**PRE-TESTING OF THE**

**2018 REMEMBRANCE ADVERTISING CREATIVE CONCEPTS**

**- Final Report -**

**Prepared for:**

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**May 2018**

**Contract # 51019-174022/001/CY**

**Awarded: March 6, 2018**

**POR 111-17**

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

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# SUMMARY

Commemoration is a key pillar of the Veterans Affairs Canada (VAC) mandate. In 2018, the sacrifices of Canada’s Veterans will be honoured through commemorative events to highlight military milestones such as the 65th anniversary of the Korean War Armistice, the 10th anniversary of National Peacekeepers Day and the centennial of the end of the First World War - Canada's Hundred Days and its numerous battles (August 8–November 11).

A centerpiece for the upcoming Remembrance campaign is a new ad. The campaign will strategically apply a mix of traditional and digital marketing and advertising tactics, including video, to engage Canadians.

The goals of the 2018 campaign are to:

* Increase the perceived relevance of the message to Canadians about Canada’s Veterans
* Increase awareness among Canadians of the contribution of Canada’s Veterans in general and linked specifically to the 2018 military milestones
* Increase the number of Canadians engaged in remembrance activities

Three alternative conceptual approaches for a 30-second ad were developed in animatic format – *Our Freedom*, *Step up*, and *The Torch*.

Focus group research was undertaken to test the three alternative conceptual approaches for the ad, in order to:

* Assess the communication effectiveness of each alternative concept
* Identify which of the concepts is strongest overall in communicating the intended messages
* Identify possible revisions to each concept that might improve its communication effectiveness

Eight focus groups were conducted March 13-15, 2018, in Halifax, Toronto, Montreal and Calgary. In each city, the groups were split by age, with an 18-34 group and a 35 and over group.

This research was qualitative in nature, not quantitative. As such, the results provide an indication of participants’ views about the topics explored, but cannot be statistically generalized to the full population. Qualitative research does, however, produce a richness and depth of response not readily available through other methods of research. It is the insight and direction provided by qualitative research that makes it an appropriate tool for exploring reactions to the Remembrance Campaign ad concepts.

Each of the three ad concepts had some positive features, and all three conveyed the message that it is important to continue to remember and honour Veterans and their sacrifices on Remembrance Day. That said, there were differences in other aspects of the ads that affect the overall communication effectiveness of each ad concept.

***The Torch:*** Among participants who recognized the poem *In Flanders Fields*, this was emotionally powerful. The opening scene showing a poppy appearing on screen conveyed right away that the ad is about Remembrance Day. In Montreal, participants felt that the ad fit with their preexisting perceptions of “anciens combattants” as being those who served in the FWW and SWW.

There were several issues with *The Torch*, including:

* At least half the participants in the English sessions did not recognize *In Flanders Fields*, nor did any of the Montreal participants. For these participants, the ad concept had less emotional impact, and the link between the narration and the visuals was unclear: the voice-over was perceived to be sad and somber while the images were of smiling people and seemed unrelated to what was being said.

**•** While some felt the serious tone was appropriate for an ad about Veterans and Remembrance Day, others felt it was too sad, dark and gloomy.

**•** Some participants said that the ad made them feel guilty, which they found off-putting.

***Step Up:*** This ad concept did fairly well among the older participants 35 and over, but less well among 18-34 year-olds. Many appreciated that the ad focused single mindedly on Veterans, and there was positive emotional connection to these images. Participants like that it showed not only FWW and SWW Veterans, but also Veterans of more recent conflicts.

Some issues with the ad concept included:

**•** There were a few participants in the English cities and in Montreal who perceived the ad to be more of a recruiting ad than an ad about remembrance.

**•** Quite a few participants, including those who generally favoured the ad concept, objected to the phrase “*We owe them everything we have as Canadians*. There was a strong feeling that this was an overstatement: that is, unquestionably we owe Veterans a great deal but not “everything” – there have been many other forces at play that make Canada what it is today.

**•** The ad was perceived to underrepresent women who have served.

**•** Generally, the ad concept was perceived to be a traditional sort of ad for Remembrance Day and as a result it was not perceived as really conveying anything new.

***Our Freedom:*** This ad concept did fairly well among both the younger age group (18-34), and the older age group. Through the theme of “freedom”, the concept was seen as making a direct connection to why we as individuals should appreciate and honour Veterans – it connects the present and future with their past actions. The message was perceived to be positive and uplifting. While Remembrance Day is in some ways a sad day, the message of this ad concept was also that it should be a day on which Canadians are not only thankful but also celebrate the choices and privileges we have. Participants in the 18-34 age group were more likely to perceive this ad as more relevant to them and more modern. Of the three ad concepts, *Our Freedom* seemed to be the one most likely to increase involvement in Remembrance Day activities, particularly among the younger 18-34 age group.

Some issues with the ad concept included:

**•** A main issue with the ad was that on first viewing, the purpose of the ad was unclear until the latter part of the ad, and thus the repeated use of the word “free” initially caused confusion.

**•** Some participants felt the ad needed to show more images of Veterans, and make a more direct visual connection between Veterans and the freedoms portrayed in the ad.

**Contract value:** $62,969.25, including HST

**Political Neutrality Certification**

I hereby certify as Senior Officer of Sage Research Corporation that the deliverables fully comply with the Government of Canada political neutrality requirements outlined in the *Communications Policy* of the Government of Canada and Procedures for Planning and Contracting Public Opinion Research. Specifically, the deliverables do not include information on electoral voting intentions, political party preferences, and standings with the electorate or ratings of the performance of a political party or its leaders.



