

Allied Operations, September 1944 – Spring 1945

KEY: † Military Cemetery Parachute Drop Siegfried Line – German Defensive Line



The broad Allied advance across Belgium and the Netherlands included the U.S. 12th and U.K. 21st Army Groups as well as the First Canadian and Second British Armies. This advance ultimately resulted in the crossing of the Rhine river, encirclement and capture of the important industrial Ruhr area, and penetration into the German heartlands. This hastened the end of the war in Europe in May 1945.



American Battle Monuments Commission

This agency of the United States government operates and maintains 26 American cemeteries and 31 memorials, monuments and markers in 17 countries. The Commission works to fulfill the vision of its first chairman, General of the Armies John J. Pershing. Pershing, commander of the American Expeditionary Forces during World War I, promised that "time will not dim the glory of their deeds."

Netherlands American Cemetery and Memorial

The U.S. 30th Infantry Division liberated this site on September 13, 1944. A temporary American cemetery was established here on November 10, 1944. The government of the Netherlands granted the use of the land as a permanent burial ground in perpetuity without charge or taxation to the government of the United States of America.

The cemetery offers free guided tours on request pending staff availability. Tours should be booked at least 2 weeks in advance.



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ABMC commemorative sites, please visit
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AMERICAN BATTLE MONUMENTS COMMISSION

Netherlands American Cemetery and Memorial



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- General of the Armies John J. Pershing



ALLIED OPERATIONS, SEPT. 1944 – SPRING 1945

Successful Allied military operations followed the landings in Normandy and Southern France. However, logistical shortages slowed the momentum of the advancing armies. In the Autumn of 1944, priority was given to the capture of important Channel ports along the coast of Northern France, Belgium, and the Netherlands. Another military objective was the advance through or around German frontier fortifications (West Wall) in Western Germany.

Key actions in the ensuing campaign included:

SEPTEMBER 14: Maastricht was the first Dutch city to be liberated.

SEPTEMBER 17: Operation MARKET GARDEN began in the Netherlands. Airborne and armored forces seized key bridges, but not the northernmost bridge at Arnhem.

MID SEPTEMBER TO OCTOBER 21: U.S. First Army besieged and captured Aachen, Germany.

MID SEPTEMBER THROUGH FEBRUARY: Sustained fierce fighting in the Huertgen Forest.

NOVEMBER 16 – DECEMBER 15: U.S. forces advanced slowly toward the Roer River.

DECEMBER 16: German counteroffensive in the Ardennes (Battle of the Bulge) stopped the Allied advance for one month.

FEBRUARY 23: U.S. Ninth Army began crossing the Roer River in Operation GRENADE.

MARCH 23-24: U.S., British, and Canadian forces launched Operation PLUNDER, crossing the Rhine River around Wesel. Its airborne component, Operation VARSITY, put U.S. and British airborne divisions north of Wesel. This cleared the way for Allied forces to encircle the vital Ruhr region and advance to the North German Plain.

Starting in July 1942 Allied aircrews flew hazardous strategic missions against German industrial targets and tactical missions in support of the ground forces.

Visitor Center

The Visitor Center tells the story of the creation of this cemetery through photos, a movie and the stories of the soldiers. Here you can have your questions answered, sign the guest register, and rest.



Court of Honor with Reflecting Pool

The names of the 1,722 missing service members of the Army and Army Air Force are engraved on the walls flanking the reflecting pool of the Court of Honor.



The Maproom

The three maps displayed present: the airborne Operation MARKET GARDEN; military operations from Normandy landings to war's end; crossing of the Roer and advance to the Rhine.



The Chapel

The chapel is on the east, or burial, side of the tower. Its bronze doors depict a Tree of Life in outline.



"The Mourning Woman" Statue

Bronze sculptures at the east end of the Court of Honor include the "Mourning Woman," three doves, and the new shoot rising from a war-destroyed tree.



Memorial Tower

The tower rises 101 feet above the east end of the Court of Honor. Its exterior walls are built of English Portland stone.



Layout

From the Visitor Center, the Court of Honor leads to the tower containing the chapel. Farther east, the 16 plots of the burial area are defined by the broad central mall and grass paths. The 8,301 headstones sweep in parallel arcs across the green lawn.



Headstone Location

PLOT: _____

ROW: _____

GRAVE: _____

Useful Information

DIMENSIONS: 65.5 acres
HEADSTONES: 8,301
LATIN CROSSES: 8,122

STARS OF DAVID: 179
WALL OF THE MISSING: 1,722
SETS OF BROTHERS: 41

MEDAL OF HONOR RECIPIENTS: 6
DEDICATED: July 7, 1960



Photo: The National Archives