

MEUSE-ARGONNE AMERICAN CEMETERY & MEMORIAL  
Rue du General Pershing  
Romagne-sous-Montfaucon  
Departement de la Meuse (France)

HALS US-2  
*HALS US-2*

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

REDUCED COPIES OF MEASURED DRAWINGS

FIELD RECORDS

HISTORIC AMERICAN LANDSCAPES SURVEY  
National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior  
1849 C Street NW  
Washington, DC 20240-0001

## HISTORIC AMERICAN LANDSCAPES SURVEY

### MEUSE-ARGONNE AMERICAN CEMETERY & MEMORIAL

HALS NO. US-2

- Location:** Rue du Général Pershing (D123) 55110, Romagne-sous-Montfaucon, Department of the Meuse, Grand Est, France
- Meuse-Argonne American Cemetery & Memorial is located at latitude: 49.334303, longitude: 05.093455. The coordinate represents a point at the center of the circular fountain and was obtained in 2015 using Google Earth (WGS84). There is no restriction on its release to the public.
- Present Owner:** The French government granted use of the land the cemetery occupies in perpetuity, free of charge or taxation, to the United States Government (See Appendix A). The American Battle Monuments Commission (ABMC) owns all buildings and capital improvements on the property.
- Present Occupant:** American Battle Monuments Commission (ABMC)
- Present Use:** World War I military cemetery and memorial landscape
- Significance:** Meuse-Argonne American Cemetery & Memorial is one of eight overseas World War I cemeteries redesigned and administered by the American Battle Monuments Commission (ABMC), a federal agency created in 1923. Meuse-Argonne, the largest ABMC cemetery in Europe with over 14,200 graves, was part a larger effort in the aftermath of World War I to create lasting and impressive memorials to the American war effort in England, Belgium, and France. The practical necessity of burying American soldiers who died during the conflict was first handled by the War Department through the Office of the Quartermaster General's Graves Registration Service (GRS). GRS landscape architect George Gibbs, Jr. had already established the basic form of Meuse-Argonne (or Romagne) Cemetery, with eight sections of graves arranged up a hillside, a local road running through a valley with a circular fountain, and the staff quarters and visitor building on the opposite hillside. The buildings were constructed by the War Department in 1923-24. The entrance to the cemetery property at each end of the road was marked by a pair of simple stone pylons with bas relief eagles.
- ABMC redesigned the existing War Department cemeteries, adding memorial chapels and other features. The agency also constructed a series of monuments starting in the mid-1920s, and continuing into the 1930s. It hired prominent French-born American architect Paul P. Cret as its consulting architect in 1925. Cret guided every aspect of the ABMC commemoration program from finalizing locations and selecting architects

to inspecting construction and making maintenance recommendations. The New York firm of York & Sawyer, with principal architect William Louis Ayres, was given the commission for designing the Chapel, new entrance pylons, and a revised site plan for Meuse-Argonne American Cemetery. Jacques Gréber served as local architect for the project and provided a revised planting plan.

Construction took place in 1929-32, starting with the Chapel and then turning to landscape improvements. York & Sawyer placed a Romanesque Revival Chapel at the crest of the hill above the burial sections. The Chapel featured a front gable center pavilion and long loggias on either side. The road area was enhanced with more elaborate entrance pylons, a fountain at the base of the hill below the Visitor Building, and additional stone terraces and steps. The circular fountain was retained, with the local road (D123) now split by a wide grassy median and lined by an allée of trees through the cemetery property. Allées of clipped linden trees were placed along the mall leading up the hill to the chapel, as well as the outer edges of the eight grave areas. York & Sawyer's architecture and landscape for Meuse-Argonne are in keeping with the commemorative program sponsored by ABMC and guided by Cret. They are characteristic of a Beaux Arts approach seen in some of the best civic architecture of the 1920s and 30s.

Historian: Lisa Pfueller Davidson, Ph.D., HDP Staff Historian

## PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

### A. Physical History

1. Date(s) of establishment: 1918 – temporary cemetery; 1921 – permanent cemetery
2. Designers: War Department, Graves Registration Service – George Gibbs, Jr., Landscape Architect; Earl H. Lyall, Architect

ABMC – William Louis Ayres for York & Sawyer, Architects; Paul P. Cret, Consulting Architect; Jacques Gréber, Supervising Landscape Architect

George Gibbs, Jr. (1878-1950) created the first design for a permanent Meuse-Argonne Cemetery. He was an experienced landscape architect who had been detailed to the GRS at the end of 1920 in order to assist with developing plans for overseas cemeteries. Commission of Fine Arts Chair Charles Moore approached Quartermaster General Harry Rogers requesting Gibbs' transfer from the Construction Division to the overseas cemetery work. Gibbs graduated from Harvard University in 1904 with a degree in landscape architecture, and worked

in the Olmsted Brothers' Brookline, Massachusetts firm for over ten years. From 1914 to 1916 he worked as an expert investigator for the City Planning Board of Boston. In 1917 Gibbs joined the Army, becoming an officer in the Construction Division in charge of camp planning. When he began working on the overseas cemeteries he converted to a civilian Army employee and lived in France with his family from 1921-23. Upon returning to the United States, Gibbs worked in the Olmsted Brothers office in Palos Verdes, California. During the Depression he worked for both the U.S. Forest Service and supervising construction of Civilian Conservation Corps projects in California. He opened his own firm in 1938 and continued to be a successful and well-respected landscape architect until his death in 1950.<sup>1</sup>

Earl Harvey Lyall (1877-1932), was a graduate of Columbia and the *École des Beaux-Arts* in Paris. He was duty stationed with the Graves Registration Service during the establishment of the permanent overseas cemeteries. Sources indicate that Lyall designed all the houses built at the cemeteries during the War Department period of development.<sup>2</sup>

Architect William Louis Ayres (1874-1947) was a principal partner in the firm of York & Sawyer when working for ABMC on Meuse-Argonne American Cemetery & Memorial. He was an 1896 graduate of Rutgers University in New Jersey with a B.S. in electrical engineering. In 1897 he joined the firm of McKim, Mead, and White to further his training in architecture. Here he would have been schooled in the Beaux-Arts approach common in this firm and many of their contemporaries. He joined York & Sawyer, another New York-based architectural firm in 1900 and became a partner in 1910. His work at Meuse-Argonne was the pinnacle of a distinguished career, receiving headline mention in his 1947 *New York Times* obituary.<sup>3</sup> Other important commissions included the Guaranty Trust Building (1911), New York Academy of Medicine (1926 – Byzantine/Lombardian), Broadway Savings Bank, and the Federal Reserve Bank (neo-renaissance, 1920-24), all in New York City, as well as the Department of Commerce Building in Washington, DC (1912-32) and Rutgers College buildings and campus plan (1908-32) in New Brunswick, New Jersey.

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<sup>1</sup> Arleyn Levee, "George Gibbs, Jr.," in *Pioneers of American Landscape Design*, ed. Charles A. Birnbaum and Robin Karson (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2000), 135-38.

<sup>2</sup> Memorandum, Lieut. Col. William O. Smith to Quartermaster General, (8 June 1925), Box 153, Entry 13 - Decimal Subject File Concerning the Construction and Maintenance of Cemeteries and Monuments, RG 117 - Records of the American Battle Monuments Commission, National Archives and Records Administration II, College Park, MD [hereafter Entry 13, RG 117, NARA II].

<sup>3</sup> "Louis Ayres, Noted as Architect, 73: Designer of Chapel in Meuse-Argonne Cemetery Dies – Won American Institute Honor," *New York Times*, 1 December 1947, 21. See also Steven McLeod Bedford, "Ayres, Louis," *MacMillan Encyclopedia of Architects*, (New York: Macmillan, 1982), 120; AIA Historical Directory of American Architects, <http://public.aia.org/sites/hdoaa/wiki/Wiki%20Pages/ahd1001583.aspx>, accessed 27 July 2015, includes copy of "Questionnaire for Architects' Roster" submitted by York & Sawyer in 1946; Withey and Withey, "Ayres, Louis," 27; "York, Edward Palmer," 675.

Ayres served as a member of the U. S. Commission of Fine Arts (CFA) from 1921-25, stepping down shortly before being considered for an ABMC commission. He was a commissioner while the CFA was overseeing the original designs for the permanent overseas cemeteries. In addition to his four-year term on the Commission of Fine Arts, Ayres served on the panel to select a design for the Liberty Memorial in Kansas City, Missouri and the Board of Architectural Consultants for the Federal Triangle project in Washington, DC (which included the York & Sawyer's design for the Department of Commerce Building). He completed many large institutional designs during his career, often working for governmental entities.

Ayres' architectural partners, Edward Palmer York (1865-1928) and Philip Sawyer (1868-1949), formed their firm in 1898 also after working in the office of McKim, Mead & White. Edward York died in 1928, just as the Meuse-Argonne project was getting underway. Philip Sawyer was trained at the *École des Beaux-Arts* in Paris before working for McKim, Mead, & White. As was typical in this period, the firm designed buildings using a variety of historical styles. While Ayres himself also worked in many historical idioms, he was especially known as a Medievalist, as reflected in his design for the Meuse-Argonne Chapel and other projects such as the Bowery Savings Bank in New York (1921-23).

Paul Philippe Cret (1876-1945) served as Consulting Architect for all of the ABMC World War I cemetery and monument projects. He was born in Lyons, France and trained at the *Écoles des Beaux-Arts* in Lyons and in Paris. He immigrated to the United States in 1903 to teach design at the University of Pennsylvania, a position he held until 1937. He also maintained a respected architectural practice based in Philadelphia. Accomplished in Beaux Arts design practices and known especially for his elegant public buildings, in the 1920s Cret developed a mature style that incorporated Art Moderne motifs into Classical forms. When ABMC hired him as consulting architect, his most noteworthy pre-war buildings included the Pan-American Union in Washington, DC, a widely-praised, competition-winning design (1907, with Albert Kelsey), the National Memorial Arch at Valley Forge (1914-17), and the Indianapolis Public Library (competition, 1914, with Zantzinger, Borie & Medary). Cret was in France when war broke out and stayed to serve with the French Army from 1914-1919. In the later years of his service he functioned as a Lieutenant Liaison Officer with the United States Army.<sup>4</sup> He was awarded the *Croix de Guerre* and made an officer in the Legion of Honor for his service.

Upon returning from France, Cret continued to win high profile competitions with widely praised designs for the Folger Shakespeare Library in Washington, DC (1919-1927), and the Detroit Institute of Art (1919-1927). In addition to public building types, Cret increasingly specialized in commemorative architecture. In

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<sup>4</sup> John Harbeson, "Paul Cret and Architectural Competitions," *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 25, no. 4 (December 1966): 306.

1919 he designed a modest but widely known memorial fountain for Quentin Roosevelt, son of former President Theodore Roosevelt, killed in action as a combat pilot in France.<sup>5</sup> His competition entry for the high profile World War I Liberty Memorial in Kansas City earned second place. At the time of his appointment to the ABMC, Cret was already working on several war memorials to be erected in France for the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.<sup>6</sup> The largest, a plaza with twin colonnades and central plinth in the town of Varennes, is located close to Meuse-Argonne American Cemetery. Cret served as ABMC Consulting Architect until his death in 1945, at which time his successor firm of Harbeson, Hough, Livingston, & Larson continued in that role. Cret's biographer, Theodore White, considers his design projects for the ABMC to be among the finest work of his distinguished career.<sup>7</sup>

Jacques Gréber (1882-1962), an architect and landscape architect from Paris, was appointed local representative and landscape architect for four of the cemeteries. In accordance with Cret's recommendations, he was assigned Aisne-Marne, Oise-Aisne, Meuse-Argonne, and Suresnes.<sup>8</sup> Gréber studied architecture at the *École des Beaux-Arts*, matriculating in 1901. During his transatlantic career, Gréber designed many estate gardens in the Philadelphia area during the 1910s. He served as the consulting architect to Philadelphia's Fairmount Park Commission starting in 1917.<sup>9</sup>

3. Builder, contractor, suppliers:  
War Department – Ernest Robin of Longlville

ABMC<sup>10</sup> – Maurice Noyer of Paris held two contracts with ABMC – one for construction of the Meuse-Argonne Chapel and one for “Romagne Central

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<sup>5</sup> A presentation drawing of the roadside fountain, shown in plan and in elevation, is found in Folder 967, Paul Philippe Cret Papers, The Athenaeum of Philadelphia, Philadelphia, PA.

<sup>6</sup> Sandra Tatman, "Paul Philippe Cret," [www.philadelphiabuildings.org](http://www.philadelphiabuildings.org), accessed 13 February 2013; Henry F. Withey and Elsie Rathburn Withey, "Paul Philippe Cret," in *Biographical Dictionary of American Architects (Deceased)* (Los Angeles: Hennessey & Ingalls, Inc., 1970; reprint 1996), 149 (page citations are to the reprint edition).

<sup>7</sup> Theodore B. White, *Paul Philippe Cret: Architect and Teacher* (Philadelphia: Art Alliance Press, 1973), 32. He became an American citizen in 1927. See Elizabeth Greenwell Grossman, *The Civic Architecture of Paul Cret* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 19. The only ABMC projects covered in the architectural press were Cret's. See "American Battle Monuments France and Belgium, Paul P. Cret," *Architectural Forum* 56, no. 5 (May 1932): 473-476.

<sup>8</sup> Letter, Gréber to Cret, (29 January 1929), Box 5, Series I - Correspondence, MS Collection 295 - Paul P. Cret Papers, The Athenaeum of Philadelphia, Philadelphia, PA. Other correspondence in this box indicates that Gréber was also working with Cret on the landscape plan for the Rodin Museum in Philadelphia and the Detroit Institute of Art during the mid- to late-1920s.

<sup>9</sup> Isabelle Gournay, "Jacques Gréber," in *Shaping the American Landscape: New Profiles from the Pioneers of American Landscape Design Project*, ed. Charles A. Birnbaum and Stephanie S. Foell (Charlottesville and London: University of Virginia Press, 2009), 112-115.

<sup>10</sup> List included in John J. Pershing, "American Battle Monuments Commission Report, July 1, 1926 to June 30, 1938," Box 3, Entry 3 – Annual Reports, RG 117, NARA II.

Development” including construction of the entrance pylons, stair terraces, flagpole bases, and rectangular fountain.

Planting – Adam & Co.

Sculpture and inscriptions – Alfred-Alphonse Bottiau

Walls – Charles Certoux

Benches and paving – Fèvre & Co.

Curbing and paving – Sté. Goussez

Curbing – Sté. Guinet & Co.

Bronze plates – H. Rouard

Roads and paths – Sté. Routière Colas

Bronze top for flagpoles - Susse Frères

Flagpoles – John E. Lingo and Sons, Camden, NJ

Bases for flagpoles – Roman Bronze Works

4. Occupant: Meuse-Argonne has been operated by the U.S. Government since its establishment as a temporary cemetery in 1918 during the Meuse-Argonne Offensive. From 1919-1934 it was administered by the Graves Registration Service, Office of the Quartermaster General, War Department. The American Battle Monuments Commission oversaw redesign of the site and construction of the Chapel in 1929-32. In 1934, an Executive Order gave ABMC administrative control over all eight World War I overseas military cemeteries. ABMC continues to administer and maintain the site.
5. Periods of development:
  - a. Original plans and construction: The War Department initially established a temporary cemetery on October 14, 1918 outside of Romagne-sous-Montfaucon to bury the war dead of the U.S. 32<sup>nd</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> Divisions which had fought on this land. By June 1919, the cemetery contained over 17,100 burials from many units arranged in back to back rows running north to south on the slope of the hill. These were marked by white wood crosses. Burials and improvements such as laying sod, and creating paths and flower beds continued in the first years following the war.

By 1920 plans were underway to make Meuse-Argonne American Cemetery one of the permanent overseas cemeteries in France. The Quartermaster General's Graves Registration Service acquired the site and began planning for permanent burials and improvements. Temporary wood barracks were gradually replaced with permanent support structures. In the process of removing remains that would be repatriated to the United States and bringing in others from discontinued temporary cemeteries, the graves area was rearranged into eight sections. The graves were spaced approximately six feet apart and placed in east/west rows facing the road at the base of the hill. Initially the wood crosses remained in place.

The War Department also built a number of structures during this period that still remain extant. These include a covered reservoir at the southeast corner and two staff cottages on the north hill. A larger matching Visitor Building, sometimes called a Reception or Hostess House, was placed in between the cottages. It was used to host visitors to the cemetery and provided overnight accommodations for families of fallen soldiers. These additions were completed in 1923-24.

War Department landscape improvements to Meuse-Argonne included the grassy median dividing the through road, with a circular fountain at the center. This median began as a sunken garden for the temporary cemetery with access roads around it and a star-shaped flower bed at the center. The road traveled through the site on the north side of this feature only. The War Department also planted allées of trees along the roadway, as well as flanking the lawns leading up the hills to the grave sections and to the Visitor Building. A wide flight of stone steps was built at the base of each hill near the road to facilitate access up the green lawns of the malls, or *tapis vert*. A flag pole was placed at the crest of the hill behind the graves, with early plans for a chapel behind it. Additional trees were placed within the grave areas and around the Visitor Building and its lawn.

- b. Changes and additions: In 1926, ABMC selected York & Sawyer to design a non-denominational Chapel for Meuse-Argonne and to redesign aspects of the site. The new Romanesque Revival Chapel was built at the top of the hill behind of the grave areas in 1929-32. The eight rectangular sections of graves received Carrara marble Latin cross or Star of David headstones in 1927-29 to replace the temporary wood markers. The footprint of the site remained the same, with the wire fencing replaced by a handsome stone perimeter wall. The basic arrangement of the site plan was retained, including the grassy median with circular fountain at the center dividing the through road and the composition of formal lawns and allées along the main north/south axis between the Visitor Building area and the grave sections. York & Sawyer designed robust entrance pylons surmounted by carved eagles to replace the simple stone piers at the entrance gates. The ends of the median by the entrances were altered into a half circle rather than ninety degree corners. The steps at the main road were redesigned to be a grander terrace with retaining walls on the south side leading to the grave sections. On the north side a retaining wall with a fountain was placed at the center with smaller stone stairs on either side leading to curving flagstone paths. These paths edged the lawn leading up to the Visitor Building but have since been removed. Finally York & Sawyer designed a pair of flagpoles with elaborate bronze bases which were placed in small plazas flanking the Chapel.

Maintenance and renovations to the service buildings, Visitor Building and Staff Quarters over the decades have led to minimal changes, other



than replacement windows and doors. A modern maintenance building with a headstone carving shop was erected just outside the north wall of the cemetery beyond the original service court. Major renovations in the Visitor Building began in fall 2015. The plans included removing some of the 1960s interior finishes and creating exhibit spaces.

## B. Historical Context:

For additional documentation on the Chapel and the Visitor Building and Staff Quarters at Meuse-Argonne see HALS No. US-2-A and HALS No. US-2-B.

### Introduction

Meuse-Argonne American Cemetery & Memorial is one of eight overseas World War I cemeteries redesigned and administered by the American Battle Monuments Commission (**Figure 1**). The practical necessity of burying American soldiers who died during the conflict was first handled by the War Department through the Quartermaster General's Graves Registration Service. Located in Romagne-sous-Montfaucon, France, Meuse-Argonne is the largest World War I cemetery as well as the largest European site in the ABMC portfolio. Another World War I cemetery is located outside London, England, one in Waregem, Belgium, and the remaining five are in northeastern France. In addition to memorial chapels at each cemetery, ABMC oversaw construction of eleven free-standing monuments in France, Belgium, and Gibraltar, a British overseas territory. ABMC hired prominent French-born American architect Paul P. Cret as its consulting architect in 1925. Cret guided every aspect of the ABMC construction program from finalizing locations and selecting architects to inspecting progress and making maintenance recommendations. Through Cret, the architecture and landscapes of the ABMC display a sophisticated Beaux Arts approach that characterized some of the best civic architecture of the 1920s and 30s. This report will consider Meuse-Argonne in the context of the development of overseas military cemetery policy after World War I, the social and political role of the ABMC sites in creating a public memory of the war, and design practices and ideals of the time. A detailed account of the design and construction of Meuse-Argonne and its associated buildings will also illustrate the firm of York & Sawyer's vision for the site and how it fits into the overall commemorative program of the ABMC.

The United States entered the Great War in April 1917, three years into a grueling conflict that inflicted huge losses on a generation of British, French, Belgians, Germans and others. The trench-warfare landscape of northern France and most of Belgium created a nightmare of unspeakably harsh conditions. In northeastern France miles of well-fortified German positions in depth set the stage for months of difficult fighting to regain the captured ground and push back the occupiers. Led by General John J. "Black Jack" Pershing, the American Expeditionary Force (AEF) provided essential reinforcements to battle-weary allies starting in 1918 and helped turn the tide of war against Germany. A signature accomplishment of the AEF was its decisive role in the critical Meuse-Argonne Offensive, considered the largest battle ever fought by American troops up to that time.

In spite of the Allied victory, the resounding military success of the U.S. in World War I have been overshadowed in the popular imagination by World War II. As historian Mark Meigs writes: "World War I has been a matter of unresolved interpretation for American participants from the first moments of their involvement to the return of the last soldiers and bodies of soldiers in the 1920s and even to the present day."<sup>11</sup> The new phenomenon of a modern war of attrition resisted a clear interpretation and national assessment of worth and meaning. Still a new player on the world stage, the United States greatly expanded the reach of its empire after the Spanish-American War at the turn of the twentieth-century. Given its military success in World War I, the United States needed to a period of adjustment to its a new role as a world leader. This process was not always smooth or even. Famously the U.S. military dramatically contracted in size after World War I, making a timely response to the threats of World War II difficult. President Woodrow Wilson's efforts to assure U.S. participation in the League of Nations failed in the face of growing isolationism amongst the American public and their elected representatives. Meigs notes that, "after some delays, Americans returned home to a country whose political climate rejected the continued international engagements that were the Wilsonian fruits of victory, embracing an agenda of "Normalcy" and isolationism. These 'effects' of World War I on America seem to deny that the war had significant effects."<sup>12</sup> The complexity of the response to World War I makes the successful realization of a cohesive and ambitious commemorative project by the American Battle Monuments Commission all the more significant and worthy of close study.

The creation of the ABMC and its overseas cemeteries and monuments illuminates the tension created by a more active international role for the United States. Historian Ron Robin writes of this period:

The ambitious cemetery-abroad project also underscored a crucial transition in the relationship between government and its citizens in the arena of international affairs. If before the war America's foreign image had been shaped by private initiative, the postwar government now sought to impose a more controlled, standardized image, one that reflected the search for order that characterized the federal government's domestic objectives as well.<sup>13</sup>

A broad desire to honor the fallen, especially among their families and fellow soldiers, generated a chaotic array of ideas, desires, and sometimes monuments, which the United States Government needed to manage. Political and military leaders struggled to develop a comprehensive approach to both provide an appropriate grave for individual soldiers and to present the United States in a positive light. Ultimately the ABMC's commemorative program – both cemeteries and monuments -- represented the culmination of contemporary thought regarding memorialization, in terms of both design and social meaning. By hiring a roster of

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<sup>11</sup> Mark Meigs, *Optimism at Armageddon: Voices of American Participants in the First World War* (New York: New York University Press, 1997), 1.

<sup>12</sup> Meigs, 2.

<sup>13</sup> Ron Robin, *Enclaves of American Political Architecture Abroad, 1900-1965* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), 34. While I agree with Robin's overarching assessment of the symbolism of the overseas cemeteries, I feel his analysis of the ABMC (as a retread of early organizations) and of Paul Cret's architecture (as retrograde and conservative) are incorrect.

top-notch architects to create tasteful designs, the ABMC provided impressive monuments to the accomplishments of an interventionist American military in its first major modern war overseas.<sup>14</sup>

### American Combat in France

The American Expeditionary Force actively entered the European conflict in 1918. General Pershing resisted efforts to “amalgamate” his troops as individuals or small units into existing British or French divisions or corps. Instead he insisted on a distinct and independent American army fighting in a sector of its own. The most extensive American fighting took place in the Lorraine region of northeastern France. After halting five major German offensives in the spring and early summer of 1918, the Allies went over to the offensive themselves. A successful Allied counteroffensive, including eight American divisions, in the Aisne-Marne region in July seized the initiative from the Germans. The Allies committed to a broader series of offensives across the entire Western front in fall 1918. After successfully reducing the troublesome St. Mihiel Salient in mid-September, the U.S. First Army assumed the mission of recapturing the territory between the Meuse River and the Argonne Forest running from Avocourt north to Sedan. German troops occupied heavily fortified positions throughout this sector, which also contained key German railroad routes. The American efforts to cut these German lines of communication and supply across the Meuse River were a key component of the larger Allied offensive in northern France and Belgium. German defensive positions in the Meuse-Argonne were well established and the topography favored defensive fighting. Numerous east to west ridges provided successive defensive positions, and high ground throughout the sector and to its flanks provided observation positions and artillery locations (**Figure 2**). It was determined that the most feasible method to advance was to launch frontal attacks that would drive salients, or bulges, into the German lines. Troops could then execute flanking attacks from these salients and proceed to dislodge the Germans from one position after another, while laboriously pushing their line of defenses ever further north.

While planning was underway for the Meuse-Argonne Offensive, the St. Mihiel Offensive took place from September 12-16. AEF First Army divisions attacked the St. Mihiel salient, cleared it, and recaptured the high point of Montsec. Meanwhile other American divisions secretly concentrated behind these troops and then moved into position for the Meuse-Argonne Offensive, soon joined by victorious units from St. Mihiel. Over a million U.S. troops fought in the Meuse-Argonne Offensive, which was launched on September 26, 1918 and lasted 47 days. After the U.S. 37<sup>th</sup> and 79<sup>th</sup> divisions captured the highest point in the region – Montfaucon -- on September 27<sup>th</sup>, German reinforcements surged in. A second stage of the offensive, now more grueling and without the benefit of surprise, involved the land which would become Meuse-Argonne American Cemetery. The heights of the towns of Romagne and Cunel were captured by October 4<sup>th</sup>. With weeks of brutal fighting and slow, uneven progress, the offensive continued north through the Argonne Forest and towards Barricourt. The last lines of

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<sup>14</sup> Elizabeth G. Grossman, "Architecture for a Public Client: The Monuments and Chapels of the American Battle Monuments Commission," *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 43, no. 2 (May 1984): 119-143. Grossman's article provides a useful overview of the ABMC's role in building the World War I chapels and monuments.

German defense were breached on October 31<sup>st</sup>. By November 7<sup>th</sup> U.S. troops had reached Sedan. An armistice declared effective on November 11<sup>th</sup> ended hostilities on the Western Front and established that date as Armistice Day. The Meuse-Argonne Offensive had driven the German Army 35 miles backwards across a vital area of the front, severed critical communications, and brought to an end the largest battle in American military history up to its time.<sup>15</sup>

### Temporary Overseas American Cemeteries

By the end of the fighting, approximately 84,000 American soldiers had died overseas due to combat or disease. Burial sites were scattered across the French and Belgian countryside, as illustrated in a 1920 War Department report (**Figure 3**). The task of identifying bodies and creating temporary cemeteries was undertaken by the Graves Registration Service of the Quartermaster Corps.<sup>16</sup> Over 6,000 African-American soldiers from combat service support units, most of whom were denied the opportunity to participate in combat, were among those assigned the gruesome task of locating, exhuming, and moving decomposing bodies (**Figure 4**). Men assigned to the GRS attempted to find over 2,400 individual and field burial sites, and group the bodies in temporary cemeteries. These cemeteries were given numbers and featured rows of graves marked by whitewashed wood crosses and sometimes a flagpole and wire fence.

Due to the heavy fighting around Romagne, this location immediately became one of the largest temporary cemeteries - No. 1232. It was the focus of many improvements during its transition into a permanent overseas American cemetery. A later guidebook declared that “no more fitting site could have been chosen for these battle dead than the gentle slopes of the valley joining Cunel and Romagne, where deeds of daring, devotion and heroism were unsurpassed.”<sup>17</sup> A history of the Graves Registration Service in Europe offers a more prosaic portrait of the early months of Meuse-Argonne Cemetery. This site was originally intended to hold over 26,000 graves. Starting on January 11, 1919, all the GRS personnel in the Neufchateau headquarters region were combined and began reregistering and rechecking all the graves in the surrounding theater of operations. This painstaking work was accomplished by assigning a GRS unit and 100 labor troops to a 640 square kilometer unit. Spreading out in a skirmish line and working steadily for eight hours, each team could resurvey their assigned sector in a day. Twenty-five teams of engineers created maps to locate the reregistered graves. Steady progress was made during the first month, in spite of bad weather and problems with flooding in low lying areas. By February 21<sup>st</sup> 20,480 square kilometers had been covered, with just one 640 square kilometer unit yielding over 12,000 bodies. Work now turned to the massive effort to relocate these bodies to Romagne and a few other temporary cemeteries in this headquarters region.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> American Battle Monuments Commission, *A Guide to the American Battlefields in Europe* (Washington, DC: GPO, 1927), 117-130; ABMC, *American Armies and Battlefields in Europe: A History, Guide, and Reference Book* (Washington, DC: U.S. Marine Corps, 1938), 167-185.

<sup>16</sup> Officials of the Graves Registration Service prepared an extensive account of their monumental effort to locate, transport, and properly bury American servicemen killed in Europe. See Typescript, “History of the Graves Registration Service, QMC in Europe,” 3 volumes, c. 1923, scanned copy accessed at Meuse-Argonne American Cemetery & Memorial.

<sup>17</sup> ABMC, *American Armies and Battlefields in Europe*, 213-214.

<sup>18</sup> “History of the Graves Registration Service – Volume I,” 28-31.

Work began at Romagne on March 11, 1919. Within a month 1,525 graves were completed. The men assigned to this work continued to inter hundreds of soldiers every week until on June 20<sup>th</sup> the cemetery contained 17,143 burials. The hardships of this major effort are described in the GRS account: “With the inadequate transport, with the war barracks for houses, with most annoying weather conditions, men detailed had to grade and level the ground and bury those bodies sent in from distant sections of the area.”<sup>19</sup> A series of Signal Corps photographs from April and May 1919 show the progress of the initial burials and the extensive camp located on site. Regiments of “colored” troops assigned to burial detail are shown digging rows of grave trenches, building large stacks of coffins, and transferring remains (**Figures 5 and 6**). The wood crosses for all the American temporary cemeteries, which were larger than the initial makeshift grave markers and painted white, were also made at a workshop here.<sup>20</sup> At this stage the graves were arranged in back to back rows running north to south. An assortment of temporary wood barracks, work sheds, and tents were clustered around the site, particularly on the hill where the service and quarters buildings would later stand, and along the road below the grave covered hillside to the south (**Figure 7**). In this early period, in addition to the Graves Registration Service officers and troops, several Pioneer Infantry and Labor Infantry companies were stationed here and working in the vicinity repairing roads and bridges.

