

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. The Chief of Defence Staff, General Johnathon Vance, CMM, MSC, CD has also been invited. 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, accessories, vehicles and equipment from WW 1, ice sculptures and other exceptional artwork and displays inclusive of a recreation of a section of WW1 Trench will add profound context to the evening.

Three groups of re-enactors dressed in period dress will guide dinner guests around the 10,000 square feet of displays, answering questions and demonstrating the operation of actual WW1 equipment.

To allow the audience to experience firsthand the emotion and power of the Last Post and Reveille, David Cunningham the grandson of 16 year old, Pte George William Shaw who lied about his age, joined the Canadian Expeditionary Force and actually played the bugle during the Battle of Vimy Ridge; will play the iconic bugle solos on the very same bugle his grandfather played during the Battle. 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. Our 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, exceptional musicians continue to be an integral part of the celebration. The HMCS Star Band continues with this must storied tradition.

Also performing will be highly skilled Pipers of the London Firefighters Pipe Band 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.

An exceptional soloist will regale us with La Marsailles. The Amabile Young Men's Choir will treat our dinner guests to exceptionally beautiful renditions of our anthems and afterwards, during the dinner course, a selection of other classics.

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

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 the Fourth Battalion the Royal Canadian Regiment who proudly carry the Vimy Ridge Battle Honour on their Regimental Colours.

Throughout the evening two massive screens will continuously present period imagery and other tributes that serve to transport viewers back to Vimy Ridge and visually reinforce key elements of the evening's program.

During this formal dress occasion, 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, wearing their hard-earned medals and decorations.

Finally, the Gala will also host a silent Auction where Vimy themed art work and other attractive 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.

Menu

Soup

- *Butternut Squash and Niagara Apple Bisque (Gluten Free)*

Main Entrée Choices:

- Dry aged Beef Striploin (8 ounces) with Peppercorn Sauce with a Yukon Gold Purée and Seasonal Vegetables
- Oven Roasted Supreme of Ontario Chicken with a Yukon Gold Purée and Seasonal Vegetables
- Vegetarian option “Grilled Vegetable Strudel with a Fire Roasted Red Pepper Sauce”

Dessert

- Apple Flan Served with a Crème Anglais and Berry Garnish

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!