



AMERICAN BATTLE MONUMENTS FOUNDATION *PAST IS PROLOGUE* ESSAY CONTEST

2022 CONTEST DETAILS

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The *Past is Prologue* Essay Contest invites students ages 11-12, 13-15, and 16-18 to compete within their age group to write an essay about a specific battle closely identified with an American military cemetery or monument overseas managed by the American Battle Monuments Commission.

The [American Battle Monuments Foundation](http://www.abmf.org) (ABMF) is an independent, not-for-profit 501(c)(3) organization and the official partner of the American Battle Monuments Commission. [abmc.gov](http://www.abmc.gov)

2022 DEADLINE TO SUBMIT ESSAYS AND PRIZES AWARDED

Submit your essay no later than midnight October 1, 2022
Winners announced by Veterans Day, November 11, 2022

PARTICIPANTS

The contest is open to any student age 11-18, who competes against others in their age group. Public, private, parochial, charter, military and homeschoolers welcome!

Each student must have an adult editor. This person may be a parent, teacher, young adult sibling or other adult. The role of the editor is to help steer research activities, support the development of the essay theme, check grammar, spelling and punctuation, and to facilitate a conversation to answer two mandatory questions that must be addressed in the essay:

- What lessons from this specific past battle are useful for us today?
- How would your life be different if Americans had not fought and died in the battle you're writing about, and what is the relevance of their sacrifice to your life and future?

The adult editor must certify that the essay was written by the student.

TOPICS

For the contest in 2022, students may choose to write about one of these three topics:

- The WW I American volunteer aviators known as the La Fayette Escadrille who flew at the Battle of Verdun before the official U.S. engagement in the war.
- The WW II Battle of Guadalcanal, codenamed Operation Watchtower, that eventually stopped sea and air attacks by the Empire of Japan attempting to cut the Allied supply lines between the U.S. and Australia.
- The WW II Allied invasion of southern France on August 15, 1944 known as Operation Dragoon. The invasion was initiated via parachute drop.

COMPOSITION DETAILS

For the 2022 contest, each essay must be written in English. If English is not the first language of the student, that should be noted on the application form.

Minimum and maximum word-count: (References are not included in the word count.)

- Students age 11-12: 800 – 1,000 words
- Students age 13-15: 1,200 – 1,500 words
- Students age 16-18: 1,500 – 1,800 words

Quoted material should be used sparingly and must include a citation of the author, publication and date.

RESEARCH MATERIALS

One excellent resource is the American Battle Monuments Commission www.abmc.gov.

Source material must be listed at the end of the essay. Footnotes, references, and source citations are not included in the minimum and maximum word count.

Wikipedia may be a starting point for general information about the topics, but it is not to be considered authoritative and should not be included in your reference list, although verified sources cited on Wikipedia may be useful resources for research.

JUDGING CRITERIA

- Accuracy of historical events. Document your source material at the end of the essay.
- Composition and writing style. Correct grammar, spelling and punctuation are expected.
- Creativity. Consider writing the essay for an audience of your peers. Or, perhaps the essay is a make-believe conversation with an “eye witness” to the events: a soldier, a citizen who lived in the area, or a journalist embedded with the military. Perhaps the essay is a straight news report written for a local or national newspaper. Use your imagination, as long as the facts of the battle are presented accurately.
- Two mandatory questions. There are no right or wrong responses, but they must be answered from the perspective of the student.

JUDGES

Qualified judges will review the essays and recommend five finalists in each age group. These essays will be reviewed by a committee appointed by the ABMF Board of Directors, who will select the First, Second and Third place winners in each age group. The decision of the Essay Review Committee is final.

PRIZES

Prizes will be awarded for First, Second, and Third place *in each age group*. First Prize is \$5,000; Second Prize is \$2,500; Third Prize is \$1,500.

Winning essays will be identified prior to Veterans Day. Winners will be notified via a telephone call to the parent/guardian with an email and hard copy letter sent via USPS.

All winning essays become the property of the American Battle Monuments Foundation and may, at the discretion of the Foundation, be published on the ABMF website and promoted through its social media channels. Use of a winner’s name is restricted to first name, last initial, and name of city and state. Any additional use of a minor winner’s name or image is done so only with the written permission of a parent or guardian.

APPLY AND SUBMIT AN ESSAY

Your essay is due no later than midnight October 1, 2022.

Please send us an email as soon as possible to let us know you intend to participate. This will help us in scheduling our volunteer judges.

To submit your essay: digital via email OR hardcopy via USPS or FedEx

- 1) Scan and attach your essay and application to: essaycontest@abmf.org. We will confirm receipt.
- 2) Mail a hardcopy of your essay and application via USPS with tracking or FedEx to:
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