

# Their Name Liveth For Evermore

Vimy Ridge Canadian Heritage Tour | MARCH 24 – APRIL 2, 2017

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Friday, March 24, 2017 – 215 students and 22 teachers from seven Black Gold Regional high schools departed from the Edmonton International Airport to Europe. They were embarking on the Vimy Ridge Canadian Heritage Tour – a 10 day educational tour where students would travel to Western European Canadian Heritage destinations, which included Vimy Ridge, Passchendaele, the Menin Gate, Juno Beach and much more. The goal of the trip was to heighten the students' understanding of the role Canadians played in the First and Second World War, to commemorate the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Battle for Vimy Ridge and promote Canadian Pride.

The trip provided a phenomenal opportunity to embrace learning without a book or a screen. What started as a desire for some students to get their very first taste of travel, ended up being a journey of remembrance and respect. For a small number of students, the Tour even allowed them to be the first amongst their families to have an opportunity to see and visit where their relatives were laid to rest.

Each historical site visited offered a different lesson, experience or emotion that could not be found by reading pages of history, but only by experiencing it firsthand; as some would say “living history”. A number of the sites visited along the Tour are shown below along with a description of the site and some of the personal accounts experienced by students or staff.

“What the Tour ultimately did was put into perspective the real magnitude of the world events that took place so many years ago and the ultimate sacrifices made,” stated Associate Superintendent of Learning Services, Bill Romanchuk. “The students and staff not only represented Black Gold on their recent tour, they represented Canada – and they did it in a fashion that we all can be extremely proud of.”

As a result of this trip, realized the significance of the phrase “their name liveth for evermore”, as these students (and staff) will never forget what they learned, felt, and experienced. They will forever remember and honour those who sacrificed so much for their freedom.

April 9, 2017 will mark the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Battle of Vimy Ridge – please remember the efforts and sacrifices made by all Canadian Veterans.

For those who gave their lives, so we could live ours – we remember.

**BLACK GOLD REGIONAL SCHOOLS | VIMY RIDGE CANADIAN HERITAGE TOUR**

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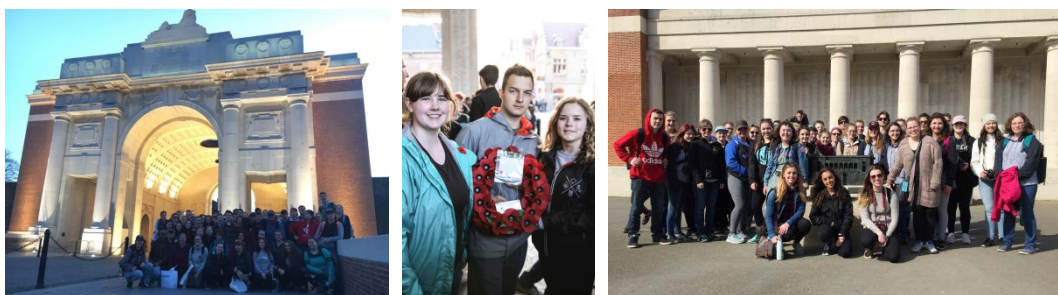
## Belgium Sites | Ypres Area

The Ypres area is surrounded by the Ypres Salient Battlefields, where many cemeteries, memorials and war museums honour the battles that unfolded in this area during World War 1.

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### Menin Gate Memorial and the Last Post ceremony

The Menin Gate Memorial to the Missing is a war memorial in Ypres, Belgium dedicated to the 55,000 British and Commonwealth soldiers who were killed in the Ypres Salient of World War I and whose graves are unknown. Crowds gather every night at 8:00 p.m. at Menin Gate for the Last Post ceremony. The ceremony started in 1928, shortly after the memorial's construction, as an expression of the town's gratitude for the sacrifice of Commonwealth soldiers who died in the nearby countryside during the First World War.



