



H-Gram 004: 100th Anniversary of World War I

4 April 2017

Contents:

1. The First Shot
2. "We Are Ready Now, Sir" (Sort of)
3. The Doolittle Raid—"Shangri-La"
4. Enlisted Hero of the Month—AMM1/C Bruno Gaido

1. The First Shot

The first U.S. shot of World War I was fired on 7 April 1917 by a Marine embarked on the old U.S. Navy iron-hulled steam schooner USS Supply, at Guam, attempting to prevent the German auxiliary cruiser SMS Cormoran II from scuttling itself in Apra Harbor, where she had been interned since 1914. The Cormoran II still blew herself up and sank, with the loss of seven (or nine) German lives. The lesson is that when war comes, it may come in a place least expected. For more detail see attachment H-004-1 SMS Cormoran II.

2. "We Are Ready Now, Sir" (Sort of)

In response to German resumption of unrestricted submarine warfare, the United States declared war on Germany on 6 April 1917. In response to a desperate British need for destroyers to counter German U-Boats, which were sinking merchant ships



U.S. Navy recruiting poster by George H Wright, circa 1917 (68-550-W).

at a grave rate, the U.S. quickly deployed a division of six destroyers to the United Kingdom, under the command of Lieutenant Commander Joseph Taussig, which arrived in Queenstown (now Cobh, Ireland) on 4 May. Although Taussig didn't actually say the famous quote attributed to him—"We are ready now, sir!"—the gist was essentially correct, and the destroyers very rapidly integrated into Royal Navy fleet operations. Taussig's destroyers were the first U.S. combat forces to arrive in the European theater, and the first U.S. Navy forces to ever operate under foreign command. Other divisions of U.S. destroyers arrived soon after, aided by the use of underway refueling, which had just been invented on the fly by Commander Ernest J. King, and Lieutenant Commander Chester Nimitz. Another U.S. technological innovation, reliable radio-telephone, would significantly improve anti-submarine warfare

tactics. Although in many respects the U.S. Navy muddled through World War I, and was far from ready for war, the U.S. Navy nevertheless succeeded in ensuring the safe arrival of 2,000,000 U.S. troops in Europe in 1917/18, despite the severe U-boat threat, which broke the years-long bloody stalemate and led to the rapid defeat of Germany. Future H-Grams will cover the U.S. Navy's impact on the war, but attachment H-004-2 discusses more detail about the U.S. entry into the war and initial U.S. Navy operations. Attachment H-004-3 shows a photo taken shortly after the war of Assistant Secretary of the Navy, Franklin D. Roosevelt with the famous painting "Return of the Mayflower" depicting the arrival of Taussig's destroyers hanging in his office (and which later hung in the White House Oval Office.) With Roosevelt in the photo is Rear Admiral William S. Sims, returned from duty as a Vice Admiral in charge of U.S. naval forces in Europe, and Rear Admiral Josiah McKean, acting CNO after CNO Benson retired.

75th Anniversary of World War II

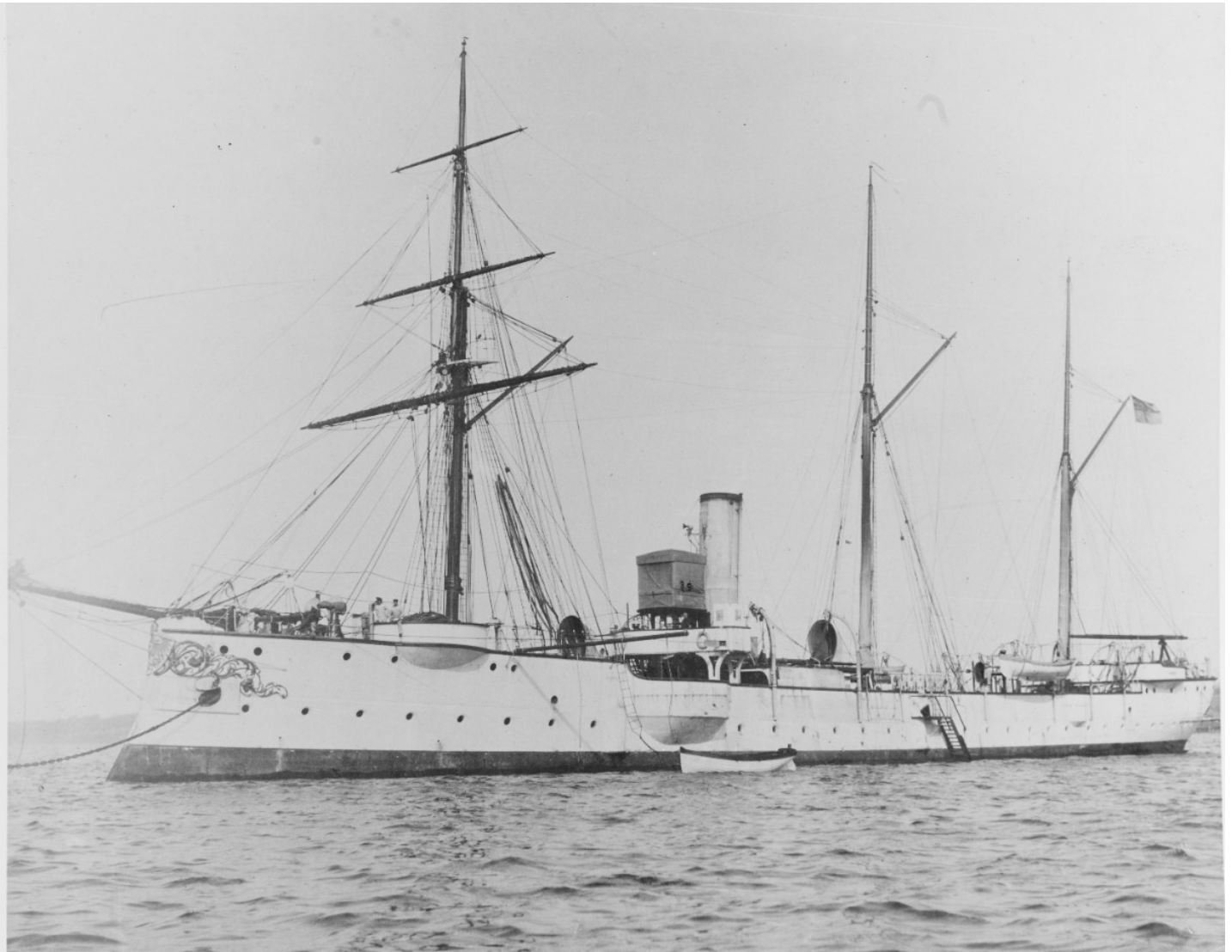
3. The Doolittle Raid—"Shangri-La"

