

# The Battle of Vimy Ridge

## The beginning of the end



- Who won?
- What is it?
- Why do we care?

**We kicked ass!**



# In fact...

- We performed so well that the French Government granted “freely, and for all time, to the Government of Canada the free use of the land exempt from all taxes”.. For all time!!!!





# So what is Vimy Ridge?



- 7km long ridge next to tiny town called Vimy(pop ~4700)
- WWI turning point battle
- Defining moment in Canadian history



# Trench war



- On the surface the war was at a standstill
- “Live and let live” philosophy
- But underground...

- Reconstructed trenches...in June

# Tunnel war



- Dig tunnels under each other and then place explosives there to collapse the enemy's tunnels
- Try to intercept signals from each other in the tunnels

# The Battle



- April 9<sup>th</sup> 1917

- Germans had this ridge for a long time
- Can see all the way to Belgium from it
- New strategies by Canadians enabled us to win it!
- Paved the way for Battle of Arras



# The Techniques



- Aerial pictures:
  - Balloons were sent into the air with baskets full of men and photographic equipment
- Resulted in good sense of what's going on in battle

# The Techniques



- Sound ranging :
  - Microphones in No Mans Land allowed engineers to pinpoint enemy guns in less than 5 minutes and within 28 yards
- Pioneered by engineering prof from McGill
- British Army didn't want to listen at first...

# The Tactics



- Private funding meant Canadians had more guns than the British
- Lieutenant-Colonel Raymond Brutinel convinced his rich friends to fund the 1<sup>st</sup> Canadian Machine Gun Brigade



# The Tactics



- Practice trenches, battleground miniatures and maps:
  - Usually maps are for officers only, this time maps were given to every soldier and each one knew his objective
- Extensive training done

**A year and a half later..**

The Great War was over

# We got the land and a huge monument





**..and I mean HUUUGGEE!**





# The monument

- Names of the missing and presumed dead are engraved all the way around the monument



# The monument

- Represents a young nation mourning its dead sons





HERE ENDS THE ROLL OF 11285 CANADIANS WHO GAVE THEIR LIVES IN THE GREAT WAR BUT THE SITE OF WHOSE GRAVES IS UNKNOWN. THE WHOLE NUMBER OF THESE IS 18283. THE NAMES NOT RECORDED HERE ARE ENGRAVED ON THE MEMORIAL ARCH TO THE ARMIES OF THE BRITISH EMPIRE AT THE MENIN GATE OF YPRES

CES LISTES, QUE COMPLETENT CELLES DU MONUMENT ELEVE EN SOUVENIR DES ARMEES DE L'EMPIRE BRITANNIQUE A LA PORTE DE MENIN - YPRES CONTIENNENT LES NOMS DE 18283 SOLDATS CANADIENS TOMBES PENDANT LA GRANDE GUERRE ET DONT LE LIEU DE REPOS EST INCONNU

1935 CANADIAN BATTLEFIELDS MEMORIALS COMMISSION



# The land still shows signs of war





**To a point where the park managers can't use lawnmowers..**





..and you can't walk there





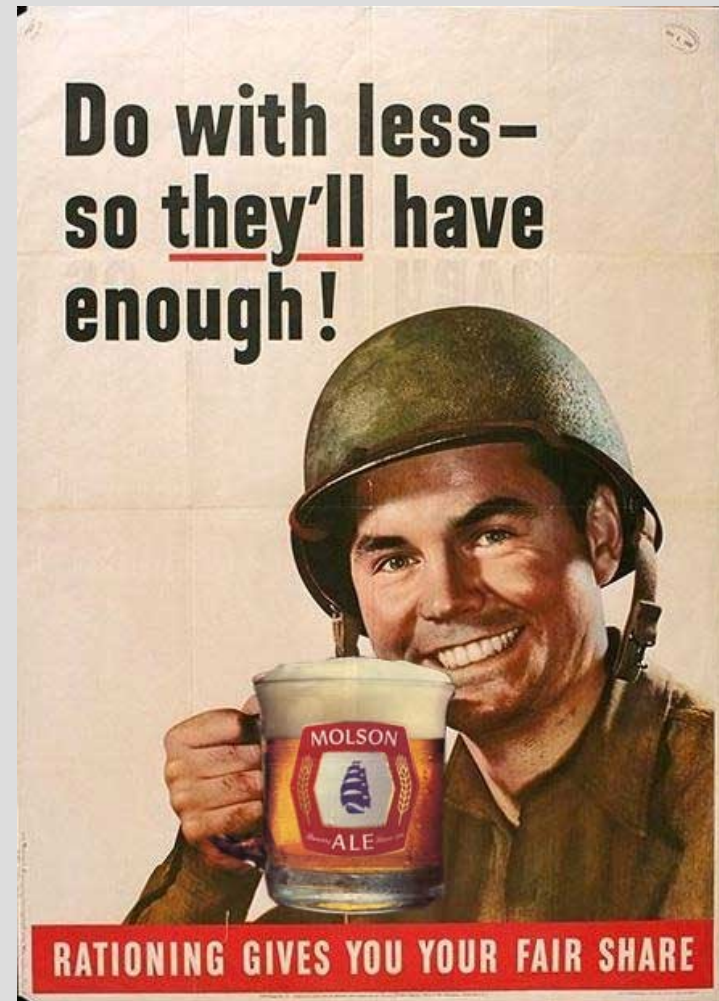
# Casualties

- 60,000 Canadians were casualties in The Great World War



# Why do we care?

- “At Vimy, the Canadian Corps had captured more ground, more prisoners and more guns than any previous British offensive in two-and-a-half years of war”



# Why do we care?

- From 1914-1918 the population of Canada was roughly 8,000,000
- Roughly 600,000 men and women had enlisted by the end
- That's almost 10%!!





# Why do we care?



- Defining moment in Canadian history
- We even got our own separate signature on the Versailles Peace Treaty!

# The End

