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Transcript of a sound recording in MS 608, WLBZ Radio Station Records, Bangor, Maine, 1931-1973

Title: Memorial Day Dedication of the Bangor Book of Honor, part 2

Date: May 30, 1947

Recording number: Tape 17

Length of recording: 1:05:40

This recording is a continuation of audio from part 1, found on Tape 16.

[transcript begins]

BILL MINCHER: The material on this tape is a continuation of the dedication of Bangor's Memorial Album. The previous part of the program will be found on another reel.

SENATOR BREWSTER, CONTINUED: And the only way in which those of us who are privileged to remain can show our gratitude is by making sure that this sacrifice shall not be asked again of another generation of our sons. Twice now within our lifetime we have found ourselves involved in worldwide war in which we held aloft the banner for those ideals that have animated America throughout the ten generations that have carried America to a position of preeminence among the nations of the world. And now at this supreme point of leadership, it is essential that we here who remain, shall not forget, but shall see to it that we so guide our course in all the turbulent chaos of the present and the future, that the world shall look to us for leadership and find in us the support of those traditions of America, those ideals of democracy for which these boys gave their all. And it is in the sobering conscious of this Memorial Day, as all around this country millions of Americans have marched to the cemeteries, to the assembly halls, to solemnly record their gratitude for these boys, and to renew their vows that they shall not have died in vain. And it is here we find the confidence and the courage to carry on in the face of all the challenges that we now see rearing their ugly heads throughout the world. And that a united America, with the united nations of the world shall be the guarantee that we are entering upon a century of peace, the peace that passeth understanding, and the peace that passeth not away. And it is in this profound conviction that we go out into the highways and byways remembering each day as a Memorial Day in order that we shall see to it that our thought is so directed that we shall give that portion of our time to the understanding of world problems that was so sadly lacking when we found ourselves twice plunged within our generation into worldwide wars because of the ignorance and lack of understanding in our own people. No man, no group of men in Washington can save this nation. But only in the growing understanding of more and more millions of Americans as to the significance of the events that are transpiring throughout this world today the common people of all lands have much in common and particularly in the price they pay for war. And we are more and more coming to realize that it is only as we apply the teachings of the gospel, the old and the new, of Christianity in its application to the problems of this day, that we shall finally real that happy day for which these boys gave their all.

[Applause]

HUNTER: Rabbi Moses Zucker of Bangor now prepares to read from the Book of Honor two excerpts, one by the late President Roosevelt, the other by the former Prime Minister, Winston Churchill.

ZUCKER: Often it occurs that in times of peace and stability we forget the promise made in crisis and distress. It is therefore necessary to perpetuate not only the names of our heroes but also the spiritual values for which they have given their young and precious lives. In the most critical hour of our nation's history the immortal President Franklin Delano Roosevelt has called us said people of builders, not of destroyers. He wanted us to use all our strength and skill for what he called the ultimate good of all nations. This noble aim set to us by President Roosevelt gives blended purpose to all our accomplishments. We must fulfill this purpose and reach the same, for our own sake and out of gratitude to our heroes. This Book of Memory joins the story of the lives of our heroes and the ideals of their tremendous achieve and will always remind us of our duty to be just as upright and just in the work of peace as we were unflinching and courageous in the effort of war. May we citizens of the city of Bangor never forget these words. They were first spoken by Franklin Delano Roosevelt two days after Pearl Harbor. I repeat them now to you. "The true goal we seek as far above and beyond the ugly fields of battle. When we resort to force, as now we must, we are determined that is for shall be directed toward cultivate good as well as against immediate evil. We Americans are not destroyers. We are builders. We are now in the midst of a war, not for conquest, not for vengeance, but for a world in which this Nation, and all that this Nation represents, will be safe for our children. So we are going to win the war and we are going to win the peace that follows. And in the difficult hours of this day and through dog days that may be yet to come, we will know that a vast majority of the members of the human race are on our side, for in representing our cause, we represent the earth as well. Our hope and their hope, for liberty under God. "

Nothing brings men closer to each other than common sufferings and common struggle. The call of Winston Churchill to win the war should be remembered, too, for it may aid us in the great test set by President Roosevelt, the test for winning the peace. On the 13th of May 1940, Churchill said, "I have nothing to offer but blood and toil, tears and sweat. We have before us many and months of struggle and suffering. You ask, what is our policy? I will say it is to wage war, by sea, land and air, with all our might and all the strength that God may give us. You ask, what is our aim? I can answer it in one word: victory. Victory at all costs. Victory in spite of all terror. Victory no matter how long and hard the road may be, for without victory, there is no survival. Let that be realized... I feel sure that our cause will not be suffered to fail among men. At this time I feel entitled to claim the aid of all, and I say, come, let us go forward together with united strength.

