

The Doolittle Raid In History and Memory

by

Andrew P. Stohlmann

A THESIS

Presented to the Faculty of

The Graduate College at the University of Nebraska

In Partial Fulfillment of Requirements

For the Degree of Master of Arts

Major: History

Under the Supervision of Professor Peter Maslowski

Lincoln, Nebraska

August, 1999

**REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE**

*Form Approved*  
OMB No. 0704-0188

Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 1 hour per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to Washington Headquarters Services, Directorate for Information Operations and Reports, 1215 Jefferson Davis Highway, Suite 1204, Arlington, VA 22202-4302, and to the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reduction Project (0704-0188), Washington, DC 20503.

1. AGENCY USE ONLY (Leave blank)		2. REPORT DATE 15.Feb.00	3. REPORT TYPE AND DATES COVERED THESIS	
4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE THE DOOLITTLE RAID IN HISTORY AND MEMORY			5. FUNDING NUMBERS	
6. AUTHOR(S) 2D LT STOHLMAN ANDREW P				
7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA AT LINCOLN			8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER	
9. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) THE DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE AFIT/CIA, BLDG 125 2950 P STREET WPAFB OH 45433			10. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY REPORT NUMBER  FY00-64	
11. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES				
12a. DISTRIBUTION AVAILABILITY STATEMENT Unlimited distribution In Accordance With AFI 35-205/AFIT Sup 1			12b. DISTRIBUTION CODE	
13. ABSTRACT (Maximum 200 words)				
14. SUBJECT TERMS			15. NUMBER OF PAGES 99	
			16. PRICE CODE	
17. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF REPORT	18. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF THIS PAGE	19. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF ABSTRACT	20. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT	

## THE DOOLITTLE RAID IN HISTORY AND MEMORY

Andrew Paul Stohlmann, M.A.

University of Nebraska, 1999

Advisor: Peter Maslowski

From the moment the first bomb fell on Tokyo, the Doolittle Raid had no chance of being a failure because the combination of history and memory would not allow such an assessment. Americans needed something that could validate their hopes of an eventual victory. Being the first positive news America had in the war, the public relished in the bombing of Tokyo. Newspapers, books, and films sensationalized the mission, and by the time the Second World War ended, the raid was rooted in America's collective memory. From 1945 to 1966, the perceptions of the Doolittle Raid stabilized. The Raiders incorporated as an organization and held annual reunions. Literature created a much more complete story of the raid; but as time passed, America's memory of the mission faded. Although the living memory continued to fade, America's interest in military history, and therefore the Doolittle Raid, flourished in the late 1970's to the mid 1980's. As a result, the Raiders' annual reunions garnered more support and attracted more public interest. Since the bombing in April 1942, memory distortion played a vital role in reconstructing the Doolittle Raid so that the perceptions of the raid remained congruent with societal values. In the end, the unconscious altering of the raid's collective memory allowed history and

memory to blend together to such a degree that distinguishing between fact and fiction became difficult. This work explains how the Doolittle Raid remained linked to America's collective memory of World War II and demonstrates how America reconstructed the raid to fit its societal needs.

## Contents

Introduction . . . . .	2
Chapter One: The Roots of Creating Popular Myth	
A Factual Framework . . . . .	11
Piecing Together the Puzzle . . . . .	21
A Myth is Born. . . . .	35
The End of A Beginning . . . . .	42
Chapter Two: Setting Up the Future	
Another Start . . . . .	43
Reunions Emerge. . . . .	45
The Tokyo Raid on Paper . . . . .	60
The Legend Lives . . . . .	64
Nearing the End. . . . .	67
Chapter Three: History Takes Over	
Rapid Growth . . . . .	69
A Time to Remember . . . . .	70
Tangible Preservation. . . . .	79
Finding the Bigger Picture; The Overall Effects of Memory Upon History . . . . .	84
Conclusion: Cemented in History . . . . .	90
Appendix . . . . .	92
Bibliography . . . . .	96

## The Doolittle Raid in History and Memory

Recently, such works as Carol Reardon's *Pickett's Charge*<sup>1</sup> and Thomas Connelly's *The Marble Man*<sup>2</sup> appeared in bookstores and libraries. These historians, among others, tackled the difficult task of separating myth from historical fact. Their conclusions include the premise that the perception of historical events can be more powerful than the event itself and that such perceptions obscure the distinction between truth and fiction. In essence, myth becomes reality so indelibly that evidence to the contrary can no longer penetrate the popular perception. Although these examples focus on America's most popular historical subject, the American Civil War, the same phenomenon has occurred in other significant historical events.

The 18 April 1942 Tokyo bombing, commonly remembered as the "Doolittle Raid," rapidly grew into a popular legend with the ability to overpower factual histories of the event. Practically overnight, the eighty airmen participating in the raid became famous through newspapers and magazines. Shortly after the raid some crew members, such as Lt. Harry McCool, toured the United States selling war bonds and pilot Ted Lawson published his account in *Thirty Seconds Over Tokyo*. In 1944, three films pertaining to the raid debuted.

---

<sup>1</sup> Carol Reardon, *Pickett's Charge In History and Memory* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1997).

<sup>2</sup> Thomas Connelly, *The Marble Man: Robert E. Lee and His Image in American Society* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1977).

Over the years, numerous articles and books have examined the first air raid on Tokyo, renowned artists have rendered their interpretations, multiple communities and museums have erected memorials to these heroes, producers have created more films and television documentaries, an expedition has located the remains of three B-25's used in the raid, and the crew members have even created their own non-profit organization to further aerospace achievements. Although a tremendous testament to the popularity and legendary-like qualities of the Doolittle Raiders, most of the works related to the raid have blended facts and memory, obscuring an objective truth and advocating a myth as definitive.

Considering the extremely complex relationship between history and memory, such a phenomenon is not necessarily surprising. Historian Michael Kammen, specializing in historical memory and culture, argues that societies "reconstruct their pasts rather than faithfully record them and they do so with the needs of contemporary culture clearly in mind."<sup>3</sup> Thus, societal values and needs dictate how a group perceives and records an event; and when those societal needs change, the group's history also evolves.

History gradually changes through a process known as memory distortion. Memory distortion is a multifaceted problem and has received a great deal of attention from historians, psychologists, scientists, and sociologists.

---

<sup>3</sup> Michael Kammen, *Mystic Cords of Memory: The Transformation of Tradition in American Culture* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1991), 3.

The actual process of changing how an event is perceived includes both physical and psychological aspects and happens in both individuals and groups. Because myth-making and the subsequent evolution of those myths revolve around memory distortion, a rudimentary explanation is necessary.

Individual memory lies at the heart of memory distortion. Remembering involves recalling coded and stored information from within the brain. Not only is this process fallible, by definition it is a selective process. Schudson explains "A way of seeing is a way of not seeing, a way of remembering is a way of forgetting, too."<sup>4</sup> Selective amnesia, as it is sometimes referred to, allows people to simply forget and, at times, unconsciously replace forgotten details with incorrect information.

At this point, the psychological aspects of memory distortion become more significant. The editor of *The Journal of American History*, David Thelen, wrote that "individuals require the testimony and evidence of other people to validate their interpretations of their own experiences."<sup>5</sup> In essence, society helps people decide what to forget and what to remember. Furthermore, people are not cognizant, due to selective amnesia, that their memories are incorrect. Thelen continues, "people reshape their memories even as they often insist that

---

<sup>4</sup> Michael Schudson, "Dynamics of Distortion in Collective Memory," in *Memory Distortion: How Minds, Brains, and Societies Reconstruct the Past*, ed. Daniel L. Schacter (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995), 348.

<sup>5</sup> David Thelen, "Memory and American History," *The Journal of American History* 75 (March 1989): 1122.

their memories are vivid, unchanging, and accurate. . . . What is important is that the memory be authentic. . . not that it be an accurate depiction of the past moment."<sup>6</sup> In this manner, people replace forgotten details and the resulting recollection conforms to what society deems acceptable. Sometimes, however, the need arises for a group to change what is considered acceptable.

When this occurs, the collective memory of the nation must change. Kammen defines collective memory as, "what is remembered by the dominant civic culture."<sup>7</sup> Memory distortion affects collective memory in the same manner as it does individual memory. However, rapid or significant changes generally have a driving force. Kammen believes the forces that normally expedite change fall into three categories: social and cultural, nationalistic, and partisan politics.<sup>8</sup> Within these categories, he acknowledges that an individual's motives for eliciting distortion may be negative or cynical but, he also argues that they may be positive or benign. For example, if a distortion of collective memory brings about a necessary readjustment of values or value systems, this might be regarded as a positive side effect.<sup>9</sup> Kammen asks "How else can it [collective memory] coherently adapt to change, often desirable change, without being plagued by a sense of inconsistency or sham?"<sup>10</sup> In short, the alteration of history

---

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Kammen, *Mystic Cords of Memory*, 10.

<sup>8</sup> Kammen, *In the Past Lane*, 200.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 210.

is necessary to maintain a viable, progressive society and should not be viewed in an entirely negative light.<sup>11</sup>

At the same time, memory distortion is problematic for the historian because it facilitates the creation of myths. Kammen explains that myths are “more likely to be fabulous than true, more likely to involve some sort of story, and quite likely to concern deities, demigods, or heroes in order to explain aspects of a society’s cosmology or sense of identity.”<sup>12</sup> However, he goes on to state that the American myth-making process immortalizes people rather than deities or mystical figures like ancient myth-making does.<sup>13</sup> Schacter adds that “these myths have powerful effects on how a society views its past, present, and future.”<sup>14</sup> Thus, myths that immortalize people and events help define America’s sense of identity or culture with, of course, its own peculiar limitations and side effects.

To understand better how myths influence written history, how people create myths warrants consideration. Historian James McRandle argues that myths are “built in the process of the day-to-day reporting of the news.”<sup>15</sup> During this early stage of myth development, society refines the story of an event

---

<sup>11</sup> Michael Kammen, “Some Patterns and Meanings of Memory Distortion in American History,” in *Memory Distortion: How Minds, Brains, and Societies Reconstruct the Past*, ed. Daniel L. Schacter (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995), 340.

<sup>12</sup> Michael Kammen, *Mystic Cords of Memory*, 25.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 27-28. One should note that this process is not unique to the United States and is, in fact, common in most contemporary cultures.

<sup>14</sup> Schacter, *Memory Distortion*, 30.

<sup>15</sup> James McRandle, *The Antique Drums of War* (College Station, Texas: Texas A&M University Press, 1994), 75.

by including, discarding, and even creating the myth's elements. But, myths do not simply occur without a reason -- they are created when history and memory interact. For a society collectively to remember an event, a need must be fulfilled by that memory.<sup>16</sup> Because myth development is a process, popular history can transcend the realm of record and enter that of myth.<sup>17</sup>

As an event becomes mythical, the popular account must be recorded or the story would simply disappear over time. In fact, Meg Greenfield, an American editorial writer, stated in 1980 that, "We have no historical memory. If it happened more than six hours ago it is gone."<sup>18</sup> Although this is perhaps an exaggeration, historians agree that societies create methods to remember past events. Sociologist Michael Schudson acknowledges that "living memory fades and the only memories that remain are those culturally institutionalized."<sup>19</sup> Societies may utilize tangible markings, such as monuments and museums, or intangible commemorations, such as celebrating particular days or anniversaries, to perpetuate myths.<sup>20</sup> Myths are not just created from historical events but virtually live as an integral part of a culture.

Myths of modern cultures suffer from two peculiarities. In the late

---

<sup>16</sup> Thelen, 1127.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 53-54.

<sup>18</sup> Meg Greenfield, "Chronic Political Amnesia," *Newsweek*, 22 September 1980, 96.

<sup>19</sup> Schudson, "Distortion in Collective Memory," in *Memory Distortion*, 350.

<sup>20</sup> Kammen, *Mystic Cords of Memory*, 33.

nineteenth century, photography appeared to make memories more precise and retrievable. However, few realized that photography had an "equal capacity to sensationalize, sentimentalize, or distort" when "used selectively by editors, publishers, and authors."<sup>21</sup> Although new technologies increase the available information, quantity does not necessarily equate to accuracy. The second peculiarity relates to the immortalization of people rather than deities.

McRandle surmises that "ordinary people cannot long survive as demi-gods, for, as their middles thicken, their glories thin. . . . This deterioration seems to be one of the conditions of modern historical myth."<sup>22</sup> Today, myths possess much shorter life spans than ancient myths. The myth may not be forgotten entirely, but the collective memory is certain to fade.

Indeed, societies reconstruct their past with their needs clearly in mind and memory distortion interacts within individuals and groups to facilitate alterations. The resulting reconstructions or myths, therefore, act much like animate objects -- evolving to mimic the societies they define. This phenomenon provides a framework to analyze an event and its meaning. Only by acknowledging the relationship between history and memory, can we discover an objective truth and understand the role a perceived event played in society.

Although recounting a myth is virtually an impossible task since, by

---

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 32.

<sup>22</sup> McRandle, 80.

definition, many versions of the "same" myth exist, the pattern of facts from which a myth derives remains relatively distinct. Specifically, the Tokyo bombing underwent a transformation from fact to legend in three stages. Lasting until about 1945, the first stage can be characterized as a period of intense growth and organization. The first chapter examines the initial stage and finds that during this period, the War Department released incomplete details of the raid, the public embraced the raid and drew associations between people and events, and the crew members formed friendships from their common experiences. Starting with a brief account of the Tokyo Raid, the chapter examines how and what the American public learned about the mission. As the war concluded, the Doolittle Raid remained prominent in America's collective memory of the war and had completed the first steps to becoming historical myth.

The second chapter examines the second stage of the Raid's transformation to legend. Lasting from 1945 to 1966, stabilization characterized the second period. The Raiders literally came together as a group by attending annual reunions. Literature created a much more complete story of the raid, but as time passed, America's memory of the raid faded. In 1966, the Raiders thought their time as great American heroes had finally reached its end. Unable to find financial support for their 24<sup>th</sup> reunion, they canceled the 1966 reunion and seriously contemplated ending their annual meetings.

The third chapter starts with the group's 25<sup>th</sup> reunion in 1967 and ends in the present day. The size of the 25<sup>th</sup> reunion breathed life back into the Raiders' organization but America's collective memory of the raid appeared limited at best. Simultaneously, large-scale memorializations for the group began increasing creating a dichotomy. When America's interest in military history revived in the early to mid-80's, the raid had clearly become legendary. The Raiders' annual reunions continued throughout this period; however, the later reunions more closely resembled times of remembrance rather than times of celebration. The third chapter concludes by illustrating some of the many ways myth and memory impacted the Doolittle Raid's history.

## Chapter One: The Roots of Creating Popular Myth

### A Factual Framework

Contrary to the popular story that had emerged prior to 1945, a factual account of the raid based upon information made public throughout the last 57 years presents a valid framework to begin any analysis. A Navy submarine officer, Captain Francis S. Low first presented a general idea of launching or recovering land-based bombers with Navy aircraft carriers to Admiral Ernest J. King in early January 1942. Admiral King had continuously stressed to his staff officers President Franklin D. Roosevelt's desire to retaliate against Japan for the attack on Pearl Harbor. A member of King's staff, Captain Low flew to Norfolk, Virginia, to examine the recently completed carrier, the *Hornet*. As his plane departed from Norfolk, he noticed the outline of a carrier deck painted on the runway. The Navy used this outline to practice short takeoffs and, that day the Army Air Forces (AAF) also happened to be practicing bombing passes on the simulated carrier deck. Low correlated the two and requested a meeting immediately upon his return to Washington. King told Low to present his idea to Captain Donald B. "Wu" Duncan, his air operations officer, and also not to mention the idea to others.

The following day, Low met with Duncan and discussed the possibility of launching or recovering twin engine medium bombers on aircraft carriers.

Although he immediately ruled out recovering the planes, Duncan began to study the launch problems in detail. Focusing primarily upon the North American B-25 Mitchell and Martin B-26 Marauder, he checked landing and takeoff speeds, ranges, payloads, dimensions, deck space specifications, and even weather patterns. Five days later, Duncan concluded that the B-25 could takeoff from a carrier deck carrying a two thousand pound payload with a two thousand mile range with the addition of extra fuel tanks. Armed with his twenty-five page report, Duncan and Low both briefed Admiral King who promptly sent them to the Chief of Staff of the Army Air Forces, General Henry H. "Hap" Arnold. The pair shared their idea with General Arnold on 17 January 1942.

Although similar ideas had already been contemplated for a mission in North Africa, it had never been pursued fully and General Arnold received the idea enthusiastically.<sup>23</sup> The following day, Arnold's staff officer and friend Lieutenant Colonel James H. "Jimmy" Doolittle confirmed that the B-25 could theoretically accomplish the mission. Volunteering for the task, Doolittle took charge of coordinating the Army Air Force's efforts, including selecting and training crews, coordinating with the Navy, and modifying the aircraft. All the B-25 crews started as volunteers from the Thirty-fourth, Thirty-seventh, and Ninety-fifth squadrons of the Seventeenth Bombardment Group and Eighty-

---

<sup>23</sup> Carol V. Glines, *The Doolittle Raid: America's Daring First Strike Against Japan* (New York: Orion Books, 1988), 16.

ninth Reconnaissance Squadron. Drawn into 24 complete crews, the 140 selected men traveled to Eglin Field for training, which consisted of short takeoffs, bombing and navigation practice, long-range cruising techniques, and naval etiquette. Most crews completed only 25 of the 50 flight hours planned for training due to leakage problems with the additional gas tanks and various other mechanical problems. The training and aircraft modifications took about three months.

