Armistice

After four terrible years, the First World War finally came to an end with the signing of an Armistice between the Allied Powers and Germany on 11 November 1918. The fighting ceased at 11 a.m. – the eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month.

At the time there were around 58,000 New Zealand troops serving overseas, including more than 24,000 on the Western Front. Some of these men had been in action as recently as the week before the Armistice, famously liberating the walled French town of Le Quesnoy on 4 November.

The First World War had taken a huge toll on New Zealand.

- The total population of New Zealand in 1914 was approximately 1.1 million
- Almost 100,000 New Zealanders served overseas in the New Zealand Expeditionary Force (NZEF)
- More than 2200 Māori and around 500 Pacific Islanders served overseas with the New Zealand forces
- 11 Victoria Crosses were awarded to soldiers serving with New Zealand forces
- Several thousand New Zealanders served in the Australian or British imperial forces, being awarded a further five Victoria Crosses
- In all, 550 nurses served overseas with the New Zealand Army Nursing Service, while others enlisted in the United Kingdom
- Around 18,000 New Zealanders died in or because of the war, and there were 41,000 instances of wounding or illness; 2779 died at Gallipoli and more than 12,000 on the Western Front
- The names of those who died are recorded on approximately 500 civic war memorials throughout New Zealand

For a more detailed discussion of First World War statistics click here