

The King Island World War 2 War Service Fund

During World War 2, Leslie Reading 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.

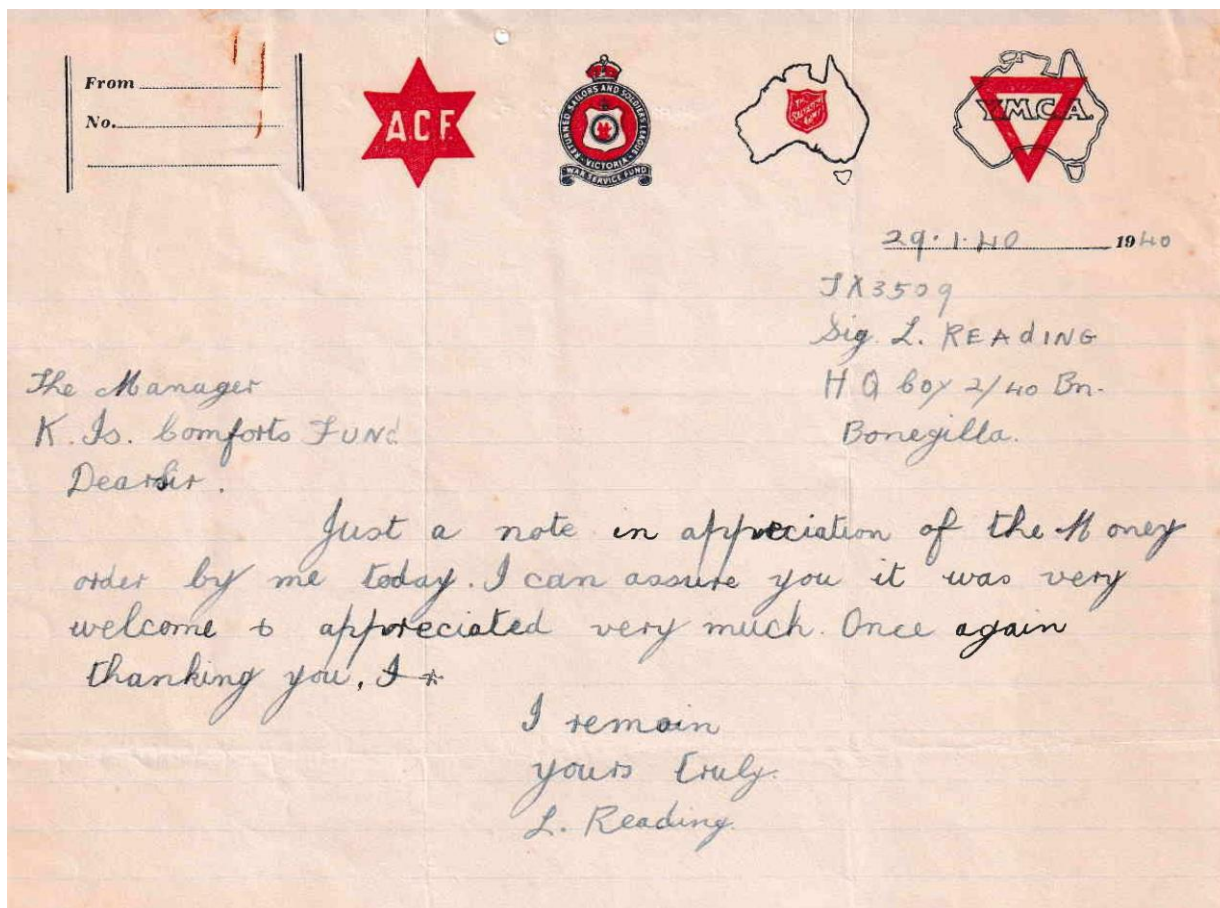
The challenges for a service person during World War 2 to write a letter was to firstly find the inclination (often directly related to their mental condition due to combat), time, paper, a writing implement and a place under cover. Occasionally a letter was typed and the paper ranged from high quality 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.

Leslie wrote four letters to the Fund; two each in 1941 and 1942. His letters are brief and record his travels as a member of the 2/40th Infantry Battalion. He appears to have had a hard life and had no living next of kin when he enlisted in 1940, aged 21. This continued as he became a POW of the Japanese on 22 February 1942 and was not repatriated until 19 September 1945.



29.1.1940
TX3509
Sig. L READING
HQ Coy 2/40 Bn.
Bonegilla

The Manager
K. Is. Comforts FUNd
Dear Sir.

Just a note in appreciation of the Money order by me today. I can assure you it was very welcome & appreciated very much. Once again thanking you. ✚

I remain
Yours truly.
L. Reading.

I received the very welcome
parcel from the comforts fund today
& wish to thank you & your fellow workers
of the funds, please give my sincere thanks,
Yours sincerely
L. Reading.

9.9. 40
TX3509
Signaller
PTE L. Reading.
Headquarter Company
2/40th Batt
Brighton

Mr Michie,

Dear Sir,

I recieved the very welcome parcel from the Comforts Fund today & wish to thank you & your fellow workers of the funds, please give my sincere thanks,

Yours sincerely

L. Reading.

From _____
No. _____



14.1.41 19
SX3509

Signaller L. Reading
H A Coy 2/40 Bn.
Bongilla Vic.

