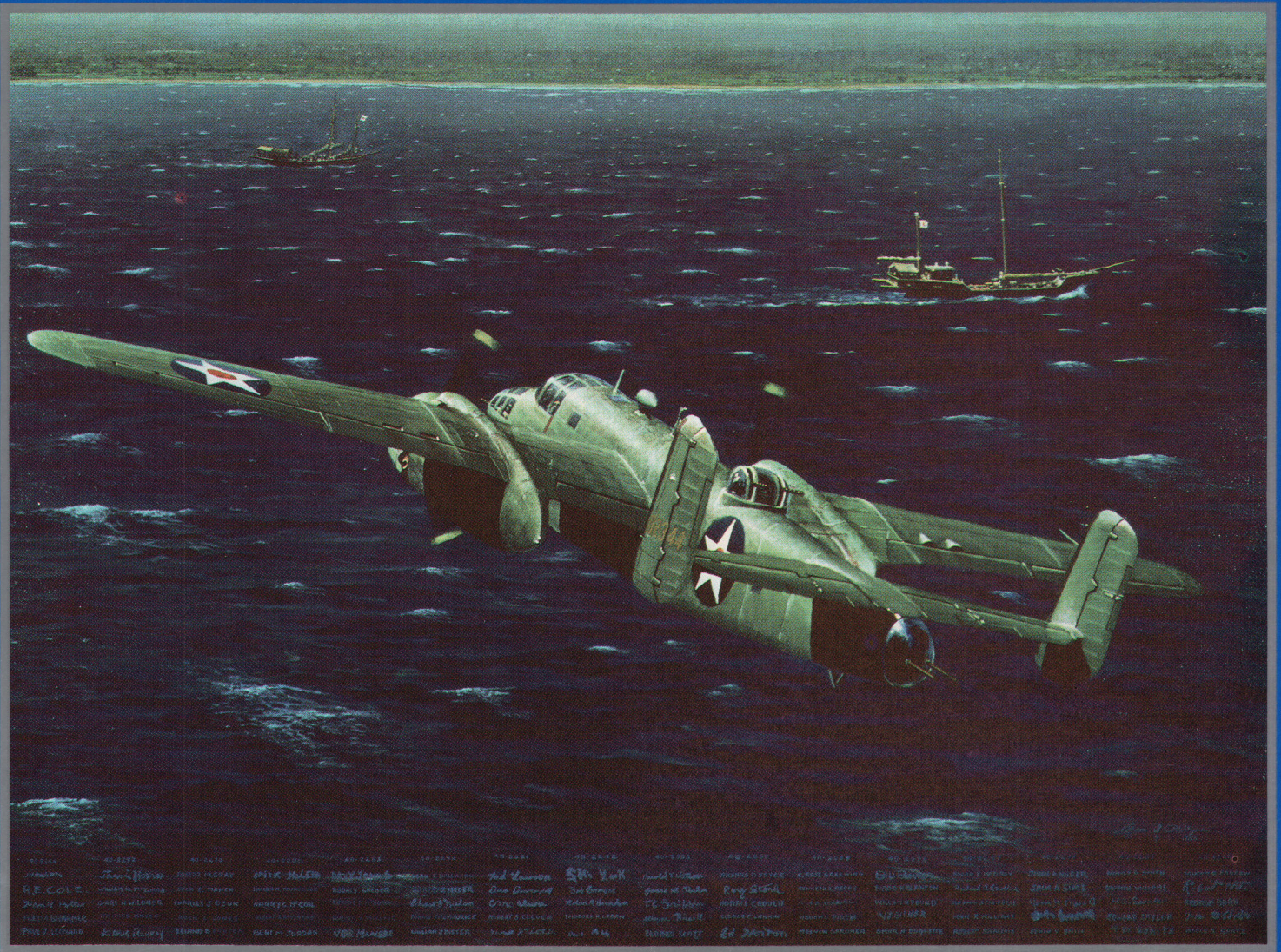




The Airmen Heritage Series
The Airmen Memorial Museum

1942

Doolittle's Raiders



The Giant Begins to Stir

On April 18, 1942, Lieutenant Colonel James H. Doolittle led a group of sixteen B-25 bombers in the first air strike on Tokyo. The retaliatory attack required 71 officers and 131 enlisted men from the United States Army Air Forces.

by William S. Phillips. © 1983 The Greenwich Workshop, Trumbull, CT



On April 18, 1942, sixteen B-25 medium bombers participated in a surprise attack on the capital of the Japanese Empire. This is the story of the men who spent a harrowing "thirty seconds over Tokyo."

We know them as . . .

Doolittle's

Raiders

by George E. Hicks

Director, Airmen Memorial Museum

"Yesterday, December 7, 1941 -- a date which will live in infamy -- the United States of America was suddenly and deliberately attacked by naval and air forces of the Empire of Japan."

Franklin D. Roosevelt

As those words ricocheted around the world, an angry and humiliated American nation sprang into action. Throughout the wounded nation, there was one overriding desire -- *avenge Pearl Harbor*. The American public clamored for action even as the military bound its wounds.

By mid-January 1942, plans began to take shape for some sort of aerial strike against the island nation of Japan. Yet, the limited inventory of aircraft and naval vessels severely hampered America's choice of tactics. We had no long-range bombers stationed close enough to Tokyo with which to launch an offensive. Available fighter aircraft were carrier-bound, and, after the December 7 disaster, the huge flattops could not be risked. The problem: "How do we get our bombers close enough to make a surprise, retaliatory attack to avenge Pearl Harbor?"

By the end of January, 1942, the concept of launching bombers from the deck of a carrier began to receive top level, highly classified study. Even as the innovators dealt with the fact that bombers had never been launched from such a tiny runway, still others were dealing with how to minimize the risks of such an operation. Aircraft carriers were simply not expendable.

At nine o'clock on the morning of February 2, the recently commissioned aircraft carrier *Hornet* steamed out through the Hampton Roads waterway near Norfolk, Va. Three things were clearly evident through the light snow that fell. There were two Army B-25 bombers lashed to the deck of the flattop and on the smoke stack of Captain "Pete" Mitscher's carrier were large hand painted block letters that read: "Remember Pearl Harbor."

Shortly after one o'clock that afternoon, the crews of the two aircraft warmed their engines. As the carrier came about, she pointed her bow into the stiff wind that swept down the deck at some 45 miles per hour. Inside the aircraft, the pilots locked their brakes and gradually increased the revolutions to the power plants that would either "put them in the drink" or carry them airborne. As the first pilot released the brakes of the bomber, the aircraft lumbered down the deck into the wind. The huge wings missed the ship's island (the stack and the bridge) by a mere six feet, but became airborne almost immediately. The second bomber repeated the feat with similar ease. Yet, could they do it with a full combat load?

With this first experiment a success, the project gained momentum.

General "Hap" Arnold, Chief of Staff for the Army Air

Forces, tapped one man to research the risks and to lead "The B-25B Special Project." Lieutenant Colonel James H. Doolittle was one of the world's foremost aviators. He had been a test pilot, dare-devil racer and now Arnold needed him as a troubleshooter and project officer. One of his tasks -- one that was to demand his full attention -- was to modify the B-25B medium bomber for a secret long-range mission.

The problem at hand was the range and the weight of the aircraft. In late January, the 17th Bombardment Group and its "associated 89th Reconnaissance Squadron" began the first of many modifications to their B-25s. Fuel capacity was increased from 646 gallons to better than 1,140 gallons by a series of collapsible tanks in the upper bomb bay, belly turret -- which seldom worked anyway -- and in five-gallon containers that could be housed in the radio operator's compartment and crawl space.

Over the course of the weeks that followed, enlisted airmen and civilian mechanics worked to lighten the bomber. The rear "stinger" machine guns were removed and replaced with painted wooden broom sticks. The radio, which weighed 230 pounds, was removed, too, for there would be no need to communicate on this mission. Radio silence would be a must, and, therefore, must be insured! The highly classified Norden bombsight was removed to prevent its capture and save weight. Then, each of the aircraft was fine-tuned for maximum fuel efficiency. Propeller blades were replaced, new spark plugs procured, and carburetors were set -- and reset -- for gas economy and performance.

In early February 1942, the commanders of the 17th Bombardment Group and the 89th Reconnaissance Squadron were asked to seek volunteers from their respective units. They were told that "... volunteers were needed for an extremely hazardous mission that would require the highest degree of skill and would be of great value to the war effort." Every individual who was approached, volunteered for the mission. All 24 crews, totalling 70 officers and 130

enlisted airmen, wanted to be included. Sergeant Joe Manske said with a shrug, "... it was the thing to do ... we were ready to do our part."

On March 1, 1942, Navy Lieutenant H.L. "Hank" Miller was "... assigned to additional temporary duty to ... train Army pilots in carrier take-off procedure employing B-25 aircraft." This, Miller thought, is going to be a challenge. Miller had never flown in a B-25, much less even seen one of the medium-range bombers! With manuals and charts in hand, he made a quick "study of the characteristics and performance of the B-25B airplane and its engine." He then began to organize a schedule of intensive training that was designed to transform the brown shoe airmen into carrier-based air crews. On the ground and in the air, the maintenance teams and aircrews began to

men volunteered for. It's a tough one and it will be the most dangerous thing any of you have ever been on. ... The operation must be made up entirely of volunteers. If anyone wants to bow out, he can do so right now."

