



Max Ottenfeld

World War 1 also known as The Great War was a global conflict between various European powers between 1914 and 1918. The US officially joined the war on April 6, 1917, by declaring war on Germany and allying with Great Britain, France, and Russia. The war officially ended with an armistice on November 11, 1918, which eventually culminated in the Treaty of Versailles in June 1919. Over four million Americans were mobilized for the war effort with many more contributing indirectly on

the home front. 2.8 million Americans served overseas as soldiers, nurses, machinists, laborers, and communication specialists.

Max Ottenfeld was one of the millions of people who served in the US military during the First World War. Ottenfeld was born in Chicago, IL on October 3, 1899, to Dora and Ed Ottenfeld. His family, including his older brother Leo and younger siblings Marcus and Rose, moved to Madison, Wisconsin sometime after. Max joined the army in November 1917 and spent time in Jefferson Barracks, Missouri; in Camp MacArthur in Waco, Texas; and Camp Merritt in New Jersey before shipping out for Europe in March 1918.

Max served as a member of the Signal Corps in the 18th Infantry in the First Division. He was trained to use military signaling as well as how to use and repair radios, telegraphs, and telephones. Ottenfeld saw action in the Battle of St. Mihiel and during the Muse-Argonne Offensive where he was injured. After recovering for several months, Ottenfeld returned to the US in September 1919 and was formally discharged from military service a month later. After the war, Ottenfeld settled in Chicago with his wife Esther and two children, Dora and Robert. He worked for the US Post Office for nearly four decades before retiring. He remained active in the American Legion, First Division Cantigny Post 556 and attended veterans' memorial services throughout the Chicagoland area. Max Ottenfeld died March 15, 1992, but his story lives on through this collection.