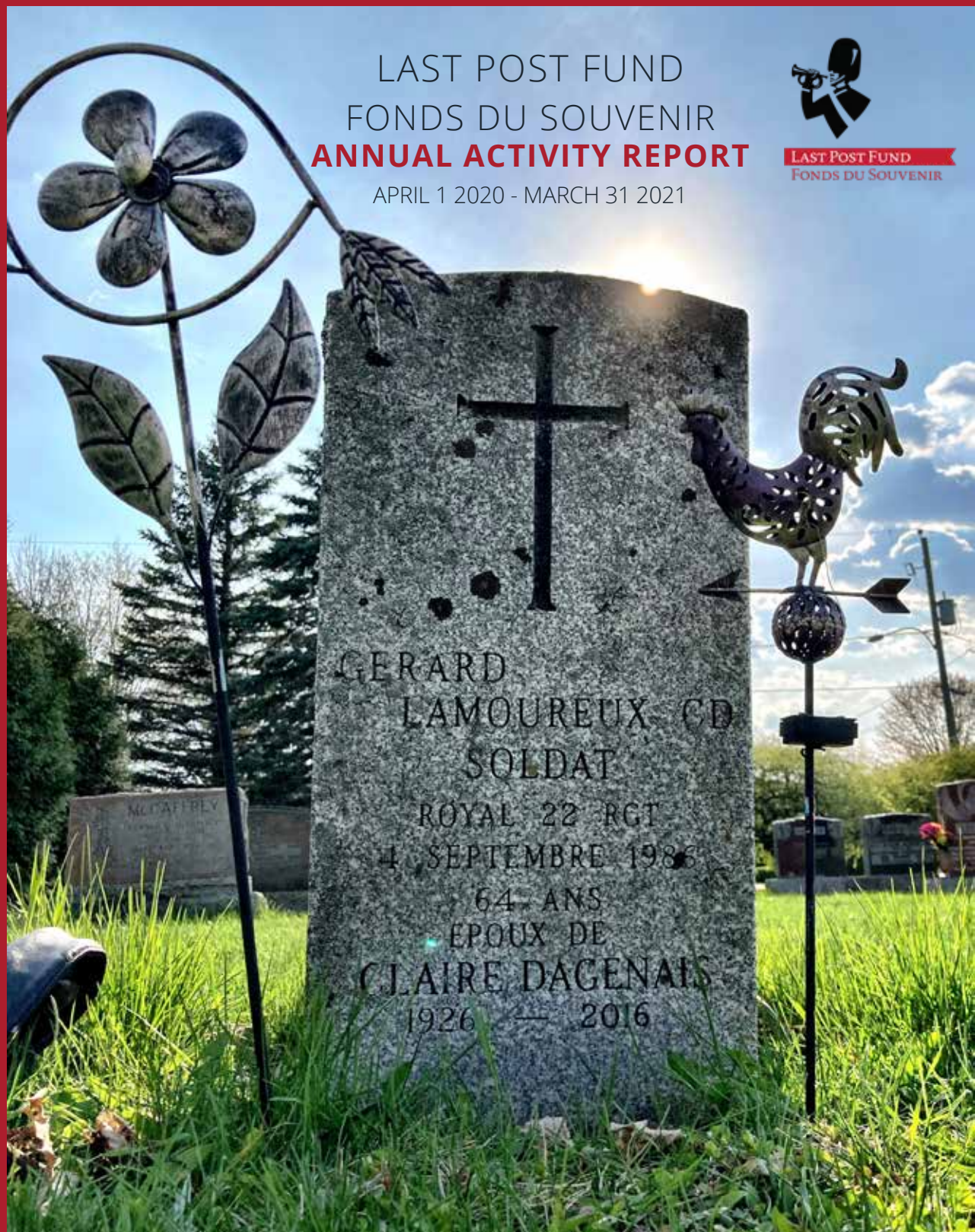


LAST POST FUND
FONDS DU SOUVENIR
ANNUAL ACTIVITY REPORT

APRIL 1 2020 - MARCH 31 2021



LAST POST FUND
FONDS DU SOUVENIR







LPF ANNUAL ACTIVITY REPORT

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LAST POST FUND | FONDS DU SOUVENIR

MESSAGE FROM THE **NATIONAL PRESIDENT**

Derek Sullivan



Dear Members,

It is my honour to provide my first message as Last Post Fund National President. As the first year of my term comes to a close, I continue to be impressed by the extraordinary dedication and hard work done by our members, volunteers, and staff in the service of Veterans and their families. This past year has presented us all with unprecedented challenges in our personal lives and our work lives. Yet, even with the additional stress and anxiety caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, the Last Post Fund has carried on its vital work. Our staff in our Montreal and Toronto offices, as well as at the

This past year has presented us all with unprecedented challenges in our personal lives and our work lives. Yet, even with the additional stress and anxiety caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, the Last Post Fund has carried on its vital work.

National Field of Honour in Pointe Claire Quebec, have provided exemplary service in delivering the Funeral and Burial Program to Veterans and their loved ones. Our Executive Director, Edouard Pahud, has led the transition to our staff working completely from home. It has been such a success that we have decided to make this approach permanent. By the time you read this we will have closed our Toronto office, and by this time next year our Montreal office will have moved out of downtown and be greatly reduced in size. This reflects our ongoing efforts to ensure that our administrative expenses are in line with our workload.

Even in the face of a pandemic, the members and volunteers across the country have increased their efforts to locate the unmarked graves of Veterans, to ensure that they are provided with an appropriate military style grave marker.

You will see the results in this Annual Activity Report. Our members have not been able to increase awareness of the work of the Last Post Fund in their traditional ways, so many of them have found new ways, such as Zoom presentations to community groups, and media events.

In the face of the ongoing pandemic, our members have found new ways to increase awareness of the work of the Last Post Fund, such as Zoom presentations to community groups, and media events.

Also in this past year the National Executive Committee, our Executive Director, and our Quebec Branch have worked hard to ensure that we are ready for the Federal Government's examination of the National Field of Honour, as they consider our proposal to transfer ownership and operation to Veterans Affairs Canada.

I would like to express my sincere appreciation to the Executive Committee, Governing Council, and the National Office for the tremendous support that they have given me over the last year. Although our June meetings will once again be virtual, I am looking forward to seeing you all again in person soon.



DEREK SULLIVAN

National President

LAST POST FUND | FONDS DU SOUVENIR

MESSAGE FROM THE **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

♦
Edouard Pahud



Dear Members,

The year started with the pandemic, and sadly I have to say we remain in the same situation a year later. This event forced us to work from home and was the main stimulus for our transition to the cloud for our IT and telephony. The transition will allow us to accommodate a long term work-from-home scenario for Toronto and Halifax employees, and a mix of office presence and work-from-home for Montreal employees. Related to this are significant reductions in operating costs, as lease costs will be greatly diminished due to the closure of the Toronto office in May 2021, and the planned relocation to a substantially smaller National Office in Montreal starting in March 2022.

The Funeral and Burial Program remains and will continue to remain a steadfast part of our mission. In terms of number of cases, we predict it will soon be overtaken by the Unmarked Grave Program. This observable trend appears to be due to the generally improved conditions of modern-day Veterans, as well as a resurgence of volunteer interest in historic and genealogical research.

The Indigenous Veterans Initiative made great strides in its first full year: many communities were contacted, researchers recruited, portions of our list of Indigenous Veterans shared for review, unmarked graves were found and identified, markers ordered, and graves marked.

Our newest program, the Indigenous Veterans Initiative (IVI), progressed exceptionally well. Contacts were made, and researchers were found with Indigenous communities across the country.

A complete report of the IVI, including an impressive map of graver marker placements, is shared with our members separately from this report.

In closing, I want to congratulate our employees for their resiliency; they have positively coped, adapted and even thrived in response to the challenging pandemic environment.

The work-from-home business format will become the structure of the LPF in the future: one small head office, with the majority of employees working from home on a permanent basis.

I feel our employee group is now more cohesive and efficient than ever. They have learned new work methods and systems. Our monthly applicant surveys confirm a high level of customer service satisfaction despite the vast changes imposed on our staff in the past year. Good work everyone, job well done!

On behalf of myself and the entire LPF staff, it is our honour and pleasure to continue our tradition of service to and recognition of Veterans.



EDOUARD PAHUD

Executive Director | Directeur général



*Wreath-laying ceremony on November 11, 2020 at the Ross Bay Cemetery in Victoria, BC.
Photo credit: Brynn Featherstone*

BEGINNINGS

In December 1908, a homeless man was found unconscious and taken to the Montreal General Hospital. Head Orderly Arthur Hair, himself a Veteran of the South African War, found an envelope in the poor man's coat pocket. It contained an honourable discharge certificate issued by Britain's War Office for Trooper James Daly, who had served the Empire for 21 years. This certificate was the man's sole possession. Suffering from hypothermia and malnutrition, Daly died a few days later at age 53. Without any friend or family member to claim his remains, his body was to be delivered over to the morgue.

