



Report of activities for 2024 for 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 2024 (01/01/2024 - 31/12/2024), its 96th year of activity.

1. The ceremonies

During 2024, the daily Last Post Ceremony took place each evening at 8 p.m. under/at the Menin Gate.

The entire Last Post Association team merits a special word of thanks for their efforts during 2024. 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 2024. This applies equally to the local police force and the Commonwealth War Graves Commission.

The following is an overview of the main ceremonies in 2024:

- 06/01/2024: Farewell to Major-General Hall, Australian military representative to NATO & EU
- 12/01/2024: Farewell to Wing Commander Jesse Laroche, Defence-Attaché Australia; welcome to his successor Lt Col Carney Elias
- 25/04/2024: New Zealand Minister of Defence Judith Collins
- 03/05/2024: London Scottish Regimental Association
- 04/05/2024: Household Cavalry + Band
- 05/05/2024: US-delegation Doughboy Foundation
- 08/05/2024: VE-Day - commemoration of the end of the Second World War
- 09/05/2024: 100 km of Ieper
- 04/06/2024: Tony Abbott, former prime minister Australia
- 11/06/2024: Farewell to Diana Reaich, Ambassador of New Zealand
- 29/06/2024: Vice-Admiral Scott Bishop, Canadian military representative to NATO
- 02/07/2024: 96th anniversary of the very first Last Post on 2nd July 1928
- 08/07/2024: Honorable Lisa Dempster, Minister of Labrador Affairs and Minister Responsible for Indigenous Affairs and Reconciliation (Canada)
- 10/07/2024: Joanna Keogh, great-great-granddaughter Lord Plumer
- 23/08/2024: 51st Four Days of the Yser
- 07/09/2024: Band of the Grenadier Guards
- 08/09/2024: Commemoration liberation of the City of Ieper after the Second World War
- 08/11/2024: First Nations Canada
- 11/11/2024: Commemoration Armistice
- 12/11/2024: Commemoration Indian monument
- 06/12/2024: International Christmas Truce Tournament (also on 07/12)



2. Some other noteworthy events during 2024

- Death Gilbert Denturck - 02/01/2024

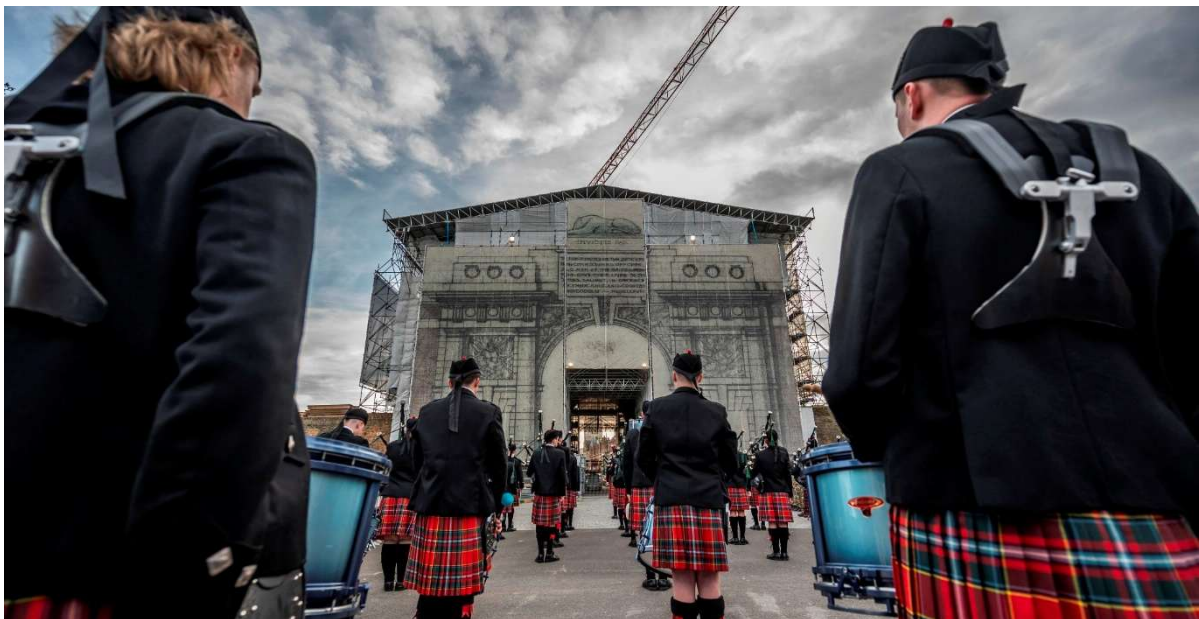
On Tuesday 2 January 2024, Gilbert Denturck died at the age of 71. He had been a ceremonial assistant of the Last Post Association since 2013. He was particularly faithful to be present every evening under the Menin Gate in order to, together with his colleagues, assist at the daily ceremony.

