

## Chapter XII

### AMERICAN WORLD WAR MEMORIALS IN EUROPE

#### ERECTED BY

#### THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

WHEN the American Battle Monuments Commission was created in 1923 one of the most important duties given it was to erect memorials in Europe to commemorate the services of the American forces there during the World War. This work has now been completed and the eleven memorials and two bronze tablets erected by the Commission commemorate these services in a complete yet dignified and modest way.

The memorials vary in size from three large ones, which commemorate the American fighting in the three areas of France where the American combat forces were engaged in greatest numbers, to smaller ones recording the wartime services of American units outside of these areas. No two of them are alike, as each was designed to fit its particular site and to give a comparative degree of commemoration with respect to the others. The architects were carefully selected from Americans of prominence in their profession and all concerned bent every effort to make the results reflect the pride of America in the historic events which the memorials commemorate.

The completed project has been the subject of much favorable comment and the larger monuments are now visited each year by many thousands of travelers from American and European countries.

The map on page 477 shows the locations of the memorials, and the photographs in this chapter will give a good idea of their appearance. Those on the battlefields have been described in connection with the tours and in the following pages references are given to the pages upon which these descriptions are to be found.

*All distances in this chapter are air line.*

#### MEUSE-ARGONNE MEMORIAL AT MONTFAUCON

This is the most imposing American monument in Europe. It commemorates the brilliant victory of the American First Army in the Meuse-Argonne offensive, September 26–November 11, 1918, and pays tribute to the previous heroic services of the Armies of France on the important battle front upon which the memorial has been constructed.

The massive shaft rises from the ruins of the hilltop village of Montfaucon and dominates the surrounding country. From the observation platforms high above the ground an extended view is obtained of a large part of the territory over which the soldiers of the American First Army advanced during the autumn of 1918.

Consult pages 203–204 for additional information concerning this memorial.

A caretaker is at the memorial during daylight hours. While he is on duty visitors are permitted to ascend the tower.

The Meuse-Argonne American Cemetery is 5 miles to the north. The nearest large town is Verdun, 14 miles to the southeast, which is easily reached by train. At that place good hotel accommodations are available and automobiles for visits to the battlefields may be hired in front of the railroad station.

#### ST. MIHIEL MEMORIAL ON MONTSEC

This memorial stands on the high isolated hill of Montsec. It commemorates the capture of the St. Mihiel salient by the American First Army, the operations of the American Second Army on November 9–11, 1918, and the other combat services of the American divisions both in this region and in Alsace and Lorraine.



St. Mihiel Memorial at Montsec

It consists of a large circular colonnade, at the center of which on a raised platform is a bronze relief map of the St. Mihiel salient. The size of the memorial, its commanding site and the perfection of its proportions all combine to make it one of the most impressive in the world.

See pages 123-127 for a more complete descriptive account of this monument.

The memorial is about 24 miles from Verdun, Nancy and Metz. Good hotel accommodations exist at those places and automobiles for a visit to the site may be hired there. The St. Mihiel American Cemetery near Thiaucourt is 8 miles away to the northeast. Thiaucourt is also the nearest main-line railroad station to the monument and automobiles for a trip to the battlefields may be hired at that place.

#### AISNE-MARNE MEMORIAL NEAR CHÂTEAU-THIERRY

An impressive memorial, overlooking Château-Thierry and the Marne River, has been erected on Hill 204 to commemorate the services of the American and French soldiers who participated in the important operations in the Aisne-Marne region during 1918, and to memorialize the friendship and cooperation which existed between the French and American Armies during the World War.

The monument proper is a long double colonnade ornamented on the west face by heroic figures representing France and the United States and on the east face by a large symbolic eagle. Appropriate inscriptions give details of the fighting. The architecture is outstanding in appearance and has been made even more effective by the beautiful landscaping.

For a more complete description of this monument and its features see page 57.

This is the closest to Paris of any of the American memorials and it is but 4 miles away from Belleau Wood and the American cemetery near Belleau. The Oise-Aisne American Cemetery is 14 miles to the northeast, near Fère-en-Tardenois. Hotel accommodations may be had (1937) at Château-Thierry, which is on a main railroad line running east from Paris, and automobiles for trips to the battlefields may easily be hired there.

#### NAVAL MEMORIAL AT BREST

In recognition of the heroic work of the American Navy in convoying troops and supplies to Europe, a large memorial has been erected on an old fortification wall of the city. The site overlooks the harbor of Brest, which was a base of operations for American naval vessels during the war as well as a large port of debarkation and embarkation for the American troops.

The memorial consists of a tall shaft from the top of which is obtained a fine view of the harbor. It is constructed of Brittany granite with decorative features of nautical interest. The surrounding area has been improved with planting and forms an attractive park, much appreciated by the inhabitants of the town.

Brest is in Brittany near the most western point of France. It is 315 miles from Paris and may be reached by train from that city in less than eight hours.

#### MEMORIAL NEAR SOMMEPY

On the crest of Blanc Mont Ridge, 3 miles north of Sommepy, has been erected a memorial to commemorate the achievements of the American and French soldiers who fought in the Champagne region of France during the World War.

