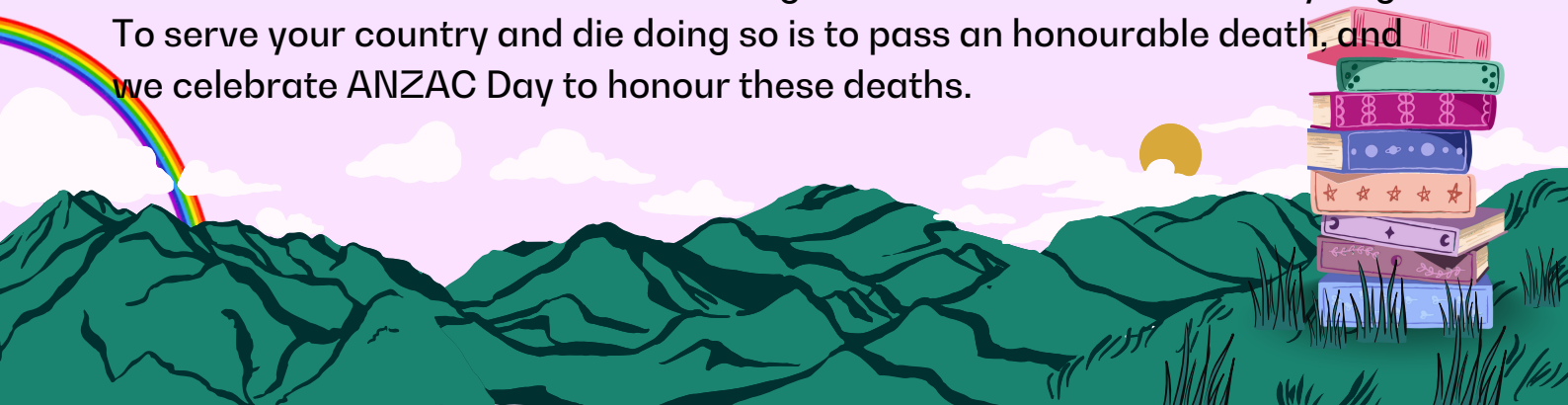


THE ANZAC STORY

Jay Govindji

Many people in this country know ANZAC Day as the day we commemorate New Zealanders and Australians killed in the first world war. ANZAC Day and its significance have a deep history. Today, we will look into its importance, evolution, and how it is currently celebrated.

ANZAC stands for Australian (and) New Zealand Army Corps. To understand what occurred, why it happened, and the significance of ANZAC on said occurrence, we must first travel to the year 1926. The Imperial Conference, a gathering of many governments, was taking place, the fifth to ever occur at the time. New Zealand, Australia, and other countries were awarded dominion status, a status given to countries where the mother country (in this case, Great Britain) and the dominion countries would provide military support during times of need. Fast forward to 1914, Great Britain declared war on Germany due to their invasion of Belgium. Australia and New Zealand, dominions within the British Empire, would also technically be at war, offering troops to Great Britain. 25th April 1915, 70,000 soldiers arrived at Gallipoli from dominion countries. Over 20,000 were Australian and New Zealand soldiers, which would ally to take Turkey out of the war and support Russia's efforts against Germany. This invasion would fail, made clear by the troops' failure to reach their objective on the first day. For eight months, the land captured stayed the same until the end of 1915, when the allied forces withdrew from the captured ground. After suffering substantial casualties, the troops were evacuated, with the ending death total being 8,700 Australians and 2,700 New Zealanders. One year progressed, and in 1916, the 25th of April was named ANZAC Day by both Australia and New Zealand. We now commemorate ANZAC Day to remember the 8,700 Australians and 2,700 New Zealanders who sacrificed their lives in the war. New Zealanders and Australians will never forget ANZAC Day, for the efforts of the Australians and New Zealanders during times of war were immensely large. To serve your country and die doing so is to pass an honourable death, and we celebrate ANZAC Day to honour these deaths.



The following events occurred in New Zealand and are dated as when they took place in New Zealand: As previously explained, the 25th of April was named ANZAC Day. This naming is commonly misunderstood as the day it became an official holiday. The official confirmation of the holiday, the ANZAC Day Act, was passed in 1920. This act meant that 25th April was formally addressed as ANZAC Day and would become a public holiday. In 1939, dawn ceremonies were widely celebrated on ANZAC Day as a method of commemoration for the first time. Previous to this year, little dawn ceremonies were occurring. Then 1949 came, when laws were created stating that ANZAC Day is prevented from being Mondayised, meaning if the celebration day fell on a Sunday or Saturday, the holiday would be moved to the next business day, although this would later change. The year 1966 came, and the ANZAC Day Act would liberalise events conducted after 1:00 pm on ANZAC Day, meaning restrictions for running such activities loosened. The prevention of ANZAC day being Mondayised came in 2013. The last change in celebration of ANZAC Day to this date came three years ago when public ANZAC Day ceremonies were cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Nowadays, New Zealanders attend parades, dawn ceremonies, and commemorative ceremonies on ANZAC Day. Many people wear poppies as a method of remembrance of those who have died in the war. Food items such as ANZAC biscuits are made and eaten during ANZAC Day, inspired by the food eaten as our soldiers' rations. The biscuits eaten as rations were hardtack biscuits, biscuits used as a nutritional substitute for bread, and as suggested in the name, the biscuits were hard. The parades previously mentioned that New Zealanders attend consisted of ex-servicemen and women marching throughout major cities and smaller ones too. Members of the defence forces, cadets, and youth organisations also take part in the parade.

ANZAC Day has a rich history and is more than just a public holiday celebrating deaths in the war. ANZAC Day evolved drastically and is now commemorated by attending events such as dawn ceremonies. We will not forget the efforts of the soldiers' sacrifices. I would like to end my piece with a quote from John Cantwell - "On ANZAC Day, honour the fallen, cheer the survivors, care for the wounded".

