FLANDERS FIELD AMERICAN CEMETERY & MEMORIAL, CHAPEL
Wortegemseweg 117
Waregem
West Flanders
France

HALS US-7-B
HALS US-7-B

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

REDUCED COPIES OF MEASURED DRAWINGS

FIELD RECORDS

HISTORIC AMERICAN LANDSCAPES SURVEY
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HISTORIC AMERICAN LANDSCAPES SURVEY

FLANDERS FIELD AMERICAN CEMETERY & MEMORIAL, CHAPEL

HALS No. US-7-B

Location: Wortegemseweg 117, Waregem, West Flanders, Belgium

The coordinates for the Chapel are 50.873804 N, 03.453813 E, and they were obtained through Google Earth in August 2013 with, it is assumed, NAD 1983. There is no restriction on the release of the locational data to the public.

The Chapel faces west/southwest. To simplify cardinal directions used in this report, the principal façade will be identified as west.

Present Owner: The Belgian government granted use of the cemetery land in perpetuity, free of charge or taxation, to the United States Government. The American Battle Monuments Commission (ABMC) owns all buildings and capital improvements on the property.

Present Occupant: American Battle Monuments Commission (ABMC)

Present Use: Memorial chapel

Significance: Flanders Field American Cemetery & Memorial is one of eight overseas World War I cemeteries designed and administered by the American Battle Monuments Commission (ABMC), a federal agency created in 1923. During the 1920s Flanders Field became part of a larger effort 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 architects had already established the basic form of Flanders Field Cemetery, with a brick wall around a roughly rectangular site and the main access road oriented diagonally from the corner gate. The gate with carved stone pylons and a handsome brick Superintendent's Quarters were built by the War Department during 1923-24.

Like the GRS, ABMC was required to consult with the U.S. Commission of Fine Arts in creating permanent memorials overseas, including redesigning the existing War Department cemeteries with memorial chapels and other features. ABMC hired prominent French-born

American architect Paul P. Cret as its consulting architect in 1925. Cret guided every aspect of the ABMC memorial program from finalizing locations and selecting architects to inspecting construction and making maintenance recommendations. Cret also personally designed the Chapel and revised site plan for Flanders Field, with this construction taking place between 1928 and 1930. Cret placed the Chapel at the center of the revised central lawn, creating a new focal point for the site that incorporated the original placement of grave plots around the four sides.

The octagonal stripped classical Chapel sits on a pedestal-like terrace at the center of the sunken central lawn. The exterior is ornamented with inscriptions in three languages (English, French, and Flemish) and small bas reliefs by French sculptor Alfred Bottiau representing History, Grief, and Remembrance. The Chapel also features an elaborate marble interior with a mosaic tile ceiling. Through Cret, the architecture and landscapes of the ABMC display a sophisticated Beaux Arts Classical approach, with the Art Moderne details and forms that characterized some of the best civic architecture of the 1920s and 30s.

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

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION
A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: June 1928 - April 1930

2. Architect: Paul Phillippe Cret

3. Original and subsequent uses: Memorial Chapel at World War I American military cemetery.

4. Builder, contractor, suppliers: Lahalle et Levard, Paris, Supervising Architects
Alfred Bottiau, Paris, Sculptor for Exterior Bas Relief Panels

5. Original plans and construction: Paul P. Cret prepared multiple schemes for the Flanders Field Chapel during 1926. Although different in detail and emphasis, each scheme suggested the basic form of a classical Chapel with a modest footprint and striking elevation. After review by the Commission of Fine Arts and the ABMC in late 1926/early 1927, scheme C, an octagonal form with a high attic story and stripped classical detailing was approved. Additional review resulted in some changes to interior decoration, but design approved in early 1927 is essentially what was built.

6. Alterations and additions: The Flanders Field Chapel is unaltered except for routine repairs and maintenance. The original poured lead roof had to be replaced with rolled lead in 2012.

B. Historical Context: For detailed information on Flanders Field American Cemetery & Memorial see HALS No. US-7. For documentation on the Superintendent's Quarters at Flanders Field see HALS No. US-7-A.

Flanders Field American Cemetery & Memorial is one of eight overseas World War I cemeteries redesigned and administered by the American Battle Monuments Commission. Located in Waregem, Belgium, Flanders Field is the smallest World War I cemetery and the only one in Belgium. Soldiers buried at Flanders Field are from the 91st, 37th, 27th and 30th AEF Divisions who fought in the vicinity. The graves were laid out in four rectangular sections facing each other around a rectangular lawn. Each section was four rows deep and 23 wide, accommodating 368 plots.[1] The name "Flanders Field" comes from the famous poem written by Canadian physician and Lieutenant Colonel John McCrae after the Second Battle of Ypres in May 1915. There was interest naming an overseas American cemetery "Flanders Field" even before a Belgian site was selected in late 1921.[2] Another World War I cemetery is located outside London, England, and the remaining six in northern France. The eight cemeteries were initially laid out according to designs created by landscape architect George Gibbs, Jr., in consultation with the U.S. Commission of Fine Arts. Although employed by the War Department, Gibbs had private sector experience with the venerable landscape architecture firm Olmsted Brothers, of Brookline, Massachusetts.

Later each cemetery received a memorial chapel constructed under the auspices of the ABMC and its consulting architect, prominent French-born American architect Paul P. Cret. Cret was hired in early 1925 and also oversaw construction of eleven free-standing World War I memorials at various sites in the three countries. Cret personally designed the Chapel at Flanders Field as well as the revised site plan for the cemetery. He described his vision for the Flanders Field Chapel as starting with the existing arrangement of graves arranged around four sides of an open square, with an entrance on the diagonal. Cret concluded that "owing to this general arrangement, it was thought desirable to locate the chapel in the center of the open space, and to make it octagonal in shape, and fairly high."[3] As built in 1928-30, the white limestone Chapel sits like a jewel box in the center of the green lawn. Although quite diminutive in footprint, the Chapel is given visual presence by its height, largely solid walls, and stepped limestone pedestal.

Overseas Cemetery Chapel Building Program of the ABMC

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[1] Drawing, War Department - Graves Registration Service, "No. 1252-1063, American Cemetery - Flanders Field at Waereghem, Belgium - Grading Plan for Grounds and Method of Numbering Graves and Rows," (2 June 1922), RG 117 - Records of the American Battle Monuments Commission, Cartographic and Architectural Branch, National Archives and Records Administration II, College Park, MD [hereafter RG 117, Cartographic and Architectural Branch, NARA II].

[2] See preliminary drawing (1921), U.S. Commission of Fine Arts Files, and Gibbs' report, Typescript, (19 May 1921), Box 5, 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 Somme American Cemetery in Bony, France was referred to as "Flanders Field" for a brief period in 1921.

[3] Typescript, "Flanders Field Chapel at Waereghem, Belgium," (30 September 1927), Box 49, Entry 8 - World War I Cemetery Files, RG 117 - Records of the American Battle Monuments Commission, NARA II [hereafter Entry 8, RG 117, NARA II].

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. 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.[4] In June 1924 the Commission traveled to Europe to inspect the American military cemeteries and battlefields there (**Figure 1**). Prior to the trip they had 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.

ABMC felt that the efforts of the War Department were satisfactory, with well-arranged and cared for cemeteries, but the existing architecture and design needed improvement. In particular the caretaker's houses were deemed too plain and prominently situated. It was determined that each cemetery would receive a memorial chapel to serve as its main focal point. The walls, flagpoles, and site plan (particularly the interior paths and plantings) would also be upgraded. The 1925 *Annual Report* of the ABMC described the intended purpose of the chapels in upgrading the cemeteries:

> A chapel of nonsectarian character should be erected in each of the cemeteries. Such a building will serve many useful purposes. It will add a religious touch and give a sheltered place where those so inclined can go for a few moments of meditation and prayer. If properly constructed, it will give a focus to the cemetery and thus attract attention away from the houses which are now the outstanding architecture features. It will serve also as some slight testimonial of the Nation's debt to the men who are buried there.[5]

The report also mentioned the desirability of having a memorial to the missing on site, perhaps in the chapel itself. By fiscal year 1926, it was decided that the memorial to the missing would take the form of a tablet carved with names in each chapel. Numerous scholars have seen World War I as moment of cultural shift towards memorializing the individual, common soldier.[6] Often Great War memorials included individually inscribed names of the dead and missing. Beyond this requirement, chapel design was guided by the construction budget, which reflected the size

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[4] List of ABMC Commissioners, (19 September 1923), Box 4, Entry 17, RG 66, NARA I.

[5] American Battle Monuments Commission, *Annual Report of the American Battle Monuments Commission - Fiscal Year 1925* (Washington, DC: GPO, 1926), 17.

[6] See John R. Gillis, "Memory and Identity: The History of a Relationship," Daniel J. Sherman, "Art, Commerce, and the Production of Memory in France After World War I," and Thomas W. Laqueur, "Memory and Naming in the Great War," in *Commemorations: The Politics of National Identity*, ed. John R. Gillis (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994); Jay Winter, *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning: The Great War in European Cultural History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), esp. Chapter 4.

of each cemetery. The Flanders Field Chapel budget of $50,000 was the smallest, in keeping with the relative number of burials.[7]

Designing the Flanders Field Chapel

Prominent architect Paul Philippe Cret (1876-1945) was chosen as consulting architect to the ABMC, based largely on a recommendation from Charles Moore and the Commission of Fine Arts. Cret was an excellent choice for the job (**Figure 2**). 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. He was born in Lyons, France and trained at the *Écoles des Beaux Arts* in Lyons and in Paris. Cret 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. His most noteworthy pre-war buildings included the Pan-American Union in Washington, DC, a widely-praised, competition-winning design (1907, with Albert Kelsey), National Memorial Arch at Valley Forge (1914-17), and the Indianapolis Public Library (competition, 1914, with Zantzinger, Borie & Medary). Cret was in France when the war started and stayed to serve with the French Army from 1914-1919. Later in his service he functioned as a Lieutenant Liaison Office with the American Expeditionary Forces (AEF).[8] 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 institutional building types, Cret increasingly specialized in commemorative architecture. In 1919 he designed a modest but high profile memorial fountain for Quentin Roosevelt, son of former President Theodore Roosevelt, who was killed in action as a combat pilot in France.[9] His competition entry for the extensive 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.[10] Cret served as ABMC Consulting Architect from 1925 until his death in 1945. Cret's biographer, Theodore White, considers his design projects for the ABMC to be among his finest work.[11]

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[7] American Battle Monuments Commission, *Annual Report of the American Battle Monuments Commission - Fiscal Year 1926* (Washington, DC: GPO, 1927), 11.

