

The King Island World War 2 War Service Fund

During World War 2, William Youl 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.

Bill wrote one brief letter to the Fund in 1944 while he was posted to Canungra, near Southport Queensland. He was 45 years old when he enlisted in May 1942; too old to join the 2AIF. Bill was never posted out of Canungra and only returned to Tasmania for his discharge on 19 March 1946.

T 34268

8 Boy

2 ARTB (J 10)

Benungra

Queensland

Dear Jack

Just a few lines thanking all concerned in sending parcel which I received yesterday. Which I appreciate very much. We have been having very wet and cold weather up here, and things have been pretty miserable. They are ~~talking~~ trying to get me a transfer back to Fassie, which I am looking forward to. They tell me it will be about two months at the least before any thing comes of it. I will write and let you know when it ~~do~~ comes off. News are very scarce up here

so I will close ~~me~~
Hoping these few lines will find
you Mr Marshall and all the
family well as it leaves at present
Wishing you all the best of luck
in the coming season.

Remember me to the boys

I Remain
your old friend
Bill

T34268
G Coy
2 ARTB (JW)
Canungra
Queensland

Dear Jack

Just a few lines thanking all concerned in sending parcel which I received yesterday. Which I appreciate very much. We have been having very wet and cold weather up here, and things have been pretty miserable. They are trying to get me a transfer back to Tassie, which I am looking forward to. They tell me it will be about two months at least before anything comes of it. I will write and let you know when it comes off. News are very scarce up here so I will close. Hoping these few lines will find you Mrs Marshall and all the family well as it leaves at present. Wishing you all the best of luck in the coming season.

Remember me to the boys

I Remain
Your old Friend
Bill