

Jerry McKeiv's
SANDYLAND CHRONICLE

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PREPARATIONS FOR WAR

With war raging in Europe in 1940, it soon became clear that the United States would probably become involved. Newspapers were filled with news reports of countries in Europe being taken over by Adolph Hitler. The United States government stepped up the training of our military. By July, 1941, the people of Nevada County began to see evidence of these preparations being made by our government for whatever might happen. The following items appeared in *The Nevada News*, one of the local newspapers published in Nevada County at that time.

July 3, 1941

The Aircraft Warning Service was organized for Nevada County. Volunteers in each community were to report any enemy aircraft that tried to enter the county. C. C. Harvey was the volunteer for Bluff City.

July 17, 1941

All housewives were requested to give to the government all worn-out and damaged aluminum utensils unfit for use. There was a house to house canvas in Prescott by the Boy Scouts to collect all salvage aluminum. Trucks and cars were used in the rural areas.

August, 1941—WAR GAMES

About 550,000 soldiers took part in mock battles in Arkansas and Louisiana. Units of the 27th Division were in Nevada County with units camped out in the woods near Rosston, Mt. Moriah, and Sutton awaiting the call to advance into "battle". It was quite a job to move large numbers of men in a short period of time. All the administrative work for the entire division was handled by 300 clerks stationed at the Oak Grove School three miles east of Rosston. When the command was given, it would be necessary to put the complete military community on wheels. A medical detachment, companies of special troops and military police, chaplains, cooks, and service batteries must be in position to move on short notice. The soldiers were divided into two groups (the Reds and the Blues) representing two countries at war. The purpose of these maneuvers was to train the soldiers on things like building pontoon bridges across rivers and moving on short notice. Prescott had the appearance of an armed city. Prescott and Reader were the railroad points for supplies for the soldiers. Although the maneuvers disrupted normal life in south Arkansas, many merchants enjoyed increased sales to the soldiers. In most cases, the soldiers were well received by the local residents and many towns provided entertainment and other diversions while they were in the area.

Soldiers who became ill in the field were cleared through the Medical Detachment at Oak Grove. The commanding officer said the unit was prepared for any emergency. Ambulances were on hand to take the serious cases to the nearest evacuation hospital. It was reported that the health of the men was good with only 750 men being hospitalized during the maneuvers.

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Most of the cases involved appendicitis, poison ivy, and a few cases of malaria which was called "the plague of Arkansas".

A notice was published in the paper asking any landowners who suffered any type damage to their property during these maneuvers to report the damage to the Army for reimbursement.

Soldiers were camped at Prescott, Gurdon, Hope, and in many of the smaller communities in Nevada and surrounding counties. You can read more about this in the September, 2009 issue.

December 7, 1941

On this date the U. S. Navy ships were attacked by the Japanese at Pearl Harbor resulting in much damage and heavy loss of life. This was followed by a declaration of war. All the training done in the last several months was now put to use in a real war. Normal life in the United States was about to change as the country geared up for a war expected to last for a very long time.

WAR TIME IN NEVADA COUNTY

People all over the country, including those in Nevada County, were on edge following the attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941. The country was at war and even little towns like Prescott, Arkansas took measures to protect its citizens from any type of attack from the enemy.

Because of the war, there were soon shortages of certain things which made it necessary to ration those items. This list of rationed items included sugar, gasoline, coffee, tires, typewriters, bicycles, footwear, silk, nylon, fuel oil, stoves, meat, lard, shortening, cheese, butter, margarine, dried fruit, canned milk, jams, and jellies. Nobody knew how long the war would last or if the homeland might be attacked by the enemy.

The files of *The Nevada News* give us some idea of what it was like for the people of Nevada County in the first months of World War II.

Jan. 8, 1942

A Civilian Defense Office was opened in Prescott. It was staffed by volunteers who recruited men and women for active service. Men were required to register for military service. These registration events were held several times during 1942, starting with the younger men and gradually including middle-aged and older men.

A Tire Rationing Board was established in Nevada County. The total allotment of tires for Nevada County for the month of January was ten tires and eight tubes for cars plus two tires and twenty tubes for heavy trucks. The allotment was spread out throughout the whole month. Tire inspectors were appointed to take applications for the purchase of tires.

Jan. 22, 1942

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A riot-proof fence was installed around the city power plant and water plant to prevent sabotage or contamination of the city's water supply.

Feb. 5, 1942

A city ordinance was passed which gave the mayor authority to carry out blackout and air raid precautions in the city and to restrict the movement of people on the streets. Another ordinance was passed which made it against the law to sell or exchange rationing coupons for money. The fine for doing so was \$500.

AIR RAID PRECAUTIONS WERE ANNOUNCED FOR THE CITY OF PRESCOTT

Be Prepared

Keep at least 10 feet of garden hose with a spray nozzle, a ladder long enough to reach your roof, a hoe, rake, or shovel, 30 feet of rope, and a bucket of dry sand. Keep attics free of paper or trash.

The Alarm

Notice of approach of enemy planes will be the sounding of the fire alarm at city hall by using a rising and falling pitch or a series of short blasts lasting about two minutes. The all-clear signal would be a single long blast. The warning may be heard many minutes before the arrival of enemy planes.

