

# NEWS & COMMENTS FROM OUR MEMBERS

Spring 2020, Vol. 65, No. 2 - James “Jimmy” H. Doolittle, by Martin Maisel

I have some nits to pick with the article “James ‘Jimmy’ H. Doolittle” by Martin Maisel in the Summer 2020 *AAHS Journal*.

First, Mr Maisel claims that the tail guns of the B-25s used in the Tokyo Raid were removed to save weight (page 141 of the article). The aircraft used in the raid were B-25Bs and they had no provision for tail guns. The black broomsticks that were placed in the tail cones of the B-25Bs were ruses to discourage enemy planes from attacking from the rear.

Mr Maisel mentioned two psychological impacts from the Tokyo Raid, the damage to Japanese morale and the subsequent withdrawal of fighter units to the homeland, and the boost to American morale (page 143). These were indeed two important impacts, however, there was a third that was probably more important. It goaded the Japanese naval authorities to accelerate their plans to attack Midway in June 1942, with disastrous results for the Japanese.

*[Doolittle, in his book, did recognize that Japan’s concern about additional attacks on their mainland may have caused the Japanese to attack Midway to push the front further from Japan - but it was not clear (based on Doolittle’s book) that the attack on Midway was accelerated due to the Doolittle raid. M. Maisel]*

On page 144 Mr Maisel states that “Doolittle was the first hero of WWII” as the result of the raid and his subsequent award of the Congressional Medal of Honor (CMH). That was a bit of an overstatement on Mr Maisel’s part, I believe. I would agree if Maisel had qualified his statement with Doolittle being the first Army Air Force CMH hero, with apologies to early war hero Captain Colin Kelly, who won the only the Distinguished Service Cross for his attack on the invading Japanese fleet on 10 December 1941. If one is speaking of aviators, however, Doolittle was preceded by Lt Cmdr Edward H. “Butch” O’Hare, who won the CMH for actions on 20 February 1942, when he shot down five Japanese planes on a single mission. Also, there were fifteen, count ‘em, fifteen CMHs awarded to Navy personnel for their actions at Pearl Harbor. The exploits of many of those members were well-known by April 1942. Lastly, General Douglas MacArthur was awarded the CMH on 1 April 1942, although his award was controversial at the time, and his heroism debatable.

On the same page Mr Maisel states that the 12th Air Force fell under Gen. George Patton. Although the Army ground forces commanders would have loved to have their own, personal air force, the 12th actually fell under the control of the overall TORCH (invasion of North Africa) commander, General Dwight Eisenhower. Patton could request help from the 12th, but his request had to filter up to Eisenhower, then descend through the chain-of-command to Doolittle.

*[George Patton was the ground commander, Doolittle*

*the air commander of the 12th Air Force. True - Eisenhower was the supreme commander but Doolittle implied that he had direct contact with Patton. M. Maisel]*

Later on page 144, Maisel stated that Doolittle took command of 15th Air Force during the assault on Sicily (July 1943) and the invasion of Southern Italy (September 1943). This is incorrect. Yes, Doolittle was the first commander of 15th Air Force, but it wasn’t activated until 1 November 1943, well after the Sicily and Southern Italy invasions.

Lastly, on page 145, Mr Maisel states that Doolittle planned “...to use the U.S. Strategic Air Forces in a series of coordinated raids on the German war industry, supported by night bombing by the RAF.” This effort, called the Combined Bomber Offensive (CBO), had actually begun on 10 June 1943, well before Doolittle took command of the Eighth Air Force. The CBO was developed in April 1943 by a committee under General Ira Eaker. Doolittle was not involved.

*[On page 369 of “I Could Never Be So Lucky Again” Doolittle stated his four primary objectives as commander of the 15th Air Force. They included the destruction of the German air force and the offensive against the German war industry. My statement in the article was not meant to imply that Doolittle originated the bombing philosophy and the association with the RAF. M. Maisel.]*

Mike Hoffman

## September 2020 - Lloyd S, Jones

The Society is saddened to report that long time AAHS member, author, illustrator and aviation artist took his final flight this month. Over the years Lloyd supported the Society through contributions of both articles and illustrations used by others. We mourn his passing and extend our sympathy to his family.

Hayden Hamilton  
AAHS Managing Editor



*Northrop YB-35 flying over the southern California desert casting a B-2 shadow. (Lloyd S. Jones)*

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