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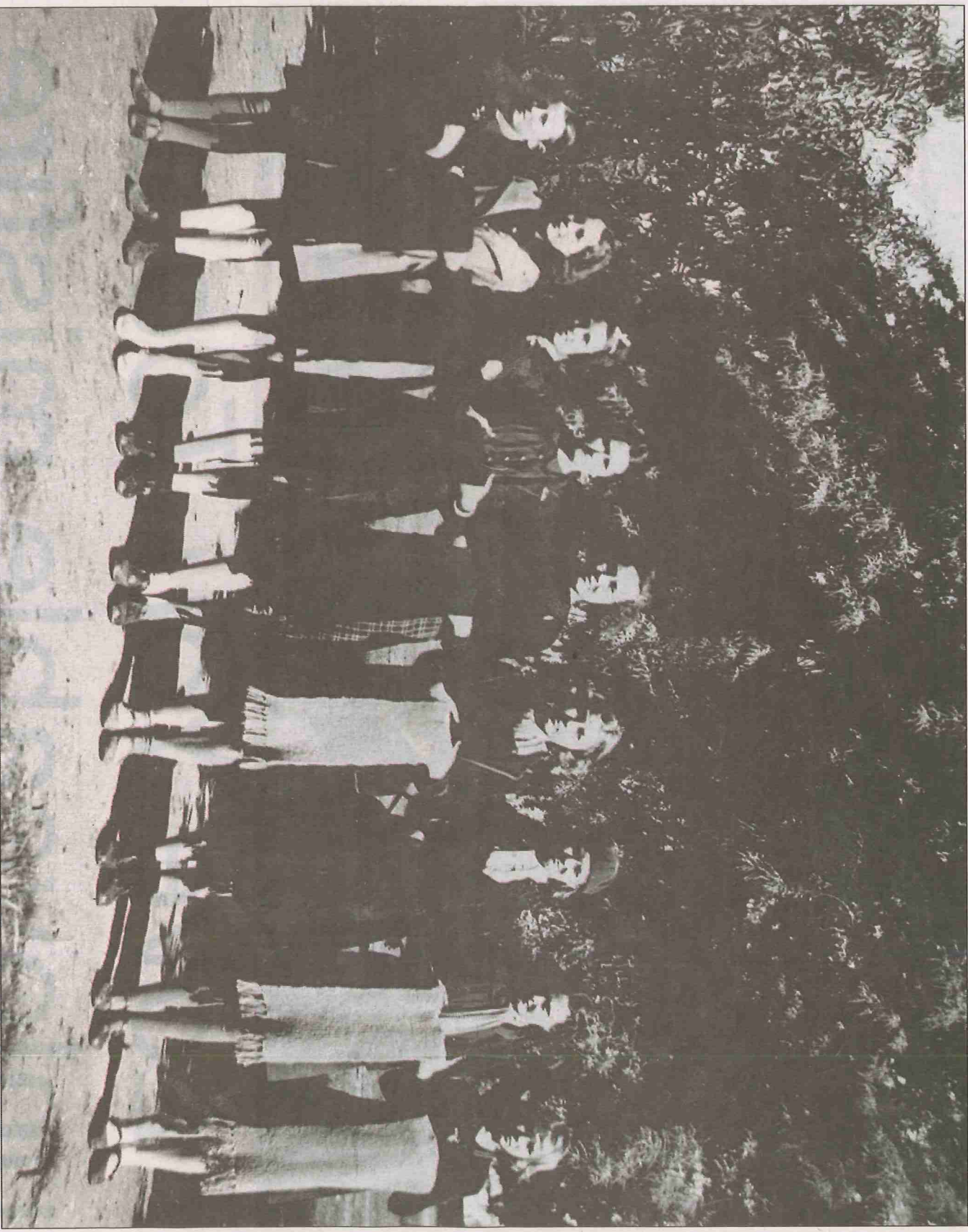
## What you should know

■ 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](mailto:archive@csu.edu.au) or visit the website at [www.csu.edu.au/research/archives](http://www.csu.edu.au/research/archives) for a full listing of holdings and more detailed information.

**Compiled by:** June Dietrich  
**References:** Sydney Morning Herald: 12 Dec 1940, 11 Apr 1942; Daily Advertiser: June 1940, Sept 12, 14, 18, 1940, June 1945.



War knitting by women and girls at Mangoplah (CSURA RW1944).

