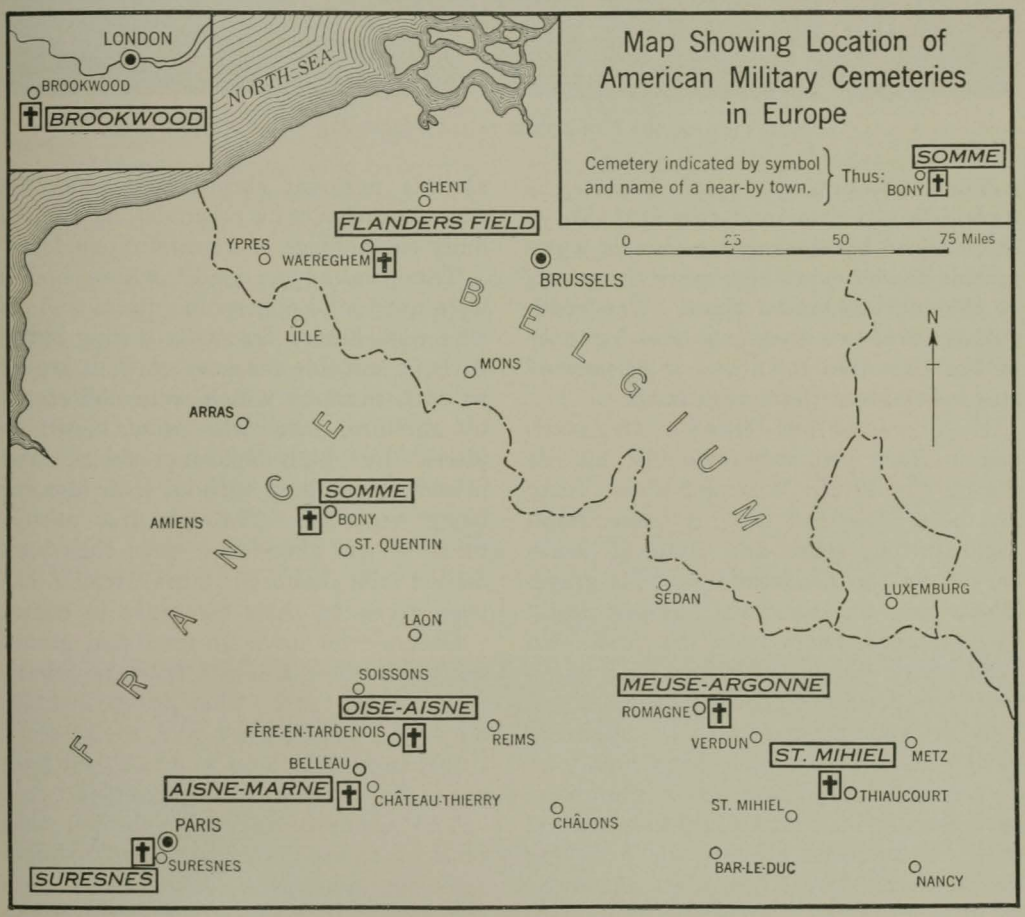
Flagpole at the Somme American Cemetery

Chapter XI

AMERICAN MILITARY CEMETERIES IN EUROPE

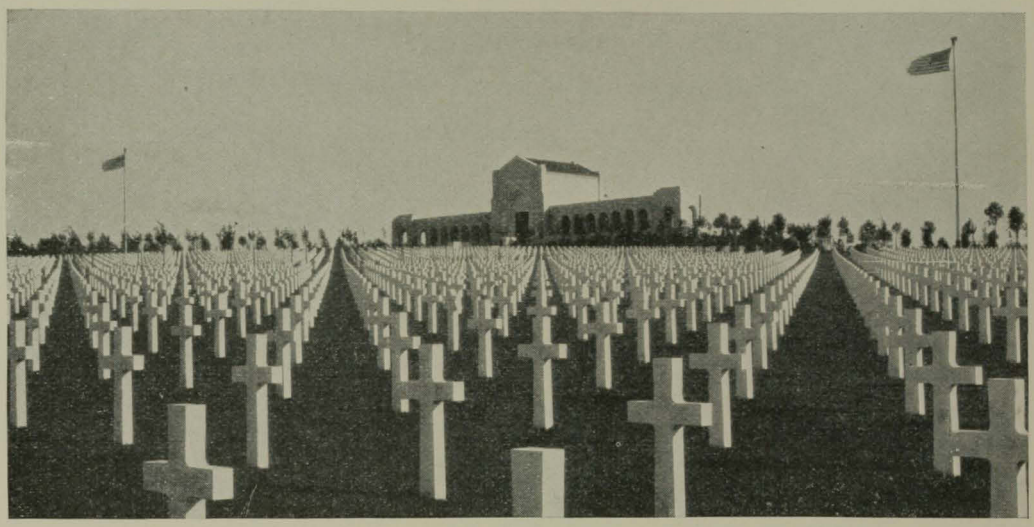
THERE are eight permanent American military cemeteries in Europe. These have been developed by the United States Government into places of distinguished beauty and no American Cemetery. The other American cemeteries are located on the battlefields of France and Belgium and have been included in the tours described in this book.

The cemeteries were originally established by the War Department. They are now (1937) under the jurisdiction of the American Battle Monuments Commission, which has erected in each one an appropriate memorial chapel and has added the additional architectural and landscape features necessary to make all of them outstanding in beauty and dignity.



who travels in Europe should fail to visit as many of them as his time will permit.

The cemeteries are conveniently located with respect to the routes which travelers normally follow. From the center of Paris it is only 5 miles to the cemetery at Suresnes, and from London it is less than an hour by train to the Brookwood



General View of the Headstones at the Meuse-Argonne Cemetery

The development of each cemetery is formal in character and this formality is emphasized by the regular rows of white marble headstones which mark the graves of the soldiers buried there. The headstones are of two designs, a cross for those of the Christian faith and a six-pointed star for those of the Jewish faith.

Every soldier now buried in an American military cemetery who lost his life during the World War and whose body has been identified has his name, rank, organization, state and date of death carved on the headstone over his grave. These men are called the "known dead" to distinguish them from the "unknown dead" whose bodies have not been found or, if found, have not been identified.

With one exception, all "unknown dead" whose bodies have been found are now buried in the cemeteries in Europe, each resting in a separate grave marked with a headstone bearing the following inscription: "HERE RESTS IN HONORED GLORY AN AMERICAN SOLDIER KNOWN BUT TO GOD". The single exception is that of the "Unknown Soldier" who was buried in a superb tomb bearing the same inscription at the Arlington National Cemetery near Washington, D. C. This soldier, selected from the unidentified dead of the A. E. F., was returned to America and buried with full military honors at this national shrine, where, as the representative of his comrades, he receives daily the homage of a grateful people.

The "unknown dead" whose bodies were not found consist mainly of soldiers who were buried hurriedly during battle without suitable markers on their graves or with markers which were obliterated by shellfire, men who were blown to pieces by high-explosive shells, and prisoners who died without their identity being recorded. Through the misfortunes of war these men have thus been denied the honored burial which has been given to their comrades in death.

