

# Cornell Ph.D. graduate killed in Ivory Coast

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SYRACUSE (AP) -- When Cornell University alumnus Robert Carsky was a teenager, he lost an eye after a nail he was hammering flew up and penetrated his eye socket. Carsky never saw the world the same way again.

"I think that changed him and may have altered his world view," said Joe Mullen, who attended high school with Carsky. "He realized that life was fragile and that there were ways to help others."

After graduating from college, Carsky left upstate New York and joined the Peace Corps, spending most of his adult life in West Africa.

Carsky, whose most recent mission was providing humanitarian aid in the Ivory Coast, was killed Saturday during an attack by Ivory Coast warplanes targeting French troops.

Carsky, a 49-year-old soil scientist and crop researcher, had been urged by State Department officials to seek cover at a missionary school in Abidjan, but Carsky could not make it there, ending up instead in a building that temporarily housed French soldiers.

Ivory Coast warplanes launched a surprise airstrike Saturday and bombed the building, killing Carsky along with nine French soldiers.

"It's unimaginable," said his mother, Patricia Carsky. "I keep thinking something will happen, that I'll wake up and find out it's just a dream."

Carsky graduated from Colgate University, joined the Peace Corps for four years and went to teach in the Congo. Carsky returned to New York to receive his doctoral degree in agronomy from Cornell University, where he met his wife, Rebecca Khelseau.

The couple moved to Brazil for two years and lived in Cameroon, Benin, Mali and Nigeria before making plans to make the transition back to the United States.

Carsky's wife and three children, age 7, 16, 19 were in a newly bought condominium in Washington, D.C., when Carsky returned to the Ivory Coast.

Family members said Carsky had recently signed a two-year contract with WARDA, an international research center which helps alleviate poverty by increasing rice productivity.

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