

## *Carroll County Times "Carroll's Yesteryears" Articles*

"Taneytown Red Cross in WWI"

Carroll County Times Article for 24 October 1993

By Jay A Graybeal

Several recent articles have explored some of the military history of Carroll County during World War 1. While the servicemen and women prepared for military service, local residents formed support organizations. The Carroll County Chapter, American Red Cross was formed on June 17, 1917 at a meeting in the Westminster Opera House chaired by Mrs. Samuel K. Herr. The members elected Dr. Lewis K. Woodward, Chairman; Robert S. Shriver, Vice-Chairman; Mrs. Eleanor Robbins, Secretary and W. Carroll Shunk Treasurer.

Local branches were organized at a public meeting held in the Westminster Opera House on July 14. The surviving record book of the Taneytown Branch documents the workings of a branch during wartime. The first step was the election of officers: Rev. L. B. Hafer, Chairman; Miss Anna Galt, Vice-Chairman; Eliza T. Birnie, Secretary and Mrs. Walter A. Bower, Treasurer. Standing committees were formed to assist in the War Relief Fund Drive, for recruiting members and for making items to send to the soldiers. The branch also adopted By-Laws based on a printed model supplied by the national headquarters of the Red Cross.

The Work Committee was tasked with producing a wide variety textile items needed for the care and comfort of soldiers. The committee was organized into four sections: Purchasing (4 members), Sewing (7 members), Knitting (17 members) and Surgical Dressings (15 members). The Committee reported on its accomplishments at the first Annual Meeting held on October 11, 1917:

Materials Purchased	Finished Products
554 yards of gauze	500 compresses, 9" x 9"
15 bolts of tape	700 gauze wipes, 4" x 4"
475 compresses, 4" x 4"	

88 gauze rolls

45 yards of outing	34 muslin bandages
18 balls of knitting cotton and knitting needles	13 wash cloths and knitting sponges

20 bunches of wool	1 double blanket for emergency cot
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The branch also sent 16 large bundles of clothes for Belgian Relief Work. Sent to the Navy League were 8 sweaters, 13 scarfs, 6 helmets and wristlets, 20 glasses of jellies, 2 comfort kits, 11 pairs of pajamas and 8 pairs of socks. A year later the committee reported the output of the several subcommittees:

Materials Purchased	Finished Products
5,711 1/2 yards of gauze	28,461 gauze dressings

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624 mouth wipes

33 yards of muslin      42 triangular muslin bandages

103 pounds of sweater yarn      101 sweaters

5 scarfs

95 pairs of socks

13 helmets

40 pairs of wristlets

39 pounds of hose yarn      7 pairs of new stockings

152 yards of outing      20 pairs of pajamas

7 pairs of bed socks

17 1/2 yards of sheeting      6 sheets

14 napkins

30 hand towels

5 bunches of wool      1 blanket

Additional items were made by the Junior American Red Cross members. These young women produced 12 comfort kits, 3 knitted blankets, 30 property bags, 18 towels and 3 comfort pillows. The Taneytown Chapter also gathered 500 pounds of old clothes and linen showers for base hospitals. The items produced by the Taneytown area women found their way to soldiers at the front and to those confined to stateside and overseas hospitals. The knitted woolen sweaters, helmets, scarfs and wristlets were greatly appreciated by frontline soldiers who endured the hardships of trench warfare. Examples of most of the textile items made for the soldiers will be displayed in the Historical Society's upcoming exhibit on World War 1. The exhibit will be held in the Shriver-Weybright Auditorium, 210 E. Main St., Westminster, and will open to the public at 4:00 p. m. on Veterans Day, November 11.

The Taneytown Chapter continued its work after the Armistice. The women made additional knitted items for the soldiers, collected old clothes and supplied children's shirts and socks. The old clothing and children's items were probably distributed to poor families in France and Belgium.

Photo Caption: Junior Red Cross members knitting items for the soldiers in Red Cross Headquarters, Westminster, Md. These young women made the same kinds of items mentioned in the records of the Taneytown Branch. Historical Society of Carroll County, gift of Miss Elizabeth Diffendal, 1987.