

The King Island World War 2 War Service Fund

During World War 2, Maxwell Phillips 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.

Maxwell wrote nine letters to the Fund; two in 1942, one in 1943, four in 1944 and the last two in 1945. They record the journey from officer training to his path in the Army, where he longed to see operational service. He mentions people he has met and is proud to represent Tasmania and King Island. Maxwell was discharged from the Army on 23 November 1945.

TX 8173,
Cader Phillips HQ,
No. 16 Course,
J.O.J. S.,
Bonapilla.
7.10.42.

Dear Jack,

Have just received your
K.I. War Service Funds Canteen
~~fund~~ order, and wish to thank
you and your committee. It's
very pleasant to be remembered,
especially here away from home.

I've had a most interesting
time in the A.I.F. to date, but see no
signs of getting any action until
at least the end of this school.

Prior to this I completed an
Infantry Instructor's School
where we handled all infantry
weapons.

With me here is Geoff Healey

when you will remember on
King Island.

2
Lus tall is well with you
and yours - I'm out of touch of
Island news these days, but
believe Bruce Wherrett owes me
a letter, so you might remind
him of it.

One thing here is very remini-
scent of the Island - beautiful
feed, the best I've ever seen, and
apparently only lightly grazed.

Have to attend a lecture
and will for the present say
cheerio.

Sincere regards,
H. O. Phillips (Sgt.)

J. B. Breese

TX8173,
Cadet Phillips M.O,
No. 26 Course,
I.O.T.S.,
Bonegilla.
7.10.'42.

Dear Jack,

Have just received your K.I. War Service Funds Canteen Order, and wish to thank you and your committee. It's very pleasant to be remembered, especially here away from home.

I've had a most interesting time in the A.I.F. todate, but see no signs of getting any actions until at least the end of this school.

Prior to this I completed an Infantry Instructors' School where we handled all infantry weapons.

With me here is Geoff Healey whom you will remember on King Island.

Trust all is well with you and yours – I'm out of touch of Island news these days, but believe Bruce Wherrett owes me a letter, so you might remind him of it.

One thing here is very reminiscent of the Island – beautiful feed, the best I've ever seen, and apparently only lightly grazed.

Have to attend a lecture and will for the present say cheerio.

Sincere regards,

M.O. Phillips (Sgt.).

TX 8173
Sgt. Phillips M.O.,
12th Inf. Eng. Bn.,
Australia.
13. 12. 41.

The Secretary,
King Island Comfort Fund,
Dear Sir,

I wish to thank you
and your committee for the
generous and most welcome
parcel which I received this
week. It is really pleasant
to know that I am still
remembered as a King Islander,
and I have warm memories
of my stay on the island during
1940-41.

The parcel, besides being
a pleasant surprise is very
useful and will be of special
benefit to our lads overseas.

I am still in the island state
but am hoping against hope
for an active job at the earliest
possible moment. Any chance
of getting anywhere into action
has been spoiled during the
last six months by my
attendance at army schools.

My particular pal at
present is Geoff Kealey who
has too very warm recollections
of his stay on the island and
of the people's hospitality.

I trust that Les Connolly
is well and happy - I can't
imagine him otherwise.

My sincere regards to all
King Island friends, and
my heartfelt thanks for your
gift.

Maxwell Phillips.

TX8173
Sgt. Phillips M.O.,
12th Inf. Tng. Bn.,
Australia.
13.12.'42

The Secretary,
King Island Comforts Fund,
Dear Sir,

I wish to thank you and your committee for the generous and most welcome parcel which I received this week. It is really pleasant to know that I am still remembered as a King Islander, and I have warm memories of my stay on the island during 1940-41.

The parcel, besides being a pleasant surprise is very useful and will be of special benefit to our lads overseas. I am still in the island state but am hoping against hope for an active job at the earliest possible moment. Any chance of getting anywhere into action has been spoiled during the last six months by my attendance at army schools.

My particular pal at present is Geoff Healey who has too very warm recollections of his stay on the island and of the people's hospitality.

I trust that Les Connelly is well and happy – I can't imagine him otherwise.

My sincere regards to all King Island friends, and my heartfelt thanks for your gift.

Maxwell O. Phillips.

TX 8173,

Sgt. Phillips M.D.,
12th. Aust. I.I. Br.

2.2.43.

The Secretary,

K. I. War Service Fund,

Dear Sir,

I wish to express
my thanks for your organiza-
tion's Canteen Order for
3/-, which I received recently.

The gift manage
to arrive at a very opportune
moment when the exchequer
is reasonably slim, and are
thus most acceptable.

Yours sincerely,
Maxwell Phillips.

