



UNDERSTANDING  
SACRIFICE

## Activity: Decisions in Postwar America: Remembrance of our Nation's Fallen Heroes



### Guiding question:

What options did families have in honoring the loss of loved ones after World War II and what were the costs of these options?

**DEVELOPED BY CHRIS JOHNSON**

**Grade Level(s):** 9-12

**Subject(s):** Social Studies

**Cemetery Connection:** Luxembourg American Cemetery

**Fallen Hero Connection:** Staff Sergeant Charles F. Simcox



**NHD**  
NATIONAL  
HISTORY DAY

## Overview

Students will have an opportunity to understand the choice American families had regarding the burial of servicemembers lost in World War II. After introducing students to the options available to families of those killed during the war, students will consider the pros and cons of different options. Then they will look at primary sources from the era to help them consider the choices available and why families made the choices they did. Finally, they will see what information exists today to help them evaluate the relative options in hindsight.

## Historical Context

World War II cost the lives of more than 400,000 Americans. For those who died in World War II for whom remains could be found and identified, families had a choice between repatriation of their loved ones' bodies for burial in national or private cemeteries in the United States or burial overseas at an American military cemetery. For servicemembers who immigrated to the U.S., families could choose to have the remains returned to a home country. This was an important and difficult choice for next of kin. However, this decision allowed them the choice to honor the sacrifice of Americans in the lands they helped to liberate in the 1940s.

*“A commonly used U.S. History textbook tells us that ‘only the Civil War involved a comparable commitment of military service from a generation.’ When determining the final resting place of their loved ones, families made an important choice that helped our nation remember the sacrifice of Americans who died far from home.”*  
—Chris Johnson

Johnson teaches at Central Bucks High School East in Doylestown, Pennsylvania.

## Objectives

At the conclusion of this lesson, students will be able to

- Identify the various costs and benefits involved in the burial of U.S. Armed Forces personnel in Europe following World War II; and
- Empathize with the difficult decision next of kin had to make regarding the disposition of remains of Americans who were lost in the war.

## Documents Used ★ indicates an ABMC source

### Primary Sources

*An Act to Provide for the Evacuation and Return of the Remains of Certain Persons who Died and are Buried Outside the Continental Limits of the United States*, August 5, 1947

Library of Congress

[loc.gov/law/help/statutes-at-large/80th-congress/session-1/c80s1ch497.pdf](https://www.loc.gov/law/help/statutes-at-large/80th-congress/session-1/c80s1ch497.pdf)

★ "American Military Cemeteries in Europe," *American Armies and Battlefields in Europe: A History, Guide, and Reference Book* (excerpt)

American Battle Monuments Commission

★ *Disposition of World War II Armed Forces Dead*

American Battle Monuments Commission

Film, *Decision*, 1946

National Archives and Records Administration (111-M-1317)

[youtube.com/watch?v=TVuqaEinlM](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TVuqaEinlM)

### Secondary Sources

★ American Battle Monuments Commission

[abmc.gov/](https://abmc.gov/)

★ Cemeteries and Memorials Map

American Battle Monuments Commission

[abmc.gov/cemeteries-memorials/cemeteries-memorials-map](https://abmc.gov/cemeteries-memorials/cemeteries-memorials-map)

★ "Decision"

American Battle Monuments Commission

[youtube.com/watch?v=2ZvVM6DPPiM](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2ZvVM6DPPiM)

## Materials

- Computer with internet capability and speakers
- Information Regarding Overseas Burials Summary Sheet

## Lesson Preparation

- Preview the Information Regarding Overseas Burials Summary Sheet.
- Review the information found in the pamphlet entitled *Disposition of World War II Armed Forces Dead*.
- Teachers can review information regarding the cemeteries available today at the ABMC website ([abmc.gov/](http://abmc.gov/)), including the Cemeteries and Memorials Map to learn more about the cemeteries and memorials today.
- Preview the excerpt from *American Armies and Battlefields in Europe*.
- Select resources for activity two based on the needs of your students and print copies or share electronically.

## Procedure

### Activity One: Introducing the Decision: Service and Sacrifice (5 minutes)

- Ask students, *When discussing World War II, a U.S. history textbook author mused that “only the Civil War involved a comparable commitment of military service from a generation.” How do you react to this statement?*
- Lead a discussion and push students to reflect on what sacrifices World War II entailed for the American people.
- Ask students to consider what tasks were necessary for government and the people at the end of the war (burial of the dead and memorialization).
- Conclude this part of the lesson by asking students to brainstorm benefits and drawbacks of overseas burial.

### Activity Two: Memory from the Home Front (10 minutes)

- Clarify for students the four options available to next of kin. Remind students that practices for World War II were similar to that of World War I, but different from the Civil War and conflicts since World War II.
- Make available to students information consistent with what next of kin had available in the World War II era. This will help students understand what difficulty they might have had making such a decision. Teachers can make any or all of the following information available for students to examine and discuss:
  - Share images of one or two ABMC World War I cemeteries, reminding students that such cemeteries would be examples the next of kin at that time would likely be aware. The ABMC website makes such photos available. Recommended cemeteries include Meuse-Argonne American Cemetery and Flanders Field American Cemetery.
  - Share the excerpt from *American Armies and Battlefields in Europe: A History, Guide, and Reference Book*.



- Share images of one or two national cemeteries, reminding students that fallen heroes from World War I were also buried at home in national cemeteries and that families would have known of these.
- Lead students in dialogue about the benefits and drawbacks for burial overseas from the families' point of view.
- Conclude this part of the lesson by engaging in dialogue with the students about what families most often chose. Ask:
  - *The majority chose repatriation. Why might that have been the case?*
  - *What does this help us understand about the sacrifice made by those who chose overseas interment?*

### Activity Three: *Decision* (30 minutes)

- Introduce 1946 short film, *Decision*. Establish context by identifying year of production (1946) and authorship (the U.S. War Department).
- Play the film.
- Debrief from video. Encourage discussion regarding the following topics:
  - *Why did the creators of this film choose the characters in this film?*
  - *What elements of the story or characters seem realistic to that time period?*
  - *Is there a choice students perceive the film wants its audience to take?*
- Share summary with students regarding what families chose to do. Majority of families with the choice opted for repatriation. Also, share figures about cost to the U.S. government for repatriation as well as overseas burial.
- Turn the discussion to the role of the cemeteries today. Lead a discussion regarding the benefits and drawbacks of these memorials today.
  - *How did the families who chose to have their loved ones interred here contribute to the memorialization of the war and America's contributions to victory?*
- Ask students to revisit the benefits and drawbacks identified in the first part of the lesson. *How has the passage of time changed or modified the answers on that list?*
- Ask students to reflect on what role the cemeteries overseas have in honoring the service and sacrifice of the nation in World War II. Also, ask students to consider the role families back then played in shaping memory of the war today.

## Assessment

- Assign students to select one of the following questions to respond to in written form. If preferred, teachers can select a question based on the level of his/her students.
  - *What decision might you have made if you were next of kin to a fallen hero in World War II?*
  - *Might families have made different decisions regarding burial overseas if they knew what these cemeteries serve as today?*
  - *What is the most important role our nation's overseas cemeteries play today?*

## Methods for Extension:

- Teachers can use the [video commentary](#) featuring Dr. Christopher Hamner analyzing the film, *Decision*.
- The American Battle Monuments Commission maintains U.S. military cemeteries overseas. These cemeteries are permanent memorials to the fallen, but it is important that students know the stories of those who rest here. To learn more about the stories of Americans who made the ultimate sacrifice, visit [abmc.gov/education](http://abmc.gov/education) and [NHDSilentHeroes.org](http://NHDSilentHeroes.org).
- Teachers can enhance students' interest in the role of the World War II homefront by exploring these related lesson plans:
  - [Industry's Role in the Strategic Bombing Campaign](#)
  - [A Japanese American Family's Experience During World War II: A Living DBQ](#)
  - [Race and Tragedy on the Homefront: The Forgotten Port Chicago Disaster](#)
  - [Sacrifice, Loss, and Honor: A Simulation of the Homefront in World War II](#)

## Adaptations:

- Teachers can focus more on visual or textual sources based on the needs of their students.
- Teachers can turn the final assessment into a presentation or podcast if desired.

# Information Regarding Overseas Burials Summary Sheet

## Options Available to Families:

- Burial in a permanent American military cemetery overseas.
- Repatriation: Return of remains to U.S. for burial in a private cemetery or in a national cemetery.
- Return of remains to a foreign country which was the homeland of the deceased or next of kin.
- These options are very similar to those available to next of kin in World War I.
- In conflicts after World War II the remains of all servicemen and servicewomen are repatriated to the United States for interment.

## Legislation Regarding Repatriation:

- Signed into law in 1946
- Allowed for repatriations until end of 1951
- Cost: \$200 million
- Each repatriation cost an estimated \$700.00
- Families could have as much as \$50 of burial cost paid for by U.S. government

## The Burial of Our Fallen Heroes:

- There are 14 ABMC commemorative cemeteries for World War II dead. Six of them are in France. Two each are in Belgium and Italy. Britain, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, the Philippines, and Tunisia each have one.
- There are 92,958 individuals from World War II buried overseas in ABMC cemeteries.
- Next of kin requested the return of 171,539 remains.

