

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.

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—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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way behind the chapel. “Dutch elm disease wiped out the original trees which have since been replaced by maple trees,” Carey said, “a part of the WWI Memorial restoration efforts that I and my foundation, the Admiral Carey Foundation, are working with the Berlin Area Historical Society as it relates to the placement of the of the individual identification shields by each tree honoring the men who died. Those shields are currently on a display board and are kept in the chapel where, of course, they are not seen by very many cemetery visitors, and thus need to be placed by the individual trees.”

“While I and my foundation have, to a degree, been the genesis of this restoration effort, the key driver and what we would identify in military terms as the On Scene Commander, has been the Berlin Area Historical Society and it is they who are handling the local negotiations with city and cemetery officials and do the day-to-day work on this important memorial restoration.”

In his interview with the Centennial Commission, Adm. Carey was asked what challenges he faced to make the project a reality. “I have been fortunate in that while many people leave their old home towns after high school graduation, never to return, I have always maintained my ties to Berlin because the area and the people there were very important to my training and education that led to my success in adult life,” he said. “I have been involved in other ‘memorial projects’ there and thus had the contacts and linkages I needed to get these projects to be considered and then brought to fruition.”

“In particular, I have worked closely with the BAHS on several projects and given their close ties with the city and library and cemetery board and all the townspeople, they are the On Scene Commanders that have helped make all my Berlin, WI projects come to ultimate completion. In large part, due to my being 1,000 miles distant, the key has been persistence, plus friends and contacts in Berlin who know me and trust me and have learned what I say



PHOTO SUBMITTED TO BERLIN JOURNAL NEWSPAPERS

THE WWI MEMORIAL GATE TO OAKWOOD CEMETERY in Berlin, WI, made from granite mined at the nearby quarry that borders the cemetery. It was erected as a memorial to all the men and women from Berlin who served in military service in WWI. Both Sgt. Carey and Cpl. Carey are buried in this cemetery with official military service plaques marking their graves.

to them or tell them I will do will, in fact, happen.

“Obviously, WWI has application to the veterans organizations and also is a matter of high interest to the historical societies, given its impact on their local communities at the time and the impact it had on local history and local families and any WWI memorials that later came into being. I have always been thankful for the qualities and character instilled in me by local teachers, community leaders and Boy Scout leaders when I was growing up, and thus feel an obligation to ‘pay back’ to my hometown for all they did for me that later helped to cause my ultimate success in life.”

“As such, I do not hesitate to always offer some financial assistance for any local project I am advocating, and this helps to take the pressure off of these local folks that would have to somehow raise all the funds needed. This has proven helpful to getting things started, and also adds to my own personal sense of satisfaction and fulfillment that I *am* ‘paying back’ for the guidance and character-building that was given me when I was a boy growing up there.”

After a 33-year Naval career that also included serving as Chairman of the U.S. Federal Maritime Commission under

President George H. W. Bush, Carey founded the Rear Admiral James J. Carey Foundation, dedicated to programs and projects in support of military veterans and their sons and daughters, grandsons and granddaughters, and nieces and nephews.

Carey is a national public policy leader and the former International Grand Master of The Knights of Templar International, recognized in “special consultative status by the United Nations. Also an Eagle Scout, he is chairman of the Future Leaders for America Foundation, National Chairman of the 3,800-plus Member Organization for military admirals and generals, founder and chairman of the National Defense Committee and Chairman of the Good Samaritans of the Knights Templar Foundation.

“It is important to remember all military veterans,” Adm. Carey said, “because there came a time in our nation’s history when they stepped forward at a time of national crisis and said, ‘take me. I am



PHOTOS SUBMITTED TO BERLIN JOURNAL NEWSPAPERS

ABOVE: SGT. ROBERT EMMETT CAREY. AT RIGHT: VFW POST 2925 CHAPLAIN Mike Trampf plants a memorial flowering pear tree honoring Cpl. John Eugene Carey, a WWI veteran who served in France in the U.S. Army Co. C, First Army Corps Cavalry.



PHOTO SUBMITTED TO BERLIN JOURNAL NEWSPAPERS

PVT. ROBERT E. CAREY in Berlin, WI prior to deploying to France in 1917.

willing to put my life on the line to ensure that my children and grandchildren, my family and friends, and all Americans will continue to be able to live in freedom and liberty.’

“This is a HUGE sacrifice these men and women made—it began in the Revolutionary War and continued on in World Wars I and II, Korea, Vietnam, Afghanistan and Iraq, and every other threat to our nation. ALL of these men and women wanted the same chance to have a long life and their own fami-

lies and a chance at happiness just like everyone else, but they came forward when truly evil people threatened our nation and volunteered to put their lives on the line for all of us.

“If we as a nation are to maintain our national dignity and gratitude, we absolutely must NEVER be found wanting in our continued commitment to the memory of these brave men and women who served on our behalf and the many of them who gave their lives for the rest of us.”

