

# WWDHS NEWSLETTER No. 452 JULY– SEPT 2022 ISSN 2207-1016

## General Meetings

**July:** Geoff Burch will conduct a Zoom Meeting on on-line records that can be accessed including: Gormly Index (State Library), Wagga Wagga Bench Books and Wagga Wagga Rate Books

**August:** Geoff Burch, will talk about  
**The History of Lake Albert**

## COMMITTEE

**President and Treasurer:** Geoff Burch  
**Vice President:** Geoff Haddon  
**Secretary:** Margaret Hill  
**Committee:** Tony Dunn, Margaret Nowlan-Jones, Peter Morris, Di Lovett, Rhonda Reedy, Brian Andrews, Mark Christenson, Leanne Diessel, Mark Christenson, Craig Dixon, Leanne Diessel, Judy Buik, Sherry Morris

**Welcome to new members:** Jack Lee, Roger Harvey, Michael and Laurie Redgrave  
 Paul Ray and the Wagga Historic Engine Club

**Annual General Meeting:** 19 September 2022, 1.30 p.m. Venue to be advised.

**Committee Meetings:** Zoom meetings to be continued.

**WWDHS Patron:** Michael McCormack, Federal Member for Riverina  
 and Federal Member for Riverina

**WAGGA WAGGA & DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC.**  
**PO BOX 90, WAGGA WAGGA. 2650.**

**President:** Geoff Burch      Ph 0417277592  
**Vice-President:** Geoff Haddon      Ph 0269224403  
**Secretary:** Margaret Hill      Ph 0269334556  
**Newsletter Editor:** Sherry Morris      Ph 0269229337  
**Email:** info@wwdhs.org.au  
**Web site:** www.wwdhs.org.au

**Committee meetings:** 3rd Monday of the month  
**General meetings:** 3rd Monday of the month 7:30  
**Annual Subscriptions:** Single: \$20, Couple: \$30.  
 Corporate: \$50. Due by 1 July each year. Payment by cash, cheque or direct deposit to WWDHS. BSB: 062 600. A/c No.: 0080 0270

**Disclaimer:** The Wagga Wagga & District Historical Society Inc., and/or its members, through this newsletter, endeavours to provide accurate and reliable information, but does not warrant or make any representation regarding the accuracy or reliability of information contained within this newsletter. To the maximum extent permitted by applicable law, the Society and/or its members shall not be liable for any damages of any kind relating to the use of this information, including without limitation, direct, indirect, special, compensatory or consequential damages, loss of profits or damage to property, even if the Society and/or its members have been advised of the possibility of such damages. Anyone acting on the information contained within this newsletter does so at their own risk.

## WWDHS ACTIVITIES

### **Museum of the Riverina Re-development, 29 April 2022**

Several members enjoyed a tour of the Museum of the Riverina's construction of its \$4.88 million re-development by Luke Greal. We examined the Society's room where meetings will be held in the future, hopefully by the end of this year or early next year. Since our tour, the roof has been completed and internal wall framing is underway for the new exhibition gallery. The Cook's Galley has recently been moved into the new museum.



*Front row: Craig Dixon, Geoff Burch (President), Sherry Morris, Di Lovett and Leanne Diessel. Back Row, Noel Thomson, Peter Morris, Mark Christenson, Peter Gissing, Judy , Margaret Keys.*



## **EXCURSION TO THE RAAF WAGGA HERITAGE CENTRE**

### **Thursday, 19 May 2022**

Several members visited the Wagga Wagga RAAF Museum. This project was undertaken by the veterans and serving members of the Wagga Wagga RSL sub-branch and RAAF Wagga to memorialise the role local Riverina towns played in supporting the Royal Australian Air Force during the Second World War. They were assisted by a \$60,000 grant from the Australian Government's Community Development Grants Program. It tells the story of over 50,000 Australian men and women who travelled to the Riverina Region to train to become competent and highly skilled RAAF aviators, aircrew and/or ground support staff within the Empire Air Training Scheme.

### **The Memorial Story Board**



William Ellis Newton VC, an Australian, is depicted on the right. He had been a bomber pilot in Papua New Guinea in March 1943 when, despite intense anti-aircraft fire, he made a series of attacks on the Salamaua Isthmus until he was forced to ditch his aircraft in the sea. When he had been awarded, he had been posted as missing. It was later discovered he had been taken captive by the Japanese and executed by beheading. He was awarded the Victoria Cross, the highest decoration for gallantry that could be awarded to a member of the British and Commonwealth armed forces.

The Tiger Moth pictured on his left was the main trainer used throughout the Commonwealth by the Empire Air Training Scheme. Thousands of military pilots learnt to fly in the Tiger Moth under this scheme as its handling was ideal for training fighter pilots.

The guardhouse, the first building established at the Base in 1940 still exists.