Some basic improvements were undertaken at this early stage out of respect for the fallen. Since it was known briefly as Argonne Cemetery, this name was spelled out with gravel and plantings in monumental letters along the road at the base of the grave sites (**Figure 8**). German prisoners of war were brought in to lay sod, plant flowers, and otherwise assist with beautification efforts leading up to Memorial Day, May 30, 1919 (**Figure 9**). They also helped erect the white wood cross on each grave, as did the African-American soldiers assigned to the GRS. When General Pershing arrived to preside over the Memorial Day ceremonies, he delivered his remarks from a bunting draped platform (**Figure 10**). An American flag flew over the graves individually decorated with flowers (**Figure 11**).

As other smaller temporary cemeteries in the area were consolidated with No. 1232/Argonne Cemetery and isolated burials recovered, the numbers buried here continued to grow. The question of whether U.S. soldiers would be returned home for burial was still very open. Precedent existed that the next of kin could request return of the body, but the United States had never been involved in an overseas conflict on this scale before. As described by historian Lisa Budreau, “Americans were understandably confident that, as in past wars, their dead would be returned home for burial. They were still relatively unprepared for the heartache of missing men, massive unidentified dead, and the eventual complications wrought by a policy that advocated leaving bodies buried on or near distant battlefields during hostilities.”<sup>21</sup> Gold Star Mothers and Fathers (whose sons had died in service), the American Legion, and other

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<sup>19</sup> U.S. War Department, “History of the American Graves Registration Service, QMC in Europe – Volume I,” (c. 1922), 31.

<sup>20</sup> “History of the American Graves Registration Service – Volume I,” 23.

<sup>21</sup> Lisa M. Budreau, *Bodies of War: World War I and the Politics of Commemoration in America, 1919-1933* (New York and London: New York University Press, 2010), 39.

veterans groups emerged in the post-war period as a chorus of opinions on the proper respect due to the dead and missing.

Our European allies, more accustomed to losing troops on far flung battlefields, had a very different tradition of burying soldiers near where they fell. Shortly after the Armistice, French Marshall Petain offered assistance to Pershing in creating permanent American cemeteries in locations where American divisions had distinguished themselves in battle.<sup>22</sup> In the year or so after the end of hostilities, the Army hoped to resist pressure to return bodies and adopt a policy requiring overseas burials. An internal Quartermaster Corps memorandum noted "there is...no alternative but leaving the remains in France, and the sooner this fact is recognized, the better."<sup>23</sup> This course of action quickly proved to be politically impossible. By the end of 1919, the U.S. War Department settled on the expensive and complicated policy of allowing the next of kin the choice of either repatriating the remains back to the United States, or leaving the remains overseas in a military cemetery. This policy caused some political problems for our allies, none of whom allowed repatriation of bodies. Ultimately just over 30,000 bodies remained in overseas American cemeteries. This number was far less than the numbers buried by other countries. Indeed, our Allies required 100 graves to every American one.<sup>24</sup>

Further complicating matters was a three-year ban on exhumations passed by France's Ministry of the Interior in February 1919. French officials allowed centralization of bodies and removal for public health concerns, but sought to limit extensive exhumation and transport of bodies on public highways and railroads.<sup>25</sup> Work on locating and registering American burials had already begun in late 1918 and officials were taken aback by this ban. In March 1919 the War Department proceeded to send out next of kin questionnaires asking about preferred burial locations, in spite of the uncertainty.<sup>26</sup>

After a fact finding tour by a Congressional committee in April 1919, the Senate appropriated funding for a national cemetery in France, hoping to encourage families to leave their loved ones buried overseas.<sup>27</sup> War Department officials promised that those who chose to allow their loved ones to remain in foreign soil would be pleased with the care taken in those cemeteries. As Budreau notes:

National cemeteries overseas offered the ideal opportunity for the state to preserve the myth of the fallen soldier while maintaining military esprit de corps.

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<sup>22</sup> Ralph Hayes, *A Report to the Secretary of War on American Military Dead Overseas - May 14, 1920* (Washington, GPO, 1920), 23.

<sup>23</sup> Memorandum, Major H. R. Lemly to Quartermaster General Rogers, (11 August 1919), Box 4, Entry 17 - Project Files, 1910-52, RG 66 - Records of the Commission of Fine Arts, National Archives and Records Administration I, Washington, DC [hereafter Entry 17, RG 66, NARA I]. The Commission of Fine Arts was involved with assisting the War Department from the beginning and both organizations hoped that popular sentiment for repatriation of the bodies could be overcome by providing beautiful overseas cemeteries. CFA Chairman Charles Moore was corresponding unofficially on this matter with Lemly starting in May 1919.

<sup>24</sup> U.S. Commission of Fine Arts, *The National Commission of Fine Arts, Tenth Report - July 1, 1921-December 31, 1925* (Washington, DC: GPO, 1926), 71.

<sup>25</sup> Hayes, 22.

<sup>26</sup> See Budreau, Chapter 5.

<sup>27</sup> Budreau, 46; "Senate Votes for Cemetery for Our Dead in France," *New York Times*, 13 June 1919, 17.

Here, on the adorned landscape of camaraderie and memory, the United States could leave its footprint of national might and influence abroad.<sup>28</sup>

On a practical level, officials worried that the decomposing bodies, buried without embalming or proper coffins, would be too shocking for family members hoping to identify remains before final burial in the United States. The logistical challenges of repatriating bodies would likely fail to comfort the families demanding the extraordinary effort. Creating overseas national cemeteries also would help maintain the patriotic vision of a glorious death in battle.

Assistant Secretary of War Ralph Hayes prepared a report for the Secretary on the American military dead overseas which he submitted in May 1920. At this time the War Department reiterated its commitment to both returning bodies to the United States and creating "fields of honor" for those who remained buried overseas, depending on the wishes of the next of kin. At this early stage the War Department was proposing three permanent cemeteries in France, to be located at Romagne-sous-Montfaucon, Suresnes, and Belleau Wood. The desire was to have a small number of permanent sites to allow the maximum enhancement and development at each. This policy was quite different from the British one, which created an official cemetery at each place where forty or more soldiers were buried. As a result of this policy and their large numbers of war dead, there are approximately 1,500 British burial grounds in France and Belgium.<sup>29</sup> Hayes acknowledged the conflicting opinions regarding burial locations while offering reassurance that War Department policy remained unwavering:

I do not hesitate to say that the sight of actual disinterments, however reverently made, and the vision of the Fields of Honor have left with me the fervent hope that the proportion of parents preferring to have their sons rest overseas will be large. But, officially, no officer of the War Department can permit such a hope to defeat or delay the redemption of the pledge made at the war's beginning, that the desire of the families as to their own dead would take precedence over every other consideration.<sup>30</sup>

The first bodies were shipped from England in February 1920, and from France in April 1920 after negotiations with French authorities to lift restrictions.<sup>31</sup> Hayes' report discussed the

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<sup>28</sup> Budreau, 48. Historian G. Kurt Piehler also sees the creation of American cemeteries and memorials overseas as an effort to promote the prestige of the United States and shape official memorial of the conflict. He views the many next of kin who refused to allow their soldier's remains to stay in overseas cemeteries as resisting any further sacrifice for the nation. See G. Kurt Piehler, "The War Dead and The Gold Star: American Commemoration of the First World War," in *Commemorations: The Politics of National Identity*, ed. John R. Gillis (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 168-185.

<sup>29</sup> Meigs, 181. Each British cemetery had "Cross of Sacrifice" designed by architect Sir Reginald Blomfield. Each stone cross had a bronze crusader's sword attached to the front and stood on an octagonal base. He also designed the headstones. Larger British cemeteries also had an altar-like "Stone of Remembrance" designed by architect Sir Edwin Lutyens. See "Address of Mr. Charles Moore, Chairman, National Commission of Fine Arts, Before the ABMC," (2 October 1923), Box 3, Entry 17, RG 66, NARA I. For period photographs of British cemeteries and memorials see Sidney C. Hurst, *The Silent Cities: An Illustrated Guide to the War Cemeteries and Memorials to the Missing in France and Flanders: 1914-1918* (New York: E. P. Hutton & Co., Inc, 1929).

<sup>30</sup> Hayes, 12.

<sup>31</sup> For a detailed account of the negotiations see Hayes, 25-30.

various arguments for and against repatriation of war dead, as well as conditions in France during this period. One argument against immediate repatriation was the limited transportation facilities in northern France, which were fully occupied with rebuilding and bringing food to a war-torn region. Because of fuel shortages, the first bodies sent home from France in April-May 1920 were those within 100 miles of the five ports designated for this purpose.<sup>32</sup> Meanwhile, the AEF Graves Registration Service was merged with the Cemeterial Division of the Office of the Quartermaster General in March 1920. The cemetery work was transitioning from an extension of wartime service into an overseas peacetime assignment.<sup>33</sup>

The immediate problem with respect to creating permanent overseas national cemeteries was consolidating the many battlefield burials and individual interments. At the time of Hayes' report in May 1920, there were still almost 600 temporary cemeteries, in spite of extensive consolidation. The largest was Romagne, as Meuse-Argonne was now called, with approximately 22,000 burials.<sup>34</sup> Hayes noted that total burials would probably be reduced by the number repatriated to the United States, even with more brought in from discontinued temporary cemeteries. However he urged the War Department to proceed with plans to increase the size of the tract at Romagne, not reduce it. Some of the Army barracks remaining on site had been repurposed as "Hostess Houses" operated by the YWCA for visiting families. Simple room and board could be obtained for a nominal cost, as well as transportation from the train station in Dun-sur-Meuse. A Board of Officers had been appointed in March 1920 to determine the land area needed for a likely permanent cemetery at Romagne, with particular attention to acquiring enough land to prevent encroachment from private buildings. It was determined that the north hill be acquired to control the view of and from the graves on the south hill, as well as creating a permanent buffer around the entire site.<sup>35</sup>

By 1920, Argonne/Romagne Cemetery had received a number of rather handsome, "semi-permanent" improvements because of its importance, size, and the intention to make this a permanent American burial ground. As described by Hayes:

A large amount of work has been done at Romagne in the erection of barracks, the construction of walls and fences, the sowing of grass, the laying of gravel, the planting of flowers, and the installation of artificial drainage. Being five times the size of any other American cemetery in France, the work of construction and upkeep has proceeded on a scale correspondingly greater than at other points.<sup>36</sup>

The tents were no longer on site, and the smaller group of wood barracks and other lightly built structures that remained were grouped on the north hill or near the Cunel gate (**Figure 12**). The area along the roadway was extensively improved, with sections of stone wall lining the road and

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<sup>32</sup> Hayes, 13, 32.

<sup>33</sup> "History of the GRS - Volume I," 43.

<sup>34</sup> Hayes, 41.

<sup>35</sup> It was Ralph Hayes who urged acquisition of the larger area and overruled the initial more modest proposal of the Board of Officers. See correspondence and map in Box 1897, Entry 1891- General Correspondence Geographic File, 1922-35, RG 92 - Records of the Office of the Quartermaster General, NARA II [hereafter Entry 1891, RG 92, NARA II], especially Memorandum, Ralph Hayes to Secretary of War, (17 May 1920).

<sup>36</sup> Hayes, 41.



marking the entrances. The walls also framed wide flights of stairs leading to the grave areas and the north side of the garden. A gravel drive circled a long lawn and formal garden at the base of the hill. In addition to an enhanced version of the monumental letters ARGONNE CEMETERY spelled out in flowers flanking a star-shaped flower bed inscribed in a circle, the sunken garden featured a series of geometric flower beds and linear gravel paths. The initial planting efforts from 1919 seem to have matured and now included small evergreens in planters arranged on the walls and around the edge of the lawn. Field artillery pieces were located at picturesque intervals and a large flag pole was located at the center top of the hill behind the graves. The rows of wood crosses were still in their original position perpendicular to the road below. The graves were arranged in a grid pattern of square sections, with gravel paths placed at regular intervals.

The inquiries sent out to families in 1919 indicated that 59 percent wanted their soldier returned and 26 percent requested burial overseas (14 percent of the inquiries went unanswered).<sup>37</sup> By April 1921, over 14,800 bodies had been returned to the United States at great expense and trouble. However, the slow progress and vague policies in this area prompted many to try to make their own arrangements, either for exhumation and transport, or for private overseas burial.<sup>38</sup> Families with soldiers in single, isolated graves often could not bear the thought of this resting place being disturbed. The difficulty of tracking, marking, and maintaining these graves motivated the GRS to pressure families to allow disinterment and relocation.

In addition, some families who had initially wanted their soldiers returned began changing their minds, as rumors of misidentification or coffins filled with rocks circulated. Certainly positive identification of decomposed or brutally wounded bodies was often very difficult. Historian Mark Meigs notes that in spite of the uncertainty surrounding identification, many families took comfort in receiving a soldiers' body -- and perhaps chose not to focus on whether they would ever know if the identification was correct.<sup>39</sup> The added logistical problems of families changing instructions with shipment or overseas burial already underway prompted the Secretary of War to impose an August 15, 1921 cutoff on all changes to previous instructions.<sup>40</sup>

#### Designing the Permanent Cemeteries – the War Department and the Commission of Fine Arts

As it became clear that permanent overseas cemeteries would be created by the War Department, attention turned to accomplishing this task in a manner that honored the war dead

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<sup>37</sup> Hayes, 35-36, 15.

<sup>38</sup> Perhaps most prominent was the grave of Quentin Roosevelt, son of the former President, who was buried in France near the site of his combat plane crash on a remote hillside. The wealth and connections of this family made the marking of this individual grave and construction of an attractive memorial fountain in the adjacent farm village possible, but there was still a question of upkeep in such a remote location. The memorial fountain is still intact and located on a small country lane at the edge of a farm. Quentin's body was moved to Normandy American Cemetery in 1955 to lie near his brother, Ted, who had a heart attack while serving with the U.S. Army in 1944. An updated marker still identifies the original grave site.

<sup>39</sup> Meigs, 184.

<sup>40</sup> Budreau, 76.

and enhanced the United States' international standing. The Hayes report recommended creating a commission - the War Memorials Council - which would advise the War Department on Cemetery & Memorial development, in consultation with the Commission of Fine Arts (CFA). The War Memorials Council would have the same dual purpose as the eventual ABMC, but as described by Hayes, would emphasize facilitating visits overseas by family members and veterans.<sup>41</sup> The CFA was created in 1910 to advise the Federal Government on matters of design and aesthetics.<sup>42</sup> This body of architects, landscape architects and sculptors was mainly involved in projects in and around Washington, DC, but also consulted on federal matters outside the nation's capital. The CFA was first officially approached for advice on creating a U.S. national cemetery in France in the fall of 1919.<sup>43</sup> Its chair, Charles Moore, took an active interest in questions of war commemoration.

Members of the War Memorials Council included Moore and Ralph Hayes (no longer Assistant Secretary of War), in addition to various high ranking government officials and clergy.<sup>44</sup> Colonel Charles C. Pierce, Chief of the GRS, also served as the Council's secretary. In September 1920 Pierce came to the CFA for advice regarding the plans for overseas cemeteries. Secretary of War Newton D. Baker personally requested that a CFA committee visit the proposed cemetery sites and make recommendations.<sup>45</sup> Because President Wilson was to leave office at the end of March, it was determined that the trip should commence before the change in administration. President Harding and his Secretary of War, John Wingate Weeks, would also be supportive of the overseas cemetery plans, but Baker wanted to avoid delays or funding problems.<sup>46</sup>

The Commission of Fine Arts representatives for the trip were Charles Moore, landscape architect James L. Greenleaf, and architect William Mitchell Kendall of the illustrious firm of McKim, Mead & White. They were accompanied by Colonel Pierce and Major George Gibbs, Jr. of the GRS. Gibbs was an experienced landscape architect who had been detailed to the GRS at the end of 1920 in order to assist with developing plans for overseas cemeteries. Moore, on the personal recommendation of Greenleaf and former CFA landscape architect Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr., approached Quartermaster General Harry Rogers requesting Gibbs' transfer from the Construction Division to the overseas cemetery work. He was highly qualified, having

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<sup>41</sup> Hayes, 42-43. The first iteration of this body may have been the "Committee on Post Bellum Memorial Design," formed in July 1920. A memo listing its members includes familiar names such as Charles Moore as Chair, Ralph Hayes, Major Pierce, Colonel Penrose (head of GRS at this time), and Henry [sic.] Kendall, AIA. See Box 4, Entry 17, RG 66, NARA I.

<sup>42</sup> See Sue A. Kohler, *The Commission of Fine Arts: A Brief History, 1910-1995* (Washington, DC: GPO, 1996).

<sup>43</sup> Typescript, "American Cemeteries in France," Box 4, Entry 17, RG 66, NARA I. At this time CFA Commissioners Charles Platt and John Russell Pope were to develop a plan for one large cemetery with a "large central memorial commemorating the services of our soldiers."

<sup>44</sup> Typescript, War Memorials Council membership list, n.d., Box 4, Entry 17, RG 66, NARA I.

<sup>45</sup> Commission of Fine Arts Minutes, (3 September 1920 and 20 September 1920), Entry 1 - Microfilm Copy of Minutes of the Commission, 1910-1990, RG 66, NARA I, Washington, DC [hereafter CFA Minutes]. "The Commission decided that plans for these cemeteries should be prepared by the very best architects and landscape architects whom it is possible to secure." A private group called the American Field of Honor Association sought authority over American military cemeteries in France, but the War Department was determined that they remain in government control like domestic national cemeteries.

<sup>46</sup> See Letter, Caemmerer to Moore, (8 October 1920), Box 4, Entry 17, RG 66, NARA I.

graduated from Harvard University in 1904 with a degree in landscape architecture, and worked in the renowned Olmsted Brothers firm for over ten years. Gibbs had been with the Quartermaster's Construction Division since May 1917, working on camp and cantonment layout and construction. In July 1920 he converted from a military to civilian Army employee.<sup>47</sup> Gibbs prepared some preliminary plans that the CFA committee reviewed at Kendall's New York office on February 28, 1921.<sup>48</sup>

The group traveled to Europe on an army transport in March 5, 1921 "with a view to examining locations and preparing plans for the permanent American military cemeteries in Europe."<sup>49</sup> Moore elaborated on the goals of the trip in a letter to the U.S. Ambassador in Paris: "The purpose of the visit is to confer with the French and British officials having charge of military cemeteries, so as to secure such a degree of cooperation as may seem advisable; also, to arrange for the architectural and landscape treatment of such American cemeteries as shall be retained in France, and, in general, to give such consideration to war memorials erected in France as may be possible and advisable."<sup>50</sup> At this time the War Department was planning to create four cemeteries in France (Meuse-Argonne in Romagne-sous-Montfaucon, Suresnes outside Paris, Aisne-Marne in Belleau, and Somme in Bony) and one in England (Brookwood). The CFA delegation believed the permanent design for the Meuse-Argonne Cemetery represented a special responsibility:

The cemetery of the Argonne represents our greatest sacrifices in human lives. Other cemeteries, which may or may not be evacuated, possibly mark points of more intense fighting and heavier losses. These are matters for the military historian to decide. The fact remains that to-day the cemetery of the Argonne stands for so much that its development along the most comprehensive and best devised plan becomes at once a privilege and a duty.<sup>51</sup>

In addition to preparing preliminary plans for each cemetery, Gibbs submitted a detailed report in May laying out the survey and mapping work needed at each site as well as a number of guiding principles for the permanent cemeteries. These included guidelines for plantings and the spacing and arrangement of graves, including a preference that headstones face the main

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<sup>47</sup> Letter, Moore to Quartermaster General Harry Rogers, (4 November 1920), Box 4, Entry 17, RG 66, NARA I. Gibbs' resume is attached to this letter.

<sup>48</sup> Letter, H. P. Caemmerer, Assistant Secretary CFA to James Greenleaf, (18 February 1921), Folder - European Trip of 1921, Box 4, Entry 17, RG 66, NARA I. Additional correspondence between Moore, Pierce, and Greenleaf, discussing Gibbs' experience and ability to work with Army personnel, is located in the same box. For example see Letter, Greenleaf to Moore, (29 September 1920).

<sup>49</sup> Memorandum - "Completion report on construction of permanent American military cemeteries in Europe," American Graves Registration Service to Quartermaster General, (4 February 1926), Box 157, Entry 13, RG 117, NARA II. See also "\$3,000,000 for Graves: United States Commission Takes Up Plans to Beautify Cemeteries," *Washington Star*, 26 March 1921, clipping in Folder - European Trip of 1921, Box 4, Entry 17, RG 66, NARA I.

<sup>50</sup> Letter, Moore to U.S. Ambassador in France, (2 February 1921), Folder - European Trip of 1921, Box 4, Entry 17, RG 66, NARA I. Louis Ayres of the firm York & Sawyer was originally going to go on the trip but was not able to join the group. See also "Plans Military Cemeteries: Charles Moore Home After Two Months' Trip to Europe," *New York Times*, 11 May 1921, clipping, Box 4, Entry 17, RG 66, NARA I.

<sup>51</sup> U.S. Commission of Fine Arts. *National Commission of Fine Arts, Ninth Report - July 1, 1919 to June 30, 1921*. (Washington, DC: GPO, 1921), 63.

roadway or direction of approach. The caretaker houses were to be included at all the cemeteries except Brookwood, while a chapel was only proposed for Romagne and possibly Belleau.<sup>52</sup>

Shortly after returning, Gibbs' preliminary plans were approved by the full CFA at their June 9, 1921 meeting. At the urging of Assistant Secretary of War J. Mayhew Wainwright, the CFA committee recommended that two more cemeteries in France and one in Belgium be added to the program.<sup>53</sup> It also promoted the various guidelines enumerated in Gibbs' report, including fairly wide spacing between graves and a planting plan of trees (not flowers) considered distinctly American in comparison to Allied cemeteries. Another concern raised was allowing space for expansion and adding monuments in the future. The War Department approved these recommendations, including expanding the number of cemeteries to add Oise-Aisne and St. Mihiel in France and Flanders Field in Belgium. This decision was finalized in August 1921 and Gibbs again traveled to Europe to gather data for plans.<sup>54</sup> Also in August 1921, the War Department reorganized the Graves Registration Service in Europe, leading to the creation of a permanent Cemeterial Construction Division. This division was tasked with coordinating all surveys and information needed to prepare detailed working plans, overseeing contracts and construction, and acquiring additional land needed for the proposed permanent cemeteries.<sup>55</sup>

The U.S. Government made arrangements with the French and Belgian governments to purchase land acquired from private owners to create the permanent overseas American military cemeteries. Secretary of War Weeks formally announced the names and locations of the six cemeteries in France, as well as Brookwood in England. Brookwood shared a name with an existing cemetery while Suresnes Cemetery outside Paris took its name from its host community. The other sites were Aisne-Marne at Belleau Wood, Meuse-Argonne at Romagne, Oise-Aisne at Fere-en-Tardenois, Somme at Bony, and St. Mihiel at Thiaucourt. As noted in the press release, the "official designations [were] to commemorate the major operations of the American Army in which the great majority of the men interred in each cemetery lost their lives."<sup>56</sup> A final decision on Flanders Field American Cemetery in Belgium was reached in October 1921.

Plans moved forward in 1921-22 to consolidate the several hundred remaining temporary American cemeteries into the eight permanent locations, which would be modeled on stateside national cemeteries, particularly Arlington. The Commission of Fine Arts reviewed a comprehensive plan for Arlington Cemetery in this period and touted the Civil War portion of this cemetery as the model for cemetery development both at home and overseas:

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<sup>52</sup> Report, Gibbs to Col. H. F. Rethers, QMC, (19 May 1921), Box 5, Entry 17, RG 66, NARA I.

<sup>53</sup> Typescript, "American Cemeteries in France," c. 1921, Box 4, Entry 17, RG 66, NARA I. Gibbs noted that Edward Lawson, Delineator, American Academy in Rome and John Paul Jones, Engineer, assisted with the plans.

<sup>54</sup> Memorandum - "Completion report on construction of permanent American military cemeteries in Europe,"; see also U.S. Commission of Fine Arts, *The National Commission of Fine Arts, Tenth Report - July 1, 1921-December 31, 1925* (Washington, DC: GPO, 1926), 71-74; and *The National Commission of Fine Arts, Ninth Report - July 1, 1919-June 30, 1921* (Washington, DC: GPO, 1921), 39-65. Correspondence between Moore, Kendall, and Gibbs indicates that Kendall was asked to contribute designs for architectural features such as gates, fences, and water towers, although the informality of this arrangement made Kendall uncomfortable. See for example Letter, Kendall to Moore, (14 September 1921), Box 5, Entry 17, RG 66, NARA I.

<sup>55</sup> "History of the GRS, Volume II," 19-22.

<sup>56</sup> Press Release, War Department, (15 August 1921), Box 9619, Entry 1888 - General Correspondence, 1917-22, RG 92 - Records of the Office of the Quartermaster General [hereafter Entry 1888, RG 92], NARA II.

The most quiet, restful, and holy portion of Arlington is the area occupied by soldiers of the Civil War. The small, moss-grown stones, with green grass between, and forest trees overhead - these are the typical elements of the American military cemetery. Every officer who has charge of such a cemetery, whether in this country or in Europe, should understand the aim, the purpose, and the ideal.<sup>57</sup>

The CFA hoped to avoid the elaborate variety of headstones that characterized later sections of Arlington and return to simplicity and dignity. Founded during the Civil War, Arlington National Cemetery became the most prominent military cemetery in the United States. The development of a national cemetery system in that post-Civil War period codified the official approach to military cemeteries. Ideally headstones were simple, like the Civil War soldiers area of Arlington. Later use of a variety of commercial headstones for Civil War officers and Spanish American War graves was decried by the early twentieth century. Well-tended paths and regular rows of graves characterized the grounds, which were enhanced by trees, shrubs, and lawns. In the late-nineteenth century, simple rostrums were built at many national cemeteries as a location for Memorial Day events and other gatherings. Lodges for cemetery superintendents, decorative gates, and perimeter walls and fences were also part of the American military cemetery tradition. The American public would expect facilities overseas to meet these standards, even as the approach to commemoration and remembrance was becoming more elaborate.

Another aspect of the national cemetery context at this time was the establishment of the Memorial Amphitheater and Tomb of the Unknown Soldier (designed by Thomas Hastings of Carrère & Hastings). On November 11, 1921, the United States laid the body of an unknown American soldier to rest in the tomb at Arlington National Cemetery. This symbolic monument followed similar examples by England and France; Belgium buried an unknown soldier in late 1922. The marble amphitheater at this prominent site was only a few years old. The Unknown Soldier was placed in a plain pedestal that would later receive a marble mausoleum designed by architect Lorimer Rich.<sup>58</sup> As historian Thomas W. Laqueur has written, the attention to both symbolic unknown soldiers and the identification of individual graves or missing soldiers represents a cultural shift in the production of collective memory. These two seemingly contradictory trends served to elevate the status of the common soldier, even when he anonymously represented the group.<sup>59</sup> While the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier at Arlington became the de facto national memorial to the Great War, the tremendous effort to individually

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<sup>57</sup> *The National Commission of Fine Arts, Tenth Report - July 1, 1921-December 31, 1925*, 62. The "World War" section of Arlington also received a white marble "Soldiers' Memorial Cross" erected on November 13, 1923 by the Argonne unit of the American Women's Legion. Moore noted in a letter written shortly after approval of the cross that he wished this type of monument would become more popular than the "doughboy" for local memorials. See Letter, Moore to Bishop Brent, (9 September 1921), Box 5, Entry 17, RG 66, NARA I.

<sup>58</sup> The legislation passed by Congress on July 3, 1926 authorizing the Secretary of War to obtain designs for the mausoleum at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier included a provision that it be approved by the ABMC, CFA, and the Arlington Memorial Amphitheater Commission. See John J. Pershing, "American Battle Monuments Commission Report, July 1, 1926 to June 30, 1938," Box 3, Entry 3 - Annual Reports, RG 117, NARA II.

<sup>59</sup> Thomas W. Laquer, "Memory and Naming in the Great War," in *Commemorations: The Politics of National Identity*, ed. John R. Gillis (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 152.

identify the dead and missing in overseas military cemeteries represents a parallel cultural impulse.<sup>60</sup>

At Meuse-Argonne the major effort to redo the grave sections was fully underway in September 1921. The new plan called for eight sections arranged in rows of four facing the road at the base of the hill. Work began at the top of the hill and progressed down, with personnel from the Exhumation Section closely coordinating with those from the Engineering Section, who were regrading as necessary, and the Reburial Section. In addition to bodies being removed for shipment to the United States, others were arriving from temporary cemeteries in the area. While the primary goal was accuracy, performing reburials quickly was also of great concern. After some trial and error with the work flow, the crews were able to exhume and rebury nearly 150 soldiers per day. By August 29, 1922, 13,927 bodies were permanently interred at Meuse-Argonne Cemetery.<sup>61</sup> Grading and reinternment work was underway at all the permanent cemeteries by summer 1922, largely due to pressure to get bodies into their permanent graves. Rushing this work with all available men and equipment between July 1922 and January 1923 cost \$150,000, a larger than anticipated portion of the total appropriation.<sup>62</sup>

The reburial work proceeded concurrently with development of plans by the Commission of Fine Arts. Gibbs' revised preliminary plan for "Meuse-Argonne Cemetery at Romagne" is dated November 15, 1921 (**Figure 13**). The property boundaries were adjusted slightly. Small amounts of additional land were acquired around each of the entrances and while a little less land was depicted behind the service area where the property line was redrawn more accurately. Gibbs' recommendations for converting the cemetery to its permanent design centered on the eight grave areas arranged across the south hillside. Grading would have to be done to create a smooth, even slope on the hillside and eliminate any water collection in low areas. Trees lined the grave sections and were scattered among the graves as well. At this stage Gibbs was proposing that gate lodges be placed on either side of the roadway as quarters for the caretakers. The administration buildings were to be placed on the north hill with an office building and "shelter." The cross axis of the site would lead up the opposite hill to a flagpole with a chapel behind. Gibbs' plan also placed a reservoir at the southeast corner of the site on the hill behind the graves. Here Gibbs and the CFA successfully established many of the defining characteristics of Meuse-Argonne Cemetery, particularly the arrangement of the grave sections and roadways, and the importance of the two cross axes through the valley and up the hillsides.<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> Historian James Mayo has noted the continued importance of the Tomb of the Unknown as its meaning has been reaffirmed with each new conflict. See James M. Mayo, *War Memorials as Political Landscape: The American Experience and Beyond* (New York: Praeger, 1988), 11.

<sup>61</sup> "History of the GRS - Volume III," 24-30. An extremely detailed account of this work at Meuse-Argonne is provided here as an illustration of the process for all the cemeteries. Also see p. 47-51 for a list of the temporary burials consolidated into Meuse-Argonne.

<sup>62</sup> Memorandum - "Completion report on construction of permanent American military cemeteries in Europe," 3, American Graves Registration Service to Quartermaster General, (4 February 1926), Box 157, Entry 13, RG 117, NARA II.

