

# FOREVER AMERICA

*By John J. Pershing*

*Decorative Border by G. H. Mitchell*



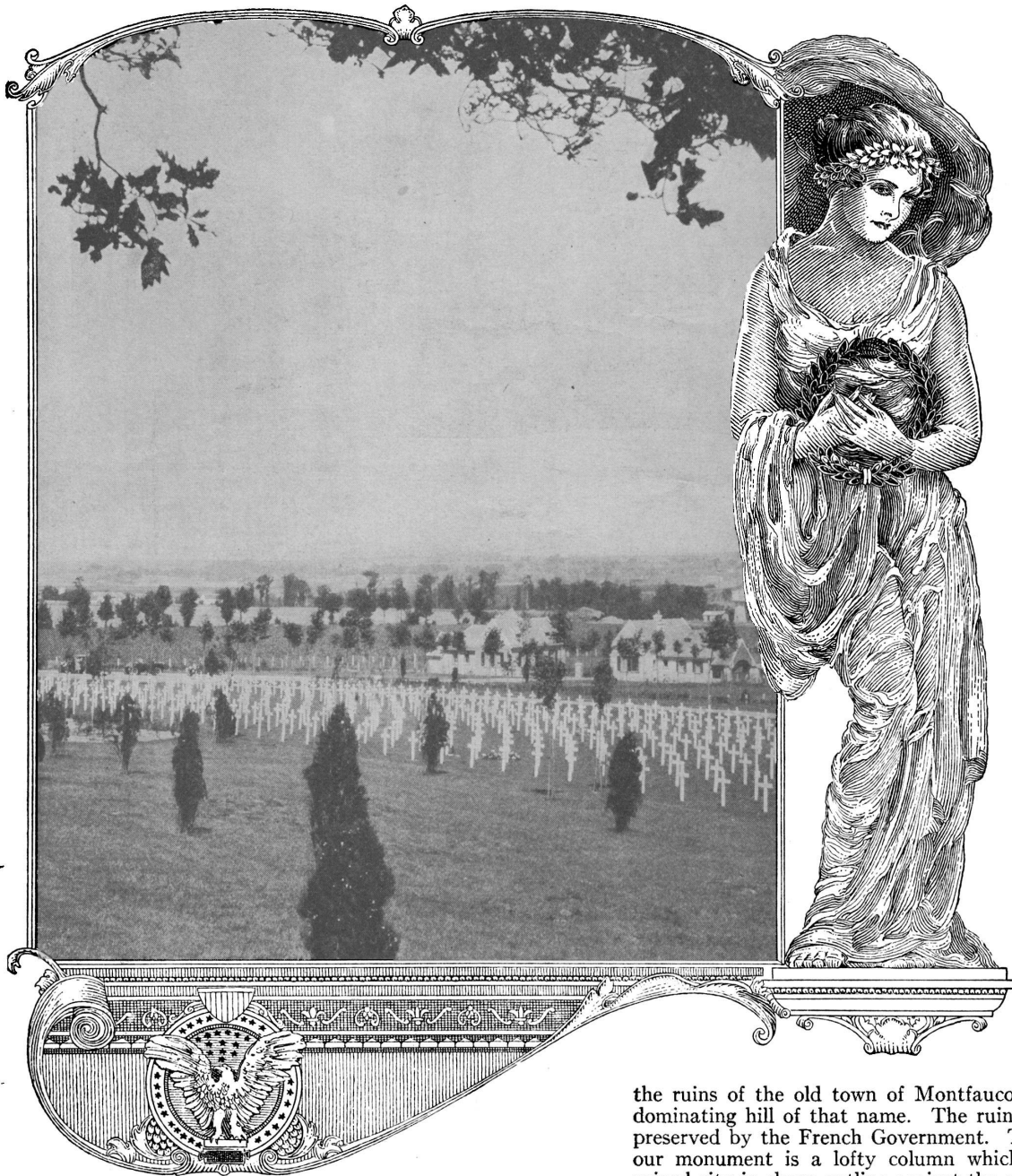
Thousands of visitors to The American Legion convention in Paris in September will visit Suresnes Cemetery, which, of the eight cemeteries on French soil that will be forever America, is closest to the capital—so close that Paris is easily visible from this quiet hillside where thousands of American soldiers sleep. Suresnes Cemetery is unsurpassed in the natural beauty of its setting, and the photograph indicates how skilfully this setting has been taken advantage of

