



# THE ANZACS AT 42ND STREET

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# INTRODUCTION

In the last week of May 1915, the ANZACS were valiantly clinging to the barren slopes of Gallipoli in a desperate battle for survival. Twenty six years later, in the last week of May 1941, a new generation of ANZACS were fighting for survival in Crete some 600km south of Gallipoli.

After witnessing the battle at Gallipoli, Charles Bean, the Australian war historian described the Anzac spirit as:

*“Anzac stood and still stands, for reckless valour in a good cause, for enterprise, resourcefulness, fidelity, comradeship, and endurance that will never own defeat”. (Anzac to Amiens, 1946. C.E.W. Bean)*

The following narrative will demonstrate that the ANZAC spirit was exemplified at 42nd Street, particularly reckless valour, enterprise and endurance.

In the Battle of Crete, which was characterised by poor preparation, ill-equipped troops and military errors, the bayonet charge at Galatas in the early evening of 25 May 1941 stands out as a proud moment in New Zealand’s military history. However, less than two days later on the 27th May, a bayonet charge by NZ and Australian soldiers was just as significant. In particular, the bayonet charge at 42nd Street blunted the remorseless German advance as the attacking Germans were reluctant to get too close to the retreating Anzacs as it was similar to confronting a cornered animal. This

counter-attack brought the Allies time and enabled the evacuation of some 12,000 soldiers, mostly ANZACS, from Hora Sparkion (Sfakia).

Until recently the bayonet charge at 42nd Street has been given little prominence. One of the reasons for this is that nearly all of the soldiers of the 2/7 Australian Battalion, who had a prominent role in the charge, were all captured on Crete including their Commanding Officer. Consequently, Australian reports on the charge did not filter out until well after the war had finished. From the NZ perspective the prominent battalion was the 28th Maori Battalion but their actions on Crete was only one of a number of successful attacks by the Battalion in North Africa and Italy. A further factor is that unlike Galatas, there are no published photos of 42 Street either immediately before, during or after the bayonet charge. The action took place in a relatively uninhabited rural area with no geographical, historical or military significance. Early British histories of the Battle of Crete gave 42nd Street little prominence and Alan Clark's 1962 book 'The Fall of Crete' when quoting a German officers reference to the bayonet charge at 42nd Street included a footnote: "Presumably means Galatas."

Although Allied troops were trained to undertake bayonet charges, it was not an exercise that required a high level of technical expertise. The success of a bayonet charge is primarily based on raw courage, a liberal dose of anger and surprise. It is an almost a medieval form of warfare designed to strike terror in the enemy but where the chances of failure against automatic weapons is high. It was not a tactic favoured by the militaristic Germans who employed 20th century firepower in a more methodical and effective manner. It is also a brutal form of warfare. Few prisoners are taken in a bayonet charge.





SOLDIERS OF THE MAORI BATTALION TRAINING IN THE WESTERN DESERT, EGYPT. ATL DA 02101-F

There are three main reasons why the bayonet charge at 42nd Street should be given greater publicity.

1. It was one of the few occasions in World War II when Australians and New Zealanders literally fought shoulder to shoulder.
2. The men who took part in the attack were mentally and physically exhausted and were literally at the end of their tether. For over a week they had been ceaselessly pounded from the air and the ground by the Germans; fighting all day and retreating by night. Deprived of sleep and wracked by hunger and thirst, the

temptation to surrender must have been intense. To launch a frontal attack on an elite German unit from a state of complete exhaustion demonstrates a remarkable level of fortitude and resilience. Furthermore, the men who participated in the charge were not professional soldiers but citizen soldiers who had volunteered for overseas service and most had little battle experience. They were ordinary blokes performing an extraordinary task. It is unlikely that any other Allied units in World War II would have launched a bayonet charge in these circumstances.

3. It was an effective counter-attack from a defensive position and a tactic perfected by the Germans in both World Wars. The Germans were superb defenders and their training and leadership emphasised the importance of temporarily withdrawing when under pressure, regrouping and launching a counter-attack before the enemy had a chance to prepare their defences. The Germans were masters of defence and the tactical counter-attack as the NZers discovered at Monte Cassino. Although they may not have realised it, the ANZACS at 42nd Street employed a tactic that every German officer and NCO was trained to execute.

Given the competitive spirit between Australians and New Zealanders, from time to time there is a debate as to which battalion initiated or were the first to charge, the 28th Maori Battalion or the 2/7 Battalion. My reading of the war diaries of both units and other documentation sheds no further light on this matter. It is likely that the 2/7 Battalion were the first to engage the Germans with rifle-fire as the Battalion had platoons well forward of the main line of defence and the advance platoons of the Germans were moving in a north-east direction towards the 2/7 Battalion. However, the sound of the haka and the sight of warriors leaping from their trenches was the spark that ignited the bayonet charge by all units along 42nd Street. My father (Div. Sigs 4699) told me that, in a battle, the safest place in the New Zealand Division was behind the Maori Battalion.

After the fall of Galatas and as the knowledge that the Allies were retreating from Crete became well-known, historians have emphasised the signs of panic and lack of morale as groups of unarmed, bedraggled troops headed towards Hora Sparkion (In the War Histories spelt as Sfakia-refer to the glossary). But in general this description only applied to some of the service personnel (and most should have been evacuated before the invasion) stationed in the Souda Bay area. It definitely did not apply to the units (both infantry and service units) who took part in the bayonet charge at 42nd Street.

Until the bayonet charge at 42nd Street, the German attack was characterised by aggressive tactics and outflanking of the Allies defensive line. The charge at 42nd Street temporarily upset the offensive tactics of the Germans who adopted a more cautious approach. At the same time the success at 42nd Street improved the morale of the Allies who performed a number of valiant rearguard actions on the road to Hora Sparkion. This was one of the main reasons that 12,000 troops were successfully evacuated from Hora Sparkion. The other important reason, which is sometimes overlooked, was the courage and skill of the Royal Navy who lost 2,000 sailors in evacuating soldiers from Crete.

From a New Zealand perspective, particularly as an Aucklander, I have given written prominence to the role of the 21st Battalion in the bayonet charge and from an Australian perspective to the 2/7 Battalion. These two battalions fought side by side at 42nd Street. The 21st Battalion were in the fortunate position to be located between the 2/7 Battalion to the north and the Maori Battalion to the immediate south.

# NEW ZEALAND 21 BATTALION -THE JOURNEY TO 42ND STREET.

After declaring war on Germany on 3 September 1939, the New Zealand Government, 9 days later, advertised for volunteers to join a special force for Overseas Service. The first volunteers were designated the First Echelon and formed the foundation of 4 Brigade of the NZ Division. The 4 Brigade Infantry Unit for the Auckland Province was 18 Battalion. The First Echelon departed for overseas service in early January 1940. The second batch of volunteers from Auckland City, North Auckland and parts of Waikato, entered Papakura Military Camp in January 1940. This second intake was designated the 2nd Echelon and the Auckland Infantry Unit was the 21st Battalion. The Commanding Officer was Lieutenant-Colonel Lloyd Macky, a prominent Auckland lawyer. He had served in WW I and had risen through the ranks to Captain in charge of a Company of the NZ Rifle Brigade. In September 1916, commanding two platoons of the reserve battalion on the Western Front, he advanced to check a German counter-attack on the right flank, a feat that earned him the Military Cross.

A few weeks after entering camp, the new recruits achieved some notoriety when the Government passed legislation prohibiting uniformed troops from carrying beer from hotels. The next morning 150 troops paraded with placards stating 'No Beer No Drill'. The protests were quashed. After three months training, the Battalion embarked for Egypt on 2 May 1940 as part of the 2nd Echelon which also included 22 (Wellington Province) 23 (South Island) and 28 (Maori) Battalions. These four Battalions formed the nucleus of 5 Brigade.



21 BATTALION PARADE ALONG QUEEN STREET PRIOR TO EMBARKATION FOR OVERSEAS SERVICE. IN THE FOREGROUND IS A WHITE TERRIER 'SGT NOODLES' WHO WAS THE BATTALION MASCOT.(HRS)

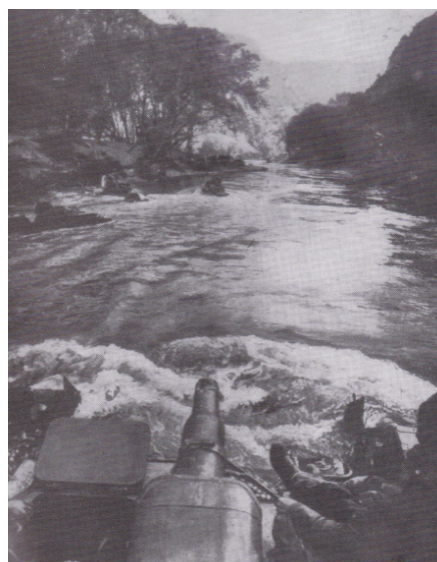
When Germany invaded France in May 1940, the convoy was diverted to Cape Town. It was feared that Italy would eventually join Hitler and the presence of Italian submarines in the Red Sea was too great a risk to use this route to Egypt. Travelling up the West Coast of Africa the convoy arrived in Glasgow on June 16th and was

immediately sent south to Aldershot in order to repel the anticipated German invasion of south-east England. As the invasion threat receded, the Battalion along with the rest of 5 Brigade departed from the UK on 12 January 1941 on a 7 week voyage to Egypt. The Battalion disembarked in Egypt on 8 March 1941. At this time most of the 4th and 6th Brigades had departed for action in Greece.

21 Battalion embarked for Greece on 26 March arriving in Athens 3 days later. After performing some home guard duties around Athens, the Battalion departed for Platamon in Northern Greece on 10 April, arriving the following day. The task of the Battalion was to hold the Platamon ridge and the eastern coast line from the southward advance of the Germans. Detachments of the 6th Mountain Division and the 2 Panzer Armoured Division attacked the 21st's positions on 15 April. This was the Battalion's baptism of fire and the Battalion War Diary recorded the day as follows:

*'Enemy artillery fire commenced about 0600 hours. Very accurate ranging with 5.9's, infantry guns and mortars. About 0700 hrs infantry supported by tanks advanced on right and centre. Our arty did very good work and with small arms fire repelled this attack. Persistent shelling all day by the enemy. Our mortars did very good work. In evening enemy infantry attacked left flank. Very persistent attack which was repelled with some difficulty by C Coy'. (21 Bn War Diary. p.7)*

After effectively stalling two infantry battalions and a hundred tanks at Platamon for 36 hrs, the Battalion was ordered to withdraw about 10 miles to the Pinios Gorge where they were part of Allen force, an Australian Brigade.



PANZERS FORDING THE PINIOS RIVER

The Battalion were given the unenviable task: *“...essential to deny the gorge to the enemy till 19 April even if it meant extinction.”*

To achieve this task the companies of the Battalion were separately located on the south eastern slopes above the narrow gorge. This was on the basis that the Panzers would not be able to cross the Pinios River until a pontoon bridge or a similar structure was erected.

However, the Panzers of 2 Armoured Division continued their aggressive tactics and found a suitable crossing of the Pinios River and attacked the forces at the western exit of the gorge. At the same time German troops attacked the eastern flanks of the Battalion. In order to avoid encirclement the separate companies of the Battalion were forced to withdraw.

The entry in the Battalion War Diary for 18 and 19 April stated:

*‘Mortar and artillery registered early on our positions and about midday his main attack developed. Shortly after at least two tanks entered TEMPE VILLAGE. B, C and D companies were pushed back up the hill by tank fire artillery and machine guns. Some tanks proceeded up the GORGE and fire from mortars across the river knocked out our anti-tank guns. Bn forced to withdraw up hills. Some of the Battalion crossed the hills and made down to M.T. on flat behind Australian position. Remainder were forced to stay in the hills. Transport were fortunate enough to get some of the trucks and personnel out under fire. Convoy travelled all night and arrived at MOLOS at 1200 hrs. Afternoon spent resting and waiting for others of the Battalion to arrive.’ (21 Bn War Diary. p.7)*

However, some sections of A Company remained at the western exit of the gorge and with Australian units and NZ gunners temporarily halted the advance of the German infantry. But with the arrival of tanks, the Germans broke through A Company’s lines. Sergeant-Major Lockett in a desperate attempt to halt the advance rammed the leading



tank with his Bren-Gun carrier and forced it off the road. He won 21 Battalion's first Military Medal but was killed at 42nd Street.

Recriminations followed from the action at Pinios Gorge. The Australians said 21 Battalion withdrew without advising them and vice versa.

