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Silence reigns in the early morning light at the Canadian National Vimy Memorial in Vimy, France, on 7 April 2017, one hundred years to the day after the epic battle.

Asian- and Black-Canadians at Vimy Ridge

by Mathias Joost

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Introduction

The Battle of Vimy Ridge is considered the quintessential “Canadian” battle of the First World War, celebrated in Canadian mythology as the moment when Canada became a nation and as having bought it a seat at the Versailles Peace Treaty. The troops involved were more than just of British and Canadian origin – in effect, White-Canadians. Asian- and Black-Canadians also fought at Vimy Ridge, their story mainly untold as to how they got to Vimy, and the nature and extent of their participation in the battle.

Conventional narratives of Black-Canadian participation in the First World War focus upon the contributions of No. 2 Construction Battalion, Canada’s largest predominantly-Black unit of that conflict. Forgotten are the many Black-Canadians who enlisted in battalions of the Canadian Expeditionary Force (CEF), for whom the common mythology indicates that they were not able to enlist in the CEF. Thus, there should not have been any

Black-Canadian soldiers at the Battle of Vimy Ridge. The truth, however, is far different.

Japanese-Canadians and their participation in the CEF during the First World War is also an oft-overlooked subject. They too had problems enlisting in the CEF, but they were eventually accepted in ‘White’ battalions. Their arrival in the United Kingdom was just in time to be trained and deployed, so that they could participate in the Battle of Vimy Ridge.

In terms of numbers, the soldiers from both of these ethnic groups were small, yet they served with as great a determination as any other soldier. By the time of the Battle of Vimy Ridge, there were about 140 Black-Canadian soldiers who had enlisted in the combat battalions of the CEF, as well as 186 Japanese-Canadians. Yet, at the battle itself, only about 30 Black soldiers were involved, and about 130 Japanese-Canadians. Considering that there were at least 212 Japanese-Canadians who served in the CEF during the war, and about 1250 Black-Canadians, including the Black-Caribbean and African-Americans who served, the disparity in numbers is worth investigating.¹ Further, their contributions to the Battle should be considered an example of the desire to prove themselves *equal to* and *worthy of* being considered Canadian. This article will examine the means by which Black- and Japanese-Canadians were accepted into the CEF, how this affected their presence at Vimy Ridge, and the nature of their participation.²

Beginnings

When Japanese-Canadians in the lower mainland of British Columbia were unable to enlist in CEF battalions being recruited in that area in 1914 and 1915, they found units ready to accept them in Alberta. It started slowly. The 13th Battalion, Canadian Mounted Rifles (CMR), enlisted two on 6 April 1916, the 175th Battalion, one on 6 February, the 191st Battalion, three at the end of May, and the 192nd Battalion, two on 18 May. Starting in June, Japanese-Canadians were accepted into the four battalions in small numbers each week, so that by the time each departed for the UK, they consisted of the numbers and allocations as noted in Table 1.

Unit	Number of Japanese-Canadians ³	Date of Departure for UK
13 th Battalion, CMR	41	June 1916
175 th Battalion	57	October 1916
191 st Battalion	22	March 1917
192 nd Battalion	50	November 1916

Table 1: Japanese-Canadians in Alberta-based battalions.

Unlike the Japanese-Canadians who were concentrated in four battalions, Black-Canadians were scattered throughout the CEF, since they enlisted from Vancouver to Halifax. Further, they enlisted over a much longer period of time. By the end of 1916, at least 139 had joined combat units.³ While the formation of No. 2 Construction Battalion was supposed to provide an outlet for those Black men who wished to serve, many Black-Canadians decided to enlist in infantry battalions, even at the risk of being rejected. The result was that they could be found in small numbers, normally clusters of under- five, in battalions throughout the CEF.

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On arrival in the UK, the battalions in which Black- and Japanese-Canadians had enlisted were broken up, with the exception of most battalions that crossed the Atlantic as part of the 1st and 2nd Canadian Divisions. When the four battalions in which Japanese-Canadians had enlisted arrived in the UK, they were dispersed. The Japanese-Canadians were kept together in their respective platoons and transferred to the 10th, 50th and 52nd Battalions. That said, the men of the 191st Battalion arrived in the UK in April 1917, and were thus too late to participate at the Battle of Vimy Ridge.

