



Anzac Day – John Allen MP

Parliamentary Information Service



Members of Parliament who served overseas in WWII

Allen, J.M. (National, Hauraki) †

Grigg, A.N. (National, Mid-Canterbury) †

Hargest, J. (National, Awarua) †

Hultquist, A.G. (Labour, Bay of Plenty) †

Lyon, W.J. (Labour, Waitemata) †

Macdonald, T.L. (National, Mātaura)

Macfarlane, R.M. (Labour, Christchurch South)

Moncur, A.F. (Labour, Rotorua)

Skinner, C.F. (Labour, Motueka)

Of the nine members of Parliament who served overseas during the Second World War, five did not return home. Three of these five men died in November 1941: Gordon Hultquist (MP for Bay of Plenty), Jack Allen (MP for Hauraki), and Arthur Grigg (MP for Mid-Canterbury). At the opening of Parliament, a month later, the House paid tribute to their service. The speeches concluded with Fred Frost (MP for New Plymouth) stating:

The nation to-day is face to face with its gravest crisis, and it seemed to me, as I listened to the tributes paid to our fellow-members, that it is appropriate that so great a sacrifice should have been made by honourable members of this House. We are the people who determine the destinies of the nation in peace and in war, and therefore it is right that, when great trials fall upon the nation, those who legislate for it should be in the forefront of the tribulation. I am sure that is the desire of the New Zealand Parliament in particular—not to ask anything of the people which Parliament is not willing to undertake itself. In these gallant comrades whom we have honoured today, and to whose loved ones we have given our sympathy, we have seen exemplified that spirit of true democracy whereby Parliament shares with the people the trials and the sorrows which they are called upon to face. Whatever may be the outcome—and the outcome must be the triumph of things we believe in – we have before us, in the memory and the work and example of these fallen comrades of House, an inspiration to go on and maintain the things for which they lived and for which they died.

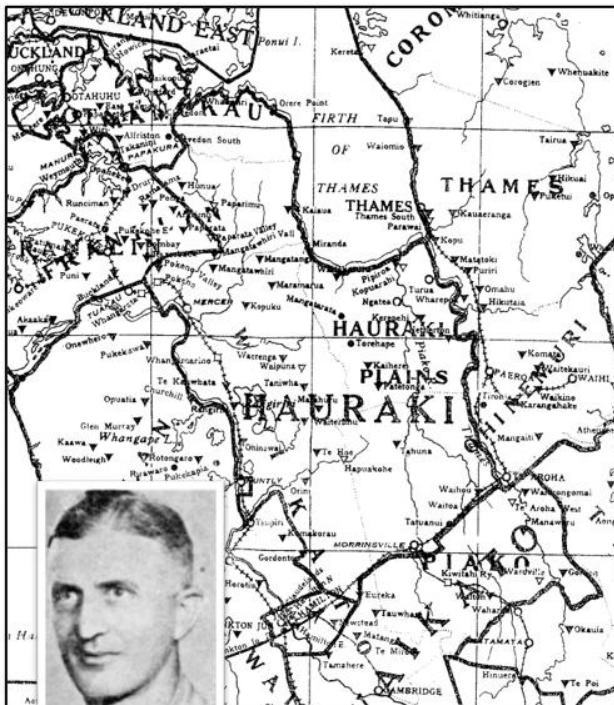
John Allen (National, Hauraki)

Lieutenant-Colonel John Manchester Allen was born in Cheadle, England on 3 August 1901 and was educated at King's College in Auckland (from 1911 to 1919) and at Pembroke College at Cambridge University, where he gained his M.A. and LI.B degrees. He began farming in Morrinsville in 1926 and was president of the Farmers' Union there in 1926-1927.

Allen was elected to Parliament for Hauraki in 1938.¹ He was the Member of Parliament for Hauraki from 15 October 1938 to 28 November 1941.²

Allen came from a family which had distinguished itself in military circles. His father "... died of wounds in the Great War of 1914-18, and his brother, Flying-Officer Arthur Allen, served in the Royal New Zealand Air Force as an instructor.³

Hauraki electorate in 1939



Lieutenant-Colonel J. M. Allen, M.P. for Hauraki, killed in action.

