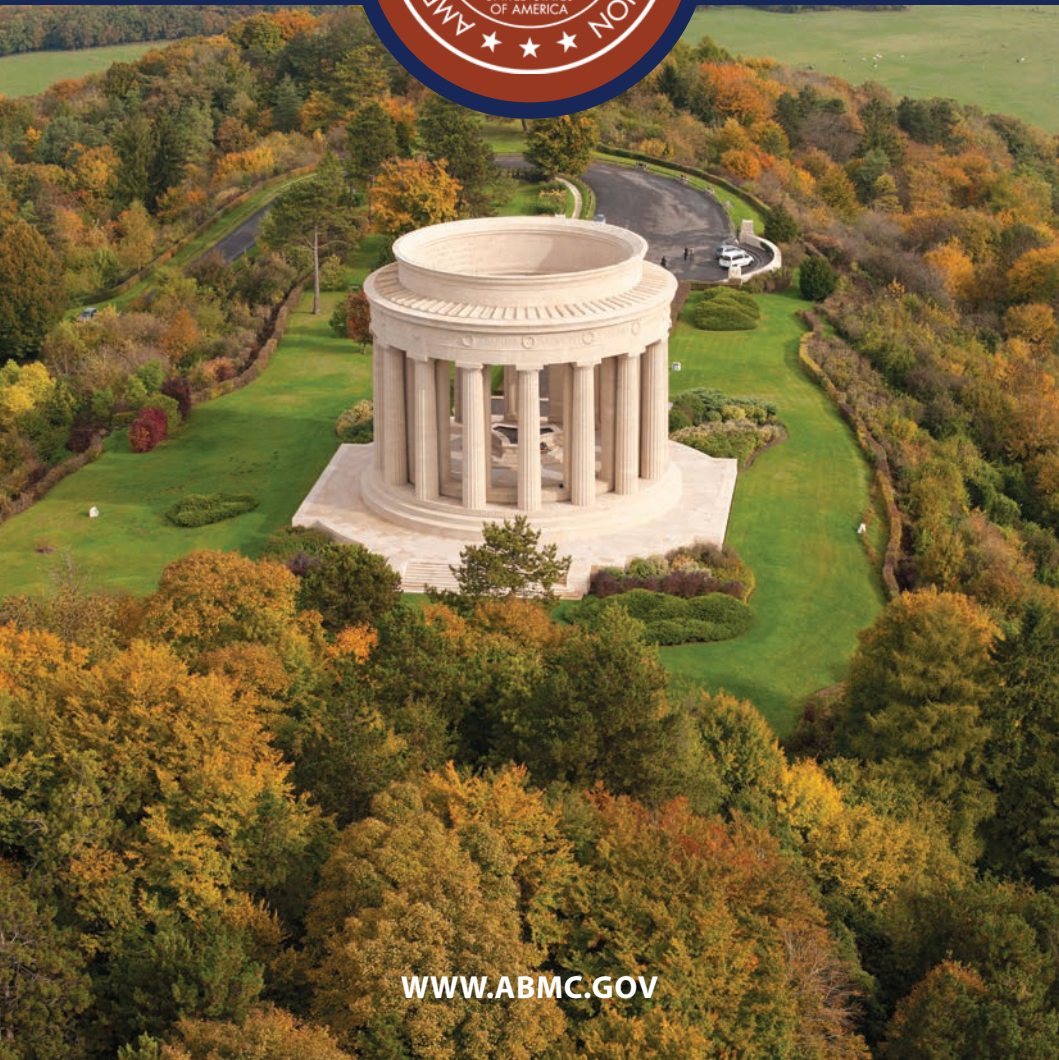


AMERICAN BATTLE MONUMENTS COMMISSION

# WORLD WAR I BATTLEFIELD COMPANION



[WWW.ABMC.GOV](http://WWW.ABMC.GOV)



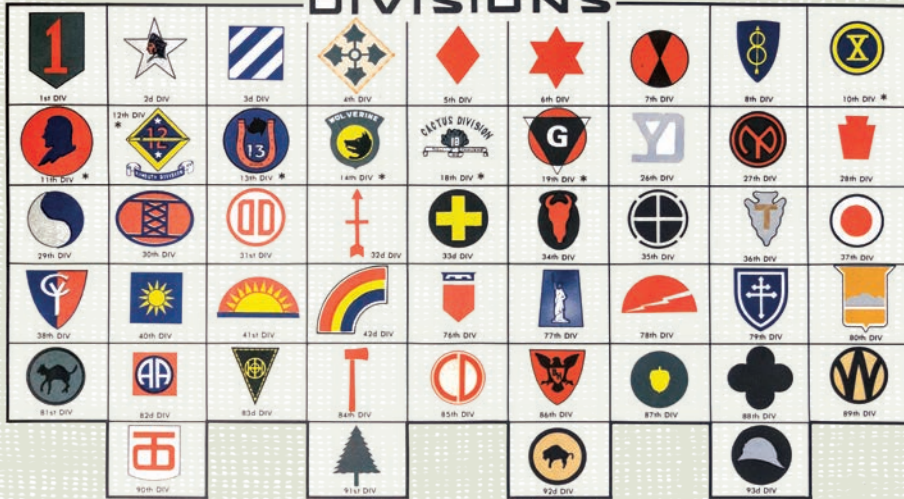
# 1917 UNITED STATES ARMY 1919



## CORPS



## DIVISIONS



## SPECIAL UNITS



## AEF INSIGNIA

These are the insignia of American armies, corps, divisions, headquarters, and special units serving in Europe during World War I. In World War I, Americans found the British Army with numerous unit and special troop insignia, and adopted their example. The first may have been the 81st "Wildcat" Division. Frequently ABMC cemeteries and monuments incorporate these insignia in their design to indicate the participation of specific units in a campaign or battle.





# AMERICAN BATTLE MONUMENTS COMMISSION

The American Battle Monuments Commission, guardian of America's overseas commemorative cemeteries and memorials, honors the service, achievements and sacrifice of the United States armed forces. Since 1923, ABMC has performed this duty in three ways.

- ★ Building and maintaining suitable memorial shrines, in the United States when authorized by Congress, and where U.S. forces have served overseas since April 6, 1917.
- ★ Designing, constructing, operating, and maintaining permanent American military cemeteries in foreign countries.
- ★ Supervising the design and construction on foreign soil of American military memorials, monuments, and markers by other American citizens and organizations, both public and private, and encouraging their maintenance.

In performance of its mission, the ABMC administers, operates, and maintains 26 permanent American military cemeteries and 29 federal memorials, monuments, and markers. Three memorials are located in the United States. The remaining memorials and all of the ABMC cemeteries are located in 15 foreign countries, the U.S. Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, and the British dependency of Gibraltar.

The World War I and World War II cemeteries, together with the three memorials on U.S. soil, also commemorate by name those U.S. service members who were missing in action, or lost or buried at sea during World War I, World War II, the Korean War, and the Vietnam War. More than 200,000 U.S. war dead from World War I and World War II are commemorated at ABMC sites; this includes nearly 31,000 interments and more than 4,400 memorializations for World War I, and more than 93,000 interments and nearly 79,000 memorializations for World War II.

# CONTENTS

- ★ **Introduction**
- ★ **1918:**  
The American Expeditionary Forces Go To War
- ★ **Cantigny:**  
Baptism of Fire
- ★ **Chateau-Thierry & Belleau Wood:**  
Defense of the Marne
- ★ **The Aisne-Marne Offensive:**  
Going on the Attack
- ★ **St. Mihiel Salient:**  
The American First Army Tested
- ★ **The Somme:**  
Breaking the Hindenburg Line
- ★ **American Expeditionary Forces in Belgium:**  
Operations in Flanders
- ★ **Willing Patriots:**  
Soldiers of Color in the American Expeditionary Forces
- ★ **Meuse-Argonne Offensive I:**  
H-Hour to Montfaucon
- ★ **Meuse-Argonne Offensive II:**  
Montfaucon to Romagne
- ★ **Heroes of the Argonne Forest:**  
The Lost Battalion; 368<sup>th</sup> Infantry; Sergeant York
- ★ **American Expeditionary Forces Farther Afield:**  
Operations in Italy and Russia
- ★ **Sustaining the American Expeditionary Forces:**  
Support for the Fight
- ★ **Paris:**  
City of Light
- ★ **American Women in the Great War:**  
They Also Served
- ★ **Remembering Their Sacrifices:**  
The AEF Memorial in Pershing Park

## Acknowledgments

This guide was produced by ABMC Deputy Secretary Robert Dalessandro and ABMC Chief Operations Officer John Wessels, with the assistance of ABMC staff members Alec Bennett, John Brown, Mike Conley, Edwin Fountain, Sarah Herrmann, Michael Knapp, and Eric Marr. The guide was materially enhanced by additional contributions from Mike Hanlon and Catch Graphics. Further support of this project from ABMC staff members Manon Bart, Jessica Cawley, Astrid Gaudefroy, Amy Kalajainen, Alec Rosati-Hohensee, Andrew Santora, Michael Shipman, and Jason Thompson was essential to the finished product.





Montfaucon American Monument

# INTRODUCTION

In this centennial year of victory in World War I, the American Battle Monuments Commission is dedicated to commemorating the service, achievement and sacrifice of the American armed forces, and the armed forces and citizens of the Allied nations, through memorial programs and commemorations at American cemeteries and monuments in Europe. ABMC's founding Chairman, General of the Armies John J. Pershing, defined our mission with the words, "Time will not dim the glory of their deeds." His vision has been followed now for nearly a century, with the creation and maintenance of monuments and cemeteries that mark the achievements of American men and women in protecting our nation, and that serve as fitting reverent memorials to the fallen.

We are equally committed to contributing to the written history of these events. General Pershing guided our agency in drafting the history of American forces in World War I, making it accessible and affordable for common Americans. First among these publications, *American Armies and Battlefields in Europe*, published in 1927 with a second edition in 1938, serves as both a comprehensive history and as a travel guide, directing visitors to historic sites, battlefields, monuments, and cemeteries of World War I.

This World War I Battlefield Companion follows the agency's tradition of telling the story of the American Expeditionary Forces of World War I. This centennial year will witness commemorations and memorial ceremonies at American historical sites throughout Europe.

Using this battlefield companion as a guide, travelers will be able to find their way to key American battle sites and cemeteries. It will give them a better understanding of the history behind the monuments and memorials.

Today, 100 years later, we can proudly say, time has not dimmed the glory of their deeds.

William M. Matz  
Secretary  
American Battle Monuments Commission





# 1918: THE AMERICAN EXPEDITIONARY FORCES GO TO WAR



By early 1918, Europe had been at war for over three years, but the United States had yet to make a significant contribution to the Allied cause against Germany. The United States had entered the war less than a year before, provoked by German U-Boat operations on merchant vessels en-route to Britain that led to American loss of life. Americans were also angered by the Zimmermann Telegram, a secret German diplomatic note that proposed a military alliance with Mexico if the United States entered World War I. In return, Germany would help Mexico recover its lost territory from the nineteenth century Mexican-American War which became the states of Texas, Arizona, and New Mexico.

The United States declared war on April 6, 1917. That summer, a small force of American soldiers was sent to Europe. Training camps throughout the United States were rapidly filling out with volunteers and draftees. By the fall, divisions of newly trained soldiers began leaving the camps, headed for ships to transport them across the Atlantic. As winter progressed, ever increasing numbers of soldiers were heading “over there” for further training.

In January 1918, the Germans doubted American intervention would be decisive in the next year. At the time there were only six partial U.S. divisions in France. While hundreds of thousands of men were in training in the United States, many doubted they would arrive and deploy to the front in enough strength to matter.



*General John J. Pershing, commander of the American Expeditionary Forces.*

There was not enough equipment to outfit or transport them. The Germans were still hopeful that their submarines would effectively interdict transatlantic troop transports.

## The Yanks Are Coming!

General John J. Pershing, commander of the American Expeditionary Forces (AEF) planned to send soldiers to Europe with minimal equipment. American production of weapons was limited, although increasing. Its production of heavy weapons was almost non-existent. Without such heavy weapons aboard, transport ships were able to carry more troops. The French arms industry provided most of the



*AEF scout planes at an airfield in France.*

artillery, machine guns, mortars, tanks and aircraft used by the AEF. Notable examples included the Chauchat light machine gun, the Hotchkiss heavy machine gun, and the quick-firing 75 mm field gun famously known as the “French 75.” Most American tanks were French-made Renault FT-17s armed with either the Hotchkiss machine gun or a 37 mm cannon. The 37 mm cannon was also used as an infantry support weapon against pillboxes and fixed positions. American troops attached to British forces made use of Lewis light machine guns and Vickers heavy machine guns. Some American tank units used the British Mk 4 and Mk 5 heavy tanks. American flyers trained and fought in French and British aircraft.

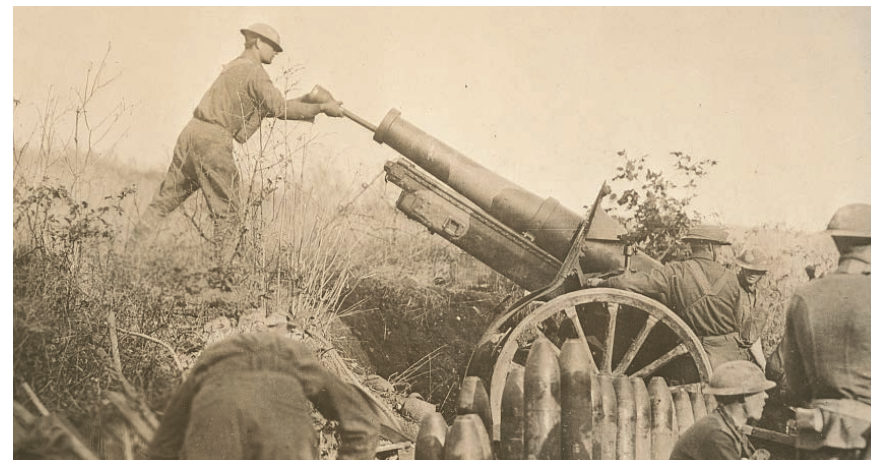
★

*American flyers trained and fought in French and British aircraft.*

It took time for the AEF to equip and train divisions sufficient to take over significant sectors of the Western Front. Pershing’s goal was to have the AEF take over a major sector in Lorraine. To sustain the necessary buildup, Americans improved French western ports, rail lines and road links supporting the chosen sector. Pershing initially planned to take over an area from south of Verdun on the Meuse River to Pont-à-Mousson on the Moselle River. He husbanded his troops to assume control of that sector, and was reluctant to commit divisions to major Allied operations during his buildup.

### **AEF Training and Supply**

Once in France, American troops ideally underwent comprehensive and progressive training. More than 60 specialized schools and camps for artillery, infantry, and other arms and services were established. Here British and French instructors, increasingly replaced by Americans as time went on, drilled details with respect to weapons and tactics. When basic and small unit training was complete, battalions went into the

*American artilleryman serves a French-built howitzer.*

line with Allied units in quiet sectors for operational seasoning. After serving up to a month in the trenches, these battalions returned to their divisions to further train as combined arms teams and in division maneuvers. This reflected Pershing’s emphasis on open warfare. He believed the war could only be won if the enemy was forced out of his defenses and defeated in battles of maneuver.

Ideally the average American combat soldier had six months of training in the United States, two months of training in France, and one month of experience at the front before being committed with his division to combat. Training in new technology was even more intense for the U.S. Air Services and the Army’s Tank Corps. The Services of Supply developed as an independent major command. This was an enormous logistical organization that handled all aspects of transportation and supply. One third of AEF soldiers were in its support services, in addition to over 20,000 American civilians.

Advanced artillery and chemical warfare

created the need for specialized individual protective equipment. By the time America joined the war, frontline troops were provided with helmets and gas masks. The AEF chose the British M-1916 Brodie pattern shrapnel helmet as its principal headgear. This marked the first time that a helmet was standard equipment for the U.S. Army. The distinctive wide brim provided improved protection against shrapnel. This pattern, slightly modified, remained in American use until the early 1940s.

Most American troops were issued a version of the British Small Box Respirator, or SBR. This consisted of a filter canister attached by a flexible hose to a rubberized cotton mask. The mask fully covered the face and had glass eye pieces. The SBR proved effective against the types of gas used during the war, but was prone to fogging up quickly, making vision difficult. It also required the wearer to keep a mouthpiece in his mouth, making communication difficult. American industry improved upon the SBR with



a larger facemask and slightly improved mechanics. Additionally, some American soldiers were issued the French M2 gas mask. This did not have a filter, but was a cotton mask with glass eyepieces. A lighter mask, it was often used against smoke and tear gas when the wearer did not want to be encumbered with the larger SBR. It too was prone to fogging, and became hard to use after several hours of wear. British and French veterans taught Americans how to use gas masks and survive chemical warfare.

American civilian volunteers used gas masks and helmets of the same designs as those of the soldiers. American Red Cross workers and Salvation Army members were issued Brodie helmets and gas masks if they worked at or near the front.

### The Imperial German Army

By early 1918 the Imperial German Army, the principal adversary of the AEF, had experienced more than three years of arduous combat. Thwarted in its invasions of France, it had repulsed recurrent Allied attacks on the Western Front and won striking victories in Russia, the Balkans and Italy. It aspired to win the war before the Americans could effectively intervene, and its morale remained high. Over time the German Army had evolved methods and tactics, both offensive and defensive, to become a truly formidable foe.

After defeating Russia in 1917 and negotiating a peace with its subsequent revolutionary government, the Germans quickly transferred 50 divisions to the Western Front. By March 1918, the German Army could concentrate 194 combat divisions against the Allies. Germany knew that this advantage in

troops – hundreds of thousands more than the western Allies – would not last. The Germans prepared a series of offensives to force the Allies to sue for peace before the ever-growing AEF tipped the balance against Germany. They initially intended to defeat the British Army first, so that the French would be left to fight alone.

### Friedenstrum: The Peace Offensive

The German Army applied a newly developed offensive doctrine in 1918. Traditionally, the Army sought to crush enemy defenses with lengthy artillery bombardments followed by waves of infantry. These waves generally could not penetrate deep enough to seize vital targets before being counterattacked by alerted enemy reserves. The new doctrine was centered upon innovative assault units called *Sturmtruppen* with special training and weapons. These battalions attacked on narrow paths through the defenses that bypassed strongpoints. They sought to disrupt resistance by striking rear area command, artillery, and reinforcements before the enemy could react. Regular infantry units trailed the specialized assault battalions, mopping up fractured defenses and expanding the breakthrough.

★

*The new doctrine was centered upon innovative assault units called **Sturmtruppen** with special training and weapons.*

The Russian and French armies had experimented with variations of this approach as well.

To achieve surprise, the new offensive method concentrated independent heavy artillery batteries for brief but unexpectedly heavy bombardments. Without preliminary ranging fire, massed batteries fired from carefully surveyed sites against accurately mapped targets. The concentrated artillery fire could deliver millions of shells in a few hours' time. Subsequently the assault battalions would attack the targets. When the offensive was over, the assault battalions and batteries could be withdrawn to refit and then attack in another sector.



An American soldier wears the British Small Box Respirator gas mask.

These new so-called “Hutier” tactics were first used against the Russians at Riga on September 3, 1917, and then against the Italians in the Battle of Caporetto on October 21, 1917. Small, fast moving assault groups attacked after a short bombardment with high explosives, poison gas, and smoke. Priority targets included selected communications, reserves and supply points in the rear. The swift tempo of the attacks inflicted heavy casualties and quickly broke up the Russian and Italian defenses. German casualties were significant, but about one-fifth of Allied losses.



American troops in steel helmets.

## The Spring “Peace” Offensive

On March 21, 1918, the German Army unleashed the new offensive methods in the British sector. After a 5-hour bombardment of over one million shells, German assault units penetrated 65 kilometers into the British lines near Saint-Quentin, France. They virtually destroyed the British Fifth Army, capturing more than 80,000 men, 975 artillery pieces, and key bridges over the Somme River. The advance created a deep salient, extending from Arras through the high ground at Cantigny and then back to Barisis. British General Sir Douglas Haig informed the Allies that he needed urgent reinforcements to secure the ports along the English Channel.

The Germans consolidated their gains, moved their heavy artillery, and rotated in fresh forces for a new attack. In the Lys Offensive, beginning on April 9, the German Army attacked in the British sector, from Ypres in Belgium to Givenchy in Northern France. The British fell back, but their resistance stiffened. Haig issued

a statement to troops saying they were fighting with their “backs to the wall,” and must hold at all costs. The Germans advanced 21 kilometers by April 29.

Haig called for a meeting of Allied leaders to discuss the crisis. Adding to the drama, the so-called “Paris Gun” began shelling that city in March, eventually inflicting over 800 casualties. General Ferdinand Foch was named Commander-in-Chief of the Allied Armies to more effectively coordinate the common effort. Despite the Allies being on the defensive at the time, Foch was committed to an eventual grand offensive. The British rushed 75,000 men from reserves in England.

★

*Haig issued a statement to troops saying they were fighting with their “backs to the wall,” and must hold at all costs.*



German heavy artillery emplacement.



The French Model 1916 rapid-fire 37 mm Infantry canon.



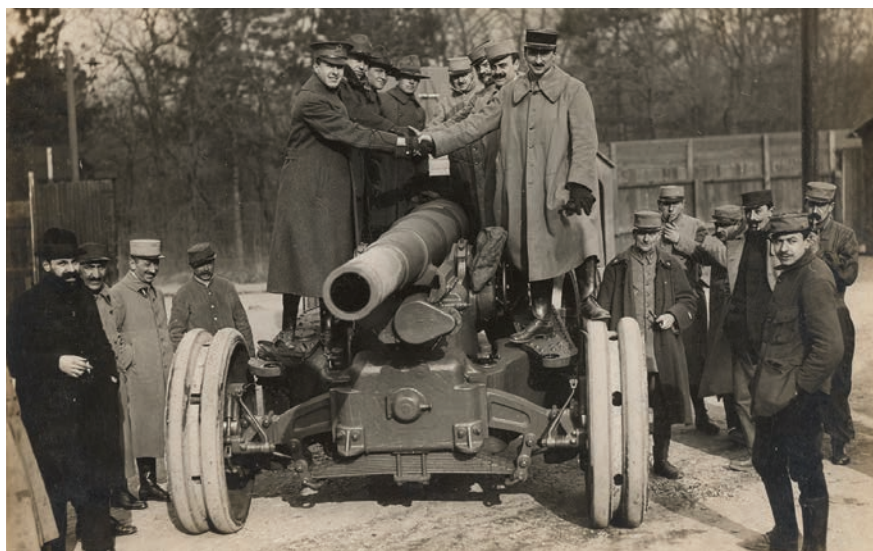
The “Harlem Hellfighters” Band entertains wounded French and American troops at a Base Hospital.

During this crisis the British and French repeated their request that American troops or small units be made available for service within their armies. Pershing detached the 93rd Division’s four infantry regiments to the French Army; they were welcomed enthusiastically. The 93rd Division was a segregated unit composed of African-American soldiers. Arguably the most famous of the four regiments was the 369th Infantry, known as the “Harlem Hellfighters” or “Rattlers”, from the New York National Guard. These African-American regiments used French weapons and wore the French “Adrian” combat helmet. The “Harlem Hellfighters” band, led by Lt. James Reese Europe, became famous in France, and is generally credited with introducing jazz to Europeans. The French Army had a high regard for these regiments, awarding individual soldiers and even whole units the Croix de Guerre.

## The German Drive in the South

The Germans redeployed forces to attack again. Forty-one divisions, including assault units, secretly massed with over 1,000 heavy artillery pieces south of Laon. These augmented German forces already on the front line between Reims and Soissons in anticipation of a major offensive in the French zone. The intent was to draw off and reduce the French Army’s reserves, rendering them unavailable to assist the British in future offensives. On May 27, 1918, the attack opened with an intense barrage by 4,000 German artillery pieces. This was closely followed by assault units using the new offensive tactics. The French Sixth Army was concentrated well forward in a static defense, and was shattered by the offensive. Assault units penetrated through





The first 155 mm supplied to the American Expeditionary Forces by the French.

their front lines as artillery methodically pounded support positions up to 19 kilometers behind the front. Disruption was complete, and the Germans made startling advances.

### Send in the AEF

The crisis caused by the attack accelerated the AEF's commitment to combat. On May 28, American Generals Pershing and Tasker H. Bliss offered Foch the immediate use of American troops. That same day the American 1st Division recaptured the strategic village of Cantigny with French tank and artillery support. On May 29 the German offensive took Soissons, around 80 kilometers from Paris. This caused panic and almost led the French government to withdraw to Bordeaux. The offensive reached Chateau-Thierry on the Marne River by June 1. There the American 3rd Division's 7th Machine Gun Battalion reinforced French forces in their successful defense of the river crossings. Further west,

remnants of the French Sixth Army were retiring into advancing Allied reserves, including the American 2nd Division. Together these forces stopped the German advance at Lucy-le-Bocage, Les Mares Farm, Torcy-en-Valois and west of Vaux on the Route de Paris. The 2nd Division then counterattacked with French support, taking the village of Bouresches. This began the famous and prolonged struggle for Belleau Wood.

On June 9, the Germans launched another offensive between Montdidier and Noyon to draw troops from Flanders, threaten Paris, expand the Chateau-Thierry salient, and protect the Soissons railway. The French fell back but did not break, and then counterattacked. By June 13, this smaller German offensive had failed with heavy German casualties.

Foch believed that the German advances had planted the seeds of their own defeat. The Chateau-Thierry salient consumed

reserves needed for a subsequent attack on the British in Flanders. German casualties had been considerable, and were much harder to replace than those of the Allies, given the arriving Americans. Third-rate "defensive divisions" had come forward to occupy far weaker positions than those of their primary defensive line – called the "Hindenburg Line." The German offensives in the salient had outrun the heavy artillery support and supply lines they relied on, causing delays in bringing up men and material. Only one rail line, running through Soissons, supported their forward forces. Allied commanders looked for opportunities to counterattack.

### Champagne-Marne Offensive

On July 15, the Germans launched yet another offensive near Chateau-Thierry, this one was targeted east and west of Reims. Their plan was to draw Allied forces away from Flanders prior to a major, and hopefully decisive, offensive there. The French gained advance knowledge of the attack along the Marne River and readied French and American units in its path. Before the German troops attacked, they

*This earned the 3rd Division the nickname it proudly bears to this day, "Rock of the Marne."*

were hammered by massed American and French artillery fire. Their attacks were further disrupted by flexible and well-sited American and French defenses. East of Chateau-Thierry the 38th Infantry Regiment of the U.S. 3rd Division defended along the Marne against the German 10th Infantry Division, a highly regarded assault unit. Even though its flanks were exposed the American regiment held out, inflicting heavy casualties on its

*The initiative passed to the Allies, who would now take advantage of the situation to go on the offensive.*

assailants. This earned the 3rd Division the nickname it proudly bears to this day, "Rock of the Marne." As the German drive stalled, Foch launched a major counter-offensive into the Chateau-Thierry salient on 18 July. His main attack struck weaker German divisions on the west side of the salient between Soissons and Chateau-Thierry. Forty-four French and eight American divisions took part in the offensive to reclaim the Chateau-Thierry salient. Between July 18 and August 6, the Germans retreated 35 kilometers to the Vesle River. On July 20, the Germans cancelled their planned offensive against the British in Flanders. The initiative passed to the Allies, who would now take advantage of the situation to go on the offensive.

## German Defenses and the Hindenburg Line

On July 24, Foch met with Haig and Pershing and solidified plans for a series of Allied offensives. The German forces were now depleted by casualties, low on morale, and over-extended. In many places, they were forward of their formidable defensive line, and stressed with respect to logistics. The burgeoning Allied forces, with ever increasing numbers of tanks, aircraft and men, would attack the weakened enemy in concert. By pressing multiple near-simultaneous attacks, they would deny the Germans the ability to concentrate against any one of the attacks. They would also force the Germans to consume their reserves. On August 8, British, French and some American forces launched a major offensive near Amiens supported by almost 1,700 aircraft and over 500 tanks. The Germans were badly defeated, losing 100,000 men killed, wounded or captured.

As the Allies advanced they would be challenged by a defensive doctrine implemented by Germany in 1917, to best economize on resources. Earlier defenses along the Western Front featured the strong static defense of frontline trenches and a “hold at all costs” mentality towards secondary lines. The new German doctrine emphasized defense in depth through three successive battle zones. It was a flexible scheme that could absorb attacks, reduce exposure to artillery concentrations, react as circumstances required, and avoid penetration.

Known to the Allies as the “Hindenburg Line,” the German defense zone featured multiple belts of heavy-gauge barbed wire thick enough to withstand artillery fire.

From an outpost line amidst the barbed wire belts, sentinels warned of attacks and harassed attackers while withdrawing. Local reserves would assail the attackers, assisted by machine guns, mortars, and forward artillery observers, who would withdraw before becoming decisively engaged.

The second defense zone included strongpoints featuring machine gun pillboxes that covered infantry approaches with interlocking fields of fire. Bunkers in the strongpoints sheltered troops so that they could survive artillery barrages and then resurface to counterattack. A third battle zone had reserves of infantry, machine guns, and artillery to counter a threatened breakthroughs. These reserves were out of the range of enemy artillery, and committed as attacks began to weaken. The system was based on careful study of previous Allied penetrations. Defensive zones were often 8-10 kilometers deep.

★

*Known to the Allies as the “Hindenburg Line,” the German defense zone featured multiple belts of heavy-gauge barbed wire thick enough to withstand artillery fire.*

Crucially, defenses were sited for concealment from enemy artillery while assuring webs of overlapping defensive fires. Substantial new defenses were built well behind the current front. This allowed optimal use of terrain while avoiding enemy observation or interruption of

the massive construction work involved. Incautious Allied troops would be surprised when German units retreated to new positions even more formidable than those they had left.

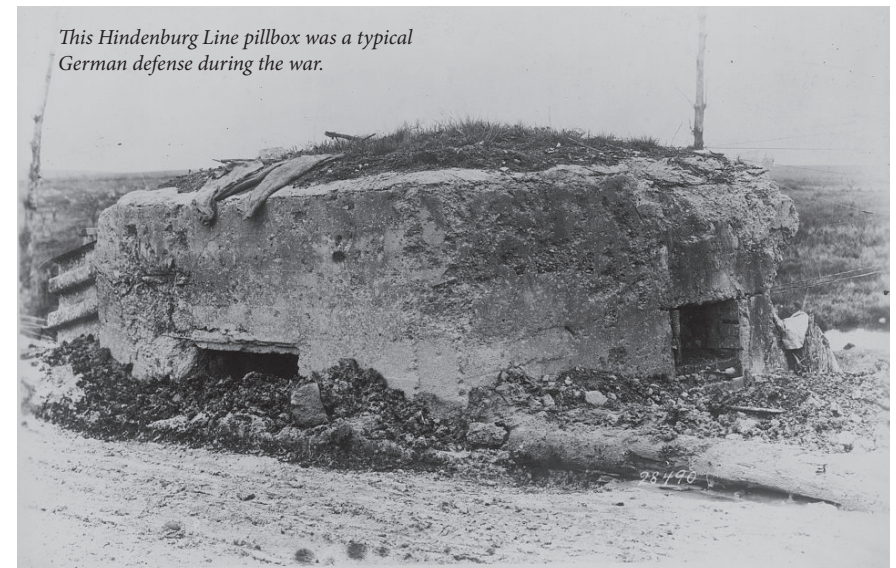
## American First Army Activated

The U.S. First Army was established on August 10. It would initially attack to reduce the St. Mihiel salient southeast of Verdun and then attack in the Meuse–Argonne sector two weeks later. A U.S. Second and then Third Army were to be activated and deployed in due course.

On September 12, 1918, the First Army attacked the St. Mihiel salient. After an intense four-hour bombardment nine American and three French colonial divisions cleared the salient within 36 hours. They advanced along an 80 kilometer front and captured thousands of German soldiers and vast stores of munitions. Col. William “Billy” Mitchell’s ad hoc air force of 600 planes, flown by pilots from five Allied countries, executed successful air support operations.

★

*The secret movement, planned by Col. George C. Marshall and using three roads in poor weather and under cover of darkness, succeeded brilliantly.*



*This Hindenburg Line pillbox was a typical German defense during the war.*



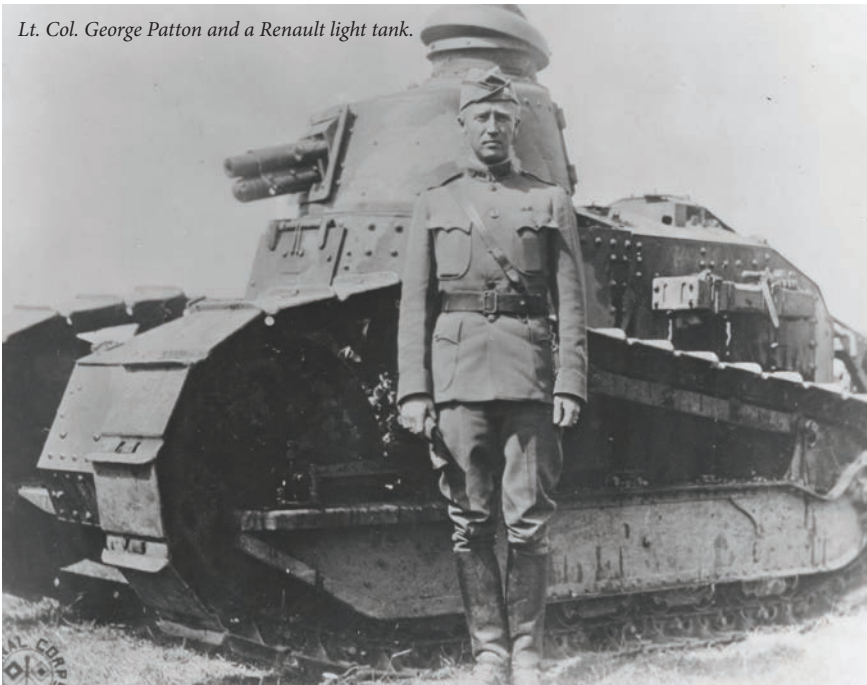
The U.S. 1st Provisional Tank Brigade, fighting in French Renault tanks, attacked under the command of Lt. Col. George S. Patton. Even before the attack ended, the challenging redeployment of more than a half-million soldiers and thousands of artillery pieces from St. Mihiel to the Meuse-Argonne had begun. This secret movement, planned by Col. George C. Marshall and using three roads in poor weather under the cover of darkness, succeeded brilliantly.

On September 20, the American Second Army was activated and secured the newly established St. Mihiel front line. This gave the AEF responsibility for a sector approximately 130 kilometers wide. It faced rough terrain around Verdun and the Argonne Forest, and a German Army deployed along a fortified and flexible defense system.

## The Allied Drive

Marshal Foch ordered attacks along the entire Allied front. Concerted offensives would throw the Germans off balance. The objectives chosen would deny the enemy the use of the railroad centers at Aulnoye and Mézières, about 50 km behind the German lines. Without these junctions and their associated rail spurs, the German armies in France could not be sustained. On September 26, the U.S. First Army launched its Meuse-Argonne Offensive. From September 27- 29 other Allied forces launched offensives extending from the Argonne to the Ypres Salient. The Germans were forced to retreat, and by October 3, senior leaders among them pressed for peace negotiations. The Germans nevertheless retired their armies slowly, kept them intact, and inflicted heavy casualties on the advancing Allies.

*Lt. Col. George Patton and a Renault light tank.*



On October 12, Prince Maximilian of Baden delivered a message to the U.S. government that the German high command wanted to negotiate. By October 18, the AEF broke through the Hindenburg Line and cleared the Argonne Forest. A British attack in the north took Le Cateau and headed towards Aulnoye. Ludendorff resigned on October 27, and much of the German navy mutinied on October 28. On November 1, the American First Army launched yet another major push, and soon was on the Meuse at the gates of Sedan.

The Allied Supreme War Council formulated the language of an armistice agreement that was presented to the Germans on November 4. On November 6 around midnight, Foch was informed that German delegates had appeared at the Allied lines. A German republic was proclaimed on November 9. On November 10, the American Second Army broke through in its sector south of the Meuse, and the Kaiser abdicated. The end was in sight.

## Silence

Armistice negotiations centered on the cessation of hostilities, rather than on a fully negotiated end to the war. Because of doubt that the arrangements would hold until a formal peace was settled, hostilities continued until the mutually agreed day and time, 11 a.m. on November 11, 1918. With guns roaring up to the last second, soldiers held their breath until the 11th hour. When it came the guns fell silent, and troops leapt out of trenches in celebration.

November 1918 saw the end of the combat for American soldiers and airmen fighting in Italy as well. In Northern Russia, the Allies continued their operation to secure supplies around Archangel and Murmansk during the Russian Civil War, in what American soldiers called “The Polar Bear Expedition.” A similar operation continued in the Russian Far East. This included the “AEF Siberia” and the American Russian Railway Service Corps. For American civilians serving overseas, years of medical and relief work continued in Western Europe, the Balkans, and the Middle East.

On the Western Front the Allies dug in and waited until November 17, when Foch issued orders to advance and reoccupy all territory once held by the enemy. This was completed on November 30. Allied troops crossed the Rhine, occupying bridgeheads in Germany on December 1. The original Armistice terms lasted until formal negotiations culminated in the Versailles Treaty, and eight other international treaties, that formally ended the war.



*Helmet emblazoned with the insignia of the American Expeditionary Forces in Siberia.*





# CANTIGNY: BAPTISM OF FIRE

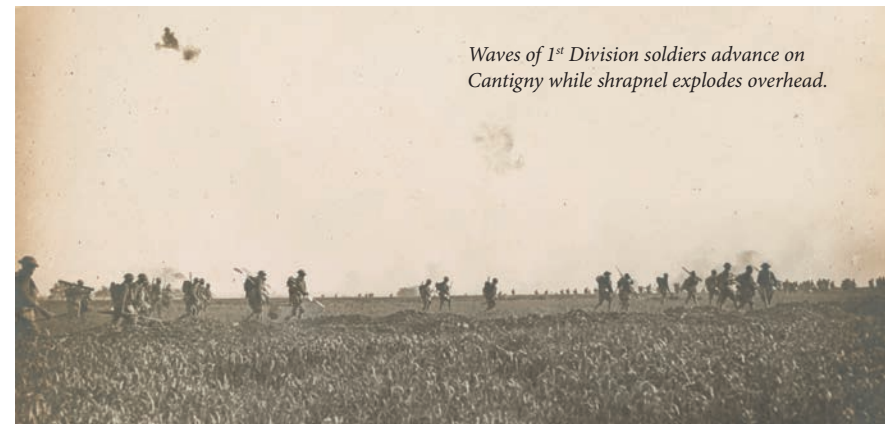
In spring 1918, the German Army began a series of Western Front offensives. Russia leaving the war freed many German troops for service in the west. The Germans employed new tactics, specially trained assault troops and artillery breached Allied defenses for additional troops to follow through. Their intent was to force Allied negotiation before American forces joined the war. Under the stress, the Allies urgently asked for American troops in training to be committed to battle.

The American infantry division was a combined-arms force of almost 19,000 soldiers. There were nearly 11,000 infantry in two brigades, and over 4,500 artillerymen. Divisional staff and engineers, along with signal, transport, supply, and medical troops made up the rest of the division. By comparison German and Allied divisions had half the number of men, but a proportionally larger amount of artillery.

The first American divisional attack of the war took place at Cantigny, a village 5 km northwest of Montdidier in the Somme region. It had fallen to the German Eighteenth Army during the first spring offensive in March.

*The first American divisional attack of the war took place at Cantigny...*

The 1<sup>st</sup> Division, including campaign-tested regiments from the Mexican border operations, had been the earliest American combat troops in France in May 1917. Their training included individual regiments fighting separately in French or British divisions. Nearly a year after their arrival, the 1<sup>st</sup> was sent to the front line opposite the heavily fortified village of Cantigny.



*Waves of 1<sup>st</sup> Division soldiers advance on Cantigny while shrapnel explodes overhead.*

*Cantigny American Monument.*





Early 1st Division shoulder sleeve insignia.

The Germans spent most of May 1918 bombarding the division with high explosive and gas. After enduring this prolonged shelling, the 1<sup>st</sup> was ordered to take Cantigny. The town was captured on the first day of the assault, May 28, with the division's 28<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment in the lead. After taking over 200 prisoners, the Americans withstood a series of strong counterattacks over the next two days.

The 1<sup>st</sup> suffered 1,603 casualties, including 199 killed, taking Cantigny. Although a local operation, it boosted Allied morale to see the American Expeditionary Forces taking the offensive. With this small victory, and the deployment of the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Divisions to defend Chateau-Thierry, the German high command realized that the long feared American infusion of manpower was now a reality.

★  
*After taking over 200 prisoners, the Americans withstood a series of strong counterattacks over the next two days.*



American troops advance on Cantigny with French tanks.