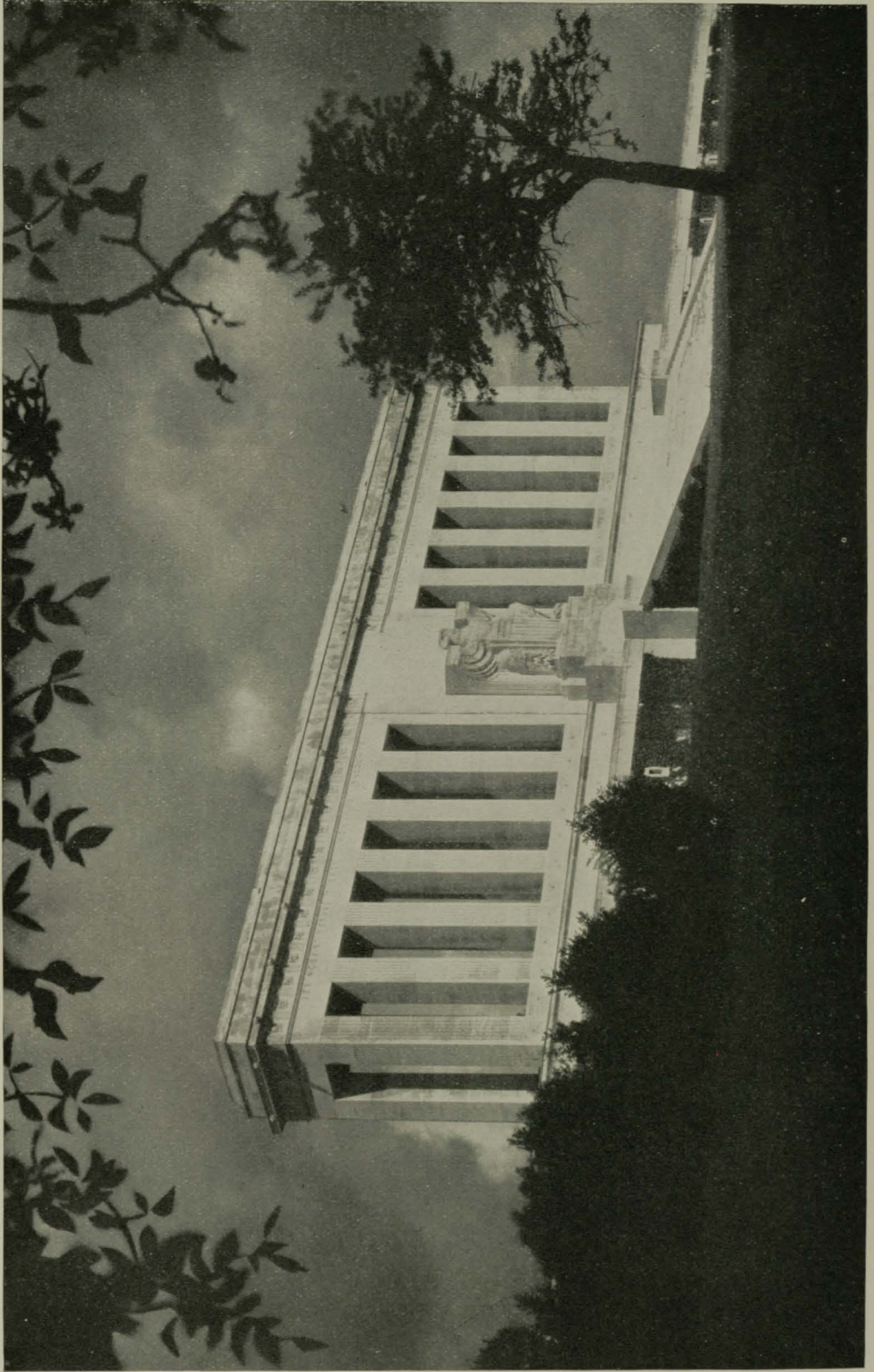
The American 2d, 36th, 42d and 93d Divisions saw battle service in the vicinity and their names and divisional insignia appear on the monument, which is located on ground captured by the 2d Division.

The memorial consists of a tower notable for the beauty and simplicity of its lines. A flight of steps leads to an observation platform on top where a fine view may be obtained and where direction arrows point out prominent places on the landscape. A good view, however, may also be had from the lower terrace.

At the present time (1937) the tower is open to visitors only on Sundays.


See page 350 for additional information of this monument and its surroundings.

The nearest cities are Reims, 22 miles to the west, and Châlons-sur-Marne, 23 miles to the south. Good hotel accommodations are available at both of those places. The village of Sommepy may be reached by railroad from Paris in four hours and automobiles may be hired there.




