

In the Lead-up to the 90th Anniversary of the End of the First World War, a Dominion Institute-Ipsos Reid national poll gauges Canadians knowledge of The Great War

Less than half (46%) of Canadians Know that Remembrance Day Marks the End of the First World War

Only 16% of Canadians could correctly identify the countries we fought against in the First World War

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Toronto, ON – In the lead-up to the 90th anniversary of the end of the First World War, a recent Ipsos Reid poll conducted on behalf of the Dominion Institute reveals that Canadians—in particular young Canadians—lack of basic knowledge about The Great War and are forgetting this important chapter in our country’s history.

“This year marks the 90th anniversary of the End of the First World War. It is troubling to see that with every passing year our memory as a country is fading to the point that most Canadians do not even know what we are remembering,” said Marc Chalifoux, Executive Director of the Dominion Institute.

The study reveals that less than half (46%) of Canadians knew that Remembrance Day marks the end of the First World War. Only 42% of Canadians aged 18-34 could correctly identify what this date commemorates.

Just 16% of respondents could identify both Germany and Austria from a list of five countries against which we fought. Nearly one quarter of Canadians (22%) were unable to identify Germany as one of Canada’s opponents.

The survey also revealed that nearly four in ten Canadians (37%) think that the United States entered the First World War ahead of Canada. This figure is even higher among young Canadians, aged 18-34 (45%).

The survey also found that nine in ten (92%) 'agree' (59% strongly/33% somewhat) that 'it is important to commemorate Canada's military history', and a similar proportion (90%) 'agrees' (53% strongly/37% somewhat) that we should 'be doing more to educate our young people about our military history'.

Respondents were first asked a series of questions about the First World War.

- Only 46% of Canadians knew that Remembrance Day marks the end of the First World War. Four in ten (38%) thought it marked the end of the Second World War and 16% thought it commemorates D-Day / Invasion of Normandy.
- Just 16% of Canadians could identify Germany and Austria from a list of five as countries against which we fought in WWI. More than two in ten (22%) Canadians did not know that we fought Germany, while 77% did not know that Canada was also at war with Austria. Two in ten (20%) thought Canada was fighting Russia, 15% believe we were at war with Japan, and 8% thought Canada we fought France. Seven percent (7%) thought Canada didn't fight any of these countries.
- Less than half (46%) of Canadians knew that there remains only one Canadian veteran of WWI alive today. Two in ten (21%) believe there are none still alive. One quarter (25%) think there remains sixteen veterans alive today, whereas one in ten (8%) think there are forty-two.

Respondents were then asked questions about Canada's involvement in the First World War as compared with that of the United States.



- 37% of Canadians thought that the United States entered the First World War before Canada. 45% of Canadians aged 18-34 thought the same.
- One in four (26%) didn't know that Canada, not the United States, had a greater percentage of its population serve in the First World War.

These are the findings of an Ipsos Reid poll conducted on behalf of The Dominion Institute from September 17th to September 22nd, 2008. This online survey of 1022 adult Canadians was conducted via the Ipsos I-Say Online Panel, Ipsos Reid's national online panel. The results of this poll are based on a sample where quota sampling and weighting are employed to balance demographics and ensure that the sample's composition reflects that of the actual Canadian population according to Census data. Quota samples with weighting from the Ipsos online panel provide results that are intended to approximate a probability sample. Statistical margins of error are not applicable to online polls because they are based on samples drawn from opt-in online panels, not on random samples that mirror the population within a statistical probability ratio. All sample surveys and polls may be subject to other sources of error, including, but not limited to coverage error, and measurement error. However, an unweighted probability sample of this size, with a 100% response rate, would have an estimated margin of error of +/- 3.1 percentage points, 19 times out of 20, had the entire adult population of Canada been polled.

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