**T**H E American Battle Monuments Commission was created by Act of Congress in 1923, to secure designs for and erect suitable memorials to commemorate the services of the American forces in Europe during the World War. Since it came into being, the Commission has carefully prepared plans which involve three distinct parts: first, the development of the eight American military cemeteries themselves into fitting memorials; second, the erection of suitable monuments in honor of the services and sacrifices of our troops; and third, the publication of a guidebook which will present in condensed form a true picture of the American effort.

Our cemeteries are in charge of the War Department, under whose direction they have been well arranged and carefully maintained. It is the purpose of the Commission to carry out further development from the architectural and landscape viewpoint in order to express as fully as possible the appreciation and affection our people feel for the men who gave up their lives and who now rest over there. The central feature in each cemetery will be a beautiful memorial chapel, non-denominational in character. The designs have already been approved, and particu-

lar study is being given to the character of the interiors. Each chapel will contain a tablet bearing the names of the missing in battles fought in the vicinity. Each cemetery will be enclosed by a masonry wall to give the necessary protection, and there will be other minor improvements added to give completeness.

The plans of the Commission have passed through a period of evolution, especially as to battle commemoration, and now embrace a scheme of monuments and tablets, including a monument for the Services of Supply, and others in recognition of the efforts of the Navy. The project of the Commission will cover all activities of our forces, considering the various operations according to their relative military importance. In the preparation of this project the Commission has decided to construct a few rather im-



*American soldiers and sailors who died in English camps or hospitals lie in this permanent American cemetery at Brookwood, Surrey, England. Of the eight American cemeteries in Europe, one is in England, one in Belgium, and the remaining six in France. The central feature in each, according to the plans of the Battle Monuments Commission, of which General Pershing is chairman, will be a memorial chapel, non-denominational in character*

*Argonne offensive, the greatest battle in American history. The site selected is on*

the ruins of the old town of Montfaucon, which occupied the dominating hill of that name. The ruins themselves are to be preserved by the French Government. The design selected for our monument is a lofty column which, standing above the ruined city in sharp outline against the sky, will accentuate the effect.

