

RESTRICTED

From: Mr D O Arnold Forster

A32 ①



MINISTRY OF DEFENCE

MAIN BUILDING WHITEHALL LONDON SW1A 2HB
2452

Telephone 01-218 (Direct Dialling)

01-218 9000 (Switchboard)

PARLIAMENTARY UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE
FOR THE ARMED FORCES

D/US of S(AF)JW/25/5/7/9

7 December 1982

A J Coles Esq
10 Downing Street
London
SW1

[Handwritten mark]

Prime Minister

*Should you like to send a short note
before Christmas to the 132 widows?
If so we will draft.*

A.J.C. 7/12

Dear John,

A-31

Mr Wiggin has seen your letter of 29 November to Richard Mottram concerning the South Atlantic Fund, the contents of which have been passed on to the Fund Trustees.

Air Chief Marshal Sir David Evans met Mr Wiggin yesterday and explained to him that the Trustees had been unable to accept the proposal to make further substantial capital payments before Christmas to large numbers of the injured and bereaved, both for legal reasons which were well understood and because they are satisfied that current needs are being met. However, they had decided to give hampers of value £80-£100 to all 132 widows. The hampers will be prepared by NAAFI and will arrive with widows in the United Kingdom and Hong Kong before Christmas. They are thought to be a warmer gesture, more indicative of the Trustees' continuing concern and interest than a further charitable cash disbursement, which it is firmly believed would be neither needed nor particularly welcomed by the bereaved at Christmas. This view has been confirmed by soundings taken among the widows, some of whom have added that they would find a short personal note or card from the Prime Minister on the first Christmas of their bereavement preferable to cash; Mr Wiggin has asked me to pass on this suggestion.

Mr Wiggin has arranged to chair an All-Party meeting in the House of Commons Committee Room 7 on 15 December at 5pm, which will be attended by Sir David Evans and the South Atlantic Fund Secretary, who will be prepared to answer questions from Peers and MPs about the Fund. He has also made arrangements for the Prime Minister to receive regular reports on Fund disbursements as requested.

Yours Sincerely
[Signature: David Arnold Forster]

Private Secretary

RESTRICTED

6 DEC 1982

12
11
10
9
8
7
6
5
4
3
2
1

CONFIDENTIAL



10 DOWNING STREET

Prime Minister

You can hardly write to the
132 widows without writing
to Northern Ireland widows -
and then you would have to
write to all widows in Northern
Ireland in future.

It is an attractive idea,
but, I fear, rather impacticable.

Agree?

A. J. C. $\frac{8}{11}$