

Hard Tack and Sea Soup: Kerby Jennings in His Own Words

The following three paragraphs are taken from *The Story of Calloway County, 1822-1976*, by Dorothy and Kerby Jennings.

The compiler of this little history of Calloway County had a unique role in the lives of servicemen of World War II, inasmuch as he served as a clearing house of communications in the columns of the weekly newspaper, the Murray Democrat. Each week the editor would write a lengthy "Dear Buddie" letter in the columns, comforting them with their problems, reflecting attitudes of the folks back home, injecting humor when a laugh was needed. In turn, service men wrote letters by the hundred which were all incorporated in a column entitled "Hard Tack and Sea Soup." At the end of most of the service men's letters, the editor would give off-the-cuff replies while setting up letters on the Linotype machine.

As a result of the camaraderie, the writer came to personally know virtually every armed service man by name, was familiar with battle locations, and theatres of action. Thus, the relationship became more tightly knit than casual friendship, consequently as casualties of war mounted, emotional factors intensified—the price that others fought and died for were greater appreciated.

Our contribution was insignificant in comparison to theirs. In the many years following, nothing has been more gratifying to the joy of life, than that which occurred between us during those historic World War II years when the very existence of the American nation was threatened to extinction. Every serviceman who requested the newspaper, or a loved one who asked it to be forwarded, received the *Murray Democrat* throughout the war free of charge. All of this, too, is history and in our opinion recorded, so others in the future might find a pattern of understanding so rewarding to men who serve their country in times of war.