

WASHINGTON COUNTY DEFENSE REVIEW

April 26, 1942

Hagerstown

IT has been our privilege previously to review other Defense assemblies in various counties of the State. Each time there has been that thrill, that sense of elation, that feeling that America can not now, and never will, be beaten. What you have done so dramatically today carries on the American tradition of immediate, full-hearted response to the call of our country. In this response is the guarantee of our survival as a Democracy. Your Country's needs are the only measure of your will to do, and your ability to achieve.

Those who have gone before this generation, in their efforts to strengthen and develop America and its free institutions, many times faced problems that staggered them and brought them face to face with despair. But they drew their belts a little tighter, they braced themselves for the fray, and they won through.

We, who four months ago were so rudely awakened by Pearl Harbor, stared with shocked eyes into a future which looked black, indeed. Though unprepared, woefully, totally unprepared, we were called upon to meet the mightiest military organization the world has ever known. In true American fashion, however, our people recovered quickly; the reaction set in, and the recovery has been inspiring, unbelievable. It is the old story—give Americans a job to do, and nobody will do it better!

Today's demonstration has been no mere parade of words, no empty show. It was the manifestation of something fine, something living and strong, that wills to perpetuate itself. It was concrete evidence of loyalty to community, to State, to Nation. It was notice to those about us and to all the world that, come what may, threaten what may, Marylanders and Americans everywhere will defend to the last ditch, and to the last bullet, the freedoms they value so highly.

And why shouldn't this be so? We are determined to keep the kind of life we have enjoyed because there is nothing in the world so fine, there are no privileges so satisfying to the individual citizen. To say nothing of our extraordinary cultural advantages, our physical comforts alone make us the envy of the world. Nothing in the way of life our enemies hold to us in the "New Order" could have any attraction for any American. On the contrary, everything about the "New Order" is repulsive to free men.

It is repugnant to the American way of life even to consider the regimentation, the slaveries embodied in life as laid down by the Axis rulers. In contrast to this, our American way of life stands out in the tottering world around us as boldly as the Statue of Liberty stands out in New York Harbor to the out-cast and exile European approaching our shores.