[8] John Harbeson, "Paul Cret and Architectural Competitions," *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 25, no. 4 (December 1966): 306.

[9] A presentation drawing of the roadside fountain, shown in plan and in elevation, is found in Folder 967, Paul Phillippe Cret Papers, Athenaeum of Philadelphia, Philadelphia, PA.

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

[11] 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

ABMC asked Cret to travel to Europe in the summer of 1925 to examine potential sites, propose general schemes for memorials and chapels, and advise as to the best method of obtaining detailed plans. He visited nineteen potential monument sites and the 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.[12]

The ABMC also asked Cret to advise on French building practices and materials, and to recommend architects for the projects.[13]

Cret, accompanied by ABMC Secretary Price, visited each of the eight overseas American cemeteries to choose a location for a memorial chapel and make general recommendations for improvements. When Cret and Price arrived at Flanders Field, they would have seen the results of the War Department efforts to date (**Figure 3**). The Superintendent's Quarters, gate, and walls were in place, as were many immature plantings. Young Lombardy poplar trees (*Populus nigra pyramidalis*) lined the entrance drive and a plain flagpole on a round base sat at the end. The center lawn, the future location of the Chapel, was just a level rectangular grassy area surrounded by a narrow crushed stone path. A few young trees and small evergreen shrubs were planted near the corners (**Figure 4**). Each the grave area had four rows of wood crosses painted white.

Cret's report on Flanders Field shows that the changes he oversaw at that cemetery were largely conceived at the time of this initial visit. Cret writes:

> The general plan is not so successful as the majority of American cemeteries. The reception building is very near the entrance, and the flagpole blocks the entrance to the cemetery. This will be more objectionable when the trees have grown. Central square looks very empty.[14]

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were Cret's. See "American Battle Monuments France and Belgium, Paul P. Cret," *Architectural Forum* 56, no. 5 (May 1932): 473-476.

[12] Letter, Cret to Pershing, (11 April 1925), Box 143, Entry 13 - Decimal Subject File Concerning the Construction and Maintenance of Cemeteries and Monuments [hereafter Entry 13], RG 117, NARA II, College Park, MD.

[13] Letter, Cret to Pershing, (11 April 1925), Box 143, Entry 13, RG 117, NARA II.

[14] Typescript, Paul P. Cret, "The American Battle Monuments Commission Report on Survey in Europe May 15-August 21, 1925," (15 September 1925), 56, Box 2, Entry 3 - Annual Reports of the Commission, RG 117, NARA II [hereafter Cret, "Report on Survey in Europe," (1925)]

Cret recommended that the Chapel be placed at the center of the square, to be surrounded by the existing four sections of graves. The Chapel was to be symmetrical in all directions. The flagpole would be moved opposite the house where it could be seen from the road and not block the view of the Chapel. He considered placing the Chapel at the far corner of the cemetery but rejected that idea as inferior due to the fact that it was too small, would not help the main portion of the cemetery, and would eventually be blocked by trees.[15]

Selecting architects for the various jobs had not been done while Cret was away as he suggested, but proceeded in the fall of 1925. 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."[16] It noted that both open and limited competitions had been considered but rejected. Competitions were the cornerstone of Cret's Beaux Arts education and his teaching methods at the University of Pennsylvania, but he adapted to the unique demands of the ABMC.[17] 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 terminated and the architect paid $250 plus travel expenses.[18]

The final list of ABMC architects and their projects would continue to change over the next year or so. At first Cret proposed that Howard Van Doren Shaw, of Chicago, design the Flanders Field Chapel, as well as the Naval Monument in Brest, France. He assigned himself the Château-Thierry monument.[19] In May 1926, Cret was to design the large monument at Château-Thierry as well as smaller monuments at Juvigny and South of Soissons.[20] 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.[21]

The various firms and their projects were published in the ABMC *Annual Report* for fiscal year 1926.[22] Cret was now listed as the architect for Flanders Field Chapel. This was likely due to the death of Howard Van Doren Shaw in May 1926, and the elimination of the two small monuments originally assigned to Cret. Shaw's successor firm, Howard Shaw Associates, did take over design of the Brest Naval Monument with Ralph Milman as the architect of record for the project. Flanders Field was to be the smallest of the chapels, allocated only $50,000 of

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[15] Cret, "Report on Survey in Europe," (1925), 56-57.
[16] ABMC, *Annual Report 1926*, 23.
[17] See John Harbeson, "Paul Cret and Architectural Competitions," *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 25, no. 4 (December 1966): 305-306.
[18] Letter, Cret to Price, (2 November 1925), Box 143, Entry 13, RG 117, NARA II.
[19] Letter, Cret to Price, (1 October 1925), Box 143, Entry 13, RG 117, NARA II.
[20] 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.
[21] Extract of Letter, Price to North, (10 May 1926), Box 153, Entry 13, RG 117, NARA II.
[22] ABMC, *Annual Report 1926*, 11.

the $1 million appropriation for this purpose. The largest amount, $300,000, went to the chapel at Meuse-Argonne Cemetery, the largest American overseas cemetery. 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.

The journal *Architectural Forum* published a "Memorial Buildings and Monuments Reference Number" in December 1926, right when Cret was designing the Flanders Field Chapel. An article by Cret in the issue focused on traditional memorial objects -- columns, shafts, cenotaphs and tablets. However he spends some time discussing the larger purpose of memorials, echoing the theme that a proper memorial required "permanency and a clear and arresting expression of the commemorative idea."[23] In Cret's view of memorials:

> In these works, which even in their strongest and noblest examples are but frail symbols of man's eternal hope to secure his glories and perpetuate his memory to future generations beyond the grasp of time, utility is, perhaps, best subordinated to beauty and simplicity of form, and to that reverent care in execution for which even time shows respect.[24]

Cret's typical attention to simple and beautiful forms is well-illustrated by his design for Flanders Field Chapel. Architectural historian Elizabeth Grossman notes in her study of Cret's civic architecture that he had a talent for "cut[ing] through the complexities and ambiguities that must accrue to any program owing to the circumstances of institutional history and the conflicting interests of the building's constituencies, and [offering] a design that seemed by its simplicity to reveal the immediate character of the institution."[25] Cret's initial concept for the placement and form of the Flanders Field Chapel would prevail, and according to Grossman, create the illusion that it had determined the cemetery plan.[26] However the specific details of the design still remained to be determined.

ABMC Secretary X. H. Price submitted Cret's preliminary designs for a chapel at Flanders Field cemetery to the Commission of Fine Arts in October 1926.[27] CFA Chair Charles Moore responded that the Commission favored "Scheme C" as having "a simplicity and charm to it that makes it altogether appropriate," although a formal vote does not seem to have been taken at this time.[28] Cret then submitted a revised design which was approved by the ABMC at its

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[23] Paul P. Cret, "Memorials - Columns, Shafts, Cenotaphs and Tablets," *Architectural Forum* 45, no. 6 (December 1926), 331.
[24] Cret, "Memorials," 336.
[25] Grossman, *The Civic Architecture of Paul Cret*, 10.
[26] 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): 138. Grossman's article provides a useful overview of the ABMC's role in building the World War I chapels and monuments.
[27] Letter, X. H. Price to Commission of Fine Arts, (11 October 1926), Box 49, Entry 8, RG 117, NARA II; CFA Minutes, (14-16 October 1926), Entry 1 - Microfilm Copy of Minutes of the Commission, 1910-1990, RG 66, NARA I, Washington, DC [hereafter CFA Minutes].
[28] Letter, Charles Moore to Price, (16 October 1926), Box 49, Entry 8, RG 117, NARA II.

December 21, 1926 meeting and by the CFA in early January. Only exterior forms were being considered at this time, as the CFA noted it was still waiting to see studies of the interior.[29]

Sketches and proposal drawings in the Cret Papers at the University of Pennsylvania Architectural Archives show several proposed versions of the Flanders Field Chapel, although they are not identified by scheme letter. All these designs share a Classical influence and a symmetrical form with a stepped pedestal and a distinctive vertical presence. One sketch shows an octagonal scheme with an inset doorway that resembles the final design, but it is larger in scale and topped by what looks a small temple with columns and panels of bas reliefs (**Figure 5**). A proposal drawing similar to the final design shows a form with a square footprint and plain walls except for a band of bas relief near ground level (**Figure 6**). Here again the scale is much bigger, with a stepped roofline crowned by a tomb-like structure. Another octagonal proposal has a lower, wider base with an open tempietto rising above (**Figure 7**). A third octagonal design features a tall frieze with bas relief sculpture and a low-pitched octagonal roof (**Figure 8**). A large winged figure is located at the peak of the roof. This design may be the "Scheme C" initially recommended by the CFA, although it would evolve into a simpler composition with a more Art Moderne approach to the decorative details. Grossman sees this drawing, as well as the final Chapel design, as variations on the Temple of the Winds located in Athens. That Classical building is a tall, octagonal tower with a frieze of bas relief sculpture around the attic level.[30]

Cret continued to revise his design over the next few months, with input from the CFA regarding the proportions of the door and window, the overall height, and other matters. Price noted to Cret after the February 10, 1927 meeting that ABMC had "decided that the interior of these chapels should be made Christian in character, although non-denominational," perhaps giving Cret further information about a desired approach to the interior.[31] Cret submitted several other revisions to the ABMC and CFA, with final conceptual approval for the exterior coming in March 1927. During the same month, Cret began sending the preliminary designs for this and other chapels to Paris for estimates.[32]

A final design rendering of the Chapel in the collection of the Commission of Fine Arts files is stamped February 17, 1927 (**Figure 9**). A very similar rendering was also published in the 1927 guidebook.[33] The elegant exterior of the Chapel stands in foreshortened perspective in front of a solid allée of trees and rows of Latin cross headstones. A bas relief of a Classical oil lamp appears in the frieze over the entrance instead of the subsequent two line "GREET THEM EVER/WITH GRATEFUL HEARTS" inscription. The door has a more stylized foliage motif but appears to be the same type of bronze grille as actually installed. The form and other details of the Chapel appear to be identical to what was built, including the low terrace with clipped dwarf hedges, a geometric stone grille over the window, and lion head drain scuppers in the attic story.