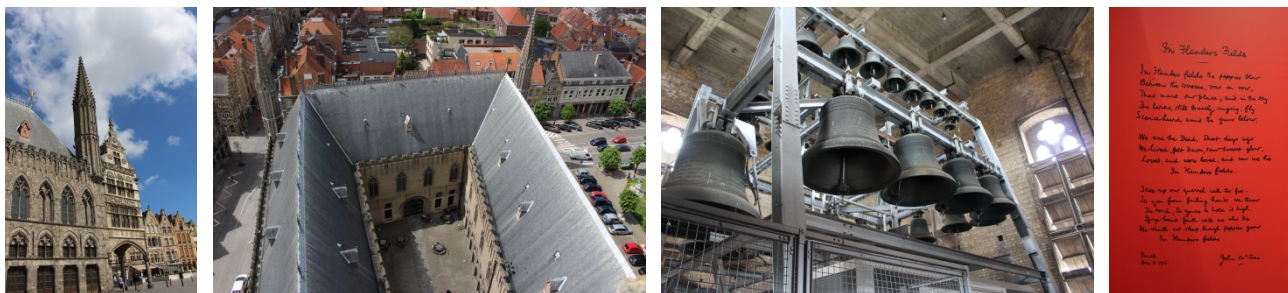
*"The ceremony was beautiful and the student choir that performed set a reflective tone with their really beautiful voices. Our Black Gold students were so wonderful with the wreath laying, that a Canadian government official came up to our tour guide afterwards to compliment them and said, 'they did our country proud.'"*

*"To have a chance to experience the history of something that has continued for generations was amazing."*

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### In Flanders Field Museum

The In Flanders' Fields Museum is located in the famous Cloth Hall in the centre of Ypres and is devoted entirely to the study of World War I.





### Essex Farm Cemetery / Field Hospital and Cemetery

Essex Farm Cemetery is a World War I, Commonwealth War Graves Commission burial ground within the John McCrae Memorial Site near Ypres, Belgium. A monument in the cemetery commemorates the composition of the war poem In Flanders Fields which is reported to have been written in May 1915 by Lieutenant Colonel John McCrae, after witnessing the burial of his friend at Essex Farm.



*“The students have been overwhelmed by the sheer number of graves and names on memorials we have seen over the last few days. They are visibly affected by what they are seeing.”*

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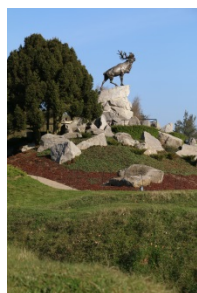
### Hill 60 with the Caterpillar Crater

The Battle of Hill 60 took place in Flanders, south of Ypres on the Western Front. Hill 60 was captured by the German 30th Division, on 11 November 1914 during the First Battle of Ypres. Heavily shelled and mined by both sides, the grounds formed of Hill 60 - literally means 60 feet above sea level.



### Beaumont-Hamel Newfoundland Memorial

A memorial site in France dedicated the commemoration of the Dominion of Newfoundland forces members who were killed during World War 1. Of the 6,241 men that served in the Royal Newfoundland Regiment, 1,304 — more than one in five — were killed. At its highest point a statue of a caribou, the official emblem of the Royal Newfoundland Regiment, looks out over the field where so many died. Their names fill three brass plaques at the base of the monument.



### **Brooding Solider near Saint Julien, also known as the Vancouver Corner**

The St. Julien Memorial is a Canadian war memorial and small commemorative park located in the village of Saint-Julien. A plaque at the foot of the memorial reads "This column marks the battlefield where 18,000 Canadians on the British left withstood the first German gas attacks from 22-25 April 1915. 2,000 fell and lie buried nearby."



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### **Langemark German Military Cemetery**

Langemark cemetery is one of only four First World War German cemeteries in the Flanders region. In the whole of Belgium there are 13 First and Second World War German military cemeteries. More than 44,000 soldiers are buried here.



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### **Tyne Cot Cemetery**

Tyne Cot Cemetery is the largest Commonwealth military cemetery in the world with 11,954 soldiers of the Commonwealth Forces resting here.



