# **IIMMY DOOLITTLE**



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Image depicting B-25s aboard USS *Hornet* (CV-8), en route to their launching location in the Pacific. They would be flown by Lt. Col. Jimmy Doolittle and his "Raiders" on a mission over Japan's home islands during April of 1942. The USS *Nashville* (CL-43) is in the distance. Image online, courtesy U.S. National Archives. PD

The Japanese had always believed their home islands were safe from attack. <u>Lt. Col. Jimmy Doolittle</u> set out to prove them wrong.

Was it possible to send American LAND-BASED planes from an aircraft carrier to bomb the wooden buildings and military installations in Japanese towns? Doolittle thought so.

Choosing the <u>B-25 "Mitchell"</u> as the best plane for such a mission, he and his hand-picked <u>crews</u> would fly sixteen B-25s to key targets like Tokyo and Yokohama:

- Their plan? Drop <u>bombs</u> on the perceived invincible islands.
- Their point? Seriously damage Japan's sense of security.

Not all went according to plan.

On April 18, 1942, a Navy Task Force en route to Japan encountered an enemy patrol boat. Mitchell and his crews were part of the Task Force, aboard the  $\underline{USS\ Hornet}$ . Naval equipment then (this link takes you aboard the Hornet) was not like equipment now (aboard  $\underline{CVN\ 75}$ , the Harry S. Truman).

The Americans sank the patrol boat, but had it radioed Japan? Taking no chances, the "Tokyo Raiders" had to start their mission 800 miles from the target. They had planned to be 450-650 miles away.

Fuel was critical. After the bomb run, the planes had to <u>fly another 1200 miles</u> to friendly bases in China. B-25s did not have the needed range. But Doolittle and his men <u>took off</u> anyway, knowing full well <u>they</u> would be in serious trouble at the end of the raid.

Over the Japanese home islands, the Americans dropped their ordnance on factories, military installations and oil storage facilities. With night and bad weather approaching, the planes were running out of fuel. Most of them would not make the China bases.

One plane diverted to Vladivostok, in Siberia, where crew members were interned by the Russians. The others would have to choose between three bad options: bail-out, crash-land or ditch-at-sea.

Doolittle crash-landed in <u>friendly</u> China and <u>returned</u> to the States soon afterwards. But two of the planes ended up in Shanghai where the Japanese, not the Chinese, were in charge.

No one from the United States knew where the two crews were until August, when the Swiss Consulate General advised that eight Americans were imprisoned by the Japanese police.

See Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:

http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/JIMMY-DOOLITTLE-Pearl-Harbor

See Learning Tasks for this story online at:

http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicActivities/JIMMY-DOOLITTLE-Pearl-Harbor

# Media Stream



#### Doolittle Raiders - On Board the USS Hornet

Official U.S. Navy Photograph, National Archives Collection.

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View this asset at:

http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Doolittle-Raiders-On-Board-the-USS-Hornet



#### USS Harry S. Truman - Aboard CVN 75

View of USS Truman (CVN-75), online courtesy Department of Defense.

PD

View this asset at:

http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/USS-Harry-S.-Truman-Aboard-CVN-75



#### USS Hornet - Aboard WWII Aircraft Carrier

Image online, courtesy Naval Historical Center - "World War II Navy Art: A Vision of History."

View this asset at:

http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/USS-Hornet-Aboard-WWII-Aircraft-Carrier



### **Doolittle Raiders - Taking-off From the Hornet**

Official U.S. Navy Photograph, National Archives Collection.

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View this asset at:

http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Doolittle-Raiders-Taking-off-From-the-Hornet



# Raid on Tokyo - Brig. Gen. James H. Doolittle

Official U.S. Air Force photograph. Online, courtesy US Air Force.

PD

View this asset at:

http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Raid-on-Tokyo-Brig.-Gen.-James-H.-Doolittle



### Raid on Tokyo - Doolittle and Crew in China

Official U.S. Army Air Forces Photograph, from the collections of the Naval Historical Center. PD

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http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Raid-on-Tokyo-Doolittle-and-Crew-in-China



### Raid on Tokyo - Eight Doolittle Raiders Captured

Image online, courtesy U.S. National Archives. ARC Identifier 534027

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http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Raid-on-Tokyo-Eight-Doolittle-Raiders-Captured



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