- New Year's Reception at Talbot House - 08/02/2024

On Thursday 8 February 2024, the Last Post Association once again organised its New Year's Reception for its staff at Talbot House in Poperinge. Thank you to Simon Louagie for the warm welcome. After snacks and drinks, the 3rd edition of the LPA quiz was organised.

- Restoration of the Menin Gate

On Monday 17 April 2023 the Commonwealth War Graves Commission started with the restoration of the Menin Gate. Until Sunday 5 May 2024, the ceremony was organised on the bridge. The exception was the evening of Thursday 22 February 2024, when the ceremony had to be moved to the intersection Bollingstraat / Menenstraat / Kauwekijnstraat due to strong winds.



On Monday 6 May 2024, the ceremony could once again take place under the Menin Gate for the first time, although some scaffolding was still in place at the corners of the Menin Gate. From Thursday 19 December 2024, the buglers could for the first time stand on their traditional spot on the white dot under the Menin Gate.

A special thanks to the entire team of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission, to the staff of Monument Vandekerckhove and to the City of Ypres for their cooperation during this period.



On Monday 2 September 2024, Group Monument organised an interesting site visit for the staff of the Last Post Association.

- ANZAC Day - 25/04/2024

The special Last Post on ANZAC Day was again organised on Thursday 25 April 2024 at 11.15am. Ambassadors Diana Reaich of New Zealand and Caroline Millar of Australia participated in the ceremony and this along with New Zealand Minister of Defence Judith Collins.



As thanks for their daily efforts, the entire team of the Last Post Association was welcome to the barbecue offered by the Embassies of Australia and New Zealand on Thursday 19 September 2024.

- Hamilton - New Zealand

The Last Post Association was privileged to receive Mayor Paula Southgate from Hamilton (New Zealand) who was a guest in Ypres on the occasion of ANZAC Day. The LPA was a guest in Hamilton in 2007 at the invitation of Peter Bos and also received the keys to the city there.

Buglers Rik Vandekerckhove and Raf Decombel received the title of honorary citizen of the city of Hamilton from mayor Paula Southgate on 25 April 2024 in Ypres. Chairman Benoit Mottrie received a civic award and he and Mayor Southgate also unveiled the Hamilton Gate in the Ypres Hamilton Park.

- 100 years monuments London Scottish and Household Cavalry - 03-04/05/2024

On 4 May 1924, Field Marshall Haig unveiled the monuments to the London Scottish at Wijtschate-Mesen and the Household Cavalry at Zandvoorde. To mark the 100th anniversary of the inauguration, the London Scottish Regimental Association and the Household Cavalry came to the region.

