

INTRODUCTION

The present report illustrates the contribution of Forms **4ALS** and **4ASA** to the second year of the **ERASMUS PLUS PROJECT - “Enseigner la Grande Guerre - Eduquer à la paix”**.

The project framework involves an international and intercultural effort meant to promote Peace Education through the study of World War I and its privileged aims are favouring active and collaborative forms of learning, comparing points of view and sharing results and considerations with peers and adults.

The contribution is concerned with activity 13 and namely with the ritual and the cult of the Unknown Soldier: the nation after the sacrifice. It has been organized into different sections that have given structure to the research.

SECTIONS

1. Funeral rites, rituals and memorials. Sense and Meaning
2. Origin of the Unknown Soldier Ritual
3. The History of the Unknown Soldier in Great Britain
4. Key personalities
5. The Unknown Warrior in Literature. The Bond Unknown Soldier-Citizens
6. The History of the Unknown Soldier in Other Countries
7. How Rituals Change in Time: different visions of war and the need for Peace. A Reflection.
8. Different Forms of Commemoration and A New Kind of War Memorial Made By Thousands of People. An Interactive Project
9. Conclusion

RESEARCH ORGANIZATION

The students' (SS) work has implied:

- search of information about funeral rites, rituals and memorials and their meaning and nature
- search of information about the ritual and cult of The Unknown Soldier,
- analysis of sources and documents to gain a clear idea of the ways British citizens lived out their national mourning
- comparison of the British ritual of the Unknown Soldier with the rituals of other countries
- recognition of differences and similarities between different countries
- reflection on the ways the ritual has been used for political purposes and the changes it might have undergone in time
- reconsideration of the ritual in view of building of a Europe of the people

STEPS

STEP I:

- Gathering information on the origin and meaning of funeral rites, rituals and memorials.
- Reading, identifying and selecting relevant information, discussing and comparing meaning and providing shared interpretation/s. Writing a summary document.

STEP II AND III

- Gathering information on the origin of the Unknown Soldier Ritual and the story of the Unknown Soldier in Great Britain and other countries
- Reading, identifying and selecting relevant information, discussing and comparing meaning and providing shared interpretation/s about the history of the Unknown soldier in Great Britain and in other countries.
- Writing a summary document.

STEP IV

- Discovering the key figures in the rituals of the Unknown Soldiers in G. Britain
- Reading, identifying and selecting relevant information, discussing and comparing meaning and providing shared interpretation/s about the Key figures in the development of the ritual G. Britain and in other countries).
- Writing a summary document.

STEP V

- Finding out about the bond between citizens and the Unknown Soldier ritual in literary texts and other sources
- Reading, identifying and selecting relevant information, discussing and comparing meaning and use of language in the texts to come to shared interpretation/s about the ways the ritual of the unknown soldier was perceived and the different responses in G. Britain
- Writing a summary document.

STEP VI

- Finding out about the rituals of the Unknown Soldier in other countries (Italy, France, The United States of America)
- Reading, listening to videos and broadcasts, identifying and selecting relevant information, discussing and comparing meaning in view of shared interpretation/s about the history of the Unknown Soldier in other countries).
- Writing a summary document.

STEP VII

- Analysing information and the language of used in the texts about the different visions and perception of war and the way rituals connected to WWI have changed in time: from the end of the war to nowadays.
- Using critical thinking and comparative analysis considering time as a relevant category in communication about WWI and the ritual of the Unknown Warrior
- Recognizing different responses according to people's role in society
- Discussing and comparing meaning to provide shared interpretation
- Writing a summary document.

STEP VIII

- Getting information about different forms of commemoration and new forms of interactive memorials
- Reading, selecting texts, responding and analyzing to express personal responses and interpretations
- Writing a personal response and analysis to the letters written to the Unknown Soldier

CONCLUSION

Providing a feedback on the visit to the site of The Unknown Warrior in London and the Imperial War Museum.



MANAGEMENT

The research was carried out both individually and in group work and students experienced learning as inter-subjective process of shared discussion where the different argumentations were compared and discussed in view of reaching a common and shared perspective respecting different points of view.

The different steps followed will be illustrated in the different sections of the present report.

Considered that the research was carried out during the lessons of English Language and Culture, for organizational reasons the privileged focusses on the ritual of the Unknown Soldier in Britain and America but the work includes references to different countries as well.



METHODOLOGY. THE LEARNING PROCESS

From the pedagogical point of view the work was meant to create occasions for the students

- to learn how to learn
- to adopt a scientific method in the learning process
- to collect, classify and select relevant information in view of carrying out a task
- to report the findings both orally and in written forms
- to exchange, compare and negotiate information and points of view to reach a shared point of view or argumentation
- to mobilize competences through the creation of a real and concrete product
- to reflect, revise, evaluate and improve the products of one's learning process
- to improve foreign language skills
- to learn more about English culture and history
- to make comparative analysis between the data collected and be ready to identify
- explain and interpret differences
- to write summary documents
- to generate presentations in power point or other multimedia formats
- to become gradually more aware of the importance of negotiation processes
- and peace education
- to carry out forms of self-assessment

Methodology

EUROPEAN COMPETENCES AND STUDY SKILLS

Along the research the students have practiced integrated study skills and mobilized the European competences below.

EUROPEAN COMPETENCES
Communication in foreign languages
Digital skills
Learning to learn
Social and civic competences
Sense of initiative and entrepreneurship
Cultural awareness and expression
STUDY SKILLS
Listening Comprehension
Reading and inferring
Recovering, finding
Telling
Discriminating or differentiating
Note-taking
Organizing
Deducting, decoding
Analysing and interpreting
Synthesising/summerizing
Arguing
Writing or representing
Translating
Communicating in different languages
Generating media presentations

SECTION 1A.

FUNERALRITES,RITUALS AND MEMORIALS. SENSE AND MEANING

The present section illustrates the results of the research about the sense and meaning of rites , rituals and memorials.

The documents included are the products of two forms of students: 4ALS and 4ASA. They worked in distinct groups and times but the materials used were the same.

Therefore they often provide similar answers to the questions posed even if the group work of the two classes were differently organized.

The first step of the work implied a research about the origin and meaning of *memory, funeral rites, rituals and memorials*. In order to carry out the task, first suitable resources were collected and selected, secondly a series of texts providing the necessary information were read individually and later shared in a participated common discussion in small groups inside the different classes.

In the end a synthesis of the results of the research were provided by the students. The documents that follow are meant to offer the executive summary and the report of the learning and research path carried out.

SECTION 1B.

INTEGRATED STUDY SKILLS AND COMPETENCES

STUDY SKILLS
Listening/understanding
Reading
Selecting information
Note-taking
Translating
Communicating in different languages
Organizing
Critical Thinking
Synthesising/summarising in writing
Presenting research results orally

SECTION 1C.

FUNERAL RITES, RITUALS AND MEMORIALS. SENSE AND MEANING

SELECTED TEXTS:

- **Alan D. Wolfelt, Why Is the Funeral Ritual Important?**
http://www.griefwords.com/index.cgi?action=page&page=articles/ritual.html&site_id=3
- **What is a War memorial**
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/War_memorial
- **Mark Beaument, Ministry of Defence, Remembrance, A Video**
<http://www.iwm.org.uk/learning/resources/remembrance-in-the-first-world-war>
- **Charlie Keitch, Remembrance in the First World War.ppt, Learning Resources at Imperial War Museum**
<http://www.iwm.org.uk/learning/resources/remembrance-in-the-first-world-war>
- **The idea of WW1 Monuments and Memorials**
<http://www.greatwar.co.uk/memorials/ww1-memorials.htm>
- **WW1 Monuments and Memorials in the United Kingdom**
<http://www.greatwar.co.uk/memorials/ww1-memorials-united-kingdom.htm>
- **Richard Slocombe, senior curator of Art Imperial War Museum London, York Art Gallery, Truth and Memory: British Art of the First World War, A video.**
<http://www.yorkartgallery.org.uk/exhibition/truth-and-memory-british-art-of-the-first-world-war/>

SECTION 1D.

4ALS CONTRIBUTION TO SECTION 1

Before approaching the history of the Unknown Soldier in Great Britain and other countries it is important to understand what is meant by a funeral *rite*, a *ritual* or a *memorial* and what their meaning is in the different societies. It follows that an etymological research of the different words may help exploring the meaning and sense of such activities.

Starting with the word *rite* the “*Online Etymology Dictionary*” says the word *rite* was already used in the 14th centuries and it comes from the Latin word *ritus*. It is used with the meaning of “*religious observance or ceremony, custom, usage*”.

Ritual derives from the same word. It was first recorded in English in 1570, and came into use in the 1600s to mean “*the prescribed order of performing religious services*”. Generally speaking a ritual “*is a sequence of activities involving gestures, words, and objects, performed in a sequestered place, and performed according to set sequence.*”

In his article “**Why Is the Funeral Ritual Important?**”, Alan D. Wolfelt says *rituals* are symbolic activities too. Also, he adds that they help people, together with one's families and friends, to express the deepest thoughts and feelings about life's most relevant events. Baptism, Birthday and Weddings are all rituals or public and private celebrations involving all the family or society.

In the same way **a funeral ritual**, too is a public, traditional and symbolic means of expressing one's beliefs, thoughts and feelings about the death of someone loved.

According to Alan D. Wolfelt the funeral rite helps meet reconciliation needs of mourning. The needs are different from each other but have a point in common: they help people reflect about their conditions, and take them to the conclusion that death is a part of life. In Alan's words the six needs are :

1. **Acknowledging the reality of death**
2. **moving toward the pain of the loss**
3. **remembering the person who died**
4. **developing a new self-identity,**
5. **searching for meaning, and**
6. **receiving ongoing support from others.**

Moving now to consider the word **memorial**, it started to be used after the 14th century with the meaning of “fame, renown, reputation,” also “commemorative gesture, monument, or rite;”. In short “something by which the memory of a person, thing, or event is preserved”. The word derives from the Old French memorial “record, report,” and directly from the late Latin *memoriale* “a memorial”. As for **war memorial**, it is a building, monument, statue or other edifice to celebrate a war or victory, or to commemorate those who died or were injured in war. During the Great War, many nations saw massive devastation and loss of life. In the west, and **in response to the victory** there obtained, most of the cities in the countries involved in the conflict **erected memorials**. Memorials to the World War I are varied: there could be **official and private memorials**. They could be found in very different places.

The oldest war memorial in the United Kingdom is Oxford University's All Souls College itself. In the United Kingdom, the scale of the loss of those serving with the military during the Great War resulted in the fact that **there are very few towns or villages which do not have some sort of public memorial** to commemorate the people who died in the First World War. In some cases, memorials also commemorate those people who served and returned from the war.

World War I memorials commemorate the events of World War I. They include civic memorials, larger national monuments, war cemeteries, private memorials and a range of utilitarian designs such as halls and parks.

During the First World War, a lot of soldiers coming from different nations lost their life. To celebrate those people and the victory that they helped to conquer, most of the cities in the countries involved in the conflict erected memorials. Most memorials were built in smaller villages and towns and presented a list of the names of each local soldier who had been killed. In addition, their names were recorded on military headstones. **War memorials often serve as a meeting place for commemorative services.**

Different kinds of memorial were built and designed. **War memorials make people reflect about war and death even if they have not experienced any loss because of it and give people a chance to mourn their loved ones if they are missing.** In each of these cases, however, the event is done apparently in function of the dead one, while it really is **to make the living relatives feel better and accept their loss.**

In modern times the main intent of war memorials **is not to glorify war, but to honour those who have died.** War memorials became commonplace in communities all around the world after WWI, so that the ones who died during the conflict could be commemorated. The memorials of the First World War are many and various. On the battlefields of the war, as well as in the country involved in it, official and private memorials can be found frequently.

Together with such memorials, there were lots of ideas to commemorate all the people that had died or fought in the war. A symbol of these is the **Flanders Fields memorial Poppy**, recognized as a **symbol of Remembrance**, or the Memorial rolls that were put up in factories, schools, railway stations, sports club and universities.

Between 1920s and 1930s, on the Western Front official national memorials were erected by the Allied nations, to commemorate the large number of lives lost.

Focusing now on the **lives loss in the UK during the WWI was so huge that memorials are scattered in almost all villages and towns.** Some of them also commemorate those who came back from war. Some of the most important War Memorials and projects related to them, in the UK:

- **The Cenotaph** in the centre of London is the national War Memorial to the British losses in the **WWI**. The word "**cenotaph**" is taken from the Greek *kenos and taphos*, which mean "**empty**" and "tomb".
- It was originally built with wood and plaster and **it was designed as a temporary cenotaph for a national Peace Day Celebration and the Peace Parade**, held in London in 1919. Later it was built again as a permanent structure.
- **The Thankful Villages** are those villages, of England and Wales, that saw all their men return safely from the war. 14 of those villages later became known as "**Doubly Thankful Villages**",

- when all of their men came back safe from the Second World War.
- **The Animals** in war memorial can be visited at Brook Gate, in central London. It **commemorates all the animals**, like horses, mules and donkeys that **served and died in the First World War**.
- **The National Memorial Arboretum**, located in the heart of England. It is a **living memorial, made of trees and plants** dedicated to the **concept of Remembrance**.
- **The UK War Memorial Archive** is a **database of all War Memorials in the UK** and now it includes over **60,000 memorials**.
- **The War Memorials Trust** is a **charity working to preserve and care over 100,000 war memorials located across the United Kingdom**.

SECTION 1E.

4ASA CONTRIBUTION TO SECTION 1

First of all it is worth reflecting on the meaning of the word "memory" in order to put the meaning of memorials into a better focus.

Memory:

- the mental ability of keeping and recalling facts, events, or experiences: long- and short-term memory.
- this ability as possessed by an individual
- the length of time over which remembering extends
- a mental picture kept in the mind; a recollection
- the state or fact of being remembered

One can easily understand that the word memory has the aim and effect **to create or build a continuity between past and present in people's life and existence**. Starting with the awareness of the function of memory it is now worth exploring the meaning of rites, funeral rituals to end with the one of memorial which are strictly connected to the Unknown Soldier's.

Rituals strongly depend on one's culture, religion and socio-economic context and for this reason they are always changeable. Relevant rituals that Western culture has always been practising are baptism, birthday, weddings and funerals. Each of them has its own characteristics and functions.

The funeral ritual helps us acknowledge the reality of death, gives testimony to the life of the deceased, encourages the expression of grief in a way consistent with the culture's values, provides support to mourners, allows for the embracing of faith and beliefs about life and death, and offers continuity and hope for the living. **War memorials** are buildings, monuments or statues that celebrate wars, victories, or the people who died or were injured during a war. **The oldest war memorial in Great Britain** is the **All Souls College in Oxford**, that was founded in 1438, so that its fellows could pray for those who died in the Hundred Years War. Common soldiers that were dead during a war were almost never buried. But during WWI things began to change: after the war, many countries saw massive devastation and **loss of life and people become aware of the war negative aspects**. As it was almost impossible to take the fallen back to England and bury them, **lots of people and families felt the need to gain a place where they could mourn**. The result was that small village communities erected lots of memorials, most of the times against the government's will.

Differently from the previous ones, these memorials for the first time did not glorify war: their aim was to commemorate the fallen and preserve their memory enlisting their names. **They became pacifist memorials and quickly spread in churches, public buildings, factories, railway stations, collieries, schools** and so on. An important example can be found in **the tomb of the Unknown**

Soldier in Westminster Abbey which represents any British fallen soldier during the Great War and has become a **symbol of hope for the living**. But lots of **memorials continued to be exploited for a political aim and not for moral reason**. This is the example of the Cenotaph in England, which became a **sort a compromise for pleasing the population and calming down the clash between the social classes of that time**.

The Cenotaph -erected in Whitehall, in central London- quickly became a **focal point of national grief** for all those many thousands of people who had lost loved ones in the war. The Cenotaph –**free from any nationalist or religious reference**- wanted to commemorate any soldier of the world and this aspect made him soon very popular. In short, with different forms and characteristics, memorials are spread all over the world and most of the times they reflect the most relevant features of the civilization who built them.

SECTION 2A.

ORIGIN OF THE UNKNOWN SOLDIER RITUAL

The first known ceremony to honour unknown soldiers dates back to the **Peloponnesian Wars in ancient Greece**, where an empty stretcher was carried **in tribute to the dead**. Before Armistice Day in 1921, **one of the earliest such commemorations in the U.S. was a granite sarcophagus dedicated in 1866 at Arlington in remembrance of the 2,011 unidentified soldiers who died in the U.S. Civil War**. Accounts differ on when the tradition began in Britain and France, but most experts surmise that the first burial of unidentified soldiers at Westminster Abbey in London and at the Arc de Triomphe in Paris took place in 1920, a year before the practice took root in the U.S.

In subsequent wars — including World War II, Korea and Vietnam — a solitary unidentified soldier was selected to be honoured with an Arlington burial. Other nations have also adopted the ceremony. In Canada, the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier was added to the National War Memorial in Ottawa in 2000, when the casket of a Canadian soldier from World War I was disinterred from a French cemetery and flown across the ocean for burial. Iraq, Australia, Denmark and several countries in South America commemorate their unknown dead in similar ways.

SECTION 2B.

INTEGRATED STUDY SKILLS AND COMPETENCES

STUDY SKILLS
Listening/understanding
Reading
Selecting information
Note-taking
Translating
Communicating in different languages
Organizing
Critical thinking
Synthesising/summarising in writing
Presenting research results orally

SECTION 2C.

SELECTED TEXT:

- Frances Romero, **A Brief History Of Unknown Soldiers** in "Time", Wednesday, Nov. 11, 2009
<http://content.time.com/time/nation/article/0,8599,1937558,00.html>

SECTION 2D.

4ALS CONTRIBUTION TO SECTION 2

"**A brief history of unknown soldiers**" is an article from the magazine "**Time**" and is meant as an introduction to the history of all Unknown Soldiers. Therefore, it paves the way to the core of our research.

