



# Chalk Talk

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PLEASE SHARE CHALK TALK WITH YOUR COLLEAGUES!!!

## Letter from the Editor

Dear Subscribers,

It seems that whenever people are asked what one item they would take with them if they had to flee a burning home, they inevitably say their photo albums. Knowing how important this is, insurance adjusters have taken to recommending that copies of photographs, negatives, digital files be saved separately for "safekeeping" because they can't be replaced.

These pictures of our loved ones, family vacations, and significant events in our lives, help tell our personal stories. Sharing photographs and the stories that accompany them are ways of remembering and keeping our family history alive.

As citizens of Canada, we share a common history which must not only be preserved but must be learned, understood, and honoured. The Monument honouring the Battle of Vimy Ridge in France is being restored in preparation for events commemorating its 90th anniversary. Of the thousands of Canadian soldiers who fought in 'The Great War', today, there are only three surviving veterans of WWI. When these witnesses to history pass, it will be up to us to keep alive the memory of the ultimate sacrifice they were willing to make for their country.

This week's issue offers a host of sites where educators can find both lesson plans and other free educational resources to help students to develop an appreciation for their heritage.

If you know an educator who is passionate about our country's history and has a knack for bringing it to life, why not nominate him/her for a Governor General's Award? Nomination Information is found in this issue.

CoEd Communications is dedicated to supporting the important work of teachers by providing resources on a range of topics for the classroom. We invite you to visit our website at [4edu.ca](http://4edu.ca) to view the many free teachers' resources on offer.

As always, your feedback is important to us. [Let us know your thoughts.](#)

## The Importance of Remembering

### Memory | Democracy | Identity

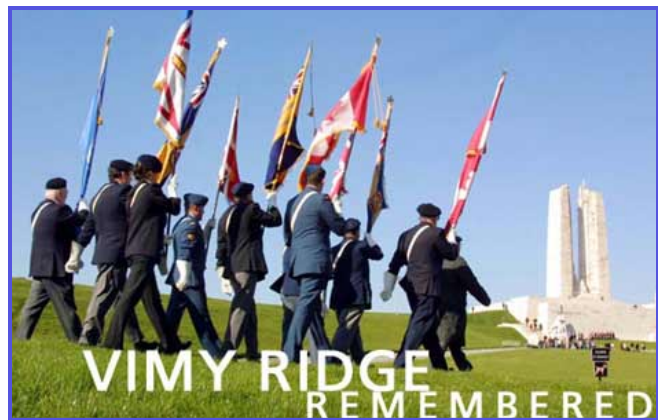
The Dominion Institute was established in 1997 by a group of young people concerned about the erosion of a common memory in Canada. In the space of seven short years, the Dominion Institute has had a far-reaching impact on Canadians' perceptions of their history and shared citizenship, through groundbreaking public opinion research, high-profile Internet, education and television programming, book publications, and meaningful curriculum reform.

### THE Dominion Institute

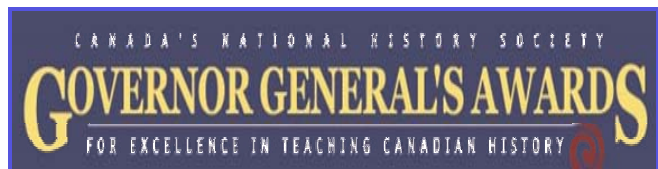
To learn more about the Institute, access past research initiatives (polls & publications) and explore educational resource sites, [click here](#).

The Dominion Institute is urging Canadians to email their MPs to ask that they support a State Funeral for the last Great War veteran. To find your MP's email address [click here](#) (you will be taken to the Parliament of Canada web site).

[Source: [Dominion Institute Online](#)]



For more information on "The First World War and the Road to Vimy Ridge", and to order educational resources, check out [Veterans Affairs Canada](#).



