

TUSCANIA

Tuscania casualty

Besner, Herbert Christian Joseph
1889 OH – 5 February 1918 Tuscania

BESNER HERBERT CHRISTIAN		C	7 099
Cpl Co F 20th Engrs		K	
1270 N Charles St Saginaw Mich		A	1 832 892
Sa	Died 2/6/18	T	293 242
Born	1/11/89	R	
Enl	11/20/17	I	7 799
	Dis 2/5/18	Cl.	

U. S. VETERANS BUREAU
 MAIL AND RECORDS
 FORM 7202

INDEX CARD

GPO 2-13959

<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3Q9M-CS1Q-2SK8-P?view=index&personArk=%2Fark%3A%2F61903%2F1%3A1%3AQP8D-9JPG&action=view>

Herbert C J Besner

Military • Michigan, Census of World War I Veterans with Card Index, 1917-1919

Name **Herbert C J Besner**
 Birth Date **11 Jan 1889**
 Birthplace **Miamensburg, Ohio**
 Residence Place **Saginaw, Saginaw**
 Death Date **5 Feb 1918**
 Military Final Rank **Corporal**
 Father's Name **[Joseph Besner](#)**
 Mother's Name **[Eliza Besner](#)**
 Event Type **Military Service**
 Event Date **5 Nov 1917**
 Event Place **Michigan, United States**
 Event Place (Original) **Camp Custer, Michigan**

<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:QP5B-LSFJ>

Herbert Jj Besner

Military • United States, World War I American Expeditionary Forces Deaths, 1917-1919

Page 23

MICHIGAN: WHITE: INDUCTED INTO NATIONAL ARMY AND ASSIGNED THERETO UPON ENLISTMENT.

<u>NAME</u>	<u>SERIAL NO.</u>	<u>RANK</u>	<u>ORGANIZATION AT TIME OF DEATH</u>	<u>DATE OF DEATH</u>
Bell, Cara	2,048,115	Pvt	Co K 16 Inf	Oct 4/18
Bell, Guy	2,030,201	Pvt	Co F 28 Inf	May 28/18
Belo, Martin	2,029,448	Pvt	Co C 1 Engrs	July 22/18
Benson, Reinhold	2,019,875	Pvt	Co B 47 Inf	July 31/18
Bercal, Anthony Charles	263,999	Pvt	Co M 125 Inf	July 30/18
Berger, Carl G	2,021,737	Wag	Sup Co 339 Inf	Jan 19/19
Berghoefer, Arthur A	2,052,374	Pvt	Co H 26 Inf	Oct 10/18
Berghuis, William J	2,043,591	Corp	Co G 26 Inf	Oct 12/18
Berlin, John F	234,499	Pvt	Co L 104 Inf	July 18/18
Berryman, Clifford W	2,050,710	Ret	Co A 26 Inf	Oct 2/18
Beasner, Herbert JJ	--	Corp	Co F 6 Bn 20 Engrs	Feb 5/18

<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:QPH4-W6FG>

WAR DEPARTMENT Q. M. C. Form No. 14 Revised Oct. 6, 1928										REPLACEMENT	
Interment in the <u>ARLINGTON, VA.</u>										National Cemetery	
To—The Quartermaster General, Washington, D. C.											
NAME			RANK		COMPANY		REGIMENT OR VESSEL			DIVISION, IF WORLD WAR SOLDIER	
							Number	State	Arm		
BESNER, HERBERT C. J.			CORPL		F		20th		ENGINEERS	DIV. None WW	
DATE OF DEATH			DATE OF INTERMENT			GRAVE MARK		REMARKS			
Month	Day	Year	Month	Day	Year	Section	Grave No.	Date of discharge and number of Pension Certificate, Disinterments, etc.			
Feb.	5	1918	Oct.	15	1920	WHITE	963	Ind.-Nov. 20, 1917. State Res.-Mich. Born Ohio C.R. Oct. 1920.			
in Scotland						EUROPIN					
TATE, GEORGIA, MAY 29 1934 815401											
Shipping point for headstones _____											
<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> 3-2556 (See Instructions on Reverse Side) Superintendent. </div>											

sem

<https://www.ancestry.com/discoveryui-content/view/2221728:2590?tid=&pid=&queryId=a0ad1d58-6695-4266-9b35-54b817d14543&phsrc=cPx8139&phstart=successSource>

Text submitted on 29 Jan 2024 to Find A Grave record 57041426

Herbert Christian Joseph Besner is listed as the son of Joseph Besner and Edith Elizabeth Saul [spelling of her surname questionable].

