

The King Island World War 2 War Service Fund

During World War 2, John (Jack) Farrell 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.

Jack wrote two undated letters to the Fund; one in 1943 and the last one in 1944. He did well considering he was 'a very poor letter writer'.

VX 9830
Dw. Farrell Jr
2/155 Gen Trans. Coy
6. th Div
AIF AUS

Dear Jack.

Just a few lines Jack to let you know I received the parcel from the K I war services today & as you will understand was very pleased to receive same. I guess you will think it quite some I wrote & thanked you all for this & other parcels I have received in the past but as I am a very poor letter writer I hope you will understand it is not that I haven't had time but just lazy.

Anyhow how are you all at home well I hope as we all are up this way. As you will see I have changed my address of late & am now amongst quite a lot of new friends. I heard that Archie Jackson is home or have quite a few of the boys here know him I hope he has enjoyed a time as I had on my last leave. Well Jack there is not much to write about ~~of~~ only to thank all concerned in the War services Fund not forgetting yourself & wish you all a Happy Christmas.

So I'll say Churrio until I see or hear from you

Churrio

Jack Farrell
Nedetrackay

VX 9830
Drv. Farrell JP
2/155 Gen Trans. Coy.
6th AUS Div
AIF AUS

Dear Jack.

Just a few lines Jack to let you know I received the parcel from the KI war services today & as you will understand was very pleased to receive same. I guess you will think it quite time I wrote & thanked you all for this & other parcels I have received in the past but as I am a very poor letter writer I hope you will understand it is not that I haven't had time but just lazy.

Any how how are you all at home well I hope as we all are up this way. As you will see I have changed my address of late & am now amongst quite a lot of Tas friends. I heard that Archie Jackson is home on leave quite a few of the boys here know him I hope he has a good a time as I had on my last leave. Well Jack there is not much to write about only to thank all concerned in the War services Fund not forgetting yourself & Wish you all a Happy Christmas.

So I'll say Cheerio until I see or hear from you
Cheerio
Jack Farrell

Excuse this note
as I am not much
of a letter writer

VX 9830
Dr Farrell JG
2/1 AUS. TRANS. P.F.N.
A.I.F. AUS.

Dear Jack.

Just a short note to let
you know I received your carton
order & also the Parcel. Will you
kindly thank all the members concerned
for me. It is certainly a great help
to receive anything from home we are
up in the great wilds of New Guinea
& it is not much of a place. We all
hope to be finished here soon. I don't
know whether we will get leave I hope
so. then I will be able to see you all.
Remember me to old Bill Scott please
Jack. Well I'll have to finish Jack so
I wish you all at home a happy
new year

From Jack Farrell *[Signature]*

Excuse this note
as I am not much
of a letter Writer

VX9830
Dr Farrell J P
2/1 AUS. TRANS. PLN.
AIF. AUS.

Dear Jack.

Just a short note to let you know I received your canteen order & also the Parcel. Will you kindly thank all the members concerned for me. It is certainly a great help to receive anything from home we are up in the great wilds of New Guinea & it is not much of a place. We all hope to be finished here soon. I don't know whether we will get leave I hope so, then I will be able to see you all Remember me to old Bill Scott please Jack. Well I'll have to finish Jack so I wish you all at home a Happy New Year

From Jack Farrell