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# ***Attitudes Towards Remembrance and Veterans' Week 2018 – Survey of Canadians***

## **Executive Summary**

### **Prepared for Veterans Affairs Canada**

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**Ce rapport est aussi disponible en français.**

**Canada** 



## ***Attitudes Towards Remembrance and Veterans' Week 2018 Survey of Canadians***

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March 2019

This public opinion research report presents the results of a telephone survey of 1,000 Canadians conducted by Phoenix SPI on behalf of Veterans Affairs Canada.

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## Executive Summary

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Phoenix Strategic Perspectives Inc. (Phoenix SPI) was commissioned by Veterans Affairs Canada (VAC) to conduct a telephone survey of Canadians on issues related to Veterans' Week and the Department's remembrance programming.

### Background and Objectives

A core responsibility of VAC is post-Confederation military commemoration. VAC ensures that Veterans and those who died in service are honoured and that Canadians remember and appreciate Veterans and those who died in service. The Canada Remembers Program and the Funeral and Burial Program support the departmental results for commemoration and promote the following:

- Veterans and those who died in service are publicly acknowledged through ceremonies and events, honours and awards, and the presentation and perpetual care of memorials, cemeteries and grave markers;
- Canadians are aware of, and value, the contributions of those who served through a suite of resources that tell the story of our military history and through the provision of funding for community-led commemorative initiatives;
- the memory of the achievements and sacrifices of Canadian Veterans and those who died in service is preserved; and
- the estates of eligible Veterans have access to financial assistance toward a dignified funeral and burial.

The *Attitudes Towards Remembrance and Veterans' Week* survey is a means through which VAC can measure Canadians' level of participation in remembrance activities, their attitudes toward those who served in Canada's military and their level of support for VAC's work related to remembrance. The purpose of the quantitative research is to evaluate the effectiveness of the Department's overall remembrance programming. More specifically, the research was designed to:

- Understand Canadians' attitudes towards and acceptance of the commemoration of Veterans and their sacrifices and achievements;
- Monitor changes in Canadians' behaviour related to remembrance;
- Assess Canadians' awareness of and pride in Canadian military contributions and the sacrifices of Canadian Veterans;
- Identify Canadians' knowledge of Canada's military contributions;
- Provide VAC with concrete data to assist in performance measurement; and
- Assess Canadians' level of participation (active and passive) in remembrance.

The research results help guide the Department in its planning and programming for the future. The information obtained allows VAC to continue determining the impact and effectiveness of its remembrance activities, adapt activities to be relevant to Canadians, improve the methods used to inform Canadians about remembrance initiatives, and improve future initiatives.

### Methodology

A random digit dialling (RDD) telephone survey was administered to 1,000 Canadian residents, 18 years of age or older, between November 12 and 22, 2018. An overlapping

dual-frame (landline and cell phone) sample was used to minimize coverage error. Interviewing was conducted by Elemental Data Collection Inc. (EDCI) using Computer Aided Telephone Interviewing (CATI) technology. A pre-test was conducted in advance of the fieldwork. In all, 20 interviews were conducted during the pre-test, 10 in English and 10 in French. The survey averaged 11 minutes to complete.

Probability sampling was used: a total of 201 interviews were completed with cell phone only (CPO) households from the cell phone sample and 799 interviews with households from the landline sample. The sample frame was geographically disproportionate to improve the accuracy of regional results. The results of the survey can be considered representative of the population of Canadians aged 18 and older. Based on a sample of this size, the overall results can be considered to be accurate within  $\pm 3.3\%$ , 19 times out of 20 (adjusted to reflect the geographically disproportionate sampling). The margin of error is greater for results pertaining to subgroups of the total sample.

The survey data has been weighted by region, age and gender to ensure results that are representative of the Canadian population. Population figures from Statistics Canada's 2016 census data were used to construct the weights.

The table in Annex 1 presents information about the final call dispositions for this survey, as well as the associated response rates. The overall response rate was 6% (8% for the landline sample and 5% for the cell phone sample).

The potential for non-response bias was assessed by comparing the characteristics of respondents through unweighted and weighted data. As is typically the case for general population telephone surveys, older Canadians (those aged 65 and older) were overrepresented in the final survey sample and younger Canadians (those under 30 years of age) were underrepresented. This was corrected with weighting.

## Key Findings

### Awareness and Importance of Veterans' Week

*Canadians' awareness of Veterans' Week and the importance attributed to it remains unchanged from 2017.*

Similar to last year, slightly over half (55%) of Canadians said they had heard of Veterans' Week. This demonstrates no change in awareness since 2016, which is still lower than the high of 66% recorded in 2011. Additionally, the overall importance that Canadians attribute to Veterans' Week is virtually unchanged from 2017. Nearly nine in 10 Canadians (87%; down from 88% in 2017) think it is important that Veterans' Week be held each year, with 68% saying that it is *very* important.

Canadians who said they think it is important that Veterans' Week be held were asked *why* they think so. Nearly three-quarters (74%) of Canadians said it is important to honour and show respect to Canadian Veterans and those who died in service. Following this, 39% said it is important to focus on our history or remembrance. Very few (8%) said that Veterans' Week is important because of a personal connection. These same themes have been Canadians' top reasons for attributing importance to Veterans' Week over time.

