



Combat Boots



The Battle of Vimy Ridge which took place over one hundred years ago in France on April 9, 1917, was a military success for Canada.

It was also the first time that all four Canadian divisions served together in a battle. There were students, businessmen, ranchers from the west, rodeo performers, fishermen, lumbermen, farmers, French Canadians, Japanese Canadians, Indigenous Canadians, Black Canadians and more.

Soldiers proudly traded in their regular shoes and put on their combat boots to serve at the Battle of Vimy Ridge, in France, for our country. The combat boot worn by Canadians was called the Ammunition Boot. These were dark coloured ankle-high boots, made of textured leather.

They also wore puttees which are strips of cloth wrapped around the lower leg from the ankle up to below the knee. They provided ankle support and helped prevent dirt from getting into the boots. Khaki-coloured wool puttees were worn with the Canadian Ammunition Boot (given this name because they were named in an ammunition factory). One hundred years ago, Newfoundland was not yet a part of Canada, but they also served in the First World War. Interestingly, the Newfoundland soldiers wore puttees that were blue, giving them the nickname “Blue Puttees”!

Sadly, not all of the soldiers returned home to trade in their combat boots for their civilian shoes. Almost 3,600 Canadian soldiers lost their lives in the Battle of Vimy Ridge. We will remember them.