



## MEUSE-ARGONNE OFFENSIVE LEADS TO ARMISTICE

U.S. and Allied counteroffensives in the summer of 1918 stopped German advances. By September, plans were made to strike German forces along the entire Western Front. U.S. First Army, commanded by Gen. John J. Pershing, received the mission of defeating German forces in the region between the Meuse River and the Argonne Forest northward to Sedan. Formidable enemy defensive positions in depth extended miles north of the front lines.

**SEPTEMBER 26:** After intense artillery barrages blasted German defenses, First Army units launched the assault at 5:30 a.m.

**SEPTEMBER 27:** U.S. 37th and 79th Divisions captured Montfaucon, highest point in the region and a key German position. German reinforcements swarmed in along the front.

**OCTOBER 3:** First Army consolidated positions gained since Sep. 26.

**OCTOBER 4:** The offensive's second phase began. Heights of Romagne and Cunel were seized.

**OCTOBER 31:** U.S. and French forces finished clearing the Argonne Forest.

**NOVEMBER 1:** Final phase of the offensive began. Units of U.S. V Corps seized critical heights around Barricourt. Other units began crossing the Meuse River and advancing northeastward across the Woevre Plain.

**NOVEMBER 7:** U.S. I Corps units captured heights on south bank of the Meuse River overlooking Sedan.

**NOVEMBER 11:** The Armistice became effective at 11:00 a.m. local time.

More than 1.2 million U.S. troops fought during the 47 days of the Meuse-Argonne Offensive. About 117,000 were killed or wounded. General Pershing said, "The success stands out as one of the very great achievements in the history of American Arms."

## The Meuse-Argonne Campaign

**KEY:** † Military Cemetery    🗿 Monument



2nd Lt. Frank Luke, Jr. shot down 18 German planes and balloons in 17 days.

### Meuse-Argonne American Cemetery and Memorial

This is the largest American cemetery in Europe. A temporary cemetery was established here October 14, 1918 on terrain captured by the 32nd and 5th Divisions. The land on which it rests has been granted free use by the French government as a permanent burial ground in perpetuity 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."



**American Battle Monuments Commission**  
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**Meuse-Argonne American Cemetery**  
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TEL +33.(0)3.29.85.14.18  
GPS N49 20.044 E5 05.376

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For more information on this site and other ABMC commemorative sites, please visit [www.abmc.gov](http://www.abmc.gov)



## Meuse-Argonne American Cemetery and Memorial

American Battle Monuments Commission



# Points of Interest



**Sommepey Monument**  
GPS N49 17.05 E04 32.18

The Sommepey Monument atop Blanc Mont Ridge commemorates the achievements of the 70,000 Americans who served in this region during the summer and fall of 1918.



**"Lost Battalion" Site**  
GPS N49 15.10 E04 54.90

From October 2-7, Major C. W. Whittlesey of the 77th Division held his men together through German encirclement, and 50 percent killed and wounded. He received the Medal of Honor.



**Sgt. York**  
GPS N49 17.00 E04 57.25

On October 8, Sgt. Alvin C. York of the 82nd Division led his depleted patrol against German forces, single-handedly killing several and capturing 132. He received the Medal of Honor.



**Montfaucon Monument**  
GPS N49 16.33 E05 08.51

The Montfaucon Monument commemorates the victory of the U.S. First Army in the Meuse-Argonne Offensive and honors the earlier services of French forces on that battlefield.

## Graves

The graves area on the southern slope of the valley is divided into eight rectangular plots lettered from A to H. Each plot is bounded by square trimmed linden trees.



## Entrance

After passing through the entrance pylons, the broad east-west entrance mall with large pool appears. It crosses the small valley across which the cemetery is located.



## Visitor Building

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



## Large Pool

The circular pool midway along the east-west mall enhances the visitors' experience with its fountain and flowering lilies.



## Memorial Loggia

The names of 954 missing are engraved on panels in the two loggias flanking the memorial to east and west.



## Chapel

The chapel occupies the center of the memorial. The altar is backed by a semicircle of flags of the United States and the principal Allied nations in World War I.



## Layout

From the entrance, visitors see the broad expanse of the site. The road to the left leads to parking and the visitor building, and the start of a memorable experience.



## Headstone

A Star of David marks headstones for those of the Jewish faith, and a Latin cross denotes all others. Headstones of Medal of Honor recipients are inscribed in gold.



*Photo: The National Archives*  
A French couple thanks U.S. soldiers who liberated their town on Nov. 6, 1918.

## Headstone Location

PLOT: .....

ROW: .....

GRAVE: .....

## Useful Information

DIMENSIONS: 130.5 acres  
HEADSTONES: 14,246  
LATIN CROSSES: 13,978

STARS OF DAVID: 268  
UNKNOWN: 486  
MISSING IN ACTION: 954

SETS OF BROTHERS: 18  
MEDAL OF HONOR RECIPIENTS: 9  
DEDICATED: May 30, 1937