

HISTORY
of the
American Graves Registration Service.

A.M.C. in Europe.

Volume II.

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CHAPTER I.
ORGANIZATION OF STAFF.

The original organization of the American Graves Registration Service in Europe, consisting of the Chief, American Graves Registration Service, C.M.C., in Europe, and the Zones of France, Great Britain and Mid-Europe, proved faulty in that too much decentralization tended toward loss of control and duplication of administration. Efficiency and economy, therefore, demanded a reorganization.

To maintain the sound principles of limited decentralization and to bring the activities under closer personal supervision of the Chief, a reorganization was effected on August 25, 1920, which abolished the Zones of France and Mid-Europe. This brought the activities directly under the staff of the Chief, consisting of an Executive Assistant, three grand Divisions, - the Administrative, Operations, Supply and Transportation, and the following separate offices:-

Adjutant	Property Auditor
Inspector	French Mission
Finance Officer.	

Each of the above Divisions and offices was administered by an officer, and by close coordination, through the Executive Assistant and daily staff conferences, the Chief was enabled at all times to exercise the desired supervision without being swamped with the multitudinous details of the Service.

The abolition of the Zones of France and Mid-Europe eliminated duplication of administration. For example, burial records had been kept by the Registration Branch at the central office, as well as in the Zone offices; the work of supply was also duplicated to a certain extent in the central and Zone offices, all of which involved extra personnel. This elimination of Zones, reduction in civilian and officer overhead, provided personnel for other increasing activities.

The Zone of Great Britain was not abolished on account of its geographical isolation, but after the conclusion of initial operations in the British Isles, the zone activities were reduced to one officer and small caretaker personnel stationed at Southampton, with the idea of future expansion when the time for final operations arrived.

The reorganization of the departments of this Service, in August, 1920, resulted in a reduction of at least one-third of the overhead expenses and effected a corresponding increase in efficiency.

The organization as adopted in August, 1920, is illustrated in the following table:-

ADMINISTRATIVE DIVISION.

Personnel Branch.

Civilian Personnel Section:

Assignment and relief of personnel.

Supervision of payment of salaries, reimbursements and allowances.

Employment civilian personnel and fixing compensation, except Motor Transport employees.

Leaves and discharges.
Executing and recording contracts.
Timekeeping and payment Headquarters personnel.
Military Personnel Section:
Assignment and relief of officers.
Maintenance of officers' records.

Information Branch.

Receiving relatives and friends of deceased members of the American Expeditionary Forces.
Furnishing information and replying to letters of inquiry.

Statistical Branch.

Statistical Section:
Compilation of statistics of operations and costs.
Historical Section:
Preparation of the History of the A.G.R.S.
Photographic Section:
All official photographic work for the A.G.R.S.
Drafting Section:
All drafting and map work for the A.G.R.S.

Medical Branch.

Professional attendance for the A.G.R.S.

OPERATIONS DIVISION.

Field Operations Branch.

Exhumations.
Transportation of remains to concentration points.
Loading of remains on trains at concentration points.
Forwarding of remains by convoy to port.

Maintenance Branch.

Maintenance of cemeteries.
Field investigations in Areas.

Registration Branch.

Receipt and check of all authorizations from Washington.
Forwarding of authorization to Field Operations Branch, and supplying the Administrative Division (Statistical Branch) with necessary information.

Furnishing Maintenance Branch with information regarding field investigations, new locations and re-markings.

Receiving completed Forms from Field Operations and Maintenance Branches; checking same and forwarding necessary data.

SUPPLY AND TRANSPORTATION DIVISION.

Rail and Water Transportation Branch:

Transportation supplies and personnel.

Control of Port Officers and operations at ports.

Checking and vouchering railroad, telegraph and telephone accounts.

Motor Transportation Branch:

Operation of all motor transportation.

Supply of Motor Transportation personnel.

Maintenance and operation of motor repair department.

Inspection of motor transportation.

Supply Branch.

Procurement of supplies by requisition or by purchase.

Guarding and upkeep of buildings in Paris.

Operation of Printing Department.

Operation of Sales Commissary, Paris.

Contracts, Rents and Claims Branch:

Execution of all leases for rent of realty.

Preparation and inspection of all contracts for services.

OFFICE OF THE ADJUTANT.

Orders.

Records.

Cables.

Mail.

OFFICE OF THE INSPECTOR.

Inspection of cemeteries and field operations.
Special investigations.

OFFICE OF THE FINANCE OFFICER.
Disbursements.

OFFICE OF THE PROPERTY AUDITOR.
Property auditing.

OFFICE OF THE FRENCH MISSION.
Liaison duties.

Administrative Division.

To have the many important details connected with the administration of the large number of employees in the Service, and the voluminous correspondence in connection with the Information Branch given the supervision of a competent and responsible officer, the Administrative Division was created. To this Division was also assigned the important matter of compilation of statistics.

The Statistical Branch was created in order that the Chief and his staff might the more easily keep in close touch with the operations in the field. With this end in view, a series of reports was rendered which not only showed the progress of operations, but included a comparison of the accomplishments of each Section during stated periods, upon which an estimate of future production could be based. To this Branch was also delegated the recording of "Costs," to include all expenditures made and debts contracted in Europe in the course of operations,

In addition to Statistics and Costs, a certain amount of the work of the Administrative Division was necessarily

allocated to the Statistical Branch, including the policies of foreign governments with reference to the shipment of bodies into those countries; also the securing of necessary information as to the regulations governing same. It was also decided that this Branch should handle all communications with the next of kin of deceased soldiers residing in Europe, for the purpose of determining their desires with reference to the disposition to be made of the remains.

In September, 1921, a further change was made in the Administrative Division. The duties of the Chief of that Division were consolidated with those of the Executive Assistant and, in turn, an Administration Branch was created within that Division, consisting of the following Sections: Finance, Statistical, Historical, Foreign Case, and Policy.

The duties of the Adjutant were also assigned to the officer in charge of the Administrative Branch and both offices functioned under one head.

Personnel Branch.

Matters of assignment and transfer of all personnel, both commissioned and civilian, were delegated to this Branch.

The commissioned personnel consisted of officers of the Regular Army and those holding emergency commissions who had been on duty with the Graves Registration Service in France

prior to the separation of such Service from the American Expeditionary Forces, in addition to such officers as were transferred by the A.E.F. to this Service, and others ordered to Europe from Washington. On May 1, 1920, the number of commissioned officers on duty with the Service totaled 77.

This force being entirely inadequate, the Chief of the Service, on May first, cabled to Washington for additional commissioned personnel to meet current requirements and to provide for the extension of the field work in the Zone of the Armies, which was scheduled to begin on September 15, 1920. A large number of officers on duty with the Service held only emergency commissions which ordinarily would expire on June 30th. The request was for 15 officers to report by August 15th that they might be given a course in field training in preparation for this work.

As none of the 15 officers required had reported in France by August 15th, conditions as to commissioned personnel became very serious. Those officers holding temporary commissions were being demoted in grade or examined for re-commission. Some were resigning because of demotion to junior grades and others being separated from the Service because of physical or other disqualification.

Cabled requests for relief from this situation resulted in the receipt of instructions from the Quartermaster General to submit a cabled estimate of officers required after

September 30, 1920. This cable was dispatched on August 28th and provided for an organization totaling 98 commissioned personnel. There were on that date on duty with this Service 53 officers of the Regular Army, 20 temporary officers awaiting results of examination for commission in the Regular Army; 6 temporary officers who had failed physically, and 5 who were not candidates for commission. By December 1, 1920, the commissioned strength fell gradually from the already undersized personnel of 84 officers to 67.

Subsequent to the organization provided for in the cable of August 28th, there developed a further necessity for additional officers in the field, due to unusual conditions as to identity of remains and the consequent necessity for a greater amount of work on the part of commissioned inspectors. Thirty-nine additional officers were asked for. A later organization was provided, as reported in a cable dated December 4th, from the Chief of the Service to the Quartermaster General, calling for 125 officers, which was the required strength on March 1, 1921. There were 91 commissioned officers on duty in August, 1921.

After the field forces had been increased, in anticipation of extensive operations, the civilian personnel of this Service consisted of the following employees:-

United States Contract Employees	295
Local Contract Employees	1221
French Caretakers	356
Temporary Laborers	346
Total	<u>2218</u>

The reduction in July, 1921, of the number of field sections from ten to eight, owing to a decrease of exhumation operations, necessitated the discharge from the Service or re-assignment of a number of American employees. In order to retain competent American personnel in the Service, it became the policy to make a careful study of the records before the discharge of an employee as surplus, and endeavor to re-assign him according to his prior rating.

On November 23, 1921, the total number of employees had been reduced to 1,634.

Information Branch.

The Information Branch was organized for the reception of relatives and friends of deceased American soldiers, who had come to France to visit the burial places of their dead and desired information regarding the location of the graves and how to reach the various cemeteries.

This Branch also issued location slips, giving data regarding railroad and motor transportation and information concerning hotels, cafes, etc.

The sale of official photographs of cemeteries; the explanation of the significance of grave numbers, serial numbers and grave markers; correspondence with relatives, and liaison with the Y.W.C.A. in connection with the Hostess Houses, were a few of the duties assigned to the Information Branch.

Medical Branch.

The Medical Branch, which began to function January 1, 1920, was first located at No. 7 rue de Tilsitt. The personnel consisted of a Medical Officer, an enlisted man of the Medical Department of the Army, and a typist-interpreter.

The services of the Attending Surgeon were extended to the Army and civilian personnel of the American Graves Registration Service, Office of the Military Attache, Paris, and the Reparations Commission.

Infirmeries were established at Brest, Romagne, St. Denis and St. Ouen, the supplies being furnished by the Attending Surgeon and attendants selected by him. Additional equipment and supplies as needed were given by the American Red Cross until they closed in Paris on December 1, 1921, or were obtained by local purchase or by requisition on the Medical Supply Department, A.F. in G., Coblenz.

The office of the Attending Physician was moved in April, 1920, to No. 7 rue Quentin-Bauchart and later to No. 8 Avenue d'Iena.

Operations Division.

The closely related activities of the Field Operations Branch, the Registration Branch, and the Maintenance Branch, were brought into one Division, under a responsible Chief, for the purpose of supervision and coordination.

Field Operations Branch.

An officer in charge of the Field Operations Branch, under this new regime, had general supervision of all forces in the field. He organized their personnel, planned their operations and inspected their work.

The field forces consisted of the mobile personnel engaged in the actual exhumation work and preparation of bodies for shipment.

A Field Section as organized consisted of the Section Headquarters and the Field Operations personnel. The former included the necessary clerical personnel and the latter consisted of Inspectors (commissioned officers) and operating groups. Each group was composed of one Supervisory Embalmer, two Technical Assistants, one Checker and such laborers as were necessary.

A Section was divided into four operating groups, except when necessity demanded a larger number, each under the charge of an Inspector. When two groups worked in adjoining plots, they were designated as Units and placed in charge of an Inspector.

The officer in charge of a Section was called "Master of Section," his duties being to supervise all work pertaining to the removal of bodies and shipments made by his Section.

The Inspector directed the work of the group or groups and was present during the preparation of all bodies by his group, and verified personally all identifications,

The Supervisory Embalmer had technical supervision of the group and the Technical Assistant aided in the preparation and disposition of remains.

The Checker, who was attached to every group, handled the identification tags and recorded all data on Forms 114 and 16-A.

Convoys were attached to Section Headquarters, at evacuation points and at the ports. Their duties were to convey bodies, supplies and important records; to prevent delays, improper handling, loss or damage in transportation, and to secure receipts for all articles intrusted to their care.

The number of authorizations for shipment of bodies to the United States increased to such an extent that, in order to proceed with the work of exhumation as expeditiously as possible, it was determined to materially increase the Field Sections. Consequently, the Chief of this Service cabled to Washington for the necessary number of officers and civilian personnel. These consisted of five captains, for Field Section commanders; thirteen first lieutenants, as assistant Section commanders; fourteen lieutenants, as mortuary inspectors, three captains for concentration point officers; three lieutenants, as assistant port officers; one lieutenant

for truck company commander, and the following number of civilian personnel; twenty-four supervisory embalmers, forty-eight technical assistants, and six male stenographers.

When the Zone of Mid-Europe was discontinued on August 31, 1920, the work in Belgium and Germany was transferred to the Operations Division, and on October 19th the field forces in Great Britain were transferred to France. The Field Operations Branch then handled all exhumations made in France, Belgium, Luxembourg, Germany and Italy, and later those of Great Britain; thus merging under one Chief, Branches which formerly required several administrative heads.

Registration Branch.

The Registration Branch, which became a part of the Operations Division under the reorganization, took over all the burial records and casualty lists formerly carried by the Zone of France. This Branch then kept all records pertaining to the American dead in Europe, showing the location and status of bodies at all times; transmitted all authorizations to the field for shipment to the United States; handled all cancellations of authorizations, and kept a complete directory of cemeteries, adding those newly discovered and striking off those abandoned. It also initiated Forms No. 114 for bodies destined for a foreign country; prepared Forms No. 114-A for bodies to be concentrated into Permanent American Cemeteries in France; attended to all

changes of inscription, and took charge of all special requests and correspondence with Washington in regard to the verification of records.

Maintenance Branch.

The Maintenance Branch supervised the maintenance of cemeteries, and for this purpose there were created eleven Areas in France, and the Areas of Great Britain, Belgium and Germany; an officer known as "Area Supervisor" was placed in charge of each. He was principally concerned with the physical upkeep and condition of the various cemeteries within his Area; location of unregistered graves; exhumations from isolated graves for concentration and identification; the necessary changes of inscription on crosses; the disposition of grave markers after exhumation for shipment to the United States, and the making of special investigations.

Maintenance ceased to function as a Branch on June 30, 1921, and was incorporated with the Registration Branch, under one officer, as a Section.

Areas No. 5, 7, 11 and Belgium were abolished on October 15, 1921, the remaining cemeteries in those Areas being transferred to Area No. 3. Area No. 9 was closed November 10th, all cemeteries included therein having been vacated.

On December 1, 1921, the only Areas operating were Nos. 1, 2, 3, 4, 6 and 8, the two latter continuing to function under one head.

Supply and Transportation Division.

In order to coordinate the activities of Supply, and Rail, Water and Motor Transportation, these activities, which were closely related, were brought together under one Chief.

The activities of this Division were divided into four Branches: Rail and Water Transportation, Motor Transportation, Supply, and Contracts, Rents and Claims.

Rail and Water Transportation Branch.

This Branch was charged with the handling of all shipments of supplies and bodies incident to the operations of the Service. All transportation, telegraph and telephone accounts were audited therein and passed for payment.

Plans for disposition of caskets and supplies upon arrival from the United States and evacuation of bodies to ports for shipment to New York were made in this Branch. Another activity assigned to this Branch was the responsibility for the delivery of bodies of American dead to nearest of kin residing in Europe. This Branch also had supervision of Railheads in the field which were established to meet the requirements of the operating forces.

Five Railheads, functioning under the jurisdiction of the Rail and Water Transportation Branch, were opened for the reception of bodies, during the three months beginning November, 1920. Three of these Railheads were closed in April,

1921, one in June and the last one in July.

Ports were established for the receipt of supplies from the United States and for the storage of bodies awaiting shipment to the United States, a Port Officer being in charge of each.

As the work of returning the bodies to the United States lessened and the necessity for making trainload shipments from various places in France ceased to exist, the discontinuance, in August, 1921, of the Rail and Water Transportation Branch was effected. It, thereafter, functioned as a Section, with one principal clerk, under the Supply Officer.

Motor Transport Branch.

This Branch was concerned with the maintenance and upkeep of all motor transportation; the employment of chauffeurs, mechanics and other workmen; the operation of the Headquarters garage, the Overhaul Park, Reserve Park and repair shops at St. Ouen, and the production, overhauling and rehabilitation of vehicles.

A commissioned officer was detailed as Maintenance Officer, to increase the efficiency at the Service Park, which was established at St. Denis. This park was organized for the purpose of relieving the shops of a vast amount of repair work which was daily accumulating.

Supply Branch.

Upon this Branch, which was administered by the Supply Officer, devolved the important responsibility of furnishing supplies to the various activities of the Service which were scattered over the British Isles, Belgium, Luxembourg, occupied Germany and France. All supplies received from the United States were placed in storage at various depots administered by the Supply Officer, and shipped at the proper time to points designated. Purchase of supplies not shipped from the United States were made by the Purchasing Section of this Branch; the Supply Officer also operated the Sales Commissary, performed the duties of Salvage Officer, administered the Paris Morgue, supervised the upkeep and administration of buildings and grounds in Paris and St. Ouen.

The Contracts, Rents and Claims Branch remained in the Supply and Transportation Division until September, 1921, when it was transferred to the newly organized Cemeterial Construction Division.

Permanent Cemeterial Construction Division.

To provide a suitable administrative force for the work of rearrangement of the permanent cemeterial sites, to conform with the revised plans of the Fine Arts Commission, a Permanent Cemeterial Construction Division, with an officer in charge, was organized on August 15, 1921. To the new Division was transferred the Contracts, Rents and Claims Branch formerly

included in the Supply and Transportation Division.

The advantages of combining Permanent Cemeterial Construction with Contracts, Rents and Claims under a single head were apparent since much of the construction work was dependent upon contracts, and the acquisition of the ground involved negotiation, which was one of the functions of the Contracts, Rents and Claims Branch. By combining these two activities, the proper coordination in the acquisition of ground and the commencement of work were assured.

The importance and scope of this new Division were so apparent that it was considered advisable to appoint a commissioned assistant to the Chief of the Division. To accomplish this without adding another officer to the Service, it was decided to further modify the organization of the staff and, by incorporating the duties of Adjutant with those of the Administrative Division, another officer was made available. He was appointed assistant to the Chief of the Permanent Cemeterial Construction Division.

The new Division as created was divided into two Branches, namely; Construction Branch and the Contracts, Rents and Claims Branch. A small administrative section, consisting of the Chief Clerk and stenographer, was created for the purpose of distributing, checking and filing correspondence and maintenance of necessary personnel records.

Construction Branch.

The functions of this Branch were twofold; the first, the development into detailed working plans of the general outlines for permanent cemeteries prepared by the Fine Arts Commission. The designs of this Commission indicated the ideal picture to be produced on the sites selected for permanent cemeteries. In originating the landscape drawings it was impracticable to obtain, in the limited time, accurate and detailed surveys, although the designs conformed generally to the configuration of the ground. In producing detailed working plans it was necessary first to make accurate surveys. These surveys were the work of the Engineering Section of the Construction Branch.

The second function of the Construction Branch primarily concerned landscape architecture. The surveys having been produced by the Engineering Section, the Architectural Section then had to produce the detailed grading and parking plans which must be utilized to produce on the ground the actual landscape picture portrayed in the designs of the Fine Arts Commission.

The amount of work involved in the preparation of these plans was large, since the outline of grading, construction of walks, roads, water-systems, Gates, fences and monuments had to be worked up and approved and, in addition, provision had to be made for removing and replacing top soil. The planning of

all these activities was essential in order that engineering and architecture should be combined and coordinated. Progress charts and work reports, as well as cost accounting, were inaugurated under this Branch when construction work was actually started.

Contracts, Rents and Claims Branch.

The Contracts, Rents and Claims Branch, which was transferred from the Supply and Transportation Division to the Permanent Cemeterial Construction Branch on August 15, 1921, transacted the payment of all bills for leases, rents, telephone and other utilities. It prepared all contracts, leases and agreements for public utilities and services in connection with operations. It investigated and settled, in accordance with French law, all personal injury claims against this Service, and investigated all vehicular claims arising from accidents in connection with motor transportation of this Service.

This Branch had charge of all matters pertaining to the acquisition of property; the vouchering and payment for all temporary occupations in the field and damages in connection therewith; for all services in connection with exhumations and reburials and contracts for labor at ports and railheads. It also made the investigation and payment of claims arising out of operations.

Finance Office.

The Finance Officer was responsible for all disbursements pertaining to this Service. He paid for all supplies purchased and all services engaged by the American Graves Registration Service throughout France, England and Belgium, and for that purpose Section Masters and other officers were appointed as Agent Officers to disburse funds as his representative. All disbursements of the American Graves Registration Service were made from one fund which was kept in bulk for such use.

The clerical force of the Finance Office consisted of one civil service clerk and sixteen civilian employees of the Quartermaster Corps who were engaged solely on finance work.

Property Auditor.

The office of the Property Auditor was made necessary by the inauguration with the Graves Registration Service, on July 31, 1920, of the Property Accounting system prescribed by War Department Circular No. 131, December 10, 1918. The office was originally organized and functioned as an independent unit under the supervision of the Executive Officer.

The new Property Accounting system placed the functions of the Property Auditor under the control of the Finance Office, so that as soon as the organization of the office was complete, a recommendation was made that the Property Auditor for the Graves Registration Service be transferred to the supervision

of the Finance Officer in Paris. War Department authority having been secured by paragraph 3, Cablegram No. 591, October 4, 1920, the change was immediately effected.

Office of the French Mission.

The French Mission, under the direction of two officers of the French Army, continued to function in liaison with French authorities and this Service. Among the more important matters undertaken were relations with the French Graves Registration Service and the Mayors of the French communes, to obtain the allocation of required ground, purchase of land, etc. During the past year, 1921, the sphere of action of this Mission became wider by reason of the operations of exhumation and transportation of bodies to the United States, and concentration in Permanent American Cemeteries.

In this connection, the tracing of graves of missing American soldiers in the various communes was taken up and successfully accomplished; also, matters relating to American soldiers buried by French Sanitary Units, whose graves had not been previously located, were taken up by the French Mission with the French Ministry of Pensions.

Liaison was also effected through this Mission with French authorities during exhumation activities in arranging for hire of motor cars and purchase of material therefor; securing local labor; obtaining French authorization for exhumations and

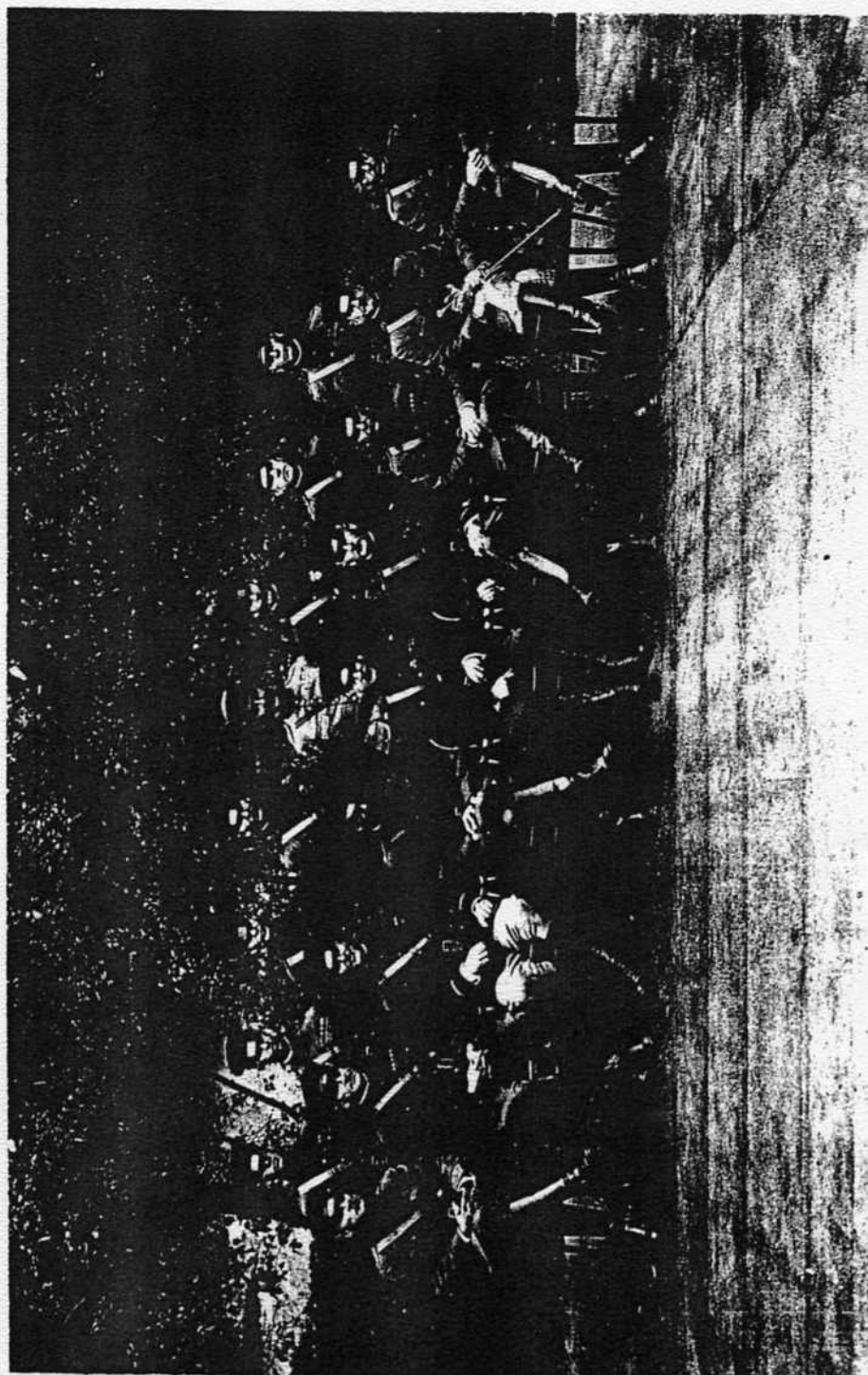
transportation; correspondence with local railroad companies,
and relations with all departments of the French Government
with which this Service had dealings.

CHAPTER II.

GENERAL POLICIES.

According to the general policy, as prescribed by the Secretary of War, this Service was charged with the exhumation, preparation and shipment of American dead buried in Europe; these duties to be carried out in a dignified and reverent manner, expeditiously, and with as little publicity as possible. To prevent misleading and inaccurate statements relative to the work appearing in the public Press, all officers and personnel connected with the American Graves Registration Service were cautioned against making any statements, verbal or written, pertaining to the operations other than those made through the regular official channels. This pertained to the office personnel as well as the field forces.

The commission of Fine Arts and the War Memorials Council appointed by the Secretary of War for the purpose of arranging final plans for the establishment of Permanent American Cemeteries, decided, in November, 1920, that no memorial should be placed in permanent American military cemeteries unless the designs submitted and the sites proposed were approved by the War Memorials Council, the Quartermaster General and the Secretary of War; and that individuals and organizations be advised not to solicit or accept contributions for such memorials prior to governmental approval. This course was taken to avoid



Headquarters Staff, Paris.

duplications, prevent lack of symmetry in monumentation, and to utilize the best artistic advice available to the Council.

Consideration was given to appeals for the retention of various cemeteries in Europe in addition to those which were already designated for permanent use, but it was considered that such action would furnish precedent for many other appeals and the consequent extension of future obligations beyond the reasonable bounds of proper maintenance. The Council at that time adhered to its former decision in favor of but four Permanent Cemeteries on the continent of Europe: Suresnes, Romagne, Belleau Woods and Sony, all located in regions where American troops were engaged. One Permanent Cemetery, Brookwood, was established near London for the repose of Americans who died in Great Britain while en route to the front.

Suresnes, on the outskirts of Paris, was selected with a view to perpetuating American traditions in establishing National Cemeteries in most advantageous and ideal situations. Suresnes is laid out on a broad, sunny plateau under the protecting brow of a wooded hill crowned by the extensive buildings of a French military post. The entire front of the burial ground is bordered by Boulevard George Washington, which is lined with ancient trees and well-trimmed hedges, beyond which can be seen the charming villas of Suresnes, the river Seine flowing through the valley below and, still further in the distance, the green stretches of the Bois de Boulogne and the spires of Paris.

Romagne, the largest American cemetery in France, marks the section of the Brioulles -Romagne-sous-Montfaucon-Grandpre sectors where the American troops met with most stubborn resistance. The furious attacks of these fresh, enthusiastic Divisions finally routed the enemy and resulted in the capture of one of the most important and cherished sections of the German front, being the key point to the Metziers-Sedan-Metz Railroad and the Briey iron regions.

Belleau Woods, the permanent cemetery in the Aisne-Marne sector, was established close to Belleau Woods, where soldiers and marines made common history, to the glory of American ideals and traditions.

Bony, situated in a treeless area in the north of France, where British and American troops fought shoulder to shoulder, was the scene of aggressive and desperate fighting. The cemetery serves as a memorial to the spirit of American courage, which conquered in the face of all the elements of shell craters, the entangled meshes of barbed wire, and machine gun cross fire. The stubborn assault went forward, step by step, day and night, for fourteen days, until all the formidable objectives were finally taken.

While the policy of concentration of the American dead in a comparatively few cemeteries seemed both expedient and desirable, it became a question whether so small a number as five would be satisfactory. The British Graves Registration

Service had decided no bodies of British soldiers would be returned home, and it was their policy to maintain a cemetery wherever forty or more bodies were interred, thus necessitating more than three thousand burial places, involving a proportionately high cost of maintenance and care.

This policy would have been impossible for the American Government to have carried out because of the great distances involved and the large force necessary for upkeep.

After careful consideration of the subject, however, the War Department, in August, 1921, decided to increase the number of permanent cemeteries to eight, the new ones being Fere-en-Tardenois, Thiaucourt and Waereghem in Belgium.

The historical interest which centered around Fere-en-Tardenois was created through the counter-offensive by American Divisions which, driving through Fere-en-Tardenois and Fismes, forced the German retreat beyond the Vesle and resulted in one of the most complete and significant victories of the war.

Thiaucourt was selected for the site of a permanent cemetery to preserve the historical importance of the St. Mihiel offensive and the ultimate collapse of the German forces. The town of Thiaucourt was on the battle line and constantly under fire. It was finally captured by American troops and 3,000 German prisoners were taken, with 92 pieces of artillery and great depots of supplies.

Waereghem commemorates the spirited advance made by the two American Divisions sent in October, 1918, to assist the 6th French Army in Belgium. The enemy was driven across the Escant River and forced to evacuate Spitaals Bosschem and Audeghem.

On August 8, 1921, the Secretary of War set a new designation upon certain permanent cemeteries. The following became the official nomenclature for Permanent American Cemeteries in Europe, and the eventual number of burials in each:-

<u>Old Designation</u>	<u>New Designation</u>	<u>Graves</u>
Remagne	Meuse-Argonne	14,826
Belleau Woods	Aisne-Marne	2,468
Bony	Somme	1,905
Fere-en-Tardenois	Oise-Aisne	6,198
Thiaucourt	St. Mihiel	4,406
Suresnes	Suresnes	1,583
Brookwood	Brookwood	600
Waereghem	Flanders Field	375
		<u>32,361</u>

It was originally proposed to concentrate at Suresnes all the burials in the Zone of the Interior, where a capacity of 4,200 had been planned. This number had to be decreased to 1,583 to meet the demands of the new policy adopted in May, 1921, of placing the crosses two metres apart. The ground procurable at Suresnes was limited, so the remainder of the bodies in the Zone of the Interior were authorized for interment at Aisne-Marne and Oise-Aisne.

Aisne-Marne (Belleau Woods) and Oise-Aisne (Fere-en-Tardenois) Cemeteries were to be the final resting places of the men who fell in the vicinity of Chateau-Thierry in operations during the summer of 1918, and were to receive a part of the excess burials in the Zone of the Interior, which could not be concentrated into Suresnes. The bodies of Americans who fell on the British front and in the operations at Cantigny,

were to be finally laid to rest in the Somme Cemetery. Those who fell in the Meuse-Argonne and St. Mihiel offensives, and a few who were buried in the extreme northeastern part of the Zone of the Interior, would lie in the Meuse-Argonne and St. Mihiel Cemeteries.

The War Department having pledged itself to care fittingly for those bodies which the relatives desired to rest in the Fields of Honor, the Commission of Fine Arts proposed a plan for the perpetual beautification of American cemeteries, with ample grounds, to provide sufficient space for each grave. Artistic approaches, uniform headstones of marble, the planting of trees bordering the cemetery and the roads leading to the nearest towns and villages, were a part of the decorative features contemplated in the development of these burial areas.

In addition to the thousands of men who were killed in the United States Army, there were also a large number of Americans who fell fighting in Allied forces. These latter men, as a rule, were buried by the Armies with which they fought, but this Service received many requests from the nearest of kin to return the bodies to the United States with those who served with the American colors.

At the time these requests first came in, this Service had no authority to acquiesce, consequently the Chief addressed a communication to Washington for a decision. The reply came that the current appropriation, "Disposition of

Remains," authorized the return home, at Government expense, of the remains of American citizens who died in the Service of the allied Armies, contingent upon the consent of the governments concerned. The War Department required that a formal request in each case be made to the Quartermaster General in Washington, who in turn notified this Service as to the disposition of the body.

Uniform Headstones.

The Council concluded there would be no variation in the governmental headstones approved for American graves, save in the individual inscriptions now authorized by statute and regulations, or necessary to indicate service in the Army, Navy or Marine Corps; except that there may be placed within the rosette at the head of each stone, an emblem of religious faith, to differentiate Christian and Jewish dead, such as a cross or the "Star of David."

The War Department decided that the Allied soldier dead in Permanent American Cemeteries could remain where buried unless request was made for the removal of the body. If not removed, the United States Government provided a standard headstone, the cost being assumed by the country of which the deceased was a subject.

Foreign civilians who died in the service of the United States Army and were buried in Permanent American Ceme-

teries were allowed to remain there, and uniform headstones were furnished by the American Government.

American graves left permanently in non-American cemeteries in Europe have, or will eventually have, headstones provided by this Service, according to British or other national design. This action was authorized by a decision of the War Department in March, 1921.

British Dead in American Cemeteries,

During the concentration operations, it was the policy of this Service to transfer British dead from temporary American cemeteries to any point the British War Graves Commission might designate, provided same was not more than 100 kilometres from the place of burial.

It was necessary in most cases, however, where there were British dead, to leave the graves in the cemetery, re-grouped in a tidy condition, enclosed wherever possible, as the British Commission was not empowered to authorize the removal of British bodies, and the procedure for obtaining permission to exhume and concentrate the remains of British soldiers consumed much time.

Exhumations and Transfers.

As far as possible, the person designated by the soldier as the one to be notified in case of emergency was in-

formed of the location of the grave. Since that notification many changes in grave locations have been made, to secure more thorough identification and better maintenance of the graves. Transfers of bodies were effected only at the instance of the French Government, which required concentrations by all the Allied Armies. The stress of battle was responsible for many poorly located cemeteries and thousands of unmarked or unidentified graves, which caused many bodies to be exhumed and concentrated into other cemeteries. The interested persons were informed, wherever possible, of these changes.

During the return of bodies to the United States from all parts of Europe, exhumations were made as promptly as conditions and the reverent handling of the dead would permit. In some instances requests from nearest of kin for the delivery of bodies to the United States were received after those bodies had been concentrated into permanent cemeteries.

When authorizations were received by this Service after the field forces had completed the operation of returning the dead from a particular cemetery to the United States, no action was taken on these late requests until the time when field parties returned to that locality for the purpose of concentrating the bodies into permanent cemeteries. This ruling did not apply to those cases where the matter of identification was in doubt and the solution of which was under consideration by the Board of Review, whose proceedings were forwarded to

Washington for final action; in these cases, in the event the identification was established, a mobile group was sent to the cemeteries in question to exhume those bodies, which were then moved by motor transportation to the nearest established railroad.

Grouping.

When the work of concentration within the permanent cemeteries began, the question of re-arrangement of the graves was taken up. Certain theories were advanced that officers should be placed in separate plots; that the "Unknown" should occupy a separate section; that a section of one particular cemetery should be set apart solely for the burial of fallen aviators, etc.

It was determined that the policy for reburials adopted in November, 1920, would be adhered to, i.e., that no attempt would be made to group the bodies according to organizations or to reserve plots for commissioned officers. The segregation of the unknown dead was deemed advisable, to expedite possible future examinations to determine identity, and also that the sections or plots for the unknown dead would be adjacent to the sections of the known burials.

The policy relative to the burial of civilian dead was to reinter them in separate plots in the permanent cemeteries.

Preparation of Bodies.

In preparing bodies for concentration into Permanent American Cemeteries, the same policy was pursued as in the case of those shipped to the United States, the removal being covered by special Form No. 114-A and Form 16-A.

The bodies of foreign dead moved from American military cemeteries to French communal or military cemeteries were prepared for burial in a blanket and reburial box and sent by motor truck.

Conditions of Delivery.

After repeated attempts had been made by the nearest of kin or their agents to obtain possession of bodies buried in Europe, it was decided that such delivery would not be made until the operations for return of bodies to the United States in the cemetery concerned had been completed - such delivery to be made for the following purposes, viz: first, for transportation to the United States at private expense; second, for transfer to permanent burial place in French communal or permanent cemeteries other than American cemeteries; third, for the retention of the remains in their original resting place. If transfer was requested for the purpose of having bodies remain in their original resting place, this Service declined to relinquish control of the grave until that cemetery had been completely evacuated.

The nearest of kin was required to have a letter of authority from the Chief, American Graves Registration Service, to take custody of the body and to accomplish a receipt for the remains, which was filed with the records of this Service. The above letter, with two extra copies, was presented to the Chief, French Mission, who obtained the necessary authorizations from the Prefet and Mayor concerned, for the exhumation and transportation of the remains. In case of leaving remains undisturbed, the applicant was informed of the conditions necessary for the acquisition of the permanent plot of ground.

If transfer of custody of remains was made while the field forces were operating in the vicinity of the cemetery, the exhumation and preparation of the body were performed by this Service. In other cases, the exhumations were made under the supervision of the Area Supervisor; the nearest of kin supplying the undertaker and labor and defraying all expenses in connection therewith.

At the request of the nearest of kin or duly authorized agent, this Service furnished a standard casket and a shipping case to receive these remains upon exhumation.

French Cemeteries.

The evacuation of bodies from the temporary American cemeteries at the beginning of exhumations for concentration caused a large amount of correspondence with the French Ministry

of Pensions. The disposition of the non-American dead, upon the abandonment of the temporary cemeteries, was a question to be determined by the French Government.

In order to allow the American Graves Registration Service to clear completely the ground occupied by the American military cemeteries, the Ministry of Pensions of the French Republic gave full authority for the exhumation of the bodies of all Allied soldiers and non-American civilian employees, and their reburial in French military cemeteries. The bodies which were originally buried in communal cemeteries were allowed to remain there, if the nearest of kin should make such request, but the French Government adhered to its policy of allowing no new burials without special arrangements with the Mayor of the commune.

Concentrations.

Concentrations into permanent cemeteries or Fields of Honor in Europe were effected in accordance with a plan based on geographical location of the temporary cemeteries in relation to the designated Fields of Honor. The only exceptions authorized were those remains of blood relatives, which, upon application, of the families concerned, were placed in the same permanent cemetery.

This policy was opposed by certain relatives who desired to have the remains of military dead transferred to a

permanent cemetery of their own selection. This matter became the subject of extended correspondence. For instance, the nearest of kin of a deceased soldier would request that the concentration be effected into the permanent cemetery at Suresnes, while the adopted plan of concentration provided for permanent interment in Aisne-Marne Cemetery. An attempt to comply with requests of relatives in this respect was considered impracticable, involving, as it would, considerable transportation and movement about France. The question of concentration into permanent Fields of Honor, it was thought, should be decided on the basis of the shortest haul and economy of operation.

Had all the requests for concentration into certain Fields of Honor been granted, it would have resulted in many difficulties of transportation and overcrowding.

It was finally decided that each case would be considered by the Quartermaster General on its merits, and that those presenting some special and important reason would be made the exception.

The question also was raised as to how the ground space and ultimate upkeep would be provided after concentrations of foreign dead into French cemeteries were effected. It was presumed that the French Government would necessarily provide, free of charge, the ground space for the bodies of German prisoners of war, for, under the provisions of the Treaty of Versailles, the signatories were bound to main-

tain the graves in the respective countries concerned. It was understood that, if the American Government paid for the removal of those bodies from purely American cemeteries to local French cemeteries, the expenses of this Service would cease when the removal operations had been completed, and that the French would keep up such graves thereafter as they would their own. The French Government assured this Service there would be no further responsibility on the part of the United States Government for the graves of the non-American dead.

The Quartermaster General, upon recommendation of this Service, authorized the expense attached to the removal to the nearest French communal or military cemetery, in reburial boxes and blankets, of such foreign soldiers or civilian dead as remained in the cemetery abandoned by reason of the removal of all American dead.

Isolated Graves.

The existence of isolated graves, particularly in localities where purely American cemeteries were evacuated by reason of the concentration of the American dead into permanent cemeteries in France, was not looked upon with favor by the French Government, as the original owners desired to regain possession of their lands. The United States Government also desired to obviate the possibility of such graves being lost or improperly cared for in future years.

Under date of April 1, 1920, the French Ministry of Pensions announced through its Graves Registration Service that

if the nearest of kin desired a body to remain in its present resting place after the American cemetery had been evacuated, the relatives must purchase the plot of ground where the body lay, and secure from the Mayor of the commune the necessary authorization for the grave to remain there.

Therefore, in all cases where the nearest of kin desired a body to remain undisturbed in an American cemetery which had to be evacuated by this Service, the United States War Department notified such nearest of kin that this request could be entertained only upon the above conditions. The body had to be either concentrated into a Permanent American Cemetery in France, or transferred to an adjacent French military or French communal cemetery. In transferring bodies to a French communal cemetery, the nearest of kin was required to make the necessary arrangements with the local officials for perpetual burial rights and upkeep of the grave.

American graves in the United Kingdom were cared for by the British Government in cases where the body had not been removed from its original burial place and had not been transferred to the Permanent American Cemetery.

The nearest of kin was responsible for the maintenance of all graves in France outside of Permanent American Cemeteries and French military cemeteries. In the latter case the French Government agreed to furnish perpetual burial rights.

"Do Not Disturb" Cases.

In the correspondence relating to the concentration of bodies into permanent cemeteries, certain phrases were adopted to designate the disposition of remains. The term, "To be returned to the United States," signified that the relatives had requested the return of the body of the late soldier to the United States. The phrase "Not to be returned," was used in cases where relatives had requested the remains be not returned home, but were willing to have same removed to a Permanent American Cemetery abroad. "Do not disturb" signified that relatives had requested the remains be not removed from the place where buried, either for return to the United States or reburial in a Permanent European-American Cemetery.

The notation "Do not disturb" applied to cases of burials in cemeteries in the United Kingdom, in French municipal or permanent French military cemeteries, or in permanent British military cemeteries. In such cases, the nearest of kin making the request that the remains be not disturbed was advised that the body would be left in its present resting place subject to the care and custody of the said relative, upon whom then devolved all future responsibility for the care of the grave.

When temporary American cemeteries were about to be abandoned, it was the policy of this Service to send a form letter, as below, stating the conditions upon which the body

might be left in its present resting place:-

"It has now developed that all other remains of deceased soldiers buried in the same cemetery as your late son will be removed for burial in a Permanent American Cemetery, which will result in the grave of your son being isolated, and, as the Government of the United States cannot then assume responsibility for future care of the grave, it will be necessary for you to relieve the Government from further care and agree to assume all responsibility.

"This action has been necessary in order to place isolated graves in Europe on the same footing as the private graves in the United States, and it will be seen that it would be next to impossible to care for a vast number of graves scattered over Europe.

"If, however, you would now be willing to have the remains removed and the body placed in a Permanent American Cemetery, this action will be taken at Government expense and the grave properly cared for at the expense of the United States Government."

Among the cablegrams received from Washington giving the desires of the nearest of kin regarding the disposition of bodies, there have been instances where those resting in permanent cemeterial sites were listed under the caption of "Do not disturb." Inasmuch as the plans adopted for permanent cemeteries contemplated that graves would be placed six feet apart and that the general plan of the permanent sites would be changed, it became evident that the instructions not to disturb a particular body could not be literally carried out. Furthermore, it was contemplated that every body interred in a permanent site would be placed in a reburial casket, so that, strictly

speaking, this could not be accomplished without the disturbance of the remains.

No cognizance, therefore, could be taken of the expression "Do not disturb" in the cases of bodies in the cemeteries which were to be permanent, but they were considered in the same category as any other bodies resting there, namely, that ultimately they would be placed in a reburial casket and reinterred so as to conform with the general plan adopted for the permanent site.

In the cases of bodies in French or British cemeteries concerning which requests had been received not to disturb, the policy of this Service was not to place such bodies in reburial caskets, or to disturb them in any way, except when a question arose as to the identity of a particular body. In this connection, however, the French Government abandoned many of its military cemeteries in the battle area by reason of concentrating the graves into larger sites, so that if in the future an instance should arise where the body of an American is lying in one of these cemeteries to be evacuated, it will likewise have to be removed because of the objection of the French Government to the existence of isolated graves.

The question of the disposition of a "Do not disturb" body in a purely American cemetery that was to be abandoned then had to be decided. The French Government did not obligate itself to provide additional burial space for such bodies in

the French communal cemeteries. That was a matter that had to be taken up by the relatives themselves with the local authorities. The French Government did, however, provide burial space in the nearest French military cemetery whenever transfer was desired. The nearest of kin was then required to furnish an affidavit releasing the United States Government from future maintenance of the grave.

Another point in question was in the cases where bodies were buried in an American plot of a French communal cemetery, or in an extension to such a cemetery, which were requested to be left undisturbed. The French Government's policy was to concentrate the bodies in the communal cemetery proper, in order to obviate the necessity of purchasing the additional land in which the bodies were located.

With reference to burials of "Do not disturb" cases in an American plot pertaining to a French communal cemetery, it was decided, on September 8, 1921, that where such plot was located within the permanent limits of the communal cemetery, these bodies should be left undisturbed. In case the American plot was situated outside the limits of the communal cemetery and was set aside exclusively for the burial of American dead, such plots were treated as temporary American cemeteries and "Do not disturb" cases therein, where the relatives had not acquired title to the ground on which the grave was located, were concentrated in a Permanent American Cemetery.

Identifications.

The operating sections were advised of the necessity of absolute identity of remains in all cases and were cautioned to use every possible means to fulfill this requirement.

Owing to the perplexing conditions in which cemeteries were found in the Zone of the Armies at the commencement of operations in the latter part of 1920, it was decided that no exhumations would be made except those designated by Form No. 114 and when necessary for purpose of identification, irregularities in burial being evident and identities questioned.

Trenching, which signified the removal of all earth from certain rows, was tolerated only when necessary to clear up existing discrepancies, in which case it could only be accomplished in a minimum degree. The extent of the trenching and the necessity for it were decided by the Master of Section. In all cases where bodies were exhumed for purposes of identification and for which no Forms No. 114 existed, they were reburied and Forms No. 16-A executed. Bodies so exhumed and reburied were concentrated in a suitable plot.

In many cases the identification was so imperfect that the dental chart became the deciding factor. It was the policy of this Service to use the dental chart generally for the purpose of furnishing corroborative evidence rather than primary evidence upon which identifications were either confirmed or denied.

In the case of bodies buried in hermetically sealed caskets, where identification had been fully established, it was decided unnecessary to open the casket or to prepare the tooth chart or Form No. 16-A.

Disposition of Remains.

A considerable number of conflicting claims in the disposition of remains of American military dead were received from divorced parents. In some cases the decree of divorce awarded the custody of a minor child to one or the other of the parents. In others, no such award had been made. This was of no legal value in determining to which of the contesting divorced parents, custody of the remains should be given, for the reason that the deceased having been of military age, the law recognized his right of selection as between the parents. The age was, by common law, fourteen years.

In most cases it developed that the habitual residence of the deceased was with one or the other and also, in most cases, one or the other of the living divorced parents had been designated by the deceased in his emergency address. It would seem, therefore, that the parent so designated should be presumed to be elected by the deceased as the one whom he desired to have direction of the disposition of his remains in case of death, and by him considered as his nearest relative in effect.

It was finally determined that, neither widow nor children appearing, where conflicting claims were made by divorced parents, the one designated by the deceased soldier in his emergency address be held entitled to direct the disposition of his remains.

One of the questions raised for settlement by the War Department was the disposition of the remains of members of the families of soldiers, sailors, marines and civilian employees of the Army who died in France.

It was decided that they might be given burial rights and be concentrated into permanent cemeteries, as might also the members of families of ex-soldiers employed in the American Graves Registration Service.

Naval and Marine Corps Dead.

