

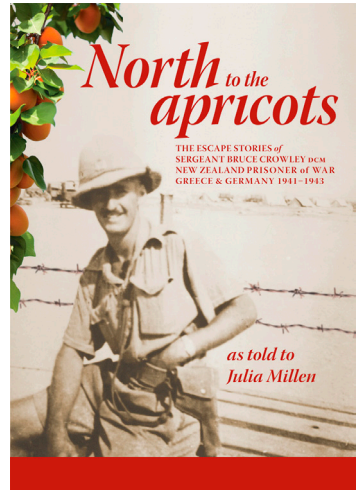
# North to the Apricots

*The escape stories of  
Sergeant Bruce Crowley DCM  
New Zealand prisoner of war in Greece  
and Germany 1941-1943,  
as told to Julia Millen*

Sergeant Bruce Crowley was the first New Zealand prisoner of war to make a successful escape from a German stalag back to Britain in World War II. For this he was awarded the Distinguished Conduct Medal by General Sir Bernard Freyberg. Years later, aged 80, Bruce related his remarkable story to well-known writer and historian Julia Millen.

Growing up in poverty in Auckland during the Depression years, Bruce Crowley was eager to join the army, not least because they supplied recruits with new boots. In 1939 he embarked with the 1st Echelon for the Middle East where his unit, 4th Reserve Mechanical Transport was soon in action. Deployed to Greece in 1941, the Allies faced overwhelming enemy power. Bruce was captured at Tolos Beach after the Allied withdrawal in April 1941. En route to Germany he jumped from a train and spent several months in hiding amongst friendly Greek villagers. Re-captured he was later sent to the infamous Lamsdorf prison in German-occupied Poland.

*North to the Apricots* recounts Bruce's exploits amongst kindly Greek villagers, hardships endured in German captivity and daring escapes. The final – successful – escape to freedom is an epic tale of kiwi ingenuity, comradeship, courage and tenacity.



Writes Hill Press for Bocoman Ltd, Wellington, 2012

RRP \$30 plus postage and packaging • ISBN 978-0-473-21416-6 • 148x210 • 140pp

Writes Hill Press, PO Box 23 032, Wellington 6140, phone 499 0030 • [www.writeshillpress.co.nz](http://www.writeshillpress.co.nz)

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