



INVALIDES: MEMORIES OF WAR PHOTOGRAPHS BY PHILIPPE DE POULPIQUET

AN EXHIBITION PRESENTED BY THE MUSÉE DE L'ARMÉE
FROM 19 SEPTEMBER 2020 TO 3 JANUARY 2021

In 2020, the Musée de l'Armée celebrates the 350th anniversary of the establishment of the Invalides by Louis XIV. Three centuries later, its primary purpose lives on with the Institution Nationale des Invalides which houses a hospital and a nursing home where veterans, military personnel injured in service or during overseas operations, civilian victims of war or terrorism, as well as wounded civilians are welcomed and cared for. The photojournalist Philippe de Poulpiquet was commissioned by the Musée de l'Armée to observe the day-to-day life of the men and women who work and live there. With two separate tours throughout the site of the Invalides, the exhibition *Invalides: Memories of War* questions the war after the war and emphasises the role of carers during this other battle.

Photojournalist and international reporter for the daily newspaper *Le Parisien/Aujourd'hui en France*, Philippe de Poulpiquet has been covering international news since 2010. The Musée de l'Armée, after acquiring several photographs from his series "Pour la France" (For France), called upon him for this unique photographic report on the medical function of the Hôtel des Invalides.

Between the summers of 2017 and 2018, the photographer immersed himself in the day-to-day life of the institution, revealing its medical, social, human, historical and memorial dimensions. Designed as a photographic chronicle, this report follows the people who bring this place to life: veterans wounded in the wars of decolonisation or in Afghanistan, civilian victims of terrorist attacks, hospital staff, military authority... Colonel Jean Baby, wounded in Indochina; Geneviève Asse, who joined the French Forces of

the Interior at the age of 21; Djamel, injured in the terrorist attacks that took place on 13 November 2015 in Paris; Lucette Cholet, amputated as a child following a bombing during the 1940 exodus... At the Invalides, under the watchful eye of Philippe de Poulpiquet, these men and women become the bruised flesh of a country scarred by the wounds of war.



© Philippe de Poulpiquet / Musée de l'Armée Collections, Paris

At the heart of the Hôtel des Invalides, the exhibition *Invalides: Memories of War* unveils around 75 photographs from this report. It is divided into two separate tours which can be seen inside and outside of the monument:

- an indoor tour showcasing original prints, produced in 2019 for the photographic collections of the establishment, in the rooms of the Arms and Armour tour of the Musée de l'Armée;
- an outdoor tour, with open access, showcasing enlarged reproductions printed and laminated on specific panels, situated in the northern moats along the main entrance of the Hôtel, towards the Esplanade des Invalides and on the railings along the Boulevard des Invalides.

Indoor Tour:

Rooms of the Arms and Armour Tour of the Musée de l'Armée

The exhibition *Invalides: Memories of War*. Photographs by Philippe de Poulpique occupies the rooms devoted to the presentation of arms and armour from the 13th to the 17th centuries.

This collection, amongst the world's greatest, specifically stands out thanks to the quality of the objects displayed: royal, jousting or tournament armors and also weapons of prestige.

In the salle de l'Europe, former refectory where the invalid soldiers used to eat their meals, eight portraits of residents dressed in full uniforms or displaying their decorations will be presented in display cabinets, interacting with the armors, fragments of armor and other exhibits. In response to these ceremonial objects, the solemnity of the portraits of Philippe de Poulpique. The fragility of flesh faces the eternity of iron.

A series of objects and representations recalling the founding of the Invalides during the 17th century and the permanent nature of their medical function up until now are displayed in the Cabinet Robert, located near the two former refectories. Photographs portraying the residents of today are deployed all around: everyday life, official ceremonies, funerals.

Further on, the current missions of the Institution Nationale des Invalides are showcased in the salle pédagogique. A film, directed by Philippe de Poulpique and produced by the French Defence Ministry's Department of Information and Communication (DlCoD), gives the floor to care workers as well as residents and patients of the institution. The exhibited photographs present the research mission, hospital function and the support provided to the residents as well as the wounded soldiers and civilians cared for at the day hospital. Amongst them, a strong focus is given to the care provided to the victims of terror attacks that have struck France since 2012 and who are welcomed to be treated at the Invalides. The photographs of Philippe de Poulpique demonstrate the pivotal role of the Institution Nationale des Invalides with respect to the care provided to the people with disabilities and the victims of injuries sustained in the context of war or affected by similar traumas.



