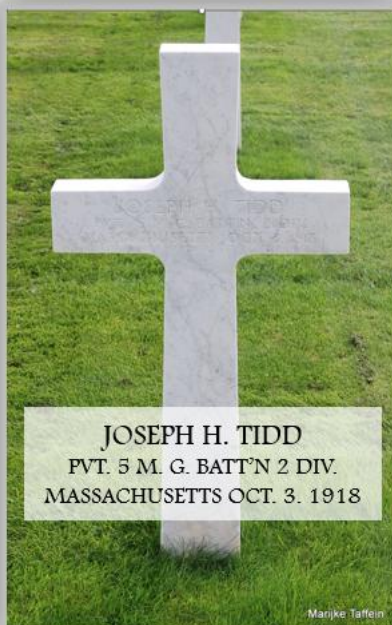




Meuse-Argonne Cemetery

Jennie kept a journal of her experiences during her month-long pilgrimage in July 1930 to see her son's grave in France. It is mostly filled with ordinary day-to-day details such as descriptions of meals and transportation, and the different landscapes she saw. This excerpt, however, describes her days at Meuse-Argonne Cemetery, and her encounter with a French matriarch who had also lost her son in the war.

The Meuse-Argonne Cemetery is the largest overseas American-maintained burial ground at 130.5 acres. It contains the largest number of American military dead in Europe (14,246), most of whom lost their lives during the Meuse-Argonne Offensive and were buried there.



WEDNESDAY, JULY 9: Left at 9:00 a.m. and went to the cemetery. Stopped first at the tea rooms (American). We had brought box lunches. Before us on a slope were the white crosses. We were called by letter, each plot having a letter A&B, C&D, E&F, so I went to plot F, row 6, grave 17. Never did I walk so slow for fear - - that I should not find his name there, but it was there, and now I feel that my son sleeps there in one of the beauty spots of a beautiful country. I placed a wreath of lovely flowers and greens there on his grave, and shall take more on Friday a.m.

THURSDAY, JULY 10: Went to Meuse Argonne Cemetery again today, took our dinner and ate at the tea rooms; went to the Argonne Forest and saw where Prince Rupert of Bavaria had his headquarters, sidewalks, pools for bathing, electric wires still in the trees, and a wonderful system of underground buildings, made of steel and cement. They made gardens, had hens and chickens, and all the comforts of home. After lunch we went on to what they called the "Trench of Bayonets", where French soldiers were buried standing in the trenches with the tops of their rifles above ground. American money has placed a cement building over a part of it.

FRIDAY, JULY 11: It is raining but we go the cemetery just the same, as our flowers will be there. Our nurse, Miss King from Australia, will go with us instead of our Lieut. Zwicker, as he has gone with one of our party 100 miles further to help her get one of her son's children (if she can persuade the mother to give him up); there are three of them. The flowers are just lovely, with the wreath I took Wednesday. Brother's resting place is covered now. It stopped raining just long enough for me to get up there; I came back in the wet with lots of others. At 3:00 we started back to Verdun, missing our Lieut.

On our way this a.m. a woman who was passing asked our nurse what the bus full of flowers was for. She told her, and the dear soul lifted her hands and blessed us for coming here on this errand, giving her love and sympathy to the mothers who came so far to see their sons' graves; she added, "*I lost a son too*", and went on wiping her tears.