

The King Island World War 2 War Service Fund

During World War 2, Dudley (Doug) Patterson 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.

Doug wrote four letters to the Fund, two each in 1940 and 1941. He was 35 years old when he enlisted in 1940 and knew many people on and off King Island, who he mentions in each letter. Like many soldiers they knew when they were being trained just to keep them occupied, frustrated by the uncertainty of where they would be sent. In his final letter Doug mentions that he is injured – this resulted in a medical discharge on 17 December 1941.



Victorian V. M. C. A. Military Service Department

PAYOR: HIS MAJESTY THE KING

Write Home First

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

16/9 1940

VX 38146.

Bill Peterson

2. Coy Royal Pk.

Dear Jack.

Just a few lines to let you know that the Comforts Fund parcels all arrived OK. Many thanks. - and would you also give my, and our thanks to the Fund for the same. - just in case you have not heard from the other boys. I saw our old friend Mac. on the Thursday of the week our parcels arrived & he told me he had received one too so it doesn't look as the army went wrong. - Mac incidentally was going to 'see' William & his Mrs. in his latest addition to the family last Wednesday so I expect he will be back again now.

Now into Jack Curtin a few days after he got over here too - somewhere about the 5th I think it was. A. S. people in there seem to attract me another. He looked very well & returned the compliment by saying the same about me. Seems to be quite happy to be back again at his old - war job. - jolly fine chap.

My B. news seems to

16/9/1940
VX 38146
DW Paterson
"B" Coy Royal PK

Dear Jack.

Just a few lines to let you know that the Comforts Fund parcels all arrived OK. Many thanks. – and would you also give my, and our thanks to the Fund for the same. Just in case you have not heard from the other boys. I saw our old friend Mac. on the Thursday of the week our parcels arrived & he told me he had received one too so it doesn't look as tho any went astray – Mac incidentally was going to Tas on leave to see Mrs. M & his latest addition to the family last Wednesday so I expect he will be back again now.

Ran into Jack Curtain a few days after he got over here too – somewhere abt the 5th I think it was. K.I. people in Melb seem to attract one another. He looked very well & returned the compliment by saying the same abt me. Seemed to be quite happy to be back again at his last war job – Jolly fine chap.

King Is news seems to be much as usual at least as I hear it from Mrs Pat & from the papers which she sends me over. Looks as tho things are moving a little here now & I will get a shift almost anytime now – where to Heaven Knows. But at least it will be into my unit. somewhere & once there & into service work it should not be so long before I'll feel that Im not wasting time too much. Was expecting to be over on leave in abt a week but there is a possibility that Mrs Pat will be coming over here for a fortnight in the next boat. If she does I will not come over until later & certainly for final leave unless its impossible. Bill Boyce says he does not expect to go over, yet at anyrate, as his people live here in Melb. (St Kilda) but Malcolm & Lindsay are going over in abt a fortnight all being well. Well no more now Jack – one of my mates is waiting for me. My regards to yourself & ~~the~~ Mrs Marshall & the family. Remember me to Jock when you see him & hope you are yourself again now.

Yrs Sincerely

Dud. M. Paterson



VX 38146. *Spr. Recd P*
Military Camp at *C. Coy. RAE Depot*
BATTALION
OR UNIT *Phil. P.O. 5 Lymington*
No 2 1940

Dear Jack.

Many thanks to the K.I. Comforts Fund for the parcel which arrived yesterday. Very acceptable I remind you of home - not that I ever forget it. Expect to get over on leave in 3 wks time all being well.

We are getting a bit more training now here & rather interesting work too. They manage to keep us going fairly solidly during the day & in addition we have lectures to go to 2 or 3 nights a week as well as night manoeuvres, wiring bridge blowing etc. The week passes quite quickly anyway.

We think, which is as much as you know all anything in the army, that we will be a unit in the 9th Div. but the C.O. himself told us he doesn't know himself, but that that is the position as it stands at present.

Had a letter ^{awoke up} from an old pal from Melb. who enlisted I went over to England. - He wrote from there at the middle



Military Camp at.....

BATTALION
OR UNIT.....

19.....

of Aug & met John over there. must have
heard him mention K.I. & asked him if he knew
me. so of course they soon got acquainted. Remarkable
how things like that crop up. isn't it?

Heard from Mac a few days ago
he is well. & was expecting a good weekend (this
weekend) with Jack & Blackie. Would have liked to
have been with them. I saw Jack Curtin in
Melb. abt a week after he came over. - that was while
I was at Royal Pk. Mac has since seen him & also
George Cathie. Have lost track of the Williams boys &
Bill Bope. I have their numbers but don't know where
they went to. Would be glad of their address if you
know it.

Well. Jack. no more now. Hope you are
quite ok. again & staying so. Remember me kindly
to Mrs Marshall & the family not forgetting Arthur.
Hoping to see you all soon.

Yours.

Harry Petersen

VX 38146. Spr D.M.P.
C.Coy RAE Depot
Mil.PO 5 Seymour
Nov 2 1940

Dear Jack.