## America's Overseas Military Cemeteries Today:

- A visitor welcome center is part of every commemorative cemetery.
- Facilities at military cemeteries include a chapel, memorials, and often murals, mosaics, maps, and other artwork that interpret the course of the war in the region in which the cemetery is located and honor the fallen.
- In fiscal year 2018 the agency's total expenditures equaled \$87.6 million.

## American Armies and Battlefields in Europe: A History, Guide, and Reference Book (excerpt)

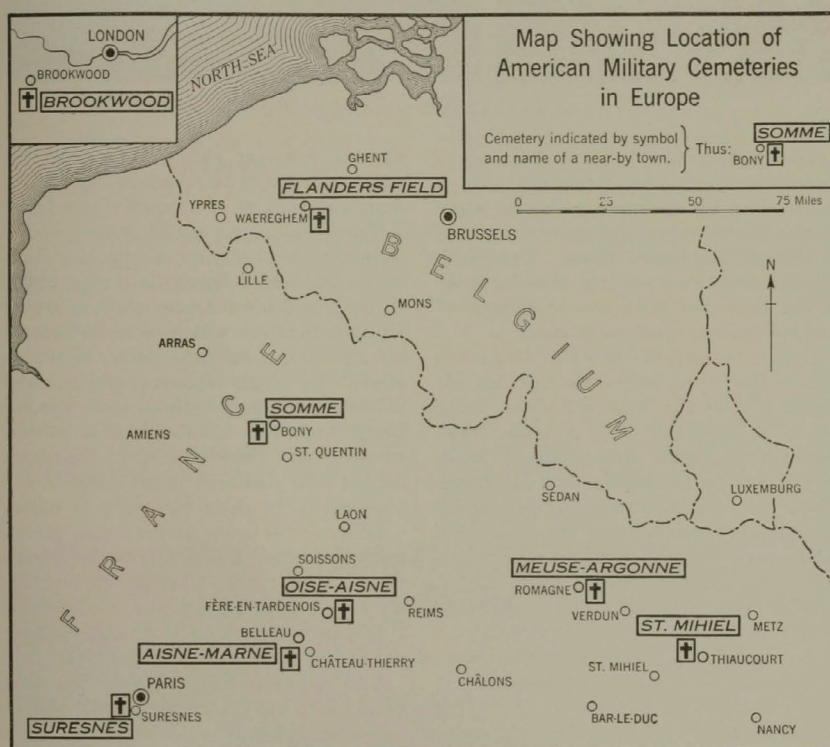
### "American Military Cemeteries in Europe," Page 457

#### Chapter XI

#### AMERICAN MILITARY CEMETERIES IN EUROPE

THERE are eight permanent American military cemeteries in Europe. These have been developed by the United States Government into places of distinguished beauty and no American

Cemetery. The other American cemeteries are located on the battlefields of France and Belgium and have been included in the tours described in this book. The cemeteries were originally estab-



who travels in Europe should fail to visit as many of them as his time will permit.

The cemeteries are conveniently located with respect to the routes which travelers normally follow. From the center of Paris it is only 5 miles to the cemetery at Suresnes, and from London it is less than an hour by train to the Brookwood

lished by the War Department. They are now (1937) under the jurisdiction of the American Battle Monuments Commission, which has erected in each one an appropriate memorial chapel and has added the additional architectural and landscape features necessary to make all of them outstanding in beauty and dignity.

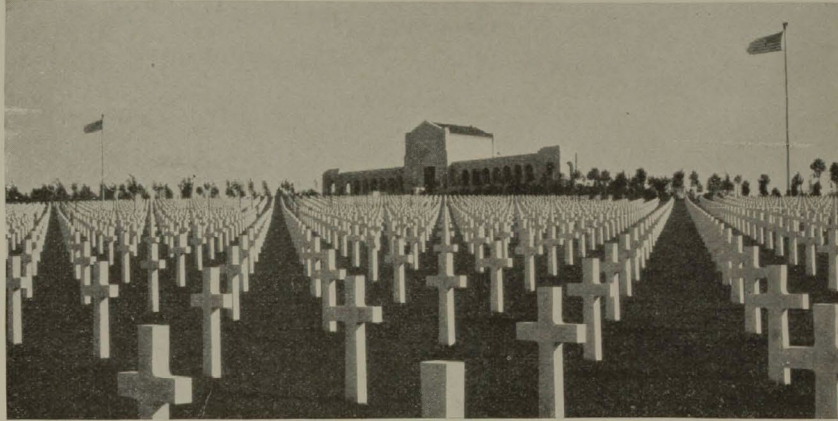


## American Armies and Battlefields in Europe: A History, Guide, and Reference Book (excerpt)

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AMERICAN MILITARY CEMETERIES IN EUROPE



General View of the Headstones at the Meuse-Argonne Cemetery

The development of each cemetery is formal in character and this formality is emphasized by the regular rows of white marble headstones which mark the graves of the soldiers buried there. The headstones are of two designs, a cross for those of the Christian faith and a six-pointed star for those of the Jewish faith.

Every soldier now buried in an American military cemetery who lost his life during the World War and whose body has been identified has his name, rank, organization, state and date of death carved on the headstone over his grave. These men are called the "known dead" to distinguish them from the "unknown dead" whose bodies have not been found or, if found, have not been identified.

With one exception, all "unknown dead" whose bodies have been found are now buried in the cemeteries in Europe, each resting in a separate grave marked with a headstone bearing the following inscription: "HERE RESTS IN HONORED GLORY AN AMERICAN SOLDIER KNOWN BUT TO GOD". The single exception is that of the "Unknown Soldier" who was buried in a superb tomb bearing the same inscription at the Arlington National Cemetery near Washington, D. C. This soldier, selected from the unidentified dead of the A. E. F., was returned to America and buried with full military honors

at this national shrine, where, as the representative of his comrades, he receives daily the homage of a grateful people.

The "unknown dead" whose bodies were not found consist mainly of soldiers who were buried hurriedly during battle without suitable markers on their graves or with markers which were obliterated by shellfire, men who were blown to pieces by high-explosive shells, and prisoners who died without their identity being recorded. Through the misfortunes of war these men have thus been denied the honored burial which has been given to their comrades in death.

Others who have no identified graves are the soldiers and sailors whose resting place is the sea. This group includes men who died at sea and were buried there, as well as those who lost their lives at sea due to the action of the enemy.

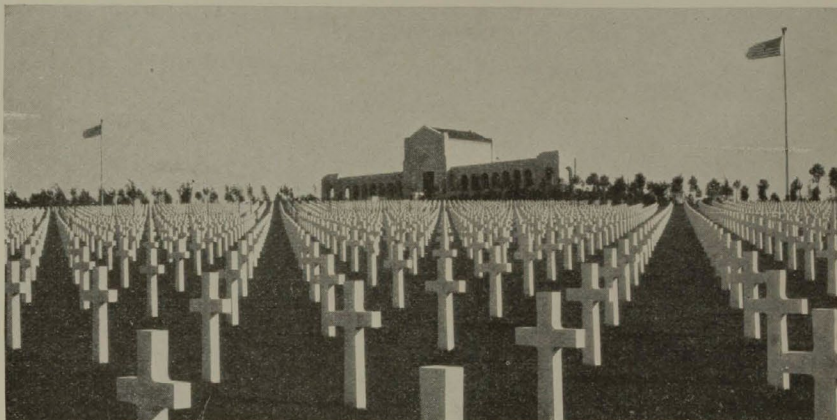
The Commission early decided that each of these "unknown dead" should have his name, rank, organization, state and date of death inscribed in one of the chapels in the American cemeteries in Europe. As a result, in the chapel of each battlefield cemetery are inscribed the names of the "unknown" soldiers who lost their lives in that region. In addition, on panels of the chapel in the Meuse-Argonne Cemetery are recorded the names of the "unknown dead" of the



*American Armies and Battlefields in Europe: A History, Guide, and Reference Book (excerpt)***"American Military Cemeteries in Europe," Page 459**

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AMERICAN MILITARY CEMETERIES IN EUROPE



