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*Rica to ****

Yesterday I went to the Invalides [\[1\]](#) ; I would as soon have created this institution, if I were the prince, as to have won three battles. Everywhere in it one finds the hand of a great monarch. I think it is the most respectable place on earth.

What a spectacle to see gathered in a single place all these victims of the homeland, who live only to defend it ; and who, feeling in themselves the same heart, and not the same strength, protest only their powerlessness to sacrifice themselves for it again !

What is there more admirable than to see these crippled warriors in this retreat observing a discipline as strict as if they were required to observe it by the presence of an enemy ; seek their final satisfaction in this image of war ; and dividing their hearts and minds between the duties of religion and those of the military art ?

I would like the names of those who die for the homeland to be written and preserved in the temples in registers that would be like the fountainhead of glory and nobility.

Paris this 15th day of the moon of Gemmadi I, 1715

[\[1\]](#) The construction of a home for infirm veterans was prescribed by Louis XIV and carried out between 1670 and 1706, with exception of the dome. The institution was admired because the wounded would no longer be reduced to wandering and begging.