

HISTORY
of the
American Graves Registration Service.

Q.M.C.. in Europe.

Volume I.

To September, 1920.

TABLE OF CONTENTS:

	Page
CHAPTER I. INTRODUCTION.	4
CHAPTER II. G.R.S. BEFORE DECEMBER, 1919.	12
CHAPTER III. ORGANIZATION IN EUROPE.	55
CHAPTER IV. FUNCTIONING OF THE SERVICE IN EUROPE.	69
CHAPTER V. POLICIES.	92
CHAPTER VI. DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WITH THE FRENCH.	114
CHAPTER VII. MEMORIAL DAY, 1920.	127
CHAPTER VIII. METHOD OF OPERATIONS.	138
CHAPTER IX. OPERATIONS, ZONE OF GREAT BRITAIN.	152
CHAPTER X. OPERATIONS IN MID-EUROPE.	183
CHAPTER XI. OPERATIONS, ZONE OF THE INTERIOR, FRANCE.	188

PREFACE.

The writing of history contemporaneously is an impossible task if one expects that brooding, impersonal, contemplative attitude with which one can now describe a battle between Syrians and Assyrians, or a particular phase of the Napoleonic campaigns. What will be thought of the great adventure of the War Department in returning thousands of dead to the United States fifty years or a century from now, it is impossible to say. The following account, therefore, makes no attempt to "place" the operation in any kind of historical perspective or political milieu. It is merely as if the locomotive were describing itself. The story comes from within; the emotions and occurrences described are told as they are known to the actors and not as they may seem to the idle spectator; on the other hand, the story will serve to show the sincerity of men who honestly tried to carry out their mission well and who made the history they afterwards wrote.

These pages were gathered together after an exhaustive study of the records, after much personal observation, and after receiving detailed reports from the men actually doing the work. It is thought that there are no significant errors in the various chapters, though necessarily there are many important instances

of fine individual performance of duty that the requirements
of space and balance prevented mentioning.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'H.F. Rethers', written in dark ink.

H.F. RETHERS,
Colonel, Q.M.C.,
Chief, A.G.R.S., Q.M.C., in E.

CHAPTER I.

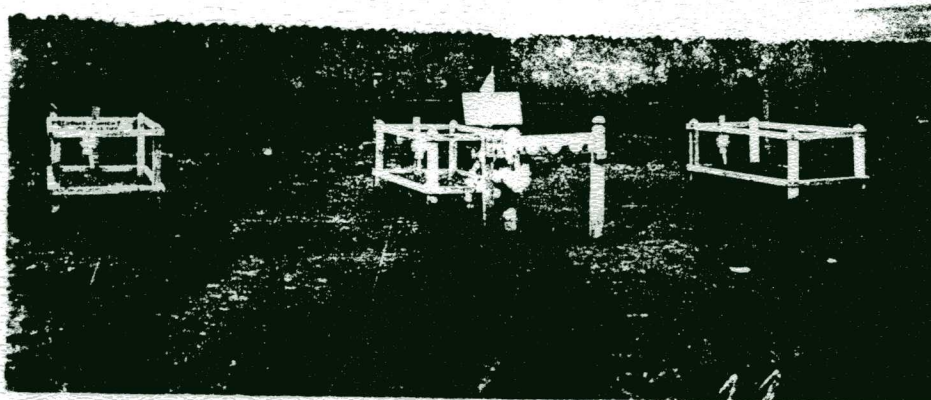
INTRODUCTION.

The history of the American Graves Registration Service, A.G.R.S., in Europe, is the story of a most extensive project in cemeterial upkeep on a large and lavish scale, and in the concentration and movement of the remains of deceased soldiers in numbers that would have been hitherto considered impracticable, and which now constitute a record-breaking achievement in keeping a Government pledge to the people of the country. For the activities of this Service have been, and always will be, in a peculiar sense, the carrying out of a sacred obligation, the fulfilling of a pledge made by the War Department to the people of the United States, that the graves of American dead should be perpetually honored and cared for, and that those men who fell should be returned to their homes, should their kin so desire. In thus adhering to an age-long custom of our country, the War Department carried out the wishes of the individual citizens of the United States and, it is hoped, performed the service satisfactorily. Few of these citizens, however, realize the extent of the project, the multitude of problems that had to be met, the delicate nature of the work and the time and devotion to duty that were expended upon it by the Army. The following pages attempt to make clear just what the Graves Registration Service had accomplished up to August 31, 1920, and how these results grew step by step from the

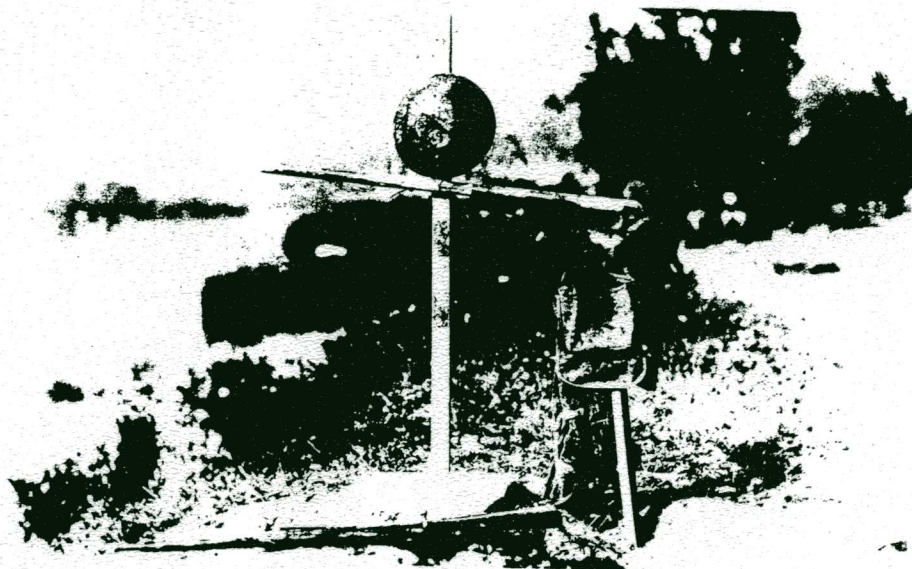
chaos of November 11, 1918 to the order that is now discovered in the great French concentration cemeteries and in the contentment that is found in many an American heart which has received its soldier dead back home again.

Battle conditions make it impossible to bury men either decently or with any surety that their identity will be preserved. Those who have seen these temporary hasty inhumations made by devoted friends or by soldiers in the line of their duty, with chaplains endeavoring to give the last rites of religion wherever possible, and to keep a record for the future, while perhaps high explosives undo the work just finished and leave new dead to be dealt with, can realize without words what was the situation in the battle area of France after the armistice. Temporary burials were sometimes marked by a rifle, by a rude improvised cross, by a stick in the ground, with the identity indicated as well as possible at the time; the grave might vary from six feet to six inches in depth, and many were the cases in which bodies were hardly buried at all. There were also, of course, trench burials of many bodies together and such, if not separated, soon became like charnel houses; so it was the duty of the Graves Registration Service to follow these temporary inhumations as they were reported and, as conditions made it possible to approach these areas, to re-mark the grave with a wooden "V" shaped peg on which was a stamped metal plate indicating the soldier's identity, and

to improve the condition of the grave when necessary. As soon after as possible, temporary crosses replaced these pegs, and on these crosses were affixed name-plates of aluminum stripping.



The first A.E.F. burials of men killed in action.



A battle burial.

So it is evident that the essential problem of the Service at armistice was the double task of the preservation and ascertainment of identity and the making of respectable burials. There was no Washington Branch of the Service at this time, all of the personnel being in Europe. The office of the Adjutant General received and handled such of the inquiries made by thousands of anxious relatives as were not mailed direct to France.

The return of the Chief of the Graves Registration Service to Washington, however, in 1919 caused the transfer of these tasks to his office, and to him fell largely the duty of determining the final policy as to the care of our graves in Europe after the disbanding of the A.E.F.

The settling of the questions as to disposition of bodies and maintenance of cemeteries was naturally of the most pressing importance. While it was true that the Government had promised to return the bodies of our dead to the United States, the passing of two years of war, the unexpectedly large number of casualties, and possible changes in the opinions of the people, made a reconsideration of the whole matter essential. Any decision was contingent on the sentiment of the American people and on such arrangements as might be necessary to secure the consent of the foreign governments concerned in the plans. In the case of European governments, it was not at once clear that they would accede readily to American removal designs. In the case of

Great Britain, for example, national policy had always refused the return of English dead except in spectacular cases of individual national heroes, and it was thought that the sight of American removals might awaken a desire in English circles that would embarrass the Government in its own policy. In the case of France and Belgium, although they would probably agree in principle to the return of the dead, yet conditions there were such that perhaps the immediate accomplishment of the work might further so derange the reconstruction as to endanger the rights of the living. These were the diplomatic questions which had to be regarded.

As for the determination of public opinion in America, this was not an easy thing. Parties always spring up, interests hope to gain something by urging the expenditure of public money, people who disapprove of a policy actively advocated are often apathetic in giving voice to their opinions. So there was a real need to discriminate between manufactured propaganda and honest sentiment which deserved attention and satisfaction.

That there was a propaganda in existence was plainly shown in the debate of Congress on the subject, in which was quoted the editorial note appearing in the American undertakers' magazine called "The Casket." This article was an unusual application of triumphant American advertising methods to the subject of bringing home the dead. It comprised a sort of "Te Deum"

that all this new business would be secured to American undertakers without an increase in the death rate. In January, 1920 there was also an occurrence which awakened Congressional interest. A Paris undertaker wrote a circular letter which was received by numerous relatives in America in which he declared he had commissions to return the bodies of various dead soldiers and in which he claimed to have the assistance of the "Purple Cross." He said he could secure promptly the return of any body not buried in the "relatively small Zone of the Armies" at an average cost, delivery New York, of \$605.00. This naturally roused the ire of Americans who had lost children and protests resulted. As usual, the Government was held guilty without trial, and the statement was made that, "It looks like, if the French can get them out for money, the United States could get them out for loyalty to its citizens." The Secretary of War replied in due course that this undertaker was making statements without foundation and promises he was not in a position to carry out. So serious was this matter that, on request of the Quartermaster General of the Army, diplomatic steps were taken to prevent the premature removal of American dead by private firms from municipal cemeteries, and the French authorities were asked whether some means were not available to impress upon this man the unwisdom of circularizing American families who were in sorrow.

The above incidents were painful experiences, and

are mentioned to show the character of interested elements which had to be contended with by the War Department. It was consequently necessary to secure some method of finding out the body of opinion as to the return of dead from the relatives themselves. This was finally done by means of questionnaires sent out to the emergency address left by the late soldier. Replies indicated that about 60 per cent of the relatives desired to have the remains returned to the United States. This result enabled the authorities to proceed to estimate the money and personnel that would be required to effect the accomplishment of the wishes of the people.

In addition to individual replies to questionnaires, public opinion was determined by the statements of public men, both in Congress and in the press, regarding their attitude toward the repatriation of the fallen. The chief exponent of the policy of leaving these men in France was Colonel Roosevelt who, by example, as well as opinion, carried out his conviction. The "Bring Home the Dead League" was the organized group for urging the accomplishment of the task. There was a similar group devoted to the cause of discouraging this practice as much as possible - a company of people which had some press support, notably by the "Philadelphia Public Ledger."

It was, however, finally decided by the War Department that the task was feasible, and the appropriation for the fiscal year of 1919-1920 included \$8,451,000, of which it was understood

that \$2,500,000 was available for beginning the work in Europe. The appropriation was "for interment or for preparation and transportation to their homes" of soldiers and civil employees of the Army who had died abroad. The way was thus open to perfect plans to carry out the expressed desire of Congress.

CHAPTER II.

THE GRAVES REGISTRATION SERVICE
BEFORE DECEMBER, 1919.

It is not the purpose of this history to reveal in all its details the manifold activities of the Graves Registration Service during the war, since that account belongs more properly to the story of the war itself than to that of the operations project of maintenance and removal of bodies, but a brief recapitulation of the achievements of the Graves Registration Service in the war period is necessary to understand clearly the resulting situation.

1.

On May 31, 1917 the War Department, through the Office of the Quartermaster General, selected Major Charles C. Pierce, retired, to organize an Overseas Graves Registration Service and to supervise it in Europe. Major, later Colonel, Pierce had organized a similar work in the Philippine Islands and had conducted it there for a period of two years until he had become incapacitated for tropical service, having completed his work there without a single case of unidentified dead. Thus he was particularly fitted, by reason of his character and previous accomplishment in those Islands, to undertake this important work.

On August 7th the completed plans of the General Staff for the organization of Graves Registration Units were published in General Order No. 104 W.D., and the recruiting of the first Unit was begun in Philadelphia. It was provided that each Unit

should consist of two officers and fifty enlisted men of properly proportioned military grades. These Units, by General Order No. 30, 1918, G.H.Q., A.E.F., were more completely consolidated into the Graves Registration Service, as it was later known in Europe, which was charged with the duty of identifying, locating by map co-ordination, surveying, registering, and marking the resting places of American dead. Delay in the establishment of this organization, however, compelled the Army in France to adopt temporary measures to meet emergencies. A "Burial Department" was organized, therefore, on principles suggested by British experience, the results of which had been studied by Capt. Hill and later by Capt. Hoy, who was made Chief of the Burial Department. By the above mentioned G.O. No.30, the Burial Department was finally merged into the prior organization of the Graves Registration Service, taking the more definitive name.

Since the United States had come into the war at a relatively late date, the Graves Registration Service was enabled from the start to visualize the complexity of the problems confronting it and to plan the agencies to deal with the multiplicity of questions. The system adopted was a combination of that employed by the United States in the Philippines and the methods evolved by the French and British Armies in the early years of the war. Owing to the exceedingly difficult conditions under which a very large number of interments were necessarily made, and the physical in-



A battle burial ground.

ability of combatant Units to bury all their own dead, the Graves Registration Service, although not specifically required to do so by General Orders, undertook an exceedingly large and difficult amount of work in clearing battlefields, reintering bodies and assembling them in selected spots, where they might lie assured of perpetual and seemly attention.

The original personnel of the Graves Registration Service consisted of one Unit of two officers and fifty men. This group naturally expanded with the growth of the A.E.F., until it finally consisted of 150 officers and 7,000 men. Of this personnel it is fair to say that they were probably unexcelled in character, intelligence and efficiency. Many of the enlisted men became commissioned officers and proved of great value to the Army from the deep knowledge of burial conditions in France which they acquired by their years of experience. Frequent mention was made in official correspondence of the notable character of the service rendered by some of these men, of which the best known is the following letter from the Commander-in-Chief:

"I have heard with great pleasure of the excellent work and fine conduct of the members of Advance Group No.1 Graves Registration Service, who are mentioned herein. The work performed by these men under heavy shell fire and gas on April 20, 1918, and the days immediately succeeding, at Mandres and vicinity, is best described herein:

"On April 20th, Lieut. McCormick and his group arrived at Mandres and began their work under heavy shell fire and gas, and, although troops were in dugouts, these men immediately went to the cemetery, and in order to preserve records and locations, repaired and erected new crosses as fast as the old ones were

blown down. They also completed the extension to the cemetery, this work occupying a period of one and one-half hours, during which time shells were falling continually and they were subjected to mustard gas. They gathered many bodies which had been first in the hands of the Germans, and were later retaken by American counter-attacks. Identification was especially difficult, all papers and tags having been removed and most of the bodies being in a terrible condition and beyond recognition. The Lieutenant in command particularly mentions Sergeant Keating and Privates LaRue and Murphy, as having been responsible for the most gruesome part of the work of identification, examining every body most thoroughly, searching for scars and tattoo marks, and where bodies were blown to pieces, these men were especially particular to make minute examinations, regardless of the danger attendant upon their work. This group of men was in charge of everything at Mandres, from the time the bodies were brought in until they were interred and marked with crosses and proper plates were attached.

"The splendid work and conduct of -
2nd Lieut. Homer B. McCormick, Inf., U.S.R., A.M.C., commanding
Advance Group No. 1 G.R.S.
Quartermaster Sgt. Gr. Charles P. Keating, Unit 301, G.R.S.
Private Holmes E. LaRue, Jr., Unit 301, G.R.S.
Private Raymond A. Murphy, Unit 301, G.R.S.

during this trying period were appreciated by all throughout the command:

By direction:

J.W. McAndrew,
Chief of Staff."

It is, of course, clear that during the war the Graves Registration Service developed from one Unit to a huge Department, caring for and maintaining some 73,000 burials. In the setting up of the Graves Registration Service, the main principle to be considered was the creating of an efficient organization capable of handling the maximum number of casualties in the forward area,

with a Central Bureau so arranged that efficiency in the field would be revealed in the records maintained. It was necessary to attempt to devise a system which would be dependent upon the field organization for its information, but one so equipped with checks that the inefficiency of a single chaplain of a working Unit or a subsection would soon be revealed. The flow of information from the field would have to be continuous, and it was essential that burials not reported within a reasonable time should be noted in the Central Bureau by comparison with other records, so that inquiries might be instituted. The method of procedure developed was as follows: The Chief and Assistant Chief of the Service, with a Personnel Officer, a Registrations Officer, a Maintenance Branch, an Acquisitions Branch and an affiliation with the Red Cross for photographic purposes, maintained their Headquarters after March, 1918, at Tours until the passing of the S.O.S., when the office was removed to Paris. Prior to the removal to Tours, the Headquarters were at Chaumont. From the time the first Unit came over in October, 1917, until September, 1918, the Chief exercised direct supervision over his working Units, sending them to those Areas at which there was an emergency. After September, 1918, there were three Area Headquarters established - one at Neufchateau, one at Soissons and, finally, one at Amiens. Under the Commanders of these Areas various groups operated, who were busied in marking all graves

and later, in the concentration activities after the armistice. The Intermediate and Base Sections were also divided into geographical areas to which Units or groups were assigned for the upkeep of the established cemeteries therein. Communication with the Headquarters was in all cases made by the Commanding Officer of the Area and, before the formation of the Areas, of the Mobile Groups. At no time were the Graves Registration Units under the control of Division Commanders except on questions of discipline and the maintenance of soldiers. With the assistance of working parties, detailed from time to time in groups by Division Commanders for the labor of policing cemeteries, it was possible for comparatively small Graves Registration Service Units to cover a considerable area. It was not intended, however, that working parties should undertake operations of a more permanent character than those which could be directly controlled by the personnel of the Service. All instructions regarding registrations, marking of graves, the selection, acquisition, plan, upkeep, and control of cemeteries, photographing of graves in cemeteries, the placing of flowers and shrubs, exhumations, memorials and permanent markers, were issued by the Chief of the Service.

By the provision of the French law, December 29, 1915, lands necessary outside of existing cemeteries for the use of French or Allied soldiers who died of wounds or illness, were acquired on behalf of the Nation by the Ministry of War. Wherever

the land so chosen was reported upon favorably by local sanitary commissions with the consent of the municipality, its acquisition was authorized without any further formalities. The cost of the acquisition was borne by the French Government. The Belgian law of the 5th of September, 1917 was similar to the French precedent. In selecting sites for new cemeteries, it was attempted to make them at least 100 metres from the nearest buildings; to keep them as remote as possible from any water supply; of easy access from the nearest road; in the corner of a field rather than in the center; so placed as not to obstruct existing roads or rights of way; chosen with a view to economy, realizing that the owners must be compensated by the French nation.

The acquisition of cemeteries not on the battle-front was a function of the Chief of the Graves Registration Service. He pursued legal formalities to their conclusion, when the need for new cemeteries was reported to him and made apparent. The basis given to Commanding Officers for computing needs was an allowance of about $3\frac{1}{2}$ square metres per grave, including roads and paths. Battle-front cemeteries were considered emergency acquisitions, as directed in that section of Army Regulations which reads: "It is the duty of Commanding Generals to set apart a suitable spot near every battlefield and to cause the remains of the killed to be interred therein." On April 8, 1918 the French Ministry of War interpreted this contingency in relation



A battle burial ground.

to the French law, so as to permit the temporary omission of all administrative formalities in the acquisition of cemeteries where the circumstances of war demanded it, and the fulfillment of these formalities was left until a convenient time after taking possession. In the case of cemeteries situated near the firing line, the Command was the sole judge of the need for fulfilling formalities after the acquisition.

The burial of dead being by special orders a part of the duty of the combatant forces, no responsibility for the carrying out of this duty fell to the Graves Registration Service, but all burials of officers, soldiers and attached personnel were to be reported at once on grave location blanks in duplicate, one copy being sent to the Chief of the Service and the duplicate to the Adjutant General's office. Officers reporting burials were directed to retain a memorandum of each one sent in. Map references of grave locations were directed to be made on the map in use by the American Forces operating in the Area concerned. The edition, name and number of the map used had to be stated in all cases. If the giving of map co-ordinates were impossible, the location had to be given in reference to prominent local landmarks. The report was expected to state how the grave was marked, whether by name-peg, cross, identification tag, record in bottle, or some other manner. It was enjoined that graves should be marked in such a way at time of burial as to insure identification.

Organizations were expected to keep themselves supplied with the necessary pegs and labels. The necessary particulars were put on these pegs in block letters, the pegs being affixed into the ground at an angle of 45 degrees, with the labeled side underneath to protect the inscription from the weather. These pegs were wooden "Y" shaped boards, 1 cm. in thickness, 9 cms. wide at the top and 30 cms. in length. A soldier was usually placed as caretaker in each cemetery or group of cemeteries. He would have in his possession a cemetery book containing a record of all interments, each interment being attested by the signature of the officer responsible for the burial. Under no circumstances were any Graves Registration markings to be removed or altered without authority from the Chief. It was directed that graves should not be more than six feet six inches long, two feet in width, five feet in depth, and should not be more than twelve inches apart and that a path, not exceeding three feet in width, should be left between the rows of graves.

It was recognized that, during an advance or heavy fighting, it was difficult to carry out all instructions, but it was directed that chaplains should not decide on a plan for the burial of dead without first endeavoring to obtain authority from the local Graves Registration Service Unit or the officer in charge of burials. Enemy dead, Allied dead, and American bodies were segregated in authorized A.E.F. cemeteries. Deceased

members of the Naval and Marine Corps, or organizations in any way attached to the A.E.F., were buried in A.E.F. cemeteries and the same reports were rendered in all cases. Various instructions regarding the burial of foreign soldiers were issued, such as that no Indian should be buried in a Christian cemetery and that Chinese burials should be made as nearly consonant with the customs of these people as possible. It was directed that Jewish graves should be marked with head-boards four feet long, ten inches wide, one and three-eighths inches thick, a grave marker which was afterward modified to carry a Star of David.

The rules governing the registration of graves were calculated to make as certain as possible the accuracy of the identity and the location. No grave was considered fully reported until the Graves Registration Service officer or a responsible non-commissioned officer, acting under his orders, had visited the grave, was reasonably satisfied of its identity and had affixed a plate bearing the letters "G.R.S." to the cross, thereby indicating acceptance. All graves reported to the Chief of the Service were listed on inspection sheets in his office by his own clerical forces, and arranged by cemeteries, and in case of isolated graves, by communes. Inspection sheets were not used by inspectors as a medium for reporting new graves found in the course of their inspection labors, but each grave on an inspection sheet, when issued to an inspector or a group,



A battle burial showing temporary cross, identification tag and the accouterments of the soldier half-covered with snow. The picture shows the nature of the terrain and the conditions which might easily destroy evidence of the grave.

had to be inspected, its location confirmed and its site properly marked by a cross agreeing with the data on the inspection sheet. After the inspection sheet had been accomplished by the Inspection Officer, it was returned to the office of the Chief. In reporting isolated graves it was essential that the commune should be correctly inserted, for future reference.

During the continuance of hostilities, the Statistical Department of the Adjutant General's office was responsible for the decision as to what inscription should be placed upon a grave, as information from other sources could not be recorded without full investigation and confirmation, so that, for example, if an officer were killed on a day on which he received a promotion and had not accepted that promotion, the Adjutant General's office held that the inscription on his grave must be of the lower rank. His family, on the other hand, hearing of the promotion, frequently desired the higher rank to be inscribed and would write to the Graves Registration Service, asking for a correction. The investigation of the request would then reveal the unusual situation, and the Graves Registration Service was forced by regulation to adhere to the Adjutant General's decision.

Until it became feasible to use more permanent markers at the front throughout the Zone of the Armies, temporary crosses were approved as follows:

Height	1.04 metres
Spread of cross	0.35 metres
Width of board	0.05 metres
Thickness of board	0.01 $\frac{1}{2}$ metres



An example of a trench burial.

All faces and edges were to be planed smooth, having one coat of paint - olive drab of the darker shade used for service uniforms. A permanent cross was at the same time adopted for the Zone of the Interior, twice the size of the temporary cross and painted white. These larger crosses were later placed at the graves throughout the battle areas. So difficult was the problem of procurement in France that the first requisition for 15,000 permanent crosses could not be filled for one year in spite of most vigorous efforts of the Graves Registration Service.

Later, when materials were obtainable, these crosses were extensively made by the Service itself at Romagne.

The standard temporary crosses were kept in adequate numbers by the Graves Registration Service Units, and Fighting Units, on application, were supplied with these crosses, but it was desired that whenever practicable, the inscriptions should be affixed under the supervision of the Graves Registration Service. Embossing machines and aluminum stripping for permanently marking the crosses were delivered to the Chief of each Unit. Regarding permanent monuments, it was desired to prevent the erection of any of these during the continuance of the war, as had already been prescribed in the British Army; it being the effort to prevent discrimination in honors to the dead and to attain uniformity in military cemeteries, as well as to obviate difficulty at the time of later exhumation. After the armistice,

however, in all cases this rule was not observed and a number of permanent grave markers were erected by individuals or organizations, in violation of orders; thus adding another phase of difficulty to be dealt with in the later project of removing bodies to the United States. All private inquiries for information were referred to the Chief for the necessary reply and even though the giving of grave locations privately was not prohibited by ordinary censorship, it was considered a breach of trust. Photographers were allowed to the Service to provide relatives of the dead with photographs of graves and to take sectional photographs of cemeteries for technical purposes, but the use of cameras had to be strictly confined to the taking of the above mentioned photographs only and adherence to General Orders, A.E.F., in this regard was strictly enjoined.

Throughout the A.E.F., all chaplains were Sub-Inspectors of the Service and were required to report to its Chief upon the condition and requirements of the cemeteries adjacent to their stations and to recommend, where necessary, the acquisition of plots and improvement in the care of graves. Inspectors were also located in England and Italy, and in the various Base and Intermediate Sections in France where cemeteries were established. During the continuance of the A.E.F. more than 1,400 burial places were under the control of the Chief of the Service and were all under the direction of the Central Office which was a part of the office of the Chief Quartermaster, A.E.F.

Some service during the war was rendered to the Graves Registration Service by outside organizations, such as the American Red Cross, the Y.M.C.A., The Knights of Columbus, and various Relief Groups. The spirit in which occasional aid was rendered by these organizations was greatly appreciated, although the aid in some cases hindered more than helped the end sought, for one man collected all identification discs from a group of dead and forwarded them to Headquarters instead of burying one disc attached to the body and placing the other on the grave marker, as widely published General Orders required. The most systematic service rendered by outside organizations was afforded by the Red Cross, which, in November, 1918, by the direction of military authorities, placed a section of its own Communication Department at the disposal of the Graves Registration Service. This group, consisting of twenty-five persons, some of them expert photographers, and operating in all the countries of Europe where American troops had been stationed, functioned as a Department of the Graves Registration Service, under the immediate direction of the Chief. Its work consisted of photographing individual graves and of replying to correspondence with stricken homes regarding requests for photographs and other favors.

2.

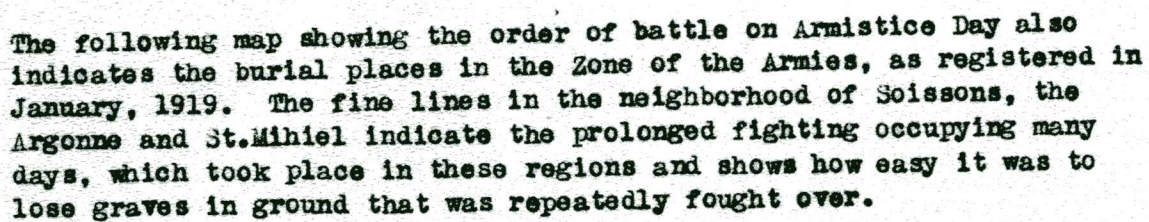
After the armistice, when the work of concentration

and maintenance became a most pressing problem, the question of the relation of the Graves Registration Service to the Fighting Units of the Army again came into notice. It was at that time ruled that the Graves Registration Service is a technical Service and must necessarily be under the direction of its technical Chief. The nature of the work demanded that the operations be made in accordance with an absolutely uniform policy throughout all the theater of operations. It was at the same time recognized beyond question that Commanders of Armies and Sections must exercise disciplinary and sanitary control over all troops within their jurisdiction. So it was determined that during the period of concentration, the same direct relation with the Chief's office should be maintained for all purely technical matters connected with the Graves Registration Service, and that the Army Commanders should be in nowise responsible for the carrying out by the Graves Registration Service Officers in their Areas of the orders directed to these representatives by the Chief.

In April, 1919, the Graves Registration Service was instructed to complete its activities in the Advance Section by July first. The Commanding General of the Advance Section was instructed to detail officers and men who would assist in the execution of the work of the Graves Registration Service. The strength of the troops offered was limited only by the capacity of the Graves Registration Service properly to identify and

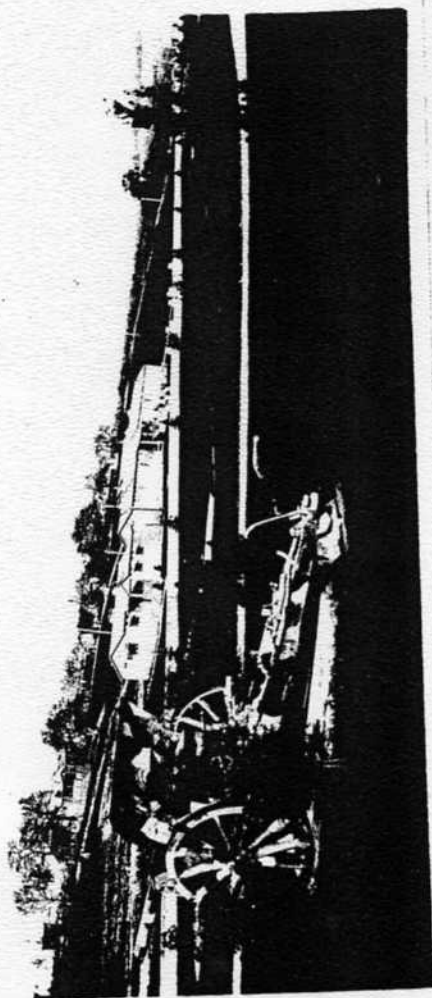
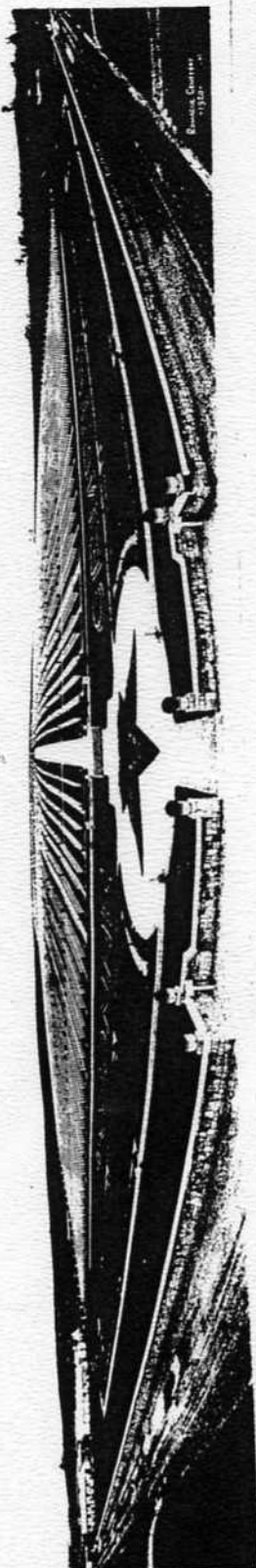
handle bodies. In accordance with this order the work of concentration and of the creation of large cemeteries was enabled to proceed at a greatly increased rate.

The creation of the great battle cemeteries themselves was the greatest achievement of the Graves Registration Service apart from its success in preserving identifications and making registrations. It is comparatively simple to maintain cemeteries in the Zone of the Interior during war time without serious errors or unusual effort, but special circumstances in battle areas render the task of preservation of identity and of grave locations peculiarly difficult. This experience was true in the British and French Armies and, in the latter case, it was reported that some 50,000 burials had completely disappeared. The disappearance of graves was especially easy in Areas over which there was much fighting back and forth. An examination of the accompanying map, showing daily lines of advance of the American Army in its different sectors, will indicate how readily a loss of graves might occur. These lines of advance are so close together, and the fighting took place in the same spot so many days at a time that it was not infrequent for graves to be opened by shell fire and for burial parties to be stricken down in the process of their duty. Although orders were strict, moreover, that no burial places should be chosen in remote, inaccessible places or places unsuitable because of drainage conditions, yet the circumstances of battle were frequently such that any place had to be used



for temporarily sheltering the dead. It was accordingly most essential that after the armistice a complete recheck of all graves in France should be made and that as many isolated burials as possible be assembled into large cemeteries where maintenance would be simpler and where there would be no danger of the location being forgotten. These concentrations accordingly were made by units working under the three Headquarters of the Areas in the battle zone - Neufchateau, Soissons and Amiens. Under the direction of the Commanding Officer at Neufchateau were created such cemeteries as Glorioux, Beaumont, Romagne and Thiaucourt. In the neighborhood of Soissons were built Floisy, Belleau Wood, Chateau-Thierry, Seringes-et-Nesles, and the smaller burial places in that sector. There was, of course, much similarity in the nature of the work, and for historical purposes, it will be sufficient if some idea is given of the creation of Romagne and Thiaucourt.

The making of Romagne Cemetery, which was originally intended to contain 26,000 graves, was an outgrowth of the operations in the Neufchateau Area, operations which were originated as a process of re-registering and rechecking all graves in the theater of operations, as directed by General Headquarters before the first of the year 1919. By January 11th the entire personnel of the Service was occupied in this duty. The files of the offices of the Graves Registration Service of the First Army, Second Army



Romagne Cemetery, 1920.

and former Headquarters Advance Section had been consolidated, and the personnel of these offices had been so assigned as to allow the greatest benefit being derived from the intimate knowledge these officers had obtained of their former Areas. One Graves Registration Unit and one hundred labor troops were assigned to each map section of 640 square kilometres, over which there had been combat activities. The method of employing these troops was to operate twenty men in skirmish line at intervals of fifty metres, thus covering a front of one kilometre, and each section in which heavy fighting had taken place would have sufficient men to cover an eight kilometre front. Working an eight hour day at the usual speed of operation, these troops could cover 64 square kilometres a day. Two hundred engineers, organized into twenty-five surveying groups, were assigned to certain map sections to make complete surveys of each burial place. Arrangements were made for the forwarding of supplies from railhead to Units in the field, such a service being necessary because of the constant evacuation of the territory by American troops, which left no provision for the rationing of Units.

By February 11th it was reported that the progress of rechecking work in the Neufchateau Area was as satisfactory as could be expected, since work was most difficult because of weather conditions. Rivers and canals were numerous and in many places had overflowed and covered the surrounding terrain. In

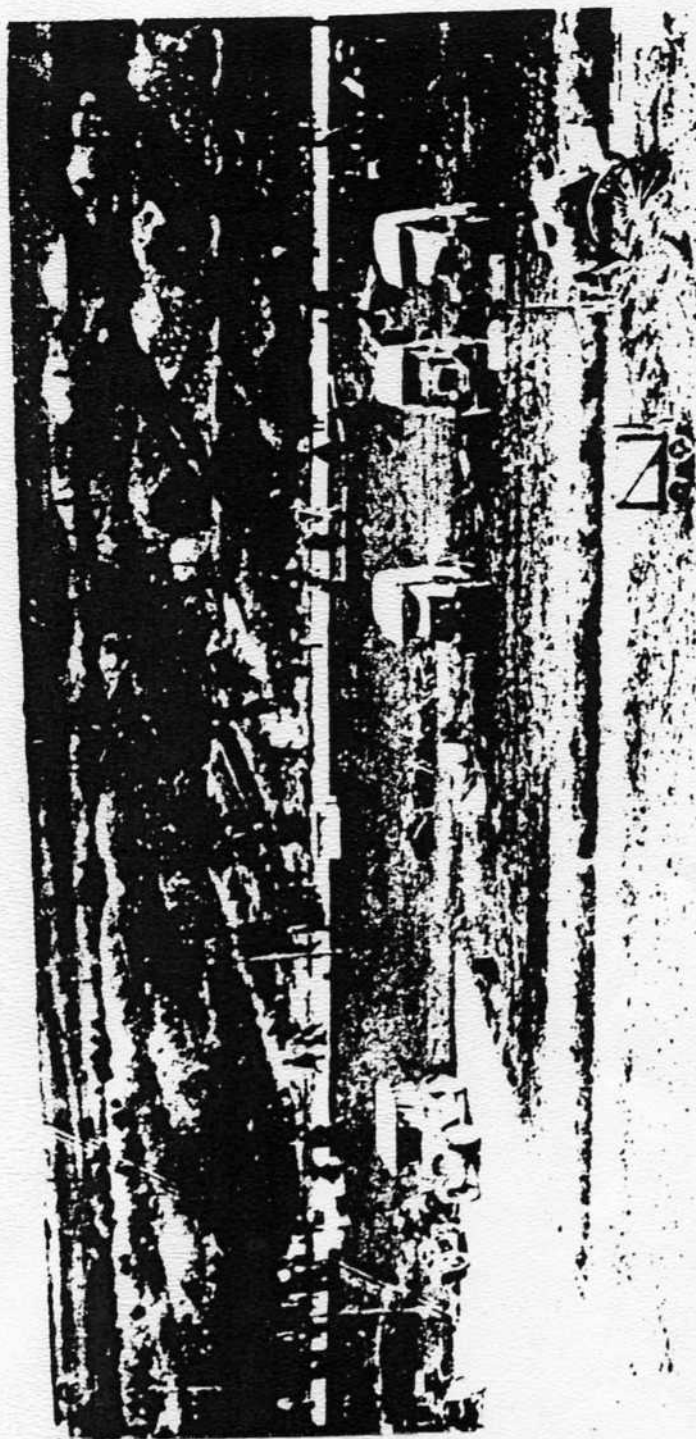
some of the flooded sections of this territory the water was waist deep.

By February 21st 20,480 square kilometres had been covered for rechecking purposes. In a map section of 640 square kilometres in this region twelve thousand burials had been registered, a number which indicates the magnitude of the losses and the difficulty of the rechecking operation. The work of concentrating these isolated burials was at this time organized. Burials made in low ground and dense forests had to be moved to places of safety to prevent loss and flooding. Five thousand coffins were ordered to the railhead at Verdun to be used in the work of concentration, and a sufficient supply for all the forward area was requisitioned. Arrangements for concentration sites were made in liaison with the French Etat Civil, a group of engineers having been assigned to lay out the new cemeteries and make accurate plans and sketches. By March 1st the rechecking had reached a point where it was possible to release four Units and assign them to concentration and maintenance. At this time in the Neufchateau Area there were 15,601 burials - 6,782 of which were isolated graves, and of this number 696 were unidentified, a proportion of 4.45 per cent. It was apparent that the majority of bodies would have to be disinterred and reburied, as very few had been put more than two feet under ground. Three sites were selected to be used as the principal points of concentration - one at Beaumont, one at Pont-a-Mousson, and the

third at Romagne. By March 11th work had actually started on Romagne Cemetery. An examination of the accompanying picture will give some indication of working conditions at this place. With the inadequate transport, with war barracks for houses, with most annoying weather conditions, men detailed had to grade and level the ground and bury those bodies sent in from distant sections of the Area. The interests of the Graves Registration Service were principally cared for by Lieut. Gove C. Wright, Q.M.C., who was responsible for the registering and proper burial of these thousands of men. The progress of the work in Romagne may be seen from the following reported figures of interments from week to week.

Total burials in Romagne for week ending	April 11th	1,525
" " " " " "	April 30th	4,268
" " " " " "	May 10th	6,573
" " " " " "	May 20th	8,293
" " " " " "	May 30th	9,527
" " " " " "	June 10th	12,933
" " " " " "	June 20th	17,143

Some alarm was felt in May when it was reported that the Sub-Prefect of the Romagne district had interposed objections to the use of the ground as a cemetery, declaring that the site covered a water source which was in danger of contamination. American engineers sent out from the Headquarters at Neufchateau made an exhaustive survey. After inspecting the site and its surroundings for a distance of at least four kilometres, they declared there was absolutely no danger of water contamination from any source. In view of the vast work already accomplished,



Operations at Romagne Cemetery,
1919.

the Chief appealed to the French Commission on military burials to adjust the difficulty so that the Service might proceed. This was accordingly done.

When finally declared completed, there were about 21,000 graves. The declaration that Romagne Cemetery was on a maintenance basis, however, which was made during the summer of 1919 by the American Forces in France, was not a fair representation of the status of things at that place. Romagne Cemetery had not reached a real maintenance basis a year later, although, as the accompanying photographs will show, enormous strides had been taken in beautifying the Cemetery and its environs.