From the title one expects to explore the unknown soldiers' history and cult. One can read about the soldiers of the First World War, their life during the war, the one of their families and the bonds between warriors in the conflict and their community.

The text integrates an image that carries a symbolical message. Indeed, what captures the reader's attention is the image that introduces the topic. It shows a young couple :a girl and a boy holding hands before the monument of the unknown soldier. On the monument, you can read:

"Here rests in honoured glory an American soldier known but to God".

The quotation summarizes the reason why at the end of the War, people decided to build monuments to commemorate all dead soldiers, and the couple holding hands conveys a sense of communion and the need to go and pray in front of the monument. **Remembrance** is a means to go back with your thought the lives of the dead. Once again, the idea of rituals and memorials is evoked. A careful reading shows the article is dated **November 11: Veterans' Day in the USA**. No surprise the article is organized into four sequences.

The first one briefly explains the function and origins of Veterans' Day; the second tells about the first known ceremony to honour unknown soldiers - one of the first of the commemorations to take place in the USA; the third sequence goes deeper on the American unknown soldier's history and later compares it to the one of other countries' similar rituals. The last sequence telling about today's problem with Unknown Soldiers and the use of DNA.

The language used is simple and concise and does not give vent to any personal opinion. Only the fourth sequence expresses the journalist's approval of the new means of identification required to soldiers that are asked to supply blood samples upon joining the military to ensure their bodies can eventually be identified.

SECTION 3A.

THE HISTORY OF THE UNKNOWN SOLDIER IN GREAT BRITAIN

SECTION 3B.

INTEGRATED STUDY SKILLS AND COMPETENCES

STUDY SKILLS
Listening/understanding
Reading
Selecting information
Note-taking
Translating
Communicating in different languages
Organizing
Critical thinking
Synthesising/summarising in writing
Presenting research results orally

SECTION 3C.

SELECTED TEXTS:

- **Tomb of the Unknown Soldier**
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tomb_of_the_Unknown_Soldier
- **How the idea was born at:**
http://www.homeofheroes.com/gravesites/unknowns/foreign_greatbritain.html
- **The Unknown Warrior Secret at**
<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/nov/11/tomb-unknown-warrior-army-chaplain-secret>
<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2598107/Revealed-time-How-Britains-famous-soldier-The-Unknown-Warrior-chosen.html>
- **The Tomb of The Unknown Warrior at IWM**
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Unknown_Warrior
- **The unknown Warrior at IWM**
http://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/search?query=unknown%20soldier&items_per_page=10&page=1
- **Unknown Warrior at Westminster Abbey**
<http://www.westminster-abbey.org/our-history/people/unknown-warrior>
- **The Unknown Warrior**
http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/historic_figures/unknown_warrior.shtml

SECTION 3D.

THE HISTORY OF THE UNKNOWN SOLDIER IN GREAT BRITAIN

4ALS CONTRIBUTION TO SECTION 3

Introduction: The origin of the worship of the Unknown Soldier of WWI

from *The Unknown Soldier of World War I - Great Britain in Military Times, Home of Heroes* at

http://www.homeofheroes.com/gravesites/unknowns/foreign_greatbritain.html

It starts with the presentation of David Railton, a reverend who was at France's front during the war when he saw a grave marked by a cross on which written "An Unknown British Soldier". Four years later he wrote to the Dean of Westminster talking about what he had seen during his service, so Dean Ryle became the leading force for the remembrance of the Unknown Soldier. The selection of the soldier to be buried started in France, where Brigadier General L.J.Wyatt chose one of the four unknown British soldiers body as a symbol for all the dead soldiers of the conflict.

After that, the body was escorted by a French guard to Boulogne and placed inside another coffin, which was then transported to Dover where some officers of the Army bore it to British soil. On November 11, the body arrived in London and the King George V followed it into Westminster Abbey. Here, the Unknown Soldier was laid to rest after passing through an honour guard. After a few days, a slab of black marble replaced the temporary stone that sealed the grave, commemorating the Unknown Soldier.



THE OVERALL EFFECT OF THE TEXT

Thanks to the text about the topic, people can learn how the ritual of the Unknown Soldier was born and what types of rites people used to practice and still do in order to commemorate the people who died during the war.

In my opinion the text comes from an historical source because it is written following a chronological order and is very detailed. As for structure, it is composed by short paragraphs and simple periods, in order to make it accessible to different kinds of readers so that they can understand what war was like and what sacrifices soldiers had to do for their homeland and their people.

The text may be considered informative and strictly related to historical events. Its purpose is to inform the reader about the origin of the Unknown Soldier ritual and cult. Its simple language and syntax make comprehension of content easy. However, this is not its only aim since the language used is not completely objective. Indeed, the writer creates a dramatic and melancholic effect with

expressions like *“to commemorate the sacrifice”* and *“bore the coffin home”*. The overall effect is therefore given also by the description of events which seem to be taken from a novel, and using quotes. They involve the reader and make the effect even more dramatic. This is done on purpose to make reading involving through sometimes a solemn language, which bring the reader closer to the Unknown Warrior and therefore the text promotes his cult and commemoration.

In conclusion, the Soldier becomes the protagonist of the message while the events of the war are only hinted at.

GOING DEEPER INTO THE TEXTS

The present text wants to be a summary of a reading, comprehension of the documents analysed concerning the cult of the Unknown Soldier and particularly the one of Great Britain. During the WWI, The British and French armies, who were allies during the war, decided to bury their dead soldiers. The idea came to Reverend David Railton in 1916. The legend says that during his service as a chaplain to British forces at the front in France, and more specifically in a garden at Armentieres, the Reverend noticed a grave marked by a rough cross on which was written "An Unknown British Soldier".

The churchman did not forget the episode and four years later, in 1920, he wrote to the Dean of Westminster, to make him a proposal. He suggested the creation of a national symbolic funeral of an "Unknown Soldier" and his burial in the Nave of Westminster Abbey *"amongst the kings"* to represent the hundreds of thousands of dead soldiers who fought at the French front. The idea was strongly supported by the Dean of Westminster, the Prime Minister David Lloyd George and then by King George V. At the same time, there was a similar undertaking in France, where the idea was debated and agreed upon in Parliament.

The selection of the fallen (maybe a soldier, or perhaps sailor or airman) began in France. The remains of six Unknown British dead were exhumed from Aisne, the Somme, Arras and Ypres at random. On the night of November 7, 1920, the bodies were carried to St. Pol in Northern France. The bodies were received by the Reverend George Kendall. The remains were then placed in six plain coffins each covered by Union Flags, to make them look the same. The Brigadier General L.J. Wyatt, commander of all British troops in France and Flanders, and Lieutenant Colonel E.A.S. Gell of the Directorate of Graves Registration and Enquiries went into the chapel alone. At random, the General with closed eyes rested his hand on one of the coffins. Two officers placed the body in a plain coffin and sealed it. The other soldiers were later taken away for reburial by Kendall at a nearby military cemetery.

The coffin of the unknown warrior remained in the chapel overnight. On the morning of November 8, a service was held to commemorate the sacrifice of the Unknown Soldier, officiated by chaplains from the Church of England, the Roman Catholic Church, and the Non-Conformist Churches. In the afternoon of the same day, the coffin was escorted under a French honour guard and Kendall to a medieval castle near Boulogne, drawn by a wagon with six horses and followed by a mile-long procession. For the occasion, the castle library was transformed into a *chapelle ardente*.

On the morning of November 9th, two undertakers placed the coffin inside another constructed of the oak timbers of trees from Hampton Court Palace. The coffin was secured with iron bands and a

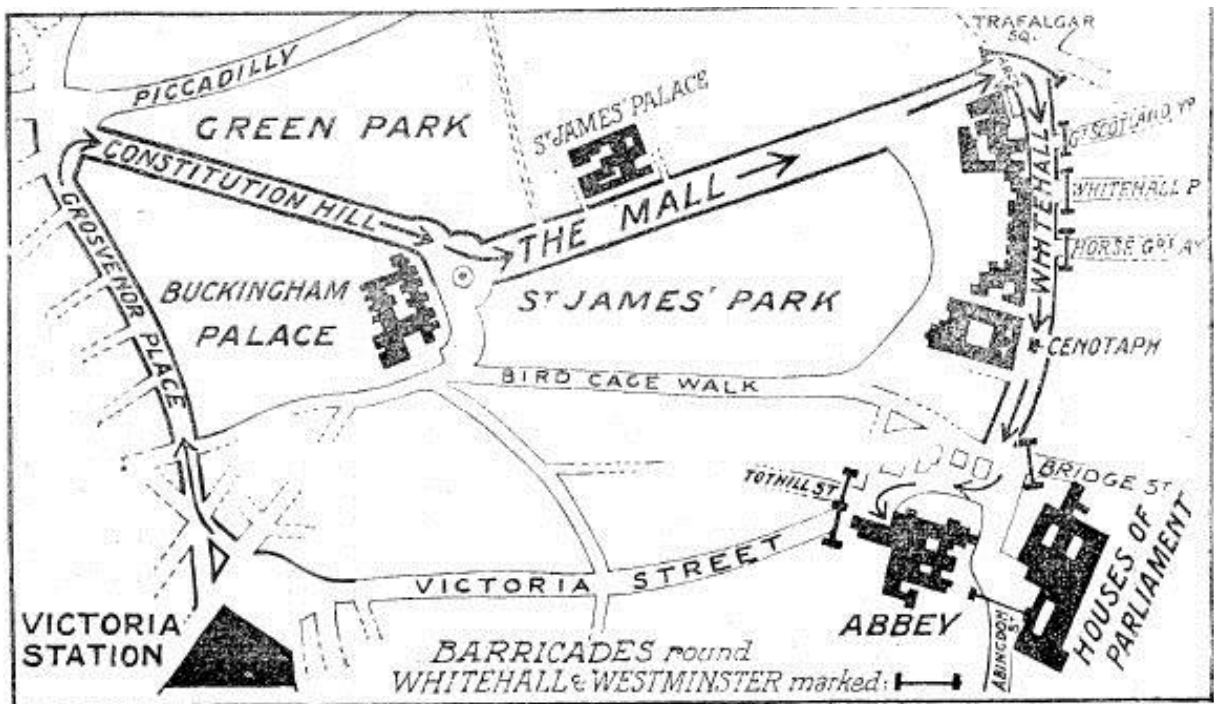
medieval crusader's sword chosen by The King personally from the Royal Collection was affixed to the top and surmounted by an iron shield with an inscription:

"A British Warrior who fell in the Great War 1914–1918 for King and Country"

At 10.30 am, all the church bells of Boulogne tolled, the massed trumpets of the French cavalry and the bugles of the French infantry played Aux Champs. The casket was carried onto a French military wagon, drawn by six black horses to the port led by one thousand local schoolchildren and escorted by a division of French troops.

Here, the casket was loaded on the HMS Verdun receiving a 19-gun Field Marshal's salute. The Verdun transported the Unknown Soldier to Dover Marine Railway Station at the Western Docks on 10 November.

Six warrant officers from the Royal Navy, Royal Marines, Royal Air Force and Royal Army then bore the coffin home to British soil. The body of the Unknown Warrior was carried to London in South Eastern and Chatham Railway General Utility Van N°132. The van has been preserved by the Kent and East Sussex Railway. The train went to Victoria Station, where it arrived at platform 8 at 8.32 pm and remained overnight.



On the morning of 11 November 1920, the casket was placed onto a gun carriage of the Royal Horse Artillery and drawn by six horses through immense and silent crowds, making its first stop in Whitehall where the Cenotaph was revealed by King George V. The King placed his garland of red roses and bay leaves on the coffin. His card read:

***"In proud memory of those Warriors who died unknown in the Great War.
Unknown, and yet well-known; as dying, and behold they live. George R.I.
November 11th 1920".***

Then the carriage, with pall bearers (Admirals) Lord Beatty, Sir Hedworth Meux, Sir Henry Jackson, Sir C.E. Madden, (Field Marshals) Lord French, Lord Haig, Lord Methuen, Sir Henry Wilson, (Generals) Lord Horne, Lord Byng, Albert Farrar-Gatliff and Air Chief Marshal Sir Hugh Trenchard, followed by the King, members of the Royal Family and ministers of State, headed toward the north door of Westminster Abbey.

Once reached the abbey, the Unknown Soldier was welcome by a guard of honour of one hundred holders of the Victoria Cross, under the command of Colonel Fryeburg VC about one hundred women, that had each lost their husband and all their sons in the war. Inside, the Choir sang "O Valiant Hearts".



The coffin was interred in the far western end of the Nave, only a few feet from the entrance, using 100 sandbags of soil brought from each of the main battlefields, and covered with a silk. After the hymn "Lead kindly light", the King dropped a handful of French earth onto the coffin. Next it was lowered into the grave. At the close of the service, after the hymn "Abide with me", the congregation sang Rudyard Kipling's solemn Recessional "God of our fathers", after which the Reveille was sounded by trumpeters.

For seven days the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier of Great Britain lay under the watchful eye of a military guard while thousands of mourners passed by to leave their last respects. On 18 November, it was covered by a temporary stone inscribed with the words: "A British warrior who fell in the great war 1914-1918 for king and country. Greater love hath no man than this."

The grave was then closed with a black Belgian marble stone featuring this inscription, composed by Herbert Edward Ryle, Dean of Westminster.

*"Beneath this stone rests the body
of a British warrior
unknown by name or rank
brought from France to lie among
the most illustrious of the land
and buried here on armistice day
11 nov: 1920, in the presence of
his majesty king George V
his ministers of state
the chiefs of his forces
and a vast concourse of the nation
thus are commemorated the many
multitudes who during the great
war of 1914-1918 gave the most that
man can give life itself
for God
for king and country
for loved ones home and empire
for the sacred cause of justice and*

*the freedom of the world
they buried him among the kings because he
had done good toward god and toward
his house”*

A GROUP CONTRIBUTION

The present text is the result of the group study and analysis of the documents about the rite of the Unknown Soldier in Great Britain. First of all, one must understand who the Unknown Warrior is : he is a soldier that represents all the fallen soldiers of World War I, whatever their origin or role. The idea of a commemoration whose function was to preserve and celebrate the memory of WWI soldiers came from David Railton, a British chaplain who was impressed by a make-shift grave on which was written “An Unknown British Soldier”. This is the reason why in 1920 he wrote to the Dean of Westminster to suggest a formal commemoration for an unknown warrior that could stand for all fallen soldiers in the conflict.

The body was chosen by the general I. J. Wyatt, the commander of the British troops in France, from the bodies of four (or six) unknown British servicemen who had lost their life fighting on the Western Front. The body of the Unknown Soldier was brought to the St Pol’s chapel, in northern France and later escorted under a French honour guard to Boulogne, to finally arrive in Great Britain at London’s Victoria railway station.

The celebration took place on November 11th, 1920. The cortege started at the station and eight bearers who belonged to the Grenadier Guards entered the carriage and draped the casket with the union flag. Afterwards the Unknown Soldier started his last trip through the streets of London, pulled by six black horses; the cortege stopped at the Cenotaph where King George placed a wreath on the coffin. Finally, the gun-carriage moved toward Westminster Abbey, where the Unknown Soldier was buried.

The burial included two minutes of silence, the first to commemorate those who had fought and returned home, the second one to remember they who had not.



As regards the language used in the documents analysed , it is mainly simple, in order to make the reader better understand the meaning and the content of each text. The frequent use of parataxis makes the reading of the documents as easy as possible. The documents are all descriptive and informative, organized into simple paragraphs. This is the reason why they rarely make use of figures of speech, even if the most used among them are metaphors, alliterations and similes.

The ideal reader is the common reader, from child to adult, because the texts are easily accessible. All the texts considered convey to the reader the same message: the idea of the celebration of a

single person perceived as a symbol for all the soldiers who died for their country. In addition, the documents underline the value of patriotism, in the name of which thousands of people gave and lost their life.

THE HISTORY OF THE UNKNOWN SOLDIER IN GREAT BRITAIN

4ASA CONTRIBUTION TO SECTION 3

Introduction: The origin of the worship of the Unknown Soldier of WWI

from *The Unknown Soldier of World War I - Great Britain* in *Military Times, Home of Heroes* at

http://www.homeofheroes.com/gravesites/unknowns/foreign_greatbritain.html

Right from the title the reader realizes that the text is a document about the history of the British Unknown Soldier of the First World War. The text is arranged in chronological order and is organized into eleven paragraphs where each of them tells about an important step of the process that led to Unknown Warrior's ritual.

It is written in a formal language because it is similar to a historical document and is an informative text. The first paragraph tells about the origin of the Unknown Warrior: in 1916 (in the same year of the Great War, the German Empire launched its greatest offensive against British and French troops) a reverend (Reverend David Railton) noticed a make-shift tomb on which was written "*An Unknown British Soldier*" in the French front.

Four years later he sent a message to Dean Ryle (Dean of Westminster) who did his best to make the reverend's idea come true and namely to build an Unknown Warrior's grave in Great Britain. The second paragraph tells about the selection of the casualty that would become the British Unknown Soldier to be buried in Westminster Abbey: the Brigadier General L J Wyatt chose one among four unknown casualties which were later taken to St. Pol while the other casualties were buried in a military cemetery in France. The casualties came from very important battlefields like Ypres and the Somme. Ypres was one of the worst battlefields of the Great War because there for the first time in Autumn 1915 German troops used gas (indeed it takes the name of the place) in the Western Front. The Somme was a strategic French fortress which was attacked by the German army in Winter 1916. It was the first battle where an army employed a tank (the British Mark I Mk IV).

The third paragraph tells about the procession of the Unknown Soldier's body, so it tells about a religious commemoration. A war ship of the Royal Navy, HMS Verdun, took the coffin to Dover where it was welcome with a 19-gun salute and afterwards six officers took the coffin to London.

