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

During the 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 to their own homes, with the intention of giving comfort to the servicemen serving in Wagga and district.

Bertram Walter Ezzy of "Rosalyn" in East 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 Gammain 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 Gammain and district organisations.

Mrs Ezzy was the treasurer of the Gammain Red Cross when it was revived in 1931 after having lapsed at the end of World War I. The Gammain Comforts Fund and Red Cross, as well as Mungindi Red Cross, benefited from Mrs Ezzy's knitting through the services of servicemen from Gammain 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 trips for the Wagga Red Cross and Comforts Fund.

Some knitting was also carried out for the Wagga Branch Women's Auxiliary of the RSL and for the Returned Sailors and Soldiers Services League 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 Comforts 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 1946, Mr Ezzy had knitted 14,000 skeins of wool into over 3000 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 bed and did all the stitching and finishing.

A knitting machine similar to the one Mr Ezzy used was donated to Gammain Historical Society. Sock machines were made in circa 1880 in South Warring, 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 Halbach donated the photographed sock machine, which was purchased at Wimsett's clearing sale.

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

Bertram Walter Ezzy passed away at Boolah on September 15, 1956, and is buried in Illawarra Cemetery, Queensland.

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