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The War An Army Lost to Birds

Emus are some of the tallest birds in the world, second only to ostriches. They can't fly, but their strong legs let them run up to 30 miles per hour. Native to Australia, emus are long-distance roamers, traveling across the country each year. One year, a terrible drought hit Western Australia. The cleared land and water that farmers provided for their animals made the wheat fields very tempting for the emus. Around 20,000 birds showed up at once, eating and destroying the crops. The farmers suffered huge money losses.

When the desperate farmers asked for help, the government agreed to send soldiers. Soldiers were sent with machine guns that could shoot very fast and seemed perfect for hitting big groups of birds. However, the mission hit some unexpected problems. The emus ran fast to get away. They then scattered into small groups that the soldiers found difficult to hit. The rough land was hard for soldiers to move through quickly and the guns did not work well. After a few weeks, the operation was declared to be a failure. The troops pulled back. The emus had won what came to be called the Great Emu War.