**WESTMINSTER ABBEY**

Westminster Abbey is an architectural of the 13th to 16th centuries, Westminster Abbey also presents a unique collection of British history – the shrine of St Edward the Confessor, the tombs of kings and queens, and countless memorials to the famous and the great. It has been the setting for every Coronation since 1066 and for numerous other royal occasions, including sixteen royal weddings. Today it is still a church dedicated to regular worship and to the celebration of great events in the life of the nation.

In the 1040s King Edward (later [St Edward the Confessor](http://www.westminster-abbey.org/our-history/royals/edward-the-confessor-and-edith)) established his royal palace by the banks of the river Thames on land known as Thorney Island. Close by was a small Benedictine monastery founded under the patronage of King Edgar and St Dunstan around 960 A.D.  This monastery Edward chose to re-endow and greatly enlarge, building a large stone church in honour of St Peter the Apostle. This church became known as the "west minster" to distinguish it from St Paul's Cathedral (the east minster) in the City of London.

The only traces of Edward's monastery to be seen today are in the round arches and massive supporting columns of the undercroft and the Pyx Chamber in the cloisters.

Edward's Abbey survived for two centuries until the middle of the 13th century when [King Henry III](http://www.westminster-abbey.org/our-history/royals/henry-iii) decided to rebuild it in the new Gothic style of architecture.

Under the decree of the King of England, Westminster Abbey was designed to be not only a great monastery and place of worship, but also a place for the coronation and burial of monarchs. This church was consecrated on 13 October 1269. Every monarch since William the Conqueror has been crowned in the Abbey, with the exception of Edward V and Edward VIII who were never crowned.

The Abbey contains over 600 monuments and wall tablets – the most important collection of monumental sculpture anywhere in the country - and over three thousand people are buried here.

Notable among these is the Unknown Warrior, whose grave, close to the west door, has become a place of pilgrimage. In 1745 a further addition was made to the Abbey when the western towers (left unfinished from medieval times) were completed. Little remains of the original medieval stained glass, once one of the Abbey's chief glories. The great west window and the rose window in the north transept date from the early 18th century but the remainder of the glass dates from the 19th century onwards.

Still today, a daily pattern of worship is offered to the Glory of God. Special services, representative of a wide spread of interest and social concern, are held regularly. Annual services include a thanksgiving for victory in the Battle of Britain, a service for Judges at the start of the legal year and a service to mark Commonwealth Day. In 1965-66 the Abbey celebrated the 900th anniversary of the consecration of King Edward's abbey, taking as its theme 'One People'. Such a theme seemed to be fitting for a church which, through a long history of involvement with the developing life of the British people, has become known throughout the world. In 2010 His Holiness Pope Benedict XVI became the first Pope to visit the Abbey.

<http://www.westminster-abbey.org/our-history/abbey-history>

**Temporary Brigadier General L J Wyatt**

On the stroke of midnight on 7 November, 1920, Brigadier General L.J. Wyatt, General Officer Commanding British Troops in France and Flanders, entered a hut near the village of St Pol, near Ypres in northern France. In front of him were the remains of four bodies, all of them lying under Union flags.

Earlier that afternoon, the bodies had been disinterred from unmarked graves in each of the main battlefields, the Aisne, the Somme, Arras and Ypres. Four blank crosses had been chosen from the forest of crosses that now covered the shell-pocked French landscape.

In some reports of what happened next, Brig Wyatt was described as being blindfolded. There were also reputed to have been six bodies rather than four. However, the brigadier makes no reference to being blindfolded in his account of what happened, and insisted that he saw only the remains of four bodies when he stepped into the hut as midnight struck.

There, the brigadier lifted up his lantern to take in the scene. Then he simply reached out and touched one of the Union flags. That was it; he had made his choice. He had picked a body to go inside the Tomb of the Unknown Warrior.

In death, the body was to enjoy a fate that would, in all probability, have been unthinkable in life.

As for the British public, at this stage they seem to have been even more doubtful than George V. Although Wyatt thought it was a wonderful idea, others, as he soon discovered, were less smitten. 'I attended a large luncheon party at around this time,' he wrote, 'and at it I was asked what I thought of the proposal to bring over a body. Only one person out of 24 agreed that it was a wonderful idea. The rest said it would never appeal to the British.’ After Brig Wyatt had made his choice, the Union flags were folded away. Then the three bodies were loaded onto the back of a truck, tipped into a shell hole beside the road near the town of Albert – and promptly forgotten.

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/defence/3399166/The-Unknown-Warrior-A-heros-return.html>

Louis was born in Islington, London, on 14 September 1874. His father was James Matthew George Wyatt, a civil engineer, and his mother was Eliza Pinta Wyatt. He was the youngest of five children. He lived with his family in Coombebury, Kingston before becoming a boarder at Aldenham Grammar School, Elstree, Hertfordshire. It can be assumed that he joined the army straight from school, as by the age of 20, he was already a 2nd lieutenant in The King’s Liverpool Regiment. He was given the task of choosing the body of the ‘UnknownWarrior’ who was finally laid to rest in Westminster Abbey. There were over 850,000 deaths among British military personnel in WW1. Many of these were buried in war graves, but unidentified.

Louis was awarded the DSO as a result of his war service, but the citation itself has not been found, probably he was also decorated by the President of the Portuguese republic, receiving the ‘Military Order of Aviz’. Louis and Marion had two daughters, Patricia and Laetitia. We don’t know when Louis left the army, but he took up various directorships and moved to Kirby Lonsdale with his family. In 1939, he was chair of John Hare (colours), Bristol, Director of the Mersey White Lead Company, Warrington and Director of the Moore Management Trust Ltd. In 1945 he was appointed sheriff of Westmorland and held the post for at least five years. He died in 1955, aged 80.

<https://livesofthefirstworldwar.org/lifestory/4908962#stories>