

SOUTHERN OREGON MINER

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WHAT CAN I DO FOR MY COUNTRY?

As America's youth graduates from the schools and colleges of the nation this spring it is gratifying to realize that these young people are thinking seriously about their world, the world into which they will now take their places as adults. The following essay was written by Bud Hagen, a graduating senior of the Saginaw, Michigan high school. Hagen is a nephew of Mr. and Mrs. Owen Gragg of Ashland. As long as America's youth continues to consider national ideals in as strong a fashion as indicated by this essay we have no fears for America's future. This essay placed first in the city of Saginaw in an annual contest conducted by the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

An American soldier stops in his headlong rush toward a Nazi pill-box, shudders, and falls — a German gunner grins. A young sailor, fresh out of an Albuquerque high school, shuffles into an Iwo dressing station, staring dully, incredulously, at the shattered stub of his arm. A veteran marine screams above the shellburst in a Leyte night and reaches for his face, but he no longer has a face!

"Alarmist," you say, "pessimist, sensationalist." Well, maybe. "We should forget all that," you mutter. . . "The war's over; push those memories aside."

Yes, sure, forget the sordid details of war; the human mind quickly rejects what it doesn't want to remember. You can forget, but some cannot. Can the hollow-eyed battle fatigued veteran forget? Can a tight-lipped mother forget the unutterable anguish of that moment when she trembling, opened the telegram, "The War Department regrets to inform . . . your . . . son killed in action."

Yes, go ahead: forget — forget the un-pretty details of how it was done, — but don't forget what these men — loudly welcomed heroes, and men for whom there will be no homecoming — ever — did.

It sounds nice to say that they carried the hope of humanity on their shoulders, that they were fighting in a just and holy cause, that they were out to save the world from slavery — you've read it all on the bond drive posters and in the magazine ads. Sounds great, but how about it? Those fellows didn't leave school and jobs to go forth with the light of a mighty and inspiring ideal shining in their eyes. They got out and did it because there was a foul, nasty, reeking, mess to clean up and they were called upon to clean it up. They were there because they had to be, and the K-rations and the blackouts and the fox-holes and the shellbursts and the stench of death were part of the job.

These men fought because they were called upon to fight, and yet within them was a certain feeling that what they were doing was right. When they liberated a long-oppressed village or city there was a sensation of real joy in seeing the people freed. For freedom is the fundamental principle of the American way of life and government.

Well, let's see. Freedom of speech. There are no strutting dictators or brutal secret police to silence an American. We may say what we wish when we wish. We may denounce and be denounced. We may praise, we may criticize. We may be wrong in what we say, but it is our undeniable right to say it.

Through our brief history we have sent reverberations of our free speech throughout the world. We spoke for just taxation, for freedom of the seas, for freedom of religion, for "liberty or death." To the men who made these statements freedom and liberty were great gifts; gifts to be won whatever the cost, and guarded jealously. To us, perhaps freedom is a right. The country owes us liberty, we say; but that is not true.

Freedom of speech and of the press and of religion and all the rest are priceless possessions — they are not abstract ideals or out-dated ideas written on a scrap of paper in the Library of Congress; they are vital, live, throbbing things — things to be respected to be kept alive to be practiced!

We must take these freedoms now as in the bleak days of World War II and use them, for only through use will they be kept free from the rust of degradation, abuse, and misuse. We must hold up the principles of that scrap of paper in Washington before the world, and loudly proclaim that we in a free America intend to make this great democracy function and work through them, and that we intend to expand these ideals from our shores to all the people of the world who want to receive them and live in a free society.

Our American ancestors fought for their freedoms — fought in the streets of Boston, off the shores of Tripoli, in the dust of San Juan Hill; fought on the bitter fields of Gettysburg, in the much of the Argonne, yes, and through the horrible, screaming nights of El Alamein, Sicily, Normandy, Aachen, Leyte, Okinawa, and Iwo. The men of these wars who fought and returned or fought and died where they fought left us a wonderful heritage.

What can I do for my country? No, what MUST I do for my country? I must remember the kid on Iwo, the marine on Leyte, the white-lipped mother, and all the rest who bled, died and suffered for my country.

I must take up a great document called the Bill of Rights and read it and then reread it, and then I must take the ideas and ideals of that document out and I must practice them. I must preserve them and defend them. I must keep them alive and by keeping them alive, keep this mighty country alive, healthy and strong.



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CHURCH OF CHRIST

Earl Downing, Pastor

Bible School, 9:45 A. M. Classes for all ages; nursery for the babies and tiny tots.

Morning Service, 11:00 A. M. Sermon, "We Here Highly Resolve".

The Christian Endeavor meetings and the evening service will be dismissed to unite in the High School Baccalaureate Service at 8:00 P. M. in the Methodist Church.

Midweek Service, Wednesday, 8:00 P. M.

Gospel Meditations, KMED, 4:00 P. M. Tuesday and Thursday.

FIRST CHURCH OF CHRIST, SCIENTIST

Sunday, May 26, 1946

Sunday Morning Service at 11 o'clock. Subject: SOUL AND BODY

Sunday School at 9:30 A. M. Wednesday evening meeting, which includes testimonies of Christian Science healing, is held at 8 o'clock.

Reading Room open daily from 2 to 5 P. M. except Sundays and holidays.

The public is cordially invited to attend these services, and to use the Reading Room.

Neighborhood Church Congregational

Corner of Blvd. and Morton

Ewart P. Borden, Minister

9:45 Sunday School. Classes for all ages.

Morning service 11:00 A. M. Dr. Borden will speak on "Gateway To Happiness."

Pilgrim Fellowship meets at 6:30 All young people are invited to attend.

Firtex has been delivered at the church and the work of re-finishing the Sunday school rooms will begin soon.

FIRST METHODIST CHURCH

North Main and Laurel St.

The Sunday School meets at 9:45 each Sunday morning. There is to be a Daily Vacation Bible School for Beginners, Primaries and Juniors, June 3 to 10. The morning sermon is at 11 o'clock. This is a Memorial Service, and the patriotic organizations of Ashland are to be the guests of honor. The pastor will speak on the subject "We Remember". The choir under direction of Mrs. Bill Weber with Mrs. Frank Davis at the organ, will offer special music. The Junior Church meets for worship during the morning sermon with Mrs. Lucille Mackay and Mrs. Ida Burns as sponsors. The Senior and Intermediate Methodist Youth Fellowship groups will have a joint worship service at 6:45, with Miss Neva West bringing a message on "The Am-

erican Negro". At 8 P. M. the baccalaureate service for the High School graduates will be given in this church by the Rev. Wilkinson, pastor of the Baptist Church. The midweek Bible study and prayer service is each Thursday evening at 7:30. Dr. G. W. Bruce, Minister.

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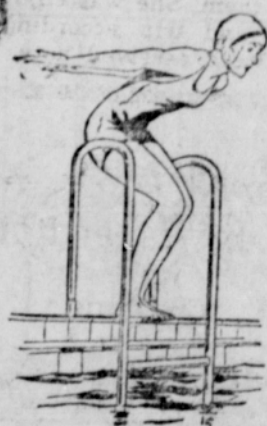
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