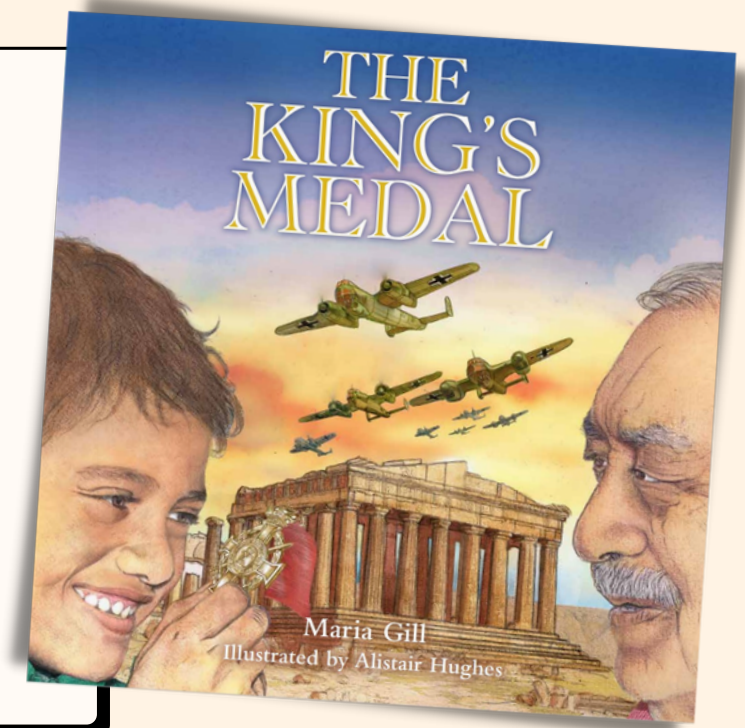


# The King's Medal



"Poppa, what's that?" asked Manu.  
His grandfather opened etched hands to reveal a medal.  
Manu leaned in. "Did you win it?"  
"Sort of. A king gave it to me."  
Manu's mouth gaped. "Why did a king give you something so precious?"  
So begins the true story of the Anzac soldiers saving the Greek King in World War II. The King and the Anzac soldiers must flee the Nazi paratroopers, climb steep mountains, avoid gunfire from Greek soldiers who think they are spies, and find the ship that will get them to safety.  
From the award-winning author of *Anzac Heroes* comes an action-packed story of daring, bravery and loyalty. Based on true recounts from Anzac soldiers, during a significant event in World War II.