[Applause]

HUNTER: Now the governor of the state of Maine, Governor Horace Hildreth.

HILDRETH: We are here tonight to dedicate a Book of Honor which is a memorial to the 110 Bangor men who died in the service in World War II. I feel that I am taking part in a religious service. I came here to join you in dedicating a sacred book. As we honor Bangor's dead tonight, at the same time we memorialize the service of all who participated. We stand in awed silence before the loved ones of those who will not return. More than 100 Bangor men gave their lives in performing the duty allotted them. Some returned bearing disabilities which they must endure until the end of their days. Others, more fortunate, return unscathed. All, regardless of whether they served on land, on sea, or in the air, performed their essential duties. Wherever service was called for, it was well performed. Men can do no more than that. But I ask you, the relatives of those honored dead, and their comrades, if this is sufficient. The sound of bursting shells and bombs are no longer heard, but the peace treaties are far from being signed. Before World War I, a comparatively few persons interpreted history and the progress of world events correctly and saw World War I coming. Their efforts to get this country to prepare to meet what to them seemed inevitable were fruitless. More people of America saw the dangers of World War II approaching, but again, not in sufficient numbers to have our country take such action as might prevent it, or if this was impossible, to make us prepared to meet the crisis promptly, thereby saving, in considerable part at least, the tremendous costs in lives and money. Now the sound of gunfire has stopped, but there are still great dangers to be avoided, great problems to be settled, before there is real peace in the world. We all want a lasting peace but we have shown, time after time, that we cherish more daily liberty and those ideals for which America stands. We must be realists. I believe these honored dead would have us do more than keep alive their memory. I believe they would have us recognize the fact that whether we like it or not, we are of necessity brothers and sisters of all peoples and nations of the world. I believe they would have us recognize that unfortunately many nations and many people, regardless of whether or not they prefer to be in the golden rule, do not live by it. We must face the fact that goodwill and peaceful policies are not enough to protect a nation against assault and invasion. The actions of too many people and nations are guided by the principle that might makes right. A realistic view of modern history should warn us that what happened to bring on World War I and World War II might happen again unless we take the action necessary to prevent it. In the face of worldwide events, can we say that no nation has designs of conquest? Look at Poland, the Baltic States, Finland, Romania, Yugoslavia, Hungary, Austria, Czechoslovakia, Manchuria, Korea, for your answer. Yes, look at Greece and Turkey, where we are forced to offer a stabilizing hand or permit these nations to be swallowed by the mania of communistic conquest. It seems to me the question resolves itself to this. Do we prize our American liberties and freedom sufficiently to make the sacrifices necessary to preserve them? We all wish and pray that all nations would disarm, but they don't, and apparently, won't. Once within our own memories, we practically disarmed ourselves in the hope that our example would be followed, and we had World War II. We have a national debt of nearly 300 billion dollars and a hungry Europe and Asia and peace treaties still unsigned. If we wish to protect our nation and our democratic way of life we must have a state of military preparedness which will command respect. The youth of the nation must have the greatest part of its military training before occasion arises for mobilization. Undoubtedly those whom this book represents would have us do whatever is necessary to preserve our way of life and prevent future wars. May we in all America keep warm in our hearts and minds the memory of the service performed by those we honor today and by their millions of brothers and sisters in uniform. But greater than that, may we memorialize these servicemen and

women by our action in our lives in doing whatever we find possible to ensure that those who follow will be permitted to enjoy the blessings of liberty and peace without being called upon to die for them. If there is anything this war-torn and war-weary world needs, it is spiritual guidance. I would like to conclude my brief remarks by telling the true story of the pilot of one of our big bombers returning from a raid over Germany. The flak had been severe and the plane had been badly damaged. It had hardly started on the return trip before it began to lose altitude. One and then another of the engines started skipping. As they were going over the English Channel, it became pretty clear that they would never get back to England. And so all the crew but the pilot bailed out, putting on their life jackets and jumping out in the dark the land in the cold waters. But the pilot stayed on. By some miracle he got back to England and the second the plane touched the ground the wing broke off and it went into a spin and flopped over. The fire crews rushed forward expecting to pull out a badly mutilated the crew. Low and behold, one man, the pilot, came out and he told what had happened. He was white faced and grim. And when he had finished, one of the fire crew said, boy, weren't you lucky? Quietly the pilot said, no, I wasn't lucky. I talked with a man upstairs. May we all here tonight, not only tonight but every night of our lives, talked with the man upstairs. Because if we do talk with the man upstairs, we will get that spiritual guidance and the chances are greater that we will do what is right.