Meanwhile, King tasked Duncan to coordinate naval efforts to carry the B-25's within five hundred miles of Japan. He oversaw the assembly of sixteen ships into Task Force 16.2, centered around the *Hornet*, and 16.1 centered around the *Enterprise*. Task Force 16.1, under Admiral William F. Halsey's command, served as an additional escort and each Task Force consisted of a carrier, an oiler, two cruisers, and four destroyers. Duncan also coordinated submarine intelligence gathering missions and had two B-25s practice actual takeoffs from the *Hornet* about one hundred miles off the United States' East coast. The Navy's newest carrier, the *Hornet* then traveled from Norfolk, where it received some final fittings, to Alameda Naval Air Station in San Francisco. On 1 April it picked up sixteen B-25s and approximately 134 men, including all the AAF crews that had completed training and Naval Lieutenant Henry L. Miller who had

helped train the air crews in short takeoffs.<sup>24</sup> Task Force 16.2, under Captain Marc Mitscher's command, left port on 2 April to rendezvous with Halsey northwest of Pearl Harbor and to become collectively Task Force 16.

The air crews spent the next two weeks accomplishing various training activities. Each crew selected military or war-related industrial targets in Tokyo, Kobe, Nagoya, Osaka, Yokohama, or Yokosuka Naval Base and made their final flight plans. They constantly checked on their planes, made minor repairs, and ran practice drills. Lieutenant Commander Stephen Jurika, the *Hornet's* intelligence officer and former naval attaché at the American Embassy in Tokyo, gave lectures on Japanese customs, political ideologies, history, and most importantly, targeting information. Ideally, Doolittle would have taken off first during the afternoon of the eighteenth to arrive over Tokyo at dusk. The other crews would follow behind a few hours, navigating off fires started by Doolittle's incendiary bombs, making the attack's completion a night raid. However, Japanese coastal defense in the form of picket boats, unknown to US intelligence, began seven hundred miles off the Japanese coast.

Early on the morning of the eighteenth, picket boats forced the U.S. task force to change its plans. The *Enterprise* established radar contact with a Japanese boat at 0300, resulting in a general alarm. In the rough seas and poor visibility,

---

<sup>24</sup> Although 140 men began the initial training, some were eliminated for proficiency concerns and other volunteers changed their minds and backed out of going prior to completing their training. Charles Ross Greening, unpublished memoirs, Doolittle Collection. Special Collections, Doolittle Military Aviation Library. University of Texas at Dallas, Texas.

the U.S. Navy managed to avoid detection until a lookout on the *Hornet* physically spotted the fourth picket boat of the morning. Unlike the others, the Japanese vessel appeared at a range of only twenty thousands yards and seemed unavoidable. Moments later, intercepted radio traffic from the picket boat confirmed the suspicion that the Task Force had been discovered. Admiral Halsey ordered the cruiser, the *Nashville*, to destroy the enemy vessel and decided to launch the B-25s.<sup>25</sup> Although over six hundred miles from Tokyo, rather than the planned four hundred and fifty miles, Doolittle lifted his 31,000 pound bomber off the deck around 0820 hours in poor visibility and very rough seas. Nearly an hour later, Lieutenant William Farrow piloted the last B-25 to depart the *Hornet*, and Task Force 16 immediately rushed east for safety.

Japanese intelligence last located the American task force when the two rendezvoused, and analysis of radio activity hinted that the American Navy was conducting an operation. Some Japanese naval leaders believed that the U.S. was attempting to attack the home islands, and the *Nitto Maru's*, the picket boat sunk by the *Nashville*, sighting confirmed their suspicion. Upon receiving the *Nitto Maru's* message, Vice Admiral Matome Ugaki, chief of staff of the Combined Fleet, ordered the available Japanese fleet against the Americans. Ten destroyers, six heavy cruisers, five carriers, and nine submarines raced to intercept and

---

<sup>25</sup> William F. Halsey and J. Bryan III, *Admiral Halsey's Story* (New York: McGraw Hill Book Company, 1947), 102.

destroy the American fleet. Fortunately for Halsey, the weather hampered the land-based aircraft's search operations, and the searching aircraft barely missed the American ships. Had Task Force 16 elected to carry the B-25s closer to the planned departure point, the results may have been drastically different.

The sixteen B-25s made the trip between the *Hornet* and Japan relatively safely. The raid caught Japan completely by surprise around noon on Saturday. Ironically, air raid drills had been conducted that morning, and Japanese planes practiced for a celebration in honor of the emperor's birthday, further lulling the populous to the upcoming danger. All of the B-25s, except one that jettisoned its payload due to an attacking Zero, dropped their bombs on primary or secondary militarily related targets but inflicted little physical damage. The bombers encountered only light anti-aircraft fire and very few planes pursued the bombers. The Japanese did not down a single American aircraft and many Japanese civilians waved as the planes passed overhead. As planned, the bombers proceeded south and then back west to auxiliary airfields in China for refueling. The planes were then to proceed to Chungking for delivery to the Chinese.

After completing a successful bombing run in spite of the early takeoff, the weather turned against the B-25's. Although an increasing tail wind actually increased the Mitchells' ranges, torrential rains and darkness engulfed China and the East China Sea and prevented the aircraft from landing safely at auxiliary

fields in unoccupied China. Furthermore, for unexplained reasons, Task Force 16 never sent a message to Washington stating the Raiders' departure time.

Washington planned to forward this message to Chungking so that locating beacons could be activated, guiding the bombers to the obscured airfields.

Without the message, the Chinese did not know of the early departure and the aircrews were unable to locate areas suitable for landing. Only one plane landed safely in Vladivostok, where the Soviets interned the Americans and kept the plane. The other fifteen crews either bailed out when they exhausted their gas supply or attempted emergency water landings.

Since fifteen B-25 crews parachuted or crashed into Japanese-controlled territory, Chinese guerrillas and civilians risked their lives to save the American airmen. Excluding the plane interned in the USSR, the Chinese saved all but eleven of the airmen. The Japanese captured eight men, the entire crew of plane sixteen and three from plane six. The Japanese later executed three of the captured men, First Lieutenants William Farrow and Dean Hallmark and Sergeant Harold Spatz, on 15 October 1942. First Lieutenant John Meder passed away due to mistreatment and inadequate care while in captivity. The four survivors, Lieutenants George Barr, Robert Hite, Chase Nielsen, and Sergeant Jacob DeShazer, lived through forty months of "special treatment" and were

liberated on 20 July 1945.<sup>26</sup> The two members missing from crew six, Staff Sergeant William Dieter and Sergeant Donald Fitzmaurice, drowned when their plane crashed in the East China Sea. The final airmen from the third plane off the carrier, Corporal Leland Faktor died when his parachute malfunctioned or due to a secondary fall. The Chinese led, carried, or transported the other sixty-four men to safety as the Japanese followed close on their heels.

Four of the sixty-four Americans needed serious medical attention enroute to safety. While pilot Ted Lawson was attempting a landing on a Chinese beach, the *Ruptured Duck* suddenly lost power and crashed into shallow waters. The impact threw four fliers through the plane's front windshields, inflicting dangerous wounds. Carried to Linhai, a Chinese doctor and English missionaries administered limited first aid until crew fifteen arrived. Doctor (Lieutenant) Thomas White, the only American physician on the mission, happened to be the gunner on the fifteenth plane. Although the uninjured men continued their journey to safety, White stayed to care for the four more seriously injured. The fortunate meeting of the two crews undoubtedly saved Lawson's life as "Doc" White amputated Lawson's infected leg.<sup>27</sup> The five Americans escaped Linhai shortly before the Japanese over-ran the village.

The Japanese army responded fanatically to news of the raid and

---

<sup>26</sup> Carol V. Glines, *Four Came Home* (reprint, Missoula, Montana: Pictorial Publishing Company, 1966), 9.

<sup>27</sup> James H. Doolittle and Carol V. Glines, *I Could Never Be So Lucky Again* (Atglen, Pennsylvania: Schiffer Publishing, 1991), 550.

retaliated against the Chinese peoples. The enraged army pushed two hundred miles into China searching for the fliers, and the soldiers killed any man, woman, or child even remotely suspected of helping the Americans.<sup>28</sup> Entire villages perished as the Japanese demolished the buildings and brutally massacred the people. The Japanese obliterated one village because the inhabitants repaired bomb craters from a recent air attack.<sup>29</sup> Even the missionaries died as, "they destroyed all the American missions. . . [and] desecrated the graves of all the missionaries."<sup>30</sup> General Claire Chennault, AAF's commander in China, estimated in his memoirs that nearly a quarter million Chinese soldiers and civilians died in the three-month search.<sup>31</sup> However, Chennault's estimate appears greatly exaggerated. American missionary Charles Meeus testified in the war crimes trials that around one thousand Chinese died as a result of the raid.<sup>32</sup>

Although none of the B-25s reached their final destination intact and the attack accomplished little in terms of actual damage, the raid greatly boosted American morale both at home and on the war front. Most significantly, the Tokyo bombing damaged the Japanese psyche that believed the home islands

---

<sup>28</sup> Cable from Chiang Kai-shek to War Department, 28 April 1943, reprinted in Doolittle and Glines, *I Could Never Be So Lucky Again*, 223.

<sup>29</sup> Claire L. Chennault, *Way of a Fighter* (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1949), p. 168.

<sup>30</sup> Reverend Charles L. Meeus, Letter to Vicar Apostolic of Nanking, Bishop Paul Yu Pin, reprinted in Glines, *The Doolittle Raid*, 153.

<sup>31</sup> Most works on the Doolittle Raid quote Chennault's estimate, usually to illustrate the supposedly immense psychological blow the raid had on the Japanese. Chennault, 168.

<sup>32</sup> Glines, *The Doolittle Raid*, 154.

were impervious to attack.<sup>33</sup> Historians concur that the Tokyo bombing prompted Japan to attack Midway Island later in 1942 where again the Navy, with the *Hornet* and the *Enterprise* present, won a stunning victory. A former captain in the Imperial Japanese Navy, Mitsuo Fuchida wrote, "So far as Combined Fleet was concerned, the [Doolittle] raid steeled its determination to press for early execution of the [Midway] operations."<sup>34</sup> Also, Japan strengthened its home defense as a result and diverted resources to develop a balloon-based bomb-carrying device to bomb the United States. The Japanese released over 6,000 balloon bombs, 285 of which landed in the United States and Canada prior to the war's completion. The only fatalities occurred in Oregon when a balloon bomb exploded at a church picnic, killing five children and pregnant woman. The Doolittle Raid had shaken the Japanese psyche.

For the surviving American crew members the war had really just begun. Some required further medical care and eight fliers remained in the China-Burma-India (CBI) theater.<sup>35</sup> Of those returning to the US, most received assignments to North Africa and found themselves again under Doolittle's command. Doolittle received the Congressional Medal of Honor and a promotion to Brigadier General. The other seventy-nine received Distinguished Service Crosses for their efforts. Captain Edward J. York's crew, which had

---

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 216.

<sup>34</sup> Mitsuo Fuchida, *Midway: The Battle That Doomed Japan, The Japanese Navy's Story* (Annapolis: United States Naval Institute, 1955), 71.

<sup>35</sup> Ted W. Lawson, *Thirty Seconds Over Tokyo* (New York: Random House, 1943), 206.

landed in Vladivostok, remained interned in the Soviet Union until their escape in late May of 1943. Four aviators eventually became German prisoners of war and another thirteen paid the supreme sacrifice before the war ended.<sup>36</sup> The preceding story reveals the facts as they are available today and involves numerous sources never available prior to 1945.

### Piecing Together the Puzzle

For the American public, the story of the raid began with incomplete and, at times, completely false newspaper reports. Headlines of major newspapers on 18 April reported the incident first with articles such as "Japan Reports Tokyo, Yokohama Bombed by 'Enemy Planes' in Daylight; Claims 9."<sup>37</sup> Even smaller papers such as the *Columbus Evening Dispatch* ran headlines claiming, "U.S. Warplanes Rain Bombs on Leading Cities of Jap Empire; Tokyo, Yokohama, Kobe, and Nagoya Hit in Big Three-Hour Offensive."<sup>38</sup> The day of the raid, the papers relied upon Japanese announcements that intentionally distorted the facts for propaganda purposes. Japan claimed that the bombers did little damage, all bombs fell on the outskirts of the cities, and that they had downed nine enemy

---

<sup>36</sup> Doolittle and Glines, *I Could Never Be So Lucky Again*, 463.

<sup>37</sup> "Japan Reports Tokyo, Yokohama Bombed by 'Enemy Planes' in Daylight; Claims 9," *The New York Times*, 18 April 1942, 1.

<sup>38</sup> "U.S. Warplanes Rain Bombs on Leading Cities of Jap Empire; Tokyo, Yokohama, Kobe, and Nagoya Hit in Big Three-Hour Offensive," *Columbus Evening Dispatch*, 18 April 1942, 1.

aircraft. Furthermore, *The New York Times* reported that Japanese radio made announcements claiming the bombers targeted schools and hospitals. The paper quoted sources stating, "This inhuman attack on these cultural establishments and on residential districts is causing widespread indignation. . . the enemy planes did not attempt to hit military establishments."<sup>39</sup> In an effort to divert Japanese retaliation, Chungking officials released a statement to the Associated Press citing that the aircraft in question were not based in China.<sup>40</sup> With no official report from Washington, the papers continued printing stories based upon Japanese news releases.

The next day, the raid again made the front page and articles abounded through the Sunday paper. Much of the information from the day before appeared again; however, a great deal of speculation and exaggeration began to emerge. Tokyo broadcasts reported that sixty planes participated in the raid and continued to insist that the planes bore the markings of the U.S. air forces.<sup>41</sup> Japan also speculated that the planes were carrier-based, and a German radio broadcast an unconfirmed Tokyo report that an American carrier had been sunk off Japan's coast.<sup>42</sup> American newspapers discussed the possibility that the raid originated from carriers but did not dismiss other possibilities. Congressmen,

---

<sup>39</sup> "Japan Reports Tokyo, Yokohama Bombed by 'Enemy Planes' in Daylight; Claim 9," *The New York Times*, 18 April 1942, 1.

<sup>40</sup> "Chungking Reaction to Raids," *The New York Times*, 19 April 1942, 39.

<sup>41</sup> "Kobe and Nagoya Raided, Tokyo Says," *The New York Times*, 20 April 1942, 1.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, 32.

although officially silent, "asserted that 'the offensive is beginning' and predicted bigger and heavier bombings at the base of Japan's power."<sup>43</sup> The early articles only fueled more speculation and enticed America's popular imagination.

More editorials started to appear as Americans wrestled with questions such as the type of aircraft used and the planes' route. Spurred by the Japanese claim on 20 April that Martin B-26s conducted the raid, American columnists immediately assessed the possibilities. The following day, the Japanese announced that the planes were North American B-25s, not B-26s as previously stated. Also, Hanson Baldwin asserted in his daily editorial column, known for its frequent commentaries on the war effort, that B-25s could takeoff from a carrier but that the planes could not land on a carrier. Like many others, he wrote that the planes could have proceeded to secret bases in China.<sup>44</sup> Amidst increasing public cries for answers from Washington, the President deliberately announced misinformation.

Presidential comments only agitated the situation, and once again the Tokyo bombing become front-page news. On 21 April, President Roosevelt told reporters that the planes came from Shangri-La, a fictional land found in James Hilton's *Lost Horizons*, a novel published in 1933. The USSR announced officially on April 24 that it had interned a crew and an unspecified plane that had,

---

<sup>43</sup> "Washington Hails Report of Bombing," *The New York Times*, 20 April 1942, 38.

<sup>44</sup> Hanson Baldwin, "Mystery in Tokyo Raid," *The New York Times*, 21 April 1942, 6.

“participated in an American air raid on Japanese islands and having lost its bearings, made a false landing in Soviet territory.”<sup>45</sup> At a press conference following this announcement, Roosevelt again correlated the planes with Shangri-La.<sup>46</sup> The references confused people because the President did not clarify whether Shangri-La was a codename for something the U.S. previously possessed or the actual name of a recently acquired air base or carrier. The President’s comments added mystery and confusion to the speculative reports of a raid.

Finally, on 10 May, the War Department confirmed Army bombers indeed had bombed Japan. Rather than unraveling all the mysteries, the official news release gave few additional details. The statement claimed ideal weather conditions allowed accurate low level attacks on military targets. The military contradicted some Japanese reports and did not disclose the type or number of bombers, their point of departure, or their final destination.<sup>47</sup> The US appeared hesitant to do anything more than publicly recognize the raid’s existence.

Undoubtedly, the War Department avoided giving a statement that would disclose militarily significant information. In fact, a Tokyo radio broadcast hinted on April 24 that Japan would like an official US response, stating, “We

---

<sup>45</sup> “US Bombers Down in Soviet Far East After the Tokyo Raid, Says Moscow,” *The New York Times*, 24 April 1942, 1.

<sup>46</sup> “Soviet Detention of Fliers Accepted; Roosevelt Makes Comments,” *The New York Times*, 25 April 1942, 2.

<sup>47</sup> C Brooks Peters, “U.S. Reveals Army Bombers Raided Japan; Fires Set in Japan,” *The New York Times*, 11 May 1942, 1.

[the Japanese] will be very interested in knowing just how many planes came from and escaped to their bases. We will be very interested in knowing their claims of damage."<sup>48</sup> Apparently, Japanese officials did not know as much as they implied and, considering their immense searches into China, releasing sensitive details may have further endangered the American flyers and those who aided in their escape. When the War Department did officially acknowledge the raid on May 10, the US knew from interviews with the crews conducted in China and other diplomatic channels that 59 crew members had reached the relative safety of Chungking, Russia had interned one crew, the Japanese had captured eight men, four severely injured men remained with Dr. White with a high probability of capture, and that three men had died when their planes crashed.<sup>49</sup> The last non-captured crews did not depart from Kweilin, China until 3 June.<sup>50</sup> With American flyers still in potential danger, the War Department could not risk releasing a detailed account of the raid.