Others who have no identified graves are the soldiers and sailors whose resting place is the sea. This group includes men who died at sea and were buried there, as well as those who lost their lives at sea due to the action of the enemy.

The Commission early decided that each of these "unknown dead" should have his name, rank, organization, state and date of death inscribed in one of the chapels in the American cemeteries in Europe. As a result, in the chapel of each battlefield cemetery are inscribed the names of the "unknown" soldiers who lost their lives in that region. In addition, on panels of the chapel in the Meuse-Argonne Cemetery are recorded the names of the "unknown dead" of the

Services of Supply and of the American Expedition to Northern Russia. The "Unknown Soldier" who is buried at the Arlington National Cemetery is therefore among the soldiers whose names appear on the walls of one of the chapels in the American military cemeteries in Europe.

The names of the "unknown" soldiers and sailors whose bodies were lost or buried in European waters are recorded in the chapels at Suresnes and Brookwood.

Of the 81,067 American soldiers, sailors and marines who gave their lives in Europe and European waters during the war, the number who still remain "unknown" is 4,431. This number includes 1,643 who are buried in unidentified graves in the permanent American cemeteries in Europe, 1,537 whose grave is the sea, 1,250 whose remains have never been found, and the "Unknown Soldier" who is buried at the Arlington National Cemetery.

At the time of the Armistice there were approximately 2,400 places in Europe in which American dead were temporarily buried. After hostilities ceased, provision was made for the permanent burial of these bodies in accordance with the expressed wishes of the nearest relatives concerned, and the eight permanent American cemeteries in Europe were established. These cemeteries, with their 30,902 burials, now contain the graves of all members of the American forces whose bodies remain in Europe except as follows: 42 men whose bodies were left in their original graves outside the cemeteries at the request of relatives; 18 who are buried beneath the Lafayette Escadrille monument at Garches, near Paris, where 21 of their former comrades of the Escadrille are also buried; those whose bodies were released to relatives for private interment, and those whose remains have not been found.

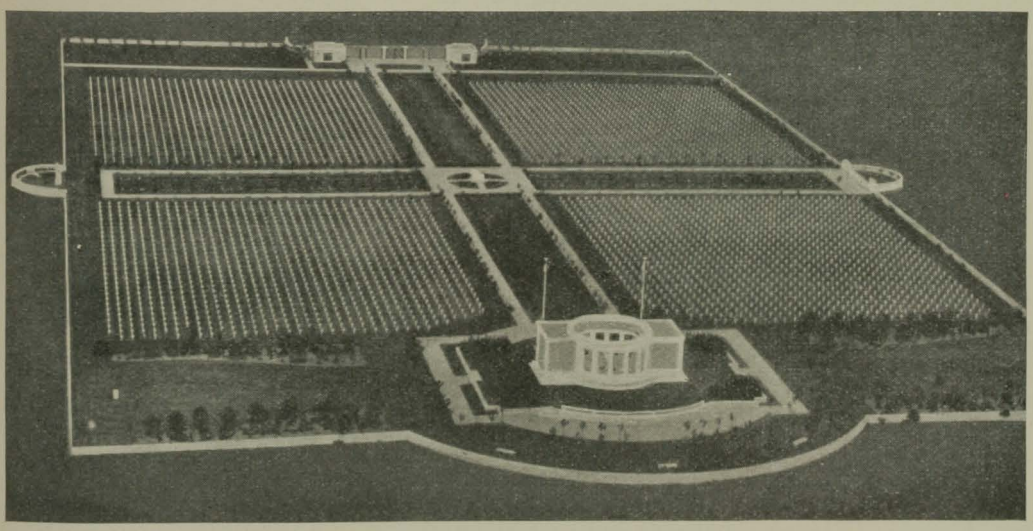
A brief description of each of the American cemeteries is given on the following pages. The photographs accompanying them will give a good idea of the appearance of the different cemeteries and the small maps will be found useful by the tourist in locating a cemetery after he arrives in its general neighborhood.

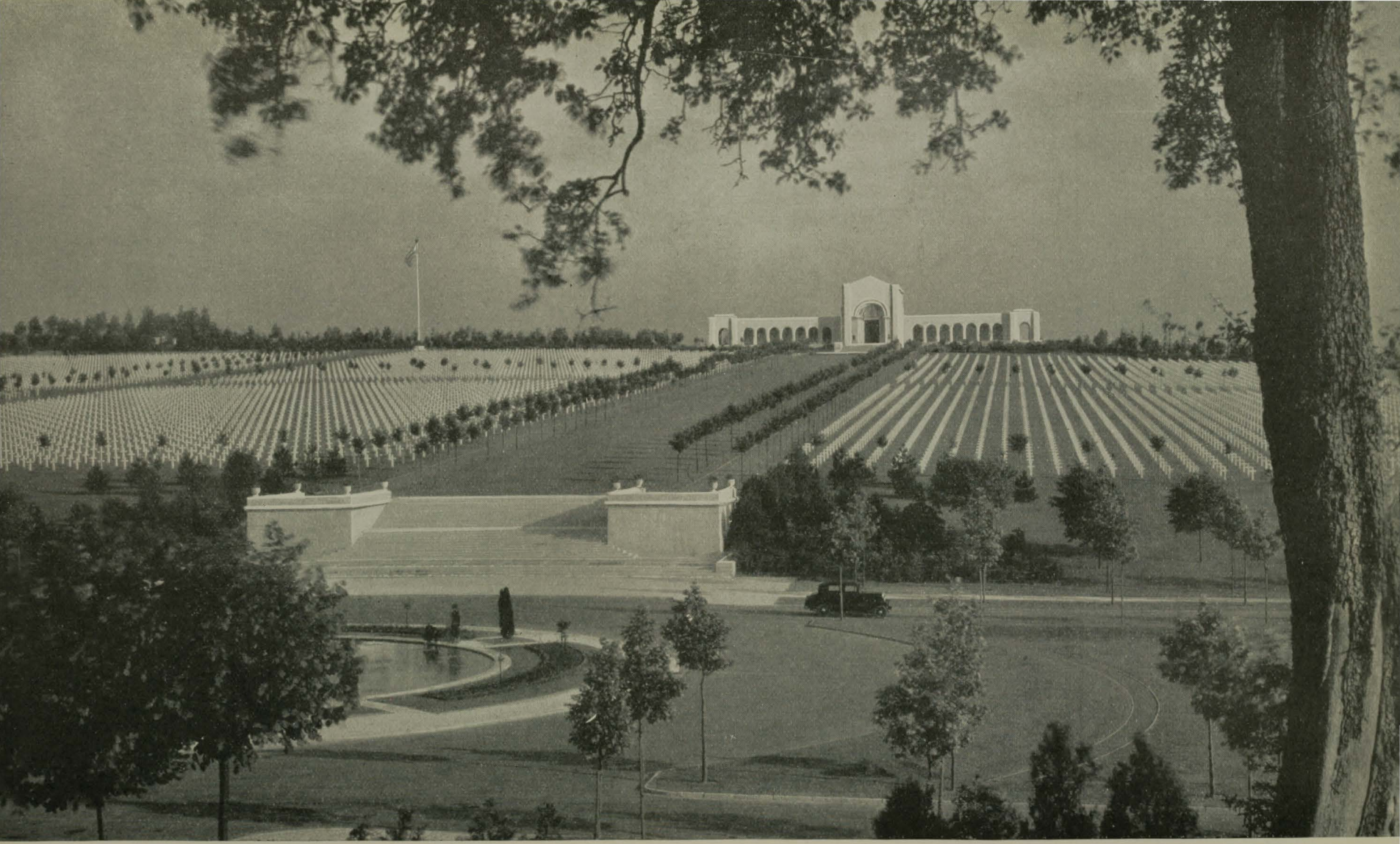
An information bureau is maintained at the European Office of the American Battle Monuments Commission, located in the American Government Office Building, 2 Avenue Gabriel, Place de la Concorde, Paris, where locations of particular graves and information concerning the cemeteries may be obtained.