[Applause]

The dedication ceremonies continue with further readings from the Book of Honor, this time by the Reverend Richard G. Sechrist of Bangor, former United States Army chaplain.

SECHRIST: A dedication by the President of the United States, Abraham Lincoln, at the military cemetery at Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, 19 November 1863. "Four score and seven years ago, our fathers brought forth on this continent a new nation conceived in Liberty and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal. Now we are engaged in a great Civil War testing whether that nation, or any nation so conceived and so dedicated, can long endure. We are met on a great battlefield of that war. We have come to dedicate a portion of that field as a final resting place for those who here gave their lives that that nation might live. It is altogether fitting and proper that we should do this, but in a larger sense we cannot dedicate, we cannot consecrate, we cannot hallow this ground. The brave men living and dead who struggled here have consecrated it far above our poor power to add or detract. The world will little note nor long remember what we say here. But it can never forget what they did here. It is for us the living rather to be dedicated here to the unfinished work which they who fought here have thus far so nobly advanced. It is rather for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before us, that from these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion. That we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain. That this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom and that the government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth." A lesson, inscription in the Memorial Church, Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts. "While a bright future beckoned, they freely gave their lives and fondest hopes for us and our allies that we might learn from them courage in peace, to spend our lives making a better world for others."

[Appause]

HUNTER: The Reverend Lewis M. Brehaut of Bangor, former United States Navy Chaplain, will now read the 110 names in the Book of Honor. The audience stands.

BREHAUT: the following are the Bangor men who died in the services in World War II.

[Audio at 24:39]

Leonard Victor Ashworth, Jr.
J. Edgar AuCoin
Donald Holman Ayer
Joseph J. Babbain, Jr.
Donald Llewellyn Barker
Charles Albert Bean
Bernard Joseph Bertels, Jr.
Philip James Black
Edgar Vincent Blake
Lawrence R. Blethen
Wilber Elmore Bradt
Harold Breen
John N. Budway
William G. Burgess, Jr.
Ernest A. Burke
Kenneth R. Burns
James Daniel Cassidy, Jr.
Theodore J. Chase
Edward Francis Chisholm
Ralph Louis Clapp
John Leslie Coffin, Jr.
Horace Nathan Comstock
Merle Lawrence Condon
John Francis Corey
Lauren L. CoWallis
Walter L. Crawford, Sr.
Dennis T. Cullinan, Jr.
Ralph Linley Cunningham, Jr.
John Francis Curran
Bernard J. Cyr
Harry V. Doggett, Jr.
Claire Frederick Dunphey
Alonzo Dyer
Paul H. Eames, Jr.
Harold G. Eaton
James Alton Faulkingham

Joseph Henry Ferguson
Charles Albert Fessenden
Ferd Charles Flagg
Charles Augustin Flanagan
James Edward Flood, Jr.
Donald Herbert Fogg
John R. Follett
Harrison William Frye
Arthur Duncan Gallupe
Rodney J. Gerrish
Howard William Getchell
Lawrence M. Giles
Thomas R. Graffam
Robert P. Grant
Carl Owen Hackett
Willis Ellwood Hendrickson
Edward R. Hopkins
Benjamin Howe, Jr.
William H. Ivey
Carl Joseph Jansson
Richard Brooks Jones
Frederick Paul Keezer
Austin Rodney Keith
Arnold R. Kelley
John Coney Kelley
Donald Murray Kilpatrick, Jr.
Joseph Herbert Kobritz
Harvey B. Lovett
Harry Lester MacDonald
Miles B. MacDougal, Jr.
Wallace Henry McGlaufflin
James Stewart MacKaye
Donald Aldrich McKinnon
Guy Marsh, Jr.
Shelley Doyle Montgomery
Charles W. Morrill