A. G. Phillips

TX8173,
Sgt. Phillips M.O.,
12th. Aust. I. T. Bn.
2. 2. '43.

The Secretary,
K.I. War Service Fund.,

Dear Sir,

I wish to express my thanks for your organisation's Canteen Order for 3/-, which I received recently.

These gifts managed to arrive at very opportune moments when the exchequer is reasonably slim, and are thus most acceptable.

Yours sincerely,
Maxwell Phillips.

TX 8173,
Lieut Phillips MO.
38 Aust Inf Bn.
Aust.
2 Jan '44.

The President,
King Island Sub-branch,
RSSAILA,

Dear Sir,
Many thanks for your
greetings and accompanying
counter order for five shillings that
I received last night.

Will you please convey
to the R. I. War Service Fund my
sincere thanks. It is indeed pleasant
to be remembered, especially by
King Islanders with whom I spent
such good times.

I have great arguments
with Victorians in the age-old inter-
state brawls, and I can foresee a

Maureen

big increase in tourist traffic to
Lassie after the war as a result
of my publicity campaign. I sell
King Island to anyone rural-
minded and sport inclined, and
manage to impress quite a few
with the island's worth.

By the way I didn't receive any
parcel forwarded in October. I can't
imagine what happened to it and
am sorry I wasn't at the receiv-
ing end. There's quite a thrill of
course to receive mail of any
sort here.

The next thing we look forward
to is leave and it should be
commencing reasonably soon.

Please convey the compliments
of the season to your energetic and
thoughtful organisation. Sincerely,
Maureen Phillips.

Personal

Dear Jack
Please convey all the
best to the lads of the village
when you next see any of the
clan.

Is Ted ambidextrously on ten
exemption or leave? There is quite
a drain of exemption is begin-
ning to rural occupation from
this area.

Life here is damnably dull
and unbroken by anything
savouring of action - however
an turn may come.

Regards

Maxwell Phillips

Maxwell Phillips

BY AIR MAIL

AIR MAIL
LETTER CARD

IF ANYTHING IS ENCLOSED THIS CARD
WILL BE SENT BY ORDINARY MAIL



The President,
King Island Pub Branch,
RSSA ILR,
Tasmania.

WHEN FOLDED THE LETTER CARD MUST CONFORM IN SIZE AND SHAPE WITH
THE BLUE BORDER WITHIN WHICH THE ADDRESS ONLY MAY BE WRITTEN.

Maxwell Phillips



TX8173,
Lieut Phillips M.O.,
38 Aust Inf Bn.
Aust.
2 Jan '44.

The President,
King Island Sub branch,
RSSAILA,

Dear Sir,

Many thanks for your greetings and accompanying canteen order for five shillings that I received last night.

Will you please convey to the K.I. War Service Fund my sincere thanks. It is indeed pleasant to be remembered, especially by King Islanders with whom I spent such good times.

I have great arguments with Victorians in the age-old interstate brawls, and I can foresee a big increase in tourist traffic to Tassie after the war as a result of my publicity campaign. I sell King Island to anyone rural-minded and sport inclined, and manage to impress quite a few with the island's worth.

By the by I didn't receive any parcel forwarded in October. I cant imagine what happened to it and am sorry I wasn't at the receiving end. There's quite a thrill of course to receive mail of any sort here.

The next thing we look forward to is leave and it should be commencing reasonably soon.

Please convey the compliments of the season to your energetic and thoughtful organisation. Sincerely,

Maxwell O. Phillips.

Personal

Dear Jack

Please convey my best to the ladies of the village when you next see any of the clan.

Is Ted Curbishley on an exemption or leave? There is quite a drain of exemptions beginning to usual occupations from this area.

Life here is damnable dull and unbroken by anything savouring of action – however my turn my come.

Regards
Maxwell Phillips

TX 8173,
Lt. Phillips M.O.
38 Aust Inf Bde.
Aust.
15 August.

The Secretary,
King Island War Service Fund,
Dear Sir,

I was very gratified on
my return from leave last week
to find your parcel awaiting me.
The contents are most acceptable and
well chosen for this part of the
world.

Please convey my thanks
to your members who are retaining
such welcome interest in servicemen.

Yours sincerely
Maxwell Phillips.

Max Phillips

TX8173,
Lt. Phillips M.O.,
38 Aust Inf Bn.,
Aust.
15 Aug. '44.

The Secretary,
King Island War Service Fund,
Dear Sir,

I was very gratified from my return from leave last week to find your parcel awaiting me. The contents are most acceptable and well chosen for this part of the world.

Please convey my thanks to your members who are retaining such welcome interest in servicemen.

Yours sincerely,
Maxwell O. Phillips.

