JFH
Memorials

10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

19 October 1981

Dear David

On 21 August, Brian Norbury wrote to John Halliday about the request from Dame Ruth King for official support for a ceremony in Westminster Abbey. The centrepiece of the ceremony was to be the unveiling of a memorial plaque to the memory of those who have given their lives in the service of the Crown.

The Prime Minister has now seen Brian Norbury's letter and the ensuing correspondence. She feels very strongly that the Government should support Dame Ruth by taking on responsibility for planning and organising the ceremony. She notes that Lord Carrington has withdrawn his early objections to Dame Ruth's proposal and hopes that an early and positive reply can now be given to Dame Ruth.

The Prime Minister also hopes that the Government can avoid interfering with the wording of the inscription on the memorial plaque. She notes that the proposed inscription is at present wide enough to include any Serviceman or civilian who has ever given his life in the service of the Crown. She feels that an attempt to exclude civilians from the scope of the memorial would go against the spirit of Dame Ruth's proposal, which appears to be to commemorate those who have otherwise been forgotten. In any case, the Prime Minister feels there is a strong case for not tampering with wording which has already been agreed with the Duke of Edinburgh and the Dean of Westminster.

Finally, the Prime Minister has expressed the hope that the ceremony will be on a date when she can attend.

I am sending a copy of this letter to Brian Fall (Foreign and Commonwealth Office), David Heyhoe (Lord President's Office), Jim Buckley (Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster's Office), Richard Dykes (Department of Employment), Stephen Boys Smith (Northern Ireland Office), John Halliday (Home Office), Don Brereton (Department of Health and Social Security), John Rhodes (Department of Trade), Julian West (Department of Energy), Anthony Mayer (Department of Transport) and David Wright (Cabinet Office).

Yours

Willie Rickett

David Omand, Esq.,
Ministry of Defence.

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NOTE FOR THE FILE

I spoke to Richard Banner, MOD on the telephone today and told him that the Prime Minister intended to attend both the unveiling ceremony and evenson on 25 March.

CJ.

17 December, 1981

I spoke to the P.M. again today. She said she would like to go if possible. Review again nearer the time.

CJ. 23/12

1.

The important thing will be to be at the unveiling. Agree to attend that and not to miss Evensong?

Yes will go to Church
PM
15 xii

MR. WHITMORE
PRIME MINISTER

Dame Ruth King's Official Support for a Ceremony in Westminster Abbey Involving the Unveiling of a Memorial Plaque to the Memory of Those Killed in the Service of the Crown since 1945

I have had a word with the Ministry of Defence about changing the date which is at the moment 25 March. They are in difficulties as the Duke of Edinburgh, who is unveiling the plaque, could only do that day and has to be back in the Palace by 1730 hours for the reception, which you are attending, for winners of the Queen's Award to Industry. There was a suggestion, however, that you might just attend the unveiling ceremony and not evensong which will follow it.

Alternatively, I could change the time of your briefing meeting to Wednesday 24th, but this might prove difficult as you are committed to doing three things with Mrs. Gandhi that week and we have as yet no timings for these. One of them is bound to be on Wednesday afternoon which will force us to have the Briefing Meeting at a most unsociable hour. It is a really bad week and I attach the annual diary for that period.

CJ.

14 December 1981

COPY NO

Tuesday 16 March

0915 Questions briefing team
? 1230 Arrival of Sultan Qaboos — Victoria Station
1300 Lunch and Questions briefing
1515 Questions
State Banquet for Sultan Qaboos +DT

Wednesday 17 March

0900 First meeting for FCS Speech
1200 Talks
1300 Lunch in honour of Sultan Qaboos +DT
1730 Chancellor

Thursday 18 March

0830 Hair
0915 Questions briefing team
1030 Cabinet
1300 Lunch and Questions briefing
1515 Questions
State Banquet given by Sultan Qaboos +DT

Monday 22 March

0830 Hair
1000 Media
1030 Keep free for Central Council Speech
1200 Chief Whip
1215 Chief Whip, Home Secretary, Chairman and Lord President
1300 Lunch with colleagues
Keep free for Central Council speech

Tuesday 23 March

0915 Questions briefing team
1300 Lunch and Questions briefing
1515 Questions
1830 Audience

Wednesday 24 March

1730 Chancellor
Keep free for Central Council speech

Thursday 25 March

0830 Hair
0915 Questions briefing team
1030 Cabinet
1300 Lunch and Questions briefing
1515 Questions
1600 Briefing meeting for European Council
Keep free for speech

Friday 26 March

0915 Media
0945 Sir Robert Armstrong
To Harrogate +DT

Saturday 27 March

Central Council, Harrogate, +DT

Monday 29 March - Tuesday 30 March

European Council, Belgium

1.

1. Mr. Whitmore

2. Prime Minister

Dame Ruth King's official support for a ceremony in Westminster Abbey involving the unveiling of a memorial plaque to the memory of those killed in the service of the Crown since 1945

You will remember that you expressed a wish to attend the ceremony in Westminster Abbey to unveil a memorial plaque.

MOD have come back suggesting 25 March in the late afternoon.

This is an appalling date as you have a briefing meeting for the European Council in Belgium (which will take place on the Monday and Tuesday of the following week) at 1600 hours followed by a possible reception at Buckingham Palace for winners of The Queen's Award to Industry. In addition you are off to Harrogate the following morning for the Central Council. I really do not see how you can possibly attend this service as it is already a horrific week with Mrs. Gandhi in London and your commitment to do at least three things with her. I cannot therefore change the Council briefing meeting.

May I send your regrets please?

9 December 1981

W. F. S. Rickett, Esq.

CABINET OFFICE

WW 23/10

With the compliments of
The Private Secretary to the
Secretary of the Cabinet

70 Whitehall, London SW1A 2AS
Telephone 01-233 8319

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CABINET OFFICE

70 Whitehall, London SW1A 2AS Telephone 01-233 8319

From the Secretary of the Cabinet: Sir Robert Armstrong KCB, CVO

Ref. A05782

22nd October, 1981

I have shown Sir Robert Armstrong my copy of the letter which Willie Rickett sent to you on 19th October about Dame Ruth King and the proposed memorial plaque to the memory of those who have given their lives since 1945 in the service of the Crown.

On the third paragraph of Willie Rickett's letter, Sir Robert has commented that he understands that Dame Ruth King had a good deal of trouble in getting the Dean of Westminster to agree with the wording now established - which has already been carved on a piece of stone. If the Government sought at this stage to reopen the wording in the sense suggested, the Dean of Westminster would no doubt revive his attempts to take it in the other direction.

I am sending copies of this letter to those who received copies of yours.

D. J. WRIGHT

(D. J. Wright)
Private Secretary

D. B. Omand, Esq.