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[29] CFA Minutes, (6 January 1927).
[30] Grossman, "Architecture for a Public Client," 138.
[31] Letter, Price to Cret, (10 February 1927), Box 49, Entry 8, RG 117, NARA II.
[32] See correspondence in Box 49, Entry 8, RG 117, NARA II.
[33] See American Battle Monuments Commission, *A Guide to the American Battle Fields in Europe* (Washington, DC: GPO, 1927), 253.

As 1927 proceeded, Cret continued in his duties as consulting architect to all the ABMC projects. The chapel projects progressed most quickly, since choosing and acquiring sites for the monuments took much more time. Cret also was working on the design for the Château-Thierry monument at this time. In August, working drawings for Château-Thierry and Flanders Field Chapel were nearly ready.[34] A set of detailed drawings for the Chapel dated August 14, 1927 show the structure largely as constructed (**Figure 10**). On the exterior only the blank frieze over the entrance stands out as different. On the interior these drawings show different design motifs for the marble floor, interior bronze grilles, and decorative ceiling. Here the mosaic ceiling depicts a winged figure standing on a pedestal in front of a colonnade instead of the oil lamp and doves of heaven design actually used.

In February 1928, a scale model of the Flanders Field Chapel interior was approved by the ABMC.[35] Planning moved forward with the inscriptions for the Chapel, which were distributed to committee members and revised over the summer, including the exterior dedication inscription in English, French, and Flemish and the names of the missing for the interior. Per Cret's suggestion, the names of the missing were spread onto two panels, one on each side wall of the Chapel.[36] ABMC had asked Cret to advise the chapel architects to complete the panels with the names of the missing at the last moment since "many of the bodies classified as missing are still being found and identified."[37] It was determined that the inscribed tablets would be handled as a special contract later, although the architects needed to plan for this addition. It was April 1930 before the list of names was carved on the tablets for the Flanders Field Chapel.[38]

The decoration carved into the marble panel over the Chapel altar also generated some discussion. There seemed to be general agreement on the motif of a crusaders sword with a long blade and heavy hilt, pointed downward. The hilt included a medallion space filled by a six-pointed Star of David in a design submitted by Cret. Price objected to Pershing:

> The panel is attractive enough but there is a question concerning the 6-pointed star which appears at the top. This is evidently to satisfy Jewish objections as is also the use of the sword instead of the cross. My personal idea is that the star and semi-circle should be omitted. There does not seem to me to be any consistency in suppressing all Christian symbols and then using a Jewish symbol in a conspicuous place. Also, the panel would probably look better without them. The question is referred to you for decision. It might be an interesting one to present to the Commission for discussion if there is to be a meeting in the near future.[39]

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[34] Letter, Cret to Price, (10 August 1927), Box 49, Entry 8, RG 117, NARA II.
[35] Extract from ABMC Proceedings, 15 February 1928, Box 49, Entry 8, RG 117, NARA II. This model does not seem to survive and photographs have not been located.
[36] Correspondence from August and September 1928 shows the conversation between Cret and Price regarding this issue. See Box 49, Entry 8, RG 117, NARA II.
[37] Letter, Acting Chief Clerk, ABMC to Cret, (26 September 1927), Box 49, Entry 8, RG 117, NARA II.
[38] Letter, Cret to Lahalle and Levard, 23 April 1930, Box 49, Entry 8, RG 117, NARA II.
[39] Letter, Price to Pershing, (16 October 1928), Box 49, Entry 8, RG 117, NARA II.

Late in 1928, this issue was still pending and Cret was asked to send sketches for Pershing's review showing treatment of this section of the carving replacing the six-point star with other motifs.[40] Cret submitted one scheme with the star replaced by palms and another extending the engraved band.[41] As executed the sword has a five-point star within a small circle on the hilt.[42]

Constructing the Flanders Field Chapel

The permanent Carrara marble headstones were fabricated in Italy and installed at the ABMC cemeteries during 1927-28 under the direction of GRS engineers. The work at Flanders Field was done from January to March 1928.[43] The site was now ready for construction of the Chapel and related improvements. Contracts for the Chapel stone, construction and other work improving the cemetery were let in June 1928.[44] The Paris firm of Lahalle et Levard acted as supervising architects for the Flanders Field work and Cret's other two ABMC projects - the Château-Thierry and Bellicourt monuments. Pierre Lahalle was Cret's brother-in-law; on Cret's recommendation his firm also worked as supervising architects for other ABMC commissioned architects including George Howe, Egerton Swartwout, Arthur Loomis Harmon, and Thomas Harlan Ellett.[45] In September 1928 Price toured the active ABMC construction sites with ABMC Commissioner Senator Reed. He reported to Pershing:

> [Senator Reed] seemed very well pleased with the way the work is going even though, except for Brookwood, there is very little to see as the work is now almost entirely on foundations….All of the work of the Commission is going along very well. The usual problems which come up in construction work and those due to the French temperament are ever present but so far have caused no serious trouble.[46]

Project management was handled by the ABMC Paris office. It was staffed by officers from the Quartermaster Corps and the Corps of Engineers, with support personnel of local national civilian clerks. Price personally took over management of this office around this time and remained in that position until December 1934.

In October 1928 Price reported to Cret on the Chapel's progress. The bronze doors and radiator grilles were fully approved, as were the exterior relief sculptures by Parisian sculptor Alfred Bottiau. Problems with defects in the cut stone were hampering work, an issue that would

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[40] Letter, Price to Cret, (21 November 1928), Box 49, Entry 8, RG 117, NARA II.
[41] Letter, Cret to Pershing, (3 December 1928), Box 49, Entry 8, RG 117, NARA II.
[42] A drawing showing the revised ornament is located in the Flanders Field Files. See Drawing 78, ABMC, *Chapelle de Waereghem*, *Revision de L'ornement Panneau Dessus L'Autel*, (December 1929).
[43] Quartermaster Corps - GRS, "Quarterly Report of the Flanders Field American National Cemetery," (31 January 1928 and 31 March 1928), Box 647, Entry 1891 - General Correspondence Geographic File, 1922-35, RG 92 - Records of the Office of the Quartermaster General, NARA II.
[44] Memorandum, Price to Pershing, (12 June 1928), Box 153, Entry 13, RG 117, NARA II.
[45] Letter, Price to Arthur Loomis Harlan, (19 January 1933), Box 3, Series I - Correspondence, MS Collection 295 - Paul P. Cret Papers, The Athenaeum of Philadelphia, Philadelphia, PA. This family relationship caused some awkwardness when ABMC later became dissatisfied with their performance.
[46] Letter, Price to Pershing, (28 September 1928), Box 153, Entry 13, RG 117, NARA II.

reappear throughout construction.[47] The Pouillenay limestone chosen for the Chapel's exterior had many defects and imperfections that were not visible until it was nearly finished. It would not be acceptable to have visible patches on cracks or holes. Price asked if perhaps the design could be changed to accommodate a rougher finish that would hide some of the small holes and imperfections. In his response, Cret agreed that the pedestal and the bottom three courses could be changed to a rougher finish, but cautioned Price against imposing too strict of a standard. He explained that he expected some natural imperfections and specifically chose Pouillenay stone to give the building surface texture. Cret reassured Price that it was a high quality stone and the overall effect would be very pleasing.[48] The natural texture of the stone is evident in the finished building.[49]

Price sounds defensive and irritated in his response to Cret, which was not uncommon. He protested that he had a responsibility to reject stone that did not match samples and he was not informed in a timely manner that Pouillenay stone contains many geodes and natural imperfections. Price also noted that George Howe had changed his specifications for the Bony Cemetery Chapel from Pouillenay to Vaurion limestone after hearing of the difficulties with Flanders Field. Price repeated a request that Cret make a trip to Europe to personally see to some of these matters.[50]

Cret sailed to Europe later that month in order to address the many questions being raised by Price, particularly regarding stone for various projects. Meanwhile, Price notified Pershing that in addition to the stone problems with the Flanders Field Chapel, there was some tension between the ABMC and GRS personnel on site. Price said, not unsympathetically, that cooperation with the GRS was difficult because they are "interested in the present appearance of the cemeteries and our work is such that this appearance must be damaged while construction work is going on."[51]

Cret visited Waregem with Price in December 1928. Price wrote to Pershing that the grading work and paths at this cemetery were almost complete. Once the pulleys for the new flagpole were obtained that installation could be finished as well. The Chapel foundations were complete, but one of the reasons Cret made the trip was to choose a "new character" of stone for the first course. Price explained that the existing first course and around twenty large cut stones had been rejected, a very serious matter. He was confident that Cret's on-site consultation would settle the matter.[52]

Work proceeded very slowly in the first half of 1929. In July 1929, Price again complained about the progress of Flanders Field Chapel where "work has been unduly delayed

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[47] Letter, Price to Cret, (16 October 1928), Box 49, Entry 8, RG 117, NARA II.
[48] Letter, Cret to Price, (5 November 1928), Box 49, Entry 8, RG 117, NARA II.
[49] Working drawings for the paving of the exterior terrace in limestone and the interior floors in marble were approved on September 28, 1928. ABMC Files.
[50] Letter, Price to Cret, (6 November 1928), Box 49, Entry 8, RG 117, NARA II.
[51] Letter, Price to Pershing, (16 November 1928), Box 153, Entry 13, RG 117, NARA II.
[52] Letter, Price to Pershing, (24 December 1928), Box 153, Entry 13, RG 117, NARA II.

on account of a dispute with the stone contractor who insists on delivering inferior materials."[53] Other than the Chapel, he considered the cemetery improvements complete. A photograph accompanying his report shows just the foundation and first course of the Chapel complete, with many blocks of limestone on the ground waiting for use (**Figure 11**). The Cararra marble headstones were in place and the rest of the cemetery was in much better condition at this time. A photograph from July 16, 1929 shows one of the rond points, complete with flagstone path, stone benches, and memorial urn (**Figure 12**). Another photograph dated August 1, 1929 shows the completed flagpole installation, including the brick terrace and associated plantings (**Figure 13**).

By October, Price reported much better progress on the Chapel:

> The chapel at Waereghem is taking shape very rapidly now. The stone question was turned over to Dr. Cret during his recent visit to Europe for solution and he has accepted many stone previously refused. Under present conditions it is hoped to have the roof on the chapel soon after the first of the year. The planting at the cemetery is now being done by the GRS according to plans prepared by the Commission. As soon as this planting is finished and the chapel completed, all necessary work at Waereghem will have been done.[54]

A photograph accompanying this report, taken on September 12, 1929, shows the Chapel walls about one third complete (**Figure 14**). Numerous cut stones and a block and tackle set up show the work in progress. Another photograph from October 19th shows rapid progress on the Chapel, with the walls at half height, including the stone screen over the doorway (**Figure 15**).

