



CONSULAT GENERAL DE FRANCE A SYDNEY

The Consul-General

Sydney, 31st January 2020

Dear Mr Innes and members of Ian Innes' family,

I was deeply saddened to learn of the death of your father Mr Ian Innes, Flying Officer in the Royal Australian Airforce, engaged in the R.A.F as a Bomber command airman at the time of the D-Day landings in Normandy and later that same decisive year with the British SAS and the French resistance.

On behalf of the French Republic, and together with Captain Philippe Petitdidier, Defence attaché for France, I want to express to you and to your family my deepest sympathy and respect in memory of the actions conducted in France by Ian Innes, and his contribution to the Liberation of France.

Your father was awarded the "Legion d'Honneur", the highest honour in 2015 as a mark of gratitude for his services. Indeed, your father showed great selflessness and incredible courage, during the year 1944. He was then only 22-years-old but as we say in French "*Aux âmes bien nées, la valeur n'attend pas le nombre des années*"¹. Ian Innes would have undoubtedly liked this phrase, not only because he was young and brave but also because he spoke very good French.

His plane was downed by the Luftwaffe as he was conducting a bombing mission to prevent the transfer of German troops to Normandy. He was able to bail out of his burning aircraft and, thanks to his good knowledge of French, could avoid capture, living for more than two months undercover in German-occupied France, fighting with

¹"For souls nobly born valor doesn't await the passing of years" Corneille, *Le Cid*.

the French maquis and also in the battle of Chatillon sur Seine, with the British SAS paratroopers operating in France, behind the German lines.

Beyond these decisive actions, Ian Innes was also a man who valued brotherhood of arms. When he had the opportunity to return to France, he was keen to meet with the French patriots and the French people who helped him during his evasion and to express his gratitude. This gesture was highly appreciated and is still remembered, as we remember the longstanding friendship and shared values between France and Australia.

These stories are the fabric of the bonds between our nations but these sorties wouldn't exist without the bravery of men such as Ian Innes.

France will remember him.

Please accept, dear Mr John Innes, my most sincere condolences.



Anne BOILLON

