

VIMY OAKS LEGACY
LEGS des CHÊNES de VIMY

Management Team

- Monty McDonald, President and CEO, Repatriation Project Manager
- Colonel (Retired) Ralph Coleman, Director Government, Media, and Public Relations
- Robert Domoney, VP Logistics & Systems and Manager of Trees for Canada Sales
- Robin McDonald, Director Legal and Secretary
- James Wakefield, Treasurer and CFO



HILL 145

- **2004: My wife and I visited Vimy Ridge.**
- **We saw no mature oak trees.**
- **I hatched a dream: why not repatriate a few Vimy acorns and plant them near the memorial with a plaque honouring Leslie?**



**HILL 145 VIEW FROM 1ST
German Trench Line**



Ed Lawrence

- Jan 2014: I shared dream on Ed Lawrence CBC Garden show:**
- **“Think Big: plant 150 saplings, not acorns! I can hook you up with people who will help you do it”**
 - **Grow acorns in Canada export trees as was done at Juno Beach with Maples**



Linda Dicaire, renowned Landscape Architect (Bilingual)



Case Vanderkruk , Owner NVK Nurseries. His family remembers Cdn Army liberation of Holland

landscapeontario.com



At the Woodlot: Build Acorn Traps, Rubber Owls and Rubber Snakes to keep the Squirrels Away



VOLC secured a KEY Partner. The Vimy Foundation, a registered charity working to preserve, promote Canada's ongoing legacy of leadership as symbolized by the victory at Vimy Ridge.

TVF proposed purchasing 1.6 hectares of farmland beside the Canadian National Vimy Memorial for a Centennial Park

VOLC responsibilities:

- Park landscape design
- Supply and plant trees in the Centennial Park , ensure backup
- Civil and Cost Engineering including UXO removal
- Provide trees for TVF to fundraise in Canada

TVF Responsibilities:

- Purchase land for centennial park
- Project Fund raising
- Government support (Veterans Affairs, Heritage Canada, govt of France)

Together we worked hand in glove on issues getting in the way and had fun doing it!



Chris Sweeney CEO



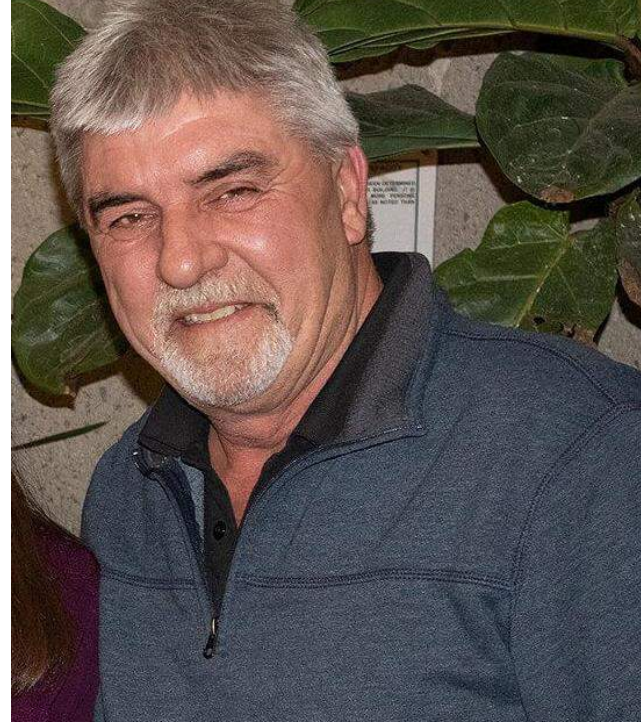
**Jeremy Diamond
Executive Director**



Alas we collected only 10 acorns in the Fall of 2014. Late spring frost!

We would not be able to meet an April 2017 planting date with plantable saplings





**Case Vanderkruk: "we will graft scions from the crowns of Vimy Trees to French Oak rootstock"
Above ground will be Vimy Oak DNA**

Pictures: Arborists harvest Scions & operating room at NVK



300 Graftings planted in Special Soil media, show excellent growth by September 2015





View of TVF 1.6 Hectare field. Photo shows 2015 Tour de France riding by on the D55 road



View of memorial from the farm field across Battlefield Terrain (UXO has not been removed)

November 2015 Reconnaissance
Trip to look at sites and gain
French Support

Linda does Site measurements to confirm **Google Earth Dimensions**



Projects in France: always get the Local Mayor on Board (**Pierre Senechal** of Givenchy en Gohelle)



Manage UXO!



