

The King Island World War 2 War Service Fund

During World War 2, Nancy Milsom 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.

Nancy wrote two letters to the Fund in 1944. She enlisted in August 1943, hence the reason for mentioning the surprise with receiving the parcel. She was being trained in searchlight operation involved with air raids, but was discharged in February 1944 as she explained in her March letter.

FOR SAFETY

IN YOUR LETTERS DO NOT REFER TO:-

The name of your ship or other ships in the convoy, or its escorts.

The date of sailing, ports of call, or probable destination.

The description of troops, their location, or any other information which, if intercepted, would be of value to the enemy.

Australian Red Cross Society

(UNOFFICIAL)

VF 513582

Sgt. M. Wilson M.C.

A. W. A. S.

A. A. S./Co. Sig. Regt.

Mosman P.O.

Sydney.

4-1-1918

To

The President & Members of the King's War Service Fund,
and the

President & Members of the King's Sub-Branch
R. S. S. & C. I. L. B.

Dear Sirs,

I wish to thank you all most sincerely for both the Seasonal Greetings and the most acceptable Banker Order. It was very kind of you to remember me - I feel most undeserving of such thoughtfulness after only three or four months' service.

Trusting that the New Year has much happiness in store for each one of you,

I remain,

Yours sincerely,
Nance Wilson.

F. J. Jones

VF 513582.
Gnr. Milsom N.E.
A.W.A.S.
A.A.S/L. Trg. Regt.
Mosman P.O.
Sydney.
4 – 1 – 44.

To
The President & Members of the King Is. War Service
Fund.
and the
President & Members of the King Is. Sub-Branch
R.S.S & A.I.L.A.

Dear Sirs,

I wish to thank you all most sincerely for both the Seasonal Greetings and the most acceptable Canteen Order. It was very kind of you to remember me – I feel most undeserving of such thoughtfulness after only three or four months' service.

Trusting that the New Year has much happiness in store for each one of you.

I remain,

Yours sincerely,
Nance Milsom.

29 Seymour Grove,
Brighton. S.S.
Melbourne.

2nd March '44.

Dear Mr Marshall,

I wish to thank you and all members of the King Island War Service Fund for the parcel which I received a couple of weeks ago. It had been readdressed from the Searchlight Troop, Regt. Sydney. The parcel arrived in good order, and the contents will be very useful.

I also wish to notify you that I have been released from the Army, for service with the Home Missions Department of the Methodist Church.

Again thanking you,

I remain,

Yours sincerely,
Nancy Wilson.

29 Seymour Grove,
Brighton. S.5.
Melbourne.
2nd March '44.

Dear Mr Marshall,

I wish to thank you and all members of the King Island War Service Fund for the parcel which I received a couple of weeks ago. It had been re addressed from the Searchlight Trg. Regt. Sydney. The parcel arrived in good order, and the contents will be very useful.

I also wish to notify you that I have been released from the Army, for service with the Home Missions Department of the Methodist Church.

Again thanking you,

I remain

Yours sincerely,

Nancy Milsom.