*"The students did a lot of reflection here. One student even stated, 'this could have been us'."*

*"The students appreciated all the efforts made to recognize the Canadians who lost their lives."*



## Christmas Truce Memorial

At Christmas 1914, men of both armies on this field, in this part of the line, met here to talk, swap souvenirs and play a game of football (soccer). The memorial is dedicated to "all those who experienced the 'small peace' in the 'Great War'". Both sides took the opportunity during the unofficial cease fire to recover and bury the dead scattered around No-Man's Land.



*"One of the highlights yesterday was going to the location that the Germans and British played soccer at Christmas. The students play a quick game of soccer after viewing the memorial. The grass was wet from morning dew so it was more of slip-n-slide soccer but everyone was laughing and having fun."*

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## Passchendaele

The Canadian Corps, a 100,000 strong fighting formation, was ordered to the Passchendaele front, east of Ypres, in mid-October 1917. A name from Canada's first World War military heritage named Passchendaele. In a muddy corner of Belgium, Canadians overcame an almost unimaginable trial to capture this ruined village in 1917.



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## France Sites | Normandy Area

The Normandy region has long played a role in European history. This area has dramatic coastal landscapes and a number of cemeteries and memorials are scattered along the pebbly D-Day beaches.



*"That person thanked me for being Canadian."*

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### Dieppe Raid

On August 19, 1942, Operation Jubilee (now known as the Dieppe Raid) was launched on the beaches of the Dieppe region and involved the 2nd Canadian Infantry Division. The objective was to create a breach in German defense, gain a temporary hold over a major port and set the stage for a major assault on northwestern Europe in 1944. On the Puys, Berneval, Varengeville, Pourville and Dieppe beaches, the raid sadly failed to achieve virtually all of its aforementioned objectives and was a disaster for the Canadians. Nearly 1000 Canadians died and nearly 2000 were taken prisoner.



*"We learned how although the 1942 Dieppe Raid taught the Allied forces many invaluable lessons, it came at a very steep price. Many Canadian soldiers were injured or lost their lives. I think some of the students became more aware of this sacrifice today."*

*"We went to Puys Beach. It is difficult to explain the impact of this location. The soldiers that landed here did not have a chance, the high cliffs and other advantages of the opposing forces, at this location, was devastating."*

*"We walked down to the beach and imagined what it was like for the soldiers in 1942."*



## Dieppe Memorial Museum

The memorial honours the Canadian and British troops who lost their lives during the raid, as well as those who survived the battle. Moving beach by beach, it documents the events that unfolded over the course of the raid.

*"Meeting a 90 year old French Resistance fighter in Dieppe today was sooooo special. The students lined up to shake his hand, say a few words, and take a pic with him! It really made me feel I was witnessing something special."*

*"We visited the museum and met a living memory, there was a gentleman there who was part of the British ground crew in WWII."*

*"A very emotional day in the theatre. Especially looking at the portraits of the veterans."*

*"Their videos remind us that the lessons of the past continue to resonate and we all can learn and draw inspiration from the heroes who built the country we are privileged to enjoy today."*



*"The guide at the museum talked about all the allies that were part of their liberation and her comment 'the Canadians are always here - lest we forget'."*

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## Canadian Dieppe War Cemetery

A cemetery containing Canadian and British soldiers who were killed in the Dieppe Raid in 1942. More than 900 members of the Allied Armed Forces are interred at Dieppe, of which 707 are Canadian. The cemetery is unique in that it was created by the occupying Germans. The headstones were placed back to back in long double rows, typical of German burials but unlike any other Commonwealth war cemetery. When Dieppe was retaken in 1944, the Allies elected not to disturb the graves, so this unusual arrangement still stands.



*"Dieppe Canadian Cemetery, a heart wrenching experience. Many personal messages on gravestones."*

*"Many have commented that the number of graves in these cemeteries outnumber the populations of our entire small communities."*



## Juno Beach Centre

The Juno Beach Centre is a museum and a cultural centre. A centre that represents the war efforts made by all Canadians. The Minister of Canadian Heritage has designated the Juno Beach landing site to be a site of national historic significance to Canada.



