

HARRY'S WAR

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I wasn't trying to dodge the war. I wasn't one of those conscientious objectors - but someone had to stay on the farm. The army wanted wool. People still needed to eat. And while I wasn't shirking, I knew I was luckier than most. Out here, it was hard to believe a war was even going on.

And then, in the autumn of 1918, my luck ran out.



Looks like they've finally caught up with you, Harry.

Take care, lad. Keep your head down.



Everything changed once I found myself at training camp in Featherston. The war suddenly felt much closer.



I was used to sharing digs with just old Ted. The army treated us like sheep in a pen.

The days were busy. We learned to fire rifles and throw hand grenades ...



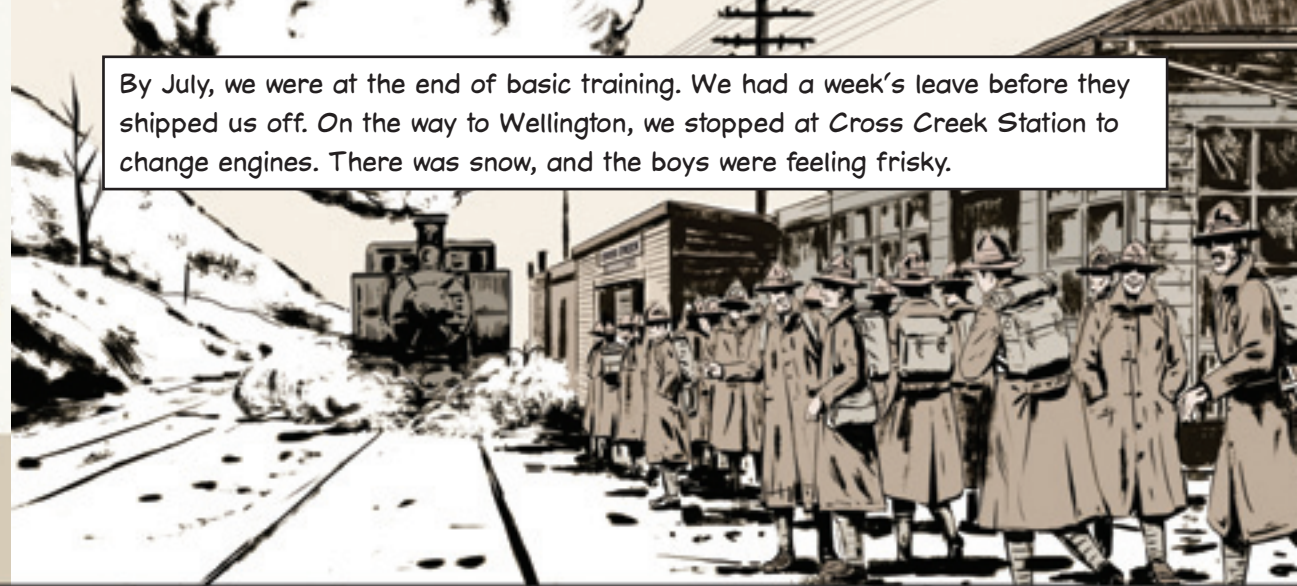
... we attacked sacks with bayonets ...



Keep in step!

... and we marched.

By July, we were at the end of basic training. We had a week's leave before they shipped us off. On the way to Wellington, we stopped at Cross Creek Station to change engines. There was snow, and the boys were feeling frisky.



Sentry duty was the only thing I didn't mind. It was a chance to be alone - a chance to think.



It was wet that winter. The camp was a muddy bog. The fellas reckoned it was all part of the training. There'd be no grass at the Western Front.



Oi, Collins.



I was fair miserable - and the war hadn't even begun for me.

Stretcher inspection, Captain, Sir!

Disgraceful. You're not on the farm now, soldier.



POSTCARD

Dear Ted,
It's OK here, I guess. Tucker's good, and the other men are friendly enough, though the officers are a stiff bunch. They're checking all our teeth before we go. I'm expecting a few fillings. What'd be a soldier? How's the farm?
Your friend
Harry

You know the rules. Your leave is cancelled.

Come on, Sir, that's not fair. They were just larking about.



The mood turned fast that day. I guess it wasn't surprising. Ypres, Passchendaele ... we'd all heard what went on at those places. After Cross Creek, we spent our leave cleaning latrines.

A few weeks later, we left for England.



Hey, Harry. A penny for your thoughts.



We arrived at Sling Army Camp, on the Salisbury Plain, three weeks before Armistice Day.

The war was over. We couldn't believe it. I didn't know whether to laugh or cry.

Cheer up, Harry. We're going home!



But it wasn't really over. We were stuck in England with no way of getting home. The boys weren't happy.

The army could find enough ships to get us here!



Another game of cards, anyone?



They still expected us to follow orders, of course. I didn't like the way the army was treating us - but some of our jokers weren't behaving right, either.



One day, things boiled over in the officers' mess.



Quick, hop in and get down.