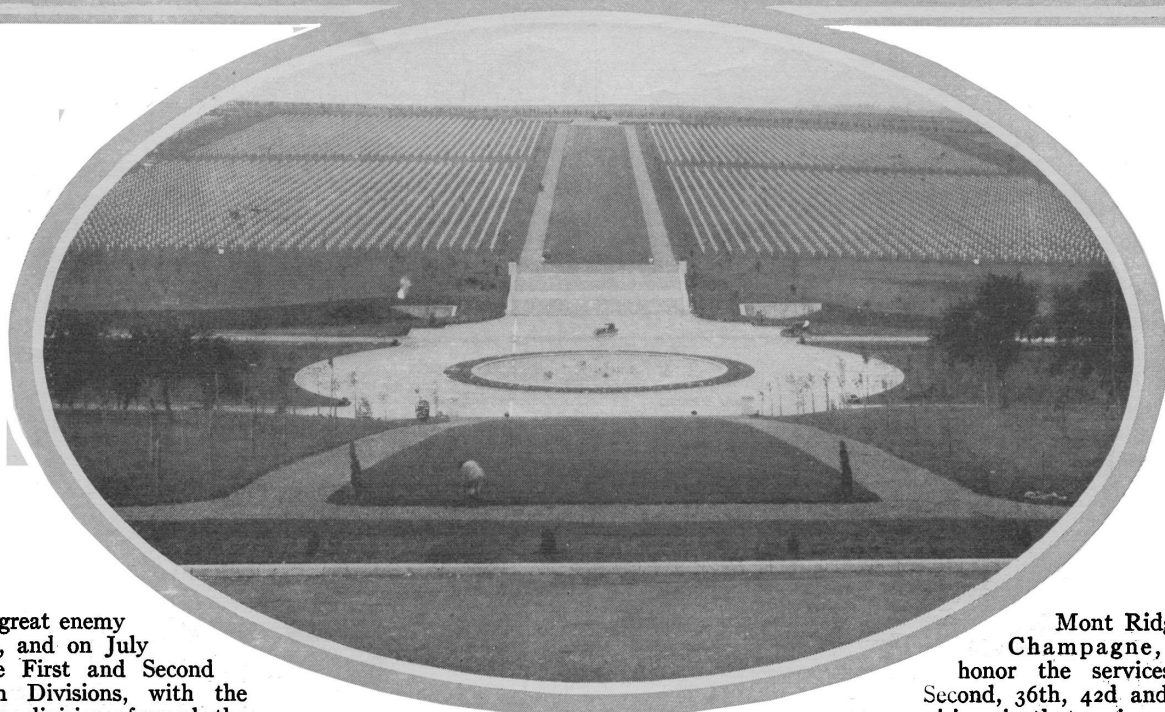
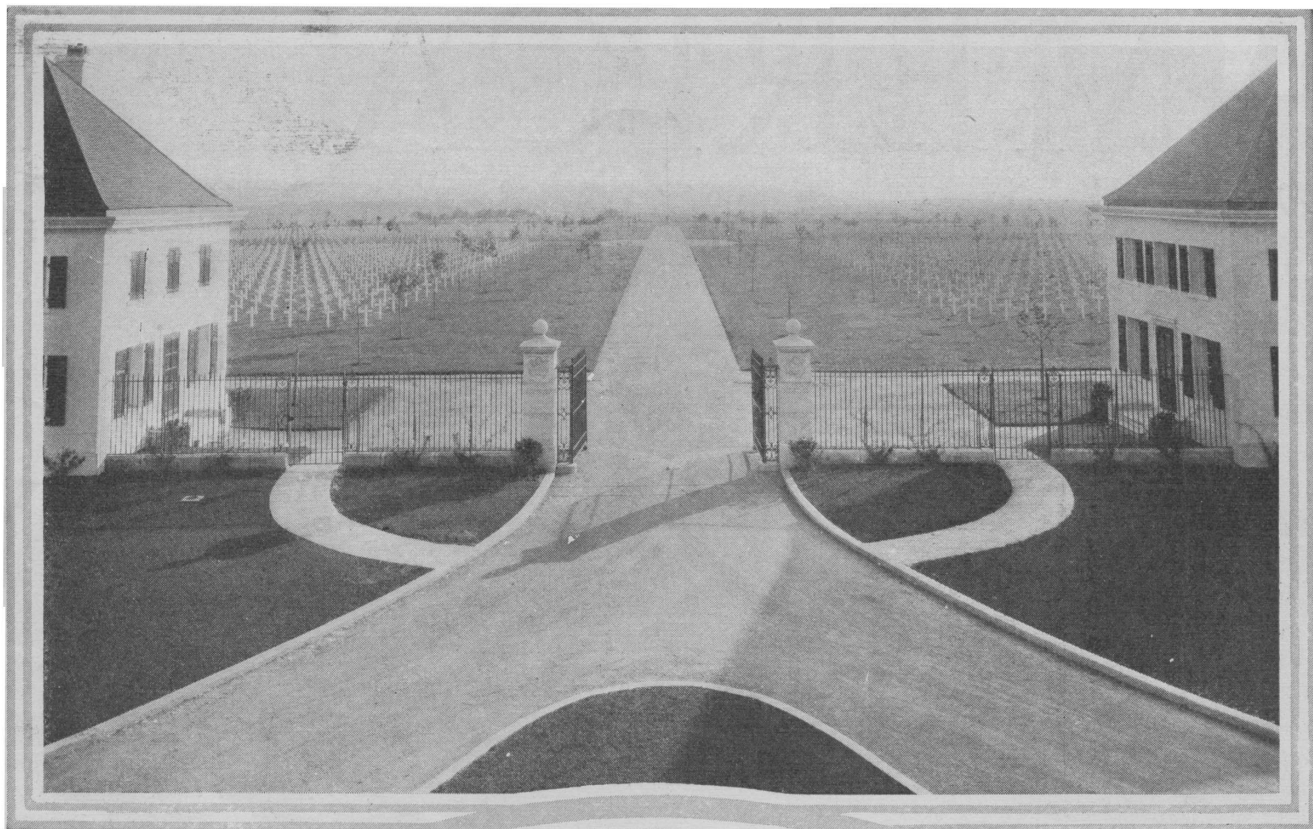
The operation second in importance conducted by the American Army was the elimination of the St. Mihiel salient, which for four years had stood as a threat to the Allied lines. The monument to this battle will be on Montsec, an isolated hill about four hundred feet high which lay within the German lines until captured. It will always be a familiar landmark to the troops who served in that sector.

