PROPOSAL TO SUPPORT THE 2017 VIMY DINNER

BACKGROUND

In the year 2017 Canada will celebrate the country's 150th Birthday. It will be a year long celebration. In addition, the country will commemorate the 100th anniversary of the Battle of Vimy Ridge. The city of London has already commenced planning for these events. London has a branch of the Royal Canadian Legion known as the VIMY Branch and that branch has undertaken the task of contributing to the commemoration by way of having a GALA Dinner on 1 Apr 2017 in the London Convention Centre to recognize the 100th Anniversary of the battle; the proceeds of which will go to the Legion Poppy Fund. It is planned to have 1000 guests. The event is organized in collaboration with the VIMY Foundation. A short history of the VIMY branch of the legion is attached as Annex A.

At Annex B is a short history of the battle. Details of the GALA dinner are below.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this proposal is to solicit a donation as a sponsor from your company in support of the GALA Dinner scheduled for 1 April 2017. 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. More details on the Poppy Fund can be found at Annex C.

THE GALA DINNER

It is planned to have 1000 guests attend the dinner and the guest of honour will be the Governor General of Canada (invited) and his spouse. Also invited is the French Ambassador and his spouse who have accepted. The CDS has also been invited. Each table of ten will have two veterans. The actual date of the battle was 9 April 1917 but since there will be other events taking place the weekend of 8/9April it was decided that the event in London would be a week earlier; 1 April 2017.
A number of features of this event are designed to make it not only a fitting tribute to the 100th Anniversary of the battle that became known as the Birth of a Nation, but an unforgettable evening. In addition to a number of staging arrangements including carefully restored uniforms, accessories, vehicles and equipment from WW 1, ice sculptures and a large mural of the VIMY monument and several other program features will add to the celebration.

To allow the civilian and military audience to experience firsthand the emotion and power of the Last Post and Reveille, ten buglers from area cadet corps bands, representing one for each decade, will play responsive versions of the iconic bugle solos. Standing on opposite sides of the ballroom, five will be dressed in circa 1917- period uniforms, the other in 2017- period attire.

In addition, proper tributes to recognize the irreplaceable role of the military family and the indispensable contributions of the civilian community, over the century, will be part of the program.

From the very first VIMY Branch meeting in 1929, music has formed a memorable part of VIMY dinners. The 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, the orchestra has continued to perform regularly and will be an integral part of the celebration. During the dance after dinner, music fans of all ages will enjoy their big band renditions of wartime hits.

Attached at Annex D is a breakdown of the sponsorship opportunities for this event.

It is our intention to solicit funding support from prominent, prestigious London and area companies. Although the GOLD level sponsorship has been reserved, we would very much welcome and appreciate your firm being a sponsor at the SILVER or BRONZE level.

Sincerely

W J ( Bill ) Pettipas
Chair
Sponsorship Committee
519 645 8918
wpettipas003n@rogers.com
A Short History:
During 1927 and 1928, a group of energetic, progressive London survivors of the Great War became disillusioned with the veterans club they had joined. They did not protest nor argue nor destroy. These comrades quietly formed their own fraternal organization that they named after the Battle of Vimy Ridge, and it has survived for over 80 years.

They wrote a simple set of guidelines:

a. There would be two meetings a year

b. The meetings would take the form of a dinner with dates that would coincide as closely as possible with the Armistice and the Battle of Vimy Ridge

c. The branch would not at any time acquire a clubhouse

d. It would be a good idea to have music or some form of entertainment at the dinner meetings

e. The executive would carry out all the business of the branch and would call upon any member to render assistance to any veteran in need.

The dinner meetings are held in April and November. They are held at the Mocha Temple on Colborne Street in London, ON
The Battle of VIMY Ridge

The Battle of VIMY Ridge, during WW 1, was so significant that, when Canada was invited at war's end to attend the peace of Versailles’ as a sovereign nation not a colony, it became to be known as The Birth of A Nation.

