



2nd Lt. Dean Davenport

'Doolittle's Raider' and The Missing Silver Star

'Doolittle's Raiders' are among the most famous US Airmen of WWII. The success of their daring and improbable 1942 mission to bomb mainland Japan rallied a nation still reeling from the surprise attack on Pearl Harbor. Their mission has been the subject of multiple books and movies, passing into legend as one of the most well known and well documented events of the war.

The family of one deceased "Raider", however, knew the official history of that long-ago mission lacked one important detail about their father, the co-pilot of the downed B-25 known as "Ruptured Duck".



Photo: US Air Force

While Lt. Dean Davenport was alive he was aware that the official history of the Doolittle mission did not mention the Silver Star Medal he was awarded during that action, but he opted never to bring that oversight to the attention of the USAF.

His widow, however, was disheartened that the mission history did not mention the Silver Star Medal her husband had received for the selfless actions he took after the aircraft he copiloted crashed in the ocean.



Photo: US Air Force



In 2013 Mimi Davenport, the daughter of this deceased Raider, contacted an Air Force official to learn how she could correct this error in the Doolittle historical records. She knew the Silver Star Lt. Davenport received was the second highest award the Army and AF can give an individual, and the family had his medal and the accompanying citation.

AG 201 Davenport, Dean
(11-11-42) PD-B

Received from The Adjutant General of the Army
one certificate representing the award of the

SILVER STAR

to Second Lieutenant Dean Davenport, 381st
Bombardment Squadron, 310th Bombardment Group,
United States Army.
formerly

Date received 11-22-42

Signature Capt. Dean Davenport

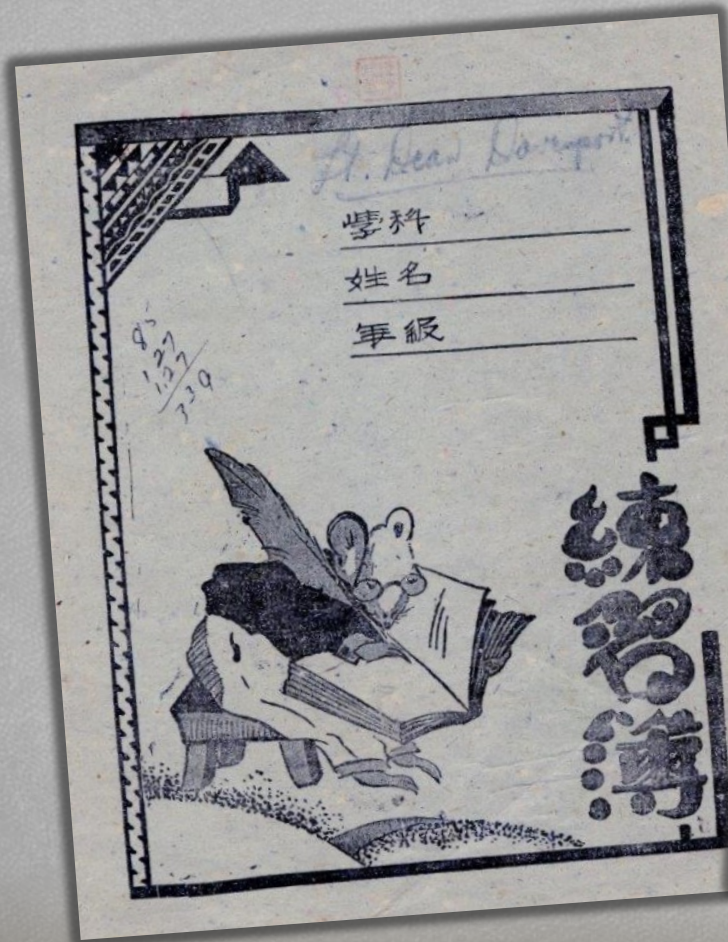
Street address C.O. 426 Bomb Sqd.
Columbia Army Air Base, Columbia S.C.
(City, Town or Post Office) (State)

To be signed and returned to The Adjutant General,
War Department, Washington, D. C.

