



MINISTRY OF DEFENCE
MAIN BUILDING WHITEHALL LONDON SW1
Telephone 01-92422 218 2111/3

MO 27/5/1/2

21st August 1981

Dear John,

My Secretary of State would welcome the views of his colleagues on a request from Dame Ruth King for official support for a ceremony in Westminster Abbey which will involve the unveiling of a memorial plaque to the memory of those who have given their lives in the service of the Crown since 1945.

Dame Ruth has obtained the agreement of the Duke of Edinburgh and the Deam of Westminster to the wording of the inscription which will read as follows:

"To the glory of God and in memory of all those who in the face of violence have given their lives, in the service of the Crown, to defend freedom, justice and peace."

The scope of the memorial is therefore wide enough to cover not only Service personnel but civilians, including diplomats, policemen and firemen. The Duke of Edinburgh has indicated that he would be willing to perform the unveiling and the provisional date for the ceremony is 3rd November. So far as the financial aspects are concerned Dame Ruth has said that she is prepared to meet the cost of the plaque and the ceremony (which is estimated at £3,500) although she feels that the relations of those commemorated might wish to contribute.

Having proceeded so far, Dame Ruth now wishes the Government to take on responsibility for planning and organising the ceremony, including the drawing up of a guest list and the issue of invitations. In this event the ceremony would take on an official character, not least since the invitations would presumably have to be issued in the name of HM Government.

J F Halliday Esq

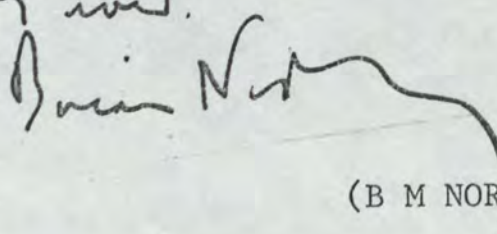


My Secretary of State has some sympathy with the underlying objective, although he recognises that contrary arguments could be put, and considers that, on the whole, it would be appropriate to meet the request for official support, bearing in mind that the project has the patronage of the Duke of Edinburgh and that, given the range of interests involved, it is unlikely that the ceremony could be properly organised by any other means. He also takes the view, however, that the ceremony ought to be on a relatively small scale with the military aspects played low key; that there should be no question of providing support for an annual ceremony (which is what Dame Ruth apparently has in mind); and that there should be no official involvement in any fund-raising activities.

If Ministers are agreed that official support should be provided it will, of course, be necessary for a number of Departments to be involved but my Secretary of State hopes that the Home Secretary will agree that it would be appropriate for the Home Office to take the lead, not only because of Home Office responsibility for the Cenotaph ceremony but also because of the fact that the memorial is intended to commemorate civilians as well as Service personnel. Naturally the Ministry of Defence would play its part.

The provisional date of 3rd November does not, of course, allow much time for the necessary preparations to be made. In my Secretary of State's view it would be preferable to postpone the ceremony for at least six months, but it would be premature to put such a suggestion to Dame Ruth in advance of a decision to provide assistance. To enable this decision to be reached it would therefore be very helpful if you, and those to whom I am copying this letter, could aim to let David Omand here have advice by not later than 7th September.

I am sending copies of this letter to Clive Whitmore (No 10); Brian Fall (FCO), David Heyhoe (Office of the Chancellor of the Duchy), Jim Buckley (CSD), Richard Dykes (Employment), Stephen Boys Smith (NIO), Don Brereton (DHSS), John Rhodes (Trade), Julian West (Energy), Tony Mayer (Transport); and David Wright (Cabinet Office).

Your servt.


(B M NORBURY)

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24 AUG 1981



MINISTRY OF DEFENCE
MAIN BUILDING WHITEHALL LONDON SW1
Telephone 01-~~2317722~~ 218 2111/3

MO 27/5/1/2

*BF for
Norman*

22nd September 1981

Dear Brian,

*The FCO are not satisfied by
this reply and want to put the
matter to Lord Canning again on his
return from Belgium. They will tell me the
news. NB/M or USI stage. Held
23/9/81*

I think it might be helpful if I were to comment on the points raised in your letter of 8th September to John Halliday about Dame Ruth King's proposal for the erection of a memorial plaque in Westminster Abbey.

It would appear, and we have no reason to doubt, that the proposal has been inspired by patriotic motives. As evidence for this view I am attaching some extracts from a letter which Dame Ruth sent the Chief of the Defence Staff last July. These extracts also indicate, as Andrew Jackson has pointed out, that Dame Ruth's primary concern is to commemorate members of the Armed Forces who have died in action since 1945. However, the wording of the inscription, as finally agreed with the Duke of Edinburgh and the Dean of Westminster is sufficiently wide to cover civilians as well as Service personnel; and indeed we understand that at a recent meeting with Sir Robert Armstrong she made this point herself and suggested that representatives of the police and fire services might be invited to the ceremony.

