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# The Power of Portrayal: How the U.S. Media Portrayed the Doolittle Raid to the American Public

James Noah Seip

Gardner-Webb University, [jseip@gardner-webb.edu](mailto:jseip@gardner-webb.edu)

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# **The Power of Portrayal: How the U.S. Media Portrayed the Doolittle Raid to the American Public**

An Honors Thesis  
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The University Honors Program  
Gardner-Webb University  
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By

James Noah Seip

**Accepted by Honors Faculty**

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Dr. David Yelton, Thesis Advisor

---

Dr. Wilson Hawkins, Honors Director

---

Dr. Robert Bass, Honors Committee

---

Dr. Elizabeth Amato, Honors Committee

---

Dr. Angelina Smith, Honors Committee

---

Dr. Abby Garlock, Honors Committee

On April 18, 1942, Americans woke up to the thrilling news that American airmen had bombed the enemy capital of Tokyo, Japan. Americans all across the country were made aware of the bombing of Japan by multiple media sources at the time including newspapers, propaganda posters, newsreels, and movies. The ways in which these media outlets portrayed the American bombing of Japan would directly impact the perception of American citizens regarding the event. The bombing, eventually termed the Doolittle Raid after the general who led the mission, James Doolittle, immediately became a source of American propaganda for the U.S. media. "Propaganda" as defined by Paul Linebarger is "the planned use of any form of communication designed to affect the minds, emotions, and actions of a given group for a specific purpose."<sup>1</sup> The U.S. media intentionally exalted the Doolittle Raid as propaganda across every medium in the weeks and months after it was accomplished in 1942 and continued to use the Doolittle Raid to influence Americans as the war progressed until its end in 1945. Christian Mull and Matthew Wallin authors of *Propaganda: A Tool of Strategic Influence* state, "Propaganda can be and often is completely truthful information. This information, while truthful, is often presented selectively to highlight some facts while omitting others that may present a differing view of an issue."<sup>2</sup> The United States media outlets illustrate well Mull and Wallin's observation as they deliberately used aspects of the Doolittle Raid to present a carefully selected view of the event to the American public. This information poses the question: How exactly did the United States media use the Doolittle Raid to impact the perceptions of the American public? The United States media used the Doolittle Raid to counter public perceptions of Japanese success in early 1942 and to claim that America was seizing the initiative to change

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<sup>1</sup> Paul Linebarger, *Psychological Warfare* (NY: Dual, Sloan, and Pearce, 1948): 57.

<sup>2</sup> Christian Mull and Matthew Wallin. "Propaganda: A Tool of Strategic Influence." *American Security Project* (September 2013): 2.

the tide of the war against an evil and devious enemy. The media specifically accomplished this by portraying the raid as the beginning of an American offensive phase, as a morale strike against Japan, a revenge attack for previous losses in the Pacific, a demonstration of American airpower, and an illustration of Japanese cruelty.

The Doolittle Raid developed during the demoralizing days of the winter of 1941-42, and the string of Allied defeats at the hands of the Japanese. On December 7, 1941, America suffered its first defeat at the hands of the Japanese when the U.S. Pacific Fleet was crippled by the Japanese bombing of Pearl Harbor. After the assault on Pearl Harbor, the Japanese attacked and conquered numerous other U.S.-held territories in the Pacific including Guam, Wake Island, and the Philippines.<sup>3</sup> In addition, the Japanese also succeeded in conquering other Allied islands and territories including Hong Kong, Malaya, and Singapore.<sup>4</sup> Americans and Allied forces together were suffering defeat after defeat in the Pacific theater. A victory was desperately needed. Directly following these Japanese triumphs American President Franklin Roosevelt, “said he wanted to strike back at the Japanese at the earliest possible moment.”<sup>5</sup> Roosevelt further, “emphasized that he wanted a bombing raid on the home islands of Japan as soon as possible to bolster the morale of America and her allies.”<sup>6</sup> Roosevelt's words reveal that the Doolittle Raid's main purpose from its inception was to serve as a propaganda tool to elevate the morale of a disheartened American people.

The idea for a bombing raid by President Roosevelt would develop into the Doolittle Raid through the efforts of a number of key planners. President Roosevelt was the initiator who

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<sup>3</sup> Michael J. Lyons, *World War II: A Short History*, (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education Inc., 2010): 144.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid, 144.

<sup>5</sup> James Doolittle and Carroll V. Glines, *I Could Never be so Lucky Again*, (New York: Bantam books, 1992): 213.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid, 213.

originally called for the idea. A long list of men who made contributions to planning the raid exists, but to mention all of the planners and their individual roles would easily fill an entire book. Among the men were Army Chief of Staff General George Marshall, chief of Naval Operations Admiral Ernest King, Chief of Staff of the Army Air Forces General Henry Arnold, and General James Doolittle, an American aviator. All of these men worked jointly to plan the specifics of the raid.<sup>7</sup> Doolittle was responsible for selecting B-25 bombers as the aircraft to be used in the raid and later was appointed to command the mission.<sup>8</sup> Admiral King was responsible for suggesting that Navy aircraft carriers be used to transport the planes.<sup>9</sup> Captain Francis Low suggested to Admiral King that the planes take off directly from the carrier itself to bomb Tokyo.<sup>10</sup> All of the ideas these men contributed to the raid were to help it succeed.

Along with the planners of the raid 79 airmen volunteered for the mission without knowing what they were signing up for. As Doolittle recounts, “I...called all the men together, and told them that they would be training for an exceptionally dangerous mission. I wanted only volunteers...the entire operation was top secret and they were not even to discuss their guesses among themselves.”<sup>11</sup> These volunteers trained for the bombing of Japan without knowing that was their mission until they stepped aboard the aircraft carrier *U.S.S. Hornet* that would carry them to Japan. From the initial conception of the raid, the goal was to bomb the Japanese mainland. Eventually, through careful planning, the locations of Tokyo, Yokohama, Osaka, Kobe, and Nagoya were selected as targets.<sup>12</sup> Before the launch of the raid, Doolittle strictly

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<sup>7</sup> Doolittle, 213.

<sup>8</sup> Robert Kane, “The Doolittle Raid: 75 Years Later,” *Air and Space Power Journal* (2017): 72.

<sup>9</sup> Doolittle, 214.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid, 216.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid, 226.

<sup>12</sup> Ted Lawson and Robert Considine, *Thirty Seconds Over Tokyo* (New York: NY, Simon and Schuster Inc., 2022): 43.

commanded his men to only bomb military targets, “You are to bomb military targets only. There is nothing that would unite the Japanese nation more than to bomb the emperor’s home. It is not a military target! And you are to avoid hospitals, schools, and other nonmilitary targets.”<sup>13</sup> Doolittle’s command was carried out by the bombers as expertly as possible, though it was nearly impossible to avoid striking nonmilitary targets accidentally with the bombs. The bombers took off from the *U.S.S. Hornet* on April 18, 1942, flew to Japan, bombed their targets, and then either bailed out over China, crashed in the South China Sea, or landed in Russia. The actual results of the raid in terms of military damage were minimal. Unavoidably, however, the Doolittle Raid did cause Japanese civilian casualties. As author James Scott records of General Doolittle’s personal bombing run, “Doolittle’s attack killed two people and injured nineteen others...the attack partially destroyed six other buildings, which included a total of twenty homes.”<sup>14</sup> While there were civilian casualties, none of the civilians were killed on purpose, such deaths resulted from imperfect navigational bombsights. The bomber crews themselves experienced mixed fates following their bombing runs on Japan. *Time Magazine* sums up the fates of the men who participated in the raid, “Of the 80 men involved, three were killed on landing, five landed in Siberia and were interned by the Russians, and eight were captured in Japanese-held territory.”<sup>15</sup> Three of the eight men captured by the Japanese would be executed for the raid. One would die in captivity and the others would be rescued at the end of the war.

In terms of the raid’s effects, little physical damage was caused, but Japanese morale was shaken, and American morale was greatly elevated. The Office of Strategic Services claimed,

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<sup>13</sup> Doolittle, 246

<sup>14</sup> James Scott, *Target Tokyo: Jimmy Doolittle and the Raid that Avenged Pearl Harbor* (New York, NY., W.W. Norton and Company, 2015): 197.

<sup>15</sup> *Think Magazine’s Diary of the U.S. Participation in World War II*. (International Business Machines Corporation, 1950): 52.

“The air raid is reported to have shaken the Japanese because many of the common people were firmly convinced that, after all, Japan could not be successfully attacked.”<sup>16</sup> Likewise, Dr. Robert Kane, Director of History for Air University, Maxwell Alabama claims, “The Japanese leaders had encouraged a sense of invulnerability among the Japanese people. The Doolittle Raid shattered that perception.”<sup>17</sup> Kane also writes, “The psychological effect of the raid on the Japanese proved profound. Having failed to protect the home islands, Admiral Isoroku Yamamoto, Commander in Chief of the Combined Fleet and architect of the Pearl Harbor attack, regarded the raid as a personal defeat.”<sup>18</sup> Historians have even drawn connections between the Doolittle Raid and the Battle of Midway leading many to claim that the Doolittle Raid was a direct cause of the Japanese attack at Midway. As Kane claims, “The raid also confirmed the Japanese leaders’ decision eight days earlier to halt their advance into the Indian Ocean and toward India for a naval operation to extend their eastern defense line further east toward Hawaii and seize Midway Island.”<sup>19</sup> The attempt to seize Midway by the Japanese led to their defeat during the battle and the first major American victory in the Pacific.

As far as impacting American morale multiple historians, such as Dr. Kane, have concluded, “The most notable and immediate effect was the tremendous boost in national morale when Americans woke up the next day to newspaper headlines and radio journalists proclaiming, “US Bombs Tokyo.”<sup>20</sup> James Scott, author of *Target Tokyo: Jimmy Doolittle and the Raid that Avenged Pearl Harbor* similarly claims, “At home in the United States the mission would derail questions over the government’s failure to guard against Japanese aggression in the Pacific and

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<sup>16</sup> Scott, 315.

<sup>17</sup> Kane, 76.

<sup>18</sup> Jacob Neufeld, William T. Y’Blood, and Mary Lee Jefferson, *Pearl to V-J Day: A Symposium*. (Bethesda: Air Force History and Museums Program and the Air Force Historical Association, 2000): 54.

<sup>19</sup> Kane, 76.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

buoy the morale of a shell-shocked nation.”<sup>21</sup> These claims reveal that historians generally agree that the Doolittle Raid positively impacted American morale.

