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MINISTRY OF DEFENCE  
MAIN BUILDING WHITEHALL LONDON SW1  
Telephone 01-2930XXXX 218 2111/3

MO 5/21

14th July 1982

Dear Murdoch,

As the Prime Minister announced in the House there is to be a national service for the South Atlantic Campaign - "the Falkland Islands Service" - in St Paul's Cathedral on Monday 26th July at 11 am.

The overall seating allocations are, of course, dictated by the capacity in St Paul's Cathedral. At the moment we envisage that some 600 seats should be allocated to the next of kin of the British dead; and about 1000 to a group which, with strong emphasis on units and ships involved in the conflict, should represent the Services, the Merchant Navy (including the National Union of Seamen), the Dockyards, NAAFI and similar organisations, and the civilian ports and shipbuilders involved. In addition some 500 seats should be allocated to the Royal Party (20), the Cabinet (40), junior Ministers (30), other Members and Peers (120), Ministry of Defence, Foreign and Commonwealth Office and Home Civil Service with particular emphasis on those directly involved (190), and 100 representatives from other countries. This would leave about 400 seats available for the general public and these will be allocated by ballot.

I understand that you have agreed that the 120 places for other Members of both Houses of Parliament should be allocated through the usual channels. A suitable division might be: 70 for the Labour Opposition (to cover both front and backbenchers), 30 for Government backbenchers and 20 for the non-Labour Opposition parties. We shall invite Mr Speaker ourselves. It is, of course, open to you and the other Whips' offices to decide whether these 120 seats should be allocated to Members and Peers only or whether some at least (arguably the most senior) should be invited to bring spouses.

We have already received requests for tickets from three Conservative Members, Ian Gow, John Wilkinson and Giles Shaw. No promises have, however, been made to them.

M MacLean Esq



Would you now consult the usual channels in both Houses and let me have nominations, with spouses as appropriate, as soon as possible.

I am copying this letter to Willie Rickett (No 10), Michael Pownall (Lords Whip's Office), David Heyhoe (Lord President's Office) and David Wright (Cabinet Office). I am also enclosing an extra copy of this letter should you wish to pass it to Mr Speaker for information.

Yours ever,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads 'James E. Ridley'.

(J E RIDLEY)