

The King Island World War 2 War Service Fund

During World War 2, Albert Dobson 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.

Albert wrote two letters to the Fund in late 1942 and early 1943, by which time he had been promoted. His last letters describes Christmas Day in the field and how they shared the food they had been sent – a good example of mateship.



AUSTRALIAN
COMFORTS FUND



In Conjunction with

Y. M. C. A.

(Use Military Address only)

No. TX 4834. Dobson, A. B.

Aus. Inf. Batt.

B. H. 3. 6 Nov. 1942.

Qualipatera

To King Island War Service Fund

Just a short note to thank you
for Centen order which I received on
the 20th Oct and was glad to receive it.
Where we are now Centen orders are not
much good, because we have no centen
at present; things are scarce up here
the main ones are ink and tobacco
you have a job to get a bottle of ink
if you had a pound note to give for
it.

Before I bring this note to a close I
must thank you again.

Yours Truly

A. B. Dobson

MAIL YOUR LETTERS A.P.O.

DO NOT MENTION MILITARY ACTIVITIES.

TX4834. Dobson. A.R.
Aust. Inf Bat
B H.Q. 6 Nov 1942
Australia.

To King Island. War Service Fund.

Just a short note to thank you for Canteen order which I received on the 20th Oct and was glad to receive it. Where we are now Canteen orders are not much good, because we have no Canteen at present. Things are scarce up here the main ones are ink and Tobacco you have a job to get a bottle of ink if you had a pound note to give for it.

Before I bring this note to a close I must Thank you again.

Yours Truly
A.R. Dobson

TX 4934.

L. bpl. Dobson
216 Aust. Inf. Batt
Australia

Jan. 1. 43.

To was ^{Service} ~~Post Office~~ Fund.

Dear Friends.

Just a few lines to let you know that I received parcel on Christmas day and was very pleased to receive the parcel. I made short work of the cake and it was very nice, we don't see much cake so you can guess when we see a cake it don't take long to disappear. When a couple of hundred men get round to have their meal. We had a good day on Christmas and a nice dinner every body seem to have enjoyed them selves we never heard any one complain, but I guess there was quite a few of the boys would have liked a bottle or two to top the day but all we could get was tea and cold water. If we are lucky we may be able to get home for our next Christmas by the way the war is going here's hoping we are all back home safe by then.

News is very scarce up our way so will bring this note to a close.

Wishing you all a Happy New Year.
and thanking you all once more.

From.

L. bpl. Dobson

Just back

TX 4834.
L. Cpl. Dobson
2/6 Aust. Inf. Batt
Australia
4. ^{Jan}. 1. 43.

To war Service Fund

Dear Freinds.

Just a few lines to let you know that I received parcel on Christmas day and was very pleased to receive the parcel I made short work of the cake and it was very nice, we don't see much cake so you can gess when we see a cake it don't take long to diserpear. when a couple of Hrundred men get round to have their meal. We had a good day on Christmas and a nice dinner every body seemed to have enjoyed them selves we never heard any one complain, but I gess there was quite a few of the boys would have liked a bottle or too to top the day but all we could get was tea and cold water. If we are lucky we maybe able to get home for our next Christmas by the way the war is going here's hoping we are all back home safe by then.

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Wishing you all a Happy New Year.

And thanking you all once more.

From.

L. Cpl. Dobson