In the brief few minutes that followed, every man present sat with riveted attention as the compact lieutenant colonel stressed secrecy and the volunteer nature of the mission. He could not tell them their destination, they could not talk about their work to outsiders and they were to abstain from speculation among themselves. Rumors, he said, could have a dangerous effect on the outcome of the mission and hundreds of lives could be lost. Then he concluded his remarks:

"Our training here will stress



On April 18, 1942, airmen of the U.S. Army Air Forces led by Lt. Col. James H. Doolittle launched a surprise attack on five Japanese cities in retaliation for the infamous raid on Pearl Harbor. U.S. Air Force Photo.

jell into an enigma we have come to know as "Doolittle's Raiders."

By March 3, most of the crews had assembled at their new duty station, Eglin Air Field, Fla. It was there that the men got their first introduction to the charismatic Jimmy Doolittle. "My name is Doolittle," he said. "I've been put in charge of the project that you

teamwork. I want every man here to do his assigned job. We've got a lot of work to do on those planes to get them in shape. There's a lot of training in store for navigators, bombardiers and engineer-gunners. For the pilots, the main thing is to learn how to take the B-25 off in the shortest possible distance with heavy loads.

We've got about three weeks--maybe less. Remember, if anyone wants to drop out, he can. No questions asked. That's all for now."

In the three weeks that followed, the commissioned and non-commissioned members of "The B-25B Special Project" labored with a quiet cohesive dedication. They stayed apart from others stationed at Eglin to preserve the secrecy of their project. Pilots practiced, over and over, the strange sequence of procedures that were required for short run, carrier take-off. Fuel consumption was carefully monitored in order to maintain fuel economy and maximize performance. Carburetors were adjusted and readjusted. Spark plugs were changed as frequently as necessary.

The hurried pace was both hectic and frustrating. Sergeant Joe Manske remembers that the "... training was so compressed. There really was a lot of confusion some of the time. Things often times did not go as they wanted, and, there was the element of anticipation that we were going to do something major even with our little bit of experience."

Indeed, the rigors of preparation were riddled with frustrations. The newly installed portable gas tanks were a constant problem. The tanks, the fittings, or the fuel lines seemed to leak constantly posing the threat of fire and a loss of fuel that would be all too precious. Then, too, none of the gunners had any training. Corporal

"Doolittle's Enlisted Raiders"

Jacob DeShazer, "... had been shown how to disassemble and load my gun, but that was about all."

In fact, the defense of the B-25Bs was left more to prayer than to bullets. The rear machine guns and the belly turret had been removed -- along with their gunners -- and the space-weight allowance given over to aviation fuel. The top turret seldomly worked properly and the nose gun, a small .30-caliber machine gun, was inefficient at best. Ground time was spent trying to get the one turret to work, keeping the auxiliary fuel tanks from leaking and the engines tuned to perfection. "By the end of the training period, most of the gunners had ground-fired their weapons on the range, had bore-sighted them and fired a few bursts in the air; however, not one of them had fired on a moving target."

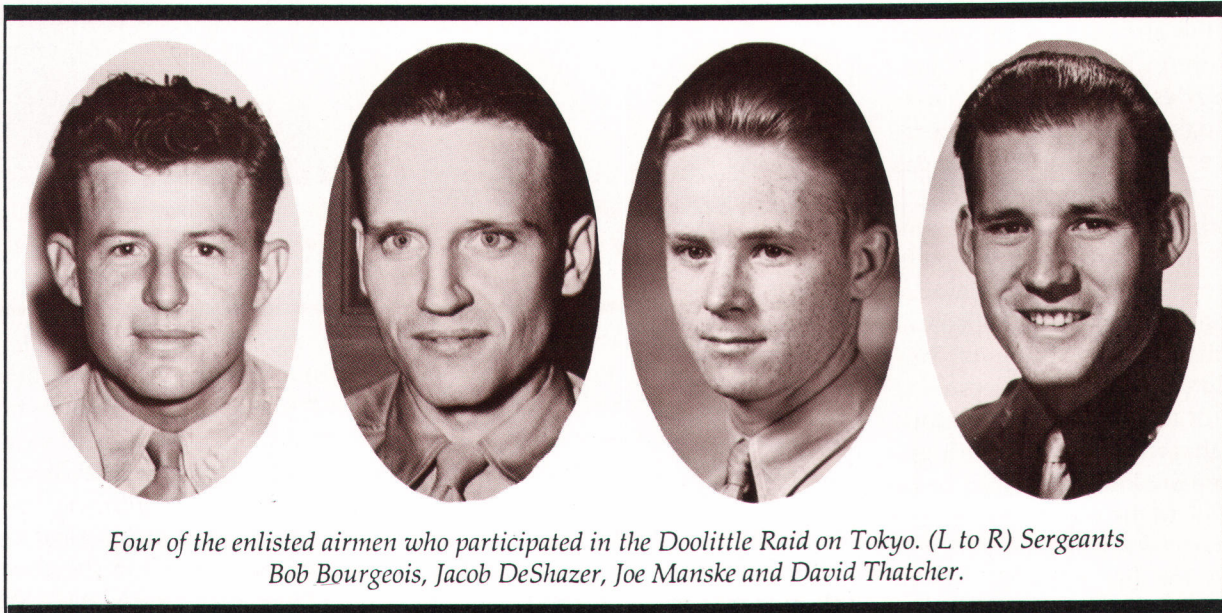
The very nature of the training stressed teamwork and specialization. Short take-offs, over-the-water navigation, low-level bombing runs and mechanical perfection summarizes the demands placed before the youthful crews. Yet, there was innovation, camaraderie and humor. Sergeant Joe Manske recalled several of the navigational training flights out of Eglin. "On one of those training flights, we got lost in a big storm. We didn't know where we were. So, we got down on the deck, followed some railroad tracks and read

the signs on the railway stations to see where we were. That's the way we got back to the base!"

By March 23, the training was as complete as it was going to be. That morning, Doolittle addressed his crews: "Today's the day we move out," he said in characteristic brevity. "Those who are going know who you are. Those not going with us will clean things up here and report back to Columbia . . . Don't tell anyone what we were doing down here." At the conclusion of his remarks to the group, he then ordered the 22 crews chosen for the trip to begin their flight to McClellan Field outside of Sacramento, Calif.

This was it! A graduation of sorts. They had trained hard, pleased the "old man," and now they were ready. Each aircraft had been diligently prepared for the trip across country as a prelude to their "big mission" and their, as yet unknown destination. The stop-over at McClellan Air Field was to be brief. Some last minute support supplies were to be taken on board and one final inspection of the aircraft performed by base personnel.

The B-25s flew on to Sacramento in small groups. Upon arrival, each crew fussed over their aircraft making sure that everything was in order and that no new problems had developed during their cross-country trek. Then, they were told to "turn over their aircraft" to the civilian me-



Four of the enlisted airmen who participated in the Doolittle Raid on Tokyo. (L to R) Sergeants Bob Bourgeois, Jacob DeShazer, Joe Manske and David Thatcher.

chanics on base for a final check-up. Doolittle had arranged for final inspections of every aircraft with the admonition that no adjustments were to be made and that nothing was to be removed without his personal approval.

Jake DeShazer fairly cringed when he heard that civilian mechanics were going to touch his aircraft. "Some of us were pretty nervous about turning over our planes to those civilian mechanics. We had really babied those planes." DeShazer's fears were not without foundation. For in the finest of traditions, not every mechanic got the word. Some carburetors were readjusted or simply replaced because their finely tuned settings -- perfected after hours of training at Eglin -- were not to factory specifications.

Doolittle, in his own words "... was madder than a son of a bitch..." at the unauthorized alterations and took his objections to Gen. "Hap" Arnold in Washington. Shortly thereafter, the civilian mechanics began to learn the meaning of the military's "sense of urgency" and each of the aircraft were closely inspected for compliance with Doolittle's specifications, *not the factory's*.

On the morning of April 1, the word was passed. The aircraft that were mechanically ready, would make one final practice take-off and proceed to Alameda Air Station near Oakland, Calif. If, after the flight, the aircraft were experiencing any difficulties at all, they would proceed to a designated hangar for last minute servicing. Whether the planes could be satisfactorily repaired or not, all crews were to go aboard. No one was

"Doolittle's Enlisted Raiders"

to be left behind.

They took off later that day, in flights of three, for the short 85-mile flight to Alameda.

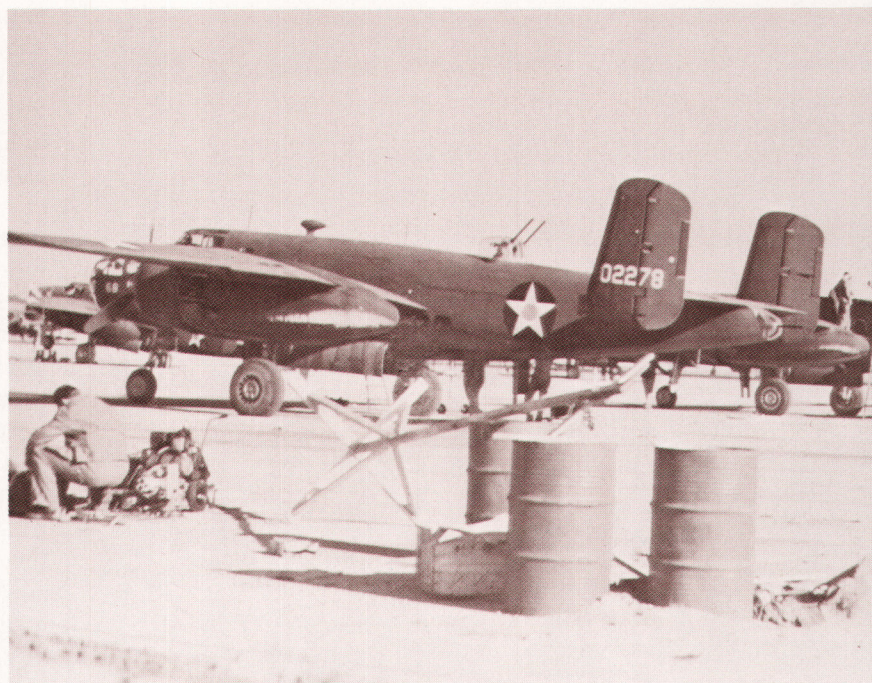
Everyone was filled with a sense of anticipation. They were one step closer to wherever it was they were going. Sgt. Joe Manske remembers the flight quite clearly. "As we approached Alameda, we circled the *Hornet* and I got to see the deck for the very first time. 'No way,' I thought, 'are we ever gonna' get off of that thing.' Then we landed and we taxied right up to the

Manske, it was like one big elevator ride, "... it went as smooth as silk. There were no problems at all. Those Navy boys really knew what they were doing." As the men watched and waited, Lt. Hank Miller gave the men one last review of "... Carrier Deck Procedure, Safety Precautions, Naval Customs and Traditions and Living Aboard Ship."