<sup>63</sup> Report, Gibbs to Col. H. F. Rethers, QMC, (19 May 1921), Box 5, Entry 17, RG 66, NARA I.

The correspondence and reports from this period give a clear sense that the Commission of Fine Arts viewed Meuse-Argonne as its premier site. One report offers a comparison to the Beaux Arts planning of Washington, DC that is worth quoting at length:

The largest of the cemeteries is Romagne, officially known as Meuse-Argonne, containing 14,000 graves, or 2,000 more than the largest of the 1,500 British cemeteries. The graves area occupies one slope of gently ascending hill, while on the opposite hillside are the administration buildings. The way from the little town of Romagne to Montfaucon and Verdun runs through the narrow valley between the two portions of the cemetery. This valley is being treated as a park, with suitable entrances at either end, a broad carpet of green grass outlined by tree-bordered roads (much like the Mall as planned between the Capitol and the Washington Monument) and ornamented with a circular pool and fountain in the center, where steps lead up to the grave section on side and to the buildings on the other. Altogether the place even now is most impressive, and when completed will be without a superior in France, in extent, in dignity, and in serenity. It will express faithfully and adequately American valor and sacrifice.”<sup>64</sup>

Again the Commission of Fine Arts emphasized the goal of creating a park-like setting with fine lawns and trees and a desire to live up to the standards of their British counterparts.

In spite of initial high level support, efforts to execute the CFA plans encountered some obstacles. While the CFA believed that their approach offered simple and tasteful design solutions, the War Department was of the opinion that park-like cemeteries were unnecessarily elaborate and expensive. General Connor, Assistant Chief of Staff, recounted a high level meeting to evaluate the Commission of Fine Arts plans:

The opinion was unanimous that the plans...contain too much land for park purposes, and the entire estimates are on a more expensive and elaborate scale than is necessary or desirable. The estimates for the buildings are entirely too high and provide for buildings that are unnecessary. The same criticism applies to the water systems, the roads and walks, and to the drainage systems. In each of these cases the plans submitted are elaborate enough for a small town and far in excess of the needs of the cemeteries in question.<sup>65</sup>

Overall the War Department strongly believed that the overseas cemeteries should resemble the “general lines of the National cemeteries in the United States and should not be any more elaborate.”<sup>66</sup>

Charles Moore complained to the War Department that resistance to the CFA recommendations reflected an attitude of "cheapness" that threw doubt on the overseas

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<sup>64</sup> Typescript, “The American Cemeteries in Europe,” (c. 1922), p. 5, Box 4, Entry 17, RG 66, NARA I.

<sup>65</sup> Extract of Memo, General Connor, Asst. Chief of Staff to Deputy Chief of Staff, (10 September 1921), Box 9619, Entry 1888, RG 92, NARA II.

<sup>66</sup> Extract of Memo, General Connor, Asst. Chief of Staff to Deputy Chief of Staff, (10 September 1921), Box 9619, Entry 1888, RG 92, NARA II.

cemeteries.<sup>67</sup> Apparently even General Pershing, referred to by Gibbs as the “obstreperous big general” in a letter to Moore, was requesting more cuts to estimates. Gibbs recounted that he was doing his best to comply without harming the designs. Regrading was already underway at Romagne, and the plans for this high profile site seem to have been accepted without too much question at this stage.<sup>68</sup> By December 1921, Moore prevailed in convincing the War Department to leave the plans essentially intact. He wrote to fellow War Memorials Council member Bishop Charles Brent of Buffalo:

Undoubtedly you were the mollifying influence that has led the War Department to the approval of the plans of the Commission, and the determination on their part to ask for a sufficient amount of money to provide for the coming year's work....It is very easy indeed to take a plan and chop off tens of acres here and there; but the plans were studied on the ground, and every foot of land was taken with a deliberate purpose to secure natural and obvious boundaries or to prevent the domination of the American cemeteries by structures on the crest of the hill above, or for some other like reason.<sup>69</sup>

The Quartermaster Corps estimated that \$1,700,000 was needed to complete the necessary work on the eight overseas cemeteries, but full funding was not forthcoming. Congress approved Public Resolution 44 on April 1, 1922, giving the War Department \$856,680 to purchase the necessary real estate and make improvements. Work on the overseas cemeteries began in July 1922, with some grading and drainage work done in the preceding months.<sup>70</sup>

The War Department decided earlier that the graves would not be grouped according to rank or branch of service.<sup>71</sup> Other than placing unknown graves in small clusters along the edges, this policy guided the layout of the grave sections with their identical headstones and precise rows. In addition to moving the bodies that were to be shipped to the United States and those being consolidated into the 8 permanent cemeteries from 2,400 temporary ones, many bodies already in the permanent cemeteries were exhumed and reburied between 1921 and 1922. This work was done to conform to the new plans for the cemeteries and respace the burials a standard six feet apart. *A Guide to the Battlefields* published by ABMC in 1927 noted that the reburials were done in a manner that made the size of each permanent cemetery correspond with the importance of the nearby battle. As the permanent cemetery for the Meuse-Argonne Offensive, the cemetery located on the edge of Romagne-sous-Montfaucon was the largest and subsequently most prominent. Ultimately the War Department buried over 14,000 soldiers here from almost every division of the AEF. In addition other burials were transported from occupied Germany and from northern Russia.<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>67</sup> Letter, Moore to Major General J. G. Harbord, Deputy Chief of Staff, (17 September 1921), Box 5, Entry 17, RG 66, NARA I.

<sup>68</sup> Letter, Gibbs to Moore, (14 October 1921), Box 5, Entry 17, RG 66, NARA I.

<sup>69</sup> Letter, Moore to Brent, (9 December 1921), Box 5, Entry 17, RG 66, NARA I.

<sup>70</sup> Memorandum - "Completion report on construction of permanent American military cemeteries in Europe." Except for a few small amounts, this appropriation was the total amount received by the GRS for overseas cemeteries.

<sup>71</sup> "History of GRS - Volume II," 35.

<sup>72</sup> ABMC, *A Guide to the American Battle Fields in Europe*, 247.



Planning and design also continued, with the Commission of Fine Arts reviewing submissions of standard gate lodge designs from the Quartermaster Corps in April 1922. The CFA was not impressed, replying that "the designs submitted lack qualities which should characterize the American work in France, if our cemeteries are to hold their own with those of other nations."<sup>73</sup> They suggested that Gibbs be consulted and allowed to confer with Kendall and other members of the CFA.

Major H. L. Green, Constructing Quartermaster, became GRS commanding officer in October 1922. This shift in control within the Quartermaster Corps from the GRS to the Construction Division was seen as a positive step by the CFA. Green was an experienced architect, having worked for ten years with the office of John Lawrence Mauran in St. Louis. Moore's assessment was that Green "knew how to deal with contractors, and if we had selected from the whole Army probably we would not have been able to get a better man."<sup>74</sup> Shortly after taking the position, Green wrote to New York architect Cass Gilbert, a personal contact. He asked for Gilbert's thoughts on the American cemeteries in France, noting the English practice of including an altar and a cross in every cemetery. Gilbert responded with his knowledge of the Commission of Fine Arts recommendations and forwarded the letter on to Moore, who also responded cordially to Green, promising to send copies of the plans.<sup>75</sup>

In spite of the initial cooperation between the War Department and CFA, the two bodies increasingly disagreed on the proper course of action for the overseas cemeteries. The Commission of Fine Arts continued to insist their vision for the overseas cemeteries emphasized simplicity, even though the War Department still found their plans overly elaborate. The CFA's 10<sup>th</sup> Report stated, "...we may with propriety reproduce in our cemeteries abroad the type of military cemetery which has developed since the Civil War a type embodying the simple treatment, and for effects depending on nature rather than art."<sup>76</sup> In late March 1923, Gibbs wrote a long letter to Moore that shows the status of the efforts and the administrative uncertainty of this period when the Construction Division was taking control. He had submitted plans for Suresnes and just learned that they had been referred to the CFA. Gibbs expressed relief that this review was still in place and noted that they should have received Belleau too, with Brookwood, Waregem, and Bony to follow close behind. There was some pressure to have all the work contracted before the funds lapsed on June 30th. Gibbs confided in Moore:

After the contracts are let it will still be possible I suppose to make any necessary changes in the plans, and I have understood all along that the approval of all

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<sup>73</sup> Letter, Lieut. Col. Sherrill to Colonel Penrose, (1 April 1922), Box 4, Entry 17, RG 66, NARA I. A few weeks later the CFA unsuccessfully suggested that the Quartermaster hire architect Nathan C. Wyeth, an American graduate of the *École des Beaux-Arts* currently in Europe. Letter, Sherrill to Quartermaster General Rogers, (3 May 1922), Box 4, Entry 17, RG 66, NARA I.

<sup>74</sup> See "Address of Mr. Charles Moore, Chairman, National Commission of Fine Arts, Before the ABMC," (2 October 1923), Box 3, Entry 17, RG 66, NARA I.

<sup>75</sup> Correspondence - Moore, Gilbert and Green, (October-November 1922), Folder - Graves, Box 4, Entry 17, RG 66, NARA I.

<sup>76</sup> *The National Commission of Fine Arts, Tenth Report, July 1, 1921-December 31, 1925* (Washington, DC: GPO, 1926), 71, 73.

details of architectural work was reserved to Washington. I thought however that the plans were being acted on outside the Commission and I feared many complications. ...I have had some rather serious misgivings as to the progress of all this work from time to time, first it looked as though all the funds would be eaten up in burial work, then the job was rescued by being put on a business basis as a purely construction job. In the general overhaul I thought the work was to be taken over without me and I had visions of many of the details getting lost in the change. I am still here however and have with me the best of all the men that we were able to gather.<sup>77</sup>

As usual General Pershing had the last word, when he noted in a December 1923 progress report and press release that the recommendations of the Commission of Fine Arts had been too extensive and were modified.<sup>78</sup> However the original CFA plans would be rather simple compared to the grander improvements overseen by the ABMC just a few years later.

At Meuse-Argonne, plans were prepared for permanent structures including two caretaker's quarters and a visitor building with overnight accommodations. Drawings for the Visitor Building/Staff Quarters complex were first sent to Washington, DC for approval on May 3, 1923 (**Figure 14**). They show this grouping basically as it exists today on the crest of the hill facing the graves. The buildings were designed with stucco walls and high pitched red tile roofs typical of local domestic architecture. This approach was again influenced by the Commission of Fine Arts, which wrote "the buildings, fences, and other architectural form were to be designed in the manner of French rural architecture. The monumental and grandiose were to be avoided: simplicity, good proportions, and the sense of at-home-ness were to prevail."<sup>79</sup> A memorandum from Major Green which accompanied the drawings noted that the residents of Romagne had objected to realigning the road through the cemetery so this proposal suggested leaving its slightly curving path unaltered. Green also addressed the direction he was given to incorporate overnight guest accommodations into the two staff houses. Instead Green proposed that "these rooms could be better incorporated with the building containing the reception room, which could be used for the sitting room in connection with the visitors' rooms. I feel that the caretakers have a right to the privacy of their own house, rather than being invaded by visitors, and for that reason felt it more desirable to concentrate in one building, both the reception and possible sleeping accommodations for visitors."<sup>80</sup>

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<sup>77</sup> Letter, Gibbs to Moore, (25 March 1923), Box 4, Entry 17, RG 66, NARA I. Gibbs expected that his time on the project would run out on July 1st and one of the "younger men" in the office would have to see to the final construction details. He noted that "Major Wyeth" was unable to join the effort. Gibbs also mentions previous work on plans for the World War section of Arlington Cemetery and expresses an interest in returning to that project when he leaves Europe.

<sup>78</sup> "Report of General Pershing on American Cemeteries Abroad," (4 December 1923), Box 4, Entry 17, RG 66, NARA I. This document was also released to the press for publication on December 12th by Secretary of War Weeks.

<sup>79</sup> Typescript, "The American Cemeteries in Europe," (c. 1922), Box 4, Entry 17, RG 66, NARA I. The report continues by stating, "no consideration was given to monuments as such. Congress has created a special commission to deal with monuments to mark the battlefields."

<sup>80</sup> Memorandum, Major H. L. Green to Quartermaster General (5 May 1923), Box 1343, Entry 1891, RG 92, NARA II.

When Green submitted his drawings with proposed changes, the Commission of Fine Arts did not respond favorably. Moore wrote:

The Commission noted with surprise and apprehension changes in the original plan for Romagne ... prepared under the immediate supervision of the commission. The changes increase the cost of improvements, while at the same time creating disorder where quiet and orderliness are of chief consideration. Particular attention is called to the plan for the valley, with two roadways, a circular pool, and an 'open' treatment of the entrances which give a through vista the entire length of the valley. These elements should be adhered to.<sup>81</sup>

While the objections to the visitor building and staff quarters seemed to be minor details – altering dormers, changing the height of the connecting wall between the buildings – the treatment of the road through the valley was paramount to the CFA's vision for Meuse-Argonne. This formal axis was essential to the character of Meuse-Argonne –the road was to be straightened and divided by a grass median. The Quartermaster General concurred and Green was ordered to incorporate these elements into his final plan, with approval forthcoming from the CFA on June 29th.<sup>82</sup>

The construction contract was awarded to Ernest Robin of Longlaville.<sup>83</sup> Work proceeded through the end of 1923 and into 1924. The cemetery remained open for visitors in spite of construction, which caused some misunderstandings and negative publicity. Dr. and Mrs. Stier of South Norwalk, Connecticut were distressed to hear from an acquaintance that the cemetery containing the remains of their son, Sergeant Fred J. Stier, was unkempt and neglected. Secretary of War John Weeks personally assured them that improvement was proceeding according to schedule and carefully monitored by General Pershing and other dignitaries. Secretary Weeks wrote:

At the present time permanent construction is in progress at the Meuse-Argonne American Cemetery involving an expenditure of approximately \$246,000. This covers the construction of buildings, roads, water and drainage systems, lawns and the planting of 30,000 trees and shrubs....Naturally this vast work cannot be accomplished without a certain amount of attending unsightliness.<sup>84</sup>

As construction neared completion, an effort was made to convince the YWCA to continue running the Hostess House facilities in the new building as they had done in the converted barracks. However, YWCA officials felt this was the appropriate time to transition to other activities. They wrote to General Pershing that while it was a "sacred privilege" to help visiting mourners in the early years they would discontinue their program at the cemetery on October 1, 1924, when the new building managed by permanent cemetery staff was scheduled for

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<sup>81</sup> Letter, Charles Moore to Quartermaster General, (22 June 1923) Box 1343, Entry 1891, RG 92, NARA II.

<sup>82</sup> See correspondence in Folder 687 Meuse-Argonne 1923-28, Box 1343, Entry 1891, RG 92, NARA II.

<sup>83</sup> Memorandum, Charles A. Morrow, QMC to Chief of GRS, (20 November 1923), Box 157, Entry 13, RG 117, NARA II. This memorandum included a list of dates for when plans were transferred and contracts let in connection with improvements at the permanent cemeteries.

<sup>84</sup> Letter, Secretary of War John Weeks to Dr. and Mrs. Stier, (12 May 1924), Box 1343, Entry 1891, RG 92, NARA II.

completion.<sup>85</sup> Ultimately funds for Hostess House staff were not appropriated and the YWCA could not be convinced to resume their concession. The remoteness of Meuse-Argonne and lack of nearby overnight accommodations resulted in an ad hoc solution for the 1925 tourist season whereby the head caretaker's wife was paid a clerk's salary in exchange for running the Hostess House.<sup>86</sup>

By the end of June 1925, there were 30,405 burials in the American military cemeteries in Europe and 130 soldiers buried in Europe outside of those cemeteries. 46,214 bodies had been returned to the United States.<sup>87</sup> The eight permanent cemeteries were St. Mihiel, Meuse-Argonne, Somme, Aisne-Marne, Oise-Aisne, and Suresnes, all in France, Flanders Field in Waregem, Belgium, and an American section in the Brookwood military cemetery outside London, England. Gibbs completed plans for all the permanent cemeteries with advice from the Commission of Fine Arts. All of the new cemeteries had simple gates, crushed stone paths, with some stone curbing in place, a flagpole, and temporary wood headstones arranged more or less in regular rows. Each was surrounded by a mix of masonry walls and wire fencing, except Flanders Field which had complete brick perimeter walls and Brookwood which was part of an established cemetery. Staff quarters and reception rooms for visitors were built at every site. As the largest cemetery, Meuse-Argonne had the most extensive of these facilities, with overnight accommodations in the Visitor Building and two sets of quarters. Lieutenant Colonel W. O. Smith, who had been in charge of GRS activities in Europe since June 30, 1924, offered this summary of cemetery conditions:

The cemeteries as they stand are completed as far as lawns, planting, water-system, sewers, roads and walks, and proper living and office quarters are concerned. However, no monumental features of any kind have yet been built, except flagpoles at all cemeteries, and the pool at the Meuse-Argonne Cemetery, and the cemeteries are still for the greater part, surrounded by wire fences, and wooden crosses are still in place. Of course all three of these items are covered by the program of the Battle Monuments Commission.<sup>88</sup>

The ABMC would be taking over the task of additional improvements at the overseas cemeteries.

### Creation of the American Battle Monuments Commission

The Act creating the ABMC was signed into law by President Warren G. Harding on March 4, 1923. It transferred control of memorial construction and further improvements to the overseas cemeteries from the War Department to this largely civilian commission. The chair, secretary, and members of the commission were appointed on June 20th. General John J.

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<sup>85</sup> Letter, Martha Finley, YWCA Foreign Division Chairman to General Pershing (13 June 1924), Box 1343, Entry 1891, RG 92, NARA II.

<sup>86</sup> See related correspondence in Folders 230.74 (1925) and 231.3 (1924-25), Box 1343, Entry 1891, RG 92, NARA II.

<sup>87</sup> American Battle Monuments Commission. *Annual Report* (Washington, DC: GPO, 1925), 5.

<sup>88</sup> Memorandum - "Completion report on construction of permanent American military cemeteries in Europe," 7.

Pershing served as chair, with Major Xenophon H. Price of the Army Corps of Engineers appointed Secretary. Price would be the guiding administrative force of the ABMC throughout its building campaigns. Other commissioners included Senator David A. Reed of Pennsylvania, a World War I veteran, and Mrs. Frederic W. Bentley, a Gold Star mother.<sup>89</sup> As the first report of the ABMC noted:

These [American] cemeteries in themselves will ever remain as memorials to the sacrifices of those who fell. It was believed by Congress, however, that further beautification might be accomplished by the construction of memorial monuments and buildings in them....All other duties in connection with their development and maintenance still remain a function of the War Department, and the [American Battle Monuments] Commission is concerned only [emphasis original] with the erection of memorial monuments and buildings.<sup>90</sup>

Even though it was not funded until April 2, 1924, the ABMC started holding meetings in September 1923 since the members served without pay.

While the ABMC would officially take the lead on aesthetic issues, its enabling legislation maintained the role of the Commission of Fine Arts in reviewing and approving all plans. Charles Moore fully supported creation of the ABMC, with the caveat that CFA review continue. It is likely that Moore and his CFA colleagues favored removing development control from the War Department. CFA Commissioner James Greenleaf complained privately to Moore:

Instead of fundamental [sic.], and far reaching problems of design being handled in a broad spirit by those who are qualified, controlling factors and critical details are being settled offhand by officers inadequately if at all equipped [sic.], who are immersed in a maze of detail. Instead of working for the future in a fine way they are pushed by the pressure of the moment into the easiest way out. The result is peril, if not death to the work the Secretary of War asked our Commission to do some two years ago.<sup>91</sup>

While certainly Moore shared some of Greenleaf's frustration, he declined to criticize the War Department publically, instead releasing a report of his September 1923 inspection trip noting that "while the cemeteries are far from complete..., the progress of the work indicates clearly that the result will be highly satisfactory."<sup>92</sup> Shortly thereafter Moore was invited to explain the CFA's involvement to date and their intentions going forward at an early ABMC meeting. The

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<sup>89</sup> Typescript, List of ABMC Commissioners, (19 September 1923), Box 4, Entry 17, RG 66, NARA I.

<sup>90</sup> Typescript, "Annual Report - The American Battle Monuments Commission Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 1924," 5. Box 2, Entry 3 - Annual Reports of the Commission [hereafter Entry 3], RG 117, NARA II.

<sup>91</sup> Letter, Greenleaf to Moore, (13 June 1923), Box 4, Entry 17, RG 66, NARA I.

<sup>92</sup> Typescript, "Report by Mr. Charles Moore, Chairman of the Commission of Fine Arts, As to the Permanent American Cemeteries in Europe, After a Tour of Inspection July-September 1923," (27 September 1923), Box 4, Entry 17, RG 66, NARA I. Moore even went so far as to write "the Commission of Fine Arts has had from the beginning the cooperation of the Construction Division of the Office of the Quartermaster General, War Department, and the utmost harmony has prevailed." Moore also published articles explaining the plans and progress of the overseas cemeteries, such as "The American Cemeteries in Europe," *Daughters of the American Revolution Magazine* 57, no. 12 (December 1923): 728-734.

meeting report indicates that he was received cordially and the two groups pledged to work together amicably.<sup>93</sup>

Lieutenant Thomas North, Field Artillery, U.S. Army, was detailed to the ABMC in October 1923 and established a European office in Paris on June 1, 1924. A photographer charged with completing terrain photographs of the American battlefields traveled to Europe with North. Also in June ABMC commissioners traveled to Europe to inspect the American military cemeteries and battlefields there. Prior to the trip they visited important battlefields and military cemeteries in the United States. In Europe they conferred with officials from England, France, Belgium, and Italy and visited cemeteries and memorials created by these countries. After the inspection tour, the ABMC was blunter in its analysis of GRS efforts:

The impression gained in almost every cemetery is that the work has been done with a minimum expenditure of funds. This is in direct contrast to the impression gained from a British cemetery, where everything is of the best. It is one of the commission's duties to provide such further works of architecture and art in these cemeteries as may be necessary to improve their appearance.<sup>94</sup>

ABMC felt that the efforts of the War Department were basically satisfactory, with well-arranged and cared for cemeteries, but the existing architecture and design needed improvement. In particular ABMC deemed the caretaker's houses too plain and prominently situated. It was determined that each cemetery would receive a nonsectarian memorial chapel to serve as its main focal point and "add a religious touch."<sup>95</sup> The walls, flagpoles, and site plan (particularly the interior paths and plantings) would also be upgraded. ABMC cautioned that the permanent headstones should be installed as soon as possible, in order to begin repairing the inevitable damage to lawns and plantings from this work.

The question of permanent headstones was a lingering controversy that offered the newly formed agency a chance to assert its authority. With frustration mounting, one of the first tasks set before the ABMC and its partners was choosing a permanent headstone design. Although a slab headstone was traditional in military cemeteries, Pershing and his Commissioners favored retaining the cross-shape of the temporary wood markers. This position had the public support of groups such as the American Legion and Gold Star Mothers. As Pershing explained it, the top priority was maintaining the look of rows of white crosses in permanent form. However the Army, and many members of Congress, had doubts about the durability of a cross form. The resulting debate continued and ranged across sub-issues from the suitable form of grave marker for Jewish soldiers, choice of materials, and whether the stone would be imported from the United States.<sup>96</sup>

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<sup>93</sup> "Address of Mr. Charles Moore, Chairman, National Commission of Fine Arts, Before the American Battle Monuments Commission," (2 October 1923), Box 3, Entry 17, RG 66, NARA I.

<sup>94</sup> ABMC, *Annual Report 1925*, 17.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid.

<sup>96</sup> See HALS US-7, Flanders Field American Cemetery & Memorial for a detailed discussion of the debate over the form and materials of the overseas cemetery headstones.

ABMC's *Annual Report* for 1926 summarized the progress of the headstone issue, highlighting the extensive discussion, including Congressional hearings on both form and material. The preference for white stone was part of the requirements that the permanent stones maintain the look of white-painted temporary wood crosses. The War Department and Commission of Fine Arts continued to favor a traditional slab headstone like those in national cemeteries. The ABMC and "practically all of the ex-service and gold-star organizations were in favor of permanent headstones of the same general form as the temporary headstones in use in these cemeteries."<sup>97</sup> The ABMC view prevailed and all the World War I overseas cemeteries have Carrara marble Latin cross or Star of David headstones following designs by Paul Cret.<sup>98</sup>

### ABMC Architect Selection and Planning

As ABMC moved forward on a comprehensive and ambitious design program, it was clear that dedicated architectural expertise was needed. Correspondence shows that in early 1925, Senator Reed, Price, and Moore were making decisions regarding how to select architects and proceed with the work.<sup>99</sup> Moore had received suggestions from his CFA Commissioners in the proceeding weeks, with some discussion of creating a World's Fair type commission of prominent architects.<sup>100</sup> It was through this process that Moore put forward prominent architect Paul Cret to be consulting architect to the ABMC. They proposed to have him travel overseas during the summer of 1925 to evaluate the potential sites and make recommendations. Moore noted that for the best results Cret should be paid enough to devote a year or two to this work exclusively. Then "the memorials will be a credit to the Government of the United States and an inspiration to the countless persons who will visit them in future years."<sup>101</sup>

Cret was invited to attend his first meeting of the ABMC in February 1925. They proposed that he travel to Europe and make recommendations to the ABMC for a fee of \$50 per day plus all expenses (for any day he was engaged in ABMC work). Cret was already working on a Pennsylvania Memorial in France and it was suggested that upcoming travel costs could be split between the ABMC and that commission. ABMC declined to immediately appoint Cret as consulting architect, but asked that he examine potential sites, propose general schemes for memorials and chapels, and advise as to the best method of obtaining detailed plans. He was assured that "after this survey it is practically certain you will be asked to be the architect-advisor of the Commission on designs and construction."<sup>102</sup> Cret was also asked to prepare final designs

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<sup>97</sup> American Battle Monuments Commission. *Annual Report* (Washington, DC: GPO, 1926), 27.

<sup>98</sup> Correspondence from late 1925 and 1926 shows the last stages of the ongoing debate about permanent headstones. There was pressure to require American stone, or switch to a French marble in lieu of Carrara marble. Ultimately the price of Carrara marble was more reasonable than any of the white stone alternatives. See Box 152, Entry 13, RG 117, NARA II. The World War II overseas cemeteries use the same headstone design but usually Lasa marble, a whiter Italian stone.

<sup>99</sup> See Folder 231.24 - Architects, Draftsmen etc., Box 143, Entry 13, RG 117, NARA II.

<sup>100</sup> See correspondence between Moore, William Adams Delano, James Greenleaf, Louis Ayres, James E. Fraser (sculptor), and Milton B. Medary, Jr., (December 1924), Box 3, Entry 17, RG 66, NARA I. Medary was a partner in the Philadelphia firm of Zantzinger, Borie, & Medary. Cret worked with this firm on the Indianapolis Public Library and other projects. He put Cret at the top of his list of to lead the ABMC design campaign and the others concurred. See letter, Medary to Moore, (10 December 1924).

<sup>101</sup> Letter, Charles A. Moore to Senator David A. Reed, (17 January 1925), Box 143, Entry 13, RG 117, NARA II.

<sup>102</sup> Letter, Price to Cret, (26 February 1925), Box 143, Entry 13, RG 117, NARA II.

for Latin cross and Star of David headstones, giving him the opportunity to put the final touches on the hotly debated cemetery markers. The architect agreed to start work immediately on the headstones and start the larger project sometime in May.<sup>103</sup>

Cret quickly submitted several possible designs for the headstones. Price notified him that full-size plaster models of "schemes B and C" would be made for the next ABMC meeting. The first priority was making a decision on the cross, and then the Star of David, which would be used for only about 350 graves. Price noted that "the Commission is committed to the cruciform headstone in spite of the objections against it."<sup>104</sup> With Cret's assistance, the headstone designs were finalized in 1925. After some debate about the type of stone, these headstones were manufactured in Italy and installed during 1927-28.<sup>105</sup>

In preparation for his 1925 trip, ABMC sent Cret a number of maps, documents, and site survey information. Several key decisions were already in place, such as the determination to add a chapel to each cemetery. The number, design, and specific location of the large monuments and smaller markers were less certain. However the list sent to Cret does reflect a majority of what was eventually built.<sup>106</sup> Cret responded by summarizing his understanding of the assignment. He would visit the nineteen potential monument sites and eight cemeteries to gather data necessary for architects to prepare preliminary studies. As to design recommendations Cret cautioned Pershing and the ABMC:

...The magnitude of the work entrusted to your Commission will require the employment of several architects or sculptors, and it might be embarrassing to these men to be limited by a preference expressed by the Commission for a design prepared by someone else. My recommendation will therefore be in most cases very general, and the sketches accompanying these will be chiefly of plan arrangement most suitable for the site and in some cases of mass and silhouette desirable for a particular site. ...The recommendations...will be in fact more in the nature of a program for the artists selected to design the monuments and buildings.<sup>107</sup>

The ABMC also asked Cret to advise on French building practices and materials, and to recommend architects for the projects. He cautioned against having too many, noting that a team approach like a world's fair might be best. Cret planned to submit a list with his trip report and urged that delay between gathering data and appointing architects be minimized to expedite construction.

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<sup>103</sup> Letter, Cret to Price, (2 March 1925), Box 143, Entry 13, RG 117, NARA II.

<sup>104</sup> Letter, Price to Cret, (20 March 1925), Box 143, Entry 13, RG 117, NARA II. Pershing also sent a letter to Cret about his European trip and offered that he would be in Europe during the summer to facilitate the decision-making process. See Letter, Pershing to Cret, (23 March 1923), Box 143, Entry 13, RG 117, NARA II.

<sup>105</sup> See Colonel Frederick W. Van Duyne, "Erection of Permanent Headstones in the American Military Cemeteries in Europe," *The Quartermaster Review* (January-February 1930): 25-30. Copy in Box 152, Entry 13, RG 117, NARA II.

<sup>106</sup> Letter, Price to Cret, (3 April 1925), Box 143, Entry 13, RG 117, NARA II.

<sup>107</sup> Letter, Cret to Pershing, (11 April 1925), Box 143, Entry 13, RG 117, NARA II.



