

An 'enemy alien' who was really a patriot

EDITOR'S NOTE: In recognition of the 50th anniversary of the end of World War II. The Lawrence Township Memorial Committee, in cooperation with The Ledger, will feature a column each week during the anniversary year profiling a Lawrence resident.

If anyone were to identify a resident of Lawrence Township as an enemy alien in our midst, in all probability the last person to consider would be Colonel Joe File, a man who has dedicated his life serving his country, his community, his employer and his family.

Joe File is one of our better known and respected citizens, and a classic example of the heights that a poor but ambitious son of immigrants can achieve in this great country of ours.

And yet, after living in the U.S. for over 12 years, when Joe attempted to enlist in the Marine Corps in February, 1942, his papers revealed that he was not a legal resident of the United States, but of Italy, a country with which we were at war. He was compelled to register as an "enemy

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Nicholas Loveless

alien," given an identification card with that classification, and warned that he could not travel outside a 50-mile radius without government permission.

Joseph File was born in May, 1923 in Lecce, a city situated in the extreme southern part of Italy in the heel of the boot-shaped country. His father, Carlo, had been a government railroad engineer. As a young man, Carlo came to the U.S. in 1909, but returned in 1914 at the insistence of his mother to fulfill his military obligation. He returned again in 1926, but Joe was not to learn the circumstances until his alien status came to light in 1942 and Carlo's past was revealed.

"Following World War I," Joe be-



Joseph File visited an orphanage in 1951 during his service during the Korean War.