Joseph "Betsner" married Elizabeth Saul on 10 November 1893 in Bay City, Bay County, Michigan. His parents were Joseph Besner and Catherine Dubois (sometimes found as Woods, the English translation of Dubois). Elizabeth's parents are listed as Adam and Anna Saul.

Herbert was apparently his mother's only child. He was born in 1889, prior to her marriage. In 1910, Herbert is found twice in the census. On 20 April 1910, Herbert C.J. Besner is a boarder in Flint, Genesee County, Michigan, age 21, born Ohio, father born Canada, mother born Michigan, a machinist in an automobile factory.

He is also enumerated on 29 Apr 1910 in Saginaw, Saginaw County, Michigan, where 21-year-old Herbert Besner, age 21, born Ohio, father born Canada, mother b. Michigan, is a laborer in an automobile factory. He lives with his parents, Joseph Besner, age 52, born

Canada, a sawyer in a saw mill, and Elizabeth Besner, age 41, born Michigan, parents born Germany. She has given birth to one child, with one living.

Herbert and his father make the news in Michigan, when, on 19 February 1911, Joseph is arrested at their home after a post-midnight scuffle with son Herbert after Joseph had arrived home. Herbert has a bullet lodged in his arm. His father claims Herbert shot at him, breaking a glass lamp. There is broken glass on the floor.

On 21 October 1915, Elizabeth Besner divorced Joseph Besner in Saginaw County, Michigan. The divorce notice includes the information that they had married 10 November 1893 in Bay City, Michigan.

Herbert Christian Joseph Besner registered on 1 June 1917 for the World War I draft. His draft registration has two addresses, one in Pontiac, Michigan, and one in Saginaw, Michigan. He is employed on a dairy farm in Pontiac, Michigan, and reports he has a dependent mother. His left arm is described as "stiff."

Herbert entered the U.S. Army on 5 November 1917 at Camp Custer, Michigan (according to Michigan WWI records) or 20 December 1917 (according to the U.S. Veterans Administration Master Index). As a corporal in Co. F, 20th Engineers, Herbert C.J. Besner sailed aboard the troopship SS "Tuscania" from New York City on 24 January 1918. On 5 February 1918, the "Tuscania" was torpedoed and sunk by German submarine UB-77 in the North Channel between Scotland and Ireland. There were 215 soldier casualties, one of them being Herbert.

Sometime between her 1915 divorce and Herbert's death, his mother had remarried, since, on the "Tuscania," he listed his mother, Mrs. E.E. Tottingham of Saginaw, Michigan, as his next-of-kin.

Herbert was among those living and dead carried by lifeboats to the isle of Islay on the western coast of Scotland after the "Tuscania" was torpedoed. He was first buried in the cemetery at Kilnaughton on Islay in grave 43, misidentified as C.M.H. Besner. His body was exhumed post-war in 1920 and was transported to the U.S. on board the ship "Antigone" which arrived in Hoboken, New Jersey, on 29 September 1920. Herbert was buried in Arlington National Cemetery in Virginia on 15 October 1920.

The Georgia death certificate of Herbert's mother, Edith Elizabeth Tottingham, indicates she was born 14 December 1867 in an unknown location. The names of her parents and their birthplaces are also unknown. She is listed as a widow, but her husband's name is unknown. Edith Tottingham, a resident of Atlanta, Georgia, died 2 October 1923 in Atlanta, Fulton County, Georgia, in Grady Hospital. She was age 56. Edith was buried in Greenwood Cemetery, Atlanta, Fulton County, Georgia.

In her last will and testament, filed 27 October 1923 in Fulton County, Georgia, Elizabeth Edith Tottingham bequeaths her real and personal property, and her dogs, to her friend, Mary Magdalene Reeves, since she attests she has no living relatives. In addition, she directs that "the insurance from the United States of America, certificate no. 293343, of my beloved son Herbert Christian Joseph Besner, taken out January 1st, 1918 and it is my will and desire that the Government whom my son served so loyally, forward each month the installment check of \$57.50 (fifty-seven dollars and fifty cents) to the said Mary Magdalene Reeves."

Life:

SON WOUNDED; FATHER IS HELD

EACH ACCUSES OTHER OF DOING
SHOOTING IN MYSTERIOUS
AFFAIR.

SAGINAW, Feb. 20.—Joseph Besner, 45 years old, is at central police station, having been arrested after the shooting of his son, Herbert, 22 years old. The affair is very mysterious, the police being unable to determine who is to be blamed. A bullet from a 38-calibre revolver is lodged in the young man's arm and a revolver with an empty chamber was found by the police when they went to the man's house to investigate the trouble.