On the 11th November, the Unknown warrior's pilgrimage began: six black horses led the carriage which bore the coffin. The King and his family followed the pilgrimage from Whitehall to Westminster Abbey.



Silent tribute: Cortege in Whitehall on Nov 11, 1920 (Photo: Getty)

In the grave six barrels of Ypres earth were brought and an honour guard put the Victoria Cross (most important British honour) on the grave. The ceremony prosecuted with songs like the hymn “*Abide with Me*” or “*God of Our Fathers*”. For seven days, people could make their last respects to the Unknown Soldier.

The ninth paragraph tells about the inscription of the stone which sealed the grave. In 1921 the General of the Armies of the United States Pershing assigned the Medal of Honour to the soldier. It was a political action to reinforce the alliance between the United Kingdom and the United States.



Reading the text, the reader receives an image of the history of the British Unknown Soldier, in all its aspects: as a religious commemoration, the origin of the celebration, the political reasons behind it as well as a description of the Unknown warrior's journey.

The text is written in a formal language which adds a reflective and serious mood. The choice is suitable to content and topic, since it informs about the idea to commemorate all the soldiers who fought in the First

World war, a topic, most people are sensitive to considered that the dead from different countries in the conflict are so many that cannot be counted.

The speaking voice is external and as a result the reader can learn about facts without being influenced by the speaking voice's opinions. From the text, the intelligent reader can infer relevant information about one of the many British dead soldiers during the Great War, one who became a hero, a symbol whom the English population who had suffered severe losses during the war could identify with. The English people were given a place where they could mourn and play homage to a man who, like many others, had sacrificed his life for the country.

The text also conveys the atmosphere of the ritual: indeed, before the Unknown Soldier's burial, a well-structured and complex ritual, accompanied by many hymns and rites, was organized. In conclusion, the message underlines the importance notto forget the war and one's country history because it is part of a country's identity and culture.

A GROUP CONTRIBUTION

THE UNKNOWN SOLDIER IN GREAT BRITAIN

The present work explores the events of the British Unknown Soldier's history and is the result of the study and analysis of the above-mentioned documents. They come from different sources published on websites like newspaper websites, Westminster Abbey's site, and many other.

The early three documents introduce the topic: the first provides a description of the Unknown Soldier's tomb (as a war memorial), the second offers a synthesis of the steps of the journey of the body of the Unknown Soldier and finally the third one tells about the origin of the idea of the building the Unknown Warrior's grave. The fourth tells about the journey of the British Unknown Soldier while the fifth document illustrates the terrible aspects of the First World War in relation to the Unknown Soldier. The last document concludes with a synthesis of the story of the Unknown Soldier's grave. Group work has mainly consisted the collection of information with the task to re-

construct the British Unknown Soldier's destiny, from the origin of the idea to the process that transformed the idea into the concrete grave in Westminster Abbey.

The idea dates 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 at the Western Front. Chaplain Railton wrote to the Dean of Westminster who helped him to carry out the project writing to King George V and to the first minister Lloyd George. He convinced the British government to build a war memorial at Westminster Abbey.

The selection of the corpse for the tomb was made in St. Pol, Northern France where the Brigadier General Wyatt blindfolded chose one between four bodies that came from different battlefields (Aisne, the Somme, Arras and Ypres) of the Western Front. The remaining bodies were buried in a military cemetery in Later the body was transported from France to Boulogne where a procession took place and the coffin had been built. The body was transported by the HMS Verdun from there to Dover. When the



Grave 1920 with flowers

coffin arrived at Victoria station in London (a ceremony took place, with the presence of the royal family and choirs singing hymns on the anniversary of the armistice in 1920. It was an inspirational and melancholic procession that from there moved from the Cenotaph to Westminster Abbey.

The Unknown Warrior received an impressive tribute by people from all parts of Great Britain and the grave there is surely 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 quoting 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. On 17th October 1921, General Pershing assigned the Congressional Medal of Honour to the British Unknown Soldier. 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.

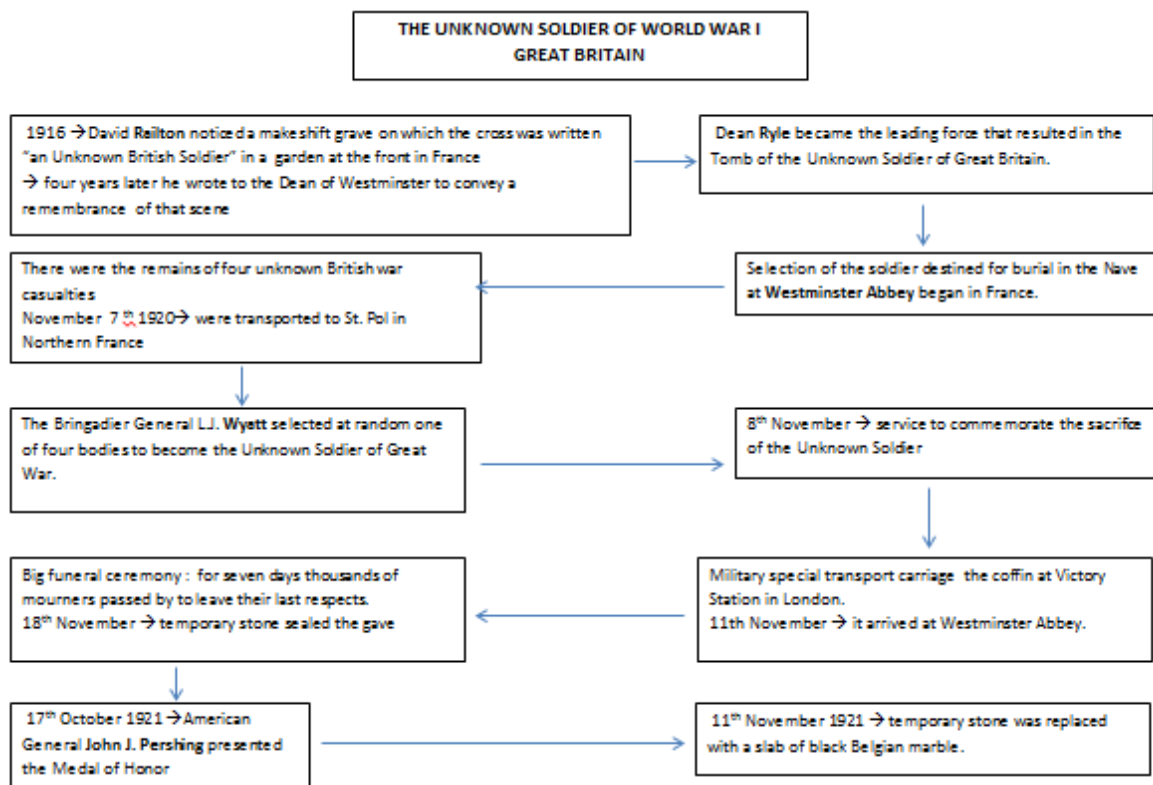
Indeed, the tomb is considered a war memorial as the Cenotaph, but it has a different meaning: The Cenotaph represents all soldiers who fell in the Great War for the country and the king, the Unknown Soldier's grave represents all the dead in the First World War who had been not identified, they who did not have a tomb. Originally, war memorials were used by the governments of the countries to involve people in the recruitment to the armies but its meaning has changed in time. Nowadays the meaning of war memorials seems to be more a warning against the horrors of war and an invitation to promote peace.



The Cenotaph is a war memorial on Whitehall in London, England. Its origin is in a temporary structure erected for a peace parade following the end of the First World War and after an outpouring of national sentiment, it was replaced in 1920 by a permanent structure and appointed the United Kingdom's official national war memorial.

Documents: Structure, communication and purpose

The documents are organized into paragraphs where each of them tells about a step of the Unknown Soldier's history or deals with a particular topic. They are mainly informative texts and use formal but simple language. The reader easily understands that the aim of the documents is to provide information about the Unknown Soldier's history, the ideal reader is someone with a peculiar interest in the history of WWI and its forms of remembrance.



SECTION 4A.

KEY PERSONALITIES

SECTION 4B.

INTEGRATED STUDY SKILLS AND COMPETENCES

STUDY SKILLS
Listening/understanding
Reading
Selecting information
Note-taking
Translating
Communicating in different languages
Organizing
Critical thinking
Synthesising/summarising in writing
Presenting research results orally

SECTION 4C.

SELECTED TEXTS:

- **Maev Kennedy, Army chaplain who took the Unknown Warrior's secret to his grave** in *The Guardian*, April 11th, 2014
<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/nov/11/tomb-unknown-warrior-army-chaplain-secret>
- **David Railton and the Unknown Warrior** at
<http://www.stjohnschurchmargate.org.uk/sicmdrupal/wp-content/uploads/2011/12/David-Railton-and-the-Unknown-Warrior2.pdf>
- **The Unknown Warrior Secret** at
<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2598107/Revealed-time-How-Britains-famous-soldier-The-Unknown-Warrior-chosen.html>
- **Unknown Warrior**
<http://www.westminster-abbey.org/our-history/people/unknown-warrior>
- **Herbert Edward Ryle**
<http://www.westminster-abbey.org/our-history/people/herbert-edward-ryle>
- **The Unknown Warrior: A hero's return** at by John Preston, in *The Telegraph*
<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/defence/3399166/The-Unknown-Warrior-A-heros-return.html>

SECTION 4D.

4ALS CONTRIBUTION TO SECTION 4

DAVID RAILTON

Introduction

The present text wants to be a summary of a collaborative work of reading, comprehension and textual analysis of documents concerning the key figure of David Railton, the man who had the idea to commemorate the Unknown Soldier. Probably, without his contribute, the ritual would not exist.

Some hints

David Railton was a priest and a soldier born on 13 November 1884 at Leytonstone, London. When he was young, he received a private education at Macclesfield Grammar School. Later, he attended the Oxford University, with a strong High Church tradition. David was ordained deacon in 1908 and

priest in 1909 by the Bishop of Liverpool. During the 1914-18 war, he became a chaplain to the second Battalion of the Hon. Artillery Company on the Western Front. He received the Military Cross in 1916 for saving an officer and two men under heavy fire. After the war, he became Vicar of St John's church at Margate in Kent. He was killed in an accidental fall from a train in Scotland in June 1955.

Why he is a relevant figure

Reverend David Railton inspired the concept of the Grave of the Unknown Warrior. The legend says that during his service as a chaplain to British forces at the front in France, namely in a garden at *Armentières*, the Reverend noticed a grave marked by a rough cross on which was written:

"An Unknown British Soldier"

The churchman did not forget the episode. In August 1920, he wrote to Herbert Ryle, Dean of Westminster, suggesting the creation of permanent national memorial to the fallen of the Great War who had no known grave and his burial in the Nave of Westminster Abbey "*amongst the kings*" to represent the many hundreds of thousands of dead. The idea was strongly supported by the Dean of Westminster, the Prime Minister David Lloyd George and then by King George V. After the war, Railton became the vicar of St. John the Baptist Church at Margate. Maybe, without this key figure the rite of the Unknown Soldier would not exist.

Use of language

Text Type - The texts analysed are historical biographies and newspaper. They are organized following a logical structure, one suitable to communicate the information fully and accurately. Their subject is Reverend David Railton.

Linguistic register –The majority of the texts does not present particularly high linguistic registers, except the ones from the site of Westminster Abbey.

Figures of speech - Due to their peculiarity the texts, must be as objective as possible and therefore there are no relevant figures of speech.

Syntax - The sentences are simple, short, often paratactic or if clauses.

Message

The texts have the objective to provide a profile of he who had the idea of contributing with a memorial to the Unknown Soldier.

Ideal reader

The texts did not present any syntactical or morphological problems, except for the ones in the site of Westminster Abbey, which requires a higher level of textual understanding.

On the contrary reading biographies generally requires only basic skills.

GROUP WORK II

Discussing the role of key figures in the process that lead to the commemoration and the ritual of the English Unknown soldier one cannot but start considering the figure from which the idea originated. Indeed, it is the merit of chaplain David Railton to have conceived the idea of having a means to offer British citizens a place and an occasion to mourn and go back to the memory and sacrifice of all those who had died in the conflict and whose.

But who was David Railton?

David Railton, born on 13 November 1884 in London was a clergyman, a Military chaplain and the man who had the idea of originating the Unknown Warrior's grave and commemoration. He was educated by private tutors before attending Macclesfield Grammar School as a boarder. Afterwards, David attended Keble College in Oxford and was led to ordination in the Church of England. He was ordained deacon in 1908 and priest in 1909 by the Bishop of Liverpool. During the First World War, he volunteered to serve as an Army chaplain in France.

The idea and the meaning

The idea of the Unknown Soldier was born when he saw a grave, near Armentieres, on which there was a cross with an inscription reading "An Unknown British Soldier". The event moved him and at the same time made him think it would be a very inspiring idea to have a national place commemorating all dead soldiers in war and whose identity could no longer be known. This would allow all citizens having lost one of their beloved whether son, or husband or friend to have a place and an occasion to remember them as well as one to give them recognition for their sacrifice. At first, he wrote a letter to Field Marshall Douglas Haig to expose his idea, but he had no response. In August 1920, he wrote a letter to Dean Ryle of Westminster Abbey with the suggestion that an Unknown Soldier should be buried in the Abbey and his dream became reality on 11 November 1920. To contribute to the ceremony, he gifted the flag he used in the French front for the burial of soldiers to the Abbey after the Unknown Soldier was brought to London. He was convinced that the tomb could ease the pain of parents, wives, sons, daughters, brothers and sisters. After the war, he became Vicar of St. John's Church at Margate in Kent. He died in a railway accident at Fort William in 1955.

The Language

All the texts about Reverend express a message of celebration of the man. This is clear from the language used. It magnifies all his actions, especially the moment when the idea of the Unknown Soldier came to his mind. Indeed, he never gave up and wrote a second letter to Dean Ryle of Westminster Abbey even if it was rejected the first time.

HERBERT EDWARD RYLE, DEAN OF WESTMINSTER

The words in Westminster Abbey's site well explain the role of the Dean in the commemoration of the Unknown Warrior:

***"..was instrumental in pushing forward the idea of
the burial of an unknown British warrior after the Great War."***

The same site also underlines how he launched the Dean Ryle fund for the repair of the stonework of the Abbey in 1920 and helped officiate at the wedding in 1923 of the future King George VI. The Dean of Westminster is the head of the chaplains at Westminster Abbey. Due to the Abbey's status

as a Royal Peculiar, the dean answers directly to the Queen, not to the Bishop of London, nor to the Archbishop of Canterbury

Sir Herbert Edward Ryle was born in London, on 25th May 1856. He was the second son of John Charles Ryle, the first Bishop of Liverpool, and his second wife, Jessie Elizabeth Walker, that died when Herbert was only three years old. He was educated at Eton College and King's College, reaching distinctions as student of theology in Cambridge. In April 1881, he began a career of twenty years as a teacher and writer. He was ordained deacon in 1882 and priest in 1883. Ryle was appointed Honorary Chaplain to Queen Victoria in March 1896. In December 1900, he was appointed Bishop of Exeter, being consecrated at Westminster Abbey in January 1901. **In December 1910 Ryle was appointed Dean of Westminster.** During World War I Ryle used to take the midday service of intercession personally, and he was responsible for the many special services held in wartime.

The idea of a Tomb of The Unknown Warrior was first conceived in 1916 by the Reverend David Railton. He wrote to Dean Ryle in 1920 proposing that an 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 of Empire dead.

The idea was accepted by Ryle and the then Prime Minister Lloyd George. There was initial opposition from King George V and others but a surge of emotional support from the great number of bereaved families ensured its adoption. The inscription on the tomb was composed by Ryle. Ryle was created KCVO (Knight Commander of the (Royal Victorian Order) in 1921. He was dean at the Wedding of Prince Albert, Duke of York, and Lady Elizabeth Bowes-Lyon. He had never been strong and had a history of heart trouble. In the autumn of 1924 his health broke down. After five months in a nursing home at Bournemouth he returned in May 1925 to the Deanery, where he died on 20 August. His stone reads:

***“Not by might nor by power but by my spirit. Herbert Edward Ryle K.C.V.O.,
D.D. Dean of Westminster 1911-1925. Born 25 May 1856. Died 20 August 1925.
Bishop of Exeter 1901-1903, Bishop of Winchester 1903-1911.
Thou wilt shew me the path of life. In thy presence is fullness of joy”.***

The grave of Herbert Edward Ryle, Dean of Westminster, is placed in the centre of the nave of Westminster Abbey, near the grave of the Unknown Warrior.

4ASA CONTRIBUTION TO SECTION 4

DAVID RAILTON

The Dean of Westminster

Sir Herbert Edward Ryle was a British author, Old testament scholar and successively the Bishop of Exeter and the Dean of Westminster. He was born in London in 1856 and he got educated at King's College, Cambridge. He was elected a Fellow of King's College, Cambridge and began his career as a teacher.

He taught at the University of Cambridge and published lots of books before he became the Dean of Westminster in December 1910. He was installed in Westminster Abbey in April 1911, at a time when the building was being prepared for the coronation of King George V. Under his guidance and with the help of his advisers, the dignity of the Abbey notably increased. During World War 1 Ryle used to take the midday service of intercession personally, and he was responsible for the many special services held in wartime.

The idea of a Tomb of The Unknown Warrior was first conceived in 1916 by the Reverend David Railton, who, while serving as an army chaplain on the Western Front, had seen a grave marked by a rough cross, which bore the pencil-written legend '*An Unknown British Soldier*'. He wrote to Dean Ryle in 1920 proposing that an unidentified British soldier from the battlefields in France should be buried in Westminster Abbey to represent the many thousands of dead soldiers. There was initial opposition from King George V and others but a wave of emotional support from the great number of bereaved families ensured its adoption. Ryle himself composed the inscription of the tomb.