The propaganda that was used to boost American morale about the Doolittle Raid was, like all U.S. propaganda at the time, under certain restrictions and censorship. Gregory Gilbert author of *The Censored War: American Visual Experience During World War Two* observes,

Shortly after the bombing of Pearl Harbor in December of 1941, the American government impressed upon the media industry and corporate advertising the cooperative need to boost morale and enlist nationalist support for the war effort. Public opinion was shaped through an active campaign in which the social trauma of war, in particular, representations of death and destructive disorder, was erased from official news reports and other forms of mass media.<sup>22</sup>

As Gilbert states, the media was encouraged to shape public opinion by carefully selecting what they included and what they omitted in their publications. The media followed these guidelines concerning the subject of the Doolittle Raid and aimed to portray it in such a way as to uplift American morale. The basic themes of how this propaganda specifically portrayed the Doolittle Raid and its purported impacts are as the beginning of an American offensive phase, a morale strike against the Japanese, a revenge attack, a demonstration of American airpower, and an illustration of Japanese cruelty.

The U.S. media, in order to counter Japanese success and claim that America was seizing the initiative to change the tide of the war, developed a narrative claiming that the Doolittle Raid marked the beginning of an American offensive phase. President Roosevelt clearly intended this perception of enacting an offensive against the Japanese directly following the attack on Pearl

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<sup>21</sup> Scott, xiii.

<sup>22</sup> Gregory Gilbert. "View Magazine and the Mass Visual Culture of World War Two." *Arts* Vol. 9 (2020, No. 2): 1.



Harbor.<sup>23</sup> When the Raid was accomplished the U.S. media believed that this was the first of many offensives to come,

The most notable and immediate effect was the tremendous boost in national morale when Americans woke up the next day to newspaper headlines and radio journalists proclaiming “US Bombs Tokyo.” This was the first good news after four months of doom and gloom, from the surprise attack on Hawaii on 7 December to the surrender of about 12,000 American and 65,000 Filipino soldiers in the Bataan Peninsula to the Japanese. The raid came less than 10 days after the worst defeat in American history. It provided the first inkling of hope of eventual victory.<sup>24</sup>

Kane observes that the U.S. media in their headlines and radio announcements portrayed the Doolittle Raid as an offensive victory and provided hope to the American public that more victories would follow. The U.S. media through the Doolittle Raid proclaimed to the American public that Japan's string of successes in the Pacific was coming to an end and that America would now be seizing the offensive with the ultimate goal of winning the war in the Pacific. This proclamation can be seen in media outlets such as *The New York Times* Sunday, April 19, 1942 edition which blared the headline, “KOBE AND NAGOYA BOMBED, JAPANESE SAY: FIRE DAMAGE LAID TO 60 ‘AMERICAN’ PLANES; U.S. PLANES RAID RANGOON, CHINESE RETIRE.”<sup>25</sup> This newspaper headline immediately draws the reader's attention straight to the fact that Japan had been bombed by American planes. The headline also claims that the Japanese claim to have damaged sixty U.S. planes. This information is not accurate regarding the raid, but it demonstrates that the media the day after the raid occurred did not hesitate to inform the American public that Japan had been successfully bombed. In the same edition in a further article entitled “Washington Hails Report of Bombing: Raid on Japan Not

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<sup>23</sup> Doolittle, 213.

<sup>24</sup> Kane, 76.

<sup>25</sup> “Kobe and Nagoya Bombed, Japanese Say: Fire Damage Laid to 60 ‘American’ Planes, U.S. Planes Raid Rangoon, Chinese Retire,” *The New York Times*, April 19, 1942. Pg. 1.

Officially Confirmed, but Congress Sees Offensive Beginning," the media continued to announce the Raid.<sup>26</sup> Americans scanning through *The New York Times* newspaper on Sunday, April 19 would have seen this article title in bold letters and immediately, before even reading the contents of the article, would be informed of Congress's view on the bombing as the beginning of a phase of American offensives. The press at *The New York Times* purposefully crafted the title of this article to capture the attention of readers in an effort to portray the Doolittle Raid as the beginning of an American offensive phase.

The actual contents of the article flesh out the details of this probable American offensive phase, "Official silence was maintained here, but the members of Congress, voicing the feeling of those who have been on a fairly steady diet of bad news, asserted that the 'offensive is beginning,' and 'predicted bigger and heavier bombings at the base of Japan's power.'" <sup>27</sup> This article is blunt in its language. Americans were disheartened by continual news of defeats, but this newspaper article claims that Americans have just won a victory by attacking the Japanese mainland. The newspaper further claimed that the raid was a victory that, "caused jubilation in Washington."<sup>28</sup> The use of the word "jubilation" appeared to communicate the fact that the media portrayed the raid as immediately boosting the morale of the American government's leaders and also that they foresaw it as the first of many victories to come. Captain Ted Lawson, a pilot in the Doolittle Raid, wrote in his eye-witness account *Thirty Seconds Over Tokyo*, "Washington broadcasts said it was our answer to Pearl Harbor and Bataan [An island in which U.S. forces were defeated by Japan and was the largest surrender of American troops in history.] and "the

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<sup>26</sup> "Washington Hails Report of Bombing: Raid on Japan Not Officially Confirmed, but Congress Sees Offensive Beginning," *The New York Times*, April 19, 1942, Pg. 38..

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

beginning of a great offensive.”<sup>29</sup> Lawson’s observation supports the conclusion that the U.S. media portrayed Washington as claiming that the American offensive was beginning. Even other Allied nations, such as China were reported as drawing the same conclusion from the raid on Japan. *The New York Times* reported, in an article titled: “Chinese Elated at Word of Raids On Japan; Chungking Celebrates; Cheers U.S. Strength” that Chinese War Minister Ho Ying-chin stated, “That the Allied air forces are now about to take the offensive is evidenced by the American air raids on the Japanese naval and air base in the Philippines and today’s attacks on Japan.”<sup>30</sup> This article demonstrates that the Chinese confirmed the U.S. claim that more offensives would follow the Doolittle Raid. The U.S. media proudly reported that the Chinese confirmed the beginning of an American offensive to claim to U.S. citizens that the offensive was truly about to begin. Including reports from both Washington and China, the U.S. media was adamant in portraying to the American public that the Doolittle Raid marked the beginning of the end of the Japanese string of victories and the beginning of an American offensive phase aimed at eventual Allied victory in the Pacific theatre.

In addition to claiming broadly that the U.S. would begin more offensives, the U.S. media claimed that America would likely implement a particular type of offensive against Japan in the near future: further bombing raids. *The New York Times* produced a newspaper with an article titled: “Japan Exhorting People to be Firm.”<sup>31</sup> The article read, “Japanese leaders yesterday warned their people to prepare for more attacks from the United States similar to the bombing raids last Saturday in which, according to the Imperial High Command, Tokyo, Yokohama,

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<sup>29</sup> Lawson, 210.

<sup>30</sup> Harrison Forman, “Chinese Elated at Word of Raids on Japan; Chungking Celebrates; Cheers U.S. Strength,” *New York Times*, April 19, 1942.

<sup>31</sup> “Japan Exhorting People to be Firm,” *The New York Times*, April 23, 1942, Pg. 10.

Kobe and industrial Nagoya were hit.”<sup>32</sup> The media's claim that Japanese leaders were urging their citizens to prepare for more attacks by the United States portrayed to the American public that America was planning to launch more bombing raids. *The New York Times* seized the opportunity to report this rumor believing it confirmed their portrayal the day before that the Japanese had now been placed on the defensive and America was beginning its offensive phase. This portrayal was nationwide as demonstrated by headlines in newspapers across the U.S. *The Detroit Evening Times* in their June 28, 1942 edition claimed somewhat ecstatically, “They carefully resisted the temptation to bomb the Imperial Palace. Excuse, please- Hirohito! Message to Hirohito: THEY’RE COMING BACK!”<sup>33</sup> Using informal language, the writers of this newspaper portray themselves as confident that Americans would return to bomb Japan again. This portrayal was made even more explicit since American airmen had the opportunity to bomb the emperor's palace. General Doolittle, however, famously ordered his men not to bomb the Japanese imperial palace during the raid.<sup>34</sup> This command was obediently carried out. Yet, newspapers such as *The Detroit Times* portrayed the exclusion of bombing the emperor’s palace as a taunt against the Japanese, as in the article above, claiming that the Americans would return because nothing prevented them from doing so.

Another local newspaper, *The Waterbury Democrat* on May 22, 1942, employed a subtle, but extremely effective tactic to portray the Doolittle Raid as the first of many bombing raids to come. In this newspaper, a photograph is included, which depicts General James Doolittle in front of a propaganda poster with the words, “Come to Tokyo for free. All expenses paid” and

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<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

<sup>33</sup> “American Bombers Found Their Mark,” *The Detroit Evening Times*, June 28, 1942, Pg. 4.

<sup>34</sup> “Doolittle Does Plenty,” *The Waterbury Democrat*, May 22, 1942, Pg. 12.

depicts a man in aviation gear looking bravely onward into the sky<sup>35</sup> (See Figure 1). The message of this poster is clear: join the U.S. Army Air Corps because the Americans are returning to bomb Japan. Likewise, *The Pittsburgh Press* on April 20 claimed, “Far from winning the war, we have just begun to fight. But we have begun.”<sup>36</sup> The same newspaper claimed that “If we can do it once, we can do it again- and again.”<sup>37</sup> Both of these lines refer specifically to America launching another bombing raid against Japan. All of these claims were made by the U.S. media mainly in early 1942 because the Doolittle Raid was interpreted as the first sign that eventual American victory in the Pacific theatre was possible. As Dr. Kane observes, “It provided the first inkling of hope of eventual victory.”<sup>38</sup> After the American victory at Midway and the many American victories that followed, media outlets such as newspapers and propaganda posters hardly referred to the Doolittle Raid. One media outlet, however, continued to use the Doolittle Raid as a motivator for future American offensives in the later years of the war, particularly in 1944. The film *The Purple Heart* produced in 1944 sought to continue to portray to Americans that ultimate victory over the Japanese was possible as a result of the Doolittle Raid. The movie primarily accomplishes this portrayal with the speech of the fictional character of Captain Harvey Ross, who is meant to be a representation of one of the real-life Doolittle Raiders captured by Japan. In the movie as the men are being tried in a Japanese court and about to be sentenced to death by the Japanese judges Captain Ross passionately gives a speech in which he states,

You can kill us. All or part of us. But if you think that's going to...stop them from sending other flyers to bomb you. You're wrong. Dead wrong. They'll come by night, and they'll come by day, thousands of them. They'll blacken your skies and

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<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

<sup>36</sup> Scott, 305.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid, 323.

<sup>38</sup> Kane, 76.

burn your cities to the ground and make you get down on your knees and beg for mercy. This is your war. You wanted it. You asked for it. You started it. And now you are going to get it and it won't be finished until your dirty little empire is wiped off the face of the earth.<sup>39</sup>

These passionate words delivered by the character of Captain Ross portray the Doolittle Raid as the first of many lethal attacks to come from the Americans. Ross especially highlights the fact that America will not cease its offensives both air and land-based until Japan is defeated. Ross's words imply that a plethora of offensives are to come from America to totally defeat the Japanese. All of these portrayals by newspapers, propaganda posters, and films boldly proclaimed to Americans that the Japanese string of successful offensives was over and that the American offensive phase aimed at ultimate victory had begun.

