

# WELCOME to the Ossuary of Douaumont

- PRIVATE FOUNDATION -

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Highly symbolic place reminding us of soldiers' sacrifice,  
The giving of their life, and calling for the respect of their humanity.

When entering here, we carry more than ourselves,  
We carry the History of men and women,  
The History of those who lost their lives here,  
On the battlefields, for History To keep writing itself,  
in brotherhood and peace.

We came as visitors or pilgrims,  
Our sight, our feelings, our senses,  
Can stand for the sake of Remembrance,  
That is to say, remind ourselves of our History,  
To find our way towards Peace,  
And invite us to build it,  
For the times to come.

May this place spread the values,  
Which are key to life.  
May the moment spent here Be source of Brotherhood and Peace.

Msgr. Jean-Paul Gusching  
President of the foundation of the Ossuary



## THE FOUNDING FATHER

Monsignor Ginisty, Bishop of Verdun, wandered across the battlefield of Verdun in the aftermath of the 1918 armistice. He discovered thousands of unknown human remains, scattered across the ground. He decided to give to "these war-time dead a sepulchre worthy of their sacrifice": the Ossuary of Douaumont.



## THE TEMPORARY OSSUARY

From 1918 onwards, all the scattered bodies and bones were collected from the Battlefield. Under the protection of the Canon Noël - war veteran from Verdun - they were kept in a temporary Ossuary until the Monument was fully built.



## KEY DATES

- 1919** Starting point for the Ossuary
- 1920** Laying of the First Stone
- 1926** Lantern-Tower completed
- 1927** Transfer of the corpses
- 1932** Official Opening



## THE ARCHITECTURAL COMPETITION

To give the monument its national character, an architectural competition was organised. Léon Azéma, Max Édreï and Jacques Hardy's project won. It was chosen for its simplicity and the way it best reflected the object of the Ossuary.

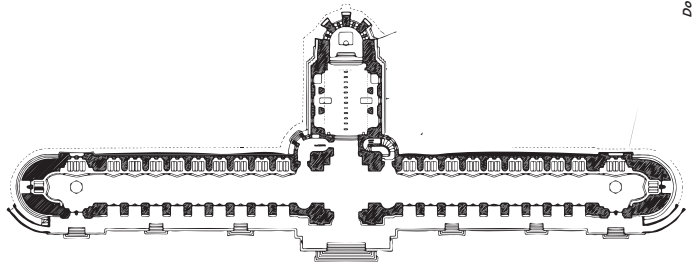


## THE APPEAL FOR FUNDS

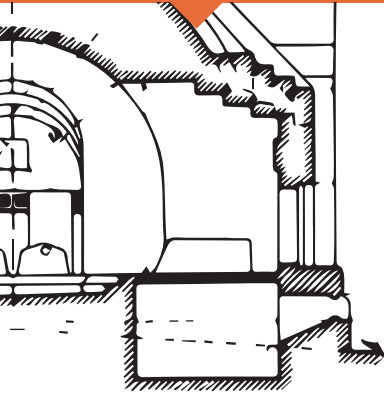
The Ossuary's action committee launched an appeal in France and abroad to collect the necessary funds to build the monument. Whether rich or poor, private or public, everybody gave what they could to contribute to the financing of this work of art which is the Ossuary of Douaumont.

## THE CLOISTER

On either side of the entrance to the tower, the main gallery – the Cloister – is 133,32 meters long and is home to 46 cenotaphs in 18 alcoves. These symbolical tomb stones cover spaces of 14m<sup>3</sup>, which contain the remains found in the various areas of the battlefield. These spaces can be seen through the windows located at the rear of the monument.



Do not litter



## THE ENGRAVINGS

In the cloister, are engraved – at the request of the families – the names of the soldiers who never returned from the battlefield of Verdun, regardless of their nationality and their religion. More than 4000 soldiers are already named on the stones and new names keep being added every year.



## THE MEMORIAL FLAME

At each end of the Cloister is a shield, where the memorial flame is relit during ceremonies. It is 'Those of Verdun', who, every year, go to the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier under the Arc de Triomphe in Paris, and carry the flame back to our monument.



## THE CHAPEL

In the chapel, are buried Monsignor Ginisty – founding father of the Monument – and his assistant Father Noël – first chaplain of the Ossuary. The stained-glass windows represent The way of the Cross on the battlefields.

## THE LANTERN OF THE DEAD

The tower of the monument peaks at 46 meters high. At the top is Louise-Anne-Charlotte, a great bell weighing 2 tons 100. This tower is also called The Lantern of the Dead as it partly lights the battlefield and the necropolis of Douaumont during the night.