On further reflection, Cret submitted more detailed information on choosing architects shortly before leaving, in the hopes that this process could proceed simultaneously with his trip. Cret wrote to Pershing: "I believe that, on projects of this nature, which are to endure and ought to be the best possible expression of the gratitude of the country, the artists entrusted with the work ought not to be held to a too narrow limit of time."<sup>108</sup> He recommended preselecting a number of architects so work could begin on preliminary designs while his trip was in progress, and included a list for this purpose (see Appendix B). Many of the architects he named, in addition to himself, would go on to work for the ABMC -- Charles Platt, John Russell Pope, Egerton Swartwout, George Howe, Thomas Harlan Ellett, Harry Sternfeld. Other prominent names on the list -- McKim, Mead & White, Albert Kahn -- would not. The projects he felt could move forward were the monuments for Montfaucon, St. Mihiel, Château-Thierry, Nancy, Tours, Southampton, and Brest, as well as two of the "historical monuments" and two of the chapels. He promised rather optimistically, "these major projects underway and some clearer idea of the type desirable for the minor monuments and the chapels being arrived at, it will be an easy matter to have the whole work entrusted to your Commission under way during the winter."<sup>109</sup>

Just the day before Cret sailed from New York on May 16, 1925, Pershing responded with a number of decisions. In addition to approving Cret's plan, Pershing had secured a resolution from the ABMC members appointing Cret consulting architect upon return from his trip and allowing architects to be hired on his recommendation without further action by the Commission. Cret was to confer with Price regarding his payment as consulting architect. Price also traveled with Cret during the trip, giving him important influence over the architect's design decisions. Lieut. Thomas North of the Paris office prepared a preliminary survey for each site.<sup>110</sup>

The most complicated part of Cret's task was recommending sites for monuments and markers. Principles adopted by the ABMC guided his evaluation. Each one should be on ground fought over by Americans, easily accessible, and with commanding views both to the monument and from it. Cret added the criteria that any monument site should have good "architectural possibilities," noting that "many monuments lose the best of their appearance in inappropriate surrounding."<sup>111</sup> Regarding the design of large monuments, Cret expressed a preference for a naturally elevated site and a structure with clean, bold lines easily read from a distance. He cautioned that "an elaborate monument set in the middle of a broad, open space almost looks like a piece of furniture forgotten in the middle of a field, whatever may be the value of its design."<sup>112</sup> Carefully designed approach roads, retaining walls, steps, and planting were preferable to elaborate sculpture in creating a monumental and impressive effect.

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<sup>108</sup> Letter, Cret to Pershing, (10 May 1925), Box 143, Entry 13, RG 117, NARA II.

<sup>109</sup> Ibid. Cret also recommended three possible ways to handle payment - through a gentleman's agreement that the architect would be given the full job or something comparable by the ABMC, a fixed lump sum of \$500 to \$1,000 as in an invited competition, or 20% of the percentage fee as calculated by American Institute of Architects standards for the entire project.

<sup>110</sup> Letter, Pershing to Cret, (15 May 1925), Box 143, Entry 13, RG 117, NARA II. Pershing also reports that a monument in Rome was being added to the list. This idea was later abandoned.

<sup>111</sup> Typescript, Paul P. Cret, "The American Battle Monuments Commission Report on Survey in Europe May 15-August 21, 1925," (15 September 1925), 2; Box 2, Entry 3, RG 117, NARA II [hereafter Cret, "Report on Survey in Europe," (1925)].

<sup>112</sup> Cret, "Report on Survey in Europe," (1925), 5.

While much of Cret's time during the trip was occupied by considering multiple sites for each large monument, he was also tasked with examining sites for smaller monuments, referred to by the Commission as "historical" monuments. Initial guidance from ABMC suggested that one design be prepared and used in twelve or so locations, perhaps a hold-over from the Battle Monuments Board memorial concept of standardized markers. Cret cautioned against this approach, noting that the proposed locations varied so greatly that each historical monument needed to be a site-specific design. He recommended that the proposed text for each monument be determined as a design starting point.<sup>113</sup>

The third major aspect of Cret's trip involved visiting the eight American military cemeteries to choose a location for a memorial chapel and make general recommendations for improvements. GRS Chief Lieutenant Colonel William O. Smith reported to the Quartermaster General that Cret and Price were to embark on their tour of the GRS cemeteries on June 9, 1925. Smith was concerned that funds had been allotted for masonry walls around all the cemeteries but ABMC still needed to decide what would be built. He was also concerned about continuing funding for his Construction Division staff into the next fiscal year (starting July 1, 1925). Their salaries had been covered by an appropriation dated June 30, 1922 that was set to expire at the end of the current fiscal year. The staff included American architect and engineer Earl Harvey Lyall, French architect Charles L. Moginier, and civil engineer Eric D. Simpson, trained at the University of California. Smith mentions that Lyall designed all the houses built at the cemeteries, with assistance from Moginier. Smith urged that his staff be retained and allowed to continue the ongoing planting plans and do preliminary work for future projects, such as installing the permanent headstones and building walls.<sup>114</sup>

When Cret and Price arrived at Meuse-Argonne, they would have seen the results of the War Department efforts to date. Cret's report does not include photographs, but a series of contemporary Signal Corps photographs show the American cemeteries as he would have seen them. At Meuse-Argonne the large site looked rather bare, with young trees and plantings and a plain flagpole on a round base at the top of the hill behind the graves (**Figure 15**). The circular fountain was in place, with the road divided by a grassy median as specified in Gibbs' 1921 plan. This formal avenue was the most impressive feature of the site, with wide stone stairs at either side of the road and simple carved stone pylons at each entrance (**Figure 16**). In addition the wide lawn, or *tapis vert*, running north/south between the visitor building and the flagpole strongly established this second formal axis as a crucial site characteristic. The handsome group of three stucco buildings at the top of the north hill was connected by a simple wall which also shielded the service area to the rear from public view (**Figure 17**). The eight large grave sections were characterized by wood markers interspersed with trees, but their arrangement was otherwise consistent with what is there today.

Upon his return, Cret revisited the task of hiring architects for the various projects. In his report he reiterated his belief that minimizing the number of architects would greatly simplify

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<sup>113</sup> Cret, "Report on Survey in Europe," (1925), 28.

<sup>114</sup> Memorandum, Lieut. Col. William O. Smith to Quartermaster General, (8 June 1925), Box 153, Entry 13, RG 117, NARA II.

things. To this end he thought each firm should do two or three projects. He also began to make more specific recommendations about procedures for hiring associated landscape architects, sculptors, and other artists, and obtaining estimates. Cret firmly suggested that the lead architect for each project should be able submit his choice for landscape architect, etc. to the ABMC and be confident that his preference would prevail. Regarding estimates, Cret recommended that once preliminary designs were received, these should be submitted for estimates from contractors in the proposed location, with the ABMC Paris office coordinating this process. This work could proceed simultaneously with the design review, providing guidance at an early stage as to whether a design needed to be simplified or changed due to cost.<sup>115</sup>

The work done by Cret and others during the summer of 1925 helped the ABMC to refine its memorial plans. The French, especially, had shown little interest in building national memorials and it seemed increasingly inappropriate to have too many American monuments scattered across their countryside. ABMC reduced the number of monuments, but proposed creating more large ones than the original two proposed by the Battle Monuments Board. A key reason for this change in scale was the waning landscape of the war:

The large memorials of the project should be sufficiently imposing so that people will make special trips to see them. This is considered quite important, as the battle-field region of France will probably not in itself attract tourists to any great extent after the evidences of the war have disappeared.<sup>116</sup>

It was also now clear that work should proceed first on the memorial chapels because acquiring sites for large monuments would take some time. The overseas cemeteries were already in the possession of the U.S. Government and ready for further development.

Selecting architects for the various jobs had not been done while Cret was away, but proceeded in the fall of 1925. The CFA had begun soliciting input on Cret's initial list over the summer. Most of their correspondents questioned the inclusion of Albert Kahn, deeming his skill to be mainly in commercial and industrial architecture. Architect Louis Ayres, of York & Sawyer, New York, and an outgoing CFA commissioner, made the observation that "I should not say that it would prove essential for all the monuments to tend toward the Classic, as they will probably be isolated and may be in surroundings where Gothic or Romanesque or some such other type would be more appropriate for the setting."<sup>117</sup> This comment reveals mainstream architectural practice at the time, which regarded various historic styles as tools to be employed by the architect as necessary. Ayres suggested Cram & Ferguson be added to the list for this reason, but it would be his firm which designed a Romanesque-inspired Chapel for Meuse-Argonne. Moore compiled the comments and suggestions he received into a letter to Price. Only Kahn was rejected from Cret's list, but eleven names were added including Ralph Adams Cram, a specialist in Gothic Revival, York & Sawyer, Cass Gilbert, and Bernard Maybeck.<sup>118</sup>

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<sup>115</sup> Cret, "Report on Survey in Europe," (1925), 79-80.

<sup>116</sup> ABMC, *Annual Report 1926*, 13. See HALS No. US-7, Flanders Field American & Cemetery for more details regarding this decision and the role of the American Institute of Architect.

<sup>117</sup> Letter, Louis Ayres to Charles Moore, (9 July 1925), Box 143, Entry 13, RG 117, NARA II.

<sup>118</sup> Letter, Moore to Price, (11 September 1925), Box 143, Entry 13, RG 117, NARA II.

Cret gently objected to the expanded list, mainly because he felt having a more limited number of architects each working on two or three projects for the ABMC would be most efficient, particularly in terms of travel costs. He requested that the West Coast architects added by the CFA (Bliss & Faville, Maybeck) be removed due to the difficulties of attending meetings in Washington, DC. Cret offered a tentative list of project assignments with most of the firms noted for more than one project, although several projects were still unassigned. John Russell Pope was only listed for the largest monument at Montfaucon. Cret included himself as the architect of the Château-Thierry monument.<sup>119</sup>

An ABMC report described the final method of hiring architects as "obtain[ing] designs by direct contract with different architects or firms whose reputation is such that it is practically certain they will produce a design satisfactory to the commission."<sup>120</sup> It noted that the architects preferred this method and both open and limited competitions had been considered but rejected. As Cret recommended, each architect would submit multiple preliminary sketches for their project, with larger monuments and chapels going to established firms and small memorials providing opportunities for a handful of younger architects. If an approved design was not developed within six months, the contract would terminate and the architect would be paid \$250 plus travel expenses. In late October invitations had been sent to eight architects/firms, but the locations of the large monuments were still in question pending final decisions by General Pershing. Cret had determined the location of the chapels within the cemeteries during his trip. Cret and Price also developed proposed cost allotments for the chapels scaled according to the size and importance of the cemetery.<sup>121</sup> The architects who received invitations were Cret, Ralph Adams Cram, Cass Gilbert, York & Sawyer, Cross & Cross, Arthur Loomis Harmon, John Russell Pope, and Egerton Swartwout. With the exception of Philadelphia-based Cret, and Boston-based Cram, all were located in New York City. Most of these firms were the ones selected for the larger monuments and chapels.

The final list of ABMC architects and their projects would continue to change over the next year. By April 1926, Cass Gilbert declined the St. Mihiel monument commission, possibly because of disagreement with the contract procedures. Cret proposed a number of names for replacements, again mostly New York architects including Thomas Hastings of Carrère and Hastings, Raymond Hood, and H. Van Buren Magonigle, as well as Holabird and Roche of Chicago.<sup>122</sup> In May, the plan was for Cret to design the large monument at Château-Thierry and smaller monuments at Juvigny and South of Soissons.<sup>123</sup> Shortly thereafter, ABMC's Committee on Memorials proposed eliminating a number of the smaller memorials, including Juvigny and South of Soissons, in order to concentrate on difficult site negotiations for the larger memorials.<sup>124</sup>

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<sup>119</sup> Letter, Cret to Price, (1 October 1925), Box 143, Entry 13, RG 117, NARA II. He proposed that Howard Van Doren Shaw design the Flanders Field Chapel, as well as the naval monument in Brest, France.

<sup>120</sup> ABMC, *Annual Report 1926*, 23.

<sup>121</sup> Letter, Cret to Price, (2 November 1925), Box 143, Entry 13, RG 117, NARA II.

<sup>122</sup> Letter, Cret to Price, (14 April 1926), Box 143, Entry 13, RG 117, NARA II.

<sup>123</sup> Typescript, (16 April 1926), Box 153, Entry 13, RG 117, NARA II. Cret would end up designing the Gibraltar Naval Memorial and Bellicourt Memorial in addition to Flanders Field and Château-Thierry.

<sup>124</sup> Extract of Letter, Price to North, (10 May 1926), Box 153, Entry 13, RG 117, NARA II.

### ABMC Cemetery Improvements

While plans moved forward for the ABMC's building program, the existing cemeteries represented the public face of American war commemoration overseas. As acknowledged by the Graves Registration Service in their completion report at the end of 1925, only basic construction had been completed, no monumental or memorial projects. Frederick Hill, a New York attorney and former officer with General Pershing's staff, wrote to Price with his impressions of four unspecified cemeteries following a trip to France in 1926. Hill wrote "they were neat, clean and well located but the buildings that have been erected and the other construction work connected therewith, including the planting and landscape treatment leaves something to be desired."<sup>125</sup> He was particularly dismissive of the buildings which he felt "do not reflect too much credit on our architectural or artistic powers," and criticized the plantings as "amateurish." Hill was quick to say that this was not intended as a criticism of the Army, which surely did the best it could with limited appropriations. He was greatly impressed by the quality of the British cemeteries and urged that ABMC take over development of the American ones. National pride was at stake, as Hill continued:

I think everyone who has seen those cemeteries will agree that they look cheap - from the seal of the U.S. crudely carved on the portals, to the good, stout, ugly steel flagpole in the rear. The workmanship is obviously of the cheapest possible character, and no American visiting France can point to it with pride.

Clearly the ABMC officials held similar views, but avoided stating them quite so bluntly. Hill articulates the desire to remove all aesthetic decisions from the War Department and develop a more visually sophisticated American presence overseas.

Cret made a visit to Europe for ABMC in July 1926, as did General Pershing. A briefing memo prepared by Price for Pershing enumerated a number of issues around acquiring sites for monuments. It was hoped that Pershing could resolve them by exerting some personal pressure. He was also scheduled to do a general inspection of the cemeteries.<sup>126</sup> ABMC was helping to plan tours and prepare cornerstone-laying ceremonies to coordinate with the American Legion convention in France during 1927.<sup>127</sup> The European Office was also providing site surveys to the various architects, when specified in their contracts.<sup>128</sup>

The various firms and their projects were published in the ABMC *Annual Report* for fiscal year 1926. Clearly the ABMC intended to emphasize a new approach to the projects formerly under the direction of the Graves Registration Service and the Battle Monuments

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<sup>125</sup> Letter, Frederick Trevor Hill to Price, (6 May 1926), Box 157, Entry 13, RG 117, NARA II.

<sup>126</sup> Memorandum - "Status of sites and work in Europe which ought to be done during the summer of 1926," Price to Pershing, (10 June 1926), Box 153, Entry 13, RG 117, NARA II. This memo includes detailed information about negotiations for Montfaucon and correspondence with the Secretary of State about acquiring monument sites.

<sup>127</sup> See Box 132, Entry 10 - Monthly Reports of Paris Office [hereafter Entry 10], RG 117, NARA II.

<sup>128</sup> Letter, Price to North, (21 July 1926), Box 132, Entry 10, RG 117, NARA II. In 1926 Lieutenant Thomas North was in charge of the ABMC European Office in Paris. North's main duties included working on site acquisitions for memorials and serving as a local contact for Commission members and architects starting design to chapels and memorials.

Board. The largest amount, \$300,000, went to the Chapel at Meuse-Argonne Cemetery. The purpose of these nondenominational memorial chapels was described as "to provide attractive buildings which will add to the beauty of the cemeteries and give a sheltered place in each where those so inclined can go for meditation and prayer."<sup>129</sup> Tablets listing the names of the missing were to be included in each design; the larger ones would have a room devoted to maps and information about the American military operations in the area. In late April 1926 Cret sent a number of photographs and plans of the existing conditions at Meuse-Argonne to York & Sawyer for their use in designing the Chapel. He offered this advice: "It is not intended to have a large structure to hold services. The Chapel is more the crowning feature of the Cemetery, at the same time a place where the visitors to the Cemetery may pray....I am entirely at your disposal either before you start on sketches or after you have some ideas, for any consultations you may wish."<sup>130</sup> The firm would proceed with preparing preliminary designs that summer.

ABMC Commissioner Robert Woodside reported on his impressions of Meuse-Argonne Cemetery in August 1926. He praised it as "one of our most beautiful cemeteries" and noted that the site for the Chapel was "excellent." Woodside was concerned about the appearance of the temporary service buildings still located behind the visitors building. He recommended that permanent buildings for tools and equipment be designed to blend with the existing buildings.<sup>131</sup> In the fall of 1926, Price informed Lieutenant North that designs had come in for most of the chapels. He noted that ABMC efforts for the near future would be "devoted toward pushing the chapels and the monuments at Montsec and Château-Thierry."<sup>132</sup>

York & Sawyer sent two possible schemes for the Meuse-Argonne Chapel to Cret in August 1926 for comment – one Classical and one Romanesque. At this point Cret favored the more Classical one as keeping with the feel of the cemetery. However both schemes used a similar form of a "central chapel flanked by two porticos with terminal motifs at each end" which Cret pronounced "entirely on the right track."<sup>133</sup> Three preliminary designs for the Meuse-Argonne Chapel were reviewed by the ABMC and the CFA in October 1926. Initially the CFA preferred one of the Classical sketches while the ABMC was evenly divided between a Classical and Romanesque approach. However both bodies felt a Romanesque approach could be appropriate for this location.<sup>134</sup> When Price directed the architects to take these comments and prepare a final design for approval, they responded with confusion at the ambiguity of this feedback. Cret sent a letter to principal architect Louis Ayres trying to clarify the matter, saying "I cannot blame you for not understanding the results of the meetings of the various Commissions. I do not myself! The only thing certain is that the general scheme of the central

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<sup>129</sup> ABMC, *Annual Report 1926*, 11.

<sup>130</sup> Letter, Cret to York & Sawyer, (29 April 1926), Box 38, Entry 8 – World War I Cemetery Files [hereafter Entry 8], RG 117, NARA II.

<sup>131</sup> Memorandum, Robert G. Woodside to Chair, ABMC Commissioners, (23 August 1926), Box 2, Entry 3, RG 117, NARA II.

<sup>132</sup> Letter, Price to North, (14 September 1926), Box 132, Entry 10, RG 117, NARA II. Price commented that the designs submitted by Cram & Ferguson for Aisne-Marne and Oise-Aisne cemeteries "won't do at all." See also Letter, Price to North, (2 November 1926) in the same location. He notes that architect Ellet was having trouble getting his designs approved.

<sup>133</sup> Letter, Cret to Sawyer, (30 August 1926), Box 38, Entry 8, RG 117, NARA II.

<sup>134</sup> See correspondence in Box 38, Entry 8, RG 117, NARA II. Clearly identified copies of these sketches have not been located.

Chapel flanked by porticos is satisfactory to both Commissions.”<sup>135</sup> Cret recommended that a rendering, rather than a blueprint, be prepared of the two Classical and one Romanesque designs. He also expressed his preference that the porticos (or loggias), be open to the rear to allow interesting views.

York & Sawyer submitted revised Classical and Romanesque schemes considered by the ABMC at its December 21, 1926 meeting and by the CFA in early January. This time the ABMC was evenly split between a Classical and Romanesque approach while the CFA and Cret all strongly preferred the Romanesque. Moore praised “Scheme B” as suggesting “a chapel very appropriate for the location and one having mystery and charm.”<sup>136</sup> The rendering of this scheme closely resembles the Meuse-Argonne Chapel as built, although the loggias are open to the rear and the entrance appears to be divided by a large cross form (**Figure 18**). Price wrote immediately to Pershing, suggesting that he re-poll the ABMC by mail to see if they would approve the Romanesque design to avoid delay. He noted that “all of our architecture advisers are quite enthusiastic about the Romanesque design.”<sup>137</sup> Pershing jotted his reply on Price’s letter: “I was the one most strongly in favor of the classic, but it is not so different after all, and I am willing to vote Romanesque.” By January 14<sup>th</sup>, Price was able to notify York & Sawyer that their Romanesque design for the Chapel was approved by both the ABMC and CFA.

Cret visited the six cemeteries in France during May 1927 and submitted his report to Pershing and the ABMC. A number of points are worth noting regarding the overall administration and planning for the cemeteries. Jacques Gréber, an architect and landscape architect from Paris, accompanied Cret on this tour. He was appointed local representative for four of the cemeteries in accordance with Cret's recommendation - Aisne-Marne, Oise-Aisne, Meuse-Argonne, and Suresnes.<sup>138</sup> Cret noted that since architects had been chosen for the chapels, they each should prepare an improvement plan for their respective cemeteries for approval by ABMC. Cret’s contributions would be general recommendations since it was more appropriate for the architect of the chapel to develop a cohesive vision for the site. Cret also urged that paths and roads, curbing, walls, sheds, and general planting plans be considered "work of architecture and art" and be under the jurisdiction of the ABMC and its hired architects. He praised the efforts of the Graves Registration Service:

In general, I was gratified with the improvement, since my last visit, in the appearance of the cemeteries, which is largely due to the vigilant care of the Graves Registration Service, seconded by the personal interest of the groundskeepers. Some handicaps due to the original planting, could not, in some cases, be overcome; the lawns, however, have been improved everywhere.<sup>139</sup>

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<sup>135</sup> Letter, Cret to Ayres, (30 October 1926), Box 38, Entry 8, RG 117, NARA II.

<sup>136</sup> Letter, Moore to Price, (8 January 1927), Box 38, Entry 8, RG 117, NARA II.

<sup>137</sup> Letter, Price to Pershing, (6 January 1927), Box 38, Entry 8, RG 117, NARA II.

<sup>138</sup> Letter, Gréber to Cret, (29 January 1929), Box 5, Series I - Correspondence, MS Collection 295 - Paul P. Cret Papers, The Athenaeum of Philadelphia, Philadelphia, PA. Other correspondence in this box indicates that Gréber was also working with Cret on the landscape plan for the Rodin Museum in Philadelphia and the Detroit Institute of Art during the mid- to late-1920s.

<sup>139</sup> Memorandum, Cret to Pershing, (13 July 1927), Box 2, Entry 3, RG 117, NARA II.

Cret blamed the handicaps of the original planting on lowest bidder practices resulting in poor quality work, with the exception of Suresnes which enjoyed the services of a reputable firm. He recommended that the architects' estimates should include new plantings, moving existing plantings, improving soil, and repairing damage from Chapel construction.

Cret mentioned the Commission of Fine Arts' original intention to omit all flowers from overseas cemeteries, and to instead favor the use of trees and shrubs like at Arlington National Cemetery. However, by that time local groundskeepers already had introduced flower beds at many of the cemeteries and "the visitors appreciate this initiative, feeling that flowers are the mark of reverent care to a grave."<sup>140</sup> Therefore, if this practice was to continue, Cret suggested that flower beds should be properly planned and incorporated into ABMC designs. This change brought the American overseas cemeteries more in line with British Commonwealth War Graves Commission World War I cemeteries, which featured flowers planted in the grave areas.<sup>141</sup> Cret made a number of minor recommendations for improving the plantings and lawns at Meuse-Argonne, but overall was impressed with the condition of this cemetery. At Meuse-Argonne, extensive flower beds were part of its earliest iteration as a temporary cemetery. Although flowers, particularly roses and accent plantings of annuals, were later included in the landscape plan, the final result was a more professional and holistic design.

The ABMC cemeteries received many American visitors during the summer of 1927 due to the American Legion convention in France. These visitors had access to a guidebook to American military sites prepared by the ABMC and were on-site during installation of permanent headstones at several cemeteries. Renderings of the proposed chapels were included in the guidebook and displayed in many locations. It was estimated that 5,000 Legionnaires visited Meuse-Argonne while a much larger number (approximately 12,000) visited Aisne-Marne American Cemetery near Belleau Wood.<sup>142</sup> In total Meuse-Argonne had 11, 207 visitors during fiscal year 1927, the great majority of these in the spring and summer.<sup>143</sup>

York & Sawyer submitted working drawings for the Meuse-Argonne Chapel to ABMC on October 27, 1927. Elevations and plans for the Romanesque Revival Chapel are remarkably consistent with how that building still appears today (**Figures 19 and 20**). The long loggias are closed at the rear and feature taller end pavilions. The entire Chapel sits on an elevated platform and features a dramatic carved tympanum over the entrance. The Chapel sanctuary space is one room, with a domed ceiling and circular apse at the rear (**Figure 21**). York & Sawyer described their chapel design for Meuse-Argonne:

In order to form a fitting end to the central avenue and to, in some measure, make a building of sufficient length to compose with this extended layout, a form has been adopted of a central building or chapel proper with extended arcades open to

<sup>140</sup> Memorandum, Cret to Pershing, (13 July 1927), Box 2, Entry 3, RG 117, NARA II.

<sup>141</sup> ABMC, *Annual Report 1925*, 23.

<sup>142</sup> Memorandum - Report on Visits to Cemeteries and Battle Fields, September 1927, D. John Markey to Pershing, (31 October 1927), Box 2, Entry 3, RG 117, NARA II. See ABMC, *A Guide to the American Battle Fields in Europe*.

<sup>143</sup> Quartermaster Corps - GRS, "Quarterly Report of the Meuse-Argonne National Cemetery," (30 June 1927), Box 1343, Entry 1891, RG 92, NARA II.



the front and closed at the back. These arcades on either side have on the back wall a series of tablets with inscriptions and the names of the missing. The style is a rather free adaptation of the Romanesque and the material is Lafayette stone, warm buff French limestone, for the upper part and Vaurion stone for terrace walls. The central feature, or chapel proper, is a gabled and buttressed building, its principal feature being an imposing arched entrance doorway with sculptured tympanum.<sup>144</sup>

On December 1<sup>st</sup>, Price informed the architects that they were almost ready to ask for bids on the contracts for construction of the Chapel.<sup>145</sup> A number of questions regarding the design of the Meuse-Argonne Chapel were discussed extensively during 1928 and early 1929, each with the result of determining that York & Sawyer's approved design was preferred. Pershing raised questions regarding the height of the Chapel, relative to the view from the base of the hill. After reconsideration by all parties, it was determined that the height as designed was correct. In addition the idea of introducing more color to the interior, though mosaics or other wall and ceiling treatment was explored and then rejected. Adding "world war motifs" to the carvings and bronze work, as at the chapels designed by Cram & Ferguson for Oise-Aisne and Aisne-Marne, was also considered and abandoned.<sup>146</sup>

In April 1928, Price, Pershing, Gréber, and Col. Van Duyne, current chief officer of the GRS, met at Meuse-Argonne to make a number of decisions regarding the upcoming redevelopment. The new perimeter wall would be five feet high, of rough stone with cut stone coping. Gréber, with assistance from Van Duyne regarding existing plantings, was to complete a planting plan for the cemetery. He was particularly charged with studying the view of the cemetery from the Visitor Building and the grouping of the trees on that north slope. Gréber's planting plan was to include everything from trees to flower beds, as well as any special instructions for size and trimming of certain plantings. He was also asked to study the use of "Italian steps" or flagstone paths from the road to the visitor building and the conversion of the median lawns into a sloped "bowling green" with curved edges. The sight lines to and from the Chapel were also to be considered carefully in creating the overall planting and landscape plan. A number of architectural details were to be determined as well, such as the urns to be placed on the steps, a design for the entrances, and a more elaborate treatment of the circular fountain. The assembled group also discussed and approved the general details of the Chapel.<sup>147</sup> Price followed up by directing York & Sawyer to proceed with plans to have models of the various carved details of the Chapel made for approval.<sup>148</sup>

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<sup>144</sup> Typescript, York & Sawyer, "Memorial Chapel at the Meuse Argonne American Military Cemetery, Romagne, France," (16 November 1927), Box 38, Entry 8, RG 117, NARA II.

<sup>145</sup> Letter, Price to York & Sawyer, (1 December 1927), Box 38, Entry 8, RG 117, NARA II.

<sup>146</sup> See correspondence in Box 38, Entry 8, RG 117, NARA II or additional discussion of these design conversations in the report HALS US-2-A, Meuse-Argonne American Cemetery and Memorial, Chapel.

<sup>147</sup> Memorandum, Price to ABMC Washington Office, (17 April 1928), Box 37, Entry 8, RG 117, NARA II.

<sup>148</sup> Letter, Price to York & Sawyer, (24 April 1928), Box 38, Entry 8, RG 117, NARA II. The New York modelmakers Ricci and Zari were commissioned to do a number of models of the Meuse-Argonne Chapel. Photographs or examples of these models have not been located. The various allegorical and decorative carvings do not appear on the drawings but instead were designed and presented by the architects via this model making process.

Additional correspondence in early June 1928 between Ayres, Grèber, and Price further clarifies Ayres' vision for the Meuse-Argonne site redesign. The tentative new planting scheme draft already worked out by Grèber and informally approved would mean "radical changes and additions to the present planting to produce a much simpler but stronger massing of foliage about the main divisions of the general plan."<sup>149</sup> The wide, monumental stair and formal tapis vert on Visitor Building side of the road were to be eliminated in favor of less formal lawn and two small stairs, in order to redirect emphasis to the Chapel side of the road. Ayres also specified using two new flagpoles or other features to create focal points for the secondary axes between the grave sections.

### Construction at Meuse-Argonne

Additional War Department construction was underway at Meuse-Argonne as ABMC prepared to start their improvements. The permanent Carrara marble headstones were fabricated in Italy and installed at the cemeteries during 1927-29 under the direction of GRS engineers. The work at Meuse-Argonne was underway by September 1927 and continued until September 1929. Installation of over 14,000 markers at Meuse-Argonne was a huge undertaking.<sup>150</sup> A concrete footer with dowel pins was constructed for each row of headstones, with careful attention to the elevations. Once the concrete footers were in place, workers set the headstones, with the goal of installing 1,000 per month. After the stones were in place, it was necessary to regrade the grave areas and in some cases remove trees and other plantings. This GRS work was complete in all the cemeteries by the end of 1929, coinciding with the construction of chapels and redesign of site plans handled by the ABMC Paris office.<sup>151</sup>

The War Department also coordinated with ABMC on construction of two permanent service buildings proposed for Meuse-Argonne. These buildings were designed to match the other administrative structures on the north hill and approved in late 1928.<sup>152</sup> It was determined that they would be placed behind the visitor building and face each other to create a service yard beyond the kitchen gardens for the quarters. Excavation for these structures was underway in early 1929 while the erection of marble markers was starting to near completion. Construction of these "warehouses" and a new well were still in process by June 1930.<sup>153</sup>

While the GRS staff at Meuse-Argonne continued to maintain the grounds and existing features, as well as completing their work on the permanent headstones, new well and pump

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<sup>149</sup> Letter, Ayres to Price, (5 June 1928), Box 43, Entry 41 – Reports of the European Regional Office – Construction and Maintenance of World War I Cemeteries [hereafter Entry 41], RG 117, NARA II.

<sup>150</sup> Quartermaster Corps - GRS, "Quarterly Report of the Meuse-Argonne National Cemetery," (30 September 1927 through 30 September 1929), Box 1343, Entry 1891, RG 92, NARA II.

<sup>151</sup> This office was staffed by officers from the Quartermaster Corps and the Corps of Engineers, with support personnel of civilian, foreign-national clerks. Price took over management of this office around this time and remained in that position until December 1934.