Anita Pollak

President

Sage Research Corporation

# BACKGROUND

## RESEARCH PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

Through Budget 2017, the Government of Canada confirms that Canada’s Veterans deserve our greatest recognition and respect. Canada’s women and men in uniform have served our country with bravery, honour and dignity—putting their lives at risk to protect the values we cherish most. Veterans Affairs Canada (VAC) exists to repay the nation's debt of gratitude toward those whose courageous efforts have given us the legacy of peace and freedom and have contributed to our growth as a nation.

Commemoration is a key pillar of VAC’s mandate. In 2018, the sacrifices of Canada’s Veterans will be honoured through commemorative events to highlight military milestones such as the 65th anniversary of the Korean War Armistice, the 10th anniversary of National Peacekeepers Day and the centennial of the end of the First World War - Canada's Hundred Days and its numerous battles (August 8–November 11).

A centerpiece for the upcoming Remembrance campaign is a new ad. The campaign will strategically apply a mix of traditional and digital marketing and advertising tactics, including video, to engage Canadians.

Veterans Affairs Canada needs to continue to build a strong sense of trust and confidence among Canadians that the Government of Canada remembers the sacrifices and achievements of Canada’s traditional and modern-day Veterans and those who continue to serve.

The goals of the 2018 campaign are to:

* Increase the perceived relevance of the message to Canadians about Canada’s Veterans
* Increase awareness among Canadians of the contribution of Canada’s Veterans in general and linked specifically to the 2018 military milestones
* Increase the number of Canadians engaged in remembrance activities

As this is a new campaign, it is critical that the Department ensure that the ad campaign will resonate with intended audiences. By conducting qualitative focus groups, the Department will be able to assess the effectiveness of the creative treatments and make adjustments as required based on feedback from focus group participants.

Three alternative conceptual approaches for a 30-second ad were developed for evaluation– *Our Freedom*, *Step up*, and *The Torch*.

**Research Objectives**

Focus group research was undertaken to test the three alternative conceptual approaches in animatic format for a 30-second ad, in order to:

* Assess the communication effectiveness of each alternative concept
* Identify which of the concepts is strongest overall in communicating the intended messages
* Identify possible revisions to each concept that might improve its communication effectiveness

## HOW THE RESEARCH WILL BE USED

The results of the research will be used to assess the effectiveness of the creative treatments and make adjustments as required.

## APPROACH & METHODOLOGY

Number and Location of Focus Groups

A total of eight 2-hour in-person focus groups were conducted March 13-15, 2018, with two groups in each of the following cities, split by age:

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Group Types:** | **Total** | **Halifax (E)** | **Toronto (E)** | **Calgary (E)** | **Montréal (F)** |
| ***18-34years of age*** | **4** | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| ***35 years of age and over*** | **4** | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
|  | **8** | **2** | **2** | **2** | **2** |

Participant Qualifications

The participant qualifications were the same for all focus groups, with the exception of family status.

The target group was broadly defined as 18 years of age and older. In each group we targeted for a representative mix of individuals along the following dimensions:

* Gender (quota 50/50 split)
* Age, within the two age groups above
* *18-34 group*: 50% 18-24; 50% 25-34
* *35 years of age and older*: 25% 35-44; 25% 45-54; 25% 55-64; 25% 65 or older
* Some representation of those born outside of Canada: 1-3 per group and who were Canadian citizens
* Mix on education and household income
* Presence of children 18 or under:

*18-34 group*: no quota

*35 years of age and older*: at least 50% of group

**•** Able to speak and read in the language of the focus group.

The following were excluded:

* Work in any of the following areas: marketing or marketing research, advertising, graphic design, Web site design, media, public relations, VAC or DND
* Currently serving or previously served in the Canadian Armed Forces or the reserves; currently a cadet or have been involved with cadets in the past

All participants met the GC Qualitative Standards for past participation in qualitative research: had not attended a qualitative session in the past six months, nor attended five or more qualitative sessions in the past five years.

Group Size

A total of 63 participants were included in the eight focus groups.

There were between eight and nine respondents in each focus group in all cities except Halifax where due to a severe winter storm, a total of 11 participants turned out for the two sessions.

**Recruiting**

The recruiting for the six English language sessions was done by *Synchro Marketing Research Ltd*., and by *Ad hoc recherche* for the two French language sessions.

Participants for the sessions were recruited from Synchro and Ad hoc’s opt-in database of people who have indicated an interest and willingness to be contacted for possible inclusion in a research study.

Discussion Approach

Participants were asked to evaluate the following three ad concepts in animatic format (to view the three concepts, please go to Appendix 2):

*Our Freedom*

*Step Up*

*The Torch*

The ads were shown one at a time and each was played twice. After seeing each, participants were asked to fill in a brief questionnaire on their individual reactions to the ad concept. After all three concepts were shown, participants ranked the ad concepts on personal relevance – most to least. Group discussion then followed.

The presentation of the ads was rotated across groups.

Participant Honoraria

Participants received an honorarium of $100.

# OVERALL PERCEIVED PERSONAL RELEVANCE

The reaction to the ad concepts was different between the two age groups and between participants in Montreal and the three English cities.

* Among English participants, *The Torch* ad concept was judged to be the least personally relevant among both age groups.

The 18-34 year-olds were more likely to select the *Our Freedom* concept as the most personally relevant.

The 35+ age group was equally split between selecting *Our Freedom* as most personally relevant and *Step Up* as the most personally relevant.

* In Montreal, the two ad concepts that were judged to be most personally relevant were *The Torch* and *Our Freedom*. *The Torch* ad concept performed a bit better with almost none selecting it as the least personally relevant.

*Step Up* was seen to be the least personally relevant across the two age groups.

General reactions to the ad concepts in the three English cities were much more positive than in Montreal, where reactions were lukewarm overall.

# AD CONCEPT: *OUR FREEDOM*

**Overview of Reactions**

In the English sessions, most participants rated the *Our Freedom* ad concept either *excellent* or *good*, particularly those in the 18-34 age group.