Besner returned home shortly after midnight. He and his son had a scuffling in which a revolver was discharged. The father declares the son shot a lamp out of his hand, while the son claims that the father shot him. Pieces of broken glass were found upon the floor by the police. Chief Kain endeavored to get a statement from the elder Besner, but he refused to talk.

"Lansing (MI) State Journal" Monday 20 Feb 1911 p 3 -
<https://www.newspapers.com/image/204810396/>

SON WOUNDED; FATHER IS HELD

Each Accuses Other of Doing
Shooting in Mysterious
Affair at Saginaw.

Saginaw, Mich., February 19.—Joseph Besner, 45 years old, is at central police station, having been arrested early this morning after the shooting of his son, Herbert, 22 years old. The affair is very mysterious, the police being unable to determine who is to be blamed. A bullet from a 38-calibre revolver is lodged in the young man's arm and a revolver with an empty chamber was found by the police when they went to the man's house to investigate the trouble.

Besner returned home shortly after midnight. He and his son had a scuffling in which a revolver was

discharged. The father declares the son shot a lamp out of his hand, while the son claims that the father shot him. Pieces of broken glass were found upon the floor by the police. Chief Kain endeavored to get a statement from the elder Besner this afternoon, but he refused to talk.

Complaint will be made tomorrow morning when it is expected that some idea of how the shooting took place will be learned.

Michigan Men Who Are Known To Have Been On Tuscania

(By The Associated Press)

Detroit, Feb. 8.—The Detroit Journal today received from its Washington correspondent a list of persons aboard the liner Tuscania. The list includes soldiers and civilians and does not designate the companies to which the men belonged. Eighteen men were from Detroit. The remainder of the list follows:

Sanitary Squad. Wilbur Clark Otto K.
Saginaw—Frank Slocum, sanitary
squad; Frank E. Kunze; Herbert C.
J. Besner.

"Port Huron (MI) Times-Herald" Friday 8 Feb 1918 p 4

STATE MEN WHO SAILED IN TUSCANIA

Saginaw.
Herbert C. J. Besner, corporal
among scattered units. Mother,
Mrs. E. E. Tettingham, Saginaw.

"Detroit Free Press" Saturday 9 Feb 1918 p 3

**FIVE—DEATH LIST—
CORPORALS.**

George Lankenau, San Francisco, Cal.

Terry Tuttle, Elgin, Ore.

Wm. R. Johnson, Metamora, Mich.

Herbert C. J. Besner, Saginaw, Mich.

Ruel A. Parrott, Garrison, Texas.

Other newspapers do not report him dead yet - "Lancaster (PA) News-Journal" Monday 11 Feb 1918 p 10

11 Michiganders On Tuscania Are Listed Missing

Washington, Feb. 11.—The eleven Michigan men who were reported missing following the Tuscania disaster were named as follows:

First Lieut. Clifford W. Wallter, Stanton.

Edward T. Fitzgerald, Abner E. Larned, Detroit. (civilian employes).

Corp. William R. Johnson, Metamora.

Corp. Robert C. H. Besner, Saginaw.

Pvt. Alpha L. Rice, Charlotte.

Pvt. Theodore A. Montgomery, Manistique.

Pvt. Friedel Wilkening, Unionville.

Pvt. Leigh A. Wright, Hillsdale.

Pvt. Wilbur W. Clark, Lansing.

Pvt. Conor A. Collins, Battle Creek.

Herbert misnamed as Robert – “Escanaba (MI) Morning Press” Tuesday 12 Feb 1918 p 1

Clark of Jackson Dead.

DETROIT, Feb. 13.—At least two of the Michigan men on the Tuscania not thus far included among survivors, are believed to be dead. The list of victims contained in an Associated Press dispatch today from a Scotch seaport included:

W. R. Johnson and C. H. Besner.

W. W. Wright, of Bismarck, Okla., was among the rescued.

Error: Wright is dead – “Lansing (MI) State Journal” Wednesday 13 Feb 1918 p 1

The Tuscania Dead.

