

The King Island World War 2 War Service Fund

During World War 2, Stanley (Stan) Millgate 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.

Stan wrote three letters to the Fund; the first in 1940 followed by two in 1941. He was 36 years old when he enlisted in 1940 and obviously had been involved with game hunting on King Island for many years. His letters are informative and he was possibly trying to keep the morale up for the 'K.I. folk'. Stan survived the war and was discharged on 31 July 1945. There is some confusion with the spelling of his surname - on his Attestation Form he used double 'LL' in his surname, but signed as Milgate. His records are listed under VX18127 Millgate, S.H.

Pte S. Milgate
A. Company
PO 18127
Caulfield.

19/6/40

Mr. J. Marshall
Sec. R.S.C.F.

Dear Sir,

Please accept my thanks for the gifts given to me before leaving King Island.

I saw a few of the K. I. boys at Caulfield today; Jack Keating & Jack Whitty will be leaving here tomorrow; they were issued with steel helmets so they may be going for a sea trip.

The camp life here is excellent, & the boys are in fine spirit.

We get plenty of entertainments at camp by local artists.

"Day Brake Don" came into camp yesterday & he & his cobbler is getting up a concert for the week end.

Best of wishes to all K. I. folk.

Yours Respectfully

S. Milgate

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The camp life here is excellent, & the boys are in fine spirit. We get plenty of entertainments at camp by local artists.

"Day Brake Dan" came into camp yesterday & he & his cobber is getting up a concert for the week end.

Best of wishes to all K.I. folk.

Yours Respectfully
S. Milgate

Pte S. Milgate
VX 18124

59. L.A.D

21st Inf. Bde. H-9.

7th Division

Abroad

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I have not been able to buy tobacco or cigarettes for weeks now, matches are also very scarce. The "Ins & Outs" of it:- During a machine gunning attack one chap crawled into a culvert for protection, he no sooner went in than was set again, some close bullets sent him back in, as he kept on ducking in & out all the time I thought he must have been bomb happy. Not until the raid was over did I know the reason for his antics, there was a snake in the culvert. Best of luck & good wishes to all K. I. folk

Yours Sincerely
Stan Milgate.

H. H. Hain

Mr. J. Marshall
Pres. K. I. W. S. I.
King Island

27/9/41

Dear Sir, just a note of thanks to you folk at home for the "banteen Order" received from your Com. last week. I have also had three parcels from the K.I.S.I., would you kindly pass on my gratitude to them also. On receiving gifts from home I'm afraid us fellows act like kiddies on a Xmas morning, can hardly wait to see what is in the "stocking". It will be a slight compensation to you folk at home to know that we greatly appreciate the sacrifices you are making for our comforts over here. I guess your hand-bags & pockets are likened unto cows, "always being milked"; the cows with the advantage in that, they can have a feed of

the good King Island grass & the
bag can be drawn on again.
My thoughts often wander back to
the island of pheasants, fish &
claybirds; how did the locals stand
up to the shell-crack shots in the
Champion shoot recently. Did
"Mal Lynch" & "Percy Sullivan" get any
mutton birds this year; last
season it took three of us catch-
ing birds to satisfy their appetites.
Hope all the K.I. boys have had as
good a spin over here as I have, Vic
Waltus is the only K.I. boy I have met
since I came to Syria. This is a very
pretty country but not over healthy,
sand flies, bugs & mosquitos are the big-
gest offenders, we can't expect much
relief from these pests until the rainy
season sets in which should be here
next month. Olive picking is just
about completed here, there are thou-
sands of acres of olive trees in this
part of Syria, the olive oil is used
mainly for cooking purposes here as
fat is almost unprocurable.

