

James Harold Doolittle Papers
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Prepared by Manuscript Division Staff

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Collection Summary

Title: James Harold Doolittle Papers

Span Dates: 1919-1990

Bulk Dates: (bulk 1940-1960)

ID No.: MSS18754

Creator: Doolittle, James Harold, 1896-1993

Extent: 33,000 items

Extent: 110 containers plus 1 oversize

Extent: 29.8 linear feet

Language: Collection material in English

Location: Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

LC Catalog record: <https://lccn.loc.gov/mm82018754>

Summary: U.S. Air Force officer and U.S. Army officer. Correspondence, speeches, writings, reports, newspaper clippings, scrapbooks, awards, maps, photographs, and other papers relating chiefly to Doolittle's service in the U.S. Air Force.

Selected Search Terms

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the LC Catalog. They are grouped by name of person or organization, by subject or location, and by occupation and listed alphabetically.

People

Arnold, Henry Harley, 1886-1950--Correspondence.

Chiang, May-ling Soong, 1897-2003--Correspondence.

Doolittle, James Harold, 1896-1993.

Eisenhower, Dwight D. (Dwight David), 1890-1969--Correspondence.

Halsey, William F. (William Frederick), 1882-1959--Correspondence.

King, Ernest Joseph, 1878-1956--Correspondence.

Magnolia, L. R.--Correspondence.

Marshall, George C. (George Catlett), 1880-1959--Correspondence.

Patton, George S. (George Smith), 1885-1945--Correspondence.

Spatz, Carl, 1891-1974--Correspondence.

Taylor, Maxwell D. (Maxwell Davenport), 1901-1987--Correspondence.

Organizations

United States. Air Force.

Subjects

World War, 1939-1945--Aerial operations, American.

World War, 1939-1945--Campaigns--Japan.

Places

Tokyo (Japan)--History--Bombardment, 1942.

Occupations

Air Force officers.

Army officers.

Provenance

The papers of James Harold Doolittle, U.S. Air Force officer and U.S. Army officer, were given to the Library of Congress by Doolittle in 1974. Additional material was given by Lee R. Magnolia from 1988 to 1990.

Processing History

The James Harold Doolittle Papers were housed and described in 1975 and expanded in 2016. The finding aid was revised in 2013 and 2016.

Transfers

Record albums have been transferred to the Library's Motion Picture, Broadcasting, and Recorded Sound Division where they are identified as part of these papers.

Copyright Status

The status of copyright in the unpublished writings of James H. Doolittle is governed by the Copyright Law of the United States (Title 17, U.S.C.).

Access and Restrictions

The papers of James Harold Doolittle are open to research. Researchers are advised to contact the Manuscript Reading Room prior to visiting. Many collections are stored off-site and advance notice is needed to retrieve these items for research use.

Preferred Citation

Researchers wishing to cite this collection should include the following information: Container number, James Harold Doolittle Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Biographical Note

Date	Event
1896, Dec. 14	Born, Alameda, Calif.
1916	Entered University of California, Berkeley, Calif.
1917	Flying cadet, United States Army Signal Corps Married Josephine Daniels (died 1988)
1918	Completed flight training and commissioned second lieutenant
1920	Regular commission and promoted to first lieutenant
1922	Bachelor of arts, University of California, Berkeley, Calif. First air crossing of the United States under twenty-four hours
1924	Masters of science, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Boston, Mass.
1925	Doctorate in aeronautical engineering, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Boston, Mass. Won Schneider Cup Race
1927	First flier to perform outside loop
1930	Resigned regular army commission Awarded Harmon Trophy Manager, Aviation Division, Shell Oil Co.
1931	Won Bendix Trophy Race from Burbank, Calif. to Cleveland, Ohio
1932	Won Thompson Trophy, Cleveland, Ohio
1940	President of the Institute of Aeronautical Sciences Returned to active duty, Army Air Corps

1942	Led sixteen B-25 bombers off deck of aircraft carrier in bombing raid over Japan Promoted to brigadier general Promoted to major general Awarded Congressional Medal of Honor
1943-1945	Commanded Twelfth Air Force in North Africa Commanded Fifteenth Air Force in Mediterranean theater Commanded Eighth Air Force in Europe and the Pacific
1946	Inactive reserve status
1946-1967	Vice president, Shell Oil Co.; later a director
1948	Awarded Silver Star
1951	Special assistant to chief of staff, Air Force
1959	Retired from the United States Air Force
1959-1963	Chairman of board of Space Technology Laboratories, Inc., Redondo Beach, Calif.
1983	Received United States Military Academy's Sylvanus Thayer Award for distinguished military service
1985	Promoted to four star general
1989	Awarded Presidential Medal of Freedom
1993, Sept. 27	Died, Pebble Beach, Calif.

Scope and Content Note

The papers of James H. Doolittle (1896-1993) span the years 1919-1990, with the bulk of the material concentrated in the period 1940-1960 and consisting of correspondence, speeches, writings, reports, newspaper clippings, scrapbooks, awards, maps, photographs, and other papers relating chiefly to Doolittle's service in the United States Air Force. Doolittle had a long career as a civilian and military aviator, government official and adviser, and business executive, but he was most celebrated for directing and leading an air raid on Tokyo in the early months of World War II against Japan. The collection is organized into seven series: [Correspondence File](#), [General File](#), [National Advisory Committee for Aeronautics](#), [Speeches and Articles](#), [Miscellany](#), [Addition](#), and [Oversize](#).

Included in the collection are military records of Doolittle and a large amount of photographs and printed material. In general, the correspondence contains routine discussions of business matters, hunting trips, social affairs, and reunions of the American fliers who attacked Tokyo in April 1942. Materials relating to the raid include a map of Japan signed by some of the participants, telegrams from Generals George C. Marshall and Henry Harley Arnold, a handwritten memorandum from Admiral Ernest Joseph King, and letters of thanks and appreciation from Admiral William F. Halsey and May Ling-Soong Chiang. Additional correspondents from the war period include letters from Dwight D. Eisenhower, George S. Patton, Carl Spaatz, and Maxwell D. Taylor.

An addition to the papers includes correspondence, articles about Doolittle, and a photograph showing a formation of B-25s in dual mode. Most of the correspondence consists of short notes from Doolittle thanking Lee R. Magnolia for sending clippings related to aviation, aerospace, politics, whaling, and other topics.

Arrangement of the Papers

This collection is arranged in seven series:

- [Correspondence File, 1940-1959](#)
- [General File, 1920-1970](#)
- [National Advisory Committee for Aeronautics, 1956-1958](#)
- [Speeches and Articles, 1943-1956](#)
- [Miscellany, 1919-1971](#)
- [Addition, 1957-1990](#)
- [Oversize](#)

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BOX 1-4	<p><u>Correspondence File, 1940-1959</u> Letters sent and received. Arranged alphabetically by name of correspondent and therein chronologically.</p>
BOX 4-36	<p><u>General File, 1920-1970</u> Correspondence, memoranda, invitations, reports, lists, studies, printed matter, and miscellaneous material. Arranged by subject or type of material.</p>
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