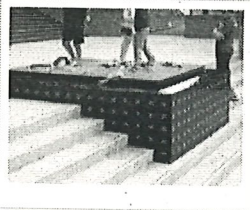




Today in History

◀ 11 November ▶



1918 Armistice Day

The 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month marks the moment when hostilities ceased on the Western Front in 1918, with the signing of the Armistice. In 2004 an Unknown New Zealand Warrior from the First World War was laid to rest at the National War Memorial. The signing of the Armistice between the Allies and Germany was celebrated in many cities and towns around New Zealand. Enthusiasm was dampened, though, by the ongoing impact of the influenza pandemic then ravaging the country. A premature report of the Armistice declaration published on 8 November added to the general sense of uncertainty about celebrating the official announcement.

Despite the difficult circumstances, thousands of New Zealanders took part in or watched Armistice parades on 12 November, the day the official announcement was published here. Brass bands and elaborately decorated floats led the way as returned soldiers, schoolchildren and crazily costumed performers marched along main streets carrying banners and flags. Public officials gave earnest speeches and crowds gathered to celebrate the end of four long years of war.

Auckland was the exception. Here the acting Chief Health Officer, Dr Frengley, postponed all official Armistice celebrations in a bid to stop the further spread of influenza. Frengley had been alarmed at the large crowds which had gathered after the premature declaration of 8 November. Despite these precautions, 1128 Aucklanders died from the influenza pandemic. Auckland eventually celebrated the Armistice in mid-1919.

Internal links

[New Zealand goes to war - First World War overview](#) [Armistice Day - remembering the 1918 influenza pandemic](#) [Armistice Day](#) [New Zealand in 1918](#)

External links

[History of Armistice Day in New Zealand \(RSA\)](#) [Tomb of the Unknown Warrior \(NWM\)](#)



1942 Troop ship *Awatea* goes down fighting

The Union Steam Ship Company's sleek 13,482-ton trans-Tasman liner *Awatea*, launched in 1936, was one of the finest and fastest ships of its size in the world at the outbreak of the Second World War. Like many merchant vessels, the liner – and its civilian Merchant Navy crew – was pressed into wartime service.

Painted grey and fitted with defensive guns and anti-mine paravanes, the *Awatea* delivered New Zealand and Australian air trainees to Canada, shipped 2000 Canadian troops to Hong Kong, evacuated civilians from the Philippines and Singapore, and carried several thousand Free Polish troops from India to South Africa. During these missions the ship narrowly escaped a German U-boat attack in the North Atlantic and was involved in three collisions with other vessels. It also suffered a smallpox outbreak that killed two crew members.

On 8 November 1942 the *Awatea* took part in Operation Torch, the successful Allied invasion of Vichy-French North Africa. After landing 3000 commandos near Algiers, it ferried other troops further to the east. On the night of 11 November, off Bougie (Bejaia), the *Awatea* was attacked by swarms of German and Italian bombers. Although its gunners shot down several planes, the *Awatea* was set on fire and holed by torpedoes. Remarkably, everyone on board got off safely (except for the ship's cat, which was apparently killed by a bomb blast). It was a sad end for a ship that has often been described as the finest ever to fly the New Zealand flag.

Image: Rescue of crew from the *Awatea*

Internal links

[The Merchant Navy in the Second World War](#) [Under the Southern Cross - the Merchant Navy](#)

External links

[Awatea at War \(NZ Ship & Marine Society\)](#)

This Week in History



450 Pound Reward
Shelby Gifford, Australia, May 1918.
REAS the Pioneer, JAMES MACKENZIE, sentenced to a prison term of 12 months for the theft of sheep, 1918, as the 1st runner for winning his money on the spot, the above reward will be paid to 10 persons, who may succeed in ap



Timeline S

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Today in Hist

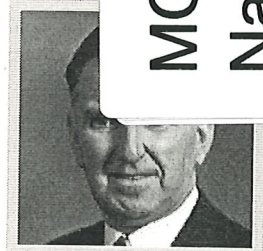
What ha

See historic day of the y date below. birthday?-

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Visit th

Kiwi of th



Sidney Holland

Holland became PM in 1949. A year later he abolished the Legislative Council, and in 1951, after winning the Waterfront Dispute, he increased his majority in a snap election.

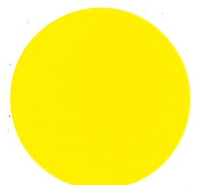
more

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THIS WEEK'S QUIZ

Test your knowledge of NZ history

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MCH nd

28 February	1 March 1901	2 March 1865	3 March 1960	4 March 1855	5 March 1830	6 March 1947
1945 Kiwi soldier faces Nazi firing squad	Skippers Bridge opened	Missionary Carl Volkner killed at Opotiki	Barry Crump's novel <i>A good keen man</i> published	Legendary sheep rustler James Mackenzie caught	Outbreak of the Girls' War at Kororaraka	Debut performance of NZ Symphony Orchestra

Culture and Society

PRE-1840 CONTACT
HOLIDAYS AND EVENTS
CRIME AND PUNISHMENT
DISASTERS
ARTS AND ENTERTAINMENT
HEALTH AND WELFARE
IMMIGRATION
TRANSPORT
DECADE STUDIES
SPORT
LIFESTYLE
PLACES
THE GREAT OUTDOORS
MEMORIALS

Politics and Government

POLITICAL MILESTONES
PROTEST AND REFORM
TREATY OF WAITANGI
MAORI LEADERSHIP
THE GOVERNORS
PARLIAMENT'S PEOPLE
WORK OF GOVERNMENT
NZ IN THE WORLD

War and Society

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SOUTH AFRICAN WAR
FIRST WORLD WAR
SECOND WORLD WAR

POST SECOND WORLD WAR
OTHER CONFLICTS
WAR MEMORIALS

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