The Black-Canadians

However, the situation for Black-Canadians was far different. Of the 122 Black soldiers whose units made it to the UK by the end of 1916 and are known to have enlisted in the combat arms, at least 85 were unable to serve at Vimy.⁴ There were a number of reasons for this. Some had been left behind in Canada or Bermuda for medical or other reasons, or they were in the process of being released after having already made it to the United Kingdom.⁵ The main reason for release was for medical issues, as the medical examination performed upon enlistment was, *at best*, cursory, and it often missed back problems, heart issues, flat feet, or other medical concerns that precluded an individual from service.⁶

The biggest systemic reason for Black-Canadians not being at Vimy was administrative. There were 33 Black soldiers who were held in reserve battalions after their units had been broken up. While White-Canadians in the same units were quickly sent to front-line battalions, Black-Canadians literally languished in the UK.⁷ Some would be sent to the front after the Battle of Vimy Ridge, while a few served the entire war in the UK. Starting in mid-1916, those that arrived in the UK were less likely to be deployed to the front-line units, or even to spend the rest of their wartime service in the UK. This was likely the result of prejudice on the part of senior staff at the

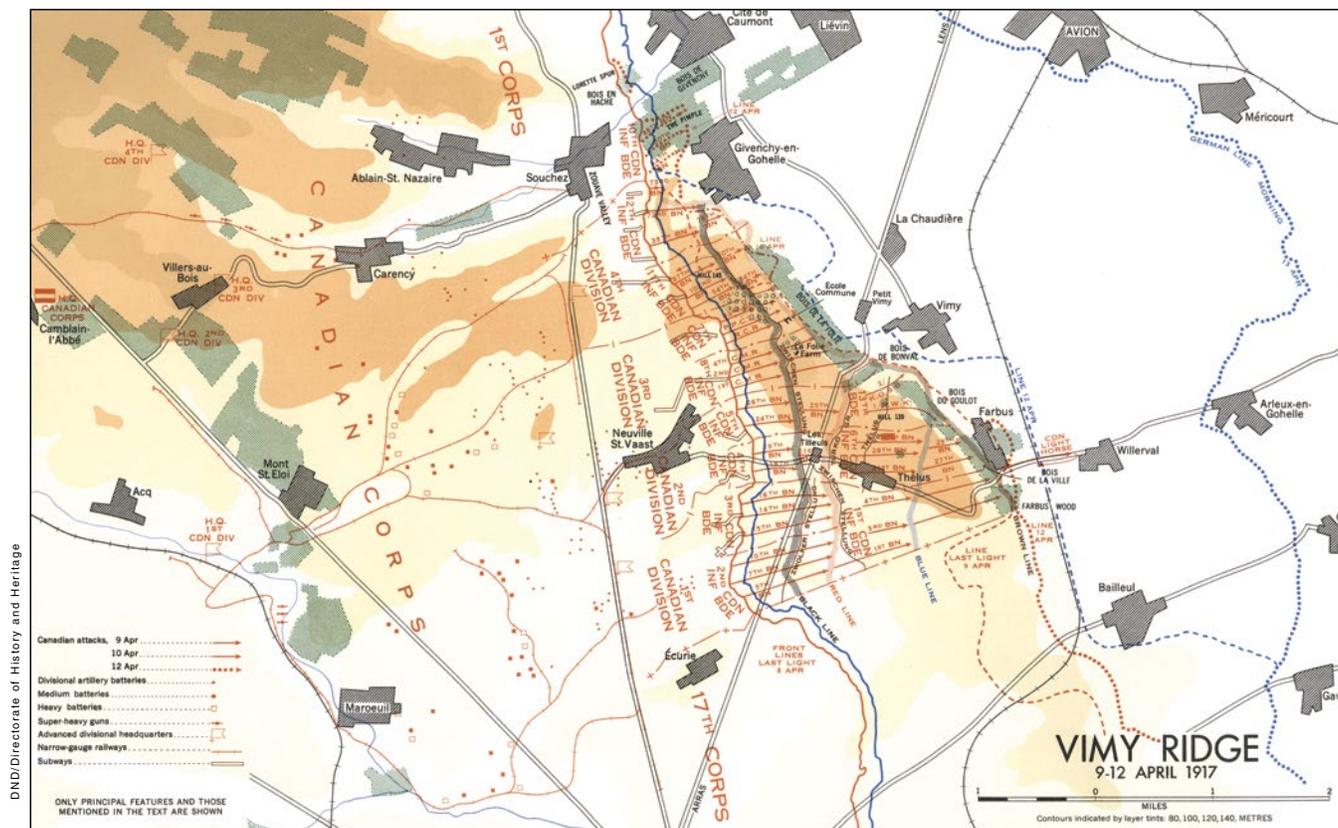
various headquarters, but especially from Major-General Samuel Benfield Steele, commander of the British South Eastern District.⁸

Killed in Action	Died of Illness	Recovering from Wounds	Transferred to No. 2 Construction Battalion	Held in UK – Reserve Battalion	Released (Medical or Other)	Unit Not at Vimy	File Not yet Available	At Vimy
9	1	4	17	33	19	6	16	27

Table 2: Black-Canadian soldiers and their disposition before Vimy Ridge.

