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MR. WHITMORE *HW*  
PRIME MINISTER *13x*

*W*

In August, Mr. Nott's Office wrote (Flag A) to propose that we should accede to a request from Dame Ruth King for official support for a ceremony in Westminster Abbey which will involve the unveiling of a memorial plaque in the Abbey Cloisters 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 Prince Philip and the Dean of Westminster to the following inscription:

"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 memorial will therefore cover both civilians and service personnel, and appears to be open-ended as far as date is concerned.

Dame Ruth has said that she is prepared to meet the cost of the plaque, as well as the ceremony. She is simply asking the Government to take on the responsibility for planning and organising the ceremony, including the drawing up of a guest list and the issuing of invitations.

Since August there has been some argument among the Ministers concerned. Mr. Nott had proposed that the Home Office should take the lead in organising the ceremony. The Home Office demurred, and the Ministry of Defence have now reluctantly agreed that if the ceremony goes ahead they will plan and organise it. Lord Carrington was both sceptical and suspicious of the proposal; he felt initially that the memorial was too wide-ranging, and that the case for such an all-embracing memorial was not proved.

/ He has

He has now reluctantly acquiesced in the proposal, but still feels that the memorial should be confined to servicemen.

Sir Robert Armstrong has spoken to Dame Ruth about her proposal. His advice is at Flag B. You will see that he strongly advises that you support Dame Ruth's proposal. She has been working on this for fifteen years, and it will give comfort and encouragement to the widows and families of those who died in Aden, Cyprus and indeed Northern Ireland. It will involve no public expenditure, except the staff cost of organising the ceremony.

The Foreign Secretary's suggestion that the memorial should be confined to servicemen is still being considered by the Ministry of Defence. In my view, to confine the memorial this way would go against the spirit of Dame Ruth's proposal. If the memorial is to commemorate those who have otherwise been forgotten, ~~then~~ it seems strange to exclude civilians in Crown service who have given their lives for their country. In any case, there seems to be a strong case for not tampering too much with the wording that Dame Ruth has already agreed with Prince Philip and the Dean of Westminster.

1. Agree that HMG should support Dame Ruth by organising the ceremony? *Yes - very much so.*
2. Agree that the wording should be as proposed by Dame Ruth and agreed by the Duke of Edinburgh and the Dean of Westminster (as in the second paragraph above)?

*Yes not*

*WRGN*

13 October 1981

*I hope the ceremony will be on a date when I can attend  
not*

Seen by WR



Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

9 October 1981

Dear David,

Please refer to Francis Richards' letter of 25 September about Dame Ruth King's proposals for the erection of a memorial plaque in Westminster Abbey.

Lord Carrington has now seen Nick Evans' letter of 22 September explaining the Defence Secretary's views. While he is still unenthusiastic he is prepared to acquiesce in the proposal that the ceremony should receive official support, in the light of Mr Nott's feeling that this would be the right course.

The implication of commemorating all who have died in the service of the Crown since 1945 is that the memorial is primarily concerned with service personnel - indeed, as Nick Evans' letter makes clear, that is Dame Ruth's main concern. That being so, Lord Carrington feels that it would be better if the text of the memorial plaque were amended to confine it to the commemoration of service personnel.

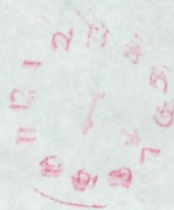
I am sending copies of this letter to the recipients of Francis Richards' previous letter.

Yours ever,

(B J P Fall)  
Private Secretary

D B Omand Esq  
PS/Secretary of State for Defence  
Ministry of Defence

112 OCT 1981





*Memorandum*

Foreign and Commonwealth Office  
London SW1A 2AH

25 September 1981

*12*

*Dear Nick,*

Thank you for your letter of 22 September to Brian Fall about Dame Ruth King's proposal.

I have since spoken to Michael Alexander. We both felt that there was little prospect of carrying matters forward by further correspondence and that in any case no action could be taken in the absence of our two Secretaries of State. Perhaps we might discuss on their return how best to take things from here.

I am sending copies of this letter to Clive Whitmore (No 10), David Heyhoe (Office of the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster), Jim Buckley (CSD), 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), David Wright (Cabinet Office) and John Halliday (Home Office).

*Yours ever,*

*F N Richards*

(F N Richards)  
Private Secretary

N H R Evans Esq  
Ministry of Defence

25 SEP 1984

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MR. WHITMORE ✓

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I understand that you would like to give the Prime Minister a little more background to the correspondence about Dame Ruth King's proposal for the erection of a memorial plaque in Westminster Abbey to the memory of those who have given their lives in the service of the Crown since 1945.

2. Dame Ruth King first mentioned this to me on 5th August 1981. She said that she had been trying to achieve this for 15 years.

She then wrote to the Chief of the Defence Staff on 4th July to ask for his help in finding a "distinguished figurehead" to announce and launch the project. The Chief of the Defence Staff replied with enthusiasm, and promised to do as much as he could to help. I attach a copy of that correspondence.