D & A Sec. Exec. Div.

*File-Misc-201 215a
Lar 870 Bt.
11/25/42*

Among their other cherished possessions was a handwritten diary Lt. Davenport had kept to document the crew's struggles in 1942. The pilot of their B-25 bomber, Lt. Ted Lawson, had even written a book during his 1943 recovery titled "Thirty Seconds Over Tokyo" and a 1944 movie based on his book told their story again, so the experiences of the crew of the Ruptured Duck were well documented.



1
 On April 1st, 1942 I flew into Alameda Airport as Co-pilot on B-25B number 2261 better known as the "Ruptured Duck". The same day we were loaded aboard the aircraft carrier Hornet and pulled out into San Francisco Bay. That night was our last night ashore in the United States and we made the most of it. Lawson, March, Gray, and I went down to fisherman's wharf and had a real sea food dinner before starting out to "paint the town".

The next day, April 2, we pulled out of S. F. Bay through the Golden Gate and on to the broad Pacific Ocean. We had four destroyers, two cruisers, and an oil tanker on escort for our mission.

Our first few days were spent in getting acquainted with the ship and I had an awfully hard time. I was constantly getting lost in the maze of

The Air Force official Mimi Davenport contacted to discuss the omitted mention of her father's Silver Star Medal responded by telling her the medal and citation the family held "could be faked" and explained that a correction of the records could not be made based on her evidence alone. He said that if US Air Force historical accounts were incomplete or in error, she must prove it and provide them with the official military order authorizing her father the Silver Star Medal.

That official's "prove it" statement upset Ms. Davenport and she immediately began to search for a qualified researcher to do just that.

She first contacted military researcher Tim Frank, owner of Military Research Associates in Maryland, whom she located on the “Hire an Independent Researcher” page at archives.gov. Tim recognized right away that records to confirm Lt. Davenport’s award could be in his USAF personnel file at NPRC so he referred Ms. Davenport to professional researcher Jackie Ostrowski of STL Archives Access. Tim knew Jackie could get a photocopy of Davenport’s file from NPRC by presenting a signed authorization from his daughter along with her record request and a copy of the veteran’s death certificate.

REQUEST FOR RECORDS

TO: 2nd Floor Search, Rm 2533

SUSPENSE DATE

IDENTIFYING INFORMATION

1. LAST NAME - FIRST NAME - MIDDLE NAME: DAVENPORT, DEAN

2. SERIAL NUMBER: 5172

3. SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER: *

4. BRANCH OF SERVICE: AAC + USAF

5. SERVED AS: OFFICER ENLISTED

6. REGISTRY NUMBER

7. PRESENT MILITARY STATUS - PRESENT BRANCH OF SERVICE: Retired

8. PRE-REGISTRY INFORMATION

9. YEAR OF LAST SEPARATION OR APPROXIMATE DATES OF SERVICE: 1967

10. VA CLAIM NUMBER: C

11. OTHER IDENTIFYING DATA (Not required if items 1 thru 6 are furnished):

DATE OF BIRTH: 6/29/18

PLACE OF BIRTH:

12. NATURE OF RECORDS DISCLOSED: PERSONNEL MEDICAL OTHER (Specify)

13. PURPOSE OF DISCLOSURE (Must be completed for all non-DOD requests): Verify awards for possible collection of records

NOTE: Under provisions of the Privacy Act of 1974 the agency to which a record is disclosed is responsible for maintaining an accounting of any further disclosure by the agency. Exceptions: These provisions do not apply to the National Research Council, which may not further disclose nonpublic information without the subject's authorization.