Instead, Hair raised the necessary funds to provide the soldier with a dignified funeral and burial in the Notre-Dame-des-Neiges cemetery on the Mount Royal. His act of charity is the founding

event of the Last Post Fund in Montreal on 19 April 1909. Thereafter, the Fund's Trustees launched a crusade to ensure that no serviceman or woman would suffer James Daly's narrowly-avoided fate.

The early work of the Fund was supported exclusively by private donations. In 1921, however, the Last Post Fund was federally incorporated and began to receive regular government subsidies, allowing the organization to expand its operations to the entire country. In 1995, it was mandated to deliver the Funeral and Burial Program on behalf of Veterans Affairs Canada.

Since 1909, hundreds of dedicated men and women have ensured that deceased Veterans receive the respectful recognition they have earned through their service and sacrifice.

THE 2020-2021 ANNUAL ACTIVITY REPORT PROVIDES A RECORD OF LAST POST FUND ACTIVITIES FOR FISCAL YEAR 1 APRIL 2020 TO 31 MARCH 2021.

LAST POST FUND AT A GLANCE

Who we are and who we serve

MISSION AND ACTIVITIES

Created 112 years ago, the Last Post Fund has since arranged funerals and, where necessary, burials and grave markers for more than 156,000 Veterans from Canada, Britain, Scotland, Ireland, Australia, Belgium, France, Poland, South Africa and other allied countries.

The mission of the Last Post Fund is to ensure that no Veteran is denied a dignified funeral and burial, as well as a military gravestone, due to insufficient funds at time of death.

In addition to delivering the Funeral and Burial Program on behalf of Veterans Affairs Canada, the Last Post Fund supports other initiatives aimed at commemorating Canadian Veterans. These include the Last Post Fund's own military cemetery, the National Field of Honour in Pointe-Claire, Québec where more than 22,000 burials have been performed since it was opened in 1930. The Fund also supports other local Fields of Honour and is present in over 2,900 cemeteries across the country.

The Last Post Fund recognizes the importance of honouring those who served. Every year in June, commemorative ceremonies are held on the St. Lawrence River in Montreal, at the Notre-Dame-des-Neiges and Mount-Royal cemeteries, and at the National Field of Honour in Pointe-Claire, Québec.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, since 2020 these commemorative ceremonies have been condensed into a single ceremony, held in a reduced format, and broadcast online to our larger community.

Other Last Post Fund activities include the Unmarked Grave Program through which the Last Post Fund provides military markers for eligible Veterans who have been deceased for over five years and lie in unmarked graves. Since the inception of this Program in 1996, the graves of 6,946 Veterans have been properly marked across the country.

The Indigenous Veterans Initiative, launched in March of 2019, focuses specifically on Indigenous communities while the newly launched Lost Veterans Initiative aims to support volunteer researchers for unmarked Veterans graves.

Finally, the Last Post Fund also works in conjunction with the Department of National Defence to provide headstones, markers or memorials for eligible Canadian Forces members who die while in service. To date, 538 such memorials have been provided through the action of the Last Post Fund.

We are deeply indebted to the hundreds of dedicated men and women who have volunteered over the years to ensure that the Last Post Fund's mission is upheld.

"I have known about the Last Post fund for many years from my time in uniform. This was my first personal encounter with the group. I was most impressed by the level of professionalism, compassion, and genuine concern that the counselor demonstrated. I represented a family member and the positive experience achieved from our dealings with the LPF made a very significant impact on her, and lifted a significant weight from her shoulders at what was certainly a most difficult time. I can not be happier with the outcome and I express both the gratitude of the family as well as my own to your organization. Truly a shining star in an otherwise very bureaucratic world. Many thanks."

LAST POST FUND OVERVIEW

Principal Programmes and Initiatives

PROGRAMS AND INITIATIVES



Funeral & Burial Program

Programme de funérailles et d'enterrement



Indigenous Veterans Initiative

Initiative pour Vétérans autochtones



Unmarked Grave Program

Programme de sépultures non marquées



Lost Veterans Initiative

Initiative pour Vétérans oubliés

OUR ORGANISATION

The Last Post Fund is made up of both volunteer members and paid employees. Its Boards of Directors are elected from a volunteer membership in each province. Each provincial Board of Directors elects a representative who sits on the national Governing Council. These elected representatives have overall responsibility for the strategic direction of the Last Post Fund's policies, standards and controls relating to administration and national program delivery.

In turn, the Governing Council delegates to the Executive Director the management responsibility for office operations and delivery of the national program as well as for communications and cooperative actions with Veterans Affairs Canada. The Executive Director operates from the Last Post Fund National Office in Montreal, Québec.

LAST POST FUND
FONDS DU SOUVENIR
**SERVING VETERANS SINCE
AU SERVICE DES VÉTÉRANS
DEPUIS 1909**

Governing Council 2020-2021

The Governing Council is comprised of the Executive Committee and the Branch Presidents from each province.

It also holds seats for the Honorary President and Honorary Solicitor, as well as a VAC liaison.

Governing Council Directors	Name	Residence
Executive Committee		
National President	Mr. Derek Sullivan	Moncton, NB
Past National President	LCol Raymond Mikkola (Retired)	Mississauga, ON
Vice President East	Maj James Lynch (Retired)	St. John's, NL
Vice President West	Col Randy Brooks (Retired)	Regina, SK
Treasurer	Mr. Uwe Manski	Stouffville, ON
Secretary	Maj Ken Usher (Retired)	Penticton, BC
Branch Presidents (East to West)		
Newfoundland & Labrador	RCMP Supt Leo O'Brien (Retired)	St. John's, NL
Nova Scotia	Mr. Robert Carter	Halifax, NS
New Brunswick & PEI	LCdr Owen Parkhouse (Retired)	Morell, PE
Quebec	LCol Michel Crowe (Retired)	Brossard, QC
National Field of Honour	A/SLt Nicolas Marcotte (Retired)	Montréal, QC
Ontario	Col R.G. (Geordie) Elms (Retired)	Dundas, ON
Manitoba	Maj Robert Orzechowski (Retired)	Winnipeg, MB
Saskatchewan	LCol Doug Penner (Retired)	Warman, SK
Alberta	LCol Hans Brink (Retired)	St. Albert, AB
British Columbia	Mr. Brent Lang	Westminster, BC
Veterans Affairs Canada Liaison		
DG Commemoration VAC	Mr. Paul Thomson	Charlottetown, PE
Honorary Roles		
Honorary Solicitor	Mr. Alex Ilchenko	Mississauga, ON
Honorary President	Ms. Jean Miso	Ottawa, ON



MS. JEAN MISO
Honorary President



MR. ALEX ILCHENKO
Honorary Solicitor



MR. EDOUARD PAHUD
Executive Director

GOVERNING COUNCIL

Executive Committee



MR. DEREK SULLIVAN

National President

Derek retired from Veterans Affairs Canada (VAC) in 2013 after 32 years serving Veterans. Derek was Director General, Canada Remembers (now Commemoration) from 2003-2013, during which time he served on the Governing Council of the Last Post Fund as VAC representative. After his professional retirement in 2013, Derek became a volunteer member of the Last Post Fund – New Brunswick / PEI Branch. Derek Sullivan held the position of Vice-President East since 2016, and was named National President at last year's annual meeting in 2020.