For at least six Black-Canadians, they were in units that were not part of the order of battle for Vimy Ridge, units such as stationary hospitals and railway troops. Perhaps one of the more extraordinary reasons for not being at Vimy Ridge was that of a Black artilleryman who was awaiting transfer to the Royal Flying Corps (RFC). At a time when the RFC was not accepting visible minorities for enlistment, his chain of command was supporting his application. He was successful in his endeavour.⁹

Thus, despite the number of Black-Canadians who had arrived in the UK in combat arms regiments being comparable to that of the Japanese-Canadians, there were fewer who were available to serve at Vimy. At best, the current calculations are that around 42 fought during the Battle, although this is likely to be reduced as personnel files become more widely available.



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The Vimy Assault Plan

The attack on Vimy Ridge was a straightforward frontal assault on the German positions. All four Canadian divisions would be involved in the attack, with 850 Canadian guns and 280 British guns providing support, as well as the entire British 5th Division. The artillery was to demolish the German trenches, keep the Germans in their dugouts and suppress German artillery fire. At 5:30 AM, the artillery opened up, with the infantry advancing behind the barrage. Because of the size of the ridge, and the fact that the front lines lay at an angle to the ridge, two of the Canadian divisions had a longer distance to gain than the others. The 1st Division had 4,000 yards to cover, while the 4th Division had only 700 yards to cross, albeit over steeper terrain. Four objectives were laid out in sequence, the Black, Red, Blue, and Brown lines. For the 3rd and 4th Divisions, their objective was the Red Line, while the 1st and 2nd Divisions, having farther to go, had to reach the Brown line. Each division had its own strategy for how to reach its objectives. In the case of the 2nd Brigade, each battalion would have a two-company front, with the first and second waves coming from the first two companies and taking the Black line, with the third and fourth waves from the remaining two companies taking the Red line. Once these objectives were secured, the next battalion would pass through and take the Blue and Brown lines. To help suppress the

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The Japanese-Canadians

By the end of 1916, about 182 Japanese-Canadians had enlisted in the CEF, of whom about 160 had arrived in the UK by the time of Vimy Ridge. The 22 Japanese soldiers in the 191st Battalion were still in Canada, the battalion only proceeding to the UK in late-March 1917. Of those who had arrived in the UK by the time of the Battle of Vimy Ridge, 148 of them were in three battalions, the 13th CMR, the 175th Battalion, and the 192nd Battalion. Of the 14 known to have arrived in the UK in other battalions, at least three fought at Vimy. Of the remainder, four were still in the UK, while two had already been in combat, one who was recovering from his wounds at the time of Vimy Ridge, and one who had been killed in action.

Thirty-eight Japanese-Canadian soldiers of the 13th Battalion, CMR, departed for France on 27 August 1916. They were first sent to the Princess Patricia’s Canadian Light Infantry (PPCLI) Depot, and then to the PPCLI at the front, after which they were transferred to the 52nd Battalion, arriving in place on 4 October. This was just in time to join the battalion as it moved into the front



The Taking of Vimy Ridge, Easter Monday 1917, by Richard Jack.

lines at Courcellette. The soldiers of the 175th arrived in the UK in October 1916, and after training, were sent to the 50th Battalion on 2 February 1917. However, the deployment of the 192nd was not as smooth. Most arrived with the 10th Battalion in early-December 1916. However, some arrived between January and March, while others arrived at the Canadian Base Depot in late-January 1917, but only deployed to the 10th Battalion after Vimy.¹¹

By the time of Vimy Ridge, Japanese-Canadians were serving principally in three battalions, with those from the 13th Battalion,

CMR, arriving in France in September 1916, and those of the 175th Battalion arriving on 2 February 1917. In the lead-up to Vimy Ridge, the Canadians raided the German lines every night from 20 March to 8 April.¹² Thus, the Japanese-Canadians of the 50th and 52nd Battalions had seen some fighting and had received some casualties. A few of the injured had returned to their respective battalions in time for Vimy, while others were still recovering from their wounds/injuries, or from other medical problems, such as influenza.

Original Unit	Unit at Vimy Ridge	Killed in Action	Recovering from Wounds	Held in UK – Reserve Battalion	File Unavailable
13 th Bn, CMR	52 nd Bn	2	10	0	13
175 th Bn	50 th Bn	1	8	0	17
192 nd Bn	10 th Bn	0	4	4	12

Table 3: Disposition of Japanese-Canadians prior to Battle of Vimy Ridge.

