

Jimmy Doolittle

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General **James Harold "Jimmy" Doolittle**, USAF (December 14, 1896 – September 27, 1993) was an American aviation pioneer. Doolittle served as a brigadier general, major general and lieutenant general in the United States Army Air Forces during the Second World War. He earned the Medal of Honor for his valor and leadership as commander of the Doolittle Raid while a lieutenant colonel.

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Early life and education

Doolittle was born in Alameda, California, and spent his youth in Nome, Alaska, where he earned a reputation as a boxer. His parents were Frank Henry Doolittle and Rosa (Rose) Cerenah Shephard. By 1910, Jimmy Doolittle was attending school in Los Angeles. When his

James Harold Doolittle

December 14, 1896 – September 27, 1993 (aged 96)



Lt Gen. James Doolittle

Nickname	"Jimmy"
Place of birth	Alameda, California
Place of death	Pebble Beach, California
Place of burial	Arlington National Cemetery
Allegiance	 United States of America
Service/branch	 United States Air Force United States Army Air Forces United States Army Air Corps United States Army Air Service Aviation Section, U.S. Signal Corps
Years of service	1917–1959
Rank	 ★★★★ General (Advanced in rank in 1985)
Battles/wars	Mexican Border Service World War I (Stateside Duty) World War II *Pacific Campaign *Mediterranean Campaign * European Campaign Cold War * Korean War (Stateside Duty)

school attended the 1910 Los Angeles International Air Meet at Dominguez Field Doolittle saw his first airplane.^[1] He attended Los Angeles City College after graduating from Manual Arts High School in Los Angeles, and later won admission to the University of California, Berkeley where he studied in The School of Mines. Doolittle took a leave of absence in October 1917 to enlist in the Signal Corps Reserve as a flying cadet; he ground trained at the University of California School of Military Aeronautics, and flight-trained at Rockwell Field, California. Doolittle received his Reserve Military Aviator rating and was commissioned a first lieutenant in the Signal Officers Reserve Corps on March 11, 1918.

Military career

During World War I, Doolittle stayed in the United States as a flight instructor and performed his war service at Camp John Dick Aviation Concentration Center ("Camp Dick"), Texas; Wright Field, Ohio; Gerstner Field, Louisiana; Rockwell Field, California; Kelly Field, Texas and Eagle Pass, Texas.

Doolittle's service at Rockwell Field consisted of duty as a flight leader and gunnery instructor. At Kelly Field, he served with the 104th Aero Squadron and with the 90th Aero Squadron of the 1st Surveillance Group. His detachment of the 90th Aero Squadron was based at Eagle Pass, patrolling the Mexican border. Qualifying for retention in the Air Service during demobilization at the end of the war, Doolittle received a Regular Army commission as a 1st Lieutenant, Air Service, on July 1, 1920. Subsequently, he attended the Air Service Mechanical School at Kelly Field and the Aeronautical Engineering Course at McCook Field, Ohio.

Having at last returned to complete his college degree, he earned the Bachelor of Arts from the University of California, Berkeley in 1922, and joined the Lambda Chi Alpha Fraternity.



Doolittle was one of the most famous pilots during the inter-war period. In September 1922, he made the first of many pioneering flights, flying a de Havilland DH-4 - which was equipped with early navigational instruments - in the first cross-country flight, from Pablo Beach, Florida, to Rockwell Field, San Diego, California, in 21 hours and 19 minutes, making only one refueling stop at Kelly Field. The U.S. Army awarded him the Distinguished Flying Cross.

In July 1923, after serving as a test pilot and aeronautical engineer at McCook Field, Doolittle entered the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. In March 1924, he conducted aircraft acceleration tests at McCook Field, which became the basis of his master's thesis and

Awards

Medal of Honor
Distinguished Service Medal (2)
Silver Star
Distinguished Flying Cross (3)

Air Medal (4)

Other work

Shell Oil, VP, Director
Space Technology Laboratories,
Chairman



Doolittle on his Curtiss R3C-2 Racer, the plane in which he won the 1925 Schneider Trophy Race



Doolittle in a pre-World War II photo

led to his second Distinguished Flying Cross. He received his S.M. in Aeronautics from MIT in June 1924. Since the Army had given him two years to get his degree, and he had done it in only one, he immediately started working on his Sc.D. in Aeronautics, which he received in June 1925. He said that he considered his master's work more significant than his doctorate.

