

## Edward J. Germain



Edward J. Germain was from West St. Paul and his service record is rather unusual. While at a U.S. Army training camp he found it difficult to get along with his superior officer. To solve the problem Edward went “absent without leave” and defected to Canada. Using a fictitious name he enrolled and was made welcome in the Canadian Army. Fighting for the British Empire he was injured in France and received treatment at a London hospital, according to his father.

Wanting to rejoin the American Army, which was fighting in France, he went “absent without leave” again. Using another alias he was received into the U.S. Army; his fighting skills and experience were needed. In 1918, Edward was killed in the brutal fighting at Chateau-Thierry, France. News of his death and service (to a President and a King) reached his father, Oliver Germain, who declared he was “proud to know that his son gave his life for his country.”

Edward was born Joseph Edward Germain on 7 November 1892 in St. Paul to Oliver Germain (1854-1930), a native of Canada, and Mary Corniea (1857-1895), who was born in Minnesota. In 1895 the family were living in St. Paul at 130 Iglehart Avenue. Children besides Edward, the youngest, were Ida, Georgie, Louis, Albridge, and Louisa, all born in Minnesota.

On 29 October 1913, Edward enlisted in the U.S. Army for a term of seven years. Records indicate that he deserted on 15 June 1915. He must have returned, and was “found guilty,” probably of being AWOL. He must have returned to American service, but then it says he deserted again on 9 July 1916. More in-depth research into service records may reveal the full story, but at least we have his father’s account as reported in the newspaper.

The Veterans Administration’s Master Index lists him as “Edward or Joseph Edward or Robert Germain or Andrews,” and indicates that he died on 23 July 1918 and was from Minneapolis. A Find a Grave memorial exists for a Corp. Edward Germain who died on that date while serving with the 104<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment, 26<sup>th</sup> Division. It appears that it is “our” Edward Germain who is buried at Aisne-Marne American Cemetery in Belleau, Picardie, France; however, the memorial includes a notation that the soldier “entered service from Massachusetts.”