However, news articles emerging on 20 May hinted that domestic concerns also drove the American silence. The Pacific War had progressed steadily from bad to worse. The British surrendered Penang, the Japanese captured Wake Island, and Bataan fell. As Japan's strength appeared greater and greater, America desperately needed some positive news. Without revealing too

---

<sup>48</sup> "Tokyo Wants U.S. Statement," *The New York Times*, 24 April 1942, 2.

<sup>49</sup> Doolittle and Glines, *I Could Never Be So Lucky Again*, 279.

<sup>50</sup> Lawson, 156.

many details of the mission, the President planned to take full advantage of the raid's morale boosting effects.

From the attack's initial report on 18 April, the Tokyo raid planted itself firmly in the American imagination. In a single month, the raid had captured *The New York Times'* front-page headlines no less than four times and the paper published over thirty articles about the raid. On 20 May 1942 the focus of newspaper articles took a dramatic turn that altered forever the way people viewed the first bombing of Japan. *The Los Angeles Times* headline reading "Doolittle Did It" epitomized the change that swept the nation -- America had found a new hero. Even the *Nome Gazette*, a newspaper Doolittle delivered as a boy, bragged, "Nome Town Boy Makes Good!"<sup>51</sup> Newspapers and magazines quickly shifted focus from the raid to Doolittle himself.

Although Doolittle's name had appeared in the press previously, the Tokyo raid made him a certified hero. James Doolittle joined the Air Corps in 1917, hoping to see action as a pilot in the First World War. He never left the U.S. during the war but became an instructor pilot, continually testing the airplane's limits as well as his own. Aeronautically, he accomplished many "firsts," including setting speed and endurance records, performing an outside loop, and an instrument only (or "blind") flight. One of the first Americans to earn a doctor of science degree in aeronautical sciences, he graduated from the

---

<sup>51</sup> Glines, *The Doolittle Raid*, 148.

Massachusetts Institute of Technology in 1925. A highlight of his pre-raid career entailed winning both the Bendix and Thompson Air Racing trophies in 1932. Although Doolittle had left active duty on 1 January 1931, the AAF recalled him in 1940 to help improve production processes in such industries as aircraft engine manufacturing. Assigned the task of organizing and training the men for the Tokyo bombing, LTC Doolittle earned a promotion to Brigadier General for his efforts. President Roosevelt also awarded Doolittle the Congressional Medal of Honor on 19 May 1942, the day he returned from China. Timed to maximize morale boosting affects, the first news article that revealed Doolittle led the attack also pictured him accepting the medal from the President. Although the other 79 crew members earned Distinguished Service Crosses, Jimmy Doolittle had taken center stage.

However, America's new hero failed to mention that the raid had been less than perfect. At a news conference after accepting the Medal of Honor, Doolittle contradicted Japanese reports when he told reporters that, "not one plane had been shot down and 'none was damaged to an extent that precluded its proceeding to its destination.'"<sup>52</sup> Across the country newspapers and magazines, such as *Newsweek* and *Life*, also trumpeted versions of the same claim.<sup>53</sup> Although technically a true statement, Americans assumed the phrase

---

<sup>52</sup> "American Airmen Decorated for Raid on Japan," *The New York Times*, 20 May 1942, 4.

<sup>53</sup> See *Newsweek* and *Life* magazines dated 1 June 1942.

“to its destination” implied a safe landing. Still, the General refused to answer questions about the number of planes, their departure site, or their final destination.

At this point the Americans might have grown suspicious that the situation was not what the media and the War Department made it appear. The public could have been demanding answers to questions such as “If Brigadier General Doolittle was such a hero, why did the government wait so long to bring him home?” and “Where are the other 79 who received medals?” Instead, Americans embraced the courageous airmen without questioning the higher authorities. The raid illustrated the War Department’s notion that the further a mission goes awry, the longer the need and desire to maintain secrecy. Had the raid proceeded as planned, the War Department would not have needed the extent of concealment to limit the retaliation against the Chinese or to protect the missing flyers.

Japan believed the U.S. timed the announcement about Doolittle to hide the U.S. Navy’s “defeat” at the Coral Sea Battle on 7-8 May. Although that may have played a role, the principle reason the U.S. delayed announcing the flyers’ names, other than some were still missing in action, related to the inability to provide definitive proof that the raid occurred successfully. Until Doolittle returned, the first to reach Washington, none of the aviators could accept the recognition of a grateful nation. Doolittle’s physical presence lent credence to the

U.S. claims of conducting a "highly destructive raid" and that the participants returned safely. In both cases, the U.S. exaggerated its success until Japan forced the Americans to re-evaluate their position.

Japanese news reports in mid-October 1942 led to a confused and somewhat embarrassing situation for the U.S. military. The United States had maintained thus far, that no planes had been lost during the attack. On 20 October, however, *The New York Times* reported that "severe punishment has been meted out to United States flyers who 'were found guilty of inhuman acts' in their bombing of Tokyo."<sup>54</sup> Unlike previous articles, the Japanese also reportedly ran pictures of the POW's in their papers. Backed into a corner by Americans demanding a truthful clarification, the War Department and Office of War Information announced that eight Doolittle Raiders remained missing following the mission.<sup>55</sup> Meanwhile articles denied the Japanese accusation that Americans committed inhuman acts by bombing and strafing schools and hospitals.<sup>56</sup> Attention focused on the secrecy issue and the insistence of attacking only military targets, rather than Japan's statements of having already punished the AAF personnel.<sup>57</sup>

Perhaps believing an American-style justice would prevail, the 21 April 1943 Presidential announcement that the Japanese had executed some of our

---

<sup>54</sup> "Japan 'Punishing' seized U.S. Flyers," *The New York Times*, 20 October 1942, 1.

<sup>55</sup> "8 Tokyo Raiders Listed as 'Missing,'" *The New York Times*, 25 October 1942, 37.

<sup>56</sup> "Japan, Reich Rage at 'Brutalities,'" *The New York Times*, 22 October 1942, 7.

<sup>57</sup> "The Tokyo Raid," editorial, *The New York Times*, 23 October 1942, 20.

airmen shocked the American public.<sup>58</sup> In part of the President's comments on 21 April, he claimed to have gained knowledge about the execution as early as 19 October 1942 and that the report had been confirmed by the Swiss Government on 12 March 1943. The State Department had made a formal protest on 12 April.<sup>59</sup> The long delay produced doubts in some Americans as to the accuracy of the information their government was providing and, again, the statement's timing appeared suspect.<sup>60</sup>

Just previous to these headlines, in what *Time* magazine described as an "artificial pumping-up of the raid" that "fell a bit flat," America celebrated the one-year anniversary of the bombing with multiple news articles.<sup>61</sup> The ban on secrecy lifted, the War Department made available a relatively complete account of the raid, releasing the names of all the participants, listing the eight prisoners of war, declaring that two remained missing, and citing one death. Official statements also declared that the raid originated from the carrier *Hornet* and that all the planes crashed, save the interned plane in the USSR. Furthermore, the President's comments pertaining to the execution came while on a campaign trip through the South to rally political support for a fourth term and the New Deal. Regardless of all the circumstances, the announcement of the execution occurred while the raid was fresh in the public mind.

---

<sup>58</sup> "Shock From Tokyo," *The Newsweek*, 3 May 1943, 22.

<sup>59</sup> "Texts of the Statements on Japan," *The New York Times*, 22 April 1943, 4.

<sup>60</sup> "Doolittle Fliers Reach Their Destination," *Christian Century*, 5 May 1943, 531.

<sup>61</sup> "U.S. at War," *Time*, 3 May 1943, 20.

Any doubt of American resolve existed after Pearl Harbor, disappeared with the execution announcements. Americans blood boiled, and calls for retaliation and revenge swept the country. A *Time* article claimed that, "Americans wanted to see. . . fresh day-old pictures of raid after raid that leveled Japan into a shambles. . . where nothing moved in the ruins."<sup>62</sup> Congressman Hamilton Fish even called for reprisal killings against Japanese prisoners.<sup>63</sup> The anger grew so great that Britain feared a diversion of effort from the European theater to the Pacific.<sup>64</sup> Doolittle, now commanding the Twelfth Air Force in North Africa, explained that any execution of POW's, "violates all our principles of right and justice – all the things we are now fighting for."<sup>65</sup> Although their names remained unknown, William Farrow, Dean Hallmark, and Harold Spatz died martyrs, symbols of all that America considered good.

As the frenzy over the killings subsided, the Doolittle Raid reached the public through means other than newspapers and magazines. Books and film appeared in 1943 and 1944 that also shaped America's understanding of the raid. Captain Ted Lawson, a pilot on the raid, published *Thirty Seconds Over Tokyo* in 1943. In 1944 the raid hit the big screen with "Thirty Seconds Over Tokyo," "Purple Heart," and "Destination Tokyo." Clearly, the first raid on Tokyo had secured its place in national history.

---

<sup>62</sup> Ibid.

<sup>63</sup> "Fish Calls for Reprisals," *The New York Times*, 22 April 1943, 3.

<sup>64</sup> "British See Peril in Killings," *The New York Times*, 24 April 1943, 5.

<sup>65</sup> "Doolittle Eager for Heavier Raids," *The New York Times*, 23 April 1943, 5.

Written in mid-1943, *Thirty Seconds Over Tokyo* recounted the experience of Ted Lawson and his crew. As a review in *Time* magazine noted, Lawson's story contained all the "material for an epic."<sup>66</sup> The book started just prior to the three month training period all the flyers accomplished near Eglin Field. Concluding while he recovered in Walter Reed hospital from a leg amputation performed in China by the only American doctor to participate in the raid, the account illustrated the dangers the crews faced, especially following their crashes. The first hand account also provided Americans a means to understand the mission more fully and at a more personal level than newspapers and magazines. The public accepted Lawson's version as definitive, and the book enjoyed best-seller status. More importantly, however, Metro-Goldwyn Mayer (MGM) studios purchased the movie rights, and the Doolittle Raid was elevated yet another step in popular American culture.

The movie, "Thirty Seconds Over Tokyo," debuted in early 1944 and starred Van Johnson as Ted Lawson and Spencer Tracy as Doolittle. Utilizing two Raiders, Ted Lawson and Dean Davenport, as technical advisors the movie followed the book's account well, and the producers bragged of its historical accuracy.<sup>67</sup> Unfortunately for the producers, not all the information available, even from primary sources, proved completely accurate. For example, the film

---

<sup>66</sup> "Books: Thirty Seconds Over Tokyo" *Time*, 19 July 1943, 98.

<sup>67</sup> Program Notes from "Thirty Seconds Over Tokyo" by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, reprinted by Stan Cohen, *Destination Tokyo* (Missoula, Montana: Pictorial Histories Publishing Company, 1983), 105.

perpetuated Lawson's claim that the *Nashville* sank the *Nitto Maru* within three minutes.<sup>68</sup> In reality, the picket boat surrendered and did not sink until after the *Nashville* rescued the crew, a full thirty minutes after firing commenced and forty-five minutes after being spotted by the *Hornet*. With Lawson and Davenport advising, the film portrayed the raid fairly accurately.

The other films, "Purple Heart" and "Destination Tokyo," cannot make the same claim. The first, spun off the trial and execution of the captured Raiders, was noted for its patriotic appeal but lacked the authoritative substance of "Thirty Seconds Over Tokyo." Completely fictional, "Destination Tokyo" portrayed submarines sneaking Americans ashore on Tokyo Bay to make weather reports to the approaching *Hornet*. Although submarines did penetrate Japanese waters and did make weather reports that the Navy utilized, no submarine landed Americans on the shore as part of the mission. These films would not be the last of Hollywood's productions about the raid but did help show the extent to which the raid had established itself in popular culture.

Meanwhile, the Doolittle Raid appeared only periodically in major news publications throughout 1944. Not including articles related to the book and films, only one article related to the raid appeared in magazines. First published in 1943 in *Atlantic* magazine, *Scholastic* reprinted gunner and doctor Thomas

---

<sup>68</sup> Lawson, 50.

White's diary in its 10 April edition.<sup>69</sup> No articles specifically about the raid appeared in *The New York Times*. However, multiple articles about Doolittle, now the Eighth Air Force's commander, appeared and each of these articles at least mentioned the famous mission. The best example may be *The New York Times* columnist Raymond Daniell's assessment, "Doolittle. . . known to everybody as 'the man who bombed Tokyo.'" <sup>70</sup> Also, the Navy launched a real *Shangri-La* on 24 February. Named after the hoax President Roosevelt used to hide the Doolittle Raid's point of departure, Mrs. James Doolittle christened the Essex class aircraft carrier as James Hilton, creator of the name Shangri-La in his novel *Lost Horizons*, watched as an honored guest. If nothing else, the articles printed in 1944 continued the mission's transformation from fact to legend.

Two major events occurred in 1945 that further cemented the Doolittle Raiders' place in history. On 21 August 1945, headlines declared "4 Doolittle Fliers Saved."<sup>71</sup> Robert Hite, Chase Nielsen, George Barr, and Jacob DeShazer survived forty months of "special treatment" to be liberated by a parachutist team led by Major Ray Nichols.<sup>72</sup> Following the initial flurry of articles, the POWs received little more press as the nation prepared war crimes trials for the Japanese associated with the flyers' improper treatment and with the execution

---

<sup>69</sup> Thomas R. White, "Hornet Stings Japan: Diary of Raid on Japan and Trek Through China to Safety," *Atlantic*, 6 June 1943, 41-46; and *Scholastic*, 10 April 1944, 13-16.

<sup>70</sup> Raymond Daniell, "James H. Doolittle," *The New York Times*, 23 January 1944, Section VI, p. 7.

<sup>71</sup> "4 Doolittle Fliers Saved," *The New York Times*, 22 August 1945, 1.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.* and "3 Doolittle Fliers Weak But Happy," *The New York Times*, 26 August 1945, 3.

of three of the group's members.

The second major event occurred on 14 December 1945. While still on the *Hornet*, Doolittle promised that after the raid he would "give you all [the Raiders] a party that you won't forget."<sup>73</sup> After all of the Raiders had made it back to the United States, Doolittle kept his promise. Most of the men made the trip to Miami for Doolittle's birthday on 14 December 1945, and several suggested a reunion be held every year.<sup>74</sup> Although impossible to understand at the time, the flyers had taken the first steps to preserve their spot in history as true American heroes.

### A Myth is Born

The war may have ended but the work for the historian, to sort out fact from fiction and to piece together numerous stories into an accurate description, had only just begun. The Doolittle Raid represented a unique challenge as the story had derived from inaccurate reports and appeared in the fragmented form discussed earlier. Furthermore, the military retained control over items, such as the intelligence reports filed after the raid, that it considered valuable for as long

---

<sup>73</sup> Doolittle and Glines, *I Could Never Be So Lucky Again*, 273.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, 463.

as ten to twenty years, and with this incomplete account America placed the aviators on a pedestal.

The immediate association of Doolittle with the mission unintentionally caused changes in the manner in which literature, art, and film presented the raid. From 20 May 1942 forward, newspapers and magazines generally included Doolittle's name in any article related to the attack, and articles mentioning Doolittle's name for any reason also included identifying lines such as "leader of the Tokyo raid" and "the man who bombed Tokyo." Gradually Doolittle's name became synonymous with the mission, and over time the attack took the title of the "Doolittle Raid." The first instance of this in *The New York Times*, and quite possibly ever, occurred in a 23 April 1943 article.<sup>75</sup> The first line of *Thirty Seconds Over Tokyo* states, "I HELPED BOMB TOKYO on the Doolittle raid."<sup>76</sup> As the title became more accepted, the participants became the "Doolittle Raiders." Other variants, such as Doolittle's fliers and Doolittle's men, also appeared frequently. Considering the mission involved 10,000 plus naval personnel, an innovative American industry, numerous AAF personnel (including the 79 other raid participants), and led to the deaths of multiple Chinese, titling the raid after a single person seems a giant and hasty step. However, Americans made this leap easily, and the first bombing of Japan became the Doolittle Raid with numerous,

---

<sup>75</sup> "U.S. Secrecy Policy on Fliers is Upheld," *The New York Times*, 23 April 1943, 4.

<sup>76</sup> Lawson, 3.

if unintentional, consequences.

Foremost, the raid's new title helped lead to the exclusion of three groups: the other Raiders, the navy, and those who trained for the raid but did not participate. With the exception of Ted Lawson, hardly any of the 79 participants made the news. Occasionally in 1942 and 1943 stories such as "Japan, Reich Rage at 'Brutalities'"<sup>77</sup> and "Only Military Targets Hit, Tokyo Raid Fliers Declare"<sup>78</sup> contained comments from Raiders other than General Doolittle. Although Doolittle's rank naturally led to him becoming a spokesman about the raid, the only widely circulated documents even to list all the aviators' names was an article stating that 79 others received Distinguished Service Crosses in May 1942 and the War Department's official account in May 1943.<sup>79</sup> The release of Barr, DeShazer, Hite, and Nielsen from Japanese captivity as well as the reunions helped refocus attention on the group as a whole. For the time being, however, America knew little about the rest of the participants.

The delayed release of the Navy's role and how the media portrayed the raid relegated the Navy to secondary importance. The War Department revealed the *Hornet's* role in April and the *Enterprise's* role in June of 1943. People ignored that the Navy risked a significant portion of its strength to get the B-25s within

---

<sup>77</sup> "Japan, Reich Rage at 'Brutalities,'" *The New York Times*, 22 October 1942, 7.

<sup>78</sup> "Only Military Targets Hit, Tokyo Raid Fliers Declare," *The New York Times*, 23 April 1943, 1.