Ryle was created KCVO ((Knight Commander of the (Royal Victorian Order) in 1921. He was dean at the Wedding of Prince Albert, Duke of York, and Lady Elizabeth Bowes-Lyon. He had never been strong and had a history of heart trouble. He died in 1925 and was buried on 25 August in Westminster Abbey close to the tomb of The Unknown Warrior. Dean Ryle Street in Westminster is named after him.

L.J. WYATT

L.J.Wyatt is remembered to have taken part in the selection of one of the bodies of unknown soldiers to be buried in Westminster Abbey and therefore he represents a key figure in the story of the Unknown soldier..

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.

As well as coming from unmarked graves, the bodies all had to belong to soldiers who had died in the early years of the War. The orders given to the exhumation parties were very clear on this point. The bodies had to be as old as possible in order to ensure they were sufficiently decomposed to be unidentifiable. Wrapped in old sacks, the four dead soldiers had been brought to St Pol, where they were received by a British clergyman and two undertakers who had travelled to France for the occasion. There, the remains were examined to make sure they bore no identifying marks, then placed inside the hut for the remainder of the day.

In some reports of what happened next, Brig Wyatt was described as being blindfolded. The number of the corpses is controversial and some say there were 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. Honoured by the King-Emperor, attended with the most lavish pomp and solemn ceremony that the country could muster, this anonymous collection of bones was about to become the focus of a nation's grief. After Brig Wyatt had made his choice, the Union flags were folded away.

SUMMING UP

Key figures in the history of the British unknown Soldier

There are four people that represent a key role in the British unknown soldier's history.

David Railton

The first is David Railton, whose figure is relevant because he was the first to have suggested the idea of an Unknown soldier's grave. The proposal was born when, in the middle of the war in 1916, noticed a makeshift grave on which were pencilled the words 'An Unknown British Soldier'. His aim was to commemorate thousands of missing men who knew no grave and ease the pain of their parents and friends. To achieve his goal, in 1920 he wrote to the Dean of Westminster who took another important role in the following events.



The Dean of Westminster

Sir Herbert Edward Ryle-The Dean of Westminster- was moved by D. Railton's sensibility towards the thousands of dead soldiers and became the first supporter for the idea that eventually resulted in the Unknown soldier's grave in Westminster Abbey. The grave became one of the first memorials of his kind and made the Abbey increase its importance.



L. J. Wyatt

In the middle of the history, another key figure took an important role: General Brigadier L. J. Wyatt. He was assigned the selection of the body of the Unknown soldier. On identification, he was blindfolded because he was supposed to choose among identified corpses because the chosen body had to symbolize all the soldiers that had died during the conflict. When he entered a hut in the village of St. Pol (near Ypres, in northern France), he had in front of him four bodies or the remains of them (the real number of the bodies were controversial). All the bodies were covered under the Union Flags. The bodies had been disinterred from unmarked graves in each of the main battlefields: the Aisne, the Somme, the Arras and Ypres. Four blank crosses had been chosen for them. The soldiers were supposed to have taken part in the early years of the war because the bodies had to be as old as possible so that they could be surely sufficiently decomposed not to be identified.



King George V

King George V who is reminded to have been a respectable king: he ruled during the period of the start of the Unknown soldier's cult and during the War he made many visits to the front. He crushed many problems during his reign (for example Irish and financial crisis) but he managed to resolve them.

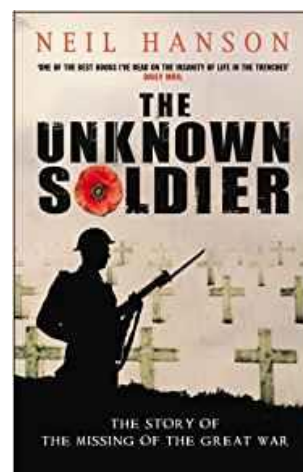


SECTION 5A.

THE UNKNOWNWARRIOR IN LITERATURE. THE BOND UNKNOWN SOLDIER-CITIZENS

The present section will take into consideration the bond between the citizens and the Unknown soldier as it comes to surface in a novel published in 2005 (NEIL HANSON, *The Unknown Soldier*), a able to create a sense of communion so that the people who had suffered from the death of their beloved could share their feelings and grief.

In his novel, he refers to the Unknown Warrior's arrival in London as reported in "The Telegraph", dated 09 November 2008 where John Preston, the journalist wrote:



*"As the train made its way to London, every station it passed through was filled to overflowing. People stood in silence and bowed their heads as the white-roofed luggage van went by. By now it must have been apparent to the most hardened skeptic that Railton's idea had caught the public imagination to a degree that not even he had dared dream of. The whole country, it seemed, was eager for a sight of the coffin – **eager to project onto its anonymous occupant the features of loved ones they would never see again, who would never come home.**"*

In order to better report the idea of the emotions, feeling and projections of the people at the time, the analysis of two chapters from Neil Hanson's novel will be analysed.

SECTION 5B.

INTEGRATED STUDY SKILLS AND COMPETENCES

STUDY SKILLS
Listening/understanding
Reading
Selecting information
Note-taking
Translating
Communicating in different languages
Organizing
Critical Thinking
Synthesising/summarising in writing
Presenting research results orally

SECTION 5C.

SELECTED TEXTS:

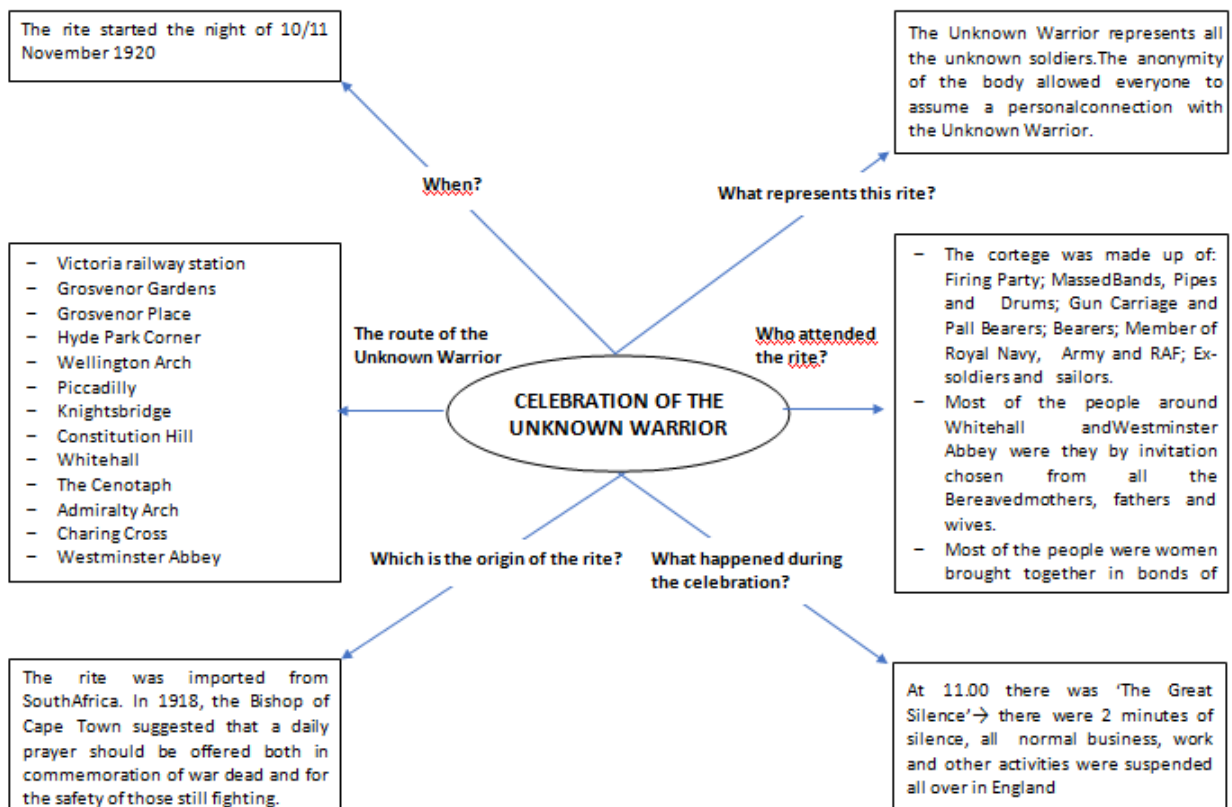
- NEIL HANSON, *The Unknown Soldier*, The story of the missing of the great war, Doubleday, 2005 Chapter 24, *The Great Silence*, pp.443-463
- NEIL HANSON, *The Unknown Soldier*. The story of the missing of the great war, Doubleday, 2005 Chapter 24, *The People's Pilgrimage*, pp.467-493
- *The Unknown Warrior: A hero's return* at by John Preston, in *The Telegraph* <<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/defence/3399166/The-Unknown-Warrior-A-heros-return.html>>

SECTION 5D.

4ALS CONTRIBUTION TO SECTION 5

The Great Silence

The celebration of the Unknown Warrior took place on the 11th of November 1920. The route of the Unknown Warrior and the cortège started from Victoria railway station. On the coffin were placed the Union flag, a steel helmet, side arms and a webbing belt. Then the last travel of the warrior went on through Grosvenor Gardens and up Grosvenor Place. At Hyde Park Corner the crowd curved to the Wellington Arch passing along Piccadilly and Knightsbridge and down Constitution Hill and along the Mall. After that the cortège moved on to Admiralty Arch and Charing Cross and then turning into Whitehall.





The coffin stopping at the Cenotaph

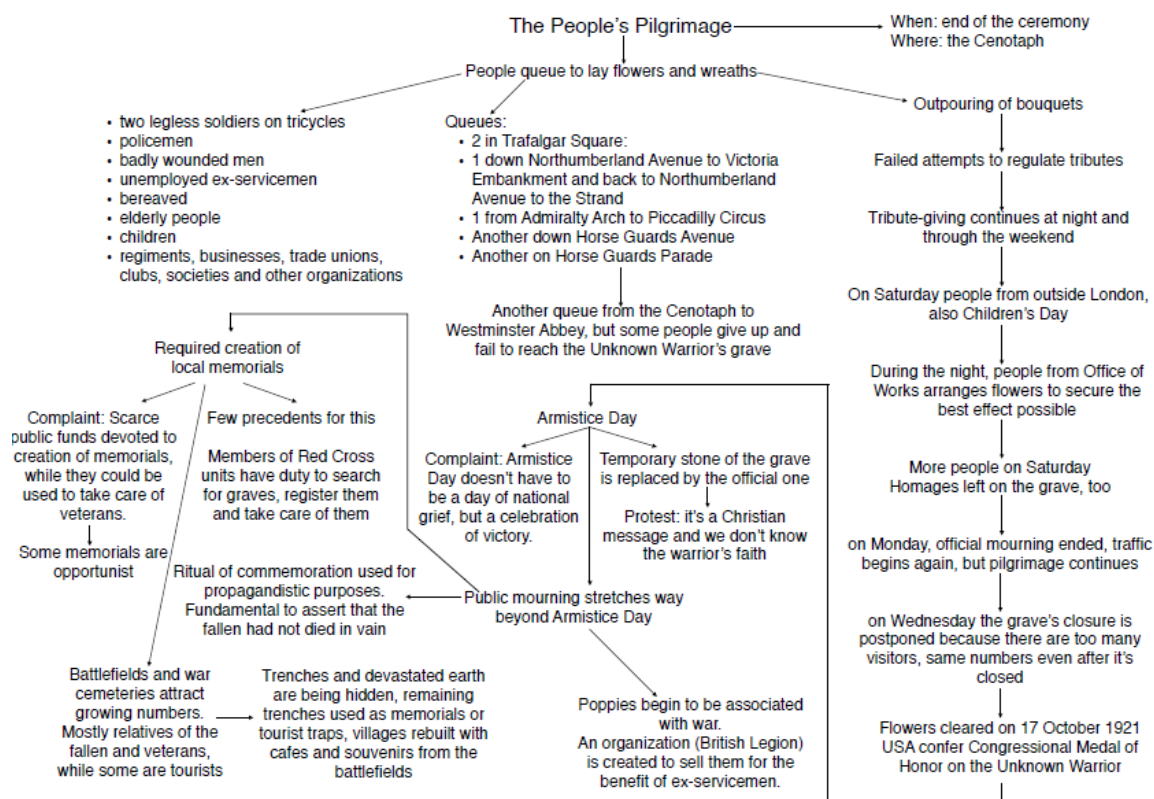
At ten minutes to 11.00 the cortege stopped at the Cenotaph where the King placed a wreath on the coffin, then the gun-carriage moved toward Westminster Abbey (the Unknown Warrior's last resting place). Arrived at the Abbey the coffin was placed in the open grave and then took place a brief celebration. The helmet, the side arms and the Union flag were removed and the grave was closed. All the people passed near the grave to give the last goodbye to the Unknown Warrior. The cortege that preceded the coffin was made up, as order of the precedence of Mourners on the March, of: Firing Party; Massed Bands, Pipes and Drums; Gun Carriage and Pall Bearers; Bearers; Members of Royal Navy, Army and RAF; Ex- soldiers and sailors. Most of the crowd around Whitehall and Westminster Abbey was there by invitation, chosen by ballot from the many bereaved mothers, fathers and wives. However, **the majority were women brought together in bonds of sorrow and pride.** The Unknown Warrior's last travel was characterized by **the silence that was sometimes interrupted by Funeral marches and other celebratory songs.** At 11.00 there was 'The Great Silence': **there were 2 minutes of silence, one minute to commemorate those who fought and returned home, the other to remember those who died in war.** All normal business, work and other activities were suspended all over in England. The rite was imported from South Africa. In 1918 the Bishop of Cape Town suggested that a daily prayer should be offered both in commemoration of war dead and for the safety of those still fighting. The Unknown Warrior represents all the unknown soldiers, whatever their origins. The anonymity of the body allowed everyone to assume a personal connection with the Unknown Warrior.

THE GREAT SILENCE AS COMMUNICATION

The text under analysis is called *The Great Silence*, an extract from the novel "The Unknown Soldier". Just considering the title "The Great Silence" the reader can make up an idea of what the text refers to. The adjective "Great" conveys the idea of something important and significant. The noun "silence" evokes a sense of respect, pain and the people's behaviour when the Unknown Soldier's coffin passed through the crowd. Readers can perceive a respectful atmosphere created by the language used and the images used. They can also understand some adjectives and nouns like "the sunlight of a perfect autumn morning" suggest the idea of something melancholy and pensive thus conveying the atmosphere of war and people's pain. Also significant is the expression "the last stroke of eleven reverberated and then faded into the deepest silence any there had ever heard". It creates an effect of desolation, sadness and attention. From the expression, the reader can understand the sympathy between people who had lost someone very dear in the Great War and the Unknown soldier. All people were in silence and all the activities stopped: a way to express respect for the Soldier and identify him with their lost sons, husbands or friend. The anonymity of the body allowed everyone to establish a special emotional and personal connection with the Warrior. Silence can be considered as a way to remember they who died in the First World War and creates a bond between the Unknown soldier who becomes a symbol for all they who died in the War and the English citizens. The lexicon used evokes melancholy and conveys the idea that also they who did not take part in the War can feel close to dead soldiers and express their personal response. All in all the text makes it clear that the rite and the commemoration are a need of those who survived and lost their beloved ones. Religious silence offered an occasion to reflect on what happened and show the terrible effects of the war thus paving the way for a different idea of what war is really like.

THE PEOPLE'S PILGRIMAGE

At the end of the ceremony at the Cenotaph, people from all country belonging to all social classes began to lay flowers at the base of it or on the Unknown Warrior's grave. However, there were so many "pilgrims" that formed w long queues. Those did not diminish their length in the whole week, making the "voyage" to the Cenotaph and the grave last many hours and making many hundreds give up. In particular, Saturday 13 was called the "children's day", since there were great numbers of little ones of all ages. The tribute-giving continued at night and under the rain and all attempts to regulate it failed. It went on even after the end of the official mourning, when, even though traffic had begun again, drivers slowed out of respect and removed their hats. The closure of the grave of the Unknown Warrior was postponed from Wednesday 17th November to the following day due to the doubling visitors. Flowers were cleared on 17 October 1921, when the USA conferred the Congressional Medal of Honour on the unknown soldier. The ceremony took place later than expected due to a delay caused by the reluctance of the King to confer the Victoria Cross to the American unknown warrior. On Armistice Day, 11 November 1921, the temporary stone of the grave of the unknown warrior was replaced by the official one. However, there were protests regarding its content, that was required too Christian, while people didn't know the unknown warrior's faith. Other protests were made by ex-servicemen, who interrupted the ceremony crying that they needed "food, not prayers". So, the government tried to change the focus of Armistice Day from a "day of National grief" to a celebration of victory.



Public mourning stretched beyond Armistice Day also on this occasion, creating long queues throughout the weekend. On this period, poppies had begun to be associated with war, so an organization was created to sell them for the benefit of ex-servicemen. Sellers of poppies were stationed on every part of the country, but some people made and sold them for profit. Even twenty years after the burial of the unknown warrior, thousands were still paying their respects at his grave; this required the creation of local memorials, which had few precedents. Members of Red Cross units were given the duty to search for graves, take care of them and identify soldiers. The majority of the dead were civilians, so a vast number of monuments were 'civilian' and lamented the sacrifice of the dead. However, some people complained about this, since the scarce funds could have been used to take care of veterans instead of creating memorials, that in some communities had an utilitarian form. The ritual of commemoration was used by academicians, too, and was adapted for propaganda purposes by people who supported and opposed to war. However, it was essential for the government to assert that the fallen had not died in vain.

Battlefields and war cemeteries attracted ever-growing numbers throughout the 1920s and 1930s. They were mostly relatives of the fallen and veterans, but some were tourists. Indeed, some of the remaining trenches were used as tourist traps and some villages were rebuilt with cafes and souvenir shops for tourists.

SECTION 5E.

