

Albury Celebrates Peace Day, July 19, 1919

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On the evening of Monday November 11, 1918 official news was received in Albury that the Armistice to end World War I had been signed. Church bells rang, trains sounded their horns, and cheering crowds assembled in every neighbourhood.

The Treaty of Versailles, signed on June 28, 1919, formally ended hostilities. By order of King George V, Saturday, July 19, 1919, was set apart as a day of rejoicing throughout the British Empire. The day was designated 'Peace Day.'



Albury's Peace Day parade makes its way through the crowd on Mate's Corner.
Wounded veterans were in the horse drawn carriage.

Albury, along with every district town, large and small, organised a day of celebration. The *Border Morning Mail* described the day as essentially "Children's Day," celebrating the end of war "which will, it is earnestly hoped, never come again in their lives, or in the lives of their children."

The paper went on to say that "the League of Nations, formed as a direct result of the conflict, should, if properly administered, result in suppressing any further attempt at world domination." It was said to be "the War to end all wars" but sadly, a significant number of the children participating that day would, twenty years later, be part of another global conflict with many from our district becoming casualties of World War II.

Celebrations had started on Friday with presentations in local schools of a 'Peace Medal,' issued to every Australian child up to age 14 years to mark the end of the war.

On Friday evening a 'Peace Palais De Danse' was held in the Mechanics' Theatre with a large attendance in aid of the Returned Soldiers' League.

Saturday's celebrations got underway with a street march headed by mounted soldiers and the Albury Town Band followed by various contingents and an estimated 2500 school children. The procession moved from Dean Street to the show grounds on the corner of Young and Guinea streets where entertainment and handouts for the children were provided.



The 'Peace Medal'

At night a massive bonfire lit up Western Hill which six years later became the site of Albury's War Memorial. The *Border Morning Mail* reported that "by special request, rockets and explosive fireworks were conspicuous by their absence. It certainly seemed strange not to hear the deafening reports, but out of deference to shell-shocked soldiers, residents complied with the request."

That evening Dean Street was lit up brilliantly by electric lights, a novelty just three years after electricity had arrived in Albury. Signs of 'Peace' and Victory' were hung across central streets and lit up with coloured lights.