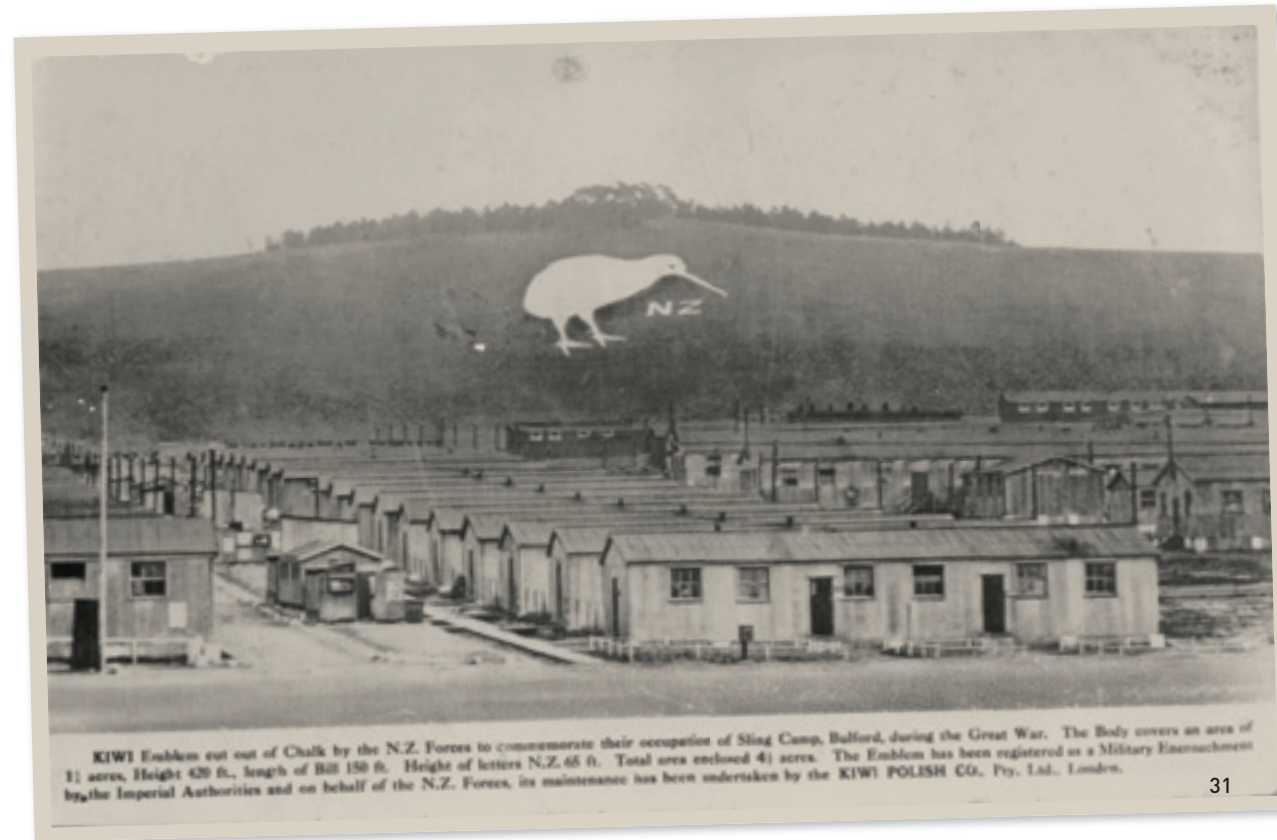
Thanks, Private.

You're all right.

The men rioted for two days. So the army came up with a new plan to keep us occupied. We were ordered to carve a kiwi into the chalk hillside.



So that was my life as a soldier ... my war. A chalk kiwi. It's funny the way things turn out.



KIWI Emblem cut out of Chalk by the N.Z. Forces to commemorate their occupation of Sling Camp, Bullford, during the Great War. The Body covers an area of 1 1/2 acres, Height 420 ft., length of Bill 150 ft. Height of letters N.Z. 65 ft. Total area enclosed 4 1/2 acres. The Emblem has been registered as a Military Emplacement by the Imperial Authorities and on behalf of the N.Z. Forces, its maintenance has been undertaken by the KIWI POLISH CO., Pty. Ltd., London.

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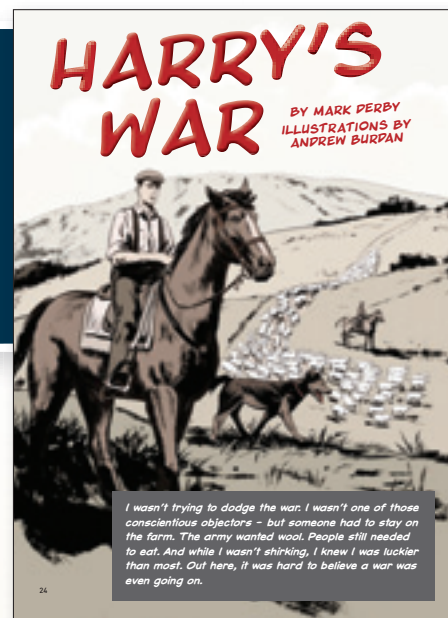
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