The Navy and Marine Corps Graves Registration Service unit handled all dead pertaining to their branch of the Service in the Zone of the Interior. Under no circumstances did Field Sections of the American Graves Registration Service, operating in the Zone of the Interior, exhume Navy and Marine Corps dead unless there was an exhuming unit of the Navy present in the cemetery, which receipted for the body and prepared it for shipment to the United States. In cases where Navy and Marine Corps dead were exhumed for purpose of identification and reburials were necessary, a special report was

made, calling attention to the fact that they pertained to the Navy and Marine Corps Graves Registration Service, so that the information, showing reburials, could be transmitted at once to the Headquarters of that Service in Paris. This Service made exhumations of Navy and Marine Corps dead in the Zone of the Armies, the Navy Graves Registration Service merely designating representatives to be present with the field forces, to secure the data pertaining to the Navy and Marine Corps dead.

Surplus Crosses.

Instructions were given to Field Sections to the effect that care must be shown in removing crosses and Jewish emblems from the graves in temporary cemeteries in order to continue their usefulness in the permanent Fields of Honor. Those crosses and stars in good condition were under no circumstances allowed to be utilized for purposes other than marking graves.

As rapidly as crosses and stars became surplus at the temporary cemeteries, they were concentrated for re-issue to the permanent ones where reburials were constantly being made.

Disposition of Markers.

Only those articles of a permanent nature, which were placed on the graves by relatives or friends and which

were different from the uniform marking or decoration of our cemeteries, were tagged and stored. These articles were not returned to the United States except upon request of the nearest of kin and then shipment was made through a commercial firm and expenses borne by the individual. Small grave markers which could be placed inside the shipping case were the only exceptions to the above. The wooden cross at the grave was not sent to the home of the deceased. Specifications were furnished in cases where it was desired to erect a similar marker in marble.

Area Supervisors were instructed that articles of a permanent nature placed on graves by private individuals must be tagged and properly cared for when bodies were exhumed by field forces for shipment to the United States or for concentration. A record was kept in Area Headquarters, giving name, description of article, name and location of grave from which the article was taken and place of storage.

Abandonment of Cemeteries.

When this Service abandoned cemeteries in France, Belgium and Italy, the various classifications of dead and the kind of cemeteries considered were as follows:-

American Military Cemeteries, French Military Cemeteries, British Military Cemeteries, French Communal Cemeteries, Belgian Communal Cemeteries, French Civilian Cemeteries, and

Italian Communal Cemeteries.

In the classification of the dead, the following terms were used:-

Former Members of the A.E.F.; Other Americans;
Citizens of Other Governments.

When an American military cemetery was to be abandoned, the non-American dead buried therein were removed to the nearest French military cemetery and reburied in reburial box and blanket. The cemetery for the reception of those reinterred was indicated by the French Government and, upon the completion of the transfer, a complete list of the bodies so reburied was furnished to the French Mission, the French guardian of the cemetery, and the Mayor of the Commune.

When concentration operations into Permanent American Cemeteries began, all bodies of former members of the A.E.F. which had not been sent home were concentrated into these permanent Fields of Honor, except those designated as "Do not disturb."

Upon the completion of exhumations for shipment out of France and for their concentration into Permanent American and other cemeteries, the part of the cemetery abandoned, which was still under the care of this Service, was placed on a maintenance basis. As a matter of form, the Area Supervisor informed the Mayor in writing that this Service had abandoned the cemetery and that it no longer had supervision over the remaining graves, a list of which was furnished him stating

that those bodies had been left by permission of the French Government.

It was then the duty of the Area Supervisor, or a commissioned officer acting as his representative, to call personally at the Mayor's office and request that a representative of the Mayor inspect the cemetery with him, securing a signed statement that the cemetery had been left in proper condition. The Quartermaster General was then furnished with a list of American bodies remaining as "Do not disturb" cases, and notified that the cemetery had been abandoned.

The Next of Kin.

Instructions for the disposition of remains were issued by the War Department in Washington, upon the properly executed authority of the legal next of kin in each case. The widow was the first person having disposition of the remains of her husband. If there were no widow or children, the father, and, in turn, upon his decease, the mother was the proper authority. The brothers in order of seniority and then the sisters in order of seniority (if there were no brothers) ranked next in authority to decide. Uncles and aunts followed.

Upon an opinion rendered by the Judge Advocate General of the Army, if a widow had remarried she forfeited her right, and the next of kin, as given above, might have claimed and been accorded the right to direct disposition. The legal guardian of the children of a deceased soldier could, however, also

direct disposition and such requests had priority next after the widow of the soldier. The former widow, after remarriage, therefore, could still direct disposition of the remains of her former husband if she had custody of the minor children of the deceased in her capacity as their natural guardian.

Changes of Mind.

A form letter and a question blank to be accomplished were sent from the Chief of the Cemeterial Division, Office of the Quartermaster General, to the nearest of kin of the deceased soldiers, requesting an expression of their desires as to whether the body should remain in France, should be interred in a National Cemetery in the United States, or brought to the family plot in the burying-ground at home.

The questionnaire was simple and clear, but was often incompletely filled out, and the indefinite character of the replies made an accurate record for filing difficult of accomplishment.

Considerable confusion was also experienced through the frequent changes of decision on the part of the next of kin. A mother would decide that she wished her son's body to remain in France and notified Washington accordingly. Subsequently another change of plans would be announced. After the second arrangement had been duly recorded, a third change of mind was registered at Headquarters. Again, at a family council, it would seem most fitting that the body should be buried perhaps

in the old family plot. This reported decision would be announced as absolutely final until, possibly, marrying again and moving to a distant city, the mother desired the body interred near the new home. So, not infrequently, on account of similar reasons, as many as six changes had to be made on the original request. This vacillation continued to such an extent that it became necessary for an order to be issued in August, 1921, announcing that after a body had once been disinterred and the cemetery evacuated, the last reported request must be considered final, and no further changes of decision could be considered. This action on the part of the authorities relieved this Service of much embarrassment.

One man, who lost two sons in different parts of Europe, and whose bodies would naturally be returned at different times, requested that one be held at Hoboken until the other arrived, so that they might be returned home together for one funeral. Sometimes requests were made to hold bodies at that port until a final decision concerning the place of burial could be arrived at by the family. These cases had to be given tactful consideration in order to avoid unpleasantness and misunderstanding. Yet if they were not satisfactorily adjusted, Hoboken would have no space to accommodate new arrivals.

Not infrequently members of the family of a deceased soldier came from distant homes to Washington, seeking information as to the location or identification of their soldier.

Most of them were appreciative of the interest taken in their behalf and of the sympathetic courtesy with which they were generally received.

Removal to Other Foreign Countries.

One of the important problems involving this Service during the period from September, 1920, to September, 1921, was that of the removal of bodies to other foreign countries.

The disposition of bodies of American soldiers of foreign birth whose nearest of kin had requested removal to a country other than the United States was a matter which took much time and correspondence to adjust.

The policy undertaken by the American Graves Registration Service was to first correspond with the governments of all foreign countries, to ascertain their sentiments regarding the entry and transportation of the dead. In some cases no definite reply could be obtained from official sources, and in others, conditions were such that it was considered disadvantageous to attempt shipment.

The following letter was exemplary of those sent to foreign governments:-

"It is the policy of the American Government to return the remains of American soldiers to their next of kin at their bona fide homes in foreign countries when the relatives so desire. We therefore request that you advise us as to whether your Government will permit this Service to return the remains of American soldiers to your country and also inform us as to the information you will require in each case before issuing the required authorization.

"When the bodies of American soldiers are exhumed by this Service their remains are thoroughly disinfected with the most effective fluids known; they are immediately placed in a metal lined casket, hermetically sealed, and the casket is securely fastened in a strong shipping case. This procedure permits the transportation of the body with absolute safety as to matters of sanitation. The remains of each soldier will be accompanied by a civilian conveyer (an American citizen) from the cemetery until finally delivered to the next of kin. Your decision on the above question will be highly appreciated."

Nearly all the countries communicated with granted the authorization, provided the conditions stated in our requests were complied with.

After receipt of authorization from foreign countries, it was the general custom to get in touch with the nearest of kin in Europe of all American dead, to ascertain their wishes as to the disposition of the bodies.

The Foreign Case Correspondence Section of the Administrative Division was the depository for all communications dealing with the subject of the next of kin of deceased soldiers residing in Europe, and with all questions pertaining to an expression of desires and complying with the same. At first glance it might appear that but little trouble would ensue in the handling of these cases and that they could be disposed of quite rapidly, but such did not prove to be the case.

Letters were originally divided into two classes, viz., those which were sent direct to the next of kin from

the office of the Quartermaster General, instructing that reply be sent to these Headquarters, copy being sent for our record, and those which were sent to these Headquarters for action. This method proved ineffectual for the reason that those letters sent direct to the next of kin by the Quartermaster General had to be followed up by the American Graves Registration Service and it was discovered that copies had not reached that office in certain cases. A new system had to be devised. It was necessary to secure the cooperation of the Quartermaster General and the officer in charge at Hoboken, and they discontinued the policy of writing direct to the nearest of kin in Europe.

The first step in notifying the next of kin was to send all advices received from Washington or Hoboken to the Registration Branch of this Service, and secure a memorandum from them to the effect that the deceased soldier was actually buried in Europe and that no prior authorization had been received for the shipment of the body. If no such authorization had been received, action was suspended and the Foreign Case Correspondence Section advised. A letter was then written to the next of kin requesting an expression of desires. An affidavit was enclosed in every case where it was intended the remains be returned to his or her address. This information was recorded on card records and a follow-up system established. When no response was received within six weeks, a follow-up letter was sent out requesting prompt reply. A second follow-

up letter was posted out at the end of the next six weeks, which was considered the last step to be taken by this Service. If no reply had been received within four months of the original advice, the case was dropped and the Registration Branch advised that it came under the category of "Cases where no reply had been received within a reasonable time" and the remains would be buried in a permanent cemetery in France.

When a definite reply was received, action was taken to comply with the desires of the next of kin and the Quartermaster General was notified of action taken. If no instructions were obtained, the remains were buried in a Permanent American Cemetery in France.

In cases where a widow made a request for the disposition of the remains of her late husband, and had again married, it was the policy to continue, in full force and effect, the disposition, unless the next nearest relative claimed the right to possession on the ground of the widow's remarriage. This Service did not assume to endeavor to locate the next nearest relative with a view to ascertaining his or her wishes in preference to those of the widow, unless such nearest relative initiated a request based upon the marriage of the widow, and the original request was complied with.

Australia.

It was the policy of the United States Government not to send bodies of American dead to Australia. This decision

was arrived at upon the request of the Australian High Commissioner and the express wish of the Prime Minister of the Commonwealth.

Austria.

The Austrian Government, on May 3, 1921, granted the right to bury American dead in Austria. This permission was obtained after this Service had communicated with the Austrian Minister for Foreign Affairs, asking the right to return the remains of American soldiers to Austria. The only conditions stipulated were that the regulations connected with public health and railway transport be not disregarded. The Federal Ministry for Social Administration (The Board of Public Health) declared its readiness to do everything in its power to assist the undertaking and to support it in special cases by issuing instructions to the competent authorities under the Ministry's control.

Belgium.

As the result of correspondence with the Ministere de la Defense Nationale, Belgium, regarding the disposition of burials under the control of this Service located in Belgium, there is quoted below the reply of the Belgian Government in reply to the points submitted. The Belgian Government was requested to express itself as to the following:-

- (a) Disposition of American Dead in "Do not disturb" cases where buried in American cemeteries to be abandoned or in Belgian communal or military cemeteries.
- (b) Disposition of Allied military dead where buried in American cemeteries to be abandoned.
- (c) Disposition of foreign non-military dead, such as non-American civilian employees and enemy prisoners of war.

The Ministere de la Defense Nationale replied that the Belgian Government would grant permanent burial rights in communal as well as military cemeteries, but those graves situated in communal cemeteries would be considered as civil graves, which might disappear after five years unless the relatives secured a permanent burial right.

Also that foreign dead, other than American, would be transferred to the nearest military cemetery.

Brazil.

The Brazilian Government, in a communication of April 4, 1921, informed this Service it had no objection to make against the transfer to Brazil of the bodies of American soldiers who died in France and whose families resided in Brazil, provided the usual sanitary conditions were observed.

Canada, South America and United States Possessions.

According to arrangements made by the United States Government, those bodies intended for burial in Canada, South

America or United States possessions, were shipped to Hoboken in the usual way and the final delivery of the body left to the Army authorities in the United States.

Czecho-Slovakia.

The Czecho-Slovakian Government accepted our offer to transport to Czecho-Slovakia the bodies of American soldiers of Czecho-Slovakian origin who fell on the battlefields, on the conditions explained in our letter of April 18, 1921. The Czecho-Slovakian Government extended its thanks to the United States Government for this decision and stated: "It would be a great solace to the families of those brave soldiers."

Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden.

Satisfactory arrangements for the interment of American dead in Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden were made, through the Consuls concerned, upon the presentation of certificates as to the cause of death and the proper preparation of the body.

Germany.

All the bodies that were found in occupied Germany and Luxembourg were returned to the United States, except in cases where specific requests for their delivery to the next of kin in a foreign country were received. American burials

in unoccupied Germany were treated the same as those in the occupied zone, after the prohibition regarding the removal of graves from the interior of Germany had been raised. The deaths which occurred in the American Forces in Germany before the American Graves Registration Service took up activities in March 1920, were treated as A.E.F. dead. Those who died after that date were embalmed and sent either to the United States or to their next of kin in Europe. Subsequently no further temporary burials were made in Germany.

In January, 1921, this Service adopted the following policy regarding the shipment of bodies to Germany:-

"Inasmuch as the German Government, in its decree of July 22, 1920, prohibited the exportation or importation of remains of deceased soldiers of the United States or Allies, it is considered inadvisable to communicate with the nearest of kin residing in Germany on this matter, as there are no prospects that the German Government will reverse its decision for an indefinite period.

"It is therefore recommended as a policy, that, in cases of the nearest of kin of American soldier dead residing in Germany, the remains of these dead receive final interment in National Fields of Honor in France, and that no correspondence be had with relatives in which the United States Government agrees to send the remains to that country, as the Government thus accepts an obligation that cannot be fulfilled for an indefinite time."

Great Britain.

It was the policy of the United States Government to return all bodies from Great Britain and Ireland, unless a specific request to the contrary was made by the next of kin.

These bodies which were left in Great Britain have been divided into two classes: first, those which must be left where they were originally buried; second, the balance which were to be concentrated and maintained in the Permanent American Cemetery at Brookwood.

A decision was reached by the British authorities that it would not permit the disinterment for return to the United States of Americans who died while in the service of the British Crown if those dead be in military cemeteries. But subsequently an understanding was had with the Imperial War Graves Commission that the release of bodies of American citizens who died in the British service would be taken up in each case by the relative through the American State Department with the Foreign Office, London.

The British Government itself avoided any display whatsoever in the transportation of its dead through the United Kingdom and suggested the same simple ceremonies be observed in the removal of the American dead.

At a conference which was held at the American Embassy in October, 1920, at which Colonel Rethers, Mr. Williams of the American Embassy and Colonel Lord Brown of the British War Graves Commission were present, it was decided that the objections heretofore made to the sending of bodies of American soldiers to their next of kin in the British Isles would be withdrawn. It was stipulated that the shipment of such bodies

from France, Belgium and other points into Great Britain would be without display of any kind, the caskets to be in plain wooden shipping cases marked according to the usual instructions, but without being draped with an American flag; no soldiers in uniform to accompany the bodies and the conveyers to be in civilian clothes.

In order to avoid confusion and possible diplomatic objection in the future, it was further decided that the various Port Officers be directed not to make any requests to British Consuls regarding the remains, but that all requests be sent to the officer of the American Graves Registration Service, in command of the Zone of Great Britain, and authority would be secured from the Customs Officers in Great Britain for the entrance of these bodies into the United Kingdom.

Shipping bodies into Ireland was temporarily suspended on November 26, 1920, because of the unsettled political conditions, but was resumed in November, 1921.

Greece.

Greece permitted the burial of the bodies of American soldiers upon the completion of three certificates; first, as to the cause of death, to be signed by a physician; second, as to the proper embalming or preparation of the remains; and third, as to the proper packing of the remains. The only unusual packing requirement was that sawdust be placed between the casket and the shipping case.

The Greek Government announced it had no objection

to the exhumation for removal of American dead in Greece, provided the deceased did not die of a contagious disease.

Holland.

The Netherlands agreed to allow the entry of the remains of American dead, in the following note which was dated February 21, 1921:-

"In answer to your letter dated January 21, 1921, I beg to inform you that the remains of American soldiers can be returned to the Netherlands under the following conditions:

"1. The remains must be placed in hermetically sealed caskets. If the transportation be by boat, the casket must be placed on deck. If the transportation be effected by rail on an open wagon, the casket must in both cases be protected against rain and sun.

"2. No formality is needed at the frontiers, but a document from the municipality of the town whence the remains are transported has to be handed to the Customs officers. This document must contain the name of the soldier and the place of destination."

Italy.

Permission was received from the Italian Government under date of December 27, 1921, to transfer bodies of American soldiers to Italy, provided the Italian Minister of War, through the office of the Military Attache, Italian Embassy in Paris, be furnished a list of names of the bodies to be sent. Also that the remains be concentrated at Turin, by way of Modane, if possible, in one single train or in successive trains, and

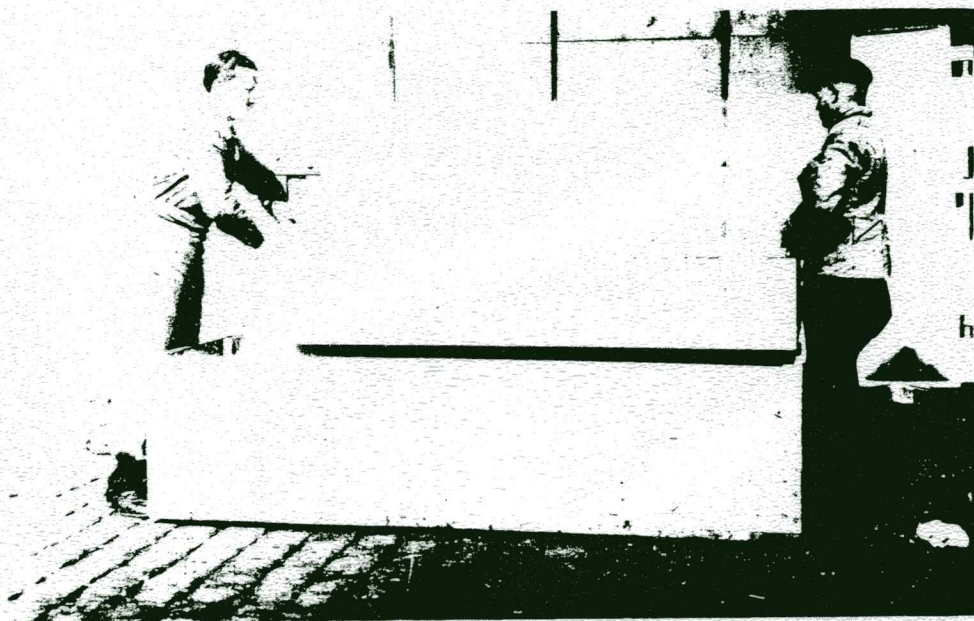
shipped in railroad cars already sub-divided for the various destinations.

The Italian Minister of War would then obtain from the Communes and Prefectures, the authorization for burial of the remains in the cemeteries of the various communes of origin or where the families are domiciled.

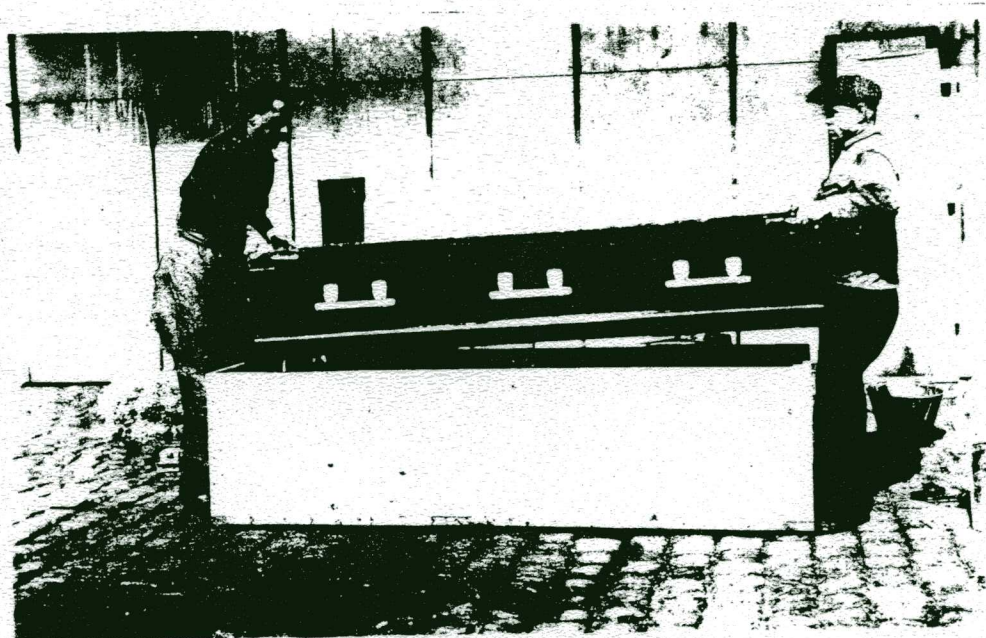
Luxembourg.

On July 4, 1921, the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg forwarded a letter to this Service granting authority for the shipment by railroad of American dead into Luxembourg under certain conditions. These provisions as set forth in a grand ducal decree, require the casket, which must be hermetically sealed, to be placed in a wooden coffin of sufficient durability as to avoid any possibility of removal; the bottom of the casket must be covered with a layer of pulverized absorbent matter at least .05 m. thick. In cases where decomposition had set in, or when operations were to be effected during the heat of summer, the body was required to be wrapped in a shroud saturated with a disinfectant.

The Duchy required that a medical certificate, indicating the cause of death and certifying that the body was properly prepared for burial, accompany the remains and attesting that the interests of public health would not be impaired by the transportation of the corpse.



Taking out the metallic lining.



Removing wooden casket.

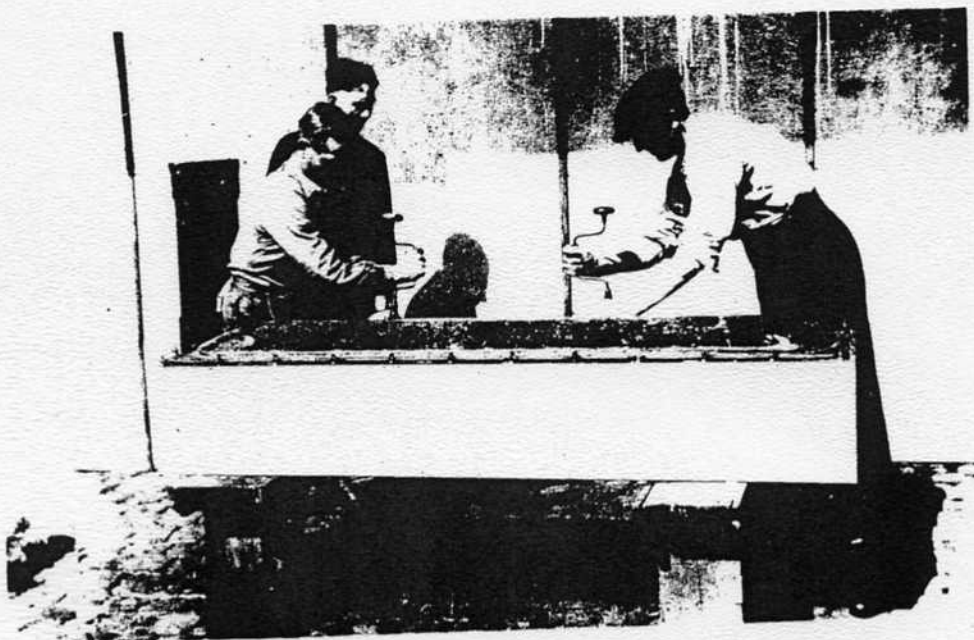
Exhumations were authorized by the Sheriff, who fixed the conditions to be fulfilled after consultations with the Medical Inspector. A physician and a member of the College of Sheriffs, or a Police Commissioner, were designated to see that the conditions stipulated in this authorization were properly fulfilled.

Poland.

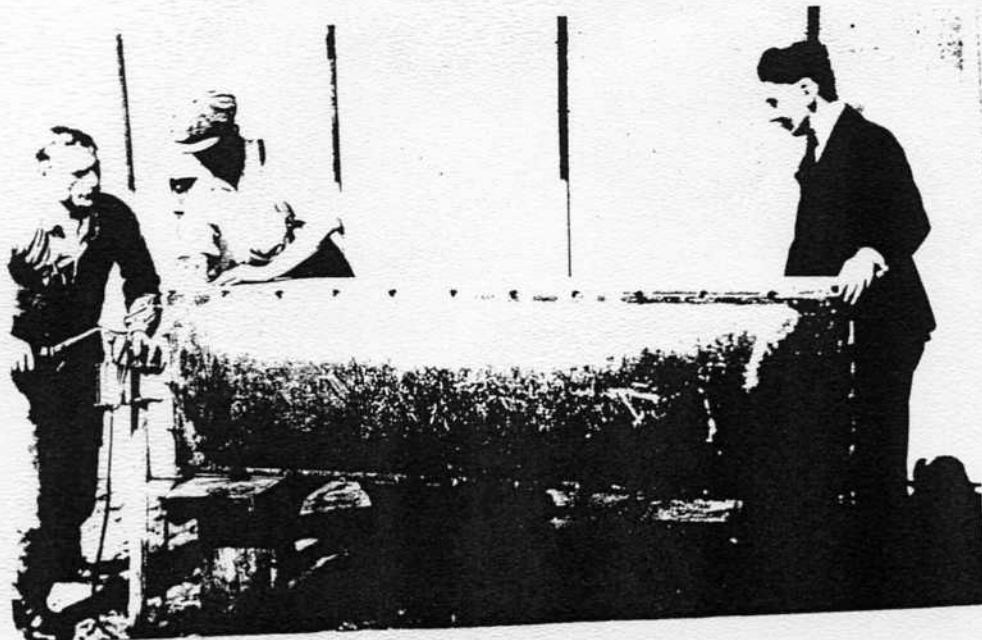
The Polish Minister of Foreign Affairs assured this Service that his Government highly appreciated the honor the United States Government conferred in returning to that country the soldiers of Polish birth killed in France. He also advised that he would cooperate in every way with this Service and would take every precaution against difficulties in the shipment of American dead.

The unsettled conditions in Poland delayed shipments of bodies to that country. Below is an interesting case in question regarding the body of an American soldier with Polish relatives.

A deceased soldier buried in Coblenz, Germany, gave as his emergency address the name of a friend in the United States but had no relatives there. He left a widow, father, mother and sisters in a town in Poland who could not be reached, although efforts had been made to get in touch with members of the family. Existing orders required return of this body from Germany to the United States for burial in a National Cemetery. Upon the



Screwing on lid of metallic
for testing.



Testing with air.

improvement of political conditions in Poland, the question of final disposition will possibly arise, upon the presentation of some request from the family.

Portugal.

In May, 1921, the Portuguese Government authorized the transportation to Portugal of the bodies of American soldiers claimed by their families, stating it was in complete agreement with the conditions this Service had set forth.

Roumania.

A communication from the Military Attache, Legation of Roumania, under date of August 16, 1921, stated that the Roumanian Government approved in principle the transportation to Roumania of the bodies of American soldiers killed on the battlefield, to be buried near their families.

Russia.

The bodies of deceased soldiers whose nearest of kin resided in Russia, and where no authorization had been received, were concentrated in France. It was decided that no correspondence would be held by this Service with the relatives in reference to the shipment of bodies to Russia, and that no bodies would be shipped there. All advices from the Office of the Quartermaster General, directing action to the contrary, were recorded

and the bodies registered for concentration.

The following excerpt of a letter from the Chief of this Service to the Quartermaster General of the Army on September 25, 1920, is explanatory:-

"With reference to the attached supplementary advices on American Cemetery No. 319, Meyers, Loire-et-Cher, France, attention is invited to the fact that it will be impossible for this Service to deliver bodies to Russia under present unsettled conditions there.

"It is accordingly requested that this office be authorized to concentrate, into Permanent American cemeteries in France, the bodies of two American soldiers with nearest of kin in Russia."

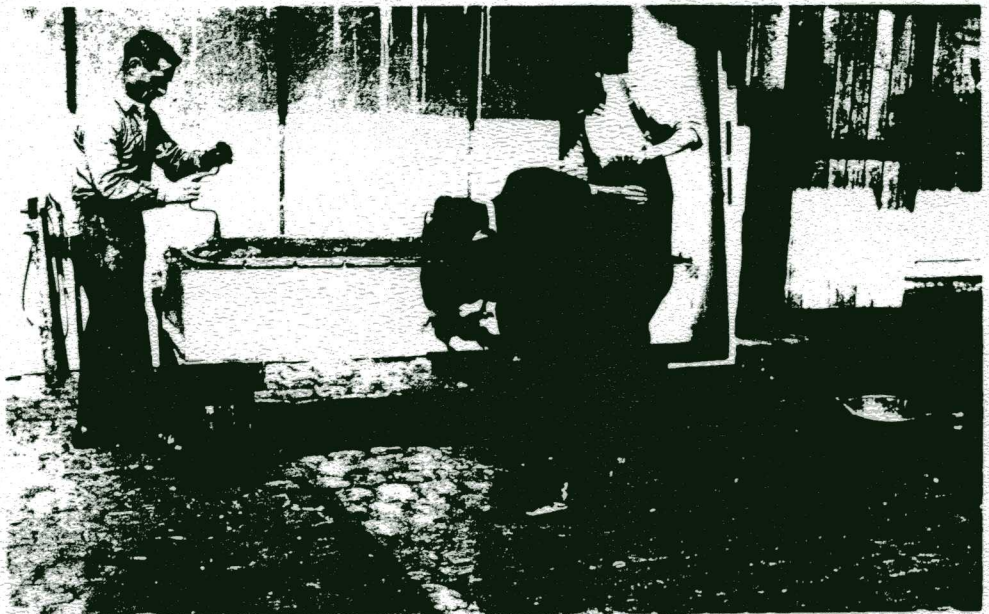
To which the reply came:-

"Authority is hereby given to concentrate the bodies referred to, when the time comes, in National Cemeteries in France. This policy to be followed in similar cases arising in the future."

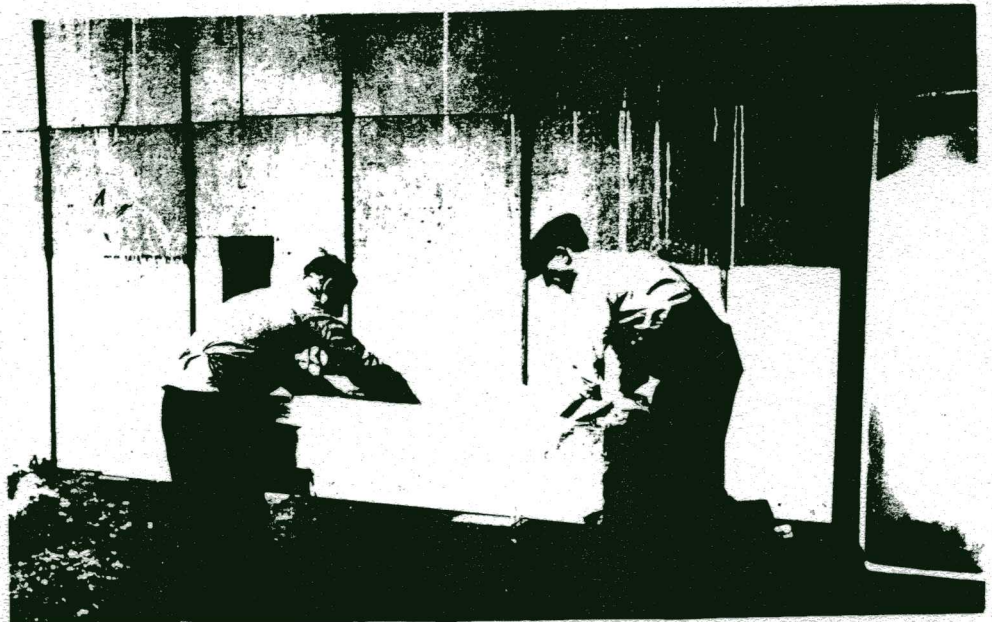
The policy for the evacuation of the remaining bodies in North Russia had not been determined on January 1, 1922, further than the general direction that they were to be returned to the United States unless there was a specific request for delivery to the nearest of kin in a foreign country.

Serbia.

The Kingdom of Serbians, Croats and Slovenes, on September 29, 1921, informed this Service that bodies of American soldiers could be brought into that country, provided the transfer was made between October first and June first and that each



Inspector stamping metallic indicating
testing had been finished.



Arranging the sheets.

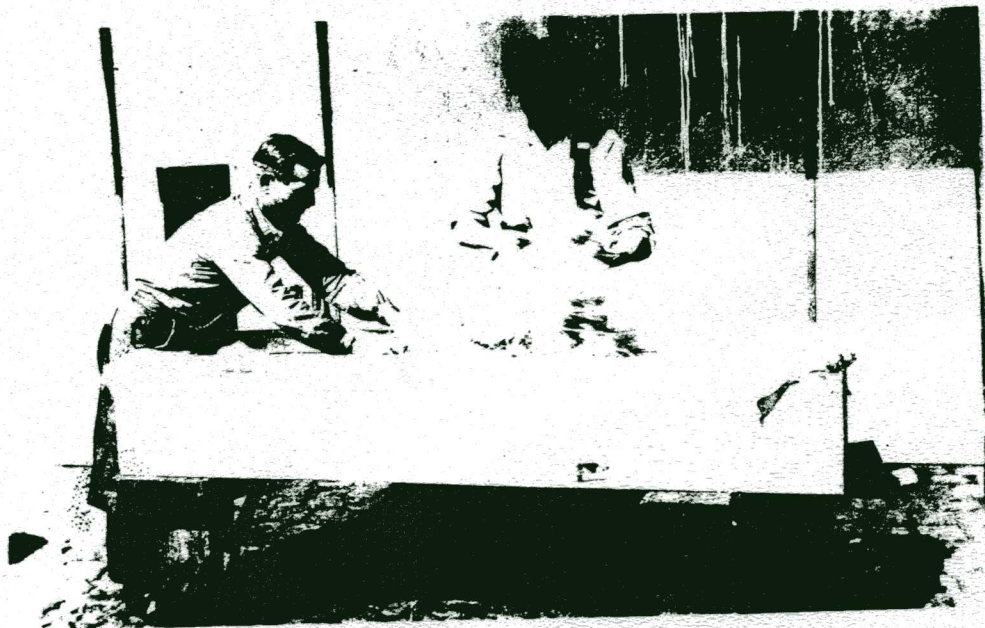
family concerned be notified that they might obtain the necessary authorizations from the sanitary officials.

Switzerland.

The Swiss Republic, according to a communication of May 27, 1921, required the bodies to be placed in a metallic casket contained in a wooden one, in conformity with the provisions of a decree of October 6, 1891, relating to the transportation of bodies. The Swiss Government had no objection to the transportation of bodies which had been buried for more than a year. In order to avoid difficulty in crossing the frontier, the Swiss Legation in Paris issued a pass to the convoyer, which he handed to the Customs officials. It was necessary in each case for the nearest of kin to apply for a permit of inhumation to the communal authorities of the place where the bodies were to be reburied. It was further necessary to produce a certificate in duplicate showing that the above mentioned conditions had been complied with, together with a permit of inhumation from the Swiss Commune. It was necessary to produce these documents before a pass for the Customs could be secured.

Turkey.

The nearest of kin of a number of deceased American soldiers buried in France were residents of Turkey. In March, 1921, this Service entered into correspondence with the Ottoman



Packing metallic with excelsior.



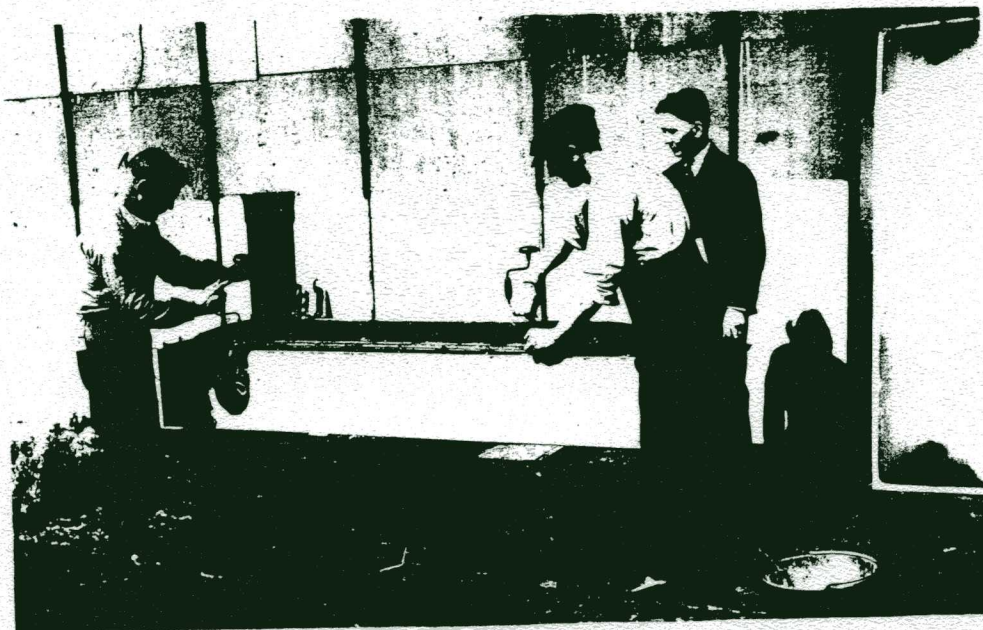
Placing pillows in casket.

Government, to obtain permission to ship bodies of American soldiers to Turkey when desired by relatives. It was not until October that a definite reply was obtained to the effect that the bodies of American soldiers killed on the battlefield might be allowed to enter the country if the families of the deceased soldiers were living therein.

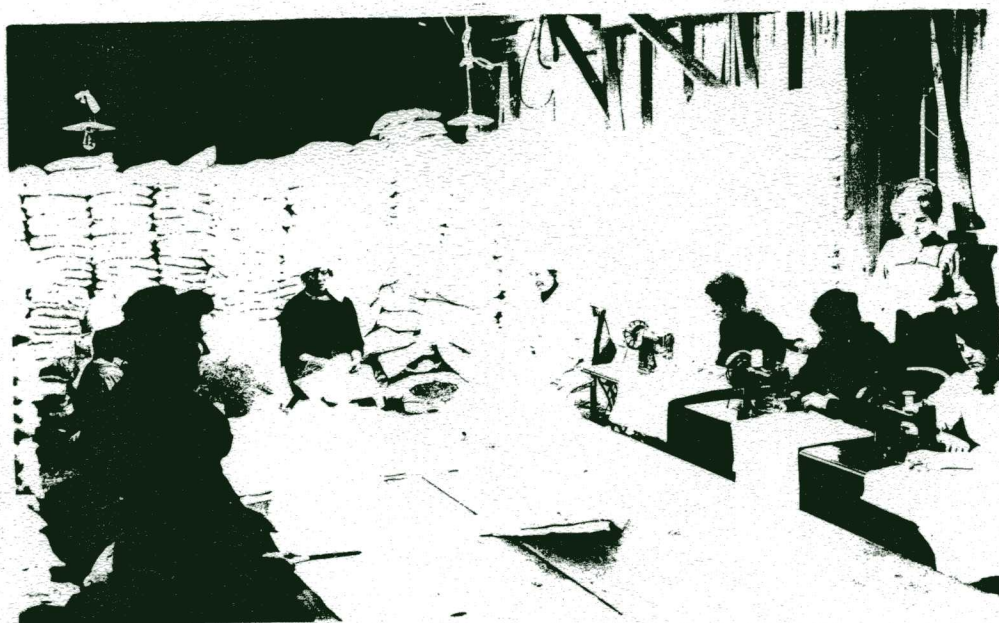
The pledge made by the United States Government at the beginning of the war, that the desires of the families regarding their dead would receive every consideration, is being fulfilled and the exhumations for the return of all American bodies, wherever requested, will soon be accomplished.

The first removals from England to the United States began in February, 1920; the initial movement from France was in the early part of March, and the evacuation from Germany occurred in May.

In order to fix a time limit upon the transfer of the remains of soldier dead, all nearest of kin were notified by letter, and the American public in general, through the daily press, that the work of returning the bodies from Europe had progressed to a point which rendered it necessary for a limitation as to the change in cancellation of requests regarding final disposition. The Secretary of War decided definitely that after August 15, 1921, favorable consideration would not be authorized for any change in previous instructions as to the disposition of bodies.



adjusting lugs to metallic.



Making excelsior pads.

CHAPTER III.

PORT ACTIVITIES.

After the middle of April, 1921, the only ports used by this Service for shipment of bodies to the United States were Cherbourg in France and Antwerp in Belgium. Other ports in Europe previously in use were Bordeaux, St. Nazaire, Brest, Toulon and Calais.

In order to accomplish the closing out of Bordeaux as a port of shipment of bodies and to avoid the long diversion of a transport on the New York-Antwerp run, to make the final clean-up, there being no further caskets to be delivered at that port, the 809 bodies on hand in May were sent by rail to Cherbourg for final shipment to the United States.

At St. Nazaire conditions were similar to those at Bordeaux except that there were no bodies on hand, all having been shipped. It was converted into a storage depot under the Supply Branch, and closed as a port on April 30, 1921.

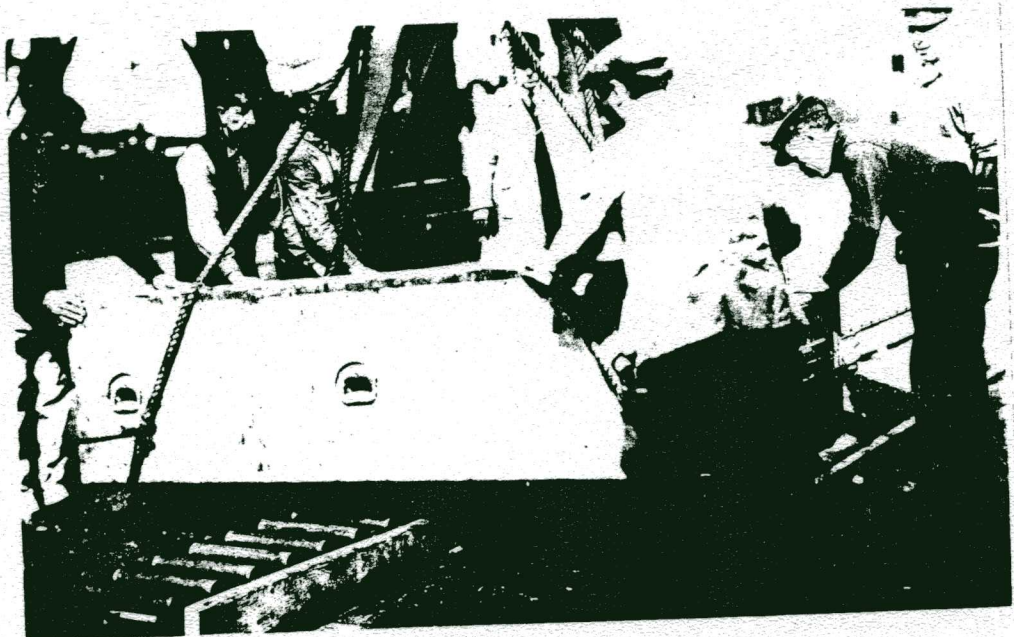
Brest was closed when the field operations in that locality were completed.

Toulon, the Mediterranean port, continued in minor operation until the bodies that were held there for shipment were called for by a United States Navy Supply Ship on May 30th.

At Calais the activities of this Service were officially ended on April 14, 1921.



Lifting two at a time from barge.

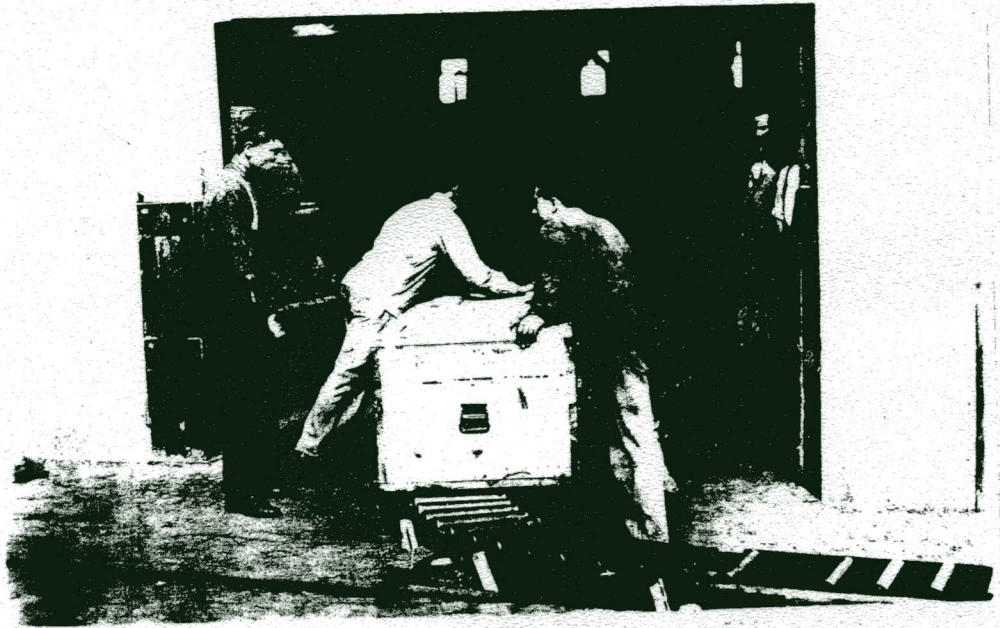


Unloading from barge.

Each of these ports had in its time been more or less active and had served its purpose either as a shipping or receiving station, and was only closed as its usefulness was rendered negligible by the gradual completion of the activities, and the concentration of operations into northern France and the Zone of the Armies.

Cherbourg was operated for the reception of supplies and for the shipment of the bodies of our soldiers to the United States. The location of these activities was divided between the main Port Office at Triage des Flamands and the auxiliary one at Equerdreville, both of which were in the immediate environs and practically parts of Cherbourg.

According to tentative plans adopted in November, 1920, 28,000 bodies for shipment to the United States were to pass through the port of Cherbourg. These plans had been based upon the railway situation in France existing up to that time, which was that, due to the activity in reconstruction work in the devastated areas, the railroads passing through those areas were congested and the French Government objected to our using these lines for shipment to Antwerp. This congestion having been relieved during the winter of 1920-1, the approval of the French Government was obtained to permit shipments across the devastated areas into Belgium, and a new plan was formulated in March, 1921, to divert to Antwerp those bodies which were located east of La Ferte-sous-Jouarre, this being the shorter and more economical



Pushing box into warehouse to be washed.



Closing cracks.

haul. Upon the adoption of this plan and the completion of operations in Suresnes Cemetery in Paris and the shipment of the bodies therefrom to the port of Cherbourg to be sent to the United States, the closing of Cherbourg as a port of shipment was accomplished upon the departure of the last ship calling at that port about April 1, 1921.

Permission was secured from the Belgian Government to transport bodies from France through that country to Antwerp, and arrangements were made with the Belgian railroad authorities for the necessary railway equipment to effect the shipment of caskets and bodies to and from the French frontier.

Antwerp then became the sole port of operations and activities with reference to the reception of bodies destined for the United States, and the receipt and repair of all caskets, supplies and materials intended for the field. An adequate plant was secured adjoining the warehouse occupied by the Port Commander of the American Forces in Germany, which afforded many advantages to this Service.

The shipment of bodies by rail from the three concentration points of Remagne, Thiaucourt and Ste. Menchould to Antwerp saved more than 2,000,000 francs over what the same movement would have cost in railng them to Cherbourg.]

The concentration of all port activities in May, 1921, effected a large saving in rentals of docks and cranes, salaries of personnel, pilotage, docking, lighterage and transportation.

There was every facility at Antwerp for the quick dispatch of all work in connection with the American Graves Registration Service. A deep water basin enabled large transports to come directly to the docks, and modern cranes were ever ready for handling cargoes to and from the freight cars and the ships or barges. The warehouses were close by, thus eliminating all necessity for motor transport haul and the additional handling of caskets.

