

The King Island World War 2 War Service Fund

During World War 2, Robert McArthur 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.

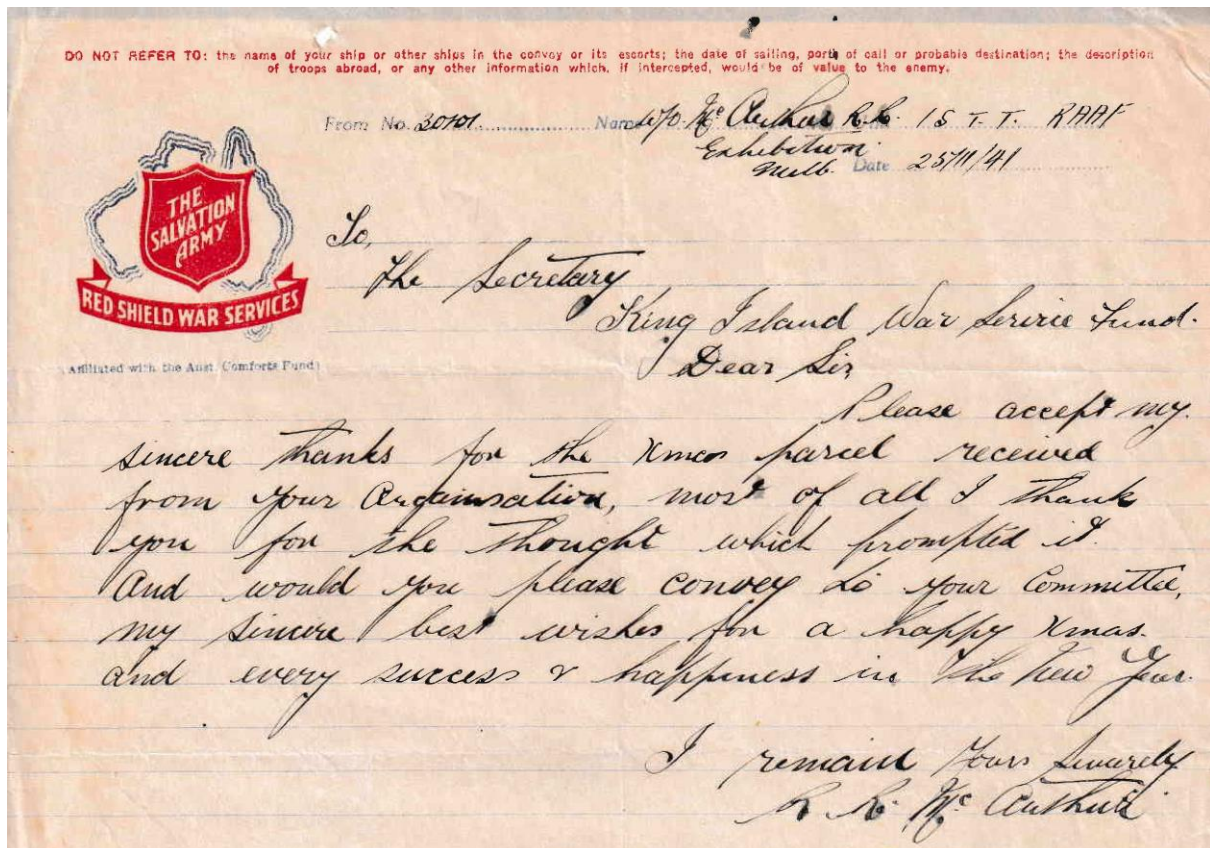
The challenges for a service person during World War 2 to write a letter was to firstly find the inclination (often directly related to their mental condition due to combat), time, paper, a writing implement and a place under cover. Occasionally a letter was typed and the paper ranged from high quality 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 three letters to the Fund; one per year from 1941 to 1943. His letters express thanks and are written in a formal style reflecting his previous employment as a Tasmanian Police Officer. This also explains why he was allocated to the RAAF Service Police and promoted to Warrant Officer soon after enlistment. In his final letter he mentions that his Service Number has changed on gaining his commission; not all of the Services did this.



30101

W/O McArthur R.R. 1 S T. T. RAAF
 Exhibition
 Melb. 25/11/41

To,

The Secretary

King Island War Service Fund.

Dear Sir,

Please accept my sincere thanks for the Xmas parcel received from your Organisation, most of all I thank you for the thought which prompted it. And would you please convey to your Committee, my sincere best wishes for a happy Xmas and every success & happiness in the New Year.

I remain Yours Sincerely

R R. McArthur

Service Police Unit, W.A. Section,
R.A.A.F.
No. 9 Howard St.
PERTH. W.A.

3rd December, 1942.

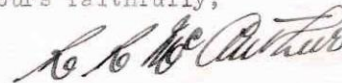
Secretary,
War Service Fund,
CURRIE, King Island.

Dear Sir,

I beg to acknowledge receipt of Xmas Parcel from
your organisation for which I sincerely thank you.

Please extend on my behalf to all your helpers my
very best wishes for a Merry Xmas and a prosperous and Happy New
Year.

Yours faithfully,



Service Police Unit, W.A. Section,
R.A.A.F.

No. 9 Howard St.

PERTH W.A.

3rd December, 1942.

Secretary,
War Service Fund,
CURRIE, King Island.

Dear Sir,

I beg to acknowledge receipt of Xmas Parcel from your organisation for which I
sincerely thank you.

Please extend on my behalf to all your helpers my very best wishes for a Merry Xmas
and a prosperous and Happy New Year.

Yours faithfully,

R R McArthur

No 255097

4/Lt L. L. McArthur
Group 836
RAAF Townsville

To The President and Members.
King Is Sub Branch RSSILA.

Dear,
Sir

Please extend to
all members of your Sub
Branch, my sincere thanks,
for your hearty good wishes,
And extend to all my very
best wishes for a Merry
Xmas and a Happy New Year.

To the members of the War
Service Fund Committee many
Thanks for Bantua Credit,
which is sincerely appreciated.
I can find no words to
express my appreciation except
to say well done, for it

²
means so much to realize
that the folk at home still
think of one, despite the
passing years, and their own
worries and trouble which
this time of strife must
inflict upon them.

I remain Yours Sincerely
L. L. McArthur

P.N. MY number has been
altered from 30101 to 255097
upon being Commissioned. R. M. A.

No 255097.

F/Lt R R McArthur

Group 836

RAAF Townsville

To/

The President & Members.

King Is Sub – Branch RSSILA.

Dear,

Sir

Please extend to all members of your Sub Branch, my sincere thanks for your hearty good wishes, And extend to all my very best wishes for a Merry Xmas and a Happy New Year,

To the members of the War Services Fund Committee many thanks for the Canteen Order which is sincerely appreciated. I can find no words to express my appreciation except to say well done, for it means so much to realise that the folk at home still think of one, despite the passing years; and their own worries and troubles which this time of strife must inflict upon them.

I remain Yours Sincerely

R R McArthur

P.N. MY number has been altered from 30101 to 255097 upon being Commissioned

R. McA