An American superintendent is on duty at each cemetery to give information and other assistance to visitors. Reception rooms are available at the cemeteries for the comfort and convenience of tourists.

All distances in this chapter are air line.

Airplane View of the St. Mihiel Cemetery

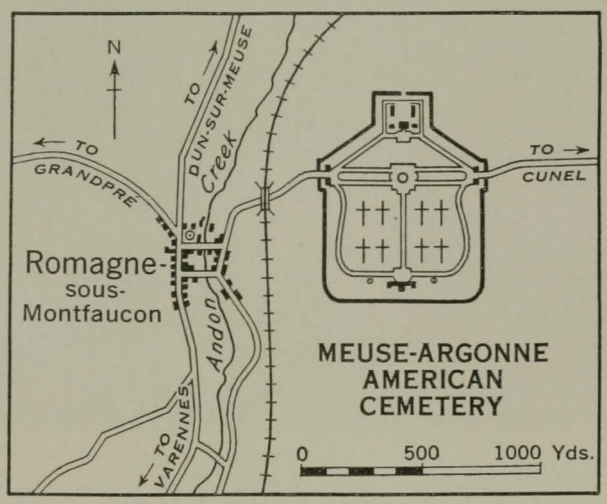




Meuse-Argonne American Cemetery Near Romagne-sous-Montfaucon

MEUSE-ARGONNE CEMETERY NEAR ROMAGNE-SOUS-MONTFAUCON

THIS is the largest and most impressive American cemetery in Europe. It contains 14,240 graves. Most of those buried here gave their lives during the Meuse-Argonne offensive, the greatest battle in all American history.



The cemetery is located just in rear of the Hindenburg Line in a small valley between Romagne and Cunel. Its size and the harmony of its architectural development make it rank high among the beautiful cemeteries of the world. The immense field of white marble crosses arranged in long regular rows on the sloping hillside, with the chapel silhouetted on the crest above, is a sight which, once it is seen, will not quickly be forgotten.

A more complete description of this cemetery is given on pages 247–248.

A hostess house, which has facilities to provide rooms and meals for a limited number of visitors during the summer months, is now maintained at the cemetery for the convenience of the relatives of the men who are buried in the cemetery.

The cemetery is about 18 miles northwest of Verdun, which is a tourist center and easily reached by train. Good hotel accommodations are available in the city and automobiles can be hired there. Both the cemetery and the Meuse-Argonne American memorial on Montfaucon are included in most of the regular tours of the battlefields which start from Verdun.

Romagne Entrance, Meuse-Argonne Cemetery

OISE-AISNE CEMETERY NEAR FÈRE-EN-TARDENOIS

ON a battlefield where many of America's bravest sons met their death, near Fère-en-Tardenois, is located the Oise-Aisne Cemetery, the second largest American cemetery in Europe. It contains 6,012 graves. The majority of the battle dead who sleep there are from divisions which fought in the vicinity and to the north as far as the Oise River. In 1922 a considerable number of bodies were moved to this cemetery from the general area to the southwest of Paris.

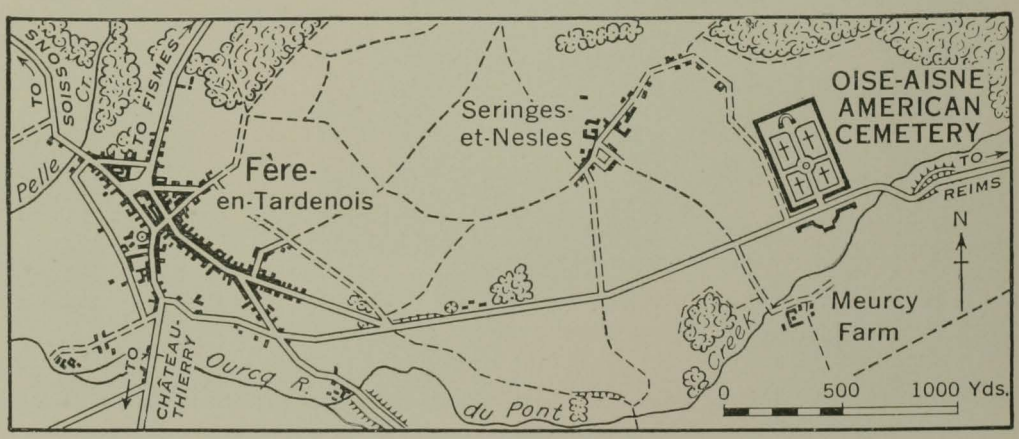
The quiet surroundings now give no indication of the conflict that raged in this region while American soldiers were fighting here for the Ourcq River heights.

The cemetery itself is a peaceful harmony of landscaping and architecture. The pink and gray sandstone chapel and walls give color at all times but perfection is reached in the spring when the roses and flowering shrubs are in full bloom.

The cemetery is about 14 miles from Château-Thierry and Soissons and slightly more from Reims. Good train service is available to each of those places, where hotel accommodations can be obtained and automobiles hired. The main railroad line between Paris and Reims passes close to the village of Fère-en-Tardenois.

For further information concerning this cemetery and its features see pages 75–76.

The American cemetery near Belleau and the American memorial on Hill 204 just outside of Château-Thierry are each about 14 miles away to the southwest.

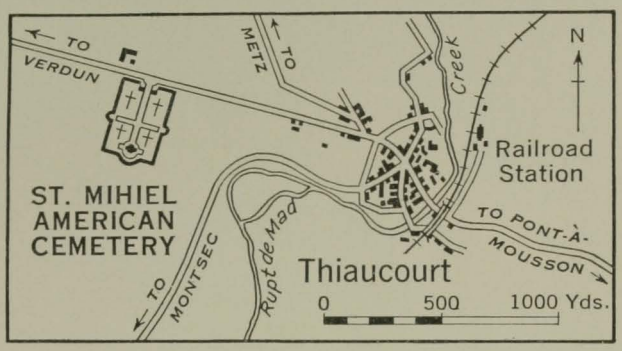


THIS is the third largest of the American military cemeteries in Europe and contains 4,152 graves. It is located on ground restored to France, after more than four years of German occupation, by the great offensive of the American First Army which resulted in reducing the St. Mihiel salient.