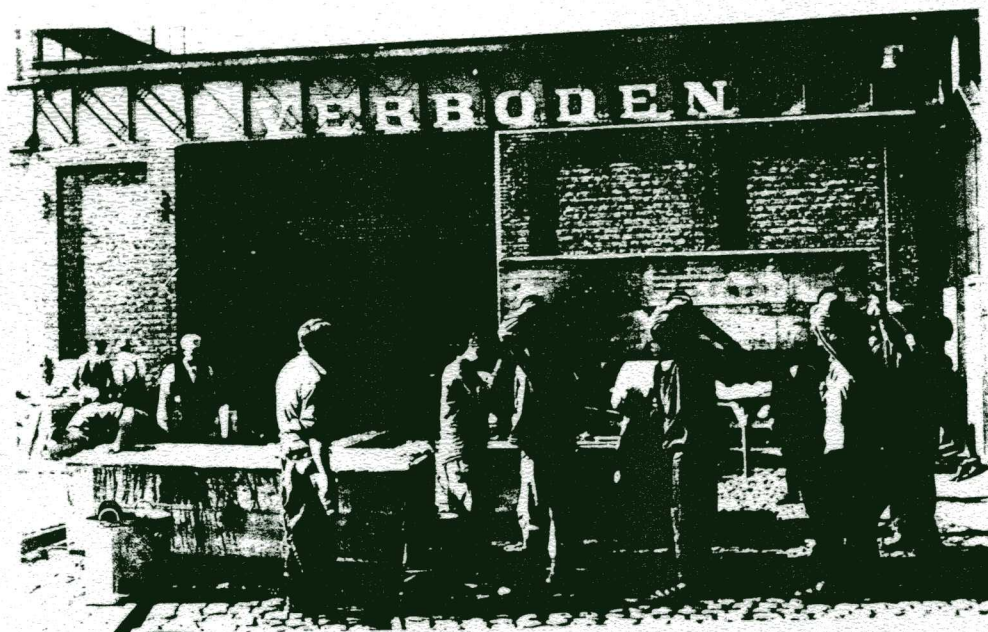
The harbor, docks, and transportation facilities were excellent and the Belgian railroad officials were efficient and eager to cooperate. Within 12 hours after receipt of a request for transportation, 100 cars could be placed at the docks, ready for disposition by this Service.

The plant operated by the American Graves Registration Service consisted of two large storerooms situated at the docks on two sides of the basin.

Storehouse 71-A was utilized as a public morgue. It had a capacity of 1,200 caskets without tiering, or 4,800 tiering four high. In connection with this building were two large rooms, one containing "Hold" cases and surplus bodies that could not be accommodated in the public morgue. It had sufficient space for 650 caskets piled three high. The second room was utilized for the storage of supplies used in connection with the repair of caskets. Tiering was resorted to only when the floor space was not sufficient for the number of bodies awaiting



Drying cases.



Bringing in one casket; washing another.

shipment.

The combined storehouse 69-70, which was enclosed by asbestos board, served as a storage place for empty caskets and contained a closed morgue where 2,300 bodies (tiered four high) could be placed. The inside storage capacity in the two buildings for bodies and empty caskets was over 10,000.

Warehouse 69-70, in addition to functioning as a storage for caskets, furnished sufficient space for the testing and repairing of metallic linings and for the washing, repairing and stencilling of cases sent from the field.

The empty caskets arriving from the United States were taken directly from the dock into the storehouse, put through the casket repair and testing department in the same building, and loaded into the cars coming alongside, for shipment to the field.

Bodies sent to Antwerp from the railhead were taken from the cars to the washing department and moved into the morgue, to await transportation to the United States.

It was possible to unload bodies from barges or freight cars at the rate of 700 per day and when necessity required, that number could be increased to 1,000, as was done in one particular case (September 5, 1921). Even at that high tension the work was thorough and no jamming or bunching of cases occurred. Every box moved slowly and smoothly through the various stages of operations until it reached its place



Cutting stencils.



Attaching Form No. 114 to case.

of storage. The repairing and testing of caskets arriving from the United States was accomplished at an average rate of 300 per day.

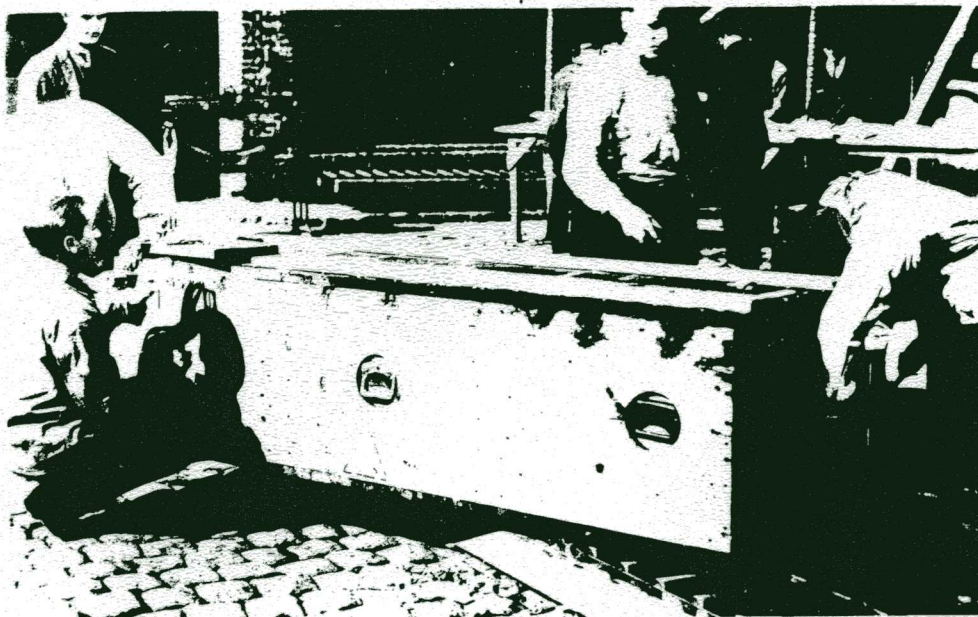
The activities of the port of Antwerp were prescribed in the Manual of Regulations of this Service and each man had his regular line of work to perform. He was thoroughly instructed that the handling of caskets, in which rested the remains of the National Dead, must be done in a dignified and reverent manner. These regulations were constantly impressed upon the minds of those whose duties involved the handling of the cases and no lack of reverence in this work was observed.

One of the most interesting phases of the work was that in connection with the dock activities, which included the unloading of caskets from the ship, the testing of metallics, to prove their efficiency, the repair of the metallic linings, the caskets and wooden cases and their preparation for shipment to a field destination.

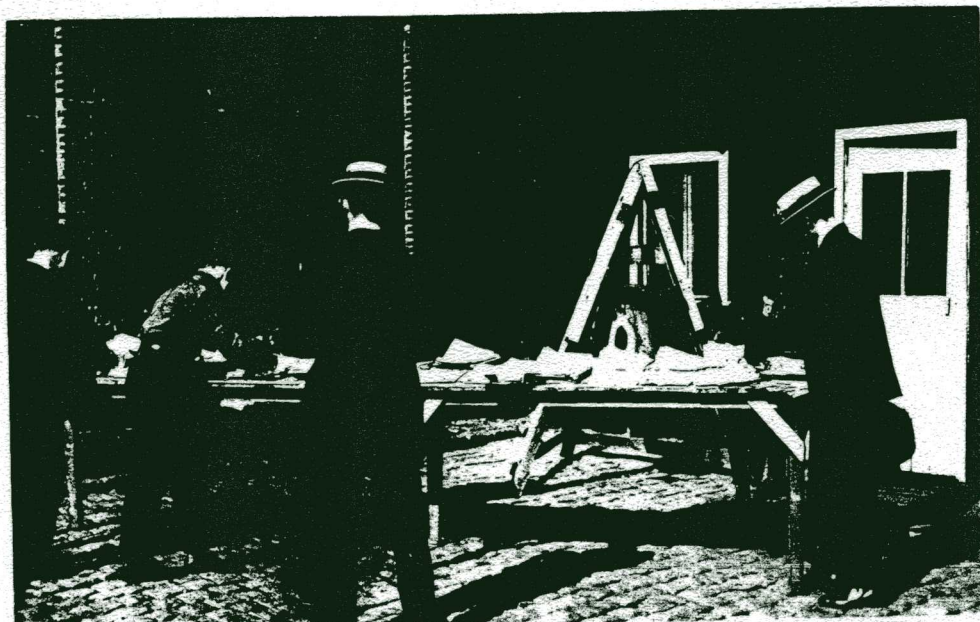
A few weeks, or possibly months later, the caskets returned to the port, this time with the bodies of American soldiers, which were being anxiously awaited by loving relatives and friends at home.

The Empty Caskets.

All caskets sent to France for the return of the war dead to the United States, were made of metal, oak or



Stencilling.



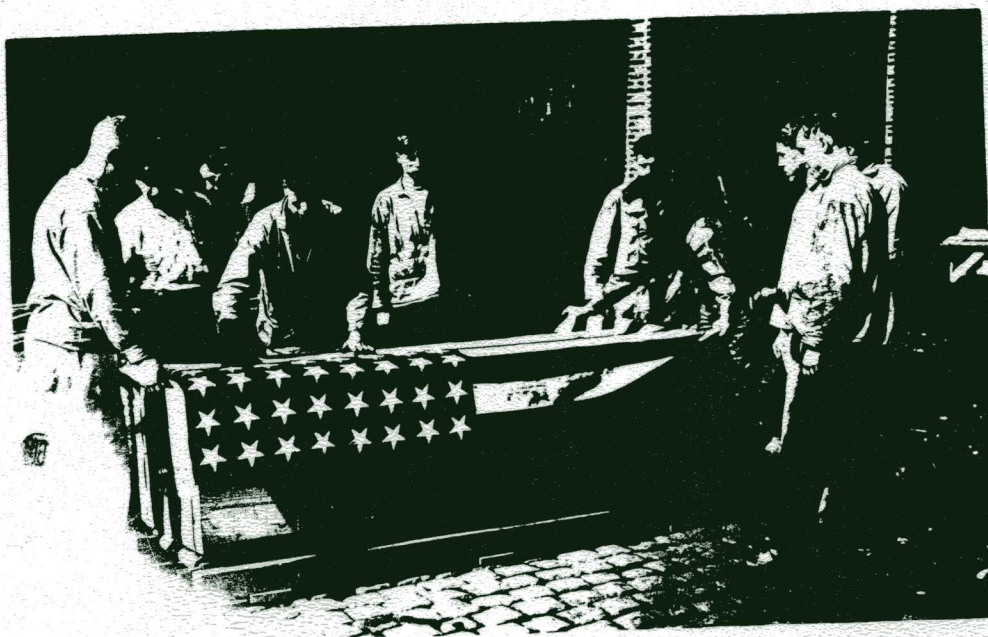
Checking records and Forms.

other hard wood, with a metallic lining which could be hermetically sealed. There was also an outer wooden box or case to protect the casket. They were opened upon arrival at the port and necessary air tests made to insure their serviceable condition.

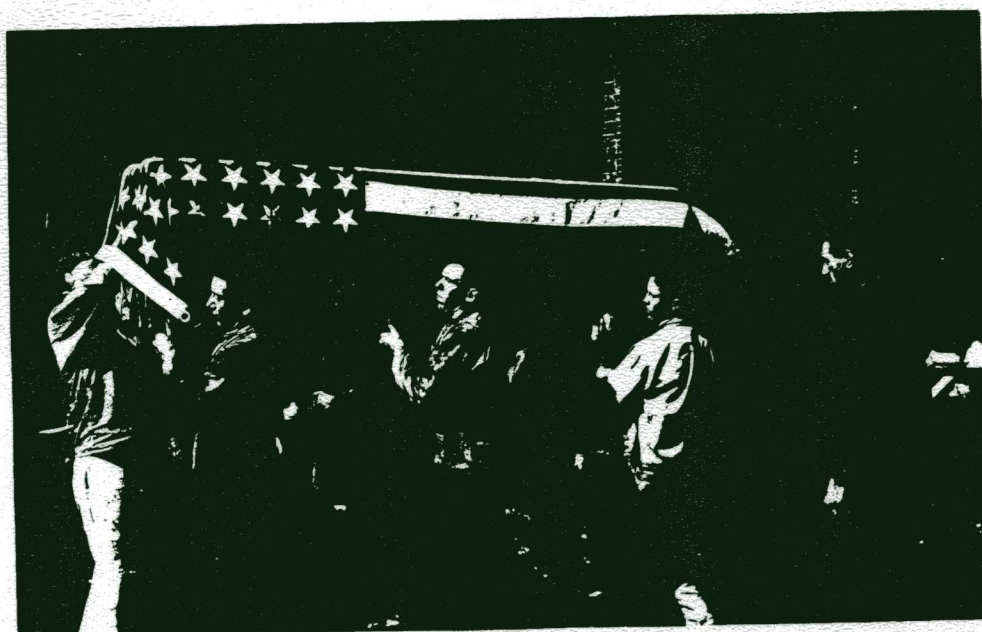
Before shipping empty caskets to the field, every means was taken to provide a proper setting for the remains which were placed inside the metallic lining. In each casket were placed a military blanket, a sheet and four muslin excelsior pads for use in wrapping the body and in preventing any possible disturbance of the remains in transit. The pads, webbing strips, etc., were cut and stitched by Belgian girls, who were employed to perform all labor in connection with the interior cloth and excelsior furnishings.

The testing completed, the Inspector stamped his initials on the metallic lining and also inside the case, to indicate he had inspected and approved their condition. An average of 300 caskets a day were thus tested and repaired.

During the months of June, July and August, 1921, when reburial caskets were badly needed in the field, especially at the Meuse-Argonne Cemetery, where great numbers of exhumations were being made, the reburial caskets, which were unlined and did not require inspection, were sent direct to the points where heavy operations were in progress. In one instance, upon the arrival of a shipment of over 6,000



Covering casket with the flag before
removal to morgue.



Lifting casket, which is now ready for
the morgue.

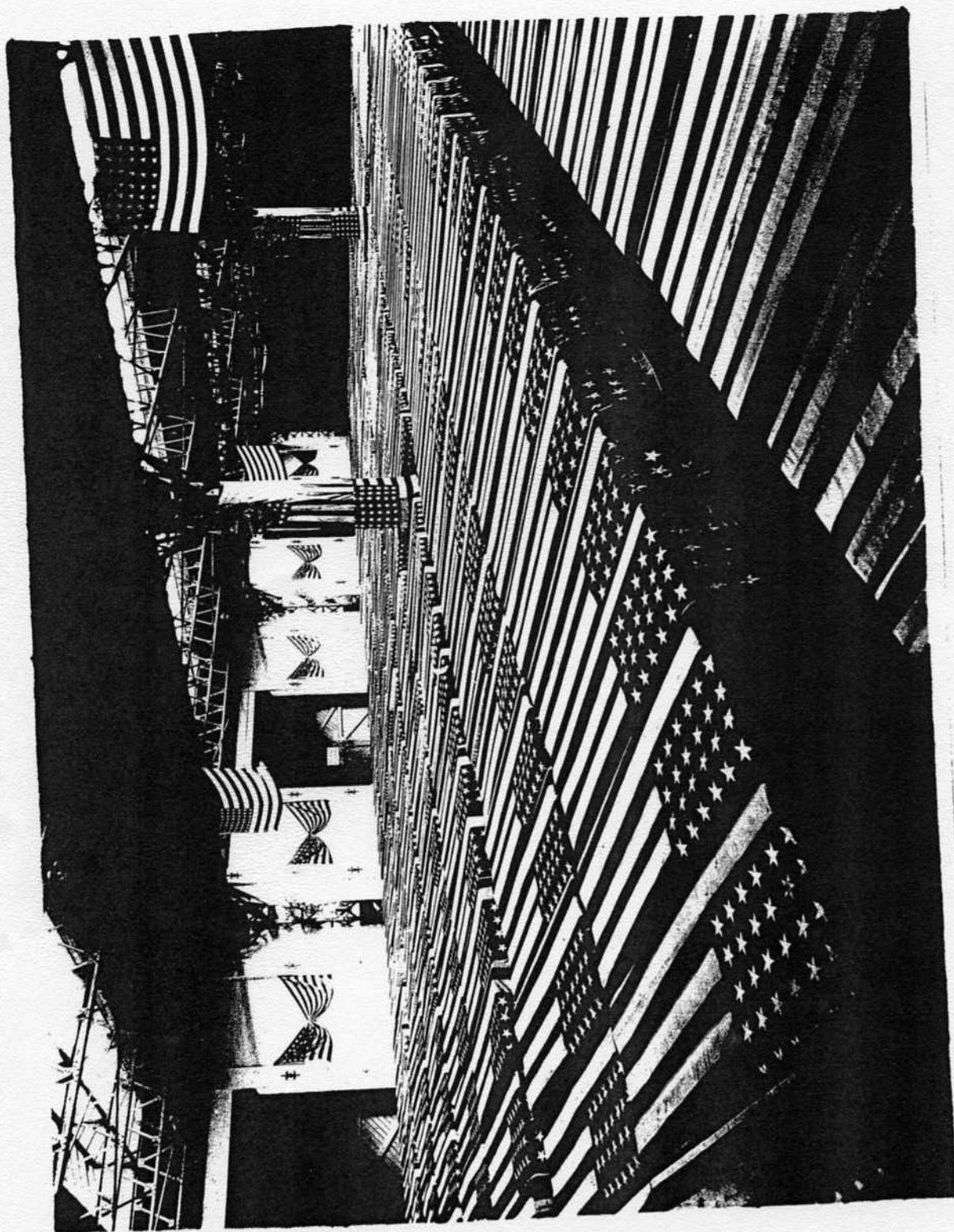
caskets, there had been requests for a much greater number. The train was backed up to the docks and the ship unloaded by cranes in 48 actual working hours. The empty caskets were unloaded directly from ship to cars, 250 cars being required for the entire shipment. These were divided into special trains of 36 cars each, American convoyers accompanying the caskets on each train.

Return of the Caskets.

Upon return to the port of the caskets containing bodies, no detail was overlooked, so far as the care and attention were concerned.

There was a great deal of strain upon a box in its journey to the field and back to the port. The wear and tear of railway transportation; the handling by different groups of men at various points, and the frequent motor haul, caused handles to be broken, iron strap bands to loosen and the case to become stained. Oftentimes weather conditions caused contraction of the wood, leaving cracks between the boards.

The wooden box was put through a series of repairs immediately upon its return to port and made as good as new before its final storage in the morgue. The cases were scrubbed by one group of men with hot soapsuds, to remove all dirt received in transit from the field. Another group dried and pushed the boxes to a third unit ready to remove stains and



A temporary home for the Dead - the morgue at Antwerp.

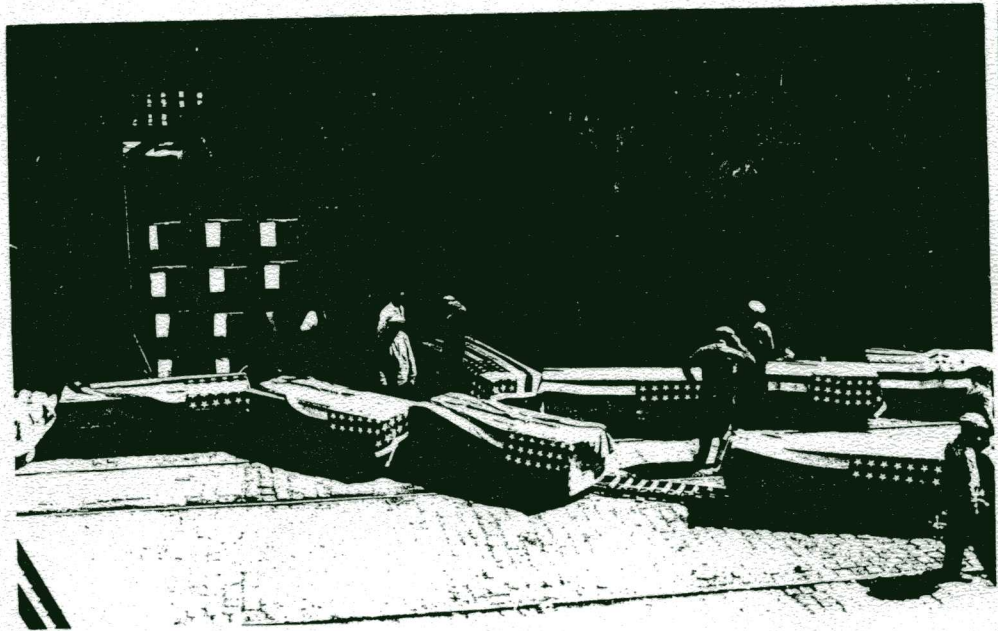
superfluous marks with sandpaper or planing tools.

Stencilling was the next process. To one not familiar with shipping regulations, the numerous markings on the boxes would be a puzzle hard to solve. Every mark, however, served an important purpose and was indispensable. Before leaving the field, the name and address of the consignee were stencilled on the upper board across one side of the box and the words "From Chief, A.G.R.S. in Europe" were placed on both ends of the box. The name, serial number, rank and organization of the deceased were also stencilled on the end; the cemetery number, on lower right hand side; the triangle with "G.R.S. via Antwerp" in lower right hand corner; the weight and measurements, in cubic feet, in the left hand corner; the box number, upper left hand corner and the word "Head" on the top at one end of the case.

An aluminum strip, bearing the name, serial number, rank, organization, and the number of the cemetery from which the remains were exhumed, was attached to the head end of the shipping case, above the handle, and a small aluminum strip, bearing the box number, was tacked below the long strip.

The shipping cases which were received from the field and on which the lettering had become obliterated or marred, were re-stencilled at the port. A stencilling machine was kept in readiness to cut new stencils for this purpose.

Each group of workmen had its own foreman, who looked each box over thoroughly before it was passed on to



Removing cases from morgue to be loaded on transport.



A method of transportation.

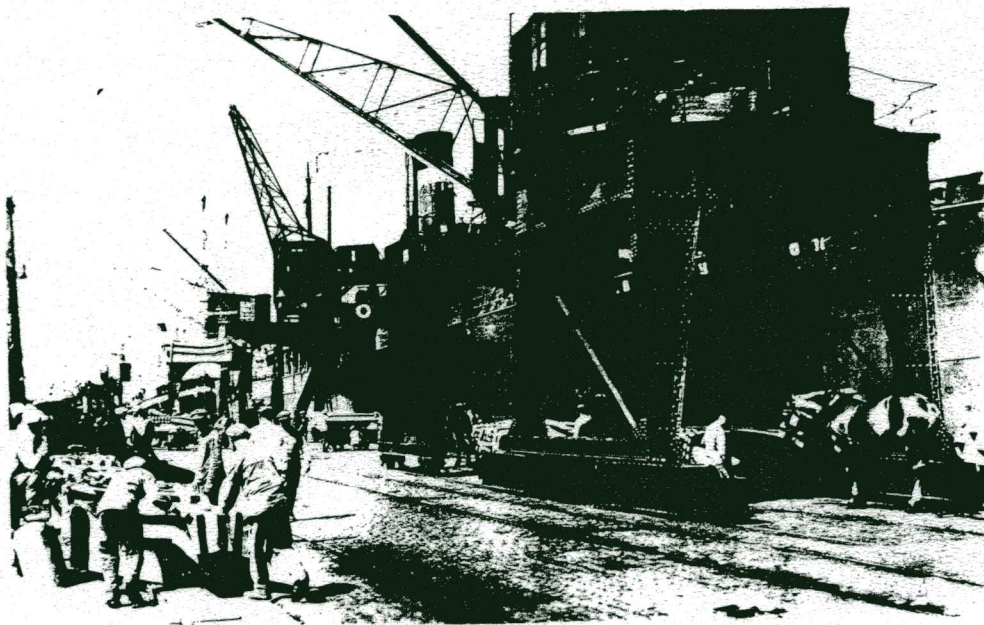
other workers.

The stencilling finished, a copy of Form 114 was secured to the case, which was then taken to the morgue and stored in rows until the time for departure to its destination.

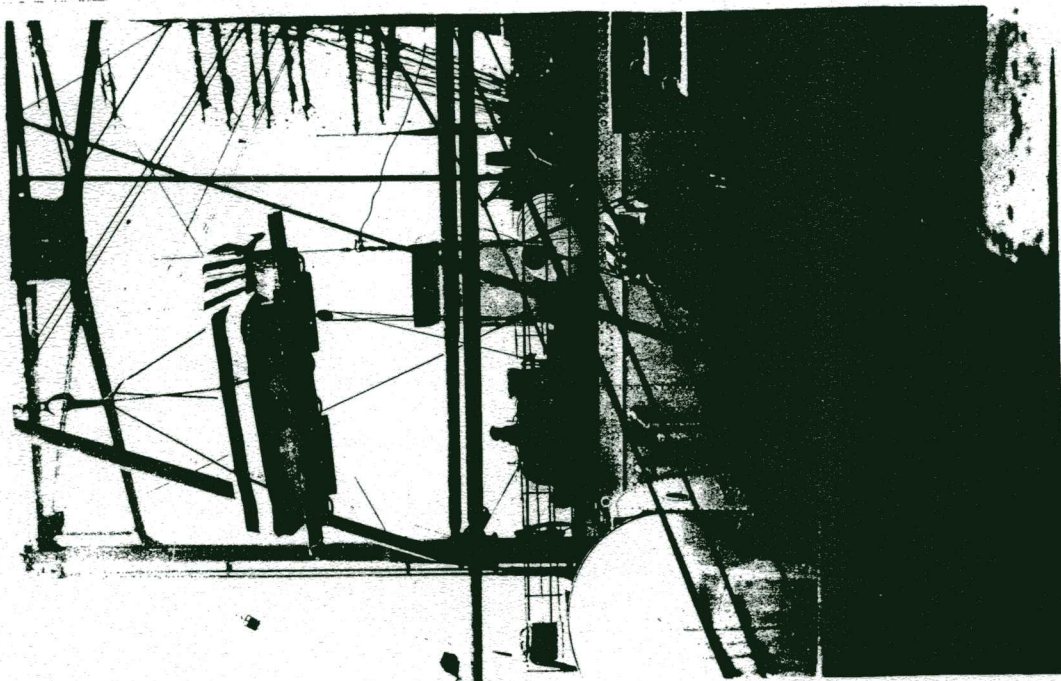
It often happened that instructions to "hold" a certain body were received at the port the same day it was scheduled to be loaded on a transport sailing for the United States. If some special system were not devised for locating each casket in the morgue immediately upon receipt of the "hold" order, a great many bodies would have been sent home whose nearest of kin had, at the last moment, decided to have them buried with their comrades in arms in the permanent cemeteries in France.

A record card was made out for each case received at the morgue, upon which was entered the line, the row and the tier numbers in which the case could be found. By this system, within a few minutes after the notice to "hold" was received at the port, the case was tagged with a blue card which bore the word "Hold" in large black letters, and proper entry was made upon the record card. These cases were held pending decision for release for the United States, for foreign burial, or for interment in a Permanent American Cemetery in France.

There were instances where bodies were shipped to the United States before the notice to "hold" reached the Port Officer. In some cases they were returned to the port



Loading on transport.



Lowering single bodies in Hold showing type of sling first used.

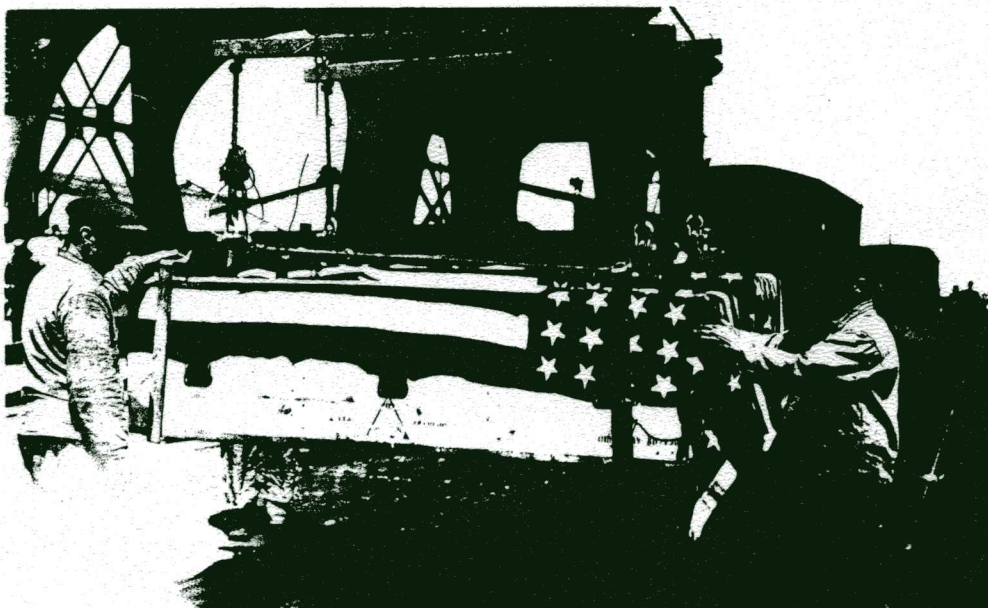
and shipped to the consignee in foreign countries or reinterred in France.

When shipments were made to the United States, a cable was forwarded to Washington, informing the Quartermaster General that the body had been loaded on the ship, in order that adequate notice might be furnished the nearest of kin prior to arrival at Hoboken.

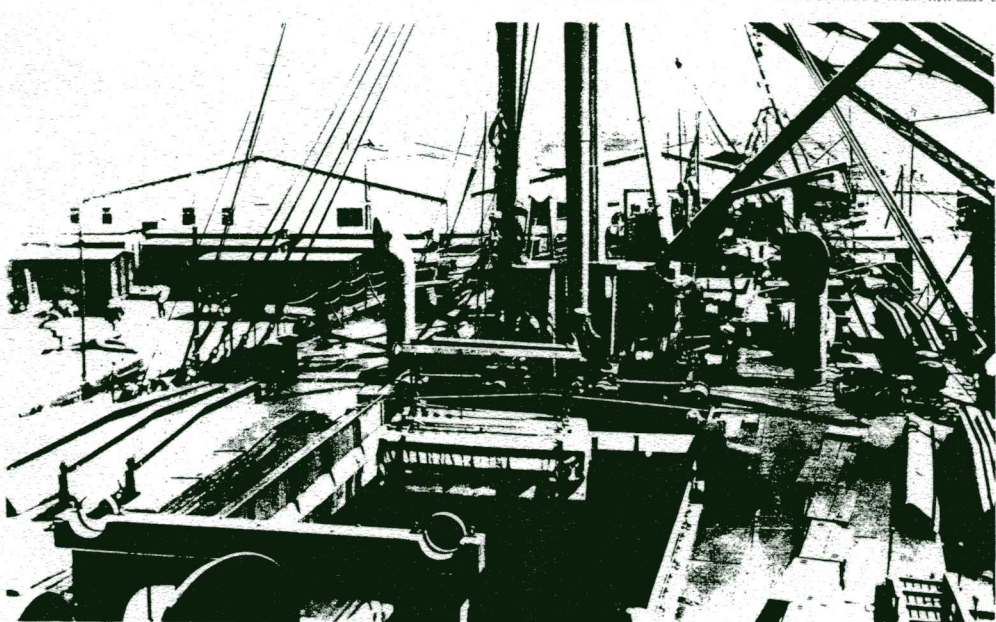
Gravity rollers set into narrow iron frames about 2 metres long were used in the transportation of caskets. This conveyor consisted of about 100 sections and extended from the point of loading or unloading to the place of storage inside the warehouse. They could be conveniently placed in any position, making a small continuous railway with adjustable curves and switches. This system accomplished a greater amount of work in less time than would have been possible by man power alone.

Before the gravity rollers were procured, it took 400 men with a number of horses and wagons to load 200 caskets a day. Upon the installation of the track, the number of laborers was cut to 180 and the average day's work increased to 700 cases.

The workmen at the port were furnished by a Belgian corporation, which had a contract with the War Department to hire all labor and transportation, under the direct supervision of the head of the sections concerned. Hand trucks were used inside and outside the buildings, so that the bodies could be



Type of sling later adopted carrying two bodies.



Bodies entering the hatch.

unloaded from any designated place, and with the use of the movable conveyor could be removed to any part of the docks.

To save time, labor and expense, a special device for loading and unloading caskets was adopted at Antwerp, a modification of the one used in New York. Two slings were made of one piece of rope. They were bound together at the center to form a ring or noose for the hook of the crane. The slings were 3.5 metres long and the loops which held the cases were 1.75 metres in diameter. Small ropes 1.18 metres long were attached to either side of the loops to insure perfect safety of the casket. With this device, two caskets could be loaded at a time, with one crane, every minute and a quarter.

Much saving of time and material was accomplished by a contrivance which was used in the repairing of handles on the outside cases when they came from the field. Many arrived at the port with broken handles, which formerly necessitated opening the box, removing the entire socket and replacing it with a new one. Special handles were designed which were fitted into the old sockets and adjusted without removing the socket or the top of the case. This was done in the course of a few seconds, thus avoiding the necessity of side-tracking the casket or holding up others pending repairs.

Before the cases were lifted by the "carrying" crew to be taken to the storehouse, they were again examined for minor breakage and to see if the iron strap bands running

lengthwise on the box were strong and tight. The metallic lugs at the top of the metal lining and casket, if broken, had to be replaced upon arrival at the port. If the screw was broken off in the socket, it had to be drilled out and a new one inserted.

These details are cited merely to show how necessary it was to have technical men on duty for every emergency which might arise, for it was the policy of the United States Government to leave no caskets uncared for from the time they were taken from the barge or train until properly stored in the morgue. A commissioned officer and an enlisted guard of honor were always present during the transfer of the bodies from the storehouse to the dock and their loading on the transport.

Flags were draped on each shipping case while being loaded and were not removed until the case was deposited in the hold of the vessel.

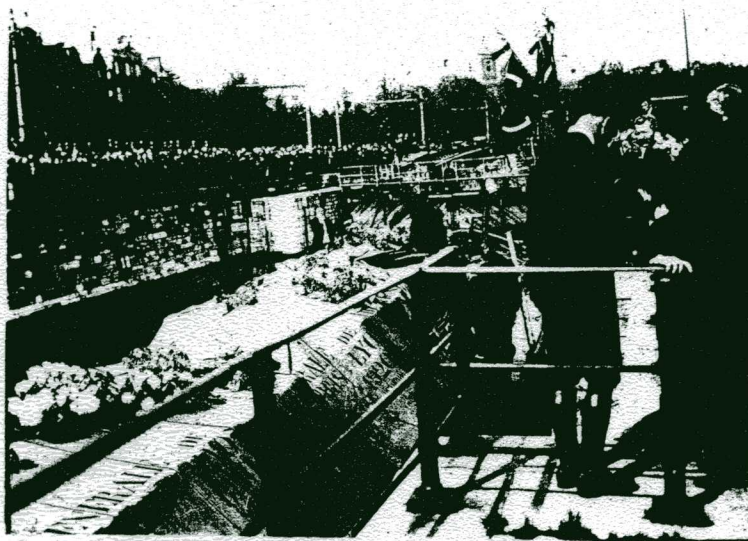
Special attention was given by the American Graves Registration Service to the loading of the bodies on the transport and in their care en route to the United States. An inspection was made of the hold of the vessel by the Port Officer before loading operations began, to see that everything was in proper condition to receive the bodies. As the shipping cases were stowed away, they were lashed and secured to prevent shifting in the event of rough weather.

Adequate fire protection was provided at Antwerp by the presence of chemical extinguishers in large numbers about

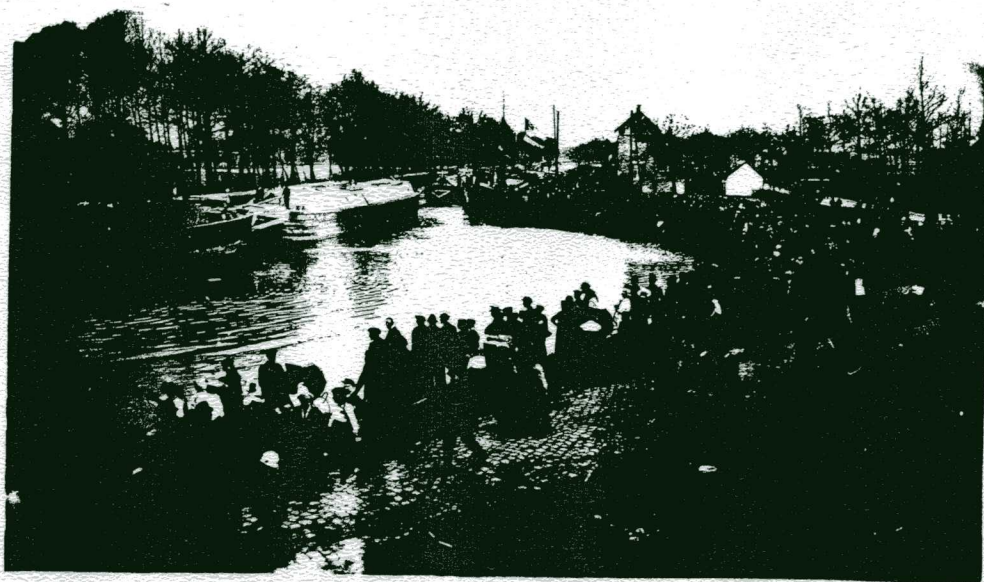
the buildings; also by a fire engine and 700 feet of hose. As the pressure in the water mains on the dock was insufficient, a feed hose was attached to the engine, which, in case of necessity, could be dropped in the basin at the dock from which water was pumped in case of fire.

The handling of caskets of the American dead in public places invariably created profound respect from all spectators, old and young alike. That these expressions were genuine was evidenced in the manner and actions of the people in baring their heads and paying homage whenever the caskets bearing the American flags appeared.

As the number of bodies being returned to the United States became considerably lessened and the operations of the port diminished, in October, 1921, the personnel at Antwerp was reduced and expenses curtailed. The main offices were moved from the Headquarters in Antwerp and installed at the dock in Storehouse 71-A, one officer performing the duties of Port Officer and Area Supervisor.



Shipment of bodies by barge.
Ceremonies at Liege.



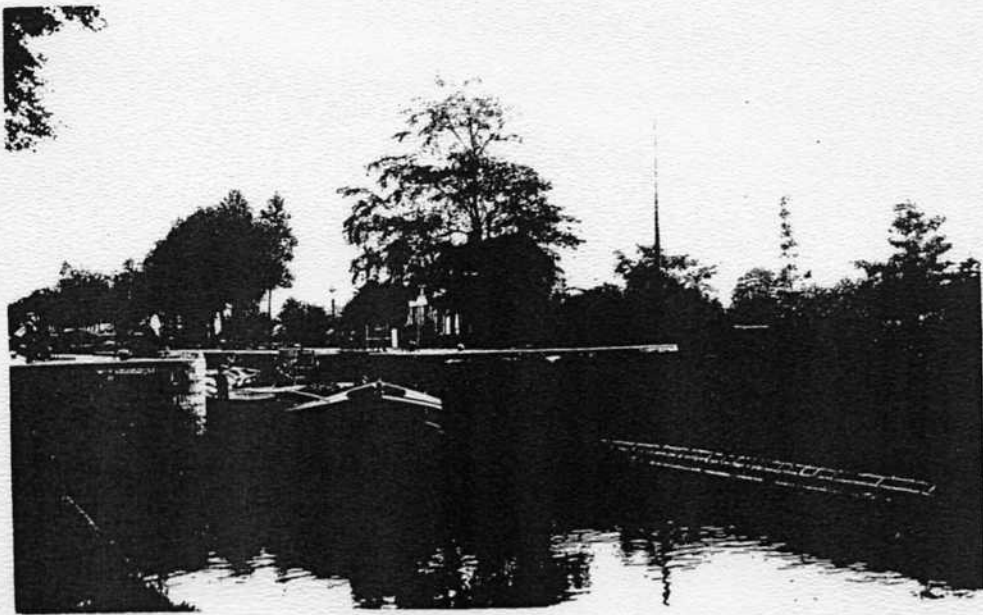
Crowd gathering along the bank.

CHAPTER IV.

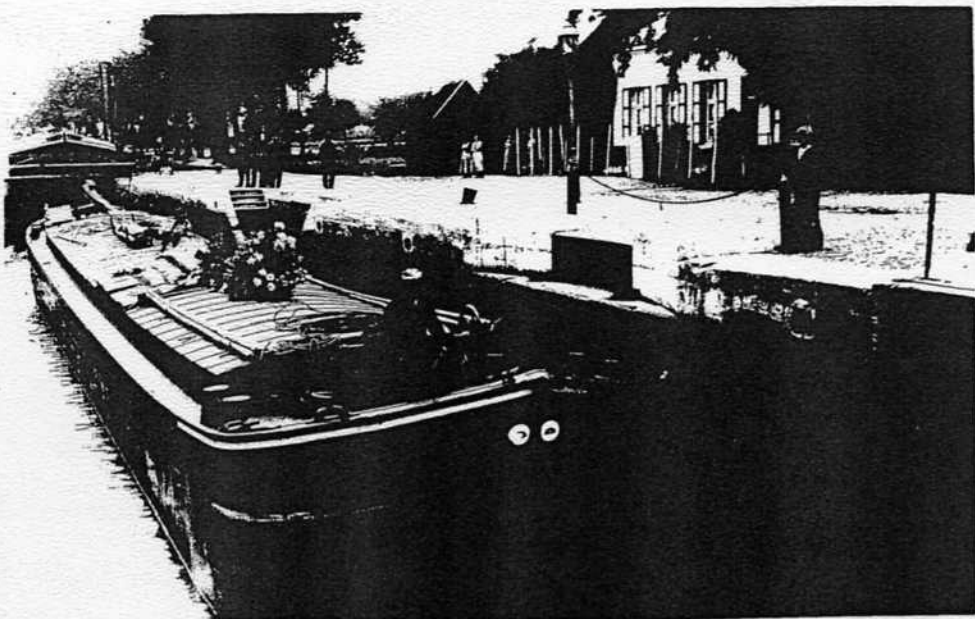
PROCESSION OF THE DEAD.

The possibility of transportation by canal and the lower cost of same as compared with transportation by rail, was a factor that decided the Chief of the Service to adopt this means of transportation, as far as practicable, in the evacuation of the bodies of American dead via Antwerp to the United States.

As operations for removal of the dead reached the Zone of the Armies where the canal systems of France and Belgium made it practicable to send bodies by barge, in the winter of 1920-21, the matter of transportation by barge shipments to Antwerp was given consideration. The canals, which had been badly damaged or destroyed during the war, were under repair and reconstruction and it was not until the spring of 1921 that it became possible to make shipments from Toul and Romagne by the Meuse canal into Belgium through Holland to Antwerp. Plans had been made for extensive use of this canal system because of the possible economy as compared with rail shipments, but unfortunately, for a period of over a month, at the peak of the operations, the Meuse canal was closed for repairs, and in order to get bodies to the port in time for transport shipment to the United States, it was necessary to send them by rail. Later on, upon completion of the repairs to the canals, shipments were made possible.



Emerging from the lock.



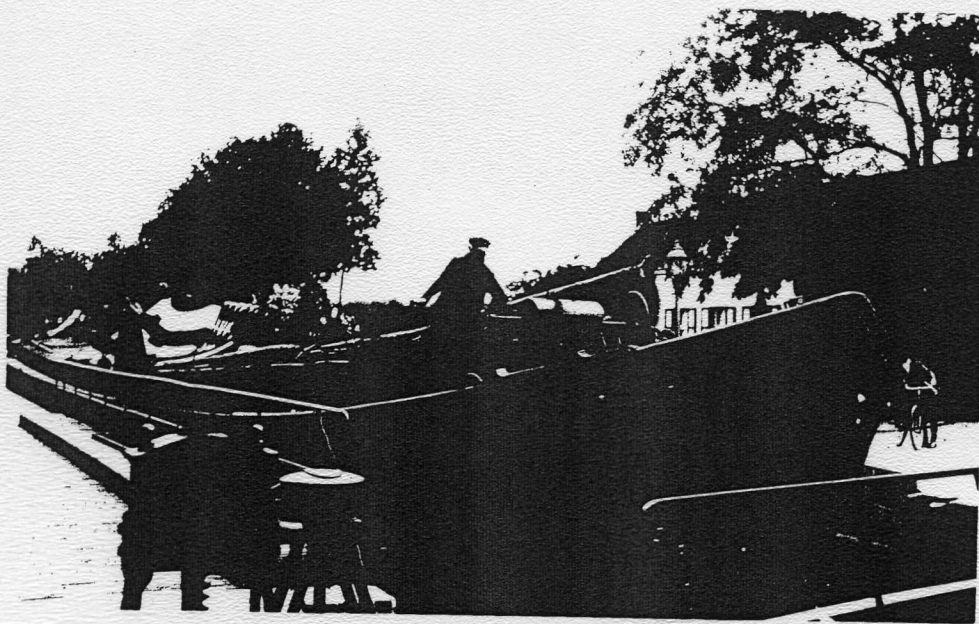
Being lowered in the lock.

The first shipment of 961 bodies left Toul on April 7, 1921, and arrived at Antwerp on April 30. The second and last shipment left Dun-sur-Meuse on August 21 with 1,985 bodies and arrived at Antwerp September 3.

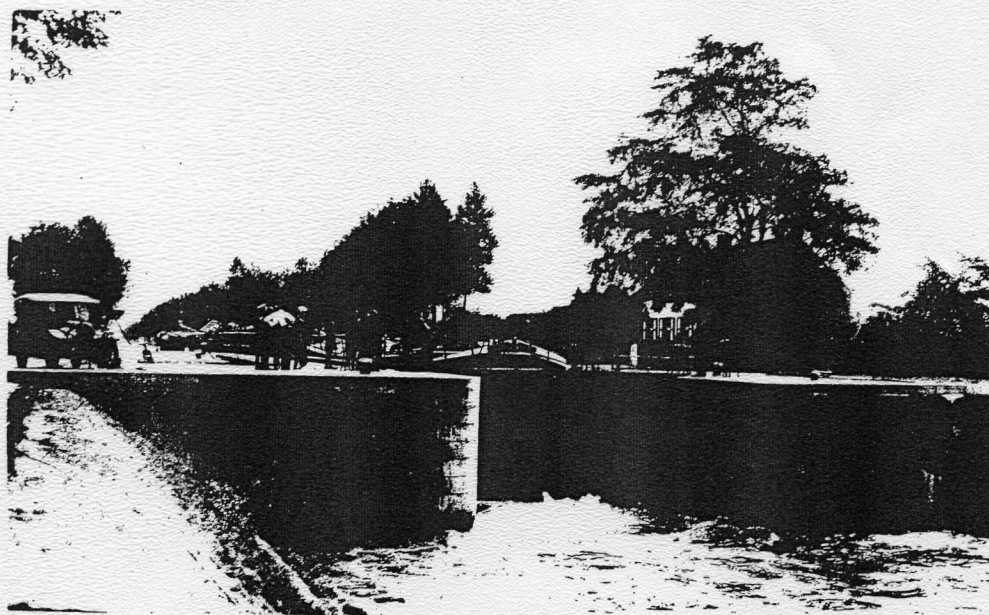
It was a fitting route selected for the convoys of the American dead returning home for final burial, through the tranquil waters of the river Meuse and the time-honored canals, traversing much of the historic ground of France, Belgium and Holland.

The barges, numbering seven, were divided into two convoys, each towed by a launch, to expedite their passage through the 83 narrow locks of the canals. With flags half-mast, and the folds of Old Glory draped from bow to stern, the barges with their dead started on their way to Antwerp.

The Meuse, from the ancient city of Dun to historical Sedan, marked a section of one of the foremost American advances, and was the scene of glorious deeds of American achievement. French troops were posted at intervals along the route and fired three volleys as a salute to the dead, while the people from the towns and villages showed deep appreciation of the opportunity to offer silent prayer for the souls of the departed heroes. They had seen the American soldier march into France; had become acquainted with him and admired his qualities. Among the remains of these American heroes silently returning to the land of their birth, there might have been



In the lock.



Waiting for the water to flow out.

some who were known personally to these simple French peasant folk. Had those heroic soldiers come from their own firesides, the sturdy people of the Meuse and the Ardennes could have paid no greater respect nor shown more gracious sympathy than they did in their devoted demonstrations along the route.

