Eugene Blanchard Jones—everybody knew him as “Gene”—graduated from New Trier High School, and went on to a couple of years of college before joining the Air Service. After months of training, he was commissioned 1st Lieutenant and sent to France in October 1917, where he was soon assigned to the Army’s 95th Aero Squadron, the first U.S. squadron on the Western Front whose main purpose was to pursue and fight enemy aircraft. In June 1918, he was transferred to another pursuit group, the 103rd, at the request of its commander, the legendary American ace, Major William Thaw. After seeing Jones battle a superior number of German planes, Thaw described him in a letter as “one of the most skilled and reliable pilots in this command.”

On September 13, 1918, during an aerial battle with eight attacking German fighters, a tracer bullet hit the gas tank of Jones’s plane, which burst into flames. Jones leapt to his death. Members of the 168th Infantry saw him fall and recovered his body, which was buried with full military honors in France. In the spring of 1921, his remains were brought home and laid to rest beneath an impressive stone in Memorial Park Cemetery, Skokie. He is also honored with a bronze plaque at St. Augustine’s Episcopal Church on Wilmette Avenue.

Bellows was mortally wounded by German machine-gun fire. He was posthumously awarded the Distinguished Service Cross and the Croix de Guerre. A stained-glass window in Kenilworth Union Church commemorates Bellows’s sacrifice, and Bellows Field in Hawaii was named after him in 1933.

Louis Mason Bruch of 1201 Greenwood Ave. was so eager to serve that he applied for officer training seventeen times and underwent three operations before at last securing acceptance in December 1917. Arriving in France the following September as a Second Lieutenant, he made daily flights over enemy lines. On November 10, 1918, Bruch had flown at low altitude for over three hours, under a bank of fog, to survey the entire battle line, when he was killed instantly by fire from an anti-aircraft gun. The war ended the next day, Armistice Day, making Louis Mason Bruch one of the last casualties of World War I. In 1921, members of the First Methodist Church of Wilmette planted an elm tree and unveiled a plaque in his memory.