



Report of activities for 2022 of the Last Post Association vzw

The Last Post Association is an independent, non-profit organisation based in Ieper. The Association organised the very first Last Post Ceremony on Monday 2 July 1928 and more than nine decades later is still responsible for the daily performance of this unique tribute under the Menin Gate Memorial to the Missing. All the Association's buglers, ceremonial assistants and directors are volunteers.

This document is the Association's annual report for the calendar year 2022 (01/01/2022 - 31/12/2022), its 94th year of activity.

1. The ceremonies

During 2022, the daily Last Post Ceremony took place every evening under the Menin Gate at 8 p.m.

Even in early 2022, COVID-19 still had a small impact on the daily ceremony. Starting at 100 attendees, it was mandatory to scan attendees' COVID Safe Ticket, and Last Post Association volunteers were still required to wear a mouth mask. All measures expired on March 6, 2022.

The entire Last Post Association team merits a special word of thanks for their efforts during 2022. The Last Post Association was pleased that for most of the year, the ceremony could return to normal as before corona.

A special word of thanks is also due to the Mayor and Aldermen of the City of Ypres and its various public services (tourism, technical department, culture, etc.) for their cooperation in 2022. This applies equally to the local police force and the Commonwealth War Graves Commission.

The following is an overview of the main ceremonies under the Menin Gate in 2022:

- 26/03/2022: Gent-Wevelgem
- 02/04/2022: 50 years Youth Fire Brigade Ieper
- 11/04/2022: Lawrence MacAulay, Minister for Veterans' Affairs and Associated Minister for Defence, Canada
- 25/04/2022: ANZAC Day
- 08/05/2022: commemoration of the end of the Second World War
- 28/05/2022: delegation Parliament New Zealand
- 01/06/2022: Dr. Brendan Nelson
- 02/07/2022: 94th anniversary of the very first Last Post on Monday 2 July 1928
- 09/07/2022: Chelsea Pensioners
- 14/07/2022: lying-in-state of an unknown Australian soldier
- 24/07/2022: a didgeridoo for the LPA, donated by David Lucas, Mayor of Swan (Australia)
- 30/07/2022: 105th anniversary of the 3rd Battle of Ieper
- 17/08/2022: WRC Rally
- 25/08/2022: Mrs. L. Bierque, Consul for Belgium in New Zealand
- 04/09/2022: commemoration of the liberation of Ieper during the Second World War



- 07/09/2022: Lieutenant-General Rick Burr, former Chief of Army Australia
- 09/09/2022: tribute to HM Queen Elisabeth II
- 10/09/2022: Lord Astor of Haver
- 04/10/2022: Minister Petra De Sutter
- 14/10/2022: Matt Anderson, director Australian War Memorial
- 18/10/2022: Commissioners CWGC
- 11/11/2022: Armistice
- 25/11/2022: farewell to Wing Commander Gareth Russell (New Zealand)
- 06/12/2022: delegation Parliament Australia
- 07/12/2022: 100 years DOVO
- 09/12/2022: Premier League Christmas Truce Tournament

2. Some other noteworthy events during 2022

- Brian Claeys, ceremonial assistant for 20 years - 24/01/2022

On Monday 24 January 2022 Brian Claeys received a gift as he reached the landmark of 20 years as a ceremonial assistant of the Last Post Association.

- The conflict in Ukraine - 28/02/2022

In response to the outbreak of the conflict in Ukraine, the Last Post Association published a message on its website and social media channels.

- New year's reception at Talbot House - 10/03/2022





On Thursday, March 10, 2022, the Last Post Association hosted its New Year's Meeting for its volunteers at Talbot House in Poperinge. Thanks to Simon Louagie for the warm welcome. Together with board member Jacques Ryckebosch, he led the group around Talbot House and we were told many interesting facts. After a quiet moment of reflection in the chapel, snacks and drinks followed and the first edition of the LPA quiz was organised. The start of an annual tradition.

- Decease Colonel Graham Parker, OBE - 11/03/2022

In March 2022, Colonel Graham Parker, a loyal supporter of the Last Post Association for more than 40 years, passed away. He was one of the founders of the annual Poppy Parade, and the idea of having poppies - poppy leaves - swirl down from the Menin Gate also came from him. These are now two regular and indispensable elements of the November 11 ceremonies in Ypres.

