



Office National des Forêts

COMMEMORATION OF THE WWI CENTENNIAL IN THE ARGONNE



Emblematic sites of the American intervention during World War I.

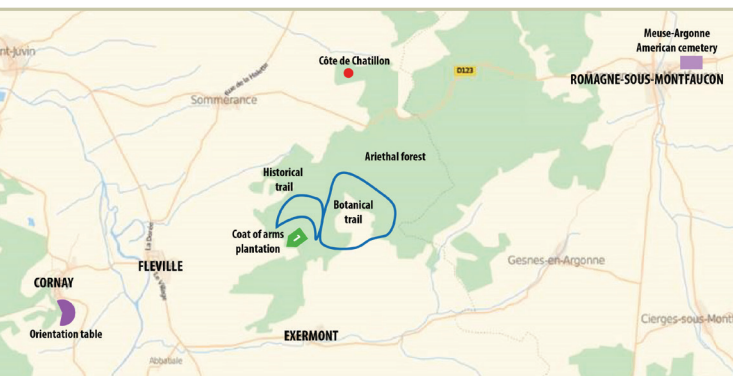
CORNAY, EXERMONT, FLEVILLE AND ARIETHAL FOREST

THE FRENCH FOREST

At the end of September 1918, the 35th Division, in which the future President Truman was serving, launched an offensive in the Argonne Forrest, the ultimate purpose of which was the capture of the Côte de Châtillon. On the very first day, Lt.-Col. Patton was wounded while leading his tanks into battle. The 35th Division was soon replaced by the 1st Division. In 10 days of combat, the 1st Division made an advance of over 4km in this hilly area, capturing 10 strongholds, with losses of about 9000, including 1700 dead. Exhausted by the Battle of Argonne Forest, the 1st Division, an elite unit of the U.S. Army, was relieved by the 42nd Division, comprised of National Guard units and better known as the Rainbow Division. The New York regiment, under Col. "Wild Bill" Donovan, founder of OSS (the precursor of the CIA), launched an offensive. However, the Côte de Châtillon was finally taken on October 16, 1918 by soldiers from Alabama and Iowa under the command of Col. Douglas MacArthur.

The French National Forest Office (ONF) would like to undertake a heritage presentation program for these highly symbolic and historic places, to ensure their memorialization and look to the future.

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This program has been approved by the French Mission du Centenaire and the US World War One Centennial Commission. We are currently seeking sponsors for this project.



There are four parts to this project :

- A lookout point at Croix du Bayle
- A commemorative planting in the forest and its path of nature discovery
- The creation of an heritage trail in the forest
- The enhancement of the site's education value

PROJECT PRESENTATION

The purpose of this project is to highlight the various combat sites, to show their strategic importance in the operations — e.g. Croix du Bayle, Ariethal Forest — or memorialize them — e.g. the American cemetery at Romagne-Montfaucon.

A further objective is to show the role played by the forest in the healing of natural sites and the preservation of the remains of the Great War.

THE 4 PROJECTS

Lookout point at Croix du Bayle

A natural promontory overlooks the surrounding countryside near the village of Cornay. An orientation table showing the various combat zones and places of interest will be installed there, and the site will be developed to increase its accessibility. It will be accessible and open to the public.

Commemorative planting in the forest

Symbolic planting is under way to reconstitute the Big Red One's coat of arms. North American tree species have been used, such as red oak and sequoia. To delineate this symbol and create interaction with the visitors, a path will be laid around the plantation. This pathway can be made accessible to disabled visitors.



Sisyrrinchium montanum
(American blue-eyed grass)
An emblematic flower brought by
American soldiers to the battlefields



*Coat of arms of
the U.S. First Division
(Big Red One)*

Forest heritage trail

This heritage trail will offer a botanical and an historical approach, introducing the non-indigenous plants brought in by armies as well as the visible remains of the war. At the entrance, a welcome area with shelters, information panels and overall signage will greet the visitor.

Respect for natural sites and preservation of historical remains and biodiversity are essential parts of the sustainable management policy of the ONF.

Enhancement of the site's educational value

Educational events and tours will be organized along these trails by an ONF official specializing in the history of the sites. The Romagne-Montfaucon US Cemetery will be the highlight of these tours. A tourist-information booklet will also be issued with the cooperation of the tourism agencies.

COST OF THE PROJECT & CONTACTS

TOTAL ESTIMATED COST: 300,000€

Croix du Bayle lookout point

Orientation table	20,000 €
Site access	45,000 €

Commemorative planting

Planting	60,000 €
Laying of disabled-access path	88,000 €

Creation of an heritage trail in the forest

Creation of reception area	22,000 €
Heritage trails	10,000 €
Signage	15,000 €

Enhancement of the site's educational value

Guided tours	15,000 €
Communication	15,000 €
Events	10,000 €

PROJECT TEAM

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