The types of emotive words most associated with the *Our Freedom* ad concept were:

*Thankful/appreciative/grateful*

*Happy/joy/uplifting/positive/optimistic/hopeful/heartwarming*

*Proud/pride/love for Canada/patriotic*

*Modern/young*

*Free/freedom*

*Empowered/inspired*

The general reaction to the ad concepts in the three English cities was much more positive than in Montreal where it was rated as either *good* or *OK.* That said, the positive emotive words associated with the *Our Freedom* ad concept in Montreal were similar to the English groups: *proud, joy* and *compassion.*

**Message and Call-to Action**

* The message was understood by most to be that fundamental freedoms Canadians enjoy today are the direct benefits from those who have served and sacrificed.
* The message was seen as making a direct connection to why we as individuals should appreciate and honour Veterans -- it connects the present and future with their past actions.
* It was viewed as a positive and uplifting message, that is, while Remembrance Day is in some ways a sad day, the message of this ad was also that it should be a day on which Canadians are not only thankful but celebrate the choices and privileges we have. Participants felt that the message inspired gratefulness to Veterans for their sacrifices.
* Of the three ad concepts, *Our Freedom* seemed to be the one most likely to increase involvement in Remembrance Day activities, particularly among the younger 18-34 age group.

**Perceived Strengths**

* **Diversity**: Quite a few participants appreciated the diversity shown in the ad, notably the different age groups, the inclusion of visible minorities and the multicultural make-up reflecting Canada today.
* **Concrete examples of freedoms**: Many appreciated that the ad concept included some specific examples of rights and freedoms Canadians enjoy today, particularly the freedom of speech.
* **The ad is balanced:** Some participants in both the English and Montreal sessions liked this ad because this ad concept seemed to be the most balanced of the three – to least glorify war while still promoting the importance of remembering our Veterans.

Additional strengths of the *Our Freedom* ad concept mentioned in the English-language sessions:

* **More relevant to young people:** Most participants in the 18-34 English-language sessions age group felt this ad was targeted to their age group and some described this ad as more modern and relevant to their age group. This was also the view of some participants in the 35+ age group.
* **Connection to national anthem:** For some participants, the tie-in with the words from the national anthem *true north strong and free* were seen to strengthen the message and appeal to participants pride and patriotism. A few participants noted that their recognition of the words from the anthem was their first cue late in the ad to understand that this ad was talking about freedoms in Canada.
* **Personal storytelling**: Quite a few participants liked the fact that each person in the ad was speaking for themselves about the freedom they enjoy in Canada.
* **Strong executional elements:** There were two segments of the ad concept that many commented on positively:

The opening scene showed a woman holding a protest sign while saying *I am free… free to stand up for what I believe*. The woman was perceived to be young and belonging to a visible minority group which participants appreciated. Additionally the scene connoted an activist sentiment which participants felt was a topical issue and for a few participants an unexpected (but welcomed) from the Government of Canada in general and for Remembrance Day specifically.

The final scene showed laying of the poppies on the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier and the announcer voice-over was *November 11th, remember those who fought for freedom*. For most participants, both the poppy and the act of laying the poppies were automatically associated with Veterans and Remembrance Day commemorations. For quite a few participants, these symbols played a key role in understanding what the ad was about.

**Perceived Issues**

* **No immediate understanding that it is an ad about Veterans and for Remembrance Day:** This was one of the main issues with the ad for many participants, including those who chose it as the ad they found to be the most personally relevant. They disliked that understanding the message was dependent on watching it to the end, if it was understood at all. A few indicated their only indication that it was about Veterans was that they had been told the sponsor of the research was VAC. Some noted that in a real-world context they would not have actually watched the ad in its entirety given the opening scenes.
* **Not focused enough on Veterans**: Some participants felt that the ad generally needed to focus more on the Veterans and to make a more direct connection, perhaps visually, between the Veterans and the freedoms portrayed in the ad. In the English sessions, this often led to some participants suggesting that the final version of the ad should be a combination of the *Our Freedom* and the *Step Up* ad concepts.
* **Too much repetition of the word “free”:** Some participants felt the word “free” was overused in the ad. A few suggested that the phrase be used less and that the ad provide more examples of people exercising their freedom.
* **Increase representation of diverse groups:** Some people suggested a broader representation of Canadians was needed in the ad, for example, more visible minorities, Canadians in different social strata, people with disabilities, etc. A few suggested that it would be better to show groups of people to be able to cover greater diversity rather than individuals.
* **Not free only because of Veterans**: A few participants reacted negatively to the basic notion that we in Canada only enjoy freedoms because of the Veterans. Contributing factors to this reaction included:

-- The phrase *Thanks to them I am free*. Their sense was that the freedoms we enjoy in Canada are as much a result of hard fought for policies and mass movements in this country as it is to the efforts of Veterans.

-- The interpretation that it has been and continues to be the military’s role and duty exclusively to uphold freedom in Canada: the perception was that fighting wars is what granted us freedom in the first place but that connection was not perceived to exist with the present day conflicts Canada is involved in.

* **The poppy:** At around the eight-second mark, there is a drawing of a couple who are each wearing a poppy. In the drawing, the poppy is not coloured in. There were a few participants who noticed this and perceived it to be a white poppy and questioned its significance – was it an anti-war symbol? That said, most did not comment on the poppy.

# AD CONCEPT: *STEP UP*

**Overview of Reactions**

In the English sessions, most participants rated the *Step Up* ad concept as either *excellent* or *good*, in both age groups.

In Montreal, the *Step Up* ad concept was rated as either *good* or *OK* by those 35+ whereas with one exception, the 18-34 year-olds rated the *Step Up* ad concept as *OK*.