Following graduation, Doolittle attended special training in high-speed seaplanes at Naval Air Station Anacostia in Washington, D.C.. He also served with the Naval Test Board at Mitchel Field, Long Island, New York, and was a familiar figure in air speed record attempts in the New York area. He won the Schneider Cup race in a Curtiss R3C in 1925 with an average speed of 232 MPH.^[2] For that feat, Doolittle was awarded the Mackay Trophy in 1926.

In April 1926, Doolittle was given a leave of absence to go to South America to perform demonstration flights. In Chile, he broke both ankles, but put his P-1 Hawk through aerial maneuvers with his ankles in casts. He returned to the United States, and was confined to Walter Reed Army Hospital for his injuries until April 1927. Doolittle was then assigned to McCook Field for experimental work, with additional duty as an instructor pilot to the 385th Bomb Squadron of the Air Corps Reserve. During this time, he was the first to perform an outside loop.

Instrument flight

Doolittle's most important contribution to aeronautical technology was the development of instrument flying. He was the first to recognize that true operational freedom in the air could not be achieved unless pilots developed the ability to control and navigate aircraft in flight, from takeoff run to landing rollout, regardless of the range of vision from the cockpit. Doolittle was the first to envision that a pilot could be trained to use instruments to fly through fog, clouds, precipitation of all forms, darkness, or any other impediment to visibility; and in spite of the pilot's own possibly confused motion sense inputs. Even at this early stage, the ability to control aircraft was getting beyond the motion sense capability of the pilot. That is, as aircraft became faster and more maneuverable, pilots could become seriously disoriented without visual cues from outside the cockpit, because aircraft could move in ways that pilots' senses could not accurately decipher.

Doolittle was also the first to recognize these psycho-physiological limitations of the human senses (particularly the motion sense inputs, *i.e.*, up, down, left, right). He initiated the study of the subtle interrelationships between the psychological effects of visual cues and motion senses. His research resulted in programs that trained pilots to read and understand navigational instruments. A pilot learned to "trust his instruments," not his senses, as visual cues and his motion sense inputs (what he sensed and "felt") could be incorrect or unreliable.

In 1929, he became the first pilot to take off, fly and land an airplane using instruments alone, without a view outside the cockpit. Having returned to Mitchel Field that September, he assisted in the development of fog flying equipment. He helped develop, and was then the first to test, the now universally used artificial horizon and directional gyroscope. He attracted wide newspaper attention with this feat of "blind"



Bust of General Doolittle at the Imperial War Museum, Duxford

flyng and later received the Harmon Trophy for conducting the experiments. These accomplishments made all-weather airline operations practical.

In January 1930, he advised the Army on the building of Floyd Bennett Field in New York City. Doolittle resigned his regular commission on February 15, 1930, and was commissioned a major in the Specialist Reserve Corps a month later, being named manager of the Aviation Department of Shell Oil Company, in which capacity he conducted numerous aviation tests. He also returned to active duty with the Army frequently to conduct tests.

Doolittle helped influence Shell Oil Company to produce the first quantities of 100 octane aviation gasoline. High octane fuel was crucial to the high-performance planes that were developed in the late 1930s.

In 1931, Doolittle won the Bendix Trophy Race from Burbank, California, to Cleveland, Ohio, in a Laird Super Solution biplane.

In 1932, Doolittle set the world's high speed record for land planes at 296 miles per hour in the Shell Speed Dash. Later, he took the Thompson Trophy Race at Cleveland in the notorious Gee Bee R-1 racer with a speed averaging 252 miles per hour. After having won the three big air racing trophies of the time, the Schneider, Bendix, and Thompson, he officially retired from air racing stating, "I have yet to hear anyone engaged in this work dying of old age."

In April 1934, Doolittle became a member of the Baker Board. Chaired by former Secretary of War Newton D. Baker, the board was convened during the Air Mail scandal to study Air Corps organization. A year later, Doolittle transferred to the Air Corps Reserve. In 1940, he became president of the Institute of Aeronautical Science. He returned to active duty July 1, 1940, as a major and assistant district supervisor of the Central Air Corps Procurement District at Indianapolis, Indiana, and Detroit, Michigan, where he worked with large auto manufacturers on the conversion of their plants for production of planes. The following August, he went to England as a member of a special mission and brought back information about other countries' air forces and military build-ups.