<sup>152</sup> Memorandum, Col. F. W. Van Duyne to Quartermaster General, (12 November 1928), Box 37, Entry 8, RG 117, NARA II. Although the service buildings were a War Department project, Cret and York & Sawyer were asked to comment on the plans and location. See correspondence in Folder Romagne 0 to End, Box 37, Entry 8, RG 117, NARA II.

<sup>153</sup> Quartermaster Corps - GRS, "Quarterly Report of the Meuse-Argonne National Cemetery," (31 March 1929 and 30 June 1930), Box 1343, Entry 1891, RG 92, NARA II.

house, and new service buildings and yard, ABMC began work on the construction of the Chapel. The contractor was Maurice Noyer of Paris, who was awarded a separate contract for the site redesign work. GRS reports from this period indicate a certain tension between maintaining site conditions for visitors and the disruption of a major construction project. They were starting to remove some of the remaining temporary barracks and sheds on site in preparation for visits by the Gold Star Mothers and Widows. After Congress passed a bill in March 1929 funding the Gold Star pilgrimages, Price wrote to York & Sawyer (York had died a few months earlier but they carried on with the same name):

It is obvious that, if possible to prevent it, these mothers and widows should not be conducted to a cemetery which is in a torn up condition.... The work on the chapel at Romagne is moving along in good shape but progress has not been made on the additional architectural improvements for this cemetery. In view of this fact it is requested that your office take the necessary steps so that the additional work in it can be completed before May 1, 1930 or as soon thereafter as practicable.”<sup>154</sup>

Construction on the Chapel began in 1929 and construction photographs show that it was well underway by the end of the year. Photographs from November 21<sup>st</sup> indicate that the foundation work was largely complete, with walls built up to the columns in some areas of the loggia (**Figure 22**). By December 18<sup>th</sup> the east loggia had formwork in place for the vaulting (**Figure 23**).

Prior to Price sharing the news of the Gold Star pilgrimages, he reminded the architects that during Ayres' summer 1928 visit they decided to wait to design additional landscape features for Meuse-Argonne until Gréber had completed his planting plan. In late January 1929 Price informed the architects that these plans were nearly complete and they should prepare to commence work on these designs.<sup>155</sup> York & Sawyer submitted their design for the entrance pylons in April 1929. Initially Price was not pleased. While he found the drawings “satisfactory” he added “it is the opinion of this office, however, that these pylons would be more in keeping with the chapel and would, in fact, look better if the eagles on top were omitted.”<sup>156</sup> It is likely that Price found the pylons to be more Neoclassical in appearance than Medieval Revival. The architects were asked to study this question and submit working drawings without delay. However a few weeks later, Cret had intervened in favor of the eagles and Price directed York & Sawyer to include them in the working drawings for the entrance pylons.<sup>157</sup> York & Sawyer's drawings for the new entrance pylons dated August 15, 1929 show the approved plans and elevations for these structures (**Figure 24**). The connecting section of wall is shown, as well as the large carved eagles perched on the roof of each pylon. The foundations for these pylons were under construction by November.<sup>158</sup> Planting plans from Gréber dated October-December 1929 show him incorporating the new features designed by

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<sup>154</sup> Letter, Price to York & Sawyer, (28 March 1929), Box 38, Entry 8, RG 117, NARA II.

<sup>155</sup> Letter, Price to York & Sawyer, (26 January 1929), Box 38, Entry 8, RG 117, NARA II.

<sup>156</sup> Letter, Price to York & Sawyer, (1 July 1929), Box 38, Entry 8, RG 117, NARA II.

<sup>157</sup> Letter, Price to York & Sawyer, (31 July 1929), Box 38, Entry 8, RG 117, NARA II.

<sup>158</sup> See photographs in 117-CON-15, Still Picture Branch, NARA II.

York & Sawyer including the new entrance pylons and redesigned area around the circular fountain (**Figure 25**).<sup>159</sup>

As work on the Chapel progressed through early 1930, ABMC moved forward with contracts for construction of the stone perimeter walls and planting the linden tree allées around the grave sections. This work was to be expedited for the pilgrimage visitors and additional planting done later. As Price wrote to Pershing in February 1930:

I was greatly pleased with the progress at Romagne and the chapel is up to a level near the top of the arches. They are placing stone at the entrance pylons. We are asking for bids today for the work of planting trees around the grave blocks and removing those trees in the grave areas. This contract is being made separately from the general landscape contract in order to have this part of the work done in time for the visit of the mothers.<sup>160</sup>

York & Sawyer's preliminary plans for the area around the circular fountain were approved in November 1929 and their designs for the flagpoles underway in early 1930. Price had instructed the architects in January 1930 that "it is the Commission's desire that the flag poles for the Romagne cemetery harmonize with the Chapel and be monumental in character."<sup>161</sup> Various requests for a new, higher feature at the center of the fountain were in the end abandoned in favor of keeping its original shape and bronze lily pad center spout.<sup>162</sup>

Construction progress photographs of Meuse-Argonne from April 9, 1930 show both the Chapel and the entrance pylons with walls erected but still an early stage of construction (**Figure 26**). A summary of ABMC work prepared in April 1930 contains useful descriptions of the status of each project (See **Appendix C** for a complete list of projects and architects). Flanders Field and Brookwood cemeteries were complete by spring 1930. The work at Oise-Aisne and Suresnes cemeteries was well-underway, as was the Château-Thierry Monument and the smaller monument at Kemmel. The other monuments were generally in very early stages of construction, as were the chapels and improvements at Aisne-Marne, Somme, St. Mihiel, and Meuse-Argonne cemeteries.<sup>163</sup> In spite of the strenuous effort, the participants in the 1930 Gold Star Mothers pilgrimage would see a number of ongoing construction projects.

In September 1930, Price reported to General Pershing that "the Chapel at Romagne has its final form and the work of finishing the exterior and putting on the roof is now going on. The entrances will be done by the middle of next month and about 500 meters of wall is completed."<sup>164</sup> A photograph from October 16<sup>th</sup> confirms this status (**Figure 27**). Tiles are

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<sup>159</sup> See additional drawings in ABMC files, for example, Jacques Gréber, "Meuse-Argonne American Military Cemetery – Plan De La Porte De Romagne Plantation, Dessin No. 21D" and "Plan de L'Hostess House et de Ses Abords, Dessin No. 16A3" (Decembre 1929),.

<sup>160</sup> Letter, Price to Pershing, (5 February 1930), Box 38, Entry 8, RG 117, NARA II.

<sup>161</sup> Letter, Price to York & Sawyer, (3 January 1930), Box 38, Entry 8, RG 117, NARA II.

<sup>162</sup> Correspondence, Box 38, Entry 8, RG 117, NARA II.

<sup>163</sup> See photographs with Progress Report, (10 April 1930), Box 153, Entry 13, RG 117, NARA II. Many of the chapels and large monuments were underway, but only foundations constructed.

<sup>164</sup> Letter, Price to Pershing, Box 153, Entry 13, RG 117, NARA II.

stacked on the roof, ready for installation. The full form of the Chapel is there, with scaffolding in place for carving and other exterior finish work. The decoration on the loggia capitals was carved in place during the winter and spring of 1931. A photograph from February 11, 1931 shows the workmen standing on platforms at the blank column capitals of the east loggia (**Figure 28**). Another from the same day shows the nearly completed carvings on the west loggia (**Figure 29**). The full scale models of the decoration produced under the supervision of York & Sawyer rest on the scaffold. A workman, partially visible at the second column, appears to refer to the nearby model as he carves the outer section of the capital. The panels at the rear wall of the loggia do not yet contain the names of the missing but the carved bas relief decoration at the top has been completed.<sup>165</sup>

In the early 1930s, full completion of the Chapel and other Meuse-Argonne improvements was slowly achieved. Price's report to Pershing about a visit in late November 1931 noted that the Meuse-Argonne Chapel was complete except for the doors, window glass, and names of the missing. He promised that "all essential features of the cemetery will be done by next summer."<sup>166</sup> Several elements that now appear to be integral with the original design were proposed and executed during 1931-32, such as the directional arrows and names imbedded in the floor of the Chapel loggias, the carved map of the Meuse-Argonne Offensive, and the panel commemorating the missing servicemen who died in the Supply Services in the loggias.<sup>167</sup> The GRS staff on site reported on March 31, 1932 that the ABMC was doing "considerable replanting" and the Chapel was "approaching completion."<sup>168</sup> A rendering of a "Revised General Plan" from this period shows the cumulative result of the site plan changes designed by York & Sawyer, including clearing the grave areas of trees, revising the central stair and fountain area, and deemphasizing the pedestrian circulation to the Visitor Building (**Figure 30**). The essential shield-like form created by the drives and the strong cross axes established by Gibbs for the War Department were retained and enhanced by these revisions.

### Meuse-Argonne in the 1930s and World War II

In fiscal year 1933, as the ABMC improvements reached completion, 21,800 visitors made their way to Meuse-Argonne, with over 12,000 of these in the spring of 1933.<sup>169</sup> The original desire to have a high-profile dedication ceremony was put aside, due to the worsening economic conditions in the United States and Europe, including the French default on war debt owed to the U.S.. As the Great Depression worsened in the early 1930s, ABMC budgets became tighter. Administrators complained that indiscriminate cuts caused disproportionate hardship for an already efficiently run office.

Even before all the memorials were completed, Price wrote to Pershing, "the question of the ultimate care of our memorials is still an important one as we have added proof each day that

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<sup>165</sup> Letter, Price to Ayres, (5 June 1931), Box 38, Entry 8, RG 117, NARA II. A copy of the notes from Cret's May 23<sup>rd</sup> inspection was attached to this letter. The items on his long punch list were all relatively minor.

<sup>166</sup> Letter, Price to Pershing, (12 December 1931), Box 153, Entry 13, RG 117, NARA II.

<sup>167</sup> Typescript, "Notes Made at Inspection at Romagne by Major Price on December 2, 1931," Box 38, Entry 8, RG 117, NARA II.

<sup>168</sup> GRS, Quarterly Report, (31 March 1932), Box 1343, Entry 1891, RG 92, NARA II.

<sup>169</sup> GRS Quarterly Report, (30 June 1933), Box 1343, Entry 1891, RG 92, NARA II.

the present organization of the GRS will not be able to do it to the Commission's satisfaction."<sup>170</sup> Price continued to lobby for an ABMC takeover of the GRS duties, complaining about the "worthless personnel" and expressing concern that the large amounts of planting being done would not be cared for properly.<sup>171</sup> Executive Order No. 6614 (February 26, 1934) and Executive Order No. 6690 (April 25, 1934) transferred full administrative control of the overseas military cemeteries from the War Department to the ABMC as of May 21, 1934. This change was the culmination of ABMC leadership on overseas commemoration for nearly a decade. The cemeteries and monuments would now be maintained and supervised by ABMC personnel, usually a combination of former servicemen as superintendents and local nationals adding their expertise as gardeners and groundskeepers. The sites were not officially dedicated yet, but construction was generally complete.

An extensive article written by General Pershing describing the work of the ABMC, with color photographs, was published in *National Geographic Magazine* that year. Pershing emphasized both the effectiveness of individually designed memorials and the results of a comprehensive program that assigned importance appropriately. His article discussed the battles being commemorated and their strategic importance and accomplishments, as befitting the leader of the AEF. Pershing noted that "eight memorial chapels, of singular beauty and dignity, now stand in the eight American military cemeteries....The chapels...vary widely in design. Each is a gem of architectural beauty and an enduring shrine consecrated to the memory of those who fell in battle."<sup>172</sup> Of Meuse-Argonne he wrote: "The chapel, which crowns the crest of the ridge, is the largest of the American cemetery memorials and is a beautiful example of modern Romanesque architecture....The chapel, landscaping, gateways, and the reception house on the ridge opposite the grave blocks have all been executed with the completeness that befits America's largest military cemetery in France."<sup>173</sup>

Even as the improvements to Meuse-Argonne were considered complete, the appearance of the plantings and buildings was constantly being evaluated and revised under the critical eyes of both Price and Cret. Correspondence throughout the 1930s shows that Cret was regularly making recommendations to improve the appearance of the buildings or landscape, and address maintenance problems that presented themselves. In 1933 the inscribed names of the missing at Meuse-Argonne Chapel were painted, a change that was inspired by a similar project for the Aisne-Marne Chapel.<sup>174</sup> In 1935 the plantings in the massifs were evaluated and trees replaced where necessary.<sup>175</sup> Near the end of that year it was proposed to add a bronze wreath to the top of the altar in the Chapel. In spite of York & Sawyer's initial reservations, the wreath of bronze leaves was fashioned by the firm Susse Frères of Paris and affixed to the top of the altar. Cret wrote after a July 1936 inspection visit:

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<sup>170</sup> Letter, Price to Pershing, (12 March 1931), Box 153, Entry 13, RG 117, NARA II.

<sup>171</sup> Letter, Price to Pershing, (15 January 1932), Box 153, Entry 13, RG 117, NARA II.

<sup>172</sup> John J. Pershing, "Our National War Memorials in Europe," *National Geographic Magazine* 55, no. 1 (January 1934): 1.

<sup>173</sup> Ibid., 29.

<sup>174</sup> Extract of Letter, Price to Pershing, (21 April 1933), Box 38, Entry 8, RG 117, NARA II.

<sup>175</sup> See correspondence in Box 37, Entry 8, RG 117, NARA II.

The improvement was particularly noticeable after two years of absence. The grave area is now framed effectively by the trees and the desired results are now quite apparent. The chapel on the crest of the hill is extended by the masses of planting on the right and left, and does not look too short for the long ridge line. In the valley, the plane trees show to good advantage the impressive entrances. The pool and fountain are more and more appreciated by visitors.<sup>176</sup>

Also in 1936 the nursery at Meuse-Argonne was expanded to supply plants such as roses, boxwood, and “expensive tree replacements” to other ABMC sites.<sup>177</sup> In 1938 Cret proposed removing the wood doors at the rear of the Chapel loggias adjacent to the sanctuary, due to issues with warping and maintenance. This work was done promptly and these two openings were filled with matching stone. Other changes in the late 1930s included demolishing the old pump house and building a small concrete block tool house on its site, as well as replacing wood slat benches with eight stone benches. When proposing the new benches, Cret wrote that he was gratified to see the increased number of visitors and estimated that one Sunday he saw nearly 3,000 people.<sup>178</sup>

Also in 1930s, ABMC officials were concerned about commercial encroachment on the cemetery in the form of two cafés erected just outside the west entrance in Romagne-sous-Montfaucon. Officials had sought to shut down these businesses for several years; they felt they were an inappropriate intrusion on the dignity of the cemetery. Efforts to buy the land and evict these businesses in 1935-36 did not meet with cooperation from local authorities. It was not until 1938 that the café owners were convinced to sell their land so it could be incorporated into the ABMC holdings. The remaining wood “ramshackle café” was promptly torn down and this land converted to a landscaped approach to the west entrance of the cemetery.<sup>179</sup>

The formal dedication of Meuse-Argonne American Cemetery & Memorial took place on Memorial Day, May 30, 1937. The ABMC cemeteries and memorials were all officially dedicated that year. One handsome ABMC brochure with photographs of all the memorials and cemeteries declared:

The memorials and cemeteries shown in this folder were established by the United States of America as shrines to the memory of her forces who served in Europe during the World War. They are dedicated, in grateful remembrance, to the achievements of all who served and to the sacrifices of all who died.<sup>180</sup>

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<sup>176</sup> Typescript, Extract from Report of Dr. Cret – Visit to Romagne, July 8, 1936, Box 39, Entry 8, RG 117, NARA II.

<sup>177</sup> For both bronze wreath and nursery, see correspondence in Box 39, Entry 8, RG 117, NARA II.

<sup>178</sup> See correspondence in Box 39, Entry 8, RG 117, NARA II, especially Extract from Letter, Cret to Pershing, (10 August 1938) and Extract from Report of the Consulting Architect to the Chairman, (31 August 1938), Box 153, Entry 13, RG 117, NARA II.

<sup>179</sup> See correspondence in Box 37, Entry 8, RG 117, NARA II.

<sup>180</sup> ABMC, “American War Memorials 1917-1918,” (c. 1937), Lot 5395 (G) - WWI Memorials in Belgium, France, and England, Prints and Photographs Division, Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

Brochures and other publications promoted the cemeteries and memorials, and provided information to visitors. The guidebook released by ABMC in 1927 was updated and expanded in 1938. The new version included photographs of the completed chapels and monuments.<sup>181</sup>

As another European conflict threatened to erupt into World War II, Meuse-Argonne Cemetery again found itself in a war zone. The ABMC European Office had approved evacuation plans in September 1938, in case fast moving events dictated that local superintendents could not reach the Paris office for instructions. It turned out that the superintendents at Flanders Field, Meuse-Argonne, Somme, and Oise-Aisne each had to act according to his own judgment. At Meuse-Argonne the Germans began bombing nearby towns on May 10, 1940, including bombing a convoy moving through Romagne-sous-Montfaucon on May 13<sup>th</sup>. The next day, Superintendent Adolph Kaess began evacuating his personnel and their families, traveling west and eventually arriving at Aisne-Marne Cemetery. A report noted that “no personnel left in charge because all civilian inhabitants in area evacuated and all sources of food and supplies in the vicinity closed.”<sup>182</sup> When Kaess returned in July, he found that all road and railroad bridges in the vicinity had been destroyed. Approximately 50 headstones had been damaged by shellfire, and the Chapel, Visitor Building, staff quarters, and service buildings had all been broken into by German troops, but nothing was damaged or taken. He was able to reemploy some laborers and start putting the cemetery back in order, although electricity was not available due to damage to the regional plant.<sup>183</sup>

ABMC officials were forced to leave France entirely in May 1941. Colonel T. Bentley Mott, head of the ABMC European office since January 1941, oversaw the excavation of all American personnel.<sup>184</sup> Care of the ABMC sites in France was transferred to the French Office of the Veterans' Secretary General, Military Graves Service. Three of Mott's non-American employees (two stenographers and an engineer, Pierre Rod) went to work for the French military cemetery authority. Mott attempted to visit and inspect the American cemeteries several times from June 1942 to March 1944, but was restricted from traveling and at one point detained by the Gestapo.<sup>185</sup>

As the Allies regained control of the relevant French and Belgian territory in 1944, Mott and ABMC personnel returned to assess conditions. The arrangements for maintenance of the cemeteries had worked quite well, with basic maintenance continued throughout the war. Some of the ABMC memorials did not fare as well. The Naval Monument at Brest was completely destroyed and the Montsec Memorial sustained significant damage from American artillery while the Germans used it for an observation post.

Colonel Price was making his own inspection of ABMC sites by October 1944, in an official role as President of the War Department Observers Board. He made four

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<sup>181</sup> See ABMC, *American Armies and Battlefields in Europe*, 1938.

<sup>182</sup> Memorandum, “Evacuation of Personnel – Romagne Cemetery,” (16 May 1940), enclosed with Extract of Letter, (22 May 1940), Box 39, Entry 8, RG 117, NARA II.

<sup>183</sup> Extract from Letter, Major Holle to Pershing, (24 August 1940), Box 39, Entry 8, RG 117, NARA II.

<sup>184</sup> Memorandum, Mott to Acting Secretary, ABMC, (8 August 1941), Box 133, Entry 10, RG 117, NARA II.

<sup>185</sup> Letter, Mott to Pershing, (5 May 1944), Box 133, Entry 10, RG 117, NARA II.



recommendations designed to protect the ABMC World War I sites and to apply that experience to commemoration of the still ongoing conflict. First and foremost, Price cautioned against temporary burials in the World War I cemeteries: "These cemeteries were not designed to hold more. The temporary burials destroy their appearance and such burials are not necessary."<sup>186</sup> Second, the ABMC needed to have a landscaping expert visit each site to supervise thinning overgrown plantings. He also recommended that "the bullet marks on the Château-Thierry monument and Belleau chapel [Aisne-Marne Cemetery] be left as objects of interest."<sup>187</sup> His final, and most ambitious, recommendation was that as soon as the current war with Germany ended, a study commence for a memorial project in Europe. Price noted that "it should be in keeping with the old project. ...An early study should be made so that another flood of private memorials, with all their attendant political and diplomatic problems will be eliminated."<sup>188</sup>

### Meuse-Argonne Post-World War II

In October 1944 after seeing the reports that most of the ABMC sites remained in good condition, General Dwight D. Eisenhower sent his congratulations to Pershing in a widely publicized letter.<sup>189</sup> At the end of 1946, ABMC began attending to some of the deferred maintenance on its structures. Proposed projects at Meuse-Argonne included repairing the leaking roofs on the Chapel loggias, stone repairs to the entrance walls and pylons, renewed maintenance of the headstones and lawns, and extensive repairs to the various terraces and steps.<sup>190</sup> Also in the late 1940s the precise clipping of the linden allées was restored, to include a flat top and sides, and an arch over the pathways where the trees met.<sup>191</sup>

Tourists and local visitors returned to Meuse-Argonne, sometimes behaving in ways that dismayed Superintendent Kaess and other ABMC officials. Apparently the circular fountain had become a popular spot for wading and fishing, as it contained ornamental goldfish. One letter on the topic noted that "when people have readjusted themselves better to post-war conditions you will have less trouble with them."<sup>192</sup> Officials were reluctant to remove the attractive feature and considered placing a coil of barbed wire in the water or removing the fish. Misbehaving visitors at the nearby Montfaucon Monument brought a directive in July 1949 that it would only be open when the caretaker was present.<sup>193</sup>

The ABMC Consulting Architect was now John Harbeson, Cret's architectural partner and former student. Harbeson was the lead partner in Cret's successor firm, Harbeson, Hough, Livingston, & Larson. Cret had continued to serve, with some brief interruptions, until his death

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<sup>186</sup> Memorandum, Price to Commanding General, Army Service Forces, (7 October 1944), Box 133, Entry 10, RG 117, NARA II.

<sup>187</sup> Ibid.

<sup>188</sup> Ibid.

<sup>189</sup> Letter, Eisenhower to Pershing, (11 October 1944), Box 133, Entry 10, RG 117, NARA II.

<sup>190</sup> See correspondence in Box 39, Entry 8, RG 117, NARA II, especially Memorandum, Col. Walter Krueger Jr. to Secretary, ABMC (26 February 1947).

<sup>191</sup> Typescript, "Notes by General North," (20 September 1947), Box 39, Entry 8, RG 117, NARA II.

<sup>192</sup> Letter, North to European Office, (9 October 1947), Box 39, Entry 8, RG 117, NARA II.

<sup>193</sup> Memorandum, North to Kaess, (25 July 1949), Box 39, Entry 8, RG 117, NARA II.

in 1945.<sup>194</sup> However, his level of activity had been diminished by poor health and the war in the proceeding few years.<sup>195</sup> Shortly after Cret's death, Grace Haupt, Executive Secretary for the Art Jury in Philadelphia, wrote to H. P. Caemmerer, Secretary for the Commission of Fine Arts, "His wide knowledge and wise counsel will be especially missed as we approach the great post-war improvement program, as well as his graciousness and delightful sense of humor."<sup>196</sup>

ABMC's mission expanded greatly with the addition of World War II cemeteries. Historian Jennifer Keene has argued that the World War I generation's greatest accomplishment was the creation of the modern Army for World War II.<sup>197</sup> This argument certainly holds true for the ABMC as it applied its former experience to the new demands placed upon it. With Harbeson's guidance, the ABMC again oversaw construction of multiple overseas American military cemeteries and memorials. The Commission of Fine Arts reviewed all projects. Lists were compiled of former ABMC architects or their successor firms, as well as newly prominent postwar actors such as Skidmore, Owings, & Merrill, Harrison & Abramovitz, and Edward Durrell Stone.<sup>198</sup> This process began in 1947-48, but the World War II burials were still under the control of the Graves Registration Command in 1949.<sup>199</sup> The ABMC would add fifteen World War II cemeteries to its inventory - five in France, two in Belgium, three in Italy, one each in England, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Tunisia, and the Philippines. Often larger than the World War I cemeteries, the World War II ABMC cemeteries followed the same formula of regular rows of headstones and a memorial chapel as a focal point for a formally designed landscape. In this instance the ABMC was involved in the site planning from the start, as opposed to working with the cemetery sites already established by the War Department.<sup>200</sup> The ABMC also built nine memorials of various sizes overseas in both the European and Pacific theaters and in the United States, although this program differed from the World War I version, as it stretched out for decades after the end of World War II. ABMC's World War II building program reflects shifting architectural trends of the period toward International Style Modernism with unornamented surfaces and geometric forms.

The World War I sites continued to be carefully maintained and administered by ABMC personnel. Generally site superintendents were former U.S. servicemen with French or Belgian wives. Maintenance and other staff were hired as LNs - local nationals. Changes to Meuse-

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<sup>194</sup> When Cret's position as ABMC Consulting Architect temporarily lapsed in 1932, Price wrote to him: "The mark of your genius is on all of our projects." See Letter, Price to Cret, (9 November 1932), Box 8, Series I - Correspondence, MS Collection 295 - Paul P. Cret Papers, The Athenaeum of Philadelphia, Philadelphia, PA.

<sup>195</sup> Cret suffered from hearing loss and the loss of his voice in later years, retiring from teaching in 1937. His obituaries often highlighted his work for the ABMC. See "Dr. Paul Cret Dies; A Noted Architect: Designer of War Memorials in France Was Responsible for Many Structures Here," *New York Times*, 10 September 1945.

<sup>196</sup> Letter, Haupt to Caemmerer, n.d., Box 20, Entry 4 - General Files, 1910-54 [hereafter Entry 4], RG 66, NARA I.

<sup>197</sup> Jennifer Keene, *Doughboys, the Great War, and the Remaking of America* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001), 7.

<sup>198</sup> Lists of Architects, (15 May 1947), Box 143, Entry 13, RG 117, NARA II. Part of the list labeled "Able Architects not on the Lists" included avant garde icons such as Frank Lloyd Wright, Walter Gropius, Mies van der Rohe, Richard Neutra, and William Lescaze.

<sup>199</sup> Correspondence, Box 133, Entry 10, RG 117, NARA II.

<sup>200</sup> Letter, Brigadier General Thomas North to John Harbeson, (1 March 1948), Box 143, Entry 13, RG 117, NARA II. In this letter North is also asking for Harbeson's opinion regarding a greater role for an American landscape architect in the overall planning.

Argonne were quite minimal, consisting mainly of routine maintenance. In 1965-66 a number of changes were made to the interior of the Visitor Building including installing the current marble fireplace surround, adding ramps to the rear, and changing the floor plan in the rear ell. The interior of the Visitor Building was again scheduled for a major renovation in fall 2015-2016. To coincide with the centennial of World War I, new exhibit space in the Meuse-Argonne Visitor Building will commemorate American involvement in that generation-defining conflict.

## PART II. PHYSICAL INFORMATION

A. Landscape Character and Description Summary: Meuse-Argonne American Cemetery & Memorial is an 130.5 acre cemetery and formal garden landscape arranged on two hillsides facing a public road running through a central valley (**Figures 31 and 32**). This acreage includes outlying service areas; 92.5 acres are within the stone perimeter walls. The center of the site adheres to a strict geometry with a green mall, or *tapis vert*, forming a north/south axis through the site. The mall is lined with allées of clipped linden trees, as are the eight grave sections. The Chapel with long loggias sits at the top of the hill behind the graves, while a Visitor Building and Staff Quarters rest on the opposite hilltop. The formal geometry of the landscape extends to the east/west axis along the road, which features rows of beech trees (*Fagus sylvatica*) and a wide grassy median with a circular fountain at the center. Handsome walls and stone pylons flank the entrances at each end. At the center of the roadway stone stairs and terraces lead to the grave sections and a rectangular fountain is located at the hillside below the Visitor Building. Massifs of mature trees and shrubs are clustered around the outer edges of the site and frame the lawn in front of the Visitor Building, creating a backdrop for the more formally composed inner core of the site. Historic service buildings are located behind the Staff Quarters, with modern service buildings outside the original stone perimeter wall further to the north.

### B. Character Defining Features:

#### 1. Natural features:

- a. Topography: The topography of Meuse-Argonne Cemetery includes a valley running east/west between hills rising to the north and south. This valley runs near the middle of the site and includes a local through road. This rolling countryside is consistent with the surrounding farmland and nearby towns of the Romagne-sous-Montfaucon and Cunel.
- b. Vegetation: See Appendix D for a list of specific plant species. The vegetation at Meuse-Argonne consists of carefully maintained plantings ranging from large-scale and naturalistic massifs of trees and shrubs to small formal flower beds. The character of the vegetation still closely adheres to the early planting plans developed by Jacques Gréber in consultation with Paul Cret, York & Sawyer, and ABMC officials

(Figures 33 and 34).<sup>201</sup> Massifs of trees and low undergrowth around the outer edge of the site create a forest-like buffer between the perimeter wall and the formal landscape of the grave sections.

Most striking are the allées of mature trees lining the major cross axes of Meuse-Argonne. Clipped and pollarded linden trees (*Tilia*) line the mall dividing the grave sections and leading to the Chapel. Additional allées of lindens outline the grave sections, forming strong secondary axes around these eight areas. Common beech (*Fagus sylvatica*), left to grow in naturalistic shapes, line the roadway through the valley.

Closer to the Visitor Building and Staff Quarters, around the lower terraces, and at the Chapel, trees and large shrubs are clipped and pruned into formal geometric shapes. These areas also include beds of roses, perennials, and annuals. At the rectangular fountain at the base of the north hill there are four English boxwoods (*Buxus sempervirens*) pruned into a ball shape as indicated on an early planting plan and roses are planted in the beds near the retaining wall. There are planting beds with shrubs on the outer side of the knee walls here and above the retaining wall behind the rectangular fountain. Large planting beds also wrap around each side of the south stair and terraces. These beds include shrubs such as lilacs, privet, boxwood and barberry maintained in a mix of clipped and natural shapes. Water lilies (*Nymphaea sp.*) grow in the circular fountain, which is surrounded by roses and other flowering plants.

Vegetation associated with the formal landscape of Meuse-Argonne continues for a short distance outside the entrance gates, in addition to tree and shrub beds by each pylon inside the perimeter wall. There is a clipped arborvitae hedge outside the west gate to Romagne, in addition to boxwood. A plant nursery growing stock for Meuse-Argonne and other ABMC cemeteries was established in this vicinity in the 1930s but has now been discontinued.

The remnants of a privet hedge (*Ligustrum ovalifolium*) and fruit trees from a kitchen garden are located between the Visitors Building and the service yard to the rear.