The cemetery contains many works of art and architecture in commemoration of those who died on this field of honor. The interior decorations of the chapel and museum, which include an inlaid marble map picturing the American fighting in the vicinity, are of special interest. For a more complete description of this cemetery and the features located in it, see pages 147–149.

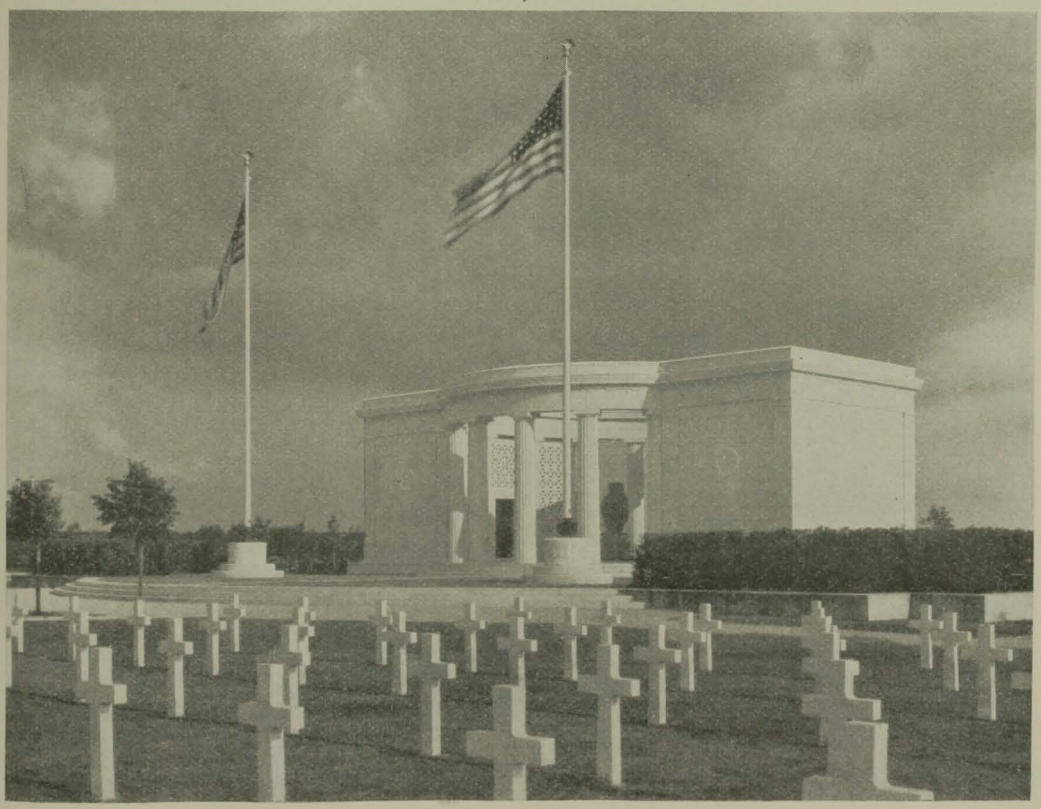
The American memorial on Montsec, commemorating the St. Mihiel operation and other American fighting in the region, is 8 miles to the southwest and can be seen from the cemetery on a clear day.

The cemetery is less than 26 miles from Nancy, Verdun and Metz. There is good train service to these places, and at each of them hotel accommodations are



available and automobiles may be hired. Thiaucourt is on the main railroad line between Paris and Metz and a few of the trains stop there. The town is four hours by train from Paris. There are, however, no good hotels at Thiaucourt.

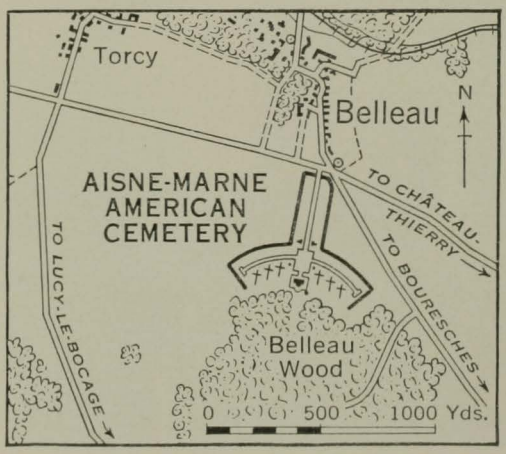
St. Mihiel Cemetery Near Thiaucourt



AISNE-MARNE CEMETERY NEAR BELLEAU

THIS cemetery lies at the foot of the hill upon which stands Belleau Wood. It contains 2,288 graves, mainly those of American soldiers who fought in the near vicinity or in the Marne River valley.

The imposing chapel standing against the hillside is of French Romanesque style of architecture. The natural setting of the cemetery and chapel, and the perfection of detail of the architectural and landscape development, all combine to give this historic spot an atmosphere of exceptional beauty and dignity.

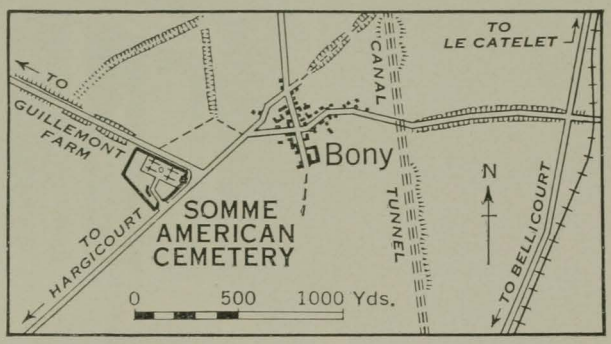


The cemetery is 45 miles from Paris and about 5 miles northwest of Château-Thierry, which is on a main railroad line running east from Paris. Fair hotel accommodations are available at Château-Thierry and automobiles for a visit to the battlefields may be hired there.

A more detailed description of this cemetery is given on pages 49–52.

A visit to the cemetery will give the tourist an opportunity to see Belleau Wood, which adjoins the cemetery, and the Aisne-Marne American memorial which is on a hill above Château-Thierry.

THIS cemetery, located about halfway on the road between St. Quentin and Cambrai, is just southwest of Bony and contains 1,833 graves. Its style of architecture expresses the spirit of rugged determination which inspired the American soldiers in their repeated assaults across the neighboring fields while advancing to attack the Hindenburg Line in front of Bony.



The men buried here are mainly those who lost their lives while serving with the British Armies in France or in the operations of the 1st Division with the French Army near the town of Cantigny.