SEARCH REPORT

DATE

14. RECORDS LOCATED AND ATTACHED: MC ENLISTED MC OFFICERS NAVY OFFICERS NAVY WWI

15. RECORDS CHARGED TO: COAST GUARD NAVY PWWI

16. RECORDS NOT LOCATED IN: NAVY MEDICAL CORRECT NAME OR SERVICE NUMBER

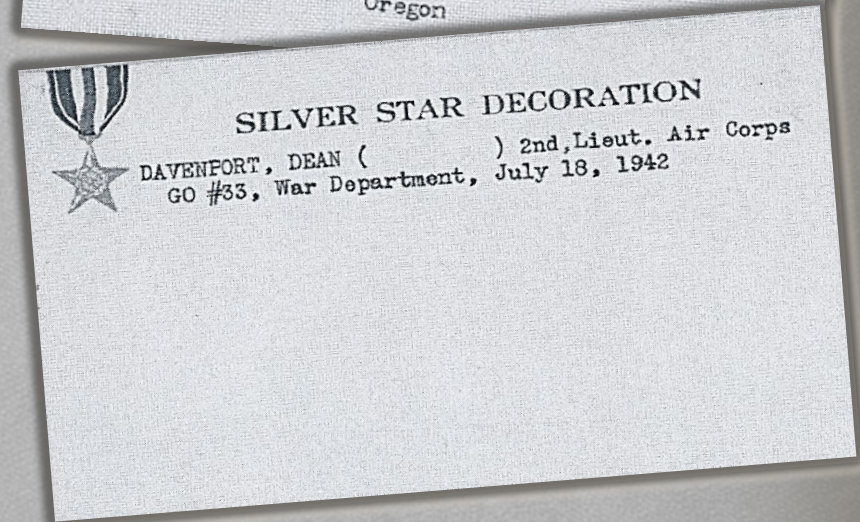
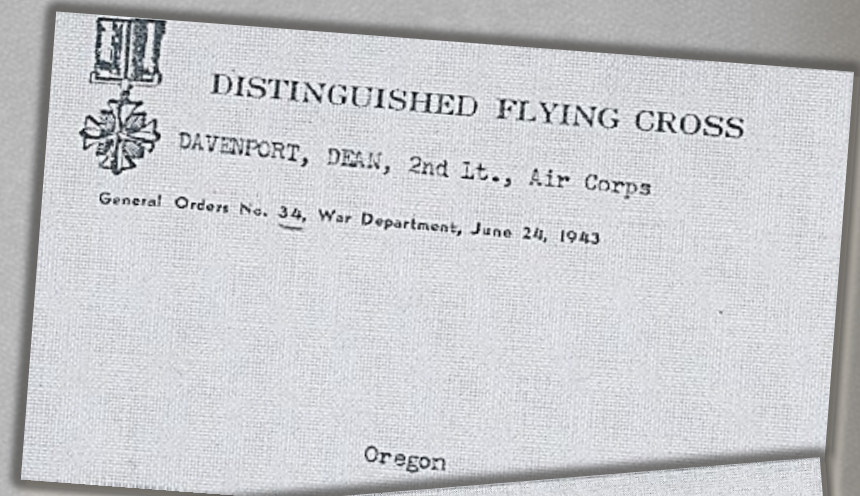
17. SERVICE NUMBER/NAME VERIFICATION: CANNOT VERIFY

REMARKS

Because the family hoped the AF would correct Raider history before the next Raider gathering just a few months away and because retrievals at NPRC take longer, all pertinent records needed to be requested right away.

Prior experience with military records informed this researcher that the Air Force would need the published order that authorized Lt. Davenport's Silver Star, so the "AAC/AF award cards" collection at NASTL was her first pull. She knew the card for his Silver Star should include the order number, date and unit that authorized the award and allow her to then search for that official order.

An NPRC registry search determined that Lt. Davenport's file was intact and available: a lucky break, because millions of WWII Army and Air Force personnel files at NPRC were destroyed in a disastrous fire at NPRC in 1973.



Images of award cards for Lt. Davenport were provided to Ms. Ostrowski first and his Silver Star card did include the order number, date and unit that authorized that award, which was great, but a copy of that specific document was still needed.

The next step was to contact the Air Force Historical Research Agency at Maxwell AFB, AL, since they hold historical orders issued for AAC and AF personnel. Jackie also decided she would submit a FOIA request for that order to NPRC, knowing many WWII Army orders were stored in binders in their Records Reconstruction Branch library.

