

MO 27/4



CCB1 (2)
Prime Minister.

To be aware.

PRIME MINISTER

Thanks for the
excellent arrangements
not.

A.F.C. 6/6

D-DAY COMMEMORATION - ATTENDANCE OF WIDOWS

In view of recent publicity on the question of war widows I thought you should have a note of the current position. This is that 53 widows have applied who meet our eligibility criteria, namely that their husbands landed on 'D' Day and were killed or died of wounds received on that day or in the subsequent fighting in Normandy. Many other enquiries have been received which were either totally ineligible or outside the Normandy criterion. All 53 have been accepted and have been told so in terms of the attached letter.

2. The outline arrangements are that they will assemble at the Services' Union Jack Club for reception, documentation and briefing, on Tuesday 5th June. They will be taken by coach to Northolt on Wednesday morning and will fly by RAF BAe 146 aircraft to Caen, where they will join the Veteran programme for the 'D' Day ceremonies. They will return that night and again be accommodated at the Union Jack Club, departing after breakfast next day.

3. Comprehensive arrangements have been made for the widows' care and welfare, including provision of poppies, extra toilets, spare umbrellas, stretcher on the aircraft, medication etc. Escort arrangements include provision of a medical officer, nursing sister and orderly; a female Service PR officer; and a Wing Commander in charge of the party.

4. You will gather from this that some statements in the press, particularly the Daily Telegraph, that some eligible widows will be left behind are inaccurate. We have taken steps to put the matter right.



5. I am copying this minute to the Foreign Secretary, the Lord President, the Chief Whip and to Sir Robert Armstrong.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be "M. S. H." or similar.

Ministry of Defence

1st June 1984



MINISTRY OF DEFENCE
Main Building Whitehall London SW1A 2HB

Telephone 01-218 (Direct Dialling)
01-218 9000 (Switchboard)

Your reference

Our reference

Date 31 May 1984

D-DAY COMMEMORATION - 6 JUNE 1984

I am writing to confirm that we are able to include you in the party of widows who will be attending the D-Day commemoration ceremonies in Normandy next Wednesday 6 June.

I enclose a return railway warrant from your local station to London Waterloo together with a map showing the location of the Union Jack Club in Sandell St adjacent to Waterloo station where a single room has been booked at Ministry of Defence expense for the nights of 5 and 6 June. Meals will also be provided as required, including breakfast on Wednesday 7 June prior to your returning home. Captain Brigid Quinlan will be at the Union Jack Club to meet you when you arrive which should ideally be between the hours of 4pm and 7.30pm on Tuesday 5 June (the Club restaurant closes at 8pm).

The programme for 6 June will broadly be as follows:

- 7.45 am - Depart Union Jack Club by coach for RAF Northolt.
- 9.00 am - Depart Northolt for France by RAF aircraft.
- 10.45 am - Arrive Caen Airport (45 minutes travel + 1 hour time change). Travel by coach to the Commonwealth War Graves Cemetery, Bayeux.
- 1.00 pm - Lunch.
- 3.50 pm - Witness Ceremony of Commemoration led by HM The Queen, HRH The Duke of Edinburgh and President Mitterand.
- 5.30 pm - Travel by coach to Arromanches.
- 7.00 pm - Witness ceremonies as HM The Queen reviews parade of D-Day Veterans.
- 8.00 pm - Travel by coach to Caen Airport.
- 10.15 pm - Arrive Northolt (a meal will be served in-flight).
- 10.30 pm - Depart for Union Jack Club.

You will be escorted throughout your journey by Brigid Quinlan and a small team including a doctor and, in France, by an English French-speaking guide.

Although the cost of your visit will be borne by the Ministry of Defence, you may need some money for small incidental expenses in France should you wish, for example, to purchase a post-card or memento. I regret that currency exchange facilities will not be available at Northolt, but your local bank will be able to assist you.

It is important that you have in your possession a valid passport or British Visitors passport; the latter is available at a cost of £7.50 from the Post Office. Also, it would be helpful if you could obtain from your local office of the Department of Health and Social Security the EEC medical cover document (Form E111); however, given the very short notice of your visit, you might have difficulty in obtaining this medical form and I should make clear that it is not essential that you should have it. However, please do not forget to bring sufficient medication (such as pills) for 3 days should you be required to take it regularly. So far as luggage is concerned, this will have to be limited on the aircraft to small hand baggage for your immediate needs on the day, although of course you may leave your heavier luggage - such as suitcases - in your room in the Union Jack Club. I would advise you to leave your valuables at home.

I regret that it will not be possible to take wreaths with you in the aircraft. However, the Royal British Legion will provide a small cross with a mounted poppy should you wish, at Bayeux, to make a private token of dedication.

In view of the shortage of time, please do not trouble to acknowledge this letter. However, do not hesitate to contact me or First Officer Elizabeth Sunley on 01-281-3871 or 01-281-3288 should you have a problem or find that you will not, after all, be able to attend the ceremonies. In the evenings and this weekend you may contact me on Tadley (07356) 2238 or First Officer Sunley on 01-998-6218.



With the compliments of

PROTOCOL DEPARTMENT
Visits Section

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH OFFICE
LONDON, SW1A 2AH