THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON
March 13, 1942.

MEMORANDUM FOR
MAC

Will you get the thing pushed and the simplest way is this? If it works and goes into large production, some figure to be agreed on, the inventor will be paid $1,000,000, but that he will get nothing until he can prove his case. If they think it is worth trying, go ahead and spend the money necessary to build one engine. This, of course, is up to the experts.

F. D. R.

x 808
x 335: Military Inventions

DECLASSIFIED
By Deputy Archivist of the U.S.
By W. J. Stewart Dale
Memorandum to Mr. McIntyre:

As you say, "Gabriel is blowing his horn". Here is a copy of his last letter to Francis Shea. You will find it pretty hot.

Robert P. Patterson,
Under Secretary of War.
March 9, 1942

The Assistant Attorney General
Department of Justice Building
Washington, D.C.

Dear Mr. Shea:

In as much as I am not acquainted with the course the contracts have followed since they were passed on by you I am addressing this communication to you and relying on you to, in the interests of the Nation, pass it along the same course as the contracts. As before expressed, your cognizance of the importance of this matter and your personal sacrifices in time and effort to lend it all possible speed are greatly appreciated, and it is hoped, therefore, that you will recognize that the content hereof is directed at the persons in the channels beyond your responsibility.

For three months and two days — Sundays, holidays, and all days—the writer hereof has devoted an average of almost twenty hours per day to one purpose: Making available to the United States armed forces the one thing that can give them the greatest advantage over our enemy, —a “thing” whose advantage far exceeds any advantage to be gained by mere superiority in numbers of men, ships, planes, guns, tanks, or resources.

The War Department had the opportunity to acquire this advantage in 1934 and has had the opportunity ever since. Though at a later date unthinking persons may heap great criticism on the War Department for its not having then acquired the advantage, it should be recognized by all thinking persons that this was an act of providence that gives us now the advantage solely and alone, instead of in common with all other nations as it would be had its use been earlier employed.

Nevertheless, and notwithstanding, this cannot serve as an excuse nor save the Government from the tremendous condemnation that will fall upon it for every day it now delays. Nor will the writer hereof much longer protect it from such condemnation though to date he has used all means in his power to do so.

Chronologically, the matter has so far proceeded as follows:

At 5:00 A.M. of Friday, January 30, 1942, the writer finished an extensive but most concise report. Between 9:00 and 10:00 A.M., by special messenger, copies sent to the President, the Secretary of War, and the Secretary of Navy were delivered.

Nothing has ever been heard from either of the latter two. Nothing was heard from the former except as a result of the dogged persistence of the writer.

In the week of February 8th calls were received from newspaper columnists purporting to have gotten their lead "from someone in the War Department." Since then many more calls have been received and to discourage the callers without arousing greater inquisitiveness has taxed this writer's ingenuity.

On February 19th Mr. Thomas R. Taylor, Chief of Staff of the National Inventor's Council phoned that at the direction of the White House he was seeking a conference with the writer. Though such could accomplish nothing in this matter, a courtesy conference was acceded to and held on February 20th.
On February 21st a phone call from the White House was received and the course to be pursued was discussed. Twelve minutes later, at 1:07 P.M., a second call from the White House informed that the decided upon course had been arranged and that in "two or three minutes" the Attorney General, Francis Biddle, would phone the writer in order to arrange a conference.

The Attorney General did not phone. Four hours and ten minutes later, at 5:17 P.M., the writer phoned the Attorney General but found he "could not arrange a conference before 11:00 A.M. Monday". The Attorney General occasioned further delays on February 24th and 25th and in each instance acted only after "prodding" from the White House.

On February 26th the White House arranged a conference between Judge Patterson (Assistant Secretary of War), General Knudsen, Mr. Shea (Assistant Attorney General), Mr. Mothershead, Mr. Houghton, and the writer. At this conference the further course to be followed was decided and agreed upon by all present and the Assistant Attorney General was requested to have the necessary contracts drawn. From that date and unto 11:30 A.M. of March 4th (days, nights, and Sunday) the Assistant Attorney General gave his fullest and almost undivided attention to the matter, with Mr. Houghton assisting and the writer collaborating.

On March 4th the contracts were taken to the War Department by Mr. Houghton.