In terms of the fighting at Vimy Ridge, the Japanese-Canadians of the three battalions had substantially different experiences. The 10th Battalion ‘went over the parapets’ at 5:30 AM. The first wave suffered more than 90 killed and 250 wounded in the first 15 minutes of battle. A small percentage of these were casualties from friendly artillery fire. However, German machine gun and rifle fire accounted for the remainder. With the German machine guns overrun at 5:47 AM, the first two waves reached their objective. The third and fourth waves took heavy casualties in helping

to clear the Black line trenches, with only one officer being left uninjured before they had even begun their advance from the Black line to the Red line. However, by 7:07 AM, the Red line was achieved, the German trenches began to be cleared, and the position was being consolidated.¹³

As the next battalion passed through, the 10th were able to return to their original start point that evening. After a day of rest on 10 April, the battalion moved forward into the Red line



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A Japanese-Canadian soldier shaving outside his dug-out.

positions at 6:30 PM the next day. 12 April resulted in them moving forward again, this time to relieve the 3rd Battalion at the Blue line positions where they remained in support of the 8th Battalion as they moved forward yet again on 14 April.¹⁴

Despite the carnage levied upon the 10th Battalion, the casualties among the Japanese-Canadians were light. Only two were killed, one on 9 April, and one on 11 April (Privates Kojima and Migita). The number injured/wounded was also light, numbering only three – on each 9 April, 12 April, and 14 April. One soldier suffered a shrapnel wound to the chest, one a severe shrapnel wound to the left leg, and one a slight rifle wound to the left hand.

The 50th Battalion was initially in held reserve, but went into battle at 3:15 PM on 10 April. These men quickly reached their objectives, and by 3:45 PM, they were consolidating their positions. Later that evening, the 47th Battalion relieved them. Casualties were 57 killed, 129 wounded, and 31 missing. The next morning, the battalion was reorganized into two companies, and they received orders to attack “the Pimple.” The battalion attacked at 5:00 AM on 12 April. They took their objective, but remained under artillery and sniper fire throughout the day and night. This attack resulted in a further three soldiers killed, 38 wounded, and seven missing. The battalion then moved forward a further 1000 yards at 5:30 PM on 13 April, and was finally relieved at 8:30 PM that evening.¹⁵

The casualties of the 50th Battalion were slightly lower than those of the 10th Battalion, and yet, there were higher casualties among the Japanese-Canadians of the 50th, compared to their counterparts in the 10th. Of those with the 50th, five were killed in the attack on 10 April (Privates Hamaguchi, Motohashi, Narita, Tada, and Takenchi), and two were wounded – one with a serious gunshot wound to the left leg, and one with a serious gunshot wound to the scalp. Another Japanese-Canadian soldier was killed the next day (Private Tsuchiya), and a seventh on 12 April (Private Sobuye). Before the 52nd was withdrawn, a final Japanese-Canadian was wounded/injured at Vimy, receiving a serious concussion and bruising from German artillery fire on 13 April.

The 52nd Battalion had an easier time at Vimy Ridge since they had been held in reserve on 9 April, but ready to move at one hour’s notice. On 11 April, they began the relief of the Canadian Mounted Rifles at 4:30 PM. They remained there throughout 12 April, but the next day, they moved forward to relieve the 60th Battalion and to occupy their lines situated on the crest of the ridge.¹⁶ As a result, they suffered only three dead during the battle, and no casualties among the Japanese-Canadians.

There were at least 20 Black soldiers who served in the infantry at Vimy Ridge. Of these, eight were fated to be killed before the end of the war.¹⁷ As these soldiers were scattered throughout the entire CEF, they likewise went into battle across the whole of the Vimy front, and their experiences varied according to the activities of their respective battalions.



DND photo by Master Corporal Shilo Adamson

A portion of the Canadian trenches at Vimy Ridge.

Because Black-Canadians were able to enlist in a larger number of units than Japanese-Canadians, they were also present in other branches of the army. Infanteer Archibald Perkins was attached to the 11th Canadian Infantry Brigade HQ, while Infanteer David Crosby was attached to the 2nd Division Signals. There were at least three Black-Canadians serving with the artillery. Ruthven Pegus was with the 9th (Howitzer) Battery of the 3rd Brigade, Canadian Field Artillery (CFA), Raymond Vignale was with the 5th Brigade, CFA, and Lyman Hogan was with the 4th Brigade, CFA.¹⁸ On that cold morning of 9 April, the men of the artillery built up a sweat as they fired their guns as quickly as possible to soften up, destroy, or suppress the German defences, something that the infantry greatly appreciated and commented upon. In part, their accuracy came from having commenced this work back on 20 March.¹⁹

There were also Black engineers at Vimy. Sapper Miles Dymond served with the 3rd Field Company, while Sapper Frank Bollen was with the 107th Battalion, which had been converted to a Pioneer Battalion.²⁰ At Vimy, the 107th Battalion had been busy in the days before the assault, laying cable and preparing a light rail track from the Arian ammunition dump to the front lines. On 9 April, the battalion had three companies laying cable through No Man's Land as it was taken, thus helping to provide communications for the battalions at the front.²¹

William Rider-Rider/DND/Library and Archives Canada/PA-003201



Three Black-Canadian soldiers in a captured German dugout during the Canadian advance east of Arras.