As no rendezvous point had been specified for the various companies of 21 Battalion withdrawing through the foothills, and with no radio or other contact, isolated groups of men made their way south, on foot, with the hope of evacuation. From 19 April onwards the Battalion ceased to operate as a complete unit. As a result of the hasty and unplanned withdrawal from the Pinios gorge, the lack of transport and the difficult topography, many did not make it to the evacuation beaches south of Athens. Consequently a total of 235 troops of the Battalion were taken prisoner. The remnants of the Battalion arrived in Crete on Anzac day.

On arrival in Crete the total strength of 21 Battalion was only 237. Consequently two NZ Engineer companies (7 Field Company and 19 Army Troops Company) already in the area were attached. However, over the next 3 weeks about 150 soldiers of the Battalion managed a series of hazardous and intrepid escapes from Greece including Lt. Colonel Macky who with other survivors was hospitalised with dysentery. With most of these later arrivals fit for service, the Battalion's strength, prior to the invasion, was 376, all ranks.





RAGGED NEW ZEALAND, AUSTRALIAN AND BRITISH TROOPS  
DISEMBARK AT SUDA BAY AFTER THEIR EVACUATION FROM MAINLAND  
GREECE. ATL REFERENCE: DA-01611



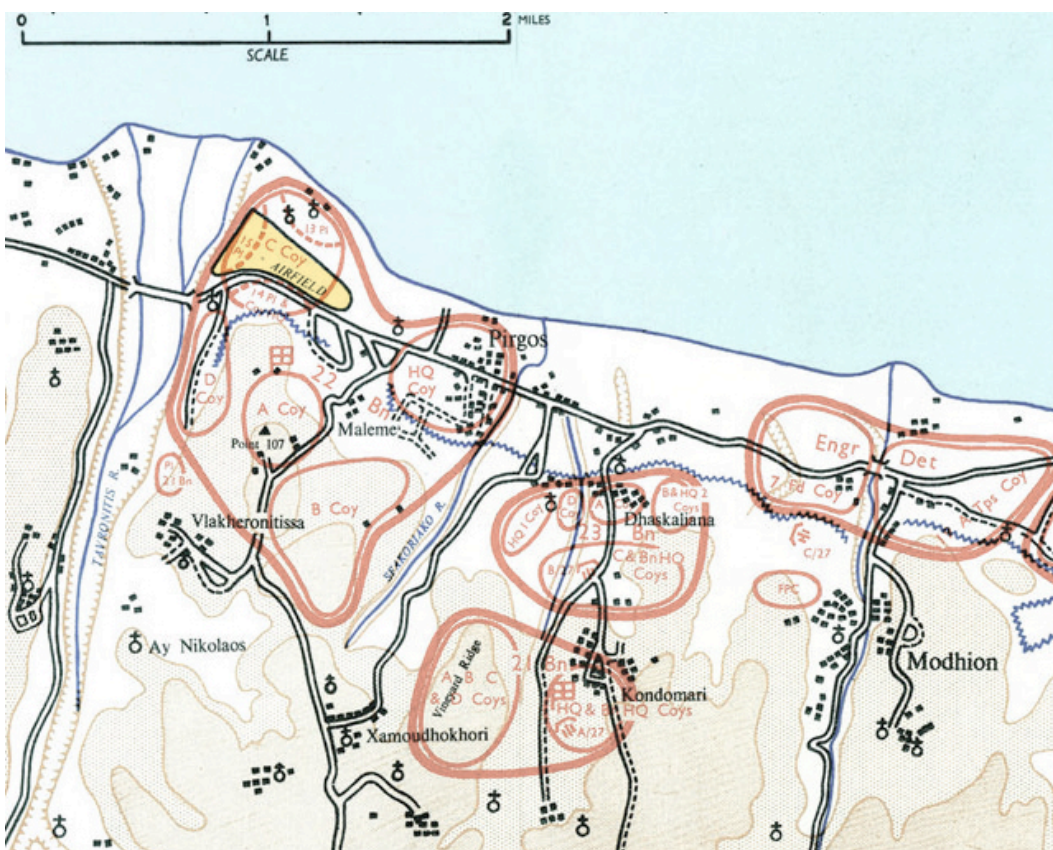
LT-COLONEL JOHN M ALLEN  
(REGIMENTAL NUMBER: 2562)

On 17 May, Lt-Colonel John Manchester Allen was appointed as CO of the Battalion. Lt-Colonel Allen was born in England in 1941 but raised in NZ. He had studied at Cambridge University obtaining an MA and an LLB. On enlistment he was a farmer from Morrinsville and a Member of Parliament for Hauraki. He was killed in action at Sidi Rezegh on 28 November 1941.

Along with the other units of 5 Brigade, commanded by Brigadier James Hargest, 21 Battalion were allotted the task of defending Maleme airfield. However, with its depleted

numbers, the Battalion was assigned a secondary role defending an area of rising ground between the villages of Xamoudhokhori and Kondomari, to the south east of Hill 107, the critical hill overlooking Maleme airfield. 22 Battalion defended the airfield and 23 Battalion located immediately to the east of 22 Battalion were given the role of counter-attacking if the Germans broke through the forward lines of 22 Battalion. 28 Battalion were held in reserve 4 miles east of the airfield in case of a sea landing a few miles east along the coast.

The position of the 21(lower centre), 22 (upper left) and 23 (middle) Battalions in relation to Maleme Airfield is illustrated below:



21, 22 AND 23 BATTALIONS, MALEME 20 MAY

By 'OPERATION INSTRUCTION NO.4 from HQ 5 Infantry Brigade dated 18 May '41, the task of 21 Battalion was outlined in Item '8' as follows:

*“ 21 Bn (Battalion) will remain in present position (933563) and be prepared*

*(a) In the event of enemy organised movement from the WEST of TAVRONITIS River to move and hold line of the river facing WEST from 22 Bn left flank on river to 935568. Two platoons with one mortar will take up a holding position along this west flank forthwith.*

*(b) In the event of 23 Bn being ordered forward, to occupy that unit's present position and be prepared to launch a further counter-attack on the beach or aerodrome.”*

In accordance with instruction (a), a platoon of 21 Battalion was located to the south-west of 22 Battalion adjoining the Tavronitis River. This platoon of 30 men was led by Lieutenant Anderson and was mainly comprised of non-infantry truck drivers and related service personnel. Their task was to '...observe and report all unusual movement in areas to the west and south-west ....' and to strengthen 22 Battalion's western flank. However, the detachment was isolated from 22 Battalion, had no radio or telephone and located 2km from 21 Battalion headquarters, their task could be better described as a suicide mission.

The Battalion's War Diary for 19 May noted:

*'Early morning raids by 109's. Raid about midday. 1900 hrs 9 bombers attacked drome followed by 109's. Quiet night.'*

This was the last quiet night the Battalion experienced on Crete. The next day, Tuesday 20 May, the German paratroopers arrived at about 8am. In comparison with the areas defended by 22 and 23 Battalion, only small groups of paratroopers landed near

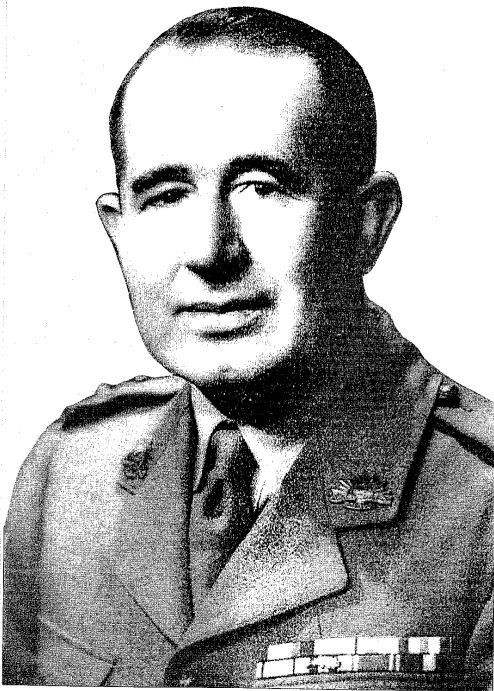
the Battalion's position. During the day, Allen received no orders from 5 Brigade HQ. The Battalion War Diary described 20 May as a:

*'Fairly quiet day for the 21 Battalion.'*

Lt. Anderson's platoon did not have a quiet day. Anderson was killed in the first few minutes. Surrounded by paratroopers, the platoon could not make contact with either 21 or 22 Battalions. However, most of the platoon managed to withdraw later that night.

At 0200 hrs on 21 May most of 22 Battalion withdrew from the high point of Hill 107 after Hargest failed to reinforce their position with 23 Battalion. Later that afternoon, 22 Battalion HQ and other sections moved into Kondomari. Allen had still not received any orders from 5 Bde HQ but at 0040 hrs (Wednesday 22 May ) received orders to counter-attack the left flank of Hill 107 in conjunction with a counter- attack on Maleme Airfield by 20 and 28 Battalions. At 0700 hrs Allen launched the counter-attack and re-captured the wireless station and the village of Xamoudhokhori. However, under heavy fire they were forced to withdraw to their original lines. With the failure of the counter-attack by 20 and 28 Battalions to take Maleme Airfield, the decision was made that night to withdraw 5 Brigade to the east of the Platanias River. Scrambling over the hills, the Battalion moved further eastward over the next few days until by the evening of the 6th day of the Battle (26 May) the Battalion was located near the coast about 3km west of Hania in an area known as Hospital Hill Ridge. By this time 180 soldiers of the Battalion had been killed, missing or wounded.

# AUSTRALIAN 2/7 BATTALION - THE JOURNEY TO 42ND STREET



LIEUTENANT-COLONEL T G WALKER  
DSO, ED

The 2/7 Battalion was one of 4 battalions (the other three were the 2/5, 2/6 and 2/8 battalions) recruited from volunteers in Victoria in October 1939. These 4 battalions formed the 17<sup>th</sup> Brigade of the 6<sup>th</sup> Australian Division and sailed for overseas service in April 1940.

The 2/7 Battalion was commanded by Lieutenant-Colonel Theo Walker, an accountant from Melbourne. In the Australian Dictionary of Biography he was described as...

*'....a short, quiet and self assured man who was considered fearless by his soldiers.'*

After training in Palestine and Egypt, the 2/7th played a major role in Operation Compass, the British and Commonwealth action in 1940/41 to drive the Italians



out of Western Egypt and Libya. On 5 January 1941, the Battalion captured the heavily-fortified port of Bardia. In this action the 16th and 17th Australian Brigades (about 6,000 men) defeated three Italian divisions taking 40,000 prisoners and a mass of military equipment including 200 field guns and 700 motor vehicles. For his actions at Bardia, Walker was awarded the DSO. His citation read:

*At Bardia on 3rd January 1941, Lt.-Col Walker showed great ability in a very confused situation. His sound planning and leadership under fire inspired his Battalion in its fighting during the nights of 3rd and 4th January, and these attributes and his execution of orders were the chief contributing factors in the success of 17th Australian Infantry Brigade operations.'*

The Battalion also undertook an active part of the capture of Tobruk (21 January) and Benghazi (6 February) where the Allied thrust into Libya halted some 500 miles west of the Egyptian border.



AUSTRALIANS ADVANCE INTO BARDIA (AWM 069221)

Reforming after its Libyan exploits, the 2/7 Battalion comprising 760 officers and men did not arrive in Greece as part of 'W' Force until 12 April 1941, some 6 days after the Germans invaded. After being transported north to Larissa, the Battalion, in common with other Anzac units, retreated to the southern evacuation beaches pursued by the Luftwaffe and the Wehrmacht. At Kalamata, located on the southern coastline of the Peloponnese, the Battalion boarded the SS Costa Rica, a Dutch ship, in the early hours of 27 April 1941. Including the 2/7 Battalion, there were 2,600 troops on board the Costa Rica. However, the ship was sunk by German bombers in the afternoon but accompanying destroyers saved all of the troops minus their weapons and most of their

personal equipment. Trans-shipment to the destroyers was not without its dangers. Private Philip 'Bluey' Hurst of the 2/7 Battalion recorded that:

*As the HMS Defender departed, the Costa Rica gave a terrible lurch and keeled over until the water came almost up to the deck level on that side. She righted herself somewhat but now had a decided list to starboard. Most of us felt that she came very close to rolling over right then. We were told to, as many as possible; line the port side to help balance the ship. As I left to board the HMS Hereward the deck was sloping so steeply that it was difficult to keep one's footing on the slippery surface. The hundreds of spent cartridges under foot certainly didn't help". (Source: [www.gumrak.net/phil/chapter9](http://www.gumrak.net/phil/chapter9))*



PTE PHILIP 'BLUEY' HURST. VX5962

Although pleased to disembark at Suda Bay later that evening, Hurst remembers the first days on Crete as:

*"...we were a sorry looking lot. Few of us had any weapons or equipment and most lacked tin hats and few had mess gear with many not having shaving gear. As time passed the lack of mess gear, very sorely missed, bothered us. We had to eat and drink out of tins that had to be constantly changed as they tended to rust and with their deep joins, were hard to get really clean. One was constantly scrounging for new tins. I was fortunate enough to have carried my knife, fork and spoon in my pocket, but many were not so lucky and were always force to borrow. Altogether our eating arrangements were a source of a lot of discomfort. Although it was spring time, it was very cold most nights. As we of course could not light fires, we spent some miserable nights trying to get warm. A greatcoat would have been a big help but none of us had one". (Source: [www.gumrak.net/phil/chapter9](http://www.gumrak.net/phil/chapter9))*



The Battalion was rearmed with rifles and some machine guns from the Australian 2/2 and 2/3 Field Regiments and was formed into 5 companies “A” to “E”. A sixth company “F” was formed from the remnants of the 2/5 and 2/6 Battalions as two-thirds of the personnel of these two battalions were trans-shipped direct from Greece to Palestine.

