PRESS STATEMENT

MALCOLM FRASER 23 March, 1967

THE WELFARE OF FAMILIES

There is one matter that has been giving me some cause for concern in the conflict in Viet Nam.

In the conditions in which only a part of the Army is involved and in circumstances in which only a very small part of the Australian people are directly involved, I was concerned to see that the burden of this conflict did not fall unduly upon one family.

I was particularly concerned about circumstances in which a brother might be sent to Viet Nam when another brother had already been killed or very seriously wounded in action in Viet Nam.

Normal Army records do not reveal this kind of relationship and therefore I have sought some publicity for administrative arrangements I have made. If a member of a family in these circumstances approaches the Army or approaches myself, administrative arrangements will made to take into account the wishes of the family and of the soldier.

Thus, if one member of a family has been killed or seriously wounded in Viet Nam and if that fact is made known to the Department of the Army, I will make sure, in present circumstances, that a brother would not also be posted to Viet Nam.

Although information to this effect is being sent to Military units throughout Australia, the initiative will have to rest with the soldier or the soldier's family because our own records do not readily reveal this kind of information.