In addition to the general interest in completing the overseas memorials and cemeteries, now a decade after the end of the war, ABMC officials were feeling pressure from the planned Gold Star Mothers pilgrimage in the summer of 1930. In a January 1930 progress report, Price wrote:

> …we are making the greatest efforts to completing all features possible before the visit of the Gold Star Mothers next summer. It is greatly regretted that this visit was not postponed a year, as the Chairman of the Commission informally suggested to those concerned. If it had been postponed until 1931 the impression on the Gold Star Mothers would have been one thousand times better, as the work which the Commission is doing will make these cemeteries exceptionally beautiful.[55]

Once the Federal government took the extraordinary step of providing trips to Europe for mothers whose sons had died while serving with the AEF, these women were not interested in delaying their travels further to give ABMC time to complete its work. Flanders Field Cemetery

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[53] X. P. Price, "Memorandum for the Commission," (8 July 1929), Box 153, Entry 13, RG 117, NARA II. The progress chart included with this memo shows Waregem chapel as two-fifths complete on July 1, 1929.
[54] X. P. Price, "Memorandum for the Commission," (10 October 1929), Box 153, Entry 13, RG 117, NARA II.
[55] X. P. Price, "Memorandum for the Commission," (10 January 1930), Box 153, Entry 13, RG 117, NARA II.

was on track to be completed in the spring (**Figure 16**). The roof was about to be placed on the Chapel and the remaining planting was scheduled to be completed by June. Price also complained that at most sites they were finding that many items completed by the GRS needed to be redone, such as installing new flagpoles or gateways and redoing water and drainage systems.

The final touches were being put on the Chapel in the spring of 1930 (**Figure 17**). An April progress report described the Chapel as complete except for the lists of the missing on the interior tablets. The planting and other landscape features were also complete. Price noted, "this cemetery looks very well indeed and has been greatly improved."[56] Cret and Price made an inspection of the Flanders Field site in late July 1930. They compiled a list of minor changes and additions, but the ABMC improvements to the cemetery were largely complete at this time. At the Chapel, it was noted that the door would stick on hot days, a special pole was needed to operate the window, and the center of the bronze door panels should be gilded. Six flags were also recommended for the interior of the Chapel.[57]

The total cost of the Flanders Field Chapel was $64,146.97, with the largest single item being $24,532.65 for stone. Cret's fee for this job was $6,000.[58] Although pleased to see the job completed, Price had many complaints about Georges Levard and the last few problems with finishing the Chapel, particularly getting the bronze work done properly. He wrote a scathing letter to Cret: "[Levard] is of little or no use as he cannot handle the French contractors, is not a good inspector, is very prejudiced, does not seem to have our interests at heart and never loses an opportunity to try to make us pay as much as possible for the work on which he advises us."[59] In 1932 Price was still complaining about the last few corrections to the bronze work, noting to Cret that he had to see to it personally.[60] A bigger fight seemed to be building between Price and Lahalle & Levard over setting accounts and turning over drawings. Ultimately there would be litigation between the firm and ABMC, causing considerable embarrassment to Cret.[61]

ABMC During the 1930s

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[56] X. P. Price, "Memorandum for the Commission," (10 April 1930), Box 153, Entry 13, RG 117, NARA II.

[57] Typescript, "Notes Made During the Inspection of Waereghem Cemetery Made by Dr. Cret & Major Price on July 24, 1930," (1 August 1930), Box 49, Entry 8, RG 117, NARA II. In the fall it was determined that 2 American, 1 Belgian, 1 French, and 1 Italian flags would be used. Cret thanked Price for his careful attention to these final details. See Letter, Price to Cret, (5 November 1930), and Letter, Cret to Price, (7 November 1930), Box 49, Entry 8, RG 117, NARA II.

[58] "Estimated Cost of Memorials," (6 May 1930), Box 153, Entry 13, RG 117, NARA II. There was no remaining work listed for Flanders Field.

[59] Letter, Price to Cret, (16 May 1930), Box 49, Entry 8, RG 117, NARA II. In another letter in the same box dated May 19, 1930, Price elaborates that Levard had the wrong design fabricated for the bronze grilles.

[60] Letter, Price to Cret, (21 March 1932), Box 49, Entry 8, RG 117, NARA II. See also in same location, Letters, Price to Cret, (14 May 1932), and Cret to Price (5 May 1933).

[61] Price and his ABMC colleagues ended up being very dissatisfied with Lahalle & Levard, feeling that they (particularly Georges Levard) were unqualified and dishonest. This rift caused difficulties between Cret and the Commission, particularly after Lahalle & Levard sued the U.S. Government for payment in 1932. This litigation was not resolved until 1936. See Typescript, "General Outline of the Services of Lahalle & Levard, Architects, In Connection with the Memorials Constructed By The American Battle Monuments Commission in France," (c. 1934), and miscellaneous related correspondence in Box 143, Entry 13; and Box 49, Entry 8, RG 117, NARA II. In the letter from the Athenaeum collection cited above, Cret apologized to Arthur Loomis Harlan and expressed regret that Levard was pursuing legal action against his advice.

As construction of the Flanders Field Chapel neared completion in early 1930, Cret turned renewed attention to the planting plan for the cemetery. The firm of Adams et Cie from Paris served as horticultural consultants at Flanders Field and prepared a planting plan inventory in the late 1920s. Many trees and other specimen plantings had been in place for several years. Cret assessed the existing conditions and the effect he was trying to achieve, revising the detailed plant lists for his plans. Cret's opinion was not only sought on the overall plan and large plantings, but on the smaller scale plantings. He requested the dwarf English boxwood (*Buxus sempervirens* 'Suffructicosa') and beds of clipped English ivy (*Hedera helix*) still in use at the Chapel pedestal (**Figure 18**). A Flanders Field site plan updated to May 1933 shows the completed ABMC redesign of the Flanders Field as well as some of the early adjustments (**Figure 19**). The narrow opus incertum flag stone paths extend from the Chapel through the corners of the lawn to the entrance drive and rond points. As conceived by Cret and still maintained today, the landscape of Flanders Field is most formal at the center around the Chapel and graves, with square clipped privet and English yew hedges, pollarded linden trees, and shaped yews and other evergreens. The curving edges of the massifs and plantings left to grow in more naturalistic shapes give the outer lawns a more informal character.

In 1934, an Executive Order transferred full administrative control of the overseas military cemeteries from the War Department to the ABMC. 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. Shortly thereafter, Cret approved Price's suggestion to put a cross and vases on the altar of the Chapel. Cret only cautioned that the cross be small to keep with the diminutive scale of the Chapel's interior. A brass cross and two simple brass vases were purchased from R. Giessler Inc., a distributor of church furnishings based in New York City.[62] These objects remain extant in the Chapel (**Figure 20**).

An extensive article written by General Pershing describing the work of the ABMC was published in *National Geographic Magazine* in 1934. Regarding the chapels at the eight cemeteries, Pershing noted that they "likewise 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."[63] "Peaceful" Flanders Field Cemetery receives a brief mention in the article, particularly emphasizing its flower beds and "classic" chapel.[64]

Cret's design for the diminutive Flanders Field Chapel is a masterful study in the stripped Classicism that was coming to characterize his work by the 1930s. Fellow Philadelphia architect George Howe (with his firm Mellor, Meigs, and Howe) used a similar Art Moderne vocabulary for the chapel at the Somme Cemetery in Bony, France. This chapel featured a stepped

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[62] Letter, Price to R. Geissler, Inc., (18 February 1935), Box 49, Entry 8, RG 117, NARA II. The Ten Commandments Tablets also found on the altar were added in the late twentieth century to address concerns from Jewish organizations.
[63] John J. Pershing, "Our National War Memorials in Europe," *National Geographic Magazine* 55, no. 1 (January 1934): 1.
[64] Pershing, 25.

pyramidal roof and stylized forms done in smooth limestone. The Somme chapel is more severely modern than Flanders Field, but shares similar proportions and scale. In contrast, the large chapel designed for the Aisne-Marne Cemetery in Belleau, France by the Boston firm of Cram and Ferguson exhibited Romanesque flavor with a tall square tower and rusticated stonework. Oise-Aisne American Cemetery in Fere-en-Tardenois (near Reims), France also had a Romanesque chapel by Cram and Ferguson. Very different in form than Aisne-Marne, this chapel has a curved, open arcade at the center flanked by two pink and gray sandstone pavilions. Louis Ayres of the New York firm York and Sawyer also used a Romanesque vocabulary for the Meuse-Argonne Chapel near Verdun, the largest American overseas cemetery. This low-slung chapel has large terraces and open loggias.

The remaining three chapels each featured more traditional Neoclassical architectural vocabulary. Charles Platt designed a temple front structure for the Suresnes Cemetery outside of Paris. Egerton Swartwout's chapel for the Brookwood Cemetery in England also featured a prominent temple pediment. A circular open colonnade is located at the center of Thomas Harlan Ellett's chapel at St. Mihiel Cemetery in Thiaucourt, France. Solid rectangular flanking pavilions with smooth limestone walls link this chapel to the stripped Classical tendencies of Cret and Howe's work for the ABMC. Richly colored mosaics on the interior recall the Romanesque Revival emphasis of other projects.

A formal dedication of Flanders Field American Cemetery and Memorial took place on August 8, 1937. The Belgian Prime Minister, Paul van Zeeland, U.S. Senator F. Ryan Duffy (D-Wisconsin), and many other dignitaries were in attendance, with the pedestal of the Chapel serving as a stage (**Figure 21**). A tradition of Memorial Day events, with local school children singing the American National Anthem, had also emerged at Flanders Field. The ABMC cemeteries and memorials were all officially dedicated this 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.[65]

The guidebook released by ABMC in 1927 was updated and expanded in 1938. The new version included photographs of the completed chapels and monuments.[66]

Flanders Field During World War II

As another European conflict threatened to erupt into World War II, Flanders Field Cemetery again found itself in a war zone. On May 10, 1940 Germany invaded Belgium and Holland. The ABMC European Office had each of their sites put evacuation plans in place in

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[65] 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.
[66] American Battle Monuments Commission, *American Armies and Battlefields in Europe: A History, Guide, and Reference Book* (Washington, DC: GPO, 1938).