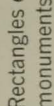
Aisne-Marne American Memorial Near Château-Thierry

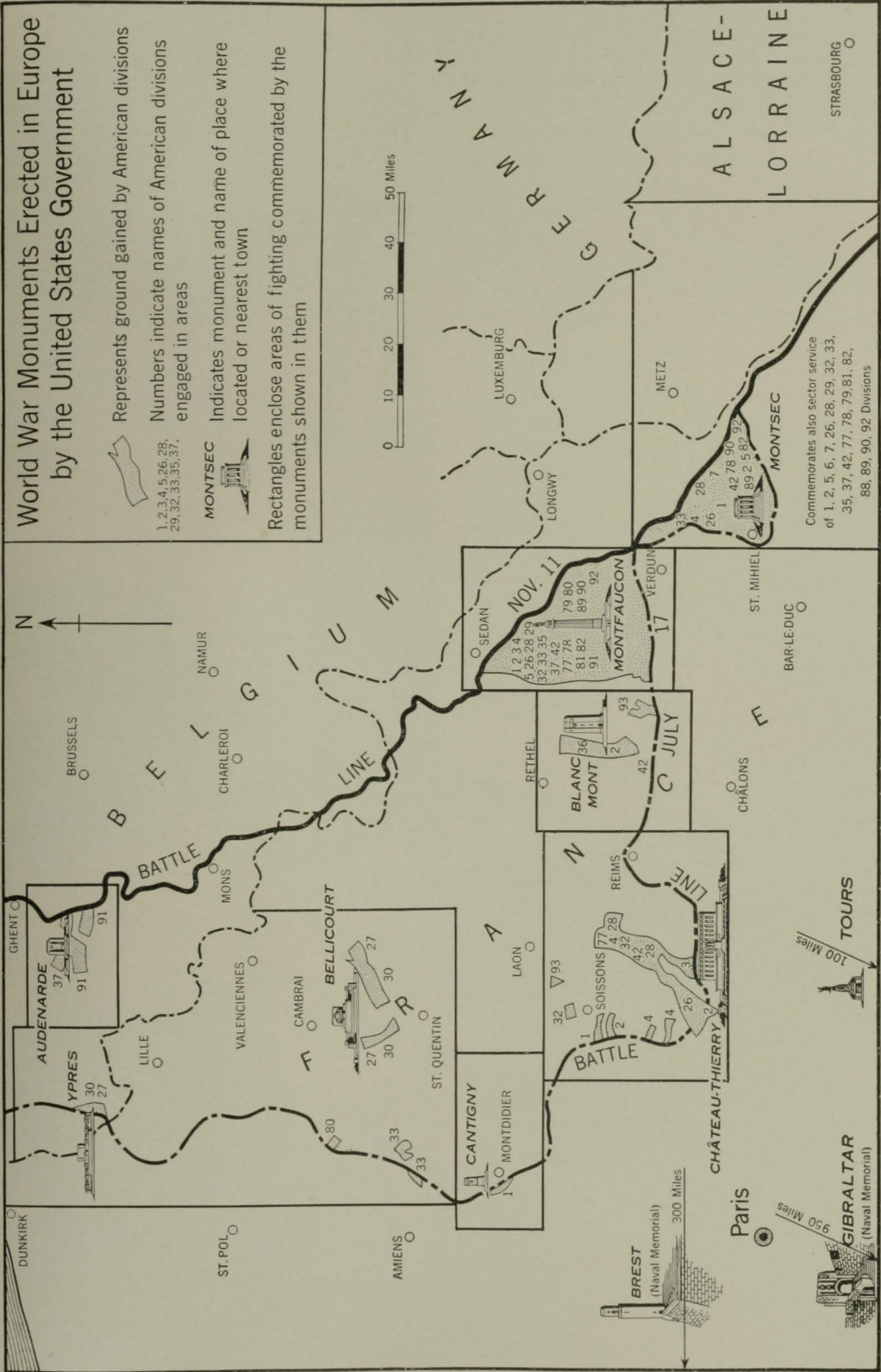
# World War Monuments Erected in Europe by the United States Government