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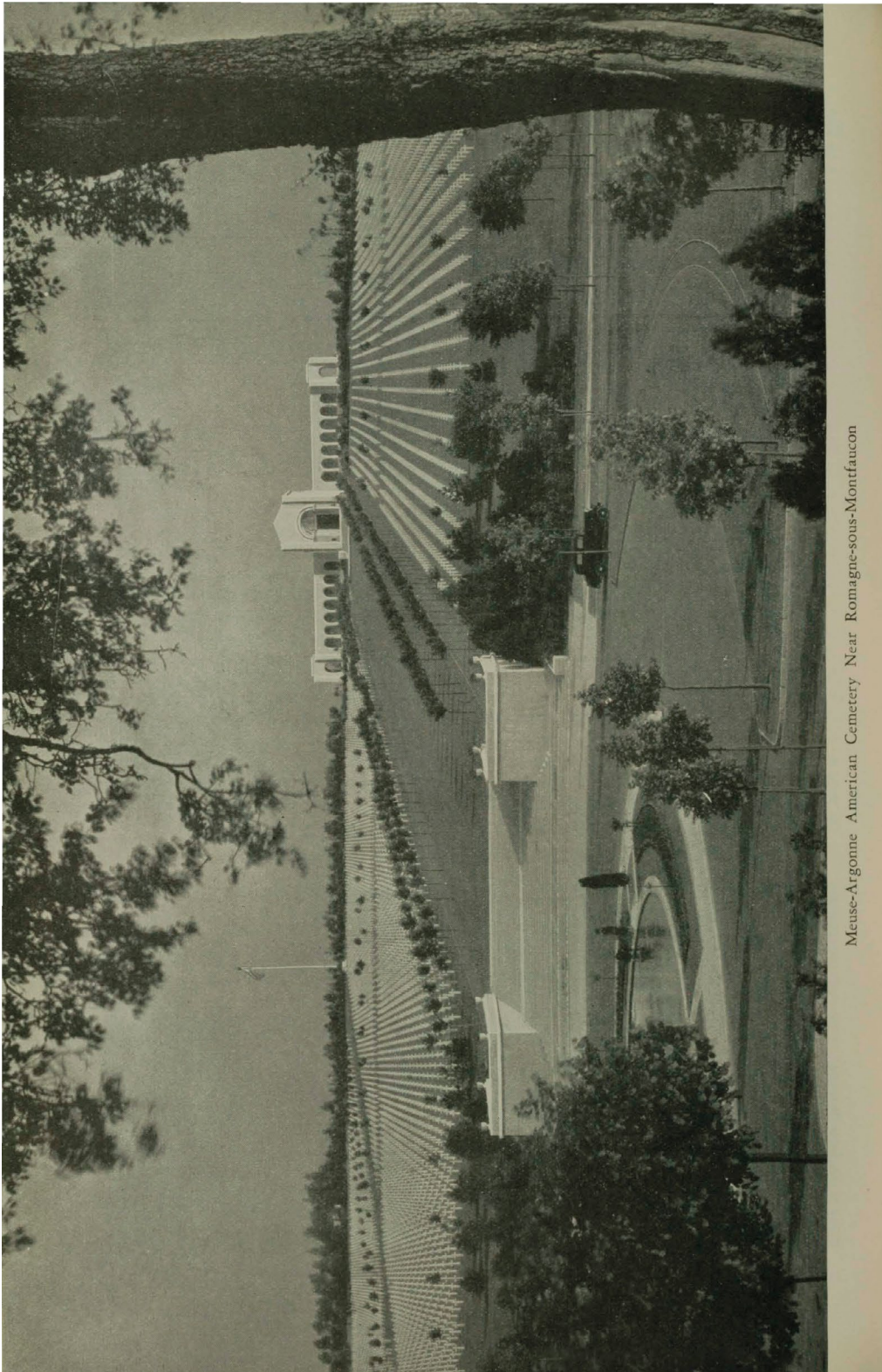
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Meuse-Argonne American Cemetery Near Romagne-sous-Montfaucon



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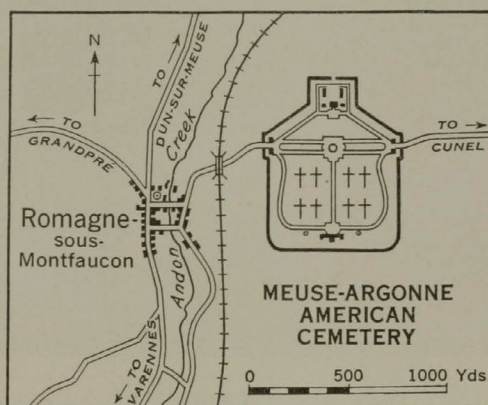
#### MEUSE-ARGONNE CEMETERY NEAR ROMAGNE-SOUS-MONTFAUCON

THIS is the largest and most impressive American cemetery in Europe. It contains 14,240 graves. Most of those buried here gave their lives during the Meuse-Argonne offensive, the greatest battle in all American history.

The cemetery is located just in rear of the Hindenburg Line in a small valley between Romagne and Cunel. Its size and the harmony of its architectural development make it rank high among the beautiful cemeteries of the world. The immense field of white marble crosses arranged in long regular rows on the sloping hillside, with the chapel silhouetted on the crest above, is a sight which, once it is seen, will not quickly be forgotten.

A more complete description of this cemetery is given on pages 247-248.

A hostess house, which has facilities to provide rooms and meals for a limited number of visitors during the summer months, is now maintained at the cemetery for the convenience of the relatives



of the men who are buried in the cemetery.

The cemetery is about 18 miles northwest of Verdun, which is a tourist center and easily reached by train. Good hotel accommodations are available in the city and automobiles can be hired there. Both the cemetery and the Meuse-Argonne American memorial on Montfaucon are included in most of the regular tours of the battlefields which start from Verdun.

Romagne Entrance, Meuse-Argonne Cemetery



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### "American Military Cemeteries in Europe," Page 462



OISE-AISNE CEMETERY NEAR FÈRE-EN-TARDENOIS

ON a battlefield where many of America's bravest sons met their death, near Fère-en-Tardenois, is located the Oise-Aisne Cemetery, the second largest American cemetery in Europe. It contains 6,012 graves. The majority of the battle dead who sleep there are from divisions which fought in the vicinity and to the north as far as the Oise River. In 1922 a considerable number of bodies were moved to this cemetery from the general area to the southwest of Paris.

The quiet surroundings now give no indication of the conflict that raged in this region while American soldiers were fighting here for the Ourcq River heights.

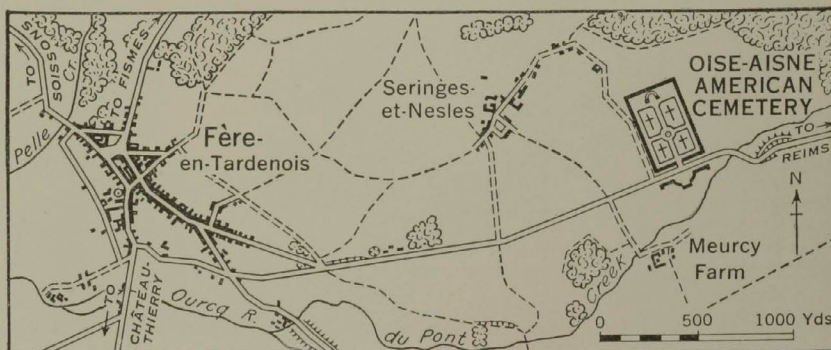
The cemetery itself is a peaceful harmony of landscaping and architecture.

The pink and gray sandstone chapel and walls give color at all times but perfection is reached in the spring when the roses and flowering shrubs are in full bloom.

The cemetery is about 14 miles from Château-Thierry and Soissons and slightly more from Reims. Good train service is available to each of those places, where hotel accommodations can be obtained and automobiles hired. The main railroad line between Paris and Reims passes close to the village of Fère-en-Tardenois.

For further information concerning this cemetery and its features see pages 75-76.

The American cemetery near Belleau and the American memorial on Hill 204 just outside of Château-Thierry are each about 14 miles away to the southwest.





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ST. MIHIEL CEMETERY NEAR THIAUCOURT

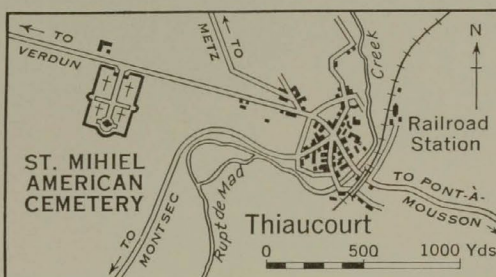
THIS is the third largest of the American military cemeteries in Europe and contains 4,152 graves. It is located on ground restored to France, after more than four years of German occupation, by the great offensive of the American First Army which resulted in reducing the St. Mihiel salient.

The cemetery contains many works of art and architecture in commemoration of those who died on this field of honor. The interior decorations of the chapel and museum, which include an inlaid marble map picturing the American fighting in the vicinity, are of special interest. For a more complete description of this cemetery and the features located in it, see pages 147-149.

The American memorial on Montsec, commemorating the St. Mihiel operation and other American fighting in the region, is 8 miles to the southwest and can be

seen from the cemetery on a clear day.

The cemetery is less than 26 miles from Nancy, Verdun and Metz. There is good train service to these places, and at each of them hotel accommodations are



available and automobiles may be hired. Thiaucourt is on the main railroad line between Paris and Metz and a few of the trains stop there. The town is four hours by train from Paris. There are, however, no good hotels at Thiaucourt.

St. Mihiel Cemetery Near Thiaucourt



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AMERICAN MILITARY CEMETERIES IN EUROPE



AISNE-MARNE CEMETERY NEAR BELLEAU

THIS cemetery lies at the foot of the hill upon which stands Belleau Wood. It contains 2,288 graves, mainly those of American soldiers who fought in the near vicinity or in the Marne River valley.

