



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

**CONDOLENCES**

**Robinson, Sapper Rowan Jaie**

**SPEECH**

**Tuesday, 14 June 2011**

BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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## SPEECH

<p><b>Date</b> Tuesday, 14 June 2011  <b>Page</b> 5835  <b>Questioner</b>  <b>Speaker</b> Mr ROBERT</p>	<p><b>Source</b> House  <b>Proof</b> No  <b>Responder</b>  <b>Question No.</b></p>
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(Fadden) (NaN.NaN pm)

Mr ROBERT (Fadden) (14:10): I join the Prime Minister, the Leader of the Opposition and the Minister for Defence in honouring Sapper Rowan Robinson, the fourth sapper to be tragically killed in action in Afghanistan. As a member of the Special Operations Incident Response Regiment, his role was to clear the paths, to find and dismantle IEDs and to protect the special forces who walked in his footsteps. There is something special about the men who protect special forces—those sappers who head out in front, described by their mates as men of insane courage, men capable of holding fear at bay just a little longer and men who have to deal with sophisticated explosives at night, under fire and in a hurry. Sapper Robinson was such a man. Having first deployed to Afghanistan as a soldier barely out of his teens, he redeployed again with the Special Operations Task Group this year, barely 23 years old yet certainly old beyond his years.

When he joined the Army he knew he may have to back up his oath one day with his life. That day has come—too soon, no doubt, but come it has. Building on the back of the most successful winter campaign to date, Sapper Robinson was part of finding the biggest cache of weapons, mines and explosives to date. He was part of the team that inspected and destroyed them, all under fire. As a special forces soldier he was not only required to do his job as a sapper but also required to fight. It was during a subsequent firefight that Sapper Robinson was shot and killed whilst providing covering fire in overwatch of his mates. He fought and died not because he hated what was in front of him but because he loved what was behind him. He gave his today so that the special forces he was protecting could fight again tomorrow. He gave the most a man could ever give: life itself.

As we pause to reflect on this insanely courageous man, we also pause to remember the 26 other Australians who have made the supreme sacrifice in Afghanistan. My prayers go out to Sapper Robinson's parents, Marie and Peter; his sister, Rachael; and his brothers, Ben and Troy. Know in your heart that your son and brother died saving lives. Rowan, we will forever remember you as a tough special forces soldier who honoured your oath, toughed out the dangerous missions and gave your life protecting those entrusted to you. We honour you as we mourn your loss.

The SPEAKER: As a mark of respect, I ask all present to signify their approval by rising in their places.

*Honourable members having stood in their places—*

The SPEAKER: I thank the House and all present.

Debate adjourned.

(Scullin) (NaN.NaN pm)

(Scullin) (NaN.NaN pm)