Frederic Coleman Murphy
Raymond Horace Noye
Vaughan Reginald Olson
W. Carleton Orr
Fields Seeley Pendleton III
Linwood W. Perkins
Carl F. Peterson, Jr.
George Pomeroy
Arnold Perry Price
Eugene John Ranks
Edwin D. Rattray
Kenneth P. Reynolds
John Allen Richard
Lloyd Kenneth Robinson
Waldo E. Robinson, Jr.
George Henry Rogers
Gerald Constantine Ryder
Glenn St. Germain
Joseph R. Sarnoski
Ralph A. Scherer
Harold Arthur Slager
Charles Edward Small
Edward G. Smith
James A. Snodgrass
Carl S. Spragg
Arthur F. Stimpson
Garland Louis Strang
Bernard Striar
Gerald Decker Strout
Charles John Taylor
W. Stuart Treworgy
Max E. Walls
George Ellis Watson
John A. Willette
Eugene Vincent Williams
Nelson Edwards Wilson
Aubrey Francis Withee
Renfrew A. Yerxa

[Music – Horns play Taps]

HUNTER: Dr. Knowlton, Chairman of the City Council, will place the Book of Honor in the custody of the public library. A librarian, L. Felix Ranlett, will receive the Book of Honor for the library.

KNOWLTON: Will the librarian of the Bangor Public Library please come forward? Sir, you've done well. For a little while, by virtue of circumstance, the fact that I am chairman of this particularly city council, this precious volume has been mine just for a little while. Now, on behalf of the city of Bangor, sir, I hand it to you, Mr. Ranlett, as librarian of the Bangor Public Library, asking that with the library keep this booked in safe custody within the library building until such future times as some other City Council may direct otherwise. I charge you to keep it on public view at all hours that the library building is open and to turn one page each day so long as the volume is in the custody of the library. I'd ask not only you, but all those who shall come after us, to turn a page each day, god willing, forever.

RANLETT: Sir, on behalf of the Bangor Public Library, I received the custody of this book. I will do as you direct. A page will be turned each day.

HUNTER: Mr. Ranlett now places the Book of Honor in the case which is here on the stage at the Bangor Auditorium, locks the drawer, and the Book of Honor is now under glass in the case where it will repose at the Bangor Public Library. Now the Reverend Dr. Frederick M. Meek.

MEEK: Honored guests and citizens of Bangor, it is a thrilling vision which you of this city of had and under which you have created this Book of Honor, a memorial that is everlasting in the finest human sense. As long as this city is here, and no community expresses more adequately the ongoing spirit of Maine and of America then does this city, reverent hands will touch these pages daily and turn them from name to name, and thus from life to life. Each day, page by page, the faces, the lives, the deeds of these men of Bangor will speak in the silences to us. And, pray God, through us to America in this sobering, momentous hour of her greatest responsibility. This night I do not come to you as a stranger intruding upon you as I speak about these honored men who belong forever to this dear city. Rather it is a coming home to a place wherein I have shared the lives and the deepest experiences of living with hundreds and thousands of people in this community. As I have read the names of the men enshrined in this Book of Honor, I find the records of men whom I have baptized with these hands and whom I have received and confirmed into the Church of Christ. I find the names of men to whom I imparted as I was able in the months and the years of their developing maturity the teachings and the guidance of our forefathers and of our faith. Such past days and experiences then are my credentials, which in this solemn hour I submit to you, before him in whom rest all beginnings and all endings. The burden of responsibility and decision which ordinary men are expected to carry in a democracy is greater than in any other form of society. These men in the Book of Honor average in their age in their middle twenties. And the youngest of them had had only 18 birthdays. They were students, welders, truck drivers, market gardeners, clerks, store keepers, men who are the stuff of which democracies are made, and by whom democracies are sustained. They are America. And today, when we repeat the names of the