The types of emotive words most associated with the *Step Up* ad concept were:

*Thankful/appreciative/grateful*

*Sadness/feeling of loss/compassion*

*Proud/pride*

*Bravery/courage*

*Respect/honour*

**Message and Call-to Action**

* The message is understood by most to be that we should continue to remember and honour Veterans and their sacrifices on Remembrance Day including both those who have served in the past in the two World Wars and also those who have been/are involved in more recent conflicts.

However, quite a few participants, including those who found the ad the most personally relevant, objected to the phrase *We owe them everything we have as Canadians*. There was a strong feeling that this was an overstatement: that is, unquestionably we owe them a great deal but not everything -- there have been many other forces at play that make Canada what it is today.

On the other hand, there were some participants, mostly older and with family members who had served who felt this phrase was appropriate.

* There were a few participants in the English cities and in Montreal who perceived the ad to be more of a recruiting ad than an ad about remembrance for one or more of the following reasons:

-- because of the cross-section of Veterans shown in the ad, all of whom were perceived to be young

-- several key phrases in the ad – *brave in the fight for what’s right* and *stepping up for peace and security*. The latter phrase was particularly perceived to point to Canada’s involvement in current conflicts

-- the lack of any iconic Remembrance Day symbols, particularly absence of the red poppy

* There were also some participants who had issues with the perceived message of the ad for one of two reasons:

-- They perceived it to be glorifying war by focusing on those who have been in combat; this is reinforced by the smile of the faces of various Veterans

-- They do not connect freedom for themselves in Canada with Canadian involvement in present day conflicts, e.g. Afghanistan

* For most participants, the call to action was passive, that is, the message was to remember and honour Veterans on Remembrance Day, as opposed to actively doing something on Remembrance Day.

**Perceived Strengths**

* **The ad is about Veterans:** Many appreciated the fact that the ad focuses single mindedly on Veterans -- Remembrance Day is about honouring those who have served and continue to serve. For quite a few respondents, there was a positive emotional connection with seeing the images of Veterans.

For some participants, that the Veterans were young underlined sacrifices that each made.

* **Showing First World War/Second World War and new Veterans:** Participants liked that it showed a diversity of Veterans - those who had served in the two World Wars (although not everyone realized that from the drawings) and more current Veterans.
* **Real people:** Some people assumed and liked the idea that the finished ad would show the faces of real people who had served.
* **Includes peacekeeping:** The inclusion of a peacekeeper in the ad was mentioned as a positive by a few participants.

Additional strengths of the *Step Up* ad concept mentioned in the English-language sessions:

* **The opening rhyme**: Some participants liked the opening rhyming lines. They felt this device caught their attention and made the ad memorable.

They also liked the use of the word *bold* to emphasize that what Veterans did involved courage in general especially when juxtaposed with the word *young*.

* **It was an inclusive picture of Veterans**: A few participants commented positively on (a) the fact that the ad showed different branches of the service rather than focusing on just one type of Veteran, and (b) included a representation of different ethnic groups who have served Canada.
* **Tone**: A few participants felt that the tone of this ad was appropriate for an ad about Remembrance Day in general- i.e. solemn without being too gloomy.

**Perceived Issues**

* **No women included:** Most participants commented that women have also served and should be included in the ad.
* **Missing Remembrance Day icons:** Some of the participants in the 35+ age groups noted that none of the symbols they automatically associate with Remembrance Day were included in the ad, particularly the red poppy, and suggested this should be added to the ad.
* **More diverse roles:** A few participants felt that the ad should contain some non-combatants who served in the Canadian Armed Forces (e.g. medics, technicians), rather than focusing only on those who are in combat.
* **Complete the story of sacrifices:** There were a few participants who wanted to get an insight into what the lives are today of those who have served, to understand their journey and possibly to better understand their sacrifices. They suggested including footage that showed these sacrifices.

For a few participants, this was also an issue because they did not feel that the smiling faces in the ad matched with the message of sacrifice nor did justice to depicting the true nature of wars and conflicts.

* **Showing First World War/Second World War and new Veterans:** There were a few participants in eachgroup who were less familiar with Veterans and Canada’s role in present-day conflicts. Thus, they did not make the connection with the transition from the Veterans from the past two World Wars to present day.

In Montreal, the perception of some participants is that “anciens combattants” refers to Veterans who served in FWW and SWW and thus did not feel that the ad should include those currently serving – they are not perceived to be “anciens combattants.” A few participants in the English-language sessions also shared this point of view.

* **The opening rhyme**: While some participants in the English-language sessions liked the rhyme, others did not. The latter felt it was trite and not in keeping with the serious message of the ad.
* **Nothing new:** As a general comment, this was perceived to be a typical Remembrance Day ad, and so did not convey anything new aside from depicting a diversity of Veterans in a variety of roles.

There were a few participants in the 35+ group discussions who felt this ad concept was aimed at younger people, e.g. millennials for whom the information in the ad is maybe new, especially because of the #CanadaRemembers hashtag at the end which they felt mirrored a typical way youth communicate.

# AD CONCEPT: *THE TORCH*

**Overview of Reactions**

In the English sessions, most participants rated *The Torch* ad concept as either *good* or *OK*, in both age groups.

In Montreal, *The Torch* ad concept was rated differently by the two age groups: all the 35+ participants rated the ad concept as either *good* or *OK*, whereas the 18-34 year-olds seemed to be split, with as many rating the ad as *excellent* or *good* as gave it a rating of *OK* or *not very good*.

The types of emotive words most associated with *The Torch* ad concept were:

*Sadness/sorrow*

*Guilt/remorse*

*Confused*

In the English-language groups, the words dark and gloomy were also associated with the ad.