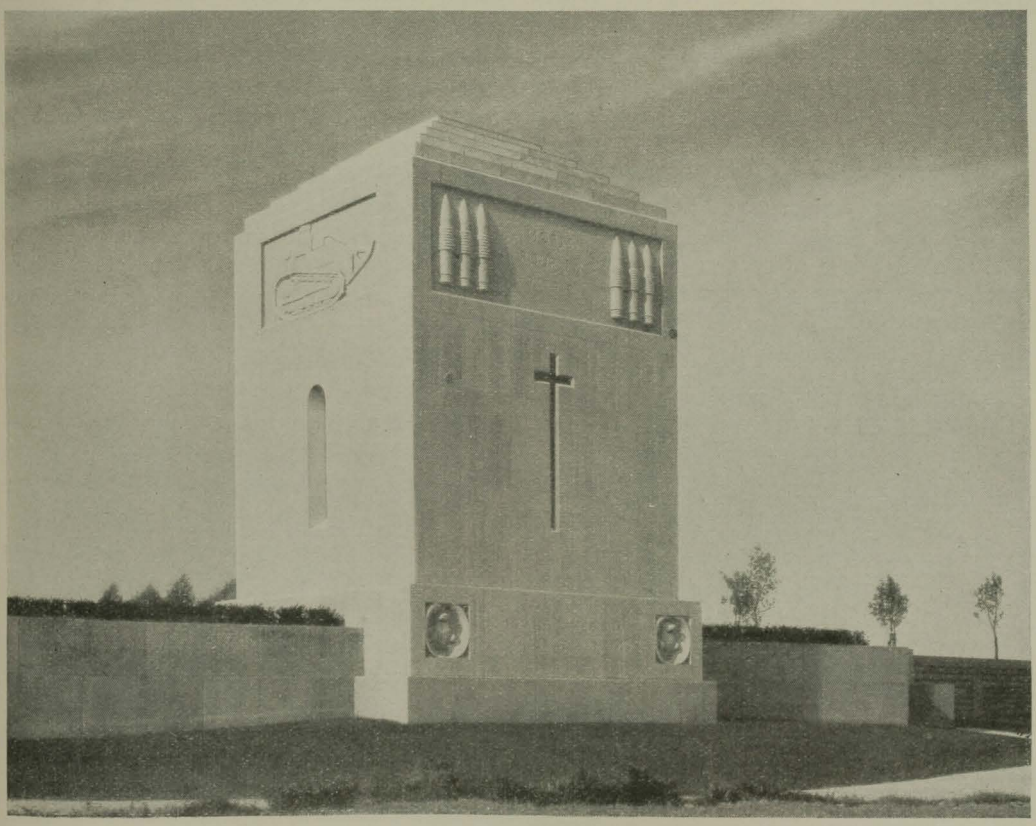
The chapel is remarkable for its cross-shaped window of crystal glass above the altar, the harmony of its interior decorations, the beauty of its bronze doors and its interesting carved exterior decorations.

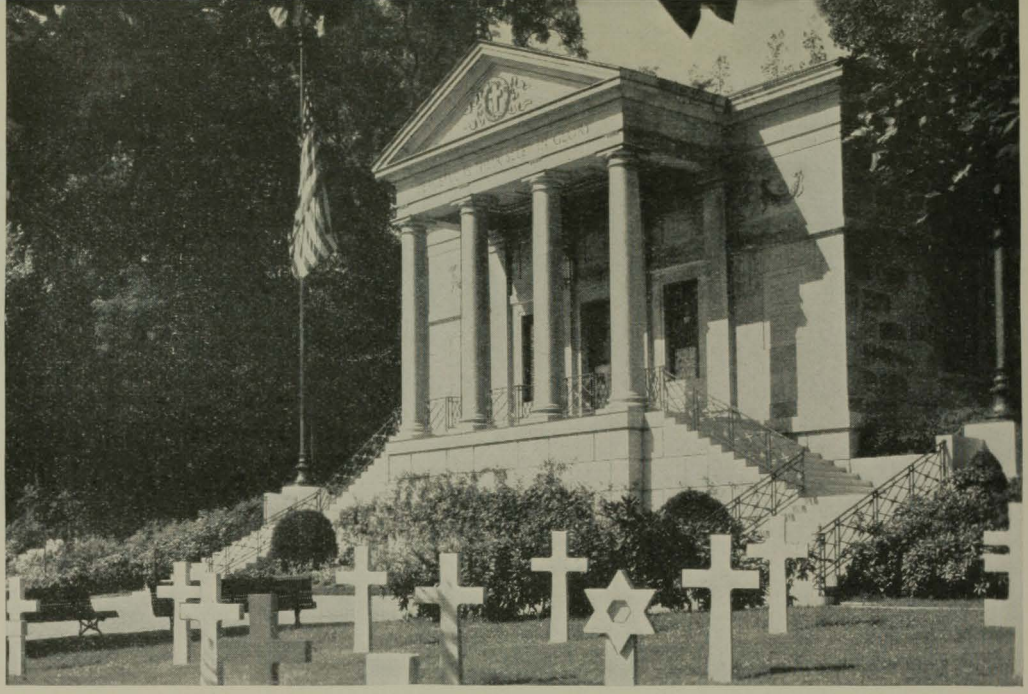
The cemetery is about 9 miles north of St. Quentin, which can be reached by train from Paris in two hours. Hotel accommodations are available and motor transportation may be hired there.

For a more complete description of this cemetery consult pages 387–388.

The American monument north of Bellicourt which commemorates the services of all American troops who fought with the British Armies in Europe during the World War is one mile away to the southeast.

Chapel at the Somme American Cemetery Near Bony

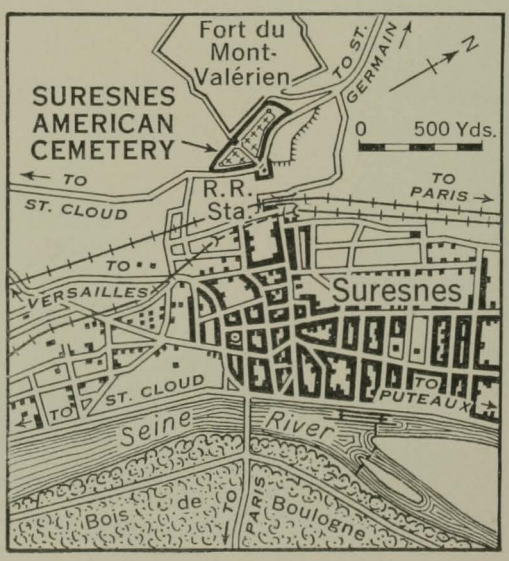




SURESNES AMERICAN CEMETERY NEAR PARIS

ON the slopes of Mont Valérien, 5 miles from the heart of Paris, is located the Suresnes Cemetery containing 1,541 graves. The men buried there are mainly those who died during the World War in hospitals located in Paris or at other places in the Services of Supply.

The cemetery is entered through an ornamental, wrought-iron gateway, and paths lead from it directly to the impressive chapel of an early colonial design. From its site against the steep wooded hillside, the chapel looks out over the fields of white marble headstones, and from its terrace a fine panorama of a large part of the city of Paris is obtained.



