

● PSF

C. F. "M" GENERAL

CF
M

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

11/15/33

Private - Confidential.

File Confidential file

Memo. for the President:

1. Mr. J. P. Morgan called and wanted to talk with you, and is waiting for a call to tell him when he can.

2. Kitty Lane called up from somewhere in Minnesota, and is to call back at seven. Wants to tell you about deplorable conditions, with Republicans holding all the ten thousand dollar jobs. I told her you knew all about it but she still wants to talk.

M. H. M.

11-6-42

File

MEMO FOR RECORD:

At Mr. McIntyre's request I phoned Mr. David J. Lewis and gave him message as follows: "After full consideration of the position taken by the War Dept. and of all of the factors in the case, objection to McNish's employment has been withdrawn and notification of the receipt of this withdrawal was acknowledged by the Office of Scientific Research and Development on October 18, 1942."

x25

*C. F.
M*

JJ

DECLASSIFIED
By Deputy Archivist of the U.S.

By W. J. Stewart Date MAY 29 1975
THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

November 4, 1942.

MEMORANDUM FOR MR. McINTYRE:

With the return of the papers received by you from Mr. David J. Lewis of the National Mediation Board concerning Mr. A. G. McNish, I am forwarding herewith a confidential memorandum received from the Office of Naval Intelligence with regard thereto.

It will be noted from paragraph 11, page 2, of this memorandum that after full consideration of the position taken by the War Department and of all of the factors in the case, objection to McNish's employment has been withdrawn and that notification of the receipt of this withdrawal was acknowledged by the Office of Scientific Research and Development on October 18, 1942. I think the information given in the immediate preceding sentence could be passed on to Mr. Lewis but I do not believe it will be necessary to furnish any of the additional information shown in the Navy Department's memorandum. This memorandum, however, could very properly be filed with these papers in case it becomes necessary to make future reference to this case.

John McCrea

JOHN L. McCREA,
Captain, U.S. Navy, x 50-13
Naval Aide to the President.

x 18
x C.7. Office of Scientific Research
and Development

In reply refer to Initials
and No.

Op-16-B-7(10)
AB-5/QQ
Serial 02545216

NAVY DEPARTMENT
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OF NAVAL OPERATIONS
WASHINGTON

NOV - 3 1942

MEMORANDUM FOR: Captain John L. McCrea, USN
Naval Aide to the President.

SUBJECT: Alvin G. McNish - summary of situation in connection with clearance
for employment on OSRD (NDRC) contract.

Enclosure: (A) Bupers conf. memo to ONI Pers 367 AH dated October 26, 1942,
re subject, with enclosures.

1. Enclosure (A) is returned herewith in accordance with the request
of the Bureau of Personnel.

2. Some time during the months of July or August in 1940, the National De-
fense Research Committee submitted the name of Alvin G. McNISH, No. 161, to the
Secretary's Office for employment in connection with the National Defense Research
Committee. On the 26th of September, after reference to the Office of Naval In-
telligence, the Secretary's Office advised the National Defense Research Committee,
that the employment of Mr. McNish was agreeable to the Navy Department.

3. On September 30, 1941, the Bureau of Ships requested an investigation of
Mr. Alvin G. McNish in connection with his employment in the civil service capacity
of physicist in the Navigation Equipment Section of the Bureau of Ships. An in-
vestigation of Mr. McNish was conducted by the Office of Naval Intelligence for
the period from October 14 until December 3, 1941.

4. As a result of this investigation and the development of the fact that
McNish was a close associate of the German scientist, Julius Bartells, who appeared
to be a confidante of the German Embassy, it seemed wise to advise the National
Defense Research Committee that the employment of Mr. McNish on confidential con-
tracts was not agreeable to the Navy Department and the clearance set forth under
date of September 26 was revoked on March 13, 1942.

5. On January 20, 1942, the Naval Observatory requested information in
connection with Alvin G. McNish, and a copy of the Naval Intelligence investi-
gation dated 12/11/41 was furnished.