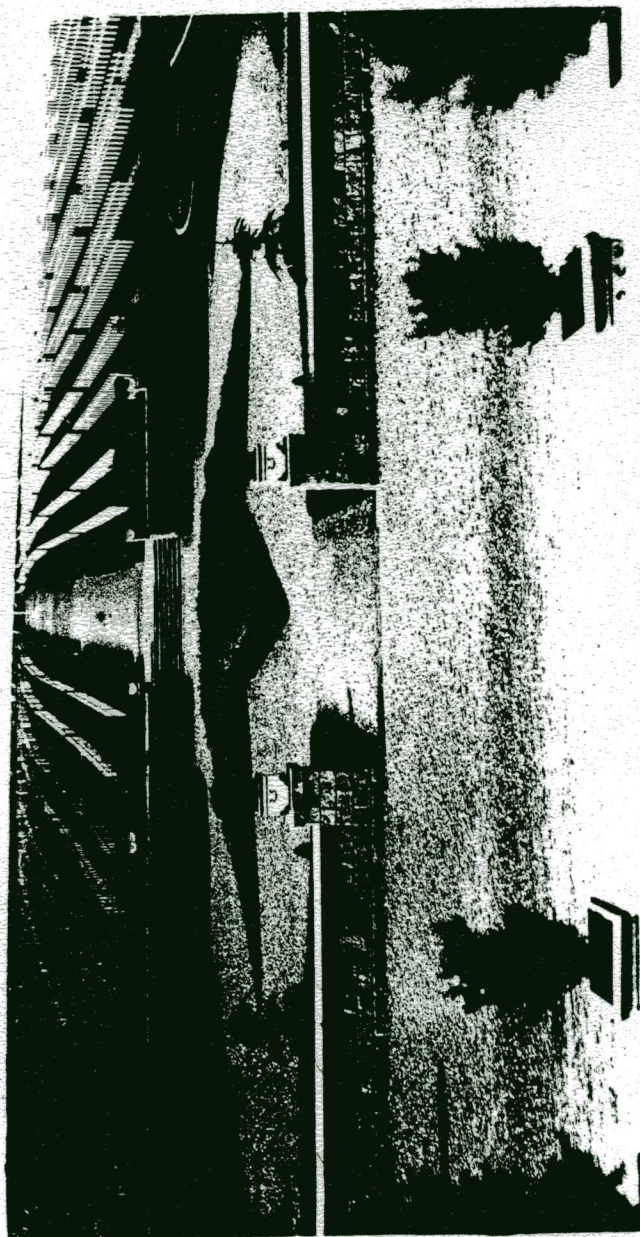
Something of the cost of this undertaking may be observed from the following figures.

Total cost from January 1, 1920 to August 31, 1920.

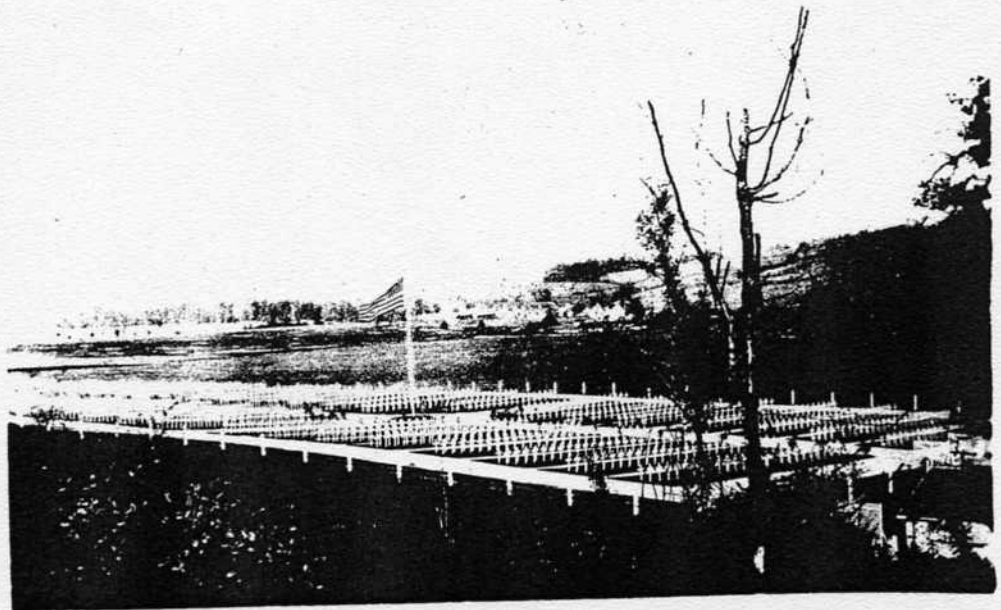
Laborers' salaries	francs	876,709.08
Laborers' mess	"	538,192.52
Cost of material used	"	274,159.74
Caretakers' and Foremen's salaries	"	<u>93,651.25</u>
Total	"	1,782,712.59

The above figures are no real guide to the cost of the concentration activities, since the labor was performed largely by troops which were much better paid than French workmen and the cost of the official supervision and supplies was naturally very high, amounts which are not included above.

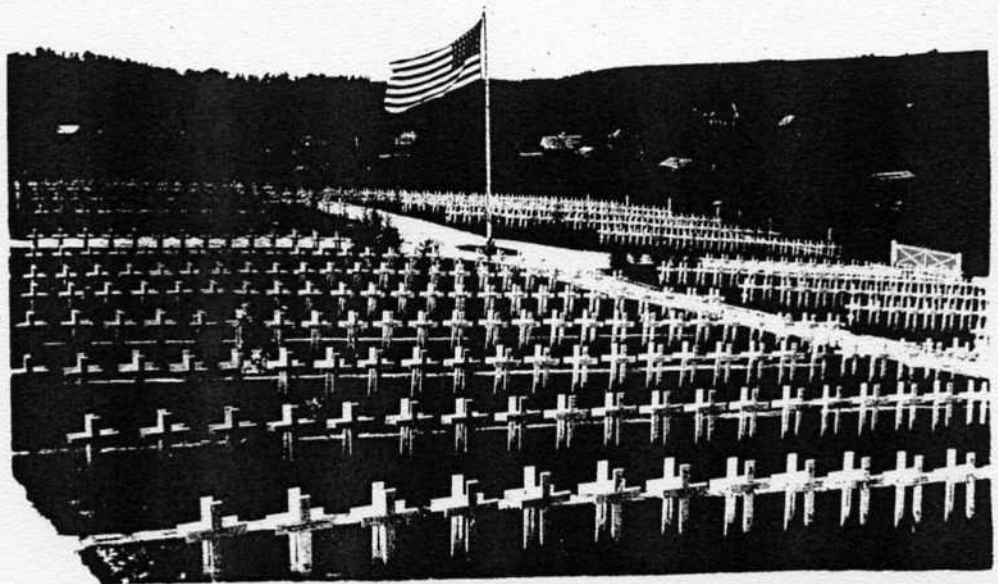
In this period were also developed the cemeteries at Suresnes, Belleau Wood and Bony. The total cost of Suresnes was



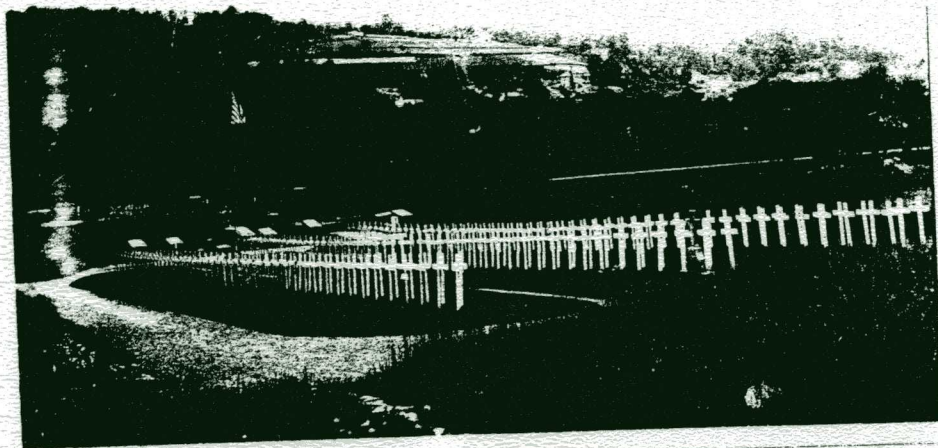
Romagne Cemetery, 1920.



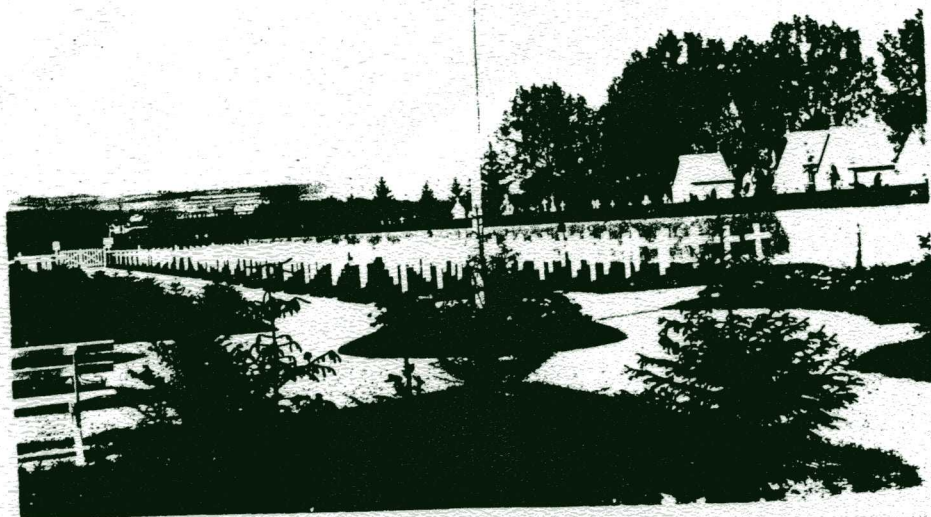
Cemetery at Belleau Wood.



Cemetery at Fismes (Marne).

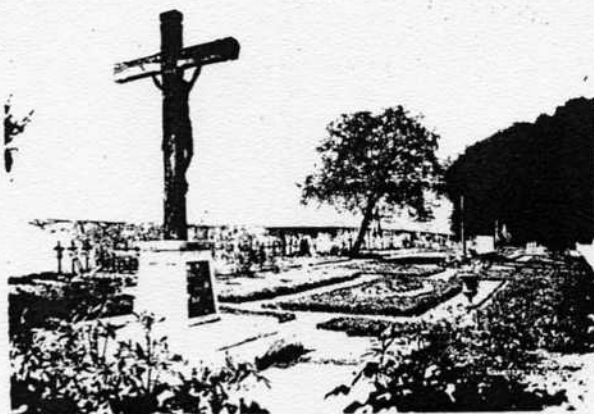


Cemetery at La Ferte-sous-Jouarre.



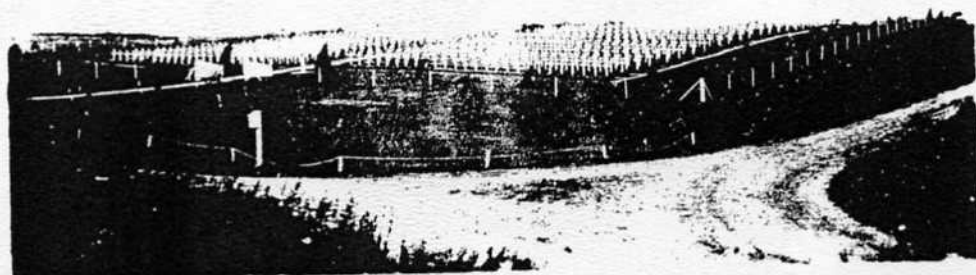
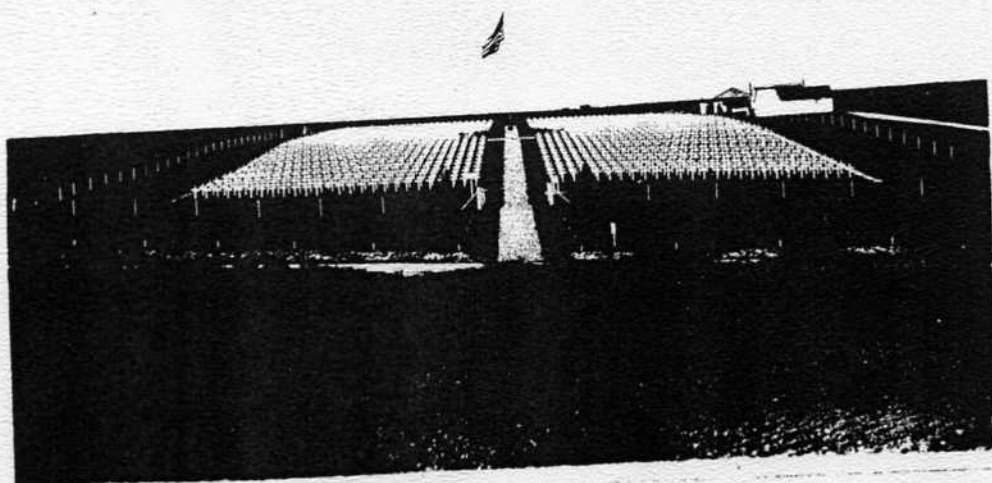
Cemetery at Vittel (Vosges).

approximately 300,000 francs up to August 31, 1920. The cost of maintenance of Belleau Wood Cemetery from January 1st to August 31, 1920 was 171,396 francs.



Chateau Perreux.

Thiaucourt Cemetery was chosen as the concentration point for scattered burials in the Area from Verdun east to Luneville, from Briey in the north to Toul in the south. The site of the St. Mihiel burial place was selected not only because the size of the available terrain made it a desirable plot for cemeterial purposes, but also because its situation on a large plateau overlooking Mount Sec, in the heart of the St. Mihiel salient, made it an ideal spot for the burial ground of the men who lost their lives in this spectacular battle. The land was surveyed and staked out by a Detachment of the 29th Engineers in the latter part of February, 1919 and ground was actually broken on March 19th. The digging was chiefly performed by a battalion of black troops from one of the labor battalions, while the tech-



Bony (Aisne).

nical and searching work was done by ninety men in charge of twenty officers and nine non-commissioned officers and privates selected from various Units of the Graves Registration Service.

There were two Headquarters at Thiaucourt; the one at the east end of the cemetery being in charge of the Camp Commander, Capt. Baker, who was head of the transportation and routine work of the Camp; the other, at the west end, being in charge of Lieut. Keating, of the Graves Registration Service, who was responsible for the identity and grave location of all reburials made in Thiaucourt.

The Graves Registration Service records were made up every evening and comprised the completed day's work. They were sent to Neufchateau Headquarters the same day by motorcycle courier.

The first concentrations were made from the immediate vicinity of Verdun, and owing to the marshy ground, the work was most difficult to accomplish and necessitated the use of several large pumps before the bodies could be located and enclosed in coffins. Various obstacles were encountered in digging the graves at Thiaucourt, of which the most trying was the appearance of many surface springs of water which ran through the northeast end of the cemetery and honeycombed the ground to such an extent that the grave walls frequently caved in. This brought it about that much of the dirt had to be handled twice, the laborers standing in water up to their knees. However, after these springs had been traced to their source and harnessed, they furnished

fresh water not only to the personnel of the Camp, but also to the inhabitants of Thiaucourt, whose original water system had been destroyed at the time the Germans evacuated the town.

The handling of the bodies was entirely new work to the colored men, but, after witnessing the manner in which the white personnel performed the various operations, they proved to be efficient in the disagreeable task.

The cemetery is built on the line between the Departments of the Meurthe and Moselle and was originally laid out to accommodate 4,000 bodies. But as the condition of several cemeteries was very bad, and in some cases burials had been made so close together as to make proper maintenance almost impossible, it was deemed advisable to vacate the unsatisfactory places and transport the bodies to Thiaucourt; thus several additional sections were organized. When it was completed at last on June 24th, 1919, there were approximately 4,500 bodies, and a few were added thereafter.

The work at Thiaucourt was very well performed and some of the concentrations were made with surprising speed and accuracy; five hundred graves at Sebastopol, north of Toul, for example, were disinterred and concentrated in thirty-six hours.

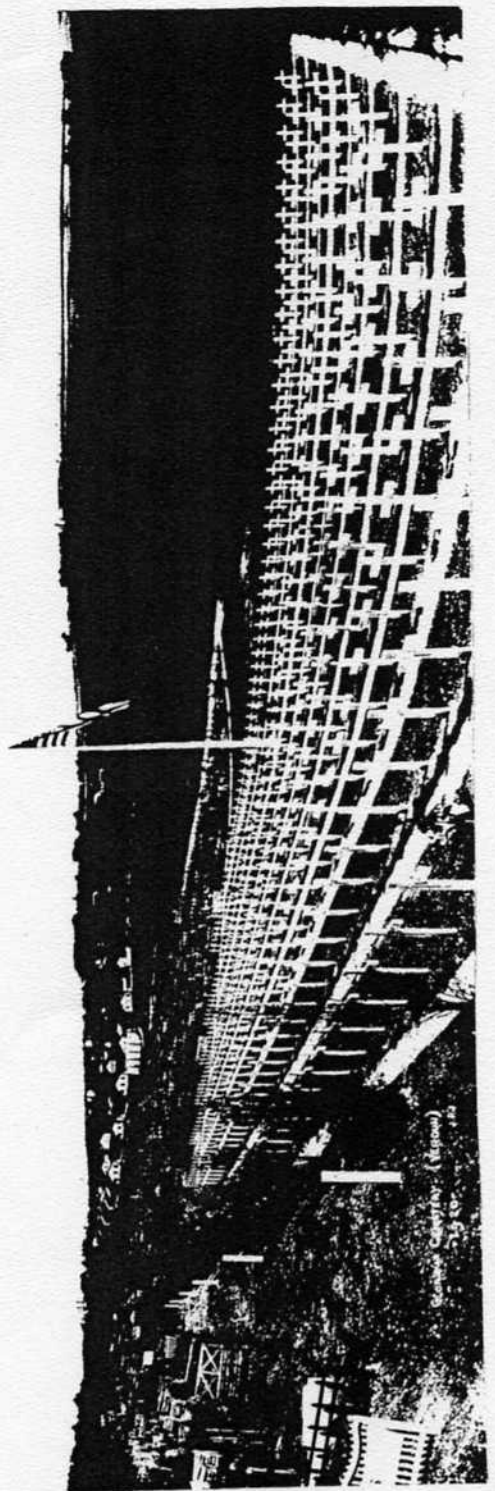
Mention has frequently been made in these pages concerning concentrations. The concentration activities were oftentimes among the most difficult tasks faced by the Graves Registration Service Units. For example, in the midst of the Forest

of Parroy, about seventy feet beneath the surface of the ground, there had been constructed a dugout, which was considered by Army opinion to be immune from hostile attacks. This dugout was finally occupied by an American officer and thirteen men, who were buried under tons of earth and debris during a night attack in which a torpedo from a German bombing plane struck directly above them, penetrating the earth to a depth of fifty feet, and destroying their refuge. To recover and identify the bodies of these soldiers, a Unit of the Graves Registration Service men, under the direction of Major Staten, undertook a task which was considered well-nigh impossible to accomplish. The undertaking was observed by a group of French officers who were present to secure details, if possible, of the construction of the shell, which had penetrated the earth to a depth previously considered impossible for a projectile of any size.

To reach the location of the former dugout, it was necessary to sink a shaft some thirty feet square to a depth of fifty feet; this was lined with heavy logs to hold back the earth, and five platforms were constructed at different levels in the descent. From this main shaft it was necessary to sap in different directions in order to locate and recover the bodies. The mining operation was made more difficult because of the character of the soil, which had been pulverized by the explosion, and because of the unfavorable weather conditions which prevailed at the time



Thiaucourt Cemetery
1920.



Glorieux Cemetery (Verdun)
1920.

of exhumation. Furthermore, the immediate scene of operations was in the center of a forest so dense that it was impossible to approach within two kilometres with any form of transportation. After the most exacting labor, covering a period of more than three weeks, the Commanding Officer, his staff, and twelve German prisoners recovered, identified and reinterred in the American Cemetery at Croixmere, the fourteen victims.

It was at this period that all the American dead in Italy were concentrated from different points to the American Plot, Protestant Section, Cemetery of the City of Genoa. These concentrations were made under the direction of Lieut. Chas. S. Denry, C.A.C., who was relieving Capt. Bogan. Capt. Bogan had placed an order with a company in Genoa for the manufacture of seventy-six caskets conforming with the regulations of the Italian Government, so that the bodies to be concentrated could be shipped by train. He had ordered the caskets shipped direct to the Mayor of each town in which there were American burials. Seventy-six regulation crosses had been ordered at the same time. While awaiting delivery of these stores, each Mayor in the various towns in which there were burials was visited and satisfactory arrangements were made whereby the local authorities, civil and sanitary, agreed to co-operate to furnish the necessary labor and supplies. Negotiations had also been entered into to secure rail transportation from the Italian Government.

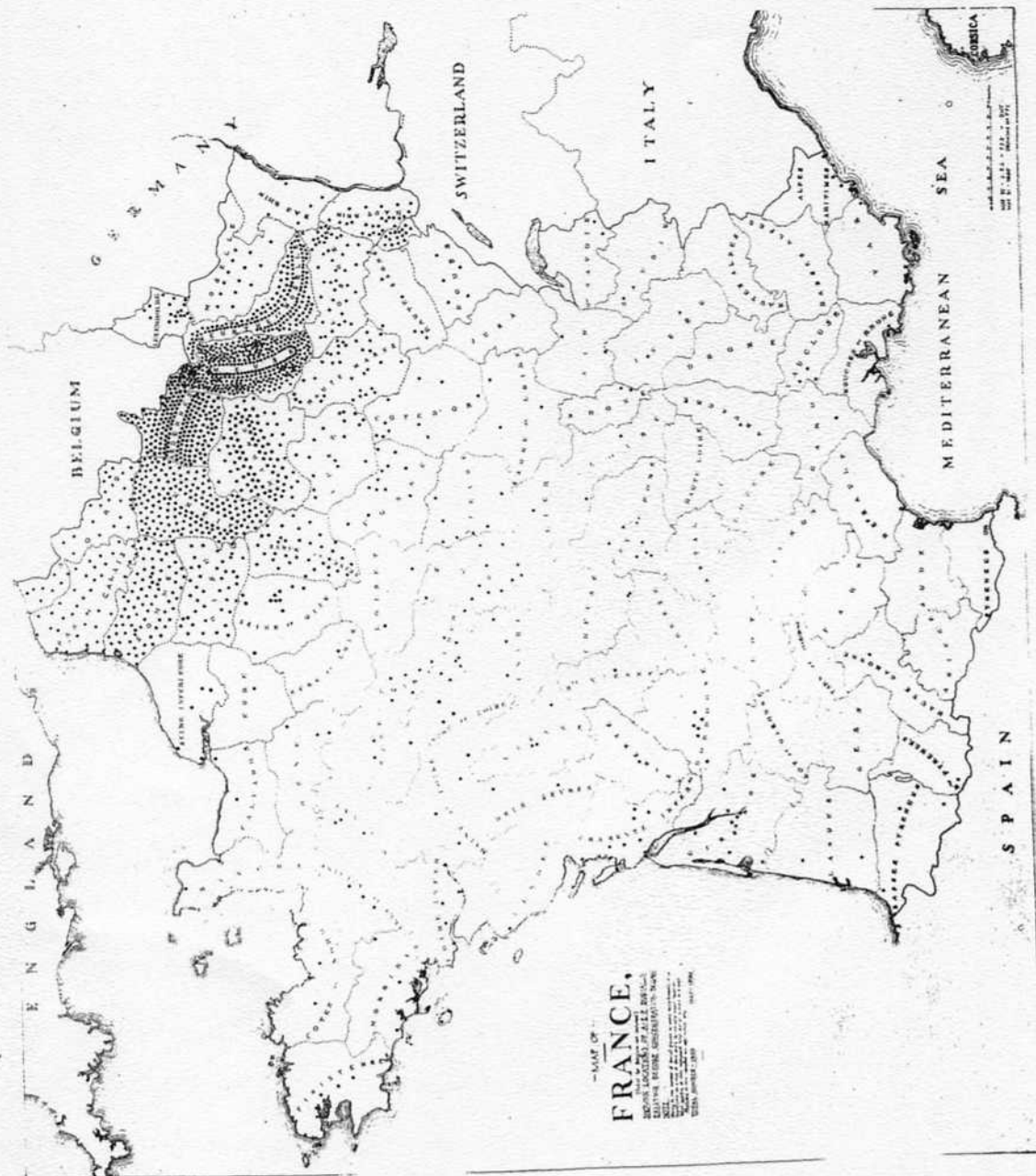
The following list gives details as to the concentrations

made:

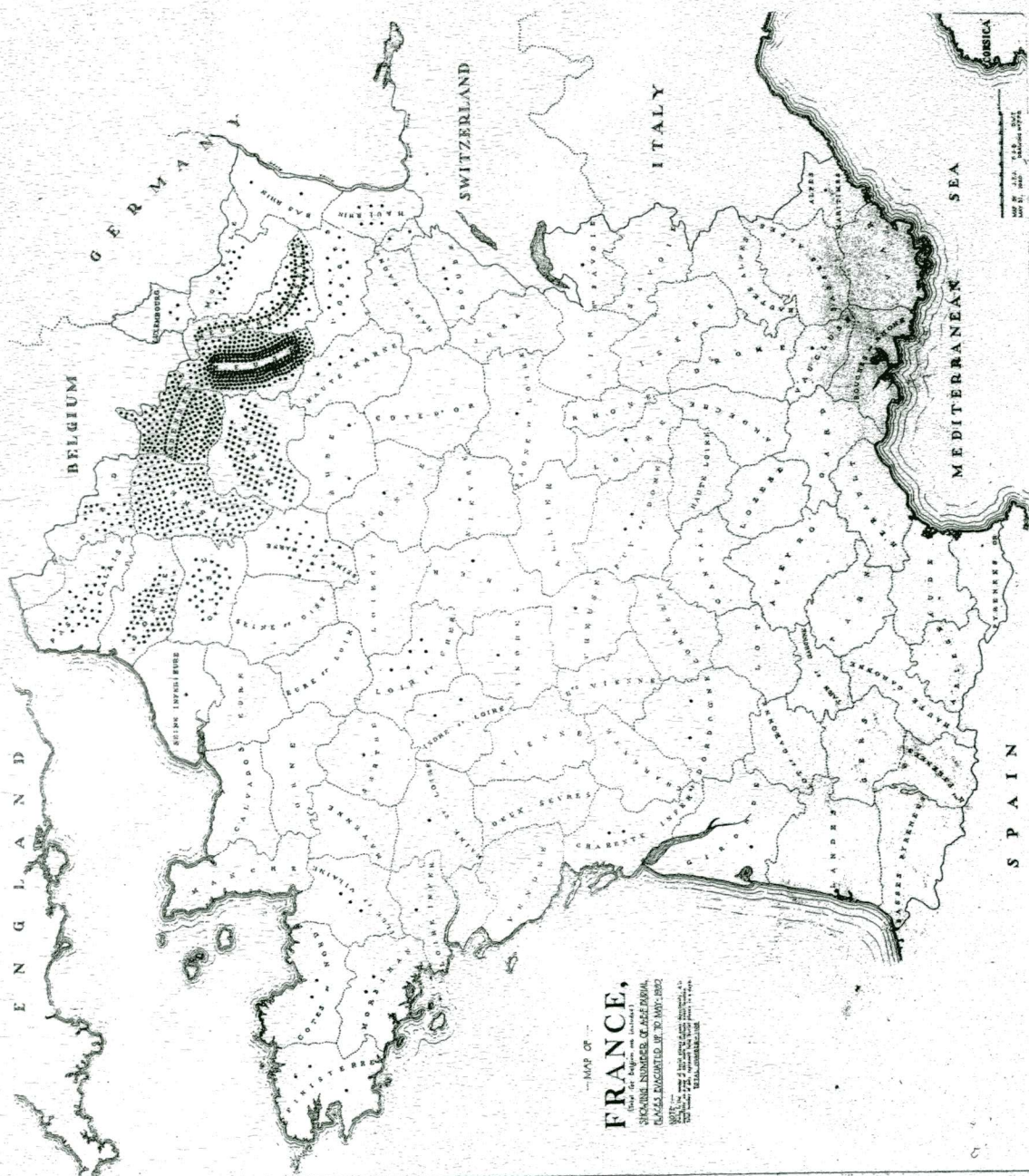
<u>Place</u>	<u>Bodies</u>	<u>Date Abandoned</u>
Rome	2	June 11, 1919
Udine	11	July 18, 1919
Calalzo	1	July 20, 1919
Treviso	23	July 21, 1919
Mestre	2	July 22, 1919
Cattaro	2	July 25, 1919
Foggia	8	July 26, 1919
Mantova	4	July 29, 1919
Villafrania	9	July 30, 1919
Fiume	2	Aug. 7, 1919
Montecchio Precalceno	4	Aug. 19, 1919
Ravene	2	Aug. 21, 1919
Valvalsone	1	Aug. 24, 1919
Milano	1	Aug. 30, 1919
Somma Lombardo	<u>1</u>	Sept. 1, 1919
	73	

There were originally three bodies buried in the American Plot in Genoa, which gave a total of American dead in Italy at the end of the war, of seventy-six.

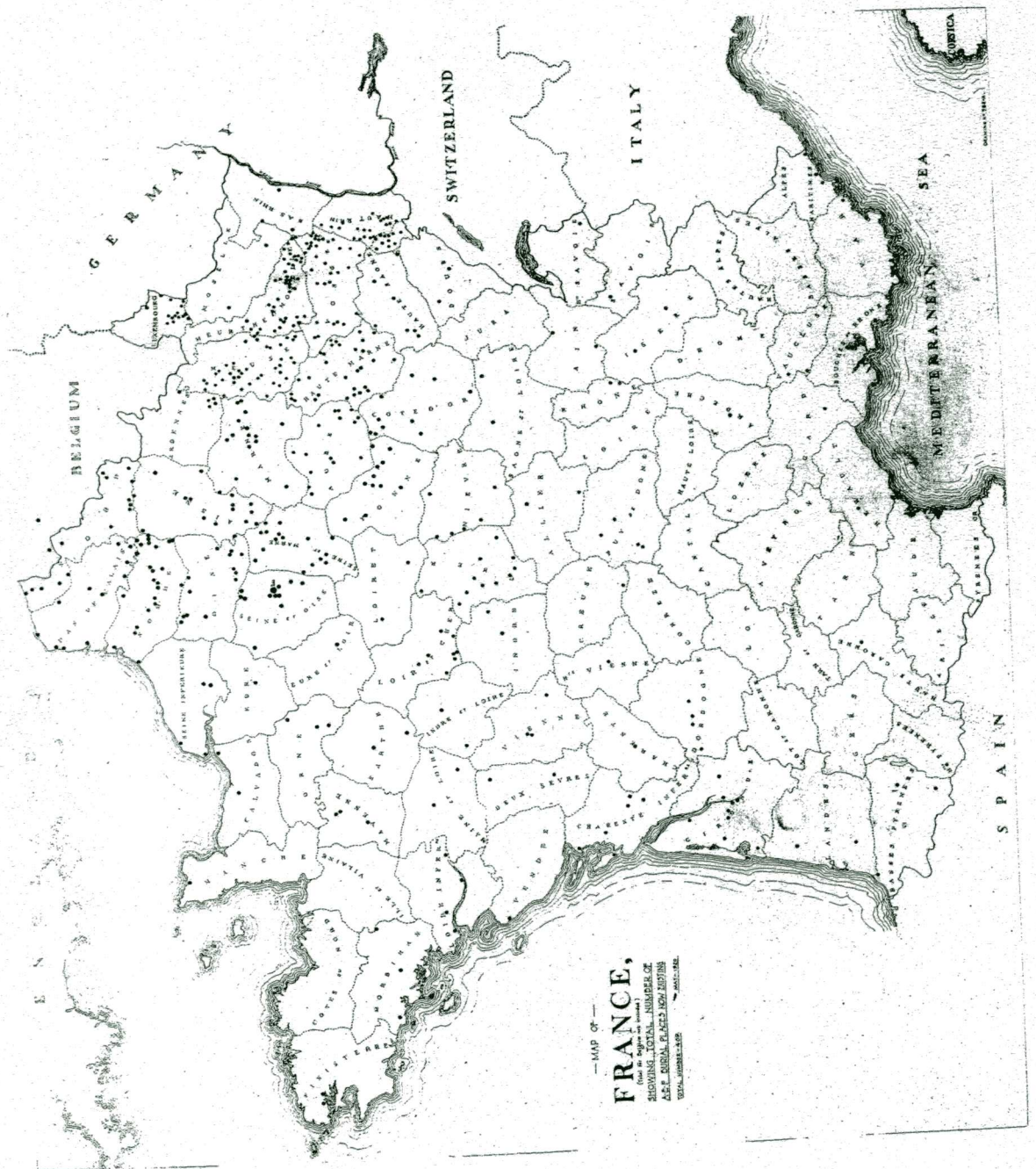
Lieut. Denny was assisted in his work by Lieut. Ferruccio Cochis, of the Italian Army, who acted as interpreter and Liaison Officer. By Italian law, an Officer of Hygiene had to be present at every exhumation, and, in order to comply with the Sanitary Law of Italy, it was necessary to obtain a signed statement from the officer that death was not caused by a contagious disease. Before a body could be moved from one Department to another, it was necessary to obtain written permission from the Prefect of the Department. Moreover, as all bodies were shipped under military control, an order had to be secured from the local military authorities permitting the use of the freight car. Automobile and truck transportation was used when possible and was usually



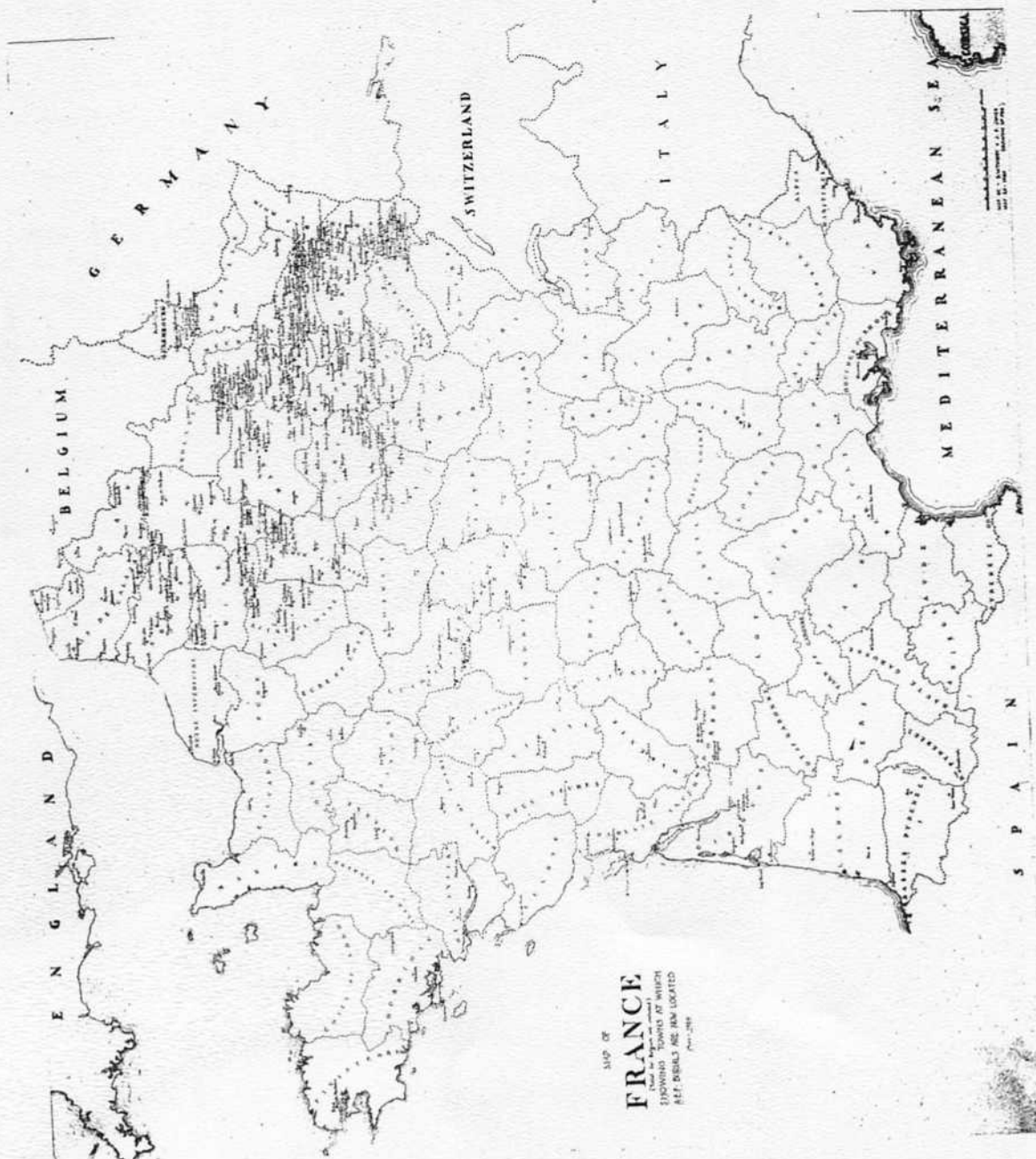
The above map shows locations of A.E.F. burials existing before concentrations began.



The above map shows the number of A.E.F. burial places evacuated up to May, 1920.



The above map shows the total number of
 A.E.F. burial places existing in May, 1920.



The above map shows the towns in which A.E.F.
burials were located in May, 1920.

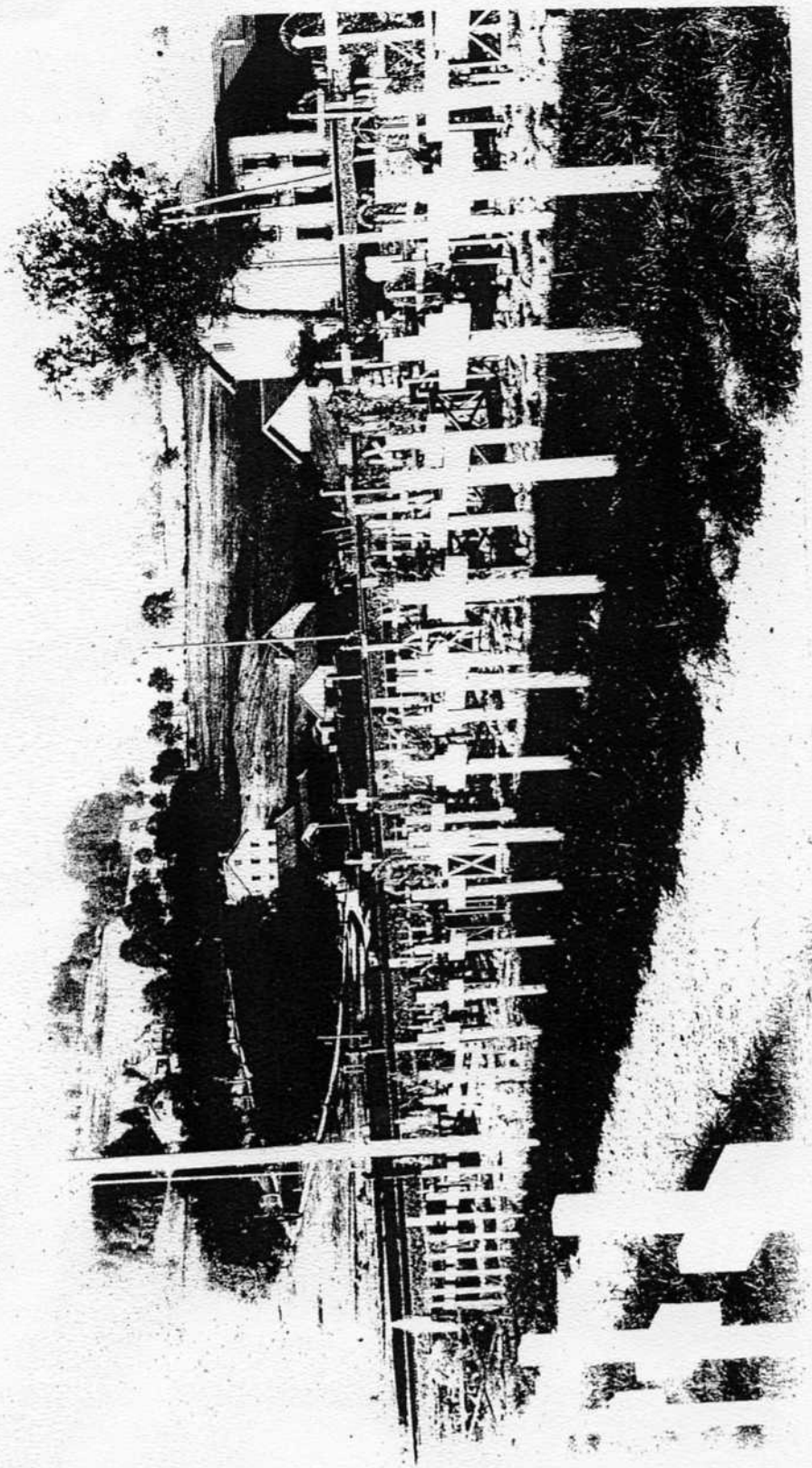
secured from the military authorities, although in some cases the Y.M.C.A. assisted.

