

Beginning the Liberation

KEY: † Military Cemetery



Photo: The National Archives
1st Infantry Division soldiers advance through Kasserine Pass, Feb. 26, 1943.



On November 8, 1942, Allied naval task forces put U.S. and British forces ashore in North Africa. Winter rains and German reinforcements stalled rapid advances eastward. Hard fighting from February through early May 1943 led to success in Tunisia.

North Africa American Cemetery and Memorial

The cemetery lies between the Mediterranean and the Bay of Tunis, atop part of ancient Roman Carthage. It was established in 1948 to consolidate temporary cemeteries in North Africa. The government of Tunisia granted its free use 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."



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



North Africa American Cemetery and Memorial

American Battle Monuments Commission



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**BEGINNING THE
 LIBERATION**

Allied leaders decided in mid-1942 that an offensive in North Africa would set the stage to enter Europe from the south, as well as the planned cross-Channel invasion. Vichy French forces in North Africa might resist, but other French forces could welcome the effort.

NOVEMBER 8, 1942: Operation TORCH began. Three Allied naval task forces put U.S. and British forces ashore near Casablanca, Oran, and Algiers.

NOVEMBER 8, 10, AND 11: Vichy French forces in Algiers, Oran, and Casablanca surrendered on those dates. Free French units soon became part of Allied operations.

DECEMBER 1942 THROUGH FEBRUARY 1943: Winter rains and strong German forces and air superiority stalled Allied advances into Tunisia.

EARLY FEBRUARY: British Eighth Army forced retreat of the Afrika Corps into southeastern Tunisia at the Mareth Line.

FEBRUARY 20-25: Battle of Kasserine Pass. German forces pushed U.S. units off the high ground. U.S. forces regained the pass in heavy fighting. The Germans withdrew toward Tunis.

MID MARCH: Allied forces gained air superiority.

APRIL 27-MAY 1: U.S. 34th Infantry Division broke through German defenses at Hill 609. Enemy forces retreated into a small area of northeast Tunisia.

MAY 7: U.S. units captured Bizerte, and the British captured Tunis.

MAY 13: Axis forces surrendered.

Conclusion of the campaign in North Africa set the stage for next steps in the Mediterranean: the invasion of Sicily and onward into Italy.

Chapel

The U.S. flag, plus Christian and Jewish chapel flags, are left of the altar. Flags of the combat arms project from the east wall above the pews.



**“Fallen American”
 Headstone**

Capt. Foy Draper is among the fallen Americans interred here. He was a member of the USA’s winning 400 Meter Relay Team at the 1936 Olympics.



Oasis

Four fountains and pools with surrounding vegetation provide welcome oases to enhance the experience for visitors in the frequently hot climate.



Graves Area

The 2,833 headstones in the graves area are arranged in rectangular lines harmonizing with the rectangular layout of the cemetery and memorial.



