

Francis Henry James Damp

Isle of Wight County Press

22 June 1957

SOLDIER AND BUSINESSMAN

DEATH OF MR. F. H. J. DAMP OF NEWPORT.

The death took place on Monday at Westbury, Carisbrooke Road, Newport, of Mr. Francis Henry James Damp, aged 63. Well known and highly esteemed in the town for 40 years in connection with the family firm of H. and F. Damp, Ltd., builders and undertakers, he was a son of the late F. Damp. After being educated at the Newport (now King James I) Grammar School, he left the Island to train as an architect in London but his studies were interrupted by the outbreak of the 1914-18 war, and he was one of the earliest volunteers to join the I.W. Rifles (8th Battalion, Hampshire Regiment). He went with the battalion to Gallipoli, but fell victim to dysentery and was sent back to England after treatment in hospital in Egypt. On recovering he was commissioned in the 15th Battalion Hampshire Regiment, and fought in the second battle of the Somme in 1918 in which he was gassed. He was awarded the Military Cross for courage and leadership in association with another officer in an assault on two enemy pillboxes, which were destroyed. When the 8th Battalion of the Hampshire Regiment was re-formed after the war he was re-commissioned and posted to B Company, Newport, and in 1922 commanded a platoon of the company who won the Le Roy Lewis Challenge Cup for the most efficient platoon in the Hampshire Brigade. He was placed on the Territorial Reserve of Officers in 1928 and finally resigned his commission in 1934. This, however, did not complete his military career, for he was also a well-liked and able Home Guard officer during the last war, commanding the Newport company with the rank of major. He had retained his association with his comrades of that time by becoming president of the local Home Guard Association.

His active connection with the family business dated from the retirement of his late uncle, Mr. H. Damp, soon after the end of the 1914-18 war. He had carried on the business since the retirement and death of his father in the 1930s, in association with his brother, Mr. C. Damp, who now continues as principal of the firm.

Mr. Damp was closely identified with the Newport Castlehold Baptist Church, where he was a deacon and in the inter-war period was for some years the popular and efficient Scoutmaster of the church troop. He was also a member of the Albany Lodge of Freemasons.

He leaves a widow, son and daughter. The funeral took place yesterday afternoon, a service in the Castlehold Baptist Church preceding interment at Newport cemetery.

Isle of Wight County Press - 29 June 1957

THE LATE MR. F. H. J. DAMP M.C.

LARGE ATTENDANCE AT NEWPORT FUNERAL.

The Castlehold Baptist Church, Newport, to which he had devoted much of his time and energy, was filled almost to capacity on Friday week, for the funeral service for Mr. Francis Henry James Damp, M.C., of Westbury, Carisbrooke, Newport, whose death at the age of 63 was recorded last week. In addition to fellow deacons and members of all branches of church life, there were present, past and present employees of his firm, Messrs. H. and F. Damp, Ltd., and representatives of the many aspects of the business life of the locality with which his work had brought him into contact, including the Ministry of Works, Maintenance Division. The many societies and organisations represented included the I.W. Rifles' Old Comrades association, the former D and C Companies of the Home Guard, the Newport and District Home Guard Association, the Royal Artillery Association, the British Legion, Albany Lodge of Freemasons, the King James I Grammar School Old Boys' Association, the I.W. Chamber of Commerce, the Newport Business and Professional Association, Lloyds Bank, the Newport P.S.A. Brotherhood, and the I.W. Christian Business Men's Committee.

The service was conducted by the pastor (the Rev. L. B. Davies, J.P.) who was assisted by the Rev. Dr. W. H. Hadon (superintendent of the West Wight Methodist Circuit). The service included the hymn "The day Thou gavest" accompanied by the organist (Mrs. D. E. Knight) and the Masonic brethren sang their closing ode.

In an address, Mr. Davies said that he was speaking as a friend of a friend. While thinking of what tribute to pay, the phrase "He was a builder" kept running through his mind and the more he thought of the phrase the more he realised how well it summed up the man whose death they mourned. Just as he was a builder of quality by profession, so throughout his life he had been a builder for his Lord, whom he had served so well, particularly as an honoured deacon of their church. He was a brave man who had won the Military Cross but never spoke of his virtues. His was a life of humility. A devoted husband and father, his building could be seen in the lives of his children and in the happiness and fellowship of his home. Their sympathy went out to his widow and members of the family.

The mourners were Mr. David Damp (son), Mr. R. Mitchell (son-in-law), Miss M. Damp (sister), Mr. and Mrs. C. P. Damp (brother and sister-in-law), and Mr. and Mrs. D. Cotton and Mr. W. H. Taylor (brothers-in-law and sister-in-law).

The interment was at Newport Cemetery.

Transcription by Kate MacDonell for the Friends of Newport and Carisbrooke Cemeteries,
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