



First Word

From the President of the ARS, Robert B. Martin Jr.

Never Forget

The Tomb of the Unknown Soldier in Arlington National Cemetery is an iconic monument dedicated to members of the United States armed services whose remains have not been identified. It was first authorized on March 4, 1921, when the U.S. Congress approved the burial of an unidentified American serviceman from World War I. Thereafter, on November 11, 1921, an unknown soldier brought back from France was interred below a three-level marble tomb. Congress subsequently appropriated funds for the construction of the super-structure above the tomb which was completed in 1932. Since that time crypts have been added to inter the Unknowns from World War II and Korea. A crypt was later added that once contained an Unknown from Vietnam whose remains were positively identified in 1998 and were removed.

On October 22, 1921, four unknown servicemen were exhumed from four World War I American battlefield cemeteries in France and taken the following day to the city hall in Châlons-en-Champagne, France where they were draped with American flags. U.S. Army Sergeant Edward F. Younger, who had been selected as one of the pallbearers, was handed a bouquet of white roses and ordered: "You will take these flowers, proceed to the chapel, and place the bouquet on one of the four caskets resting there. The one you select will be the Unknown Soldier." After kneeling in prayer, Sergeant Younger stood and circled the caskets three times, touching each casket. He then saluted and placed the flowers on the second casket to his right. The roses remained on the coffin throughout the journey home and were buried with the unknown soldier at Arlington National Cemetery along with some soil taken from France.

The 100th Anniversary of the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier will be commemorated at Arlington National Cemetery at 11:00 AM on November 11, 2021.

In preparation for the commemoration of the Centennial, the Historian of the Society of the Honor Guard, Tomb of the Unknown Soldier contacted the American Rose Society to ask if it was possible to identify the white roses used in the selection of the American Unknown Soldier in France in 1921 by Sergeant Edward Younger. As President of the American Rose Society, and a student of American history I undertook this project. In doing so I determined that since there is no historical record that specifically identifies the roses used, it was impossible to answer that question with certainty. There are, however, references in the historical record that provided clues that suggest a likely candidate.

The account of my investigation is set forth in my now widely-published article titled "The Rose of the Unknown Soldier". In it I concluded it likely that the roses used in the selection of the American Unknown Soldier in France in 1921 by Sergeant Edward Younger were a bouquet of the pure white Tea rose 'Niphetos' from the gardens of Joseph Pernet-Ducher, the famous French nurseryman near Lyons who had himself lost two sons in the Great War.

Richard A. Azzaro, Society of the Honor Guard, Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, Director, Never Forget Garden has said of this story:

"From the perspective of a Tomb Guard, co-founder and past president of the Society of the Honor Guard, Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, this story speaks to the very heart of America's sacred duty to never forget those who have served and sacrificed on behalf of America in times of war or armed conflict.

Once again we see the eloquence of the rose."



The Society of the Honor Guard, Tomb of the Unknown Soldier's has publicized this research and has designated the American Rose Society its expert source on roses and a partner in the Never Forget Garden Project.

To pledge our support, the American Rose Society Board of Directors has adopted resolutions in support of the Centennial Commemoration of the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. Furthermore, we have resolved to dedicate a special and permanent place within America's Rose Garden as our 'Never Forget Garden' to remember America's fallen heroes, and to encourage our thousands of members across the country to do likewise. These efforts are being furthered through Marilyn Wellan as the representative of the American Rose Society to the Society of the Honor Guard, Tomb of the Unknown Soldier in connection with its 'Never Forget Garden' project.

The Society of the Honor Guard has made the white rose its official flower and encourages the planting of white roses. In this connection, Marilyn Wellan is currently working with Fabien Ducher of Roseraie Ducher and Tyler Francis of Francis Roses on the introduction of a white rose to be named 'Never Forget'. These will likely be available in limited quantities this year but increased numbers will be available in subsequent years. The Society of the Honor Guard has also commissioned a "Never Forget" permanent garden marker advertised in this issue (pg. 33).

The planting of the Rose, America's National Floral Emblem, will be a major feature of the 'Never Forget Garden' project, an important element of the Centennial plans of the The Society of the Honor Guard, Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. We jointly recognize the power of Roses to speak of patriotism, give comfort, represent love, pride, remembrance, strength, courage, unity, valor and all matters of the heart. Therefore, we should all be honored and pleased to join the Centennial Commemoration this year and; to dedicate a special place within our own rose garden as well as our local community gardens as "Never Forget Gardens". Please consider joining us in this effort.

ABOVE: 'Never Forget', photo Ducher Roseraie.