Lieut. Dunton was stationed in Genoa to receive the bodies as fast as they reached that city, and to take charge of the reburial and recording of the location. The city authorities of Genoa gave all the assistance that could be expected. After the concentration was completed, the crosses were erected, the regulation flag-pole was put up and the land was seeded. The ground, however, sank very rapidly and left such depressions where a grave had been dug that considerable attention was necessary in the cemetery for some time.

The only misunderstanding met with in the operations was concerning the Plot itself in the cemetery at Genoa. Through an error it was originally agreed to pay the City of Genoa 60,000 lire for the land. The American Government authorities, however, refused to make the payment without full investigation, owing to the fact that there was an understanding that the Italian Government would provide the ground. After considerable negotiation the misunderstanding was cleared up satisfactorily.

The general desire to finish up A.E.F. business as soon as possible led to a premature declaration on the part of the higher Army authorities that the cemeterial work was finished and that the burial grounds were on a maintenance basis. Transport was removed and sold, personnel was called in, and the main records were moved to the United States. This action has been

-39-A



Gerardmer Cemetery (Vosges).

criticised, with some justice, in that the forces remaining had inadequate means of doing the enormous work still facing them. On the other hand, the Army undoubtedly had to move out of France, and the sooner this was accomplished the better it was for the situation taken as a whole. That unfairly heavy work fell on the maintaining group that stayed in France is, while true, excusable in the general cause. The main thing lost was time, especially in the huge cemeteries, but this was almost entirely made up by the summer of 1920.

When Colonel Pierce moved with his staff to Washington, a new department began to function in the War Department - a branch of the office of the Quartermaster General, and one that was peculiarly suited to continue its work because of its extraordinary experience during the fighting months. It is fitting that General Pershing's letter to the Chief of the Cemeterial Division be inserted here as a just record of the achievements of that officer and his staff.

"It is a pleasure for me to express my thanks and the thanks of officers and men of the American Expeditionary Forces to you and your personnel, for the efficient work of the Graves Registration Service throughout the War.

"You arrived in France, a lone advance agent of a branch of service which had still to be organized and which war's exigencies and hazards made imperative. You and your first handful of workers labored unceasingly, overcame obstacles, taxed your brains and hands to the utmost and finally achieved an organization worthy of the highest praise.

"On every battle-field where Americans were engaged, and, having made the supreme sacrifice, were laid to their final rest, the results of your Service were seen.

"Your personnel toiled, often exposed to the same dangers as front line troops, and performed their duties there diligently, conscientiously and sympathetically. The liaison they maintained with our Allies was admirable.

"The consecrated service you rendered to the kinsfolk of our soldiers in conveying information and allaying undue anxiety and fears, the part you played in acting as personal representatives for thousands of soldiers' relatives, meets not only with the appreciation of the entire American Expeditionary Forces, but the gratitude of the American people.

"A work, so comprehensive in its scope, yet characterized by an humanitarianism that is indeed laudable, stands forth in bold relief as a labor of duty and sympathy that will be a credit to our country forever."

Sincerely yours,

(Signed) John J. Pershing.

3.

(a) After the return of the Graves Registration Service, as it was organized during the war, to the United States, it was reorganized into the Cemeterial Division of the Quartermaster General's office. This included the old Graves Registration Service and the Service in Europe, and was by law under the direction of Major General H.L. Rogers, the Quartermaster General of the Army. All important communications issued from that office and were signed, "By authority of the Quartermaster General." Colonel Charles C. Pierce retained the office of Chief of the Service, becoming Chief of the Cemeterial Division and had direct supervision of all the work of that organization, directing the operations to be pursued in Europe, as well as dealing with all matters in Washington concerning appropriations, personal relations

with the public and the policies of the Service.

The Executive Officer in Washington was Colonel W.C. Jones, Q.M.C., who directed the general accomplishment of the activities, giving his personal attention to all important matters relating to supplying the overseas contingent and watching the manner of execution of the orders issued. There was an Administrative and Personnel Officer, Capt. Connor; an officer in charge of the Overseas Personnel Department, Capt. Smith, wherein were included the files of applicants and their credentials - a Branch which, after examination, made recommendations for overseas service and securing of the passports. Supplies and requisitions were in charge of Capt. Parker. Capt. Wynne directed the Inquiry Section. Registrations Branch was in charge of Lieut. Noetzel. In addition to this there were a Photographic Department and a Red Cross Office for the collection and distribution of individual pictures of the graves. The Filing Section kept records relating to locations, identifications and cemeteries. It was here that cablegrams were decoded and the necessary data supplied to the American Port Officers for the shipping of bodies to their destinations. The Publicity Department, in the office of the Quartermaster General, edited and censored all information received concerning the Service.

The Cemeterial Division has long been an important office in the Quartermaster General's Department, its problems

being the acquisition of ground for National Cemeteries and the accomplishment of the necessary undertakings attendant on their plan, arrangement and continued maintenance. The Graves Registration Service, having enlarged its personnel and increased the scope of its activities to such extensive proportions during the World War, and having received two appropriations from Congress totaling \$30,000,000.00 for the disposition of the remains of our dead, was in March, 1920 merged into the Cemeterial Division of the office of the Quartermaster General, of which entire organization Colonel Pierce was Chief. Because of the expansion of activities, the offices were removed from the temporary war buildings at 1800 Virginia Avenue to more commodious quarters in the Munitions Building, where the entire Division is housed.

(b) When it was decided by the American Government that the bodies of many of our soldier dead were to be returned from France, and it became known that the work was to be undertaken by the Graves Registration Service, it was also understood by the public that additional men would be engaged and sent from the United States to assist in the work.

The Overseas Personnel Officer, who had himself been actively engaged in the Graves Registration Service work, both at home and abroad, immediately began to receive applications from men desiring to go overseas, commencing his Department in one small room with one stenographer. It was soon necessary to

appreciably increase the office accommodation and his clerical force. The incoming mail was enormous, and the return correspondence proportionate, while the corridors were daily filled with applicants even before the opening of the office, many men who were in or near Washington coming in person.

There had been no formal advertisement for help, but the information was circulated through the medium of the various soldiers' weeklies and similar publications. Thousands of letters were received, from practically every State in the Union and from our possessions, from men of every class and age, both ex-Service men and civilians with no military record. Ex-Service men, however, were given the preference in the question of selection, partly because it was felt that they deserved the work and partly out of consideration of the fact that, having been in the Service and abroad, they would be more amenable to the necessary discipline and could more readily adapt themselves to the local conditions to be encountered.

Many of the letters of application were unique and displayed a variety of terminology, of amusing expression and varying intelligence. Many were accompanied by letters of recommendation from senators, Congressmen, military authorities, or employers. Correspondence with each man was filed in separate "jackets" alphabetically arranged, and labeled on the covers with the name of the applicant and the position desired. These latter

were derived from the original tables of organization. All of those men whose application for employment was favorably considered were instructed to accomplish the Civil Service Form 375, covering their experience and physical condition, this to be accompanied by at least two letters regarding their character and technical ability. On acceptance, a temporary contract was signed and a passport obtained (through the presentation of a properly accomplished request, accompanied by a birth certificate) from the Passport Bureau at the State Department, after which travel orders were issued and the men embarked at Hoboken.

When it was decided by the Chief of the American Graves Registration Service, Q.M.C., in Europe, to ask for no more clerical personnel, checkers or convoyers, but only for supervisory embalmers and technical assistants, the Overseas Personnel Officer in Washington was confronted by the fact of a shortage of available applicants, for by that time the men had become fairly re-adjusted to civilian life and had obtained permanent employment.

Through no co-operation of Washington, some schools of embalming began to offer, as an inducement to encourage the entrance of new pupils, the probability of employment of their graduates for duty overseas with the Graves Registration Service. Many letters were received at Washington from men asking for this to be verified and, while the embalming schools presented this inducement solely in their own interests, it eventually had the advantage of supplying some competent men who qualified for

duty in France.

(c) At the risk of some repetition, it is desirable to recall the circumstances of the early burials briefly, so as to make clear the data on which the Washington office had to work in preparing its authorizations for disinterments overseas.

On the death of a soldier, the first report of the same sent to the United States was a cablegram sent to the Adjutant General's office. This established the soldier on a death status.

Immediately after an engagement, the burial officer of a regiment, who was generally a junior officer assigned to that work, took out with him into the field a detail of men, whose duty was to locate the bodies and bury them, after searching for and recording all personal articles found upon them, and by which they might be identified.

When there were a considerable number of dead, it was often found convenient to bury them in long trenches, partitioned off, to keep the bodies separate. Over each one, when possible, a cross was erected to which was attached one identification tag, the other being buried with the body. When a chaplain superintended the burials, brief prayers were said over the graves. Naturally, by the very character of the circumstances of warfare, many individual burials were made hastily by the comrades of the soldiers. They were often accomplished under shell-fire, sometimes at night, often in isolated and not easily accessible places; but ordinarily the endeavor was made to observe as much care and system in the burials as the circumstances would permit.

From data obtained from the Commanding Officer, from the chaplain, or from the burial officer, the fact of a soldier's death was established and the record submitted to the most accessible Graves Registration Service Officer. This latter checked up this data and accomplished the first burial Form No. 1-A, which he sent in from the field.

At the time of reburial, Form No. 16 was accomplished.

The chaplains were sometimes placed in charge of two or three squads of pioneer troops, which were attached to certain Divisions for the purpose of following up the combatant troops and burying the dead after an engagement. The chaplains then sent in their reports, containing, in addition to the complete available data, a brief comment on the attending circumstances of the death, if they knew of such. These reports were called "Case Papers."

After the first burial was made, the Graves Registration Service workers went into the field and located the graves as soon as possible. These they opened, confirmed the identification, placed the bodies in boxes and reburied them in a local cemetery, if there were one near by, or, if there were not, they laid out a little concentration cemetery of their own in which were buried those found in the immediate vicinity. Map coordinates and other data were submitted to facilitate and insure location later on.

In March, 1919 a further concentration was undertaken

and more permanent cemeteries established. These latter often consisted of an American addition to a French cemetery already existing. These concentrations obviated many of the difficulties experienced because of isolated groups and insured a greater protection and care of the graves. There were, at one time, 1,836 cemeteries listed in the files at Washington. All foreign cemeteries containing our dead are filed. The data on these cards includes the name and location of each body, its section, plot and row; and as cemeteries or plots were evacuated in the process of concentration and the bodies removed elsewhere, an exact record was made of the fact and the files rearranged accordingly.

In many cases, because of forms incompletely accomplished, or because of insufficient information, the location or the identification of a body was in doubt. In such instances the Red Cross submitted "Search Reports." Their workers acquired the information contained in them by first making up a list of casualties from company records, and obtaining personal depositions of men who were with their comrades when they were killed, or who assisted in their burial, and so knew the circumstances of their end and of the location of the grave.

There was included also in these "Search Reports" a brief account of any worthy or heroic actions attending the death of the soldiers, and by interviews with their comrades, they often learned of their last words, or of the expressed desires of the dying men. These were recorded, not only for their historical

significance, but as a consolation to their bereaved families. All of these records and the depositions of the men are in the files of the Graves Registration Service in Washington and have proved valuable as references for location and identification. "Hospital Reports" have also been of service in obtaining correct data, as have also the "Communal Lists" showing the approximate locations of original burials.

After the location and identification were completed, the Red Cross took photographs of many of the cemeteries and individual graves, sending one of the latter to the next of kin. A supply and headquarters room of this auxiliary service is maintained at the Cemeterial Division at Washington, in the office of the Quartermaster General of the Army.

Members of the 29th Regiment of Engineers who were assigned to work with, and in the interest of, the Graves Registration Service, located many graves and rendered valuable assistance by making careful drawings and accurate maps of cemeteries and isolated groups of graves. They submitted one thousand eight hundred sketches of some nine hundred different cemeteries, of which blueprints are on file.

A considerable collection of photographs was obtained from the Signal Corps. These they had taken of the various locations and operations of the Graves Registration Service in the field, including, besides many localities, the making and erection of the crosses, the exhumations in the various stages of the work,

the clerical force in the field, officers, and the methods of transportation.

All of the established information, obtained from every source on file, being finally assembled, was recorded on the 5" x 8" registration cards. This includes the name, number, rank, organization, place of death, location of burial and the name of the next of kin. On the reverse side, if the body is sent to the United States, is the date of arrival at, and of shipping from, the foreign port, the arrival at the American port, the shipment to the home or National Cemetery, the number of the express bill of lading, and the location of the final resting place of the body. It is from these files that the necessary data is obtained for the decoding of the cablegrams from Europe, sent at the time of the shipment of the bodies on the transports. Shipping instructions were then issued to the American port concerning the final destination. If the body were to remain in Europe, the proper data was recorded.

There was a large clerical force in charge of these various filing departments, and the personnel of the Graves Registration Service had made, up to July, 1920, some six thousand identifications concerning which the information was apparently entirely inadequate. These identifications they accomplished through their individual interest and efforts; by harmonizing apparently conflicting data and by piecing together seemingly unrelated information.

As an instance of initiative in securing data, the authorities of the United States Navy had apparently exhausted every source of information in an attempt to establish the facts concerning a young naval man who was thought to have drowned when an American ship was wrecked off the coast of Spain on a given date. The Navy finally appealed to the Graves Registration Service in Washington, one of the employees of which went to that branch of the State Department where consular reports are received and filed. Finding the part of Spain off which the wreck had occurred and the name of the Consul in charge of that locality, he examined the regular consular reports covering the period of the disaster, and found a complete account of the finding of the body on the beach, of the funeral and the name of the officiating priest, the final resting place of the body and even a relation of the respect and courteous attention shown the American sailor by the rural inhabitants of this isolated and almost inaccessible spot. Original research of this type is an example of the interest and efficiency not uncommon among the Graves Registration Service men.

(d) There was a considerable personnel at Hoboken, N.J., engaged in the accomplishment of the work of the Graves Registration Service at that port. This work consisted chiefly in the control and shipping of supplies requisitioned in Washington at the request of the Chief in Europe; in the unloading of the bodies from the transports; in properly checking them, and in shipping

the same to their final destinations on receipt of official directions from Washington. In August the work was under the direction of Colonel Shannon, Chief Graves Registration Service Officer at the port. He was assisted by Capt. J.J. McAlear, who had been on duty there since March, 1920; by Lieut. Barker, on duty since February of the same year, and by several Personnel Officers.

Although transports frequently discharged their miscellaneous cargoes at Army Base, Pier 3, Bush Terminal in Brooklyn, a sub-port of Hoboken, they always proceeded later to the Graves Registration Service dock to unload their consignments of caskets. These were cleared at the Graves Registration dock from two hatchways simultaneously by means of giant cranes. The securing of the cases to the swings and the placing of them on the dock was done by stevedores, who were paid by the day and had no official connection with the Graves Registration Service. As each shipping case was lifted from the hold, it was swung over a protecting net of rope, stretched between the ship and the dock to secure the case against falling into the water in case of accident, and it was then placed on a small electric truck which carried it to its numbered section on the dock. Due to a careful survey of the available floor space and to intelligent planning, about two thousand caskets could be accommodated at one time. A checker, an employee of the Graves Registration Service, made a note of the marking of each case on a separate card as it was placed in its

appointed place; consequently, by the time the entire shipment was unloaded, there was a complete card index showing each body, the name, rank, organization, next of kin, and the exact location of its position on the floor. This card index system made possible the immediate location of any desired body on the dock. As each casket was put into place, it was swept off and covered with an American flag. If any caskets were damaged in transit, they were replaced or repaired; and if for any reason it were necessary to open one, it was taken to the morgue, a large room in one corner of the dock, well equipped with necessary instruments and supplies, including a stock of new caskets and cases for emergency use. There were three embalmers continually in attendance.

Immediately before the arrival of a transport, the caskets which had not previously been shipped to their destinations were placed in an adjoining section of the dock by themselves, thus avoiding the confusion which would attend the mixing of different shipments.

On receiving shipping instructions from Washington, the caskets were lowered to the ground level onto a platform, from which they were placed in the express cars which, for greater convenience, were run directly into the dock yards. A conveyer then accompanied groups of bodies to the nearest central shipping point, from which they were in turn conveyed individually to their final destinations by United States soldiers detailed for that purpose from the nearest Army Headquarters or military Post.

The interior of the dock used by this Service was one of those formerly controlled by the Hamburg-American Line. It was modern, well-constructed, and something over six hundred feet long; its interior, lofty, dry and well-lighted, was admirably suited to its mortuary use. It was appropriately decorated with American flags, and carefully guarded from curious or unauthorized persons. The atmosphere of the surroundings and the attitude of the personnel were in keeping with the purpose and character of the work.

CHAPTER III.

ORGANIZATION IN EUROPE.

When the general policy had been decided by the War Department, it was realized that a special organization was needed to handle the specific problems of exhumation, shipment and concentration of the remaining bodies. It was evident that this organization could not be wholly planned from Washington, since the infinite details to be arranged needed daily knowledge of local conditions. The general plans to be followed, the policies to be pursued, the supplies that must be purchased in America and the technical American personnel could be determined by the War Department, but the Quartermaster General of the Army recognized the need for a Chief in Europe who should be personally responsible to him and who should be in full charge of all European operations. There was, to be sure, already an organization in Europe, the remains of the large A.E.F. establishment, the nucleus which functioned as a maintenance and registrations branch during the life of the A.F. in F. It was recognized that it was necessary to build on these foundations, when beginning the new project, for there were many officers who were fully acquainted with the situation in France, who had the various cemeterial areas under control, who understood the previous conditions, who had helped bury and locate A.E.F. dead, and who fully comprehended the importance of care and intelligence in keeping identities

straight and registrations accurate. Yet the zone system in Europe was insufficient to accomplish the wishes of the War Department. What was needed, it seemed, was a co-ordinating superstructure of administration above the zones, one which would direct all operations and supervise all activities, yet one which would utilize the knowledge possessed by the older group and which would consequently learn the lessons of experience in this new project at as small a cost as possible.

After a thorough consideration of the situation in the Cemeterial Division and by the Quartermaster General of the Army, on October 24, 1919 Major General H.L. Rogers acknowledged the War Department order of October 6th, which commanded the project, and sent on for the approval of the Secretary of War his tentative scheme or organization for mortuary work in Europe. He continued, "I recommend that an experienced officer of superior rank in the Quartermaster Corps should be detailed, under the absolute direction of the Quartermaster General, for the purpose of more direct supervision in Europe and the co-ordination of the departments of activity herein outlined. Should this recommendation meet with your approval, I request that Colonel Harry F. Rethers, Quartermaster Corps, now on duty in England, be relieved and ordered to report by cable for instructions as to the performance of the duty for which his detail is requested."

The plans as set forth included the zone system of

operations, transportation of bodies and the extensive use of motor transport. On November 8th the Adjutant General agreed to the plan, with the following provisos:

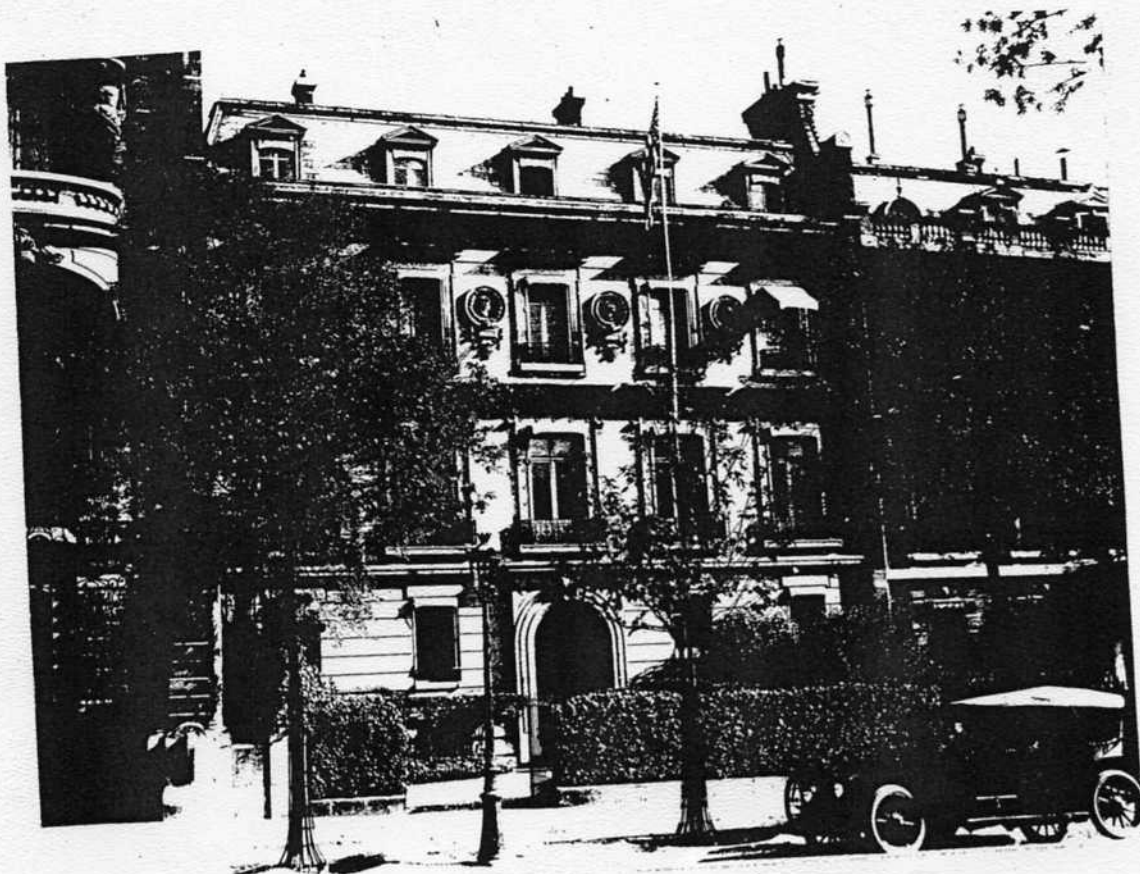
"There is no objection on the part of the War Department to the scheme presented by the Quartermaster General, Director of Purchase and Storage, for the removal of Army dead from Europe, except that the organization or set-up of any activities which are now functioning in the War Department under another Service is disapproved.

"It is intended that the Quartermaster General will utilize the Transportation Service for the movement of bodies by rail and water. The land, wheeled, transportation necessary for this work will be hired in Europe or sent from the United States, as may be most economical. That question will be decided by the Quartermaster General. Should it be desired to use United States Army motor equipment, application for that transportation and accompanying personnel should be made to the Adjutant General.

"The work in Europe in districts under command of American troops should be done in consultation with the Commanding Officers concerned. The Quartermaster General has sufficient commissioned and enlisted personnel and authority to hire the necessary civilians, provided the existing appropriations are not exceeded. Deficiencies will not be created without the express approval of the War Department, for which timely application should be made."

The cablegram of November 22nd to Colonel Bethers outlined the instructions under which he would work. The Chief of the Graves Registration Service was to maintain a central office in Washington. The Chief in Europe was to be under the absolute direction of the Quartermaster General, although he was expected to consult with any Commanding Officer concerned when he was operating under his jurisdiction. It was decided to constitute four zones in Europe, the first to include Great Britain, with Headquarters in London; the second, for the maintenance project in France; the third for the removal from the French Zone of the Interior, and the fourth for the remaining countries of Europe, with Headquarters at Coblenz. Simultaneous operations were desired in all zones. Personnel and mortuary supplies were to be sent largely from the United States, while labor was to be obtained locally. "In view of the public demand," said the cablegram, "it is desired to begin work in England at the earliest possible moment." Considerable personnel was accordingly directed to Great Britain. It concluded, "The Quartermaster General is charged by the Secretary of War with initiating, arranging for and executing all measures necessary." It was on the basis of these instructions, and the more detailed confirmation, that the Chief took up his Headquarters in Paris in rue Boissy d'Anglas and proceeded to organize his Service. There were many changes in the personnel as originally scheduled, and during the first months of 1920 the organization was perfected to carry out the zone system as outlined

by the Cemeterial Division in Washington. This organization consisted first of the Headquarters American Graves Registration Service, Q.M.C., in Europe, with Headquarters after March at 8 Avenue d'Iena, Paris.



This system, as organized, consisted of the Chief of the Service, Colonel Rethers; Assistant Chief, Lt. Col. H.H. Fuller, F.A., and the Executive Officer, Major C.A. Morrow, Q.M.C. In direct touch with the Executive Officer were the following Divisions:

Administrative Division, Supplies Division, Transportation Division, Registration Division, Inspection Division, Motor Transport Division, Finance Division and Medical Division.

Under the Administrative Division came such questions as all details of the administration of the Service's business; full control of the personnel, including hiring and discharging, and issuance of orders, and the preparation of vouchers covering all activities and payments to personnel. In this Division, also, was the Information Branch, a Branch established for receiving relatives and friends of American soldier dead who had come to Paris either to secure information as to grave locations or to get assistance in learning the best railroad routes to cemeteries and the best means of securing hotel accommodations. In this Division was also the Operations Branch, which kept statistics, historical records, data for cables to the United States on operations, and charts showing progress of the operations. This Branch also prepared the necessary correspondence with relatives who desired foreign interment of their dead, and replied to letters from the United States requesting information as to burials. Under the Administrative Division, too, was the Claims Branch, which had full control of all claims against the United States arising from this Service, the arranging for rentals, leases and investigations of the same. It was concerned with liabilities, accidents, and the bearing of the French laws upon the various operations of our Service.

The Supplies Division consisted of an Administration Branch, which attended to the mail, records and personnel and the very complicated business of handling supplies coming from the United States and England and those secured by local purchases; of a Property Branch, which attended to requisitions, stock and warehousing of supplies and accounting therefor, and the Sales Commissary; a Building and Grounds Branch, which attended to the maintenance, supplies, and repairs to buildings; a Purchasing Branch, which attended to the procurement of supplies locally, their inspection and the vouchering of invoices for the same; a Printing Branch, which attended to job printing, multigraphing and mimeographing.

The Transportation Division of the Headquarters organization consisted of an Administration Branch for correspondence and files; an Auditing and Accounts Branch, which attended to the charges arising from the use of the telegraph, telephone and railways, records of these accounts and their vouchering; an Inland Transportation Branch, which attended to matters concerning contracts, customs, convoys, schedules and the necessary records thereof; an Army Transport Branch, which dealt with questions connected with the ports, customs and schedule of sailings; and the Rail Transportation Branch, divided into the Freight and Express Section and the Passenger Section. The Freight and Express Section dealt with convoys, customs, bills of lading, ordre de transport, and declaration d'Expedition, and the Pass-

enger Section with bon de transport, ordre de transport, British military warrants, movement orders, baggage, customs and schedules.

The Registration Division of the Headquarters contained a complete record of all American dead in Europe and was divided into an Administration Branch, which took care of all correspondence regarding grave locations with the Cemeterial Division in Washington and with the Field and Area Forces. It directed investigations, disinterments for the purposes of concentration, and identifications. It registered all known and unidentified American dead, directed changes of inscriptions and removals. It contained a File Section, showing an alphabetical file of all A.E.F. burials, cemeterial directories, unlocated and missing file, file of those buried at sea, file of those to be returned to the United States, file of isolated graves, file of special disposition of remains, copies of casualty cablegrams, file of serial numbers of unlocated men for identification purposes, memoranda on special individual cases, records of burial irregularities, identifications effected, cemeterial code numbers, an X-1 card file, G.R.S. Forms 16, G.R.S. Forms 1-A, Forms 114, and a shipping serial number file. To carry out the work connected with this Branch was a Typing Branch and a Branch which furnished information to the Information Bureau for transmission to relatives.

The Inspection Division consisted of a Branch for in-

specting cemeteries, to give reports of deficiencies, keep a record of deficiencies and a record of their correction and to make recommendations as to maintenance; a Property Inspection Branch, which had charge of surveys, property auditing and surplus property reports; and a special Investigations Branch, which took care of all matters that had to be taken up for the good of the military service.

The Motor Transport Division was an organization of considerable complexity, since this form of transport was of primary importance in making possible the carrying out of the operations in Europe. It consisted of an Administration Branch, a Maintenance Branch, a Field Operations Branch and a Garage Service Branch, and finally a Reparations Branch, which consisted in turn of a Unit for supply of vehicles, spare parts, tools and machinery, fuels, oils, greases and miscellaneous supplies, and on the other hand, a Service Park Unit, which controlled the organization at St. Denis, established for the repair and overhaul of trucks, passenger cars, motorcycles, tires, electrical equipment, general machine shop repairs, general motor repairs and necessary carpentry.

The Finance Division consisted of a Disbursements Branch and an Auditing Branch.

The Medical Division performed the usual services of attention to the needs of officers and their families.

Under the immediate direction of the Chief and his

Executive Officer were Commanding Officers of the three zones which were finally organized - the Zone of Mid-Europe, the Zone of Great Britain, and the Zone of France. The Zone of Mid-Europe, whose headquarters were established at Cochem, Germany, consisted of an Administration Division, Finance Division, Supplies Division and a Maintenance Division, under which came the upkeep of the two Areas, that of Belgium and that of Germany and Luxembourg. Under the direction of the Commanding Officer of the Zone of Mid-Europe was also a Port Officer, A.G.R.S., at Antwerp, in so far as his duties pertained to the work of this Service and not to transportation proper. In the carrying out of the latter duties he was under the direction of the Army Transport Service. Also operating under the Commanding Officer, Zone of Mid-Europe, who was Major Chester Staten, came the two Field Operations Sections. This consisted in turn of two Units each, which in turn were divided into two groups each. There were consequently operating in Mid.-Europe, during the period of which this history treats, eight complete exhumation groups.

The Zone of Great Britain, with headquarters at 61 Princes Gate, London, was commanded by Lt. Col. J.A. Moss. His organization consisted of an Administration Branch, Supply and Finance Branch at London, the Port Office organizations at Southampton and Liverpool, and two Sections of eight operating groups to carry out the field service orders on Great Britain.

In the case of exhumations in Germany and Luxembourg,

which were completed about September 1, 1920, Forms 114 were prepared in Paris from the records in the Registration Branch and all bodies were ordered to the United States, except in certain specific instances in which instructions were received from the Cemeterial Division in Washington to forward them to certain European homes. In the case of Great Britain, with the exception of disinterment order authorizations on Magdalen Hill and Paignton Cemeteries, these Forms 114 were received from the United States and contained specific consignees. All Forms 114 passed through the Operations Branch and the Registration Branch of the Headquarters.

The Zone of France, under command of Major L.A. Shipman, consisted of an Administration Branch, Inspection Branch, Supply Branch, a special Registration Branch and a Maintenance Branch, under which was managed the upkeep of the cemeteries of France, which were divided into eleven different Areas. This Area division had been established by the old Graves Registration Service when that organization still had its Headquarters at Tours. The Commanding Officer, Zone of France, appointed an officer in charge of Field Operations, Major Robert P. Harbold, under whom operated the Ports of Brest, Bordeaux and St. Nazaire, and the three operating Sections consisting of six Units or twelve exhumation groups.

2.

The following statistics as to the personnel, officer

and civilian, who carried on the work of the organization outlined above, are of some interest, since they indicate the magnitude of the project, and some reflection upon the figures involved will show the amount of planning which was necessary to get the most efficient service out of the employees.

The first chart shows the number of commissioned officers of the United States Army on duty from December 15, 1919, the approximate date when Colonel Rethers became Chief of the Service, to the month of August, 1920.

<u>DATE</u>	<u>NO. OF OFFICERS</u>	<u>HOURS.</u>	<u>D I S T R I B U T I O N</u>		
			<u>Z. of F.</u>	<u>Z. of M-E.</u>	<u>Z. of G.B.</u>
Dec. 15	23		23		
Jan. 10	50	14	22	4	10
Feb. 1	50	12	25	5	8
Mar. 1	49	13	23	5	8
Apr. 1	60	15	31	5	9
May 1	69	15	34	10	10
June 1	82	17	41	10	14
July 1	92	23	44	10	15
Aug. 1	87	20	41	12	14

One Field Clerk, Quartermaster Corps, was on duty as Chief Clerk in Headquarters since the organization started. Of enlisted men, in December, 1919 there were none. After that date five enlisted men were continuously assigned to the Service, and in addition there were Guards of Honor placed at each port for temporary duty as required. The number of these Guards varied from four to seventeen.

In December 1919 the civilian personnel on duty in the G.R.S. in Europe consisted of the following number and classes

of workers.

Clerks	38
Special Grave Investigators	2
Stenographers	17
Typists	11
Messengers	1
American Caretakers	49
French Caretakers	323
Laborers	<u>51</u>
Total	492

On March 10, 1920 the following contract employees from the United States were added to the personnel in France.

Liaison Agent	1
Assistants to Deputy	2
Masters of Section	8
Inspectors	22
Supervisory Embalmers	21
Assistant Embalmers	29
Technical Assistants	8
Convoyers	47
Checkers	34
Surveyors	5
Assistants to Surveyors	3
Draftsmen	4
Landscape Architect	1
Transportation Clerk	1
Assistant Transportation Clerk	1
Stenographers	17
Typists	31
Clerks	<u>22</u>
Total	257

In the meantime the following personnel had been hired in Europe to assist in the operations of the Service.

Caretakers, European	21
Clerks	30
Carpenters	3
Charwomen	4
Chauffeurs	39
Draftsmen	2
Motor Transport Mechanics	48
Assistant Truckmasters	4
Stenographers	34
Laborers	249
Miscellaneous	<u>32</u>
Total	466

This made a grand total employed on March 10, 1920 of 1,215 employees engaged in the service of maintenance, mortuary operations and the administration incident to both these phases of the work.

The following summary shows the status of civilian personnel by number, zone employed, and contract status, whether American or European, from April 30, 1920 to August 1, 1920.

Designation	Month	Hqrs.	Z. of P.	Z. of G.B.	Z. of M-E	Ant-werp	Total
U.S.Contract Civ.	4/30	14	174	42	10	13	253
European "	4/30	293	875	39	17	4	1,228
U.S.Contract	5/31	12	153	51	17	13	246
European "	5/31	262	996	49	22	4	1,333
U.S.Contract	6/30	14	150	59	27	13	263
European "	6/30	304	998	48	34	16	1,400
U.S.Contract	7/31	14	159	56	28	12	269
European "	7/31	322	1,197	51	36	32	1,638

The civilian employees reported for duty in Europe, with the exception of some scattered arrivals, in three main groups.

On December 29, 1919 - - - - 49
 On January 20, 1920 - - - - 48
 On February 15, 1920 - - - - 156

CHAPTER IV.

FUNCTIONING OF THE SERVICE IN EUROPE.

The outline of the organization of the Graves Registration Service in Europe given in the previous chapter merely indicated the complicated organization which it was necessary to establish in order to carry out the many details which constantly arose in connection with the work. It is the purpose of the present chapter to show more specifically exactly what was accomplished by the more important branches up to the time of the re-organization of the Service in August, 1920.

1.

The Supply Branch, which had come into actual existence on the 16th of February, with Colonel A.L. Littell in charge, had its offices in the Headquarters Building, with an original personnel of four. Prior to this date all supplies had been handled by the Supply Officer of the old Zone of France. During the remainder of the month of February an increase in personnel was made, the necessary storerooms were opened and a Sales Commissary was organized. The Supply Division was at this time charged with the supervision of the Headquarters buildings, the grounds and telephone service. During the month of March the Subsistence Stores at Romagne Cemetery were taken over by the Supply Officer, and his personnel was necessarily increased to seventeen clerks. By the 31st of March three hundred requisitions had been received,

averaging ten items on each requisition. Of these one-third originated at Headquarters, another third in the Zone of France, while the remaining one hundred were scattered among the Zones of Mid-Europe and Great Britain, and the Motor Transport Corps. Of these requisitions over fifty per cent had to be purchased in the open market, but the condition of the French market and the lack of transportation were important factors that tended to retard the rapid filling of demands. In some instances it was necessary to cable to the United States for the purchase of such items as casket screws, a circumstance which naturally caused some delay in the continuance of operations. By the 31st of March, personnel actively engaged in the Supply Division numbered thirty-seven. From March 31st to June 30th it was estimated that the activities of the Division increased approximately $33\frac{1}{3}$ per cent. On July first two hundred and fifty-two requisitions had been filled for the Zone of France, two hundred and twelve for Headquarters, ninety for stock, and one hundred and six for the Motor Transport Officer. Miscellaneous requisitions brought the total up to approximately eight hundred, of which three-fourths had been received and filled during the months of May and June, an average of ten requisitions a day. The number of items on each requisition had increased from an average of ten to an average of fifteen, making a total of nine thousand items, of which two-thirds had to be purchased. The personnel was increased to meet the new demands by the addition of a special

Purchasing Agent for automobile supplies, which constituted the largest single item, and of which the most important feature was the procuring of gasoline.

The Printing Branch was also enlarged owing to increased demands for printing, and on July first one hundred and fifty jobs, totaling approximately one million impressions, had been printed and delivered.

The supplies from the United States began to arrive rapidly in the months of May and June, practically filling all existing requests. Bulk requisitions for exhumation work at Marseilles, Toulon, Calais and Cherbourg were received in early July and acted upon. Tentative estimates for the field work in the Zone of the Armies were also cabled to Washington. Market conditions had improved to such an extent in France that by the first of August approximately eighty per cent of the supplies requisitioned were purchased in Europe and, where necessary, material was secured from London. On the first of August, after exhaustive inventories, the new Property Accounting system was installed. Block requisition numbers were assigned to the various requisitioning officers. The Port Officers were placed under the Supply Officer for requisitioning and distributing purposes. The necessary orders and instructions to place the new property system into effect were printed and distributed. The two weeks between July 25th and August 7th were the busiest experienced in the Supply Division since its organization, owing to the transfer

of the Supply Division of the Motor Transport Corps to the Supply Officer. Pursuant to instructions, the Branch was subdivided into eight sections as follows:

Administrative Section, with personnel of	6
Purchasing " " " "	5
Subsistence Supplies " " "	3
Motor Trans. Supply " " "	32
(1st Lt. George A. Dunagin, O.D., in charge).	
Miscellaneous Property Section with personnel of	17
Printing " " " "	3
Shipping " " " "	3
Buildings and Grounds " " " "	<u>20</u>
Total	89

The duties of these various sections, as outlined in Supply Branch Office Memorandum No. 16, were, briefly, as follows.

- Administrative Section - Receipt and distribution of mail, maintenance of records, co-ordination of activities, general supervision of personnel, routine correspondence, preparation of reports.
- Subsistence Supplies - Operation and maintenance of Sales Commissary.
- Purchasing Section - Purchase of all supplies and services.
- Motor Trans. Supp. Sec. - Receipt, warehousing and issue of M.T.C. supply accessories and equipment; guard and fire protection of buildings and grounds at St. Denis, pertaining to Supply Branch.
- Miscellaneous Property - Receipt, warehousing and issue of all supplies not specifically assigned to other sections; supervision of the guard and fire protection for Miscellaneous Supplies.
- Printing Section - Operation of Multigraph and Mimeograph and placing of job printing office.

- Shipping Section - Charged with receipt and shipment of all supplies required to be shipped by the Supply Branch.
- Buildings and Grounds - In charge of supervision and upkeep of buildings and grounds at 8 Avenue d'Iena and 7 rue Quentin-Bauchart; in charge of telephone system and employees connected therewith.

Under the reorganization, the Administrative Section took over all routine correspondence which had previously been handled by the various Branches of the Supply Division. The use of written proposals and purchases in bulk was instituted in the Purchasing Section. The Miscellaneous Property Section was relieved of the responsibility for the maintenance of the Sales Commissary when this latter was constituted "Sales Commissary Section."

2.

The beginning of the Motor Transportation Service was marked by the detail of Major J.W. O'Mahoney as the first Motor Transport Officer of the Service. He received his orders on November 26, 1919, but, due to illness, was unable to report until January 23, 1920. Shortly after Major O'Mahoney received his orders, on December 5, 1919, Major William C. Croom was also directed to report to the Chief for duty. He was assigned as Assistant Motor Transport Officer on December 27, 1919. Upon the arrival of Major O'Mahoney, these two officers proceeded to make the arrangements they considered necessary for the procure-

ment of motor transportation and supplies. Previous to his departure from the United States, however, Major O'Mahoney had filed in the Quartermaster General's office, preliminary requisitions covering six months' requirements of spare parts for Dodge cars, Cadillac cars, White $1\frac{1}{2}$ - 2 ton trucks and Harley-Davidson motorcycles.

On December 30, 1919 the Chief, American Graves Registration Service, wired to the Commanding General, American Forces in Germany, requesting information as to the amount of transportation that could be furnished to the American Graves Registration Service, Q.M.C., in Europe, from that station. As a result of the reply to this wire, and after a conference at Headquarters, American Graves Registration Service, it was decided to make use of the transportation received from Germany to supply the needs of the Zone of Mid-Europe, but that the transportation to be used in France must be requisitioned from the United States.

The advisability of hiring transportation locally in France was considered, but after deliberation this was found to be impracticable. It was first decided also that it would be possible, in the Zone of Great Britain, to hire sufficient truck transportation and that only passenger transportation need be requisitioned from the United States. As it was found impossible, later, to obtain such services in England in sufficient quantity, the plan was discarded and all vehicles were ordered from the United States. The first requisition that was then sent to the

United States called for twenty-five Cadillac cars, twelve Dodge passenger cars, sixteen Dodge light delivery trucks, thirty White Staff Observation cars, sixty-two 2-ton White trucks, twenty-four Harley-Davidson motorcycles, three Ford touring cars and two machine shop trucks.