<sup>79</sup> Because many of the raid's participants were fighting throughout the world, the press had significantly less access to the other Raiders. *Thirty Seconds Over Tokyo* also listed the participants; however, the list appeared as a duplication of the War Department's account.

range and to Task Force 16's narrow escape. Had Doolittle not been on the raid, the possibility exists that the entire story could have been seen from the Navy's perspective. After all, the idea originated in the Navy, and the Navy risked the most men and material to accomplish the mission. The most positive portrayal of the Navy's contribution came from scenes in "Thirty Seconds Over Tokyo," where each service slowly developed a profound respect for one another.<sup>80</sup>

The non-participating members received even less attention. Prior to 1945, nothing clarified that all of the trained crews boarded the *Hornet*. Lawson's book stated only that some crew members came along as spares.<sup>81</sup> Some non-participating crew members ended up in Doolittle's command in North Africa and participated in a mini-reunion on the raid's first anniversary. By the war's end, events had obscured that any AAF personnel, other than the eighty participants, were on board the *Hornet*.

The question remains, however, why did the public associate Doolittle with the raid to such a degree that the contributions of others appeared negligible? One significant factor was that people naturally viewed historical events from the commander's perspective, or from the top-down. Such an approach led to emphasizing the leader's contributions, generally attributing other persons' accomplishments as the leader's own. Although common until

---

<sup>80</sup> Lawson's book, *Thirty Seconds Over Tokyo*, also espoused this theme but to a lesser degree.

<sup>81</sup> Lawson, 34.

John Keegan wrote *The Face of Battle* in 1976, a simple top-down approach to history does not adequately answer the question and other significant factors require consideration.<sup>82</sup>

The Presidency and the military high command lacked complete agreement on the mission's primary purpose. Both intended for the raid to produce negative psychological effects in Japan and positive effects within the U.S. and its Allies.<sup>83</sup> Unfortunately, doing both proved very difficult as they required contradictory efforts.

The military sought to maximize the raid's psychological effects on the Japanese, rather than focus upon raising American morale. Therefore, the military high command desired absolute secrecy because this would "keep Japan guessing."<sup>84</sup> The military also hoped that the Japanese would pull forces back to the main islands for protection and that production would at least be minimally hampered.<sup>85</sup> By not revealing the planes' origin or destination, the Japanese could not defend themselves as easily against future attacks, nor could Japan predict when the U.S. might strike again. In short, the U.S. high command desired tangible results against the enemy.

On the other hand, President Roosevelt saw the raid as an opportunity to

---

<sup>82</sup> John Keegan, *The Face of Battle* (New York: Viking Press, 1976). This work started the current trend in military history to view warfare from the bottom-up, or from the individual soldier's perspective.

<sup>83</sup> Doolittle and Glines, *I Could Never Be So Lucky Again*, 540.

<sup>84</sup> "U.S. Secrecy Policy on Fliers is Upheld," *The New York Times*, 23 April 1943, 4.

<sup>85</sup> Doolittle and Glines, *I Could Never Be So Lucky Again*, 541.

boost morale on the home front and within the Allies. Never told of the attack for security reasons until after the B-25s lifted off the *Hornet*, the President found the surprise, carrier-borne assault appropriate retaliation for Pearl Harbor.<sup>86</sup> Nominating Doolittle for Brigadier General (skipping Colonel) just four days after the raid, the U.S. had received little information from China about the crews and believed that Japan could have shot down up to five planes.<sup>87</sup> The raid's results mattered little; Roosevelt found a hero he could present to the American public, and he intended to do so in a grand fashion. The new hero received the Congressional Medal of Honor the day after he returned to the United States. Against Army chief of staff General George C. Marshall's wishes, the President allowed press coverage of the award ceremony.<sup>88</sup> The President's attempt to boost morale worked magically across the nation but at the expense of the military's concern for absolute secrecy.

The execution of the three Raiders also helped fuel the legacy of the Doolittle Raid. Foremost, the killing outraged the American people and policy makers to nearly the same level as Pearl Harbor.<sup>89</sup> If the Japanese appeared devious, cunning, and aggressive after Pearl Harbor, they now appeared heartless murderers of innocent, honorable warriors. As evident by ads,

---

<sup>86</sup> Duane Schultz, *The Doolittle Raid* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1988), 247.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*, 211.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*, 247-248.

<sup>89</sup> "U.S. at War," *Time*, 19.

especially war bond ads,<sup>90</sup> and articles such as "Murder in Tokyo—The Law of the Jungle" by retired Major General (U.S.A.) Stephen O. Fuqua,<sup>91</sup> America accepted total warfare characterized by a lack of distinction between combatants and non-combatants. At a minimum, the executions awakened the general public to the nature of warfare they could expect in the future.

Lastly, in a recent article related to war movies, noted historian Roger J. Spiller pondered the question, how do people come to think that they know more about war than they actually do?<sup>92</sup> He concluded, "what most Americans today know of war comes from film."<sup>93</sup> The Doolittle Raid was no exception to this phenomenon. Considering three films appeared in 1944 alone and that only one of those attempted to remain historically accurate, the American perception was skewed from the day "Thirty Seconds Over Tokyo" first appeared on the silver screen. The public naturally assumed Ted Lawson's experience characterized the group's. Yet, few articles actually discussed what happened to the Raiders as they proceeded through China or where they went after reaching safety. The films satisfied the public's need for knowledge, even though gaping holes remained in the storyline.

---

<sup>90</sup> See War Bond advertisements in the 26 April 1943 edition of *The New York Times* on page 10 or see U.S. Army Official Poster reproduced on the back cover of Carol Glines' *Four Came Home*, reprinted edition in 1995. Both appear in the Appendix.

<sup>91</sup> Major General (U.S.A. ret.) Stephen O. Fuqua, "Murder in Tokyo--The Law of the Jungle," *Newsweek*, 10 May 1943, 18.

<sup>92</sup> Roger J. Spiller, "War in the Dark," *American Heritage* (February/March 1999): 43.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*

## The End of A Beginning

Assuming societies do reconstruct their past as Kammen suggests, then the Doolittle Raid filled a need within American culture. The question did not pertain to the relative worth of the campaign but whether America had heroes to guide them through the war. Roosevelt and the press placed no emphasis upon whether the raid accomplished any military objectives nor did America seem to be concerned about the Chinese people who died for our limited objectives. When Americans did begin questioning the relative worth of the raid in April 1943, Roosevelt once again solidified American popular opinion with news of the fliers' executions.<sup>94</sup> America had recreated its own history.

As for 1945, the story of the raid ended with many details left unresolved. America moved on to new topics and uncovering any missing details became merely an academic process. Popular interests had changed and questions, such as the actual amount of damage done by the attack, slipped away. Such issues eventually surfaced again years later to justify the raid and to establish its important role in the Pacific. However, the perception of the Doolittle Raid as a great accomplishment and the heroic qualities of the Raiders—especially Jimmy Doolittle—continued to live. The 18 April 1942 bombing of Tokyo had taken the first step to becoming a historical myth.

---

<sup>94</sup> "U.S. at War," *Time*, 19.

## Chapter Two: Setting Up the Future

### Another Start

On 17 April 1942, the sixteen ships comprising Task Force 16 reached a point 1,000 miles from Tokyo. After refueling, the carrier *Hornet* and the carrier *Enterprise*, escorted by four cruisers, pulled away from the slower tankers and destroyers in their final run towards the Japanese coast and the launch point. The day also provided an opportunity to pose for some publicity photos and to decorate the bombs with old Japanese medals and slogans, such as "I don't want to set the world on fire -- just Tokyo."<sup>1</sup> At some point during the day, Doolittle promised, "When we get to Chunking, I'm going to give you all a party that you won't forget."<sup>2</sup> The celebration never took place because, "we didn't all get to Chunking at the same time and the almost complete absence of 'party facilities.'"<sup>3</sup> However in 1945, Doolittle could finally keep his promise and the subsequent reunion helped establish how America viewed the raid for the next twenty years.

Although by 1945 the raid was firmly rooted in popular memory, the period between 1945 and 1966 proved vital in continuing America's fascination with the Raiders. During this time, the memory of the raid seemed to stabilize in

---

<sup>1</sup> Carroll V. Glines, *The Doolittle Raid: America's First Daring Strike Against Japan* (New York: Orion Books, 1988), 63.

<sup>2</sup> James H. Doolittle and Carroll V. Glines, *I Could Never Be So Lucky Again* (Atglen, Pennsylvania: Schiffer Publishing, 1991), 273.

<sup>3</sup> James H. Doolittle, Personal Letter to Charles L. McClure, 26 November 1945. Doolittle Collection. Special Collections, Doolittle Military Aviation Library. University of Texas at Dallas, Texas.

the American mindset. The heroic deeds and perilous situation did not become more so, but more literature did seek to explain and justify the mission. The Raiders as a group passed significant milestones and public support encouraged the Raider reunions. Throughout the reunions, traditions started, friendships emerged, and the Raiders grew as an organization. In essence, the stabilization during this period, in both American culture and within the group itself, ensured the Doolittle Raid would not easily be forgotten.

However, the perceptions of the Doolittle Raid did remain linked to society's needs. Events such as the Air Force's bid for a separate service, Japanese-American relations, the Korean War, and Vietnam undoubtedly affected how America portrayed the raid. In 1966 Doolittle wrote that the "public's memory is short."<sup>4</sup> He realized that as World War II ended, new challenges for the United States emerged and the country attempted to return to a state of normalcy. Attention focused around the events at hand, and the public's memories of World War II faded quickly. As early as 1950 the Raiders felt pressure to stop holding their annual reunions, and over the next two decades, the situation deteriorated further. Some might say that the Raiders had fallen down the slippery slope of being forgotten entirely.

This chapter examines the period between 1945 and 1966 to determine

---

<sup>4</sup> James H. Doolittle, Personal Letter to William M. Bower, 14 March 1966. Doolittle Collection. Special Collections, Doolittle Military Aviation Library. University of Texas at Dallas, Texas.

why the Doolittle Raid did not fade away completely. These years proved pivotal as the Raiders contributed to securing their place in the annals of history. An excellent place to start, the annual reunions reveal a great deal about what happened within the group as a whole. Next, the literature emerging about the mission illustrates the direction popular thinking took. In places where this analysis differs from what may be considered the collective memory of the attack, it will be noted. Finally, the conclusion draws all of the information together and hypothesizes why society chose to reconstruct the Doolittle Raid in a particular manner.

### **Reunions Emerge**

Although the Raiders' consider the 1945 gathering in Miami as the first true reunion, the anniversary of the raid did not go entirely unobserved prior to this celebration. On 18 April 1943, Doolittle and a few of the Raiders under his command in North Africa gathered in a farmhouse to mark the mission's first anniversary. Although war correspondents covered the mini-reunion, it received little attention from both the Raiders and the press. Hank Miller, Doolittle's co-pilot, explained that he was more concerned about the current hazards than a

single mission he had flown a year ago.<sup>5</sup> However, the mini-reunion in North Africa was significant.

The first reunion is important in many of the ways other "firsts" are significant. The small reunion in the farmhouse was not what Doolittle had in mind when he said he would throw a party in Chunking. To the Raiders, and certainly to Doolittle, this small gathering did not constitute a reunion. For consistency purposes, however, the Raiders do count the North Africa gathering as the first. In this manner the number of annual reunions matched the number of years since the actual raid. For example, 1957 marked both the fifteenth anniversary of the raid and the fifteenth annual reunion. Also, a photograph taken during the mini-reunion of the participants toasting the raid's anniversary found its way into numerous publications years later. Not only did the photo play a role in influencing Americans in later years, the picture records that those Army Air Force personnel who had been on the *Hornet* but did not participate in the raid attended the festivities.<sup>6</sup> This proved to be the last time these forgotten aviators attended a reunion as part of the group. Although a small number of the men gathered again in 1944 for the raid's anniversary, at the time they did not consider the meeting a reunion, and the gathering received no media attention.

---

<sup>5</sup> Glines, *The Doolittle Raid*, 221.

<sup>6</sup> Stan Cohen, *Destination Tokyo: A Pictorial History of Doolittle's Tokyo Raid, April 18, 1942* (Missoula, Montana: Pictorial Histories Publishing, 1983), 73.

The next important reunion was the 1945 gathering in Miami. Doolittle took the initiative to bring everybody together. He wrote letters to all the Raiders he could find stating, "Now seems the right time to have our get-together and I, for one, would appreciate nothing more than a chance to swap handshakes, yarns, and toasts with the old, original gang."<sup>7</sup> The first major get-together, as Doolittle referred to it, turned out to be a huge success by any standards.<sup>8</sup>

Held the weekend of Doolittle's forty-ninth birthday, 14 December 1945, at the MacFadden Deauville Hotel in Miami, many of the men returned for the celebration. Although the group paid homage to their eighteen fallen comrades, the emphasis remained on having fun and catching up. The popular story follows that everybody had so much fun that someone suggested holding a reunion every year. Doolittle, having paid \$1500 from his own pocket to host the celebration, responded, "I'd like that, fellas but I'm afraid I couldn't afford it. From here on, it's up to you to carry the ball."<sup>9</sup> Evidence suggests, however, that Doolittle either planned or hoped for the reunion to become an annual event. In the initial letter inviting the Raiders to help celebrate his birthday, he called the meeting their "first major get-together."<sup>10</sup> In retrospect he explained that they

---

<sup>7</sup> Doolittle, Personal Letter to McClure, 26 November 1945.

<sup>8</sup> James H. Doolittle, Personal Letter to Charles Ross Greening, 26 November 1945. Doolittle Collection. Special Collections, Doolittle Military Aviation Library. University of Texas at Dallas, Texas.

<sup>9</sup> Glines, *The Doolittle Raid*, 222.

<sup>10</sup> Doolittle, Personal Letter to McClure, 26 November 1945.

had all "shared an unusual life-threatening situation and had formed an unusual bonding relationship. It was understood that we would meet again annually."<sup>11</sup> Regardless, this first reunion established that the annual gatherings would continue and also illustrated the expenses involved in having them.

From the December reunion until 1950 the reunions appear to have passed relatively smoothly. After 1945 the Raiders held their reunions on the weekend closest to April 18 and as a result skipped holding one in 1946. As early as 1947, the group decided to create a committee and a chairman for each reunion to help with the organization, planning, and coordination of the event.<sup>12</sup> Again held in Miami, the reunion featured the first memorial dinner and approximately 37 of the Raiders attended.<sup>13</sup> Also, civic organizations began sponsoring the celebration and in some cases the entire community became involved. At Galveston, Texas, in 1949, the mayor participated in the activities and all the Raiders became Honorary Texas Citizens.<sup>14</sup> Combining public sponsorship and rotating the committee chairman helped these reunions proceed successfully.

Unfortunately, the situation began deteriorating during the planning for the 1951 reunion. During February Colonel Ross Greening sought sponsorship

---

<sup>11</sup> Doolittle and Glines, *I Could Never Be So Lucky Again*, 463.

<sup>12</sup> "Doolittle's Raiders Gather For Reunion," *The New York Times*, 19 April 1947, 31.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>14</sup> Charles Ross Greening, Personal Letter to Amon Carter (Forth Worth Star Telegram) 24 January 1951. Doolittle Collection. Special Collections, Doolittle Military Aviation Library. University of Texas at Dallas, Texas.

from Fort Worth, Texas. With the Korean War raging in the background, the situation grew precarious.<sup>15</sup> Intending to use the reunion to stimulate public support for war mobilization, some Raiders, such as William Bower, Thadd Blanton, and Doolittle, realized that their actions could draw adverse criticism.<sup>16</sup> To complicate matters further, over thirty Raiders remained active duty military members and at least one, Staff Sergeant Fred Braemer, voluntarily returned to active duty from his civilian job.<sup>17</sup> The chances that any of the active duty military members could participate in the reunion decreased significantly during the war. On the other hand, Blanton argued that "we are about the only World War II group that has held together, and if we skip a year we probably will never get together again."<sup>18</sup> In the end, the group reached a consensus and decided against holding a reunion in 1951, announcing that the reunion was canceled due to complications arising from the Korean War. Although the group proved Blanton's prediction wrong and continued to meet, the Raiders soon found new conflicts while organizing their reunions.

The Raiders had reached a paradox: they needed civic sponsorship to help defray the reunions' expenses but the sponsors always wanted something in return. Usually, the civic groups and the Raiders could easily reach a

---

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> Thadd H. Blanton, Personal Letter to William M. Bower, undated – est. Feb or Mar 51. Doolittle Collection. Special Collections, Doolittle Military Aviation Library. University of Texas at Dallas, Texas.

<sup>17</sup> Cohen, 114.

<sup>18</sup> Blanton, Personal Letter to Bower.

compromise that both honored the Raiders and promoted the sponsors. The Raiders attended a press conference where the sponsors received adequate attention, and they also attended a memorial dinner. The sponsor sold tickets to the dinner to help defray their costs. On occasion, the Raiders also participated in local events to help draw attention to important issues. For instance, in Galveston in 1954 the reunion attendees spent an afternoon at a civil defense program to highlight its importance.<sup>19</sup> Only when civic organizations sought to promote themselves more than they sought to honor the Raiders did problems occur.

In some cases problems arose from over zealous sponsors, as was the case in the 1955 Los Angeles reunion. The Raiders asked Dick Pittenger, a prominent public relations person for Farmer's Insurance, for help organizing and sponsoring the get together. Apparently, Pittenger had either worked with the Raiders previously or at a minimum had befriended Ted Lawson. In July of 1954 Lawson warned Richard Knobloch, the 1955 reunion chairman, about Pittenger's motives. Lawson believed that Pittenger was "attempting to use the prestige of the 'old man' [Doolittle] to keep himself in solid with his company" and that Knobloch "may find him uncontrollable."<sup>20</sup> Knobloch agreed with Lawson's assessment and explained to Doolittle that Pittenger was unduly crediting

---

<sup>19</sup> *The Houston Press*, 16 April 1954. Doolittle Collection. Special Collections, Doolittle Military Aviation Library. University of Texas at Dallas, Texas.

