

LAST POST FUND
FONDS DU SOUVENIR
ANNUAL ACTIVITY REPORT

APRIL 1 2023 - MARCH 31 2024



LAST POST FUND
FONDS DU SOUVENIR





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LAST POST FUND | FONDS DU SOUVENIR

MESSAGE FROM THE **NATIONAL PRESIDENT**

*

Randy Brooks



As National President of the Last Post Fund, I want to express my gratitude to our members, volunteers, and staff for their dedication and continued effort in serving Veterans and their families. We continue to receive moving testimonials from Veterans and their families who praise our staff and members for their compassion and support during this trying time in their lives.

The Last Post Fund has carried on its work of ensuring that all Veterans are appropriately remembered for their service and sacrifice for 115 years. Through the work our staff, members and volunteers, we continue to ensure the successful delivery of the Funeral and Burial Program, the Unmarked Grave Program and the Indigenous Veterans Initiative.

This year we finalized the Member Engagement and Diversity Plan and continued to work with members and volunteers from each branch in the functional Sub-committees to advance the Unmarked Grave Program, Commemoration, and Communication and Fundraising plans.

In this Annual Activity Report we will inform you on the other great work being done across the country every day to serve our Veterans, and some of the milestones reached.

I would like to pass on my gratitude, and the gratitude of the members of the Governing Council and the Executive Committee, to our staff, as they continue to assist Canadians during a very difficult time in their lives: the passing of a loved one. I feel privileged to be able to contribute to this great cause.

Lest we forget,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Randy Brooks". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

LAST POST FUND | FONDS DU SOUVENIR

MESSAGE DU PRÉSIDENT NATIONAL

★

Randy Brooks



A titre de président national du Fonds du Souvenir, je tiens à exprimer ma gratitude envers nos membres, bénévoles et employés pour leur dévouement et leurs efforts soutenus au service des Vétérans et de leurs familles. Nous continuons de recevoir des témoignages touchants de la part de Vétérans et de leurs familles, lesquels louangent notre équipe et nos membres pour leur compassion et leur soutien durant cette période difficile de leur vie.

Depuis 115 ans, le Fonds du Souvenir poursuit son travail visant à assurer que tous les Vétérans soient commémorés pour leur service et sacrifices. Grâce au travail de nos employés, nos membres et nos bénévoles, nous continuons à assurer avec succès le déploiement du Programme de funérailles et d'inhumation, du Programme de sépultures non-marquées et de l'Initiative pour Vétérans autochtones.

Cette année, nous avons finalisé le Plan de diversité et d'engagement des membres et nous avons poursuivi notre travail avec les membres et bénévoles de chaque branche au sein des sous-comités afin de faire progresser les plans pour le Programme de sépultures non-marquées, la communication et la levée de fonds.

Dans ce rapport annuel nous vous informerons sur le travail accompli à travers le pays afin de desservir nos Vétérans, ainsi que sur certains des jalons atteints.

J'aimerais faire part de ma gratitude ainsi que de celle des membres du conseil d'administration et du comité exécutif à toute l'équipe qui continue de soutenir les Canadiens lors d'une période difficile de leur vie : le départ d'un être aimé. Je me sens privilégié d'être en mesure de contribuer à cette grande cause.

Je me souviens,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "Randy Brooks".

LAST POST FUND | FONDS DU SOUVENIR

MESSAGE FROM THE **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

*

Edouard Pahud



Dear Members,

Since its inception, the Last Post Fund has stood for our nation's Veterans. At the heart of our mission lies the administration of the Veterans Affairs Canada Funeral and Burial program, a cornerstone initiative launched by the Last Post Fund in 1909. This program embodies our unwavering dedication to ensuring that every Veteran receives the dignity and respect deserved in their final journey.

As we reflect on our rich history and enduring legacy, we are reminded of the profound impact our organization has had on the lives of countless Veterans and their families. From providing financial assistance for funeral and burial expenses to offering compassionate support and guidance during times of loss, the Last Post Fund continues to be a pillar of strength and solace for those who have served our country with honour and valour.

Over the past year, the Last Post Fund has embarked on several noteworthy initiatives to further our mission of commemorating the service and sacrifice of Veterans. Among our most significant achievements was the successful launch of the BMO sponsored film highlighting our Indigenous Veterans Initiative.

