



at the archives
Wayne Doubleday



Mr Bertram Walter Ezzy (courtesy of Mrs Ethel Fullerton).

What you should know

- The CSU Regional Archives are open Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm. Located in the Blakemore Building at the South Campus of the university. Access can be gained via College Avenue or Hely Avenue.
- Members of the public are welcome to visit the search room, where professional archival staff can assist with inquiries. For those people unable to visit the archives in person, staff can provide a research service for straightforward inquiries for a fee of \$55 per hour, including copying and postage.
- For further information, phone 6925 3666, email archive@csu.edu.au or visit the website at www.csu.edu.au/research/archives for a full listing of holdings and more detailed information.

Our patriots

Over past months, recognition has been given to the many voluntary groups and patriotic bodies who supplied thousands of hours packing parcels, rolling bandages, training and organising all types of functions such as dances, card parties and street stalls during World War II.

In addition to the wonderful work accomplished by these voluntary organisations, individuals from the community willingly gave their time and skills with the same amount of intensity and devotion in their own homes, with the intention of giving comfort to the servicemen and women of Wagga and district.

Bertram Walter Ezzy of "Roslyn" in Best Street, Wagga, deserves to be mentioned as one of these people, with the assistance of his wife Amy, who devoted countless hours to knitting socks for members of both the Army and Air Force.

Prior to living in Wagga, Mr and Mrs Ezzy were members of the Ganmain community, Mr Ezzy being the proprietor of a motor garage in Ford Street for many years.

Both Mr and Mrs Ezzy were community-minded people and worked for Ganmain and district organisations.

Mrs Ezzy was the treasurer of the Ganmain Red Cross when it was revived in 1931 after having lapsed at the end of World War I.

The Ganmain Comforts Fund and Red Cross, as well as Mangain Red Cross, benefited from Mrs Ezzy's knitting; through them, servicemen from Ganmain received two pairs of socks each month.

Nearby Ashbridge Red Cross was formed in October 1939 and members donated money for the purchase of knitting wool, which was handed on to Mr Ezzy to knit socks on his knitting machine.

Difficulties arose when rationing was introduced, making a huge difference to the distribution of the socks and Mr Ezzy's work could not be continued locally; however, he did knit socks and made the long baskets for the Wagga Red Cross and Comforts Fund.

Some knitting was also carried out for the Wagga Branch Women's Auxiliary of the RSSILA (Returned Sailors and Soldiers Services League



Bertram and Amy Ezzy (courtesy of Ganmain Historical Society and Museum).

of Australia) but rationing also caused this work to be discontinued.

Mr Ezzy wanted to knit for Wagga and District servicemen but because the wool had to be obtained from the Wagga Red Cross and Comfort Fund and this was secured from the head office of the Australian Comforts Fund in Sydney, all knitted articles had to be returned to Sydney.

Although Mr Ezzy was of the opinion that Wagga should have a supply of wool or that the coupon rating on khaki wool should have been lowered so that socks knitted locally could have been distributed to Wagga servicemen, he knitted approximately 24 pounds of wool for the Sydney Comforts Fund every six weeks.

By July 1944, Mr Ezzy had knitted 14,000 skeins of wool into over 3500 pairs of socks.

In natural light he could knit one sock in 40 minutes, after which it was removed from the machine and Mrs Ezzy turned the heel and did all the stitching and finishing.

A knitting machine similar to the one Mr Ezzy



Knitting machine held at Ganmain Historical Society and Museum.

used was donated to Ganmain Historical Society.

Sock machines were made in circa 1880 in South Waring, London and were used by maids of upper class people. These machines were also used for making socks for soldiers during the Great War.

Mr Mervyn Halbisch donated the photographed sock machine, which was purchased at Winnell's clearing sale.

It had been used by Mr Winnell's mother, who volunteered her time and skill to knitting socks for the servicemen during World War II.

Bertram Walter Ezzy passed away at Booval on September 15, 1958, and is buried in Ipswich Cemetery, Queensland.

He must be remembered as a truly patriotic person giving so many people comfort during World War II.

- References: *The Daily Advertiser*, Wagga July 13, 1944; *Queensland Times* September 16, 1958. Ganmain History, Lorna Gilmour. Compiled by June Dietrich