

Aisne-Marne and Oise-Aisne Offensives

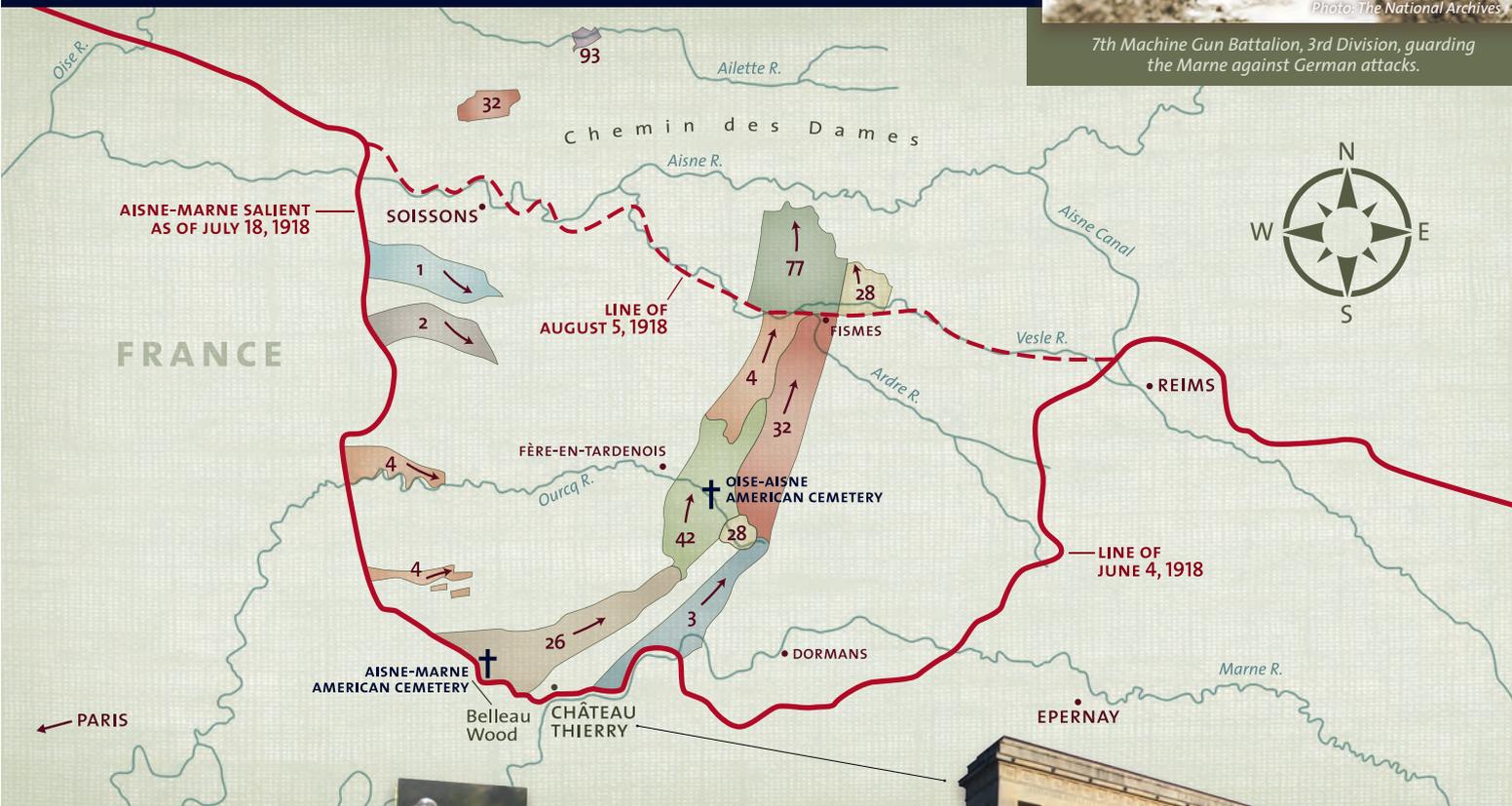
MAY 31 – SEPTEMBER 16, 1918

KEY: † Military Cemetery U.S. Army Divisions



Photo: The National Archives

7th Machine Gun Battalion, 3rd Division, guarding the Marne against German attacks.



Belleau Wood

You may access Belleau Wood by exiting the cemetery and turning around it to the south.



A memorial to the 4th Marine Brigade stands in the middle of Belleau Wood.



Cannons and vestiges of trenches and shell holes remain in Belleau Wood.



Château-Thierry Monument - Hill 204

The Château-Thierry Monument on Hill 204 has a large map of the American operations in this region.

Aisne-Marne American Cemetery and Memorial

The Aisne-Marne American Cemetery lies below the hill containing Belleau Wood, the scene of fierce combat where many of those buried in the cemetery lost their lives. The government of France granted use of this land, in perpetuity, as a permanent burial ground without charge or taxation.

