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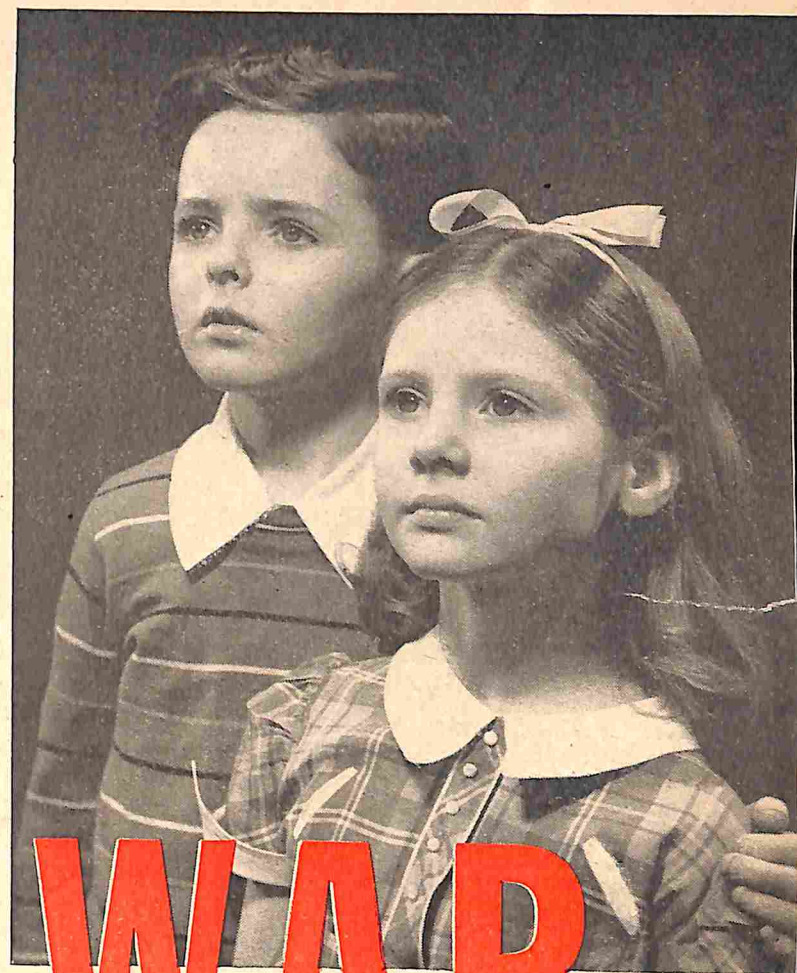
★ Contents ★

The Household Magazine ★ your home ★ your family ★ your community ★ and You



When Your Child Asks You About the

WAR



BLACK BOX PHOTO

I DON'T know what to say to Bob," lamented a young mother. "I've told him time and again not to fight with the other boys. Not that it has done any good. But I've told him it is just as silly for nations to fight as for small boys. Now his daddy has applied for a commission in the Army, and I am doing all the war service I can find time for, and we both are going to do everything we can to whip the Japs, the Germans, and everybody that picks on the United States.

"Now Bob can't see how that squares with the things I told him a few years ago or even a year ago. He wants to know when I was right, then or now. I have an instinct that I was right then and that I also am right now, but how can I get that feeling across to a ten-year-old boy?"

A great many American mothers are in that same dilemma. They will be more conscious of it this summer, as the war goes on and excitement rises, and as the children are at home more and have more time to think up and ask questions of their parents.

What can parents say? The fact is that a large proportion of American mothers were pacifists until a year or so ago; many up to the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. This was natural, for the United States, like democracies generally, is a peace-loving nation. When I say that American mothers were pacifists, however, I do not mean extreme pacifists—people who believe in the doctrine of non-resistance, who

are convinced that under no circumstances is it right to fight. American pacifism, for the most part, has simply meant that we were unwarlike, that we believed the world had outgrown war, like other bad habits, that we ought to avoid war if possible, and probably would be able to do so. We know different now. Our ideals were all right, but too many people in the world did not agree with them, and so they did not work out. Except for an inconsequential minority of conscientious objectors to war, we don't feel pacific any longer.

