Godfathership of the
Graves of Dead Amer. Soldiers
1945-47

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Œuvre du Parrainage des Tombes
de Soldats Américains
Godfathership of the Graves
of the Dead American Soldiers

1005, Grand'Rue
Great Street
PRAYON-TROOZ (Liège)
Belgique - Belgium

Présidente d'Honneur : Honorary President :
Mrs Franklin ROOSEVELT

Prayon-Trooz, le 2d December 1946

Chèques Postaux 7766.11

Dear Madam,

We think that it should be pleasant to you to know what the Committee of which you so kindly accepted the Presidence of Honour, realize in remembrance of the Heroes of the American Army who are dead in order that we may live free. Besides we feel it our duty to keep you acquainted with our activities.

We beg you kindly to excuse us for having somewhat delayed doing so, but it was our intention to put off the matter till now in order to enable us to describe better the Ceremonies which were organized at the Henri-Chapelle Cemetery.

As we had the honour to let you know, we organized three Religious Ceremonies in Commemoration of that gallant American youth who came and died from their distant Mother-country for our Liberation.

If we chose the month of September for celebrating our ceremonies, it is because September was the very month of the aniversary of our first contact with your gallant Sammies. In fact, could we possibly celebrate that aniversary better than by leaning to the Graves of those who had sacrificed their lives so that we might live free and happy.

On Sunday 1st September 1946 we organized the Religious Protestant Ceremony. We were very pleased to meet the Rev. Chaplain Rusher of the American Army who officiated. Also were present the Rev. Clergyman Getaz of Verviers and another Young Clergyman. A crowd of over 1000 persons

attended the Ceremony in an empressive manner. The Rev. Chaplain Rusher spoke first in an excellent French. The two Clergymen spoke afterwards. The Ceremony although very simple was grand according to our wishes and fully answered our expectation. It ended by a speech in French delivered by our Lady President. That speech was repeated in English by Mr Joseph Cajot, a member of our Committee.

But we were surprised at the end of the Ceremony. On that moment, an American lady accompanied by persons at whose house she had her quarters made her appearance. She was the Mother of a soldier interred at Henri-Chapelle. Our President readily took a decision. She requested the Rev. Chaplain Rusher to be so kind as to organize an intimate fresh ceremony on the grave of that lady's son which took place. Everybody came to the grave referred to i.e. that of the soldier Babcock. That was readily adorned with many flowers which caused the grave to disappear almost totally. Before parting, after the flags had leant to the grave, the crowd marched past in front of the mother surrounded by the Rev. Chaplain Rusher and the President, and expressed her the great part having been taken in her sorrow.

On Sunday September 15th 1946, it was the turn of our second Ceremony. We had that day a grand Catholic Ceremony. As the preceding one, it took place at 2 p.m. That time we had a much larger attendance which was estimated at more than 2500 persons. Many authorities had answered our invitation too, and we had the great honour to meet Captain Miller, a Military attache of Embassy, and representing His Excellence the Honourable Ambassador of the United States. We were also very pleased to note the presence of Colonel Johnson and Major Lile representing the American Army; Mr Meyers Civilian Manager of the Cemetery; Mr Burt Derocy American Superintendent of the Cemetery; The Representative of the Governor of the Liege district; Misters the Military Auditors of Liege and Verviers; the Representatives of the former of Old Contemptibles Associations; Members of Patriotic Societies and Belgian Red Cross.

A train preceded by a Cross bearer led the authorities and the participants from the meeting place to the entrance of the Cemetery to the Chapel where a solemn high Mass had to take place. Father Rafferty, a Chaplain of the American Army surrounded by the Chaplain of the Vogelsang Convent, and another Priest in the neighbourhood, was officiating. The Chapel was much too small to contain the crowd who had accepted our invitation. The choir of the Chapel was surrounded by the many flags of the present associations and the high Mass began and was celebrated in an impressive silence. At the end of the Mass, the train was reformed and went to the foot of the Central Mast where the Vicar of Hombourg surrounded by many Clergymen in black dresses sang the general absolution. It ended by the hearing of the American and Belgian anthems which were executed by the "Société d'Harmonie de Hombourg". During the silence minute, trumpets rang the "Last Post". The lady president of our Committee delivered a short speech in French repeated in English by our English Secretary Miss Olga Boussaint. Captain Miller also delivered a warm speech in an excellent French language. Thereupon a marching part of the societies animated by the Harmony of Hombourg. During the marching past, we saw the flags leaning to the Mast and an heaping up of flowers. So our second ceremony ended.

Afterwards the third ceremony began, on Sunday September 29th 1946. Over 1000 persons were there. It was quite a plain ceremony. The great Rabbi of Brussels, David Berman, surrounded by two officiating ministers, the Rev. Rabbi of Liege and another Rabbi of Brussels, were officiating at the foot of the Mast. During the ceremony, a symbolic procession went round a baron composed of 200 graves. Back to

as well as our best
Yours very
Lady Vice President

the foot of the Mast, the ceremony ended by a speech delivered in French by the Lady President and repeated in English by our English Secretary Mr Edward Bort. The ceremony ended by a salute to the Mast symbolizing all the dead Soldiers of the Cemetery.

In short, our description of the three Ceremonies which were organized at the American Cemetery. We contemplate renewing them next year at the same period and hope they will be better organized. Our intention is to repeat them every year at least, as long as American Soldiers are buried in Belgium.

On the 2nd November last the Rev. Father Rafferty, a Chaplain of the U.S. Army organized a mass for commemorating the American Soldiers of Henri-Chapelle and he requested us kindly to summon all our Members with a view to attending that ceremony which took place at 2 p.m.. Unfortunately, the Rev. Father had to leave unexpectedly for Ireland by military order. His departure is only temporary. He had to be replaced at the last minute. He is Father to the Val Dieu Abbey, and came and sang the mass, which was attended by over 300 persons having come to the ceremony despite the bad weather and the lengthy walk which most of them had to do.

We have thought that you would be very glad to receive the series of photos enclosed with our report and which better than our descriptions will give you an exact idea of the importance of our organization. Also enclosed the English texts of the speeches which were delivered on the occasion of each ceremony. These texts will give you the feelings and the essential purposes we are aiming at.

While we excuse us for having so much trespassed on your time, we beg to express herewith, Dear Madam, our profound gratitude for your having accepted the Presidence of Honour of the "Godfathership of the graves of the Dead American Soldiers"

by a speech
and repeated
Edward Bort
the most symbolizing
of the three Ceremonies
Cemetery. We
year at the same
organized. Our
ear at least, as long
Belgium.
the Rev. Tatha Rafferty

as well as our best wishes.

Yours very Respectfully,

Lady President,
J. Vivier

Lady Vice President,
Stirard

Lady Secretary,
Aubry

English Secretaries,
O. Toussaint
W. Bort

Assistant-Secretaries
N. Eischel
G. Zecko

Treasurer,
P. Vivier

Assistant-Treasurer,
Pojot

Members,
J. Murray
N. Gavray
Paul Rimont
Thérnard

Missing: Mr A. Gallet (member)