

50 Sunset Drive
Anniston, Alabama
February 6, 1958

Mr. Robert K. Bell
Attorney at Law
Huntsville, Alabama

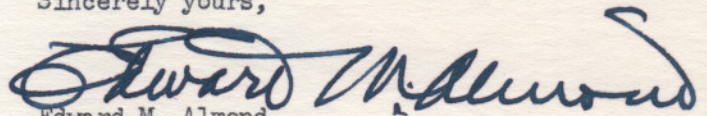
Dear Mr. Bell:

Inclosed herewith are copies of communications which are self-explanatory and pertaining to the Nickerson case. *

I send you the inclosed to keep you posted on what is going on here in Anniston.

With every good wish for Mrs. Bell and yourself from us here in Anniston, I am

Sincerely yours,



Edward M. Almond
Lieut. Gen. USA (Ret)

EMA/jn

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Nate

Had Almond's request for
Vincent to call Nickerson and
his "reply."
@

50 Sunset Drive
Anniston, Alabama
February 13, 1958

Mr. Robert K. Bell
Attorney at Law
Huntsville, Alabama

Dear Mr. Bell:

I have been in conversation with Harry Ayers during the early part of the week and we both agreed that it would be a fine thing to get something in motion to subdue the unnecessary and trivial expressions of your nearby neighbor General Medaris, with reference to Nickerson in particular and the Army missile project in general.

Harry and I agree that General Medaris is only the functionary of a small part of the whole missile project and as such has no business speaking for the Administration, the Defense Department and the Army, on who will be utilized to sponsor and operate the missile program.

I have no doubt that General Medaris would have difficulty in "living with the man" (Nickerson) because if anybody has done his best to frustrate what Nickerson stood for as far as personalities go it is General Medaris. He may know the veneer of missile production but von Braun, as we all know, is the man who put the thing in the air. I think that Medaris does the missile project a lot of harm by quibbling about his likes or dislikes of Nickerson and also I think that we should get more action on the Nickerson case than we are getting.

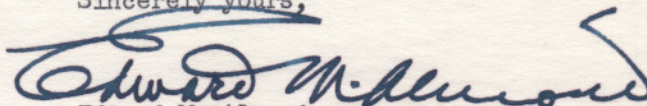
I have sent you all of the correspondence that I have had with everybody with reference to Nickerson because I recall you telling me once that you had a project there in Huntsville along the same line. The most helpful responses that have come so far have been from Congressman Huddleston of the 9th Alabama District of which you have copies of letters to and from him already.

Hoping that you can further some effort to curb Medaris's assinine expressions as set forth in his Sunday "Meet The Press" and offering

you any assistance that I can lend, but which of course is watered down because I am a service functionary, I nevertheless offer it.

With personal good wishes for you, I am

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Edward M. Almond". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping initial "E" and a long, horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Edward M. Almond
Lieut. Gen. USA (Ret)

EMA/jn

cc: Colonel H. M. Ayers

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CABLE ADDRESS: "BELMON"

February 18, 1958

Lt. Gen. Edward M. Almond, USA (Ret.)
50 Sunset Drive
Anniston, Alabama

Dear General:

I wish to acknowledge receipt of your letter of February 13, 1958 and the copies of various correspondence that you have written in the interest of our mutual good friend, John Nickerson, and wish to especially thank you for each of these. We here, too, have been busy in the interest of Colonel Nickerson; and, as a matter of fact, I have passed along copies of most of your correspondence to Joe Davis, a very close personal friend of mine here who is Personnel Manager of U. S. Industrial Chemicals Company here and who is also serving as one of the Vice Commanders of the Department of Alabama Veterans of Foreign Wars. Joe plans to be in Anniston this weekend for the VFW midwinter conference, at which time he plans to see to a resolution in support of Colonel Nickerson's vindication being submitted to the convention. He is aware of the fact that you are scheduled to be one of the speakers at this gathering and will doubtless be in touch with you soon after his arrival.

I have also received a letter from our mutual good friend, Colonel Ayers; and I am sending him a copy of this letter rather than restate some of the facts that follow in a separate letter to him.

You and the Colonel are certainly right in your conclusion that it would be a wonderful thing to subdue the unnecessary, trivial, unwarranted and unkind expressions of the Commanding General of ABMA with reference to Colonel Nickerson. However, if you knew the man, his ambitions and what makes him tick, you would better appreciate the fact that you are tackling a "tough nut to crack."

