

# THINK LIKE A HISTORIAN: THE BATTLE OF VIMY RIDGE

## VIMY IN NEWSPAPERS: PRIMARY SOURCES

### MESSAGE TO TEACHERS:

This collection of primary sources accompanies the *Think Like a Historian* series of videos and worksheets. Find the entire series at [thinklikeahistorian.ca](http://thinklikeahistorian.ca). This package accompanies the *Vimy in Newspapers* video and worksheets. It includes a full transcript of *The Globe* and *Le Canada* reports, and a reproduction of the original newspapers. Find the classroom worksheets at [education.historicacanada.ca](http://education.historicacanada.ca).

29th Infantry Battalion advancing over "No Man's Land" through German barbed wire and heavy fire during the Battle of Vimy Ridge (courtesy Library and Archives Canada/W.I. Castle/PA-001020).

### ABOUT THE GLOBE:

The English-language newspaper *The Globe* was founded in 1844 by George Brown in Toronto. By 1917, it had a circulation of more than 90,000. *The Globe* merged with *The Mail and Empire* in 1936 to become *The Globe and Mail*, which remains one of Canada's national newspapers.



*The Globe*, 11 April 1917 (courtesy of Media Commons, Robarts Library, University of Toronto).

### ABOUT LE CANADA

The French-language daily newspaper *Le Canada* was founded in 1903 in Montreal. It had a circulation of around 18,000 and supported the Liberal Party. *Le Canada* was published in Montreal until 1954.



*Le Canada*, 10 April 1917 (courtesy Bibliothèque et Archives Nationales du Québec).



# ARRAS VICTORY A STAGGERING BLOW TO INVADERS OF NORTHERN FRANCE

## Teutons Sustain Tremendous Losses in Men, Guns and Position—Retreat South of Vimy Ridge to Defensive Lines Farther Back—Canadian Triumph is Complete—Plains to Douai Dominated by Haig

Special Cable Despatch to The Globe by Philip Gibbs.

War Correspondents' Headquarters, April 10.—The Battle of Arras is the greatest victory we have yet gained in this war and is a staggering blow to the enemy. He has lost already nearly 10,000 prisoners and more than half a hundred guns, and in dead and wounded his losses are great. He is in retreat south of Vimy ridge to the defensive lines farther back, and as he goes our guns are smashing him along the roads. It is a black day for the German armies, and for the German women who do not yet know what it means to them.

During last night the Canadians gained the last point, called Hill 145, on Vimy ridge, where the Germans held out in a pocket with machine guns, and this morning the whole of that high ridge which dominates the plains to Douai was in our hands, so there is removed from our path the great barrier for which the French and ourselves fought through bloody years.

### Enemy Wiped Out.

Yesterday, before daylight and afterwards, I saw this ridge of Vimy all on fire with the light of a great gunfire. The enemy was there in strength, and his guns answered ours with a heavy barrage of high explosives. This morning the scene was changed as by a miracle. Snow was falling and blowing gustily across the battlefields and powdering the caps and helmets of our men as they rode or marched forward to the front, but presently the sunlight broke through the storm clouds and flooded all the countryside by Neuville-St. Vaast and Thelus and La Folie Farm up to the crest of the ridge, where the Canadians had just fought their way with such high valor. Our batteries were firing from many hiding places, as was revealed by short, sharp flashes of light, but few answering shells came back, and the ridge itself, patched with a snowdrift, was as quiet as any hill of peace.

### Deadly Menace Eased.

It is astounding to think that not a single German stayed up there out of all those who held it yesterday, unless some poor wounded ones still cower in the great tunnels which pierce the hillside. It is almost unbelievable to me, who have known the evil of this high ridge month after

## BRAZIL TO FIGHT AGAINST THE HUNS

(Canadian Press Despatch.)

**RIO JANEIRO, April 10.**—At a Cabinet Council to-day it was decided that Brazil should sever her relations with Germany.

— This follows the sinking of Brazilian ships without warning.

month and year after year, and the deadly menace which lurked about its lower slopes, yet I saw, just below, where, of all the Germans who had been there at Arras yesterday, thousands of them were now in our lines, drawn up in battalions, marshalling themselves, grinning at the fate which had come to them and spared their lives.

