

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

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ABOUT THE COVER

The cover art is the winning entry for the 2021 Veterans Day Poster Contest. Matt Tavares, of Ogunquit, Maine, an author-illustrator of children's books and advocate for military families is this year's Veterans Day poster contest winner. The design for this year's poster contest theme commemorates the Centennial Anniversary of the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier.

The Tomb of the Unknown Soldier was dedicated on November 11, 1921, to make sure those who made the ultimate sacrifice but were not identified were never forgotten. Soldiers with the 3rd U.S. Infantry Regiment, known as "The Old Guard," have volunteered to serve as Tomb Guards since 1948. They are selected through a rigorous process and undergo intensive training.

Here's how Tavares describes his winning entry:

"In this poster, a Tomb Guard carries out his responsibilities with unwavering dedication, alone on the quiet plaza at dawn. There have been Tomb Guards of all races, genders, religions and creeds, so I wanted to keep the identity of this Tomb Guard ambiguous.

By placing the Tomb Guard off to the side, I hoped to remind the viewer to look past the sentinel and focus on the tomb itself and the unknown soldiers who died in service to our nation."

A HISTORY OF THE TOMB OF THE UNKNOWN SOLDIER



A Tomb Guard at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier during the wreath-laying ceremony on Memorial Day, May 31, 2021. The Arlington National Cemetery is managed by the U.S. Department of the Army.

Located at Arlington National Cemetery, the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier was initially dedicated by the Army on Armistice Day, November 11, 1921. The Tomb dedication by President Warren G. Harding commemorates all Veterans who died in service. The dedication was the first event in history attended by three presidents: Harding, Woodrow Wilson and William Howard Taft. The site has become a people's memorial that inspires reflection on service, valor, sacrifice and mourning.

The Tomb of the Unknown Soldier lies above the remains of an unidentified American soldier from World War I, representing all of the fallen heroes who died during conflict. Since that time, Unknowns from World War II, the Korean and Vietnam Wars were also interred in the plaza beside their comrade from World War I. In 1998, mitochondrial DNA testing identified U.S. Air Force 1st Lt. Michael Joseph Blassie as the Vietnam Unknown. The crypt that held his remains for 14 years remains empty and is now inscribed, "Honoring and Keeping Faith with America's Missing Servicemen, 1958-1975," in memory of those Missing in Action (MIA) from the conflict.