*Members of the Historical Society listening to our tour guide describing all the aircraft on display at the front gate. From left to right: Robert Haywood, Marg Walsh, our tour conductor, Mark Porter, Geoff Haddon, Mark Christenson, Peter Morris and Leanne Diessel, learning about the aircrafts on display.*



Photograph of the opening of the new WRAAF Quarters, RAAF, Wagga Wagga in 1973. One of the many photographs and memorabilia which represent the fifty years of service to the RAAF and the local region on display.



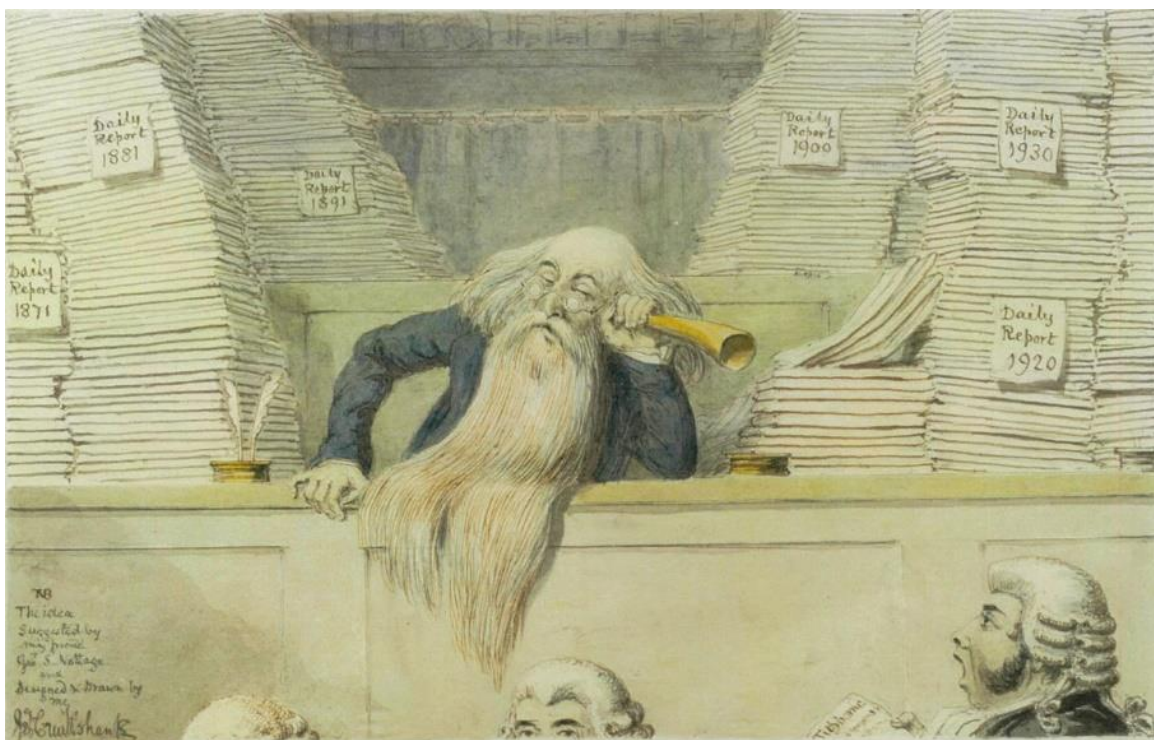
## COMBINED SOCIETIES' DINNER at the RSL, 29 June 2022

The Combined Societies' Dinner was a huge success. This year, seven societies were represented. These included:

Wagga Wagga and District Historical Society  
Wagga Wagga District Family Historical Society  
Wagga Antique Society  
Wagga Wagga Rail Heritage Museum  
Wagga Wagga Historic Engines Club  
Wagga Aviation Heritage Museum  
Wagga Stamp and Coin Club.

## TICHBORNE WATERCOLOUR CARICATURE

The Wagga Wagga Historical Society combined with the Museum of the Riverina to purchase a rare Tichborne watercolour caricature painted by George Cruikshank, a well-known artist renowned for his caricatures. It is a rare piece of art which adds to the Museum's Tichborne Collection. Wagga Wagga became famous for The Great Tichborne Trials of the 1870s when a local butcher Tom Castro claimed he was Sir Roger Tichborne's heir. A Civil Trial was followed by a Criminal Trial when he was found guilty of perjury. He was then called 'The Greatest imposter in history'.



*The caricature was named 'Last Man on the Tichborne Jury'*

## Digitisation of the Wagga Wagga Rate Books

The digitisation of the Wagga Wagga Rate Books is also progressing with now two of the three stages completed. The 1870-1907 books are now available online on the NSW State Archives website NRS Series 17646.