3. The primary concern is to commemorate members of the Armed Forces who have died in action since 1945 - and it is clear that Dame Ruth King has had soldiers killed in Ireland especially in mind. But she is very insistent that it is not confined to Northern Ireland but includes Korea, Cyprus and Aden as well; and the wording on the plaque is sufficiently wide to cover members of the civilian Crown services as well as the Armed Forces.

4. I see that the Foreign Secretary is, and Lord Soames was, rather uneasy about the project, and about Dame Ruth King's motives. I really do not think that they need be: I am sure that the proposal is inspired only by patriotic motives. I do not think that it ought to become mixed up with the Cenotaph arrangements which are and should continue to be confined to the two World Wars.

5. My own view of the matter is that Dame Ruth King's proposal is imaginative and valuable. It will give comfort and encouragement to the widows and families of those who died in Aden, Cyprus, and indeed Northern Ireland, and I hope that the Prime Minister will agree that the project should

be given official support. This does not involve any public expenditure: Dame Ruth King has promised us that she will look after the costs of making and putting up the proposed plaque. It is really only a question of organising the ceremony at which it is unveiled, and of attendance at it. My own feeling is that it would be churlish and unimaginative not to give that degree of support.

6. The plaque would, I understand, be in the Westminster Abbey Cloister, not in the Abbey itself.

RA

Robert Armstrong

23rd September 1981



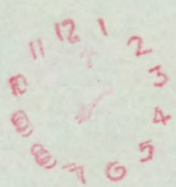


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to obtain official support. This does not involve any public expenditure. ...  
... to assist in the ...  
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Robert ...

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MAIN BUILDING WHITEHALL LONDON SW1A 2HB

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01-218 9000 (Switchboard)



CHIEF OF THE DEFENCE STAFF

1060/8

Dame Ruth King DBE Hon LI.D FRAM  
The Pavilion  
Greenfield Park  
Dublin 4

*Dear Dame Ruth:*

Thank you very much for writing to tell me about your plan for a Memorial to those who have died in action since 1945. It is an excellent idea and I am very impressed by your initiative and perseverance in gaining the backing of the Duke of Edinburgh and the Dean and Chapter of Westminster.

I will be very pleased to do as much as I can to help and to mobilize the Ministry of Defence in your support. I have asked Admiral Leslie Townsend, the Defence Services Secretary, to get in touch with you and to see how we might best help. When he reports back we will take steps to ensure that the Memorial is announced and launched in the most appropriate fashion.

May I thank you once again, on behalf of the Chiefs of Staff for starting and driving this commendable project. I am sure it will have support of not only the Armed Forces but of the country as a whole.

*Tows sincerely  
Terence Lewin*



From Dame Ruth King. DBE., Hon. L.D., FRAM.

July 4<sup>th</sup> 1981.

The Pavilion  
Greenfield Park  
Dublin 4  
695870

Admiral of the Fleet Sir Terence Lewin, G.C.B., M.V.O.

Dear Admiral Lewin,

I am writing to you at the suggestion of Sir John Hackett. It is 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 & orphans have no honoured place, & feel forgotten. This is not only sad for morale in the Service, but also for the nation, particularly the young who are no longer made aware of the price of freedom.

I am only involved because I feel so deeply about this gross injustice. Many people have wanted such a Memorial, but when mentioned it has always been brushed under the carpet for political reasons. When my friend Ted Heath became Prime Minister in 1970 I wrote to 10, Downing Street. My letter ended with the then Chaplain-General who explained that nothing could be done, as deaths in Defence Operations were classed as industrial accidents. . . . . After that, & living in Ireland for six years, and seeing the marvellous standard of the Forces there, I felt compelled to have one more try, & so wrote to the Duke of Edinburgh.

He understood and responded immediately. Through  
the Dean & Chapter of Westminster have provided a site in  
the Abbey Cloisters. The wording is agreed, & the design was to  
be complete by the end of May; November 2nd (All Souls' Day)  
was chosen for the unveiling by the Queen. I was with the  
Dean on April 25<sup>th</sup> & he felt his work was complete until it came  
to planning the service for November 2nd.

So, in fact, the great need now is for a distinguished  
figure-head to announce & launch the project, as Lord de Vries  
did for the Field Marshall's Memorial.

Mr Richard Davies, the Duke of Edinburgh's right-hand,  
suggested that I write to Sir John Hackett about this. We  
have spoken on the telephone, & he is unable to undertake  
the task as he has no 'back-up' in retirement. So he suggested  
that I should write to you, & that he would do so also. I have  
informed Mr Davies.

I do hope so very much that you will be able to  
help. To have got so far and not be able to complete  
the task, - the Memorial for those who die in action in our  
Defence now, - would be a great disappointment for many  
people & organisations concerned.

Yours sincerely,

Ruth King

P.S. I am not working for this cause because I have personally lost  
relations: I have been all too fortunate. Nor do I want my name  
in anyway involved. I just think England should not be afraid  
to recognise publicly, with pride, & honour those who give their  
lives in her service. R.K.