

## **CONDOLENCES**

### **SAS Signaller Sean McCarthy**

**Mr ROBERT** (Fadden) (11.20 a.m.)—Benjamin Disraeli said:

The legacy of heroes is the memory of a great name and the inheritance of a great example.

Signaller Sean McCarthy is indeed a great example to all Australians. It is with a sense of pride, mixed with great sadness, that I rise to honour this fallen warrior, the sixth to die serving our country in Afghanistan since 2002. I pass on my sympathy and support to his family—his parents, David and Mary, and his sisters, Leigh and Clare—whom I had the pleasure of meeting and speaking to in the unfortunate circumstance of Sean's funeral on the Gold Coast on 18 July this year. Sean is the second warrior from my electorate of Fadden to fall in Afghanistan and be buried; he is the second to have had the Australian flag draped over his coffin.

Sean was born in New Zealand, but we proudly call him our own. He was a student at Trinity Lutheran College in Ashmore, where he graduated in 2000. At school, he represented Trinity on the sports field as a member of the 2/15 rugby team and Trinity water polo team, in addition to serving on the student representative council. He is remembered by the school as a reliable and trustworthy young man with a great sense of personal integrity and maturity, which was apparent to all who interacted with him. Staff recall Sean as being quick-witted and having a great sense of humour while remaining courteous and considerate towards others. It is no wonder that, in looking at his funeral as a testimony to his popularity, many from his school turned out with stories and anecdotes from their time with Sean. Indeed, one of his very early primary school teachers turned out to speak glowingly of Sean as a young man. Sean was clearly popular with his peers at school and with his colleagues and compatriots in the Army. He was disciplined, focused and a great example of the modern digger, the modern ANZAC—the professional Australian soldier.

Sean enlisted in the Australian Defence Force on 10 July 2001. He was posted to the 7th Signals Regiment on 14 July 2003 and went into the Special Air Service Regiment on 15 January 2007. He was an active member of the regiment until his tragic death on 8 July this year. Sean was killed by a roadside bomb in Afghanistan. He was not married. He was 25 years old. Sean's operational experience included Special Operations Task Force 5 in Afghanistan in 2007, Operation Astute in East Timor in 2008 and redeployment to Afghanistan in 2008. Having served for only seven years with three operational deployments, Sean never shirked his responsibility and his duty to move into the operational theatre and to defend Australia's interests. Sean was awarded a Special Operations Command Australia commendation. In speaking to Sean's CO in the Special Air Service Regiment, I was told that when Sean was given the commendation he simply shrugged his shoulders and got on with the job. There was no great public ceremony and there were no great words—he simply accepted it as a matter of doing his duty. He received the Australian Defence Medal for service, the International Coalition against Terrorism Clasp, the Afghanistan Campaign Medal, the NATO Medal and the Return of Active Service Badge.

Signaller Sean McCarthy'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 Sean's case, 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, one free from violence, intimidation and repression. Though it can only ever be of small comfort to his family, Sean sacrificed his life serving and doing what he loved: taking care of, serving and representing his country. George Orwell once wrote:

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

Sean was such a man—a committed, dedicated soldier who fought for you and me and for us as a nation to keep us safe. On Remembrance Day this year, Sean's name will be etched onto the War Memorial Roll of Honour to join those of the other five great Australian military heroes who have given their lives during the Afghanistan campaign. His sacrifice will never be forgotten.