T. W. Herman (probably Fred W. of Lincoln, Neb.); Luther B. Reeder, Brondus, Tex.; William Keown, Sand Spring, Tex.; Lewis Roberts, Nachhinchoches, Tex.; Orvel N. Casper, Milwaukee, Wis.; Everett H. Duffy, Siloam Springs, Me.; William R. Johnson, Metamora, Mich.; Henry H. Page, Saratoga, Tex.; Clayton B. West, Baxter Spring, Tex.; Terry Tuttle, Elgin, Ore.; Walter L. Brown, Port, Va.; Clarence W. Short, Wellsboro, Pa.; Raymond Butler, New Richmond, Wis.; George V. Zimmerman, New Rochelle, N. Y.; John Edwards, Butte, Mont.; George A. Reinhardt, Jefferson, Mo.; Walter Crellin, Virginia, Minn.; William E. Pennett, Rogers, Ark.; Charles E. Swanson, Rothschilds, Wis.; William P. Morin, Portland, Ore.; Clyde C. Jenkins, Coalinga, Cal.; Raymond Hurst, Pogasset, Okla.; Theodore E. Lewton, Forest Grove, Ore.; Herbert C. J. Besner, Saginaw, Mich.; Bert O. Weeks, Modesto, Cal.; Henry S. Speidl,

List continues – "Iron County Miner" (Hurley WI) Friday 22 Feb 1918 p 2

The Tuscania Dead:

HERMAN, T. W. (probably Fred W. of Lincoln Neb.).
 REEDER, LUTHER B., Broadus, Tex.
 KEOWN, WILLIAM, Sand Spring, Tex.
 ROBERTS, LEWIS, Nachirdoches, Tex.
 CASPER, ORVEL N., Milwaukee, Wis.
 DUFFY, EVERETT H., Siloam Springs, Mo.
 JOHNSON, WILLIAM B., Metamora, Mich.
 PAGE, HENRY H., Saratoga Tex.
 WEST, CLAYTON B., Baxter Spring, Texas.
 TUTTLE, TERRY, Elgin, Ore.
 BROWN, WALTER L., Pert, Va.
 SHORT, CLARENCE W., Willsboro, Pa.
 BUTLER, RAYMOND, New Richmond, Wis.
 ZIMMERMAN, GEORGE V., New Rochelle, N. Y.
 EDWARDS, JOHN, Butte, Mont.
 REINHARDT, GEORGE A., Jefferson, Mo.
 CRELLIN, WALTER, Virginia, Minn.
 PENNETT, WILLIAM E., Rogers, Ark.
 SWANSON, CHARLES E., Rothschilds, Wis.
 MORIN, WILLIAM P., Portland, Ore.
 JENKINS, CLYDE C., Conlinga, Cal.
 HURST, RAYMOND, Pocomset, Okla.
 LEWTON, THEODARE E., Forest Grove, Ore.
 BESNER, HERBERT C. J., Saginaw, Mich.
 WEEKS, BERT O., Modesto, Cal.
 SPEIDL, HENRY S., 239 East Ninety-Fourth street, New York city.

List continues – “L’Anse (MI) Sentinel” Saturday 2 Mar 1918 p 6

Mother:

Elizabeth Saul

in the Michigan, U.S., Marriage Records, 1867-1952

Name	Elizabeth Sauli
Gender	Female
Race	White
Age	26
Birth Date	abt 1867
Birth Place	Maine
Marriage Date	10 Nov 1893
Marriage Place	Bay City, Bay, Michigan, USA
Residence Place	Tuscola County
Father	Adam Sauli
Mother	Anna Sauli
Spouse	Joseph Betsner
Record Number	4155

#155 Nov 10 93 Joseph Betsner 39 W Bay City Mich John J. Betsner
 Elizabeth Sauli 26 " Bay City Maine None Adam Sauli
 John J. Betsner Catherine Wood 20 Nov 10 93 Bay City
 None Adam Sauli Anna Sauli 20
 Patrick J. Morris Justice of the Peace
 Bay City

https://www.ancestry.com/discoveryui-content/view/5100415:9093?tid=&pid=&queryId=d4d23c37-58a5-47ab-b205-e7d0f532a12f&_phsrc=cPx8106&_phstart=successSource

Elizabeth Besner

in the Michigan, U.S., Divorce Records, 1897-1952

Name	Elizabeth Besner
Marriage Date	10 Nov 1893
Marriage Place	Bay City
Decree Date	21 Oct 1915
Decree Place	Saginaw, Michigan, USA
Spouse	Joseph Besner
State File Number	3215
Number of Children	0
Divorce Status	Granted

3215	Besner Elizabeth	✓	Nov. 10 1893	Bay City	No	11	Aug. 16 1915
	" Joseph						
Nov. 3 1915	✓	Desertion	21	No	Granted	4	Absolut

<https://www.ancestry.com/discoveryui-content/view/519488:9092?tid=108124785&pid=350063997021&queryId=ebdc6530-e458-43b1-add3-64ad641b2bb3&phsrc=cPx8098&phstart=successSource>

Georgia, U.S., Wills and Probate Records, 1742-1992 for Herbert Christian Joseph Bessner

Fulton > Wills, Book G

537

THE WILL OF EDITH ELIZABETH TOTTINGHAM.