LCOL RAY MIKKOLA (RET'D)

Past National President



MAJ JAMES LYNCH (RET'D)

Vice-President East



COL RANDY BROOKS (RET'D)

Vice-President West



MR. UWE MANSKI

Treasurer



MAJ KEN USHER (RET'D)

Secretary

LPF Staff 2020-2021

Executive Director	Édouard Pahud
Finance Manager	Frantzy Charles
Administrative Assistant	Natalie Escaler
Communications Officer	Justine McIntyre
Accounts Payable Clerk	Christian Dupuis
Indigenous Project Coordinator	Maria Trujillo
Senior Counsellor	Tara Muia
Counsellor	Amy Khamlong
Counsellor	Jessica Sokoloski
Counsellor	Heather Pettipas
Counsellor	Kelly Martin



Veterans Affairs Canada Minister Lawrence MacAulay and Owen Parkhouse, President of the New Brunswick/P.E.I. branch of the Last Post Fund during a visit to the cemetery in Souris, PEI on August 19, 2020. The purpose of the visit was to announce additional funding of \$100,000 to assist with the restoration and repair of gravestones of Veterans across P.E.I. / Photo: Stu Neatby, The Chronicle Herald

PROGRAM ACTIVITY

All programs

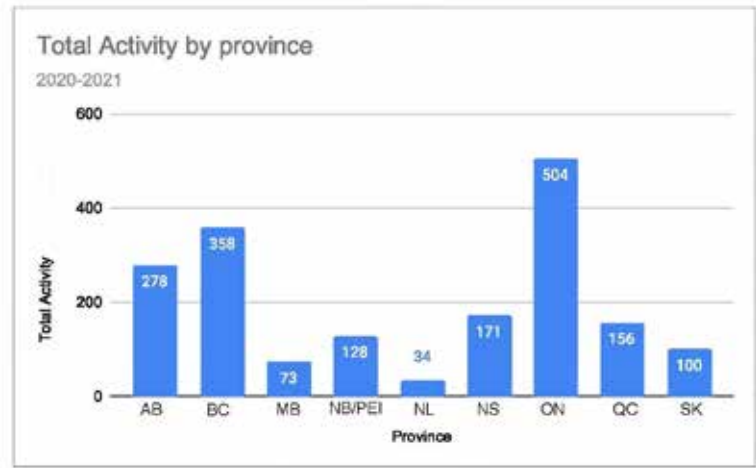
The below charts show all program activity in a breakdown by province. As noted in the introductory remarks, Funeral and Burial (F&B) program activity is steadily declining, while activity related to the Unmarked Grave Program (UMG) continues to increase due to the recent addition of the Indigenous Veterans Initiative and of the Lost Veterans Initiative, and thanks to the tireless and dedicated efforts on the part of volunteers across the country.

Processed Cases by province 2020-2021

Diagram 1: Processed cases by province
Summary of program activities by province, including Funeral & Burial, Unmarked Graves and Dept. of National Defense programs.

Province	F&B		UGP	DND	Total Activity per province
	Cases Approved	Not Approved			
AB	72	54	152	0	278
BC	89	83	185	1	358
MB	23	20	30	0	73
NB/PEI	70	45	13	0	128
NL	23	8	3	0	34
NS	96	60	13	2	171
ON	206	181	115	2	504
QC	40	91	25	0	156
SK	18	18	64	0	100
Int'l	7	4	5	n/a	16
Program Totals	644	564	605	5	1818

Diagram 2: Total Activity by province
This chart shows combined totals of all program activities distributed by province.



FUNERAL & BURIAL PROGRAM

Potential clients for the Veterans Affairs Funeral and Burial Program (generally the next-of-kin or the executor of the Veteran's estate) apply to the Last Post Fund for funeral and burial benefits on behalf of Veterans who meet service eligibility criteria.

Once military service is confirmed, applications are submitted to means testing that assesses the financial status of the Veteran's estate at time of death. If the net worth of the estate is below the established financial level, a grant is approved to assist with funeral and burial expenses, as defined in the Veterans Burial Regulations (VBRs). If a pensioner dies from his/her pensioned condition, a full grant for an allowable amount is approved without means testing. These applications become matter-of-right cases.

In the Canadian Government fiscal year from 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021, the Last Post Fund processed 1,208 applications for funeral and burial grants, of which 644 were approved for grants.

Diagram 3: Cases Processed, Cases Approved and Cases Not Approved

These three charts show the numbers of all cases processed, approved and not approved for the Funeral and Burial program for a 5-year period.

TOTAL CASES PROCESSED (APPROVED AND NOT APPROVED) | FIVE-YEAR TREND

Year	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
Total cases	1,945	2,217	1,902	1,453	1,208

CASES APPROVED | FIVE-YEAR TREND

Year	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
Standard (Type 1)	184	78	49	46	59
Assisted (Type 2)	967	994	908	699	585
Total approved	1,151	1,072	957	745	644
Matter-of-right cases (included in Standard Types 1 & 2)	161	175	162	107	119

CASES NOT APPROVED | FIVE-YEAR TREND

Year	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
Not approved	794	1,145	945	708	564

Photo top

*Photo captured by Exec. Dir. Ed Pahud
at a cemetery in Vaudreuil-Dorion, QC.*

Photo bottom

*Flat marker installation at Lakeshore
Psychiatric Hospital Cemetery, Etobicoke, ON.*



DEFINITIONS

Standard, Assisted and Matter-of-Right Services

The Last Post Fund provides three types of funeral and burial services: standard services (Type 1); assisted services (Type 2); and matter-of-right services.

1. **Type 1 (standard) services** are provided when a Veteran's family approaches the Last Post Fund before funeral arrangements have been made. If the deceased Veteran is deemed eligible for benefits, the Last Post Fund will contract directly with the funeral home.
2. **Type 2 (assisted) services** are provided when the Veteran's family contracts for funeral arrangements and an application for financial assistance is submitted afterwards. If the deceased Veteran is deemed eligible for benefits, the Last Post Fund reimburses the family for allowable costs, as set out in the Veterans Burial Regulations (VBRs).
3. **Matter-of-right services** concern disability compensation recipients who die from their service-related condition. In this situation, the Veteran's family will receive a grant up to the maximum amount allowable under the VBRs, and no means-testing is required.



UNMARKED GRAVE PROGRAM

The Last Post Fund initiated the Unmarked Grave Program in 1996 with financial assistance from Veterans Affairs Canada (VAC) to provide markers for Veterans deceased for over five years and lying in unmarked graves. The Last Post Fund receives annual financial support from Veterans Affairs Canada for this program. Applications to mark such graves are made to the Last Post Fund and provision for grave markers under this program is on a “first-approved-first-served” basis.

In fiscal year 2020-2021, 605 markers were paid for and installed under the Unmarked Grave Program.



Mount Pleasant Field of Honour in Swift Current, SK, where temporary wooden crosses are being replaced through the UMG Program, thanks to the work of Swift Current Parks Superintendant Michael Newell, and with the support of the local Legion. Photo courtesy Glenn Miller.

DND PROGRAM

In 1999, the Last Post Fund entered into an agreement with the Department of National Defence (DND) to provide grave markers for Canadian Armed Forces members who die while in service. Since 2000, the Last Post Fund assisted the DND in installing 538 grave markers for deceased Canadian Forces members.

In 2020-2021, 6 Canadian Forces markers were installed. The Department of National Defence reimburses the Last Post Fund for this expenditure.

*Glennwood Cemetery, Edson, AB.
Photo courtesy Albert Branch member
and volunteer researcher, Bobbi Foulds.*



Grave Markers Installed

In fiscal year 2020-21, the Last Post Fund installed 1,060 grave markers through regional grave marker suppliers

Diagram 4: Grave markers installed

This chart shows the total number of grave markers installed in 2020-2021, by program.

GRAVE MARKERS INSTALLED BY PROGRAM

Program	Installed
VAC Funeral and Burial	450
Unmarked Grave	605
Department of National Defence	5

INDIGENOUS VETERANS INITIATIVE

** A separate detailed report on the IVI will be provided to members.*

The Indigenous Veterans Initiative (IVI) was inaugurated in March of 2019. Launched as an initiative of the Last Post Fund National Office with the approval of VAC, the Initiative is consistent with the Canadian government's efforts towards advancing reconciliation and renewing the relationship with Indigenous peoples based on the recognition of rights, respect, cooperation and partnership.

This program has two main components:

1. Indigenous Unmarked Graves To provide grave markers to Indigenous Veterans deceased for over 5 years and lying in unmarked graves.
2. Indigenous Traditional Name Marking To add the traditional names of Indigenous Veterans, where requested, to new and existing military grave markers.

Both program components require research and community support from members of Canada's Indigenous communities. The Indigenous Program Coordinator coordinates and oversees the IVI and manages the LPF's partnerships with researchers.

Since the program's inception in March 2019, the IVI program coordinator has established relationships with 23 Indigenous community researchers across Canada. 175 UMG cases have been submitted, of which 74 have been approved to date.



Sgt. Moogly Tetrault-Hamel is Indigenous Adviser to the Chaplain General of the Canadian Armed Forces. Photo Courtesy DND.

"I just wanted to thank you for all your work in helping my family get a monument for my great grandfather. My family is extremely happy to finally see a marker and have a spot to go to commemorate our ancestor. I'm so thankful for everything you've done. Chi-Miigwetch (big thanks)."

LOST VETERANS INITIATIVE

On February 1st, 2021, the Last Post Fund launched the Lost Veterans Initiative in order to support the ongoing efforts of current volunteer researchers and to stimulate the recruitment of new volunteers for the UMG Program.

LPF created an information toolkit designed to assist volunteers with their research. In addition, research volunteers are given a t-shirt for their field work in cemeteries that identifies them as a researcher for the Lost Veterans Initiative. A specially branded “Field Notes” newsletter features volunteer researchers and their work as a way of highlighting their contribution, and providing encouragement to other volunteer field researchers.