Immediately after receiving news of the raid upon Japan in April of 1942, the U.S. media also seized the opportunity to portray the raid as having struck a blow to Japanese morale. This allowed the media to claim that Japanese success in the Pacific was over and that America, instead of being the one whose morale was crushed, was now the one delivering a morale-crushing blow to the enemy. This portrayal began with the media searching for the answer to the question of where the American planes came from to bomb Tokyo. When reporters from the media asked President Roosevelt about this question the only answer they received was that the American bombers had come from a base called Shangri-La.<sup>40</sup> Shangri-La was "a reference to a mythological Tibetan utopia in a very popular 1930's novel and movie *Lost Horizon*."<sup>41</sup> The use of a fictional base termed Shangri-La was used for two reasons by President Roosevelt. The first was to keep the fact secret that a U.S. aircraft carrier had been used to transport the typically

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<sup>39</sup> *The Purple Heart*, directed by Lewis Milestone (Twentieth Century Fox Film Corporation, 1944): DVD. 01:30:59.

<sup>40</sup> Doolittle, 259.

<sup>41</sup> Samuel Cox, *H-004-4: The Doolittle Raid- "Shangri-La."* 2017, Naval History and Heritage Command.

land-based bombers within miles of Japan a secret from the Japanese. The second was to taunt the Japanese. The U.S. media not knowing about the first reason in early 1942 since those details had not been revealed to the public picked up on the second and portrayed it through a variety of mediums. The newspaper *The Saint Louis Star-Times* provides an example of this. Their May 20, 1942, edition stated about Shangri-La, "It is one of the most provocative secrets of the war and not the least interested to learn the answer are the Japs."<sup>42</sup> The use of the word "provocative" in this sentence refers to the annoyance the Japanese were experiencing as a result of not knowing the base from which they had been bombed. Director of Naval History Samuel Cox observes that the Japanese were so annoyed at not knowing where the American bombers came from that they analyzed "all manner of outlandish alternative possibilities."<sup>43</sup> In other words, Cox observes that the Japanese were desperate to uncover the secret base from which the Americans were able to bomb their homeland. As a direct result of the American taunt of a secret base, the Japanese focused on their apparent claim that the American bombers had only struck at cultural and civilian targets. Yet, the U.S. media such as *The New York Times* focused on this claim as just another way in which American airmen had affected the morale of Japan. For instance, one article on April 19 of *The New York Times* reports that the Japanese press stated, "This inhuman attack on these cultural establishments and on residential districts is causing widespread indignation among the populace."<sup>44</sup> The use of the term "indignation" here is drawn out by *The New York Times* to offer an ironic picture. Months earlier in December of 1941, the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor and caused Americans indignation.<sup>45</sup> Now, in April of 1942, the

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<sup>42</sup> "Doolittle May Repeat Attack," *Saint Louis Star-Times*, May 20, 1942.

<sup>43</sup> Cox.

<sup>44</sup> "Damage is 'Light,' Their Public 'Angry,' Japanese Say Raiders Hit Schools, Hospitals, Not War Objectives, No Confirmation of the Tokyo Radio Report is Given in Washington, *The New York Times*, April 18, 1942, Pg. 1.

<sup>45</sup> Kane, 76.

Americans bombed Japan and caused the Japanese indignation. The Japanese began the war against America in December of 1941 and in April of 1942 newspapers proudly portrayed the Japanese as being aggravated at the result of America striking back. *The New York Times* portrayed the Raid with the use of such carefully selected language to cause American readers to realize that the Japanese were afraid.

The U.S. media did not specifically confirm that the Doolittle raiders hit civilian targets only that the Japanese claimed that they did. The U.S. media did, however, confirm that the raiders hit military targets. The use of newsreels was one medium the U.S. media used to confirm the news that American raiders struck military targets during the Doolittle Raid. Newsreels were "shown at movie theaters before feature films, were one of the most common ways to spread news during WWII."<sup>46</sup> The United News newsreels in particular tended to present "information with a propaganda-type narration."<sup>47</sup> In 1943 one United News newsreel stated regarding the raid,

Taking the gale in its teeth, each bomber sets its course for carefully prearranged military objectives in Japan, a course that will put them over Tokyo at high noon in broad daylight. The Yokosuka Naval base, ablaze. Arms plants, railyards, and oil refineries smashed by the raiders in Tokyo, Yokohama, Kobe, and Osaka.<sup>48</sup>

In this newsreel, the U.S. media highlights the military targets struck by the Doolittle Raiders including arms plants, railyards, and oil refineries. It also points out the fact that this raid was performed in broad daylight, which makes the Japanese defenses appear unprepared and caught entirely off-guard. While the Doolittle Raid did little physical damage to the military targets the

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<sup>46</sup> Chucik. "Commemorating the Doolittle Raid." *The Unwritten Record* (National Archives, 2017): 1.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

<sup>48</sup> *Carrier Revealed as Airbase for Tokyo*. 1943, United News. <https://www.britannica.com/video/225008/Doolittle-Raid-1943-World-War-II>. Retrieved from the National Archives. 00:03:03.



newsreel observes that the raid, "did much to shake the complacency of the Japanese warlords."<sup>49</sup> The Japanese believed they were invincible and that they could attack without being attacked. The Japanese leaders specifically told their people this. Kane observes that "Japan had not been attacked by outsiders since the thirteenth century... Thus, Japanese leaders had encouraged a sense of invulnerability among the Japanese people."<sup>50</sup> The U.S. media proudly boasted that the Americans shattered this perception of Japanese invulnerability stating that the Doolittle Raid was a direct hit against the morale of Japan. *The New York Times* further confirmed this point when it reported on the constant contradictions in the Japanese newsfeed. One newspaper from *The New York Times* on April 18 1942, the day of the Doolittle Raid, reads, "The Japanese radio strangely denied today that three American planes had bombed Tokyo. It was strange because the Tokyo radio went to great lengths to deny something that apparently nobody had reported. As far as could be determined Reuter had never reported the bombing of Tokyo."<sup>51</sup> On the same day during which Japan was bombed Japanese radios and news sources reported the bombing, yet as *The New York Times* reports some Japanese news sources were either directed to deny that the bombing happened or attempted to deny the bombing because of the fear that such news would directly strike at the morale of the Japanese public. In addressing this inconsistency among the Japanese, *The New York Times* portrayed the Japanese as flustered and in a state of confusion directly caused by the raid on Tokyo.

Along with the depiction of the Japanese as being flustered the U.S. media reported that Japanese leaders were preparing Japan for more attacks, "The United Press reported that the Japanese Government had broadcast a warning to the people to prepare for "further attacks" by

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<sup>49</sup> Ibid. 00:04:10.

<sup>50</sup> Kane, 76.

<sup>51</sup> "Japanese Report Bombing of Tokyo," *The New York Times*, April 18, 1942, Pg. 3.

United Nations' planes, adding that the empire had been brought into the war zone.”<sup>52</sup> The American Press reported that the Japanese were afraid of another bombing by the U.S. and that they reasonably alerted their citizens to the possibility of another attack. This report portrays the Japanese as a nation frightened that they will be attacked again. *The New York Times* reports further on April 19, 1942 that the Japanese Press stated, “Japan must be prepared for more raids “as long as the United States possesses aircraft carriers.”<sup>53</sup> Including this information in American newspapers portrays the Japanese as directly frightened of more bombing raids by the U.S. The Japanese press even admitted that the Japanese emperor was affected by the raid, “Japan’s Premier, Navy Minister and Foreign Minister paid a personal call on Emperor Hirohito after 4 P.M., Tokyo time, today to report on the air raid and to inquire after the Emperor’s well-being. The broadcast said that the trio found the Emperor ‘composed as usual but undoubtedly he was greatly concerned over the incident.’”<sup>54</sup> The phrase “greatly concerned” suggests that Emperor Hirohito along with his citizens were affected by the bombing raid and were also worried about future attacks by the Americans. American newspapers eagerly portrayed the Japanese as frightened in order to convey to the American public the effectiveness of the Doolittle Raid showing both that the Japanese success in the war was coming to an end and that American success was beginning. One historian sums up the Doolittle Raid, by saying “Although material results of the raid are trivial, psychological effect is profound. The heart of the Empire of the Rising Sun is not, as the Japanese have believed, invulnerable.”<sup>55</sup> The Japanese belief that they were invincible to enemy attack was crippled by the Doolittle Raid and the media directly

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<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

<sup>53</sup> “Kobe and Nagoya Raided, Tokyo Says,” *The New York Times*, April 19, 1942, Pg. 38.

<sup>54</sup> “Hirohito Concerned,” *The New York Times*, April 19, 1942, Pg. 38.

<sup>55</sup> Arnoldo, Mondadori, *2194 Days of War: An Illustrated Chronology of the Second World War*. (New York, NY: Windward, 1950): 235.

seized the opportunity to portray Japanese morale as having declined. Another newsreel produced by Castle Films in the year of the raid (1942) stated while showing footage of Japanese air raid drills, "for which they assured the emperor and the people of Japan would never be experienced."<sup>56</sup> The footage in the newsreel combined with the words above demonstrate that the U.S. media portrayed the Japanese people as believing that they were invincible and that they would never have to employ an actual air raid procedure. The Doolittle Raid both shattered that belief and forced the Japanese to confront the reality that more air raids could come in the future.

Doolittle Raider Ted Lawson records, "The results of the Doolittle Raid are still evident in Japan. They are stamped into the daily living habits of the Japanese people. Where before they imagined themselves safe from aerial aggression, they now search the skies each morning and each night."<sup>57</sup> Lawson's words reveal that the Japanese were shocked and traumatically affected by the Doolittle Raid. The truth of the media's portrayal can be seen in the reactions of the Japanese leaders. As Cox describes, "In Japan, the result was a profound loss of 'face' by senior army and navy commanders, especially Yamamoto, who became physically ill and incapacitated upon hearing the news."<sup>58</sup> The reaction of the Japanese leaders, especially Yamamoto, reveals that the people of Japan were negatively affected by the Doolittle Raid. In addition, the Japanese were still reeling from the effects of the Doolittle Raid months later when they engaged in the Battle of Midway. Kane observes that the Japanese "pulled back four front line fighter squadrons to defend the home islands from another American attack."<sup>59</sup> These squadrons were shifted back to Japan to protect from another possible U.S. bombing raid revealing that the Japanese were

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<sup>56</sup> *Yanks Bomb Tokyo*. Castle Films, 1942, <https://archive.org/details/gov.fdr.227>. 00:06:15.

<sup>57</sup> Lawson, 261.

<sup>58</sup> Cox.