Inside the chapel is an artistic marble altar flanked by large marble urns containing green shrubbery. The effect of these is heightened by the beautiful mosaic above them depicting the Angel of Victory laying a tribute upon the tombs of the soldier dead. The interior of the chapel is illuminated by a subdued light from six attractive stained-glass windows and on the walls are bronze tablets giving the names of American soldiers and sailors whose grave is the sea.[1] Carved benches have been provided for meditation and prayer.

Nature has aided with a generous hand the careful planning which created this peaceful resting place and a visit to honor these soldier dead is recommended when the trees and shrubs are in flower.

The reception building which contains facilities for visitors is located at the southern end of the cemetery.

The town of Suresnes can be easily reached from Paris by train, autobus or automobile. The cemetery is only about 200 yards from the main railroad station.

[1] Additional names of those men who have no grave except the sea are given in the Brookwood chapel.

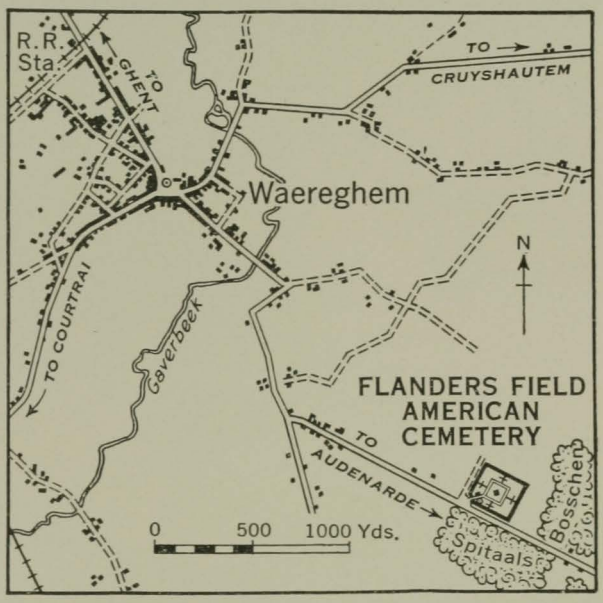
FLANDERS FIELD CEMETERY NEAR WAEREGHEM, BELGIUM

THIS cemetery, located about halfway between Brussels and Ypres, contains 368 graves. The men who rest here are mainly those who gave their lives during the American fighting in Belgium.

The beautiful chapel at the center of the cemetery is surrounded on four sides by the fields of white marble headstones. The landscaping gives an impression of quiet harmony and the whole development forms a fitting resting place for the American heroes who are buried at this place.

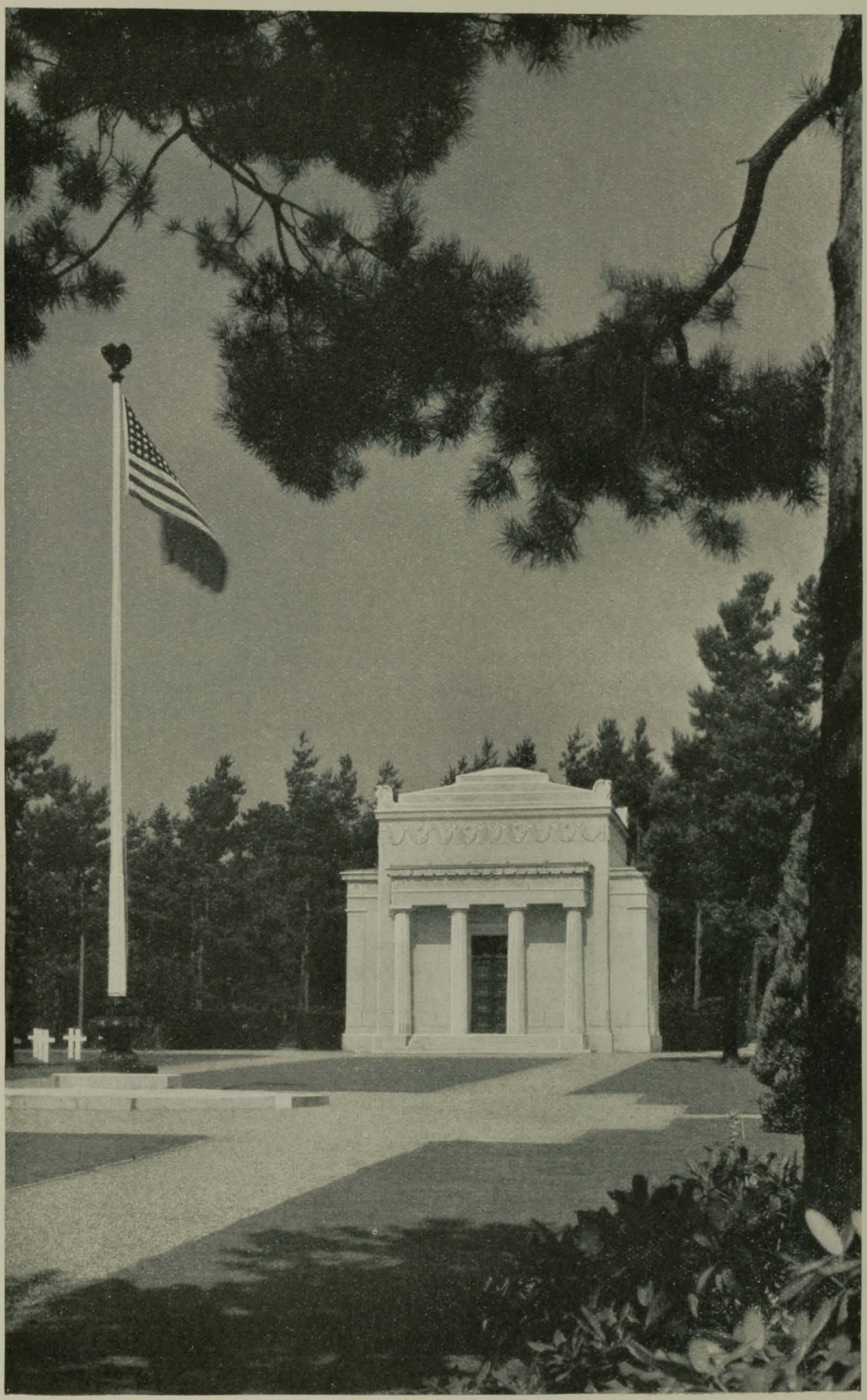
Additional information concerning this cemetery and the features in it is given on page 399.

The American monument in the town of Audenarde is 7 miles away on the direct road to Brussels.



The cemetery is 17 miles southwest of Ghent, 24 miles northeast of Lille and 39 miles west of Brussels. The nearest railroad station, which is in the village of Waereghem, can be reached by fast train from Paris in approximately five hours.

Flanders Field American Cemetery Near Waereghem, Belgium



American Cemetery Near Brookwood, England

BROOKWOOD CEMETERY NEAR BROOKWOOD, ENGLAND

THIS cemetery, located near the village of Brookwood about 25 miles southwest of London, contains 468 graves. Adjoining it is a British World War cemetery in which are buried many of the dead from their colonial forces. Both of these burial areas form part of a very large and beautiful British cemetery that was established privately many years ago.