American Battle Monuments Commission

This agency of the United States government operates and maintains 24 American cemeteries and 25 memorials, monuments and markers in 15 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."



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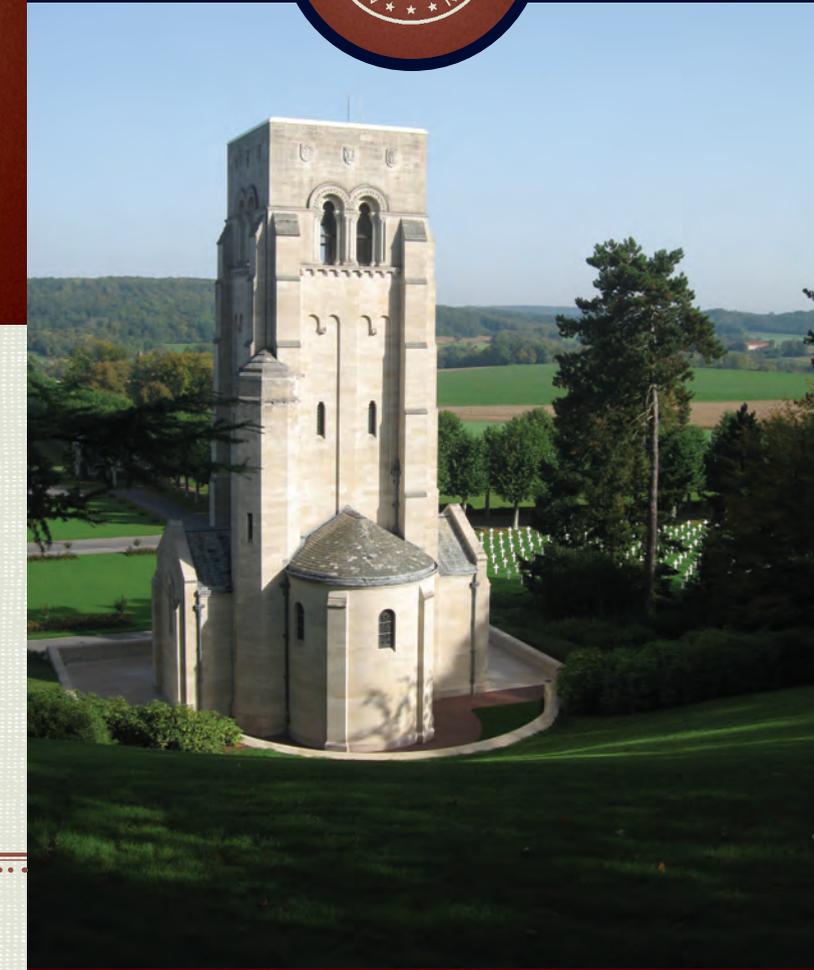
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For more information on this site and other ABMC commemorative sites, please visit www.abmc.gov



Aisne-Marne American Cemetery and Memorial

American Battle Monuments Commission



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**AISNE-MARNE AND
 OISE-AISNE OFFENSIVES**
MAY 31 – SEPTEMBER 16, 1918

When the United States entered World War I in April 1917, the Allies and Germans all doubted the fighting capability of the Americans. German offensives on the Western Front in spring 1918 sought to win the war before American units became operational.

MAY 27, 1918: German forces broke through French lines at the “Chemin des Dames.” Within three days they reached Belleau Wood and the Marne River in Château-Thierry. Without reserves, France called on the American Expeditionary Forces.

MAY 30: U.S. 3rd Division arrived in Château-Thierry, blocking German forces on the north bank of the Marne throughout June.

EARLY JUNE: U.S. 2nd Division, including its 4th Marine Brigade, replaced French units in the Belleau area.

JUNE 6: Marines led the 2nd Division into Belleau Wood to clear out German units. The battle lasted 20 days and became an enduring symbol for the Marine Corps. American forces proved themselves, stirring Allied hopes to win the war.

JULY 15: German forces tried again to pierce Allied lines by crossing the Marne River east of Château-Thierry. The 3rd Division blocked them, and was nicknamed “Rock of the Marne” by the French Army.

JULY 18: The Allies began the Aisne-Marne Offensive. By August 6, the German salient was eliminated and Allied forces reached the banks of the Vesle River. Ten American Divisions (310,000 men) participated in this offensive.

General John J. Pershing led the American Expeditionary Forces to successes in the St. Mihiel and Meuse-Argonne campaigns and to the Armistice on November 11, 1918.

Carvings

Decorative embellishments are carved on the chapel. Some depict scenes of trenches. Others reproduce shoulder patches of the American divisions that fought during the Aisne-Marne offensive.



Former Hunting Lodge

This former hunting lodge stands on the hill behind the chapel. It was a strategic place during the battle of Belleau Wood.



The Chapel

This Romanesque style memorial has been erected on front lines occupied by the 2nd Division during the campaign.



