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TORONTO – On the 65th anniversary of the end of the Second World War in Europe, known as V-E Day, a new Ipsos Reid poll commissioned by The Historica-Dominion Institute reveals a deep admiration for veterans.

Three quarters (77%) of Canadians ‘agree’ (33% strongly/44% somewhat) that ‘the men and women who served in the Second World War deserve to be called “the Greatest Generation”’, as broadcaster Tom Brokaw famously described their American counterparts.

Furthermore, almost all (94%) Canadians ‘agree’ (69% strongly/26% somewhat) that ‘Canada’s Second World War veterans deserve to be called heroes’, a widespread feeling across the country and across generations.

Majority (58%) of Canadians Say They Would Have Served...

The survey found that nearly three quarters (72%) of Canadians ‘agree’ (38% strongly/34% somewhat) that they would be ‘ashamed if Canada had not entered the Second World War’.



From 1939 to 1945, over one million Canadians and Newfoundlanders served in the Second World War. The survey asked respondents to put themselves in the shoes of these men and women.

A majority (58%) of Canadians say they would have signed up to serve in the Second World War (23% definitely yes/35% probably yes) if it were 1939 and they were 20 years old and living in Canada. They would have done so knowing everything that they have seen, heard and learned about the Second World War, including the high number of injuries and casualties among Canadian troops, as well as their ultimate victory over the Axis Powers. However, just four in ten (40%) Canadians aged 18 to 35 say they'd sign up to serve if they found themselves in those circumstances, suggesting younger Canadians feel differently about the War than older Canadians.

Reflecting on V-E Day ...

Just one half (50%) of Canadians know that we will be marking the 65th anniversary of V-E Day on May 8, 2010. Others believed that the date was the 10th anniversary of Pierre Trudeau's death (17%), the 200th anniversary of Sir John A Macdonald's birth (16%), the 20th anniversary of the collapse of the Meech Lake Accord (12%), or even the 40th anniversary of the October Crisis (5%), which, as the name suggests, did not occur in May.

This could perhaps be a result of the fact that only one in ten (11%) of Canadians think VE Day is Canada's most significant event of the Second World War. In fact, a majority (54%) of Canadians believe that D-Day/Invasion of Normandy was Canada's most significant moment in the Second World War, while more believe that the Battle of Dieppe (14%) and the Liberation of Holland (13%) were significant.

Honouring our Heroes...

A majority (62%) of Canadians 'agree' (27% strongly/35% somewhat) that 'compared to other countries, Canada does not do enough to honour its veterans; those over 55 are the most likely to agree (70%).

Most (90%) believe (52% strongly/38% somewhat) that students should meet a Second World War veteran as part of their history class. To this end, The Historica-Dominion Institute's program, *The Memory Project Speakers' Bureau*, has enabled veterans to share their stories with over one million students since 2001.

Since our veterans are getting older and many of them are no longer with us, almost all (96%) 'agree' (69% strongly/26% somewhat) that 'it is important to record the stories of Second World War veterans before it is too late'. The Historica-Dominion Institute's landmark oral history archive, *The Memory Project: Stories of the Second World War*, is recording the stories of every consenting Second World War veteran.

Serving in Today's Wars...

At various times in Canada's history, tens of thousands of Canadians have volunteered to fight overseas or on the home front. Thinking about whether or not they could foresee an international conflict that would compel them to volunteer for military service, including a possible combat role, among those who say they'd be able to serve, four in ten (40%) say they could foresee such a circumstance, up 3 points from 2002. Conversely, six in ten (60%) couldn't foresee such a circumstance that would compel them to volunteer for military service, down 3 points from 2002.



These are some of the findings of an Ipsos Reid poll conducted between April 27-30, 2010, on behalf of The Historica-Dominion Institute. For this survey, a national sample of 1,025 adults from Ipsos' Canadian online panel was interviewed online. Weighting was then employed to balance demographics and ensure that the sample's composition reflects that of the adult population according to Census data and to provide results intended to approximate the sample universe. A survey with an unweighted probability sample of this size and a 100% response rate would have an estimated margin of error of +/-3.1 percentage points 19 times out of 20 of what the results would have been had the entire population of adults in Canada been polled. All sample surveys and polls may be subject to other sources of error, including, but not limited to coverage error, and measurement error.

Older Generations and Younger Generations Don't Always See Eye to Eye...

The data revealed some significant findings between generations and their views towards veterans in Canada and the Second World War:

- Older Canadians (84%) are the most likely to believe that the men and women who served in the Second World War deserve to be called the Greatest Generation, while middle-aged (79%) Canadians are slightly less likely, and younger Canadians are much less likely (66%) to believe this should be the case.
- Older Canadians are most likely (82%) to say they'd be ashamed if Canada had not entered the Second World War, while middle-aged (71%) and younger Canadians (62%) are less likely to say they'd be ashamed if Canada had not participated.

- Older Canadians are by far the most likely (72%) to say they'd sign up to serve in the Second World War if it were 1939, while middle-aged (59%) Canadians are significantly less likely to say they would sign up. Just four in ten (40%) adults under the age of 35 say they'd sign up to serve if they found themselves in those circumstances.
- Canadians aged 55 and older (70%) and those aged 35 to 54 (65%) are much more likely than those aged 18 to 34 (49%) to believe that, compared to other countries, Canada does not do enough to honour its veterans.

Regional Variations...

The data suggest that Canadians across the country might not totally agree when it comes to their attitudes about Veterans and the Second World War:

- Atlantic Canadians (82%), Ontarians (81%) and British Columbians (80%) have the highest propensity to believe that those who served in the Second World War deserve to be called the Greatest Generation, while those living in Saskatchewan and Manitoba (77%), Alberta (71%) and Quebec (69%) are less likely to believe this.
- Most Canadians living in Atlantic Canada (82%), Alberta (81%), British Columbia (78%), Saskatchewan and Manitoba (75%) and Ontario (75%) would be ashamed if Canada had not entered the Second World War. However, just 56% of Quebecers say they would feel the same way.
- Knowing what they know today, two in three Atlantic Canadians (68%) and British Columbians (68%) are most likely to say that they would have signed up to serve in the Second World War, while a majority of those living in Alberta (60%),



Saskatchewan and Manitoba (57%) and Ontario (57%) say they'd also sign up to serve in those circumstances. However, just one half (49%) of Quebecers would volunteer to serve under those circumstances.

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