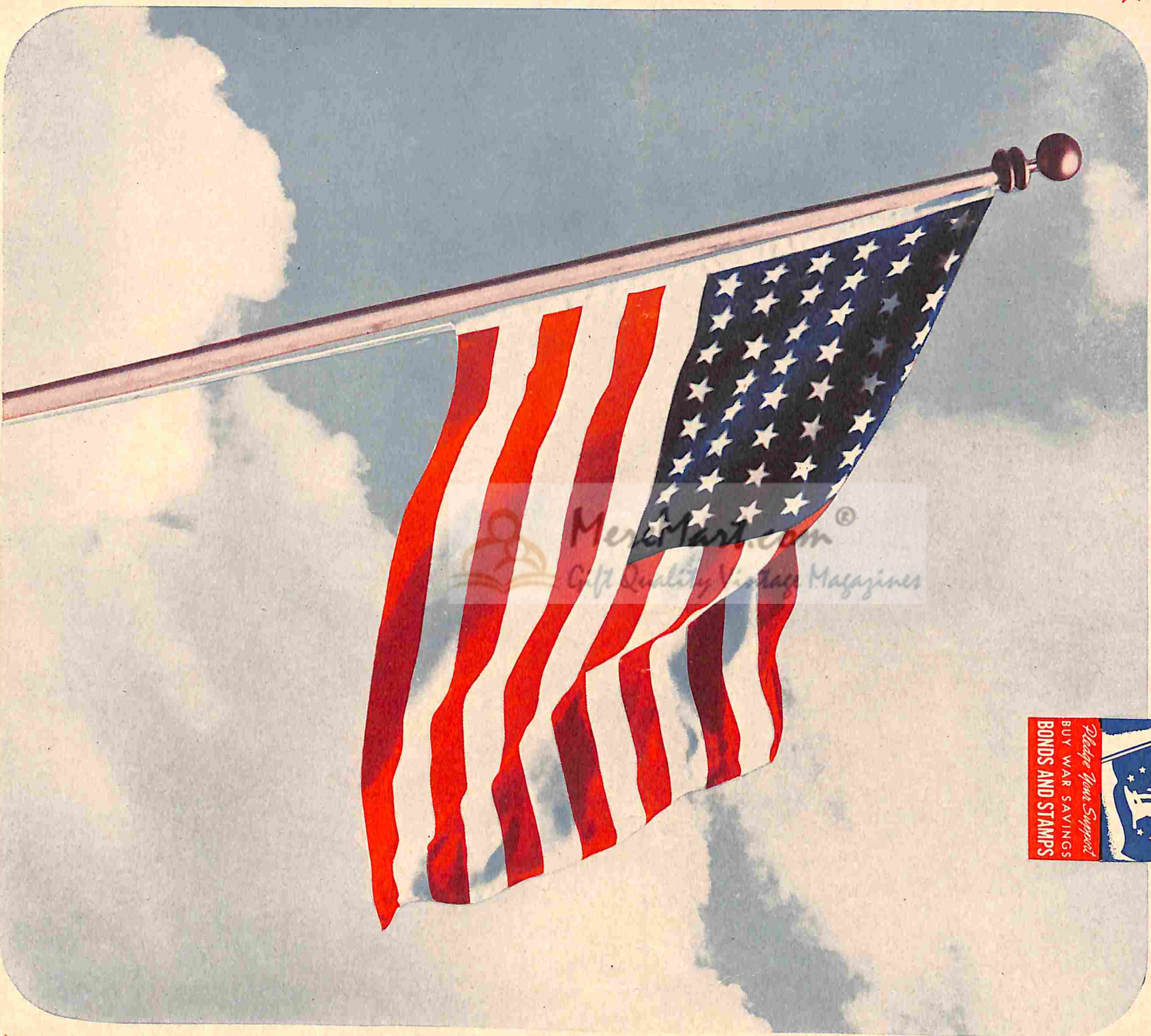
What we want to tell the children is not that we have ceased to believe in peace as an ideal but that we are in a position where we have to fight. People often find themselves in situations where they have to do what they do not like. For instance, if a crazy man is running up and down the street shooting a revolver at passersby, it is up to the nearest policeman—and to other citizens—to stop him. He may have to be knocked unconscious or even killed. The police do not want to kill anyone; they are strictly instructed "to use no more force than necessary in making any arrest." They may have to kill, however, in order to protect their own lives or the lives of other citizens.

To take an example closer to the life of children, there is the tough boy who is always picking fights with other boys. Whatever the mothers of these boys may have said, their fathers undoubtedly have told them that the [Continued on Page 22]

BY NELSON ANTRIM CRAWFORD

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