



Speech by


Hon. Campbell Newman

MEMBER FOR ASHGROVE

Hansard Tuesday, 11 September 2012

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Death of Soldiers in Afghanistan, Motion to Take Note

 **Hon. CKT NEWMAN** (Ashgrove—LNP) (Premier) (10.07am): It is with deep regret that I rise to acknowledge in this House the recent death on active service in Afghanistan of five highly professional and dedicated Australian soldiers: Lance Corporal Stjepan Milosevic; Sapper James Thomas Martin; Private Robert Hugh Frederick Poate; Lance Corporal Mervyn John McDonald; and Private Nathanael John Aubrey Galagher.

Lance Corporal Stjepan Milosevic, Sapper James Martin and Private Robert Poate from the 3rd Battalion, the Royal Australian Regiment Task Group, were killed following an insider attack at Patrol Base Wahab in the Baluchi Valley region of Uruzgan Province on the evening of 29 August 2012. In a separate and unrelated incident, Lance Corporal Mervyn McDonald and Private Nathanael Galagher from the Special Operations Task Group died when an International Security Assistance Force helicopter crashed in Helmand Province in the early hours of 30 August 2012.

Lance Corporal Milosevic, or Milo to his mates, deployed to Afghanistan with the 3rd Battalion, the Royal Australian Regiment Task Group, and was from the 2nd/14th Light Horse Regiment, (Queensland Mounted Infantry), based here in Brisbane. Lance Corporal Milosevic was born in Penrith, New South Wales in 1972 and he joined the Army in 2008. Private Robert Poate was a member of the 3rd Battalion, the Royal Australian Regiment Task Group and was from the 6th Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment Task Group based in Brisbane. Private Poate was born in Canberra, Australian Capital Territory, in 1988 and he joined the Army in 2009. Sapper James Martin was born in Perth, Western Australia in 1991 and he joined the Army in 2011. Sapper Martin was on his first operational deployment as part of the 3rd Battalion, the Royal Australian Regiment Task Group. He was a sapper from the Brisbane based 2nd Combat Engineer Regiment.

These three men were all from Enoggera Barracks, which is in my electorate of Ashgrove. As a former member of the Army and particularly the 2nd Combat Engineer Regiment, I mourn these brave men with a great sense of comradeship and grief for their families.

Lance Corporal Mervyn McDonald was serving with the Special Operations Task Group and was on his sixth tour to Afghanistan—six tours. Lance Corporal McDonald was born in Carnarvon, Western Australia, in 1982 and he joined the Army in 1999. Private Nathanael Galagher was serving with the Special Operations Task Group and was on his second tour to Afghanistan. Private Galagher was born in Wee Waa, New South Wales, in 1989 and he joined the Army in 2007.

Following the deaths of these fine Australians, tragically 38 members of the Australian Defence Force have lost their lives in Afghanistan since 2002. On behalf of the House, I place on record our deepest regret for the deaths of Lance Corporal Milosevic, Sapper Martin, Private Poate, Lance Corporal McDonald and Private Galagher and I thank them for their service to our nation. I also take this opportunity to extend my sympathy and that of this House to their respective families and friends.

I move—

That the House takes note of this statement and that the House acknowledges agreement by observing one minute's silence as a mark of respect.