

C B Campbell

K 1A 1917

France 1. 12. 17

Dear Mrs Campbell

as one who knew, & admired your son very much, I am writing to tell you how grieved  
for all are at losing him. First some months ago in England, when I was posted to this  
Squadron, in fact we both graduated from the flight, & were afterwards at Sunberry  
together, where he & I shared a room with our present flight commander, here in  
France, he was living in the hut with my Chem & myself, until his own hut  
should be finished, & so I saw a good deal of him, & came to consider him  
one of my best friends over here. We were both in the same flight, & in fact  
were the only two ~~Chems~~ 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 antiaircraft 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 faster Heen 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 & 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, & I did not see  
him go down, as there was no time just then to look round, in fact  
it was not until the firing stopped that I noticed that one of our machines  
was missing & 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, & as we were up at a considerable height at the  
time, we very much fear, that both he & 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 Auns left us just before we crossed the lines. Coming back and shortly afterwards were engaged by some of our Scouts who saw the fight. Climbed up to our assistance, they were too late to help us, but we have 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, & it seems doubly hard that he was brought down like that, but it was the finest way a man could meet his end, & he had done his job. He was a great favourite with us all, & was very much respected & thought a great deal of by the mechanics in the flight whose duty it was to keep his ~~machine~~ machine in order. He was very conscientious & careful in his work, & used to spend a great deal of his spare time working on his machine himself. The three of us sharing the hut were all Colonials & your son. I had many friendly arguments on the respective merits of Australia, & South Africa which is my home. Unfortunately at present I am unable to mention names of places in my letter, but as soon as opportunity arrises I shall write, give you full particulars of the locality of the fight & where it was that your son's machine was shot down, & any other details that I think you might like to know. Assuring you of my deepest sympathy & willingness to do anything I can for you. Signed. Ho Lone