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Hattie Meyers Junkin Papers - Writings: "What is This Thing Called Soaring", US Air Service , 1931-11

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Doolittle and the racer were on the ground at Birmingham, Ala., having covered eleven hundred miles of the trip. Two ten found him at Corpus Christi, Texas, seventeen hundred miles from Ottawa and about eight hundred from Mexico City. He landed at Mexico City at five-fifteen P.M. eastern time to complete an epochal three capitol flight which is probably a more difficult achievement than his now famous transcontinental record made last September. The total distance of about 2,500 miles was covered in eleven hours and forty-five minutes flying time at an average speed of about 213 miles an hour. The last 225 miles between Tampico and Mexico City are reported to have been covered in fifty-four minutes, a speed of 250 miles an hour.

Doolittle's achievements in the air are so numerous they defy proper chronology here, but a few will serve to revive the memory. In 1922 a transcontinental one-stop record in a rebuilt DeHaviland airplane with a Liberty motor. In 1925, winner Schneider trophy race. Later went to South America to demonstrate American aircraft and while there flew across that continent both ways, over the lofty Andes with both legs in plaster casts, having broken both his ankles in a ground accident. His technical accomplishments while in the Army Air Corps are not so well known to the public but flying men know Jimmie to be an Ace among the fog banks of calculus and a master of the technical features of aeronautical engineering. He holds a degree as Doctor of Aeronautics from Massachusetts Institute of Technology and it is worth mentioning that this degree was one hundred per cent earned by several years of diligent study and was not the honorary handout of the type now held by some other well known aviators. Later flying feats remembered by the public include the first outside loop, made by Doolittle in 1927, the first blind landing made in 1929 in connection with his work for the Guggenheim Foundation, and his recent phenomenal transcontinental record of eleven hours, sixteen minutes and ten seconds.

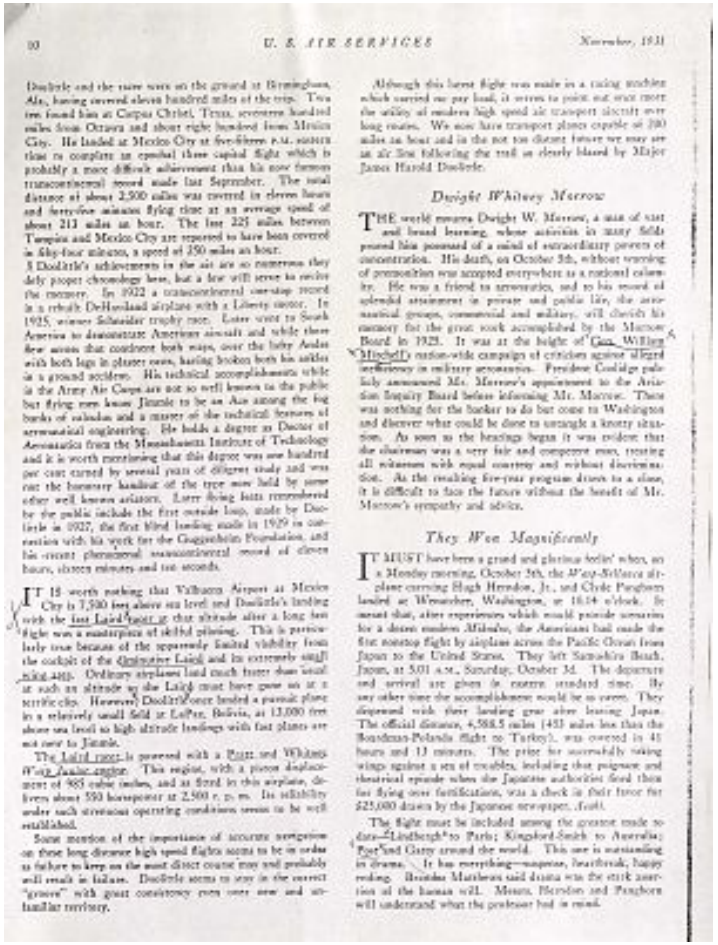
IT IS worth nothing that Valbuena Airport at Mexico City is 7,500 feet above sea level and Doolittle's landing with the fast Laird racer at that altitude after a long fast flight was a masterpiece of skilful piloting. This is particularly true because of the apparently limited visibility from the cockpit of the diminutive Laird and its extremely small wing area. Ordinary airplanes land much faster than usual at such an altitude so the Laird must have gone on at a terrific clip. However, Doolittle once landed a pursuit plane in a relatively small field at LaPaz, Bolivia, at 13,000 feet above sea level so high altitude landings with fast planes are not new to Jimmie.