On the morning of 18 April 1942, 16 U.S. Army Air Force B-25B Mitchell twin-engine bombers, led by Lieutenant Colonel James H. "Jimmy" Doolittle, launched from the flight deck of the carrier USS Hornet (CV-8) and bombed targets in Japan, the first strike by the U.S. against the Japanese homeland since Pearl Harbor. The raid was a huge boost to U.S. morale. Damage to military targets was good for the limited number of aircraft employed, but the psychological effect on the Japanese was profound. All 16 aircraft were lost (none were shot down over Japan, but 15 crashed in or off the coast of China after running out of fuel and one was interned by the Soviets when it landed near Vladivostok.) The human cost was seven aircrewmen dead (three killed in bailout/ditching, and of eight POW's, three were executed and one starved to death.) As many as 250,000 Chinese men, women, and children were killed in a three-month Japanese campaign of retaliation for Chinese assistance to the Raiders, including use of bacteriologic agents from Japan's

infamous "Unit 731." Attachment H-004-4 discusses the Navy origins of the Doolittle Raid and the raid's consequences.

4. Enlisted Hero of the Month—AMM1/C Bruno Gaido

Although my H-grams tend to concentrate on command decisions, I will also periodically highlight a few of the many exceptional acts of valor displayed by enlisted Sailors throughout the history of the U.S. Navy. Attachment H-004-5 highlights the actions of Aviation Machinist Mate First Class Bruno Peter Gaido during the raid on the Japanese held-Marshall islands by the carrier USS Enterprise (CV-6) on 1 February 1942. During an attack by Japanese bombers, Gaido jumped into the back seat of a parked SBD Dauntless dive bomber on the flight deck, and used the aircraft's rear guns to shoot down a Japanese bomber intent on crashing into the Enterprise. The wing of the crippled bomber cut the tail off Gaido's plane, yet Gaido continued to fire, and then extinguished a fire left by bomber remnants. Spot-promoted from Third Class to First Class by Vice Admiral William Halsey for his actions, Gaido was later captured and tortured by the Japanese at battle of Midway, and after revealing nothing of value, was thrown over the side to drown. Gaido was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross posthumously.



Imperial German gunboat SMS Cormoran (NH 64265).

H-004-1: SMS *Cormoran II*— The First Shot

H-Gram 004, Attachment 1
Samuel J. Cox, Director NHHC
4 April 2017

The first shot fired by the U.S. after entry into World War I was at Guam. On 7 April 1917, the elderly steam schooner USS *Supply* (originally built in 1873, and the Station Ship at Guam since 1902) with a contingent of Marines embarked, approached the German auxiliary cruiser SMS *Cormoran II* in Apra Harbor to prevent the ship from scuttling itself. The *Cormoran II* had been

interred at Guam since 14 December 1914, when low on coal, and pursued by Japanese warships (Japan was an ally of the British in World War I), the ship had taken refuge at Guam. Because the U.S. was neutral in the first years of the war, and because of a shortage of coal on Guam, the *Cormoran* was required to stay in Guam, where the German crew was generally treated with hospitality.

