

# CANADIAN NATIONAL VIMY MEMORIAL

Designed by Canadian sculptor and architect Walter Seymour Allward, this majestic monument took 11 years to build. It rests on a bed of 11,000 tonnes of concrete, reinforced with hundreds of tonnes of steel.

The towering pylons and sculptured figures contain almost 6,000 tonnes of limestone brought to the site from an abandoned Roman quarry on the Adriatic Sea (in present day Croatia).

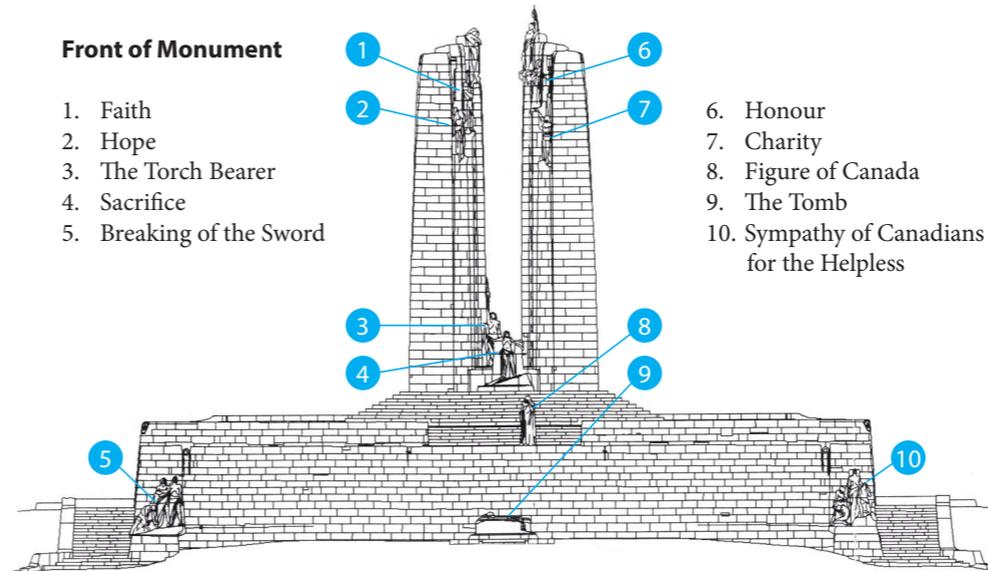
The figures were carved where they now stand. A cloaked figure (8), made from a single, 30-tonne block of stone, stands at the front of the monument overlooking the Douai Plain. This sorrowful figure of a woman represents Canada—a young nation mourning her dead.

Below is a tomb (9), draped in laurel branches and bearing a helmet and sword. On each side of the front walls at the base of the steps are the Defenders – two groupings of figures known as the Breaking of the Sword (5) and Sympathy of Canadians for the Helpless (10). Above each grouping is a cannon draped in laurel and olive branches.

Carved on the walls of the monument are the names of some

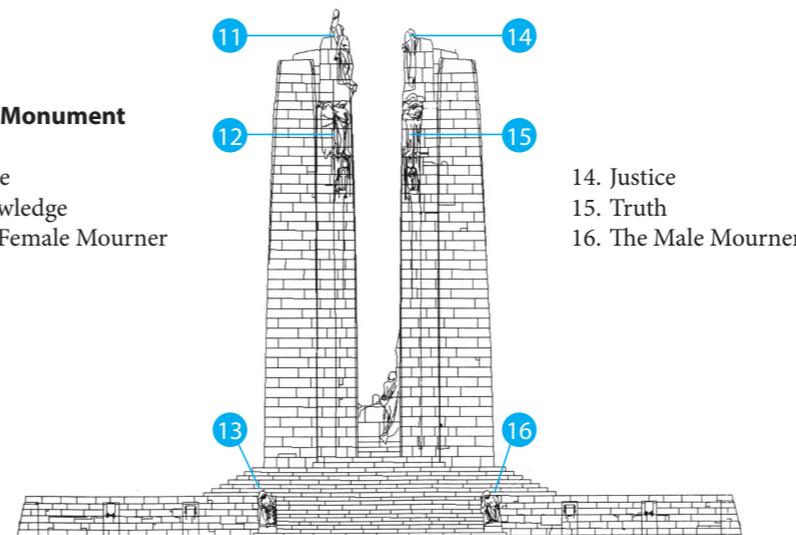
## Front of Monument

1. Faith
2. Hope
3. The Torch Bearer
4. Sacrifice
5. Breaking of the Sword



## Rear of Monument

11. Peace
12. Knowledge
13. The Female Mourner



11,285 Canadians who died in France and whose final resting place was then unknown. Standing on the monument's wide stone terrace overlooking the broad fields and rolling hills of Northern France, one can see other places where Canadians fought and died during the war. More than 7,000 of these fallen heroes are buried in 30 war cemeteries within a 20-kilometre radius of the Canadian National Vimy Memorial. More than 66,000 Canadians gave their lives during the First World War.