4ASA CONTRIBUTION TO SECTION 5

The pilgrimage began with flowers and wreaths' laying on the Cenotaph by the columns of people which didn't only belong to military forces or related with members or survivors of British army, but also by people which simply wanted to celebrate the mourning of a country (man, women or child). The flowers and the wreaths laid on a tomb are a symbol of respect which join lots of religions and cultures, they represent the rebirth of the life in another place. On the wreaths,



there are written dedications made by individuals to remember family members lost in the war or on behalf of teams, regiments or other societies and organizations. The pilgrimage prosecuted walking to Unknown Warrior's grave in Westminster Abbey. So, "pilgrims" passed from the Cenotaph (an empty tomb) to Unknown Warrior's grave which is a real tomb where a real soldier buried. People passed from a monument to another with different meaning. Indeed, in the first step people commemorate the mourning of British war dead, in the second step they visited the Unknown Warrior's grave to pay homage to a soldier who represents all warriors who died for their country whose identity doesn't exist.

In the First World War, there were lots of unknown soldiers although the countries that participated made the first real research work of finding the identity to their dead soldiers. The ceremony continued for days: on each day generally arrived other categories of people, for example on Saturday arrived lots of children of different ages who were war orphans or accompanied their parents.

In addition, the Unknown Warrior received posthumous honours, the most important he received was awarded by United States of America: it is the Congressional Medal of Honour, the greatest honour of the American ones. It was a political action because the purpose was the reinforcing of the alliance between the United States of America and the United Kingdom. Indeed, before bestowing of the honour to British Unknown Warrior, the American government assigned the same honour to the French Unknown Soldier; so France and the United Kingdom were the most important European allied of the United States in the First World War. The General of the Armies of the United States (the highest possible rank in the American army) John Pershing travelled to Paris to award the honour to French Unknown soldier and then would travel to London for the same purpose. During that period a political error occurred because Pershing did not manage to go to London in a determinate date for giving the honour, the event was not organized successfully; the British statement said that the problem was caused by difficult points of procedure.

The reason of the problem was also the reluctance of the King to award the Victoria Cross (greatest British honour) to the American Unknown Warrior. But at least the King informed the American president that he wanted to bestow the Victoria cross to the American Unknown Warrior. On Armistice day, the tomb's stone had been replaced with another which came from Belgium. For the end was chosen a text from the Bible: this action provoked a protest from Levy who said that wasn't correct to put a Christian inscription because if the soldier's identity is unknown, for his religion it is the same so he might be Jewish, Muslim or each other. The Dean justified the inscription saying that if the Unknown soldier sleeps in a Christian abbey, it's not a surprise to find a Christian inscription.



So, people perceived the pilgrimage as an event of extreme importance so that they came also from lots of places of Great Britain and from British colonies; the estimates shows numbers about over a million of visitors during the pilgrimage's days. Even today all important Presidents and politicians visiting London generally go and pay their tribute to the Unknown Warrior.

THE PEOPLE'S PILGRIMAGE AS COMMUNICATION

The text 'the People's Pilgrimage' communicates some relevant information and ideas about the people's bond to the Unknown soldier. The text makes the intelligent reader understand the strong relationship that connected and joined the English people with the Unknown soldier considered the Unknown soldier is a dead one whose identity is unknown. The English one was unearthed and chosen in France, transported to Victoria Station in London, following a great Pilgrimage to its last destination (Westminster Abbey).

Very accurately, the text conveys the global response that such warprovoked. The text pays attention particularly to the numbers of people involved in the Pilgrimage. Right from the start, it is said that the streets were passed through by queues of people who paid their respects for the Unknown soldier, the man who gave his life for their country. Expression like 'huge', 'thousands and thousands', 'column' underline the massive crowds of people who, with diligence, took part in that rite. The Pilgrimage did not simply last 2 days (Friday, Saturday) but it continued also the following

days, just to underline the significant bond the Unknown soldier had established with people. It goes without saying that those many people laid so many flowers, wreaths and bouquets in the area near the Cenotaph, that it became almost impossible to walk around. After two days, there were about 100,000 wreaths there. This suffices to understand the common national feeling the Unknown soldier had brought forth: the text underlines the moral and affective aspects of the Pilgrimage. It indeed involved any kind of people: the elderly, women, children, orphans, bereaved and not and wounded men all the same took part in the ceremony.

The text makes the reader understand the great importance citizens assigned to taking part. Indeed, people felt the need and the desire to be there. In some cases, people had to renounce because of the impossibility to reach the places of the Pilgrimage. People came from all parts of G. Britain (Scotland, Wales, etc.) and very often they have never been in London before. All of them were respectful, they wore in black and stayed in silence. This is very important because the colour black hints at a funeral – it was more like a special funeral, whose mourners represented the whole population and thus the necessity to be silent for 2 minutes during the rite (one minute for the dead and one for the wounded). The event makes the intelligent reader understand the meaning of the word ‘Pilgrimage’: although the soldier was no religious authority, the ceremony became something holy, on a higher level of importance. Such great number of people was reached in a few days (1 million and half), crowds lengthened even if it rained, people continued to visit the Abbey also the following days and traffic had to be stopped for a week to let space for the solemn ceremony.

In conclusion, the Pilgrimage was the biggest of any time and it is no surprise that it invited new reflection about the real meaning of the war. Probably it nourished a change of mentality in the people of each European country: war was no more worshipped, it was denounced, thus the importance to celebrate its own Unknown dead soldier. People could finally mourn on someone who could be their son, father or relative. But the events connected to the Unknown soldier were not only moral and religious: this Pilgrimage was also exploited for political reasons.

SECTION 6A.

THE HISTORY OF THE UNKNOWN SOLDIER IN OTHER COUNTRIES

SECTION 6B.

INTEGRATED STUDY SKILLS AND COMPETENCES

STUDY SKILLS
Listening/understanding
Reading
Selecting information
Note-taking
Translating
Communicating in different languages
Organizing
Synthesising/summarising in writing
Presenting research results orally

SECTION 6C.

SELECTED TEXTS:

- **Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, Rome**
http://encyclopedia.1914-1918-online.net/article/tomb_of_the_unknown_soldier_rome
- **The Unknown Soldier of World War I – Italy , Military Times**
http://www.homeofheroes.com/gravesites/unknowns/foreign_italy.html
- **La storia del Milite Ignoto**
<http://www.rainews.it/dl/rainews/media/La-storia-del-Milite-ignoto-eroe-di-Guerra-la-cui-salma-riposa-altare-della-Patria-a-Roma-a4b3a5f1-76aa-4218-867c-be42075060e1.html#foto-1>
- **Il Milite Ignoto**
<http://www.raistoria.rai.it/articoli/il-milite-ignoto/23093/default.aspx>
- **Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, Rome in International Encyclopedia of The First World War**
http://encyclopedia.1914-1918-online.net/article/tomb_of_the_unknown_soldier_rome
- **The Unknown Soldier of The First World War - France, Military Times**
http://homeofheroes.com/gravesites/unknowns/foreign_france.html
- **America's Unknown Soldier, Doughboy Center**
<http://www.worldwar1.com/dbc/unksold.htm>
- **Tomb of the Unknown Soldier at Arlington National Cemetery, Arlington National Cemetery**
<http://www.arlingtoncemetery.mil/Explore/Tomb-of-the-Unknown-Soldier>
- **Commemorating France's Unknown Soldier**
<https://bonjourparis.com/history/commemorating-frances-unknown-soldier/>
- **The Unknown Warrior at BBC World Service**
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p0376lvy>

SECTION 6D.

4ALS CONTRIBUTION TO SECTION 6

ITALY

The present text reports the history of the Italian Unknown Soldier.

At the end of the Great War the Italian government wanted to remember the sacrifice of the 680.000 soldiers who had died during the conflict. On the 24th August 1919, with a royal decree, a national commission was set up to decide about the search of soldiers' bodies. In 1920, Giulio Douhet, the Chief of staff XIII army in Val Camonica and Val Tellina proposed to remember those who had died in the Great War creating a monument in Rome.

Therefore, in the July 1920, G. Douhet proposed to bury an unknown soldier in the Pantheon the "symbol of all Italian soldiers' prominence". The idea was supported by Cesare Maria De Vecchi, Commander General of the Milizia but he proposed the monument had to be built at the "**Altare della Patria**". The law was approved on the 11 August 1921 and the execution was entrusted to Luigi Gasparotto, Minister of war.

Minister Gasparotto created a commission that had to choose eleven bodies, one from the major battlefields: San Michele, Gorizia, Monfalcone, Cadore, Alto Isonzo, Asiago, Tonale, Monte Grappa, Montello, Pasubio and Caposile. The bodies were all put into wooden coffins and transferred to Aquileia's basilica within 27th September. The bodies were brought to Gorizia and later to Aquileia.



There Maria Bergamas, a woman who had lost her son – Antonio Bergamas (a volunteer who deserted the Austro-Hungarian Army - in war), the 28th October 1921 chose a coffin that would later travel to Rome. That day she walked among the coffins but she couldn't finish her walk that she fell down crying and screaming her son's name. The other bodies were buried near the basilica at The Cimitero degli Eroi.

After the ceremony, the chosen body was put on a train that travelled slowly, to allow people to homage the soldier, from Aquileia to Rome, passing through Udine, Treviso, Venezia, Padova, Rovigo, Ferrara, Bologna, Pistoia, Prato, Firenze, Arezzo, Chiusi and Orvieto. The celebration of the Unknown Warrior continued in Rome in Santa Maria degliAngeli e dei Martiri Church on the 4th November 1921. The Unknown Warrior was welcomed by King Vittorio Emanuele III, all the Italian military forces' flags and some veterans.



At the end of the ceremony the coffin was buried at the "Altare della Patria".

On the tomb of the Soldier are written the date of the beginning, the end of the Great War and the inscription:

«Ignoto il nome – folgora il suo spirito - dovunque è l'Italia - con voce di pianto e d'orgoglio-dicono – innumeri madri: - è mio figlio»

In the following years, he received medals of honour for his sacrifice, as the Medal of Honour by the United States of America.

SECTION 6E.

4ASA CONTRIBUTION TO SECTION 6

FRANCE

History

The Unknown soldier's cult developed in Europe during the first World War and at first involved countries like England and France. Later on, this phenomenon spread also to the USA and all over the world. The idea of the Unknown soldier's symbolic burial in France came from a local official in the city of Rennes in 1916. Little by little the idea reached French Prime Minister Georges Clemenceau in 1919: he formally approved the idea but he proposed that a symbolic burial for the unknown soldier should be installed in the Pantheon, the honorary burial place in Paris for France's major historical figures. But French veterans –who supported the unknown soldier's '*honouris causa*'– favoured the Arc de Triomphe (more prestigious than the Pantheon) and the decision took place.



What then remained was to find and choose the soldier to be honoured. The physical search, having received parliamentary approval, was begun on 8th November 1920. In order to allow each French family who had lost a soldier in the war to consider that the honoured one could, perhaps, be theirs, one body was ordered to be unearthed and chosen from each of eight major areas of conflict during the war. Every precaution was taken to be sure that the selected body was indeed a French soldier. That was not always an easy task because not even the nationalities could be established with certainty.

Nevertheless, by the 9th of November eight bodies had been selected, placed in oak caskets and transported to an underground chamber in the Citadelle of Verdun, one of the heaviest battle areas of Eastern France. On the way, placement of the caskets was changed constantly so that, on arrival, it deliberately was virtually impossible to tell which one came from what area.

On the 10th of November, the choice of the soldier (destined to rest forever under the Arc de Triomphe) was to be made by a locally stationed simple valiant soldier. 21-year-old August Thin was told to make his historic choice: with a musical accompaniment, Thin walked quickly once around the flag-draped coffins and then on a slower tour laid a bouquet of red and white violets given him by the Minister of Pensions Andre Maginot on what he deemed to be sixth of the eight caskets before him. The Unknown Soldier had been chosen. From the Citadelle in Verdun, his casket was taken on a horse-drawn 75 millimetre cannon platform to the train for Paris accompanied by a rifle-toting military guard of honour that included Thin.

Arriving in Paris on November 11, the casket was put on another, larger 155-millimeter cannon platform and taken briefly to the Pantheon where then French President Raymond Poincare made a laudatory speech to a massive crowd of Parisians assembled for the ceremony. The casket, still on its horse-drawn cannon platform, then moved on to the Arc de Triomphe where, in front of another

massive crowd of spectators, the officially chosen Unknown Soldier was finally laid to rest. Back in Verdun, at the same moment, Thin participated with comrades of his regiment in another ceremony that returned to earth in a local cemetery the caskets of the seven unidentified soldiers who had come close, but not quite close enough to eternal glory.

Three months later, thin left the army at the end of his required service period and returned to his job as a baker. He later explained that he had taken the number 6 because, looking for a logic for his choice, he decided to take the total of the three numbers of his 132nd regiment. Although Thin's role in the Unknown Soldier epic remains virtually unknown, the logic of such a commemorative gesture by France did not go unnoticed by other countries that had engaged in the battles of 1914-1918. Subsequently, for example, Belgium, Great Britain, the United States, Portugal, Romania and eventually, Canada all similarly have paid honour to one of their unidentified soldiers who perished in the "War to End All Wars."



On October 22, 1922, the French Parliament declared the eleventh day of November in each year to be a national holiday. The following year on November 11, 1923 Andre Maginot, French Minister for War, lit the eternal flame for the first time. Since that date, it has become the duty of the Committee of the Flame to rekindle that torch each evening at twilight.

The Unknown soldier today

At the base of the Arch de Triomphe stands a torch. Every evening at 6:30 P.M. it is rekindled, and veterans lay wreaths decorated with red, white and blue near its flickering flame. It burns in the darkness to recall the sacrifice of an unknown French soldier who gave his life during WWI. And every year, on November 11, the date which marked the end in 1918 of World War I, once optimistically but mistakenly hailed as "The War to End All Wars," France solemnly celebrates the occasion with a high-level wreath-laying ceremony on the Unknown Soldier's tomb at the Arc.

THE USA

The American Unknown Soldier - The origin of the idea

Inspired by the French idea, Brigadier General William D. Connor **proposed the commemoration to General Peyton C. March for the United States in 1919.**

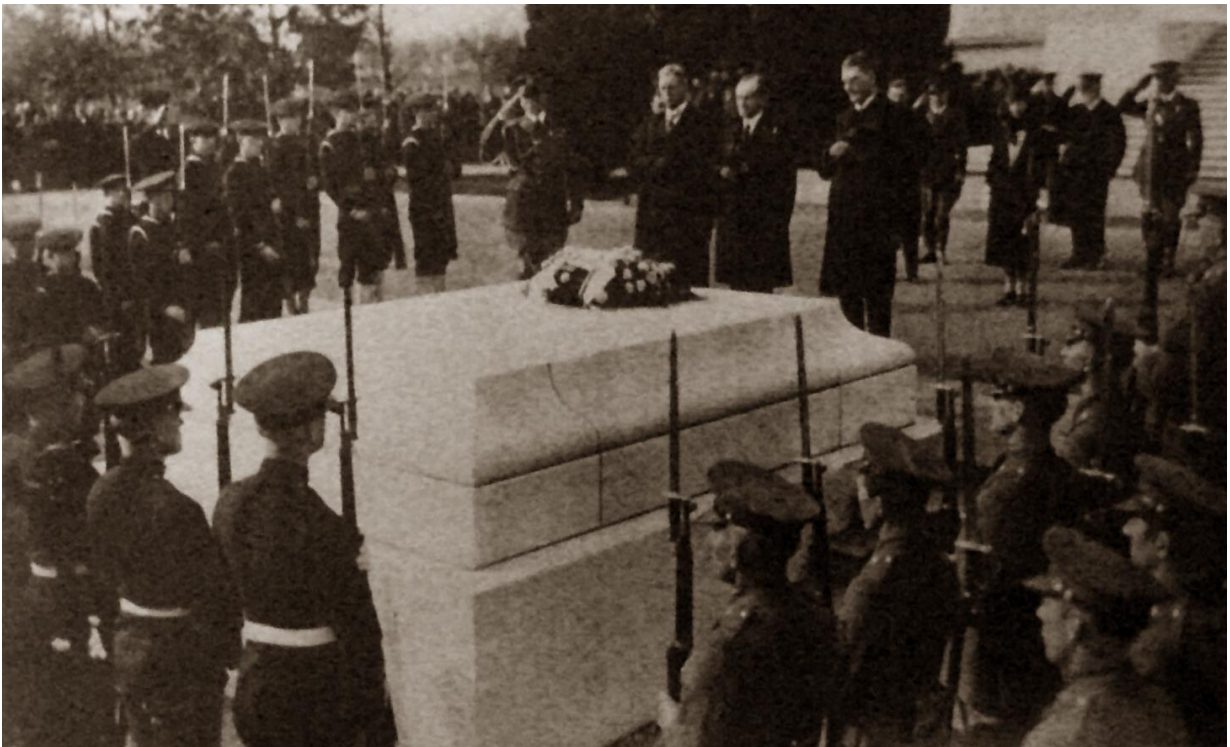
General March disagreed because he thought that the Army Graves Registration Service would probably identify all American casualties. In addition, he explained that the United States had not got an appropriate burial place for the American Unknown Soldier like the "Arc de Triomphe de l'Étoile" or Westminster Abbey.



In 1920 the idea became a matter for the Congress: **Hamilton Fish Jr** found the ideal solution providing to the return of an unknown American casualty of the French front and projecting his funeral ritual in a grave at the **Memorial Amphitheatre in Arlington National Cemetery**. Hamilton Fish's idea was approved by the Congress on 1921 and therefore the construction of the grave would take place at **Arlington National Cemetery**. The grave had originally been a simple structure, it was improved between 1926 and 1929. **H. Fish proposed the ceremony to be taken place on Memorial Day** (an American federal holiday to remember the people who died in war fighting for the United States Armed Force, the holiday is celebrated on the last Monday of May every year) in 1921, but **the Secretary of War John W. Weeks chose Armistice Day (like the British ceremony)**. The War Department ordered to Quartermaster General Harry L. Rogers to make **an effective "selection ceremony" for an unknown soldier from France**. It took place at **Chalons-sur-Marne on 23 October 1921**, a body was taken there from each of American cemeteries in France during the previous day and before arriving in Chalons-sur-Marne they had been inserted in alike coffins.