Once aboard, they watched as the final increment of Mitchell Bombers were maneuvered into place and lashed down. A total of 16 B-25Bs were placed on the deck of the *Hornet*, one more than originally prescribed. The total length of the deck still available for take-off was 460 feet.

With the aircraft secure on deck, the Army aircrews were shown to their bunks. Thereafter, each airman spent the afternoon and evening hours fending off inquiries about their mission and the most immediate question of, "Just why the hell have we got Army bombers on board this carrier?"

That first night, April 1, 1942, was an anxious one. Corporal and bombardier Jacob D. DeShazer was the



In preparation for their infamous mission, Doolittle's Raiders trained at Eglin Field, Fla. Some of the B-25s are shown here prior to their departure to California.

[Naval Air Station] dock and got our aircraft in line for loading."

As the aircraft came in, preparations were made to load the modified bombers aboard the *Hornet*. Aviation fuel was drained from the tanks and the Navy's dockside "donkey," or tractor, hooked on to the nose gear for the short tow down the pier.

Each crew followed along behind the aircraft that they had "babied" for so long. Each engineer-gunner climbed aboard for the hoist ride up to the deck of the huge aircraft carrier. For Joe

junior man of the mission and he walked guard duty on the flight deck. "It was a cold, calm spring night. As I walked my post, I remember thinking for the first time, I might not come back from this thing. It was a nagging thought and a lonely night." Gradually, though, dawn came to the California coast and the mighty *U.S.S. Hornet* made preparations to shove off. At 10:18 that morning, the *Hornet* got underway.

As they departed the San Francisco area, the men stood on deck

and could see the cars crossing the Golden Gate Bridge above them in the bright sunshine. Though the surface visibility at departure was poor, virtually everyone made the comment: "All of that secrecy and here we are leaving for points unknown in broad daylight."

Once the *Hornet* and her escort ships were safely put to sea, Captain "Pete" Mitscher put an end to the speculation and the rumors about the task force's destination. In semaphore, the message was flashed to the other ships. On board the *Hornet*, Mitscher, himself, gave the announcement: "This ship will carry the Army bombers to the coast of Ja-

"Doolittle's Enlisted Raiders"

as pure pandemonium. But the airmen had their jobs to do, too. They ran to their aircraft and went through the first of what was to become a twice-daily drill to prepare for combat action.

In the several days at sea, the airmen had the opportunity to tour the mammoth carrier, enjoy ice cream sodas from the "gedunk" stand amidship, play poker and rest. Yet, each day they combed over their aircraft ensuring that all was in order and that nothing was needed. "Doc" White scrounged more medical supplies for

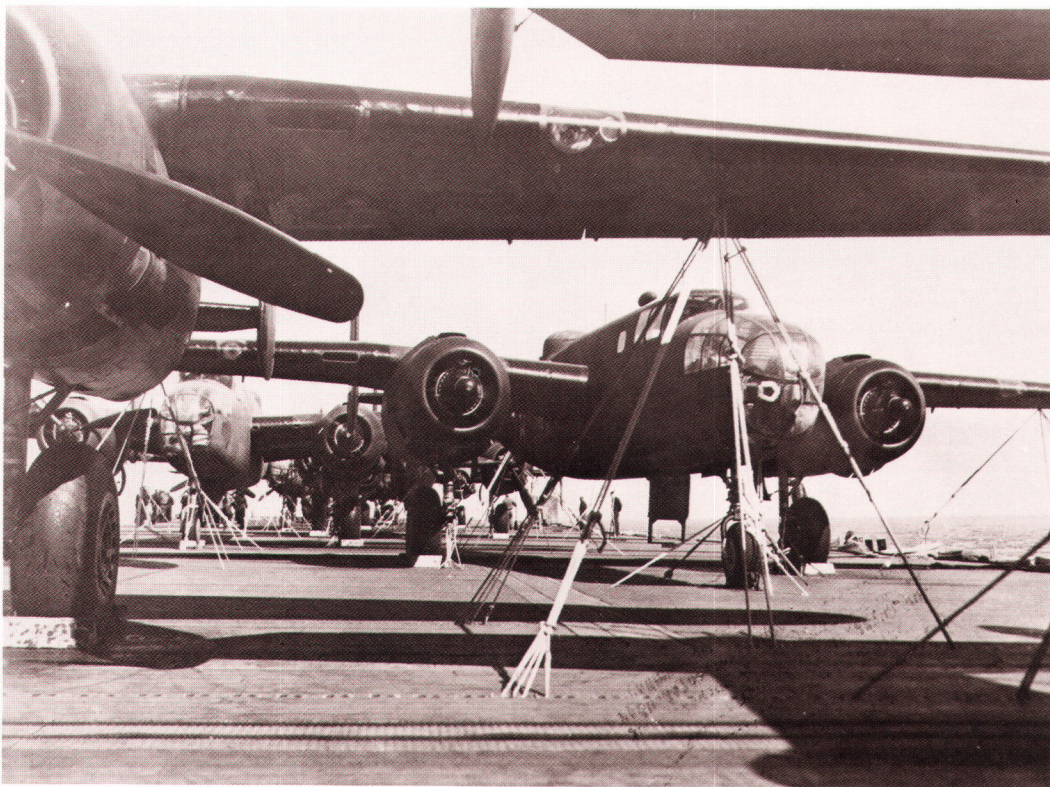
doorstep. As planned, the aircraft would be launched at a specific point, have enough fuel to reach their respective targets, then fly on to mainland China where they could refuel and fly to safety.

The primary threat to the mission was any potential loss of the element of surprise. If the task force was discovered at any point, then the mission would have to be abandoned. Then, too, if the task force was threatened by aerial attack, the Mitchell Bombers would have to be pushed overboard so that the carrier's fighter aircraft could be launched to defend the big flat top.

On mainland China, the high level

of secrecy that surrounded the mission complicated all preparations for the arriving Raiders. In essence, those in China were tasked to assemble large supplies of aviation fuel and oil without knowing why or who it was for. Radio directional beacons were to be placed at specific points to guide the B-25s to safe landing strips for refueling. Bad weather and an absence of secure communication totally frustrated the efforts of a few dedicated souls.

As the task force forged ahead, they literally had no way of knowing exactly what they were heading into. Though Japanese radar was still under development and inefficient, they were prepared to deal with a carrier-based



Sixteen B-25 North American medium bombers were lashed to the deck of the U.S.S. *Hornet*. U.S. Air Force Photo.

pan for the bombing of Tokyo. That is all." That is all? That was enough! The roar of cheers of a task force about to avenge an angry nation drifted out across the calm Pacific waters. But the calm did not last.

At dusk on April 2, all hell broke loose when the klaxon sounded and the loud-speaker demanded: "MAN YOUR BATTLE STATIONS." Two thousand men all jumped into action in what seemed to the Army airmen

the crews' first aid kits and the officers held endless reviews of the mission, the maps and the limited intelligence data available.

As for the mission itself, it was simple. The *Hornet* and their escort ships were going to make a silent approach to within 400 to 500 miles of the Japanese coast. At that point, the B-25s were to be launched for their individual attacks on principal Japanese cities; taking the war to the Emperor's

attack.

By the spring of 1941, Japanese planners had established a defensive perimeter of roving sentry ships which could provide an early warning of impending aerial attack. This parade of fishing trawlers and better than four dozen radio-equipped patrol boats formed Japan's early warning system against air attack from the sea. Their defense was based on visual sightings and radio messages

that would warn of approaching aircraft.

For the airmen aboard ship, life remained focused on the mission. Doolittle himself tried to speak to the men "once or twice a day." They also received daily intelligence briefings from *Hornet* personnel and instructions on carrier operations. In the former category, the men were acquainted with Japanese and Chinese customs and the differences in the two cultures. Military intelligence focused on the target areas. There were daily navigational courses for the navigators and physical training in the form of running laps on the carrier deck. The gunners were given some training by practice firing their weapons at target kites which trailed behind the aircraft carrier.

The aircraft were checked daily. Since the B-25s had never had any prolonged exposure to salt air, corrosion was of some concern. The crews exercised their aircraft daily and the mechanics constantly reviewed the adjustments, settings, fluid levels and leakages. Ever mindful of the pitching and yawing of the carrier, the lines lashing the wings to the deck and wheel chocks of the aircraft were checked regularly.

