

## Epic of Vimy ~ a Canadian Pilgrimage

### Synopsis of Single Frame Exhibit

The Battle for Vimy Ridge, April 9<sup>th</sup> - 12<sup>th</sup> 1917, was as a determining factor for Allies and Canada in WWI. It was also an achievement of the greatest magnitude by Canadian Corps. ~ *being the first time all four Divisions fought as one unit or Corps.*

It was therefore a battle of *Epic* proportion, in the number of combatants, more than 57,000 in four Divisions , as well as making it the costliest victory in Canadian military history, with 7000 wounded & 3598 killed in the four day battle ~ April 9<sup>th</sup> - 12<sup>th</sup> 1917. The Monument has engraved names of 11,285 soldiers with no know resting place and includes four awarded Victoria Cross.

Mr. Marley (Regimental No.9698) was with the Canadian Expeditionary Force (CEF) that was formed by Canada in Aug.1914 and he was with the 1st Division, 1<sup>st</sup> Brigade, 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion, (Toronto Regiment) <sup>(1)</sup> in Europe for duration of war, which ended in 1918. ~ *participating in the battles in Flanders (Belgium)& the Somme (France) and in particular of Vimy Ridge, Apr.9<sup>th</sup> - 12<sup>th</sup> 1917 and therefore he would have had a personal interest in the Pilgrimage & the unveiling of the Monument*

The Pilgrimage and unveiling of the Vimy Monument would be ~ " a solemn Pilgrimage to the Land where we fought & suffered and where we wish to honour our fellow Canadians, brother Britons, gallant Allies who made the supreme sacrifice"<sup>(2)</sup>

Mr. Marley would have also understood the importance to perpetuate the event through these souvenir covers with *symbolism of Vimy Memorial cards enclosed, as displayed.*

The exhibit details the preparation, voyage & chronological order of the Pilgrimage beginning 16<sup>th</sup> July 1936 Montreal, PQ aboard five ships, to various towns, cities in France, Belgium and Great Britain, visited by the more than 6000 Pilgrims, in particular by Mr.& Mrs. Marley.

Also the return visit to France Aug 2-5 1936 of Mr. & Mrs. Marley, by the invitation of the French Government and the return to Canada in September 1936.

The Pilgrimage and those locations visited, as well as the dedication of the Vimy Memorial is presented here by Philatelic means as well as collateral material relevant to trip.

The exhibit provides some details of the Monument, the development of the cache, stamps and signed essay/proofs<sup>(3)</sup> of stamps produced by France for the unveiling of the Vimy Monument. Photographs and & other collateral material pertaining to & relating to the Pilgrimage are also included.

The photo of the monument is of the original (21.0cm x 28.0cm) photo <sup>(4)</sup> taken of the sculptors (W.S. Allward) plaster or clay models (maquette) This was acquired in 1936, by Mr. Marley, from Pringle & Booth, Toronto, who were architectural photographers to *produce and copyright the cache or corner card for all covers.*

The covers were sent to associates, relatives, friends, as well as Philatelic collectors Canada, USA, Egypt, South Africa. The number of covers produced are unknown ~ the exhibit has only displayed a few known to exist and collected by exhibitor over many years

Note : Items indicated with  are of importance do to research, difficulty of acquisition and scarcity

- Notes:
- 1 ~ from battle diaries 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion (Toronto Regiment) records, Queen's Own Rifles, located at Casa Loma, Toronto
  2. ~ from Official Pilgrimage to Vimy, promotion folder, Canadian Legion Apr. 1935
  3. ~ engraving test pieces artist signed & colour proofs are rare
  4. ~ original photo for cache ~ from 8 x 10 framed/matted photo

**Bibliography:**

- "Krag Machine Postmarks", Paul T. Carter, published Dec 2012, British Postmark Society  
"Shoestring Soldier" ~ The 1<sup>st</sup> Canadian Division at War 1914 - 1915, University of Toronto Press  
Andrew Iarocci, 2008  
"Walter Allward Papers" ~ National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa