

community on the Battle of Crete's commemoration day. As a newcomer, I was warmly received, and during the course of numerous introductions, I began to notice a trend among the women I conversed with. It became apparent that a significant number of them came from Crete, particularly Chania on the western part of the island. Intrigued, I asked them why there was such a notable presence of individuals from this region. Initially, I assumed that chain migration might provide a logical explanation. However, drawing upon my research background, I delved into archival research and soon uncovered a deeper connection to the war and much more.

The allied forces divided the island into different defense zones and the Kiwis were assigned to defend Chania. This is where the connection goes deeper. The soldiers who managed to escape with the assistance of the locals never



A large group of young women migrants arriving from Crete to resettle in New Zealand in the early 1960's. Photo National Library of New Zealand

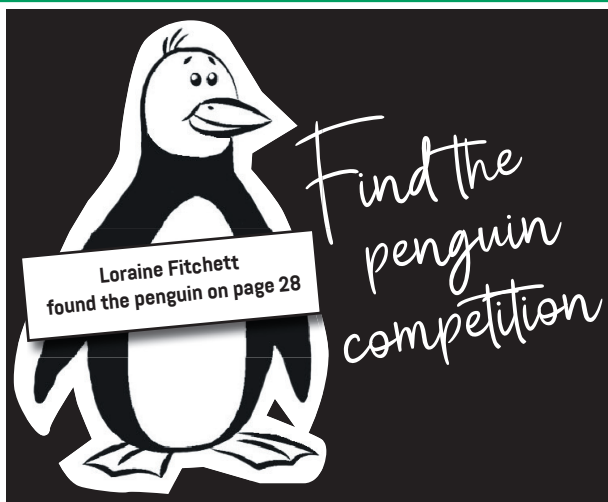


A memorial plaque for New Zealand soldiers who lost their lives in Crete.

forgot the selfless act of support they received. Some of them left handwritten notes with their contact information in New Zealand, hoping that one day they could repay the kindness. It didn't take long before, a few years later, these men reached out to the New Zealand government to help some of the families living in impoverished post war Crete with a request to offer their daughters the opportunity to come to New Zealand. The empathy these soldiers felt towards the locals and their desire to give back played a significant role in initiating

this petition.

The couple that played an important role in setting up this visa scheme was Ned and Katina Nathan; a wounded Māori Battalion soldier and a young Cretan woman who had fallen in love when the young infantryman was sheltered by her family in the aftermath of the battle. Ned brought Katina to New Zealand, where they made their home in Northland. Their son Manos Nathan is a renowned artist in New Zealand, with his works being showcased in the collections of prestigious museums such as



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