To meet the immediate requirements for transportation, and while awaiting the arrival of the machines from the United States, various expedients were resorted to in order to obtain the needed vehicles. Several Cadillac cars were obtained from the Liquidation Mission in London, and an attempt was made to secure cars from the Ministry of the Liberated Regions, and later steps were taken to reclaim cars formerly sold to the Ukrainian Government. After several conferences and extended negotiations concerning the Ukrainian stocks, it was agreed that twenty-five Cadillac touring cars, twenty-five Harley-Davidson motorcycles and a quantity of tires and tubes were to be assigned for use by the American Graves Registration Service. After the necessary arrangements had been made for the transfer of these vehicles, the Motor Transport Officer was directed to proceed to Langres (Hte. Marne) for the purpose of bringing them to Paris. They required a certain amount of overhauling to put them in running condition, and before the cars were finally fit to move, the Ukrainian representatives served an injunction restraining Major O'Mahoney from removing them from the place of storage. Up to August 31, 1920 the cars were still at Langres. In the meantime

the shortage of transportation continued. Further attempts were made to hire passenger cars and trucks from the French and to purchase from a British Syndicate in Germany. The first was unsuccessful and the last was at length considered inadvisable. Additional transportation was, moreover, required from the United States for use in the Zone of Great Britain. A few cars were obtained from one source and another, and finally the first shipments began to arrive from the States. Upon the arrival of the vehicles, it was found that substitutions had been made in certain types of vehicles. The White 2-ton trucks were replaced by G.M.C. light delivery trucks, and the Ford cars by Dodges. In order to obtain personnel for the operation of the transportation, it was decided to employ suitable French or English civilians, and also Americans holding honorable discharges from the Army. The gas and oil station at St. Denis was obtained for use as a Service Park and a garage was rented in town at 30 Place St. Ferdinand. After the arrival of the first consignment of motor transportation at Brest on the S.S. "Mercury" spare parts and additional cars arrived by each succeeding transport. All shipments were forwarded to St. Denis, where the work of unloading and setting up the cars was taken in hand, and by June 12, 1920 all cars were unloaded. As rapidly as they were set up, these cars were organized into sections and ordered into the field to operate with the Field Forces in the various Areas. The proper supervision of these sections was handicapped, due to the fact that insufficient com-

missioned personnel was available for assignment.

In August, 1920 Major J.W. O'Mahoney and Major W.C. Croom were ordered back to the United States and, following the reorganization of the American Graves Registration Service, Capt. Horace H. Fuller was made Motor Transport Officer. He proceeded to reorganize the Motor Transportation Service in various respects. New buildings were constructed at the Service Park and others were remodeled. In the field the personnel of the truck sections was revised and increased, and additional transportation was furnished to the sections. Operations were started in new Areas, necessitating the organization of additional sections. Truck Company No. 3 was formed from sections operating in Bordeaux, to be sent to Calais for duty. As this was new territory and the services of an officer in operating the transportation were considered essential, Lieut. Harrison Shaler was relieved from duty at Romagne and placed in command of this Company. At Romagne, as at other points where no Motor Transport Officer was available, the responsibility for the cars was vested in some other officer operating with the Field Forces. A total of ten sections, including the Headquarters' garage, which had been moved to the rue Petrarque, were put into service. Instructions were received at this time to make the necessary arrangements for the supply of sufficient transportation to fill the needs of five additional Field Sections. The organization of these Field Sections was under way, and it was considered adequate to furnish one Motor

Truck Section, consisting of twelve G.M.C. trucks, one White Reconnaissance car, one Dodge passenger car and one motorcycle for each Field Section. The personnel of the Truck Section consisted of one truckmaster, one mechanic, twelve G.M.C. chauffeurs, two extra chauffeurs and one watchman.

The nature of the work required of the motor transportation of the American Graves Registration Service was of such a sort that ever-increasing demands for repairs were made on the Service Park. The substitution, in the United States, of G.M.C. $\frac{3}{4}$ ton trucks to replace the White $1\frac{1}{2}$ - 2 ton trucks requisitioned, resulted from the beginning in a crippling of the Motor Transport activities. In the field the G.M.C. trucks were required to do work for which trucks of this type were never intended. On the other hand, such use of the trucks could not be avoided if operations were to continue. Sand and gravel were sometimes hauled and even when loaded with only two bodies, the load was excessive. The result was that a constantly increasing demand for replacements was received and this demand kept increasing. A heavier type of truck could have been operated by personnel receiving the same rate of pay, and a load three or four times as great could have been carried without in any way injuring the truck.

3.

The Finance Branch of the Headquarters of the American

Graves Registration Service in Europe consisted of one officer, one enlisted man, one civil service clerk, and thirteen civilian employees, the latter working under emergency contracts terminable on eight days' notice. With one exception, the entire personnel was formerly employed in similar positions in the office of the Disbursing Quartermaster attached to the office of the Chief Quartermaster of the American Expeditionary Forces at the close of the year 1919. One of the first orders issued by the Headquarters of the American Forces in France, (Par. 1, S.O. 2, Jan. 2, 1920) transferred this office to the Graves Registration Service. The officer in charge, then Major, now Capt. Charles F. Eddy, at once reported to the Chief of the Service, and was assigned to duty and station by Par. 2, S.O. 13, Hdqrs. A.G.R.S., 1920.

Notwithstanding the fact that the office was transferred to the Graves Registration Service, it was held to be the Finance Office of the Army in Paris, and to it, from time to time, as the various Services ceased to function, were transferred their cash balances and outstanding bills. Among such Services represented in this office in a financial way were the Ordnance, Medical, Air and Engineer Services, and the former United States Liquidation Commission. Disbursements were also made covering vouchers certified by the Rents, Requisitions and Claims Service, as not being covered by their agreement with France dated December 1, 1919. Pay of officers and enlisted men passing through Paris en route to and from various stations was also settled by the Finance

Officer. As an indication of the varied character of the work of this office, attention need only be called to the following list of appropriations under each of which money was separately held, expended and accounted for monthly to the War Department.

Pay of the Army, 1920.
" " " " 1919.
" " " " 1918.
Mileage, 1920.
" 1919.
General Appropriation, Quartermaster Corps, 1920.
" " " " 1919.
Increased Compensation, Military Establishment, 1920.
Pay of the Navy.
Army Account of Advances.
Air Service Production, 1919.
Pay of the Army Deposit Fund.
Quartermaster Collections.
Miscellaneous Receipts, Account of Sales of Government Property.
Manufacture of Arms, 1919 and 1920.
Air Service, Military, 1919.
Engineer Operations in the Field, 1920.
" " " " " 1919.
Automatic Rifles, 1919.
Medical and Hospital Appropriations, 1920.
" " " " " 1918 & 1919.
Air Service, Army, 1920.
Ordnance Service, 1920.
" " " 1919.
Barracks and Quarters, 1920.
Signal Service, Army, 1920.
" " " " 1919.
Supplies, Subsistence and Transportation, 1918.
Contingencies of the Army, 1920.
Disposition of Remains, Officers, Soldiers, etc., 1920.
" " " " " 1918 & 1919.
Shooting Galleries and Ranges, 1920.
Miscellaneous Receipts, Suspense Account.
Library Surgeon General's Office, 1920.
" " " " " 1919.
Contingencies Hdqrs., Military Establishment.

Armament of Fortification "B"
" " " " "L"

Ordnance Stores and Supplies, 1919 & 1920.

Increase Aviation, Signal Corps, 1919.

Army Account of Advances, (under which all funds appropriated for the fiscal year 1921 are carried.)

In addition, accounts were carried for special funds, not the property of the United States, such as, the Disbanded Organization Account, the Fund for Reimbursement of American Prisoners of War held by Germany, and the other larger fund for the Reimbursement of German Prisoners held by the American Forces. The Finance Officer was custodian of these funds and made special reports monthly to Washington.

The following tabular statement shows the number of vouchers paid and the amount represented by them in American money for each month of 1920:-

<u>Month</u>	<u>Number of vouchers paid</u>	<u>Amount</u>
January	2519	\$ 350,386.76
February	1865	258,644.32
March	1090	105,793.26
April	1731	174,590.91
May	2332	301,127.45
June	2515	290,129.79
July	2146	324,677.41
August	2276	445,617.40

The decrease in the amount of expenditures month by month for the first three months gives an index of the rapid reduction of the activities of the American Forces in France. The increase during the last five months shows the development of the Graves Registration Service and the establishment of excavation and shipping operations. These figures represent only disbursements

on vouchers and do not include transfers of funds to other disbursing officers in Germany, Belgium and England.

In order that purchases made at other points in France might be paid for at once without the delay involved in obtaining a remittance from Paris, certain officers were designated as agents of the Disbursing Officer and intrusted with funds. At the end of August twenty-four such agent officers were functioning. They were located at the following points:-

Amiens	Romagne-sous-Montfaucon
Bordeaux	St. Denis (near Paris)
Brest	St. Nazaire
Calais	Soissons
Cherbourg	Toulon
Epinal	Tours
Marseilles	Troyes
Nantes	
Paris (American Embassy, Headquarters Graves Registration Service).	

The following statement indicates the amount of money that was intrusted to these agent officers month by month:-

<u>Month</u>	<u>Amount intrusted to Agent Officers</u>
January	Francs 72,825
February	235,178
March	328,133
April	440,545
May	296,144
June	666,481
July	449,610
August	870,758

In addition to the amounts paid in cash by these agent officers, many payments were made through the mails by the Finance Office with checks drawn on the Banque de France. This bank, at its

principal office in Paris, vised these checks, making them payable at the nearest Branch to the person to whose order they were drawn. The extent to which this mode of payment was made use of is disclosed by the following table:-

<u>Month</u>	<u>No. of checks drawn on the Banque de France</u>
January	130
February	175
March	195
April	132
May	411
June	452
July	366
August	455

By the following table can be seen the number of checks drawn on the principal depositories of funds by the Finance Officer month by month:-

<u>Month</u>	<u>Checks drawn on the Guaranty Trust Co.</u>	<u>Treasurer of the United States</u>	<u>Tresor Public Francais</u>
January	612	36	3
February	218	38	1
March	153	44	
April	290	37	2
May	955	12	5
June	431	14	10
July	436	26	6
August	287	39	5

Checks were also drawn in lesser numbers on the Farmers' Loan & Trust Company and the Equitable Trust Company of New York. Payments to creditors in foreign countries were made by drafts on such country, purchased in Paris.

Vouchers for amounts less than fifty francs were paid by Mandat-Cartes, or French postoffice money orders. This form of

payment was used to the following extent:-

<u>Month</u>	<u>Number of Money Orders Sent</u>
January	91
February	81
March	73
April	106
May	163
June	224
July	208
August	228

For the purpose of aiding the French Government in its efforts to stabilize the rates of exchange, all payments were made in francs, either in cash, by check on the Banque de France, the Paris Branch of the Guaranty Trust Company of New York, or by French postoffice money orders. Vouchers were computed and accounts rendered to Washington at an official rate of exchange; this official rate was an arbitrary price of the dollar set in advance by the officials of the United States Treasury Department at regular intervals. It was, of course, difficult to forecast, even for a fifteen day period, what the market value of the dollar would be in French francs when the New York market was fluctuating sometimes over a franc in twenty-four hours. Yet that the Treasury succeeded remarkably well in their efforts to set a rate approximately that of the commercial world, may be seen by the following comparative statement. For the purpose of illustration, we will suppose that two employees in Paris each receive \$200 per month. The first draws his salary on the 15th and last day of each month at the Government rate of exchange; the second draws his salary

in dollars, takes them to the bank and exchanges them for francs at the average rate current on the Paris Bourse on the day he receives them, or the first banking day thereafter. The results are disclosed by the following table:-

<u>Pay Day</u>	<u>Value of \$100 at the official rate of exchange</u>	<u>Value of \$100 at the commercial rate of exchange</u>
January 15	francs 1100.00	francs 1144.00
January 31	1100.00	1322.00
February 15	1200.00	1421.00
February 29	1445.00	1425.00
March 15	1425.00	1361.00
March 31	1350.00	1497.00
April 15	1430.00	1679.00
April 30	1650.00	1665.00
May 15	1700.00	1458.00
May 31	1600.00	1280.00
June 15	1350.00	1309.00
June 30	1325.00	1215.00
July 15	1225.00	1208.00
July 31	1200.00	1307.00
August 15	1315.00	1371.00
August 31	<u>1379.00</u>	<u>1451.00</u>
Total	21,794.00	22,113.00

It will be seen that the man who drew his money in dollars will have benefitted to the extent of 319 francs during a period of eight months. On nine pay days he would have received more and on seven pay days less than the man who received his pay in francs at the official rate. This is on the supposition that he had been fortunate enough to receive the average quotation for the day on the Bourse. It should be remembered, however, that the price paid by the banks for currency is always somewhat lower than the Bourse, so that it is doubtful if the man paid in dollars would benefit thereby at all.

Finally it might be of interest to know that the Finance Officer was responsible to the United States Treasury Department for a sum exceeding six hundred millions of francs, held in various Government depositories in Paris.

The Rail and Water Transportation Branch was organized as a separate unit of the American Graves Registration Service under date of February 20th in charge of J.B. Pfeffinger, Transportation Clerk, contract civilian employee sent over from the United States, acting under the direct supervision of the Executive Officer. Prior to this date transportation of personnel and material was handled on a basis of cash payment. An office was opened and correspondence was entered into with the various railroads and with the telephone and telegraph service of the French Government, explaining the nature and extent of the operations of the organization and requesting that the privilege be given, as for other Branches of the American Army, of securing transportation on formal request, payment to be effected by bills rendered monthly. Temporary arrangements were made with the Military Attache of the American Embassy to secure transportation through that office pending the receipt of authority from railroad companies. On March 15th Major Charles F. Dougherty, Q.M.C., arrived from the United States and was assigned as officer in charge of the Rail and Water Transportation Branch; and to this Branch was assigned the handling of all railroad and inland water transportation, together with the handling of telegraph and

telephone accounts. The Rail and Water Transportation Officer was also assigned as representative of the Army Transport Service, thus co-ordinating the receipt of supplies by transports from the United States and their further transportation to destination.

During the month of March correspondence was continued with the various railroads, and personal meetings were arranged to further clarify the matter, but actual authority was not received for this service until May 5th. Arrangements were made at this time, through the Commanding Officer, Zone of Great Britain, for the use of British Military Warrants for transportation in England and on Channel steamers. The Commanding General of the American Forces in Germany allowed passenger and freight transportation, both in the occupied territory of Germany and in Belgium. This transportation was furnished on direct request, the blanks having been furnished by the Zone of Great Britain and the American Army in Germany and were accounted for monthly by this Service to the above. On the first of May the railroad companies issued their instructions to all of their agents in France, authorizing the issuance of transportation on formal request from this Service for passengers, for merchandise, shipments both Petite and Grande Vitesse at full tariff and for the handling of bodies by Grande Vitesse at fifty per cent of the regular tariff.

Under date of February 12th bulletin was issued from the Transportation Service at Washington, covering agreement

between the Chief of the Transportation Service and the Quartermaster General, making all Port Officers of the American Graves Registration Service in Europe local representatives of the Army Transportation Service at their ports. Under the earlier organization the Port Officers were placed under the jurisdiction of the various Zone Commanders, but under date of August 5th the ports in France then in operation were turned over to the direct jurisdiction of the Rail and Water Transportation Service, and the reorganization of August 21st, covered by General Order No. 122, dissolving the Zones of France and Mid-Europe, placed the control of Port Officers and of all operations at ports under the Rail and Water Transportation Branch. Liaison had been effected between this Branch and the Port Commander at Antwerp, who was Base representative of the Army Transport Service in Europe, and all matters pertaining to that Service, in so far as they affected the operations of the Graves Registration Service, were handled by the Rail and Water Transportation Branch.

The question of customs arising early, several interviews were had with the Director General for Customs of the French Government, resulting in instructions being issued to all of the Customs Officers at ports of entry, admitting all Graves Registration Service supplies free of duty as pertaining to the American Army. Some little difficulty was experienced at several ports at the first entry, but in each case a representative of the Service settled the matter directly, the original misinter-

pretation of instructions was cleared up and repetitions did not occur. At a number of ports it was found necessary to arrange for special transportation service. At St. Nazaire, the warehouse being several kilometres from the wharf, arrangements were made for a special switching service operating between St. Nazaire and the American dock at Montoir for transportation of personnel and for accommodation of passengers and personnel on the transports arriving at that port. At Toulon, the warehouse being on an island, it was found necessary to have a special gasoline launch for transportation of personnel and small supplies arriving by rail.

In the early days the arrival from the United States of the various motor transportation and equipment for the Motor Transportation Service was the first big task. The first shipment, on A.T. "Mercury", arrived at Brest on April 1st. It consisted of G.M.C. trucks, Reconnaissance cars and touring cars, motorcycles, spare parts and tires. The transportation to the Motor Park at St. Denis was handled under the direct supervision of the Rail and Water Transportation Officer, the material going forward in two trains with a total of fifty railroad cars. The second shipment, similar to the first one, was received at Brest May 10th from the Transport "Nansemond" and required forty-nine railroad cars which were also moved in two special trains to the Motor Park at St. Denis. Later shipments of truck bodies and motor parts, the railroad transportation for which was di-

rectly handled by representatives of the Rail and Water Transportation Service, were made as follows:-

From Brest	June 3rd	"Mercury"	9 carloads of truck bodies and motorcycles.
" "	June 18th	"Princess Matoika"	7 carloads of truck bodies.
" St.Nazaire	May 13th	"Buford"	2 carloads of repair parts.
" Antwerp	April 8th	"Mercury"	3 carloads of touring cars.
" "	July 17th	"Pocahontas"	9 carloads of spare parts.
" Calais	Sept.27th	"Pocahontas"	5 carloads of spare parts and tires.

All of this material was cleared through the Customs, was handled over the railroads of France and Belgium without delay, and delivered intact without a shortage to the Motor Park Officer at St.Denis. It should be noted that in making all of these arrangements an excellent liaison was maintained with the French Government officials and with the officials of the French railways, and that full co-operation, together with excellent service, was received at all times.

Up to October 6th there were shipped to the United States, through the various ports, 8,954 bodies. Included in this there were shipped by rail, from the various Sections operating in the field to the ports, eighty-four carloads containing 2,548 bodies. From the Paris office there were issued to employees of this Service 668 bons de transport covering passenger travel,

and by the various supervisors and Field Sections, 704 bons de transport, making a total of 1,372 passenger trips, which were handled in accordance with the instructions issued. The number of rail shipments made from Paris, under the arrangements as entered into, was by months as follows:-

April	14
May	65
June	60
July	139
August	161
September	<u>151</u>
Total	590

In addition to these, shipment by other officers of this Service from other points than Paris, during the same period, amounted to three hundred fifty-eight.

In accordance with instructions, this office received and vouchered from various telegraph offices in France, one hundred and five bills amounting to francs 46,992.00 and fifteen bills for telephone amounting to francs 1,374.85. Railroad passenger transportation was paid on monthly bills amounting to francs 25,335.02 and freight transportation has been paid to the railroads amounting to francs 215,127.38.

The monthly cost of salaries in this Branch was about \$1127.00.

CHAPTER V.

POLICIES.

It must be constantly borne in mind that the work which was being performed in France was essentially a new project - one which had to be learned by experience and one in which the regulations governing its accomplishment had to be created as the need for them arose. Thus the policies of the Service were somewhat slow in growth; were somewhat in the nature of a series of legal decisions on questions which were raised by interested relatives, by foreign countries, by criticisms of the Service, and by the existing laws and regulations governing various Army activities. Accordingly, it will be most satisfactory if each one of these questions, which are frequently in themselves unrelated, be discussed in the form of cases which came up for settlement. The circumstances of each case will be outlined and the reason for the decision reached fully explained. Taken as a whole, they form a considerable body of findings as to the best manner of carrying on such operations as were in process. The aim of the Chief was constantly to be as generous, as sympathetic, and as agreeable to particular desires of individuals as circumstances would permit, but at the same time, there were so many cases in which compliance with individual requests would have meant chaos if the same privilege had been extended to the relatives of all American dead, that refusals of the desires of relatives were not infrequent.

1.

When the decision to return bodies was made, these questions naturally arose: What bodies shall be sent to the United States - all? Those specifically requested, or should there be some other defining policy? There were numerous reasons why some policy should be established which would permit of exceptions. For instance, many people had as keen a desire not to move the remains of their dead as others had to bring them home. Of course, a negative wish would not awaken the same enthusiasm as the positive one of "Bring the boys home" but it had to be considered. In addition there was a strong feeling in France that at least some dead should be left as a memorial and as a permanent international bond of fellowship between the two Republics. In view of these facts, it was decided to take only those to America from France where there was a specific request from the next of kin. The remainder would be concentrated in permanent National Cemeteries which could be easily maintained forever.

Considerations of economy made it impossible to start concentration cemeteries in Great Britain. So the policy adopted there was to return all bodies unless the next of kin said they were to remain in Europe. The final policy as to Great Britain had not been settled in August, 1920.

There were about 2,400 burials in Germany and Luxembourg. Sentiment seemed to be entirely against leaving any bodies

on German soil, so the policy was adopted to return all of them to the United States or to a European home regardless of the wishes of the next of kin. At least two requests for permanent burial where the bodies lay in Germany were refused for reasons of policy, and Germany and Luxembourg were evacuated in early September. There were, naturally, deaths in the Army of Occupation in Germany, and policy was at the same time adopted to embalm all new dead at Coblenz and its environs and send them on the first available transport to America for final burial.

2.

One of the first problems which concerned the War Department was the question of transferring bodies from one country to another in Europe. In the American Army there were, of course, many soldiers whose next of kin and whose homes were located in foreign countries. The results of the questionnaires sent out by the Cemeterial Division frequently showed a foreign consignee for the remains. On the first of January, 1920 the War Department cabled that it was their policy to deliver, upon request of the nearest of kin, the bodies of American officers and enlisted men buried overseas to the bona fide homes in foreign countries, when such a course was practicable. This decision was reached in accordance with the decision of the Comptroller of the Treasury "that the cost of transportation of said soldier's remains to his home is authorized, the cost of same

to be paid from the appropriation 'Disposition of Remains of Officers, Soldiers and Civil Employees, 1912.'" "The shipment at Government expense is only authorized to Oederan, Saxony, the alleged home of the soldier, but if the cost of shipment to Dresden is no greater than the cost of shipment to Oederan, the remains may be shipped at Government expense to Dresden; if greater, however, shipment at Government expense should only be made to Oederan. Before taking any action or incurring any expense in this case, you should satisfy yourself that Oederan, Saxony, was the bona fide home of said soldier." In addition to this precedent, the Appropriation Act of the fiscal year of 1919 was so worded as to include the return of bodies to the home of the soldier wherever it might be. In view of this fact, the Secretary of War gave general orders that the bodies of American soldiers should be returned to the next of kin at their bona fide homes in foreign countries where such a course was practicable. Accordingly the Cemeterial Division, where it was impracticable for them to communicate direct with the next of kin, authorized the Paris Headquarters to make the necessary inquiries as to the disposition requested when the next of kin lived in remote parts of Europe. Numerous letters were sent out and replies, either literate or illiterate, usually conveyed the desire that the body be returned. This involved becoming acquainted with the various regulations in force in the different countries of Europe regarding the entrance of a body for final

interment. Up to August 31, 1920 not a great deal of headway had been made in carrying out the promised deliveries. This was due principally to the complexity of Italian laws regarding the entrance of bodies. Since there were more Italians than any other nationality who desired foreign burial, there was some congestion in the foreign deliveries.

In the case of Great Britain, negotiations were first made through the Imperial War Graves Commission to secure authority to return bodies of American soldiers to Great Britain for final interment. The Commission disapproved of this action on the grounds that it would awaken a similar desire among British subjects and would embarrass their decisions. Permission was finally secured, however, from the Home Office, and the Customs Authorities were so considerate as to waive the usual certificates, thus permitting the entry of bodies prepared by the American Graves Registration Service on receipt of notice that remains would be sent into Great Britain on a certain day through a certain port. This enabled the Customs Authorities to inform the Collector of that port that remains should be passed through without question. Similar authorization was received for burials in Ireland.

In the case of Finland, Norway and Greece, admission was secured by certificate of the cause of death, of proper preparation of the body and the due observation of sanitary laws in the construction of the metal casket and its outer wooden coverings. Shipment was made under convoy in every case and

delivery to the next of kin or to the designated cemetery was carried out.

In the case of Germany, up to August 31st two bodies had been returned, but further operations in this regard were stopped by the German Government owing to a shortage of transportation facilities.

3.

The handling of Naval and Marine Corps dead presented certain specific problems of internal administration that are worthy of notice. On the 9th of December, 1919 the Chief was informed by Admiral Knapp that instructions had been received from the Navy Department Bureau of Medicine and Surgery to return Naval and Marine Corps dead buried in France and Belgium, so far as possible and also to carry on their disinterment activities in Great Britain with a similar object. Admiral Knapp stated at that time that it did not appear practicable for the Navy to act independently of the Army in the disinterment of Naval and Marine dead, and he requested full information as to the Army's plans. The Chief gave Admiral Knapp the data asked for and arrangements were made to co-ordinate the Naval disinterments with those of this Service. This was necessary from the fact that our Army's Registration Branch had been carrying all Naval and Marine Corps dead buried in American cemeteries on their records and the Army had been, and was, responsible

for the maintenance of these graves. It was accordingly necessary that no disinterments should be made by the Navy without the Army authorities being fully advised as to what had occurred. On January 28th Admiral Knapp again wrote to the Chief, stating that he had a force of Naval men employed in the disinterment of Naval and Marine dead, who were buried in France outside of the War Zone, where the return of the remains had been requested. He asked the Graves Registration Service to take over the disinterment and return to the United States of all Naval and Marine Corps dead who should remain in France after the United States naval exhumations unit had completed its present work, and he further asked that the care of Naval and Marine graves should devolve permanently upon the Army. The Chief agreed to these requests, asking for information regarding the final concentration policy of the Navy and suggested that a Navy representative should confer with this Service later on to assist in the proper assessment of the costings involved in such operations as the Army would undertake on behalf of the Navy.

There seems, however, to have been some difficulty in Washington in co-ordinating disinterment activities of the Navy Department and the Army Authorities, although in every case the deliberations held in Europe were forwarded for the consideration of the War Department. The chief misunderstanding arose over the handling of the Marine Corps dead. On April 10, 1920 the Adjutant General cabled that the Army would care for Marine Corps

dead in all cases except where special application for removals might make it more convenient for the naval operating unit to effect the disinterment, since such a unit might reach a cemetery prior to the Army's operations. It was provided that all such special exceptions should have the approval of the Chief. On April 22nd Commander L.W. McGrath, U.S.N., who was Exhumation Officer for the Navy in Europe, was informed that this cable did not change the instructions which had previously been given to him - viz., that he should make all exhumations of Naval and Marine Corps dead outside the Zone of the Armies. This apparent contradiction in instructions was solved in a conference with Commander McGrath, in which it was decided that he would carry out his instructions regarding his disinterments, but that he should attempt to arrange the itinerary of his units in such a way that they would operate as nearly as possible in a given cemetery at the same time that the Army's units were employed there. The object of this proviso was to avoid the arousing of adverse public feelings in French port towns by having frequent disinterment operations by different units in those places. It was determined that the Paris Headquarters would forward all disinterment orders involving Marine dead to Commander McGrath upon their receipt, that he would be responsible for the disinterment of the remains, and would make a full report to the Graves Registration Service Headquarters upon their dispatch to the United States.

For some weeks an attempt was made to keep an account of naval activities by detailing a representative of the Graves Registration Service to follow the naval parties from place to place and give detailed reports of disinterments. This was found unsatisfactory, however, because the Navy initiated a policy of disinterring sailors and marines from remote cemeteries, not only with the idea of sending those requested home to the United States, but with the further intention of concentrating at Brest those which were to be left for permanent burial in France. The underlying idea back of this policy was that it would be cheaper to evacuate a cemetery at one time than to return there after the final concentration policy in France had been returned. Some confusion arose, however, from the fact that the Graves Registration Service representative reported all disinterments as being made for the purposes of shipment to the United States when, in point of fact, a fair percentage were merely for concentration. This disrupted the records to such an extent that it was thought best to have Commander McGrath make a periodical report of all shipments which actually were made to the United States.

Commander McGrath had been supplied by the Navy Department with disinterment authorizations dating back to early 1919 and he frequently effected disinterments on which no Forms 114 had been received through the Quartermaster General's office. It turned out that when the Cemeterial Division in Washington issued questionnaires as to disposition on a given cemetery, they also

asked for the final wishes of the next of kin of Marine Corps dead. This resulted in Forms 114 which came to us frequently having a different consignee than that already in Commander Mc Grath's possession. There was accordingly some confusion in the United States about the proper delivery of bodies which had been shipped.

The most serious result of the original lack of full co-operation with the Marine Corps, however, was evidenced in the cable of June 25th in which the Cemeterial Division declared that their correspondence with relatives as to the disposition of remains disclosed the fact that some Marine and Navy bodies were already in their relatives' hands and interred at the time the Army was asking for disposition advices. This naturally subjected the Cemeterial Division to unfavorable comment. The Chief in Europe replied that the result of all conferences with the naval exhumation authorities in Paris had already been dispatched to the Quartermaster General's office, but that in future all shipments made by the Navy would be immediately cabled. The agreement which had been made with Commander McGrath and Admiral Knapp was also repeated at this time, to the effect that the Army would disinter all bodies in the Zone of Mid-Europe and in the Zone of the Armies. The difficulty was settled finally by a conference held on June 24th in Washington with representatives of the Marine Corps, at which the following conclusions were agreed to:-

(a) That the Cemeterial Division would immediately discontinue direct correspondence with the nearest of kin and, in form, would consider the Marine Corps Headquarters as the nearest of kin.

(b) That it would accept without question the information as forwarded by the Marine Corps Headquarters, on which Europe would be instructed as to disposition of remains; the responsibility for correctness of data as to final disposition of bodies to rest with the Marine Corps Headquarters.

(c) That the Marine Corps Headquarters would receive the status of our files at the time that their decision as to disposition should be requested.

(d) That the Cemeterial Division would forward the names of Marines located in the cemeteries of which this office received four weeks' notice by cablegram.

(e) That the Marine Corps Headquarters be furnished with copies of cablegrams advising of the shipment of remains,

(f) That the Cemeterial Division would, as in the past, send out the final telegram requesting confirmation of shipping instructions; reply to be made to Hoboken.

(g) That the Graves Registration Service office at Hoboken would release the remains to the Transportation Corps and obtain the transportation receipt as in the past, and forward the accomplished Form 114 and the transportation receipt to the Cemeterial Division, as in the past.

(h) That the Cemeterial Division would furnish the Marine Corps Headquarters with a photostat copy of the accomplished Form 114 and the transportation receipt.

The Navy effected all disinterments of its dead in England and Scotland entirely independently of the Army and their operations in that Sector had no connection with the Graves Registration Service.

Up to August 31st, from France the Navy had dispatched 216 bodies; of these 88 had been ordered disinterred through the Cemeterial Division.

4.

When dealing with the wishes of the next of kin, the old Latin adage, "Tot homines, tot mentes" applied with peculiar force. It was impossible to have imagined in advance the number of varied opinions expressed by the next of kin and the number of specific requests which were received in this connection. Decisions had to be adopted regarding specific requests for disposition, so the Quartermaster General of the Army in February wrote to the Chief of Staff of the Army for approval of certain definite policies in this connection. The main thing was certain requests that bodies should remain in France in the places where they were originally interred. As long as the American Army was maintaining approximately one thousand different burial places, the dead could rest where they then were, but with the need for concentration and the economies consequent thereon, it

was impossible to leave a grave or two in a cemetery which had been otherwise abandoned. The French Government also wanted as much ground reclaimed from cemeteries as could be decently demanded. It had also to be borne in mind that mortuary tenure of ground was frequently for a limited term in communal cemeteries and additional fees would be required if a perpetual cession were to be granted. In the case of bodies already in French municipal cemeteries, arrangements could possibly be made, under some conditions, for permanent burial. The Quartermaster General submitted the following questions:- First, shall it be the rule that bodies must be returned from France to relatives, or transferred to such permanent American cemeteries as may be designated overseas, if these bodies are to receive future care from the United States Government? To this an affirmative answer was given. The second query was:- Shall the Graves Registration Service transfer bodies, upon proper request, to the nearest French cemetery? An affirmative answer was also received to this query, with the proviso that no expense be incurred by the United States other than that involved in removal and reinterment. Relatives should not be permitted to effect these removals by private or individual agency. The disposal of each body should be made officially, and the evacuation of each cemetery should be complete when the personnel of the Graves Registration Service was withdrawn. The next question involved the problem as to whether, after such a transfer or retention in French cemeteries,

or possible demand for payment to secure perpetual cession of ground, the expenses should be borne by the United States and be payable from the same appropriation as other removals. To this a negative answer was given, with the advice that relatives electing such disposition be advised that maintenance of scattered graves in Europe was impossible just as the same procedure had been held to be impracticable throughout the United States. Finally, in the case of scattered burials made on the expression of wish of the next of kin, shall future maintenance devolve entirely upon relatives? An affirmative answer was given to this policy.

There were cases in which the next of kin was a French citizen, and in these instances delivery of the body was made to a cemetery of a commune in which the person requesting transfer resided. In view also of the fact that the appropriation for transfer of bodies included civilian employees of the United States Army, various transfers were made of French civilians who had died while on the payrolls of the United States.

Under the head of special dispositions came also the various pleas for the erection of special grave markers, for the sending of the crosses which had marked the graves back to the United States, for the shipment of any stone monuments that had already been erected and various requests to plant flowers and shrubbery on graves. It was determined, in the interests of the uniform arrangement of our cemeteries, that no further per-

manent grave markers would be allowed and that no shrubbery or flowers be planted on the graves, (except when placed between and on alignment with the crosses). In case of return of original markers, this was permitted so long as the expense of the transportation of the monuments and crosses was borne by the person making the request. There were numerous instances in which families had disinterred the remains of their dead shortly after the armistice and had them reburied in metallic caskets. The Service was frequently requested to send bodies home in these containers and not to disturb them. The policy was adopted of complying with this request in every case where the condition of the metallic casket would make such compliance safe. There were very few instances, however, in which they were found fit for overseas shipment and whenever defects were discovered, the case was reported and the body was transferred to a proper coffin.

5.

One of the most difficult things to accomplish in the operations of this Service was the divulging of information to the next of kin and to the public. There was a natural and very general ignorance as to what the Graves Registration Service was accomplishing in Europe, as people very frequently had been informed that the cemeteries were being neglected and that the trace of graves was being lost. There were several factors which might have contributed to this impression. The first was the

original concentration policy pursued after the armistice. When a soldier had been killed, his family was usually notified of this fact. Any information as to the burial place was conveyed to the next of kin. In addition to the official Army notice, which sometimes proceeded from the office of the Adjutant General of the Army or sometimes from the Graves Registration Service at Tours, there were all sorts of private investigations made by the American Red Cross, the Y.M.C.A., the Knights of Columbus, the American Legion and by many individuals. It follows as a matter of course that with so many outside agencies giving out information more or less accurate, and the Graves Registration Service necessarily changing the location of those scattered burials into permanent cemeteries, the next of kin was frequently mystified as to where the body was lying and whether its location actually was known. To avoid the giving of misinformation and to make certain that information which had previously been furnished by the War Department would be co-ordinate with the present status of grave locations and identifications, it was determined that no information should be given directly to relatives living in the United States from the Headquarters in Paris, but that these letters should be acknowledged and that the originals should be sent on to the office of the Quartermaster General for final reply; such information was put in the Paris indorsements as would assist the Cemeterial Division in reporting the truth to the inquiring relative or friend. The same policy was pursued in the handling

of requests from the American Red Cross, the Y.M.C.A., etc. They were asked to forward the letters which they received direct to the Headquarters in Paris, from which reply was made through official channels. Every effort was made to make certain that the information furnished to Washington should embody the last investigations which had been made in each particular case.

When requests for grave locations or information were received from people residing in Europe, they were answered direct by the office in Paris.

The next aspect of the question of giving information was the matter of making public, through the press, some account of the actual achievements of the Service. There were a few premature interviews given to the newspapers by employees of the Service which would naturally have been upsetting to American relatives reading the account. The difficulty with these interviews was that they usually dealt with certain problems which had cropped up in internal administration - questions which had nothing to do with the efficiency of the Service regarding the upkeep of graves and preservation of the identity, but questions which were of no concern to the public whatsoever. Steps were taken by General Order to forbid the divulging of any information except by authority of the Chief of the Service. Similar action was taken by the Cemeterial Division in Washington. Accordingly, the Chief authorized publication of locations of our cemeteries on Memorial Day, 1920 and also authorized the publication of an account of

the Graves Registration Service up to that date. This was published in the Paris issue of the "Chicago Tribune" of May 30th.

6.

There were many cases in which relatives showed considerable impatience with the necessary delays incident to inaugurating so large a project. These people, being frequently well-to-do, desired to effect exhumation or disinterment by private arrangement and thus to secure possession of the body sooner than the operations of this Service permitted. Since it was quite apparent that the work had to be done in an orderly and systematic manner, and that it was impossible to send exhumation groups "hit-or-miss" over France to effect disinterments which were special requests, it was necessary to refuse all pleas, either for favoritism in effecting exhumations by this Service or for permission to allow work to be done by private undertakers. The latter request was refused because it was not desired that an impression should be created in the United States that a person of means could secure service more quickly than a poor one. In our correspondence with relatives this charge was frequently made, but there is not an atom of justification for it. The attitude of the War Department was well expressed in the following letter from the Secretary of War to one mother, and is quoted to show a particular case which best represents the policy followed.

"Mr. Hayes tells me that he has discussed with you the

question of the removal of American military remains from France, with particular reference to the body of your son; he stated to you, he informs me, that it would not be proper for the War Department to favor in any one case what the French Government has held cannot now be accomplished in other similar cases; but that it would be entirely permissible for you (assuming that you do not wish to have the remains returned to America by the Graves Registration Service) to take complete custody and control of the body as soon as the War Department has been enabled to effect the removal of the other remains from the zone where your son's body is. The Chief of the Cemeterial Division informs me that he, too, has sent substantially this same information to you.

"Briefly, the situation is this: The War Department has sought and received from the French Government the right to remove, from the Zone of the Interior, as many of the remains of our soldier dead as are requested by their families. Rail transport facilities there, however, are in such a condition that the French Government tells us that it cannot at this time assign any tonnage to us, and that for the immediate future our operations will have to be confined to locations close enough to the base ports to be covered by motor transport, which we have shipped from America or procured elsewhere. With this general prohibition enforced upon the War Department by the French Government, you will realize the criticism which would follow any effort of the Department to seek or acquiesce in the seeking of an arrange-

ment in an individual case, which arrangement it was unable to apply similarly in other cases. Since the parents of the great majority of American soldiers buried overseas are persons of very modest means, and since they naturally feel most deeply on the subject of the return of their lost sons, it becomes imperative that we avoid any action which would be open to the interpretation of seeming to create distinction on the basis of rank or of means, or of making any individual discrimination in the repatriation of our dead.

"When the War Department, however, has been able to remove those remains which are requested by the next of kin from the area where your son's body is, I know of no objection to your taking custody of the remains and of making such arrangements as you desire for his permanent interment, or for transportation to this country.

"It goes without saying that in case you desire the Graves Registration Service to transport his body to America, when the area about Paris is reached in our operations, that will be done. I am inclined to think that after you have seen the operations of the Graves Registration Service, this will be your wish."

There was another case which arose in Great Britain of a family which desired to effect a shipment by themselves, but after they had investigated private shipping conditions and had seen the manner in which the Government was effecting dis-

interments and shipments, they authorized the delivery of the body by the usual course of the operations of this Service.

There were numerous devices of one kind or another used by relatives to secure premature possession of the body. These took the form of declaring that they wanted the remains to rest permanently where they then were. After securing this permission, they would approach a private undertaker and attempt to effect the removal. The United States Government's arrangement with the French Republic, however, was so binding that no authorization was given to disinter an American that was not referred to the Graves Registration Service Headquarters for approval; consequently, so far as is known, up to August 31, 1920 no private disinterments were effected. A policy was adopted, however, slightly modifying that outlined by the Secretary of War in that it was agreed that relatives could have possession of a body after the Graves Registration Service had finished operations, not in the zone, as mentioned, but in the Area in which the cemetery in question was located. This made it possible to give exclusive control of the remains to the next of kin after certain districts had been completely evacuated. In this way the object of the policy was secured, since the relatives could have received the remains sooner by the Government's aid than by their own efforts, and at the same time it gave them whatever satisfaction was to be derived from performing the service entirely through their own efforts.

Still another type of request for special disposition was that made by relatives who had two or more dead among the A.E.F. burials. In a case where they were to be sent to the United States, request was made to send them at the same time. In the case of those who were to remain permanently buried in Europe, the request was made to bury them side by side in the same cemetery. Since usually these burials were far apart, acquiescence would involve the holding of one body for many months, either in Europe or in the United States, until the other cemetery had been reached, or going back to the first cemetery when the second had been reached; neither of these courses was in the least practicable, either from a sanitary or economical standpoint. As a consequence, the policy was adopted of not complying with requests to send bodies to the United States in the same shipment unless it could be accomplished without difficulty. In the latter case, it was determined that it was practicable to reserve graves for relatives in the same cemetery and it was thought that this would be a considerate action on the part of this Service. Therefore the following policy was adopted: "Upon request of the nearest of kin, remains of blood relatives will be concentrated in one cemetery, the cemetery selected to be the one which will require the least disturbing of remains."