REQUESTED under FREEDOM of INFORMATION ACT:

Please search WWII War Dept General Order volumes in your Records Reconstruction Branch Library to locate/photocopy/provide me with the following text/pages. (Personnel file at NPRC for this vet has already been reviewed & does not contain these GOs):

- General Order #33, War Dept, 7/18/1942
(authorizes Silver Star Decoration to Lt Dean Davenport)
- &
- General Order # 34, War Dept 6/24/1943
(authorizes a Distinguished Flying Cross to Lt Dean Davenport)

The email response from the AFHRA a few weeks later informed her that this order was not in their collection because high level awards (like the Silver Star) were authorized by the War Department and they did not have those orders. This was the first time this researcher had heard this, but she still knew what the next step was.

She emailed the Army Center of Military History, asking their staff for a quick turnaround because of the impending reunion deadline. A response from that CMH office was received the next day; it included War Dept. Order #33 dated 18 July 1942, the document Jackie believed the USAF needed as proof. Jackie was able to provide it to Mimi Davenport that very same day.

GENERAL ORDERS,
No. 33

WAR DEPARTMENT,
Washington, July 13, 1942.

Section
I, II

Authority to appoint general courts martial.
Citations for gallantry in action.

I. Authority to appoint general courts martial.—By direction of the President, the Commanding Officer, Military Department, is empowered, pursuant to the eighth article of war, to appoint general courts martial, effective July 11, 1942.

[A. G. 250.4 (5-29-42).]

II. Authority to appoint general courts martial.—General Orders, No. 26, War Department, 1942, is rescinded.

By direction of the President, the commanding officer is empowered, pursuant to the eighth article of war, to appoint general courts martial:

First District, Army Air Forces Technical Training Command.

Second District, Army Air Forces Technical Training Command.

Third District, Army Air Forces Technical Training Command.

Fourth District, Army Air Forces Technical Training Command.

[A. G. 322.2 (7-11-42).]

III. Citation for gallantry in action.—By direction of the President, under the provisions of the act of Congress approved July 9, 1918, (Pub. L. 45, W. D., 1918), the following-named officers and enlisted men are cited for gallantry in action and are entitled to wear the Silver Star decoration. The citations are as follows:

Dean Dancesport, second lieutenant, Air Corps, United States Army. For gallantry in action subsequent to raid on Japan, April 18, 1942. Address: Care of The Adjutant General, Washington, D. C. Residence at appointment: Portland, Oregon.

Arthur W. Donaldson (Army serial number 1449640), for gallantry in action near Exerment, France, October 29, 1918. Residence at enlistment: Euporia, Kansas.

Fred J. Hattenstein (Army serial number 1447170), for gallantry in action in the Boise de Mont on September 29, 1918. Residence at enlistment: Humboldt, California.

David J. Thatcher (Army serial number 19019573), corporal, United States Army. For gallantry in action subsequent to raid on Japan, April 18, 1942. Residence at enlistment: Billings, Montana.

Thomas R. White, first lieutenant, Medical Corps, United States Army. For gallantry in action subsequent to raid on Japan, April 18, 1942. Address: Care of The Adjutant General, Washington, D. C. Residence at appointment: Redlands, California.

BY ORDER OF THE SECRETARY OF WAR:

G. C. MA

OFFICIAL:

J. A. ULIO,

Major General,

The Adjutant General.

