

American Battle Monuments Commission.

Access: <http://www.abmc.gov>.

The American Battle Monuments Commission (ABMC) administers and maintains American military cemeteries and battle monuments located overseas. Congress established ABMC in 1923 as an arm of the Executive Branch of the Federal Government with General of the Armies John J. Pershing as its first chairman. The Web site includes information about the Commission and its work "honor[ing] the service, achievements and sacrifice of United States Armed Forces." Twenty-five battle monuments and 24 cemeteries are administered and maintained by the commission. The WWII Memorial in Washington, D.C., is also the responsibility of the commission, but it has its own Web site. ABMC is not affiliated with the Veteran's Administration, which maintains domestic veteran's cemeteries.

The site serves primarily as a resource for family members of the nearly 125,000 service people buried overseas. Several databases searchable by name, military unit, or the home state of the deceased provide information on the location of graves. The site is also a source of information for general users looking for information on overseas cemeteries from the World Wars. While there are no overseas military cemeteries from the Korean or Vietnam Wars, a roll of honor of Korean War dead is maintained online (including names of those who have died on active duty in Korea up to the present, since no peace treaty has been signed) along with a database of those still missing in action in Southeast Asia.

Fee-based services offered for family members include flower placement, photo-

graphs for those who are unable to visit the graves in person, and special lithographs of the cemeteries that include a photograph of the decedent's headstone or inscription. The latter are available through the Andrews Projects sponsored by the late Congressman George Andrews of Alabama. For people intending to visit the graves in person, the ABMC offers free services, such as travel and lodging advice, letters of support for free passport applications, and escorting family members to the grave site within the cemeteries.

The Web site is well organized and easy to use. Individual pages describe ABMC, the cemeteries and memorials, services provided, scheduled events, and employment opportunities with the commission. A lengthy list of Frequently Asked Questions contains useful material. Interactive content includes video tours of the cemeteries and a live video stream of the Normandy Cemetery and Memorial. One of the multimedia presentations describes the actions of the Army Rangers at Ponte du Hoc during the Normandy invasion, with historical and present-day scenes of the fortifications and surrounding area.

Overall the site is very well done. Only one bad link was found, and the interactive content displayed without any problems. No dates appear on the site since the material is largely in the public domain, but the content appears not to have been updated in several months. The Commemorative Events section contained schedules for 2010 Memorial Day and D-Day (June 6) ceremonies. The site is a good resource for anyone interested in American overseas cemeteries from the World Wars and those looking for information on fallen service persons.—*Mark A. Stoffan, Florida State University, mstoffan@fsu.edu*

EarthTrends. Access: <http://earthtrends.wri.org>.

International and nongovernmental organizations create a wealth of information

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that is of great interest to students, researchers, and policymakers. However, for those who are searching for information on the environment, sustainable development, and the social and political issues that surround these subject areas, one barrier to access is that this information exists largely in silos. Various governmental, international, and nongovernmental organizations gather and publish data and useful information. It can be problematic for non-expert searchers to visit each of these individual data sources as part of their research processes.

EarthTrends is an attempt by the World Resources Institute (WRI), a Washington, D.C., based think-tank, to aggregate data on social issues surrounding global resources and the environment. At its core, EarthTrends is a searchable database of information on environmental topics. Access to the database is provided through ten specific subject areas. Searchers must first select a subject area, and then choose from a list of variable or data points. The ten subject areas are: "Coastal and Marine Ecosystems," "Water Resources and Freshwater Ecosystems," "Climate and Atmosphere," "Population, Health, and Human Wellbeing," "Economics, Business, and the Environment," "Energy and Resources," "Biodiversity and Protected Areas," "Agriculture and Food," "Forests, Grasslands, and Drylands," and "Environmental Governance and Institutions."

EarthTrends provides two key services to its users. First, it aggregates data from public data sources such as the World Bank, the UN Environment Program, OECD, and the UN Development Program and organizes this data into fixed categories. Second, it delivers its data packaged into easily comparable formats. By standardizing geographic and chronological units, EarthTrends makes accurate comparison between data points accessible to the casual researcher.

The EarthTrends searchable database is a tool that will appeal to researchers who desire data from diverse international and nongovernmental organizations but lack the experience and expertise to locate the

best sources and who may struggle to make statistically valid comparisons between data points drawn from different data sets. Faculty and graduate students may find EarthTrends to be a useful supplement to their primary resources, but it is undergraduate students who will most likely appreciate EarthTrends key services the most.

While the aggregation and organization of data in EarthTrends database does a lot to package complex data into useable formats for undergraduates, users may be frustrated by the necessity of browsing lists of variables rather than a more familiar keyword search feature. Adding to the confusion, there is a keyword search for the EarthTrends Web site, but it does not provide access to the searchable database.

In addition to the searchable database, EarthTrends offers some supplemental resources that help make the data more accessible. First, there are information guides to each subject area. These pathfinders are organized by key or controversial topic areas and would be useful to supplement a library's topics collection or tools, such as CQ Researcher. Country reports are also available for those who wish to approach their research from a geographic perspective rather than the subject organization of the database.

Data in the EarthTrends database is regularly updated and reasonably current. In a sample search, the most current data for a particular variable tended to be between two and five years old. Feature articles, the site's RSS feeds, and other supplemental areas of the EarthTrends site appear to be updated somewhat less frequently than the database itself.

By aggregating information on the environment, sustainable development, and their surrounding social issues from public data sets into a single, well-organized access point, EarthTrends fills a valuable niche in the information ecology. Many researchers, especially undergraduate students, will find EarthTrends to be a useful filter.—*Nicholas Schiller, Washington State University-Vancouver, schiller@vancouver.wsu.edu* 