

COPY

MEMORANDUM

January 13, 1943

TO: Senator Kilgore
FROM: Mr. Robinson
SUBJECT: Fifth Service Command of Ohio

There is attached a copy of a letter written to General Somervel by a retired Lt. Colonel, which outlines in some detail the activities of General Collins, Commanding Officer of the Service Command covering Ohio, and other matters.

It is not believed that much will be gained by initiating inquiry with General Somervel with respect to the contents of this letter. However, it will undoubtedly fit in with other matters currently under review by you, and for that reason is referred to your attention.

The letter indicates that General Collins is looking forward to a three star promotion, and it might be well to have the information contained therein at the time any such request is officially made.

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To: 10 Brehon Somervell, Lt. Gen., U. S. Army.

more to office space cost than I can see him spending. I can see him spending

in command of any installation, particularly one so large as a service command. I am writing this as an interested taxpayer, not in the belief that you will accept it for true, but in the hope that you will investigate the statements made herein and take action calculated to save our army from embarrassment. Gen. Collins first official act here was to order venetian blinds installed on his house. He had not yet seen the house at the time. The cost was about four or five hundred dollars, as you can verify with the Cleveland Venetian Blind Co. of Cleveland, Ohio. You can also verify that an army vehicle picked them up the day they were finished and whisked them to Columbus so as not to keep the General waiting. Of course \$400. will not break us up, and a 250 mile trip, special delivery, is not too serious, but it is an indication of where the main interest lies. It doesn't look like an attempt to abide by your minimum maintenance orders. And it would look bad in the newspapers, where I hope I won't have to put it. Don't let the Gen. blame his staff for not pointing out the regulations to him. When one tries to explain to Collins that he is evading regulations, he gets out short the first time and gets the impression that the next attempt would be his last official act. Another indication of Collin's attitude was revealed when the Gen. bawled out a civilian carpenter at Ft. Hayes for not keeping the post looking better. This carpenter has one flyer-son in a German prison camp and another in training. He answered, "General, we are conscious that a war is going on. We have not tried to improve appearances, but have stuck to essential maintenance." General Collins replied, "The war does not make a damn bit of difference, this post is going to be fixed the way I want it." You know what the press could do with that remark.

A few days after arrival, the General made an inspection tour of Ft. Hayes. Now, the Service Command Inspector General had gone over the post about three or four months earlier and given a rating of excellent, and the post is in fully as good condition now. Collins pronounced the post as the worst he had ever seen. As he met each officer he picked some trivial item that he could see, and proceeded to beat the officer's ears down without giving him a chance to say a word. If he could see nothing wrong, he would ask questions on inconsequential details until he caught him hesitating, and then proceed with the tongue lashing. The approach never varied, and was apparently designed to offset an inferiority complex induced by the General's small stature. This is quite different from the approach recommended and practiced by General Marshall. Here are some results of this inspection: 1. Colonels, eagle Colonels, Division chiefs in the service command headquarters, making personal inspections of the grounds outside office buildings three times a day, looking for paper on the ground. 2. All members of command with an extreme case of jitters, expecting unfounded criticism at any moment. 3. Post Commander, who has been in command only a couple of months, debating whether to abandon ship and take a medical discharge, which he can get, or stay and risk leaving under a cloud. 4. The government's money being spent right and left in face lifting projects designed to humor the General.

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The things I have listed are relatively trivial. I would have waited for the bigger things which are certain to follow, except I believe early investigation and control will save a lot of money. There are a lot of other stations involved. And if his plan to convert the reception center barracks here to office space goes thru, I can see him spending \$100,000.00 for elevators, linoleum and beautification. Also the officers club here has satisfied all predecessors and it hardly appears necessary to the war effort to take over a big office building at this time unless the accident is to be on the way life from now on.

Maybe his predecessors did not make perfect decisions, but why discuss that? The point is that the work of winning the war is being well done with the place as it is now. Even Collins makes no attempt to justify his actions as necessary to the war. He has the viewpoint held by many oldtime regulars that no one gets promoted for saving the government money. Maybe he can get that third star by wasting manpower and materials vital to war. I hear it has been done, but that is rambling into the field of opinion. More to the point is this: on a recent date the 5th S.C. Hq. roster showed 32 Colonels, 42 Lt. Col., 10 Majors, 68 Captains, 30 First and 34 Second Lt. Also a couple thousand civilians. If Collins is honestly trying to accomplish his mission with a minimum of strain on the nation, he would set about trying to reduce this bureaucratic setup, rather than trying to beautify his quarters and service command at government expense.

Collins has talent, ambition, and considerable knowledge. He could probably do a job in a staff post under immediate supervision of someone who outranked him, but he is out of character in a command spot. I know the army can afford better than that. For instance, Col. Taylor, at Camp Campbell, would cut your operating cost of this service command 15 or 20% the first year, and be liked and respected by every subordinate while doing it.

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