The imposing chapel standing against

the hillside is of French Romanesque style of architecture. The natural setting of the cemetery and chapel, and the perfection of detail of the architectural and landscape development, all combine to give this historic spot an atmosphere of exceptional beauty and dignity.

The cemetery is 45 miles from Paris and about 5 miles northwest of Château-Thierry, which is on a main railroad line running east from Paris. Fair hotel accommodations are available at Château-Thierry and automobiles for a visit to the battlefields may be hired there.

A more detailed description of this cemetery is given on pages 49-52.

A visit to the cemetery will give the tourist an opportunity to see Belleau Wood, which adjoins the cemetery, and the Aisne-Marne American memorial which is on a hill above Château-Thierry.



## American Armies and Battlefields in Europe: A History, Guide, and Reference Book (excerpt)

### "American Military Cemeteries in Europe," Page 465

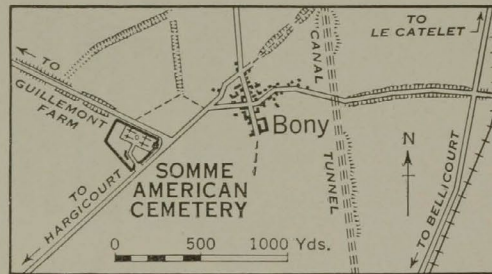
#### SOMME AMERICAN CEMETERY NEAR BONY

THIS cemetery, located about halfway on the road between St. Quentin and Cambrai, is just southwest of Bony and contains 1,833 graves. Its style of architecture expresses the spirit of rugged determination which inspired the American soldiers in their repeated assaults across the neighboring fields while advancing to attack the Hindenburg Line in front of Bony.

The men buried here are mainly those who lost their lives while serving with the British Armies in France or in the operations of the 1st Division with the French Army near the town of Cantigny.

The chapel is remarkable for its cross-shaped window of crystal glass above the altar, the harmony of its interior decorations, the beauty of its bronze doors and its interesting carved exterior decorations.

The cemetery is about 9 miles north of



St. Quentin, which can be reached by train from Paris in two hours. Hotel accommodations are available and motor transportation may be hired there.

For a more complete description of this cemetery consult pages 387-388.

The American monument north of Belli-court which commemorates the services of all American troops who fought with the British Armies in Europe during the World War is one mile away to the southeast.

Chapel at the Somme American Cemetery Near Bony



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SURESNES AMERICAN CEMETERY NEAR PARIS

ON the slopes of Mont Valérien, 5 miles from the heart of Paris, is located the Suresnes Cemetery containing 1,541 graves. The men buried there are mainly those who died during the World War in hospitals located in Paris or at other places in the Services of Supply.

The cemetery is entered through an ornamental, wrought-iron gateway, and paths lead from it directly to the impressive chapel of an early colonial design. From its site against the steep wooded hillside, the chapel looks out over the

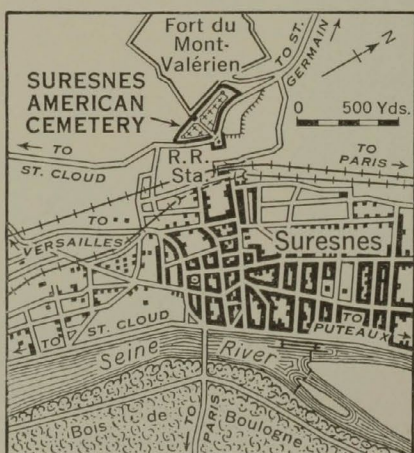
fields of white marble headstones, and from its terrace a fine panorama of a large part of the city of Paris is obtained.

Inside the chapel is an artistic marble altar flanked by large marble urns containing green shrubbery. The effect of these is heightened by the beautiful mosaic above them depicting the Angel of Victory laying a tribute upon the tombs of the soldier dead. The interior of the chapel is illuminated by a subdued light from six attractive stained-glass windows and on the walls are bronze tablets giving the names of American soldiers and sailors whose grave is the sea.<sup>1</sup> Carved benches have been provided for meditation and prayer.

Nature has aided with a generous hand the careful planning which created this peaceful resting place and a visit to honor these soldier dead is recommended when the trees and shrubs are in flower.

The reception building which contains facilities for visitors is located at the southern end of the cemetery.

The town of Suresnes can be easily reached from Paris by train, autobus or automobile. The cemetery is only about 200 yards from the main railroad station.



<sup>1</sup>Additional names of those men who have no grave except the sea are given in the Brookwood chapel.

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#### FLANDERS FIELD CEMETERY NEAR WAEREGHEM, BELGIUM

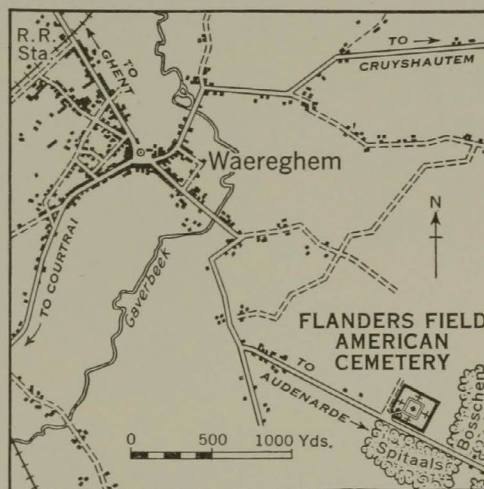
THIS cemetery, located about halfway between Brussels and Ypres, contains 368 graves. The men who rest here are mainly those who gave their lives during the American fighting in Belgium.

The beautiful chapel at the center of the cemetery is surrounded on four sides by the fields of white marble headstones. The landscaping gives an impression of quiet harmony and the whole development forms a fitting resting place for the American heroes who are buried at this place.

Additional information concerning this cemetery and the features in it is given on page 399.

The American monument in the town of Audenarde is 7 miles away on the direct road to Brussels.

The cemetery is 17 miles southwest of Ghent, 24 miles northeast of Lille and 39 miles west of Brussels. The nearest rail-



road station, which is in the village of Waereghem, can be reached by fast train from Paris in approximately five hours.

Flanders Field American Cemetery Near Waereghem, Belgium

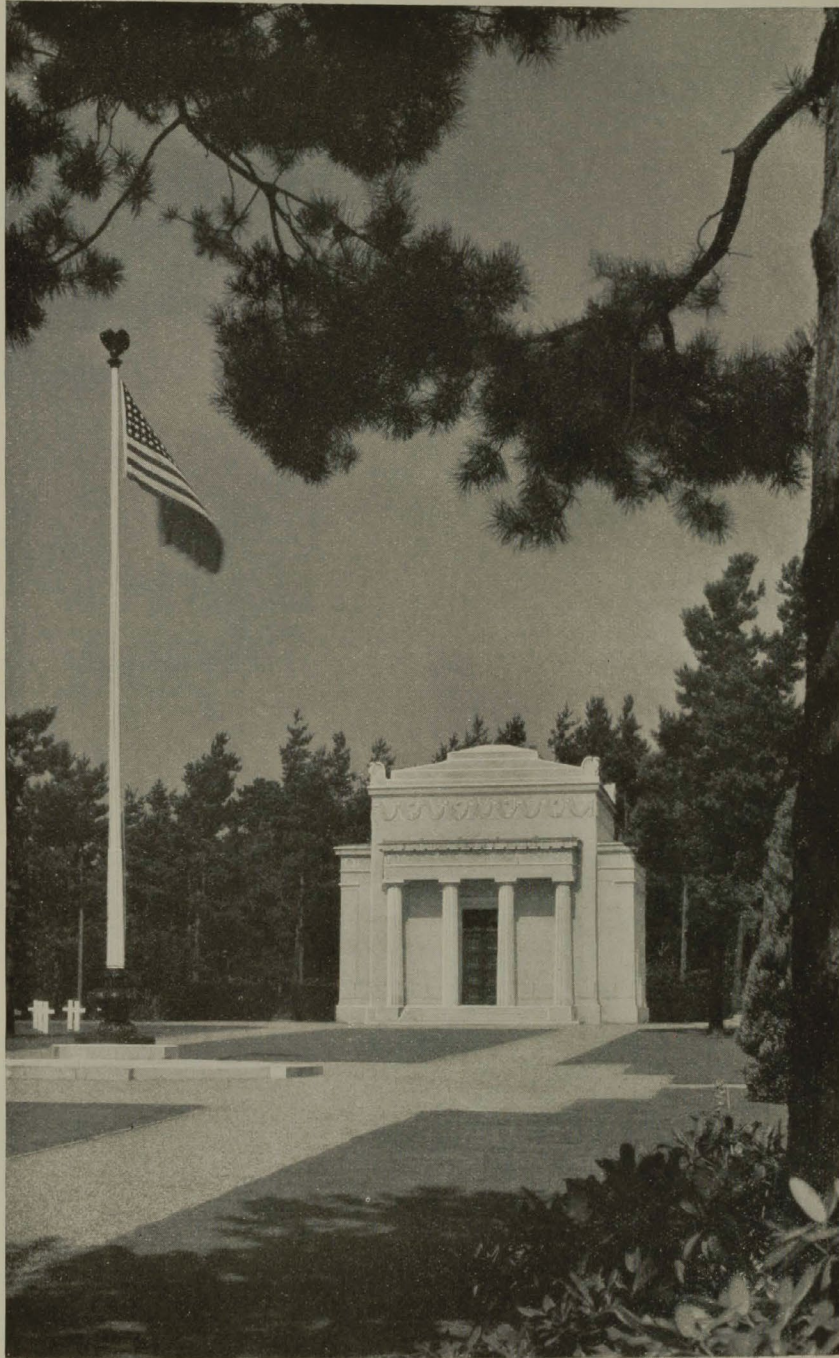


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American Cemetery Near Brookwood, England



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## BROOKWOOD CEMETERY NEAR BROOKWOOD, ENGLAND

THIS cemetery, located near the village of Brookwood about 25 miles southwest of London, contains 468 graves. Adjoining it is a British World War cemetery in which are buried many of the dead from their colonial forces. Both of these burial areas form part of a very large and beautiful British cemetery that was established privately many years ago.

