

Birth of an American Army

KEY: † Military Cemetery 🗿 Monument



Photo: The National Archives

U.S. artillerymen fire 75mm gun toward Montsec from a position near Beaumont, September 12, 1918.



Montsec American Monument

GPS N48 53.360 E5 42.764

The Montsec American Monument commemorates the achievements of American soldiers who fought in this region in 1917 and 1918.



St. Mihiel American Cemetery and Memorial

American Battle Monuments Commission



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.

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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St. Mihiel American Cemetery

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





BIRTH OF AN AMERICAN ARMY

Allied counteroffensives in mid- 1918 eliminated most of the German salients on the Western Front. But the St. Mihiel salient remained, projecting into the Allied line since 1914. Its elimination was critical. The American Expeditionary Forces were ready for the task.

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.

Chapel

The mosaic behind the altar depicts the Angel of Victory sheathing a sword after the battle and the doves of peace bearing olive branches.



The Memorial

A funeral urn of pink granite is the memorial's centerpiece. The carved figure of Pegasus is symbolically taking the immortal soul on its voyage to the hereafter.



Museum

The wall map within the museum represents the battle lines during the offensive which reduced the Saint-Mihiel Salient in four days.



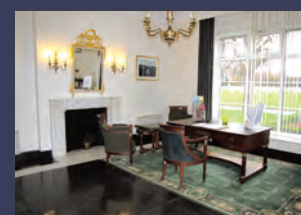
Names of the Missing

Names of 282 soldiers missing in action appear on two walls in the museum. Small bronze rosettes mark the names of six soldiers later found and identified.



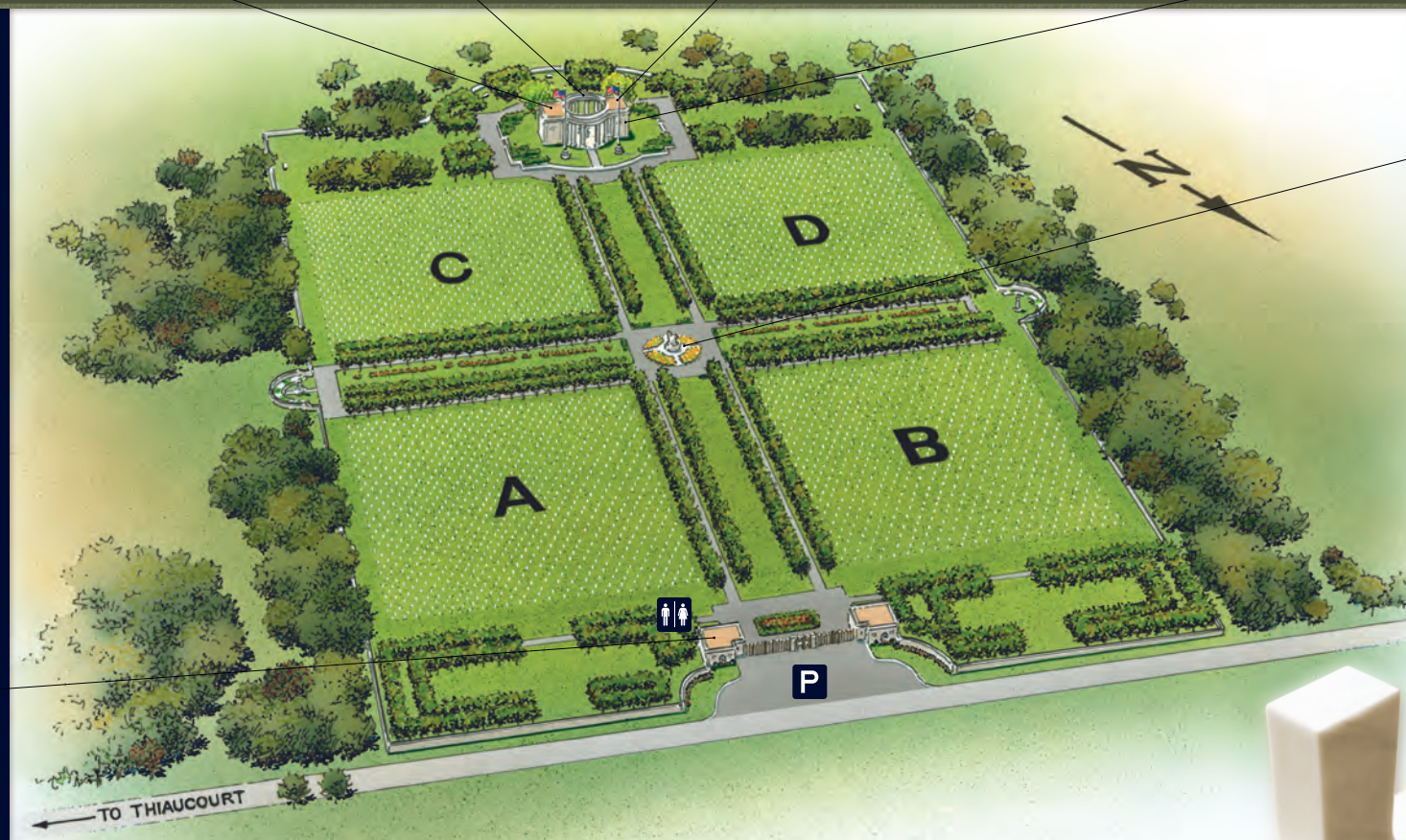
Headstone

2nd Lt. J. Hunter Wickersham, of the 89th Division, received the Medal of Honor posthumously for his conspicuous gallantry on September 12, 1918.



Visitor Building

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



Layout

Plots A and B lie near the visitor building. The walkway between them leads to the center of the cemetery and the eagle sculpture. Plots C and D come next, and then visitors reach the memorial.



Eagle Sculpture

The eagle sculpture at the cemetery's center serves as a sundial. General Pershing's statement, "Time Will Not Dim The Glory Of Their Deeds," is inscribed around its base.



Photo: The National Archives

1st Lt. E. V. Rickenbacker, 94th "Hat in the Ring" Aero Squadron, after the St. Mihiel campaign.

Headstone Location

PLOT:

ROW:

GRAVE:

Useful Information

DIMENSIONS: 40.5 acres
HEADSTONES: 4,153
LATIN CROSSES: 4,107

STARS OF DAVID: 46
MULTIPLE BURIALS: None
MISSING IN ACTION: 282

SETS OF BROTHERS: None
UNKNOWN: 117
MEDAL OF HONOR RECIPIENTS: 1

DEDICATED:
May 30, 1937