

# The AEF in the Somme Sector

## May 28 – October 24, 1918

KEY: † Military Cemetery    └ Monument



Soldiers of the 1st Division advance to seize and hold Cantigny, May 28, 1918.  
Photo: The National Archives

### 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."

### Somme American Cemetery and Memorial

The cemetery is named for the region in which major U.S. units fought from September 1918 through November 1918. It was first established as a temporary cemetery following the Somme Offensive, October-November 1918. The government of France granted its free use as a permanent burial ground in perpetuity without charge or taxation.

The cemetery offers free guided tours on request pending staff availability.



#### American Battle Monuments Commission

2300 Clarendon Boulevard  
Suite 500  
Arlington, VA 22201  
USA

#### Somme American Cemetery

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02420 Bony France  
Tel +33.23.66.87.20  
Email [somme@abmc.gov](mailto:somme@abmc.gov)  
GPS N49 59.103 E3 12.798

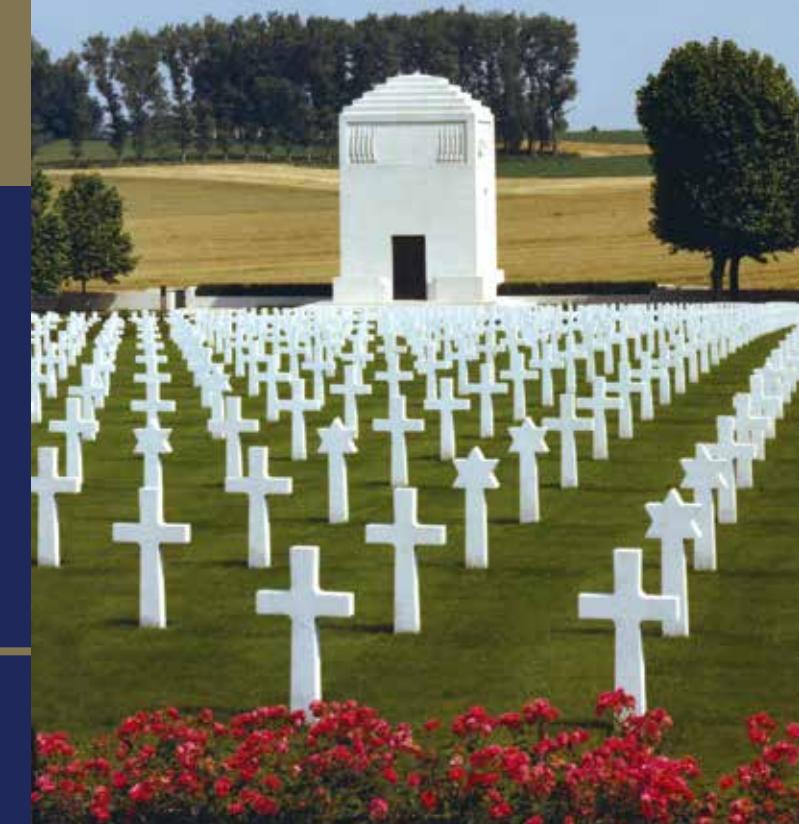
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ENGLISH

AMERICAN BATTLE MONUMENTS COMMISSION

## Somme American Cemetery and Memorial



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- General of the Armies John J. Pershing



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## MAY 28 – OCTOBER 24, 1918

The United States entered the war on April 6, 1917. Upon arrival in 1918, some divisions of the American Expeditionary Forces were placed under British or French command. General Pershing prevailed on the principle that the Americans would fight as units as part of Allied commands.

**MARCH 21, 1918:** The Germans launched the first of five major offensives, driving a deep salient at the junction of the British and the French Armies near Amiens.

**MAY 28:** The U.S. 1st Division, under French command, executed the first division-size offensive, seizing Cantigny and holding it against German counterattacks.

**JULY 22-AUGUST 22:** Under British command, elements of the American 33rd and 80th Divisions participated in reduction of the Amiens salient.

**SEPTEMBER 24:** Having fought previously with the British in Belgium, the American 27th and 30th Divisions were placed in front of the Hindenburg Line. The St. Quentin Canal Tunnel, nearly four miles long, was the backbone of this defensive line. Hundreds of tunnels connected the canal to various German defensive positions.

**SEPTEMBER 29:** The main assault was launched. Thick foggy conditions helped the 30th Division to reach the southern entrance of the tunnel. The 27th Division faced a determined German defense near Bony. For its 107th Infantry Regiment, this was the bloodiest day of any American regiment in WWI. By the end of the day, the backbone of the Hindenburg Line was broken. Australian and British units pushed forward on the offensive.

**NOVEMBER 11:** The Armistice ended hostilities.

## Useful Information

### Flagpole with Trench Helmets

Graveled paths intersect at the flagpole, flying an American flag. Four bronze World War I trench helmets capping bronze wreaths are mounted at the base.



### Headstone

1st Lt. (Dr.) William T. Fitzsimons was the first American officer killed in action in WWI. He served with U.S. Army Base Hospital No. 5, supporting British forces.



### Memorial Chapel

A sculptured bronze eagle rests atop the chapel's entrance doors. The dedication above reads: "To Those Who Died For Their Country."



### Chapel Interior

Inside the chapel, across the face of the altar is inscribed: "Thou O Lord Has Granted Them Eternal Rest."



### Graves Area

Each of the four grave plots are bordered by trees and plants. Plantings of colorful polyanthus roses border the grave plots in the area surrounding the flagpole.



### Visitor Building

Here you can meet our staff, get your questions answered, and sign the guest register.



## Layout

Visitors reach the parking area and visitor building about 100 meters after passing the entrance. From the parking area, a short roadway bordered by linden trees leads to the graves area and the memorial.

**DIMENSIONS:** 14.3 acres  
**BURIALS:** 1,838  
**LATIN CROSSES:** 1,796

**STARS OF DAVID:** 42  
**TABLETS OF THE MISSING:** 333  
**SETS OF BROTHERS:** 5

**MEDAL OF HONOR RECIPIENTS:** 3  
**DEDICATED:** May 30, 1937

## Headstone Location

**PLOT:** \_\_\_\_\_

**ROW:** \_\_\_\_\_

**GRAVE:** \_\_\_\_\_



Photo: The National Archives  
Soldiers of the 27th Division cross a temporary bridge at St. Souplet, Oct. 19, 1918.