



AT THE TIME IN 1968 OF THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF ARMISTICE, on Nov. 11, 1918, the above picture has nostalgic meanings for many relatives and friends of the soldiers in this 1915 photo of the 130th Battalion Lanark and Renfrew Regiment taken in front of the Arnprior Town Hall just before leaving for

overseas. Sitting in front are Lt. Lemoine, coal merchant, of Arnprior; Captain Hatton, butcher, of Arnprior; and Lt. Cunningham, of White Lake. Among are Jimmy Ring, Charles Ring, Sgt. Jackson, and Fred Nichols, all of Arnprior; Billy Debonham, William Poynter, and Jim Parker, of Pakenham; and Jim Beat-

tie of Braeside. The only surviving member of those named is Jimmy Ring, believed to be living in Nipigon, Ont. In the third row standing (third from right) is William Poynter, and below are personal experiences related to The Guide reporter by his widow, who lives in Galetta.

EXPERIENCES OF WAR . . .

William Poynter and his wife came to Canada April 2, 1914, on the last trip the Empress of Ireland made, before the boat was scrapped. With her husband and two children, Hilda age 3 years, and Charles age 16 months, Mrs. Poynter celebrated her 23rd birthday aboard the Empress of Ireland. Arriving in Canada they made their way to Pakenham, to the farm of Mack Russell.

That same year William Poynter enlisted with the 59th but was medically discharged 6 weeks later. He then joined the 130th stationed in Arnprior, where he was located for over a year. He was made canteen sergeant of the old King Edward Hotel, which was the barracks, with some of the men billeted on Daniel Street in a brick row. (These are identified as the Hotel standing where St. Adnyk's Service Station is now, and the brick row, as that north of Oddfellow Hall).

Just before the battalion (which had been made up of three groups) took departure for Perth, a picture (above shown) was taken of the men on the steps of the Town Hall. From here they went to Barriefield Camp, Kingston; then on to Valcartier; and thence they were about to be shipped overseas. Just as William Poynter was about to get on the boat, the doctor discharged him as medically unfit.

Returning to Pakenham and his family, about two months later he was called from Ottawa and asked to go overseas as a foreman in the Canadian Timber Supplies Overseas. En route over, their ship was torpedoed, and many lives were lost. The men on two or three of the lifeboats were picked up by a destroyer and

taken to Ireland to recuperate. William Poynter was one of these, and was rescued with only pants and socks. Mrs. Poynter did not learn of her husband's being alive for quite some time.

After three weeks they were transferred to England. Here, Poynter and his companions were put in a camp with the British Imperials at Aylesbury, England. All this time his wife and other relatives thought everyone had been lost at sea.

Just here Mrs. Poynter's predicament enters the story. Here she was, all alone in Canada, a stranger, without a relative in the land, and with two small children dependent upon her. She was without money or recompense. With no money or pay she had to work to support her infant children. This she did, and was paid the large sum of 10 cents an hour. (Her husband was receiving the huge sum of \$15 a month).

The efforts, heartache, trial and frustration Mrs. Poynter went through in an effort to get recognition from Ottawa, are a story unto themselves. Many, many times she appeared before the different authorities demanding to be sent to her husband (whom she now learned was alive), and to be cared for as a war wife, and family.

After continuous struggle and much juggling about from one to another she was finally, on May 3, 1918, placed aboard the signal ship out of Montreal of the first tank battalion convoy, that left from Montreal. It was a 3 week trip, with 3000 soldiers aboard 16 ships and one woman and two children. Diphtheria, mumps and measles broke out on the ships and they sailed into Tilbury Dock

flying the yellow flag. In England the flu (Mrs. Poynter describes it as "the black flu") was raging. So she left her children in the care of her Mother while she worked as a Civil Defence nurse. About this time, tired of separation, Mrs. Poynter commandeered one of the army huts and joined her husband with the children.

A year later they were shifted to Quentin, Buckinghamshire, where they remained 2-1/2 years.

"In the meantime" said Mrs. Poynter "I was fighting the government to get pay. They just scoffed at me, and I mean scoffed! They said he wasn't British Imperial. All they would do for me, was to give me a free pass back to Canada, where they said I belonged." So, after three years and four months in Britain, the little woman with her children, again separated from her people, left the land of her birth, and joined by her husband returned to Pakenham in 1922. Mr. Poynter went to work in Findlays Stove Foundry, Carleton Place, where he remained for 28 years working as a grinder. July 12, 1957 William Poynter died suddenly. In the meantime, the family had been joined by another daughter whom they named Amy.

Mrs. Poynter, who was christened Amy Maud Susanah Drake, is a descendent of the great Sea Captain, Sir Francis Drake. She has travelled to England 17 times, 10 by ship and 7 by air. A few years ago she journeyed to England again and brought her aged mother out to Canada, by air. Son Charles is in Elliot Lake, Mrs. Amy Bressan lives in Arnprior, Mrs. Hilda Hall lives in Fitzroy, while Mother Poynter has her own little apartment in Galetta, where she lives with her cat, her knitting and many, many lovely antique pieces of pewter, crystal and silver. Last but not least, Mrs. Poynter has a wealth of memories and stories, some very sad and pathetic; but many are bright and happy.