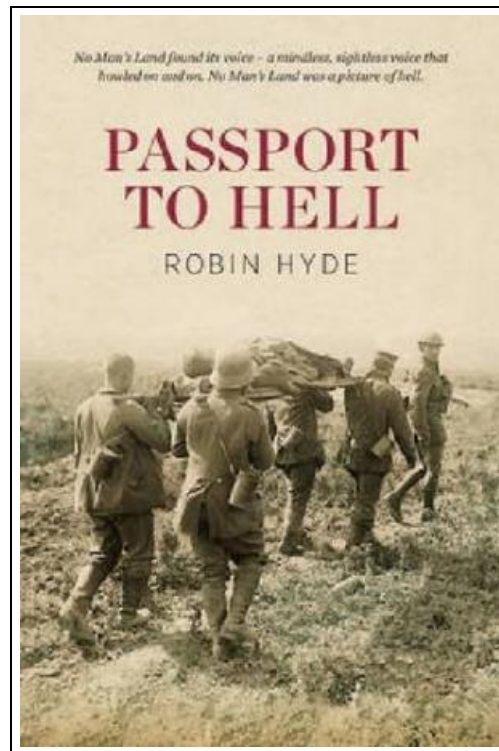


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Auckland University Press, New Zealand, 2015. Paperback. Condition: New. 2nd Second Edition, Second ed.. Language: English . Brand New Book. This man is the biggest, laziest, rottenest, most troublesome-And in the trenches he s one of the best soldiers I ever had. Passport to Hell is the story of James Douglas Stark-Starkie-and his war. Journalist and novelist Robin Hyde came across Starkie while reporting in Mt Eden Gaol in the 1930s and immediately knew she had to write his ` queer true terrible story . The result was greeted by John A. Lee, war veteran, author and politician, as ` the most important New Zealand war book yet published . Born in Southland and finding himself in early trouble with the law, the young Starkie tricked his way into a draft in 1914 by a subterfuge involving whisky and tea. In his subsequent chequered career in Egypt, Gallipoli and France, he showed himself ` a soldier and not a solider , with a ` contempt of danger and discipline alike . Hyde took the raw horrors, respites and reversals of Starkie s experiences and composed a work of literature much greater than a mere documentary of war. She portrays a man looting a dead man s money-belt and filching beer from the Tommies; attempting to shoot a sergeant in a haze of absinthe, yet carrying his wounded captain back across No Man s Land; a man recommended for the V.C. and honoured for his bravery - but also subject to nine courts martial.It is a portrait of a singular individual - ` something of a visionary , in Hyde s words - who has also been described as the quintessential New Zealand soldier. And against the contradictory elements of Starkie s character, Hyde shows a war machine that preaches ` Thou shalt do no murder one...



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