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 their own judgment.[67] German troops were at Flanders Field several times from May 23-28. They went through the house, broke windows, and took gasoline, bicycles belonging to the local gardeners, and some small items, but the cemetery was otherwise unharmed.[68] These events at Flanders Field were characterized by Major Holle as the "only deliberate aggression" experienced at the ABMC sites.[69]

ABMC officials were forced to leave France entirely in May 1941.[70] Care of the ABMC sites in France was transferred to the French Office of the Veterans' Secretary General, Military Graves Service. Similar arrangements were made for Flanders Field with the Swiss Legation in Brussels. Superintendent William Mozes (or Moses) left Flanders Field on May 7, 1941 and one of his Belgian employees, Achiel Adams, moved into the house to keep watch over the site. A Belgian gardener, Mr. Verplancke, also continued to protect and maintain the cemetery. In 1942, the Germans transferred responsibility for Flanders Field to the Belgian Ministry of the Interior and Public Health.[71] As the Allies regained control of the relevant French and Belgian territory in 1944, 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 Monument sustained significant damage from American artillery while the Germans were using it for an observation post. At Flanders Field, there were 12 temporary burials in grave area A. These burials of American aviators were done by British troops. An inspection report praised the conditions, noting that "the assistant caretaker, Mr. Adams, has kept the cemetery, including buildings, lawn, trees and shrubbery in excellent condition under very adverse conditions."[72] In September 1944 part of a battery of British field artillery was using the Superintendent's Quarters and other buildings on site, but they moved on shortly thereafter without causing any damage.

Price (now a Colonel) 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 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."[73] His most ambitious recommendation was that as soon as the current war with Germany ended, a

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[67] Letter No. 2592-P, Major Charles Holle, (22 May 1940) and Cablegram, (11 July 1940), Box 49, Entry 8, RG 117, NARA II.
[68] Major Holle, Diary Notes - Enclosure to Letter No. 2601-P, (29 July 1940), Box 49, Entry 8, RG 117, NARA II.
[69] Extract of Letter, Holle to Pershing, (14 July 1940), Box 49, Entry 8, RG 117, NARA II.
[70] Memorandum, Mott to Acting Secretary, ABMC, (8 August 1941), Box 133, Entry 10 - Monthly Reports of Paris Office, RG 117, NARA II.
[71] See Correspondence, Box 132, Entry 10, RG 117, NARA II.
[72] Office of Quartermaster, "Report of Inspection - American Cemeteries and Battle Monuments, Northern France and Belgium," Box 133, Entry 10, RG 117, NARA II.
[73] Memorandum, Price to Commanding General, Army Service Forces, (7 October 1944), Box 133, Entry 10, RG 117, NARA II.

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."[74]

After seeing the reports that most of the ABMC World War I sites remained in good condition, General Dwight D. Eisenhower sent his congratulations to Pershing in a widely publicized letter.[75] At the end of 1946, ABMC was attending to some of the deferred maintenance on its structures. Proposed projects at Waregem included repointing the stone gate pylons and repainting the gate, repairs to the flagpole base and terrace, and realignment of stone curbs. The Chapel required roof repairs, a replacement piece of stained glass, an electrical inspection, and regilding of the inscriptions on exterior and interior. However procurement of enough gold leaf proved to be difficult. The ABMC Consulting Architect was now John Harbeson, Cret's architectural partner and former student. Cret had continued to serve in that capacity, with some brief interruptions, until his death in 1945.[76] However, his level of activity had been diminished by poor health and the war in the proceeding few years.[77] Harbeson was the lead partner in Cret's successor firm, Harbeson, Hough, Livingston, & Larson.

ABMC's mission expanded greatly with the addition of World War II cemeteries. With Harbeson's guidance, the ABMC again oversaw construction of multiple overseas American military cemeteries and memorials. 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.[78] 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 Flanders Field were quite minimal, consisting mainly of routine maintenance. The additional stone benches around the center lawn were installed in the late 1950s, and nearly match the original

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[74] Memorandum, Price to Commanding General, Army Service Forces, (7 October 1944), Box 133, Entry 10, RG 117, NARA II.
[75] Letter, Eisenhower to Pershing, (11 October 1944), Box 133, Entry 10, RG 117, NARA II.
[76] 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.
[77] 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.
[78] 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.

ones.[79] The Superintendent's Quarters were substantially renovated starting in the early 1960s and again in the mid-1970s.[80] Other repairs during the late 1970s included repointing the perimeter wall and Chapel terrace, and regilding the inscriptions on the Chapel.[81] In the late 1990s a major new service building replaced the original greenhouse and service sheds, greatly increasing the scale of this feature and encroaching on the historic landscape. Maintenance of the Chapel, plantings, and landscape features has continued to be meticulous, making Flanders Field an enduring tribute to the sacrifices of World War I.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement

1. Architectural character: The Flanders Field Chapel is a limestone building with stylized Classical detailing including a tall entablature, pilasters, and a stone grille over the only window. It has an octagonal footprint with four long and four short sides and sits on a low octagonal terrace in the sunken lawn at the center of the four grave areas. It serves as the focal point of Flanders Field Cemetery. The Chapel faces west/southwest towards the entrance drive. To simplify cardinal directions used in this report, the principal façade will be considered west.

2. Condition of fabric: Very good.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Overall dimensions: 36 feet, 6 inches high (from ground)
   23 feet, 7 inches across (with pedestal)
   53 feet, 1 1/2 inches across (with terrace)

2. Foundations: The Chapel's structural foundations are concrete (*béton de ciment*) footings.[82] The exterior limestone foundations rise from a low terrace to form a stepped octagonal pedestal. The terrace and first tall course of stone are labeled on construction drawings as Rocville stone. The first pedestal course has a rougher finish. The southwest corner of this course (to the right of the doorway) has the date inscription:

AD 1930
AMERICAN BATTLE MONUMENTS COMMISSION

[79] Drawing, "*Bancs Supplementaries*," (22 January 1958), Drawing Files, Flanders Field.
[80] Drawing 108/38, "Flanders Field Superintendent's Quarters, Addition and Modification, (3 August 1977); Drawing 108/36 "Flanders Field Superintendent's Quarters, Modifications," (3 September 1976); "Specifications for Improvement and Modifications to Quarters at The American Cemetery and Memorial, Flanders Field, Waregem, Belgium," (3 September 1976), Drawing Files, Flanders Field.
[81] ABMC, *Annual Report of the American Battle Monuments Commission, Fiscal Year 1979* (Washington, DC: GPO, 1980), 67.
[82] Paul P. Cret, and Lahalle et Levard, "*Détails de la Chapelle, Chapelle de Waereghem, Belgique*," (14 August 1927), ABMC Files.

PAUL P. CRET ARCHITECT

This inscription is done in a serif font that decreases in size from top to bottom. The second layer of the pedestal steps in and is formed by a course and a half of Pouillenay limestone with a smoother finish. There are three by fourteen inch rectangular vents with metal grates at the base of the three longer walls. Two small round arch vents with metal grates flank the doorway.

3. Walls: The Chapel walls consist of large blocks of white Pouillenay stone (a French limestone) laid with tight joints and regular coursing. The stone is smoothly finished but retains texture through natural imperfections such as fossils and geodes. The octagonal footprint has uneven sides which creates narrower walls at the corners of the building. The clean, simple form of the walls is emphasized by smooth monumental pilasters and a tall Classical entablature with parapet.

   The main (west) façade has the only openings and is oriented toward the main gate and entrance drive. The other wider walls face the corners of the sunken lawn and are on axis with the urns in the rond points. These walls have a dedication inscription in three languages -- English, Flemish, and French. The inscription is carved onto a smooth recessed panel framed by Doric pilasters. The tall pilasters have an angled outer edge forming part of the narrower corner walls. The capitals are formed by a simple ogee cornice with cyma reversa molding below. Each of these walls features a an allegorical bas relief sculpture below the inscription pane by French sculptor Alfred Bottiau. The bas reliefs are 22 by 24 inches (described below).

   An entablature is located above the inscription panels. It includes a thin band with a stylized lamb's tongue motif, a plain wide frieze, a row of dentils, and a flat soffit with a thin curved molding on top. The entablature also wraps over to part of the narrower corner wall with the pilasters. A tall parapet rises from the entablature and is topped by stone coping with an ogee curve and rounded upper edge. The parapet forms a stylized Doric capital for the narrow corner walls, making them read as monumental pilasters. A high relief lion's head located near the top of each corner wall serves as a roof drain. A pipe directs the water out of the lion's mouth.

   The south wall has the dedication inscription in English, inscribed in a gilded serif font:

THIS CHAPEL
HAS BEEN ERECTED
BY THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
IN MEMORY OF HER SOLDIERS
WHO FOUGHT AND DIED
IN BELGIUM DURING THE WORLD WAR

THESE GRAVES
ARE THE PERMANENT

AND VISIBLE SYMBOL
OF THE HEROIC DEVOTION
WITH WHICH THEY GAVE THEIR LIVES
TO THE COMMON CAUSE
OF HUMANITY

At the top and bottom of the inscription panels is a bas relief garland of leaves in five recessed sections. A small vertical column design appears between each section of garland. The allegorical bas relief is located below this decoration roughly at eye level with a person standing on the terrace.

Each bas relief is a seated female figure in Classical dress, depicted in profile. On the south wall the bas relief figure depicts "History." She is seated on a bench and writing in a book. Her costume is Classical drapery and sandals; her head is uncovered and she has a thick braid of hair down her back.

The east wall contains the dedication inscription in Flemish and a bas relief sculpture depicting "Remembrance." The seated female figure has her bowed head covered with a scarf. She holds a cluster of branches in her hand on her knee. There is also a wreath partially visible on the ground behind her bench.

The north wall contains the dedication inscription in French and a bas relief sculpture depicting "Grief." The seated female figure faces west and holds an oil lamp in one hand, with her legs crossed and knees up. The other hand holds her head scarf at her neck. Like the other figures, she wears sandals and hair braids.

4. Structural system, framing: The Chapel has load-bearing limestone walls that rest on shallow concrete footings. There is a layer of brick between the exterior and interior walls. The roof system is a double concrete shell with an inaccessible attic void. The outer shell supports a rolled lead roof with a shallow pyramidal form. The inner shell holds the mosaic tile ceiling.

