Navy: John L. McCrea (Naval Aide)
THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

February 12, 1942.

MEMORANDUM FOR

MISS TULLY

The President directed that the attached information be made available to him in connection with the preparation of the radio address he is to deliver on the 23rd.

While Admiral King's memorandum is now labeled "CONFIDENTIAL," the substance of the damage inflicted will be released to the Press on February 15th.

[Signature]

JOHN L. McCREA,
Captain, U. S. Navy,
Naval Aide to the President.
Memo for the President

The "Neches" (naval tanker old type) was torpedoed and sunk in location about 100 miles WSW of Honolulu some time yesterday - Have no further details - Will attempt to obtain and advise you later in the day.

Very resp.

—John McCrea
CONFIDENTIAL

Memorandum for: Naval Aide to the President.

MARSHALL ISLAND RAID


The orthodox manner of executing this raid would have been to have kept the carrier and supporting force about a hundred miles off the locus of the raid and to have sent the aircraft in to drop bombs and torpedoes. Instead, Vice Admiral Halsey divided his surface and air forces perfectly, made a simultaneous and highly destructive attack on the shore installations and the auxiliary naval forces found in the atoll anchorages, destroying or damaging not less than one cruiser, one destroyer, one 17,000 ton auxiliary, three large fleet tankers, two submarines, six store ships, four small tenders, two large seaplanes, fifteen fighter planes, twenty-one bombing planes, six hangars, as well as an ammunition dump, fuel storage tanks, industrial and administration buildings.

The thoroughgoing and effective support afforded Vice Admiral Halsey in this attack by subordinate officers and all the men under his command, and their conduct under the determined bombing attacks launched against the force by Japanese aircraft not destroyed, showed that the modern sailorman is a worthy successor of his distinguished predecessors.

Vice Admiral Halsey has been awarded the Distinguished Service Medal for planning and conducting this brilliant and audacious attack and driving it home with great skill and determination. Appropriate awards to other officers and men may be expected when recommendations are received.
February 10, 1942.

MEMORANDUM FOR ADMIRAL KING

Last night I showed the attached despatch to the President. When he came to the last sentence he remarked substantially as follows -

Certainly, I'll be glad to do it. See that this despatch is brought to my attention in a few days when I start work on the speech.

The President did not ask for it, but I respectfully suggest that a brief memorandum giving the facts which in your judgment can be disclosed would be of assistance to the President in drafting his speech.

Very respectfully,

[Signature]

JOHN L. MCCREA,
Captain, U. S. Navy,
Naval Aide to the President.
MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

You wished to be kept informed about the progress of the tank lighter equipment.

Two Tigris River barges built by a New Orleans company are being delivered today to the Dodge Motorboat Works at Newport News. These tank barges are in a knocked-down condition and will be assembled by that company. This same company has a contract to build 6 tank packing boxes which are due for completion on 28 February.

The Navy Department has outlined a test program for this equipment. The War Department is prepared to furnish the tanks, and the President can rest assured that the test will be conducted expeditiously.

As further information on this subject becomes available, it will be forwarded.

Very respectfully,

John L. McCrea

CONFIDENTIAL

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

February 13, 1942.

PSF: Navy (McCrea Folder)
THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

February 25, 1942.

MEMORANDUM FOR CAPTAIN McCREA:

The President asks if you will be good enough to find out when Admiral Allen, Commandant of the Charleston Navy Yard, is due to retire.

Grace G. Tully

MEMORANDUM FOR MISS TULLY

Rear Admiral William H. Allen, U. S. Navy, is due to be placed on the Retired List on 1 July, 1942.

JOHN L. McCREA
MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT:

Mayor Lockwood of Charleston phoned he was having a lot of trouble with Admiral Allen, Commandant of the Charleston Navy Yard.

According to the Mayor, he fell out with the Admiral because the Admiral was for Willkie and not the President. He evidenced this by the fact that when a recent ship-christening took place, there were about six Democrats and about 300 Republicans present. The Admiral made a crack to the Mayor about this, and since then he and the Admiral have never gotten on.

The Mayor admitted he asked Senator Byrnes to keep Admiral Allen there but now he regrets this exceedingly. He is hoping in some way that the President might see fit to shorten the tenure of office of the above mentioned Admiral at the Charleston Navy Yard. They are constantly in a fight.

