

Temuka Leader – 5 January 1918

SOLDIERS' LETTERS

Mrs J. Rickus, Wilkin Street, Temuka, has received a letter from her son, Private William Rickus, from "Somewhere in France," in which he mentions that the gift of mutton birds (the dispatch of which was mentioned in our columns some months ago) had been received, and given the men a great treat. He says, "All the members of the battalion had a bird each, so the gift didn't turn out badly. I expected we were going to get the equivalent of ? each, but it turned out very different (though I could have eaten more), and I must thank you and all those who subscribed to the mutton bird scheme. Please tell all you can that the boys of this battalion thank the South Island people for what they did for them." Private Rickus mentions that at the time of writing he was quite well, and was out of the line, and that was how he was able to write.

Driver Tieka Pemamene, writing from a rest camp, also expresses to Mrs Rickus his and his transport's thanks for the gift of mutton birds. He says the birds were a nice change, and it was a pity they could not always get them, or at any rate some change from bully beef and army biscuits. He mentions several of his company. Tom and Bill Rickus were well; with the exception that Tom had a slight cold. Bill was as "fit as nails," and was to represent the company in the football matches. Raha Nopena was also well, but had still to use a walking stick. The Taipana brothers were well, and Jimmie Hopkinson was in hospital in France. A passage in Driver Peneamene's letter reads: "The winter is coming on fast, and talk about rain - it's worse than awful. The road is just one streak of slush, and the horse lines a mud pond. So you see a soldier's life has plenty of hardships, but we must carry on to show the road to victory soon - I hope before next Easter, if luck will have it"