No war name appeals more to the popular mind in America than Chateau-Thierry. It is the common designation for the series of operations which turned the tide of the war. Beginning on May 27th, American troops were thrown in front of the Germans and effectively stopped the drive on Paris. On July 14th they fought with the French in the thick of the defense against

posing monuments instead of a large number of smaller ones.

To be of greatest value, a memorial should be placed where people would naturally go, or if commemorating an important event it should be of such a striking nature that they will go out of their way to see it. As the rehabilitation of the devastated areas progresses, the battlefields will lose more and more of their war-time appearance, and before long most of the evidences of the conflict will have disappeared. As time goes on, fewer and fewer people will visit these regions, and it is the Commission's view that the memorials should be of such an impressive character that efforts will be made to see them.

The project contemplates three major battlefield memorials and five minor ones. The largest will commemorate the Meuse-



*The resting-place of the fallen victors of St. Mihiel and the famous sector north of Toul; the American cemetery at Thiaucourt (above). In oval, Romagne cemetery, largest of American cemeteries abroad, where lie the dead of the Battle of the Meuse-Argonne, in the heart of the bloody soil which they won back to France*

the last great enemy offensive, and on July 18th the First and Second American Divisions, with the Moroccan division, formed the spear-head of the attack that went through the German lines south of Soissons and forced the German commander to begin the retirement of his armies from the Marne. The attacks against the enemy continued during August until he was driven behind the Aisne, over 300,000 American troops participating. To commemorate these successes, the Commission will erect a single memorial at a prominent site on what is known as Hill 204, near the village of Courteau, just west of Chateau-Thierry. From here the visitor looking in the direction of the advance will obtain a splendid view of that historic city and the Marne valley.

