



# STRATEGIC PLAN

## 2022 - 2026



## Mission

The American Battle Monuments Commission, the preeminent guardian of America's commemorative military cemeteries and memorials worldwide, honors the achievements of the U.S. armed forces by preserving their legacy of service and sacrifice.

## Vision

ABMC is the premier agency for commemorating and venerating American military service, sacrifice, and achievements, fulfilling the promise of General of the Armies John J. Pershing that "Time will not dim the glory of their deeds."

## Values

- **Honor:** We memorialize and commemorate the service of America's armed forces.
- **Respect:** We extol the unique value and individual sacrifice of each service member.
- **Excellence:** We dedicate ourselves to being the preeminent standard of excellence for maintaining America's military cemeteries and memorials.
- **Stewardship:** We are responsible guardians of the sacred mission entrusted to our care.
- **Commitment:** We are dedicated to professional service to our nation, our allies and partners, our communities, and our workforce.



## Strategic Goals

**ABMC will remain the preeminent standard of excellence for maintaining America's overseas military cemeteries and iconic memorials and will work with relevant stakeholders to identify new opportunities to establish memorials in the U.S. and overseas that honor post-Korean War service and sacrifice.**

**ABMC will work with interagency and public partners to capture the nature of service-related sacrifice as a means of ensuring the continued relevance of our commemorative efforts.**

**ABMC will identify innovative methods and connections that reflect our broader recognition of sacrifice and expand national and international audiences' appreciation for the service of America's armed forces.**

**ABMC will sustain its mission effectiveness by recruiting, developing, and retaining a diverse, professional, and passionate workforce.**



## Strategic Objectives

**ABMC will remain the preeminent standard of excellence for maintaining America's overseas military cemeteries and iconic memorials and will work with relevant stakeholders to identify new opportunities to establish memorials in the U.S. and overseas that honor post-Korean War service and sacrifice.**

ABMC commemorative cemeteries and federal memorials are maintained and preserved to an exceptional standard commensurate with the sacrifices they honor.

ABMC validates the respect given to those who have served in its armed forces through exemplary design, maintenance, upkeep, and preservation of cemeteries, monuments, and markers. ABMC's commemorative mission is accomplished by ensuring that military cemeteries and memorials are places that people feel a strong desire to visit. These historic sites attract visitors in large part due to their aesthetic quality and the meticulous attention to detail that goes into the maintenance of the structures and horticultural features.

The core of ABMC's mission is upholding the highest maintenance and preservation standards and selecting and using noble materials that reflect the reverence of the American people. Consistent results are ensured by documenting, reviewing, and enforcing standards, establishing lifecycle metrics and adhering to cyclical maintenance requirements. As our cemeteries and memorials age, ABMC meets the arduous challenge of finding and using materials and techniques that, in the course of time, may have become rare or impossible to source. ABMC cannot stop the march of time, so when original materials or techniques prove impossible to procure, ABMC carefully selects adequately noble, modern replacements. These efforts are supported by nurturing partnerships with agencies such as the National Park Service, the National Cemetery Administration, Arlington National Cemetery, the Presidio Trust, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, host nation governments and non-profit organizations with shared values and goals.

ABMC accomplishes its mission while respecting applicable laws of the United States and host nations regarding historic preservation, environmental protection, and sustainability. This is done in part by taking a proactive stance towards finding and using environmentally friendly alternatives to chemical pesticides, cleaning products, and fertilizers, and eco-friendly and efficient vehicles, equipment, and maintenance techniques.