CHAPTER VI.

DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WITH THE FRENCH.

At the conclusion of the armistice the question of the care of the dead was most pressing. In the midst of American doubt as to what to do, Marshal Petain, on behalf of the French people, offered to furnish burial grounds at the expense of the State for the American soldiers who had died on behalf of France. "France," he said, "would be happy and proud to retain the bodies of American victims who have fallen on her soil." General Pershing accepted this offer and it was made the subject of diplomatic exchanges. There was a clear understanding that the American people would demand the return of their dead and the French never opposed the idea in principle, but there was a party in the Chambre des Deputes which attempted to pass a law in February, 1919 forbidding the exhumation and transport of bodies for three years. General Pershing drew the attention of the State Department to this, and active representations were made to avoid the embarrassing situation which would have resulted as a consequence of such a law. As it was, the rumor that it would be passed had an unfortunate effect on public opinion in the United States. At the same time, it was contemplated to return the bodies of Americans who died in the vicinity of Archangel. The project was to take those bodies to France for temporary burial. But it was ascertained that there would be similar opposition to their

removal after burial and, under very adverse conditions, they were finally carried back to the United States.

The reasons back of this official attitude are not easily seen. Of course, the arguments used were always contingent on reasons of public policy, alleged interference with reconstruction, sanitary dangers, lack of transportation, etc. Reasons on such questions, however, are usually representative of psychological states rather than vital arguments against the problem. Putting it simply, it was a reaction against a policy not understood or sympathized with, a natural tendency to say "No" to a country to whom they had been continually saying "Yes" for two years or more. It was not unreasonable to expect this state of things, if one knew all the conditions of the A.E.F. Familiarity breeds close acquaintance with each other's faults. After the war a little time had to elapse before people on each side again saw each other through normal vision. This applied to friends as much as to enemies. But in the case of Franco-American relations, any temporary coldness that may have existed passed away completely after Memorial Day, 1920.

In any case, throughout the period of liquidation in France there was a close liaison with the French Government. Attempts were insistently made to secure authority to proceed with the exhumation project. On December 10, 1919 this permission was received from the Minister of the Interior and read in part

as follows: "I beg to inform you that, at a meeting of the Council of Ministers, it was decided that the French Government would authorize at once the exhumation and collective transportation to ports to be hereafter designated, of bodies of American soldiers interred in France outside of the old Zone of the Army.

"I am sending instructions to the Prefects of the Departments interested in order that they and the Mayors may facilitate, to the largest extent, the task incumbent upon the American military authorities. You will please find attached the text of these instructions.

"I would add that the exhumation, with a view to removal to the United States, of the remains of the American soldiers buried in the old Zone of the Armies cannot be undertaken at present, for the reason that the transport of bodies is strictly prohibited in said Zone pending instructions to the contrary, due to material necessities resultant upon the grouping and identification of the bodies of French soldiers before considering their restitution to their families.

"It would naturally be impossible to grant to our Allies at this time privileges which are denied to our own families; such a step would call forth protestations and provoke hostile public opinion to which no satisfaction could be given for the motives mentioned above.

"The Government is therefore obliged to defer the

authorization to exhume and transport, with a view to their repatriation, the bodies of American soldiers interred in the old Zone of the Armies until such date fixed by Parliament for the return to French families of the bodies of their dead."

The publication of this partial permission produced no diminution in the demands heard in the United States for speedy action in the Zone of the Armies. It was insisted that no distinction should be made between burials in the Zone of the Interior of France and the old battle area. The Americans who had stayed at home could have no idea of conditions in France, nor could they sympathize with French reluctance to give a blanket authority to operate at will all over the country. To a mother or father interested in one small plot of ground in France, there seems no good reason why an exhumation is more difficult there than elsewhere. Comparatively few people are gifted with the imaginative power necessary to realize in advance all the difficulties in the way of accomplishing a huge project, and their own needs naturally take precedence over the griefs of others. This is as it should be, but the business of government, on the other hand, is to co-ordinate and make vital, without fear or favor, such of these individual aspirations as are worthy of public consideration. This the American Government did by pressing its demands for authority to make the exhumations, but agreeing to carry on the work in an orderly and systematic manner, a manner that would result in no serious derangement of French rights.

The first Franco-American Conference relative to the repatriation of American remains lying in the former zone of operations was held at the Foreign Office, March 20, 1920. The United States was represented by Mr. Ralph Hayes, Assistant to the Secretary of War; the Military Attache at Paris, and the Chief, American Graves Registration Service, Q.M.C., in Europe. The French Government sent representatives of the Foreign, Home, Public Works, Liberated Regions, Hygiene and Pensions Offices. After the usual diplomatic exchanges of good feeling, M. Maginot stated that the delay hitherto experienced in securing the consent of the Government to the removal of bodies in the Zone of the Armies was due, not to an objection to the principle involved, but to certain material obstacles of which the chief were shortage of transport and the effect on the French public of giving priority of movement to the Americans. Since there were 1,500,000 French dead in this Zone, and since many of these were to be claimed by their families, the Government might be embarrassed by assenting to the request of the American Government.

The American reply to this address was a simple statement of the situation: while French families could visit their dead, distance deprived the majority of Americans of this consolation. It was clearly understood that the task was a large one and that it would take considerable time. But public feeling in the United States would be satisfied if it could be pub-

lished that the French Government had removed its previous objections to removal operations in the zone of battle. The end aimed at by the Americans was only the return of those bodies for which a formal request had been made. As for the remainder, about twenty-five per cent, the United States accepted with gratitude the generous offer of Marshal Petain and the French Government to establish cemeteries for the fallen. It was the intention of the American Graves Registration Service to take every precaution in a sanitary way, and since authority had already been granted in principle, the only remaining point was to obtain official consent to begin operations in the battle area before November, 1920. It was pointed out that the exhumations now being made in the interior of France would take some time and that it was possible that the actual time of beginning work in the Eastern Zone would probably approximately coincide with the date suggested by the French. The Chief explained the working of the Graves Registration Service in detail, pointing out that our graves were in good condition, that the bodies were in coffins and that the greatest precautions would be taken against disease. He pointed out that there would be no demands for railroad transports in the Zone of the Interior, and that it would be six or seven months before any would be needed in the Zone of Operations. Even then a train of fifty wagons would be sufficient to carry 1,500 bodies.

The French representatives decided that they could justify the granting of special privileges to the Americans on

three grounds: first, the impossibility of Americans visiting French cemeteries; secondly, the fact that preliminary work of identification had been accomplished to a much greater degree by the United States than by the French; and thirdly, that the United States would largely use its own transport.

The French finally decided to meet the wishes of the United States in the matter of work in the Zone of operations and thus allow the Chief to prove to his countrymen that no distinction was made between burials in different zones. The Commission decided at length to recommend to the Government of the Republic that all restrictions on the transfer of Americans from the Zone of the Armies should be removed and that operations be permitted there as soon as these regions were reached.

The second meeting of the International Commission was held on March 24th, at the Foreign Office. The question at issue now was the date at which operations in the Zone of the Armies should begin. The French suggested November first as the most suitable time. They were willing to give an unrestricted sanction to operate according to the resolution adopted at the first session, but they wanted a verbal agreement that no removals be made before that date. They based their demands on the shortage of transportation, the shortage of labor in the devastated regions, the more pressing need of supplying the living in these regions with essentials, and the danger to public health from moving bodies in their zone during the hot weather. It was considered

that giving the Americans special transportation facilities for the removal of dead in a district so destitute would make a painful impression on the inhabitants. The American delegates, however, again stated the intense feeling existent in the United States and the necessity of an agreement without an inhibiting temporal clause which would permit work as soon as the operations of the Service should reach the area under discussion.

It was agreed that there was no objection to the Service making preliminary installations in this territory. The American delegates promised to do such work either with American personnel or with French labor not secured in this region. After another discussion of the sentimental and material difficulties, the President promised to draw up a protocol which, with the approval of the Americans, he would request the French Government to ratify.

On March 25th, after receiving the President's promised definite proposal, the American delegates made a counter offer. The two meetings of the Commission had given the Americans a clearer understanding of the difficulties besetting the French authorities. In recognition of these the Commissioners modified their original proposals in three particulars: first, the Federal Government would transport to America only those bodies whose return was demanded by the next of kin. Not only would those be left whose kin requested permanent interment in France, but also those dead whose relatives left the final dis-

position to the discretion of the United States authorities, and the unidentified bodies would not be returned; secondly, the former intention of clearing all bodies in one cemetery at a time by sending those destined for America to a port and those scheduled for retention in France to a centralized Field of Honor would be modified to moving only the homeward-bound dead and to leaving the rest, in spite of the increased cost and upkeep, until such time as the French transportation facilities should have improved; thirdly, notwithstanding the insistent demand from America for immediate action, to give the French Government time to determine its own policy regarding French dead, the Commissioners agreed to split the difference between the French time of November and April, and suggested July 15th as the date at which operations could begin in the battle area. It was pointed out that the arrival of the materials from America had been so speeded up that the Service would be ready to work sooner than at first anticipated.

After emphasizing once more the feeling that American relatives had towards having their dead separated from them by impassable barriers of distance and language; after pointing out that only 50,000 Americans lay in the disputed area and that of these, many thousands would not be touched, and after recalling that the British Government had made no objections to a similar proceeding in Great Britain, the Commission offered the following agreement for consideration.

"Pursuant to the agreement proposed by the French Foreign Office to the American Department of State in August, 1918, and thereafter ratified by the Federal Government, the French Republic recognizes and adheres to the principle that the Federal Government may exhume and transport to the United States the remains of American soldiers, sailors, marines and associated personnel now interred in the French "Zone of Military Operations", as defined in the Provisional instructions of the President of the Council, published in the Journal Officiel of June 19, 1919.

"Actual transportation of remains by the American Graves Registration Service from the Zone of Operations under this agreement may begin at any time after July 15, 1920.

"The Federal Government, under the terms of the present agreement, will limit the return of bodies to those whose removal to America is requested specifically by their next of kin.

"The Graves Registration Service, through the observance of stringent hygienic precautions, agrees to insure the prevention of epidemic from the conduct of its operations. A detailed statement of sanitary safeguards will be transmitted to the Service de l'Etat Civil et des Sepultures Militaires and at the option of the latter organization a French hygienic officer may be associated with the Graves Registration Service in all of its operations.

"In agreement with the Ministry of Transportation the American Graves Registration Service will undertake so to locate the points of concentrating bodies for shipment to ports as to require a minimum of construction or rearrangement of railroad facilities.

"The Ministry of Transportation, on the request of the Graves Registration Service, will allocate upon a rental basis, an amount of rail transportation sufficient for the actual necessities of the latter after mid-July. The Graves Registration Service, on its part, will undertake to limit its rail transport requirements to French ports under this agreement to such a minimum as may be necessary under most economical conditions of utilization, not exceeding a maximum of 100 standard box cars in use at any given time.

"The regulations relative to concentration and regrouping of bodies in the Zone of Military Operations, as published in the Journal Officiel of June 19, 1919, are not altered by this agreement."

At this point the French began to lay greater stress than ever on the dangers to public health arising from exhumation. To satisfy the Ministry of Hygiene that such precautions were being taken as would render the danger of spreading disease quite nugatory, a meeting was held in April to discuss the question. The wish expressed by one French delegate that bodies already in a coffin should be placed in the metal casket coffin and all without exposing the body was proved impracticable. The French delegates were given a programme of the sanitary precautions followed during disinterment. This, the delegate admitted, gave sufficient hygienic guarantees, with the exception that there was insufficient precaution against flies. The French delegates suggested working under a tent to avoid this danger, but it was pointed out that the men engaged in the work would be overcome by the fumes of the chemicals if free access to the air were cut off. Referring to the suggestion that when digging had reached to about two inches from the body the earth be sprayed with a formaldehyde solution, the French professor of hygiene remarked that men could not work under these conditions either. In such cases it was declared lime would be used, not as a protection against flies, but as a disinfectant. The French delegates at length approved of all the American plans, with one reservation - i.e., that certain precautionary measures against flies must be taken. The American delegates accepted this reservation and asked the French to submit their suggestions.

After this approval by the Ministry of Hygiene, the Council de Cabinet sanctioned the transfer of American bodies buried in the Zone of the Armies, but for "imperative sanitary reasons" this permission would not be effective until September 15th, instead of July 15th as requested. It was not apparent for many reasons that this reservation would be acceptable to the Secretary of War. Indeed, the objection was not valid. The only specific hygienic objection raised by the French had been against the fly menace. The American sanitary officers suggested that the treatment of all fresh earth with crude oil should eliminate this peril; and in fact the French were invited to give any other practical idea they might deem satisfactory. But to show that flies did not constitute an actual danger to public health, it is only necessary to state that even in the Zone of the Armies the operation of digging up remains had actually been in progress since shortly after the armistice by all armies. The "provisional instructions" of the President of the Council, dated June 19, 1919, prohibited the moving of bodies outside the Zone of the Armies, but allowed their transfer and concentration in large numbers. In point of fact, the number so moved was in excess of that now proposed for disinterment. This had been done without resulting harm. An appeal to Ambassador Wallace was accordingly made, in the name of the State Department, that he make one more attempt to move the French. It seemed impossible to acquiesce in a two months' delay for a

reason so wholly untenable.

After further consideration, however, the Secretary of War realized that the condition of our supplies made it impossible to work in the Zone of the Armies to any advantage before the date agreed to by the French, so he accepted the date in the War Department cable of April 22nd. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs acknowledged the Ambassador's communication in early June, saying, "The French Republic recognizes and admits the principle by which the Federal Government can exhume and return to the United States the bodies of the soldiers, sailors, marines and American personnel, actually buried in the 'Zone of Military Activities' transportation can begin at any time after September 15, 1920." This closed the negotiations, and work was actually begun on September 15th in the Calais Sector.

During the various meetings with the French and in all official relations, the Graves Registration Service was assisted by two French officers, Major De Vienne and Captain Le Roch, who acted as Liaison Officers and who were provided with offices in the Headquarters for themselves and staffs.

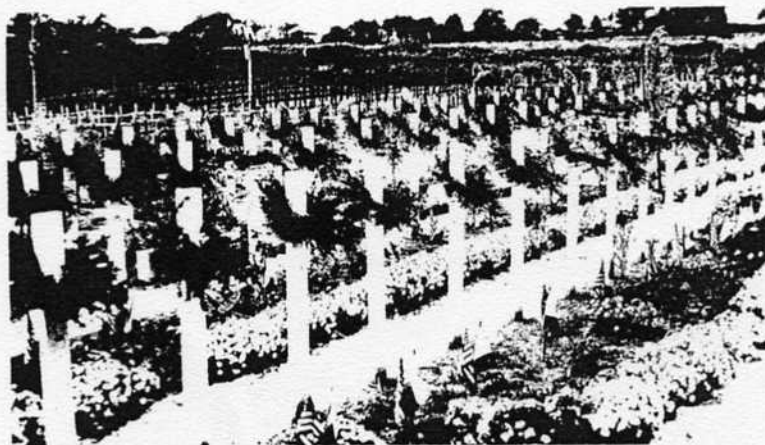
CHAPTER VII.

MEMORIAL DAY. 1920.

Memorial Day in 1920 was fittingly observed in every European country where our soldier dead were laid to rest - in France, Great Britain, Belgium, Luxembourg, Germany, Italy and Spain and on the Island of Ilay. The conducting of the ceremonies and the decoration of the graves were arranged by the Graves Registration Service, which distributed the funds collected by the American Memorial Day Association and by patriotic Americans residing in France. The "Chicago Tribune" and associated papers in the United States also secured and forwarded funds for the decoration of the graves of our American dead in Europe. Much credit is also due the American Legion for its contribution of funds, as well as the carrying out of the exercises in outlying cemeteries and its co-operation in the observance at Suresnes, near Paris. Checks were sent by the American Graves Registration Service to the Commanding Officers of the several zones; to all of the Area Supervisors, and to the American Consuls in Genoa, Italy and at Seville, in Spain. Flags were supplied for each grave and arrangements made for the securing of flowers and wreaths. An explanation of the significance of the day and accounts of its observance were featured in the daily papers of contingent provincial towns and of Paris, as well as in the press of the United States.

Services were held at many of the cemeteries. The

crosses had been repainted and re-stencilled, the grass cut, and everything put in the best possible condition. The caretakers of the isolated plots were no less careful, - written instructions having been issued to them in their own language - so that from the prominent and beautiful cemeteries at Suresmes, Belleau Wood and Romagne to the most isolated corners of the various cemeteries, all possible honor was rendered to our men who had met the Great Adventure. The American flags at the cemeteries were at half-mast until noon, when they were raised to the top of the staffs; the bases were banked with flowers and wreaths, which were afterwards distributed over the graves,



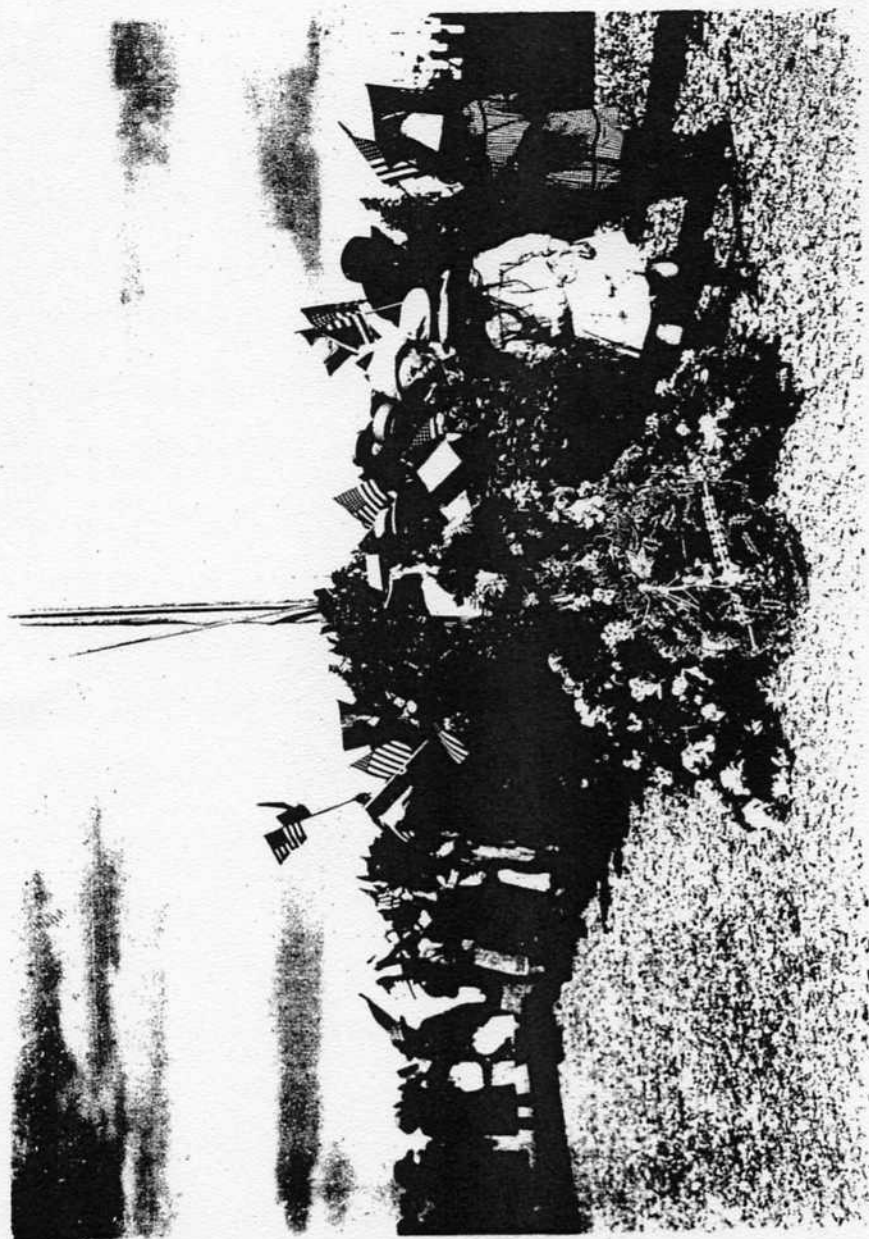
Chateau-Thierry.

making them even more beautiful than they were before. The French and American flags were flying together. In many instances a mass was said in the adjoining chapel or the town church, and in all cases Catholic priests or Protestant minis-

ters officiated at the cemeteries. Military honors were rendered the dead by the soldiers of the Allied nations in whose countries the cemeteries were located. At Coetquidan an entire battalion of the 11th Artillery was present to honor our men. Although French military law prescribes that no armed troops shall enter a church or a cemetery, this ruling was waived in recognition of the American custom.

In the United Kingdom two thousand four hundred and thirty-six American soldiers and sailors were buried in one hundred and eight cemeteries in ninety-nine towns; and the grave of each was appropriately decorated with wreaths, flags and flowers. There the American Graves Registration Service had the co-operation of the American Legion and the American Consuls, as well as that of the members of the English Speaking Union, resident in the various districts. To insure that no grave or cemetery would be neglected, Colonel Rethers issued orders that civilian employees be sent to every locality to purchase flowers, which they placed, together with a flag, upon every grave. At Queenstown the celebration embraced the decoration of the graves of the "Lusitania" victims. The "Last Post" was sounded by a bugler of the Essex Regiment. The American Consul addressed the gathering and wreaths were presented by the American Legion and by the Admiralty.

In France, long before any official announcement had been made from Paris, or other sources, requests had been re-

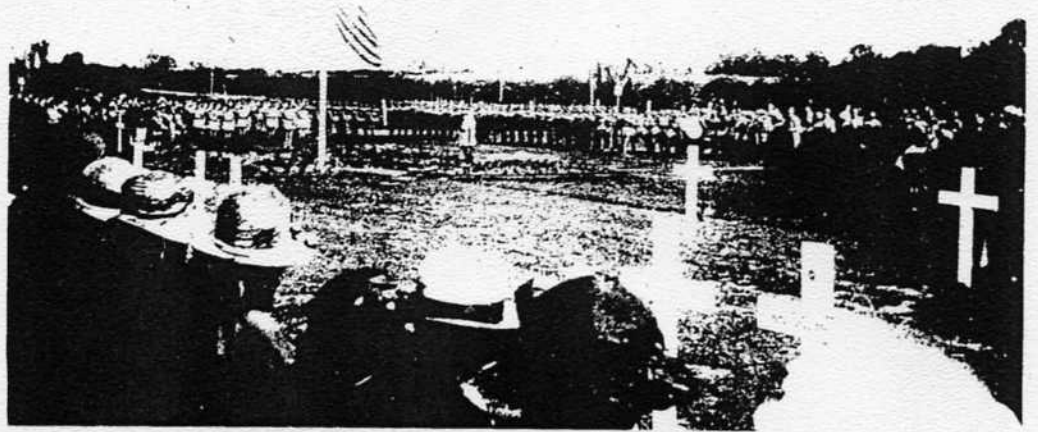


Romagne Cemetery, Memorial Day, 1920.

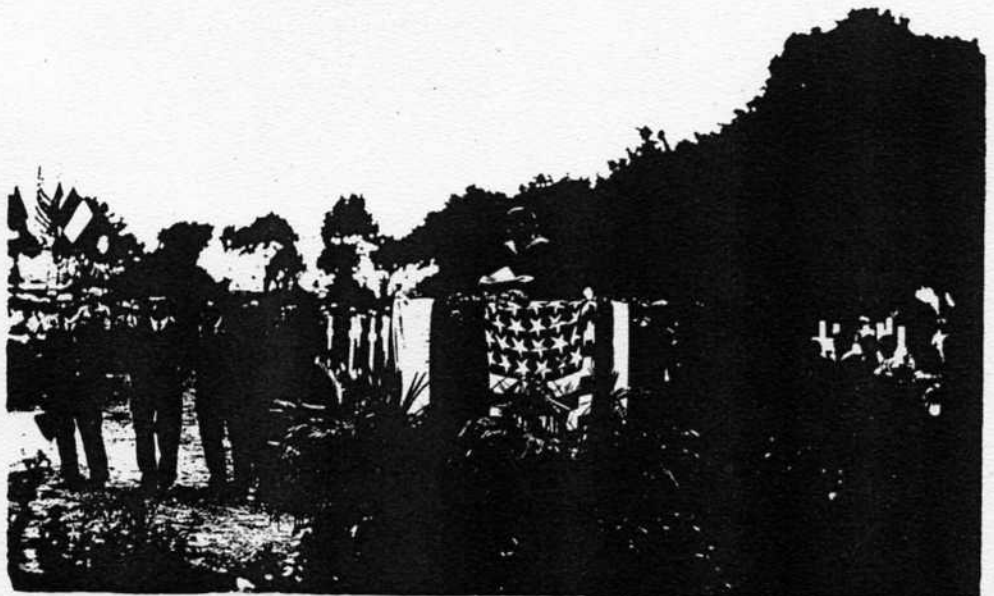
ceived from civil and military authorities, that they be allowed to participate in our observance of Memorial Day and, on invitation, they responded most generously and contributed all that was possible to make the fete a success. Every class was represented in France, and perhaps they may be generally and best noted as:

- I. The Military, which includes Commanding Generals and their Staffs; representatives of the French Army and representatives of the French Navy.
- II. French civilians: this includes Mayors, Municipal Officials, members of the clergy and residents of the cities in which our cemeteries are located.
- III. Americans: Army Officers, Area Supervisors and civilians. The latter class embraces our representatives of the State Department and American residents of neighboring cities.

Letters were received from American individuals in all parts of the world, enclosing sums of money to be expended on Memorial Day decorations. Many of these requested that, if possible, some flowers be placed on a specified grave, assuring the gratitude of the family, if such could be done. These requests were usually accompanied by proper data regarding the name of the cemetery and the location of the grave, and expressed a sincere appreciation of the effort involved. These communications were acknowledged most courteously by officers in charge of the Areas in which the graves were located, and assurance was given that the graves would



Memorial Day at Nevers Cemetery.



Memorial Day at Le Mans Cemetery.

be decorated. In reply many sincere letters of gratitude were received telling of the resultant satisfaction and comfort derived. In addition to letters from individuals, some were received from organizations, such as one from an American Legion Post in the United States asking that the grave of a private, after whom the Post was named, be decorated. This interchange of correspondence and its consequent revealing of the true spirit of the American Graves Registration Service in Europe in its desire to serve the bereaved ones in America did much towards promoting amiable relations and mutual understanding.

As for the spirit of the French people on this occasion, it is almost impossible to draw a picture that would convey the desired impression of their friendly attitude, and of their pathetic and most touching expression of respect for our dead. While the American people have undoubtedly a very genuine sentiment regarding the more sacred and emotional phases of life, they not infrequently lack the power of expressing their real feelings, or they are prevented from the same by a hesitancy to appear, as they think, sentimental. But the French people have no such scruples. They feel deeply and have a trained ability of expression.

The addresses made throughout France, not only by our own military and consular representatives, but by the French officials themselves, were most inspiring and impressive. One felt keenly the beautiful spirit and intimate union in the hearts

of the two nations - American and French. One could not help but be impressed by the deep sincerity of the ceremonies and by the fact that our dead lie surrounded by a very real sympathy and affection.

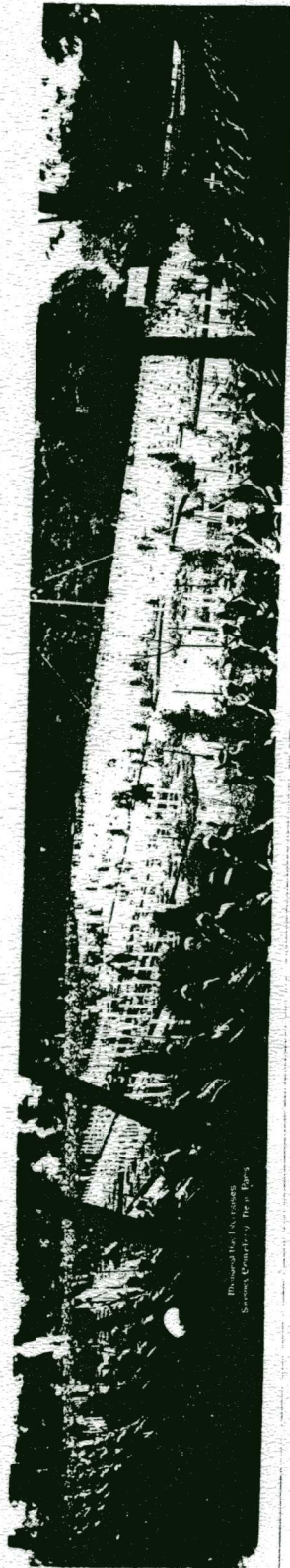
One example of an isolated celebration of Memorial Day, or rather, the deprivation of its privileges, would seem to present, through an individual, the spirit of the whole French people. An old peasant in Bazoches, on the southern bank of the Vesle, had for a considerable time tended the grave of a young American soldier who had been buried in her little garden. She had rounded it off trimly, planted it with geraniums and sweet herbs and watered it every day. It was lovely, that little mound, and she was always thinking how happy his poor mother would be to come one day and see it. And then, just before Memorial Day, the body was removed, in compliance with the policy of concentration. She was desolated; her American comrade that she dreamed of by night and whose grave she tended by day was gone! Could there be anything more pathetic or expressive of the almost universal love of the French people for our dead, than her sad question, "Is it, Monsieur, that by some chance you may know where they have taken him?" And could anything be more expressive of the prevailing attitude than the ceremony at Perigueux where five hundred little French children recited in chorus, in English, a prayer which was written for this occasion by a little girl! In other localities the Society of French Homes sent children

with flowers. These delegations were officially welcomed at the cemeteries by representatives of the American Graves Registration Service.

Everywhere, on this day, the sincere eloquence of the French expressed their genuine sentiment, and the general effect of the ceremonies and of the affiliation of the French Military and Communal authorities did much towards creating a more kindly feeling towards the Americans on the part of the French people.

To quote one speech made on this day is to give an example of the spirit of the whole, and that of M. Millecard, the Sous-Prefect of Brest, is the most interesting. Standing before the monument which was decorated with flowers and with the French and American colors; with the United States flag flying at half-mast; with every grave decorated with the Stars and Stripes, and on each of which a bouquet of flowers had been laid; and in the presence of a gathering of French people who had made it their duty to come and bring to the dead of the Great America their pious respects; before the Portuguese, the Brazilian, the Belgian and the Spanish Consuls, the representative of the British Consul, the Commanders of the Atlantic Schools, the Commander of the Atlantic Division, the Veterans of the War of 1871, the clergy, and the assembled Americans, he said:

"On this day, when you celebrate the memory of your dead, when your countrymen gather in the memory of those who



fell for our cause, the French people are joining your intimate ceremony as friends and brothers.

"Those of your people who fell by the side of their own are sacred to them. Silent witnesses, they recall to us the sacrifice made by far-away America to the cause of civilization and right.

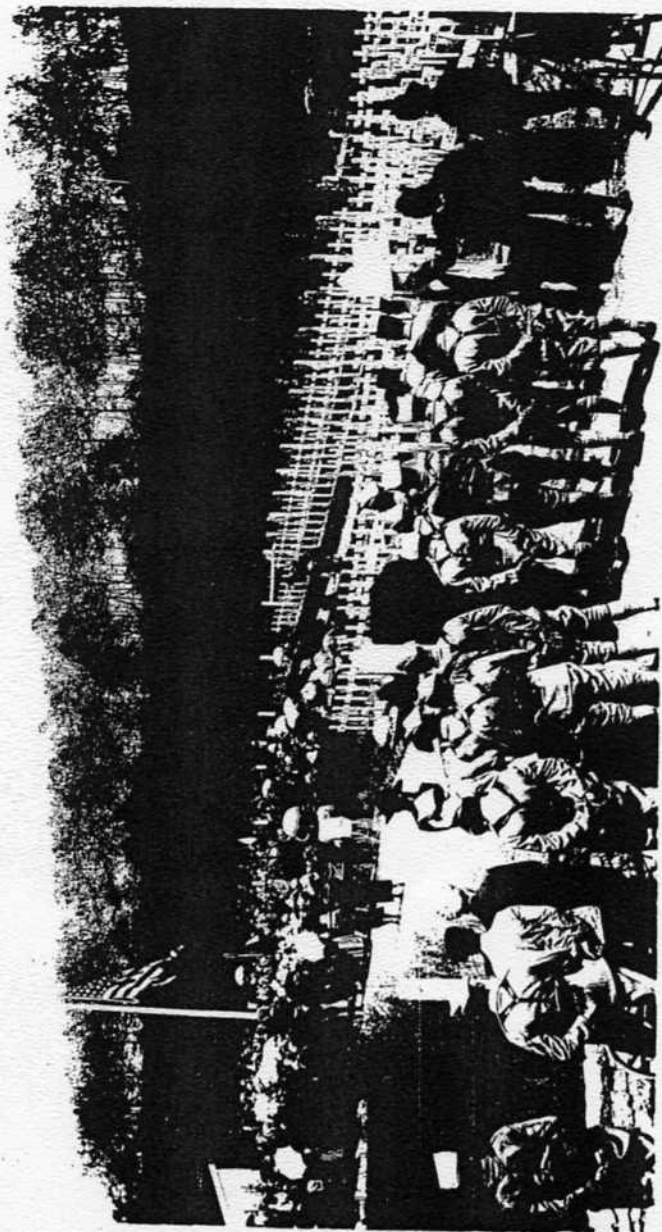
"They fell, those sons of free America, in this European war, where they had no personal interest, for those great ideas, clearly understood by some, vaguely felt by others, of liberty, democracy and justice which were at the bottom of the souls of those who, during long years accepted the hard struggle: British, Italians, Belgians, Serbians, Roumanians, etc., who all suffered, struggled and died in order that what is worth living for should not die . . .

"And when the first khaki uniform, when those young sons of America

landed, with their strength, and also their love so beautiful, so touching, so spontaneous for that France which had been bleeding for four years and which was the incarnation of those ideas for which they came to fight, the entire Entente, indeed the whole world, felt that a great hour had come to pass; that for the first time in history, men were coming to fight and die for other things than lands and booty, for other things even than the defense of their soil; in fact, for the highest form of one's native land, for the ideas for which it stands. And we who had decided to die rather than accept slavery, we felt that this time Fate had decided and that Victory, bought at the price of so much ruin and death, was at last coming. And from the other side of the trenches, the German also heard Fate speaking by the voice of the West wind.

"Victory had come, then Peace and then organization of the world of tomorrow, with the settlement of the war miseries, particularly hard to deal with in a country like ours, which saw nearly two millions of its sons die, and an eighth of its territory ruined; in those difficulties of tomorrow, which the French accept bravely, and for which they beg nothing, but for which they accept a friendly and brotherly help, let us always remember our dead; let us remember that Ideal for which they died, that great dream of human Liberty and Justice.

"Some of your dead will continue to rest on our land; do not worry, we will guard them as we guard ours and our women



Cemetery at Is-sur-Tille, Cote d'Or,

Memorial Day, 1920.

will come, on days of celebration, to put flowers on their graves like those which they put on their husbands' and sons' graves; others will be returned to their country; they will not leave France entirely; a little of themselves will stay here, in the clear atmosphere of France; and they will also take with them, mixed with their sacred bodies, a little of the land for which they died.

"And in hours of doubt and trouble, in hours of normal and natural fights for interest, we will feel in ourselves the memory of those dead who fell at the hour when we knew each other so well, because we loved each other, and because we were fighting together for the highest and finest Ideal: and from now on, there shall be, on both sides of the Atlantic, a mysterious and secret bond which will unite the people of America and France, the brotherly friendship of the sons of two great Republics, who died side by side."

Meanwhile, the bereaved ones at home were not forgotten. As an example of the care taken to acquaint them with the proceedings abroad, a list of the American soldier dead in the Municipal Cemetery of Sainte Marie at Havre was submitted by the American Graves Registration Service Headquarters in Paris, to the American Consul General. Afterwards a souvenir record of the Memorial Exercises was sent to the respective families in America. The graves were decorated by the women of the American colony, and there was a French Guard of Honor of two hundred. Photo-

graphs were taken of the adorned graves and sent to the homes, together with a programme of the exercises, a list of the dead, an account of the ceremonies and an explanatory letter.

It would seem that one great secret of the success of the American Graves Registration Service was its understanding of the psychology of human nature, which remembers the loved one always as he was, when in the intimate association of the former daily life, and never as he now is in the grave, after the processes accompanying dissolution; secondly, by its appeal to the age-old longing for companionship, to have those we love nearby, or at least where we can go to them and show that affection by caring for their resting place; and, finally, by that assurance which carries such great satisfaction and comfort to the bereaved ones, namely, that their loved ones will always be cared for; whether in the isolation of a distant island, or assembled together to be once more with their "bunkies" in the great Fields of Honor.

CHAPTER VIII.

METHOD OF OPERATIONS.

The object of the organization in Europe being the exhumation, preparation and shipment of American dead to the United States or to concentration cemeteries in Europe, it was necessary to devise certain regulations governing all aspects of the process which would arise in connection with the carrying out of disinterment authorizations. The principles of procedure were based on four primary needs of the Service. The first essential was the necessity for preserving the identity of the body. The absolute identity of remains was required by the Service in all cases, and every possible precaution was taken and every means exhausted to fulfill this obligation. Enough has already been said about the processes of identification in Europe and the difficulties of many burials, to make it apparent that the utmost care would have to be observed to prevent mistakes, - mistakes which would be most unfortunate in their effects, not only on the relatives concerned, but upon the large body of people who were actually receiving their own dead, but who might become suspicious if instances of error came into the public press. Accordingly, when the organization of the field personnel was determined, the Master of Section, who was a commissioned officer, and his inspector, also a commissioned officer, were responsible for the verification of the identity

of the bodies prepared under their direction, and the inspector was required to verify personally all the evidence connected with the establishment of the name of the deceased. The Master of Section was responsible for the reporting of any burial irregularities which might be discovered in a cemetery in which he was working. Such cases might be:-

- (a) Where more bodies were found in a grave than the marker specified.
- (b) Where supposed graves were opened and no bodies were discovered.
- (c) Where graves were opened for a certain soldier and another's remains were discovered.
- (d) Where cases of improper burial were brought to light.
- (e) Where there were discrepancies between the grave marker and the tag on the body.

In addition, all effects found on the body, after being sterilized, were forwarded to the Headquarters in Paris and later to Washington for record and for use in proving identity where questioned.

It was provided that, when caskets were raised to the surface of the ground, they be taken intact to the nearest favorable location for opening; that they be opened in the presence of an officer; and that in the case of broken or collapsed caskets, a commissioned officer should be present from the time the body was uncovered until the identification was established, or until all investigation possible had been made to determine it. In all cases where identity could not be absolutely assured

after the most thorough search by the Supervisory Embalmer and his assistant, an exact and detailed description was made of the remains, and dental charts were prepared, to indicate the existing conditions. It was pointed out again that in the original burials, identification discs, bottles buried with the body containing burial information, hospital tags attached to uniforms or outer wrappings, and the name of the deceased on the coffin, (tag being tacked thereon or name written in crayon) were methods used to preserve a soldier's name. It was most strictly enjoined that if there were a tag on a body at exhumation, this tag should be allowed to remain there after verification. The Supervisory Embalmer was held responsible that an aluminum strip, bearing the name, rank, organization and cemetery number of the deceased, should be pinned to the blanket in which the body was finally wrapped.

Regarding dental charts, instructions were most rigid that a hard pencil should be used to show size and position of fillings or cavities, whether on the face or sides of the teeth, according to actual investigation. It must be stated whether fillings were gold, silver or composition. Where necessary, teeth must be cleaned with water. Where teeth had been removed before death, it was necessary to state "Extracted"; if after death, it was remarked on the chart "Missing." The most complete statement possible regarding all things found on the body had to be made.

To make certain that an identity once established should be preserved and that there should be a record of everyone who had anything to do with the preparation and shipment of the remains of a particular soldier, G.R.S. Form 114 was furnished, which was a complete report of disinterment, preparation and shipment. It covered the following principal points. First, the records of the Cemeterial Division in Washington, which cover the man's name, number, rank, organization, date of death, cause of death, with a column for discrepancies discovered upon examination of the body, which would alter any of the data furnished by Washington. The next section of the report covered the grave location, as known at Headquarters, and a discrepancy column to show wherein the actual findings might differ. This was followed by a full account of the location, name and code number of the cemetery, the date of disinterment, the inscription found on the grave marker, and whether or not an identification disc had been found on the grave marker and on the body. These latter points were subscribed to by the junior technical assistant. If any other means of identification were discovered on a body, they were indicated in the blank spaces on the form. The condition of the body and nature of the burial were reported; the date it was prepared and placed in the casket, as well as the name of the man sealing the casket were given - statements which were vouched for by the signature of the Supervisory Embalmer. Regarding shipment, the consignee of the body was usually indicated

by Washington and the date of marking the shipping case was indicated on the form by the field party. All statements and remarks were finally certified to by the Commanding Officer witnessing the disinterment. The form traveled with the body; the names of all convoyers, with dates of shipment and of receipt at port were indicated as the body went from point to point, while the final signature was made by the Port Officer who vouched for the ship on which the remains had been consigned to the United States.

Furthermore, to make certain that there would be no tampering with the aluminum strip tacked to the exterior of the shipping case, it was finally determined that the stencilling on the outer case should be made in the cemetery itself.