<sup>20</sup> Ted W. Lawson, Personal Letter to Richard Knobloch, 26 July 1954. Doolittle Collection. Special Collections, Doolittle Military Aviation Library. University of Texas at Dallas, Texas.

himself in the media with all of the reunion's activities in an attempt to increase his own prestige.<sup>21</sup> As a result, Doolittle suggested that Knobloch "arrange to get a formal invitation from the American Legion Post 707 inviting us to be their guests at the reunion and that there be a written statement saying what they will do for us and what they want us to do in return."<sup>22</sup> Beginning with Knobloch's request from Pittenger for the 1955 reunion, the Raiders avoided many more future problems by having the chairman ask for specific details in writing before they agreed to attend.

Although the Raiders learned a valuable lesson from Pittenger, he should not be highlighted as entirely self-serving. Lawson's letter stemmed in part from Pittenger's suggestion that the reunion be moved to the New Year's holiday. Pittenger argued that "the reasons [for changing dates] are numerous, but mainly you need a shot in the arm to bring this group together again."<sup>23</sup> Although the Raiders did not necessarily want to admit it, Pittenger's point had some validity.

Indeed, the reunions did need some bolstering. Attendance had fallen since the skipped reunion in 1951. Based on past attendance, Greening

---

<sup>21</sup> Richard Knobloch, Personal Letter to James H. Doolittle, 11 December 1954. Doolittle Collection. Special Collections, Doolittle Military Aviation Library. University of Texas at Dallas, Texas.

<sup>22</sup> James H. Doolittle, Personal Letter to Richard Knobloch, 21 December 1954. Doolittle Collection. Special Collections, Doolittle Military Aviation Library. University of Texas at Dallas, Texas.

<sup>23</sup> Richard Pittenger, Personal Letter to Richard Knobloch and Ted Lawson, 21 June 1954. Doolittle Collection. Special Collections, Doolittle Military Aviation Library. University of Texas at Dallas, Texas.

estimated that 35 Raiders would attend the 1951 reunion.<sup>24</sup> By the 1954 Galveston reunion the number had dropped to a mere 19 of 60 Raiders.<sup>25</sup> In 1952, Edward "Ski" York suggested that the Raiders "set up some sort of reason for having the reunions other than a chance to get together."<sup>26</sup> His letter did not completely clarify what he meant by this suggestion but appeared to have the preservation of the group in mind.<sup>27</sup> As attendance and Pittenger's letter illustrate, the group needed more than just a common bonding experience and friendship to bridge the distances among them annually.

York's suggestion seemed to do the trick. In 1953 the Raiders began developing the Traffic Safety Award to encourage ground safety.<sup>28</sup> At the time, ground accidents killed more Air Force personnel than any other source of accidents. The Raiders presented the award, an engraved bronze cup, at their annual reunions to the Air Force command that had the best traffic safety record. The award presentation helped draw attention to the importance of ground safety, but more importantly it gave the Raiders a renewed sense of purpose.

The group ceremoniously presented the Traffic Safety Award to the Air

---

<sup>24</sup> Greening, Personal Letter to Carter.

<sup>25</sup> News release to *The Houston Press*, 16 April 1954. Doolittle Collection. Special Collections, Doolittle Military Aviation Library. University of Texas at Dallas, Texas.

<sup>26</sup> Many popular stories told at the reunions credit Doolittle as being the first to suggest an additional purpose for the gatherings. Edward York, Personal Letter to James H. Doolittle, 1952. Doolittle Collection. Special Collections, Doolittle Military Aviation Library. University of Texas at Dallas, Texas.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> News Release, Secretary of the Air Force: Office of Information, Los Angeles, 6 April 1962. Doolittle Collection. Special Collections, Doolittle Military Aviation Library. University of Texas at Dallas, Texas.

Force at the 1955 reunion, marking the beginning of another dimension of the reunions. The Raiders had always helped communities that sponsored them in an informal capacity but with the advent of the trophy the reunions gained an official function. Although the Air Force technically controlled all of the competition's details, such as who won the trophy, the Raiders continued to present the award to the winning Air Force command at the annual reunions. In addition, the Air Force started competition for a second Safety Award in 1963. Also awarded by the Raiders, only commands with three or fewer bases or fewer than 10,000 assigned personnel could compete for this second award.<sup>29</sup> In 1968 the Air Force ceased competition for the Safety Awards, and the Raiders retired the trophies in 1969 to a permanent display at the Air Force Academy.<sup>30</sup>

Perhaps developed in conjunction with the Safety Award, research indicates that the reunion mission statement also appeared between 1953 and 1955.<sup>31</sup> The statement outlined the basic purposes of the reunions as renewing old friendships, perpetuating basic Air Force values, and "to participate in some activity which we feel will be of benefit to the country as a whole or to the

---

<sup>29</sup> John A. Hilger, Personal Letter to James H. Doolittle, 9 April 1963. Doolittle Collection. Special Collections, Doolittle Military Aviation Library. University of Texas at Dallas, Texas.

<sup>30</sup> Travis Hoover, Personal Letter to Stewart Bachtelle (USAFA) 9 April 1969. Doolittle Collection. Special Collections, Doolittle Military Aviation Library. University of Texas at Dallas, Texas.

<sup>31</sup> The exact date of the first mission statement is unclear. The statement has changed in wording, but not meaning, several times and one variation appears in the appendix. Doolittle Collection. Special Collections, Doolittle Military Aviation Library. University of Texas at Dallas, Texas.

community in which we meet."<sup>32</sup> In the early 1960's, the Raiders began doing more than just presenting trophies to accomplish their stated goals.

In 1962 the Raiders had raised enough money to begin presenting an annual scholarship to a young person in the host community. The hosts determined the scholarship winner, further benefiting the community that sponsored the reunion. Raider pilot Richard Cole wrote that "the scholar program has made it [the reunions] even more purposeful."<sup>33</sup> So that the group could earn money to finance such programs, it officially incorporated as the Doolittle Tokyo Raiders Association in 1963.<sup>34</sup> Such new purposes also added new life to the reunions by creating publicity.

Publicity had both positive and negative effects. Most significantly, the Raiders attendance rose once again. Thirty-eight Raiders attended the 1955 Los Angeles reunion and the number of dignitaries invited also grew. In 1954 the only invited guest was Henry Miller, the Navy captain responsible for teaching the Raiders carrier takeoff procedures.<sup>35</sup> In comparison, the Raiders invited various high-ranking Air Force personnel beginning in 1955 and by 1962 had

---

<sup>32</sup> Richard Knobloch, Personal Letter to Edward Crowley (LA sponsorship contact), 3 May 1955. Doolittle Collection. Special Collections, Doolittle Military Aviation Library. University of Texas at Dallas, Texas.

<sup>33</sup> Personal interview, Richard E. Cole, 18 April 1999, tape recoding.

<sup>34</sup> John A. Hilger, 1963 Doolittle Reunion File. Special Collections, Doolittle Military Aviation Library. University of Texas at Dallas, Texas.

<sup>35</sup> 1954 Doolittle Collection. Special Collections, Doolittle Military Aviation Library. University of Texas at Dallas, Texas.

begun inviting influential congressman and political leaders.<sup>36</sup> Publicity also helped land popular celebrities, such as Joe Brown in 1958 and Dennis Day in 1961, to perform at the formal dinners. Increasing publicity appeared to retain local, if not national, interest in the raid and also helped hold the Raiders together as an organization.

On the other hand, publicity also changed the focus of the reunions in two significant ways. In the first place, often the celebrity performing as the master of ceremonies drew as much attention as the Raiders themselves. Clayton Banter, manager of the Colorado Springs Chamber of Commerce, stated that he would wait to attempt any major publicity for the 1960 reunion until the Raiders determined a master of ceremonies. Furthermore, he told others that "a 'name' M.C. will be our biggest selling point for the banquet."<sup>37</sup> This was compounded by the increasing publicity General Doolittle generated.

General Doolittle continued to be a prominent figure in the press, especially with respect to military affairs. Therefore, the media and the sponsors tried to take advantage of his annual presence at the Raiders' reunions. To stimulate interest public affairs people would often try to coerce Doolittle into speaking appearances. He wrote "In the past, I've had public relations people –

---

<sup>36</sup> Jack A. Sims, Personal Letter to Auriel Douglas (sponsor coordinator), 26 March 1962. Doolittle Collection. Special Collections, Doolittle Military Aviation Library. University of Texas at Dallas, Texas.

<sup>37</sup> Clayton Banter, Personal Letter to Travis Hoover, 15 March 1960. Doolittle Collection. Special Collections, Doolittle Military Aviation Library. University of Texas at Dallas, Texas.

after I had refused – print my name in the program as a speaker and then, erroneously, imagine I would be obliged to oblige.”<sup>38</sup> The media also tried to secure interviews as well as radio and television appearances with the General. Although he granted such requests, he made a specific point to include other Raiders. One public relations person, Colonel Max Boyd, wrote another that Doolittle would want any appearance to involve other veterans of the Tokyo Raid.<sup>39</sup> Boyd based his information on “past experiences in which he [Doolittle] declined to appear without his boys.”<sup>40</sup> Doolittle tried to make it clear that he considered the raid a group effort and that all of them deserved their share of the limelight.<sup>41</sup> Although publicity had a downside, it did help maintain the Tokyo Raid in the public eye.

An excellent example of public support and admiration occurred at the 1959 Tucson reunion. At times, competition between prospective host cities developed, and the selected city generally possessed some animate supporters driving the community’s bid. Chuck Arnold, director of Tucson’s Sunshine Climate Club in 1959, not only spurred Tucson’s successful bid but also helped create one of the Raiders’ most widely publicized traditions.<sup>42</sup>

---

<sup>38</sup> James H. Doolittle, Personal Letter to Jack A. Sims, 27 March 1962. Doolittle Collection. Special Collections, Doolittle Military Aviation Library. University of Texas at Dallas, Texas.

<sup>39</sup> Max B. Boyd, Personal Letter to Mark D. Meranda (public relations office), 18 January 1955. Doolittle Collection. Special Collections, Doolittle Military Aviation Library. University of Texas at Dallas, Texas.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

<sup>41</sup> Personal interview, Carroll V. Glines, 24 May 1999.

<sup>42</sup> John Jennings, “He Made Strong Case for Doolittle Raiders” *Tucson Citizen*, 1 May 1992.

Often times the host city presented the Raider organization with a token of appreciation for coming and in honor of the raid itself. Wanting to do something special, Arnold decided to give each Raider a silver goblet to use for their traditional toast to all of the Raiders who had passed away.<sup>43</sup> In addition, he presented the organization with a wooden case to display the goblets and a bottle of brandy. The vintage intentionally coincided with the year of Doolittle's birth, and the gift started the "Last Man Club" for the Raiders. The idea behind the club was that as a Raider passed away, his goblet would be inverted. When only two goblets remained upright, the two remaining Raiders would drink a final toast to the group's deceased from the 1896 vintage brandy. The Raider's Last Man Club quickly became an important part of the reunions and played an increasingly significant role in the 1980's and 1990's.

North American Aviation presented the Raiders with the another significant gift of the period from 1945 to 1966. For the 1958 Las Vegas reunion, North American gave the Raiders an operational B-25B, which had been modified into a replica of the plane Doolittle flew on the raid. Shortly after the reunion, the Raiders presented the plane to the Air Force Museum in Dayton, Ohio, for permanent display.

Even though the advent of the Traffic Award and scholarship brought the Raid into the public eye, military groups were not immune to the shifting tide of

---

<sup>43</sup> Personal interview, Chase J. Nielsen, 18 April 1999, tape recording.

public sentiment. Throughout the Vietnam War support dwindled for groups with military ties. Although national sentiment would grow even more anti-military following the 1968 Tet Offensive, the Raiders found 1966 the most difficult year to garner support.

At the previous reunion, Kansas City's bid to host the 1966 reunion looked the most promising. William Bower, that year's reunion chairman, started serious negotiations for the gathering in August of 1965. The day he arrived in Kansas City to meet the city's representative, he learned that "it wasn't convenient to discuss the proposal."<sup>44</sup> He attempted to regenerate interest in the Kansas City area through two other contacts but failed. Next, Bower inquired into New York City but again found little interest. Meanwhile, in November Ski York found that the San Antonio Air Force Association was interested in hosting the reunion. Plans proceeded quickly and appeared finalized following a 13 January meeting. However, Bower learned a week later that "the Chamber of Commerce had declined to support" the reunion.<sup>45</sup> Finally, Carroll Glines, the Raiders' historian, found initial interest in Winter Park, Florida, but again, the

---

<sup>44</sup> William M. Bower, Personal Letter to Richard Joyce, 5 May 1966. Doolittle Collection. Special Collections, Doolittle Military Aviation Library. University of Texas at Dallas, Texas.

<sup>45</sup> William M. Bower, Personal Letter to James H. Doolittle, 9 March 1966. Doolittle Collection. Special Collections, Doolittle Military Aviation Library. University of Texas at Dallas, Texas.

excitement shrank rapidly.<sup>46</sup> The Raiders, despite their best efforts, could not find a host for 1966.

The Raiders officially announced that the reunion would be postponed until next year because "The pressure of Vietnam has fully absorbed our attention and efforts."<sup>47</sup> However, some of the Raiders, including the General, believed that the end of the sponsored reunions had come. As Bower stated, "We must drum up the interest right away for our usefulness is no longer as pointed as in the past."<sup>48</sup> Doolittle furthered Bower's idea when he wrote "I suggest we plan one more big subsidized party, for our twenty-fifth reunion, and then either cancel future reunions or finance them ourselves."<sup>49</sup> Over the past years, the Raiders had found public support and financing increasingly difficult to secure. Doolittle noted that the group "should stop begging for financial support" because "each time it has been just a little more embarrassing."<sup>50</sup> Hence, after nearly twenty-five years, the reunions and the popular memory of the raid appeared on the verge of collapse.

---

<sup>46</sup> William M. Bower, Form Letter to Doolittle Raiders, 10 March 1966. Doolittle Collection. Special Collections, Doolittle Military Aviation Library. University of Texas at Dallas, Texas.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

<sup>48</sup> Bower, Personal Letter to Joyce, 5 May 1966.

<sup>49</sup> James H. Doolittle, Personal Letter to William M. Bower, 14 March 1966. Doolittle Collection. Special Collections, Doolittle Military Aviation Library. University of Texas at Dallas, Texas.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

## The Tokyo Raid on Paper

Following World War II numerous historians sought to record the events of the recent past. Although the Doolittle Raid had already been recorded in Lawson's *Thirty Seconds Over Tokyo*, the story told only one viewpoint and scholars found a wealth of unpublished information still existed. From 1945 to 1966, publishers printed two books directly pertaining to the raid and five other books that were related to the mission. Through these works, authors established what history credited the attack with accomplishing and illustrated that two distinct perspectives, one Air Force and one Navy, existed. Overall, literature about the Tokyo Raid stabilized national thought by recording the significant facts while quietly eliminating critical evaluations.

In two of the earliest discussions of the raid, both William "Bull" Halsey<sup>51</sup> and Marc Mitscher's<sup>52</sup> biographies have sections about the mission. Mitscher's account is more complete and presented the Navy's version of the story. Although neither discussed the raid's relative success, they both intentionally refuted criticisms that had surfaced about the mission's conduct. Most criticisms about the raid remained unpublished, but some Army Air Forces and Navy personnel believed that the Navy endangered the Raiders lives beyond reason by

---

<sup>51</sup> William F. Halsey and J. Bryan III. *Admiral Halsey's Story* (New York: McGraw Hill Book Company, 1967).

<sup>52</sup> Theodore Taylor, *The Magnificent Mitscher* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1954), 121.

launching the planes early.<sup>53</sup> Halsey defended his decision to launch the attack early, after being spotted by the picket boat.<sup>54</sup> He claimed that the early takeoff was "regrettable" but maintained that the risk of losing two carriers, at a time when the U.S. Navy had only five in the Pacific Theater was too great to continue towards the Japanese coast.<sup>55</sup> Mitscher also addressed those who believed the entire mission accomplished nothing, stating, "it paid big dividends since it threw the islands into a panic and forced them to keep a large defense force at home."<sup>56</sup> Mitscher would not be the last to justify the raid with such an argument.

Although never published, the Ross Greening monograph may be the most even-handed account. Written in 1948 as a paper for the Armed Forces Staff College, Greening analyzed the raid as a joint effort or a military action conducted with two or more service branches. He felt both services remained uncooperative until after Mitscher announced that the Army personnel were going to bomb Tokyo. Furthermore, he believed both services deemed the raid successful in relation to their respective costs.<sup>57</sup> By examining the raid as a joint effort, both services received adequate attention for their participation and some authors continued this theme.

---

<sup>53</sup> Duane Schultz, *The Doolittle Raid* (New York; St Martin's Press, 1988), 123.

<sup>54</sup> Halsey and Bryan, 103.

<sup>55</sup> Taylor, 121.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid.

<sup>57</sup> Charles Ross Greening, "The First Joint Action" (Armed Forces Staff College, Norfolk, Virginia, 21 December 1948), 68.

