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We Remember

C A N A D A R E M E M B E R S

# Vimy Oaks Keep Memories Growing

Hundreds of oak saplings will help to keep alive the memory of the sacrifice made by Canadian soldiers in the Battle of Vimy Ridge 100 years ago.

The oak trees being planted today are descendants of acorns collected on the battlefield as a souvenir by Lieutenant Leslie Miller. Shell fire had devastated the landscape but a half buried oak tree provided a remembrance and its acorns were planted by Miller on farmland which is now home to the Scarborough Chinese Baptist Church. He called his farm the 'Vimy Oaks Farm'. Today, several of the original oaks survive. However, there are no original oaks on the Vimy Ridge site.

In January 2015, the process of continuing the Vimy Oaks began with professional arborists taking cuttings (scions) from the crowns of the oaks, which were grafted onto base root stock. The saplings are now growing at Connon NVK nurseries in Dundas, Ontario, using an accelerated method and many have already been planted by organizations through Vimy Oaks Legacy.

The oak saplings are offered for sale to organizations that are committed to planting them at commemorative sites such as cenotaphs, town squares, memorial sites and parks, heritage sites, schools, military cemeteries and sites, Royal Canadian Legions, public locations associated with the First World War, and at sites that communicate messages of universal values and peace.

Proceeds from the sale will fund the repatriation of descendants of the original oaks back to Vimy Ridge to promote the memory and legacy of Canadians who fought there 100 years ago. A related project headed by the Vimy Foundation aims to create a the Vimy Foundation Centennial Park, a landscaped planting of 100 Vimy Oak trees beside the Canadian National Vimy Memorial Historic Site in France.

For more information visit [vimyoakslegacy.ca](http://vimyoakslegacy.ca) and [vimyfoundation.ca](http://vimyfoundation.ca).



Veteran Ashley Zedner pours a shovelful of dirt on Notre Dame Catholic School's new Vimy Oak as Beaches-East York MP Nathaniel Erskine-Smith holds the tree up. The oak was planted in June to mark the 75th anniversary of the school, the 100th anniversary of the battle of Vimy Ridge and Canada's 150th birthday. Photo by Justin Skinner, Metroland

These acorns collected from Vimy Oaks Farm in Scarborough are descendants of trees destroyed during the Battle of Vimy Ridge.



## Vimy Ridge Area During and After The Fighting



After years of fighting in the region and after the final assault on April 9, 1917, the area surrounding Vimy Ridge was no more than a muddy field littered with bodies and shell holes. There was no vegetation except for a few dead trees. The countryside and the soldiers were not the only ones who suffered; surrounding towns, villages and farms were also hit hard. Many had to start from scratch.



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