<sup>59</sup> Kane, 76.

concerned about their homeland at the time of the Battle of Midway. American media sources quickly portrayed Midway as a battle caused in part by the events of the Doolittle Raid. Castle Films reported, "The loss of face by Tokyo may well have driven the Japs into the disastrous Midway expedition and its staggering losses of ships and men."<sup>60</sup> Kane confirms this portrayal by observing "The raid also confirmed the Japanese leaders' decision eight days earlier to halt their advance into the Indian Ocean and toward India for a naval operation to extend their eastern defense line further east toward Hawaii and seize Midway Island."<sup>61</sup> Likewise, Cox observes that the Doolittle Raid allowed Admiral Yamamoto to dissolve "any 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."<sup>62</sup> Coverage of the Doolittle Raid by the U.S. media decreased heavily after June of 1942 with the victory at Midway stealing the spotlight. Months and years later, however, in newsreels such as the one from Castle Films released towards the end of 1942, the U.S. media portrayed the Doolittle Raid as a catalyst that led to the great American victory and morale-crushing Japanese defeat at Midway. Ultimately, portraying the Raid as crushing the morale of the Japanese communicated to the American public that the Japanese taunts of invincibility and strength were false showing that America could strike against the Japanese and had the strength to turn the tide of the war. Thus, portraying Japanese morale as in decline uplifted the morale of American citizens.

While crushing the morale of the Japanese lifted the spirits of Americans the U.S. media decided to go a step further and also portray the Doolittle Raid as a revenge attack. Following the Japanese attack upon Pearl Harbor and the multiple American losses in the Pacific theatre, the

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<sup>60</sup> *Yanks Bomb Tokyo*. 00:06:44.

<sup>61</sup> Kane, 76.

<sup>62</sup> Cox.

American public was infuriated with the Japanese and desperately wanted to strike back against them. The U.S. media, after receiving the first news of the bombing of Japan seized upon the opportunity to portray the bombing as the revenge attack Americans had been anxiously anticipating. Portraying the Doolittle Raid as a revenge attack demonstrated to the American public that American success was possible even against a foe who had been constantly winning in the Pacific theatre. Newspapers such as *The Detroit Evening Times* called the bombs dropped by the American airmen “destructive remembrances of Pearl Harbor.”<sup>63</sup> Doing so emphasized symbolically that the bombs were being dropped as revenge for those dropped on Pearl Harbor. *The New York Tribune* in a caricature cartoon titled "Some of His Own Medicine" depicted a series of bombs falling in the sky where an angry-looking sun labeled "Japan" watches<sup>64</sup> (see Figure 2). The bombs in this cartoon are labeled "USA" along with "Remember Pearl Harbor Brand."<sup>65</sup> They also have tags attached to their tails labeled "Tokyo."<sup>66</sup> This political cartoon bluntly portrays the bombs of the American planes as destructive remembrances of Pearl Harbor being dropped revengefully upon a furious Japan. In this way, the cartoon displays how the U.S. media portrayed the Doolittle Raid as a revenge attack for the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. Along the same lines, *The New York Times* claimed in an article titled "Japanese Report Bombing of Tokyo,"

The laconic comment of Lieut. Col. John Hubert Davies, participant in the Philippine bombings, that that action had “cut down the score,” was regarded as typical of American airmen in the Pacific to drive home to the Japanese that their attack on Pearl Harbor and their merciless pounding of the besieged American troops in the Philippines would not go unavenged. A raid on Tokyo, citadel of

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<sup>63</sup> “American Bombers Found Their Mark,” *The Detroit Evening Times*, June 28, 1942, Pg. 2.

<sup>64</sup> "Some of His Own Medicine," *The New York Tribune*.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid.

Japanese military arrogance, would, in the minds of all American fighting men in the Pacific, go a long way toward further “cutting down” of the score.<sup>67</sup>

According to this newspaper, the media portrayed Americans as viewing the bombings against Japan as revenge attacks for the various American losses suffered in the Pacific. The excerpt from *The New York Times* above demonstrates that newspapers portrayed the raid to the American public as being viewed by American fighting men as an attack that ‘cut down the score’ for American losses. Meaning that America was now paying Japan back for all the losses it had inflicted upon the American Army. This portrayal directly showed the American people that Japanese successes were now on the path to being matched by American successes. *The Los Angeles Times* ran an article that said of the Doolittle Raid, “Consider this another installment in our debt to her.”<sup>68</sup> “Her” in this case is Japan. The American newspaper press portrayed the Doolittle Raid as paying America's debt to Japan for Japanese victories in the Pacific, especially Pearl Harbor. *The Associated Press*, likewise, portrayed the Doolittle Raid as a revenge attack by calling it, “a balm for the wounds of Pearl Harbor and Bataan.”<sup>69</sup> Depicting the analogy of America as a wounded nation and Japan as its attacker, the *Associated Press* saw the Doolittle Raid as a way to repay and also repair the wounds inflicted by Japan.

In a political cartoon featured in *The New York World Telegram* the Doolittle Raid is again portrayed as a revenge attack for the Japanese bombing of Pearl Harbor. In this cartoon titled “A Dose of His Own Medicine” an arm labeled “Allied Air Arm” is depicted as choking a monkey-like figure whose military cap reads “Tokyo”<sup>70</sup> (See Figure 3). A second Allied hand is depicted as forcibly spooning a series of bombs into the monkey-like figure's throat and a caption

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<sup>67</sup> “Japanese Report Bombing of Tokyo,” *The New York Times* April 18, 1942. Pg. 3.

<sup>68</sup> Scott, 324.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid.

<sup>70</sup> “A Dose of His Own Medicine,” *The New York World Telegram*.

next to the arm reads, "You can dish it out. Now let's see you take it!"<sup>71</sup> The phrase "You can dish it out" is a reference to the bombs dropped by the Japanese upon Pearl Harbor. The image of the Allies spooning bombs into the Japanese figure's mouth is representational of the bombs dropped upon Japan during the Doolittle Raid. Similarly, this portrayal continued in 1944 with the movie *Thirty Seconds Over Tokyo* in which an announcement from *The Hornet* proclaims as the craft nears Japan,

I think you might like to know that the army personnel on the Hornet are going to bomb Japan. We of the navy are going to take them in as close to the enemy as possible. This is a chance for all of us to give the Japs a dose of their own medicine. It's an Army Navy show.<sup>72</sup>

The announcement that the men are going to give the Japanese "a dose of their own medicine," like the cartoon, portrays the Doolittle Raid as a revenge attack against the Japanese. Such language portrays the raid as an evening of the score by America. Thus, newspapers, political cartoons, and the movie *Thirty Seconds Over Tokyo* serve as further examples of how the U.S. Media portrayed the Doolittle Raid as a revenge attack for Pearl Harbor.

The men involved in the Doolittle Raid itself contributed to the media's portrayal of the raid being a revenge attack. This can be seen in a newsreel produced in 1942 by Castle Films. In this film, footage is shown of U.S. Navy Captain Marc Mitscher attaching his old medals, which were given to him by the Japanese, onto the bombs to be dropped by Doolittle and his men.<sup>73</sup> This footage is shown and the narrator proudly announces it to show that the Japanese are the enemies of America and American men are going to strike back at them for their unannounced bombing of Pearl Harbor. Another newsreel by United News released in 1943 and titled *Carrier*

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<sup>71</sup> Ibid.

<sup>72</sup> *Thirty Seconds Over Tokyo*, directed by Mervyn LeRoy (Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, Lowe's Inc., 1944): DVD. 00:57:52.

<sup>73</sup> *Yanks Bomb Tokyo*. 00:01:12.

*Revealed as Air Base for Raid on Tokyo* also highlighted the pinning of medals to the bombs. This newsreel further noted that the medals were previously given to the American men for "humanitarian aid to the Japanese people."<sup>74</sup> By including this footage and highlighting the pinning of the medals to the bombs the U.S. media is directly attempting to portray the Doolittle Raid as an American attack of revenge against the Japanese. In addition, to showing the medals, the narrator of the Castle Films newsreel triumphantly states the Doolittle Raid was "America's answer to treachery."<sup>75</sup> "Treachery" refers to the bombing of Pearl Harbor. It can be observed from this line of the newsreel that the media portrayed the raid as a revenge attack for Japan's previous attacks against the U.S. specifically Pearl Harbor. In addition, footage of the American planes taking off from the aircraft carrier *The Hornet* is shown and the narrator states, "These historic pictures round out the electrifying news of Tokyo's first taste of American vengeance in April 1942."<sup>76</sup> The use of the words "American vengeance" accompanied by the footage of the planes taking off to bomb Japan demonstrates that the media attempted to portray the raid as an American revenge attack against Japan. Captain Ted Lawson records that when he first heard about how the raid he had participated in was being portrayed to the American public, "Washington broadcasts said it was our answer to Pearl Harbor and Bataan and "the beginning of a great offensive."<sup>77</sup> Eager to boost American morale and receive a positive reaction the U.S. media deliberately portrayed the Doolittle Raid as a revenge attack against the Japanese.

With America having suffered multiple defeats in the Pacific beginning with Pearl Harbor and prior to the Doolittle Raid, Bataan, it appeared to the American public that the

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<sup>74</sup> *Carrier Revealed*. 00:00:52.

<sup>75</sup> *Yanks Bomb Tokyo* 00:04:47.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid*, 00:05:04.

<sup>77</sup> Lawson, 210



Japanese war machine was both stronger and more effective than the U.S.'s. The success of the Doolittle Raid was seen as a spectacular feat of American airpower with claims emerging that it was "the greatest surprise raid in the history of aerial warfare."<sup>78</sup> The U.S. media intentionally used the Doolittle Raid to portray to the American public that although the Japanese had an effective war machine so did America. The media even portrayed that as a result of the Doolittle Raid American airpower was strong enough to change the tide of the war in America's favor. For example, *The New York Times* on May 20, 1942 stated,

President Roosevelt said that the volunteer bombing group had successfully carried out "a highly destructive raid on the Japanese mainland," and General Doolittle, who returned to the United States only today from an undisclosed landing place, gave the first definite details of the damage wrought by the American bombers, which dropped their missiles from the extremely low altitude of 1,500 feet.<sup>79</sup>

This excerpt reveals that the media claimed that the Doolittle Raid was successful in completing its objectives. The same newspaper claims later on in the article, "After the ceremony in the White House the War Department issued the following statement by General Doolittle: "The success of the recent air raid on Japan exceeded our most optimistic expectation."<sup>80</sup> *The New York Times* in this article portrayed the raid as a success by using language such as "highly destructive" and "success." Americans while reading this would be led to believe in the raid's overall success and would view it as a daring feat of American military strength. A newspaper titled *The Detroit Evening Times* included this claim within one of its articles, "Nippon had even boasted that it couldn't be bombed- successfully. Jimmy Doolittle- begging the Brigadier's pardon- proved otherwise."<sup>81</sup> In this newspaper, the media claimed that Japan had been

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<sup>78</sup> *Yanks Bomb Tokyo*, 00:02:06.