In closing, I am afraid the real trouble is that the Admiral said Charleston was the worst town this side of Singapore and put it off limits for his command for a week.
THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

March 27, 1942.

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT:

We have just had a dispatch that Rear Admiral Wilcox was lost overboard at sea today. He was the Commander of Task Force No. 39 which is proceeding to a foreign port which you know. Rear Admiral Giffin has assumed command tonight.

We have had a message from the P.M. but it came in quite garbled. The War Dept. is going to have a repeat.

McCrea
March 27, 1942.

MEMORANDUM FOR

THE PRESIDENT

Admiral Brown arrived Pearl Harbor. At sea since 31 January. Fitch will relieve Brown at early date. Quezon, family and War Cabinet arrived in Australia. MacArthur suggests message of congratulations from President to Quezon.

One tanker torpedoed and sunk off Diamond Shoals. No news from Fletcher.

McCREA
THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

March 29, 1942.

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT:

Wainwright states that doubtful if he can hold out beyond fifteenth of April because of lack of food.

No news from Fletcher. Everything else quiet.

McCrea
April 20, 1942.

In President's handwriting

"John McCrea:

"In view of the much larger anti. sub. patrol on East Coast you might find out if Navy would now favor the East Boston sea-plane base?"

F.D.R."
MEMORANDUM FOR CAPTAIN J. L. MC CREA, NAVAL AIDE TO THE PRESIDENT.

Concerning your inquiry at the instance of the President a few days ago regarding a "yarn" of the Naval Affairs Committee having been frightened by a mock accident on board of a submarine in approximately 1914. I regret being unable to get any trace of this alleged incident, but suggest that the yarn might apply to an incident covered in the book "The Fleet Today" by Kendall Banning, Pages 205-207. I am unable to vouch for the accuracy of the story which is as follows:

"It was the control room of a submarine that served as the setting of a drama of the sea that has begun to assume the aspects of a classic. It started, according to legend, in the friendship between two or three cadets at West Point and as many midshipmen at Annapolis, and was continued after graduation. The Army men entered the Air Service; the Navy men the Submarine Service.

"'Ever been up in a plane?' the fliers asked of their Navy guests during the latter's visit to the flying field.

"No, they had never been up in a plane. Yes, they would be delighted to take a trip. So up they went, with their Army hosts at the controls, and a grand performance indeed they put on. They gave their guests the works -- loops, tailspins, barrel rolls, Immelmann turns. The sailors were finally landed, a bit groggy and pale, perhaps, but still game and properly appreciative. In the course of time these same fliers, mindful of their social obligations, called upon their Navy friends at the Submarine Base. No, they had never been down in a sub. Yes, they would be delighted to take a trip. So aboard they all went; orders were passed; the engines were started, and while the vessel was proceeding to the diving area, hosts and guests repaired below to pass the time.

"'Rig for diving!' at last came the cry from the bridge. Hatches on the deck were slammed shut and dogged; the diving officer made his round of inspection; diving stations were manned. The hosts explained to their visitors the mechanics of the operation. Soon, however, the interest of the
hosts began to be diverted from their guests and become focused upon the controls. They showed signs of anxiety; something was evidently going wrong. The depth gauge seemed to be the center of interest; instead of stopping at the indicated depth of 40 feet, the needle continued its course. Now the boat was shown to be down to 50 feet; now 60 feet; soon it struck 150 feet. The hush in the boat was broken only by the commands of the officers.

"These boats are designed to stand 200 feet of pressure, but they can probably stand as much as 300 feet," the skipper encouragingly assured his guests.

"With increasing perturbation the visitors watched the gauge record a depth of 150 feet, with the needle steadily moving into dangerous area. At 200 feet the silence was blasted by the shriek of the collision alarm. All compartment doors were instantly closed; the visitors were now trapped in the control room with their hosts. Suddenly the lights went out and the compartment was thrown into a tar-like blackness. The dim emergency lamps were switched on; they cast the compartment into an eerie gloom. At 220 feet the Nonsan escape lungs were hauled forth and strapped upon all hands, with hurried instructions for their use -- just in case. A stream of water began to trickle ominously down the hatchway from the conning tower. Beads of perspiration broke out upon the faces of the worried visitors. The needle now registered 250 feet; the boat was now well down into the danger zone; obviously out of control. When a depth of 300 feet had been reached and the submarine was in imminent peril of collapsing, the needle on the depth gauge miraculously steadied. Slowly, exasperatingly slowly, the boat began to rise. With breathless interest the eyes of the visitors were riveted upon the dial as the needle indicated the return to safety. At last, thank God! the boat broke the surface; the hatches were thrown open to the sky, and the visitors clambered joyfully to the deck.

