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Canada and the Battle of Vimy Ridge

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SOURCE Citation

Ho, Barry; Blair, Maxwell; Panescu, Elena Melania; and Jedrzejko, Patrick, "Canada and the Battle of Vimy Ridge" (2016). *Canadian Military History Research Posters*. 4.

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Canada and the Battle of Vimy Ridge

The Battle: In 1917, the Canadian Corps received orders to attack Vimy Ridge – a strong German defensive position in France that many thought impenetrable. Between 9 and 12 April, the Canadian Corps attacked the Ridge and succeeded in capturing the position in the face of stiff opposition.

A Heavy Cost: More than 10,500 Canadian troops were killed or wounded in the assault.

An Unexpected Outcome: Many Canadians have viewed the Battle of Vimy Ridge as the real birth of the nation. As historian Jonathan Vance explains, "it was only a small step to connect Vimy with the birth of a nation. With the provinces represented by battalions from across the country working together in a painstakingly planned and carefully executed operation, the Canadian Corps became a metaphor for the nation itself."

On 26 July 1936, the Vimy Memorial was unveiled by King Edward VIII. During the ceremony, Canada's Minister of Justice, Ernest Lapointe, reflected on Vimy's enduring legacy and the monument's meaning. *"The grandest tribute we could offer to Canadian soldiers is to affirm that their sacrifices have contributed to the introduction into our civilization of its highest modern conception - that of universal Peace founded on recognition of the basic right of people to life and justice."*

