

A GUIDE TO ANZAC DAY



Each year on 25 April – Anzac Day – New Zealanders remember those who have served and died in war. The first Anzac Day was held in 1916, during the First World War. The day has gone through many changes since then, but it still marks very important moments in the history of New Zealand and its people.

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WHY DOES NEW ZEALAND HAVE AN ANZAC DAY?

The first Anzac Day marked the anniversary of New Zealand's landing at Anzac Cove in the Gallipoli Campaign, which was our first major engagement in the First World War (1914-1918).

For New Zealand, with a population of around one million in 1914, the First World War was a hugely traumatic event – 100,000 Pākehā and Māori served overseas, alongside other soldiers from the British Empire. Over 18,000 of these men and women died, and tens of thousands more were wounded.

Ever since the First World War, Anzac Day has become an annual day of remembrance – an occasion when we pay our respects to those who have died in times of war, and remember all those affected by war.

WHAT HAPPENS ON ANZAC DAY?

Anzac Day is a public holiday, put aside for remembrance. Most shops close on this day. Many people take the opportunity to gather with friends and family.

Anzac Day commemorations generally start with a Dawn Service held at a community's local war memorial. Dawn marks the time of the first landings at Gallipoli on 25 April 1915. Some communities also hold a service later in the morning.

During Anzac Day services, there are speeches, wreaths are laid and the New Zealand national anthem is played. At the end of the service a bugler plays the Last Post, followed by a minute of silence when people stand and remember those who served and died in war.

After the service, you are welcome to lay a tribute alongside the wreaths. Often these include red poppies which are sold by the Returned and Services Association on the Friday before Anzac Day.

HOW CAN YOU BE INVOLVED?

To find an Anzac Day service near you, talk to your local council or visit www.rsa.org.nz/find-an-anzac-day-service

Learn more about Anzac Day at www.anzac.govt.nz

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