On Monday, April 9th, 1917, the Canadians were able to win a victory that had evaded the British once and the French twice by defeating the Germans dug in on the murderous high ground of Vimy Ridge. Our soldiers success was all the more remarkable, given their terrible losses suffered in the battles of 1915 and 1916. A major makeover of our fighting techniques turned the situation around and produced a superior fighting Army. They were now hailed as “shock troops” by the allied commanders.

Complementing the incredible bravery, determination and tenacity of the Canadian troops, was our commanders’ innovation and meticulous planning. Two Allied Armies had failed three time to take Vimy Ridge - the same-old-same-old methods wouldn’t work. So, our senior officers innovated the use of artillery, so that a moving curtain of deadly fire would lead our men on to the enemy positions. To ensure the success of the new tactics, our troops rehearsed and practised the new procedures again and again, until every single soldier knew exactly what to do and when.

While we can never forget the final sacrifices and casualties our men experienced, one thing we do understand without question: The Battle of Vimy Ridge lives on as one of Canada’s Finest Hours.
The Poppy Fund

The purpose of the Poppy Fund, of the Royal Canadian Legion, is to assist our Veterans and their dependents. The money raised is used to provide those ex-service personnel and their families in need with dental and eye care, medical equipment, prescriptions, shelter, clothing and other assistance. It is only through receiving financial support that we can continue to provide these necessary services.

Poppy Funds are made available through the generosity of the Canadian public and consequently they are part of the public trust between Canadians and the Legion. As a consequence of this bond, Poppy Funds are held in trust at each level of the organization and may be used for approved purposes only.

The basic purpose and obligations of the Poppy Trust Fund are to assist:

Canadian ex-service personnel and their dependants who are in need of assistance.

Canadian ex-service personnel who have served on Class “C” reserve service and their dependants who are in need of assistance.

Merchant Navy personnel who are eligible and their dependants who are in need of assistance.

Ex-service personnel of allied countries who are residents of Canada and their dependants who are in need of assistance.

Ex-service personnel of Commonwealth countries who are residents of Canada and their dependants who are in need of assistance.
### Sponsorship Opportunities

#### GOLD
- **$20,000**
  - Two Places at the Head Table
  - Three tables of ten
  - Two veterans at each table

#### SILVER
- **$10,000**
  - Two tables of ten
  - Two veterans at each table

#### BRONZE
- **$5,000**
  - One table of ten
  - Two veterans at each table
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. 1,000 guests are expected. The event is organized in collaboration with the Vimy Foundation, The Royal Canadian Legion, The City of London, London Area Military units, 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. Each sponsored table of ten will have two veterans.

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. Other prominent guests include The Chief of the Defence Staff, General Jonathan Vance and wife, Kerry, and Legion Dominion President, David Flannigan and his wife, Vera.
The actual date of the battle was 9 to 12 April 1917. Since there will be other events taking place the weekend of 8/9 April, including a Pilgrimage to Vimy Ridge, it was decided the event in London would be 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, reenactors in period uniforms, accessories, vehicles and equipment from WW 1 and ice sculptures will add to the celebration.

Also performing will be highly skilled Pipers 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. Topping off an evening of great music will be the always popular dance time, with the well-known dance band from Hamilton's HMCS Star.

Militarily, there will be a Quarter Guard and a Mounted Troop of 1st Hussars. An added commemoration, the Gala follows a Freedom of the City Parade by those London Units who proudly carry the Vimy Ridge Battle Honour on their Regimental Colours.

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 or formal dress, wearing their hard-won medals and decorations.

Finally, the Gala will also host a silent auction where an amazing selection of period pieces and unique 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, replica period documents and imagery located on their tables.

You won’t want to miss out on what will truly be a once-in-a-lifetime experience.

Tickets are $100 each and are now on sale.

We look forward to welcoming you!