

Tomorrow is Remembrance Day. Can anyone tell me what we're remembering tomorrow?

[soldiers who have sacrificed their lives in battle]

We spend time on Remembrance Day, and on the Sunday closest to 11 November, remembering the soldiers who have died for their country. But we also should remember the people they left behind, the people who loved them and wanted them home again.

Today I'm going to tell a story about two men, and a dog. One day a man called George decided he wanted to adopt a dog. He went to a dog shelter and there was a big, beautiful black labrador called 'Reggie.' He took Reggie home with him. The shelter gave him Reggie's dog bed, toys, and sealed letter which they said had come from Reggie's first owner. George put down the letter and forgot about it.

After two weeks things weren't working out well. Whenever he called Reggie by name the dog would ignore him. Reggie never seemed to listen when George called him, and didn't obey the commands like 'sit,' 'stay,' and 'come.'

George decided it would be best if he took the dog back to the shelter for them to find Reggie another home. But then he remembered the letter from Reggie's first owner. He found the letter, opened it, and this is what the letter said.

[open letter]

George had heard about Paul Mallory. Paul had died in Iraq, giving his life to save three men in his platoon.

George looked over at the dog, and called out, 'Hey, Tank.' The dog's head whipped up, ears cocked and eyes right. 'Tank, come.'

Tank was instantly on his feet, and hurried over. He sat in front of George, listening for the name he hadn't heard for months, his real name. George said his name over and over, and Tank leaned against him, happy. 'It's me now, Tank,' George told him. 'You and me. Your old friend gave his life for his country, and now I'm going to take care of you.'

We remember that Jesus said, 'No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends.' Paul Mallory made the greatest sacrifice, saving his friends in Iraq. But his dog, Tank, also made a sacrifice, losing the person he loved. On Remembrance Day we honour people like Paul, and also those who miss them.

Please stand for a short silence, as we remember those who have given their lives for our country.

[short silence]

They shall not grow old, as we that are left grow old.
Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn.
At the going down of the sun and in the morning
We will remember them.