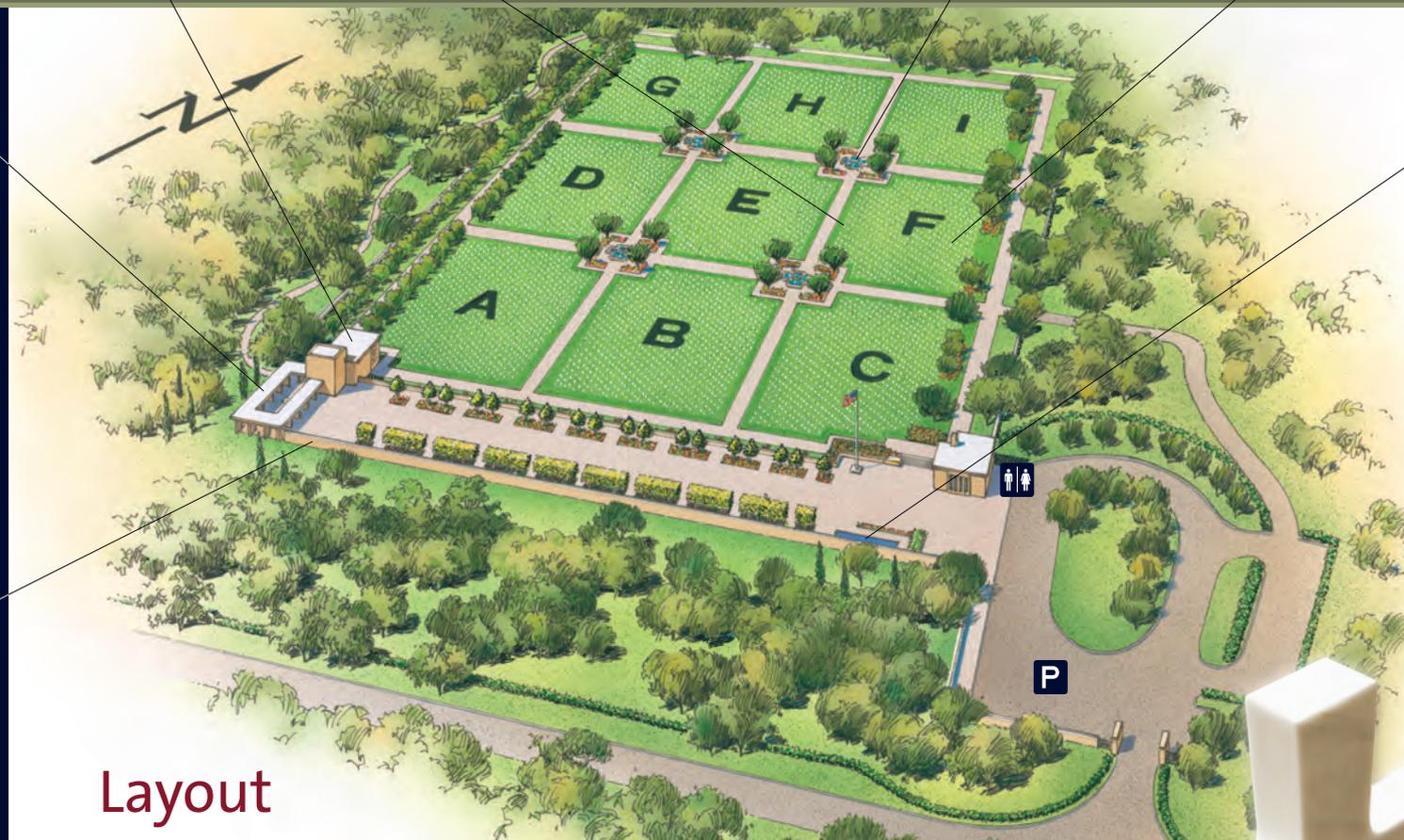
Open-Air Map Room

The map on the south wall displays operations of U.S. and allied forces in North Africa from the November 1942 landings to the Axis surrender in May 1943.



Tablets of the Missing

Tablets arrayed on a wall 364 feet long display names and particulars of 3,724 of those missing in service on land, sea, and air in the region.



Layout

From the cemetery entrance off Roosevelt Road visitors traverse the forecourt. The visitor building is at the right-hand side. The mall extends westward, with tablets of the missing on its south side and the memorial at its west end. The mall overlooks the graves area to the north.



Court of Honor

The figure called “Honor” bestows a laurel wreath upon those who gave their lives. Inscription on the pedestal proclaims, “HONOR TO THEM THAT TROD THE PATH OF HONOR.”



Photo: The National Archives
 U.S. infantry and tanks clear Bizerte of enemy snipers.

Headstone Location

PLOT:

ROW:

GRAVE:

Useful Information

DIMENSIONS: 27 acres
HEADSTONES: 2,833
LATIN CROSSES: 2,777

STARS OF DAVID: 56
MISSING IN ACTION: 3,724
UNKNOWN: 240

MEDAL OF HONOR RECIPIENT: 1
SETS OF BROTHERS: 4
DEDICATED: July 21, 1960

