

# FRANCE - GERMANY 1870-1871

## WAR, COMMUNE, AND MEMORIES

13 APRIL – 30 JULY 2017

**Overshadowed as it is by the two World Wars, the war between France and Germany from 1870 to 1871 is a topic many French and German people are not familiar with, even though it represents a key moment in the relationship between these two countries, around which the future of Europe would be built.**

The “*année terrible*”, as it was described by Victor Hugo, ended in a civil war, the Paris Commune. This was no accident but rather the natural outcome of a pre-existing process that the social tension and wave of patriotism triggered by the French defeat had helped to create.

The exhibition aims to offer a new perspective on the Franco-German War of 1870-1871, including points of view from both France and Germany, either from the time or in retrospect. The conflict is examined within longer chronological contexts: firstly from 1864, the beginning of the German wars of unification, up to the "War in sight" crisis of 1875; secondly from 1813, the year of the German Wars of Liberation (*Befreiungskriege*) followed by the 1815 Congress of Vienna, up to the Treaty of Versailles in 1919.

Many traces have been left in the arts, literature or in the urban environment by the combatants or witnesses of the war, such as the La Défense district in the west of Paris, or the Victory column (*Siegessäule*) and the *Strasse der Pariser Kommune* in Berlin. These will be examined in the exhibition through a wide variety of objects, paintings, sculptures and an exceptional collection of photographs from the time. The important political, diplomatic, military, ideological, social, economic or religious developments that resulted from these events will also be explored.



### DID YOU KNOW?

**La Défense:** this district of Paris was named after the sculpted group *La Défense de Paris*, by Barrias, installed on the old Courbevoie roundabout, from which French troops left for the second battle of Buzenval, the 19th of January 1871. Today, a street and a metro station commemorate the battle.

**Quatre-Septembre street and Metro station:** this refers to 4 September 1870, the date of the proclamation of the Third Republic by Léon Gambetta at Paris City Hall.

**Place Denfert-Rochereau:** formerly known as the Place d'Enfer, it was renamed to commemorate Colonel Pierre Philippe Denfert-Rochereau, governor of the Place de Belfort in 1870, who resisted for 103 days from 3 November 1870 to 18 February 1871, during the siege of the city by German troops. The statue in its centre is a *replica*, reduced to a third of the original monumental *Lion de Belfort* by the Alsatian sculptor Auguste Bartholdi.

### THE EXHIBITION IN FIGURES

**Over 320 works, objects and documents**

**Over 80 loans from German museums**

**20 multimedia devices**

**9 information panels for young people**

### Partner

This exhibition is supported by the CIC, a major partner of the Musée de l'Armée.



### Curators - Musée de l'Armée

**Mathilde Benoistel**, librarian, Assistant Curator in the Expert and Inventory Department

**Sylvie Le Ray-Burimi**, Head Curator of the Department of paintings and sculptures, collection of drawings, prints, photography and library

**Christophe Pommier**, Assistant Curator of the Artillery Department

### Publication

Catalogue co-published with Éditions Gallimard

### Practical Information

Open every day except 1 May, 10am to 6pm.

Admission: €12 to visit the exhibition and the permanent collections; €8.50 concessions and on the first Monday of the month; free for under-18s.

Guided tours, activities for young people, film cycle, concerts, conferences, etc.

Musée de l'Armée, Hôtel des Invalides, 129 rue de Grenelle, 75007 Paris

musee-armee.fr - 0 810 11 33 99



### Press Officer

Alambret Communication Agency

Angélique Guillemain: angelique@alambret.com

Sabine Vergez: sabine@alambret.com

+33 (0)1 48 87 70 77