

Jean Pierre Bechaud

Class of '17

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JEAN PIERRE BECHAUD enlisted in May 1917, attending the First Officers' Training Camp at Fort Sheridan, Ill. After five weeks of continuous training he was sent to Fortress Monroe to continue his training in the Coast Artillery. On the 15th of August he received his commission as Second Lieutenant of the Coast Artillery. The 22nd of August he married Miss Viola Mitchell of Fond du Lac, Wis., and immediately after the wedding left for Fort Wright, New York, where he was stationed.

Shortly after his arrival at Fort Wright he was promoted to First Lieutenant. During all this time his one hope and ambition was that he would get overseas, for he thought that he had remained here long enough as it was. He was Material Officer and one of Colonel Dorsey's staff officers.

On April 10, 1918, a sergeant suddenly became insane, shooting seven soldiers and killing five. Lieut. Bechaud was in the Material office when he heard the shooting. Running to the door he saw one of the men fall from an upper story window of one of the cantonments. He ran to pick up the wounded soldier and as he was about to do so, the crazed sergeant fired and shot Jean through the abdomen. He was immediately rushed to the hospital and specialists summoned from New York and Boston. They proclaimed his condition critical but had faint hopes that he would pull through. This happened on a Wednesday morning and on Friday morning he passed away. He had been conscious up until almost the last. His father and mother had been summoned but they arrived too late to see their son alive.

Lieut. Bechaud was the first man from Fond du Lac to make the supreme sacrifice. Among his classmates there was no man liked and admired better than "Pinky" Bechaud. He was a member of Phi Kappa Sigma fraternity.