

McDONOGH SCHOOL PARENT-TEACHER ASSOCIATION

May 4, 1942

McDONOGH

THE war struck home today to many thousands of our people throughout the Country. Admittedly, it is the greatest war in which America ever has engaged. Beyond any doubt, it constitutes the gravest menace to American Democracy and to our way of life this or any other generation has seen. Yet it requires something like sugar rationing, or the limitation on sales of tires or gasoline, to bring home to us, as a people, the enormity of the dangers that beset us on many sides.

Hitler gave the free peoples of the world much comfort in his speech of last week, by his admission of Germany's difficulties and problems. Don't let us be misled, however, into wishful thinking about a quick Axis collapse in Europe. Hitler's hysteria was the type of thing we want most to hear. It will pay us well, though, to give attention first to our own efforts and requirements, so that we may be prepared fully to capitalize on anything that may develop. To relax our efforts in the slightest, because the enemy is confessing that he has made mistakes, would be dangerous to the extreme. The foes aligned against us are too strong, too resourceful, too ruthless, to be underestimated.

Another address that attracted much less notice than Hitler's ravings, or the message to the Nation delivered by our Commander-in-Chief, President Roosevelt, was made several days ago by Eddie Rickenbacker, famous American ace of the First World War, and a recognized authority on aviation. He sounded a note of warning that may well be heeded. We not only *can lose* this war, he declared, but we *are losing* it, and *have been losing* it every day since Pearl Harbor. Before we talk about *winning* the war, he contended, we must first *stop losing* it. Every additional city and port and landing field yielded to the Japanese, he pointed out, is another city or port or field that must later be recaptured at the cost of great military effort, and the sacrifice of many lives.

Human nature is difficult to understand. If, on our way home tonight, we were to see a dog run down and badly injured, it would upset us greatly. Some of us probably would be unable to sleep at all. Or it would disturb our dreams. Yet, not enough Americans, I venture to say, lost sleep over the sufferings and privations of our heroes on Bataan Peninsula. There are women and children, as well as fighting men, on Corregidor, but I wonder how often even the parents of America give a thought to the dangers these people face.

Unfortunately for all of us, our attitude towards the war effort, as individuals, hinges too closely upon the matter of relative distances. First, the fighting is 6,000 or more miles distant. It cannot actually touch us, we figure. Secondly, unless we have a son or brother on one of the fighting fronts, there isn't that close connection and interest that would absorb every last atom of