6. Following the ONI letter dated March 13, 1942 rescinding the clearance
of Alvin G. McNish, the OSRD replied enclosing a copy of a memorandum setting
forth the details of the project under the general direction of McNish. They
were stated to be numerous and of substantial importance. It was pointed out
that these projects were largely Army work, and work for the Navy was largely
completed.

DECLASSIFIED
OSD Letter, 5-3-72

-1-

FEB 11 1974

Op-16-B-7(10)

AB-5/QQ

Serial 02545216

NOV - 3 1942

7. The OSRD letter of March 16 was acknowledged by letter dated April 6 in which it was stated that realizing the substantial importance of the work for the Army, the Navy Department supplied the Army with all pertinent information in its hands, and consulted with the Army before further communicating with OSRD, and it was only after the most careful consideration that the Navy Department reaffirmed its decision set forth in its letter of March 13, 1942, that the employment of Alvin G. McNish by the Office of Scientific Research and Development in the work of that organization where he would have access to Naval classified and aeronautical information was not agreeable to the Navy Department.

8. Subsequently, on April 8, OSRD advised that McNish was no longer employed on Navy work, but was employed on very important Army work, and it was felt that it would appear undesirable to take any but the very necessary steps at the moment until the Army investigation may have been completed.

9. On August 20, 1942, OSRD again took up the matter of the clearance of Mr. McNish with the Office of the Coordinator of Naval Research which stated that it could not recommend the clearance of Dr. McNish, and further that it advised against giving Dr. McNish access to confidential OSRD information.

10. On September 22, 1942, the Office of Naval Intelligence received a copy of a letter from the Military Intelligence Service in which it was stated that, based upon information contained in War Department files, there appeared to be no reason why Alvin G. McNish, alias George A. McNish, and Alvin Wilhelm Greene McNish, ought not to be employed on National Defense work. This was followed by a copy of a report received in the Office of Naval Intelligence on September 25, 1942, and dated August 31, 1942, on Alvin Greene McNish.

11. On September 26, 1942, OSRD again took up the McNish matter with the Coordinator of Naval Research. Their letter was referred to ONI for a reply. On October 18, 1942, after full consideration of the position taken by the War Department and of all of the other factors in the case, objection to McNish's employment, was withdrawn.

12. Subsequently, on October 19, 1942 receipt was acknowledged by the director of the OSRD of the letter of October 18, 1942, withdrawing objection to McNish's employment.

J. B. Walker
J. B. WALKER,
Captain, USN

x
x18-R

DECLASSIFIED
OSD Letter, 5-8-7#

FEB 11 1974

In reply address not the signer of this
letter, but Bureau of Naval Personnel,
Navy Department, Washington, D. C.
Refer to No. Pers 367 AH

NAVY DEPARTMENT
BUREAU OF NAVAL PERSONNEL
WASHINGTON, D. C.

PR3/P14-1

October 26, 1942.

MEMORANDUM TO: Commander W. S. Wharton, USNR, Room 4740,
Office of Naval Intelligence.

Subject: A. G. McNish - request for clearance by the
Navy in connection with his duties under a
contract with the National Defense Research
Committee.

1. The attached memorandum from the Naval Aide
to the President, together with enclosures, is forwarded here-
with as it is understood that your office is familiar with
this case.
2. It is requested that you furnish the informa-
tion requested in the memorandum from the Naval Aide to the
President, and return the enclosures with your reply.
3. The Office of the Naval Aide has been advised
of this reference by telephone.

Respectfully,

Old

F. P. Old,
Captain, USN.

XXXXXX
XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX
XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX
XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

XXXXXXXXXXXX
XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX
XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX
XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

October 24, 1942

MEMORANDUM FOR

THE CHIEF OF NAVAL PERSONNEL *x 18-2*

Mr. McIntyre has asked me to advise him with regard to the situation described in the attached correspondence.

With the return of all papers would you please give me a memorandum which I could hand to Mr. McIntyre at the time I return Mr. McNish's letter to him.