As the UMG Sub-committee Chair and VP West on the LPF governing council, Col. (Retired) Randy Brooks is the national lead for the Lost Veterans Initiative. Researchers working with their provincial leads have access to support from our knowledgeable LPF counsellors when it comes time to submit a preliminary application for a headstone.



A placeholder card marks the spot where a new headstone is to be installed through the UMG Program at the Lakeshore Psychiatric Hospital Cemetery in Etobicoke, ON. Photo still from CTV News.

Aerial view of the National Field of Honour, Pointe-Claire, Québec.



LAST POST FUND NATIONAL FIELD OF HONOUR, POINTE-CLAIRE QC

During the year 2020-2021, a total of 107 burials were conducted, compared to 158 the prior year. The types of burials were as follows:

Casket burials – 42

Urn burials – 46

Columbarium – 19

Since the year of its consecration in 1930, a total of 22,308 burials have taken place at the Last Post Fund National Field of Honour.

FIELDS OF HONOUR

National and Provincial

In addition to the National Field of Honour in Pointe-Claire, Québec, Last Post Fund is responsible for the Ontario Field of Honour and the Manitoba Columbarium. As of last year, all of our niches at the Manitoba Columbarium as well as the Nova Scotia Columbarium, which is owned by the Halifax Regional municipality, are filled. Plots are available at the Ontario and Newfoundland Fields of Honour.

ONTARIO FIELD OF HONOUR, MEADOWVALE CEMETERY, BRAMPTON, ON

Located within Section 1 of Meadowvale Cemetery in Brampton, Ontario, the Ontario Field of Honour is located next to the Korean Veterans National Wall of Remembrance. As of 31 March 2019, 60 remaining plots are available to Veterans.

MANITOBA COLUMBARIUM, BROOKSIDE CEMETERY, WINNIPEG, MB

The Last Post Fund Manitoba Columbarium, located within Brookside Cemetery in Winnipeg, is a focal point as one of the oldest military Fields of Honour in Canada. Although all of the niches have been sold, the Last Post Fund continues to assist the City of Winnipeg to arrange opening and closing of niches for Veterans and their family members as well as arranging inscriptions on their niche plates, provided by Larsen's Memorials.

NOVA SCOTIA COLUMBARIUM, FAIRVIEW LAWN CEMETERY, HALIFAX, NS

The niches at the Last Post Fund Nova Scotia Columbarium located within Fairview Lawn Cemetery in Halifax are all filled. Halifax Regional Municipality owns the columbarium.

Diagram 6: Summary Financial Disbursement per program and Fundraising Sources

The Last Post Fund received charitable donations from private organizations and the general public in all provinces (except Québec where donated funds are allocated to the National Field of Honour).

These funds are used to support the Last Post Fund's National Field of Honour, other Fields of Honour across the country, and to finance various commemoration initiatives.

Summary financial highlights for the years ending March 31, 2021 and 2020

	2021 (unaudited)	2020 (audited)
Total Assets	\$3,401,299	\$3,598,230
Donations	\$113,288	\$113,768
Funeral and Burial Program	\$4,204,980	\$4,956,165
Unmarked Graves Program	\$880,110	\$830,270
Administration	\$1,314,547	\$1,489,827
Total Program Expenses	\$6,399,636	\$7,276,262
Administration Percentage	20.5%	20.5%
Sources of donations		
Royal Canadian Legion	\$2,550	\$4,425
CanadaHelp.org - Online	\$34,740	\$16,025
Bequests	\$2,500	\$5,300
Other	\$73,499	\$88,018
Total Donations	\$113,288	\$113,768

"I am extremely blessed to have the kind and caring people that work with the Last Post Fund to guide me through this process. So grateful that this service is offered to the families of our veterans. My father would be so proud. Thanks again Last Post on behalf of our family."

STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN

Governing Council

Guided by the five objectives/priorities outlined in the Strategic Action Plan (SAP) 2016-20, Governing Council (GC) members are assigned to various committees to work on specific strategic tasks. It is a living document that is enabling in nature and is an agenda item at each annual GC meeting to ensure it continues to meet Last Post Fund prerogatives. The year 2020 marked the final year of this 5-year SAP.

The five primary objectives identified by the current SAP (2016-2020) are:

1. Raising awareness of the LPF brand
2. Reviewing governance
3. Advocating on behalf of deceased Veterans and their loved ones
4. Fundraising to support the mandate
5. Ensuring membership in each Branch

The Strategic Action Plan committee is chaired by Maj. (Retired) James Lynch, Vice President East, and Col. (Retired) Randy Brooks, Vice President West sits on the committee as well. Data from two Members' surveys conducted in August 2020 was reviewed by the committee, collated and incorporated into the draft Strategic Plan 2021-2024.

The new plan will be presented to members for approval at this year's Annual Meeting of Members.

ADVOCACY GOALS

Minister of Veterans Affairs

While we seek to continue alliances with like-minded Veterans' organizations, given that we deliver a government program our advocacy efforts are limited to issues related to our mandate. Two outstanding issues remain, which the Last Post Fund continues to address with the Minister of Veterans Affairs :

1. INDEXATION OF FUNERAL AND BURIAL PROGRAM BENEFITS

In 2016 the Federal budget increased the Estate Spousal Exemption and made provision for it to be indexed on an annual basis for cost-of-living. On the other hand, Budget 2013 increased the Funeral allowance component of the Program with no indexation clause. We believe that the Funeral allowance should receive the same indexation treatment as Estate Spousal Exemption; otherwise the Funeral allowance amount will only erode with time due to unaccounted-for inflation.

2. INCREASE THE FUNERAL AND BURIAL PROGRAM APPLICATION PERIOD

Families of deceased Veterans have one year from date of death to apply for benefits. This limitation is problematic for two reasons:

1. The LPF's greatest ongoing challenge is making Veterans and their families aware of the existence of the Funeral and Burial program. In doing this we become aware of some 50 or more cases per year where families belatedly learn they may well have been eligible for assistance; and
2. Even with knowledge of the Program, some grieving families do not manage to submit an application within the year.

Last Post Fund recommends increasing the application period to three years. A more compassionate approach may see the elimination of a time limit altogether.

"I was so pleased to get a phone call, not an email or "snail" mail, from your office. And it was a positive response to my forms. So very satisfied with the staff, help and outcome of it all. Keep up the hard work."

Veterans Affairs Canada Case Projections

Diagram 5: Case Projections

This table below shows Veterans Affairs Canada's projections for Funeral & Burial Program and Unmarked Grave Program cases by fiscal year.

Please note that these are projections only and not actual program numbers.

	F&B War Time	F&B MDV	Totals for F&B Program	Unmarked Grave Program	Grand Total
2015-16	729	445	1,174	344	1,518
2016-17	689	462	1,151	314	1,465
2017-18	590	482	1,072	262	1,334
2018-19	440	560	1,000	225	1,225
2019-20	380	590	970	200	1,170
2020-21	319	592	911	200	1,111
2021-22	196	644	840	150	990
2022-23	112	693	805	150	955



Major (Retired) Richard Gratton, CD and Major (Retired) Serge Gélinas, CD preparing to begin the commemoration ceremony at the National Field of Honour in Pointe-Claire, QC, June 7, 2020.

"My brother died without having prepaid funeral arrangements and the Last Post Fund saved me from having a \$4000 bill sitting on my line of credit for a long time. My Counsellor was very helpful and called me both to let me know the application was received, reviewed, and accepted and then again when the cheque was in the mail. I did appreciate being updated as the process moved along, it helped alleviate my stress. The Legion was also very good to my brother, making sure he got new eyeglasses and meals on wheels. I really appreciate the fact that we look after our Veterans, it's important. Thank you."

ANNUAL COMMEMORATION

Annual Commemorative Ceremonies

Due to the Québec government health guidelines pertaining to public gatherings, annual commemorative ceremonies at the National Field of Honour were kept to a strict minimum.

On Sunday, June 7, 2020, members of the Last Post Fund Québec Branch conducted a brief ceremony at Currie Circle at the National Field of Honour in Pointe-Claire, Québec in honour of the military men and women from Canadian and Allied forces who rest there in eternity. Following Major (Retired) Gratton's opening remarks, LPF Quebec Branch President LCol (Retired) Michel Crowe gave a brief speech and padre L'Heureux then blessed the proceedings. A bugler was present to sound the Last Post. Members of the 3rd Montreal Field Battery of Artillery (3BAM) fired a cannon shot, and after observing two minutes of silence, a second cannon shot was fired before the sounding of the Reveille. To conclude the brief ceremony, LCol (Retired) Michel Crowe laid a wreath in commemoration and in honour of the dead.

Prior to the ceremony at the National Field of Honour, Edouard Pahud, Executive Director of the Last Post Fund visited the Sailor's memorial at the Old Port of Montréal where a memorial wreath was laid. Unfortunately, the Mount-Royal Cemetery, where a small ceremony is normally conducted, was closed to the public.