Division	Battalion	Name
1st Division	3 rd Battalion	Randolph Winslow
	7 th Battalion	Lancelot Joseph Bertrand
	10 th Battalion	Frederick Firth
	14 th Battalion	Charles Langton
	16 th Battalion	William Henderson
2nd Division	25 th Battalion	James Eatman
	26 th Battalion	Ralph Stoutley
	26 th Battalion	Norman Ash
3rd Division	The Royal Canadian Regiment	Gordon Johnson
	The Royal Canadian Regiment	Jeremiah Jones
	The Royal Canadian Regiment	Percy Martin
	4 th Canadian Mounted Rifles	Rankin Wheary
	4 th Canadian Mounted Rifles	James A. Post
	58 th Battalion	Henry Thomas Shepherd
4th Division	38 th Battalion	Sylvester Long
	50 th Battalion	Samuel Watts
	75 th Battalion	Charles Marshall
	78 th Battalion	Ethelbert "Curley" Christian
	87 th Battalion	George Lam
	87 th Battalion	Arthur Duff

Author

Table 4: Black-Canadian soldiers in Vimy Ridge Infantry Battalions.

Black-Canadians were equally involved in the fighting across the entire front. They too fought bravely, and suffered casualties. The obstacles they overcame in the fighting were myriad, and they were a microcosm of the experience of the Canadian infantry as a whole. Not all their experiences can be noted here, due to the sheer number of battalions involved. However, a sampling will provide an idea of what happened to them.

Having fewer soldiers at the battle, there were naturally fewer casualties among the Black-Canadians at Vimy than those suffered by the Japanese-Canadians. There was one soldier who was killed – Frederick Firth of the 10th Battalion. As noted in the write-up on the Japanese-Canadians of the 10th Battalion, this battalion suffered many casualties from machine gun and rifle fire. Private Firth's body was never recovered, and thus, his name is commemorated on the Vimy Memorial.

The Royal Canadian Regiment (RCR) also suffered casualties from German strongpoints and machine gun fire. Their advance started well with C and D Companies advancing behind the artillery fire that kept the enemy down with the result that the Black line was captured with just a few casualties. A and B Companies then passed through C and D Companies, but by then, they came into range of German forces whose positions had not been taken or had been destroyed by the artillery. At La Folie Wood, C and D Companies ran into several strongpoints that held up their

attack and caused heavy casualties. Once these strongpoints were overcome, the next problem became the Germans still in control of Hill 145, which the 4th Division had not taken. As a result, snipers did most of the killing. The RCR took their objectives, in the process, capturing five German machine guns. However, 50 soldiers were killed, 159 wounded, and 65 were missing, some of whom were later found to be wounded.²² Gordon Johnson made it through the fighting without any physical injury. However, Percy Martin suffered a gunshot wound to the left shoulder on 9 April, which kept him in hospital until 13 May.

Perhaps the most distinguished action by a Black-Canadian in the RCR that day was accomplished by Jeremiah Jones, who had been hit by shrapnel. Before being pulled from the battlefield, Jones single-handedly attacked a German machine gun post that was holding up his platoon's advance. In the wake of his grenade attack, the surviving Germans surrendered to him. Jones then had them carry

the machine gun back to the battalion headquarters, where it was placed before his commanding officer. Jones then went back into battle and was wounded by shrapnel in his left arm, which kept him in hospital for two months. For his actions, Jones was recommended for the Distinguished Conduct Medal, the second-highest award for valour for enlisted Canadian soldiers at the time, but this award was never approved.²³

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Advancing through “No Man’s Land” amid barbed wire during the battle.

W. I. Castle/ DND/Library and Archives Canada/PA-001020



akg-images/WHA/World History Archive/AKG1066772

A Canadian Vimy casualty, being evacuated by captured German prisoner stretcher bearers.

It was not just enemy machine gun fire that resulted in casualties. German artillery, although under attack, was still able to return fire, although at a reduced level and often without precise targeting from the front lines. In the 78th Battalion, Ethelbert "Curley" Christian was a runner, carrying messages from the companies on the attack to headquarters, or between the headquarters of different battalions. At Vimy, he was buried in a trench by artillery fire and not found for two days. As it materialized, he was barely alive when found, and was even more fortunate when being carried off the battlefield when two of his stretcher bearers were killed by enemy fire. As all four of his limbs were badly crushed and had been without proper blood circulation, gangrene set in with the result that all four of his limbs had to be amputated. He survived the war and eventually became an advocate for veterans.