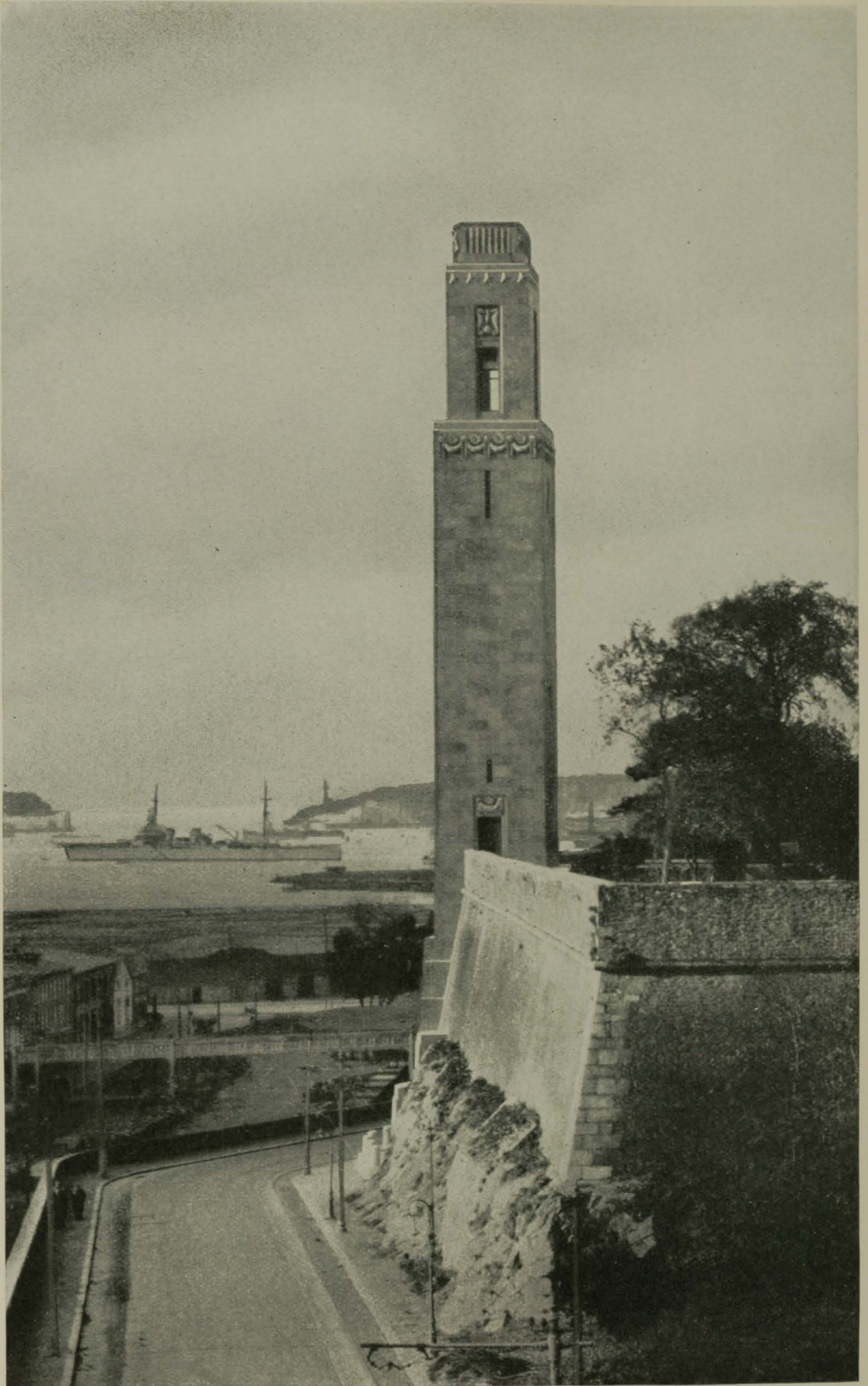
 Represents ground gained by American divisions

1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 26, 28, 29, 32, 33, 35, 37  
Numbers indicate names of American divisions engaged in areas

 MONTSEC  
Indicates monument and name of place where located or nearest town

 Rectangles enclose areas of fighting commemorated by the monuments shown in them





American Naval Memorial at Brest

## MEMORIAL NEAR BELLICOURT

A memorial near Bellicourt commemorates the American units, totaling approximately 90,000 men, which fought with the British Armies in France during the World War. It is on a battlefield of the 27th and 30th Divisions, being picturesquely located on the ridge over the St. Quentin Canal tunnel which was such a strong feature of the Hindenburg Line.

A detailed description of the monument and its features is given on page 383.

The Somme American Cemetery near Bony is 1 mile away to the northwest.

The Bellicourt memorial is 9 miles north of St. Quentin and 13 miles south of Cambrai. Hotel accommodations are available at those places and automobiles for a visit to the site may be hired there.

## MEMORIAL AT TOURS

A beautiful fountain has been constructed at Tours by the United States Government in grateful recognition of the achievements of the more than 640,000 members of the American Expeditionary Forces who served in the Services of Supply and whose work behind the battle lines made possible the brilliant accomplishments of the armies in the field.

The fountain is of outstanding beauty and is worthy of a high place among the many architectural gems of that historic part of France. It stands in the heart of Tours near the southern end of the Pont Wilson, the main bridge which crosses the Loire River within the city boundaries.

On the lower circular basin is carved the dedicatory inscription. Below the upper basin appear the coats of arms of Tours, Brest, St. Nazaire, Le Mans, Is-sur-Tille, Nevers, Neufchâteau and Bordeaux; French cities where important installations of the Services of Supply were located. Above the upper basin are four beautiful figures representing Administration, Construction, Procurement and Distribution, the four principal divisions of the Services of Supply organization. The crowning feature is a bronze American Indian releasing an American eagle. A model of this figure won a gold medal

during a recent American competition.

The small adjoining park area is part of the memorial and is being maintained by the United States Government.

Tours was the headquarters of the Services of Supply during the war. It is in the center of the famous château region of France and is three hours south of Paris by train. It may be visited from that place by automobile or autobus. The trip is interesting as the main roads pass by or near many famous châteaux.

## NAVAL MEMORIAL AT GIBRALTAR

At Gibraltar, the gateway to the Mediterranean, the United States Government has constructed a memorial archway of stone from the neighboring mountain to commemorate the achievements and comradeship of the American and British Navies in that vicinity during the World War. Many American vessels used the harbor as a base for naval operations.