The ceremony was captured on video and broadcast via Facebook Live, where over 22,900 people across Canada and abroad viewed the proceedings. Despite the sanitary restrictions in place, the Last Post Fund is pleased that we were able to uphold our long history and sacred duty of honouring Veterans.



AWARDS SPECIAL EVENTS & FUNDRAISERS

The Last Post Fund congratulates Alberta Branch Member Kyle Scott on receiving a Certificate of Achievement presented to him by Col. (Retired) Randy Brooks in recognition of his outstanding work in researching and submitting applications for the Unmarked Graves Program.

Kyle was also recognized by 1 Combat Engineer Regiment, who presented him with a Canadian Military Engineer Commendation, in part for his volunteer work with the Last Post Fund.



UMG Sub-committee Chair and LPF VP West, Col (Retired) Randy Brooks presents Alberta Branch member Kyle Scott with a certificate of achievement in recognition of his work on UMG.



On November 24, 2020 Last Post Fund Alberta Branch Member Bobbi Foulds was awarded the Sovereigns Medal for Volunteers in recognition of her work with both the Last Post Fund and the Royal Canadian Legion.

in January 2021 LCol (ret'd) Larry Wong of the Last Post Fund Saskatchewan Branch was presented with the Last Post Fund Long Service Medal in recognition of 12 years of exemplary services and commitment to the Last Post Fund.





An unveiling ceremony organized by former National President of the Last Post Fund Major-General Edward Fitch (Retired) was held at 2pm on 11 November, 2020 in recognition of the marking of the graves of J.M. Simpson, Paris (and Mary Elizabeth) Carter, and James Normansell. At each site, a brief biography was read aloud by MGen. (Retired) Fitch, followed by the unveiling of the headstone, the laying of a wreath and the bugler's playing of the "Last Post".



On Wednesday, October 28, 2020 the Last Post Fund Ontario Branch proceeded with marking the graves of 24 service members from the First World War who ended up in Lakeshore asylum in the years that followed the war, many due to depression or PTSD.

Present for the marking were Last Post Fund Ontario Branch President Colonel (Retired) R.G. Geordie Elms (pictured) accompanied by Ed Janiszewski, a volunteer researcher and former employee of the Lakeshore Psychiatric Hospital, who was instrumental both in bringing this project to the attention of the LPF, and in helping to see it through.

Similar marking ceremonies took place across Canada, although gatherings were often not possible due to government health measures related to the pandemic.

MUSIC NIAGARA FESTIVAL | 2020



Music Niagara, for the second year in a row, held a Remembrance Day concert event, "The Lark Ascending" from which all proceeds were generously donated to the Indigenous Veterans Initiative. Due to sanitary restrictions, the event was held online in 2020.

Thanks to the success of the event, \$600 was donated to the IVI cultural consideration fund, made available to researchers to cover expenses related to following cultural protocols. The concert can be viewed on YouTube (click on the image above).

Thanks to the fundraising efforts of Café Steel Pot, a cheque in the amount of \$1,732 was donated to the Last Post Fund in support of the National Field of Honour.



COMMUNICATIONS ACTIVITIES

Summary of Communications activities for 2020-2021

Reporting directly to National Office Executive Director Edouard Pahud, the Communications Officer works in conjunction with the Communications Subcommittee, staff and volunteers to carry out communications directives.

Our members are our greatest communications asset, and we are greatly indebted to them for their tireless dedication in promoting the services and activities of the Last Post Fund.

Online presentations

Some of our lead volunteer researchers were invited to give presentations to various organizations interested in learning more about the Lost Veterans Initiative / Unmarked Grave Program.

- Québec Family History Society (Bobbi & Kyle) – March 28, 2021
- Saskatchewan Genealogical Society (Randy Brooks) – December 10, 2020
- United Empire Loyalists – National Office (Bobbi & Kyle) – December 7, 2020
- Vancouver Branch of the United Empire Loyalists (Gino Simeoni) – Nov.17, 2020
- BC Genealogical Society (Bobbi & Kyle) – August 12, 2020

Screenshot of the Last Post Fund presentation on the Lost Veterans Initiative to the BC Genealogical Society, August 13, 2020.

Bobbi Foulds and Kyle Scott are identified by a yellow star.



Publications

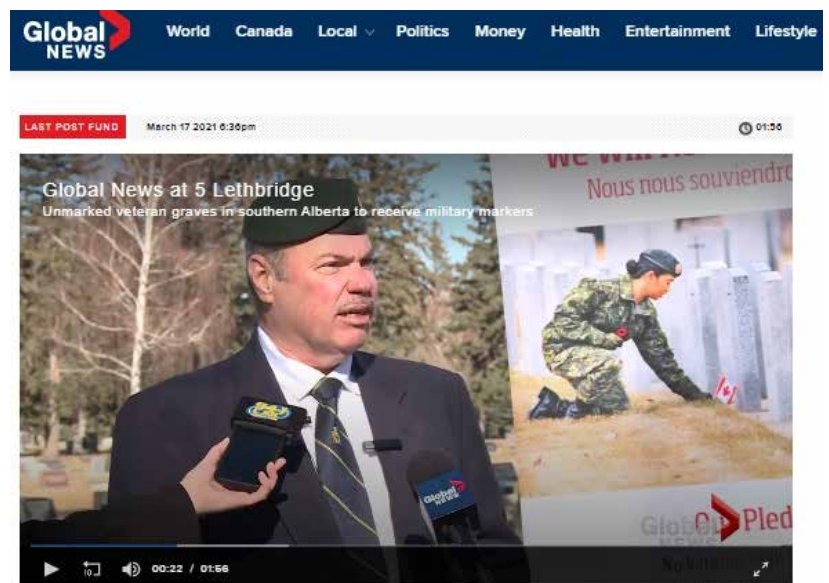
Several feature articles as well as news interviews on the Last Post Fund were published in 2020-21. Some articles were published as “sponsored content”, where publications granted space for an informational article upon purchase of advertising space.

Some notable non-sponsored content publications were due to the excellent field work of our more energetic volunteers, who actively solicited media coverage of local events.

Notable non-sponsored media coverage includes (non-exhaustive list in reverse chronological order) :

- 17/03/2021 [Global News Lethbridge](#)
- 08/02/2021 [Signal Halifax](#)
- 11/11/2020 [Ha-Shilth-Sa First Nations Newspaper](#) (IVI)
- 11/11/2020 [APTN News](#) (IVI)
- 11/11/2020 [Toronto Sun](#) (Lakeshore Psychiatric Hospital project)
- 03/11/2020 [The Sault Star](#)
- 16/10/2020 [The Merritt Herald](#)
- 27/08/2020 [My Lloydminster Now](#) (IVI)
- 19/08/2020 [Halifax Saltwire](#)
- 15/08/2020 [Global News Lethbridge](#)
- 01/07/2020 [Mayerthorpe Freelancer](#)
- 16/04/2020 [Journal de Montréal](#)
- Several Sun Media editorials by Gil Taylor:
- 03/08/2020 [VJ Day](#)
- 29/07/2020 [Métis Veterans](#)
- 19/05/2020 [Dieppe Hero](#)
- 07/05/2020 [VE Day](#)

Screen capture of Global News Coverage in Lethbridge, AB on March 17, 2021 coordinated by LPF Alberta Branch member Glenn Miller.



Unmarked veteran graves in southern Alberta to receive military markers

The Last Post Fund, a non-profit dedicated to helping veterans, is in the process of installing several new military headstones in Lethbridge and surrounding area for graves that were previously unmarked. Eloise Therien has more on the importance of the initiative.