Passing stately rows of venerable trees, and quaint villages, where the people, with the sorrows of war still weighing heavily upon their hearts, sympathetically laid wreaths of flowers, in tender tokens, upon the barges as the remains of America's Cherished Fallen passed on their silent way.

At Givet, the frontier town of France, the barges passed without delay, and upon entering the Belgian territory at Heer and Agimont, every possible aid was given, to allow the passage of the convoys without loss of time.

As the convoys neared Dinant, a Belgian peasant stopped his plowing and stood high upon the cliff with scores of others of the ancient village, to gaze in silent meditation upon the scene. When the convoys had passed, the man remained for a few seconds, with head raised and arms outstretched as if in reverent prayer. A moment later he remarked in the simple manner of these sturdy country folk, "Many times have I looked across this deep valley to the hills beyond, but never before was my blood stirred as it was on this occasion. It is all in keeping with the magnanimous spirit of the big-hearted America. These are her sons who gave their lives to save our

little nation." Farther down at the bottom of this high slope, the village children had gathered wild flowers and strewn them upon the barges, where they remained until the convoys reached Antwerp.

Ceremonies were held at Namur, one of Belgium's oldest towns, by the Federation Nationale des Combattants, who saluted the convoys and placed wreaths of flowers on the barges.

At Avroy the arrival of the funeral barges was announced by salutes from the big guns, and on the last bridge before entering the locks, a company of cavalry was drawn up and presented arms, while the bugles sounded "Taps." Thousands of people lined the banks, everyone uncovered, and in many instances, women wept while they knelt.

Other demonstrations were held at Huy, a busy manufacturing town about half way between Namur and Liege and situated on both sides of the Meuse. In every town and village and from every lock and bridge en route to Huy, flowers were strewn upon the passing barges. The people of this town were unusually demonstrative, thousands rushing to the quays, the men doffing their hats and all bowing their heads as the barges slowly coursed by. Mounted lancers rode along the canal banks as a guard of honor until Liege was reached, where thousands of persons, with bared heads, lined the bridge and water's edge.

At Liege, demonstrations had been planned beforehand and ceremonies were conducted by the military and civic digni-

taries of the city. Representatives of the Belgian Government, American and French Consular officials, and groups of wounded soldiers were among the thousands who paid their respects to the dead. The convoys were met at Pont du Commerce, which spans the Meuse, by the Governor and Mayor of Liege and the Mayors of surrounding towns; also two generals of the Belgian Army stationed in the city of Liege. As the convoys of the dead passed under the bridge, flowers and floral tributes were dropped upon the barges by thousands of persons, young and old. Children flocked to the edge of the canal with flags and flowers, which they gave to the conveyors to place upon the boats.

During the ceremonies a Belgian military band took position on one of the barges and played the American and Belgian National Anthems and Chopin's Funeral March, the latter while the barges were passing slowly through the city of Liege. The lanciers the while were escorting, single file on either side of the river, the barges with the American dead. All traffic ceased and many of the shops were closed while this demonstration was going on. The barges then passed into the basin and, as the cortege regained its way, trumpets sounded "Taps" and a military band played the American National Anthem.

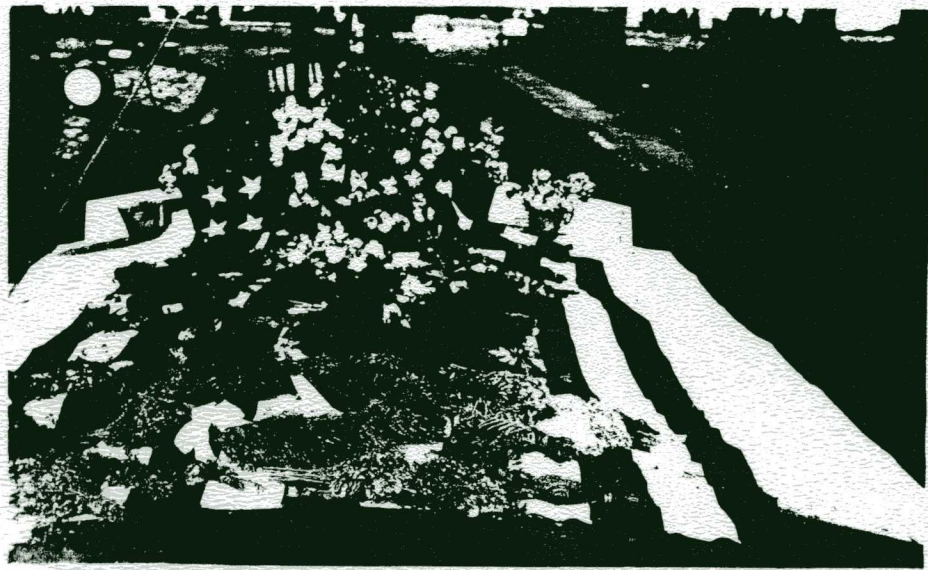
The following is a translation of a Belgian view of the passing of the caissons, which was published in a Liege journal dated April 29, 1921:

"Monday afternoon, under the sunny sky, Liege saw

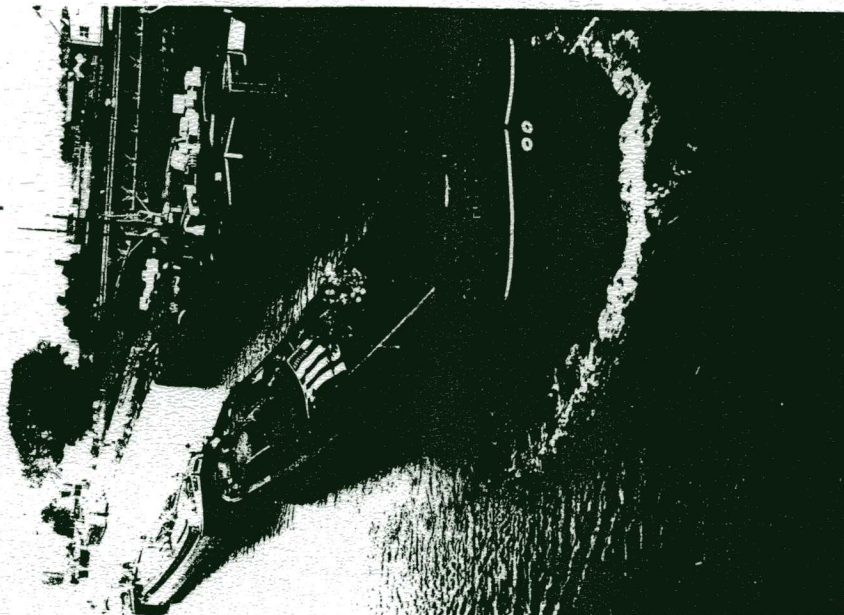
a touching ceremony take place in the clear scenery of its river. A boat, with three barges in tow, had entered the channel of a lock. But this time the barges were carrying a sacred load, at the passing of which the river-side people took off their hats and bowed their heads in silent respect. The bugles sounded "Taps" while the flags were flying at half-mast. Children threw flowers on the tarpaulins and then the convoy went on its way along the smooth waters. It carried through Liege the remains of a thousand American soldiers who fell in 1918 during the fighting around Haute-Meuse. At Antwerp a transport will take them across the ocean, to the country whence they came to give their lives in the defense of Right.

"All along the watery way the peasants of France and Belgium had brought, at each halting place, the humble gifts of their gardens already in bloom. One felt glad that the return of those overseas heroes had been made by water instead of in the cars of an ordinary train. Thus their convoy added its majesty to the joy of the verdant landscape, which felt honored to add one more memory to those of its history.

"We are proud that our musical and multicolored Meuse was the road selected for that trip. It adds a page to its war records. A Latin river, - if ever there was one, - our Meuse saw on its banks some episodes which were perhaps the most decisive of the civilized defense, from the resistance of our forts up to the entrance in action of the Americans, after the



300 American Dead in each barge.

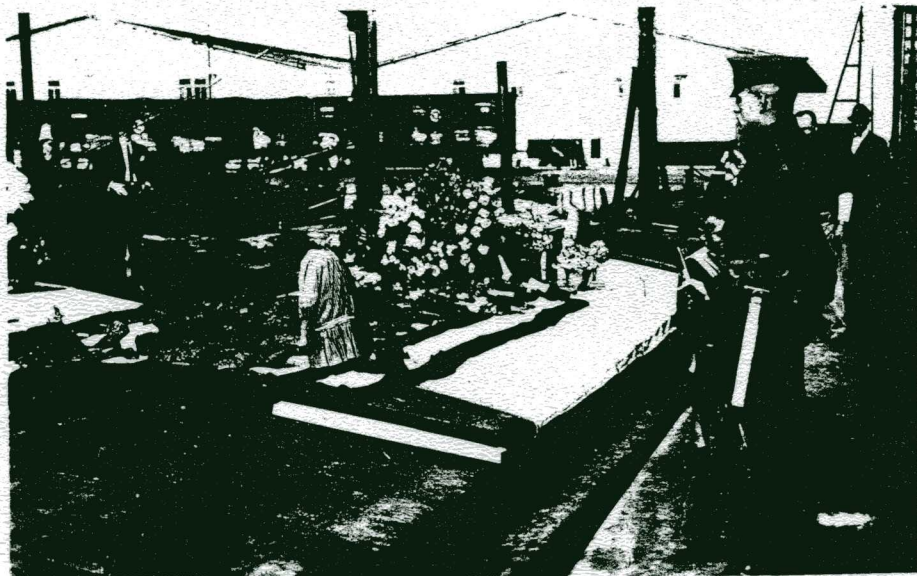


Arriving at Antwerp.

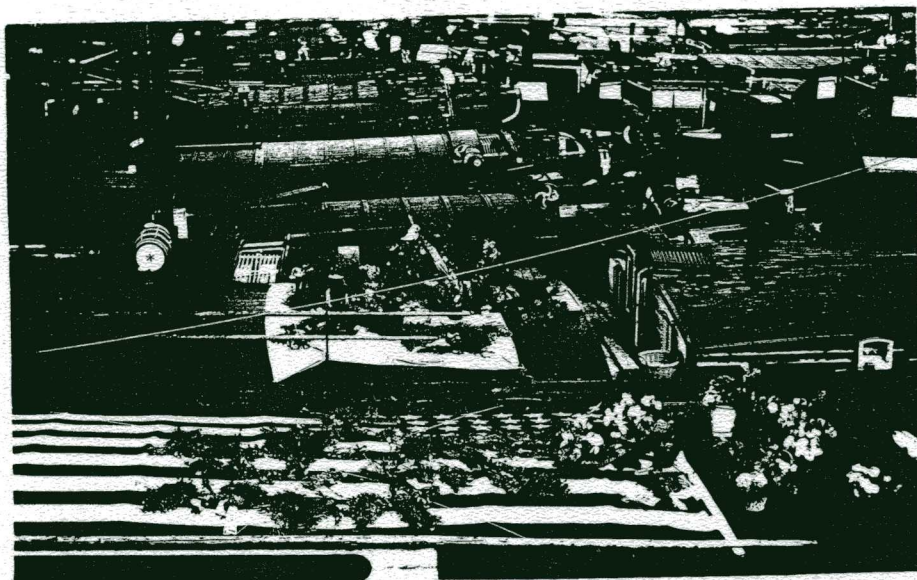
superhuman days of Verdun. It has not ceased to be tragic since the days when, its waters reflecting the fires of Dinant and Vise, and the epopee of which its faithful waters have kept an image, crowns in the mind a long sequence of dark hours when the genius of the soil fought ever since the origin for the salvation of Liberty. What a beautiful and uplifting book could be written by a new Michelet who would tell the legend of the Meuse!"

The next day the convoys entered the frontier of Holland, threaded their way into flowing canals, passing through the lush fields of the Dutch lowlands and the high walled locks. As the convoys crossed the frontier into Holland, they were met by an escort of Netherland infantry, in command of a colonel of the military district of Maastrich, which fired three volleys as a salute to the dead. The colonel was accompanied by his military staff, the Commissariat of Police and the Burgomeister. In order to avoid all difficulty in passing through Holland, the colonel and his staff remained with the barges while in Dutch territory and two gendarmes were sent to accompany them on foot.

Through the courtesy of the Commissioner of Canals, preference was given throughout the journey to the American convoy, and all incoming and outgoing traffic commercial or otherwise, was halted at the locks until the American dead passed through. At the second Belgian-Holland frontier,



Little Belgian girl paying tribute to American Dead.



A few of the floral tributes.
Basin at Antwerp.

another escort of Netherlands infantry met the convoy. They also fired the salute for the dead and flowers were presented by the village people.

These winding canals again turned their course into Belgian territory. At Bree the entire village turned out to witness the procession of American dead. Sturdy, flaxen-haired children elbowed their way through the throng to get a better view. As the barges drew near, all hats were doffed and heads bowed. A demonstration was held and an address made by a representative of the municipality, an excerpt of which is quoted herewith:

"Speaking in the name of the soldiers of the Great War, I feel deeply honored to thank you, and in your person the whole American nation, for all you have done for the people of the Belgians.

"You gave us food, you gave us clothes, when we were in want of all. But that was not enough. When you saw that victory and freedom were at stake, you gave us your sons. And the best of them came from the American shores to defend the sacred soil of France and Belgium to crush the might that would oppress the ideals without which the world could no longer exist.

"Thousands of them have fallen and have been buried in the soil they defended. But restless far from their dear ones, they are going back slowly through our waters to find a

last repose in their own dear land.

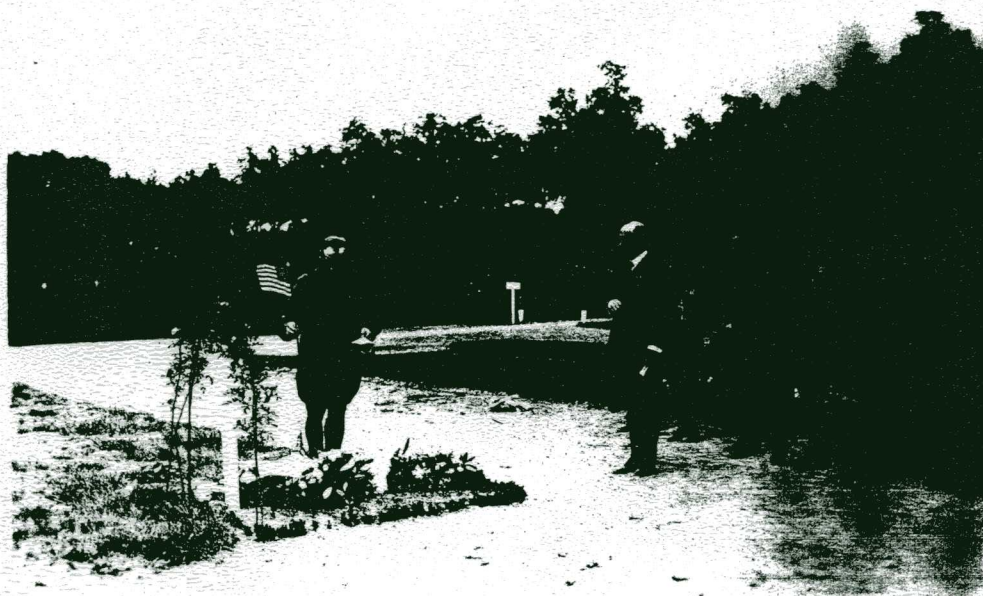
"And now they are on their triumphal march homeward-bound, we have come to express to them our deepest feelings of gratitude and admiration, I ask you to tell the American people that the Belgians have not forgotten and never will forget that they owe you their freedom and that the sacrifice of your sons has granted them the hope of a great and prosperous future.

"The Belgian soldiers of the Great War come here to show their love and admiration for their dead American comrades, and it is with profoundest emotion that I say to them: Dear Dead, we have been fighting side by side in the worst moments of the war; we have seen your pluck and courage; we have admired your endurance and heroism. In the name of the soldiers of Bree, dear comrades, I thank you; Glorious Heroes."

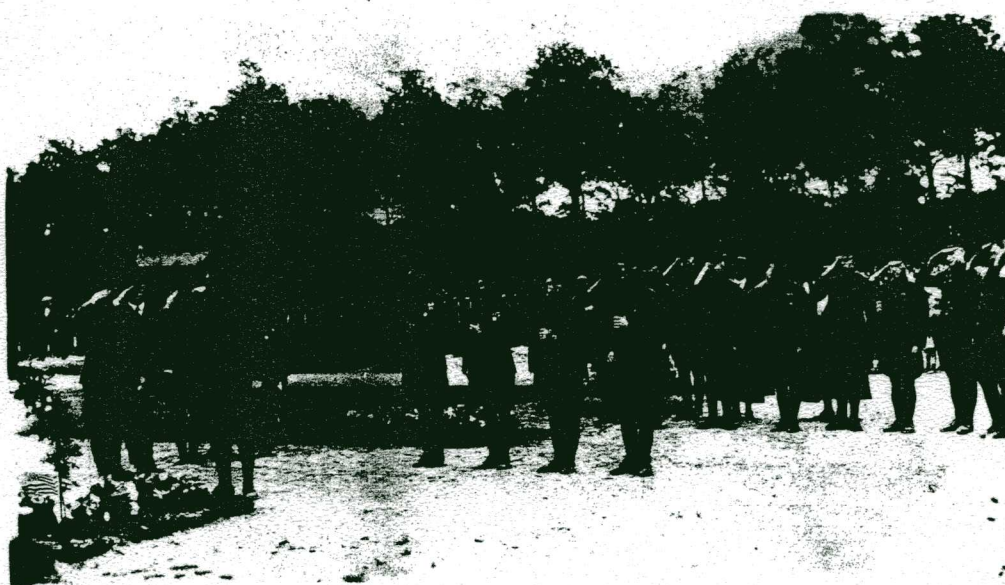
Welcomes were repeated in every town, and a great number of cards, which had been attached to the floral offerings, were collected by the convoyers. These cards were from individuals, from various societies and from schools, the following of which is typical:

"A Belgian schoolmistress and her grateful pupils, to the American braves, who brought peace and liberty to the world."

The newspapers also wrote much that was deeply touching regarding the Sacred Cargo passing through the locks of their respective cities, and expressed sincere appreciation of the splendid spirit of our soldiers.



Belgium - Memorial Day, 1921.



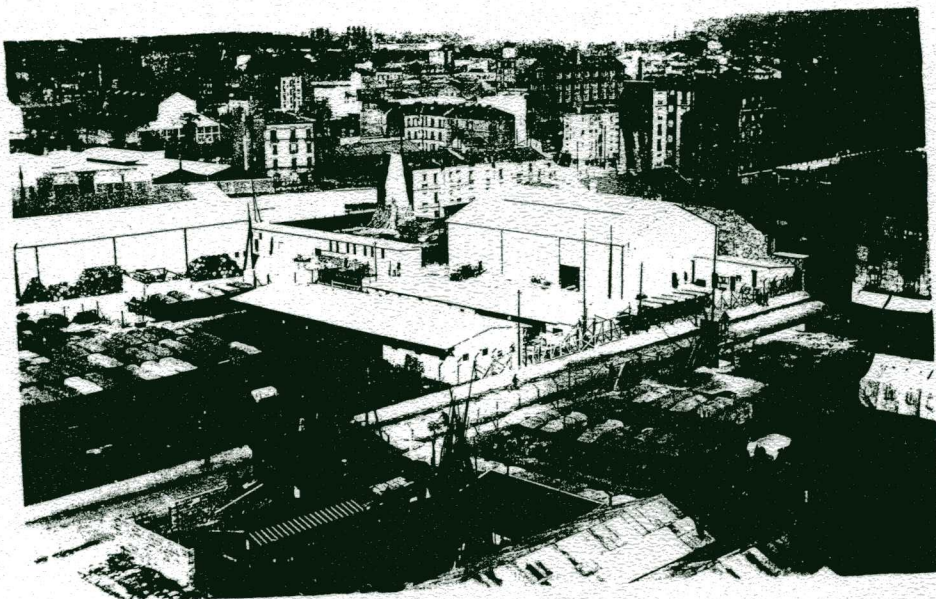
Belgium - Memorial Day, 1921.

In several of the towns of Belgium, many foreign visitors were among those who paid homage to their dead. Summer residents of the resorts where the convoys passed, stopped their motor cars and bared their heads as the funeral cortege passed. In nearly every case, passengers in the trams along the route took off their hats, and the cars stopped until the cortege had passed.

Nearing Antwerp all traffic was stopped for several minutes while the barges passed through the causeway into the first of the basins. The river was jammed and congested with shipping of all descriptions, but a right of way was quickly made so that the American convoys, which had been two weeks on their journey through the canals, were able to enter the basins of the city after all other shipping had been suspended. They continued unimpeded to the dock where an American guard of honor was waiting to receive them.

Nothing could be more convincing of the appreciation of American valor than the tributes shown by the people of France and Belgium along the route traversed by those solemn convoys of the dead.

This passage through the sombre grandeur of the canals and rivers was a fitting processional to the 3,000 mile voyage in a military transport across the broad Atlantic.



Storage Reserve Park and Garage, St. Ouen.



Disabled vehicles in yard waiting to enter Shop.
Overhaul Park and Shop, St. Ouen.

CHAPTER V.

ACTIVITIES OF THE SUPPLY AND TRANSPORTATION DIVISION.

The establishment of the Transportation Division and its activities up to September 1, 1920, have been referred to in Chapter IV., Volume I, of the History of this Service. The fusing of the Supply Branch and the Transportation Branch into the Supply and Transportation Division was effected upon the reorganization in August, 1920.

Up to that time the Division had been scattered over a radius of five miles, with a Headquarters at No. 7 rue Quentin-Bauchart, a garage on rue Petrarque, Paris, the Reserve Park at St. Denis and the Overhaul Park at St. Ouen.

In the fall of 1920 negotiations were begun for the rental of a suitable building for the Overhaul Shop. After various locations were considered, the former American Motor Transport Advance Supply Base at St. Ouen, about one mile outside the gates of Paris, was finally obtained.

It was decided that St. Denis should be retained as a Reserve Park and that the new property at St. Ouen should be organized as an Overhaul Park.

The property at St. Ouen was taken over on the 6th of December, 1920, and the removal of the shop to St. Ouen was begun at once. All work was stopped at St. Denis and the work-

men were called upon to assist in the transfer, which occupied about three days. At the same time, steps were taken for the installation of lights, power, telephone and machinery. As none of the machinery, of which a sufficient stock had been requested, could be furnished from the United States, with the exception of twenty Shaler vulcanizers, the necessary amount was purchased locally, authority being granted for the expenditure of four thousand dollars for this purpose.

The most important of the machinery purchased was a band saw for the carpenter shop, a hack saw, a large lathe, a forge, and a generator set, together with a number of smaller articles.

On March 7, 1921, Major F.F. Jewett, Infantry, was relieved in charge of the Division of Supplies and Transportation by Lt. Col. Wm. G. Ball, Q.M.C.

When the lease on occupied premises of this Service at St. Denis expired on June 30, 1921, the depot was installed at St. Ouen, where additional grounds and buildings were secured. This concentration resulted in a reorganization of the executive sections of the Division, permitting a reduction in the number of temporary personnel.

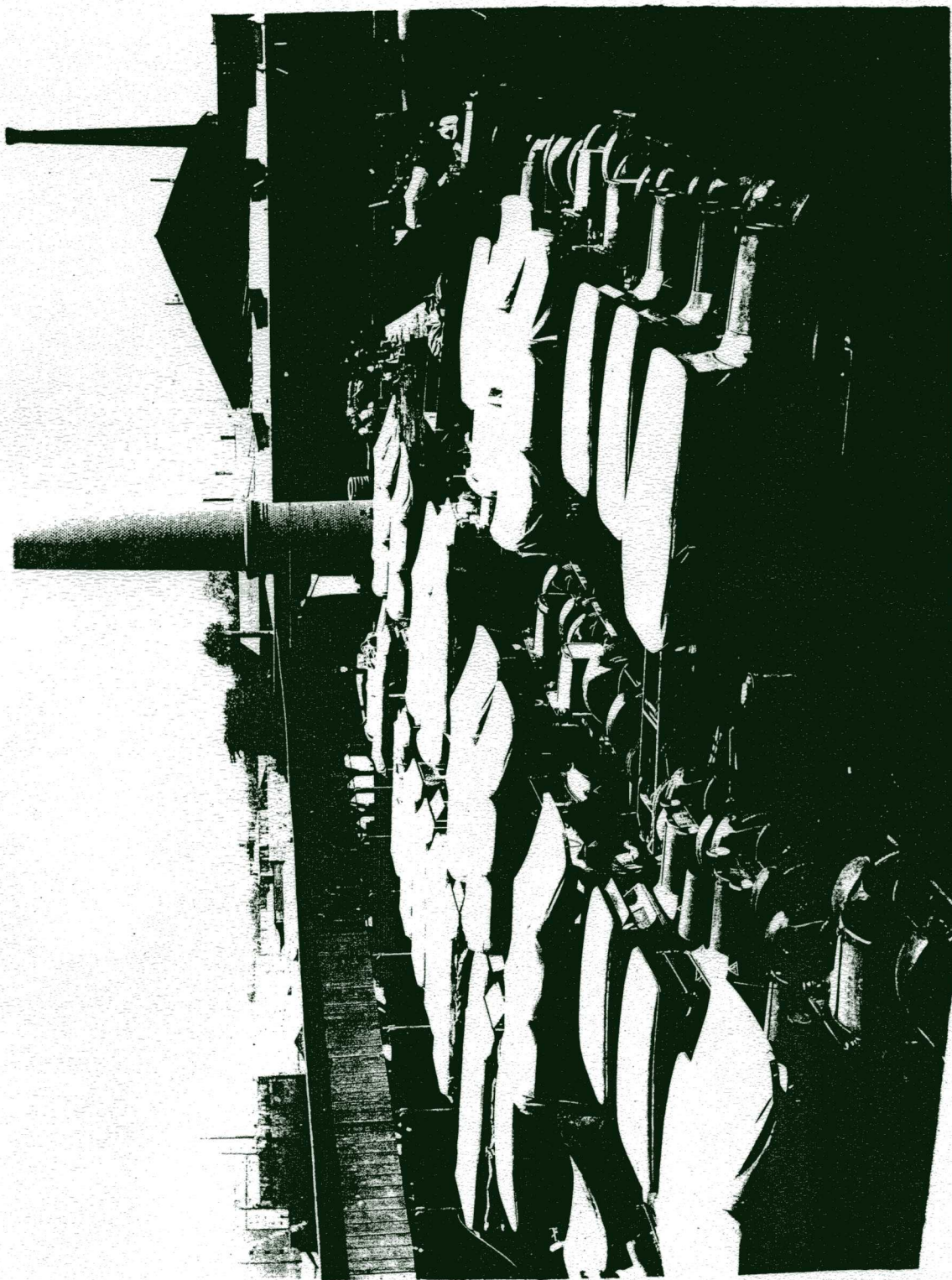
Motor Transportation Branch.

The types of transportation furnished this Service from the United States were found to be unsuitable for the

work required. The G.M.C. $\frac{3}{4}$ ton truck was too light for the transportation of bodies. With one casket this car was subjected to lost motion; with two it was overloaded. The long trips over the rough roads of the devastated regions at high speed subjected the Dodge winter touring cars to wear for which they were not intended. The White Reconnaissance cars were old stock and badly in need of overhauling. As the work of the American Graves Registration Service was rapidly expanding, use had to be made of the transportation on hand, and as a result, cars of all types found their way into the Service Park at St. Denis in ever increasing numbers. As a consequence, the most difficult problem of all - the repair of transportation - was introduced into the situation.

The Service Park at St. Denis, while more or less adequate for minor repairs for the operation of transportation under normal conditions, was wholly inadequate for the work required under the abnormal conditions found on the battlefields of France. With restricted working and storage space; inadequate shelter for the workmen; insufficient machinery; a limited supply of spare parts; a mass of wrecked transportation drifting into the yard, the situation at St. Denis presented a far from encouraging picture.

Cables were sent to the United States requesting shop machinery, adequate parts and heavier transportation in the form of Liberty trucks to replace the G.M.Cs; also



Another view of Overhaul Park and Shop, St. Ouen.

Cadillacs and White Staff Observation cars to replace the Dodges. In addition, tank trucks and a machine shop truck, with spare parts trailers, were requested. Attempts were then made to locate a building suitable for an Overhaul Shop.

In order to further increase the efficiency at the Service Park, Captain H.C. Holdridge was detailed as Maintenance Officer, with instructions to begin the organization along the lines of approved shop methods as far as they were applicable to the existing situation.

With reference to the requests for additional transportation of heavier type, this Service was notified that there was none available in the United States, but that 75 Liberty trucks were to be turned over by the American Forces in Germany. While this was less than the number asked for, it was a substantial increase over the transportation on hand. Substitution for the Cadillacs and White Observation cars, this Service was informed, must be expected from the 25 Cadillacs to be turned over by the Society of the Ozaks.

The Motor Transport supplies were ordered to be transferred from the Supply Branch to the Motor Transport Department, and Captain Holdridge was made Motor Transport Supply Officer and Salvage Officer, in addition to his duties as Maintenance Officer. The Reserve Park at St. Denis was also placed under the Maintenance Officer, the necessary change being due to shortage of commissioned personnel.

The inventory of Motor Transport supplies was undertaken by the Maintenance Officer in conjunction with the Supply Officer; the installation of steel bins in the shop at St. Ouen was contracted for and, upon completion of the inventory, the transfer of stock to St. Ouen was begun.

Meanwhile, the first shipment of 30 Liberty trucks from the American Forces in Germany was received and, although requiring minor repairs, they soon were ready to be sent to the field. The number of vehicles available was also increased by the shipment to Paris of all cars operating in England, where the work had been finished. Unfortunately, these cars were in poor condition mechanically and served only to swell the mass of material awaiting repairs, which had increased to an astonishing degree. This increase was explainable by the fact that some of the cars had been in service for almost a year and required overhauling; some were injured by poor drivers, while others had been received from the United States in an unserviceable condition, and very few could be repaired while the shops were being moved. In addition, a number of cars were shipped in from various stations as surplus, and it was considered inadvisable to re-assign them until they had been more or less overhauled.

Major Ralph Talbot, Jr., Q.M.C., was transferred to the American Forces in Germany and was relieved by Major R.W. Riefkohl, C.A.C., on January 1, 1921. At about this date the

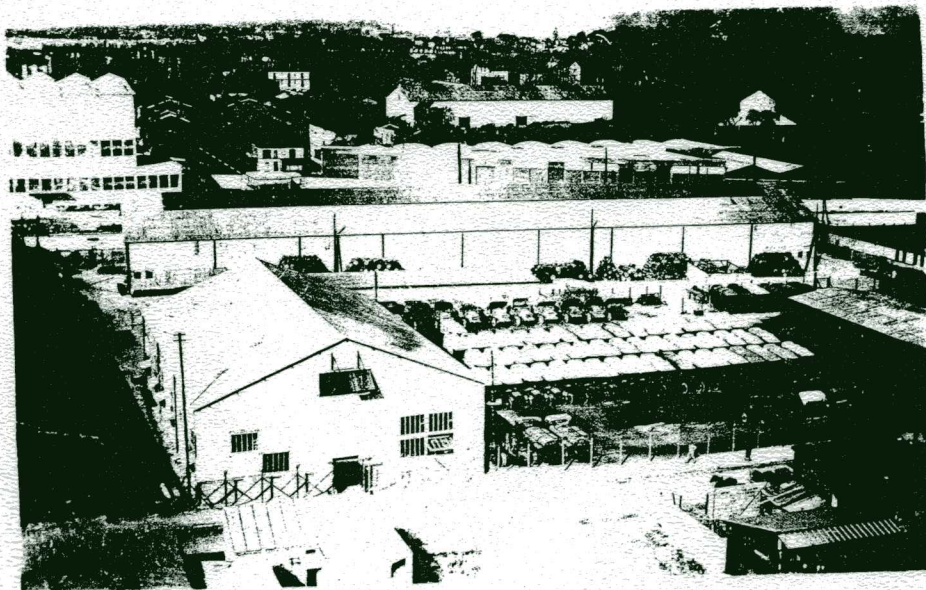
25 Cadillacs arrived from the Ukrainian stocks and the second shipment of 25 Liberty trucks was received from the American Forces in Germany. These also required some repairs before being in condition for heavy field service, but their general condition was good. With the receipt of 36 additional new G.M.C. trucks; 6 used White Reconnaissance cars from the United States, and the promise of 15 Cadillacs and 17 White Reconnaissance cars from the American Forces in Germany, adequate motor transportation for this Service was assured.

The situation on March first had radically improved. An excellent shop, adequate for all needs, was maintained; also a Supply Branch and a Reserve Park functioning promptly and efficiently for the operations of the Field Sections. Up to March first, a total of seven complete truck sections had been organized and sent to the field, and transportation was available for the organization of four more, two of which were already completed.

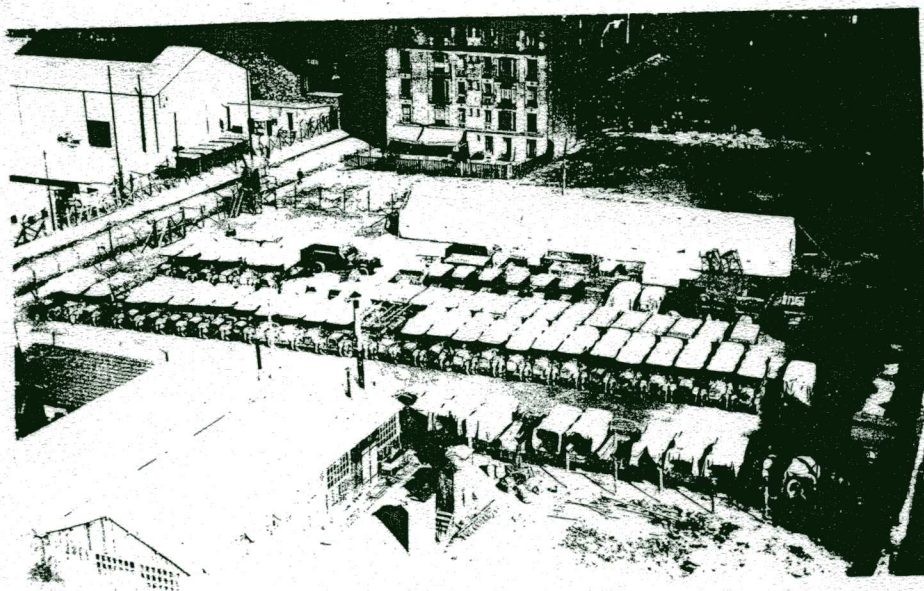
During the six months prior to October 1, 1921, tires and tubes to the value of \$35,232 were received at the repair shops as worthless. More than \$13,000 worth of this material was repaired and sent to stock for re-issue.

The general average of employees for the year October, 1920, to October 1921, was:-

- 1 Chief mechanic.
- 10 Foremen.
- 11 Machinists.
- 109 Mechanics and helpers.
- 5 Blacksmiths and helpers.
- 6 Painters.



Supply Branch, Headquarters and Reserve Park.
St. Ouen.



Storage Park and corner of Garage.
St. Ouen.

13 Carpenters and body workers.
3 Tinsmiths and metal workers.
8 Upholsterers and trimmers.
7 Electricians.
3 Vulcanizers and tire repair men.
2 Acetylene welders.

The Motor Transport Service on October 1, 1921, consisted of 55 Cadillacs, including touring cars and limousines; 39 Dodge winter touring cars; 42 White Reconnaissance cars; 89 Standard "B" trucks; 221 G.M.C. $\frac{3}{4}$ ton trucks and 43 Harley-Davidson motorcycles. This transportation was distributed substantially as follows: for the Port Officers, one or more G.M.C.s., a Dodge or Cadillac and a motorcycle; for the Area Supervisors, practically the same number of the same types, and for the Field Sections engaged in removing the soldier dead, a truck section consisting of twelve G.M.C.s. (or four Standard "Bs" and seven G.M.C.s.), a passenger car and a motorcycle. All had the necessary personnel to handle the trucks and cars assigned. For the Port Officers and Areas no overhead personnel was necessary, but to the truck sections, in addition to the regular chauffeurs, were assigned one truckmaster, two mechanics and an extra chauffeur.

Not mentioned above was that transportation assigned to the Paris Garage and that at the Reserve Park, which was used locally at Headquarters for transporting supplies and personnel and which from time to time was called upon to make trips of a temporary nature to all parts of France.

The sections often remained away from their base for

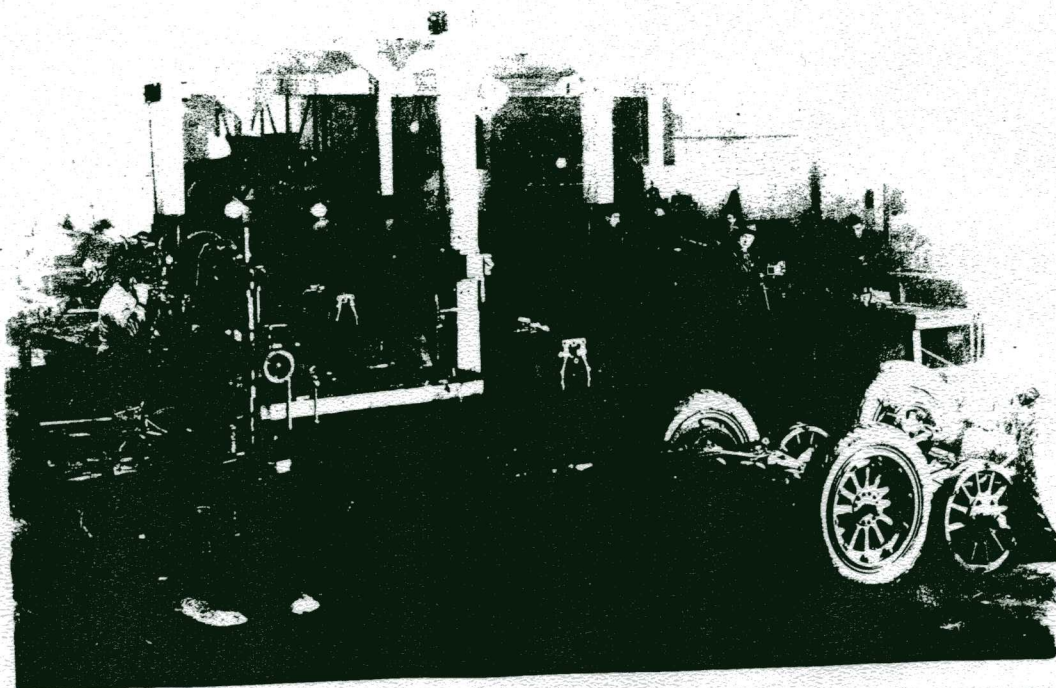
long periods of time. During the early days of the operations, they started in the north, west and southwest of France and from there converged toward the large cemetery at Romagne. The entire movement required a period of almost a year for its completion, and during that time several of the sections did not return to Paris. Another section, starting from Paris, was sent to Germany, traveling as far east as Warsaw. It returned to Paris after an absence of more than two months, recording a total mileage for each vehicle of approximately four thousand miles. This was a normal full season's run for the average motor car. Single vehicles have been known to average nearly three hundred kilometres per day for several weeks at a time. Traveling over the bad roads of the devastated regions or through the snowdrifts of the Vosges; working under high pressure; continually shifting position, and the impossibility of securing sufficient spare parts made the service especially difficult. The personnel consisted of approximately 600 civilian employees and two commissioned officers.

Fortunately, good material for truckmasters had been available. Discharged sergeants of the Army, Motor Transportation Service; ex-officers of the French Service; picked men secured locally, - the abilities of all were made use of as truckmasters or assistants in other capacities.

Of all the difficulties experienced, those connected with the repair of transportation were the worst. Originally

the Service Park was organized at St. Denis, on the site of the old gasoline filling station that was in operation during the war. When the American Graves Registration Service was in its infancy, this Park was adequate for all requirements. At that time the cars were new and the Park was concerned chiefly with setting up the vehicles and putting them into service. Before the last one was dispatched to the field, the amount of material to be repaired was assuming such large proportions as to demonstrate the utter inadequacy of the service of repair. Larger and better accommodations for an Overhaul Park were necessary and were found only after a long search. In the meantime the personnel was working under open sheds or out in the inclement weather of the month of October, with the only equipment available being contained in two machine shop trucks. The lease of the concrete building at St. Ouen obviated this objectionable feature.

Before much could be done in the way of repairs, difficulties began to pile up, and the incessant demand for transportation that started at that time continued for several months. Cars began to break down on account of the severe service required of them during the winter months, and arrived in Paris in increasing numbers as the days passed. Seventy-five Standard "B" trucks were received from the American Forces in Germany, and although in fair condition for town work, were in need of repair before they could be sent to the field with the



General Repair Shop. St. Ouen.



Testing the motor, Repair Shop. St. Ouen.

expectation that they would remain there. The 25 Cadillacs received from the Ukrainian Government, having been turned back from the war stocks, required a thorough overhauling before they could be placed in service. As many as 200 cars requiring repairs were on hand at this time. Demands for replacements were coming in from every direction. Spare parts were scarce, especially for the Cadillac cars that had been received unexpectedly, and a lack of procurement continually delayed repair.

By November, 1921, the Overhaul Park was able to give full service and produced an average weekly output of over twenty cars. Between January first and November first more than 500 cars were repaired, most of them being completely overhauled. Cars turned in were stripped of all accessories and placed in the Storage Park until such time as there were places for them in the shop. They were fed through the shop and, upon completion of the work required, were placed in the Reserve Park until needed for the formation of sections or for replacement. A reserve sufficient to meet all normal demands was then available for all types of vehicles, and instantaneous service given for all replacement calls. So well had the future needs of cars been taken care of, that work on certain types was entirely suspended and a reduction of personnel made possible. Until October first about 150 men were required in the shop for the service of repairs alone. By November first a reduction of 30 per cent in the number of employees was effected.

Rail and Water Transportation Branch.

The activities of the Rail and Water Transportation Branch from September 1, 1920, to September 1, 1921, in the issuance of passenger transportation, express and freight shipments, greatly increased in accordance with the enlarged program of operations and the general increase in personnel.

During an average period of six months, vouchers were issued for the payment of passenger transportation to the amount of francs 58,559.45 and for freight transportation to the amount of francs 306,629.55, or a total amount to railroad companies of francs 365,189.00. There were also paid by this Branch, bills for telegrams and cables to the number of 163, amounting to francs 54,132.05.

In the early part of October the policy regarding arrangements for railroad movements and the ordering of cars for large shipments was changed. Prior to that time all details covering the handling of transportation for this Service were made direct with the railroad companies by the Rail and Water Transportation Branch. The new arrangements provided that such details be handled by the French Mission attached to this Service.

To carry out the plan of evacuation and transportation of remains in France for the so-called Zone of the Armies, and to comply with the requirements of the French Government for trainload shipments, it was necessary to solve the problem of

storage and transportation. This activity was assigned to the Supply and Transportation Division and was accomplished by the establishment of railheads at various points to be operated under the direct supervision of the Chief of the Rail and Water Transportation.

A personal reconnaissance was made by the Chief of this Branch with a view to securing the best possible facilities at certain points for storage of the number of bodies to be evacuated from each railhead and for the shipment of trainload lots of 1,000 to 1,500 bodies.

On the above basis, railheads were temporarily established, as operations advanced, as follows:-

Railhead No. 1	Roisel (Somme).
Railhead No. 2	Bazoilles-sur-Meuse (Vosges).
Railhead No. 3	Toul (Meurthe & Moselle).
Railhead No. 4	Fismes (Marne).
Railhead No. 5	Chaumont (Haute-Marne).

Due to the impossibility of securing proper lodgment in the devastated area of Roisel, it was found necessary to place the personnel of this railhead, as well as that of the operating division working at the railhead, in railway cars. Arrangements were made with the National Tourist Bureau of the French Government to lease five of the old American hospital cars which were stored at Gievres. Cars were brought to Paris, fitted up, and forwarded to Roisel for the railhead. Work commenced at that point on November 26, 1920. Shipment of bodies were made to the port of Calais in two trainload lots, one of

33 cars containing 873 bodies and one of 28 cars containing 651 bodies.

Railhead No. 2 was opened at Bazailles-sur-Meuse (Vosges) January 10, 1921, three Field Sections operating at one time or another through this railhead.

Railhead No. 3 at Toul. (Meurthe & Moselle) was opened February 15, 1921, with two Field Sections working at that point.

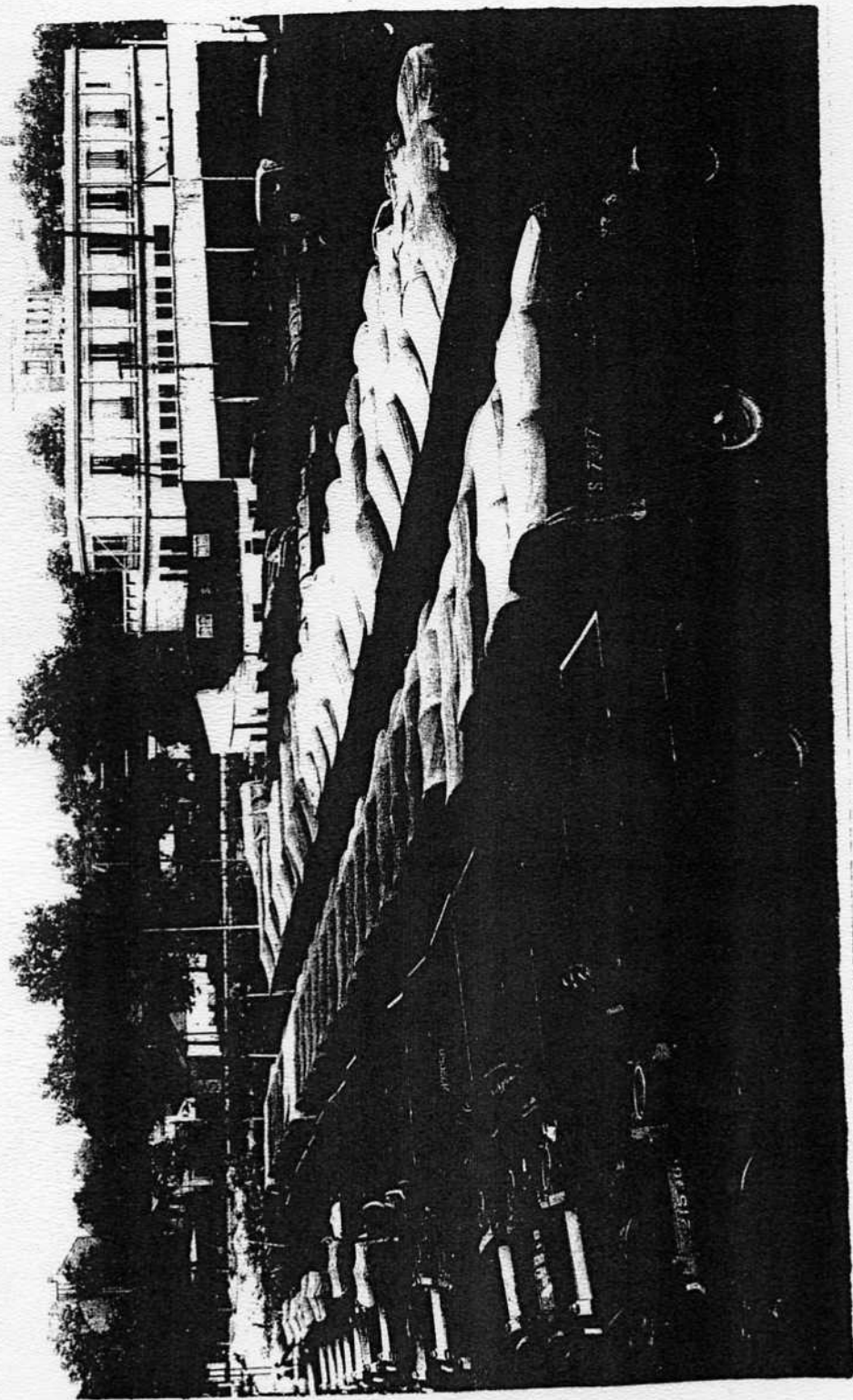
Railhead No. 4 was opened at Fismes (Marne) February 23, 1921. The same conditions of lodgment having been found as at Roisel, it was decided that the hospital cars in use at Roisel be transferred to Fismes (Marne).

Railhead No. 5 opened at Chaumont (Haute-Marne), February 20, 1921, with one Field Section in operation.