Upon the U.S. declaration of war, the commanding officer of the *Cormoran II*, Captain Adalbert Zuckschwerdt, had to decide whether to attack his former U.S. hosts on Guam (which included 400 U.S. Marines) or to scuttle his ship to prevent it from falling into American hands.

Determining that an attack would result in needless and fruitless loss of life, he chose to scuttle the ship (although most of *Cormoran II* 's guns had been removed under terms of internment, the Germans had surreptitiously retained some arms). Although accounts vary, at some point in the process of ordering the *Cormoran II* to surrender, a Marine fired a rifle shot (apparently into the air, when another Marine on *Supply* grabbed the rifle and pushed it up.) The Germans blew up their ship anyway with a demolition charge. Seven (possibly nine) German crewmen were killed, presumably as a result of the explosion or drowning afterwards, although accounts of how they died are murky. The remaining 350 or so German crewman were quickly rescued and the dead were buried with full military honors (and still remain) in a cemetery on Guam. This incident resulted in the first shot, the first German deaths resulting from U.S. action, and the first German prisoners of war of the U.S. in World War I. The wreck of the *Cormoran II* still remains in Apra Harbor in about 110 feet of water, right next to the wreck of the Japanese merchant ship *Tokai Maru*, sunk by the U.S. submarine USS *Snapper* (SS-185) in World War II.



Commander Joseph K. Taussig, USN, accompanied by Mr. Wesley Frost, the American consul, reports to Vice Admiral Sir Lewis Bayly, RN, at Queenstown, Ireland, 4 May 1917 (NH 5270).

H-004-2: "We Are Ready Now, Sir!" (Sort of)

*H-Gram 004, [Attachment 2](#)
Samuel J. Cox, Director NHHC
4 April 2017*

Actually, despite what my 1976 Naval Academy *Reef Points* says, Lieutenant Commander Joe Taussig, USN, never said it, at least according to his own diary. Taussig led the first contingent of six U.S. Navy destroyers to Europe after the U.S. declaration of war against Germany, arriving in Queenstown, Ireland (Ireland was not yet independent from Britain) on 4 May 1917 to assist the British in protecting merchant shipping then being sunk by German U-boats at an alarming rate in the Western Approaches. In response to the British Commander-in-Chief of the Western

Approaches, Vice Admiral Sir Lewis Bayly's question about when the newly arrived U.S. destroyers would be ready to commence operations, Taussig replied something like "as soon as we can get to the fuel pier" according to Taussig's recollection. This exchange was initially reported in U.S. newspapers as "We can start at once" and in British newspapers as "We are ready now" resulting in a big boost to British morale at a very dark time. The "We are ready now" quote was then widely reported in the U.S., and used unabashedly by the U.S. Navy as a public relations and recruiting rallying cry, and became the most famous U.S. Navy quote of the war. What Taussig did actually say, on the record before Congress several years later, was that "the Navy was far from being ready for war," a (arguably true) statement that made him a lifelong enemy of the then-Assistant Secretary of the Navy (and future President) Franklin D. Roosevelt.

As a result of the German's resumption of unrestricted submarine warfare, the United States declared war on Germany (but not German allies, the Austro-Hungarian Empire, Ottoman Empire, or Bulgaria) on 6 April 1917. This set off a scramble between the U.S. Army and U.S. Navy, neither of which was really ready to go to war. Although a major naval buildup had been authorized by Congress in 1916 at the request of President Woodrow Wilson, none of those new ships were completed (or in most cases even begun) before the outbreak of war. Nevertheless, the U.S. Navy was one of the largest and best-equipped navies in the world, but its most recent combat experience against an enemy fleet was in the Spanish-American War of 1898 (which actually wasn't much of a contest), although there had been some minor combat actions related to the Philippine Insurrection and U.S. intervention in Mexico, particularly at Vera Cruz in 1914 (these of course, weren't minor for those involved.)

In anticipation of an imminent outbreak of war, the President of the Naval War College, newly promoted Rear Admiral William S. Sims, was ordered by Secretary of the Navy Josephus Daniels to travel incognito (leaving uniforms behind) to Great Britain to serve as a discrete liaison officer with the British Admiralty. (The "incognito" thing didn't work; Sims was recognized by the U.S. Navy gun crew that had recently been provided to the U.S. merchant ship *SS New York* for defense against U-boats). When receiving his orders from CNO William Benson, Sims later said that Benson told him not to get too close to the British, since "we would just as soon fight them [the British] as the Germans." Although Benson later denied he said that, at least one other witness said he did, and there certainly had been no love lost between the U.S. and the Royal Navy since the Revolution and the War of 1812. In the early days of World War I, U.S. anger was often directed as much toward the British blockade of Germany, which interfered with U.S. trade, as toward German actions. Sims had actually been reprimanded, and relieved of

command, in 1910 for publically expressing strong pro-British sympathies. He was, in fact, very pro-British, and was a close friend of First Sea Lord Admiral Sir John Jellicoe, senior officer in the British Navy in 1917, since both had served closely together in the Boxer Rebellion in China in 1900, where both had been wounded (as had Taussig for that matter,) during the international expedition to rescue besieged Western embassy personnel in the Chinese capital.