Through a series of virtual presentations, we shared the stories and experiences featured in the Indigenous Veterans Initiative film with audiences across the country. In a special occasion, the Indigenous Veterans Initiative film was officially launched at the prestigious National Arts Centre in Ottawa, Ontario. The launch event brought together Veterans, community leaders, government officials, and members of the public to commemorate our Indigenous Veterans and the work of local researchers and communities.

In addition to our organizational initiatives, the Last Post Fund is proud to celebrate the achievements and contributions of our members. Over the past year, several members were recognized for their exceptional dedication and service to our Veterans and their families.

Their achievements have garnered attention in the media, with several newspaper articles and interviews highlighting their remarkable work and dedication. These features not only highlight the individual accomplishments of our members but also raise awareness of the vital role that the Last Post Fund plays in supporting Veterans and their families.

Our BC branch was awarded the BC Reconciliation Award in recognition of its leadership, integrity, respect and commitment to furthering the Calls to Action outlined in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's report.

Once again this year, I extend my heartfelt congratulations to our dedicated employees for their unwavering commitment to the Last Post Fund and their exemplary service to our Veterans. The consistent positive feedback from our monthly applicant surveys reaffirms the important level of satisfaction with our customer service. To each and every one of you, excellent work—your dedication does not go unnoticed. Well, done!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A. F. M.', is centered on the page.

LAST POST FUND | FONDS DU SOUVENIR

MESSAGE DU **DIRECTEUR GÉNÉRAL**

*

Edouard Pahud



Chers membres,

Depuis sa création, le Fonds du Souvenir soutient les Vétérans de notre nation. L'administration du Programme de funérailles et d'inhumation d'Anciens Combattants Canada, une initiative lancée par le Fonds du Souvenir en 1909, est la pierre angulaire de notre mission. Ce programme représente notre dévouement inébranlable afin d'assurer que chaque Vétéran reçoive la dignité et le respect mérités lors de ses derniers moments.

Notre riche histoire et notre héritage durable nous rappellent l'impact profond que notre organisation a eu sur la vie d'innombrables Vétérans et leurs familles. Qu'il s'agisse de fournir un soutien financier pour les funérailles et l'inhumation ou d'offrir un soutien et des conseils empreints de compassion durant une période de deuil, le Fonds du Souvenir continue d'être un pilier de force et de réconfort pour ceux ayant servi notre pays avec honneur et vaillance.

Lors de la dernière année, le Fonds du Souvenir a entrepris plusieurs initiatives notables afin d'avancer notre mission visant à commémorer le service et les sacrifices des Vétérans. L'un de nos accomplissements les plus significatifs est le lancement très réussi du film commandité par la BMO mettant en vedette notre Initiative pour Vétérans autochtones.

A travers une série de présentations virtuelles, nous avons partagé avec des gens de partout au pays les récits et expériences mises de l'avant dans le film Initiative pour Vétérans autochtones. Une occasion spéciale a été le lancement officiel du film au prestigieux Centre national des arts à Ottawa, Ontario. Cet événement a réuni des Vétérans, des leaders communautaires, des officiels gouvernementaux et des membres du public afin de commémorer nos Vétérans autochtones et le travail des chercheurs locaux et des collectivités.

Outre nos initiatives organisationnelles, le Fonds du Souvenir est fier de célébrer les accomplissements et contributions de ses membres. Au cours de la dernière année plusieurs membres ont été reconnus pour leur dévouement et service exceptionnel envers nos Vétérans et leurs familles.

Leurs accomplissements ont attiré l'attention des médias et plusieurs articles et entrevues ont mis en valeur leur travail remarquable et leur dévouement. Non seulement ces reportages mettent la lumière sur les accomplissements de nos membres, ils nous permettent également de faire connaître le rôle vital que le Fonds du Souvenir joue en soutien aux Vétérans et à leurs familles.

Notre branche de la C.-B. a reçu le BC Reconciliation Award en reconnaissance de son leadership, son intégrité, son respect et son engagement envers les appels à l'action du rapport de la Commission de vérité et réconciliation du Canada.

