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By MICHAEL FANEUFF

*Times Staff Writer*

George Ponty, Southern California builder, sportsman, philanthropist and war hero, died of throat cancer Friday night at St. John's Hospital in Santa Monica. He was 63.

Ponty, with longtime business partner Maxwell J. Fenmore, participated in the planning, building, and selling of single and multiple-family dwellings, industrial parks, and shopping and commercial centers in Southern California, Nevada and Arizona.

The Ponty-Fenmore Co. purchased the old Hal Roach Studios in Culver City for \$1.3 million in 1962 and redeveloped the 14.3 acre site into what is now the Landmark Industrial Park. Ponty was also instrumental in the creation and development of the Golden Hills residential-recreational community in the Tehachapi Valley.

A second-generation California contractor and developer, Ponty literally grew up with his father's firm, founded in 1928. When Ponty was 12, he became a jack-of-all-trades around the Ponty construction sites. Trying his hand at various crafts, he became a journeyman carpenter at 18 and by the time he was 20 had mastered several other building trades.

When World War II began, Ponty joined the Army as an aviation cadet and emerged a much decorated captain at the war's end. In addition to receiving the Silver Star, the Distinguished Service Cross and the Purple Heart, he was awarded the Croix de Guerre and was personally decorated by Yugoslavia's Marshal Tito. In all, he was awarded 26 wartime decorations.

Ponty is survived by his wife, Margaret, his son, George, Jr., and daughters, Gretchen Ponty Smith, Jan Ponty Lerner, Kris-

tine Ponty Wyckoff, Mary Ponty and Sharon Ponty Hill.

Funeral services will be conducted at 11:30 a.m. Monday at the Corpus Christi Catholic Church in Pacific Palisades.