Breakout, Pursuit, and Liberation

KEY: † Military Cemetery

American soldiers in Avranches

Brest Naval Monument

The Naval Monument at Brest overlooks the major base for American naval vessels during World War I, and celebrates the U.S. Navy's achievements then.

Tours Monument

The World War I Tours monument honors the 650,000 soldiers who toiled in the Services of Supply of the American Expeditionary Forces.

Brittany American Cemetery and Memorial

Three days after the U.S. 8th Infantry Division liberated the site on August 2, 1944, it became a temporary military cemetery. It evolved into a permanent military cemetery after World War II. France granted the use of the site in perpetuity without charge or taxation as a burial place for those killed in the liberation of Europe.

American Battle Monuments Commission

This agency of the United States government operates and maintains 25 American cemeteries and 26 memorials, monuments and markers in 16 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
2300 Clarendon Boulevard
Suite 500
Arlington, VA 22201
USA

Brittany American Cemetery
50240 St. James – France
TEL +33.(0)2.33.89.24.90
GPS N48 31.199 W1 18.067

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

Brittany American Cemetery and Memorial

American Battle Monuments Commission

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BREAKOUT AND PURSUIT, JULY 25 – AUGUST 25, 1944

After weeks of intensive offensive operations against German forces following the D-Day landings in Normandy, U.S. forces captured St. Lô on July 18. General Omar Bradley, commander of First U.S. Army, planned Operation COBRA to break out of Normandy and into Brittany.

JULY 25: Operation COBRA began. Concentrated "carpet bombing" by U.S. and British airmen west of St. Lô opened a gap in German defenses.

JULY 28: Coutances fell to U.S. troops on July 28, and Avranches on July 30.

AUGUST 1-7: Third U.S. Army was activated. Its VIII Corps drove westward into the Brittany peninsula. The rest of Third Army struck southward toward the Loire River, reinforcing First Army's advance toward the Seine River.

AUGUST 7: German counterattack near Mortain threatened the advance. Valiant fighting by U.S. soldiers and prompt reinforcements stopped the counterattack.

AUGUST 8-16: First and Third Armies continued advancing eastward. They also strove to link with British and Canadian forces near Falaise and Argentan. By August 16 the numerous enclosed German forces began a very disorderly withdrawal through the "Falaise Gap."

AUGUST 19: The remnants of German forces withdrew. The gap closed when U.S., British, and Canadian forces linked up.

AUGUST 21: Free French resistance forces begin insurrection within Paris.

AUGUST 25: U.S. 4th Infantry Division and French 2d Armored Division lead the entry into Paris.

COBRA succeeded. Allied forces broke out of German lines in Normandy, liberated most of Brittany, reached the Seine, and liberated Paris before moving east toward Germany.

The Maps

Map titled "Breakout from the Beachhead and Advance to the Seine" graces the Memorial Building's north wall. The south wall map features operations from the Normandy landings to war's end.

Visitor Building

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

The Memorial Building

The Memorial Building consists of a foyer and tower, map room, and chapel. Its ecclesiastical architecture is typical of the region. Highly decorative sculptures are found over the entry door.

