



My name is Monty McDonald, I am the Leader of the Vimy Oaks Legacy (VOL), a not for profit group of volunteers promoting the memory and legacy of Canadians who fought in the First World War through the planting of Vimy Oak trees.

These trees are descendants of acorns gathered from the Vimy Ridge battlefield in France after the April 1917 battle and sent home to Canada by a Canadian soldier (Leslie Miller). The acorns were planted in the woodlot of his farm in Scarborough.

The VOL mission is to create a living memorial by:

- Repatriation of Vimy Oak trees to France
- Distribution of Vimy Oaks trees across Canada

I am also a friend of the late Leslie Miller having worked for him on his farm as a youth. I introduced the story of the Vimy Oaks to members of the deacon's board of SCBC a number of years ago.

The Church has been fully supportive of the recently formed Vimy Oaks Legacy and its mission of commemorating the memory of Canadians who have fought in the First World War. Since initiating our repatriation project the VOL never asked the SCBC to consider heritage status nor does it see the need for making the woodlot a heritage site. Right from the time SCBC was first told about the Vimy Oaks, they have been good stewards of the original Vimy Oaks trees. They have been true partners with the VOL, giving us access to the site in the harvesting of cuttings and acorns and in leading the celebration of the kick off harvesting event in January 2015. There are now over fifteen hundred descendant trees growing at a nursery near Hamilton. Several hundred are planned to be repatriated to Vimy Ridge in April 2017. The rest of the trees, VOL plans to offer for planting at commemorative sites in communities across Canada. We have already pledged trees to a number of such locations. The original trees at the Vimy Oaks woodlot will eventually die but their heritage will be preserved across the country for Canadians to experience whenever commemoration events are held. Therefore, there is no need to make the original woodlot a heritage site.

Monty McDonald

Leader Vimy Oaks Legacy