

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

During World War 2, Thomas (Tom) 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.

Tom wrote two letters to the Fund; the first believed to be in December 1942 and the last one a year later. In his first letter he expresses his frustration about service life, but a year later things seemed to have improved.

T. X. 6836.  
Capt. James T. F.  
B. Co.  
40th A. I. B.  
A. I. F.  
Las.

Tuesday.

Dear Jack,

Received canteen order today and I will ask you to thank the Committee of the War Service Fund for same on my behalf.

I am sorry I did not get out to see you people while I was home last, but I really intended to do so but I had to come away two days earlier than I expected but hope to see you all when I get home next time which I think will be in about six weeks time.

We are all getting fed up with this place - when we enlisted we did not expect to put in eight months here but I suppose the powers in charge will give us a trip somewhere as soon as they can place us.

Hoping you & the rest of the family are enjoying the best of health

I remain

Yours sincerely  
Tom Farrell

T.X. 6836.  
L/Cpl. Farrell T.F.  
B Coy.  
40<sup>th</sup> A.I.B.  
A.I.F.  
Tas.

Tuesday. [Dec 1942]

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Yours sincerely

Tom Farrell.

TX 6836  
Cpl Farrell T  
40 Just Inf Bn  
Australia  
5 Dec 43.

Dear John,

after all this time I feel that I must write and thank you and your Committee of the W.B.F. for your many parcels etc which you have kindly sent to us since we left K.I.O.

Previously I have asked Mum to let some one of the committee know that we had received parcels and to thank them on my (our) behalf and I trust she did the job O.K.

We have each received a parcel this week and each article will be very handy - toothpaste being the most useful article as far as I am concerned.

We are very well cared for in the N.T. - the A.C.F. in this area do a very good job - we



get an issue of some kind or other every month and the Canteens are very well stocked - it is only occasionally that we cannot procure all our wants but on the average we can always get necessary things.

Life in the NT seems to agree with me - so far I have not contracted any of the tropical complaints but one has to be very careful. The 'wet' season is slowly approaching and I believe it is the worst time of the year but I am sure we will all survive.

I believe you are having a great season at home this year - it makes a big difference when the rain comes at the right time.

Will John again thank you so much for your many kindnesses. I will say hello hoping you and all the family are as well as I am at present.

Walt

Yours sincerely  
Tom D.

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Cpl Farrell T  
40 Aust Inf Bn  
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Yours sincerely

Tom F.