The memorial serves a useful purpose as it includes a flight of steps which connects the town of Gibraltar with the large British naval establishments below.

Gibraltar is a port of call for most passenger vessels using the Mediterranean and a visit to the monument may be made from the pier in about half an hour.

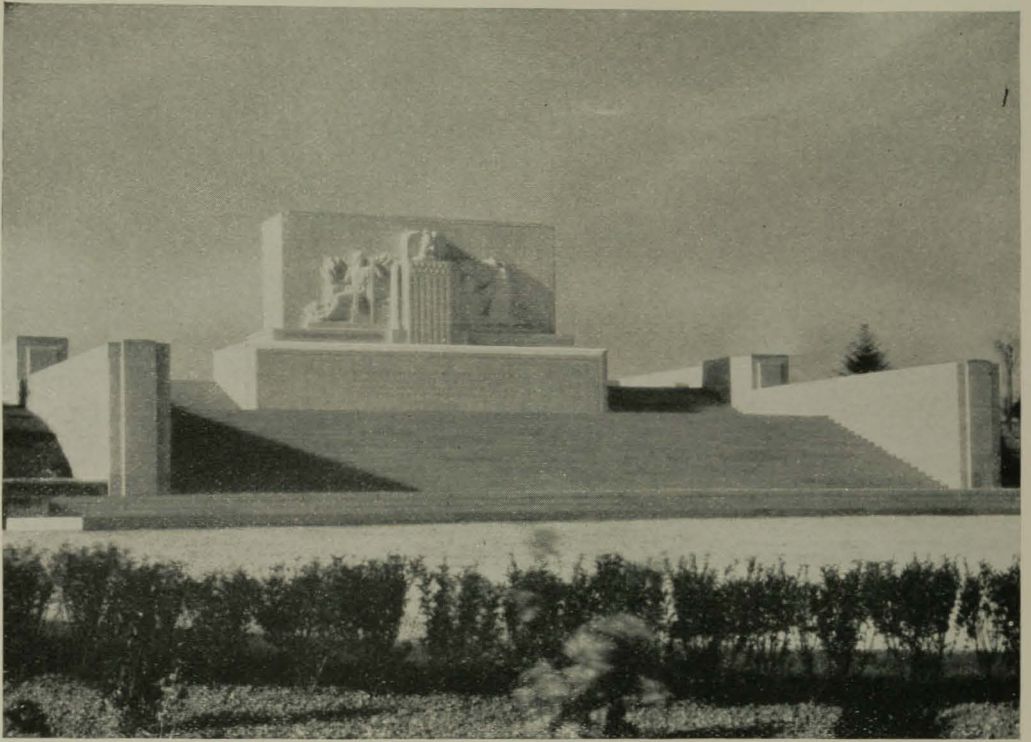
## BELLEAU WOOD

Belleau Wood, 5 miles northwest of Château-Thierry, was given to the United States Government by an American association which had acquired it soon after the World War. It is now being maintained as a memorial to all American soldiers who fought in the war. The remains of trenches, shell holes and many relics of the war, including weapons salvaged in the vicinity, may be seen there.

For further information concerning the wood and the American fighting in the vicinity, consult pages 45-49 of Chapter II.

The Aisne-Marne American Cemetery adjoins Belleau Wood on its north side.

The wood is easily reached from Paris, 45 miles away, either directly by automobile or by train to Château-Thierry and then by automobile from that place.



American Monument Near Bellicourt

American Memorial at Tours to the Services of Supply, A.E.F.