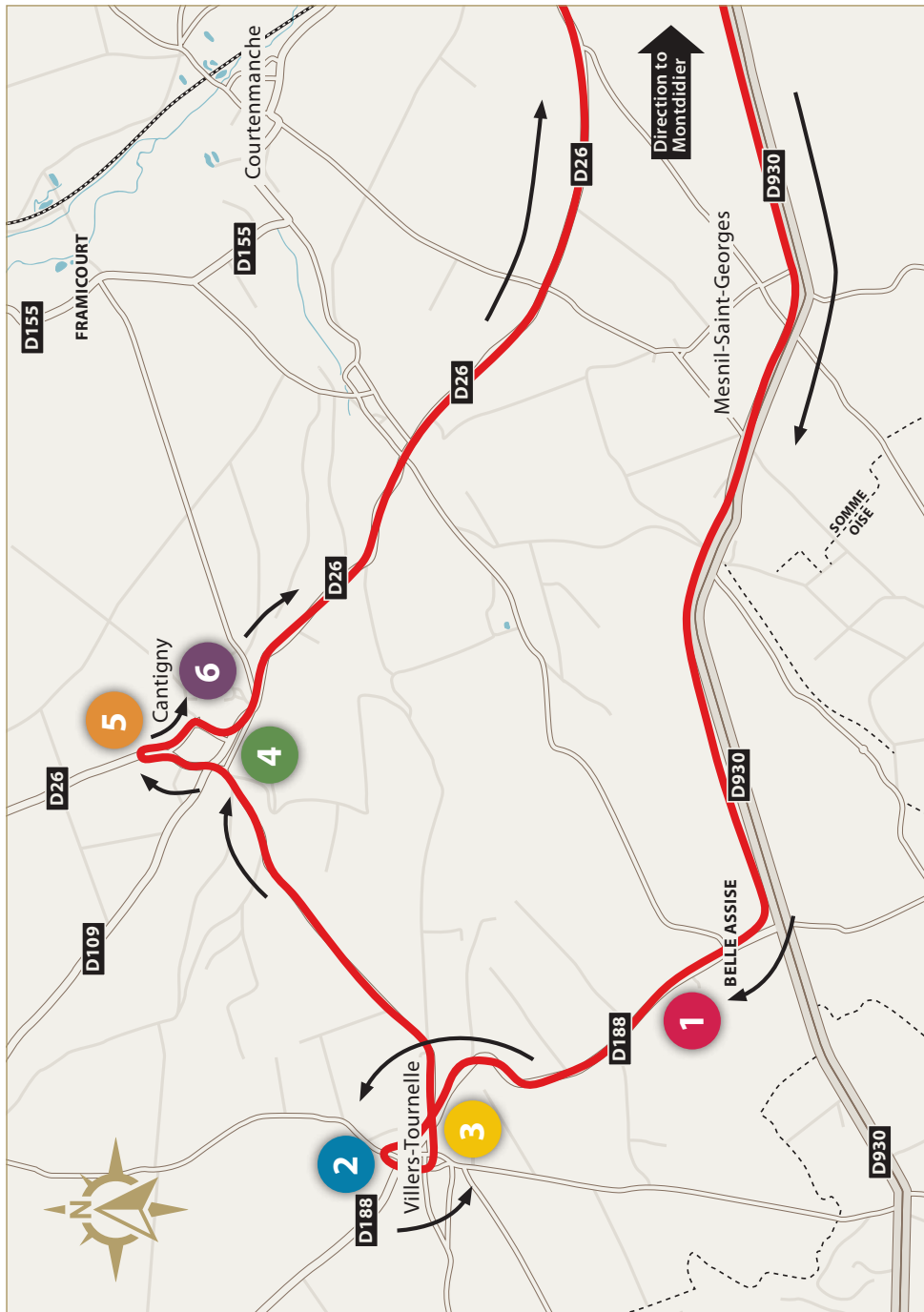
American troops in the ruins of Cantigny after the battle.



Above: Maj. Gen. Robert Lee Bullard commanded the 1<sup>st</sup> Division at Cantigny. Left: Pvt. Joseph R. Smith of Idaho lost his life in the Battle of Cantigny. He is buried in Somme American Cemetery.

Start Tour >





# Stop 1

## Getting to Stop 1:

From the center of Montdidier drive west on the D930. Turn right on D188 toward Villers-Tournelle. If it is safe, pull off the road carefully at the silos on the left. If there is traffic at the site there are a few turnouts on farm roads just up the road.

## Observation & Orientation

Just over 2.4 km to the northeast is the town of Cantigny. From this knoll you can see how Cantigny has a commanding view of the surrounding countryside, and how it hides the valley behind it from view. The many small forests were used to conceal movement of troops from observers on the ground and in the air. Just over 1.5 km away is Villers-Tournelle, an important American forward post in this area.

★

*The many small forests were used to conceal movement of troops from observers on the ground and in the air.*



Artistic rendering by George Matthews Harding shows the night after the taking of Cantigny. The French and Americans sheltered in lamp-lit basements.

## Stop 2 >



# Stop 2

## Getting to Stop 2:

Continue north on D188 into Villers-Tournelle. Go through the middle of town, passing a park on the right and bearing right at the crossroads. Pass the monument on the left, and a church on the right. Take the next right after the church, and pull over just past the town cemetery on the right.

## The Villers-Tournelle Cemetery

Look east from here. Again you see Cantigny on the hill across the valley 2 km away. The little wood to your left was called the Bois Texas on American maps.

From where you are standing a trench line ran to your right across the east side of the town.

The two frontline trenches ran about a 1.5 km east of here. Casualties could only be brought out of the front line aid stations to Villers-Tournelle in darkness.

To the east you can see the southern end of a broken line of woods that run north. Further to your right you can

see roofs of farm buildings directly east. The line of advance toward Cantigny ran from the far side of those woods to a point east of the farm buildings.



American troops northeast of Villers-Tournelle fire a machine gun across no man's land.

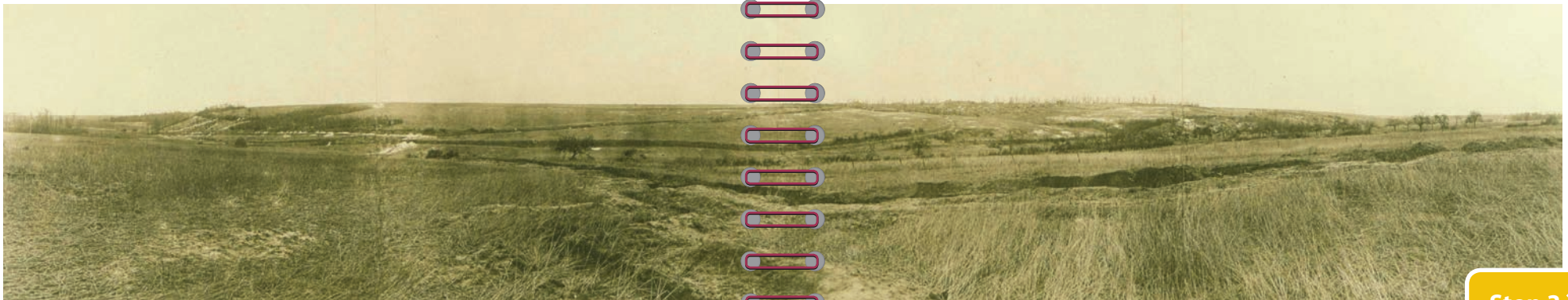
★  
*From where you are standing a trench line ran to your right across the east side of the town.*



Wounded removed at night, "The Flare" by Harvey Thomas Dunn.



A view of the countryside with the town of Cantigny in the distance.



A view of Cantigny from the American jump-off point. Cantigny is at right among the shattered trees.

Stop 3 >



# Stop 3

## Getting to Stop 3:

Carefully return to Villers-Tournelle bearing down the road between the park and the Church. Find a place to park on the left for a moment.

## Villers-Tournelle

This town was under frequent artillery fire, including poison gas, and air attack and the town was heavily damaged in the war. After the war, the church was rebuilt and the masonry of the tower in the field across the street still shows scars of battle. A regimental medical station with two Ford ambulances was concealed here, and aide stations were further forward in the



A typical American dressing station.

trenches. Ambulance drivers sometimes braved the artillery fire, speeding west on roads to bring out the desperately wounded.

From Villers-Tournelle the American and French staff could communicate by telephone to Rocquencourt 1.5 km to the west. There the massed artillery of the 1<sup>st</sup> Division and that of the French X Corps, over 200 guns, waited to support the attack.

★

*Ambulance drivers sometimes braved the artillery fire, speeding west on roads to bring out the desperately wounded.*



Even ambulances were in danger close to the front.



Ruins of the church at Villers-Tournelle, May 1918.



Rebuilt church at Villers-Tournelle, July 2018.

Stop 4 >



# Stop 4

## Getting to Stop 4:

Bear to the left of the monument in the park. At the next intersection bear left toward Cantigny on Rue Saint-Jacques. At the edge of town bear left at the fork on Rue du 28 Mai 1918. Drive up to the park with monuments in the middle of town. Find safe parking, and proceed to the monument.

## Cantigny American Monument

The Cantigny American Monument commemorates the attack on Cantigny, on May 28, 1918, by the 1<sup>st</sup> Division, led by the 28<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment. The attack rolled quickly through the town to the eastern field where the 1<sup>st</sup> Engineers improved the defenses. Many German defenders were captured.

There are two other monuments in the park in Cantigny. One is to the 28<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment, the other is to the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, 5<sup>th</sup> Artillery Regiment that supported the attack.



The Cantigny American Monument commemorates the first attack by an American division in World War I. Above: 1<sup>st</sup> Division's 28<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment Monument. Inset: 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, 5<sup>th</sup> Artillery Regiment Marker.

The road between Villers-Tournelle and Cantigny was on the south side of the attack. The leading companies of the 28<sup>th</sup> moved forward in the dark to occupy the woods and trenches 600 yards in front of Cantigny. An hour later a rolling barrage began and the reinforced 28<sup>th</sup> went forward with French tanks and flamethrower teams. The center battalions moved swiftly through the town while the flanking battalions pushed around its edges, seizing German trenches and taking many prisoners. Support troops installed telephone wire to American and French observation posts taking advantage of the new position. Engineers followed the assault troops to improve defenses east of the town, ambulances now came forward to the western slope of Cantigny to evacuate casualties unobserved by the enemy.



French flamethrower troops and Americans capture Germans leaving their shelters in the shattered town.

★  
Support troops installed telephone wire forward to American and French observation posts taking advantage of the new position.



French tanks similar to those used in the attack.



# Stop 5

## Getting to Stop 5:

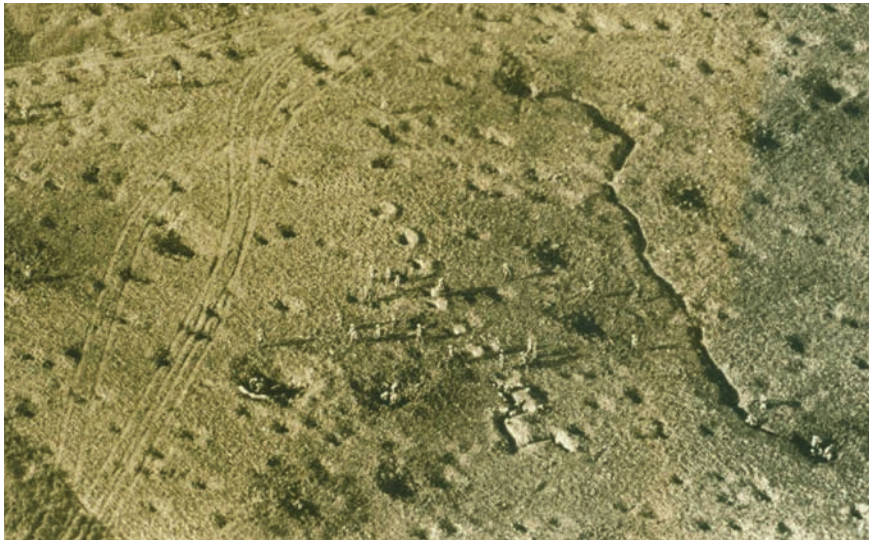
Drive to the north side of town to the intersection of the D26 and the D109 by the church and bear right on the D26. Pull off by the town cemetery on the right.

## Cantigny Cemetery

From in front of the cemetery you can look west beyond the water tower to see the woods where the north flank of the American attack started on May 28. After the attack the American position straddled the road about 300 yards north of here. From there it ran 400 yards into the fields east of Cantigny. There the 1<sup>st</sup> Engineers and the 28<sup>th</sup> Regiment reworked German trenches to ward off seven strong counterattacks in the following days. The cemetery was made into a defensive strongpoint.

The Germans attacked the American position from those woods, the Bois de Framicourt, multiple times on the evening of May 28. The final German attack was from the Laval Wood northeast across the fields at 5:30 a.m. on May 30. American infantry stopped the attack with artillery support. Beyond the Framicourt and Laval woods the ground falls away to the valley of the Rivier des Trois Doms.

★  
*American infantry  
stopped the attack with  
artillery support.*



American soldiers can be seen digging in by an old German trench north of Cantigny.



Top: Wounded soldier after receiving first aid.

Bottom: 1<sup>st</sup> division soldiers watching artillery fire on Cantigny before the American advance.



Stop 6 >



# Stop 6

## Getting to Stop 6:

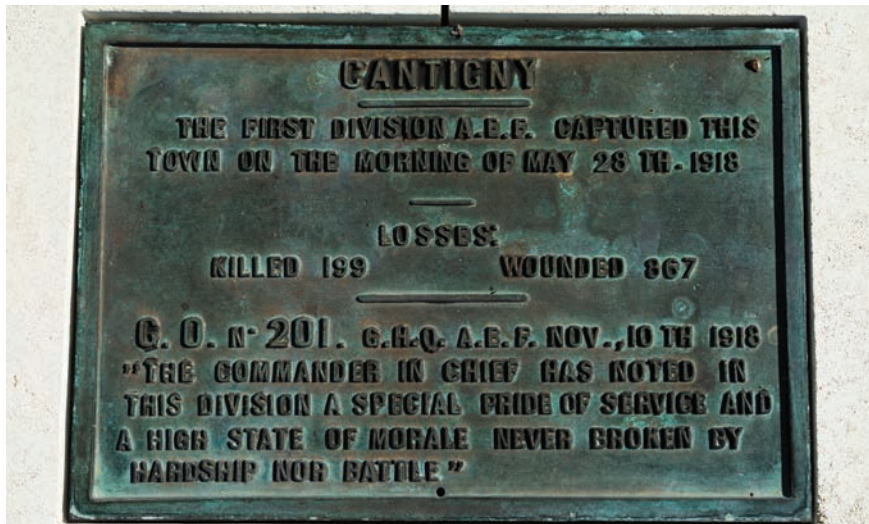
From the Cantigny Cemetery return toward Cantigny 100 m and take the first left. After the turn go 200 m and bear right. Park in the pull out immediately ahead on the right. Put your hazard lights on and walk carefully to the monument on the grassy triangle inside the intersection.

## 1<sup>st</sup> Division Cantigny Monument

The 1<sup>st</sup> Division Cantigny Monument is a square pillar surmounted by a perched eagle. The eagle's drooped wings shield an artillery shell bearing the 1<sup>st</sup> Division insignia inside a laurel wreath. The sides of the pillar bear bronze panels with the names of 1,138 members of the 1<sup>st</sup> Division lost during their 73 days in the front line.



Detail of the 1st Division insignia on the monument.



The bronze plaque on the monument.

### - End of tour -

Drive South on Rue de la Mairie. At the stop sign turn left onto Rue Saint-Aignan (D26) to the D930. Turn left on the D930 into Montdidier.

The 1<sup>st</sup> Division Monument at Cantigny.







## CHATEAU-THIERRY & BELLEAU WOOD: DEFENSE OF THE MARNE

By the spring of 1918, many American troops were training in France. French and British commanders wanted the Americans committed to battle as soon as possible. Gen. John J. Pershing, commander of the American Expeditionary Forces, withheld his troops from combat. He believed that they needed additional training before they engaged in combat. Pershing wanted his troops to engage the enemy at the front as an independent field army. A series of offensives by the German army that spring changed the situation.

The Germans recognized that the weight of American reinforcements might break the stalemate on the Western Front that had endured for more than three years. In March 1918, they launched a series of attacks intended to bring the Allies to the negotiation table before the Americans arrived in force. The German spring offensives were a shock to the French and British command, who renewed their pressure for the early deployment of



*A German howitzer in action.*

American divisions. When the German advance threatened to cross the Marne River northeast of Paris, Pershing relented.

The third German spring offensive began with the secret concentration of the German Seventh and First Armies behind the front line in the hills between the cities of Soissons and Laon. This was a much contested area known as the Chemin des Dames. The Germans, with reserves of divisions freed from service on the Eastern Front after Russia left the war, reorganized



*Some American soldiers were trained by the British.*

*Headstones at Aisne-Marne American Cemetery.*



their forces into assault divisions, line divisions, and divisions primarily for defense. In addition, reserves of heavy artillery were organized for decisive use in critical operations. Behind the front, the critical north-south rail line brought the guns and men to the Chemin des Dames. The French Sixth Army was concentrated in forward positions to hold ground recaptured in 1917.

On the morning of May 27, 1918 more than 4,000 German artillery pieces opened a bombardment on the densely concentrated French army. Then 17 elite assault divisions drove deeply into the French lines, breaking up the defense. Allied lines broke on a 40 km front. They lost some 50,000 men, and 800 artillery pieces were captured. The Germans advanced more than 16 km in the first day across the Aisne River to the valley of the Vesle River. By June 4, they had driven almost 50 km to the town of Chateau-Thierry on the Marne River, 80 km from Paris. Responding to urgent pleas from the French, Pershing ordered the American 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Divisions into the line in relief of the French Sixth Army. These divisions were made up of Regular Army



Army Brigadier General James G. Harbord commanded the 2<sup>nd</sup> Division's 4<sup>th</sup> Infantry (Marine) Brigade at Belleau Wood. In this 1923 portrait, Major General Harbord sits resplendent before the battle-damaged Belleau Hunting Lodge.

regiments, as well as a brigade of Marines in the 2<sup>nd</sup>. When questioned by the French commander about the readiness of the American troops, Col. Preston Brown, 2<sup>nd</sup> Division Chief of Staff, responded:

*“General, these are American regulars. In 150 years they have never been beaten. They will hold.”*



American Marines were trained with grenades in trench warfare.

On June 1, the 2<sup>nd</sup> Division took up positions northwest of Chateau-Thierry from around Lucy-le-Bocage and Belleau Wood extending south to the area west of Vaux. The 3<sup>rd</sup> Division had stalled the German attack at Chateau-Thierry. A French officer retiring with his troops through the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion, 5<sup>th</sup> Marine Regiment suggested to Capt. Lloyd Williams that the Marines should also retire. Williams replied,

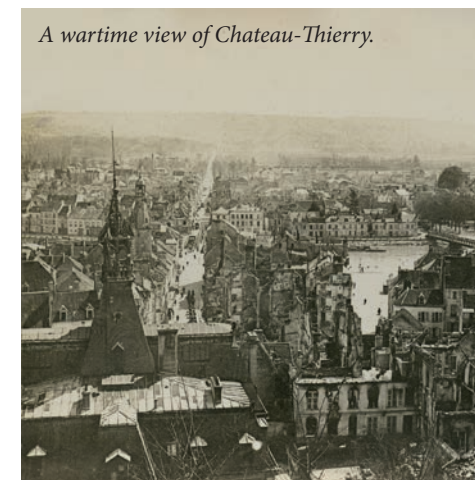
*“Retreat? Hell, we just got here!”*

The Germans were consolidating positions from Hill 142 through Torcy-en-Valois to Belleau Wood and Bouresches and south to Monneaux with mortars, light artillery and machine guns.

On June 4, Germans attacked the Marines around Lucy-le-Bocage and Les Mares Farm and were repulsed with heavy losses. The French XXI Corps ordered the 2<sup>nd</sup> to retake Belleau Wood on June 6. The 2<sup>nd</sup> Division's Marine Brigade attacked on a front from Hill 142 to Bouresches south of Belleau Wood suffering heavy casualties. The Marines took Hill 142 overlooking Belleau Wood from the west and held it against counterattacks. They assaulted Belleau Wood across a wheat field under German machine gun fire. The Marines attacked and took Bouresches, and dug in there against German counterattacks. Following this, a back-and-forth battle ensued for days. Subjected to poison gas and artillery fire, both sides fought stubbornly.

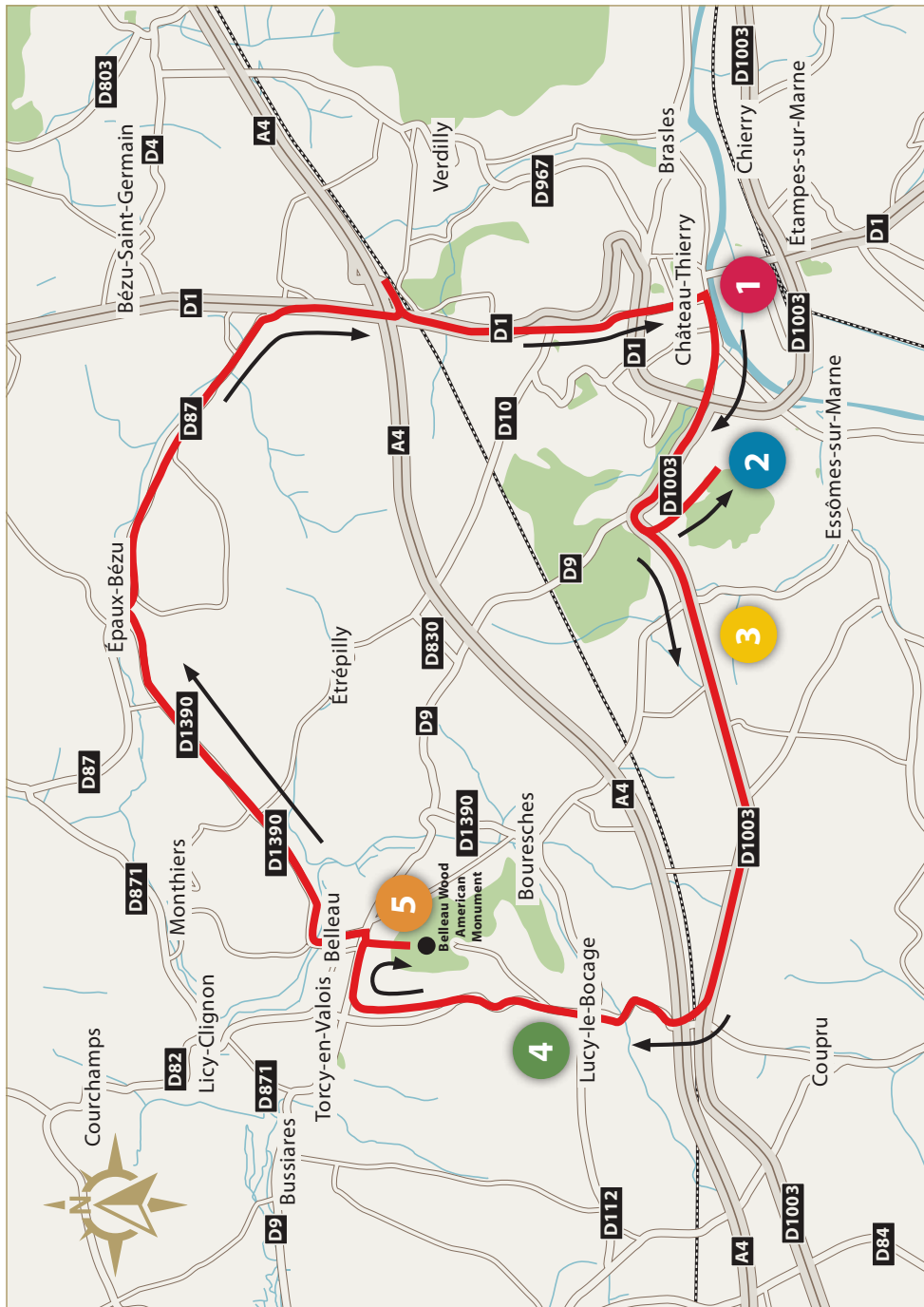
On June 9, Americans withdrew from Belleau Wood for a heavy American and French artillery bombardment. The shelling stripped the hunting preserve of

*A wartime view of Chateau-Thierry.*



its foliage, leaving a tangle of fallen trees. On June 11, following the bombardment, Marines pressed hard into the wood capturing the southern two-thirds. From June 16-20, the Army's 7<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment relieved the exhausted Marine brigade. On June 23, the Marines launched a major attack, but were unable to gain ground. Suffering staggering losses, they required over 200 ambulances to evacuate the wounded. Two days later, Belleau Wood was subjected to a 14-hour bombardment by French artillery. After that the Marines were finally able to clear the wood. On June 26, after defeating some early morning German counterattacks, Maj. Maurice Shearer reported:

*“Woods now entirely—U.S. Marine Corps.”*



# Stop 1

## Getting to Stop 1:

From the Autoroute de l'Est, E50, take the Soissons/Château-Thierry exit. Past the toll booths, follow the traffic circle sign to go south toward Château-Thierry on the D1. At the second traffic circle, take the first exit to the D10 toward Blanchard, the Avenue de Soissons. At the third traffic circle, take the second exit toward Centre Ville. At the traffic circle at the river, take the first exit. You will pass a monument on the right. Turn into public parking just beyond it.

Note: this is a good place to get out for a walk. A block east, just back from the river road, is a tourist office in a brown, red, and brick building. There you can find exhibits and local historical information.

## Château-Thierry

The monument next to the parking lot is that of the American 3<sup>rd</sup> Division that stopped the German advance here on the banks of the Marne River. The original monument, destroyed during WWII, was just east of the tourist office in the traffic circle by the bridge. After passing the monument, go to the riverside at a crosswalk.

On June 1, 1918, when German troops reached the town, it was defended by a force of the French 10<sup>th</sup> Colonial Infantry Division and Company A, 7<sup>th</sup> Machine Gun Battalion, 3<sup>rd</sup> Division. Outnumbered, they were pushed back to the riverbank. One German patrol rushed the bridge. When they were repulsed at a barricade, French engineers blew half the bridge into the river. The 7<sup>th</sup> Machine Gun Battalion fired



from the alleyways and gardens on the south bank, covering American and French troops who swam the Marne or crossed the rail bridge upstream. Other elements of the 3<sup>rd</sup> arrived with French reinforcements to reestablish the front line on the south bank.

Down river to the west you can see the Chateau-Thierry American Monument. The monument sits on Hill 204, which was the next objective of the German drive.

The 3<sup>rd</sup> Division Monument in Chateau Thierry.



## Stop 2 >



# Stop 2

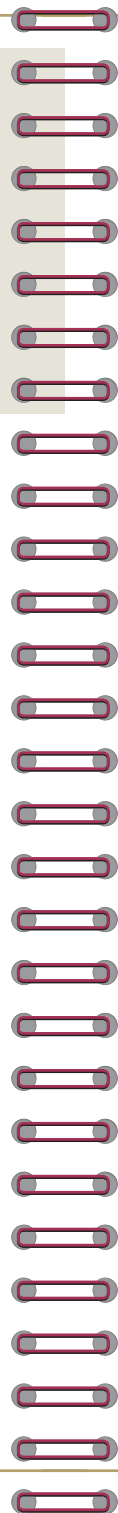
## Getting to Stop 2:

From the parking lot, drive west along the river. At the first traffic circle, take the second exit. At the second traffic circle, take the second exit up the hill. At the third traffic circle, take the second exit uphill toward the “Monument Americain” on the Avenue de Paris. You will see a sign. Be prepared for a sharp left turn. At the next opportunity, turn left through the entrance of the American monument. Drive up the road to the parking lot, and go around to the entrance at the right end of the monument. If you have binoculars bring them along here.

## Château-Thierry American Monument

The Chateau-Thierry American Monument commemorates the service of those Americans and French who fought in this region. It is a lasting symbol of the bonds of friendship and cooperation between French and American forces. The monumental double colonnade on a high terrace is decorated with large sculptures and inscriptions. The names of American battles in this region are engraved above the columns. Facing east is an American

eagle with a shield and the inscription “Time Will Not Dim the Glory of Their Deeds,” flanked by insignia of American corps and divisions that fought here. Below the eagle is a map of regional American campaigns. On the terrace a masonry compass points to historic features in the surrounding terrain. On the west face are large sculptures symbolizing the unity of France and the United States, flanked by dedicatory inscriptions in their respective languages. Within the colonnade there are inscriptions describing the American campaign in this region. The monument



houses a visitor center that tells the story of the American experience in World War I.

This commanding height became the focus of action after the Marne River bridges were destroyed. From June 1 to July 9, 1918 the hill was contested for its excellent observation of the surrounding country. From the monument, you can see the Marne crossings. Trenches beyond the woods behind the monument looked down on sloping vineyards to the southwest. The height dominates Chateau-Thierry to the east and Vaux to the west. You will notice vineyards below its southern slopes. Belleau Wood is 7 km over the hills to the northwest. By holding Hill 204 and Chateau-Thierry, the German army cut the main route from Paris to Reims and beyond to Verdun. Parts of the hill exchanged hands many times until it was finally retaken by the French 39<sup>th</sup> Division in mid-July.

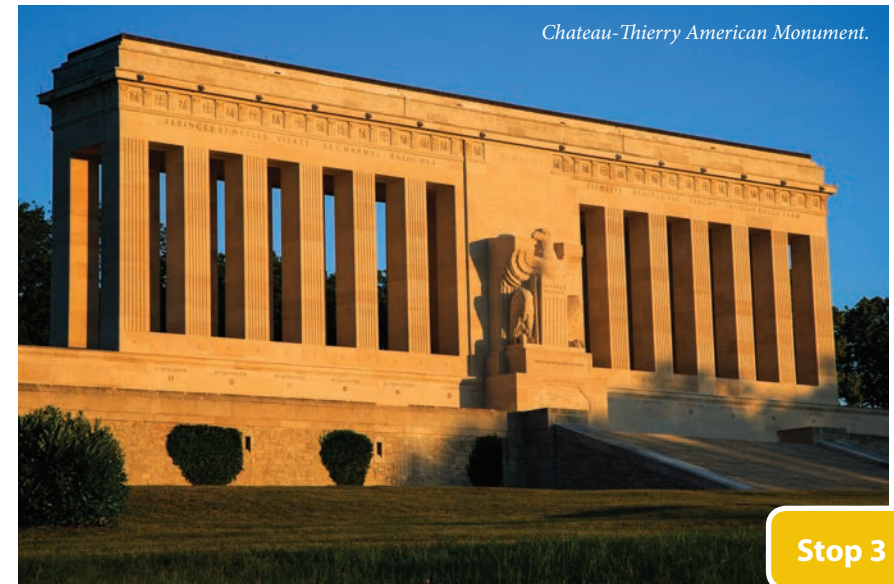
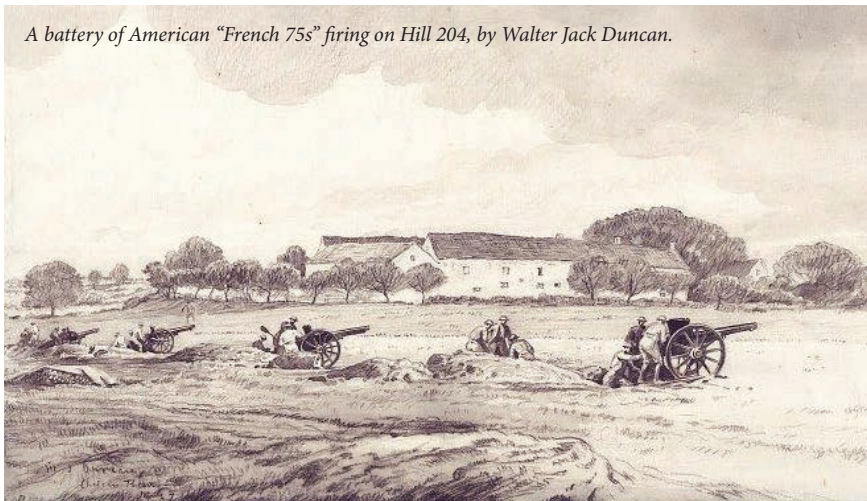


The visitor center at the monument.

★

*The Chateau-Thierry American Monument ... a lasting symbol of the bonds of friendship and cooperation between French and American forces.*

A battery of American “French 75s” firing on Hill 204, by Walter Jack Duncan.



Chateau-Thierry American Monument.

Stop 3 >



# Stop 3

## Getting to Stop 3:

Return down the entrance drive to the Avenue de Paris and turn left. Go for about 1.5 km through the town of Vaux. If it is safe, pull out left onto a paved shoulder of the road about 1.5 km from the Hill 204 entrance. If it is not safe here, there is also an entrance to a winery about 0.8 km further up on the left. Put on your hazard lights.

## Vaux

Be very careful here. Look back across the valley to Hill 204. It dominates the local terrain. German artillery spotters could easily target an exposed area like this stop. Before the first American attack on Hill 204, they seized the village of Vaux - the closest the German offensive came to Paris on this road. Vaux is a classic wine producing village of the region with strong stone structures and ample storage cellars. To the left of the town is the Bois de la Roche. The American 2<sup>nd</sup> Division attacked Vaux down the axis of this road on July 1, 1918.

American Intelligence interviewed refugees of Vaux for details on every house and wine

cellar. Famous American photographer Maj. Edward Steichen provided aerial images to map the town accurately. Twenty one American and French artillery batteries bombarded the town methodically for a day before the attack at 6 p.m. on July 1. The artillery put down two barrages to suppress defenders and conceal the attack. A standing barrage fell behind Vaux and the Bois de la Roche to cut off German reinforcements. Immediately east of this stop a rolling barrage fell, moving about 90 meters eastward every two minutes. American infantry and engineers followed behind it closely. They attacked Vaux's



Maj. Edward Steichen, center front, in a flying suit along with the 14<sup>th</sup> Photo Section.



The town of Vaux after the attack. Credited to Major Edward Steichen.

strongpoints and cellars with explosives before the Germans could react. The left flank attacked and occupied the Bois de la Roche. The shattered town was captured by Americans in an hour, along with many machine guns and dazed German soldiers. American reinforcements arrived promptly. They re fortified the eastern edges of the ruins of Vaux and the Bois de la Roche immediately. The new defenses withstood a German counterattack on July 2.



Signalmen repairing a telephone line during a gas attack.

★  
*The shattered town was captured by Americans in an hour, along with many machine guns and dazed German soldiers.*



# Stop 4

## Getting to Stop 4:

Carefully pull out to continue west on D1003, the Route de Paris past Le Thiolet. Turn right at the four-way intersection on D82, toward Lucy-le-Bocage. Pass through Lucy-le-Bocage. At the top of the rise out of town, pull off to the right carefully onto a dirt lane.

## Belleau Wood and Lucy-le-Bocage

The forest to your east is the south end of Belleau Wood. On June 4, 1918 the Germans attacked Lucy-le-Bocage across these fields from the north and east. They were repulsed by the rifle fire of Marines of the American 2<sup>nd</sup> Division in Lucy and Les Mares Farm.

On June 6, Marines attacked Belleau Wood from Lucy-le-Bocage; some crossed these fields to the southern wood and others down this road toward the northern wood.

Repulsed from the northern wood, they took positions west of the road in the Bois de Bruyeres. At the same time, other Marines advanced east from Lucy-le-Bocage to secure the south side of Belleau Wood by capturing the village of Bouresches.



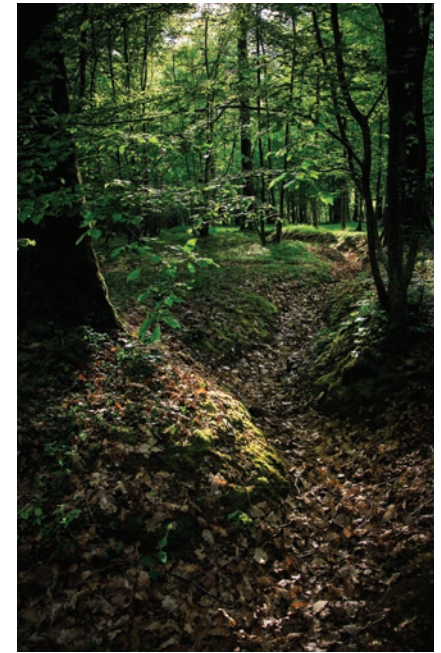
The shell-scarred town of Bouresches just south of Belleau Wood after the fighting in 1918.



75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Stamp depicting the Battle of Belleau Wood.



U.S. Marine Monument in Belleau Wood.



Trenches and rifle pits in Belleau Wood.



American soldiers in rifle pits near Chateau-Thierry are armed with a machine gun and grenades captured from the Germans.



# Stop 5

## Getting to Stop 5:

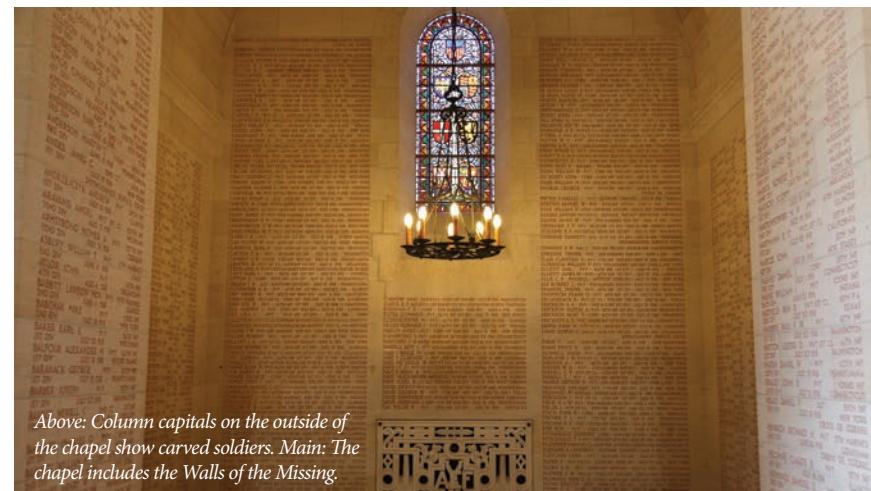
Continue north on D82 to the four-way intersection and turn right onto D9. Drive down D9 0.8 km to the entrance of the Aisne-Marne American Cemetery. Go up the driveway to the parking lot on the right. There is a reception room and office in the building beside the parking lot, which provides printed guides to the cemetery and other related local sites, and a walking tour map for Belleau Wood.

## Aisne-Marne American Cemetery & Belleau Wood

The Aisne-Marne American Cemetery rests at the foot of slopes that rise into Belleau Wood. Approaching the chapel, the two large plots of the cemetery come in to view curving away left and right around the hill. There are nearly 2,300 Americans buried here, most of whom were casualties of the fighting in this region in the summer

of 1918. Among those interred are more than 200 whose identity is unknown. On the Walls of the Missing in the chapel are the names of more than 1,000 missing. A rosette next to a name indicates the remains of the service member have been recovered and identified.

*Chapel approach at Aisne-Marne American Cemetery.*



*Above: Column capitals on the outside of the chapel show carved soldiers. Main: The chapel includes the Walls of the Missing.*

★  
*A rosette next to a name indicates the remains of the service member have been recovered and identified.*

The chapel was completed with features that recall those on local churches and the Reims cathedral. The stained glass window in the alcove to the left bears the coats of arms of the Allied nations, while the window on the right bears the Great Seal of the United States and the insignia of Army divisions and corps that fought here. These insignia are also carved in the stone of the tower. The altar in Italian marble bears, among many carved figures, an owl for wisdom, and a crusader whose shield

bears a lion and the scales for fortitude and justice. Dedicatory and memorial inscriptions are in French and English, and the stained glass windows bear the images of saints. Damage on the exterior of the chapel dates from World War II, when the forested height behind the chapel was used as a defensive position by the French Army.

The Marine memorial is in the middle of Belleau Wood surrounded by the remains of German artillery of the era. To get to the memorial in Belleau Wood, ask the office for directions and then drive from the cemetery.

Belleau Wood is perhaps the most famous battle in the history of the U.S. Marine Corps. The 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> Marine Regiments and the Marine's 6<sup>th</sup> Machine Gun Battalion took a central part in the fighting as a brigade of the U.S. Army's 2<sup>nd</sup> Division. Walking in Belleau Wood, it is best to





Hunting lodge.  
Inset: Plaque above door.



The town center of Belleau, just north of Belleau Wood, suffered heavy damage during the war.



Marine machine gunners in the vicinity of Belleau Wood.

reflect that this was a heavily wooded hunting reserve before World War I. The damaged stone tower was a lodge from which hunters shot passing game through second story windows. Heavy fighting in Belleau Wood lasted from June 6-26, 1918. In the forested area, maneuvering was difficult and vision was restricted at ground level after shelling shattered the trees. Both German and Allied artillery made frequent use of poison gas. American soldiers and Marines fought in the heat of summer in gas masks, buttoned up in uniform to avoid burns from mustard gas. The history and traditions of the site are found in the walking tour map, which is available in the visitor building at the cemetery.