What To Do

Seek shelter. Keep cool. Stay indoors until the all clear is sounded. There is often as much danger from machine guns on planes as there is from the bombs. Keep off the streets. Children in school are safer than if they were on the way home. If in a car, park next to the curb, extinguish lights, and seek shelter. The best place during a raid is under a table. Keep away from windows. At night following the alarm, turn off or shade all lights. DO NOT turn off your main light switch. Turn off all gas jets. Catch water in buckets or bathtub with which to fight fire.

How to Fight Incendiary Bombs

Do not approach burning bombs for at least 41 seconds because the heat is terrific. Spray bomb with water or soda acid fire extinguisher. Do not use a solid stream; it will cause the bomb to explode. As soon as practical, remove the bomb from building in a bucket containing at least two inches of sand. Use hoe, rake, or shovel. Throw dry sand on bomb to extinguish. Spraying water on bombs will cause it to burn up rapidly, but will not extinguish it.

The Fire Department

The fire department cannot attend all fires caused by bombs and it is the duty of each to assist his neighbor in fighting fires. You cannot collect insurance for fires caused by enemy bombs. Do not get in the way of fire fighters.

Water Supply

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Bombs may cut off the water supply, therefore when the alarm is sounded, collect water in tubs or buckets Use water sparingly but effectively.

Air Raid Wardens

Wardens for the residential district are John Marshall Pittman, Case Chapple, Duncan McRae, Clark White, L. A. Murrah, Leon Carrington, J. Bryan Moody, J. W. Gist, C. P. Arnold, Fred Anderson, Jesse Crow, and C. W. Neimeyer. In the business district, the police department and fire department are the wardens.

Remember

The air raid wardens have complete POLICE AUTHORITY. Obey their orders. Consult your warden when in doubt about what to do following a raid.

Blackouts

Blackouts are effective ONLY when ALL LIGHTS are out or windows covered so NO LIGHT shows on the outside. Keep off the streets and walks during blackouts. If caught in a blackout while driving a car, park at the curb, immediately extinguish lights, and seek cover.

The Law

Persons violating the orders of an Air Raid Warden will be punished according to law.

Feb. 12, 1942

Three air raid wardens were selected for each ward of the city of Prescott.

Feb. 26, 1942

A unit of the Arkansas State Guard was organized in each county to be known as the 6th Infantry. It would have a non-combat role and its main duty was to replace men of the National Guard who had been called into active service. The age limit for this Arkansas State Guard was men from 18 to 64 years old. C. P. Munn was the captain. First Lieutenant was Charles Dundee and Second Lieutenant was Dale Ledbetter. The Guard had weekly drills and had uniforms consisting of regulation shoes, shirts, and khaki trousers with an overseas cap.

Apr. 23, 1942

A registration of men age 45 to 65 years of age was held resulting in 1544 men from that age group being registered in Nevada County.

June 25, 1942

Rules and regulations for sugar rationing were given.

July 30, 1942

A scrap metal drive was held for the whole county. Any metal, no matter how small, was to be collected. Those who sold metal were paid 35 cents per 100 pounds.

Sep. 3, 1942

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It was announced that owners of farm to market trucks (1/2 ton and 3/4 ton) would have little chance of getting new tires for the duration of the war. It was advised to use retreads if at all possible.

Nov. 5, 1942

Gas rationing plans were announced.

Nov. 25, 1942

Coffee rationing rules were announced. Each person over age 15 was allowed one pound of coffee every five weeks. No coffee could be sold to anyone less than 15 years of age.

August 13, 1943

The Boy Scouts collected 52 pounds of silk stockings and underwear and 114 pounds of old phonograph records for the war effort.

TRIVIA

What was predicted to be the main cash crop grown in Nevada County in 1942? Answer at bottom of page 8.

EXPECT THE UNEXPECTED

I'm retired now, but I worked for over 31 years for a timber company helping to manage the company's forest land. Our unit covered five counties and involved thousands of acres of timberland. During this time, I traveled just about every road in those five counties—everything from the major highways to the little woods roads that were seldom used. Most of the time nothing happened out of the ordinary, but occasionally, we would come upon something unexpected.

One incident I remember happened near Waldo, Arkansas. My co-worker and I happened to drive down a dead end road where people were known to dump their trash. We were driving along looking at the trash to see if we could find something useful when all of a sudden, I looked in the rear view mirror and saw a car following us with flashing blue lights.

We were out in the middle of nowhere and the last thing we expected was to be stopped by a cop in the middle of the woods. We stopped our truck and the officer got out of his car. He was dressed in a nice uniform and had a gun, but his uniform was not the same color most officers wore. We soon learned that we had been stopped by the Livestock and Poultry Police. I didn't even know there

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was such an agency. He wanted to know what we were doing on that road and we told him we worked for a timber company. He then told us that they had been having problems with chicken farmers dumping their dead chickens in that area and he thought we might be doing that. We talked a few minutes and then he got in his car to leave. As he was turning around, he backed off into a ditch and got stuck. We then had to pull him out and he went on his way. We laughed later about the day we got caught by the Livestock and Poultry Police.

