

THE BATTLE OF VIMY RIDGE

100TH ANNIVERSARY

COMMEMORATIVE GALA DINNER

1800 hrs Saturday 1 April 2017

London Convention Center

BACKGROUND

During 2017, Canada will celebrate its 150th Birthday. In addition, the country will commemorate the 100th anniversary of the Battle of Vimy Ridge – which historians have named the Birth of a Nation. The city of London has already commenced planning for these events.

VIMY Branch of the Royal Canadian Legion in London will mark the landmark commemoration by holding a GALA Dinner on 1 April 2017, in the Grand Ball Room of the London Convention Centre. 800 to 1000 guests are expected. The event is organized in collaboration with the Vimy Foundation, The Royal Canadian Legion, The City of London, London Area Military and Cadet Units, Area First Responders including the Police, Fire and Paramedics, Area Museums, Historical Societies and Fanshawe Community College.

PURPOSE

All proceeds from the event will go to the Poppy Fund. The purpose of the Poppy Fund is to assist veterans and their dependents. The money raised is used to provide ex-service personnel and their families in need, with dental and eye care, medical equipment, prescriptions, shelter, clothing and other assistance.

THE GALA DINNER

The invited Guests of Honour are His Excellency, David Johnston, Governor General and Commander-in-Chief of Canada and Her Excellency, Sharon Johnston. Representing France are the invited Distinguished Guests, the Ambassador of France, Nicolas Chapuis and Madame Chapuis. We are awaiting confirmation of their acceptance.

The actual date of the battle was 9 to 12 April 1917. Since there will other events taking place the weekend of 8/9 April, including a Pilgrimage to Vimy Ridge in France, it was decided the event in London would be celebrated a week earlier on 1 April 2017.

A number of features are designed to make it not only a fitting tribute to the 100th Anniversary of the battle but an unforgettable evening. In addition to a number of staging arrangements, including carefully restored uniforms, a display of Victoria Crosses won by area soldiers, reenactors in period uniforms, accessories, vehicles and equipment from WW 1, ice sculptures and a large themed mural of Vimy “Now and Then” will add profound context to the evening .

To allow the civilian audience to experience firsthand the emotion and power of the Last Post and Reveille, ten buglers from area cadet corps bands, one for each decade, will play responsive versions of the iconic bugle solos. Standing on opposite sides of the ballroom, five will be dressed in 1917- period uniforms, the other in today’s dress. Playing this Buglers’ Tribute, across the 100 years of remembrance, as represented by the size of the dining area, will ensure a rare moment of remembrance.

From the very first Vimy Branch meeting in 1929, music has formed a memorable part of Vimy dinners. The original orchestra featured such talents as flutist Roger Gardiner, who played with the Boston Symphony and Ken Ferguson, who had played trumpet with Guy Lombardo. Since then, the orchestra continues to enjoy exceptional musicians and will be an integral part of the celebration.

Also performing will be highly skilled Pipers filling the Grand ballroom with their iconic music, not only to entertain but also to pipe important moments throughout the evening and during our Remembrance Ceremony.

Topping off an evening of great music will be the always popular dance time with an outstanding Dance Band.

Militarily, there will be a Quarter Guard and a Mounted Troop of 1st Hussars. An added commemoration, the Gala follows a planned Freedom of the City Parade by those London Units who proudly carry the Vimy Ridge Battle Honour on their Regimental Colours.

Dinner guests will be rubbing shoulders with serving Military and RCMP resplendent in full mess dress, retired military and other first responders in Legion or Regimental Blazers or formal dress, wearing their hard-won medals and decorations.

Finally, the Gala will also host a silent Auction where period pieces and related items will be available for bidding. Again, all proceeds will be going to support the Poppy fund and our Veterans.

In retrospect, this Commemorative Gala Dinner will be a most enjoyable and memorable evening for all. It truly recognizes this important anniversary through: rich military and musical pageantry, exceptional Speakers, impressive historical displays and a very moving Remembrance Ceremony - all this combined with a delicious meal and after-dinner dancing enhanced by the realization that your attendance is supporting our Veterans.

Dinner participants will receive souvenir Vimy Pins, a keepsake gala program and replica period documents and imagery located on their tables.

You won't want to miss out on what will truly be a once-in-a-lifetime experience.

Tickets are \$100 each and sales will commence from 1 April 2016.

We look forward to welcoming you!