GEORGIA, FULTON COUNTY.

I, Edith Elizabeth Tottingham, of said State and County, being of sound and disposing mind and memory, do make this my last will and testament, hereby revoking any and all others that I have heretofore made.

Item 1. It is my will and desire that my body be buried in a Christian like manner, the place and details of which I leave to my friend and beneficiary Mary Magdálene Reeves.

Item 2. It is my will and desire that all my just debts be paid as soon as practicable after my death.

Item 3. I will, bequeath, and devise all my property, both real and personal, of whatever kind and wherever situated, to my beloved friend and beneficiary Mary Magdalene Reeves, who has been my friend in time of need and has comforted me in my hour of sorrow, and administered to me in my sickness and has been more devoted than any relative could have been and I declare by this my last will and testament that I have no living relatives.

Item 4. I do especially will, in addition to all my real and personal property to my devoted friend Mary Magdalene Reeves, the Insurance from the United States of America, certificate No. 293343, of my beloved Son Herbert Christian Joseph Bessner, taken out January 1st, 1918, ^{and} it is my will and desire that the Government whom my son served so loyally, forward each month the installment check of \$57.50 (fifty-seven dollars and fifty cents) to the said Mary Magdalene Reeves.

Item 5. It is my will and desire that at the time of my death that all of my dogs which I will at the time own be taken in charge by my friend Mary Magdalene Reeves, and be put to death by a competent veterinary surgeon, that my dogs be buried in the manner in keeping with the treatment that these devoted companions have been, this I earnestly bequest my beneficiary to follow.

Fulton > Wills, Book C

Item 6. I hereby appoint Mary Magdalene Reeves, as my executrix of this will and I relieve her from making any inventory of my property or appraisal, or from giving any bond, and she is required only by this will to probate the will, and she is further relieved from making any returns of her acts and doings to any court whatsoever.

This January 12th, 1922.

ELIZABETH TOTTINGHAM. (Seal)

Declared, published, signed and sealed by Edith Elizabeth Tottingham as her last will and testament, in the presence of the undersigned as witnesses, she first signing in our presence, and we then, at her special instance and request, signing in her presence, and in the presence of each other.

L. H. FOSTER

FRED E. HARRISON

H. I. BATTEY, M. D.

STATE OF GEORGIA,
FULTON COUNTY.

I do solemnly swear that this writing contains the true last Will of the within named Edith Elizabeth Tottingham, deceased, so far as I know, or believe, and that I will well and truly execute the same in accordance with the law of this State. So help me God.

MARY MAGDALENE REEVES.

Sworn to and subscribed before me,
this 27 day of October, 1923.
THOS. H. JEFFRIES, Ordinary.

1 PLACE OF DEATH
COUNTY Fulton

GEORGIA STATE BOARD OF HEALTH
BUREAU OF VITAL STATISTICS
STANDARD CERTIFICATE OF DEATH

FILE NO.
FOR STATE REGISTRAR
29178

BOVS.
FORM
11

MILITIA DISTRICT _____
TOWN OR CITY Atlanta No. _____ ST. REG. DIST. NO. 1981 REGISTERED NO. 4122
(IF DEATH OCCURRED IN HOSPITAL OR INSTITUTION, GIVE ITS NAME INSTEAD OF STREET AND NUMBER.)

2 FULL NAME Mrs. Edith Elizabeth Tottingham
RESIDENCE, CITY Atlanta Ga No. _____ ST. Cambelton Rd.
(IF NON-RESIDENT GIVE CITY OR TOWN AND STATE)

18 Length of residence in city or town where death occurred yrs. mos. dys. How long in U. S., if of foreign birth? yrs. mos. dys.

PERSONAL AND STATISTICAL PARTICULARS.