- c. Water: Natural water sources at Meuse-Argonne are the spring running through the west side of the property, now contained by culverts and feeding into a retention pond on ABMC property outside the west gate on the edge of Romagne-sous-Montfaucon. A reservoir and well is located at the southeast corner of the site on the hill next to the Chapel. Placed here by the War Department early in the development of the cemetery, this

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<sup>201</sup> Additional detail sheets of the areas around the Chapel, entrances, and circular fountain are available in this set. See Meuse-Argonne Drawings P10, P20 and P20bis in the ABMC drawing files.

covered reservoir structure helps redistribute water collected below. Discovery of additional springs during construction of the Chapel motivated additional redevelopment of the water system in 1930.<sup>202</sup>

2. Spatial organization:

- a. Land patterns: Meuse-Argonne is characterized by formally delineated land patterns, with the public through road D123 dividing the site into two main areas. The area to the south of the road contains the grave sections, Chapel and associated paths and roadways. These areas are public with the exception of the covered reservoir and small tool shed east of the Chapel. The north side of the road includes the Visitor Building and flanking Staff Quarters, with the service buildings and yard to the rear. While diagonal driveways lead the public to the Visitor Building for access to the staff and restroom facilities, this side of the site includes staff areas with restricted public access.
- b. Circulation: The circulation at Meuse-Argonne includes the Departmental road D123 dividing the site, automobile drives providing access to the Chapel or the Visitor Building area, and axial pedestrian pathways leading from the road through the grave sections to the Chapel, and along the road between the entrances. Public road D123 was an existing right-of-way when the temporary Romagne cemetery was created in 1919. The two-lane road traveled across the cemetery site, providing the most direct access between the nearby towns of Cunel on the east and Romagne-sous-Montfaucon on the southwest. When the cemetery was developed by the War Department, the road was straightened and widened through the site. Each lane became a wide, tree-lined avenue with a grassy median in between. A circular fountain placed in the middle also created a traffic circle. The median at the center of the road D123 is treated as a tray-like lawn with curved ends. This road has a macadam surface and granite curbing.

Wide access points with gentle curves transition from the through road to the automobile drives. Each hillside has a macadam-paved drive that leads up to the main public structure – either the Chapel or Visitor Building – and back down to rejoin the road. The drives have Belgian block gutters and granite curbing. On the Chapel side, the Belgian blocks appear to be recent replacements. At the Visitor Building the automobile drive splits to create an additional service drive that loops around the service buildings and staff quarters.

The pedestrian circulation pattern at Meuse-Argonne includes a paved pair of pathways traveling from the rectangular fountain on the north side of

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<sup>202</sup> See Letter, Price to Pershing, (13 February 1930), Box 38, Entry 8, RG 117, NARA II.

the road, across to the south stair and terrace, and up to the Chapel on either side of the mall lawn. At the front of the Chapel both paths split, with the macadam surface curving to the side around a planting bed or transitioning into a low turned stair incorporated into a stone terrace. The terrace across from the Chapel at the drive is accessed from the paths at the linden allée by two shallow steps to a square platform. The limestone pavers are not turned here. Another set of three shallow steps are at the inner edge of platform, requiring pedestrians to turn 45 degrees. The pavers on the platform at the drive are also three feet, two inches square, turned in a checkerboard pattern.

Another set of paved walks lines the road and ends shortly outside the entrance gate pylons at either end. The pathways at road level and leading up the hill to the Chapel are macadam with granite edging. A pair of curving flagstone pedestrian paths from the north terrace steps up the lawn to the Visitor Building have been removed, although their former location is still clear. These informal paths replaced a pair of axial gravel pathways installed by the War Department. In addition to the formal paved pedestrian paths, the allées of linden trees and clipped lawn around the rows of headstones encourage pedestrian movement along these axes and between the headstones.

- c. Views and vistas: The formal axis through the center of Meuse-Argonne Cemetery creates a dramatic vista between the Chapel and Visitor Building grouping facing each other on opposite hillsides. This vista is enhanced by the clipped linden allée between the base of the south hill and the Chapel. The linden allées around the grave sections also create a series of secondary vistas looking toward the flagpoles also at the top of the hill. The open lawn in front of the Visitor Building also helps frame this part of the view while the informally-placed trees on either side help screen the service drives and yard. While the site is largely characterized by internal vistas created through lawn, tree, and building placement, the high ground at the Chapel also commands sweeping views of the farmland to the south from the ends of the loggias. This aspect of the Chapel siting is incorporated into the design with directional arrows embedded in the loggia floor locating battle landmarks. Another key formal vista is along the road and grassy median between the entrance gate pylons.
- d. Water: Built water features at Meuse-Argonne include utilitarian ones managing natural water sources and two important decorative fountains positioned on the main site axis. The reservoir east of the Chapel and the culverts and retention pond on the west side of the site were built to manage the natural water flow through the site, particularly the culvert

containing the spring.<sup>203</sup> The culvert has several concrete sections starting at the massif between the west drive and the perimeter wall. The culvert continues to the west and channels the water under the perimeter wall and then the road into the retention pond.

The most prominent decorative water feature is the circular fountain at the center of the road. This fountain dates to the War Department development of the cemetery and was designed by George Gibbs, Jr. in 1922.<sup>204</sup> It consists of a wide low circular basin with a flower bed and paving around the outer edge. The water lily motif water spout at the center is original to the fountain. ABMC improvements retained the fountain as-built.

York & Sawyer redesigned the area around the center of the road to include a long rectangular fountain in front of the retaining wall at the north hill below the Visitor Building. Water flows into the fountain through the mouths of four high relief lion heads projecting from the retaining wall. Four decorative stone urns rest on the top of the retaining wall. This shallow fountain was also flanked by planting beds and filled with water lilies.

- e. Buildings and structures: See historical report HALS No. US-2-A for detailed descriptions of the Chapel and HALS No. US-2-B for the Visitor Building and Staff Quarters.
  - i. Gatehouses/Entrance Pylons – There are a pair of tall gatehouses/entrance pylons flanking the road at the east (Cunel) and west (Romagne-sous-Montfaucon) sides of the cemetery. These robust Neoclassical structures were designed by York & Sawyer to replace the simple stone pylons originally placed by the War Department in these locations. Each pylon is one story tall, with a nearly square footprint and shallow pitched stepped roof. The pylons rest on grade, with a slightly projecting course of stone approximately 18 inches high forming a base. The walls are smoothly dressed limestone laid in regular courses of varied width (the local stone variety is called Euville Corquillière).<sup>205</sup> There is a datestone placed at grade at the inner façade of one pylon at each entrance (south elevation of northeast pylon and north elevation of

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<sup>203</sup> The original well, reservoir and pump system were installed by the War Department in 1924 to supplement a rudimentary spring fed system. A new well was drilled in 1930 to meet increased water needs. See Memorandum, Col. F.W. Van Duyne to Chief, GRS in Europe, (10 November 1926), and Memorandum, Col. Richard T. Ellis to Quartermaster General, (10 December 1929), Box 1343, Entry 1891, RG 92, NARA II.

<sup>204</sup> George Gibbs, Jr., AGRS Plan No. 13-R, "Meuse-Argonne American Cemetery Preliminary Plan for Steps and Pool," (28 March 1922, revised 18 April 1922), RG117 – American Battle Monuments Commission – World War I Cemeteries and Monuments, Architectural and Cartographic Branch, NARA II.

<sup>205</sup> Letter, Price to Cret, (2 December 1929), Box 38, Entry 8, NARA II.

southwest pylon). It reads: "AD 1932 American Battle Monuments Commission York & Sawyer- Architects."

The walls include a thick belt course that projects one inch at approximately the middle of each pylon. The open upper section has half-circle arched openings springing from the belt course on all four facades. The arches have plain voissors, a thick bead, and a flat relieving arch. A wide, flat cornice at the top of each pylon is supported by thick curved dentils. The roof steps up in three levels to a stylized eagle sculpture on the roof. The large eagles face inward across the road and were carved in place from Euville Marbrier limestone.<sup>206</sup>

The pylons are not enclosed but do include an interior space. The pylons are entered at grade and have three rectangular doorways. These openings are located on the west and east elevations and at the outer side for each pylon. The openings do not have doors. Each stone opening is framed by a thick bead which turns at the foundation stone on the bottom sides of the opening. Each doorway is set into a five inch deep recess. There is a molding carved into the stone straight across at the top of each entrance.

Each opening has matching bas relief ornamentation above of a wreath of poppies with a ribbon at the bottom. The edges of the ribbon curve out horizontally. Below each wreath is a bas relief of a winged hourglass flanked by vertical palm fronds. The poppies were a popular symbol of remembrance for the Great War, while the hour glass represents the passage of time or mortality, and palm fronds were often used to symbolize victory.

The door openings and bas reliefs are set into a shallow recess framed by stylized pilasters that are continuous with the wall surface on the outer edge. The carved allegorical motifs in the pilaster capitals repeat at each opening. The left capital has a reclining female figure in Classical dress with an exposed breast, indicating her allegorical representation of Victory or Liberty. She is putting a branch of what appears to be laurel or olive leaves in a three-legged Classical vessel or brazier for burning an offering. The vessel continues around the corner. Another branch is in her other hand. A wreath of leaves is around her head. On the right is a male figure reclining with a World War I helmet and Classical drapery. There is an olive tree at the inner edge that continues around the corner.

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<sup>206</sup> Letter, Price to Cret, (2 December 1929), Box 38, Entry 8, NARA II.



The inside floor is paved with limestone squares and contains a stone bench. The limestone walls are the same here as the exterior. The ceiling is open to the groin vault under the roof. There are single engaged Gothic columns in each corner. The inner end of the arches has a flat band. There are no visible gutters.

There is a small lawn at the inner edge of each pylon along the road. There are new tan interlocking brick paths outside each pylon, with a section of gray stone at the pylon openings. These paths curve out to where D123 narrows again. There is gray slate curbing. A tall limestone wall is attached at the outer corner of each gate. The walls have the same regular coursing with a variety of widths as the pylons and are topped with a flat and slightly projecting coping course. The coping is Euville Marbrier limestone.<sup>207</sup> The words “MEUSE-ARGONNE AMERICAN CEMETERY” are carved in the next stone course. This carving is executed in a medieval-looking serif font painted in oxblood red. The wall has a pier at the end where it connects to the perimeter wall. There are low clipped boxwoods along the high wall that continue to the end of the path and turn at the end. The path continues as macadam on the outer sides.

- ii. North Terrace and Stairs – The rectangular fountain on the north side of the road is incorporated into the hardscaping and garden beds in this area. This feature was designed by York & Sawyer at the request of ABMC. The retaining wall behind the fountain pool continues across the bottom of the hillside to a pair of stairways flanked by low knee walls. The wall is topped by a flat coping course and recesses back about eight inches on either side of the fountain. The projecting section behind the fountain has an additional coping course on top and four stone urns placed at the corners and framing the view up the lawn to the Visitor Building.

Each stair has eight wide, shallow steps with a thick limestone edge that matches the low knee walls. The inner side of the east stair knee wall is carved with “AD 1932 AMERICAN BATTLE MONUMENTS COMMISSION YORK & SAWYER – ARCHITECTS. This inscription is carved in the same Medieval Revival serif font as the walls at the entrance pylons and the Chapel. The tread of each step is formed by four rectangular panels of exposed pebble aggregated carefully laid in alternating diagonal patterns. These stairs used to connect to curving flagstone paths leading up the lawn to the Visitor Building. These paths have been removed.

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<sup>207</sup> Letter, Price to Cret, (2 December 1929), Box 38, Entry 8, NARA II.

Sections of lawn with low shaped shrubs are located on either side of the fountain, with stone curbs at the front and beds of roses to the rear against the retaining wall. More densely planted beds of shaped shrubs and perennials are located across the top of the retaining wall at the bottom of the hill.

This ensemble also includes a wide paved terrace between the base of the hill and the road. The paving material here is new interlocking tan brick with wavy sides, with courses of red bricks forming five rectangles. Four stone benches are located around this terrace for the convenience of visitors.

The paving around the circular fountain is also redone with the same tan brick. This area also features four tall shaped yew bushes placed in pairs, again to frame the view up the two tapis vert on the hills. Sections of lawn and planting beds with roses are interspersed with the yews on each side of the circle.

- iii. South Terrace and Stair – The stairs leading to the grave sections at the bottom of the south hillside were redesigned and expanded by York & Sawyer for ABMC. The terrace on the south side of the road is paved with macadam at road level, with granite curbs. Two benches are placed here. There are four limestone steps up to the first stair landing, which stretches across the entire structure. The landing is paved with slate blocks 3 feet, 4 inches by 16 inches. outlining 7 feet, 3 inch by 4 feet, 3 inch rectangles filled with a large pebble aggregate, randomly placed. These rectangles are placed twelve across and three deep, except where the back row is interrupted by the next flight of stairs in the center.

This second flight of limestone stairs is eleven steps high and flares out at the bottom. The intermediate landing is paved with two rows of large limestone squares edged with large limestone rectangles. The next flight travels thirteen limestone steps to a metal drainage grate that forms a transition to the macadam platform here. This macadam continues as the paving material for the two paths leading to the Chapel.

The top of the stair is flanked by two large platforms on top of the retaining walls projecting on either side of the main stair. Each platform is surrounded by a low wall which sits above a thick carved molding around the three outer edges of the platform. Limestone urns, like those at the wall behind the rectangular fountain, are placed on the wall at the four corners of each platform. The urns are approximately 2 feet high and are

seasonally planted with geraniums as specified in the 1938 planting plan. The surface here is paved with light gray granite blocks 16 by 8 inches. These are in regular courses and look like recent replacements. A stone bench is located at each platform.

- iv. Flagpoles and terraces: The ABMC redesign of Meuse-Argonne included removing the War Department flagpole at the center of the south hill behind the grave sections and replacing it with a pair of new flagpoles. These flagpoles were installed to either side of the Chapel, close to the south side of the drive along the hilltop. The flagpoles were placed on axis with the center aisle of each group of four grave sections, adding a focal point to these secondary vistas. The flagpoles have a decorative bronze base designed by York & Sawyer. The initial design was approved in June 1930, a simplified and less expensive version submitted in September 1930, and their specifications were dated November 10, 1930.<sup>208</sup> The bases feature Classical motifs such as Roman armor, swords, axes and shields, with festoons and ribbons intertwined behind these military symbols. The poles are topped by bronze eagles with outstretched wings. Each flagpole stands on a two-tiered octagonal stone base at the center of a circular terrace. A step is cut into the rear of the top tier for access to the cleats and ropes. The terrace paving is exposed gray aggregate divided by limestone laid in a star pattern and lining the outer edge. A short walk leads from the road to each terrace. Plantings arranged in two semi-circles on either side of the flagpoles further define these spaces. A low hedge clipped square traces the inner edge of each planting bed, with a variety of taller hedges left in natural shapes arrayed behind.
- v. Perimeter wall and fencing: The main perimeter of Meuse-Argonne Cemetery is enclosed by stone walls with some areas of wire fencing with concrete posts enclosing the outer edges of the property. The War Department built this enclosure of handsome rubblestone walls with regular coursing and limestone coping at all the publically visible areas starting in 1930.<sup>209</sup> As a cost saving measure, concrete posts and wire fencing were used in a few

<sup>208</sup> Letter, Price to York & Sawyer, (10 June 1930), and Letter, Cret to Price, (15 September 1930), Box 38, Entry 8, RG 117, NARA II. York & Sawyer, Specifications for Meuse-Argonne Flagpoles – Bronze Bases and Finials, (10 November 1930), Box 38, Entry 8, NARA II. Additional correspondence regarding the flagpoles is located in this box.

<sup>209</sup> Letter, Price to Cret, (2 December 1929), Box 38, Entry 8, NARA II. Preliminary sketches for the wall were dated November 27, 1929 and enclosed for Cret's approval with this letter. Price told Pershing that the stone for the wall was to be a "stone produced near Verdun" for the wall proper and "one of the best stones in Lorraine for the coping [Euville Coquillière],...the same as that used in the Ossuary at Douaumont." The bid had come in at half the anticipated cost. See Letter, Price to Pershing, (12 February 1930), Box 38, Entry 8, RG 117, NARA II.

limited sections behind service areas and bordering agricultural fields.

- vi. Service buildings: Two maintenance shop buildings with hipped tile roofs were built by the War Department in 1929-30.<sup>210</sup> These buildings are located behind the Visitor Building and Staff Quarters, facing each other across a service yard. New maintenance shops of modular metal construction, including a headstone carving facility for multiple ABMC sites, was erected just outside the original stone perimeter wall to the north in 2002-03. In addition to a small pump house at the reservoir, a one-story concrete block building is located just outside the west gate. Painted dark green, the original section of this structure was designed by Paul Cret in 1935. This building was the shed and office for the ABMC plant nursery located at Meuse-Argonne. It was expanded in 1960 with open stalls for mulch and other supplies.<sup>211</sup>
- f. Small scale elements:
  - i. Headstones: While individual headstones serve as small scale elements of the Meuse-Argonne landscape, the cumulative effect of 14,246 in orderly rows creates a major feature. The ABMC headstones take the form of a Latin cross (13,978) or a Star of David (268) fabricated from white Carrara marble. Each headstone includes the name, rank, division, home state, and date of death, as well as any military honors. Graves of unknown soldiers (486 at Meuse-Argonne) display the simple inscription, "Here Rests in Honored Glory an American Soldier Known But to God." Most the soldiers buried at Meuse-Argonne fell between September 26 and November 11, 1918 during the Meuse-Argonne Offensive but others were transferred from temporary cemeteries as far away as the Vosges Mountains at the France/Germany border, occupied Germany, and Archangel, Russia.
  - ii. Signage: Each of the eight grave sections (A-G) is marked at the front center by a low carved marble sign with its designated letter. Low exposed colored aggregate signs that appear to have been added post-World War II are located at the base of the service road and on the road from Romagne-sous-Montfaucon.

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<sup>210</sup> See Quartermaster Corps - GRS, "Quarterly Report of the Meuse-Argonne National Cemetery," Box 1343, Entry 1891, RG 92, NARA II.

<sup>211</sup> For nursery shed construction and addition see drawings in RG 117, Cartographic and Architectural Branch, NARA II, College Park, MD.

- iii. Benches: Eight elegant rectangular limestone benches with rounded edges and no backs were installed at Meuse-Argonne in 1939. Several are located at the roadside terraces near the circular fountain and in the entrance pylons.

g. Archeological sites: N/A

### PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

- A. Architectural drawings: Drawing collections with useful material on Meuse-Argonne are described below. Specific drawings are cited as relevant throughout the report.

American Battle Monuments Commission - scanned copies of drawings including construction drawings for the Chapel.

Cartographic and Architectural Branch, NARA II – Record Group 117 (ABMC) and Record Group 66 (CFA) include drawings for Meuse-Argonne.

Meuse-Argonne - on-site files including Chapel maintenance.

U.S. Commission of Fine Arts - in-house files include the approved rendering of the Meuse-Argonne Chapel design from 1926.

- B. Early Views: Early photographs show Meuse-Argonne (Romagne) during the War Department period and as ABMC changes were implemented. The collections with useful material on Meuse-Argonne are described below. Specific photographs are cited or reproduced as relevant throughout the report.

Still Pictures Branch, NARA II - The National Archives photographic collections have images of Meuse-Argonne in ABMC (RG 117-CON and RG 117-MC), Commission of Fine Arts (RG 66-G) and Signal Corps (RG 111-SC) record groups.

Textual Records, NARA II - Material in RG 117 includes construction progress photographs of the Chapel and other ABMC improvements at Meuse-Argonne.

- C. Selected Bibliography:

#### *Archives and Unpublished Sources*

American Battle Monument Commission, Drawing Collection (scanned)

Meuse-Argonne American Cemetery & Memorial, Romagne-sous-Montfaucon, Meuse, France  
Drawing Files

National Archives and Records Administration I, Washington, DC

RG 66 - Records of the Commission of Fine Arts

National Archives and Records Administration II, College Park, Maryland  
 RG 117 - Records of the American Battle Monuments Commission  
 RG 92 - Records of the Office of the Quartermaster General  
 Still Pictures Branch  
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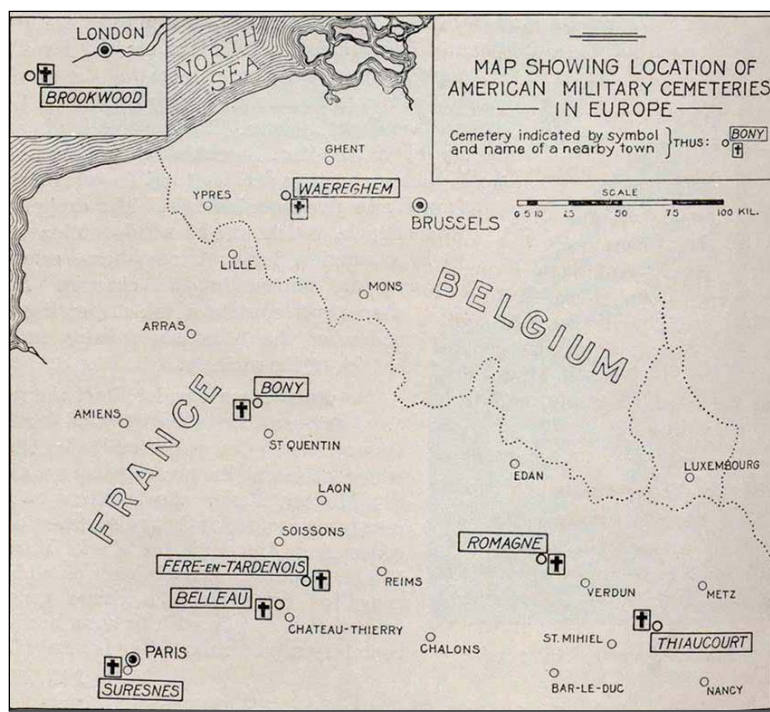
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#### PART IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

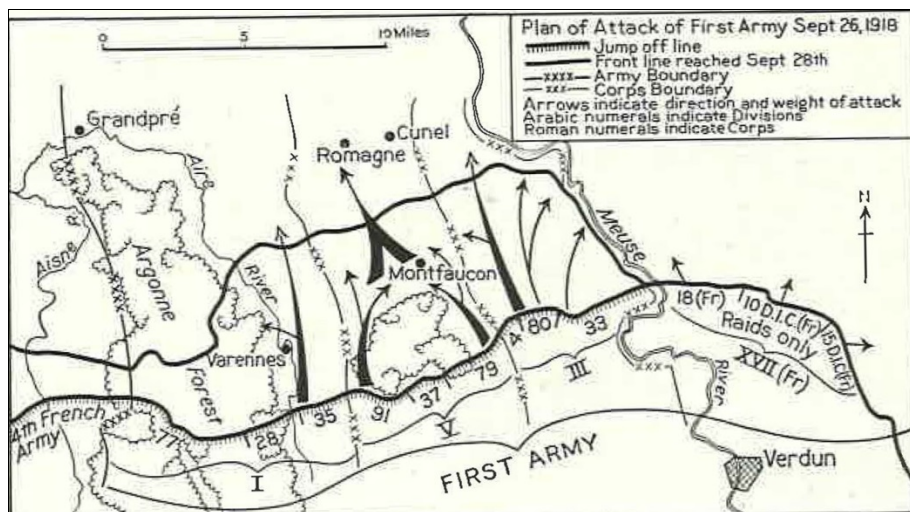
Documentation of Meuse-Argonne American Cemetery & Memorial was undertaken in 2015 by the Historic American Landscapes Survey (HALS) of the Heritage Documentation Programs division of the National Park Service, Richard O'Connor, Chief. The project was sponsored by the American Battle Monuments Commission (ABMC), Honorable Max Cleland, Secretary. Project planning was coordinated by Paul Dolinsky, Chief, HALS, and by John Wessels, Deputy Director, Overseas Operations, ABMC and Alec Bennett, Historian, ABMC. The field work, including hand measuring and terrestrial laser scanning, was undertaken by Project Supervisor Christopher M. Stevens, HALS Landscape Architect, and HDP Architects Dana Lockett, Dan DeSousa, Jason W. McNatt, and Ryan Pierce. Stevens, McNatt, Pierce, and student architect Charles Canfield (University at Buffalo) produced the measured drawings. The historical reports were written by HABS Historian Lisa P. Davidson, Ph.D. The large-format photography was produced by contract photographer Brian Grogan in 2016. On-site assistance at Meuse-Argonne was provided by David Bedford, Superintendent; Dominique Didot, Cemetery Associate; and by the ABMC maintenance staff.



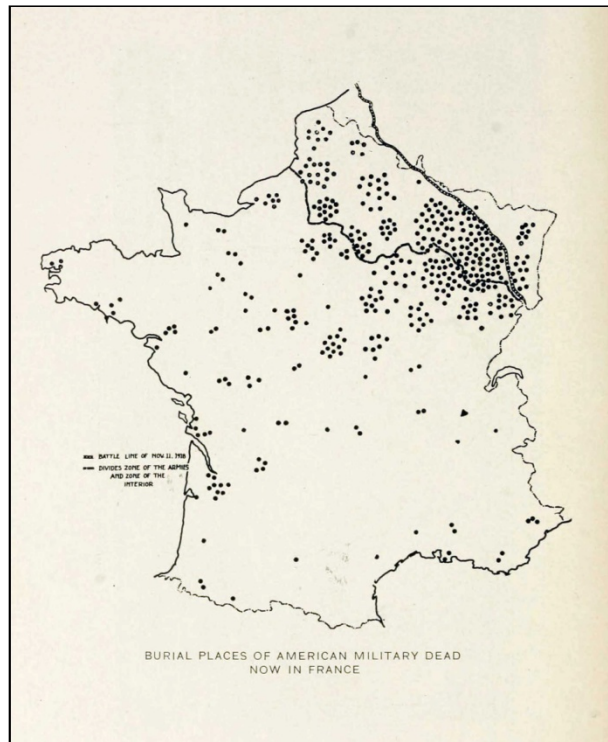
## PART V. ILLUSTRATIONS



**Figure 1:** "Map Showing Location of American Military Cemeteries in Europe," (1927)  
 Source: ABMC, *A Guide to the American Battle Fields in Europe* (Washington, DC: GPO, 1927)



**Figure 2:** Plan of Attack, Meuse-Argonne Offensive, Fall 1918  
 Source: ABMC, *A Guide to the American Battle Fields in Europe* (Washington, DC: GPO, 1927)



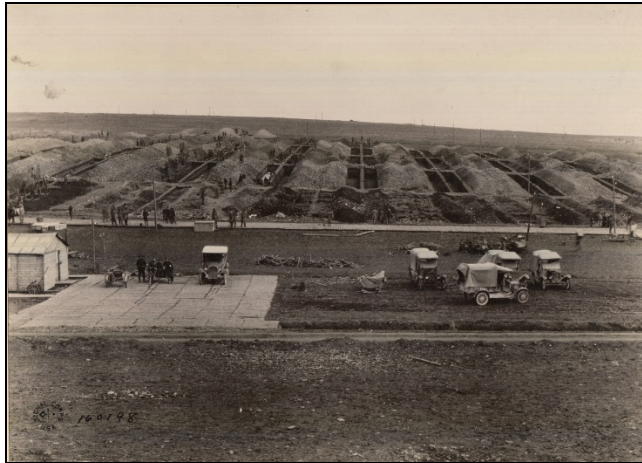
**Figure 3:** Temporary Burial Locations of American Military Dead in France, 1920

Source: Ralph Hayes, *A Report to the Secretary of War on American Military Dead Overseas - May 14, 1920* (Washington, DC: GPO, 1920).



