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Remembering Vimy Ridge: Residents honour historic battle

Several communities
will host events
to mark Vimy's
100th anniversary

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Residents of Simcoe and Grey counties will pay tribute to the men who fought, and died, in one of Canada's most defining military moments.

As nearly 400 students and staff from 14 local schools prepare to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the Battle of Vimy Ridge by travelling to France, several local communities also have remembrance plans. Per-

● See MANY, page 5



Chris Simon/Metroland

Royal Canadian Legion member Steve Glover (right) and Grey & Simcoe Foresters' Darcy Murray are co-ordinating a Vimy Ridge commemoration. The event will take place at the Barrie branch April 9.

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Many recruits didn't see first action until Vimy

Continued from front

haps the largest of the local events will be held April 9 at the Barrie branch of the Royal Canadian Legion. It begins with a First World War military display and exhibition at 12:30 p.m., followed by a parade and wreath-laying ceremony at 1 p.m. and guest speakers at 2 p.m.

"Vimy is the battle that has become the symbol for (the) war," said organizer Steve Glover. "There were other battles that were more important in the scheme of things, but it's Vimy people remember."

During the battle, Canadians earned a reputation as tough, effective troops, though more than 10,000 were killed or wounded.

The Canadian Corps was ordered to seize Vimy in April 1917. Situated in northern France, the heavily fortified, seven-kilometre-long ridge presented a vantage point of the Allied lines.

For the first time, all four Canadian divisions attacked together, with men from every region of the country present.

At least 13 local men were killed and another 40 were wounded. However, hundreds of county men were in the trenches during the battle.

"To me, it's a sombre moment of reflection," said Darcy Murray of the Grey & Simcoe Foresters. "They took Vimy and it was a big honour. It showed the rest of the British Empire that Canadians could fight



Chris Simon/Metroland

Simcoe County students and staff will head to Europe to mark the 100th anniversary of the Battle of Vimy Ridge in April.

well. But the war still lasted another year-and-a-half. Vimy was a great achievement, but more men died (in the war) after Vimy than had died before."

It is difficult to tally the precise number of local soldiers who served overseas, but more than 4,000 residents of Grey and Simcoe counties are believed to have trained for service during the war. Of those, more than 600 were killed in battle.

Many of the local recruits didn't see their first action until Vimy.

"The battalions that fought in the fall of '16 had

been decimated," Murray said. "There was a regiment that went into battle with 700 men and came out with 80. They were desperate for reinforcements."

There were recruitment centres and armouries in towns and villages throughout the area, from Cookstown to Coldwater. Simcoe County had a population of about 82,000 in 1916, so pulling that many men out of their communities for military service certainly affected the home front, Murray said.

A few of those communities will also pay tribute

April 9. The legion's Meaford branch will host a cer-

emony at that community's cenotaph at 2 p.m. There will be a ceremonial wreath laying and the sharing of some Vimy history during the service.

The Coldwater legion will host a luncheon at 2 p.m. Admission is free for veterans and their caregivers and \$8 for everyone else. Advance registration is required; participants can call 705-686-3388 for more information.

Canadian Forces Base Borden, which opened in July 1916 and trained more than 30,000 Canadian soldiers during the war, will host an invitation-only tour through restored



Pte. Elwood Wines

THOSE WHO FOUGHT

PTE. ELWOOD WINES

Born in New Lowell in 1894, Wines enlisted with the 157th Battalion in January 1916. He was wounded at Vimy, collapsed suddenly while being transported to a field hospital and died on April 13, 1917. He was 23. Wines was described in a newspaper article from the time as a devoted son and brother with a devout belief in God, who helped his father on the family farm. He is buried at Ecoivres military cemetery in France.



Major Samuel Kenyon Lount

MAJ. SAMUEL KENYON LOUNT

After leading a roughly 200-member company that seized German guns and distinguished itself on the battlefield at Vimy, Lount received the Military Cross.

He was born in Barrie in 1892 and worked for the Bank of Nova Scotia before enlisting with the 76th Battalion in August 1915. Several accounts from officers have described the good work done by Lount. He received a gunshot wound to the neck at the Somme in September 1916 and was diagnosed with shell shock at Passchendaele in November 1917. He survived the war, albeit with battle scars.

trenches, plus a breakfast and ceremony.

Other speakers for the Barrie event will include history professor and author Andrew Iarocci, Lori Oschefski (British home children) and Maj.-Gen. Glynne Hines (post-traumatic stress disorder). More than 150 people are expected to attend.

While the event is free,

the legion wants participants to purchase and wear \$5 Vimy pins. Proceeds benefit education programs organized by the branch and the Vimy Foundation.

The pins can be purchased at the legion, which is at 410 St. Vincent St. For more information, call 705-728-1412 or visit barrielegion147.ca.

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