



# Y.M.C.A.



WITH THE

**NEW ZEALAND EXPEDITIONARY FORCE.**

WRITE HOME FIRST.

address  
no. 6956  
Pte H. Perkins  
13th Company  
2nd B. Inf.  
N.Z.E.F.  
Hawke

Reply to No. \_\_\_\_\_ Company \_\_\_\_\_ Bat \_\_\_\_\_

Stationed at Hornchurch  
Essex  
England

April 16<sup>th</sup> 1918

Dear Mrs Harris

I received your letter a few days ago & which was written on the 21<sup>st</sup> of December last, & for which I was very pleased. First of all I must thank you for your kindness also Fannie for sending on the little parcel which I had received some time before your letter, & whilst I was in Hospital in London. Dear Mrs Harris you have my greatest sympathy in the loss you have sustained, & I was not aware until I received your letter that Charles had paid the supreme sacrifice its very hard for you dear mothers, & I often think worse for us boys relatives than for ourselves, as you have such an anxious time at home. I well remember the 4<sup>th</sup> of October. Our Battalion came out of the Line on the 3<sup>rd</sup>, & so we were then in reserve however we were back again on the 10<sup>th</sup> & over the top on the morning of the 12<sup>th</sup> of Oct, & this is a day one can never forget, it was the worst day

that our boys ever had from N.L., & we did not get  
a very good chance against our foes, as by some  
means our Barrage was of a short duration, & Fritz  
got a lot of our boys with his Machine Guns & also  
by sniping. The mud was indescribable & unless  
anyone saw it they would hardly believe it. I had  
the bad luck to fall in a shell hole in the dark  
the night we went in & nearly got disowned. I  
had to wait in my wet clothes all night & was  
dash glad to hop over next morning to chance  
my luck, as it was very miserable to be plastered in  
mud & all through a wet night to wait in a  
sap. The night like many more I have had  
seems long enough for 5 or 6 nights, & when the  
sun was issued next morning, anyone was very  
glad to get a tot. Well as you mentioned on your  
letter anyone comes through some novel & trying  
experiences, & I got through pretty well until  
about July 21<sup>st</sup> when a lot of us got caught in  
some "Mustard Gas" with the result that I was  
sent to an Hospital in Bologna & was there a  
week after which I was sent to the 2<sup>nd</sup> London  
General Hospital at Chelsea. I was there a  
month & was then sent to this Convalescent Home  
I have been here nearly three weeks, & must say  
that this is a very nice place. There are at present  
over 2,000 of us here & our food is pretty good  
& we have a plenty of amusements. We have the

N. Z.



Y.M.C.A.

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N. Z.



*J.S. You enquire about Miller & I must tell you that we are soon getting specific*

*Please secure the parcel, but I can write faster with it I know you don't mind*

Reply to No. \_\_\_\_\_ Company \_\_\_\_\_ Bar \_\_\_\_\_

Stationed at

(3)

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*y. M. C. A. & y. M. C. A. also the Church Army Halls  
to go to, & there are also other places for soldiers  
outside the camp. I was lucky to be sent over here now  
in the Spring time, as it's a lovely time of the year  
& the country will soon look at its best, but still  
this last few hours the weather has changed & it's  
now raining very heavy & rather cold, but no doubt  
the rain will do a lot of good, it's an old saying  
that April showers bring forth May flowers. On your  
letter you mentioned about lovely Devon, & I love  
the old county, but I also love N.Z. now I have  
got used to it, & I hope to go back again, if  
I get through this war. I often think I would  
not mind losing an arm or leg, as long as I  
can get off with that. I often laugh over a  
little incident that happened to one of our chaps  
a few weeks before I left France. Six of us were  
carrying food to some outposts & one morning about  
six o'clock we were hurrying up, when old Fritz  
was sending his bullets very close, with the result  
that the chap next to me got hit & by his actions*

I thought it must be pretty bad, so of course he laid  
down in a shell hole & I examined him, but found  
the bullet had only grazed the skin. He made  
sure he had a "Buckshot" as we call it meaning  
one good enough for England. He swore when I told  
him it had just broken the skin, so you can  
just imagine how some poor chaps long to get over  
here, away from the roar & din of battle. Well dear  
Mrs Harris as I write this letter my thoughts go  
out to our boys in France, & no doubt they are in  
for some grim work at the present, let us hope &  
pray that it will soon be over, & peace reign in  
the place of all this bloodshed. I know for fact  
at the present we are in a critical period, but we  
have confidence & must keep a brave heart. When I  
read your letter I thought what changes we get in  
what seems a short time, & fancy Nellie being married  
nearly two years, it seems such a short time since  
I was at Rangiora. Dave Sutherland I think is  
in Egypt as he went on the "Mounted". I was at  
Rangiora on my final leave. I expect as you say  
Grandpa is getting feeble, dear old man. Well  
Mrs Harris I was sorry to hear of Mr Holman's  
illness, & no doubt he has had a bad time. I will  
send you a P.C. of me & mate taken at Chelsea  
it is not very good, as the sun was out, of course  
you will see me in front, & now I will conclude  
with kind regards to you all & again thanking you  
from yours sincerely Harry Porten