War was declared shortly before Sims arrived in England (after the *SS New York* hit a mine, but did not sink), so all pretenses were immediately dropped. The British were eager to let bygones be bygones, and Sims' special relationship with Jellicoe was an added bonus, so Sims was immediately brought into the Royal Navy's inner circle and given access to the Royal Navy's most sensitive intelligence. There Sims learned that the situation was far more desperate than was publically known, especially in the United States, as the German U-boats were now far more effective than they had been during the first attempt at unrestricted submarine warfare in 1915 (which resulted in, among other things, the loss of the liner *Lusitania* with 1,198 civilians, including 128 of 139 Americans citizens on board, and a huge diplomatic outcry that ended in Germany suspending its policy). To stay ahead of the Germans during the hugely expensive pre-war naval arms race, the British had concentrated on building battleships, and now were desperately short of destroyers, which were needed to escort convoys, which the British were coming to believe would be the only way to keep an excessive number of merchant ships from being sunk by U-boats and prevent possible resulting starvation in the United Kingdom.

Sims sent back word to Washington that what the British needed most was not the U.S. battle fleet, but as many destroyers as we could send as fast as we could send them. On 13 April, LCDR Joseph Taussig, commander of Destroyer Division Eight, on his flagship *USS Wadsworth* (DD-60),

received orders to depart what was then known as "Base 2" (Yorktown, Virginia) with his destroyers and proceed immediately on 14 April to New York, which he did, only to find the Navy Yard's piers closed for the weekend. Taussig's diary is a hoot. Anyone who has made a short-notice deployment will recognize all the hurry-up-and-wait, contradictory directions, uncertainty, scramble for gear, shortage of people, family issues, etc., and reach the historic lesson that "some things never change." (Taussig was notified on 25 May 1917 that he had been promoted to Commander backdated to 29 August 1916. However, Taussig had already "self-promoted" himself during the transit and was wearing commander's rank when he arrived in Queenstown. Those were the days...)

DESDIV 8, consisting of *Wadsworth* (DD-60), *Porter* (DD-59), *Davis* (DD-65), *Conyngham* (DD-58), *McDougal* (DD-54), and *Wainwright* (DD-62)—the order they appear in the famous painting "Return of the Mayflower"—departed from Boston on 24 April for the first trans-Atlantic crossing by U.S. destroyers since a previous squadron transited via the Mediterranean in 1905 to be stationed in the Philippines (one of which was run aground in that archipelago by Ensign Chester Nimitz, but that is another story.) After a slow transit due to weather conditions, mechanical breakdowns, and the need to conserve fuel, DESDIV 8 arrived in Queenstown (now Cobh, Ireland) on 4 May 1917, representing the first U.S. combat forces to arrive in the European Theater during World War I. (American pilots had already been flying combat missions as part of the Lafayette Escadrille—originally *Escadrille Americaine*—but they were wearing French uniforms, under French command, in a French unit, although the Germans were not amused and claimed it was a violation of U.S. neutrality.) The arrival of the U.S. destroyers received enormous attention from the British press and was a huge boost to British morale.

Taussig's destroyers did commence operations very quickly, after a crash course in Royal Navy communications, security, and operating procedures, and were integrated into the Royal Navy command structure, the first time U.S. Navy ships had ever operated under foreign command. At one point, Rear Admiral Sims temporarily relieved the British commander of the Western Approaches, the first time an American admiral had exercised command of foreign ships.

The U.S. Navy quickly realized that sending destroyers across the Atlantic without refueling, arriving in the U.K. almost empty, was a bad idea. So the Fleet Engineer on the staff of the U.S. Atlantic Fleet, newly promoted Commander Ernest J. King, went up to Boston and met with the executive officer of the new oiler USS *Maumee* (AO-2), Lieutenant Commander Chester Nimitz (the CO was off the ship), and the two of them figured out a way to refuel destroyers underway from the *Maumee* and then rigged the ship to do so. (NAVSEA was nowhere to be found, yet.) The Royal Navy had previously experimented with underway replenishment with coal, but those efforts largely failed and were abandoned. The use of oil for fuel made the idea more practical, but the U.S. Navy was the first to do it. The *Maumee* successfully refueled the second squadron of U.S. destroyers midway across the Atlantic, using the newly devised alongside method, as well as subsequent squadrons in May and June. As anyone in the Navy should know, underway refueling (and later, replenishment) was a profound revolution in naval warfare that cannot be overstated. In the early days of World War II, the U.S. Navy still wasn't very good at underway refueling, especially in rougher seas, but we were far better than any other navy, including the Japanese (even the Soviet Navy continued to use a less-efficient bow-to-stern method into the 1980's.)