Print Advertising

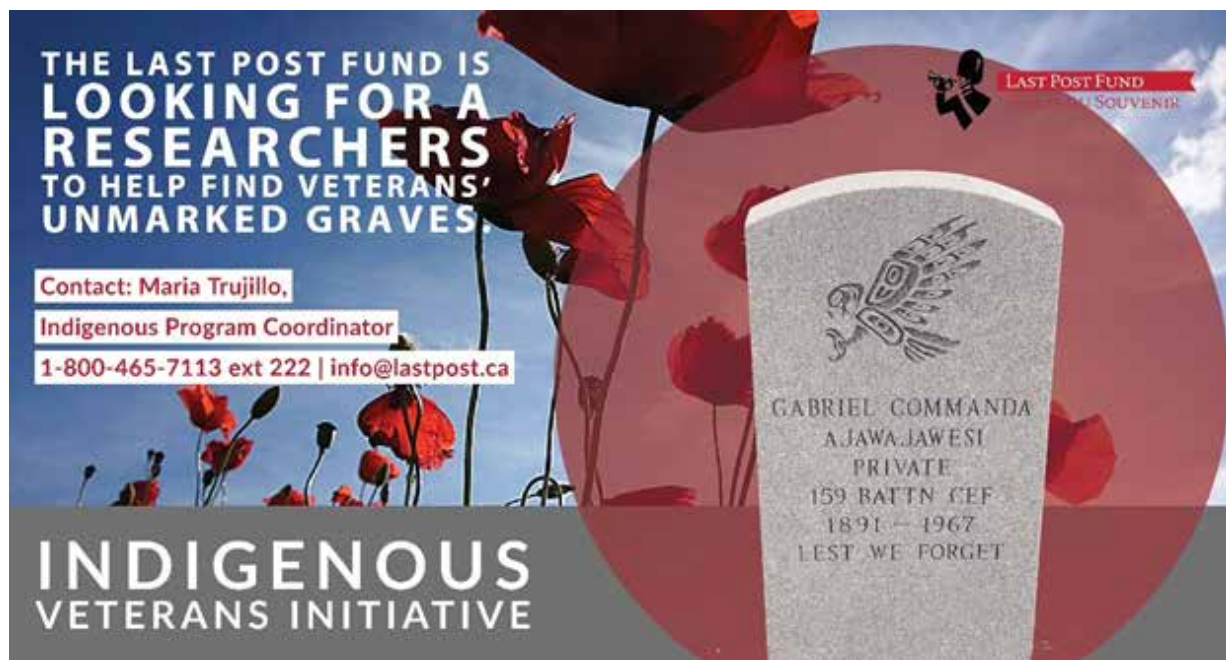
Below is a list of print advertising spots for 2020-2021:

Magazines (full, ½-page and ¼-page ads): Canadian Funeral News, Esprit de Corps, Journal de Montréal, (special insert on funeral services), First Nations Drum, Say Magazine and Legion Magazine (English and French).

Canadian Funeral News, First Nations Drum, Say Magazine and the Journal de Montréal additionally offered space for an editorial article on the LPF. Canadian Funeral News being an industry magazine, the articles submitted were on unclaimed urns and a general article on the Funeral and Burial program. First Nations Drum and Say Magazine being geared towards Indigenous communities, those editorial articles focused on the IVI, and the Journal de Montréal article was a brief description of LPF services, geared towards the general public.

Community Newsletters: Saskatchewan Genealogical Society, ¼-page ad accompanied by an article on Fields of Honour and the Lost Veterans Initiative, featuring an interview with Col (Retired) Randy Brooks.

Royal Canadian Legion Military Service Recognition Book: A half-page ad appeared in the RCL Military Service Recognition Book for each of the 9 provincial branches.



This IVI print ad appeared in Say Magazine's November 2020 issue alongside an editorial article on the IVI.

These print ads (submitted in March 2021) appeared in the May 2021 issue of the Legion Magazine in both English and French.

The theme being explored this past quarter especially has focused on Fields of Honour with UMG or temporary markers.



We Will Remember Them.

The Field of Honour in Kindersley, SK is currently replacing its temporary wooden crosses with permanent headstones, thanks to the Last Post Fund. Does your Field of Honour have temporary crosses or unmarked graves? Contact the Last Post Fund to find out more about the Lost Veterans Initiative.

Last Post Fund | Fonds du Souvenir 1-800-465-7113 / info@lastpost.ca



Nous nous souviendrons d'eux.

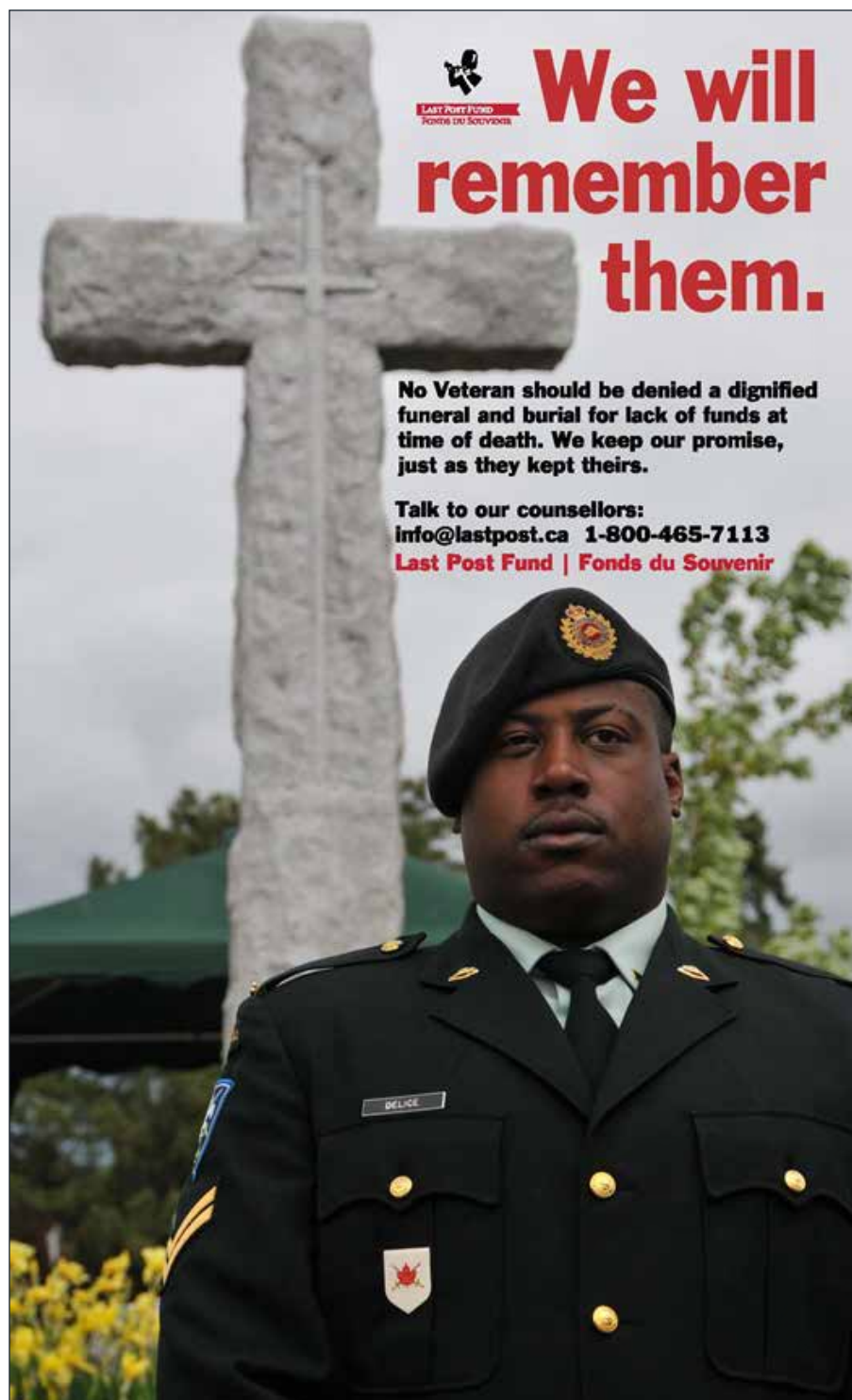
Le champ d'honneur à Kindersley, SK remplace ses croix temporaires en bois par des pierres tombales permanentes, grâce au Fonds du Souvenir. Communiquez avec le Fonds du Souvenir pour savoir comment l'Initiative pour Vétérans oubliés peut venir en aide.

Last Post Fund | Fonds du Souvenir 1-800-465-7113 / info@lastpost.ca



Regiment Posters

Posters were mailed out in English and French to Regiments across Canada in an effort to increase visibility among currently serving members of the CAF.



Challenge Coins

In July 2020, a couple of our volunteers brought forward the idea of producing a Challenge Coin. Challenge Coins, while without value as currency, are a popular item amongst military regiments, who appreciate and collect them as souvenir objects, as keepsakes, or for trading purposes between regiments.

A project was opened with the National Office and after several design iterations, a prototype was approved by the Governing Council. The challenge coin design is based on the familiar bugler icon ("heads") and the traditional crest of the organization ("tails").

An initial printing of 500 coins received before Christmas 2020 was quickly distributed among provincial branches, and shared as a token of thanks and appreciation with volunteer members and researchers. A reorder for an additional 250 coins was issued mid-March, 2021. The coin will remain a part of our repertoire of special items to use in this manner.



"We were so happy and proud that this service is available as the funeral costs were a hardship and the help really went a long way in helping my mother with the costs. Your assistance is appreciated more than words can say."

