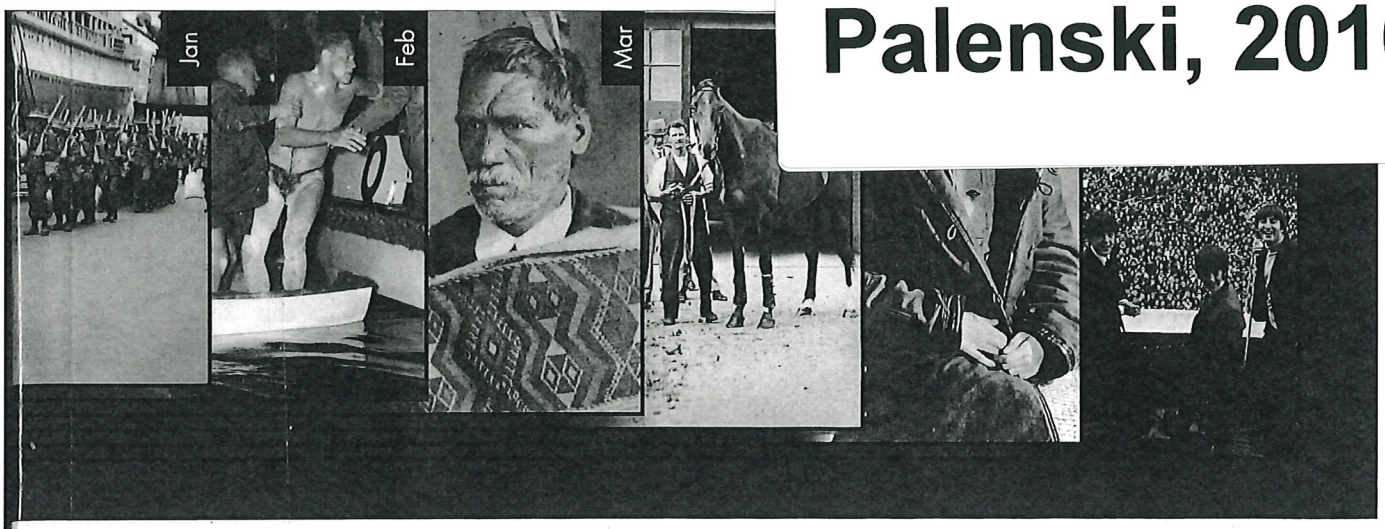
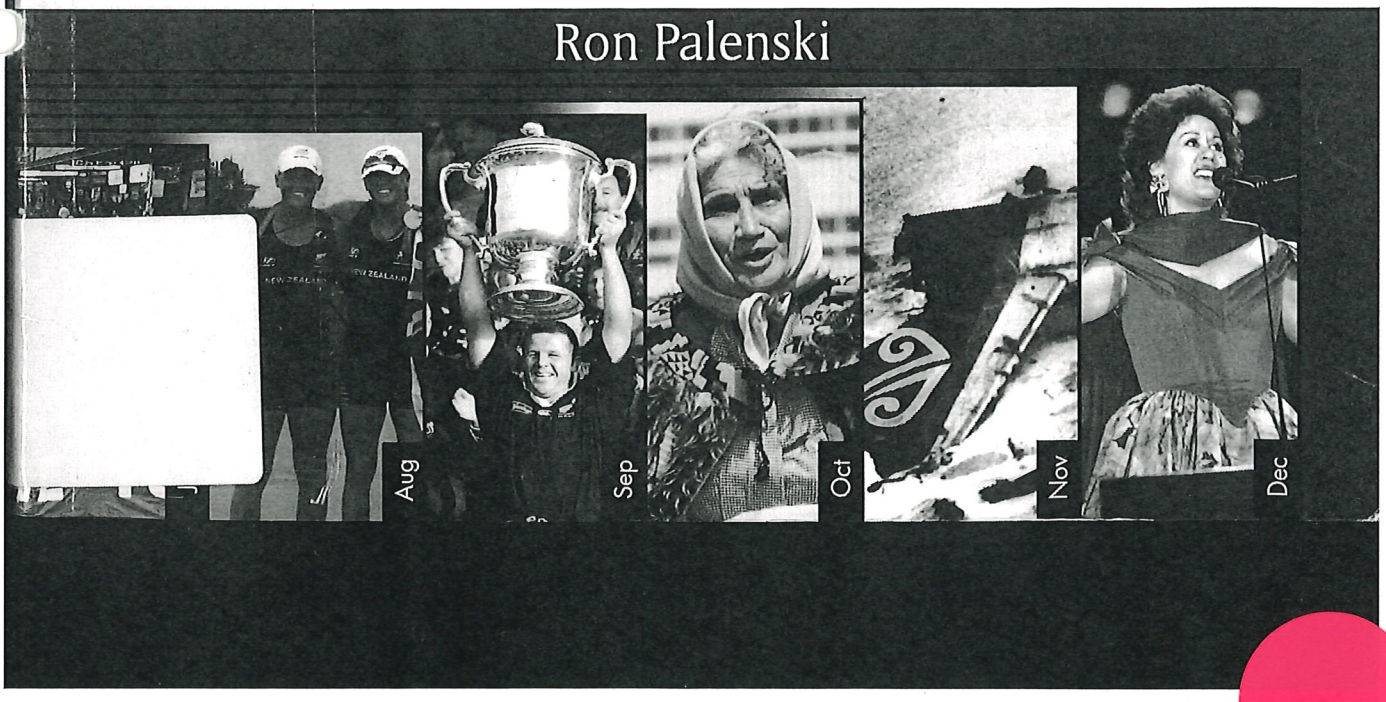
Palenski, 2010



