



LAST POST FUND
FONDS DU SOUVENIR

A Quarterly Newsletter from the Last Post Fund

THE BUGLER

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During this joyful Holiday Season, let us remember and honour those who are no longer with us and cherish those who are.

From all of us at the Last Post Fund, our very best wishes for a happy and prosperous New Year!

FIRST WORLD WAR VETERAN RETURNS HOME From Seattle to Victoria, BC



Born in Victoria in 1896, **Gordon H. Marwick** was barely 19 when he went overseas with the Canadian Expeditionary Force in 1915. He served in France as a signaller and spent a winter on Vimy Ridge where he took part in the final attack and capture of the Ridge in April 1917.

After returning from WWI, Gordon married and moved with his bride to Seattle in 1924. He became a US Citizen in 1938 and worked as a telegraph operator with Western Union for several years. For the rest of his life, he kept his WWI service medals tucked into a small box.

After his divorce in 1940, Mr. Marwick became a regular at the Mecca Café & Bar owned by the Smith family who, in 1992, asked him to live with them. A nurse was hired to care for the Veteran until he passed away in 1997. Mr. Marwick had left instructions to return his cremated remains to Canada. Unfortunately, when the Smiths' son was diagnosed with leukemia, complying with the Veteran's request slipped down a notch or two on their priority list.

By 2011, all members of the Smith family had passed away. When clearing up the estate, **Karon Hinke** — Mrs. Smith's daughter in law — found Mr. Marwick's ashes carefully packaged with his medals and handwritten notes on his war service. A search online for organizations and assistance that might be available for Canadian Veterans led her to the Last Post Fund.



Howardeena Kembel-McGrory (left) and Karon Hinke



Mr. Marwick being an "out of country" death, repatriation of his ashes and medals was arranged last September by counsellor **Howardeena Kembel-McGrory** from our BC Branch who drove to Seattle to bring back his remains to Canada. They were buried in the Victoria Veterans Cemetery in October, the service being officiated by **Padre Don Hatfield** from CFB Esquimalt and attended by Canadian Forces serving members. A military marker was later provided by the Last Post Fund as an ultimate honour for this Veteran whose remains have finally returned home.



LPF NATIONAL PRESIDENT

LCol (Ret'd) Daniel O'Connor



The year 2012 will soon be over. Admittedly, it hasn't been an easy one for the Last Post Fund!

Veterans Affairs having directed us to reduce our adminis-

trative budget by nearly a million dollars, we had to restructure our organization by closing four offices and terminating 13 employees, while maintaining an effective delivery of the Funeral and Burial Program.

Nevertheless, we continued to advocate changes to the Program, namely on these issues: increasing the maximum allowance payable to funeral homes (standing at \$3,600 since 2001, it fails to keep pace with the rising costs of funeral services); raising the estate exemption for a Veteran's survivors, reduced from \$24,030 to \$12,015 in 1995; and extending the eligibility for the Funeral and Burial Program to Canadian Forces Veterans in financial need at the time of their death. The Last Post Fund is presently using its limited donation funds to provide a dignified funeral and burial for these modern-day Veterans.

Let us now hope that the year 2013 will bring a fruitful outcome to these most important issues for our Veterans!

We wish to thank the **Funeral Service Association of Canada** for their timely campaign urging the Canadian government to increase funding of the Last Post Fund. We are also indebted to the **Royal Canadian Legion** and **ANAVETS** for their endless support of our cause.

I would like to add how proud I am of our staff, who has shouldered the burden of a substantial and ongoing restructure without complaint, while maintaining our very high standards of service to our clients. I would also like to thank our Branch Presidents, their Executives and all volunteer Board members across the country for their continued dedication and commitment to ensuring our national footprint in service to our Veterans.

HONOURS DELAYED FOR WWI VETERAN

In North Bay, ON



John Jack Friel, sitting

In 1916, steam engineer **John Jack Friel** from Sudbury enlisted with the 159th Overseas Battalion raised by the Algonquin Regiment* in Northeastern Ontario.

Born in 1895, this heroic infantryman survived a gunshot wound to the head in the 1917 Passchendaele** battle, only to go back to France's trenches where he was gassed during the Battle of Cambrai. He was kept in the hospital for several months before returning again to the trenches. During the Pursuit to Mons battle, Private Friel was shot in the hand which caused a permanent injury that prevented him from returning to duties. He was honourably discharged in 1919.

Described as a wanderer and a loner, John Jack Friel died in 1965. With no family of his own, a public trustee handled his funeral and he was laid to rest in an unmarked grave. When his nephew **George Friel**, aged 90, was going through his mother's belongings after her death, he discovered that his uncle was buried in North Bay, but under the wrong name. (Misspelled names were typical of that time period.)

Tracking his whereabouts earlier this year, George was shocked to find no markings at his uncle's gravesite. "I didn't think something like that could happen. I believe there are many poor Veterans lying in the ground and it's unknown who they are and there's no credit for what they did," he said.

In November, three rifle volleys broke the silence of St. Mary's Cemetery in North Bay for military honours delayed by nearly half a century. Army reservists with the Algonquin Regiment conducted the graveside commemoration, near the new marker provided by the Last Post Fund through its Unmarked Grave Program. Four generations of the Friel family attended the military service and grave marker dedication.



On that occasion, George Friel admitted: "I feel better and at peace knowing that my uncle has finally received the proper recognition."



*Algonquin Regiment's 159th Overseas Battalion embarked for England on 1 November 1916 with a strength of 1,004 men. It is estimated that more than 400 soldiers from that Regiment died in the First World War.

**In the Battle of Passchendaele, over 15,000 Canadian soldiers died or were wounded; nine Canadian soldiers received the Victoria Cross in recognition of their acts of bravery.