

Evacuated from Greece

MATAKANA SOLDIERS' AT CRETE

Accounts of their experiences serving with the Middle East Forces overseas are told in letters just received by Mr and Mrs R. D. Smith, of Matakana, from Privates H. K. May and R. Munford. Both letters were written early in May.

Extract from Pte. May's letter are:—

"At present we are on the Island of Crete which belongs to Greece, it is a grand place and a good climate, in fact, it is very similar to Greece, as they grow practically the same crops, etc. We saw quite a lot of Greece as we travelled from end to end in open trucks. It is a grand little country and very like New Zealand in some parts, although there's plenty of rugged rocky mountains and ranges everywhere. Whilst there we struck all kinds of weather, some real hot days, a descent storm or two with very little shelter available and a snow storm where we had to sit out in the open; dog gone, it was cold! It was the first time that most of us had seen falling snow and I sincerely hope that it is the last, as two days of it was enough for the lot of us. In Greece the wheat and barley crops were almost ready to be reaped when we left, they grow a lot of grain, plenty of olives and there are vineyards everywhere with the grapes just forming. In these parts they drink wine just the same as we drink tea in New Zealand, and besides they grow sultanas along with the black and white grapes. Wild flowers and poppies seem to flourish both here and in Greece and they sure look pretty; they have most of the weeds that we have in New Zealand, but the buttercups and blackberry don't spread the same here. I have seen odd cows about, but most of the milk supply seems to come from goats and sheep. By the way the flocks of sheep are all tended by shepherds and you never see any fences about the place. A way back where we were amongst the snow I saw strawberries growing wild. The only timber that grows there is wild scrubby oak, but further south there are large patches of small pine trees. We spent a few hours in Athens, so I had a look at the Acropolis ruins which stand on a hill overlooking the city; these ruins are thousands of years old, and below is the famous stadium. Athens is a large and beautiful city and contains many fine old buildings and parks, the population gave us a much better hearing than we have ever had before. The peasants are certainly workers and work from daylight till dark, the women-folk working just as hard as the men—we saw women and girls of 13 and 14 working on the roads shovelling and pushing wheelbarrows like the men-folk. As you know we were in the big do in Greece, but all of us in our platoon got out without even a scratch luckily. That's all that I can tell you till we get back, then I'll let you have it in detail."

Extracts from Pte. R. Munford's letter are:—

"We had a pretty rough spin at times, but it wasn't near as bad as it might have been and most of us got out of it all right. We are now on the Island of Crete.

Greece is quite a nice country or at least it was before the Germans came in. We had four days' leave in Athens when we first landed. It is a big place and the people were very good to us. The language problem was a bit awkward at times, but we had a pretty good time all the same. I had some very good photos of the Acropolis and the town, but I lost them during the evacuation. We travelled a good bit while we were there. It is a very mountainous country, but there are some nice valleys between the ranges. We camped in all sorts of places from just above sea level to about three thousand feet up. Twice we spent the night in snow storms with no cover, except leafless trees. However, most of the time the weather was very good except for the cold at night.

We were very lucky at times during our little race with the Huns. Two or three times we nearly got trapped, but we were just a bit too fast for them. The worst part of all was the lack of air support. The German bombers did as they liked and they sure made things lively at times. From the first position we left we marched all night over rough rocks through the hills and nearly got lost. We struck the road just before daylight and travelled all day by truck. The Jerry planes found us about ten o'clock and were chasing

us all day. They let go enough bombs and machine gun bullets around us to wipe out the whole lot. Really they did very little except cause a lot of hold-ups and burn a few trucks.

The money is very simple here. They have only one coin—the drachma. It is worth a little less than 1d. (500 for 18/9d.). The biggest coin is 5 drachmas. Everything from 10 upwards is a note. Sometimes you have a roll big enough to choke a horse and the whole lot is probably only worth about 10/-.

AHURUA.

(Own Correspondent.)

SCHOOL CONCERT

A most enjoyable evening was spent in the Ahuroa Hall on Thursday, 8th May, when a large and appreciative audience attended the annual school concert.

"Harvest Song" (by primers); "Bonnie Dundee" (by a boys' choir); "Waltzing Matilda" (by boys in appropriate swagman costume); "Topical Hits" (a humorous skit by six senior pupils); and the "Maori Marching Song" (by all pupils); were some of the most popular items, also "Rendezvous" (in costume); "Buying a hat" (a brief comedy); and a duet by Misses Elva and Dawn Woodcock were delightfully rendered. The concert preceded a supper and a dance. Credit is due to all performers who were helped by a spontaneous heartiness of applause from the audience. Outstanding performers were Misses Elva Woodcock, Shirley McLaughlin, Erina Beecher, Thelma Sanderson, Phyllis Hawkin, and Masters Bruce Jenkins, Joseph Tolhopf, Brian Jenkins and Roy Parker. Thanks and every credit are due to Mr Campbell (headmaster), Miss Rogers (assistant teacher), and Mrs R. J. Schollum, who so ably trained the children and thus made the concert a complete success. Competition prizes were won by Misses Moyna Beecher and Shirley McLaughlin. A pleasing addition to school funds will permit a steady continuance of school ground improvements.

"BOTTLE MESSAGE FROM SOLDIER"
A coincidence regarding a bottle message from a soldier is as follows:—Private E. R. Jones, formerly of Ahuroa, and later of Auckland, enlisted for overseas, and whilst near the Australia coast on board a troopship dropped a message overboard in a bottle to his wife of 17 St. Andrews Road, Epsom, Auckland. The message was picked up by Mr Flanagan, of the Commonwealth Bank in Perth on Anzac Day, whilst leisurely strolling along the beach, and was forwarded to the above address.

