

Key Canadian dates in the First World War

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Aug. 4, 1914: Canada at War

When Britain went to war, all colonies and dominions of the British Empire, like Canada and Newfoundland, were automatically at war.

Aug. 22, 1914: War Measures Act

Canada passed the War Measures Act in order to provide the government with new and intrusive powers to prosecute the war. These powers included censorship, the right to detain and arrest Canadians, and the right to take control over any property.

April 22, 1915: Battle of Second Ypres

In Canada's first major battle, the outnumbered Canadian Division faced the first use of chlorine gas as a battlefield agent. A third of the force, or 6,000 soldiers, were killed, wounded, or captured, Canadians kept the Germans from

but the _____
breaking through.

July 1, 1916: Beaumont Hamel

The Newfoundland Regiment went into battle at Beaumont Hamel as part of a general British offensive on 1 July 1916. Due to error and miscalculation, the Regiment attacked through uncut barbed wire against heavy machine-gun fire. Within 30 minutes, 324 of its 801 soldiers were dead or missing, and another 386 were wounded.

April 9-12, 1917: Battle of Vimy Ridge

Canadians successfully attacked the German-held strongpoint of Vimy Ridge. The thoroughly planned and executed victory has become a post-war symbol for Canadian identity and independence.

Sept. 20, 1917: Wartime Elections Act

In preparation for an election mainly on the issue of conscription (mandatory military service) the government changed the election rules. Some Canadian women were able to vote for the first time, while other Canadians were lost their right to vote in sweeping changes to enfranchisement.

Oct. 26-Nov. 10, 1917: Battle of Passchendaele

Remembered for its brutal fighting and horrible weather conditions, Canadian forces serving under a Canadian commander captured their objective, but suffered 16,000 killed or wounded.

Dec. 17, 1917: Federal Election

The 1917 debate on conscription, mandatory military service for men, was one of the fiercest and most divisive in Canadian political history. French-Canadians, as well as many farmers, unionized workers, non-British immigrants, and other Canadians generally opposed the measure. The pro-conscription side won the election, polarizing provinces, ethnic and linguistic groups, communities, and families, and had lasting political effects on the country as a whole.

Aug. 8-Nov. 11, 1918: The Hundred Days

Canadians played a key role in the series of battles, with infantry and artillery working in a combined arms system, along with tactical airpower, machine-guns, mortars, chemical weapons, and armoured vehicles. The German armies were driven back and defeated.

Nov. 11 1918: Armistice

The war ends at 11 a.m. Two minutes earlier, Canadian Pvt. George Price is killed, the last casualty of war that claims more than nine million service personnel and an estimated 20 million civilians killed.

Source: Canadian War Museum