Along the 1st World War battle lines (480 Km), Approx
5 Billion Artillery Shells were fired

Dud rate is estimated at 20% so **1 Billion shells** are
underground classed as **Unexploded Ordnance (UXO)**

This is called the Red Zone . Securite Civile must be called to
demine before construction takes place

Patrick Rochet (director Pas de Calais region) liked our Franco
Canadian project, **offered to demine at no cost for his crew**





**Government
of Canada**

**Gouvernement
du Canada**

**Veterans Affairs Manage the
Vimy site. Signed Off on
compatibility of our project**



**CWGC is responsible for 978
Cemeteries France, Belgium.
Advised on planting in clays of
ridge, park construction
materials and offered to do our
gardening**

Other Supporters in France



Warty McDonald and Charles Nemeth Photo © Linda Dixon

L’homme de Terrain de VOLC en France

Charles Nemeth: friend from
Esso Chemical days now living
in France

His watchword “The French
have their ways of doing things”



August 2016, NVK staff show off grafted trees ready for export.

NVK took every precaution:

- Growing in **quarantined** greenhouse.
- Gov't approved **Pest management** system
- Coordinated, passed all **government inspections**

- **All that was needed was a Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) Phyto Sanitary Certificate** to export to E.U.



VOLC Team members: Col Ralph Coleman and MP John McKay (Parl. Secretary for Minister of Defense, (& VOLC's Man on the Hill)) had arranged for :

Hercules Aircraft to fly 300 grafted trees to France as was done for Maples to Juno 1994

- **Along with military pipe band as escort**



Wife's advice: "there is a good crop of acorns at the Vimy woodlot, why not gather them as insurance?"



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Ottawa, ON
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CANADA

Tel.: (001) 613-773-7166
www.inspection.gc.ca

October 26, 2016

Monty McDonald
President, Vimy Oaks Legacy Corporation
85 Page Avenue
North York, ON

**Alas a dear
John Letter
from CFIA**

Given what you have told us of the Vimy Oaks project's history and symbolism, I would like to assure you that we were also disappointed to find that the CFIA could not meet the EU's standard import requirements. If France is able to exempt the oak plants from the EU's standard requirements or reduce them so that the CFIA can certify the plants for export, we will be able to communicate this information to our Operations field staff.

We are now awaiting a reply from the French embassy regarding their decision. We will inform you as soon as we have more information.

In closing, I look forward to a positive outcome for this historic project and thank you for your collaboration.