places where they and their fellow Americans were, Tarawa and Okinawa, Casino and Anzio, Normandy and the Bulge, something happens in American hearts and minds. These places become more than simply names in geography and locations in definite space. They are deeds done in time with the quality of eternity. And later generations coming after, who will know nothing but first-hand experience of what these deeds were, will have incorporated them by right of inheritance and gratitude into the stream of their American life. As these deeds are remembered and told, they will be so much part of our American living that the people of these later generations will say, unconscious of any incongruity, this is what we did. Because of what these men have done, Main Street in this city has become a thoroughfare, a world highway such as no city government would ever have envisioned. Main Street in Bangor now reaches to Algeria and Austria, to Belgium and Brazil, to England and France and Germany, to Guadalcanal and Hawaii to Hungary and India and Italy, to Iwo Jima and Japan and Labrador, to Okinawa and the islands of the Pacific, to Sicily and the Solomon Islands, to Spain and Tunisia and Yugoslavia. Who had ever imagined that Main Street outside yonder doors gave a direct route to the farthest corners of the earth? And there where they rest from Algeria to Yugoslavia is the heart of America forever. And because America is there forever, this world of ours has become a different place, for us and for American people. We can never treat lightly or casually the fact that these men died in assuming the responsibility which we placed upon them and in doing what we asked them to do. Never forget that we of this city and of this country assented to the legislation that took these men and ten million other men away from their homes and their loved ones. We assented when the normal course of their lives was interrupted. There was the work they did chosen to do for a livelihood in a peaceful democracy. The education they wanted to acquire. There were the girls they had planned to marry and the thought of children whom they had hoped to see grow up. Yes, and fish to catch in Maine's clear waters, gardens to tend, roofs to shingle, the thousand, significant, simple acts which make up the warp and woof of democratic living. By our assent, we implied that our cause was so great that if we stood as we do tonight in the presence of all those who never came back, we could say truthfully, this which you have done is worth the price which you have had to pay. And that, we can say. But even to say so in the presence of their memory is not enough. There are such searching questions as these which touch the roots of our lives. As we face the record of this Book of Honor, by what motives do we now purpose to vote, to pay taxes, to live proudly, as the responsible people of America. For all of us, this Book of Honor is a court of judgment, impartial, searching, fair, demanding. From time to time, let the city officials stand before this book with its record and ask, is what we do worth this? Let the Chamber of Commerce and the businessman of this city stand before these open pages and ask, is what we do in the life of Bangor worth this? Let the legislators, to whom we entrust many most important decisions in Maine and in American life, stand before this book and ask, are the policies I support worthy of what these men have done? Let the school board and the teachers stand before this court of judgment and ask, is the teaching and the influence of our schools worthy of what these sons and fathers did? Let the clerks and the office workers, the bus drivers and the mechanics, stand here and ask, am I worth this? And if their day's labor is well done, they will be found worthy. I hope that under God, no one of us will ever be able to view this book without asking, as I make a contribution of my life to this community and America, am I shamed? Or am I humbled? As I stand here before those who have bought for me the very days of my life. In this silent conversation between us and them, there come also direct words of admonition and warning. They say, clearly as a bell, heard in a quiet fog filled night on the Maine coast,

you stand now on final ground. One night in July 1945, the American people went to sleep, little knowing what would happen in the early dawn of the next morning. When we woke up, not eight hours, but a whole century had passed by in a blinding flash of light and heat and radioactive devastation in New Mexico. Never had so many people been moved so far ahead in time so quickly and unwittingly. Our living and our prospects have thereby being irrevocably altered. Therefore this word comes directly to us. You now stand on final ground and on that ground the old ways are not good enough. That is true. The old cycles of life and thought have been broken. Industry, war, peace economics, statecraft, the direction of human life, all begin henceforth with new premises. And the new premises themselves have not yet been clearly formulated. Meanwhile, these facts abide. Man remains, and he is faced with seeing it through. Good and evil abide, each intensified, having appropriated God's powers with irreverent hands. Man's own wisdom seems to be insufficient. The little provincialisms of men who are opportunists, and who want to live as if the old techniques and struggles for power were still adequate, are the greatest hazards of the new day. International anarchy, under which the nations have lived for so long, becomes our great peril. The mechanical and geographical unity into which our world has been compressed only increases the number of friction points and the certainty of our fiery end unless, and that word unless holds tomorrow's destiny. This whole area of potential tragedy was graphically lined in a letter found in the kit of the French author and aviator, [sonics Suprey] after he had failed to return from a flight in Europe. This letter read, "Look my American friends, it seems to me that something new is in process of formation. The material progress of modern times has linked mankind by a sort of nervous system. The contacts are innumerable. The communications are instantaneous. We are bound like cells in the same body, but this body does not yet have a soul. In our time, this newly created unified body of mankind seeks a spirit adequate for its direction and its control. Man's reason has done great things, but will man spirit be able to control what he has discovered? There are those who despair of ever leaving this final ground for the fertile plains of peace and security. And the most appalling thing about it is to find multitudes of the young men and women in America, the age of the majority of those whose names are in this book, who have adopted the attitude that they are doomed before they have ever started living. Walk the campuses on the streets and listen to them say it resignedly. This philosophy of defeat and despair grows on under the failures and the present inadequate deeds of us who are their elders. Therefore the most direct demanding word that comes to us tonight is this. Do you really believe in your own democracy? In this generation, a struggle goes on in our world, the far-reaching aspects of we all too few of us have noticed or have been willing to acknowledge. It is a struggle between two philosophies, two ways of life, communism and democracy. The one is a philosophy of life which is completely secular, which believes that man is sufficient unto himself, which promises him freedoms, as its followers choose to define them, economic welfare, as they choose to define it, a world united by force and kept in line by violence. And their promised world is a world in which good and evil are regarded as matters of party policy and party decision and not as eternal laws in the universe. To this way of life, scores of millions of people have turned and are turning. The other way of life is our own, the way of democracy. Its founders believed, and we have forgotten or we ignore that they ever so believed, but man is answerable finally not to an all-powerful state but to an all-powerful God who has given man the gift of life. Democracy, too, promises freedoms and economic well-being. It offers a world held together not by force and fear, but by a unity which arises in the fact that men are the children of God the Creator. A world in which

