

Anzac Day

Anzac Day occurs on 25 April. It commemorates all New Zealanders killed in war and also honours returned servicemen and women.



Anzac art 1916

The date itself marks the anniversary of the landing of New Zealand and Australian soldiers – the Anzacs – on the Gallipoli Peninsula in 1915. The aim was to capture the Dardanelles, the gateway to the Bosphorus and the Black Sea. At the end of the campaign, Gallipoli was still held by its Turkish defenders.

Thousands lost their lives in the Gallipoli campaign: 87,000 Turks, 44,000 men from France and the British Empire, including 8500 Australians. To this day, Australia also marks the events of 25 April.

Among the dead were 2721 New Zealanders, almost one in four of those who served on Gallipoli.

It may have led to a military defeat, but for many New Zealanders then and since, the Gallipoli landings meant the beginning of something else – a feeling that New Zealand had a role as a distinct nation, even as it fought on the other side of the world in the name of the British Empire.

Anzac Day was first marked in 1916. The day has gone through many changes since then. The ceremonies that are held at war memorials up and down New Zealand, or in places overseas where New Zealanders gather, remain rich in tradition and ritual befitting a military funeral.

How to cite this page: 'Anzac Day', URL: <http://www.nzhistory.net.nz/war/anzac-day/introduction>, (Ministry for Culture and Heritage), updated 5-Apr-2011

MCH, 2011g
Nation Dates
FINAL

Page 90

MCH 2011

