



Kiwis among the Olympians

THIS survey of material in the Hocken Library relating to Greece, originally intended for publication last year, is perhaps more fittingly appearing just in time for the Athens Olympics. Besides, the recent intervening months have seen several commemorations of the close and warm links forged by New Zealand's participation in the attempted defence of Greece against German invasion in World War 2. This is particularly true of the ill-fated Crete Campaign, the 50th anniversary of which was marked by several emotional ceremonies.

These things are reflected in the proportions of the Greek material in the Hocken, in which accounts of New Zealand participation in World War 2 are overwhelmingly predominant. This is inevitable, as well, because most of the general literature of Greek history, culture and geography are to be found in



the Central University Library.

Outside the war coverage, the Hocken holdings are relatively sparse — some coverage of the teaching of Greek language and culture in New Zealand, a few translations of Greek texts, and inevitable references to Greek styles in works on architecture etc. Few New Zealand travel writers and even fewer novelists seem to have based their work on Greece, and even our artists have not produced many images relating to that country.

As for the Olympic Games, the relevant Hocken material was fully described in Bulletin No. 34 ('Sydney or the bush?'), issued four years ago to coincide with the Olympic Games in Sydney, and it hardly needs updating here.

So let's mobilise our forces and go into action!

'A WORTHWHILE INVESTMENT'

THE main account of the Greek campaign is W.G. McClymont's *To Greece* (1959, 538p), which begins with the assembling of the first three echelons and the development of the New Zealand Division after the first Libyan campaign in 1940-41.

Hitler had ordered the occupation of northern Greece on December 13, 1940; and when Britain supported Greece and a military coup took power in Yugoslavia, Hitler extended that order on March 22, 1941, to cover the whole country. As the Greek front began to crumble, the New Zealanders were sent across from Egypt, even though it was recognised that the forces available had little chance of withstanding an all-out attack. The first engagement involving the Division took place on April 10. The next 14 days saw the Allies unable to hold the German advance through the passes, and evacuation then began in the face of German air superiority which sank

23 vessels (including two hospital ships and a destroyer) in just two days.

Monty McClymont, who had graduated with 1st class honours in history from Otago University, and was to have a notable career as a teacher, rugby footballer (to All Black standard) and mountaineer, wrote an excellent account of this doomed campaign. And though the hurried New Zealand intervention was unsuccessful and costly (261 New Zealand dead, 387 wounded and 1856 taken prisoner), McClymont takes the view that 'as a long-term investment it was well worth the risks that had been taken'.

Dan Davin, whose account of *Crete* (1953, 547p) appeared six years earlier, was an even more notable Otago graduate, with first-class honours in English and Latin and a Rhodes Scholarship to his name. He himself was wounded on Crete, where he had been on Freyberg's Intelligence staff;

and he remarks in his Preface on the difficulties which faced him, as an historian, assessing the military performance of men who had been his direct superiors and personal acquaintances.

The opinions voiced in his concluding nine-page chapter are succinct. He points out that the campaign itself had been preceded by several months in which preparations to resist invasion were inadequate; that the topography of Crete meant the south coast was ill-suited to reinforcement from Egypt; that the Allied cause was too hopelessly short of

equipment to meet the island's needs; and that the decision to stand and fight had not been made so much on strategic grounds, but rather as an attempt to save the thousands of Allied troops already evacuated to the island from Greece. [The subsequent defence of Crete, however, resulted in a much higher toll than in Greece — 671 New Zealand dead, 967 wounded, 2180 captured, with Australian and British casualties to match. The Hocken has the eight-page list of *New Zealand War Dead. Crete*, issued by the NZ War Graves Office in 1991 for the Suda Bay War Cemetery.]

UNIT HISTORIES

MANY individual unit histories enlarge on aspects of those two campaign studies by McClymont and Davin.. One of the best is *23 Battalion*, whose author Angus Ross was not only another well-known Otago graduate and subsequent professor, but would later become a considerable benefactor to the Hocken Library and one of its four founding Fellows. He allots 28 pages to the Greek campaign (without bothering to mention that he himself was the recipient of the Greek order of valour, Aristion Andrias); and another 43 pages to Crete, including an account of how Clive Hulme (a sergeant in the *23 Battalion*) won the Victoria Cross.

Sir Edward Puttick devotes a 42-page chapter to Greece in *25 Battalion*; Jim Henderson a brief 22 pages in *22 Battalion*, followed by a full 50-page chapter on the unit's involvement around Canea, in the north-west corner of Crete; W.D.Dawson, in *18 Battalion and Armoured Regi-*

ment, has 55 pages on Greece then 46 pages on the 'Crete Debacle'; Robin Kay, in *27 (Machine Gun) Battalion*, has about 90 pages on the two theatres; there are 67 pages in A.L.Kidson's *Petrol Company*; just over 100 in P.W.Bates' *Supply Company*; and 90 in C.A.Borman's *Divisional Signals*. Together — with other unit histories held in the Hocken — they offer a varied range of detail and interpretation.

Lesser coverage can be found in countless other books on World War 2 and the history of the New Zealand Army. David Filer allots 22 pages of photographs in his pictorial history *Kiwis in Khaki* (1989); George Kaye and Peter Bates combined in 1981 to produce *Baptism of Fire. 40th Anniversary of the Campaigns in Greece and Crete*, a lively tabloid coverage in story and picture published by INL.

LATER ANALYSIS

THE Greek and Crete campaigns were to generate much argument and analysis in the ensuing years. Twenty years afterwards, Anthony Heckstall-Smith, who had commanded a tank landing-craft, and H.T.Baillie-Grohman, who had been in overall command of Operation Demon, co-authored *Greek Tragedy* (1961, 240p). In the following year came Alan Clark's *The Fall of Crete* (206p), which related how six changes in command and various conflicting plans had hamstrung the defence of the island, but pointed out that the resistance to the German attack had been sufficiently ferocious to cause 7,000 casualties and almost persuade the German High Command to call the invasion off. In *The Struggle for Crete... A Story of Lost Opportunity* (1966, 518p) I.M.G.Stewart notes that the uncertainty which had been attributed to Freyberg had also been shown by 'all but one of the subordinate commanders'.

Since then, far more attention has been given to the Battle of Crete than to the preceding Greek campaign.

G.C.Kiriakopoulos, in his *Ten Days to Destiny* (1985, 339p), reminds us that Hitler — impatient to launch his assault on Russia — was furious with Kurt Student, commander of the airborne invasion of Crete. 'France fell in eight days,' he cabled Student. 'Why is Crete still resisting?' Kiriakopoulos notes that the valiant resistance of the Allies and Crete civilians not only almost brought about the first German defeat of the war, but inflicted more casualties than the Wehrmacht had suffered in the war to that point.

The approach of the 50th anniversary of the battle brought a fresh flurry of publishing. *Crete 1941 Eyewitnessed*, by C.N.Hadjipateras and Maria Fafalios (NZ ed. 1991, 328p) gathered together diary extracts, letters and poems from those who had taken part. Laurie Barber and John Tonkin-Covell were able to argue in *Freyberg, Churchill's Salamander* (1989, 310p) that the declassification of ULTRA intelligence material had enabled earlier questioning of Freyberg's competence to be rebutted. Paul Freyberg's biography of his father, *Bernard Freyberg V.C. Soldier of Two Nations* (1991, 627p) — the cover-blurb acknowledging that 'Freyberg's reputation was clouded by the disaster of the fall of Crete...' — devoted over 100 pages to the two campaigns, including a full chapter on 'Crete - The Inquiry and the Aftermath'. But Antony Beevor's *Crete. The Battle and the Resistance* (383p), published the same year, reviewed the whole campaign and claimed that Freyberg's misreading of an ULTRA signal at a crucial moment had had disastrous consequences.

Ten years on, and the sixtieth anniversary showed that the crucial Battle of Crete had lost none of its fascination. Alan Clark's 1962 classic was republished in Britain. *A Unique Sort of Battle. New Zealanders Remember Crete* (2001, 254p), edited by Megan Hutching, drew on the personal reminiscences of Crete veterans; and Matthew Wright, in *A Near-Run Affair* (2001, 131p) summed up the battle from a New Zealand point of view.

INDIVIDUAL EXPERIENCES

PERSONAL accounts of experiences in the two campaigns are numerous, one of the best coming from yet another distinguished Otago University graduate and Rhodes Scholar, Geoffrey Cox. His *A Tale of Two Battles* (1987, 224p) is split evenly between Crete and the subsequent North African desert battle of Sidi Rezegh.

Other relevant titles include: A.S.Helm, *Fights & Furloughs in the Middle East* (1943, 301p); Francis Jackson, *Passage to Tobruk* (1943, 142p); C.M.Wheeler, *Kalimera Kiwi; to Olympus with the NZ Engineers* (1946, 204p); Fred Fleming, 'Dear Cousin, — Cheerio, Fred' (1971, 48p), letters home from Greece and Egypt; and O.R.Gatman, *On Active Service...* (1999, 128p), similar letters written before his fatal wounds in the Desert, but handsomely illustrated. Many more general biographies include references to the Crete experience — such as Cyril R.Bradwell's *Symphony of Thanksgiving* (1994, 1975p), a biography of the Salvation Army Commissioner Sir Dean Goffin, which begins with his baptism under fire at Galatas.

