Birth of an American Army

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.”

St. Mihiel American Cemetery and Memorial
This site is almost in the middle of the Saint-Mihiel Salient, after which it was named. It was a temporary cemetery during World War I, and became a permanent cemetery after the war. The French government has granted free-use of the land as a permanent burial ground without charge or taxation.

St. Mihiel American Cemetery
Route de Verdun
54470 Thiaucourt, France
Tel +33 (0)3 83 80 01 01
Email saint-mihiel@abmc.gov
GPS N48.57.419 E5.51.164

“Time will not dim the glory of their deeds.”
- General of the Armies John J. Pershing

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

December 2018
August 10, 1918: The U.S. First Army was activated, commanded by General John J. Pershing. It included fourteen American and four French divisions. It was given the mission to reduce the salient. Nearly 1,500 aircraft participated, the largest use of airpower in World War I.

Early September: Final plans for the St. Mihiel offensive included a main drive against the southern face of the salient, a secondary blow against the western face, plus holding attacks and raids against the tip.

September 12: Aerial and artillery bombardment of German positions began at 1:00 a.m. The main ground attack on the southern face began at 5:00 a.m. The assault on the western face began at 8:00 a.m. Raids began against the tip in and near St. Mihiel itself. The 2nd Division liberated Thiaucourt. The 89th Division fought across the ground that became this cemetery.

September 13: About 2:00 a.m., the 26th Division reached Vigneulles. By dawn, its patrols met soldiers of the 1st Division, thus closing the salient. Offensive actions continued for the next three days.

September 16: The First Army achieved its missions.

More than 550,000 Americans and about 110,000 French fought in the offensive. Most units fought in the Meuse-Argonne Offensive, starting on September 26.