The following is a resume of the activities of the various Railheads during six months prior to September, 1921;

The last shipment from Roisel was made on February 22 and upon departure of this last shipment of bodies, the residents of Roisel gathered at the train to bid farewell and the Mayor read a short address to which the Commanding Officer of Railhead No. 1 responded with a few words of thanks. This railhead was transferred to Ste. Menchould on March 12.

Two shipments of bodies were made from Railhead No. 1, Sainte Menchould, to Antwerp. The first, consisting of 1,305 bodies, was forwarded on March 29 and the second, consisting of 864 bodies, left for Antwerp on June 4. After the departure



Vehicles in running condition ready to take the Field.
Reserve Park, St. Denis.

of the last trainload of bodies from Ste. Menehould, the Railhead was completely closed out.

The last shipment from Bazoilles, consisting of 1,302 bodies, was forwarded to Cherbourg on February 29 and Railhead No. 2 was opened at Thiaucourt on March 24th. There were two shipments made from Railhead No. 2, Thiaucourt, to Antwerp. The first, consisting of 1,343 bodies, was forwarded on May 3 and the second, of 1,003 bodies, left for Antwerp on May 16. The Railhead was transferred to Chateau-Thierry on May 27, from which point two shipments were made to Antwerp.

In accordance with the decision of the Chief of this Service, all bodies concentrated at Toul were shipped to Antwerp by barge. Four barges containing 961 bodies left Toul for Antwerp on April 8 and this Railhead was closed on April 14, 1921.

Only one shipment, consisting of 567 bodies, was forwarded from Railhead No. 4, Fismes, to Antwerp on April 16 and the Railhead was closed immediately upon the departure of this shipment.

One shipment, consisting of 1,176 bodies, was forwarded from Railhead No. 5, Chaumont, to Antwerp on April 6 and the Railhead was completely closed out on April 10.

Railhead No. 6 at Pere-en-Tardenois was opened for operations on March 25, 1921. Permission was obtained from the Regions Librees to use ground under their control for the establishment of the Railhead. The empty caskets used by Rail-

head No. 6 were furnished by Cherbourg. There were two shipments of bodies made from this Railhead to Antwerp. The first shipment of 1,263 bodies left Fere-en-Tardenois for Antwerp on June 2, 1921, and the second shipment, consisting of 946 bodies, was forwarded on June 10. Railhead No. 6, Fere-en-Tardenois, was completely closed out on June 11, 1921.

Supply Branch.

Up to September, 1920, the Rail and Water Transportation Branch had under its direction the vouchering and accounting for all rail transportation, Army Transport charges, port expenses, telegraph, telephone and cable accounts.

After the organization of September, 1920, the Telephone Accounts Section was transferred to the Rents, Contracts and Claims Branch.

All auditing and vouchering since September, 1920, functioned under the Rail and Water Transportation Branch, as did also the Telephone, Cable, and Barge Transport Sections.

In September, 1921, the Rail and Water Transportation Branch was incorporated with the Supply Branch and became an independent section thereof.

Auditing.

All railroad bills, being based on tariff rates and not on Government agreement, were audited in connection with the complete set of French railroad tariffs retained by the

Rail and Water Section.

As a sample of the volume of work accomplished during an average month, bills were vouchered by this Section in the amount of one million francs. These items covered rail transportation of passengers, bodies and supplies; switching and special side-track charges including the operation of the Army railroad from Dun-sur-Meuse to Romagne Cemetery.

Bills for telegraph and cable accounts were checked against the French Government postal tariffs before being vouchered by the Rail and Water Section. Arrangements were made by this Section with the French Government whereby all telegrams for this Service were handled on a credit basis, the bills being passed through Headquarters for vouchering by this Section.

Supply Section.

It was impracticable to get all supplies from the United States, due to the fact that the necessity for most of them arose through emergency conditions. In compliance with specific authority from the War Department, all purchases were made in Europe except for certain standard articles which were supplied from the United States. When supplies were available in the Quartermaster Department of the American Forces in Germany they were obtained there. The classes of merchandise differed considerably. Machinery, garden tools, exhumation

tools and technical supplies for exhumation work had to be bought in Europe except in the case of disinfectants, which were purchased in the United States.

There were two methods of issue. Headquarters were supplied by the Property Loan Officer, while the outside issues were made by the Supply Officer.

Salvage.

When the field operations began to slow up and Area and Port offices began to close, all surplus property that had been issued to them was shipped to St. Ouen. An inventory was taken and inspection requested. The property was disposed of as the Inspector directed, either by being broken up or sold. When property was ordered sold, sealed proposals were called for and the property disposed of to the highest bidder.

The Supply Department had charge of the upkeep of the buildings and grounds which were leased by this Service. These included the Headquarters building at No. 8 Avenue d'Iena; buildings and grounds at St. Ouen; the morgue at Aubervilliers, and, up to July 1921, the supervision of the building at No. 7 rue Quentin-Bauchart.

The Sales Commissary.

The Sales Commissary of the American Graves Registration Service, A.M.C., in Europe, began to function on March 5, 1920.

and was located in the Headquarters Building, 8 Avenue d'Iena, Paris.

The commissary of the American Expeditionary Forces in France having closed in January, 1920, the Chief of this Service decided to establish a small commissary for the convenience of the commissioned, enlisted and American civilian personnel of the American Graves Registration Service in France. Commissary privileges were also extended to all officers on duty in France, including officers of the United States Army attending French Military Schools, and retired officers residing in France, and naval personnel passing through Paris; all American civilian employees serving under contract, whether with the American Graves Registration Service or elsewhere; also civilian clerks, Q.M.C., detailed for duty in the office of the Military Attache. In special cases and on proper request, the permission was extended beyond the above limits. Properly established cards of identity were issued to those privileged to purchase.

The personnel engaged in conducting this department consisted of a Chief Clerk, an assistant clerk and one warehouse man.

When Field Sections were operating in devastated regions, there were practically no facilities for obtaining the necessary supplies, accordingly messes were organized and largely supplied from the commissary in Paris.

All supplies were requisitioned from the commissary of the American Forces in Germany at Coblenz and delivered by conveyer twice a month.

On March 15, 1920, a commissary was opened at Romagne-sous-Montfaucou (Meuse), this being the only one in the field. In addition to serving the American personnel on duty at the cemetery there, this commissary proved of great convenience to the Y.W.C.A., who managed the Hostess House at that place, by enabling them to purchase supplies in cases of emergency for the accomodation of visitors.

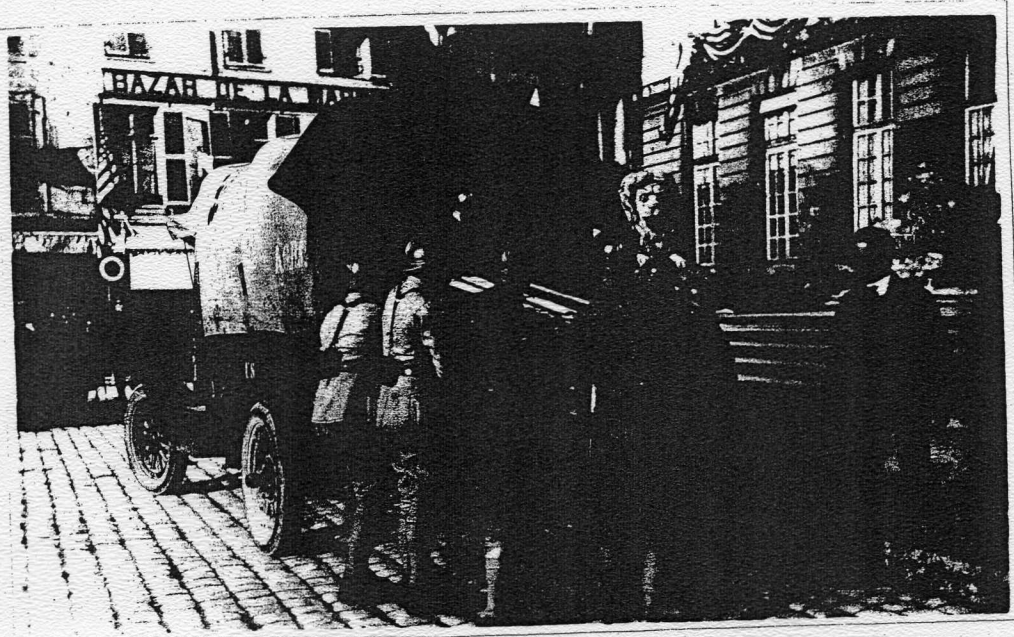
On June 10, 1920, the direct operation of the commissary at Romagne-sous-Montfaucou ceased and it came under the jurisdiction of the Supervisor of Area No. 1. An officer was assigned in charge and the civilian employees already on duty there were transferred from the payroll of the Paris commissary to that of Romagne.

The Morgue at Paris.

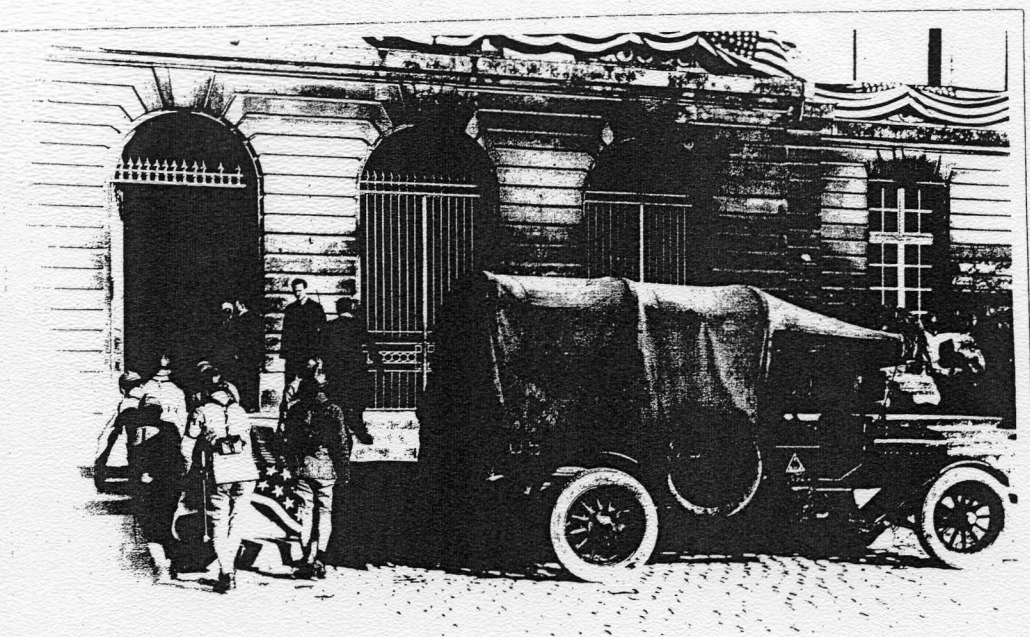
The morgue, which was leased by this Service in Warehouse No. 55, Magasins Generaux at Aubervilliers, was a large brick warehouse with cement floor, and a capacity of approximately 800 caskets. It was first opened on April 14, 1921, with Captain Edward J. Targeon, O.M.C., in charge and was intended to relieve the railheads and ports by storing the bodies held for identification, for concentration at Suresnes, and those for foreign shipment.

About the middle of May the bodies in storage included 126 from the port of Toulon and 17 from Cherbourg. There were 101 for concentration at Suresnes and one for Belleau Wood. For foreign shipment there were 12 for Italy and one each for Greece, Scotland and England. Thirty-three were held for identification. One small case contained the ashes of a soldier who had been cremated at the family's request.

Assisting Captain Turgeon, who was under Major C.D. Hartman, Q.M.C., were four American watchmen, one chauffeur, one Chief Clerk and two French laborers. On occasions requiring extra labor, such as the unloading of caskets, workmen were furnished from the Supply Depot at St. Ouen.



Chalons.
Arrival of the Unknown Dead.



Chalons.
Entering Hotel de Ville.

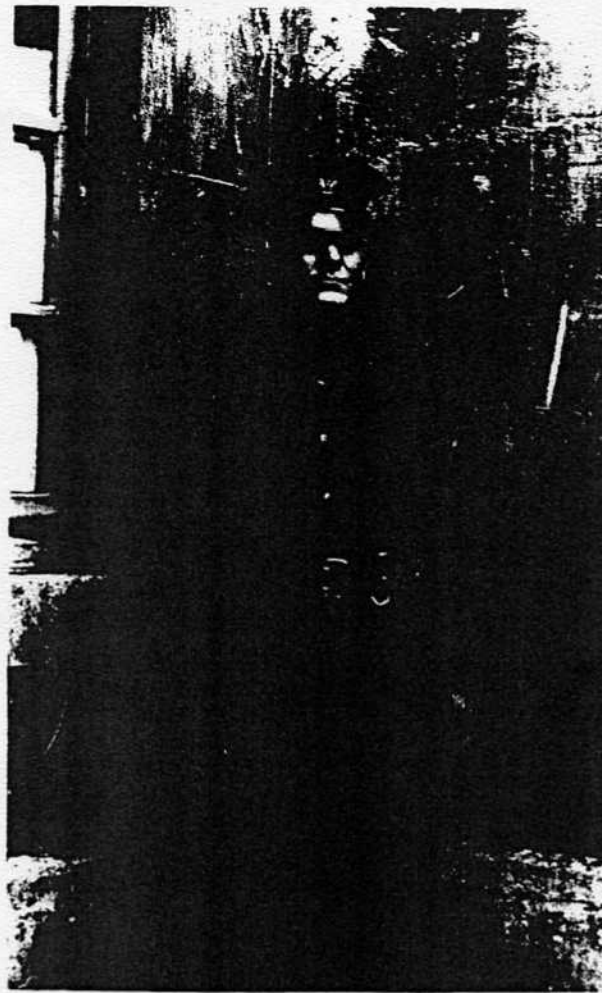
CHAPTER VI.

THE UNKNOWN DEAD.

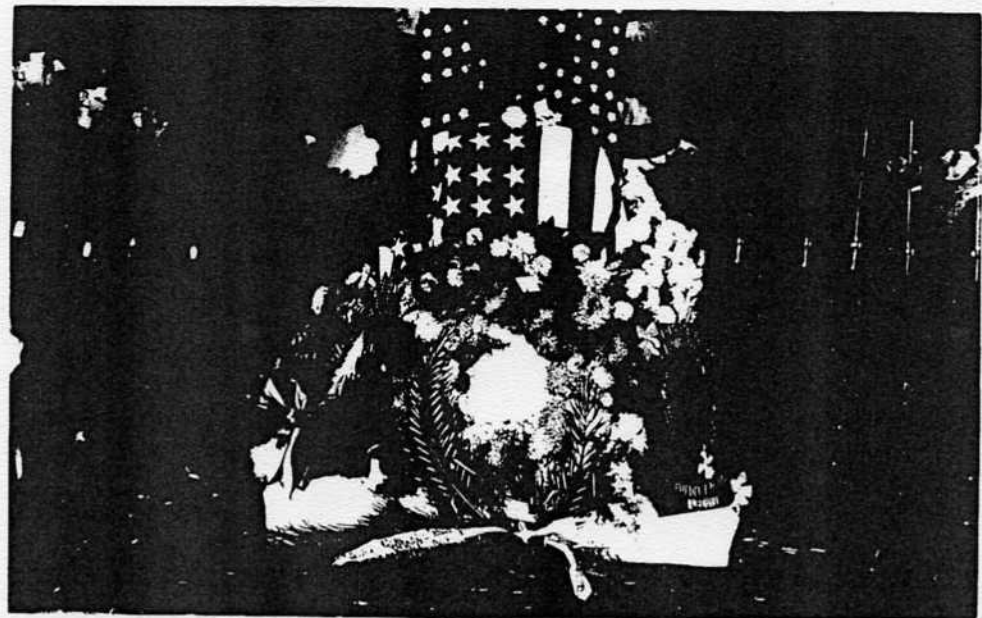
In the heart of the old battle area of France, at Chalons-sur-Marne, the body of the Unknown United States Soldier was chosen on Monday, October 24, 1921, as representative of the 77,000 Americans who paid the supreme sacrifice in the cause of Liberty and Justice.

Four bodies of unknown soldiers from the cemeteries of Aisne-Marne, Meuse-Argonne, Somme and St. Mihiel were brought to Chalons on Sunday, October 23, and placed in a chamber in the Hotel de Ville.

Prior to the shipment of the remains of these four unknown soldiers to Chalons-sur-Marne for the final selection, this Service made a thorough search of all the Forms No. 16-A for unknown soldiers in the cemeteries at Aisne-Marne, Meuse-Argonne, Somme and St. Mihiel. This search was for the purpose of locating bodies of unknown soldiers which gave no clue to, or evidence of, identity. Further, the original records, showing the interments of these bodies, were searched and the four bodies selected represented the remains of soldiers of which there was absolutely no indication as to name, rank, organization or date of death. In other words, these bodies were picked up in isolated spots and concentrated in the cemeteries



Sergeant Younger who selected the Unknown Soldier.



Chalons.
Body of Unknown Soldier lying in state.

enumerated above so that their identity could not be solved by any recourse to records.

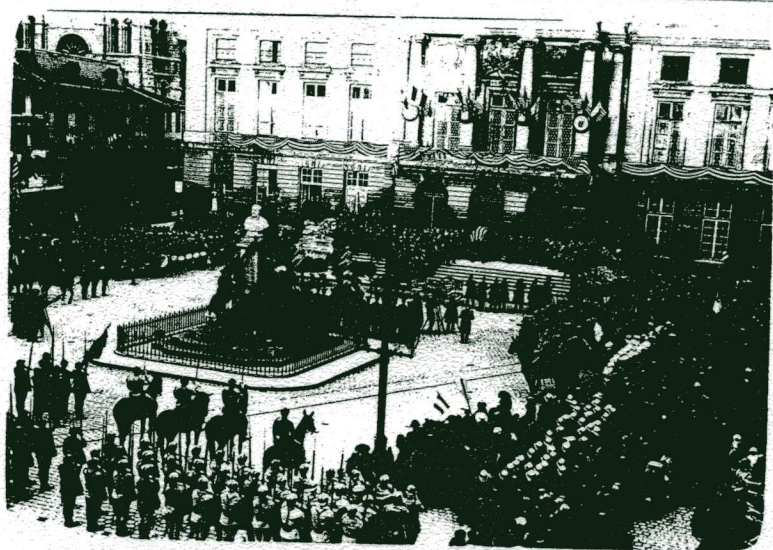
In addition to these four bodies - one from each of the cemeteries stated above - four other bodies were selected for alternates, and Forms No. 16-A, giving the grave locations of these bodies in their respective cemeteries, were prepared by the Registration Branch. The purpose of providing alternates was in case the exhumation of the Unknown Soldier revealed any evidence of identity, the alternate body could then be exhumed and taken to Chalons-sur-Marne as the Unknown from that particular cemetery.

These four bodies were exhumed from the four cemeteries on October 22, 1921, and promptly at the designated hour of 3 p.m. on October 23 the bodies arrived from different directions at the Hotel de Ville. Each body was conveyed by an officer, who had instructions to deliver to Major R.P. Harbold, Q.M.C., the Forms pertaining to the bodies delivered, as well as the alternate Forms which had been provided. In no case was the alternate Form used and the four bodies when exhumed had absolutely no evidence of identity. These Forms were turned over to Major Harbold and were later given to Lt. Colonel G.V.S. Quackenbush, Q.M.C., Operations Division, who, in the presence of Major Harbold, destroyed by fire the four Forms No. 16-A pertaining to the four bodies which had been exhumed and sent to Chalons-sur-Marne.

In addition to the destruction of these Forms, all



Chalons.
French people paying tribute to Unknown Soldier.
October 24, 1921.

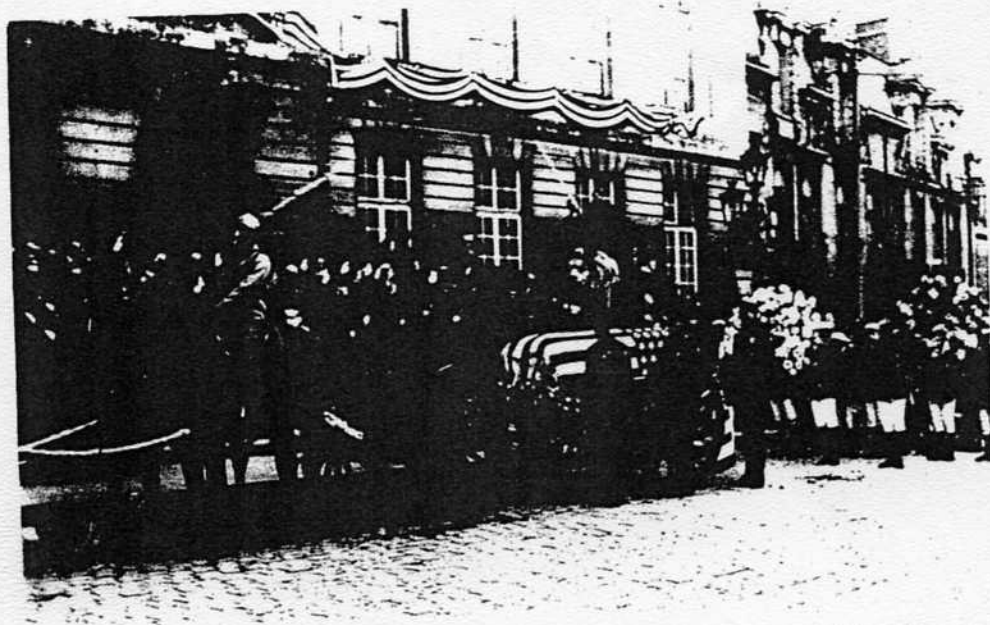


General view of Place de l'Hotel de Ville as
the body was being removed.

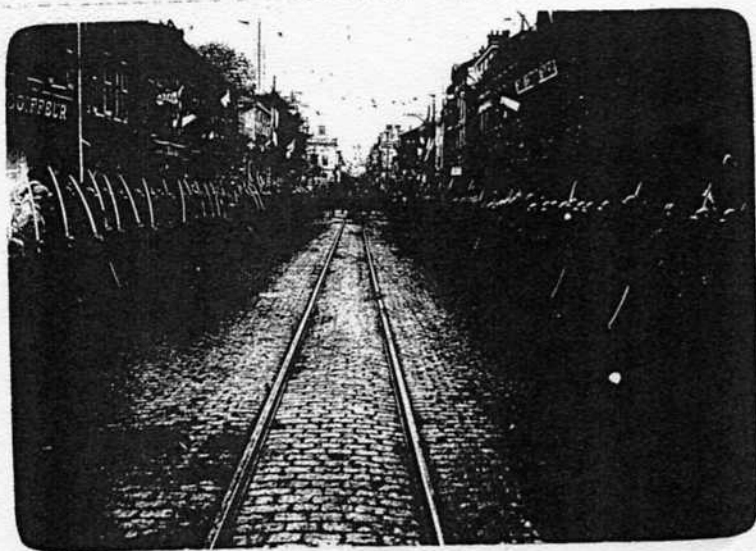
records in the Registration Branch of these Headquarters pertaining to these four bodies were likewise destroyed, so that the four bodies have no record on file showing from whence they originally came and from which cemetery they were exhumed for shipment to Chalons-sur-Marne.

On October 23, upon the arrival of the bodies at Chalons-sur-Marne, the caskets containing same were taken from their shipping cases, placed on top of the case and draped with American Flags. Early on the morning of October 24, Major Harbold, with some French and American soldiers, rearranged the caskets by placing them on different cases other than the ones on which they reposed during the night. By this method there could be no opportunity for any person, even the employees of the American Graves Registration Service present at Chalons-sur-Marne, to recognize, through the order of arrangement, the bodies from the various cemeteries.

When the final selection of the Unknown was made by Sergeant Edward Younger, the casket containing this Unknown was immediately taken to another room and the remains transferred to the one specially provided. This transfer was made in the presence of Quartermaster General H.L. Rogers, United States Army; Colonel H.F. Rethers, Chief, American Graves Registration Service, Q.M.C., in Europe; Lieut. Colonel W.G. Hall, Q.M.C., and Major R.P. Harbold, Q.M.C. After the transfer had been effected, the casket from which the remains had been taken was returned



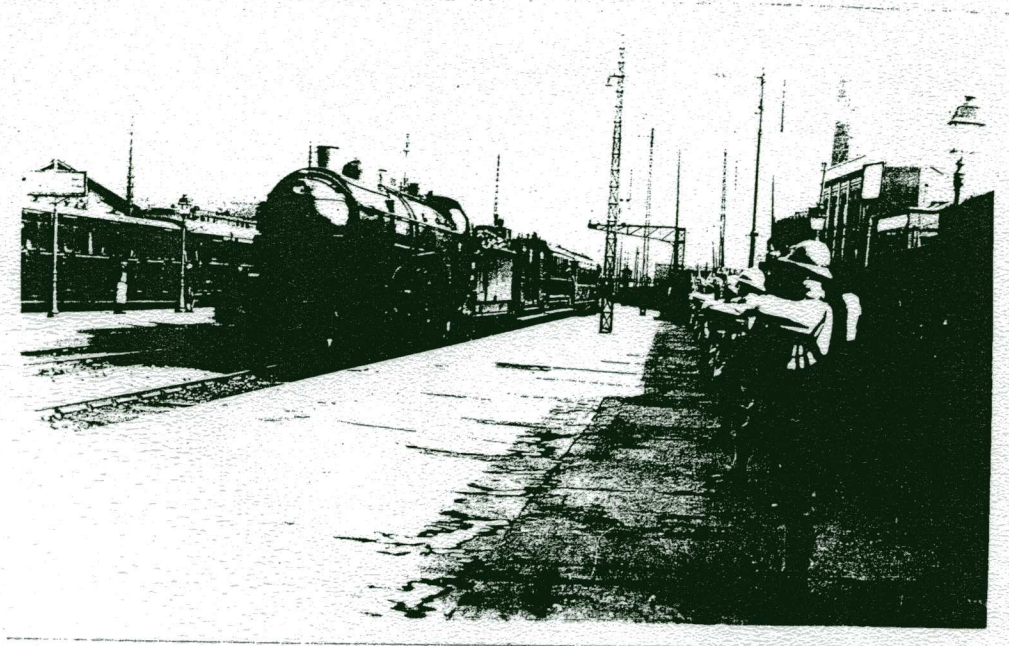
Chalons.
In front of Hotel de Ville.



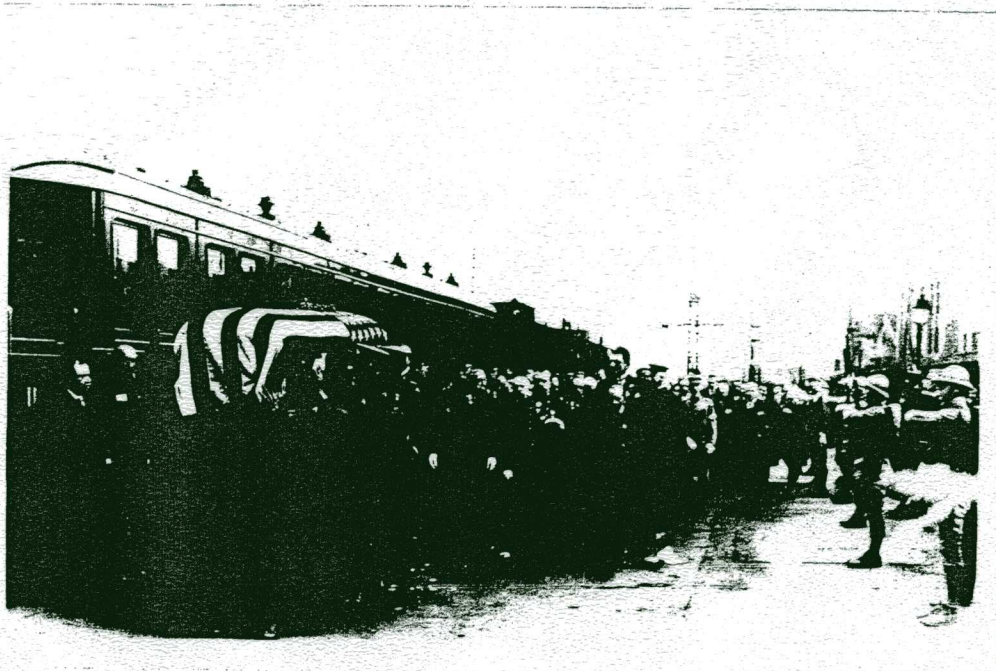
Cordon of French troops along route of procession.

to the room containing the other bodies. One of the caskets therein was opened and the body removed from it and placed in the casket from which the selected Unknown Soldier had been taken. The purpose of this transfer was to have the casket buried (which originally contained the body that had been selected) and thus preclude the possibility of any mark of identification being left which might in any way show from what cemetery that body had been exhumed. The caskets were then replaced in the shipping cases and loaded on G.M.C. trucks, which were waiting at the entrance. They were sent immediately to Romagne Cemetery, where the three bodies were buried that same day in graves numbered 1, 2 and 3, Row No. 1, Block G. The only record now pertaining to these bodies is the reburial record showing an Unknown Soldier buried in the three graves above enumerated. ✓

The ceremony of selecting the Unknown Soldier took place at 10 o'clock Monday morning. Among those present were: General Duport, commanding the 6th Army Corps; M. Brisas, the Prefect of the Marne; M. Servas, Mayor of Chalons-sur-Marne; the Town Council; a number of French guards and other officers; the American officers, including Major General H.L. Rogers, Quartermaster General; Colonel H.F. Bethers, Q.M.C., Chief, American Graves Registration Service, Q.M.C., in Europe; Lieut. Col. William G. Hall, Q.M.C.; Major Robert P. Harbold, C.M.C.; Captain E. LeRoch, French Army (French Liaison Officer); Mr. Keating, Chief Supervisory Embalmer; photographers and members



Le Havre.
Arrival of funeral train.



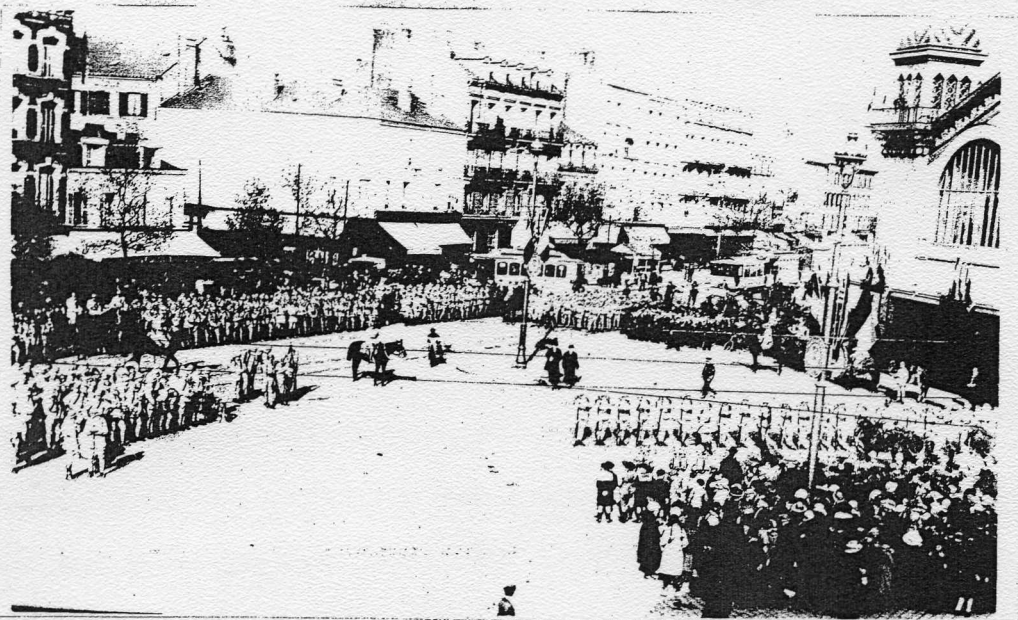
Carrying Unknown Soldier to caisson.

of the Press. A French military band in the courtyard adjoining rendered appropriate music.

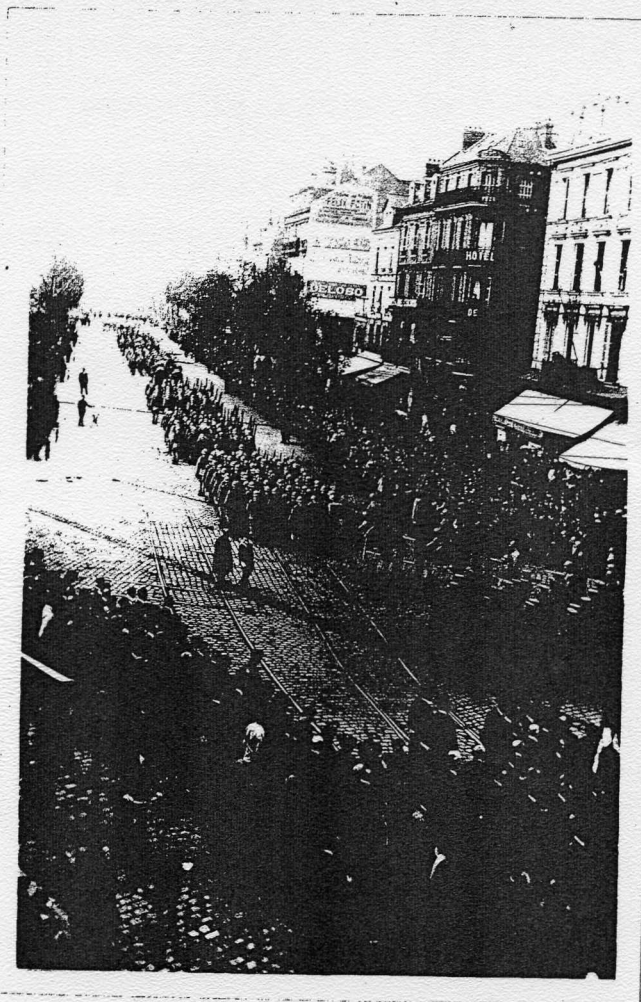
General Duport then delivered an address in French, to which a brief reply was made by General Rogers, thanking General Duport, the Prefect, the Mayor and others for the complete arrangements they had perfected for this very important ceremony.

At 9:30 a.m. on Monday the French troops assembled in front of the Hotel de Ville and at 10 o'clock the French and American officials entered the hall. A French military band played "The Death of Ase" from "Peer Gynt" as Sergeant Younger slowly entered the mortuary room, carrying a spray of white roses which had been donated by M. Brasseur Brulfer, a former member of the City Council. Sergeant Younger, passing between two lines formed by the officials, entered the chamber in which were the bodies of the four Unknown Soldiers, circled the caskets three times, then silently placed the flowers on the third casket from the left. He faced the body, stood at attention and saluted. General Duport stepped forward at the other end of the casket, and saluted in the name of the French people. He was followed by the other officials present.

The casket was inscribed: "An Unknown American who gave his life in the World War." The coffin was sealed and then draped with the Stars and Stripes. The original spray of white roses was laid upon the new casket and, as the strains of Chopin's "Funeral March" broke upon the silence, the pall-



Le Havre.
General view of Place de la Gare upon arrival.



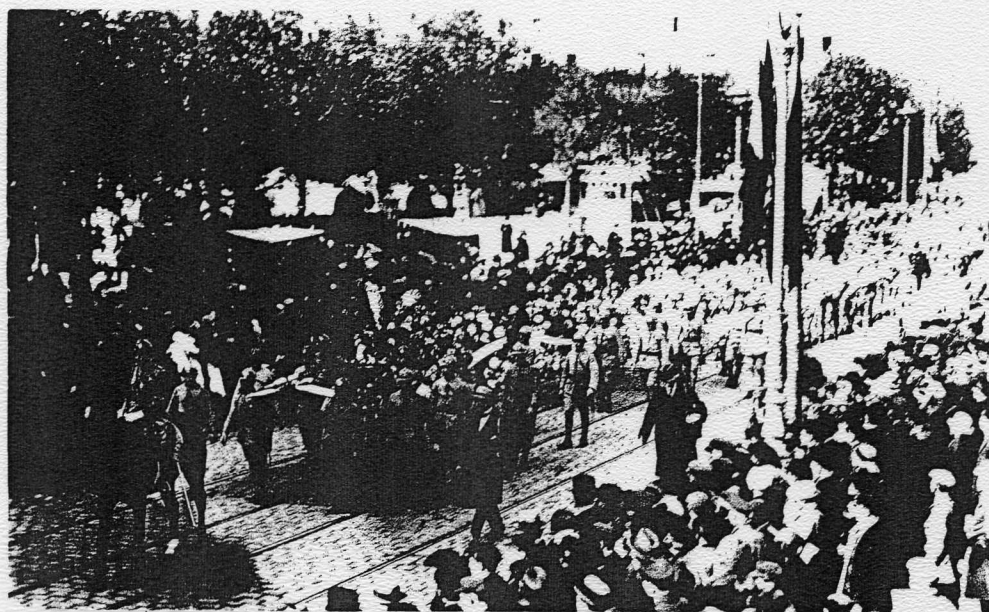
View of procession on Boulevard Strasbourg,
showing American Guard of Honor.

bearers, six non-commissioned officers selected from the Headquarters Company at Coblenz, lifted the casket and bore it to the catafalque in a shrine erected in the center of the large hall facing the principal entrance gate of the Hotel de Ville. A guard of honor kept watch over the remains. It consisted of six French soldiers, five non-commissioned officers from the American Forces in Germany, and a representative of the American Legion. Flowers, wreaths and bronze tokens, which had been donated, were placed at the base of the catafalque.

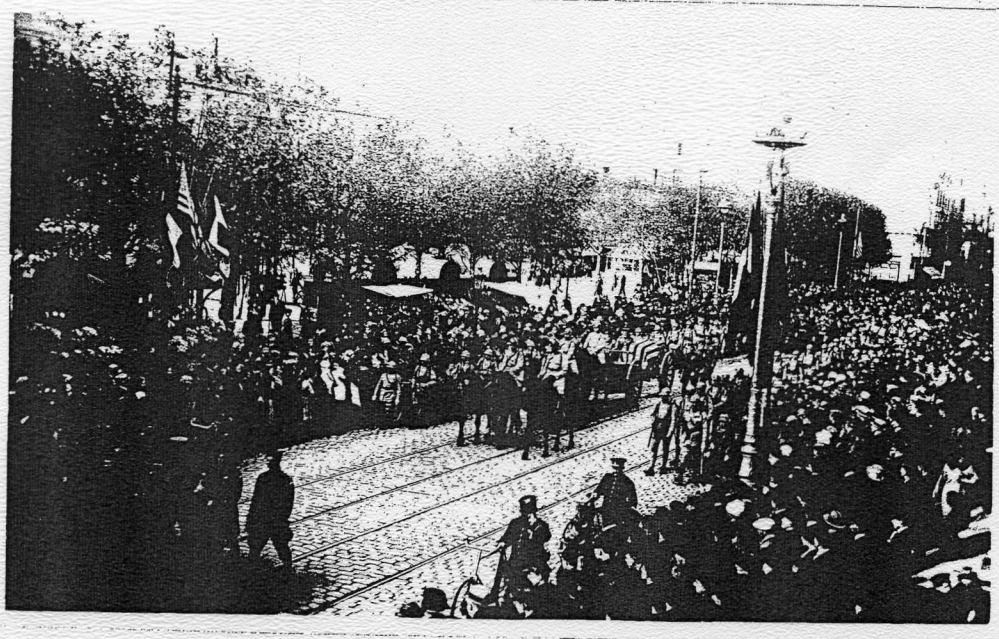
The body lay in state from one o'clock until four, during which time the people of Chalons reverently paid their respects and left offerings of flowers.

At four o'clock, French troops, composed of military bands, the 106th Regiment of Infantry, and several squadrons of cavalry, grouped in front of the Hotel de Ville. General Duport, his Chief of Staff and his aide-de-camp; General Allen; General Rogers and his staff, escorted by a troop of cavalry, returned to the Hotel de Ville for the official ceremonies which had been prepared by the Mayor of the city of Chalons.

Upon completion of the ceremonies, about 5 p.m., the march to the station began. The officials inside the hall stood at salute while the casket was being carried out and placed on the gun carriage appropriately draped with flags. Boy Scouts of France gathered the flowers and tributes and formed in line in front of the caisson. French infantry and



Le Havre.
Carrying the floral tributes.



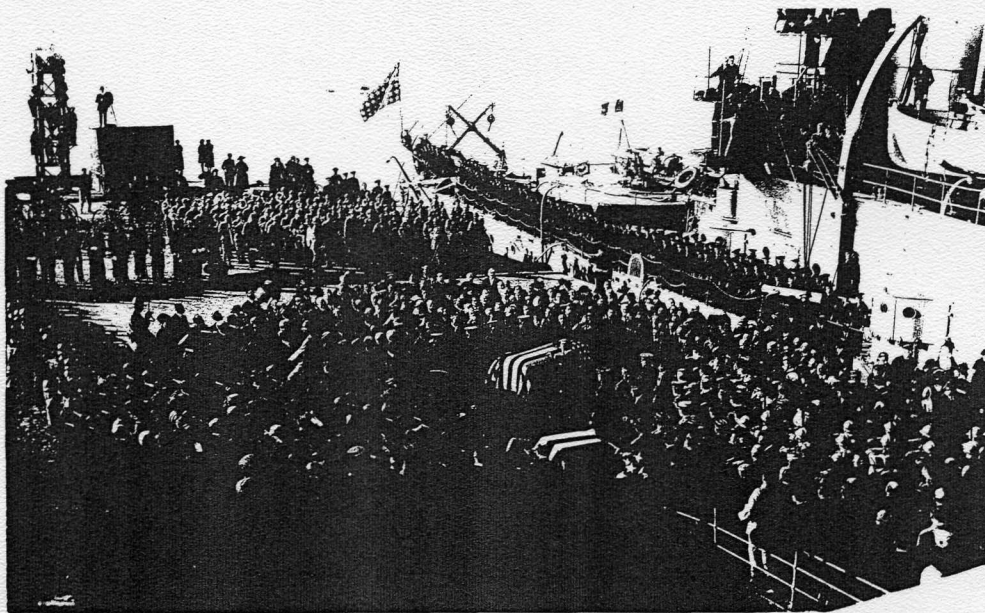
Procession passing through Le Havre.

cavalry lined the streets from the Hotel de Ville to the station along the route of the procession. The cortage consisted of the following French organizations:

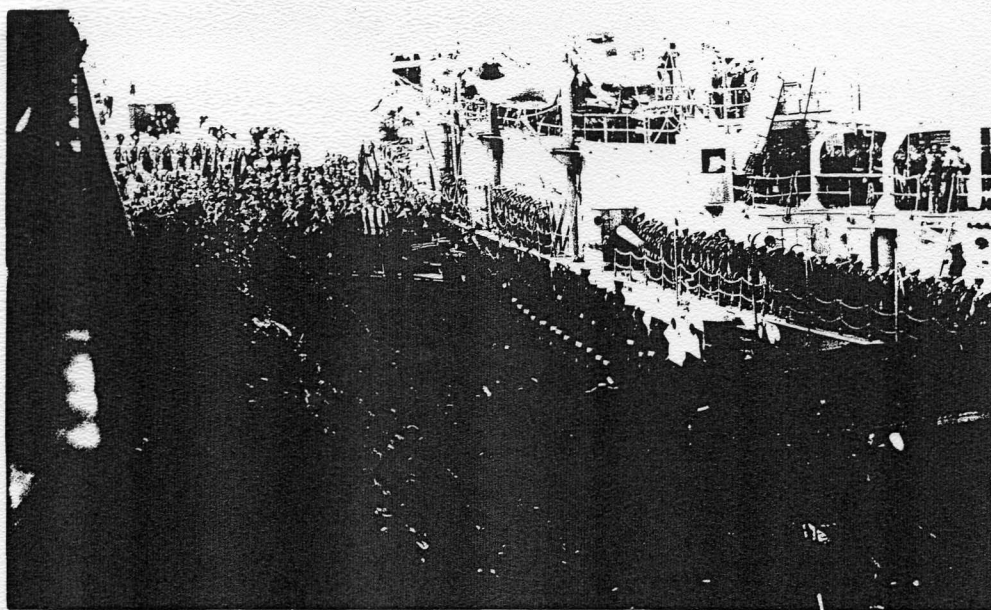
9th Dragon.
166th Infantry.
40th Field Artillery.
25th Field Artillery.
140th Motor Transportation Co.
6th Section of Q.M.C.
Boy Scouts.
Firemen.
Delegations of various veteran societies
and other local societies.
Students of Arts & Trades School.
School children, etc.

The remains were placed in the funeral car of the special train which was tendered by the French Government. The train left Chalons at 6:10 p.m. and arrived at the Gare Batignolles, Paris, at 10 p.m. The body remained over night in the car at the station under a guard of honor of three soldiers from the American Forces in Germany and a representative of the American Legion.

The funeral train, bearing M. Maginot, Minister of Pensions, and other French and American officials, left Batignolles station for Le Havre at 9:20 a.m., Tuesday, October 25, stopping at Rouen, where Major General Duchesne, Commanding General of the 3d French Army Corps and his aide-de-camp, joined the military escort accompanying the remains. The train arrived at Le Havre at 1:00 p.m. A guard of one Machine Gun Company of the 129th French Infantry and a detachment of French sailors presented



French Minister of Pensions decorating the Unknown
Soldier with the Cross of the Legion of Honor.



Body taken in charge by the Navy.

arms as the train drew into the station, the following officials being present:

Vice-Admiral Barthes, Prefet Maritime de Cherbourg,
representing the Minister de la Marine.
Prefet de la Seine Inferieure.
Sous-Prefet du Havre.
M. Mayer, Maire du Havre.
M. Brindeau, Senator.
Captain de Vaisseau de Maynard.
Colonel Le Hagre, 129th Infantry.
Major De Garnison du Havre.

The American pallbearers carried the casket from the train, followed by the officials and also by 30 French soldiers carrying the floral offerings and marched to the square in front of the station where the caisson, draped with American flags, was waiting. As the band of the 5th Division, French Army, played the familiar strains of "Aux Champs," the casket was placed upon the caisson. A veritable shower of flowers then fell upon the casket - the offerings of the school children of Le Havre.

The entire population of the city turned out to pay homage to America's Unknown Soldier and to show deep appreciation and respect. Many thousands of people lined both sides of the entire route from the station to the Pier d'Escale, where the United States Cruiser "Olympia" awaited the arrival of the body.

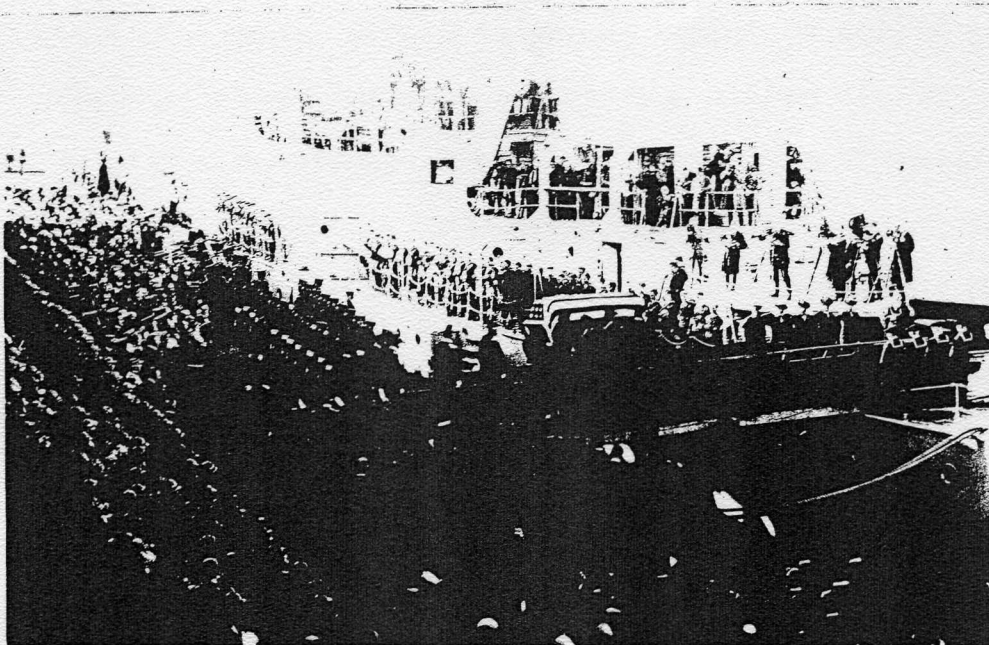
At 1:20 p.m. the cortege started. In front was a detachment of mounted police; then came the drums and bugles of the 129th Infantry Regiment and the Divisional band that

was to play the Funeral Marches of Chopin, Andrieux and Mendelssohn on the way; the flag of the 129th Infantry; Colonel Le Hagre, followed by battalions of the Havrais Regiment; a section of sailors from the crews of the "Verdun" and "l'Epervier." The palms, wreaths, bouquets and flowers carried by soldiers of the 129th Infantry Regiment followed.

