

Vimy Oak marks 100th anniversary

By SALLY SMID

The 100th anniversary year of the Battle of Vimy Ridge was remembered in a most dramatic and appropriate way on Sept. 24th near the Athens Cenotaph with the commemorative planting of a Vimy Legacy Oak Tree.

The story really began after the Vimy Battle when one of the surviving soldiers gathered up a handful of acorns and later planted them in Ontario. From the original plantings, 100 trees were offered to eligible towns across Canada. The Athens Garden Club

successfully applied and a Vimy Oak Tree was recently planted and dedicated in a very special ceremony. MC Jean Brassington announced, "We're here today to look back and remember 'the Athens eleven' who died in the First World War and also the men of Athens who fought and returned, forever scarred by their experience - and to look forward and plant for the future".

She also noted that the little, fragile sapling has such great significance! Present for the event were 37 descendants of the fallen and many dignitaries who took part in the event by placing a shovel of dirt around the tree. MP Gord Brown provided a brief history of the Vimy Battle. MPP Steve Clark noted that in many ways our country was "forged by this battle and the world came to know that Canada could be counted on". Mayor Herb Scott thanked the committee for all of their work in making the event possible.

Bruce Corbett of the Royal Canadian Legion Branch 504 read the list of the 11 names of the fallen WWI servicemen. Actually 2 of the 11, Roscoe DeWolfe and Everett Cross have their

names on the Vimy Monument having lost their lives in France.

It was especially impressive to have WWI re-enactors and the Brockville Rifles and Cadets present. The Castle Minstrels played music of the WWI period and local singer Katie Baker also sang several appropriate songs. Guests were invited to participate by placing poppies around the tree at the end of the ceremony. A reception and WWI displays were provided at the Joshua Bates Centre following the event which brought relief to participants who endured record breaking temperatures. The Vimy Legacy Oak Planning Committee consisting of Jean Brassington, Kathryn Hudson, Wendy Colombe and Les Coutlee extended gratitude to everyone who contributed to the Athens Vimy Oak Project. A commemorative plaque is hoped to be placed by the oak tree in the future. The sentiments of MP Clark probably reflected the thoughts of most in attendance. "May this oak tree be a reminder that we should never take for granted the freedom we have which was attained at such a terrible price!"



Belva Cousins places some soil beside the Vimy Oak Tree in honour of her fallen WWI family member, William Carl, at the recent Vimy Oak Ceremony in Athens. Photo: Sally Smid

Charity hockey game

Community & Alumni and Local Primary Health Care (CPHC) along with MP Gord Brown, MPP Steve Clark, Brockville Mayor David Henderson, George Tackaberry and Gerald Tallman will host a unique charity hockey challenge.

Leeds & Grenville's Charity Hockey Challenge will be taking place at the Brockville Memorial Centre, on Thursday, October 19, at 7:00pm

This highly-charged hockey event is Co-chaired by MP Gord Brown, MPP Steve Clark and Mayor David Henderson. Also, being a key part of this event are the Honorary-Chairs George Tackaberry of G. Tackaberry & Son's Construction and Gerald Tallman of Tallman Truck Centre. This year's event will see NHL Alumni, OHL

Dignitaries take to the ice in the spirit of sportsmanship and fair play, with all proceeds going to CPHC.

The night will start off with the introduction of the players as they take to the ice, followed by a special performance by Thousand Islanders Chorus with the singing of two Canadian Songs. The game will consist of two 20 minute periods, with a 20 minute intermission. Starting off the intermission will be a short game of hockey with our local novice kids, then brief speeches, and ending it with the Return Flight Raffle Draw.

Tickets for the Charity Hockey Challenge are \$5.00 and can be purchased at the door or by calling CPHC (613)342-3693 ext. 2072.



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