

Preparing For War in Calloway County

As families grew accustomed to the constant threat of attack during WW2, local leaders of the Civilian Defense Corps organized demonstrations locally. In 1942, many men and boys spent time and effort to become qualified members of the local Corps.

Kentucky scheduled a statewide blackout and air raid practice for each county to practice in advance for warnings that could be issued, as well as those that could come without warning. Wardens, fire-watchers, and fire-fighters were trained and put on notice.

In 1942, the large field at Murray High School was marked off into 16 sectors representing the outlay of Murray and the college campus. Bryan Tolley, chief air raid warden, provided demonstrations including proper methods of blackening out homes, combating incendiary and detonation of all types of bombs, gas bombs, first aid methods, and many other aspects important to defense.

After the demonstration, Tolley and his assistants canvassed the city to gain census information of all residents and to make certain people were prepared. Some of the things families were asked to provide included: Where you are to be found when you are away from your home; who in your home is ill or handicapped; how many small children are in the home; what room do you intend to use as a refuge room; is there an attic or garrison that should be protected from bombs; and what shelters are close by should you be caught outdoors in a raid sometime.

These difficult conversations were intended to help individuals prepare for a personal affront. Tolley said, "Should an air raid come to this community, you can do your part while protecting yourself."

To keep lines available for the military personnel, residents were asked to curtail personal use of the telephone. This was essential for both local and especially long-distance telephone calls unless the calls were considered urgent. The telephone company said that this unusual request came as they could not build new facilities because all necessary materials were going into war weapons.

Locals purchased bonds in the community to purchase ammunition, guns, planes, and tanks. In addition, funds were raised for the War Fund which was designated for 17 different causes to make life more bearable for those in uniform, to help civilians who were in war oppressed areas, and to those who felt the cruelty of Mussolini and Tojo.

In addition to telephone rationing, meat, sugar, and other commodities were restricted.

###

Photos:

- This is the window of Edmona Flora McCuiston in Murray, Kentucky. Provided by Rachel Flora Koeniger.
- *Ledger & Times*, "Survey Started in County for Sugar Rationing," February 26, 1942, cover.

Sources:

Ledger & Times, "Plan Civilian Defense Demonstration in City," September 3, 1942, cover page.

Ledger & Times, "Survey Started in County for Sugar Rationing," February 26, 1942, front page.

Ledger & Times, "Making Fewer Phone Calls is Essential," September 24, 1942, page 3.

Ledger & Times, "War Fund Drive Begins November 11," November 4, 1943, cover page.