Headstones at Aisne-Marne American Cemetery.

Staff at the visitor building can also provide information about other sites of interest near the cemetery. These include the village of Belleau with the 26<sup>th</sup> Division church, the Pennsylvania Fountain, and the “Bulldog Fountain” favored in the lore of the U.S. Marine Corps. The fountain is on private property, so check about access.

Following the relief of the Marine Brigade, the 26<sup>th</sup> Division captured Belleau in 1918, shelling the old church in the attack. The division’s veterans paid to rebuild the church as a memorial to comrades who fell in France. The Pennsylvania Fountain was offered by the state in memory of Pennsylvanians who fell in Belleau Wood.

**- End of tour -**

From the entrance to the cemetery drive across the road into Belleau on D1390. The road curves left, then right. At the fork by the cemetery, bear right. Stay on the 1390. At the intersection in Épaux-Bézu, bear right toward the church, then turn right just past the church on D87. Stay on the D87 until you come to the D1. Turn right (south) on the D1. In about 1.6 km you will return to the D1 toll road entrance where you started.





*Oise-Aisne American Cemetery.*



# THE AISNE-MARNE OFFENSIVE: GOING ON THE ATTACK

By the end of May 1918, the third German spring offensive had established a salient extending from a point west of Soissons south to Chateau-Thierry, and then northeast to the outskirts of Reims. An attack pushed west from Soissons in June fell short of German expectations. Another was planned to encircle Reims and cross the Marne River east of Chateau-Thierry in mid-July. French intelligence uncovered the plan. Their response was a prepared defense and a strategic counterattack to collapse the Chateau-Thierry salient.

★  
*An attack pushed west from Soissons in June fell short of German expectations.*

The attacks between July 15 and 17 were countered by prepared defenses. French and American artillery east of Chateau-Thierry fired on the masses of German infantry waiting in forward positions. It was here that the American 3<sup>rd</sup> Division earned its name, “The Rock of the Marne”, in defensive battles on the south bank of the Marne. The 42<sup>nd</sup> Division fought with French forces east of Reims near Navarin Farm in the Champagne region.



*A soldier of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Division poses for a portrait.*

With the German offensive balance thrown toward Reims, the second part of the French plan was to attack the salient from the west, southwest, and east with three French armies supported by British, Italian, and American divisions. To the west the French Tenth and Sixth Armies, including the U.S. 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> Divisions, surprised German units south of Soissons on July 18. On July 19 Maj. Theodore Roosevelt, Jr., was gassed and wounded leading his battalion of the 26<sup>th</sup> Infantry, 1<sup>st</sup> Division.





42nd Division snipers fighting in the town of Villers-Sur-Fere.

The French determined that the better German troops had already been used. Second rate “defensive” units held the west face of the salient.

The predawn French-led attack on July 18 was a complete surprise to the Germans. There was no preparatory bombardment. The French Tenth Army’s 1,500 artillery pieces only fired a heavy rolling barrage ahead of the assault. Behind the artillery fire came tanks followed by infantry. The American 2<sup>nd</sup> Division led the others advancing 8 km. Twenty thousand German soldiers were taken prisoner. An American liaison officer with the French High Command was congratulated by French officers saying:

*“Without the Americans this would never have been possible.”*

For American Expeditionary Forces’ units in the French Sixth and Ninth Armies, pursuit began with the 26<sup>th</sup> Division attacking between Vaux and Belleau, and the 3<sup>rd</sup> Division crossing the Marne east of Chateau-Thierry.

★

*Twenty thousand German soldiers were taken prisoner.*

The Germans reacted and began a methodical withdrawal from the salient covered by reinforcements of ground and air forces. The reinforcements were assault units preparing for an August 1 offensive against the British in Flanders. The attack was canceled, saving the British from another dangerous battle.

Allied forces pressed the Germans steadily out of the salient. American divisions fought under Allied command in French corps and armies. Most of the campaign was fought in “open warfare” conditions across land without strong entrenchments and fortifications. American divisions distinguished themselves in the rolling fields and dense woods of the region. In his memoirs, Gen. Ludendorff wrote of this campaign:

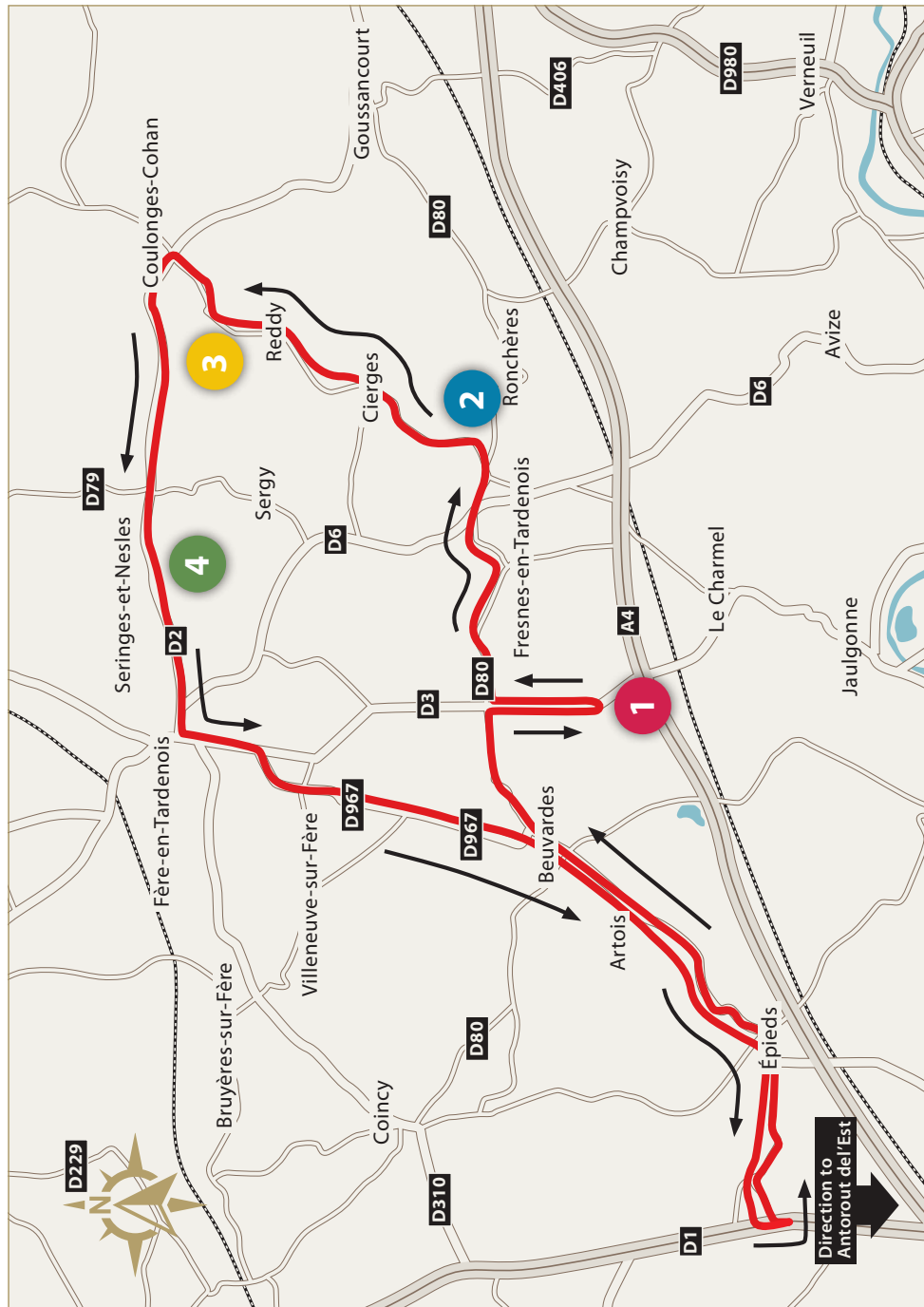
*“This was the first great setback for Germany. There now developed the very situation which I had endeavored to prevent. The initiative passed to the enemy. Germany’s position was extremely serious. It was no longer possible to win the war in a military sense.”*

The campaign was the first clear Allied victory in 1918 on the Western Front. Germany would not mount another offensive or have another victory. The Allied counteroffensive lasted until early September. Before the Oise-Aisne campaign ended, the advantage passed to the Allies on the Western Front. Ludendorff was compelled to cancel plans to attack the British Army in Flanders. German morale sagged. The opportunity had passed for Ludendorff to force the Allies to negotiate before the American Expeditionary Forces could tip the balance. Gen. Pershing’s First Army began its first offensive as an independent force at St. Mihiel.



Soldiers en route to the front cross a pontoon bridge across the Marne.

Start Tour >



# Stop 1

## Getting to Stop 1:

From the Autoroute de l'Est, E50, exit to the D1 north toward Soissons and Fère-en-Tardenois. Go north almost 3 km and turn onto the D4 toward Bezu-St-Germain. At the stop sign in town, turn right toward Epieds. At the traffic circle, continue straight on the D967 toward Memorial de la 42e division U.S. At the fork, bear left. At the next fork by the white memorial, bear right. Continue toward Beuvarde on D967 straight through the crossroad in La Croisette and Beuvarde. After Beuvarde, turn right on the D80. When you come to the four-way intersection, turn right on the D3. Pull out on the paved parking area on the right by the ruined walls of Croix Rouge Farm and statue.

## Croix Rouge Farm

The 42<sup>nd</sup> Division was made up of National Guard units from 26 states. The press nicknamed this division “The Rainbow Division.” On July 24, 1918 the 42<sup>nd</sup> Division passed through the Forêt de Fère, south of Beuvarde. Patrols encountered German defensive positions at Beuvarde and Croix Rouge Farm.

The American units were trained, but did not have significant battle experience. The Germans were in the fortified farm buildings, the remains of which you see by the monument. The fields around the farm were as broad as you see them now, with a summer’s growth. Concealed in the fields were trenches on the sides of the road running north and south. A v-shaped trench ran around the farm buildings pointing toward the wood line. The Germans had made colored blazes in the wood line to assist their shooting. They were armed with several dozen machine guns. To the east, more Germans were stationed in the woods beyond the fields. The fields are 915 meters wide, half the effective range of their machine guns. The area had been surveyed by German



The Croix Rouge memorial.

artillery observers for accurate fire from distant guns.

*The area had been surveyed by German artillery observers for accurate fire from distant guns.*

The 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, 167<sup>th</sup> Infantry, an Alabama National Guard regiment, attacked the farm without artillery support at 4:50 p.m. From a position 460 meters in the woods the men advanced in skirmish line in cool rainy weather.



The regiment's 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion, covering the right flank, advanced to pass south of the farm buildings. Advancing in line through the woods, both battalions encountered German snipers and machine gun teams who fired and fell back. High explosive and poison gas shells from German artillery began to fall in the wood. Approaching the field, the 167<sup>th</sup> came under fire from the farm buildings and field positions. The attack of the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion became pinned down in front and to the north of the farm. At 6 p.m., reserve companies came up and renewed the attack with survivors of the first wave. About 100 men assaulted the roadside trench, north of the farm. From the woods to the east, a German counterattack advanced. The Alabama National Guardsmen turned them back at bayonet point. Casualties were very heavy.

On the right flank, the 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion encountered dense woods approaching the fields, which protected them from long-



42<sup>nd</sup> Division Commander Maj. Gen. Charles T. Menoher, far right, stands with other officers including Division Chief of Staff Col. Douglas MacArthur, at left.

range fire, but brought them into close contact with German skirmishers. Enemy fire checked the assault at the wood line briefly. The assault then carried into the field trenches in hand-to-hand combat. A 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion mortar section began to bombard the farm from the woods. Five hundred fifty meters south of the farm, two companies of the 167<sup>th</sup> cleared the enemy from the south edge of the fields. The 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion's commander and three of his company commanders were casualties. Assault organization was breaking down, but officers and men reformed and pressed the attack across the road to the east of the farm houses.

★

*Assault organization was breaking down, but officers and men reformed and pressed the attack across the road to the east of the farm houses.*

Two hours into the attack, casualties were severe. The 167<sup>th</sup> had isolated the farm house from enemy reinforcements. The 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion's attack had veered toward the farm buildings, with the 168<sup>th</sup> Infantry, an Iowa regiment. To the north by the road, 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion fired on the buildings and the eastern woods. The roadside trenches provided cover to approach and attack the farm buildings. About 7 p.m., lieutenants from the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalions led separate attacks on the farm buildings and cleared the roadside ditches, carrying Croix Rouge Farm. German artillery fire had fallen in



*Croix Rouge Farm from the south.*

the woods and around the farm during the attack, and continued through the night. In the field east of the farm, men of different units of the 42<sup>nd</sup> Division organized a defense and repelled a German counterattack.

Throughout the rainy night, the regiment recovered its dead and evacuated the wounded. One hundred sixty two officers and men of the 167<sup>th</sup> Regiment were killed in the fighting at Croix Rouge Farm. The 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion had 65 percent killed or wounded. On the morning of July 27, word came that the Germans had retreated across the Ourcq River.

On July 26 Col. Douglas MacArthur, chief of staff of the Rainbow Division, praised the 167<sup>th</sup> and 168<sup>th</sup> Regiments that:

*“...captured the Croix Rouge Farm in a manner which for its gallantry I do not believe has been surpassed in military history.”*



# Stop 2

## Getting to Stop 2:

Return north on the D80 to the four-way intersection and turn right. Go around the church in Fresnes-en-Tardenois toward Courmont. By the church in Courmont, turn left on D14 toward Ronchères. Leaving the town, pull off carefully onto the road just past the soccer field trees.

## The Attack on Grimpettes Wood

On the morning of July 28, 1918 the 28<sup>th</sup> Division, a National Guard division from Pennsylvania, replaced French forces here, facing northeast around the town of Courmont. The 42<sup>nd</sup> Division covered their left flank 1 km to the northwest. To the right, just across the road from the soccer field, the 3<sup>rd</sup> Division stretched to the southeast. Two infantry regiments of the 28<sup>th</sup> Division were held in reserve near Croix Rouge Farm 5 km to the rear. The clash here was part of the Battle of the Ourcq.

Courmont is in the valley of the Ourcq River which flows along the line of trees you see down the road. Beyond, crowning the ridge opposite Courmont is Grimpettes Wood. In wet July weather, the Germans had been slowly retreating north, taking advantage of good defensive positions. The 28<sup>th</sup> Division and elements of the French Sixth Army had been pursuing them in force, not knowing when they would fight.

*The temporary American cemetery at Courmont, Nov. 1918.*



On July 28 a reinforced regiment of the 28<sup>th</sup> Division, about 4,500 men, descended the hill toward the Ourcq to press the Germans. Occasional machine gun and artillery fire fell on the men in the fields here. The enemy had made a stand across the little river, and the regiment went to ground in the river bed. On the right, the 3<sup>rd</sup> Division advanced beyond the river toward Grimpettes Wood but was driven back. German artillery fire increased and the advance was halted. The Ourcq River, then as now, forms a natural trench some 2.5 meters wide and deep with only 0.3 meters of water in its bed.

On the second day, the 28<sup>th</sup> Division attacked again before dawn with a brief artillery bombardment. The leading troops made it to Grimpettes Wood by 6 a.m., but were forced back by heavy fire three hours later. The attack only gained the lower slope of the hill. To the right, the 3<sup>rd</sup> Division made an attack mid-afternoon, but made little progress. The Germans still held Grimpettes Wood and the ridgeline to the left of it. German artillery and machine guns harassed the American line. Orders were issued to attack again in the morning on July 30. Engineers built wooden bridges across the Ourcq. The 28<sup>th</sup> Division's objective was the Grimpettes Wood and the ridge to the left. Through the day and into the night, one brigade of the 28<sup>th</sup> Division prepared to attack before dawn. French artillery had arrived and set up for the next day's attack.

At 3:40 a.m. on July 30, the 28<sup>th</sup> Division attacked again. In the dark, a brief but heavy bombardment struck the German positions. The soldiers of the 28<sup>th</sup> Division made it to the crest and to the edge of Grimpettes Wood. In the early afternoon,



*American artillery observers were crucial to assure effective artillery support.*

French artillery bombarded the woods and then laid a rolling barrage in front of the 28<sup>th</sup> Division. The line of explosions hid the American soldiers from the enemy, then rolled forward through the wood. The soldiers of the 28<sup>th</sup> Division followed the confusion of the barrage through the wood, often bypassing Germans. Beyond the wood, they secured a line above the town of Ceigres out of site beyond the ridge. Two reserve companies of the attacking regiment went slowly through Grimpettes Wood, mopping up the enemy, then reinforcing the new line. In the evening, the 28<sup>th</sup> Division held off a German counterattack from the Ceigres Wood on their right. The next day, the 28<sup>th</sup> Division was relieved by the 32<sup>nd</sup> Division, made up of Michigan and Wisconsin National Guardsmen. In only a few days of fighting here, the 28<sup>th</sup> Division suffered 1,400 men killed and wounded.



# Stop 3

## Getting to Stop 3:

Drive down the D14 toward the Ourcq River and continue on D14 north. At the fork in Cierges, bear left at the fork on D14 toward Coulonges-Cohan. Stay on D14 into Chamery. On the right, notice the sign “Fontaine a la Memoire du Lieutenant Quentin Roosevelt”. The white stone fountain is ahead under a low tree on the right.

## Lt. Quentin Roosevelt and Chamery

When indoor water taps were uncommon, most of the village came here for their drinking water. This fountain was presented to the town in memory of Lt. Quentin Roosevelt by his family.

In July 1918, Chamery was behind German lines. When the Allies attacked, the Germans sent reinforcements, including aviation units. Military aviation had become more important, and as the value of reconnaissance and bombing aircraft increased, so did the need to counter them with fighters. Flying swift, maneuverable, and well-armed aircraft, fighter pilots were much admired by the public, as their single combat in colorful biplanes drew parallels with chivalric knights.

On July 14, Quentin Roosevelt, the youngest son of former U.S. President Theodore Roosevelt, was killed in action flying a Nieuport 28 fighter. Quentin had grown up in the White House and was a favorite of the American people. Aged 20, he had only been flying in combat for nine days. This was the tragically typical life expectancy for a World War I pilot.

The crash site was in the field 915 meters east of the fountain. Quentin was buried with honors by the German Army at the site of his crash, in a well-attended funeral. After they



Lt. Quentin Roosevelt.

took Chamery, Allied soldiers flocked to the gravesite. In 1955, Quentin's remains were moved to the Normandy American Cemetery to lie by those of his brother, Brig. Gen. Theodore Roosevelt, Jr. Five days after his brother's death, Theodore was wounded near Soissons. He would later die in World War II during the Normandy campaign in July 1944.

★

*Quentin was buried with honors by the German Army at the site of his crash, in a well-attended funeral.*



Above: The Quentin Roosevelt Memorial Fountain. Left: The grave of Lt. Quentin Roosevelt in 1918. Below: The Alert Nieuports, by Harry Townsend, depicts the Nieuport 28, the type of plane flown by Roosevelt.





# Stop 4

## Getting to Stop 4:

Go north on the D14 that turns right, then left. At the four-way intersection, turn left on the D2. Continue on the D2 6 km to the Oise-Aisne American Cemetery.

## The Oise-Aisne American Cemetery

This is the second largest American World War I cemetery. It lies on land seized from the German army by the 42<sup>nd</sup> Division between July 31 and August 2, 1918. In the course of an ongoing attack on July 31, the division advanced behind a heavy barrage of high explosive and thermite incendiaries that broke the local German defense. On August 2, the division advanced again in pursuit over the ground where the cemetery stands and through the Forêt de Nesles to the north. The 42<sup>nd</sup> Division suffered almost 6,500 casualties in this

campaign. The poet Joyce Kilmer, author of "Trees", is interred here. As a member of the regimental intelligence section, he volunteered for a hazardous patrol, and was killed by a sniper on July 30.

★

*This is the second largest American World War I cemetery.*



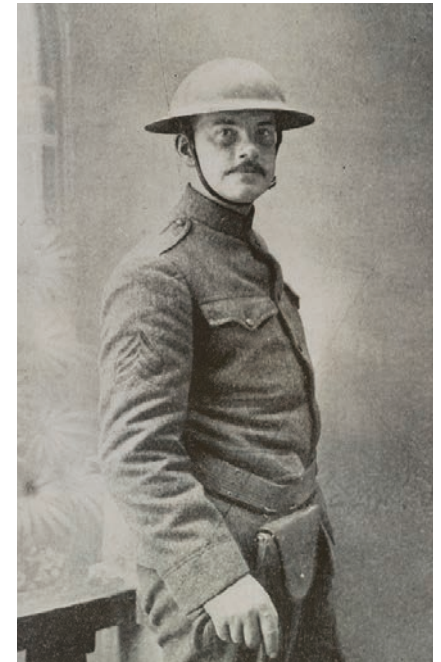
Headstones at Oise-Aisne American Cemetery.



The cemetery in 1921, with wooden markers.



Stylized great seal eagle on chapel exterior.



Sgt. Joyce Kilmer.



The Oise-Aisne American Cemetery memorial.



The 42<sup>nd</sup> Division established this cemetery as a resting place for its fallen in 1918. It was confirmed as a permanent site in 1921. Most of those interred here were casualties of the Aisne-Marne and Oise-Aisne Offensives. The cemetery is the resting place of more than 6,000 Americans, nearly 600 of whom are unknown. The names of nearly 250 missing Americans, who died in this region, are honored on the Walls of the Missing in the chapel.



*The cemetery is the resting place of more than 6,000 Americans, nearly 600 of whom are unknown.*

The cemetery is divided by a central grassy mall with the entrance at one end and a curved, colonnaded, peristyle memorial at the far end. The memorial consists of a stepped terrace supporting an altar of carved polished Rocheret Jaune marble that complements the surrounding walls of Gres de Vosges sandstone. At either end of the peristyle is a small commemorative room, and memorial chapel. The Oise-Aisne and Aisne-Marne Offensives are recalled with carved stone maps and symbols of participating formations. The chapel is highly decorated and includes the names of the missing, and is illuminated by windows of translucent Algerian Onyx. The four grave plots are divided by the mall and transverse paths that meet in the center at a flagstaff.



Flags on display at Oise-Aisne American Cemetery.



Campaign of Aisne-Marne region.



Chapel inscriptions.



Above: The chapel at the cemetery and the Walls of the Missing.  
Below: Oise-Aisne American Cemetery in summer.



**- End of tour -**

From the Oise-Aisne American Cemetery, drive west on D2 to the intersection of the D967 and turn left (south) toward Beuvarde. Continue south to Beuvarde, and on to Epieds. Bear right at the fork in Epieds toward Bezu-St-Germain, and go straight at the traffic circle, the first exit. At the "T" intersection in Bezu-St-Germain, turn left on D4 toward Chateau-Thierry. At the intersection, turn left toward Chateau-Thierry. In 2.8 km you will find the entrance to the Autoroute de l'Est.





## ST. MIHIEL SALIENT: THE AMERICAN FIRST ARMY TESTED

For the American Expeditionary Forces, the Battle of St. Mihiel was an important victory for strategic and psychological reasons. When the battle took place in mid-September 1918, many soldiers in the American Expeditionary Forces had already experienced a baptism of fire in the war. In addition, a vast supply network—the Service of Supply (SOS)—brought men, supplies, and material to American Expeditionary Forces and Allied armies from ports in western France. Allied fliers and Americans of the U.S. Air Service manned nearly 1,500 aircraft under Gen. Billy Mitchell. The Americans took the lead in this battle, supported by the French and British, and demonstrated that they were every bit as capable as their allies.

★  
*...the Battle of St. Mihiel was an important victory, for strategic and psychological reasons.*

American divisions had previously fought within the command structures of the French and British in the sectors controlled by those armies. To move under its own command structure, the American First Army was organized on August 10, 1918, under command of Gen. John J. Pershing. It contained the I, IV, and V American Corps, and the French II Colonial Corps. Many American support troops were attached to



*A Machine Gun Nest, by Samuel Johnson Woolf.*

the First Army, as were numerous French and American artillery and aviation units. The chosen target of this force was the St. Mihiel salient, a rough triangle jutting into Allied lines 56 km wide, and 32 km deep, with the small city of St. Mihiel on the Meuse River south of Verdun at its southwestern point.

The St. Mihiel Salient was created by German units supporting attacks on Verdun. One side of the salient faced west from Haudiomont to St. Mihiel. From there it faced south to the Moselle River above Pont-à-Mousson. The new position complicated the supply to French forces at Verdun, and further south threatened



the Paris to Nancy rail line. A stalemate ensued around the salient. By fall of 1918, the German Army planned to retreat from the salient to a shorter defensible line between Pont-à-Mousson and Haudimont. The American attack was scheduled for the morning of September 12, 1918. The day before the attack, the Germans had begun a controlled, methodical withdrawal.

The American First Army would attack all around the salient. On the south side the American I and IV Corps, with several divisions each, faced a 24 km front from the Moselle River to west of the town of Seicherprey. From there the front ran west past Apremont to the Meuse River, and then curved around St. Mihiel to the northeast by the town of Mouilly. This area was covered by the French II Colonial Corps serving with the American First Army. The American V Corps' front ran from Mouilly northeast for

almost 5 km and then curved northwest to Haudiomont. The 1<sup>st</sup> Division and the 26<sup>th</sup> Division were to drive hard for the town of Vigneulles-lès-Hattonchâtel in the center of the salient. Above the battlefield the largest operational concentration of combat aircraft would drive off German aircraft, perform reconnaissance, and attack German ground forces.

★

*The Americans took the lead in this battle, supported by the French and British, and demonstrated that they were every bit as capable as their allies.*

Curious AEF soldiers watch a group of German POWs captured in the Battle of St. Mihiel.



American crew firing 75 mm gun during the Battle of St. Mihiel.



1<sup>st</sup> Lieut. Eddie Rickenbacker standing up in his aircraft.







# Stop 2

## Getting to Stop 2:

Go west on the D657, the Rue Victor Hugo. The street curves left and then right. Just over the railroad, turn right on the D958, which you will follow west through several turns. Pass through Limey on this road. At the village of Flirey go through the intersection at the church and find parking.

## Flirey

There are two monuments here. On the south side of the road, a monument commemorates the American divisions that recaptured the St. Mihiel Salient and freed French citizens held under German occupation since 1914. In front of the church is a monument to France's 163<sup>rd</sup> Infantry Regiment.

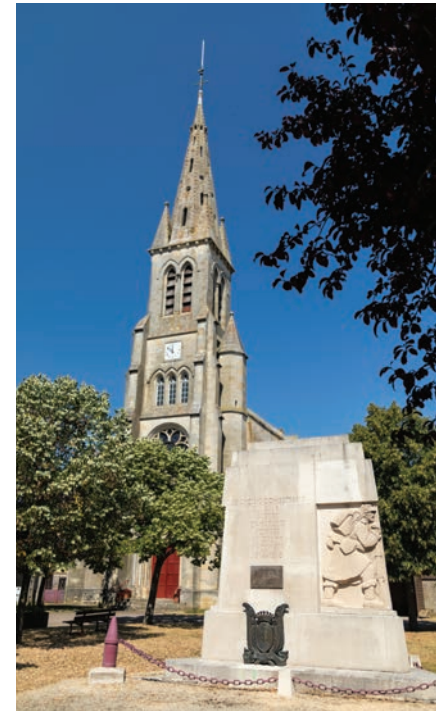
Flirey was the right flank of IV Corps. On the night of September 11, 1918 the 89<sup>th</sup> Division was massed here facing north. The typical three regiments of artillery were doubled for this attack. To the right was the 2<sup>nd</sup> Division, with its Marine brigade. To the west were the veteran 1<sup>st</sup> and 42<sup>nd</sup> Divisions.



Damaged bridge at Flirey. Note traffic jam of trucks in the foreground.

★  
*The German barbed wire, laid down years before, had become brittle and susceptible to the barrage.*

At 1 a.m. on September 12 the attack began with a 4-hour artillery bombardment. At 5 a.m. the infantry moved forward behind a rolling barrage. In the first days the 89<sup>th</sup> advanced an astonishing 8 km through well-prepared positions. The German forces had already begun their withdrawal, and the barbed wire, laid down years before, had become brittle and susceptible to the barrage.



Monument to the French 163rd Infantry Regiment.



Monument to the American divisions who served in this sector.

Stop 3 >



# Stop 3

## Getting to Stop 3:

Continue southwest on the D958 and look out on the right to take a right on the D28A. Continue into Seicheprey and at the “T” intersection turn right toward the church. There is some parking on the road behind the church.

## Seicheprey

Seicheprey was the dividing line between the 1<sup>st</sup> and 42<sup>nd</sup> Divisions. The fountain adjacent to the playground is a monument to troops from Connecticut who previously fought here. This fountain became the daily source of household water for many villagers and a daily reminder of the American Expeditionary Forces.

As you move north from Seicheprey notice how the broad slightly rolling country is dominated by the hills ahead of you, the heights of the Meuse River. You will see a lone hill straight ahead, Montsec, your next stop.

★

*This fountain became the daily source of household water for many villagers and a daily reminder of the American Expeditionary Forces.*



Overview and detail of the 102nd Infantry Memorial Fountain.



A machine gun team in the damaged cemetery of Seicheprey in 1918, by Harvey Dunn.



The ruins of Seicheprey on September 16, 1918.



# Stop 4

## Getting to Stop 4:

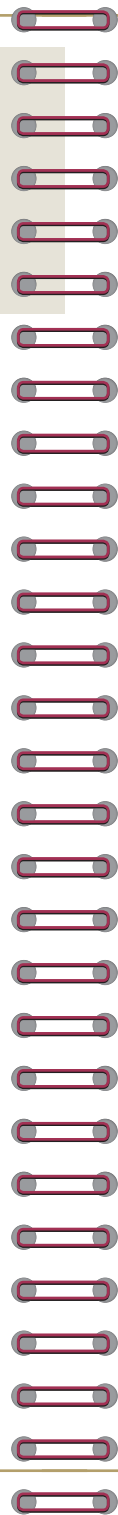
Return to the road in front of the church, and turn southeast. You will see a bus stop on the right, take the next right. Stay right on the main road at the fork. Continue straight toward Butte de Montsec. Beyond Richecourt take the left fork by the cemetery. In the town of Montsec, at the crossroads turn left on D12 toward Butte de Montsec. Bear right up the Butte de Montsec at the fork.

## The Montsec American Monument

The Montsec American Monument is a white, circular, open-topped colonnade. In the center on a raised platform is a bronze relief map of the St. Mihiel Salient. Arrows in the floor between the columns point to important sites. The monument commemorates the Battle of St. Mihiel and American actions further south and east in this region. Southeast of the monument you can see the road leading

away from Montsec toward Richecourt and Seicheprey.

1<sup>st</sup> Lieut. Eddie Rickenbacker visited Montsec and said observers could view aircraft above his airfield at Toul 16 km southeast. The crest of Montsec and the south slope held numerous observation posts. The north side of the hill had many dugout shelters for German defenders.



American Soldiers advance in St. Mihiel. The Butte de Montsec is in the distance.

Trench lines and barbed wire were laid for an all-around defense. On September 12 and 13, Allied artillery blanketed Montsec with a smoke screen obscuring observation.

The 1<sup>st</sup> and 42<sup>nd</sup> Divisions advanced from Seicheprey, passing Montsec, heading north. The lakes to your front were smaller then and did not impede the advance. Looking north you can see the end of a ridgeline above Heudicourt-sous-les-Côtes. The 1<sup>st</sup> Division advanced as far as the

forests to the east on the first day in line with the 42<sup>nd</sup> and 89<sup>th</sup> Divisions to their right. The final objective of the 1<sup>st</sup> was Vigneulles-lès-Hattonchâtel, on the second distant ridgeline.

★  
*The crest of Montsec, and the south slope held numerous observation posts.*



Left: Montsec American Monument. Below: Butte de Montsec and St. Mihiel in 2018.



Stop 5 >



# Stop 5

## Getting to Stop 5:

Return down the hill to the D12 and turn left into Montsec village. At the crossroads turn left onto the D119 and follow that to Woinville. Turn right (north) on D908 toward Vigneulles-lès-Hattonchâtel. Go right at the traffic circle and take the first exit onto D901. At the next traffic circle take the third exit and then take the first left into the parking lot. Park and walk to the monument facing the D901.

## Vigneulles-lès-Hattonchâtel

This monument commemorates the fallen of the 1<sup>st</sup> Division in the Battle of St. Mihiel, and its meeting with the 26<sup>th</sup> Division that cut off the salient on September 13, 1918. Both roads to the tip of the salient met in Vigneulles. The two divisions cut off and captured many retreating Germans. To the west of here are the hills of the Côtes de Meuse, which give way to flatlands of the Woëvre plain stretching east.

You can see Montsec directly south. Seicheprey is just beyond and to the left 12 km away. Look north and you will see a ridge and the village of Hattonchâtel.



*Changing the name of a Vigneulles street sign from "Hindenburg Strasse" to "Wilson, U.S.A."*



*American soldiers stand ready on the Woëvre Plain.*

On the morning of September 13, American fighter pilots of the 27<sup>th</sup> and 95<sup>th</sup> Squadrons flew beneath bad weather to observe soldiers of the 26<sup>th</sup> Division waving from the ridge and in the streets of these towns. The 26<sup>th</sup> had advanced over 12 km in a little more than a day. The 1<sup>st</sup> and 42<sup>nd</sup> Divisions overran the road east of here capturing German troops and material and cutting off their retreat. Further east, American and Allied aircraft converged on the road to attack the retreating enemy.

The advance of the American divisions was remarkable in a war measuring success in hundreds of meters. Their dash was complimented by increasing professionalism. Germans reported that American artillery was accurate, quick to

respond to the needs of American infantry, and efficient in preliminary bombardment. The German attempt to withdraw was upset by the rapid advance of the American Expeditionary Forces. The Germans lost 16,000 men, 443 guns, and valuable munitions stores.

★

*The advance of the American divisions was remarkable in a war measuring success in hundreds of meters.*



*First Division Memorial.*

Stop 6 >



# Stop 6

## Getting to Stop 6:

Return to the road and go east on D901. In St. Benoit turn right at the intersection onto D67 and go 6 km to the St. Mihiel American Cemetery on the right of the road.

## St. Mihiel American Cemetery

This site became a cemetery in September 1918. Today, St. Mihiel American Cemetery contains the graves of more than 4,100 Americans. Of these, the identities of more than 100 are unknown. Most of those interred fell in the St. Mihiel Salient. Tablets in the chapel bear the names of more than 280 missing Americans who died in the area. A rosette on the Tablets of the Missing indicates the individual was later recovered and identified.

The cemetery is divided into four plots by paths and Linden trees. At the center is an American eagle surmounting a sundial inscribed with "Time Will Not Dim the Glory of Their Deeds". At the east is a

sculpture that includes a commemorative vase. To the west is a statue of a soldier framed by a cross, donated in memory of a fallen doughboy. At the south axis of the path is a peristyle of columns with a sculpted urn at its center. To the left is the chapel, and to the right is a commemorative room where names of the missing are carved and gilded in marble. Opposite the door is a map of the Battle of St. Mihiel. Montsec can be seen in the distance

When you leave the cemetery you will pass through Thiaucourt, captured on September 12 by the 2<sup>nd</sup> Division. Thiaucourt became a center of medical services.



*The eagle sundial at St. Mihiel American Cemetery.*



*Above: An American bugler at a temporary cemetery in the St. Mihiel salient. Right: AEF medical services in a forward area. Below: American soldiers in Thiaucourt being photographed and filmed by a Signal Corps team.*





★

*To the west is a statue of a soldier framed by a cross, donated in memory of a fallen doughboy.*



Above left: Statue of a wartime soldier framed by a cross. Above right: Headstone of a Medal of Honor recipient. Below: Names of missing are carved and gilded in marble.



St. Mihiel American Cemetery.

**- End of tour -**

Turn southeast (right) and continue through Thiaucourt. Cross the bridge at the small river and turn immediately right, and then left under the rail line. At the "T" intersection in the fields by the woods turn right onto D3. Turn left on the D958 to return to Pont-à-Mousson.





## THE SOMME: BREAKING THE HINDENBURG LINE

Gen. John J. Pershing had two goals for the American Expeditionary Forces in the war: he wanted his troops to be prepared for battle, and he wanted an independent American Army. When the Germans began a series of major offensives in spring 1918, Pershing relented and allowed American soldiers to serve in the British sector under a limited, but formal, arrangement.

The II Corps of the American Expeditionary Forces was a composite British and American organization. Among the American units in II Corps were the 27<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> Divisions, composed of men from New York, Tennessee, and the Carolinas. Both were formed from National Guard units. They trained in British camps and trench lines in Northern France, using British weapons. Their artillery brigades remained with other

American units. The II Corps relied on British artillery for support. From late September to early October 1918, these divisions fought alongside Australian units assigned to the British Fourth Army.



*American soldiers armed with British Enfield rifles, 1918.*



*American soldiers training on British Vickers machine guns.*



*Nearly 2,000 Americans are buried in Somme American Cemetery in France.*



## The Hindenburg Line at the St. Quentin Canal

The II Corps played an important role in the British Army's Hundred Days Offensive. The operation to break the German positions along the Somme River began on August 21, 1918. Three British armies carried out attacks in mid-September, which secured positions for an offensive on the Hindenburg Line between Cambrai and St. Quentin. The St. Quentin Canal was incorporated into the defenses. Steep banks led down to the canal that formed a moat running through the middle of the fortified zone. For the British Army, depending on tanks in assault, it was a daunting obstacle.

The II Corps led the attack on the line around the towns of Bony, Bellicourt, and Riqueval. The main heavy line of the German defense was in front of the towns, in a set of three interconnected and heavily-wired trenches. Forward of



*British heavy artillery firing near Bony.*

these positions was the outpost line with thick belts of wire. Defenses were carefully sited to take advantage of the softly rolling terrain. Communication trenches in the folds of ground hid routes between the lines. Here the outpost line incorporated stone-walled farms and strongpoints dug into low ridgelines.



*American soldiers supported by a British Mk V tank.*



*A chaplain talks to a wounded 27<sup>th</sup> Division soldier near Ronssoy.*

Between Bony and Riqueval the St. Quentin Canal passed under high ground through the 5.6 km-long Riqueval Tunnel, completed in 1810 under Napoleon. In World War I, German military engineers pierced the tunnel and ventilation shaft walls creating underground quarters and facilities with hidden exits to defense lines above. Barges moored in the tunnel provided protected accommodation for troops. About 30 meters inside the tunnel entrances were concrete walls with machine gun positions. The tunnel complex was an ideal shelter for reserves waiting in safety to counter enemy attacks.

The British decided to attack here using tanks, including the American 301<sup>st</sup> Heavy Tank Battalion, to break through the wire and trenches. The attack was planned for September 29. The Germans knew they were vulnerable to tanks at Bellicourt. They placed field guns in main defenses and used artillery shells as improvised tank mines.

As part of the British Fourth Army offensive, the II Corps would lead the attack on the north end of the line at the tunnel sector. The attack was preceded by a bombardment by 1,000 field pieces and 600 heavy artillery pieces firing for 30 hours. The bombardment began with eight hours of mustard gas shells.

At 5:50 a.m. on September 29, the British Fourth Army advanced on a 19 km front. Its right-hand corps quickly crossed the St.-Quentin Canal, and by evening had taken the canal line. In the center, the 30<sup>th</sup> Division attacked the Hindenburg Line at Bellicourt. The 27<sup>th</sup> continued to attack toward the Hindenburg Line defenses around Bony.





# Stop 1

## Getting to Stop 1:

From Cambrai, take the D664 (Avenue de Paris) south. Pass over the Escaut River and St. Quentin Canal that run side by side in Masnières. Bear left at the fork, still on D664. In about 6 km, turn right onto D16. Take the second left onto D57, toward Vendhuile. In Vendhuile, turn right on the D28 and follow it out of town to the west. Just before the highway, turn left into the highway maintenance road and stop with your hazard lights on.

## Left Flank of the 27<sup>th</sup> Division

The 27<sup>th</sup> Division arrived in the line on September 25, 1918. The division's left flank faced east here on September 27. The farm on the road you just passed, Le Tomboise, was heavily fortified. German trenches and belts of barbed wire stretched back from Le Tomboise to high ground known as "The Knoll" northeast of the fortified Guillemont and Quennemont farms. The British 18<sup>th</sup> Division had failed to take these outpost line positions, and the newly arrived 27<sup>th</sup> was told to attack them on September 27. They assaulted the outpost line at 5:30 a.m. with 12 tanks of the 301<sup>st</sup> Tank Battalion. The troops moved forward quickly. Tanks came up and harassed "The Knoll" and Guillemont Farm to little effect. On the right side of the attack tanks failed to arrive in support. German

reinforcements appeared from behind the high ground and forced the division back. A number of Americans were captured. Isolated pockets held out in shell holes and foxholes between the lines. The hurried attack weakened the 27<sup>th</sup> before the main push on September 29, with only slight advances on the flanks.