Warkworth Croquet Club

ANNUAL MEETING

Keen interest was shown at the annual meeting of the Warkworth Croquet Club held recently. The meeting was well attended. The report and balance sheet adopted disclosed a very satisfactory state of affairs.

Officers elected for the ensuing year were:—President, Mrs A. M. MacDiarmid; secretary, Mrs S. Smith; vice-presidents, Mrs P. A. McDowell and Mrs J. Bond; committee, Mesdames A. S. Carran, G. Robertson, T. Ramsbottom, G. Fitzgerald, H. B. Moore, S. Morrison and A. Hoysted; handicap committee, Mesdames MacDiarmid, Smith, Hoysted, Fitzgerald.

Votes of thanks were accorded the retiring president, Mrs P. S. Halligan; the secretary, Mrs Smith; and club report, Mrs Fitzgerald.

CLUB MATCH WINNERS

The following were winners of club matches decided during the past season:—Green Cup handicap singles, Mrs MacDiarmid; A and B handicap combine, Mesdames Halligan and MacDiarmid, runners-up, Mesdames S. Morrison and Stewart; A championship, Mrs Halligan, runner-up, Mrs Smith; B championship, Mrs MacDiarmid.

For Coughs, Colds, remember Woods' Great Peppermint Cure

Heard in a Sunday school classroom:—

"Why was Jerusalem surrounded with walls?"
"To keep in the milk and honey."

LEIGH

(From a Correspondent.)

FAREWELL DANCE

A very enjoyable dance, organised by the Leigh Patriotic Committee, was held in the Leigh Public Hall on Thursday evening last, to bid farewell to Mr E. Harper, jun., who is going overseas. There was a large gathering of friends to bid him "God Speed." The dance music was kindly donated by the Pakiri orchestra. Several extras were played by Mr Masefield, of Pakiri, while Mr J. Frost officiated as M.C. Mrs Harper, snr., was presented with a beautiful bouquet, while Mrs E. D. Harper and Miss B. Harper were given shoulder sprays. An excellent supper was provided by the local ladies.

Mr Story, on behalf of all present, presented to Mr Harper a leather carry-all. Mr Harper gave thanks for the evening and for the gift. Musical honours were then accorded him and dancing was kept up merrily till the early hours.

Gift Evening

A very enjoyable dance, organised by the Leigh Women's Institute, the Omaha hockey girls and other friends, was held in the Whangateau Domain Hall on Wednesday evening, 28th May, to honour Miss Coral Ashton in view of her approaching marriage to Mr Ken. Meiklejohn, who was unable to be present on account of illness.

The hall was tastefully decorated by the hockey girls, and with the beautiful frocks of the ladies, made a very gay scene. The dance music was provided by Schollum's Orchestra, with Mr C. Ashton officiating as M.C. An excellent supper was supplied by the ladies.

Lieutenant-Colonel Wyatt in a neat speech, referred to Miss Ashton being such a help in tennis and hockey circles, and asked her to accept the gifts on the table with the good wishes of all present. In the absence of Mr Meiklejohn, Mr R. Dunning returned thanks on behalf of Miss Ashton. Musical honours were accorded her, and also to Mr Meiklejohn.

Dancing was kept up merrily till the early hours.

Dominion Reconstruction Conference

In company with similar activities in other parts of the world, especially in Britain, a conference of leaders, officers and members of the moral and spiritual movements in New Zealand is being convened to find how the foundations on which the Christian reconstruction of the Dominion should be based.

The conference has the patronage and active support of many of our church leaders. They have signed the convening order and circular letter to all who are thought able and willing to contribute to its deliberations. The date and place of the conference have yet to be arranged.

Like the Melvern Conference recently held in England under the presidency of the Archbishop of York, the assembly will discuss freely and frankly all moral, social and economic problems, the discussions being led by men and women who have made a study of their respective subjects.

The Dominion Conference, however, will be wider in its scope than the Melvern discussions, for those taking part will include representatives of all churches and schools of thought.

It is expected there will be frank discussions of the present social and economic order, but, unlike many similar discussions, it will be directed to a frank examination of faults with the desire to find out and put into effect the necessary remedies.

This Dominion Reconstruction Conference is designed to show the great degree of unity and common purpose existing in the minds of moral and spiritual leaders and in the hearts of our people.

It will therefore refrain from discussions on party politics and detailed technical methods but will positively and constructively outline the fundamental Christian Principles which alone can provide a true basis for the people's welfare and a better order.

Full information regarding this forthcoming Dominion Reconstruction Conference will be most willingly forwarded to all who write to Box 944, Wellington.

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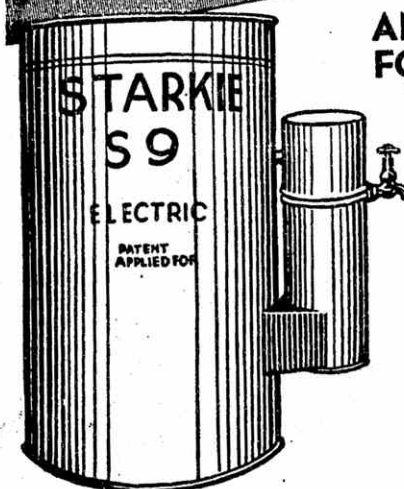
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