In 1964 both books pertaining solely to the Tokyo Raid appeared. *Target Tokyo* by James Merrill<sup>58</sup> and *Doolittle's Tokyo Raiders* by Carroll Glines,<sup>59</sup> contained similar information but each from a different viewpoint. Both described what happened to each crew from takeoff to crash but Merrill approached the subject more from the joint viewpoint. He labeled the mission the Halsey-Doolittle Raid and included more narrative from the naval personnel involved. With significantly more detail than Merrill, Glines focused upon the Army Air Forces perspective. The most significant aspect of *Doolittle's Tokyo Raiders*, Glines was the first to imply that the Battle of Midway and the Tokyo Raid were connected, writing that "the Battle of Midway might not have been fought had it not been for the Doolittle raid."<sup>60</sup> The two perspectives, one joint and one Air Force, had clearly developed.

Although the other major works published in the same period relate to the attack only indirectly, they do have some interest. *Guests of the Kremlin*,<sup>61</sup> *Four Came Home*,<sup>62</sup> and *The Amazing Story of Sergeant Jacob DeShazer*,<sup>63</sup> all discussed what happened to particular Raiders following the mission. Robert Emmens, a

---

<sup>58</sup> James M. Merrill, *Target Tokyo: The Halsey-Doolittle Raid* (Chicago: Randy McNally, 1964).

<sup>59</sup> Carroll V. Glines, *Doolittle's Tokyo Raiders* (New York: D. Van Nostrand Company, 1964).

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, 396.

<sup>61</sup> Robert G. Emmens, *Guests of the Kremlin* (New York: MacMillan Company, 1949).

<sup>62</sup> Carroll V. Glines, *Four Came Home*, (Missoula, Montana: Pictorial Histories Publishing Company, 1966).

<sup>63</sup> Hoyt C. Watson, *The Amazing Story of Sergeant Jacob DeShazer* (Winona Lake, Indiana: Light and Life Press, 1950).

co-pilot on the raid, wrote *Guests of the Kremlin* about his internment and escape from Russia following his landing in Vladivostok. The book was one of the earliest, first-hand, American accounts of Communist oppression and aggression. *Four Came Home*, also by Glines, fully discussed the treatment of the eight Raiders the Japanese caught and held as prisoners of war (POW). Hoyt Watson's work illustrated the experience of Jacob DeShazer, one of the eight POW's. DeShazer developed a profound belief in God during his time as a Japanese prisoner and, upon returning to the United States, entered seminary training. Returning to Japan as a missionary, DeShazer helped convert Mitsuo Fuchida, the Japanese pilot who led the attack on Pearl Harbor, to Christianity in 1950.<sup>64</sup> These three works, in addition to *Target Tokyo* and *Doolittle's Tokyo Raiders*, framed the public understanding of the Doolittle Raid from 1945 to 1966.

Literature finished the story Lawson started with *Thirty Seconds Over Tokyo* in 1943. Now, the public could experience what happened to all sixteen crews and, depending upon one's perspective, could gain some insight into the Navy's role. The public, assured by works such as *Four Came Home* and *The Amazing Story of Sergeant Jacob DeShazer*, realized that the Raiders epitomized true American heroes—people who volunteered for the country in time need, endured great hardships as a result, and in the end, believed even more strongly in America and its value system. Literature cemented the mission's place in

---

<sup>64</sup> Glines, *Four Came Home*, 126.

American history but did not cultivate and propagate the Doolittle Raid legend alone. Furthering the myth relied upon a combination of literature, the group's efforts, and collective memory.

### The Legend Lives

Although the Doolittle Raid remained embedded in the American consciousness throughout the war, in 1948 Greening argued that the mission indeed had a highly controversial effect on the public.<sup>65</sup> He realized the raid lost some of its appeal as the minimal materiel damage became well known. Greening also believed that Roosevelt's delay in announcing the execution of the three Raiders created suspicion within the public as to the reliability of information concerning the war efforts.<sup>66</sup> Yet, in 1961 the *Ouachita Citizen*, the Camden, Arkansas newspaper, claimed that "The Doolittle Reunion is one of the greatest international events of peacetime."<sup>67</sup> In less than twenty years the collective memory of the Doolittle Raid had grown larger than the raid itself.

In 1966 Doolittle wrote that "The Tokyo Raid caught the public fancy and lived longer than we [the Raiders] had any right to expect."<sup>68</sup> The reunions and literature about the mission certainly played a role in prolonging the memory of

---

<sup>65</sup> Greening, "The First Joint Action," 60.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, 61.

<sup>67</sup> "Today Marks Start of Doolittle Reunion," *Ouachita Citizen*, 13 April 1961, p. 1.

<sup>68</sup> Doolittle, Personal Letter to Bower, 14 March 1966.

the Raiders. However, these things did not occur in isolation and, acknowledging that societies reconstruct their past, the Raid's larger role within society becomes important.

Immediately following World War II the Army Air Forces renewed its push for an independent air force. On 17 September 1947 Congress officially made the U.S. Air Force an independent service of the armed forces. Compared to the nearly 200 year-old Army and Navy, the Air Force had little heritage to form its roots and traditions. As a result, the new Air Force embraced past events and important leaders from its earlier days of being tied to the army. The fledgling Air Force suddenly had a vested interest in portraying the Doolittle Raid as an Air Force accomplishment. The reunions and literature both furthered the idea that the Air Force deserved the credit for the mission. Reunions focused attention almost exclusively on Air Force personnel. Until 1958, when the Raiders asked Admiral Halsey to attend, the only Navy person ever invited was Henry Miller.

Literature followed the same path as it generally told the Air Force's perspective. Although Merrill's *Target Tokyo* tried, nothing published from 1945-1966 approached the truly joint view Greening espoused. In addition, Carroll Glines, the most definitive author on the subject, had little interest in presenting a joint perspective since he was an Air Force officer. Plus, he had agreed to pay

the Raiders' organization a commission for its exclusive cooperation.<sup>69</sup> The reunions and literature favored the raid's portrayal as an Air Force phenomenon.

Another factor that was important in continuing the collective memory of the Doolittle Raid had to be Japanese-American relations. The two could not completely ignore that they had just finished waging total war against one another, but the advent of the Cold War and the Communist victory in China illustrated the need for a strong alliance. Formerly controlled by the Japanese Empire, South Korea fell under U.S. protection as well. Japanese-American relations evolved rapidly following the cessation of hostilities.

Considering the U.S. and Japan were on increasingly friendlier terms, commemorating the war in the Pacific Theater became problematic. To avoid diplomatic embarrassment, the people and battles that were remembered could not evoke too strong of feelings from the former opponent. Controversy surrounded the use of atomic weapons and therefore the ending of the war. Fanatical fighting generally characterized major battles and remembering them also involved recalling a large number of casualties. As a result, deciding what exactly to expose nationally could be difficult.

The Doolittle Raid, however, did not create an abundance of controversy. In comparison to other air attacks, the Tokyo Raid did little damage and the U.S. readily admitted it. America's admission of doing little damage corresponded

---

<sup>69</sup> John A. Hilger, Form Letter to Doolittle Tokyo Raiders, 1963 Doolittle Reunion File. Special Collections, Doolittle Military Aviation Library. University of Texas at Dallas, Texas.

nicely to the official Japanese position following the attack. The U.S. could still claim a moral victory due to the morale boost, and Americans seemed capable of forgiving the execution of the three Raiders, probably due to fire bombing and nuclear weapons. In the end, the Doolittle Raid appeared a relatively uncontroversial way to commemorate the war in the Pacific.

Japanese-American relations and an independent Air Force propagated the myths surrounding the Doolittle Raid and were two of the stronger influences on the formation of collective memory. These influences led to two perspectives of the raid and did not hamper international relations. The American public simply felt free to continue upholding the Raiders as national heroes longer than anyone expected. The trend may have continued unabated had Vietnam not slowly eroded public support for organizations associated with the military.

### **Nearing the End?**

From 1945-1966 the Doolittle Raiders stabilized and grew as an organization. The group began meeting annually for fun and to honor their fallen comrades. As the members matured, so did their purpose for holding reunions. They began presenting the Air Force Safety Award in 1955 and scholarships in General Doolittle's honor in 1962. The Raiders' attendance varied

but appeared proportional to publicity. Following a fairly steady decline and a setback when the 1951 reunion was canceled, publicity and another purpose brought the Raiders in strength to Los Angeles in 1955. However, as the Raiders themselves grew older, so did America's memory of the mission.

During the period multiple authors revisited the attack. The earliest references, in biographies of significant Naval officers, refuted the raid's remaining critics and illustrated the Navy's role. Other monographs concentrated upon completing the historical gaps left untouched by literature prior to 1945. One of the major works approached the raid as a joint mission while the other relegated the Navy's role to secondary importance. Other books focused upon selected Raiders and their plight following the attack. Literature illustrated the general trend of American thought but could not influence that track alone.

The Doolittle Raid lived and grew within America's collective memory. Societal needs, combining with the reunions and literature, retained the Raiders as national heroes and help explain why the Raid's memory remained important to the average American. As evidence of America's fascination, communities and organizations financed the Raiders' annual reunions. However, as the group approached its twenty-fifth reunion, public support began to dwindle. When the Raiders could not find sponsorship in 1966, they thought that they had reached the end of their usefulness and prepared for their final celebration.

## Chapter Three: History Takes Over

### Rapid Growth

Over the weekend of 16 to 18 April 1999, seventeen Doolittle Raiders and four Honorary Raiders converged on Wright-Patterson Air Force Base in Dayton, Ohio. The group gathered to celebrate their 57<sup>th</sup> Annual Reunion, also marking the 57<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the raid. As part of the festivities, the Raiders agreed to sign autographs in the Air Force Museum for a period of three hours on Saturday 17 April. Although the signing was not scheduled until 1300 hours, a group of people began congregating shortly after the doors to the museum opened at 0900 hours. World War II veterans, military members, interested civilians, and parents accompanied by their children massed to collect autographs on everything from paintings and books to pillow cases and aircraft parts. The line of awaiting people grew so long that a half an hour after the autograph session started, museum officials closed the line to new arrivals. Literally thousands of autographs and four and one half-hours later, the Raiders finally finished.

From what appeared to be the end of the Raiders' reunions in 1966 until 1999, America's collective memory of the raid and its participants underwent some significant changes. The generation following the Second World War generally lost interest in the raid or few learned about the mission. On the other hand, America's interest in history grew rapidly in the 1980's. The result was a

mixture of Americans that either possessed a living memory of the Doolittle Raid or did not know about the mission. Since the number of people with no first-hand experience of the Second World War constantly increased, the period from 1966 to 1999 could be described as a struggle between time erasing the collective memory of the raid and efforts to preserve that memory.

Chapter Three examines the period from 1966 to the present to help explain how and why the Doolittle Raid remained a legendary event. Again, the reunions provide an excellent starting point because many relevant trends within society, such as memorabilia collecting, have direct associations with the reunions. A brief discussion about the purpose of memorials and about the ones dedicated to the mission follows. Lastly, a discussion on why the Raid, or military history in general, became popular again in the 1980's concludes the chapter.

### **A Time to Remember**

Although the Raiders canceled the 1966 reunion for a lack of support, the 1967 reunion drew a great deal of attention for three inter-related reasons. In

1966, Doolittle suggested a final subsidized party for 1967 and the planning committee organized the reunion under such auspices.<sup>1</sup> To the Raiders, the 1967 reunion was also their 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary and could possibly be their last. Thirdly, the Raiders involved the Navy more in the 1967 reunion than in previous years. The combination of these factors renewed interest in the raid and helped the raiders garner financial support.

The Raiders' 25<sup>th</sup> Reunion became one of the largest and most memorable.<sup>2</sup> Chaired by Jack Sims, the Raider committee responsible for organizing the reunion worked hard to make this reunion special. They arranged for celebrities, such as Bob Hope, to make surprise guest appearances. With the help of Admiral Miller, the committee also coordinated for a North American B-25 to takeoff from a carrier for the first time since the raid.<sup>3</sup> For the first time since 1943, popular magazines, such as *Life*, covered the Raiders' reunion.<sup>4</sup>

However, the *Life* article is most interesting due to the two photos the magazine chose to publish. Of the hundreds of pictures the magazine could have used, both images relate to the Raiders' toast to their departed comrades. One pictured a toast at the 1943 mini-reunion in North Africa and was discussed in

---

<sup>1</sup> James H. Doolittle, Personal Letter to William M. Bower, 14 March 1966. Doolittle Collection. Special Collections, Doolittle Military Aviation Library. University of Texas at Dallas, Texas.

<sup>2</sup> Personal interview, Carroll V. Glines, 16 April 1999, tape recording.

<sup>3</sup> 1967 Doolittle Raiders' Reunion File. Special Collections, Doolittle Military Aviation Library. University of Texas at Dallas, Texas.

<sup>4</sup> "25<sup>th</sup> Reunion Toast for Doolittle's Raiders," *Life* 28 (April 1967): 42

the preceding chapter. Although the picture received little attention in 1943, the shot also appeared in two of Glines' books,<sup>5</sup> Doolittle's autobiography,<sup>6</sup> and Cohen's pictorial history.<sup>7</sup> The other photo showed Doolittle holding a silver goblet. By 1967 the eighty goblets the city of Tucson presented to the Raiders in 1949 had become a traditional part of the reunions. Recalling Michael Kammen's statement that photographs have the capacity to sensationalize, sentimentalize, or distort, the publication of these two particular pictures proved significant.<sup>8</sup>

The Raiders' toast to their departed members became a ritual performed at every reunion. To date, the toast consists of a role call followed by drink of brandy.<sup>9</sup> The living members respond in an affirmative manner when their name is called. If the person called has deceased, the highest ranking crew member present answers "absent" for his departed crew members. On the first reunion following a Raider's death, their goblet is also turned upside down.<sup>10</sup> The Raiders consider the toast a symbol of respect, a chance to honor the group's deceased. However, it is also a way to remember and the two pictures, twenty-

---

<sup>5</sup> Carroll V. Glines, *The Doolittle Raid: America's First Daring Strike Against Japan* (New York: Orion Books, 1988), 163; *Doolittle's Tokyo Raiders* (New York: D. Van Nostrand Company, 1964), 399.

<sup>6</sup> James H. Doolittle and Carroll V. Glines, *I Could Never Be So Lucky Again* (Atglen, Pennsylvania: Schiffer Publishing, 1991), 79.

<sup>7</sup> Stan Cohen, *Destination Tokyo: A Pictorial History of Doolittle's Tokyo Raid, April 18, 1942* (Missoula, Montana: Pictorial Histories Publishing, 1983), 94.

<sup>8</sup> Michael Kammen, *Mystic Cords of Memory: The Transformation of Tradition in American Culture* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1991), 32.

<sup>9</sup> Personal interview, Chase J. Nielsen, 18 April 1999, tape recording.

<sup>10</sup> Rank is denoted by the crew member's position on the aircraft, not traditional military ranks. The order from top to bottom is as follows: pilot, co-pilot, navigator, bombardier, and flight engineer/gunner.

five years apart, illustrated that the group had not forgotten their own. Thus, the pictures and the *Life* article indicated that America remembered, or at least should remember, the historic mission.

Following the relative flurry of activity surrounding the 25<sup>th</sup> reunion, interest in the Doolittle Raid stagnated. Many statements similar to those made about the 1966 reunion surfaced. In 1971 Doolittle wrote, "I am sure the time will come when we will either have to give up the Reunions or finance them ourselves. In the meantime we are, to a degree, beggars."<sup>11</sup> Also, in years past political and military leaders, from the President to the Chief of Naval Operations, sent telegrams to the Raiders during the reunion. The message generally thanked the Raiders for their heroic efforts, but evidence suggests that such telegrams stopped arriving for the duration of the 1970's.<sup>12</sup> The Raiders even had difficulty finding popular celebrities to act as the banquet's master of ceremonies.<sup>13</sup> America seemed uninterested in preserving the raid's legacy, and until the mid-1980's, Doolittle's prediction that the reunions would soon lose public support appeared to be growing closer each passing year.

Surprising many of the Raiders, they continued to find financial support and at least minimal public interest through the 1970's and into the 1980's.<sup>14</sup>

---

<sup>11</sup> James H. Doolittle, Personal Letter to Charles L. McClure, 04 May 1971. Doolittle Collection. Special Collections, Doolittle Military Aviation Library. University of Texas at Dallas, Texas.

<sup>12</sup> 1970-1979 Doolittle Raiders' Reunion File. Special Collections, Doolittle Military Aviation Library. University of Texas at Dallas, Texas.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>14</sup> Personal interview, Chase J. Nielsen, 18 April 1999, tape recording.

Although the reunions continued, they did so rather uneventfully. The mission did not appear in popular magazines, *The New York Times*, or in new literature. Just as Americans followed President Gerald Ford's lead in deliberately disremembering the Vietnam War, the new generations could not, as Doolittle described, "care less" about the Tokyo Raid.<sup>15</sup> However, in the eighties America's interest in military-related events returned for several reasons.

Some of the change resulted from the election of President Ronald Reagan in 1980 and increasing Cold War tensions. The Cold War focused attention on the military, and Reagan pushed for an increased defense budget. Reagan repeatedly claimed that the United States lost the Vietnam War because it fought with "one hand tied behind its back."<sup>16</sup> At the same time, the U.S. Army and Air Force propagated false myths to increase their own prestige. The Army claimed that the media lost the war, and the Air Force bragged that strategic bombing won the war.<sup>17</sup> Furthermore, the Air Force implied it could have won years earlier had political leaders used strategic bombing correctly.<sup>18</sup> Such rhetoric removed the taboo surrounding Vietnam, and as Kammen assessed, interest in military affairs and military history "was very much in vogue once again."<sup>19</sup>

---

<sup>15</sup> Kammen *Mystic Cords Of Memory*, 662; Doolittle Personal Letter to McClure

<sup>16</sup> Kammen, *In the Past Lane*, 210.

<sup>17</sup> Micheal Schudson, "Dynamics of Distortion in Collective Memory," in *Memory Distortion*, ed. Daniel L. Schacter (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995), 352.