Early in May, the Battalion was moved to the small village of Georgioupolis on the northern coast about 60km south-east of Hania and 40km west of Rethimno. Georgioupolis and Rethimno were part of the Central Sector for the defence of Crete commanded by the Australian Brigadier George Vasey. The Central sector was to be defended by the newly formed Australian 19th Brigade comprising the following infantry units:

- 2/1 Battalion
- 2/7 Battalion
- 2/8 Battalion
- 2/11 Battalion

Brigadier Vasey had two main tasks:

- a) To prevent a seaborne landing in Georgioupolis Bay and in particular along the beach which extended some 10 km to the east of Georgioupolis. The 2/7 and 2/8 battalions were allotted this task.
- b) To defend the airfield and harbour at Rethimno with the 2/1 and 2/11 Battalions

While preparing to defend the coastline, the taverns in Georgioupolis provided the troops with the opportunity to imbibe in Retsina, the local wine and the home distilled and highly intoxicating raki. However, the combination of frustration with their living conditions, empty stomachs and intoxicating spirits led to some disturbances. The Brigade HQ issued the following warning:

1. *During the short period that this force has been in the Neo Khorian area, 19 cases of crime by AIF personnel have been reported to this headquarters by civilian authorities. These all involve injury to civilians or damage to their property.*
2. *The number of soldiers in our ranks responsible for these offences is fortunately very small. But the ill repute which they bring to the AIF as a whole is out of all proportion to their number.*

*(Source: Bolger et. al )*

However, interaction with the locals was not all negative. Hurst mentioned that he and a friend obtained permission to visit an isolated village to buy some bread and honey.

*‘Once in the village we were made welcome and shouted a round of free drinks at the café. We were pleased to find that there were some men who spoke good English and they invited us to sit and talk awhile’.*

For the next two weeks the troops dug concealed trenches, erected barbed wire entanglements and laid mines along the beach and through the barbed wire.

On 20 and 21 May, the first and second days of the airborne invasion, the 2/7th saw little action as Georgioupolis was not the destination for any parachute landings. However, during the early evening of Wednesday 21 May, the 2/7th received orders to replace the New Zealand 20th Battalion who were located near the coast west of Hania in the Maleme Sector. The 20th and the 28th Maori Battalion were to launch a counter-attack that night to retake Maleme airfield. The 2/7th was to be trucked to replace 20 Battalion and to defend the area from a possible sea-borne invasion. However, the execution and timing of the transfer did not proceed according to plan. The Battalion’s War Diary for 21 May reported the transfer as follows:

*'Order to move to Hania area on the evening of 21 May. Convoy arrangements faulty and considerable difficulty in finding trucks. Most drivers bomb happy and could not be found. Recce planes detected movement and troops and transport bombed heavily. Considerable delay. Last truck moved at 2200 hours. The transport drivers displayed no eagerness to carry on with the job. A plane 5 miles away sufficient to start a stampede as a result we were considerably delayed in getting trucks away'. (2/7 Bn War Diary))*

The delay was fatal. Two companies of 20 Battalion did not move off until after midnight and did not reach the start line for the attack until 3.30am. The 28th and 20th Battalions met heavy opposition from the fresh paratroopers who landed the previous day and with typical German thoroughness had laid mines and booby traps in front of their defensive lines. The two battalions made slow progress and with daylight the initiative passed to the Germans and the counter-attack failed.

For the next two days 2/7 was located west of Hania on 'beach defence' although the Royal Navy had destroyed the sea invasion on the night of 21/22 May. However, early on the morning of 24 May, 2/7 took up a new position on the eastern side of Prison Valley near Perivolia facing the 3rd Parachute Regiment. With 2/8 on their left flank, 2/7 Battalion sent out patrols that were engaged in skirmishes with the paratroopers but no major attack was launched by the Germans. However for the next 6 days from 26-31 May, the 2/7th would be continuously in the thick of the battle.

# GERMAN / AUSTRIAN - 141 GEBIRGSJAGER REGIMENT - THE JOURNEY TO 42ND STREET

The Gebirgsjager (Mountain Soldier) Regiment 141 (GJR 141) was formed on 1 May 1940 and trained at Doberitz, located about 20 km west of Berlin. A Gebirgsjager Regiment comprised 3 battalions each with about 700 soldiers and other support units. It was generally equivalent (although with fewer soldiers) to a Brigade in the NZ and Australian Armies. As part of the 6th Mountain Division the Regiment participated in occupation duties after the fall of France in June 1940.

In March 1941 the Regiment began their preparations for the invasion of Greece by marching, with full packs, for 12 days through Bulgaria to the Greek border. As a vivid

demonstration of their fitness and hardiness, the Regiment covered 430 km in these 12 days-an average of 35 km a day which involved climbing mountains 1500-2000m high.

As part of XVIII Corps of the 12th Army, the Regiment invaded (code-named Operation Marita) Greece from their Bulgarian positions on 6 April 1941 and attacked the heavily defended Metaxas Line. The superior German forces progressively overwhelmed the poorly armed Greek forces.

On 17 April 1941, Oberst (Colonel) Maximilian Jais, a regular soldier, was appointed as Commanding Officer of GJR141.



MAXIMILIAN JAIS (1891-1957). JAIS SERVED AS A LIEUTENANT IN AN ARTILLERY REGIMENT IN WORLD WAR I AND WAS AWARDED THE IRON CROSS. PHOTO TAKEN ON SURRENDER IN MAY 1945 WHEN JAIS WAS A GENERAL MAJOR.

By 18 April, GJR 141 was attacking the Anzac forces (including 21 Battalion) in the Pinios Gorge. The Regiment pursued the Anzac forces southwards as the Allies withdrew to the evacuation beaches south of Athens. Utilising their fitness and mountain training the Regiment attempted, on 23/24 April, to cut off the Anzacs at the Brallos Pass by an out-flanking movement, on foot, over the hills to the west. This was almost successful but the supply lines of the Regiment were stretched and sturdy defence by NZ and Australian artillery units halted the attack. A few days later most of the Anzac Forces had been evacuated from Greece and the Regiment was not involved in further action in Greece.

Although part of 6 Division, the 3 Battalions of GJR 141 were attached to 5 Mountain Division for the invasion of Crete. Regimental HQ including Oberst Jais and I Battalion landed at Maleme on 25 May.



Bundesarchiv, Bild 148-1981-159-22  
Foto: o. Ang. | o. Dat.

ANXIOUS GEBIRGSJAGER, LIFEJACKETS AROUND THEIR NECK, IN A JU 52 ON THEIR WAY TO MALEME AIRFIELD. SOURCE: BUNDESARCHIV BLD 148-1981-159-22

By this date the Allies had withdrawn to Galatas some 15km to the east of Maleme. III Battalion landed the following day and II Battalion on 27 May. By the evening of 26 May, Reg. HQ, I and III Battalions arrived at Pirgos opposite the 2/7, 2/8 and the 2 Greek Regiment. The Regiment had yet to make contact with the Allies.

# DAY 7 - MONDAY

## 26 MAY, 1941

With the fall of Galatas on 25 May, the last opportunity for the Allies to effectively stem the eastwards advance of the Germans had been lost. Galatas was the last line of prepared defensive positions. From now on the Allies would have to fight a series of rearguard actions from hastily prepared and inadequate defensive positions.

Freyberg knew that his exhausted and ill-equipped troops had little chance of holding the growing force of Germans for any length of time. At 9.30am he sent the following cable to Wavell:

*I regret to have to report that in my opinion the limit of endurance has been reached by the troops under my command here at Suda Bay. No matter what decision is taken by the Commanders-in-Chief from a military point of view our position here is hopeless. A small, ill-equipped and immobile force such as ours cannot stand up against the concentrated bombing that we have been faced with during the last seven days. I feel I should tell you that from an administrative point of view the difficulties of extricating this force in full are now insuperable. Provided a decision is reached at once a certain proportion of the force might be embarked. Once this sector has been reduced the reduction of Retimo and Heraklion by the same methods will only be a matter of time. The troops we have with the exception of the Welch Regiment and the Commando are past any offensive action. If you decide in view of the whole Middle East position that hours help we*



*will carry on. I will have to consider how this would be best achieved. Suda Bay may be under fire within twenty-four hours. Further casualties have been heavy, and we have lost the majority of our immobile guns'. (Long p 247-248)*

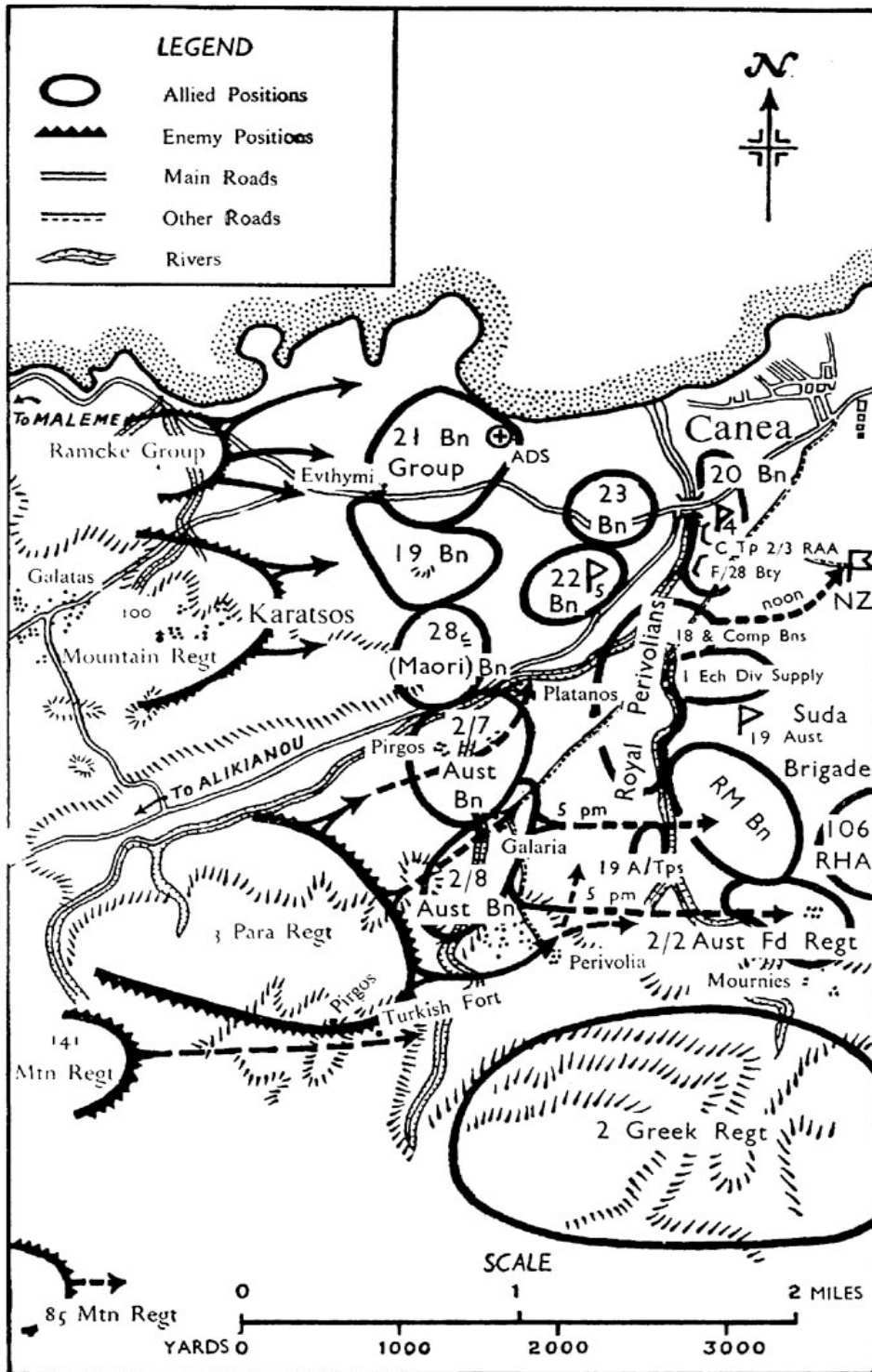
The soldiers in the frontline were now fighting for survival. Freyberg ordered a new line of defence at Hospital Hill Ridge, some 1500m east of Galatas and a similar distance west of Hania. As illustrated on the Map overleaf, the line ran from the coast west of Hania (Canea on the map) to Perivolias and the foothills on the eastern side of Prison Valley.