BY AIR MAIL

AIR MAIL
LETTER CARD

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

Webster

Mr. J. Marshall
"Cunnie"
King Island
Australia

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



Mr. J. Marshall
Pres. K.I.W.S.F.
King Island

27/9/41
Pte S. Milgate
VX18127

59. L.A.D
21st Inf. Bde. H.Q.
7th Division
Abroad

Dear Sir,

Just a note of thanks to you folk at home for the "Canteen Order" received from your Com. last week. I have also had three parcels from the K.I.C.F., would you kindly pass on my gratitude to them also. On receiving gifts from home I'm afraid us fellows act like kiddies on an Xmas morning, can hardly wait to see what is in the "stocking". It will be a slight compensation to you folk at home to know that we greatly appreciate the sacrifices you are making for our comforts over here. I guess your hand-bags & pockets are likened unto cows, "always being milked"; the cows with the advantage in that, they can have a feed of the good King Island grass & the bag can be drawn on again. My thoughts often wander back to the island of pheasants, fish & claybirds; how did the locals stand up to the Melb. crackshots in the champion shoot recently. & Did "Mal Lynch" & "Percy Sullivan" get any muttonbirds this year; last season it took three of us catching birds to satisfy their appetite. Hope all the K.I. boys have had as good a spin over here as I have, Vic Walters is the only K.I. boy I have met since I came to Syria. This is a very pretty country but not over healthy. Sand flies, bugs & mosquitos are the biggest offenders, we can't expect much relief from these pests until the rainy season sets in which should be here next month. Olive picking is just about completed here, there are thousands of acres of olive trees in this part of Syria, the olive oil is used mainly for cooking purposes here as fat is almost unprocurable. I have not been able to buy tobacco or cigarettes for weeks now, matches are also very scarce. The "Ins & outs" of it: - During a machine gunning attack one chap crawled into a culvert for protection, he no sooner went in than was out again, some close bullets sent him back in, as he kept on ducking in & out all the time I thought he must have been bomb happy. Not until the raid was over did I know the reason for his antics, there was a snake in the culvert.

Best of luck & good wishes to all K.I. folk

Yours sincerely
Stan Milgate

Pte. S. Milgate

VX 18127

59. L. A. D

21st Aust. Inf. Bde. H. G.

7th Division

Abroad

16/12/41

R. S.S.I.L.A.
K.I.

Dear Comrades,
Just a note to thank you for the valuable parcel I received from your branch a few days ago. There is no doubt about you King Island folk you keep us boys well supplied with tid-bits. I hope the other K.I. boys are having the same luck in receiving their parcels as what I am having. I have not met any of the boys for over six months but hope they are still in the pink.

Winter has set in properly & believe me it knows how to rain here once it starts, the mountains

2.

Sops are covered with snow
but it is not extra cold just
where I am camped. We hope
to have Aussie ham for Xmas
dinner, & plus contents of your
parcel I will be having quite
a blow-out. I'm sure the classics
of this war have been extra
well treated, we seldom are in
need of anything, have plenty of
warm clothes & good sleeping
quarters, the food "except for wog
kull's "ham meat" is as good as
one can expect in war times.

The address you have been putting
on my letters & parcels is in-
correct, correct address on first page.
Heris wishing all you folk a
Merry Xmas & Happy New year
best wishes to all K.I. friends
from
Stan Wilgate.

BY AIR MAIL

AIR MAIL

LETTER CARD

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



Greetings from the
Aust. Forces (M.I.)
Xmas - New Year
1941-42

Mr. J. Marshall

Pres. R.S.S.I. Co.

Burnie

King Island

AUSTRALIA.



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



Pte. S. Milgate
VX18127
59.L.A.D
21st Aust. Inf. Bde. H.Q.
7th Division
Abroad
16/12/41

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Dear Comrades,

Just a note to thank you for the valueable parcel I received from your branch a few days ago. There is no doubt about you King Island folk you keep us boys well supplied with "tit-bits". I hope the other K.I. boys are having the same luck in receiving their parcels as what I am having. I have not met any of the boys for over six months but hope they are still in the pink.

Winter has set in properly & believe me it knows how to rain here once it starts, the mountain tops are covered with snow but it is not extra cold just where I am camped. We hope to have Aussie ham for Xmas dinner, & plus contents of your parcel I will be having quite a blow out. I'm sure the Aussie's of this war have been extra well treated, we seldom are in need of anything, have plenty of warm clothes & good sleeping quarters, the food "except for Wog "bull"& "ram" meat" is as good as one can expect in war times. The address you have been putting on my letters & parcels is incorrect, correct address on first page. Here's wishing all you folk a Merry Xmas & Happy New Year best wishes to all K.I. friends

from

Stan Milgate.