Facts About Vimy

1. **Vimy was neither Canada's largest nor its most important battle in the First World War.** No single battle can be considered the most decisive, but some were bigger or bloodier, or had a greater impact on the war's outcome. While 10,602 Canadians were killed or wounded at Vimy, the Battle of the Somme saw 24,029 casualties, and Passchendaele saw 15,654. Canada's victory at the 1918 Battle of Amiens is less famous than Vimy, but it marked the beginning of the end of the war. The Germans themselves called it a "black day" for their army. That being said, the first day of Vimy was the bloodiest day in Canadian military history, with about 7,700 casualties.

2. **The Canadian Corps at Vimy Ridge was not commanded by Sir Arthur Currie.** The 1917 battle marked the first time that all four divisions of the Canadian Corps fought together, but they did so under the command of British Lieutenant-General Julian Byng. Sir Arthur Currie, one of the most highly respected leaders in Canadian military history, would succeed Byng as commander of the Canadian Corps in June 1917. But at Vimy, he commanded The 1st Canadian Division, one of the four Canadian divisions to fight there. Byng later served as Governor General of Canada, from 1921 to 1926.

3. **The Battle of Vimy Ridge was not a significant factor in Germany's defeat in the First World War.** However, the capture of Vimy Ridge was essential to the success of the larger British offensive to the south during the opening phase of the Battle of Arras. Vimy Ridge was an important German-held position and if they had continued to hold it, they would have inflicted significant casualties on the Canadian and British troops. The capture of Vimy was a tactical victory that boosted Allied morale and established Canada's reputation as a formidable fighting force.

4. **It is not true that the Canadian Corps was sent to capture Vimy Ridge because the British and French had failed.** The Canadian operation was just one part of the British-led Battle of Arras, which was itself a diversionary attack to support the French Nivelle Offensive. By attacking the escarpment to the north, the Canadians allowed the British to advance along the southern flank. The British had limited success, and the French offensive failed, but the Canadians could not have taken the ridge without British artillery and aerial support.

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5. **The Canadian National Vimy Memorial is not only a memorial to the Battle of Vimy Ridge.** The iconic monument, designed by Walter Seymour Allward, is dedicated to the memory of more than 66,000 Canadian Expeditionary Force members who died during the entire First World War, not just to those who died in the Battle of Vimy Ridge. Built between 1922 and 1936, the memorial is adorned with 20 allegorical figures representing values such as justice, peace, honour and hope. It is one of only two Canadian National Historic Sites overseas — the other is the Beaumont-Hamel Newfoundland Memorial, also in France.

6. **Contrary to popular belief, the Canadian National Vimy Memorial is not inscribed with the names of the Canadians killed in the 1917 Battle of Vimy Ridge.** The monument is the place of commemoration for the 11,285 Canadian soldiers who died in France during the entire First World War and who have no known grave. Their names are carved into the limestone base. The names include some of the 3,598 soldiers who died at the Battle of Vimy Ridge, but not all of them.

7. **The battlefield at Vimy Ridge is not a part of Canada.** France granted the use of 100 hectares of land — but not the land itself — to Canada, in perpetuity, for the creation of a battlefield park and memorial. The site encompasses part of the ground over which the Canadian Corps made their assault in the Battle of Vimy Ridge, and it includes the Canadian National Vimy Memorial, preserved trench lines, and several other memorials and cemeteries. Much of the battlefield is off limits because of the danger posed by tunnels, trenches, craters and unexploded munitions.

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