



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

**Federation Chamber**

**CONDOLENCES**

**Martin, Sapper James, Milosevic, Lance  
Corporal Stjepan, Poate, Private Robert**

**SPEECH**

**Wednesday, 12 September 2012**

BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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## SPEECH

<b>Date</b>	Wednesday, 12 September 2012	<b>Source</b>	House
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<b>Questioner</b>		<b>Responder</b>	
<b>Speaker</b>	Jones, Ewen, MP	<b>Question No.</b>	

**Mr EWEN JONES** (Herbert) (11:47): I join my colleagues in honouring Lance Corporal Stjepan (Rick) Milosevic, Sapper James Martin and Private Robert Poate from 3RAR task group who were tragically killed in action and their two comrades who were wounded in action during an attack at Patrol Base Wahab in the Baluchi Valley on the evening of 29 August. I offer my condolences to Lance Corporal's Milosevic's partner, Kelly; his daughters, Sarah and Kate; and his mother, brothers and sisters. I extend my condolences to Sapper James Martin's mother, Suzanne Thomas; his younger brother and sister, Angus and Holly; and his grandparents, Lucille and Ralph Thomas. I extend my condolences to Private Robert Poate's parents, Hugh and Janny, and his sister, Nicola.

Sapper James Martin was on his first operational deployment as part of 3RAR, which is based in Townsville. They are under the control of a very qualified Lieutenant Colonel and they are a highly trained and highly skilled group of defence personnel. Sapper Martin came from the Brisbane based 2nd Combat Engineering Regiment. Along with the rest of his squadron, Sapper Martin's force concentrated in Townsville with the 3RAR in early 2012 in preparation for their deployment to Afghanistan.

Private Robert Hugh Frederick Poate was a member of the 3RAR and was from the 6RAR, based in Brisbane in the south-east corner of Queensland.

Lance Corporal Stjepan 'Rick' Milosevic, or 'Milo' as his mates called him, was deployed to Afghanistan in the same group. He was from the 2nd/14th Light Horse Regiment (Queensland Mounted Infantry) based in Brisbane.

During my fantastic rugby career, in my first year of senior football with the magnificent Bank of New South Wales Rugby Club in Brisbane, our two breakaways in first grade were Cedomir Milosevic and Miroslav Risojevic. Like all of Stjepan's mates who called him 'Milo' or 'Rick', Cedomir Milosevic was called 'Chad' and Miroslav Risojevic was called 'Rizzo'. I can only tell you one thing on behalf of all of them: if you have a bloke by the name of Milosevic in your team, you are going to go okay; he is going to be tough, he is going to go hard at the ball and he will take no prisoners—he will be hard at it.

3RAR has only been in Townsville for a short time. We are part of a very big defence family and we feel for the people who have copped this loss. We feel it as a community. For those who are wounded, we need to help you with your recovery; we need to understand what is going to happen to you when you come home and the problems you are going to face. And we need to look at the way that our allowances and pay are done for these people. There are the soldiers who accompany home the bodies and there are the wounded men who come home and go to hospital but want to move out of hospital to be with their families. All of their allowances and tax-free benefits must be looked at to support these people as best we possibly can. They have enough to worry about.

The overall command of the Australians in Afghanistan is now under the control of Major General Stuart Smith, who is the immediate past brigadier at the brigade in Townsville. He is the son of a Vietnam casualty. He knows first-hand. Those of us who have been to the funerals will understand the grief that has been shown by the families who have suffered these losses. The Defence Force Welfare Association and Legacy will do a great job for these families, but it is cold comfort for someone who has lost a family member. We just had a ball in Townsville to raise money for Legacy. I did the auction. We raised some fantastic money and everyone had a great night. It is these things that bring it home very quickly.

I have not been to Afghanistan but I talk to ADF personnel and their families. We will stay the course. We have a finish date and we do not cut and run. These guys understand that they have a role to play. We have professional soldiers and a very professional Army. Lest we forget.

Debate adjourned.