

# Well-loved Wiltshire Kiwi gets makeover

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## **DIO and partners have restored the Bulford Kiwi, a chalk monument on Salisbury Plain carved by New Zealand soldiers after World War 1.**

The well-loved 'Bulford Kiwi' monument in Wiltshire has been restored by the Defence Infrastructure Organisation (DIO).

The monument, a large depiction of a kiwi, set in the chalk on Beacon Hill above the village of Bulford on Salisbury Plain, was carved by soldiers from the New Zealand Expeditionary Force who were waiting to return home following the end of World War 1.

DIO partnered with the New Zealand High Commission, local conservation groups, contractor Landmarc and volunteers from the 3rd (UK) Division Signal Regiment and Operation Nightingale to restore the impressive carving.

Operation Nightingale is a UK military archaeology initiative using archaeological digs to aid the recovery of wounded, injured, and sick military personnel and veterans. Started in 2011 on Salisbury Plain, it supports veterans and service personnel by engaging them in archaeological digs to combat issues like anxiety and depression.

As part of the work to ensure the historic significance of the kiwi is preserved, an RAF Chinook helicopter flew over the site and dropped 10 tonnes of chalk, which was then raked into place by volunteers from the partnership groups. A Waiata (a traditional Māori song or chant) and Kukuri dance were performed. The Kukuri dance is a dance performed by the New Zealand Defence Force (NZDF) that blends Māori haka traditions with the traditional dance of the Nepalese Gurkhas.

The soldiers who created the monument fought alongside the 'Trench All Blacks' during the Battle of Messines - often regarded as one of the most successful battles of the war.

Richard Osgood, DIO's senior archaeologist, who leads the work for DIO said:

DIO is responsible for looking after 772 scheduled monuments across the MOD estate dating from the pre-historic era right up to the Cold War.

Although the Bulford Kiwi is one of the youngest, being constructed in 1919, it is of national and international importance, given its association with the Armed Forces of New Zealand. This annual re-chalking reinforces the bonds between our countries and reminds us of the sacrifices made in World War 1.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/well-loved-wiltshire-kiwi-gets-makeover>