



New Poll Shows Most Canadians (83%) Feel Vimy Centennial should be Key Part of Canada 150 Celebration

However only One in Ten (12%) can Identify Vimy Monument from a Photo

Toronto, ON – April 7 - The year 2017 marks two key milestones for Canada: the 150th anniversary of confederation, and the 100th anniversary of the Battle of Vimy Ridge. According to a new Ipsos poll conducted for the Vimy Foundation, most (83%) agree (32% strongly/51% somewhat) that “the 100th anniversary of Vimy, falling as it does in 2017, the 150th anniversary of the birth of Canada, should be one of the most important celebrations for Canada that year”. Agreement is up 9 points since last year. In contrast, two in ten (17%) disagree (4% strongly/13% somewhat) that it should be given prominence during Canada’s sesquicentennial celebrations, down 9 points.

Identifying the Canadian National Vimy Memorial...

Presented with a photo of the Canadian National Vimy Memorial in France, just one in ten (12%) Canadians correctly identified it, on an open-ended unprompted basis, as the monument at Vimy Ridge (any response including the word “Vimy” was accepted as correct). Men (17%) are more likely than women (8%) to correctly identify the monument, as are those aged 55+ (15%) compared to those aged 35-54 (10%) or 18 to 34 (12%). Regionally, residents of BC (16%), Ontario (16%) and Atlantic Canada (16%) were equally as likely to be able to identify the monument, while those in Alberta (10%), Saskatchewan and Manitoba (8%) and Quebec (6%) were less likely.

Other mentions included the Canadian War Memorial in Ottawa (5%), a generic reference to a veterans/fallen soldiers memorial (4%), a war memorial in France (3%), other European region mentions (2%), World War I memorial (1%), or a World War II memorial (1%). Others thought that it was the Washington Monument (1%), a monument to the Twin Towers of the World Trade Centre (1%), a monument for Dieppe (less than 1%), Pearl Harbour (less than 1%), or some other place (3%). Three quarters (74%) of Canadians didn’t know and didn’t venture a guess.

Majority (52%) Supports Changing name of \$20 to a “Vimy”

Given its position in Canadian history and its prominence on the \$20-bill, a slim majority (52%) of Canadians ‘agree’ (19% strongly/33% somewhat) that they’d support changing the name of the \$20 bill to a “Vimy” to help commemorate the battle’s centennial in 2017, up 1 point since last year. Fewer than half (48%) of Canadians disagree (18% strongly/30% somewhat) with this position, down 1 point.

Two in Three (65%) Would Like to Visit Vimy

Given the significance of the Battle of Vimy Ridge, two in three (65%) Canadians agree (27% strongly/38% somewhat) that one day they would “like to visit the Canadian National Vimy Memorial in France”, while one in three (35%) disagrees (14% strongly/21% somewhat) that this is on their bucket list. Encouragingly, younger adults aged 18 to 34 (68%) are most inclined to agree.

In fact, one in twenty (5%) Canadians say that they or someone in 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.

The Centenary of the Battle of Vimy Ridge...

Among a list of five possibilities, three in ten (28%) correctly identified that 2017 marks the centenary (100th anniversary) of the Battle of Vimy Ridge. Men (35%) are more likely than women (22%) to know this, as are those aged 55+ (32%) compared to those aged 35 to 54 (25%) or 18-34 (28%). Regionally, Ontarians (35%) are the most likely to know the significance of 2017, followed by those in Alberta (33%), British Columbia (32%), Atlantic Canada (28%), Saskatchewan and Manitoba (21%) and Quebec (15%).

Two in ten (16%) believe that 2017 marks the end of the First World War, while one in ten (10%) think it's the centenary of Canada's confederation. Others say it's the 100th anniversary of the Normandy Landings (4%) or the Battle of Dieppe (3%), both of which were pivotal moments of the Second World War which occurred decades after the First World War. Four in ten (39%) Canadians simply responded that they didn't know the significance of 2017 and what centenary it represented.

The results suggest that Canadians' knowledge of key events in its history appears to be waning, despite the belief among most (87% agree – 50% strongly/37% somewhat) that it's just as relevant for students today to learn about the First World War in school as it was for their generation.

Six in Ten (61%) Agree Canada "Became a Nation" at Vimy Ridge

Historians and political leaders have argued that Canada became a nation at Vimy Ridge. The Canadian victory at Vimy Ridge, the first time all four divisions of the Canadian Corps worked together as one formation, also gave Canadians a reputation for breaking through the centre of German defence. Given the significance of this moment in Canadian history, six in ten (61%) agree (17% strongly/44% somewhat) that "Canada became a nation at Vimy Ridge", while four in ten (39%) disagree (9% strongly/30% somewhat).

Majority (66%) Says Canada Doesn't Do Enough to Honour Its Veterans

Thinking about the extent to which Canada honours its veterans, a strong majority (66%) of Canadians agree (27% strongly/40% somewhat) that "Canada does not do enough", up 3 points since 2012, while one in three (34%) disagrees (7% strongly/26% somewhat), down 3 points. Those older than 55 are most likely (77%) to believe that Canada does not do enough, followed by those who are 35 to 54 (63%) or 18-34 (57%). Regionally, those in BC (76%) agree the most, followed by those in Atlantic Canada (72%), Ontario (68%), Alberta (66%), Saskatchewan and Manitoba (66%), and Quebec (58%).

Canadians are more split on whether other countries do more than Canada to honour their veterans: 56% agree (18% strongly/38% somewhat) that other countries do more to honour their veterans than Canada does, up 1 point, while nearly half (44%) disagree (8% strongly/35% somewhat) that this is the case, down 1 point. Once again residents of BC (63%) are most likely to agree, followed by those in Saskatchewan and Manitoba (59%), Alberta (57%), Ontario (57%), Atlantic Canada (57%), and Quebec (51%).

For more information

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