

The King Island World War 2 War Service Fund

During World War 2, John Hooley 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.

John wrote two letters to the Fund in 1940 and 1941, which are to the point and indicate they were being trained with little free time. John was a member of the 2/40th Battalion and was captured on Timor on 22 February 1942; he remained a POW until he was repatriated from Singapore on 5 September 1945.



Australian Young Men's Christian Association

Patron, HIS MAJESTY THE KING

Write Home First

Pte J Hooley.

Tx 3413.

8th Division

2nd 40th Bn. C Coy.

Brighton Camp.

25th Aug. 1940.

Dear Mrs Marshall.

Will you please convey my thanks to all members of War Service Committee for the parcels sent to us. It is nice to know you think of us & we all appreciate them very much, although we do not always write. There is not much of interest to write about.

With kind regards to all & again thanking you all very much.

I am.
Yours truly
John H. Hooley.

Pte J Hooley.
TX 3413
8th Division
2nd 40th Batn. C Coy
Brighton Camp
28th Aug 1940

Dear Mrs Marshall.

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Yours truly
John. H. Hooley

T. X. 3413

C. Coy. 2/40th

Camp P.O.

Bonegilla. Vic

3.12.41

To All Members of.

The War Service Fund

King Island.

Thank you
all very much for Canteen Order for 5/-
just received as I was going on
leave. We are all very grateful for your
kindness to us, and we all appreciate
parcels etc, received at different times, very
much. You will understand we do not
get much time for writing letters.
We are training very hard and also
attend lectures at times when not
drilling I am

yours truly.

Cpl. J. Hooley.

T.X. 3413
C. coy. 2/40th
Camp P.O.
Bonegilla. Vic
3.2.41

To All Members of
The War Service Fund
King Island.

Thank you all very much for Canteen Order for
5/-, just received as I was going on leave. We are all every grateful for your kindness to us.
and we all appreciate parcels etc, received at different times, very much. You will
understand we do not get much time for writing letters. We are training very hard and also
attend Lectures at time when not drilling.

I am

yours truly

Cpl. J Hooley.