***The Unknown Soldier in Great Britain***

**The documents**

The present work explores the events of the British Unknown Soldier’s history, it is the result of the analysis of documents about the mentioned argument. The sources of the documents are different websites: newspaper, Westminster Abbey’s site, Wikipedia… The early three documents introduce the argument: the first tells a description of the Unknown Soldier’s tomb (as a war memorial), the second illustrate a synthesis of the steps of the journey of the body of the Unknown Soldier and the third tells about the origin of the idea of the construction of the Unknown Soldier’s grave. The fourth tells about the origin of the idea and it illustrates the journey of the British Unknown Soldier. The fifth document illustrates the terrible aspects of the First World War in relation to the Unknown Soldier. The last documents present a synthesis of the Unknown Soldier’s grave. The similarity is the argument: assembling the documents’ information, the intelligent reader can reconstruct the British Unknown Soldier’s history, from the birth of the tomb’s idea to his concretization.

**The history**

The idea date back to 1916, during the Great War, when a military chaplain, David Railton, found a makeshift grave with the inscription “An Unknown British Soldier” in France (Western Front). Railton wrote to the Dean of Westminster who helped him to carry out the project writing to king George V and the first minister Lyod George who convinced the British government to build a war memorial at Westminster Abbey. The selection of the cadaver for the tomb had been made in Northern France in St. Pol (it must be said that the selection was one that random) where the Brigadier General Wyatt chose one between four bodies that came from different battlefields (Aisne, the Somme, Arras and Ypres) of the Western Front, the other bodies were buried in a military cemetery in France. Then the body was transported from France to Italy where a procession took place and the coffin had been built. The body was transported by the HMS Verdun from Italy to Dover. When the coffin arrived in London a ceremony took place, with the presence of the royal family and choirs which sang hymns on the anniversary of the armistice in 1920. It was an effective a procession from the Cenotaph to Westminster Abbey which received an impressive visit by people from all parts of Great Britain, so it is one of the most important war memorials in the world, the ceremony continued for days. The grave built in Westminster Abbey is covered by a slab of black Belgian marble from a quarry near Namur. On the grave of the Unknown soldier there is an inscription written by Ryle, the Dean of Westminster; the inscription is: "A British Warrior Who Fell in the Great War 1914-1918 for King and Country. Greater Love Hath No Man Than This.". For years a Union Jack covered the coffin in Westminster Abbey. General Pershing assigned the Congressional Medal of Honour to the British Unknown Soldier on 17th October 1921. It was a political strategy to reinforce the existing alliance between “her majesty’s government” and the American Congress.

**The tomb as “war memorial”**

What is a war memorial? A war memorial is something used to remember a particular war, a battle victory or who died in war. Each memorial represents different concepts.

Indeed the tomb is considered a war memorial as the Cenotaph, but it has another meaning: the Cenotaph represents all soldiers who fell in the Great War for the country and the king, the Unknown Soldier’s grave represents all dead in the First World War who had been not identified, who didn’t have a tomb. Originally, war memorials were used by countries’ governments to involve the recruitment to the armies, the meaning is changed. The actual meanings represent peace and not war.

**Documents’ structure, communication and purposes**

The documents are organized into paragraphs, each of them tells about a particular step of the Unknown Soldier’s history or about a theme, they are informative texts and use a formal language. The intelligent reader understands that the aim of the documents is to provide information about the Unknown Soldier’s history, the ideal reader is someone which is interested to find information about this argument.