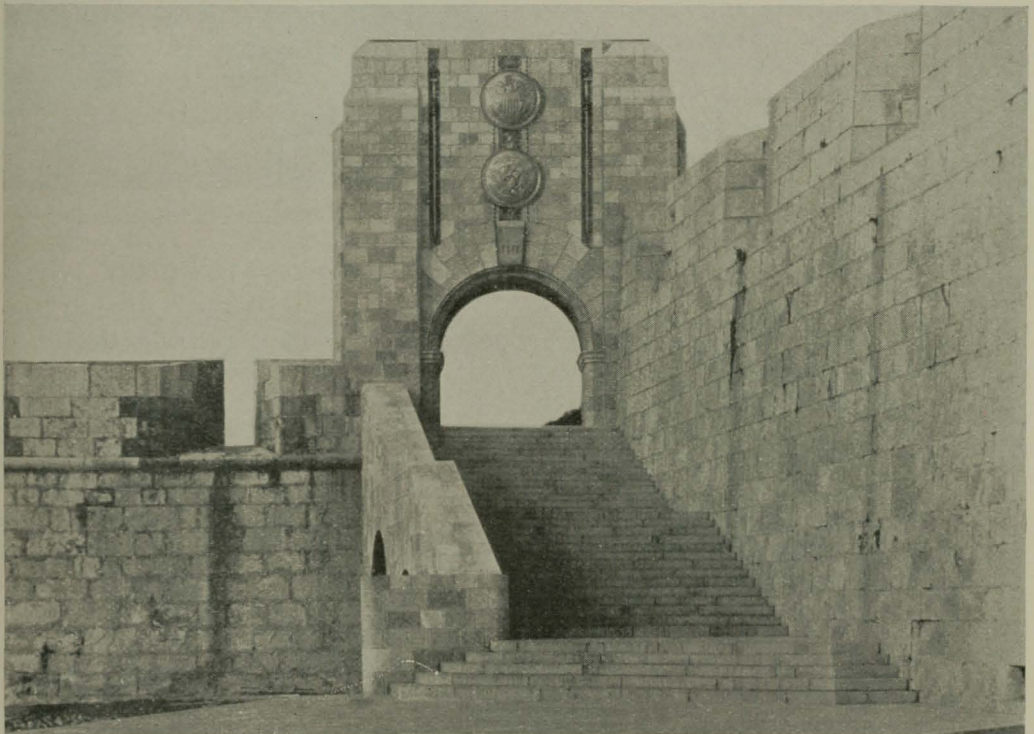






American Memorial Near Somme

American Naval Memorial Arch at Gibraltar





American Memorial at Vierstraat

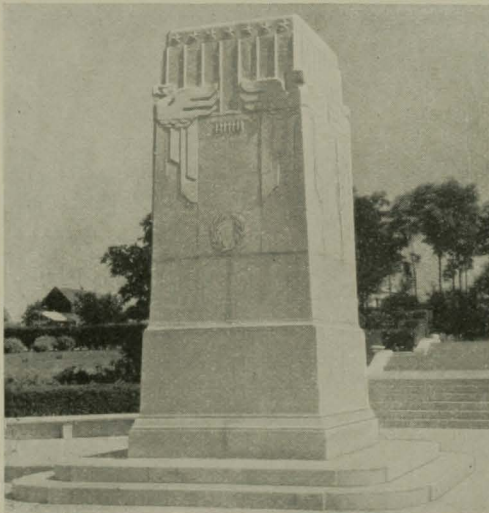
#### MEMORIAL AT AUDENARDE, BELGIUM

In the historic town of Audenarde, Belgium, a small memorial has been erected in a public park to commemorate the services of the approximately 40,000 American soldiers who fought in that vicinity toward the end of the World War.

A more complete description of this memorial and its location with respect to the nearest large cities in the surrounding country may be found on page 401.

The Flanders Field American Cemetery near Waereghem, where many of the soldiers who died during the American operations in this immediate vicinity are buried, is about 7 miles away to the west.

American Monument at Cantigny



#### MEMORIAL NEAR VIERSTRAAT, BELGIUM

About 4 miles south of Ypres, Belgium, near the hamlet of Vierstraat and not far from the base of Mont Kemmel, a small monument has been erected to commemorate the services of the 27th and 30th Divisions which participated with the British in the Ypres-Lys offensive in that region in August and September, 1918.

See page 405 for a more complete description of this memorial and its features.

The Flanders Field American Cemetery near Waereghem, Belgium, where a considerable number of the men who died in the operations near Vierstraat are buried, is approximately 27 miles away to the east.



American Monument at Audenarde

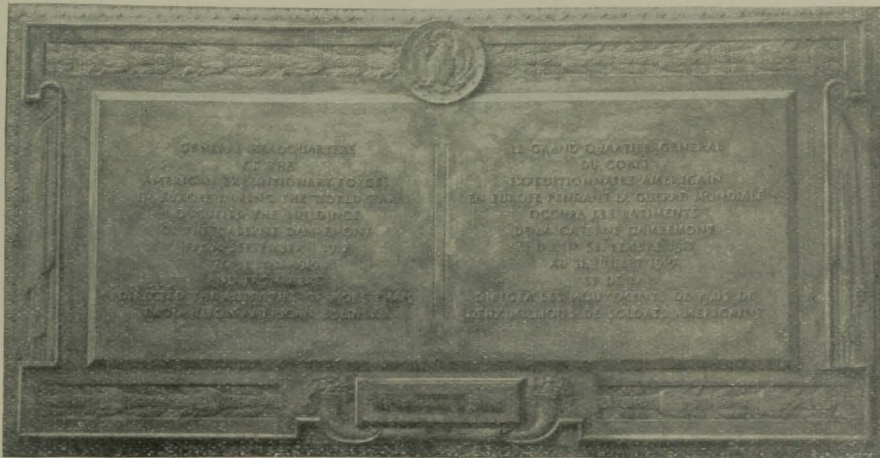
#### MEMORIAL AT CANTIGNY

In the center of the little village of Cantigny a small park has been developed into an attractive memorial to commemorate the capture of that village by the American 1st Division in the first offensive operation carried out by a large American unit during the World War.

A more detailed description of this memorial and directions for reaching it have been given on page 416 of this book.