<sup>79</sup> W.H. Lawrence, "Airman Decorated: Gets Medal of Honor from Roosevelt- 79 Receive the D.S.C.," *The New York Times* May 20, 1942, Pg. 1.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid*, Pg. 4

<sup>81</sup> "American Bombers Found Their Mark," *The Detroit Evening Times*, June 28, 1942, Pg. 2.

successfully bombed. The use of the term “success” across multiple American newspapers such as the ones mentioned above reveals that the U.S. media portrayed the raid as a success to the American public. Along the same lines, United News claimed that the raid was the "dramatic saga of a combined Army-Navy mission that brought panic to Japan and stirred the world for its brilliance and daring."<sup>82</sup> Portraying the raid as a success also meant that the media was portraying the raid as an example of American airpower. Specifically, attempting to demonstrate that America can plan and successfully execute a direct attack against the Japanese homeland with considerable results.

The effective bombing of military targets was a frequent topic in the U.S. media claiming that American airpower was sophisticated enough to bomb military objectives successfully. Due to the White House and War Department not releasing any information or even confirming the raid for weeks after it was conducted, the U.S. media relied upon Japanese reports for their initial information and news in the early days of April 1942. As a result, many of the early media sources from April 18 to early May portrayed the raid as bombing civilian targets such as schools and hospitals. For instance, *The New York Times* stated, “Damage is ‘light’. Japanese say raiders hit schools, hospitals, not war objectives. THEIR PUBLIC ‘ANGRY’. No confirmation of the Tokyo Radio Report is given in Washington.”<sup>83</sup> In the same newspaper, they reported, “Invading planes failed to cause any damage on military establishments, although casualties in the schools and hospitals were as yet unknown.”<sup>84</sup> A day later *The New York Times* stated similarly, “Tokyo Adds Detail Insists Raids on 4 Cities Hit No War Targets in Two-Hour Assault.”<sup>85</sup> On May 20,

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<sup>82</sup> *Carrier Revealed*, 00:00:31.

<sup>83</sup> “Damage is Light,” *New York Times*, April 18, 1942, Pg. 1.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid

however, when the White House revealed to the public that the raid was led by General James Doolittle the media changed their news about the Raid to instead read, “Doolittle, Leader of Raid on Japan, says Navy yard, plane plant were hit.”<sup>86</sup> After Doolittle gave his speech at the White House revealing details of the raid the American media ceased to mention anything other than the military targets hit by the raiders. Any prior mention of schools, hospitals, and civilians being bombed was seemingly forgotten. In fact, the media even boasted on and after May 20 that the Americans strictly bombed military targets and intentionally avoided bombing non-military targets such as the Imperial Palace. This shift in reporting only on military targets was a result of the attempt to make America appear as a heroic country capable of advanced technological feats such as precision bombing. Gregory Gilbert author of “View Magazine and the Mass Visual Culture of World War II” observes,

Visual reportage on the war and propagandistic advertising focused on the organizational efficiency of U.S. military operations and the superiority of American industries to create scientifically advanced forms of weaponry. An effective element of morale culture was preserving illusions of rational planning and order through a misplaced faith in the power of military technology. Precision bombing was a major trope within the government’s arsenal of visual propaganda.<sup>87</sup>

Gilbert’s observation that the media utilized precision bombing as a way to demonstrate the effectiveness of American technology applies to the coverage of the Doolittle Raid. Media outlets all across the country only focused on the military targets struck by the Doolittle bombers and proclaimed that this was a feat of American airpower. One newspaper, *The Philadelphia Inquirer* stated, “Due to the low altitude at which the bombing was done...extreme care had to

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<sup>86</sup> “Doolittle Leader of Raid on Japan, Says Navy Yard, Plane Plant Were Hit,” *The New York Times*, May 20, 1942, Pg. 1.

<sup>87</sup> Gilbert, 4.

be exercised to avoid non-military targets.”<sup>88</sup> *The Saint Louis-Star Times* also claimed that the Doolittle Raid, “left a wake of death and destruction among warships, airplane factories and other military objectives on April 18.”<sup>89</sup> A newsreel by Castle Films in 1942 included an interview of two of the Doolittle raiders who upon returning to the U.S. claimed,

My target, my first target, was a tank factory in the south of Tokyo. My alternative targets being an oil storage tank and a railroad yard. We were fortunate in getting through the anti-aircraft and reaching our number one target, dropped the entire load on this tank factory and had the satisfaction of seeing two of the bombs score direct hits.<sup>90</sup>

These words presented by the men who took part in the raid and used by the media portray the raid as though it only struck military targets. This report gives the impression that only military targets were bombed in the raid. *The New York Times* further promulgated this portrayal stating, “Doolittle said extreme care was taken to avoid non-military targets.”<sup>91</sup> And, “I gave specific instructions not to bomb the palace, but there would have been no difficulty in bombing it had we chosen to do so.”<sup>92</sup> Thus, the American media after May 20, 1942 quickly shifted their portrayal from the Japanese reports that only non-military targets were hit to the American reports that only military targets were hit. They would continue this portrayal until the end of the war. An example of this can be seen from *The Purple Heart* which was released in 1944. In this film a Doolittle raider on trial denies that he and his men bombed non-military targets, “This man is a liar. Sure, we told him we hit our targets, but they weren't hospitals, temples, or schools. They were oil storage centers, airports, and shipyards. That's what we hit and that's what we told

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<sup>88</sup> William Murphy Jr. “Doolittle Tells How Bombs Blasted Japan; No U.S. Planes Lost,” *Philadelphia Inquirer*, May 20, 1942, Pg. 2.

<sup>89</sup> “Doolittle May Repeat Attack, Officials Say,” *Saint Louis-Star*, May 20, 1942.

<sup>90</sup> *Yanks Bomb Tokyo*, 00:08:32.

<sup>91</sup> “Airman Decorated,” *The New York Times*, May 20, 1942, Pg. 4.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid.

him."<sup>93</sup> This film reveals that even in 1944 the U.S. media portrayed the raid as only striking military targets. Historian George Roeder observes that depicting the destruction of military targets was common for the U.S. films at the time, "They gratified viewers with spectacular scenes of bombs destroying enemy munitions plants but excluded human bodies, or parts of bodies, from the debris that soared skyward after the invariable direct hit."<sup>94</sup> Films like *The Purple Heart* and *Thirty Seconds Over Tokyo* abided by this pattern and contributed to portraying the raid as a triumph of American technical know-how and respect for the rules of warfare. Reporting that only military targets were struck in the raid reveals America's airpower because it demonstrates that America can select targets and successfully bomb those targets.

The most shocking way the U.S. media portrayed the raid as a demonstration of American airpower is the claim that not a single U.S. plane was shot down during the raid. As with the lack of information regarding the bombing of military targets, the American press also lacked official information about the number of planes involved in the raid and relied on reports from Japanese sources. For example, in the early days of reporting on the raid newspapers stated the Japanese claim that "Japan Reports Tokyo, Yokohama bombed by 'enemy planes' in daylight; claims 9."<sup>95</sup> The Japanese claimed initially that they had shot down nine American planes. As more information emerged with the confirmation by the White House and the War Department the newspaper press shifted their reports to read that, "Not one American plane was shot down in the raid."<sup>96</sup> *The Detroit Evening Times* reported that President Roosevelt stated,

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<sup>93</sup> *The Purple Heart*, 00:23:43.

<sup>94</sup> George Roeder. *The Censored War: American Visual Experience During World War Two*. (Yale University, 1993): 85.

<sup>95</sup> "Japan Reports Tokyo, Yokohama Bombed by 'Enemy Planes' in Daylight, Claims 9," *The New York Times*, April 18, 1942, Pg. 1.

<sup>96</sup> "Airman Decorated: Gets Medal of Honor from Roosevelt- 79 Receive the D.S.C.," *The New York Times* May 20, 1942, Pg. 1.

“There were no planes left in Japan...some were damaged, but none was shot down.”<sup>97</sup> *The St. Louis Daily Globe-Democrat* blared the headline, “Doolittle Led Volunteers on Tokyo, Didn’t Lose a Plane.”<sup>98</sup> *The Morning Post* from Camden New Jersey also contained an article in their May 20 edition titled, “Doolittle Led Raid Without Plane Lost.”<sup>99</sup> A Castle Films newsreel similarly stated, “not a single shell fragment hit a plane.”<sup>100</sup> All of these articles and the newsreel reveal that America possessed the airpower to not only effectively bomb Japan, but to do so without losing a single plane in the process.

The reports that the squadron had not lost a single plane were consistent with the overall goal of the U.S. media at the time to, “withhold information on demoralizing wartime realities and appeal to the nation’s patriotic support through propaganda campaigns.”<sup>101</sup> Stating that the U.S. had not lost a single plane in the raid initially covered up the fact that some of the American airmen either died in the crash-landings or were captured by the Japanese. In early 1942 and into 1943 the media focused solely on the survivors of the Doolittle Raid, hailing them as American heroes. *The Daily News* on June 14 of 1942 ran an article in their Sunday edition with the title *The Man from Shangri-La*. This article explores the person of James Doolittle and his receiving of the Congressional Medal of Honor, but it also states within it, “On April 18, Americans were heartened by the news that the Japanese homeland had been bombed for the first time in history”<sup>102</sup> The author of this article specifically uses language to signify the importance of the raid, but also how the raid was a feat in itself. Claiming that the Doolittle Raid was the first raid

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<sup>97</sup> “More Tokio Raids in Lap of Gods,” *Detroit Evening Times*, May 20, 1942, Pg. 6.

<sup>98</sup> “Doolittle Led Volunteers on Tokyo, Didn’t Lose a Plane,” *St. Louis Daily Globe-Democrat*, May 20, 1942, Pg. 4.

<sup>99</sup> “Doolittle Led Raid Without Plane Lost: Receives Medal from F.R. Reveals Heavy Destruction in Japa,” *The Morning Post, Camden New Jersey*, May 20, 1942, Pg. 4.

<sup>100</sup> *Yanks Bomb Tokyo*, 00:06:35.

<sup>101</sup> Gilbert, 4.

<sup>102</sup> Martha Martin, “The Man from Shangri-La,” *Daily News, New York*, June 14, 1942, Pg. 38.

to bomb Japan in all of Japan's history is to claim that America demonstrated the power of its air capability when it accomplished such a feat. With this portrayal in mind, the media portrayed not only Doolittle but also all the men who carried out the history-making raid as American heroes.

The media reported that prestigious military awards were awarded to all of the Doolittle raiders. As the leader of the raid, James Doolittle received the Congressional Medal of Honor, which is the highest military award for valor, personally from President Roosevelt.<sup>103</sup> American Newspapers immediately reported this news to the American public. *The New York Times* reported, "President Roosevelt today personally awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor to Brig. Gen. James H. Doolittle, noted speed pilot, who led the squadron of Army medium bombers that raided Japan on April 18."<sup>104</sup> Other newspapers boasted about Doolittle and included biographical articles of him in their papers such as *The Daily News*,<sup>105</sup> *The St. Louis-Post Dispatch*,<sup>106</sup> *The Nome Nugget*,<sup>107</sup> *The Salisbury Times*,<sup>108</sup> and *the Morning Post*.<sup>109</sup> In addition to Doolittle receiving an award, the newspapers also reported that all seventy-nine men who volunteered for the mission would be receiving "the Distinguished Service Cross, the War Department announced."<sup>110</sup> The Distinguished Service Cross is the second-highest military decoration for soldiers who have displayed valor in battle.<sup>111</sup> Thus, both the Congressional

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<sup>103</sup> "Congressional Medal of Honor Recipients," Congressional Medal of Honor Society, 2024 (Accessed 29 March 2024): <https://www.cmoHS.org/recipients/james-h-doolittle>.

