



AFA Statement

April 18, 2018

76th Anniversary of the Doolittle Raid

ARLINGTON, Va. – The Air Force Association (AFA) honors the anniversary of the Doolittle Raid, a defining moment in the Second World War that conveyed the strength of US forces at an uncertain time. Despite its limited tactical impact, the raid had a profound effect on American resolve and Japanese military and civilian morale during the war.

On April 18, 1942, four months after the devastating attack on Pearl Harbor, 16 B-25B Mitchell bombers took off from the USS *Hornet* 750 miles from the coast of Japan. The mission, a retaliatory strike long called for by President Franklin D. Roosevelt, was designed and executed by then-Lt Col James H. Doolittle and 79 volunteer Airmen. They relied on specially modified aircraft to carry out a long-range strike on the Japanese mainland, which for centuries had remained impenetrable to foreign attack. Though limited in damage inflicted, the raid boosted American morale and was followed by naval victories that turned the tide in the Pacific theater.

Lt Col Doolittle was swiftly promoted to brigadier general and awarded the Medal of Honor. He would go on to help create AFA and champion the establishment of the Air Force as an independent branch of the military. AFA's national headquarters in Arlington, Va. is named in his honor.

AFA salutes the brave Doolittle Raiders. We recognize the lasting lessons the Doolittle Raid offers on innovative thinking, strategic action, and collaboration. We remember the selfless young men whose courage and sacrifice helped shape the course of World War II.