*German reinforcements appeared from behind the high ground and forced the division back.*

*A tank supporting the 27<sup>th</sup> Division destroyed by a German mine near Ronssoy.*



## Stop 2 >



# Stop 2

## Getting to Stop 2:

Drive west under the highway and past Unicorn Cemetery to Lempire. At the “T” intersection, turn left onto D58. Go south until you come to a 4-way intersection and turn left on D57. Go under the highway and drive east to a line of trees on a rise where there is a turnout on either side into a field road, and park with hazard lights on.

## Right Flank of the 27<sup>th</sup> Division

You are now standing on the point which was the middle of the German outpost position on the morning of September 29. Down the line of trees to your right was another German strongpoint, Quennemont Farm. From here, you can see how the ground falls away to the east to rise again to the main Hindenburg Line. The low area allowed the Germans to reinforce the outpost line under cover.

On September 29, the 27<sup>th</sup> Division attacked again through the mist at 5:30 a.m. with tank support. The British began a rolling barrage far forward beyond the outpost line. The German strongpoints were intact and waiting for the attack. The outpost line here was captured with the help of the Australian 3<sup>rd</sup> Division which arrived around 11 a.m. Casualties were heavy among the tanks and the infantry. Many Americans continued forward among the Australians. Together they attacked toward Bony and beyond for about 1.6 km on the right. On the left of the 27<sup>th</sup>, fighting was fierce and confused; at 3 p.m. the Australians arrived. American and Australian units fought together intermingled against the German strongpoints. The Americans joined the Australians, and continued the advance on



*An American soldier escorts German prisoners near Bellicourt.*

September 30. In these attacks and in the subsequent consolidation of the position, the 27<sup>th</sup> Division suffered 4,264 casualties. The 301<sup>st</sup> Tank Battalion alone lost 105 killed, wounded and missing.

★

*American and Australian units fought together intermingled against the German strongpoints.*



*American soldiers advance with tanks near Bellicourt on September 29, 1918. The frames atop the tanks are for dropping in trenches to aid crossing.*



*Wounded at a dressing station.*

Stop 3 >



# Stop 3

## Getting to Stop 3:

Return east on D57 by passing under the highway. Turn left on the D332 and follow it south curving back over the highway. You will pass a farm on the left. At about 275 m past the farm, there is a field pullout on the right parallel to the road.

## The 30<sup>th</sup> Division's Advance on September 29

The American 30<sup>th</sup> Division replaced the Australian 1<sup>st</sup> Division here on the night of September 24, 1918. The Australians had succeeded in seizing the outpost positions of the Hindenburg Line. On September 25 they repulsed a German trench raid.

Look south at the further of the two small woods, known as Quarry Wood. The 30<sup>th</sup> attacked and took it on September 26. The nearer wood remained in German hands and had a communication trench running east to where the Hindenburg Line defenses began. Unlike the 27<sup>th</sup> Division, they had five days to prepare and improve their position for an attack along a 3 km front with artillery and tank support.



German prisoners bringing in the wounded pass a British tank in a smoke screen.

★  
*...they had five days to prepare, and improve their position, for an attack on a 3 km front with artillery and tank support.*

The 30<sup>th</sup> objective for September 29 was to capture the line of the canal at Bellicourt, then push beyond and to the southeast behind the canal. The Australian 5<sup>th</sup> Division planned to overtake and relieve them. Heavy artillery preparation with a rolling barrage and smoke screen preceded the attack. At 5:30 a.m. the attack began. Low cloud, mist and smoke screen limited visibility. Though coordination with tanks broke down, the murky conditions also hindered German artillery and machine guns. Fighting in Bellicourt went on from 7 a.m. to 9:30 a.m.

Driving toward Bellicourt the main Hindenburg Line trenches began where the embankment rises on the left side of the road, there is a pullout on the right. Between there and Bellicourt there were three belts of barbed wire and three trench lines.



British heavy artillery support II Corps in the attack on the Hindenburg Line at Bellicourt.



The town of Bellicourt was almost completely destroyed during the fighting.

Stop 4 >



# Stop 4

## Getting to Stop 4:

Continue east on D331. Entering Bellicourt, you will pass a British cemetery on the left. At the four-way intersection, turn right on the D1044. Go south out of Bellicourt and take the first right turn toward Hammeau de Riqueval. Pull into the parking lot a short way down the side road on the left.

## Riqueval Tunnel Entrance

Here you can see a museum and the southern entrance to the St. Quentin Canal. The entrance was fortified, and footbridges lay across the canal. By 7:30 a.m. on September 29, the 30<sup>th</sup> Division took the north side of Bellicourt and pushed into the last trench of the Hindenburg Line, northeast of town. By 9:30 a.m., the south side of Bellicourt was in American hands. After the 30<sup>th</sup> passed over the canal tunnel, a regiment fanned out south and east for 1.5 km, securing the flank. The British 46<sup>th</sup> Division's infantry waded the canal further south. British

tanks came north, making a U-turn around the Riqueval Tunnel entrance. In the early afternoon, the mist and smoke of battle began to lift, and German artillery took a greater toll on the tanks. The Australian 5<sup>th</sup> Division arrived to take over the attack, and many soldiers of the 30<sup>th</sup> joined them. Together, the British Army and the American Expeditionary Forces had achieved a major objective by piercing the Hindenburg Line.

There is a Tennessee State monument to the 30<sup>th</sup> Division outside by the canal boat display.



Close-up of the Riqueval Tunnel mouth.



The 30th Division monument.



The Riqueval Tunnel entrance, 2018.

## Stop 5 >



# Stop 5

## Getting to Stop 5:

Leaving the parking lot on the west side of the canal, turn left (south). This leads over a bridge, back to the D1044. Turn left (north) on the D1044. Drive north on the D1044 for 3.25 km and look for the Bellicourt American Monument on the left.

## Bellicourt American Monument

The monument provides a good view of the battlefield. It sits on the dividing line between the 27<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> Division lines of advance and directly over the St. Quentin Canal Tunnel. At the back of the monument is a map of the area with an orientation table to identify historical points in the terrain.

The Bellicourt American Monument commemorates 90,000 Americans who

served in combat with British armies in France. The insignia of the II Corps, the 27<sup>th</sup>, 30<sup>th</sup>, 33<sup>rd</sup>, and 80<sup>th</sup> Divisions, and the 6<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> Engineers are carved in stone. The monument is engraved with names of notable actions of these and other units. On the face of the monument is an American eagle on a pedestal of stars and stripes, flanked by figures representing victory and remembrance.

During the night of September 30, 1918, the II Corps was withdrawn from the line for rest and re-deployed north of St. Quentin on



The Germans honeycombed the ground around the tunnel with shelters equipped with lights and small tram rails.



The front of the Bellicourt American Monument.

October 6. On October 7 the 30<sup>th</sup> Division attacked from around Montbrehain and advanced 16 km in four days. They reached the Selle River and were relieved by the 27<sup>th</sup>. On October 17 the entire II Corps attacked across the Selle advancing 5,500 meters. The II Corps captured nearly 4,000 prisoners during this operation. In their attacks on the Hindenburg Line, the II Corps suffered over 17,000 men killed, wounded or captured.

★  
*On the face of the monument is an American eagle on a pedestal of stars and stripes, flanked by figures representing victory and remembrance.*



The orientation table at the back of the monument.



# Stop 6

## Getting to Stop 6:

Continue north on the D1044 for 1.6 km, and turn left on D442 toward Bony and Somme American Cemetery. Pass straight through Bony. Leaving Bony you will see the Somme American Cemetery ahead on the right. Drive past the chapel on the corner to the entrance on the right. It is flanked by curved white stone walls and stone gateposts bearing the union shield from the great seal of the United States. Go up the drive and park by the visitor building.

## Somme American Cemetery

Somme American Cemetery was first established as a temporary battlefield cemetery in 1918. It is named for the Somme region of France. The cemetery holds the graves of nearly 1,900 Americans. The names of more than 300 are engraved on the Walls of the Missing within the chapel.

From the visitor building, a path lined with linden trees leads to a white stone

wall surrounding the cemetery, which is divided by walking paths into four plots. At the intersection of the paths is a flagpole whose base is surrounded by bronze World War I helmets surmounting laurel wreaths. The memorial chapel is in the center of the southeast side of the cemetery. It is built with white Vaurion stone with carved motifs that include eagles, artillery rounds,



Walls of the Missing in the Chapel.



Medal of Honor headstones such as this one are inscribed with gold leaf.



His Majesty King George V of Britain visits the temporary American cemetery near the St.-Quentin Canal in 1918.

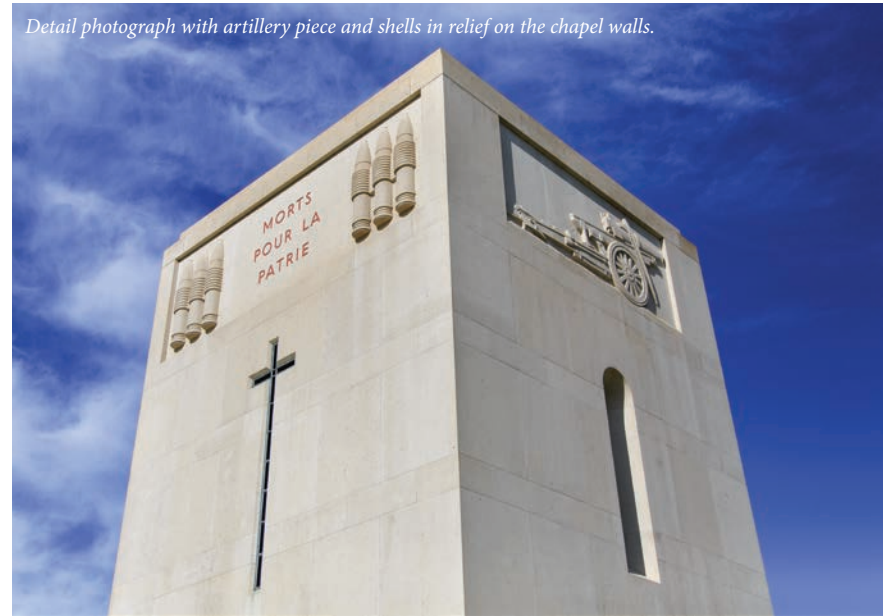


The town of Bony can be seen from the cemetery.





Top: Chapel. Left: Detail of Bronze chapel door.  
Right: The American flag flies over the cemetery.



Detail photograph with artillery piece and shells in relief on the chapel walls.

French tanks and artillery pieces, and rifles with fixed bayonets. The exterior bears dedications in English and French to those who died for their country. The interior floor is marble with a plaque bearing 48 stars for the number of states at the time. There is an altar and mounts for flagstaves. On the walls are the names of those whose resting place is unknown. Rosettes on these walls indicate service members whose remains have been since identified.

★  
*The memorial chapel... is built with white Vaurion stone with carved motifs that include eagles, artillery rounds, French tanks and artillery pieces, and rifles with fixed bayonets.*

**- End of tour -**

Return east through Bony to the D1044. From here you may either drive north to return to Cambrai, or turn south to drive directly to St. Quentin. To get to a main highway go north on the D1044 to the intersection with the D917 in Banteux. At the traffic circle, take the second exit toward Peronne. Drive southwest to the interchange with the Autoroute des Anglais, the A26.

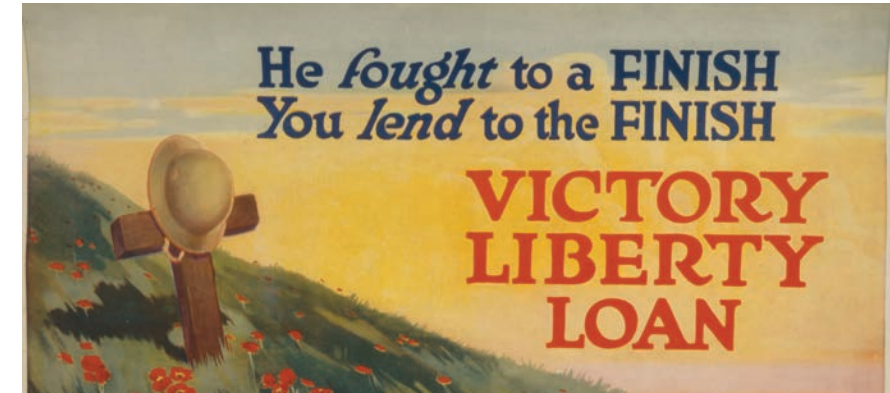




## AMERICAN EXPEDITIONARY FORCES IN BELGIUM: OPERATIONS IN FLANDERS



The chapel at Flanders Field American Cemetery.



The imagery of crosses and poppies in the poem *In Flanders Fields* was used in *American Liberty Loan* drives during the war.

Since the onset of World War I, the Flanders region of Belgium saw nearly continuous combat. Belgian, British, and French forces fought the German Army in massive, terrible clashes around the cities of Ypres and Passchendaele.

★  
*In just a handful of stanzas, McCrae captured the wartime feelings of melancholy, sacrifice and determination that continues to characterize World War I commemoration to this day.*

In this bloody and cruel landscape, John McCrae, a Canadian doctor serving under British Command, wrote perhaps the most famous poem of the war, *In Flanders Fields*. In just a handful of stanzas, McCrae captured the wartime feelings of melancholy, sacrifice and determination that continues to characterize World War I

commemoration to this day. McCrae wrote his poem in 1915, in a site near Ypres, years before the United States entered the war.

After the United States entered the war in 1917, General John J. Pershing, commander of the American Expeditionary Forces (AEF), reflected the position of his government in insisting that an independent United States Army would rise to fight alongside the Allies in a sector of its own. Pershing's vision required intensive training, but the realities of war intervened. German offensives launched between March and July 1918 in Northern France created a crisis for the Allies, and forced the commitment of American divisions to British or French Operational control. In the face of battle, American divisions made a name for themselves. They proved to be invaluable and adapted to the ways of their new partners as well as the harsh realities of military life.



By July 1918, the Allies had the initiative. American troops were quickly proving vital to the Allied war effort. Approximately 10,000 American soldiers were arriving in France daily, to be trained and equipped by the British and French. As part of the overall Allied plan to attack across the front, the British Army would carry out offensive operations in Belgium. Four American infantry divisions would fight in this offensive.

The 27th Division, New York National Guard, was commanded by General John O’Ryan. Its insignia was a stylized monogram of the letters “NY”, with the constellation Orion superimposed, as a tribute to the division’s popular commander. Only soldiers deemed fully competent by the division commander were allowed to wear this insignia. Other American units in Flanders included the 30th “Old Hickory” Division, made up of national guardsmen from the Carolinas, Georgia, and Tennessee, and the 37th “Buckeye” Division came from Ohio. Draftees from states along the Pacific Coast and Mountain West made up the 91st “Wild West” Division.

The 27th and 30th had served alongside British forces since their arrival in Europe in May 1918. By the time they reached Flanders in August, a brutal war of attrition had long been underway, with Allied and German forces facing off across a war-torn battlefield. American soldiers adjusted to the cruel realities of modern warfare. They encountered seemingly endless artillery barrages, machine gun fire, and horrific chemical gas attacks from a determined German Army dug in along fortified networks of trenches and bunkers. German

forces had captured much of the area during their recent offensives in the spring of 1918.

South of Ypres, the 30th Division occupied a sector facing Voormezele, while the 27th faced Vierstraat. The Germans were dangerously exposed in a salient along the Lys River. Allied attacks intended to reduce this salient if the Germans failed to withdraw. The strongest positions to the German rear constituted the formidable defenses of the “Hindenburg Line.”



*The 27th Division shoulder sleeve insignia.*

The German Army suffered heavy losses during Allied offensives launched near Amiens on August 8. Foch and other members of the Allied leadership rightly surmised that the Germans would attempt to withdraw back to the “Hindenburg Line.” In Belgium, British and Belgian armies pushed into the Lys Salient in mid-August to preclude an orderly German withdrawal. The Germans were not yet committed to a general retreat, and gave ground grudgingly. This led to fierce battles and determined rear guard actions.

Fearing a major Allied attack, German troops began withdrawing just days after the Americans reached the front lines. From August 29 to September 4, 1918, the two US divisions pushed forward and captured over 1,500 meters to liberate Vierstraat Ridge and Voormezele.

To the south, German troops occupied Mount Kemmel, one of the highest points above the Flanders plain. American soldiers advanced eastward across open stretches of “No Man’s Land” devastated by years of concentrated artillery fire.

Beyond this desolation waited a network of complicated concrete fortifications. Serving with the British, the American forces helped break through these formidable obstacles.

The 27th Division attacked and seized Vierstraat on August 31. Advancing beyond the town they weathered fierce counter-attacks and heavy machine gun fire, but nevertheless pushed on another thousand yards to secure the trench on the slopes of Wytschaete Ridge.



*Elsie Janis, the “Sweetheart of the AEF,” performs for soldiers in Belgium.*



The 30th Division serving with the British II Corps attacked and seized Voormezele on September 1, and repulsed a German counterattack near Lankhof Farm on September 2. The German withdrawal was skillful, integrating artillery fire, booby traps, machine gun fire and snipers to delay the Allied advance. A particularly pernicious German tactic was the widespread use of mustard gas, which penetrated wool clothing, caused horrific burning, and could remain active for weeks in trenches, shell holes, and low ground. The momentum of the attack was to be sustained by a rotation of units, and on September 4 British divisions replaced the 27th and 30th. By the time the divisions were relieved, the 27th had suffered 1,300 casualties, and the 30th about 800.

Battered by recurrent Allied attacks across a broad front, the Germans committed to a general withdrawal to the formidable defenses of the Hindenburg Line. The Allies pursued, but were hindered by logistical difficulties when bringing supplies and ammunition forward across battle damaged terrain they had recently captured.

With synchronized Allied offensives in France already under way, the Allied Armies of Flanders resumed the attack on September 28 after a brief but intense artillery barrage. The British and Belgian Armies advanced rapidly at first, but the advance stalled by October 5, delayed by rainy weather, mud, badly damaged transportation infrastructure, and skillful German resistance. Artillery and supplies proved particularly difficult to move forward in the saturated terrain. Delays allowed the Germans to rush in reinforcements from their dwindling reserves. The Allies paused to bring forward artillery, supplies and reinforcements, repair damaged infrastructure, and reorganize. At this time, at the request of Foch, the 37th Division, composed of Ohio and West Virginia National Guardsmen, and 91st Division, a drafted division made up of men from California, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, Oregon, Utah, Washington and Wyoming, which had been fighting in the Meuse-Argonne Offensive near Verdun, were repositioned in Flanders.



37th Division soldiers cross the Scheldt River.

Now commanded by King Albert I of Belgium, the Allied Armies in Flanders renewed the offensive on October 14. By October 20 progress in Belgium had again stalled, again victim to battle damaged bridges and roads, weather, and skillful German resistance. King Albert again reorganized to sustain momentum, and to this end removed depleted French forces off the line, to be replaced by the 37th and 91st.

On October 30, the 37th and 91st took over a front line sector at Wareghem. The attack began in the early hours of October 31, and featured a brief preparatory artillery assault, followed by intense moving barrages timed to correspond with the advance of the troops. The 37th captured Cruyshautem, fought its way to the Scheldt between Heuvel and Eyne, forced a crossing of the river, threw footbridges across it, and defended their bridgehead against a German counterattack. The 91st attacked past Waereghem, cleared the dense wooded area known as Spitaals Bosschen, and fought its way to the Scheldt at Audenarde. On November 4, the 37th and 91st were relieved from their positions, and withdrew to prepare for another phase of renewed assaults. The Allies once again paused to bring up supplies, reinforcements and artillery. But by November 8 it became apparent that the Germans were withdrawing from the line. The American divisions resumed their advances east of the Scheldt. By November 11 the 37th reached Dickele and Zwartebroek, and the 91st reached Elst and Boucle-St. Blaise. At 11:00 that day, the campaign and war came to an end when an Armistice agreed to by the Allies and Germans at Compiegne went into effect.

## *In Flanders Fields*

**John McCrae, 1872 - 1918**

In Flanders fields the poppies blow  
Between the crosses, row on row,  
That mark our place, and in the sky,  
The larks, still bravely singing, fly,  
Scarce heard amid the guns below.

We are the dead; short days ago  
We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,  
Loved and were loved, and now we lie  
In Flanders fields.

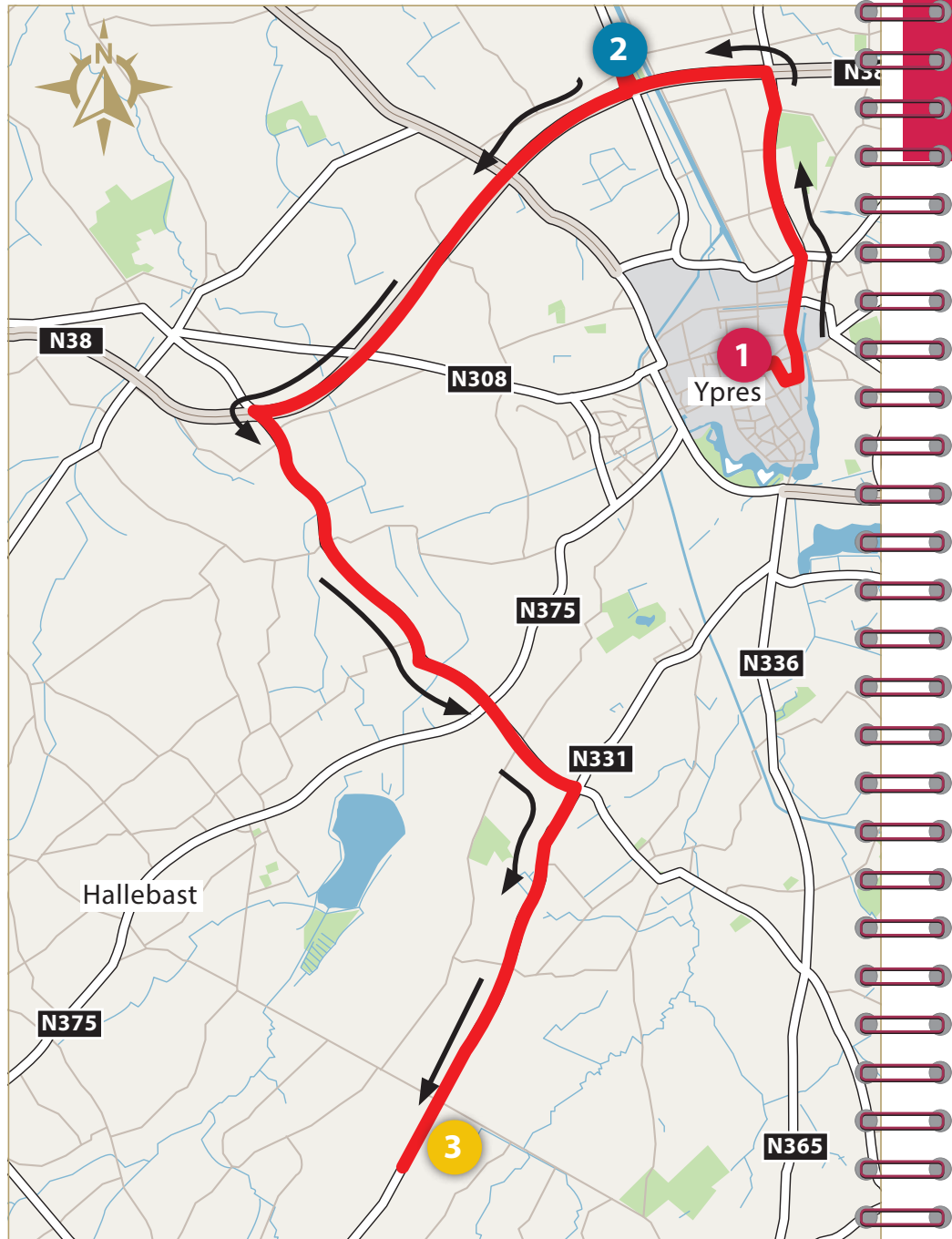
Take up our quarrel with the foe!  
To you from failing hands we throw  
The torch; be yours to hold it high!  
If ye break faith with us who die  
We shall not sleep, though poppies grow  
In Flanders fields.

★

*The 37th captured Cruyshautem, fought its way to the Scheldt between Heuvel and Eyne, forced a crossing of the river, threw footbridges across it, and defended their bridgehead against a German counterattack.*

**Start Tour >**





# Stop 1

## Getting to Stop 1:

The Cloth Hall is located in the center of Ypres, on the Market Square (Grote Markt).

## Ypres Cloth Hall

You are standing in front of the Ypres Cloth Hall. Constructed in the Middle Ages as a commercial hub for the flourishing regional textile industry, the building was destroyed by artillery fire during World War I. After the war, it was painstakingly reconstructed. Today, the building is home to the In Flanders Field Museum, which tells the story of World War I in the area, including the American involvement. The belfry affords a spectacular view of the city and the surrounding battlefields. There is also a tourist office here.



The entrance to the In Flanders Fields Museum.



27th Division Soldiers in front of the ruins of the Cloth Hall in 1918.

Stop 2 >



# Stop 2

## Getting to Stop 2:

Drive down Grote Markt in the direction of the Menin Gate. After 200 m merge left onto Korte Torhoutstraat. In 200 m turn left onto Lange Torhoutstraat. There will be a roundabout in 300m; take the third exit onto Hoge Wieltjesgracht. In 300 m turn right onto Stoffelstraat. In 200 m turn left onto Brugseweg. Continue for 150 m and make another left onto Diksmuidseweg. After 500 km, enter the roundabout and take the first exit to stay onto Diksmuidseweg. After 1.5 km, there will be a cemetery on your right with a small area to park. The John McCrae site is next to the cemetery.

## Site of John McCrae Dressing Station

A native of Ontario, Lieutenant Colonel John McCrae, MD, entered the service of the Canadian Expeditionary Force soon after the outbreak of World War I in August 1914. While stationed at this site in the spring of 1915, tending to masses of wounded during the Second Battle of Ypres, McCrae wrote the evocative poem “In Flanders Fields.” Published in December of that year, the poem gained widespread attention and immediately resonated with public sentiments regarding wartime sacrifice. His evocative words were the inspiration for the name of the only American World War I cemetery in Belgium, which is part of tour 2.

McCrae himself never saw the full impact of his words. He succumbed to illness on January 28, 1918. He is buried in a Commonwealth War Graves Cemetery in Wimereux, Northern France, not far from where he wrote his famous poem.



Lt. Col. John McCrae.



A British dressing station on the Western Front.



The memorial at the John McCrae site.



Bunkers at the John McCrae site.

Stop 3 >



# Stop 3

## Getting to Stop 3:

Get back onto Diksmuidseweg in the direction of Ypres. After 150 km, turn right onto the ramp to Noorderring (N38). Continue for 3.5 km. After a sign for Voormezele, there will be a stoplight. Take a left here onto Rodenbachstraat. This road will turn into Krommenelststraat. After 3 km, enter the roundabout and continue straight onto Ruuschaartstraat. In 1 km, enter the roundabout and take the first exit onto Kemmelseweg. After three miles, there will be a small parking area on your right. The monument is located across the road.

## Kemmel American Monument

This monument is located on a slight rise, to give visitors a prospective view of the battlefield. It is dedicated to the 27th and 30th Divisions, that fought in this area. The monument includes bayonets carved in relief, along with an American World War I helmet set upon a wreath. ABMC dedicated the monument in 1937.

There is a small interpretive sign here with a map to help you orient yourself. Looking north, the small village of Vierstraat was one of the objectives of the 27th during

the Ypres-Lys Offensive. The road that runs east-west through Vierstraat was the dividing line between the constituent units of the 27th; the 105th and 106th Infantry Regiments. Each regiment was restricted to attack in its particular zone, to prevent friendly-fire incidents.

The 27th occupied Vierstraat on August 31, 1918, and set up a front line directly to the east. The following day, after a 3½ hour artillery bombardment, the 27th attacked in the direction of Wyschaete. After capturing a series of machine-gun nests, the offensive stalled in the face of fierce German counterattacks.



30th Division soldiers march through St. Martin Au Laert, Belgium, on their way to the front.

Looking back towards Vierstraat, to the right you may be able to see the church steeple of Voormezele through the trees. This town was captured by the 30th on September 1, 1918.

This region experienced years of combat prior to the Ypres-Lys offensive. There are multiple British and French cemeteries in this area. The reconstructed Bayernwald German trenches are about a five minute drive to the east.

A 30th Division soldier mans a Lewis machine gun in Belgium.



Kemmel American Monument.







27th Division infantrymen in training in Belgium.



The insignia of the 27th and 30th Divisions are carved in relief at the rear of the monument.



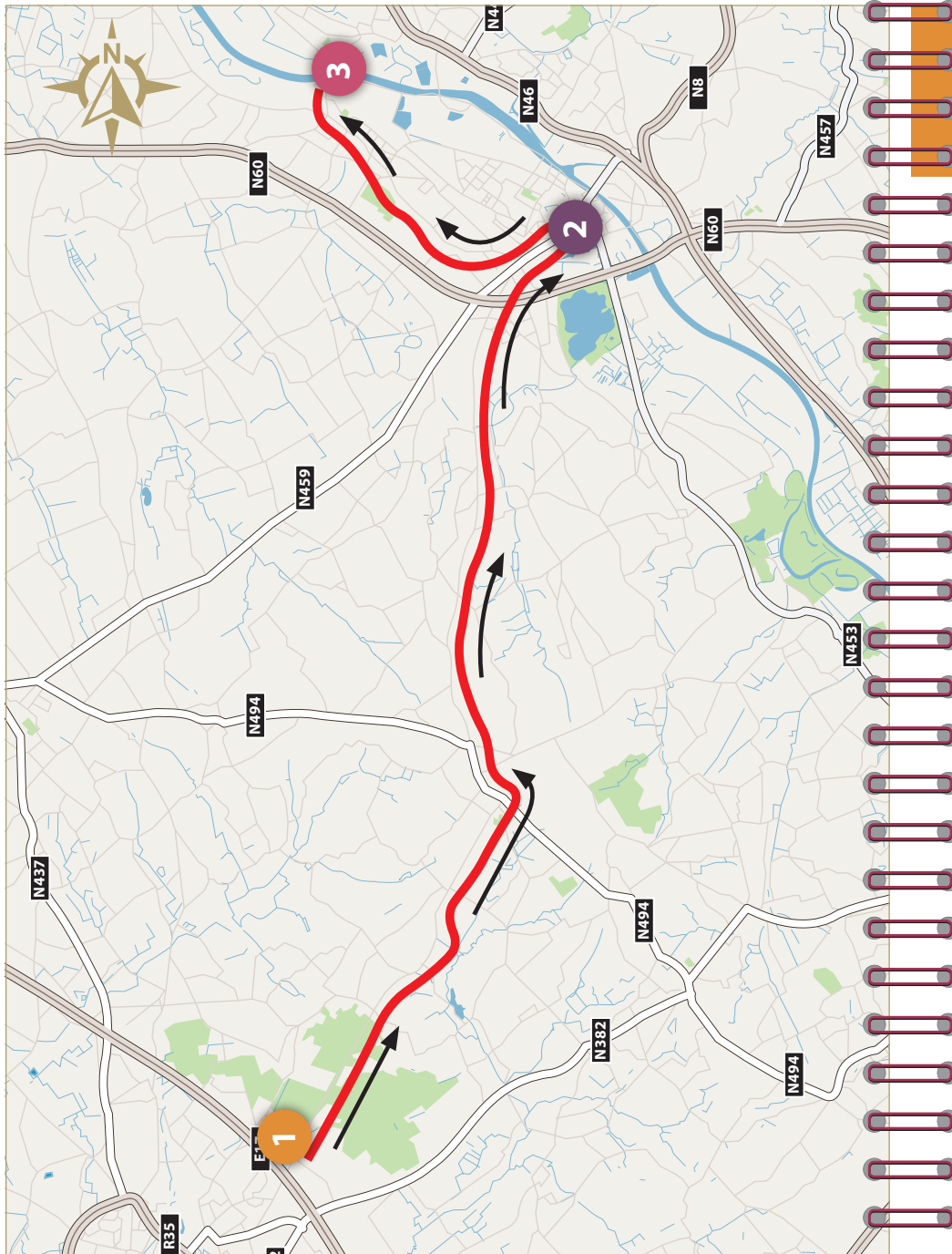
A panorama of the battlefield from the monument.

**- End of part I -**

To return to Ypres, turn around and drive north on Kimmelstraat for 5 km. Turn left onto Rijselseweg and continue for 500 km. At the roundabout, take the third exit onto Oudstrijderslaan. In 1 km, turn right onto Stationstraat, and you will be in the center of town.

**Part II >**





## Stop 1

### Getting to Stop 1:

From Kortrijk, take the E17 highway east. Take exit 5, Waregem, and merge right onto the Expresweg/N382. After 500 m turn left onto Flanders-Fieldweg. In 800 m, cross Wortegemseweg and pull into the cemetery parking lot on your right.

### Flanders Field American Cemetery

Over the course of the war, more than 108,000 Americans fought in Belgium. The four divisions that fought here suffered over 4,700 casualties.

Originally a temporary battlefield burial ground, Flanders Field American Cemetery later became the only permanent American World War I cemetery in Belgium. The grounds hold the remains of 368 individuals, most of whom died during the Ypres-Lys Offensive in 1918. The Walls of the Missing commemorate 43 missing and unaccounted for service members. John McCrae's haunting poem *In Flanders*

Fields, which resonated with Americans as it did worldwide, captured the sense of sacrifice and loss of the war. As the only American cemetery in Belgium, the title of the poem was selected as the name of the cemetery with its evocative ties to this campaign.

The chapel was designed by Franco-American Architect Paul Cret, who served as the consulting architect to the ABMC. A visitor's center in the cemetery administration building features photographs, personal stories, and a film, which tell the story of the AEF in Belgium. Attendance is free, and no tickets or reservations are required.

*Flanders Field American Cemetery.*







ABMC commissioners at Flanders Field American Cemetery in 1925.



An urn with flower plantings.

Detail of the Walls of the Missing in the cemetery chapel.



Headstones in Flanders Field American Cemetery in April 2018.



The visitors center at the cemetery.



# Stop 2

## Getting to Stop 6:

Take a left out of the cemetery parking lot; there will be a stop sign. Take another left onto Wortegemseweg. Continue for 5 km. In Wortegem, at a T intersection, take a left onto Oudenaardseweg. After 6 km, you will come to a T intersection next to a monument of a World War I soldier. Turn right onto Beverestraat. After 600 m, this road turns into Tacambaroplein. Continue for another 100 m and you will see a parking lot on your left. Take a left onto Wijngaardstraat, and another immediate left back onto Tacambaroplein in the opposite direction. Continue for another 50 m and then take a left into the lot. The monument is in a public park next to the parking lot.

## Audenarde American Monument

The Allies attacked Germany's last major defensive line in Belgium in late October 1918. Led by the King of Belgium, Allied forces launched a campaign to drive the Germans beyond the Scheldt River. The US 37th and 91st divisions redeployed from the Meuse-Argonne Offensive to reinforce the French Army on the Flanders front.

East of Waregem, the 91st Division turned the enemy out of the densely wooded Spitaals Bosschen, before advancing east. On November 2, 1918, the 91st Division captured Audenarde.

After the war, ABMC constructed this monument to honor the American divisions that fought in this area. It is also the only monument constructed by ABMC which also honors a military unit smaller than a division - the 53rd Field Artillery Brigade. This brigade, made up of soldiers from Pennsylvania, fought with the 91st Division. After the war the State of Pennsylvania intended to construct a memorial dedicated to the 53rd, but instead worked with ABMC to ensure that the unit would be honored on the ABMC memorial.



The damaged Oudenaarde city hall, 1918.



The repaired city hall in 2018.



Audenarde American Monument.

Stop 3 >



# Stop 3

## Getting to Stop 6:

Take a left out of the parking lot and continue on Tacambaroplein back to Beverestraat. After 400 m, take a right on Gentstraat. Continue for 3.5 km until you come to the intersection with Ohiostraat. Take a right, and after 200 m take a left onto Misweg. Park your car in the lot on your right, and walk about 100 m further on the Ohiostraat until you come to a Buffalo sculpture.

## 37th Division Bridge

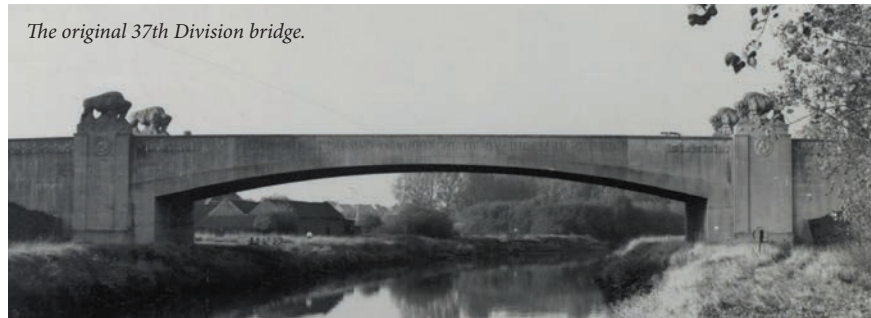
You are walking on the Ohiostraat, following in the footsteps of the 37th Division, which consisted of National Guard troops from Ohio and West Virginia. In fall 1918, the 37th Division advanced alongside the 91st in this part of Belgium. The 37th captured Cruyshautem on November 1. The following day, the Germans had retreated across the Scheldt. The 37th “forced” the Scheldt River here at Eyne by constructing a footbridge. The Americans were advancing virtually unopposed when Germany signed the Armistice on November 11, 1918, that ended the war.

Many American monuments were built as bridges, so that in addition to honoring the service of the AEF, they would be functional. After the war, the 37th Division Association built a bridge at this location, designed by the Cleveland architectural firm of Walker and Weeks. The abutments at each end of the bridge were adorned with concrete American bison.

The original bridge was destroyed in World War II. In the 1950s, it was reconstructed and remained in use for decades, until it was replaced by the current bridge, in 1982, to accommodate an increase in river barge traffic. The buffalo remain on either side of the bridge, along with plaques and American flags. The bridge was rededicated in 2014, at the centennial of the outset of World War I.



The buffalo sculpture was preserved from the original bridge.



The original 37th Division bridge.

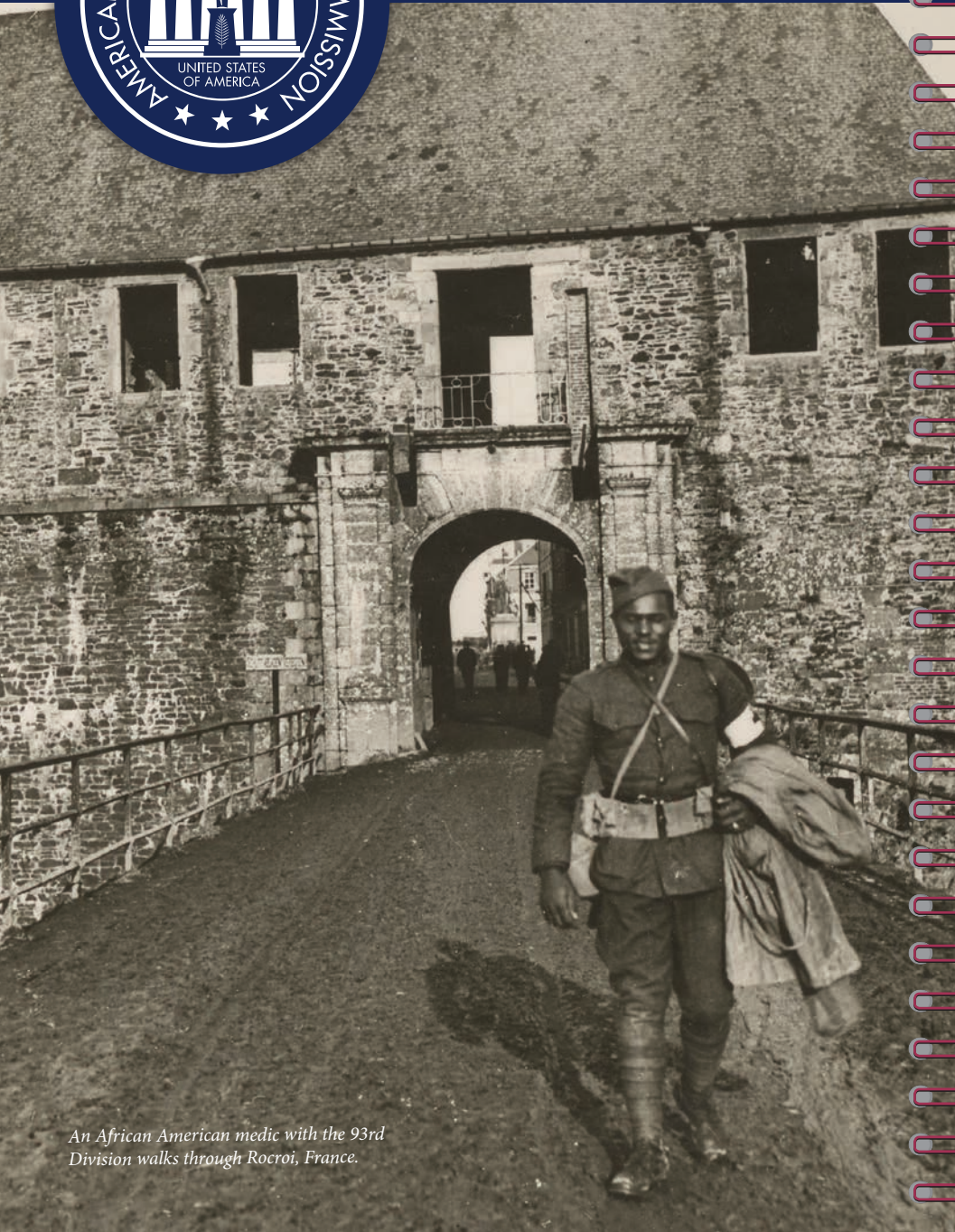


Troops of the 91st Division cross the temporary bridge at this site in 1918.