Despite the fact that these contracts were drawn by the Assistant Attorney General, -despite the fact that they are concerned with a matter of greater importance than any before the Government at this time, -the War Department has in five days not acted on them and offers as its only excuse that it "wants to check whether they are legal!"

When one is confronted with such as this in a matter of this kind a very probable reason for the success of the raid on Pearl Harbor is suggested as obvious -The American forces could not fire back until the War Department determined whether it was legal.

That remark is meant as condemnatorily as it is stated. This is WAR -and in self preservation we must not be concerned with whether a Necessary act is legal -we must COMMIT the act -and legalize it afterward if necessary.

This writer and the Nation have been most patient with the indifference, indiscretion, inefficiency -and even incompetence- of persons in and out of the Government who egotistically and pompously inflate their own interests and importance beyond those of their office or station. In this time of war personal importance and interest must be subjugated by every individual's office, station, job or bent, -and the major interest put foremost: Winning this war!

We are fighting in the most terrible war the World has ever known. We are fighting to stave off greater terrors and oppression than have ever before in history been visited on peoples. We are fighting against maniacal and demoniacal forces more terrible than ancient civilization's anthropophagic crusades. We are fighting against terrors far worse than death. And if we do not win this war -if those terrors are visited upon us and our children and our children's children every delinquent among us is to blame. Every worker who strikes at this time is an enemy of the Nation -and the Union racketeer or unfair industrialist that goads him to strike is a greater enemy. No one can dispute those facts -no one cares to -but nothing is done about them -"it wouldn't be legal". Corporations, Unions, Companies, individuals -each who by any act interferes with or holds back the war effort is an enemy of the Nation, -but still nothing is done because -"It wouldn't be legal". And now that delinquency extends to the very thing that can win this war!

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Though all those who "do nothing" cannot be classed as enemies of the Nation they all can be and must be classed as delinquents - delinquents who are to blame. In this time for to "do nothing" there is no excuse. If a thing is not legal and is necessary - MAKE it legal! If a thing is necessary and involves taking a chance - TAKE the chance! No chance is too great to take against the direness of the circumstances that face us. And in recognition of this the writer has chanced his all - he not only has chanced his all but he has tried to GIVE to the Government a "thing" whose advantages at this time would far exceed any other advantage that can be now conceived of.

The Government could not accept the gift - it "wouldn't be legal" - so he suggested it buy it for the cost of protecting patent rights. But that "wouldn't be legal" - so he suggested a compromise arrangement. Now delinquents have wasted five days - "doing nothing" - wondering if a contract drawn by the Assistant Attorney General to cover the compromise arrangement might be legal - and the help and advantage this compromise could give General MacArthur and his men is delayed another five days.

In the original offer the writer offered all - including his services. He has offered all manner of compromise in which he took all the chances and the Government none. He agreed to a contract in which he committed himself to everything and the Government committed itself to nothing. And delinquents are STILL wondering whether it would be legal. His patience is at an end. He realizes the war we are in - he realizes what we are fighting for, - and since others do not or refuse to realize these things he now feels that, for the sake of the Nation, he must take it upon himself to force the realization on them.

To this end he has revised the contract to one that is equally committal by all parties and as equally binding on all. And to prevent any further delay in the making of this advantage available to the Government here stipulates positive terms from which he will not waver.

At the most, 48 hours should have more than sufficed for all manner of War Department inquiry into a contract drawn by the Assistant Attorney General, and when in two conversations with the Assistant Secretary of War's assistants during that period the answer was "when and if we determine it is legal we will get in touch with you", the writer decided on the following course:

TO MULTIPLY THE MONETARY STIPULATIONS IN THE THEN CONTRACT BY THE NUMBER OF DAYS THAT ELAPSE FROM THE EXPIRATION OF THAT 48-HOUR PERIOD TO THE TIME A CONTRACT IS EXECUTED.

That 48-hour period expired on Friday, March 6th. Today is the third day beyond. In other words, instead of a preliminary trust fund of $50,000 the fund must now be $150,000. Tomorrow it will be $200,000 - and so on. The additional deposit instead of being $950,000 is now $2,850,000. Tomorrow it will be $3,800,000 - and so on. Since I would have been willing to accept as little as $6,000 per year as compensation it is this minimum figure that is multiplied in this case. Instead of $6,000 per year the compensation must now be at the rate of $12,000 per year. Tomorrow it will be $24,000 - and so on.

