

The King Island World War 2 War Service Fund

During World War 2, John Sullivan 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.

John wrote two letters three months apart in 1944, when he was on a technical training course.



AUSTRALIAN COMFORTS FUND

(Victorian Division)

With which is Affiliated
R.S.L. WAR SERVICE FUND, THE SALVATION ARMY,
THE Y.M.C.A. and Y.W.C.A.

43/911
Aci Sullivan
337 Fittes
15TT
Ransford
10.3.44

Dear Friends

Just a short note
Thanking you for your kindness
in sending me a Xmas parcel which
I received today. I have apparently
been trying to catch up to me for
the last 4 months. I had given up
hope of seeing it. Last month I
received a postal note from your
organization, and it came in handy
at the canteen.

The last couple of days have been
very wet and cold over here. I hope
it has been a little better over there.

2
USE MILITARY ADDRESS ONLY



From No. Name

Unit or Group Date

In association with the
Aust. Comforts Fund.

I have met a few of the King Island boys in the Air Force down at camp. Geoff Cummings and Bill Stocks but both have now gone to other stations. I myself am still doing a Fitters course that is learning electricity, drawing and a certain amount of engineering, after I pass this I will be classed in relation to the percentage I get, Group I or II for a pass. I don't wish to make this note too long, so thanking you again.

Yours Faithfully.
J. Sullivan.

431911

AC 1 Sullivan J. C.
337 Fitters
I S T T.
Ransford.
10:3:44

Dear Friends

Just a short note thanking you for your kindness for sending me a Xmas parcel which I recieved today. I has apparently been trying to catch up to me for the last 4 months. I had given up hope of seeing it. Last month I recieved a postal note from your organization, and it came in handy at the canteen.

The last couple of days have been very wet and cold over here, I hope it has been a little better over there. I have met a few of the King Island boys in the Air Force down at camp Geoff Cummings and Bill Stocks but both have now gone to other stations.

I myself am still doing a Fitters Course that is learning electricity drawing and a certain amount of engineering, after I pass this I will be classed in relation to the percentage I get, Group 1 or 11 for a pass.

I don't wish to make this note too long, so thanking you again.

Yours Faithfully.

J Sullivan.

431911
1701 Sullivan J. G.
468 Course
No 2 Wing.
IES.
Scot Vale.
4:6:44.

Dear Friends

I received your most welcome parcel last week, and was very pleased with everything.

I have been out here at Scot for about 2 mths now, learning all I can about 2 or 3 different types of aero engines. The work is very interesting, but the course is rather difficult at times.

I will be here for some time yet, but will be pleased to get to some place warmer as it is very cold. Thank you again I will close.
J. G. Sullivan.

431911
AC 1 Sullivan, JC
468 Course
No 2 Wing
IES.
Ascot Vale
4:6:44

Dear Friends

I receivd your most welcome parcl last week, and was very pleased with everything.

I have been out here at Ascot for about 2 mths now, learning all I can about 2 or 3 different types of aero engines. The work is very interesting, but the course is rather difficult at times.

I will be here for some time yet, but will be pleased to get to some place warmer as it is very cold. Thank you again

I will close.

J.C. Sullivan