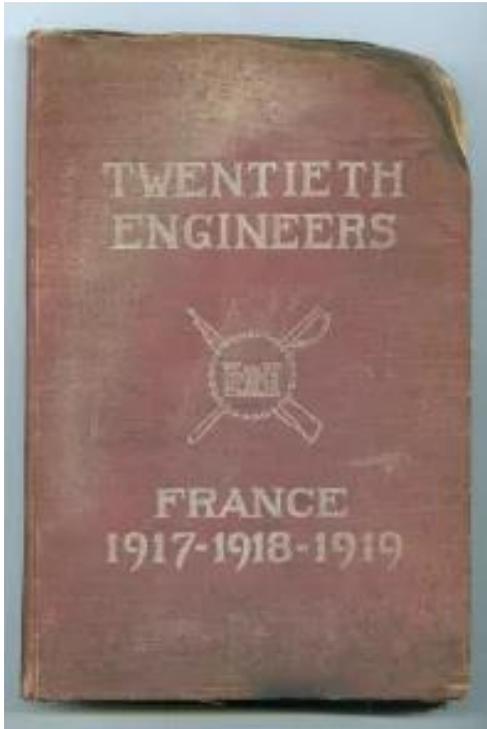


Edward Gottlieb Ambrose Kirchner, Jr.



Edward G. Kirchner was born 13 January 1893, the eldest of ten children of Edward Gottlieb Ambrose Kirchner, Sr. (1864-1936) of Indiana and Emilie Otilie Krech (1868-1939) of Inver Grove Township, Dakota County. They farmed in Dakota County their entire lives.

Prior to the War, Edward worked on the family farm. He registered for the draft on 5 June 1917 when he was 24 years old and living in Inver Grove. He claimed exemption for helping to support his family.

Edward G. Kirchner joined the colors 26 February 1918. He was a private in the 44th Company, 20th Engineers, American Expeditionary Forces. He departed from Hoboken, New Jersey on 22 May 1918. Kirchner returned to the U.S. on 23 June 1919 from Brest, France on the USS *Rhode Island*.

“The 20th Engineers (“the Fighting Foresters”) was the largest regiment ever to exist in the United States Army.

From its beginning in 1917, it grew to over 500 officers and 30,000 soldiers by Armistice Day in 1918. The organization included 14 battalions deployed to France, with another 14 battalions and additional company-sized units attached, and 15 more battalions still organizing in the United States. Its missions were among the most diverse of the American Expeditionary Forces, from operating within direct combat range of German forces, to units scattered along the Spanish border; its soldiers were among the first to arrive in France, and among the last to return home. The primary function of the 20th Engineers was forestry-- to produce lumber and timber for Allied forces--but its flexibility and command structure allowed for a wide range of other engineer missions.” (20thEngineers.com, accessed 16 Sept 2021)

After the War, Edward married Luella Louise Aszmann (1901-1992) and they lived in St. Paul, Ramsey County, Minnesota. In 1920, Edward and Luella lived on Belvidere Street on St. Paul’s West Side and he worked as a cooper. By 1929 they lived at 709 1st Avenue South in South St. Paul, and Edward worked for Swift & Co. The 1930 census listed his occupation as sawyer (someone who saws wood).

At age 40 on 27 January 1933, Edward was killed in a landslide while working at Simon’s Ravine in South St. Paul, along with John Yost, 18, and J. Wosal, 40. They were part of a team of 29 men working on ravine excavation as part of a city project to open up 19th Avenue North to connect to Stickney Avenue. The victims could not escape the 12-ton slab of frozen clay that fell

from the cliff directly above them, and were killed instantly. A coroner's jury found no negligence on the part of the construction company. The West St. Paul *Globe* said the men were working a "welfare job to obtain food and clothing for their families" and claimed the slab had fallen 75 feet.

Services were held at Trinity Lone Oak Lutheran Church on the Jefferson Highway in Eagan, and Edward G. Kirchner was buried in the church cemetery. Survivors were listed as his wife, Luella; a son, Howard, 14; and two daughters, Lorraine, 12, and Fern, 7. He was also survived by his mother and father and four brothers and five sisters.

See also Portraits of War, "Forestry Engineers of WWI: The Unsung Heroes of the 20th Engineer Regiment." <https://portraitofwar.com/2013/04/18/forestry-engineers-of-wwi-the-unsung-heroes-of-the-20th-engineer-regiment/> (accessed 16 Sept 2021).