### - End of tour -

To return to the E17, exit the parking lot and take a right to get back onto Ohiostraat. In 200 m continue straight onto Graaf van Landaststraat. After 1 km, enter the roundabout and take the first exit onto Gentsesteeweg. Continue for 6 km, and then turn left onto Deinze Baan/Steenweg Deinze. After 5 km, enter the roundabout and take the first exit to continue straight. The entrance to the E17 will be in 600 m.





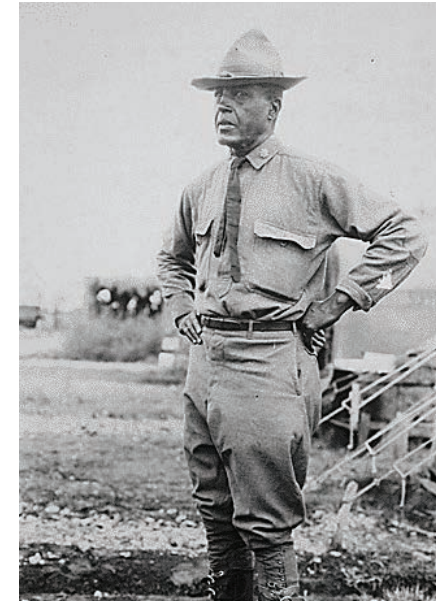
An African American medic with the 93rd Division walks through Rocroi, France.

## WILLING PATRIOTS: SOLDIERS OF COLOR IN THE AMERICAN EXPEDITIONARY FORCES

When the United States declared war in April of 1917 there were four regiments of African-American troops in the regular Army that had been created following the Civil War: the 24th and 25th Infantry and the 9th and 10th Cavalry. The decision was made by the War Department not to include these units in the expeditionary forces being sent to France, instead leaving them in place to serve in the American west and the occupation of the Philippines.

The Selective Service Act of 1917 expanded the pre-war military to wartime military and subjected all males within pre-determined age brackets to military service, regardless of race. This posed a conundrum for both the Jim Crow-era military and the African-American community. Within the Government and the military, there was a distinct fear of the ramifications of providing military training and arming the thousands of African-Americans who would be subject to the draft. In the African-American community, there was considerable disagreement about fighting for a country that denied them full citizenship.

In response to increasing pressure from activists such as Dr. W.E.B. Du Bois and organizations including the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), Secretary of War Newton Baker was persuaded to state “... There is a need for both white and colored men alike ... some must fight in the trenches, while others must serve in other capacities behind the firing lines.”



Col. Charles A. Young.

Du Bois advised African-American men to “swallow their bitterness and enlist in the military.” *The Crisis*, the newspaper of the NAACP succinctly advised “first your Country, then your Rights!”

In the end, the War Department assented to organization of two African-American infantry divisions under the command of white general officers. Although the NAACP advocated strongly for the ranking African-American officer, Colonel Charles A. Young, to be promoted to brigadier general and assigned as deputy commander to one of the divisions, his health and fitness for continued service blocked their effort. The War Department decision to sideline Young remains controversial today.





92nd Division Soldiers in gas mask training in France.



A soldier in the Advanced Section, Services of Supply.

In another concession to the Civil Rights movement, the War Department agreed to commission African-Americans as officers. The department created a separate school for these potential officers at Fort Des Moines, Iowa. The school would produce company grade officers (lieutenants and captains) destined to serve in African-American units.

Although the majority of volunteer and draftee African-Americans would serve in non-combat units in labor functions, some would see combat under both French and American command.

In this chapter, when referencing these units, we have chosen to use the original language of the period, which the modern reader may find offensive, but we feel that changing the World War I period text so as not to offend the modern reader would be a disservice to these patriotic soldiers whose service and sacrifice was made under these prejudicial designations.

## The 92nd Division (Colored)

Authorized in October 1917, the 92nd Division was raised from draftees. This division was fully formed with divisional artillery and support elements. Between June and July of 1918 the division arrived in France, where it went into training.

On September 25, the division, less the 368th Infantry and the artillery brigade, constituted the reserve of the I Army Corps in the Meuse-Argonne Offensive, and was assembled in the woods northwest

of Clermont. The American First Army placed the remainder of the 92nd Division, less its artillery, engineers and 183rd Brigade, at the disposal of the French XXXVIII Corps on September 29. The corps reduced the width of the zone of action of the 368th at that time and the regiment spent most of the day rearranging and reorganizing its units.

## The 368th Infantry Regiment

The 368th Infantry formed a part of the combat liaison between the French 4th Army and the American First Army from September 26 to October 4, 1918. These units went into the line on September 25. The next day, part of the 368th advanced about one mile, but with the exception of one company, which spent the night about 200 yards in front of its starting point, the rest of the units retired during the evening to behind their jump-off positions.

On September 27, the 368th moved forward an average distance of one mile, encountering little opposition. The next day, reinforced by two companies of the 351st Machine Gun Battalion of the 92nd Division, French artillery units and a squadron of the French 10th Dragoons, the 368th attacked in the direction of Binarville. Although considerable movement backward and forward took place during the day, the total ground gained was quite small. (see the Heroes of the Argonne chapter)

On September 30, a French regiment, the 9th Cuirassiers-à-pied, was directed to capture Binarville. Seeing this unit advancing, and having failed to receive the orders to stand fast, elements of the 368th Infantry Regiment



368th machine gunners in a communication trench.

attacked with the French. Binarville was captured and the front line was established beyond it. During the morning of October 1 the regiment was relieved from the front line, and it passed into reserve with other organizations of the 92nd. The division was returned to the control of the American First Army on October 4 and was assigned to the IV American Corps, where it proceeded to the vicinity of Toul. On October 9 it relieved the 69th French Division in the Marbache Sector. It then passed from the IV Corps to the VI Corps on October 25. The division participated in the attack of the Second American Army on November 10-11, operating west of the Seille River along the heights on both banks of the Moselle River in the direction of Corny. The regiment suffered 270 casualties during their operations.





An illustration of the dramatic engagement for which Pvt. Henry Johnson would eventually receive the Medal of Honor.

### The 93rd Division (Colored)

The second African-American division was the 93rd. It was formed from National Guard units from across the United States as they were federalized. They drew men from segregated African-American units in several states that were formed before the war. These were the 8th Illinois Regiment, the 15th New York Regiment, the 1st Separate Battalion of Washington D.C., the 1st Separate Company of Maryland, the 9th Ohio Battalion, the 1st Separate Company of Connecticut, Company L of the Massachusetts National Guard, and Company G of the Tennessee National Guard. These units and draftees filled out the division.

The 93rd Division was never fully constituted and consisted of only the two infantry brigades, the 185th and the 186th; the newly designated 369th and 370th Infantry Regiments; and the 371st and 372nd Infantry Regiments.



Pvt. Henry Johnson with the Croix de Guerre.

### The 369th Infantry Regiment "Harlem Hellfighters" or "Rattlers"

One of the first American units to arrive in France, the 369th Infantry Regiment landed at Brest on December 26, 1917.

They were quickly assigned to the French Fourth Army for instruction and training and placed in a front line sector north of Sainte-Menehould in the Champagne sector, where they participated in defensive and offensive operations.



An illustration of a 369th soldier in France, 1918.

It was here on May 15, 1918, that Privates Henry Johnson and Needham Roberts were attacked by a German raiding party of 24 men. Although both were severely wounded, they successfully fought off the raiding party. During the engagement, Johnson rescued Roberts as he was being dragged away by the Germans. For this action, they were both awarded the French Croix de Guerre, the first African-American soldiers to be so honored. Johnson would eventually receive the Medal of Honor posthumously for his actions, in 2015.

The regiment held the sector near Sainte-Menehould until July 5 when it was moved and participated in both the Champagne-Marne Defense and the Aisne-Marne Offensive.

When the French Fourth Army advanced northward in the Champagne region on September 26, three infantry regiments of the American 93rd Division were serving in that Army as part of the French IX Corps, which attacked from a position lying a few miles to the west of the Argonne Forest.

Reassigned to the French 161st Division, the 369th was in support when the Meuse-Argonne offensive began on September 26. On that day, the regiment entered a gap in the line, took the town of Ripont, captured a number of prisoners and several pieces of artillery, then continued forward in the following days, when the regiment gained a foothold on the side of the Bellevue Signal Ridge after a stubborn fight. On September 29 they captured the town of Séchault.



On October 14, the regiment, as part of the French 161st Division, proceeded to the Alsace, where it took over sections of the front line in the Vosges and held it until November 11. After the Armistice, the regiment became part of the French Army of Occupation.

### 370th Infantry Regiment “Black Devils”

This regiment was organized from the 8th Illinois (National Guard). It arrived in France in April 1918, and trained with various French divisions until August 31. During this period detachments of the regiment were in front line positions. On September 15, the regiment, as a part of the French 59th Division, went into line in the Vauxaillon Area northeast of Soissons and participated in the Oise-Aisne Offensive, September 17 to October 12, and October 24 to November 11.

### 371st Infantry Regiment “Red Hand”

The regiment arrived in France in April 1918 and was assigned to the XIII French Army Corps. They were in training from April 26 to June 6, in the vicinity of Barle-Duc. The regiment joined the French 68th Division on June 13, in the vicinity of Verdun, remaining in support of this unit until June 22. From June 23 to September 14, the regiment was in line in the Verdun Sector. It participated in the offensive operations of the Fourth French Army on the Champagne front September 27 to October 6. On September 28, the 371st, along with the 372nd Infantry Regiment entered the line as part of the French 157th Division, advancing about 600 yards against



*A detail of the Victory Monument in Chicago, dedicated to members of the 370th.*



*An unidentified officer of the 372nd Infantry whose decorations include the District of Columbia World War I service medal.*

machine-gun resistance. During the morning of September 29, the 371st Infantry captured Ardeuil and Montfauxelles. It was here that Corporal Freddie Stowers of C Company, 371st Infantry Regiment distinguished himself, leading his men to capture Hill 188 before being mortally wounded. He was recommended for the Medal of Honor for this action, but the recommendation was misplaced. In 1991, he was posthumously awarded the medal, making him the first African-American to be so honored for World War I. The regiment was withdrawn on October 6th and proceeded to the Vosges where they remained until the Armistice.

### 372nd Infantry Regiment “Red Hand”

This regiment arrived at Saint Nazaire in April 1918, and proceeded to the training center in the vicinity of Givry-en-Argonne for duty with the French Army. From June 6 to July 14, and from July 26 to September 9, the regiment was in line in the Argonne Sector. It participated in the offensive operations of the Fourth French Army on the Champagne front from September 26 to October 7, operating with the 371st Infantry Regiment. On October 1, the 372nd Infantry Regiment relieved the 371st and on October 2 advanced about 3/4 mile to a point south of Monthois, where it was subjected to enfilading fire from the high ground to the southwest of that town. The regiment repulsed a strong enemy counterattack and held its position about 1/2 mile south of the village of Monthois until it was relieved on October 7. The regiment proceeded to the Vosges on October 11 and remained there until the Armistice.

The casualties of the four infantry regiments of the 93rd Division totaled 591 soldiers killed in action or died of wounds and 2,943 wounded



*The 371st and 372nd Regiments took their “Red Hand” nickname from the flag of the French 157th Division.*

in action. All four regiments won the praise of the French authorities for their conduct.

Although nearly 200,000 African-Americans would serve in the Army during World War I and many would lose their lives in support of promises for equal rights, their sacrifice to the Nation would be largely unanswered. Ironically, many African-Americans who perished would be buried in Federal cemeteries in segregated sections, and would only see equal treatment in overseas American cemeteries, later administered by the American Battle Monuments Commission, where they would be buried without regard to race. Their struggle for equal rights would take another fifty years to begin to bear fruit, though their sacrifice will never be forgotten.

[Start Tour >](#)





## Stop 1

### Getting to Stop 1:

From Verdun, drive west on the A4 until you get to exit 29, in the direction of Sainte-Menehould. Go through the toll booth and then take a left at the T intersection onto D982E2. After 1 km take a right on the D3. Stay on the D3 for 750 m, and then take a left onto D982 in the direction of Chaudefontaine. Drive for 19 km. At Cernay-en-Dormois, bear right to stay on D982. After 5 km you will approach an intersection with the D6. Take a left, and then take an immediate right into the parking lot next to the monument.

### 369th Infantry Regiment Monument at Sechault

On September 26, 1918, the 369th Infantry Regiment captured Ripont, a small village about 6 km southwest of here. After Ripont, the regiment attacked towards Sechault, entering the village on September 29. In the face of intense machine gun fire, the regiment was temporarily forced to withdraw, before moving back into the village later that day. The 369th would continue to advance northeast. It was withdrawn from the front line on October 1.

This black granite obelisk was erected in 1997, and features the coiled rattlesnake insignia of the regiment. In 2006, an identical memorial was erected in New York City, to honor the regiment in the city of its predecessor National Guard unit – the 15th New York (Colored) Infantry Regiment.

To the west you should see a crest of a hill about 2 kilometers away. This is the next stop on the tour.

*This unidentified member of the 369th Infantry Regiment proudly wears the French Croix de Guerre awarded for bravery and the rattlesnake patch. The star on his left sleeve denotes him as an early enlistee in the AEF.*



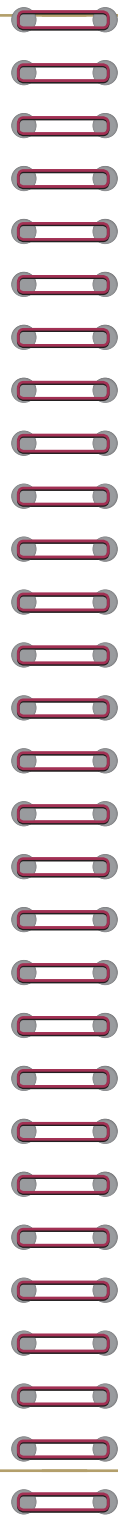
*The shoulder sleeve insignia of the 369th Infantry Regiment featured a striking rattlesnake.*



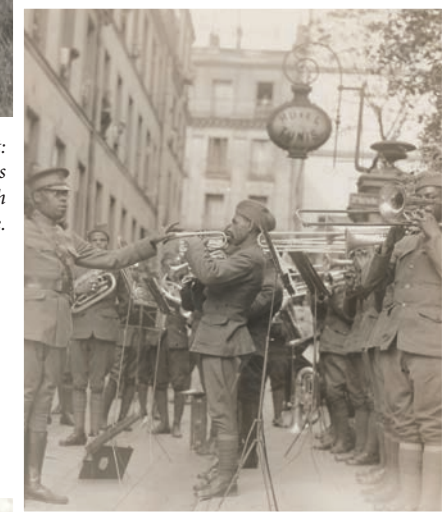




*The 369th Infantry Regiment Monument at Sechault. Inset: A detail of the 369th Monument with the inscribed regimental insignia.*



*Above: The 369th with the colors on display. Right: 369th band, led by Lt. James Reese Europe, performs at a base hospital.*



Stop 2 >



# Stop 2

## Getting to Stop 2:

Drive west on D6 in the direction of Ardeuil. After about 1200 m, turn left on the small paved road, and drive about 100 m. Walk up the unpaved road to a gate on the right. Enter at the gate and walk uphill to the monument.

## 371st Infantry Regiment Monument

On September 28, 1918, the 371st Regiment, Company C, attacked German positions near this location. Soon after, German soldiers held their fire, and climbed up to the top of their trenches to surrender. This was a trap. As the Americans came out of defensive positions, the enemy jumped back into their trenches

and fired machine guns and mortars, causing severe casualties. Corporal Freddie Stowers, a farmhand from South Carolina, took charge of his men, and crawled towards a machine gun nest while under heavy fire. After destroying the nest Stowers continued the attack against a second trench line before he was mortally wounded.



Front and 3/4 view of the 371st Infantry Regiment Monument.



Cpl. Stowers is buried in the Meuse-Argonne American Cemetery, about 40 minutes east of here. After the war he was recommended for the Medal of Honor – the military’s highest award for valor – but it would take decades before he posthumously received the award.

The 371st would continue to advance north, taking Ardeuil and Trieres Farm, before it was relieved.

The gray granite monument is dedicated to those soldiers of the 371st who fell in combat near here. It was erected after World War I; during World War II, the monument was heavily damaged.



Grave marker of Cpl. Freddie Stowers.

Sign at the monument describing its wartime damage.



Stop 3 >



# Stop 3

## Getting to Stop 3:

Drive back to the D6 and take a left. After entering the town of Ardeuil, take the first right, on the D121 in the direction of Challerange. Stay on this road for 2 km. At the intersection with the D982, take a left in the direction of Monthois. After 2 km, you will see the 372nd Infantry Monument on the right side of the road. Pull over to the side of the road and put on your hazard lights.

## 372nd Infantry Regiment Monument near Monthois

On October 1, the 372nd entered the front line near Trieres farm and moved north. The next day, while moving through the area where you now stand, the regiment came under fire from German positions south of Monthois. The fire came “in enfilade” – meaning that the flank of the advance bore the brunt of the attack. The regiment bore down. On October 5, the regiment held off a determined German attack, before it was relieved two days later.

This gray-granite monument, which honors the members of the 372nd who lost their lives in this area, features the 93rd Division insignia – the “Blue Helmet.” It is also inscribed with the French 157th Division, which was the operational command for the 372nd.



*Two soldiers of the 372nd Infantry Regiment.*



*The 372nd Infantry Regiment Monument with details in insets.*



# Stop 4

## Getting to Stop 4:

Continue north on the D982 until you enter Monthois. Turn left onto the D306 in the direction of Marvaux. After 9 km, near the village of Sommepy, enter the roundabout and take the second exit, following the sign labeled “Memorial American.” Continue for 500 m and take a right at the next sign labeled “American Monument.” After 500 m, turn left onto the D320. Continue for 4 km until you see a copse of trees on your right. There will be a parking lot on your right. The memorial is a short walk down the path.

## Sommepy American Monument

This memorial, on the crest of Blanc Mont Ridge, is located on ground captured by the 2nd Division in October 1918. There is an outstanding view of the surrounding battlefields from this location. Vestiges of World War I trenches are nearby.

After the war, this monument was erected by ABMC to honor the American divisions that fought in the Champagne region, including the 93rd. The “Blue Helmet” insignia is carved in relief upon this monument, along with the names of important battlefield objectives.



*The 93rd Division insignia, along with its significant battlefield objectives.*



*A view of the battlefield from the top of the monument.*



*Sommepy American Monument.*



# Stop 5

## Getting to Stop 5:

Turn left out of the parking lot and drive on the D320 back towards Sommepy. After 4 km, take a right on the D977 in the direction of Châlons-en-Champagne. Go 400 m and enter the roundabout. Take the second exit and continue on the D977. There are the concrete ruins of World War I pillboxes on this road. After 4 km, pull into the parking lot just before the Navarin Ossuary.

## Navarin Ossuary

The Navarin Ossuary honors the service of the Allied soldiers who fought in Champagne. The 93rd Division is commemorated here, along with other US divisions that fought under command of the French. In addition, French colonial soldiers, along with Russian and Czechoslovakian soldiers, are honored.

This memorial holds the remains of approximately 10,000 French soldiers who lost their lives in this area. After World War I, many French soldiers were laid to rest in ossuaries such as this. It is located on the Navarin farm site, which was completely devastated during the battle.

The 93rd Division fought under the command of General Henri Gouraud, leader of the French Fourth Army, who dedicated the monument in 1924, and who is buried in a marked grave within this ossuary.

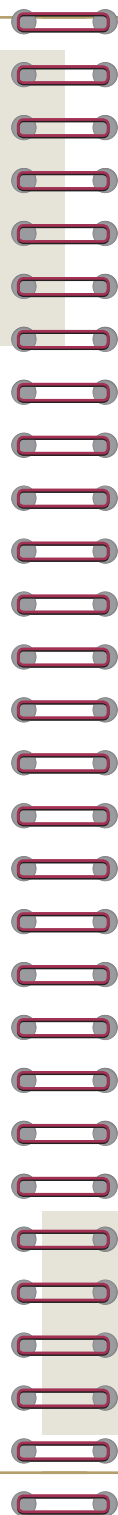
There are three figures on the monument. The soldier to the right is based upon Quentin Roosevelt, son of President Theodore Roosevelt, who lost his life near this location (see the Aisne-Marne Offensive chapter). The figure is somewhat incongruous, as Roosevelt was a pilot, while the figure is of an infantryman.



Navarin Ossuary.



The sculptural figures on the top of the monument. Note the inscription to the 93rd Division.



## - End of tour -

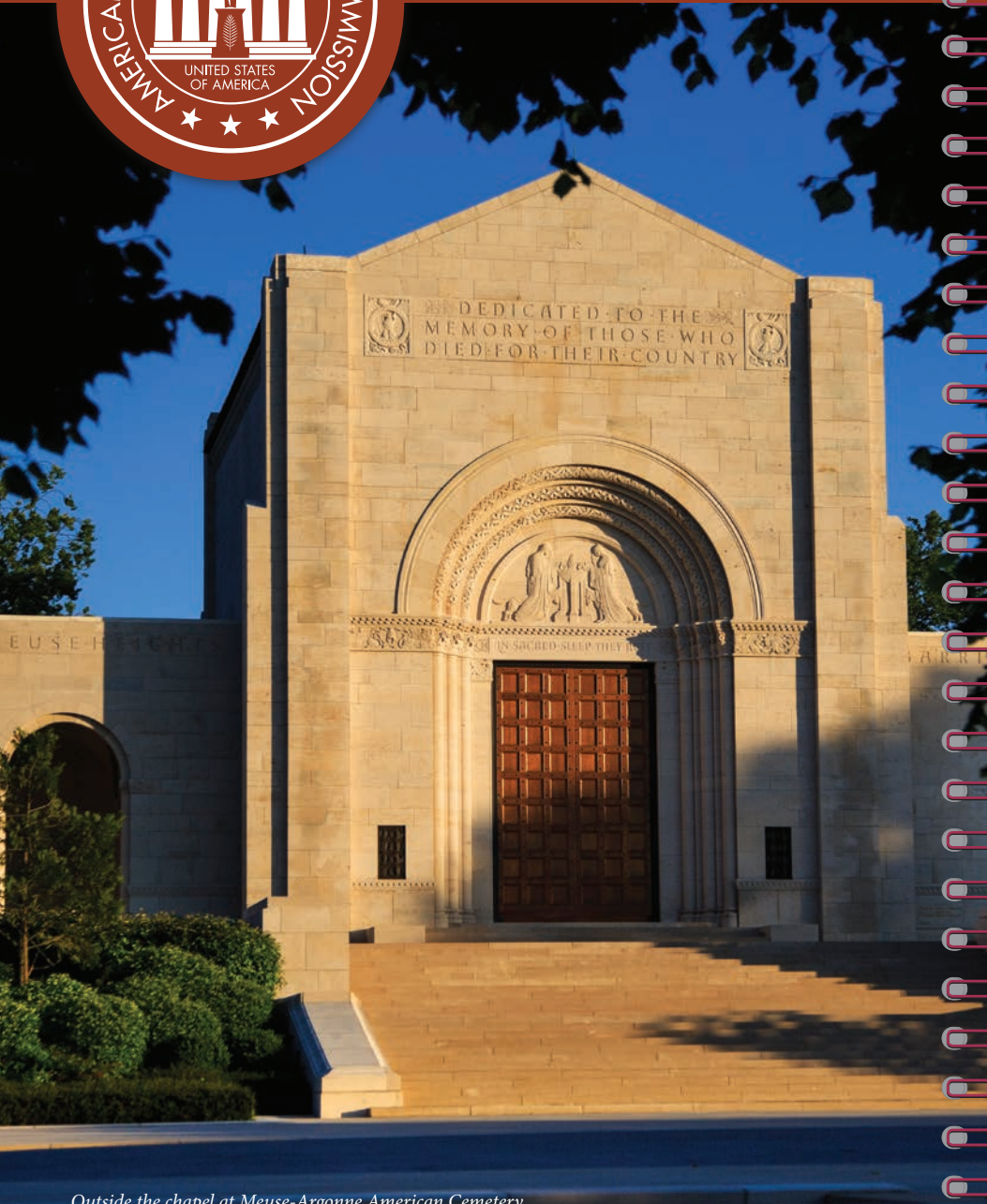
To return to the A4, continue on the D977 in the direction of Châlons-en-Champagne. After 10 km, in the town of Suippes take a right to continue on the D977 in the direction of Châlons-en-Champagne. After 11 km, enter the roundabout and take the second exit in the direction of Châlons-en-Champagne. Continue for two km until you enter a roundabout.

The second exit leads to a toll booth and the entrance to the A4.





# MEUSE-ARGONNE OFFENSIVE I: H-HOUR TO MONTEFAUCON



Outside the chapel at Meuse-Argonne American Cemetery.

The Meuse-Argonne Offensive was the greatest American battle to date in numbers of combatants and casualties. The First and Second Armies of the American Expeditionary Forces, with a force of 1.2 million men, suffered more than 120,000 casualties in sustained fighting from September 26, 1918 up until the Armistice on November 11, 1918. The greatest share of the fighting fell to the First Army, advancing between the Meuse River and the Argonne Forest.

The Supreme Allied Commander, French Marshal Ferdinand Foch, convened a conference of Allied commanders in late July. Foch foresaw that an orderly withdrawal of German forces in the face of increasing Allied strength could help Germany prolong the war.

The German High Command, recognizing the same reality, were also faced with a dilemma. A slow withdrawal would increase their combat losses, while a swift withdrawal would mean the loss of irreplaceable supplies near the front. The Germans chose the swift withdrawal option, in early September at St. Mihiel, prompting the comment from Foch:

*“The man could still escape if he did not mind leaving his luggage behind him.”*

Based on the information available, the Allied command chose the area of the front between the Meuse River and the Argonne Forest for the American Expeditionary Forces’ great offensive because it was the



World War I Supreme Allied Commander Marshal Ferdinand Foch.



Artistic rendering by Harry Townsend shows captured German artillery.





Col. George C. Marshall.

sector Germany could least afford to lose. The Germans were heavily dependent on two rail lines with junctions in the vicinity of Sedan, 56 km behind the frontline. Losing either of these rail junctions would greatly complicate withdrawal or resupply of German forces in Belgium and Northern France. Foch intended to drive toward both. This would break direct communication between German forces east and west of the Meuse River and make it difficult to shift reserves and supplies to meet Allied attacks. The Meuse-Argonne Offensive was intended to drive through the Hindenburg Line defenses toward Sedan, cross the Meuse there, and capture the rail junctions. To blunt the German reaction to the offensive the French and British would commit to simultaneous attacks elsewhere on the Western Front



Camouflaged American trucks and ambulances.

to draw off or delay the arrival of German reserves to counter the American attack.

The success of the American Expeditionary Forces in the earlier St. Mihiel Offensive convinced Foch to employ the American Expeditionary Forces in the Meuse-Argonne Offensive. In advance of the American attack in the Meuse-Argonne, 220,000 French soldiers holding the front would have to be replaced by around 600,000 Americans brought in for the attack. This entire movement would have to be concealed from the Germans.

The task of planning this redeployment fell to Col. George C. Marshall. The movement began while the U.S. First Army was still reducing the St. Mihiel Salient 80 km to the east. The troop movement was concealed at night, using three roads, over a two-week period. Marshall demonstrated the military genius that served the Americans so well in World War II. Artillery moved first, then six reserve divisions followed by the nine assault divisions. American troops and materiel were moved into position for attack on September 25-26, 1918. French and American motorized and horse drawn transport units were key to success. On most of the front, French soldiers remained

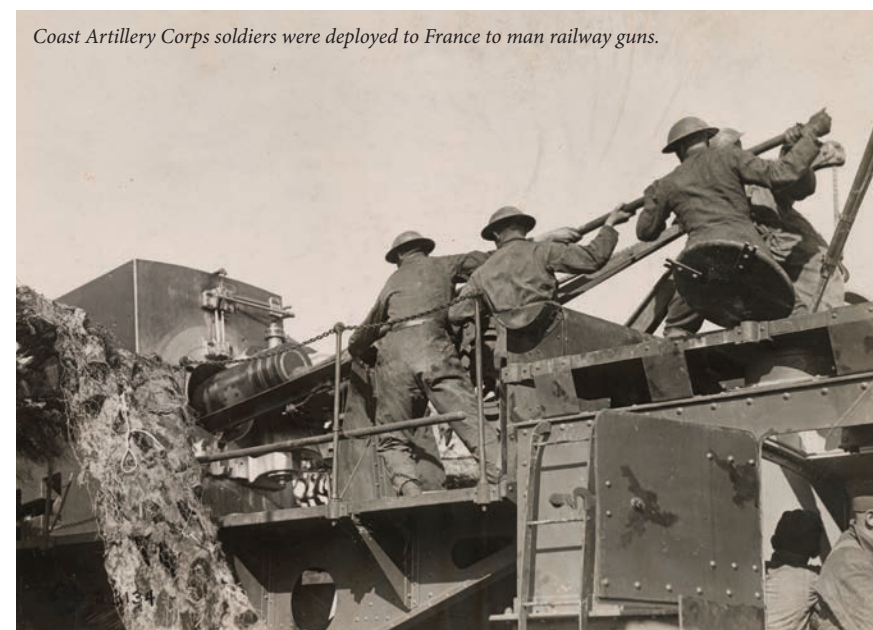
in the outpost positions until the very last moment, to keep the enemy from learning of the large American concentration.

The U.S. Army I Corps would advance through the Argonne Forest and the Aire River Valley; the V Corps would attack through the east side of the Aire Valley and the adjacent high ground, including Montfaucon; finally, the III Corps would drive over the ridges and bottom land adjacent to the Meuse River. The massed French and American artillery amounted to almost 4,000 pieces, from 3-inch "French 75s" to 14-inch railroad guns, which provided one gun for every eight meters of the frontline.

The Argonne Forest covers steep hills that provided observation and cover for infantry positions and artillery. Its wooded ridgelines stretch east into the valley of the Aire River, which runs north toward

Sedan. It is interrupted by the valley around Grandpré. Tributaries to the Aire cut a number of long ravines into the valley's eastern slopes, rising to a rolling plateau of farmland. Toward the Meuse River, it is increasingly interrupted by wooded high ground. The nature of the Meuse-Argonne terrain made it ideal for defense.

To protect this vitally important area, the enemy had established almost continuous defensive positions for a depth of up to 20 km behind the front lines. Vauquois Hill and Montfaucon were dominating heights that were well defended and important for distant observation. Behind the southern German front line were three stronger defense lines. Every village and nearly every forest was lined with prepared positions. German artillery observers in the Heights of the Meuse and the Argonne Forest could direct frequent artillery bombardments and



Coast Artillery Corps soldiers were deployed to France to man railway guns.





*Soldiers of the 33<sup>rd</sup> Division at Forges-sur-Meuse look toward the heights across the Meuse River they are about to cross.*

harassing fire on the American advance. Most roads were poor and the broken ground was not well suited to the 190 light Renault tanks in use by the Americans.

Following a 3-hour bombardment, where the Army fired more ammunition than was fired during the entire U.S. Civil War, the First Army jumped off at 5:30 a.m. on September 26. On the left, I Corps penetrated the Argonne forest and advanced along the valley of the Aire River. In the center, V Corps attacked at Montfaucon. It was held up temporarily in front of the hill. On the right, III Corps moved north past the east side of Montfaucon. The crest was in American hands by noon of the second day, as the advance continued north in the other corps areas. Though complete surprise was achieved, the enemy was stubbornly contesting every foot of terrain. Profiting

from the temporary holdup in front of Montfaucon, the Germans brought forward reinforcements. By September 30, the U.S. First Army had driven the enemy back 10 km in some places. The advance bogged down due to inexperienced units and commanders, poor logistics and roads, as well as lack of coordination between artillery and infantry.

The opening days of the Meuse-Argonne Offensive had succeeded. Key terrain was taken in a surprise attack. The American Expeditionary Forces were not as effective in the middle phase of the campaign. The month of October would prove to be the worst of times for Gen. John J. Pershing's troops. This was especially true for the period October 8–18, when the First Army was attacking the highly defensible heights of the central Argonne. On the right flank of the sector the 33<sup>rd</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> Divisions,

operating under the French XVII Corps, made a forced crossing of the Meuse River on bridges constructed by the 108<sup>th</sup> Engineers. Attacking the heights of the Meuse north of Verdun reduced German observation of the offensive west of the river.

The Americans suffered high casualties during the opening days of the offensive. By October 8, fighting had become severe for the First Army across a 37 km front. Across the front, thousands of American soldiers fought resolutely against the unbroken German Army. Daily, multiple American soldiers performed courageous acts.

The Army Air Service made important contributions to the operations of American Expeditionary Forces ground forces in the Meuse-Argonne Offensive. The First Army had to learn how to operate as a combined force while continuing the attack. This made German ground forces fearful of any Allied aircraft appearing;

plus, the sight of aircraft attacking the enemy encouraged American soldiers. Pursuit aircraft in large numbers aggressively attacked enemy artillery observation balloons on both sides of the Meuse River. This restricted German ability to fully use their artillery to attack the full depth of Americans on the frontlines or the supply routes. The American Pursuit Groups made daily low altitude sweeps with all available squadrons. Their sheer numbers overwhelmed enemy anti-aircraft fire and German aircraft flying in defense of their balloons.

Pershing brought in experienced divisions and more combat engineers. He relieved officers who were not performing, and focused attention on traffic control for the limited roads bringing supplies and reinforcement and evacuating casualties. He appointed his best senior general, Hunter Liggett, to command the First Army.



*A column of tanks going into action in the Argonne Forest.*



The final phase of the Meuse-Argonne Offensive began at daybreak on November 1. It was one of the most important and successful American operations of the war. A 2-hour artillery preparation began with more American artillery than ever had previously assembled. Mobility and supply organization was improved to support a rapid advance. The lessons of the earlier battles had been absorbed and previous errors corrected. The attack exceeded all expectations.

By early afternoon of November 1, the last formidable Hindenburg Line position on Barricourt Heights had been captured, ensuring success of the whole operation. That night the German Army issued orders to withdraw across the Meuse River. Their retreat became a rout. American Expeditionary Forces' units racing north overtook broken German units. By November 4, after an additional Meuse crossing by the First Army, the enemy was in full retreat on both sides of the river. Three days later, the First Army was on the heights above Sedan, dominating the critical railroad supply junctions. The German High Command could no longer sustain the Western Front.

The American Expeditionary Forces' attention shifted to another strategic objective, the city of Metz east of Verdun. The First Army began shifting its axis of operations in that direction. The Second Army was renewing action on the St. Mihiel sector northeast of Pont-a-Mousson. The Armistice halted further offensive operations.

The final phase of the Meuse-Argonne Offensive was the most influential operation for the American military. It convinced future American military

leaders that taking objectives with minimal casualties required overwhelming firepower, while employing high mobility to maintain momentum. The legacy continued beyond World War II. It became an essential part of the American way of war. Historian John Eisenhower wrote that his father "thought Operation Overlord undoable without the experience the Army gained in the Argonne."

★  
*Historian John Eisenhower wrote that his father "thought Operation Overlord undoable without the experience the Army gained in the Argonne."*



An American soldier prepares to fire his weapon.



A French-built Breguet bomber of the American 96<sup>th</sup> Aero Squadron as used in the Meuse-Argonne Offensive.



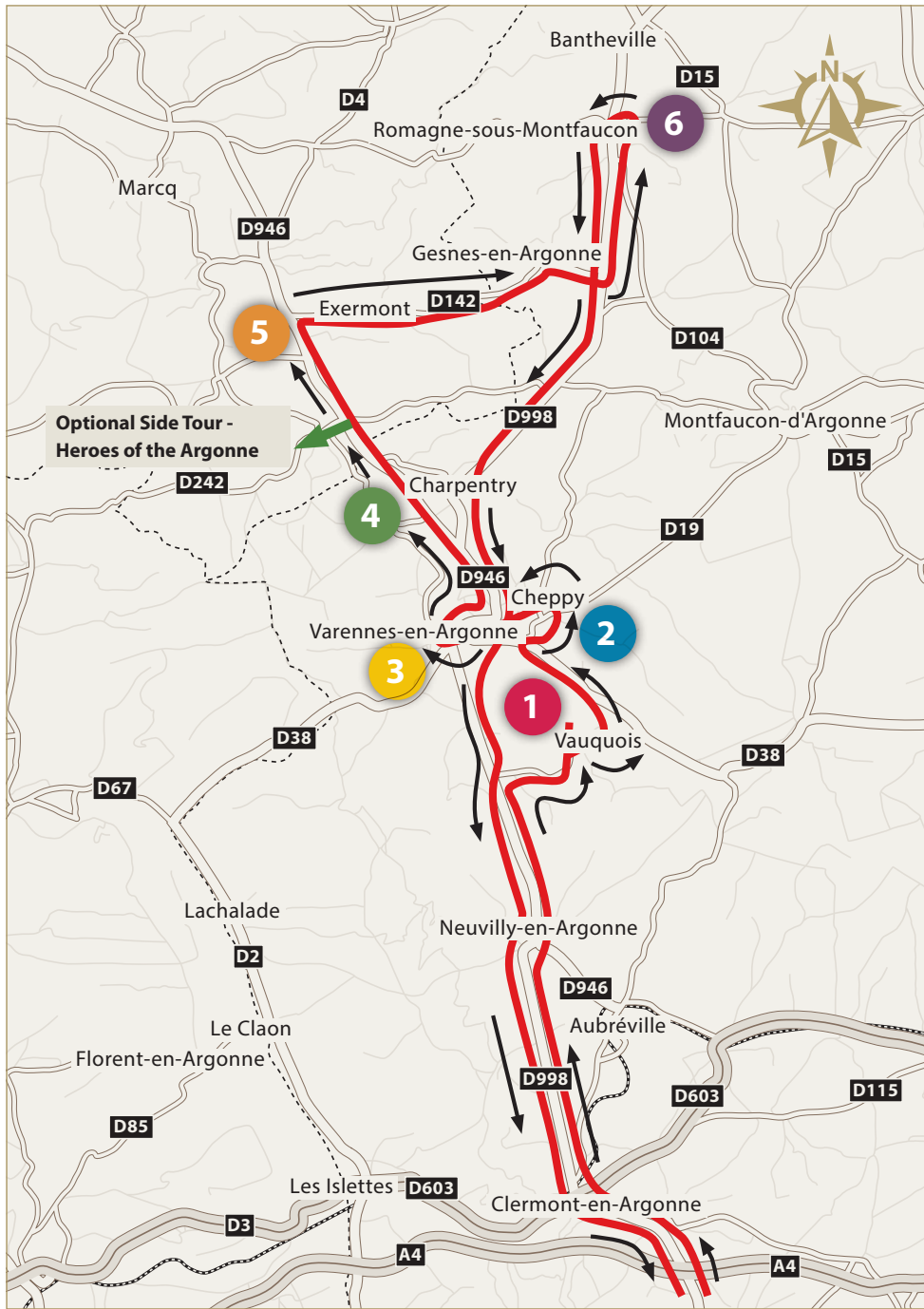
Battle Scene by Samuel Johnson Woolf.

**- Tour Note -**

This tour will be covered in three stages. The first two stages will cover the progress from Vauquois Hill and Montfaucon, respectively. A third short section will cover famous incidents in the Argonne Forest – including the stand of the Lost Battalion and the exploits of Sgt. Alvin York. Go to the tabbed section named Heroes of the Argonne Forest to take this tour.

