

The King Island World War 2 War Service Fund

During World War 2, Allan (Snowy) Jackson 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.

Snowy wrote two undated letters to the Fund which are believed to date from early and late 1944, respectively. His observations as a crew member on a hospital ship about the soldiers, their wounds and the turning of the war against Japan are worthy of note.

H.M.A.H.S. "Manunda"

2nd 1st Hospital Ship

6/o Sydney G.P.O.

To Mr J. Marshall,
Secretary to The King Island Branch
R.S.S. + A.I.L.A.

Dear Mr Marshall,

Will you please
forgive me for not acknowledging before this the parcel
sent me for Christmas by your branch
of the R.S.S. + A.I.L.A. Part ^{but} not all of the
reason for not doing so, was due to myself,
but the main reason cannot be explained
here because of National Security Regulations.

Hoping that the first
paragraph of this letter has gained for me
your forgiveness, I can now tell you how
much I appreciated that parcel + the
good wishes which accompanied it. I
can assure you + all Members of your
Organisation that every article which
the parcel contained, was found very
useful indeed + I trust that the day
is not so very far off when I will

be able to thank you all personally as I fear that with pen + paper, I cannot show to its full extent my appreciation for your kindly act.

I would like to tell you something of the War up here but we are permitted to say so very little except that our boys are doing a marvellous job of work up here under appalling conditions. And it is only those who have seen the country in which they are fighting who can fully appreciate the grand job they are carrying out. Ourselves we are very busy, & have our hectic moments as Kippon likes to let us know in more ways than one that there is a war on, still we haven't a complaint in the world, as these wounded diggers are the greatest morale builders I know.

Well Mr Marshall I shall draw this letter to a close now. Wishing you your family & all Members of the R.S.S & A.I. L.A. all the very best that this New Year can bring & hope that every day that passes brings us closer to Victory & Peace. Thanking you ~~at~~ once again.

I am Yours
sincerely
Allan (Shury) Jackson

H.M.A.H.S. "Manunda"
2nd Ist Hospital Ship
C/o Sydeny G.P.O.

To Mr J. Marshall,
Secretary to The King Island Branch
R.S.S. & A.I.L.A.

Dear Mr Marshall,

Will you please forgive me for not acknowledging before this the parcel sent me for Christmas by your branch of the R.S.S. & A.I.L.A. Part but not all of the reason for not doing so, was due to myself, but the main reason cannot be explained here because of National Security Regulations.

Hoping that the first paragraph of this letter has gained for me your forgiveness, I can now tell you how much I appreciated that parcel & the good wishes which accompanied it. I can assure you & all Members of your Organisation but every article which the parcel contained was found very useful indeed & I trust that the day is not so very far off when I will be able to thank you all personally as I fear that with pen & paper, I cannot show to its full extent my appreciation for your kindly act.

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I am Yours

Sincerely

Allan (Snowy) Jackson

H.M.A.H.S. "Manunda"
2nd 1st Hospital Ship
6/10 Sydney S. P.O.

To the Secretary,

King Island War Service Fund,

Dear Sir or Madam,

Please

accept the following, as an expression of my deepest gratitude, to yourself & all Members of "The King Island War Service Fund," for the parcel of comforts which I received on my return from a certain War area. The parcel contained certain articles, which we find almost unobtainable up here. The gesture is grand & your idea of just what a man needs is unbreakable. The fact that all this comes from ~~the~~ place where a person has spent all their younger life, has a sentimental value unsurpassed by any gesture of goodwill offered me outside of my own relatives.

While not trying to give you the idea that the War up here is just a walk over, I would like to say this, that the soldiers

up here do not seem to have suffered the wounds nor the privations, that they have suffered in previous battles up this way. What I think can be accepted as a sure indication, that our leaders & soldiers have not only mastered & over matched the cunning of the Japanese, but have also snatched from them their only hope of ever becoming Masters of the Pacific & we shall see further evidence of this as our big offensive moves forward.

There is little else here to think of or talk of except War. But I hope to return to King Island some day & see you all again & thank you all personally for what you have done for me. Until then I will say Merry & Happy Christmas & a Victorious New Year to yourself & all Members of The King Island War Service Fund.

I am gratefully,
Yours!

Allan Jackson

H.M.A.H.S. "Manunda"
2nd 1st Hospital Ship,
C/o Sydney G.P.O.

To the Secretary.
King Island, War Service Fund,

Dear Sir or Madam,

Please accept the following, as an expression of my deepest gratitude, to yourself & all members of "The King Island War Service Fund," for the parcel of Comforts which I recieved on my return from a certain War area. The parcel contained certain articles which we find almost unobtainable up here. The gesture is grand & your idea of just what a man needs is unbeatable. The fact that all this comes from the place where a person has spent all thier younger life, has a sentimental value unsurpassed by any gesture of good will offered me outside of my own relatives.

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Yours.
Allan. Jackson