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10 DOWNING STREET

THE PRIME MINISTER

12 July, 1982

Mr M. Roberts,

Thank you for your letter of 23 June concerning the tragic death of your nephew, Guardsman Peter Edwards, who was on board Sir Galahad when the ship was attacked in Bluff Cove on 8 June.

I realise that this must have been most distressing news for you all, particularly your sister, and I should like to say at the outset how very deeply I sympathise with you in your great loss.

I was most concerned to read that you considered the letter sent to your sister to have been abrupt and unfeeling, but I think you will appreciate that it is never easy - indeed it is almost impossible - for a letter to convey adequately the writer's true feelings of sadness at the death of a fellow Serviceman; and the details which may have struck the family as matter-of-fact and unfeeling were actually intended to express the Army's concern that the next of kin should be as quickly as possible given information about sources of help and support which they might need to turn to. I am extremely sorry that the letter upset your sister, since that was quite certainly the direct opposite of what was intended.

It is a long standing tradition in the Army that a senior officer of that Service should write to express the Army's condolences, but please do not think that because I or my colleagues have not written personally to the next of kin we do not share the sense of loss. I know that no words of mine can diminish your grief but you can be proud that Peter died for a cause and a principle

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which has won the admiration and respect, not only of the people of Britain and the Falklands, but of all those nations throughout the world who cherish the principles of true democracy and freedom. There can be no finer tribute paid to a British soldier.

Yours sincerely

Raymond Stalder

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D Roberts, Esq.,