5. Terrace: The Chapel terrace wraps around the building and forms a platform for the pedestal. It is accessed from four sides via a wide Rocville stone step at the end of each flagstone path. There are four more steps to the doorway. The terrace includes recessed planting beds with dwarf English boxwood hedges (*Buxus sempervirens* 'Suffructicosa') clipped into a tight square. The boxwood hedges line the terrace with wide openings at each of the steps. There also are areas of lawn planted on the terrace inside each row of boxwood.

6. Chimneys: None.

7. Openings:

    a. Doorways and doors: The Chapel has one doorway in the west façade that serves as the decorative focal point. It is cut into the second layer of the

pedestal, with the bottom of the doorway resting on the wide first course of Rocville stone. The opening is framed by an incised bead that comes to a point at the top. The bottom ends have an incised tassel motif. Sitting on the point over the doorway is an acroterion. The acroterion is formed by a volute with a stylized blossom rising from the center that includes vertical bands of a stepped chevron motif. The words GREET THEM EVER/WITH GRATEFUL HEARTS are carved into the frieze above the doorway with a serif font.

There is a four-inch wall inset around the rectangular door opening. The bronze single leaf door is set directly into the stone with a deep reveal. The bronze grille design is perforated with a sheet of glass behind. The door has three crosses of closely spaced bronze bars arranged down the center forming the frame and a band of alternating triangles around the outer edge. Each cross has a nested set of three squares at the center accented with gold leaf (recently restored). A gilded radiating chevron motif creates a diamond form behind each cross. The remaining area of the eight squares formed by this frame is filled with high relief bronze sculptures of tree branches. The four left openings have oak branches with acorns and the four right have olive branches with olives. The heavy door has only a simple keyhole, no exterior hardware and is beautifully balanced in the frame.

b. Window: There is a single large window opening over the door on the west façade. The opening is framed on the sides by curved corners carved into a monumental bundled rod motif (bands near bottom). On the exterior the window is covered by a thick stone screen with openings in an uneven octagon shape. Between each octagon is a recessed square with a raised five-point star. Along the outer edges the grille is carved with a stylized Art Deco blossom motif. The window frame is three bronze sash arranged vertically and filled with blue and yellow leaded glass. See below for description of the window from the interior.

8. Roof:

a. Shape, covering: The low-pitched pyramidal roof is surrounded by a stone parapet. It is a concrete shell originally covered with poured lead. It is now sheathed with seamed rolled lead.

b. Eaves: The Chapel does not have external eaves. The roof has a drainage channel behind the parapet for an internal drain spout system. The water is removed from the roof through these internal drains and the pipes at the lion's heads in the entablature.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plans: The interior of the Chapel is one small room with an altar at the east wall. The room is an uneven octagon in plan.

2. Stairways: None.

3. Flooring: The floor is covered with a variety of fine stone, generally identified in the construction drawings.[83] A wide band of St. George rose marble is located around the outer walls. A pair of two and a half inch bands of black marble appears next inward, separated by almost six-inch wide Corentville stone. The inner portion of the floor pattern is large white Corentville stone laid in regular courses perpendicular to the altar and doorway.

4. Wall and ceiling finish: The walls are composed of smooth blocks of white stone with flush joints. There are large fluted piers at each narrower corner wall. This motif ends about two feet off the ground at a smooth base. The top of the walls has a flat stone frieze then an ovolo stone molding. There are recessed panels of St. George Rose marble at the center of each wall, framed with bronze cove molding on the top and sides. The bottom of each side panel sits on the first course of wall stone, which forms a tall baseboard. All carving on the panels is accented with gold leaf.

   The panel over the altar on the east wall is incised with a Crusaders sword, pointed down with a five-point star on the hilt. The panel is outlined with carved lines. On the sides the thin band created by the lines is interrupted at regular intervals by a bound ribbon-type motif. A thicker band of incised decoration at the top has a vertical rope motif with stylized egg and dart below. Across the bottom of the altar panel is a three-part incised design that has rounded top edges, with a wide middle section filled with a vertical motif of chevrons and wavy lines.

   The panels on the north and south side walls are inscribed with the names of missing soldiers who fought in the vicinity. They include, from top to bottom, the Seal of the United States, the inscription "IN MEMORY OF THOSE AMERICAN SOLDIERS WHO FOUGHT IN THIS REGION AND WHO SLEEP IN UNKNOWN GRAVES," and the list of the missing. The names are arranged down the left column, with their home state and any military honors. A center column has each man's rank and the right column his assignment and Division. Twenty-one names appear on the north wall and twenty-two on the south wall. Tall lances are carved into the panel on either side of the list.

   The Chapel features a stepped dome mosaic tile ceiling with a "doves of heaven" design. The three steps have curved edges; the first two steps are an uneven octagon in shape. As the dome rises inwards, the third step is a square with chamfered corners. These three steps have a continuous ceramic mosaic covering executed in tan, grey, and white with gold leaf and black accents. The mosaic

[83] Lahalle et Levard, No. 9, Details of Floor Paving, Waereghem, (26 September 1928), ABMC Files.

includes regular small square pieces and larger triangular pieces in irregular shapes and sizes. The design is of stylized clouds in a symmetrical pattern that repeats on each side. High relief doves with outstretched wings are placed randomly around the ceiling adding an element of asymmetry to the design. Each dove is covered in silver leaf, with shading to add depth and detail such as black eyes and red feet. Some of the silver has oxidization stains.

The innermost panel of the ceiling is a square with rounded edges. It features a high relief Classical oil lamp at the center extending beyond the edges of a circular field of silver stars. The five-point stars are closely spaced and appear to be two different sizes with irregular placement. A band of silver mosaic circles the stars and radiates out in one line to the front, back and sides, and in three lines to each corner. Thinner concentric circles of gold appear behind the rays. The silver and gold circles and the outer edges of the silver rays are regularly shaped mosaic tiles. The stars background consists of irregularly shaped pieces in gray, silver, and black. The overall background of the square is similar, but with smaller pieces and more gray and black.

5. Openings:

    a. Doorways and Doors: The exterior and only door has a bronze threshold and is set directly into the stone of the west wall with a canted reveal. The opening is framed by an incised line forming a three-inch-wide flat molding. The inner face of the door is a single pane of glass over the decorative bronze grille, held in place by pivot latches. There is a bronze ring pull on the inside of the door.

    b. Windows: The inside of the window opening over the doorway shows the three bronze sashes stacked vertically with yellow and gold leaded glass in a geometric pattern. Each sash is hinged at the bottom and has a lever on the top edge. The glazing is arranged in a pattern of four partial circles within a diamond and interconnecting triangles.

6. Decorative features and original furnishings:

    a. Altar: The altar area includes a two level Corentville stone platform. The base level angles back to the walls. The second higher level is stepped back and angles forward from the walls. A single rectangular step seven inches high is located at the center of the first platform. The Grand Antique Pyrenees marble altar, with dramatic black and white veining, has a sarcophagus form and sits on a base of the same material. The front is incised with a quote from the King James Bible (Hosea 13:14), in a serif font with gold leaf:

I WILL RANSOM THEM
FROM THE POWER OF THE GRAVE

I WILL REDEEM THEM
FROM DEATH

The top edge of the altar has a lid appearance with an elegant ogee curve. The altar is brick beneath its marble sheathing.

b. Furniture: The Chapel has benches and kneelers from the original design, executed in oak with a black stain and white graining finish. The furniture includes a star design on the end of the kneelers and red velvet cushions.

c. Light/Flag Standards: The altar is flanked by large combination light and flag standards executed in bronze with raised gold leaf decoration including acanthus, oak and olive leaves. The top has four arms with faux candle incandescent fixtures. Three flags are display on each standard with cups to hold the bottom of each pole and a projecting guide to position them. The flags represent the United States (2), Belgium, France, Great Britain, and Italy (the World War I allies).

7. Hardware: The door has a bronze circle pull on the interior and a push button lock on the door frame. The radiator niches at the northwest and southwest corners have decorative bronze and gold leaf grilles with a stylized diamond and curl motifs. The grilles have a hexagonal knob connected to a lift lever.

8. Mechanical equipment:

a. Heating, ventilation: The Chapel with built with small electric radiators installed into low niches in the front corner walls. The radiators have been removed but the niches with decorative grilles and lead lining remain. The Chapel is currently unheated and only naturally ventilated.

b. Lighting: The two light standards include incandescent bulbs and exterior wires running to the modern electrical box installed in the northwest radiator niche. A modern wall-mounted light fixture is placed at the base of the window over the doorway and directed outward through the leaded glass window.

c. Plumbing: None.

D. Site:

1. Historic landscape design: See information on the Chapel terrace and its plantings above. See the overview report and drawings (HALS No. US-7) for a complete landscape analysis. The Chapel and its terrace sit at the center of a sunken lawn surrounded by the four grave areas. As part of Cret's redesign for the site in the late 1920s, the edges of the lawn were excavated to create a tray-like setting with curved edges covered with grass. This area is also lined by

crushed stone paths and granite curbing. The lawn is crowned at the center, giving additional height and visual prominence to the Chapel.

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

A. Architectural drawings: Drawing collections with useful material on Flanders Field Chapel 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.
- Flanders Field - on-site drawings file including Chapel maintenance.
- Paul P. Cret Collection, Architectural Archives, University of Pennsylvania - collection includes sketches of proposed designs for the Flanders Field Chapel.
- U.S. Commission of Fine Arts - in-house files include the approved rendering of the Flanders Field Chapel design from 1927.

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

- Still Pictures Branch, NARA II - The National Archives photographic collection has excellent sets of photographs showing Flanders Field in 1925, 1928, 1930, and 1935. These photographs are in RG 117 (ABMC) and RG 111 (Signal Corps).
- Textual Records, NARA II - Material in RG 117 includes construction progress photographs of the Chapel and other ABMC improvements at Flanders Field.

B. Selected Bibliography:

Archives and Unpublished Sources:

Architectural Archives, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
Paul Philippe Cret Collection

Athenaeum of Philadelphia, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
Paul Philippe Cret Collection

Flanders Field American Cemetery and Memorial, Waregem, West Flanders, Belgium
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 - Record of the Office of the Quartermaster General
Still Pictures Branch
Cartographic and Architectural Branch

U.S. Commission of Arts, Office Files, Washington, DC

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White, Theodore B. *Paul Philippe Cret: Architect and Teacher*. Philadelphia: Art Alliance Press, 1973.