3 SEX Female 4 COLOR OR RACE white 5 MARRIED, widow
WIDOWED (write the word)

5a IF MARRIED, WIDOWED, OR divorced
(OR) WIFE OF Dont Know

6 DATE OF BIRTH, (MO. DY. YR.) Dec 14 - 1867

7 AGE 56 yrs. mos. dys.
IF LESS THAN 2 YEARS state if breast fed Yes No IF LESS than 1 day hrs. mins.

8 OCCUPATION
(a) TRADE, PROFESSION OR PARTICULAR KIND OF WORK House work
(b) GENERAL NATURE OF INDUSTRY, BUSINESS OR ESTABLISHMENT IN WHICH EMPLOYED (OR EMPLOYER)

9 BIRTHPLACE (STATE OR COUNTRY) Dont Know

10 NAME OF FATHER Dont Know

11 BIRTHPLACE OF FATHER (STATE OR COUNTRY) Dont Know

12 MAIDEN NAME OF MOTHER Dont Know

13 BIRTHPLACE OF MOTHER (STATE OR COUNTRY) Dont Know

14 THE ABOVE IS TRUE TO THE BEST OF MY KNOWLEDGE.
(INFORMANT) Miss Reeves
(ADDRESS) canaly Bldg

15 OCT 5 - 1923
FILED 192 L. J. Hornta LOCAL REGISTRAR

16 DATE OF DEATH October 2 192 3

17 I HEREBY CERTIFY, THAT I ATTENDED DECEASED FROM 9-21-23 192 , TO Oct. 2 192 3
THAT I LAST SAW HIM ALIVE ON Oct 2 192 3
AND THAT DEATH OCCURRED, ON THE DATE STATED ABOVE, AT 4:45 P.M. THE CAUSE OF DEATH WAS AS FOLLOWS:
Uremia

(DURATION) _____ YRS. _____ MOS. _____ DYS.

CONTRIBUTORY (SECONDARY) Chronic interstitial nephritis

(DURATION) _____ YRS. _____ MOS. _____ DYS.

WHERE WAS DISEASE CONTRACTED, IF NOT AT PLACE OF DEATH?

DID AN OPERATION PRECEDE DEATH? no DATE OF _____

WAS THERE AN AUTOPSY? no WHAT TEST CONFIRMED DIAG. no heart sounds

NOSIS? no heart sounds

(SIGNED) B. M. Huey Jr M. D.
10-2 192 3 (ADDRESS) Grady Hosp

19 PLACE OF BURIAL, CREMATION, OR REMOVAL DATE Greenwood cem 10/5 192 3

20 HUNTER, B. ANCHARD & GARTRELL CO. City
UNDERTAKER ADDRESS

Per _____

GA death record of mother Edith Elizabeth Tottingham - 14 Dec 1867 - 2 Oct 1923 -

<https://www.ancestry.com/discoveryui-content/view/210155:2562>

Mrs. Edith Elizabeth Tottingham
 Funeral services for Mrs. Edith Elizabeth Tottingham, fifty-six years of age, of Cambellton road, who died Tuesday at a private sanitarium, will be held Friday at 3 o'clock at the chapel of Hunter, Blanchard & Gartrell. Interment will be in Greenwood cemetery.

"Atlanta (GA) Journal" Thursday 4 Oct 1923 p 32 -

<https://www.newspapers.com/image/970937404/?article=28889f86-a5d4-4caa-b20a-a8e6f8bb5dcf&xid=us-ga>

Besner Delia C, bds 1019 Sheridan av.
 Besner Edward J, special policeman, rms 222 S 3d av.
Besner Elizabeth (wid Joseph), res 340 Stone.
 Besner Ferdinand, tmstr, res 1019 Sheridan av.
 Besner Helen, bds 907 Atwater.
 Besner Henrietta, bds 1019 Sheridan av.
 Besner Herbert C J, agt, bds 340 Stone.
 Besner Marian F, smstrs, bds 1019 Sheridan av.
 Besner Samuel J, lab, res 907 Atwater.
 Besner Samuel J Jr, bds 907 Atwater.

1910 Saginaw MI city directory – Elizabeth & son Herbert C.J. reside at 340 Stone – she is not a widow, since husband Joseph dies in 1933 - https://www.ancestry.com/discoveryui-content/view/448746110:2469?tid=&pid=&queryId=39469e9d-63e2-401a-a03b-154c0fa9664d&_phsrc=cPx8158&_phstart=successSource

1913 Saginaw MI city directory:

Elizabeth Besner, janitor Barie's, boards at 2032 State
 [neither Joseph nor Herbert are listed]

Besner Elizabeth, bds 2032 State.
 Besner Ferdinand, butcher, res 1000 Clark.
 Besner Ferdinand Jr, student, bds 1000 Clark.
 Besner Frank, lab, bds 1000 Clark.
 Besner Herbert, bds 2032 State.
 Besner Joseph, sawyer, res 2032 State.
 Besner Lucinda, student, bds 1000 Clark.
 Besner Marie F, dressmkr 1000 Clark, bds same.
 Besner Samuel J, watchman The McClure Co, res n e cor Maplewood and Hess avs.