You asked how the memorial would relate, if at all, to the accepted system of campaign medals and awards for gallantry, including those awarded posthumously. In fact there is no obvious link with the system of medals and awards.

The significance of the words "since 1945" is explained by the fact that the Cenotaph commemorates those who fell in the two World Wars; in other words, Dame Ruth sees her proposed memorial as complementing the Cenotaph. On the other hand, the year 1981 has no particular significance in this context, and has not been mentioned by Dame Ruth. She has been attempting to gain support for her proposal for the last fifteen years but it is only now that it is (apparently) coming to fruition. There is in fact no terminal date: the period covered by the memorial is open-ended.

As Brian Norbury said in his letter of 21st August, my Secretary of State feels that, on the whole, it would be right to provide official support for the ceremony, even though

B J P Fall Esq



there are features of the project which are potentially controversial. His proposal that the Home Office should take the lead was in part a reflection of his view that the military aspects should be played down; in view, however, of the Home Office's opposition he is prepared to accept, albeit reluctantly, that the Ministry of Defence should take on responsibility if it is decided to meet Dame Ruth's request for official support.

It has been suggested informally to the Dean that the provisional date of 3rd November is now beginning to look unrealistic and he appears to be well seized of this point. Dame Ruth has been told informally that, if her proposal is given official support, the ceremony will probably need to be held at a later date, and she quite accepted this. Nevertheless, we shall need to let her have a formal reply in the very near future; and, equally, it will be necessary before long to give the Duke of Edinburgh's Private Secretary some definite information. In short, this matter is now assuming some urgency.

I am sending copies of this letter to the other recipients of your letter.

Yours sincerely,

Nick Evans

(N H R EVANS)

"I am writing about the Memorial for all those who have died in action since 1945. The Cenotaph is clearly for the two World Wars, and all those who have died in the many 'undeclared wars' since then (I believe called Defence Operations) are left unrecognised. From Korea, Cyprus, Aden, Oman, Ireland etc there are now about 2,500 dead, who with their widows and orphans have no honoured place, and feel forgotten. This is not only sad for morale in the Services, but also for the nation, particularly the young who are no longer made aware of the price of freedom."

".... I just think England should not be afraid to recognise publicly, with pride, and honour those who give their lives in her service."

12 2 SEP 1981

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Memorandum

Civil Service Department
Whitehall London SW1A 2AZ
01-273 4400

From the Private Secretary

David Omand
Private Secretary to the Secretary of State
for Defence
Main Building
Whitehall
LONDON SW1A 2HB

RW

Box

9 September 1981

Dear David,

MEMORIAL PLAQUE IN WESTMINSTER ABBEY.

Brian Norbury sent me a copy of his letter of 21 August to John Halliday. The Lord President has now had the opportunity to look at the papers (although I think that there are some that have not been copied to us) together with the recent letters from the Private Offices of the Home Office, Northern Ireland Office and the Foreign Office.

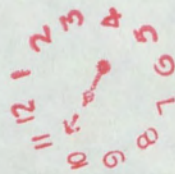
The Lord President has asked me to say that he is rather uneasy about this project. He shares many of the misgivings of the Foreign Secretary and in particular he questions the chosen dates of 1945 to 1981. If it is the intention to include those killed in Northern Ireland there seems to be the danger of creating some kind of arbitrary cut-off date when the plaque is unveiled. The Lord President would therefore like to know much more about the intentions behind the memorial before official support was given.

I am sending copies of this letter to Clive Whitmore (No. 10), John Halliday (Home Office), Brian Fall (Foreign Office), David Heyhoe (Chancellor of the Duchy), Richard Dykes (Employment), Stephen Boys Smith (Northern Ireland), Don Brereton (DHSS), John Rhodes (Trade), Julian West (Energy), Antony Meyer (Transport) and David Wright in Sir Robert Armstrong's Office.

Yours sincerely,
Jim Buckley.

J BUCKLEY

SEP 1981





Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

8 September 1981

Dear John

B/K

The MOD are going to
 send to Mrs. Brown
 their response.

Mrs Gix

Memorial Plaque in Westminster Abbey

Lord Carrington has seen a copy of Brian Norbury's letter to you of 21 August about Dame Ruth King's request for official support in organising a ceremony to unveil a Memorial Plaque in Westminster Abbey to those who have given their lives in the service of The Crown since 1945.