*"It feels more like Canada here, than at home. It's all around us."*

*"It can be overwhelming to be surrounded by all the images of death and destruction. So many lives given. A few students found connections to great uncles and grandparents at the centre and then again at the cemetery. Deeply moving."*

*"I have never felt more Canadian."*

*"I didn't get it until now."*





## Canada House

One of the most iconic buildings in Canadian military history, Canada House was one of the first houses liberated by Canadian soldiers on D-Day, 6 June 1944, and has since become a familiar historic landmark. The left-hand side is owned by the family of Hervé Hoffer, whose grandfather owned the home during the war but was evicted by the Germans. Hoffer died in January 2017, leaving the house and its artifacts to his wife and children, and in the care of L'Association la Maison des Canadiens, a private organization dedicated to the maintenance of the house and its role in Canadian remembrance.



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## Beny-Sur-Mer Canadian Military Cemetery

Many of those buried in Beny-sur-Mer Canadian War Cemetery are men of the 3rd Canadian Division who died either on 6 June or during the early stages of the Battle of Normandy in the Second World War.



*“One student in our group found the headstone of her great uncle. Her family had researched her family history and she was able to make a real connection with our trip. Something very special.”*

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## Thiepval Memorial to the Missing of the Somme

The Thiepval Memorial to the Missing of the Somme is a war memorial to 72,246 missing British and South African servicemen who died in the Battles of the Somme of the First World War between 1915 and 1918, with no known grave.



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## France Sites | Vimy and Area

### Vimy Ridge Tunnels and Trenches

The victory at Vimy was a defining event for Canada, considered by many contemporaries and later scholars to be a significant event in Canada's progress to full independence from Britain. Over four days of bloody fighting, the Canadians had overrun Vimy Ridge at the cost of more than 10,600 killed and wounded. The battle has since become an important symbol for Canada, the place where Canadians from across the country delivered an unprecedented victory, all four divisions of the Canadian Corps fighting together for the first time in the war.



*"The students experienced the trenches and history lesson on how we (Canadian troops) along with many others took Vimy ridge. It was neat to see the students connect their history lessons to something real while exploring."*

*"Vimy was a sobering location and an impressive memorial."*

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### Vimy Memorial Complex and Interpretation Centre

The Canadian National Vimy Memorial is a memorial to all Canadians who served their country in battle during the Great War of 1914-1918. 60,000 Canadians were killed and over 11,000 of those killed died in France have no known grave. The Canadian National Vimy Memorial inscribes the names of those 11,168 missing Canadian heroes. The Interpretation Centre was officially inaugurated at the Vimy Memorial Park, November 1997 and is administrated by Veterans Affairs Canada.



*"For the wreath laying, each of the seven high schools had a representative [...]. All of the BGRS students today should be recognized for the outstanding behaviour and respect shown during the ceremony."*

*"The Vimy ceremony couldn't have gone any better! The students were true Canadians, humble and proud. They even impressed several local French people who commented."*

*"Many students found someone with the same last name... they now want to do some research."*



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## France Sites | Paris

Paris, the capital and most populous city in France, includes many notable monuments such as the Notre Dame Cathedral, the Eiffel Tower and the Basilica of Sacré-Cœur in Montmartre.



*"I had no idea how good my French was."*

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## Versailles

The Chateau of Versailles, an UNESCO World Heritage Site for the last 30 years, is one of the most beautiful achievements of the 18<sup>th</sup> century French Art. A tour of this lavish palace of Louis XIV includes the Royal Chambers, the Royal Chapel, the Opera House and of course the Hall of Mirrors where the Treaty of Versailles was signed, ending World War I.

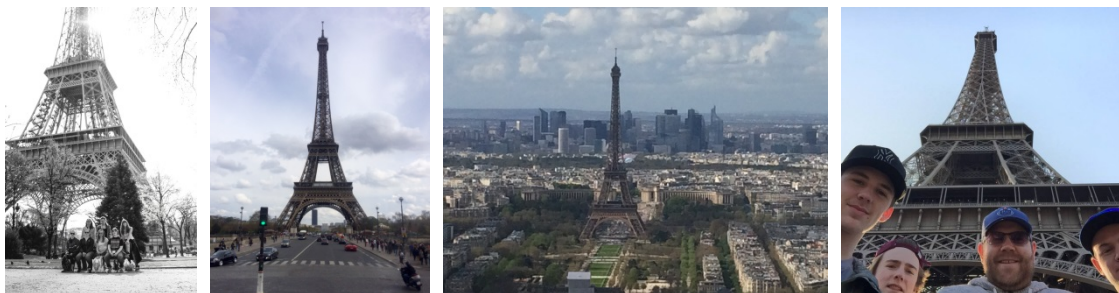


*"I am so glad that the students were able to see this amazing palace, hoping it will give them the spark to learn more about that period of history."*