**Figure 4:** GRS Soldiers Searching Bodies for Identification, Romagne, France, c. 1920

Source: Image 66-G-50LL, Still Pictures Branch, NARA II, College Park, MD



**Figure 5:** “Completed Trenches Ready for Coffins, Romagne, April 4, 1919”  
Source: Image 111-SC-160198, Still Pictures Branch, NARA II, College Park, MD



**Figure 6:** “Colored Troops Digging Trenches, Romagne, April 8, 1919”  
Source: Image 111-SC-160197, Still Pictures Branch, NARA II, College Park, MD



**Figure 7:** “Section of Cemetery showing Boche prisoners laying sod, Romagne, May 22, 1919”  
Source: Image 111-SC-160222, Still Pictures Branch, NARA II, College Park, MD





**Figure 8:** "Argonne Cemetery," Memorial Day, May 30, 1919  
Source: Image 111-SC-160240, Still Pictures Branch, NARA II, College Park, MD



**Figure 9:** German Prisoners of War Planting Pansies, Romagne, May 29, 1919  
Source: Image 111-SC-160229, Still Pictures Branch, NARA II, College Park, MD



**Figure 10:** Memorial Day, May 30, 1919

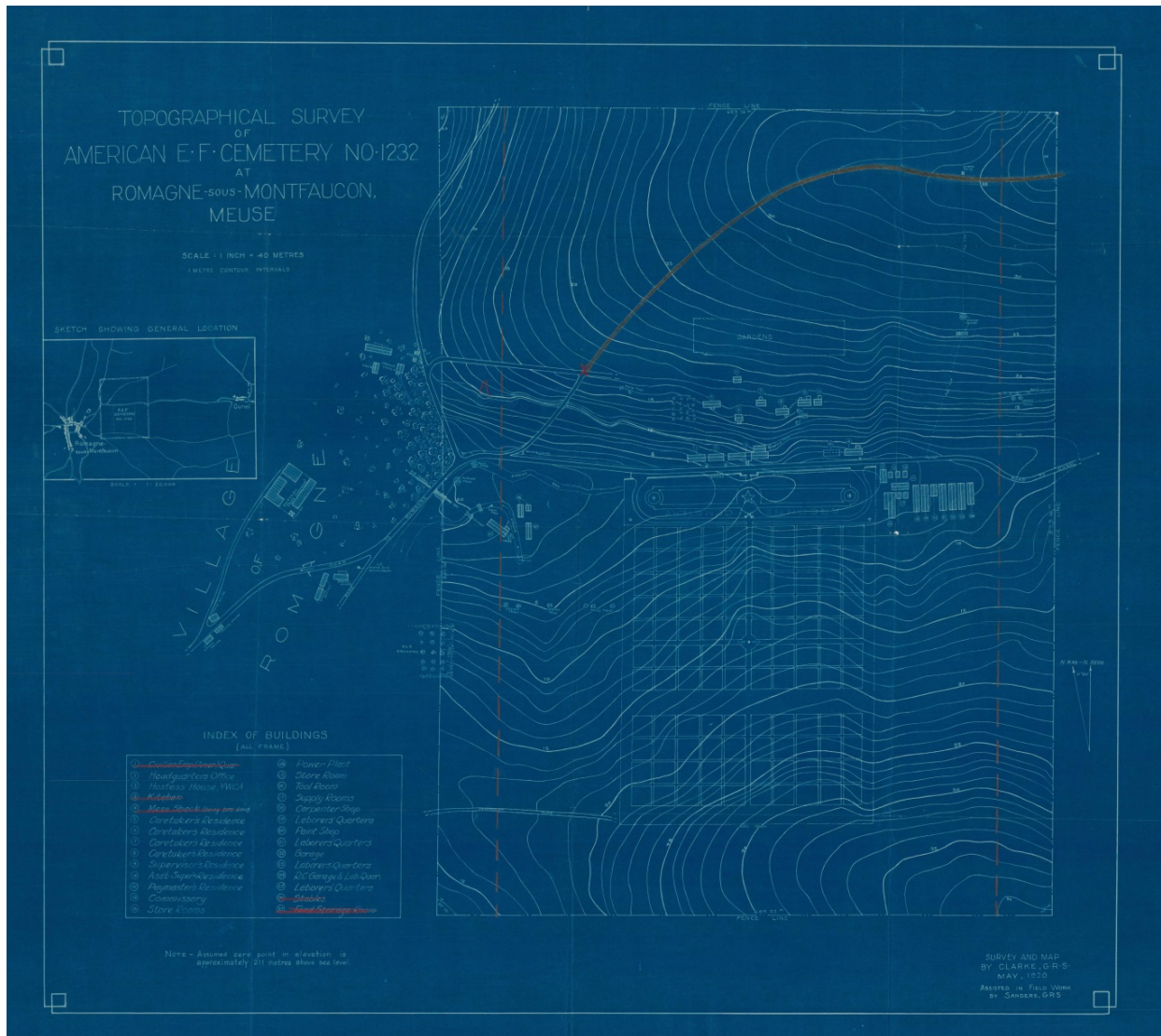
Source: Image 111-SC-160238, Still Pictures Branch, NARA II, College Park, MD



**Figure 11:** "General Pershing and Staff walking through the cemetery, May 30, 1919"

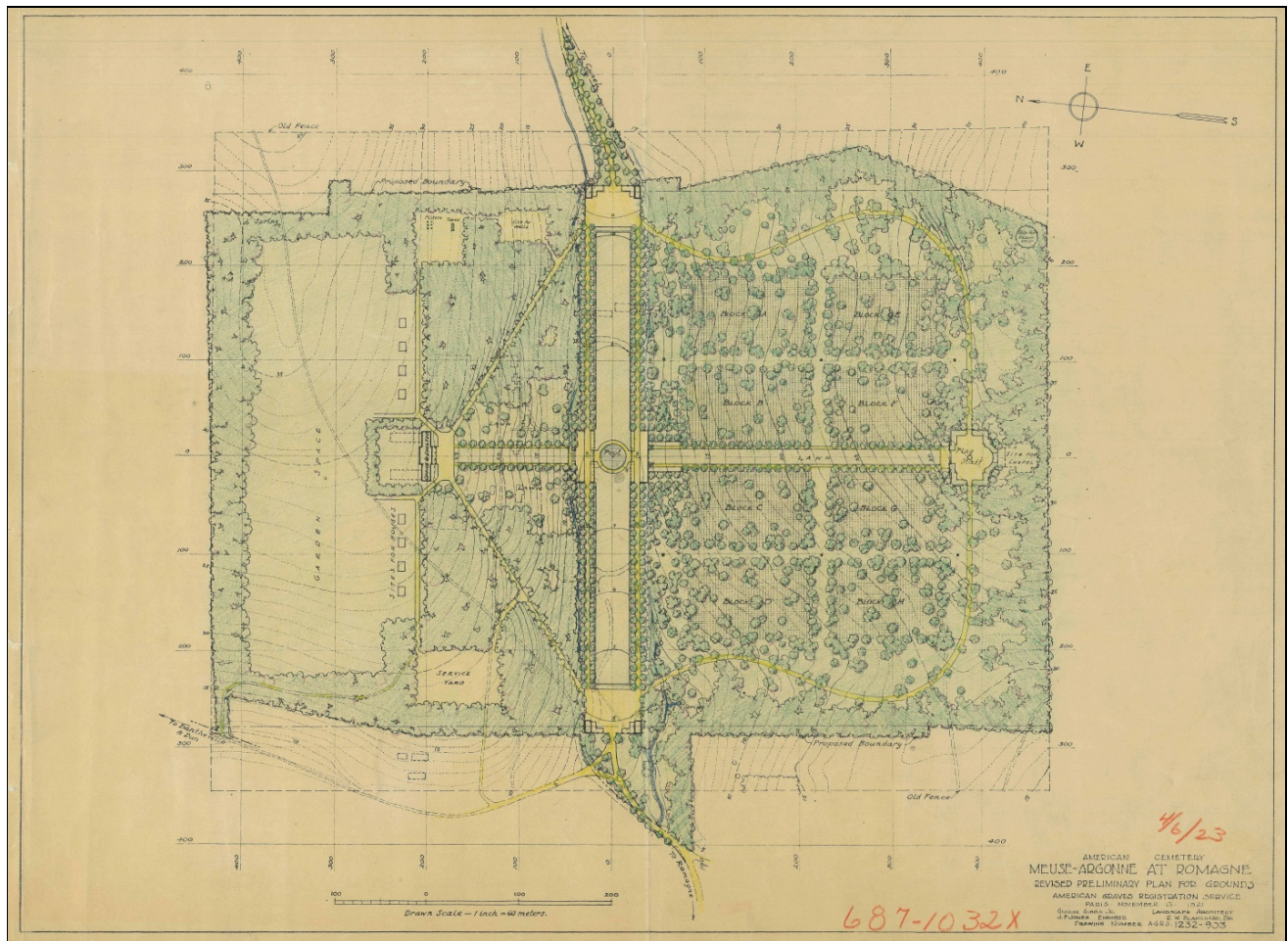
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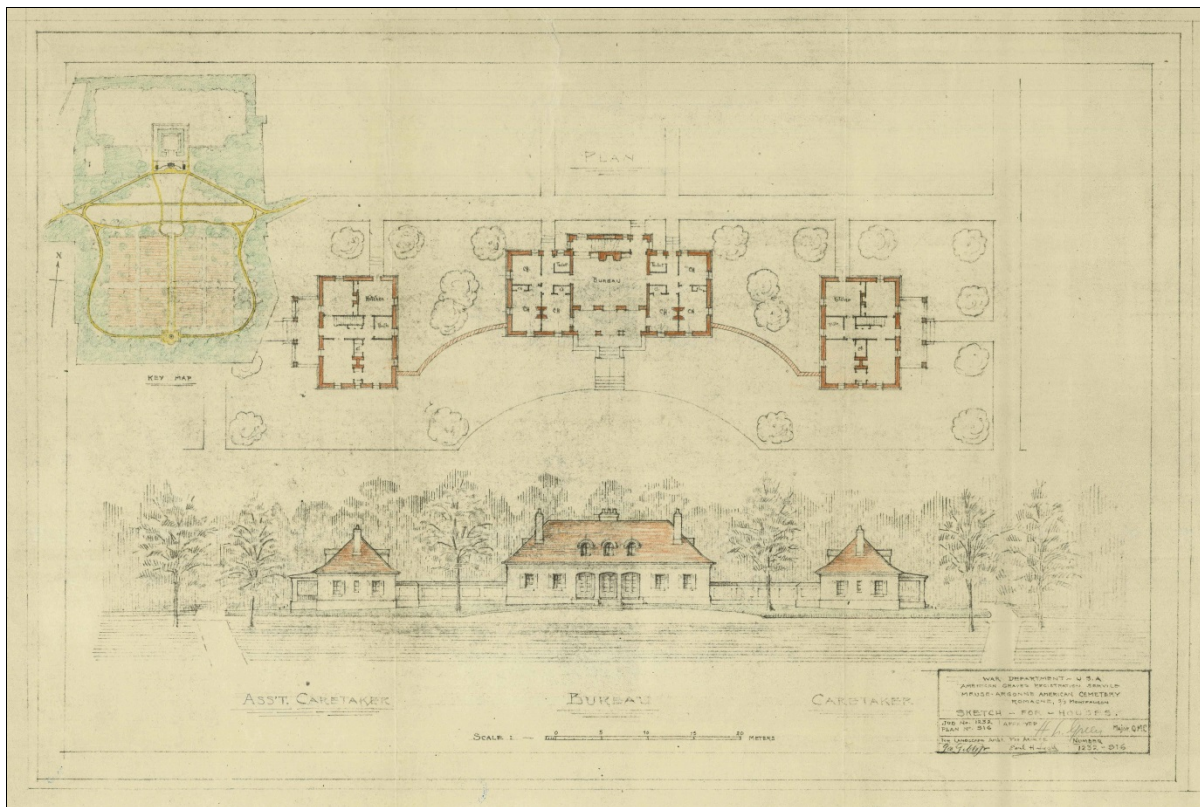
**Figure 12:** Topographic Plan of Argonne/Romagne Cemetery, May 1920  
 Source: RG 66, Cartographic and Architectural Branch, NARA II, College Park, MD

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**Figure 13:** Revised Preliminary Plan, Meuse-Argonne at Romagne, November 15, 1921  
Source: RG 117, Cartographic and Architectural Branch, NARA II, College Park, MD









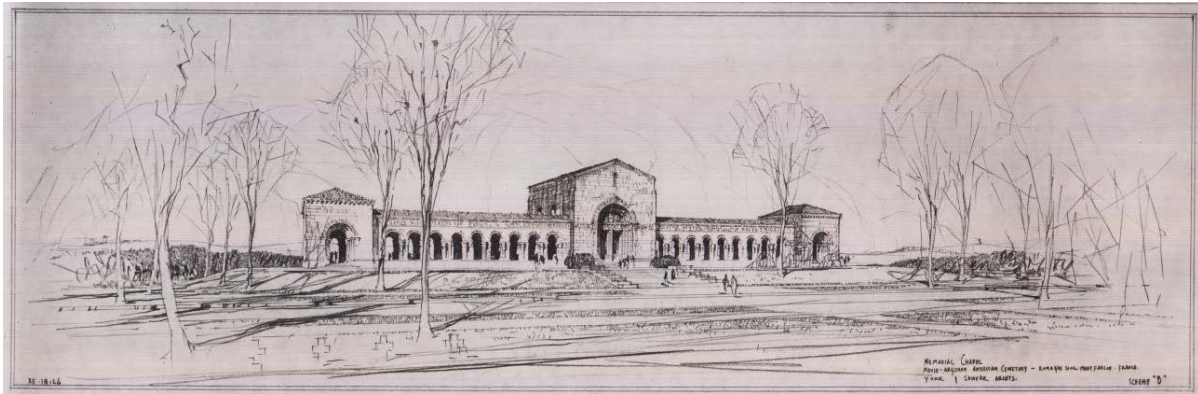
**Figure 16:** West Entrance to Cemetery, 1925

Source: Image 111-SC-86290, Still Pictures Branch, NARA II, College Park, MD

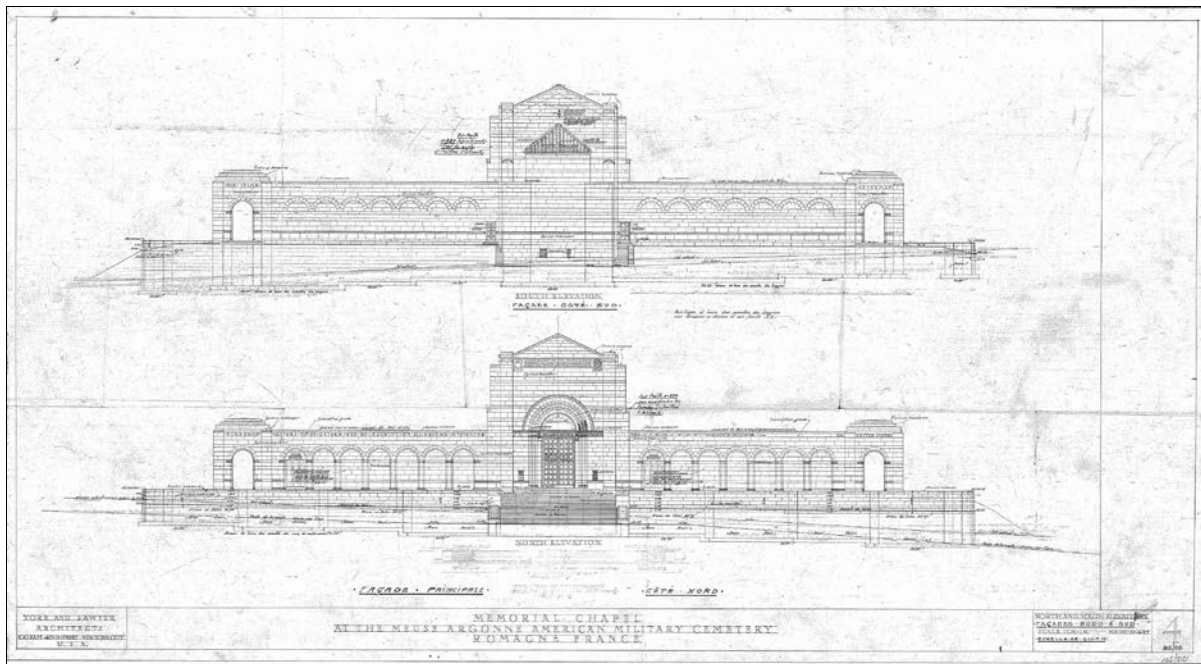


**Figure 17:** View to Visitor Building and Staff Quarters, 1925

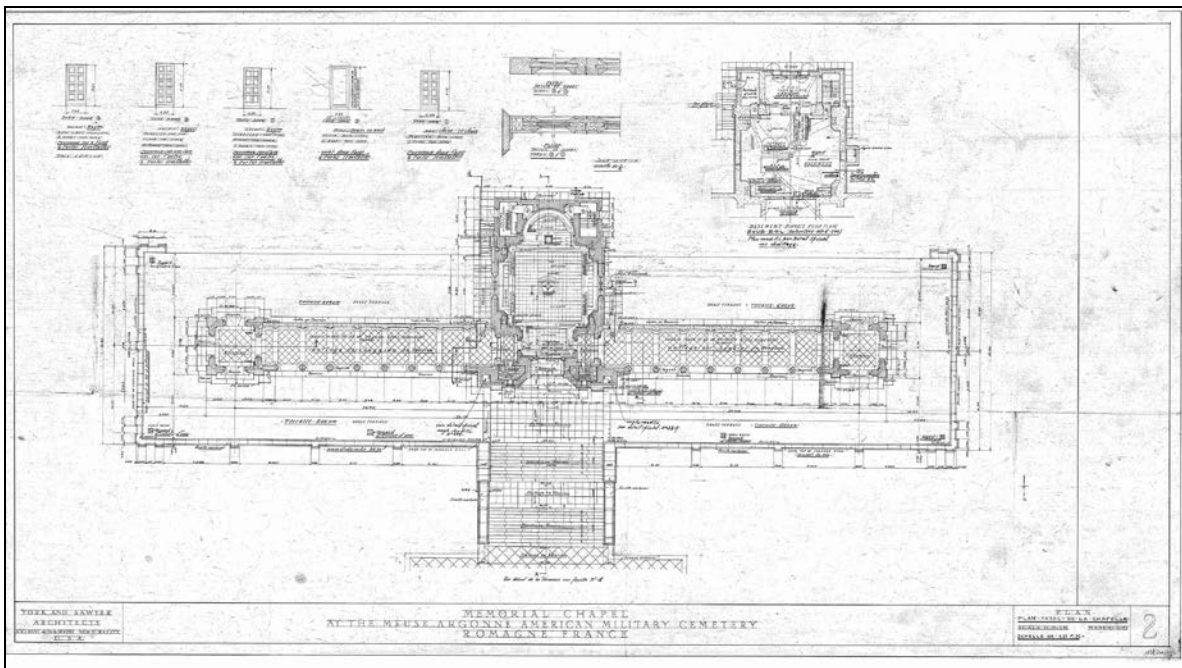
Source: Image 111-SC-86280, Still Pictures Branch, NARA II, College Park, MD



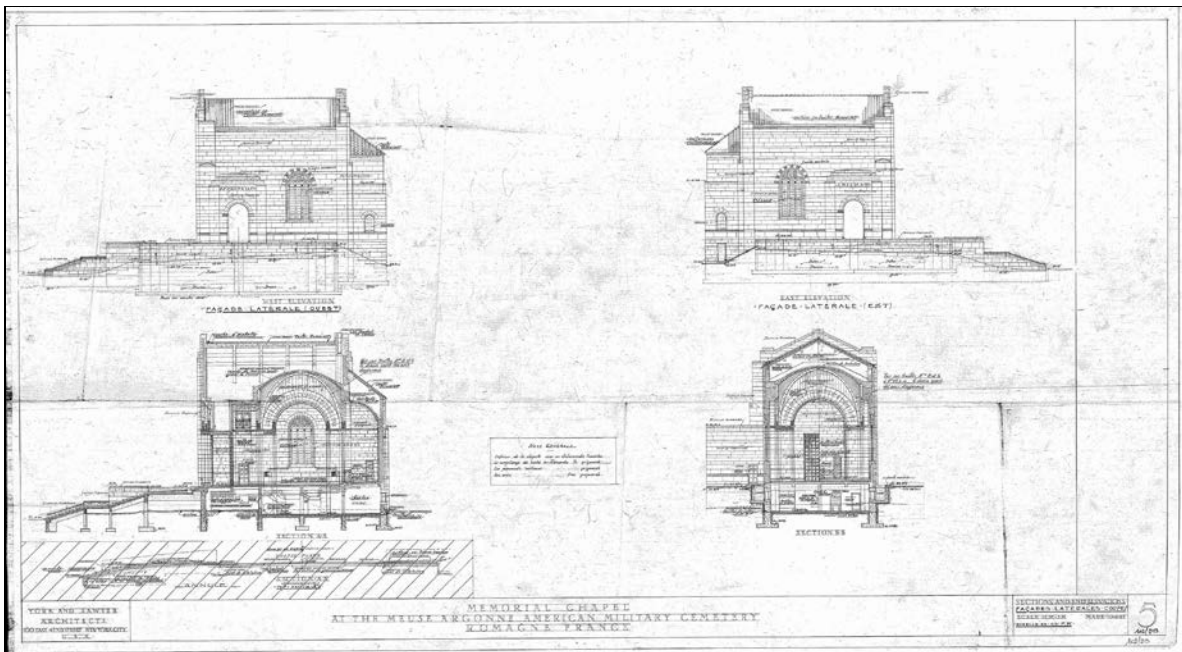
**Figure 18:** York & Sawyer, Meuse-Argonne Chapel – Scheme B, December 10, 1926  
Source: U.S. Commission of Fine Arts



**Figure 19:** York & Sawyer, Meuse-Argonne Chapel Elevations, (April 10, 1927)  
Source: ABMC Drawing Files

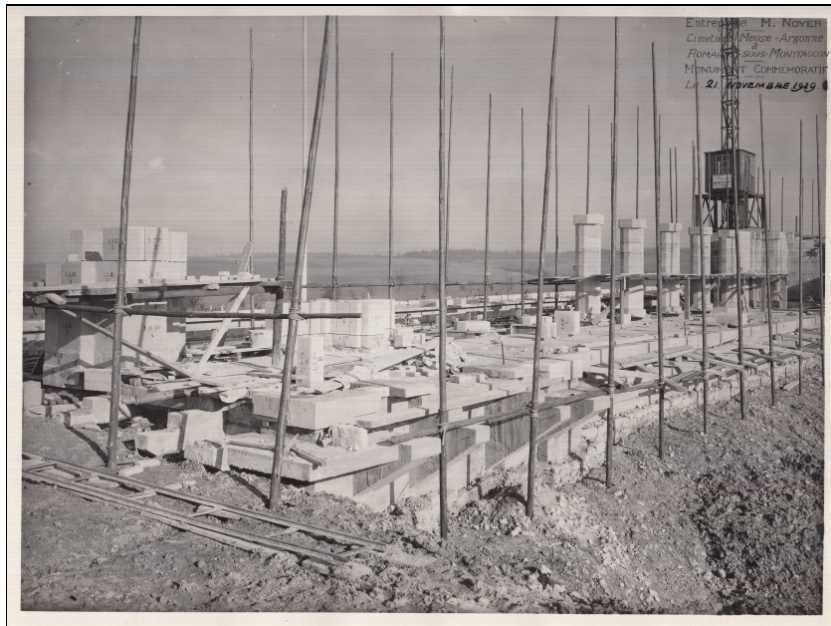


**Figure 20:** York & Sawyer, Meuse-Argonne Chapel Plans, (April 10, 1927)  
Source: ABMC Drawing Files

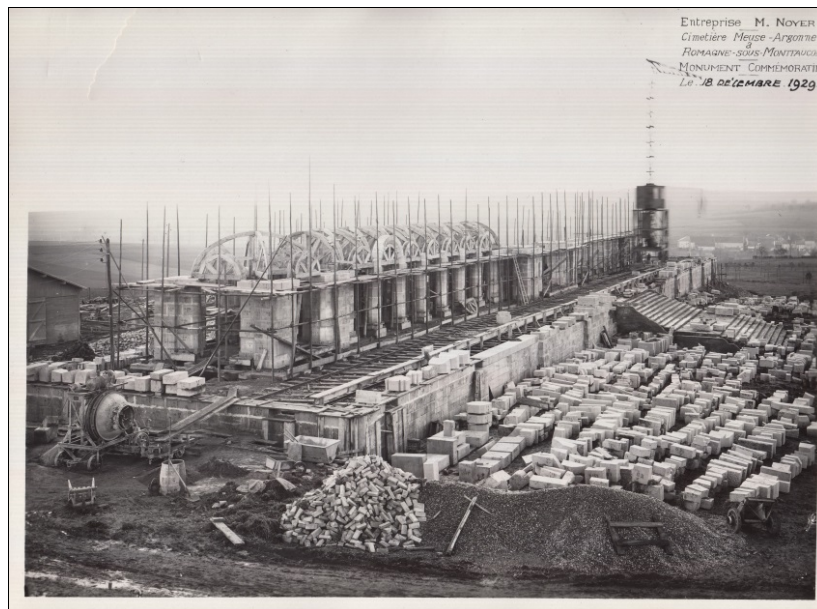


**Figure 21:** York & Sawyer, Meuse-Argonne Chapel Sections, (April 10, 1927)  
Source: ABMC Drawing Files

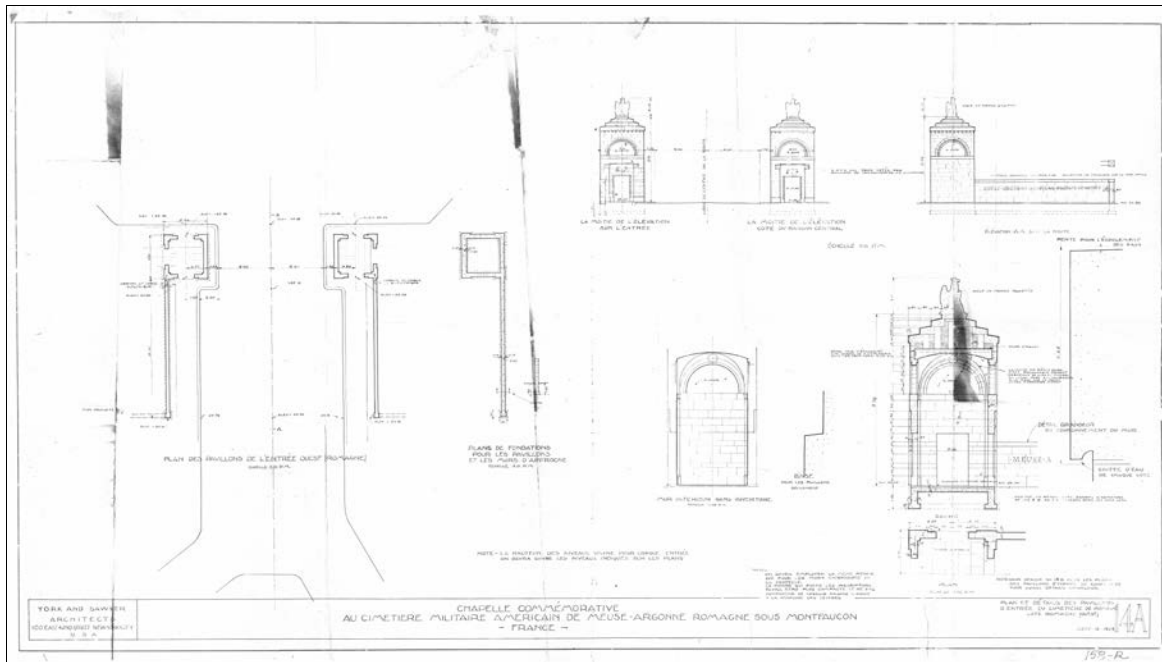




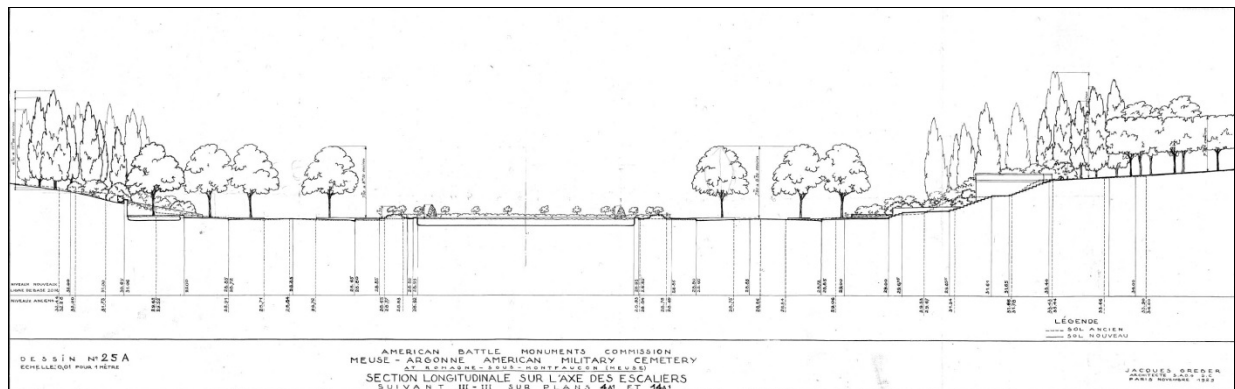
**Figure 22:** Meuse-Argonne Chapel Under Construction, November 21, 1929  
Source: Image 117-CON-15-4, Still Picture Branch, NARA II



**Figure 23:** Meuse-Argonne Chapel Under Construction, December 18, 1929  
Source: Image 117-CON-15-9, Still Picture Branch, NARA II



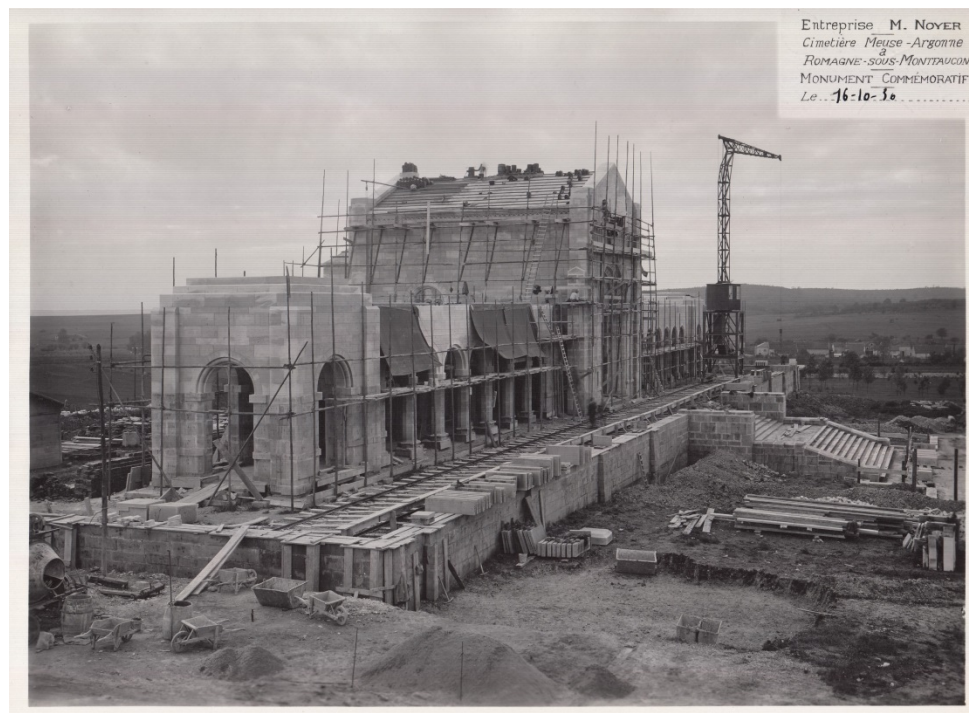
**Figure 24:** York & Sawyer, Entrance Pylons for Meuse-Argonne, (August 15, 1929)  
 Source: RG 117, Cartographic and Architectural Branch, NARA II



**Figure 25:** Jacques Gréber, "Meuse-Argonne American Military Cemetery – Longitudinal Section On Stair Axis," (November 1929), Drawing 25A  
 Source: ABMC Drawing Files



**Figure 26:** Meuse-Argonne West Entrance Under Construction, April 9, 1930  
Source: Image 117-CON-15-24, Still Picture Branch, NARA II



**Figure 27:** Meuse-Argonne Chapel Under Construction, October 16, 1930  
Source: Image 117-CON-16-9, Still Picture Branch, NARA II