- Lawrence MacAulay, Minister for Veterans' Affairs and Associated Minister for Defence, Canada - 11/04/2022

On Monday, April 11, 2022, Lawrence MacAulay, Minister for Veterans' Affairs and Associate Minister for Defence of Canada participated in the daily ceremony and this in the presence of Alain Gendron, Ambassador of Canada to Belgium.

- ANZAC Day - 25/04/2022



The special Last Post held to mark ANZAC Day once again took place at the Menin Gate on Monday 25 April 2022 at 11h15. Ambassadors Diana Reaich from New Zealand and Caroline Millar from Australia attended the ceremony, as well as British Ambassador Martin Shearman. A small catafalque party of the CCMP Ieper also participated in the ceremony.



- Commemoration of VE-Day - 08/05/2022

The end of the Second World War was commemorated on Sunday 8 May 2022, during a the daily Last Post ceremony.

- Delegation Parliament New Zealand - 28/05/2022

On Saturday, May 28, 2022, a delegation from the New Zealand Parliament attended the Last Post and was led by Trevor Mallard, Speaker of the House of Representatives. Mrs. Diana Reaich, New Zealand's Ambassador to Belgium, was also present.

- Ceremony Etaples (France) - 19/06/2022

A delegation of the board of directors and a two buglers participated in the ceremony at the British military cemetery at Etaples in northern France on Sunday, June 19, 2022.

- Meeting Prime Minister New Zealand - 30/06/2022

At the invitation of the Embassy of New Zealand, Chairman Benoit Mottrie met with Mrs. Jacinda Ardern, Prime Minister of New Zealand.

- Lying-in-state of an unknown Australian soldier - 14/07/2022



On Thursday, July 14, 2022, the coffin of a recovered Australian soldier from World War I was placed centrally under the Menin Gate during the daily Last Post. It was a particularly moving ceremony that left no one unmoved. The soldier was buried the next day with military honours at Tyne Cot Cemetery in Passchendaele.



- A didgeridoo for the Last Post Association - 24/07/2022

On Sunday, July 24, 2022, the Last Post Association received a special gift: a didgeridoo donated by David Lucas, mayor of the city of Swan in Western Australia. The intention is to use the instrument in the future on ANZAC Day, for example.

- WRC Rally Ieper - 17/08/2022

Ypres was once again host city for the WRC car rally in mid-August 2022. An important delegation of the organisation and pilots took part in the ceremony.

- Meeting with the Ambassador of Australia - 26/08/2022

A meeting with the Australian Ambassador to Belgium, Mrs. Caroline Millar, took place in Ypres on Friday afternoon, August 26, 2022.

- Commemoration of the liberation of Ieper during the Second World War - 04/09/2022



At noon on Sunday, September 4, 2022, a special Last Post took place for the liberation of the City of Ypres in September 1944 after World War II. The mayors of Ypres and Saint-Omer laid a wreath together. Gordon and Ray Erlebach laid a wreath on behalf of the Brookwood Last Post Association. The Royal Harmony De Vijverzonen from Dikkebus provided musical accompaniment to the ceremony.



- Tribute to HM Queen Elisabeth II - 09/09/2022

On Thursday, September 9, 2022, British Queen Elisabeth II died. During her long reign she was a guest under the Menin Gate in Ypres at three occasions: in 1966, in 1998 for the 80th anniversary of the end of World War I and also in 2007 on the occasion of the 90th anniversary of the 3rd Battle of Ypres. Together with the City of Ypres, a short tribute to the deceased sovereign was organised on Friday, September 9, 2022, during the daily Last Post.

- Ceremonies New Zealand - 12/10/2022

At the request of the Embassy of New Zealand, the chairman and two buglers of the Last Post Association participated in two ceremonies: at Dochy Farm British Cemetery where Captain Ernest Barry received a new headstone with his name and the ceremony for the 105th anniversary of the Battle of s'Graventafel at the New Zealand column there.

- Matt Anderson, director Australian War Memorial - 14/10/2022

On Friday, October 14, 2022, Matt Anderson, the director of the Australian War Memorial in Canberra, Australia, attended the daily Last Post.