The Doolittle Raid

Main article: Doolittle Raid

Shortly after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, and America's entry into World War II, Doolittle was recalled to active duty. He was promoted to Lieutenant Colonel on January 2, 1942, and assigned to Army Air Forces Headquarters to plan the first retaliatory air raid on the Japanese homeland. He volunteered for and received General H.H. Arnold's approval to lead the top-secret attack of 16 B-25 medium bombers from the aircraft carrier USS *Hornet*, with targets in Tokyo, Kobe, Yokohama, Osaka, and Nagoya. On April 18, all the bombers successfully took off from the *Hornet*, reached Japan, and bombed their targets. Fifteen of the planes then headed for their recovery airfield in China, while one crew



Lt Col James H. Doolittle, USAAF (front), leader of the raiding force, wires a Japanese

chose to land in Russia due to their bomber's unusually high fuel consumption. As did most of the other crewmen who participated in the mission, Doolittle's crew bailed out safely over China when their bomber ran out of fuel. By then they had been flying for about 12 hours, it was nighttime, the weather was stormy, and Doolittle was unable to locate their landing field. Doolittle came down in a rice paddy (saving a previously injured ankle from breaking) near Chuchow (Quzhou). He and his crew linked up after the bailout and were helped through Japanese lines by Chinese guerrillas and American missionary John Birch. Other aircrews were not so fortunate. Although most eventually reached safety with the help of friendly Chinese, several crewmembers lost their lives after being captured by the Japanese, who occupied many areas along the China coast. Doolittle went on to fly more combat missions as commander of the 12th Air Force in North Africa, for which he was awarded four Air Medals. The other surviving members of the raid also went on to new assignments.

medal to a 500-pound bomb, during ceremonies on the flight deck of USS *Hornet* (CV-8), shortly before his force of sixteen B-25B bombers took off for Japan. The planes were launched on April 18, 1942.

Doolittle received the Medal of Honor from President Franklin D. Roosevelt at the White House for planning and leading his raid on Japan. His citation reads: "For conspicuous leadership above and beyond the call of duty, involving personal valor and intrepidity at an extreme hazard to life. With the apparent certainty of being forced to land in enemy territory or to perish at sea, Lt. Col. Doolittle personally led a squadron of Army bombers, manned by volunteer crews, in a highly destructive raid on the Japanese mainland."

The Doolittle Raid is viewed by historians as a major morale-building victory for the United States. Although the damage done to Japanese war industry was minor, the raid showed the Japanese that their homeland was vulnerable to air attack, and forced them to withdraw several front-line fighter units from Pacific war zones for homeland defense. More significantly, Japanese commanders considered the raid deeply embarrassing, and their attempt to close the perceived gap in their Pacific defense perimeter led directly to the decisive American victory during the Battle of Midway in June 1942.

When asked from where the Tokyo raid was launched, President Roosevelt coyly said its base was Shangri-La, a fictional paradise from the popular novel *Lost Horizon*. In the same vein, the US Navy named one of its carriers the USS *Shangri-La*.

Doolittle was portrayed by Spencer Tracy in the 1944 film *Thirty Seconds Over Tokyo* and by Alec Baldwin in the 2001 film *Pearl Harbor*, in which a fictionalized account of the Doolittle raid was depicted.

World War II, post-raid



In July 1942, as a Brigadier General - he had been promoted by two grades on the day after the Tokyo attack, by-passing the rank of full colonel - Doolittle was assigned to the nascent Eighth Air Force and in September became commanding general of the Twelfth Air Force in North Africa. He was promoted to Major General in November 1942, and in March 1943 became commanding general of the Northwest African Strategic Air Forces, a unified command of U.S. Army Air Force and Royal Air Force units.

Maj. Gen. Doolittle took command of the Fifteenth Air Force in the

Lt Gen Jimmy Doolittle with Maj Gen Curtis LeMay standing in front of a Lockheed P-38 Lightning in Britain, 1944.

