

## **The King Island World War 2 War Service Fund**

During World War 2, Barbara Bertram received a Comfort Package or a Money Order from the King Island (Tasmania) War Service Fund, and then corresponded with the Fund.

In August 1940, the Island Fund was formally approved to operate independently from the State of Tasmania. It was run by a group of volunteers, led by Mr John (Jack) Marshall. John was an ex WW1 soldier, also the President of the local Returned Sailors, Soldiers and Airmen Imperial League of Australia (RSSAILA), founded on King Island in 1919. This is now known as the Returned and Services League (RSL) and the King Island RSL Sub branch is still in operation.

The fund distributed packages to locals who had enlisted and other people who had no connection with King Island. As a mark of respect 139 service personnel wrote letters of thanks, totaling approximately 530 letters – they form the basis of the collection. Further information on the Fund and its operation can be found on the Community Page.

The challenges for a service person during World War 2 to write a letter was to firstly find the inclination (often directly related to their mental condition due to combat), time, paper, a writing implement and a place under cover. Occasionally a letter was typed and the paper ranged from high quality to loose scraps, and as the war progressed supplies dwindled. With letterhead paper, naming a unit or organisation, do not assume that was where the person was when writing. Paper was borrowed and passed on to mates. Occasionally, a Telegram was sent where the emphasis was on brevity as each word added more to the cost.

The standard of writing is directly related to the standard of education and sometimes a friend or a Chaplain would write a letter on a person's behalf. Many of the letters were addressed to Mr Marshall (or just Jack), his wife, a member of the voluntary committee, or the RSSAILA. Some letters are very brief while others are detailed and mention other people, or events they have witnessed. The Marshall's also lost their son John while on Active Service, and some writers asked about John or acknowledged his death to the family.

For most of the war, letters were subject to censorship and this is often observed in a cutout section on a page – if the other side was written on it was also deleted. Many letters have the initials or the signature of the person who checked them prior to posting.

What follows is a scan of the original letter and a typed transcript, based on the original. Grammar or spelling has not been changed or corrected, and if more than one letter was written they follow in date order. Some of the original letters, although stored correctly, are very faint and fragile, but all have been included along with undated letters. They are perhaps the only surviving documents written by this person.

Barbara wrote five letters – two each in 1943 and 1944, and the last one in 1945 when she was stationed at the Naval Hospital in Milne Bay.

R.A.N. Nursing Service

Flinders Naval Depot,

~~Press No.~~

Date 13<sup>th</sup> May.

Dear Mr Marshall,

This is just a short note to thank you and the members of the War Service Fund for the parcel which I was delighted to get.

It was most acceptable & I needed all the articles, things are so hard to get down here & we only get up to town once a fortnight.

I'm sorry I'm so late in acknowledging the parcel, but coming to a new place like this there is such a lot to do I don't seem to get much spare time.

Once again thanking you.

Yours sincerely

Barbara Buttram.

R.A.N. Nursing Service  
Flinders Naval Depot,  
13<sup>th</sup> May.

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Yours sincerely

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R.A.N. Nursing Service  
7 Linders Naval Depot.  
13.6.43.

Dear Mr Marshall,  
Just a short note  
to thank you & the K.I. War Service  
Fund for the lovely parcel  
which I received several weeks  
ago.

It was a great surprise and I  
had great pleasure while un-  
packing it.

It was very good of you all to  
send a parcel to me and I do  
appreciate it.

I've settled into my new job now  
& like it very much, the boys  
are very good to look after, I haven't  
had the pleasure of nursing any of  
the K.I. boys yet.

Thanking you all. Yours sincerely  
Barbara Bestman

R.A.N. Nursing Service

Flinders Naval Depot.  
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Yours sincerely

Barbara Bertram



R.A.N. Nursing Service  
FLINDERS NAVAL DEPOT,  
VICTORIA.

6.3.44.

Dear Mr Marshall,  
Would you thank the  
members of the King Island War Service  
Fund very much indeed for the most  
acceptable parcel I received some time ago.  
I did appreciate getting it.

Yours sincerely  
Barbara Bertram

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FLINDERS NAVAL DEPOT,  
VICTORIA.  
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R.A.N.S.  
Feinders Naval  
Depot.  
17.7.44

The Secretary K.I. War Service Fund,  
Just a note in  
appreciation of the very nice  
parcel I received from you  
a week or so ago. I do enjoy  
getting them.

You may be interested to  
know that I am going on  
draft to New Guinea in  
several weeks, am looking  
forward to the trip up.  
Hope I get a few days  
leave to get home and  
say a few farewells before  
I finally depart.

Yours sincerely  
Barbara Buttram

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Yours sincerely

Barbara Bertram



R. A. N. N. S.  
Naval Hospital  
Meibne Bay  
9.1.45.

The President,  
King Island War Service Fund.

Dear Sir, May I express my  
sincerest thanks and appreciation  
for the canteen order & lamp  
received by me at Christmas  
time from the members of  
your association.  
These were much appreciated  
and I shall look forward to  
thanking you in person  
in the near future.

Thanking you,

yours sincerely  
Barbara Bevan.

R.A.N.N.S.  
Naval Hospital  
Milne Bay  
9.1.45.

The President,  
King Island War Service Fund,

Dear Sir,

May I express my sincerest thanks and appreciation for the canteen order & hamper received by me at Christmas time from the members of your association.

These were much appreciated and I shall look forward to thanking you in person in the near future.

Thanking you,

Yours sincerely  
Barbara Bertram.