# WAGGA WAGGA MUNITIONS FACTORY

Corner of Forsyth and Murray Streets

By Sherry Morris

Prior to the Second World War, as early as 1937, the Australian Government was contemplating spending huge sums of money on the manufacture of armaments (machine guns, cartridges, shells, fuses etc) for Australia and the other dominions of the British Commonwealth. The Editor of *Wagga Wagga Daily Advertiser* was encouraging local residents to support the establishment of a munitions factory, arguing that the town would be an ideal munition manufacturing centre because it was midway between Sydney and Melbourne and far enough from the coast to be secure from an enemy air attack.<sup>1</sup>

In October 1940, Sir Phillip Goldfinch, Chairman of NSW Board of Management of the Ministry of Munitions, which was responsible for the planning and production of munition projects and supplies, visited Wagga Wagga to investigate the possibilities of establishing annexes for the production of fuse caps. He was accompanied by Norman Malin of the same department (and later Minister for Navy and Munitions 1941-1946). The two men explained that a munitions factory would employ between 550 and 600 people who would have to work in three shifts a day. They met with Mayor of Wagga Wagga, Alderman Henry E. Gissing, Town Clerk, Frank Burns, Electrical Engineer, H. J. Crisp, and Municipal Engineer, Henry J. Chaston (who had compiled a long list of technical skills available for such a project).<sup>2</sup>

A few weeks later, during the 'Made in Australia' Week in Wagga Wagga, displays of munitions in Fitzmaurice and Gurwood streets attracted over 1300 people. It was organised by the Wagga Chamber of Commerce and items were provided by the Department of Munitions. It was the first munitions display outside capital cities. It included many types of shells and bombs with various types of cartridges, shells and shell cases shown in sections and in various stages of manufacture up to the finished article. There were also detonators, fuses, explosive containers and tools for the manufacture of munitions.<sup>3</sup>



*Left to right: Mayor of Wagga Wagga, Alderman Henry E. Gissing; Wagga Council Engineer, Henry J. Chaston; and Town Clerk, Frank Burns*



*Left: Eddie Graham MLA, Member for Wagga Wagga  
Centre: Senator Phillip McBride, Minister for Munitions  
Right: Norman Malin, Minister for Navy and Munitions*

Within a couple of weeks, Eddie Graham, Member for Wagga Wagga MLA, Mayor H. E. Gissing and Wagga Municipal Council officers were having discussions with the Federal Government about establishing a munitions factory in Wagga Wagga. The town's resources were examined by experts who found that Wagga was eminently suitable. The town had unlimited electrical power, pure water, sewerage, gas and good roads and it was on the main railway system. It also had a population large enough to supply the required labour.

The Mayor, H.E. Gissing, was keen to aid the war effort and was also aware that a munitions factory could be used for other industries after the war. After gaining public approval at a public meeting, he made an offer on behalf of Wagga Wagga involving the floating of a company with considerable capital. Wagga was to provide the resources and the government agreed to supply the machinery. Although the factory would have to depend on certain key men from Sydney or overseas, local men were to be used after they had received extensive training. In December 1940, a company with a capital of £30,000 was formed. The sum of £20,000 was to be subscribed locally and the remainder was to be provided by the Chamber of Manufacturers in Sydney to supply the key men required for the works to be established.<sup>4</sup>

By the end of December that year, Senator Philip McBride, the Minister for Munitions and Supply and Development, had announced that Wagga and Goulburn were the first to be chosen for 'armament annexes establishments' in New South Wales, as long as engineering and other facilities were available. These facilities included a Management Organiser competent to take charge of mass products of metal; skilled tradesmen competent to make tools and gauges of high precision; a foreman who could train operatives; men competent to set up machines; factory facilities (including electricity); an adequate labour supply; and engineering works to which armament annexes could be attached (which were limited in the country).<sup>5</sup>

In May 1941, Wagga Technical College was chosen to train the large number of men required for the factories (mainly turner-machinists and fitters); and Wagga Municipal Council, after negotiating with the Department of Education, chose a building in Gurwood Street for the training. The Technical College transferred equipment to the new site. Some suitable



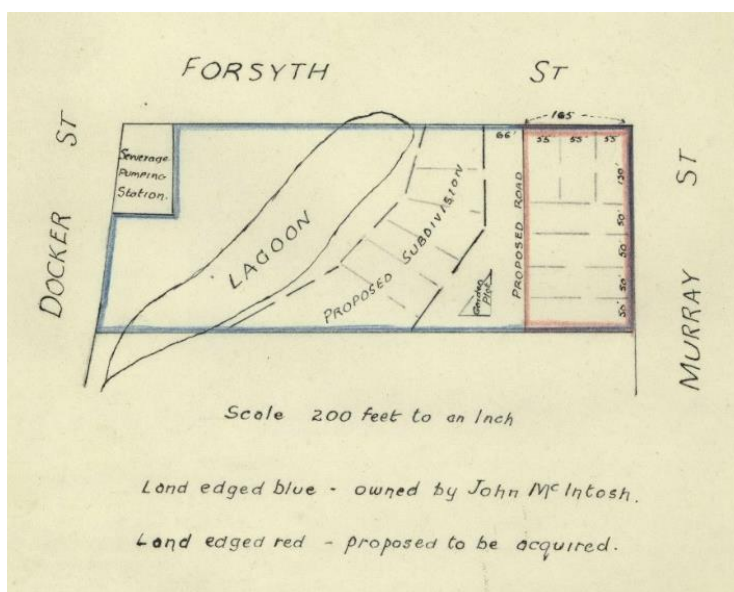
machinery was obtained locally and additional plant was ordered and later installed. Those who accepted the training had to accept munitions work for the duration of the war at the completion of their course.<sup>6</sup>