### Canadian Attack Astounding.

The Canadian attack yesterday was astounding, successful, and carried out by high-spirited men, the victors of Courclette, in the battles of the Somme, who had before the advance an utter and joyous confidence of victory. They went away at dawn, cheering and laughing, through the mud and rain which made scarecrows of them. They followed close and warily to the barrage of our guns, the most stupendous line of fire ever seen, and by 6.30 they had taken their first goals, which included the whole front line system of German trenches above Neuville-St. Vaast, by La Folie Farm and La Folie Wood, and up by Thelus, where they met with fierce resistance. The German garrisons were for the most part in long, deep tunnels, pierced through the hill as assembly ditches. There were hundreds of them in the Prins Arnaut tunnel, and hundreds more in the great Volker tunnel; but as the Canadians surged up to them, with waves after waves of bayonets, the German soldiers streamed out and came running forward

with hands up. They were eager to surrender, and their great desire was to get down from Vimy ridge and the barrage of their own guns. That barrage fell heavily and fiercely upon Tucco trench, but too late to do much damage to our men, who had already gone beyond it.

### Canadian Losses Light.

The Canadian casualties are not heavy in comparison with the expected losses, but the German prisoners are glad to pay for the gift of life by carrying our wounded back. The eagerness of these men was pitiful, and now and then laughable. At least the Canadian escorts found it a great laughing matter, in the enormous numbers of men they had to guard, and in the way the prisoners themselves directed the latest comers to the barbed wire enclosures, and with great satisfaction acted as masters of ceremony to their own captives.

### Very Cheerful Prisoners.

I have never seen such cheerful prisoners, although for the most part they were without overcoats, and, despite the cold blizzard of snow, they were joking with each other, and in great humor passed life, with all its hardships, was dear to us, and they had the luck of life. They were of all sizes and ages and types. I saw elderly bewhiskered men with big spectacles, belonging to the professor tribe, and young lads who ought to have been in the German high schools. Some of their faces looked very wise and small beneath their great shrapnel helmets. Many of them looked ill and starved, but other tall, stout, hefty fellows, who should have made good fighting men if they had any stomach for the job. There were many officers standing apart. The Canadians took over 200 of them.

(Continued on Page 4, Col. 5.)

## GIVE US BREAD, SAY FOE WOMEN

### Serious Food Rioting in German City of Dusseldorf Easter Sunday

(Canadian Press Despatch.)

London, April 10.—A despatch to the Exchange Telegraph from The Hague says:

"Serious food rioting took place in Dusseldorf Easter Sunday. A crowd of women, composed mostly of the wives and daughters of munitions

The Globe, Toronto, Wednesday, April 11, 1917

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### **Officers Left "in the Air."**

All the officers were disconcerted because of the cheerfulness of the men at being taken. I talked with some of them. They told me of the horrors of living under our bombardment. Some of them had been without food for four days, because our gunfire had boxed them in. "When do you think the war will end?" I asked one of them. "When the English are in Berlin," he answered, and I think he meant that would be a long time.

Another officer said, "In two months," and he gave no reason for his certainty. "What about America?" I asked one of them. He shrugged his shoulders and said, "America can't send an army across the ocean." At this statement the Canadian soldiers standing around laughed loudly and said, "Don't you believe it, old sport. We have come along to fight you, and the Yankees will do the same."



### Canadians Do Quick Work.

By 3 o'clock in the afternoon yesterday the Canadians had gained the whole of Vimy ridge except the high, strong post on the left of Hill 145, captured to-night. Our gunfire had helped them by breaking down all the wire, even round Heroes' Wood and Count's Wood, where it was very thick and strong. Thelus was wiped utterly off the map.

This morning Canadian patrols pushed in the snowstorm through Farbus Wood and established outposts on the railway embankment. Some of the bravest work was done by the forward observation officers, who climbed to the top of Vimy ridge as soon as it was captured, and through a sea of heavy barrage reported back to the artillery all the movements seen by them on the country below. In spite of the windy day our flying men were riding the storm, signalling to the [illegible] who were rushing up their field guns.

"Our 18-pounders," said a Canadian officer, "had the day of their lives." They found many targets. There were troops massing on the sloping ground, and they were scattered. There were guns and limbers on the move, and men and horses were killed, in addition to all the prisoners taken yesterday by the English, Scottish and Canadian troops.

