



10 DOWNING STREET

THE PRIME MINISTER

18 May, 1983

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My dear Lord Bishop

Thank you for your letter of 31 March proposing, as a result of our conversation after last November's Cenotaph Ceremony, the form of words for use in future years. I am so sorry that I have not been able to send you an earlier reply.

I have raised this matter with the Home Secretary with whom, as you know, responsibility for arrangements for the Ceremony lies. It appears that, although the wording of the Order of the Ceremony prior to 1981 was indeed limited to references to those who died in the two World Wars, the wording which you quoted as being used prior to 1982 was in fact introduced only in 1981, on the suggestion of your predecessor and after discussion with the Home Secretary, to meet suggestions made in a number of quarters that the Ceremony should recognise those who died in other conflicts such as Korea, Malaya and Northern Ireland. Bishop Ellison's original suggestion, like the one you now propose, would also have omitted any specific reference to the two World Wars. We felt then that such change would not be acceptable: the inscription on the Cenotaph itself, around which the Ceremony takes place, refers specifically only to the two World Wars and a very great many of those involved, such as the British Legion and the War Widows, regard it as relating to those who died in those two conflicts. In the light of these considerations, Bishop Ellison agreed that this reference should remain but that the additional words "all who have died in the service of their country" should be added to cover those who died in other conflicts.

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I do feel, and I am sure you would agree, that the feelings of those who still remain to mourn the dead of two World Wars must be respected. Nonetheless, and particularly after the conflict in the Falklands, we are all only too aware of the great debt we owe to those who by their personal sacrifice have preserved our free and democratic society, in whatever conflict that may be. A form of words which might serve to reflect the continuing remembrance of the two World Wars and the sacrifices of other conflicts is the following:

"We remember those who made the great sacrifice during the two World Wars;

We remember those who have given their lives in the service of their country in other conflicts;

We pray for those who suffer at this time;

We pray for those who have been bereaved;

We pray for peace;

We pray that we may be worthy of the sacrifice made on our behalf."

If you are content with this form of wording, I should arrange with the Home Secretary for it to be submitted to Her Majesty The Queen for her approval so that it might be used in this year's Ceremony at the Cenotaph.

Thank you so much for all the care and thought you have given to this wonderful service.
Yours sincerely
Raymond Deltor

The Right Reverend The Lord Bishop of London
