



LAST POST FUND
FONDS DU SOUVENIR

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STOLEN SOLDIERS' GRAVE MARKERS SOLD FOR SCRAP METAL



Photo: Scott Buschlen

St. Catharines, Ontario — More than 150 metal maple leaf markers, which stand proudly alongside Canadian flags on the graves of local soldiers at Victoria Lawn Cemetery, have been stolen.

And police say the metal markers were sold for scrap.

"These people don't realize what we did for the world," Veteran Harry Dobell, 91, of St. Catharines, said. "I feel very mad about it."

Mr. Dobell, who fought in the Second World War in an anti-aircraft regiment, said the metal markers commemorate the valiant efforts of the men and women who made the ultimate sacrifice in the fight for freedom.

He said they are a reminder to never forget.

Mike Gander of the Royal Canadian Legion Branch 138 in Merriton, Ont., was outraged to hear about the thefts.

"These Veterans gave them the privilege to be here to steal," he said of the culprits.

Excerpts from a story by the QMI Agency, 2012-02-23. Click [here](#) for full story.

DONATION FUNDS USED TO BURY MODERN-DAY VETERANS

Three recent cases



It is hard to believe that in this day and age, there are Canadian Forces' Veterans who, at the time of death, do not have the financial means to receive a dignified funeral. Since they do not meet the eligibility criteria of the Canadian Government Funeral and Burial Program, the Last Post Fund has had to use

donation funds to cater to their family's needs. Since the beginning of 2012, three Veterans have benefited from the Last Post Fund's donated funds.

In Nova Scotia, a 62-year-old modern-day Veteran who passed away in January left his widow with no money to pay for his funeral and burial services. The widow had a huge credit card debt and very little monthly income to support herself and her daughter born with Down syndrome. The distraught woman was quickly heading for welfare assistance, an avenue she wished to avoid. To relieve her anxiety, the Nova Scotia Office with help from the National Office of the Last Post Fund helped clear her outstanding debt to the funeral home. She was immensely grateful for the financial support she received.

Two other cases can be found in Alberta. Early in February, an impoverished modern-day Veteran died without being eligible for benefits under the Funeral and Burial Program. His father called upon the Last Post Fund for help in getting a military marker and to have his son's remains sent to a funeral home in Charlottetown. The Last Post Fund approved the instalment of a marker and provided a financial support for the funeral and burial of the Veteran in need. A second case, also in February, saw a modern-day Veteran end up at the Calgary morgue. The divorced man was homeless and living on the street. Therefore, the Last Post Fund in Alberta entered into a contract with a Calgary funeral home that has cremated the remains of the Veteran before sending them to his brother in New Brunswick.

For more than 14 years the Last Post Fund has been advocating to the Canadian Government that modern-day Veterans be included, on the same basis as traditional Veterans, in the Canadian Government's Funeral and Burial Program. This advocacy has been supported by all Veterans groups in Canada but with no results. It should be noted that the Last Post Fund has been looking after the funeral and burial expenses of Veterans who are financially challenged at the time of death since 1909.

IMPORTANT REORGANIZATION at the Last Post Fund

Veterans Affairs Canada (VAC) has instructed the Last Post Fund (LPF) to reduce its administrative budget by one million dollars. Consequently, members of the LPF Governing Council met in February to address the issue and discuss necessary actions to meet these reduction requirements.

Difficult decisions had to be taken. The LPF, having substantially reduced its expenditures in previous years, had limited available options to achieve the latest cutbacks. Two options were identified: to downsize the Last Post Fund staff, starting in September 2012, and to close a number of offices.

As a result of this reorganization process, 13 employees will have their employment terminated and four offices will be closed: New Brunswick-Prince Edward Island, Newfoundland-Labrador, Manitoba-Saskatchewan and Alberta. The LPF personnel will then be composed of 17 employees.

In order to ensure an effective delivery of the VAC Funeral and Burial Program, the LPF will implement a National Service Centre which will be operated by counsellors located in remaining offices across Canada. This will allow the organization to maintain a regional presence in four (4) locations:

- ◆ Surrey – British Columbia;
- ◆ Toronto – Ontario;
- ◆ Montreal – Quebec;
- ◆ Halifax – Nova Scotia.

The LPF National Service Centre will be supported by a global phone system which will enable a first-time caller to speak to the first available counsellor across the country. The latter will then be responsible for processing the application to the end.

These measures, effective during fiscal year 2012-2013, were adopted to ensure that the delivery of the Funeral and Burial Program for our Veterans remains at its present level of quality.

COVERED EXPENSES under the Funeral and Burial Program

The following information should answer the numerous requests received by the Last Post Fund as to what expenses may be covered under the Veterans Affairs Canada (VAC) Funeral and Burial Program.

Covered expenses in full or in part, up to a maximum of \$3,600

- ◆ A casket that meets VAC standards;
- ◆ Should the remains be cremated, the urn and rental of a casket for viewing or, if rental is not available, a casket that meets VAC's standards;
- ◆ Normal preparation of the remains for viewing;
- ◆ The use of a viewing room and a chapel;
- ◆ The use of a hearse and up to two vehicles for mourners and pallbearers;
- ◆ The presence of funeral home officials at the place of burial or cremation;
- ◆ Local transportation of the remains from where death occurred to the nearest funeral home and from there to the nearest place of burial, up to a maximum of 16 km for each stage;
- ◆ In the case of cremation, local transportation of the remains from the place where death occurred to the nearest funeral home, from there to the nearest place of cremation and from there to the nearest place of burial, up to a maximum of 16 km for each stage.

Over and above the maximum of \$3,600, the Last Post Fund will also reimburse the cost of cremating the remains.

At the cemetery

- ◆ The lowest cost burial (determined by the Veteran's place of residence at time of death);
- ◆ The lowest cost of an inurnment in a Columbarium;
- ◆ Opening and closing of the grave or niche;
- ◆ An amount of \$200 covering the cost of a decomposable grave liner;
- ◆ An amount of \$570 covering the cost of a non-decomposable grave liner;
- ◆ Perpetual care of the plot or niche; and
- ◆ A military-style grave marker.

Items not covered

- ◆ Obituary press notices;
- ◆ Obituary bookmarkers & thank-you notes;
- ◆ Signature book;
- ◆ Flowers;
- ◆ Choir or musicians at funeral;
- ◆ Second limousine, and;
- ◆ Luncheon or reception.

For more information: www.lastpostfund.ca or 1 800 465-7113.