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Vimy Ridge victory during First World War not forgotten



Bernard S. Andrews, president of the Manitoulin and North Shore Naval Veterans Association, laid a naval cross at the civic courthouse cenotaph April 9 to commemorate the 93 anniversary of the battle of Vimy Ridge during the First World War. Photo by Bill Bradley.

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By: Bill Bradley - Sudbury Northern Life

The battle for Vimy Ridge in northern France, during the First World War 93 years ago, is being commemorated various ways in Greater Sudbury during the following week.

Historians and veterans have remarked that the battle for Vimy Ridge, where more than 10,000 Canadians were killed or wounded, defined Canada as a country because Canadian troops were commanded by their own officers and operated as a unified force for the first time.

At 5:30 a.m. on April 19, 1917, troops from four Canadian divisions stormed the ridge after 10 days of artillery bombardment by the Canadians and British. More than 15,000 Canadian infantry overran the German positions all along the front.

Bernard S. Andrews, president of the Manitoulin and North Shore Naval Veterans Association, laid a naval cross at the civic courthouse cenotaph on the morning of April 9. He was accompanied by Bill Lee, president of the War Pensioners Association of Canada, Sudbury branch.

Andrews was commemorating a land assault such as Vimy Ridge because it was the Canadian Navy and Merchant Marine ships that transported the troops or escorted them across the Atlantic in both the First and Second World Wars.

“(The troops) did not walk on the water to arrive in England,” Andrews said. “They were brought there by our ships and our sailors. Many of our sailors died or were wounded helping them get across the ocean so they could fight the enemy.”

Andrews said that this year marks the 100th anniversary of the Canadian Navy.

“In 1910 we had our own ships for the first time. Before that we were under the control of the British Navy.”

Vimy Ridge will also be commemorated by the Royal Canadian Branch 76 Legion on Sunday, April 18 when there will be a parade forming up at Tom Davies Square at 1:30 p.m. From there, the procession will move at 1:50 p.m. to the Church of the Epiphany for a service at about 2 p.m.

For more information, phone the Legion office at 566-4010.