- Commissioners Tour CWGC - 18/10/2022

On Tuesday, October 18, 2022, the Commissioners Tour of the CWGC participated in the Last Post. The delegation was led by Vice-Chairman Lieutenant General Sir Bill Rollo.

- Armistice - 11/11/2022

On Armistice Day, November 11, 2022, the special Last Post took place at 11 a.m. The ceremony again followed the normal pattern with the poppy parade. After several years of absence, the British bands were again in attendance, as were the Ypres Surrey Pipes & Drums and the Royal Harmony Ypriana.





Belgian Prime Minister Alexander De Croo was again present as was Flemish Minister Matthias Diependaele. Many Ambassadors, military attachés and representatives of the CWGC attended the special Last Post. In the marketplace everyone could follow the ceremony on the big screen and the Last Post Association provided an information stand under the Nieuwerck.

- Concert The Great War Remembered - 10 & 11/11/2022

After a 2-year hiatus, the Great War Remembered Concert was organised for the 17th time at St. Martin's Cathedral. Once again, three editions of the concert were organised and this time on Friday, November 11 at 5 p.m. and on Saturday, November 12, 2022 at 5 p.m. and at 8:30 p.m.. For the first time, an seating plan with numbered seats and e-tickets only was used. A total of 2,700 attendees attended the concert.



The soloists at the 2022 concert were Jef Neve, Patrick Riguelle, Frans Grapperhaus and Brad Ulrich. The Royal Harmony Ypriana, the Chorus and Youth Chorus and the Ypres Surrey Pipes & Drums provided the music and singing. A special thanks to conductors Nico Logghe and Tineke Devoghel, director Bart Cafmeyer and Geert Gombeir for the production, but also to all others who made the 2022 concert a very successful one. Special thanks also to Mathieu Mottrie for this top edition, but also to all the people of the Last Post Association for their cooperation in the concert. Finally, thanks to all external partners for the very smooth and pleasant cooperation.



- Concert Guards Chapel - 14/11/2022

The Last Post Association provided a recording of the ceremony in Ypres to be shown at the concert organised by Visit Flanders at the Guards Chapel in London on Monday, November 14, 2022.

3. Personnel

2022 was the Last Post Association 94th year of activity. On 31 December 2022, 26 people were actively engaged on behalf of the organisation in an official capacity, namely:

- Executive board (3): Benoit Mottrie, Guy Gruwez and Philip De Bruyn
- Board of directors - working members (8): Carl Denys, Hans De Keyser, Philippe Dochy, Patrick Donck, Cédric Jacques, Mathieu Mottrie, Charles Vermeulen and Jacques Ryckebosch
- Buglers (6): Rik Vandekerckhove, Raf Decombel, Tonny Desodt, Jan Callemein, Christophe Wils and Filip Deramoudt
- Pipers (2): Pierre Dervaux and Gil Vermeulen
- Ceremonial assistants (5): Gilbert Denturck, Youri Van Miegroet, Bart D'Hulster, Johan Moors and Manu Waelkens
- Photographer (1): Francis Vanwynsberghe
- Secretariat (1): Jan Matsaert

4. Operational working

In terms of its internal organisation, the Last Post Association and its full complement of accredited personnel worked hard throughout the year to optimise the performance of the Last Post Ceremony and all matters pertaining to it.

The secretariat work of the Last Post Association was further carried out by Ian Connerty and Jan Matsaert.

Ian Connerty celebrated his 65th birthday in September and decided to retire as secretary of the Last Post Association on September 30, 2022. A special thanks to Ian is certainly in order here for his many years of service as director (1996-2007) and secretary (2013-2022) of the Last Post Association.

In 2022, the Last Post Association made partial use of the temporary unemployment regulations introduced as a result of the corona crisis.

- Ceremonial assistants

Emmanuel Waelkens became active again as ceremonial assistant starting in late 2022, each time on Wednesdays.

Brian Claeys stepped down as ceremonial assistant in November 2022, a role he assumed for just over 20 years. Thank you so much for this long engagement.



- Rehearsals for the buglers

The monthly rehearsals for the buglers continued to be organised each month in 2022.