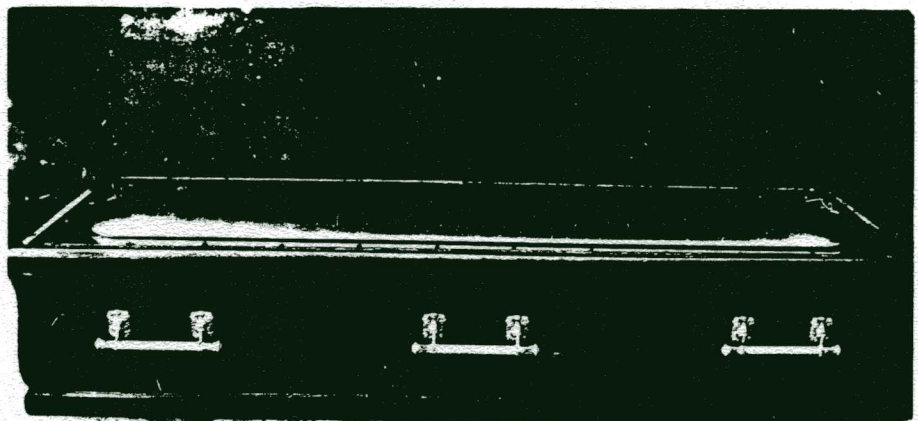
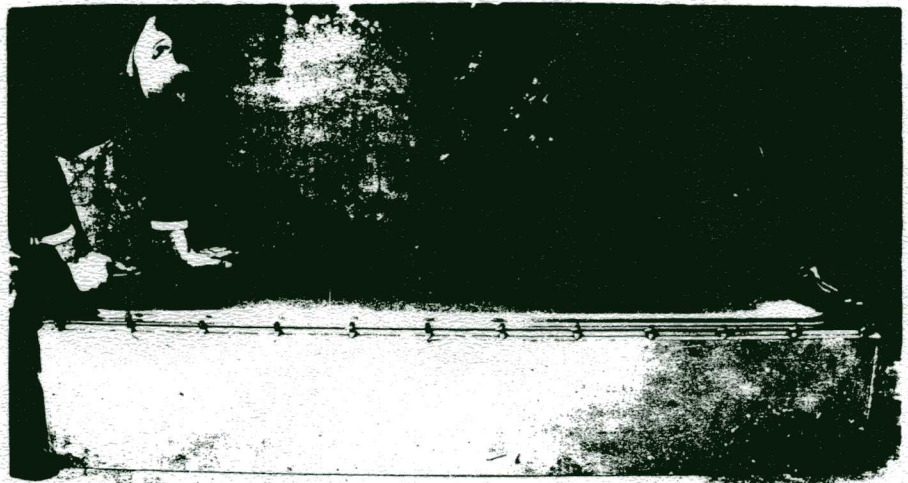
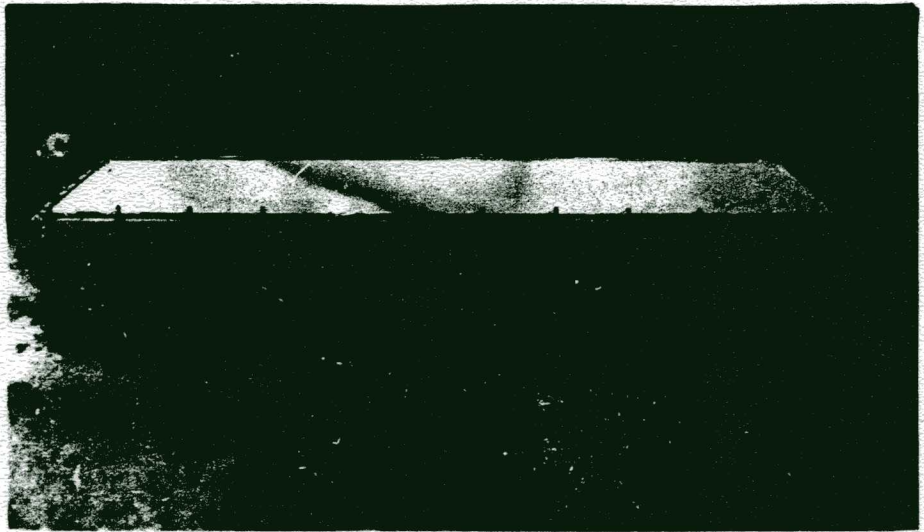
The second great need which influenced the formulation of the principles of field service was the necessity for observing the best rules of hygiene. It was necessary from the first to realize that throughout operations of this Service, the just rights of the living took precedence over the desires and plans of everyone, consequently an hygienic means had to be devised which would protect the personnel performing the operations and would also protect the vicinity in which the exhumations were made from the dangers of infection or of contamination from the exposure of bodies which had been in the process of decomposition for many months.

There was in France and Great Britain a certain body

of opinion which feared the opening of old graves on the score of contamination, and the authorities in both France and Great Britain had to be satisfied that the wholesale disinterments which were contemplated by this Service would at all times be so regulated as to safeguard the interests of the population. The first essential was the use of a metallic casket which would be so constructed as to preclude any chance of the escape of germs or the fluid used in the preparation of the body. After some investigation, it was found that satisfactory coffins were not procurable in Europe. During the North Russia Expedition, some caskets had been bought in London, but they were found unsatisfactory, and it was the experience of this Service in exhuming bodies of our dead in France which had been placed in metallic caskets at the time of death or after, that in almost all cases they were not fit for use in transporting remains. Accordingly, contracts for caskets were placed in the United States, and shipment was made to various ports in France and England as the needs of the Service directed. In the first instance, careless inspection and the exigencies of shipping brought it about that a large percentage of the caskets received were found defective upon arrival. This made it necessary to establish, at the ports of receipt, workrooms at which a thorough inspection of every casket was made, so as to insure that when finally sent to the field party, it would be in absolutely serviceable shape. The accompanying photo-

graphs show the type of casket that was determined upon in the United States as the standard, and the remarks which will now be made as to the precautions taken to insure their good condition, apply to these drawings and will be more intelligible if reference is made to them. The Port Officers were instructed to examine the exterior of the case to see if it were in perfect condition. If any defects were discovered after they had noted the securing screws, iron strappings and handles on securing brace, they must be specifically stated. The casket was then examined with particular attention focussed on whether there were any cracks or other damage in the lid; whether the finish were marred; whether the molding were in good condition; whether the lugs that held the metallic lining were all in place; whether the hold-down screws on the lid were bent or disfigured; whether the rubber gaskets were in good condition; whether all the seams and joints were perfectly constructed. The metallic lining itself was given an air or water test, to make certain that there was no leakage of any kind. Where any was discovered, the necessary soldering was done. For the purpose of making necessary corrections in the United States, a careful check was kept of the manufacturer's name, the American inspector and all information which might be available in fixing blame for damaged caskets.

After inspection and repair had been completed, each casket was provided with a blanket and sheet, muslin excelsior



pads and wiping cloth. The original addresses on the shipping cases were all removed, shipping case handles were protected where necessary, and the caskets sent to the field parties in such quantities as had been requisitioned. If, after the final preparation of the body and the return of the casket to the port with the remains therein, any defects were found, it was directed that in no instance would a body be shipped from a port to the United States until the remains had been transferred to a proper container.

The other precautions necessary for the preservation of hygienic laws were, of course, those which were observed in the cemetery itself. All unauthorized persons were excluded from the vicinity of operations and, so far as possible, the work itself was done in inclosures or tents. The technical supervision of the work was under the direction of the supervisory embalmer, who was responsible for the observance of all local sanitary and mortuary laws. He had a technical assistant and a checker to keep the necessary data, while there was a squad of laborers who performed the actual work of opening the graves, raising the body and carrying it where necessary. While the excavation was in process, the supervisory embalmer and his assistant prepared the casket and arranged the material for the treatment and reception of remains. As soon as the casket was opened and the remains uncovered, they were liberally treated with disinfectant fluid. When practicable, the outer wrapping

of the body was removed and a final search made for identification tag or marks. After the establishment of identity, which, in the majority of cases, occupied but three or four minutes, the body was placed upon a clean blanket and treated with fluid according to the prescribed method and wrapped so that the remains should appear in the most presentable condition, according to the best undertaking practice. The aluminum strip and the disc taken from the cross were pinned to the blanket over the chest of the remains, and the body was then placed in the metallic case. After this the whole was covered with a clean sheet, and sufficient muslin excelsior pads were placed over the remains to prevent shifting during transportation. The metallic lid was securely fastened down and sealed. A coat of asphaltum paint was used on the rubber gaskets to secure perfect sealing. The supervisory embalmer was held responsible for the proper performance of this task; for the fact that all dirt and stains were removed from the metallic case and casket top, and, finally, that the lid of the casket and of the shipping case were firmly secured in place.

The solution used in the preparation of the body was approximately five per cent of cresolis compositis and about four ounces of necrosan sprayed over the body. The variation in the condition of exhumed bodies, however, was constantly recognized, and the Section Commander was informed that it was his duty to see that the bodies were properly pre-

pared for shipment and that every step was taken to deodorize, disinfect and preserve the remains shipped. If, in individual cases, the formula laid down by higher authority could not possibly carry out its object, the Section Commander had to use his discretion and perform the work properly. Upon completion of the work in a cemetery, it was the duty of the operations party to make certain that all pieces of old caskets that might be contaminated and any other possible disease-producing agency should be destroyed. The Area Supervisor was also informed forty-eight hours before the completion of work in a cemetery, so that he might be ready with his laborers to assist in its cleaning up, if necessary.

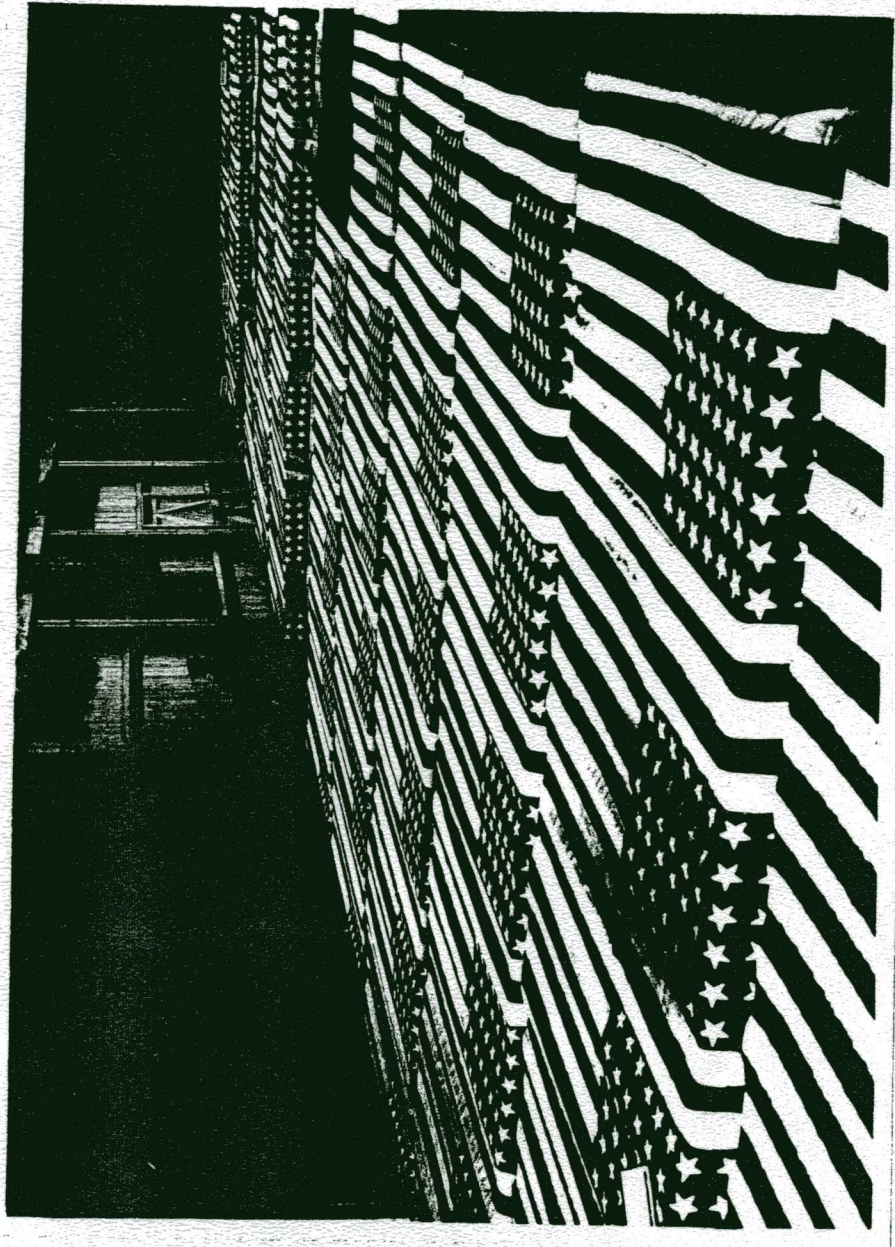
The third great need found in devising regulations was the necessity for securing safety in transportation. Only those experienced in the handling of freight have any conception of the manifold difficulties which arise in connection therewith. The trivial errors that occur make all the difference in the world between proper performance of shipment and the loss or damage to the consignment; thus the movement of forty or more thousand bodies presented a somewhat difficult question in freight management. Every shipping case weighed between five and seven hundred pounds and occupied about one measurement ton space. The bulky nature of the containers and the need for unusual care in handling the dead caused the establishment and refinement of the processes of moving and loading which will

be indicated.

At the ports were established, as well as conditions would permit, morgues for the storage of one thousand or more bodies, and these morgues were placed, wherever possible, in close proximity to the point at which a transport would dock to move them. The Port Officers were directed to receive bodies brought in by convey from the field parties and were responsible that the supplies they sent to the field parties were in every way serviceable. On the arrival of a transport, the Port Officers were responsible that the hold was properly cleaned, that the stevedores did their work satisfactorily and that, after the shipping case had been stowed away, the caskets would be lashed and made safe for their trip by the use of dunnage.

On all movements of caskets from the field to temporary concentration points near the cemeteries where exhumations occurred and on the ocean voyage to New York, the remains were always accompanied by American convoyers, who were responsible for the safe delivery of the body. During the voyage this conveyer was required to examine the hold every day, when such examination was possible, and to satisfy himself that no accidents occurred in transit.

The final need which governed the regulations to the field service was the necessity for insuring respectful treatment of bodies. It was essential that nothing should occur which outsiders might see and report as being callous or dis-



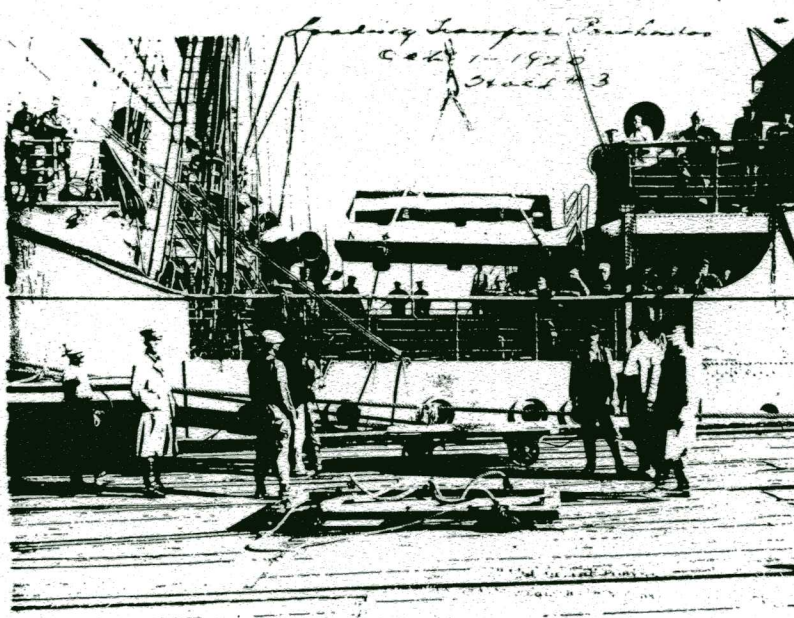
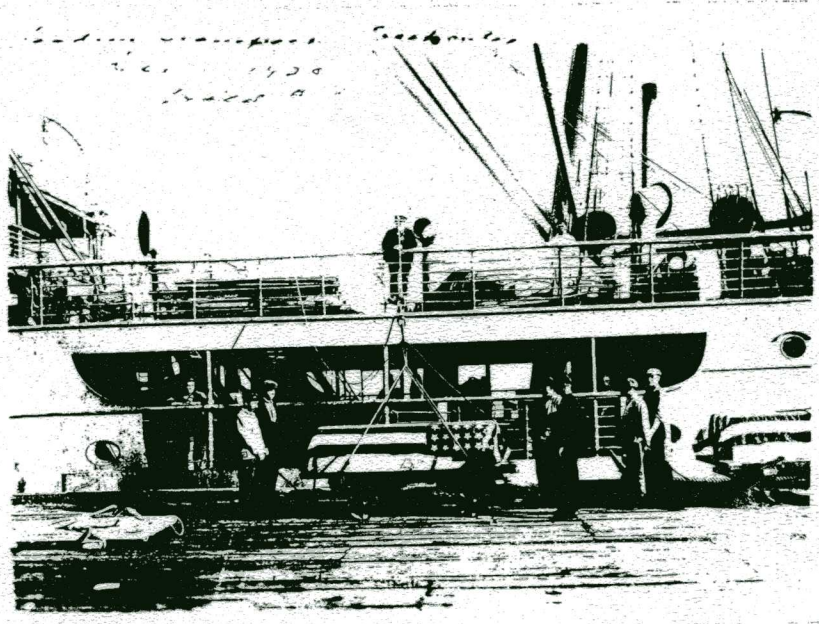
Bodies of American Dead on the dock, Calais,
awaiting shipment to the United States.

respectful. Under these circumstances, it was deemed necessary to demand such care as might slightly increase the expenses of the operations rather than that by using ordinary stevedoring and transportation methods, unfavorable criticism should arise. It was enjoined upon all personnel of the Service that all operations in connection with the removal of the dead must be conducted in a dignified and reverent manner. This General Order was followed by instructions that the shipping cases, on their return to port, should be carefully scrubbed and that an excessive amount of water should not be used, to guard against the chance of leakage into the caskets from the outside. The morgue at the ports was carefully cleaned and, where practicable, whitewashed. Its walls were draped suitably with flags, and the shipping cases containing the bodies were aligned and evenly spaced and covered with the American flag. Boxes were placed in tiers only when floor space was insufficient for the number awaiting shipment. Extreme precautions were taken to guard against fire. No smoking was allowed in the building, and the arrangement, cleanliness and its decoration aimed to be such as to suggest the spirit of decorum and respect due the dead. Guards were kept over the bodies of exhumed soldiers at all times and at all points of concentration and storage. Employees were forbidden to ride upon or lean against the shipping cases. There was at all times a Guard of Honor of enlisted men of the Army on duty during the loading of vessels, and a

commissioned officer was always present to observe the proper carrying out of the spirit of these regulations. Bodies were loaded on the ship singly by means of the standard platform, and a flag was draped on each shipping case while it was being moved from the dock to the interior of the vessel. Where it was necessary to walk upon caskets within the ship, paulins were placed over them, so that the shipping case would not be marked by footprints of the stevedores. Wherever possible the casket was carried into place after being lowered into the hold, although under certain conditions it was permissible to use rollers.

The above principles of procedure were suggested in outline by the Cemeterial Division in Washington at the commencement of operations. They were tested and expanded during the operations of the Service, and were finally codified by the office of the Quartermaster General in Washington. No regulations could be made in advance to cover all contingencies that might occur in so complicated a project, and orders were necessarily given to cover unusual and special conditions as they arose. In the main, however, it was possible to protect the interests of all who were concerned in the movement of these bodies, and the outline of the precautions enjoined indicates only the external regulations issued. The important thing was the willingness of the personnel of the Service to exert every effort to carry out their spirit and not quibble about the application of parti-

ocular injunctions to unusual cases. This spirit was always manifested, and to it is due the measure of success that the work achieved.



Loading Transport "Pocahontas" at St. Nazaire.

CHAPTER IX.

OPERATIONS. ZONE OF GREAT BRITAIN.

1.

The relations of the American Army with the British Government were always unique. Similarity of language and customs made intercourse easy and understanding a quickly accomplished fact. Formal liaison was usually superseded by immediate contact between the officers concerned, a procedure which made for the speedy as well as efficient performance of duty. The movement of about one million men through England during war-time and the concentration for training there of thousands of others were only possible because of the mutual confidence felt and because of the ease of carrying on the project. The very magnitude of American troop movements there made it inevitable that cemeteries would have to be provided and that some system must be devised for properly caring for the dead. It was not anticipated that the losses would be heavy in the district covered by Base Section No. 3, and this expectation would have been fulfilled except for the three circumstances which could not be foreseen, - the influenza epidemic and the wrecks of the "Otranto" and the "Tuscania."

The largest single cause of death in England was that form of pneumonia known popularly as "flu", a cause which filled the cemeteries at the rest camps at Knotty Ash, Liverpool; Magdalen Hill, Winchester; Paignton; the smaller cemeteries near

Southampton, and the cemetery at Glasgow, which became a receiving station for the dead and dying taken from convoys as they reached England from the United States. In October, 1918 mortality was so great throughout England that there was a serious shortage of caskets everywhere, a stringency that was of course felt by the Army authorities. The second great cause of death was the loss of the "Otranto" and the "Tuscania" off the Island of Islay, a circumstance that brought about the creation of various small cemeteries off the western coast of Scotland. The principal remaining causes of death were aeroplane accidents and the small percentage of disease from natural causes that might have been expected from the transport of so large a number of soldiers. The loss was about .24 of one per cent of the men passing through, but when it is considered that their stay in England averaged only about five days or less, it is apparent that influenza claimed a heavy toll among Americans there.

The 2,436 burials were scattered among ninety-nine cemeteries, the following being the six largest:-

Magdalen Hill (Winchester)	with 552 burials
Everton (Liverpool)	" 639 "
Kilchoman (Islay)	" 315 "
Brookwood (Surrey)	" 132 "
Craigton (Glasgow)	" 112 "
Paignton (Devonshire)	" 100 "

In the total were included twenty-six graves in three cemeteries in Ireland. In England proper there were eighty burial grounds

totaling 1,786 graves; in Scotland, fifteen, totaling six hundred and twenty-three graves and in Wales but one burial.

From practically the beginning of the creation of British cemeteries, the United States was freed from the burden of maintaining the burial places. On May 7, 1918 the American Ambassador was informed that, in response to a request made by the Military authorities for certain cemeterial space, the Army Council had taken steps to acquire the necessary land, but "they trust that they may have the privilege of undertaking all the expenses of the purchase and maintenance of the graves as a small mark of their appreciation of the service of the United States to the cause of the 'Allies.'" This letter, after being forwarded to Washington, was answered by Secretary Lansing as follows: "I am requested by the Secretary of War and Secretary of the Navy to ask you to convey to the Foreign Office and the Army Council, the expression of the high appreciation with which the War and Navy Departments accept this graceful offer on the part of the Council.

"It is desired, however, and it should be understood and so expressed in any formal document that may be involved, that the privilege is reserved of bringing to the United States, after the prohibitory exigencies of the war shall have passed, the remains of such of our soldiers and sailors whose final interment in the United States may be desired by their relatives." Accordingly, Ambassador Page, on July 23, 1918, in a letter to

the Right Honorable Arthur Balfour, accepted the offer of the British Government, an arrangement which lasted throughout the operations in Great Britain.

The manner of maintenance adopted by the British Government to carry out their agreement was similar to their own system of maintaining military burials. The upkeep of cemeteries was under the control of the Commanders of the various military districts in Great Britain. Communication regarding upkeep of our cemeteries was made through the British War Office which referred the question to the particular Commander concerned. An inspection of cemeteries in England in the summer of 1919 showed that the British pledge was being satisfactorily kept. The graves had all been marked with the regulation crosses by representatives of the Graves Registration Service, and indeed there had been two or three Graves Registration Service officers permanently on duty at Headquarters of Base Section No. 3, from 1918 until the establishment of exhumation headquarters in London. (The first steps in effecting exhumations which had been made by the War Department in Great Britain were taken by Ambassador Davis in December, 1919, when he asked for authority to make such disinterments as would be directed by the Washington authorities. Earl Curzon, of Kedleston, the Head of the Foreign Office, replied that authority which he had given on the 7th of May, 1919 for permitting the exhumation of naval dead would govern in the present case and that the American Army could pro-

ceed with its work. He stated that both the Foreign Office and the War Office would be glad to assist in the project in any particular, and he stated that the General Officer Commanding-in-Chief of each Command in the United Kingdom, who was responsible for the care and maintenance of American soldiers' graves within the limits of his Command, and who was in possession of complete records of such graves, was being informed in regard to the exhumation and transfer to the United States of these soldiers and was being instructed to render all possible help. Reference to the procedure under which naval and soldier dead could be disinterred in England was the following:-

"In the case of men interred in England and Wales, the application for the necessary license, which should be addressed to the Secretary of the Home Department, should be made separately in respect of each burial ground from which it is desired to remove any remains. Each application should state the name, with date and cause of death, of each person whose remains it is desired to remove, and if the removal involves the disturbance of any remains of any other persons, the same particulars should also be furnished with respect to each such person. In cases of death from infectious disease, the license might be made operative only after the expiration of a period of three months from the date of death, and in cases of death from certain specially malignant diseases the presence of a skilled pathologist would be necessary at the exhumation.

"In the case of burials in Scotland the power to authorize disinterment is vested in the Sheriff. On receipt of a list of the burial grounds in Scotland, containing the bodies of members of the United States Navy, the Secretary for Scotland will be prepared to assist the United States Naval authorities by giving information as to the Courts in which application for exhumation should be made.

"Where members of the United States Navy have been interred in Ireland, on receipt of a statement showing:

(1) The cemeteries in Ireland in which the remains of these officers and men were interred.

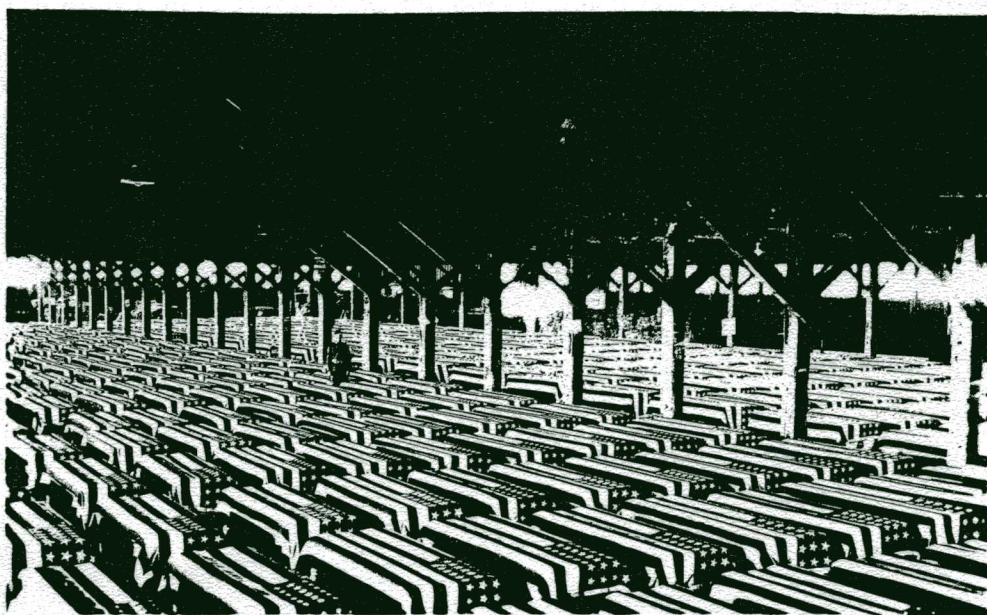
(2) The names of the above mentioned persons interred in each cemetery, and

(3) The cause of death in the case of each person, the Viceroy will be prepared to approach the Sanitary and Cemetery Authorities with a view to the issue of the necessary consents for exhumation, and in all cases in which such consents are given will cause instructions to be issued to the Irish Police not to interfere with the agents of the United States Navy Department in exhuming and transferring the remains of the deceased officers and men in question." The license, when delivered by the officer in charge of field operations, to the burial authority, was sufficient to enable the forces to begin work in that cemetery, with the one exception of bodies which had been buried in consecrated ground of the Church of England.

In these cases, in addition to the Home Office authority, petition had to be made to the Bishop of the Diocese in which the cemetery was located, for a removal authority. Prices of these ecclesiastical permits varied from £ 4/4 to £ 7/7.

Thus the way was cleared for immediate operations throughout Great Britain.) The organization for the Zone of Great Britain was effected as outlined in Chapter III, and the first consignment of caskets, two hundred and one in number, was received at Southampton on the S.S. "Martha Washington" in December. The arrival of civilian personnel on this boat permitted plans to be made for the beginning of operations. These plans included the immediate setting up of a Port Office and Field Headquarters at Southampton, since it was contemplated that it would be advisable, owing to weather conditions, to begin work in southern England. Through the kindness of the War Office, half a dozen former British Army barracks were secured at Swaythling Camp, near Southampton, - buildings which were utilized by the Port Officer, Major Nichols, as offices, carpenter shop, morgue and casket storage rooms. His first motor transport was secured by public hire and the condition of supplies from America was investigated. It was here that the first difficulty was experienced with caskets, a difficulty which pursued the Service to the end of this period. The caskets (originally manufactured for the United States Navy, but turned over to the Army in order to admit of immediate operations) had been

inefficiently inspected in the United States and their long sea trip did not better their condition. The result was that in order to secure sanitary containers, each casket had to be thoroughly inspected and, in many cases, completely rebuilt before they were fit for use. This consumed considerable time.



Bodies awaiting shipment at Southampton.

inasmuch as it had not been previously contemplated that an establishment for this work would have to be created. There was naturally a shortage of spare parts on hand, for similar reasons.

The first exhumation in Europe was made at Ann's Hill, Gosport, February 3, 1920. It was not, however, until the first week in March that major exhumation activities actually began

by the disinterment of forty-four bodies from Paignton Cemetery in Devonshire. The first shipment from England consisted of eighteen bodies from the neighborhood of Southampton which were dispatched to the United States on the S.S. "Northern Pacific" leaving Portsmouth February 23rd.

When operations were well advanced in the south of England, and when increased personnel made expansion of activities feasible, arrangements were made through the War Office to secure certain British Army hutments near Liverpool. These accommodations were intended to take care of disinterments made in the central and northern parts of England and in Scotland. The Port Office was established at 79 Banastre Street, Liverpool.

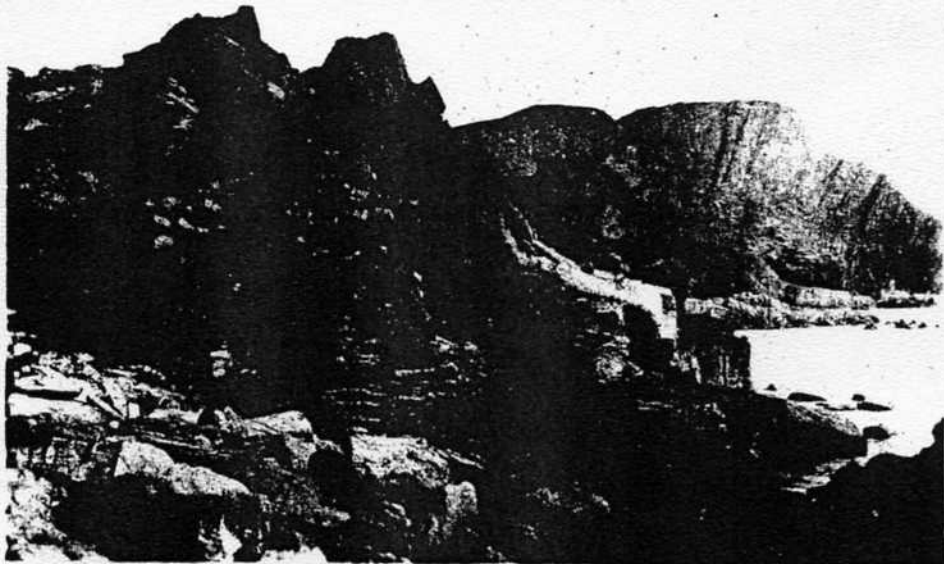
There were no serious difficulties encountered in Great Britain, with the exception of the operations conducted on the Island of Islay, - operations which were so interesting in their nature and so complicated in execution that they may be considered the most important achievement of the field parties of the Graves Registration Service during this period. It is consequently thought to be sufficient expression of the activities of this Zone if a complete description of the Islay project is given.

2.

The Island of Islay is one of the bleak and desolate islands off the west coast of Scotland and north of Ireland. Its

coasts are among the most dangerous to navigators of all the waters adjacent to the British Isles.

Shortly before dusk, February 5, 1918, the "Tuscania", while proceeding as a member of the convoy of transports bound for Glasgow, was torpedoed off the southwest coast of this Island. A large portion of the ship's complement of troops was rescued through the efficient work of the British destroyers



summoned for aid against the attack of the Hun submarine. The other ships of the convoy were under orders not to stop if an accident should befall one of their members, as to do so would be to increase the chances of the loss of other ships of the convoy. The majority of the troops on the "Tuscania" were safely

taken off by these destroyers before the ship sank. Unfortunately, however, over a hundred of the American troops on board lost their lives, and in the course of the next day and the day following, the bodies of most of the victims were washed up on the shore of the Island, the majority being found near Port Ellen. There were also one or two individuals who were washed ashore and who survived the effects of their experience. To the people of the Island great credit is due for their tireless and unselfish efforts to assist in every way and to alleviate the sufferings of these survivors. The majority of the victims of the



"Tuscania" were buried in Port Ellen Cemetery on the south coast of the Island. There were, however, several score found fifteen or twenty miles along the coastline near Port Charlotte where there was also a large cemetery. Between these two points, two other groups of victims were cast ashore. Ten of these were

buried within one hundred yards of the coast in a little cove, one of many which indent the coastline.

Only a hundred yards further along the coast were forty-four more graves and, though the distance in a straight line between the two cemeteries is so short, it is necessary, because of the high cliffs intervening, to walk and climb almost a mile to get from one to the other.

Immediately in front of Kinibus Cemetery is a large rock, fifty feet in diameter, which at high tide juts upward at a sharp angle from the raging surf. It may be seen in the distance on the accompanying photograph. It was here that the Chief Constable of Port Ellen, at considerable personal risk, rescued one of the survivors who had still enough strength to



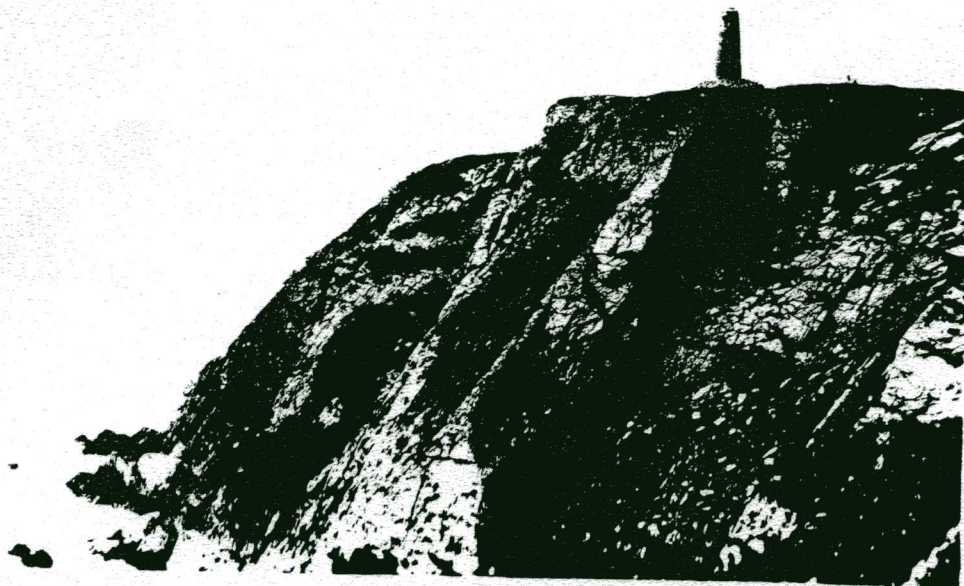
cling to this rock. The Chief Constable, amongst others of the Islanders, was drawn to the scene through hopes of rendering what aid might be possible. Seeing this survivor clinging to the highest point of this huge rock and in danger of being drawn back by the waves into the sea at any moment, he watched his opportunity and, taking a coil of rope, leaped down onto another similar rock nearby. Between successive waves he managed to hurl the rope to the man on the rock and get back on higher ground himself before the next breaker came in. The rescue party, after the survivor had made himself fast with the rope, was able to bring him safely ashore. The photograph of this rock gives a better idea of the courage and skill required to accomplish this rescue than is possible by a mere description.

The Island is very sparsely populated, there being only a couple of thousand people scattered among the five main villages, three of which are ports. The activities of the Island consist solely of sheep-raising, peat-cutting and, last but not least, distilling of Scotch whiskey. The principal business man and land-owner of the Island, John Ramsay, the proprietor of most of the above mentioned distilleries, was instrumental in rendering considerable assistance on the occasion of both disasters by directing his employees to assist in the work of rescue.

Within a few yards of the cemetery are to be seen the life-boats of the wreckage of the "Tuscania" as a realistic reminder of the disaster. Several of the bodies of the "Tuscania"

victims were carried almost eighty miles by the tide and currents of these waters and were finally found on the shore of the Isle of Mull.

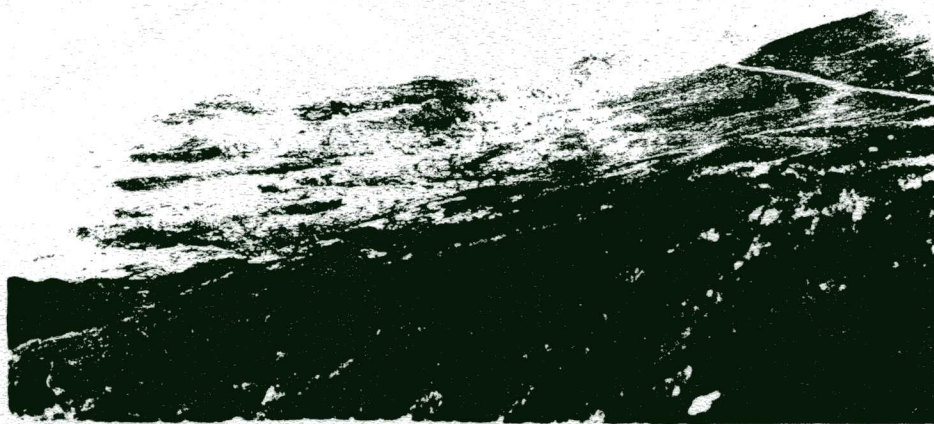
Almost eight months to the day of the first disaster which so stirred the inhabitants of this little Island, another loss was sustained in the destruction of the "Otranto." This ship was not torpedoed, however, but during a raging southwest gale, collided with another ship of the convoy while still many miles away from Islay.



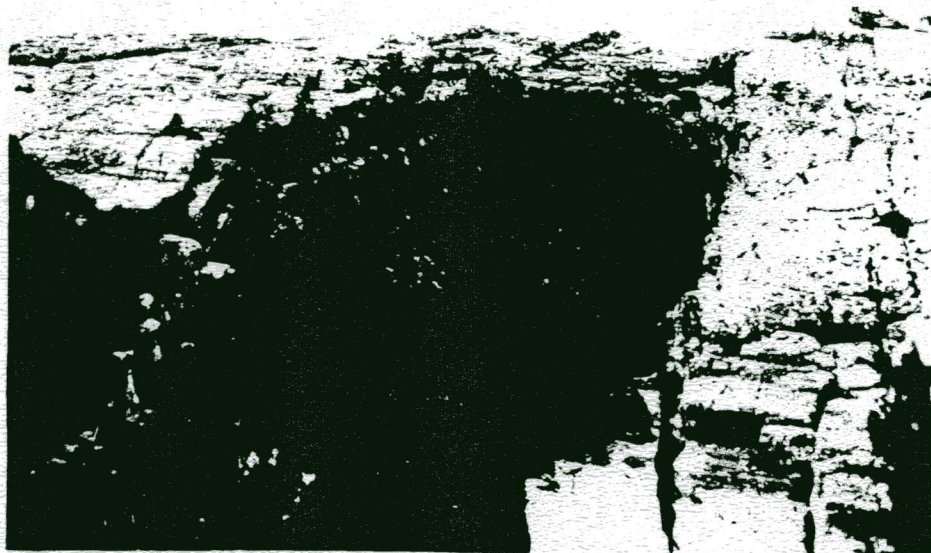
Proper control of the ship was rendered impossible through damage sustained in the collision, and, in a helpless condition, she was driven by the gale to practically the same point near which the "Tuscania" met her fate. Again, however,

the destroyers were able to rescue some of the troops before the ship sank, but the storm was so intense and the sea so high that the work of removing any of those on board was extremely hazardous to the "Otranto" and the rescuing destroyers alike, and the fact that any at all were taken off under these conditions is a high tribute to the seamanship of the rescuers.