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PART IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

Documentation of Flanders Field American Cemetery & Memorial was undertaken in 2013-14 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 Charles Hunt, World War I Regional Director, ABMC. The field work, including hand measuring and terrestrial laser scanning, was undertaken by Project Supervisor Christopher M. Stevens, HALS Landscape Architect, and HABS Architects Jason W. McNatt and Paul Davidson. Stevens, McNatt, Davidson, and Landscape Architecture Technician Bradley Odom (LSU) 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. On-site assistance at Flanders Field was provided by Christopher D. Arseneault, Superintendent; Christopher D. Sims, Cemetery Associate; Martin Degrande, Head Gardener; and by the ABMC maintenance staff.

PART V. ILLUSTRATIONS

Figure 1: ABMC Commissioners Visiting Flanders Field, c. 1924
Source: Image 111-SC-86153, Still Pictures Branch, NARA II, College Park, MD

Figure 2: Architect Paul Philippe Cret, 1925
Source: aaup.062.449.1, Paul P. Cret Collection, Architectural Archives, University of Pennsylvania

Figure 3: Signal Corps Photograph of Flanders Field Cemetery Looking East Along Entrance Drive (1925)
Source: Image 117-MC-37-3, Still Pictures Branch, NARA II, College Park, MD

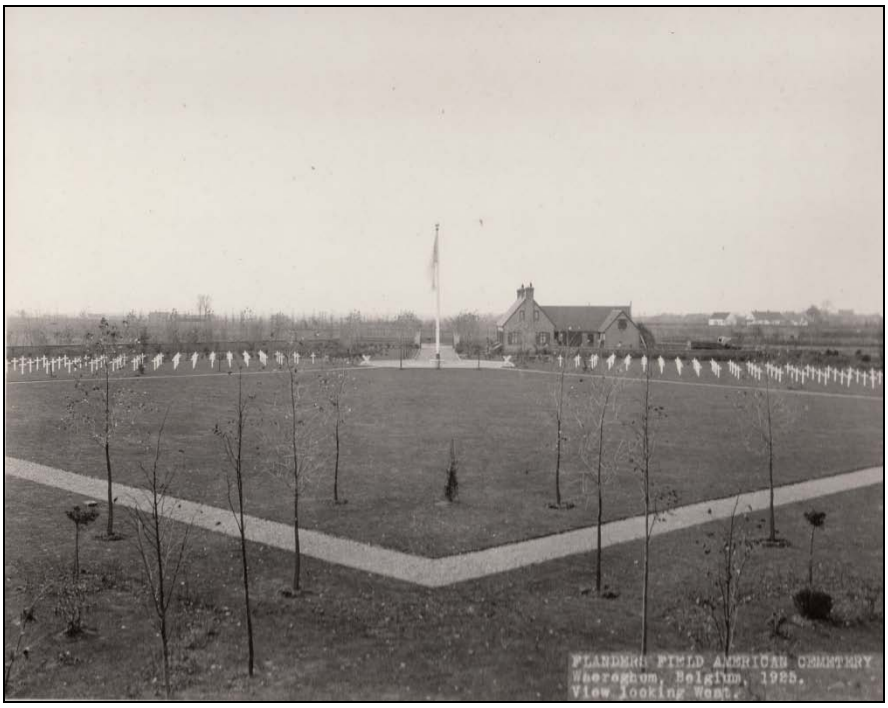

Figure 4: Signal Corps Photograph of Flanders Field Cemetery Looking West Across Center Lawn (1925)
Source: Image 117-MC-37-5, Still Pictures Branch, NARA II, College Park, MD

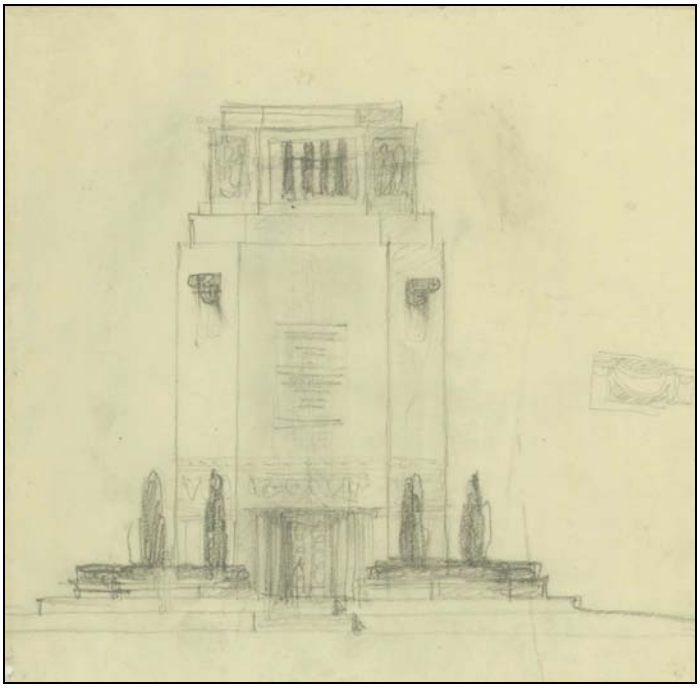

Figure 5: Proposed Design for Flanders Field Chapel
Source: aaup.062.266, Architectural Archives, University of Pennsylvania

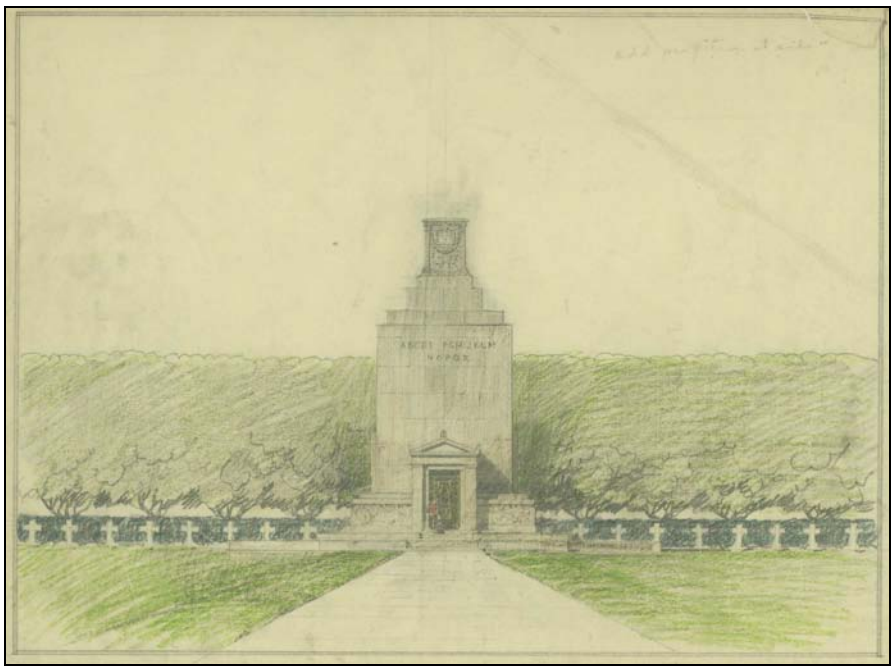

Figure 6: Proposed Design for Flanders Field Chapel, 1926
Source: aaup.062.265, Architectural Archives, University of Pennsylvania

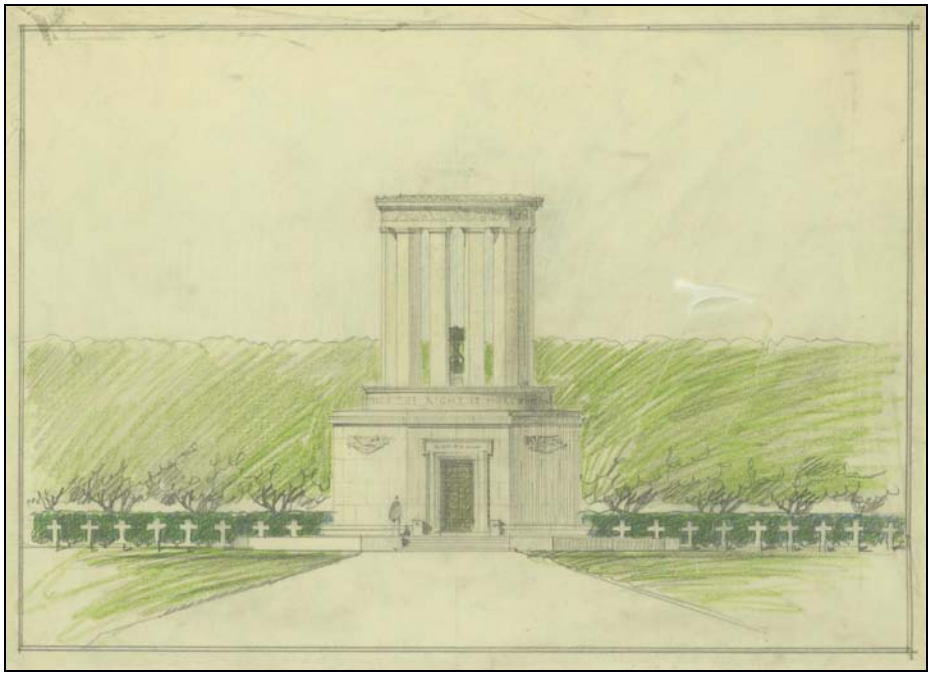

Figure 7: Proposed Design for Flanders Field Chapel
Source: aaup.062.267, Architectural Archives, University of Pennsylvania

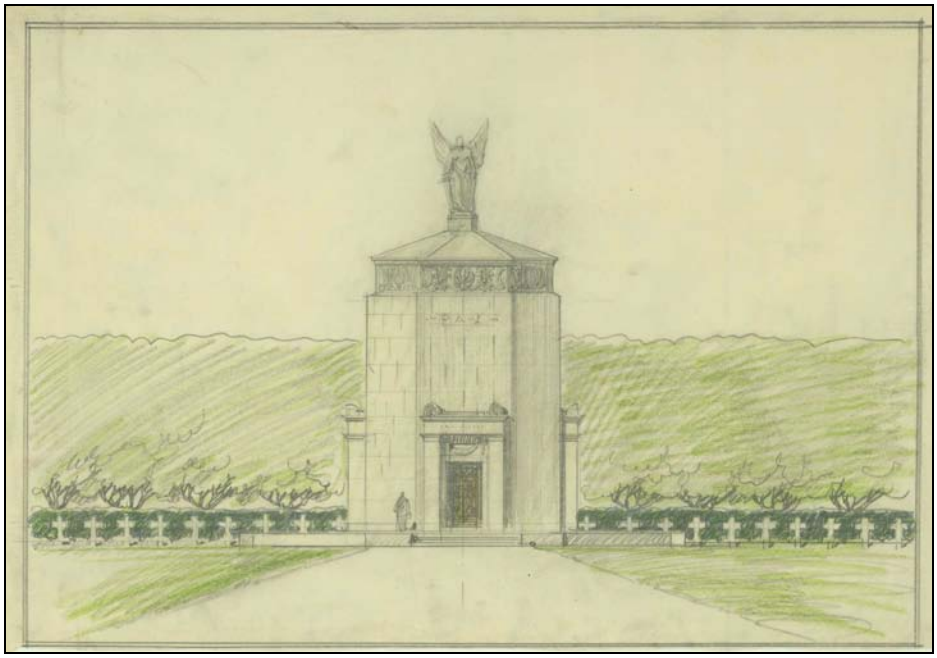

Figure 8: Possible Scheme C, Proposed Flanders Field Chapel, Paul P. Cret, (c. 1926)
Source: aaup.062.267, Architectural Archives, University of Pennsylvania