Another U.S. technological innovation that would have profound effect on World War I was the use of new radio-telephones (significantly better than

what the British had developed to that point.) The CW936 first went to sea in January 1917, and over 1,000 were produced and used on destroyers and sub-chasers. The use of voice communications, via radio-telephone (although vulnerable to German interception, which was why the British were slower to develop it,) significantly improved the ability of convey escorts to rapidly react to U-boat sightings and coordinate attacks, thereby making convoys far more effective in minimizing losses to U-boats. I will describe the World War I U-boat war in greater detail in future H-grams, but the key point is that of the approximately two million U.S. troops that were shipped across the Atlantic to Europe in 1917 and 1918, none were lost in convoys escorted by U.S. ships. (About 75 U.S. troops were lost on a ship returning from Europe. Only one troop ship, the SS *Tuscania*, was sunk by U-boat under British escort; about 200 U.S. troops were lost, although British destroyers heroically saved about 1,800 Americans from that ship.)

(My thanks to Dr. David Kohnen, Executive Director, NHHHC Naval War College Museum, for his ground-breaking research on "UNREP" with a great article soon to follow, and his work on Vice Admiral Sims.)



Return of Rear Admiral William S. Sims to Washington, DC, 9 April 1919. In the office of the Secretary of the Navy, from left to right: Rear Admiral J. S. McKean, Acting Chief of Naval Operations; Rear Admiral William S. Sims, USN; and Honorable Franklin D. Roosevelt, Acting Secretary of the Navy. On the wall in the background is the painting "Return of the Mayflower" by B. F. Gribble, a gift of Admiral Sims to the Navy Department (NH 2344).

H-004-3: Acting Secretary of the Navy Franklin D. Roosevelt and "The Return of the *Mayflower*"

H-Gram 004, [Attachment 3](#)
Samuel J. Cox, Director NHHC
4 April 2017



USS Hornet (CV-8) launches Doolittle's force at the start of the first U.S. air raid on the Japanese home islands, 18 April 1942 (80-G-41197).

H-004-4: The Doolittle Raid—"Shangri-La"

*H-Gram 004, [Attachment 4](#)
Samuel J. Cox, Director NHHC
April 2017*

The Doolittle Raid was a U.S. Navy idea. The genesis came from a U.S. Navy submarine officer, Captain Francis "Frog" Low, who already had a reputation for creative thinking. Within weeks of the attack on Pearl Harbor, President Franklin D. Roosevelt relentlessly pressed the service chiefs

to come up with a way to strike back at the Japanese homeland. In response to the pressure, Admiral Ernest J. King, Commander in Chief of the U.S. Fleet, established a small working group that included Low and an aviator, Captain Donald B. Duncan, to study the problem and come up with solutions. In March, King also assumed duty as Chief of Naval Operations (the CNO at the time of Pearl Harbor, Admiral Harold "Betty" Stark, received more gentle treatment than Admiral Kimmel, being shifted from CNO to Commander of U.S. Naval Forces in Europe. King, the Commander in Chief, Atlantic Fleet, had assumed the CINC U.S. Fleet (CINCUS) title when Admiral Kimmel was relieved in December 41. King was

the first to combine the duties of CINCUS and CNO, and quickly changed the acronym from CINCUS ("sink us") to COMINCH.

The problem for the Navy in responding to Roosevelt's demands was that no one in their right mind wanted to take any of the Navy's precious few carriers and bring them within the necessary 200 nautical miles to strike the Japanese homeland, which would also be well within the range of hundreds of Japanese bombers. Captain Low came up with the idea of launching USAAF bombers off a carrier; the aircraft would then have to recover in China or the Soviet Union. Captain Duncan confirmed that a bomber could possibly be launched from a carrier, although it certainly couldn't be recovered on one. Low and Duncan took the idea to Admiral King, who broached the idea with Chief of the U.S. Army Air Force, General Hap Arnold, who liked it. Arnold assigned Lieutenant Colonel James "Jimmy" Doolittle, who already had a reputation as a daredevil flyer, to lead the mission. Doolittle determined that the new twin-engine B-25 Mitchell bomber (which had yet to see combat), specially modified to save weight and increase range, was best suited for the mission. Two B-25's were test-launched off the USS *Hornet* (CV-8) off of Norfolk to prove it could be done, before the brand-new *Hornet* transited to the Pacific. Navy aviator Lieutenant Henry F. Miller then trained the USAAF aviators, who volunteered for a hazardous but unspecified mission, in short-take-off procedures at Eglin Field, Florida (Miller was designated an "honorary Raider" by those who survived the mission due to his critical efforts.) Secret discussions with the Soviets proved fruitless, since they were officially neutral in the war with Japan, which meant the landing fields would have to be in areas of China still held by the Nationalists under Generalissimo Chiang Kai-Shek. The Chinese were not notified in advance, even though Japanese retaliation was assumed by those planning the mission, including Doolittle.

