



CANADA 150

DID YOU KNOW?

# The Invictus Games are coming to Canada September 2017



The Invictus Games are similar to the Olympics or the Paralympics, except that the competitors are all soldiers—most of them wounded from combat.

Invictus is Latin for *unconquerable*. The Games will show that these “wounded warriors” have not been conquered by their physical and emotional wounds. The Games are designed to help soldiers cope with, and heal from, their health challenges.

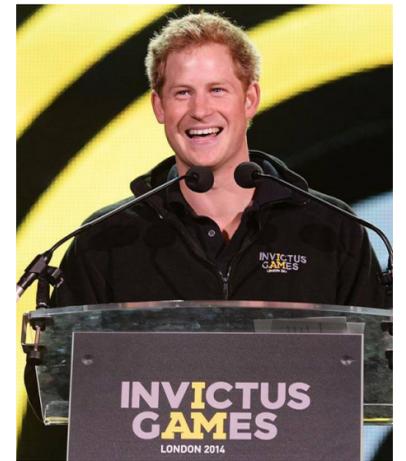
In 2014, Prince Harry helped to start the first Invictus Games. They were held in London, England. In 2016, the Invictus Games were in Orlando Florida.

This year, 2017, is a special year for Canada. It marks the country’s 150th anniversary.

Not only will there be great sporting events this year, such as sledge

hockey, but there will be many activities for Canadian students and others who want to know more about the country’s military history.

The 2017 Invictus Games will run from September 26 to 30.



PRINCE HARRY

# The Battle of Vimy Ridge 1917



Richard Jack, The Taking of Vimy Ridge, Easter Monday 1917. CWM 19710261-0160. BEAVERBROOK COLLECTION OF WAR ART © CANADIAN WAR MUSEUM.

2017 marks the 100th anniversary of an important battle in the First World War (WWI) that took place on Vimy Ridge, in France.

In 1917, Canadians fought the Germans there in a battle that was thought to be unwinnable. That victory by the Canadians helped to turn the tide of the war. The Germans occupied Vimy Ridge, a seven-kilometre-long area near Arras, in northern France. The geography offered a commanding view over the surrounding countryside.

It was not easy for the Germans to defend the Ridge against advancing forces. Previous British and French attacks on the Ridge had been unsuccessful and had resulted in more than 150,000 casualties. In early 1917, the Canadian Corps under the command of Lieutenant-General Sir Julian Byng was tasked with capturing Vimy Ridge as part of a larger offensive in the Arras area.

Lessons learned in the previous battles led Byng to subject Canadian troops to intense training using new tactics to better prepare soldiers to help them to make

quick decisions on their own that were still in keeping with the overall plan. Small units and individual soldiers were given much more information about the battle, and were expected to exercise initiative in keeping the advance moving, even if their officers were killed or wounded.

Byng’s plan of attack was meticulously prepared. Infantry rehearsed their roles on mock-ups behind the lines; light rail lines were built to carry supplies forward and the wounded back; tunnels under the ridge were carved out to lay mines or to shelter troops from hostile gunfire.

At daybreak on April 9, 1917, Easter

Monday, nearly 1,000 guns opened fire on the German positions. An estimated 15,000 Canadians advanced towards the ridge in the first wave, with thousands more behind them. Amid intense fighting, the Canadians captured most of the ridge that day and the remaining portions of it three days later.

Over four days of bloody fighting, the Canadians took Vimy Ridge at the cost of more than 10,600 men killed or wounded.

The battle of Vimy Ridge is an important symbol for Canada as the place where Canadians from across the country delivered an unprecedented victory. Vimy Ridge represents the first time in the war that all four divisions of the Canadian Corps fought together.

## NOW YOU KNOW! CONNECTIONS

### WRITING/DISCUSSION PROMPT

How may the qualities that veterans possess help them become great athletes? In your opinion, which quality is most significant?

### READING PROMPT: RESPONDING TO AND EVALUATING TEXTS

Do you think the Invictus Games will change the public’s awareness of veterans and the challenges that some veterans face when they return from war? Do you think it will succeed in “helping soldiers cope with, and heal from, their health challenges?”



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