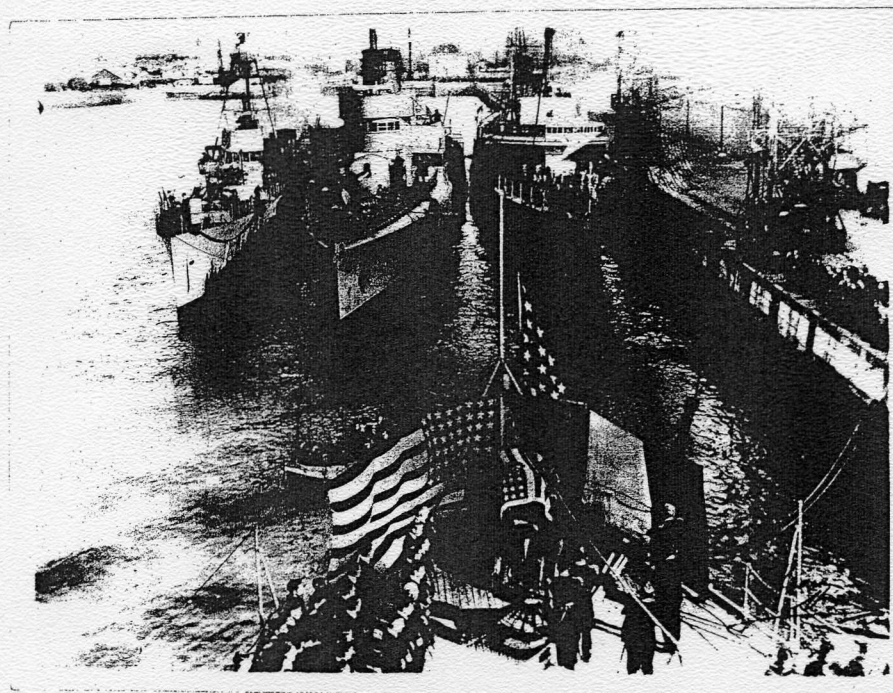
After these came a detachment of American soldiers preceding the coffin of the Unknown Soldier. On each side of the coffin were eight American sergeants, among whom was Sergeant Edward Younger who had the honor of selecting the Unknown Soldier; then a section of the 129th Infantry Regiment carrying their arms reversed, and the orphans belonging to the "Fraternite Franco-Americaine," each carrying a flower.

The procession marched through the Boulevard de Strasbourg. A wreath tied with the French and Havre colors, and at the base of which was a bouquet of roses, was offered by the city of Le Havre, in front of the Hotel de Ville, where delegations of the fire brigade, Customs officials and policemen had gathered. It was carried by two ushers of the Hotel de Ville, who, after walking around the coffin, took their places in front of the gun carriage.

The cortege then continued through the rues de Paris, des Drapiers, du General Faidherbe and the Quai de Boston. A reverent and deeply-moved crowd lined the way, which had been decorated with flags flying at half-mast. The ceremony had been



Le Havre.
Going aboard the "Olympia."



Placing Unknown Soldier on catafalque aboard the cruiser.
French naval escort in background.

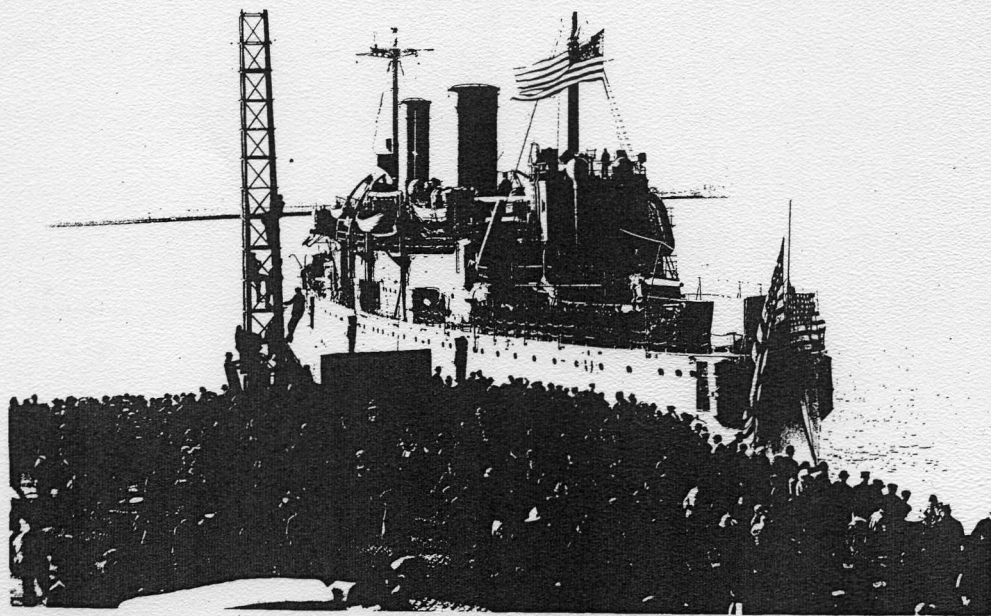
admirably conducted by M. Artigues, Special Commissary, and Captain Chemin, Chief Constable. The procession reached the Quai d'Escale at half past two. The cruiser "Olympia," with the American flags half-mast and the French flag hoisted half way up the foremast, was anchored between her escorting ships. Admiral Chandler, with the officers of his ship and those of the Destroyer "Reuben James," stood on the wharf in front of the cruiser. Grouped behind them were the band and detachments of American marines and sailors of the "Olympia."

The caisson stopped at the entrance to the breakwater and the notables formed in front of the French troops lined up in company formation.

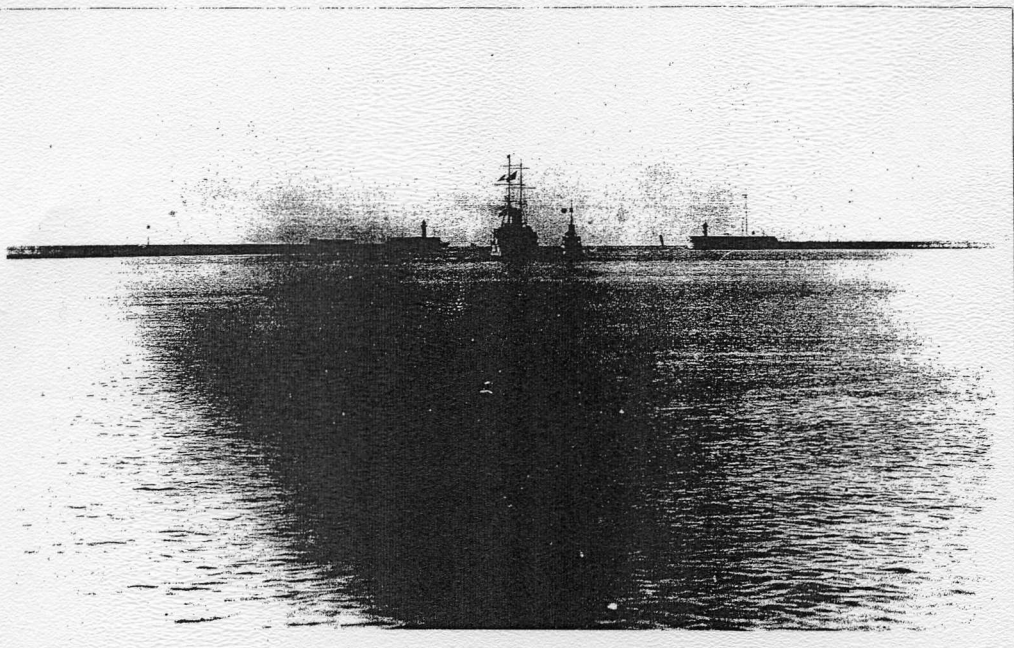
M. Leon Meyer, Mayor of Le Havre, made an address, followed by M. Maginot, Minister of Pensions, and Major General Henry T. Allen.

The Cross of the Chevalier of the Legion of Honor was attached to the casket by the Minister in the name of the French Republic. The French military band of the 129th Infantry played "Ouvrez le Ban" while the decoration was being secured to the coffin, and "Fermez le Ban" and the "Marseillaise" upon the completion of the ceremonies.

The military pallbearers lifted the casket and carried it towards the cruiser. They were met near the gangplank by pallbearers from the Navy and Marine Corps. The Navy took over the Unknown from the Army without lowering the casket, a sailor



U.S.S. "Olympia" leaving the dock at Le Havre.

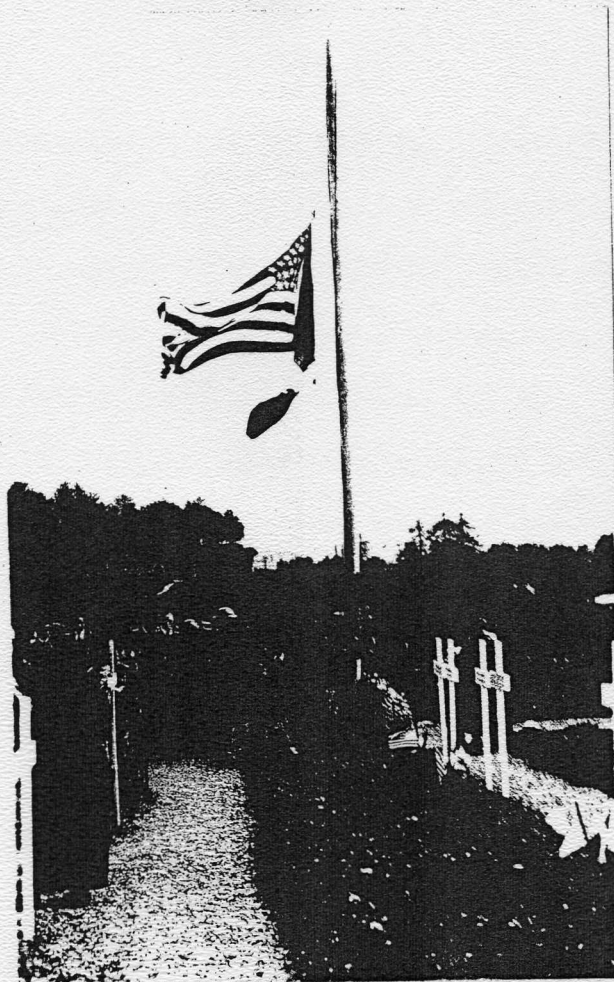


Homeward bound. Passing through the gate.

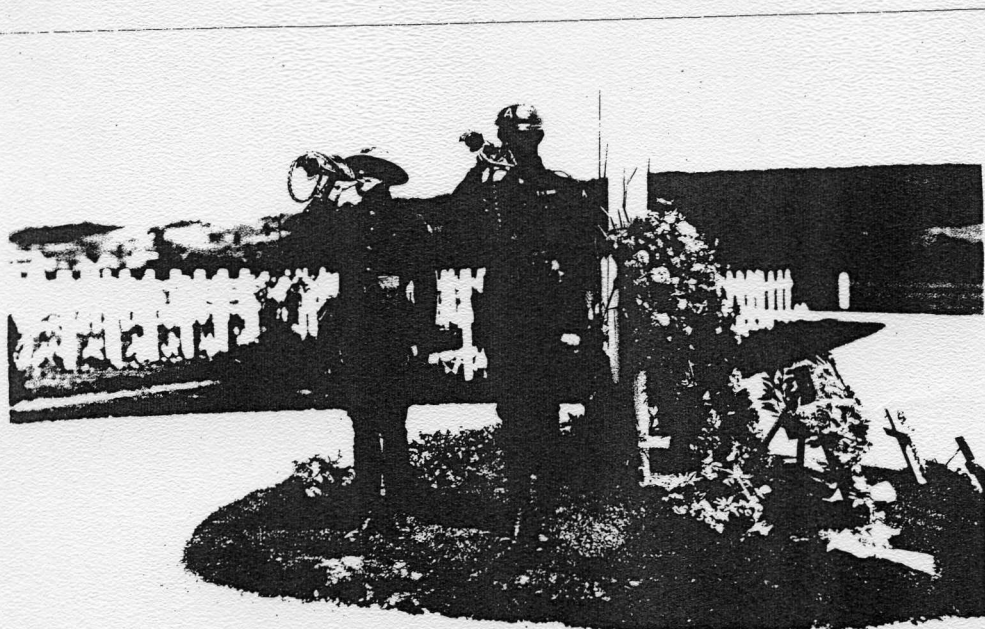
or marine relieving a soldier one at a time and so quietly and promptly that few realized the change had been made. Admiral Chandler, United States Navy, took charge of the body after it had left the immediate care of this Service.

As the body was being transferred to the vessel, the band of the "Olympia" played the "Marseillaise" and the "Star Spangled Banner." The American Marines were lined on the Quai d'Escale and presented arms as the pallbearers with the Unknown passed, followed by the Admiral in command of the "Olympia," his aide, three naval officers and the American and French officials.

The casket was placed on the stern of the cruiser, which had been beautifully decorated with wreaths, flowers and flags. The school children of Le Havre went aboard and banked flowers around the casket. During the ceremonies, the two French destroyers, which had been acting as escorts to the American cruiser, pulled out beyond the breakwater. Silently the "Olympia" moved slowly from the pier and steamed out into the bay. She was met by a salute of 17 guns from the French destroyer in honor of America's Cherished Hero, to which she promptly responded. The Nameless Warrior was leaving for his last resting place in the land of his birth.



Chateau-Thierry, Memorial Day, 1921.



Belleau Wood, Memorial Day, 1921.

CHAPTER VII.

MEMORIAL DAY, 1921.

This day was marked throughout the foreign countries where our dead were buried, by unprecedented enthusiasm and devotion. From every city, from every large cemetery, as well as from the smaller and isolated localities in the eleven areas in France and Belgium, reports were received of the ceremonies held and the observance of ceremonies in honor of Our Dead. Everywhere the thoughtfulness and sincerity of the French people were displayed in action and expressed in sentiment. Nothing was left undone to further the friendship between the United States and France or to prove the love of the latter country for our Honored Dead.

Instructions had been issued to all Area Supervisors regarding the raising and lowering of the flags and the decoration of the graves with wreaths and flowers. The Veterans of Foreign Wars, the American Legion, the American Memorial Day Committee, and the various consular officers cooperated in sending representatives to participate in the celebrations, and little was left undone to accomplish a perfect observance of the day. The French military authorities offered the most complete assistance and all of the French Veteran societies joined together in order to cooperate with us at every point where

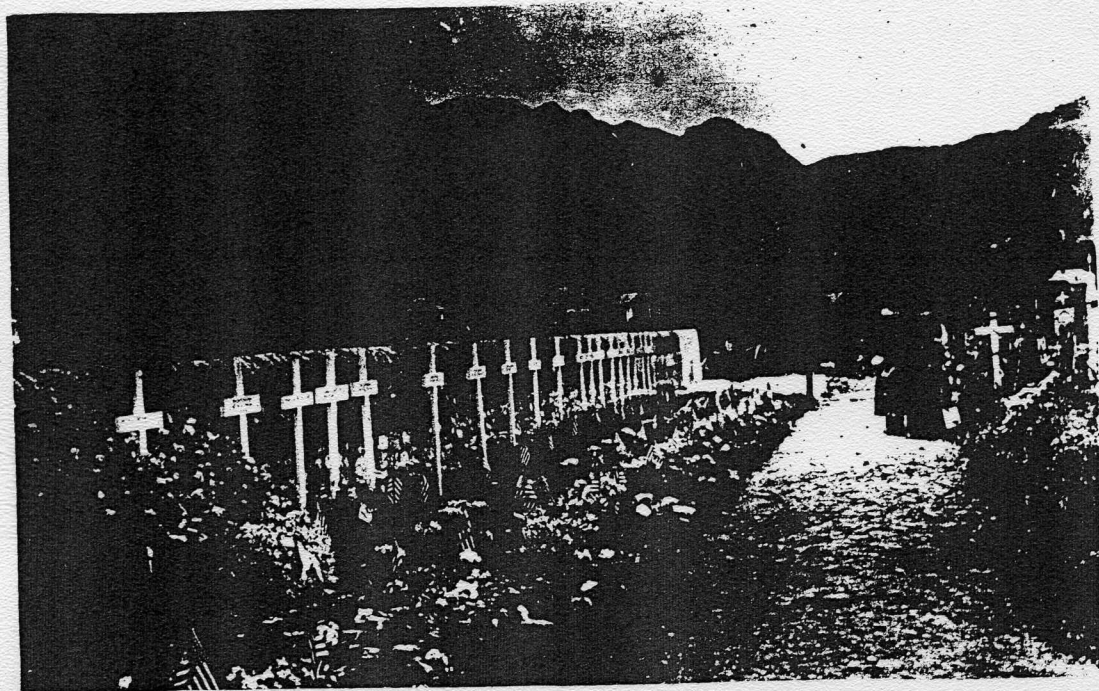
ceremonies were held, and even in some isolated localities where, for lack of sufficient workers, we were not able to send our delegates.

Nor were Memorial Day services confined to France alone, but unoccupied Germany, Gibraltar, Luxembourg, the British Isles, Italy, Spain and Portugal also shared in the observance. Large wreaths were presented by us to the French military authorities, suitably inscribed in gold "To Our Allied Dead." These were in every instance deeply appreciated and prominently displayed. American flags supplied by this Service were placed upon each grave, according to instructions issued to the caretakers of each cemetery, as were also wreaths that were purchased and distributed by this Service through funds furnished by the Memorial Day Committee.

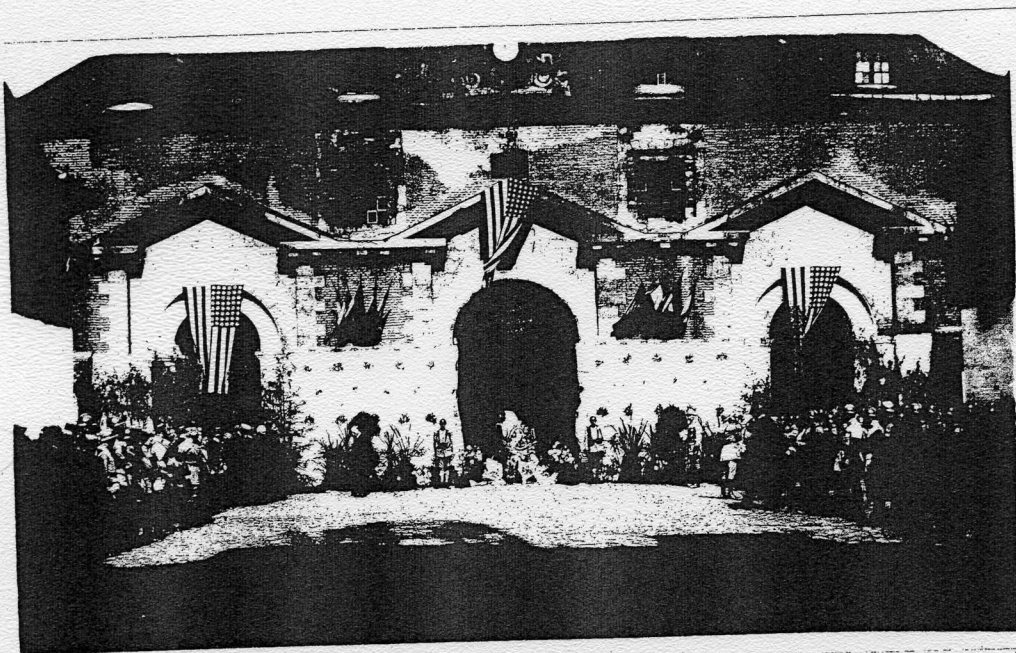
The Chef du Service des Sepultures Militaires Belges rendered splendid assistance in paying a fitting tribute to our American Dead. Beautiful potted flowers were placed on the graves and other kind acts were performed which must always be gratefully remembered.

Nor were the bodies in the morgue forgotten, as appropriate wreaths and other floral decorations were plentifully supplied for the decoration of the caskets in storage.

Photographs of many of the ceremonies and localities were either taken by this Service or otherwise obtained. Newspaper clippings and verbatim accounts of the celebrations and



Aix-les-Bains, Memorial Day, 1921.



Amiens, Memorial Day, 1921.

of the speeches were received.

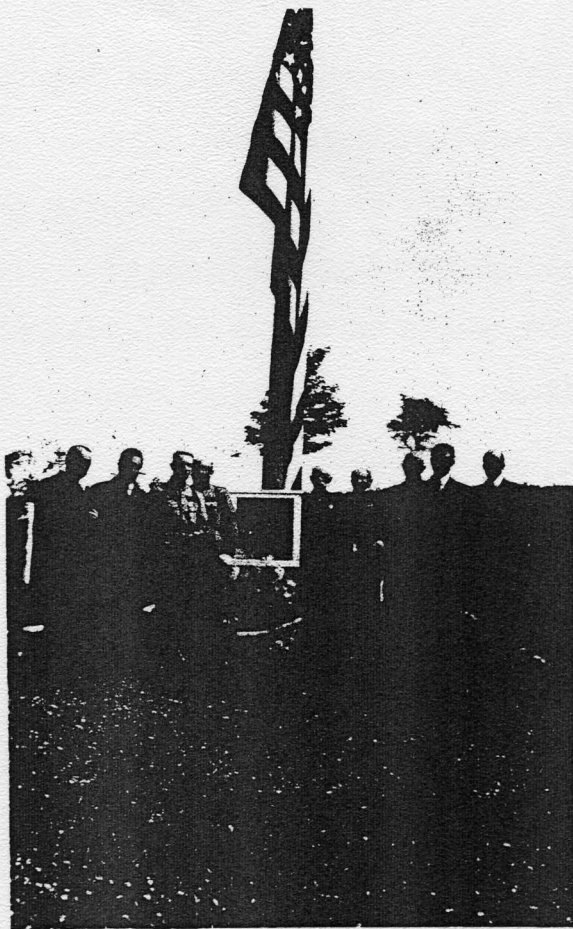
At Le Havre, the Mayor, in his speech, said that no more hospitable spot could be found for the American Heroes lying in the cemetery within the city which had seen them debark and go to the front, so full of bravery and gaiety. A touching part of the ceremony was the depositing of a wreath by the orphans of the public schools of Le Havre, who have been adopted by the Fraternite Franco-Americaine. The ladies of the American colony were indefatigable in devoting themselves and in assisting.

At Suresnes Cemetery near Paris, Memorial Day was observed with all completeness. A large platform was erected for the speakers and for the reviewing of the French and American troops, the latter having come from the American Forces in Germany for the occasion. The plots were beautifully decorated with flowers, and a great throng of notables, both French and American, attended the ceremonies.

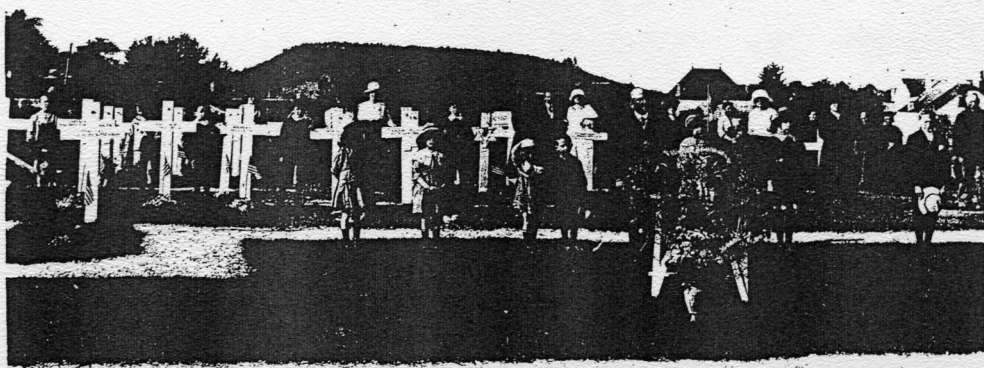
At the American Church of the Holy Trinity a Memorial Service was held with the assistance of the United States Military Band from Coblenz, after which the various patriotic societies formed in a procession and went to the Arc de Triomphe, where they laid a wreath on the tomb of the Soldat Inconnu.

No matter how isolated the cemetery nor how few the graves, none was forgotten.

Several letters were received by the Supervisor, Area No. 9 (Bordeaux), regarding celebrations in commemoration of



Langres, Memorial Day, 1921.



Chateaufort

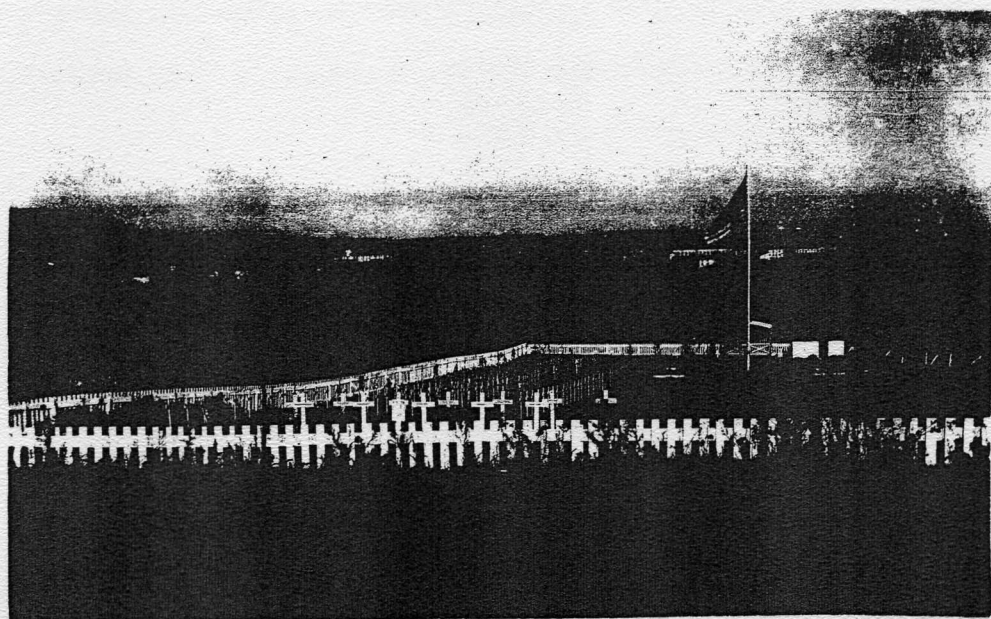
Memorial Day, 1921.

Memorial Day, 1921. This was typical of all the Areas of the American Graves Registration Service. These letters were, in almost every instance, from the Mayors of the several towns, to which suitable replies were made by the Supervisor. Some inclosed clippings from the local papers containing the verbatim speeches made at the commemorations, all of which were redolent of appreciation of our Soldier Dead; their participation in the World War, and of the mutual love and comradeship of the French fighting man for his American comrade in arms.

They expressed their happiness at being able to participate in the ceremonies, and of paying homage to the Americans who died for France. They told of the pleasure of showing a little of their gratitude by offering a floral tribute to the Allied Dead who fell for the same cause, with the same heroism and spirit of courage, and who are now united in their last sleep.

In many instances the Mayor, accompanied by the school children and the inhabitants of the village, with clarions and trumpets, with the French and American flags flying, went to the cemeteries, where the War Orphans placed flowers on the graves; the children sang the American National Anthem and the "Marseillaise," after which "Taps" was sounded.

The offering of floral wreaths by the American Graves Registration Service to the French comrades buried in the various communes called forth many expressions of appreciation for this friendly token and for the thought which prompted the honoring



**Cemetery at Clermont-Ferrand.
Memorial Day, 1921.**



**Cemetery at Clermont-Ferrand.
Memorial Day, 1921.**

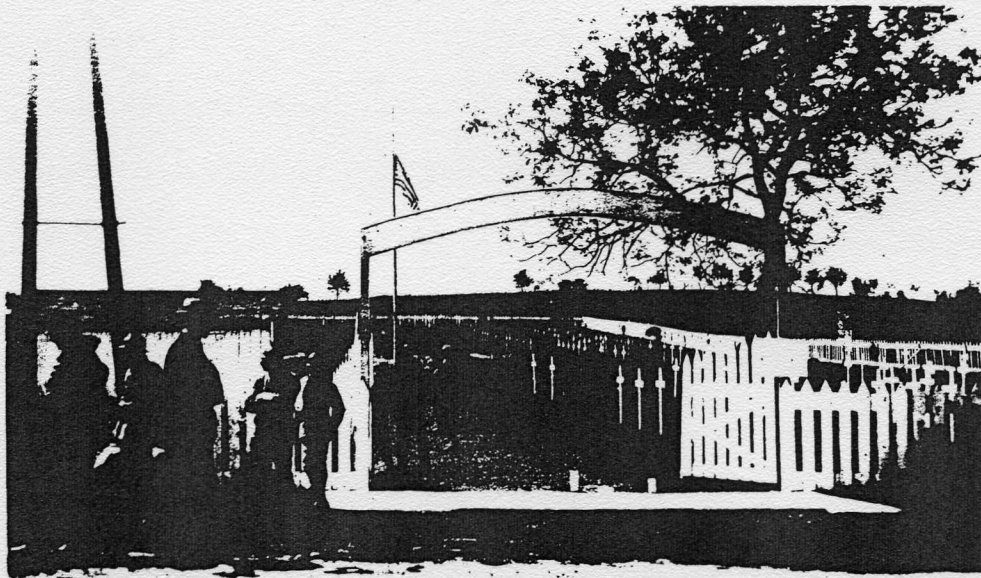
of the French who fell with our men. In return, palms and flowers were placed beneath the Stars and Stripes in honor of "Our Brothers from America who sleep their last sleep."

The assurance was given that France will never forget the immense debt of gratitude to America who, like France, has "Ideals and loves Liberty;" to America, who sent her splendid young men from "Over There," who, in the Supreme Hour, offered up their vigorous and happy lives.

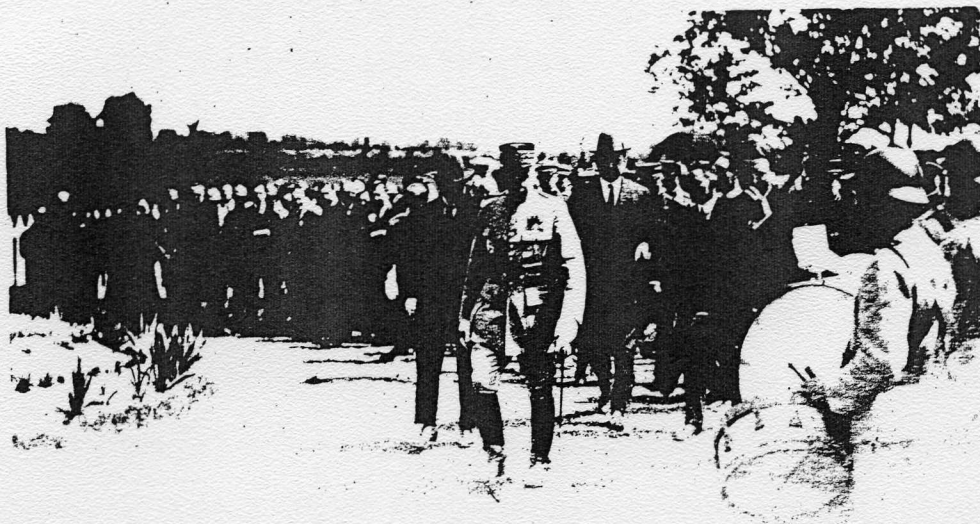
One expression was: "Soldiers of the United States, who died for France, the French Army counts you among her children and will never forget you."

The Memorial Day ceremonies at Amiens (Somme) were of a peculiarly impressive and significant character. This was produced partly by the elaborate and dignified procedure; partly by the setting in the courtyard of the ancient Caserne Stengel, and largely from the fact that the entire ceremony was arranged and carried out by the French military authorities, who had requested the privilege of rendering some small honors to the bodies of the American soldiers in the morgue at that Caserne.

On Wednesday, May 25, the work of placing the courtyard in order was begun. The walls were painted white to a height of ten feet. An alcove in which the catafalque was erected was lined with white cloth which extended outside for some distance along the adjoining walls. This was further decorated with flowers and bordered with decorative clusters of fir. Green trees were



**Cemetery at Clermont-Ferrand.
Memorial Day, 1921.**



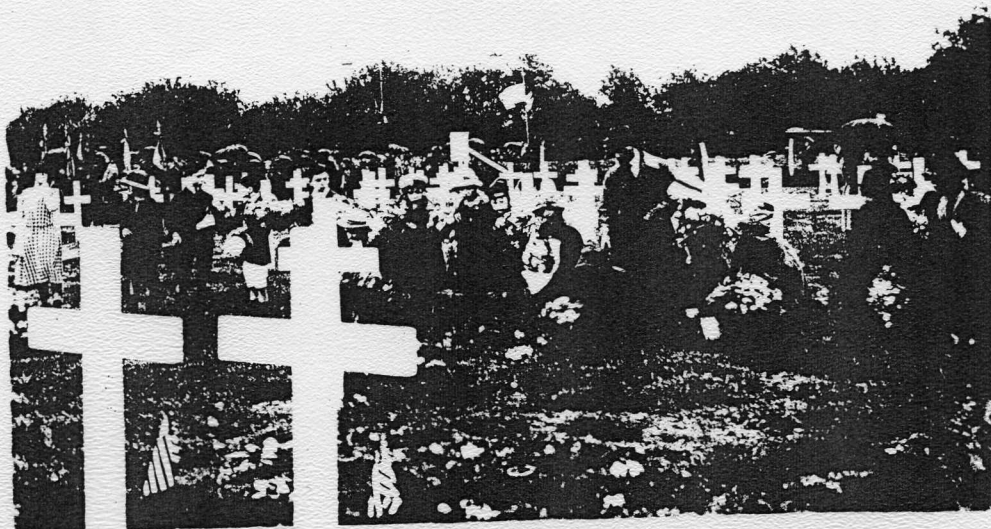
**Cemetery at Clermont-Ferrand.
Memorial Day, 1921.**

placed on each side and the Allied colors were appropriately displayed.

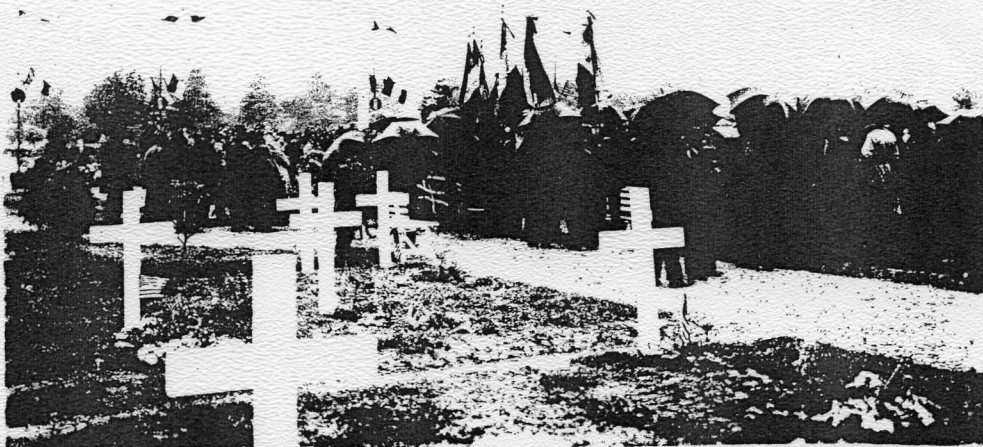
Monday, Memorial Day, on which the weather was ideal, the final decorations were placed, the work beginning at 5 a.m. A single casket, containing the remains of one of our Heroes Dead, was lifted on to the catafalque and draped with the flags of the United States and of France. From about seven o'clock until nine (the hour set for the ceremony) floral offerings were being brought in and arranged about the bier. These gifts varied from the small bouquet offered from the garden of some poor French mother who had lost her own son, to the splendid wreath of bronze, over 40 inches high, presented by the officers and soldiers of the garrison at Caserne Stengel.

An "Ordre de la Place" had been widely distributed, in accordance with which the ceremonies were conducted, from the arrival of the military, ecclesiastical and civil dignitaries, (including our American representative and Major General Mathieu, Commandant d'Armes Delegeue) to the final benediction by M. Cadot, the Vicaire General.

The courtyard was lined with troops, who presented arms as the "Star Spangled Banner" and the "Marseillaise" were played. A silent tribute was then paid to the body representing the American Dead, after which most touching speeches were made, expressing the mutual friendship of the two nations and of the brave soldiers who died side by side. The entire garrison then



Nantes - Memorial Day, 1921.



Nantes - Memorial Day, 1921.

filed slowly by to the accompaniment of a funeral march.

The splendor of the official ceremonies could not, however, eclipse the expression of sincere emotion on the part of the French populace. This was demonstrated by the reverent throngs which filled the adjoining streets, and afterwards, by the many children, and wounded, and the old and poor, who slowly filed through the courtyard with bared heads, stopping to say a prayer, while each laid perhaps only a single rose before the catafalque, in silent tribute to our American Soldier Dead.

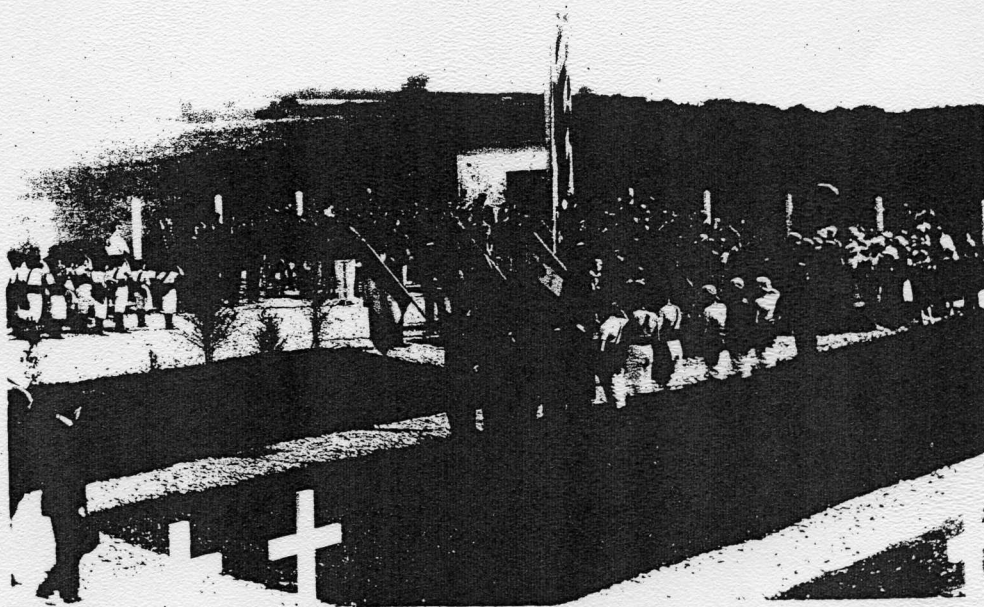
CHAPTER VIII.

COMMENDATIONS.

In connection with the operations of this Service, involving to so great an extent the personal interests and deep natural emotions of the people of the United States, it was only to be anticipated that many personal letters of a varying character should be received. It was also to be expected that a certain amount of personal criticism would be forthcoming; that many individual suggestions would be offered, and that a variety of opinions, both favorable and otherwise, would be expressed.

Even long after the matter of the final disposition of the Soldier Dead had been ostensibly settled by the next of kin, it was attempted to reopen questions which might reasonably have been considered closed. Small groups of individuals continued to spring into being, with the apparent object of persuading the public to accept their ideas regarding the removal of the bodies, and no inconsiderable propaganda was continued through the medium of the Press and of individual communications.

Allied with this influx of correspondence was some personal criticism of the care of the cemeteries; of the personnel engaged in the work; of the necessary military regulations, and, in short, of the ultimate wisdom and method of procedure of the entire undertaking, so that, in dealing with the public, it became incumbent upon this Service to exercise great patience and wisdom.



Cemetery at Is-sur-Tille - Memorial Day, 1921.



Hyeres Cemetery, Memorial Day, 1921

In this regard, however, it was only a matter of justice to the inborn common sense of the intelligent majority of the American people, as well as to the courtesy and efficiency exemplified by this organization in all of its far-reaching activities, to record that there was at no time any unfavorable official criticism, and that the letters of appreciation and helpful commendation far outnumbered those of an opposite character.

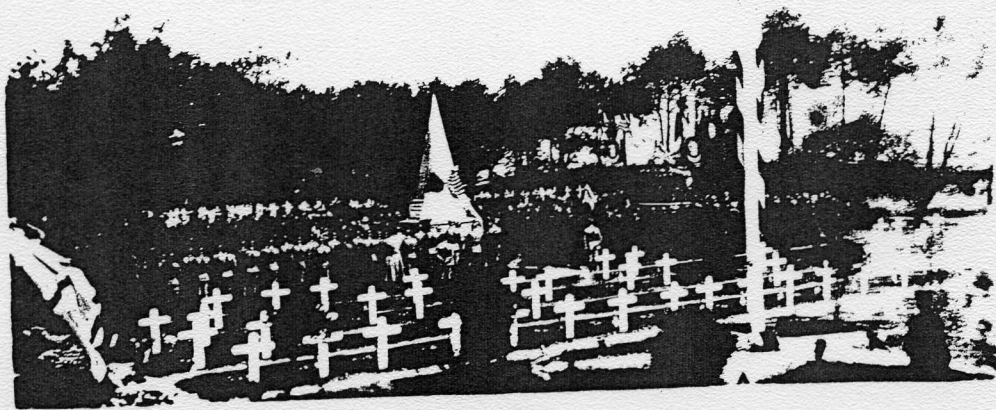
To understand the inspiration of much of this varied correspondence, dealing particularly with local affairs, something of the contemporary condition of the Service should be considered. It would, indeed, scarcely be within the realm of possibility that a project embracing such an extensive territory, a territory only just recovering from a vast upheaval and complete disorganization, and one requiring such a large personnel to perfect its accomplishments, should be completed without certain natural oversights or apparent carelessness, either in the upkeep of the many cemeteries or in the attention expected by interested individuals. Nor could all of the policies of the organization be expected to accord with the ideas of everyone whom they affected.

The preliminary task of attending to the small or isolated burial places in widely scattered areas, and of maintaining the larger cemeteries in good order, was an enormous one.

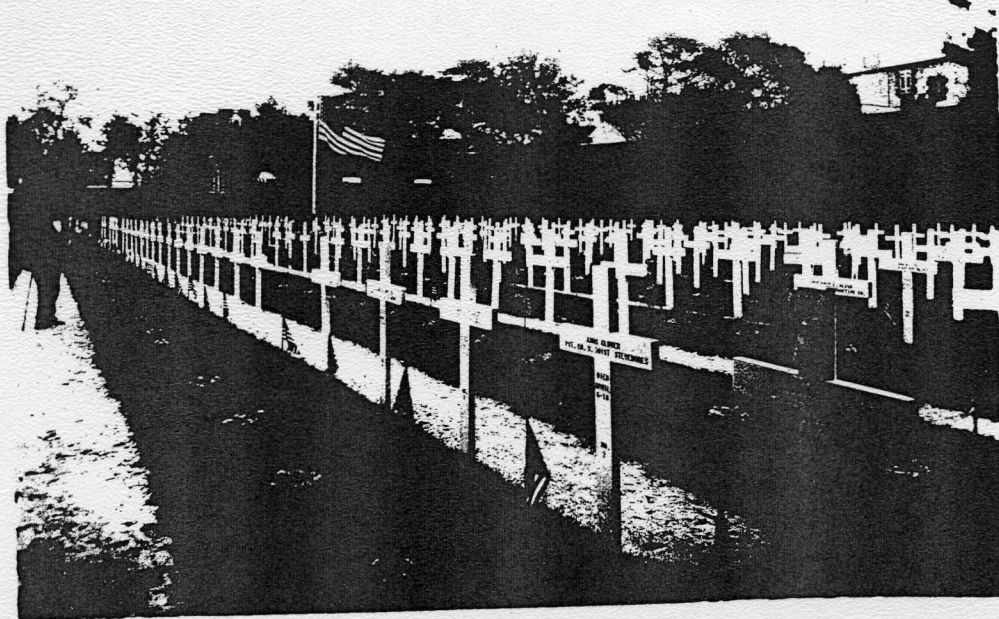
Numerous and most trying obstacles had to be overcome before favorable results in their upkeep could be secured. The one object, in this relation, was to try to maintain the final resting places of our Soldier Dead in the most fitting condition possible, so that when once the Permanent American Cemeteries should have been established and properly adorned, they would constitute a memorial of which every American might be justly proud.

In addition to the customary care required in keeping the graves and their surroundings in trim condition, was to be considered the constant deterioration caused by adverse weather conditions, especially in the winter and spring, requiring all the cemeteries to be included in an almost continual program of renovation, so that, despite the unremitting care exercised by the Area Supervisors, some almost unavoidable neglect was occasionally noted. In remedying this, every reasonable report brought to the attention of the authorities concerning such conditions was sincerely appreciated and prompt action taken, in conformity with the approved policy of the Service.

Such, then, at the beginning, and for a considerable subsequent period, were the conditions which obtained throughout the immense area under the supervision of the American Graves Registration Service, A.G.R.S., in Europe; an area extending from the Scottish coast to Italy, and from the Mediterranean to the North Sea. And, commencing with that



Kerfautras Cemetery, Brest.
Memorial Day, 1921.



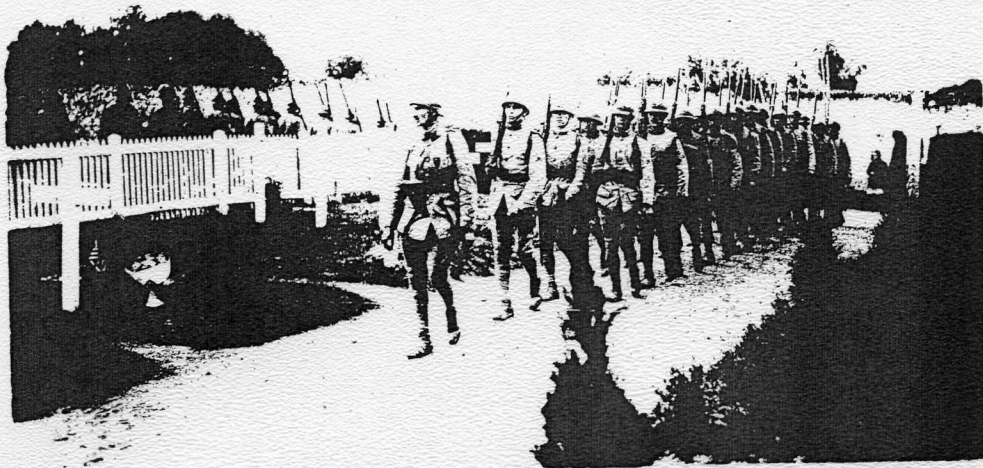
Kerfautras Cemetery, Brest.
Memorial Day, 1921.

early period of activities and continuing through the entire progress of the work, this personal correspondence, a correspondence as interesting as it was varied and sincere, played an important part.