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## Eiffel Tower and German Bunker

The Eiffel Tower monument holds the distinction of being the most visited tourist attraction the world. Visitors can also see a secret wartime military bunker, which has rarely been seen by the public. During World War I, the Eiffel Tower was used to house communications equipment for the army and an evacuation route was built underground, with several secret corridors and tunnels. In case the German army advanced, the tunnels were an escape route and led from the bunker into the River Seine.



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## Students & Staff Reunited with Loved Ones



**Staff Name:** Barbara White  
**School:** Calmar Secondary School  
**Relative:** Great Uncle – Alexander Campion Wright  
**Cemetery:** Duisans Cemetery  
**War Region:** Vimy



**Student Name:** Analise Beatty  
**School:** École Secondaire Beaumont Composite High School  
**Cemetery:** Juno Beach Centre  
**War Region:** Juno



**Student Name:** Delaney Burns  
**School:** École Secondaire Beaumont Composite High School  
**Cemetery:** Juno Beach Centre  
**War Region:** Juno



**Student Name:** Madi Bannick  
**School:** École Secondaire Beaumont Composite High School  
**Cemetery:** Juno Beach Centre  
**War Region:** Juno

**Student Name:** Liam Verne  
**School:** École Secondaire Beaumont Composite High School  
**Relative:**  
**Cemetery:** Juno Beach Centre  
**War Region:** Juno

**Student Name:** Jayden Kutz  
**School:** École Secondaire Beaumont Composite High School  
**Cemetery:** Juno Beach  
**War Region:** Juno

**Student Name:** Christian Scheerschmidt  
**School:** École Secondaire Beaumont Composite High School  
**Cemetery:** Juno Beach  
**War Region:** Juno

**Student Name:** Connor Flitz  
**School:** John Maland High School  
**Relative:** Great Grandfather – Private J. Filtz  
**Cemetery:** Lijssenthoek Military Cemetery  
**War Region:** Ypres

**Staff Name:** Jill Mattock  
**School:** John Maland High School  
**Family Connection:** J.C. Harlow  
**Cemetery:** Beny-Sur-Mer Canadian Military Cemetery  
**War Region:** Dieppe

**Student Name:** Daniel Karpiuk  
**School:** Leduc Composite High School  
**Relative:** Great Uncle - Mathew Hydichuk.  
**Cemetery:** Bretteville-sur-Laize Canadian War Cemetery  
**War Region:** Normandy

**Student Name:** Alysha McAusland  
**School:** Leduc Composite High School  
**Cemetery:** Essex Farm Cemetery  
**War Region:** Ypres

**Student Name:** Brooklyn Rye  
**School:** Leduc Composite High School  
**Relative:** Great Uncle - George Neyrinck De Croy  
**Cemetery:** Bretteville-sur-Laize Canadian War Cemetery  
**War Region:** Normandy

**Staff Name:** Candace Acorn  
**School:** Leduc Composite High School  
**Relative:** Great Uncle – Private Sydney James Goddard  
**Cemetery:** Becourt Military Cemetery  
**War Region:** Somme



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## About the Students

The tour involved 215 students from seven Black Gold Regional Schools.

<b>Enrolled Students Vimy Ridge Canadian Heritage Tour 2017</b>	
<b>Participating Schools</b>	<b>Total</b>
Calmar Secondary School	7
École Secondaire Beaumont Composite High School	69
John Maland High School	26
Leduc Composite High School	85
New Sarepta Community High School	4
Thorsby Junior/Senior High School	11
Warburg School	13
<b>Totals</b>	<b>215</b>