#### BRONZE TABLET AT CHAUMONT

An attractive bronze tablet has been placed at the entrance to the Damrémont Barracks at Chaumont and upon it is the



Bronze Tablet at Chaumont

following inscription which has been inscribed both in English and in French:

GENERAL HEADQUARTERS  
OF THE  
AMERICAN EXPEDITIONARY FORCES  
IN EUROPE  
DURING THE WORLD WAR  
OCCUPIED THE BUILDINGS  
OF THE CASERNE DAMRÉMONT FROM  
SEPTEMBER 1, 1917, TO JULY 11, 1919,  
AND FROM HERE DIRECTED  
THE ACTIVITIES OF MORE THAN  
TWO MILLION AMERICAN SOLDIERS



BRONZE TABLET AT SOUILLY

An ornamental bronze tablet has been placed on the outside of the town hall at Souilly and upon it is the following inscription both in English and French:

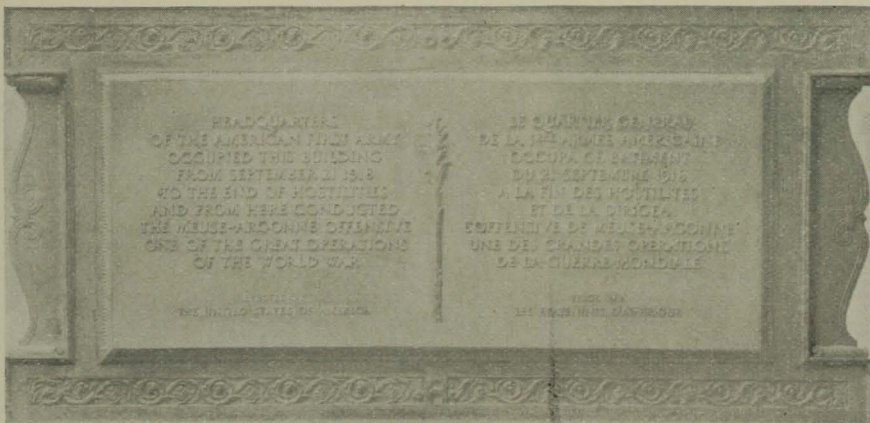
HEADQUARTERS  
OF THE AMERICAN FIRST ARMY  
OCCUPIED THIS BUILDING FROM  
SEPTEMBER 21, 1918,  
TO THE END OF HOSTILITIES  
AND FROM HERE CONDUCTED  
THE MEUSE-ARGONNE OFFENSIVE,  
ONE OF THE GREAT OPERATIONS  
OF THE WORLD WAR

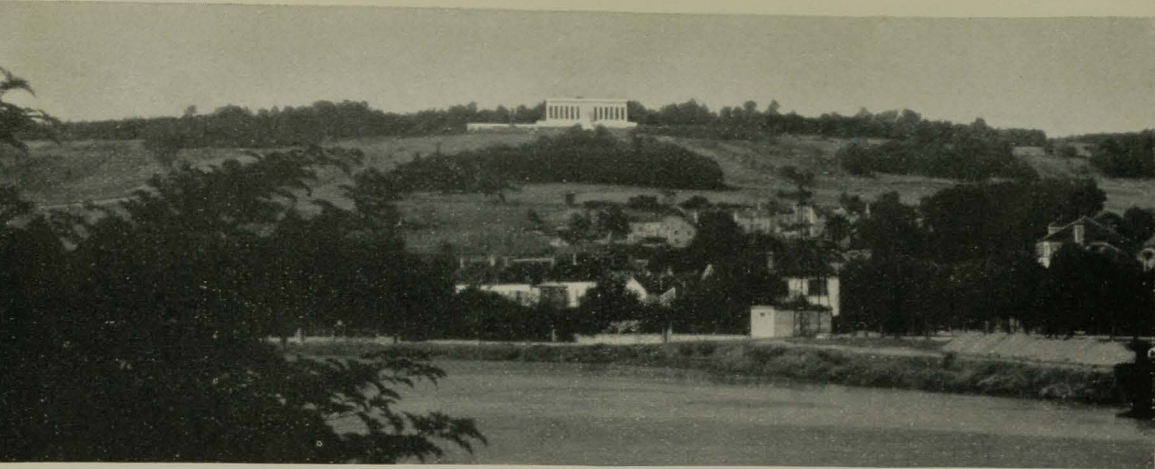


The memorials described above, except for Belleau Wood, were constructed by the United States Government and all of them are now being maintained by it.

*A table giving information concerning the principal American World War memorials in Europe erected by agencies other than the United States Government has been included in this book in Chapter XV.*

