

# Connecting the Oceans

**KEY:** † Military Cemetery



Photo: The National Archives  
President Theodore Roosevelt controls a steam shovel while inspecting Panama Canal construction, November 1906.

## Corozal American Cemetery and Memorial

The site was originally a farm of the Isthmian Canal Commission. It evolved into a cemetery in 1914, expanding over the years. Under terms of the Panama Canal Treaty, ratified in 1978, 16.9 acres of the site was designated a permanent American cemetery. ABMC assumed control of the site on June 5, 1982.

## 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."



### American Battle Monuments Commission

2300 Clarendon Boulevard, Suite 500  
Arlington, VA 22201  
USA

### Corozal American Cemetery

Calle Rufina Alfaro, Edif. #6566  
Corozal, Republic of Panama

TEL 011 507 317-6034

EMAIL abmcpn1@cwpanama.net

GPS N8 59.356 W79 34.351

For more information on this site and other  
ABMC commemorative sites, please visit  
[www.abmc.gov](http://www.abmc.gov)



# Corozal American Cemetery and Memorial

American Battle Monuments Commission





## CONNECTING THE OCEANS

**DECEMBER 1502:** Christopher Columbus, on his fourth voyage, saw the Chagres River.

**1509:** Spain founded settlements in Panama.

**SEPTEMBER 1513:** Vasco Nuñez de Balboa reached the Pacific Ocean and proved the isthmus existed.

**NOVEMBER 25, 1821:** Panama declared independence from Spain, joining Colombia.

**JANUARY 27, 1855:** Panama Railroad, the first transcontinental railroad, was completed.

**NOVEMBER 3, 1903:** With U.S. encouragement, Panama seceded from Colombia.

**NOVEMBER 18:** The U.S. and Panama signed the Hay—Bunau-Varilla Treaty, granting the U.S. rights to build and defend a canal across the isthmus.

**MAY 4, 1904:** The Isthmian Canal Commission began construction of the Panama Canal.

**NOVEMBER 6-22, 1906:** President Theodore Roosevelt inspected Panama Canal construction on the first official visit abroad by a president while in office.

**FEBRUARY 5, 1914:** The Isthmian Canal Commission designated two acres of land as a permanent cemetery. The first interment was conducted on February 13.

**AUGUST 15:** The Panama Canal officially opened, connecting the oceans.

**SEPTEMBER 7, 1977:** President Jimmy Carter and General Omar Torrijos signed the two Torrijos-Carter Treaties, transferring the Canal to Panama by the end of the 20th Century.

**JANUARY 19, 1979:** President Carter's Executive Order 12115 assigned the American Battle Monuments Commission to administer the 16.9-acre Corozal American Cemetery.

**JUNE 5, 1982:** ABMC assumed control of the cemetery.

**JUNE 11, 1999:** The U.S. and Panama signed the agreement formalizing ABMC's operation of the cemetery after the Panama Canal and U.S. bases were transferred to Panama on December 31, 1999.

### Overview

This aerial photo of the southern portion of the cemetery highlights the Visitor Center, Memorial Hill, Calle Rufina



Alfaro which borders the eastern cemetery boundary, and various plot areas.

### Graves Area

The graves are situated on the rolling terrain of the cemetery in 11 plots ranging alphabetically from A through K.



### Memorial

The inscription on the memorial pays tribute to those interred here who served in the U.S. armed forces or contributed to the construction, operation and maintenance of the Panama Canal.



### Headstone

Cpl. John E. Westberg, of the 1st Illinois Cavalry, is one of 31 veterans of the Spanish-American War interred at the Corozal American Cemetery.



### Visitor Building

Here you can meet our staff, get your questions answered, and sign the guest register.



### Entrance

The entrance, on the west side of Calle Rufina Alfaro, welcomes visitors to the cemetery and memorial.



## Layout

After passing through the entrance gate, visitors follow a path with restrooms on the right and then the visitor building on the left. Parking is available at the "Y" at the base (east) of section E.



### Plantings

Lush tropical flowers and other plantings brighten the scene. Stately palm trees enhance the dignity of the site.



*Photo: The National Archives*

*Workers pause during construction of a "cut" through terrain for the Panama Canal, 1913.*

## Headstone Location

**PLOT:** .....

**ROW:** .....

**GRAVE:** .....

## Useful Information

**DIMENSIONS:** 16.9 acres  
**PERSONS INTERRED:** 5,424  
**NATIONALITIES REPRESENTED:** 71  
**DEDICATED:** February 5, 1914

**U.S. ACTIONS INVOLVED:** Construction of Panama Canal, campaigns from the Mexican-American War through the current International War on Terrorism.

