

SPRINGRIDGE FARM DIGS IN TO FIRST WORLD WAR REMEMBRANCE PROJECT

MILTON FARM PART OF VIMY OAKS TREE-PLANTING CAMPAIGN

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When it comes to appreciation for Canada's veterans, the Springridge Farm family's roots run deep. Literally and figuratively. With three of their four grandfathers having fought in the First World War, owners John and Laura Hughes were more than a little honoured to be part of the nationwide Vimy oak tree-planting campaign last year. They were entrusted with five of these trees — planted and now flourishing near the Springridge's Niagara Escarpment Educational Lookout — that are

descendants of the oaks destroyed during the Battle of Vimy Ridge.

'We were touched by the story of the young soldier bringing the acorns home and them growing into these magnificent trees.'

- Laura Hughes, co-owner of farm with Vimy oaks

The Bell School Line farm is believed to be the only privately owned land to have received Vimy oaks,

which were primarily planted at community parks and conservation areas.

John Hughes made a pitch for his farm to be included after he and Laura made a trip to Vimy Ridge in 2015.

Said Laura, "It was a very moving experience and something that every Canadian should see if they have the chance. It (the trip) definitely raised our level of interest in the (tree-planting) project."

After Canada's victory in this historic battle, it's believed Lt. Leslie Miller collected acorns as a souvenir. The fruit farmer sent them home, requesting they be planted on his Scarborough-Agincourt property.

In 2015, cuttings were taken from the Vimy oaks at the Miller Farm and grafted to a suitable oak root understock, with the new saplings that developed grown by the



John Hughes stands by one of the five heritage Vimy Oak trees at Springridge, which honour the legacy of Canadians who fought in the First World War.

Connon-NVK Nursery just west of Waterdown and distributed for last year's planting. "We were touched by the story of the young soldier bringing the acorns home and them growing into these magnificent trees," said Laura, whose farm sees roughly 20,000 students vis-

it for school tours each year — making its inclusion in the Vimy oaks project a logical choice. "They're (the Springridge Vimy oaks) doing so well." While Prime Minister Justin Trudeau joined world leaders in France this past weekend to commemorate the 100th anniversary

of the end of the First World War, Springridge Farm visitors were invited to check out the Vimy Oaks and reflect on the freedom we enjoy thanks to our veterans — past and present. To learn more about the Vimy oaks and the Vimy centennial, visit www.vimyfoundation.ca.

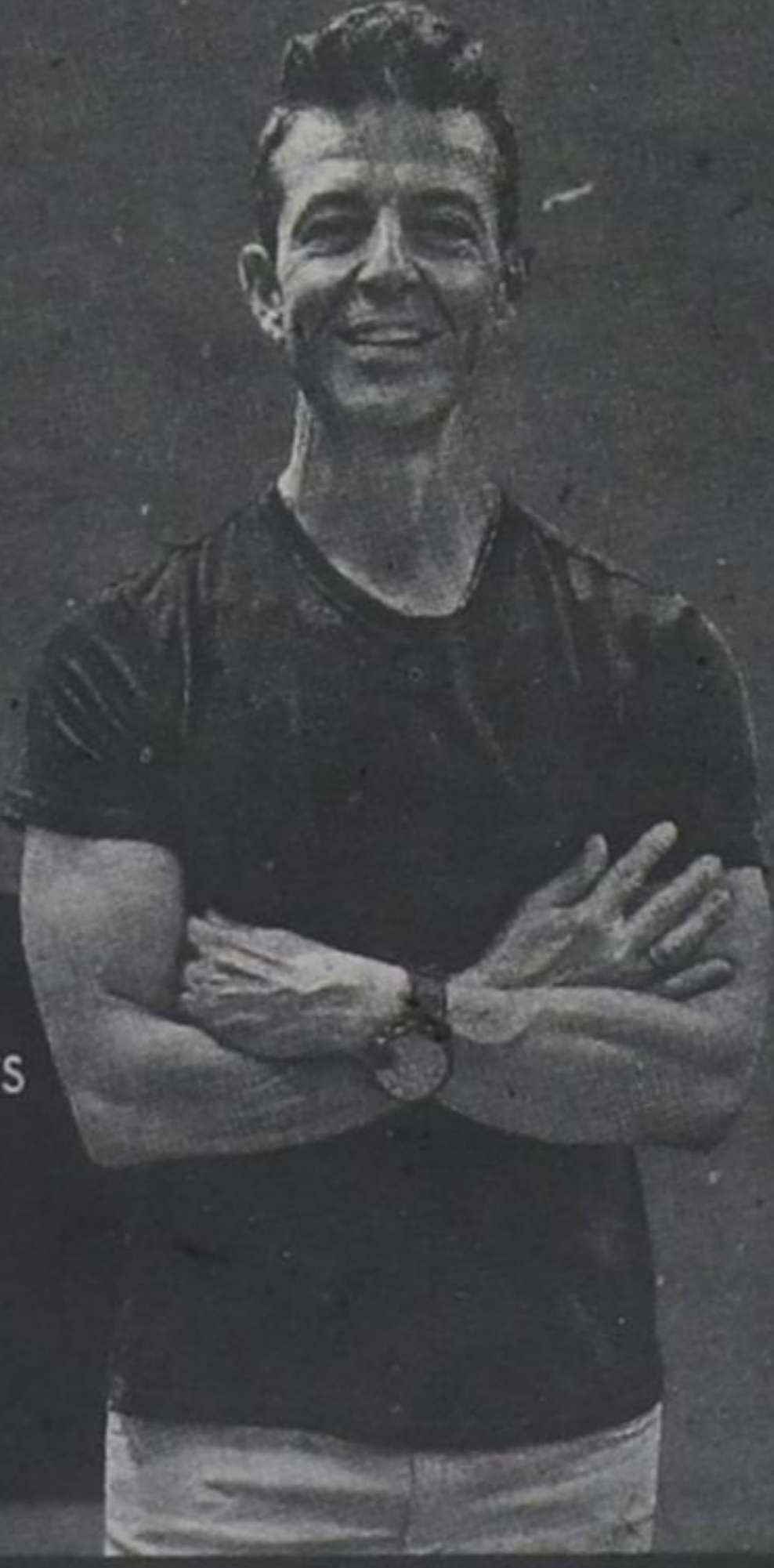
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