Red Cross calling for Wagga women

In July 1916, owing to the generosity of the management and staff of State Stores Ltd in Gurwood Street, one of the most enterprising functions the Wagga Red Cross League held was when all of the departments of the store were controlled and conducted by the ladies. A sum of 150 pounds was forwarded to the French Red Cross.

At a committee meeting in July 1916, a decision was made to install a bed in Randwick Hospital, and supply furnishings to one of the Sydney convalescent homes.

Money was also sent to the men’s section of Red Cross after receiving their request to supply 20 bed sheets, 20 beds, 20 tables and five sets of quilts, all suitably branded with name of the Wagga Red Cross League as donors.

In August 1916, notification was received with regard to sending Christmas presents to the men serving in the “Firing line.”

In 1916, the Wagga Red Cross League had sent 400 Christmas holly-cans to individual soldiers, so it was decided that the league would send Christmas gifts to sick and wounded Australian servicemen and the Messes Cadbury were asked to make special boxes of chocolates with greetings from the Wagga Red Cross League.

These gifts were distributed by an Australian committee to Australians in hospitals in Egypt, France and England.

The first president of the Wagga Red Cross League, Mrs McDonough, resigned when her husband retired as major; Mrs Oste became president until Isabella Mitchellmore accepted the position in 1917, when it was no longer automatically the role of the mayor’s wife.

The Wagga Branch of the Red Cross was officially registered with the Australian Red Cross in 1917. The women proved to have incredible business and organisational skills which were successful in their money raising activities.

For the young Australian servicemen at war it was apparent the women of Wagga assisted in making exhausted troops feel appreciated and remembered at home.