



American Battle Monuments Commission – World War One Sites

Routes of Interest – From Reims east to the Sommepey American Monument.

Notes: American infantry divisions and smaller units attached to French armies fought in the area between Reims and the Meuse Argonne battlefields. The Army's 2nd Division with its Marine Brigade fought here after Chateau Thierry and Belleau Wood. The 42nd "Rainbow Division" also fought in this area.

Reims is a very historic town with several museums, The Abby of St. Remi, and the High Gothic style Cathedral of Notre Dame de Reims where almost all French Kings were crowned. The cathedral was heavily damaged in 1914, and restored by the French Government with private American assistance, and reopened this historic landmark in 1938. Adjacent to the Cathedral is the Palais du Tau, a museum.

During summer the Sommepey American Monument is open weekdays from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., and on weekends from 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.. The monument is open on French and American holidays, and closed on 25 December and 1 January.

1. Take the D944, the Rue Henri Farman, southeast from Reims.
2. When there are fields on both sides of the roads look for a band of woods ahead and pull off into the parking lot on the right for the Fort de la Pompelle museum.
 - Fort de la Pompelle: This Fortress was built in the 1880s, captured by the Germans for three weeks in 1914, and then retaken by the French. The Germans assaulted the front line fort with tanks on June 1, 1918. An excellent museum for local WW1 history, uniforms, and equipment.
3. Return to the D944 headed southeast and look for signs for a traffic circle and Airport.
4. Take the 3rd exit from the traffic Circle, toward Verdun/Mourmelon/Suippes on D931
 - The very straight road you are on was originally established by the Romans.
 - On the left you will be a WW1 Cemetery, where 12,169 French, Poles, and Germans are interred.
5. Pass the turn off to the town of Auberive to the left.
 - On July 15-18, 1918 this was the left of the 42 "Rainbow" Division's forward line facing German attacks from the north. A sentry line was 1-2 miles north. French artillery was deployed to your right. The 42nd Division's front ran east from here for 8 miles.
6. Continue Southeast through Saint-Hilaire-le-Grand and Jonchery on the D931 toward Suippes.
 - Note: Jonchery was in the 2nd line position of the 42nd Division.
7. At the first intersection in Suippes turn left toward Verdun/Sedan /Charleville on the D977
8. The road will bend right and then open into a town square with a church.
9. Turn left toward Sedan/ Charleville on the D977.
 - Note: Local Museum: turn sharp left carefully into parking. The Centre d'Interprétation Marne '14-'18. This is a local museum on World War One. One Brigade of the Rainbow Division was

based here in July 1918, two Artillery Battalions in fields north of town, and two Battalions of the 167th Infantry (Alabama National Guard) in the 2nd Defense line two miles further north.

10. Continue North on the D977, through Souain-Perthes-les-Hurlus.
 - Note: On your left is the WW1 cemetery Souain la Crouee. Over 30,000 French soldiers are buried here, and over 13,000 Germans in an adjacent site.
11. Continuing north you will pass the first defense line at a low concrete bunker on the left.
 - Note: Here Company E, and F of 167th Infantry, repulsed German attacks in hand to hand fighting in July 1918.
12. You will see a large monument ahead on the left, the Ossuaire de Navarin.
 - The French forward sentry line was about ¼ mile south of the monument.
13. Navarin Farm and Ossuary – there is parking here.
 - In October 1918 the French 4th Army attacked this site from the south. There are remains of WW1 trenches and craters here. The ossuary commemorates those who lost their lives in the Armies of the Champagne region 10,000 French, American, Czech, and Polish soldier are buried here.
14. Continue north on D977
15. Bear right at the fork toward Sommepey
16. At the Traffic Circle take the 2nd exit toward Sedan Charleville.
17. About 4 miles north of town turn left onto a paved field road.
18. Take the 3rd left onto the D320 toward St. Etienne-a-Arnes.
19. Bear right at the fork toward St. Etienne-a-Arnes.
20. Bear right at the next intersection toward St. Etienne-a-Arnes/Memorial Americain.
21. Two miles north there are trees and a tower on the right.
22. Enter the site at the “Memorial Americain” sign.
 - This is the Sommepey American Monument - During summer the monument is open weekdays from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., and on weekends from 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.. The monument is open on French and American holidays.
 - Sommepey American Monument - The French refer to this as the “Monument Americain du Blanc Mont”. This site commemorates the attack made by the U.S. Army’s 2nd Division. They fought as part of the French Second Army under General Gouraud, and their ranks included the U.S. Marine Brigade, and elements of the 36th Division. Fighting occurred in October 1918 with an assault on the third. The Division took the ground swiftly, surprising their French allies who had failed to take the ridge in numerous previous attacks.

On October 3 a dressing station was established at Sommepey by Ambulance Co. No. 1. Later Field Hospital No. 1 and surgical Field Hospitals No. 15 and 23 reinforced medical services there.