

The King Island World War 2 War Service Fund

During World War 2, Ernest (Code) Morrison 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.

Code wrote one newsy letter in 1941 where he mentions other King islanders, life in the front, going absent without leave, the Italians being a nuisance with their bombing, and wine that may have tasted like vinegar. Code was 30 years old when he enlisted and obviously knew Jack Marshall quite well.

26th Jan 1941

TX426. E. R. Morrison
D. Sect. Petrol Convoy
6 the Am. Div. A.A.S.C.
Abroad

Dear Jack.

Jan. 2nd 1941

I received your welcome letter, and I was very pleased to hear from you. I received the Xmas parcel G. K. and I done justice to it. Don never got his. It came to the camp, but he was away in hospital at the time, and they sent it to him, & such they did, but he never got it, so someone else got the benefit of it. Dick Thompson got his. I see him every day, he is in the same section as me. I often used to see Frank Bishop and Stan Wilson, but we all got split up, and I haven't seen them for sometime now. I couldn't say if they got their parcels or not, but I should think they would. The last time I saw Pat Holmes was in Jerusalem, he told me he had a good job in there, but he didn't seem to anxious to tell me what it was, so I don't think it was as good as the job in there went so hot. I haven't seen young Ennis since we were home on final leave. I tried to find him one day I was at their camp but he was away. I was in hospital with Arthur Blake, one of Captain Blakes boys, your boys would remember him at school. You have a big job looking after all us chaps, and we appreciate it more than I can tell you. I believe all the boys from England are over here in

Egypt now, I heard the 12th were back in one of the
camps we left, so I see some of them, how long. I
suppose John would be over here to. What became of Archie
Jackson, is he still with John? I went to Alexandria
on leave once, and once with out it, and had a swell
time, on both occasions. I would of liked to of gone
to Cairo, but we got very little leave, while we were down
and we are to far away now, to even think about leave
but apples will grow again. We have had some pretty
tough times, but some good ones to. I remember Blue-
Davies, saying that the good times would make up for the
bad ones. I think there is something in it.

The first day we arrived here, the Daguer put on
an air raid. They dropped eggs all around us, about
forty of them, but they copped their corner, our planes
had a go at them, and we were pleased to see two
of them come down in flames, they are over every
night, but they don't do much, they just drop a few
and go for their lives. We got on to an Italian wine
dump, the other day, and the boys went for it in a
big way, but I can tell you, it is "drack" and once is
enough, there are barrells of it about but no one will
touch it now.

Well Jack old times I will have
to close this now, hoping it finds you and all the
family well, remember me to any of the boys you
see, and thanks for all you have done for us.

Yours sincerely
"Code" *Antony*

TX426.E.R. Morrison
D. Sect. Petrol Comy
6th Aus. Div. A.A.S.C.
Abroad
Jan. 4th 1941

Dear Jack.

I received your welcome letter and was very pleased to hear from you. I received the Xmas parcel O.K. and I done justice to it. Don never got his. It came to the camp, but he was away in hospital at the time, and they sent it to him or said they did, but he never got it, so some-one else got the benefit of it. Dick Thompson got his. I see him every day. He is in the same section as me. I often used to see Frank Bishop and Stan Wilson, but we all got split up and I hav't seen them for some time now. I culd't say if they got their parcels or not, but I should think they would. The last time I seen Pat Holmes was in Jerusalem, he told me he had a good job in their, but he did't seem to anxious to tell me what it was, so I don't think it was so good as the jobs in their wer't so hot. I have't seen young Enniss since we were home on final leave. I tryed to find him one day I was at their camp but he was away. Don was in hospital with Arthur Blake one of Captain Blake's boys, your boys would remember him at school.

You have a big job looking after all us chaps, and we appreciate it more than I can tell you. I believe all the boys from England are over here in Egypt now. I heard the 12th were back in one of the camps we left, so I see some, of them before long. I suppose John would be over here too, what became of Archie Jackson, is he still with "John"? I went to Alexandria on leave once, and once with out it, and had a swell time, on both occasions. I would of liked to of gone to Cairo, but we got very little leave, while we were close and we are to far away now, to even think about leave but apples will grow again. We have had some pretty tough times, but some good ones too. I remember Blue Davies, saying that the good times would make up for the bad ones. I think their is something in it.

The first day we arrived here, the Dagoes' put on an Air raid. They dropped eggs all around us, about forty of them, but they copped their corner, our planes had a go at them, and we were pleased to see two of them come down in flames, they are over every night, but they don't do much, they just drop a few and go for their lives. We got on to an Italian wine dump, the other day, and the boys went for it in a big way, but I can tell you it is "drack" and once is enough, there are barrells of it about but no one will touch it now.

Well Jack old timer I will have to close this now, hoping it finds you and all the family well, remember me to any of the boys you see, and thanks for all you have done for us.

Yours Sincerly
"Code"