



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

**PROOF**

**Main Committee**

**CONDOLENCES**

**Sergeant Brett Till**

**SPEECH**

**Wednesday, 13 May 2009**

BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

---

## SPEECH

<p><b>Date</b> Wednesday, 13 May 2009  <b>Page</b> 113  <b>Questioner</b>  <b>Speaker</b> Robert, Stuart, MP</p>	<p><b>Source</b> House  <b>Proof</b> Yes  <b>Responder</b>  <b>Question No.</b></p>
--	---

**Mr ROBERT** (Fadden) (10.51 am)—Benjamin Disraeli said that the legacy of heroes is the memory of a great name and the inheritance of a great example. Sergeant Till is indeed a great example to all Australians. It is with great pride mixed with enormous sadness that I rise to honour this fallen warrior. Sergeant Brett Till was recently farewelled by fellow diggers in Tarin Kowt, southern Afghanistan. He became the 10th young Anzac, the 10th young soldier, the 10th young warrior killed in a foreign battlefield called Afghanistan. He was killed while trying to defuse an improvised explosive device. The 31-year-old was the fourth Australian to die from an IED blast in Afghanistan.

The cortege of vehicles, including one carrying Sergeant Till's flag-draped casket, passed along a route lined by his Australian colleagues and representatives from coalition forces in Oruzgan. Eight of his mates then carried his casket into an awaiting RAAF C130 Hercules, which then brought this brave warrior home. He was serving with the Special Operations Task Group. His commanding officer said that his death was not in vain. He said:

Without question, Brett's work on the day he died saved the lives of his mates.

He was a man who, with his team, would deliberately place himself directly between dangerous and unstable high explosive devices and the soldiers of the Special Operations Task Group on a daily basis, in order to ensure that they could carry out their important mission to make this country—

Afghanistan—

a safer place. Brett will be forever remembered both here and at home as a bloke that made a difference and saved lives.

Sergeant Till's widow, Bree-Anna Till, paid tribute to her husband. She said:

Brett was such a beautiful man. His smile would crack the frowns off a hundred faces.

Mates of Sergeant Brett Till bid farewell to a friend and colleague during that solemn ramp ceremony in Tarin Kowt on Saturday, 21 March. Sergeant Till, from the Sydney based Incident Response Regiment, was serving with the Special Operations Task Group. Led by engineers from the Mentoring and Reconstruction Task Force and accompanied by Special Operations Task Group colleagues, he was farewelled. He was the 10th Australian soldier killed on that foreign battlefield. He was an explosive ordnance disposal technician. He was a man whose job it was to place himself in harm's way to protect those who could not protect themselves from the foulest of devices—that of improvised explosions.

He was 31 and lived in Sydney with his beautiful wife and two children. By way of background, Sergeant Till enlisted in the Australian Army in 2001. He was posted to the corps of Royal Australian Engineers following recruit training. He trained as a combat engineer and served with a number of units, including the 1st Combat Engineer Regiment and the School of Military Engineering. Defence Force head Air Chief Marshal Angus Houston paid tribute to Sergeant Till and his extraordinary bravery. He said:

Sergeant till's selfless act to protect his mates and innocent civilians is a mark of the character of the man. My thoughts and prayers are with Sergeant Till's loved ones at this difficult time. His sacrifice will never be forgotten.

This was a soldier who went to fight for freedoms we enjoy and take for granted. When I deployed in operations, I had a 21-year-old wife but I had no children. I cannot imagine what it would be like kissing small children goodbye and going to a foreign theatre of operations. But this is what Sergeant Till and thousands of young Australians like him do every day, every week, every month to protect and preserve freedom in our name. Sergeant Till paid the ultimate sacrifice in defending what we love and believe in—freedom.

It is attributed to George Orwell that we sleep safe in our beds because rough men and stand ready in the night to visit violence on those who would do us harm. Sergeant Till was one of those rough men, those young Australians, those young Anzacs, those warriors who stood ready 24 hours of the day to protect us and preserve

our freedom. He knew that freedom is indeed the sure possession of those alone with the courage to defend it. Sergeant Till indeed stands tall in our nation's history.

Pericles, the ancient warrior, statesman and king who founded the Athenian empire 2,500 years ago and led that nation during the first two years of the Peloponnesian War, said:

What you leave behind is not what is engraved in stone monuments, but what is woven into the lives of others.

Sergeant Till spent his time on a foreign battlefield protecting his mates in a highly-charged environment doing a difficult job—working with improvised explosive devices. How many lives this brave man saved may never be counted, but his heroism will never be forgotten. His kids will remember him and they will honour his sacrifice, as this nation does. They will march every Anzac Day with his medals and they will be remembered as they remember their father. This nation and this parliament are very proud of Sergeant Till. We are very proud of all our young warriors who serve us so faithfully overseas and surely will never forget.