



January 24, 2019

Don Darling, Mayor  
15 Market Square  
Saint John, NB E2L 4L1

Dear Mayor Darling,

As Executive Director of the Vimy Foundation, I want to thank you and your city for hosting special ceremonies and activities last year that commemorated the Centennial of the end of the First World War and the signing of the Armistice. A devastating war, the First World War was also an important moment for Canada. Thanks to our contributions, on and off the battlefield, Canada received a negotiating position at the Versailles Peace Conference in 1919 and furthered the case for consideration as an autonomous nation.

In 2006, the Vimy Foundation was formed with the mandate of preserving and promoting Canada's First World War legacy, as symbolized by the victory at Vimy Ridge in April 1917. Since then, the Foundation has designed and distributed more than 150,000 unique Vimy pins and medals, created high quality education resources for thousands of teachers and schools across Canada, facilitated, funded annual student 'pilgrimages' to Vimy, and completed the \$10 million Vimy Visitor Education Centre in France, opened in April 2017. Most recently, the Foundation opened the Vimy Centennial Park in a ceremony in November 2018, which was visited by Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, and Minister of Veterans Affairs Seamus O'Regan. Please visit [www.vimyfoundation.ca](http://www.vimyfoundation.ca) to learn more about what we have accomplished.

The Vimy Foundation Centennial Park features one hundred Vimy Oaks, descendants of acorns collected from the battlefield by Canadian soldier Leslie Miller following the battle at Vimy in 1917 and is located adjacent to the famous Vimy Memorial. The space was designed by Canadian landscape architect Linda Dicaire, and includes pathways, educational signage, view planes of the Vimy monument, a bronze Bugler, commemorative flagpoles, and uniquely designed benches. It is already well visited and provides a space to reflect the battlefield and the monument.

Elements in the park are 90% sold, and include contributions from corporate Canada, local legions, provinces, NGO's, service clubs, cadets, individuals, and a \$350,000 gift from the Province of British Columbia; however, there is still time for the City of [name] to participate.

I am writing to you to request that the City of Saint John consider a First World War Legacy Gift in the form of a Vimy Centennial Bench (\$25,000) to be placed inside the picturesque and reflective setting of the Vimy Foundation Centennial Park, or a Vimy Oak tree (\$10,000), which are planted throughout the park. The City could dedicate either element to local veterans and serving army members and acknowledge the contribution of its citizens to the Canadian war effort in the First World War. The dedication would appear on the beautifully designed wall that encircles the park interior.

I welcome the opportunity to speak with you further about how your city could contribute a one-time, unique legacy gift in honour of Saint Johners who served so bravely a century ago.

Thank you for your consideration.

Yours sincerely,

**Caitlin Bailey, Executive Director (Interim)**  
**The Vimy Foundation**

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