## Participation in Veterans' Week and Related Activities

*Participation in Veterans' Week has increased steadily since 2011 and reached a record high this year. Wearing a poppy continues to be the most popular way to commemorate Veterans.*

Nine in 10 surveyed Canadians (92%) said they or members of their immediate family participated in Veterans' Week.<sup>1</sup> Since 2011, there has been a steady increase in participation, from 73% in 2011 to this year's high of 92%. Similar to previous years, practical constraints, such as not having time, were the most common barriers to participating in Veterans' Week.

Of those who participated in Veterans' Week activities, almost half (48%) said they did so to honour or show respect to Veterans. Following this, 33% said it was due to personal connections, which includes knowing a Veteran, being a Veteran, or knowing someone who participates in the events. Participating in Veterans' Week due to personal connection has declined significantly, from 40% in 2017 to 33% in 2018.

The most common form of participation in Veterans' Week continues to be wearing a poppy, which was cited by 82% of respondents (up from 79% in 2017). Additionally, 72% said they observed a moment of silence (virtually unchanged from 71% last year). Following this, 46% watched a Remembrance Day ceremony on TV, 38% participated in remembrance ceremonies in their communities, and 20% took part in a remembrance-related activity on social media (down from 25% in 2017). Additionally, half of Canadians (52%; up from 2017 in 37%) reported that they or members of their immediate family remembered Canadian Veterans and those who died in service in some way *outside* of Remembrance Day or Veterans' Week.

## Prioritizing Veterans' Week Activities

*Canadians feel the Government of Canada should prioritize all remembrance initiatives.*

Canadians were asked to indicate what priority they feel the Government of Canada *should* place on various initiatives that recognize the achievements and sacrifices of Canadians during wartime and in peacetime operations. Providing educational materials for schools topped the list at 90% (up from 86% in 2017). This was followed by supporting and leading commemorative events (84%; down from 87% last year) and providing funding for commemorative projects (75%; up from 70% in 2017).

In addition, more than seven in 10 attributed importance to posting remembrance-related content on social media (74%; up from 71% in 2017) and creating remembrance-related ads (72%; down from 76% in 2017). Consistent with previous years, two-thirds (66%) of Canadians attributed importance to the production of promotional materials such as posters and pins.

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<sup>1</sup> This includes those who indicated that they, or members of their immediate family, participated in Veterans' Week this year **and** those who initially said they had not but later reported that they or their family had taken part in a remembrance activity, such as wearing a poppy.

## Attitudes Towards Veterans and Canada's Military

*Canadians' attitudes towards Veterans and Canada's military role remain strongly positive.*

The vast majority of Canadians think that Canada's Veterans and those who died in service should be recognized for their service (96%) and that Veterans have made major contributions to our country (93%). Following this, more than four in five (86%) agreed that participation in commemorative activities increases awareness and appreciation for Veterans and those who died in service. Additionally, nearly three-quarters of surveyed Canadians agreed that they make an effort to demonstrate their appreciation to Veterans (74%) and that VAC effectively honours Veterans and those who died in service and preserves the memory of their achievements and sacrifices (73%). With regards to Canada's military role, roughly four in five (83%) agreed that they are proud of the role that Canada's military has played in peacekeeping missions and conflicts, while seven in 10 (71%) agreed that they are knowledgeable about the role that Canada's military has played in the international domain. Canadians' attitudes towards Veterans and Canada's military remain strong and virtually unchanged since 2017.

## Recognizing Canadian Veterans and Those Who Died in Service

*Canadians continue to consider recognizing Veterans and those who died in service as well as commemorating the anniversaries of the World Wars to be important.*

Similar to 2017, more than nine in 10 Canadians agreed that it is important that Veterans Affairs Canada recognize and honour Canadian Veterans and those who died in service through the presentation and care of memorials, cemeteries and grave markers (93%) and by providing funeral and burial assistance (91%). In addition, 59% agreed that they are satisfied with VAC's performance in recognizing and honouring Veterans and those who died in service through the presentation and care of memorials, cemeteries and grave markers, and 52% felt this way about how VAC recognizes and honours deceased Canadian Veterans through the provision of funeral and burial assistance.

With regards to awareness of the anniversaries of the First and Second World Wars, almost two-thirds of Canadians (64%) said they are aware of the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the First World War. A strong minority (46%) indicated they are aware of the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Second World War. Compared to 2017, awareness of the World War anniversaries has increased this year. A clear majority (89%) said they find commemorating the World Wars important, with 69% saying it is very important.

## Notes to Readers

- All results are expressed as percentages unless otherwise noted.
- Percentages may not always add to 100 due to rounding.
- In graphs:
  - "DK" stands for "Don't know" and "NR" for "No response."
  - Tracking data are presented where available. This survey was not conducted in 2009, 2013, or 2015.
  - Values less than 5% are not labelled in the stacked bar graphs.

- The number of respondents changes throughout the report because questions were asked of sub-samples of survey respondents. Readers should be aware of this and exercise caution when interpreting results based on smaller numbers of respondents.
  - Demographic differences are identified in the report. Only differences that are significant at the 95% confidence level and pertain to a sub-group sample size of more than n=30 are discussed in the report.
  - The tabulated data is available under separate cover.
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The contract value was \$49,478.26 (including HST).

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