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Union nationale des Combattants (UNC)

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Founded on 11 November 1918 with the support of French Prime Minister Georges Clemenceau, the *Union Nationale des Combattants* was the largest right-wing veterans' association in interwar France. It campaigned for the improvement of veterans' pensions and for the involvement of ex-servicemen in government.

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Founding the Veterans' Association

The *Union Nationale des Combattants* (UNC) was founded in Paris on 11 November 1918 on the initiative of Catholic veterans led by Father [Daniel Brottier \(1876-1936\)](#). General [Léon Durand \(1846-1925\)](#) became the UNC's first president and, with Brottier, formulated the UNC's motto: "United as at the Front." The association founded a national weekly newspaper called *La Voix du Combattant*. With the support of the [Church](#), the army and conservative business interests, the UNC became the largest right-wing [veterans' association](#) in France, with 900,000 members by 1939. Throughout the interwar years, the UNC campaigned tirelessly for the improvement of veterans' pensions and for the involvement of ex-servicemen in government. The UNC was a founding member of the *Fédération interallié des anciens combattants*, an international body for former allied veterans that was suspicious of rapprochement with [Germany](#).

The UNC in the 1930s

During the 1930s, under the leadership of Parisian councillor [Georges Lebecq \(1883-1956\)](#) and parliamentary deputy [Jean Goy \(1892-1944\)](#), the UNC became increasingly involved in politics. On 6 February 1934 the association rioted with nationalist [paramilitary groups](#) in Paris against the left-wing government. Following the riot, the UNC grew close to extreme right-wing and [fascist](#) groups. Increasingly disillusioned with the democratic Third Republic, in 1938 the association (along with the [Union fédérale](#)) demanded an authoritarian regime of veterans under the leadership of a “national personality” such as Marshal [Philippe Pétain \(1856-1951\)](#). The UNC was subsumed into Vichy France’s *Légion française des combattants* in August 1940.

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