After being driven for several hours in the teeth of the gale, the "Otranto" finally struck the west coast of Islay, at a point close to Kilchoman. Just at this spot is one of the few smooth stretches of beach to be found on the whole Island, but unfortunately, the "Otranto", instead of being washed ashore on the sand, struck the last bit of rocky reef to be found for the next mile and a half along the coast. A matter of one hundred and fifty yards further north on the same course (N-NE) would have meant comparative safety, as in that case those on board would have had only the sea to combat and would have had more chance of surviving than was the case when they were washed



against the last portion of this rocky coast. As it was, the "Otranto" actually struck within one hundred yards of the shore and then started to break up. The troops on board, though equipped with life preservers, and even though some were good swimmers, were at a terrible disadvantage in their fight for safety because of the extremely rough nature of the rocks along the shore at this point. The shoreline is indented by deep crevasses worn in the course of time by the small creeks running down from the high cliffs. It was in several of these larger crevasses that the majority of the "Otranto" victims were found, although a few were fortunate enough to escape the rocks and were washed up on the sandy beach a little further along the coast.



This particular portion of the coast is very lonely.

there being a small village called "Kilchoman", consisting of only a church and schoolhouse, "The Manse", and the cottage of a family named McPhee. A half mile away is the home of another family named Clark. In another direction and south along the coast are the huts of some shepherds, and with the exception of these there are no habitations within five miles. The wreck of the "Otranto" was discovered by one of these shepherds, who sent his mate to notify the minister at Kilchoman, Mr. Donald Grant. Mr. Grant in turn sent word for help to Bridgend, the nearest point having a telephone, five miles away, and then with the McPhee and Clark families, joined the shepherds in the work of rescue at the shore. Unfortunately, through the nature of the aforementioned rocks, most of those washed ashore were beyond any help when reached, but through the untiring efforts of this little handful of rescuers, more than a score were finally resuscitated. Mr. Grant placed his entire residence and all of his resources at the disposal of the survivors, as did also the McPhee and Clark families, and they were later reinforced in their work by the arrival of every available person on the Island who could possibly get to the scene. The oldest inhabitants on the Island state that never within their memory had there been such a storm as that which raged on the morning of October 6, 1918. A Ford car with six men coming to the rescue was blown completely off the road by the terrific wind. The wreckage of the ship is still to be seen far above any suc-

ceeding tide or high water mark.

As soon as word of the catastrophe was received, a rescue party from the mainland arrived, in charge of Lieut. Jeffries, A.R.C., with blankets, first-aid requisites, etc. They were followed by a company of British troops, who at once began the task of turning over the immense quantity of debris and wreckage with which the crevasses were filled, and thereby recovered many additional bodies of the victims. The bodies were then carried a mile and a half over very rough ground to the churchyard at Kilchoman. Identification of the victims was there completed, and the bodies were buried in the cemetery established at Kilchoman on the edge of the bluff overlooking the sea and within a mile of the spot where the "Tuscania" struck. There were about three hundred and fifteen American soldiers buried there, together with the Captain of the R.M.S. "Otranto" and eighty British seamen, members of the crew. The funeral ser-



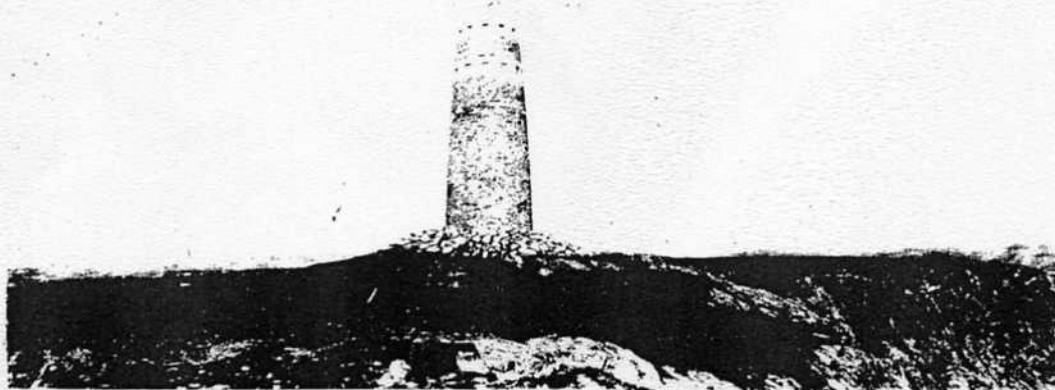
vices for the victims were conducted by the Reverend Mr. Grant; the natural impressiveness of the scene under such circumstances and the rough setting of the surrounding country were added to by the presence of the British troops and Scotch pipers playing the traditional Scotch funeral march, "Flowers of the Forest." A firing squad added the last military rites.



The requirements for a proper burial of over three hundred men at one time severely taxed the resources of the little Island, but the unceasing efforts and toil of the inhabitants, troops, and all others concerned, were undertaken in a most creditable manner. Each year thereafter, on the 30th of May, there were Memorial Services held in all

of these five little cemeteries on the Island, and the school children decorated each individual grave with flowers, wreaths and floral tributes sent by the various American Welfare Societies.

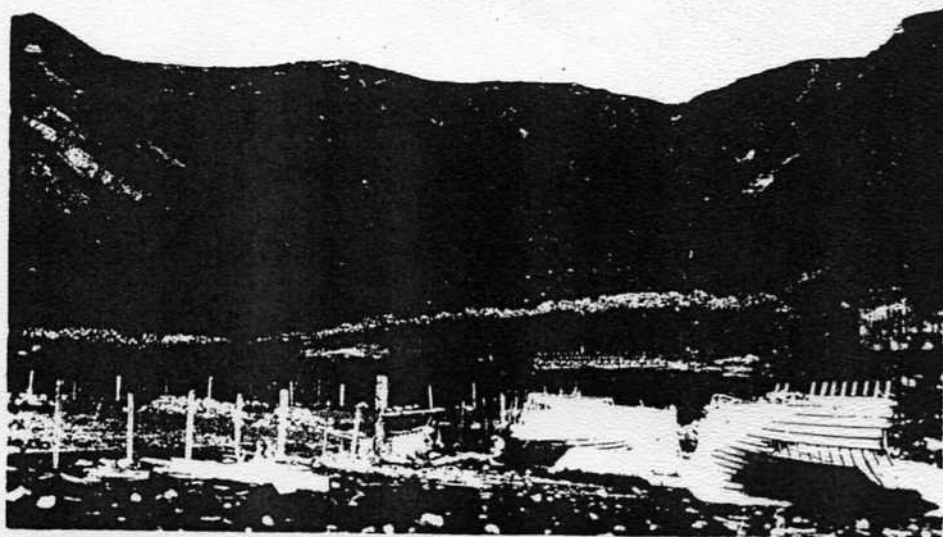
On the southwest extremity of the Island is a long projecting cliff which rises three hundred feet above the sea, and on the top of this the American Red Cross has erected a beautiful monument as a lasting memorial to those who lost their lives for liberty in nearby waters. At the base of this monument, towards the sea, is a wreath cast in bronze which was sent as a personal tribute from President Wilson. On a clear day the monument can be seen over fifty miles out at sea, and in years to come it will be a constant reminder to many passengers, sailing over the same course in perfect safety, of the sacrifice made by those who sailed their final course in 1918 to make the seas safe.



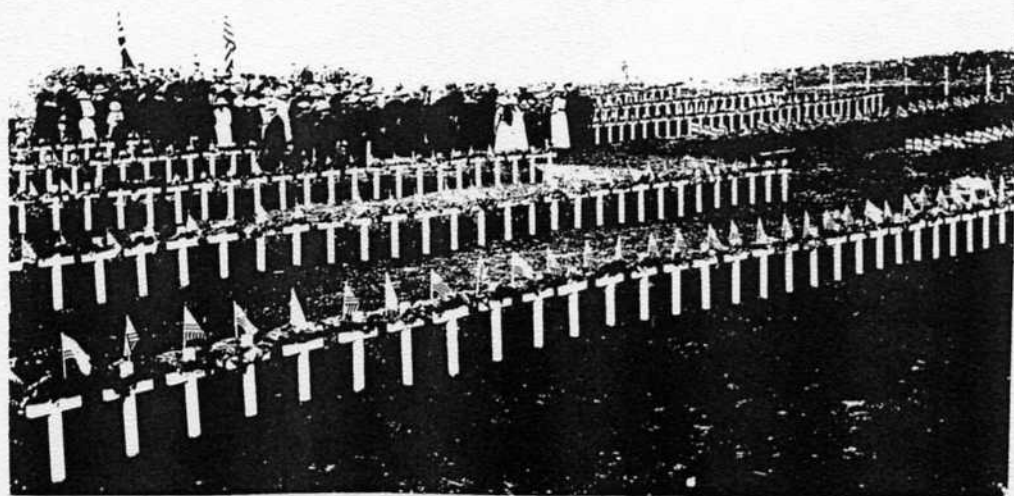
The foregoing account makes clear the reasons for and the circumstances under which the burials were made in this remote spot.

Effecting their disinterment involved considerable investigation of conditions of transport to and on the Island, and of living conditions there. In the middle of June, the Commanding Officer submitted to the Chief a report of a visit to the Island of Islay made by Mr. C.B. Henderson, his chief transportation clerk in England. He found a steamship line which had daily sailings, except Sunday, from Glasgow to Islay, a trip which took from 8 A.M. to 4:30 P.M. In addition to this steamship, cargo boats ran weekly from Glasgow to all ports on the Island. He found that Port Ellen, the principal port, had accommodations for vessels at low tide of a draught not exceeding twelve feet six inches. This made the visit of an American Army Transport impossible. The distances of cemeteries from Port Ellen was also an important matter, owing to the local transportation problems which would arise. It was found that from Port Ellen to Kilnaughton Cemetery was a distance of two miles; Killeyan and Kinnibush Cemeteries, eight miles; Kilchoman Cemetery, twenty-five miles and to Port Charlotte Cemetery, twenty-one miles. The roads were mostly hardened ones, twelve and thirteen feet in width, and there were a number of small stone bridges which would bear a gross weight of seven or eight tons.

Kilnaughton Cemetery was under the jurisdiction of the Laird of the Kildalton States, and the burial records were all in charge of the Laird's Chief Clerk, Mr. Colin Campbell. The ground occupied by this Cemetery was a plot 95' x 65', inclosed



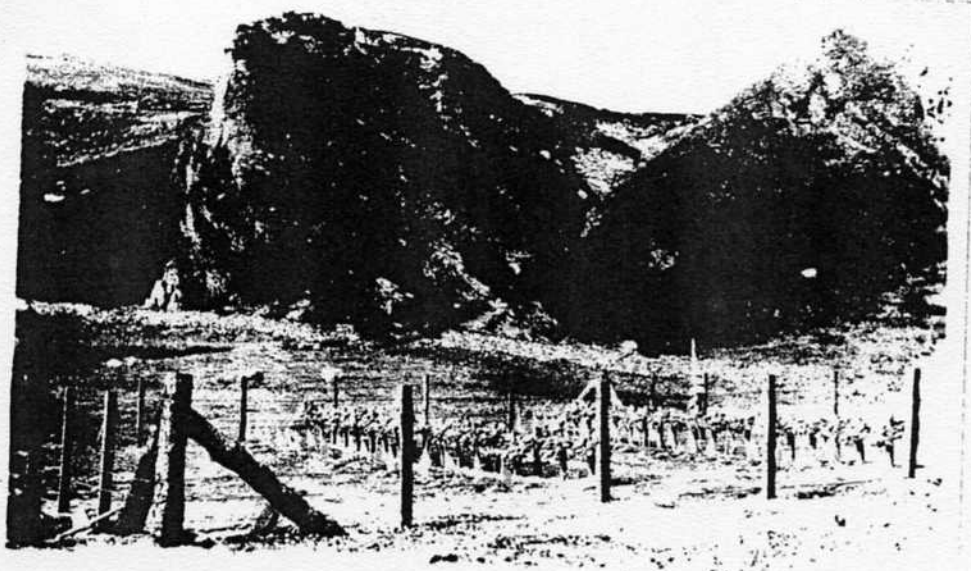
Tuscania life-boats in foreground. Kinibus
Cemetery in background - May, 1919.



by a stone fence, ground that was conveyed by deed to the American Red Cross by the Laird, Capt. Ramsay. There was space available within the stone fence inclosure for the erection of a Marquee tent where operations could be carried on and where storage could be effected until such time as caskets could be hauled to Port Ellen. Kinibus Cemetery, lying close to the shore, could be reached from the road only by a descent of from seven hundred to eight hundred feet by a zig-zag path leading from the plateau to the shore. Access to Killeyan Cemetery was similarly only possible by a descent more difficult than that of Kinibus. It was obviously not practicable to carry the shipping cases down to these two cemeteries, the weight being against such a procedure; moreover, the nature of the coast made it impossible to land them by water. It was accordingly determined that wooden stretchers would have to be used to carry the bodies to the top of the precipice before putting them in the coffins and shipping cases. Port Charlotte Cemetery, while a considerable distance from Port Ellen, presented no transportation difficulties. Kilchoman was similarly accessible. Near all the cemeteries it was found that there were citizens who were glad to furnish storage space. No wheel transportation could be relied upon in Islay, and it was necessary to take government lorries there. As for labor, it was apparent that it was practically unprocurable; accordingly, it was determined to take seventy-nine laborers from Liverpool to attend to the disinterment operations as well as the loading



Otranto wreckage in deep crevasse where
majority of victims were found.



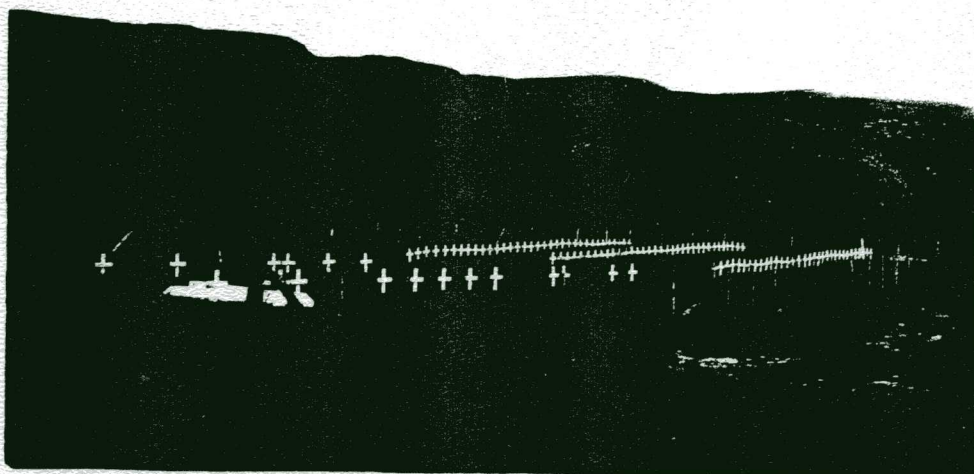
Kinibus Cemetery - May 30, 1920.

and unloading of steamers at Port Ellen. As for supplies, petrol was procurable on the Island and moderate quantities of meat, butter and eggs; other foods it was necessary to send there. Owing to the holiday season, there were no hotel accommodations available, and the American and British personnel were obliged to seek quarters in tents or barracks. At this preliminary visit it was reported that there was a strong tendency to look with disfavor on the removal of American dead from Islay. The Reverend Mr. Grant, who had always taken a great interest in the affairs of the Cemetery and had corresponded with relatives of deceased soldiers, particularly regretted the action; however, he afterwards gave every assistance possible. After some discussion, the Army Transport Service chartered the S.S. "Groningen", a boat which was finally loaded and sailed for Port Ellen on the night of July first. Its cargo consisted of four hundred caskets, four trucks and a motorcycle, in addition to tentage, bedding and supplies. Owing to the laws of Great Britain regarding the carrying of passengers on steamships, it was necessary to send the personnel overland to Glasgow and thence to Islay by the usual travel route.

Seven disinterment groups, under the command of Capt. Wheeler-Nicholson, assisted by five other officers, comprised the American personnel. Under most adverse weather conditions, the operations were begun about July 7th.

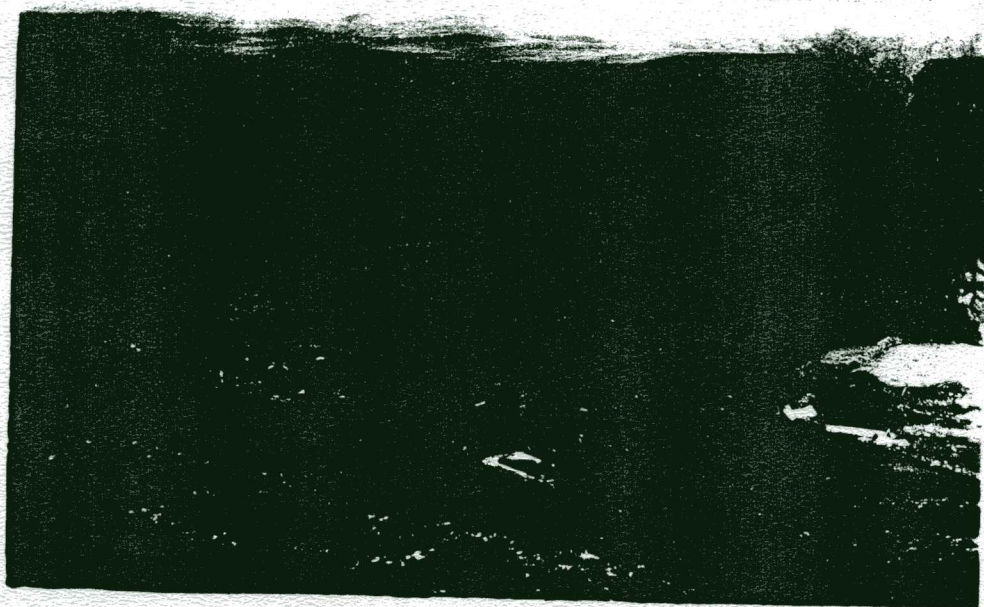


Field parties embarking on chartered steamer for Islay.

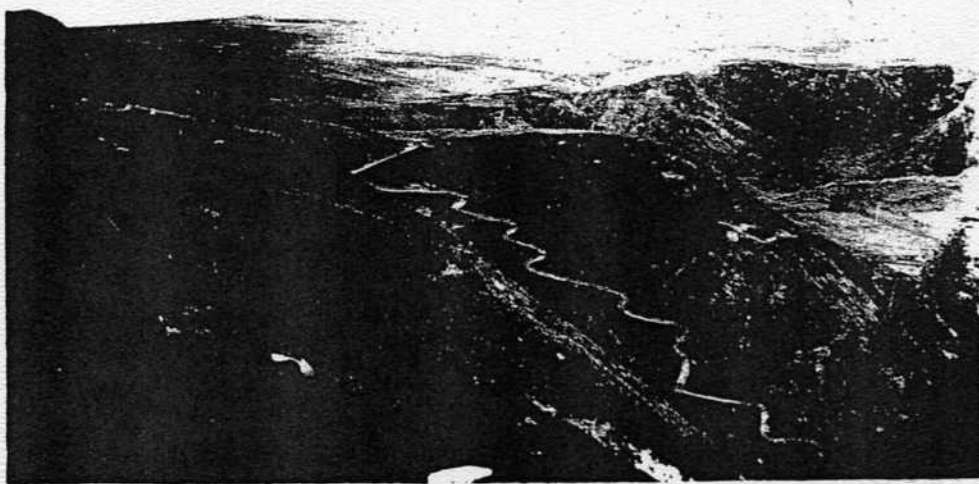


Kilchoman Cemetery, August, 1920. Grave of Capt. of R.M.S.
"Otranto" in near corner under stone cross.

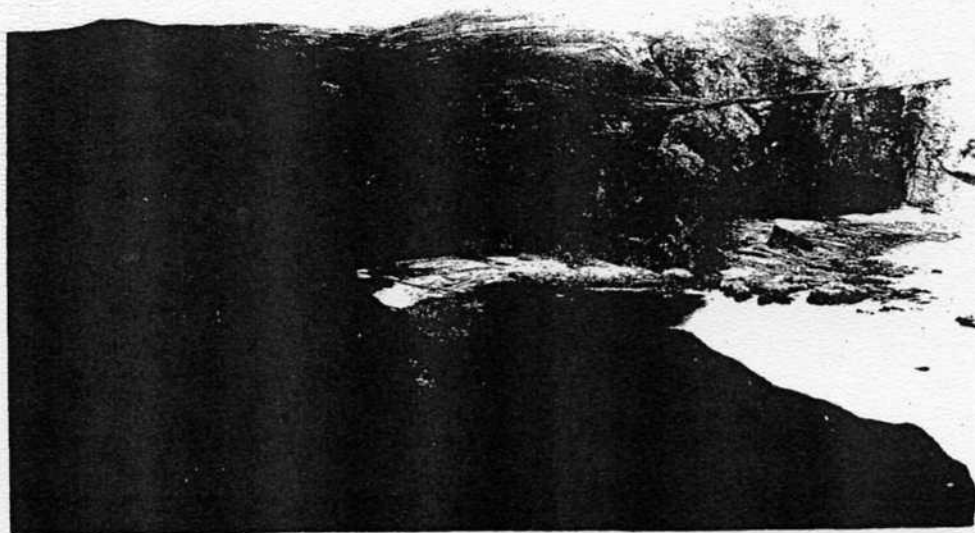
-174-B



Litter bearers carrying bodies up hill, Island of Islay.



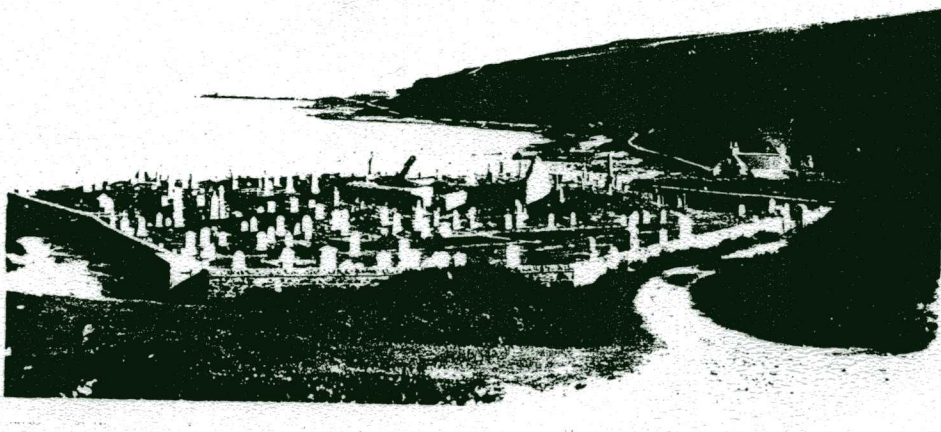
Winding trail up cliffs from Kinibus Cemetery.



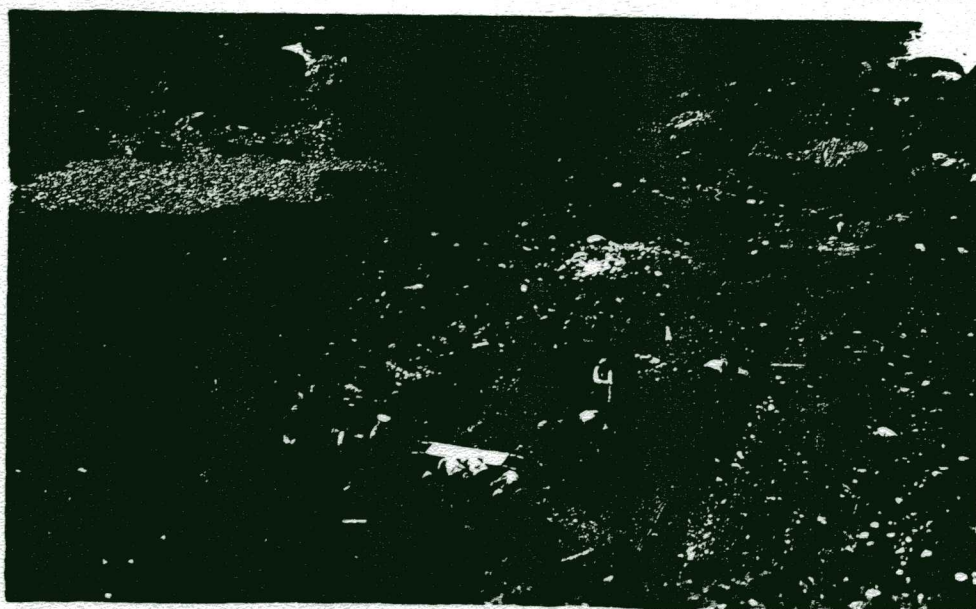
Looking down on Kinibus Cemetery.

Perhaps the most vivid idea of the difficulties encountered may be conveyed by selections from personal letters written by the Commanding Officer. "As to weather, he said, if you picked this season of the year in preference to others, you were exceedingly wise. They tell me here this is the best season of the year, - if it is the best, Lord deliver me from the worst. We have had cold rains almost continuously for the last few days. Today it is blowing a regular gale - wind, rain and hail. Our tents came down and have just been put up. The roads are almost impassable and the laborers all want to quit; it is pretty hard on them. Our motor lorry people want to throw up their contract on account of the state of the roads the latest disaster has just been reported to me - our ship has just been blown ashore. I don't think there is any damage and I am sending for a tug to pull her off. This is the worst day we have had yet. I am working hard on the mess end of this - had all sorts of trouble - field kitchen broke down; we were short of equipment and had the dickens of a time generally . . . we have eighty-seven caskets in the ship already loaded and some fifty ready to load. I believe that we will finish up Kilchoman in two or three days more. The work has been considerably delayed by the rotten weather. The trenches fill up with rain water almost as soon as they are dug. This tends to slow things up but the work has not fallen much below average. . . . I am working extremely hard to keep up a good feeling with

-175-A



Local Cemetery of Port Ellen and lighthouse in distance.

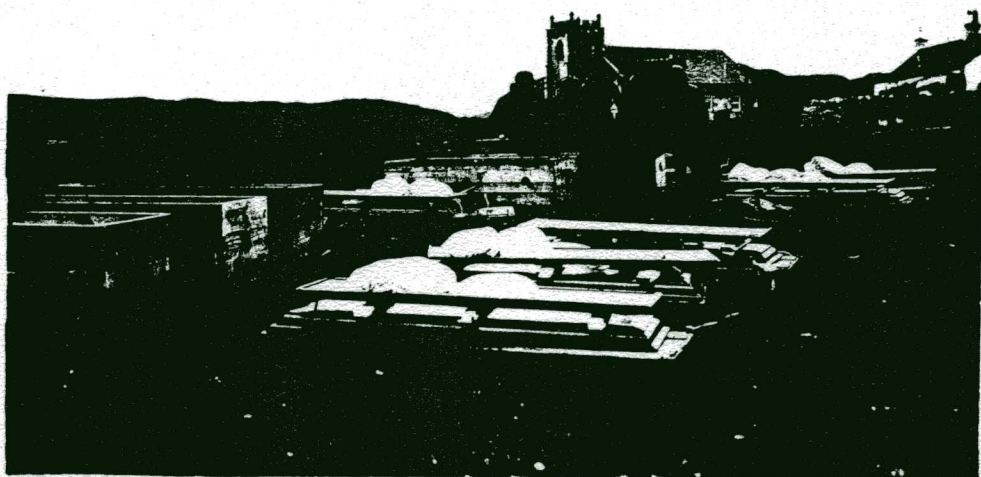


Killeyan Cemetery from cliffs during removals -
August, 1920.

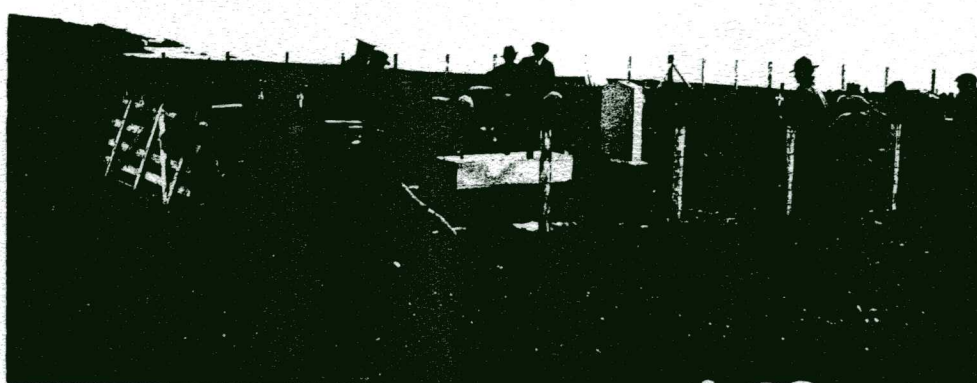
the Islanders and have succeeded in spite of some attempts to break it. I'll have your Island cleared off in schedule time in spite of the difficulties. They arise all the time but it lends zest to the job. Something bobs up and hits me in the face about every five minutes, but so far we have been able to down all difficulties. The personnel as a whole is doing splendid work under the most unattractive conditions and doing no grumbling whatsoever. I sent for the trucks because of the fact that it holds up my lorries for too long a period transporting personnel over these long hauls - also gets them there soaked through and chilled, which is bad for morale. Thanks very much for the prompt response. If the weather would only stay clear five minutes we could speed up everything to beat the band, as things are pretty well organized. But the elements are certainly hostile on this Island."

At this time instructions were issued to concentrate bodies in the cemetery at Islay. In the largest cemetery bodies were reburied in the original boxes unopened. The Section Commander was later directed to purchase the necessary lumber and to make plain boxes for such reburials of bodies as might be necessary in the case of those not provided with caskets in the first instance.

A few more quotations from the letter of August 7th, written by the Commanding Officer of the Islay operations, will give an idea of the close of the project at that place. "Leaving



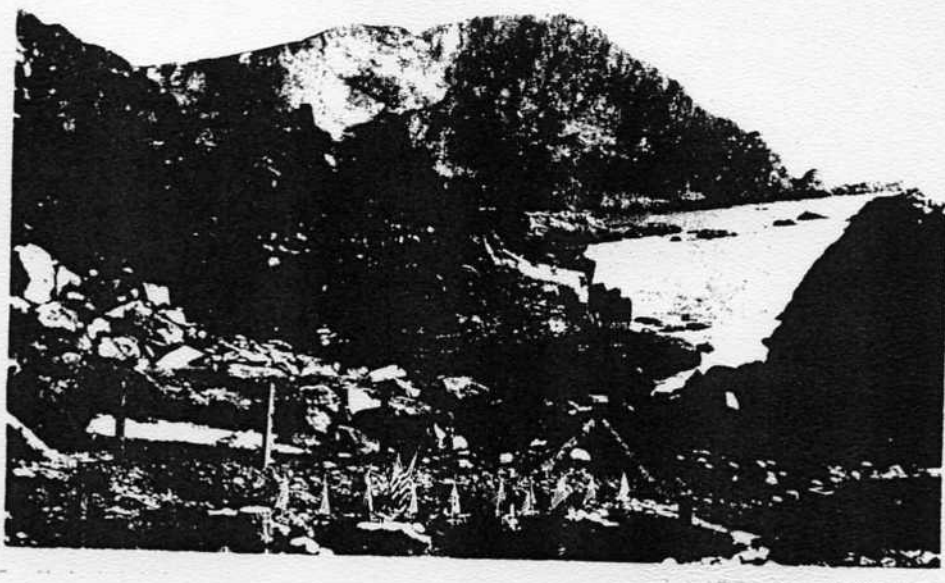
Kilchoman Church where "Otranto" victims were first taken after the disaster, Oct. 6, 1918, for identification before burial.



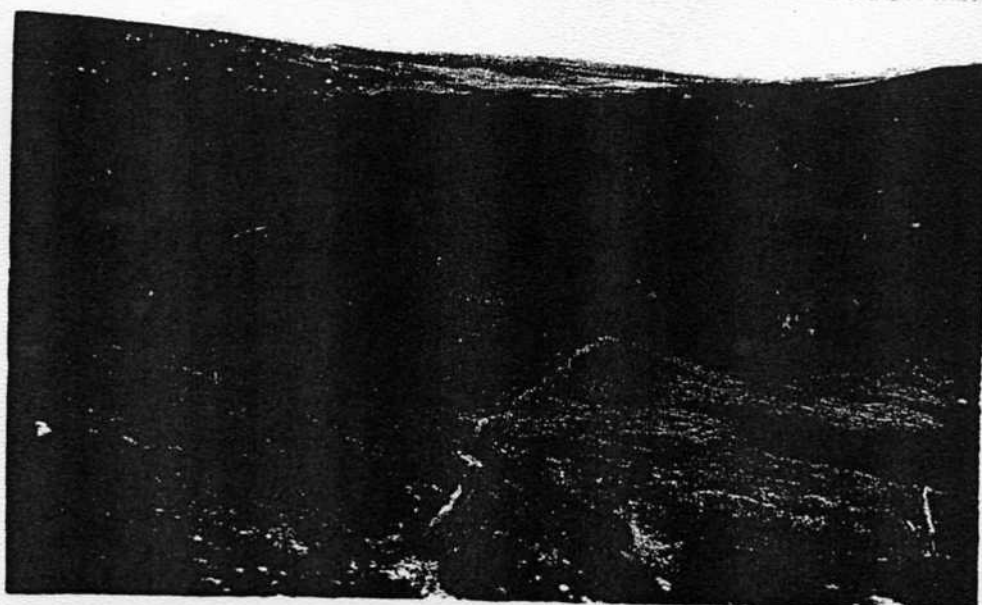
General view of removal operations at Port Charlotte Cemetery, August, 1920.

Islay was quite an operation. The problem had to be solved by sending as many of the American personnel as possible to Glasgow in advance. On Wednesday night camp was struck, tents rolled up and everything except the kitchen moved to the docks. All laborers were put into the armory. The American mess was broken up and arrangements made locally for the few remaining meals. The laborers' mess was continued until the last.

"On Wednesday morning an attempt was made to load the "Groningen" but she was prevented from coming in, owing to the presence of the freight steamer at the dock. This did not pull out until 4:00 o'clock. It was necessary to get the "Groningen" in quickly and pile the things aboard in a hurry before the arrival of the mail steamer at 5:00 o'clock. The mail steamer arrived, however, before we had finished, and had to wait for us for an hour or two. The "Groningen" was then dispatched that night to Bruichladdich, the only place where it was possible to load the trucks. The following morning, the bedding, all remaining mess equipment and supplies were loaded into trucks. All American personnel sailed aboard the "Pioneer" for Glasgow with the exception of two or three civilians, Lieut. Austin and myself. Lieut. Austin finished paying the bills and accounts on Wednesday whilst I directed the loading of the "Groningen" at Bruichladdich. The trucks were sent around by land to Bruichladdich on Wednesday morning, their cargoes loaded into the ship, and the four trucks and two White cars



Looking down on Kinibus Cemetery.



Carrying bodies on litters up trail to top of cliffs
during removals at Kinibus Cemetery, August, 1920.

stowed in the hatches. The "Groningen" set sail at 1:00 P.M. for Glasgow, much to my relief.

"The personnel then remaining, including myself, took ship Thursday morning for Glasgow. Upon arrival there it was found that the advance arrangements made were working successfully. There was a great deal of difficulty in the quartering of the personnel, lodgings being extremely hard to find. Some of the men had to sleep on the dock. About twenty of the Islay crew of laborers were discharged, and new laborers taken on in Glasgow . . .

"I am happy to state that, in spite of a few small outbreaks, we left Islay with the good wishes of the inhabitants. These good wishes were conveyed to me by a deputation of the inhabitants who called upon me before I left and expressed their appreciation of the good behavior and kindly attitude of the personnel, and expressed regrets at our departure. I would again suggest that some official thanks be given to these people for the extraordinary efforts, amounting in some cases to heroism, which they put forth in the salvage of these bodies and the rescuing of the survivors at considerable expense and trouble to themselves, and at the departure of all survivors, have made it their business to see that proper care and veneration is paid to our dead on their Island. The British Government has recognized the heroism of at least one of these men by conferring a decoration upon him for heroism. From local accounts, it would appear that he was very instrumental in saving the lives

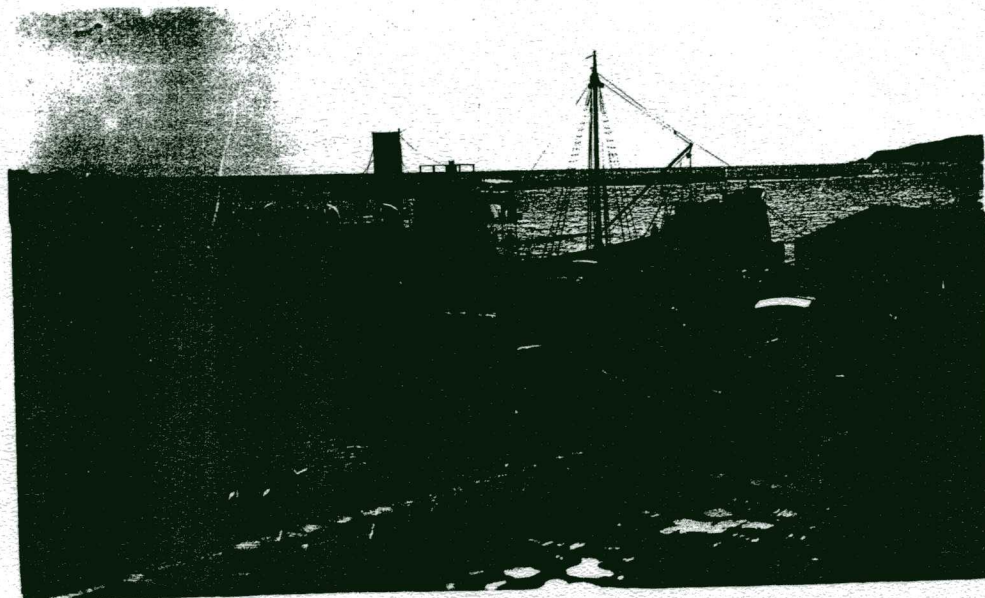
of at least nine men."

After the Islay operations had been completed, the field parties moved to Craigton Cemetery in Glasgow. The character of the soil - heavy, wet clay - was far worse than that encountered at Everton in Liverpool, and resulted in many cave-ins. The caskets in which the bodies were buried were badly disintegrated, as well as the bodies themselves, and a great deal of extra labor was necessary. This cemetery was flooded with visitors, who were finally taken in charge by three policemen of the Glasgow Police Force. Work was also held up by the frequency of funerals, during which operations had to be suspended. Labor conditions in Glasgow were the worst of any that had been met in England. None of the Liverpool laborers could be used in loading and unloading the ship, owing to the refusal of the Glasgow Union to allow any on the docks.

Shortly before the field parties left Islay, the "Groningen" was sent with one group to the Islands of Muck and Mull to make the two disinterments which were necessary there. It was impossible for the steamer to land, and the parties had to go ashore in a launch, with the coffins and necessary implements, to effect the disinterments. After this was accomplished, the remains were carried out by launch to the "Groningen" and placed on board by transfer from ship to ship. The operation was really exceedingly difficult and was done most speedily. To get one body up involved an all-night trip of 160 miles by motor. This



Carrying caskets by hand to end of road at Kilchoman Church, for road transport to Port Ellen.



S.S. "Groningen" loading bodies at Port Ellen.

was brought back through the driving rain and put aboard the "Groningen." Mr. Sechrest deserves great praise for the manner in which he planned the expedition.

3.

The following table shows the cost of the work of this Service in Great Britain from the beginning of the operations to the end of August:-

<u>Total Expenditures</u>		<u>Monthly Expenditures</u>	
Pay local employees	\$ 20,765.57	Jan. \$	9,934.12
Pay U.S. contract employees	71,744.95	Feb.	17,882.93
Pay port & field employees	28,267.32	Mar.	17,557.84
Transport, rail	5,701.43	Apr.	14,327.97
Transport, motor	12,510.03	May	34,422.49
Rentals, storage, miscel.	43,964.89	June	25,404.33
\$	182,954.19	July	35,416.49
		Aug.	28,008.02
		\$	182,954.19
Civilian per diem			13,162.25
Outstanding bills Aug. 31st			11,783.93
		\$	207,900.37
Port Charges, all ships, Southampton, Liverpool and S.S. "Groningen"			41,985.33
		\$	249,885.70
1,760 disinterments give average cost per body from field to hold of ship			141.98
Port Charges alone, average per body			23.85

The cost of operations in England was between fifty and sixty per cent greater per body than the average for operations in all Europe. This is due to the relatively higher scale of prices in Great Britain as compared with France and Germany, and to the fact that the majority of English cemeteries were so scat-

tered and contained so few burials as to make a great deal of transportation necessary. This brought it about that the exhumation of 1,760 bodies could not be accomplished with the speed that a similar number could ordinarily be disinterred in France. Also the original operations in England were held up owing to the lack of supplies and disinterment authorizations.

It is interesting to note, with reference to the accompanying figures, that \$21,620 of the port charges were spent for the S.S. "Groningen" alone. This boat was chartered from August 1st to August 11th for the accomplishment of the project on the Island of Islay. This steamer made several trips to and from Glasgow with bodies and supplies.