These are severe measures, - but they are not near as severe as public reaction will be toward those whose delinquency makes such measures necessary. The writer fully realizes that the matter with which this is concerned, and that which is herein concerning the matter should only come to public attention when necessity demands it. Because he realizes this he has done all in his power to keep any information concerning it out of the press. However, those who are delinquent in this case are charged with a public trust - and if their delinquency continues then that continued
delinquency must be regarded as a public concern. Therefore, copies of this communication, the attendant pages, the contract which the War Department deliberates, and all reports and communications regarding this matter have been placed in a sealed fiber envelope and dispatched to the writer's attorney, and, if by 5:00 P.M. of the 10th day (March 16th) there has not been a contract executed, the writer's attorney is to open the packet and turn the contents over to specified members of the press. The packet also contains a chronological recording covering all dates and times of all that has transpired including matters that never would otherwise be divulged.

I realize the attitude that will be taken by those persons referred to herein as delinquents, -but I also realize that unless Our Country wins this war life will be worse than death! And I realize this which those who are delinquents must be made to realize -that with the "thing" I am offering the Government we can win the war -but without it we may not win -or may waste many more lives in the doing.

Attached hereto are the introductory pages of the disclosure of the "GABRIEL ENGINE". They should to some extent serve to impress those who are delinquents with the importance of the matter in which they have been delinquent. In addition to the content of those pages I wish to call attention to one other fact that might even better serve the purpose: In the conference of February 26th General Knudsen remarked that he had "heard a lot about the GABRIEL ENGINE". It's true, he had, for the engineers who conducted the tests for the inventor in 1934 did quite a bit of talking about its almost fantastic results, but for purposes the writer does not disclose at this time I sidetracked General Knudsen's remark by calling attention to an exchange of correspondence.

The writer has not and never has had any desire for personal gain from the Government. His attitude always has been and still is -to contribute to the Government and to all mankind to the fullest and best of his ability. He regrets deeply that so few people share this attitude and hopes sincerely that they will at once begin to increase in numbers.

Assuring you and all others who read this that the offensive attitude herein is directed wholly and only at those persons who merit it,

Very truly yours,

/s/ F. W. Gabriel, Jr.

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DOE BM 65000.9 (2/27/58)
Date: 1-3-72
Signature: RGP

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To the disclosure witnesses:

Gentlemen:

I am led to believe that (other than the attorneys of the Patent Section, Claims Division, Department of Justice) all those persons present are designees of the Secretary of War, representing the Government, and are duly authorized and empowered (1) to pass judgment upon the facts to be here disclosed, and (2) to decide here and now at the conclusion of the disclosure whether the Government shall or shall not at once "elect to proceed further under the contract". As soon as the persons present have established their status, and only such as are here before stipulated remain in attendance, the disclosure will be begun.

Preliminary to the disclosure, throughout the disclosure, and, most of all, subsequent to the disclosure, you are requested to keep these facts foremost in your mind:

(1) The invention to be herewith disclosed is not merely an improvement, -- it is something new. Something as new to motive power as was the first internal combustion engine, -- and something that is as greatly advantageous over all other internal combustion engines as were those engines over steam engines. When this engine is available to use it will make the use of present type engines in automobiles, airplanes, etc., as ridiculous, comparatively, as the use of steam engines in such vehicles has been made by them.

(2) This engine, in this time of war, tremendously increases our striking power, -- increases it far beyond anything present engines could ever attain. This is an advantage, -- an exceedingly tremendous advantage -- but an advantage only so long as we have it and the enemy does not.

(3) This engine extends our oil reserves, -- greatly extends them -- maybe even as much as 300%. But the extension of oil reserves is even more important to the enemy than to us, -- and, if the engine should be put in production by the enemy before we used our advantage to end the war, the advantage would be the enemy's, -- not ours.

(4) This engine, besides extending our oil reserves, speeds our processes of supply tremendously. Instead of the long and costly processes of gasoline refining, -- instead of the man power and cross-tracking and back-tracking of gasoline refining plants, -- instead of the excessive tax on transportation facilities made by oil well to gasoline refinery to place of use -- this engine requires no or only insignificant refining of oil and only a fraction of the transportation. Once again, -- this is an advantage that would be even more important to the enemy than to us and, once they produce the engine, the greatest advantage is theirs, -- not ours.

