Aisne-Marne and Oise-Aisne Offensives

May 31 – September 16, 1918

For more information on this site and other ABMC commemorative sites, please visit www.abmc.gov

KEY: ♦ Military Cemetery  U.S. Army Divisions

Bellevau Wood

You may access Bellevau Wood by exiting the cemetery and turning around it to the south.

A memorial to the 4th Marine Brigade stands in the middle of Bellevau Wood.

Château-Thierry Monument - Hill 204

The Château-Thierry Monument on Hill 204 has a large map of the American operations in this region.

Cannons and vestiges of trenches and shell holes remain in Bellevau Wood.
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When the United States entered World War I in April 1917, the Allies and Germans all doubted the fighting capability of the Americans. German offensives on the Western Front in spring 1918 sought to win the war before American units became operational.

May 27, 1918: German forces broke through French lines at the “Chemin des Dames.” Within three days they reached Belleau Wood and the Marne River in Château-Thierry. Without reserves, France called on the American Expeditionary Forces.

May 30: U.S. 3rd Division arrived in Château-Thierry, blocking German forces on the north bank of the Marne throughout June.

Early June: U.S. 2nd Division, including its 4th Marine Brigade, replaced French units in the Belleau area.

June 6: Marines led the 2nd Division into Belleau Wood to clear out German units. The battle lasted 20 days and became an enduring symbol for the Marine Corps. American forces proved themselves, stirring Allied hopes to win the war.

July 15: German forces tried again to pierce Allied lines by crossing the Marne River east of Château-Thierry. The 3rd Division blocked them, and was nicknamed “Rock of the Marne” by the French Army.

July 18: The Allies began the Aisne-Marne Offensive. By August 6, the German salient was eliminated and Allied forces reached the banks of the Vesle River. Ten American Divisions (310,000 men) participated in this offensive.

General John J. Pershing led the American Expeditionary Forces to successes in the St. Mihiel and Meuse-Argonne campaigns and to the Armistice on November 11, 1918.