

Wednesday, December 22

ON THIS DAY



▲ **2009:** The onset of Europe's harshest winter in decades claimed more than 80 lives in three days as snow storms and sub-zero temperatures swept the continent

1858: Giacomo Puccini, composer of *Tosca* and *Madame Butterfly*, was born

1984: Dom Mintoff stepped down as prime minister of Malta after 13 years

1989: Romanian communist dictator Nicolae Ceausescu was overthrown after 24 years of hardline rule

2009: Former Manchester United footballer Albert Scanlon, a survivor of the Munich air disaster of 1958, died at the age of 74