

'Our Honored Dead, Overseas'

■ BG John S. Brown, U.S. Army retired, does an outstanding job of telling the story of America's overseas military cemeteries in his May "Historically Speaking." After each war—given the choice—approximately 60 percent of the next of kin of our war dead chose to repatriate the remains of their loved ones home for private burial and about 40 percent chose to leave the remains in our beautiful overseas cemeteries. BG Brown, however, doesn't tell the story of the hundreds of American war dead who are buried overseas outside of our cemeteries.

These isolated burials occurred for several reasons: The next of kin elected to leave the remains where they fell and assumed responsibility to care for the diverse and isolated sites; the families were recent immigrants to the United States and chose to repatriate the remains to their original homeland; or the young American joined a foreign service before America's entry into the war and is buried in a Commonwealth War Grave or other foreign military cemetery. Today there are hundreds of fallen Americans buried in locations overseas, but not in our cemeteries.

BG Brown also mentions America's overseas monuments, built and maintained by the American Battle Monuments Commission. Indeed, the commission was originally established in 1923 not to run the cemeteries but to design and construct monuments. Their 14 independent memorials are indeed breathtaking, but they are com-

plemented by hundreds of private memorial sites—monuments built not by the U.S. government but by units, veterans' groups, families, towns and others. Today, these monument sites keep alive the memory of America's wartime service, achievements and sacrifices.

While American Battle Monument Commission cemeteries and monuments are maintained in pristine condition, isolated burials and private memorials are often less well-maintained. American War Memorials Overseas is a 501 (c)(3) nonprofit corporation that seeks to document, promote and preserve all of these scattered burial sites and monuments. For more information, visit our website at www.uswarmemorials.org or send us an email at info@uswarmemorials.org.

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