The Friendly Invasion, The Americans in the British Isles

Key:
- Military Cemetery
- Allied Bombings
- Seaborne Reinforcements

American Battle Monuments Commission
This agency of the United States government operates and maintains 26 American cemeteries and 30 memorials, monuments and markers in 17 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.”

Cambridge American Cemetery and Memorial
This is the only World War II American military cemetery in the United Kingdom. The University of Cambridge donated the site. The British government authorized use of its land in perpetuity as a permanent burial ground without charge or taxation.

After forestalling German invasion in 1940, the United Kingdom became the hub of offensive action against Axis powers in Europe. American reinforcement and presence expanded massively from sea and air. The strategic bombing campaign flown from East Anglia crippled German war power. Allied ground, naval, and air forces set forth from the UK for D-Day 1944, and Germany’s ultimate defeat.

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

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“Time will not dim the glory of their deeds.”
— General of the Armies John J. Pershing
The demands of World War II called again upon American youth to defend the liberties of free peoples. Young Americans lost their lives long before Pearl Harbor, as merchant seamen rallied to the British cause in the Battle of the Atlantic and American Eagle Squadrons joined the Royal Air Force in the skies above Britain.

Once the United States entered the war in December 1941, air, ground, and naval forces streamed into Britain. The Eighth Air Force made Britain its home, striking enemy targets in Europe from August 1942 to May 1945. More than 220,000 Americans were stationed here until 75 percent were sent to battle in North Africa, starting in November 1942. Campaigns to liberate North Africa, Sicily, and Italy governed troop commitments over the next year.

The mid-1943 decision to launch the cross Channel invasion at Normandy in 1944 renewed the buildup in Britain—the “Friendly Invasion.” By June 6, 1944, 1.6 million Americans were based here. Within three months of D-Day, 1.2 million had surged into battle on the continent.

The U.S. commitment to liberty and democracy brought more than 3 million Americans to the British Isles in World War II. Separated by a common language, we learned about each other. Relationships built then remain strong into the 21st Century. Cambridge American Cemetery became a symbol of our nation’s sacrifice and a sacred meeting place to recall our mutual past.

The Plantings
White hawthorn trees line the north side of the great mall. Each grave plot is enclosed by a boxwood hedge with tulip trees, catalpa, beech, oak and sweet gum also present.

The Memorial
The inscription atop the memorial’s north face reads, “Grant Unto Them O Lord, Eternal Rest.” The memorial interior contains a large battle map and a small chapel.

The Graves
Those buried here lost their lives in the skies over the British Isles, and in preparation for the battles to be fought on the continent, or were evacuated here after the invasion.

Useful Information
DIMENSIONS: 30.5 ACRES
BURIALS: 3,812
LATIN CROSSES: 3,732
STARS OF DAVID: 81
WALLS OF THE MISSING: 5,127
SETS OF BROTHERS: 3
DEDICATED: JULY 16, 1956

The Chapel
The bronze inscription over the doorway to the chapel, located at the east end of the memorial, reads “Into Thy Hands O Lord.”

The Statues
Four statues (a soldier, airman, sailor, and Coast Guardsman) guard the Walls of the Missing inscribed on a 417-foot long wall of Portland stone.

Tablets of the Missing
Names and particulars of 5,127 missing are inscribed on the Portland stone wall.

Visitor Center
Here you can meet our staff who can answer questions about those commemorated in the cemetery.

Headstone Location
PLOT:
ROW:
GRAVE: