CHILDHOOD MEMORIES OF THE BATTLE OF CRETE

Efthyhios Xanthoudakis interviewed by Alex Catharios

Transcript from SBS Radio's Greek Language Program, May 2005

Efthyhios Xanthoudakis is an Australian born in Crete. He was a child during the time of the Battle of Crete. He speaks about his own memories and the stories of his elders.

Efthyhios lived close to the Chania Cemetery where the Australian anti-aircraft fighters had lodged themselves, using a canon to aim at German aircraft. He remembers the Australians as very kind and brave people.

His father owned a near-by tavern. The Australians used to go there often and always had a kind word to say to him. They asked him what his name was and he said "George" because he did not want to put them to the trouble of pronouncing a difficult name like his. The Australians would jokingly say to him "hello Georgy Porgy".

Most of the Australian soldiers were killed when a German aeroplane fell on the area where the Australians had their cannon. The few Australians who survived were assisted by the Cretans to escape by sea to Africa. The Germans retaliated by executing Cretan people collected from Chania at random.

Xanthoudakis concludes by stating how brave the Australians and New Zealanders were.