The frontline was in the Souda Bay sector which was commanded by Major-General Weston of the Royal Marines. Freyberg told Puttick that he and the NZ Division were now under Weston's command. This decision was to have fatal consequences.

Freyberg's orders to Puttick at 4am that morning were:

*'.....You must hold them on that line and counter-attack if any part of it should go. It is imperative that he should not break through.....' (Davin p.326)*

Freyberg directed that the NZ 5 Brigade (21, 22, 23 and 28 Battalions plus 19 Battalion from 4 Brigade) was to hold the line for all of 26 May until midnight/early morning the following day when they would be relieved by Force Reserve consisting of 1 Welch, the Northumberland Hussars and 1 Rangers. These battalions were all fully-equipped units that had not fought in Greece and had seen little action since 20 May.



HOSPITAL HILL RIDGE 26 MAY 1941 (DAVIN P. 332)

Freyberg considered that holding this line was essential as some 80 tons of food and ammunition and a force of British Commando's were to be landed at Souda Bay that evening and these supplies had to be unloaded and distributed if an orderly withdrawal was to be implemented. The 2/7 and 2/8 Battalions, also under Weston's command, were to remain in the line for 2 days (until dark on Tuesday 27 May) protecting the flank of Force Reserve.

After a day in 'reserve' experiencing heavy aerial dive bombing and machine gunning, at 0300hrs 21 Battalion was given orders to defend the northern end of the line adjoining the coast. Hospital Hill Ridge was so named as it was west of the main tented hospital and the site of an Advanced Dressing Station (ADS). The Battalion's strength was now down to 170 men and it was reformed as 21 Battalion Group (21 Bn Gp) by the addition of 130 troopers from Divisional Cavalry (under Major John Russell), by 90 sappers from 7 Field Company (under Captain JB Ferguson) and 70 soldiers from A Company of 20 Battalion under Lieutenant OW Washbourne. With the establishment of the newly-formed 21 Battalion Group, Allen now had 460 troops under his command. The troops of 21 Bn Gp had only a few hours of darkness to prepare their positions on the bare, rocky slopes of Hospital Hill Ridge. Picks would have been required to make any impression on the hard ground but none were available. Rocks were gathered and small sangars were formed to lie behind. However, these sangars gave no protection from the burning sun or the attention of German spotter planes that casually flew over their lines directing accurate mortar fire onto their positions and occasionally dropping hand grenades out the window. From 0930hrs dive-bombing commenced. Cody recorded that:

*'Some of the bombs were delayed action ones and, the hillside being too hard to penetrate, they rolled down the hill before exploding. This was probably the most nerve-racking experience the sorely tried troops had experienced. (Cody21. p.98)'*

On the forward slope of Hospital Hill, casualties increased and HQ Company and Ferguson's engineers withdrew to the reverse slope of the ridge that provided more protection. When Colonel Allen heard that the right front was apparently breaking, he personally led a reserve squad of Divisional Cavalry up to the front ridge, and by 1.30 p.m. the situation was stabilised. Other sections were forced from their positions but counter-attacks by the Div. Cav who were in reserve restored the line. The Bn Gp managed to hold out to nightfall. Cody described the day as follows:

*'Casualties during the day were four officers and 80 other ranks. It was the worst day and the greatest test of endurance 21 Battalion Group had undergone. Odd cases of hysteria were not to be wondered at under the circumstances It was just as well the half-dazed troops did not know the chaotic state of affairs behind them. There was a near breakdown of communication and control between Force Headquarters, Divisional Headquarters, and Brigade Headquarters.'* (Cody21. p 99)

19 Battalion defending the left flank of 21 Bn Gp experienced a similar day to that of 21 Bn Gp but managed to hold on.

South of 19 Battalion, the ground was defended by the 28 Bn and was similarly hard and stony. However, the Bn had undertaken some work on this part of the line on the previous day. At 0530hrs a reconnaissance plane flew over the 28 Bn position and an hour later aerial strafing began and continued for most of the day.

A Coy and the left flank experienced concerted attacks all day and casualties mounted. As evening fell, the enemy switched the attack to the left flank and B Company's position. 12 platoon under Lieutenant H O Stewart (killed at 42nd Street) experienced continuous mortar fire that killed two men and the platoon temporarily withdrew. However, Dittmer ordered the platoon to return to the line. Two platoons of the enemy moved forward to occupy what they thought was a vacant position. However,

Lieutenant Stewart set up an ambush and when the enemy was within 50 yards of the line the platoon unleashed sustained fire from 3 Brens, two Thompson guns, High Explosive grenades and 2 captured Spandau. Cody reported that:

*‘The ambushed Germans were almost annihilated. The survivors took shelter in houses on the roadside but were ferreted out and dealt with’ (Cody28.p 116).*

Just behind the line, the 22 and 23 Battalions were in reserve ready to counter-attack if there was a break in the line.

The southern end of the line was defended by the 2/7 and 2/8 Battalions and by 2 Greek Regiment. In the early morning, heavy bombing of the southern end of the line was followed by an attack by the remnants of 3 Para. The point of attack was a gap between 2/8 Bn and 2 Greek and the paratroopers penetrated towards the outskirts of Perivolia exposing the rear flanks of 2/8 Battalion. However, action by Captain C Coombes of B Company in reorganising the line prevented further advances of the paratroopers before midday. However, in the late afternoon further bombing and strafing of the 2/8 position forced the Bn to withdraw to Mournies. The paratroopers entered Perivolia and Galaria exposing the left flank of 2/7 Battalion. At 6.30pm Lt. Col. Walker reported that all his companies were firing and at 7.30pm that two of his companies had been penetrated but he was counter-attacking.

By early evening the line was under increasing strain and so were Weston, Puttick and the Brigade commanders Hargest and Vasey. One of the reasons the Germans did not break through is that in the afternoon 85th Mountain Regiment at the southern end of the enemy offensive line were severely attacked by their own bombers. Consequently, the German commanders adopted a more cautious approach, particularly in the application of aerial bombing.

At 1745hrs Weston met with Puttick at NZ Divisional HQ on the southern outskirts of Hania. Puttick indicated to Weston that the frontline of 5 Brigade was under pressure and may have to withdraw before they were relieved by Force Reserve. He also stated that the 19 Australian Brigade (2/7 and 2/8 Battalions) were in a similar situation. Weston contacted Vasey (who was under his command and not Puttick's command) and he told Weston that it was not possible for his Brigade to hold their present line for another 30 hours i.e until dark on 27 May and that both Brigades should withdraw to a shorter line east of Souda Bay. Weston stated that he was unable to make a decision on withdrawal and would need to contact Freyberg and set off for Creforce HQ.

From 1900-2200hrs Puttick received a series of reports from Vasey stating that if he did not withdraw immediately he would be surrounded by the Germans. During this 3 hour period Puttick sent wireless message to Freyberg's HQ but received no response. At this time Freyberg was not at his HQ but was down at the Souda Bay docks ensuring that essential supplies were unloaded. At 2215 hrs Puttick received a wireless message from Freyberg's HQ stating that as he was under the command of Weston he would receive any orders from Weston. Meanwhile Vasey and Hargest urged Puttick to authorise a withdrawal even though this was contrary to Freyberg's order earlier in the day. At 2230 hrs, Puttick, exasperated at not receiving any orders from Weston and under increasing pressure from Hargest and Vasey, authorised the withdrawal of Hargest's 5 Brigade. Vasey followed Hargest in withdrawing. It is noted that sections of both brigades had already started withdrawing prior to Puttick's order. Before he made this decision Puttick sent his intelligence officer Captain Robin Bell to Weston's HQ to inform Weston that both Brigades were withdrawing. However, Weston had moved his HQ to 42nd Street and when Bell finally got to Weston's HQ he was prevented from speaking to Weston.

Despite the pressure from Hargest and Vasey, Puttick took full responsibility for countermanding Freyberg's order. In the NZ Division Report on Crete he stated:

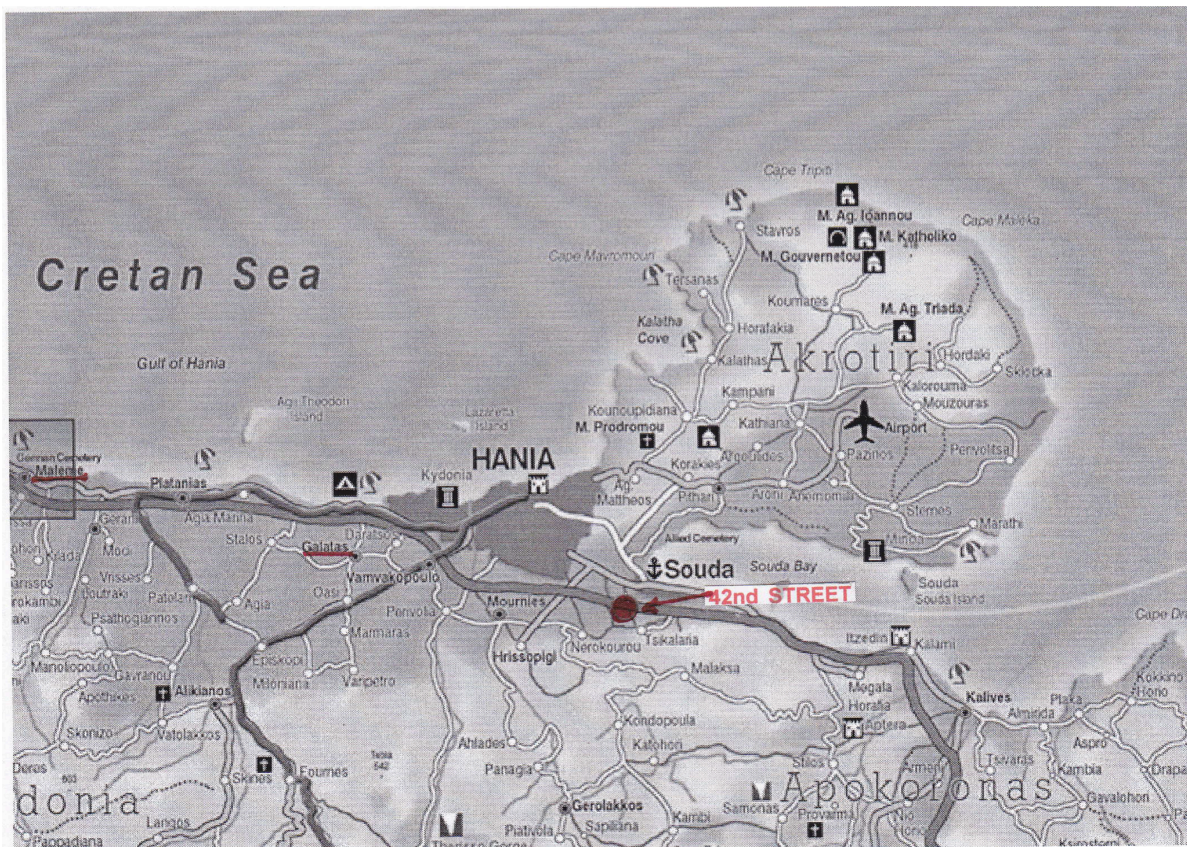
*'In any case the tactical decision had so altered since the issue of the order by the C-in-C that it could only be observed at the expense of sacrificing 19 (Aust) Inf. Brigade. The withdrawal of both brigades had already commenced, moreover, and the utmost confusion would have resulted had an attempt been made to cancel the movement' (Davin p.349.)*

This succession of events would have tragic consequences for 1 Welch Battalion and Force Reserve who entered the front line just after midnight on the understanding that 5 Brigade were covering their left flank. However, early in the morning they discovered that there were no supporting troops on their left and the area was occupied by the Germans. Surrounded on 3 sides, Force Reserve was slaughtered. On Crete 1 Welch casualties were 115 killed, 2 wounded and 453 taken prisoner. (Long, p.316).

No other Allied battalion on Crete had more soldiers killed. The impact of this tragic event was heightened by the fact that 1 Welch had not been sent to Greece, were fully armed and supplied and saw little action before 27 May and then were needlessly wasted. In his book 'The Struggle for Crete' Ian Stewart, the medical officer for 1 Welch on Crete, forensically analyses the confusion and inadequacies of the Senior Officers responsible for the fate of the 1 Welch Battalion.



