

Anzac Day



What Is Anzac Day?

Anzac Day is a day of remembrance that takes place on 25th April. It is commemorated in Australia and New Zealand or by Australians and New Zealanders living elsewhere in the world. It is held in memory of the members of the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps (ANZACs), many of whom lost their lives in battle.

Australia and New Zealand Join the First World War

In 1914, at the beginning of the First World War, Australia was allied with Britain and France. In August 1914, Britain declared war on Germany and the Australian Prime Minister, Andrew Fisher, offered his support and agreed to send troops to help the British

war effort. In 1915, soldiers from Australia and New Zealand were sent to capture the Gallipoli peninsula.

The Battle of Gallipoli

The Australian and New Zealand Army Corps landed at Gallipoli on 25th April 1915. This was the first major combat of the war for these two countries. The plan was to defeat Turkey as quickly as possible in a quick battle; however, the battle lasted eight months. Generals and commanders were worried about the high number of casualties as well as the coming winter and they started to plan a retreat. At the end of 1915, the ANZAC forces were rescued from the beach.

Many were killed during the Battle of Gallipoli. Over 8000 Australian soldiers and more than 2500 New Zealander soldiers lost their lives. Even though the mission was not successful, the bravery and determination shown by the ANZACs have made it an important moment in history.

The ANZAC Spirit

By the end of the war, more than 70,000 Australian and New Zealander soldiers had lost their lives. When the total population of these countries at the time is considered, this was a substantial number. Around the world, the ANZACs were



seen as brave, strong and determined men who developed strong bonds with each other to get them through the horrific experiences they had to face. The idea of 'mateship', looking out for and supporting one's friends, was established at this time.

The spirit of the brave ANZACs caused Australia to be regarded as a reliable and strong nation across the world.

How Is Anzac Day Celebrated?

The first Anzac Day was commemorated on 25th April 1916. A popular tradition of Anzac day is a dawn service. This is a ceremony which includes the raising of flags, the reading of relevant passages and a performance of the Last Post. This is followed by a minute's silence. Many schools will hold their own Anzac ceremony.

Parades are usually held every year in local towns and major cities. Originally, ANZAC soldiers marched in these parades. Now, it is common for the children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren of ANZAC soldiers to march in them. They wear the medals or carry something belonging to their ancestors. Nowadays, these parades are more celebratory events with crowds lining the streets to cheer on and applaud the military personnel. There is a sense of pride in what these brave men and women have done, and continue to do for Australia.



Photo courtesy of Named Faces from the Past (@flickr.com) - granted under creative commons licence - attribution

Questions

1. On which date does Anzac Day take place? Tick **one**.

- 25th August
- 25th April
- 15th April
- 15th August

2. How long did the Battle of Gallipoli last?

3. How many New Zealander soldiers lost their lives at Gallipoli? Tick **one**.

- 8000
- 60 000
- 2500
- 250

4. Which of these are part of the dawn service? Tick **two**.

- The Last Post is performed.
- Soldiers march in parades.
- There is a minute's silence.
- Relatives march in parades.

5. Tick the boxes to say whether the sentences are true or false.

Sentence	True	False
Anzac Day is only celebrated by people living in Australia.		
Parades now celebrate all members of the military.		
All schools hold an Anzac ceremony.		
Britain declared war on Germany in April 1914.		

6. What turned a terrible event into a legend?

7. Why did the ANZACs go and fight alongside Britain?