© Philippe de Poulpique / Musée de l'Armée Collections, Paris

Outdoor Tour:

Northern Moats facing the Esplanade des Invalides and Railings of the Boulevard des Invalides

The northern moats towards the Esplanade des Invalides, usually dedicated to showing documentary or promotional photographs under the auspices of the military Governor of Paris, as well as the railings of the Boulevard des Invalides, new outdoor space converted for this exhibition, welcome a set of photographs representative of the work of the photographer, combining portraits, scenes of everyday life and institutional life.



© Philippe de Poulpiquet / Musée de l'Armée Collections, Paris



Philippe de Poulpiquet © Victor

Philippe de Poulpiquet (born in 1972) is a photographer and international reporter for the newspaper *Le Parisien/Aujourd'hui en France*. After studying cinema in Paris, he collaborated with press magazines and gradually specialised in news journalism. Philippe de Poulpiquet then started a new collaboration with the daily newspaper *Le Parisien/Aujourd'hui en France* as a photojournalist. He has covered the major conflicts of the last fifteen years in Africa and the Middle East. In parallel, and for some years, he has been trying to distance himself from the topic he specialises in, war, by looking at it from a human point of view. His series on the injured soldiers from Afghanistan "Pour la France" ("For France") or on the Invalides ("Invalides: Memories of War") interrogate the other form of war which

takes place after the war: the war of men and women who have fought and who are now battling to recover physically and psychologically, against oblivion and the passing of time. The work of Philippe de Poulpiquet involving these veterans represents a social photography of those who have been fighting for France for nearly half a century or who have suffered as a consequence of these wars.

Philippe de Poulpiquet, who always positions himself at the right distance from the subject, likes to integrate his portraits of fighters, grieving families or carers within an environment full of objects which represent temporal markers of the history of the consequences of war through the ages.

On 3 September 2019, Philippe de Poulpiquet was awarded the Sergent Vermeille Prize by the Ministry of the Armed Forces for his documentary *Invalides: Memories of War*.

The Photographic Fund of the Musée de l'Armée

With over 60,000 photographs about military life from 1850 to nowadays, the Musée de l'Armée retains funds for the representation of the Hôtel National des Invalides and the residents of the institution.

In 2017, keen to pursue this photographic documentation until contemporary times, the Musée de l'Armée commissioned a photographic order around the representation of the medical function at the Institution Nationale des Invalides, encompassing both documentary series and the author's viewpoint. After acquiring the documentary "Pour la France" (For France) which dealt with the battle to rebuild the French soldiers injured in Afghanistan, the photographer Philippe de Poulpiquet was chosen because of his understanding of the military field and hospital environment, as well as his ability to immerse himself in an environment that requires both discretion and tenacity.

This report led to the acquisition of a selection of 100 prints, printed using pigment ink jet technology, for the collections of the establishment.

Curators:

Anthony Petiteau, Head of Photography Collections, Fine Arts and Heritage Department, Musée de l'Armée

Philippe de Poulpiquet, photographer

Coordination:

Laure Parent

Graphic Design:

Graphica (Igor Devernay)

Scénography:

Flavio Bonucelli

Lighting Design:

Serge Derouault

Catalogue :

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EXHIBITION PARTNERS

This exhibition was organised with the support of Arqus.



PRACTICAL INFORMATION

Exhibition open every day: 10 am to 6 pm, until 9 pm on Tuesdays

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MUSÉE DE L'ARMÉE

The Musée de l'Armée, with over 1.2 million visitors in 2019, is the 6th most visited museum in Paris. The public is invited to discover the Hôtel des Invalides and its famous Dome, which houses the tomb of Napoleon I, and to travel through the history of France through its collections. The establishment, founded in 1905, holds one of the world's finest military history collections, with some 500,000 pieces, from the Bronze Age to the 21st century. Guided tours and educational workshops, temporary exhibitions, conferences and seminars, film screenings, shows, concerts and events are held throughout the year.