"The vessel was still quietly moored to the dock; it had never moved a foot. The hosts smiled enigmatically. The debt of the submariners to the fliers had been paid in full."

"Hudley W. Knox,"

DUDLEY W. KNOX,
Captain, U.S.N. (Ret.),
Officer-in-Charge.
MEMORANDUM FOR

CAPTAIN McCREA

Please find out for me:

1. Who is being given command of the new 110 foot submarine chasers and the new 173 foot submarine chasers, both of which classes are rapidly going into commission? Regular or Reserve Officers? What rank?

2. Please also find out for me where these ships are being stationed and how long it takes for them to go into actual active operations after they are commissioned.

F. D. R.

No papers accompanied the original of this memorandum to Capt. McCrea.
THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

June 13, 1942.

MEMORANDUM FOR
CAPTAIN McCREA

Will you have the following sent through the War Department:

FOR

FELLERS
CAIRO

President asks obtain if possible information for him in regard to Alan Stuyvesant of American Field Service, whose family has been informed he is missing.

EDWIN M. WATSON
MILITARY AIDE
THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

November 30, 1942.

MEMORANDUM FOR

CAPTAIN McCREA

Please get from the Department the present location and use of all patrol craft of the following types which have been delivered to the Department since January 1, 1941:

SC - 110 feet
SC - 173 feet
SC - 183 feet (type delivered to Dutch and Norwegians)
PC - 1466 to 1471
PT - 81 to 149

F. D. R.
MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

I thought the despatch from Admiral Nimitz to Admiral King to be of interest.

As bearing on the same subject, I am informed by Rear Admiral Cooke that there is every indication that the enemy had no knowledge that the WASP was lost until we made announcement of that fact.

Very respectfully,

JOHN L. McCREA
UNLESS OTHERWISE INDICATED THIS DISPATCH WILL BE TRANSMITTED WITH DEFERRED PRECEDENCE.

UNLESS THERE IS EVIDENCE NOT AT HAND HERE THAT THE ENEMY ACTUALLY SAW THE HORNET SINK I FEEL VERY STRONGLY THAT YESTERDAYS ANNOUNCEMENT WAS OF CONSIDERABLE ASSISTANCE TO THE ENEMY AND CORRESPONDINGLY HARMFUL TO US IN A VERY CRITICAL SITUATION.
Congress Bloc Getting Ready For Showdown

Dozen Bills and Resolutions Reflect Public Interest in Issue Mitchell Began

Special to the Herald Tribune

WASHINGTON, July 18.—The battle that the late Brig. Gen. William Mitchell started is reaching a climax. About a dozen bills and resolutions have been introduced in Congress this session designed to separate the air force from the Army and Navy, and throughout the nation there is unprecedented agitation in the cause. A potent group of legislators is preparing for a showdown.

The Royal Air Force’s spectacular defense of Great Britain and the German Luftwaffe’s lethal trail through the air of Poland, Holland, Flanders, Greece and Crete have caused alarm. Successful air attacks on warships have aroused more doubts. Maj. Gen. H. H. Arnold, deputy chief of staff for air, the top air officer of the Army, and Col. Ira C. Eaker have written a book, “Winged Warfare,” in which they say confusion and delay would result if a sudden change in the air force set-up were made.

Argument Challenged

Now is a bad time for the change. reply some on the other side, and not as bad as war time would be. If the change must be made, they add, it should be made immediately.

Most of the bills would provide a new Department for Air, with a Secretary for Air in the President’s Cabinet. Some of these leave the Navy air forces with the Navy. The bill by Senator Pat McCarran, Democrat, of Nevada, lumps the Navy and all other air forces under one department. Some bills provide that all civil air functions be lodged in the Air Department, although Senator McCarran’s bill does not include this.

Senator McCarran’s bill would give the President power to attach needed air forces to the Navy or Army for specific purposes, and most revolutionary proposal of all, it provides that Army or Navy forces may be similarly attached to the air force. Top air officers would have the same rank as top Army and Navy officers.

