

LAST POST FUND'S NATIONAL FIELD OF HONOUR

- The Last Post Fund is an important stakeholder for Veterans Affairs Canada as the organization delivers the Department's Funeral and Burial Program and supports Canada's Veterans and their families.
- I would like to assure you that the Department is working with the Last Post Fund Executive on the way forward for the National Field of Honour.
- In March 2020, the Last Post Fund asked the Government of Canada to take over the cemetery. In December 2020, Veterans Affairs Canada began its due diligence on this request and engaged Public Services and Procurement Canada to undertake a review of the site.
- Their review encompassed site operations and management, health and safety, accessibility, heritage, and environment.
- The Department received the report from Public Services and Procurement Canada in January 2024 and continues to conduct its due diligence.

WHEN PRESSED:

Q1 – What is the Government of Canada doing to care for Veteran graves?

Veterans Affairs Canada maintains approximately 250,000 eligible Veteran grave markers in over 7,800 cemeteries across the country.

In Budget 2018, the Government of Canada announced an investment of \$24.4M over five years for Veteran grave marker maintenance. Over 110,000 repairs were made to Veteran graves in cemeteries across the country.

A portion of the project funding was also used to repair infrastructure at cemeteries with large numbers of Veteran graves, including the Last Post Fund National Field of Honour where VAC invested approximately \$1.57M from 2018-19 to 2022-23.

The additional funding and work completed since 2018 have positioned us well to continue the important task of honouring Canada's Veterans and preserving their legacy. We will carry on visiting the gravesites of Canadian Veterans, inspecting their grave markers, and ensuring they receive the care they deserve.

BACKGROUND — LAST POST FUND’S NATIONAL FIELD OF HONOUR

Last Post Fund and Veterans Affairs Canada

The Last Post Fund (LPF) was established in 1909 to ensure all military Veterans receive a dignified funeral and burial. The non-profit organization delivers Veterans Affairs Canada’s (VAC) Funeral and Burial Program. In 1930, the organization created its own cemetery dedicated to Veteran burials, called the LPF National Field of Honour, in Pointe Claire, Quebec.

VAC is not presently involved in operating or funding the LPF National Field of Honour; however, the Department invested approximately \$1.57M in grave marker maintenance at the cemetery from 2018-19 to 2022-23. This was part of the five-year, \$24.4M commitment announced in Budget 2018 for Veteran grave marker maintenance.

Additionally, VAC has provided funding through the Commemorative Partnership Program to support ceremonies at the cemetery and repairs to the Gate of Remembrance. The Department also supports community war memorial projects for LPF branches across the country.

Last Post Fund request for VAC to acquire the cemetery

In March 2020, the LPF wrote to the Minister of Veterans Affairs requesting that VAC “take steps to add the National Field of Honour to the other military cemeteries in Canada which it already owns and operates.”

As part of its due diligence on this request, VAC sought assistance from Public Services and Procurement Canada (PSPC) to conduct a review of the site to determine the investment required to bring it into compliance with regulations for Crown properties. The site assessment took place from 2021 to 2023 and included site operations and management, health and safety, accessibility, heritage, and the environment.

The final report was received by VAC in January 2024. The Department has prepared options for consideration.

In May 2024, a member of Parliament, opened a petition for signature to call upon the Government of Canada to consider making “a full public commitment in 2024 to assume oversight, management and funding of the Last Post Fund National Field of Honour.” The Government’s response was tabled on 18 November 2024 indicating that Veterans Affairs Canada will continue working with the Last Post Fund to ensure the National Field of Honour remains an appropriate and respectful final resting place for Veterans for many years to come.