The selection ceremony

Differently from British selection of the Unknown Soldier, the American one was a real ceremony. At the event **delegations from American and French army** participated: the American representation was ruled by Quartermaster General and the French one was led by General Duport (commander of the French 6th Army Corps, the Prefect of Marne and the Mayor of Chalons-sur-Marne). The officials prepared **the city hall** for the event: it was adorned by American and French flags in the outside, the hallways were garnished with plants like palms or potted trees. A room for each step of the ceremony was prepared, indeed after the welcome another room was prepared for the conveyance of the chosen unknown soldier to a special coffin.



Major Harbold rearranged the coffins disposition making the provenience unidentifiable and he chose Sergeant Edward F. Younger of Headquarters company for the selection of the unknown soldier even if originally an appointed officer would choose the body. The change of plan was due to the fact that General Rogers learnt about French selection where a soldier chose the French Unknown Soldier. For the ceremony General Duport guided American and French officers to the reception room for the honour of the dead and after that Duport and Rogers made speeches and Sergeant Younger guided the passage and while the French band played hymn in the courtyard Sergeant Younger chose a coffin laying down a spray of white roses on it, then the officials made their last respects to the bodies; then the remaining coffins were taken to Romagne Cemetery. After the official selection the procession of the Unknown Soldier began, from the city hall of Chalons-sur-Marne to the railroad station; the French escort of the ceremony included a band, dragoons, infantry, artillery and a motor transportation unit and the American unit was assembled only from the Quartermaster Corps. In addition to the military escort there was a no-military escort composed by students, firemen, war veterans and representatives of French societies. On 24 October, the train which contained the coffin left the city and arrived in Paris where French officials and other representatives of French government made their last respects. The selection ceremony celebrated in France symbolized the strength of the relationships between the United States and France, an alliance that persisted from the American Independence.

The funeral ceremony

On 25 October, the American Army honour guard and French guards and representatives brought the coffin from Paris to Le Havre where, according to the plan, the coffin and the military convoy left France by the cruiser USS Olympia for the United States. In the United States an appointed military officer, Brigadier General Harry H. Bandholtz, had to organize the funeral ceremony in all its steps.

On November 9th, the Olympia arrived at the Potomac River's outlet at the Washington Navy Yard, where the Unknown Soldier was received by Brigadier General Bandholtz, the third Cavalry and its band and important military officials like the General of the armies of the United States John Pershing, Admiral Robert Coontz, Major General John Lejeune, Secretary of War John Weeks and Secretary of Navy Edwin Denby.



The third Cavalry was in line facing the war ship and the band was situated on the left of the cavalrymen. The marines brought the coffin to the gangway and at the same time the cruiser started with canons shot and the band played the "Funeral March" of Chopin. After the reception eight cavalrymen placed the coffin on a caisson and the procession began. The band led the procession to Washington D.C., following in order were a squad of cavalrymen that guided the caisson containing

the coffin, the remaining men of the third Cavalry and military rulers and civil representatives in their cars; the way was lined on the two sides by marines and the Capitol was literally “invaded” by soldiers belonging to all military branches. The eight body bearers took the coffin crossing the honour cordon and put it on the Lincoln catafalque where President Warren Harding and his wife subsequently placed a wreath of crimson roses and a white band of ribbon with a pinned National Shield on the coffin. Then Vice President, Speaker of the House, Chief Justice, Secretary of War and Secretary of Navy put wreaths for the institution each represented in that order. Capital employees on the evening of the 9th roped off areas in the rotunda which would channel the crowds as they entered from the east, moved past the bier, and continued out the west door: this maneuver improve the Unknown Soldier’s route from the rotunda on 11 November. **The public was admitted on 10 November and delegations of patriotic organizations arrived from all over the country.**

On the morning of Armistice Day the coffin was taken by the military escort from the rotunda to the Memorial Amphitheater in Arlington National Cemetery, following the escort President, Vice President, Chief Justice and the military rulers walked. After the procession, at the Amphitheater **the President of the United States assigned the Unknown Soldier the Congressional Medal of Honour** (highest American military honour) and the **Distinguished Service Cross**. Following the funeral ceremony each diplomatic representation of the allied countries of USA of the First World War conferred the Unknown Soldier the most important military honour of their country.

SECTION 7A.

HOW RITUALS CHANGE IN TIME: DIFFERENT VISIONS OF WAR AND THE NEED FOR PEACE. A REFLECTION

SECTION 7B.

INTEGRATED STUDY SKILLS AND COMPETENCES

STUDY SKILLS
Listening/understanding
Reading
Selecting information
Note-taking
Translating
Communicating in different languages
Organizing
Critical Thinking
Synthesising/summarising in writing
Presenting research results orally

SECTION 7C.

SELECTED TEXTS:

- **Guerre nel Mondo. News Giornaliere sulle Guerre nel Mondo e su i Nuovi Stati**
<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/defence/3399166/The-Unknown-Warrior-A-heros-return.html>

The reading experience carried out during the project: both at the level of the individual relationship with the texts and the one of comparing and sharing different points of view in group work sessions **has not allowed to decide if the texts analysed are totally in favour of war or peace.**

Before developing any argumentation, it is worth saying that the thesis developed in the present reflection results from the study of informative texts, newspaper articles, listening activities of videos and other media as well as from the analysis of some passages from Neil Hanson's, *The Unknown Soldier*, a novel published in 2005 in England.

Indeed, **if all texts considered report events and facts that took place during WWI or just after the end of the conflict**, one cannot forget **they were written later than the tragic events** and mainly **to remind their readers about a ritual considered of utmost importance by British people.**

Facts that are strictly connected to one of the most tragic events in English and European history are not easy to be told and therefore the information and response a reader may infer result from the different perspectives, responses of text writers and, last but not least, from their cultural context/s and communicative intention. **Therefore, time is to be considered of utmost importance to make sense of the messages** of the texts analysed, whether they seem to have a positive or negative vision of war or peace and to tell the truth **most of the texts in our research are contemporary texts.**

It is no surprise then that readers have found it **a hard task to come to a unique and shared idea about the real intention of the messages conveyed in the different texts** and decide if what they have read conveys an idealistic view of war or if they are promoting peace. As a result the intelligent reader will recognize the **contradictions of any definite point of view about the Unknown Soldier's ritual as they come to life in the texts studied and even in the messages of today's different media** about the Unknown Soldier.

This is why the present reflection will now consider the **different perspectives from which the ritual of the Unknown Soldier was presented in the texts** that were the object of our research.

The Common People

First of all, one cannot neglect **the Unknown Soldier as perceived by the common people was seen as a sort of emotional bridge joining any dead relative, father, son, friend or cousin with the tragic reality of death embodied by the corpse in the grave**, one very hard to come to terms with whatever the time. Thus, it is easy to understand how among ordinary people **the Unknown Soldier turns out to be a means not to forget the sense of belonging to one's beloved.** In a few words the grave in Westminster Abbey becomes a symbol for all the dead.

A different response hidden between the lines of the texts is **the anger felt towards all they who were held responsible for the tragic events despite whatever idealistic reasons** might have pushed lots of young people to enrol with the hope to serve their country and get some glory in return.

The Establishment

The response of the Establishment was of course different since there was **the need, on one side to justify the choice made during the war** and consequently its horrors (17.000.000 casualties and 20.000.000 injured), **on the other to exalt the sacrifice of so many human lives** and somehow convey a **rhetoric image** of those who died that are **now said to be heroes in front of God and King George V**. All that said so far explains for the rhetorical need to celebrate the ritual as a form of official commemoration promoted by the Church and the King which **was not devoid of political implications**. This can be clearly seen between some lines of the inscription on the grave

" ...
THE MANY
MULTITUDES WHO DURING THE GREAT
WAR OF 1914-1918 GAVE THE MOST THAT
MAN CAN GIVE LIFE ITSELF
FOR GOD
FOR KING AND COUNTRY
FOR LOVED ONES HOME AND EMPIRE
FOR THE SACRED CAUSE OF JUSTICE AND
THE FREEDOM OF THE WORLD
THEY BURIED HIM AMONG THE KINGS BECAUSE HE
HAD DONE GOOD TOWARD GOD AND TOWARD
HIS HOUSE"

General reflection

The contradiction mentioned above gradually came to surface during the project activities: **the role of the English key figures** are very useful to **unveil such contradictions**. To start with reverend Railton, the chaplain whose first intention was to create a commemoration for all unidentified dead soldiers, thus expressing "**human compassion**" the story continues with the **Dean of Westminster's pride who claims the paternity of Reverend Railton's idea**, to end with **the scepticism initially expressed by the King**. Indeed, it was only in front of the **massive response of British citizen** before the Cenotaph and the Unknown Warrior's grave - **one unparalleled in English history** - that the Establishment (**both the Church and the Government**) understands that **the sense of belonging** expressed by what Neil Hanson's called *The People's Pilgrimage* **could be exploited to reinforce the nation's sense of identity**, the role of a nation that has always been proud of being **Great Britain**.

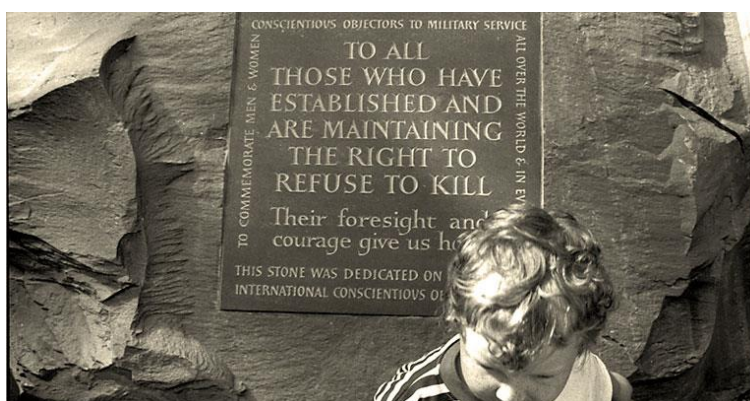
Over time and thanks to the role of media **the rhetoric exaltation of rituals** even the ones born spontaneously **changes**. Indeed, time has shown without any doubt that **war has not solved any problem** whatsoever, on the contrary it was only able to humiliate the German people and in the end **to set the scene for a further conflict**.

In the ever-changing Weltanschauung of the European area **war is now seen with different lenses**. All the countries involved in the conflict of the First World War that followed France's and Great Britain's idea of the Unknown warrior ritual **have now become Member States of the European Union**. The reality principle has compelled them to analyse events and facts **going beyond rhetoric imagery** and therefore come to at least partial understanding **that the only cause worth fighting for is PEACE**.

Unfortunately, it seems not everybody has learned the lesson and **this is the tragic message learnt from the research carried out to contribute to the ERASMUS Plus Project**. According to the **latest statistics 62 countries are still at war¹ in the world** and that is why there is still an **urgent need to promote Peace Education**.

SECTION 8A.

DIFFERENT FORMS OF COMMEMORATION AND A NEW KIND OF WAR MEMORIAL MADE BY THOUSANDS OF PEOPLE. AN INTERACTIVE PROJECT



Peace Pledge Union, 1 Peace Passage, London

SECTION 8B.

INTEGRATED STUDY SKILLS AND COMPETENCES

STUDY SKILLS
Listening/understanding
Reading
Selecting information
Note-taking
Translating
Communicating in different languages
Organizing
Critical Thinking
Synthesising/summarising in writing
Presenting research results orally

¹<http://www.guerrenelmondo.it/?page=static1258218333> last visited 17.03.2017

SECTION 8C.

SELECTED TEXTS:

- **Telling Stories: An Interview with Neil Bartlett**
<http://dontdoitmag.co.uk/issue-five/telling-stories-an-interview-with-neil-bartlett/>
- **Project: Letter to An unknown soldier**
<http://www.millhill.org.uk/greatwar/downloads/LetterToUnknownSoldier.pdf>
- **Letter to an Unknown Soldier - 14-18 Now**
<https://www.1418now.org.uk/letter/>

4ALS -4ASA



Going back now to **other forms of war memorials** some of them re built to honour they who died, instead of glorifying war. For example after World War I, **some towns in France set up pacifist war memorials**. Instead of commemorating the glorious dead, **these memorials denounce war with figures of grieving widows and children rather than soldiers**. The most famous is at Gentioux-Pigerollesin the department of Creuse. Below the column which lists **the name of the fallen stands an orphan in bronze pointing to an inscription:**

'Mauditesoit la guerre' (Cursed be war).

Another such memorial is in the small town of Équeurdreville-Hainneville(formerly Équeurdreville) in the department of Manche. Here the statue is of a grieving widow with two small children.

The previous example offer a different vision of war and make you reflect on what the conflict concretely meant for many citizens and families. As said before the idea of war brings forth lots of contradictions but as time passed from WWI and WWII people and governments started to shift from a more rhetoric idea of war to one that really takes the lives of citizens into consideration. The idea of soldier as a human being belonging to a family, a community and a nation comes gradually to surface and this seems to bring some hope in view of reaching Peace.



A New Kind of War Memorial Made by Thousands of People .An Interactive Project

In 2014, for the hundredth anniversary of the First World War (Great World), a project was launched inviting all people to write a letter to the Unknown Soldier represented in the statue at Platform I of London's Paddington Railway station.

"Letter to an Unknown Soldier"



The statue is the Great Western Railway War Memorial, a monument to the memory of employees of the Great Western Railway who died during the First World War. The stonework was designed by the architect Thomas S. Tait, and the bronze figure by the sculptor Charles Sargeant Jagger; the memorial was unveiled on Armistice Day in 1922 by Viscount Churchill. Its dominant feature is a large bronze statue of a British First World War soldier dressed in battle gear, wearing a helmet, woollen scarf, and a greatcoat draped over his shoulders. **The soldier is looking down, reading a letter from home.**

The interview to Neil Bartlett ² about the interactive project and the idea of it well expresses how a different attitude to the Unknown Soldier's commemoration has developed in time. Here below the objectives and the response to the project as they illustrated on in the project website by Neil Bartlett and Kate Pullinger are quoted.

WHY?

In a year jammed-full of WW1 commemoration our project invited everyone **to step back from the public ceremonies and take a few private moments to think.** For us, it was important to provide a **space for people to reconsider the familiar imagery we associate with the war memorials – cenotaphs, poppies, and silence.**

We asked people the following questions: **if you could say what you want to say about that war, with all we've learned since 1914, with all your own experience of life and death to hand, what would you say?** If you were able **to send a personal message to this soldier, a man who served and was killed during World War One, what would you write?**

² Telling Stories: An Interview with Neil Bartlett at < <http://dontdoitmag.co.uk/issue-five/telling-stories-an-interview-with-neil-bartlett/>>

WHO?

The response to this project was extraordinary. By the end of its second week nearly ten thousand people had written to the soldier, and **by the project's close, 21439 number had written.** The invitation to write was to everyone and, indeed, **all sorts of people responded: schoolchildren, pensioners, students, nurses, serving members of the forces and even the Prime Minister.** Letters arrived from **all over the United Kingdom and beyond,** and many well-known writers and personalities contributed.

WHEN?

The website opened on 28th June 2014, the centenary of the Sarajevo assassinations, and closed at 11 pm on the night of 4 August 2014, the centenary of the moment when Prime Minister Asquith announced to the House of Commons that Britain had joined the First World War. As the letters arrived, **they were all published on the website** and made available for everyone to read.

A selection of the letters has also been published as a book³, which you can find out more about on the publisher's website⁴. Letter to an Unknown Soldier will be archived here, as part of 14-18 NOW, until 2018.

After that, all of the **letters will be archived in the British Library** where **they will remain permanently accessible online,** providing a snapshot of what people in this country and across the world were thinking and feeling about the centenary of WW1."



The Present Research and "Letter to An Unknown Soldier"

In the present research, **some letters of the Project have been selected and analysed** and some samples of the analysis are provided here below. Once more they show all the contradictory vision of the war that have been mentioned in the previous sections. Indeed, you still find letters showing a rhetorical idea of war together with letters that well exemplify a condemnation of the conflict.

However **new forms of commemoration** like this project, together with the idea offered by the **permanent and temporary exhibition⁵ on war at London's Imperial War Museums⁶** seem to convey fertile examples and **promote further steps towards Peace and Peace Education.** Indeed, they show all the atrocities and horrors of the conflict so as **to favour awareness of what is really like and what it means in the existence of human beings.**

3 Letter to an Unknown soldier. A new Kind of War Memorial , HarperCollins, 2014
4 <<https://www.harpercollins.co.uk/9780008116842/letter-to-an-unknown-soldier>>
5 Exhibition: <http://www.iwm.org.uk/exhibitions/iwm-london/fighting-for-peace>
6 Imperial War Museum London at < <http://www.iwm.org.uk/>>

A Letter To An Unknown Soldier. Considerations

Memory is the ability to keep information over time. It is one of the most important human capacity, as it defines our being. Collective memory is therefore what defines the belonging to a group. The states invest in the maintenance of the memory of a people to promote the spirit of the nation. They do this by financing the creation of memorials, which can be physical (such as a statue, a building or a plate) or more "abstract." An example of that is provided by the UK with its project "A Letter to the Unknown Soldier".



On occasion of the centenary of the declaration of war, the UK invited everyone in the country to write a personal letter to the statue of the unknown soldier of Paddington Station- Platform One in London. The letter can be sent in two ways: in digital form, posting the letter on a dedicated website, or physically sending the letter to the address of Paddington station.

