

The King Island World War 2 War Service Fund

During World War 2, Robert Heddle 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.

Robert wrote six letters to the Fund; three each in 1941 and 1942. As a member of the 2/40th Battalion he travelled from Tasmania through Victoria to Darwin then on to Timor. However, he was medically evacuated back to Australia having contracted polio. His letters from 1942 reflect his time in hospital and, apart from his illness, he knew his mates were now prisoners of the Japanese. This would not have helped his recovery, noting that he was discharged as medically unfit in September 1943.

From R.H. Huddle

No. 183926

B Coy 2/40 Batt.

W/o Camp P. G.

Bongilla Victoria
Aus.



Jan 12 1941

To

King Island War Service Fund.

Dear Sirs,

I received your parcel on Jan. 3rd.
a few days before I left Brighton Camp Tasmania
and I ^{am} very pleased for all you have sent.

It is great to receive ^{such} excellent parcels of youthful
articles,

We have been very busy lately so there-
fore I couldn't write before. Although I sincerely
hope I am not too late in thanking you now.

Yes we (all the 2/40 Batt.) are in Bongilla
camp now, and I might say the heat is great
yesterday it was 102° I don't know what
it is today but the ~~poor~~ perspiration
runs out of us while we are sitting down
in our huts. Today being Sunday we are taking
it fairly easy, the last few days we have
been going swimming in the Murray River, and
last night a good few of us went to Albury
in New South Wales about 12 miles from camp.

② While we were there we went to a dance, it was not too bad, ofcourse the style of dancing is different and we Tasmanian boys have to be careful, we can't tell the girls we are from Tas. because they won't look at us, they have no time for the Tasmanian boys, for what reason I don't know.

Ah. Well there is not much to write about although I like to fill in a few lines so I have to bring in the personal things.

Well King Island Friends I will have to close now, but before I go, I would like to thank you once ab again for your kindness. So

~~With~~ ^{cheerio} for the time being
hoping to hear from you soon.

I am your happy friend
and thankful

Robert H. Heddle.

Tx 3986

B. boy

2/40 Ball

40 Camp Post Office

Bonegilla Victoria

Aus.

R.H. Heddle
TX3986
B. Coy 2/40 Batt.
C/O Camp P.O.
Bonegilla Victoria
Aus.

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It is great to receive such excellent parcels of youthful articles.

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Yes we (all the 2/40 Batt.) are in Bonegilla Camp now, and I might say the heat is great yesterday it was 102% I don't know what it is today but the persperation runs out of us while we are sitting down in our huts, Today being Sunday we are taking it fairly easy, the last few days we have been ~~going~~ swimming in the Murray River, and last night a good few of us went to Albury in New South Wales about 12 miles from Camp. While we were there we went to a dance, it was not too bad, of course the Style of dancing is different and we Tasmanianboys have to be careful, we can't tell the girls we are from Tas because they won't look at us. they have no time for the Tasmanian boys, for what reason I don't know.

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So cheerio for the time being hoping to hear from you soon,

I am Your happy and thankful Friend

Robert H. Heddle
TX3986
B. Coy
2/40 Batt
C/O Camp Post Office
Bonegilla. Victoria
Aus.



Australian Young Men's Christian Association

PATRON: HIS MAJESTY THE KING

'It is not sufficient to live.
But to live well

Write Home Free

July 11th 1941

FROM: TX3986. PTE. HEDDLE. R. H.
B. Coy. 2/40th BATTN.
No. 1 Military. P.O. DARWIN. N. T. AUS.

Dear Mrs. Marshall,

Just a few lines thanking you and the other members of The King Island War Service Fund for the kindness you have all provided in sending us boys comforts in the many ways you have, parcels which you folk have already sent have been much appreciated by we King Is. boys of the 2nd BATTALION.

The parcel you posted on May 18th 41 arrived here on Monday evening last and thanks ever so much for it, the tin of coffee was delicious & needless to say (not only me) but the other members of my tent really enjoyed every cupful it made, the tobacco socks & handkerchief etc were also much appreciated.

My people wrote from home saying you would like us to acknowledge all parcels, so I guess the other boys have already wrote than^{king} you, I was the last to get my parcel as I was further North when they came, it wasn't until a week back that the other companies moved up here, & was then I



Australian Young Men's Christian Association

PATRON: HIS MAJESTY THE KING

'It is not sufficient to live,
But to live well

Write Home First

194

received my parcel.

I will now tell you a little about our new camp, we are only 28 miles south of Darwin (the Northern Territory capital) & believe me the Mosquitoes are thick, from the first day we arrived here we have used "Mosquito nets". It is impossible to sleep at ~~no~~ night without nets, the weather! well we still believe it is summer, we don't know what rain is, we can't say we have had any since Xmas:

News are very scarce, I believe Russia is at War with Germany, I hope Britain takes the opportunity of the World situation now & wipes Germany off the face of the Earth.

Well Mrs Marshall time is drawing on so I must close, once more thanking you War Service Fund helpers for your much appreciated kindness.

I am

Yours Truly

Pte. Robert H. Heddle

July 11th 1941

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No. 1 Military. P.O. DARWIN. N.T. Aus

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Yours Truly

Pte. Robert H. Heddle.