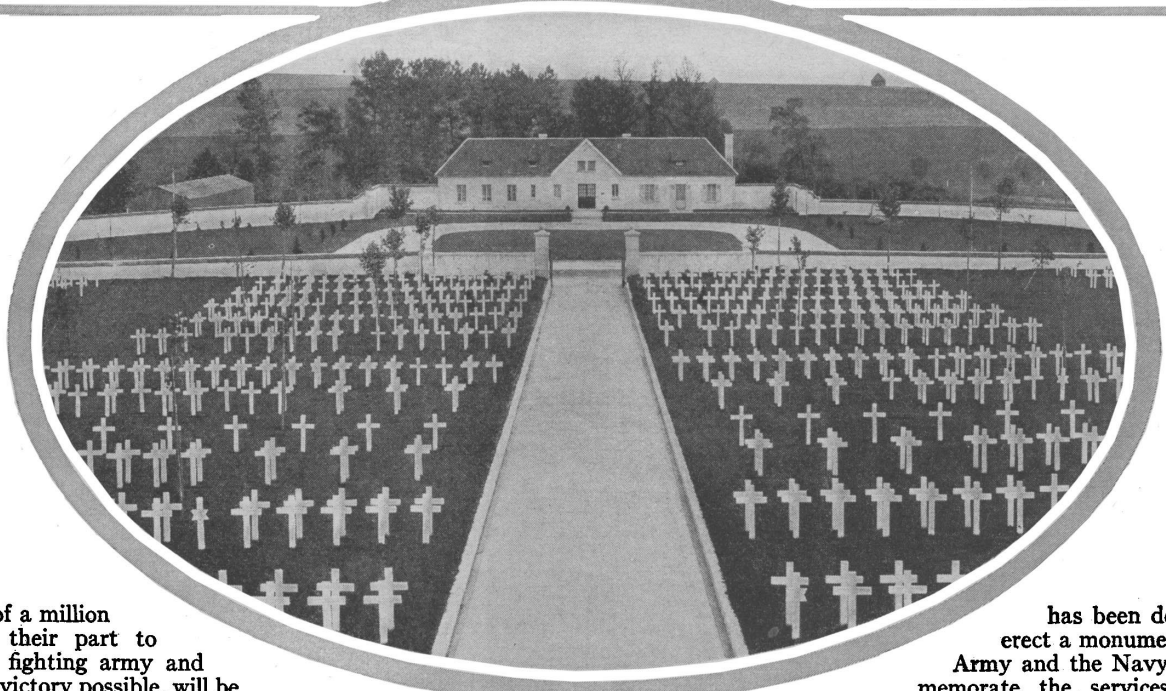
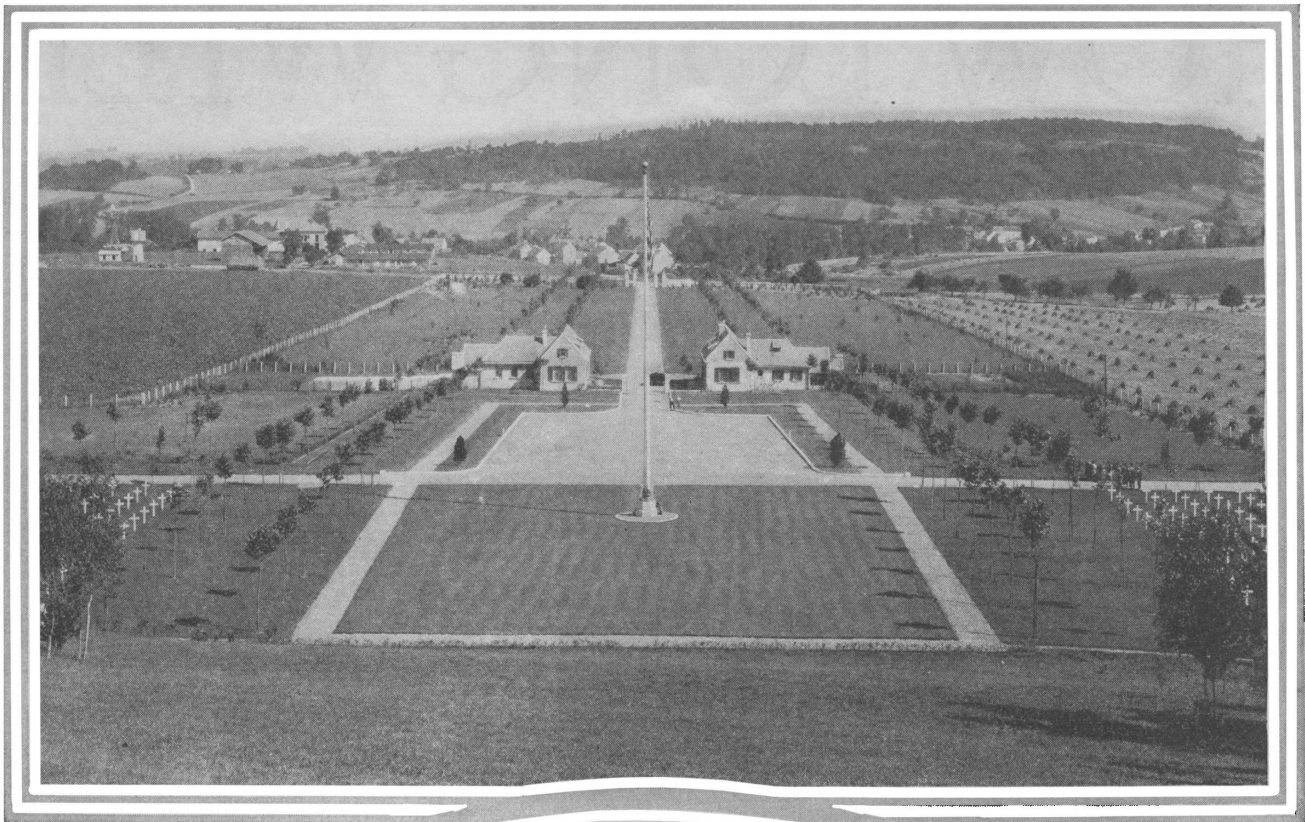
These three, then—Montfaucon, Montsec and Chateau-Thierry—will be our principal battle monuments.