**ABMC will manifest its core mission by seeking opportunities to establish memorials in the U.S. and overseas to honor the post-Korean War service and sacrifice of America's armed forces.**

ABMC was established by Congress in 1923 with the mission of commemorating the service and sacrifice of America's armed forces where they have served since 1917. What began with the responsibility for constructing suitable monuments to the American Expeditionary Forces after World War One has expanded and evolved with the passing of time and subsequent conflicts. The Commemorative Works Act provides that commemorative works honoring a major conflict shall not be authorized until at least ten years after the officially designated end of the event. Several post-Korean War significant events meet this requirement. As ABMC approaches its 100th anniversary, the need to commemorate service and sacrifice continues and ABMC recognizes the need to identify under-represented events and establish appropriate memorials as needed. In coordination with the service historians, ABMC will continue to identify opportunities to plan and construct such memorials within the limits of resources and budget, with emphasis on post-Korean War actions. ABMC will be vigilant in assessing the values and desires of the American people to memorialize the service of its armed forces while facing the challenges inherent in erecting memorials in foreign countries where Americans have served.

**ABMC will work with interagency and public partners to capture the nature of service-related sacrifice as a means of ensuring the continued relevance of our commemorative efforts.**

ABMC will improve its understanding of the nature of service-related sacrifice through an aggressive outreach program with interagency and public partners and will reflect the insights gained in the innovative ways we commemorate post-Korean War actions.

As ABMC works to memorialize and commemorate post-Korean War conflicts, we must consider the most appropriate way to capture the selfless sacrifices military families have endured in their service to those conflicts.

Modern military conflict has resulted in a greater appreciation for and awareness of the ways in which servicemembers are impacted by, and live with, the aftermath of their service to our nation. The service and sacrifice of America's armed forces, throughout decades-long conflicts, are often supported by the service and sacrifice of our nation's military families.

**ABMC will identify innovative methods and connections that reflect our broader recognition of sacrifice and expand national and international audiences' appreciation for the service of America's armed forces.**

ABMC will develop history-based, innovative outreach programs that combine advanced information sharing techniques with novel approaches to educational programs. Targeted programming will facilitate the education of domestic and international audiences of all ages through easy-to-use web sites, video documentaries, and written stories. Key audiences and historically underserved groups will be identified, and specialized materials and strategies will be developed to reach and inform those groups.



To build and sustain deep connections with an ever-changing audience, ABMC engages in deliberate and targeted outreach to its visitors and partners.

ABMC will broaden its digital and online outreach efforts to leverage all available mediums, while continuing to provide printed materials, in-person, and face-to-face services to visitors. We will continue to actively pursue evolving media and communications opportunities that maximize reach and tailor messaging to an ever-changing base of audiences.

Our memorials and cemeteries commemorate the service and sacrifice of people who are as diverse as America itself and ABMC recognizes the importance of representation in the fulfillment of its commemorative mission. By identifying under-represented demographic groups whose heritage, too, is connected to America's overseas cemeteries and memorials, ABMC will tap into audiences that are essential to keeping the memory of those who have served alive. We will conduct qualitative visitor use studies to help identify key audiences and produce tailored materials and strategies to reach those audiences.

ABMC recognizes the challenge of overcoming geographic barriers and will continue to expand and improve our social media, online, and augmented reality products. ABMC will continue to find effective and creative ways to serve the high proportion of non-American visitors and will redouble efforts to bring our stories to our audiences with particular emphasis on Americans who may never have the opportunity to visit our memorial sites in person.

**ABMC will establish state of the art visitor centers that both respect the diversity and dignity of our fallen while informing, preserving, and honoring the sacrifices and service of all American armed forces. Each center will provide information and interpretation in an array of multi-sensory formats.**

Nearly 100 years after its inception, ABMC continues to enjoy generous public interest but has embraced the reality that in the post-World War II years, the demographics of its visitor base have changed. What began as an agency that was dedicated to providing services to surviving next-of-kin and those who had a living memory of those interred in our cemeteries, has evolved into one that must provide meaning to a broader, more diverse, audience. To fulfill our commemorative mission, we will continue to develop quality interpretive and educational products that highlight the significance of service and personal sacrifice and facilitate development of personal relevance and broader understanding. ABMC historical materials provide a context to the events and people memorialized at our commemorative sites and cemeteries across the world and tell the story of America's involvement on the world stage through the conflicts of the 21st Century. Our interpretation programs are intentional, mission-based communication efforts that act as a catalyst so that visitors to ABMC sites (both in-person and virtual), can forge their own emotional and intellectual connections with the meanings and universal concepts ABMC commemorative sites represent. We will continue to develop and expand educational programs that underpin our interpretive efforts and help educators with lesson planning for learners of all ages, including non-traditional learners.

