



**Newsletter Issue 43, April 2019**

**“Isolated Burials” —What Are They?**



After each World War, the next of kin of Americans who were killed overseas could choose what to do with the remains of their loved ones. The remains could be repatriated for burial in a cemetery in the United States, they could be buried overseas in an ABMC cemetery, or they could remain where they lay. While about 61 percent of the remains were returned to the U.S. and 39 percent were buried in ABMC cemeteries, several hundred families chose not to disturb the remains. These isolated graves can be found in town cemeteries, the war cemeteries of our allies, or even in the fields where they fell throughout Europe. The families have total responsibility for the gravesite of isolated burials. Unfortunately, in many cases these graves have been forgotten and have fallen into terrible disrepair. At left is the burial site of CPT Hamilton Coolidge, WWI aviator, who rests next to the remains of his aircraft outside of Chevières, France. The site is lovingly cared for by the family and the town.

**Not Eligible**



Some service members were killed outside of the dates officially recognized by the US Army and the American Battle Monuments Commission as the conflict dates and thus were not eligible for burial in an ABMC cemetery. For example, thousands of Americans volunteered to fight and help in France well before the US entered World War I. Those killed outside of the official dates for overseas internment are buried in local cemeteries or in allied cemeteries. Above is the gravesite of Richard Cutts Fairfield who, instead of attending Harvard University after being accepted there, volunteered to serve in Italy with the British Wynne Bevan Ambulance Corps. He rests in the Mestre Town Cemetery (close to Venice, Italy). His headstone recognizes him as the youngest American killed in the execution of his duties in the war.

**Recent Immigrants**

Some next of kin elected to repatriate their loved ones' remains not to a cemetery in the United States, but to a cemetery overseas. In many cases the family members were recent immigrants to America who retained strong ties to their homeland and thus elected a burial in their family plot. These are extremely difficult to track as US records only indicate the country where the remains were repatriated to.



Tech4 Nicolas Boudros was KIA in the Battle of the Bulge on 1 January 45 while serving in the 35th Infantry Division. His mother had him repatriated to the town cemetery of Karpasi on the island of Lemnos in Greece. His family built a beautiful tomb. Boudros was an only child so there are no immediate family members left to care for his gravesite. A distant cousin has been doing her best to maintain the site, but the tomb was severely damaged by an earthquake and a renovation is beyond her capabilities. American War Memorials is trying to raise \$15,000 to renovate the tomb of this fallen American. *Please consider a donation or give us any sponsorship ideas that you may have.*



**Other Forces**

By far the most overseas burials outside of our cemeteries occur when Americans have served in or with our allied forces. There are hundreds of Americans buried in Commonwealth War Grave Cemeteries throughout the world. LT Donald West of Fresno, CA joined the Royal Canadian Air Force in 1941, accumulating 560 hours of flying time before transferring to the USAAF in 1943. He was killed piloting a Lancaster bomber when it was shot down over Germany. He remained at the controls of his burning aircraft to give his crew the chance to get out, and four of them survived. He was awarded the British Distinguished Flying Cross and is buried in the Heverlee War Cemetery in Belgium. There are six other Americans buried there, among them a pilot in the RAF, two air gunners for the



RCAF, and an infantry Private in the Royal Highland Regiment of Canada whose headstone is pictured here.

**Veterans:** There are many American veterans who chose to remain overseas after the wars and then died years later as expatriates and were buried locally. These individuals are not War Dead and are not considered to be Isolated Burials. They are not in our memorial database.