### Enemy's Losses Frightful.

The enemy's losses were frightful and the scenes behind his lines must have been, and must still be, hideous in the slaughter and terror. I have not time to-night to tell the full story of the battle of Arras, of all the great fighting on the right, where it was very hard; in Blangy, and onward toward Feuchy. On this side the Germans fought most fiercely, and our men were held up at Chapeel re-doubt and other strong points until our gunfire knocked out these works and made way for them. Fifty-four guns were taken here on the east side of Arras, and to-day the pursuit of the beaten enemy continues.

## ARRAS VICTORY A STAGGERING BLOW

(Continued from Page 1, Col. 2.)

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**Le Canada, Montreal, Saturday, April 14, 1914**  
**Courcelette and Vimy**  
**THE GLORIOUS ROLE OF FRENCH-CANADIAN VOLUNTEERS**

In the past few days, the press from all around the world has been filled with the stories of the exploits of the Canadian volunteers who have, in a spectacular impulse last Monday, taken from the German the ridges at Vimy.

It is the winners at Courcelette that we are praising everywhere, and amongst them is the glorious 22nd French-Canadian Regiment.

Our heroes from the 22nd have, without a doubt, not conquered or scared away an entire German army on their own. Besides, our volunteers on the Front are not all part of the 22nd, and those of our French-Canadian Battalions that were spread out in other units certainly do not deserve any less, thanks to their valour and strength, the glorious praises of which they are covered.

The French blood in their veins could not lie and their example must have dragged with them, in this immortal assault, their comrades of a colder blood. We do know, from diverse sources, including French Officers who know each other in gallantry, that our French-Canadians are considered, on the Front, to be elite troops to whom we entrust the most dangerous operations.

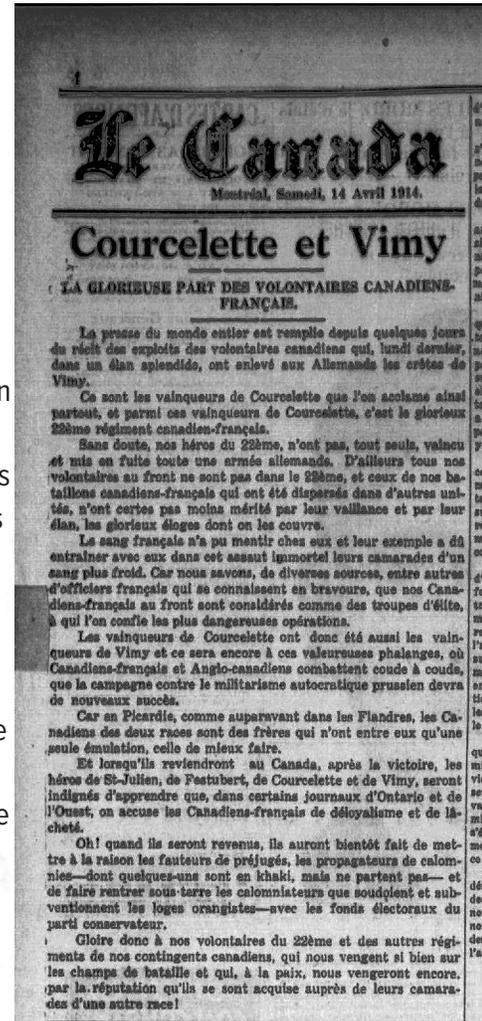
The winners at Courcelette are therefore also the winners at Vimy, and it will once again be to these valorous phalanges, where French-Canadians and English-Canadians fight side to side, that the campaign against Prussian autocratic militarism will owe its new achievements.

In Picardie now, like before in Flanders, both races of Canadians are brothers who share only one ambition: to do better.

When they will come back to Canada after the victory, the heroes of St-Julien, Festubert, Courcelette and Vimy will be outraged to learn that in some of the papers in Ontario and in the West, the French-Canadians have been accused of disloyalty and cowardice.

Oh! When they will be back, they will soon have disproved those who spread prejudice and calumny — some of which wear the khaki but don't leave abroad — and they will shame the slanderers who are bribed and financed by the Orange Lodges - with the electoral money of the Conservative Party.

Glory, then, to our volunteers of the 22nd and from the other Regiments of our Canadian contingents who avenge us so well on the battlefields and who, once back to peace, will still avenge us, thanks to the reputation they will have gained with their comrades of another race!



*Le Canada*, 14 April 1917  
(courtesy Bibliothèque et Archives Nationales du Québec).