

Interpretive Text – Vimy Oak

*New Westminster Heritage Preservation Society (Heritage New West)*

*Draft text submitted to the City by Deane Gurney*

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### **The Oaks of Vimy Ridge**

On April 12, 1917, after a battle that had raged for four days, Canadian troops triumphed over the German army at Vimy Ridge. This strategic plateau in France, captured by Germany early in WW 1, had repelled several earlier attacks by Allied forces. The four Canadian Divisions, fighting as a unified force for the first time, scored a startling and decisive victory though at a tragic cost of 3,598 dead and more than 7,000 wounded. The much-celebrated Battle of Vimy Ridge is considered to be a defining moment in Canadian history, heralding our young nation's entry onto the world stage.

Helping to carry the wounded across the decimated landscape that day was Lt Leslie Miller who, as the story goes, stopped to scoop a few acorns from the fallen oak trees. Upon his return to Canada, he planted these acorns on his farm in Ontario.

The oak tree you see here, a descendent of those same trees, was planted on ----, 2018. It shares the symbolism of the oaks now replanted at Vimy Ridge: the renewal of hope amidst the devastation of war.

Heritage New West is proud to partner with the City of New Westminster in sponsoring this tree. We gratefully remember all those who have sacrificed their lives and loved ones in times of war.

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