

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

During World War 2, Alfred Viney 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.

Alfred wrote two letters to the Fund in 1941 while he was serving in the Middle East. He describes the countryside along with people and enquires about sport on King Island. Alfred returned to Australia and was sent to New Guinea, where he was tragically killed in action on 19 August 1943.

VX.51086

Mr. J. V. Viney

to boy

By B. L.

H. J. F.

at Broad

11th / 11th / 41

Dear Sir,

I received a parcel from you on the 11<sup>th</sup> of Nov. the contents of which were very useful. I appreciate your kindness very much & wish to express my gratitude to you. Things are not quite so convenient over here & the things that were enclosed are hard to obtain. I have met a few boys from the Island but have not said a word to any of them. Would it be possible for you to let me know what the price is so I would like to see him. I met Don Morrison a couple of months ago & he told

me where the Starred boys are but I did not get a chance to go & see them.

Where we are at present it is very cold but there has been no rain for a long time. Well there is not much to write about so I will close hoping this finds you all well & happy as it leaves me at present thanking you again for the parcel.

Yours sincerely  
J. V. Viney

W. J.

VX51086  
Pte. A. Viney  
C. Coy  
2/7 Btn  
A.I.F.  
Abroad  
11..11..41

Dear Sir,

I received a parcel from you on the 11<sup>th</sup> of Nov. the contents of which were very useful. I appreciate your kindness very much & wish to express my gratitude to you. Things are not quite so convenient over here & the things that were enclosed are hard to obtain.

I have met a few boys from the Island but have not saw Arthur yet. Would it be possible for you to let me know what Btn he is in as I would like to see him. I met Don Morrison a couple of months ago & he told me where the Farrel boys are but I did not get a chance to go & see them.

Where we are at present it is very cold but there has been no rain for a long time. Well there is not much to write about so I will close hoping this finds you all well & happy as it leaves me at present thanking you again for the parcel.

Yours Sincerely  
A. Viney

Vx. 51086

Plc. A. Viney

S. boy

H. Bln

1 A. J. J.

A. road

1... 12. 4. 6. 1

Dear Sir,

Just a few lines to let you know that I received both your parcels. I wrote to you about three weeks ago so you should receive it before this one. I appreciate your kindness very much & I am assure you that my cobble & I had some good supper from the contents.

Where we are at present it is very cold & the snow is on the hills all around us. At present it is raining like the devil & we nearly due to go out & get a

couple of hours in it. I started this letter at night & am finishing it the next morning. Well we got the surprise of our lives the snow must have been falling all night as it is within a quarter of a mile of us.

I havnt met any more boys from the Island but am still living in hopes. I dont know whether you have any scraps of places over there but if you havnt let me know & I will send you some over. How are the sports going over there now? As they still play football & cricket & I cant say get teams. I often think of the Island & will be glad when I can get back there again. Well I must say I am thanking you again for

VX.50186  
Pte. A. Viney  
C. Coy  
2/7 Btn  
A.I.F  
Abroad  
1..12..41

Dear Sir,

Just a few lines to let you know that I received both your parcels. I wrote to you about three weeks ago so you should receive it before this one. I appreciate your kindness very much & I can assure you that my cobber & I had some good suppers from the contents.

Where we are at present it is very cold & the snow is on the hills all around us. At present it is raining like the devil & we nearly due to go out and put a couple of hours in it. I started this letter at night & and finishing it the next morning. Well we got the surprise of our lives the snow must have been falling all night as it is within a quarter of a mile of us. I havn't met any more boys from the Island but am stilling living in hopes. I don't know whether you have any snaps of places over here but if you havn't let me know & I will send you some over. How are the sports going over there now? do they still play football & cricket or can't they get teams. I often think of the Island & will be glad when I can get back there again. Well I must say cheerio thanking you again for parcels & wishing you all a Mery Xmas & Happy New Year

A Viney