**Message and Call-to Action**

* The message is understood by most to be, that it is up to this generation to continue to remember and honour Veterans on Remembrance Day.
* However, there were different reactions to the delivery of this message depending on familiarity with or recognition of the excerpt from *In Flanders Fields*.

A minority of participants recognized or guessed that it is an excerpt from *In Flanders Fields*, and thus they had a strong positive emotional reaction to the sentiments expressed in this iconic poem. However at least half of the participants in the English language sessions did not recognize it, including some who were not familiar with the poem at all, and no one in the Montreal sessions seemed to identify it.

Among those in English Canada who did not recognize the poem, there was often a negative reaction to the message – participants felt this was an attempt to make them feel guilty, i.e. guilt them into doing something. A few participants in Montreal also shared this sentiment.

* For most participants, (a) there was no perceived clear call to action other than to remember, and (b) did not impact their perceptions of Veterans.

**Perceived Strengths**

* **Inclusion of Remembrance Day icons:** The ad was immediately understood to be about Remembrance Day because of the red poppy in the opening scene. The scenes at the Cenotaph and the laying of the red poppies on the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier reinforce the message of the ad. As icons, they also evoke strong positive feelings about Remembrance Day and Veterans.
* ***In Flanders Fields*:** The use of the poem created personal connections for some English-language participants, either because it brought to mind family members who had served or because it triggered memories in their own lives of past Remembrance Day observances. However, as noted, at least half of the participants in the English-language sessions did not recognize the poem.
* **Inclusivity:** Most participants appreciatedthe inclusion of both men and women in the ad. Most participants in the English-language sessions also appreciated the inclusion of different ethnic groups because it reflects the make-up of Canada.

Additional strengths of *The Torch* ad concept mentioned in the Montreal sessions:

* **Matches perception of Veterans:** In Montreal, this ad was seen to focus solely on “anciens combattants” and thus fits with their perceptions of Veterans, that is those who served in FWW and SWW and the sacrifices they made.
* **Matches expectations:** The general sense was that this was the type of ad they had seen in the past and expected to see for Remembrance Day. For some participants this was therefore judged to be the most personally relevant.
* **The use of you/vous:** The use of vous was seen to be personal, that is, the message of the ad was addressed to each viewer of the ad.

**Perceived Issues**

* **There is a disconnect between the audio and visuals:** For those unfamiliar with *In Flanders Fields*, there was often confusion trying to connect what was being said with the visuals. The voice-over was perceived to be sad and somber in contrast to the images of smiling people, who seemed to have no linkage to what was being said, particularly the first image of a smiling woman following the opening scene with the hands.
* **Tone and imagery:** While some felt the serious tone of this ad was appropriate for an ad about Veterans and Remembrance Day, there were others who felt it was too sad, dark and gloomy, and too focused on death. A few also thought the ad implied Veterans were frail and sad individuals, especially in conjunction with the first image which was perceived to be showing “old” hands.
* **Reaction to “to you”/ “à vous”:** Some participants felt that telling them it was their responsibility to carry on was didactic and created unwelcome feelings of guilt.

In conjunction with this, there were also particular phrases, especially *To you, if ye break faith with us who die we shall not sleep* (in the English script) to which a few respondents in the English language sessions reacted negatively.

* **Music:** Some participants felt the music track also contributed to the dark and gloomy feeling they got from the ad, including a few who described it as depressing or funeral-type music.
* **Veterans portrayed in ad**: The focus was perceived to be only on World War Veterans rather than those involved in more recent or current engagements, with peacekeepers being pointed out as a specific example by a few participants in the Montreal sessions.

**APPENDIX 1:  
STUDY MATERIALS**

***SCREENING QUESTIONNAIRE***

Advertising Pre-testing

-- Screener --

Hello/Bonjour, I'm \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ of [name of recruiting company], a marketing research company. We are organizing a research project on behalf of the Government of Canada. I’d like to ask you some questions to see if you would be interested in possibly taking part in this study. This will take about 5 or 6 minutes.

May I continue?

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Yes | 1 |  |
| No | 2 | **Thank and end the interview** |

Would you prefer that I continue in English or in French? Préférez-vous continuer en français ou en anglais? **[If prefers French, either switch to the French screener and continue, or say the following and then hang up and arrange French-language call-back]** Nous vous rappellerons pour mener cette entrevue de recherche en français. Merci. Au revoir.

In this project, an individual like yourself is chosen to sit down with several others and give ideas and opinions in a two-hour discussion session.

**[If prefers to continue in English for the Montreal French-language focus groups, ask:]** The discussion will be held entirely in French, and participants will be asked to review and discuss written communication materials written only in French. Would you be comfortable with this?

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Yes | 1 |  |
| No | 2 | **Thank and terminate** |

**[If prefers to continue in French for the Toronto, Halifax or Calgary English-language focus groups, ask:]** La discussion se déroulera entièrement en anglais et nous demanderons aux participants de passer en revue du matériel de communication en anglais seulement puis d'en discuter. Seriez-vous à l'aise avec cela?

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Oui | 1 |  |
| Non | 2 | **Remerciez** **et terminez** **l'entrevue** |

The Government of Canada is planning to run an advertising campaign later this year. They have several alternative ideas for how to do this advertising campaign. In the discussion session, you would be asked to review some of these advertising materials and give your ideas and opinions about these materials.

Your participation is voluntary and confidential. All information collected, used and/or disclosed will be used for research purposes only and administered per the requirements of the *Privacy Act*. The names of participants will not be provided to the government. May I continue?

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Yes | 1 |  |
| No | 2 | **Thank and terminate** |

I need to ask you a few questions to see if you fit the profile of the type of people we are looking for in this research.