The 4th Division had the most difficulty at Vimy. For the 87th Battalion, 520 all ranks 'went over the top' at 5:30 AM. By the end of the battle, 149 had been killed and 155 wounded among the ranks, which, if the officers were included, was a casualty rate of 60 percent. The battalion's goal was to take the approaches to Hill 145. Right away, there were problems, as C Company on the right flank was held up by rifle and machine gun fire from the front and the right flank, where the 102nd Battalion was also having problems advancing. While A and B Companies reached their

objectives, they only did so with heavy casualties. A Company had only one officer and 12 men remaining by noon, while B Company had only a sergeant and 15 men securing the centre. It was only with help from the 75th Battalion, which was moving through them to take up the advance, as well as the 102nd Battalion on the right, that trenches were secured. The 87th Battalion was pulled from the line on 11 April.²⁴

Given the hard fighting that the 87th Battalion experienced, it is fortunate for Privates Arthur Duff and George Lam that they were able to escape physical injury during this tough fighting. Duff had enlisted in the 77th Battalion in August 1915, joined the 87th in November 1916, and was promptly sent on a Lewis Gun course. He was wounded in June 1917, but remained on duty. However, Private Duff was killed in action in November that year. Private Lam enlisted in the 132nd Battalion in December 1915. He was taken on strength of the 87th on 6 December 1916 and wounded only once, in May 1917, a wound which kept him out of the 87th until late-December 1917. For both of them, Vimy was their first major battle.²⁵

The actions of one Black soldier at Vimy Ridge were to lead to him being awarded the Military Cross. Lancelot Joseph Bertrand enlisted in the 11th Battalion at Valcartier in 1914, and when the unit was broken up, he was attached to the 7th Battalion just in

time for the Second Battle of Ypres which he survived, despite the battalion being all but wiped out. In the battalion's next major fight, the Battle of Festubert, Private Bertrand was wounded in the shoulder. He was transported to the United Kingdom to recover and was to remain there, working at the Depot Headquarters, to allow time for his shoulder to recover as it was still weak. However, his abilities were duly recognized, and he was quickly promoted to sergeant as of 15 July 1915, and then recommended for commissioning, which came through on 25 August 1916.²⁶ He is one of just two Black infantry officers of the war known to this author.

On 20 October 1916, Lieutenant Bertrand was taken on strength again by the 7th Battalion. On the morning of 9 April, runners reported to him that first, the company commander of No. 4 Company, and then a more senior lieutenant of the company, had been killed. Bertrand took over command of the company when they were still 100 yards short of the Bismarck Trench. On arriving at the Black line, he learned another lieutenant had also been injured. Lieutenant Bertrand then began to deploy the company to ensure that it was in contact with its flanks, and then began to consolidate the company's position. In so doing, he had only one NCO to assist him, a corporal. When the company moved on to the Red objective, he had only 60 soldiers on strength in total.²⁷ For his actions on this morning, Lieutenant Bertrand was awarded the Military Cross.

Black-Canadians continued to be enlisted in individual battalions, with 1916 being the most active year of recruitment. They were not, however, used as replacements for other Black-Canadians in the field, but rather, were put into a general pool, most of whom never made it to the continent. When it came to conscription, large numbers of Black-Canadians were enrolled, over 300 having been identified. However, less than 10 percent made it to front line service of those known to have arrived in the UK.²⁸

The voluntary enlistment of Japanese-Canadians died down after the last members of 191st Battalion were accepted in early-1917. This battalion was broken up when it arrived in the UK, its Japanese-Canadians sent to the 10th and 50th Battalions to reinforce their Japanese-Canadian platoons. When it came to conscription, few were accepted – less than 30 having been identified, and there were less than five voluntary enlistments in 1918.

While seven of the Black-Canadians who served at Vimy were killed in later action during the war, 37 Japanese-Canadians who survived the battle were subsequently fatal casualties. Of the total number of soldiers from each group that participated at Vimy, these were high percentage fatality rates. The Japanese-Canadians must certainly have been ferocious fighters as the numbers of their members who were repatriated as medically unfit due to wounds/injuries was quite high.²⁹ A total of 12 of

them were decorated with the Military Medal (MM), one of them receiving a bar to his MM. Among Black-Canadians, there was one Military Cross recipient, five Military Medals awarded, as well as one Distinguished Conduct Medal.³⁰

Conclusions

Getting from the UK to Vimy was a tale of dichotomies for the two groups. While the Japanese-Canadians were able to remain together as a coherent group, Black-Canadians were not. In part, this may have been because it was easier to send an already-organized company forward, yet this does not explain why individual Black-Canadians seem to have been singled out for retention in the UK and had not been sent to the front as reinforcements. Thus, while the two groups had roughly equal numbers of soldiers overseas at the end of 1916, there were more Japanese-Canadians at Vimy because some administrative process held back a good percentage of Black-Canadians.

