THE UNKNOWN SOLDIER IN FRANCE

A Tomb of the Unknown Soldier refers to a monument in dedication to the services of an unknown soldier and to the common memories of all soldiers killed in any war. Such tombs can be found in many nations and are usually high-profile [national monuments](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_monument) like the one in France.

The Arc de Triomphe is, from the date of its inauguration in 1836, a symbol of the different French victories, afterwards it especially became a symbol of those French soldier who fought for France in the WWI.

It all started in 1916 during World War I, when the idea of honoring one soldier to symbolize all of those that died in battle fighting for their country came about through discussions by the Senate and the deputies of France.

And it was shortly after the Armistice on the 11th November 1918 that these dignitaries voted to bring the remains of an unidentified soldier from the front line to [the Pantheon](http://www.eutouring.com/the_pantheon_in_paris.html) in Paris.  However, there was a lot of opposition to this idea, even though The Pantheon had become a famous burial place, and many of the war veterans associations wanted this symbolic gesture to be honoured at the Arc de Triomphe instead of at the Pantheon.

On November 10, 1920 it was selected a body from among eight identical coffins, each bearing the remains of an unknown French soldier who had been killed during the Great War.  It was then transported to rest in the chapel on the first floor of the Arc de Triomphe.  There the coffin remained until January 28, 1921 at which time the Unknown French soldier was laid in his permanent place of honor at the base of the Arc de Triomphe. The tomb is decorated with the [Legion d’Honneur](http://www.eutouring.com/musee_national_de_la_legion_d_honneur.html), the highest medal or decoration that can be given in France and have an inscription: ICI REPOSE UN SOLDAT FRANÇAIS MORT POUR LA PATRIE 1914–1918 ("Here lies a French soldier who died for the fatherland 1914–1918")

On October 22, 1922 the French Parliament declared the eleventh day of November in each year to be a national holiday.  The following year Andre Maginot, French Minister for War, lit the eternal flame for the first time.  Since that date it has become the duty of the *Committee of the Flame* to rekindle that torch each evening at twilight. It burns in the darkness to recall the sacrifice of an unknown French soldier who gave his life during World War I.

Every year millions of people visit the Arc de Triomphe to pay tribute to The Unknown Soldier and those who lost their lives fighting for France.