1914 Saginaw MI city directory – Elizabeth, Joseph & Herbert at 2032 State - <https://www.ancestry.com/discoveryui->

content/view/418911256:2469?tid=&pid=&queryId=313977eb-5649-40d3-9999-99220f0ec469&_phsrc=cPx8160&_phstart=successSource

Mrs E J Tottingham

Obituary • United States, GenealogyBank Historical Newspaper Obituaries, 1815-2011

Name	Mrs E J Tottingham
Sex	Female
Death Date	About 18 Feb 1918
Event Type	Obituary
Event Date	18 Feb 1918
Event Place	Saginaw, Michigan
Event Place (Original)	Saginaw, Michigan
Newspaper	Saginaw News
Affiliate Name	GenealogyBank, Inc.

Mrs E J Tottingham's Spouses and Children

OPEN ALL

[Corporal Herbert C Besner](#) Son M



<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:Q5QG-W3VW>

Abbreviations:

b = born

d = died

F: = Find A Grave (www.findagrave.org)

NOK = next-of-kin

Name: Herbert Christian Joseph Besner

Name variations:

Military:

On Tuscania: 20th Eng. 18th/Co. F - corporal

Serial number: not assigned when died

Entered service from: Saginaw, Saginaw MI

Sailed on "Tuscania" as: Herbert C. J. Besner

Next-of-kin on "Tuscania": mother Mrs. E.E. Tottingham, Saginaw MI [handwritten:
Collingwood St. & Highland Ave.]

1st buried on the isle of Islay, Scotland: at Kilnaughton, Islay, Scotland - grave 43, as C.M. H. Besner

Body returned from war on: "Antigone" arriving Hoboken 29 Sep 1920

Body listed on return ship as: Herbert C. Besner

Rank on return ship: pvt, Co. F, 20th Engrs

World War I draft registration (1917): as Herbert Christian Joseph Besner - b. 11 Jan 1889 Miamisburg OH; res: RFD #7, Pontiac MI and 916 Benjamin St., Saginaw MI. Single.

Employed on dairy farm, E. Leroy Pelleteir [Pelletier?], RFD #3, Pontiac MI. Has dependent mother. Left arm stiff. Height: 5'4" – medium build.

Veterans Administration Military Index:

Enlisted 20 Dec 1917

Discharged as of 6 Feb 1918 [due to death]

Address: 1270 N. Charles St., Saginaw MI

Rank/unit: corporal, Co. F, 20th Engineers

MI Census of WWI Veterans:

Enlisted 5 Nov 1917 Camp Custer MI. Resident of Saginaw MI. Corporal in Co. F Battalion, 20th Engineers. Born 11 Jan 1889 Miamisburg [sic] OH. Died 5 Feb 1918. Father: Joseph Besner. Mother: Eliza Besner.

Birth & death:

Born: 10 Jan 1889 Miamisburg, Montgomery OH

Died: 5 Feb 1918 Tuscania (Find A Grave lists 5 Oct 1918 in record - tombstone indicates Tuscania date)

Find A Grave record: 57041426 - presence on Tuscania noted in flower

Burial location: Arlington, Arlington Co. VA

Cemetery: Arlington National

Tombstone: veteran tombstone: Michigan CPL 20 Engrs

Father: Joseph Besner, 23 Jan 1859 St. Paul, Joliette, Quebec, Canada or St. John's, Canada – 8 Dec 1933 Saginaw, Saginaw MI. Son of Joseph Besner (1833 Quebec, Canada – 21 Dec 1891, F: 95804795) & Catherine DuBois (also found as Catherine Wood/Woods, the English translation of DuBois, b. ca. 1832 Paris, France].

Find A Grave record says he was a lumberman. In Feb 1911, police are called to the Besner home. Herbert has a bullet in his arm, claiming his father shot him. The scuffle occurred after midnight on 19 Feb 1911. Joseph claimed Herbert shot a lamp out of his hand. Pieces of glass were found on the floor. Joseph was arrested; he was not talking. [Unable to locate follow-up stories.]

Buried in Mount Olivet Cemetery, Saginaw, Saginaw MI.

Find A Grave: 54576752

Mother: Edith Elizabeth (Eliza) Saul Besner Tottingham, 14 Dec 1867 MI (MI according to 1910 census; "unknown" on her GA death certificate, also found as Maine) – 2 Oct 1923 Atlanta, Fulton GA (in Grady Hospital).