Sincerely,

Patricia McAllister
National Manager, Horticulture Section

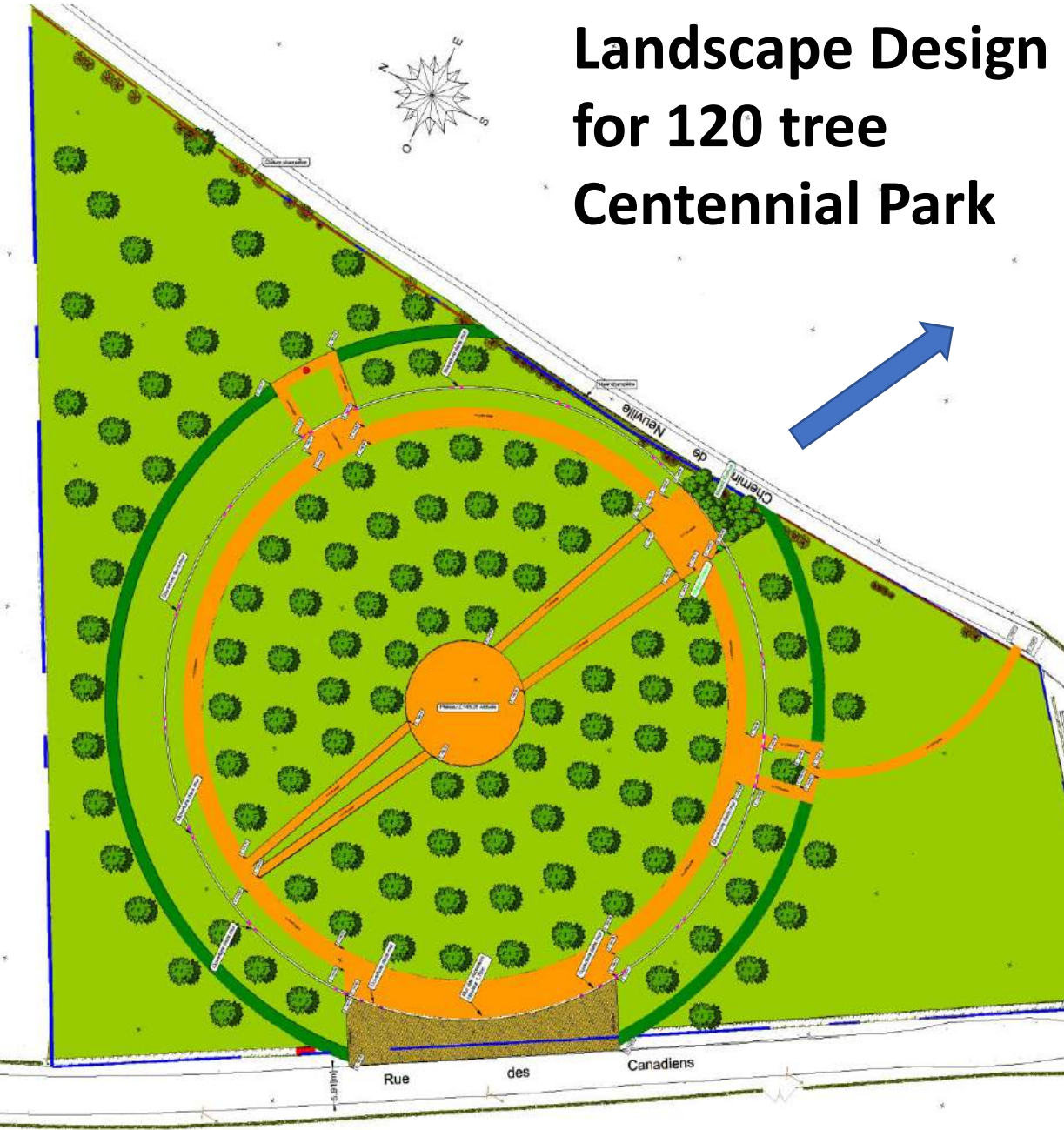
- **Good News: CFIA got approval to export Acorns**
 - “Find a nursery in France!”
- **TVF agreed to “Acorn strategy”**
 - New Project Completion Date Nov 11 2018



Nov 2016, Monty shakes on deal with Bruno Picard, owner of Montferrat Nursery and seedings 6 months later



Nov 2016: Linda's Landscape Design for 120 tree Centennial Park



- 4 sided 1.6 hectare field
- a 100m diameter grove symbolizing 100 years (1917-2017) of remembrance surrounded by circular path
- Grove: 4 concentric tree circles, 1 circle for each Canadian Division who fought at Vimy.
Trees: small green circles
- Pathways and other hard surfaces coloured orange
- Path with axial view to the Vimy Memorial (view corridor) , see sighting arrow
- Corridor is symbolic of a journey from darkness, death and despair (narrow) to light, life and hope (wide).
- Memoriam and Donor recognition wall.

April 2017: 100th Anniversary of the Battle. A peeled back Vimy battlefield with war junk from demining operations (see backhoe behind).

Excavated metal: Pig tails for barbed wire, shell casings, projectiles, communications cable, shovels, hand grenades, a kitchen stove.

3 bodies also unearthed (Commonwealth War Graves takes them for burial)



Three tries to eliminate UXO to one meter Depth

Finally used Ground Penetrating Radar

Excavation of UXO : **Blue means Inactive,**

Red is Active

Construction delays



Undetonated Bunker Buster and Sheep who replace lawnmowers on Battlefield Terrain





At last (May 2018) SNB Colas, our selected E.U. Landscaping contractor continues construction 6 months to park opening

Remember Warning: “the French have their way of doing things!!”



Oct 2018: 415 Vimy Trees from 500 acorns at Montferrat Nursery Ready to ship



SNB does photo op with school kids planting trees wrong. If not replanted, they will DIE!





