



Tours Monument

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The Tours Monument stands on Ave. André Malraux about 300 meters east of the southern end of Pont Wilson, the bridge across the Loire River.

American Battle Monuments Commission

This agency of the United States government operates and maintains 25 American cemeteries and 26 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."

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www.abmc.gov

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The American Monument at Tours recognizes the achievements of the members of the Services of Supply (SOS) in World War I. The city of Tours was its headquarters during the war. The work of the members of the SOS behind the battle lines enabled the armies of the American Expeditionary Forces (AEF) to perform their combat missions.



Photo: ABMC
The bronze sculpture atop the monument portrays an American Indian releasing an eagle.

The fountain's column between the lower and upper basins displays sculptures of the coats of arms of Bordeaux, Brest, Is-sur-Tille, Le Mans, Neufchâteau, Nevers, St. Nazaire, and Tours. Important installations of the SOS were located in those cities during the war. Four sculptured figures appear on the column above the upper basin. They represent the four principal divisions of the SOS: Administration, Construction, Procurement, and Distribution. A bronze sculpture gleams from the top of the monument.

THE SERVICES OF SUPPLY

Principal functions of the Services of Supply operating in France and Great Britain were procurement, storage, and transportation



Photo: The National Archives
Services of Supply (SOS) soldiers build a locomotive at the assembly plant in St. Nazaire.



Photo: The National Archives

Photo: The National Archives
Soldiers of the 20th Engineer Regiment cutting trees for use as fence posts.



of supplies. Successful execution of those functions enabled the combatant forces to concentrate on defeating the enemy.

By the time of the Armistice on November 11, 1918, a total of 2,057,907 American troops had come to European soil. Among them were almost 645,000 soldiers and 24,000 civilians of the Services of Supply.

Here are examples of SOS accomplishments:

- » Constructed almost 1,000 miles of standard-gauge railway tracks;
- » Assembled more than 1,500 locomotives and 18,000 rail cars with parts shipped from the United States;
- » Managed hospitals with a capacity of 192,844 beds.

General John J. Pershing, commander of the AEF, said this about the Services of Supply in his final report:

Magnificent efforts were exerted by the entire Services of Supply to meet the enormous demands made on it. Obstacles which seemed insurmountable were overcome daily in expediting the movements of replacements, ammunition and supplies to the front, and of sick and wounded to the rear.



Photo: The National Archives

Photo: The National Archives
Horses debark from a transport ship at Bordeaux. Almost 68,000 horses and mules were shipped from the USA to the AEF.