Great Seal in the Chapel

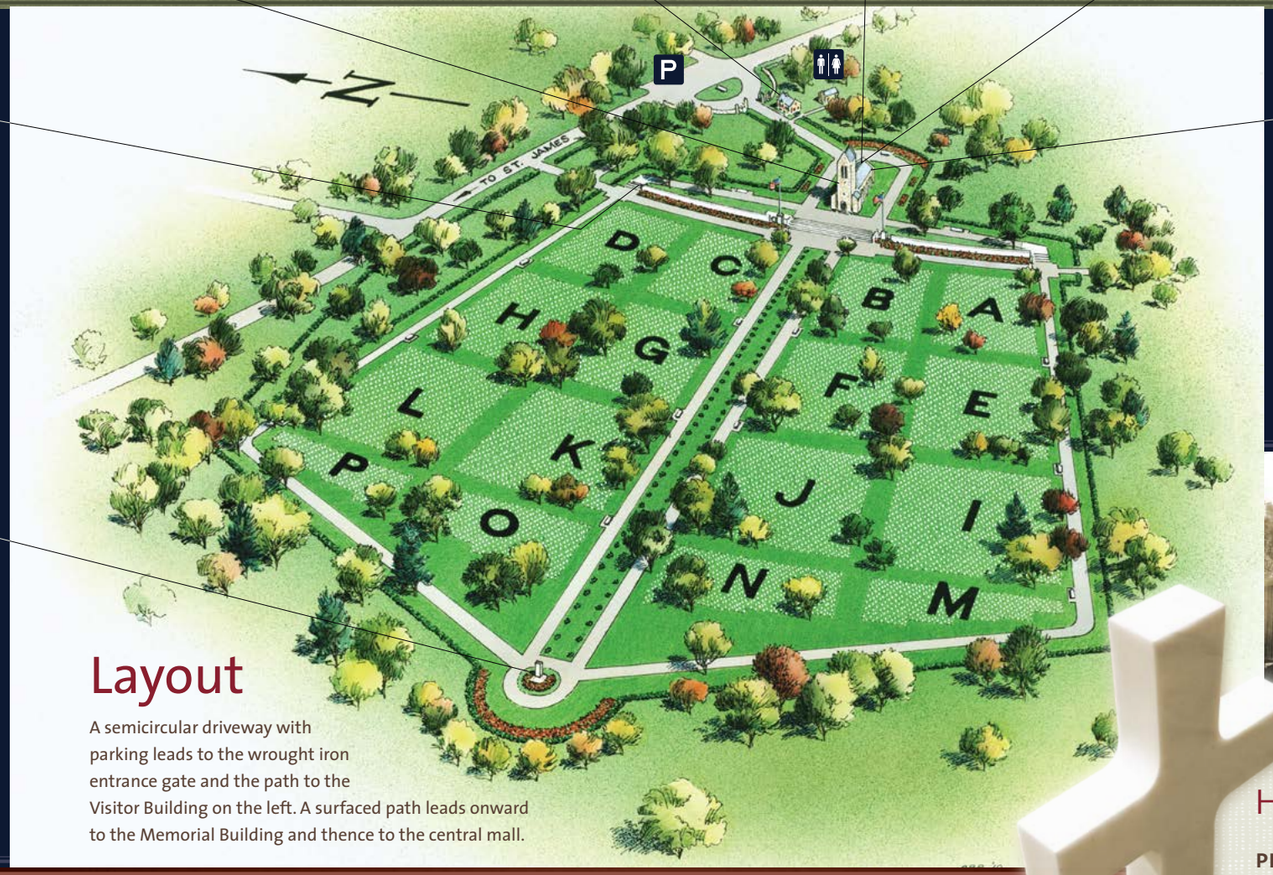
Above the altar in the chapel a large stained glass window displays six foils, each with three stars. The Great Seal of the United States dominates the center.

Tablets of the Missing

The tablets emanate from the curved walls of the terrace. The names inscribed on the walls present information about 498 of our missing. A bronze rosette marks those later recovered.

The Cenotaph

The rectangular stone cenotaph overlooks the western end of the mall. A torch and laurel wreath and the words "PRO PATRIA 1941-1945" are carved upon it.



Layout

A semicircular driveway with parking leads to the wrought iron entrance gate and the path to the Visitor Building on the left. A surfaced path leads onward to the Memorial Building and thence to the central mall.

The Statue

A sculpture group titled "Youth Triumphing Over Evil," executed in Chauvigny limestone from the Poitiers region, graces the east end of the Memorial Building.

Photo: The National Archives

American soldiers stop German attack near Mortain

Useful Information

DIMENSIONS: 28 acres
HEADSTONES: 4,408
LATIN CROSSES: 4,327

STARS OF DAVID: 81
MISSING IN ACTION: 498
UNKNOWNS: 97

SETS OF BROTHERS: 21
DEDICATED: July 20, 1956

Headstone Location

PLOT: .....

ROW: .....

GRAVE: .....