- The Last Post in the landscape

The Last Post Association put together a dossier as part of Westtoer and Tourism Flanders' "The landscape reveals" project. The dossier was submitted on May 20, 2022 and approved at the end of June. The total amount of the project is 96,500 EUR of which 75% is subsidised or 72,375 EUR. The project runs from April 25, 2023 to August 31, 2024.

The project includes the following components:

- The expansion of the number of stories in the Last Post App and the linking of the stories to locations in the landscape.
- The organisation of 4 evocations (2 in 2023 and 2 in 2024) in the landscape. Each evocation will tell the story of one or more soldiers, which will be told by an actor/actress. Music and/or singing will also be provided at each evocation and the buglers of the Last Post Association will also participate.

- Membership

During 2022, a major effort was made to check and update the Last Post Association's database of contacts and members, which currently contains ± 11,700 records.

The Last Post Association's number of members in recent years is as follows:

- number of lifetime members: 96 on 31/12/2022 (+ 6 in 2022)
- number of ordinary members:
 - 2015: 441
 - 2016: 540
 - 2017: 687
 - 2018: 790
 - 2019: 726
 - 2020: 702
 - 2021: 621
 - 2022: 543

This means that on 31/12/2022 there was a total of 639 lifetime and ordinary members.

The following factors probably had an influence on this number:

- the decrease in the number of members was particularly noticeable in the number of foreign members, which were still less present during the year 2022;
- as of July 2021, the Last Post Association decided to increase the annual membership fee from 40 to 60 EUR and this increase was thus applicable for the first time to those members who had to renew their membership fee in the period January to June 2022.



Website

The Last Post Association launched its renewed website in July 2021.

Some figures for 2022:

- 45,945 users of which 46,5% from Belgium, 22,9% from Great Britain, 8,2% from the Netherlands, 5,4% from the US, 2,1% from France, 1,79% from Australia and 1,60% from Canada
- 219,931 page views.

Social media

lastpostassociation Profiel bewerken Archief bekijken ⚙️

59 berichten 1.861 volgers 38 volgend

Last Post Association
Every night at 20.00, the buglers of the Association sound the Last Post for the soldiers of the British Empire & allies who died in the Great War.
lastpost.be/the-last-post-in-the-landscape

LANDSCAPES DAILY RESTORATION CONCERT 11-11-22 Nieuw

BERICHTEN REELS OPGESLAGEN GETAGD

02/07/1928 02/07/2023

**95 JAAR / 95 YEARS
LAST POST ASSOCIATION**

The Last Post Association makes every effort to be present on social media, where it provides its members, visitors and followers with relevant information about the organisation.



Some figures:

- Facebook: 30,085 followers on 27/03/2023 (+ 2 % compared to 2021)
- Twitter: 2,534 followers on 27/03/2023 (+ 4,7 % compared to 2021)
- YouTube: 807 subscribers on 27/03/2023 (+ 32,3 % compared to 2021)
- Instagram: 1,791 followers on 27/03/2023 (+ 16,9 % compared to 2021).

5. Word of thanks

The Last Post Association wishes to thank everyone who contributed towards making 2022 another successful year:

The City of Ieper, Mayor Emmily Talpe, Alderman Diego Desmadryl and all other members of the city council for their continued assistance and co-operation throughout 2022. Collaboration with the various city services, such as tourism, culture and the technical department, was also excellent, for which the Association is most grateful.

The daily Last Post Ceremony would not be possible without the much-valued assistance of the local police, who halt the traffic passing under the Menin Gate from 1930 hours to 2030 hours each evening.

The Last Post Association would also like to thank the entire team of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission for their commitment and dedication to the commemoration of the war dead and for their maintenance of the Menin Gate Memorial.

Thanks are also due to the volunteers of the Association:

- The six buglers, who during their alternate 'on-call' weeks are present at the Menin Gate each evening. The two teams of buglers consist of Rik, Tonny and Filip on the one hand and Raf, Jan and Christophe on the other hand.
- The five ceremonial assistants for their tireless efforts.
- Pipers Pierre Dervaux and Gil Vermeulen for their presence at special ceremonies.
- All members of the board of directors for their efforts in various fields.
- Ian Connerty and Jan Matsaert for their performance of the organisation's secretarial duties.

6. Monthly meetings

The board of directors held its meetings on the first Monday of each month.

7. Newsletters

In 2022, four newsletters were sent by e-mail.