

31667 2/Lt. K.H. Hume,  
"G" Office,  
H.Q. Maadi Camp,  
2nd N.Z.E.F.,  
MIDDLE EAST FORCES.  
20th July, 1941.

Dear Dad & Mum,

Well, I've seen Ian Johnstone and I'll try to describe the spot to you. Jock's guns, two of them, thirty or forty yards apart were on a ledge ten or fifteen yards wide, rock and earth covered and dropping away then steeply to another terrace lower down. Olive trees cover these terraces fairly thickly and in front about 3,800 yards away and some distance below, is Maleme Aerodrome. Beyond it, further north is the coast road, a long stretch of steeply shelving beach and then the sea; further north still is Greece. Not far from one of the guns, Jock was buried in a grave of his own. There have been no communal graves for Australians and New Zealanders yet. The guns still stand there a bit rusty, I suppose, from the sea air; the ground around is strewn in places knee deep, with empty shell cases, a witness of the work they did during the two days they were in action. They were left because there was no more ammunition on the island to fit them. When they first got the guns, they had no sights, so these were improvised - a piece of boxwood with a V in it for a backsight, and a lump of Wrigleys chewing gum on the top of the barrel for a foresight! Captain Snadden said the Germans would have been very annoyed if they ever found the place. They got 800 rounds and when Jock was killed, there were 26 left, and by all accounts, few were wasted. The Brig. in his lecture today, paid the very highest tributes to the gunners at Maleme, for the way they stuck to their jobs, under a hail of enemy machine gun fire from the air, sniped by parachutists lurking in the gorges and rocks and bombed by Stukas whenever anyone made a move. To see their shells landing, someone had to run forward after each shot to the front of the terrace and observe and then dash back again. Well, this is all I can tell you. I'm trying to locate photos, but there are few about.

Lots of Love,

KEITH.

23rd July, 1941.

Dear Mum & Dad,

I've just received another letter from you., so I'll send a letter card answering a few questions. I'm glad the wall mat arrived. I saw this the day he and Stuart chose it down in the "mouskey" (native bazaars). The nurse Pierce mentioned is "Pinkie" who of course is still here with us. Re the other things you must look out for a Major White (or Whyte) O.B.E. who'll give them to you.

I don't know the Maori and he would not have had Jock's binoculars. Sgt. (or Gunner) Storey had them and he is a prisoner of war so probably still has them. From news received reliably today, all New Zealanders and Australians on Crete were buried by their own chaps some during the battle (like Jock) and others towards the end, after it. All Germans have also been buried there in graves of their own. The Tommy troops have communal graves. Full lists of the ones who are prisoners of war from Crete will not be out for five or six weeks yet. A lot of the Greece ones are already announced.

The tiny film really is supposed to be enlarged. It comes out very well. Out here, most don't agree with your opinion about Russia; however, time will tell and she's held Germany well so far. Yes, I saw Jock's letter from Greece. I'll try and get a photo of Maleme marked for you as you have asked. No hope of getting Jock's camera. It was burned with all their kits during the evacuation. I'll look out for Rossie's parcel. I got one of John Buckleton's yesterday from Marn. I'll hold it for a while and then if John's whereabouts is notified, I can post it to him.



24.7.41.

I have just had a talk to Brig. Hargest who commanded Jock's Brigade in Crete and Greece. He knew Jock well and during the 20 days or so before the landing he visited "his two boys" (Jock and Arthur Boyce) every day on his morning rounds in Crete. Their position was half way round his daily tour, so he always had a cup of morning tea with them. Their gun position was exactly as I described it - olive trees, ledge (a bit wider than I thought) but below them were vineyards (not olive trees) then the aerodrome, and then the sea. He last saw Jock just a short time before he was killed, talked to him and asked how things were. Jock was cheerful, but wished they had a bit more ammunition !!! He was also concerned about how they could get out some of their wounded.

I'm still trying to get some photos of Crete to send home to you.

Many happy returns of August 12th Dad. I'll be thinking of you that day. Incidentally the same day marks my completion of one year's commissioned Service in the 2nd N.Z.E.F. Edna will remember taking Peter out at some inconvenience, I'm afraid, to represent the family at our passing out ceremony at Trentham. My word it seems a long time ago - three months in N.Z. which went quickly, one on the boat and eight months in Egypt. Anyway, lets hope I'll be back with you for your next birthday.

I've not forgotten the silver things you want me to get Mum, and I've looked at several, but always in a hurry. I'll try and devote a few hours to it one afternoon. Nice letters from Hilton Hall Graham Mary and the Neil Humes.

Cheerio,  
KEITH.