**Start Tour >**





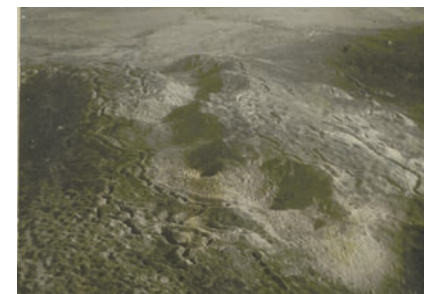
# Stop 1

## Getting to Stop 1:

From the A4 Autoroute de l'Est, take the Clermont-en-Argonne exit and turn north on the D998. Stay on the D998 into Clermont-en-Argonne. Go straight across the intersection, continuing north on the D998 toward Champ de Batailles 14-18 Argennes. At the end of a long straightaway, the road turns right over the Aire River into Neuville-en-Argonne. Bear left at the square with the church onto D946 to Boureuilles, where you will turn right on D212 toward Butte de Vauquois at an intersection by a church. In the village of Vauquois, turn left up the hill before you get to the church. Park in the parking lot in the woods.

## Vauquois Hill

From the observation terrace by the large monument on Vauquois Hill, you can see that this was a commanding height with a sweeping view. The slopes were bare of trees by war's end. In 1918, the German line was on the north side of the main line of craters. The craters are from subterranean mining by the French and Germans between 1914 and 1918 that completely destroyed the town that once sat atop the hill. World War I trenches are preserved here, and beneath the surface are the remains of mining galleries that can be toured with guides.



An aerial view of Vauquois Hill, pockmarked with craters.

The 35<sup>th</sup> Division captured Vauquois Hill on the first day of the offensive, September 26, 1918. The 35<sup>th</sup> was a Kansas and Missouri National Guard division. To hide the presence of the 35<sup>th</sup> Division, the French remained in the front line until hours before the attack. Artillery struck the German defenses for three hours before the 5:30 a.m. assault and laid smoke and poison gas on the hill. The main attack went around both sides of the hill in thick fog, preceded by a rolling barrage from artillery and machine guns. The 35<sup>th</sup> sent a brigade forward reinforced with engineers,

machine guns and light artillery. The first elements bypassed the hill to the left and headed for the second line of defense. Two following battalions split to mop up the hill from the flanks.

The crushing bombardment had torn apart much of the frontline defenses. Enemy batteries were bombarded with high explosive and poison gas. Divisional artillery laid rolling barrages to protect the attack waves, which were also concealed by the thick fog. The lead units of the 35<sup>th</sup> continued north, overrunning trenches almost 1 km behind the front. They stopped to reorganize 1.5 km further on near the villages of Cheppy and Varennes.

## Stop 2 >



# Stop 2

## Getting to Stop 2:

Return down the hill to the D212 and turn left (east) and bear left at the fork in the road. Bear left again at the second fork, heading north. Turn left on D38 and take the next hard right on the D19 toward Cheppy. Pull off the road on the right just beyond the memorial.

## Cheppy and the Missouri Memorial

Designed by Nancy Coonsman Hahn to honor all the Missourians who died in France during World War I, it was the first overseas American monument designed by a woman. From the platform, you can get a good sense of fighting here. Cheppy was part of the forward positions of the Hindenburg Line.

Around 9 a.m. the fog began to lift. Soldiers reported an increase in German machine gun fire from the front and from bypassed pockets of resistance. The rolling barrage had stopped on the flat behind the monument an hour earlier just as the 35<sup>th</sup> Division arrived. Across the valley to the north was the village of Cheppy, an outpost of the Hindenburg Line with concrete pill boxes. From a strongpoint just past the bridge, a trench ran west up to the high ground across the road. The high ground to the right held another. Despite earlier bombardment by 155 mm howitzers of the 130<sup>th</sup> Field Artillery and the French 317<sup>th</sup> Colonial Heavy Artillery, the defenses were coming back to life.

Under machine gun fire, the 35<sup>th</sup> reorganized for an assault. The light tanks of the American 304<sup>th</sup> Tank Brigade caught up with the infantry at this point. These were small, two-man, French Renault tanks armed with a machine gun or small



The Missouri Memorial at Cheppy.



Left: The town of Cheppy included a medical station. After the town was secured it became an important point for support of the American attack. Right: A French-built Renault FT-17 crosses a trench.

cannon. The brigade commander of the 304<sup>th</sup>, Lt. Col. George S. Patton, arrived and directed the tanks on foot. He was soon wounded. Multiple other officers and men were killed and wounded leading others through the wire and trenches into the town, which fell by 12:30 p.m. To the east and west, other units of the division were penetrating Cheppy Woods and the town of Varennes. Many prisoners of the Prussian Guard were captured in Cheppy, along with numerous machine guns and antitank rifles.

★

*Many prisoners of the Prussian Guard were captured in Cheppy, along with numerous machine guns and antitank rifles.*



The ruins of Cheppy after the battle.



# Stop 3

## Getting to Stop 3:

Drive north into Cheppy and turn left at the first intersection on D19c. At the next intersection, turn left on the Rue de Varennes, D946. Continue straight by the church in Cheppy and the church in Varennes. Bear left at the fork, past the bridge over the Aire River, toward the clock tower. About 140 m beyond the clock tower, look for a large monument on the right, and turn into the lane next to the monument. Find a place to park around the monument.

## Varennes Pennsylvania Monument

The Pennsylvania Monument honors all Pennsylvanians who served in World War I. The street approaching the monument is rue Louis XVI. Down the hill from the Pennsylvania Monument is the tower where Louis XVI was arrested during his attempt to flee Revolutionary France.

The part of Varennes on the east side of the Aire River was captured by the 35<sup>th</sup> Division about the same time that it seized Cheppy. Troops entered this town, a part of the Hindenburg Line, around 11:30 a.m.



*A wounded German prisoner stands under guard.*

*Light Renault tanks in Varennes.*



*The Varennes Pennsylvania Monument.*



and cleared the town with the assistance of tanks that had arrived late because of smoke and fog. A number of Germans surrendered to the leading tanks whose crews turned them over to the infantry.

The part of Varennes on the west bank of the Aire River was captured by the 28<sup>th</sup> Division, a National Guard Division from Pennsylvania. The 28<sup>th</sup> began the attack west of Vauquois Hill, with two battalions of the 110<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment making assaults and passing through each other in turn. They attacked Varennes together. Mopping up resistance took until 2 p.m., though the rest of the division was slowed down by the wooded broken terrain of the Argonne Forest on their left.



*Soldiers advance through Varennes.*

Go to the north overlook of the monument. From Varennes, the 110<sup>th</sup> pushed forward further north, crossing the Aire River bend twice and climbing to the plateau beyond. The 110<sup>th</sup> was stopped there by machine gun fire from the town of Montblainville beyond the ridge.

## Stop 4 >



# Stop 4

## Getting to Stop 4:

Leaving the monument turn left and return down the hill into Varennes, cross the bridge, and go straight to the edge of town where the road (D946) curves left up the hill. At the fork, continue straight toward Apremont. If it is safe, pull off to the right into the paved field road just past the grain elevators. Turn on your hazard lights.

## Capt. Harry Truman

At 6 p.m. on September 27, 1918, the 35<sup>th</sup> Division continued its advance from Cheppy. Capt. Harry Truman, commanding "D" Battery 129<sup>th</sup> Field Artillery, was on the west side of the road between here and the fork to Charpentry. His observation post was in the open under a camouflage net strung to a hedge. West across the valley, Truman's observers noticed an American aircraft dropping a flare over a German battery on the near side of Montblainville. To avoid casualties from friendly fire, Truman's unit was not supposed to engage targets in the adjacent division's lane. Contrary to these orders, Truman called for fire that destroyed the enemy guns. On the next morning, west across the valley, the 28<sup>th</sup> Division's lead regiment was in Montblainville, but the remainder of the division lagged behind. Truman observed a German observation post over 3 km northwest near Chene-Tondu, and again broke the rules and called for fire on the observers who retreated quickly. Shortly after, they observed a German battery setting up close to the previous target. Forty-three rounds hit the enemy battery. Six field guns were later found abandoned on the site. Batteries A and B fired similar missions later in the day. Though admonished for this action, Truman never regretted his work along this road, even after he attained the U.S. presidency.



Capt. Harry Truman in uniform.

★  
*To avoid casualties from friendly fire, Truman's unit was not supposed to engage targets in the adjacent division's lane.*



Artillerymen wearing gas masks in action during the Meuse-Argonne Offensive.



An artillery observer with a tripod periscope and telephone lines to his artillery battery. The observer was essential to accurate artillery fire.

## - Optional Side Tour -

Go to the tabbed section named Heroes of the Argonne Forest to take the optional side tour about the Lost Battalion, the 368th Infantry, and Sgt. Alvin York.

Stop 5 >



# Stop 5

## Getting to Stop 5:

Continue down the D946 to the northwest for 4.8 km. You will pass the turn off for Chatel-Chéhéry and an agricultural equipment garage on the left. Ahead on a slight downgrade turn off carefully on the right into the local highway gravel yard. Turn on your hazard lights.

## Exermont

Look back to the southeast. On the skyline you can see the Montfaucon Monument. The forested hills to the northeast are the heights of Romagne which concealed lines of fortifications with steel and concrete shelters and pillboxes. From there and from the northern Argonne Forest to the west, artillery could strike Americans in these fields. The forward position of the 35<sup>th</sup> Division on September 28, 1918, was the wooded hill immediately to the

southwest of Montrebeau. On September 29, the division advanced 1.2 km north toward the heights of Romagne under heavy fire, supported by a few tanks and a light artillery barrage. The division had fought tenaciously through the German lines, advancing 10 km in three days. The infantry of the 35<sup>th</sup> Division was reorganized into two provisional brigades that incorporated division machine gunners and engineers.



A "dangerous corner" in Exermont, October 1918.

★  
*The division had fought tenaciously through the German lines, advancing 10 km in three days.*

The Germans waited in force around Exermont, a village hidden in the folds of the forest to the northeast. German artillery concentrated on the American tanks forcing them back. After some initial gains, the 35<sup>th</sup> was forced to withdraw to Montrebeau. There it held out against two days of German shelling and infantry attacks. On October 1, the 35<sup>th</sup> was withdrawn from the line except for its artillery brigade. It was replaced by the 1<sup>st</sup> Division, which renewed the attack on October 4.



After taking Exermont, American soldiers replaced the Germans in billets in the church there. Here American troops use the church organ.



The "dangerous corner" in Exermont, 2018.



# Stop 6

## Getting to Stop 6:

Continue down the D946. Turn right just over the bridge on D142. Bear right at the church in Exermont toward Romagne. Continue on D142/D2211 through Gesnes-en-Argonne where you bear to the right of the church. At the “T” intersection, turn left toward Romagne on D998. At the intersection by the church in Romagne, turn right toward the American cemetery on D123. At the next intersection, turn left toward the American cemetery. The Meuse-Argonne American Cemetery is 0.5 km ahead. Drive through the gate and bear left up the hill toward the visitor center.

## Meuse-Argonne American Cemetery

This is the largest American World War I cemetery, and lies on land captured from German forces by the 5<sup>th</sup> and 32<sup>nd</sup> Divisions. A temporary cemetery was established here in mid-October of 1918. There are more than 14,000 Americans interred here, including more than 450 whose identities are unknown. Nearly 1,000 names are recorded on the Tablets of the Missing. Among the tablets are names of the missing of the American Expeditionary Forces’ Services of Supply, and the missing from American operations in Northern Russia.

★  
*There more than 14,000  
Americans interred here,  
including more than  
450 whose identities are  
unknown.*

The best way to begin the visit is with a stop in the visitor center. Newly renovated in 2016, the building includes exhibits, films and digital interactives that help tell the story of the Meuse-Argonne Offensive. Entrance is free and reservations are not required.

*More than 14,000 Americans are buried in Meuse-Argonne American Cemetery.*



*Stained glass windows with divisional insignia inside the chapel at the cemetery.*



*Allied flags inside the chapel at the cemetery.*



*A Meuse-Argonne regional battle map outside the chapel at the cemetery.*



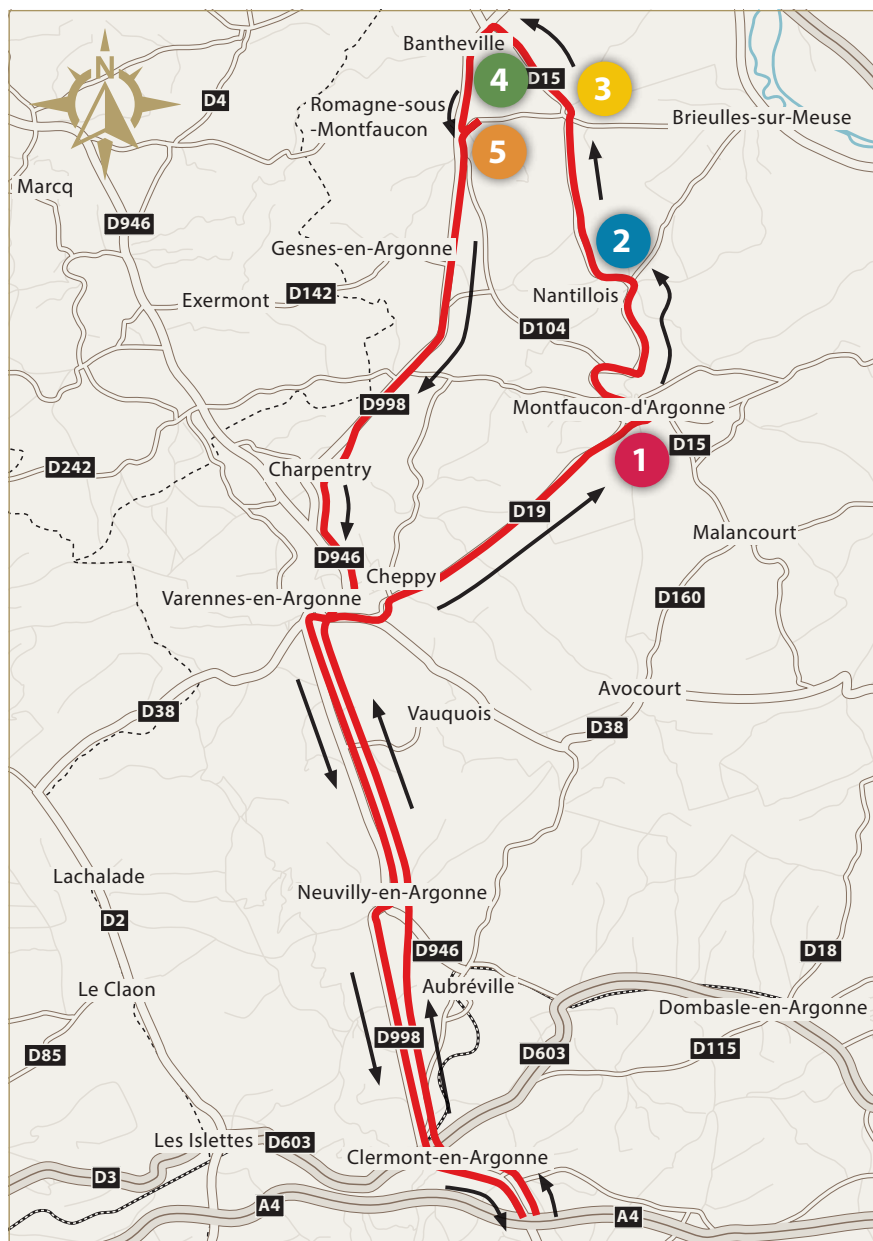
*Poppies grow near the entrance to Meuse-Argonne American Cemetery.*

### - End of tour -

Return through Romagne to the D998, and turn south. In Charpentry, the road bends left then right. Where the D998 meets the D946 turn south on D946 toward Varennes. In Neuville-en-Argonne at the intersection by the church, turn right just past the monument on D998. Stay on the D998 until you come to the Autoroute de l’Est in Auzéville-en-Argonne.



# MEUSE-ARGONNE OFFENSIVE II: MONTFAUCON TO ROMAGNE



## Stop 1

### Getting to Stop 1:

From the A4 Autoroute de l'Est, take the Clermont-en-Argonne exit and turn north on the D998. Stay on the D998 into Clermont-en-Argonne. Go straight across the intersection continuing north on the D998 toward Champ de Bataille 14-18 Argonnes. At the end of a long straight-away, the road turns right over the Aire River into Neuville-en-Argonne. At the intersection by the church, monument and town hall, turn left onto D946 toward Varennes. In Varennes, bear right toward the Monument Americain. You will pass the Pennsylvania Monument on your left and then turn right over the bridge at the bottom of the hill. Take the first right after the bridge on D38. At the fork, bear left toward Montfaucou (the sign reads Mémorial Americain on D19). At the four-way intersection, go straight. In a moment you will see the monument ahead. At the "T" intersection, turn left toward Butte de Montfaucou. You can park here.

### Montfaucou Monument

The hill of Montfaucou was an important observation post for the Germans, and was a key objective of the first day of the campaign. The Montfaucou Monument faces toward the American start line for the Meuse-Argonne Offensive 6.5 km to the south. From the observation platform, much of the Meuse-Argonne battlefield is visible. The monument is in the form of a Doric column. The names on the face of the platform are the strategic objectives of the Meuse-Argonne Offensive. The participating divisions of the First Army are named on the terrace along with their most important engagements. Inside the base are inscriptions in French and English with a map of the campaign. A staircase leads to the observation platform. The parapet around the platform is inscribed with names and directional arrows indicating important sites and features in the surrounding terrain. Adjacent to the monument are ruins of the town of Montfaucou, which was never reoccupied after the war. The Germans



Montfaucou Monument from front with ruins behind.





American reserves move up through barbed wire.

hid fortifications in the ruins of the town, using stone from the church to make an observation post that still remains.

★

*The Germans hid fortifications in the ruins of the town, using stone from the church to make an observation post that still remains.*



Campaign map inside the base of Montfaucon Monument.

The American attack on September 26, 1918 at 5:30 a.m. involved three divisions. The 4<sup>th</sup> Division of the regular Army, and the 37<sup>th</sup> Division made up of Ohio and West Virginia National Guard units, were to push through the flanks of the peak to isolate it. Both divisions had to cross ground with numerous trench lines and barbed wire, all covered by the fortified villages of Malancourt and Montfaucon. The morning

was foggy and a smoke screen added to the murky atmosphere. The 4<sup>th</sup> advanced on the east flank and the 37<sup>th</sup> on the west flank. Directly to the south the 79<sup>th</sup> Division made the main assault toward Montfaucon. They took Malancourt by 7:30 a.m. and pushed on. In some areas the ground was a muddy moonscape of craters from years of shelling, and the preparatory bombardment had failed to cut the wire. The attacks bogged down half way to Montfaucon. Units advancing behind the assault battalions cleared the pockets of resistance after the fog lifted. The 37<sup>th</sup> and 79<sup>th</sup> were held up, but the 4<sup>th</sup> pushed north most of the way to Nantillois, halting in the Bois de Septsarges.

On the second day of the attack the 79<sup>th</sup> was already advancing at 4 a.m. They bypassed strongpoints and headed for the crest. They reached the base of the Montfaucon by 9:30 a.m. The 313<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment made the final assault with three battalions. One came straight up the hill while the other two enveloped the town from east and west. The Germans began to retreat. Montfaucon was in American hands by noon on September 27.



The entrance to the Montfaucon Monument includes a description of the significance of the site.



Top of Montfaucon Monument.



Church ruins adjacent to Montfaucon.



# Stop 2

## Getting to Stop 2:

Leave the west side of the parking lot toward Nantillois on D15A, take the next left. At the intersection in town by the bus stop, turn right toward Nantillois. Stay on D15 as it bends to the three-way crossroad, and turn left (north) on D15. Go straight at the crossroad in Nantillois on D15. Around 2.4 km north of Nantillois you will come to a broad farm meadow with woods around it. The farm buildings at the far end are Madeleine Farm. You can pull off into the field roads, or the road just before the farm that leads to a German cemetery.

## Madeleine Farm

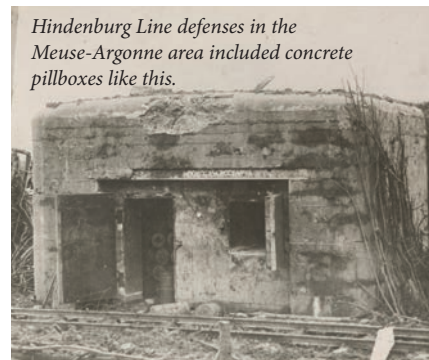
The Madeleine Farm consists of the farm buildings to the north of you. The farm was fortified with communication trenches leading into the woods behind it, the Bois de Cunel. The Bois de Cunel hid concrete Hindenburg Line defenses and concealed the approach of German counterattack battalions.

The 4<sup>th</sup> and 79<sup>th</sup> Divisions stormed into the area on the second day of the offensive, but stalled here in hard fighting. The divisions

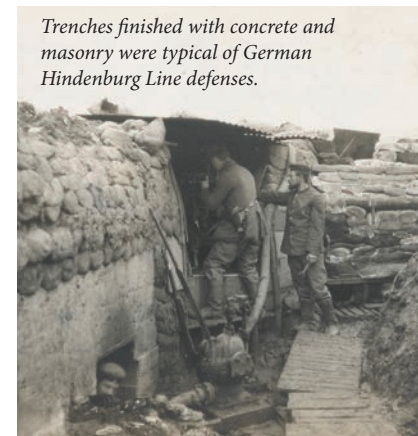
attacked the farm with tank support starting on September 28, 1918, but had to retreat. The forest to the south and east of the road is the Bois des Ogons, which traded hands between Germans and the two American divisions on September 28 and 29. The wooded hill to the southwest of the clearing is Hill 250, which was taken by the 79<sup>th</sup> on September 28, but lost to counterattack.



Ruins of Madeleine Farm after the battle.



Hindenburg Line defenses in the Meuse-Argonne area included concrete pillboxes like this.



Trenches finished with concrete and masonry were typical of German Hindenburg Line defenses.

On the night of October 5, Hill 250 was retaken by the 3<sup>rd</sup> Division in heavy fighting. The Bois des Ogons was finally consolidated by the 80<sup>th</sup> Division on October 6. The north-south road was the divisional boundary for the 3<sup>rd</sup> Division on the left, and the 80<sup>th</sup> Division. On October 9, both divisions attacked and seized the Bois de Cunel. Heavy artillery had

bombarded the farm and Hindenburg Line positions for several days. The 3<sup>rd</sup> Division crossed the road to take the farm. Both divisions moved north beyond the woods toward Cunel and the Madeleine Farm became 3<sup>rd</sup> Division Headquarters.



View of Madeleine Farm, 2018.



# Stop 3

## Getting to Stop 3:

Continue 1.6 km north on the D15 from Madeleine Farm. There is a field road to pull off into on the left across from some woods. Park with hazards on and walk out on the road a little to the west.

## Cunel Overlook

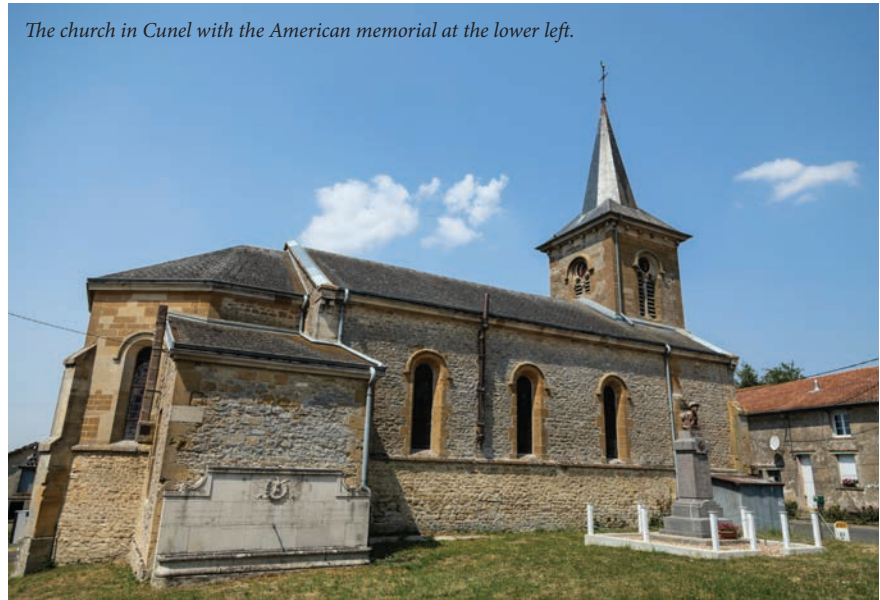
The town to the north is Cunel. It was attacked at different times by three American divisions – the 80<sup>th</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, and 5<sup>th</sup> – beginning on October 9, 1918. The wooded hill behind it concealed a fortified German strongpoint, Bois de la Pultiere. From there, German counterattacks retook Cunel several times. Cunel and the Bois de la Pultiere were finally taken by the 5<sup>th</sup> on October 14. After the war, several divisions left a series of markers in the path of their advance. Behind you, down the road about 45 meters toward Madeleine Farm, is a marker of the 5<sup>th</sup> Division under

a tree on the west side of the road. While traveling to the next stop, you may wish to visit the church in Cunel which has a memorial to “Three American Citizens who died for Liberty.”

★

*The wooded hill ...  
concealed a fortified  
German strongpoint,  
Bois de la Pultiere.*

*Soldiers passing through Cunel, October 1918.*



*The church in Cunel with the American memorial at the lower left.*



*The 5th Division monument.*



*The memorial is dedicated to three Americans from Boston who lost their lives in the fighting here.*



# Stop 4

## Getting to Stop 4:

Continue north on D15 into Cunel and turn right (north) at the intersection by the church on D15. Passing over the ridge, you will see a large grain elevator ahead. Pull off to the right at the field road entrance just before the drive to the silo. Turn on your hazards.

## Bantheville

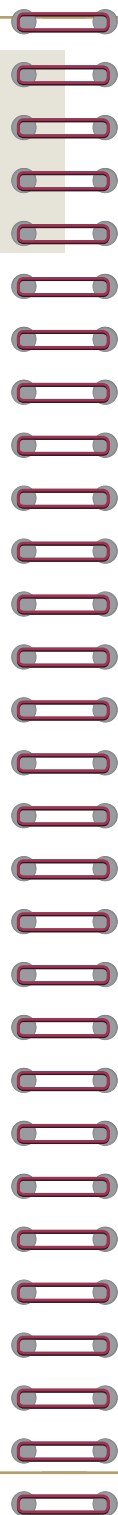
Immediately next to your car is a small obelisk for the 5<sup>th</sup> Division, marking its position from here through the woods which ran east toward the Meuse River. The town in the valley beyond the woods to the northeast is Aincreville. The town at the bottom of the hill is Bantheville, and the wooded hill beyond is the Bois de Bantheville.



*With the town covered on three sides, they prepared a complex attack.*



The 5th Division monument at Bantheville.



The 5<sup>th</sup> was a Regular Army unit. A brigade of the division with reinforced artillery support seized the Bois des Rappes on October 21, 1918 and fought off a counterattack from Aincreville. The other brigade of the division then attempted to take Bantheville, but was driven off. On the night of October 21, this was the sentry line of the division's right wing—the limit of its advance. Patrols headed south from here to reach the left-hand brigade on the south side of Bantheville. That night, the 5<sup>th</sup> was replaced on the line by the 90<sup>th</sup> Division, part of which took over the Bois de Bantheville from the 89<sup>th</sup> Division. With the town covered on three sides, they prepared a complex attack.

American machine gunners of the 90<sup>th</sup> in the Bois de Bantheville covered the fields north and northwest of the town. Harassing artillery fire was laid on suspected positions in the fields, and bombardments were laid on Aincreville and the woods on the skyline

The 5th Division monument is dedicated to Maj. James Rivet who lost his life in fighting near here.



to the north. One battalion descended on Bantheville from the Bois de Bantheville, and another from the south. They took the town quickly, and pushed north to a line roughly from the north tip of the Bois de Bantheville to the tip of the Bois des Rappes to the northeast. For the next few days, patrols and local attacks occupied the division.

At this time the American First Army had completed its first part of the Meuse-Argonne Offensive by establishing a line from several kilometers east of here on the Meuse River to a link-up with French forces at Grandpre at the north end of the Argonne Forest. On November 1 and 4, the 90<sup>th</sup> made sweeping attacks that marched 5 km north of the Bois de Bantheville in the west, to the far side of the forest beyond Aincreville. From there they overlooked the Meuse River. The division went on to cross the Meuse in several places before the Armistice on November 11.

Maj. Rivet is buried in Meuse-Argonne American Cemetery.



## Stop 5 >



# Stop 5

## Getting to Stop 5:

Drive down the hill into Bantheville and turn left toward Romagne and the sign that reads American Cemetery at the intersection with D998. Turn left just past the church in Romagne toward the American cemetery. At the next intersection, turn left toward the Meuse-Argonne American Cemetery, which is 0.4 km ahead. Drive through the gate and bear left up the hill toward the visitor center.

## Meuse-Argonne American Cemetery

This is the largest American World War I cemetery, and lies on land captured from German forces by the 5<sup>th</sup> and 32<sup>nd</sup> Divisions. A temporary cemetery was established here in mid-October of 1918. There are more than 14,000 Americans interred here, including more than 450 whose identities are unknown. Nearly 1,000 names are recorded on the Tablets of the Missing. Among the tablets are names of the missing of the American Expeditionary Forces' Services of Supply, and the missing from American operations in Northern Russia.

★

*This is the largest American World War I cemetery, and lies on land captured from German forces...*

The best way to begin the visit is with a stop in the visitor center. Newly renovated in 2016, the building includes exhibits, films and digital interactives that help tell the story of the Meuse-Argonne Offensive. Entrance is free and reservations are not required.

Visitor Center.



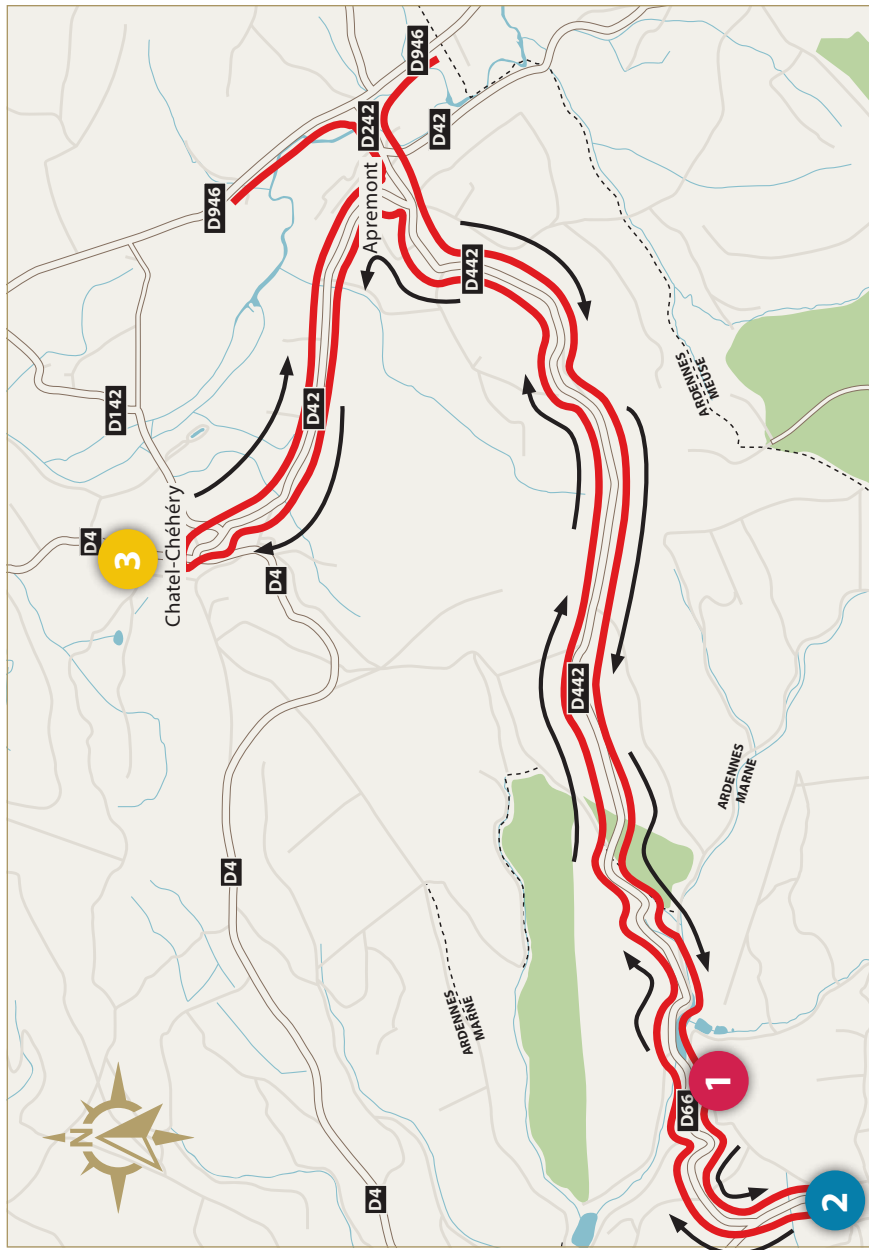
Top: More than 14,000 Americans are interred at Meuse-Argonne American Cemetery. Bottom left: Over 900 names are inscribed upon the Walls of the Missing in the chapel. Bottom right: The visitor center includes World War I artifacts along with a battlefield experience film.

### - End of tour -

Return through Romagne to the D998, and turn south. In Charpentry the road bends left then right. Where the D998 meets the D946, turn south on D946 toward Varennes. In Neuville-en-Argonne at the intersection by the church, turn right just past the monument on D998. Stay on the D998 until you come to the Autoroute de l'Est in Auzéville-en-Argonne (A4).



# HEROES OF THE ARGONNE FOREST: THE LOST BATTALION, 368<sup>TH</sup> INFANTRY, & SERGEANT YORK



## Stop 1

### Getting to the Lost Battalion:

From Stop 4 (Captain Harry Truman) on the Meuse-Argonne Offensive I tour, return south on D946 and take the first right on D242 toward Apremont on the D142. Turn left at the “T” intersection by the bridge toward D946. In about 2.75 km turn right on D242 toward Apremont. Go straight through Apremont. At the intersection with the small shrine, you will bear right on D442 toward Binarville. In 6.5 km, you will see a reservoir downhill to your left. At the end of the reservoir, past the bridge, pull off left at the small monument.

### The Lost Battalion Monument

This monument commemorates soldiers of the 307<sup>th</sup> and 308<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiments and the 306<sup>th</sup> Machine Gun Battalion, all units of the 77<sup>th</sup> Division, who fought while surrounded by the enemy from October 2-7, 1918. This “Lost Battalion” of 463 officers and men was under the command of Maj. Charles Whittlesey. They advanced on October 2 and dug in near here when stopped by enemy fire. They were isolated because the other troops of the division failed to reach their objectives. For the next five days they were surrounded, under constant attack, and accidentally shelled by their own artillery. They had to take food and ammunition from their fallen comrades, and their only water source was under constant German fire.



The French Lost Battalion Monument, with Cher Ami perched atop a Doughboy helmet.

*For the next five days  
they were surrounded,  
under constant attack,  
and accidentally shelled by  
their own artillery.*



These elements were dug into a defensive position of roughly 320 meters by 70 meters. Communicating with runners became impossible, and they had to resort to their limited supply of homing pigeons. Two of their three pigeons fell to enemy rifle fire. When American artillery accidentally started firing on their position, they desperately sent this message with the last pigeon, Cher Ami:

*“We are along the road parallèll [sic] to 276.4. Our own artillery is dropping a barrage directly on us. For heavens sake stop it.”*

Cher Ami was hit by fire, but delivered the message despite losing an eye and leg.



*Cher Ami was hit by fire but delivered the message despite losing an eye and leg.*

When finally reached by American forces on October 6, the battalion had suffered more than 50 percent casualties. Whittlesey and six of his soldiers were awarded the Medal of Honor.

The actual site is 0.5 km back the way you came. There is a small pull out on the right by a short stone pillar with an inscription and an arrow pointing down the hill.



*Lt. Col. Charles Whittlesey, having been promoted for his leadership, receives the Medal of Honor from Gen. Clarence Edwards.*



ABMC Lost Battalion Marker.



*Above: Survivors of the “Lost Battalion.” Below: This landscape shows part of the position of the isolated companies of the 77<sup>th</sup> Division.*



# Stop 2

## Getting to Binarville:

From the Lost Battalion Monument, drive up the hill in the opposite direction of the reservoir. In 1.5 km there will be a monument dedicated to the French 9th Cuirassiers, who fought alongside the 368th Infantry. Take a left at the stop sign and continue on D63. In 600 m, enter Binarville. A French World War I monument will be on the right. Park on the street near the monument.

## 368th Regiment at Binarville

At the outset of the Meuse-Argonne Offensive, the 368th Infantry Regiment, 92nd Division, served as a liaison unit between the American First Army and the French Fourth Army. In this capacity, the 368th was situated on the extreme left flank of the Americans, and the extreme right of the French. As with other African-American combat units of the segregated American Army, the 368th served under French command (see African Americans in the American Expeditionary Forces).

On September 26th, 1918, the 368th, supported by the 351st Machine Gun Battalion, attacked north through the Argonne Forest. After four days of fighting, the regiment captured the town of Binarville. On October 1st the 368th was withdrawn from the line. In total the 92nd Division suffered 270 casualties during the battle. For its role in the offensive, the 92nd Division is honored at the Montfaucon Monument, which is described in the Meuse-Argonne Offensive II chapter, and is about a 25 minute drive from here.



The 368th Infantry marches toward Binarville. Note the camouflage over the road.



Traffic on badly shelled roads slowed the advance of the 368th.

Stop 3 >



# Stop 3

## Getting to the Sergeant York Tour at Chatel-Chéhéry:

Return to Apremont and, at the intersection with the shrine, turn left on D42 toward Chatel-Chéhéry. The road curves left by the church and town hall. Bear right at the fork by the pines, and go straight at the second fork with a shrine and bench on the right. At the “T” intersection in Chatel-Chéhéry, turn right and look for the town hall (Mairie) on the left. It has a plaque in front in dark stone with the name “YORK” on it.

## Sgt. York Trail

It is possible to go to the area of Sgt. Alvin York’s action. It is further down this road on the left. There is a sign marking the entrance to the footpath.



Right: Sgt. Alvin York wearing his Medal of Honor, and the French Croix de Guerre. Below: In Chatel-Chéhéry, German prisoners are loaded on trucks to be taken to the rear.



## The Action of Sgt. Alvin York

On October 8, 1918, York, then a corporal in the 82<sup>nd</sup> Division, was with a patrol broken up by heavy German fire. Trying to outflank a machine gun in dense woods, they unknowingly penetrated the German frontline. They surprised and captured several groups of Germans, including some officers eating breakfast. Returning with their prisoners, they were attacked by machine gunners who killed a number of the Americans and captive Germans. York and seven men prepared to fight their way out. The patrol surprised another German officer who surrendered with

50 men. In multiple fighting encounters, York killed more than two dozen of the enemy. Prisoners were formed into a column carrying the wounded and were marched back to American lines through German positions. At York’s prompting, the captured officers encouraged the surrender of more Germans. By the time they returned to American lines, York and the seven privates had captured 132 Germans, including a battalion commander and two other officers. York was promoted to sergeant and awarded the Medal of Honor.

Two wounded soldiers enjoying refreshments from the Red Cross station at Chatel-Chéhéry.



## - Return to Apremont -

Return south on the D4 and turn left on D42 toward Apremont. At the square with the church and town hall in Apremont follow the road right. At the intersection with the shrine, turn hard left on D242. Follow the D242 to the “T” intersection and turn left (north). Resume with “Getting to Stop 5” on the Meuse-Argonne Offensive I Tour.





Monument to the 339th Infantry Regiment "Polar Bears" in White Chapel Cemetery, Troy, Michigan.

## AMERICAN EXPEDITIONARY FORCES FARTHER AFIELD: OPERATIONS IN ITALY AND RUSSIA

### American Expeditionary Forces Italy

In response to the catastrophe at Caporetto, Italy, in October 1917, the Italian government requested support from the United States; President Wilson asked General Pershing to support the request. In July 1918, Pershing sent one regiment, the 332nd Infantry, from the skeletonized 83rd Division, with attached medical and supply units, to the Italian front. Its principal missions were to build up Italian morale and to destabilize enemy morale by creating the impression that a large force of Americans had been committed in support of the Italian Army.

The regiment was first stationed near Lake Garda, where it trained in methods of mountain warfare adapted to the terrain that comprised the greater part of the

Italian theater of operations. Early in October, the regiment moved to Treviso, behind the Piave River Front, where it was assigned to the Italian 31st Division.

Focused on deceiving the Austrians of the size of the American force, the regiment staged a series of marches in which each battalion, with different articles of uniform and equipment, left the city by a separate road, circulated during daylight hours in exposed positions for both the Italians and Austrians to see, and returned after nightfall to its station at Treviso in as inconspicuous a manner as possible. The ruse worked perfectly, and convinced the Austrians that several divisions of Americans had arrived in Italy.

