

## **Keith Elliott, VC**

### **22nd Battalion, 2nd New Zealand Division**

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**Information Free Phone: 0800 VALOUR (0800 825687)**

Keith Elliott was born in 1916 at Apiti, in the Manawatu. After attending Feilding Agricultural College, Elliott farmed and played provincial rugby for Bush. World War II began while he was working on his father's farm near Feilding and he immediately joined the New Zealand Expeditionary Force.

After serving in Greece and Crete and in the early battles of the Western Desert, Elliott reached the rank of Sergeant. At various times during the desert campaigns he was wounded, captured, freed and continued to fight.

"On 15 July 1942 at El Ruweisat Ridge, Western Desert, Sergeant Elliott was wounded in the chest while leading his platoon in an attack under heavy machine gun and mortar fire. Nevertheless, he carried on and led his men in a bayonet charge which resulted in the capture of four enemy machine-gun posts and an anti-tank gun. Seven of the enemy were killed and 50 taken prisoner. In spite of his (four) wounds Sergeant Elliott refused to leave his platoon until he had reformed them and handed over the prisoners, the number of which had by then increased to 130."

Elliott was awarded a Victoria Cross for this action, and shortly after was commissioned in the field. Since Victoria Cross holders were considered good for morale back home, Elliott, in spite of his protests, was returned to New Zealand.

Elliott married Margaret Markham in 1944 and in 1947 was ordained a minister in the Anglican Church. He served as Vicar in a number of parishes including working for many years in the Maori Mission before moving to Wellington as the Assistant City Missioner and later as Welfare Officer for the Fire Service. After a lifetime of committed service in both the military and the Church, Keith Elliott died in 1989, at Wellington, aged 73.