

CONDOLENCES
Special Forces Sergeant Matthew Locke
Trooper David Pearce
Special Forces Commando Luke Worsley

[Mr ROBERT](#) (Fadden) (11.44 a.m.)—I rise to speak on the condolence motion for Trooper David Pearce and to pass on my sympathy and support to his wife, Nicole, and daughters, Stephanie and Hannah. Trooper Pearce was born in Liverpool, New South Wales. He enlisted in the Australian Army Reserve in 2002 and served until 2005. Following a period of reserve service, he transferred to the Australian Regular Army in July 2006. He was deployed to the Solomon Islands with the 9th Battalion of the Royal Queensland Regiment in 2005-06. He was subsequently posted to the Brisbane based 2nd/14th Light Horse Regiment in October 2006. He had been deployed just a few weeks prior and was serving with the reconstruction force.

Trooper Pearce was 41 when he was tragically killed during a roadside bomb attack on the light armoured vehicle he was driving, only six kilometres from the Australian base of Tarin Kowt in the southern province of Oruzgan. Trooper Pearce was one of the great modern Anzacs who knew service above self and demonstrated so ably that, 'Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.' His death has touched the heart of the nation and has united people from all walks of life who have paid personal homage to this brave soldier.

Trooper Pearce's life experiences and outgoing personality made him a very popular soldier. His ability to communicate with people of all ages was highly regarded and he was well respected by his peers. As a former army officer with operational service overseas, I understand the hardships for families who keep the home fires burning whilst their partners serve us overseas.

Trooper Pearce was a great family man. He was a dedicated father of two beautiful girls, Stephanie and Hannah, and a dedicated husband to Nicole, his wife and life partner of 18 years. It is attributed to George Orwell that:

We sleep safe in our beds because rough men stand ready in the night to visit violence on those who would do us harm.

Trooper Pearce's sacrifice was not in vain. He is a beacon of inspiration to other peacekeepers to provide a better future for the people they serve—in Trooper Pearce's account, those of Afghanistan. He stands tall as a man who believed that all people, wherever they may live, should have the opportunity to live in a better world, free from violence, intimidation and repression. Though it can only ever be a small comfort to his family, Trooper Pearce sacrificed his life doing what he loved—serving his country.

A highly professional, skilled and dedicated soldier, he knew the great dangers, the great sacrifices, but also served in that great tradition of our noble country, knowing that the only way evil prospers is if good men do nothing. Trooper Pearce will never share a place with those cold, miserable souls who stand by in ambivalence. His place will be forever known as one of honour, of the man who did not shrink or shirk from danger but fulfilled his duty in the great tradition of our nation. He is universally saluted. Let me finish with some fitting words by Rudyard Kipling:

If you can keep your head when all about you

Are losing theirs and blaming it on you,
If you can trust yourself when all men doubt you
But make allowance for their doubting too,
If you can wait and not be tired by waiting,
Or being lied about, don't deal in lies,
Or being hated, don't give way to hating,
And yet don't look too good, nor talk too wise:
If you can dream—and not make dreams your master,
If you can think—and not make thoughts your aim;
If you can meet with Triumph and Disaster
And treat those two impostors just the same;
If you can bear to hear the truth you've spoken
Twisted by knaves to make a trap for fools,
Or watch the things you gave your life to, broken,
And stoop and build 'em up with worn-out tools:
If you can make one heap of all your winnings
And risk it all on one turn of pitch-and-toss,
And lose, and start again at your beginnings
And never breathe a word about your loss;
If you can force your heart and nerve and sinew
To serve your turn long after they are gone,
And so hold on when there is nothing in you
Except the Will which says to them: 'Hold on!'
If you can talk with crowds and keep your virtue,
Or walk with kings—nor lose the common touch,
If neither foes nor loving friends can hurt you;
If all men count with you, but none too much,
If you can fill the unforgiving minute
With sixty seconds' worth of distance run,
Yours is the Earth and everything that's in it,

And—which is more—you'll be a Man, my son!

This parliament is tremendously proud of Trooper David Pearce. As his federal member and a former fellow serving soldier, I am incredibly proud of his service and his sacrifice. I know his wife, Nicole, daughters Stephanie and Hannah, and extended family are very, very proud of their hero, father and husband.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms S Bird)—I understand it is the wish of honourable members to signify at this stage their respect and sympathy by rising in their places.

Honourable members having stood in their places—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER—I thank the Committee.