At the battle itself, the distance that some divisions had to cover, or the nature of the terrain would likely have awed the soldiers at Vimy. For most of the Black-Canadians who participated, they had already met the German defences, and the tasks set before the Canadians were ones which would likely have struck them with some worry. For the Japanese-Canadians, this was the first major battle for them, some having only just arrived. And yet, when it came to engaging the enemy, both groups showed their mettle. Not even age was a factor. Jeremiah Jones was over 50 when he took on a German machine gun post...

The actual character of the fighting at Vimy depended upon the battalion in which each individual served. The Japanese-Canadians serving in the 52nd Battalion saw little action because they had been held in reserve. This also happened to Black-Canadians. When it did come to combat, there was no reticence to fight on the part of those who 'went over the parapets.' While there were more Japanese-Canadian casualties than Black-Canadian casualties, this was more a result of the battalions in which they served, the opposition they encountered, and just 'blind luck' that some soldiers escaped unscathed, and others became casualties.

The Black- and Japanese-Canadians who fought at Vimy demonstrated that they were as worthy of being considered soldiers of Canada as any other group in the battle. These two groups of ethnic soldiers may have been small in numbers at Vimy, but their presence was a signal that they too were equal to any other ethnic group in Canada when it came to fighting for their country.



“The Japanese-Canadians must certainly have been ferocious fighters as the numbers of their members who were repatriated as medically unfit due to wounds/injuries was quite high.”

NOTES

1. These numbers are based upon the author's lists of confirmed Japanese-Canadians and of Black-Canadians, as well as African-Americans and Black-Caribs, who enlisted or were conscripted into the CEF. For the purposes of this study and simplicity, "Black-Canadians" will be used to represent men of African origin who were resident in Canada, the Caribbean, and the United States who enlisted and served in the CEF.
2. There were also 12 Chinese-Canadians, 10 Sikh-Canadians, and one Korean who are known to have enlisted. Because of their small numbers in the CEF, they are being excluded from this study.
3. The number of Black-Canadians is based upon the author's research. The figure of 139 does not include those who enlisted in No. 2 Construction Battalion. Hence, the author recognizes that he has likely not included many Black-Canadians for whom a further source could not be found. LAC is digitizing the personnel files of soldiers of the First World War. However, the process takes time, and information is not yet available for some Black- and Japanese Canadians.
4. The statistics and causes are based upon the author's review of personnel files that are available online at the aforementioned LAC database, "Soldiers of the First World War." Not all of the personnel files of the soldiers who have been identified as being in the CEF at the time of Vimy Ridge are available for download. However, in some cases, additional authoritative information exists for some of these soldiers.
5. The 163rd Battalion had enlisted at least 16 Black soldiers while stationed in Bermuda.
6. For more information on the issue of medical releases and the issues with proper medical examinations, see Nicholas James Clarke, *Unwanted Warriors: The Rejected Volunteers of the Canadian Expeditionary Force* (Ottawa: Doctoral Dissertation, University of Ottawa, 2009).
7. Based upon the author's examination of personnel files of White soldiers in the same units as Black-Canadians. Some Black-Canadians spent their entire wartime service in the UK.
8. During an inspection of a training depot on 21 June 1916, Steele noted a Black soldier and expressed his desire that he should be discharged. On the other hand, when he saw the platoon of Japanese-Canadians soldiers in 13th Battalion (Bn.), CMR, some weeks later, he lauded their military abilities. LAC, RG 9, III A1 Series 8 8-5-10e, Vol 45, Major-General Steele to Major-General Carson, 27 June 1916, pp. 3-4; and Major-General Steele to Major-General Carson, 20 July 1916, p. 2. My appreciation is extended to Dr. William Stewart for pointing out this file and hence its implications. For more on Steele's belief that Black men did not make good soldiers, see Samuel Benfield Steele, *Forty Years in Canada* (Toronto: McClelland, Goodchild & Stewart Ltd, 1919), pp.373-386, particularly 385-386. See also Roderick Charles MacLeod, "Steele, Sir Samuel Benfield," in Dictionary of Canadian Biography at <http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio.php?id_nbr=7722>, accessed 30 July 2016, who notes that Steele considered Blacks a "natural subject race." Steele retained the position of commander South Eastern District until 1 March 1918.
9. There were a few other cases of visible minorities making it into the RFC, but all appear to have one thing in common – the support of a commanding officer. The Black-Canadian pilot would be commissioned and would serve his time ferrying



The Vimy Ridge Memorial.