Many thanks to the K.I. Comforts Fund for the parcel which arrived yesterday. Very acceptable & reminds me of home – not that I ever forget it. Expect to get over on leave in 3 wks time all being well.

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Had a letter a week ago from an old pal from Melb who enlisted & went over to England – He wrote from there abt the middle of Aug & met John over there must have heard him mention K.I & asked him if he knew me & of course they soon got acquainted. Remarkable how things like that crop up isn't it?

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Well Jack no more now. Hope you are quite O.K. again & staying so. Remember me kindly to Mrs Marshall & the family not forgetting Arthur.

Hoping to see you all soon.

Yours

D M Paterson



William's
W. Pope

Military Camp at VX 38146. Gpr. Hillier.

BATTALION OR UNIT B. Coy. E.T.D. Group A.
Puckapunyal 1/2/41

Dear Jack.

Many thanks to the K.I. War Service Fund for the Canteen order. Incidentally saw the William's boys & Bill Pope - they received theirs too. Things in our crowd are pretty quiet at present. The first draft of Engineer reinforcements whose Xmas leave was their pre-embarkation left on Tues. for seas very soon. 5th reinforcements to 2/2 2/3 & 2/8 Field Coy. The rest of the 6th & 7th reinforcements to above have been expecting final word since Xmas, but now don't know whether we'll get it next week or next month. Appears to have had nearly all the engineer training we are to get here (we've had a lot too) because they are going over some bits of it again. Get a bit fed up at times. Inactively breeding a certain amount of discontent. Doesn't do to think too much along those lines much less talk about it so "nuff said."

Kindest regards to yourself & the rest of the family & again many thanks. Hope it won't be long before I see the island again - I'm quite homesick for it lately.

Yours Doug. Peterson.

VX38146. Spr. DMP
B. Coy. E.T.D. Group A.
Puckapunyal 1/2/41

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Yours.

Doug. Paterson.

VX 38146 cpl W. Patterson.
2. H. G. H. abroad.
8/11/41.

Dear Jack.

Just a note to let you know I'm O.K. Received a parcel from the Fund yesterday too sent Aug 29th many thanks. Your people at home are not forgetting us and its great to know that.

Havent stuck anyone of the kids since my last letter which was just when I met John in here. Hope he's quite O.K. again now. The Tunnells are all well - still here & received parcels too - was talking to Thyl & Jack yesterday.

Don't know how much longer I'll be here - getting on all right but seems to be very

very slowly. Can get about now tho' so suppose any improvement is good. Cant walk far yet but manage a bit more each day.

How are you getting on? Hope the old ribs are knitting properly. Mrs Pat said that she'd let me know how you were when she got back again - only had a couple of letters from her since that event so she probably hasn't got to it yet.

Guess she's been pretty busy getting settled down again. Glad she's home anyway & I reckon she is too. Letters are coming in very well now - have been for some time. Nearly all got across in 12 days.

Sometimes 11 which is very good. - but the main thing is that they are regular - One can almost be sure of the day to expect mail in fact. Had a letter from Kath.

Sullivan yesterday. Said in it
 that Jack Hodges are home, wounded
 in Syria - on abt 7th Oct. Hope he's
 not knocked abt too badly. One thing
 he is: he able to have Mums dinner
 at home. Must tell Phyl abt him
 won't think he'd know. Had a letter
 from Ray Heinrich since he rejoined
 his unit. Did I give you his add.? Fancy
 I did. In care not. SX 7717 CM. R.L.H. 1st Aus.
 Ordnance Wks Coy. AIF. etc. She's quite well
 again. Hope John is quite OK. again -
 looked a bit strained when he was here.
 but that was natural & a spell would
 fix it all right. And now Jack
 still got a couple to write to so will
 bring this note to a close. Sincerely hope
 you're OK. again. Many thanks, best
 regards to yourself the family &
 remember me to them all.

Yours. Doug Patterson.

BY AIR MAIL

AIR MAIL

LETTER CARD

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



MR. J. MARSHALL.

CURRIE.

KING ISLAND.

TASMANIA AUSTRALIA.



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

D. Patterson Received Parcel 29th Aug.
 Tunnell 17th 31



VX38146 cpl DW Paterson.
2.A.G.H Abroad.
8/11/41

Dear Jack.

Just a note to let you know I'm O.K. Received a parcel from the Fund yesterday too sent Aug 29th Many thanks you people at home are not forgetting us and it's great to know that.

Haven't struck any more of the lads since my last letter which was just when I met John in here I hope he's quite O.K. again now. The Farrells are all well – still here & received parcels too – was talking to Phyl & Jack yesterday

Don't know how much longer I'll be here – getting on alright but seem to be very very slowly. Can get about now tho' so suppose any improvement is good. Cant walk far yet but manage a bit more each day.

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And now Jack still got a couple to write to so will bring this note to a close. Sincerely hope you're O.K. again. Many thanks, best regards to yourself & the family & remember me to them all.

Yours. Doug Paterson.