E-Newsletter

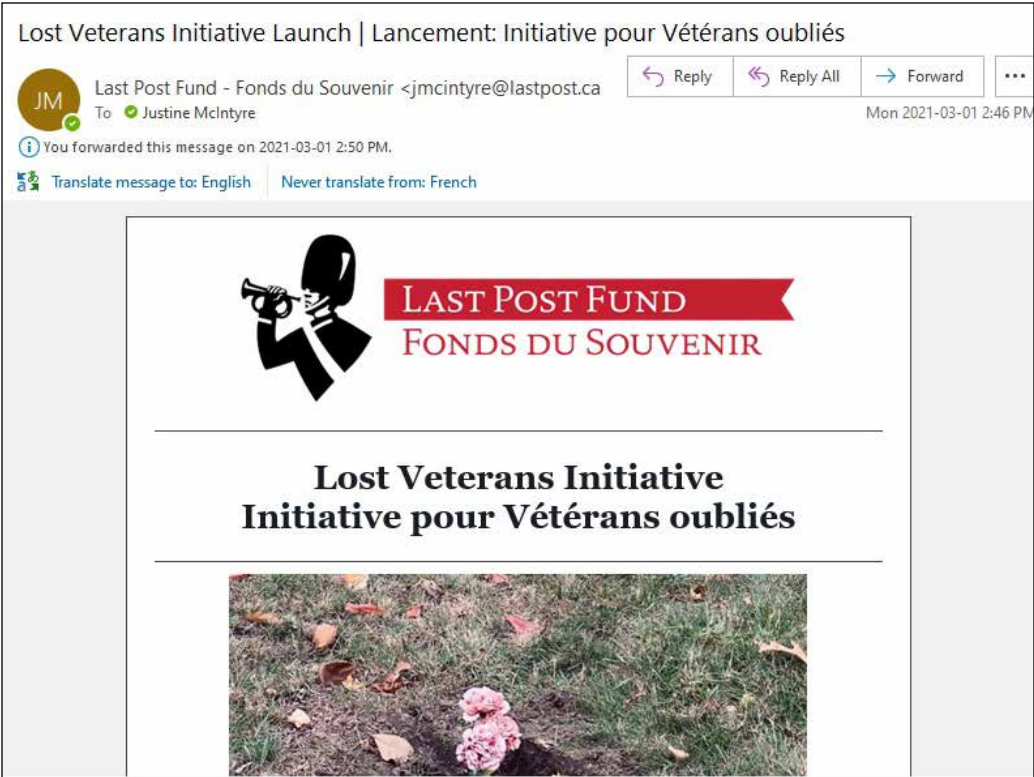
Since 2018 The Bugler has been replaced by the electronic newsletter format. The e-newsletter is an effective communication tool, allowing LPF to communicate frequently with members on a variety of topics in a concise format. The newsletter is sent out electronically via Constant Contact, an emailing service, to the inboxes of Last Post Fund members as well as to our mailing list of supporters. Besides the frequently updated members list, other mailing lists are divided into various categories: General Interest, Legion Branches, Military Journals, etc.

The newsletter is a useful communication tool for providing updates on our activities and sharing news from our Branches. Newsletters are sent out as occasions arise, to commemorate important historical military events, or as relevant news items are brought to our attention, at an average frequency of 1.4 publications per week.

As a February 2021, a new category of newsletter was created, entitled "Field Notes", whose purpose is to highlight the field work of volunteer researchers contributing to the Lost Veterans Initiative. Field Notes are published at a rate of approximately one per month.

Example of how an e-newsletter sent via Constant Contact displays in email inbox.

This newsletter was sent out February 1, 2021 to announce the launch of the Lost Veterans Initiative. Newsletters can be prepared in advance and programmed to be sent at a specific date / time.

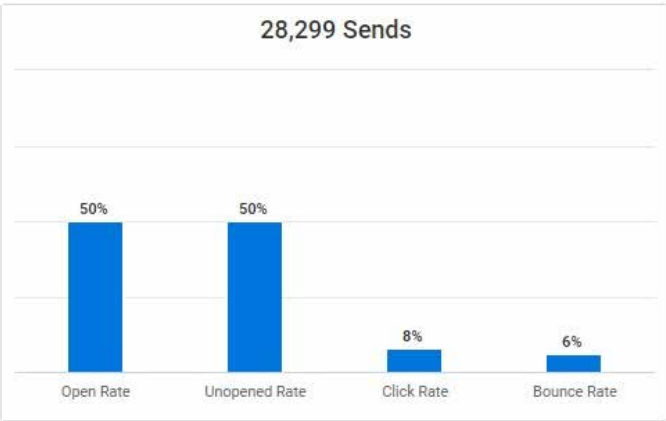


Our current open rate for the e-newsletter is 50%. While this is higher than the industry average (22%), it is low for a newsletter to which recipients have subscribed. This may point to overly active spam filters causing our emails to be redirected to “promotions” or “spam” folders, where they remain ignored by subscribers.

The low click rate (8%) is due to the fact that not all of our correspondence includes links. It is nevertheless more than double last year’s click rate (3%).

Diagram 6: Constant Contact Open, Click and Bounce Rates

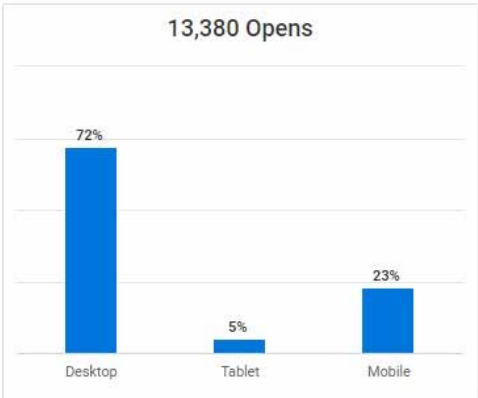
This table shows the rates in percentage of e-newsletters opened, unopened, clicks and bounces for a total of 28,299 emails sent.



The number of opens on desktop computers (72%) vs. mobile devices (5% on tablets, 23% on mobile phones) shows an overwhelming use of desktop computers to read emails, with a slight increase in mobile usage (vs 21% last year) and slight decrease in tablet (vs 8% last year).

Diagram 7: Constant Contact Device Used

This table shows which devices, by percentage are being used to access emails sent via Constant Contact, out of a total of 13,380 opened.



WEBSITE & SOCIAL MEDIA

Online Presence

The Last Post Fund website and social media accounts are an integral part of the communication strategy. Together, they make up our online presence, amplified by online news stories, and publications about the LPF.

Last Post Fund social media goals are:

- 1. To raise awareness of our programs to both general and targeted audiences*
- 2. To increase applicant traffic to the LPF website*
- 3. To facilitate donations to LPF*

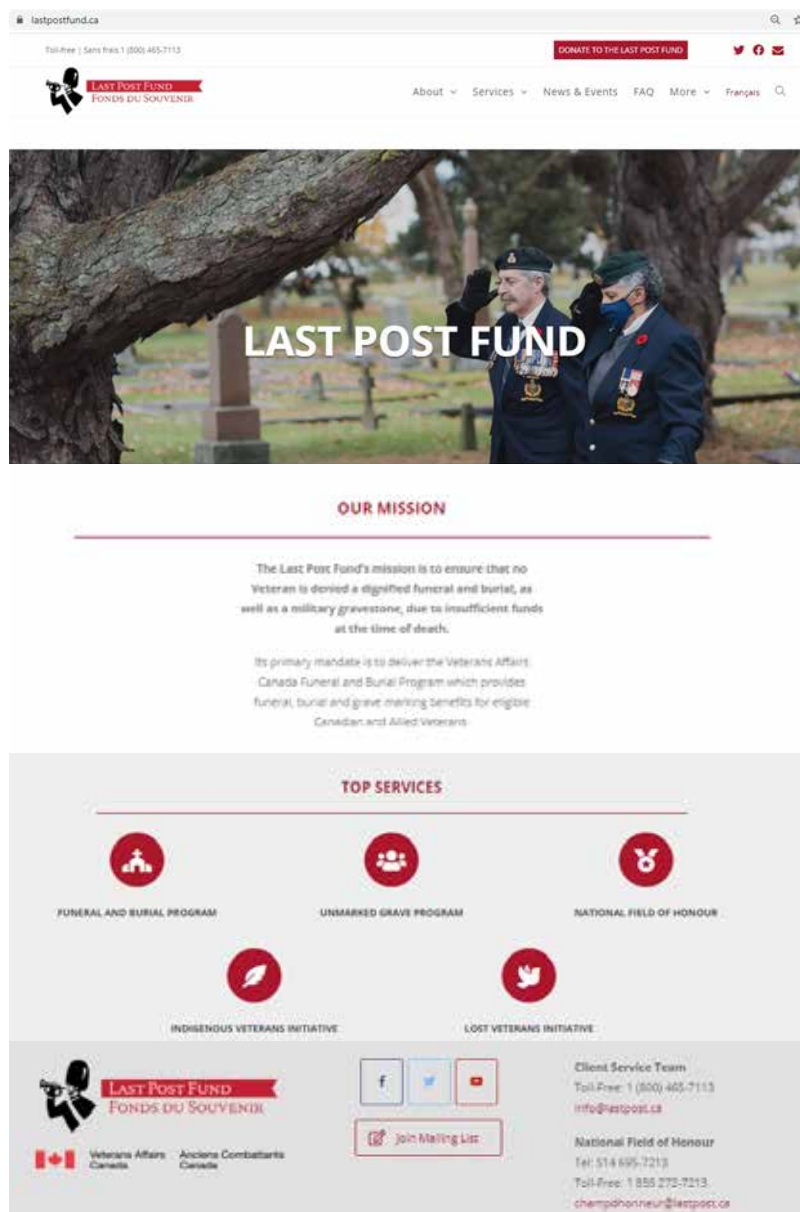
LPF Website Migration and Re-Launch

The Last Post Fund website is an essential communications tool, providing program information, essential application forms and updates on news & events. The website and all related content and forms are bilingual; users can toggle between French and English.