**Note to recruiter: When terminating a call because of their profile say: *Thank you for your cooperation. We already have enough participants who have a similar profile to yours, so we are unable to invite you to participate at this time.***

0) **Record gender:**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Male | 1 | **Quota: 50/50** |
| Female | 2 |

1a) First of all, do you, or does anyone in your household, work for . . . ? **(Read list)**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **No** | **Yes** | **If “yes” to any, thank and terminate** |
| A marketing research firm | ( ) | ( ) |
| An advertising agency, web or graphic design firm | ( ) | ( ) |
| A magazine or newspaper | ( ) | ( ) |
| Government of Canada | ( ) | ( ) |
| A marketing company | ( ) | ( ) |
| A radio or television station | ( ) | ( ) |
| A public relations company | ( ) | ( ) |

1b) Have you ever served in the Canadian Armed Forces either on active duty or in the Reserves?

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Yes | 1 | **Thank and terminate** |
| No | 2 |  |

1c) Have you ever been a Cadet?

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Yes | 1 | **Thank and terminate** |
| No | 2 |  |

2) We would like to talk to people in different age groups. Into which **one** of the following groups should I place you? **(Read list)**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Under 18 | 1 | **Thank and terminate** |
| 18 to 24 | 2 | **Qualifies for Younger group;**  **Age quota: 50/50** |
| 25 to 34 | 3 |
| 35 to 44 | 4 | **Qualifies for Older group;**  **Age quota: 25% in each age group** |
| 45 to 54 | 5 |
| 55 to 64 | 6 |
| 65 or over | 7 |

3a) Were you born in Canada or were you born elsewhere?

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Canadian-born | 1 | **Go to Q.4** |
| Born elsewhere | 2 | **Ask Q.3b** |

3b) Are you a Canadian citizen?

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Yes, I am | 1 |  |
| No, I am not | 2 | **Thank and end the interview** |

3c) In what country were you born? **(Record below)**

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Quota: 1-3 born outside of Canada**

4) What is the highest level of education you have received? **(Do not read list)**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Some high school or less | 1 | **Recruit mix** |
| Completed high school | 2 |
| Post-secondary technical training | 3 |
| Some college/university | 4 |
| Completed college/university | 5 |
| Post-graduate studies | 6 |

5) What is your current family status? **[Do not read]**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Married/common-law | 1 |
| Single/separated/divorced/widowed | 2 |

6) Do you have any children 18 or under living with you at home?

**Older group Quota: 50% have children living with them**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Yes | 1 |
| No | 2 |

7) We would like to talk to a cross-section of people with different income levels. Which one of the following groups best describes your annual household income from all sources before taxes? **(Read List)**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Under $30,000 | 1 | **Recruit mix** |
| $30,000 to $49,999 | 2 |
| $50,000 to $69,999 | 3 |
| $70,000 to $99,999 | 4 |
| $100,000 to $124,999 | 5 |
| $125,000 or more | 6 |

I have just a few more questions to ask you.

8) Have you ever participated in an in-depth research interview or a focus group involving a small group of people where people were asked to discuss different topics?

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Yes | 1 |  |
| No | 2 | **Go to Q.10** |

9a) What topics have you ever discussed?

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**(If related to advertising, thank and terminate)**

9b) And when was the last time you attended an interview or discussion group?

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 6 months ago or less | 1 | **Thank and end the interview** |
| **OR** more than 6 months ago | 2 |  |

9c) In the past 5 years, how many in-depth research interviews or discussion groups have you attended? Would you say less than 5 in total, or would you say 5 or more?

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Less than 5 | 1 |  |
| 5 or more | 2 | **Thank and end the interview** |

Let me tell you some more about this study to see if you would like to take part.

10) As I mentioned earlier, the research involves taking part in a focus group discussion. In the group discussion, you will be asked to fill in some short questionnaires in English (French). Also, participants in focus groups are asked to express their thoughts and opinions freely in an informal setting with others. Do you feel comfortable doing this?

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Yes | 1 |  |
| No | 2 | **Thank and end the interview** |

**Terminate if person gives a reason such as verbal ability, sight, hearing, or related to reading/writing ability, or if they think they may have difficulty expressing their thoughts.**

**If respondent wears glasses, remind them to bring them to the session.**

Participants in the discussion group will be asked to turn off any electronic devices during the discussion. Would you be willing to do so?

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Yes | 1 |  |
| No | 2 | **Thank and end the interview** |

There may be some people from the Government of Canada who have been involved in this project observing the session. However, they will not take part in the discussion in any way, and they will not be given your name. Is this acceptable to you?

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Yes | 1 |  |
| No | 2 | **Thank and end the interview** |

The session will be audio-recorded. These recordings are used to help with analyzing the findings and writing the report. Your name will not appear in the research report. Is this acceptable to you?

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Yes | 1 |  |
| No | 2 | **Thank and end the interview** |

**Invitation**

Thank you. We would like to invite you to participate in one of our group discussions. Refreshments will be provided, and you will be paid $100 in cash for your participation immediately at the end of the group discussion. The discussion will last approximately 2 hours starting at \_\_\_\_\_, and will be held…..

Would you be willing to attend?

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Yes | 1 |  |
| No | 2 | **Thank and end the interview** |

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **City/Date:** | **Location:** | **Type of group:** | **Time:** |
| ***Halifax Tues., March 13*** | **MQO**  Tel #: 902- | 35 years & over 18-34 years | 6:00 – 8:00 pm 8:00 – 10:00 pm |
| ***Montreal Wed., March 14*** | **Ad Hoc Recherche**  Tel #: 514- | 18-34 years 35 years & over | 6:00 – 8:00 pm 8:00 – 10:00 pm |
| ***Toronto Wed., March 14*** | **Consumer Vision**  Tel #: 416- | 18-34 years 35 years & over | 6:00 – 8:00 pm 8:00 – 10:00 pm |
| ***Calgary Thurs., March 15*** | **Qualitative Coordination**  Tel #: 403- | 35 years & over 18-34 years | 6:00 – 8:00 pm 8:00 – 10:00 pm |

As part of our quality control measures, we ask everyone who is participating in the focus group to bring along a piece of I.D., picture if possible. You may be asked to show your I.D.