10. aircraft from an aircraft supply depot in northern France to units at the front. This activity was one in which hundreds of pilots partook.
10. 2nd Canadian Infantry Brigade Instructions No. 3, dated 26 March 1917 found in LAC War Diary, 10th Battalion, Appendix 12
11. War Diaries of the 10th Battalion, 50th Battalion and 52nd Battalion. For the delays experienced by some of the Japanese soldiers of the 192nd, see, for instance, the personnel file of 898527 Tokutaro Iwamoto.
12. Nicholson, *Official History of the Canadian Army*, p. 234.
13. LAC, War Diary, 10th Battalion, Appendix 92
14. LAC, War Diary, 10th Battalion, April 1917.
15. LAC, War Diary, 50th Battalion, April 1917
16. LAC, War Diary, 52nd Battalion, April 1917.
17. Information on another 17 is not available as of the time of writing this article, as the personnel files have not been scanned and posted to the LAC website.
18. Ruthven Pegus enlisted on 25 September 1914, Lyman Hogan enlisted on 30 November 1914, and Raymond Vignale on 22 February 1915. LAC, Personnel files, 83666 Lyman William Hogan, 45370 Ruthven Ignatius Pegus and 246 Raymond Vignale.
19. Nicholson, *Official History of the Canadian Army*, pp. 249-250
20. Miles Dymond enlisted on 23 September 1914 in the 1st Field Company, Canadian Engineers. Frank Bollen had originally enlisted in the 71st Battalion, but had been released as being medically unfit. LAC, Personnel file, 5085 Miles Smith Dymond, and 127549 Frank Bollen and 225709 Frank Bollen.
21. LAC, War Diary, 107th Battalion.
22. LAC, War Diary, The Royal Canadian Regiment, April 1917, pp. 23-29; R.C. Featherstonhaugh, *The Royal Canadian Regiment, 1883-1933* (London, ON: The Royal Canadian Regiment, 1936), pp. 278-281.
23. Some of the documents in Jones' personnel file indicate it was a gunshot wound. LAC, Personnel file 716221, Jeremiah Jones. When writing his book about No.2 Construction Battalion, Calvin Ruck discovered that Jones had been recommended for the award, but had never received it. There was much evidence from survivors of the battalion and in newspapers about his actions at Vimy Ridge and about the recommendation. Because medals cannot be awarded beyond a certain time after an event, Jones could no longer receive the DCM. However, on 22 February 2010, Jeremiah Jones was posthumously awarded the Canadian Forces Medallion for Distinguished Service. Jones' wound was sufficiently bad that it left him with a weak arm and a 30 percent disability categorization, for which, in part, he was subsequently given a medical discharge from the CEF. He never returned to the RCR after Vimy.
24. LAC War Diary, 87th Battalion, and William J. Patterson, *Soldiers of the Queen: The Canadian Grenadier Guards of Montreal, 1859-2009* (Montreal: The Canadian Grenadier Guards Corporation, 2009), pp. 116-118.
25. LAC, Personnel Files, 144504 Arthur John Duff and 793041 George Lam.
26. The synopsis of his service is based upon his personnel file. LAC, Personnel File, 21803 Lancelot Joseph Bertrand.
27. The synopsis of what Lieutenant Bertrand did at Vimy Ridge is based upon his report, which forms part of the 7th Battalion War Diary for Vimy Ridge. He would be killed at the Battle of Hill 70 in August 1917.
28. Based upon author's list of Black-Canadian conscripts, and excluding those for whom the personnel files were not yet available at the time of writing.
29. Author's review of personnel files of Japanese-Canadians not yet tabulated.
30. The Military Medal was awarded to 12 Japanese volunteers: Tokutaro Iwamoto (10th Bn), Masumi Mitsui (10th Bn), Tow Inouye (47th Bn), Yesaku Kubodera (49th Bn) Takezo Shirasago (50th Bn) Kiyoji Iizuka (50th Bn), Otojuro Yamamoto (MM and Bar) (50th Bn), Manichi Nakamura (50th Bn), Bunshiro Furukawa (50th Bn), Tominosuke Tanji 191 (50th Bn), and Yasuo Takashima 191 (50th Bn), Yoichi Kamakura (52nd Bn). Black-Canadians received the following recognition: Military Cross: – Lancelot Joseph Bertrand (7th Bn); Military Medal: David Crosby (25th Bn); Roy Fells (25th Bn); James Grant (83rd Bty, CFA); Percy Martin (RCR); John Cecil Lightfoot (8th Bn, CE); Distinguished Conduct Medal: James Post (4th Bn, CMR).