Une fois de plus cette année j'offre mes sincères félicitations à nos employés dévoués pour leur engagement inébranlable envers le Fonds du Souvenir et pour leur service exemplaire auprès de nos Vétérans. La rétroaction positive que nous recevons à travers notre sondage mensuel auprès des postulants réaffirme l'important niveau de satisfaction envers notre service à la clientèle. Excellent travail à chacun d'entre vous. Votre dévouement ne passe pas inaperçu. Bravo!

En mon nom et au nom de toute l'équipe du Fonds du Souvenir, c'est avec honneur et plaisir que nous poursuivons notre tradition historique visant à servir et honorer nos Vétérans. Nous sommes privilégiés d'avoir l'opportunité de soutenir et reconnaître les contributions de nos Vétérans, et nous demeurons engagés à maintenir cette noble tradition.





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 April 19, 1909. There-after, 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 2023-2024 ANNUAL ACTIVITY
REPORT PROVIDES A RECORD OF
LAST POST FUND ACTIVITIES FOR
FISCAL YEAR
1 APRIL, 2023 TO 31 MARCH, 2024**

MISSION AND ACTIVITIES

Created 115 years ago, the Last Post Fund has since arranged funerals and, where necessary, burials and grave markers for more than 159,000 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 also offers other services including the Unmarked Grave Program, through which military markers are provided for eligible Veterans who have been deceased for over five years and lie in unmarked graves. Since the beginning of this Program in 1996, the graves of 8,744 Veterans have been properly marked across the country.

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

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, 559 such memorials have been provided through the action of the Last Post Fund.



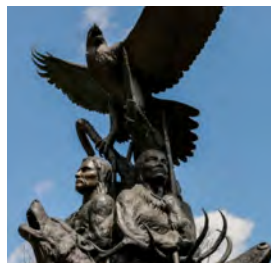
The organization supports other initiatives aimed at commemorating Canadian Veterans, including the Last Post Fund's own military cemetery, the National Field of Honour in Pointe-Claire, Quebec, where more than 22,690 burials have been performed since it was opened in 1930. The Last Post Fund also supports other local Fields of Honour and is present in over 2,900 cemeteries across the country.

We recognize the importance of honouring those who served. Every year, 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, Quebec.

PROGRAMS AND INITIATIVES



Funeral & Burial Program



Indigenous Veterans Initiative



Unmarked Grave Program



Lost Veterans Initiative

MISSION AND ACTIVITIES

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 Pointe-Claire, Quebec.

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

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 2023-2024	
Governing Council Directors	Name
Executive Committee	
National President	Col (Retired) Randy Brooks
Past National President	Derek Sullivan
Vice President East	Maj (Retired) James Lynch
Vice President West	Maj (Retired) Ken Usher
Treasurer	CDR (Retired) Paul Blumemstock
Secretary	April Adams
Branch Presidents (East to West)	
Newfoundland and Labrador	RCMP Supt. (Retired) Leo O'Brien
Nova Scotia	Mr. Bob Carter
New Brunswick and PEI	Capt (Ret'd) Kelly Newstead
Quebec	A/SLt Nicolas Marcotte
National Field of Honour	Lcol (Retired) Michel Bourque
Ontario	Lcol (Retired) Michael Voith
Manitoba	Lcol (Retired) Matt Halpin
Saskatchewan	LCol (Retired) Colin King
Alberta	WO (Retired) Glenn Miller
British Columbia	Maj (Retired) Gino Simeoni
VAC Liaison	
DG Commemoration	Mr. Paul Thomson
Honorary Roles	
Honorary Solicitor	LCol (Ret'd) Raymond Mikkola
Honorary President	General (Retired) Walt Natynczyk

LPF STAFF 2023-2024

Executive Director	Édouard Pahud
Finance Manager	Enza Testa
Administrative Assistant	Natalie Escaler
Communications Agent	Julie Brouard
Accounts Payable	Christian Dupuis
Indigenous Project Coordinator	Maria Trujillo
Senior Counsellor	Tara Muia
Counsellor	Amy Khamlong
Counsellor	Chan Khamlong
Counsellor	Kelly Martin
Counsellor	Heather Pettipas

"I was very pleasantly surprised to receive the most welcomed funds."

**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.*

The below chart shows all programs activity in a breakdown by province.

