

On the eve of the release of *Passchendaele* in Canadian theatres, a Dominion Institute-Ipsos Reid national poll gauges Canadians knowledge of the First World War

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37% of Canadians think that the United States entered the First World War before Canada

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National Poll finds that only 16% of Canadians could correctly identify the countries we fought against in the First World War

37% of Canadians think that the United States entered the First World War before Canada

Toronto, ON – On the eve of the release of *Passchendaele*, a new Ipsos Reid poll conducted on behalf of the Dominion Institute reveals Canadians’ – in particular young Canadians – lack of knowledge about the First World War, and that many are forgetting about this important chapter in our country’s history. *Passchendaele* is a \$20-million, Canadian-produced film depicting the famous 1917 battle fought by the Canadians in the fields of Ypres, Belgium.

The study reveals that less than four in ten (37%) Canadians have heard of the Battle of Passchendaele. Only 46% of Canadians knew that Remembrance Day marks the end of the First World War. Just 16% of respondents could identify both Germany and Austria from a list of five countries against which we fought, without picking another country that was an ally of Canada. More than 1 in 5 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%).

“Canada’s victory at Passchendaele is an astounding tale of determination, commitment and triumph,” said *Passchendaele* writer-director-star Paul Gross. “My mission in making this film is to help keep alive the memory of our nation’s courage.”



“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,” said Marc Chalifoux, Executive Director of the Dominion Institute.

Respondents were first asked a series of questions about the battle of Passchendaele and the First World War:

- Only four in ten (37%) Canadians say they’ve heard of the Battle of Passchendaele.
- Once informed of the Battle of Passchendaele, where ‘enduring hard rain and fighting in thick mud, the Canadian Corps took part in an important assault known as the Battle of Passchendaele’, 59% were able to identify that it took place in the First World War, not the Second World War (23%), the Boer War (11%) or the Korean War (8%).
- Only 46% of Canadians knew that Remembrance Day marks the end of the First World War. 38% of those surveyed thought it marks 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 the First World War, without naming additional countries that were actually Canada’s allies. More than one in five (22%) Canadians did not know that we fought against Germany, while nearly 4 in five (23%) 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 the First World War 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 between September 17 and September 22, 2008. This survey of 1022 Canadian adults was conducted via the Ipsos I-Say Online Panel, Ipsos Reid's national online panel. Weighting then was employed to balance demographics and ensure that the sample's composition reflects that of the Canadian adult population according to the latest Census data and to provide results intended to approximate the sample universe. 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, of what the results would have been had the entire adult population in Canada been polled.



Dominion Institute – Passchendaele in the Classroom.

This Fall, the Dominion Institute has launched *Passchendaele In The Classroom*, an educational campaign to encourage high school teachers to incorporate the film into their lesson plans on Canada's involvement in the First World War. The Institute has developed a bilingual Education Guide, which has been distributed to every high school in Canada and is currently being used by thousands of students.

The Institute also launched the *Great War Letters Contest*, which encourages young Canadians to write a letter as if it were penned from the Battlefield or the Home Front during the First World War. The submissions will be judged by an esteemed panel of well known Canadians including Paul Gross, Adrienne Clarkson and the only remaining Canadian veteran of the First World War, John Babcock. The grand prize winner will travel to Belgium for a tour of the Passchendaele battlefields.

To order a copy of the Education Guide or participate in the *Great War Letters Contest* visit www.dominion.ca or call 1.866.701.1867.

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