The London Scottish Regimental Association participated in the Last Post on Friday 3 May 2024 and accompanied the Band of the Household Cavalry on Saturday 4 May. The latter,

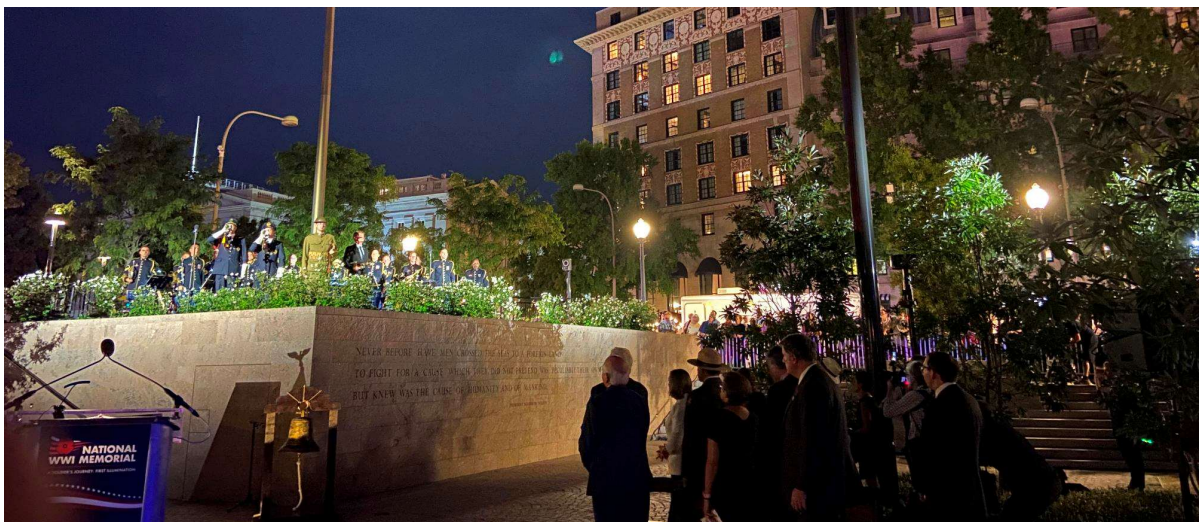


accompanied by three horses, marched from the market square to the Menin Gate and took part in the impressive ceremony on the bridge.



- Doughboy Foundation US

After the Last Post Association travelled to the United States in June 2023, the Doughboy Foundation and the World War Centennial Commission from Washington now came to Ypres. They participated in the Last Post and played “Taps” and the Reveille on 5, 6, 7 and 8 May 2024. Together with a delegation from the Ypres Last Post Association, they were received at the US Embassy in Brussels on Tuesday 7 May 2024. Together, a short tribute was also organised at the Congress Column and the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier in Brussels.



A delegation from the Last Post Association travelled to the US in September 2024 to participate in the official ceremony for the inauguration of the new US World War I memorial in Washington on 13 September 2024. The Ypres delegation included board member Carl Denys and buglers Tonny Desodt and Christophe Wils. Thanks to Flanders House in New York which helped this visit and participation in a number of other ceremonies on site possible.



The Doughboy Foundation also organises a daily “Taps” ceremony at the memorial from this date. With the Australian War Memorial in Canberra also organising a daily Last Post, there are now three places in the world hosting a daily Last Post ceremony.

- [The Last Post in the landscape, Zillebeke - 08/06/2024](#)

The third evocation as part of the “The Last Post in the Landscape” project took place on Saturday 8 June 2024 at Caterpillar Crater in Zillebeke. The evocation was attended by 300 people.

There, Henk Cnockaert told the story of Australian soldiers Oliver Holmes Woodward and his fellow soldiers Arthur Tandy and Wilfred Avery. They were responsible for detonating the Caterpillar mine on 7 June 1917.



Bert Ostyn sang and Youth Chorus and Westhoek Consort provided the musical accompaniment. And David Brightling, Deputy Head of Mission at the Australian Embassy, addressed a word of thanks.

- [96 years Last Post - 02/07/2024](#)

Tuesday 2 July 2023 marked the 96th anniversary of the very first Last Post on Monday 2 July 1928. It was the 33,281st day that the daily tribute was sounded at the Menin Gate.