# 42ND STREET AND SOUDA BAY: 1940-41



LOCATION OF 42ND STREET TODAY



When Mussolini launched his unprovoked attack on Greece on 28 October 1940, Crete was inevitably drawn into the conflict. Crete was of strategic importance to the Royal Navy as Souda Bay provided one of the few protected harbours in the Eastern Mediterranean. Consequently, in November 1940 the British agreed to establish a garrison on Crete that would primarily protect the proposed Naval Base at Souda Bay. The provision of a British garrison also had the added benefit that it enabled the Cretan Division (the 5th Division) comprising 3 infantry regiments, to be sent to Northern Greece to fight the Italian invaders. The Cretan Division distinguished itself in the capture of the Klisora Pass and in the Battle of Trebeshina. Unfortunately, it was isolated on the mainland when the Germans invaded Crete.



CAPTAIN EDWARD TIDSWELL.  
(SOURCE: MY-CRETE-SITE.CO.UK)



THE SIGN POSTED BY THE ROYAL  
ENGINEERS. SOURCE AWM PO 3731

On 1 November 1940 the 2nd York and Lancaster Regiment arrived on Crete followed by the rest of the 14th British Infantry Brigade on 6 November. Among the Brigade units were 150 men of the 42nd Field Company of the Royal Engineers under Captain Edward Tidswell. The 42nd Field Company were based about 1500m to the west of the naval base at Souda Bay, near the junction of the main road to Hania and a dirt track about 2,000m long that led to the village of Tsikalaria. The locals referred to the dirt track as Tsikalarion Road; its current title. The small village of Tsikalaria was located on the lower slopes of the hills that form the east-west spine of Crete.

The 42nd Field Company named and sign-posted the dirt track '42nd Street'; an oblique reference to the 1933 American musical film "42nd Street". The army's map-makers appreciated the engineers sense of humour and all Allied military maps made reference to '42nd Street'.

In order to accommodate army vehicles, the Field Company graded the surface and gradient of the dirt track and piled the surplus material on both sides of the street. From then on 42nd Street was referred to as a 'sunken road'. Given the congested nature of the Souda Bay dockyard and its vulnerability to air attack, the area around 42nd Street east to the Souda dockyard became the main supply depot for the Allies. A Deauville rail track (about 2 feet wide) was built from the dockyard to various depots containing supplies of food, ammunition, fuel and equipment. I have been unable to find any detailed descriptions or maps of 42nd Street and the surrounding area and have mainly relied on the following two sources of information.

1. 'Climax in Crete' by Theodore Stephanides, Faber and Faber, London. 1946
2. An interview with Malcolm Coughlan (19 Battalion-Reg. No. 4797) on 2 June 2010.

Theodore Stephanides was an Army medical doctor with a Cypriot Pioneer Company based in the village of Tsikalaria. He was also fluent in Greek and a noted biologist, scientist and poet. After evacuation from Greece, the Pioneer Coy dug trenches and fortifications and other light engineering works in and around 42nd Street. Most of the Company were unarmed and had little military training. After landing at Souda Bay, Stephanides reported:

*'We first followed the main road towards Canea (Hania) and then branched to the left down a tree planted highway known as Tobruk Avenue. A light Deaucaville railway ran parallel with the road` and there were several very conspicuous store houses on one side of Tobruk Avenue and a petrol dump on the other'. (p. 30)*

Tobruk Avenue is not a local street description but appears to be a road running some 200m east and parallel to 42nd Street. Stephanides commented that:

*All the dumps in the Suda area must have been very obvious to aerial observation with the railway lines running through them and I could not understand why the Germans had not bombed them so far'*

What is obvious on the ground can be unclear from the air, particularly as Stephanides describes the surrounding countryside as covered with *'...olive groves and orchards of orange and lemon surrounded by cactus hedges'*. One of the few positive features of the Allies Crete campaign is that their positions were well-camouflaged and the Germans totally underestimated the size of Creforce. Stephanides described 42nd Street in the following terms:

*'This, in spite of its impressive title was just a rough sunken road winding through fields and olive groves'. (p. 44)*

## And that the village of Tsikalaria

*“... was a pretty little village of perhaps 500 inhabitants, built on the north slope of a hill about one mile south-west of Suda. The streets were crooked and narrow , the one or two storied houses were old and had little projecting porches and balconies, and their fissured walls were daubed with white or blue plaster.”*

Malcolm Coughlan (4797) of the 19th Battalion was wounded on the first day (20 May) of the Battle when an explosive bullet hit him in his right hand while operating a Bren Gun on the outskirts of Galatas. A Field Dressing Station for the walking wounded was established adjacent to 42nd Street and Matt spent 5 days there with other wounded soldiers.



MALCOLM COUGHLIN-ON  
FURLOUGH MID 1943 (M  
COUGHLIN COLLECTION)

He described the facility as follows:

*‘It was run by the British Army with British Doctors. The post, according to British regulations did not open until 9 am and at 9 am every day the German planes came over. There was always a bit of a scrap so it was cancelled and they wouldn’t open at any other time of the day. Only about half dozen soldiers got their wounds dressed each day’.*

Malcolm did not have his wound dressed until he got back to Alexandria. The disorganisation at 42nd street was symptomatic of the Crete Campaign. He also confirmed the presence of stores of food, clothing, tools, petrol and ammunition around 42nd Street.

*“We (the wounded) were surrounded by all this high explosive.”*



One of tragedies of the Battle of Crete was that much of this essential equipment from picks and shovels to food and ammunition never got to the frontline troops.



42ND STREET-JUNE 2011 (PHOTO TAKEN BY REBECCA MACKY)

# TUESDAY 27 MAY 1941- DAY 8 OF THE BATTLE OF CRETE: THE BAYONET CHARGE AT 42ND STREET.

## Anzac Withdrawal to 42nd Street

When Puttick reluctantly conceded to withdraw from the frontline, he sent the following signal at 2215 hrs to the units of 5 Brigade:

*A line is being formed two miles west of Souda at approximately the junction of two converging roads. Beyond this line all troops must go. Units will keep close together, liaison where possible to guard against sniper attack. 5 Brigade units in general will hide up in area along road between Souda and Stylos turn-off. Hide-up areas for units will be allotted by "G" staff on side of road*

*after passing through Souda. Bde HQ will close present location at 2300 hrs and travel at head of column. Will then set up adjacent to Stylos turn-off. A dump of rations boxes already opened is situated near the main bridge on main Canea Road also some still at DID. Help yourself. It is regretted that NO further transport is available for evacuation of wounded. There is possibility of a dump of ammunition being on roadside near main ordnance dump. Take supplies as you pass'. (Cody 21. p.99)*

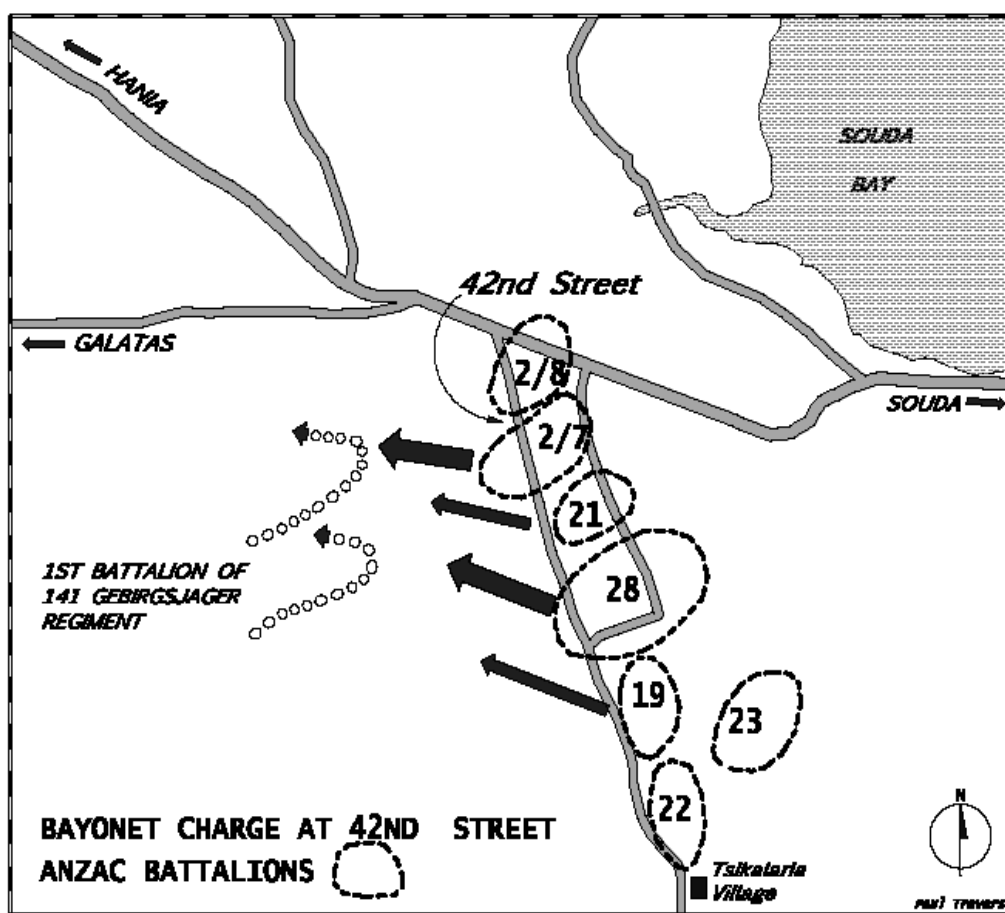
The 'line' mentioned in the signal was 42nd Street.

Around mid-night on 26 May most of the weary Anzacs of the 5 and 19 Brigades began their 7.5 km trek to 42nd Street. Lt. Col. Allen reported that at 2359 hrs 21 Battalion Group "*withdrew without incident*". The Battalion's casualties for the day had been about 80 including 4 officers wounded.

23 Battalion was given the difficult task of providing the rearguard and by 0100 hrs were the last unit to retreat from the Hospital Hill line. Disengaging from an advancing enemy is one of the most difficult infantry tasks and must be undertaken without alerting the enemy. If the retreat is discovered by the enemy, then it offers a perfect opportunity for the enemy to launch an attack as the retreating troops are out of their concealed defensive positions and have their backs exposed to fire. For exhausted, hungry troops the challenge of disengaging is magnified. Furthermore, in the dark it is difficult to distinguish friend from foe. The problem in disengaging from Hospital Hill Ridge was compounded because the Germans for the first time dropped parachute flares from night-flying planes. These flares lit-up the night sky exposing the retreating troops. With nerves already strained by 7 days of continuous combat the flares created further chaos and confusion.

Anzac units started to arrive at 42nd Street about 4am on Tuesday 27 May. The placement of the units along the north-south axis of 42nd Street was largely determined

by their time of arrival. As illustrated on the following map, the under-strength 2/8 Battalion was allotted the very northern end of the Street covering the Main Hania to Souda Bay Road. A platoon of the 2/1 MG Battalion, under Sergeant Billett, set up its Vickers MG's to fire on any advance along the Main Road.



42ND STREET-27 MAY 1941

Next in line was the 2/7 Battalion. Walker placed two companies forward of the Street. C Company under Major Miller was located on the right flank and D Company under Captain St. Elmo Nelson was placed on the left flank. The balance of the Battalion was placed in reserve along 42nd Street.



21 Battalion Group were located immediately south of the 2/7 Battalion. A Company (Captain Trousdale) was placed on the right and A Company 22 Battalion (Lt. Washbourn) on the left. In reserve under an orange grove was HQ Company and 7 Field company and to their left the Divisional Cavalry (Major Russell) detachment. Lt. Col. Allen gave the following instructions to the forward companies:

*'Forward companies to patrol front, defend the locality and attack and destroy parties of the enemy with which they could deal'. (Allen Report. P.7)*

28 Battalion were disposed as follows:

- A Company was on the right flank adjoining 21 Battalion Group.
- B Company was in the centre.
- C Company was on the left flank adjoining 19 Battalion and D and HQ Companies were in reserve.

19 and 22 Battalions defended the southern end of 42nd Street and 23 Battalion the last Battalion to arrive was in reserve.

The above description of the location of the Anzac units along 42nd Street may give the impression that each unit had a defined area. The reality was very different with units and platoons mixed up.

*'...the units were not arranged as methodically on the ground as the Brigade Major had planned. Many men had dropped exhausted where they found themselves at the end of their tiring night march. Thus the men of the 23rd found themselves in touch with both the Maoris and 2/7 Australian Battalion.' (Ross A. 23 Battalion . Historical Publications Branch, Wellington. 1959. p.87)*

After the battalions and other units had arrived at 42nd Street, the various commanding officers agreed that if the enemy got close to them they would open fire and charge. Allen reported that he contacted LT. Col Dittmer and “fixed on scheme of defence” At about 0930hrs 42nd Street was attacked by Stukas and German fighters but there were few casualties.