<sup>104</sup> "Airman Decorated: Gets Medal of Honor from Roosevelt- 79 Receive the D.S.C.," *The New York Times* May 20, 1942, Pg. 1.

<sup>105</sup> Martin, Pg. 38.

<sup>106</sup> Helen Morris, "Wife of the Man who Bombed Tokyo," *St. Louis-Post Dispatch*, May 19, 1942, Pg. 33.

<sup>107</sup> "Brig. Gen. Doolittle Gets Congressional Medal of Honor Former Nome High School Student," *The Nome Nugget*, May 20, 1942, Pg. 1.

<sup>108</sup> "40-Mile Path Cut Through Japan, Gen. Doolittle Says," *The Salisbury Times*, May 20, 1942, Pg. 1.

<sup>109</sup> "Wife Who Begged Doolittle to End Flying Watches Him Get Medal," *The Morning Post, Camden New Jersey*, May 20, 1942, Pg. 4.

<sup>110</sup> "Airman Decorated." *The New York Times*, May 20, 1942, Pg. 1

<sup>111</sup> "U.S. Army Distinguished Service Cross Recipients," Military Awards for Valor, U.S. Department of Defense, 2022 (Accessed 29 March 2024): <https://valor.defense.gov/Recipients/Army-Distinguished-Service-Cross-Recipients/>.

Medal of Honor and the Distinguished Service Cross were awarded to American military men considered to be valiant heroes. American newspapers portrayed these men exactly as such by reporting on the awards they would be receiving.

In addition, a newsreel in 1942 by Castle Films announced to the public, "All survivors, except the crew of one plane which landed safely in Russia and were interned, reach America and are decorated by General Arnold, head of the American Army Air forces."<sup>112</sup> The film *Thirty Seconds Over Tokyo* also portrays the raiders as heroes who are protecting their loved ones back home. In one scene Captain Ted Lawson is shown talking with another raider saying, "I don't pretend to like the idea of killing a bunch of people. But it's a case of drop a bomb on them or pretty soon they'll be dropping one on Ellen."<sup>113</sup> The words of Captain Lawson portray him and each of the raiders as compassionate men who are fighting to protect their loved ones at home in the U.S. in this case Ellen who is Lawson's wife. Another newsreel produced by The Armed Forces Information Film Company in 1944 called upon American men to be like the heroes of the Doolittle Raid and join the war in the Pacific,

Before each man that has fallen there is another to take his place. There's is the task, the victory will be for all, but this victory can be won only if free men everywhere give to its cause unsparingly their strength, their treasure, their hearts. Then and only then, will there be peace in the Pacific and over all the earth.<sup>114</sup>

This newsreel calls upon American men to step up to the task of fighting the Japanese in the Pacific just like the Doolittle Raiders did to achieve victory. Ultimately, the airmen who survived the Doolittle Raid were portrayed by the U.S. Media through newspapers, newsreels, and movies

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<sup>112</sup> *Yanks Bomb Tokyo*, 00:07:28.

<sup>113</sup> *Thirty Seconds Over Tokyo*, 01:05:02.

<sup>114</sup> *Attack in the Pacific*. Armed Forces Information Film, 1944. <https://www.ibiblio.org/hyperwar/Newsreels/>. 00:51:13.



as decorated heroes with the goal being to encourage the United States home front by demonstrating that America is full of heroes who are determined to turn the tide of the war in America's favor.

A noticeable shift in the media's coverage occurred in September of 1943 when they were authorized by the government to release more "graphic images of American war casualties."<sup>115</sup> Along with the release of these images also came the release of information such as the revelation that some of the airmen involved in the Doolittle Raid had been captured, tortured, and executed by the Japanese. With this information now available for release to the public the U.S. media portrayed the fallen American airmen as heroes in various media. The most prominent being the film *The Purple Heart*. This entire film is aimed at portraying the men who were captured and executed by the Japanese as heroes. In the final scene of the movie the men after being sentenced to execution are shown walking down a hallway together. Their faces do not reveal any fear or terror instead, they look proud and brave as they march to their deaths.<sup>116</sup> The brave demeanor and proud faces of these men in this movie are aimed to portray the real-life Doolittle raiders as heroes who died sacrificially for America. The portrayal of both the living and the dead Doolittle Raiders was used by the American media in order to uplift Americans and demonize the enemy. As Gilbert claims propaganda like this, "sought to demonize the Axis enemies by contrasting the heroic goodwill and controlled discipline of American soldiers with the irrational brutality and bestiality of Japanese and German troops."<sup>117</sup> Thus, the U.S. media employed the use of various media in order to portray the Doolittle Raiders as heroes and

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<sup>115</sup> Gilbert, 22.

<sup>116</sup> *The Purple Heart*, 01:32:47.

<sup>117</sup> Gilbert, 2.

proclaim to America's citizens and the world that the Doolittle Raid was a demonstration of American airpower.

The U.S. media also attempted to encourage unity between the front and the home front by portraying the Doolittle Raid as a demonstration of American airpower that depended on a joint effort between the military and American civilian workers. A Maryland newspaper described one of James Doolittle's many speaking engagements that he embarked on following the Doolittle Raid. It reads, "Brig. Gen. James H. Doolittle, in a noon-hour address to thousands of North American workers, said that Shangri-La, mythical land jokingly identified by President Roosevelt as the place whence the bombers came, "is right here in this North American plant. This is where our B-25 bombers came from."<sup>118</sup> Doolittle in this speech recorded by this newspaper portrays the Doolittle Raid as a joint effort. It did not just involve pilots and the navy but also involved the average American plant worker who helped to build the planes themselves. The Doolittle Raid was seen as such a great victory that Doolittle went around giving speeches about it to American workers to remind them that they contributed directly to the achievement of the Doolittle Raid. This served to boost morale by painting the bombing raid as a crucial victory achieved through the combined efforts of American civilian and military war power. This conclusion is directly supported by the way the newspaper portrayed the audience's response to Doolittle, "the workers...answered his statement with burst after burst of applause."<sup>119</sup> This Maryland newspaper portrayed American workers as heroes and direct contributors to the Doolittle Raid, doing so was a confident way of demonstrating American airpower to the public. According to Roeder, this portrayal was used to, "appeal to the nation's patriotic support through

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<sup>118</sup> "Flyer Visits Plane Plant: Doolittle Tells North American Workers About Bombing of Tokyo. Declares Mysterious Shangri-La Where Raid Started was Factory," *The Baltimore Sun*, June 2, 1942, Pg. 9.

<sup>119</sup> Ibid.

propaganda campaigns for silence, social unity, economic frugality, and disciplined production on the home front."<sup>120</sup> Portraying American workers as having contributed to the Doolittle Raid was one of the ways that the U.S. media attempted to encourage production on the home front claiming that America's airpower began at home.

The U.S. media also recognized that the Japanese as America's enemy needed to be portrayed in a negative light in order to inspire a unified hatred for them in America. Historian Sumiko Higashi argues that "A racialized war in the Pacific was subject matter made to order. By rendering the Japanese...as evil incarnate...voiced feelings of intense racial hatred and transformed rational discourse into a hysterical text."<sup>121</sup> The U.S. media was guilty of this "evil incarnate" portrayal in their depiction of the Japanese across mediums. The ultimate goal being to show that the Japanese were cruel, and that America must take measures to defeat these evil people. The U.S. media emphasized the Japanese as executioners guilty of murder. A newsreel produced by United News in 1943 stated, "The Japanese government flatly admits that 8 of the uniformed fliers were captured, some have been executed, this is in flagrant violation of all international law."<sup>122</sup> These words announced to the American public that eight U.S. airmen were executed by the Japanese. Stating that the Japanese violated international law portrays them as war criminals and heightens their cruelty. The 1944 movie titled *The Purple Heart* also depicts the Japanese as violating international law. The movie depicts the captured Doolittle raiders on trial for their bombing raid. In the film, one of the airmen stands up and proclaims to the Japanese court that they cannot be tried under the Geneva treaty.<sup>123</sup> The Japanese judges

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<sup>120</sup> Roeder, 10.

<sup>121</sup> Sumiko Higashi, "Melodrama, Realism, and Race: World War II Newsreels and Propaganda Film," *Cinema Journal* Vol. 37 (Spring 1998, No. 3): 43.

<sup>122</sup> *Carrier Revealed*, 00:03:47.

<sup>123</sup> *The Purple Heart*, 00:08:40.

respond by claiming that the U.S. airmen are guilty of breaking international law.<sup>124</sup> This movie is designed so that the viewer sympathizes with the Americans. The reference to the violation of the Geneva Treaty by the Japanese is another way of portraying the Japanese as guilty of violating international law. This movie displays how the U.S. media portrayed the Japanese as murderers guilty of breaking international law.

It was not only in war films and movies that the U.S. media portrayed the Japanese as cruel murderers but also in a series of propaganda posters issued in the U.S. over the months and years following the Doolittle Raid. For example, one propaganda poster depicts three Japanese soldiers standing in a line with their rifles in firing position as if about to execute someone in front of them (see Figure 4). A crashed U.S. plane is pictured behind the Japanese men and the poster states, "Murder in cold blood."<sup>125</sup> The words of this poster along with its imagery of Japanese soldiers aiming to execute portrayed to its viewers the belief that the Japanese army was a cruel force that would not hesitate to murder its enemies. Another propaganda poster also contributed to portraying the Japanese as cruel murderers through the use of implied explicit language. Created sometime between 1942 and 1943 this poster depicts a Japanese man's face in a derogatory way and states, "Remember our Airmen! Murder: the specialty of the yellow b\_\_\_\_s. More Production!"<sup>126</sup> (See Figure 5). Just like the previous poster discussed, this poster refers to the Japanese as murderers. It also, however, goes a step beyond and implores the use of an implied curse word to paint the Japanese in a further negative light. Interestingly, the poster was printed with the curse word with only the first and last letter allowing for the reader to fill in

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<sup>124</sup> Ibid, 00:09:32.

<sup>125</sup> *Murder in Cold Blood*, 1942-1943, World War Two Posters, National Archives Catalog, <https://catalog.archives.gov/id/534789>. (Accessed 10 March 2024).

<sup>126</sup> *Remember our Airmen*, 1942-1943, World War Two Posters, National Archives Catalog, <https://www.archives.gov/>. (Accessed 10 March 2024).

the blanks. Another propaganda poster created to portray the Japanese as cruel by claiming that they were murderers was released in 1943 and shows an actual photograph of two Japanese soldiers leading a blindfolded American airman presumably to his place of execution<sup>127</sup> (See Figure 6). The poster states, "The Jap way: cold-blooded murder. We'll make them pay if you keep up production."<sup>128</sup> A newspaper headline is also included announcing the execution of some of the Doolittle raiders.<sup>129</sup> This poster not only portrays the Japanese as cruel murderers but also appears to show two of them in the act of leading an American airman to his death. The U.S. Media aimed to present the Japanese in the cruelest light possible. This poster and the others discussed intended to do that and succeed in portraying the Japanese as murderous executioners to the American public.