Very respectfully,

J. L. McCre

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

Attachments

CARNegie INSTITUTION OF WASHINGTON

DEPARTMENT OF TERRESTRIAL MAGNETISM

5241 BROAD BRANCH ROAD, N. W.
WASHINGTON, D. C.

October 19, 1942 (No.Gr-1)

Mr. David J. Lewis
National Mediation Board
Room 2008, Old Interior Department Building
18th and F Sts., N. W.
Washington, D. C.

Dear Mr. Lewis:

Enclosed herewith please find (1) A statement of my parentage and nationality (2) A statement of personal history (3) A statement of political views (4) A letter to Captain Hellweg and (5) A letter from Captain Hellweg. These are supplied for whatever assistance you think they may be in taking up the matter of my defective Navy clearance, which we discussed on October 15.

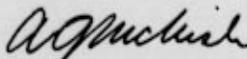
I was first aware of my lack of clearance during the spring of 1942, but, as my work at that time was concerned almost entirely with the Army, no vigorous steps were taken to have the matter cleared up. However, on a number of occasions since then my services to the Army have been hampered by the fact that I was excluded from any activity where I might see Navy equipment of a confidential sort. More recently there have been several requests from the Navy for experimental equipment and services from the supplying of which I was excluded because of this lack of clearance. It is my opinion that this situation is contrary to the best interests of our armed forces. The facts upon which this opinion is based cannot adequately be set forth without revealing confidential information which I have no authority to disclose.

I understand that Dr. Bush, Director of The Office of Scientific Research and Development, has called attention to this, but so far my clearance has not been established by the Navy, although at Dr. Bush's instigation the Army has re-opened consideration of my clearance and reaffirmed their previous findings after a more thorough investigation.

In requesting that you take steps through whatever channels are open to you, I am acting in what I believe to be the best interests of our country.

With deep appreciation of your willingness to assist in this matter, I am

Sincerely yours,



A. G. McNish

PERSONAL HISTORY

I have been a resident of Washington or its suburbs all my life.

I attended the Webster Elementary School from September 1909 to June 1916 (seven school years), the McKinley Manual Training High School from September 1916 to June 1920, George Washington University from September 1920 to June 1926 and from February 1929 to June 1931.

During my childhood I traveled extensively with my parents within the United States. At that time my father was a special investigator for the Federal Bureau of Investigation of the Department of Justice. He was transferred to the War Department in 1918 where he served until his retirement about 1934 as legal adviser in the Real Estate Disposal Section of the Quartermaster General's Office.

I was employed at the National Bureau of Standards during the summer of 1920 and later from June 1921 to October 1923. I was employed as a laboratory aid and laboratory assistant in the Sound Section of the National Bureau of Standards during the summer of 1920 and from about June 1921 to October 1923. From about May 1924 to about June 1925 I was employed as a clerk in the Adjutant General's Office, War Department. I taught physics in the Washington, D. C. Business High School from September 1926 to September 1930. I was appointed to the staff of the Department of Terrestrial Magnetism of the Carnegie Institution of Washington on July 1, 1930, which position I still hold.

During November 1939 I prepared a memorandum pertaining to our national defense following which I was actively engaged in the furtherance of this defense measure in cooperation with established agencies of the Navy Department. This work was carried out on a voluntary basis, my services being loaned to the Navy Department by the Carnegie Institution.

In April 1941, the phases of the work for which I was best adapted having been completed, I undertook investigational work for the Army under a contract with the National Defense Research Committee, part of which work has been completed and part of which is still in progress.

It is my sincere and conscientious belief that my services have been of appreciable value in improving our national defense. All of these activities were undertaken without any special remuneration or reward and at the sacrifice of advancement of my scientific career.

On January 18, 1942 I was requested by Captain J. F. Hellweg, Superintendent of the U. S. Naval Observatory, to apply for a commission in the Navy. After consultation with the Director of my Department and officials in the National Defense Research Committee I declined this honor, believing that my services to my country would be of greater value in my then existing capacity.

POLITICAL VIEWS

During the several years preceding our entry into the present war I believed in a policy of non-intervention for this country and was opposed to numerous steps taken by our government which were contrary to that policy. I believed that such steps would eventually involve us in war which I did not believe would be to the interest of this country. Since this belief was identical with what the Nazi propagandists would naturally desire, my views may have been considered pro-Nazi by those whose views were otherwise.