Mediterranean Theater of Operations in November 1943. On June 10, he flew as co-pilot with Jack Sims, fellow Tokyo Raider, in a B-26 Marauder of the 320th Bombardment Group, 442nd Bombardment Squadron on a mission to attack gun emplacements at Pantelleria. Doolittle continued to fly, despite the risk of capture, while being privy to the Ultra secret, which was that the German encryption systems had been broken by the British.^[3] From January 1944 to September 1945, he held his largest command, the Eighth Air Force (8 AF) in England as a Lieutenant General, his promotion date being March 13, 1944 and the highest rank ever held by a reserve officer in modern times. Doolittle's major influence on the European air war occurred early in the year when he changed the policy requiring escorting fighters to remain with the bombers at all times. With his permission, P-38s, P-47s, and P-51s on escort missions strafed German airfields and transport while returning to base, contributing significantly to the achievement of air supremacy by Allied Air Forces over Europe.

After the end of the European war, the Eighth Air Force was re-equipped with B-29 Superfortress bombers and started to relocate to Okinawa in the Pacific. Two bomb groups had begun to arrive on August 7. However, the 8th was not scheduled to be at full strength until February 1946 and Doolittle declined to rush 8th Air Force units into combat simply to say that "the 8th Air Force had operated against the Japanese in the Pacific".

Postwar

On May 10, 1946, Doolittle reverted to inactive reserve status at the grade of lieutenant general. He returned to Shell Oil as a vice president, and later as a director. In 1947, Doolittle became the first president of the Air Force Association, an organization which he helped create.

In March 1951, Doolittle was appointed a special assistant to the Chief of Staff of the Air Force, serving as a civilian in scientific matters which led to Air Force ballistic missile and space programs. In 1952, following a string of three air crashes in two months at Elizabeth, New Jersey, Harry S. Truman appointed him to lead a presidential commission examining the safety of urban airports. The report "Airports And Their Neighbours" led to zoning requirements for buildings near approaches, early noise control requirements, and initial work on "super airports" with 10,000 ft runways, suited to 150 ton aircraft.

Doolittle retired from Air Force duty on February 28, 1959. He remained active in other capacities, including chairman of the board of TRW Space Technology Laboratories.

In 1972, Doolittle received the *Tony Jannus Award* for his distinguished contributions to commercial aviation, in recognition of the development of instrument flight.

On April 4, 1985, the U.S. Congress promoted Doolittle to the rank



Personalized photo of General Jimmy Doolittle.



of full General on the Air Force retired list. In a later ceremony, President Ronald Reagan and U.S. Senator and retired Air Force Reserve Major General Barry Goldwater pinned on Doolittle's four-star insignia.

Doolittle is awarded a fourth star, pinned on by President Ronald Reagan (left) and Senator Barry Goldwater (right), April 10, 1985.

In addition to his Medal of Honor for the Tokyo raid, Doolittle also received the Presidential Medal of Freedom, two Distinguished Service Medals, the Silver Star, three Distinguished Flying Crosses, the Bronze Star, four Air Medals, and decorations from Great Britain, France, Belgium, Poland, China, and Ecuador. He is the only person to be awarded both the Medal of Honor and the Medal of Freedom, the nation's two highest honors. Doolittle was awarded the Public Welfare Medal from the National Academy of Sciences in 1959.^[4] In 1983, he was awarded the United States Military Academy's Sylvanus Thayer Award. He was inducted in the Motorsports Hall of Fame of America as the only member of the air racing category in the inaugural class of 1989, and into the Aerospace Walk of Honor in the inaugural class of 1990. The headquarters of the United States Air Force Academy Association of Graduates (on the grounds of the United States Air Force Academy), Doolittle Hall, is named in his honor.

On May 9, 2007, The new 12th Air Force Combined Air Operations Center, Building 74, at Davis-Monthan Air Force Base, Tucson, Arizona, was named in his honor as the "General James H. Doolittle Center." Several surviving members of the Doolittle Raid were in attendance during the ribbon cutting ceremony.