On October 24, the opening day of the Italian Vittorio-Veneto offensive, the Italian 31st Division, with the 332nd Infantry attached, was in reserve. It joined in the



Soldiers of the 332nd Infantry Regiment throwing grenades in Italy.



pursuit of the fleeing Austrians on October 29 as part of the British XIV Corps of the Italian Tenth Army. On November 3, after several hard marches, the 332nd established contact with an enemy rear-guard battalion that was defending the crossings of the Tagliamento River near the village of Ponte-della-Delizia.

Early on November 4 the 2nd Battalion crossed the river on a narrow footbridge, and after a brief fight captured the Austrian position on the far side. Continuing to move forward along the Treviso-Udine railroad, the 2nd Battalion occupied the town of Codroipo, where it took possession of large stores of munitions and supplies.

At 3:00 p.m., November 4, when the armistice between Italy and Austria-Hungary became effective, the leading American elements were at Villorba.

After this Armistice the American troops formed part of the Allied forces stationed in Austria, along the Dalmatian coast and in Montenegro. In March 1919, the regiment was assembled in Genoa, and on April 3 its last elements embarked from that seaport for the United States.



*Capt. Fiorello La Guardia.*

In addition to this American infantry force, 30 American ambulance sections, a base hospital and 54 airplane pilots served with the Italian Army.

The American pilots, including New York politician Captain Fiorello La Guardia, served as members of Italian bombardment squadrons, engaged in bombing raids behind the Austrian lines, being especially active during the progress of the Vittorio-Veneto offensive.



*Troops of the 332nd crossing a pontoon bridge over the Piave River.*



*An outpost of the 339th Infantry in North Russia.*

## American Expeditionary Forces North Russia

Prior to the collapse of the Russian Empire in 1917, huge quantities of military supplies had been assembled in the northern part of Russia at the ports of Archangel and Murmansk. The Allied Supreme War Council believed that troops should be sent to secure these ports for the use of the Allies and to save the supplies located there. Consequently, an Allied force under British command was dispatched by sea and on August 3, 1918, seized the city of Archangel and drove the Bolshevik troops to the south.

The British Government urged American participation in the expedition and directed the American Expeditionary Forces to send three battalions of infantry and three companies of engineers to join this Allied expedition. The 339th Infantry Regiment was designated along with the 1st Battalion, 310th Engineers, 337th Field Hospital and 337th Ambulance Company, all from the 85th Division.

The units sailed from England and arrived in Northern Russia on September 4. Operating under British command, the contingent was soon split up in isolated detachments protecting, with Allied troops and Russian volunteers, the vital points on the railroads and rivers that were the main avenues of approach to the coast.

The Americans were spread out over a 450-mile front and in some places were over 200 miles from their main base at Archangel.

The American soldiers soon participated in the fighting, their first casualties occurring on September 16 in the general area to the south of Obozerskaya. During their service in Russia, the American troops conducted many small operations under arduous conditions, intensified by the deep snow, intense cold, darkness of winter in the Arctic Zone, and the long lines of communication, which were in constant danger of being cut by the enemy.

During January 1919, the Bolsheviks launched an offensive northward between





*American soldiers in a remote outpost.*

the Dvina River and the railroad, forcing the evacuation of Ust-Padenga, Shenkursk and Shegovari after heavy fighting. This caused the Allies to establish a new line of defense and more widely dispersed American forces.

In March, severe fighting developed around Bolshie-Ozerki, and in May a long-threatened attack in the vicinity of the Vaga River, 18 miles southeast of the town of Bereznik, was repulsed.

During April 1919, the American 167th and 168th Railroad Transportation Companies joined the expedition, operating mainly in the Murmansk region in combat support.

The American withdrawal began in late May 1919. Units were assembled at Archangel and sailed for France, being replaced by British troops newly arrived from England and Russian soldiers.

On August 5, the headquarters of the American force in Northern Russia was officially closed.

In the opinion of the senior American officer, the expedition was not particularly well managed and his troops were subjected to needless hardships.

More than 400 casualties were suffered by this small American force, most of them occurring after the Armistice. In spite of this and the trying nature of their service, however, the American units performed their duties with great fortitude and bravery.



*The 339th braved extreme elements during the "Polar Bear" Expedition.*



*American forces parading through Vladivostok, Siberia.*

## American Expeditionary Forces Siberia

In order to secure the railroad line near Vladivostok, relieve the Czechoslovak troops guarding railroad stations, and secure Allied supplies, General Pershing ordered the Regular Army's 27th and 31st Infantry Regiments from Hawaii and the Philippines respectively. The first troops disembarked in Vladivostok in mid-August, and they were quickly assigned guard duty along segments of the railway between Vladivostok and Nikolsk-Ussuriski in the north.



*An American and Russian soldier in front of a captured Red Army armored train near Lake Baikal, Siberia.*

General William Graves, the expedition commander, believed his mission in Siberia was to provide protection for American-supplied property and to help the Czechoslovak Legion evacuate Russia, a mission that did not include fighting against the Bolsheviks. Repeatedly calling for restraint, Graves often clashed with commanders of British, French and Japanese forces, who also had troops in the region and who wanted him to take a more active part in the military intervention in Siberia.

Later, in order to operate the Trans-Siberian Railroad, the Russian Railway Service Corps was formed of U.S. personnel.

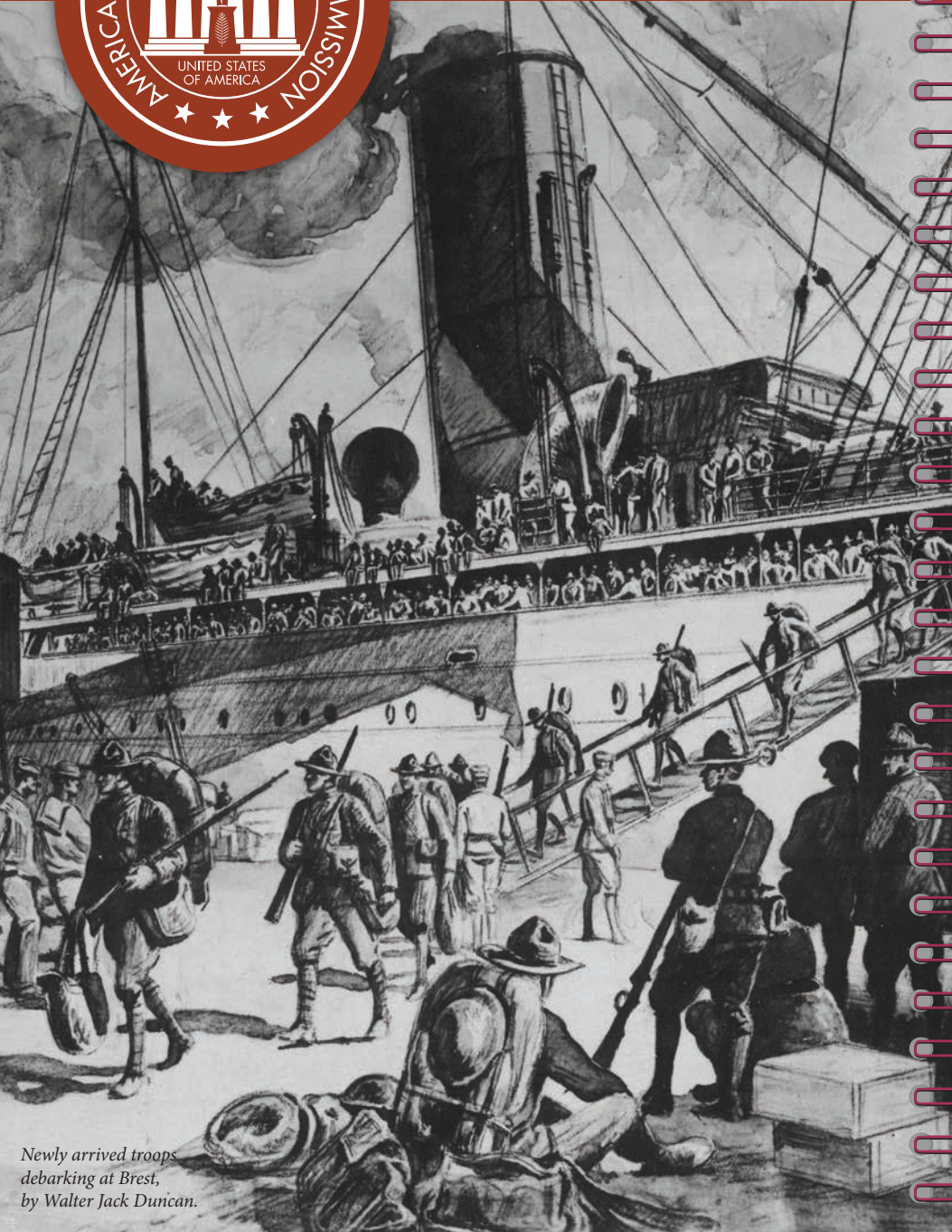
The experience in Siberia was miserable. Problems with fuel, ammunition, supplies and food were widespread. Horses accustomed to temperate climates were unable to function in sub-zero Russia. Water-cooled machine guns froze and became useless.

The last American soldiers left Siberia on April 1, 1920. During their 19 months in Siberia, 189 soldiers of the force lost their lives.





## SUSTAINING THE AMERICAN EXPEDITIONARY FORCES: SUPPORT FOR THE FIGHT



*Tours American Monument.*

By the time of the Armistice, more than two million American military personnel had arrived in Europe to serve in the American Expeditionary Forces (AEF). Sustaining so large a force at such trans-oceanic distances was a mammoth undertaking, and historically unprecedented. Over 1.2 million Americans fought in the Meuse-Argonne Offensive, thousands of miles and an ocean away from the camps in which they had mustered and trained. Seven American Battle Monuments Commission (ABMC) sites capture major portions of this sweeping story: the Naval Monuments at Brest and Gibraltar, the American

Cemeteries at Brookwood and Suresnes, the Tours Monument, and the Chaumont and Souilly Markers. Other ABMC World War I sites reflect the battlefield effects of this sustainment at the front end.

When the United States entered World War I in April 1917, the Allies were at risk of defeat. The Germans had resumed unrestricted submarine warfare in the expectation that they could win the war before the United States could effectively intervene. Their calculus included sinking vital Allied shipping faster than it could be replaced and intercepting convoys carrying American troops. British authorities told





American troops passing through London, July 1917.

American Admiral William S. Sims, who would soon be the Commander in Chief of U.S. Naval Forces in European waters, that the Germans were sinking close to one million tons of shipping a month. If this continued it would be difficult for Britain to continue to wage war.

Sims arranged for the immediate dispatch of American destroyers to Europe, followed by further destroyers, small cruisers, revenue cutters, gunboats and even converted yachts. He established major U.S. bases at Queenstown, Ireland, Brest, France, and Gibraltar. The Allies initiated a comprehensive program of escorted trans-oceanic convoys in June 1917. Airplanes and dirigibles assisted ships on anti-submarine patrol in coastal waters. Shipping losses plummeted, and were replaceable, particularly since better convoy escort generally resulted in rescued crews.

With the German U-Boat threat under control, the U.S. Navy's Cruiser and Transport service began shipping American troops overseas. The Naval Overseas Transportation Service took responsibility for shipping their supplies. General John J. Pershing, Commanding General of the AEF, decided early on that Lorraine would be an appropriate sector for the independent American army he envisioned fielding. Rail lines running east from Brest and the Biscay ports and north from Marseille could support forces in Lorraine, while avoiding the congestion of the Channel ports supporting the British or the French concentrations around Paris. The naval bases at Brest and Gibraltar were ideally positioned to protect the maritime approaches to these routes.

About half of the American forces sent to France sailed in American or French-controlled ships. The other half sailed in British-controlled ships. American and French ships generally sailed directly to France. British ships generally sailed to ports along Great Britain's west coast, such as Liverpool. From there arriving American troops and supplies travelled by rail to Channel ports, most notably Southampton, then re-embarked for France. U.S. logistical facilities sprang up to support this traffic, in addition to the naval forces already based in Great Britain. England became the rear support area for American forces serving with the British in France and Belgium, playing particularly important roles with respect to specialized training and hospitalization. Over 2,000 Americans died in the British Isles from various causes during World War I. Many are buried in the Brookwood American Cemetery.

Once American troops and supplies were ashore in France, the monumental task of moving and sustaining them fell to the AEF Services of Supply. This sprawling enterprise ultimately numbered over 600,000 military and 24,000 civilian personnel. Across France it built thousands of barracks and hundreds of kilometers of rail lines, and supported a massive expenditure of small arms and artillery rounds. It supervised an expansive network of nine base sections, an intermediate section, and an advanced section. The headquarters for all of this was located in Tours.



Paris, the capital of France, attracted a concentration of administrative and logistical facilities. Many of these assisted with operational and logistical coordination with French counterparts. Others facilitated rest and recreation. Paris was particularly noted for its concentration of hospitals, to which many of the more severely wounded American soldiers were evacuated. Of those who died, many were buried in the Suresnes American Cemetery. For more on Suresnes, see the “Paris: City of Light” chapter.

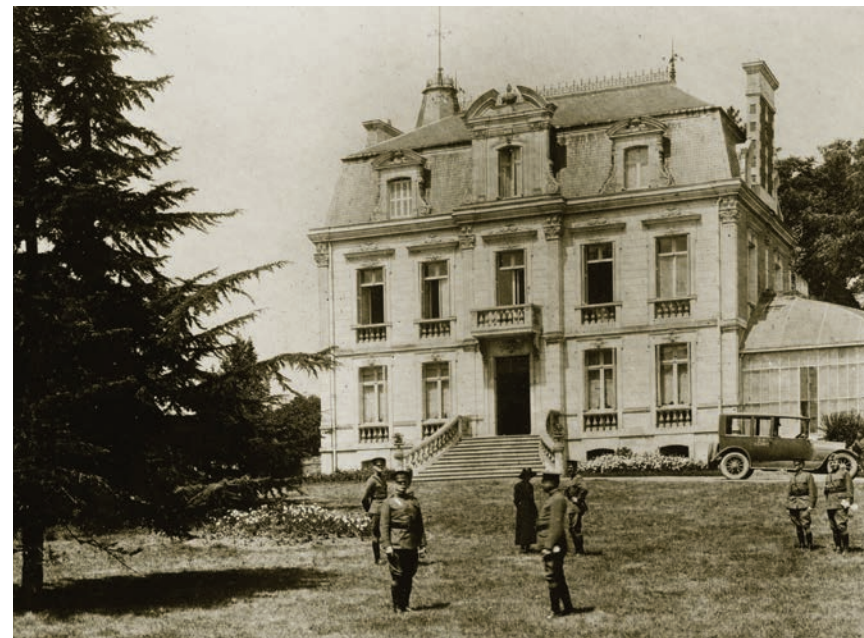
The Services of Supply, headquartered in Tours, coordinated the quartermaster, engineer, ordnance, signal, transportation and medical branches. It controlled the movements of personnel and material from the ports to delivery points in the forward areas designated by the General Headquarters of the AEF. That headquarters was in Chaumont, and governed the critical interface between the largely strategic and industrial activities of the Services of Supply and the largely operational and tactical activities of the forward armies. By November 1918, the AEF fielded three armies. The U.S. First Army, activated in August 1918, saw the most action. Armies are the point at which personnel and supplies have reached the “front”. The headquarters of the U.S. First Army was in Souilly.

The ABMC sites discussed in this chapter reflect a vast sustainment effort flowing from the United States to the Western Front. Guarded by naval forces based in Brest, Gibraltar and elsewhere, convoys streamed across the Atlantic Ocean.



*Brookwood American Cemetery.*

About half of these landed in Great Britain, crossed it by rail, and re-embarked to cross the Channel. Brookwood American Cemetery and Memorial honors those who died in route, or in Great Britain for other reasons. Once ashore in France, personnel and supplies came under the control of the expansive Services of Supply, headquartered in Tours. They were pushed forward into the advanced sector, directly controlled by the AEF Headquarters in Chaumont, and then into the armies, most notably the U.S. First Army headquartered in Souilly. If severely wounded, soldiers might well be evacuated to hospitals around Paris, proximate to a cemetery at Suresnes. The geographical scope of these sites speaks to the grandeur of the logistical achievement.



*The Chateau Beaulieu, headquarters of the SOS in Tours.*

*The General Headquarters of the AEF in Chaumont, with the dedicatory plaque.*



**Sustainment Sites >**





## Site 1

### Getting to the Naval Monument at Brest:

The monument stands 800 meters southwest of the Gare de Brest along the Cours Dajot, on ramparts of the city overlooking the harbor.

### Naval Monument at Brest

Brest was the main base in France of the United States Navy during World War I, and also the principal port of debarkation for American troops and supplies. More than 700,000 members of the AEF arrived through Brest. The westernmost of France's major ports, it was served by rail lines that led directly through Tours and Bourges into Lorraine. These transportation links avoided the congestion around Paris and the Channel ports, and proved ideal to support such offensives as St. Mihiel and the Meuse-Argonne.

Over 30 U.S. destroyers supported by auxiliary craft were based in Brest. These were heavily involved in escorting convoys to and from French ports. The Naval Air Service flew planes and dirigibles in support of these surface forces. The commitment and focus of the convoy escorts proved invaluable. For example, during July and August of 1918 over 3 million tons of shipping was escorted in and out of French ports by U.S. vessels based in Brest. The loss rate was less than a tenth of a percent.



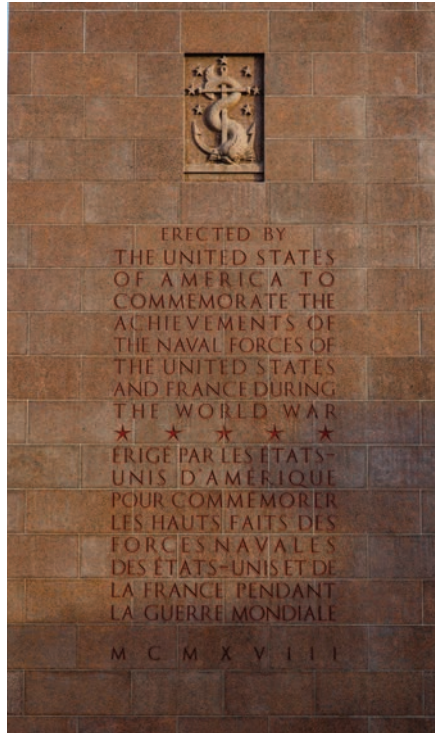
American troops arriving in Brest, April 1918.



Brest became a major logistical establishment in its own right. Base Section 5 of the Services of Supply set up extensive depots to handle arriving supplies and equipment. Vehicles received particular attention, as they were reassembled here after shipment before being pushed on to serve in forward units or along the lines of communication. The Services of Supply built billets, including those at Camp Pontanezen, the entry and exit point in France for tens of thousands of Doughboys.

During World War II, furious fighting in the city destroyed the Naval Monument at Brest. ABMC rebuilt the monument according to the original specifications in the 1950s.

The monument itself is a rectangular rose-colored shaft of Brittany granite rising 145 feet above the terrace upon which it is based. Its four sides are ornamented with sculptured items of nautical interest. A small but attractive park surrounds its base.



Detail of the inscription on the monument.



Naval hospital in Brest.



Naval Monument at Brest



## Site 2

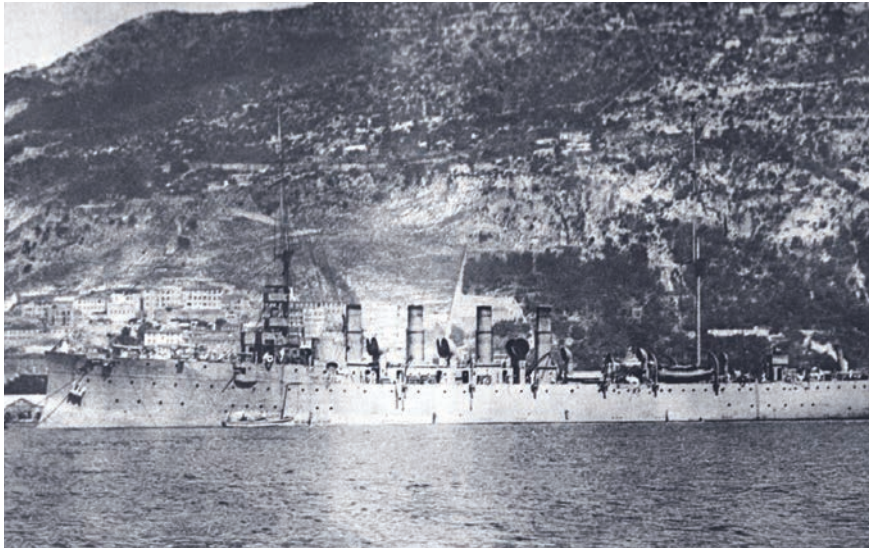
### Getting to the Naval Monument at Gibraltar:

The Naval Monument at Gibraltar is located on the Line Wall Road.

### Naval Monument at Gibraltar

Gibraltar, over-watching the critical straits that connect the Atlantic Ocean to the Mediterranean Sea, was a major base for both the United State Navy and the British Royal Navy during World War I. The United States contingent operating from Gibraltar included cruisers, destroyers, Coast Guard cutters and submarine chasers. Its primary responsibility was anti-submarine warfare, in particular the escort of Allied vessels to and from ports in France and Great Britain.

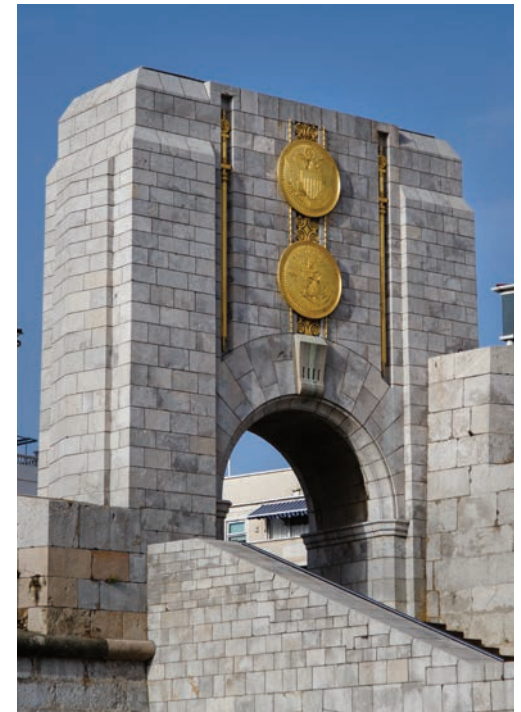
To support its operations in Lorraine, the AEF depended heavily on ports along the Bay of Biscay and the Mediterranean coast of France. Marseille was the principal French port in the Mediterranean. U.S. Navy forces based in Gibraltar played a crucial role in protecting this traffic. For example, during July and August 1918 they escorted twenty-five per cent of all Allied convoys to Mediterranean French ports and seventy per cent of all convoys from the vicinity of Gibraltar to English ports. In addition to convoy escort, U.S. Navy forces from Brest also conducted independent and aggressive anti-submarine operations.



A U.S. Navy cruiser in the Mediteranean.

Gibraltar had long been a critical base for Great Britain's Royal Navy. The navies of the United States and Great Britain cooperated extensively throughout the World War I battles for the Atlantic and Mediterranean, and heavily depended upon each other. The Naval Monument at Gibraltar honors the comradeship of the American and British navies as well as the courage, competence and sacrifices of the United States forces serving in and around Gibraltar.

The monument itself is a masonry archway over a flight of steps connecting the historic town of Gibraltar with the extensive naval facilities located at sea level. It is made of stone quarried from the nearby Rock of Gibraltar. Large bronze seals of the United States and the United States Navy Department are affixed above the arch.



Naval Monument at Gibraltar.



Detail of the monument.



# Site 3

## Getting to Brookwood American Cemetery and Memorial:

The Brookwood American Cemetery is open to the public from 9 AM to 5 PM except on December 25 and January 1. It is immediately south of the town of Brookwood, Surrey, England, about thirty miles southwest of London.

## Brookwood American Cemetery and Memorial

As the United States entered World War I, one of the Allies' most urgent priorities was to secure the Atlantic Ocean for the safe movement of troops and supplies. The U.S. Navy quickly developed bases in the British Isles to facilitate that purpose. Queenstown, Ireland became a main base with a contingent of over thirty U. S. destroyers supported by other craft. These escorted a major fraction of the tonnage being shipped into British harbors. Plymouth became a major sub-chaser base, Killingholme a naval air base supporting surveillance in the North Sea, and Berehaven a base for U.S. submarines. A contingent of U.S. battleships joined their British counterparts at Scapa Flow.

Inverness, Scotland became the main base for U.S. naval mining operations, especially the establishment of the expansive North Sea mine belt from Scapa Flow to Norway.

About half of the two million AEF troops travelled in British-controlled ships, which generally sailed to ports on the west coasts of Great Britain such as Liverpool. American soldiers then travelled by train to the English Channel to re-embark for France. U.S. logistical facilities sprang up to facilitate the movement of troops and supplies along this route. A principal port and naval base used for U.S. cross-Channel traffic was Southampton. Coal was a critical fuel for the U.S. Navy and the AEF. A naval headquarters at Cardiff, Wales, administered the procurement and movement of this commodity.



American Red Cross hospital in Liverpool.

As the war progressed, England became a rear area for U.S. forces fighting alongside British forces in Belgium and France. The U.S. 27th and 30th Divisions, for example, served under British command throughout their wartime service – and fought with distinction. Many of the severely wounded and diseased were evacuated back across the English Channel to hospitals in England. American soldiers also trained in facilities scattered throughout the British Isles.

Over 2,000 Americans died in the British Isles during World War I. Others were lost at sea in the waters around the islands. Notable ship losses involving American soldiers and sailors included those of the SS *Tuscania*, the USS *President Lincoln*, the U.S. Coast Guard Cutter *Tampa*, and the HMS *Otranto*. A particularly deadly strain of influenza, the Spanish Flu, broke out in 1918, and contributed heavily to the losses among troops in route to or travelling in Great Britain. By the end of the war, Americans were buried in 99 separate burial grounds throughout the United Kingdom.

The families of 427 Americans who died in the British Isles chose to have their loved ones remain buried overseas. These were gathered into the Brookwood American Cemetery. An additional 41 unknown Americans are buried there as well. Another 563 names are inscribed on the Walls of the Missing in the cemetery's chapel, grim testimony to the numbers of soldiers and sailors lost at sea. Brookwood is the only World War I American Cemetery in which those on the Walls of the Missing outnumber those who are buried in the cemetery.

The Brookwood American Cemetery and Memorial is located within the considerably more expansive Brookwood Cemetery. White marble crosses arranged in four plots surround a cast bronze flagpole. The green lawn is framed by masses of rhododendrons, oak, scotch pine, azaleas and other plants in the manner of an English garden. A small Beaux-Arts chapel constructed of Portland Stone and illuminated by stained glass windows stands at the north end of the cemetery.



Brookwood American Cemetery chapel.

Site 4 >



## Site 4

### Getting to Tours American Monument:

The monument is at the south end of the Pont Wilson, which extends the Rue Nationale of Tours over the Loire River.

### Tours American Monument

On July 5, 1917, General John J. Pershing established the Line of Communication to coordinate the logistics of the AEF. This organization would eventually be designated as the Services of Supply (SOS), and was headquartered in Tours. Over the course of the war more than 600,000 military and 24,000 civilian personnel served in the SOS, which administered Base Sections near major ports, an Intermediate Section with facilities and depots, and an Advance Section near the front.

Major functions of the SOS included administration, construction, procurement and distribution. Administration was complicated not only by the size of the organization, but also by the diversity of its responsibilities. The SOS had to bring unskilled and semi-skilled labor from the United States since France had suffered tremendous manpower losses and was short on labor. More than half of the AEF personnel were non-combatant skilled specialists, or unskilled or semi-skilled laborers. These soldiers served in the SOS, often in engineer, service, stevedore and labor units. Given the segregation and prejudices of the time, many of the units fulfilling these vital roles were African-American.



*Shoes worn out by American troops in Tours, 1918.*

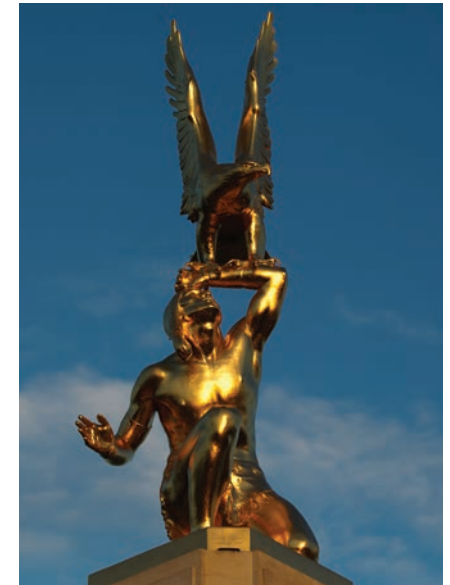
The scope of the SOS building program was enormous. The SOS erected over 16,000 barracks in France, and constructed vast railhead and regulating stations, complete with ample warehousing, combining the functions of major depots and railway yards. In addition to repairing existing rail lines, the SOS constructed hundreds of kilometers of railroad track.

From ports and depots the SOS pushed troops and supplies forward into the Advance Section. Transportation was primarily by rail, but where the rail lines ended, fleets of trucks and wagons took up the load.

By the end of the war, the AEF had expended over 300 million small arms rounds and more than 12 million rounds of artillery – all supplied by the SOS. Moreover, SOS distribution supported a massive medical establishment. SOS-managed hospitals had an overall capacity of more than 190,000 beds.

Procurement required American and Allied produced items. Shipping was constrained, and industrial and agricultural bases had different capabilities. Pershing recruited Charles Dawes, a prominent banker and political leader, to be his general purchasing agent. The Americans were almost totally dependent upon the Allies for such equipment and supplies as combat aircraft, tanks, artillery, machine guns, and artillery ammunition.

The Tours American Monument commemorates the Services of Supply. It is an elegant white stone fountain featuring a column and two large basins. Above the upper basin carved figures represent administration, construction, procurement and distribution. Between the two basins carved coats of arms represent the locations of principal SOS installations: Bordeaux, Brest, Is-sur-Tille, Le Mans, Neufchateau, Nevers, St. Nazaire, and Tours. A gilded statue of an American Indian holding an eagle surmounts the column.



*A gilded statue atop the Tours American Monument.*



# Site 5

## Getting to the Chaumont Marker:

To get to the marker from Paris, exit A5 onto N67, turn right onto D65, and follow the signs to “Chaumont Nord”. The actual address is 1 Avenue du 109eme RI, 52903, Chaumont.

## Chaumont Marker

The General Headquarters of the AEF, organized by General John J. Pershing on July 5, 1917, was a theater headquarters responsible for coordinating and supporting U.S. forces throughout Europe. It did not directly command tactical operations, delegating that responsibility to its constituent armies. It did control the training of U.S. forces, dispersed in divisional training areas throughout southeast France and schools and other facilities throughout Europe. The Services of Supply, subordinate to GHQ, was responsible for sustaining the AEF. GHQ occupied the Damremont Barracks in Chaumont beginning September 1, 1917.

By November 30, 1917, close to 130,000 American military personnel had arrived in France. This nearly doubled to 254,000 by the end of February 1918, more than doubled again to 660,000 by May 31, and doubled again to over 1.2 million by the end of July. More than two million American military personnel had arrived in France by the time of the Armistice. This force was fifteen times as large as the entire United States Army had been nineteen months earlier.



Mechanics repair AEF automobiles in Chaumont.

Pershing aspired to field an independent American army in a sector of its own, but massive German offensives in the spring and early summer of 1918 interrupted his plans. U.S. divisions were deployed under French operational control to fight in such battles as Cantigny, Chateau-Thierry, Belleau Wood, and the containment of the Champagne-Marne Offensive. Eight U.S. Divisions fought under French operational control in the Aisne-Marne Offensive (July 18- August 6) liberating the Chateau-Thierry salient. Even after the U.S. First Army stood up on August 10, U.S. divisions continued to serve under Allied operational command along the Somme, in the Oise-Aisne sector, in Champagne, and in Belgium. The support and sustainment of these widespread forces remained an AEF responsibility.



Pershing was the first commander of the U.S. First Army. The AEF added the U.S. Second Army under Lieutenant General Robert L Bullard in mid-October 1918 and the U.S. Third Army under Major General Joseph T. Dickman on November 7. Lieutenant General Hunter Liggett assumed command of the U.S. First Army on October 16 as Pershing's and GHQ's spans of control expanded to the coordination and sustainment of multiple armies.

The Chaumont Marker is a bronze tablet affixed at the entrance to the Damremont Barracks. It was originally installed by ABMC after World War I. In 1942, during the German occupation of France, the marker was removed. The current marker is a replica of the original. ABMC installed it in 1947.

A Jewish New Years holiday service in Chaumont.

Chaumont Marker.





# Site 6

## Getting to the Souilly Marker:

Driving from Paris on A4, take the Verdun exit and follow the signs to Souilly. The address is Mairie 35, Voie Sacree, Souilly, France.

## Souilly Marker

During World War I, the “field army” was the level of command at which the strategic activities of transportation and supply translated into the operational and tactical activities of the battlefield. An army headquarters included representatives of all the branches and services. The U.S. First Army stood up on August 10, 1918, and established its headquarters at Souilly on September 21. From the beginning, its logistical responsibilities were at least as expansive and consequential as its operational and tactical responsibilities.

St. Mihiel (September 12-16, 1918) was the AEF’s first independent offensive. The U.S. First Army mustered 650,000 troops (of whom 550,000 were Americans) supported by thousands of artillery pieces and hundreds of planes and tanks. This effort was soon overshadowed by the even more massive Meuse-Argonne Offensive (September 26 – November 11, 1918). For this, First Army massed an even greater arsenal. Behind the lines many depots sprung up to support the army’s requirements for ammunition, ordnance, engineer supplies, fuel, food, and water supply. Dozens of evacuation hospitals cared for the wounded.



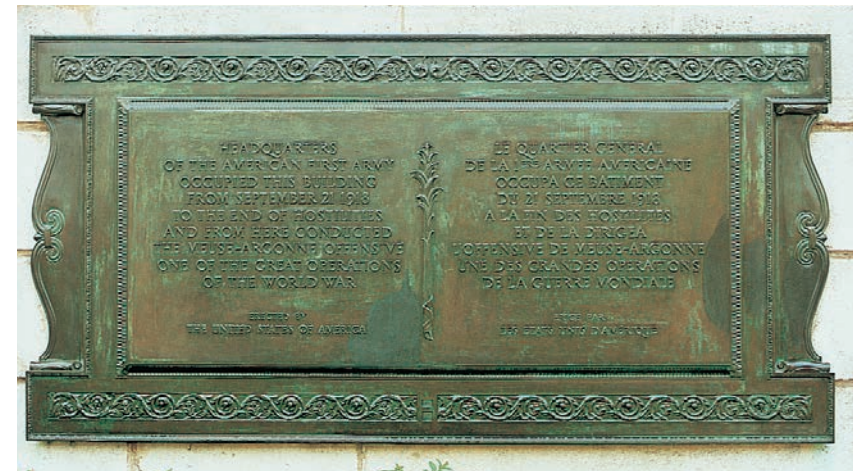
First Army headquarters in Souilly.

U.S. First Army logistical assets were continuously challenged through the six long weeks of the Meuse-Argonne Offensive. In the face of hard fighting and heavy casualties, the offensive paused from time to time to replace exhausted units and lost equipment, restore lines of communication, and stage supplies forward. Renewed major attacks jumped off on October 4, October 14, and November 1. Over 1.2 million American soldiers and thirty divisions were drawn into the campaign. Hundreds of kilometers of railway were constructed on the battlefield to forward massive quantities of ammunition per day.

The Souilly Marker is a bronze tablet affixed on the outer wall of the town hall of Souilly.



A telegraph operator in Souilly.



Souilly Marker.





Central arch of the Lafayette Escadrille Memorial Cemetery.



# PARIS: CITY OF LIGHT

Paris was central to the history of World War I. German offensives threatened Paris in 1914 and 1918, and German aircraft bombed it. Later in the war, the long-range “Paris Gun” shelled the city from 130 km away. Then, between the Armistice and the Treaty of Versailles that ended the war, Paris became the center of diplomatic activity for the world. Yet, throughout the war, Paris captivated Americans for other reasons.

★  
*...between the Armistice and the Treaty of Versailles that ended the war, Paris became the center of diplomatic activity for the world.*

In addition to being the French capital, Paris was an international cultural beacon for performing arts, design, fashion, science, learning, and gastronomy as well as a center of politics and international relations. It possessed venerability of age, energy of youth, and the luster of modernity. Mid-19<sup>th</sup> century urban planning and successive international expositions in 1889 and 1900 made Paris the “City of Light” and yielded enduring architectural icons like the Eiffel Tower. Beaux-Arts and Art Nouveau styles, which were developed in Paris, drew attention to its iconic examples. In the golden age of print and advertising, Paris was an



Temporary barracks for American soldiers on leave in Paris.

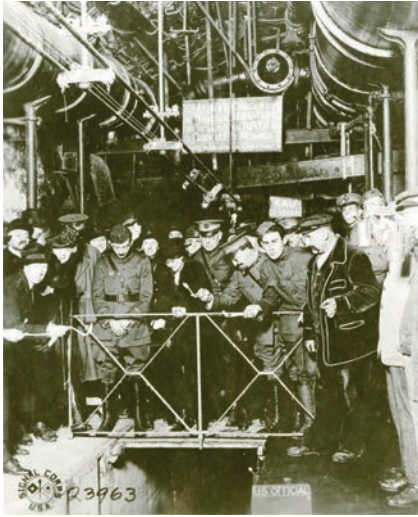


On July 4, 1918 young French women wait to cast flowers on American soldiers.



Marines pose with a Paris taxi in front of the Madeleine Church.





Americans sought out famous Paris attractions. In October 1918 American volunteers, along with active duty service members, gather for a special tour of the sewers of Paris.

international star. Paris was a subject of pioneering popular work in photography and cinema. Even the sewers were considered marvels, and the catacombs a mysterious attraction. The risqué attractions of the “Belle Époque” were well known. Depictions of Bohemian life and cabaret society in literature, art, and imagery found avid audiences, establishing another international Parisian stereotype.

In the United States, France was popular as a beacon of civilization, a fellow democratic republic, and an ally since the American Revolution. French immigrants were better received than most in the United States. Relations between Washington, D.C. and Paris were cordial. There was an American expatriate community in Paris, and a significant presence of college students and seasonal tourists. An American hospital was founded in Paris in 1909.



An American officer in the Paris Catacombs.

★

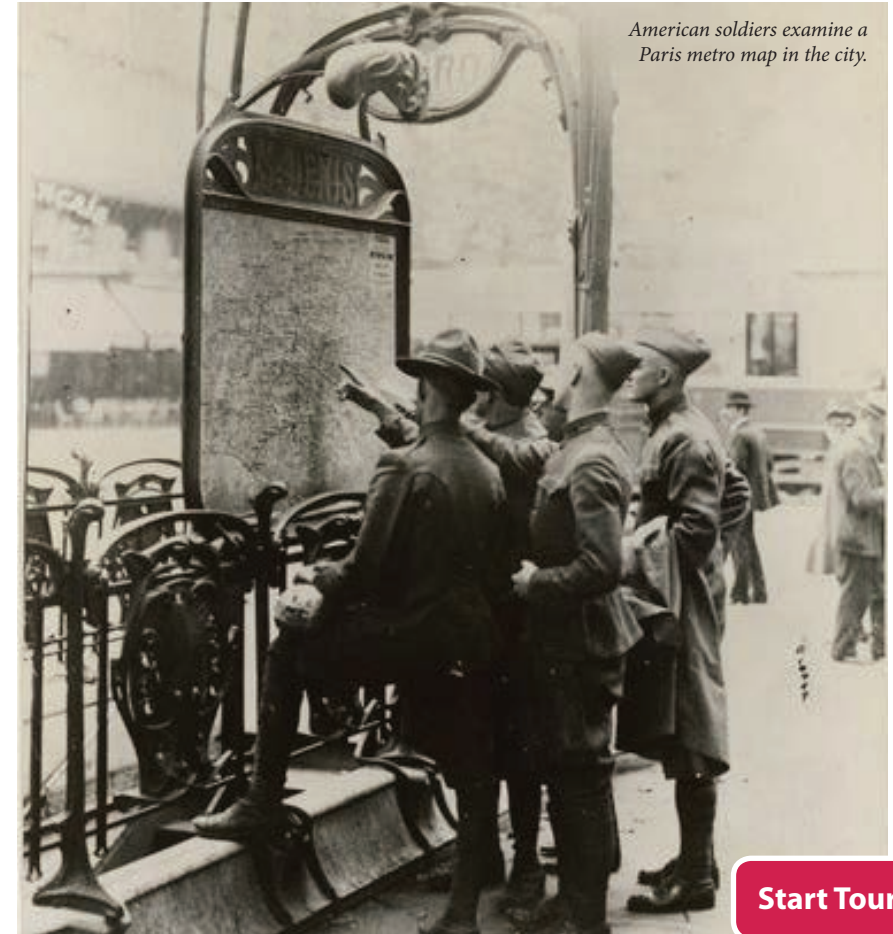
*In the United States,  
France was popular as a  
beacon of civilization, a  
fellow democratic republic,  
and an ancient ally.*

For Americans, nothing was more positively associated with France than Paris. Soldiers, sailors, and officers made their way to the French capital for unique Parisian sites and experiences. Bars and cafés like Harry’s New York Bar and Café de la Paix near the Paris Opéra were popular with Americans. They still exist. The welcome that Parisians extended to Americans was often rapturous. The American Expeditionary Forces, state governments, religious groups, and

organizations like the American Red Cross and YMCA provided an array of services for wartime Americans in Paris. The American Express company went from offering tourist amenities to providing financial services for soldiers. Thousands of American military and civilian personnel worked in Paris. To some, it seemed like the city was awash with Americans.

