*Doughboys march in Chicago in support of Liberty Loans during World War I in an undated Chicago Tribune historical photo.*

# The Chicagoans who served in World War I

**By Ron Grossman**

*via the Chicago Tribune newspaper web site*

A century ago, Lt. Arthur Keating, who hailed from Van Buren Street on Chicago's West Side, led an infantry platoon in a raid on enemy-held trenches in northern France.

"Hey Arthur, don't you know me?" one of the captured Germans said in the English of a Chicago street-corner boy. The two of them had been schoolmates at Austin High School.

When World War I had begun in 1914, Keating's prisoner returned to Germany, where he had been born. Keating joined the U.S. Army.

Military historians observe that all wars, whatever their scale, are essentially composed of myriad clashes between small units — like the one Keating described in a letter to his wife, written from a field hospital where he was recovering from his wounds, in November 1918.

Keating's wife passed his tale on to the Tribune, where it appeared among the daily dispatches chronicling the Great War, as it originally was known. After years of bloodshed and destruction, it seemed that the end of the war must be near. Yet it was far from certain which side would win.

Some Tribune stories of 1918 described the maneuvers of major formations, like the 8th Infantry Regiment of the Illinois National Guard, an all-black regiment from Chicago's Bronzeville neighborhood. Others, like the picaresque adventures of another Chicagoan, Bronislav Platkowski, provided a human-scale view of a war with casualty lists beyond comprehension.