



The Doolittle Raid

On 18 April 1942 sixteen B-25 *Mitchell* medium bombers under the command of Lt Col Jimmy Doolittle took off from the deck of the U.S.S. *Hornet* and attacked Japan. The audacious raid was the first Allied air attack on the Japanese home islands during the war, and would be the last until Operation Matterhorn more than two years later.



Publicly, Japan dismissed the raid as aptly named ...Do-Little. But inflicting damage was not the point. Following the attack on Pearl Harbor and the string of Japanese military victories across Asia and the western Pacific, America was shaken and in need of some sort of symbolic success, some harbinger of final victory. Launching fully loaded Army bombers from the 500-foot deck of a Navy carrier, even though they were spotted early and had to launch prematurely, with little prospect that they would have the range to recover to friendly airfields in China, Doolittle and his 79 volunteers from the 17th Bomb Group accomplished precisely that.

As a result of this daring raid America had its proof of victory. Doolittle and his men were celebrated as heroes, and Japan moved out to close the perceived gap in its perimeter defense, leading within two months to the decisive United States Naval victory at Midway.



The 17th Training Wing descends from the historic 17th Bomb Group, which supplied the planes and crews for Doolittle's daring raid on Japan.

