A Century Later:
Remembering World War I
Crossing the Marne

As temporary replacements for destroyed bridges across Europe, numerous small boats, with their bows pointed towards the oncoming flow of water, served as pontoons, supporting a sectional wooden deck laid across their tops. Aerial photography helped identify destroyed bridges and the need for pontoon bridges. Shown are US Forces crossing the Marne River near Lucy, France, July 20, 1918. The pontoon bridge was a temporary replacement for the destroyed bridge in the background. As pontoon bridges of this size were especially buoyant, the soldiers crossing are using caution by keeping equal spacing and their preserving balance.

Fort de la Pompelle

The Fort de la Pompelle (pictured) was completed in 1883, as one of several forts protecting the city of Reims, France. During WWI, the fort was taken by the Germans on September 4, 1914. The French quickly retook it on September 24, and held it through the German offensive in the spring of 1918. The fort was bombarded to the point of ruins during the Second Battle of the Marne.

Observation Balloon

The static nature of trench warfare led to a concentration of surveillance balloons to observe a distance. Tethered to the ground by steel cables, operating altitudes of one mile were not uncommon. Later in the war, fixed-wing aircraft assumed most balloon missions, although artillery spotting continued from balloons until the end of the war.

Aftermath of Zeebrugge Raid

In April 1918, Britain executed a plan to sink three old British ships to block the entrance to the Port of Zeebrugge, a major German submarine base. The ships were loaded with concrete and steered towards the harbor. Although one was sunk by German fire before reaching the desired position, the British successfully sunk two ships and closed the port for several days. Only at high tide could German submarines pass through the port entrance. Shown is an aerial photo of the port clearly displaying the three sunken ships.

Ernest Hemingway

Rejected by the Army for medical reasons, eighteen-year old Ernest Hemingway joined the Red Cross as an ambulance driver and arrived in Italy in June 1918. On July 8, he was severely wounded, ending his military career. He was honored for his bravery, receiving Italy's Medal of Valor for carrying a soldier to safety. Shown is Hemingway in an ambulance in 1918. In 1929, he authored *Farewell to Arms*, an iconic novel based on the war.

Field Artillery Captain Harry S. Truman

In 1918, Harry Truman commanded Battery D of the 35th Infantry Division. Arriving in Europe without heavy weapons, Battery D spent time training with French 75mm field guns before joining the Allied forces in launching the massive Meuse-Argonne Offensive in September 1918. Enduring forty-seven days of heavy combat, Battery D displayed great skill and leadership under fire, attributes later tested as president of the United States from 1945 to 1953.