

FEATURE SECTION

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SECOND SECTION

Memorial tree planting honors area World War I veterans

By Jim Wolff

A national tree planting program commemorating soldiers who served during World War I took on a local connection when two memorial trees were planted at the Berlin VFW Post 2925 honoring two brothers who were born in Berlin, Wisconsin and served in France.

The October 31st tree memorial ceremony honored the service of Sgt. Robert Emmett Carey, 325th Army Remount Squadron, Cavalry, and Cpl. John Eugene Carey, First Army Corps Cavalry. Sgt. Carey's son, Rear Admiral (Ret.) James Carey, who grew up in Berlin and graduated from Berlin High School in 1956, has spent two years serving on the Board of Directors of the USA World War One 100th Anniversary Commemoration Foundation created by the U.S. Congress and has sponsored the two memorial trees through the Rear Admiral Carey Foundation.

Both Robert Carey and John Carey, were born in the late 1800's in Berlin where Carey family members were known as significant horsemen and harness racers and trainers. At the time, there was a large racetrack in Berlin and the family had large horse stables. Both men raced horses there. It was their expertise and proven experience in horse training and harness racing that undoubtedly led to their both serving in the cavalry during World War One.

"I HAVE ALWAYS MAINTAINED MY TIES [IN BERLIN] BECAUSE THE AREA AND THE PEOPLE THERE WERE VERY IMPORTANT TO MY TRAINING AND EDUCATION THAT LED TO MY SUCCESS IN ADULT LIFE."

—ADMIRAL JAMES J. CAREY

While Sgt. Carey had to eventually leave harness racing and training after the war due to declining eyesight, Cpl. Carey remained in those endeavors for his entire life, keeping stables at the Winnebago County fairgrounds in Oshkosh, racing into his 60's and training well into his 70's.

The official dedication of the memorial trees was held on the 124th anniversary of Sgt. Carey's birth on October 31st. He was one of the Founding Charter Members of VFW Post 2925 in 1945, an achievement documented on the official charter on display inside the VFW clubhouse on Memorial Drive in Berlin. Both he and his



PHOTOS SUBMITTED TO BERLIN JOURNAL NEWSPAPERS

LEFT: ADMIRAL JAMES J. CAREY U.S. NAVY (RET.), founder of the foundation in his name instrumental in restoring veterans' memorials. MIDDLE: VFW POST 2925 IN BERLIN plants a memorial flowering lilac tree honoring Sgt. Robert Emmett Carey, a WWI veteran who served in France in the U.S. Army 325th Remount Squadron. Fulfilling their duties are (l-r) Post Bugler Brian Zamzow, Post Chaplain Mike Trampf and Post Commander Rich Brey. RIGHT: CPL. JOHN EUGENE CAREY.

brother John were members of that post and remained members until their deaths in Berlin in the 1970's.

Both are buried in Oakwood Cemetery where the granite stone gate on Highway 91 entering the city is itself a World War I Memorial. Additionally, right behind the gate and leading up to the Cemetery Chapel, 30 trees were planted following World War I, lining the roadway on either side and individually dedicated to the 30 Berlin, Wisconsin men who died in military service during "the war to end all wars." It is that memorial gate and the memorial trees that now lead the way to the final resting places in Oakwood Cemetery of Sgt. Robert Emmett Carey and Cpl. John Eugene Carey.

Sgt. Robert Carey was born October 31, 1892, the son of James and Mary Carey. James Carey was Berlin's former City Treasurer and later Berlin's Postmaster. Bob Carey enlisted December 10, 1917 and went overseas on September 7, 1918. He was promoted to Corporal October 31, 1918 and to Sergeant March 1, 1919. He was wounded Oct. 14, 1918 at Verdun and discharged June 30, 1919 at Camp Taylor, KY.

First Class Private John E. Carey was born August 14, 1890, also the son of Mr. and Mrs. James Carey. He enlisted July 11, 1917 and was deployed overseas to France on February 18, 1918 for 14 months. He was assigned to First Army Corps Cavalry and discharged May 13, 1919 at Camp Grant. He took part in battles at Champagne-Marne, Aisne-Marne, St. Mihiel and Argonne.

The Memorial Tree Project dates back to the end of the Great War in 1919 and continued into the post war years. As part of the United States National World War One 100th Anniversary Commemoration Commission, a tree plant-

ing program is taking place throughout the U.S. Events have been held with the participation of the "Saving Hallowed Ground" program that manages the memorial tree plantings.

The Berlin Area Historical Society (BAHS) has been particularly helpful in the local memorial effort. "Their research with regard to the military service of my father and uncle

was very significantly helpful in that the military records of all WWI soldiers were destroyed in a large fire at the Military Personnel Records Archives in St. Louis in the 1970's," said Admiral James Carey. "Details and photos resulting from their research are available on the BAHS website, www.Berlin-AreaHistoricalSociety.com"

Admiral Carey is also work-

ing on a second project in addition to the planting of the memorial trees on the grounds of the local VFW post. That project is being conducted by the Berlin Area Historical Society and relates to the existing memorials at Oakwood Cemetery and the 30 original trees planted along the road

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