The Laird racer is powered with a Pratt and Whitney Wasp Junior engine. This engine, with a piston displacement of 985 cubic inches, and as fitted in this airplane, delivers about 550 horsepower at 2,500 r. p. m. Its reliability under such strenuous operating conditions seems to be well established.

Some mention of the importance of accurate navigation on these long distance high speed flights seems to be in order as failure to keep on the most direct course may and probably will result in failure. Doolittle seems to stay in the correct "groove" with great consistency even over new and unfamiliar territory.

Although this latest flight was made in a racing machine which carried no pay load, it serves to point out once more the utility of modern high speed air transport aircraft over long routes. We now have transport planes capable of 200 miles an hour and in the not too distant future we may see an air line following the trail so clearly blazed by Major James Harold Doolittle.

Dwight Whitney Morrow


10 U. S. AIR SERVICES November, 1931

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THE world mourns Dwight W. Morrow, a man of vast and broad learning, whose activities in many fields proved him possessed of a mind of extraordinary powers of concentration. His death, on October 5th, without warning of premonition was accepted everywhere as a national calamity. He was a friend to aeronautics, and to his record of splendid attainment in private and public life, the aeronautical groups, commercial and military, will cherish his memory for the great work accomplished by the Morrow Board in 1925. It was at the height of Gen. Billy Mitchell's nation-wide campaign of criticism against alleged inefficiency in military aeronautics. President Coolidge publicly announced Mr. Morrow's appointment to the Aviation Inquiry Board before informing Mr. Morrow. There was nothing for the banker to do but come to Washington and discover what could be done to untangle a knotty situation. As soon as the hearings began it was evident that the chairman was a very fair and competent man, treating all witnesses with equal courtesy and without discrimination. As the resulting five-year program draws to a close, it is difficult to face the future without the benefit of Mr. Morrow's sympathy and advice.

They Won Magnificently

IT MUST have been a grand and glorious feelin' when, on a Monday morning, October 5th, the *Wiley-Williams* airplane carrying Hugh Herndon, Jr., and Clyde Pangborn landed at Wenatchee, Washington, at 10.14 o'clock. It meant that, after experiences which would provide scenarios for a dozen modern *Mikados*, the Americans had made the first nonstop flight by airplane across the Pacific Ocean from Japan to the United States. They left Samushiro Beach, Japan, at 5.01 a.m., Saturday, October 3d. The departure and arrival are given in eastern standard time. By any other time the accomplishment would be no career. They dispensed with their landing gear after leaving Japan. The official distance, 4,988.5 miles (453 miles less than the Boucheau-Polanda flight to Turkey), was covered in 41 hours and 13 minutes. The prize for successfully taking wings against a sea of troubles, including that poignant and theatrical episode when the Japanese authorities fired shots for flying over fortifications, was a check in their favor for $25,000 drawn by the Japanese newspaper, *Asahi*.

The flight must be included among the greatest made to date—Lindbergh's to Paris; Kingsford-Smith to Australia; Post and Gatty around the world. This one is outstanding in drama. It has everything—suspense, heartbreak, happy ending. Besides Matthews said drama was the stark assertion of the human will. Messrs. Herndon and Pangborn will understand what the professor had in mind.

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