

*United Kingdom*

The work in the United Kingdom, mentioned in previous reports, continued to be carried out as before. The year under review, however, was mainly notable for the commencement of the repatriation of the prisoners of war, and the Board's work in this connection is set out later in this report.

The New Zealand War Services Association continued, as reported previously, to carry out the distribution of comforts throughout the United Kingdom and also the management of the New Zealand Forces Club.

The following grants were forwarded to the High Commissioner for New Zealand to assist in the relief of distress in Great Britain caused by flying bombs, &c. :—

£10,000 sterling for the Women's Voluntary Services, England, to assist in the rehousing of blitzed personnel and for post-natal hospital work.

£1,000 for the Navy League Seafarer's Comforts Supply, London.

£2,000 for the British Y.M.C.A. for services rendered in connection with amenities for released prisoners of war.

£500 to the Lady Frances Ryder Organization to assist in the work of providing hospitality for New Zealand Service personnel.

*Middle East and Italy*

Brigadier A. S. Falconer, who was relieving Colonel F. Waite as the Board's Commissioner in the Middle East during Colonel Waite's furlough, returned to New Zealand in March, 1945, and Colonel Waite resumed his duties.

Major C. Meachen was appointed by the War Purposes Committee of the Joint Council of the Order of St. John and New Zealand Red Cross Society as Sick and Wounded Commissioner in the Middle East, in the place of Major W. Tweedy, who had completed three years' service.

The lines of communication in the Middle East and Italy, on account of the fighting, were tremendous, and clubs were established at Bari, Rome, Florence, and Venice. In addition, special hostels under the Y.M.C.A. were arranged at Riccione, Madonna di Campiglio, and Trieste, in addition to those already working in Cairo and Alexandria.

In regard to the clubs, these were not actually maintained by the National Patriotic Fund Board. In the first instance the Cairo Club commenced under a guarantee that any loss sustained would be met by the Board, and an advance of cash was made. Goods were sent from New Zealand, and on account of the fact that these goods were of necessity sold at Naafi prices a considerable profit was made, and as all staff was provided by the 2nd N.Z.E.F. the clubs were actually a profit-making concern and came eventually to be controlled by a special section of the 2nd N.Z.E.F. Patriotic Funds were used to supply the goods, but this money was eventually repaid.

On the cessation of hostilities with Germany special provision was made for sports gear, entertainments, and leave arrangements for the troops.

*Repatriation of Prisoners of War*

As stated in last year's report, Major S. C. Read was appointed the Board's Commissioner in the United Kingdom. As a result of his preliminary work, in conjunction with Mr. C. Cassells, the Senior Y.M.C.A. Secretary, arrangements for the reception of the repatriated prisoners of war were well in hand when these men started to arrive in the United Kingdom from Germany. In conjunction with the Army authorities, Y.M.C.A.s were arranged throughout the reception depots in the United Kingdom as follows :—

Puttick Reception Camp, Cliftonville.  
Hargest and Crump Wing, Broadstairs.  
Headquarters and Park Wing, Westgate.  
Miles Wing, Birchington.  
Freyberg Wing, Folkestone.  
Hospital Wing, Haine.