

# John Daniel HINTON, VC

20<sup>th</sup> Battalion, 2<sup>nd</sup> New Zealand Division

Jack Hinton was born in Colac Bay, Southland, on 17 September 1909. At the age of twelve he ran away from home and worked for the next years in a variety of jobs including whaling, farming and prospecting for gold. When war broke out in 1939 he was one of the first to enlist in the New Zealand Expeditionary Force. During the months of training in New Zealand, Hinton was promoted rapidly to Sergeant. He left New Zealand in January 1940 as part of the 20<sup>th</sup> Battalion.



In Greece, during the Division's first action, Hinton was attached to a group of soldiers who were to stay in reserve and provide reinforcements for the Division if needed. This group was sent to the Greek port of Kalamata when the Allied troops were ordered to evacuate Greece. On the night of 28 April 1941, Hinton fought his way down a narrow street, destroying several machine gun posts and attacking an armoured self propelled gun, before being severely wounded in the stomach.

Attempts to evacuate Kalamata were abandoned, and the remaining Allied troops, including Hinton, were captured. Hinton spent the rest of the war in prisoner of war camps in Greece and Germany. Medals are not normally conferred on soldiers while they are prisoners, therefore it was a major break with precedent when the announcement of the award of the Victoria Cross to Sergeant Hinton was made on 17 October 1941. Hinton was presented with the ribbon of his medal by a German general at a parade in a prisoner of war camp. Hinton at the time was being held in solitary confinement after one of several unsuccessful escape attempts.

After being liberated towards the end of the war, Hinton returned to New Zealand where he began a life as a publican, managing and owning numerous pubs in various New Zealand towns. Jack Hinton married twice and after living out his retirement in Christchurch, died in 1997 at the age of 87.