PROCESSED CASES BY PROVINCE 2023-2024

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	Total
AB	51	144	195
BC	82	253	335
MB	22	15	37
NB/PEI	81	9	90
NL	32	2	34
IN	7	3	10
NS	76	5	81
ON	163	96	259
QC	81	11	92
SK	18	9	27
Total	613	547	1 160

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 April 1, 2023 to March 31, 2024, the Last Post Fund processed 824 applications for funeral and burial grants, of which 613 were approved for grants.

Diagram 2: Cases
Processed, Cases Approved,
Cases Not Approved

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

Year	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
Total cases	1,902	1,453	1,208	953	850	824

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

CASES APPROVED | FIVE-YEAR TREND

Year	2018 -19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
Standard (Type 1)	49	46	59	62	55	61
Assisted (Type 2)	908	699	585	538	568	552
Total approved	957	745	644	600	623	613
Matter-of-right cases (included in Standard Types 1 & 2)	162	107	119	121	96	67

CASES NOT APPROVED | FIVE-YEAR TREND

Year	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
Not approved	945	708	564	353	327	211

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.

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.

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).

Matter-of-Right services concern disability compensation for 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 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 2023-2024, 528 markers were paid for and installed under the Unmarked Grave Program.



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 559 grave markers for deceased Canadian Forces members.

In 2023-2024, 2 Canadian Forces markers were installed. The Department of National Defence reimburses the Last Post Fund for this expenditure.



INDIGENOUS VETERANS **INITIATIVE**

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.

To date, over 400 unmarked graves of Indigenous Veterans have been found and over 200 grave markers have been ordered or already placed thanks to the support of 23 Indigenous community researchers established across Canada.

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.

The Last Post Fund 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.



*“My experience was exceptional.
Dealing with the Last Post was the
easiest and most seamless process
throughout this whole situation - the
death of my husband.
I am forever grateful.”*



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

During the year 2023-2024, a total of 133 burials were conducted, compared to 137 the prior year. The types of burials were as follows:

Casket burials – 15
Urn burials – 97
Columbarium – 21

Since the year of its consecration in 1930, a total of 22,690 burials have taken place at the Last Post Fund National Field of Honour.

In addition to the National Field of Honour in Pointe-Claire, Quebec, the 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 March 31, 2024, 58 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.

NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR, MEMORIAL GARDENS CEMETERY, ST. JOHN'S (GALWAY), NL

The Newfoundland and Labrador Branch recently opened a new Field of Honour. It is located at Memorial Gardens in Southlands near Galway. A beautiful cenotaph highlights the entrance to the cemetery grounds. This cenotaph was donated by Commissionaires Newfoundland and Labrador who are a major financial supporter of our Branch.

Summary financial highlights for the years ending March 31, 2023 and 2024

Diagram 3: Summary
Financial Data

The Last Post Fund received charitable donations from private organizations and the general public in all provinces.

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.

	2024	2023
	(unaudited)	(audited)
Total Assets	\$4,082,669	\$4,077,197
Donations	\$113,223	\$164,774
Funeral and Burial Program	\$4,580,932	\$4,177,769
Unmarked Graves Program	\$773,247	\$998,006
Administration	\$1,318,542	\$1,130,953
Total Program Expenses	\$6,672,721	\$6,306,728
Administration Percentage	19.8%	17.9%

"Thank you so much for being there for my husband and myself. I am truly grateful."

STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN

Governing Council

The Last Post Fund Strategic Action Plan 2021-2024 was approved and adopted by the Governing Council at the 2021 Annual General Meeting. The Action Plan, which was prolonged to 2025, outlines the Last Post Fund's strategic direction until the end of the period. This Strategic Action Plan focuses attention on continuing initiatives to increase internal capacity around inclusion and diversity, strengthening our services to current and prospective clients, and assisting us to continue to build a healthy, dynamic and innovative organization with strong volunteer engagement strategies. Based on the foregoing, the Last Post Fund will focus its effort on the following 6 objectives:

Objective 1- Promote Inclusion and Diversity in the overall membership of the Last Post Fund