On 30 June 1941, Wagga Technical College Training School advertised for men aged over 21 who were skilled workers, with the ability to use tools or machinery. Workshop experience in engineering was preferred. The course included calculations, theory, trades drawing and practical work. After three months the men were to be posted to annexes for a further three months. After six months those possessing the necessary aptitude were to be employed in one of the factories. The Wagga Munitions Factory at that time was expected to employ 200 men and 300 women.<sup>7</sup>

In July 1941, three officers of the Ministry of Munitions, inspected several sites in Wagga Wagga. By August 1941, land at the corner of Forsyth and Murray streets was being considered.<sup>8</sup> The site was on Section 82, part of Lot 1 which had originally been granted to John McIntosh in 1868 as two crown grants. John McIntosh had been born in Inverness, Scotland, about 1834 and had moved to Wagga Wagga in 1858. He was a builder and later a funeral director. On his death in May 1907, the land passed to his son, also named John McIntosh. It included six acres and was described as:

All that piece or parcel of land being part of Lot 1 of Section 82 situated in the town of Wagga Wagga in the County of Wynyard and State of New South Wales commencing at a point being the intersection of Forsyth and Murray Streets thence by the west side of Murray Street aforesaid bearing south 330 feet thence by the north boundary of Lot 2 of the said Section west 165 feet thence by the south boundary of Forsyth Street aforesaid east 165 feet to the point of commencement.<sup>9</sup>

The land was level, low lying and swampy, intersected by the Wollundry Lagoon and subject to flooding. All town services were available. All surrounding roads had been constructed but there were no footpaths. It had been vacant for many years. The report stated that it was not an attractive residential area but the higher land could be subdivided for moderately priced residential building services. It suggested that it appeared to be 'overripe for sub-division'.



*The Commonwealth of Australia  
Gazette, No. 226, 27  
November 1947*





After some debate over the value of the land, on 3 October 1941, upon the request of the Ministry of Munitions, Possession Orders under Regulation 54 of National Security (General) Regulations were issued (pending acquisition by the Commonwealth). The land was officially acquired on 18 December 1941. It was agreed that John McIntosh would be paid £650 plus interest at 3% from the date of acquisition, 18 December 1941, to the date of settlement.<sup>10</sup>

By mid-November 1941, munition factories had already been constructed in St Mary's and Villawood near Sydney, Lithgow and Rutherford and then in Bathurst, Orange, Albury, Goulburn and Wagga Wagga in New South Wales. The factory at Wagga was to cost £350,000 and was expected to employ 500, an equal number of men and women. Wagga Wagga Municipal Council agreed to provide and lay all services including water, sewerage, electricity and gas to the locations required on the factory site, to excavate and place concrete footings to the various buildings and to lay all concrete floors. The Munitions Department agreed to arrange for supply of all materials not readily available to council and to reimburse council for the cost of work plus 5% to cover plant, supervision etc.<sup>11</sup>

Late January 1942, officers of the Board of Area Management, Ministry of Munitions, inspected various garages, foundries and engineering establishments, concerning the utilisation of certain local machinery which could be used for munitions production.<sup>12</sup> On 7 March 1942 the Department of Munitions took over the premises of Browne Bros Garage in Wagga Wagga from the estate of the late Charles Hardy and the late William Henry Hardy. It was used to accommodate the Munitions Department until it was vacated on 22 April 1942 and rental paid up to date.<sup>13</sup>

By 9 May 1942, the area management of the Ministry of Munitions at Wagga Wagga was advertising for two fitters (tradesmen), with experience if possible, for the installation of machinery from layout. Within three weeks it was advertising for munitions workers – women as process workers or viewers and men as labourers. The general staff was to be selected as required by the factory manager and the office to the Department of Labour and National Service.<sup>14</sup>

On 16 July 1942, the adjacent block of land on Allotment 1 Section 82 (2 acres, 2 roods) was also acquired, apart from the sub-station erected on this block by the Wagga Electricity Department, described as 'an easement to the Council'. Its alignment coincided with the building alignment of the fuse factory but it was excluded from the Commonwealth land.<sup>15</sup>