Although of course the matter is not one primarily for the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, Lord Carrington takes the view that it would be prudent to try to discover a good deal more about Dame Ruth King's motives in advancing this proposal and to think somewhat harder about the likely consequences of falling in with what she suggests, before the Government is in any way committed to offer official support. The terms of the communication from Dame Ruth King to Mr Nott may offer some help, but it is not at all clear to us whose memory is really being evoked in the somewhat disparate spectrum ranging from policemen and firemen through civilians including diplomats to soldiers - presumably as widely separated in time and place as Northern Ireland, Palestine and Malaysia. Nor is it clear how the memorial would relate, if at all, to the accepted system of campaign medals and awards for gallantry, including those awarded posthumously. Again, what is the significance of the dates chosen ie 1945 and 1981? It is perhaps to be regretted that Dame Ruth King should have approached the Duke of Edinburgh and the Dean of Westminster before seeking official advice.

All in all, while the proposal may seem at first glance to be innocuous and unexceptionable, Lord Carrington is not at all clear for his part whether we yet know enough about the genesis and background of it to form a considered opinion. In so far as direct FCO interests may be involved, for example the inclusion of Diplomatic Service officers who have been killed in the line of duty, or the plaque's possible relevance to controversial aspects of Britain's post-war withdrawal from empire, it is not clear that such a memorial would serve any useful purpose.

I am sending copies of this letter to Clive Whitmore (No. 10), Brian Norbury (MOD), David Heyhoe (Office of the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster), Jim Buckley (CSD),

/Richard Dykes



Richard Dykes (Dept of Employment), Stephen Boys Smith (NIO), Don Brereton (DHSS), John Rhodes (Dept of Trade), Julian West (Dept of Energy), Tony Mayer (Dept of Transport) and David Wright (Cabinet Office).

Y Mrs ever
Ji.

(B J P Fall)
Private Secretary

J F Halliday Esq
Home Office

From: THE PRIVATE SECRETARY



NORTHERN IRELAND OFFICE
GREAT GEORGE STREET,
LONDON SW1P 3AJ

David Omand Esq
Private Secretary
Ministry of Defence
Main Building
Whitehall
London SW1

8 September 1981

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Dear David

Brian Norbury copied to Stephen Boys Smith his letter of 21 August about Dame Ruth King's request for official support for a ceremony in Westminster Abbey involving the unveiling of a memorial plaque to the memory of those who have given their lives in the service of the Crown since 1945.

Unfortunately, in Northern Ireland's currently divided society, Crown service in defence of freedom, justice and peace is largely associated with only one part of the community; the other has to a considerable extent withheld its support for the security forces in recent years. (In such a situation, it is not inconceivable that an extremist element might seize the opportunity presented by the ceremony to protest about the security forces in Northern Ireland).

However, that drawback should not be exaggerated nor allowed to detract from the remembrance of those who have died in the service of the Crown. Given the support that the scheme has already attracted, we would not argue against a limited degree of official backing, and would naturally want Northern Ireland to be associated with it.

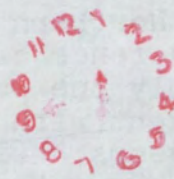
We would agree with the rest of the approach suggested to the proposition in Brian's letter - in particular that there should be no commitment to continuing official support for an annual ceremony, nor official involvement in any fund-raising activities.

I am sending copies of this letter to the recipients of Brian Norbury's.

Yours sincerely
Mike Hopkins

M W HOPKINS

8 SEP 1981





HOME OFFICE
QUEEN ANNE'S GATE
LONDON SW1H 9AT

7 SEP 1981

NBP
Ruth

Dear David

Brian Norbury wrote to John Halliday on 21st August about the request from Dame Ruth King for official support for a ceremony in Westminster Abbey in connection with a memorial to those who have given their lives in the service of the Crown since 1945. He also suggested that the Home Secretary might take the lead in co-ordinating the interests of the various Departments involved.

will request if required

The Home Secretary sees no objection to the Government giving support to this proposal. We would not, however, feel able to take the lead. Our position was made clear in Paul Wright's letter of 7th August to David Wright, which was copied to Simon Webb.

will request if required

It is clear from Dame Ruth King's original letter to the Chief of the Defence Staff that the inspiration for her proposal is to commemorate those who have died in action since 1945, notably in Korea, Cyprus, Aden, Oman and Northern Ireland. It is true that the proposed wording of the memorial is wide enough to cover those who have died in the civilian services but Dame Ruth King's primary concern is clearly with those who have died in action in the armed forces.

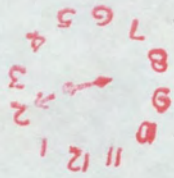
The Cenotaph ceremony is rather different. It is based on the old Home Office building and the civilian services play a prominent part. It does not provide a reason for the Home Secretary assuming responsibility for a ceremony in Westminster Abbey to unveil a memorial to "all those who have died in action since 1945" (Dame Ruth's original words).

I am sending a copy of this letter to the recipients of Brian Norbury's.

Tom
Andrew Jackson

A. P. JACKSON.

David B. Omand Esq.



- 8 SEP 1981