



Newsletter Issue 35, April 2017

Monument to American Volunteers Fallen for France



Long before the United States entered the European war in April 1917, thousands of Americans had already fought - and hundreds had already died - in service to France. They were members of the French Foreign Legion, the French Army and air forces, most notably the Lafayette Escadrille. As important were the thousands who traveled to France to serve in humanitarian, medical and ambulance corps. The Monument to American Volunteers Fallen for France in the Place des États-Unis, Paris was conceived by French General Charles Mangin, who had commanded American battalions in league with his own French forces. By 1922, he could still become emotional about Americans who fought for France before their own country joined the fight, and felt that they must never be forgotten. He determined that the monument would be

an entirely French creation, and it was funded by 500,000 francs raised from 50,000 French citizens and school children. It was inscribed with names of dead American members of the Legion, the Escadrille and the American Field Service ambulance corps, and topped with a statue in the likeness of the poet soldier Alan Seeger (it would later include the name of one World War II American, see this newsletter January 2017). The monument was dedicated on the seventh anniversary of Alan Seeger's death, July 4, 1923. Though badly vandalized in 2012, then restored by the city of Paris, it would continue to be a location of annual celebrations of the relationship between the US and France nearly 100 years after its creation.

- contributed by Chris Dickon, who is author of *A Rendezvous With Death: Alan Seeger in Poetry, at War to be published in June 2017.*

US WWI Centennial kicks off in Paris

WWI Isolated Burials



The United States declared war on Germany on April 6, 1917, formally bringing the US into the conflict that some Americans had been participating in for almost three years (see above and right). The US Embassy in Paris marked the centennial of this event on April 6, 2017 with a reception hosted by our

Chargé d'Affaires Uzra Zeya and attended by French Defense Minister Jean-Yves le Drian and French Chairman of their Joint Chiefs of Staff General Pierre de Villiers, along with Libby O'Connell of the US WWI Commission. Look for many commemorative events over the next two years as we mark the centennial of our participation in the Great War.

The many Americans who volunteered to fight or assist in WWI before our entry into the war were not eligible to be buried in our cemeteries if they were killed prior to April 6, 1917. Consequently, there are over 600 Americans that we know of that are buried elsewhere in Europe: in Commonwealth War Grave Commission cemeteries, in the Lafayette Escadrille Memorial, or in churchyards or town cemeteries throughout Europe. Pictured here is the gravesite of Dennis Dowd in the St Germain-en-Laye (France) town cemetery. Dowd had enlisted in the Foreign Legion and transferred to the Lafayette Flying Corps before he was accidentally killed in August '16.



If you happen to be in Europe over Memorial Day weekend, remember that all overseas American Cemeteries have Memorial Day ceremonies that weekend. Check abmc.gov or aomda.com and aomda.org for details.

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