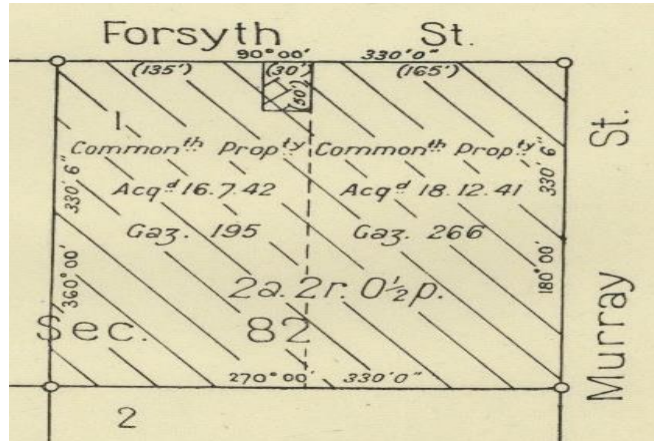
It was decided that the munitions building in Wagga Wagga was to be a timber framed building with concrete foundations, concrete retaining wall and floor, timber framed roof trusses, steel stanchions and gantry rails and asbestos cement wall sheeting and roof coverings.<sup>16</sup> A clinic was established in three rooms adjacent to the main building not long after the factory opened.<sup>17</sup> The Munitions Factory later had its own hospital, kitchen, canteen and rest rooms. It had natural lighting and later large electric fans and heaters were installed to provide cooling in summer and heating in winter.



NAA: SP857/8

The Commonwealth Government obtained the right half of Allotment 1, Section 82 on 18 December 1941 and the left half on 16 July 1942. A small area on the left side (30' x 50') was excluded from the area and described as 'an easement to the Council' to erect and maintain an electricity substation over that land at its own cost as it was to be resumed by Wagga Electricity Department.

*The Commonwealth of Australia  
Gazette, No. 226, 27 November 1947*



## Wagga Wagga Munitions Factory

Wagga Wagga was in the southern group of munitions factories with Hay, Albury and Goulburn, which was the parent company. They were set up from Melbourne by the Gun Ammunition Directorate as Munitions Annexes (later called Government Ammunition Factories). The building and capacities were planned to produce a certain amount of ammunition per year per factory. The method of manufacture and the design of tooling and gauges were all determined by the Directorate which followed the principles of manufacture and design of its parent factories at Maribyrnong and Footscray in Melbourne. The Wagga Wagga, Albury and Hay Ammunition Factories produced Fuses D.A. Perc No. 119 for the military.

The Divisional Manager was J. D. Stratton (former manager of the Small Arms Factory in Lithgow) who was also in charge of the northern factories, Rutherford and Tamworth. The Works Manager of the Southern Group was R. V. F. Eldridge. The Production Manager in Wagga Wagga was L. D. Bryan who had been engaged in the initial planning of ammunition factories at the Gun Ammunition Production Directorate in Melbourne.

The fuse factory buildings were completed by early 1942 but the project did not begin until June 1943. The machinery and tools took a long time to arrive and then a long time to be installed and there was some difficulty finding labourers with experience. The machine tools included multi-spindle automatics, single spindle, capstan lathes, milling machines, drilling machines, thread milling machine, power presses and furnaces. The tool room had lathes, milling machines, grinding tools and cutters, furnaces, drilling machines and measuring equipment.

Gradually the method of manufacture and the design of the tools improved on each of the 27 components in the fuse. Twenty of the components were manufactured in the factory and the remainder produced commercially. L. D. Bryon attended periodical production managers' conferences to discuss any problems or improvements of tooling and methods of manufacture so that each factory would assist the others and production would be standardised.<sup>18</sup>

## The workers

The key personnel, executives and associated personnel and skilled workers were brought from Sydney or overseas but the accent was on local employment. Advertising began in May 1943, calling for munition workers - single or childless women aged between 18 and 45 for process work or viewers and men not eligible for military service, aged between 18 and 55, and physically capable of undertaking heavy work.<sup>19</sup> Approximately 200 people were employed. These included the Production Manager (L. Bryon), an Engineer, Foreman of Production, Foreman of Tool Room and Foreman of Maintenance. There were eventually approximately 150 females and 50 males.

Paulene Wulff who worked in the office remembers that the factory was always under tight security with guards manning the front gate of the building 24 hours a day. The workers needed a pass to get in and out.<sup>20</sup> Thomas Spalding, a farmer from Victoria, came to work in the Munitions Factory as a cutter in 1943 and decided to remain in Wagga Wagga. His wife, a teacher, taught at a Wagga school for a while during the war.<sup>21</sup>

Gwen Kneebone also worked in the Munitions Factory. She recalled:

When we heard the news of the outbreak of war, I remember a lot of the men knew they would have to be in it. When they left to fight, we just had to get up and carry on. Women are pretty good at coping, better than men.