On one particular day, the *Hornet* was plowing through heavy seas. Despite the foul weather, the aircraft had to be exercised. Little Joe Manske was concerned about his aircraft "... so I went out on deck to check on it. The winds were so strong and the rain was so intense I couldn't make my way back from the flight deck without fear of being blown overboard. I just held on to the wing ropes. Finally, the Navy watch saw me and helped me back. Boy, did I get chewed out for being out there."

Those same high winds that pounded the aircraft demanded that

"Doolittle's Enlisted Raiders"

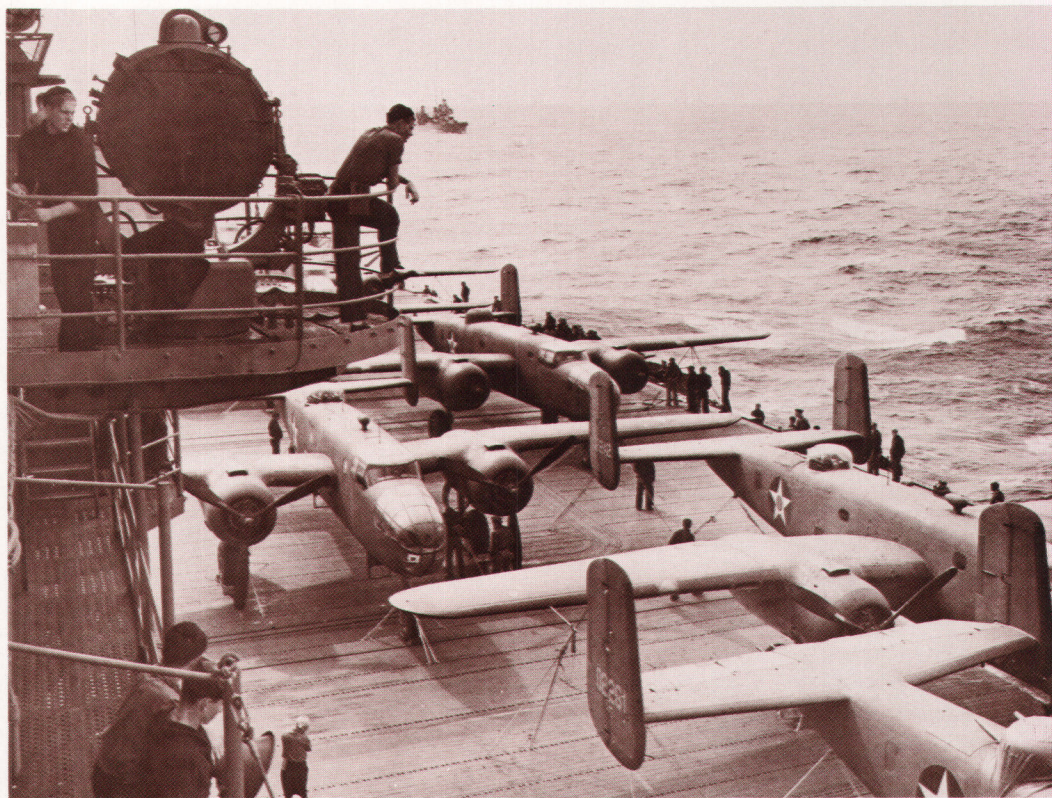
the Army and Navy maintenance crews work closely together. The recently installed temporary fuel tanks leaked almost constantly and they required monitoring. Machine guns were cleaned and oiled regularly. Control surfaces of the aircraft, buffeted by the high, abrasive winds, were carefully checked and tightened or adjusted as needed. Interservice cooperation was, in a word, inspirational.

By the 13th of April, the men had combed over their aircraft and the details of the mission, time and again. They had heard constant admonitions

"Most planes will carry three 500-pound demolition bombs and one 500-pound incendiary. You will drop the demolitions in the shortest space of time, preferably in a straight line, where they will do the most damage. You will drop the incendiary cluster as near to the others as possible in an area that looks like it will burn... You are to look for and aim at military targets only!"

Sergeant Bob Bourgeois paid close attention to Doolittle's warnings. As an enlisted bombardier, he was a trained technician and somewhat of an expert on the Norden Bombsight.

On board the *Hornet*, Bourgeois and other crewmen received regular



While enroute to Japan, mechanics and crews pre-flighted their aircraft engines daily. U.S. Air Force Photo.

from Doolittle, "do not bomb the Temple of Heaven -- the Emperor's Palace." Doolittle was insistent with the demand because he felt it would galvanize the Japanese people like "nothing else we could ever do."

Instead, the crews agreed on their targets and their tactics. They were to avoid concrete and steel structures. The focus was on military targets that would burn. Doolittle directed that,

intelligence briefings by Lt. Commander Steve Jurika. Bourgeois was amazed at the details provided about the targets in and around Tokyo Bay. As he listened, the young sergeant wondered, "How in the world does he know exactly where those targets are? Each day he gave us new locations for ships in the harbor."

On April 16th, Doolittle passed the word that his crews were to meet

on deck. There the men assembled in front of one of the Mitchell Bombers and focused on Doolittle, Mitscher and a solitary 500-pounder sitting atop a bomb dolly.

Shortly after Pearl Harbor, several aging Navy veterans sent rather unique letters to the Secretary of the Navy. Too elderly to fight themselves, they were angry at the Japanese nation that had attacked the American fleet in Hawaii. They asked that decorations presented to them by the Japanese in 1908 be unceremoniously returned to the Nippon Government. Perhaps their request was best expressed by former Master Rigger, H. Vormstein. Essentially he said, "... please attach this to a bomb and return it to Japan in that manner."

On April 16, aboard the carrier *Hornet*, Lt. Colonel Jimmy Doolittle complied with the wishes of the Navy veterans. In the presence of the Army crews and Navy support personnel, the several medals were tied to a single 500 pound bomb that would be dropped by Ted Lawson's "Ruptured Duck." The ceremony served to ease the tensions, but only for a brief time.

The following day, the tiny fleet was roughly 1,000 miles off of the coast of Japan. Admiral Halsey ordered the refueling of the aircraft carriers and the escort cruisers. As the refueling was being accomplished, Captain Ross Greening directed the joint Army and Navy crews in final preparations for the raid on Tokyo.

The Mitchell Bombers were loaded with fuel, bombs and machine gun ammunitions for the tur-

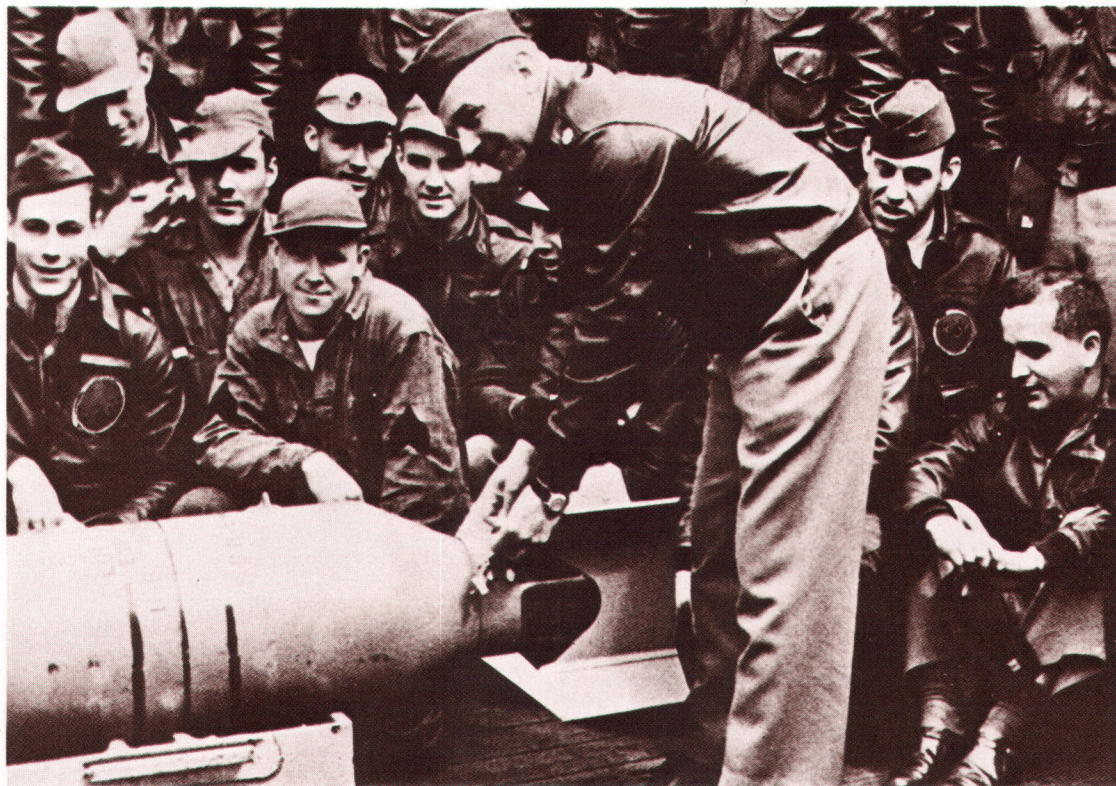
"Doolittle's Enlisted Raiders"

ret and nose guns. As darkness fell, the fleet began their high-speed approach of Japan through heavy, hostile seas and gale-force winds. Below decks there were numerous cases of sea sickness.

