

The King Island World War 2 War Service Fund

During World War 2, Earl Smith 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.

Earl wrote six letters to the Fund; one in 1943, two in 1944 and three in 1945. He was 34 when he enlisted in 1942 and appears to have served in Southern Tasmania until he was discharged in early 1946. Earl expresses his thanks for the parcels, mentions people he has met, provides descriptions of the weather, and was not impressed with cities.

T21831
Pte E.T. Smith
30 Garrison BTN.
12/1/43.

Dear Jack.
See R.S.L.

Just a line to
let you know I received your Canteen & Card
alright for which I thank you very much for
same.

I hope you got C/PL Stewart address alright
as I left it with father to give to Mr Davies.

As far as I know now I will be leaving
here early next week going just a little bit
further away.

Kind regards to Mr Marshall & family
wishing you all the best for 1944

I Remain
Yours Sincerely
E. Smith..

T21831
Pte E.T. Smith
30 Garrison BTN.
12/1/43.

Dear Jack.
See R.S.L.

Just a line to let you know I received
your Canteen & Card alright for which I thank you very much for same.

I hope you got C/PL Stewart address alright as I left it with father to give to Mrs Davies.

As far as I know now I will be leaving here early next week going a little bit further away.

Kind regards to Mrs. Marshall & family wishing you all the best for 1944

I Remain

Yours Sincerely
E. Smith..

T21831

Pte. Smith E. L.

6/30 Aus Gns. Detachment

Dowsing Point

Tao. 12/8/44.

King Is. War Service Fund.

Dear Jack.

Just a few lines to let you know I received your welcome parcel last Tuesday for which I appreciate very much. Being so long getting it is due to me being changed to different places.

The socks are most welcome, the soap I have tried out to day & find it very good, & the milk will be very handy as we often run out.

We have had some very cold snaps down here & some nice white frosts to know what they are like now getting up all hours of the night. I am looking forward for my next leave, better still when the war is over & I can get back for good.

Well Jack will come to a close once again thanking you. Kind regards to Mrs Marshall &

I Remain

Familly

your sincerely

E. Smith.

T21831
Pte Smith E.T.
6/30 Aus Grn Detachment
Dowsing Point
Tas. 12/8/44.

King Is. War Service Fund.

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Well Jack will come to a close once again thanking you. Kind regards to Mrs. Marshall and Family

I Remain
Yours Sincerely
E. Smith.

T21831

Pte Smith E. J.

6/30 Gen Coy.

Dowsing Point.

22/10/44.

Hing Is. War Service Fund.

Dear Jack.

I received

your very welcome parcel last Friday which came as a big surprise to me for which I thank you.

No doubt your thoughts are appreciated by all the Is. lads, & your helpers are sure would be well pleased if they were only there when the boys were opening them as I can tell you I got quite a kick opening mine.

I am looking forward for Xmas time now to come when I hope to be home for a few days leave. I heard that Ben Hiddle is in hospital at Brighton he is a up fraterner so I know his trouble. I have seen Rob. a few times in Hobart he was on his crutches but looks well.

I often see Maurice Lynch he is driving a bus at Brighton. I also saw Albert Misson last Mon he looks well.

Well Jack I must come to a close, once again thanking you for the parcel. With kind regards to Mr. Marshall & the girls not forgetting Arthur & yourself.

I Remain, yours sincerely

E. Smith.

T21831
Pte Smith E.T.
6/30 Gun Coy.
Dowsing Point.
22/10/44.

King Is. War Service Fund.

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Well Jack I must come to a close, once again thanking you for the parcel.

With kind regards to Mrs Marshall and the girls not forgetting Arthur & yourself.

I remain, yours Sincerely

E Smith.

121831

Pte Smith E. J.

6/30 Aus Gn Coy

Broadmarsh

14/1/45. TAS.

