



Three Quarters of Canadians (74%) Believe 100th Anniversary of Vimy Ridge in 2017 Should Be One of Canada's Most Important Celebrations During Sesquicentennial

Majority (51%) of Canadians Support Changing the Name of \$20 Bill to a "Vimy"

Toronto, ON – April 7 2015 – 2017 is a big year for Canada as it celebrates its 150th birthday, but also the 100th anniversary of the Battle of Vimy Ridge – one of the most famous battles of Canadian history, which scholars often point to as Canada's definitive "coming of age" moment. A new Ipsos Reid poll conducted on behalf of the Vimy Foundation has revealed that three quarters (74%) of Canadians 'agree' (26% strongly/48% somewhat) that 'the 100th anniversary of Vimy, falling as it does in 2017, should be one of the most important celebrations for Canada that year'. Just one quarter (26%) of Canadians 'disagrees' (6% strongly/20% somewhat) that Vimy deserves this special distinction in 2017.

Most (75%) Canadians also 'agree' (30% strongly/45% somewhat) that 'all Canadians should participate in a local activity to celebrate Canada's 150th birthday in 2017', while one quarter (25%) 'disagrees' (7% strongly/18% somewhat) that every Canadians should seek out a local activity.

It's likely that many of these public gatherings and celebrations, especially those marking the 100th anniversary of Vimy or other milestones of the First World War, could happen at a local cenotaph, where the sacrifice of Canada's soldiers is honoured and remembered. However, the data reveal that the state of Canada's cenotaphs might not befit the honour that is due to Canada's fallen heroes, as four in ten (40%) Canadians 'agree' (8% strongly/32% somewhat) that 'the war cenotaph/memorial in my community is in need of repair and/or restoration'. Those in Atlantic Canada (50%) and Alberta (50%) are most likely to believe their local cenotaph is in need of repair or restoration, followed by those living in Saskatchewan and Manitoba (46%), Quebec (40%), Ontario (38%) and British Columbia (27%). Six in ten (60%) 'disagree' (16% strongly/40% somewhat) that their local cenotaph is in need of repair.

From 2014 to 2018, Canada and those around the world mark the 100th anniversary of many important milestones from the First World War. But most Canadians are not entirely aware of these important anniversaries. Four in ten (44%) 'agree' (9% strongly/34% somewhat) that they are 'aware of upcoming centennial anniversaries of important moments of the First World War, such as poet John McCrae's In Flanders Fields, the Battle of Ypres, the Battle of Vimy Ridge, etc'. Conversely, a majority (56%) 'disagrees' (17% strongly/39% somewhat) that they are aware of these important milestones.

Majority (51%) Supports Renaming \$20 Bill a "Vimy" ...

The Battle of Vimy Ridge, and its contribution to Canadian history and nation building, is so significant that the government of Canada chose to include an image of the monument on the new \$20 bill. Many Canadians want to see the gesture go even further: a majority (51%) of Canadians 'agree' (14% strongly/37% somewhat) that since the new \$20 Canadian polymer bill features an image of the Vimy monument, they'd 'support changing the name of the \$20 bill to a "Vimy" to help commemorate the battle's centennial in 2017'. Nearly half (49%) of Canadians 'disagree' (19% strongly/30% somewhat) with this idea.

Three Quarters (75%) Say a Visit to a Canadian Battlefield, Cemetery or Historic Site Would Increase their Knowledge and Appreciation...

While many Canadians will likely participate in events here at home to mark Canada's 150th birthday and the centennial of various moments of the First World War, traveling to Europe to see the sites, graves and monuments first hand would have a certain meaning and appeal to most Canadians.

Three quarters (75%) 'agree' (26% strongly/49% somewhat) that 'a visit to Canadian battlefields, cemeteries and historic sites in Europe has or would increase my knowledge and appreciation for Canada's military history, while just one quarter (25%) 'disagree' (8% strongly/18% somewhat) that a visit of this nature would enhance their appreciation for Canada's history in this way. Adults under the age of 35 are most likely to agree (79%).

In fact, 5% of Canadians say that they or a member of their family is planning to travel to France in 2017 for the centennial observances of the Battle of Vimy Ridge and the unveiling of the new Vimy Education Centre.

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For more information

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