North Africa American Cemetery and Memorial

The cemetery lies between the Mediterranean and the Bay of Tunis, atop part of ancient Roman Carthage. It was established in 1948 to consolidate temporary cemeteries in North Africa. The government of Tunisia granted its free use as a permanent burial ground in perpetuity without charge or taxation.

American Battle Monuments Commission

This agency of the United States government operates and maintains 26 American cemeteries and 29 memorials, monuments and markers in 16 countries. The Commission works to fulfill the vision of its first chairman, General of the Armies John J. Pershing. Pershing, commander of the American Expeditionary Forces during World War I, promised that “time will not dim the glory of their deeds.”

Beginning the Liberation

On November 8, 1942, Allied naval task forces put U.S. and British forces ashore in North Africa. Winter rains and German reinforcements stalled rapid advances eastward. Hard fighting from February through early May 1943 led to success in Tunisia.
Allied leaders decided in mid-1942 that an offensive in North Africa would set the stage to enter Europe from the south, as well as the planned cross-Channel invasion. Vichy French forces in North Africa might resist, but other French forces could welcome the effort.

November 8, 1942: Operation TORCH began. Three Allied naval task forces put U.S. and British forces ashore near Casablanca, Oran, and Algiers.

November 8, 10, and 11: Vichy French forces in Algiers, Oran, and Casablanca surrendered on those dates. Free French units soon became part of Allied operations.

December 1942 through February 1943: Winter rains and strong German forces and air superiority stalled Allied advances into Tunisia.

Early February: British Eighth Army forced retreat of the Afrika Corps into southeastern Tunisia at the Mareth Line.


Mid-March: Allied forces gained air superiority.

April 27-May 1: U.S. 34th Infantry Division broke through German defenses at Hill 609. Enemy forces retreated into a small area of northeast Tunisia.

May 7: U.S. units captured Bizerte, and the British captured Tunis.

May 13: Axis forces surrendered.

Conclusion of the campaign in North Africa set the stage for next steps in the Mediterranean: the invasion of Sicily and onward into Italy.