good and evil are irrevocable standards of judgment, embedded in the world as are the laws of physics and chemistry. Meanwhile, nations and races watch to see whether by actual demonstration, our way of democracy actually works. And as of tonight, the demonstration which we give in America leaves much to be desired. This struggle between these two ways of life will never finally be settled by force of arms. It will never be settled by cargoes of atomic destruction speeding back and forth over the Arctic Circle or the Atlantic Ocean or the Pacific Ocean at supersonic speeds forcing the n-never destroys an idea. It can only destroy the body in which the idea lived. The idea goes on. An idea, a way of life, must be replaced by another way of life, another idea more compelling in its achievements and possibilities. There is no question but that democracy's way of life is or life which is most demanding, which requires a higher individual character from those who share in it. But meanwhile this democratic way must find a more adequate demonstration in the lives of communities like this, in the lives of states like this, in the lives of the people of our beloved America. And to us, the chance to provide that demonstration has been given by the deeds and the lives of men like those whom we honor tonight. Here is the question. What, then, is to be the spirit that will animate and direct this newly created unified world? Now, it is a strange, but understandable, bodily phenomenon but hungry, discontented, thwarted people always have large sensitive ears for hearing and picking up strange and dangerous forms of political and economic doctrine. That is true in America. That is true in Asia and in Europe. Now it may be that a lack of knowledge of this elementary physiology was behind the attempt recently made in our capital, fortunately it failed, to reduce the allocation for foreign food relief from 350 million dollars to two hundred million dollars. In comparison with our prodigious war budgets for destruction, what small change were saving human life? Empty stomachs and starving children and thwarted men and women cannot exist in the same world with democracy. Such conditions can never be allowed to persist or democracy itself perishes. But empty stomachs and thwarted people can exist with communism, on that discontented grove. Meanwhile there are those who would save this small change of our charity, the charity of the most comfortable, best fed people in the world. And I know, and you know, what the people of the world say when the story of that attitude and similar deeds is told and grows in the retelling on the world radio from Moscow. A word comes again more urgently than before. Do you really believe in your own democracy? Do we believe in it enough so that in the new day, we will be willing to pioneer with the new deeds and the new attitudes toward trade and world government, toward relations between people and races which are also necessary in order to preserve even the physical fabric within which democracy can find its chance. What is to be the spirit that will finally control this newly created unified word? On the walls of the fortress of Verdun in France there are countless scribbled names of American soldiers. One of them reads thus. "Austin White, Chicago, Illinois 1918. Austin White, Chicago, Illinois, 1945. This is the last time I want to write my name here." I do not know Austin White. I do not know if Austin White lived to go back to Chicago, Illinois. But if it should happen that Austin White should ever again have the chance to write his name on the walls of Verdun, then in words used by General Eisenhower about any future war, it will not be because of necessity, but because of stupidity. May I repeat, those are the words of General Dwight D. Eisenhower. On this final ground, stupidity will mean, that as a 20th century civilization we are finished. That is the word of judgment given by the clearest headed of the most honest of the American scientists. The men who fell that any false optimism, any blindness or temporizing with the danger which faces us, that anything less than the blunt, honest, frightening truth is the equivalent of treachery toward the