## 141 Gebirgsjager Regiment

At dawn on 27 May, Lt. Colonel Jais , from his HQ on a hill south-west of Perivolia, surveyed the landscape of olive groves, vineyards and farms east to Suda Bay but could see no sign of enemy movement. The war diary of 141 GJR reported that:

*‘In his verbal orders to his commanders at 0600 hrs....the regimental commander gave instructions to advance east on a wide front, clearing the area en route, to keep close contact between groups, to recce and to watch the flanks. Time of advance 0630 hrs. I/141 in the lead, then Regimental HQ, then III/141 which would skirt the high ground at Pyrgos to the south and go as far as the bridge 1km NE of the hill.’ (141 War Diary. p.1)*

At 0630 hrs 141GJR moved eastward with I Battalion, under Major Forster, leading the advance. The 100 Mountain Regiment was on the left flank of 141 GJR and 85 Mountain Regiment on their right traversing the steep hills to the south. However, meeting little opposition I Battalion advanced rapidly until the Battalion was about a 1 km ahead of Reg. HQ and III Battalion of 141 GJR. About 0930 hrs, a cycle platoon from Reg. HQ was sent forward to make contact with I Battalion but returned an hour later without finding I Battalion.

At this time I Battalion, isolated from the rest of the Regiment, were heading in a NE direction a few hundred metres from and at an angle to 42nd Street. The Battalion

would have been passing through the various supply dumps established by the 42nd Field Company before the invasion and investigating the contents of the dumps. Clearly they were not expecting any major opposition.

## 2/7 Battalion

As the 2/7 Battalion had two companies well forward of 42nd Street, it was the first Anzac unit to sight the approach of about 500 troops of I Battalion of 141GJR. The time was approximately 1100 hrs. Major Miller of C Company sent a patrol under Lt. McGeoch to keep the Germans under observation. McGeoch's patrol moved forward about 200m from their defensive line until they could hear the voices of the Germans who were raiding an abandoned Allied supply dump. Miller then contacted Captain Nelson of D Company to organise a counter-attack. Nelson sent a runner to Lt. Col. Walker who gave approval to attack. The order was given to fix bayonets. The aim was that by getting close to the Germans the ever-present Luftwaffe would not be able to distinguish friend from foe and would be neutralised.

Private H G Passey (VX3987) who was Lt-Colonel Walker's batman reported that:

*'When this order went out it seemed to lift the tension that had been hanging to us for the past few days. The time had come when we were going to show Jerry a few tricks...'* (2/7 Bn War Diary, p.157)

When McGeoch's forward patrol opened fire, Miller sent C Company forward to reinforce the patrol and engaged the enemy. Miller reported that:

*'It took a few minutes to establish superiority of fire and after this was effected the enemy broke and ran'* (Davin, p.377)

SR Carter (VX 15081) was the runner for 13 platoon under Lt McGeoch. He reported

*About 1000 hrs on 26 May(sic) we were told we were to attack the enemy who were then about 250 yards ahead of us mostly on the front of 'D' company which was on our left. Both C and D companies attacked together. After covering about 200 yards we went to ground and opened fire on the enemy who were then very close. Major Miller called for the mortars who fired about 6 bombs and the enemy started to run. We immediately charged forward at them on the order of Maj. Miller who went with us ; during the charge some Maoris came up and joined us. We shot a considerable number of Germans'. ( 2/7 Bn War Diary, Appdx C)*

**Reg Saunders (VX 12843)**  
described what happened next:

*'They came over a rise 50 metres in front. I saw a German soldier stand up in clear view..... He was my first sure kill..... I can remember feeling a moment that it was just like shooting a kangaroo..... Just as remote. After that many Huns appeared and for them and us it was pretty confused.'* (Bolger et.al. p.90).

Suddenly the soldiers in C and D Company of the 2/7th leapt from their positions and with a raucous yell charged at the Germans. The Germans were completely surprised. Reg



SERGEANT REG SAUNDERS WITH FELLOW SOLDIERS OF THE 2/7TH BATTALION IN QUEENSLAND, OCTOBER 1943. SAUNDERS WAS THE FIRST ABORIGINAL COMMISSIONED OFFICER IN THE AUSTRALIAN ARMY. (SOURCE: AWM 057894)

Saunders stated:

*'It was crazy, crazy, the most thrilling few minutes of my life. We were all obsessed with this mad race to slaughter with the bayonets - it wasn't like killing kangaroos any more. When we got there they were real men excited like us and some of them terribly frightened. They were highly trained Germans but they got such a shock'. (op. cit. p.91).*

It was brutal warfare. Private John Peck (VX 9534) recorded the following:

*'Hand-to hand combat was very frightening. You know without a shadow of doubt that if you make a fraction of a mistake, then you're dead. The German knew it and I knew it. It wasn't a question of 'Put up your hands'. No quarter was asked or given. You're dead or you are alive, and if you are alive you move onto the next one. He was fairly big, bigger than me, and he got me through the arm but he was dead fairly soon afterwards. The German bayonets were nowhere as long as ours-ours were 18 inches long. I never felt anything, not even relief'.(Thompson. P.356)*

Miller and Nelson joined the rush forward until Nelson was shot in the shoulder. Lt. Bernard took over and carried the charge forward although wounded. A platoon led by Sergeant Reiter drove the Germans from the protection of the abandoned depot. Although wounded in the head, Sergeant Reiter continued to lead his men forward.

John Peck recorded the chase:

*'They ran and we kept running after them. We were absolutely exhausted-we'd gone from a gallop right down to a crawl. If we had suddenly struck a fresh batch of troops we would have been dead. We were called back. The commanders were shit-scared because their troops were scattered everywhere. We were called back to where we had started and we weren't very pleased about it. We wanted to keep them on the run' (Thompson. P. 357)*

## 28 (Maori) Battalion

At the same time the Maori Battalion attacked:

*(Captain) Rangi Royal took the initiative instructing his runner:*

*“You go and tell C Company they will hear my whistle quite plainly. On the blast of my whistle we (B Company) will charge.*

*The runner that day was 17 year old Rangitepuru Waretini (known as Sonny Sewell).*

*“He blew his whistle and no bugger moved. It wasn’t until he blew it again and he jumped up himself and..... Sam O’Brien of Tē Puke got up with him and started to mea with his rifle (he demonstrated use of the rifle like a Taiaha). You wouldn’t think he was a soldier at all....He had two left feet.... But oh something must have stirred inside him I suppose when he got up and did this. Rangi just raised his staff and went like that (pointed his staff in the direction of the enemy). Chaaarge! And there’s Sam doing like a wero next to him. And of course everybody just got up and into it and boy you get those Tuhoe fellas yelling in Maori, not in English! (Soutar, pp. 147-148 ).*

Captain Baker of A Company reported:

*‘.....As soon as B Company clambered up the bank I waved my men forward*



MAJOR RANGIATAAHUA KINIWE ROYAL  
(SOURCE: AWMM-CENOTAPH DATABASE)

*and was able to keep them under control while section commanders got their men together. B Company were subjected to deadly fire as soon as they commenced to move forward and by the time they had moved to 50-55 yards they were forced to the ground where from the cover of trees, roots and holes in the ground they commenced to exchange fire with the enemy, who had likewise taken up firing position as soon as the attack commenced. I therefore gave immediately orders for A Company to advance. We moved forward in extended formation through B Company and into the attack. At first the enemy held and could only be overcome by Tommy-gun, bayonet and rifle. His force was well dispersed and approximately 600 yards in depth and by the time we met them their troops were no more than 150 yards from 42nd Street. They continued to put up a fierce resistance until we had penetrated some 250-300 yards. They then commenced to panic and as the troops from units on either side of us had now entered the fray it was not long before considerable numbers of the enemy were beating a hasty retreat. As we penetrated further their disorder became more marked and as men ran they first threw away their arms but shortly afterwards commenced throwing away their equipment as well and disappearing very quickly from the scene of battle.....' (Davin, p. 377-378)*





SOLDIERS OF THE 28TH (MAORI) BATTALION. FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: P CLARKE, T BRYERS AND W H COOPER. PHOTOGRAPHER UNIDENTIFIED. FACED WITH THESE MEN CHARGING AT YOU WITH THEIR 18 INCH BAYONETS, IT IS NOT SURPRISING THAT THE GERMAN MOUNTAIN TROOPS CONSIDERED THAT FLIGHT WAS A BETTER OPTION THAN FIGHT.

## 21 Battalion Group

Situated between the 2/7th and the Maori Battalion, 21 Battalion charged forward. Cody reported the charge as follows:

*“The forward Companies of 21 Battalion had scarcely lined the sunken road when they heard yells that could only come from Maori throats. It was a blood-stirring haka. The Australians produced a scream even more spine chilling than the Maori effort and the sight of the Maori Battalion charging with vocal accompaniment sent the whole line surging forward. The forward elements of the enemy did not wait. They threw away their packs and ran. They were shot from the hip and those who hid in the scrub were bayoneted. Some mortar teams that tried to get into action were over-run and dealt with”. (Cody 21.p. 102)*

The charge by 21 Battalion Group was led by Captain Trousdale's A Company followed by A Company of 20 Battalion. Although in reserve, the sappers of 7 Field Company, under Captain Ferguson, quickly followed the leading companies. Captain Ferguson reported as follows:

*“At about 11 o'clock the Germans were attacking strongly when an involuntary attack on our part took place. No order was given but we all fixed bayonets. The Aussies howled on our right and the Maoris bellowed awful cries on our left and we all went headlong into it” (Engineers: War History, p.153)*

Also in reserve were HQ company and they also joined the charge. Fearing that his remaining reserve (Divisional Cavalry) might do the same Lt. Col. Allen ordered Div. Cav. to hold the line at 42nd Street. George Mandeno of Div. Cav. recalled that although ordered to remain at 42nd Street he received an order:

*'The Maoris are out of ammunition. Get a box and take it up to them. So I grabbed a box and met a large Maori coming back sweating and puffing who said:*

*'Those Jerries run too fast for me'. (Writers interview with G Mandeno- 2003)*

Lt. Col Allen reported the charge as follows:

*'Heard Maoris charge and forward companies of 21 Bn went straight in. HQ and Engineers went too before they could be stopped. Maj. Russell informed of position and told to watch and get some troops into right reserve Company's area. Moved forward behind attackers a distance of 1 mile. About 70 dead enemy on Bn front. One med. MG captured by 20th Coy and one light mortar. Some documents and maps from a prisoner passed to Bde. (Allen Report, p.7.)*

Despite the hammering they received the previous day and a harrowing withdrawal by night, the speed with which 21 Battalion supported the bayonet charge demonstrated remarkable spirit. This was not the action of demoralised troops.

Major Hanson, New Zealand's Senior Engineer on Crete, was temporarily in the Maori Battalion area and reported:

*'... men began to go over the top and the charge from 42nd developed. I think 'developed' is the right word. As far as I know there was no definite order although there may have been some previously prepared plan. Sapper Les Adams who was with me called out: 'Come on Boss lets be in' so with my tommy gun and Adams with his rifle we participated in the charge of 42nd Street'. (Engineers: War History. P.155)*

The bayonet charge continued for about 1000-1,500m with the Germans in full flight. However, the attackers came under fire from the advancing III Battalion (commanded by Captain Pelikan) of GJR141 who covered the withdrawal of the remnants of I

Battalion. This halted the Anzac advance and as the attackers were running out of cover from an air attack, the officers ordered a return to 42nd Street.

## 141 Gebirgsjager Regiment (GJR)

The War Diary of 141 GJR reported that at 1020 hrs (German time was 1 hour behind that of the Allies) Major Forster of I Battalion reported back to HQ that:

*A strong enemy counter-attack has just been launched on the left. Request III Battalion to come forward immediately'. (141 War Diary. p.5)*

III Battalion also reported back to HQ that an enemy counter-attack had been launched. However, as the situation with I Battalion was still unknown, Jais gave orders not to attack immediately but to hold the line. The War Diary recorded the following:

*'The enemy attack was stopped forward of the centre of III/GJR by the combined fire of all the heavy weapons. 12 Company which had won a favourable defensive position 200m east of the village of Metoxi Xazaln and also halted the enemy attack'. (141 War Diary. p.5)*

Jais temporarily halted the eastward movement of the Regiment and reorganised the remnants of his force that had been scattered by the Anzac's bayonet charge. This brought the Anzacs some valuable time. However, northern platoons of I/GJR cleared the main Hania to Souda Bay Road west of 42nd Street. At 1340hrs the War Diary recorded the following:

*About 1340 hrs, Major Forster ( the Commander of I/141) arrived at Reg. HQ and reported what had happened to I/141. According to his story the Battalion had come unexpectedly on the English positions 2.5km west of Suda village in thick olive grove country about 1020 hrs. Part of*

*the leading company had run onto a minefield and the Battalion had had heavy casualties in a few minutes. The English threatened to surround the Battalion completely, and therefore the fighting troops were pulled back, suffering further casualties as they came. Most of the officers and many OR (Other Ranks) had been killed or wounded. ((141 War Diary. p.3)*

The underlined phrase above indicates that the officer recording the diary gave little credence to Major Forster's report. Major Forster was clearly confused about the minefield as there is no Allied report of any minefield being laid around the 42nd Street area. If there was a minefield in the area it is unlikely the Anzac senior officers would have contemplated a counter-attack and there are no reports of Allied soldiers killed or wounded by mines. The mortar fire launched by the 2/7 Battalion may have given the appearance of mines exploding but it is likely 'that stumbling on a minefield' offered a better excuse for I Battalion's casualties than a surprise attack by retreating troops considered to be demoralised.