Shortly after three o'clock on the morning of April 18, a radar operator on duty with the *U.S.S. Enterprise* picked up two "blips" indicating enemy ships at some 21,000 yards. The task force immediately changed course to avoid being sighted. Barely two hours later, one of the scout planes dispatched from the *Enterprise* reported

read "three enemy carriers sighted at our position 650 nautical miles east of Inubo Saki at 0630 [Tokyo time]." It was time to act. Doolittle and Mitscher held a hasty conference as Admiral Halsey, aboard the *Enterprise*, directed the *U.S.S. Nashville* to open fire on and sink the picket boat.

On the deck of the *Hornet* all hell broke loose. Young Jake DeShazer was alternately preparing for the order to launch the planes and watching the *Nashville's* big guns as they fired round after round. To airmen and sailors alike, it "... looked like the whole side of the *Nashville* was on fire. Every gun seemed to be firing as fast as they could." Joe Manske



Lt. Col. Jimmy Doolittle ties Japanese medals to the tail fin of a 500-pound bomb for their immediate return to Tokyo. Sergeant Joe Manske (Second from L) is one of the observers.

Photo courtesy San Diego Aero-Space Museum.

sighting a Japanese boat approximately 40 miles directly ahead of the advancing ships. At 7:45 that morning: "ALL HANDS TO BATTLE STATIONS" brought the crew to action.

The most immediate threat was the Japanese picket boat *Nitto Maru* at a distance of some 10,000 yards. Within minutes of the sighting, the *Hornet's* radio operators intercepted a radio transmission from the small craft which

was with his aircraft which was lashed down just above one of the side turrets on the *Hornet*. "The excitement of it all, whew! We were getting ready to go. It was pure bedlem."

At that time, too, the commanders conferred about their dilemma. The task force was still some 150 miles away from the aircrafts' predetermined launch point. If the

planes took off early, the Army air- men would almost surely reach their targets, but they would have little or no chance of completing the escape flight to mainland China.

Within minutes, the task force radio officer aboard Halsey's *Enterprise* reported intercepting several radio messages. It was obvious that the Japanese Navy was on the move to intercept and confront the American task force. The priorities remained the same -- save the carriers. To Doolittle and his crew came the message flashed from the *Enterprise*: "LAUNCH PLANES. TO COLONEL DOOLITTLE AND GALLANT COMMAND: GOOD LUCK AND

"Doolittle's Enlisted Raiders"

ner Jake DeShazer hurriedly stuffed "Baby Ruth" candy bars into his flight jacket and hurried back to the flight deck.

Mother Nature had more surprises in store that morning. Topside, everyone was being tossed about the slippery deck. The big flattop, whose deck normally rides some 70 feet above the water, was fighting the heavy seas. An occasional wave would send spray over the bow as the carrier rose and fell in the furious raging storm. Despite the pitching deck, Army and Navy personnel worked feverishly to top off

to attempt the takeoff.

With characteristic class, a concerned and committed Jimmy Doolittle shook hands with every sailor he came in contact with. He thanked them and wished them luck!

Above, the dark gray sky had never looked so foreboding. The flight deck was awash in water and wind-whipped sea spray. Yet, everyone was committed to action despite the heavy seas and the intermittent squalls. Within minutes, the B-25B Mitchell Bombers and their crews were ready for takeoff. When the *Hornet* came about, the wind was roaring across the deck of the flattop at 40 knots.

It was barely seven minutes after 8 a.m. when Doolittle's aircraft was ready to be launched. The *Hornet's* Flight Deck Officer, "Ozzie" Osborne, worked with Hank Miller to launch the overloaded bombers. This was it. Osborne and Miller watched the bucking flight deck and estimated the time it would take for the aircraft to make the run down the runway. Timing was everything. The bomber had to reach the end of the ramp as the bow was on the rise.

At 8:17, Osborne circled the checkered flag above his head to signal Doolittle to increase the power to his engines. At maximum power, with oil pressure stable and all controls in the right position, Doolittle and Miller exchanged the "thumbs up." Osborne dropped the flag when the *Hornet* was on the downward plunge. Doolittle released his brakes and the deck crew pulled the wheel chocks. For the next few seconds,



Interservice cooperation between the U.S. Navy and the Army Air Forces was a major factor in the success of Doolittle's Raid on Tokyo. Photo courtesy of U.S. Air Force Museum.

GODBLESS YOU. HALSEY." Within seconds, the klaxon aboard the *Hornet* ordered "ARMY PILOTS MAN YOUR PLANES."

Throughout the *Hornet*, Army air- men scrambled into action. Some of the men had been at breakfast, oblivious to the gunfire of the *Nashville*. Some had been asleep. The order to man their planes was 150 miles and several hours early. Engineer-gun-

tanks that may have lost fuel to evaporation or leakage. Sailors rocked the wings of the aircraft in an effort to force air bubbles from the wing tanks. In Manske's aircraft, the crews were rapidly filling a tank that had been repaired the night before. In the meantime, the seconds ticked away, the Japanese Navy got closer and the carrier deck seemed to get progressively smaller to those crews that would have

everyone held their breath. As the bow of the *Hornet* reached the crest of its rise, that first bomber, with Jimmy Doolittle at the controls, cleared the deck in less than 400 feet. Everyone cheered! The mission was on.

Doolittle circled the carrier, ". . . got his exact heading and checked the compass." Aboard the *Hornet*, the crews worked feverishly to launch the balance of the Army airmen in intervals that ranged from one to 10 minutes.

Fifteen minutes after Doolittle's take off, "Whiskey Pete" rumbled down the ramp toward Tokyo. At 8:40, the "Ruptured Duck" cleared the deck of the *Hornet*. Sergeant Wayne

"Doolittle's Enlisted Raiders"

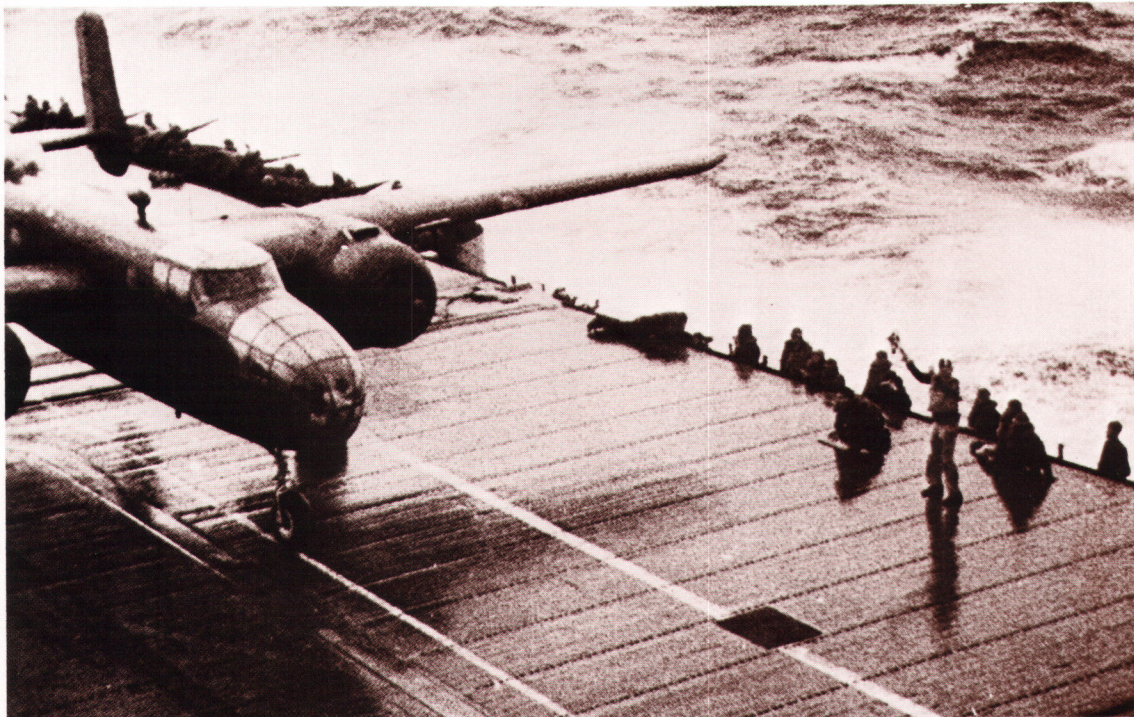
last update on the positions of the targets on Tokyo Bay. With the information conveyed, Jurika exited, the hatch was secured and everyone contemplated the mission. Lift-off eased the tension appreciably. The *U.S.S. Hornet's* ship's log documents that "visibility [was] very poor. Ship heading into storm."

Shortly after 9:05, the fourteenth aircraft cleared the deck of the *Hornet*. As the fifteenth B-25 was jockeyed into position, their propwash hit DeShazer's aircraft, the "Bat Out of Hell," piloted by Lt. Bill Farrow.

Robert Wall lay directly in front of one of the landing gear wheels. DeShazer and a sailor moved the injured man to the side. "His eyes were bright and shiny and in all that pain he just looked up at me and said, 'Give them hell for me.' I hated to leave him there like that, but I had to. The crew pulled the chocks, gave the signal for all clear and I climbed up in the hatch and took my position. That's when I noticed the hole in the [nose] plexiglas," said DeShazer. Apparently, in maneuvering the aircraft for takeoff, the tailfin of the preceding plane had broken the nose glass. It was too late to fix it. Farrow released the brakes and the "Bat Out of Hell" roared down the deck.

As the last aircraft departed, the ships began their own escape. The log of the *U.S.S. Enterprise* noted that they "changed fleet course and axis to 090, commencing retirement from the area at 25 knots." In the words of historian Duane Schultz, "This fast getaway was a maneuver that had become well-known throughout the Pacific. The men called it 'hauling ass with Halsey.'"

