

20th September 1941.

Dear Mr Hume,

I was very glad to receive your letter which arrived by the last plane as it brings to a head a matter which has worried me quite a bit knowing how your people would feel about it. As I said I was forward of the position when Jock was killed and knew nothing of the effects of the Blitz till I returned.

When I was free to go and see him I went to where his body was lying and had him removed to a spot I have marked on your sketch (x) and had him wrapped in a groundsheet. His effects, a watch, Paybook and pistol were entrusted to Gunner George Storey who said he was an old friend of the family. I made arrangements then with the Padre of the R.E. Engineers for him to be buried as soon as picks and shovels were available. The honest fact is that we had neither picks or shovels to dig ourselves in let alone bury our dead. We were in action then on throughout the day of the 22nd and arrangements were in hand for Jock's burial on the dawn of the 23rd.

On the morning of the 23rd however we received hurried instructions about 0400 hours to withdraw which we managed just at first light. As things were getting under way I took Gunner Norris along with me and I went over Jock's clothes to make sure I had missed nothing. I removed his red identity disc which I had forgotten till then, leaving the green one on him. I cast three handfuls of earth over him and came away. I feel rotten that I could do no more for him and that I have to tell you this. He was a grand kid. There is no doubt that he would be found and buried by the Germans when they came along.

The two gunners I have mentioned are now prisoners of war. His other effects were not many for like most of us he had lost everything in Greece and was travelling light. The only gear he had I think was a blanket and a few clothes. Even these we could not find in the dark.

Trusting that this will not be too upsetting to your Mother and Father and thanking you for your good wishes.

I remain,

Yours sincerely,

J. P. SNADDEN

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