Objective 2- Enhanced Volunteer Engagement

Objective 3- Enhances Communications-Raising Awareness of the Last Post Fund

Objective 4- Governance/Renewal

Objective 5- Advocating on behalf of deceased Veterans and their families

Objective 6- Fundraising

While all objectives are pursued there has been a particular focus on inclusion and diversity. Every person has a unique background and therefore brings a different perspective to a discussion. Having a sound strategy in place for inclusion, one that makes sure underrepresented groups have a voice, is critical to the future success of the Last Post Fund. Given the changing demographics in Canada, the Last Post Fund will make every effort to attract members of different gender, racial, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds. In carrying out our mission, The Last Post Fund will act in a manner that respects the dignity and rights of all persons without prejudice as to race, religious beliefs, colour, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, physical characteristics, disability, marital status, family status, age, ancestry, place of origin, place of residence, socioeconomic background or linguistic background.

At the Last Post Fund, we value diversity and inclusion of ideas and people. We respect the value that diverse life experiences, perspectives, and viewpoints bring to our organization. We are committed to building a diverse Board and strongly encourage applications from historically marginalized, underrepresented, or disadvantaged individuals.

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.

Veterans Affairs Canada Case Projections

Clients	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27
War Service	309	232	152	123	100	79	62	47
Canadian Armed Forces	436	412	448	449	471	494	511	526
Total Clients	745	644	600	572	571	573	573	573

“I'd just like to thank my counsellor and the Last Post Fund for their compassion and kindness during our unfortunate need for their help. My counsellor was extremely helpful and we couldn't have asked for a better experience.”

ANNUAL COMMEMORATION

Annual Commemorative Ceremony

The Last Post Fund held its annual commemoration ceremonies in June. Three commemorative ceremonies were held on June 10 & 11, honouring the Canadian Veterans who sacrificed their lives over the years to preserve ours. In the morning of June 10, a ceremony was held at the Sailors' Memorial Tower (the Clock Tower) in the Old Port of Montreal. On June 11, the Last Post Fund Québec Branch held its annual commemoration ceremony in honour of Canadian and Allied Veterans who lie buried at the National Field of Honour in Pointe-Claire, Québec.



**OTHER
EVENTS**

Commemorative tribute at the Royal Oak burial park in B.C.

In August 2023, a commemorative tribute for the Veterans section of the Royal Oak burial park in Saanich B.C. was installed. The marble cross stands on a long sandstone base with “Pro Patria Et Defensoribus” - the Last Post motto - engraved into the front center of the stone. On either side of the cross, there are engraved surface mounted black granite interpretative plaques. The design of the cross, with the eight arms, is a direct reference to the flag of British Columbia. Around the long base, there is a bed of crushed white marble that provides a bright ground cover, complimenting the cross.



Installation of new Cross of Honour in Ontario

In November 2023, Georgie Elms and fellow veterans Adam Saunders, Alex Zimmerman, Brian Patterson, Ontario LPF President Mike Voith and Carmine Infante were at the Meadowvale Cemetery to turn the sod for a Cross of Honour in the Ontario Field of Honour.



COMMUNICATIONS **ACTIVITIES**

Publications

Several feature articles as well as news interviews on the Last Post Fund were published in 2023-2024. Some articles were published as “sponsored content”, where publications granted space for an informational article upon purchase of advertising space.

Advertising

National print and digital ad placements were published in Canadian Funeral News, Legion Magazine, Canadian Military Families and Military Bases.

E-Newsletter

Our e-newsletter remains popular with an above average open rate of 50%. While this is higher than the industry average (22%), it is low for a newsletter to which recipients have subscribed. Furthermore only 5% of opened actually click on the links that may be contained in the email.

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.

The Last Post Fund online goals are:

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

Website

In the last fiscal year there were 27,335 visits to the website, of which 65% accessed through organic search and 34% accessed directly. The total page views is 49,180 and the average visitor spends 1.48 minute on the site. Other than the home page, the most visited page is the Funeral and Burial Program page (52%), followed by the Unmarked Grave Program (10%)

Facebook

Facebook remains an effective method for reaching a large audience. As of March 31, 2024, the Last Post Fund Facebook page @lastpostfund had 2,158 followers, an increase of 143 over 2022-2023. With a 61,000 coverage, we had 4,700 interactions (7%) with the page, compared with 33,300 coverage and 2,900 interactions the previous year.