As a result of the bayonet charge Jais adopted a defensive approach moving his regiment to the north-east and the Hania -Souda Road, avoiding any frontal approach to 42nd Street. In the late afternoon the War Diary of the 141 reported:

*'...the weak I/141 on its left and 85 Mtn Regt on the right worried the regimental commander particularly as night was approaching and as there was obviously a superior enemy forward of the battle group. This enemy force was launching counter-attack after counter-attack to restore its situation and appeared to have plenty of ammunition.'* (141 War Diary p.3)

## Withdrawal

Later that afternoon enemy patrols of the 85th Regiment were seen moving across the hills to the south-west of 42nd Street and could cut-off the southward retreat of the two

Brigades to Hora Sfakion on the coast. Consequently after darkness that evening the 2 brigades made their way south to Beritiana and Stylos. In regard to the mention of ‘... counter-attack after counter-attack ..’ in the 141 War Diary, Davin commented that they “...were no doubt mere feints to cover withdrawal”.

That night Warrant Officer Bill Foxwell of the 2/7th scribbled in his pocket diary a nine word epitaph on the action:

*‘Big battle at Suda. Gave Huns a good dishing’  
(P Stanley, Principal Historian, AWM Crete Tour 2002)*

Estimates of the number of Germans killed in the charge at 42nd Street vary. Davin (p. 378) considers that 141/GJR ‘..can hardly have lost fewer than 300 men’. Beevor (p.200) states that: *“In this action the Germans admitted to losing 121 men killed”*

The exact number of Anzacs killed in the charge is also uncertain.

Examination of the NZ War Histories for the various units defending 42nd Street lists the following number of soldiers killed on 27 May 1941.

19 Battalion:	4 Killed
21 Battalion:	4 Killed
28 Battalion:	7 Killed
Div. Signals:	2 Killed
Engineers:	1 Killed
Reserve Motor Transport:	1 Killed
Total:	19 killed

The War Diaries of the 2/7 and 2/8 Battalions list the following killed on 27 May 1941:

2/7 Battalion:	10 Killed
2/8 Battalion:	1 Killed
Total:	11 Killed

It is possible that a few of those listed above may not have been killed in the bayonet charge but in action later that day. However the war diaries do not mention any soldiers killed in skirmishes later that afternoon. However, their stay at 42nd Street was short as German forces were seen in the hills to the west attempting to encircle the retreating Anzacs. That night the Anzacs continued their southward retreat to Hora Sfakion on the south coast fighting a series of valiant rear-guard actions over the next 4 days.



# THE ROAD TO HORA SFAKHION

After withdrawing from 42nd Street during the evening of 27 May, the two Anzac brigades, working in combination, undertook a series of effective rearguard actions over the next 4 days as they tramped over the White Mountains to Hora Sfakion. This was achieved by establishing suitable defensive/ambush points and as the enemy approached sustained firepower was unleashed from Bren Gun and rifle in order to break up the enemy formation forcing him to take cover and reorganise his response. The main body of troops would then slip away while marksmen and snipers covered the withdrawal. For exhausted troops it was a major feat of organisation and coordination between disparate units. A further reason for the successful withdrawal is that after 42nd Street the Germans were reluctant to get too close to the two brigades as the response was similar to that of a cornered animal. This gave the Anzacs valuable time to make their frantic escape.

Even today the White Mountains are a formidable obstacle to any journey southwards. From its base near the village of Alikambos, the White Mountains ascend to a height of some 1000m before reaching the Askifou Plain. With little, if any, food and water, wracked by lack of sleep and with crumbling boots, it required an almost super-human effort in the soaring temperatures of late May 1941. Many did not make it and dropped by the road exhausted.

Most of the Anzacs in the 5th and 19 Brigades arrived at the Askifou plain late on Thursday 29 May. However, the 19th Brigade was given the grim task of manning the last rearguard some 5 km from the beach at Hora Sfakhion. At 3 am on 30 May, the Brigade took up its positions. The 2/7 Battalion was forward with the 2/8 guarding the deep wadi to the west of the road.

In the afternoon of 30th May General Freyberg held a conference with General Weston and Brigadiers Vasey, Hargest and Inglis. Freyberg told Hargest that one of his Battalions would have to remain as there was insufficient space on the last 4 destroyers arriving that night to accommodate both 4 and 5 Brigades. Hargest chose 21 Battalion:

*‘...I sent for Col. John Allen 21st and told him, I have to choose John, your Battalion with its attached troops is the strongest, you yourself are the youngest CO and the freshest.... You have to stay. He took it like a man.’ (Davin. p. 431)*

The 21st was now part of 19 Brigade and Allen met with Vasey and disposed his troops tactically with Div. Cav in a forward position between the 2/8 and 2/7 Battalions. However, at 2000 hrs Allen received orders that the 21st was again part of 5th Brigade which was not to be evacuated that night but the following night 31 May/1 June.

By the end of 30 May all effective resistance on Crete had ended except for the final rearguard of the 2/7 and 2/8 Battalions and some supporting units around the hills above Hora Sfarkion.

At 0500 hrs 31 May, 21 Battalion Group, with the rest of 5 Brigade, commenced their descent to the beach at Hora Sfakion.

*Got a hot cup of tea for men, and rations for breakfast from SPHARKIA. 1000 hrs-100 men (picked from all Coys) under Capt JB Ferguson NZE sent to top of ridge 02310239 to piquet ridge and contact 20 Bn on their left. 50 men (picked from all coys) under Lieut. WGJ Roach 21*

*Bn sent halfway up ridge to 02340236 to observe and command SPHARKIANA ravine. (Allen. p.10)*

The fact that Allen was prepared to give Capt Ferguson, an engineer with no infantry experience, the major role in protecting the Battalions withdrawal indicates that leadership under fire and tactical appreciation was not confined to the infantry units of the NZ Division.

The rations the troops received from 'SPHARKIA' would have been landed by the Royal Navy the previous night.

At 1700 hrs the groups under Ferguson and Roach were recalled and the Battalion moved onto the beach to a chaotic scene.



LT-COL J. B. FERGUSON

*They passed through a grim-faced cordon from 22 and 28 Battalions with rifles loaded and bayonets fixed, ready to use either bullet or steel on any stragglers who attempted to embark before the fighting men. Some had tried, but their fate convinced the mixed crowd of Greeks, Jews, Palestinians from labour units, as well as Australian, English, and New Zealand troops who had thrown away their arms, that the cordon meant to do the job it was there for. Assault landing craft and strings of lifeboats arrived like ghosts from the blackness over the sea, were filled, and disappeared again. The 21st Battalion's turn came at 11.30 p.m. and there were ready hands to help them on board the Phoebe. Steaming hot cocoa and white buttered bread were passed around and, when the ship was fully loaded, 21 Battalion sailed and, in the terse report of the battalion war diary, Arrived Alexandria 1630 hrs. June 1. Arrived Amiryra transit camp 1830 hrs. The Battalion's casualties in Crete were: 33 killed or died of wounds, 33 wounded and 80 prisoners of war (of whom 32 were wounded and 5 died), making a total of 146.' (Cody 21.p.107)*

The 2/7 Battalion were not so fortunate. Although lacking ammunition, food and water, the Battalion spent 30 and 31 May resolutely defending the perimeter of Hora Sfakhion from the encircling Germans. This enabled thousands of troops to be evacuated. However, at 7pm on 31 May Walker received orders to begin withdrawing to the beach at 9 pm that night. The Battalion began to withdraw at 9.30 pm. Major Marshall who was with the last company wrote:

*'I could have no mercy on them and I had to haze them and threaten them and push them into a faster speed... Falls were numerous but I would permit no delay as I knew that time was against us'. (Long p.306)*

In pitch darkness over 'nightmare country' the column finally reached the beach road, some were so tired they fell to the ground and slept. At the allotted time 2/7 column moved down the cliffs to the beach. But the path was jammed with desperate soldiers attempting to 'gate-crash' the column. Progress was slow. At the head of the column, Colonel Walker ordered them to keep hold of the man in front and ensured that officers acting as self-appointed marshals did not impede progress. Finally they reached the shore and Walker sent a group of his men onto a waiting landing craft, while he remained on the beach organising the embarkation of the Battalion. Major Marshall reported:

*'Then came the greatest disappointment of all. The sound of anchor chains through the hawser.... I found Theo (Walker) and we sat on the edge of the stone sea wall. He told me that things were all up and that the Navy had gone.... All our effort and skill wasted'. (Long p.307)*

When the 2/7 Battalion landed on Crete, it contained 31 Officers and 576 OR's. Of the original 607 soldiers, only 72 reached North Africa. The wretched fate of the 2/7 Battalion did not go unnoticed by the New Zealanders:

*‘Thus an occasion tragic in its self-for whatever happened many fine soldiers would have to be left behind-was made more so by the loss of a battalion which had fought well all the time that it was engaged and which in these last days had held out nobly in a position where on its endurance rested the security of the whole force.’ ( Davin. p. 452)*

# ROLL OF HONOUR - KILLED IN ACTION

## New Zealand

The following list has been primarily obtained from the Official War Histories of those NZ units that were at 42nd Street on 27 May 1941. The various Rolls of Honour list 19 soldiers who were killed on that day. Although all of the units had departed from 42nd Street before the end of the day, none of the relevant unit histories mention soldiers who were killed on 27 May after leaving 42nd Street. It is reasonable to assume that all those killed on 27 May were at 42nd Street. The list does not include those who were seriously wounded at 42nd Street and died later.

Biographical details and photographs have been obtained from the Auckland War Memorial Museum-Cenotaph Database

28 (MAORI) BATTALION  
 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant Horton Oliphant  
 Stewart




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<i>Date of Birth:</i>	1907
<i>Parents:</i>	Albert Oliphant and Adeline Celia (nee McKay) Stewart of Whakatane
<i>Marital Status:</i>	Husband of Arline Evelyn Stewart (nee Waugh) married 1929, of Whakatane. A daughter Denise.
<i>Enlistment Number:</i>	4183
<i>Enlistment Address:</i>	32 Landing Road, Whakatane.

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2. Lance-Corporal George Gabriel Bird




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<i>Date of Birth:</i>	1913
<i>Parents:</i>	Joseph and Anni (nee Wharewera) Bird of Murapara.
<i>Marital Status:</i>	Single.
<i>Enlistment Number:</i>	4204
<i>Enlistment Address:</i>	Murapara

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### 3. Lance-Corporal Le Roy Merriman



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*Date of Birth:* 1912

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*Parents:* Tenuka and Roma  
Merriman of Parawai.

---

*Marital Status:* Single.

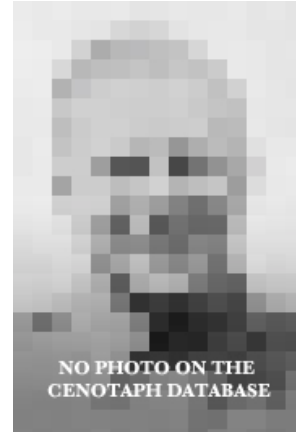
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*Enlistment  
Number:* 25945

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*Enlistment  
Address:* 15 Hardinge Street,  
Auckland.

### 4. Private Wiremu Erueti



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*Date of Birth:* 1905

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*Parents:* Mei Erueti and Erana  
Erueti (nee Rigby), of  
Wairoa

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*Marital Status:* Married to Bessi E. Moses  
Erueti, Ruatoki

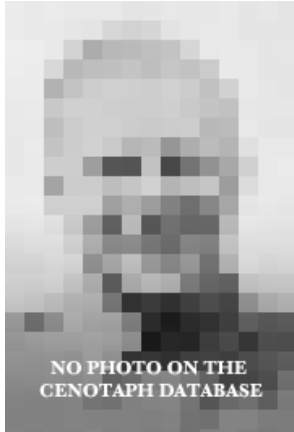
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*Enlistment  
Number:* 6174

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*Enlistment  
Address:* Ruatoki North.