Once air-



Lt. Col. Jimmy Doolittle's B-25 Mitchell bomber was the first aircraft to launch from the heaving deck of the *U.S.S. Hornet*. *U.S. Air Force Photo*.

M. Bissell and Staff Sergeant Eldred V. Scott went aloft in the "Whirling Dervish" 12 minutes later. By 9 a.m., the eleventh aircraft, the "Hari Carrier" was ready to launch despite the increasingly bad weather and darkened skies. Behind the nose glass in the navigator's chair, Lt. Frank A. Kappeler's stomach was in one huge knot as he considered the ever-shortening runway. In the thirteenth aircraft, Lt. Commander Steve Jurika had climbed through the main hatch to give Sergeant Bob Bourgeois one

Farrow was at the controls when the nose started to rise. As the tail -- which was protruding over the fantail of the deck -- dropped toward the sea, the deck crew scrambled for the lashing ropes and nose gear. DeShazer, still on deck servicing the aircraft, grabbed for the nose gear with one of the sailors. A young deck hand, Robert Wall, slipped and fell. A propeller hit him in the back severing his arm. There was an ominous pause as the aircraft teetered, balanced, then settled back to the deck.

borne, the pilots climbed for the safety of the low-lying clouds. The weather aloft was every bit as rough as it had been on deck. Aircraft, pilot and crew all bounced through 30-knot head winds. Fuel consumption was high, too high.

After the take-off routine was complete and all systems were checked, flight engineer-gunner Cpl. Joe Manske did some hasty calculations. The young corporal switched on the intercom to his pilot and said, "Sir, we don't have enough gas." Capt.

David Jones replied, "That's right." Nothing more was said for more than an hour. Each of the other crews were computing their fuel consumption, figuring their chances and reaching the same conclusions. It did not look good. But, they droned on.

Aboard the "*Bat Out of Hell*," the crew was apprehensive, at the very least. If there had been a sense of impending doom, it would have been well-founded. As the last aircraft to take off, they had been required to make an eleventh-hour fuel tank replacement, had left a severely injured sailor on deck and now fought strong head winds with a shattered nose glass. That damage to the aircraft would slow them down and require them to use precious fuel.

Their primary objective was an aircraft factory in Nagoya. They were also supposed to attack in a three-plane element. That, however, was impossible as a result of the damaged nose glass. The "*Bat Out of Hell*" plodded along, knowing that the enemy would be expecting their arrival.

Each of the Mitchell Bombers fought stubborn head winds. They were alone in the clouds and fully

occupied with in-flight duties. The most critical function in the early stages of the flight was the transfer of aviation fuel from the five-gallon gas cans to the portable interior tanks that had been installed for the mission. Each container was emptied, holes were chopped in them and they were later jettisoned.

It was a little less than four hours before Doolittle's armada of 16

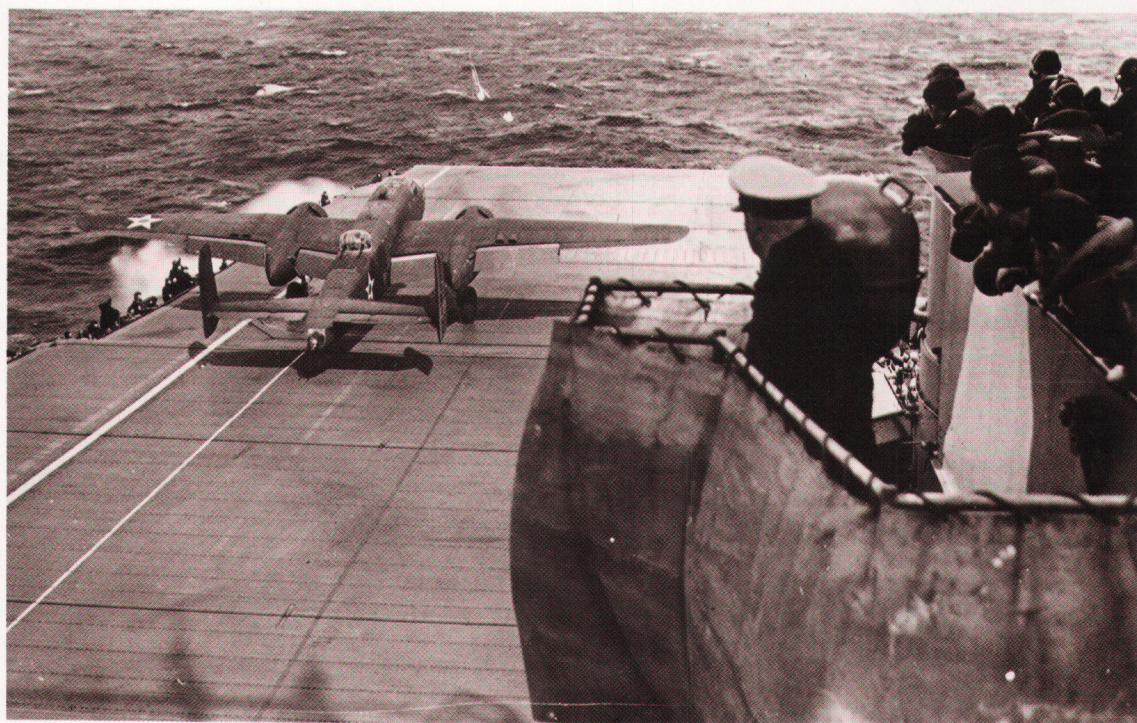
"Doolittle's Enlisted Raiders"

Mitchell Bombers, without benefit of a formation, were all slightly off course as a result of the weather and navigational complications. Consequently, they approached their targets from 16 different directions and varying altitudes.

Defending anti-aircraft batteries were caught unaware. They had never fired on an enemy aircraft before -- after all, the Divine Emperor had proclaimed the homeland as safe. Amazed and confused, the Japanese gunners did not fire their first salvo until some "20 minutes" after the first bombs fell.

With the fourth bomb "away," Lt. Gray swung away from the targets, pushed the throttles to the firewall and skimmed across Tokyo Bay as fast as the Mitchell could fly. As he did so, Cpl. Leland Faktor had his hands full in the top turret trying to repel enemy fighters, and Sgt. Jones was firing the tiny .30 caliber from the nose position. As they cut their way through the Tokyo skies, other "Raiders" were just arriving.

It was close to one o'clock that afternoon when the *Ruptured Duck* winged its way across the Japanese coast toward an alerted Tokyo. A quick check with the navigator verified that they were 30 or 40 miles



Doolittle's Raiders enroute to Japan to avenge the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor.
Photo courtesy U.S. Air Force Museum.

Whiskey Pete flew right into those first bursts of flak -- or rather, between them! Below, the anti-aircraft guns were firing fore and aft of the aircraft, at the right altitude but at the wrong speed. As bombardier Sergeant Aden Jones sighted in on his three targets, pilot Bob Gray "held her steady" at 900 feet. The first high-explosive bomb hit a steel plant, the second a gas plant and the third a chemical plant. A low-flying *Whiskey Pete* reeled from the concussion as the fourth, a thermite cluster bomb, set fire to the dock area below.

north of the Imperial City. Pilot Ted Lawson immediately turned to the southwest. Ahead, he could see flames and billowing plumes of black smoke.

Thirty minutes later, the pilot fairly skimmed across the entrance to Tokyo Bay at less than 20 feet before climbing to his bombing altitude. At 1,500 feet, the bombardier released his payload, including the high-explosive bomb and the medals Col. Doolittle had tied to the bomb fins two days earlier. Three of the

projectiles hit their industrial targets but the fourth, an incendiary bomb, exploded in a heavily populated area.

With bombs away, the *Ruptured Duck* dove and hugged the earth on its southeasterly escape route. In the top turret, Sgt. Dave Thatcher contemplated their fortunes and their fate.

"Doc" Watson's crew aboard the *Whirling Dervish* gazed out of their B-25 as they approached the Japanese coast. The sunshine and blue skies that accentuated the beauty of the Japanese homeland was in stark contrast to the purpose of their mission.