He, the said Commanding General, is undoubtedly one of the ablest men that I have ever known; but at the same time one of the coldest, most calculating characters with one thought in mind (that is, the promotion of one specific individual) that I have ever known. He has a lot of people almost hypnotized, and I was astounded at some of the expressions in Bill Pritchett's letter to Colonel Ayers. I have known Colonel Pritchett many

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years and regard him highly, but if he hasn't been sold a bill of goods, I have never known a man that has.

You know it is a very easy thing to be riding the crest of a very popular event or movement and to display a little charity towards others less fortunate, but here again we are dealing with a person who is so carried away with his momentary success and credit (whether justifiable or not) that by his very nature he cannot help but take a dig or a kick at someone not in his favor.

I am sure you and Colonel Ayers both know that it is General H. N. Toftoy, the Commanding General at Redstone Arsenal, often referred to as "The Father of Rocketry" in the American Army, that not only corraled the German scientists in Europe during the closing days of the war but brought them to this country, re-activated Redstone Arsenal, brought them to Huntsville and developed the Redstone missile, which is the carrier of the Jupiter-C. Yet a very carefully calculated plan has been executed to make certain that Toftoy's name not appear in any of the publicity regarding the Jupiter-C or the successful orbiting of the Explorer. We hear very definite and ugly rumors here that this situation is the result of politics on a very high level to the effect that Redstone was re-activated, the German scientists whipped into the best rocket and missile team west of the Iron Curtain, and the Redstone and other missiles developed under a program set up by the Democrats; and that the Administration in Washington is determined that no credit shall come forth for these efforts, but that the credit will be centered elsewhere and that General Toftoy in the not too distant future will be transferred to an overseas assignment--all this in spite of the fact that he is one of the best men in missile research and production in the country--and you are certainly right in your choice of words that another involved possesses a mere "veneer of knowledge" of this entire program.

I have been quite frank with you in this letter and have passed along some of the things that have come to my constant attention. When I see you and Colonel Ayers, I fully intend to acquaint you with some of the correspondence that I have received from editors of such papers as the "Columbus Sentinel" and some of the foremost newspaper columnists in America making inquiry as to rumors involving land purchases and developments and associated undertakings in which the man under discussion is alleged to be involved. I have studiously tried to avoid becoming involved in any of these possible controversies, not only because I have to live here, but because I am doubly anxious to not do or say anything that might reflect unfavorably upon John Nickerson and his speedy restoration to the position

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that he so rightfully deserves in our Armed Forces. However, you can rest assured there is quite a long story to be told; and, while I have had little to say in answer to these inquiries, I am anxious to tell you and Harry Ayers when the occasion presents itself.

I, too, had hoped to come to Anniston this weekend, but am very much involved in an alleged unfair labor practice which two employes of a client of mine have filed with the National Labor Relations Board and, therefore, will be unable to attend the VFW conference.

Asking that you keep the contents of this letter confidential insofar as the source of its contents is concerned, and with warmest personal regards to you and Mrs. Almond always, I am

Sincerely yours,

Robert K. Bell

RKB:mfl

CC: Col. H. M. Ayers

P.S. There are other important, and possibly tragic, aspects to the matters herein above discussed that I feel worthy of mention. Both of you have read accounts in Time Magazine and other periodicals wherein Werhner Von Braun has stated that he has received offers from private industry paying him as much as \$100,000 per year, and the sole reason why he has not entertained such offers is due to the keen and realistic appreciation and loyalty to General Toftoy for not only saving he and his "team" from the Russians, but for making the continuance of their work as a team possible in this country, and for the privilege of their becoming American Citizens. Werhner is not only one of the world's foremost scientists, but he is a great commander, a super salesman, and a devoted leader. The feeling the other Germans have for him is uncanny and they do not care to accept more lucrative offers because of the loyalty they feel to him personally. Why Toftoy goes, the picture changes entirely, because I can assure you in no uncertain terms that the loyalty and appreciation they feel for Toftoy is not shared by another living person. It is a tragic pity that persons in high places don't know and understand this feeling as it exists, but when we stop and think of how some of the same persons so utterly lacked knowledge and appreciation of how people's minds work, and sponsored the "Little Rock Landings", I don't suppose any of us should be surprised.