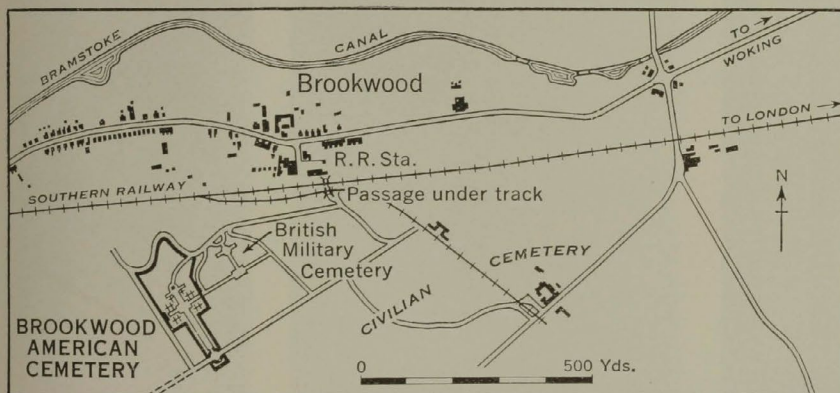
The American soldiers who rest in the Brookwood Cemetery were brought there after the Armistice, from various places throughout England, Scotland and Ireland, and comprise those members of the American Expeditionary Forces who lost their lives in Great Britain or its surrounding waters during the war. They include many of the victims of the S. S.

evergreens which form a perfect setting for the chapel, a graceful building of classic design decorated with features of both religious and patriotic interest.

The interior of the chapel is of brown stone, soft in coloring. Small stained-glass windows, remarkable for the beauty of their designs, light the altar and the carved cross above it. On the walls are inscribed the names of American soldiers and sailors whose grave is the sea.<sup>1</sup> Inlaid in the floor is a large bronze coat of arms of the United States; and high above the altar, carved in relief on the wall, is an eagle with the inscription below it,

WITH GOD IS THEIR REWARD

A visit to the cemetery can not fail to bring a feeling of satisfaction to the



*Tuscania* which was sunk by a German submarine on February 5, 1918, not far away from the west coast of Scotland.

On the southwest side of the cemetery, across from the British military burial ground, is situated a reception building which contains facilities for the comfort of visitors. The office of the superintendent is in that building and inquiries should be made there for the location of a particular grave or for other information.

At the center of the cemetery is an ornamental flagpole from which the American flag flies, each day of the year, over the soldier dead buried here.

The regular rows of white marble headstones are shaded by thick masses of

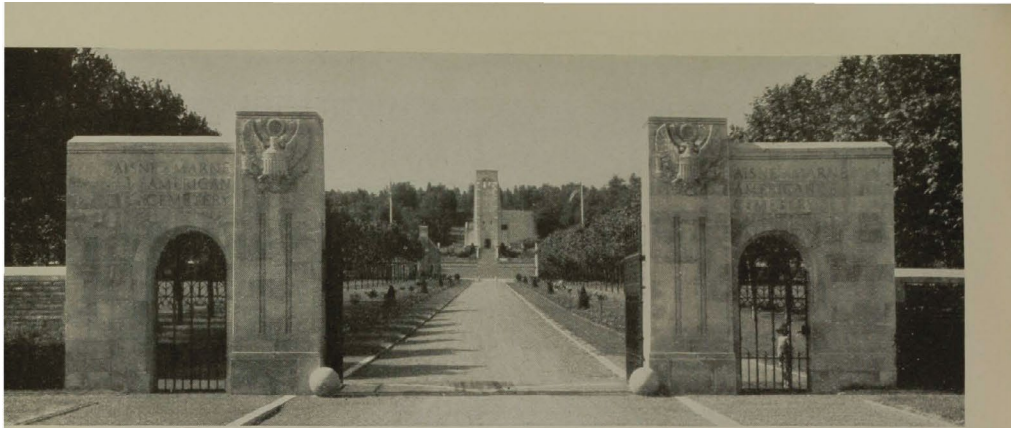
American visitor that these soldiers who died in Great Britain and who still remain there are sleeping in such beautiful, dignified and peaceful surroundings.

It is a pleasant drive by automobile from London to Brookwood, through an interesting part of England, and a round trip to the cemetery in this way can be made comfortably in half a day. Brookwood can also be reached by train in less than an hour from London. The railroad service is exceptionally good, trains running about every hour, and the American cemetery is only about 300 yards to the southwest of the railroad station.

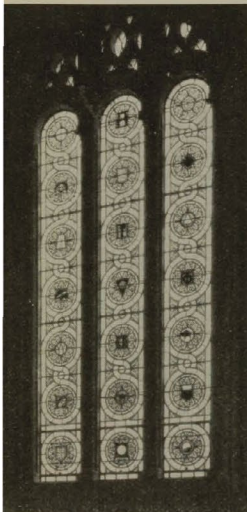
<sup>1</sup> Additional names of those men who have no grave except the sea are recorded at the Suresnes Cemetery.

## American Armies and Battlefields in Europe: A History, Guide, and Reference Book (excerpt)

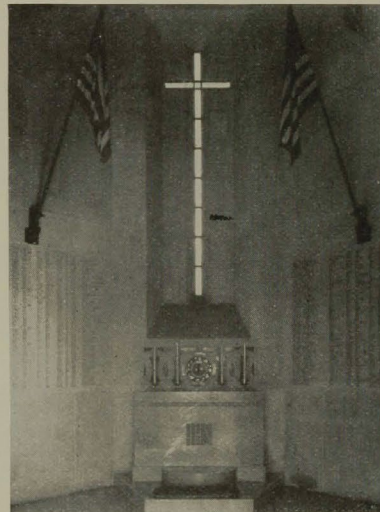
### "American Military Cemeteries in Europe," Page 470



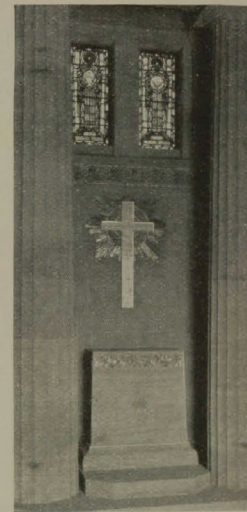
Entrance, Aisne-Marne Cemetery



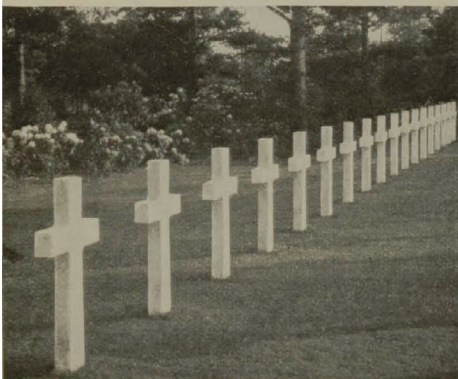
Chapel Window in the Meuse-Argonne Cemetery