Not surprising, considering the numbers of New Zealanders captured in Greece and Crete, several books recount the experiences of prisoners-of-war. The best known of them is probably W.B. 'Sandy' Thomas's classic, *Dare to Be Free* (first published 1951, over 500,000 copies sold; this Hocken edition 2001, 245p). Severely wounded at Galatas, he was sent to a prison hospital in Greece, made several attempts to escape, was transferred to a specially guarded camp in Salonika, and from there made an amazing escape and spent a year being shuffled among Greek mountain monasteries. He later became Major-General Thomas, Army Commander, Far East Land Forces.

Less famous New Zealand soldiers had similar experiences. Peter Winter's *Free Lodgings* (1993, 143p) relates his capture in Crete, three years of captivity in Greece, Italy and Germany, and, just as the end of war seemed in sight, his forced marches across Poland and Germany as the Russians advanced. Fred Woollams, *Corinth and All That* (1945, 167p) covers the adventures of a small group who escaped capture at Corinth and lived for some months among the Greek peasants until betrayed by one of their own. He himself was placed in a concentration camp then, while being taken as a prisoner to Italy, survived the ship being torpedoed.

Corinth was where yet another distinguished Otago graduate, John Borrie, was taken prisoner, but the greater part of his extremely interesting *Despite Captivity* (1975, 240p) deals with prison life in Germany.

Ernest Clarke's *Over the Fence is Out* (1965, rev. 1987, 94p) is a plain, desk-published account of experiences with Greek peasants, with interesting detail, and Arthur H.Lambert, *From Greece to Crete... Extracts from My Life Story* (2001, 125p) describes his months hiding among the mountain peasants of Crete before eventual capture and transportation through Greece to Germany. Harold H.W.Smith, *Memories of World War II* (1996, 138p), includes a substantial description of the Greek and Crete campaigns, both of which he survived — only to fall prisoner later in Libya. Jim McDevitt, in *My Escape from Crete* (2002, 293p) writes about the Cretans who sheltered him from July 1941 until a boat surreptitiously picked up some 30 New Zealand and Australian remnants on May 8, 1943.

GREEK ATTITUDES

SEVERAL New Zealanders shared a closer and much more official comradeship with the Greek partisans, and their stories are not only dramatic, but give us a better concept of the Greek side of things.

Gabrielle McDonald's *New Zealand's Secret Heroes* (1991, 168p) tells the story of Major Don Stott — in the words of Brigadier Myers, 'One of the bravest men we ever knew' — and members of the Special Operations Executive (SOE). The first part, set in Greece, includes the destruction of the Asopos Viaduct; subsequently the units moved to Asian theatres.

Major Bill Jordan was another legendary hero. His autobiography, *Conquest without Victory* (1969, 256p) describes his experiences in the Resistance Movements in both Greece and France, including murderous dealings with the Greek Communists. *Vasili, the Lion of Crete*, by Murray Elliott (1987, 175p) puts on record the wartime exploits of Dudley Churchill Perkins. Perkins arrived on Crete following the Allied withdrawal from Crete, escaped his German captors and spent a year on the loose in western Crete before leaving by submarine. He was so impressed by the help given him by the islanders that he joined the British SOE, and returned to Crete as a special agent, training and commanding a band of guerillas.

With Greek Guerillas, by Arthur Edmonds (1998, 260p) covers similar ground. After sabotage operations in 1942 he was appointed senior British liaison officer with the Communist-controlled Resistance organisation and, like Jordan, comments on the 'great brutality' of the Communists against rival Resistance bands.

Thanks to the 'E.Hunter Collection', the Hocken has several booklets relating to the Greek civil war. E.W. (Ted) Hunter, son of a Saddle Hill farmer, came under Mark Silverstone's influence in the 1920s, joined the Communist Party and later, as a 'trammie' and Tramways Union official, eventually became president of the Otago Trades Council. His library, which came to the Hocken after his death in 1980, includes several pamphlets supporting the aims of the Greek Communists: A.W.Shepherd's *An Australian Officer in Greece* (1947, 23p) and *Greece's Struggle for Freedom* (1949, 16p); Sid Scott ed. *The Truth About Greece* (1945, 23p); *The Greek Question* (1947, 96p) containing speeches by Vyshinsky, Gromyko and the Ukrainian diplomat Manuilsky to the UN General Assembly.