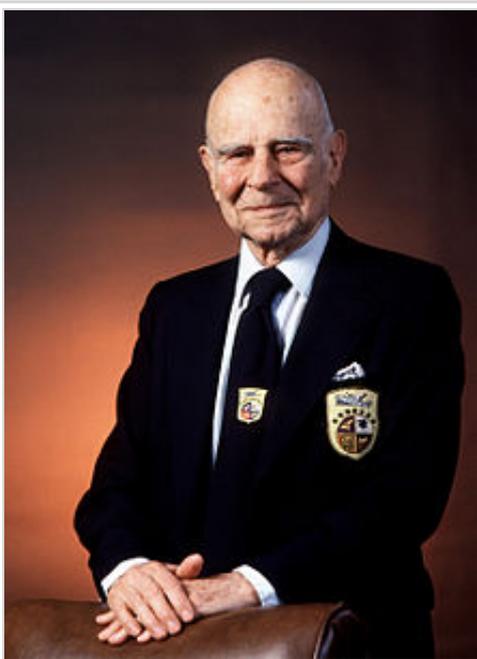
Personal life

Doolittle married Josephine E. Daniels on December 24, 1917. At a dinner celebration after Jimmy Doolittle's first all-instrument flight in 1929, "Joe" Doolittle asked her guests to sign her white damask tablecloth. Later, she embroidered the names in black. She continued this tradition, collecting hundreds of signatures from the aviation world. The tablecloth was donated to the Smithsonian. Married for over 70 years, Joe Doolittle died in 1988, five years before her husband.

The Doolittles had two sons, James Jr., and John. Both became military aviators. James Jr was an A-26 Invader pilot during World War II and committed suicide at the age of thirty-eight in 1958.^[5] At the time of his death, James Jr was commander of the 524th Fighter-Bomber Squadron and piloted a F-101 Voodoo.^[6]

His other son, John P. Doolittle, retired from the Air Force as a Colonel, and his grandson, Colonel James H. Doolittle, III, was the vice commander of the Air Force Flight Test Center, Edwards Air Force Base, California.

James H. "Jimmy" Doolittle died at the age of 96 in Pebble Beach, California on September 27, 1993, and is buried at Arlington National Cemetery in Virginia, near Washington, D.C., next to his wife.^[7] In his honor at the funeral, there was also a flyover of Miss Mitchell, a lone B-25 Mitchell, and USAF Eighth Air Force bombers from Barksdale Air Force Base, Louisiana. After a brief graveside service, Doolittle's great-grandson played Taps flawlessly.



Doolittle photographed in 1986.

Honors and awards

Military honors

Medal of Honor citation

Citation:

For conspicuous leadership above the call of duty, involving personal valor and intrepidity at an extreme hazard to life. With the apparent certainty of being forced to land in enemy territory or to perish at sea, Gen. Doolittle personally led a squadron of Army bombers, manned by volunteer crews, in a highly destructive raid on the Japanese mainland.^[8]

Army Distinguished Service medal citation

Citation:

The President of the United States of America, authorized by Act of Congress July 9, 1918, takes pleasure in presenting the Army Distinguished Service Medal to Major General James Harold Doolittle (ASN: 0-271855), United States Army Air Forces, for exceptionally meritorious and distinguished services to the Government of the United States, in a duty of great responsibility as Commander of the Northwest African Strategic Air Force since its organization. Under his guidance and direction, this Force has developed a high degree of efficiency and accuracy and brought about, in great measure, a critical reduction in the supplies and reinforcements needed by the enemy. General Doolittle's energy, good judgment, exceptional qualities of leadership and wholehearted cooperation were primary factors in the ultimate success of air operations during the Tunisian Campaign.^[9]

Distinguished Flying Cross citations

1st Citation:

The President of the United States of America, authorized by Act of Congress, July 2, 1926, takes pleasure in presenting the Distinguished Flying Cross to First Lieutenant (Air Service) James Harold Doolittle (ASN: 0-271855), U.S. Army Air Corps, for extraordinary achievement while participating in an aerial flight. On 4–5 September 1922, Lieutenant Doolittle accomplished a one-stop flight from Pablo Beach, Florida, to San Diego, California, in 22 hours and 30 minutes elapsed time, an extraordinary achievement with the equipment available at that time. By his skill, endurance, and resourcefulness he demonstrated the possibility of moving Air Corps units to any portion of the United States in less than 24 hours, thus reflecting great credit on himself and to the Army of the United States.^[9]

2nd Citation:

The President of the United States of America, authorized by Act of Congress, July 2, 1926, takes pleasure in presenting a Bronze Oak Leaf Cluster in lieu of a Second Distinguished