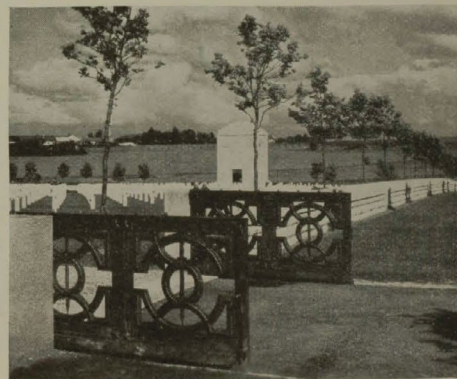
Altar of Chapel in the Somme Cemetery



Altar of Chapel in the Brookwood Cemetery



Line of Crosses in the Brookwood Cemetery

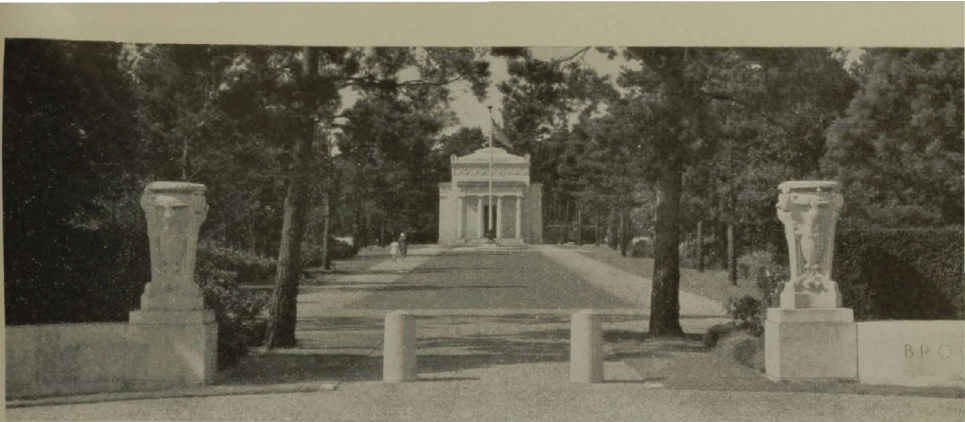


Bronze Gates at the Somme Cemetery



**American Armies and Battlefields in Europe: A History, Guide, and Reference Book (excerpt)**

**"American Military Cemeteries in Europe," Page 471**



Entrance, Brookwood Cemetery



Mosaic and Altar of Chapel in the St. Mihiel Cemetery



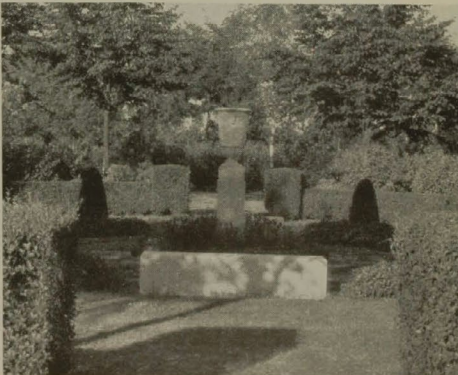
Altar of Chapel in the Meuse-Argonne Cemetery



Monument in the St. Mihiel Cemetery



Mosaic and Altar of Chapel at the Suresnes Cemetery



A Corner of the Flanders Field Cemetery

# An Act to Provide for the Evacuation and Return of the Remains of Certain Persons who Died and are Buried Outside the Continental Limits of the United States, August 5, 1947

61 STAT.] 80TH CONG., 1ST SESS.—CH. 497—AUG. 5, 1947

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[CHAPTER 497]

## AN ACT

To amend the Act entitled “An Act to provide for the evacuation and return of the remains of certain persons who died and are buried outside the continental limits of the United States”, approved May 16, 1946, in order to provide for the shipment of the remains of World War II dead to the homeland of the deceased or of next of kin, to provide for the disposition of group and mass burials, to provide for the burial of unknown American World War II dead in United States military cemeteries to be established overseas, to authorize the Secretary of War to acquire land overseas and to establish United States military cemeteries thereon, and for other purposes.

August 5, 1947  
[H. R. 3394]  
[Public Law 368]

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,* That the Act of May 16, 1946, entitled “An Act to provide for the evacuation and return of the remains of certain persons who died and are buried outside the continental limits of the United States” (Public Law 383, Seventy-ninth Congress), is hereby amended to read as follows:

Return of remains  
of certain persons  
buried outside U. S.

“That the Congress hereby declares it to be in the public interest to provide for the interment of the remains of certain persons who died on or after September 3, 1939, and whose remains are buried in places located outside the continental limits of the United States and could not be returned to their homeland for burial due to wartime shipping restrictions, by authorizing their permanent interment outside the continental limits of the United States or their evacuation and return either to their homeland or to the homeland of their next of kin, and to centralize in one agency the task of accomplishing the purpose of this Act.

60 Stat. 182.  
50 U. S. C. app.  
§§ 1811-1816.

“SEC. 2. All activities herein provided for are hereby made a responsibility of the Secretary of War, except as expressly reserved to the American Battle Monuments Commission by section 9 of this Act.

Responsibility.

“SEC. 3. The Secretary of War is hereby authorized and directed upon application by the next of kin in the case of individual identified remains to return such remains to the homeland of the decedent or of his next of kin for interment at places designated by the next of kin, including national cemeteries provided such remains are entitled to interment therein; and he is further authorized at his own discretion in the case of group or mass burials, which include the remains of one or more known individuals, to cause them to be interred in such places as he may direct: *Provided*, That this Act shall apply only to the remains of persons who died on or after September 3, 1939, and are buried outside the continental limits of the United States, and who were—

Identified remains.

“(a) members of the armed forces of the United States who died in the service;

“(b) civilian officers and employees of the United States;

“(c) citizens of the United States who served in the armed forces of any government at war with Germany, Italy, or Japan and who died while in such service and who were citizens of the United States at the time of such service;

“(d) citizens of the United States whose homes are in fact in the United States and whose death outside the continental limits thereof can be directly attributed to the war or who died while employed or otherwise engaged in activities contributing to the prosecution of the war; and

“(e) such other citizens of the United States, the disposition of the remains of whom under the provisions of this Act would, in the discretion of the Secretary of War, serve the public interest.

Applicability.

“SEC. 4. With respect to the remains of all persons who are included in the categories set forth in the preceding section of this Act, the

Interment in military cemeteries outside U. S.



# An Act to Provide for the Evacuation and Return of the Remains of Certain Persons who Died and are Buried Outside the Continental Limits of the United States, August 5, 1947

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PUBLIC LAWS—CHS. 497, 498—AUG. 5, 1947

[61 STAT.]

Secretary of War is further authorized and directed upon application by the next of kin in the case of individual identified remains, and authorized at his own discretion in the case of unidentified remains and in all cases of identified remains which are not returned to the homeland under the provisions of this Act to inter the remains in United States military cemeteries established outside the continental limits of the United States.

Acquisition of land  
abroad.

“SEC. 5. The Secretary of War is hereby authorized to acquire by purchase, gift, or devise, without submission to the Attorney General of the United States under the provisions of section 355 of the Revised Statutes (34 U. S. C. 520; 40 U. S. C. 255), land or interest in land in foreign countries necessary for the purposes of this Act, and to establish thereon United States military cemeteries. Cemeteries established by the Secretary of War under the authority of this Act are subject to the provisions of section 12, Public Law 456, Seventy-ninth Congress.

60 Stat. 318.  
36 U. S. C. § 132.

Rules and regula-  
tions.

“SEC. 6. The Secretary of War is authorized to prescribe such rules and regulations as may be necessary to carry out the purposes and provisions of this Act.

Appropriations au-  
thorized.  
*Ante*, p. 686.

“SEC. 7. There is hereby authorized to be appropriated from time to time such sums as may be necessary to carry out the provisions of this Act, said sums to be made available for civil functions administered by the War Department, ‘Cemeterial expenses, War Department’, to be expended under the direction of the Secretary of War.

Termination of Act,  
etc.

“SEC. 8. This Act and the authority granted therein and all rules and regulations promulgated thereunder shall terminate on December 31, 1951, or upon such earlier date as may be specified in a proclamation by the President, or in a concurrent resolution by the two Houses of Congress as the date beyond which further continuance of the authority granted by this Act is not necessary in the public interest, whichever date is earliest: *Provided*, That as to any applications provided for under sections 3 and 4 filed prior to such termination date, the provisions of this Act and such rules or regulations promulgated pursuant thereto shall be treated as remaining in force for the purpose of providing for the return or overseas burial of remains in proper cases.”

Prior applications.

Design and con-  
struction of cemeteries  
abroad.

SEC. 9. The American Battle Monuments Commission shall be solely responsible for the permanent design and construction of the cemeteries to be established in foreign countries under section 5 of this Act and of all buildings, plantings, headstones, and other permanent improvements incidental thereto. The Secretary of War is authorized to undertake such temporary construction as will be necessary for the accomplishment of this Act and to maintain such cemeteries in a suitable condition until such time as the functions of administration thereof shall pass to the American Battle Monuments Commission in accordance with section 12 of Public Law 456, Seventy-ninth Congress, or any other law.

Temporary con-  
struction.

60 Stat. 318.  
36 U. S. C. § 132.

Approved August 5, 1947.

[CHAPTER 498]

AN ACT

To provide for the reincorporation of The Institute of Inter-American Affairs, and for other purposes.