To be taken into consideration the letter has to show some characteristics. The main topic has to be concerned with one's thoughts and feelings when looking at soldier's face. The writer is also expected to reflect on the peace we live in today. The strength of this new type of memorial, is that the writer becomes a builder; He participates together with his fellow citizens in the construction of building the words that besides remembering the fallen and the great war create a bridge between past and present in view of improving the world we live in.

If, attending a solemn ceremony, the audience takes on a passive position, in the act of writing a letter he is called to interact with the Unknown Soldier. With her/his private act he is obliged to reflect first on the issue of the war and, as a result, the memory of those events become a more meaningful part in her/his memory and the task is certainly more effective than the passive participation in a formal, official ceremony that in most cases sounds rather distant.

The weakness of this project is that it addresses one's memory to the minds of those who decide to write the letter, leaving behind those who do not want to participate. However, the project may encourage reflection in additional ways. Reading the letters citizens have written may be a good start. I could experiment it personally and I can say reading was a really positive experience that invited reading and knowing more about the sense of WWI and of war itself. In my opinion, this project will surely turn out to be more effective than building a monument.

Scolaro Erik - 4ALS

The letter as a memorial. Reflections

I think that the letter as a memorial is the proper way to remember a sad and violent period as the Great War. In my opinion in order to write a letter people have to reflect about their ideas and emotions about that crucial event. They also have to put themselves into the soldiers' shoes and then identify themselves with someone who lived in the same period of the Unknown Soldier. The

letter is a personal and intimate form of communication that evokes feelings and emotions. When writing a letter you leave the outside world for a while because you need to be alone with yourself.

When writing to the Unknown Soldier people indeed write to themselves, too.

It is not an easy 'task' because all that we know about the Great War does come from our direct experience or from the experience of our close relatives. To tell the truth our idea and perception of the conflict is the result of what we may have read or heard - some stories or anecdotes – some old photos or film. I also think that this intimate way to keep the Unknown Warrior alive in our memory, is surely more intelligent than all the public ceremony that is often simply rhetoric behaviour that goes on repeating always the same rites and formulas and that very rarely succeed in involving people's feelings and thoughts.

On the contrary, every letter written is unique and different from the other: everyone expresses her or his personal emotion and thoughts about an event that must be remembered to avoid making the same mistakes and finally considering PEACE something granted.

Baldan Sofia – 4ALS

I think that the letter as a memorial is a particular way to remember what happened lots of years ago. In writing a letter, the writer has to devote some of his time and dedicate it to someone he or she didn't ever meet and died lots of years ago. This person has to dig in his or her mind and thoughts and reflect on the war, the death of millions of people, the difficulties met by the soldiers behind the trenches and what they had to see, live or bear in those horrible situations.

As we know, lots of years have passed and maybe there aren't ex-servicemen alive nowadays, thus if a young boy or girl want to know about the Great War, he or she have to read about it on the books or other media because they can't have any direct/real source of information. This makes me suppose that it's very difficult to write a letter thinking of the difficulties of life during the First World War and dedicate it to a dead soldier.

Once said that, I think that a letter as a memorial is interesting because he/she who is writing has to reflect about a sad moment of human history and concentrate on a specific and deep theme that is very far from him/her. At the same time, it's very difficult to write a letter to a dead person because we live in a different historical period and we don't understand what life was like at that time, in particular life in the trenches. In addition, I think that the occasion of a letter writing could be a moment to reflect on our history and how it has brought us to live as we do now and how some human beings' decisions can influence the future of the whole World.

Writing that letter can offer a good occasion for people to really tell the unknown soldier and to all the dead men who fell in war for their nation what they really feel and think.

Danielis Alice –4ALS

SOME LETTERS

Letter – Jason Bignell

Dear Unknown Soldier,

It's been 100 years since you went to war. Time passes by so quickly. We are all stressed and constantly depressed about how we live; frantically trying to keep up with the pace of life. I find myself utterly disgraced by ***how we have allowed ourselves to become this selfish***. Only now, when we come to write these letters to you, do I realize the self-centered nature of humanity.

It's been 100 years since you went to war and yet still there is fighting. I am ashamed to say that despite the carnage you suffered, the world has not learnt from their mistakes. No, in fact they only got worse. They have found more cruel ways to kill each other, which was only compounded due to the start of a second world war!

It's been 100 years since you went to war and I can't stop thinking about what you had to suffer and witness. I have read on many occasions of the conditions: the smell, the

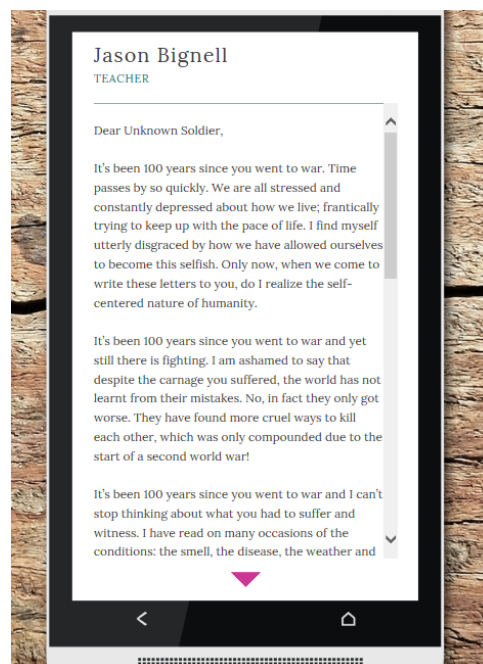
disease, the weather and the horrific death. Were you aware of what you were walking into when you signed up? Did you have a choice? Would you have really gone if you were told the truth? I still cannot believe such an extensive and horrific war could be started over something that has no impact on the common people. How dare they think they have the right to sentence so many people to death! So many innocent people died, like yourself not even being provided with a decent burial.

It's been 100 years since you went to war and I am moved by what you suffered. I appreciate the horror you faced in order to protect your homeland from those who thought they had the right to order us around, but the true crime is to be forced into such a situation where you feel you have no choice – propaganda being used in order to convince you of the 'right course of action'. I really truly hope that people can learn from what happened back then, but I live in fear that they will never learn.

It's been 100 years since you went to war. You didn't come home...your life was taken from you. As I sit here writing this letter, I am reminded of a hope that keeps me going. You may be resting now, but I hope that one day soon we will meet. I hope that one day soon you will return to live the life you should have lived. This life will not be one of war or pain, but it will be of peace and beauty, love and life. So do not fear, quake or cry. I will meet you there and smile. All that hurt will be gone and maybe then you will live, laugh and dine a while.

It's been 100 years since you went to war...

Yours faithfully. A concerned citizen



Analysis

The letter is written by Jason Bignell, who is a 26-year-old teacher and he's from Crawley in West Sussex (England). I choose this letter because I found that themes and the reflections are very interesting. Also at the beginning the young teacher's age drew my curiosity. The addressee of the letter is the unknown soldier. Jason writes to him to express his ideas about war and fighting. Also, he makes reflections about the consequences of war.

He organizes the letter into five main sections and he uses a simple language. Every section starts with the same expression to underline that the soldier will never be forgotten even if it's been a long time since he died.

In the first section, he makes a reflection about the human being: he is regretful for people's egoism. He explains that we concentrate too much on our life only and we never take time to think about what happened. Indeed, Jason is thinking about the soldier and the war only on the moment when he's writing the letter.

In the second section the teacher thinks about the war and he reflects on the situation at the moment since there is still fighting in the world and what happened in the past seems have taught men nothing at all.

In the third section, he shortly analyses the aspects of war and the situation the soldier had to live. Jason conveys a sense of anger towards those who allowed the death of so many people; he asks the soldier three questions and he underlines the possible soldier's powerlessness of refusing fighting. This reflection returns in the fourth section where the writer refers to the propaganda that convinced the soldier to go to war. Also, he conveys to the reader the compassion he feels for the soldier and he is thankful to him to have protected his homeland in war even if he says people do not know the real reasons he went to war.

The fourth section ends with a message of hope that continues in the fifth section. Jason hopes the soldier *"one day soon you will return to live the life you should have lived"* and he hopes for a better world. At the end of the sections he repeats **"It's been 100 years since you went to world"** once again to underline the concept one more time and to invite the reader to a moment of reflection. Finally, he ends with the closing salutation.

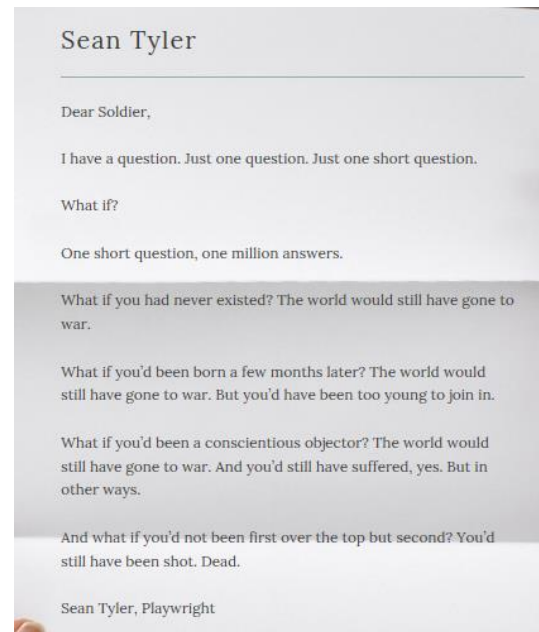
Jason Bignell was able to write a simple letter eliciting a reflection on the theme of war but at the same time he has given his personal opinions: people should learn from what has happened not to repeat the same mistake. This letter made me think about the aspects of war. Also, I think that it gives a real message of hope.

Papotto Sara– 4ASA

Letter – Sean Tyler

*Dear Soldier,
I have a question. Just one question. Just one short question.
What if?
One short question, one million answers.
What if you had never existed? The world would still have gone to war.
What if you'd been born a few months later? The world would still have gone to war. But you'd have been too young to join in.
What if you'd been a conscientious objector? The world would still have gone to war. And you'd still have suffered, yes. But in other ways.
And what if you'd not been first over the top but second? You'd still have been shot. Dead.*

Sean Tyler, Playwright



Analysis

In this letter, Sean asks the Unknown Soldier an important question: What if? Sean would like to know what if the Unknown Soldier had never existed or if he had been born a few months later?

All his questions are given a common answer: The world still have gone to war. Unfortunately, I think Sean is right since his vision of war is negative. Indeed, he thinks that the war would have been fought the same because in this case a single person can't make difference.

I chose this letter because it fascinated me from the first reading. I liked the alternative way it was written. The letter was written by a playwright who, in the space of very few words managed to express many emotions and make us understand War is complex matter and a very difficult one to prevent.

Camilla Geotti – 4ASA

Letter – Dafydd Williams

Boots on the Cenotaph by Dafydd Williams

They weren't there when I went passed before,
but here, now, on the steps of the cenotaph
were the boots of the unknown soldier.
They could have belonged to the Big Issue Seller
or a member of the Army of the Homeless but
there was nobody else around.
So I could only surmise that these were the boots
worn by lions led by donkeys
at Mons, Ypres, Gallipoli and Passchendaele where
13,000 men were lost in 3 hours.
Haig's comment was 'Mostly gamekeepers and
servants'

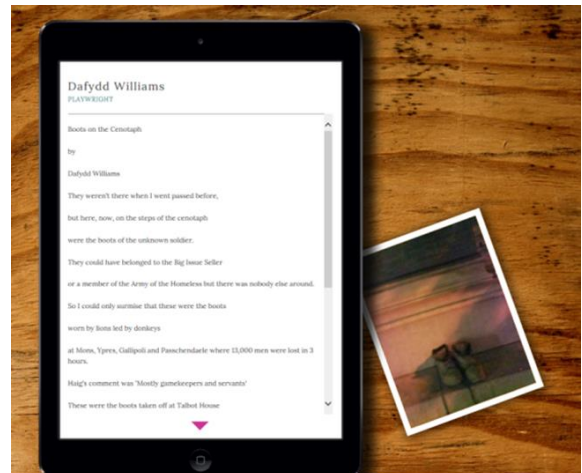
These were the boots taken off at Talbot House
and placed on the table to bring bad luck to all that wore them.

Each one of the Accrington Pals wore these boots.

These boots were worn whilst digging trenches, whilst kicking rats and knocking in fences.

These were the boots that scrambled over the top at the blast of the shrill whistle.

These were the boots that they were buried in but somehow, they have found their way back across
the channel and worked their way through the concrete for us to realise
that they were real men
that wore them.



Analysis

I chose this letter because of the poetical form that fascinated me. Indeed, the writer is a playwright. He opposes to the idea of war. The reader can understand he decided to honour soldier's referring to a pair of boots. Whose are the boots? You cannot identify the owner.

The playwright uses irony to discredit the leaders who guided the soldiers to death: "... *these were the boots worn by lions led by donkeys ...*" (ll 6-7). Therefore, the reader can understand that the poet fights with the idea of conflicts and the horrors that are here conveyed by the use of harsh language." *These boots were worn whilst digging trenches, whilst kicking rats and knocking in fences/These were the boots that scrambled over the top at the blast of the shrill whistle.*"(ll.13-14)While he is assuming the owner of the boots, he puts War in a bad light, but he enhances the sacrificed soldiers. The "poet" really a playwright uses free verse to convey a really deep message.

Gemma Canesin – 4ASA

Letter – Wayne Ellis

Dear Sir,

I write to you as a brother in arms. My own 19 years of military service has seen nothing of the horrors of the Great War. I know little of the sacrifice you have made, only that your tale will never be fully understood. I make you a promise now that I will take advantage of the freedoms open to me because of the actions 100 years ago of you and your comrades. I include in that oath a vow to pass on the message of remembrance and appreciation to the generations following behind. A simple 'thank you' will never be enough so I hope that by living a good life I can in some small way justify your sacrifice.

Yours respectfully, 24937862 WO1

Wayne Ellis



Wayne Ellis - soldier

Analysis

The writer of the letter is Wayne Ellis, a soldier that has been serving his nation for 19 years. Although he is a soldier, he is conscious that the horrors he has experienced during his military service are nothing compared to the ones that the Unknown Soldier faced in the Great War. This makes him to show respect and gratitude for the Soldier' sand his comrades' actions, in which he recognizes the reason of his freedom. His feelings of respect and gratitude sets the mood of the whole letter which ends up to be pretty formal. And Wayne makes the oath to pass on the message of remembrance and appreciation to the generations that have still to come so that hissacrifice will never be forgotten. He concludes the letter with the hope that by living a good life he can, at least partly, justify the sacrifice of the Soldier even if he knows that nothing will fully repay him.

I chose this letter because it was written by a soldier as well and therefore one who has experience war, so he can offer a realistic point of view other people can't. For examples, he when he says that what he has experienced during his service is nothing compared to the horrors of the First World War, he makes us think about the brutality of that war, when compared to today's ones.

Gregoretti Massimiliano– 4ASA

Letter - Edward F. Willmoth

(2)

Mortal were your wounds sustained,
We bore you to a jungle hide,
I stayed until your strength had waned,
I stayed until you died.

I took your I.D. service discs,
And your A.B. Sixty Four,
We'd search this area for you, Jack,
When we have won this war.

I made a simple bamboo cross,
I bound it with a strap,
Then sought to find my comrades,
With my compass and my map.

I rendezvoused with Special Force,
I saw the haggard face of pain,
Then two long days of marching,
And we made our lines again.

We fought many bitter battles,
With the fanatic Japanese,
But we beat their vaunted army,
And brought it to its knees.

We chased them to Taungdaw,
We chased them all the way,
Down to Prome and Pegu,
And on to Mandalay.

In Bangkok they surrendered,
Those of the rising sun,
Through strength and resolution,
Our far eastern war was won.

Your bedroom, Jack, remains untouched,
But some additions have been made,
In a cabinet on a cushion,
Are your medals neatly laid.

In the Naga hills after the war was over, tribesmen
of the friendly Naga hill tribes dragged a stone monument
up a hill and mounted it on the top. The inscription read-
"When you go home, tell them of us and say,
for your tomorrow we gave our today."

I am reminded of Henry the Fifth to his men before the
battle Agincourt: "We few, we happy few, we band of brothers"

E. F. Willmoth.

London 1946

**Poet: Edward F. Willmoth- Age: 90 and WWII
veteran (British forces)**

Analysis

The veteran sent to the Unknown Soldier of Paddington Station a text whose addressee is a friend (Jack) died alongside him in WWII in the Asian theatre while they were fighting against the invading Asian forces of Axis. He wrote 1946 as the date of the letter because it makes it more realistic (one year after the war's conclusion).

I choose this letter because I am interested in WWII and I was curious to read a text of a British war veteran because a veteran knows what the Unknown Soldier could feel like in trenches of WWI. Therefore, even if the statue of Paddington station is referred to WWI, the veteran wrote about his experience in WWII. It goes without saying WWII is also a war and therefore it presents lots of similarities with the previous war.

Indeed, the letter is a poem arranged into three parts. The first and the second are organized into quatrains. In addition, the quatrains presents an alternate rhyme and so the intelligent reader can understand the poet being very old (90), spent a lot of time to compose it.

In the first part the veteran tells about the meeting between him and Jack's family at their farm in Wroxham (Norfolk county) as Edward had promised his friend. There is also a description of how he spends his time with them: helping Jack's father with farm work or eating his mother's cake. In this section the poet highlights the difference between the destruction of the war (see first and the last quatrains) and the serenity of the countryside (underlined by the sixth quatrain). Indeed, after years of war he managed to return to England and therefore he managed to leave from the terror of the war to reach the peace of the English countryside.

He tells they altogether commemorate Jack's death with cuddles and tears of grief and pride. So the veteran clarifies tears have an ambivalent meaning. In this message the reader can see a contradiction in the writer's thought. To tell the truth the reader understands the veteran does not love war and, what's more war is the cause of his dear friend and comrades' death. The veteran/poet wanted to remember his friend's bravery and his deeds exalting his patriotism, too because differently from WWI, the second world war was not only a war of territorial ambitions, it was also a war of ideologies. The reader perfectly understands the veteran and his friend fought in the war also following their ideological belief.