During their approach to the target area, gunner Eldred Scott reflected back on his schoolboy days and the photographs of Japan in his geography book. Even as he did, though, the terrain became more hostile. The beautiful beach and the lush green

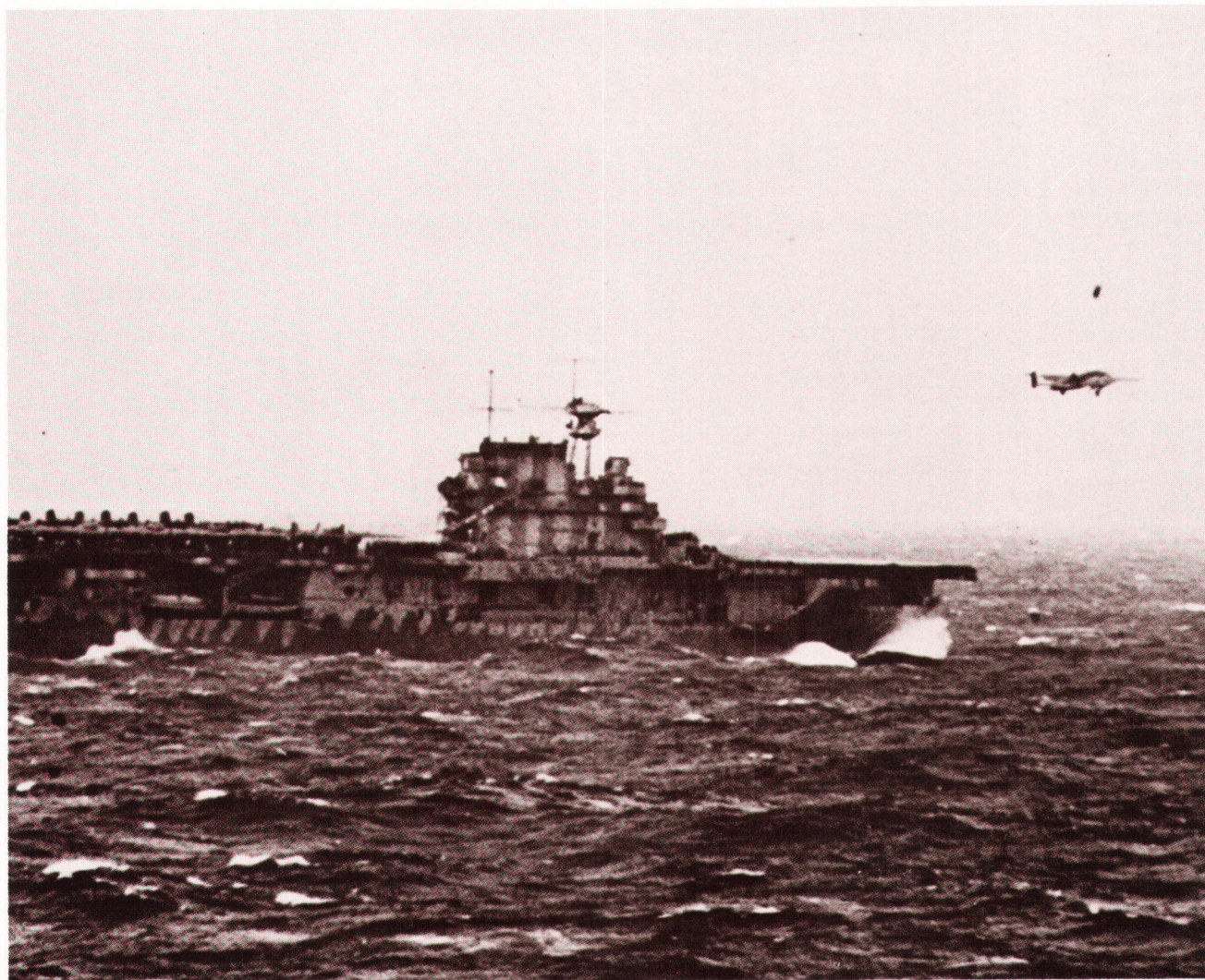
"Doolittle's Enlisted Raiders"

turf below gave way to enemy airfields and defensive positions. Ahead, Sgt. Scott could see the salvos of black clouds that meant "flak" and anti-aircraft fire. Gradually, the bursts got closer as the enemy gunners found the range and altitude of the *Whirling Dervish*.

With the flak closing in, Lt. "Doc" Watson dove his Mitchell Bomber to the roof tops. He wrestled the controls to wing-wag, zig-zag over Tokyo in an attempt to evade the hostile ground fire. As he closed in on the target area, the pilot pulled up to 2,500 feet and set his air speed. With course and speed steady, Sgt. Wayne M. Bissell focused in on what he believed was the Kawasaki Truck and Tank Plant and called out "bombs away."

In the top turret, Sgt. Eldred Scott watched for the explosions below that would record their success. Suddenly, he was brought back to reality as a lone Japanese fighter closed in for the attack. Red tracer bullets were everywhere. "All I could do was keep my finger on the trigger and aim with my tracers. As my bullets came closer and closer, the enemy fighter fell off . . . I think I got him, but I'll never be able to swear to it."

In the cockpit, "Doc" Watson had everything he could do to stay alert and stay alive. The young pilot set the *Whirling Dervish* skimming across the waves fairly churning the mid-day haze that hung over Tokyo Bay. With throttles wide open, the Mitchell Bomber ran the gauntlet of anti-aircraft fire from coastal positions, battleships and cruisers. Gradually, the B-25 out-distanced the gunfire



Doolittle's Raiders taking off from the U.S.S. Hornet, April 18, 1942. Photo courtesy of C.V. Glines.

and their pursuers.

Four hours after takeoff at nearly one o'clock that afternoon, the *Hari Carrier* roared over an enemy airfield where future Japanese fighter pilots were practicing their takeoffs and landings. The pilot decided to forego the temptation of attacking the air base and continued on to his primary target, an oil refinery at Yokohama.

Thirty miles from that target, Greening's *Hari Carrier* was attacked by four extremely fast fighters. Sgt. Melvin J. Gardner opened up with the turret guns, directing his .50-caliber machine gun in short, effective bursts. Greening dove to the deck and pushed the throttles past 250 miles per hour. As the pilot went through his evasive aerobatics, Sgt. Mel Gardner damaged, and probably downed, two of the fighters. "One caught fire and the other wobbled off, heavily damaged, although neither was seen to crash." They gradually outran the other two fighters.

As Greening approached his primary target, he was still "on the deck" when they noticed an "elaborately camouflaged" oil storage depot. With fighters on his tail, bombardier Sgt. Bill Birch dropped his load of high-explosive and incendiary bombs. The results were immediate and incredible.

"Doolittle's Enlisted Raiders"

There was, as the pilot said, "... great sheets of flame and a terrific explosion." The tremendous thermal updraft, punched the *Hari Carrier* toward the skies with such ferocity that the crewmen ricocheted off of the top of the cockpit.

Greening turned back to the south and headed across Tokyo Bay. In their wake, engineer-gunner Sgt. Mel Gardner could see the havoc they had unleashed. In their path, Sgt. Bill Birch opened fire at three patrol boats on Tokyo Bay. One of the three was immediately engulfed in flames.

It was shortly after 12:45 p.m. when Lt. "Mac" McElroy began to alter his course for his run to target.

Running with the throttles wide open, the *Lucky Thirteen* climbed to

1,500 feet over Tokyo Bay. Shortly before one o'clock that afternoon, the bomb bay doors were opened for Sgt. Bob Bourgeois.

From his vantage point in the bombardier's compartment, Bourgeois gazed down on Tokyo Bay and his targets. "I could not believe my eyes, there they were, just like that Lieutenant Commander said. Aircraft carrier, tin cans, oil storage depots. It was something. They were right where he said they would be."

Peering down his makeshift bombsight, Bourgeois released his bombs on his priority targets, striking them all. The first high-explosive bomb struck the huge dry dock area where an aircraft carrier was under construction, destroying that vessel. The second and third bombs struck a mammoth loading crane and an oil storage area. The single incendiary

bomb set the dry dock maintenance shops afire.

With "bombs away" ringing through the intercom, "Mac" McElroy turned left and put the Mitchell Bomber in a dive back toward the water. Pilot and crew had done their jobs and now the task was to conserve fuel and head for China.

Even as the first 15 aircraft



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U.S. WARPLANES RAIN BOMBS ON LEADING CITIES OF JAP EMPIRE

YANK BOMBING PLANES CARRY WAR TO ENEMY

American bombers lobbed at the Axis on far-flung battlefronts today, and military observers estimated that the Allies were throwing nearly 5000 first line warplanes against the enemy every 24 hours.

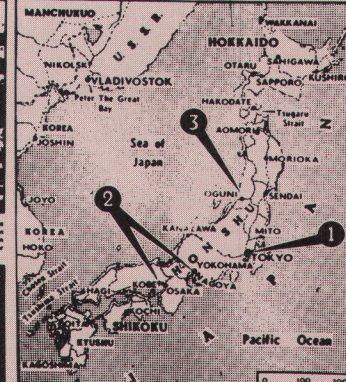
Tokyo and other Japanese cities for the first time in history.

"America is becoming a devastating factor in the war," a London military expert said, pointing to the widespread raids.

HUNDREDS OF BUILDINGS REPORTED WRECKED IN RAID ON JAPS



Tokyo was playing air raid when this picture was taken. Smoke from a nearby fire-fighting brigade is pictured in an elevated view on the right. Tokyo's Broadway. This still had just before the war with the U. S.



Japanese reports Saturday revealed that 100 planes, identified as American, had rained (1) the Tokyo-Yokohama area and the cities (2) of Nagoya and Kobe. The bombs reported at (3) were aimed at Osaka.

550,000 in WAR BONDS IS DUE U. S. FLYERS IF TOKYO BOMBING IS CONFIRMED OFFICIALLY

Chicago, April 18.—(AP)—The bombing of Japanese cities today, but it also will be a source of pride for the thousands of flyers who have bombed Tokyo.

TRANSFER OF \$2,000,000 TO AID DEFENSE SOUGHT

NAVY MAY TAKE OVER OPERATION OF AIRPORT

Tokyo, Yokohama, Kobe And Nagoya Hit in Big Three-Hour Offensive

TOKYO, (From Japanese Broadcast), APRIL 18.—The Japanese command announced that hostile warplanes bombed Tokyo, Yokohama, Nagoya and Kobe today and caused air-raid alarms to run through three of the four main islands of Japan.

The Japanese embassy in Buenos Aires, Argentina, issued a communique saying flatly that the attacking planes were American.

These were the first air raids in Japan's experience. (Thus in one tremendous sweep, the attackers, in what appears to have been the most daring air assault in history, struck at the heart of the Japanese empire; at Tokyo, the capital, population 7,000,000, the world's third city; Nagoya, 1,000,000, center of the aircraft industry; Kobe, 1,200,000, chief port of the empire, shipping point for supplying the Japanese armed forces in the southwest Pacific; Yokohama, 950,000, the port for Tokyo.)