For a while she worked on her father's farm, droving cattle and sheep and haymaking (taking the place of her brother who had enlisted). She went to work in the Munitions Factory after a six-week training course.

Sylvia Piffero also worked there after completing the Tech six-week training course which taught the students how the machines worked. She said she used the machines that threaded the 25-pound bombs. She recalled:

It was dirty work. We would wear big aprons made of leather and cork boots. We would be constantly cutting our fingers or something. The munitions factory was operational around the clock. The shifts were split from 7 a.m. to 3 p.m., then 3 p.m. to 11 p.m. and 11 p.m. to 7 a.m..<sup>22</sup>

Sylvia felt that the munitions factory resembled a prison because of the tall fences and the armed guards at the gate.

Lola Stuart (later Belling) was only a young girl when she worked at the factory after undergoing a training course at the Gurwood Street School. There were about 15 girls in the class. A room had been set up with small lathes and drilling machines and they were taught by teachers from the Technical College metalwork or engineering departments. Lola recalled that there was an emphasis on safety and it was stressed that their work was important for the war effort. When she started work, she was issued with navy blue overalls and blue dustcoats, and in the factory they had to wear thick wooden clog-type footwear. They were allowed to buy blouses from the munitions department. She described the factory building as,

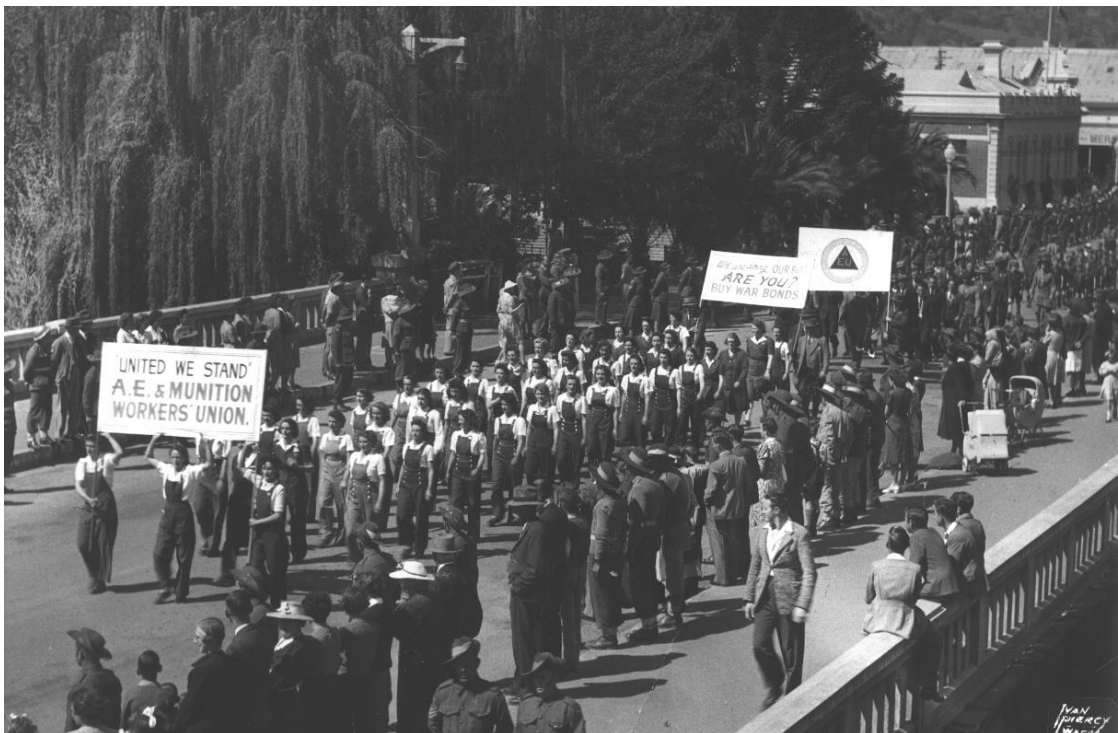
a great barn of a place with high ceilings and concrete floors and numbers of smallish machines set up in groups. The floor was impregnated with cutting oil which had spilt or splashed from the machines.<sup>23</sup>



## Female Munition Workers



*Munitions workers on the munitions float at the eight-hour-day procession in October 1943.*



*Female munitions workers proudly marching behind their union banner over the Lagoon Bridge in Baylis Street and encouraging people to buy war bonds to help finance the war. Jean Campbell, Maisie Cannon and Muriel Fern are holding the union banner at the head of the group. The parade attracted a large number of onlookers including many men and women in uniform.*

Many of the women rode bikes to work and there were long lines of bike racks at the back of the building. According to Lola Belling, they had to 'bundy' on and off at the beginning and end of every shift.

