

25 Boronia Avenue

Beecroft.

Sydney 29-10

Dear Bob,

Perhaps you have wondered by now why I have not replied sooner to your very grateful letter of appreciation.

Truth is, I purposely have delayed this until you have settled down with your good folks again and with the dust of Bressy, Wickenby & Wickfield shaken off your feet forever you will be able to look back and consider what I have to say now.

It would not have been a good idea trying to say this to you a month ago while you were having your last goodbye to the service at P.O. (yes, I heard all about it from Ray Gratz yesterday and only wish I had been with you!)

I assume now that you are at home and more or less settled, so that were speaking as one civilian to another.

You see, Bob, I have tried to tell you this for almost 18 months, but as apparently I either failed to express myself adequately or was unable to convince you of my sincerity, I want now to place on record for all time both my deep appreciation and sincere regard for all that you have done while you have been in the service and not merely while you were stationed at Bressy.

Although it was not till you arrived back in Australia that I got to know you, I will always regret that we were not together on the other side when the going was really tough, and as you know, we flew a lot of these German targets together and the going really was tough. You did a great job then Bob, and although I have known hundreds of air gunners some who did a thorough job, others whose record was exceptional some who were very thorough and determined, some who were given awards distinctions and rapid promotion, some who just didn't have it in them, some who just didn't return from distant

targets, and some who couldn't face it, I know better than any man on this earth that not one of all those I have seen in action carried out their operational flights with more enthusiasm, fearlessness and faithfulness to the task than you did.

Do not think, Col, that this is exaggeration or an effort to win your confidence, because I want nothing from you and probably never ever see you again. It is just that I feel rather deeply that your record was overlooked too readily and while there may be many who wear easily won decorations like my own, not one did the great job you did.

Had you been with our squadron and not that English squadron were you were never understood as an Australian, your decoration for gallantry would have been recommended and approved of without hesitation and I always want you to remember that although officially you earned no recognition, you earned the respect and admiration of those who really knew your sterling qualities, and that is the highest honour any man can hope to achieve.

Let it rest at that. I feel happier now that I have placed this on record. I do this willingly and without redress and I do hope you will realise how deep is my admiration.

Looking back, and forgetting our little disappointments, we must agree that we have been exceptionally lucky. So many fine boys we knew have not

returned. We have had our fights of course, but always we emerged from them with new friends - true friends. Never let us forget them.

Think of the names - Roggaty, Brom, Charlie Brock, Kas Wann, Frankie Camppling, Burt Richardson, Tom Butler, Whitney, Alec Sanders, Gen Wann, Fire Bomb, Granfer, Jimmy Brabbe and the host of others. Each and every one true blue and setting himself a model to live by.

Great people all those, Col, and their names bring back memories of great times. A great life which is now right behind

There will always be little regrets as we look back of course, but if our spirits could conquer any of our difficulties then, then these same spirits will clear any hurdles that may be in front of us in the years that lie ahead.

For myself I am set. Established, blessed with good health, opportunities and an adoring wife so that there is nothing more I can ask for.

However I would feel flattered if some day we will be able to do something for you. Favour too small, no trouble too great - so remember us, sometimes.

Jo joins me in extending you all our best wishes, every happiness and good, long lasting health.

Yours very sincerely

Alec Morrison

Transcription of the letter from S/LDR Alec MacWilliam DFC
460 Gunnery Leader,
Binbrook,
Lincolnshire,
ENGLAND

25 Boronia Avenue
Beecroft
Sydney

29 - 10 - 45

Dear Col,

Perhaps you have wondered by now why I have not replied sooner to your very gratefull letter of appreciation.

Truth is, I purposely have delayed this until you have settled down with your good folks again and with the dust of Cressy, Wickenby & Lichfield shaken off your feet forever you will be able to look back and consider what I have to say now.

It would not have been any use trying to say this to you a month ago while you were having your last goodbye to the service at P.D. (yes, I heard all about it from Ray Graetz yesterday and only wish I had been with you!)

I assume now that you are at home and more or less settled, so that were speaking as one civilian to another.

You see, Col, I have tried to tell you this for about 18 months, but as apparently I either failed to express myself adequately or was unable to convince you of my sincerity, I want now to place on record for all time both my deep appreciation and sincere regard for all that you have done while you have been in the service and not merely while you were stationed at Cressy.

Although it was not till you arrived back in Australia that I got to know you, I will always regret that we were not together on the other side when the going was really tough, and as you know, we flew a lot of those German targets together and the going really was tough. You did a great job then Col, and although I have known hundreds of air gunners, some who did a thorough job, others whose record was exceptional, some who were very thorough and determined, some who were given awards distinctions and rapid promotion, some who just didn't have it in them, some who just didn't return from distant targets, and some who couldn't face it, I know better than any man on this earth that not one of all those I have seen in action carried out their operational flights with more enthusiasm fearlessness and faithfulness to the task than you did.

Do not think, Col, that this is exaggeration or an effort to win your confidence, because I want nothing from you and probably never ever see you again. It is just that I feel rather deeply that your record was overlooked too readily and while there may be many who wear easily won decorations like my own, not one did the great job you did.

Had you been with our squadron and not that English squadron were you were never understood as an Australian, your decoration for gallantry would have been recommended and approved of without hesitation and I always want you to remember that although officially you earned no recognition, you earned the respect and admiration of those who really knew your sterling qualities, and that is the highest honour any man can hope to achieve.

Let it rest at that. I feel happier now that I have placed this on record. I do this willingly and without redress and I do hope you will realise how deep is my admiration.

Looking back, and forgetting our little disappointments, we must agree that we have been exceptionally lucky. So many fine boys we knew have not returned. We have had our fights of course, but always we emerged from them with new friends – true friends. Never let us forget them.

Think of the names, Moggety, Brom, Charlie Crook, Kas Mann, Frankie Campling, Curley Richardson, Tom Butler Whitney, Alec Sanders, Gen Man, Time Bomb, Granfer, Jimmy Crabbe and the host of others. Each and every one true blue and setting himself a model to live by.

Great people all those, Col, and their names bring back memories of great times. A great life which is now right behind us.

There will always be little regrets as we look back of course, but if our spirits could conquer any of our difficulties then, then those same spirits will clear any hurdles that may be in front of us in the years that lie ahead.

For myself I am set. Established, blessed with good health, opportunities and an adoring wife so that there is nothing more I can ask for.

However I would feel flattered if some day we will be able to do something for you. No favour too small, no trouble too great – so remember us sometimes.

Jo joins me in extending you all our best wishes, every happiness and good, long lasting health.

Yours very sincerely

Alec MacWilliam