### In Flanders Fields

*In Flanders fields the poppies blow  
Between the crosses, row on row,  
That mark our place; and in the sky  
The larks, still bravely singing, fly  
Scarce heard amid the guns below.*

*We are the Dead. Short days ago  
We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,  
Loved, and were loved, and now we lie  
In Flanders Fields.*

*Take up our quarrel with the foe:  
To you from failing hands we throw  
The torch; be yours to hold it high.  
If ye break faith with us who die  
We shall not sleep, though poppies grow  
In Flanders Fields.*

- John McCrae

Canada is rich in stories and there are countless ways to tell them. Canada's National History Society invites educators from elementary, middle, and senior levels to share how they explore Canadian history with their students, through the Governor General's Awards for Excellence in Teaching Canadian History. Teachers can present themselves or a group, or be nominated by a student, parent or colleague. [The application deadline has been extended to May 5, 2006.](#)

#### Six Recipients Awarded \$2,500!

Six recipients will be awarded \$2,500, a medal and a trip to Ottawa for two, to attend the Awards ceremony and presentation by Her Excellency.

#### Six Schools Share in the Winnings!

An additional \$1,000 is awarded to the recipients' schools.

#### All Approaches are Welcome!

[Apply Today!](#)

**1-800-861-1008**

[www.historyociety.ca](http://www.historyociety.ca)



### Facts and Figures — The Battle of Vimy Ridge — April 9-12, 1917



Canadians returning from Vimy Ridge, 1917, WWI  
[\[Source: War Museum.ca\]](#)

- Vimy Ridge was a key to the German defence system. Rising 61 metres above the Douai Plain, it protected an area of occupied France in which mines and factories were in full production for Germany. It was a linchpin covering the junction of the main Hindenburg Line and the defence systems running north to the coast of the English Channel.
- Though the victory at Vimy came swiftly, it did not come without cost. There were 3,598 dead out of 10,602 Canadian casualties. Battalions in the first waves of the assault suffered grievously.
- Each soldier carried at least 32 kilograms of equipment, plus, some say, a similar weight of the all-pervasive mud on uniform and equipment. This burden made climbing in and out of the numerous trenches and craters particularly difficult.
- The Canadian success at Vimy marked a profound turning-point for the Allies. A year-and-a-half later, the Great War was over. The Canadian record, crowned by the achievements at Vimy, won for Canada a separate signature on the Versailles Peace Treaty ending the War.
- Today, there's a large park at Vimy Ridge, dedicated to Canada. The striking memorial features a 30-tonne limestone figure carved from a single block, a hooded figure representing Canada herself, gazing down on a single tomb overlooking the Douai plain. The twin stone pillars list the names of 11,285 Canadian soldiers who died in France and whose remains were never found. [\[Source: Veterans Affairs Canada Online\]](#)

### Education News and Recommended Links

[Remembering Vimy](#) — National Post, April 5, 2006, Rudyard Griffiths, Executive Director  
Dominion Institute

"This Sunday marks the 89th anniversary of the First World War Battle of Vimy Ridge. At Vimy, a 14-kilometre escarpment that sits atop the Douai plain of France, 30,000 Canadian troops achieved not only a stunning military victory over their German adversaries -- they established Canada as an independent power in world affairs. And yet, Vimy is well on its way to becoming a piece of trivia; a textbook factoid that inspires little respect for the half a million Canadians who fought in the Great War, and the 3,500 who gave their lives at Vimy."

that inspired the rest of the nation. Canadians who fought in the Great War, and the 6,000 who gave their lives at Vimy.”

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[Indepth: Vimy Ridge Remembered — Shock and Awe, 1917](#) — Gary Graves, CBC News Online, April 9, 2003

“At 5:30 in the morning on Easter Monday, April 9, 1917, the assault began. It was raining. It was freezing cold. And it began with a huge artillery barrage... shock and awe 1917-style.”

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[Worth saving?](#) — Christopher Hume, The Toronto Star, March 4, 2006

“Heritage properties help to form both individual and collective identity, and our sense of who we are comes in part from the places we inhabit.”

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[Test scores and access to school libraries linked - library report a challenge for new Minister of Education](#) — People for Education, Press Release, April 6, 2006

“This study shows a link between school libraries and students’ reading achievement,” said Kathryn Blackett, researcher for the parents’ group, People for Education. “Now that we know the link is there, we must do more to ensure that all of Ontario’s students have access to this valuable resource.”

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[Study: The high educational aspirations of visible-minority youth](#) — The Daily, Statistics Canada, April 4/06

“Data from the Youth in Transition Survey were used to examine differences in the goals for postsecondary education among 15-year-old students. The study found that 79% of visible-minority immigrant youth aspired to obtain at least one university degree in their future, compared with 57% of Canadian-born non-visible minority students.”



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