From TX3986

June. 8-1942.

Pte. Middle. R. H.

C/o 9. "A. G. H.

NORTHFIELD.

SOUTH AUST.

To

Mrs. A. Marshall.

Cowie.

King Island.

Dear Madam,

I wish to thank
you and all members of The K.I. War
Service Fund for the parcel which I
received some few days ago, everything
it contained was in excellent condition
& of course was much appreciated.

I also thank you for your good
wishes, regards a quick recovery etc. +
I wish to be remembered to all King
Island friends & hope to be with you

D A

2
all again soon,

Yours in the King's Service.

Phe. Meddell, R. H.

D A

FROM. TX3986

June. 8- 1942.

Pte. Heddle. R.H.
C/O 9..th A.G.H.
NORTHfiELd.
SouTH AusT.

To

Mrs. A. Marshall.

Currie

King Island,

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War Service Fund for the parcel which I received some few days ago, everything it contained
was in excellent condition & of course was much appreciated.

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remembered to all King Island friends & hope to be with you all again soon,

Yours in the King's Service.

Pte. Heddle. R.H.

T x 3986.

HEDDLE. R. H.

C/O 105. THA. M. H.

Aug. 4/1942.

COLONEL LIGHT GARDENS.

ADELAIDE. S. A.

Dear Mrs. Marshall,

Sincerely hope you & all members of the
K. I. WAR SERVICE FUND. will accept these few
words of thanks for the Canteen order which
I received a few days ago.

One finds little to write about in hospital
but am living in high hopes of seeing you all
at Xmas time or early in 43. By this you
can guess I am improving.

Believe me for now, once again thanking
you ^{all} for your great kindness.

Yours in the Kings Service.

Robert H. Heddle.

P.S. Would like to be remembered to all K. I. friends

R. H. Heddle

TX 3986.

HEDDLE R.H.

C/o. 105.th A.M.H.

CoLoNEL LigHTGARDENS

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RH Heddle

123986.

Huddle. R. H.

C/O. 105. A. M. H

Cot. Lgt. Gans.

6/10/1942.

Dear Mrs. & Mr. Marshall.

These few lines hoping to find you all well & enjoying life to the fullest, things seem to be going well with my self at present, am now able to stand for a few minutes each day, with a "spot" of luck should be soon lengthening the term.

Guess you can imagine just how happy I am, but it will be nothing ~~to~~ compared to the day when I leave this itel, that's about the only thing I am living for, at the moment any way.

Before going any further, Mrs. & Mr. Marshall I would like to say how sorry I was to hear the very sad news of your son John, I sincerely hope you will accept my deepest sympathy, even if I am late in writing, to tell the truth it was late when I learned the sad news, so I decided not to write until now, To-day I am also writing to Mrs. & Mr. J. Youl, it was only yesterday that I heard about Peter. Jones, it's hard when so many grand, young, men have their life taken by such a tragedy as war, One never knows what next he is going to hear, but cheer up, "friends", & look on the bright side, we must come out on top one day.

Well, what is the weather like over there now? we had about a weeks perfect weather

here until the day before yesterday when we had severe hailstorms & a slight rumble of thunder, today it is not so bad, but could be a little warmer.

The beach is only three miles or so from here & we boys would be very happy if we only had a way of getting there, guess if we did the army would be down on it, yes, this place, too, is bound with Red tape, guess if they had as much barbed-wire as they have red tape, well, we'd have the Hun & Gaps cornered months ago.

~~Well~~ By the way I would like to thank the K. I. War Service Fund for the canteen-order which I received a few days ago, such gifts have always been appreciated but I am now going to ask you not to send any more, as we get plenty of everything ~~thing~~ here, not as though I am trying to be independent or anything in that line, but really I get more than I need now, & I thought you would have plenty of use for same.

I know for
 will understand
 what I mean
 about the end of the
 Race I will close for
 hoping this so find for
 all will happy + enjoying
 life so the I am yours
 Sincerely
 Robert Meddler

P.S. I sincerely hope you will take
 the War Service request in the
 manner it is meant, really I
 don't wish to be offending.
 R.M.H.

TX3986.

Heddle. R.H.

B/O. 105. A.M.H

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I know you will understand what I mean.

But as this is about the end of the "News" Real I will close hoping to find you all well happy and enjoying life to the greatest extent.

I am Yours Sincerely

Robert Heddle

P.S. I sincerely hope you will take the War Service request in the manner it is meant, really I don't wish to be offending.

Tx 3486.

HEDDLE R.H.

Co. 105. A.M.H.

Coh. Lt. Gans.

24. 12. 42.

To

THE SECRETARY AND MEMBERS OF.
King Island War Service Fund.

Dear Sirs.

I would very much like to
thank you all for the very nice parcel
which I received some time ago - I might mention
it was much appreciated & every thing
was in perfect condition.

I will close wishing
you - one & all - a very Merry Xmas & a
Bright & Happy New Year.

Yours Sincerely,
Robert. H. Heddle

TX3986

HEDDLE, R.H.

C/O. 105. A.M.H.

CoL. LgT. GdNS.

24.12.42.

To/

The SECRETRY aNd MEMbERS of.

KiNg ISLAND. WAR SERVICE FUNd.

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