N. Is. War Service Fund.

Dear Jack.

just a
few lines thanking you once again for the
Bantam order, ^{also enough} you sent to me + I appreciate
it very much for thinking of me the way
you have done since I have been here.

I am sorry I have not wrote before
I received your letter just before I went on leave
that is why I have not done so before.

We are having some very nice
weather down here now, which just suits our
dress only wear the trousers + shirt also belt +
gatus it gets a little cool in this rig of a night
time have to put our sweaters on or even our
S. Coats at times.

was talking to St. Hooper at
Brighton last night just for awhile + hoping to
see him one night this week again. Sorry I
missed having that drink with you Jack had to
go away but am hoping will have some with you
soon.

Must come to a close with kind regards
to Mr. Marshall the girls also Arthur.

I remain yours sincerely E. Smith.

T 21831
Pte Smith E.T.
6/30 Aus. Grn Coy
Broadmash
14/1/45. TAS.

K. Is. War Service Fund.

Dear Jack.

Just a few lines thanking you once again for the Canteen order also card you sent to me & I appreciate it very much for thinking of me the way you have done since I have been here.

I am sorry I have not wrote before I received your letter just before I went on leave that is why I have not done so before.

We are having some very nice weather down here now, which just suites our dress only wear the trousers & shirt also belt & gaiters it gets a little cool in this rig of a night time have to put our sweaters on or even our G. Coats at times.

Was talking to M. Hooper at Brighton last night just for a while & hoping to see him one night this week. Sorry I missed having that drink with you Jack had to go away but hoping will have some with you soon. Must come to a close with kind regards to Mrs. Marshall the girls also Arthur.

I Remain yours Sincere

E Smith.

T21831.

Pte Smith E. J.

6/30 Aus Gen Coy

Broadmarsh

Dec. 22. 5. 45.

King Island War Service Fund.

Dear Jack.

Once again I take the pleasure of writing you a few lines & thanking you for the welcome parcel that I received a little while ago sorry I have not wrote before, these few lines will show I have not forgotten you & can tell you I appreciate it very much.

We was all very pleased here when when we heard of the good news in Europe & V.E. day was spend very quite we all get a special days leave for it which I am hoping to have mine home early next month I am looking forward to having that drink with you the one that I did not have at Xmas time am hoping Joe will have some when I arrive.

We are having some very cold nights & mornings down here now was just white last Friday morning & very cold quite awhile since it has rained.

Well Jack I must close wishing you & family all the very best & once again thanking you.

I Remain yours Sincere E. Smith.

T21831.
Pte Smith E.T.
6/30 Aus Grn Coy
Broadmash
Tues. 22. 5.45.

King Island War Service Fund.

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Well Jack I must close wishing you & family all the very best & once again thanking you.

I Remain Yours Sincere E. Smith.

T21831
Pte Smith E.J.
6/30 Aus. Gen Coy
Broadmarsh Rd
Brighton
6/8/45.

Dear Jack

Just a few lines thanking you for the parcel that you sent to me, which I received a few days ago now, can assure you was much appreciated all of the contents was good service use.

Have had quite a few nice white frosts down here also a very good & welcome rain was wanted very bad. Can notice the days starting to spread out will be glad when the sun starts to get a bit more kick in it.

I had a trip into Hobart last Mon. week the first time since I came back off leave so I don't worry ~~the~~ about the city much.

How is Arthur getting on doing well I hope also Mr. Marshall & the girls

Well Jack I must come to a close once again thanking you very much for the parcel.

I remain yours truly

E. Smith.

T21831
Pte Smith E.T.
6/30 Aus. Grn Coy
Broadmash Rd
Brighton
6/8/45.

Dear Jack

Just a few lines thanking you for the parcel that you sent to me, which I received a few days ago now, can assure you was much appreciated all of the contents was good service use.

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How is Arthur getting on doing well I hope also Mrs. Marshall & the girls

Well Jack I must come to a close once again thanking you for the parcel.

I Remain Yours Truly
E. Smith.