



Caterpillar Inc. Chairman and CEO Doug Oberhelman  
2015 Distinguished German-American of the Year  
Remarks  
Washington, DC  
October 29, 2015

Good evening.

*Goot-en Ab-end mine-eh Dam-en oondt Hair-en.*

*Es ist wonder-bar hoy-te A-bend here zu zein.*

It's great to be here and quite an honor to receive this award from such an incredible organization. Thank you, Susan, for your kind introduction. John and Werner, thank you for your dedication to this foundation and to strengthening U.S.–German ties.

I'd like to introduce a few special guests who are here with us tonight.

First and foremost is my wife, Diane. While she's not German, by any stretch, she is a leading commercial real estate developer, and her schedule is – quite honestly – busier than mine, so I'm especially glad she is here with me tonight.

Our son, Allen Cullinan, and two of our great friends from Peoria, Rex and Laurie Linder, are also here. And we have a very special visitor, my friend Michael Heidemann, who is vice chairman of Cat® dealer Zeppelin, our Caterpillar dealer in Germany, has flown here just to be a part of this event, and I appreciate that very much. I'll have a few more good things to say about Michael and Zeppelin in a few minutes.

So, thank you all for being here tonight.

I've proudly accepted awards on behalf of Caterpillar for construction equipment, engineering and sustainability – but an award linked to my German heritage is a first. It's remarkable for many reasons.

It's remarkable to join the company of your previous honorees, outstanding citizens like General Norman Schwarzkopf and Paul Volcker. And for me, it's a welcome opportunity to celebrate the accomplishments of the German people, of my ancestors, and to illustrate how Germany is really a backbone of Caterpillar's operations.

Preparing for tonight has also been remarkable – and very educational – because I've made some connections between my German ancestry and Caterpillar that I hadn't made before. And that's what I'm going to talk about tonight.

I am very fortunate to lead Caterpillar, the world's leading manufacturer of construction and mining equipment, diesel and natural gas engines, gas turbines and locomotives. I joined Caterpillar right out of college and just celebrated my 40-year anniversary. It's been four decades of fun, with its fair share of challenges – and I know there's a lot more of both ahead.

My dad sold John Deere agricultural equipment for his entire career. So, when people hear that connection – Caterpillar and John Deere – they say that heavy equipment and machinery must be “in my blood.”

Well, as I prepared for tonight, I found out how very true that is. It goes back not just one generation, but it's been in the Oberhelman blood for about three hundred years.

I'll take us on a quick tour through those three hundred years, and share the connections between German industry, Caterpillar and the Oberhelman family tree.

Today, Caterpillar operates in three primary product areas: Construction Industries, Resource Industries – which is primarily mining – and Energy and Transportation. We also provide financing for our products through Cat Financial, a captive finance company with more than \$34 billion in assets. We have facilities in more than 20 countries and sell over 300 products under 21 brand names.

You'll recognize our construction equipment as the Cat yellow iron that builds roads, dams and bridges. I'm one of the few people who actually like highway construction zones. I drive very slowly through them and count the Cat machines at work!

Resource Industries supports customers using machinery in mines and quarries. Energy and Transportation manufactures diesel and natural gas engines, diesel-electric locomotives and industrial gas turbines.

We sell in more than 180 countries. Over half of our sales are outside the United States and that's been the case for decades. The vast majority of those sales are through a worldwide network of 177 Caterpillar dealers.

Since 1954, Zeppelin has been the Cat dealer for Germany. You'll recognize that familiar name – the company's founder is the same Ferdinand Graf von Zeppelin who invented the

airship. A few years ago, they took Diane and me on a ride over Berlin in a modern Zeppelin.

In 1914, Benjamin Holt, one of Caterpillar's co-founders, also flew above Berlin in a Zeppelin. He declared the experience "exhilarating." I'd describe it exactly the same way! The Zeppelin Foundation in Friedrichshafen owns our dealer in Germany, Austria and Russia. They also own ZF, a major supplier to the automotive industry, and one of our leading suppliers of transmissions.

Coincidentally, Friedrichshafen is also a sister city to Peoria, Illinois, our headquarters city. Rex and Laurie Linder, who I introduced you to a few minutes ago, have been such active leaders in the great collaboration between the two cities that began in 1976. The Friedrichshafen and Peoria relationship will be 40 years old and strong next year. Rex and Laurie have been instrumental in keeping it going and growing for so many years.

Two years ago, Zeppelin presented me with a book entitled "Ledde, Origin of the Kansas Oberhelman Family." A historian painstakingly researched archives in Ledde and Tecklenburg, and traced the Oberhelman family all the way back to 1575 - when the name first appeared on the tax lists.

Another connection is that Michael Heidemann, Zeppelin's vice chairman, who is here tonight, is also from near Ledde. Michael and I often say we are German brothers - *Deutsch brüdern*. Earlier this month, Diane and I spent three wonderful days with Michael and the Zeppelin's team in Munich. To get to and from our meetings, of course we drove on the autobahn - which was built, in large part, by Caterpillar machines in the 1950s.

The book about the Oberhelmans of Ledde is fairly short, but it includes copies of birth, immigration and business records that cover centuries. From that book, I learned that machines, farming and mining truly are in my blood, and can be traced to my ancestors in Westphalia.

Let's start with that tax list from the year 1575. The name then was Averhelmich, which later became Oberhellmann, with two l's and two n's. In English, Oberhelman translates to something like "a healthy man who lives on the upper farmstead."

