KEY FIGURES

The concept of the Grave of the Unknown Warrior in Westminster Abbey was inspired by Reverend **David Railton**(1884-1955) who was a curate in Folkestone in Kent before becoming a chaplain to the 2nd Battalion of the Hon.

In 1916, in a back garden at Erkingham near Armentières in France, he noticed a grave with a rough cross on which were pencilled the words 'An *Unknown British Soldier'*.  After the war he became vicar of Margate in Kent  and in August 1920 he wrote to Herbert Ryle, Dean of Westminster, **suggesting a permanent memorial to the fallen of the Great War who had no known grave**. The idea was strongly supported by Ryle, who was in those years, the Dean of Westminster, he held many ecclesiastical positions throughout all Great Britain.

Rather reluctant at first King George V and the government later supported the idea and on 11 November 1920 David Railton saw his dream become reality.

But who was David Railton?

David was the son of George Scott Railton, the first Commissioner of The Salvation Army and Second in Command after its Founder General William Booth, and his wife, Marianne Deborah Lydia Ellen Parkyn. He was educated at Oxford and Liverpool.

In 1916 he was awarded the Military Cross for saving several men under heavy fire. After the War Railton became the vicar of St. John the Baptist Church at Margate, but he still hoped to impress the authorities with his idea. In August, 1920 he wrote to Bishop Ryle, the Dean of Westminster, about the possibility of giving an unidentified soldier a national burial service in Westminster Abbey.

**GENARAL WYATT**

The selection of the Unknown Soldier body was assigned to General Wyatt.

He was the General officer commanding the British troops in Flanders and France. On the identification he was blindfolding because he was supposed to choose among an unidentified cruces, because the chosen body had to represented all the soldier that had died during the conflict.

When he entered in the hut in the village of San Pol (near Ypres in Northern France) he had in front of him four bodies or the remains of them (the real number is controversial ).

All the bodies was covered under the Union Flag. The bodies had been disinterred from unmark graves in each of the main battlefields : Ypres, Aisne, the Somme and Arras.

**DEAN OF WESTMINSTER**

Herbert Ryle was the Dean of Westminster from 1910 to 1925; he was a British author , Old Testament scholar and successively the Bishop of Exerted and Bishop of Winchester. In 1920 he received the letter from the chaplain David Railton where he proposed a unidentified British soldier from the battlefields in France be buried with due ceremony in Westminster Abbey “amongst the Kings” to represent the many hundreds of thousands dead for the Empire.

He strongly supported Railton’s idea. Finally he composed the inscription on the tomb.

In addition to supporting the idea of David Railton the dean wanted to show off to increase his prestige and used the opportunity to shine. However, he remains only some information and you do not know his real thoughts about the idea about the tomb of the Unknown Warrior.

**KING GEORGE V**

King George V reigned in the first half of the twentieth century and led England in the First World War.

He built several memorials throughout England for two reasons: the first reason is to incite war; the second was to control and satisfy the people who were now exhausted by the crisis that struck England during World War II. Also the people who had remained in the homeland had to mourn their dead loved ones and they did it in these common memorials. At first he did not approve the idea of David Railton, but then to avoid internal conflicts was favorable and supported the chaplain’s idea.

In May 1922, the king paid a visit to Belgium and northern France, visiting the local war cemeteries and memorials built by the Imperial War Graves Commission. The tour also involved a short visit to Italy in 1923 and was the last time after the end of the war in which George agreed to leave his country.

**COMMENT**

After studying the history of the Unknown Warrior it was a lot easier and useful to observe the main sites linked to it as his grave and the Abbey of Westminster, the Cenotaph and the Imperial War museum.

See these places has led me to reflect on the horror of war and the atrocities that were to undergo the soldiers but also their loved ones who stayed at home; in the Imperial War museum reproduction of noise and exposure of arms and the various objects that the soldiers used, in addition to the reconstruction of a trench, made me feel the emotions that lived in those days soldiers at the front.

However, the contents of the Imperial War museum want to convey a message of peace and not of hostility and war , as happened during World War I and World War II.

With the knowledge of what happened in World War I and with the study dealt before the start of the stage , see the tomb of the Unknown Warrior at the Abbey of Westminster and hear the information disclosed by the marshal was a reaffirmation of our knowledge, in the addiction information in our possession were better than those of the marshal.

Finally, observing the Cenotaph, and many other museums we have noticed how the British are very patriotic, proud and respectful of their history and their nation, indeed that both the Cenotaph around the tomb of the Unknown Warrior there are fake poppies ,as the real ones would die in the cold.

This because poppies are the symbol of World War because they were the first flowers that were born on the battlefield amid the trenches.