



Prime Minister

Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

The Uruguayans are being helpful about the visit by next-of-kin to the Falklands. It seems sensible to meet their wishes over publicity.

14 December 1982

A.F.C. <sup>14.</sup>/<sub>12</sub>

Agreed not

Dear John,

Falklands: Next of Kin Visit

Ministers in the FCO and MOD have now considered together the content and timing of the announcement we need to make soon of the visit of UK next of kin to the Falklands. The Prime Minister will know that this visit is being arranged for April 1983. We have consulted the Uruguayan Government in some detail about this because their continued cooperation is vital.

The Ambassador at Montevideo has now persuaded the Uruguayan Government to accept that we should make a fairly explicit announcement, mentioning Uruguay. They accept that a less explicit one would only provoke press enquiries which could easily blow the whole thing out of proportion. I enclose a copy of the text which they have accepted.

In accepting the text we put to him, the Uruguayan Foreign Minister has however asked us to make the announcement close to Christmas, in a low key way and via the FCO. He fears that an announcement by the MOD would give the visit too military a flavour and that a high-level statement, particularly by the Prime Minister, would give the issue too much prominence and political significance. He himself wants to be able to stress the humanitarian side of the visit

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FOI Exemption.

Wayland  
19 February 2013

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Mr Pym therefore proposes that the announcement should be made, as in the enclosed text, by the FCO News Department at one of its regular daily press briefings. Tuesday 21 December would be a suitable date. The MOD could then immediately inform all the next of kin personally the same day. The MOD have told us that their Ministers are also prepared to accept this course for the reasons given in paragraph 4.

I am copying this letter to Richard Mottram.

*Yours ever*

*for Holmes*

(J E Holmes)  
Private Secretary

A J Coles Esq  
10 Downing Street

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Announcement

Following earlier undertakings, plans are being made to enable close relatives of those who were buried in the Falklands, or who were lost at sea in the fighting, to visit the Islands in April next year, at public expense. Transport will be by civil air to Montevideo and thence by a civilian cruise liner, the Cunard Countess. We expect the departure date to be on or about 7 April.

The whole journey will last some ten days of which about three will be spent on or around the Islands. The visit will be timed to coincide with a special service in the new military cemetery for those who are buried on the islands and with the dedication of the memorial to those who are not in marked graves. Next of kin of those who died will be visited shortly by the appropriate Service authority when details of the visit will be explained.

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c.c. Mr. Ingham  
Mr. Rickett

10 DOWNING STREET

*From the Private Secretary*

15 December, 1982.

Falklands: Next of Kin Visit

The Prime Minister has seen your letter of 14 December about the content and timing of the announcement that will need to be made soon on the visit of UK next of kin to the Falklands. Mrs. Thatcher agrees with the line you propose to take.

I am sending a copy of this letter to Richard Mottram (Ministry of Defence).

J.E. Holmes, Esq.,  
Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

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A. J. COLES