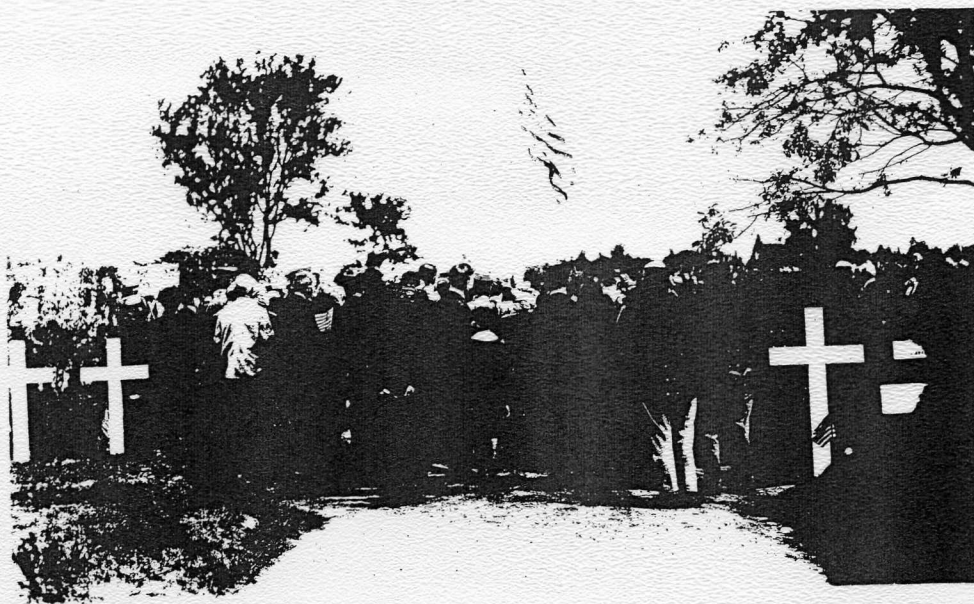
Regardless of the expense and inconvenience involved in traveling from often distant localities in the States; crossing the ocean, and undertaking the subsequent journeys by casual trains over often inconvenient routes, a great number of bereaved relatives and friends visited the cemeteries and individual burying places of their dead. Many of the visitors stopped in Paris on their return, and either wrote, or called in person upon the Chief of this Service, to express their gratitude for the manner in which their beloved ones were cared for.

Letters of commendation were received with increasing frequency, as improvements were made possible. They came, not only from our own people in France, concerning the care and beauty of the cemeteries and of courtesies extended by the personnel, but from the French people as well. Appreciative communications were likewise received from the Secretary of War, the Quartermaster General, and the Chief of the Cemeterial Division, as well as from other military and civil authorities in the United States.

In this respect, it is a matter of significant interest that this entire project, while an undertaking of the Quartermaster Corps of the United States Army, was largely successful in proportion as it deviated, often necessarily,



Tours.
Memorial Day, 1921.

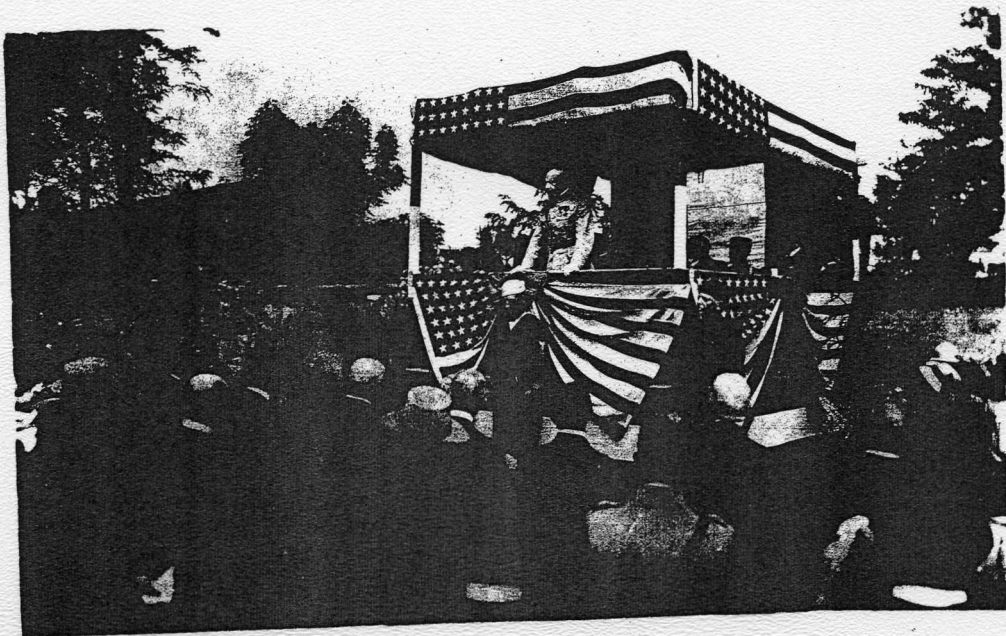


Tours.
Memorial Day, 1921.

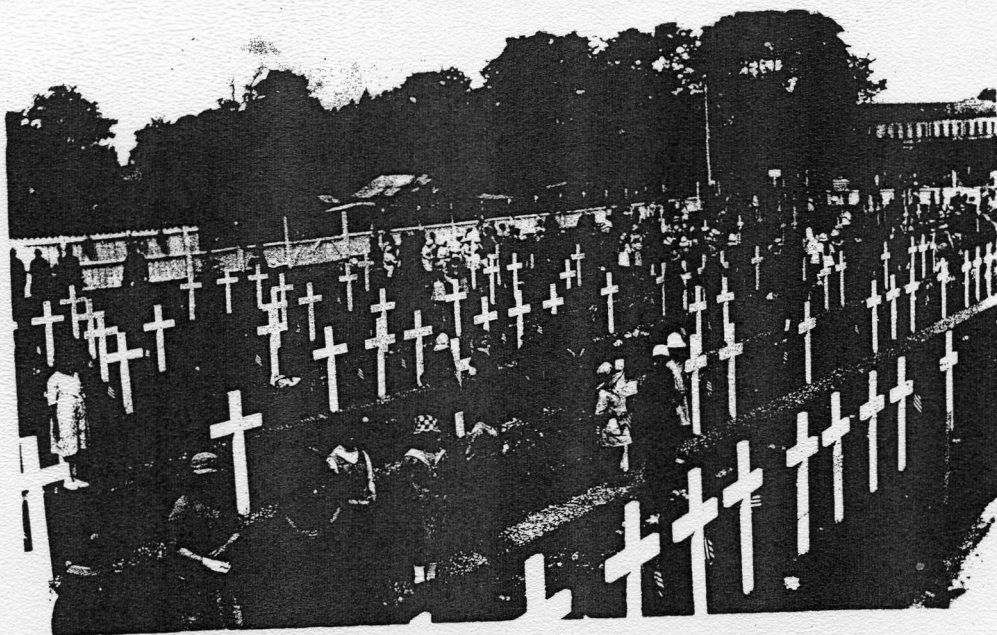
from the lines of strict military procedure. This deviation occurred, not only in its Policies of Operation, but in its personal contact and the nature of its correspondence with the public. Through the many unique and nerve-testing emergencies, these letters of commendation and mutual expressions of courtesy provided a distinct stimulus to renewed effort, and inspired an amiable cooperation that contributed not a little towards the esprit de corps which characterized, at all times, the most efficient of the personnel.

The Chief of the Service, realizing that it was deeply gratifying to those engaged in the arduous duties of this Service, to know at least that their efforts were appreciated; and, understanding the very natural reaction of human nature to such appreciation, took every opportunity of conveying a knowledge of the same to those associated with him. As an instance of this prevalent spirit of courtesy, the Quartermaster General, in December, 1920, wrote a personal letter to Colonel Rethers, from which he in turn sent to his men the following extract:-

"The work you and your forces are doing in France is a source of great satisfaction to me and has caused nothing but favorable comment. In these trying times, when the Army, when the War Department and Administration, and when the Quartermaster Corps is held up to such criticism both in and out of the Service, it is a pleasure indeed to know that there has been no foundation for any unfavorable criticism of your



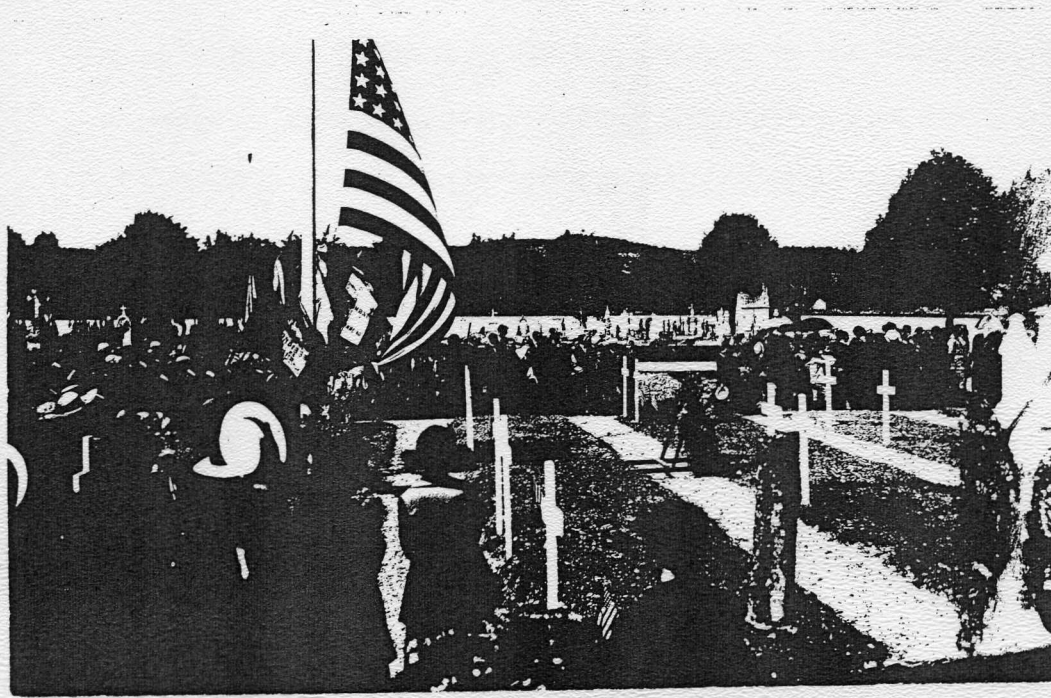
Talence - Memorial Day, 1921.



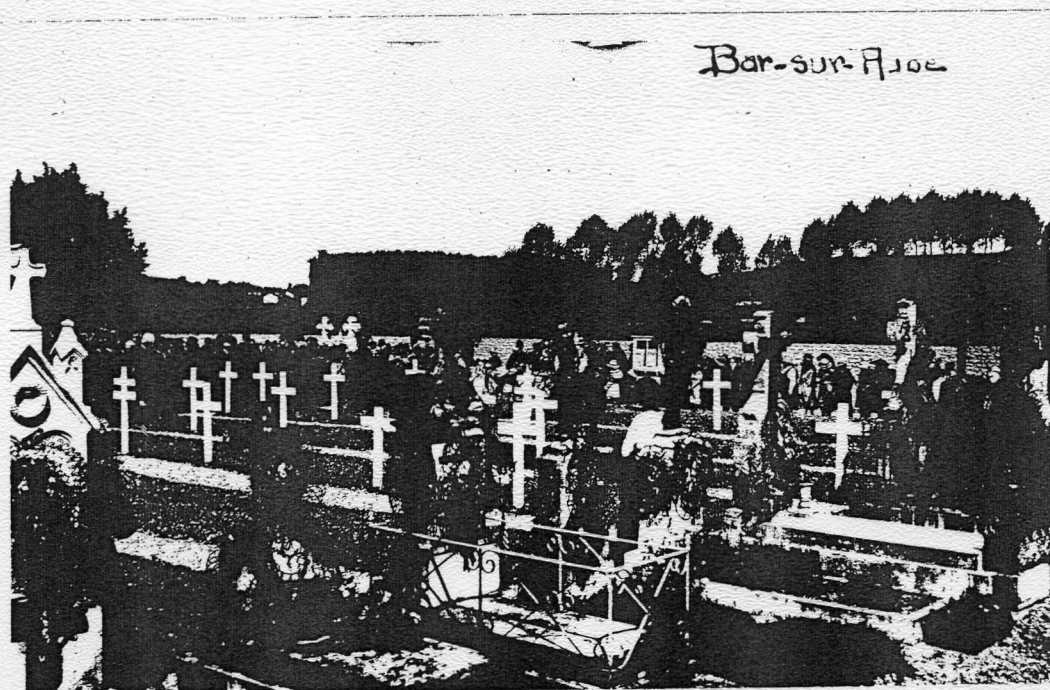
Talence - Memorial Day, 1921.

work. I say this entirely without any mental reservations and I wish you would try and impress upon the young officers whom we have sent over recently, the importance of the work and the care they must exercise in all of their transactions. Their work and yours is peculiarly trying and difficult and if we can succeed in the future as we have in the past, in not making any mis-steps, and complete this work in the same creditable manner as it has thus far been carried on, we shall have a record of which we shall indeed be proud."

The Area Supervisors also contributed their quota to the letters of commendation in praise of the officers and men with whom they had been associated in their area, or in the Sections working there. In commenting upon their system and thoroughness in operations, one wrote: "The work has been done quickly and quietly, and after completion the cemeteries have been left in splendid condition considering the disadvantages under which the field forces were operating. When off duty, the officers and men conducted themselves in a manner which has left a very favorable impression and this fact has been commented on by many Americans in responsible positions." This communication was forwarded to the Commanding Officer of that Section to which it referred, with the following notation: "It is very gratifying to the Operations Division to learn that



Bar-sur-Aube - Memorial Day, 1921.

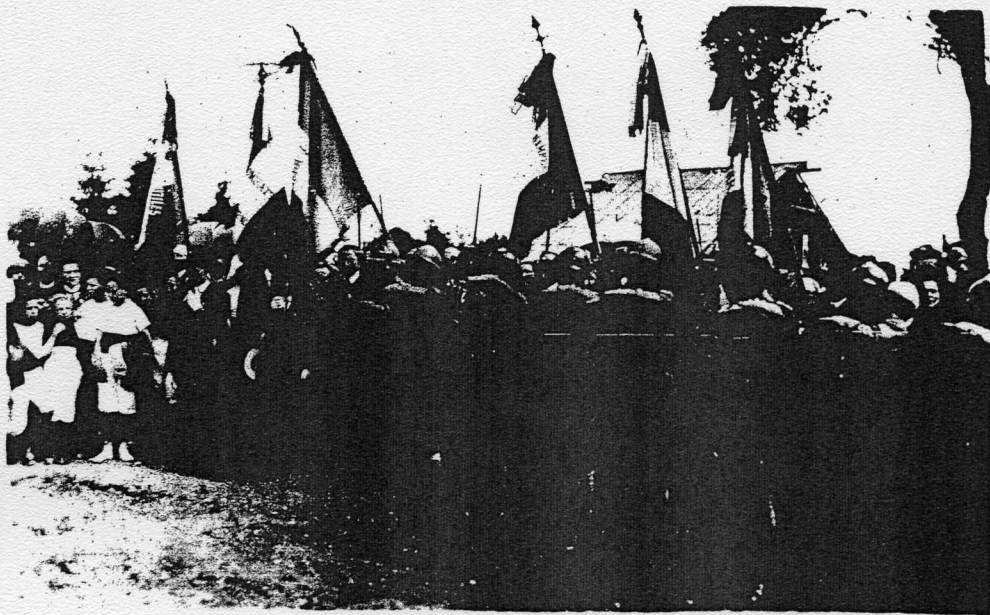


Bar-sur-Aube - Memorial Day, 1921.

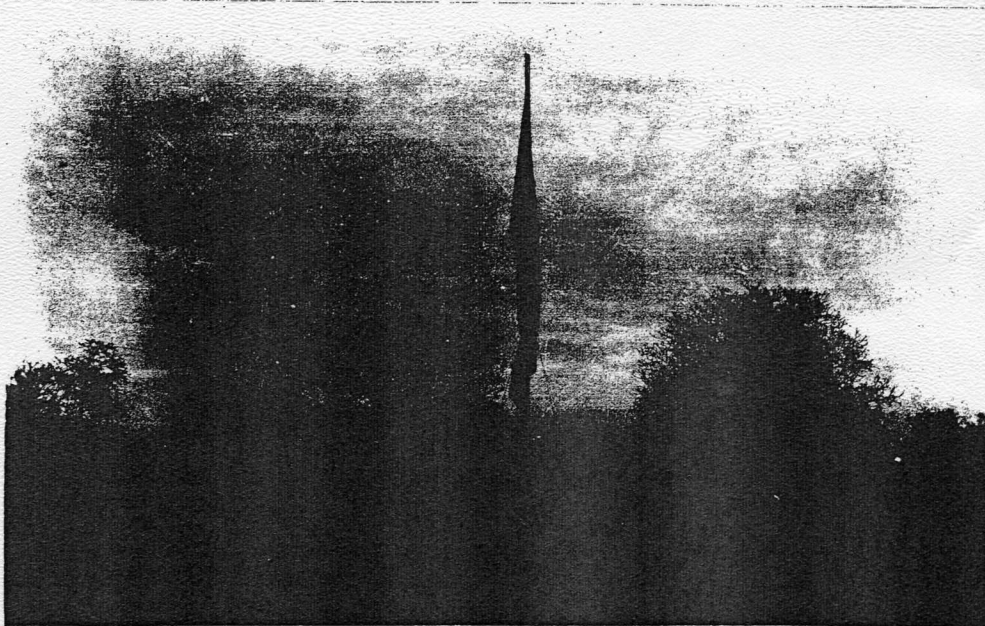
the work performed by the Section and the conduct of its personnel has been such as to bring forth a letter of this character. This Division fully understands the handicap and difficulties under which our Field Sections operate and to obtain commendation, as stated, means unusual interest and attention to the work involved, by all the personnel of the Section."

In a letter from the Vice-Consul at Barcelona, Spain, which is characteristic of those from officials coming into contact with this Service, he said: "I am glad to state that my contact with your Organization afforded me a much better understanding and clearer idea of the work now being carried on by the American Graves Registration Service in France and the difficulties encountered, than I had before. I believe that this work and the spirit back of it are thoroughly American and will commend itself, upon acquaintance, to every true American."

Actuated by something of the same spirit, a former officer of the United States Army, who had just completed a visit to ten of our cemeteries wherein were buried men of his former Company, said: "Let me speak again of the very special points of strength which completely outweigh all other considerations. The beauty, dignity and upkeep of the cemeteries, I have mentioned. Let me add my sincere praises of your Service, and of its painstaking courtesy, care and efficiency, as exemplified in the personnel. The reverent, con-



Vitry-le-Francois - Memorial Day, 1921.

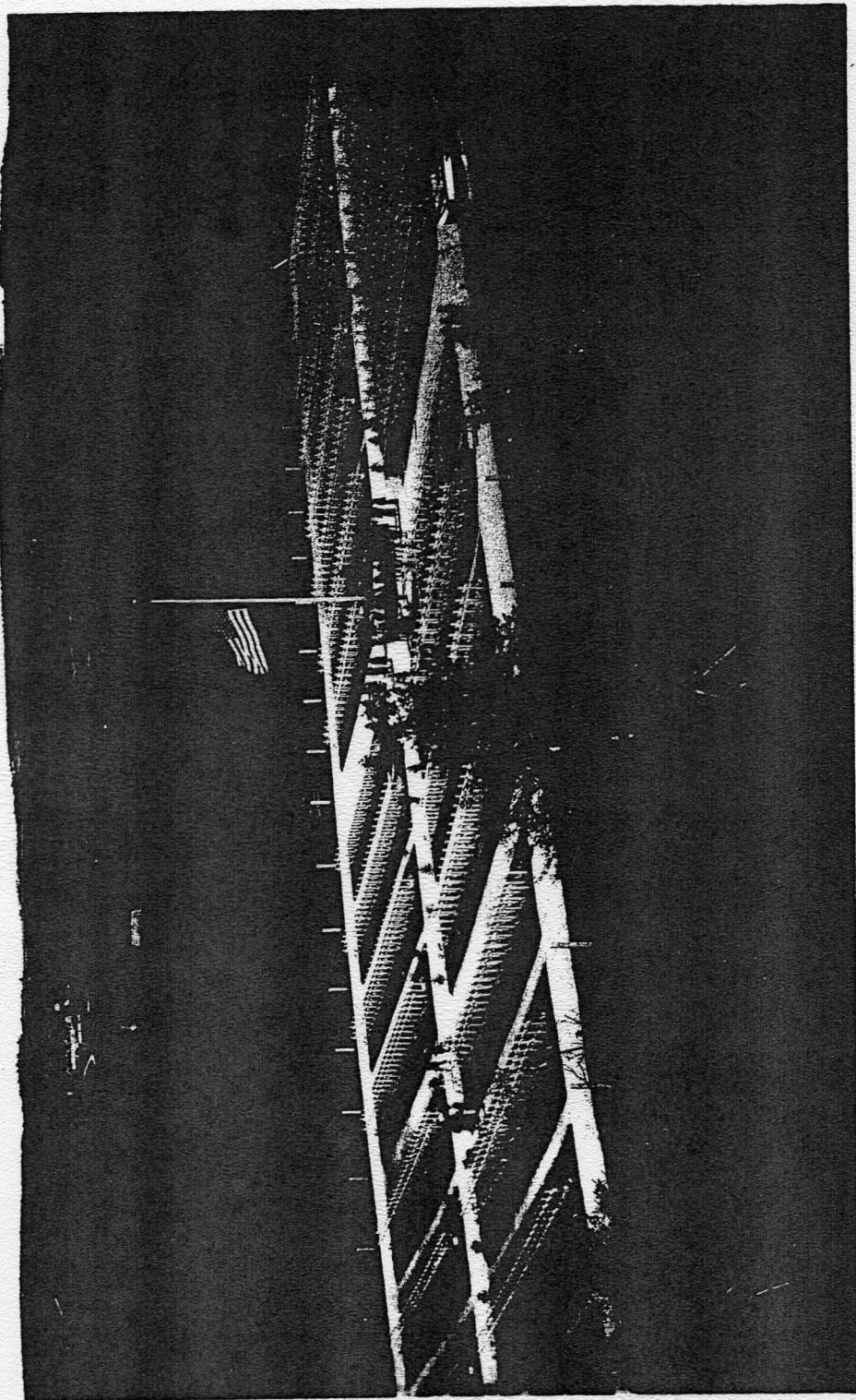


Mesves Cemetery - Memorial Day, 1921.

scientious interest given to their work by the caretakers was pleasant to note. Two other especially impressive features were the flying of the flag everywhere, and the uniformly equal treatment which the graves were receiving. Officers and their men were alike here, as they had been in death."

The relations of this Service with the French military and civil authorities were also the source of many courteous exchanges of correspondence. In the French people is united a spirit of sympathetic understanding, with a keen appreciation of friendly cooperation. Added to this they possess an inherent gift of expression which they displayed most happily on many occasions when the Officers of this Service, either by the flying of the French flag in our cemeteries, or by the observance of French holidays, demonstrated their very genuine feeling of friendship. To permit a mutual exchange of courtesies, permission was granted by the French Minister of War, to fly the American flag over French Communal and Military Cemeteries where American soldiers were buried. In fact it would appear, from the reports received, that the French devoted as much attention to the graves of the American Dead in their cemeteries as they did to their own.

It was also our custom to hoist the French flag at the same height as the American Emblem on the following days:- January first, Easter Monday, Whit Monday, Memorial Day,



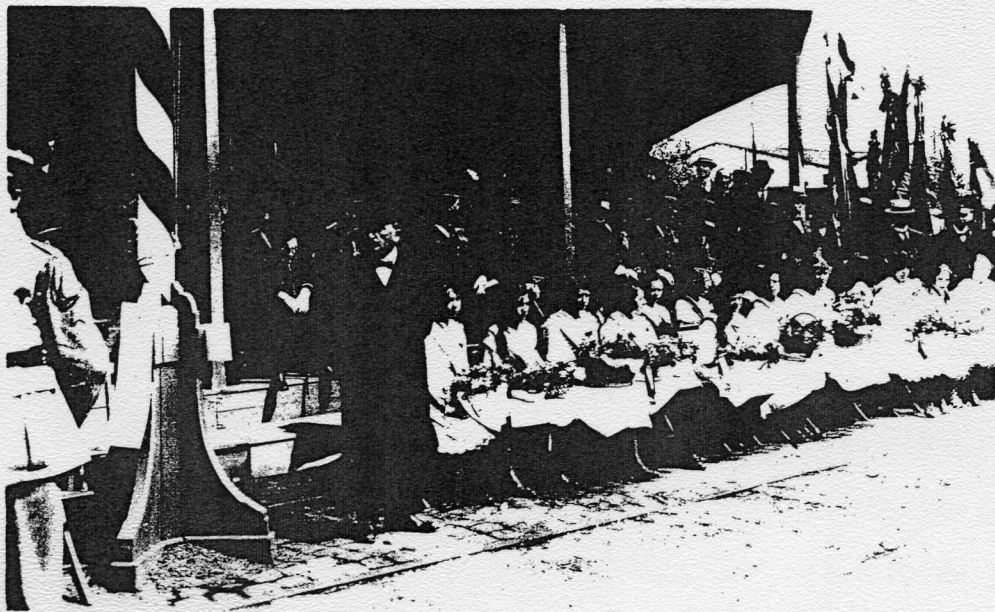
Belleau Wood - Memorial Day, 1921.

July 4th, July 14th, (The French Day of Independence), August 15th, (The Assumption), November first, (All Saints Day), and December 25th. All Saints Day in France has the same significance that Memorial Day has with us in that the French dedicate it to the memory of their dead.

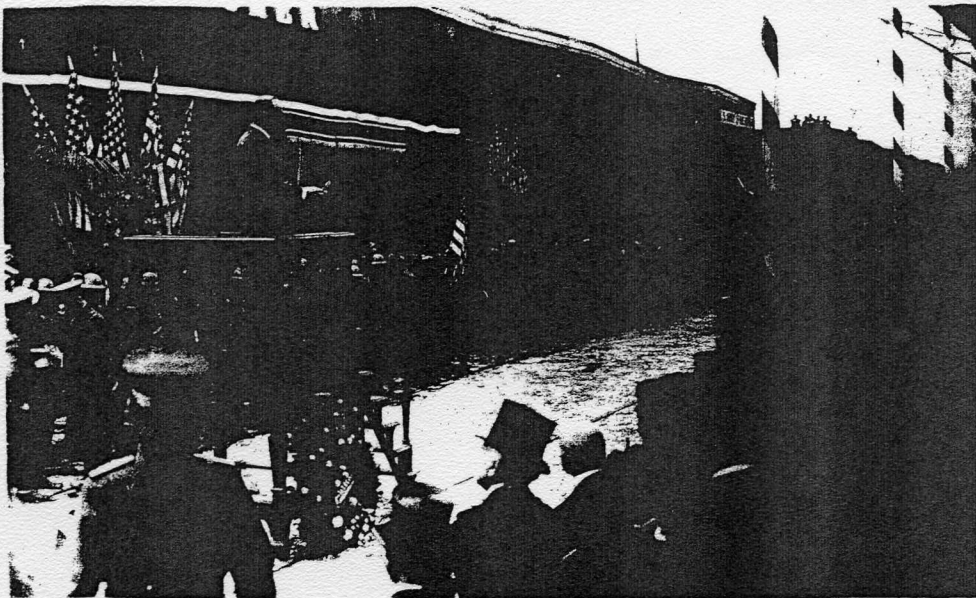
In a letter from an Area Supervisor to the French authorities in his Area, he declared: "Our two colors will fly together on All Saints Day, as a sign of deep gratitude to the glorious dead of our two countries, who gave their lives for the common cause. We are glad to take this occasion to strengthen the feelings of sincere friendship which have never ceased to exist between these two Allied nations since their sons fought side by side and gave their blood for the same ideal."

In reply, Major Fremont, State Civil Officer, 21st C.A., wrote: "I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter and to express my thanks for this delicate attention, and for the feelings of sympathy you show us. It is a pious thought in which we share with all our hearts and which we appreciate deeply."

Commanding General Hudant, of the 7th Corps, C.A., transmitted the following: "I wish to assure you that every Frenchman will learn with gratitude that you intend flying the French colors by the side of the American flag on All Saints Day. It will be to us a solemn and glorious thought, that on



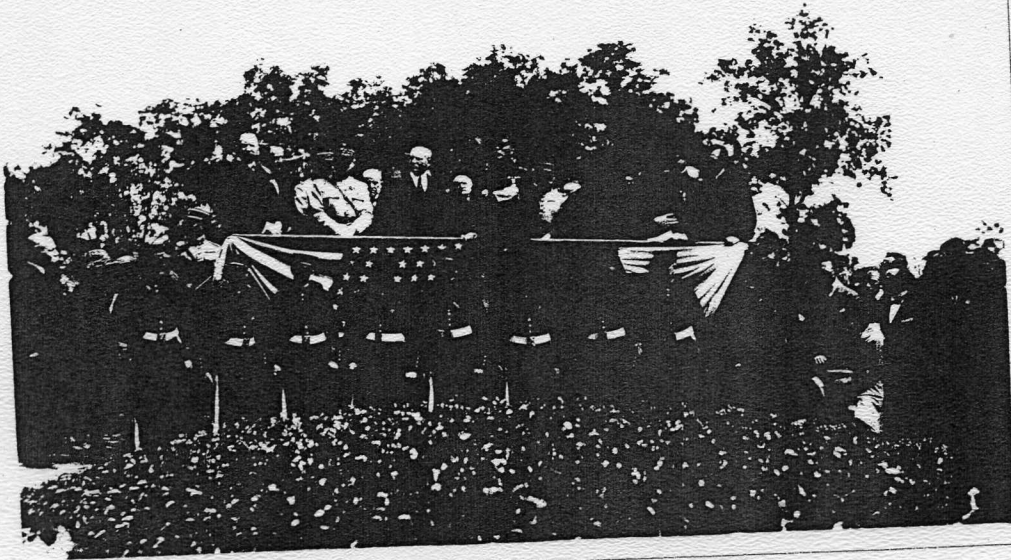
Antwerp - Memorial Day, 1921.



Antwerp - Memorial Day, 1921.

that day the memory of the brothers in arms who died for the defense of right, will be united in our minds, and the reverent gathering that will step with a feeling of respect and gratitude before the noble sons of America, fallen on French soil, will see with deep emotion the two flags flying together, symbol of the Franco-American Friendship." And the Mayor of Vittel writes that they "flew the American flag by the side of the French on the occasion of All Saints Day, in the French Cemetery, to commemorate the fraternity of our two nations and in memory of the children of France and America who died together."

While numerous letters expressed pleasure and satisfaction at the care of the cemeteries; the interest taken by the caretakers, and the thoughtful attentions of the personnel, many other communications referred to specific occasions of interest, as instanced in the case of the nurse, Miss Jane A. Delano, at the exhumation of whose body, from the cemetery at Savenay, the Surgeon General had requested (on behalf of the Red Cross Authorities) that a special representative of that Society be present. This representative, in a letter to the Director of the American Red Cross activities in Belgium and France, wrote that she could not but mention the extreme courtesy and help received from those in charge of the work at that place. Miss Helen Scott Hay, Chief Nurse, A.R.C. Commission to Europe, commenting on the very courteous treatment received



General Allen at Suresnes Cemetery.
Memorial Day, 1921.



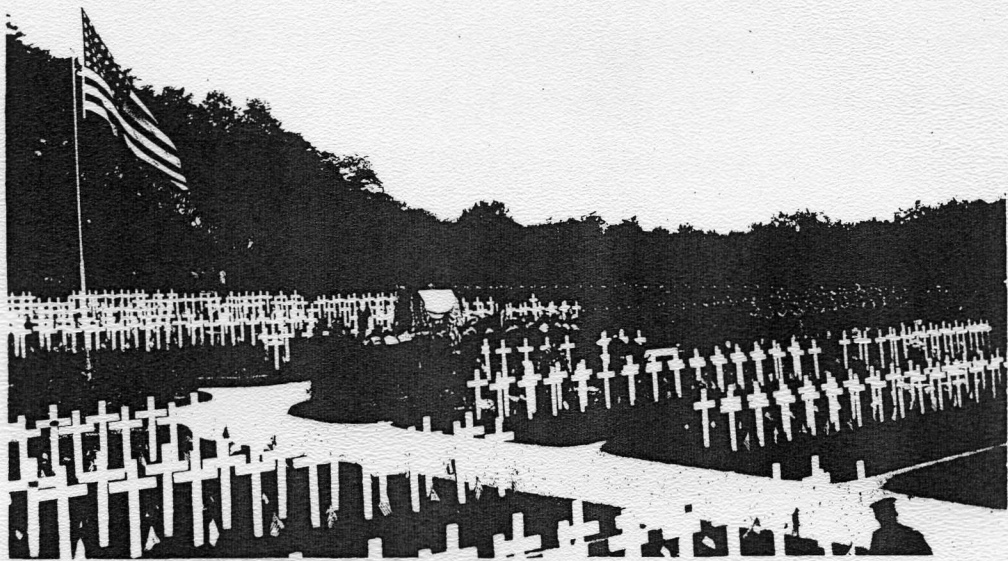
Marshal Petain, Mmo. Millerand,
Ambassador Wallace and General Allen.
Suresnes, Memorial Day, 1921.

from the staff of the American Graves Registration Service, expressed her great appreciation of their kindness and how great a pleasure and gratification it was for her to report this to their representative and to Miss Delano's friends in America.

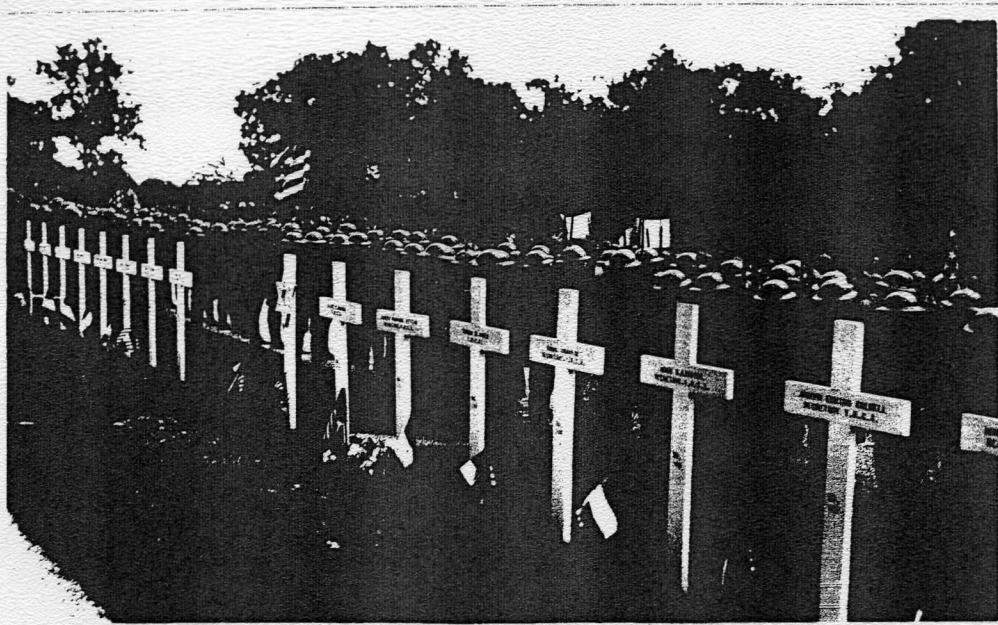
Colonel Rethers, in reply, assured her that it was "very gratifying to know that the personnel of this Service was doing its utmost in connection with this sorrowful task and that its one aim was to accomplish it in the most fitting and reverential manner possible."

The Quartermaster General, congratulating Colonel Rethers upon the receipt of such letters, further wrote: "I have taken pains to place them before the Secretary of War and also General Ireland, who has been so much interested in the case. Both of them have expressed great satisfaction, and I feel that the handling of this case has added a commendable chapter to the history of the Graves Registration Service and the Quartermaster Corps."

Not only was this but one example of the sympathetic cooperation which this Service continued at all times with the American Red Cross, but the same amiable relationship was sustained with the other societies represented in Europe. This appears in the extensive correspondence with the Y.W.C.A., with which this Service was closely associated in the conducting of the Hostess Houses at the prominent cemeteries, with the American Legion, who generously supplemented our observance



Bureau Cemetery - Memorial Day, 1921.

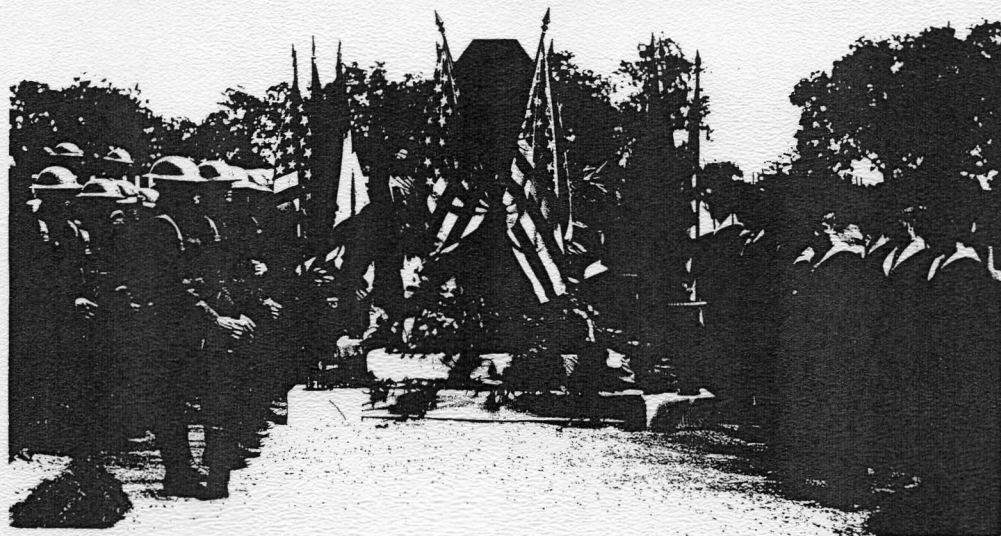


Bureau Cemetery - Memorial Day, 1921.

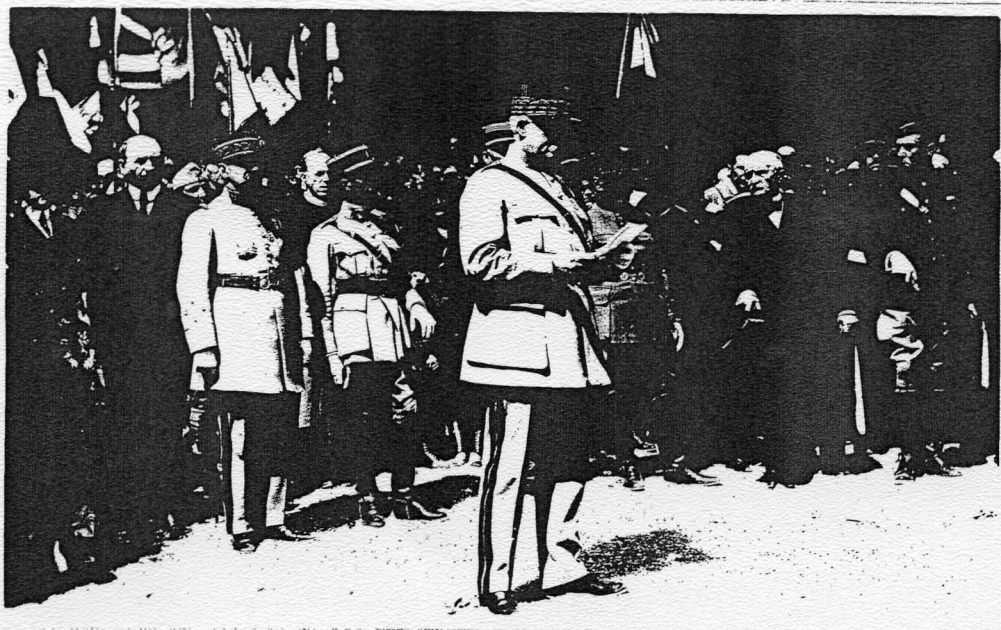
of Memorial Days by assisting in the attendant decoration of graves and the service held on that day, also with the Jewish Welfare Board, who sent a representative to photograph the graves of Soldier Dead of the Jewish faith, and the chairman of which wrote: "I have learned with sincere satisfaction of the splendid cooperation and assistance that you have accorded him. The manner in which you have facilitated the accomplishment of this highly important task is most gratifying, and I wish to take this opportunity of expressing, on behalf of this Board, our sincere appreciation of your cooperation."

On the conclusion of the work by this European representative, he himself wrote to the Chief of this Service in Europe: "I desire to take this opportunity to express to you, and to all those officers and employees of the Graves Registration Service, with whom I have come in contact, my highest appreciation for the courtesies and cooperation shown to me in connection with this work."

In the course of my work, I have journeyed thousands of miles by automobile, visiting nearly every cemetery in Belgium and France where our men are buried. I believe that I can justly claim the right of having come in closer contact with the activities of the American Graves Registration Service than any other private individual. I feel that the American



Cenotaph, Suresnes Cemetery.
Memorial Day, 1921.



Marshal Pétain, Suresnes Cemetery.
Memorial Day, 1921.

public has every reason to be proud of the excellent care bestowed upon the resting place of their Dead.

I assure you of the gratitude of my co-religionists in having the grave markers of the American soldiers of Jewish faith properly marked."

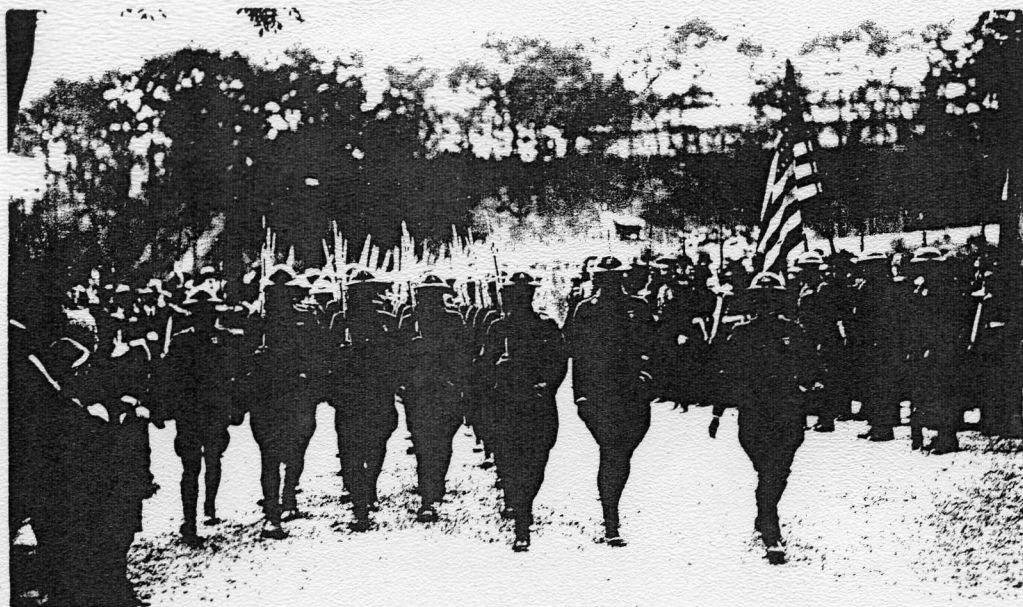
Realizing, however, that the ultimate desolation caused by the bereavements, following in the wake of the World War, was largely endured by the mothers, expressions of commendation from them were perhaps appreciated by the personnel of the Service above all others. Many of these letters were most touching in their simple expressions of appreciation and of the tender care which they found had been expended on the graves to which they had made a pilgrimage.

One mother from a Western State traveled altogether some ten thousand miles to visit the resting place of her loved one. She came, not only as the representative of her own family, but to represent other mothers who could not come. On her return she wrote that every man of the American Graves Registration Service whom she had met, had been most courteous, and that she carried back with her the kindest memories of them. She also wrote, on her return home, a very appreciative account of the work "that other mothers might be comforted."

In acknowledging a graciously expressed remembrance of her sorrow, (together with a longed-for memento), from the Chief of this Service in Europe, one mother wrote: "I am most



General Tanflieb and Colonel Rethers, Chief of the Service.
Suresnes, Memorial Day, 1921.

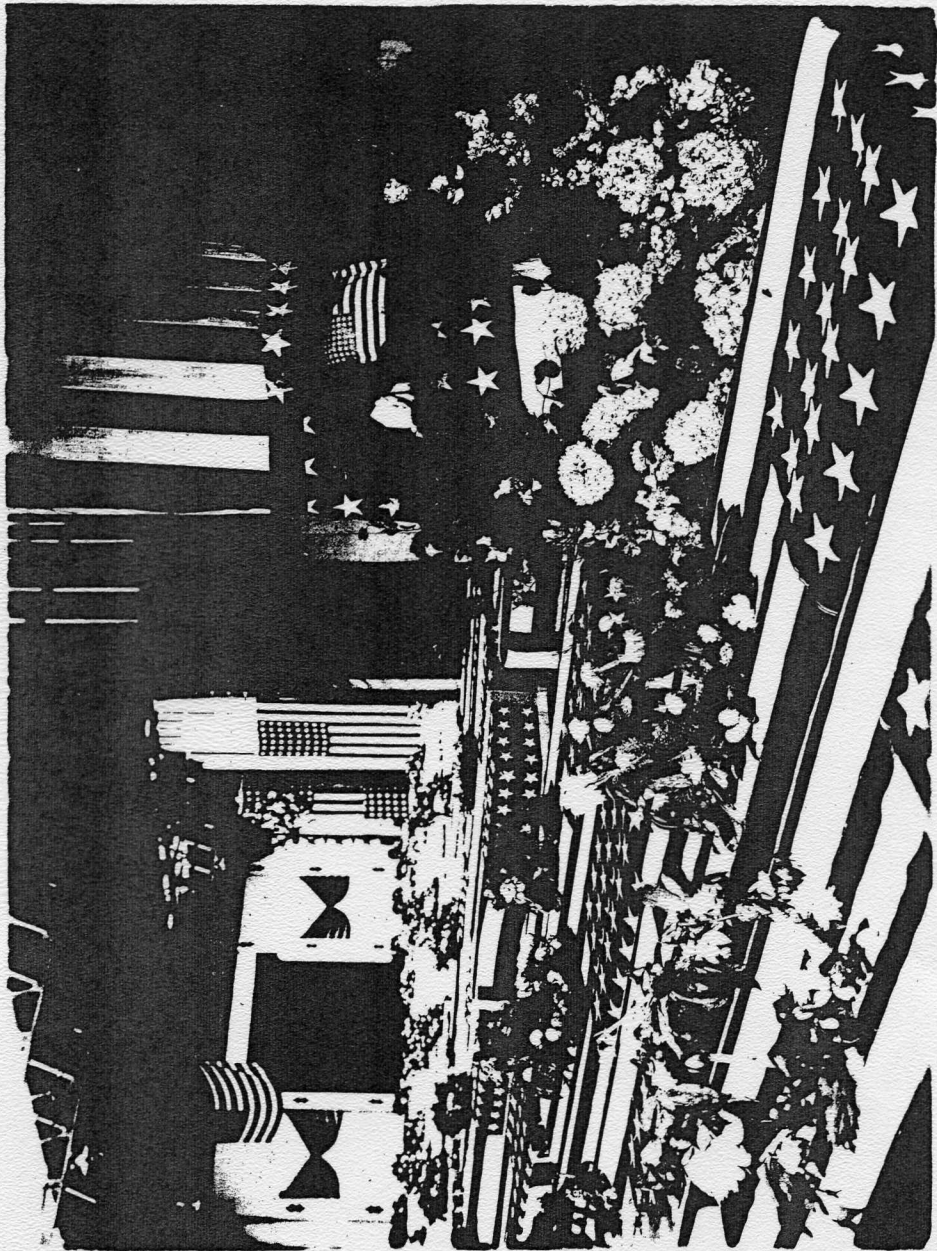


Suresnes Cemetery - Memorial Day, 1921.

grateful to you for those splendid pictures of Belleau, and very appreciative of your remembering my boy and me. A large part of my heart will always be where he rests, having fought a good fight and kept the Faith. It can never seem foreign soil with the flag over them and with the united, loving care of the American and French. Please believe how much your kindness has helped us and lessened the sadness of our pilgrimage."

In this connection should be recorded an example of the frequent appreciations received concerning the unfailing courtesies extended to the mothers and friends, at the Headquarters in Paris; sincere appreciation of the assistance given in locating the cemeteries, individual graves, and of the detailed directions as to the most convenient means of reaching them: "Following the suggestions given in your office, we had no trouble in reaching our desired destination, and I am writing to thank you for the great help you were in that matter. We found the cemetery most beautifully located and very carefully kept. The caretaker showed every attention. We want to express to you our keen appreciation of your help and interest, and to let you know that we will surely carry back home a good report."