The twin white pylons, one bearing the maple leaves of Canada, the other the fleurs-de-lys of France, symbolize the sacrifices of both countries. At the top are figures representing Peace (11) and Justice (14); below them on the back of the pylons are the figures representing Truth (15) and Knowledge (12). Around these figures are shields of Canada, Britain and France. At the base of the pylons is a young dying soldier, the Spirit of Sacrifice (4), and the Torch Bearer (3). On each side of the staircase are the male (16) and female (13) Mourner figures.

# VIMY

Self guided tour map

## 1. Visitor Centre “You Are Here”

The Visitor Centre at the Canadian National Vimy Memorial was officially unveiled on November 9, 1997. The centre offers information about events at Vimy Ridge during the First World War and the part played by the Canadian Corps in recapturing this important high ground in the Battle of Vimy Ridge that was fought April 9-12, 1917.

There are maps, presentation boards, photographs, military exhibits and personal artifacts on display. There is also a film showing documentary footage. Postcards, books and pamphlets related to the Battle of Vimy Ridge and the Canadian National Vimy Memorial are available at the reception desk.

## 2. Tunnels and restored Trenches

The First World War’s Western Front had an extensive system of trenches, underground tunnels and dugouts. In preparation for the Battle of Vimy Ridge, five British tunneling companies excavated 14 “subways” in the Canadian Corps’ sector, the longest of which was more than 1,700 metres (1,880 yards) in length. These special tunnels connected the Allied reserve lines to the front lines and permitted soldiers to advance to the front quickly and unobserved by the enemy. The subways’ main passages typically measured about two metres high and one meter wide, and were dug seven to ten metres (7.7 to 11 yards) below the surface for protection from heavy artillery fire. These large underground networks incorporated light rail lines, dressing stations, command posts, water reservoirs, ammunition stores, mortar and machine gun posts, and communication centres. A portion of the Grange Subway, originally some 1,230 metres (1,340 yards) in length, is now open to the public.

The trenches that can be seen at Vimy were reconstructed between 1925 and 1927. They are located in the same positions as the original Canadian and German outpost lines of 1917. At some points, the opposing trenches were only

25 metres (27.3 apart. What is visible today represents only a small portion of the network of trench lines that originally ran the entire seven-kilometre length of the Canadian sector at Vimy.

## 3. No Man’s Land

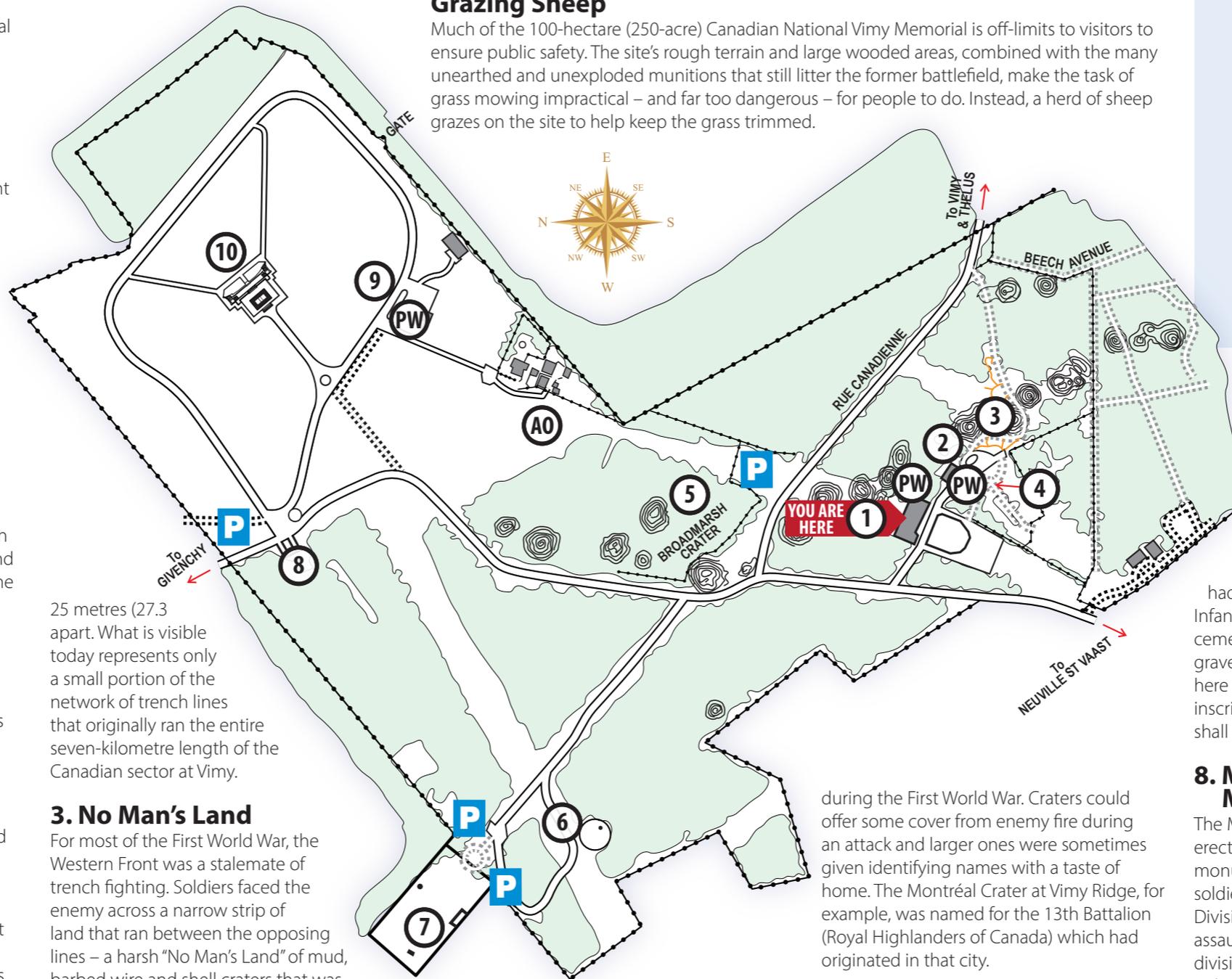
For most of the First World War, the Western Front was a stalemate of trench fighting. Soldiers faced the enemy across a narrow strip of land that ran between the opposing lines – a harsh “No Man’s Land” of mud, barbed wire and shell craters that was swept by deadly rifle, machine gun and artillery fire. This is what soldiers had to cross when they went “over the top” of the trenches and launched an attack. Sadly, the dead and wounded who fell in No Man’s Land often could not be recovered as it was too dangerous.