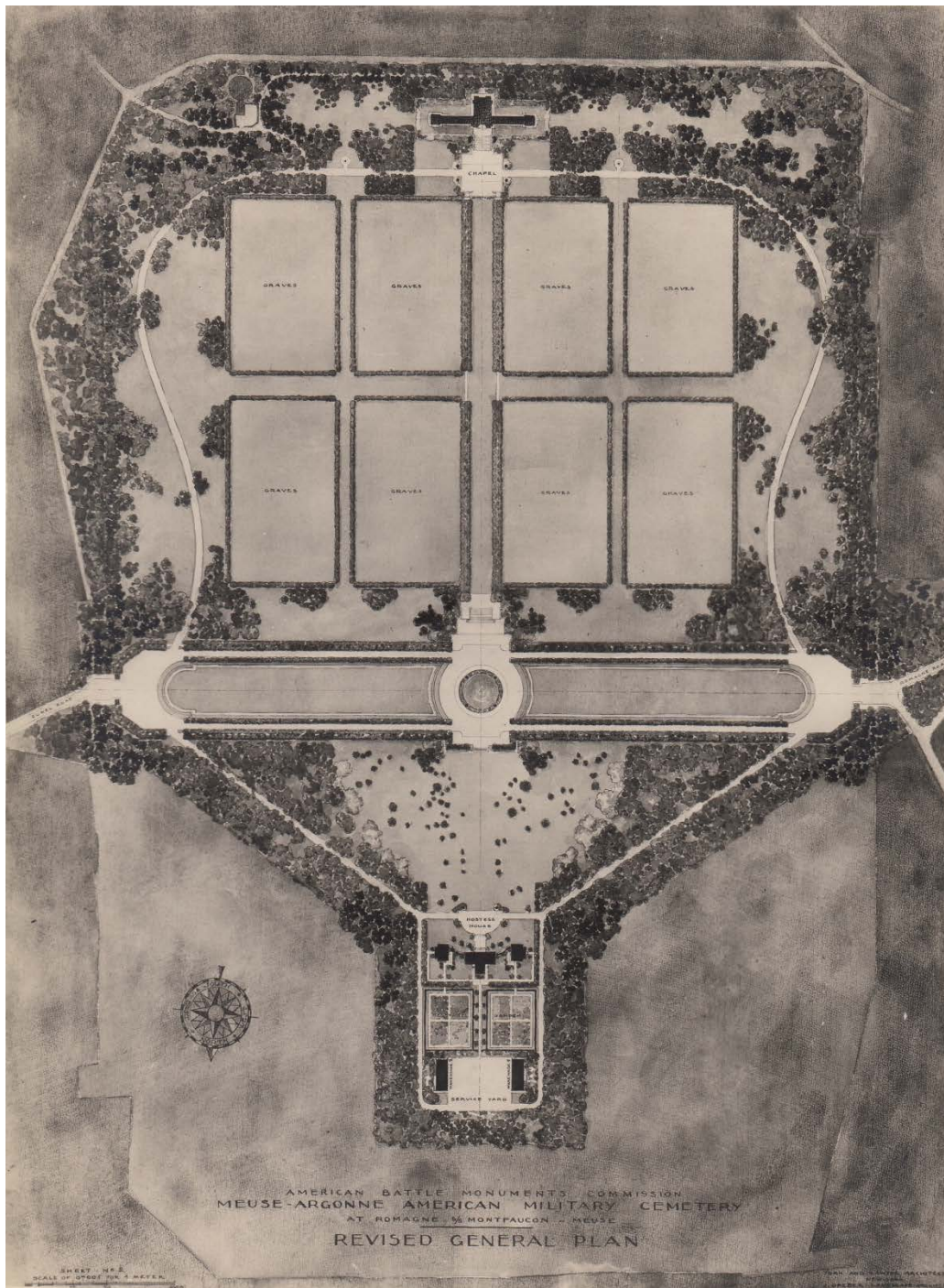




**Figure 28:** Carving Chapel Loggia Capitals, February 11, 1931  
Source: Image 117-CON-16-22, Still Picture Branch, NARA II

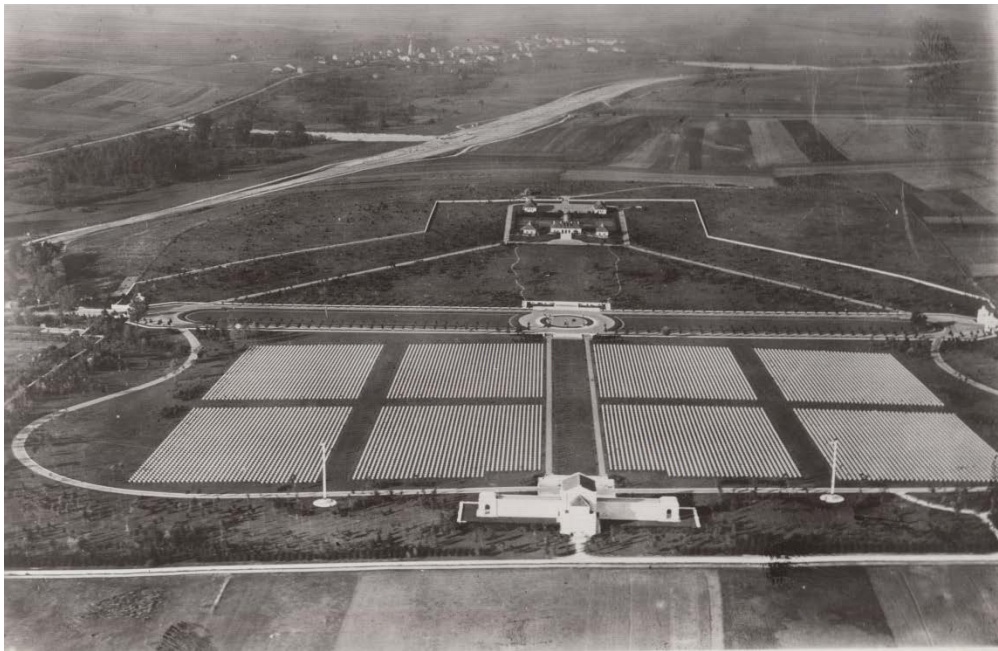


**Figure 29:** Carving Chapel Loggia Capitals, February 11, 1931  
Note plaster model resting on scaffolding platform in left foreground.  
Source: Image 117-CON-16-23, Still Picture Branch, NARA II

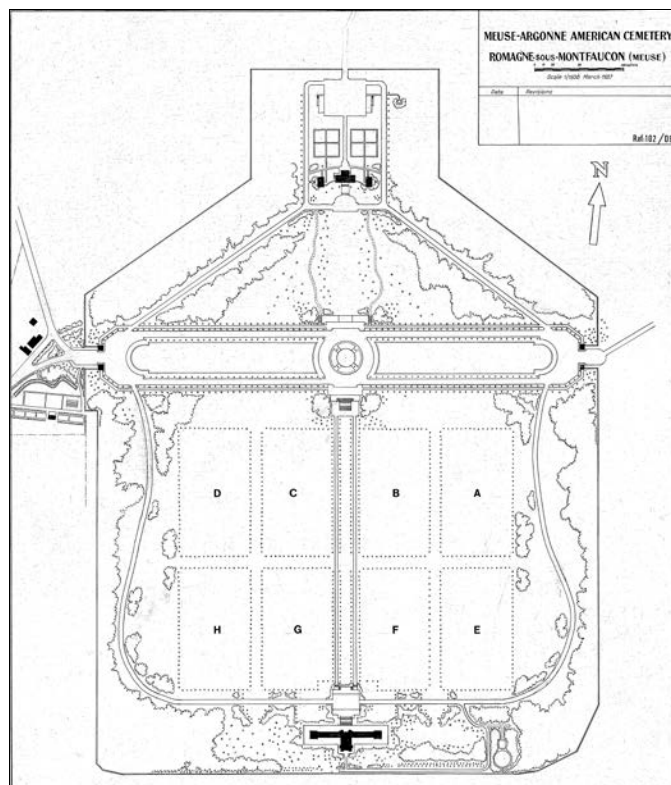


**Figure 30:** Jacques Gréber and York & Sawyer,  
“Meuse-Argonne American Military Cemetery Revised General Plan,” c. 1931  
Source: Box 153, Entry 13, RG 117, NARA II

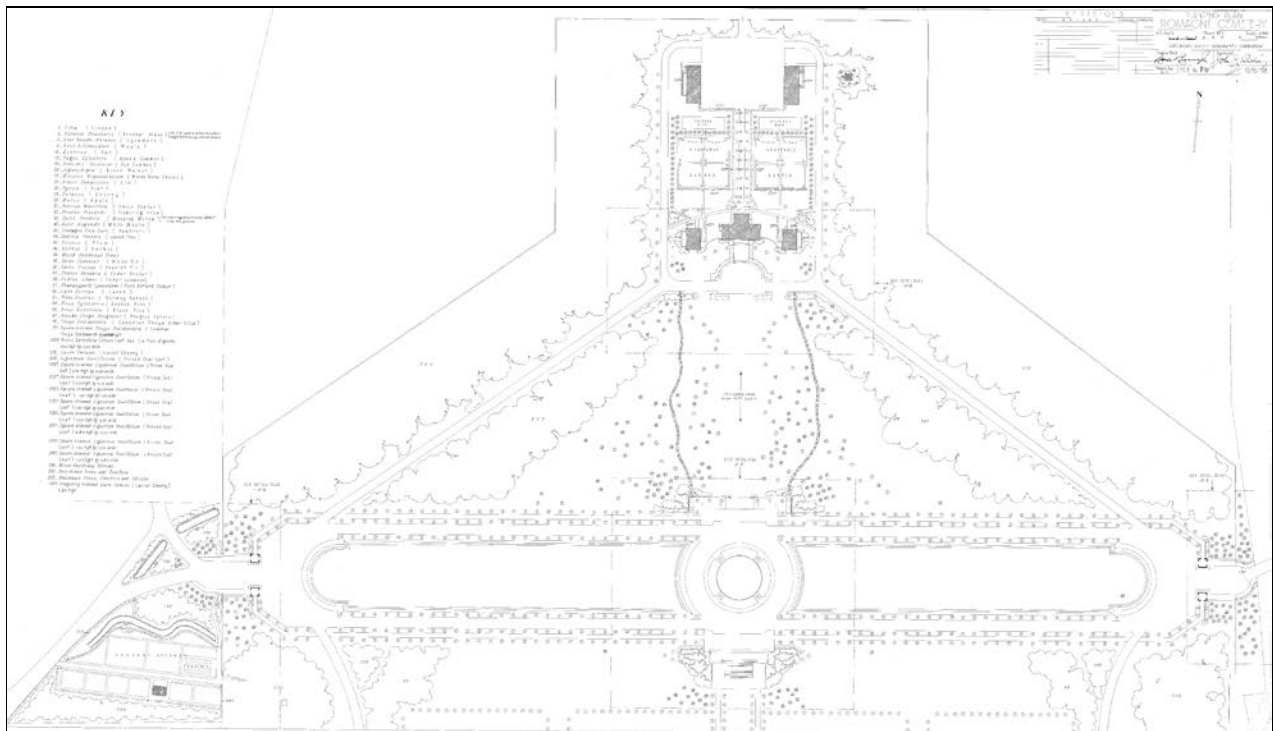




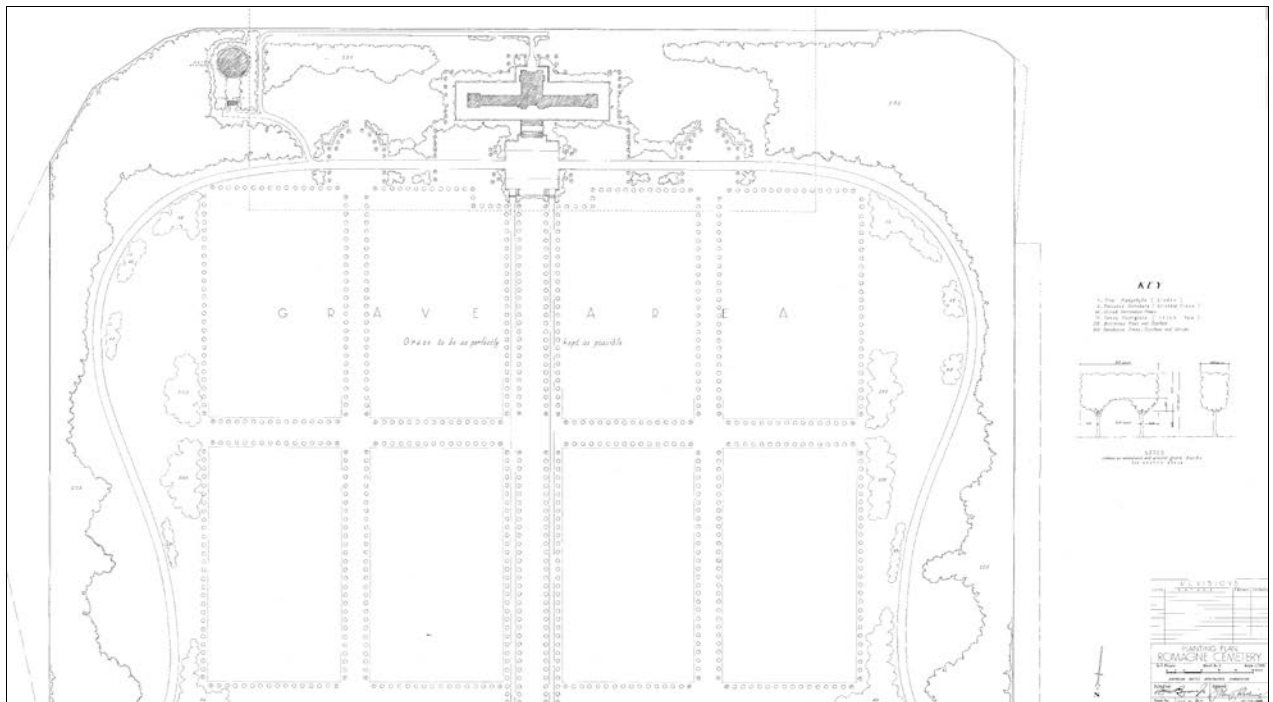
**Figure 31:** Aerial view of Meuse-Argonne Cemetery from south, 1933  
**Source:** Image 117-MC-27-15, Still Picture Branch, NARA II



**Figure 32:** Plan of Meuse-Argonne Cemetery, (March 1937), Drawing 102-D9  
**Source:** ABMC Drawing Files



**Figure 33:** Planting Plan, Romagne Cemetery (October 19, 1938), Drawing P18  
 Source: ABMC Drawing Files



**Figure 34:** Planting Plan, Romagne Cemetery (October 19, 1938), Drawing P17  
 Source: ABMC Drawing Files

PART VI. SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION

**Appendix A: US-France Agreements for ABMC Sites**

**ACQUISITION OF SITES FOR AMERICAN  
BATTLE MONUMENTS**

*Agreement signed at Washington August 29, 1927  
Entered into force August 29, 1927  
Replaced by agreement of October 1, 1947<sup>1</sup>*

Treaty Series 757

This agreement made on August 29, 1927, by and between the Government of the United States of America, represented by John J. Pershing, General of the Armies, Chairman of the American Battle Monuments Commission, party of the first part, and the Government of the French Republic, represented by Mr. Anne-Marie Louis de Sartiges, that Government's Chargé d'Affaires ad interim at Washington, party of the second part, for the acquisition by the Government of the United States of lands intended as sites for monuments which the American Battle Monuments Commission is to erect in France, in accordance with and by the authority of the Act of Congress of the United States approved March 4, 1923,<sup>2</sup> entitled "An Act for the Creation of an American Battle Monuments Commission to Erect Suitable Memorials Commemorating the Services of the American Soldiers in Europe, and for Other Purposes", witnesses that

**ARTICLE I**

The French Government will acquire the real estate of which the American Battle Monuments Commission whose office is at Paris, rue Molitor, 20, will have become proprietor by virtue of the authority for this purpose which it has received from the United States Government, in view of the erection of the American commemorative monuments above mentioned.

This acquisition by the French Government from the said Commission will be accomplished for the sole price of one franc for the totality of the real estate necessary for each monument.

**ARTICLE II**

When the land necessary for the erection of the American memorials in question has not been acquired by the American Battle Monuments Commis-

<sup>1</sup> TIAS 1720, *post*, p. 1215.

<sup>2</sup> 42 Stat. 1509.

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sion and if the United States Government expresses the wish, the French Government will proceed to acquire the said land if necessary and if such acquisition is possible; it being understood that in the case where certain organizations such as Communes or Departments do not consent to the transfer of their land, all necessary steps will be diligently pursued by the French Government in order to obtain the concession of the lots necessary to the end in view.

ARTICLE III

Before the French Government will undertake any procedure of acquisition or of concession of land necessary to the erection of any of the memorials in question, the authorization to erect such monument must have been given by decree in each separate case, in conformity with the procedure laid down by the Decree of November 18, 1922, and upon a request which will have been previously made by the Government of the United States.

ARTICLE IV

The negotiations provided for in Article 2, which are to be undertaken by the French Government with the owners or tenants of the lands above mentioned for the normal transfer of the said land will be pursued by a representative of the French Government (Ministry of War—appropriate Engineer District) accompanied by a representative of the Government of the United States. The normal agreements signed by the owners or tenants and bearing the written approval of the representative of the United States Government will plainly state that the formalities of acquisition and of payments will be undertaken by the French Government.

ARTICLE V

The French Government will grant without cost and in perpetuity to the Government of the United States the use and free disposal of the lands intended for the erection of the said monuments whether they belong at the present moment to the French Government or whether they have been acquired in conformity with the provisions of Articles 1 and 2 above mentioned. The land of which the French Government is able to obtain only a concession for a limited period will be conceded by it for the same period to the Government of the United States, but in this case, the representative appointed by the latter Government must have given his approval before the French Government definitely acquires the concession.

These measures, however, can never entail the prohibition of any undertakings of public works for which the public necessity will have been declared and of which the site might concern directly or not the land transferred. In this case a representative of the Government of the United States will be called upon to cooperate with the French Government in order to determine the best measures to be taken so far as the monuments are concerned.

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FRANCE

ARTICLE VI

In the case where the Government of the United States might later decide either not to carry out a project for the erection of a monument or to remove a monument once erected, such land as has been acquired for this purpose under the present agreement and which would then be released will be sold by the French Government and the net proceeds of such land will be paid by the French Government to that of the United States.

ARTICLE VII

The land acquired in conformity with the provisions of this agreement will be exempted from all rates and taxes in conformity with Articles 105 and 106 of the Law of 3 Frimaire An VII and with the Decree of August 11, 1808.

By application of the provisions of Article 12 of the Finance Law of June 30, 1923, exemption will be granted from all taxes for stamps, registration, or mortgages, etc., for the various documents established and conveyances accomplished by the French Government having in view the acquisition or the concession of land necessary for the erection of the memorials in question.

ARTICLE VIII

The French Government will settle all difficulties which may arise with adjoining owners or tenants; it will institute and pursue any suit or sustain any defense concerning the land acquired which may thereafter appear necessary. The cost resulting therefrom being repaid to it by the Government of the United States.

It is agreed, however, that payment of damages caused by the personnel appointed by the Government of the United States for the maintenance and guarding of the American memorials or by the material belonging to it will be undertaken by the representative appointed by that Government.

ARTICLE IX

The Government of the United States will repay to the French Government the amounts which the latter will have paid, other than those provided for in paragraph 2 of Article 1, both for actual acquisitions or concessions (indemnities to owners or tenants of the land occupied) and for all other expenses occasioned by the said acquisitions or concessions.

ARTICLE X

In no case will the debts of the Government of the United States towards the French Government on account of the purchase of land necessary for the American memorials be susceptible of cancellation against any debt whatever of the French Government towards the Government of the United States.

MILITARY CEMETERIES—AUGUST 29, 1927

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ARTICLE XI

Repayments to the French Government will be effected as soon as possible by checks, and will provide for a receipt in the following form:

"The French Government acknowledges to have received from the Government of the United States the sum of . . . . . for the purchase of the lands described hereafter, necessary for the erection of the American commemorative monument at . . . . . purchase accomplished in accordance with the agreement dated . . . . . of which a copy is attached hereto.

"Description of the property: . . . . .

ARTICLE XII

Payments for acquisitions made under the provisions of Article 1 above mentioned will be made by checks.

They will provide for receipts in the following form:

"The Government of the United States acknowledges that the American Battle Monuments Commission has received from the French Government the sum of one franc for the purchase of land described hereafter, necessary for the erection of the American commemorative monument at . . . . . this acquisition accomplished in accordance with the agreement dated . . . . . of which a copy is attached hereto.

"Description of the property: . . . . .

In witness whereof, the date, month and year, above mentioned, this agreement has been signed in four copies, each copy having the same value and effect as an original, by the Government of the United States represented by John J. Pershing, General of the Armies, Chairman of the American Battle Monuments Commission, and by the French Government represented by Mr. Anne-Marie Louis de Sartiges, that Government's Chargé d'Affaires ad interim at Washington.

JOHN J. PERSHING  
SARTIGES

MINISTRE DE  
LA GUERRE

(COPY)

Erection d'un monument à  
Montfaucou, (Meuse)

Appendix "W-1".

REPUBLIQUE FRANCAISE

Le Président de la République Française,  
Sur la proposition du Ministre de la Guerre,  
Vu le décret du 18 Novembre 1922,

**D E C R E T :**

Article 1er. Est autorisée l'érection, sur le territoire  
de la commune de MONTFAUCON (Meuse), d'un monument  
à la mémoire de l'Armée Américaine.

Article 2. Le Ministre de la Guerre est chargé de  
l'exécution du présent décret.

FAIT A PARIS, le 17 juin 1927

Gaston DOUMERGUE

PAR LE PRESIDENT DE LA REPUBLIQUE  
Le Ministre de la Guerre,

Paul RAINIERE

Collationné:

Le Sous-Chef du Bureau

(Signé) Illisible

Pour Ampliation:

Le Chef du Bureau  
des Archives Administratives

(Signé) Illisible

**Appendix B: List of Architects for the Consideration of the American Battle Monuments Commission, May 10, 1925, Paul P. Cret<sup>212</sup>**

McKim, Mead and White, New York. This firm is so well-known that I do not need to give references as to their qualifications.

Charles A. Platt, New York. Mr. Platt is the author of the Freer Gallery, and is now working on the plans for the National Museum of the Fine Arts in Washington on the recommendation of the National Fine Arts Commission.

John Russell Pope, New York. Mr. Pope has built in Washington the Scottish Rite Temple and several residences, which have placed him in the foremost rank of the profession.

Egerton Swartwout, New York. Mr. Swartwout has built very important memorials; for instance, one to Mrs. Eddy. He is completing now the national Elks' memorial in Chicago, a very beautiful structure, and was the architect selected from the George Washington auditorium for the capital.

Howard Van Doren Shaw, Chicago.

Albert Kahn, Detroit.

Paul P. Cret, Philadelphia. Architect for the Pan American Union, Indianapolis Public Library, Delaware River Bridge, George Washington Memorial Arch at Valley Forge, Pennsylvania State Battlefields Monuments, Museum of the City of Detroit, etc.

For the minor projects, I would recommend the younger men:

Thomas Harlan Ellett, formerly of McKim, Mead and White, now practicing in New York.

Mr. Harry Sternfeld, former Paris Prize winner, now practicing in Philadelphia.

Messrs. Mellor, Meigs and Howe, who have been awarded the gold medal of the Architectural League of New York.

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<sup>212</sup> Attachment to Letter, Cret to Pershing, (10 May 1925), Box 143, Entry 13, RG 117, NARA II.



## **Appendix C: ABMC Projects with Associated Architects**

### Chapels and Cemeteries:

- Meuse-Argonne American Cemetery & Memorial, near Romagne-sous-Montfaucon, France, Architect - Louis Ayres (York & Sawyer, New York)
- Oise-Aisne American Cemetery & Memorial, near Fere-en-Tardenois, France, Architect Ralph Adams Cram (Cram & Ferguson, Boston)
- Aisne-Marne American Cemetery & Memorial, near Belleau, France, Architect Ralph Adams Cram (Cram & Ferguson, Boston)
- Flanders Field American Cemetery & Memorial, Waregem, Belgium, Architect Paul P. Cret (Philadelphia)
- St. Mihiel American Cemetery & Memorial, near Thiaucourt, France, Architect Thomas Ellett (New York)
- Somme American Cemetery & Memorial, near Bony, France, Architect George Howe (Mellor, Meigs & Howe, Philadelphia)
- Suresnes American Cemetery & Memorial, near Paris, France, Architect Charles Platt (New York)
- Brookwood American Cemetery & Memorial, England, Architect Egerton Swartwout (New York)

### Monuments:

- Meuse-Argonne Monument, Montfaucon, France, Architect John Russell Pope (New York)
- St. Mihiel Monument, Montsec, France, Architect Egerton Swartwout (New York)
- Aisne-Marne Monument, Château-Thierry, France, Architect Paul P. Cret (Philadelphia)
- Bellicourt Monument, Bellicourt, France, Architect Paul P. Cret (Philadelphia)
- Naval Monument, Gibraltar, Architect Paul P. Cret (Philadelphia)
- Naval Monument, Brest, France, Architect Ralph Milman (Howard Shaw Associates, Chicago) [destroyed during World War II and reconstructed]
- Services of Supply Memorial, Tours, France, Architect Arthur Loomis Harmon (New York)
- Somme-Py Monument, Somme-Py, France, Architect Arthur Loomis Harmon (New York)
- Cantigny Monument, Cantigny, France, Architect Arthur Loomis Harmon (New York)
- Audenarde Monument, Audenarde, Belgium, Architect Harry Sternfeld (Philadelphia)
- Kemmel Monument, near Ypres, Belgium, Architect George Howe (Mellor, Meigs & Howe, Philadelphia)

**Appendix D: Plant List for Meuse-Argonne Cemetery, May 2015**

KEY	VEGETATION LATIN NAME	COMMON NAME	ABMC NUMBER
Ac	<i>Abies concolor</i>	white fir	50
A	<i>Acer</i> sp.	maple	3/4/5/25/40/43
An	<i>Acer negundo</i>	boxelder maple	40
Ap	<i>Acer platanoides</i>	Norway maple	25
Aps	<i>Acer pseudoplatanus</i>	sycamore maple	3
ApA	<i>Acer pseudoplatanus</i> 'Atropurpureum'	purpleleaf sycamore maple	43
Aca	<i>Aesculus carnea</i>	red horse chestnut	24
Ah	<i>Aesculus hippocastanum</i>	common horse chestnut	23
Aj	<i>Aucuba japonica</i>	Japanese aucuba	147
Bst	<i>Berberis stenophylla</i>	rosemary barberry	103
Bt	<i>Berberis thunbergii</i>	Japanese barberry	101
Bta	<i>Berberis thunbergii</i> f. <i>atropurpurea</i>	Japanese barberry	215
Bv	<i>Berberis vulgaris</i>	common barberry	102
Ba	<i>Betula alba</i>	European white birch	7
Bs	<i>Buxus sempervirens</i>	English boxwood	112
Bss	<i>Buxus sempervirens</i> 'Suffruticosa'	dwarf English boxwood	112
Cd	<i>Calocedrus decurrens</i>	incense cedar	96
Cb	<i>Carpinus betulus</i>	European hornbeam	8
Cbp	<i>Carpinus betulus</i> 'Pyramidalis'	pyramidal hornbeam	823
Cbi	<i>Catalpa bignonioides</i>	southern catalpa	9
Ca	<i>Cedrus atlantica</i>	atlas cedar	53
Cs	<i>Cercis siliquastrum</i>	Judas tree	10
C	<i>Chamaecyparis</i> sp.	cypress or falsecypress	57/68/69/83/84/605
Cl	<i>Chamaecyparis lawsoniana</i>	Lawson cypress	57
Cae	<i>Cornus alba</i> 'Elegantissima'	Siberian dogwood	257
Cse	<i>Cornus sericea</i>	red twig dogwood	-
Cav	<i>Corylus avellana</i>	European hazelnut	183
Cf	<i>Cotoneaster franchetti</i>	orange cotoneaster	105
Ch	<i>Cotoneaster horizontalis</i>	rockspray cotoneaster	106a
ClA	<i>Cotoneaster lactea</i>	milkflower cotoneaster	253
Csa	<i>Cotoneaster salicifolia</i>	willow leaved cotoneaster	204
Co	<i>Crataegus oxyacantha</i>	English hawthorn	12
Cu	<i>Cupressus</i> sp.	cypress	78
Cy	<i>Cytisus</i> sp.	brooms	47/157
D	<i>Deutzia</i> sp.	deutzia	146
Ep	<i>Eleagnus pungens</i>	thorny olive	249
Fs	<i>Fagus sylvatica</i>	common beech	13
Fsa	<i>Fagus sylvatica</i> 'Atropurpurea'	purple beech	14
F	<i>Forsythia</i> sp.	forsythia	170
Fe	<i>Fraxinus excelsior</i>	European ash	15
Fep	<i>Fraxinus excelsior</i> 'Pendula'	weeping European ash	19
Hs	<i>Hibiscus syriacus</i>	rose of Sharon	154
Hc	<i>Hypericum calycinum</i>	St. John's wort	159
Ia	<i>Ilex aquifolium</i>	English holly	21/243
Jn	<i>Juglans nigra</i>	black walnut	20

KEY	VEGETATION LATIN NAME	COMMON NAME	ABMC NUMBER
Jr	<i>Juglans regia</i>	English walnut	-
Jcp	<i>Juniperus chinensis</i> 'Pfitzeriana'	golden pfitzer juniper	92
Js	<i>Juniperus sabina</i>	savin juniper	82
Jv	<i>Juniperus virginiana</i>	eastern redcedar	59
Kj	<i>Kerria japonica</i>	Japanese kerria	135
Ld	<i>Larix decidua</i>	European larch	60
Lo	<i>Ligustrum ovalifolium</i>	California privet	129
Ljh	<i>Lonicera japonica</i> 'Halliana'	Hall's honeysuckle	116
Ln	<i>Lonicera nitida</i>	box honeysuckle	113
Ma	<i>Mahonia aquifolium</i>	Oregon grape holly	143
Mf	<i>Malus floribunda</i>	Japanese flowering crabapple	22
Mp	<i>Malus pumila</i>	common apple	30
N	<i>Nymphaea</i> sp.	waterlily	184
Oa	<i>Osmanthus aquifolium</i>	holly osmanthus	134
Pe	<i>Pelargonium peltatum</i>	ivy geranium	239
Pc	<i>Philadelphus</i> sp.	mock orange	140/141
Pa	<i>Picea abies</i>	Norway spruce	61
Pm	<i>Picea mariana</i>	black spruce	62
Pn	<i>Pinus nigra</i> 'Austriaca'	Austrian pine	65
Pac	<i>Platanus x acerifolia</i>	London planetree	2
P	<i>Prunus</i> sp.	plum	45
Pl	<i>Prunus laurocerasus</i>	cherry laurel	126
Plu	<i>Prunus lusitanica</i>	Portugal laurel	127
Pcp	<i>Prunus cerasifera</i> 'Pissardi'	purpleleaf plum	33
Pme	<i>Pseudotsuga menziesii</i>	Douglas fir	67
Pco	<i>Pyrus communis</i>	common pear	28
Q	<i>Quercus</i> sp.	oak	11
Rs	<i>Ribes sanguineum</i>	flowering currant	256
Rp	<i>Robinia psuedoacacia</i>	black locust	34/44/35
Rpo	<i>Rosa polyantha</i>	polyantha rose	181
Rf	<i>Rubus fruticosus</i>	European raspberry	165
S	<i>Salix</i> sp.	willow	38
Sv	<i>Spiraea x vanhoutei</i>	Vanhoutte spirea	117
Sr	<i>Symphoricarpos racemosus</i>	common snowberry	124
Sy	<i>Syringa</i> sp.	lilac	142
Ta	<i>Taxus</i> sp. (baccata or cuspidata)	English or Japanese yew	70/87
Tf	<i>Taxus fastigiata</i>	Irish yew	71
T	<i>Thuja</i> sp.	arborvitae	72/73/74/603/604
To	<i>Thuja occidentalis</i>	American arborvitae	72
Tor	<i>Thuja orientalis</i>	Chinese arborvitae	73
Tp	<i>Thuja plicata</i>	giant arborvitae	603
Tpl	<i>Tilia platyphyllos</i>	bigleaf linden	1
Tc	<i>Tsuga canadensis</i>	hemlock	77
Ug	<i>Ulmus glabra</i>	wych or Scots elm	-
Vt	<i>Viburnum tinus</i>	laurustinus	123