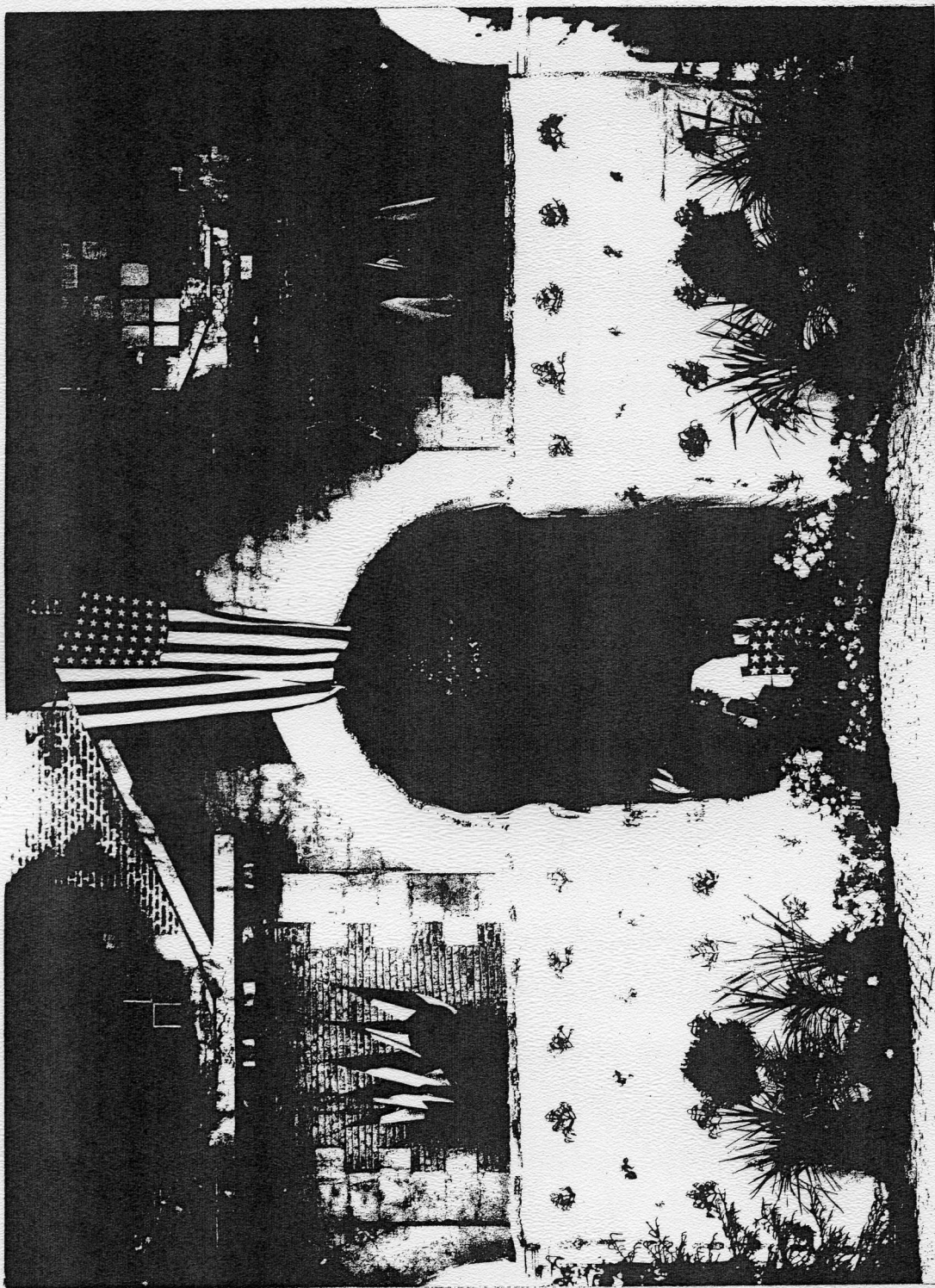
It would seem also to neglect what might be considered a comparatively humble, but which was nevertheless a very important, department contributing to the success of this Service, not to re-



Morgue at Antwerp - Memorial Day, 1921.

cord that in many letters from mothers reference was made to the caretakers of the various cemeteries in France. A pilgrimage to the resting place of their sons was often the only consolation left to those who had sacrificed them in their country's service, and they seemed to feel that when the graves of the loved ones were cared for by a former brother-in-arms of the United States Army, it was as if their soldiers were not quite so alone. The presence of many a young caretaker, and his regard for the graves, has comforted a mother as perhaps nothing else could do, and has sent her back to the lonely home in America with a heart full of thankfulness to this Service which had employed him, and which had gained, as it not infrequently did, an added luster from the consideration and individuality of its personnel. Concerning this attitude, one mother wrote: "I am very much pleased and satisfied with the care and attention shown the graves in the cemetery where my son is buried, and I especially desire to mention the very decided interest shown on the part of the caretaker who tells me that he is an ex-soldier of our American Army."

And to select extracts from a letter characteristic of many others: "May I write a few personal lines in reference to our American Cemeteries in France? It was my privilege to be present in some of them on Decoration Day, Fourth of July



Morgue at Amiens - Memorial Day, 1921.

and on the fourteenth of July, as well as at intermediate times. The beauty of the surroundings, the exquisite neatness of the turf, the trees and the crosses - in fact, the care given to everything! The journey was a pilgrimage fraught with sadness, but no more lovely spot could be chosen, and everywhere those in charge took a gentle interest and, from motives of sympathy, showed great courtesy to those who visited the cemeteries. There will be tourists, no doubt, to whom the grief of it all will be a closed book, but these are few. I saw many sad, wan faces; many steps halting and broken, of those whose entire interest in life lies buried in these our cemeteries in France. May the winds be soft to these souls of theirs until they go to join their loved ones. It is my fervent prayer that our Government will always appropriate sufficient funds to continue the fine thing accomplished for the last resting places of our American soldiers who died in France. It is a heritage which coming generations should treasure."

The Secretary of War, in commenting on this, stated: "It is most gratifying to hear from all sources such high praise of the work done in this delicate and tender matter."

To this the Quartermaster General added, in a line to the Chief, that he would like the officers and men associated with him to know that the excellent work that was being accomplished abroad was fully appreciated by himself, as well as by the Secretary of War.

The Special Commission representing the State of Massachusetts, which visited Europe for the purpose of viewing the activities of this Service, rendered a very complete report giving the details of the field operations and in conclusion made the following statement: "Massachusetts has, up to this time, been the only State to make an independent and thorough examination of this unattractive, but very necessary, work of the Graves Registration Department, to ascertain if their findings are to be given full faith and credit by our people. Our inquiry and investigation appear to justify the claims of the Department that every effort has been made to do the business part accurately, decently and with all respect, and after that to bestow the honors due to the heroic dead. The Commission, standing with devoted American officers and civilians in charge of the work, and in the presence of a thousand receptacles of the dust that was the living wall against which the Hun raged in vain, expressed their admiration of the devoted work of the Department, and their perfect satisfaction with it."

This Service received high commendation from a United States Senator, who viewed the remains of the son of one of his constituents, and, after personally observing the condition of many of the bodies, expressed himself as very much pleased with the state in which they arrived.

In a report submitted to the War Department by Major George R. Callender, of the Medical Corps, United States Army.

after his inspection of twenty-eight bodies, upon their arrival from overseas, at Hoboken, New Jersey, he commented most favorably on the general excellence of the condition in which the bodies were received from abroad. He stated that they showed excellent care in every way and that no flaws of technique were detected. Major Callender declared that, under the circumstances, nothing could be in better condition than the remains of our Soldier Dead which he examined at Hoboken.

All letters inspired by our foreign relations were not, however, merely those of courtesy. One example of this type, involving no sentiment, but nevertheless expressing a very genuine and practical appreciation of this Service, was received from Dr. H. Fettes, the Chief Medical Adviser to the City of Luxembourg, after being delegated by his Government to act in the capacity of a Supervisor to note our operations in the exhumation of the American Dead:

"The undersigned certifies that he was present during the exhumation of the American soldiers who fell on the field of honor, and were buried in the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg at Walferdange, Hellerich, Luxembourg, Reeser and Oettange, and that the process of exhumation, disinfection and the new method of putting bodies in the coffins has been so up-to-date that it was admired by the Medical and Sanitary Corps and that it will be an improvement of the present sanitary laws of the Grand Duchy.

"I am also willing to state that the fear of the population that, on account of the exhumation, sickness might be caused, proved to be without any foundation on account of the excellent American method, and that the newspapers did not fail to express their admiration and their full satisfaction. The American officers fulfilled their duty in the most respectful way."

The letter from which extracts are quoted below, written to the Adjutant of this Service, tells its own story:

"I am leaving Paris with a much changed frame of mind and with a subconscious feeling that I owe an apology to the United States Army or at least to that branch of it which your Service represents.

"I have never been so profoundly touched as I was at Savenay with the tact and courtesy of the officer in charge, and with the reverence and order with which the work was done.

"I soon realized that not only for myself but for mothers and other sisters I had a mission in seeing every step of the procedure that I may return to America and speak with authority for what the Graves Registration Service stands for.

"Only those who have lost their dear ones can appreciate that feeling of uncertainty regarding the disposition of our dead when we have the all too prevalent impression that was mine before I came.

"I cannot say more than had I known beforehand what I knew now I would not have come on such a long journey, even

though cremation was fulfilling the wish of my brother, and I most certainly feel that if others shared my knowledge a very much less percentage of bodies would be going home."

The following excerpt of a letter was written by the Dean of Tuam, Archdiocese of Dunmore, County Galway, Ireland, upon the receipt of the body of a United States soldier with relatives in Ireland:

"It is the greatest consolation to the mother and all of us here that America has treated this soldier with such magnanimity and consideration, and it can never be forgotten by us.

"I must say in conclusion that the conveyer did his work with the utmost devotion and care, and it is due in great measure to his intelligence and tact that all the arrangements were so thorough and successful."

Extracts from letter of Mr. Charles K. McClatchy, Editor of the "Sacramento Bee," dated May 25, 1921:

"And we are all unanimous in the statement that in no place anywhere could the loyal dead be more honored or better cared for than in the American cemeteries in France. They are neat; they are clean; they are well kept and systematically conducted; and they are a credit to the American name and to American supervision.

"And I desire also here to set it down that our experience showed that the registration system in those cemeteries, and with the American dead generally, is as perfect as man could

make it -(something we tested at the American Registration Office, 8 Avenue d'Iena, Paris, and also in the Argonne Cemetery).

"I never saw anywhere - in itself, and in its surroundings and in its care - a more beautiful God's Acre than that known as the Argonne Cemetery near Remagne. There some 21,700 of the honored American dead were buried; but 12,000 of these are about to be shipped to America at the urgent request of misguided, misled relatives."

In a letter dated November 15, 1921, a clergyman at Bron-y-Craig, Llanberis, North Wales, after the receipt of the body of an American soldier, stated: "At the meeting in connection with the funeral, held in my church, Capel Coch, Llanberis, the whole congregation rose to express its good feeling towards your great country, as well as your noble Service."

Another appreciative commendation from the British Isles was sent on November 16, 1921, to the representative of this Service at Southampton, by the father of an American soldier killed in France. It was in part as follows:

"I hope in so addressing you, I may not be considered presumptuous in any way. But I should like to offer to you, as the nearest representative of the American Government, the heartfelt thanks of the whole family for the great kindness and courtesy that has permeated through all the transactions arising between us, since the unfortunate death of my son two years ago, over, until today, when he has been laid to rest finally at his old home. All the officials at all times have

done their utmost to smooth away our sorrow, and to lighten our burden. No words of mine can frame our gratitude. If you will kindly convey this to those concerned upon our return to America we shall be still more grateful. As a Great and Free Country, you have acted most nobly and generously, worthy indeed of its many sons, who laid down their lives for the Stars and Stripes, they were so proud to die for."

Mr. Henry Horner, Judge of the Probate Court of Cook County, Illinois, writing from Chicago, August 20, 1921, stated in part:

"After a tour which took me to half a dozen of the various Cemeteries maintained in France by your Service, I cannot refrain from expressing my appreciation and congratulation, as an American citizen, for the excellent condition and fine standard of maintenance in which I found these cemeteries; and for the prompt and courteous services you render those who make inquiry regarding individual graves and missing men.

"I am sure that if the families of the brave fellows who now sleep in our cemeteries in France, could see or know of the tender and efficient consideration employed by our Government in the care of their present resting places in France much solace would come to the members of those families in the contemplation of their own great loss and their greater contribution to country.

"I am hoping that the hospitalization plans of the

government at home may take inspiration and example from the work of the American Graves Registration Service here - that the same high degree of efficiency may be reached in caring for the service men who are physically and mentally sick at home, as this Service has given, and is giving, to the resting places of their comrades who fell in France. It is only because the men in the public service so infrequently receive acknowledgement for work well done, that I find justification in thus writing you."

The following letter was received from Mrs. Caroline K. Tucker, 124 West 85th Street, New York City, under date of August 30, 1921, stating:

"I wish to express my appreciation and gratitude to the American Graves Registration Service for the unfailing kindness and help given me by everyone connected with this Service. I am sailing on Thursday, leaving my dear son's body in your care at Seringes-et-Nesle, and the bronze plaque which I have placed in Virolaine overlooking the country over which he flew, commemorates the spirit with which he gave his life."

Excerpt from letter of Major R.O. Barton, commanding composite battalion, American Forces in Germany, under date of October 9, 1921:

"It is desired to express extreme appreciation for the assistance rendered this Battalion by the Graves Registration

Service. Difficulties which otherwise would have been almost unsurmountable have been rendered negligible by the prompt and efficient aid your service has unsparingly given. This is especially true of your Transportation Department. Everyone of your service, however, with whom we came in contact has given the heartiest cooperation."

A paragraph from a letter of Miss Agnes Peter of the Societe des Foyers de l'Union Franco-Americaine, addressed to the Chief of this Service, February 23, 1921, reads:

"After a day with some of our Allies, suffering again the aftermath of war and destruction and nothingness, to see that flag of ours, and, stepping, look on an oasis in that waste of horror - green grass, simplicity, order, cleanliness and rest, and later in my foyer, the men and boys who lived to come back, - if only our people could see what I have seen, they, too, would understand and appreciate all that you and your service has done for them and for our country and perhaps, not least of all, the ideas given to our friends of other lands."

Under date of April 6, 1921, Paul H. Gaither, an attorney of Greensburg, Pa., wrote to the Quartermaster General as follows:

"I have just returned from France where, through the courtesy extended me by you, I was permitted to be present when the body of my son was exhumed in the cemetery in France, preparatory to its removal home."

"It is a pleasure to report to you that I consider the Graves Registration Service, in its plan and character of service rendered, the best and finest of any department of governmental service with which I am familiar.

"With that charming and most capable man, Colonel Pierce, in charge at home, and with a most efficient staff in France, the work is done in such manner as gives the greatest comfort to those who mourn for their heroic dead.

"May I speak in particular of Colonel H.F. Rathern, in charge in France - one who is a real soldier, a splendid executive and a lovable man. Rarely have I met one who has so richly combined in him these several attributes. And he has about him men who strive to be like him.

"I was deeply indebted to one Lieutenant Charles S. Denny, who was in training with my son at Fortress Monroe and who was of great aid to me in the field.

"I congratulate you, sir, on the thorough service of your splendid organization."

The following is an excerpt from a letter dated November 8, 1921, from the American Vice Consul, Horta, Fayal, Azores, to the Chief of this Service:

"Every possible honor was given the body by the Portuguese authorities of the Azores, and twenty-one guns were fired as the casket was brought ashore from the steamer. The conveyer stated that the manifestation was the most sincere and the largest by far of any interment of the sort he had ever

witnessed. The generous manner in which the Government returns the fallen dead should make for greater appreciation of true American ideals."

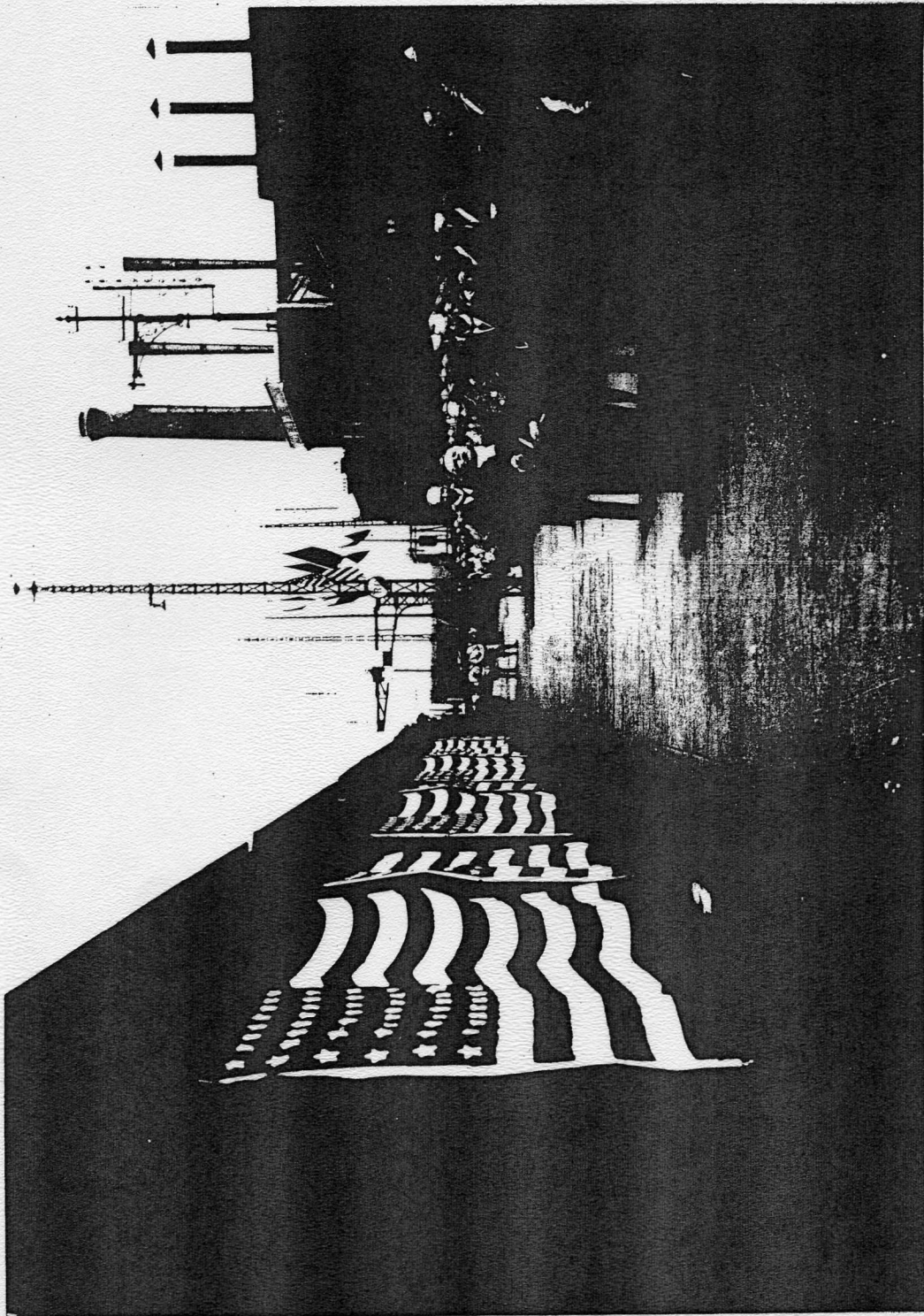
The following letter, dated June 25, 1920, from General Peyton C. March, former Chief of Staff, United States Army, to the Chief of this Service, is quoted in full herewith:

"I have now concluded my inspection of the Headquarters of the Graves Registration Service, and have visited a number of the more important American cemeteries, and while I have told you personally some of my impressions, I desire to record them in a more formal manner.

"Your organization, it seems to me, has now reached the point where it is clear that you have the work well in hand. The cemeteries which I inspected were in very fine condition without exception; the caretakers and the American women at the Hostess Houses were devoted to their work, and the universal excellence in the appearance of the cemeteries showed me plainly that the Graves Registration Service is well organized.

"I have also been extremely pleased by the reports which I have received from all sides of the very fine attitude on Decoration Day of the French people. The Ceremonies that were held at the different cemeteries were in nearly all cases international in character and will undoubtedly be a strong

bond between the two countries. If there is anything that I can do from the American end to help you along in your work, I desire you to feel free to call upon me at any time."



Departure of trainload of bodies from Le Havre.

CEREMONIES AT LE HAVRE.

Through the courtesy of the United States Consul at Le Havre, the Mayor of that city issued invitations, over his signature, to particular dignitaries of Le Havre and that Department, to be present at the railroad station at 2.45 p.m., Tuesday, May 10, 1921, in order to pay homage to the American Dead then being returned to the United States.

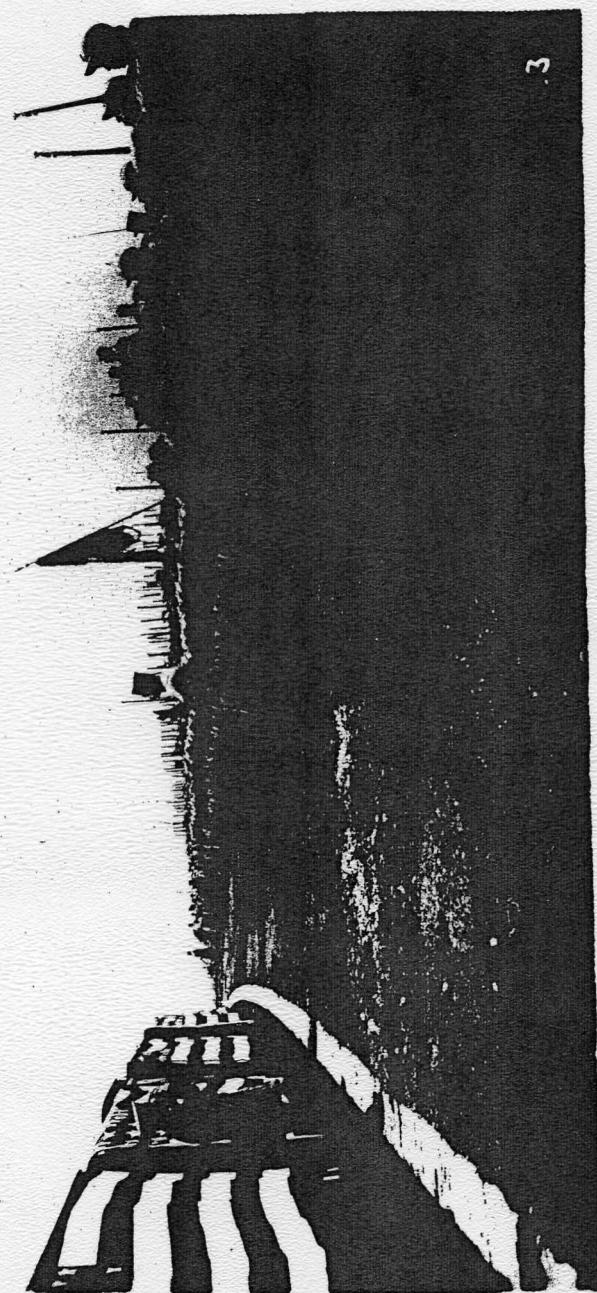
The Inspector General of the State Railroad directed that the train containing the caskets be switched into the main station, Gare Centrale, where each car, being first washed by employees of the Railroad Company, had two American storm flags tacked upon the side.

At the appointed time, a company of the 129th French Infantry took station on the quay alongside and facing the train. Here the invited guests, members of the American colony, and others were assembled. The Sous-Prefect then began his address of eulogy of the Americans and their dead. He was followed by the Mayor of Le Havre, who spoke briefly on the feelings and liaison between France and America. The American Consul replied.

Following these speeches, the pastor of the French Evangelical Church delivered an invocation. This was followed by prayer and a solemn benediction of the dead by the Archbishop of Le Havre, accompanied by his acolytes.

After which, the troops presented arms, and the mili-

tary Band played a funeral march, while the train slowly pulled out of the station and disappeared in the distance.



Salute to the American Dead when leaving Stenay.

THE FAREWELL AT STENAY.

After the bodies of our soldiers had been exhumed from the Cemetery at Letanne, they were concentrated in Stenay for shipment to the Port. On the approach of this event, the Commanding General of that Department, General Pougin, expressed a desire to render homage to the American Dead at the departure of the train.

Accordingly, on the first of February, 1921, two companies of the 120th Regiment of Infantry took station at the side of the train, facing the American National Emblem with which it was draped. With the troops were the colors and the regimental band.

As the soldiers presented arms, they were inspected by the French General and our Field Section Commander, after which the National Anthems of America and France were played.

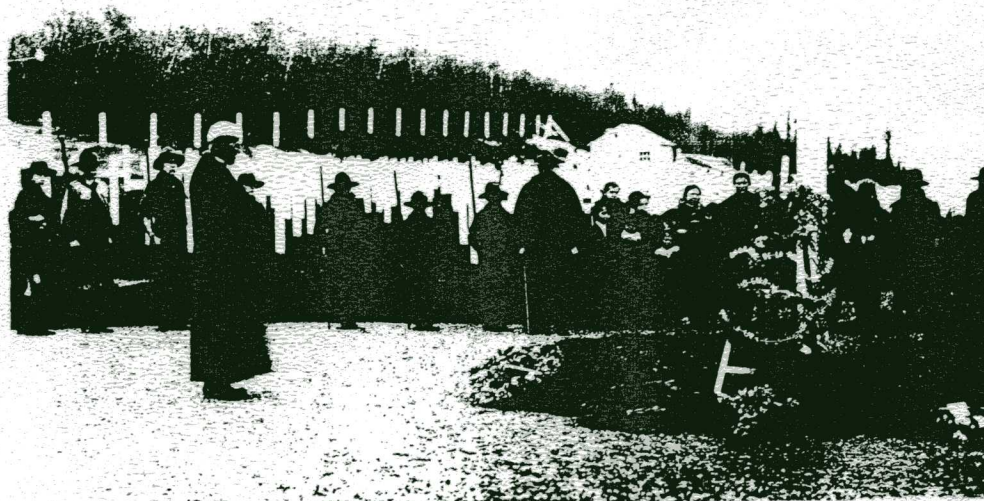
A speech was then made by General Pougin, expressing the deep and lasting friendship between France and the United States. The valor of the American troops, particularly those who made the supreme sacrifice about Stenay, was dwelt upon; these same troops whose bodies were on this train and who were about to return to their Home-land.

The section commander replied to the remarks of the General, thanking him and his staff on behalf of the United States Government, and of the families of the deceased soldiers, for the

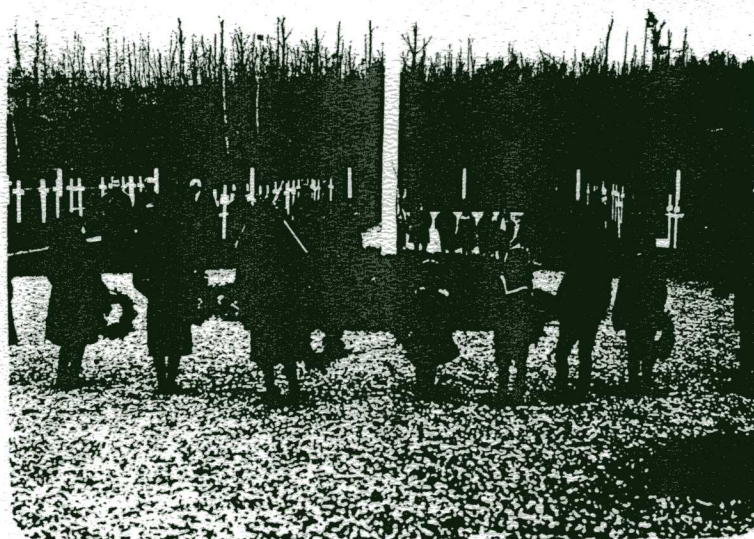
honor rendered to their fallen American comrades.

As the train moved slowly away, the troops stood at salute, while the band played "The Star Spangled Banner." The women present displayed evidence of genuine grief, the civilians standing, meanwhile, uncovered.

The ceremony, for all its simplicity, was exceedingly touching and impressive. Only a courteous spirit could have prompted so dignified a farewell, and the participation of the General and of his gallant soldiers will always remain in the annals of this Service.



Christmas, 1921.
The Boy Scouts of Chateau-Thierry and the children of
Bellesau listening to the eulogy of the Cure.



Christmas, 1921.
Each child had a wreath for an unnamed grave.

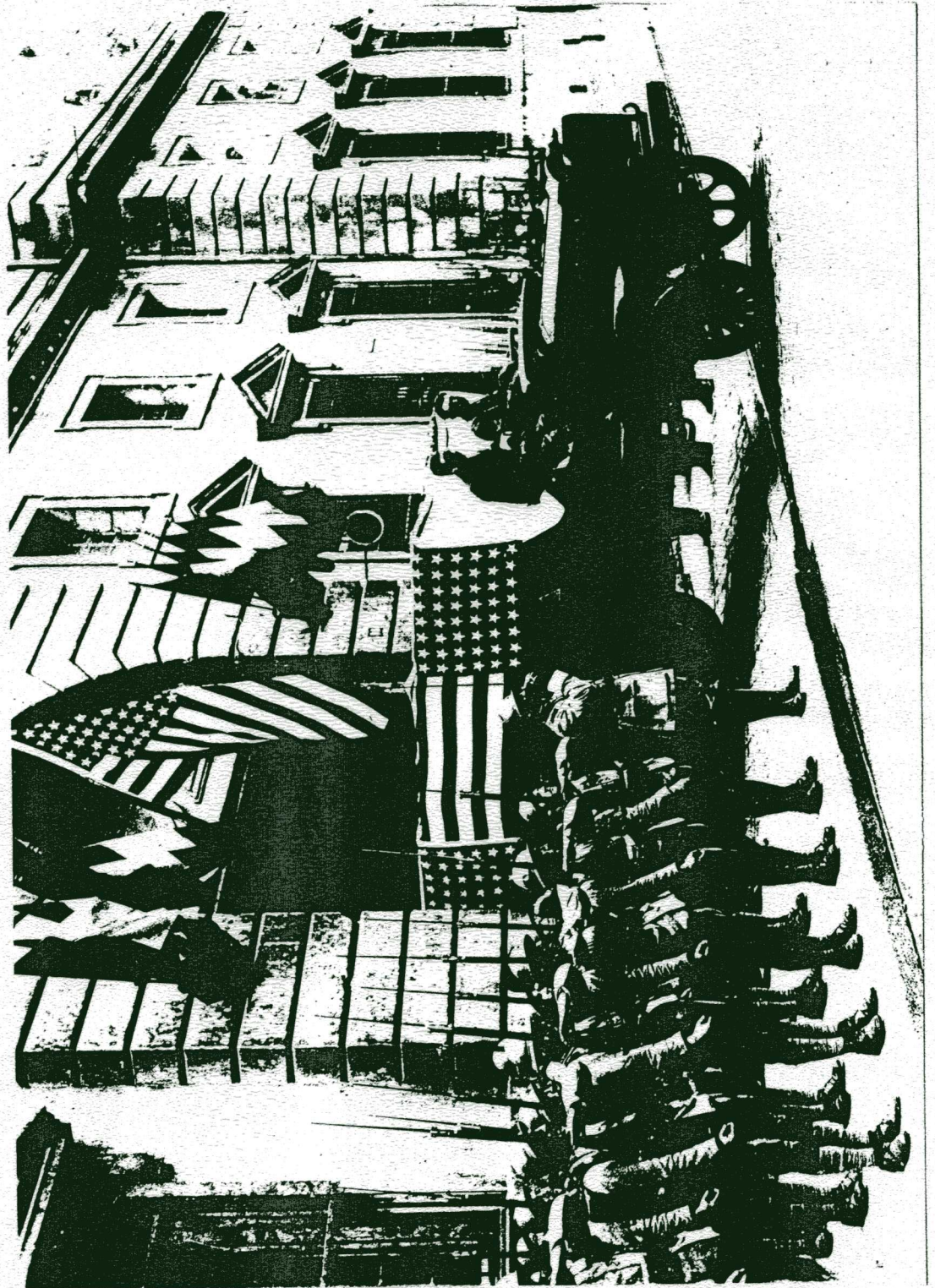
DECORATING THE UNKNOWN GRAVES.

The first ceremonies in France and Belgium in honor of all American Unknown Dead fallen in the World War, were held on Christmas Day, 1921, when nearly 2,000 graves were decorated with wreaths of ivy and holly, furnished by the Paris edition of the "New York Herald."

At all of the Permanent American Cemeteries, and others where the Unknown were buried in France and Belgium, these wreaths were placed upon each unknown grave on Christmas Day.

The ceremonies at Belleau Wood may be described as an example of the services held at other cemeteries as far as the generous response of heart and hand of the kindly villagers was concerned.

Despite the cold, penetrating weather, at times visited by rain and sleet, a number of school children from Belleau, accompanied by the Mayor, the Cure and an instructor, marched to Belleau Cemetery to await the arrival, a few minutes later, of a detachment of Boy Scouts from Chateau-Thierry. Then villagers from these two small towns, reinforced by visitors from Paris and elsewhere, who arrived during the forenoon by motor car and train, formed a background for the children in their silent but eloquent march to the cemetery, located at the edge of the wood where heroic American blood was shed. A circle was formed around the flag-pole and the Boy Scouts performed the ceremony of a salute to the flag. This was followed with short addresses by the Cure and the Mayor of Belleau.



Removal of bodies from concentration point at Amiens,
September 14, 1921.

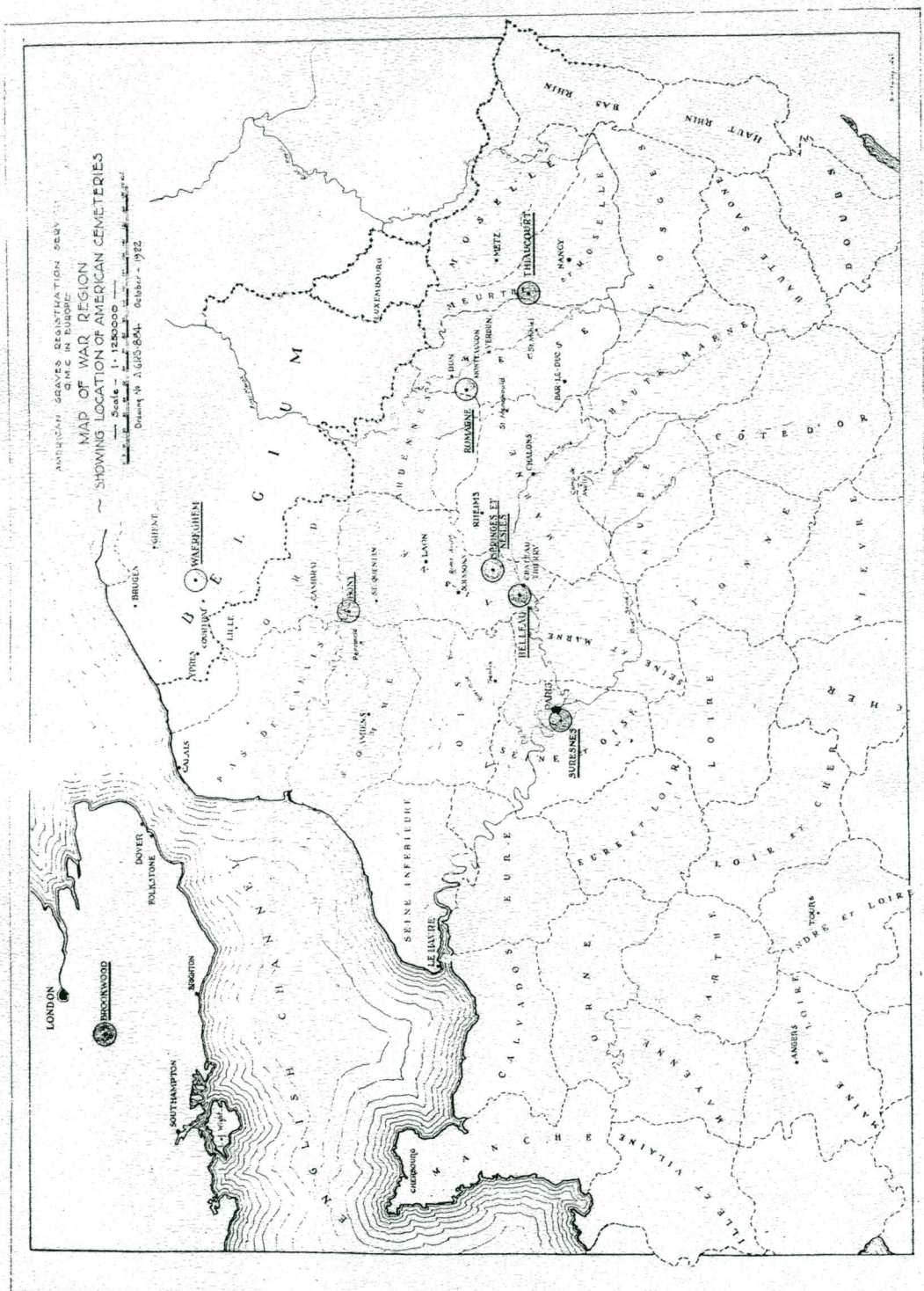
COPY OF CHAPTER 17
HISTORY OF THE AGES, QMC
VOLUME N° 2
(pp.117-127 incl.)

THE UNKNOWN DEAD

In the heart of the old battle area of France, at Chalons-sur-Marne, the body of the Unknown United States Soldier was chosen on Monday, October 24, 1921, as representative of the 77,000 Americans who paid the supreme sacrifice in the cause of Liberty and Justice.

Four bodies of unknown soldiers from the cemeteries of Aisne-Marne, Meuse-Argonne, Somme and St. Mihiel were brought to Chalons on Sunday, October 23, and placed in a chamber in the Hotel de Ville.

Prior to the shipment of the remains of these four unknown soldiers to Chalons-sur-Marne for the final selection, this Service made a thorough search of all the Forms N° 16-A for unknown soldiers in the cemeteries at Aisne-Marne, Meuse-Argonne, Somme and St. Mihiel. This search was for the purpose of locating bodies of unknown soldiers which gave no clue to, or evidence of, identity. Further, the original records, showing the interments of these bodies, were searched and the four bodies selected represented the remains of soldiers of which there was absolutely no indication as to name, rank, organization or date of death. In other words, these bodies were picked up in isolated spots and concentrated in the cemeteries enumerated above so that their identity could not be solved by any recourse to records.



Map of War Region
Showing Location of American Cemeteries.

On October 23, upon the arrival of the bodies at Chalons-sur-Marne, the caskets containing same were taken from their shipping cases, placed on top of the case and draped with American Flags. Early on the morning of October 24, Major Harbold, with some French and American soldiers, rearranged the caskets by placing them on different cases other than the ones on which they reposed during the night. By this method there could be no opportunity for any person, even the employees of the American Graves Registration Service present at Chalons-sur-Marne, to recognize, through the order of arrangement, the bodies from the various cemeteries.

When the final selection of the Unknown was made by Sergeant Edward Younger, the casket containing this Unknown was immediately taken to another room and the remains transferred to the one especially provided. This transfer was made in the presence of Quartermaster General H.L. Rogers, United States Army; Colonel H.F. Rethers, Chief, American Graves Registration Service, Q.M.C. in Europe; Lieut. Colonel W.G. Ball, Q.M.C., and Major R.P. Harbold, Q.M.C. After the transfer had been effected, the casket from which the remains had been taken was returned to the room containing the other bodies. One of the caskets therein was opened and the body removed from it and placed in the casket from which the selected Unknown Soldier had been taken. The purpose of this transfer was to have the casket buried (which originally contained the body that had been selected) and thus preclude the possibility of any mark of identification being left which might in any way show from what cemetery that body had been exhumed. The caskets were then replaced in the shipping cases and loaded on G.M.C. trucks, which were waiting at the entrance. They were sent immediately to Romagne

Cemetery, where the three bodies were buried that same day in graves numbered 1, 2 and 3, Row N° 1, Block G. The only record now pertaining to these bodies is the reburial record showing an Unknown Soldier buried in the three graves above enumerated.

The ceremony of selecting the Unknown Soldier took place at 10 o'clock Monday morning. Among those present were : General Duport, commanding the 6th Army Corps; M. Brisac, the Prefect of the Marne; Mr. Servas, Mayor of Chalons-sur-Marne; the Town Council; a number of French guards and other officers; the American officers, including Major General H.L. Rogers, Quartermaster General; Colonel H.F. Rethers, Q.M.C., Chief, American Graves Registration Service, Q.M.C. in Europe; Lt. Col. William G. Ball, Q.M.C.; Major Robert P. Harbold, Q.M.C.; Captain E. LeRoch, French Army (French Liaison Officer); Mr. Keding, Chief Supervisory Embalmer; photographers and members of the Press. A French military band in the courtyard adjoining rendered appropriate music.

General Duport then delivered an address in French, to which a brief reply was made by General Rogers, thanking General Duport, the Prefect, the Mayor and others for the complete arrangements they had perfected for this very important ceremony.

At 9.30 a.m. on Monday the French troops assembled in front of the Hotel de Ville and at 10 o'clock the French and American officials entered the hall. A French military band played "The Death of Ase" from "Peer Gynt" as Sergeant Younger slowly entered the mortuary room, carrying a spray of white roses which had been donated by Mr. Brasseur Brulfer, a former member of the City Council. Sergeant Younger, passing

between two lines formed by the officials, entered the chamber in which were the bodies of the four Unknown Soldiers, circled the caskets three times, then silently placed the flowers on the third casket; from the left. He faced the body, stood at attention and saluted. General Duport stepped forward at the other end of the casket and saluted in the name of the French people. He was followed by the other officials present.

The casket was inscribed : "An Unknown American who gave his life in the World War". The coffin was sealed and then draped with the Stars and Stripes. The original spray of white roses was laid upon the new casket and, as the strains of Chopin's "Funeral March" broke upon the silence, the pall-bearers, six non-commissioned officers selected from the Headquarters Company at Coblenz, lifted the casket and bore it to the catafalque in a shrine erected in the center of the large hall facing the principal entrance gate of the Hotel de Ville. A guard of honor kept watch over the remains. It consisted of six French soldiers, five non-commissioned officers from the American Forces in Germany, and a representative of the American Legion. Flowers, wreaths and bronze tokens, which had been donated, were placed at the base of the catafalque.

The body lay in state from one o'clock until four, during which time the people of Chalons reverently paid their respects and left offerings of flowers.

At four o'clock, French troops, composed of military bands, the 106th Regiment of Infantry, and several squadrons of cavalry, grouped in front of the Hotel de Ville. General Duport, his Chief of Staff and his aide-de-camp; General Allen; General Rogers and his staff, escorted by a troop of cavalry, returned to the Hotel de Ville for the official ceremonies which had been prepared by the Mayor of the City of Chalons.

Upon completion of the ceremonies, about 5 p.m., the march to the station began. The officials inside the hall stood at salute while the casket was being carried out and placed on the gun carriage appropriately draped with flags. Boy scouts of France gathered the flowers and tributes and formed in line in front of the caisson. French infantry and cavalry lined the streets from the Hotel de Ville to the station along the route of the procession. The cortege consisted of the following French organizations :

9th Dragon
106th Infantry
40th Field Artillery
25th Field Artillery
140th Motor Transp. Co
6th Section of Q.M.C.
Boy scouts
Firemen
Delegations of various veteran societies
and other local societies
Students of Arts & Trades School
School children, etc.

The remains were placed in the funeral car of the special train which was tendered by the French Government. The train left Chalons at 6,10 p.m. and arrived at the Gare Batignolles, Paris, at 10 p.m. The body remained overnight in the car at the station under a guard of honor of three soldiers from the American Forces in Germany and a representative of the American Legion.

The funeral train, bearing M. Maginot, Minister of Pensions, and other French and American officials, left Batignolles station for Le Havre at 9.20 a.m. Tuesday, October 25, stopping at Rouen, where Major General Duchesne, Commanding General of the 3rd French Army Corps and his aide-de-camp, joined the military escort accompanying the remains. The train arrived at Le Havre at 1,00 p.m. A guard of one Machine Gun Company of the 129th French Infantry and a detachment of French sailors

Presented arms as the train drew into the station, the following officials being present :

Vice-Admiral Barthese, Prefet Maritime de Cherbourg
representing the Minister de la Marine,
Prefet de la Seine Inferieure,
Sous-Prefet du Havre
Mr. Meyer, Maire du Havre,
Mr. Brindeau, Senator,
Captain de Vaisseau de Maynard
Colonel Le Hagne, 129th Infantry
Major de Garnison du Havre.

The American pall-bearers carried the casket from the train, followed by the officials and also by 30 French soldiers carrying the floral offerings and marched to the square in front of the station where the caisson, draped with American flags, was waiting. As the band of the 5th Division, French Army, played the familiar strains of "Aux Champs", the casket was placed upon the caisson. A veritable shower of flowers then fell upon the casket - the offerings of the school children of Le Havre.

The entire population of the city turned out to pay homage to America's Unknown Soldier and to show deep appreciation and respect. Many thousands of people lined both sides of the entire route from the station to the Pier d'Escale, where the United States Cruiser "Olympia" awaited the arrival of the body.

At 1:20 p.m. the cortege started. In front was a detachment of mounted police; then came the drums and bugles of the 129th Infantry Regiment and the Divisional band that was to play the Funeral Marches of Chopin, Andrieux and Mendelssohn on the way; the flag of the 129th Infantry, Colonel LeHagne, followed by battalions of the Havrais Regiment; a section of sailors from the crews of the "Verdun" and "L'Epernay". The palms, wreaths, bouquets and flowers carried by soldiers of the 129th Infantry Regiment followed.

After these came a detachment of American soldiers preceding the coffin of the Unknown Soldier. On each side of the coffin were eight American sergeants, among whom was Sergeant Younger who had the honor of selecting the Unknown Soldier; then a section of the 129th Infantry Regiment carrying their arms reversed, and the orphans belonging to the "Fraternité Franco-Américaine", each carrying a flower.

The procession marched through the Boulevard de Strasbourg. A wreath tied with the French and Havre colors, and at the base of which was a bouquet of roses, was offered by the City of Le Havre, in front of the Hotel de Ville, where delegations of the fire brigade, Customs officials and policemen had gathered. It was carried by two ushers of the Hotel de Ville, who, after walking around the coffin, took their place in front of the gun carriage.

The cortege then continued through the rues de Paris, des Drapiers, du General Faidherbe and the Quai de Bostrom. A reverent and deeply moved crowd lined the way, which had been decorated with flags flying at half mast. The ceremony had been admirably conducted by Mr. Artigues, Special Commissary, and Captain Chemin, Chief Constable. The procession reached the Quai d'Escale at half past two. The cruiser "Olympia", with the American flags half-mast and the French flag hoisted half way up the foremast, was anchored between her escorting ships. Admiral Chandler, with the officers of his ship and those of the Destroyer "Reuben James", stood on the wharf in front of the cruiser. Grouped behind them were the band and detachments of American marines and sailors of the "Olympia".

The caisson stopped at the entrance to the breakwater and the notables formed in front of the French troops lined up in company formation.

M. Leon Meyer, Mayor of Le Havre, made an address, followed by M. Maginot, Minister of Pensions, and Major General Henry T. Allen.

The Cross of the Chevalier of the Legion of Honor was attached to the casket by the Minister in the name of the French Republic. The French Military band of the 129th Infantry played "Ouvrez le Ban" while the decoration was being secured to the coffin, and "Fermez le Ban" and the "Marseillaise" upon the completion of the ceremonies.

The military pallbearers lifted the casket and carried it towards the cruiser. They were met near the gangplank by pallbearers from the Navy and Marine Corps. The Navy took over the Unknown from the Army without lowering the casket, a sailor or marine relieving a soldier one at a time and so quietly and promptly that few realized the change had been made. Admiral Chandler, United States Navy, took charge of the body after it had left the immediate care of this Service.

As the body was being transferred to the vessel, the band of the "Olympia" played the "Marseillaise" and the "Star Spangled Banner". The American Marines were lined on the Quai d'Escale and presented arms as the pallbearers with the Unknown passed, followed by the Admiral in command of the "Olympia", his aide, three naval officers and the American and French officials.

The casket was placed on the stern of the cruiser, which had been beautifully decorated with wreaths, flowers and flags. The school children of Le Havre went aboard and banked flowers around the casket. During the ceremonies, the two French destroyers, which had been acting as escorts, to the American cruiser, pulled out beyond the breakwater. Silently, the "Olympia" moved slowly from the pier and steamed out into the bay. She was met by a salute of 17 guns from the French destroyers

in honor of America's Cherished Hero, to which she promptly responded.
The Nameless Warrior was leaving for his last resting place in the Land
of his birth.