Some of the bills, including one by Senator Bennett Champ Clark, Democrat, of Missouri, provide for a Department of National Defense with a unified military command under which there would be equal air, land and sea commands. This would assure complete co-ordination and co-operation of all forces, say the proponents. Representative Melvin J. Mass, Republican, of Minnesota, who favors a unified command, also would stipulate that this over-all commander be primarily an aviator.
Shall the United States Have a Separate Air Force?

The question of an independent Air Corps for the United States is one that is troubling the Military Committees of the Senate and House. The Senate Military Affairs Committee has agreed to hold hearings on Senator McCarran's bill to create an independent Department of Aviation.

The Senators and Representatives are seeking expert advice on the problem—mainly from admirals, generals, and Government dignitaries, all of whom are hedged about by tradition and restriction of rank and by personal considerations. Many of these experts will no doubt testify when the hearing begins. Senator Reynolds, committee chairman, promises to begin the hearing as soon as the draft extension controversy is settled.

But there is another group of men well qualified to give an answer to the query. They are former members of the Army and Navy flying forces, chiefly those who served in the last war. Some of these veterans could not answer the question because of the delicacy of their positions in relation to various Government agencies, but others, not placed where their necks are sticking out, are ready and definite with replies.

Herewith their answers:

By JIMMY JEMAIL

The Question—Should the U.S. Have a Separate Air Force?

The Answers—Asked of men who flew in World War I.

Col. Dean L. Lamb, Thirteenth Squadron, R. F. C.: "Yes. The separate Royal Naval Air Service and the Royal Flying Corps got no place in the World War until they were combined. Every other air power in the world has learned that lesson with the exception of the United States. If a separate air force isn't logical, why have a separate Army and a separate Navy? All operate in different elements. To keep the air force under wraps is as logical...

Roland H. O'Brien, World War Army Flying Staff: "Yes. It's the only solution if we are to expect the same results being gained by the German and..."
Ia

The Navy on the second

from the other military services.

When and if we do have a separate

Air Force, it should be di-

volved from the Army and the

Navy, and we should have a Sec-

detary of National Defense to co-

ordinate all air efforts of this

force and those assigned to the

Navy and Army thereby elimi-

nating duplication and making

for standardization.

Former Lieut. Comdr. John

W. Iseman, World War

naval aviator: 

"Yes, Bill, I thought

that the Army and

Navy should be

served by aviators.

A separate air force

under competent

air officers would

be flying efficiency.

The men who can

fight and the ones

who know flying

are not the same.

I agree with you

100 per cent that

the Army and the

Navy need the

air service.

Major M. K. Lee, West

Conn., World War

naval aviator: 

"Yes, because of the great effi-

cency of the air arm and its

growth and importance as a

weapon of offense and de-

fense. The Navy should

have had its own air

force for naval war-

time and should re-

quire special regu-

lations which are

different from those

which the Army

has. Wesley Mitchell, and I

agreed with everyth-

ing he said. We

are on the same

wavelength; we

know the Army

and the Navy,

and we should have

the two separate

air forces.

Beckwith Havens, World

War, test pilot, Naval Air Service: 

"Yes, because of the great effi-
cency of the air arm and its

growth and importance as a

weapon of offense and de-

fense. The Navy should have

had its own air

force for naval war-
time, and should require

special regulations which are

different from those

which the Army has.

Major M. K. Lee.

Beckwith Havens.

WORDS OF THE WISE

man's first care should be to

avoid the reproaches of his

own heart; his next, to escape

from the censure of the world.

The last interferes with the

former, it ought to be entirely

neglected; but otherwise there can

not be a greater satisfaction to

an honest man, than to see

those reproaches which give

its glory to the scenes of

the public.---Addison.

Much of what is great, and

to all men beneficial, has been

wrought by those who neither

intended nor knew the good

they did.---Ruskin.

The common fluency of

speech in many men and wom-

an, to a scarcity of matter and

of thought, language, and a

mind filled with words, and

not apt to hesitate upon the

choice of both.---Swift.

There are two kinds of

constancy in love, one arising

from necessity finding in the

loved one freshness of objects to

love, the other from regarding it as a

point of honor to be constant.

---La Rochefoucault.

The future will always be in

America's power—the U. S. Air

Force: the decision to build that

power resides in the people.