

24, 1918.

"MISSING" STORY OF AN AIR FIGHT

Reinforcements Too Late

Lieutenant Campbell, who has been reported missing in France, is a son of Mr. Frederick Campbell, of Yarralumla and Red Hill stations, who has just received the following letter from Lieutenant T. W. Lowen, of the Royal Flying Corps:—

As one who knew and admired your son very much, I am writing to tell you how grieved we all are at losing him. We both graduated from the same flight, and were afterwards at Tunberry together, where he



Second-Lieut. Charles Campbell

and I shared a room with our present Flight Commander. Here in France he was living in the hut with my chum and myself, until his own hut should be finished; so I saw a great deal of him, and came to consider him one of my best friends over here. We were both in the same flight, and, in fact, were the only two from our flight who took part in the "show" a few days ago, from which your son failed to return.

"We had reached our objective in the enemy country, and after having been heavily shelled by their anti-aircraft guns, had completed our job and had just turned round to come back, when we were attacked by more than three times our number of fast scout machines. They spread out in a fan shape, and kept about 200 yards away, firing at us all the time from the rear. Your son and I held the last two places in our formation, but a sudden change of course, just as the action started, made me get slightly ahead of him on my side of the formation, and I did not see him go down, as there was no time to look round just then. In fact it was not until the firing stopped that I noticed that one of our machines was missing, and knew it to be his, as all the machines have distinctive letters on them.

On comparing notes, when we reached our aerodrome we found that three of our observers had seen your son's machine go down, out of control, and as we were up at a considerable height at the time, we very

LIEUT. C. B. CAMPBELL.

The following letter refers to Lieut. C. B. Campbell, son of Mr. and Mrs. F. Campbell, formerly of Yarralumla, who was posted "missing" after an air attack last year:—

France, 1.12.17.

Dear Mrs. Campbell.—As one who knew and admired your son very much, I am writing to tell you how grieved we all are at losing him. I first met him some months ago in England when I was posted to this squadron, in fact, we both graduated from the same flight and were afterwards at Tunberry together, where he and I shared a room with our present Flight Commander. Here in France he was living in the hut with my chum and myself until his own hut should be finished, and so I saw a great deal of him, and came to consider him one of my best friends over here. We were both in the same flight, and in fact were the only two from our flight who took part in the show a few days ago, from which your son failed to return. We had reached our objective in the enemy country, after having been rather heavily shelled by their anti-aircraft guns, had completed our job and had just turned round to come back when we were attacked by more than three times our number of fast scout machines. They spread out in a fan shape and kept about 200 yards away firing at us all the time from the rear. Your son and I held the last two places in our formation, but a sudden change of course, just as the action started, made me get slightly ahead of him on my side of the formation, and I did not see him go down, as there was no time to look round just then. In fact it was not until the firing stopped that I noticed one of our machines was missing and knew it to be his, as all the machines have distinctive letters on them. On comparing notes when we reached our aerodrome we found that three of our observers had seen your son's machine go down out of control, and as we were up at a considerable height at the time, we very much fear that both he and his observer were killed. They have been posted as "missing," as of course they would be unless there were absolutely conclusive proof of their deaths, but as we were right over the enemy territory at the time it may be a considerable time before proof can be obtained. It is very difficult for me to write this to you, but I feel sure you would prefer to know all I can tell you. The Huns left us just before we crossed the lines coming back, and shortly afterwards were engaged by some of our scouts who saw the fight and climbed up to our assistance; they were too late to help us, but we have a little satisfaction in knowing that they succeeded in bringing down three of the enemy machines. It was your son's first show, as it was mine, and it seems doubly hard that he was brought down like that, but it was the finest way a man could meet his end, and he had done his job. He was a great favourite with us all, and was very much respected and thought a great deal of by the mechanics in the flight whose duty it was to keep his machine in order. He was very conscientious and careful in his work, and spent a lot of his spare time working on his machine himself. The three of us sharing this hut were all colonials, and your son and I had many friendly arguments on the respective merits of Australia and South Africa, which is my home. Assuring you of my deepest sympathy and of my willingness to do anything I can for you. Yours sincerely,
T. W. LOWEN, Lieut.