

New program allocates resources for service member religious identification

American Battle Monuments Commission to partner with Operation Benjamin to ensure Jewish service members rest under Stars of David at overseas cemeteries

ARLINGTON, VA, UNITED STATES, June 5, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- In support of the Fallen Servicemembers Religious Heritage Restoration Program, the [American Battle Monuments Commission](#) will facilitate headstone changes for Jewish service members incorrectly buried under Latin crosses.

ABMC, which operates and maintains 26 cemeteries and 31 memorials and monuments in 17 countries, will partner with [Operation Benjamin](#), a non-profit dedicated to identifying and correcting burial errors of Jewish American service members buried under Latin crosses. The new program provides funding for the partnership to identify, research, and correct burial mistakes for these service members.

"Each headstone at our sites represents a father, a sister, an individual whose hopes and dreams were cut short," said Robert Dalessandro, ABMC's acting secretary. "Learning more about their stories and ensuring they are at rest in accordance with their religious traditions remains an important part of our mission even all these years later. It helps us bring a deeper meaning to the sacrifices lying beneath each of those headstones."

It is estimated hundreds of service members may have been mistakenly buried under Latin crosses. When service members were buried after World War I and World War II, records of their religion may have been missing, or in many cases Jewish service members identified themselves as Protestant for fear of persecution if they were captured in Europe.



A Star of David and a Latin cross headstone at Meuse-Argonne American Cemetery. June 2, 2026, ABMC and Operation Benjamin changed five headstones at the cemetery to reflect the service members' faith. (ABMC/NGuyen-Kim)

“The American Battle Monuments Commission understands that memory is not symbolic work,” said Operation Benjamin Chief Historian and Co-Founder Shalom Lamm. “It is sacred work. Together, ABMC and Operation Benjamin are ensuring that Jewish American service members who gave their lives for our country are remembered truthfully and honored beneath the symbol of faith that shaped their lives.”

Operation Benjamin has been working with ABMC since 2018 to replace headstones for Jewish service members. Pvt. Benjamin Garadetsky was the first service member whose headstone was changed at Normandy American Cemetery and the non-profit's namesake. Most recently, in July 2025, ABMC replaced three headstones at its two cemeteries in Italy and [five at Meuse-Argonne American Cemetery](#) in June 2026.

About the American Battle Monuments Commission:□

The American Battle Monuments Commission operates and maintains 26 cemeteries and 31 federal memorials, monuments and commemorative plaques in 17 countries throughout the world, including the United States. The three memorials in the United States are: the Honolulu Memorial located within the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific in Honolulu; the West Coast Memorial located within the Presidio National Park in San Francisco; and the East Coast Memorial located within The Battery in New York City. Since March 4, 1923, ABMC's sacred mission remains to honor the service, achievements, and sacrifice of more than 200,000 U.S. service members buried and memorialized at our sites. For more information about ABMC, visit [abmc.gov](#).□

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