A more solid book on the subject, published by Gollancz's Left Book Club (1947, 240p), is William Hardy McNeill's study of *The Greek Dilemma. War and Aftermath*, which can still be read with benefit half a century after it was

written. The Hocken also has at least three novels based on World War 2 experiences in Greece: Jack Lindsay's *Beyond*

Terror (1943); C.K.Stead's *Talking About O'Dwyer* (1999); and Kapka Kassabova's *Love in the Land of Midas* (2000).

CLASSICAL GREECE

DESPITE the intense New Zealand involvement with Greece during World War 2 — the place of the Battle of Crete in our national psyche could now fairly be said to rank with Gallipoli — our educational interest in the country is largely limited to the classical Greek times of 2500 years ago. And compared with the University Central Library's holding in that field, the items held in the Hocken Library are quite few.

W.K.Lacey wrote his notable *The Family in Classical Greece* (1980 reprint, 342p) in 1968, the year he was appointed to the chair of Classical Studies in Auckland. It was the first major study of the subject to be published in English. A few years earlier, Fleur Adcock — better known now for her poetry — had contributed a long, well-illustrated article to the *School Journal*, subsequently published (1965, 80p) as *Ancient Greece*. Richard Green produced *A Study of Life in Ancient Athens* (1970, 48p) as a school bulletin. Shorter coverage, again for primary schools, is given in Maria Kazmierow's *Ancients Alive* (1992) and a couple

pages on 'Schools in Ancient Greece' in Alan Trussell-Cullen's *School Days* (1991).

Of much more general use is the Polygraphia publication *Making Connections with the Ancient World. Greece. Teacher Guide* (2000, 45p) compiled by Raewyn Gilmour. Aimed at supporting specific school courses, it gives teachers a broad guide to background books, to planning lessons and to the use of illustration and such fields as coins, clothing etc. Even for general readers it offers an excellent approach to its subject. Raewyn Gilmour has also written *Alexander of Macedon* (1999, 56p) as a companion to school studies.

One could say the same, at a higher level, about *Pass University Bursary Classical Studies*, of which the Hocken holds the 1999 & 2000 editions. In these, all questions from the 1997, 1998 and 1999 Bursary exams are arranged by topic and provided with answers which, far from offering mere cramming, positively spur one to study the original Greek (and Latin) material more closely.

OMNIUM GATHERUM

OTHER Hellenic material in the Hocken can be located by patient use of the computerised catalogue.

Examples of relevant New Zealand travel books include *Blue Seas. White Marble and Bread at a Greek Table* (2001), a short account published privately in Dunedin by Maria Thomson; Keith Wilson, *A NZ Artist's Travels* (1995); G.M.Swainson ed. *William Swainson FRS FLS, naturalist and artist: diaries 1808-1818* (1989); and E.A.Anderson, *A Life's Roundabout* (1962).

R.S.Gilmour's *Understanding the Architecture on the Acropolis at Athens* (1999) and Adrienne Burney's *Teacher's Resource Material: Athenian Architecture and Sculpture* (2002), are two short school texts dealing specifically with Greek architecture, while many general books on New Zealand architecture include briefer references.

Greek learning and culture are the subject of several New Zealand books, mainly by classical scholars: E.M.Blaiklock, *The Decline and Fall of Athenian Democracy* (1948) and *The Male Characters in Euripides* (1952, 267p); A.Miller Nicolson's *Classical Revision of the Greek New Testament* (1878); L.H.G.Greenwood, *Greek Tragedy compared with*

Modern Drama (1943); Agathe Thornton, *People and Themes in Homer* (1970); J.K.Anderson, *Handbook to the Greek Vases in the Otago Museum* (1955).

See also: Hankey & Little eds. *Essays in Honour of Agathe Thornton*, 1985; Richard Lawson, *Fragmenta Animi* (1942 & 1948); E.H.McCormick, *An Absurd Ambition. Autobiographical writings* (1996) — in which, in a two-page chapter, he says the lectures on Greek History, Art and Literature at Victoria University College were 'the landmark of my formal education'; also Marian Coxhead ed., *The Globe Theatre... 1961-1986* (1986), listing productions of Aeschylus, Euripides, Sophocles & Aristophanes (two Hotere sketches for a performance of *Oedipus* are held in Hocken Pictures). Many translations from and articles on Greek subjects can be found in runs of various periodicals; while the annual calendars and almanacks of New Zealand's universities trace the teaching of Greek at tertiary level.

Finally, if by any chance any reader wishes to reprint this Bulletin in Greek, don't forget to consult the Hocken's copy of H.W.Williams, *Greek In Type: an essay for printers* (1903).

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