

## **The King Island World War 2 War Service Fund**

During World War 2, James Mallett 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.

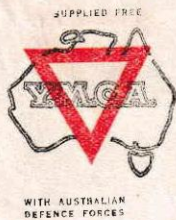
The challenges for a service person during World War 2 to write a letter was to firstly find the inclination (often directly related to their mental condition due to combat), time, paper, a writing implement and a place under cover. Occasionally a letter was typed and the paper ranged from high quality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

James wrote three letters to the Fund; one in 1940 and two in 1941. He expresses his thanks for what has been sent to him and mentions being ill for some time in his final letter sent in May 1941. He was discharged medically unfit (due to service) on 20 September 1941. This was a few months before his unit – 2/40<sup>th</sup> Infantry Battalion - was sent to Timor with eventual capture by the Japanese.



*Australian Young Men's Christian Association*

PATRON: HIS MAJESTY THE KING

Write Home First

"It is not sufficient to live,  
But to live well."

20.12.1940

*To King Island Comfort Funds*

*I wish to thank you all  
for the parcels which I recieved on two occasions  
but regarding being such work<sup>to</sup> which hindered  
myself from writting before hand I hope to thank  
the pl people for what they are doing for me  
considering only enlisting from there.  
I appreciate all dun for me in comfort fund  
work,*

*I remain Yours Faithfully*

*P.T.E. J Mallett*

*TX 3415*

*C Coy 2/40 Battalion  
Brighton Camp  
Tasmania*

30.12.1940

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P.T.E. J Mallett

TX3415

C Coy 2/40 Battalion

Brighton Camp

Tasmania

3.3.1941

To The King Island War Service Funds

With happy thoughts to all the people of King Island I send my compliments for the comforts sent by them, as they are more than useful to us in the A.I.F., we are wanting too be over there <sup>with</sup> them others others to help.

I will visit there on final leave if there is a chance, for I am wanting to be back with all my friends there.

I hope this note is taken for thanks by all in the Funds.

I remain Yours Faithfully  
IX 3415 Pte J. W. Myall  
6 Coy  
2/40 Battalion  
Bongilla C.P.C.  
Victoria

3.3.1941

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Darwin  
North coast

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my thanks to the War Service funds of Ling  
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to time and hope it will show how we appreciate  
the comforts,

I should of wrote before but owing to illness for  
some time, have been unable to write, but <sup>am</sup> very  
thankful for them, I can gladly say that the boys  
from Ling Island are better cared for than any  
of the others in this Battrn,

The last Parcel which I recieved was dated the  
first of May,

From TX 3415

Pt. Mallett I. W.  
"B" Coy 2/40 Battrn  
Military P.O. No-1  
Darwin  
North coast.

Darwin  
North Aust  
[May 1941]

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Pte Mallett JW  
"C" Coy 2/40 Battn  
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