

SURVEY OF AMERICAN BATTLE FIELDS FOR COMMEMORATIVE PURPOSES

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MESSAGE

FROM

THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES

TRANSMITTING

THE PRELIMINARY PLAN OF THE SECRETARY OF WAR BY WHICH THE INVESTIGATION AND SURVEY OF AMERICAN BATTLE FIELDS FOR COMMEMORATIVE PURPOSES, CAN, IN HIS OPINION, BE MOST ECONOMICALLY CARRIED OUT

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DECEMBER 9, 1926.—Referred to the Committee on Military Affairs and ordered to be printed

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*To the Congress of the United States:*

In compliance with section 2 of the act approved June 11, 1926, entitled "An act to provide for the study and investigation of battle fields in the United States for commemorative purposes," I transmit for the information of the Congress the preliminary plan of the Secretary of War by which the purpose of the said act can, in his opinion, be most economically carried out.

CALVIN COOLIDGE.

THE WHITE HOUSE,  
*December 9, 1926.*

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WAR DEPARTMENT,  
*Washington, November 8, 1926.*

The PRESIDENT,  
*The White House.*

DEAR MR. PRESIDENT: Section 2 of the act of Congress approved June 11, 1926, provides that the Secretary of War shall submit to the Congress through the President on or before December 1, 1926, a preliminary plan by which the purpose of the said act, namely, the investigation and survey of American battle fields for commemorative purposes, can, in his opinion, be most economically carried out

The following plan is submitted in accordance with provisions of that section.

The first step to be taken is the enumeration and classification of battle fields within the continental limits of the United States. A considerable amount of the work involved in this enumeration and classification has been accomplished by the historical section of the Army War College, as indicated in its report of May 28, 1925, printed in full in House Report No. 1071, Sixty-ninth Congress, first session. It is planned to have this work completed by the historical section of the Army War College and to have the same paid for out of special estimates submitted in compliance with the provisions of this act. It is expected that there will be no change in the principles of classification indicated in the above cited report.

The next step is to determine the policy relative to priority in which battle fields shall be investigated with a view to commemoration. It is recommended that the following policy be adopted:

Absolute priority over all other projects is to be given projects as to which definite promises of free cession of required land are made. Subject to this priority, every State will be entitled to have one battle field investigated and reported on before any State has two. As between States, the engagement in which the largest number of troops were engaged shall be preferred. If any State has had investigated one battle field of one particular war (all Indian campaigns being taken as one war for this purpose), it can not obtain priority for the investigation of another battle field of that war until there have been investigated all other domestic battle fields of that war as to which promise of free land has been given and in which a greater number of troops were engaged than the one for which the State is asking.

It is planned to make preliminary examinations for the purpose of determining the cost of inspection or survey, if necessary, of the battle fields heretofore classified, and of other battle fields as they are classified. It is planned to have the work done by the Chief of Engineers through his district engineers and to pay for such preliminary examinations from a lump-sum appropriation contained in the nonmilitary section of the War Department budget and submitted under the terms of the basic act above cited.

It is planned to have future programs drawn up, for submission to the Secretary of War, by a board made up of representatives of the historical section of the Army War College, the office of the Quartermaster General, and the office of the Chief of Engineers. It is planned to have their yearly program, when approved by the Secretary of War, turned over to the Quartermaster General, so that he can include any required items in his estimates in the nonmilitary section of the War Department Budget. It is planned to have any necessary surveys made by the Chief of Engineers, from funds turned over by the Quartermaster General. Such surveys should be executed under the limitations imposed upon river and harbor expenditures. When such surveys are preliminary to a final layout, it is planned to have this layout submitted to the board of officers described above for completion of the project. It is planned to have all projects, except surveys, executed by the Quartermaster General, who will be charged with the acquisition of necessary lands,

the design and erection of memorials, and the administration and upkeep of the structures.

It is planned to submit a supplementary estimate for defraying extra work imposed upon the historical section of the Army War College under this plan, both for the fiscal years 1927 and 1928; to submit a similar supplementary estimate to defray the cost of the preliminary examinations required to determine the cost of survey and inspection of all duly classified battle fields; and to submit a report on December 1, 1927, indicating the battle fields whose survey and investigation is desired under the priority rules above enunciated.

It is not expected that any other steps will be taken toward the execution of the act of June 11, 1926, during the current fiscal year.

Respectfully yours,

DWIGHT F. DAVIS,  
*Secretary of War.*



