

AMERICAN BATTLE MONUMENTS COMMISSION

SOMME AMERICAN CEMETERY AND MEMORIAL

The Somme Cemetery is named after the general area in which the American 1st, 27th, 30th, 33rd and 80th Divisions, the 6th and the 11th Engineers fought during the period between March 1917 and September 1918. The cemetery contains the burials of American fighting men and is one of the 8 World War I and 14 World War II American Military Cemeteries maintained by the American Battle Monuments Commission, an independent agency of the United States Government.

Here among the 1,844 American War Dead of World War I are buried 137 Unknown Soldiers, 7 of them resting in a single grave. The "Missing" rolls at the cemetery bear 333 names which are inscribed on the interior walls of the Chapel-Memorial. The architect of the architectural features was Mr. George Howe of Philadelphia. Mr. Marcel Loyau, a French sculptor interpreted Mr. Howe's designs with beautiful results.

All of the defenses in the area during the autumn of 1918 were among the most formidable on the western front. In about the middle of September 1918, the British began to attack the outpost zone in order to establish a good line of departure for a general attack on the 29 September against the Hindenburg Line. This general attack and the Meuse-Argonne offensive of the American First Army were the two of the four great Allied attacks which were either started or continued late in September. The 30th and 27th Divisions went into the line in adjoining zones of action on the 24 and 25 September respectively, as part of the American II Corps, although under the tactical control of the Australian Corps. They were supported by British artillery, as these two Divisions did not have their own artillery brigades with them. The line taken over by the 30th Division was west of Bellicourt and that by the 27th Division was west of Bony.

In the 30th Division zone of action a large part of the German outpost positions had been captured by the British. Most of remainder was seized on the 26 September when the 30th Division advanced about 300 yards and occupied Quarry Wood and a trench running to the north from it. The left flank of the Division was heavily engaged on the 27 September during a preliminary attack in which the 27th Division had been ordered to make on the principal strong points of Quennemont Farm, Guillemont Farm and the Knoll. The close of the day showed practically no gains except on each flank, where the front line was advanced a few hundred yards.

On the 29 September 1918, the 27th and the 30th Division, supported by British Artillery attacked. The 107th Infantry Regiment of the 27th Division attacked the Knoll, Guillemont Farm and Quennemont Farm with 377 men killed and 658 wounded on this day. Although the casualties in this operation had been exceptionally heavy (no other American Regiment suffered such a heavy loss in a single day during the war) the American Soldiers persistently continued their assaults and succeeded in breaking the Hindenburg Line. The casualties in this Regiment were unusually heavy during the war, all company officers except two being killed or wounded. At the same time the 30th Division, accompanied by tanks, progressed quickly across the principal German trench system.

In spite of heavy losses by the American Soldiers, the Hedinburg Line was broken, thus opening the way to further advances.

BELLICOURT MONUMENT

This American Memorial, constructed by the United States Government commemorates all American Units which served with the British Armies in France during World War I.

Sculptures and dedicatory inscriptions, the names and places which were prominent in American fighting are found on the monument as well as the insignia of those whose combat operations with the British Forces are commemorated here. An engraved map on the rear of the monument shows American operations in the vicinity and an orientation table on the terrace indicates directions and distances to these places.

CANTIGNY MONUMENT

This American Memorial, constructed by the United States Government is located in the village of Cantigny, Somme, France about 50 miles southwest of the Somme American Cemetery and Memorial. This monument commemorates the first large offensive action by an American Division which took place during World War I.

The 28th Infantry of the First Division, operating under the French X Corps, captured the town of Cantigny from German Troops on the 28 May 1918. Counterattacks were launched by the Germans for the next two days, including an intense 72-hour bombardment from hostile guns of all calibers. In the end, the American First Division had lost no ground and the Germans were compelled to accept defeat. This victory furnished the Allies a concrete example of the fighting ability of the American troops, who were then beginning to arrive in France in large number.

For further information regarding the Cemetery, Bellicourt and Cantigny Monuments, contact the Superintendent of the Somme American Military cemetery in Bony.

Somme American Cemetery
Bony, 02420 - Bellicourt.
TEL : 23.66.22.81.

SOMME AMERICAN MILITARY CEMETERY AND MEMORIAL

HEADSTONE EPITAPHS

Corporal John K. Mc Cormick 15-A-21 107 Inf 27 Div NY, Oct 18, 1918	"He who looketh into the perfect law of liberty shall be blest in his deed."
Corporal Gilbert B. Dymock 15-A-18 107 Inf 27 Div NJ, Nov 15, 1918	"The souls of the righteous are in the hand of God. They are in Peace."
Sergeant Thomas A. Hegarty 13-A-20 102 Field Sig Batt'n 27 Div NY, Oct 30, 1918	"Asleep in Jesus Peaceful rest."
PVT Donald W. King 15-A-2 106 Inf 27 Div NY, Nov 3, 1918	"Greater love hath no man that he lay down his life for his friends."
Sergeant Frederick C. Gudebrod Jr 8-B-25 107 inf 27 Div NY, Sept 29, 1918	"It is not life that matters but the courage we bring to it."
2nd Lt. Thomas Treganowan Kerr 5-B-27 108 Inf 27 Div NJ, Sept 29, 1918	"'tis finished ! all is finished, their fight with death and sin."
PVT 1CL Thomas Francis Morrisey 3-B-31 107 Inf 27 Div NY, Sept 29, 1918	"Dear son-brother think of clasping a loving hand and finding it God's hand."
PVT 1CL Edmund M. Strauch 14-D-22 107 Inf 27 Div NY, Oct 22, 1918	"He was withal of a beautiful countenance and goodly to look upon."
PVT 1CL James O. Vedder 3-D-2 107 Inf 27 Div NY, Sept 29, 1918	"Tranquil you lie. Your knightly virtue proved."
Mess Sgt Harmon B. Vedder 2-D-2 107 Inf 27 Div NY, Nov 5, 1918	"How could a man die better than for his country."

