



## SOCIETY OF THE HONOR GUARD, TOMB OF THE UNKNOWN SOLDIER

P.O. Box 1111, Hermitage, PA 16148

[www.tombguard.org](http://www.tombguard.org)

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## Centennial of the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier -- Circular Letter #3

At the close of the American Revolution, General George Washington issued his Circular Letter to the States. This device allowed him to express his heart felt gratitude for the trust placed in him, the unwavering support that met him everywhere and to share his thoughts on matters that would advance the noble purpose for which they had pledged, *"their lives, their property and their sacred honor"*.

In that spirit of gratitude for the trust placed in us to fulfill America's sacred duty to never, ever forget those who have or will serve in our military in times of war or armed conflict, we now share our thoughts and invite all of America to join us as we prepare for appropriate observance of the Centennial of the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, in Arlington National Cemetery.

### Background

At 11:00 A.M. on November 11, 2021 the people of the United States will mark the passage of 100 years since the interment of an unidentifiable member of the American Expeditionary Forces of World War I in Arlington National Cemetery. The place of interment has come to be known as the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier and regarded as America's most sacred shrine. As intended, it is dedicated to all veterans that have served and sacrificed on behalf of America and to their families. It is a place that captures the very heart of America.

Congressman Hamilton Fish, Jr. hoped that: *"the grave of this unidentified warrior will become a shrine of patriotism for all ages to come, which will be a source of inspiration, reverence, and love of country for future generations."*

Millions of Americans have embraced that vision by their pilgrimage to the Tomb the Unknown Soldier and continued reverence over the generations, eloquently expressed their profound gratitude and commitment to America. While we have witnessed the passing of generations, and with them the challenges of their times, we have also witnessed the profound respect, love and pride in the eyes and faces of our fellow Americans. Our service as Honor Guard, has enabled us to perfect a profound understanding that the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier fosters a unifying national identity that transcends our differences of race, religion or politics.

(2)

The enclosed document invites all of America to create a **Tomb of the Unknown Soldier Never Forget Garden**. We seek to explore the language of flowers, plants and trees to establish and keep, throughout our land, living tributes to our veterans and their families.

Like the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, the coming Centennial is about America's sacred duty to never, ever forget or forsake our veterans or their families who have served and sacrificed on behalf of America. We believe that the Never Forget Garden can unify our Country by recognizing those who have ensured that America would live and endure. And, like the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, a very special and personal place to reflect upon those principles and values that define us as Americans. We envision that the Never Forget Garden can be a kind of proxy for the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, especially for those who cannot easily travel to Arlington National Cemetery.

There are many ways and traditions that are available to express patriotism, love, mourning and remembrance. In this initiative, we seek to reach every American. Your "Never Forget Garden" can provide an elegant expressing of that which deeply resides in the heart of our fellow Americans: ***"I will Never, Ever Forget You -- I am in it with you."***

Help us bring this message and invitation to as many Americans as possible; help us make this a reality by urging all to plant and to encourage the planting and dedication of these gardens; help us and our Country make this the "electric cord" of our generation that connects us to each other and especially to those who we owe a debt that can never be repaid.

This and more about the Society and its work on the Centennial of the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier can be found on the Society's webpage [www.tombguard.org/centennial](http://www.tombguard.org/centennial)

Thank you for all that you do for our Country,

*Gavin McIlvenna*

Sergeant Major (Retired) Gavin McIlvenna  
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***"Soldiers never die until they are forgotten, Tomb Guards never forget."***