

Peyton M. Magruder, Chief Designer of the Marauder



Peyton M. Magruder was born on October 19, 1911 at Fort Riley, Kansas. He was the lead aircraft designer for the Marauder program, but was also responsible for design work on the previous Martin B-10 and Model 146. His father was Marshall Magruder, a Brigadier general in the U.S. Army, and the family moved from one post to another during Peyton's early life. They lived in Manila, Yokohama, Hawaii, and several other posts, and although Peyton attended four different high schools, he still won appointments to both Annapolis and West Point.

Magruder chose to attend the Naval Academy in Annapolis and entered in 1930. He reportedly studied less and partied more than most of his contemporaries, but still remained in the upper part of his class. He was a pole-vaulter on the track team, member of the swim team, and won a \$350 bet by running 5 miles in 29 minutes and 37 seconds. However, during his senior year in 1934, he resigned during a scandal that is now part of the Academy's lore, but also to apply for enlistment in the Army's aviation school. At the time, the Army would not accept Navy officers or cadets since the Navy had its own air school.

To improve his odds of acceptance, Magruder joined a National Guard air unit and enrolled in the University of Alabama's aeronautical engineering program. However, before completing his first year of studies, he was engaged to be married and looking for employment. He soon obtained a position at the Naval Aircraft Factory in Philadelphia through a chance encounter with Admiral Ernest J. King, then Chief of the Navy Bureau of Aeronautics. Magruder's family had been neighbors with King in Newport, Rhode Island while Adm. King and his father studied at the Naval War College. Magruder stayed at the NAF for two years before moving in 1937 to a job at Glenn L. Martin Company, now Lockheed-Martin.

Glenn L. Martin Company gave the 27-year-old aeronautical engineer the title of "Project Engineer" and the task of designing Model 179 according to Army Air Corps' January 1939 specifications. This model would later become known as the B-26 Marauder. Initial design work was completed in June 1939, and on July 5, the Model 179 was submitted to a review board which gave it the highest rating of all proposals submitted. On August 10, 1939, the Army issued a contract for 201 Model 179s under the designation B-26.

Magruder eventually left the Martin Company and became President of International Chemical Corporation. He died on January 19, 1982, at Marathon, Florida.



Peyton Magruder with Jimmy Doolittle