



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

PROOF

CONDOLENCES

Larcombe, Sapper Jamie Ronald

SPEECH

Monday, 21 February 2011

BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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Questioner
Speaker Robert, Stuart, MP

Source House
Proof Yes
Responder
Question No.

Mr ROBERT (Fadden) (2.09 pm)—I join the Prime Minister, the Leader of the Opposition and the Minister for Defence to honour a fallen sapper, Jamie Larcombe, who, along with his Afghan interpreter, was tragically killed in Afghanistan just two days past. Too short has been the time since last we were here to honour one of our own. It is a poignant reminder that freedom is never free. We stand here, in the nation's parliament, because fighting men and women stand there, on the battlefields of the world, where freedom, justice and liberty are scorned. Sapper Larcombe is the fourth engineer to be tragically killed in action in Afghanistan. He and his sapper mates bear a tremendous burden—nerves on edge, senses attuned to the slightest change in terrain, skills pushed to the limit. For all of the might of the Western world's amassed armada in Afghanistan, it still comes down to a sapper to clear an obstacle, detect a mine or search a tunnel. As a combat engineer, it was Sapper Larcombe's duty to go forward ahead of his mates to clear the path, his only companion the knowledge that every step forward kept his mates safe.

Ever since the 1st Field Company of engineers stormed the beaches of Gallipoli and within seven hours were building a road for ease of movement, sappers have been on the front line and have undertaken the difficult but necessary work with the skill and humour that only sappers can muster. Sapper Larcombe extolled the virtues of those original Anzacs, serving at the front, protecting those who come so closely behind.

As in ages past, so much of the burden falls on the loved ones at home. We offer our sincerest condolences to Jamie's parents, Tricia and Steven; his sisters, Ann-Marie, Emily and April; and his girlfriend, Rhiannon. You have lost an only son, an only brother. Whilst you may never again follow his footsteps in the red soil of the outback, you can follow his heart, which, to the end, cared for those to whom he was entrusted. You as a family have paid a tremendous price so that our freedom can truly remain free. For that, our nation is indebted and we honour your only son as he joins the hallowed ranks of those who have fallen.

The SPEAKER—As a mark of respect, I invite honourable members to rise in their places.

Honourable members having stood in their places—

Debate (on motion by **Mr Albanese**) adjourned.