

# Private Harry Keeling

17th August 1884 - 7th June 1917

*Private Harry Keeling, service number 32998 was a member of the 4th Company, 1st Battalion of the Otago Regiment, New Zealand Expeditionary Force who died on 7th June 1917 aged 32.*

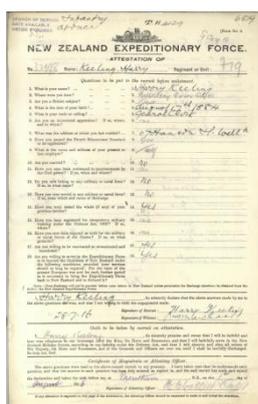
Harry first appeared on the 1891 Census aged six, when the family was living in Norsey Road. His father, Peter (44 years old) a labourer, who was born in Stock and had been a brickmaker and agricultural labourer in his time, and Harry's mother, Mary Ann (38 years old) hailed from Baddow.

His nine siblings were, William the oldest, Frederick, George, Arthur, Sarah, Rosa, Tom, Samuel, and Joseph (the youngest).

Census evidence from 1861 shows that both Peter (then 14) and Mary Ann (then 8) would have been aware of each other when living South Hanningfield with their respective families. Harry's grandfather an agricultural labourer, Joseph (who in 1861 was then aged 73) had been born in Woodham Ferrers, and his grandmother Sarah (59 years old) had been born in Basildon. As to Mary Ann's family her father and mother, Thomas Elliott was 27 and a Brickmaker born in Great Baddow, whilst his wife also Mary Ann was 25 and is registered as being from Chelmsford.

The 1901 Census does show that a Harry Keeling aged 17 from Billericay, was working as a barman in a pub, the Queens Head, in West Ham Lane. If we turn that on its head, he wasn't at home with his mother and father when this census was taken. In fact most of the siblings had moved on at this time.

At time of writing and this will need further research, Harry, forever what reason went to New Zealand and there is a gap of some fourteen years that need accounting for to fill in this time of his life.



We do know that at the time of the Great War he was a General Clerk and was residing in Wellington, North Island, NZ. His attestation papers give a full resume of his physicality and where he was living and the job he was doing at time of enlistment. It did come as a surprise to read that he had joined the Otago Regiment based near Wellington. Evidence of this had come in from a secondary source, the Commonwealth War Graves Commission which cites these details, plus his mother and father, Peter and Mary Ann were living in Gooseberry Green, Billericay at the time of his death.

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Harry joined the New Zealand Expeditionary Force 28th July 1916, enlisting at Trentham which is a suburb of Wellington. The house he lived in 67 Hanson Street is no longer there but Google maps does show some older properties in the area which may give the viewer an idea of where Harry was living at the time.



Post war Harry's mother was sent the British War and Victory Medal, along with the plaque and scroll.

#### Acknowledgements

Ancestry.com

Commonwealth War Graves Commission

Google maps

[www.archway.archives.govt.nz](http://www.archway.archives.govt.nz)

<http://1914-1918.invisionzone.com/forums/>

<http://nzetc.victoria.ac.nz/tm/scholarly/tei-WH1-Otag-t1-back-d1-d1.html>