TX 8173,

Lt. Phillips Mo.,

38 Aust Inf Bn.

Aust.

Friday Oct. 10.

Secretary,

K. I. W. Fund.

Dear Sir,

On my return to camp
I received your parcel dated
September 6th. Many thanks
for the contents which I always
find most useful and well-
chosen.

My movements in the
immediate future are likely to
be uncertain as the unit has
been disbanded. Should there

be any further parcels I wish
you would temporarily remove
my name from the list as I should
not like a parcel into which so
much work is obviously placed,
to go astray.

At present I'm merely resting -
a most unsatisfactory conclu-
sion to 3 years' service during
none of which I've seen action.

My sincere thanks to the
King Island folk responsible
for these thoughtful parcels

Yours sincerely,
Maxwell Phillips

TX8173,
Lt. Phillips M.O.,
38 Aust Inf Bn.
Aust.
Friday 6 Oct. 44.

Secretary,
K.I.W.S.Fund.
Dear Sir,

On my return to camp I received your parcel dated September 6th. Many thanks for the contents which I always find most useful and well-chosen.

My movements in the immediate future are likely to be uncertain as the unit has been disbanded. Should there be any further parcels I wish you would temporarily remove my name from the lists as I should not like a parcel into which so much work is obviously placed, to go astray.

At present I'm merely resting – a most unsatisfactory conclusion to 3 years' service during none of which I have seen action.

My sincere thanks to the King Island folk responsible for these thoughtful parcels

Yours sincerely,
Maxwell O. Phillips

TV 8173

Lt. Phillips Mo.
38 West End Bm.

18 Dec 1914.

President

K. I. Sub. Branch.

R.S.L.

Dear Mr. Marshall,

Please convey to your members my sincere appreciation of your thoughtful seasonal wishes and cardeword which I received recently.

The fortunes of war have cast me in a sad backwash and I have little hope of being a useful

member of the forces now.

Please wish your
members on my behalf
the compliments of the
season. I trust that this
maybe our last Christmas
under wartime conditions.

Yours fraternally,
Maxwell O. Phillips

TX8173,
Lt. Phillips M.O.,
38 Aust Inf Bn.,
18 Dec. '44.

President,
K.I. Sub. Branch.
R.S.L.,

Dear Mr. Marshall,

Please convey to your members my sincere appreciation of your thoughtful seasonal wishes and canteen order which I received recently.

The fortunes of war have cast me in a sad backwash and I have little hope of being a useful member of the forces now.

Please wish your members on my behalf the compliments of the season. I trust that this maybe our last Christmas under war time conditions.

Yours fraternally,
Maxwell. O. Phillips

TX 8173,
Lt. M. Phillips,
1 Aust Indep Sig Bn,
Aust.

15 April '45.

The President,

K. I. War Service Fund,

Dear Sir, I wish to express my thanks for the parcel I received from your committee this week, with a card dated Feb 7th.

The parcel had apparently followed me round considerably, as I am now in Victoria doing a cipher officers course prior to getting an operational job.

On this Aztec Day, may I wish you and your organisation on behalf of all King Island servicemen, an early return to peace time living.

Yours gratefully, M. Phillips.

TX8173,
Lt. M.O. Phillips,
1 Aust Indep Sig Gp.,
Aust.
25 April '45.

The President,
K Is. War Service Fund,
Dear Sir,

I wish to express my thanks for the parcel I received from your committee this week, with a card dated Feb 7th .

The parcel had apparently followed me round considerably, as I am now in Victoria doing a Cipher Officers' Course prior to getting an operational job.

On this Anzac Day, may I wish you and your organisation on behalf of all King Island servicemen, an early return to peacetime living.

Yours gratefully
Maxwell O. Phillips.

TX 8173.

Lt. M. Phillips,

1 Aust Indep Reg Cpt.,

Aust

1. July 45.

President.

R. I. War Service Fund.

Dear Sir,

Another if you much appreciated parcels reached me last week - having a comparatively short distance to travel. Am expecting that any future parcels will have a considerable distance to travel, as I'm on the verge of heading north again, a bit nearer the heart of things.

Please thank your committee for their continued enthusiasm and interest. Yours very sincerely
Maxwell Phillips

TX 8173,
Lt. M.O. Phillips,
1 Aust Indep Sig Gp.,
Aust.

1. July 45.

President,
K.I. War Service Fund,
Dear Sir,

Another of your much appreciated parcels reached me last week – having a comparatively short distance to travel. Am expecting that any future parcels will have a considerable distance to travel, as I'm on the verge of heading north again, a bit nearer the heart of things.

Please thank your committee for their continued enthusiasm and interest,

Very sincerely

Maxwell O. Phillips.