

Friends of Millbank

Remembrance Sunday, 8 November 2020



Dear Friend of Millbank

Lest we forget

Greetings, I hope you are all keeping well, especially at this poignant time. It's Remembrance Sunday this weekend, and this Wednesday 11 November marks the 100th Anniversary of the unveiling of the Cenotaph at Whitehall. For the first time in its history the annual Remembrance Sunday ceremony at Westminster Abbey and at the Cenotaph, normally attended by myself and many Friends of Millbank, will be a closed ceremony with strictly limited attendance, due to the coronavirus pandemic and now a second lockdown in England. Official events elsewhere are also curtailed, though certain limited attendance wreath-laying ceremonies will still go ahead. See the GOV-UK website for more details: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/public-asked-not-to-gather-at-the-cenotaph-for-remembrance-sunday-due-to-coronavirus>

The public, therefore including Friends of Millbank, are encouraged to virtually attend the Festival of Remembrance at 2110hrs Saturday 7 November and the Remembrance Sunday service at the Cenotaph commencing at 1015hrs (both on BBC One), and observe the Two Minute Silence at 1100hrs. Where possible, do stand outdoors at 1100hrs to remember the fallen, as a visible sign of respect for those who risked and gave their lives for their country, just as we showed respect for NHS staff also risking their lives in the first lockdown by clapping outside together each Thursday.

I am always so impressed at this time by the efforts of our military charities to remember the fallen and help the bereaved, especially this year by seeing how they have adapted to the challenge of their normal fundraising activities largely being curtailed. Do visit and be inspired by their websites, whether of long-standing internationally renowned charities like the Royal British Legion <https://www.britishlegion.org.uk/> (poppy attached) or of smaller newer ones such as Scotty's Little Soldier <https://www.scottyslittlesoldiers.co.uk/>, set up in memory of 26 year old Corporal Lee Scott of 2 Royal Tank Regiment (killed by an IED during Operation Panther's Claw in Afghanistan on 10 July 2009),¹ which helps bereaved service children. Cpl Scott's young daughter (seven months old when he died) has led calls for the outdoors national Two Minute Silence. We will remember them.

David Vassallo, Chairman

¹ For a history of Operation Panther's Claw, Camp Bastion Hospital, and the Defence Medical Services in the Afghanistan conflict, visit the Military Medical History and Unit Histories sections in <https://www.friendsofmillbank.org/history>