Figure 9: Rendering of Approved Design for Flanders Field Chapel, Paul P. Cret, (1927)
Source: Courtesy of U.S. Commission of Fine Arts, Washington, DC

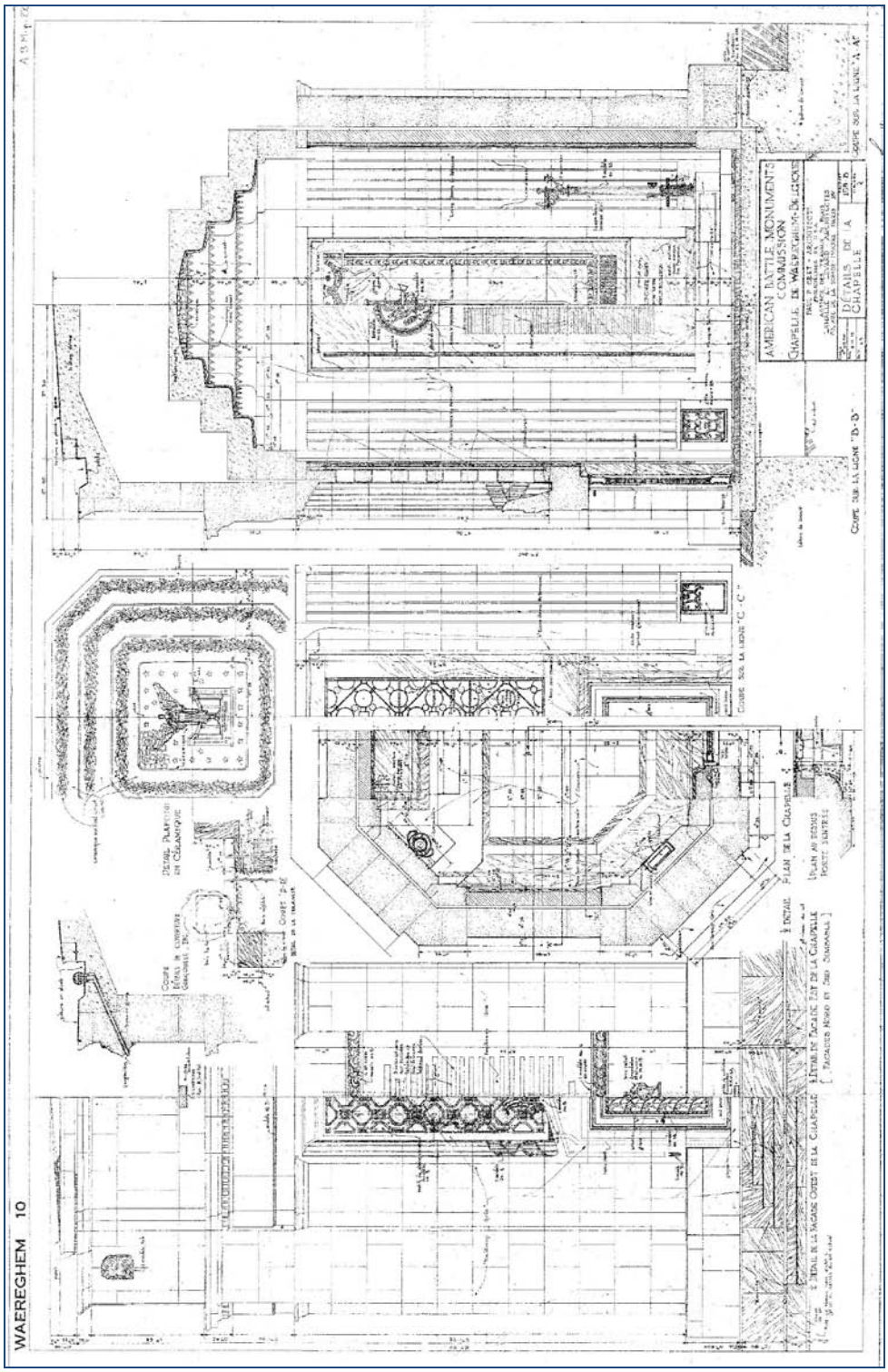

Figure 10: Flanders Field Chapel, Paul P. Cret, ABMC, (14 August 1927)
Source: ABMC Files

Figure 11: Construction of Flanders Field Chapel, (20 June 1929)
Source: Entry 13, RG 117, NARA II

Figure 12: View of Rond Point, (16 July 1929)
Source: Entry 13, RG 117, NARA II

Figure 13: Completed Base for New Flagpole, (1 August 1929)
Source: Entry 13, RG 117, NARA II

Figure 14: Construction of Chapel, (12 September 1929)
Source: Entry 13, RG 117, NARA II

Figure 15: Construction of Chapel, (12 September 1929)
Source: Entry 13, RG 117, NARA II

Figure 16: Construction of Chapel, (20 December 1929)
Source: Entry 13, RG 117, NARA II

Figure 17: Construction of Chapel, (March 1930)
Source: Entry 13, RG 117, NARA II

Figure 18: Completed Chapel, (1930)
Source: Image 117-MC-37-20, Still Picture Branch, NARA II

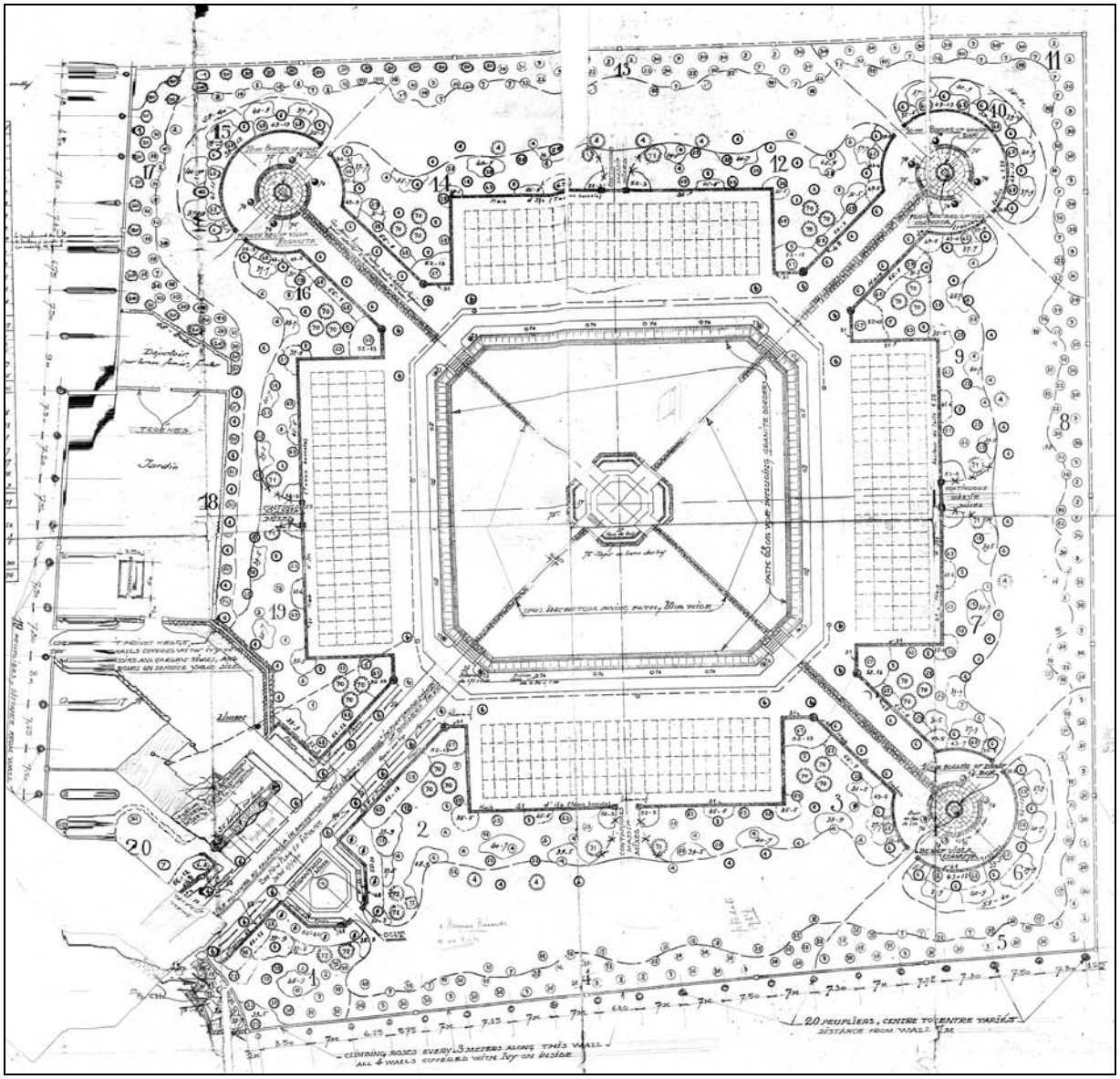

Figure 19: Excerpt from Planting Plan of Flanders Field American Cemetery, Paul P. Cret, ABMC, (May 1933, updated 1934)
Source: ABMC Files

Figure 20: Interior of Chapel, 1935
Source: Image 117-MC-37-56, Still Picture Branch, NARA II

Figure 21: Dedication of Flanders Field American Cemetery and Memorial, 8 August 1937
Source: Lot 5358 (H), no. 68, Prints & Photographs Reading Room, Library of Congress