(5) This engine extends our metal reserves -- tremendously, -- maybe even more so than it extends our
This again is an advantage that would be more important to the enemy than to us. Again, once they produce the engine, the greatest advantage is theirs, -- not ours.

(6) This engine means that 50 or 60 engines -- maybe many more -- can be manufactured in the time now required for one.

This engine tremendously multiplies the output per man-hour.

This engine tremendously reduces the factory facilities required.

This engine tremendously reduces the machine-tool requirements.

This engine tremendously reduces assembly requirements.

This engine tremendously reduces maintenance and replacement time.

This engine tremendously reduces almost every space, time, material and cost of factor that can be conceived of! And all those advantages are more important to the enemy than to us.

We must, more so than with anything before in our history, guard this engine in the fullest secrecy possible. We can and must hide from the knowledge of even those workmen producing it that this is an engine. I repeat, -- we can and must!

(7) One factor that would be of equal advantage to us and the enemy is this: This engine greatly increases our striking range, -- of our planes, our tanks, our ships, our submarines. And to hold this advantage to ourselves alone we must hold the engine to ourselves alone for the fullest time possible. We must do everything to assure ourselves that the enemy will gain no knowledge of it before such time as they may capture some unit containing it -- and not even then, if possible.

These admonishments, -- the repetitions they contain -- may be regarded too lightly by you. For your sake, for the nation's sake, for the sake of all civilization, -- they must not be.

These same admonishments were contained in a confidential documentary report that was sent by special messenger to be delivered sealed to the President, the Secretary of War, and the Secretary of Navy. Despite this fact, in a period of less than two weeks information was willfully given to newspaper columnists by one or more of these sources. If those men or persons enjoying their trusted confidence regard the admonishments lightly it certainly is not amiss to suppose that any of you gentlemen might do likewise. It must not be done!
Reflecting on these admonishments it should be as evident to you as it is to the inventor that speed is as essential as secrecy and may even be essential to secrecy. In other words -- the faster we can get into production on these engines and get them into use the faster the advantage is ours and the less chance there is for the enemy to learn of it beforehand. Or -- what must definitely be considered also -- the less chance there is of one of their nationals paralleling the invention and affording them instead of us its preemptive use. It should not need to be emphasized that if this latter should happen our fate might thereby be predetermined.

In view of all these things, the inventor is attempting by all means at his disposal to make this disclosure so full and understandable that a "demonstration period" might be dispensed with and investigational and developmental research begun immediately. Because of this, -- because of the facts foregoing this, -- it is requested that you follow the disclosure with the greatest of attention and proceed from step to step of it only when each is fully understood by you.

Several extra minutes now may save several months of needlessly wasted time, -- and several months of time saved may save the nation and all civilization.
May 28, 1942.

Dear Mac:

The enclosed correspondence constitutes an effective tomb-stone for the strange case of Dr. Gabriel. I suggest that you keep it in your file on the subject as I have no facilities in this office for storing confidential documents.

Yours sincerely,

John Carter
Dear Mr. Carter:

With reference to your recent request for information as to Mr. Herman W. Gabriel and particularly as to any verification of his statement that he had sold his invention to a foreign power, I enclose a brief report.

Apparently there seems to be no evidence to support his statement as to its sale, and every indication that his invention is not promising.

Very sincerely,

T. S. Wilkinson.

Mr. J. Franklin Carter,
Room 1210,
National Press Building,
Washington, D. C.
MEMORANDUM FOR THE DIRECTOR

SUBJECT: Gabriel Engine; Herman W. Gabriel.

Reference: (a) Conf. memo for Head of Domestic Intelligence Branch, dated May 23, 1942, same Subject.

1. Inquiries made in the Domestic Intelligence Branch in this case have developed no information regarding a specific foreign Government with whom the inventor states he has been negotiating.