LinkedIn

The Last Post Fund LinkedIn profile is used to share professional accomplishments and news relating to our members or activities. As of March 31st, 2024, the Last Post Fund LinkedIn account had 129 subscribers an increase of 31 over 2022-

WEBSITE & **SOCIAL MEDIA**

Online Presence

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. As of March 31st, 2024 the @LastPostFund Twitter account had 1,288 followers.

The LPF YouTube channel has 10 subscribers, down from 14 since 2022-2023. The channel features 19 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.

The Last Post Fund LinkedIn profile is used to share professional accomplishments and news relating to our members or activities. As of March 31st, 2024, the Last Post Fund LinkedIn account had 130 subscribers an increase of 32 over 2022-2023.

A LOOK TO THE FUTURE

Closing Remarks from Edouard Pahud, Executive Director

As we press onward into the upcoming year, the Last Post Fund remains resolute in its dedication to honouring our nation's Veterans. Building upon our longstanding legacy, we are committed to expanding the reach and impact of our initiatives. Our focus will be on strengthening the Indigenous Veterans Initiative, fostering deeper connections with Indigenous communities, and amplifying the voices of those who have served.

In the months ahead, we will continue to intensify our efforts to create greater awareness of the Last Post Fund and its vital programs. Through strategic outreach campaigns and community engagement initiatives, we aim to broaden our reach and ensure that Veterans and their families are aware of the support available to them. By leveraging various communication channels and partnerships, we will work tirelessly to connect with those who can benefit from our services, ensuring that no Veteran is left unsupported in their time of need. Additionally, we will continue to explore innovative approaches to outreach, harnessing the power of digital platforms and grassroots advocacy to amplify our message and expand our impact.

With gratitude for the tireless efforts of our employees, we look forward to upholding our noble tradition of honouring and serving our Veterans. Together, we will ensure that every Veteran receives the dignity and respect they deserve in their final journey.

*“We were touched by the compassion and level of support.
Thank you so much.”*

UN REGARD VERS L'AVENIR

Remarques de clôture d'Édouard Pahud, directeur général

Alors que nous entamons la prochaine année, le Fonds du Souvenir demeure déterminé envers son engagement d'honorer les Vétérans de notre nation. En bâtissant sur notre héritage, nous sommes engagés à étendre la portée et l'impact de nos initiatives. Nous mettrons l'emphasis sur le renforcement de l'Initiative pour Vétérans autochtones, la promotion de profondes relations avec les communautés autochtones, et à faire résonner les voix de ceux ayant servi.

Dans les mois à venir, nous continuerons d'augmenter nos efforts afin d'accroître la notoriété du Fonds du Souvenir et de ses importants programmes. Par le biais de campagnes de sensibilisation et d'initiatives d'engagement communautaire, nous visons à étendre notre portée et à nous assurer que les Vétérans et leurs familles soient informés du soutien auquel ils ont accès. En profitant de divers canaux de communications et de partenariats, nous travaillerons sans relâche afin de joindre tous ceux pouvant bénéficier de nos services afin de nous assurer qu'aucun Vétérant ne manque de soutien. De plus, nous continuerons à explorer d'autres approches novatrices pour accroître notre portée et à utiliser le pouvoir des plateformes numériques et le soutien populaire afin d'amplifier notre message et notre impact.

C'est avec gratitude envers les efforts soutenus de nos employés que nous poursuivons notre honorable tradition d'honorer et desservir nos Vétérans. Tous ensemble nous nous assurerons que chaque Vétérant aie droit à la dignité et au respect auxquels ils a droit.

“La compassion et le niveau de soutien nous a touchés. Grand merci.”

2023-2024 ANNUAL ACTIVITY REPORT

Prepared By:

Edouard Pahud, CPA, Executive Director

Julie Brouard, Communications Agent

Natalie Escaler, Administrative Assistant

***Invitation to submit:** We like to use photos submitted by our members for this AAR, please send in your best photos to Julie throughout the year with a small description of each.

***Invitation à soumettre :** Nous aimons utiliser les photos soumises par nos membres pour ce rapport annuel, veuillez envoyer vos meilleures photos à Julie tout au long de l'année avec une petite description de chacune.



LAST POST FUND
FONDS DU SOUVENIR

Annual Activity Report
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