on this day in New Zealand

Ron Palenski



there is nothing to shew to what cause her loss is to be attributed.' The inquiry found that the ship was seaworthy in every respect when it left London and that its cargo had been stowed according to regulations.

1893 An Auckland boxer, John Nicholson, was acquitted of a charge of manslaughter resulting from the death of his opponent, Richard Forgie, in a 35-round fight in Auckland. Police stepped into the ring and stopped the fight when it became evident Forgie could not continue. He went to work the next day but died that night, and Nicholson was charged with manslaughter. The trial judge told the jury the fight was illegal and that Forgie died as a result of it, but the jury saw fit not to convict, telling the judge that the police should have stopped the fight sooner. Three members of the jury made a public statement that they disagreed with their colleagues.

1901 A Royal Commission on Federation appointed by Premier Richard Seddon recommended against New Zealand joining the Australian federation and becoming a state of Australia. The commissioners, chaired by lawyer Albert Pitt, concluded 'that merely for the doubtful prospect of further trade with the Commonwealth of Australia, or for any advantage which might reasonably be expected to be derived by this colony from becoming a State in such Commonwealth, New Zealand should not sacrifice her independence as a separate colony, but that she should maintain it under the political constitution she at present enjoys.' The Australian colonies federated to form the Commonwealth of Australia on January 1, 1901.

1925 A Kaipara farmer and returned soldier labelled a hero, Gordon Coates, became prime minister after Sir Francis Dillon Bell stood down after just two weeks. Coates, who had originally sided with the Liberals in Parliament, joined William Massey's Reform Party because he disagreed with the Liberals' policy on freehold land for farmers. By the early 1920s he was seen as a successor to Massey. The Reform Party under Coates was re-elected in the 1925 general election but lost power three years later to a combination of Labour and a quasi-Liberal party called United.

1941 Three days after evacuation orders were first issued, organised resistance by Allied forces on Crete came to an end. The Allied commander, Bernard Freyberg, was ordered back to Cairo against his wishes. New Zealand and other troops had gradually withdrawn over the mountainous spine of Crete and waited patiently to be taken off by ship. An official communiqué conceded: 'Our losses have been severe.' Of the 7702 New Zealanders on Crete, most of whom had evacuated from Greece, 671 were killed, 1943 were wounded and 2180 were taken prisoner. Many New Zealanders stayed hidden on the island, working with locals against the German occupiers.