2. An indices check of the Division of Naval Intelligence files disclosed no reference to an individual by this name. An inquiry in the Office of Inventions resulted in ascertaining that the Subject transmitted on January 31, 1942 a lengthy document describing generally the functions of his engine. Mr. Gabriel did not furnish any return address at that time, and, consequently, no reply was made by the Office of Inventions to Mr. Gabriel. The information on file in that office has been examined and contains no other background information regarding Mr. Gabriel, except that he claims to be an expert in the fields of chemistry, science, physics, engineering, metals, alloys, biology, physiology, cardiology, dermatology, psychology, sociology, production problems, labor problems, and philosophy. An inquiry in the office of Colonel Bissell, G-2, also resulted in negative findings.

3. It has been ascertained that the Mr. Taylor referred to in Reference (a) is, in fact, Dr. Thomas R. Taylor, of the National Inventors' Council, and not Mr. Taylor of the Naval Research Laboratory. Dr. Thomas R. Taylor has stated that he is quite familiar with Mr. Gabriel's invention and somewhat acquainted with the individual himself. Dr. Taylor further stated that in the early spring of 1942 Mr. Gabriel, through some pressure at the White House, secured a contract with the War Department to go on the payroll at $25.00 per diem, provided the disclosure of his invention indicated merit. This contract contained a stipulation to the effect that the invention would...

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OSD Letter, 5-3-72
have to be passed on by a board of review designated by the War Department. It was this board, consisting of General William Knudsen, Dr. Thomas R. Taylor, of the National Inventors' Council, and one member each from the Bureau of Standards and Department of Justice, which decided that Mr. Gabriel's invention had no foundation of merit. Dr. Taylor advised that the Department of Justice representatives on this board had gone so far as to have a patent search made, which search revealed the fact that all of the claims set forth by Mr. Gabriel were covered by previous patents, and that there was nothing new in his invention. The contract which had been entered into between the War Department and the inventor was voided after a report of the committee set forth above. Dr. Taylor further stated that he had never heard the Subject mention directly any dealings with a foreign government, although it was Dr. Taylor's opinion that the Subject would not hesitate to do so.

An inquiry with Colonel Heiss in the Under Secretary's Office, War Department, resulted in ascertaining that it was Colonel Heiss who made the arrangements for the inventor to be given a hearing on his invention. Colonel Heiss advised that the invention was "no good", and that the inventor had attempted to sell the idea to General Motors about four or five years ago. Colonel Heiss further stated that General Knudsen had been of the opinion that there was absolutely nothing to the inventor's claims.

Both Dr. Taylor and Colonel Heiss advised that the Subject is a very high-pressure individual and one who will stop at nothing to advance his cause. Both of these gentlemen indicated that the board which had heard the inventor on the matter of his engine had been ordered more or less through the insistence of the White House, and that the Subject had apparently used some Congressional influence to present his views to the White House. Colonel Heiss stated that General Knudsen would have no further information on this, and that no statement had been made to him regarding the possibility of Subject dealing with a foreign power, although the remark was offered that such an act would not be without the realm of possibility.

It is interesting to note that Dr. Taylor, of the National Inventors' Council, also stated that at no time had the Subject made a complete disclosure of his invention, and there was never any working model submitted.
Mr. John Franklin Carter,
1210 National Press Building,
Washington, D. C.

Dear Mr. Carter:

General Knudsen tells me that his personal opinion on the Gabriel engine is the same as his official opinion expressed as a member of the board, that is to say, that the device is not feasible and that it would be a waste of money to pay for the completion of a demonstration model.

I am looking up the other matter mentioned in your letter.

With best regards, I am

Sincerely yours,

Robert P. Patterson
Under Secretary of War.
MEMORANDUM FOR MR. MCINTYRE:

Mr. Taylor of the Inventors' Council phoned in regard to Dr. Gabriel. He said he was afraid he had not succeeded in taking him off our hands; that after an all-afternoon conference yesterday, Gabriel still refused to go any further with him on his invention, and said he expected a telephone call from the White House in regard to the matter.

Mr. Taylor said that Gabriel seemed intelligent enough, but as far as his invention is concerned, it is a revolutionary idea for an engine, and the Council is doubtful about it because they do not believe Gabriel has sufficient technical background to have perfected it.

Of course, there are no details in the communication he has submitted, and he refused to tell Taylor anything more about it. He will not obtain a patent on it, either, because he is afraid the secret of his invention will be released. Mr. Taylor tried to convince him that the Patent Office would hold it in absolute secrecy, but he was unsuccessful.

