

HORSE handles

CHECK SIX

Stories behind
the sentimental,
creative and
quirky names
of racehorses.

BY BRITTNEY
MAYOTTE

Tell us about your interesting horse names and they could be featured in a future edition of TROT's Horse Handles. Send your stories to brittney@trot.ca.



After serving 21 years in the United States Marine Corps, retired Lieutenant Colonel Jay Egloff no longer has to 'check six.' At least not in the true meaning of the term used by fighter pilots warning to watch behind you for threats. Now, Jay only has to watch out for unruly yearlings at the annual Standardbred sales.

Each year, Jay arranges his schedule so that he can return to Vieux Carre Farms in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania to assist his father Dr. John Egloff and his brother Mark Egloff with prepping and showing their yearlings to prospective buyers at the Lexington and Harrisburg sales.

Those involved in harness racing might be more familiar with the term 'check six' as the name of an up-and-coming sophomore son of Somebeachsomewhere. The colt's name was actually chosen by the Egloff family when Jay began working for a company called Check-6 after he retired from the Marines a few years ago. The consultant company, started by former Marine and Navy fighter pilots, assists industries with hazardous jobs, such as oil and gas, to mitigate risks by implementing best practises from military and commercial aviation.

"When I went to work for the company Check-6, it was right about the time dad was looking for a name for the current [horse] Check Six. So they decided to name one of the yearlings after the company," explained Jay. "It's the name of the company, it's a term that I used throughout my career, so it just seemed like a good name for a horse."

As a yearling, Check Six was a strong, muscular colt, and part of Vieux Carre's 50-horse consignment at the 2014 Harrisburg sale, where he sold for a bargain price of \$30,000. "We were expecting him to bring at least twice that, but that's the way it goes," noted John. "You get more than you expect for some and you get less than you expect for some."

Check Six impressed trainer Ron Burke after his partners picked the colt out from the sale. In spite of a setback during his freshman campaign when he stepped on a nail and developed an infection, Check Six has earned \$416,139 for Burke Racing Stable LLC, Weaver Brusceci LLC, William Switala and James Martin. The 2016 North America Cup eligible started his sophomore season with three wins in a row, including a 1:50.3 victory

in the inaugural \$561,500 Pennsylvania Classic on May 7 at Pocono Downs.

"He's in excellent hands with Ron Burke training him and Yannick Gingras driving him," said John. "Those guys make some pretty good decisions."

Back at Vieux Carre Farms, Check Six's younger siblings also look like they could have promising futures. "We're having a great foaling season this year," said Mark, who is the farm's General Manager. "Southwind Vanna, Check Six's mother, she's got a really nice A Rocknroll Dance colt that will be selling this year and she just had a Sweet Lou foal who is really nice too. All of our Sweet Lous have been nice, we're pretty excited with the way they look, so that's kind of fun."

It comes as no surprise to the Egloff patriarch that his sons enjoy working with horses and have returned to assist at the breeding operation he started with his wife in the early 1980s after he was employed as a resident veterinarian at Lana Lobell Farm for a dozen years.

"Horses have been part of our life, part of my life, forever," said John. "I mean, I grew up around horses and, of course, my three kids grew up surrounded by horses, so we're pretty much a horse family. They've fed us and clothed us and housed us for many years."

"Mark, my oldest son, is the one that was always the real horse nut. When he graduated from college, he played professional polo for about 12 years before he got married and came back to the farm. Jay, of course, was interested in flying and now he's involved with a number of business ventures, but still manages to work his schedule where he can come help old dad and his brother out at the sales."