

John Gildroy GRANT, VC

1st Battalion Wellington Regiment

Jack Grant was born in Hawera in 1889. Prior to World War I he worked as a builder and contractor in the Taranaki area. He enlisted in the New Zealand Expeditionary Force on 14 June 1915 and embarked for Egypt with the 7th Reinforcements to the NZEF in October. He joined the Taranaki Company of the 1st Battalion, Wellington Infantry Regiment in France in 1916.



In two years of fighting in Belgium and France, Grant rose to the rank of Sergeant. On 1 September 1918 he was in command of a platoon during an attack on Bancourt Ridge.

“On reaching the crest, it was found that a line of five enemy machine-gun posts offered a serious obstacle to further advance. When about twenty yards from the posts, Sergeant Grant rushed forward ahead of his platoon and with great dash and bravery entered the centre post, demoralising the garrison and enabling the men of his platoon to mop up the position. In the same manner he then rushed the post on the left, and the remaining posts were quickly occupied and cleared. Throughout the whole operation Sergeant Grant displayed coolness, determination and valour of the highest order and set a splendid example to all.”

For this action Sergeant Grant was awarded the Victoria Cross. In early 1919 Grant was commissioned, before returning to New Zealand and leaving the Army in 1920. After later service in the Territorial Force he retired in 1929 with the rank of Lieutenant. Following the end of his service career, Grant lived in Taranaki and in Auckland where he continued to work as a builder, owned a small business, and was a keen follower of horse racing. Jack Grant died in Auckland in 1970, aged 81.