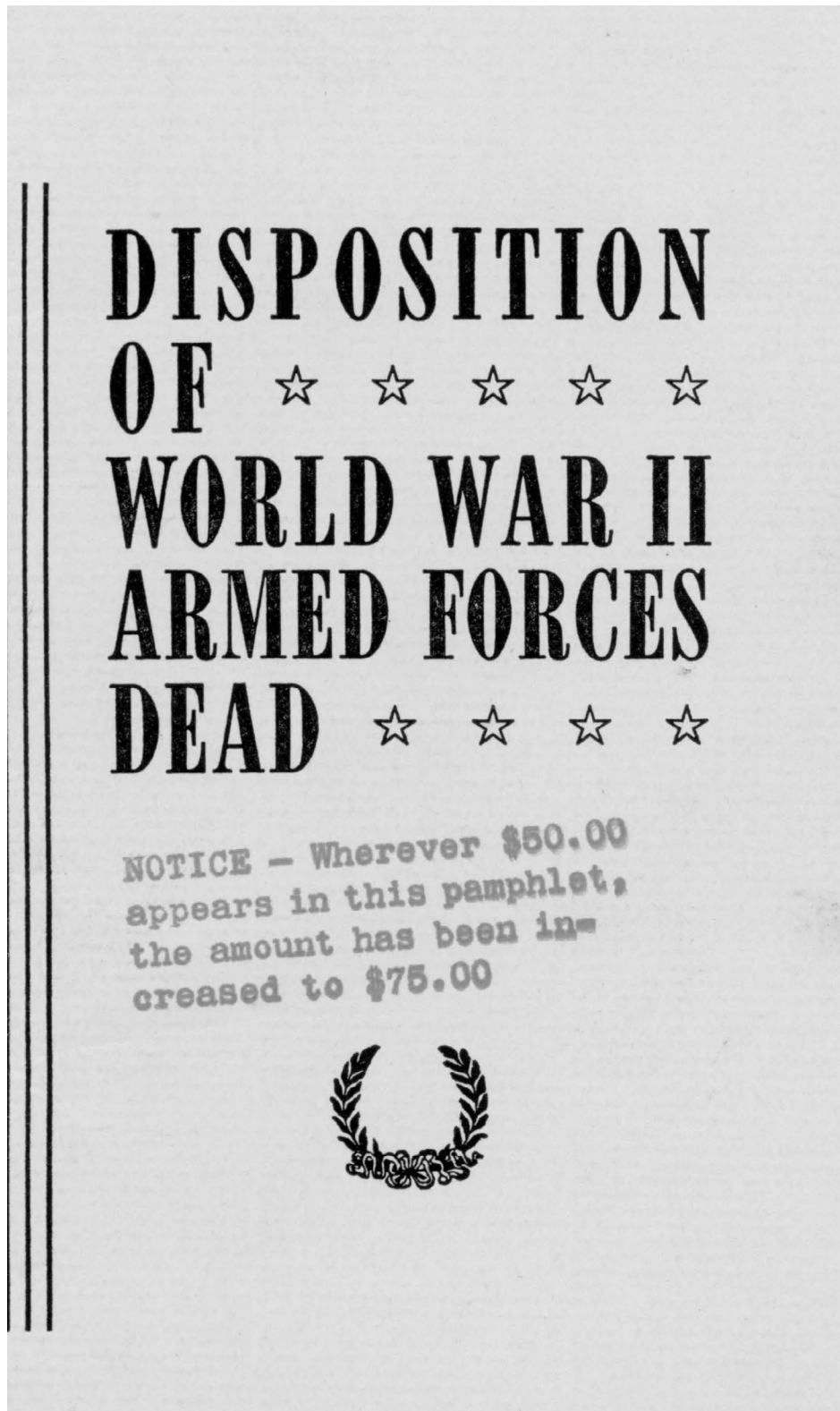
August 5, 1947  
[H. R. 4168]  
[Public Law 369]

Institute of Inter-  
American Affairs Act.

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled*, That there be, as of the date of enactment of this Act, created as an agency of the United States of America a body corporate with the name of “The Institute of Inter-American Affairs” (in this Act called the “Institute”).



## *Disposition of World War II Armed Forces Dead*



## *Disposition of World War II Armed Forces Dead*

**DISPOSITION  
OF  
WORLD WAR II  
ARMED FORCES DEAD**

**THIS PAMPHLET IS FOR THE  
GUIDANCE OF THE NEXT OF KIN  
OF ALL OUR WORLD WAR II  
ARMED FORCES DEAD, NOW  
BURIED OUTSIDE THE UNITED  
STATES.**

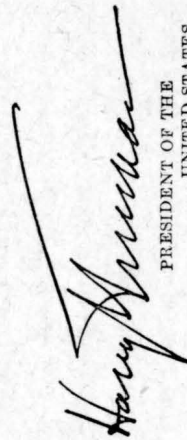
**WAR DEPARTMENT  
OFFICE OF THE QUARTERMASTER GENERAL  
WASHINGTON 25, D. C.**

## Disposition of World War II Armed Forces Dead



### DEDICATION

In deep and everlasting appreciation of the heroic efforts of those who, in keeping their country free, made the supreme sacrifice in World War II—the entire Nation has been dedicated to disposing of the mortal remains of those honored dead, in a manner consistent with the wishes of their next of kin.

  
PRESIDENT OF THE  
UNITED STATES



## Disposition of World War II Armed Forces Dead

### FOREWORD

**T**HE Congress of the United States has authorized the Secretary of War to carry out all feasible wishes of the next of kin for disposition of the remains of those Americans who made the supreme sacrifice during World War II. The next of kin of those members of the armed forces as well as of the civilians who served with the armed forces will be requested to indicate their wishes.

This program is not alone a War Department program, but rather a coordinated program jointly planned and participated in by all the armed forces of the United States and those governmental agencies whose personnel served overseas in World War II with the armed forces. The Quartermaster General of the Army, acting for the Secretary of War, will administer this program.

The information contained in the succeeding pages is published so that, as next of kin, you may become acquainted with your rights under the law, and learn of the pro-

(1)

## Disposition of World War II Armed Forces Dead

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visions that have been made for carrying out your desires. If you have a question or several questions, not included in the following pages, please send it—or them—to the Office of The Quartermaster General, Memorial Division, War Department, Washington 25, D. C. Every endeavor will be made to carry out your expressed desire.

All efforts will be devoted to ensuring such final resting places for our honored dead as they themselves would choose. The selection of the procedure to be followed, however, is now yours, as next of kin.

**Question:** Who is the next of kin?

**Answer:** In order best to insure a proper disposition of the remains, the War Department will, in the absence of special circumstances, recognize designations for disposition of decedent's remains from persons specified below in the order indicated:

*a. If the deceased was unmarried.*

1. Father.
2. Mother.
3. Brothers over 21 years of age, in the order of their seniority.

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4. Sisters over 21 years of age, in the order of their seniority.

5. Next of kin of legal age in order of their relation to decedent.

*b. If the deceased was married.*

1. Widow or widower (if not divorced, separated, or remarried).

2. Sons of the deceased, who are over 21 years of age, in the order of their seniority.

3. Daughters of the deceased, who are over 21 years of age, in the order of their seniority.

4. Next of kin of legal age in the order specified for unmarried deceased personnel, as set forth in par. a 5 above.

**Question:** What should I do if I conclude that I am *not* the next of kin?

**Answer:** If, after reading the answers to the preceding question, you have decided that you are *not* the next of kin, *not* the one authorized to direct the disposition of the remains, please fill in part III of the "Request for Disposition of Remains" form and return it in the postage-free, addressed envelope that has been provided.



## Disposition of World War II Armed Forces Dead

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**Question:** If I have concluded that I *am* the next of kin, may I relinquish my rights to someone else?

**Answer:** If you *are* the next of kin as outlined in answer to the first question, you may relinquish your rights to dispose of the decedent's remains. The rights which you had then pass to the next existing person in the order of eligibility outlined in answer to the first question. To accomplish this, please complete part II of the form entitled "Request for Disposition of Remains" and return it to the Office of the Quartermaster General, Memorial Division, War Department, Washington 25, D. C.

**Question:** What should I do if I conclude that I *am* the next of kin and wish to exercise my rights?

**Answer:** If you have now decided that you *are* the next of kin, please read the following pages and make your decision on the various options that are presented for your selection. Then please complete part I of the "Request for Disposition of Remains" form, have the form notarized in the space provided for this purpose, place the form

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in the addressed, postage-free envelope that has been furnished and promptly mail it.

The reinterment of these honored dead is a tremendous undertaking. It will be carried out, area by area, from all over the world. It is an undertaking that will require many months, probably years, to complete. It will be accomplished in reverent and orderly manner. Your action in promptly returning the completed "Request for Disposition of Remains" form will greatly assist in the performance of this sacred duty. Prompt action is stressed. You are urged, therefore, to return the inclosed request form within 30 days after its receipt by you.

Although emphasis has been laid upon the necessity for your prompt action, even answer by return mail will not effect immediate action in event that you decide upon option 2. If you should elect option 2, it is advised that no funeral or other personal arrangements be made until you are further notified by this office.

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## Disposition of World War II Armed Forces Dead

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### OPTIONS TO BE GIVEN NEXT OF KIN

#### Option 1—

*The remains be interred in a permanent American military cemetery overseas.*

The establishment of permanent American military cemeteries overseas in the various areas in which American forces served is contemplated.

#### Option 2—

*The remains be returned to the United States, or any possession or territory thereof, for interment by next of kin in a private cemetery.*

Shipment will be made to the city or town designated by the next of kin.