Parents listed as Adam & Anna Sauil on her 1893 marriage license. Could be spelled Sael, Saal, Saul, Saeel, etc. According to the 1910 census, her parents were born in Germany. Her GA death certificate lists both her parents' names & birthplaces as "unknown."

At some point her divorce from Joseph Besner on 21 Oct 1915 & Herbert's departure on Tuscania on 24 Jan 1918, she presumably married a man named Tottingham & is listed as E.E. Tottingham of Saginaw MI in 1918.

In her last will & testament, filed Oct 1923 in Fulton County GA, Edith Elizabeth Tottingham "wills her real & personal property & her dogs to friend Mary Magdalene Reeves as she has "no living relatives." She directs Mary Reeves to take care of her dogs, have them euthanized when needed by a competent veterinary surgeon & buried in a manner "in keeping with the treatment that these devoted companions have been." In Article 4, she writes: "I do especially will, in addition to all my real and personal property to my beloved friend Mary Magdalene Reeves, the insurance from the United States of America, certificate no. 293343, of my beloved son Herbert Christian Joseph Besner, taken out January 1st, 1918 and it is my will and desire that the Government whom my son served so loyally, forward each month the installment check of \$57.50 (fifty-seven dollars and fifty cents) to the said Mary Magdalene Reeves."

Her GA death certificate also states she is a widow but the name of her husband is unknown. She died of uremia, with chronic interstitial nephritis as a contributing factor. She was age 56, engaged in housework. She resided on Cambelton Rd., Atlanta GA. Buried in Greenwood Cemetery, Atlanta, Fulton GA but not on Find A Grave as of 29 Jan 2024.

Find A Grave:

Parents' marriage - 10 Nov 1893 - Joseph Betsner, son of Joseph Betsner & Catharine Wood, married in Bay City, Bay MI, to Elizabeth Sauil, daughter of Adam & Anna Sauil. Divorce: 21 Oct 1915 Saginaw Co. MI. Elizabeth & Joseph Besner – stated marriage date was 10 Nov 1893 in Bay City MI.

Pre-war:

Numerous MI newspapers carried the story, such as the "Lansing (MI) State Journal" 20 Feb 1911 p 3 – in Saginaw, "Son Wounded; Father is Held" – "Each Accuses Other of Doing Shooting in Mysterious Affair at Saginaw" – Joseph Besner, age 45, is at the central police station in Saginaw, having been arrested after shooting his son, Herbert, age 22. "The affair is very mysterious, the police being unable to determine who is to be blamed." A bullet from a .32-calibre revolver is lodged in Herbert Besner's arm, and a revolver with an empty chamber was found by police when they went to the house to investigate. Joseph came home after midnight and was "scuffling" with Herbert during which a revolver was discharged. Herbert says his father shot him. Joseph said his son shot a lamp out of his hand. Pieces of broken glass were found on the house's floor by the police. "Chief Kain endeavored to get a statement from the elder Besner but he refused to talk."

When Herbert registers for the WWI draft, it is noted that he has a stiff left arm.

Siblings:

Notes:

Pre-war:

Wartime:

Post-war:

Obituary:

Censuses:

1880 East Saginaw, Saginaw MI
 Joseph Bezner, 44 Canada, laborer
 Catherine, 47 France
 Mary, 23 MI
 Joseph, 21 MI
 Charls, 16 MI
 Alferd, 14 MI
 Calac, 12 MI [male]
 Lillie, 10 MI
 Jennie, 8 MI

Herbert was double-counted by the 1910 census:

1910 Flint, Genesee MI – conducted 20 Apr 1910
 Herbert C.J. Besner, 21 OH, father b. Canada (English), mother b. MI, machinist,
 automobile factory,
 Boarder with the Patrick Hoagg family (Patrick, Patrick's wife & their 4 children ages 18-26)
 & 1 other male boarder.

1910 Saginaw, Saginaw MI – 1540 N. Boud (spelling?) – conducted 29 Apr 1910
 Joseph Besner, 52 Canada, father b. Canada, mother b. France, in 1st marriage, emigrated
 1859, married 22 years, sawyer, saw mill
 Elizabeth, 41 MI, parents b. Germany, in 1st marriage, gave birth to 1 child, 1 is living
 Herbert, 21 OH, father b. Canada, mother b. MI, laborer, automobile factory

1930 Saginaw, Saginaw MI – 1270 N. Charles [the same address on Herbert's Veterans
 Administration Master Index card]
 Joe Besner, 71 Canada, widowed, father b. Canada, mother b. France, emigrated 1859
 Boarder: Fred Landry, 67 OH