With the Armistice and negotiations to end the war, President Woodrow Wilson

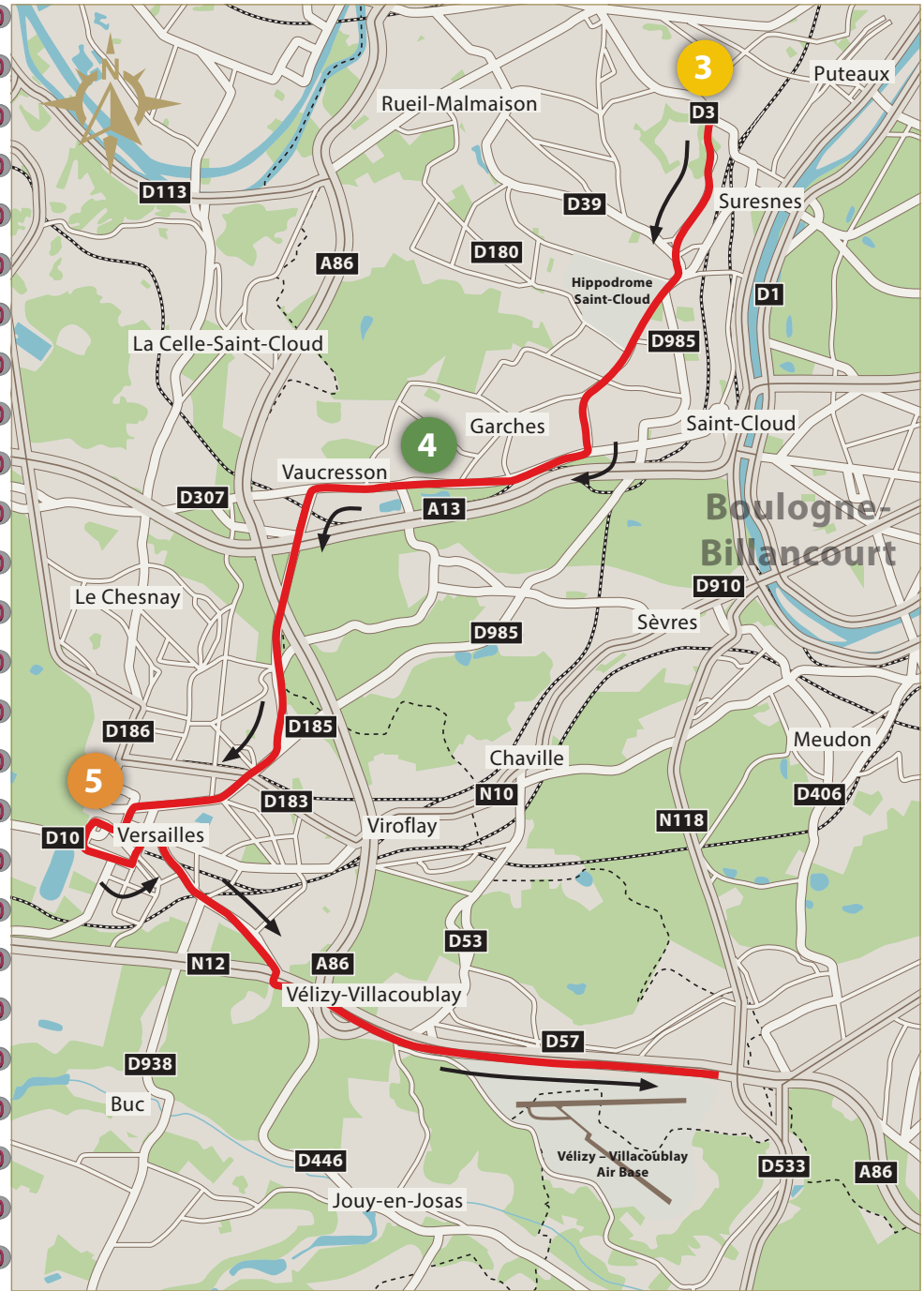
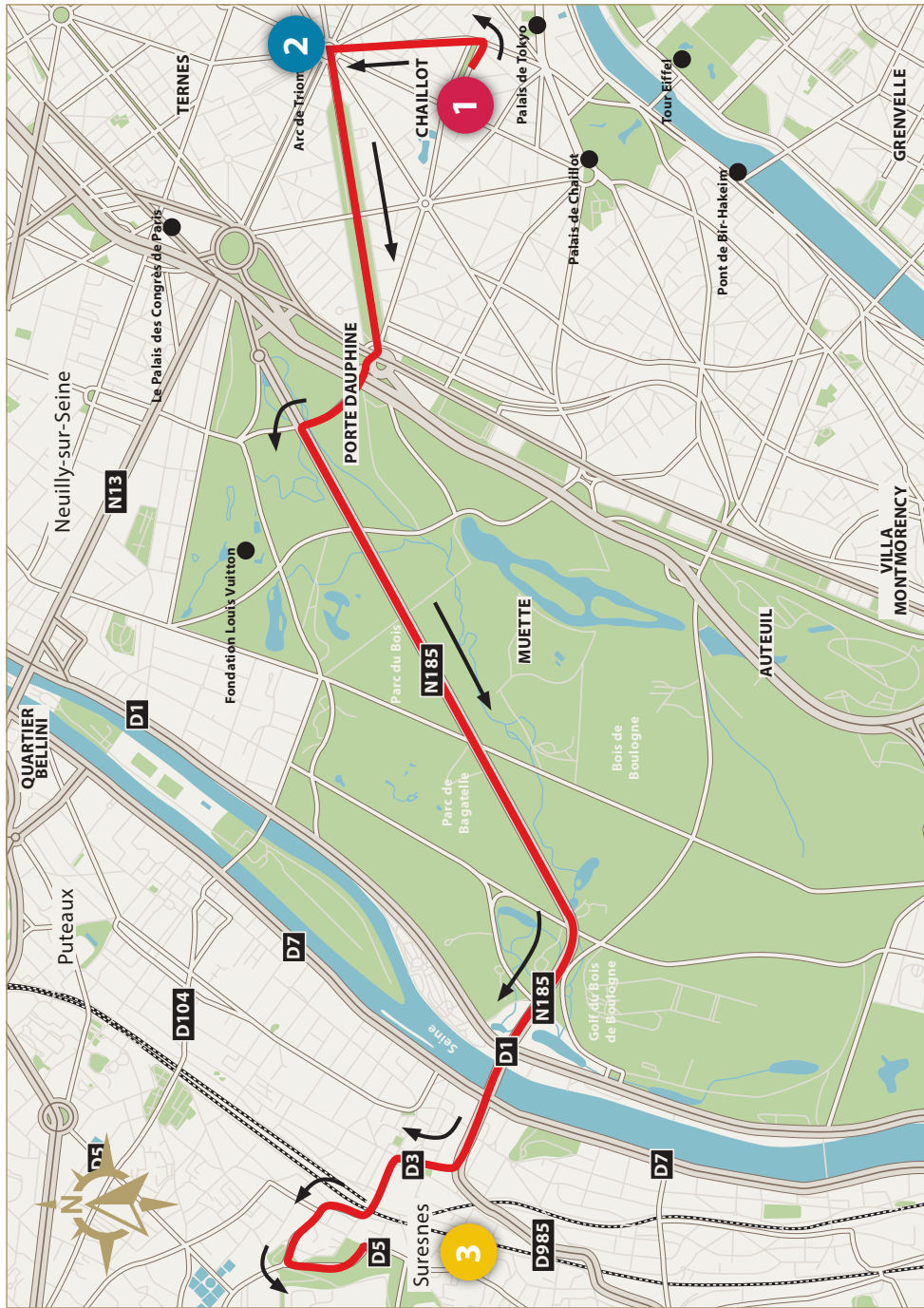
resided outside Paris for six months. He participated in the Allied conferences, including the Treaty of Versailles, and ceremonies to honor and memorialize the service of Americans in the war. He participated in the dedication and decoration of Suresnes American Cemetery, located west of Paris beyond the Bois de Boulogne. The Treaty of Versailles brought the palace to greater American notice, though it was already a popular destination for American servicemen during the war.



American soldiers examine a Paris metro map in the city.

Start Tour >







# Stop 1

## Getting to Stop 1:

The site is in the 16<sup>th</sup> Arrondissement of Paris, less than 1 km south of the Arc de Triomphe, just off the Avenue d'Iéna. The closest metro stop is Kléber on the Avenue Kléber, about half way between the Arc de Triomphe and Place des États-Unis.

## Thomas Jefferson Square, the Place des États-Unis

Thomas Jefferson Square is located on the Place des États-Unis, so named at the request of an American ambassador in the 19th century. The site contains several places of interest to Americans. The American Embassy was once located at No. 16, and for a time during the Versailles Peace Conference, Wilson lived at No. 11. Edith Wharton, a prominent American author, once lived in No. 3. The park itself features a statue of George Washington and Marquis de Lafayette, created by Frédéric Bartholdi, who sculpted the Statue of Liberty.



An Army nurse stands with American servicemen in the Place des États-Unis.

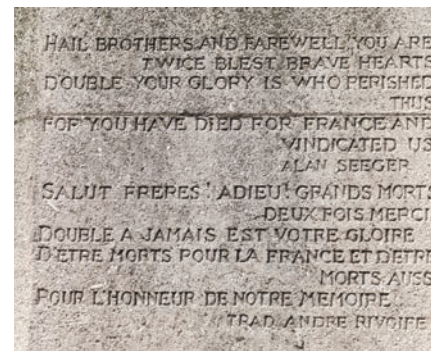
who died serving in the French Foreign Legion. Seeger, who also composed the more famous "I Have a Rendezvous with Death," would perish while serving in the Foreign Legion, on July 4, 1916.

At the east end of the park is the Place de l'Amiral de Grasse, which contains a small tribute to the Comte de Grasse, victor of the Battle of the Virginia Capes, and commander of the French fleet at the Battle of Yorktown during the American Revolution.

*...the memorial to American volunteers, which honors those who volunteered to serve for France during World War I.*

Also in the park is a memorial to American volunteers, which honors those who volunteered to serve for France during World War I. The bronze statue is based on the American poet and volunteer, Alan Seeger, whose poem "Ode in Memory of the American Volunteers Fallen for France" is inscribed on the base, along with his name and those of 23 other Americans

Right: The statue of Washington and Lafayette in the Place des États-Unis. Below: Alan Seeger poem on American Volunteer monument.



Memorial to American Volunteers.

Stop 2 >



# Stop 2

## Getting to Stop 2:

On the south side of the Place des États-Unis, go to the Avenue d'Iéna and turn left (north) to the Place de Charles de Gaulle (also called the Etoile) to the intersection around the Arc de Triomphe. If you are driving, park nearby.

## The Arc de Triomphe

The Arc de Triomphe, dedicated in 1832, is a monument to the combatants of France's Revolutionary and Napoleonic wars. Beneath the Arc is the grave of France's unknown soldier of World War I. It is one of the most iconic monuments of Paris, and, for France, the focus of national martial commemoration. The Allied victory parade passed here at the end of the war. Many Americans visited the site in 1918. Later, during World War II American forces paraded by the site after the liberation of

Paris in 1944. Modern Bastille Day parades mass here to march down the Champs-Élysées to the Place de la Concorde.

★  
*Beneath the Arc is the grave of France's unknown soldier of World War I.*



On July 14, 1919 members of the American Expeditionary Forces march through the Arc de Triomphe.



Gen. John J. Pershing leads American forces in the victory parade passing through the Arc de Triomphe on July 14, 1919.



Americans stop at the Arc de Triomphe on the Etoile, today's Place de Charles de Gaulle.



Arc de Triomphe, 2018.

## Stop 3 >



# Stop 3

## Getting to Stop 3:

From the Place de Charles de Gaulle, drive west on Avenue Foch until it terminates in the Place de Maréchal de Lattre de Tassigny and turn right. Take the third exit toward Neuilly y Seine. Turn left at the first traffic light on Allée de Longchamp (N185). The road will curve to the right and cross the Seine River. Continue straight on the Boulevard Henri Sellier for about 370 meters from the river, and turn right onto Avenue du General Charles de Gaulle that curves left becoming Avenue Roosevelt (D3). Stay on this road up the hill to Boulevard Washington. Go clockwise around the island in the intersection to go left (south) on Avenue Washington (D5). Look for a car park on the right in about 180 meters. The cemetery is located on the southwest side of Avenue Washington.

## Suresnes American Cemetery

This cemetery was dedicated in 1937 but began use as an American military cemetery during World War I. The cemetery is unique for the ABMC, in that it was established for the American Expeditionary Forces in 1917 to receive

American dead from Parisian hospitals. The plots hold the graves of more than 1,500 World War I fallen, as well as more than 20 unknown soldiers from World War II. The walls of the chapel bear the names of nearly 1,000 other Americans



Suresnes American Cemetery entrance.

whose final resting places are unknown. A rosette next to a name indicates their remains were later identified. There is a reception building at the south end of the cemetery. Loggias extend from the chapel and terminate in memorial rooms. The loggias list the other ABMC cemeteries of the world wars, and the memorial rooms contain memorial statues and inscriptions.



*The cemetery is unique for the ABMC, in that it was established for the American Expeditionary Forces in 1917 to receive American dead from Parisian hospitals.*

A panoramic view of the city stretches out from the platform in front of the chapel, and also from the carpark.



Detail of the chapel at Suresnes American Cemetery.



President Woodrow Wilson and the First Lady, Mrs. Wilson observe Memorial Day 1919 at Suresnes American Cemetery.



Memorial urn with graves.



# Stop 4

## Getting to Stop 4:

Turn right onto Boulevard Washington (D5) which becomes Boulevard Maréchal de Lattre de Tassigny. In about 0.75 km, turn left at the intersection onto Rue de la Procession (D5). Follow this street to the first traffic circle and turn right onto Rue Louis Loucheur (D39), towards Boulogne /Billancourt/ Saint-Cloud. Follow D39 to the intersection with Boulevard de la République (D985). Turn right and stay in the right lane. Turn right at the second traffic light onto Rue du Camp Canadien (D180A) towards Garches. D180A becomes Rue de la Porte Jaune (D180A). Go to the second stop light and bear left onto Rue de la Porte Jaune, toward Centre Culturel.

At Rue Pasteur/Boulevard General de Gaulle (D907), turn right toward Garches/Versailles. Watch for signs for Memorial de l'Escadrille Lafayette. You will pass a traffic light and pass a gatehouse on your left. The next gate on the left is the marked entry to the Lafayette Escadrille Memorial Cemetery, a white stone gateway with medallions of a Native American warrior. Turn left through the gate and follow the road to a parking area before the bridge.

## Lafayette Escadrille Memorial Cemetery

This is the memorial and resting place for members of the Lafayette Escadrille, made up of pilots who were largely American volunteers. The Escadrille was a fighter squadron of the French Air Service. Many Americans volunteered for French service in the Foreign Legion or the volunteer ambulance services. These men typically shared an affinity for France, desire for adventure, technical ability and higher education, traits which recommended them for air service. A unit of American flyers, the Escadrille Américaine was approved by the Service Aéronautique and began operations in April 1916, but the name contradicted American neutrality. Rechristened the Lafayette Escadrille, it established a reputation for skill and



Detail of arch inscription.

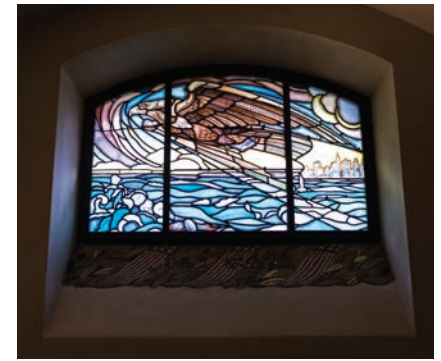


Mosaic of squadron emblem.

daring that was celebrated in France and the United States. These pilots and their comrades who flew for other French squadrons became known collectively as the Lafayette Flying Corps.

*Rechristened the Lafayette Escadrille, it established a reputation for skill and daring that was celebrated in France and the United States.*

The monument consists of a central triumphal arch flanked by open wings terminating in pavilions. There is a reflecting pool, and a terrace that forms the roof of a crypt, housing the resting place of 49 American aviators and two of their French commanders. Nineteen others whose remains are buried elsewhere or were never recovered are also commemorated here.



Eagle stained glass in crypt.



Place for prayer in the crypt.



Facade of the Lafayette Escadrille Memorial Cemetery.

Stop 5 >



# Stop 5

## Getting to Stop 5:

Return to the D907 and turn left (west). In about 1 km, turn left toward Versailles on Boulevard Jardy (D182). The road becomes Avenue Saint-Cloud (D185). Continue on Avenue Saint-Cloud through the tree-lined boulevard until you come to an intersection that broadens out to the left in a great plaza often filled with buses. Turn left onto Avenue Rockefeller. Continue around the lot on the right until you see the entrance to parking.

Note: There is also rail service to the Palace of Versailles that connects with the Paris metro.

## The Palace of Versailles

The Palace of Versailles was much more than a home for French kings. The vast estate was a seasonal residence for many French nobles and court officials. It is the site where the Treaty of Paris was signed in 1783, ending the American Revolution.

★

*It is the site where the Treaty of Paris was signed in 1783, ending the American Revolution.*



The peace conference convened at Versailles' Hall of Mirrors.



Soldiers from New England visit the Palace of Versailles.

The Paris Peace Conference opened here in 1919, and its product, the Treaty of Versailles, brought an end to the war and founded the first modern international body – the League of Nations. The treaty was signed here in the Hall of Mirrors, crowded with delegations from the Allied and Central Powers. This was the same room where the German Empire was proclaimed in 1871 after the Franco-Prussian War.

The palace is also associated with the offices of the Allies' Supreme War Council and its leader, Marshal Ferdinand Foch. This inter-Allied body was formed in late 1917 to guide strategy. It evolved from an advising body into an inter-Allied general staff with great influence on the conduct

of the war and the conclusion of the Armistice on November 11, 1918.



"Big Four" world leaders at the Paris Peace Conference. From left to right: British Prime Minister David Lloyd George, Italian Premier Vittorio Orlando, French Premier Georges Clemenceau, and U.S. President Woodrow Wilson.

### - End of tour -

Leaving the parking lot, turn right and continue up the Rue Pierre de Nolhac, following to the left. At the intersection, turn left on the Rue de l'Orangerie (D10). Drive east until the "T" intersection and turn left. Go north until you come to the broad intersection with Avenue de Paris. Turn right and stay right. In 140 meters, bear right onto Rue des Chantiers. Bear right under the highway and then left onto the on ramp toward Paris.





*Maj. Julia C. Stimson, seated, superintendent of the Army Nurse Corps in France and recipient of the Distinguished Service Medal, is pictured with other members of the corps.*



## AMERICAN WOMEN IN THE GREAT WAR: THEY ALSO SERVED

There were few American women in military service prior to World War I. The expansion of their presence and the significance of their service emerged for several reasons, not least their dedication and ability. The traditional role of women at home was altered by the absence and loss of their male counterparts to war work or military service. Women entered industrial and agricultural work in greater numbers than ever before.

---

★

*Women entered industrial and agricultural work in greater numbers than ever before.*

---

American military commitment rapidly developed to an unprecedented scale. Large modern armies created high demand for support services traditionally performed by men. Beyond treating the wounded, public health and social services became recognized as essential to promote morale or prevent epidemics. While training enormous numbers of soldiers was a problem, training sufficient nurses, technicians, and social workers would be harder. At the same time social movements in the United States provided a new national asset. Reformist movements that advocated suffrage and expanded roles for women promoted humanitarianism as well. Many American women who looked



*A poster advertises YWCA support for women war workers in France.*



*A member of the American Red Cross serves water to a badly wounded British soldier on a railway platform on Montmirail, France.*





Left: Jane Jeffrey was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross for heroism during an air raid on the hospital at Joy-sur-Morin in July 1918. Top right: Staff stand outside the American Women's Hospital No. 1 at Chateau de Luzancy, France. Bottom right: A nurse at an American Red Cross rest station provides comfort to soldiers in September 1918.



to expand rights and education also took interest in social work and medical careers. The new national asset was a growing body of women with experience, training and ambition to serve wherever they were most needed. A nation in the crisis of war could not ignore them. Some 25,000 American women served overseas, many in previously unavailable vocations. Their success was a very significant contribution and they inspired others by their example.

Other historic conditions encouraged women to pursue overseas roles during World War I. They were the same ideas that made men accept or volunteer for military service. Opportunities for foreign travel had placed more American women in European countries before the war as students, performers, tourists and expatriates. Some turned to service directly

from their lives overseas. The example set by high profile women in media, such as teachers and professors, drew others to share their values and follow their example. In World War I the changing role of women, and popular culture inspired them to seek rewards and challenges that had drawn men into service for generations.

★

*Some 25,000 American women served overseas, many in previously unavailable vocations.*

Many American families shared sentimental attachment to their nations of origin. Affection for their traditions, ancestors, and relatives drew men and women into service. This was

true of recent immigrants and long-established American families.

The first American women to find service in World War I were those whose professions and residence made their participation immediate in 1914, before the American declaration of war. The American Hospital of Paris opened in 1909. The women of its clinical staff and nursing school were involved immediately. The hospital became a base for ambulance service that transported thousands of wounded soldiers. Many American expatriates and students in France became interested in service, though opportunities were somewhat more restricted for women.

The writers Edith Wharton and Mildred Aldrich engaged the public through their literature and humanitarian acts. Julia Taufenlaub, Mary Borden, and Anne Morgan were very well connected expatriate humanitarians who donated their property and wealth to medical and relief service. Anne Morgan founded the American Committee for Devastated France, an organization with 350 women staff. Gertrude Stein and Alice B. Toklas became drivers for French hospitals moving supplies and personnel. These prominent American women stood out in the war and set an example by creating opportunities for others to follow. Hundreds of others served with them, remaining in the war zone or traveling there to work. The popular Allied cause drew many American women to Europe under sponsorship or using their own money. Nurses were prominent and some even served in German or Austrian hospitals, though many more served with the Allies. Relief and health work for refugees, care for orphans, and supporting

industrial workers were also common tasks. Some became casualties working among the troops or in accidents.

With war looming, many in the United States became engaged in preparedness for the likely possibility of war. Within the American medical community, returning volunteers from Europe worked to establish reserve hospital organizations that would serve with the Army. Their clinical experience and knowledge of military medical organizations was invaluable to training and organizing reserve hospitals and warehousing medical supplies for future use. American women nurses from civilian hospitals provided administrative and clinical service for these hospitals.

Immediately after the United States entered the war in April 1917 the British medical liaison officer in Washington, D.C., issued an urgent request for 16 base hospital organizations and additional staff for Europe. The first U.S. Army unit to deploy to Europe arrived on May 28, 1917, as Base Hospital No. 4. It was one of six immediately mobilized. When Gen. John J. Pershing stepped ashore in France on June 28, all six mobilized base hospitals had arrived and No. 4 was treating wounded at Rouen, France. Hundreds of American nurses were treating British wounded and their duties included rotation to clearing stations near the front where some were wounded. Army Nurse Corps numbers in Europe eventually totaled 10,660, and the Army Medical Corps employed 300 women as reconstruction aides for occupational and physical therapy with recovering wounded. American Red Cross nurses worked in the same organizations as Army nurses.



Maj. Julia C. Stimson became chief nurse of the American Expeditionary Forces during the war. She was decorated with the Distinguished Service Medal for her service. However, the situation of American women in Army or Navy service was strained by the fact that they generally did not receive rank. Even women physicians serving the U.S. Army did not receive rank. The situation amazed Allied military medical organizations. In response, some American women medical professionals prolonged their service with Allied countries, while others raised funds to organize and run their own medical institutions. Doctor Rosalie Slaughter Morton had volunteered for service in the Balkans, and founded the American Women's Hospital Service that raised funds supporting a hospital in France and medical professionals in Serbia, Palestine and Greece during and after the war.

The first American women to receive rank in the military were in the Navy and Marine Corps in World War I, though not in medical service. In 1917, the Navy designated women, often in clerical positions, as Yeoman (F), for female. The Marines designated women as privates in the Marine Corps Reserve. Most of these women served in the United States. Their status allowed them to receive the same benefits as men in service. Veterans' benefits were not available to Army and Navy nurses, or the many civilian contractors supporting the military.

Among civilian contractors who did extremely important service for the Army in France and England were Signal Corps female telephone operators, known as the "Hello Girls." Four hundred and fifty carefully selected women,

fluent in French and English, were hired and trained to operate headquarters' switchboards. As contractors they did not receive the same benefits as their Navy and Marine counterparts.

★

*The Marines designated women as privates ... Their status allowed them to receive the same benefits as men in service.*

Many American women volunteered for service with organizations that were neither medical nor military. The most noted of these were the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA), the Jewish Welfare Board, the Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA), and the Salvation Army. The YMCA was best known for providing wholesome diversion and entertainment for troops in Europe. They provided services like mending garments, assisting with correspondence, library work, sports events, and traveling entertainment. The YWCA was focused on women's welfare, assisting women in French war industry, war brides, and rest and recreation for American women serving in Europe. Before the Russian Revolution they had even established facilities in Petrograd and Moscow. The most popular organization for the American Expeditionary Forces in France was the Salvation Army. They provided many of the same services as the YMCA and assisted in helping soldiers transfer funds to their families in the United States. Their popularity stemmed from their

unstinting service to troops just behind the front. Often under threat of poison gas and artillery fire, women of the YWCA baked pies, fried doughnuts, and provided other sustenance to the fighting men. There are many images of them in helmets with gas masks preparing food. They sometimes fed thousands a day from the most hardscrabble improvised kitchens. All three organizations supported religious services for Christians and other denominations.

American women continued to serve in Europe after the Armistice in November 1918 and after the Versailles Peace Treaty. As soldiers departed for home so did those providing services of all kinds. Women stayed on to serve with occupation troops in Germany, and some American women

stayed on in Europe as new expatriates. Many continued to work for social service organizations assisting orphans and widows and widowers of the war and fighting the influenza epidemic.

American women more than met the challenges posed to them by the war. Some credit their example in part for the final success of women's suffrage in the United States. The American Battle Monuments Commission is committed to commemorating their service a century after the war. At least seventy American women who served in World War I as civilians, Army Nurse Corps, American Red Cross, YMCA, Army Signal Corps, and Army Medical Corps members are honored at the Brookwood, Meuse-Argonne, Oise-Aisne, Somme, St. Mihiel and Suresnes American Cemeteries.



Left: A sheet music cover extols the service of Salvation Army women at the front providing doughnuts for soldiers. Top Right: YMCA volunteers prepare doughnuts for American soldiers. Bottom right: Women with the Salvation Army make pies for soldiers.





# AMERICAN WOMEN INTERRED AT ABMC WWI CEMETERIES



## Brookwood American Cemetery

- Florence L. Athay, *Army Nurse Corps*
- Tula Harkey, *Chemist*
- Teresa M. Murphy, *Army Nurse Corps*
- Alice V. Murphy, *Army Nurse Corps*
- Hattie M. Raithel, *Army Nurse Corps*



## Meuse-Argonne American Cemetery

- Caroline H. Christman, *Army Nurse Corps*
- Charlotte A. Cox, *Army Nurse Corps*
- Marion G. Crandall, *YMCA*
- Dorothy B. Millman, *Army Nurse Corps*
- Annie D. Reveley, *Army Nurse Corps*
- Elizabeth S. Tyler, *American Red Cross*



## Oise-Aisne American Cemetery

- Hazel E. Babcock, *Army Nurse Corps*
- May Berry, *Army Nurse Corps*
- Alice S. Drisko, *American Red Cross*
- Pauline Field, *American Red Cross*
- Joan Lorraine Forbes, *Civilian*
- Louisa Francks, *Civilian*
- Katheryne E. Greene, *Army Nurse Corps*
- Felicita W. Hecht, *Army Nurse Corps*
- Alice A. Ireland, *Army Nurse Corps*
- Estelle Jegon, *Army Signal Corps*
- Alice J. Knight, *YMCA*
- Mary A. Moore, *American Red Cross*
- Gertrude O'Connor, *Army Nurse Corps*
- Lorraine Ransom, *YMCA*
- Gertrude C. Valentine, *YMCA*
- Ida H. Vietmeier, *Army Nurse Corps*



## Somme American Cemetery

- Helen Fairchild, *Army Nurse Corps*
- Elma Groves, *Army Nurse Corps*
- Margaret Hamilton, *Army Medical Corps*
- Lucile Pepoon, *American Red Cross*
- Constance Sinclair, *Army Medical Corps*



## St. Mihiel American Cemetery

- Esther Amundson, *Army Nurse Corps*
- Nora E. Anderson, *Army Nurse Corps*
- Margaret S. Bailey, *Army Nurse Corps*
- Anne Maria C. Breen, *Army Nurse Corps*
- Sophia Haarman, *American Red Cross*
- Sabra R. Hardy, *Army Nurse Corps*
- Elizabeth L. MacDonald, *Army Nurse Corps*
- Ella Maescher, *Army Nurse Corps*
- Crystal E. McCord, *Army Nurse Corps*
- Marion L. Overend, *Army Nurse Corps*
- Charlotte Schonheit, *Army Nurse Corps*
- Nellie J. Ward, *Army Nurse Corps*
- Gladys Watkins, *Army Nurse Corps*
- Edith M. White, *YMCA*
- Margaret W. Worth, *Army Nurse Corps*



## Suresnes American Cemetery

- Elizabeth A. Brubaker, *YMCA*
- Maude Mae Butler, *American Red Cross*
- Inez Ann Murphy Crittenden, *Army Signal Corps*
- Dorothy K. Cromwell, *American Red Cross*
- Gladys Cromwell, *American Red Cross*
- Ella Dalton, *Army Nurse Corps*
- Katherine Dent, *Army Nurse Corps*
- Nellie M. Dingley, *Army Nurse Corps*
- Lily Durant, *American Red Cross*
- Eva Emmons, *Civilian*
- Lucy N. Fletcher, *Army Nurse Corps*
- Dorothea Gay, *YMCA*
- Florence B. Graham, *Army Nurse Corps*
- Alice Hagadorn, *Army Nurse Corps*
- Florence Kimball, *Army Nurse Corps*
- Winona C. Martin, *YMCA*
- Marian H. Peck, *Dietician*
- Nelle Robertson, *YMCA*
- Alice C. Rogers, *YMCA*
- Ethel Fannie Scatchard, *American Red Cross*
- Esther Slocum, *YMCA*
- Ruth E. Smith, *American Red Cross*
- Marian H. White, *American Red Cross*



# REMEMBERING THEIR SACRIFICES



Gen. John J. Pershing.

The American Expeditionary Forces (AEF) served a pivotal role in World War I, and helped tip the scales towards the Allied victory. In the years after the Armistice many states, cities and towns erected “doughboy” statues or other memorials to honor servicemen drawn from the local community. The Liberty Memorial in Kansas City, Missouri, erected in 1926 to honor all the nation’s WWI veterans, was designated by Congress in 2014 as the National World War I Museum and Memorial.

In Washington, D.C., the American Battle Monuments Commission built the AEF Memorial in Pershing Park to commemorate the two million American



Gen. Pershing at a review parade after the war, with Col. George C. Marshall behind.

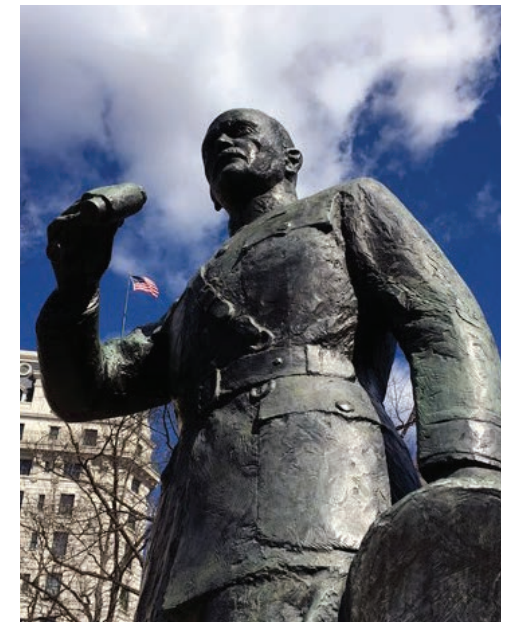
# AEF MEMORIAL IN PERSHING PARK



The 8-foot statue of Gen. Pershing in the park that bears his name.

military personnel of the AEF and their Commander-in-Chief, General of the Armies John J. Pershing. Located on Pennsylvania Avenue one block from the White House, the memorial consists of a reflecting pool, an 8-foot statue of Gen. Pershing, and battle maps and text detailing the accomplishments of the AEF. The AEF Memorial, dedicated in 1981, is now administered by the National Park Service.

In 2014, Congress designated Pershing Park as the National World War I Memorial in the nation’s capital. As of 2018 it is slated to be redeveloped into a more substantial tribute to the AEF.



Detail of the Pershing statue.



# AFTERWORD

A century ago the American Expeditionary Forces (AEF) were arriving in France in increasing numbers. Aided by the experience of the French and British armies they took their places on the Western Front. They added an energetic dedication to duty that distinguished them to friend and foe alike. Their arrival was welcomed by the Allies and their actions helped make 1918 the year of victory.

The American Battle Monuments Commission (ABMC) was established as an enduring expression of America's desire to recognize the service of the AEF, the veterans who returned, and their comrades in arms interred overseas and at home, as well as those missing. General of the Armies John J. Pershing became the first Chairman of the ABMC. Under his leadership American cemeteries and monuments were created in Europe. Great care was shown in the design of these sites. The architects created in stone and earth fitting memorials to service and sacrifice that are national treasures for all Americans. The World War I monuments of the ABMC also inspire European families who frequent the sites, some of whom have worked for and supported the ABMC for generations.

The monuments and cemeteries of the ABMC are as essential to the national story as those in the United States. Visiting the final resting places of these American men and women, we are inspired by their service and indebted to their sacrifice. Standing on the battlefields of American armies we sense the drama of the history they made, and appreciate their endurance and achievement.

**David J. Urban**  
Chairman

**Jennifer S. Carroll**, Commissioner

**John P. McGoff**, Commissioner

**Benjamin L. Cassidy**, Commissioner

**Luis R. Quinonez**, Commissioner

**Dorothy Gray**, Commissioner

**Evans C. Spiceland**, Commissioner

**Thomas O. Hicks**, Commissioner

**Robert O. Wefald**, Commissioner

**William M. Matz**  
Secretary

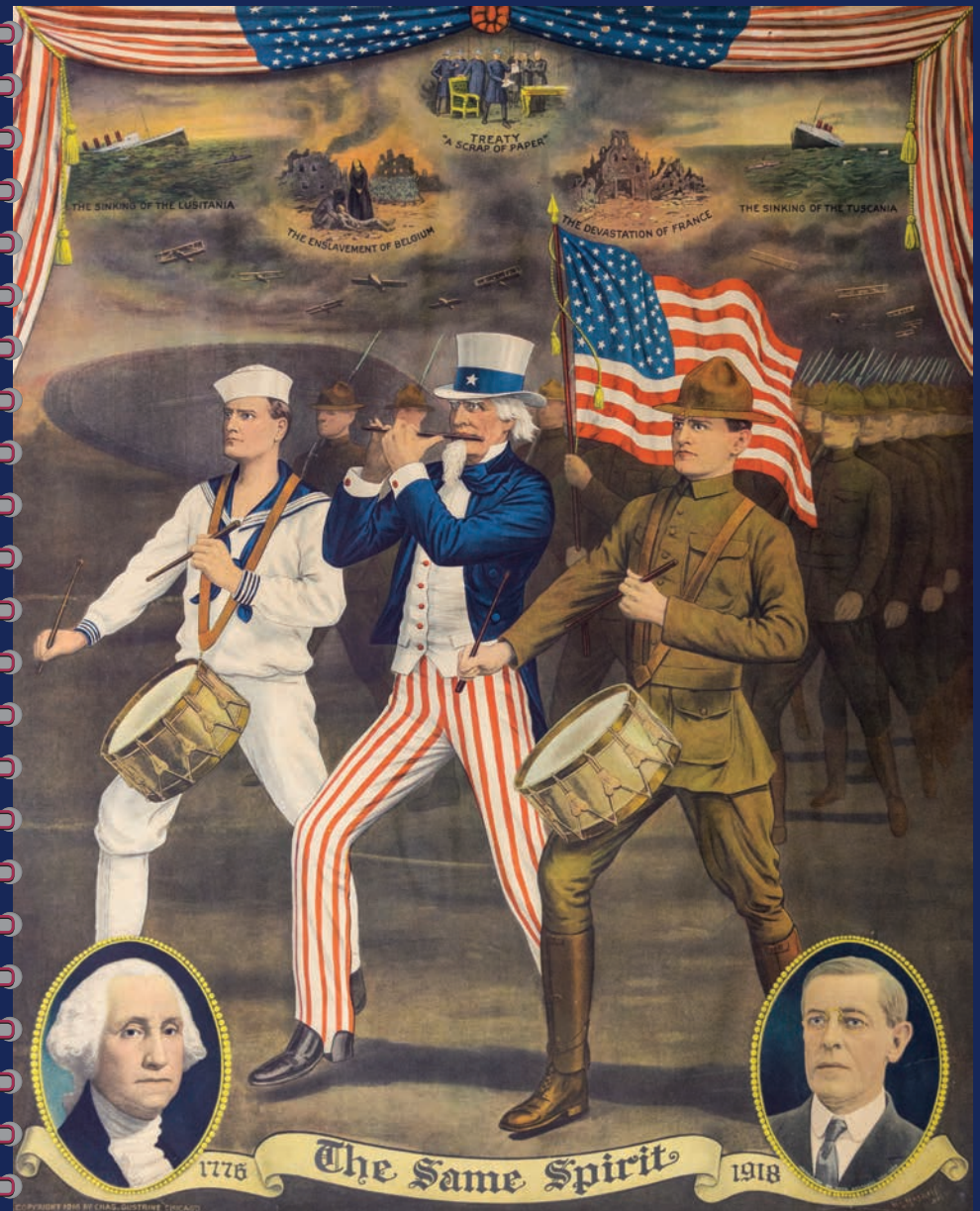
**Robert J. Dalessandro**  
Deputy Secretary

**John A. Wessels**  
Chief of Operations

# LIST OF SOURCES

- ★ **Alec C. Bennett**
- ★ **Alexander Barnes**
- ★ **American War Memorials Overseas, Inc.**
- ★ **City of Oudenaarde Archives**
- ★ **Douglas MacArthur Memorial Library and Archives**
- ★ **First Division Museum**
- ★ **George C. Marshall Research Library**
- ★ **George S. Patton Museum**
- ★ **Gerald Torrence**
- ★ **Harry S. Truman Presidential Library & Museum**
- ★ **International Military Antiques**
- ★ **Library of Congress**
- ★ **Michael E. Hanlon**
- ★ **Monique Seefried**
- ★ **National Archives and Records Administration**
- ★ **Robert J. and Rebecca S. Dalessandro**
- ★ **The Army Navy Club on Farragut Square Library Trust, Washington, D.C.**
- ★ **The Smithsonian Institution**
- ★ **Tom Cavaness**
- ★ **United States Air Force Historical Research Agency**
- ★ **United States Army Heritage and Education Center**
- ★ **United States Marine Corps History Division**
- ★ **United States Military Academy Museum**
- ★ **United States National Library of Medicine**
- ★ **Warrick Page**





COPYRIGHT 1918 BY CHAS. GOSTLING, CHICAGO





## AMERICAN BATTLE MONUMENTS COMMISSION

“Time will not dim the glory of their deeds.”

GENERAL OF THE ARMIES JOHN J. PERSHING

2300 Clarendon Boulevard Suite 500  
Arlington, VA 22201  
(703) 696-6900

**WWW.ABMC.GOV**