The finishing of Islay and completion of the cemeteries in Lancashire completed authorizations for England with the exception of some scattered burials in small towns. It was at once asked of the War Department what was to be the final disposition of the remainder. It will be recalled that in the first instance the policy in regard to Great Britain was to return all bodies to the United States unless the next of kin requested that they be left in Europe or in some specific place in England. There were twenty-eight special requests for permanent burial in various parts of Great Britain. The balance of these bodies, more than four hundred and fifty, were the puzzle. The policy was not decided whether this balance should be concentrated in Brookwood Cemetery, be returned to the United States in spite of the wishes

expressed, or be sent to one of the great American concentration cemeteries in France. The delay in reaching the final decision in this case caused some loss, since it seemed needless to move all the personnel to France if they were going to be returned at once to Great Britain for farther duty. The other question was that of future maintenance, the problem having arisen that after the final policy was decided it would be better for the United States to pay its own upkeep bills in England, as the British colonies were in the habit of doing, rather than to expect the British Government to do so indefinitely, generous though their offer was.

CHAPTER X.

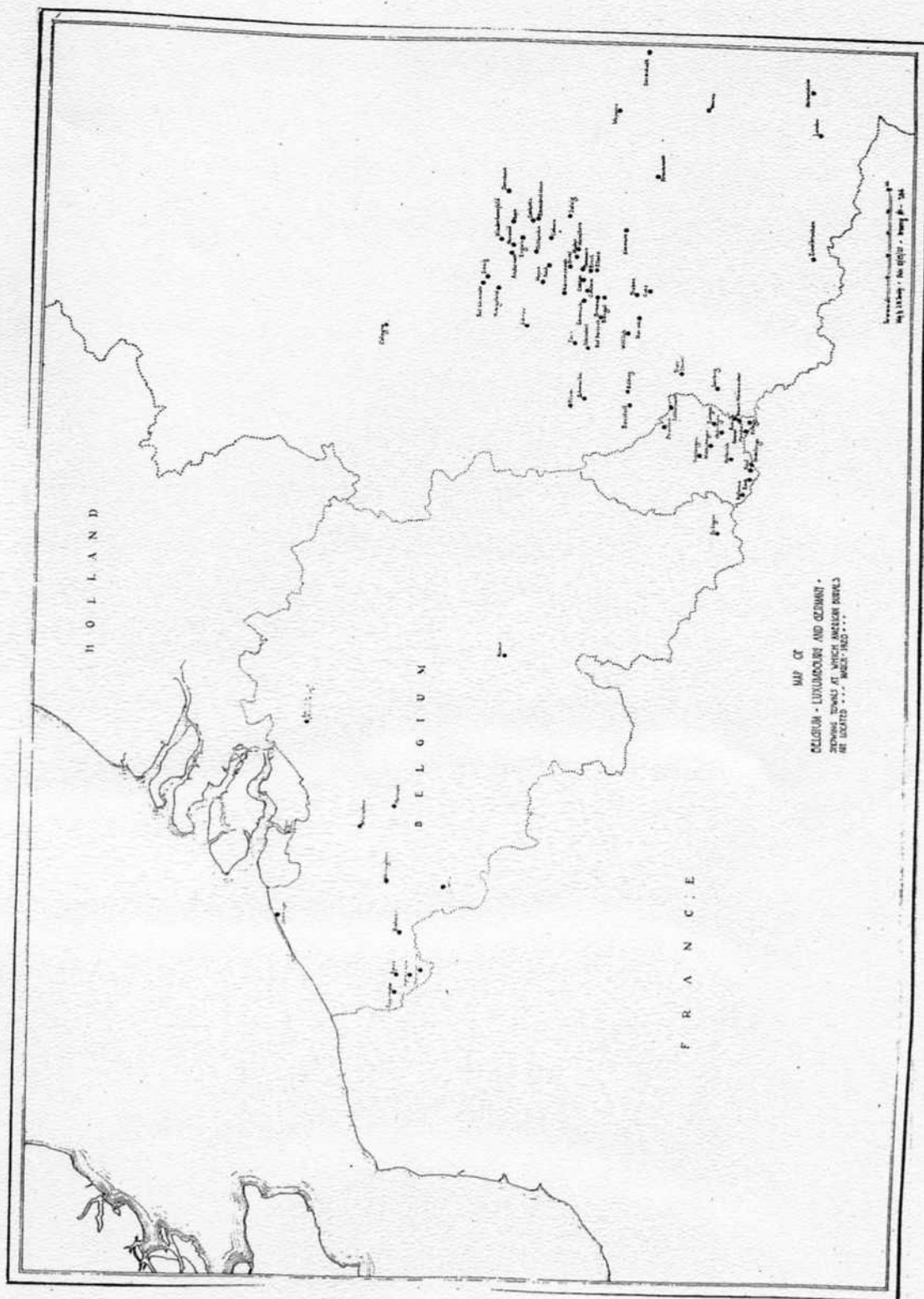
OPERATIONS IN MID-EUROPE.

Field operations in Mid-Europe were carried out expeditiously after supplies had been received and prepared in the Port of Antwerp. In Chapter III the organization of the Zone of Mid-Europe, at Cochem, was outlined. In Chapter V, under "Policies", it was indicated that the policy pursued was to return to the United States all bodies buried in Germany, Luxembourg, Unoccupied Germany and Belgium. According to the original plans, the Zone of Mid-Europe was to clear Germany and Luxembourg first and then proceed to Belgium to evacuate the 1,043 bodies buried there. Negotiations, however, were rather unsatisfactory as far as the Belgian Government was concerned, and permission was refused to make any disinterments until after September 15, 1920, the same date as that fixed by the French Government for operations in the Zone of the Armies in France. When, however, the French Government authorized bringing in the bodies from foreign countries for final concentration in our Permanent Cemeteries, the policy of complete evacuation of Belgium was altered to permit the removal to cemeteries in France of those Belgian burials on which no specific requests for return to the United States had been received.

There were a number of soldiers buried in Germany whose next of kin lived in other countries in Europe. The Paris

office was informed by cable to hold up the dispatch of these bodies until replies as to disposition were received from the European homes. In one or two cases no reply was ever given by the next of kin, so, after the French authorized the importation of foreign remains, these former German burials on which no delivery instructions were forthcoming were brought in and concentrated. There were fifteen bodies delivered to the nearest of kin in Europe from Germany and Luxembourg, being shipped to Scotland, Ireland, Italy, Finland and Sweden. Aside from these few exceptions, the original policy, in so far as Germany and Luxembourg were concerned, was accomplished, and the remains of 1,252 soldiers were dispatched to the United States.

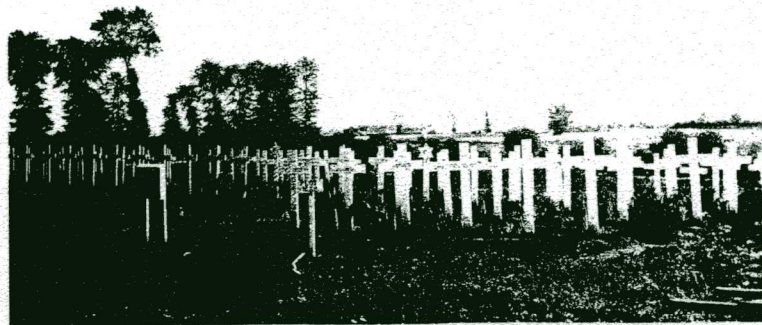
On examination the accompanying map will show how scattered were the burial places in Belgium, Germany, Luxembourg and Unoccupied Germany. The alteration in the organization of the Service in Europe affected the Zone of Mid-Europe to the extent of abolishing that organization after September 15th. This was after the accomplishment of the disinterments in Luxembourg and Unoccupied Germany. The twenty-six recorded burials in Unoccupied Germany were not touched, owing to the refusal of German authorities to allot railway transport for this purpose. The shortage of transport in Germany was too serious a question to the general public to permit of exhumation activities by foreign countries. While the twenty-six American bodies would have made no serious difference, the Germans were aware that the Belgian,



This map shows how scattered were the burial places in Belgium, Germany, Luxembourg and Unoccupied Germany.

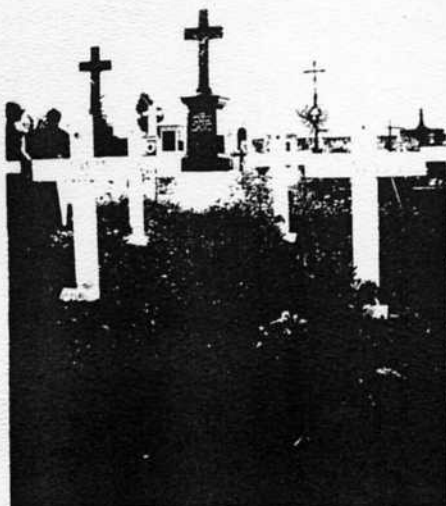
French and British Governments would probably make similar demands if the Americans' request was assented to. Indeed, informal inquiries were made of this Service by the Belgian Government as to whether we were being given any special favor by the Berlin authorities. Although two bodies were sent into Germany for final burial on request of the next of kin, the conveyers had considerable difficulty with the police during their journeys, and further shipments were forbidden by the German Government. Transportation difficulties were again given as the official reason.

Operations in Mid-Europe actually began first on May 12th in the embalming plant which was established at Coblenz to care for current deaths among the troops of the American Forces in Germany. The first shipment from Mid-Europe left Antwerp on May 9th via the S.S. "Princess Matoika." Field operations proper commenced on May 22nd; the first exhumations were made in Engers Cemetery.



Lijssenthoek, Poperinghe, Belgium.

Since all bodies exhumed in Germany had to be shipped through Antwerp, authority was necessary from the Belgian Government to secure the necessary transportation to carry the remains by rail from the German border to the port. This was secured without difficulty, and all the bodies were dispatched in that way.



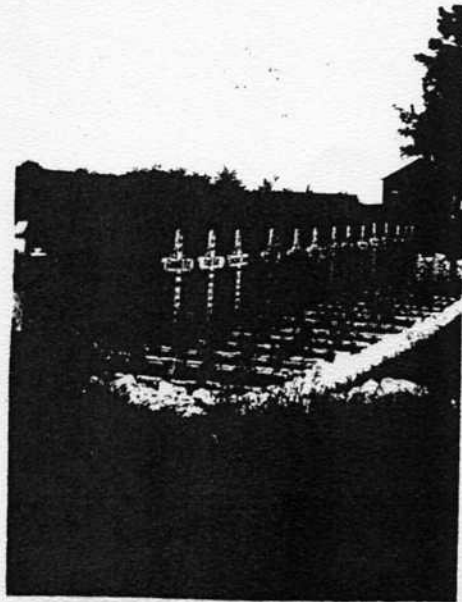
Hellerich, Luxembourg: in each consignment be given to the French Mission in time to send the necessary instructions to the border.

In the case of Italy and Spain, there were so few burials as to make the project a simple one. The Italian Gov-

The break-up of the Zone of Mid-Europe made the Area of Belgium a part of the zone of operations, under direct control of the Operations Officer in Paris. Permission was secured from the French Government to evacuate such remains as it might be most convenient to move via Calais, and permission to enter France was given by the French Government on condition that the town of entry and the number of bodies

ernment in July, 1920 informed the Ambassador that the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs would permit the remains of the

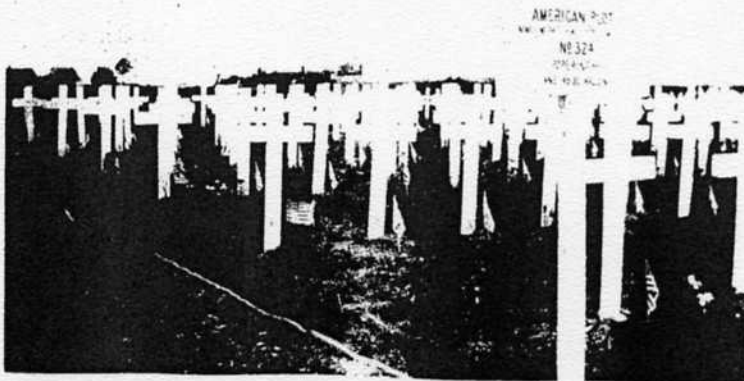
seventy-six American soldiers buried in Genoa to be removed whenever the United States wished to do so. On request the Ministry of the Interior was to delegate power to the Prefect of Genoa to authorize their removal in accordance with law.



Dudelingen, Luxembourg.

In February, 1920 the Austrian Government declared that the request of the United States Government relative to the transportation of American soldiers

buried in Austrian territory had been received by the Austrian Government and that they would be only too glad to do everything possible to facilitate its execution.



Nine Elms

British Military

Cemetery.

CHAPTER XI.

OPERATIONS. ZONE OF THE INTERIOR. FRANCE.

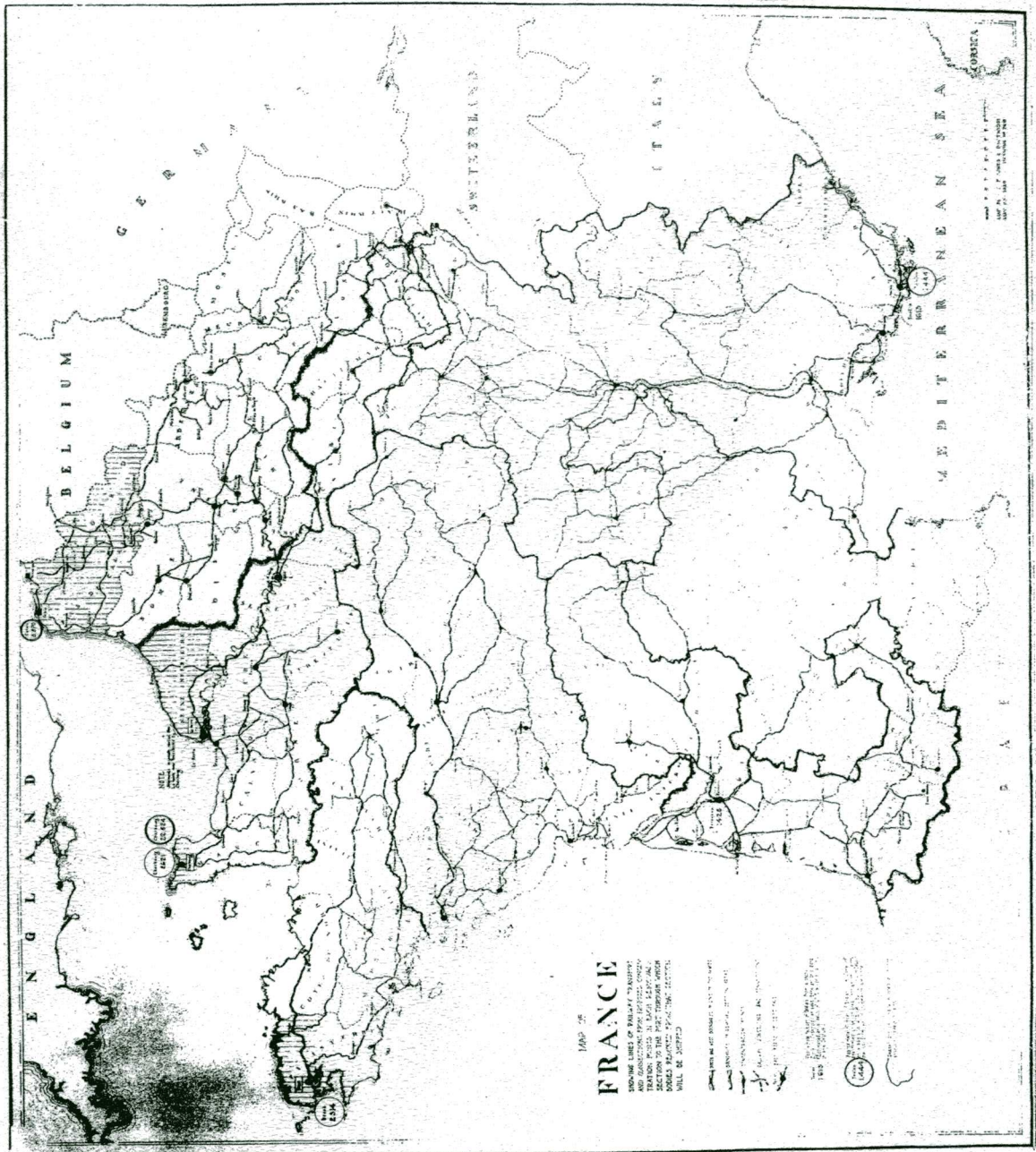
Operations began in the Zone of Great Britain because the first supplies and personnel were sent there from the United States, and because conditions there made planning the work a comparatively easy matter. In France, however, with its five hundred and five burial places widely scattered, involving all sorts of questions of supply and transportation, it was not so evident what would be the best means of attacking the problem. A contemplated scheme of operations, however, was conceived, involving the evacuation of the Zone of the Interior of France, beginning with those cemeteries at the ports themselves and working gradually into the back areas. It was decided, after consultation with the French authorities, to use the ports of Brest, St. Nazaire, Bordeaux, and Marseilles or Toulon as points of concentration and shipment to the United States or to European countries. It was at the same time determined that the opposition of the French to the extensive use of rail transport would make it impracticable to carry out the decision of the Quartermaster General that, when a cemetery in this Area was cleared of all bodies which were to go to the home country, the balance should be disinterred at the same time and concentrated at Suresnes Cemetery, near Paris, where there was room for perhaps 4,000 new graves. This was communicated to Washington and ap-

proved.

Evacuation plans had necessarily to be based on estimated figures. The results of the first inquiries from the Adjutant General's office and from the Cemeterial Division had revealed the fact that approximately sixty per cent of the relatives desired the return of the remains of their soldier dead. Accordingly, the interior of France was divided into the four working Areas above noted. The total number of dead in cemeteries in each Area was counted up, and caskets were ordered for sixty per cent of each one of these four totals. Thus it was thought that approximately 2,326 bodies would be sent through the port of Brest; 3,740 bodies through the port of St. Nazaire; 1,416 bodies through the port of Bordeaux and 1,628 through the port of Toulon (Toulon being finally chosen in preference to Marseilles as the port of exit for southeastern France). It is apparent that in the interior of each one of these four Areas the cemeteries were widely scattered, and in many cases there were but a few graves in each one. Because of transportation difficulties, therefore, temporary storage points had to be chosen within the Area at which bodies locally exhumed could be concentrated until a sufficient number had been gathered together to make a trainload to be sent to port. These storage points were located at convenient railway centers beyond the range at which motor transport could be used from cemetery to port with advantage. In the Brest Area, which for convenience was called

Section I, there were three such storage points - viz., Ploermel, where it was contemplated one hundred and eighty would be stored; Laval, where it was expected to locate approximately twelve, and Le Mans, where it was thought four hundred and ninety would be stored. In the back area of the St. Nazaire Sector, twelve such storage points were chosen, the chief ones being at Tonnerre, Nevers, Bourges, Chateauroux, Blois, Orleans, Tours and Angers. In the so-called Section 3, the back area of Bordeaux, there were approximately thirteen points of concentration finally chosen, the chief ones being at Perigueux, Angouleme, Limoges, La Courtine, La Palisse, Toulouse and Bayonne. In Section 4, the back area of Toulon, there were about eight concentration points, the chief ones being Lyons, Chambery, Grenoble and Avignon. It should be borne in mind that in the Zone of the Interior, the largest cemeteries were at the ports themselves, which made the transportation question in the interior rather simple, because from these large cemeteries to the port was but a short haul for motor lorries. It was contemplated to lease the necessary temporary storage buildings at these various inland towns as occasion arose and hold them, in the interests of economy, as short a time as possible. The map shows the manner of arrangement of the concentration points as contemplated at first, and indicates the wide extent of country over which the field parties had to move.

It was one thing, however, to determine upon the manner of evacuation and it was quite another thing to accomplish it



The above map shows the lines of railway transport proposed to remove the bodies from the cemeteries of France to the various ports.

expeditionally, in view of the difficulty which was experienced in receiving supplies from the United States. The Service in Europe was absolutely dependent upon the United States for the delivery of caskets, blankets, sheets, embalming fluid, disinfectants, deodorants, preservatives, aluminum stripping, stencil machines, stencil paper, rubber gloves and other items needed for the proper performance of field work. Deliveries of all minor supplies, with the exception of necrosan, were as rapid as could be desired, but in the case of caskets, delivery was retarded to a marked degree. The following chart indicates the rate at which caskets were delivered to the Service in Europe from the first shipment, which was sent to England, up to the 31st of August, 1920.

On January 23rd the necessary supplies were cabled for to start operations at Brest. On March 22nd it was necessary to report that work would be seriously delayed unless these requisitions were filled. It was added that had it not been possible to borrow and purchase supplies from other sources, commencement of operations at Brest would have been delayed a number of weeks longer. On April 3rd it was necessary to report that there had been a delay in receiving the necessary disinterment authorizations for the Brest Area.

These reports of deficiencies in Europe led to the only misunderstanding with the Cemeterial Division of the War Department that occurred during this period. It was a somewhat

Report of Caskets Received and Requisitioned
January to August, 1920.

Caskets Received - By port and Boat.

Boat	Date	Brest	St. Nazaire	Bordeaux	Antwerp	Toulon	Southampton	Liverpool
Martha Washington	12/15/19						201	
Nansemond	3/-/20	773						
Mercury	3/20/20	1184			243			
New York	3/27/20						100	
Princess Matoika	4/5/20				315		600	
Buford	4/29/20		851					
Nansemond	4/22/20				100			1500
Mercury	5/20/20		853					
Princess Matoika	6/5/20	226	796		515			
Pocahontas	7/6/20				1088			
Antigone	6/20/20			1651				
Sherman	---		1934					
America	---					2379		
Totals		2183	4434	1651	2261	2379	901	1500

Caskets Received by Months.

War Dept. Interpretation of Requisitions.

<u>Month</u>	<u>Quantity</u>
1920.	
January	201
March	2200
April	1015
May	2451
June	2390
July	2739
August	<u>4313</u>
	15,309

200
3000
5100
5000
5000
1500
<u>3500</u>
23,300

humorous happening after its serious aspects were explained, and constituted a sort of comedy of errors due to the difficulties in using the cable as a means of communication. On February 10th the Chief asked for authorizations to disinter in the three cemeteries at Brest. Orders on Kerfautras only were sent and accordingly, on March 27th, another cable of warning was sent that the work would be completed in Brest by April, so that authorizations ought to be forthcoming on the back area burial places. The word "Cemeteries" (plural) was used, but in decoding the word, the singular and plural being the same in transmission, it was understood as singular in the War Department. Questions were at once asked as to why authorizations were demanded on the back area when Kerhuon and Lambeselles at Brest were not yet worked. To add to the mystification, a cable asking for authorizations on Great Britain was garbled in transit and some clerk in Washington, who must have known something of French place names, inserted in his decoding the name "Bar-sur-Aube." This cemetery was, of course, not thought of in Paris at the time, but suddenly, while all the personnel were waiting for Forms 114 on the Brest Area, forms arrived on Bar-sur-Aube. These occurrences, trivial in themselves, made Washington feel that Paris did not know its own business or plans, and made Paris feel that Washington was not functioning properly. An exchange of letters cleared up the misunderstanding by explaining their origin as being beyond anyone's control.

The result of these happenings was a determination on

the part of the Cemeterial Division to send authorizations only on transports which carried caskets, a decision that was not adhered to, and the request from that office that four, and later, six weeks' notice should be sent to Washington, showing the cemeteries that would be worked; thus giving an opportunity to send out questionnaires, secure and sort replies, and prepare the Forms for shipment to France. At the same time the policy regarding the manner of cabling details of shipments to America was altered. At first, on the sailing of a transport, the Headquarters office in Paris sent a cable showing the date of sailing and all the bodies, by name and organization, that were in the consignment. This was too expensive a process, and a scheme originated in Washington whereby the cost of cables was cut by eighty per cent. This was accomplished by the institution of cable reference numbers. All bodies in a given cemetery were listed in strict alphabetical order, regardless of rank or civilian status. These bodies were numbered consecutively from one to the total number in the cemetery. When a shipment from a particular cemetery was to be reported to Washington, reference was made to the cemetery from which the bodies had come, and the individuals in the shipment were referred to by their number and surname; thus, if a man named "Bell" were the fourth man on the list of a given cemetery and the fifth and sixth men were named "Bird" and "Brown", and they had all been exhumed at the same time and were ready for shipment on the same boat, they would be referred to in cable as

"Bell four through Brown six", thus saving all the words of their organizations and eliminating intermediate names by inclusion.

The next happening of note occurred in the Brest Area during the loading of two hundred and seventy-three bodies on the S.S. "Mercury." On Monday, April 5, 1920 one hundred and sixty-six bodies had been placed in the lower hold of hatch No. 3. The gangs finished for the day, and the next morning, when they were ready to proceed with the loading, they discovered that this compartment had been filled with five feet of salt water, consequently the lower tier of caskets was completely submerged. Since this shipment was among the first that had been made to the United States, it was especially unfortunate that the work of the field parties should be so badly represented. The ship's pumps were put to work and the hatch was cleared of water. Upon arrival in New York, however, it was found that a large number of bodies had to be transferred to new containers, and the condition of the old ones, from having been water-soaked, was very unsatisfactory. The responsibility for the occurrence did not rest with the Graves Registration Service, but was due to carelessness on the part of the ship's officers.

After completion of operations in the immediate vicinity of the town of Brest itself, the field parties moved into the back area and carried out exhumations at such places as Le Mans, Laval and Mayenne.

Disinterment operations in the Zone of France began

at Brest on March 3, 1920, after considerable repairing had been done on caskets which had been shipped from the United States and injured in transit.

The first cemetery to be vacated was Kerfantras. These operations were not very successful until March 30th. Work proceeded with eighty-two exhumations on that day, however, and continued successfully until April 7th. About April 7th the first serious trouble experienced in France arose when the city officials interfered and declared that there was great distress among the people in Brest, owing to the danger of contagion from the disinterments that were being made.

Kerfantras Cemetery is one small in area and quite surrounded by dwelling houses, circumstances which made it impossible to avoid the spreading of the odor of disinterred bodies and of disinfectants. The smoke of the burning coffins added to the uneasiness that was expressed. It was stated, on April 8th, by the Mayor of Brest, that he understood several physicians had complained concerning the work of exhumation, and he added that a certain physician, Dr. Lafolie, had two patients under his treatment who had already suffered contamination. It was said, at this meeting, that it was the intention to lodge a claim against the United States for any deaths which resulted in the district from American exhumation activities. The American Liaison Agent called upon the doctor in question and found that he had no clinic and that he had only one patient, a mechanic, who was ill with a

form of influenza. Dr. Lafolie understood that another physician had a similar case. It was on the basis of this one case and the report of another that Dr. Lafolie had complained to the Municipal Council of the danger of an epidemic arising in a city of 90,000 inhabitants. Though the claim was absurd, it was nevertheless decided to defer the exhumation work in Lambezellec Cemetery until public opinion had become somewhat adjusted to the exhumation idea.

Brest, in general, was a difficult place to work because of its bolshevik tendencies and because of city officials who were particularly unwilling to obey the French Government's instructions issued from Paris. It is possible that when the American officials first began to operate in Brest they were not sufficiently careful in paying courtesy calls upon the Mayor and other officials of the town. At any rate, there was some feeling over the fact that the special arrangements of the American Government with the French Republic had brought about that the city officials would not receive the usual fee for the disinterment of the bodies.

On April 17th a conference was held with the local authorities at Brest, at which Major Huntoon and the Liaison Agent were present. This meeting was called because it had been reported that the people in Lambezellec were also more or less excited by the idea of the American Army starting work there, since the discussion which had arisen in Brest after the Ker-

fautras disinterments had spread to the neighboring town. The Acting Mayor of Brest, the Mayor of Lambazellec and two Deputies from the district, along with the Chief of Hygiene of the Department of Finistere, were present.

M. Masson, who had previously been the Mayor of Brest and who had been removed from office by the National Government because of his radicalism, was especially antagonistic and emphatic. Dr. Lafolie's charges were again brought up and it was attempted to show that the death of this mechanic was due to the exhumations from Kerfautras. Moreover, a direct accusation was made by the Acting Mayor, that the men who exhumed the bodies were in the habit of wiping their hands on the outside of the shipping cases after handling the remains and that the old caskets were then carried by the French laborers, who burned them. The question of burning the old coffins was taken up also and objected to by the French authorities, but the Liaison Agent replied that if the boxes were not burned, the laborers would carry them off for use as fire-wood, or to make cupboards and shelves.

The result of the conference was that a formal request was made to the naval representative and the Graves Registration Service representative to suspend operations in the vicinity of Brest until a special Sanitary Commission from Paris could make an investigation. At the same time, certain sensational articles were appearing in the local newspapers, particularly the "Cri

du Peuple." The aforesaid committee made a full investigation, and found no objections to the American Graves Registration Service proceeding with operations. The field party accordingly began disinterments at Lambazellec Cemetery on May 5th.

At Brest all Sections worked together so as to break in the new personnel under trained leadership.

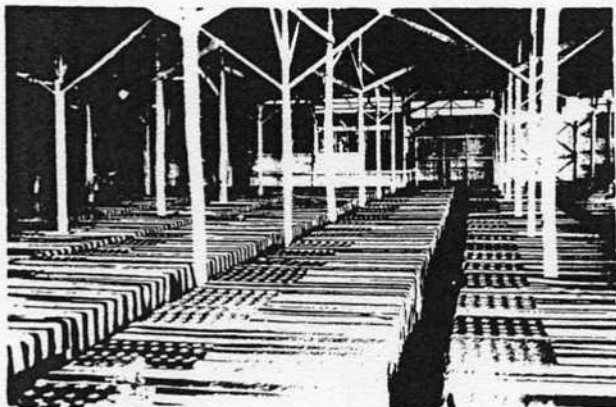
The following chart indicates the dates and number of bodies handled:-

	Bodies shipped via	Burials (Army)	Burials (Navy)	Start of Operations	Finish of Operations	No. of days	Exhumations	Reburials
Kerfantras	Brest	551	183	3/31	4/10	9*	341	138
Lambazellec	Brest	1738	29	5/5	6/17	38**	1052	674

*The Sections operated in Kerfantras Cemetery on these dates:-
March 31st to April 3rd, 6th, 7th and 10th. Owing to no authorizations having been received, these Sections were transferred to Lambazellec Cemetery, Section 3 returning to Kerfantras Cemetery and making twenty-eight exhumations on June 3rd and Section 2 one more on June 18th.

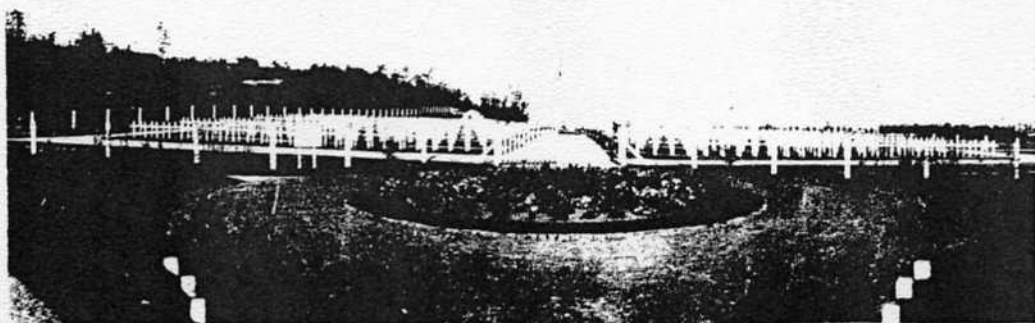
**Operations in this cemetery began on May 5, 1920 and continued steadily up to and including June 17th when, on account of no authorizations, work ceased. Section 2 made no exhumations on June 19th, five on June 22nd and one on June 23rd.

As appears from the records in possession of the Operations Division, Section I, under Capt. S.D. Campbell, had accomplished the most work of any Section in France up to October first. This was indeed an excellent organization and was once



The Morgue at Brest.

called by Major Harbold, the field general of the actual operations, his "Flying Squadron" because they were sent everywhere in emergencies and never failed to function properly. These words imply no invidious comparisons; they simply give deserved commendation to superior results. The Section Commander fully understood the difficulties of his position and the extreme need for



Belleau Wood Cemetery.

the careful training of personnel before entrusting them with the responsibilities attendant upon wholesale exhumations. He writes: "I find from our experience that it is absolutely necessary to have a capable man, one who has an intense respect for the work in which he is engaged, as Supervisory Embalmer. Some men, I find, come by this respect naturally; others have acquired it from a professional standpoint. I am, therefore, in favor of having a professional embalmer in charge of a group to a certain extent, that is, provided the Section Master has not a man in charge of a group who comes by this respect of the dead naturally. I am very fortunate in having in my Section both types of men. As you know, from personal experience in business life, it is very easy to handle things in an easier manner than that specified and, in consequence, one gets into the habit of doing things the easier way, which sometimes proves expensive in the long run, both from the standpoint of proper work and a neglect of the system which it is absolutely essential to maintain.

"At the formation of a Section I advocate the policy of getting the entire Section together before the commencement of operations and explain in detail just what your personal ideas are in regard to how the work should be handled, and emphasize at that time that a certain policy, the policy under discussion, is to be adhered to during the entire time that the Section is operating. Suggestions from the Section members at large should be invited as to what their ideas are in regard to points with

which they are most familiar. You should emphasize the fact also that your Section is going to be the best Section in the American Graves Registration Service, but that it cannot be so unless everyone works with that end in view.

"Secondly, it is also essential that you distribute your men within the Section in such a manner that you will start operations with each member of the group in accord with the ideas outlined and with the ideas of the Supervisory Embalmer, as it is, and has proved to be, absolutely essential that there be no direct friction between the Supervisory Embalmer and any member of his group. If possible, a certain amount of competition between groups should be encouraged - not necessarily a competition in regard to the number of bodies handled, but from the standpoint of the highest class of work.

"Thirdly, each group should then be equipped with the best of materials possible to enable them to do their work in a satisfactory manner.

"Fourthly, the nature of the work demands that the best care be taken of a Section personnel, not only from the standpoint of paying them their monthly salary, but also from the standpoint of looking after their welfare in every way possible. I personally have found, through past experience, both in business and in the Army, that if your men realize that you are giving them consideration in this regard, they are more inclined to work with some other idea in view than earning so

much per month. A certain amount of leeway should be given the men in regard to leave of absence, since this class of work is entirely different from anything else in the world. A man cannot work consistently day in and day out without some relaxation, and if compelled to do so, the natural tendency is for him to find some means of diverting his thought from the work in question, which is not always for his own welfare nor that of a Section. I do not think that sufficient attention has been paid to this point. There is another point that I am very adverse to, that of being compelled to change the personnel in the Section at the discretion of Headquarters; in order to maintain the esprit and the routine which is required in order that the work be conducted properly, it is necessary that when a group is once formed, a change be not made unless it is made from some disciplinary standpoint.

"Fifthly, a large share of the success of any Section belongs to the Assistant Master of Section, who should be a man of wide experience in handling men. He is in constant touch at all times with his particular Section and can, if he be of that temperament, antagonize the entire Section through his attitude, or can, on the other hand, maintain discipline when it is necessary and in doing so maintain the esprit which is absolutely essential.

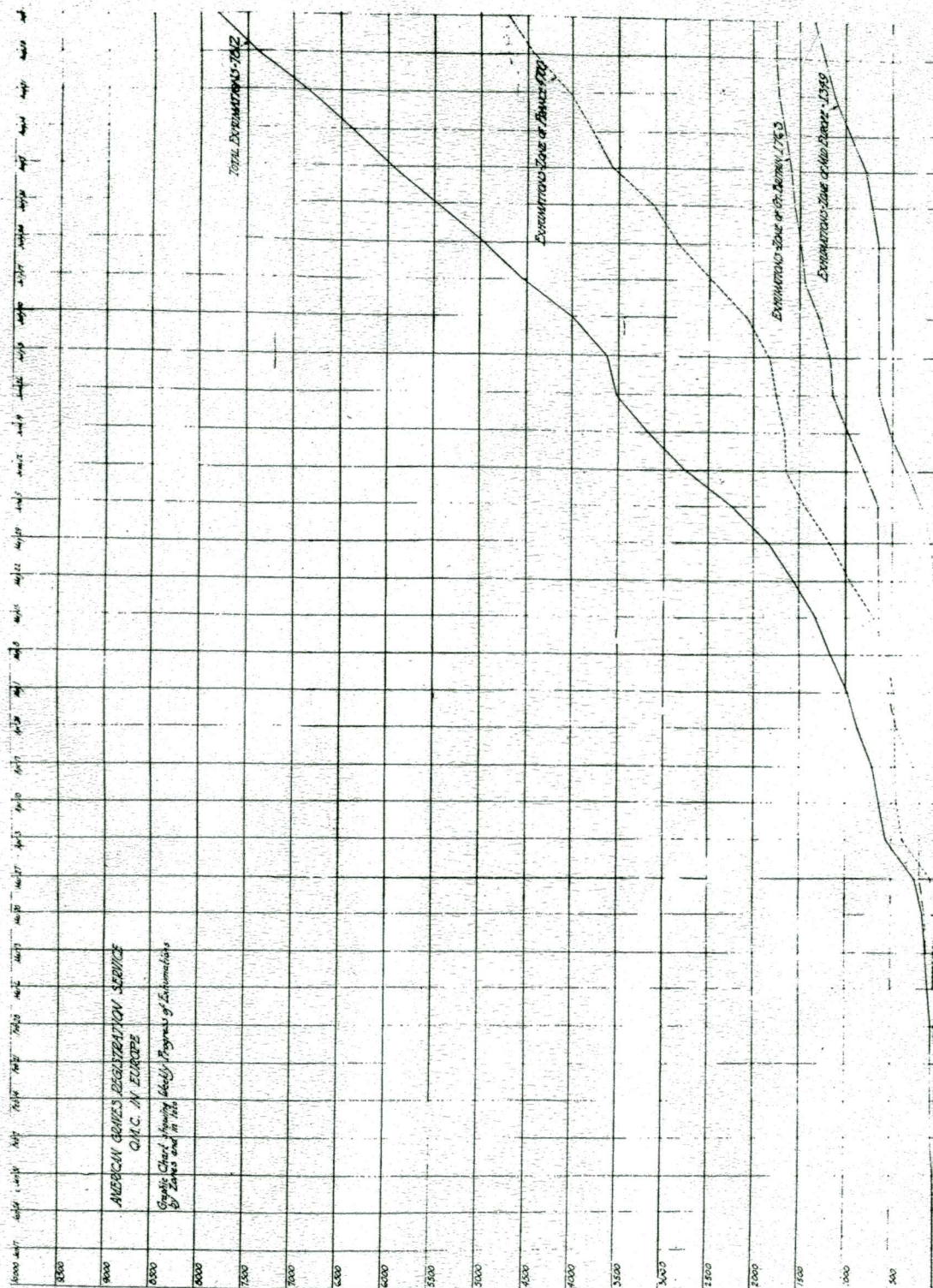
A word is necessary about the routine work of the ports, a typical example of which was seen at St. Nazaire. The operating

plant was entirely created out of A.E.F. wreckage by Major G.W. Douglass and his staff. The administrative office, casket storage house and repair shop were an old Army sawmill; the morgue was built on the pier that American engineers had constructed several kilometres out into the water, not far from the old base of Montoir. Good fire protection was installed and daily fire drills were held; each member of the staff and labor gangs had a particular station to occupy, ready to fight a blaze at any point. The buildings were necessarily of wood and, when filled with empty caskets, would have made a costly and dangerous conflagration.

The workshop was arranged for the repair and testing of caskets. Gangs were trained to do certain parts of each operation, on the basis of the division-of-labor system. Supplies were issued out from booths, being grouped by numbers, so that if a man needed screws and handles for the shipping cases, he went to the window, pointed to an index number on the counter and received in return the proper number of handles and screws to finish his job. Or, if the casket were ready and complete, the laborer pointed to another number and received a bundle containing the blanket, sheet, pillow, etc., which were put in the interior of the casket before dispatch to the field forces. This arrangement, obviating all conversation with Frenchmen who could not be readily understood, saved time and money and, by its standardization, rendered supervision easier and hence more ef-

ficient.

A port office was always a busy place, but when a steamer was in to discharge caskets and to take on a cargo of bodies, the activity resembled war-time shipping conditions. Demurrage on transports is a big item and stevedores are expensive people, so, as far as possible, the ship was habitually worked continuously. The Port Officer and his assistants had no sleep worth mentioning until the ship left. The staff was busy everywhere, checking and watching for errors; passengers on the steamer wanted this sort of favor from other Americans and that sort of attention. Perhaps a crane breaks down, or a winch ceases to function, or the ship's gear gets tangled; these things happened regularly. The Port Officer heard and had to deal with every occurrence. Signing the hundreds of Forms 114 was the least of his troubles, though that was no small task in itself. He had to be everything to everybody and be everywhere every minute; and above him was Headquarters clamoring for reports. And yet to a man really interested in seeing things done, there was no greater satisfaction in the world than to stand on the dock, the morgue empty, and see the transport pushing off, filled with bodies, securely stowed, and to know that there was now time to catch up one's sleep, a refreshment that would be doubly sweet because of the successful effort that preceded it.



The above tracing gives a graphic chart showing the progress of field operations to the end of the period dealt with in this volume.

CONCLUSION.

This account of the operations of the American Graves Registration Service in Europe ends with the change in the organization that was effected in August, 1920 - a change that was contemplated by the Chief in view of certain administrative deficiencies incident to the zone organization and the additional personnel made necessary thereby; to the lack of direct contact with the exhumation operations by reason of this intermediate organization; and also to the passing of the temporary officers from the rolls of the Army - a change that was also recommended by the Inspector General of the Army, after his visit in July and August. With this change opened up the future with its huge tasks of finishing the Zone of the Armies and of creating the great concentration cemeteries - stories yet to be told.

End of Volume I.

--oOo--