

JESSE B. COOLEY WORLD WAR I JOHN AVIS

In 1910, at the age of 14 (b. August 31, 1896), Jesse Barton Cooley came from Milford to Brighton with his mother, Frances. October 4, 1917, his mother married widower Frank S. Conely four days after Jesse entered the Army September 30, 1917. After training at Camp Custer, the Private was transferred to Camp McArthur at Waco, Texas. As a member of Co. 3, 126th Infantry, 32nd Division (the Red Arrow Division- so named because they 'shot through every line the Boche put before them.') He was shipped overseas the following February to assure the 'world must be made safe for democracy'. That August 2, 1918, not yet 22 years old, he became the first war casualty from Brighton in WW I.

Brighton Argus, August 28, 1918 . . . "Today the flag on the village hall floats at half-mast . . ." begins the article telling of the death of Cooley in the fields of battle in France. Brighton Argus, July 13, 1921 . . . "The body of Jesse B. Cooley, sacrificed veteran of the world war from Brighton is expected to arrive in Detroit Thursday. The body has been transported by the government from the battlefields of France, where it was buried following death in action. A military funeral will be held in honor of the veteran.

Brighton Argus, July 20, 1921 . . ."The pain and ordeals of the great war were brought back to the minds of the Brighton people Sunday, when the body of one of Brighton's soldier heroes, Jesse B. Cooley, was buried at Fairview Cemetery." Rev. M. W. Weaver officiated and members of the American Legion were pall bearers, July 17, 1921.

The Brighton Legion Post was organized shortly after the American legion was formed in 1919. To commemorate Cooley's sacrifice the local post was named the Jesse B. Cooley American Legion Post #235. Members of that post are still bringing dignity and reverence to the final resting places of local veterans.

John Avis, at 27, was the other of the two from Brighton killed in WW I in France. July 31, 1921, he also was interred in Fairview. The Brighton Argus noted . . . "John Avis was killed in the Argonne Forest when going over the top for the 5th time, November 1, 1918, only 10 days before the Armistice was signed." Two and a half years before the Selective Service Act was made into law, Avis had enlisted December 4, 1915 in Detroit in the 5th Marines, 7th Co., 2nd Division which went overseas August 12, 1918. He was the son of James and Mary Avis. He had married Jennie Lewis February 6, 1917, and had a daughter Clara, b. February 26, 1918, in Long Island, New York. Again the American Legion was in charge of services at Fairview.

IN WWII his nephew, Robert Avis, served in the Pacific Theater. The war to end all wars, didn't. The lives of 16 from Brighton were lost during that one. May we, who benefit from the sacrifices of Cooley, Avis and untold others, never fail to remember their dedication. (Compiled by Marieanna Bair from : Honor Roll of Livingston County by Kenneth Payne and The Brighton Argus: 'From Settlement to City'..by Carol McMacken; obituaries collected by Milton Charboneau.