The U.S. Media also portrayed the Japanese as cruel by claiming that they possessed a high level of inhumanity. A newsreel produced in 1942 by Castle Films is a prime example of how the United States media portrayed the Japanese as inhuman people. In this newsreel, the narrator states about the Japanese, "Mark these men well. General Tojo and his barbarous war bandits, who boast that they have executed some of the fliers captured."<sup>130</sup> The description of the Japanese including General Tojo as "barbarous" and "war bandits" is directly intended to portray them as inhumane people. In addition, the narrator portrays the Japanese as boasting over the execution of American airmen. Also in this newsreel, U.S. General Arnold is quoted as saying, "We must redouble our efforts until the inhuman warlords, who committed this crime have been utterly destroyed."<sup>131</sup> A respected U.S. General is cited here as calling the Japanese inhuman

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<sup>127</sup> *The Jap Way- Cold Blooded Murder*, 1943, Library of Congress Collection, <https://www.loc.gov/resource/cph.3g04264>. (Accessed 10 March 2024).

<sup>128</sup> Ibid.

<sup>129</sup> Ibid.

<sup>130</sup> *Yanks Bomb Tokyo*, 00:07:43.

<sup>131</sup> Ibid, 00:07:48.

warlords. This directly adds to the portrayal to the American people that the Japanese were inhuman people bent on destroying and murdering their enemies. In addition, *The Purple Heart* also shows the Japanese as cruel torturers. The airmen whom the Japanese torture in the movie all suffer various traumatic effects.<sup>132</sup> One airman's arm is broken, another is left unable to speak, and another is left with inoperable hands.<sup>133</sup> The film causes the audience to sympathize with the tortured American airmen depicting them as heroes and the Japanese as inhuman cruel torturers. Historian George Roeder observes that *The Purple Heart* was the first film to focus on Japanese atrocities against Americans.<sup>134</sup> He claims, "It depicted the results of Japanese torture without explicitly showing the process, and it became one of the year's most widely viewed films."<sup>135</sup> Other details that the film follows the trend in American propaganda to avoid showing disturbing war realities, in this case, the torturing of the American airmen. The fact that it was also one of the year's most popular films means that a great number of Americans were subject to the portrayal of the Japanese as cruel torturers and murderers as the movie depicts. In addition, the film drives home the point that the Japanese are inhuman people by having a Japanese general claim, "No Captain, the Japanese people are united in this war through Emperor worship and hate, Hate for all foreigners, white or otherwise."<sup>136</sup> This line delivered by the Japanese officer portrays the Japanese people as cruel people who are full of hate and thus prepared to torture and murder their enemies at all costs. A newsreel produced in 1945 by the War Finance Division of the U.S. Treasury Department reveals that this portrayal of the Japanese as inhuman people in relation to the Doolittle Raid continued even to the last year of the war. In this newsreel a man

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<sup>132</sup> *The Purple Heart*.

<sup>133</sup> Ibid.

<sup>134</sup> Roeder, 134.

<sup>135</sup> Ibid

<sup>136</sup> *The Purple Heart*, 00:41:09.

who is meant to appear as if he were a Japanese man sits at a desk and tells his American audience about his people and his homeland. In the newsreel, he states in reference to the Doolittle Raid, "Neither fire nor earthquake can level our city. You are finding that out, are you not? None of your bombings particularly impress us. London was bombed. Did England die? Tokyo, Osaka, Okayama. Drop your bombs! You cannot destroy Japan by turning cities into black and rubble. By wiping out a few inexpensive lives. You are finding that out too, are you not?"<sup>137</sup> The man posing in the newsreel as a Japanese man describes the bombings made during the Doolittle Raid as ineffective against the Japanese. He does admit that some lives were lost in the bombings, but he describes those Japanese lives as "inexpensive."<sup>138</sup> This language, especially the use of the word "inexpensive" is meant to portray the Japanese as cruel inhuman people whose leaders appeared to not care for the civilian lives lost during the Doolittle Raid.

Contributing to the war effort also became linked to the U.S. media's portrayal of the Japanese as cruel. One poster titled "We'll Pay You Back Tojo," serves as an example of this. It depicts the hands of an American strangling the Japanese general Tojo (see Figure 7).<sup>139</sup> At the top of the poster is the headline from a Newspaper announcing, "Japanese Execute Doolittle Men."<sup>140</sup> The bottom of the poster states, "We'll pay you back Tojo through the Pay Roll Savings Plan if it takes our last dime!"<sup>141</sup> This poster depicts the Japanese, particularly General Tojo, as villainous people on whom the U.S. must take revenge for their execution of American airmen. The way that revenge is advertised here is by contributing to the Payroll Savings Plan. Another

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<sup>137</sup> *My Japan*. War Finance Division of the U.S. Treasury Department, 1945, <https://www.ibiblio.org/hyperwar/Newsreels/>. 00:02:58.

<sup>138</sup> Ibid.

<sup>139</sup> *We'll Pay You Back Tojo*, 1942-1945, National Archives Catalog, <https://catalog.archives.gov/id/513574>. (Accessed 10 November 2023).

<sup>140</sup> Ibid.

<sup>141</sup> Ibid.

poster discussed above titled "Murder in Cold Blood" continues this theme by stating, "Let's force the Japs to pay. Make every bullet grade A."<sup>142</sup> This propaganda poster created by the War Production Board of the United States portrays the Japanese as cruel murderers for executing the captured Doolittle raiders, but it also encourages the U.S. to enact revenge on the Japanese by creating exceptional bullets to be used in the war effort. The U.S. media used the execution of the Doolittle airmen to paint the Japanese in a negative light and to inspire the U.S. home front to continue to produce quality war materials in vast quantities as a way to contribute to defeating the Japanese. The depiction of the Japanese as cruel barbarous murderers is contrasted in the Castle Films newsreel with the words of American General Arnold who describes the executed airmen, "Those men died as heroes. We must not rest. We must redouble our efforts until the inhuman warlords, who committed this crime have been utterly destroyed."<sup>143</sup> From the words of General Arnold, it can be seen that the American media portrayed its airmen as heroes and those who killed them as inhuman, war-hungry, and criminals. In addition, the quote from General Arnold is meant to inspire Americans to redouble their efforts in war production and on the front lines to enact revenge against the cruel Japanese. The final moments of the newsreel conclude with two of the Doolittle raiders talking about their experiences during the raid. One of the raiders, Captain Ted Lawson states, "We all feel pretty strongly about these boys that flew west. We had all been pretty close, a large family, almost like brothers. We've known each other from a year to a year and a half before this raid ever came off. We knew their families, their children. And if there is any way to get even, we will certainly try."<sup>144</sup> Lawson's words demonstrate that many Americans perceived the Japanese as cruel criminals who had murdered their friends and

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<sup>142</sup> *Murder in Cold Blood*, 1942-1943, National Archives Catalog, <https://catalog.archives.gov/id/534789>. (Accessed 10 November 2023).

<sup>143</sup> *Yanks Bomb Tokyo*, 00:07:48.

<sup>144</sup> *Ibid*, 00:09:01.



family. In addition, Lawson's words invoke a call to Americans to fight back against the Japanese to enact revenge for their cruelty against the airmen.

In conclusion, the United States media used the Doolittle Raid to counter public perceptions of Japanese success in early 1942 and to claim that America was seizing the initiative to change the tide of the war. The media specifically accomplished this goal by portraying the raid as the beginning of an American offensive phase, as a morale strike against Japan, a revenge attack for previous losses in the Pacific, a demonstration of American airpower, and an illustration of the cruelty of the Japanese. The U.S. media specifically chose select themes to include in its coverage of the Doolittle Raid and what details to eliminate with the ultimate goal being to uplift American morale. The portrayal of the raid shifted over time. In early 1942 the U.S. media reported on all the news it could find that portrayed the raid as a military success. Its primary medium for the circulation of this news was newspapers. After the battle of Midway in June of 1942 the U.S. media shifted to use the Doolittle Raid as the feat that helped cause the battle of Midway primarily through the medium of newsreels. The American government in the early years of the war censored news of death and destruction causing the media to censor the stories of the imprisoned and executed airmen until September 1943 when the censorship was lessened. When this occurred the media placed a heightened emphasis on the men who died in the Doolittle Raid in the final two years of the war most noticeably with propaganda posters, newsreels, and *The Purple Heart*. The portrayal of the Doolittle Raid by the U.S. media is important because it offers a glimpse into the themes of mainstream propaganda throughout World War Two. More importantly, it demonstrates that World War Two was a total war that required not only the full mobilization of American manpower and economic resources but also the full psychological mobilization of American citizens. The Doolittle Raid both in its military

implementation and its portrayal by the U.S. media clearly demonstrates the importance of psychological mobilization in World War Two. Without the psychological mobilization of American citizens, morale was more likely to collapse leading to a decrease in war production and decrease in support for the war. The Doolittle Raid was an event that the U.S. media immediately seized upon to use as a means of uplifting American morale leading to the effective psychological mobilization of American citizens throughout the rest of the war. In addition, the Doolittle Raid was the first American victory on which the U.S. media had the opportunity to report, which means that propaganda about the Raid was the first attempt by the media at using an American victory to psychologically mobilize and uplift the morale of American citizens. Each of the themes examined above was intended to boost the morale of the American people and to a degree did though to what exact degree is difficult to determine because the minds of the citizens who observed Doolittle Raid propaganda cannot be directly analyzed. In light of this, however, the themes discussed above can provide important information on the level of impact news about the Raid had on American perceptions and can shed light on how those perceptions affected American morale. Historians have also attempted to gauge the success of the raid and its portrayal by the media upon the American public. For example, Carroll Glines, an expert on the Doolittle Raid claims, "To the people of the United States the news of the raid was immediately stimulating and heartening."<sup>145</sup> Every American would have learned of the Doolittle Raid through the U.S. media, which, according to Glines' words, demonstrates that the media accomplished its goal in using the Raid to uplift morale by countering popular public perceptions of Japanese success in early 1942 and to show that America was seizing the initiative to change

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<sup>145</sup> Glines, 217.

the tide of the war. The impact of the U.S. media's propaganda about the Doolittle Raid is further described by pilot Ted Lawson,

'You think it was worth while?' One of the boys asked me before we went to sleep that early morning of June 4. I thought it over for a while, trying to see the whole thing objectively. When I finally said that I did, I meant it. We'll probably never know just how much damage we caused. The important thing, I figured, was that our people got a lift out of it. It made them sure we could go to work on the Japs, no matter how far away they were.<sup>146</sup>

Lawson's observation was correct regarding the uplifting of American spirits as a result of the Raid and the way that Americans received this uplifting news was through the U.S. media. Thus, the U.S. media's portrayal of the Doolittle Raid is important to the historical community and the history of the American home front in World War Two because it demonstrates how the U.S. media used the Doolittle Raid to influence the American public into believing that the Japanese could be successfully attacked, and that America was actively on the route towards winning the war in the Pacific.