In 2020, a project to migrate the Last Post Fund website to a Word Press site was launched. The migration was piloted by Justine McIntyre, Communications Officer, and carried out by Ingrid, the Internet Technology (IT) provider for the National Office. The new website was launched on February 11, 2021.

The main objectives of the release were to migrate to a technology platform that is more modern, that displays well across all hardware platforms (desktop, tablet, cellphone) and that easily allows us to edit the content as needed. Additionally, information on the site was updated and reorganized in order to be more user-friendly, less text heavy, and with a focus on driving web traffic to contact our counsellors. We are confident that these objectives have been attained.

You can visit the Last Post Fund website by clicking the link: <https://www.lastpostfund.ca> or by clicking on the homepage image, right.



As our members, staff and volunteers continue to provide comments, and in keeping with activities and current events, our Website is constantly updated on an ongoing basis.

Facebook

Facebook remains an effective method for reaching a large audience. As of March 31, 2021, the Last Post Fund Facebook page @lastpostfund had 2,081 follows, an increase of 22.4 % over 2019-2020.

Our cover photo was updated with a photo taken by Brynn Featherstone at a headstone unveiling ceremony presided by Col (Retired) Ed Fitch at Ross Bay Cemetery, Victoria, BC on Remembrance Day 2020. This same photo was used consistently across our social media platforms.

Last Post Fund uses Facebook to keep our followers engaged, publishing stories about our activities, and sharing stories directly related to our audience i.e. those involving Canadian Veterans, with particular attention to maintaining the dignified tone and appropriate content of our publications. While this approach is not aimed at generating the highest click rates, that is not our goal; rather it is to maintain an active online presence as part of our larger goal of making Veterans aware of our services. Care is taken to create bilingual posts; where articles are shared, a brief summary in both official languages is included in the description.

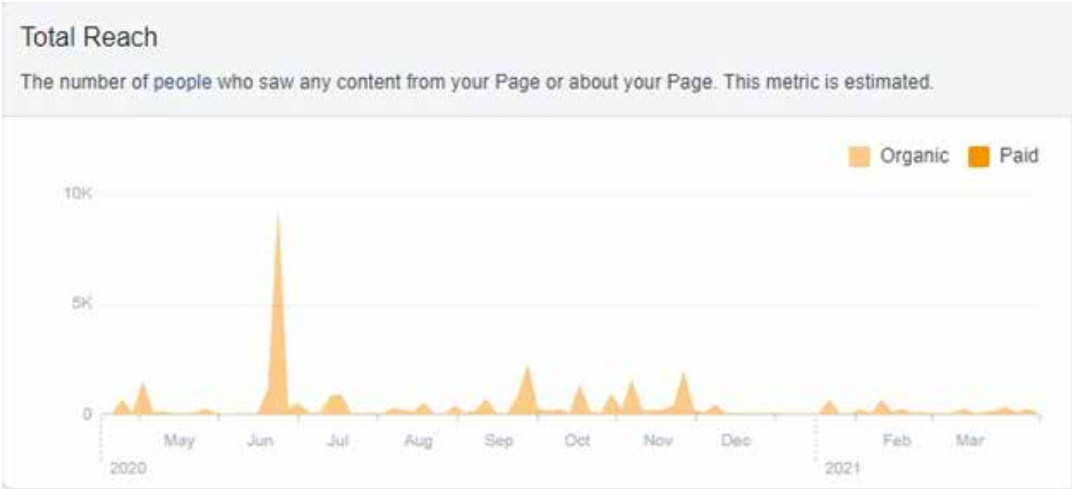
Reach

Last Post Fund does not use any funds to promote posts on Facebook, relying on “organic” reach.

Diagram 8: Facebook audience reach

This table shows the total reach of the various posts to the LPF Facebook page from April 1 2020- March 31 2021.

The large spike in June is attributable to our live streaming of the June Commemoration event at the National Field of Honour, which generated over 22,900 views and reached approx. 79,000 Facebook users.



Over the course of the 2020-21 period, various social media posts generated more interest than others. Due to the tremendous response to the Facebook Live video of the June 7th Commemorative Ceremony, that event far exceeded the reach of all other posts in the past fiscal year. This post alone was viewed 79,000 times, generating 22,900 views of the video, 1,500 reactions, 140 shares and 126 comments.

Other popular posts were a post encouraging Veterans of the Gulf War to participate in a VAC historic initiative on the 30th anniversary of that conflict (reach of 12,900 generating 378 reactions, comments and shares), and a post (pictured below) celebrating the first installation of a Métis headstone, for Veteran George Loyie, buried at Lloydminster Cemetery in Saskatchewan (reach of 8,917 generating 396 reactions, comments and shares).





Twitter, YouTube, LinkedIn

Twitter is used to share timely news items as Twitter posts are more time-sensitive and ephemeral than posts on other social media platforms. The objective is to generate impressions and post shares so that we remain visible to our followers on this platform, amplifying our presence elsewhere. As of March 31st, the @LastPostFund Twitter account had 1,293 followers.

The LPF YouTube channel has 21 subscribers, up from 17 in 2019-2020. The channel features 11 professionally produced videos. We continue to use these high-quality videos to promote our activities as well as to explain our mission through social media as well as on the Last Post Fund website.

Since 2017, Last Post Fund has a corporate profile on LinkedIn, a professional networking website. Professional accomplishments are published to this page; for example, articles mentioning the Last Post Fund and news relating to our members or activities.

Throughout this report, we feature quotes from our client survey. The comfort that we bring to families of Veterans across Canada to whom the LPF extends a helping hand, and the knowledge that we have honourably commemorated our Veterans is our motivation to continue our work, and our true reward.

“We cannot thank LPF enough for their help and support since the death of my father who served in the Canadian Queens Own Rifles of Canada. My husband was extremely proud of this regiment and his time in Canada. We applied for support with my husband’s funeral costs since we were both retired without assets and LPF were an absolute god send. We are sending our thanks directly also but THANK YOU again LPF. You were amazing and a lifeline for our family.”

COVID 19, NEW CHALLENGES & **A LOOK TO THE FUTURE**

Closing Remarks from Edouard Pahud, Executive Director

As mentioned in last year's report, the challenges related to the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic were primarily technological, related to enabling our staff to work from home. Not only were we successful in doing this, but we did so without missing a beat in our high-level customer service. Our monthly applicant survey results were as positive during the pandemic as they were before it.

The Toronto office is closing at the end of May 2021, and we will be able to reduce the size of the National Office substantially. These changes will significantly reduce our administrative expenses in future years.

The decline in Funeral and Burial applications has made it increasingly clear that the LPF will be led by the Unmarked Grave Program in the upcoming years. Marketing efforts have been vastly improved via our public branding of the Program as the Lost Veterans Initiative (LVI), and we expect interest in this initiative to continue to grow. Presentations will be made to Genealogical and Historical Societies at provincial and local levels. We will continue our efforts to recruit Volunteer Researchers from these organizations, expanding our feet on the ground in cemeteries from coast to coast to coast.

"At this time, when losing my husband after 30 years, this program has made me feel so much better about honoring his nearly 3 decades of service properly. Thank you!"

2020-2021 ANNUAL ACTIVITY REPORT

Prepared By:

Edouard Pahud, CPA, CA, Executive Director

Justine McIntyre, Communications Advisor

Frantzy Charles, Finance Manager

Natalie Escaler, Administrative Assistant



LAST POST FUND
FONDS DU SOUVENIR

Annual Activity Report 2020-2021

Prepared by Last Post Fund | Fonds du Souvenir National Office

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www.lastpostfund.ca

Back cover photo: Ross Bay Cemetery, Victoria, BC. Courtesy Brynn Featherstone



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