

COUNTY LOCAL DIRECTORS AND CHIEF AIR RAID WARDENS
CARVEL HALL

December 14, 1941
Annapolis

WITHIN one short week we have seen the whole pattern of America life changed immeasurably. There has come to pass, as the result of the treacherous assault by Japanese forces on our Island possessions last Sunday a war threatened for a considerable period, but which the civilian populations of our Country never really expected to see.

In consequence, there is forced upon the people of our State and of our Country, unwilling as many minds have been to accept it, the realization that America is in a struggle the outcome of which may determine not only our survival as a nation, but the survival of Democracy as a system of Government and as an ideal of humankind throughout all the world.

Even when this meeting was planned by our State Defense officials several weeks ago, there may have been a question in some of your minds as to whether the program to be presented here would ever have any practical application in our lives. There is no question now. We know, just as definitely as it is possible to realize any fact, that we are faced with the immediate organization and completion of Civilian Defense plans of the most momentous significance. We know, too, that our people may be called upon to use these plans, not in some very distant months or years, but tonight, or tomorrow night, or some night in the very immediate future.

Yesterday we read that unidentified planes had roared low over San Francisco. Tomorrow the people of America may read the same news about Baltimore or Annapolis, or Cumberland or Salisbury, or some other vital section of our State or this immediate vicinity.

Threatened as we are, therefore, with sudden attack, and realizing as we do the devastating results in loss of life, bodily injury, destruction of property fires, dangers to health, that might well accompany such attacks, it is incumbent upon us to realize to the utmost our responsibilities as heads of Civilian Defense activities in our own communities, and to leave no stone unturned to fit ourselves, and those who are to serve under us, to carry on successfully and intelligently the manifold duties that devolve upon us.

It was a wise decision of the Maryland Council of Defense to bring you all in here today, rather than to try to make visits to each of the twenty-three counties. At such a meeting as this it is possible to bring to you the responsible officials of the most important Civilian Defense functions, to give you a complete picture of what will be required of you, and tell you of the aids and facilities that will be supplied to assist in achieving the perfect defense organization that must be yours.