<sup>18</sup> Walter J. Boyne, *Beyond the Wild Blue: A History of the U.S. Air Force, 1947-1997* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997), 176.

<sup>19</sup> Kammen, *Mystic Cords of Memory*, 652.

As interest renewed in militarily related events, the Raiders found a strong advocate to purport and validate their heroic deeds. President Reagan himself helped attract attention directly to Doolittle and the Tokyo Raid when he promoted Doolittle to General in 1985.<sup>20</sup> Once again Doolittle was in the public spotlight as the promotion made him the first person in the Air Force Reserve to wear four stars. When Reagan left office in 1989, he once again highlighted Doolittle and the raid as important to America's history. He stated in his farewell address, "We've got to teach history based not on what's in fashion but what's important: Why the Pilgrims came here, who Jimmy Doolittle was, and what those 30 seconds over Tokyo meant."<sup>21</sup> America's national leader deemed the Tokyo Raid an essential part of the country's history.

In addition, America's renewed interest in military events corresponded with an increase in commercialism of historic events. Historian Susan Davis argued that "the way we experience the past and present, the very experience we have to interpret is being rebuilt for us through marketing strategies."<sup>22</sup> In essence, large corporations influenced what younger generations understood about historical events.<sup>23</sup> The businesses also profited by associating their products with American heritage. More importantly for the Raiders, and a side

---

<sup>20</sup> Barry Dillon, "Doolittle Gets Fourth Star," *The Air Force Observer*, 1 August 1985, 30.

<sup>21</sup> *The New York Times*, "Reagan's Farewell Address," 12 January 1989, 8.

<sup>22</sup> Susan G. Davis, "'Set Your Mood to Patriotic': History as Televised Special Events," *Radical History Review*, 42 (1988), 128. Pg 122-43

<sup>23</sup> Kammen, *Mystic Cords of Memory*, 669.

effect of history's commercialism, people began collecting what they considered pieces of the past.

Memorabilia collection increased rapidly in the late 1980's and had a great impact on the Raiders and their Reunions. Foremost, people wanted something tangible to collect, creating a need for new products. As a result, book publication and artistry featuring the raid reached new heights. Stan Cohen compiled his book, *Destination Tokyo: A Pictorial History of the Doolittle's Tokyo Raid*, in 1983, and it was reprinted for the seventh time in 1995.<sup>24</sup> Duane Schultz and Carroll Glines both published books in 1988 entitled *The Doolittle Raid*.<sup>25</sup> Glines also reprinted *Four Came Home* in 1981 and 1995.<sup>26</sup> Although Doolittle has been the subject of many biographies, his autobiography, *I Could Never Be So Lucky Again*, appeared in 1991.<sup>27</sup> Limited edition prints also became popular and artist Robert Moak painted his rendition of the raid in 1987.<sup>28</sup> World-renowned aviation artist Robert Taylor painted the "Doolittle Raid" in 1990.<sup>29</sup> In the same year, Moon Studios and the Hadley Companies also started working on a print

---

<sup>24</sup> Cohen.

<sup>25</sup> Duane Schultz, *The Doolittle Raid* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1988); and Glines, *The Doolittle Raid*.

<sup>26</sup> Carroll V. Glines, *Four Came Home*, 7<sup>th</sup> ed. (Missoula, Montana: Pictorial Histories Publishing Company, 1966).

<sup>27</sup> Doolittle and Glines, *I Could Never Be So Lucky Again*.

<sup>28</sup> 1987 Yearly Activity Report in Doolittle Raiders Reunion File. Special Collections, Doolittle Military Aviation Library. University of Texas at Dallas, Texas.

<sup>29</sup> Enthusiasts expect Taylor to release his second print depicting the raid sometime in the summer of 1999. 1990 Yearly Activity Report in Doolittle Raiders' Reunion File, Special Collections, Doolittle Military Aviation Library. University of Texas at Dallas, Texas.

depicting the raid.<sup>30</sup> Although the paintings and books have enjoyed great sales success, the mostly highly sought after memorabilia were autographs.

Collectors seeking the Raiders' autographs have helped the Raiders in two important ways. Raider pilot Richard Cole stated that "collector mania beginning in the mid-eighties" drove the formation of formal autograph sessions, such as the one described earlier.<sup>31</sup> The desire to obtain autographs naturally increased the public's interest in the reunions and their attendance. The reunions had again entered the public limelight.

Secondly, increasing collector interest has helped the Raiders find financial support for their reunions and other activities. Businesses and communities offer support more readily because the large number of collectors and enthusiasts bring additional business to the local area. At the same time, the Raider organization profited by receiving royalties as collectors and enthusiasts purchased books and souvenirs. For instance, the Raiders organization received \$13,629 in royalties for the sale of the painting *Hornet's Nest*.<sup>32</sup> Also, galleries, such as the Military Gallery of England, started paying the Raiders to sign its artwork related to the raid.<sup>33</sup> Being a non-profit organization, the group used some of the money it earned for business-related expenses but much of the

---

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

<sup>31</sup> Personal interview, Richard E. Cole, 15 April 1999, tape recording.

<sup>32</sup> 1994 Yearly Activity Report in Doolittle Raiders' Reunion File. Special Collections, Doolittle Military Aviation Library. University of Texas at Dallas, Texas.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

money went to other charitable causes.

The Raiders continued the practice they had established earlier of benefiting the host community or nation in some manner. Each year, the organization provided a scholarship to the young person the host community selected. In 1993, the group voted to provide an endowment of \$40,000 to the Experimental Aircraft Association Aviation Foundation (EAA). The stated goal was to provide scholarships to individuals involved in aerospace disciplines and to "perpetuate the name and deeds of the Doolittle Tokyo Raiders."<sup>34</sup> Also with the influx of revenue, the group started contributing more to the preservation of their memory in the form of museums and monuments. Thus, the "collector mania" of the 1980's helped preserve and further the memory of the mission in many ways.

"Uncertain" could describe the Raider reunions from 1967 into the 1990's. The 1967 reunion enjoyed relatively strong public support and interest. Soon after, however, America's memory of the raid seemed to fade. Influences in the 1980's, such as the Reagan Administration, rekindled interest in the mission and American commercialism virtually guaranteed a spot for the Raiders in popular American history.

---

<sup>34</sup> 1993 Doolittle Raiders' Reunion File. Special Collections, Doolittle Military Aviation Library. University of Texas at Dallas, Texas.

## Tangible Preservation

Mystery writer K. C. Constantine once wrote, "The surest way you know something's dead was when somebody started talking about preserving its memory. There wasn't a coffin around that could match a museum for saying something was croaked."<sup>35</sup> Although Constantine was writing a novel, he illustrated one of the ironies about preserving a collective memory – to a large degree, to preserve a memory one must first admit that it is gone. One of the best ways to preserve collective memory is through memorialization, or the erection of tangible commemorations to honor a person, group, or event. Because both the Raiders themselves and various others sought to institutionalize the Raiders' deeds, the mass memorialization that also occurred in the 1980's and 1990's proved noteworthy. Before continuing, however, a closer examination of the increasing commemorations to the Raiders proves essential.

Commemorations to the Raiders began as early as 1958 when North American Aviation presented the Raiders with a B-25 Mitchell. The plane was a replica of the B-25 Doolittle flew on the mission (plane #40-2344) and became the Raider's first publicly displayed artifact. The Air Force Museum in Dayton, Ohio, displayed the aircraft and in 1963 Hilger helped establish the museum as

---

<sup>35</sup> K. C. Constantine, *Bottom Liner Blues*. (New York: Mysterious Press, 1993), 3.

an official repository for the raid's artifacts.<sup>36</sup> Several of the Raiders contributed items to the museum, and in 1975 the museum expanded its presentation on the raid.<sup>37</sup> Although other national museums, such as the Smithsonian Air and Space Museum in Washington D. C., also started Tokyo Raid presentations, the Air Force Museum collection grew into the largest of its kind.

The late 1970's and 1980's witnessed explosive growth in the number and type of commemorations to the Raiders. On 20 May 1978, Chanute Air Force Base (AFB) officials dedicated Faktor Hall. The base named the new dormitory after Leland Faktor, the single Raider who died during bail out on the mission.<sup>38</sup> The community of Elizabethtown, Kentucky, erected a historical marker to honor George Larkin, a gunner on the raid.<sup>39</sup> Air Force officials renamed a street after William Farrow, one of the executed POW's, at Myrtle Beach AFB on 18 September 1987.<sup>40</sup> Two of the most interesting dedications, the Doolittle Raiders Restaurant opened in 1986 in Torrance, California, and baseball officials named Columbia, South Carolina's baseball team, the Capital City Bombers, after the

---

<sup>36</sup> John A. Hilger, Form Letter to Doolittle's Tokyo Raiders, Doolittle Collection. Special Collections, Doolittle Military Aviation Library. University of Texas at Dallas, Texas.

<sup>37</sup> Cohen, 98.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 99.

<sup>39</sup> Arville L. Frank, Personal Letter to James H. Doolittle, 15 June 1993. Doolittle Collection. Special Collections, Doolittle Military Aviation Library. University of Texas at Dallas, Texas.

<sup>40</sup> "Base Renames Two Streets in Honor of Local Heroes," *Strand Sentry*, 18 September 1987, 5.

Raiders in 1994.<sup>41</sup> By 1999 over twenty museum displays and memorials of the raid existed throughout the United States.<sup>42</sup>

Communities started the majority of the commemorations, but the Raiders also initiated some of their own. The largest of their memorial projects again occurred at the Air Force Museum.<sup>43</sup> Located outside the museum, the memorial consisted of sidewalks, benches, and a large marble marker shaped as a vertical stabilizer of a B-25. Both sides of the stone were engraved—one side records the names of each raider, listed by crew and order of takeoff, and the other tells a brief account of the mission. The Raiders started raising money for the memorial in 1986 and made their donation of \$23,068 for the project's completion in 1988.<sup>44</sup> The museum dedicated the memorial the same year.

The dramatic increase in memorialization was interesting in itself, but the increase became more intriguing in light of Kammen's argument that the 1970's and 1980's were "a time according to polls and tests when ignorance of United States history proved astounding."<sup>45</sup> The Raiders themselves noted that America's knowledge about World War II decreased. Chase Nielsen reminisced that he used to be able to give speeches solely about his experience on the raid

---

<sup>41</sup> 1986 Doolittle Raiders' Reunion File. Special Collections, Doolittle Military Aviation Library. University of Texas at Dallas, Texas; and "Shanahan Lining Bombers up for Success," *The State*, 2 April 1994, C1.

<sup>42</sup> A list of the Raiders' commemorations appears in the appendix.

<sup>43</sup> 1986 - 1988 Doolittle Raiders' Reunion Files. Special Collections, Doolittle Military Aviation Library. University of Texas at Dallas, Texas.

<sup>44</sup> 1988 Doolittle Raiders' Reunion File. Special Collections, Doolittle Military Aviation Library. University of Texas at Dallas, Texas.

<sup>45</sup> Kammen, *Mystic Cords of Memory*, 465.

and as a POW. Now, he must preface his discussion with a basic overview of World War II and further explain the war in the Pacific before he relates his experiences.<sup>46</sup> It appeared, as historical illiteracy raged across the United States, the Raiders experienced a vast growth in public interest and memorialization. How could such a dichotomy be explained?

The relationship between collective memory and commemorations is the majority of the answer. Schudson explains that commemorations, whether an anniversary, a memorial, or a museum display, institutionalize collective memories for long-term preservation.<sup>47</sup> Furthermore he states that "as the possibility of living memory fades the only memories that remain are those culturally institutionalized."<sup>48</sup> Hence, the only means for the Raiders to preserve their place in history after the last man has passed away was through commemorations. Therefore, the dichotomy is that an increasingly smaller group that remembers an event must teach an increasingly larger group that possess only limited knowledge of the event. Memorialization and "collector mania" increased significantly as a result.

The other engaging aspect of the increase in commemorations pertains to the number of Raiders represented. As the first chapter illustrated, Doolittle received a great deal of the attention for the mission. With the possible exception

---

<sup>46</sup> Personal interview, Chase J. Nielsen, 18 April 1999, tape recording.

<sup>47</sup> Micheal Schudson, "Dynamics of Distortion in Collective Memory," in *Memory Distortion*, ed. Daniel L. Schacter (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995), 348.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*

of the Doolittle Library in Dallas, Texas, the commemorations of the 1970's, 1980's, and 1990's focused upon either the raid in its entirety or upon the others on the mission. The bottom-up approach to military history that emerged after John Keegan wrote *The Face of Battle* in 1976 explains part of this change.<sup>49</sup> However, part of the change also sprang from communities attempting to link themselves with the past.<sup>50</sup> Most communities sought this link for the intrinsic value and to accommodate an increasingly "grass roots" oriented culture.<sup>51</sup> Regardless of the specific motives driving the increased commemorations, the process has helped draw attention to all of the Raiders.

Commemorations, in the form of tangible objects, have ensured the Raiders' place in America's collective memory for years to come. Memorials and displays increased greatly in the late 1970's through the 1990's as enthusiasts diligently sought to preserve the raid's memory against the effects of time. The results of their efforts can be seen in many locations throughout the United States.

Thus, the Doolittle Raid emerged in its final form within popular history. Schudson stated, "The past that comes to be known best or known at all is not only the one made into stories; it is the one made at all."<sup>52</sup> The

---

<sup>49</sup> John Keegan, *The Face of Battle* (New York: Viking Press, 1976).

<sup>50</sup> No evidence suggests that organization or communities sponsored memorials or monuments for commercial purposes. The same is not true for the restaurant and baseball team.

<sup>51</sup> Kammen, *Mystic Cords of Memory*, 681-82.

<sup>52</sup> Schudson, 358.

institutionalization of the mission provided the means for America to remember the raid. Simultaneously, the perceptions of the mission solidified and are unlikely to change a great deal in the future. The very process of memorialization actually altered the past because, "Memorialization moralizes the past, creates out of a chronicle a tradition."<sup>53</sup> Just as the story of the Tokyo Raid is engraved forever on the marble memorial outside the Air Force Museum, the story is also engraved in popular history. Historians may add, subtract, or twist the story to meet current societal needs, but the public perception of the mission, as one of the United States' greatest moments of World War II, will remain long after the living memory of the Doolittle Raiders passes.

### **Finding the Bigger Picture; The Overall Effects of Memory Upon History**

McRandle claimed that "popular history is myth" but "being modern. . . we cannot accept mother goddesses, magicians, and incantations, so history must disguise these ancient potions."<sup>54</sup> He continued to say that history contains all the elements of myths – young heroes, taught by a fatherly or motherly figure, rush to the rescue of someone or something in great despair and then return to find the world a better place.<sup>55</sup> McRandle used this analogy to describe the

---

<sup>53</sup> Ibid., 359.

<sup>54</sup> McRandle, 54.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid., 55.

myths surrounding the Battle of Britain, but the same can be said for the Doolittle Raid.

The world characteristically darkens as Europe erupts in war. The dishonorable bombing of Pearl Harbor solidifies America's resolve as though magically transformed by war. Seventy-nine young heroes, guided by the older and much wiser Doolittle, volunteer for a dangerous mission. Calling upon hidden courage and armed with magical B-25's that can takeoff from aircraft carriers and fly extraordinarily long distances, the heroes begin their long journey and accomplish the impossible. The bombing of Japan radiates hope throughout America. Indeed, America's secret belief that it would win the war came true, and the heroes returned from their treacherous journey to find the world a better place.

No wonder then, historians have difficulty recording the story accurately. The nearly instantaneous transformation of the Doolittle Raid into myth forever skewed the facts. Even though historians have wrestled with the mission's factual details for over fifty years, their interest is adding detail to the popular story, not debunking the myth. Should historians eradicate the mythical elements that intrigue people, they would disrupt the very foundations of their knowledge and their careers. As result, historians, and the audience too, forget the most important question of all, "What does popular history hide?"

When asked about the Doolittle Raid, the answer is surprisingly long.

Foremost, the mythical appeal of the raid eliminated criticism. The first chapter illustrated that criticism began nearly in April 1943 when the War Department released many of the mission's factual details. Historians have ignored a 1964 study conducted by the Department of the Navy that concluded the raid had "no strategic value" other than increasing morale.<sup>56</sup> Even one of the Raiders, Harry McCool, felt that the raid was not worth the risk. He considered that "our losses [were] out of proportion to the material damage inflicted. It was after the war that I reluctantly accepted that it had been a good psychological bet."<sup>57</sup> Today, the attack's myths have overpowered any remaining criticisms as though they never existed.

Along the same lines, the popularity of the legend in America prevented more critical analyses of the raid's strategic implications. The Doolittle Raid's psychological effect upon the Japanese eliminated the Naval General Staff's opposition towards Admiral Isoroku Yamamoto's proposed operation against Midway Island. Yamamoto's goal was to attack a target the United States considered valuable enough to defend, thus drawing the U.S. Navy into a decisive battle. With full support, Yamamoto launched the attack with a larger and more experienced fleet.

---

<sup>56</sup> U.S. Naval War College, *The Battle of the Coral Sea: Strategical and Tactical Analysis*, 2; quoted in Ronald H. Spector, *Eagle Against the Sun: The American War with Japan* (New York: The Free Press, 1985), 154.

<sup>57</sup> Personal interview, Harry McCool, 18 April 1999, tape recording.