Gabriel will make no further disclosure of the details of his engine until he has the guarantee from some government agency that he will be protected in a financial way against any possible lawsuits from automobile companies, etc. When Taylor said no government agency could legally do that, Gabriel said he was acting on his lawyer's advice, and would not be budged from that idea.
March 17, 1942

MEMORANDUM FOR THE ATTORNEY GENERAL

Gabriel is blowing his horn again.

This is the effusion which I showed the President this morning.

As I suggested on the phone, will you show it to your Mr. Shea and then see that it goes over without delay to Under Secretary Patterson.

Obviously, we are taking no action whatever on it.

M. H. McIntyre
Secretary to the President

Enclosure

Let to the President from H. W. Gabriel reviewing entire case and with particular reference to conference 3/14/42 with Asst. AG Shea and member of his staff over revision of contract which did not meet with Gabriel's approval.
February 23, 1942.

Respectfully referred for consideration and acknowledgment.

EDWIN M. WATSON
Secretary to the President

Letters to the President: Referred to the Department of Commerce, N.C.

For suggestions for inventions to aid in defense.

GABRIEL, Dr. H.W., Jr., 1011-910 E St., N.W., Wash., D.C., 2/8/42.
HARKLEY, Allen, R.2, Box 33, Tomsand, Ga., 1/22/42.
HARTA, A.A., Box 336, Winlock, Wash., 1/18/42. Add. to Mr. Early.
ANONYMOUS, Postmarked Phila., Pa., 1/26/42.
HANSEL, William W., 624 Shade Line, Gen. Del., Cumberland, Md., 1/22/42
to Mr. Early.
SHEPH, Louis, 463 E. 46th Place, Chicago, Ill., 1/26/42.
SHIPMAN, Cecil L., 159 Lexington Ave., Buffalo, N.Y., 1/26/42.
MARTIN, George O., 731 Tennyson, Kansas City, Kans., 1/26/42.
ARATO, Mr. Frank, 1333 S.E. Division St., Portland, Ore., 1/22/42.
GOODIT, Adrian, c/o Barber Shop, 10th & Orchard St., Newport, Ky., 1/26/42.
LIPSOMER, R.E., 4101 Central, Kansas City, Mo., 2/8/42.
THOMPSON, Owen, 1114 Houston St., San Antonio, Tex., 2/3/42.
GROCE, Mr. Edward V., 3022 S. Keesler Ave., Chicago, Ill., 2/3/42.
ELSTER, Bert, 1139 Penn. Ave., McLeanport, Pa., 2/8/42.
O'BAN, Earl, 6201 Rhodes Ave., Chicago, Ill., 2/7/42.
NANCE, John V., 25 W. 46th St., Sparta 1806, New York, N.Y., 2/7/42.
LEACH, Thomas, 4101 Central, Kansas City, Mo., 2/8/42.
PORTER, J.Vayno, Belle Vernon, Pa., R.D.2, 2/7/42. Encl. (2).
STONE, P.G., 10347 Gratiot, Detroit, Mich.,
CARS, William J., 961-75th St., Brooklyn, N.Y., 2/8/42.
AVIS, John A., 2600 Hard ave., Jennings, Mo., 2/9/42. Encl. (1). Add. to
Mr. Early.
FOLK, S.C., P.O. Coverdale, Pa., 2/6/42.
ANONYMOUS, (initials G.R.), postmarked Cleveland, Ohio, 2/10/42. Encl. (1).
MILLER, J.C., 2421 Eureka Ave., Birmingham, Ala., 2/8/42. Encl. (1).
RELLER, Earl, 405 S. 6th St., Jefferson, Pa., 1/27/42.
IONBUR, Peter M. M.D., Easton, Pa., 1/26/42.
CARRER, Mr. Richard, Camp Road, Athol Springs, N.Y., undated.
POINSETT, Walter, 3608 E. Overlook Hts., Cleveland Heights, Ohio, undated.
RASS, Philip, (or Phillip Ross), 106 Hawley St., Toledo, Ohio, 1/27/42.
CHERD, John, Galion, Ohio, 249 S. Pierce St., 1/26/42.
DARRELL, Kenneth K., King & Woolard Sts., Melvern, Pa., 1/27/42.
BROOKS, Chudo, 96 Collins Road, Waban, Mass., 1/25/42.

J.J. [illegible]