# Stitches in time

**T**housands of hours were spent by volunteer women working for Wagga's war effort during WWII, with many of the volunteers overlapping into multiple organisations so that maximum effort could be utilised to meet the needs of the servicemen and women created by the war.

In 1938, the Women's Voluntary Service (WVS) was formed on a federal level in Australia and the movement, based on its English counterpart, gained popularity and membership grew in both city and rural centres with headquarters at Federation House in Sydney.

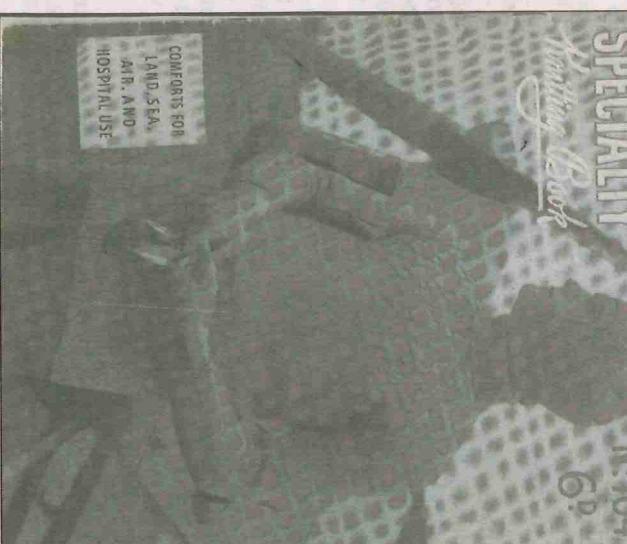
Initially, the WVS trained women in first aid and air raid precaution (ARP) but soon began comforts work once the war emergency arose in 1939 and by early 1942 the estimated 150 branches with a membership of more than 20,000 throughout NSW were encouraged to join with local patriotic fundraising.

It is not entirely certain when the WVS met on a permanent basis in Wagga, however, in September 1939, the WVS held first aid examinations and the federal organiser of the WVS, Miss Broad of Sydney, toured the district to address members in Wagga and other areas such as Grenfell, Junee and Albury to help promote the organisation to country people.

In Wagga, the WVS not only supported the mayor's patriotic and war fund; its work also appreciated the reciprocal help from the many organisations when assistance was forthcoming for fundraising events, such as running dances, market days, selling second-hand goods and, on June 5, 1940, it was decided to organise a card system of house-to-house collection of one shilling a month.

Shortly after the Wagga branch formed, the

branches of Wagga Experimental Farm, Cartwrights Hill, Oura and South Side (Wagga) began to meet. Branches in surrounding towns soon started with knitting and sewing committees, as well as at local schools and small communities who were all interested in contributing to the war effort and comforts fund.



Knitting Pattern Book Cover, c.1941.

Mrs C Garrett was the originator of the Hathaway Club and started knitting socks in September 1939. It would not be an exaggeration to say that all households would have had knitting to "pick up" to assist with articles such

as socks, scarves and balaclavas, as well as hospital stockings and splint sleeves for the comforts fund.

A committee was formed in June 1940 with Mrs WL Shaw as president, Mrs Riordan, honorary secretary and Mrs Scott, honorary treasurer, and it was decided that a shop would be opened to work for the WVS and comforts fund. Mrs Gissing agreed to be patron.

Mrs HE Gissing, the mayoress, performed the opening ceremony of the Hathaway Patriotic Jumble shop on July 13, 1940, and wished the organisers success.

Mrs Shaw thanked everyone who had helped and thanked Mr FF Copland for the spacious premises he lent for the purpose of raising funds for the WVS. The fittings for the shop were donated by Messrs Edmondson and Co, Hunter Bros, WL Shaw and Mrs Hardy snr.

During the war years, the shop had six locations in the Fitzmaurice and Gurwood street area.

Newspapers and periodicals were collected and Miss Anderson reported on September 12, 1940, that during the previous two weeks 78 packets of reading material had been despatched to men in the services overseas, making a total of 537 packets.

The men were reportedly "delighted with the packages with reading from home" and letters of appreciation to the committee were received at this time from Private Sid Croaker, Pt L Waterhouse, Driver JA Page, and Driver KJ Hilder, who were all serving in Palestine.

The Hathaway knitting, sewing and jumble shop donated thousands of knitted garments and raised well over £4000 for the Wagga Patriotic and Comforts Fund during World War II, indicating once again the generosity of the Wagga community.

The Wagga branch of the WVS wound up in 1945 and should be congratulated on the tireless work of the many committees.