

Celebrated flight guests

Doolittle with Spitfire hero

30 seconds over Tokyo - 2 days here

"Golf game the most exciting experience"

Have you heard of the vice president in Shelloil, Mr. James Doolittle? Oh, not? But the "30 second"-general James Doolittle, which with the Tokyo raid on the 18 April received the first star on the coat arms of the U.S. Army Air Forces, may be more familiar. These both gentlemen in one person arrived at Bromma 16:20 on Tuesday for a two day visit with the American military attaché in Oslo private plane "Hellsapoppin". In his company were Shelloil's contact in England, Group Captain Douglas Bader, the spitfire phantom pilot with wooden legs.

The guests were greeted by Shelloil's Swedish executive, director K. Holthuis, and the Scandinavian executive, director C. Lejdström, and the American military attachés general Kessler and major Cornrade. When the Witchcraft landed, the first one off was an elegant, grey haired lady. It was the general's wife. Thereafter followed an American officer. The photographers flashes went off - but it wasn't Doolittle. Only after a little while did he come out, a middle-aged, fairly short but sturdy man in blue costume and grey felt hat. When asked to lift his hat and wave for the photographers, greeting him welcome, he says with a sparkling smile "I'm not a very good actor" and disappears in a waiting car.

At the press conference at Strand hotel he's talkative except for one point, and that is his conversation with King Haakon.

- Wouldn't it be rather rude to reveal what a king says, he asked. The purpose behind the general's visit is mainly to contact Shell's European representatives and discuss their problems. Doolittle is a real oil expert, primarily within the flight sector, after 13 years in the army, during and after the last world war, he was employed by Shell for 10 years and now after the war been reinstated since 6 months. The stop here lasts for two days, then the journey continues to Copenhagen, Amsterdam, Rome and eventually down to Cairo. There's not military intent with the visit, although a visit will be made with general Nordenskiöld, and military oil problems will be discussed. But the general is very interested of the rocket projectiles without for that sake coming with a theory of his own, "you know them much better than I do".

- We must seek to establish a firm international organization, he says, when it comes to peace. However one thing is certain. If USA has such a sweet prize as peace in their grasp, it will not be kept through weakness. The stronger we are armed, the more securely it is kept. And by that motto the country will act.

Doolittle of three things in particular: the atom bomb, the Tokyo raid and American civil aircrafts.

- I have flown over both Hiroshima and Nagasaki. The impact of the bomb can hardly be described. It represented about 150 tons of explosives, or 200 large planes fully loaded with bombs, except in two regards. First of all, even with the most intense bombing, you can never avoid leaving small undamaged patches - in this case every millimeter was devastated. Second, people could hide in shelters during bomb raids - here everything was over before anyone knew it had begun. A comparison between Japan and Germany, which I've also flown over, showed much larger destruction in Japan, mainly because of the flammability of the wooden houses.

The Bikini bomb was an extremely complicated experiment, demanding high precision. You had 40 seconds between the bomb was dropped and it detonated. During these 40 seconds all film cameras and timed instruments must be activated by radio, which was successful. The bomb hit at the side of the target, the reason as of yet unknown, but despite this the effect was immense. Most of the explosive power went upwards, causing no damage, and therefore one awaits the underwater bomb, which will be dropped next year, which will have a larger impact.

The American civil flight industry have moved forward fast since the standstill. The many demobilized aviators often establish themselves as taxi aviators and competes successfully at shorter distances with transportation on land, both regarding lighter goods and passengers. Facing this development we must build more airfields, and above all improve the capability of flying during storms, so the air traffic becomes even safer and as reliable as a train time. The demand of private planes is very large. The factories have orders of 50 000 planes for this year, but can only manufacture 30 000.

The half minute raid over Tokyo was a perfectly organized flight and fleet-operation. But the Japanese coast guard forced the aviators to leave early, as the fuel was more or less sufficient to reach China. 15 of the 16 planes could not navigate back to the bases, due to darkness and bad weather, and the crews had to jump. Some of these were hit by the Japanese and struck down, but the majority, that is 61, made it. The impact of the raid was more psychological than material, of course, as only 16 tons of bombs. Group Captain Douglas Bader, one of RAF's most successful fighter pilots, have a special word, and that is "modest". On V-day he received the highest honor an English aviator can receive, that is to lead the 300 Spitfires in the victory parade. His comments:

- They must have someone at the head, and it happened to be me. Otherwise my efforts in the war were very modest, he says, to which General Doolittle remarks "no, not your efforts, but yourself". It is also Doolittle who tells the story of how Bader got admitted to RAF at the outbreak of the war. Bader lost both legs in a flight accident 1932. When he filed his application the flight leaders wanted him as an instructor, but not active. Bader calmly took a plane, went up in the air, and pulled off an advanced flight, which made the spectators on the ground realize, that not one aviator in a thousand, despite two working legs, could do that. Yes, since then there was no talk of instructing. For three years Bader was in German captivity after losing one of his prosthesis in an air collision. That was when he got his spare prosthetic sent over, and thrown down, not in a passage flight as the Germans had thought but during a bomb raid. The history have reason to come up on the classic list of flight anecdotes. These three years with the Nazis have put down his mood however.

- The Germans annoy me, he says, because it annoys one that in a people with so many good qualities - the bad ones take the upper hand. Besides - if the world's most sympathetic nation wanted to take one's liberty, one would fight them anyway - and the Germans are not.

When Bader, who escaped from captivity four times, but each time been re-captured, and for a while had a top score on shot down Germans, was asked of his greatest adventure, he said after smoking his pipe:

- Lets see... Yes it was in 1936, when I won a golf tournament with 76 strokes!

Translation: Fredrik Aldhagen