The Manager
King Is. Comforts Fund.

Dear Sirs.

Just a few lines to
thank you for the Christmas parcel I received today.
The reason I didn't get it until today was because
I've been away at a wireless school for the last
two months.

Everything over here is very well.
although it's not as good over here as at Brighton.
The school I was at in Albert Park was a real picnic
ground. We had hardly anything to do. What I did
have, I'd already learned at Brighton, but by what
I've been told things will be different here.
Well I guess you're much too busy to worry about
over here so I'll close, once again thanking you
for the parcel.

Yours respectfully
L. Reading.

14.1.41

TX3509

Signaller L. Reading

HA Coy 2/40 Bn.

Bonegilla VIC.

The Manager

King Is. Comforts Fund,

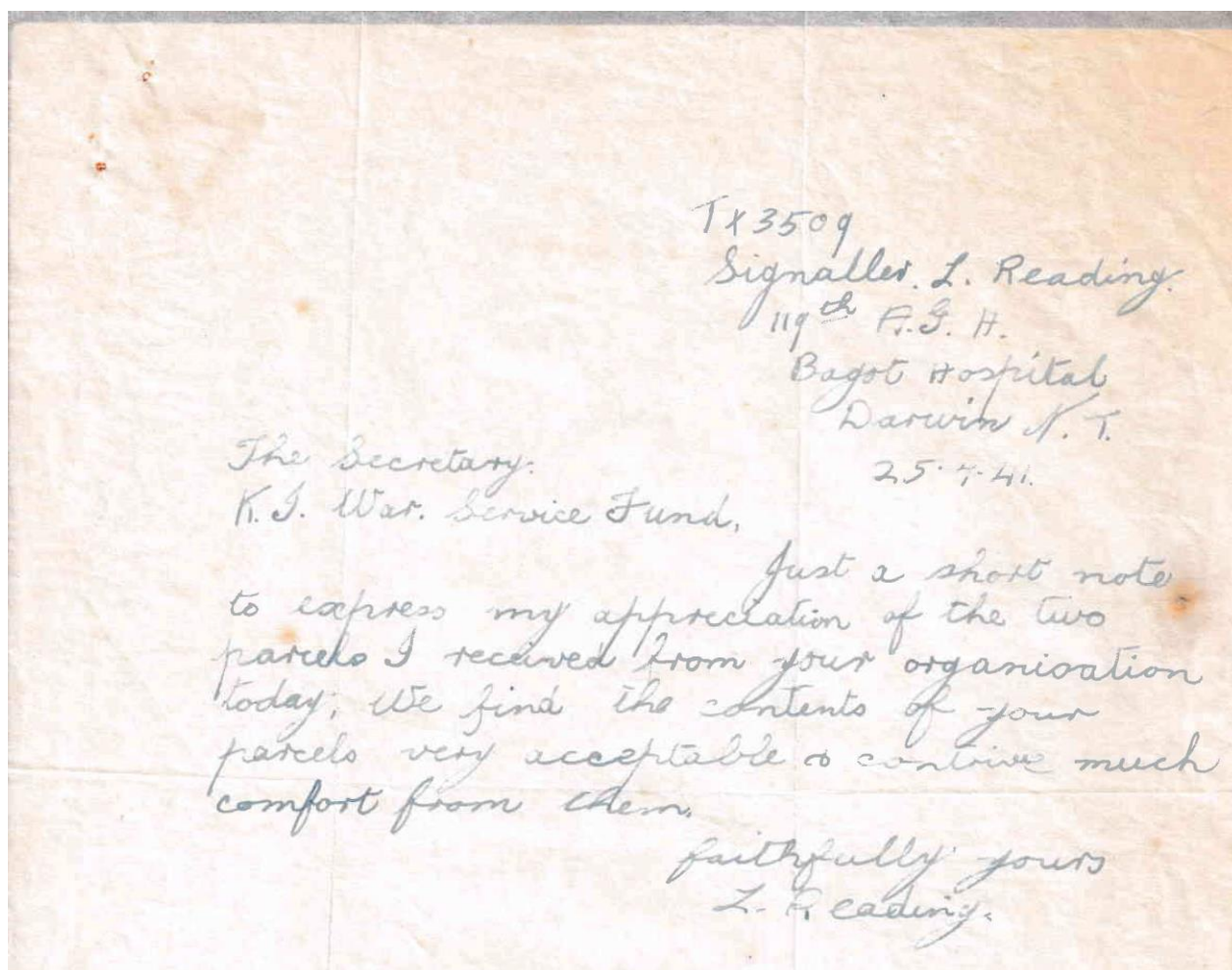
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Yours respectfully

L. Reading.



TX3509
Signaller L. Reading.
119th A.G.H.
Bagot Hospital
Darwin N.T.

The Secretary

25.7.41

K.I. War Service Fund,

Just a short note to express my appreciation of the two parcels I received from your organisation today. We find the contents of your parcels very acceptable & contrive much comfort from them.

faithfully yours
L. Reading