- [The Last Post in the Landscape, Passchendaele - 18/08/2024](#)

The fourth and final evocation as part of the “The Last Post in the Landscape” project took place on Sunday 18 August 2024 at Tyne Cot Cemetery in Passchendaele and was attended by 750 people.

There, Liesbet Desmet and Vera Turpijn told the story of Canadian soldiers Guy Melfort Drummond and his brother-in-law Trumbull Warren. Both soldiers died in April 1915 and were married to the Braithwaite sisters, Mary and Marjory.

Ozark Henry provided the singing. The Chorus Youth Choir and the Royal Harmony Ypriana also took part in the evocation. Ms Angela Dark provided the closing remarks on behalf of the Canadian Embassy.



- Band of the Grenadier Guards - 07/09/2024

At the invitation of the Flemish Government, the Band of the Grenadier Guards once again participated in the daily Last Post on Saturday 7 September 2024.



In the speech at this occasion, the Last Post Association also paid tribute to the late Major Tonie Holt and his achievements in tourism and commemoration.

- Ambassadors United Kingdom and Australia - 29/10/2024 & 09/11/2024

On Tuesday 29 October 2024, the Last Post Association participated in a luncheon with the new Ambassador of the United Kingdom, Ms Anne Sherriff. It happened again on Saturday 9 November 2024 on the occasion of Ambassador Caroline Millar's farewell to Australia.

- Ceremonies Australia - 09/11/2024

At the request of the Embassy of Australia, buglers Jan Callemein and Tonny Desodt took part in the commemorations for Sapper Francis Hugh Armstrong in Zonnebeke and Sergeant Roy Richard Mason at Menin Road South Military Cemetery in Ypres on Saturday 9 November 2024.

- First Nations Canada - 08/11/2024

On Friday evening, 8 November 2024, the indigenous veterans of the Canadian Forces who died in our region during World War I were commemorated. The Ambassador of Canada Nicholas Brousseau was also present.

- Armistice Day - 11/11/2024

On Armistice Day, Monday 11 November 2024, the special Last Post took place at 11am and this on the bridge and a part of the Frenchlaan.

Together with the city of Ypres, the detailed plans of 2023 were used again. The weather was nice on 11 November and all the elements of the traditional Armistice Day commemoration were present: the poppy parade, the British Devon Fire & Rescue Service Band and West



Yorkshire Police Band, the Ypres Surrey Pipes & Drums, the Royal Harmony Ypriana and the Chorus choir, the usual boxes for VIPs, invited guests, members of the LPA, etc.. Only the poppy drop could not take place in 2024.



Matthias Diependaele, minister-president of Flanders, was present and read the exhortation. Many Ambassadors, military attachés and representatives of the CWGC also attended the special Last Post. On the market square, everyone could follow the ceremony on the big screen and the Last Post Association again provided an information stand under the Nieuwerck.

- Concert The Great War Remembered - 09 & 11/11/2024

The Great War Remembered Concert took place for the 19th time at St Martin's Cathedral. Once again, three editions of the concert were organised and were held on Saturday 9 November at 5pm and 8.15pm and on Monday 11 November 2023 at 5pm. Also in 2024, there was a seating plan, numbered seats and e-tickets only. All performances were sold out, representing a total of 2,700 attendees.

The soloists at the 2024 concert were Wannas Cappelle, Tom McRae, Isolde Lasoen, Lies Verholle and Pieter-Jan Beghein.





The Royal Harmony Ypriana, the Choir 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 everyone else who did their bit to make the 2024 concert a very successful one. Special thanks also to Mathieu Mottrie for this top edition, but also to all the staff of the Last Post Association for their contribution to the concert. Finally, thanks to all external partners for the very smooth and pleasant cooperation.