The factory made the metal parts of the fuses for bombs. The workers operated on a production line with each person performing a particular operation as the assembly moved along on a conveyor belt. Lola Belling recalled that she worked in the middle of the line and as parts that had been already partly machined came to her, she had to cut a fine thread on the metal part and pass it on to the next operator. She remembered that there was a high standard of precision required. The women usually agreed that they were doing their bit for the war effort but although they never openly discussed their fears, they were concerned that Wagga Wagga could become a target because of the Munitions Factory – and the Army Camp and Air Bases.

Jean Fraser (a nursing sister) set up a clinic at the munitions factory in three rooms adjacent to the main building not long after the factory opened. She believed that the safety record at the factory was very good as she usually only had to attend minor accidents and illnesses.<sup>24</sup> There was the occasional serious accident. Although it was stressed that their hair had to be covered with a hair net, one girl failed to do so. Her hair became caught in a machine and she suffered severe scalp damage.<sup>25</sup>

Later, 20 houses were built by the War Workers Housing Trust to help relieve the housing shortage. They were built in a group adjacent to the Sturt Highway near Wagga Wagga Base Hospital and Lewisham Hospital (later Calvary) with frontages to Gormly and Hardy avenues and Cullen Road. They were commonly known as 'duration houses' and were described as 'small but comfortable'.<sup>26</sup> All had four rooms and a porch and were a drab colour. A female welfare officer, based in Wagga, was appointed to look after the workers in the Wagga and Albury factories.

The women enjoyed working at the factory and the company of other women. Dances were often held usually at the Masonic Hall including one on New Years' Eve.<sup>27</sup> Dances were also held at the popular dance halls, the Coconut Grove, Wonderland, the Woolstore and the New Moon Garden. Most of the staff joined the Union (Metal and Munitions Union). When five girls refused to join, the remaining workers went on strike. The five girls joined the union after only a 45-minutes stoppage.<sup>28</sup>

## **Conversion to a clothing factory**

By January 1944, fifty munition factories in Australia were being converted to modern clothing factories, including factories in Wagga Wagga, Young, Dubbo, and Katoomba in NSW and Wonthaggi and Stawell in Victoria. General Manager of Dunlop Rubber Australia Ltd, Melbourne, W. A. Bartlett, declared that his company intended to manage the premises of the Wagga factory for the Government's Department of Supply, after it was vacated by the Ministry of Munitions. For the duration of the war, it planned to manufacture the types of clothing most required by the defence authorities including Jungle Greens for the Australian soldiers in New Guinea and urgent civilian needs, including weatherproof garments from chemically treated woollen materials. The Manager, J. C. Gordon, began production with just ten ladies while munitions were still being removed from the factory.



On 1 May 1944, Dunlop Rubber Australia Ltd established and incorporated a new subsidiary called 'Dunlop Weatherproof (Australia) Pty Ltd', for the manufacture of novel and useful lines of production. It manufactured essential rubber clothing of various types. By June 1944 ladies' rain capes (lightweight oilcloth capes and showerproof poplin capes) were being advertised.<sup>29</sup>

By September 1944, the clothing factory was in 'full swing'.<sup>30</sup> It advertised for operators who would make Jungle Greens and essential civilian waterproofs which were needed urgently. It stated that previous experience was not essential as the operators could learn while they earn and receive good wages and conditions.<sup>31</sup> Work involved a five-day working week with breaks for morning and afternoon tea. The workroom was all under the one roof. The raw materials went in at one end for cutting and then gradually moved up the room to finally emerge as a raincoat or other products. Then each garment was examined before it went into the packing and despatch room which adjoined the examining section. Rest and reading rooms and a well-stocked canteen were provided while the factory had its own social club and published its own magazine. There was a double certificated nurse in attendance at the hospital.

A variety of additional plant was installed, many of it never used in Australia previously. The modern machines were laid out in rows. One impressive machine was the Eastman Cutter, which cut up to 150 thicknesses of cloth at the one operation. Another machine cut and sewed buttonholes in three seconds while the invisible stitching machine sewed a hem in which the stitches passed through the threads only of the material and were unseen from the outside of the finished article. Dunlops in Wagga Wagga continued to manufacture military uniforms at least until 1947 and shipped all finished products to Sydney by road and rail.