**Views at official Centennial Park
Opening day Nov 9 2018 mostly
dirt, 120 small trees spread 30 ft
apart. Bruno from Nursery confirms
trees will die unless replanted!**



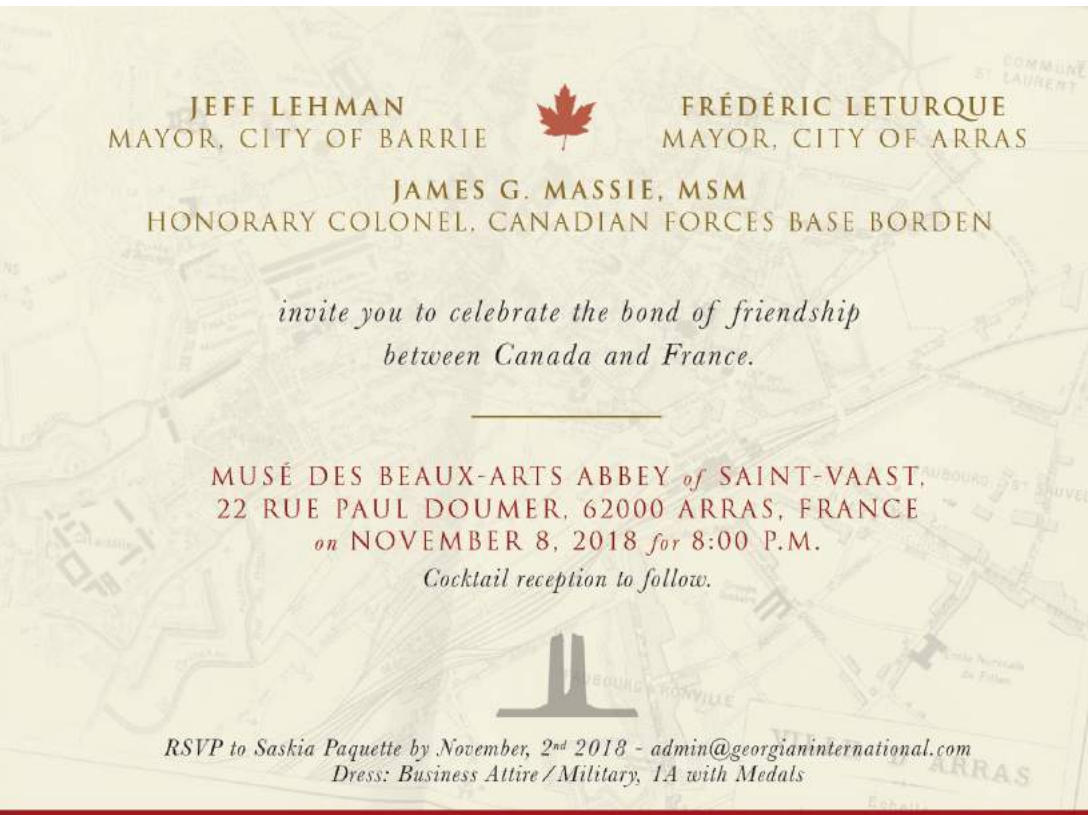
**Opening Nov 9 2018: TVF's CEO Sweeney
with BC Gov't Donors, Linda and Monty**



**Sunrise Nov 11 looking
down view corridor. Bugler
statue by Marlene Hilton
Moore**



Time to celebrate at TVF reception. Two of management team: Jim Wakefield and Robin McDonald with Monty



THE PARK TREES LOOKED NICE BUT NEEDED TO BE REPLANTED

- Heavy rains delayed replanting for 1 month
- But trees **were not wind staked**
- 50 year windstorm over Christmas blew the trees flat
- Our selected maintenance contractor **“La Vie Active”** made it right

VOLC DONATED SURPLUS TREES

- 100 trees to 4 towns on the ridge
- 170 trees to French Forest Ministry (ONF) for an Allee named **“Road of Canadian Memories”**



July 2019 Most of 120 replanted trees survived, properly Wind Staked and cared for by “LaVie Active”, our maintenance gardening contractor. They hire only disabled people (fitting for a commemorative site).



Following Views all taken in Nov 2020









View Corridor 2035

2019 &
BEYOND



**ARIEL VIEW IN 2035: Leslie's
Woodlot on the Ridge**



Bob Domoney ran **Trees for Canada** , 1,000 sold across Canada planted at Commemorative places. Funds raised covered growing and planting costs in France

Waterdown Legion



Royal Military College



Cdn Military Cemetery Ottawa





Leslie Miller, a humble man, would have been very pleased with our accomplishments

The **415 trees repatriated to France** and growing on Vimy Ridge **represent the spirits of men like Leslie** who returned, could not fulfill their initial dreams but knuckled down and helped build the Canada we love today.

Now these spirits stand guard by the memorial to 61,000 who never returned

In Closing....

In heartfelt gratitude to my wife, MaryAnne, who was with me every step of the way, being supportive, keeping me on the critical path and coming up with unique ideas, while putting her life on hold so my dream could be fulfilled.

Lest We Forget