The American soldiers who rest in the Brookwood Cemetery were brought there after the Armistice, from various places throughout England, Scotland and Ireland, and comprise those members of the American Expeditionary Forces who lost their lives in Great Britain or its surrounding waters during the war. They include many of the victims of the S. S. *Tuscania* which was sunk by a German submarine on February 5, 1918, not far away from the west coast of Scotland.

On the southwest side of the cemetery, across from the British military burial ground, is situated a reception building which contains facilities for the comfort of visitors. The office of the superintendent is in that building and inquiries should be made there for the location of a particular grave or for other information.

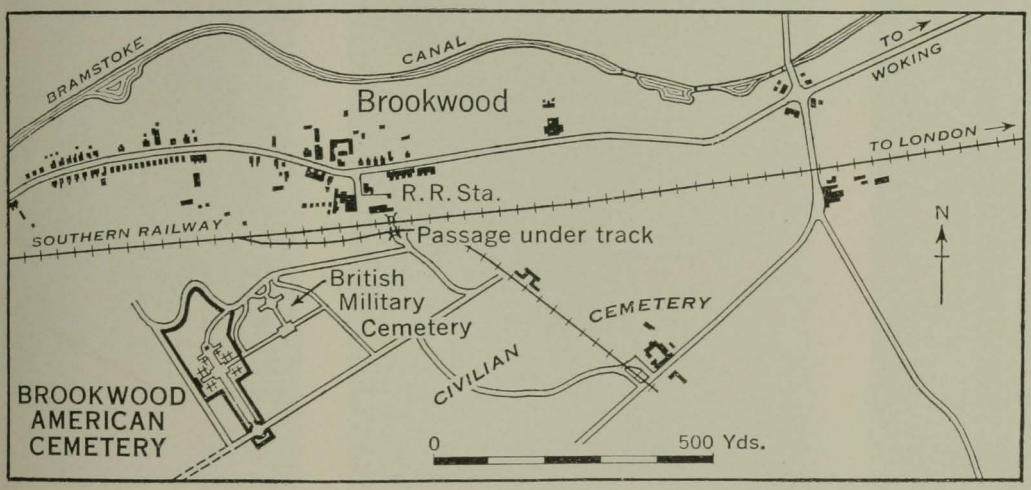
At the center of the cemetery is an ornamental flagpole from which the American flag flies, each day of the year, over the soldier dead buried here.

The regular rows of white marble headstones are shaded by thick masses of evergreens which form a perfect setting for the chapel, a graceful building of classic design decorated with features of both religious and patriotic interest.

The interior of the chapel is of brown stone, soft in coloring. Small stained-glass windows, remarkable for the beauty of their designs, light the altar and the carved cross above it. On the walls are inscribed the names of American soldiers and sailors whose grave is the sea.[1] Inlaid in the floor is a large bronze coat of arms of the United States; and high above the altar, carved in relief on the wall, is an eagle with the inscription below it,

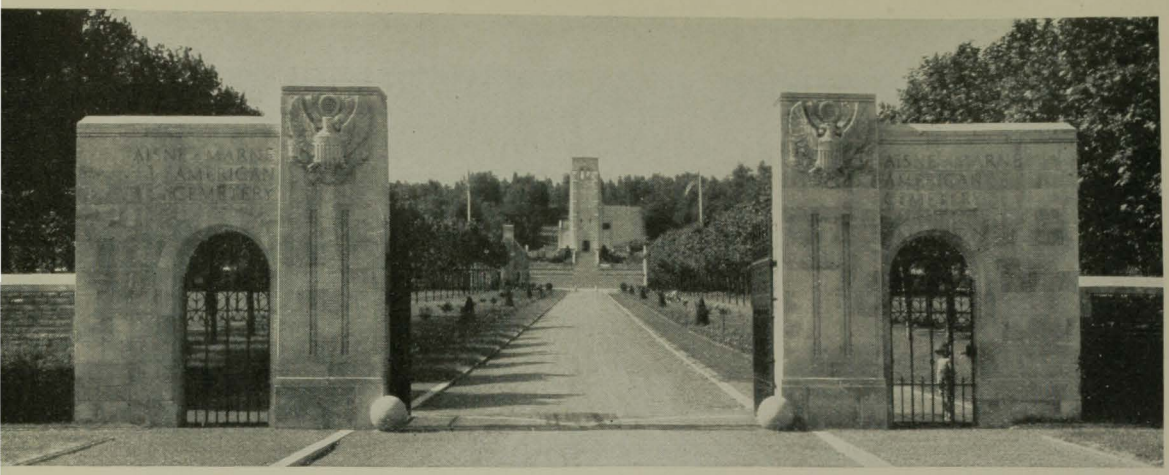
WITH GOD IS THEIR REWARD

A visit to the cemetery can not fail to bring a feeling of satisfaction to the American visitor that these soldiers who died in Great Britain and who still remain there are sleeping in such beautiful, dignified and peaceful surroundings.

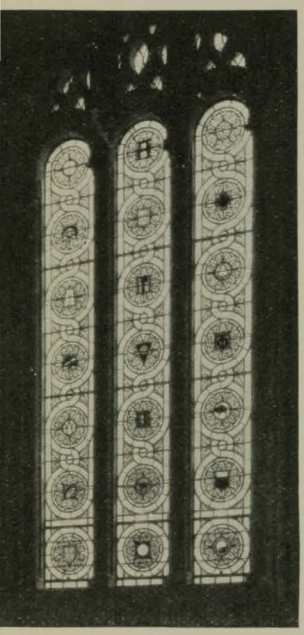


It is a pleasant drive by automobile from London to Brookwood, through an interesting part of England, and a round trip to the cemetery in this way can be made comfortably in half a day. Brookwood can also be reached by train in less than an hour from London. The railroad service is exceptionally good, trains running about every hour, and the American cemetery is only about 300 yards to the southwest of the railroad station.

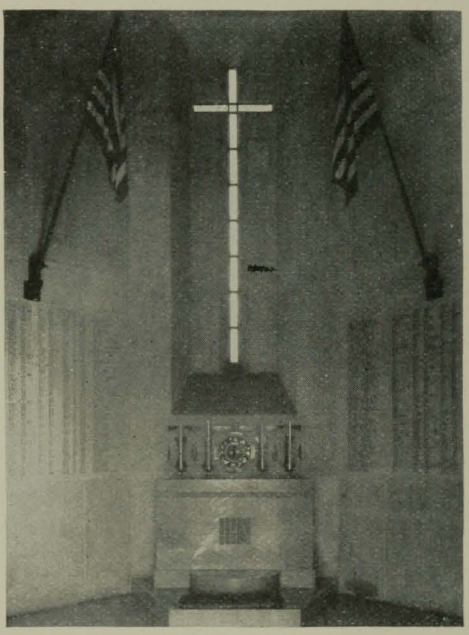
[1] Additional names of those men who have no grave except the sea are recorded at the Suresnes Cemetery.