As these are small groups and with even one person missing, the overall success of the group may be affected, I would ask that you make every effort to attend the group. But, in the event you are unable to attend, let us know as soon as possible so we can find a replacement. Please call us at ***[Insert recruiting company phone #]*** and ask for ***[Insert recruiting company contact name]***. Also note that you may not send someone else in your place if you are unable to attend.

Please also arrive 15 minutes prior to the starting time. **The discussion begins promptly at [TIME]**. Only those who participate in the discussion will receive the $100.

Someone from our office will be calling you back to confirm these arrangements. May I please have your contact information where we can reach you during the evening and during the day?

**Name:**

**Evening phone: Day time phone:**

**Email address:**

**Thank you very much!**

**Recruited by:**

**Confirmed by:**

***DISCUSSION MATERIALS***

2018 Remembrance Day Advertising Pre-testing

Discussion Guide

**1) Introduction (15 minutes)**

a) **Introduce self, and explain purpose of research:** This research is being sponsored by the Government of Canada and specifically Veterans Affairs Canada. The Government is considering running an advertising campaign later this year. They have several alternative ideas for how to do this advertising campaign. What I’ll be doing is showing you the different alternative ideas they have, and asking you for your opinions.

b) **Review group discussion procedures:**

-- Role of moderator

-- Role of participants: there are no right or wrong answers; just want everyone to participate and offer your own views, and to feel free to agree or disagree with others in the group

-- Confidentiality: Your name will not appear in the report; the report will be available through Library and Archives Canada

-- Recording: The session is being audio-recorded. The recording is for my use only to help in preparing the report on this research, and will not be provided to Veterans Affairs

-- Presence of observers from Veterans Affairs behind the one-way mirror – they are not given your name; they are here to observe the moderator and to increase their general understanding of the topics we are discussing tonight

-- Description of facilities (washrooms, front desk for incentives)

-- Please turn off cell phones and any other electronic devices

-- Discussion to last 2 hours

c) **Any questions?**

d) **Participant self-introductions:** First name only, what you are doing these days – are you working outside the home, raising a family or attending school?

**2) Review ad concepts (25 minutes)**

a) **Overview of procedure:** The Government of Canada is planning to run an advertising campaign, and they have developed three alternative concepts for the design of the ads.

I’m going to show you the advertising concepts one at a time, and after each one I’ll ask you to complete a short questionnaire on your reactions to it. After you have seen everything, I’ll ask you for your opinions about the different advertising concepts.

b) **Explanation of how ad concepts have been rendered:**

The ad campaign would consist of a 30-second ad. None of the ads actually have been produced yet. Instead, each ad is represented by an animation, with drawings instead of real footage and music and voices that aren’t final as well. This is just to give you the idea of what the ad would look and sound like, before it gets produced with real footage and professional announcers and music. They’re like sketches that an artist would do before the final painting.

I will present each concept by playing these animations. Again, these aren’t the final ads, which would have real footage instead of drawings, and a different announcer, as well a professionally recorded sound track.

In order to evaluate these ads, you will have to overlook the fact that these are rough animations, and instead focus on the messages of these ads, the feelings they give you, and how effective you think the overall ideas are. We will not be talking about the quality of the drawings, or the quality of the sound track. Instead, I want you to remember that these animations would be produced later on with real photography, real announcers and more professional music and soundtracks, and react to the ads on that basis.

c) **Present first ad concept** (order will be rotated across groups)

I am going to play the first ad for you and I will play it twice. After that I will ask you to complete a brief questionnaire

Pass out and review ad concept questionnaire

♦ Do not write on the questionnaire until you have seen the ad twice

♦ Don’t worry about spelling or grammar, but please do make notes for yourself

♦ Don’t talk with each other about what you think of the ads, so that each of you has time to formulate your own opinions before hearing what other people think

Have participants complete the questionnaire.

d) **Present the other two ad concepts, using the above procedure**

**Rotation system based on group time:**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Halifax, March 13** | **Montreal March 14** | **Toronto March 14** | **Calgary March 14** |
| **Group 1** | *35 & over*  1. Step Up  2. The Torch  3. Our Freedom | *18-34*  1. Our Freedom  2. Step Up  3. The Torch | *18-34*  1. Our Freedom  2. Step Up  3. The Torch | *35 & over*  1. The Torch  2. Our Freedom  3. Step Up |
| **Group 2** | *18-34*  1. Step Up  2. The Torch  3. Our Freedom | *35 & over*  1. Our Freedom  2. Step Up  3. The Torch | *35 & over*  1. Our Freedom  2. Step Up  3. The Torch | *18-34*  1. The Torch  2. Our Freedom  3. Step Up |

**Assignment of letters to ads**

G: Our Freedom

N: Step Up

R: The Torch

**3) Do vote on personal relevance (5 minutes)**

To help me get started, I’d first like to find out what choice you made on the last questionnaire you filled in – that is, which of the three ad concepts did you find most relevant to you personally?

(Do vote and use the voting pattern to decide on order of discussion in Step 4 below)

**4) Review campaign concepts (60 minutes)**

**For each ad concept** (replay the ad as a reminder)**:**

To help me get started, I’d first like to find out how you rated the ad. (Do votes on Q.5 in the self-completion questionnaires)

Start the discussion with those most positive towards the ad

-- Why did you rate the ad the way you did? What emotion words did you write down? What kind of feeling do you get from this ad?

-- What did you like? What, if anything, did you not like? [*Note to moderator:* keep like/dislike discussion brief]

-- What did you see as being the main ideas or messages of this ad concept?

