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CPT Cunningham monument renovated



CPT Oliver Cunningham, a Yale graduate who fought at Chateau Thierry, Vaux and Belleau Wood, was killed by mortar fire on his 24th birthday, Sept. 17, 1918. His comrades of the 15th Field Artillery buried him with military honors where he fell, deep in the woods near Jaulny, France. His heartbroken mother donated three bells to the town church in her son's name, and financed the rebuilding of the town hall. Though Cunningham was eventually reinterred at St. Mihiel American Cemetery, his original tomb remains in his memory where he fell, but had fallen into disrepair. Many thanks to the Lorraine Contemporary Military History Association, who recently completed an impressive renovation of the site.



Featured Isolated Burial: LT Paul Swank



1LT Paul Swank was born at Cape Girardeau, Missouri on 12 February 1921. He entered the Army as a Private on 18 August 1942. He parachuted into Vichy, France, south of Carcassonne, on 11 August 1944 as part of Operation Peg, an OSS operation whose mission was to harass enemy forces and cut communication and supply lines in the Carcassonne Gap. On 17 August his team attempted to block the movement of a column of 250 German troops by blasting rock from a cliff near the road. The resulting rockfall was not sufficient to stop the column. Knowing that his team of 12 men could not hold back the heavily armed enemy, he stayed behind to cover the retreat of his team. LT Swank's ferocious and fatal final stand protecting his unit caused him to be awarded the Distinguished Service Cross. He had explicitly requested to be buried where



he fell, so he still rests on the west side of the D-117 between Alets-les-Bains and Limoux in the south of France. His tomb is lovingly cared for by descendants of the Maquis on his team, and they still have a ceremony at the site every year to remember this brave man.

An American Memorial in Sweden

Project Sonnie secretly evacuated 4,304 people, including Norwegian members of the Resistance and American aviators who managed to get to Sweden, and flew them from Sweden to the UK in 44 and 45. To keep them secret, the flights were only flown in bad weather and the planes were from the American Air Transport Service. A B-24 on such a secret evacuation mission crashed on 20 October 1944, killing the crew of six US Army Air Force aviators. Today they are honored by a monument at the crash site, deep in the woods outside of Alingsas, Sweden.



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