

PRIDE AND KNOWLEDGE: LOOKING BACK AT CANADA'S PARTICIPATION IN WORLD WAR II

ASSOCIATION FOR CANADIAN STUDIES

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INTRODUCTION

- This week, several world leaders will gather to mark the 75th anniversary of the Allied invasion of Normandy, which is widely regarded as the operation that wrested occupied France (and later Europe) from Nazi control and laid the foundations of the Allied victory on the Western Front. In many parts of the world, there will be commemorations held to pay tribute to the courage and sacrifice of the soldiers. There will be a specific acknowledgement of the important role that Canada's military played in this decisive battle and homage paid to the many Canadians who lost their lives on the shores of Normandy.
- Historians in Canada and elsewhere regard knowledge about D-Day and about World War II as critical in understanding the evolution towards democracy and the respect for human rights over the ensuing 75 years.

SETTING THE RECORD STRAIGHT

- However, there remain important gaps in knowledge about that critical time, both in terms of what occurred at that time and what has since transpired. First, there is the view held by a significant number of Canadians that everyone in the country supported participation in World War II, when in fact there was a very divisive referendum over military conscription. Second, there is a widely held view that Canada has always welcomed refugees, when in fact the country refused many refugees during and after the War.

METHODOLOGY

- The results of a poll conducted for the Association for Canadian Studies were collected via a Web survey by Leger Marketing between November 7-12, 2018, among a representative sample of 1,519 Canadians, 18 years of age or older.
- Using data from Statistics Canada, the results were weighted according to gender, age, region, language spoken at home, education, and whether or not children are present in the household, to ensure a sample representative of the entire population under review. For comparison purposes, a probability sample of 1,519 respondents would have a margin of error of $\pm 3.5\%$, 19 times out of 20.

ONE THIRD OF CANADIANS BELIEVE ALL CANADIANS SUPPORTED THE COUNTRY'S PARTICIPATION IN WW2 AND ONE IN FOUR DON'T KNOW

All Canadians supported the country's military participation in World War II	
TOTAL AGREE	33.6%
Strongly agree	11.1%
Somewhat agree	22.5%
TOTAL DISAGREE	40.6%
Somewhat disagree	25.9%
Strongly disagree	14.7%
I don't know	24.1%
I prefer not to answer	1.7%
Total	100.0%

PERSONS OVER 75 MOST LIKELY TO DISAGREE THAT ALL CANADIANS SUPPORTED THE WAR EFFORT (STILL THREE IN TEN IN AGREEMENT)

All Canadians supported the country's military participation in World War II	Between 18 and 24	Between 25 and 34	Between 35 and 44	Between 45 and 54	Between 55 and 64	Between 65 and 74	75 or older
Strongly agree	7.9%	12.9%	7.7%	9.9%	12.0%	13.3%	16.2%
Somewhat agree	21.8%	21.7%	25.2%	27.2%	22.6%	18.1%	14.9%
Somewhat disagree	22.4%	23.7%	23.2%	23.5%	29.3%	29.4%	35.1%
Strongly disagree	13.9%	12.9%	14.6%	11.0%	15.0%	17.3%	25.7%
I don't know	33.3%	26.5%	28.5%	23.9%	20.3%	21.4%	5.4%
I prefer not to answer	.6%	2.4%	.8%	4.4%	.8%	.4%	2.7%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

THOSE CANADIANS SAYING THEY HAVE GOOD KNOWLEDGE OF OUR HISTORY ARE MOST LIKELY TO BELIEVE THAT ALL CANADIANS SUPPORTED WORLD WAR 2 MILITARY SERVICE

All Canadians supported the country's military participation in World War II	I have a good knowledge of the history of Canada			
	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree
Strongly agree	23.9%	9.8%	5.4%	3.4%
Somewhat agree	25.0%	25.2%	16.2%	8.6%
Somewhat disagree	23.5%	29.4%	24.9%	22.4%
Strongly disagree	20.5%	13.8%	15.2%	19.0%
I don't know	7.1%	21.0%	37.9%	46.6%
I prefer not to answer		.7%	.4%	
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

THOSE CANADIANS MOST PROUD OF THE COUNTRY'S HISTORY ARE MOST LIKELY TO AGREE THAT ALL CANADIANS SUPPORTED THE MILITARY PARTICIPATION IN WORLD WAR 2

All Canadians supported the country's military participation in World War II	I am proud of Canadian history			
	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree
Strongly agree	22.4%	7.0%	2.7%	2.2%
Somewhat agree	28.4%	24.6%	11.4%	17.4%
Somewhat disagree	17.7%	32.2%	40.3%	19.6%
Strongly disagree	12.9%	12.0%	24.2%	43.5%
I don't know	17.7%	24.0%	19.5%	17.4%
I prefer not to answer	1.0%	.1%	2.0%	
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

TWO IN THREE CANADIANS BELIEVE CANADA HAS ALWAYS WELCOMED REFUGEES

Throughout history, Canada has always welcomed refugees to the country	
Strongly agree	21.5%
Somewhat agree	45.4%
Somewhat disagree	15.3%
Strongly disagree	6.7%
I don't know	9.8%
I prefer not to answer	1.3%
Total	100.0%

CANADIANS 18-24 LEAST LIKELY TO AGREE THAT THE COUNTRY HAS ALWAYS WELCOMED REFUGEES

Throughout history, Canada has always welcomed refugees to the country	Between 18 and 24	Between 25 and 34	Between 35 and 44	Between 45 and 54	Between 55 and 64	Between 65 and 74	75 or older
Strongly agree	17.0%	23.3%	20.8%	26.0%	21.5%	19.8%	16.2%
Somewhat agree	37.6%	40.6%	49.8%	44.7%	47.2%	50.2%	44.6%
Somewhat disagree	18.8%	12.4%	11.8%	14.3%	16.2%	15.4%	28.4%
Strongly disagree	7.3%	5.6%	5.7%	4.4%	7.5%	8.9%	10.8%
I don't know	18.2%	14.9%	11.0%	8.8%	6.8%	5.3%	
I prefer not to answer	1.2%	3.2%	.8%	1.8%	.8%	.4%	
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

THOSE CANADIANS MOST PROUD OF OUR HISTORY ARE MOST LIKELY TO AGREE THAT CANADA HAS ALWAYS WELCOMED REFUGEES

Throughout history, Canada has always welcomed refugees to the country	I am proud of Canadian history			
	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree
Strongly agree	38.0%	15.9%	8.8%	17.0%
Somewhat agree	42.3%	53.2%	36.5%	25.5%
Somewhat disagree	11.5%	15.6%	31.1%	21.3%
Strongly disagree	2.6%	7.0%	15.5%	29.8%
I don't know	5.6%	8.0%	8.1%	6.4%
I prefer not to answer		.4%		
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

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