**Probe:** Was there anything in the ad you didn’t like or that was confusing? Are there any specific parts that are unclear? Is there anything that could be done to clarify the message?

What, if anything surprised you in this ad? Is there anything missing in this ad that you had expected to see?

Who is this ad campaign being aimed at? What gives you that impression?

Is this an important message for Canadians like you to hear and see? Why/why not? Could something more be done to make it more relevant to you?

-- Would you change anything about the ad? Anything you would suggest changing to improve the ad – e.g. what more, if anything, could be done to increase the appeal of the ad or to make it catch your attention more?

-- When you are watching this ad, does it connect to your impressions of Veterans?

**Probe:** Does it make you feel that it is important to honour our Veterans?

Does it help to increase awareness of the sacrifices and successes of Veterans in helping make Canada what it is today?

-- Do you think seeing this ad might change anything you do or thoughts you may have about Veterans in any way? If yes, how and why? If no, why not?

**Note to moderator on intended ad campaign objectives (February 23 document):**

* Build awareness and intensify the personal relevance of the Remembrance message
* Instill a sense of pride, respect and gratitude towards Veterans
* Engage Canadians, of all ages, in Acts of Remembrance

**5) Wrap-up (5 minutes)**

These are all the questions I have for you, but before we go, do you have anything else you would like to add about the material we discussed today?

Thank you for coming this evening and giving us your opinions.

Please leave all the papers on the table.

On your way out, please don’t forget to see the host to sign for and receive your incentive envelope.

**Group 1**: There is another group waiting out there to have this same discussion. So please don’t talk about anything related to what we have done here to make sure they don’t have any more information than you did before the discussion.

Ad Concept G

1) Please write down any emotion words that describe your reaction to this ad concept:

2) What are main ideas or messages of the ad?

3) Please write down anything that you particularly like about this ad:

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

4) Please write down anything that you don’t like about this ad or anything that you found confusing:

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

5) Overall, thinking both about what the ad is saying, and how the ad is done, would you say the ad is – please circle a number between 1 and 4:

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Excellent | Good | OK | Not very good |

Ad Concept N

1) Please write down any emotion words that describe your reaction to this ad concept:

2) What are main ideas or messages of the ad?

3) Please write down anything that you particularly like about this ad:

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

4) Please write down anything that you don’t like about this ad or anything that you found confusing:

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

5) Overall, thinking both about what the ad is saying, and how the ad is done, would you say the ad is – please circle a number between 1 and 4:

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Excellent | Good | OK | Not very good |

Ad Concept R

1) Please write down any emotion words that describe your reaction to this ad concept:

2) What are main ideas or messages of the ad?

3) Please write down anything that you particularly like about this ad:

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

4) Please write down anything that you don’t like about this ad or anything that you found confusing:

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

5) Overall, thinking both about what the ad is saying, and how the ad is done, would you say the ad is – please circle a number between 1 and 4:

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Excellent | Good | OK | Not very good |

Last Questionnaire

The three ad concepts were G, N and R.

1) Taking everything into consideration – what the ad said and what the ad showed, please write in the letter of the ad concept that you found **most** relevant to you personally:

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

1b) Why is that?

2) Please write in the letter of the ad concept you found **least** relevant to you personally: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**APPENDIX 2:  
ADVERTISING CAMPAIGN CONCEPTS**

**OUR FREEDOM**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Screenshot 2018-04-18 10.41.54.png | I am free. Free to stand up for what I believe. |
| Screenshot 2018-04-18 10.42.15.png | Thanks to them, I am free. Free to say what needs to be said. |
| Screenshot 2018-04-18 10.42.29.png | I am free. Free to be, who I’m meant to be. |
| Screenshot 2018-04-18 10.42.43.png | Free to remember |
| Screenshot 2018-04-18 10.43.01.png | why we’re true north, |
| Screenshot 2018-04-18 10.43.13.png | strong and free. |
| Screenshot 2018-04-18 10.43.24.png | November 11th, remember those who fought for freedom. |
| Screenshot 2018-04-18 10.43.34.png |  |
| Screenshot 2018-04-18 10.43.51.png | A message from the Government of Canada |

**STEP UP**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Screenshot 2018-04-18 10.44.19.png | They were young. They were bold. |
| Screenshot 2018-04-18 10.44.35.png | Their memory will never grow old. |
| Screenshot 2018-04-18 10.44.48.png | Brave in fight for what’s right.  Freedom. |
| Screenshot 2018-04-18 10.45.07.png | Canada’s Veterans.  Always stepping up for peace, and our security. |
| Screenshot 2018-04-18 10.45.19.png | We owe them everything we have as Canadians. |
| Screenshot 2018-04-18 10.43.34.png | On November 11, we step up and remember our Veterans. |
| Screenshot 2018-04-18 10.43.51.png | A message from the Government of Canada |

**THE TORCH**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Screenshot 2018-04-18 10.45.43.png | To you, |
| Screenshot 2018-04-18 10.45.54.png | from failing hands, we throw the torch. |
| Screenshot 2018-04-18 10.46.13.png | To you, |
| Screenshot 2018-04-18 11.20.38.png |  |
| Screenshot 2018-04-18 10.46.56.png | be yours to hold it high. |
| Screenshot 2018-04-18 10.47.13.png | To you, |
| Screenshot 2018-04-18 10.47.27.png | if ye break faith with us who die, |
| Screenshot 2018-04-18 10.47.42.png | we shall not sleep, though poppies grow. |
| Screenshot 2018-04-18 10.47.58.png | On November 11th, |
| Screenshot 2018-04-18 10.43.34.png | Remember to remember those who stood up for freedom. |
| Screenshot 2018-04-18 10.43.51.png | A message from the Government of Canada |