¹ John Manchester Allen. Online Cenotaph. <https://www.aucklandmuseum.com/war-memorial/online-cenotaph/record/C17193>; Killed in action. Member for Hauraki. Lieutenant-Colonel J.M. Allen. Putaruru Press, 11 December 1941, p.7. <https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/PUP19411211.2.40>; King's College archives. <https://nz.accessit.online/KNG13/#/ldashboard>; 18 Battalion and Armoured Regiment: Chapter 1 – Early days. In: The official history of New Zealand in the Second World War 1939-1945. <https://ndhadeliver.natlib.govt.nz/webarchive/20210104000423/http://nzetc.victoria.ac.nz/tm/scholarly/tei-WH2-18Ba-c1.html#name-000581-mention>

² Roll of members of the New Zealand House of Representatives, 1854 onwards. New Zealand Parliament. [roll-of-members-of-the-new-zealand-house-of-representatives-1854-onwards.pdf](http://www.parliament.nz/roll-of-members-of-the-new-zealand-house-of-representatives-1854-onwards.pdf) (www.parliament.nz)

³ Killed in action. Member for Hauraki. Lieutenant-Colonel J.M. Allen. Putaruru Press, 11 December 1941, p.7. <https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/PUP19411211.2.40>

Military career and death

Allen was appointed to the Hauraki regiment in 1924 as Second-Lieutenant and went overseas with the forces with the rank of Major.⁴

Following a farewell function in the Legislative Council Chamber on 21 September 1939—which concluded with the singing of “wartime songs” and the first verse of the National Anthem—Allen and Jack Lyon (MP for Waitemata) left for Hopuhopu Camp. Allen was second in command of the [18th Infantry Battalion](#) in the [First Echelon](#), which left Wellington in January 1940, arriving at Maadi Camp in Egypt.⁵ When he embarked, his next of kin was his wife, Ethne May Birch Allen of Piako, Auckland.⁶



Allen served in the Western Desert and was killed in action in the Middle East on 28 November 1941, aged 40 years. His last rank was Lieutenant Colonel/Military with the 21 (Auckland) Infantry Battalion. He is buried at the Knightsbridge War Cemetery in Acroma, Libya.⁷

Lieutenant Colonel J.M. Allen.

Announcing his death, Prime Minister Peter Fraser said,

“This distressing news will be received with the deepest sorrow by every member of Parliament and by the people of New Zealand, and the widest and most sincere sympathy will be extended to his wife and family. Lieutenant-Colonel Allen has been in Parliament only a short time (he was elected at the 1938 election), but this period was long enough for all members to recognise his ability and to get to know and like him... His death is a severe loss to the Army, to the Parliament and to the country.”

Sidney Holland, the Leader of the Opposition, said:

“Colonel Allen was a staunch colleague and faithful friend and his passing has cut short a life of public service that showed the greatest promise,” said Mr Holland. “He was highly respected by every member of the House, regardless of political affiliations, and whenever he spoke he was listened to with the greatest attention.”⁸

⁴ Killed in action. Member for Hauraki. Lieutenant-Colonel J.M. Allen. Putaruru Press, 11 December 1941, p.7. <https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/PUP19411211.2.40>; Killed in action. Member for Hauraki: Prime Minister expresses regret. Timaru Herald, 8 December 1941, p.4. <https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/THD19411208.2.38>

⁵ Second World War – overview. Page 6 – Second World War timeline. NZ History. <https://nzhistory.govt.nz/war/second-world-war/timeline>

⁶ Lieutenant Colonel John Manchester Allen. Commonwealth War Graves. <https://www.cwgc.org/find-records/find-war-dead/casualty-details/2095927/john-manchester-allen/>

⁷ <https://www.cwgc.org/find-records/find-war-dead/casualty-details/2095927/john-manchester-allen/>; John Manchester Allen. Online Cenotaph. <https://www.aucklandmuseum.com/war-memorial/online-cenotaph/record/C17193>; Lieutenant Colonel John Manchester Allen 3 August 1901–28 November 1941 (Person). New Zealand Electronic Text Collection. <https://ndhadeliver.natlib.govt.nz/webarchive/20210104000423/http://nzetc.victoria.ac.nz/tm/scholarly/name-000581.html>

⁸ Killed in action. Timaru Herald, 8 December 1941, p.4. <https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/THD19411208.2.38>

Further information

More information on Allen's military career can be found at:

https://ndhadeliver.natlib.govt.nz/webarchive/20210104000423/http://nzetc.victoria.ac.nz/tm/sc_holarly/name-000581.html

Memorials

John Allen's name is listed on the following memorials:

- Auckland War Memorial Museum, World War 2 Hall of Memories.
- Roll of Honour, Officers' Club Auckland, The Northern Club, 19 Princes Street, Auckland.
- Roll of Honour, Parliament House first-floor main foyer, Wellington.⁹

⁹ John Manchester Allen. Online Cenotaph. <https://www.aucklandmuseum.com/war-memorial/online-cenotaph/record/C17193>