In the second part the veteran provides a description of the battlefield and his actions: he tells of when they were in the jungle -in the South – East of Asia the battlefields were jungles and cities, -

and so the poem reminds the reader that the battlefield itself was an enemy. The jungle is a particular battlefield and one of the hardest: if Germans and Soviets died because of the cold in Stalingrad, in the jungle soldiers died because of terrible and dangerous diseases or venomous animals. In addition, the jungle creates problems of visibility, causing disorientation between the soldier sat the same time making supplies slow to arrive. Edward tells that after his death he continued to fight in the jungle against the Japanese army (Dai Nippon Teikoku Rikugun) a combative one even if not the best armies of WWII. Their soldiers were known to be fanatic for their thought and E. Willmoth used the expression “*fanatic Japanese*”. He mentioned some places where he had fought in South – East of Asia and tells about the last place where the Japanese had surrendered in Thailand calling them “*those of the rising sun*” (the Japanese empire was named “*empire of the rising sun*”).

In the last part, he tells that has brought Jack’s medals and has put them in his bedroom and has written some notes which underline his patriotism and the devotion to his ideology. He tells he found an inscription on a hill in the Indian region of Assam, it says: “*When you go home, tell them of us and say, for your tomorrow we gave our today*”.

Clementin Emilio – 4ASA

Letter – James Noakes

When it came to writing this letter, I wanted to say thank you. I also wanted to tell the tale of my own grandfather – wounded in the war fighting for the King’s Liverpool Regiment. I am thankful, and I do appreciate the sacrifice of my grandfather and countless others like you. But when it came to writing, I felt I could only say one thing...

Sorry.

Sorry that alongside 16 million others, poor young men like you were slaughtered fighting in many cases for something they knew little about.

Sorry that you felt the need or were asked to fight in a hell of a war; to see horrors no man should see.

Sorry that you fought and killed other men with whom you probably had more in common than you had with the decision-makers.

Sorry that the cruelty of Man was evident in the use of flames, gas and countless other despicable ways to kill fellow Man.

Sorry that moments of humanity and normality, which there surely were, had to be amongst such terror.

Sorry that your personal nobility had to be spread across no man’s land.

Sorry that those of us who have much to thank you for have rarely lived up to your own personal standard of selflessness and honour.

Sorry that we never learnt, that more horrors followed and killing continues still. Sorry that the war to end all wars did not.

Sorry. -James Noakes- Grandson

James Noakes

GRANDSON

When it came to writing this letter I wanted to say thank you. I also wanted to tell the tale of my own grandfather – wounded in the war fighting for the King’s Liverpool Regiment. I am thankful, and I do appreciate the sacrifice of my grandfather and countless others like you. But when it came to writing, I felt I could only say one thing...

Sorry.

Sorry that alongside 16 million others, poor young men – and women – were slaughtered fighting for what they thought was a noble cause.

Sorry that you felt the need or were asked to fight in a hell of a war; to see horrors no man should see.

Sorry that you fought and killed other men with whom you had much more in common than those who were giving the orders.

Sorry that the cruelty of man was evident in the use of flames, gas and countless other despicable ways to kill fellow man.

Sorry that moments of humanity and normality, which there surely were, had to be amongst such terror.

Sorry that your personal nobility had to be spread across no man’s land.

Sorry that those of us who have much to thank you for have rarely lived up to your own personal standard of selflessness and honour.

Sorry that we never learnt, and the killing continues still.

Sorry that the war to end all wars did not.

Sorry.

Analysis

I read many letters written to the unknown soldier. Some were about stories of real people's relatives, talking about how much they missed him, how they didn't want him to go, how things were while he was on the front; others were poems about his sacrifice and others were of people who thanked the Unknown soldier and pitied him.

At the beginning, I chose a letter from the first category, but then I changed my mind. Differently from other letters, the one I chose didn't say thank you to the unidentified soldier, but it rather said sorry as you can see from the letter above. Initially I thought this wasn't correct, since the ones who had to say sorry should have been the people who had killed the soldier and not someone who wasn't involved in his death.

However, I chose it because the writer says sorry about the current situation when people do not seem to have learnt much from him. In my opinion about there's no need to pity a dead person if you don't try to change the conditions that have caused his death, especially if he is an idealized person treated like a martyr and not like the human being he once was.

As far as I am concerned, he wasn't a poor young man, a martyr or one who made a sacrifice, he was just a man that probably didn't want to die that way. So, instead of apologies, in my opinion it is better to act in order to change the situation, but I guess that for most people it's better to watch the world burn and feel sorry for it.

De Paoli Anna – 4ALS

Letter - Anonymous

Dear Friend

They told you 'this is the war to end all wars'.

They lied

They are still lying.

The problem is some people like dominating, controlling, ruling, subjugating.

They think their ways are stronger, more correct, more righteous.

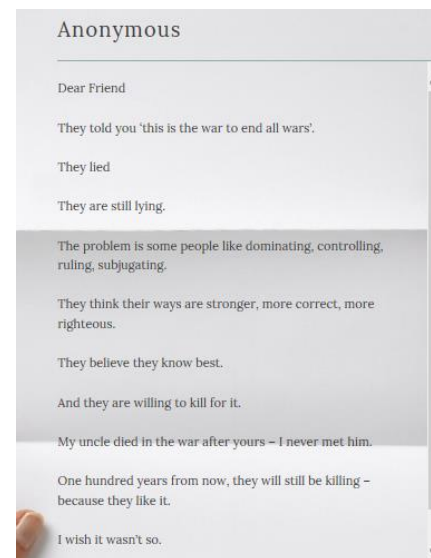
They believe they know best.

And they are willing to kill for it.

My uncle died in the war after yours – I never met him.

One hundred years from now, they will still be killing – because they like it. I wish it wasn't so.

R. T.



Analysis

This is one of the letters people wrote to the Unknown Soldier of the WW1. The writer calls the unknown soldier "dear friend", so you can understand that he feels the unknown soldier close to him. The salutation condemns people like kings, emperors or men of power that in order to reach their own interests were, are and will always be the reason of the death of million people.

The writer goes on saying these kinds of people usually make excuses to justify their behaviour. The letter moved me for two reasons. First I found the way the writer addresses to the unknown soldier particularly moving since he speaks to him as if so much time had not passed. Secondly, the letter moved me because the last line ("*I wish it wasn't so.*") conveys the writer's great hope that one day wars will end.

Bergantin Ester – 4ALS

Letter – Tansy Parker

As I sit to write to you I falter as I do not know your name. I so wish that I did. Your boots seem heavy and I want to pull a chair up for you to sit. The cloak you wear seems to drag you down or perhaps it is in tune with your shoulders. You look weary and carry the world upon your shoulders. I want to offer a hug and tell you that everything will be alright now. You are safe. For you to look up and smile. I want you to know that you are not alone. You are home.

But I cannot so all I can offer is my gratitude. For I now know what horrors you faced when you pulled those boots on and marched for King and Country.

My Great Great Uncle Frank pulled those boots on to. Perhaps you knew him. What Regiment you ask. Lancashire Fusiliers: c Coy. 1st/7th Bn. He didn't make it home though as he was killed in action at Gallipoli Peninsula, May 6th 1915. He was 27 years old. All we have of him is a photo, war records, medals and Helles Memorial.

I hope though, as you stand on the platform, that you are going home; made it home. The letter you read is from a loved one whispering her news; a mother's love wanting her son home. I hope the letter is giving you comfort and hope erasing the darkest memory of what you have just witnessed. That the letter, whoever it is written by, tells you of how much you are loved and missed. I know that Uncle Frank got such a letter.

I can only pray that it gave him great joy and strength. I will never be able to comprehend what you and others faced 100 years ago, and as I light my candle tonight I will think of you, of them, and Frank.

For what was your today is my tomorrow. And that I will never forget. We will never forget.

Thank you, Sir,

Tansy Parker



Analysis

The writer of this letter is Tansy Parker, a mother. I chose this letter to discover what kind of letter a mother could write to the Unknown Soldier.

The letter is organized into five sequences. In the first sequence, the writer expresses her impressions in seeing the statue of the Unknown Soldier and her wish to console and reassure the

soldier. The second sequence opening with an adversative connection has the function to convey the impossibility to realize the writer's desire.

In the next part of the letter, the writer reports a personal experience of loss thus creating a deep empathic connection with the Unknown Soldier. The following sequence is similar to the first. What changes is the subject of the writer's comfort, that is not only directed to the Unknown Soldier, but also to the other fallen, in particular to Uncle Frank. The writer conveys her hope to have comforted Frank and the other fallen, remembering that their sacrifice will never be forgotten.

The purpose of the letter is to reassure the Unknown Soldier with a typical motherly attitude that takes care of her son's comfort. In order to convey the mother's need to reassure her son/soldier the writer uses words such as "hug", "safe", "smile", "not alone" and "home".

The woman particularly keeps on repeating the word *home*. Her wish is to provide a safe home for the soldier but she cannot do it physically and therefore she "hope erasing the darkest memory of what you have just witnessed. Consequently, she relies on a candle and its power of giving light to him, her dead relatives and all the fallen.

"I light my candle tonight I will think of you, of them, and Frank."

Scolaro Erik - 4ALS

Letter - child

We will remember you

Dear friend,

Thank you for you lighting our country. Thank you for saving people like the of England 2014. I hope you did not die.

Love from Archie

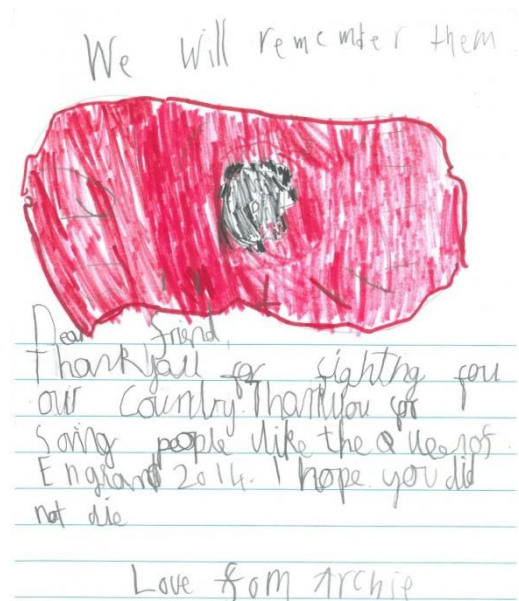
Analysis

The letter above is the one I chose. It was written by a little boy 8 years of age. I did not choose the letter because it is shorter than others, but because in my opinion it conveys a deep meaning.

I think that this letter provides everyone with a suitable example of the way the cult of the unknown soldier was felt in England. Indeed, even a child has participated in the invitation to British people to write a letter to the Unknown Soldier.

Archie considers the Unknown Soldier as his friend and therefore he opens the letter with "Dear friend". In addition, he thanks him for saving the lives of many people during the First World War. The part of the letter that struck me a lot is the final sentence: "I hope you did not die." It makes it clear the child doesn't know who the Unknown Soldier is, nevertheless he considers it as if he were a hero. In addition, the sentence underlines the innocence and the spontaneity of the child.

Bragagnini Paolo - 4ALS



Letter – Annelie Wenderberg

My love,

I have no tears. I see your slender figure walk down the narrow path that winds along our field. The rye is high. Slowly, your back disappears, your uniform, the bag you slung over your shoulder.

My heart breaks. It breaks for the loss of my first love, the loss of all that could have been and that is now walking away with you.

You turned away from me with that glint in your eyes that speaks of heroic deeds and glory, and the curl of your lips that speaks of triumph. You leave your sisters, your wife, and your daughter to kill brothers, husbands, and fathers.

You leave to see the gore and blood and stink of war, to see young men crying for their mothers, pissing their pants, and dying in the trenches they dug for themselves. You leave to hear the screams of mules and horses, their lungs and feet burned from gas. Maybe your horse will be one of these horses. Maybe you will be one of these men.

The path is empty now. The sun hovers over the horizon.

I turn away.

I will not wait for you.

Annelie



Analysis

I decided to analyse this letter because in her few lines the writer does not express what might happen in war, vice versa she focusses the attention on what happened at home. She tells about what mothers, daughters and wives thought and expected from war, what they felt and when their sons, husbands fathers or brothers left home to go fighting in the conflict. Her first words are "My love,".

From the first line the reader can understand that there was a relationship between the writer and the soldier. Probably she decided to identify herself with the girl, wife or mother of the Unknown soldier. Going on she says "I have no tears". She has already cried a lot so now she can't do it any longer. The reader can see she thinks the soldier will never come back because he is probably going to death. Later she writes "I see your slender figure walk down the narrow path that winds along our field". Surely, she imagines the figure of her lover along the battle field. She says "our field" because she probably has got the image of a field where they used to play together that has now turned into a battlefield.

Interesting is also to notice the way she refers to the man/soldier: a "slender figure". In my opinion it is a strange lexical choice, because, most of the men in that war were simply man or poor, weak

young guys caught in a trap of rhetoric idealism. The image of the man is one of walking despair. She sees him from his back and so he disappears from sight but the image seems chosen on purpose because of the ambiguity of the word disappear which may mean both "to walk down" and "to die". The result is the woman's sense of emptiness.

She insists on that very image *"Slowly, your back disappears, your uniform, the bag you slung over your shoulder."* The first word almost obliges the reader to slow down the reading pace exploiting punctuation. It follows that the reader can understand that the speaking voice is remembering the moment when she lost her love. *"My heart breaks"* is the way her said words unveil her tragic. In my opinion this is was one of the most strong phrases in the letter/poem because it refers to the moment when she feels she may see the soldier/lover again. The following expression: *"It breaks the loss of all that could have been and that is now walking away with you"*. It seems as if she were compelled to lose the whole sense of her life: the past she had shared with him, her present and her future.

Subsequently she focusses on the soldier facial expression: *"glint in your eyes that speaks of heroic deeds and glory, and the curl of your lips that speaks of triumph"*. She seems to feel pity for the false idealistic principles that have probably pushed him to leave his family. On one hand, he was crying because he was going to war, but on the other hand he wanted to receive glory and honours once he would be back home.

In my opinion the writer describes a young and naive soldier, that goes to war because people have told to him a lot of nonsense since the voice seems to scream that the soldier is indeed leaving *"to see the gore and blood and stink of war, to see young men crying for their mothers, pissing their pants, and dying in the trenches they dug for themselves"*. The lines *"You leave your sisters, your wife, and your daughter to kill brothers, husbands, and fathers"* underline the complexity and the absurdity of the battle he is going to fight. Now her sense of sadness gradually transforms into anger when, speaking of the war she makes precise semantic choices *"You leave to see the gore and blood and stink of war, to see young men crying for their mothers, pissing their pants, and dying in the trenches they dug for themselves"*.

The young people who went to war for glory later were compelled to face a 'hell in life'. She underlines the negative aspects of war resorting to a suitable use of language that besides telling of atrocities is able to make you feel, hear and see its horror. The end of the letter *"The path is empty now. The sun hovers over the horizon. I turn away."* Involves the reader that feels emphatic with the speaking voice sense of void of the approaching death so that the young lady *"will not wait for"* him. It goes without saying that the letter is an open condemnation of war.

Cadenaro Martina - 4ALS

CONCLUSION

OUR VISIT TO THE IMPERIAL WAR MUSEUM AND THE UNKNOWN WARRIOR IN LONDON. A FEEDBACK

I will now spend some words about our experience with the English Unknown soldier in London during our school trip. As we had already started our research on the topic, my classmates and I had the opportunity to visit the main places related to the British Unknown Soldier and the First World War and to deepen our knowledge

So why not going to the Imperial War Museum? We went there, but only for a little hour (a really little time). Its large façade immediately captures your attention with the two guns that gave me the impression of something raw and related to the war.

Right at the entrance we could visit the part related to the First World War: it consisted of some galleries with informative panels illustrating and explaining the main played an important role in the 'domestic war': it promoted hate towards the enemy (we could see English posters against Germany that favoured the enrolment of soldiers). Across the exhibition were many findings like guns, rifles, helmets, military clothing that perfectly communicated the atrocity of the war (especially in the Western front).

The most important sections were the ones that invited reflections through photos and panel showing desperation and terror in the eyes of soldiers and their relatives 'grief. Reflecting on the hard reality of war people gradually began to change their point-of-view and to think that war was no more useful and could only bring devastation and the loss of life so that reflection on the war horrors and the related cults like the one of the Unknown Soldier started to make people see the war under a different perspective and no longer as an occasion for glory or to celebrate heroic deeds.

Visited the Imperial War Museum, the day after we went to the famous Westminster Abbey. The Abbey holds many coffins of famous characters (scientists like Newton or queens like Elizabeth I). Once inside we soon moved to the Western nave of the Abbey and so we could personally see the Unknown soldier's tomb brought into the Nave in 1919.





We had the opportunity to see exactly the place we had just studied about and this made the visit more interesting. We felt expert about the history! But what made me think was that the tomb was surrendered by poppies: they are flowers, the first flowers to have been reborn on the fields devastated by the war. in France; the flowers symbolize the passage between death and life, a possibility to hope for a better life. Full of symbolism and historical events, the Unknown Soldier's tomb is surely one of the most important memorials in the Abbey and in England. It is there to symbolize any dead soldier during the War.

After entering into contact with British history thanks to the living monument of the Abbey, on the last day we could see from the distance the long-studied memorial of the Cenotaph. Its history had been was intrinsically with the one of the Unknown Soldier. The main difference is that, instead of being a moral memorial, it commemorates all British dead soldiers, so it is a patriotic memorial: a monument to unify the population under a patriotic feeling. Indeed, the monument is not inside a church but it isn't '*en-plain-air*'. All the visits to the places of our project gave me the impression of the British country as one that strongly wants to overcome the tragedy of the wars.

Digiusto Mattia – 4ASA

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