These views were freely discussed with those whom I considered my friends, but I refrained from associating myself in any way with any of the organizations promulgating similar views, feeling that such association might detract from my usefulness to our Armed Forces in case we did become involved in the war. Meanwhile, I have exerted myself to the extent of my capacity in the perfection of our armaments.

I have never at any time held or expressed a liking for the Nazi form of government. Previous to the attack on Pearl Harbor I believed in and advocated the utmost improvement of our defenses, and since that attack I have believed in and advocated the prosecution of the war effort with the utmost vigor regardless of the sacrifices which might be required of the citizenry of this country.

C O P Y

Department of Terrestrial Magnetism
Carnegie Institution of Washington
Washington, D. C.

January 22, 1942 (No.G-1)

Capt. J. F. Hellweg, Superintendent
U. S. Naval Observatory
Washington, D. C.

Dear Capt. Hellweg:

After discussing with Dr. Fleming the proposition set forth in your letter of January 19, I concur with the opinion he expressed to you by telephone. While I should have considered it a great honor to serve our country as a Lieutenant-Commander in the Navy and should have readily accepted all the responsibilities and conditions involved in such an appointment, it seems that a greater usefulness will be served by my remaining in my existing capacity at the present time.

Please let me repeat Dr. Fleming's offer that my services will always be available to the Naval Observatory in a consultant capacity for whatever problems may arise in connection with the Observatory's compass work. Thanking you again for the honor which you have shown me, I am,

Sincerely yours,

/ S/ A. G. McNish

C O P Y

NAVY DEPARTMENT
U. S. NAVAL OBSERVATORY
Washington, D. C.

January 19, 1942

My dear Doctor Fleming:

The work at the Naval Observatory in connection with magnetic compasses has now reached a point where we need additional help.

Mr. A. G. McNish will fit into our picture beautifully if we can get him.

Before any effort can be made to have him inducted into the service, a written release is required from you.

Please do not think that this means that we are going to cut McNish off entirely from all other work. What we want is to have him here where we can utilize his special knowledge 100 per cent in our work in handling magnetic compasses.

I hope that this will meet with your approval and that you will furnish us with the written release for Mr. McNish.

The Navy Department will do nothing until after they receive such a release. I will appreciate it very much both personally and officially.

Very sincerely yours,

/s/ J. F. Hellweg,
Captain, U.S.N. (Ret.)
Superintendent.

Doctor John A. Fleming,
Department of Terrestrial Magnetism
5241 Broad Branch Road, Northwest,
Washington, D. C.

PARENTAGE AND NATIONALITY

I was born in Washington, D. C. on January 18, 1903.

My mother was Clara I. M. (Donch) McNish, daughter of Henry and Eliza Donch. My mother was also born in Washington, D. C. Her parents were born in Germany. They entered this country about 1846. My maternal grandfather was a naturalized American citizen. He enlisted in the United States Marine Corps for service with the Union forces on August 23, 1864.

My father was Alvin Miller McNish, born in Savannah, Georgia on January 7, 1864 to Thomas Walsh and Mary (Way) McNish, both American born. On my father's side I am a direct descendent of Zachariah Greene, an officer on the Staff of Gen. Washington during the Revolution, and of Peregrine White, the first white child born in New England of British parentage.

In support of these facts there are

- (1) Affidavit as to my birth
- (2) Certificate of my christening
- (3) Copy of my geneology from the files of the Children of the American Revolution

I have no known relatives living outside of the United States except a first cousin, Adelaide (McNish)Booker, and her infant son, who live now at Swanage, England.

NATIONAL MEDIATION BOARD

WASHINGTON

GEORGE A. COOK, CHAIRMAN
OTTO S. BEYER
DAVID J. LEWIS
ROBERT F. COLE, SECRETARY

A. G. McKish ^{necessary}

Seeks opportunity to be present to
explain his own devices to Navy - Seeks Sub-
Army grants clearance -
Son tried to enlist and has Father's Consent -
Grandfather enlisted in Navy - Civil War -
On Father's side gave back to Revolution