

## The Tomb of the Unknown Warrior

On November 7th, 1920, in strictest secrecy, four unidentified British bodies were exhumed from temporary battlefield cemeteries at Ypres, Arras, the Asine and the Somme. The soldiers who did the digging were not told why. The bodies were taken by field ambulance to GHQ at St-Pol-Sur-Ter Noise. There the bodies were draped with the union flag. Guards were posted and Brigadier-General Wyatt and Colonel Gell selected one body at random. A French honour guard was selected and stood by the coffin overnight. On the morning of the 8th, a specially designed coffin made of oak from the grounds of Hampton Court was brought and the unknown warrior placed inside. On top was placed a crusader's sword and a shield on which was inscribed 'a British Warrior who fell in the GREAT WAR 1914-1918 for King and Country'.

On The 9th of November, the unknown warrior was taken by horse-drawn carriage through guards of honour, through the sound of tolling bells and bugle calls to the quayside.

On the quay, it was saluted by General Marechal Foch and loaded onto HMS Vernon bound for Dover. The coffin stood on the deck covered in wreaths and surrounded by the French honour guard. On arrival at Dover, the unknown warrior was greeted with a 19 gun salute, normally only reserved for field marshals. He then travelled by special train to Victoria Station London. He stayed there overnight and on the morning of the 11th of November, he was taken to Westminster Abbey.

The idea of the Unknown Warrior was thought of by a Padre called David Railton who had served at the front during the great war and it was the union flag he used as an altar cloth at the front, that had been draped over the coffin.

It was his intention that all relatives of the 517,773 combatants whose bodies had not been identified could believe that the unknown warrior could very well be their lost husband, Father, brother or son.



At the going down of the sun, and  
in the morning, We will remember  
them

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VIPERS SKILL	Question	Your Answer
V	Can you write a definition in your own words for the verb 'exhume?'	
R	Which four battlefields were the unknown soldiers exhumed from?	
I	Why do you think so much secrecy was needed throughout the process?	
V	Can you think of any other synonyms for the word warrior? (Use a thesaurus if needed)	
I	What type of vehicle was HMS Vernon?  Give three pieces of evidence to support your answer.	
V	What is a wreath?  Do you know when wreaths are used?	
R	How many unidentified British bodies were there at the end of the war?	
R	How often is Remembrance Day and when is it held?	
IE	Why is the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier important?	