475128*-42

U. S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE

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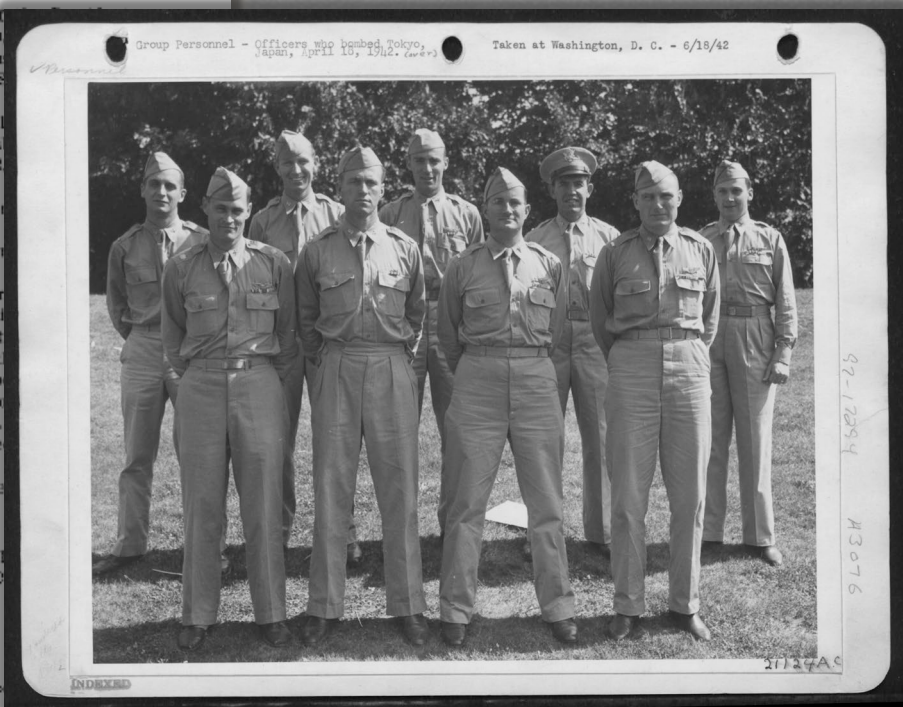


Photo: US Air Force

A copy of the personnel file for Lt. Davenport reached Jackie in late July and the Davenport family was happy to get copies of that file as well. It contained one very impressive document they had not seen before... a letter written and signed by Jimmy Doolittle, citing the courage Lt. Davenport displayed while assisting his crewmates after their B25 bomber crashed into the China sea.

Lt. Davenport was severely injured from the crash but he still put the well being of his crew before his own needs.

ADDRESS REPLY TO
CHIEF OF THE AIR CORPS
WAR DEPARTMENT
WASHINGTON, D. C.

WAR DEPARTMENT
HEADQUARTERS, ARMY AIR FORCES
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OF STAFF
WASHINGTON

June 17, 1943

To: Commanding General, Army Air Forces
Subject: Distinguished Service Cross, or
Distinguished Service Medal

It is recommended that the Distinguished Service Cross or Distinguished Service Medal be presented to 2d Lt. Dean Davenport, serial number O-427310.

This officer was knocked unconscious when the plane of which he was co-pilot struck the sea. His right leg and his head were injured severely and were bleeding profusely. When he recovered consciousness, at great danger to his life, he assisted the other members of his crew, all of whom were injured, some critically, to reach the shore in safety, despite a very considerable surf and a rough and rocky shore. In addition to this, and in spite of his very painful wounds, he kept himself going all night long while making arrangements with the Chinese bandit leaders into whose hands he fell, to transport him and his fellow crew members to safety instead of turning them over to the Japanese. These bandits were in a position to demand a fabulous reward from the Japanese for the surrender of these five American soldiers, and it is due to Lt. Davenport's persistence and persuasiveness that they were prevailed upon to forego this reward and to undertake the hazardous mission of transporting the wounded men into friendly hands.

Further, he supervised the dressing of his companions' wounds and prevented the Chinese from putting all sorts of doubtful remedies into their wounds. Without doubt, this officer's courage, persistence, and fortitude saved the lives of the injured with him and also prevented their capture by the enemy since, at the time, the enemy camp was less than one kilometer away.

*See citation
back on this
of same nomination
see O-201
and 2nd Lt.*

*O-201
Davenport, J. E.
Capt. J. E. D.*



J. E. Doolittle
J. E. DOOLITTLE
Brigadier General, U. S. Army

CONSIDERED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
BOARD OF DELEGATIONS

7

left us only one out, a forced landing. A good sizeable beach presented itself and it looked like a cinch. The only trouble would be in the approach. Well, that approach was just a shade low and resulted in one hell of a loud crash. The next thing I remember was that I was under the water and still in my seat. I reached down and unhooked my safety belt and floated to the surface. To my utter amazement I was about 150 or 200 ft away from the plane. It was on its back and in about four or five feet of water. Everybody else was up on the beach by the time I got there and the first one I saw was Lawson. He was pretty much of a mess and it sort of made me wonder what I looked like. Then I found Mc Clare, who didn't look so bad; and Clever, who was really a bloody mess.