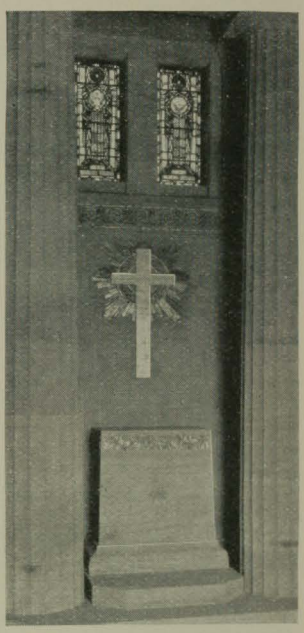
Entrance, Aisne-Marne Cemetery



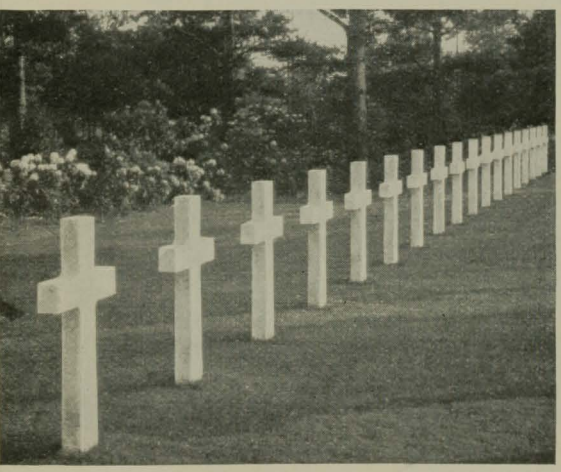
Chapel Window in the
Meuse-Argonne Cemetery



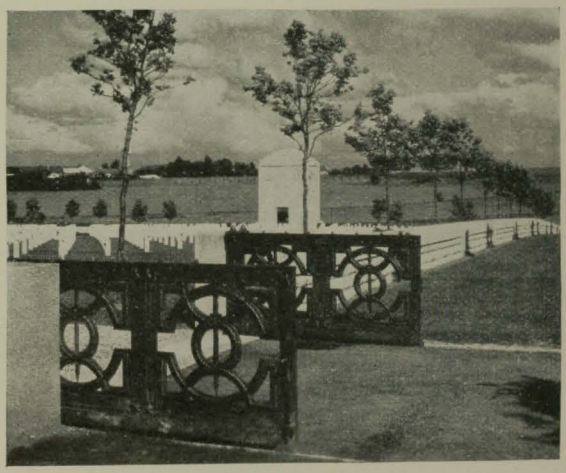
Altar of Chapel
in the Somme Cemetery



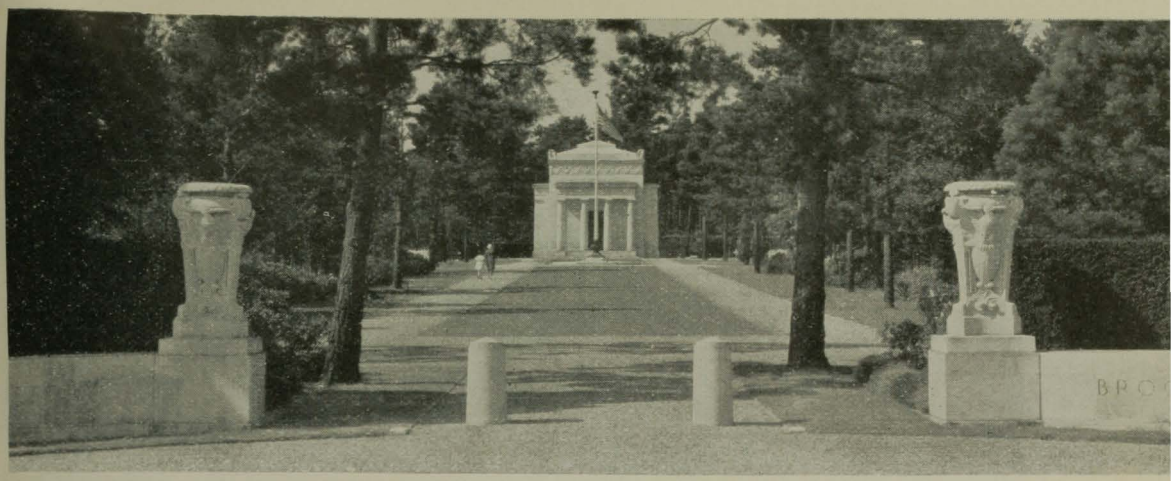
Altar of Chapel
in the Brookwood Cemetery



Line of Crosses in the Brookwood Cemetery

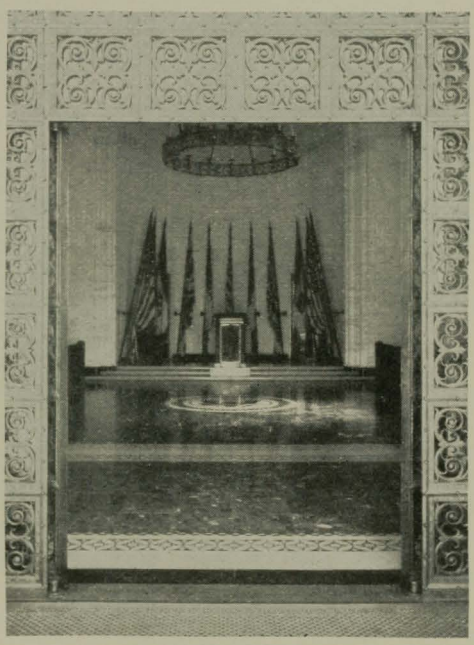


Bronze Gates at the Somme Cemetery



Entrance, Brookwood Cemetery

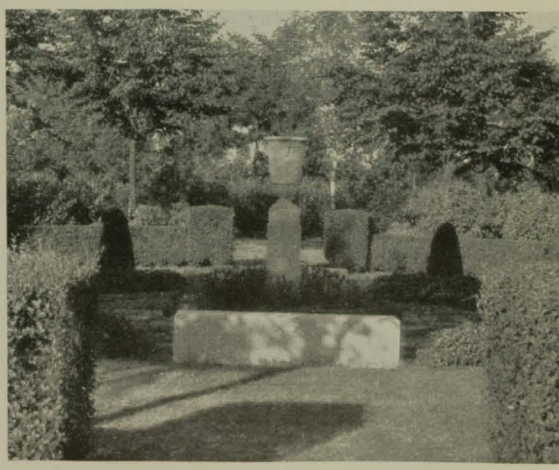
Mosaic and Altar of Chapel
in the St. Mihiel Cemetery



Altar of Chapel
in the Meuse-Argonne Cemetery

Monument in the
St. Mihiel Cemetery

Mosaic and Altar of Chapel at the Suresnes Cemetery



A Corner of the Flanders Field Cemetery