Because Japan did not win, some historians have attempted to use the U.S. Navy's stunning victory at Midway to establish the Doolittle Raid's strategic value.<sup>58</sup> Such historians imply that the raid tricked Japan into a foolish and impossible operation. Furthermore, the Midway operation was one the U.S. was destined to win due to its vastly superior, albeit smaller, Navy. No question ever existed as to whether the U.S. would win; the only question was how to lure the Japanese into attacking Midway. Subconsciously, the implication alters the entire focus of why the U.S. Navy won and credits the Doolittle Raiders with a disproportionate amount of the credit. In this manner, victory was the result of Japan's unfathomable decision to attempt the mission and not the result of the actual fighting. Unfortunately for the Raiders, nothing could be further from the truth. The U.S. Navy won because superior intelligence allowed them to achieve surprise at a critical moment. Beyond the fact that the Raid eliminated Yamamoto's opposition and allowed him to accelerate the operation's timetable, the two events are independent of one another.<sup>59</sup> Popular history rarely looks so critically at related events and their stated significance.

---

<sup>58</sup> See Glines and Schultz, *The Doolittle Raid*.

<sup>59</sup> A much more thorough analysis would reveal that the Doolittle Raid was related to Midway in another way. The Coral Sea Battle affected both countries' force composition at Midway. The raid actually accelerated Japan's timetable for the Coral Sea operation and reduced the forces it allotted for the attack. On the other hand, the U.S. also fought with a reduced force because the *Enterprise* and *Hornet* missed the battle due to their participation in the Tokyo Raid. The Coral Sea Battle arguably ended in a draw but did have some effects on Midway. Precisely how the Tokyo Raid affected the Coral Sea Battle and then affected the Midway operation are highly speculative and well beyond this paper's scope.

Lastly, the legend's power literally completed missing details with incorrect facts. The most glaring example of people unquestionably accepting wrong information pertains to both the book and the movie *Thirty Seconds Over Tokyo*. When Ted Lawson's plane first earned its nickname, the Ruptured Duck, the audience knew something was going to happen to the plane. To explain the crash, Lawson wrote, "when, for some reason I'll never understand, both engines coughed and lost their power."<sup>60</sup> The book established that the Ruptured Duck crashed due solely to bad luck.

However, Dean Davenport, the plane's co-pilot, recently stated that the plane crashed due to crew error. He explained that the left engine had been missing combustion cycles operating in the "lean" mixture setting, a position that creates a fuel-to-air ratio for maximizing range rather than power. When they proceeded to land, they failed to return the fuel-to-air mixture to full "rich" to maximize power, a standard operating procedure whether the engines had been missing or not. As a result, when the left engine missed slightly above the water, the plane dipped enough for the landing gear to hit the water and the plane flipped over. Crew error, not fate as history has accepted for over fifty years, caused the Ruptured Duck to crash and exemplifies how myths cause people to accept incorrect information as fact.

Often times, people overlook the powerful influence myths exert upon

---

<sup>60</sup> Ted W. Lawson, *Thirty Seconds Over Tokyo* (New York: Random House, 1943), 74.

history. Myth downplayed criticism and prevented more critical analyses of the Doolittle Raid. Popular history has also exaggerated the strategic importance of the mission, especially as it related to the Midway battle. Furthermore, myth augmented missing details with incorrect information in an extraordinarily believable manner. Although the few examples highlighted here are undoubtedly incomplete, the examples illustrate how easily myth can skew history.

### Conclusion: Cemented in History

On 19 April 1942, Chinese nationalists escorted Doolittle to the remnants of his B-25. The aircraft lay in multiple fragments across the mountaintop and the sight dejected the raid's leader. In his mind, the mission was a failure and he told his crew that he doubted the Air Force would ever let him fly anything other than a desk. Authors have traditionally portrayed this scene as one of Doolittle's finest moments—a man on the verge of stardom, humbled by the loss of his aircraft. No one has taken the position that Doolittle may have assessed the mission correctly as a failure.

From the moment the first bomb fell on Tokyo, the Doolittle Raid had no chance of being a failure because the combination of history and memory would not allow such an assessment. America needed something that could validate their hopes of an eventual victory. Being the first positive news America had in the war, the public relished the idea that Tokyo had been bombed. Newspapers, books, and films sensationalized the mission, and by the time the Second World War ended, the raid was clearly rooted in America's collective memory.

From 1945 until 1966 America's memory of the raid gradually faded. The Raiders started meeting annually to celebrate the mission's anniversary and to remember their departed friends. Incorporating as a non-profit organization, the reunions' purposes evolved to include furthering a local or national cause. When

the Raider's failed to find financial and public support for their 1966 reunion, some group members believed America's collective memory of the raid had outlived its usefulness.

Although the Raiders have found support for their reunions each year since 1966, interest in the raid dramatically renewed in the mid-1980's. The explosive growth of memorials and displays dedicated to the Raiders, as well as increasing public interest in the reunions, illustrated that the mission remained in America's popular history. However, the 1980's are best explained as a struggle between those trying to preserve the collective memory of the raid and time erasing it. As the people with a living memory of the raid decreased, the number of people with no knowledge of the raid increased. Thus, the raid entered its final form as popular history.

Throughout, memory and memory distortion played a vital role. Memory distortion allowed historians to reconstruct the Doolittle Raid, and all history for that matter, so that it could continue to meet societal needs. Memory's selective nature eliminated inconsistencies and completed missing details with credible assumptions. Since this occurred without conscious effort, the myths surrounding the mission could be accepted without any sense of deception and history and memory blended seamlessly together.

## Appendix



## THIS IS OUR ENEMY...

WELL, BROTHER, how do we feel about pleasure driving now?

How does hoarded food taste?

How does the money that might have gone into an extra War Bond feel in the bottom of our pockets?

*"Japanese Execute Doolittle Men."*

Nice people, these Japs. Very decent folks. True to the best traditions of their warrior caste, the Samurai.

Oh, yeah?

Look, brother. When an American boy goes to war, he expects to run the danger of losing his life. He expects that some bullet, somewhere, may have his number on it. He undertakes these risks willingly, because he knows this is war.

But what he *doesn't* expect is that he'll be tied to a stake, or stood up against a wall, with no equal chance against his opponent, and that

bullets will be fired into his helpless body from point-blank range.

That's what happened—to Doolittle's men.

How much have we given to the Red Cross this year?

How many War Bonds are we buying?

*"Japanese Execute Doolittle Men."*

Do you want to see more headlines like this?

You will. For this is our enemy. This is the way he operates. This is the way he'll continue to operate *till he's wiped out.*

These inhuman acts of his demand vengeance. Not by retaliation. Not by lining some of his men up against a wall and thudding American bullets into them.

No, these acts demand vengeance in the American way. Vengeance by an overwhelming force of arms. Vengeance by carrying the fight to the Japanese. Vengeance by defeating them

finally and completely in the shortest possible space of time. Vengeance by bringing to justice at long last the real criminals responsible for this unspeakable act.

Leave the strategy to the army and navy. Leave the timing to them. *But see to it that they bristle with so much equipment that nothing the Japs put in their way will be of any avail, will hold off their defeat for one minute.*

Pour your money into War Bonds. Forget that they pay you so high a rate of interest. Forget even that the money's coming back to you.

Pour it into War Bonds with a vengeance—an American vengeance—*your* vengeance.

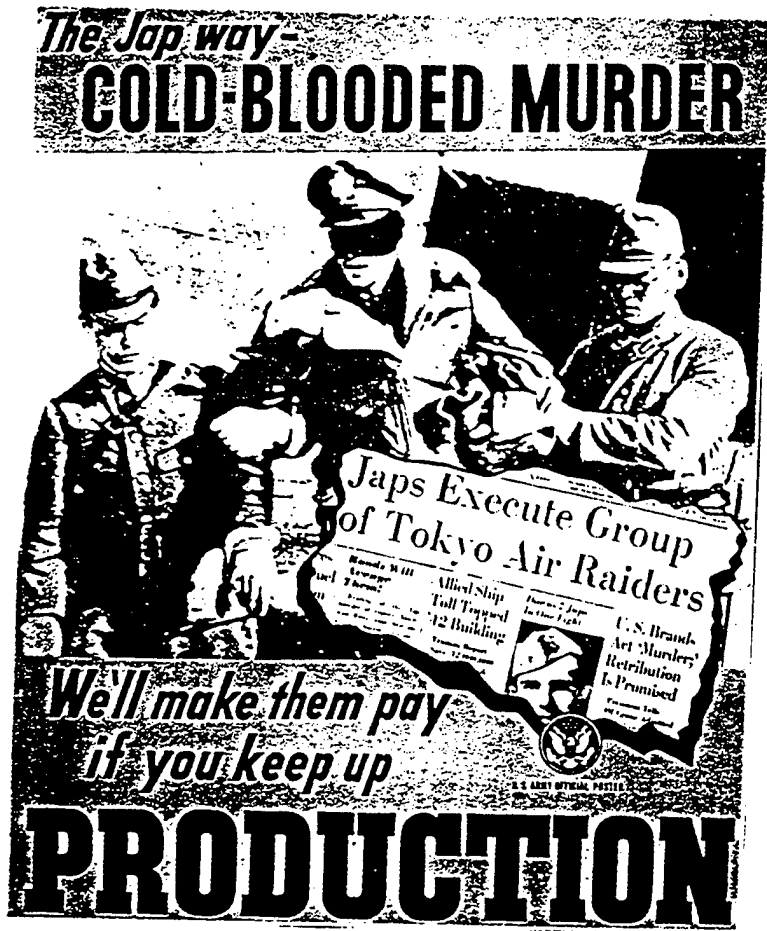
*They GAVE their LIVES  
... You LEND your MONEY!*

2<sup>ND</sup> War Loan  
Drive

THIS ADVERTISEMENT CONTRIBUTED BY THE AMERICAN LOCOMOTIVE COMPANY

Picture 1.1

Reprint of War Bond Ad published in the New York Times on 26 April 1943



Picture 1.2  
Reprint of Official Army Poster found on back cover of *Four Came Home*

## DOOLITTLE TOKYO RAIDERS

### PURPOSE OF REUNION

In the Fall of 1945 General Doolittle called for a reunion in Miami of all surviving Raiders. After a rousing good time, it was decided to hold an annual reunion. Though it was combat action and drama of the past that brings us together, our reunions keep alive that comradery, the fraternalism and closeness that has existed among the members of our small group these many years. But even more importantly, we hope our reunions will help to perpetuate some of the basic values, the fundamental principles that characterize American military service, duty and patriotism. We now meet to renew old friendships, to honor the memory of those who passed on, and to participate in some activity which is of benefit to the nation, to the Air Force, and to the community in which we meet.

Figure 2.1 First appearing around 1953, this is one of the Raiders' earliest purpose statements. Although the wording of this statement has changed over the year, the meaning has remained the same. Doolittle Collection. Special Collections, Doolittle Military Aviation Library. University of Texas at Dallas, Texas.

Table 3.1  
Doolittle Tokyo Raider Commemorations

Type or Name of Commemoration	Date of Dedication	Location
Museum exhibit	April 1958 <i>expanded in 1975</i>	Air Force Museum, Wright-Patterson AFB, Ohio
Doolittle Tokyo Raider display	(app.) 1960 <i>expanded in 1984</i>	Arnold Hall, U.S. Air Force Academy, Colorado
Tokyo Raider Memorial	(app.) 1960	Valparaiso, Florida – near Eglin AFB
Museum exhibit	1972 <i>expanded in</i> <i>1992 and 1997</i>	Admiral Nimitz Center, Fredericksburg, Texas
(Sergeant Leland) Faktor Hall, building dedication	May 1978	Chanute AFB, Kansas
Historical marker for Staff Sergeant George Elmer Larkin	June 1983	Hardin County Courthouse, Elizabethtown, Kentucky
Richard Joyce Memorial Weekend and display dedication	August 1983	Lincoln, Nebraska
Museum exhibit	August 1983	Naval Aviation Museum, Pensacola, Florida
Historical marker for Lt. Richard E. Miller	April 1984	Fort Wayne, Indiana
Doolittle Military Aviation Library	February 1985	University of Texas at Dallas, Richardson, Texas
Doolittle Raiders Restaurant	November 1986	Torrance, California
(SSgt. George Elmer) Larkin Hall; building dedication	July 1986	Gray Field, Fort Hood, Texas
(Lieutenant William G.) Farrow Boulevard; street naming	September 1987	Myrtle Beach AFB, South Carolina
Museum exhibit	N/A	Air and Missile Museum, Florence, South Carolina
Doolittle Tokyo Raiders Memorial	1988	Air Force Museum, Wright-Patterson AFB, Ohio
Doolittle Raiders Plaque Dedication	April 1990	Pendleton, Oregon
(Master Sergeant Edwin Vance) Bain Monument	May 1991	Greensboro, South Carolina
Doolittle Hall, building dedication	August 1992	U.S. Air Force Academy, Colorado
Capital City Bombers; naming of baseball team	April 1994	Columbia, South Carolina
(Lieutenant Colonel Jacob E.) Manch Conference Room	May 1996	Shenandoah Valley Regional Airport, Weyers Cave, Virginia
Doolittle Raiders Memorial	October 1998	Guide Dog School, Sun City Center, Florida

## Bibliography

Primary SourcesManuscripts

Doolittle Collection. Special Collections, Doolittle Military Aviation Library.  
University of Texas at Dallas, Texas.

Doolittle Raiders Reunion Files, 1943-1999. Special Collections, Doolittle Military  
Aviation Library. University of Texas at Dallas, Texas.

Greening, Charles Ross. "The First Joint Action." Monograph submitted to the  
Armed Forces Staff College, Norfolk, Virginia. 21 December 1948.

---. Unpublished Memoirs. Doolittle Collection. Special Collections, Doolittle  
Military Aviation Library. University of Texas at Dallas, Texas.

Newspapers

*The Air Force Observer* (Washington D.C.). 1 August 1985.

*Columbus Evening Dispatch* (Columbus, Ohio). 18 April 1942.

*The Houston Press* (Houston, Texas) 16 April 1954.

*The New York Times* (New York). April 1942 – April 1999.

*Ouachita Citizen* (Camden, Arkansas) 13 April 1991.

*Strand Sentry* (Myrtle Beach AFB). 18 September 1987.

*The State* (Columbia, South Carolina). 2 April 1994.

*Tucson Citizen* (Tucson, Arizona) 1 May 1992.

Books

Chennault, Claire L. *Way of a Fighter*. New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1949.

Doolittle, James H. and Carroll V. Glines. *I Could Never Be So Lucky Again*.  
Atglen Pennsylvania, Schiffer Publishing, 1991.

Emmens, Robert G. *Guests of the Kremlin*. New York: MacMilian, 1949.

Fuchida, Mitsuo and Masatake Okumiya. *Midway: The Battle That Doomed Japan, The Japanese Navy's Story*. Annapolis: United States Naval Institute, 1955.

Halsey, William F. and J. Bryan III. *Admiral Halsey's Story*. New York: McGraw Hill Book Company, 1967.

Lawson, Ted W. *Thirty Seconds Over Tokyo*. New York: Random House, 1943.

### Magazines

*Atlantic*. April 1942 – April 1945.

*Christian Century*. April 1942 – April 1945.

*Life*. April 1942 – April 1967.

*Newsweek*. April 1942 – September 1980.

*Popular Science*. April 1942 – April 1945.

*Scholastic*. April 1942 – April 1945.

*Time*. April 1942 – April 1945.

### Interviews

Cole, Richard E. Interview by author, 15 April 1999, Dayton. Tape recording.

Doolittle, John P. Interview by author, 15 April 1999, Dayton. Tape recording.

Glines, Carroll V. Interview by author, 16 April 1999, Dayton. Tape recording.

---. Interview by author, 24 May 1999, Dallas. Tape recording.

McCool, Harry. Interview by author. 18 April 1999, Dayton. Tape recording.

Nielsen, Chase J. Interview by author, 16 April 1999, Dayton. Tape recording.

Stork, J. Royden. Interview by author, 15 April 1999, Dayton. Tape recording.

## Movies

"Thirty Seconds Over Tokyo." Movie, Metro-Goldwyn Mayer, 1944.

## Secondary Sources

### Books

Boyne, Walter J. *Beyond the Wild Blue: A History of the U.S. Air Force, 1947-1997*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997.

Cohen, Stan. *Destination Tokyo: A Pictorial History of Doolittle's Tokyo Raid, April 18, 1942*. Missoula, Montana: Pictorial Histories Publishing, 1983.

Connelly, Thomas L. *The Marble Man: Robert E. Lee and His Image in American Society*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1977.

Constantine, K. C. *Bottom Liner Blues*. New York: Mysterious Press, 1993.

Glines, Carroll V. *The Doolittle Raid: America's Daring First Strike Against Japan*. New York: Orion Books, 1988.

---. *Four Came Home*. Reprint. Missoula, Montana: Pictorial Histories Publishing, 1995.

Kammen, Michael. *Mystic Cords of Memory: The Transformation of Tradition in American Culture*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1991.

---. *In the Past Lane*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1997.

Keegan, John. *The Face of Battle*. New York: Viking Press, 1976.

McRandle, James. *The Antique Drums of War*. College Station, Texas: Texas A&M University Press, 1994.

Merrill, James M. *Target Tokyo: The Halsey-Doolittle Raid*. Chicago: Randy McNally, 1964.

Reardon, Carol. *Pickett's Charge in History and Memory*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1997.

Schacter, Daniel L., ed. *Memory Distortion: How Minds, Brains, and Societies Reconstruct the Past*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995.

Schultz, Duane P. *The Doolittle Raid*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1988.

Spector, Ronald H. *Eagle Against the Sun: The American War with Japan*. New York: The Free Press, 1985.

Taylor, Theodore. *The Magnificent Mitscher*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1954.

#### Articles

Davis, Susan G. " 'Set Your Mood to Patriotic': History as Televised Special Events." *Radical History Review* 42 (1988): 122-43.

Spiller, Roger J. "War in the Dark." *American Heritage* (February/March 1999): 41-51.

Thelen, David. "Memory and American History." *The Journal of American History* 75 (March 1989): 1117-29.