

The Extraordinary Story Of New Zealand WWI All Blacks

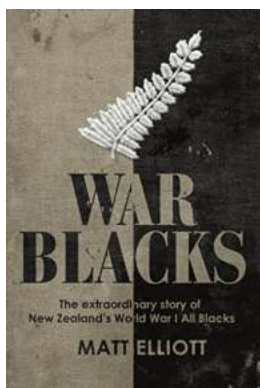


The New Zealand All Blacks, the world-famous rugby team known for their dominance on the pitch, have an extraordinary story that goes beyond the sport. During World War I, many members of the All Blacks joined the New Zealand Expeditionary Force and fought in the war alongside their fellow countrymen. This remarkable chapter in their history showcases their courage, resilience, and loyalty.

The All Blacks and World War I

When World War I erupted in 1914, New Zealand answered the call to arms. The All Blacks, who were respected and beloved by the nation, felt a duty to serve their country. Despite the potential impact on their successful rugby careers, over 150 players and administrators enlisted in the military. They would form the New

Zealand Divisional Rugby Team, better known as the 'Kiwis' or the 'Rugby Fifteen'.



War Blacks: The extraordinary story of New Zealand's WWI All Blacks by Matt Elliott (Kindle Edition)

★★★★★ 5 out of 5

Language : English
File size : 3914 KB
Text-to-Speech : Enabled
Screen Reader : Supported
Enhanced typesetting : Enabled
X-Ray : Enabled
Word Wise : Enabled
Print length : 320 pages



From the Rugby Field to the Battlefield

These men traded their rugby uniforms for military gear and embarked on a journey quite different from anything they had experienced before. They were separated into different regiments and units, but their love for the game and their camaraderie helped them maintain a sense of familiarity in the midst of the chaos of war. Wherever they went, they continued playing rugby, providing an outlet for their physical and mental endurance.

Bonding Through Rugby

On the battlefield, rugby became a way for the soldiers to bond with each other and find solace amidst the brutality of war. Matches were organized whenever possible, allowing the soldiers to temporarily escape the harsh reality they were facing. These games brought them together, offering moments of respite from the anguish and devastation around them.

The Spirit of the All Blacks

The All Blacks' exceptional teamwork and resilience on the rugby field translated into their wartime efforts. Several members of the team received distinguished honors for their bravery and leadership, demonstrating the spirit that New Zealand rugby embodied – a relentless pursuit of excellence and unwavering loyalty. They fought with the same tenacity that made them champions on the rugby pitch.

Remembering the Fallen

Tragically, not all the All Blacks who served in World War I returned home. Some made the ultimate sacrifice, laying down their lives for their country and fellow soldiers. Their memory lives on, and today, their names are commemorated, reminding us of the sacrifice and dedication of these extraordinary men.

An Enduring Legacy

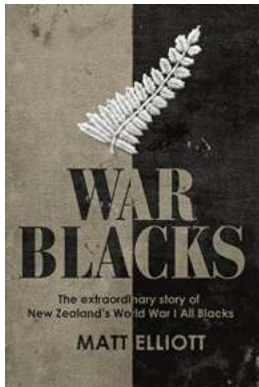
The All Blacks' involvement in World War I is a testament to their character, determination, and the deep-rooted sense of duty they held. Their story serves as a reminder that even in the face of adversity, unity and sportsmanship can prevail. The All Blacks, both on the rugby field and the battlefield, have left an indelible mark on New Zealand's history and will forever be remembered as heroes.

Their Return to Rugby

After the war, the surviving All Blacks returned to the rugby field, resuming their successful careers and continuing their legacy. Their experiences during World War I only added to their depth as individuals and as a team. They carried their wartime resilience and dedication into the game, making them an even greater force to be reckoned with.

The extraordinary story of the New Zealand WWI All Blacks showcases the incredible bravery and resilience of these men. They not only fought for their country but also exemplified the spirit of rugby even in the darkest times. Their legacy lives on, reminding us of the true meaning of teamwork, sacrifice, and the indomitable human spirit.

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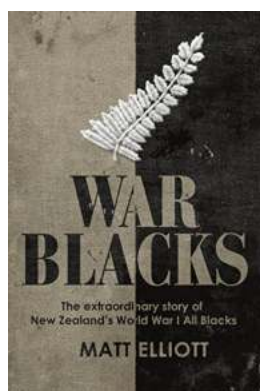
War Blacks is the extraordinary story of New Zealand's national sport and The Great War, and the effect each had on the other.

Rugby and war have played major roles in the forging of a national New Zealand identity. This is the story of where both met, on the hot sands of Egypt and the muddy fields of Britain and France during World War I. War Blacks presents for the first time the stories of more than 90 men who had been, were, or would be All Blacks and their 1914-18 wartime service, wearing the double silver fern of the New Zealand Expeditionary Force or the badges of other nations.

While first-class and senior rugby in New Zealand came to a halt as the war progressed - "fit to play, fit to fight" - the game played an important role in the recreation and morale of our troops. The mighty rivalry between the All Blacks and the Springboks can be traced to this period. When the "Invincibles" were touring the Northern Hemisphere in 1924-25, the ex-soldiers in the team made a point of visiting the battlefields they had fought on only a few years earlier, as well as the graves of their fallen comrades.

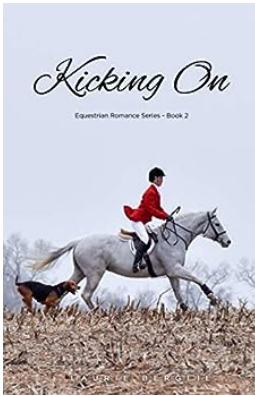
Arguably the most famous of the New Zealand player-soldiers was Dave Gallaher, captain of the "Originals" All Blacks in 1905, who lost his life in 1917 at Passchendaele. He was one of 13 All Blacks killed in action during WWI. Others were wounded and left suffering the effects of active service for the rest of their lives. But amongst those who played after the war was Maurice Brownlie, one of the greatest forwards the game has seen.

War Blacks is the moving - and at times humorous - story of our national sport and The Great War, and the effect each had on the other.



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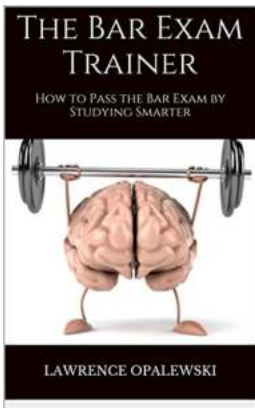
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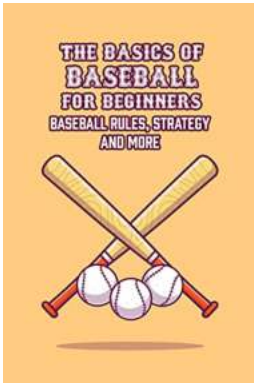
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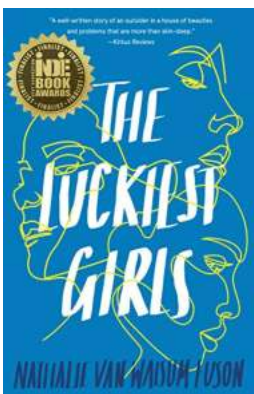
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