



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



THE SENATE
CONDOLENCES
Sergeant Brett Till
SPEECH

Tuesday, 12 May 2009

BY AUTHORITY OF THE SENATE

SPEECH

Date Tuesday, 12 May 2009
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Questioner
Speaker Fielding, Sen Steve

Source Senate
Proof No
Responder
Question No.

Senator FIELDING (Victoria—Leader of the Family First Party) (3.59 pm)—I wish to add my remarks on the condolence motion. On behalf of Family First, it is with great sadness that I acknowledge the death of Sergeant Brett Till, who was tragically killed on 19 March serving his country in Afghanistan. I express my condolences to his family and friends. Sergeant Till was 31 years old. He was a loving husband to his wife of just one year, Bree, a devoted father to his two children, aged 10 and seven, and was looking forward to the birth of his third child later this year.

Tributes from his wife and family have told of a courageous, kind and calm man with a winning smile who valued honour and humility. He was the 10th Australian to die serving in Afghanistan. Sergeant Till was an exemplary and brave soldier who was prepared to risk all to protect his fellow soldiers. According to those who served with him, he never faltered in his duty. His work as an explosive ordnance disposal technician operating with the Special Operations Task Group saw him regularly called upon to dismantle dangerous explosive devices that threatened his team. He died attempting to protect his fellow soldiers from an improvised explosive device that, regrettably, exploded. The words of the Defence head, Air Chief Marshal Angus Houston, I think demonstrate his courage: ‘Sergeant Till’s selfless act to protect his mates and innocent civilians is a mark of the character of the man.’

I think it is very important that the Senate notes Sergeant Brett Till’s death and the death of each and every one of the military people killed serving our country. Sergeant Till’s life was not lost in vain. Family First’s thoughts and prayers are with his family at this very difficult time.

Question agreed to, honourable senators standing in their places.