Resarching French soldiers who died in the First World War

Many visitors to the battlefields will have visited the huge French National Cemeteries, or seen the French military graves at places like Thiepval or Lijsenhoek. Many are struck by the simple line ‘Mort pour la France’ – ‘Died for France’ - which is inscribed on the headstones. While many of those visitors are aware of the superb services and records of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission and have some idea about how to go about finding out more about British and Commonwealth soldiers who died in the First and Second World Wars, very few know that similar records exist for French soldiers…

The French Army lost 1.3 million soldiers in the First World War. Today the records of those who lost their lives are kept by the French Ministry of Defence and can be searched via the following link –


The website also includes the following records;

- War Graves database
- The records of 1009 French soldiers and civilians sentenced to death by military courts
- 74,000 records including the flying crews (pilots, observers, flight engineers, machine gunners and photographers) and the ground staff (mechanics, meteorologists, sailmakers, carpenters or members of the commissariat).
- The War Diaries of French units in the First World War
- The Regiment Histories of those units which fought in the First World War