American people. Recently a little paper-covered book printed in England came into my hands and this paragraph burned itself in upon me. Democracy, victorious in the war, may yet perish for want of democrats. And I hasten to add in the presence of this distinguished company here on the platform, the writer spelled Democrats with a small D. The canker of social life is the irresponsibility of the individual man, the writer went on. Democracy is not a piece of machinery set in motion by majority vote. It is the goal of individual men and women who, mindful of their responsibilities in the community, press on toward it. It comes down then to you and me, to the ordinary folk, welders and truck drivers, students and mechanics, who walk Main Street in Bangor on a Saturday night looking in the store windows and who in the hours of America's danger, walk down Main Street to Algeria and Yugoslavia. No Statesman, no scientist, no religious leader, standing at the junction in America's forked road, can make the final decision for the ordinary responsible citizens of our democracy. It comes back to us. Democracy depends on a new breed of citizen on folk like us who will be led by a new infusion of democracy's vigor. On citizens to whom responsible honorable government, the problems of trade, of race and of atomic power are as vital and demanding and emotion provoking as the exploits of the Braves and the Red Sox and the ponies at Suffolk Downs, and the latest murder trial. At least they are immensely more significant and if we look at them with intelligence and imagination we will discover that they have far more drama. And incidentally, the bets made are made with our own lives, and we don't get anything if we place or show. We have to win. And we win by the quality of the life of the democracy of which we are part. Therefore as I look at this Book of Honor, I say to myself, and I say to you, you have a life to give also. America awaits the gift of the lives of free men in the time of peace, of men who really believe in their own way of life, so that they live for it and demand of their community and their leaders and their nations live for it. America asks from us, as she has never asked before, an informed alert sense of individual responsibility. But by what pattern shall this responsibility be directed? And here we touch rock bottom. Make no mistake about it. This world is a moral order of God's design. When with cynical disregard of the good, men break God's laws, the inevitable consequences of pain and destruction follow. And this era of war, beginning far back in 1914, is the result of man's attempted evasion of God's moral laws which are for nations as truly as for individuals. Inevitably then, on this night of memory and purpose, we come into the presence of one who is greater than we are, in whose hands rest all beginnings and all endings. One of the men from the parish which I had in the Midwest had been through some of the severest fighting in Africa and Italy. In keeping in touch with him, in my writing I had sent him a devotional manual. I received a letter from him from Anzio. In it he described the place where he and a companion had lived for many days, a shelter which they had simply hacked out with such protection as they could gather from the surrounding area. But he told me that at night, with unflinching regularity he read from that devotional manual. And all the light I have, he said, comes from a piece of tent rope stuck in a glass of bacon grease, but by that I am able to read. I have thought many times of that man trying to find his God under such discouraging conditions and I salute him as a searcher whose name deserves to be remembered. It is to just such a search that all our human living and planning are in the end directed, wittingly or unwittingly. Today millions know only uncertainty and confusion and darkness. None of us can really see around the turn in the road. But there is a way out there, and we can find it and walk in it. But we must comb the precious pages of human experience, good and ill. And the precious pages of the outline of God's design for us even if it be with the help of a tent rope and a piece of bacon grease. And then on Main Street and in the Legislative assemblies, in the

synagogues and the churches. there must be the deeds that will match the truth which we now know. And the truth we now know our democratic way of life is sufficient to save us to which living we turn tonight. As our offering of gratitude for those whose names we honor have done for us. Tomorrow these pages begin turning forever. And day by day, they will say to each of us, do you really believe in your own way of life?

[Applause and music]

MEEK: Now may the Lord bless you and keep you. May he cause his face to shine upon you and be gracious unto you. May he lift up the light of his countenance upon you and give you his peace, this night and always. Amen.

HUNTER: Ladies and gentlemen, we have broadcast the complete dedication ceremony of the Book of Honor, Bangor's memorial to the 110 Bangor men who died for victory in World War II. The impressive Memorial Day exercises were broadcast directly from the Bangor Municipal Auditorium. This is the Maine Broadcasting Company.

[transcript ends]

For more information about this transcript, audio recording, or other materials in Special Collections at the University of Maine, contact:

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