

Genevoix, Maurice

By [Laurence Campa](#)



Maurice Genevoix (1890-1980)

Maurice Genevoix, who joined the French infantry in 1914, turned his war notes into five novels, later compiled under the title "Ceux de 14".

Unknown photographer, black-and-white photograph, n.p., n.d.; source: Genevoix family archive; , contributed by Laurence Campa.

Courtesy of Julien Larere-Genevoix.

Genevoix, *Maurice*

French Writer

Born 29 November 1890 in Decize, France

Died 08 September 1980 in Javea, Spain

Summary

The war turned Maurice Genevoix into a writer. He embodied soldier loyalty and was the author of *Ceux de 14*, a prime example of French literary narrative and a monument compelling us not to forget.

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During the War

Maurice Genevoix (1890-1980) was a brilliant student at the *Ecole Normale Supérieure* who was mobilized in the [infantry](#) in August 1914. The young second lieutenant took part in the [battle of the Marne](#) with the 106th Infantry Regiment and was then posted to Les Eparges (Meuse) starting in mid-October 1914. Despite the extremely harsh conditions and carnage provoked by repeated attacks, he wrote unrelentingly in his notebooks. On 25 April 1915, he was wounded by three bullets in the shoulder and chest. Disabled and discharged, he wrote *Neath Verdun*, published in May 1916, which he dedicated to his deceased friend, Lieutenant [Robert Porchon \(1894-1915\)](#). The book was immediately acclaimed, both for the veracity of its account and for the clarity of the language used.

Writing

Between 1916 and 1923, Maurice Genevoix published four other books based on his war experience. And yet he was also compelled to draw on another source of inspiration, rooted in nature and the miracle of life (*Raboliot*, Prix Goncourt 1925). His loyalty to the dead and to his [comrades](#) was pursued via his involvement in [veterans' organizations](#). In 1929, [Jean Norton Cru \(1879-1949\)](#) called him "the greatest painter of the war". In 1949, the author compiled his five war books under the title *Ceux de 14* in order to create a literary monument. Genevoix was elected to the *Académie française* in 1946; he also initiated the Verdun Memorial, which he inaugurated in 1967, and was highly respected by General [Charles de Gaulle \(1890-1970\)](#). Maurice Genevoix never ceased to counterbalance mourning and forgetting with the values of remembrance, fraternity and peace.

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Selected Bibliography

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- [Cru, Jean Norton: *Témoins. Essai d'analyse et de critique des souvenirs de combattants édités en français de 1915 à 1928*, 3 ed., Nancy, 2006: Presses universitaires de Nancy.](#)
- [Genevoix, Maurice, Campa, Laurence \(ed.\): *La ferveur du souvenir*, Paris, 2013: La](#)

[Table ronde.](#)

- [Genevoix, Maurice: **Ceux de 14**, Paris, 2014: Flammarion.](#)

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External Links

- [Famous witnesses and novelists \(Passion & Compassion 1914-1918\) \(Article\)](#)
- [Genevoix, Maurice: Ceux de 14, 1949 \(Internet Archive\) \(Book\)](#)
- [Genevoix, Maurice: Neath Verdun, London 1916 \(Internet Archive\) \(Book\)](#)
- [Maurice Genevoix, blessé à la main, durant sa convalescence \(Le Figaro\) \(Image\)](#)
- [The memorial of Verdun \(Mémorial de Verdun\) \(Institutional Website\)](#)

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