

*"To honour and protect in death seems but a small return to those who have protected their country in life."*

Arthur Hair, Last Post Fund founder



## **Arthur Hair - (1873-1947)**

### **Military life**

The origin of Canada's Last Post Fund begins with Arthur Hair. Born in London, England, on the 14th of June 1873, Hair emigrated to Canada at age 13.

Arthur Hair military career began in 1889, when at the age of 16 he enlisted as a trumpeter in The Regiment of Canadian Artillery in Quebec City. In 1891, he transferred to the Permanent Force as a gunner in " B " Battery.

In 1898 Hair took his discharge and returned to Britain. He enlisted in the Royal Horse Artillery, trained at Woolwich and St. John Wood in London and was drafted to the " A " Battery for imperial garrison duty at Meerut, India.

In 1900, with war raging in South Africa, Gunner Hair's unit was despatched to Natal and he fought throughout the length and breadth of South African campaign. The strain and continuous duty took its toll and in 1902 Gunner Hair was medically discharged. For his service in the field, Gunner Hair received the Queen's South African Medal with seven battle clasps - an unusually high number, testament to his battery strenuous campaigning.

In 1903, Hair returned to Canada, with his spouse, Janet McIntyre, and became the head orderly at the Montréal General Hospital. He maintained a link to military life by joining No. 5 Field Ambulance, Canadian Medical Corps, non-permanent Active Militia where he served from 1906 to 1909 reaching the rank of sergeant-major and "performed his duties efficiently and his conduct was exemplary " as per his discharged papers in 1909 at the age of 37.

### **His Compassion for the Veteran**

In December 1908, an elderly man named James Daly was found in a downtown doorway and taken to the Montréal General Hospital. Suffering from exposure and malnutrition, he was clearly dying.

Arthur Hair happened to see a blue envelope sticking out of Daly's pocket. A British Veteran himself, he recognized it as the type issued to soldiers on discharge from the British Army. He opened the envelope (the only possession the impoverished Daly had) and saw that the man had served for 21 years, including the Crimean War of 1854 to 1856.

In a time before Canada had social programs like welfare and Medicare, there were many British Veterans who emigrated to Canada but ended up in dire economic circumstances, especially as they grew older. Their military pensions were small and these brave men often left behind insufficient assets to cover the cost of their own funerals.

Hair was concerned that Daly would not be given a proper burial and approached a local veterans' organization for help. There were few of these organizations at the time and none were able to pay for the cost of burying impoverished veterans on a regular basis.

Hair was shocked that Daly might not receive a dignified burial and raised money from friends and fellow hospital employees to do so. This encounter changed the course of Hair's life and would lead to the establishment of the Last Post Fund.



*Entrance of the National field of honour*

Arthur Hair would continue with the Last Post Fund until his death in 1947, by then the Last Post Fund has national prominence. His act of compassion changed the Canadian veteran landscape forever.

He was put to rest at the National Field of Honour of the Last Post Fund, in Pointe Claire Quebec. The

National Field of Honour is the only private not-for-

profit Canadian military cemetery reserved for veterans and their close ones. It is now the final resting place for more than 22,000 Veterans and their close ones. His grave is at the Director's Circle that surrounds the Cross of Remembrance.

## The Last Post Fund

**The Last Post Fund's mission is to ensure that no veteran is denied a dignified funeral and burial, as well as a military gravestone, due to insufficient funds at the time of death.**

Its primary mandate is to deliver the Veterans Affairs Canada Funeral and Burial Program which provides funeral, burial and grave marking benefits for eligible.

The [Last Post Fund](#) organization has played an important role in Canada since 1909. Operating in cooperation with Veterans Affairs Canada, the Last Post Fund ensures that all eligible war veterans can receive a dignified funeral, burial and headstone. It also supports commemorative projects across the country.

The work of the Last Post Fund is often behind-the-scenes, but deeply meaningful. The organization's history reflects a remarkable drive by dedicated men and women to ensure that veterans receive the respectful recognition at the end of their lives that they have earned with their service and sacrifice.

**The Last Post Fund has helped more than 145,000 Veterans over the years.** It has helped veterans be buried not only in Canada, but around the world in countries like the United States, Britain, Australia, Greece, Spain, Guyana and Zimbabwe.

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