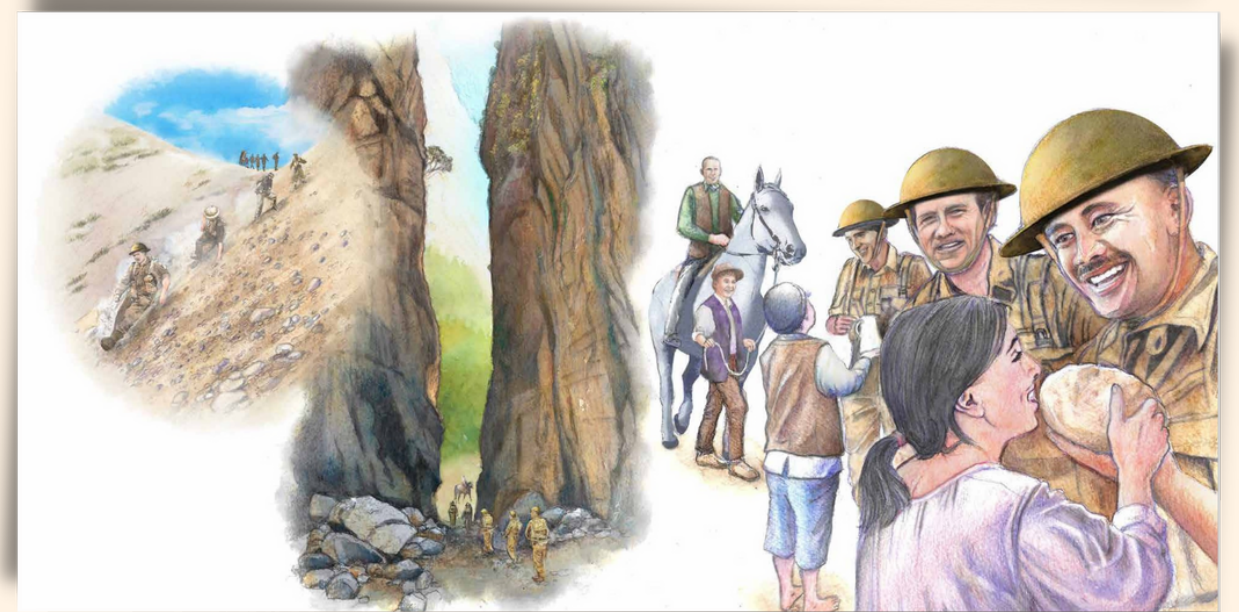
## Author

Author Maria Gill has written 60 children's books up to 2021. Her book *Anzac Heroes* won the 2016 Children's Book of the Year prize, and she has received 10 Storylines Notable Book Awards for her nonfiction books. While researching for *The King's Medal*, Maria walked part of the Samaria Gorge in Crete, Europe's second-largest canyon, and visited the Museum of National Resistance in Therisson village. [www.mariagill.co.nz](http://www.mariagill.co.nz)



## Illustrator

Illustrator Alistair Hughes has provided art for several children's books, including the 2020 New Zealand Society of Authors Heritage Book Award-nominated *Ice Breaker! An Epic Antarctic Adventure*, also with Maria Gill. After illustrating and writing for a major media organisation for two decades, he founded his own company, Shoreline Creative. [www.shorelinecreative.co.nz](http://www.shorelinecreative.co.nz)



## Comprehension Questions

- Looking at the cover what do you think this story is about?
- What did Poppa reveal in his hands?
- What does the author mean by, 'Manu's mouth gaped'?
- When and where was this story set?
- Who are the ANZACs?
- Why was the King of Greece in danger?
- How did the Nazis land in Crete?
- What was the King wearing that could attract danger?
- Why did they duck when they saw a plane fly low?
- Who fired at them and why were they reluctant to stop?
- What happened to the Prime Minister's party?
- Where is the village on the Crete map?
- How did the villagers show their hospitality?



## Comprehension Questions

- Why did the boy give the King a parcel?
- What is the Greek word for 'thank you'?
- What were the soldiers watching out for when they trekked up the White Mountains?
- Why did the King pray for his people?
- What type of landscapes did they have to traverse?
- How did the village people greet the party when they came out of the gorge?
- What is an SOS signal?
- Why didn't the Greek ship answer their signal?
- What dangers did they have to watch out for on the ship?
- How did the King reward and thank the soldiers?
- What was the name of the regiment who saved the King?
- What happened to the King after he was rescued?
- Was this a true story or a made-up story? How do you know that?

## Activities

1. Design a medal for bravery – Make it for a brave act in your classroom. It could be doing something they haven't done before, standing up to a bully or helping someone in trouble. Consider what illustration and slogan you will have on it, as it needs to represent 'bravery' in some way. Plan the design first in pencil. Then think about how you will make the medal. Will it be made of cardboard and ribbon? Or will you cover it with tin foil and paint it? Or will it be made of a hard-setting dough? After you have made it and it has dried and set, present it to someone in the class who you think has been brave.
2. Continue the story – The enemy caught some of the stray soldiers. What do you think happened to them? Research on the Internet what the enemy did with the captured soldiers. You can then write a true short story about what happened to one of the soldiers afterwards or you can make up a fiction short story and imagine what happened to them.
3. Supercharged verbs – Throughout the story the author has used supercharged verbs such as reveal or gaped. With a partner see how many you can find in the story. Who found the most? Make up a poem with a 'bravery' theme, using those supercharged verbs.
4. Interview a grandparent – Ask them what brave thing they have done in their life that they are proud of. Write a set of open questions (that require more than a yes or no answer), before you set a time to interview them. Tape the interview and play it back to the classroom or take notes and write it up and share it with your fellow students.