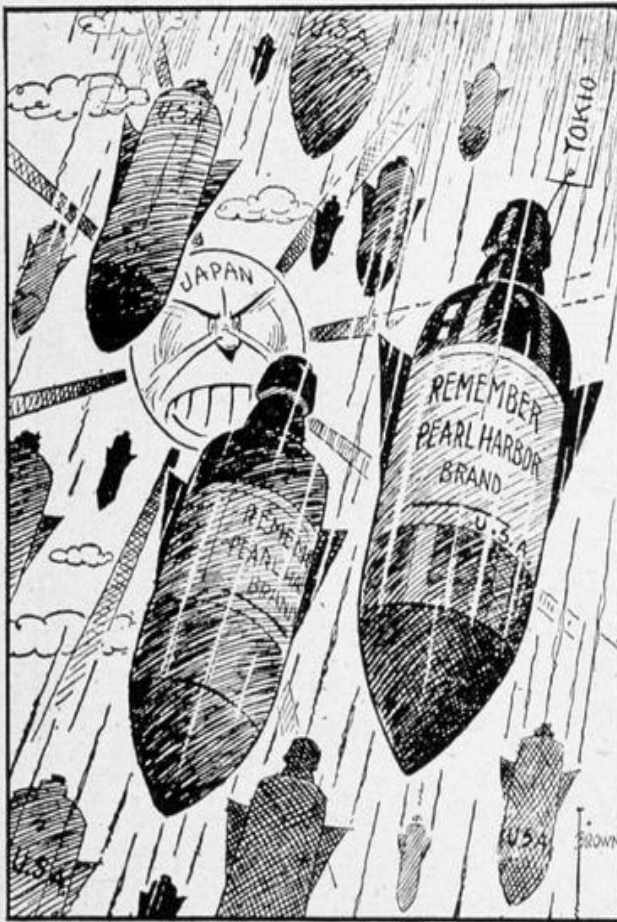
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<sup>146</sup> Lawson, 210.

## Appendix



Figure 1: "Doolittle Does Plenty," *The Waterbury Democrat*, May 22, 1942, Pg. 12.



© N. Y. Tribune, Inc.

"Some of His Own Medicine"



The N. Y. World Telegram

"A Dose of His Own Medicine"

Figure 2 (on left): "Some of His Own Medicine," *The New York Tribune*

Figure 3 (on right): "A Dose of His Own Medicine," *The New York World Telegram*.

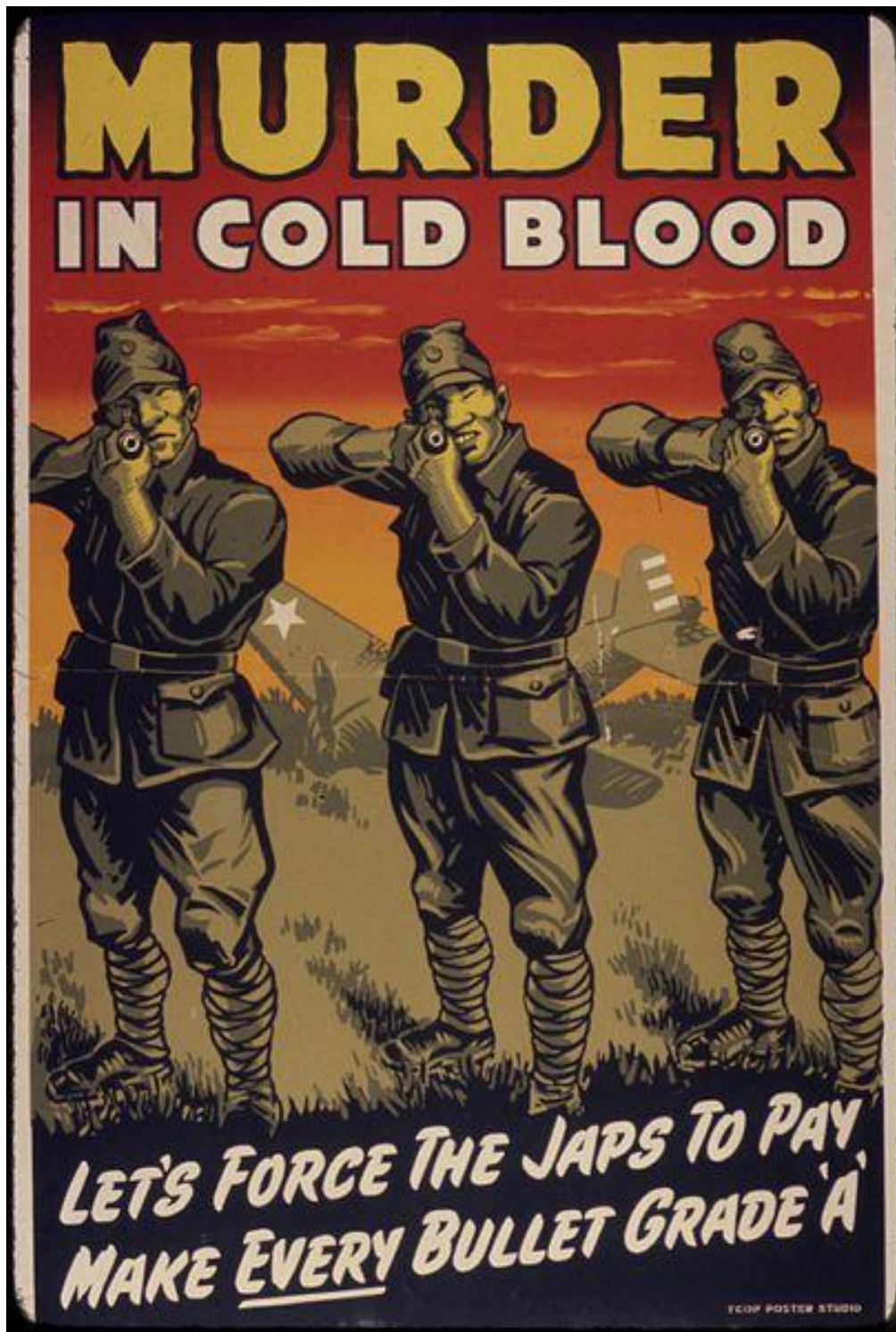


Figure 4: *Murder in Cold Blood*. 1942-1943, World War Two Posters, National Archive Catalog, <https://catalog.archives.gov/id/534789>. (Accessed 10 November 2023).





Figure 5: *Remember our Airmen*, 1942-1943, National Archives Catalog, <https://www.archives.gov/>.

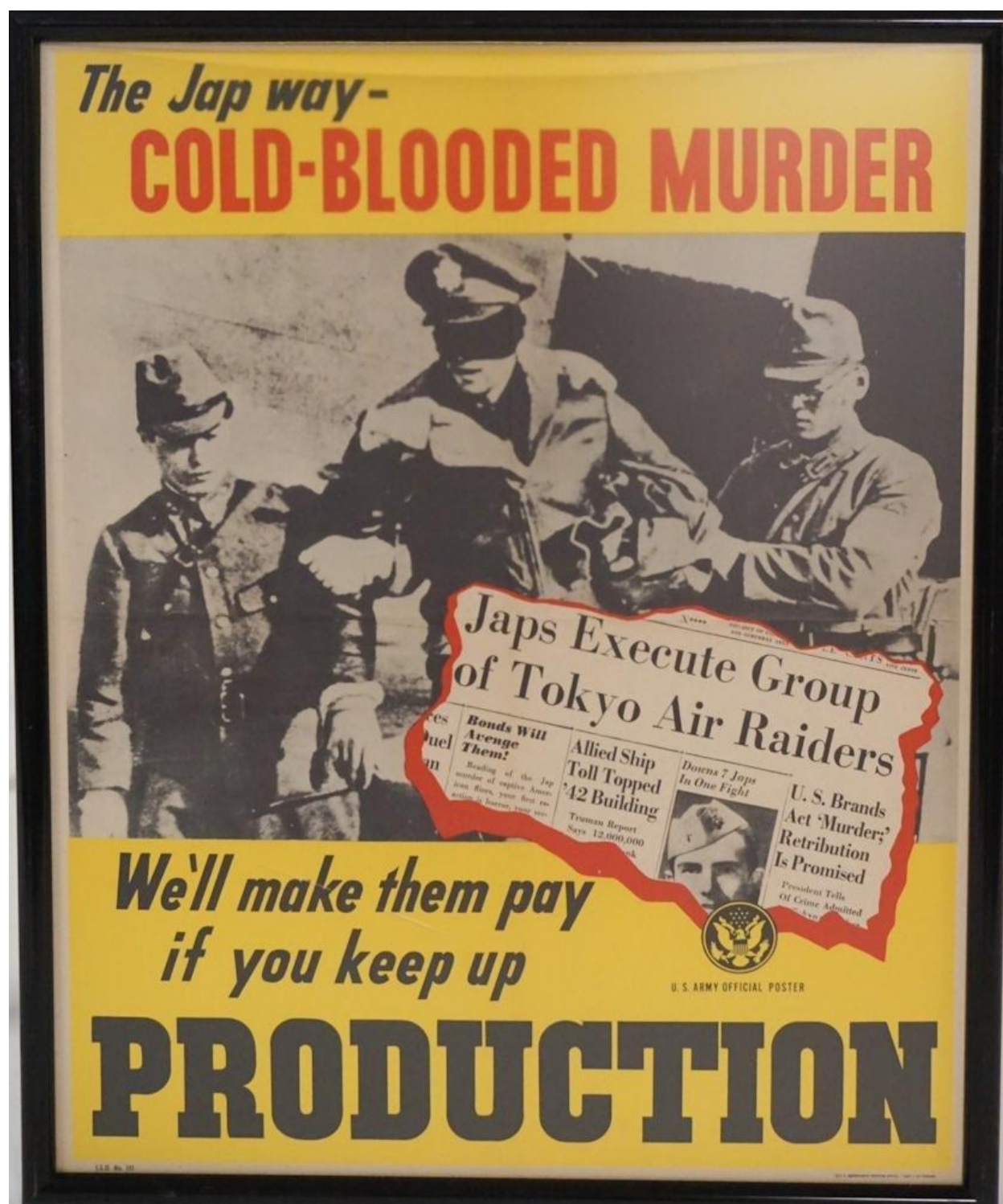


Figure 6: *The Jap Way- Cold Blooded Murder*, 1943, Library of Congress Collection, <https://www.loc.gov/resource/cph.3g04264>.





Figure 7: *We'll Pay You Back Tojo*, 1942-1945, National Archives Catalog, <https://catalog.archives.gov/id/513574>

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