Bronze Tablet at Souilly

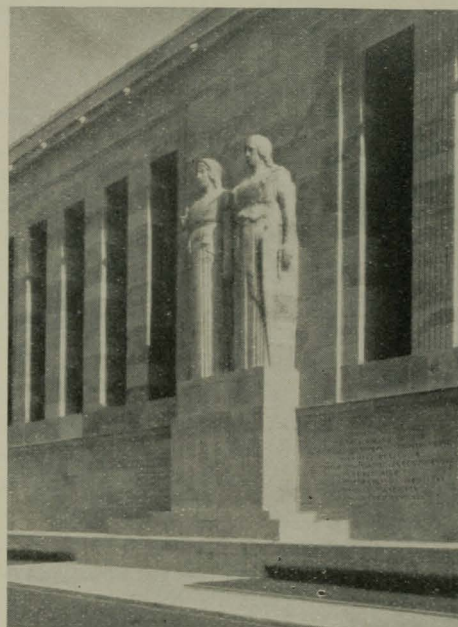




View of the Aisne-Marne Memorial From Across the Marne River



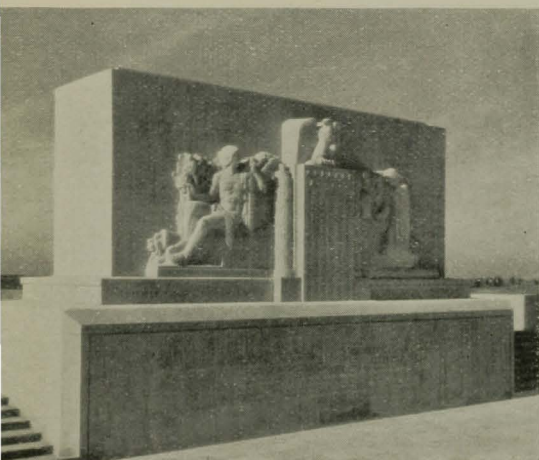
Upper Part of Naval Memorial at Brest



Symbolic Figures, Aisne-Marne Memorial



Lower Terrace, Naval Memorial at Brest



Memorial Near Bellicourt



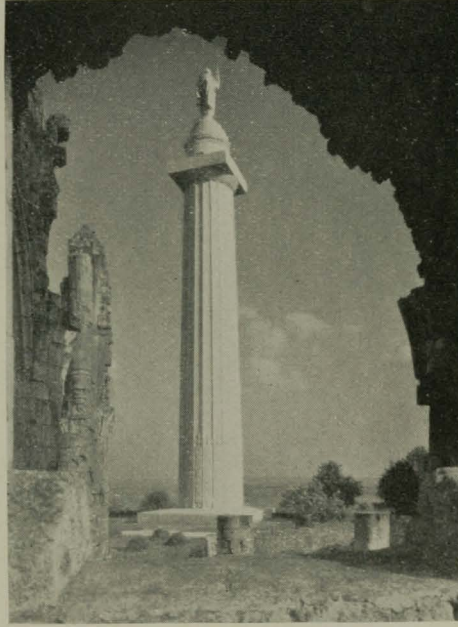
Aisne-Marne Memorial



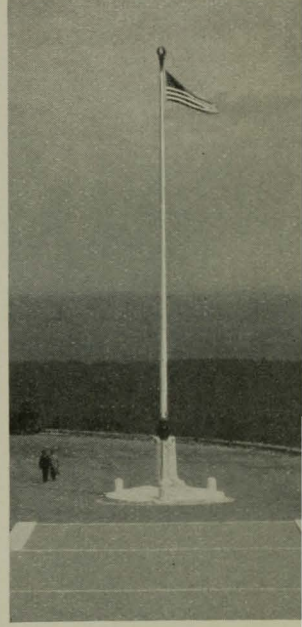
Looking Southeast Toward the Hill, Monument and Village of Montfaucon



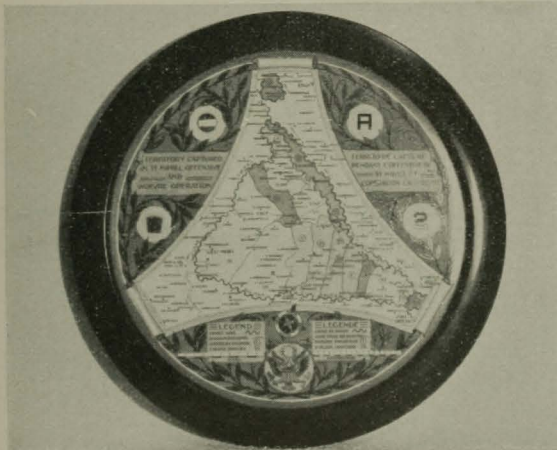
Details of the S.O.S. Memorial Fountain at Tours



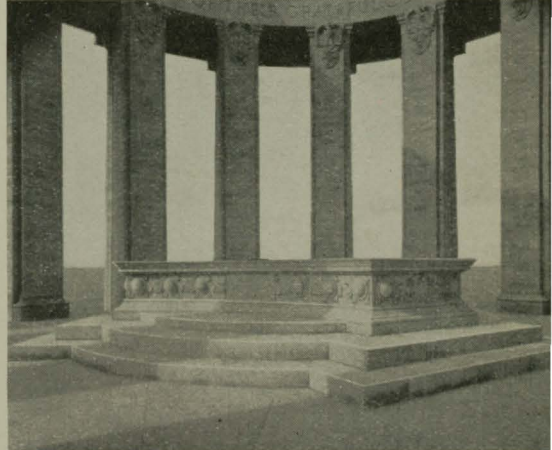
Meuse-Argonne Memorial



Terrace of the St. Mihiel Memorial



Porcelain Map at the St. Mihiel Memorial



Orientation Table at the St. Mihiel Memorial



Troops Arriving at Hoboken from France on the *Agamemnon*