#### Option 3—

*The remains be shipped within, or returned to a foreign country, the homeland of the deceased or next of kin, for interment by next of kin in a private cemetery.*

Shipment to a foreign country is dependent upon the ability of the

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United States Government to obtain entry and reinterment authority therein. If authority can be obtained, shipment will be made to the city or town designated by the next of kin.

#### Option 4—

*The remains be returned to the United States for final interment in a national cemetery.*

When this option is desired, the remains will be transported to the continental United States and interred in a national cemetery selected by the next of kin. Burial in the national cemetery desired is subject to availability of space therein.

#### Alternate Choice

If the options described above do not provide for your wish, it is suggested you submit your specific desire to the Office of The Quartermaster General for final decision by the War Department as to its legality and practicability.



## Disposition of World War II Armed Forces Dead

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### **Cremation**

If cremation of the remains is desired, specific request that the remains be cremated should be made on page 2 of the Form "Request for Disposition of Remains," in the block titled, "Remarks and Additional Instructions." The request should include a statement as to whether the next of kin desires to arrange for private cremation services or wishes the Government to make necessary cremation arrangements. Upon receipt of this request a letter pertaining to the Government procedure to carry out the wishes of the next of kin in this respect will be forwarded to the next of kin from the Office of The Quartermaster General.

### **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ON OPTIONS GIVEN ABOVE**

#### **All Options**

On all options, all costs of exhumation, preparation of remains, casketing, and shipment to the city or town designated by next of kin, or his duly authorized representative, will be borne by the Government

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of the United States. In all cases the Government will provide a flag of the United States to be used for proper draping of the casket during interment services. If next of kin of the deceased, or authorized representative, is present at the time of final interment, this burial flag will be presented. Otherwise, this burial flag will be forwarded to next of kin.

### **Option 1—Permanent American Military Cemetery Overseas**

The establishment of permanent American military cemeteries overseas, in the various areas in which American Forces served, is contemplated. These cemeteries will be beautified, maintained, and permanently cared for by the United States Government. To assist the next of kin in determining the place of final interment, a pamphlet describing permanent American military cemeteries abroad, and national cemeteries in the United States, is inclosed. All expenses incident to burial in permanent American military cemeteries will be paid by the Government. When the next of kin



## Disposition of World War II Armed Forces Dead

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requests that remains be interred in such cemeteries, they will be removed from their temporary burial location, prepared for reburial, casketed, transferred to the site of final interment and reburied there, all at Government expense. An Army chaplain will conduct appropriate religious services at the time of this reburial. The location of the permanent burial site will then be communicated to you. A temporary inscribed grave marker, (*Cross, or Star of David,*) will identify the grave until it can be replaced by the Government with an approved type inscribed headstone.

### **Option 2—Private Cemetery in United States**

If option 2 is selected, in addition to the expenses outlined above, the Government will contribute a sum not to exceed \$50 toward the defrayment of actual burial expenses. Costs or expenses in excess of \$50 must be borne by the person who contracted for the services. Funeral services at the private cemetery will be as arranged by the next of kin. Local veterans' organi-

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zations and the State Guard may be contacted for assistance in arranging for such military rites as may be desired. These organizations will cooperate insofar as their facilities permit. Arrangements for the burial plot are the responsibility of the next of kin.

An escort, provided at the expense of the Government, will accompany the remains to the city or town designated by the next of kin and will be instructed to obtain the signature of the next of kin, funeral director, or other designated representative of next of kin, in receipt for the remains. If the next of kin requests the escort to remain for the funeral services, the escort will be permitted to remain for a period not to exceed 72 hours from the time he arrives with the remains. The escort will deliver appropriate printed instructions regarding the manner of submitting claim for the Government contribution of \$50 toward defrayment of actual burial expenses.

### **Option 3—Private Cemetery Overseas**

If option 3 is selected, in addition to those services provided under all options, the



## Disposition of World War II Armed Forces Dead

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Government will contribute a sum not to exceed \$50 toward the defrayment of actual burial expenses. Costs or expenses in excess of \$50 must be borne by the person who contracted for the services. Funeral services at the private cemetery will be as arranged by the next of kin.

An escort, provided at the expense of the Government, will accompany the remains to the city or town designated by the next of kin and will be instructed to obtain the signature of the next of kin, funeral director, or other designated representative of next of kin, in receipt for the remains.

The Government will provide assistance in obtaining medical clearance and reinterment authority. Next of kin must arrange for burial plot and such funeral services as may be desired.

Upon application to the Office of The Quartermaster General, Memorial Division, War Department, Washington 25, D. C., after interment, the next of kin will be furnished appropriate instructions regarding the manner of submitting claim for reimbursement of a sum not to exceed \$50 to

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cover expenses incurred during final interment.

### **Option 4—U. S. National Cemetery**

National cemeteries were established in the United States in honor of and to provide final resting places for deceased members of the armed forces. To assist the next of kin in determining the place of final interment, a pamphlet describing permanent American military cemeteries abroad, and national cemeteries in the United States, is inclosed. If the deceased was a member of the Armed Forces of the United States, the option, "Return to the United States for final interment in a national cemetery," authorizes selection as the site for final interment, a national cemetery which is open for burials. A listing of these cemeteries which are open for additional burials is inclosed. If the cemetery chosen by the next of kin is no longer open for additional burials when the reply form "Request for Disposition of Remains" is received, the next of kin will be advised and requested to make another choice from a list of national cemeteries open at the time.



## Disposition of World War II Armed Forces Dead

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Remains may be shipped directly to the selected national cemetery for interment and funeral services; or, remains may be shipped to the place designated by you and thence to a national cemetery for interment. In the latter case, the Government will be responsible for transportation cost in an amount not to exceed the travel expense otherwise necessary to move the remains to the national cemetery by a direct route from the Distribution Center.

An escort, provided at the expense of the Government, will accompany the remains to the national cemetery selected, or the city or town designated by the next of kin if it is desired that the remains be shipped to a designated city or town for religious services prior to interment in the selected national cemetery. In the latter case, the escort, if so requested by the next of kin, will be permitted to remain for the services for a period not to exceed 72 hours from the time he arrives with the remains. The escort will be instructed to obtain signature of next of kin, funeral director or other designated representative of the next of kin, in receipt for the remains. Provision for

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services of an attendant to accompany the remains from the place where services were held to the selected national cemetery is an obligation of the next of kin.

When interment in a national cemetery is your choice, there will be no cost to you for the grave site, the opening of the grave or the actual interment and closing of the grave. Also as stated previously, the Government approved type of inscribed headstone will be provided automatically at no cost to you.

### *Identity of Deceased*

Prior to the registering of a grave overseas as containing the remains of a designated (by name) member of the armed forces of the United States, every means possible was employed and every known method was pursued to establish definitely and positively the identity of the deceased. In this respect, no effort was considered to be too great and meticulous attention was given to smallest details. Identity having been thus established, evidence of identity was buried with the re-



**Disposition of World War II Armed Forces Dead**

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mains and indicated on the grave marker. If removal and reburial elsewhere become necessary, all records will again be checked and all evidence of identity again examined. Military personnel especially trained in the procedure supervise and directly control these operations. Also, from the time of exhumation of the remains until their reception by next of kin, they will be under constant protection of military escorts. Thus, when the next of kin is requested to indicate his desires in the manner of final disposition of the remains of a certain member of the Armed Forces of the United States, he and all others may rest assured that the identity of the remains has been definitely established.

### **INQUIRIES CONCERNING THE DECEASED**

When information on any of the following listed subjects, with respect to the personnel indicated is desired, the inquiry should be addressed to the office that is listed below:

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### ***Army, State Department, Merchant Marine, U. S. Employment Service, Red Cross, and War Correspondent Personnel:***

Death (circumstances surrounding death) and missing personnel—

The Adjutant General,  
Casualty Branch,  
Munitions Building,  
Washington 25, D. C.

Cemeterial and Burial Information—

Office of The Quartermaster General,  
Memorial Division, War Department,  
Washington 25, D. C.

Personal Effects—

Army Effects Bureau,  
Kansas City Quartermaster Depot,  
601 Hardesty Avenue,  
Kansas City 1, Mo.

Religious Matters—

War Department,  
Office, Chief of Chaplains,  
Washington 25, D. C.

## Disposition of World War II Armed Forces Dead

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### ***Navy Personnel:***

Death (circumstances surrounding death),  
Missing Personnel, Personal Effects, and  
Religious Matters—

Bureau of Naval Personnel,  
Navy Department,  
Washington 25, D. C.

### **Cemeterial and Burial Information—**

Bureau of Medicine and Surgery,  
Navy Department,  
Washington 25, D. C.

### ***Marine Corps Personnel:***

Death (circumstances surrounding death)  
and missing personnel, cemeterial and  
burial information, personal effects, and  
religious matters—

Commandant,  
U. S. Marine Corps,  
Navy Department,  
Washington 25, D. C.

### ***Coast Guard Personnel:***

Death (circumstances surrounding death)  
and missing personnel, cemeterial and

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burial information, personal effects, and  
religious matters—

Commandant,  
U. S. Coast Guard,  
Washington 25, D. C.