United Nations On Offensive In Far Pacific

WASHINGTON, APRIL 18.—(AP)—Chairman of the house military and naval committee announced today that the bombing of Japanese cities, as described by Tokyo, meant the start of an offensive war by the United Nations in the Far Pacific.

"It is the beginning of a general offensive against the Japanese empire," said the committee chairman.

Official announcements said that "it is confirmed thus far that nine enemy planes were shot down" in the Tokyo-Yokohama area and that in all cases the damage was light.

Observers declared that without doubt the planes which bombed the Tokyo-Yokohama region were United States machines, said the Tokyo radio.

made their run to target, Bill Farrow's B-25, the last to take off, approached the Japanese coast and "... hedged-hopped into Nagoya." Ahead, their target was clearly marked by damage inflicted by the pair of Mitchell Bombers that had preceded them. As the navigator altered the course for the bombing run, bombardier Jake DeShazer sighted in on the huge oil storage tanks below. Cpl. DeShazer released three incendiaries and, as he called out "bombs away," the pilot banked away from the anti-aircraft fire and on to the next target. As he did so, the sound, the smoke and the acrid smell of the flak filtered through the shattered nose glass.

When the last bomb fell, the *Bat Out of Hell* turned south, away from the inferno they had set alight and headed for sanctuary in China.

On their southerly escape route,

"Doolittle's Enlisted Raiders"

Farrow kept his air speed at a minimum -- about 125 miles an hour -- and the aircraft hugged the ground. They had to conserve their fuel.

One by one, *Doolittle's Raiders* evaded the Japanese flak, fighters and gunfire. Bombardiers, gunners and the entire crew placed their fortunes in the hands of the pilot, co-pilot and navigator. Individually, and as a team, they monitored their fuel consumption and computed their chances for survival.

In the cockpit, each pilot sought the most energy-efficient settings for altitude and air speed. Engulfed in darkening clouds and rain, they kept a wary eye on the fuel gauge and the compass. Mercifully, the Mitchell Bombers were pushed along by a 35-knot tail wind. But, even as the China coast drew

nearer, the weather deteriorated. Soon, the crewmen could not see the wing tips of their aircraft. Hour after hour, the bombers droned on looking for sanctuary.

As the weather worsened, pilots and crews discussed options, as well as procedures, for forced landings in China, drowning in the China Sea, bailing out in enemy-held territory, or proceeding on to Russia, against orders. Eighty men in 16 aircraft were alone with their God, their fears and their thoughts of home.

It was shortly after nine o'clock that night -- 13 hours after take off -- when the first fuel-starved engine coughed and died. One by one, aircraft and airmen descended to points unknown. Yet, even as they plummeted into uncertainty, their names were indelibly engraved in the annals of American history.



Jimmy Doolittle's Tokyo bombing crew and some Chinese friends after the raid on Tokyo and bail out over China. U.S. Air Force Photo.

They were airmen on an impossible mission -- a mission accomplished.

Their objective had been to avenge Pearl Harbor and to take the war to the Japanese homeland. Their immediate goal was to give America something to cheer about, a psychological boost. The military objective was to shake the Japanese people's confidence in the fanatical military leadership and the notion that the island nation was untouchable by enemy aircraft or invaders. As Doolittle's Raiders churned the skies over Tokyo and their bombs took their toll, confidence in the Japanese military began to erode, ever so slightly.

Over the years, historians have credited the Doolittle Raid with more, much more. Hundreds of Japanese fighter aircraft were said to have been recalled from the expanding Pacific front to protect the Emperor's homeland. An embarrassed Japanese navy

launched an impetuous retaliatory attack on the American Navy some two weeks later and suffered a devastating defeat at the Battle of Midway - all prompted by Doolittle's Raid on Tokyo.

As for Doolittle's Raiders, of the original 80, three died during landing or bailout. Eight men were captured by the Japanese. Three of those airmen were executed and one died in prison. One crew was detained in the Soviet Union for more than a year. The remainder of the men evaded capture and escaped with the help of friendly Chinese Nationals. Many stayed on to fight in the China-Burma-India Theater. Some perished in other theaters and still others suffered or died as prisoners of war. Theirs is another story in the personal chapter of *Doolittle's Raiders*.

Suggested Readings

And Acknowledgements

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York: Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1981. Glines, C.V., *The Doolittle Raid*, New York: Orion Books, 1988.

Schultz, D., *The Doolittle Raid*, New York: St. Martins Press, 1988.

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Doolittle's Raiders

Takeoff No. 1 (bail-out over China)

P Lt. Col. James H. Doolittle
CP Lt. Richard E. Cole
N Lt. Henry A. Potter
B Sgt. Fred A. Braemer
E-G Sgt. Paul J. Leonard

Takeoff No. 2 (crash-landing, China)

P Lt. Travis Hoover
CP Lt. William N. Fitzhugh
N Lt. Carl R. Wildner
B Lt. Richard E. Miller
E-G Sgt. Douglas V. Radney

Takeoff No. 3 (bail-out over China)

P Lt. Robert M. Gray
CP Lt. Jacob E. Manch
N Lt. Charles J. Ozuk
B Sgt. Aden E. Jones
E-G Cpl. Leland D. Faktor +

Takeoff No. 4 (bail-out over China)

P Lt. Everett W. Holstrom
CP Lt. Lucian N. Youngblood
N Lt. Harry C. McCool
B Sgt. Robert J. Stephens
E-G Cpl. Bert M. Jordan

Takeoff No. 5 (bail-out over China)

P Capt. David M. Jones
CP Lt. Ross R. Wilder
N Lt. Eugene F. McGurl
B Lt. Denver V. Truelove
E-G Sgt. Joseph W. Manske

Takeoff No. 6 (crash-landing, China)

P Lt. Dean E. Hallmark ++
CP Lt. Robert J. Meder **
N Lt. Chase J. Nielsen *
B SSgt. William J. Dieter •
E-G Sgt. Donald E. Fitzmaurice •

Takeoff No. 7 (crash-landing, China)

P Lt. Ted W. Lawson
CP Lt. Dean Davenport
N Lt. Charles L. McClure
B Lt. Robert S. Clever
E-G Sgt. David J. Thatcher

Takeoff No. 8 (landing in Russia, crew interned)

P Capt. Edward J. York
CP Lt. Robert G. Emmens
N-B Lt. Nolan A. Herndon
E SSgt. Theodore H. LaBan
G Sgt. David W. Pohl

Takeoff No. 9 (bail-out over China)

P Lt. Harold F. Watson
CP Lt. James N. Parker
N Lt. Thomas C. Griffen
B Sgt. Wayne M. Bissell
E-G SSgt. Eldred V. Scott

Takeoff No. 10 (bail-out over China)

P Lt. Richard O. Joyce
CP Lt. J. Royden Stork
N Lt. Horace E. Crouch
B Sgt. George E. Larkin, Jr.
E-G SSgt. Edwin W. Horton, Jr.

Takeoff No. 11 (bail-out over China)

P Capt. C. Ross Greening
CP Lt. Kenneth E. Reddy
N Lt. Frank A. Kappeler
B SSgt. William L. Birch
E-G Sgt. Melvin J. Gardner

Takeoff No. 12 (bail-out over China)

P Lt. William M. Bower
CP Lt. Thadd H. Blanton
N Lt. William R. Pound, Jr.
B Sgt. Waldo J. Bither
E-G Sgt. Omer A. Duquette

Takeoff No. 13 (bail-out over China)

P Lt. Edgar E. McElroy
CP Lt. Richard A. Knobloch
N Lt. Clayton J. Campbell
B Sgt. Robert C. Bourgeois
E-G Sgt. Adam R. Williams

Takeoff No. 14 (bail-out over China)

P Maj. John A. Hilger
CP Lt. Jack A. Sims
N-B Lt. James H. Macia
E SSgt. Jacob Eierman
G Sgt. Edwin V. Bain

Takeoff No. 15 (crash-landing, China)

P Lt. Donald G. Smith
CP Lt. Griffin P. Williams
N-B Lt. Howard A. Sessler
E Sgt. Edward J. Saylor
G Lt. Thomas R. White

Takeoff No. 16 (bail-out over China)

P Lt. William G. Farrow ++
CP Lt. Robert L. Hite *
N Lt. George Barr *
B Cpl. Jacob D. DeShazer *
E-G Sgt. Harold A. Spatz ++

+ Killed bailing out over China, April 18, 1942.

• Killed in crash April 18, 1942.

* POW of Japanese 3 1/2 years

++ Executed by Japanese, October 15, 1942

** Died in Japanese prison, Dec 1, 1943





AIRMEN MEMORIAL MUSEUM

Founded in 1986, the Airmen Memorial Museum stands as a tribute to enlisted airmen who have served in the U.S. Air Force, the Army Air Corps and the U.S. Army Air Forces.

Located in the Airmen Memorial Building just eight miles from Washington, D.C., this museum is a maturing showcase of accomplishments. It is also designed to function as a research and reference center that documents and preserves the contributions of the men and women who have served honorably but, until now, without a memorial or museum they could call their own.

This special series of compiled histories is the first effort by the museum, through its ongoing research activities, to make available to the public the story of America's unsung heroes -- enlisted airmen.

The museum is open 8 a.m. until 5 p.m. weekdays and during specially-scheduled events. For more information about the museum and its research project, contact the Airmen Memorial Museum, toll-free, at 1-800-638-0594 or 301-899-8386.

