

# Canada's Forgotten Battle of the First World War: A Study in Canadian Military History

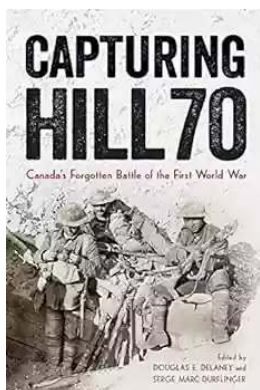
When people think of the First World War, iconic battles such as the Battle of Verdun or the Battle of the Somme often come to mind. However, one significant battle that tends to be overlooked is the Battle of Vimy Ridge, a battle that showcased Canadian military prowess and had a profound impact on the outcome of the war. In this article, we will delve into the historical significance of this forgotten battle and explore the lessons it taught about the Canadian military.



## The Battle of Vimy Ridge: A Grueling Test of Resolve

The Battle of Vimy Ridge took place from April 9 to April 12, 1917, in the Nord-Pas-de-Calais region of France. It was a crucial battle that aimed to capture the

heavily fortified German positions on Vimy Ridge, which had eluded previous Allied attempts.



## Capturing Hill 70: Canada's Forgotten Battle of the First World War (Studies in Canadian Military History) by Ed Bird (Kindle Edition)

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Under the command of General Arthur Currie, the Canadian Corps was given the daunting task of capturing Vimy Ridge. Previous attempts by British and French forces were unsuccessful and resulted in heavy casualties. However, through meticulous planning, a detailed understanding of the terrain, and close cooperation among infantry, artillery, and engineering units, the Canadians were able to achieve what no other force had done before.

### **Lessons Learned: Canadian Military Prowess**

The success of the Canadian Corps at Vimy Ridge is attributed to several key factors that demonstrated the military prowess of the Canadians.

#### **1. Unity and Cooperation:**

The Canadian Corps consisted of soldiers from all regions of Canada, representing the country's diverse population. Despite their differences, the troops exhibited exceptional unity and cooperation, which played a crucial role in their victory. The ability to work together as a cohesive unit was a testament to the strength of the Canadian military.

## **2. Detailed Planning and Preparation:**

Prior to the battle, the Canadian Corps conducted thorough reconnaissance and created detailed maps of the German positions. This allowed them to develop well-coordinated plans and strategies to overcome the enemy's defenses. The emphasis on meticulous planning showcased the Canadian military's commitment to preparedness and readiness.

## **3. Effective Use of Artillery:**

The Canadian Corps employed a novel tactic during the battle known as the "creeping barrage." This involved a carefully orchestrated artillery bombardment that moved forward in sync with the advancing infantry, effectively neutralizing the enemy's defensive capabilities. The successful implementation of this tactic demonstrated the Canadians' ability to utilize artillery as an effective weapon of war.

## **4. Innovative Use of Tunnels:**

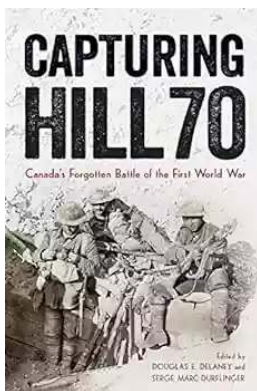
Prior to the battle, Canadian engineers dug a network of tunnels under Vimy Ridge, creating a system of underground passages and chambers. These tunnels provided crucial advantages during the battle, allowing the infantry to move closer to the enemy undetected and providing shelter during the intense bombardments. This innovative use of tunnels showcased the Canadian military's adaptability and resourcefulness.

## The Legacy of Vimy Ridge

The Battle of Vimy Ridge had profound implications beyond its military outcome. It was the first time all four Canadian divisions fought together as a unified force, lending a newfound sense of national identity and pride. Many historians argue that the victory at Vimy Ridge marked a turning point for Canada, transforming it from a British dominion into a nation in its own right.

The sacrifice made by the soldiers during this battle was not forgotten. Today, the Vimy Ridge Memorial stands as a testament to their bravery and serves as a symbol of Canadian unity and sacrifice. The memorial attracts thousands of visitors every year, ensuring that the memory of the Battle of Vimy Ridge and its significance to Canadian military history remains alive.

The Battle of Vimy Ridge may have been forgotten over time, but its impact on Canadian military history cannot be understated. The lessons learned from this battle continue to resonate, showcasing the Canadian military's unity, meticulous planning, effective use of artillery, and innovative tactics. As we remember the brave soldiers who fought at Vimy Ridge, let us also recognize the significance of this forgotten battle and its enduring legacy for Canada.



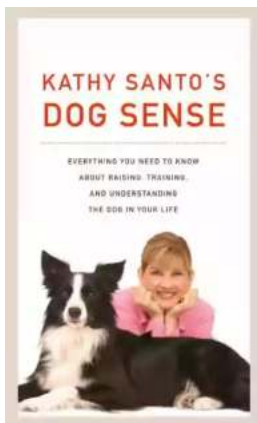
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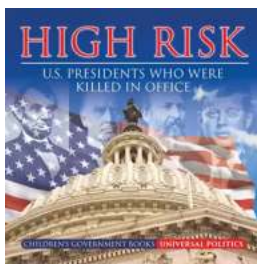


In August 1917, the Canadian Corps captured Hill 70, vital terrain just north of the French town of Lens. The Canadians suffered some 5,400 casualties and in three harrowing days defeated twenty-one German counterattacks. This spectacularly successful but shockingly costly battle was as innovative as Vimy, yet few Canadians have heard of it or of subsequent attempts to capture Lens, which resulted in nearly 3,300 more casualties. Capturing Hill 70 marks the centenary of this triumph by dissecting different facets of the battle, from planning and conducting operations to long-term repercussions and commemoration. It reinstates Hill 70 to its rightful place among the pantheon of battles that forged the reputation of the famed Canadian Corps during the First World War.



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