The remaining five will be of modest character, conforming to the lesser importance of the operations involved. On Blanc

Mont Ridge, in the Champagne, one will honor the services of the Second, 36th, 42d and 93d Divisions in that region while with the French armies. Near Bony another will preserve the memory of the services of the 27th and 30th American Divisions, that fought with the British Army. It will crown a site over the canal tunnel north of St. Quentin, between Bony and Bellicourt, and overlook our cemetery in that vicinity. On the road between Ypres and Mount Kemmel, in Belgium, a smaller marker will designate another battlefield where these divisions fought.

The Cantigny monument will commemorate the sacrifices of the First Division in the capture and retention of that town in our first independent divisional operation of the war. In the public square at Audenarde, Belgium, a pedestal will commemorate the aggressiveness of the 37th and 91st Divisions with the Belgian Army.

The contribution by the Service of Supply, in which three



quarters of a million men did their part to serve the fighting army and make the victory possible, will be marked by a fitting memorial at Tours. The General Headquarters of the A. E. F. at Chaumont and the Headquarters of our First Army at Souilly will be marked with bronze tablets.

As to the Navy, an appropriate memorial will be placed in England to record the effective cooperation of our naval forces with those of the British in policing the seas and keeping open the great routes of travel. Another memorial at Brest will recognize the very arduous work of the Navy in convoying transports carrying armies and supplies across the Atlantic and through infested waters. This monument will be erected on a bastion of the old fortifications overlooking the harbor, familiar to so many American soldiers who received their first and last impressions of France at this port.

Other naval memorials will be placed at Gibraltar, at Corfu, in Greece, and at Ponta Delgada, in the Azores. At Rome, it

*Over the brow of the ridge where the A. E. F. waged one of its most desperate fights sleep thousands of the victors of the Belleau and Chateau-Thierry fighting in the earth which they won—Belleau Cemetery (above), closest to Paris after Suresnes.. In oval, the cemetery at Seringes-et-Nesle, in the heart of the Marne salient*

has been decided to erect a monument to the Army and the Navy to commemorate the services of the troops who fought with the Italian armies and the sailors who guarded the Mediterranean.

Designs and sites have been obtained for most of the monuments mentioned, and working drawings will be finished within a few weeks. Unless unforeseen difficulties arise, construction

will probably begin by Fall, and it is the hope of the Commission that work may be far enough advanced in a few places to permit the Legionnaires who visit France in September to assist in laying the cornerstones.

It has been agreed with the French and Belgian governments that no American memorials may be erected in either country unless first approved by the American Battle Monuments Commission. It is the opinion of the Commission that the scheme proposed will modestly commemorate in a complete and equitable manner the devotion and sacrifice of (Continued on page 84)

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## Forever America

—the last of five pages—

Americans and that there is no real need for others on the battlefields. The Commission believes that all other American memorials erected over there should be of a character useful to the inhabitants of the locality in which they are placed.

It should be remembered that there are but few French, British, Belgian or Italian monuments, and it is improbable that many will be erected on these battlefields, nor should we forget that many of these fields had been courageously fought over by the Allies before we arrived, and all of them have been battle grounds at some time or other in the past.

In the completion of its task, the Commission is exercising great care that all data recorded by inscriptions on monuments and tablets shall be accurate. In many instances the original records of units have been found to be confusing or contradictory and it has required voluminous research to ascertain the actual facts. It has often taken months to determine which division should be entitled to credit as the captors of this or that position. Valuable data, which has become a part of the permanent archives, has been obtained

from former officers and enlisted men, a large number of whom were reached through the columns of The American Legion's magazine.

The historical research of the Commission and its preliminary investigations in Europe early revealed the need of an accurate guidebook to the American battlefields. The most widely circulated books giving information about our activities are of foreign compilation and are full of errors. Those individual guides conducting tourists who have come under our observation give very incomplete and misleading accounts of the American fighting. The Commission has been working for some time on the preparation of the guidebook, and Congress has recently authorized its publication. It will be the official guide and will contain in brief form a summary of the American effort.

Such, in outline, is the work of the American Battle Monuments Commission. We are attempting fittingly to discharge the sacred duty entrusted to us as the American people and the veterans of the World War would have it done—with accuracy, with modesty, and with reverence.

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