



Press Release

Awareness of Vimy Ridge Rises in Centenary Year; Passchendaele Less Well Known

Three in Four Canadians (76%) Support More Budget to Maintain Soldiers' Graves in Canada

Toronto, ON, November 8, 2017 — The year 2017 marks the centenary of two significant battles of the First World War in which Canadian troops participated. A new Ipsos survey for the Vimy Foundation has found that half of Canadians (49%) know that one of them is the Battle of Vimy Ridge, though only one in four (25%) can identify Passchendaele as the other battle marking its 100th anniversary this year.

The survey also finds that awareness of the Canadian National Vimy Memorial in France has strengthened, in light of the increased attention paid to the battle on its centenary: two in ten Canadians (18%) can correctly identify the monument from a photograph, without any written prompts or clues – a six-point increase from 2016.

By contrast, knowledge about the Battle of Passchendaele is less strong. Given a list of battles in different wars, only one in three (35%) are able to identify that Passchendaele was fought in the First World War. More than half (54%) aren't sure, while the remaining one in ten (11%) incorrectly link it to the Second World War (5%), the War of 1812 (2%), the war in Afghanistan (2%), the Korean War (1%) or the Vietnam War (1%).

Knowledge about Passchendaele varies significantly by age, with Millennials (27%) being much less likely to associate it with the First World War than Gen X'ers (32%) or Baby Boomers (44%). The same holds true for awareness of the Centenary of Vimy (36% of Millennials, vs. 46% of Gen X'ers and 60% of Boomers) and recognition of the Canadian National Vimy Memorial (16% of Millennials, vs. 18% of Gen X'ers and 21% of Boomers), which demonstrates a trend of lower levels of awareness and knowledge of these historical battles among young adults.

Lower levels of knowledge among Millennials doesn't mean they do not *care* to know: in fact, they're the most likely demographic to support the building of a memorial dedicated to Vimy in Toronto. Eight in ten (83%) agree (33% strongly/50% somewhat), as do 83% of Gen X'ers, while support among Baby Boomers drops to 72%. Millennials are also just as likely as older Canadians to say that one day they'd like to visit the Canadian National Vimy Memorial in France: two in three (66%) agree (24% strongly/42% somewhat), in line with 67% of Gen X'ers and 68% of Boomers.

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Strong Support for Better Maintenance of War Memorials, Graves in Canada

As Remembrance Day draws near, the centenary of these two battles has prompted a renewed focus on how war memorials and grave sites are maintained across the country. Currently, the Government of Canada oversees the maintenance of roughly 207,000 graves of Canadian soldiers across Canada. Government auditors have found that more than 45,000 of these grave markers require maintenance. Prior to 2003, the federal government allocated \$5 million annually to the care of these grave markers. Since then, the budget has been reduced to \$1.2M, where it remains today.

Most Canadians (76%) support (31% strongly/45% somewhat) increasing the budget for the maintenance of these sites, including a majority of every demographic studied. Many also perceive a need to restore war memorials at the community level: half (48%) of Canadians agree (10% strongly/38% somewhat) that the war cenotaph or memorial in their community is in need of repair and/or restoration. This is up 8 points in two years.

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About the Study

These are some of the findings of an Ipsos poll conducted between October 18 and October 20, 2017, on behalf of the Vimy Foundation. For this survey, a sample of 1,001 Canadians aged 18+ was interviewed. Weighting was then employed to balance demographics to ensure that the sample's composition reflects that of the adult population according to Census data and to provide results intended to approximate the sample universe. The precision of Ipsos online polls is measured using a credibility interval. In this case, the poll is accurate to within ± 3.5 percentage points, 19 times out of 20, had all Canadian adults been polled. The credibility interval will be wider among subsets of the population. All sample surveys and polls may be subject to other sources of error, including, but not limited to coverage error, and measurement error.

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