*"Interpretation helps audiences feel and think differently. It does not provide answers, it poses questions. It does not teach, it offers opportunities. Interpretation does not educate, it provokes increasingly sophisticated appreciation, understanding and a more generous perspective toward the multiple meanings of a given place. Interpretation does not tell people how it is, it reveals personal significance."*

*David Larsen, Meaningful Interpretation*

ABMC will establish unique partnership opportunities to expand both domestic and international understanding of the service and sacrifice of our armed forces. ABMC will take deliberate action to reach Americans travelling or living abroad by partnering with organizations that provide services to travelers. ABMC will redouble foreign and domestic outreach efforts through partnerships with the military, patriotic organizations, travel-related services, the media, and academic and educational entities.

**ABMC will sustain its mission effectiveness by recruiting, developing, and retaining a diverse, professional, and passionate workforce.**

ABMC will aggressively pursue the mandate of the President's executive orders on equity, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility, striving toward a workforce that reflects the full diversity of the American people and ensuring that public servants at all levels have an equal opportunity to succeed and lead.

ABMC will maintain a robust professional development program that enhances our ability to grow and retain a high-performing workforce at all organizational levels, from our administrative offices in Virginia and France to our 26 geographically separated sites in 10 countries, each staffed with a host nation workforce supervised by one or more American citizen USGS employees. This presents significant challenges to effective professional development. ABMC employs a wide range of professionals from many ethnic and cultural backgrounds that speak a variety of native and second languages and require development opportunities in their appropriate skill areas. Safety, human resource, and regulatory requirements vary from country to country and ABMC must adapt all aspects of its professional development to provide opportunities for professional growth and advancement. Challenges, inherent in leading local national teams, face ABMC's USGS employees as well. This requires leadership development programs that are adapted to the needs of both host nation and USGS ABMC employees. ABMC's success in this area will be evidenced by opportunities for advancement, better retention rates, lower accident rates, a reduction in lost work productivity and increased quality and efficiency.

**ABMC will develop and retain an impassioned, ardent, and educated workforce.**

ABMC employees are part of a dedicated team with a strong devotion to our sacred mission. Both at home and overseas, ABMC is a highly selective employer of choice. We will continue to nurture ABMC's operational ethos by creating opportunities for cross-functional collaboration, advancement, and multicultural contributions to our mission. ABMC will establish, extend, and formalize cross-training opportunities and develop and mature mentorship programs for Associates and Superintendents. To enhance the visitor experience, while deepening employee connection to ABMC values, we will provide contact interpretation training to our greenspace workers. ABMC will redouble its efforts to recruit employees that are traditionally under-represented in greenspace teams, such as women. We will make career advancement opportunities available and develop our people to be able to take advantage of those opportunities. We will establish and employ a rigorous program for selection when promoting Foreign Service National employees. ABMC values institutional knowledge and experience and will formalize career ladders for senior gardeners, operations technical managers and other advanced positions.

**ABMC will foster an environment of fairness, opportunity, mutual respect, and cultural tolerance in which everyone in the workforce is valued and treated fairly and courteously.**

We will bridge our "Atlantic Divide," transforming "One Commission One Mission" from an organizational slogan to a cultural reality. As a result, our workforce will be free to focus on mission accomplishment and honorable service.



*“Time will not dim the glory of their deeds.”*

GENERAL OF THE ARMIES JOHN J. PERSHING





# AMERICAN BATTLE MONUMENTS COMMISSION

**WASHINGTON, D.C.**

2300 Clarendon Boulevard Suite 500

Arlington, VA 22201

(703) 584-1501

**WWW.ABMC.GOV**

Follow us @USABMC