Sixteen modified B-25B's and their crews were loaded on *Hornet* at Alameda on 1 April 1942. The mission called for 15 aircraft; the 16th was supposed to be flown off shortly after departing San Francisco Bay to prove to the pilots that it could be done. Although trained to make short take-offs, none of Doolittle's pilots had actually launched from a carrier; their first time would be the real thing on 18 April. Doolittle wasn't supposed to fly the mission, but instead kept the 16th plane on board and flew it himself—and was the first to launch—thereby proving it could be done in a real case of "leading by example."

Hornet, under the command of Captain Marc "Pete" Mitscher, departed San Francisco Bay in daylight with the B-25's in plain view on deck (they couldn't fit on the hangar elevators anyway) and any observers assumed the *Hornet* was just ferrying the planes somewhere. *Hornet*'s own air wing was stowed below in the hangar, which essentially left her defenseless. At a point north of Hawaii, *Hornet* rendezvoused with TF-16, under the command of VADM William Halsey, embarked on USS *Enterprise* (CV-6), which provided air cover for the operation. On 17 April, after the weather had turned very bad, the combined task force conducted a last refueling, the two oilers and eight destroyers were left behind, and the two carriers and four cruisers sprinted ahead toward the launch position.

Japanese Admiral Isoruko Yamamoto, Commander-in-Chief of the Combined Fleet, was deeply concerned about the possibility of a U.S. carrier raid on the Japanese homeland. He had already developed a plan to try to trap the U.S. carriers, and the rest of the U.S. fleet, at Midway Island, but the plan had not yet been approved by the Naval General Staff in Tokyo. Under the assumption that U.S. carriers would have to approach within 200 miles of Japan to launch an attack with carrier aircraft, Yamamoto directed the establishment of a fairly dense line of picket vessels (mostly commandeered fishing boats) at 600-700 miles from Japan, which would provide

sufficient early warning for the Japanese to react and counter the U.S. raid.

The Ballad of the *No. 23 Nitta Maru*: After avoiding several surface radar contacts in the pre-dawn hours of 18 April, TF-16 encountered Japanese picket boats at dawn. The dawn patrol by an SBD Dauntless dive bomber reported that it had probably been seen by a Japanese surface craft. Then the task force came upon the *No. 23 Nitta Maru*. Although presumed to be a fishing boat, Halsey wanted to take no chances, and the light cruiser USS *Nashville* (CL-43) was ordered to sink the little vessel immediately. *Nashville* opened fire with her 15 x 6" guns. The *Nitta Maru*, bobbing in the very heavy seas, returned fire with her small caliber deck guns. At 928 6" rounds later, and emptying the magazines of several F4F Wildcat fighters on strafing runs, the *Nitta Maru* finally went down, but not before hitting an SBD Dauntless with machine-gun fire, which forced the U.S. plane to ditch. U.S. radio intelligence, organic to the task force, confirmed that the *Nitta Maru* had sent a contact report, so there was no guesswork on the part of Halsey and Doolittle, there was no doubt that they had been spotted and their position reported. The *Nitta Maru* actually reported three carriers, and an accurate position, but failed to note that one of the carriers had bombers embarked, although she probably never got close enough to tell after coming under intense fire. Five of the *Nitta Maru*'s 11 crewman survived and were rescued by the U.S. The chief petty officer in charge of the boat committed suicide rather than risk capture, but he certainly had done his duty. Aircraft from *Enterprise* engaged about 16 more picket boats, sinking about five, during the course of the day.

With their cover blown, Halsey and Doolittle decided to launch immediately, about 150 miles short of their intended launch point, which would mean the planes would not have the fuel to reach the planned airfields in China, but would have to ditch or bail-out. With the heavy seas, the launch was very harrowing, requiring great skill

by *Hornet*'s flight deck crew to time the launches so the bombers would not plow into the sea (green water was coming over the deck.) One *Hornet* crewman was blown into a prop-arc and lost his arm. But, all 16 aircraft got airborne safely and proceeded to their targets, aided by extensive additional target and defense information provided by *Hornet*'s intelligence officer, Lieutenant Commander Steve Jurika, who had been a former naval attache in Tokyo.

The Japanese reaction was even more surprised and befuddled than the U.S. reaction at Pearl Harbor; no one imagined that twin-engine bombers would be launched from a carrier. Several Japanese scout planes and ships accurately reported the inbound aircraft. Although they didn't know what type, they were accurately reported as inbound "enemy" bombers. The reports were dismissed. Airborne Japanese fighters saw the planes but did not engage, assuming they were friendly. Japanese air raid alerts didn't go off until 15 minutes after the bombs fell (Pearl Harbor had done much better). One plane was lightly damaged by anti-aircraft fire, but none were lost over Japan. Thirteen planes hit targets in the Tokyo area, including Yokosuka, where a bomb damaged the Japanese submarine tender *Taigei* that was being converted to the light carrier *Ryuho*, delaying her completion until well after the battle of Midway. Several aircraft buzzed the Imperial Palace in Tokyo, but were under strict orders not to bomb it. Three aircraft went after targets in Nagara, Osaka, and Kobe (one ditched its bombs to avoid Japanese fighters.) The aircraft actually did extensive damage relative to the limited number of planes in the raid. Although the targets were military and industrial, there was collateral damage, including accidental strafing of a school yard and a hospital. Approximately 87 Japanese were killed, including some women and children, and 151 seriously injured. Japanese propaganda used the civilian casualties to inflame public and military opinion, and was a significant factor in the resulting increase in war crimes and atrocities

perpetrated by the Japanese military (they had already been massively brutalizing civilians in China, but to that point in the war had exercised some degree of restraint against the U.S., such as not targeting civilians at Pearl Harbor and not bombing the naval hospital at Sangley Point in the Philippines, for example). From the Japanese perspective, it was now the U.S. who were “baby-killers” and they reacted accordingly.

