



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Main Committee

CONDOLENCES

Larcombe, Sapper Jamie Ronald

SPEECH

Tuesday, 22 February 2011

BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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Questioner
Speaker Marino, Nola, MP

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Ms MARINO (Forrest) (8.12 pm)—I rise to honour and respect the outstanding but tragically short life and supreme sacrifice of our brave Sapper Jamie Larcombe. It is important that we in this parliament acknowledge his life and his commitment to the freedoms and values that we hold so dear here in Australia. We also need to honour and respect the sacrifice of his loving family. I offer my heartfelt condolences to the Larcombe family—his mother, Tricia; his father, Steven; and his sisters, Anne-Marie, Emily and April; his partner, Rhiannon Penhall, and all of his extended family, his friends and his ADF mates in the 1st Combat Engineer Regiment.

Every single day this cherished young man will be in their thoughts and hearts. His mother and father will remember Jamie as a little boy, his happy, fun-loving nature and sense of humour, his many antics—as we all do as little people—his achievements as he grew through life and his life's one ambition: to serve his country. His sisters will remember their childhood fun and their games and, I am sure, the endless adventures. His partner Rhiannon will remember how much they loved each other and the plans and dreams that they shared for a future together.

In spite of the terrible grief of the Larcombe family and Rhiannon, they do know that Jamie chose his path. They know why his personal qualities made him a leader, the very same qualities of the engineers—courage and a skill and capacity to lead, to go in ahead of their ADF mates to make sure an area is safe, to protect those who are to follow behind them and to make the area safe for the local people they are there to protect.

Jamie loved his job. He was well regarded, as Air Chief Marshal Angus Houston said, and was not only a real team player and someone you could rely on but also a quiet achiever who worked hard and was focused on getting the job done. Jamie will also be mourned and greatly missed by his close-knit local community, his fellow Country Fire Service volunteers and all of his mates at his local footy team. I have no doubt that everyone who knew Jamie will have their own special memories of this fine young man.

Can I also offer my most sincere condolences to the 1st Combat Engineer Regiment. You have lost two of your mates in the past two weeks or so, and I can only imagine what you are going through now and how tough this must be for you all. I do know, however, just how resolute and strong your units is—the very qualities it takes to be a sapper. I have no doubt that, like you, Jamie shared the views of Corporal Ben Roberts-Smith VC when he said:

I do what I do because I believe in the country that we live in.

... ..

I believe that we are making a difference in stemming the flow of terrorism into Australia, and I want my children to be able to live as everyone does now without the fear of getting onto a bus and having it blow up.

Jamie epitomised, I think, the motto of the combat team: 'Never alone and fight together'. I honour and respect the life and supreme sacrifice of Sapper Jamie Larcombe. Lest we forget.