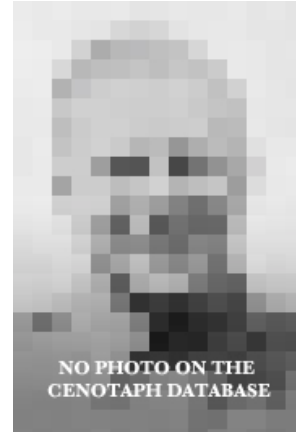
## 5. Private Wiremu Puke Barrett Parete



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<i>Date of Birth:</i>	1918
<i>Parents:</i>	Puke and Ngaurupa Parete of Matamata.
<i>Marital Status:</i>	Single.
<i>Enlistment Number:</i>	25976
<i>Enlistment Address:</i>	Whakatane

## 6. Private Henare Reweti



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<i>Date of Birth:</i>	1912
<i>Parents:</i>	Mate and Kahunte Reweti of Reporoa.
<i>Marital Status:</i>	Single.
<i>Enlistment Number:</i>	39245
<i>Enlistment Address:</i>	Reporoa.

## 7. Private Sonny Rewi



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*Date of Birth:* 1911

---

*Parents:* Son of Amokura Rewi of  
Murupara

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*Marital Status:* Single.

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*Enlistment* 39243  
*Number:*

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*Enlistment* Murupara.  
*Address:*

21 BATTALION

8. Company Sgt-Major Allan Hugh Lockett M.M



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*Date of Birth:* 1905

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*Parents:* George Beattie and Mary Genevive (nee Madden) Lockett.

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*Marital Status:* Married to Mamari Lockett.

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*Enlistment Number:* 20496

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*Enlistment Address:* Bowen Street, Dargaville.

9. Private Kenneth Tudor Brewer



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*Date of Birth:* 1911

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*Parents:* Harry Tudor and Annie Lillian Brewer.

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*Marital Status:* Married to Doris Charlotte (nee Seay) Brewer.

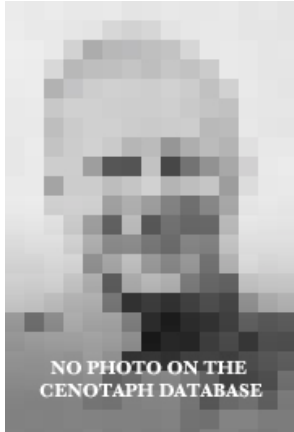
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*Enlistment Number:* 30437

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*Enlistment Address:* Ramarama.

10. Private Arthur Edward Smith



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*Date of Birth:* 1913

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*Parents:* William and Elizabeth Ann  
(nee Scrivans) Smith.

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*Marital Status:* Married to Maina R Smith.

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*Enlistment* 21398  
*Number:*

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*Enlistment* Auckland.  
*Address:*

11. Private Athol William Joyce Brown



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*Date of Birth:* 1914

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*Parents:* William T and Eden H  
Brown of Rehia.

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*Marital Status:* Single.

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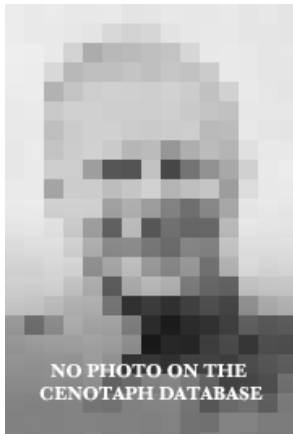
*Enlistment* 21610  
*Number:*

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*Enlistment* Tokatoka.  
*Address:*

## 19 BATTALION

### 12. Private Robert McKay



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<i>Date of Birth:</i>	1914
<i>Parents:</i>	William David and Ann Kinnear McKay of Murchison
<i>Marital Status:</i>	Single.
<i>Enlistment Number:</i>	5389
<i>Enlistment Address:</i>	13 Van Dieman Street, Nelson.

### 13. Private John Percy O'Dea



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<i>Date of Birth:</i>	1908
<i>Parents:</i>	John and Helena Amelia O'Dea of Marton.
<i>Marital Status:</i>	Single.
<i>Enlistment Number:</i>	33885
<i>Enlistment Address:</i>	Mangaweka.

14. Private George William Trillo



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*Date of Birth:* 1916

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*Parents:* Son of Rose Emily  
Trillo of Wanganui.

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*Marital Status:* Single.

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*Enlistment Number:* 33885

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*Enlistment Address:* Okoia

15. Private Raymond Leonard Vesty



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*Date of Birth:* 1915

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*Parents:* James and Henrietta  
Vesty of Hastings.

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*Marital Status:* Single.

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*Enlistment Number:* 37428

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*Enlistment Address:* 701 Nelson Street  
Hastings.



DIVISIONAL SIGNALS -  
ATTACHED TO 5 BRIGADE HQ.

16. Corporal John Dimitrios Melville




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<i>Date of Birth:</i>	1907
<i>Parents:</i>	Constantine and Clara Melville of Auckland.
<i>Marital Status:</i>	Married to Margaret Melville.
<i>Enlistment Number:</i>	6299
<i>Enlistment Address:</i>	38 Lawrence Street, Herne Bay.

17. Signalman John Pringle Rennie




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<i>Date of Birth:</i>	1907
<i>Parents:</i>	Alexander and Elizabeth Mary Rennie.
<i>Marital Status:</i>	Married to Florence Eveline Rennie.
<i>Enlistment Number:</i>	30315
<i>Enlistment Address:</i>	334 Palmerston Road, Gisborne.

## RESERVE MOTOR TRANSPORT

### 18. Driver Arthur Richard Brown



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<i>Date of Birth:</i>	1908
<i>Parents:</i>	John Christian Henry and Evelyne (nee Banchard) Brown.
<i>Marital Status:</i>	Single.
<i>Enlistment Number:</i>	60221
<i>Enlistment Address:</i>	Kaitaia.

## ENGINEERS

### 19. Sapper James Crawford Farmer



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<i>Date of Birth:</i>	1907
<i>Parents:</i>	Alexander and Catherine Farmer.
<i>Marital Status:</i>	Married to Elizabeth Agnes Farmer.
<i>Enlistment Number:</i>	22609
<i>Enlistment Address:</i>	Dunedin

## Australia

I was not able to find a list of the soldiers who were killed on 27 May 1941 or their personal details but will update this document if these become available.

# 42ND STREET MEMORIAL UNVEILED

## - 23 MAY 2014

**42η Οδός – Η Μάχη της Κρήτης**  
**42nd Street – The Battle of Crete**

**English Text:**

During the Battle of Crete, 13,000 Allied troops landed on the island of Crete on May 22, 1941. The battle for 42nd Street was one of the fiercest and bloodiest in the history of the 2nd New Zealand Division.

After seven days of fighting the Allies were in retreat. On the last day of the battle, the 2nd New Zealand Division fought a desperate battle to hold the position.

The battle for 42nd Street was one of the fiercest and bloodiest in the history of the 2nd New Zealand Division. The division was ordered to hold the position for as long as possible.

The 2nd New Zealand Division was ordered to hold the position for as long as possible. The division was ordered to hold the position for as long as possible.

The charge, along with other actions in western Crete, temporarily delayed the enemy's advance – providing extra time for thousands of Allied troops to escape the island.

This memorial is dedicated to the memory of the ANZAC troops at 42nd Street and to all those who fought and fell here.

**Map of 42nd Street:**

ANZAC CORPS AREA  
 42ND STREET  
 43RD STREET  
 44TH STREET  
 45TH STREET  
 46TH STREET  
 47TH STREET

**Deployment of ANZAC forces north to south at 42nd Street, 27 May 1941**

38 (Victoria) Battalion	29 Brigade, 6th Division, and AIF
27 (Wellington) Battalion	13 Brigade 6th Division, and AIF
28 (Canterbury) Battalion	142nd and 143rd Divisions NZEF
29 (New Zealand) Battalion	144th and 145th Divisions NZEF
30 (Wellington) Battalion	146th and 147th Divisions NZEF
31 (Wellington) Battalion	148th and 149th Divisions NZEF
32 (Wellington) Battalion	150th and 151st Divisions NZEF
33 (Wellington) Battalion	152nd and 153rd Divisions NZEF
34 (Wellington) Battalion	154th and 155th Divisions NZEF
35 (Wellington) Battalion	156th and 157th Divisions NZEF
36 (Wellington) Battalion	158th and 159th Divisions NZEF
37 (Wellington) Battalion	160th and 161st Divisions NZEF

**CHIEF OF BRIGADE**  
**2ND BRIGADE**

**Greek Text:**

Η Διεύθυνση των Στρατευμάτων των ΑΝΖΑΚ έλαβε ηρώς την 42η Οδό, 27 Μαΐου 1941.

**42nd Street Memorial:**

This memorial is dedicated to the memory of the ANZAC troops at 42nd Street and to all those who fought and fell here.

## MICHAEL SWEET REPORTING FROM CHANIA, CRETE For NeosKosmos.com on 23 may 2014.

On Wednesday, hundreds gathered in the village of Tsikalaria in Crete to witness Mayor of Chania, Manolis Skoulakis receive the 42nd Street memorial plaque.

Presented by Glenda Humes, eldest daughter of Captain Reg Saunders, the plaque will mark the location of a historic battle between Anzac and German forces on 27 May 1941. Known to the Allied troops as '42nd Street', the site near Tsikalaria has never previously been marked.

And what an event it was, climaxing with a breathtaking haka performed by descendants of NZ 28 (Maori) Battalion to celebrate the handing over of the plaque. 28 (Maori) Battalion fought at 42nd Street, alongside two Australian battalions raised in Victoria

The plaque, paid for by Australian Cretan and Greek community organisations and private donors, was conceived by Glenda Humes after visiting the site in 2010. Her father, who in 1941 was a 20-year-old Private in the Australian 2/7 Infantry Battalion, fought in the 42nd Street battle.

During her speech, Ms Humes described the plaque as a way to "bring recognition to the Anzac soldiers who were here, to mark their sacrifice and memory for future generations".

"This is our gift to the brave people of Crete from the people of Australia and New Zealand."

Under a cloudless Cretan sky the Tsikalaria community turned out in force with hundreds of local schoolchildren given time off school to join the celebrations.

Also attending the event was Australia's Ambassador to Greece, Jenny Bloomfield, who has been a staunch supporter of the project.

Speaking to the plaque's organisers, Deputy Mayor of Chania Dimitris Leipsakis confirmed that the Municipality was committed to creating a memorial site on Odos Tsikalarion (42nd Street) to display the plaque. A technical plan is to be drawn up by the end of July.

Chania Municipality Architect Engineer Aggelina Syrakouli has been tasked with the job of developing a suitable design.

# SOURCES AND ABBREVIATIONS

<i>2/7 Bn War Diary</i>	AWM 52, Item 8/3/7, 2/7 Bn War Diary
<i>3 Para.</i>	3rd Parachute Regiment of the 7th Airborne Division of the Luftwaffe
<i>21 Bn War Diary</i>	ANZ. WAI 1/158 DA 54/1/16
<i>141 War Diary</i>	Report on Actions of Jais Battle Group 26-30 May 1941. ATL, MS 5079-247
<i>Allen Report</i>	Allen, JM. Report of the Operations of 21 Battalion 20 May -1 Jun 1941. Appendix to the 21 Bn War Diary. ATL:54/15/2
<i>ANZ</i>	Archives New Zealand
<i>ATL</i>	Alexander Turnbull Library
<i>AWM</i>	Australian War Memorial.
<i>AWMM</i>	Auckland War Memorial Museum
<i>Bn</i>	Battalion
<i>Bolger et. al</i>	Bolger W P; Littlewood J G; Folkland F C, The Fiery Phoenix: The Story of the 2/7 Infantry Battalion, 1939-1945, 2/7 Battalion Association, 1983.

<i>Cody 21</i>	Cody J F, 21 Battalion, War History Branch, Wellington, 1953.
<i>Cody 28</i>	Cody J F, 28 Battalion, War History Branch, Wellington , 1953.
<i>Coy</i>	Company
<i>Davin</i>	Davin DM. Crete. War History Branch. Wellington, 1953.
<i>GJR</i>	Gebirgs Jager (Mountain Soldier) Regiment
<i>Grp.</i>	Group
<i>Long</i>	Australia in the War of 1939-1945-Volume II Greece Crete and Syria, Canberra, 1953
<i>Soutar</i>	Soutar, M. Nga Tamatoa, The Price of Citizenship- C Company of 28 Maori Battalion 1939-45. David Bateman 2008.
<i>Thompson</i>	Thompson P. Anzac Fury-The Bloody Battle of Crete 1941. William Heinemann 2010