One of the 16 aircraft diverted to an airfield in the Soviet Union near Vladivostok and the five aircrewmembers were interned for a year, before they were repatriated to the U.S. via a surreptitious NKVD (Soviet Secret Police) operation, so the Japanese would not discover the neutrality violation. (The Soviets kept the plane.) The other 15 aircraft, aided by an unexpected tail wind, actually reached the coast of China where the crews either bailed out, crash landed, or ditched off the coast. One aircrewman was killed while bailing out, and two drowned when their plane ditched in the water. Eight were subsequently captured by the Japanese. All were tried in a Japanese military court in occupied Shanghai, under a hastily concocted new Japanese law, which was made retroactive to the raid. Found guilty of bombing, strafing, and killing civilians, all eight were sentenced to death. Five had their sentences commuted to “life in prison” while the two pilots and another were executed by firing squad. When word of the executions reached the U.S., along with news of the Bataan Death March (which commenced a week before the Doolittle Raid,) U.S. public opinion, already inflamed by Pearl Harbor, hardened even more. So although the Doolittle raid boosted U.S. morale, it also contributed to the attitude on both sides that the war would be a vicious fight to the death, with “no quarter” being the rule, and in the U.S. that Japanese civilian deaths on a massive scale were acceptable.

In Japan, the result of the raid was a profound loss of “face” by senior army and navy commanders, especially Yamamoto, who became physically ill

and incapacitated upon hearing the news; his Chief of Staff, Admiral Matome Ugaki, had to direct the initial Japanese response, sending dozens of bombers and three carriers in a futile chase of the *Hornet* and *Enterprise*, who had made good their escape. The Japanese eventually figured out that the planes had come from a carrier, after analyzing all manner of outlandish alternative possibilities. Admiral Yamamoto did use the raid to steamroller any remaining opposition to his Midway Plan (which had been opposed both by the Army and the Navy General Staff), setting in motion what became a disaster for the Japanese. The Japanese Army, already used to killing large numbers of Chinese civilians as a matter of routine, embarked on a three-month campaign of retaliation against areas of China that had aided the escape of 69 surviving U.S. aircrewmembers. The Japanese devastated entire towns and villages, reportedly killing every man, woman, child, and farm animal, then poisoning wells, food stores, fields, and even deliberately spreading bacteriological agents such as anthrax, plague, and cholera, using their biological warfare unit, “Unit 731.” The devastation was so widespread that even some Japanese soldiers died from the plague. In a letter to President Roosevelt, Chinese Nationalist leader Chiang Kai Shek, noting that he had not been informed in advance of the raid, stated that 250,000 Chinese men, women, and children had been slaughtered, repeating the statement in case Roosevelt didn’t get the message. U.S. Army Air Force General Claire Chennault (of the “Flying Tigers”) also cited the number 250,000. The real number will never be known, but it certainly was in the many tens of thousands, and the Chinese paid an extremely high price to boost American morale. (Which doesn’t take away from the bravery of the aircrewmembers who flew the extremely dangerous mission: Doolittle received the Medal of Honor and a direct promotion to brigadier general—skipping colonel—and all the Raiders were awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross.)

After the raid, the press asked where the bombers had come from and Roosevelt responded "from our secret base in Shangri-La," a reference to a mythological Tibetan utopia in a very popular 1930's novel and movie *Lost Horizon*. The name Shangri-La was subsequently given to a new Essex-class carrier (CV-38), which took part in several campaigns in World War II, was at the Japanese surrender in Tokyo Bay and served through Vietnam.

(There are many accounts of the Doolittle Raid, but the one by Ian Toll in *Pacific Crucible* is a really good short read.)



Scene on the Enterprise's flight deck, 1 February. Note belts of .50-caliber ammunition being carried by the crewman in the foreground. The aircraft in the background are Douglas SBD-3 Dauntless scout/dive bombers (NH 50941).

