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JH 26/6.
NORTHERN IRELAND OFFICE
WHITEHALL
LONDON SW1A 2AZ

cc EO
JH

John Hamilton Esq
Private Secretary to the Foreign Secretary
The Foreign Office
King Charles Street
LONDON
SW1A 2AH

26 June 1996

Dear Mr Hamilton,

My Secretary of State would be grateful if you would seek the Foreign Secretary's approval for the Rt Hon Sir John Wheeler DL MP to attend the 80th Anniversary Ceremonies being held to commemorate the 1st day of the Battle of the Somme on 1 July 1996. The Secretary of State will himself be in attendance, permission having already been granted by No 10.

The ceremonies will be attended by a VVIP, by senior members of the French Government and by representatives from throughout the United Kingdom but especially Northern Ireland. The ceremonies will take place at the Ulster Memorial Tower, Theipval which some years ago was given by the French Government to the people of Ulster in recognition for the many thousands of Ulstermen who gave their lives during the Battle of the Somme. The tower is now a sovereign part of Northern Ireland.

To coincide with this visit Sir John Wheeler would also like to accept a long standing invitation to visit the Irish Institute of European Affairs in Louvain, near Brussels, which is partly financed by the Department of Finance and Personnel (NI) for which he is the Departmental Minister.

I am copying this letter to John Holmes in No 10.

Yours sincerely,

Elizabeth Harrison

pp JOANNA NIXON
Diary Secretary