As men returned from the war looking for jobs, J. C. Gordon decided to employ as many as possible. They included Mick Powell who was employed in 1946 and remained for nine years and met (and married) his wife, Dorothy, there. Mick was impressed with the cleanliness of the factory which was considered to be extremely important. He recalled that there were two sweepers whose jobs were to go around all the time, sweeping up bits of material and cotton.<sup>32</sup>



*Dunlops shortly after the end of World War II when many returned soldiers were hired by manager, J.C. Gordon.*

In 1945, the manager was still J. C. Gordon. R. B. Drewe was in charge of training activities and J. C. Capes was the accountant.<sup>33</sup> By 1945, S. H. Fink, General Manager of Dunlop Weatherproofs Australia Pty Ltd was keen to install more modern up to date machinery in order to double production if they could obtain sufficient labour. However, finding sufficient labour was difficult mostly because housing was a problem. Women and girls from outlying districts were anxious to come to Wagga Wagga to work but needed accommodation.<sup>34</sup>



*Munitions Factory (later Dunlop Weatherproof)*



*Dunlop Weatherproof Australia Pty Limited*

## From War to Peace

In February 1947 the former munitions factory was sold to Dunlop Weatherproofs (Australia) Pty Ltd, Flinders Street, Melbourne, which had been managing the factory on behalf of the Government's Department of Supply, after it was recommended by the Secondary Industries Commission. The sale was effected through the Disposals Commission.<sup>35</sup>

By the 1960s, Dunlops had 27 major plants and 275 other plants in Australia. In Wagga Wagga the Dunlop Waterproof Factory employed 260 people including 208 females. This was Wagga's largest workforce under a single roof.

The end of an era came in 1977 when the Dunlop factory closed its doors for the last time.

---

<sup>1</sup> Editorial, *Daily Advertiser* (DA), 9 August 1937; Letter to editor from E. S. Holmes, DA, 1 September 1937.

<sup>2</sup> *Argus* (Melbourne), 11 October 1940; *Border Morning Mail*, 11 October 1940; DA 10, 11 October 1940, 1 November 1940.

<sup>3</sup> DA, 1, 2 November 1940.

<sup>4</sup> *Argus*, 13 November 1940; DA, 15 November 1940; *Goulburn Evening Post*, 19 November 1940.

<sup>5</sup> DA, 18, 29, 30 December 1940; *Goulburn Evening Post*, 18 December 1940; *Young Chronicle*, 20 December 1940.

<sup>6</sup> DA, 9 May 1941, 2, 18 June 1941; *Tumut and Adelong Times*, 17 June 1941; *Narrandera Argus*, 3 June 1941; *Cootamundra Herald*, 13 June 1941.

<sup>7</sup> DA, 30 June 1941; 2, 3 July 1941.

<sup>8</sup> DA, 3, 4 July 1941, 22 August 1941.

<sup>9</sup> National Archives of Australia (NAA), SP857/8, PM/219.

<sup>10</sup> NAA, SP857/8, PM/219.

<sup>11</sup> DA, 13 November 1941, 19 December 1941.

<sup>12</sup> DA, 30 January 1942.

<sup>13</sup> NAA, SP857/10, PR/490: Wagga Wagga Accommodation for Department of Munitions, Hire of Brown Bros Garage, Box 1131; Advertisement for clearing sale, DA, 19, 26 July 1941, 30 January 1942.

<sup>14</sup> DA, 9, 29 May 1942.

<sup>15</sup> NAA: SP857/8, A. Percival, Surveyor-General to Works Director, Sydney, Compulsory Acquisition of Land for Defence Purposes at Wagga Wagga, New South Wales.

<sup>16</sup> NAA: SP857/8, PM219: Wagga Wagga, Site for Munitions Fuse Factory, Box 973.

<sup>17</sup> Wrigley, 'World War II fuse factory', DA, 8 June 1991.

<sup>18</sup> DA, 11 November 1953.

<sup>19</sup> DA, 28, 29 May 1943, 30 June 1943.

<sup>20</sup> 'Victory 1945-1995', DA, 15 August 1994.

<sup>21</sup> 'Dunlop Weatherproof Pty Ltd's Wagga Factory'. DA, 7 March 1946.

<sup>22</sup> Troy Whitford, 'Wagga Women who fought from Home', *Riverina Leader* (RL), 9 August 1995, p.6; H. N. Wrigley, 'World War II fuse factory, part of old Dunlop building history', DA, 8 June 1991.

<sup>23</sup> H. N. Wrigley, 'World War II fuse factory', DA, 8 June 1991.

<sup>24</sup> Wrigley, 'World War II fuse factory', DA, 8 June 1991.

<sup>25</sup> Troy Whitford, 'Women who fought from Home', RL, 9 August 1995, p.6.

<sup>26</sup> DA, 11 October 1952.

<sup>27</sup> DA, 11, 24 August 1943, 22 September 1943, 21 October 1943, 24 November 1943, 4, 28 December 1943.

<sup>28</sup> *Tribune* (Sydney), 16 September 1943.

<sup>29</sup> DA, 13 September 1944.

<sup>30</sup> DA, 13 September 1944.

<sup>31</sup> Advertisement, DA, 11 September 1944.

<sup>32</sup> RL, 19 February 1992.

<sup>33</sup> DA, 24 January 1945; 4 December 1945, 21 November 1946.

<sup>34</sup> DA, 29 August 1946.

<sup>35</sup> DA, 17, 18, 20 February 1947; *Argus* (Melbourne) 18 February 1947.