H-004-5: Toughness— Aviation Machinist Mate 1st Class Bruno Peter Gaido

*H-Gram 004, [Attachment 5](#)
Samuel J. Cox, Director NHHC
29 March 2017*

On 1 February 1942, five Japanese twin-engine bombers made it through the USS *Enterprise* (CV-6) combat air patrol (fighters) defenses following the U.S. carrier raid on the Japanese-held Marshall Islands. All the bombers missed and turned away, except the badly damaged lead

plane, piloted by Lieutenant Kazuo Nakai, which turned back in an attempt to crash on the *Enterprise*. As the aircraft neared the ship and anti-aircraft fire seemed ineffective, Aviation Machinist Mate Third Class (AMM3/C) Bruno Gaido leaped out of the catwalk, climbed into the back seat of a parked SBD Dauntless dive bomber (his normal position as radioman-gunner when the plane was airborne), and swiveled the plane's aft twin .30 caliber machine guns and opened fire, standing while pouring accurate fire down into the low-flying bomber's cockpit, causing it to lose control. The bomber barely missed the flight deck, its wingtip cutting the tail off the SBD Gaido was in and spinning the parked aircraft. Gaido continued firing on the bomber throughout, until it crashed in the water on the opposite side of the

ship. Gaido then calmly grabbed the fire bottle from the SBD and extinguished a pool of flaming gasoline on the flight deck left over from the crashed bomber. Thereafter, he disappeared into the ship, worried that he would get in trouble for leaving his watch station. Vice Admiral William F. Halsey, the task group commander, ordered that the unidentified gunner be found. A search party eventually located Gaido and brought him to the bridge, whereupon Halsey spot-promoted him to First Class, as everyone who observed the event credited Gaido with keeping the *Enterprise* from being hit in the extremely close call.

Gaido already had a reputation on *Enterprise* for his mental and physical toughness. In June 1941, newly reported pilot Lieutenant Junior Grade Dusty Kleiss got into his SBD to make his first carrier landing, expecting to fly solo, only to find Gaido, who identified himself as Kleiss's radioman-gunner, sitting in the gunner's seat instead of the usual pile of sandbags for initial carrier qualification flights. Kleiss tried to talk Gaido into getting out of the aircraft for his own safety, but Gaido persisted, responding, "You got wings, don't ya?" Buoyed by Gaido's confidence, Kleiss made several perfect landings with Gaido as a passenger.

At the subsequent battle of Midway on 4 June 1942, Gaido was a gunner in an SBD piloted by Ensign Frank O'Flaherty, one of 28 planes that dive-bombed the Japanese carrier IJN *Kaga* (the bomb just missed, possibly because smoke and flames from four previous hits obscured the target). While returning to the *Enterprise* in a group of a six stragglers led by Lieutenant Charles Ware, the flight was jumped by six Japanese "Zero" fighters that broke away from Japanese carrier IJN *Hiryu*'s dive-bomber counterstrike that was heading toward the carrier USS *Yorktown* (CV-5). Ware had earlier improvised a tactic of turning into the attacking Japanese Zeros, and did so again, creating an arc with the trailing SBD's that enabled all rear seat gunners to concentrate their fire on the leading Zeros. Two Zeros were so

badly shot up they had to return to *Hiryu*; one ditched en route and the other barely made it to the carrier. Although it is impossible to tell which SBD gunners did the damage, given Gaido's previous history of accuracy, it is possible he did his fair share. The remaining four chastened Zeros broke off, but were unable to catch up with *Hiryu*'s dive bombers before they were intercepted by F-4F Wildcat fighters from the *Yorktown*, which shot down most of the undefended dive bombers (the seven bombers that got through scored three severe direct hits and two damaging near-misses on *Yorktown*, so every Japanese plane lost was critical to *Yorktown*'s survival at that point in the battle.)

Unfortunately, Gaido's plane had been holed in the wing during that or an earlier encounter with the Zeros, and was losing fuel. O'Flaherty had to ditch in the open sea. Of the other five SBD's, one was able to ditch near the *Yorktown* for rescue, but the other four, including Ware's, missed the U.S. carriers and disappeared without a trace into the Pacific. O'Flaherty and Gaido were picked up by the Japanese destroyer IJN *Makigumo*, interrogated and probably tortured. The Japanese claimed to have gotten useful information from them about the defenses of Midway Island, but the two provided nothing of value regarding the U.S. carriers. However, neither had been to Midway Island so neither had any way of knowing what was on the island (even the skipper of USS *Hornet*'s torpedo bomber squadron did not know that a detachment from his own squadron, which had been left behind in Norfolk to transition to the new TBF Avenger, had arrived on the island). My assessment is that O'Flaherty and Gaido, under torture, gave up plausible but phony information. Certainly everyone who knew Gaido adamantly believed that he would not have cracked. However, on 15 June 1942, the Japanese decided the two aircrewmembers were no longer of use. Weights were tied to both and they were thrown over the side to drown. Japanese accounts state that both met their end with stoic and dignified defiance.

Gaido's fate was not known by the U.S. until after the war. None of the responsible Japanese officers survived the war, so there was no war crime prosecution. Gaido was subsequently posthumously awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross.

(My thanks to Laura Orr, NHHC Hampton Roads Naval Museum, Deputy Education Director, for much of the research on Gaido.)