Flying Cross to First Lieutenant (Air Service) James Harold Doolittle (ASN: 0-271855), U.S. Army Air Corps, for extraordinary achievement while participating in an aerial flight. During March 1924, at McCook Field, Dayton, Ohio, Lieutenant Doolittle, piloting a Fokker PW-7 pursuit airplane, performed a series of acceleration tests requiring skill, initiative, endurance, and courage of the highest type. In these test a recording accelerometer was mounted in the airplane and the accelerations taken for the following maneuvers. Loops at various air speeds; single and multiple barrel rolls; power spirals; tail spins; power on and power off; half loop, half roll, and immelman turn; Inverted flight; pulling out of dive at various air speeds; flying the airplane on a level course with considerable angle of bank; and flying in bumpy air. In these test the airplane was put through the most extreme maneuvers possible in order that the flight loads imposed upon the wings of the airplane under extreme conditions of sir combat might, be ascertained. These test were put through with that fine combination of fearlessness and skill which constitutes the essence of distinguished flying. Through them scientific data of great and permanent importance to the Air Corps were obtained.^[9]

3rd Citation:

The President of the United States of America, authorized by Act of Congress, July 2, 1926, takes pleasure in presenting a Second Bronze Oak Leaf Cluster in lieu of a Third Distinguished Flying Cross to Colonel (Air Corps) James Harold Doolittle (ASN: 0-271855), United States Army Air Forces, for extraordinary achievement as Pilot of a B-25 Bomber and Commanding Officer of the 1st Special Aviation Project (Doolittle Raider Force), while participating in a highly destructive raid on the Japanese mainland on 18 April 1942. Colonel Doolittle with 79 other officers and enlisted men volunteered for this mission knowing full well that the chances of survival were extremely remote, and executed his part in it with great skill and daring. This achievement reflects high credit on himself and the military service.^[9]

Silver Star citation

Citation:

The President of the United States of America, authorized by Act of Congress July 9, 1918, takes pleasure in presenting the Silver Star to Major General (Air Corps) James Harold Doolittle (ASN: 0-271855), United States Army Air Forces, for gallantry in action. Since 19 February 1943, when he took command of the Allied Strategic Air Force (Northwest Africa), General Doolittle, by his untiring energy, initiative and personal example has inspired the units under him to renewed successful efforts against the enemy. On 5 April 1943, the strategic air force was responsible for the destruction of forty eight enemy planes in the air and approximately 100 on the ground. This extraordinary achievement under the leadership of General Doolittle reflects great credit to himself and the armed forces of the United States.^[9]

Other honors

Doolittle was also awarded the Bolivian Order of the Condor of the Andes, now in the collection of the Smithsonian National Air and Space Museum.^[10]

The Society of Experimental Test Pilots annually presents the James H. Doolittle Award in his memory. The award is for "outstanding accomplishment in technical management or engineering achievement in

aerospace technology".

The city of Doolittle, Missouri, located 5 miles west of Rolla was named in his honor after World War II.

In popular culture

- Spencer Tracy played Doolittle in Mervyn LeRoy's 1944 movie *Thirty Seconds Over Tokyo*.
- Alec Baldwin played Doolittle in Michael Bay's 2001 movie *Pearl Harbor*.
- Bob Clampett's 1946 cartoon *Baby Bottleneck* briefly portrays a dog named "Jimmy Do-quite-a-little", who invents a failed rocketship.

See also

- List of Medal of Honor recipients for World War II
- Aviation history

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Categories: 1896 births | 1993 deaths | People from Alameda, California | American aviators | Flight instructors | American air racers | Schneider Trophy pilots | Harmon Trophy winners | Presidential Medal of Freedom recipients | Army Air Forces Medal of Honor recipients | Recipients of the Distinguished Service Medal (United States) | Recipients of the Bronze Star Medal | Recipients of the Silver Star | Recipients of the Distinguished Flying Cross (United States) | Recipients of the Air Medal | Recipients of the Order of the Condor of the Andes | University of California, Berkeley alumni | Burials at Arlington National Cemetery | Air Corps Tactical School alumni | American test pilots | United States Army Air Forces generals | United States Army Air Forces pilots of World War II | United States Army Air Forces pilots of World War I | American military personnel of World War I | Honorary Knights Commander of the Order of the Bath | National Academy of Sciences laureates | Mackay Trophy winners

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