CREW TWO

37th Bomber Squadron

The Hoover Room

DOOLITTLE RAIDERS

TOUJOURS AU DANGER

U.S. AIR FORCE

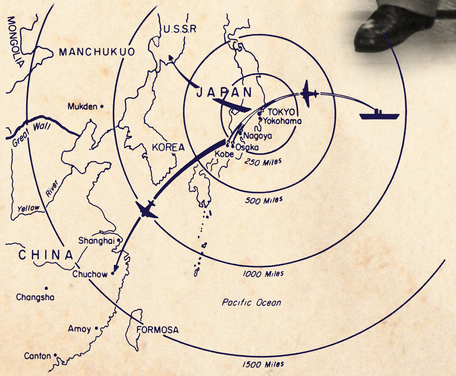
AFLCMC · AFGSC · AFRCO

B-21 RAIDER

BOLD · INNOVATIVE · COURAGEOUS

On April 18, 1942, 80 men and 16 B-25 Mitchell medium bombers set off on what some said was an impossible mission, to change the course of World War II. The actions of these 80 volunteers, led by Lt. Col. Jimmy Doolittle, were instrumental in shifting momentum in the Pacific theater and setting the stage for victory at the Battle of Midway.

These men, dubbed the Doolittle Raiders, launched 16 B-25s off the flight deck of the USS Hornet, despite the plane not being designed for carrier operations. The raid acted as a catalyst to many future innovations in U.S. air superiority from land or sea. That bold, innovative and courageous spirit of the Doolittle Raiders has been the inspiration behind the name of America's next generation bomber, the B-21 Raider.



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18 APRIL 1942

B-25 MITCHELL

USS HORNET

WORLD WAR II

TAIL NUMBER: 40-2292 → TARGET: Tokyo

Lieutenant Hoover lifted off five minutes behind Jimmy Doolittle and caught up to the lead aircraft en route to Japan. His B-25 followed Doolittle's until it reached the shoreline, at which time Hoover veered off to bomb his own targets, two factory buildings and storehouses. He then trailed Doolittle most of the way to China where he managed to make a wheels-up crash-landing in a soft rice paddy. The crew was uninjured and walked for three days before friendly local guerilla fighters found them. On April 22 they went by boat to Sungyao, then traveled by train and by foot to arrive in Chunking on May 14.

This plane, flown by Hoover, closely followed Doolittle into Tokyo and dropped their bombs from only 900 feet. (also on a factory). They then headed to China with Doolittle's plane in sight. After losing sight of plane #1 in the darkness over the Chinese mainland, Hoover landed the plane safely in a rice paddy near the port city of Ningbo, Zhejiang Province, which was then an area occupied by the Japanese army. They set fire to the plane before evacuating westward with what they might need on the plane. The crewmen stayed overnight in a valley. Like the crew ahead of them this crew was also picked up by Chinese guerrillas and escorted to the Western Zhejiang Administration.

Pilot: Lt. Travis Hoover (1917–2004)
Co-Pilot: Lt. William Fitzhugh (1915–1981)
Navigator: Lt. Carl Wildner (1915–1994)
Bombardier: Lt. Richard Miller (1916–1943)
Engineer Gunner: Staff Sgt. Douglas Radney (1917–1994)