That's not the only time we got caught by a law enforcement officer. One day we had followed an old woods road into a tract of land near Chidester. As we were getting ready to start our work, a game warden pulled up behind our truck. It turned out to be Jack Starnes whom I had known for many years. He told us he often drove the county roads looking for recent tire tracks leaving the main road during hunting season and he would follow the tracks to check for any hunting violations.

Another incident happened when we were cruising timber in Calhoun County. That means we walked through the woods on a straight line, stopping at intervals to tally the trees in a certain size plot and that information was used to estimate how much timber was on that tract of land. Our cruise line that day happened to cross a gas line. We walked out into the gas line right-of-way and noticed a truck parked nearby with the motor running. The driver's door was open and a large man was lying in the seat. We wondered why he was at that location since it was quite a distance off the main road. We thought about ignoring him and continuing on with our work, but then wondered if he might have had a heart attack or something and needed help. We decided to holler at him from a distance so as not to startle him. He jumped up when we hollered at him because he wasn't expecting to see anyone. He told us he had a logging crew that was working just up the road and had decided to take a little nap. We were glad it was nothing serious and went on about our work.

I was working one day in southern Nevada County where many African-Americans live. I drove down a little road and saw a plastic grocery bag in the ditch with something dark inside. I didn't think much about it at first, but I guess I had watched too many crime shows on TV. I got to thinking later that the object in the sack was about the size of a little baby and I couldn't get that thought out of my head. I had heard stories about new born babies being discarded in the trash.

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I decided to check it out more closely just to be sure. I drove back to that location and when I got out of the truck, I noticed the smell of something dead. I got a stick, and finally worked up enough courage to open the sack hoping I would not find what I had suspected it might be. It turned out to be a dead armadillo.

One day we had to face a disgruntled landowner armed with a pistol wanting to know what we were doing. The forester I was working with that day had driven down a woods road just past the man's house without asking for permission. I was new at the job at that time, but learned from that experience to always ask permission before crossing someone's property. We apologized to the man and he calmed down somewhat.

On another occasion, we were burning a tract of land to prepare it for replanting when a woman drove up in a nice car and got out with a pistol. She was upset about the smoke and made all kind of threats, but finally calmed down and went on her way.

We sometimes came upon marijuana patches and had been instructed to be very careful because some of those are booby trapped. If we suspected illegal drug operations, we backed off and notified law enforcement and let them handle it.

I remember at least three times we came upon lovers parked in the woods in the daytime and these were not young folks.

One day I was using a GPS device to help map the company's land. To do this I had to locate certain survey corners and stand at that location for several minutes while the device acquired a reading from a satellite. When I reached the corner location that day, I discovered the corner post was inside a dog pen which contained several pit bull dogs. There was no way I was going to enter that dog pen and stand there several minutes just to get a signal from the satellite. Sometimes you have to use common sense. I let my supervisor deal with that problem since the dog pen was encroaching on company land.

On at least three occasions, I have found money while working. I found a five dollar bill one day in the woods near Poison Spring State Park and a dollar bill on the side of a gravel road near Willisville. I found several coins one day at a gate

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near Bluff City. I suppose the coins fell out of someone's pocket when he was looking for a key to the gate.

These are just a few of the unexpected things I encountered while trying to do my job. These type things didn't happen every day, but we soon learned to always expect the unexpected. Besides dealing with snakes, mosquitoes, ticks, and chiggers, we had to deal with all types of the human species as well, some friendly and some not so friendly.

RAINFALL --Jan. (3.1 inches); Feb. (6.6 inches); Mar. (3.0 inches); Apr. (9.0 inches)

WORD OF THE MONTH – BUCOLIC (Bu-colic) – relating to rural life

My room had three windows, each with a lovely, bucolic view.

Answer: Peanuts--Due to shortage of vegetable oils during World War II. 6000 acres of peanuts were planted in Nevada County in 1942.



The object in the last issue is a De Laval “Junior” cream separator. As I said, some parts are missing (the large container that held the milk and the metal tubing which carried the cream and milk to separate containers). I have a faint memory of seeing this in operation at our house when I was very young. Below is a picture of the label on the machine.



Brenda Barham and Billy Joe Meador correctly identified the object.

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A Father's Beatitude – by Don Mathis

Blessed is the father who spends time with his child,
for he shall reap a garden of remembrances.

Blessed is the father who gives consolation to his child's minor
misfortunes,

for he will be called on for great things in life.

Blessed is the father who is proud of his child,
for he shall have a child who is proud of his father.

Blessed is the father who imparts love,
for his child will give love.

Blessed is the father who is gentle with his child,
for he will have a child who can turn away wrath.

Blessed is the father who listens to his child,
for he shall be rewarded with the trust of his child.

Blessed is the father who has patience with his child,
for patience will be bestowed on him.

Blessed is the father who shows mercy to his child,
for he shall experience mercy.

Blessed is the father who does not exasperate his child,
for he shall receive compassion.

Blessed is the father who shall accept the unintentional insults of a
developing child,
for he shall know the glory of fatherhood.

Father's Day is Sunday, June 18