Wall of Missing

Names of 1,060 American soldiers missing in the area appear on the walls of the chapel. Four who were recovered are recognized by the little rosette added near their names.



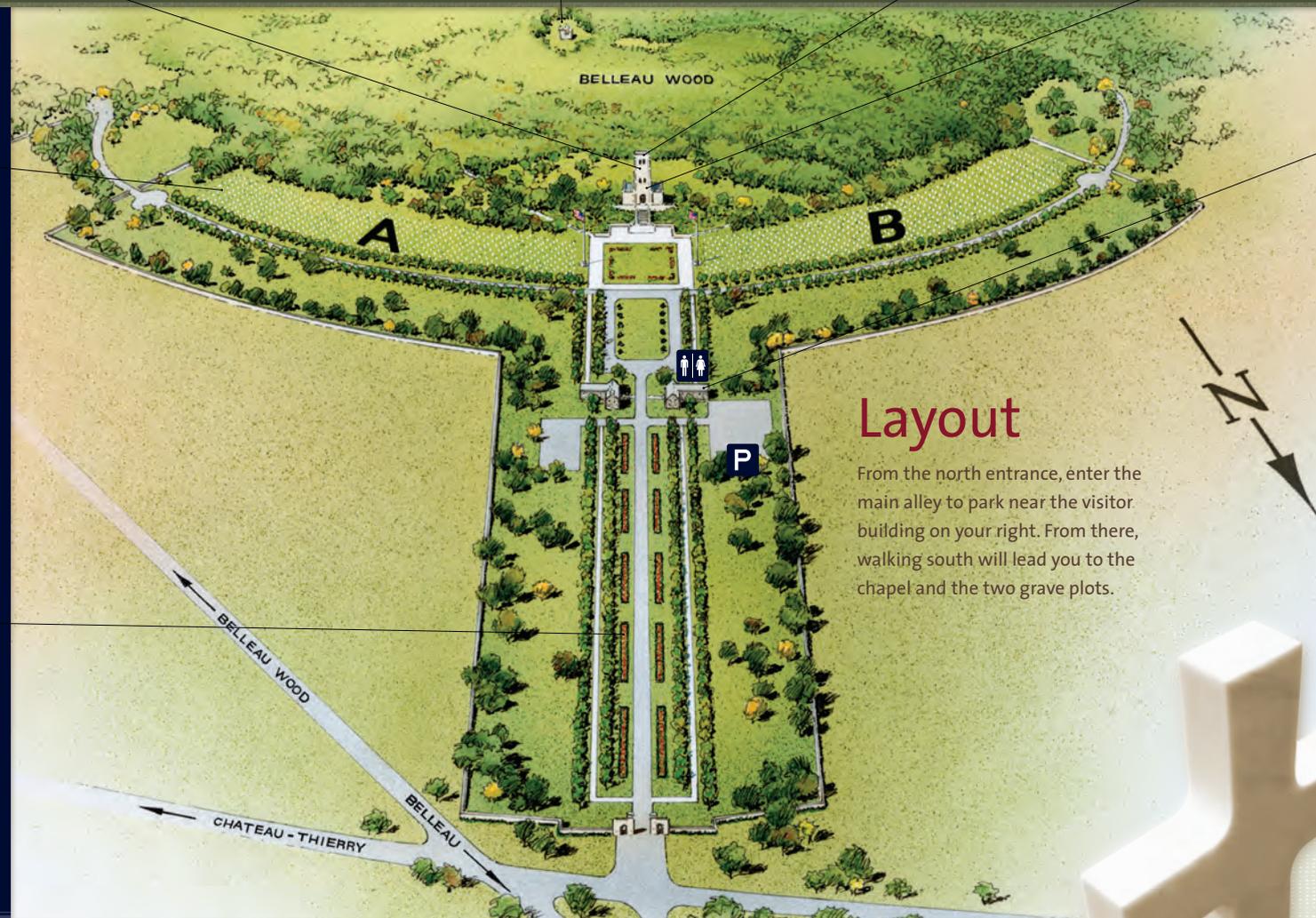
The Graves

2,289 headstones, separated into two graves areas A and B, follow the curve of the hill where the battle of Belleau Wood took place.



The Plantings

328 plane trees and nearly 4,000 rosebushes border the graves areas and the main alley.



Layout

From the north entrance, enter the main alley to park near the visitor building on your right. From there, walking south will lead you to the chapel and the two grave plots.



Visitor Building

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



Surviving officers of 2nd Battalion, 6th Marine Regiment, at Belleau Wood, June 18, 1918.

Headstone Location

PLOT:

ROW:

GRAVE:

Useful Information

DIMENSIONS: 42 acres
HEADSTONES: 2,289
LATIN CROSSES: 2,256

STARS OF DAVID: 33
MISSING IN ACTION: 1,060
UNKNOWN: 250

SETS OF BROTHERS: 3
MEDAL OF HONOR RECIPIENTS: 1
DEDICATED: May 30, 1937