## 4. ‘Gift from France’ Plaque

This cairn and plaque commemorates the generosity of the people of France in helping make the creation of the Canadian

## Grazing Sheep

Much of the 100-hectare (250-acre) Canadian National Vimy Memorial is off-limits to visitors to ensure public safety. The site’s rough terrain and large wooded areas, combined with the many unearthed and unexploded munitions that still litter the former battlefield, make the task of grass mowing impractical – and far too dangerous – for people to do. Instead, a herd of sheep grazes on the site to help keep the grass trimmed.



National Vimy Memorial possible. In 1922, use of the land for the battlefield park was granted to the people of Canada for all time by the grateful French nation.

## 5. Craters

The many craters the visitor sees today at Vimy Ridge were created by the heavy artillery fire and powerful underground mine explosions that blasted the landscape there

during the First World War. Craters could offer some cover from enemy fire during an attack and larger ones were sometimes given identifying names with a taste of home. The Montréal Crater at Vimy Ridge, for example, was named for the 13th Battalion (Royal Highlanders of Canada) which had originated in that city.

## 6. Givenchy Road Canadian Cemetery

This cemetery, originally known as CD 1, contains the graves of soldiers who lost their lives April 9-13, 1917. More than 100 Canadians who fought and died in the Battle of Vimy Ridge are buried here.

## 7. Canadian Cemetery No. 2

There are nearly 3,000 First World War soldiers commemorated at this cemetery, including more than 370 Canadians who

- 1 Visitors Centre
- 2 Subway/Restored Trenches
- 3 No Man’s Land
- 4 “Gift from France” Plaque
- 5 Craters
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- 8 Moroccan Division Memorial
- 9 Front Lines Map Plaque
- 10 VIMY Monument
- P Parking lots
- PW Public washrooms
- AO Administrative office

lost their lives in the Battle of Vimy Ridge. This cemetery was established by the Canadian Corps after the fighting at Vimy Ridge. The majority of the fallen were reinterred here in the years following the end of the war from surrounding battlefields and isolated gravesites nearby.

Twenty-nine Canadian soldiers who had been buried in the 11th Canadian Infantry Brigade Cemetery and the Canadian cemetery near Gunner’s Crater, but whose graves are now lost, are commemorated here by special memorial headstones inscribed with the quotation, “Their Glory shall not be blotted out.”

## 8. Moroccan Division Memorial

The Moroccan Division Memorial was erected between 1919 and 1925. The monument commemorates the brave soldiers of the French Army’s Moroccan Division who lost their lives during a fierce assault here in May 1915. Members of the division fought their way to the top of Vimy Ridge but, in the face of determined German counter-attacks, they were unable to hold the gains that they had made and were forced to withdraw with heavy losses.

## 9. Front Lines Map Plaque

This large plaque features a map of the front lines at Vimy Ridge prior to the attack on April 9, 1917, as well as the positions of the major Allied and German units there.

## 10. VIMY Monument

See reverse side for discription.