

Anzac Day



What Is Anzac Day?

Anzac Day is a day of remembrance that takes place on 25th April. It is mostly celebrated in Australia and New Zealand, although people from these countries who live in other parts of the world may take part in special services and activities.

Australia and New Zealand Join the First World War

In 1914, at the beginning of the First World War, Australia still had strong ties with Great Britain. 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 (ANZACs) landed at Gallipoli at dawn on 25th April 1915. This was the first major fight of the war for these two countries. They planned to defeat Turkey as quickly as possible in a quick battle; however, the battle lasted eight months. 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. Although they did not achieve their goal, the bravery and determination of the ANZACs during this time turned a terrible event into a legend.

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. The spirit of the brave ANZACs caused Australia and New Zealand to be regarded as reliable and strong nations across the world.



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.

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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.



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