The name still fits today! Diane and I live on a farm in central Illinois, and also own land nearby that was once a surface coal mine. We've spent the last 20 years restoring it to its natural state. We have about 1,800 acres of native plants, corn, alfalfa, sunflowers,

wetlands, and several large lakes. We also work hard on conservation and rehabilitating that mine into productive land. In fact, we grow crops that feed a large dairy nearby – and we can proudly say our land produces the feed that ends up as milk that feeds many children and babies!

We're more fortunate than the Oberhelms of the 16th and 17th centuries, who owned small farms but lived in serfdom, working for the lord of a nearby manor in Lengerich-Hohne.

When Wilhelm Oberhelman, my great-great-grandfather came of age in the late 18th century, he became a weaver. For a time he earned a good living producing textiles near Lengerich.

Then, at about the turn of the century, Wilhelm moved his family to Ledde. They rented a house in the center of the village. Wilhelm also rented and worked farmland; and the records show he owned one cow, one calf and one pig. Today, Diane and I own three cows, several horses and have a flock of chickens. Diane has a nice pumpkin patch and vegetable garden – probably not unlike the early Oberhelms.

So, Ledde, in Westphalia, is my ancestral home. That, as most of you know, is Germany's industrial heartland. For centuries it's produced iron ore from mines, and sand and limestone from quarries.

The current Ledde coat of arms includes a silver mining lamp for the miners, and two red ploughshares to honor the region's farmers. While we don't make farm equipment now, that's how Caterpillar started. We invented the first diesel-engine tractor, and the iconic steel belt that propelled tractors through muddy California farmland one hundred years ago. When people saw that belt move, they said it looked like a caterpillar – and that's how we got our name.

That farming history is always with us. In fact, if you ask many Americans what Caterpillar makes, they'll often say farm equipment, even today!

While agriculture is not, mining is one of our primary business segments. And, as I'll explain in a minute, our global mining business has deep roots in Germany.

But first, a little more about how the Oberhelmans came to America. When the German textile industry faltered about 1814, Wilhelm had to give up their house in Ledde, and he became a heuerling, pretty similar to what Americans would call a tenant farmer.

Wilhelm's fifth child, Heinrich Oberhelman, is my great-grandfather. He was born in 1808 in Ledde. He was also a heuerling for the Grothmann Farm nearby. The entire family worked on the farm to pay the rent on their small house. They also earned what extra they could from their own small piece of land, which probably included a garden, too!

Heinrich and his wife, Henriette, had 13 children. Of the 11 children that survived into adulthood, nine immigrated to the United States. Two daughters went first, and Heinrich and Henriette followed when they were in their sixties. They settled in Riley County, in Northeast Kansas.

Heinrich's son, Louis, was my grandfather. He was a wheat farmer and raised cows, pigs and chickens in Riley County. Some of my earliest memories are visits to my grandfather and grandmother's farm. Although I could drink water from the well powered by a windmill, their house didn't have running water or indoor plumbing.

My grandfather Louis was one of seven children and he also had seven children, including my dad, Ernie. In 1960, Ernie moved our family to outside of Chicago, and he sold John Deere ag equipment in northern Illinois and southern Wisconsin for 30 years.

The Oberhelman family is like millions of other American immigrants. They came to America for greater opportunity and freedom in what they saw as a promised land.

I would say America has met that promise for my family.

I graduated from Millikin University in Decatur, Illinois, with a degree in finance. Although I had opportunities to go into banking or financial services, I chose Caterpillar instead. I'm sure the Oberhelman history had a strong influence on that choice, even though I didn't know this deep history at that time. I had been around equipment my entire life and – as I've connected the dots now – it seems German mining and machines were running through my blood, too.

Caterpillar also benefits from similar parallels and German influence. In the early 1800s, while my great-great-grandfather Wilhelm faced a faltering textile industry in Westphalia, a company called Eisenhutte Westfalia became the first supplier to the worldwide mining

industry. Caterpillar bought that company, and it's now the core of Caterpillar Mining Europe and our longwall underground mining group.

In 1866, the predecessor companies to Caterpillar Moteren KG were formed. Today, Moteren is globally recognized for its medium speed diesel and gas engines for petroleum and power generation. It's also a very well-known, major supplier of huge diesel engines to the ocean-going ship industry.

In 1871, just three years before Heinrich and Henriette set sail for Kansas, legendary German engineer Carl Benz founded Moterenwerke Mannheim, or MWM. We bought MWM in 2013. It's now part of Caterpillar's Energy and Transportation group, developing and producing large natural gas engines and generators.

In 1893, Orenstein & Koppel opened the original Dortmund factory in Westphalia that produced steam powered excavators. That company is now also part of Caterpillar global mining. It manufactures some of the largest hydraulic mining shovels in the world.

As you can see, Germany is the foundation of our global mining leadership. Today, Caterpillar has almost 5,000 employees in Germany, seven manufacturing facilities and 11 additional offices and service centers – when you add Zeppelin's nearly 2,800 employees, 35 branch offices and more than 100 rental locations – that equals a great base of operations in Germany!

It's very important to us and has a very personal appeal to me. About 15 years ago my parents went to Ledde looking for information on our ancestors. They visited the Grothmann farm, and spoke to Frau Grothman who still lives there. Although she didn't have the information my parents were looking for, she told the Zeppelin historian she remembered my parents, "the American visitors."

I haven't made the trip to Ledde yet, but I will someday. I can imagine it will feel like home, and the entire region of Westphalia will echo with the voices of Wilhelm, Heinrich and all of my ancestors.

Thank you again for this outstanding honor and the opportunity to connect the Caterpillar and Oberhelman families with our deep, strong roots in Germany.

*Isch woon-scha E-nen all-es goot-eh.*

I wish you all the best.