Each great nation possesses a number of monuments recalling its major historical events. Such is case of this memorial site of the Battle of La Fiere, which we could allude to as the Gettysburg of Liberty.

It illustrates a page of history, a page written with the blood of soldiers and civilians, a page known by France and the United States of America.

It is difficult to imagine today in this rural and peaceful countryside, from the manor house to the chapel on the other side of the marshes, that a fierce battle took place.

In June 1944, these flooded marshes encircled the road. 37 American paratroopers drowned here. A hundred feet ahead, in front of us, 40 paratroopers from the 505 PIR would lose their lives. At the Manor house, 2 battalion commanders and 20 paratroopers were killed. The barn was full of wounded and near dead.
TOTALITE LES PERTES S’ELEVAIENT A PRES DE 300 TUES ET 600 BLESSES EN 4 JOURS DE COMBATS COTE AMERICAIN.

On the causeway, more than 100 paratroopers lay dead, gunned down while attacking. At the Cauquigny chapel, we discovered a vision from hell as the corpses of the soldiers lay intertwined. Overall the American loss grew to 300 killed and 600 wounded during the 4 days of battle.

LE MAJOR KELLAM MENE L’ATTAQUE DU 505EME POUR LIBERER LE MANOIR. MARCUS HEIM ET LEONARD PETERSON DETRUISENT 3 TANKS SUR LA CHAUSSEE. ILS SERONT DECORES PLUS TARD DE LA DISTINGUISHED SERVICE CROSS.

Major Kellan leads the attack of the 505th to liberate the Manor House. Marcus Heim and Leonard Peterson destroy 3 tanks on the causeway. They will later be decorated with the Distinguished Service Cross.

LE SERGENT BILL OWEN EN DEPIT DE TRES LOURDES PERTES REUSSIT A TENIR LE PONT. LE SOLDAT BOB MURPHY APPORTE SOUS LA MITRAILLE, LE MESSAGE A OWEN LUI DEMANDANT LA PERMISSION DE SE REPLIER. LA REPONSE EST CINGLANTE. « RESTEZ ICI IL N Y A PAS DE MEILLEUR ENDROIT POUR Mourir »

Sergeant Bill Owen, suffering tremendous losses, succeeds in holding the bridge. Private Bob Murphy, under a hail of bullets, brings a message to Owen asking his permission to withdraw. The sergeant snaps back: “STAY HERE, THERE IS NO BETTER PLACE TO DIE.”

CHARLES DE GLOPPER SE SACRIFIE POUR SAUVER SES COMPAGNONS D’ARMES. IL RECEVRA LA MEDAL OF HONOR A TITRE POSTHUME.

Charles de Glopper sacrifices his life to save his brother in arms. He’ll receive the Medal of Honor posthumously.

LE GENERAL RIDGWAY EST PRESENT A L’ARRIERE PREPARANT L’ATTAQUE DE LA CHAUSSEE. LE CAPITAINE SAUL MENE LA CHARGE AVEC SES 37 SOLDATS. L’UN DES EVENEMENTS LES PLUS HEROIQUES ET LES PLUS MECONNUS DE TOUTE LA GUERRE. LE GENERAL GAVIN, DEPUIS LE MANOIR, DONNE SES ORDRES AU CAPITAINE WRAY POUR S’ASSURER LA DEFENSE DE LA TETE DE PONT.

At the rear, General Ridgway is preparing to attack the causeway. Captain Saul leads the charge with his 37 soldiers, one of the most heroic and unknown events of the
General Gavin, from the Manor House, gives the orders to Captain Wray to assure the defense of the bridge.

The farmers and their families in the area try to escape the cataclysm of the war. Certain help the paratroopers in giving them food or helping the wounded, giving them comfort with a smile or a thank you. June 10th, this soil was finally free. From there would start the liberation of Normandy and France.

Today, our association, Friends of the American Veterans, founder of this Memorial Site of La Fiere want to express its eternal gratitude to the heroic American paratroopers of the 82nd and 101st Airborne Divisions who sacrificed their lives for our freedom.

We will never forget as we inaugurate now the memorial “IN MEMORIAM” in homage to these valiant paratroopers.

This memorial was initiated and realized by the AVA Association with the financial support from Operation Democracy of Locust Valley, NY and the French National Office of Veterans.

ELLE SERA DEVOILEE PAR MONSIEUR MARCHAND LACOUR, SOUS-PREFET, LE COMMANDEUR NATIONAL DE L’AMERICAN LEGION MR KOUTZ, ET LE COLONEL
KEITH NIGHTINGALE, ANCIEN COLONEL COMMANDANT LE 505EME REGIMENT DE LA 82 EME A D ET DES FORCES SPECIALES AMERICAINES ET EN PRESENCE DES VETERANS PARACHUTISTES DES DEUX DIVISIONS; DUAINÉ PINKSTON, BILL SULLIVAN, GEORGE SHENKLE, RAY FARY, JOHN CIPOLA ET WILSON COLWELL ET DE MESDAMES, KAYE WENINGER, PRESIDENTE et CATHY SOREF, VICE-PRESIDENTE D OPERATION DEMOCRACY.

It will be unveiled by Mr Marchand Lacour, Sub-Prefect, The National Commander of the American Legion Mr Koutz and Colonel Keith Nightingale, former commanding Colonel of the 505 PIR of the 82nd Airborne, and in presence of veteran parachutists from both divisions, Duaine Pinkston, Bill Sullivan, George Shenkle, Ray Fary, John Cipola and Wilson Colwell as well as Kaye Weninger, President and Cathy Soref, Vice President of Operation Democracy.

GOD BLESS AMERICA MERCI