- 25 years Last Post in Ploegsteert - 06/12/2024

A delegation from the Last Post Association attended and laid a wreath during the monthly Last Post on Friday 6 December 2024 at the Ploegsteert Memorial. The ceremony was attended by a Representative of the King and marked the 25th anniversary of the monthly ceremony.

3. Personnel

2024 was the Last Post Association 96th year of activity. On 31 December 2024, 31 people were actively engaged on behalf of the organisation in an official capacity namely:

- Executive board (3): Benoit Mottrie, Philip De Bruyn and Mathieu Mottrie
- Board of directors (7): Guy Gruwez, Carl Denys, Hans De Keyser, Philippe Dochy, Patrick Donck, Cédric Jacques and Jacques Ryckebosch
- Member added (1): Jorn Kestelyn
- Buglers (8): Rik Vandekerckhove, Tonny Desodt, Raf Decombel, Jan Callemein, Christophe Wils, Filip Deramoudt, Bavo Ketels and Lars Vandenbussche
- Pipers (3): Pierre Dervaux, Gil Vermeulen and Els Vandooren
- Ceremonial assistants (5): Bart D'Hulster, Jens Leupe, Johan Moors, Youri Van Miegroet and Emmanuel Waelkens
- Photographers (2): Francis Vanwynsberghe and Eric Compernelle
- Didgeridoo (1): Tijs Lozie
- 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 Jan Matsaert.

Staff

- Death of Gilbert Denturck on 2 January 2024.
- On Thursday 25 July 2024, the Last Post Association welcomed Bavo Ketels as a new bugler.
- On Monday 12 August 2024, Lars Vandenbussche joined the team of buglers as the eighth member.
- Els Vandooren is active as 3rd piper.
- Jorn Kestelyn reinforced the board of directors from October 2024.
- Monthly rehearsals for the buglers were organised every month.



Membership

During 2024, a major effort was made to check and update the Last Post Association's database of contacts and members, which currently contains ± 12,230 records.

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

- number of lifetime members: 112 on 31/12/2024 (+ 10 in 2024)
- number of ordinary members:
 - 2015: 441
 - 2016: 540
 - 2017: 687
 - 2018: 790
 - 2019: 726
 - 2020: 702
 - 2021: 621
 - 2022: 543
 - 2023: 552
 - 2024: 602

This means that on 31/12/2024 there was a total of 714 lifetime and ordinary members.

Social media

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: 31,230 followers on 24/03/2025 (+ 1,4% compared to 2023)
- Twitter: 2,644 followers on 24/03/2025 (- 1% compared to 2023)
- YouTube: 1,260 subscribers on 24/03/2025 (+ 24,8% compared to 2023)
- Instagram: 2,214 followers on 24/03/2025 (+ 10% compared to 2023).

5. Word of thanks

The Last Post Association wishes to thank everyone who contributed towards making 2024 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 2024. 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. The Last Post Association merchandising items are now also available at the new visitor centre that opened its doors on 2 July 2024. Special thanks also to Geert Bekaert, Area Director Central and Southern Europe Area CWGC, who retired at the end of November 2024.

Thanks are also due to the volunteers of the Association:

- The 8 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, Filip and Lars on the one hand and Raf, Jan, Christophe and Bavo on the other hand.
- The 5 ceremonial assistants for their tireless efforts.
- Pipers Pierre Dervaux, Gil Vermeulen and Els Vandooren for their presence at special ceremonies.
- Photographers Eric Compennolle and Francis Vanwynsberghe for capturing many ceremonies.
- Tijs Lozie who plays the didgeridoo.
- All members of the board of directors for their efforts in various fields.
- Jan Malsaert for his 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 2024, six newsletters were sent by e-mail.

8. Objectives for the year 2025

- ensure the continuity of the daily ceremony
- the commemoration of the Armistice on 11/11/2025
- the concert The Great War Remembered 2025
- maintain the number of members
- preparation of the commemorative year 100 years Menin Gate (24/07/2027) - 100 years Last Post Association (02/07/2028)
- the reinforcement of the board of directors