

RESTRICTED

Argentina



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10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

25 November 1982

The South Atlantic Fund

The Prime Minister has seen your letter of 24 November.

Mrs. Thatcher has commented:

"I do not think that this is enough. People contributed to the Fund in the expectation that a considerable number of capital sums would be paid so that people did not have to apply for each need to be met. We are coming up to Christmas and money is needed at such a time. Criticism will mount and in my view rightly so."

I should be grateful if you could arrange for the Prime Minister's points to be considered and for further advice to be submitted.

I am copying this letter to John Holmes (Foreign and Commonwealth Office).

A. J. COLES

Derek Piper, Esq.,
Ministry of Defence.

RESTRICTED



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MO 5/21/3

24th November 1982

I don't think there is enough people in the - expenditure to that fund that a considerable no. of capital sum would be paid so that people do not have to apply for each need to be met.

We are coming to the need of money in needed A.S.C. 24/11.

Contributions will be made and in my view rightly so.

Prime Minister

S. R. Nicholls

THE SOUTH ATLANTIC FUND

In your letter of 16th November to Richard Mottram you referred to the briefing we had provided that day for Prime Minister's Question Time, on the South Atlantic Fund. The Prime Minister had not been happy with the line that there is no need for the Trustees to pay out a capital sum now to those injured in the Falklands campaign. The Prime Minister asked for my Secretary of State's views on this.

In fact the Trustees of the South Atlantic Fund always intended to make interim awards (where appropriate) to those who were injured as soon as medical assessments could be completed. The Trustees have now considered this further and have decided to make interim payments to the more seriously injured pending the assessment of their long-term needs. As a result of this decision sums of between £2,000 and £20,000 have now been paid to the 73 most seriously injured. The total sum involved is £345,000, and the payments are calculated on the basis of medical assessment of the severity of the injury and of the likely immediate need. In all cases these payments will be less than the final payments which will be made when the assessments of long-term need, which are now underway, are completed.

The Chairman of the Trustees is satisfied that the process of assessing the needs of all the others injured is continuing as quickly as circumstances and resources permit. All cases of need that have arisen so far have been dealt with speedily and if any arise before final awards are made they too will be similarly treated urgently by the Fund.

As regards those Servicemen and others who were only very slightly injured and who recovered fully and rejoined their units after only a few days recuperation, the Trustees of the Fund do not consider it appropriate or necessary to make interim payments. All such cases are, however, being included in the current review assessing long-term needs and it is expected that, when these assessments are complete, everyone concerned will receive some payment from the Fund.

A J Coles Esq



My Secretary of State was glad to learn of the Trustees' decision to make interim payments to those most seriously injured. So far as the others are concerned Mr Nott believes that we should press on as quickly as possible with the necessary assessments to allow final awards to be paid, and is inclined to think that in the meantime we should accept the Trustees' judgement, in the light of the expert advice they are receiving, on the requirement for further interim payments. An exception to this concerns Servicemen who were injured but who choose to leave the Service. There are, for example, two Welsh Guardsmen whose normal period of service is coming to an end this month and who are not continuing to serve. They are to be given interim payments of £1,000 and £700 respectively. There is also one Private in 3 Para who received a comparatively minor injury (a wound to his left hand) which would probably not have prevented him being found alternative employment within the Army but who chose to be medically discharged this week. This soldier's long-term needs are being assessed but he too received an interim award of £1,000 from the South Atlantic Fund when he left.

There is nothing in this letter on which the Prime Minister should not draw if this is raised with her in the House, except for the detailed amounts of money being paid to Servicemen which would not normally be disclosed.

I am copying this letter to John Holmes (Foreign and Commonwealth Office).

Yours ever,

Henry Piper

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