*7/16
9/10*

It took more than a review of AAC award cards and Lt. Davenport's personnel file to gather the evidence required by the Air Force, but the WD General Order the Air Force needed did reach them in time for Raider historical records to be corrected prior to the ceremony his daughter Mimi planned to attend a short time later.

Click Below to Watch the Final Raider Toast Ceremony



Photo: US Air Force/GS 9 Lance Cheung

As anyone familiar with Doolittle Raider history knows, the surviving crew members gathered regularly for years to honor recently lost comrades and toast their 1942 mission success again. At those events, they used goblets specially made for them, each engraved with the crew member's name. In 2014, Hennessy Cognac created some drink recipes to honor the Raiders and their regular toasts and one was a cocktail named "the Ruptured Duck". On the very next anniversary of the Raider mission, April 18, 2014, Mimi Davenport decided to toast the Doolittle crew and the researcher who helped her correct their historical record by having a "Ruptured Duck" cocktail. An email Jackie received that evening from Mimi included a photo of her "Ruptured Duck" cocktail atop her copy of the book "Thirty Seconds Over Tokyo". It seems she felt the Davenport family mission to add their father's special honor to the Raider's history had been accomplished.

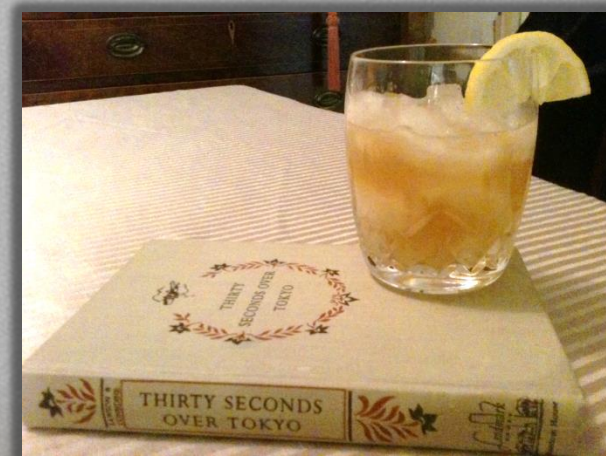


Photo: Courtesy of Mimi Davenport

A final note of thanks from Mimi
said:

“Again, you will never know what the
work you have done means to me and
my family. I think you deserve the
Distinguished Research Cross!”

No such award exists, of course, but
it was a lovely way to honor the
research professional who assisted
with her family’s mission.

-by Jaclyn Ostrowski

Military records used to verify Silver Star Medal officially awarded in 1942 to LT Dean Davenport by the (then) Army Air Corps:

- Army Air Corp Award Cards, 1942-1963 (5 award cards located)
- Electronic registry of records at NPRC (to identify the intact AF retired record of this vet)
- Official Military Personnel File, Dean Davenport (accessed with signed consent of deceased vet's NOK)
- FOIA request to NPRC -Requested copy of War Dept General Order #33, 18 July 1942, from a volume of General Orders in the Records Reconstruction Branch Library, Federal Records Center, St Louis, MO (no response or document received)
- Air Force Historical Research Agency, Maxwell AFB, AL - Archivist at AFHRA responded promptly and referred the researcher to Dept of the Army, since that AF facility does not hold WAR DEPT General Orders
- U.S. Army Center for Military History, Ft McNair, Washington, DC -The image of WD GO #33, 18 July 1942, on file there, was promptly provided by staff of the Historical Resources Branch

More recent research (2021):

- National Archives Catalog- color images of Army Air Corps Award Cards (5) for Lt Dean Davenport. (This card collection was only recently added to NARA's online catalog)