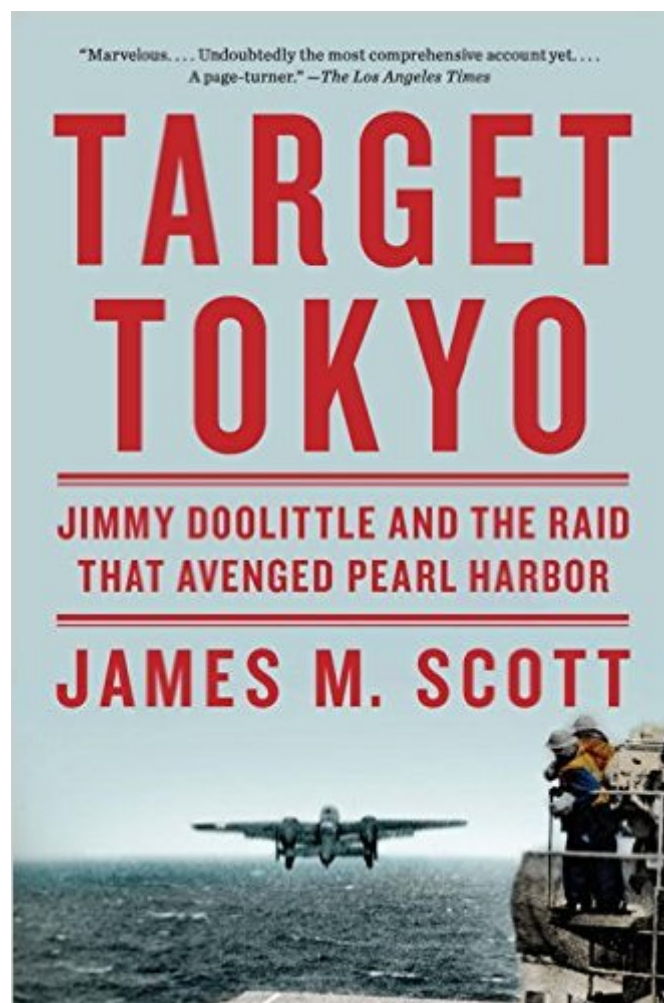


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# Target Tokyo: Jimmy Doolittle And The Raid That Avenged Pearl Harbor



## Synopsis

Finalist for the 2016 Pulitzer Prize in History. "Like Lauren Hillebrand's *Unbroken* [Target Tokyo brings to life an indelible era." —Ben Cosgrove, *The Daily Beast* In December 1941, as American forces tallied the dead at Pearl Harbor, President Franklin Roosevelt gathered with his senior military counselors to plan an ambitious counterstrike against the heart of the Japanese Empire: Tokyo. Four months later, on April 18, 1942, sixteen U.S. Army bombers under the command of daredevil pilot Jimmy Doolittle lifted off from the deck of the USS *Hornet* on a one-way mission to pummel the enemy's factories, refineries, and dockyards and then escape to Free China. For Roosevelt, the raid was a propaganda victory, a potent salve to heal a wounded nation. In Japan, outraged over the deaths of innocent civilians—including children—military leaders launched an ill-fated attempt to seize Midway that would turn the tide of the war. But it was the Chinese who suffered the worst, victims of a retaliatory campaign by the Japanese Army that claimed an estimated 250,000 lives and saw families drowned in wells, entire towns burned, and communities devastated by bacteriological warfare. At the center of this incredible story is Doolittle, the son of an Alaskan gold prospector, a former boxer, and brilliant engineer who earned his doctorate from MIT. Other fascinating characters populate this gripping narrative, including Chiang Kai-shek, Lieutenant General Joseph "Vinegar Joe" Stilwell, and the feisty Vice Admiral William "Bull" Halsey Jr. Here, too, are indelible portraits of the young pilots, navigators, and bombardiers, many of them little more than teenagers, who raised their hands to volunteer for a mission from which few expected to return. Most of the bombers ran out of fuel and crashed. Captured raiders suffered torture and starvation in Japan's notorious POW camps. Others faced a harrowing escape across China—via boat, rickshaw, and foot—with the Japanese Army in pursuit. Based on scores of never-before-published records drawn from archives across four continents as well as new interviews with survivors, *Target Tokyo* is World War II history of the highest order: a harrowing adventure story that also serves as a pivotal reexamination of one of America's most daring military operations. 16 pages of illustrations

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## Customer Reviews

My father, S. Sgt. David J. Thatcher, the engineer/gunner on Crew #7, "The Ruptured Duck," is one of the two surviving members of the Doolittle Raid. (Col. Richard E. Cole is the other.) I serve as president of a non-profit group, The Children of the Doolittle Raiders, Inc. and have a vested interest in seeing the Doolittle Raid portrayed accurately and doing everything that I can to keep the legacy of these true American heroes, the Doolittle Raiders, alive. I am pleased to report that James M. Scott, the author of "Target Tokyo: Jimmy Doolittle and the Raid That Avenged Pearl Harbor" has provided a truly accurate portrayal of the Doolittle Raid and delivered a major payload with his new book, much as the 80 volunteers comprising the Doolittle Raiders delivered their "surprise" to Japan 73 years ago. Not since "Thirty Seconds Over Tokyo" has a book on the Doolittle Raid been so vivid and alive in its presentation. I have now read Scott's book three times and each time I learn something new. Scott's research spanning four continents has unearthed a treasure trove of new and previously unpublished material in regard to the Raid and its aftermath. (Thanks to Scott's research, I now have in my possession several documents related to my father's role in the Doolittle Raid and its aftermath -- items I would not otherwise have been privy to.) Scott's writing style is gripping and takes the reader up close to the Raid -- like a fly on the wall -- from its infancy in the immediate aftermath of Pearl Harbor, to its planning and later the training phase at Eglin Field, to the white knuckle phase when the 16-ship flotilla is steaming toward Japan, to the discovery phase when the Raiders are forced to take off hundreds of miles before they realistically should have -- turning the Raid into an almost certain "suicide" mission, to the bombing phase when the B-25s are over Japan and dropping their medal-strewn payloads on Tokyo and other cities, to the bailout and crash landing phase when the Raiders enter unknown Chinese territory in pitch dark conditions, and to the conclusion when some of the Raiders have been captured by the Japanese and forced to suffer horrible torture and even death in some cases, and some 250,000 Chinese -- for the assistance Chinese guerillas and others gave to the Raiders including my father -- have been forced to pay with their lives at the hands of their brutal Japanese occupiers who exhibit truly subhuman

animalistic savagery running the gamut of immolations, rapes, drownings, executions and bacteriological warfare. Through it all, Scott keeps the reader engaged, eagerly turning page after page, wanting to learn more and unable to put the book down. This is history at its finest. Bravo to James Scott and his excellent book, "Target Tokyo." Postscript: Since I first posted this review a few months ago, I had the chance to travel to China in early September and "follow" in my father's footsteps after his plane, "The Ruptured Duck," crash landed in the surf off a small island in the South China Sea. I saw the spot where the plane crashed, visited some of the places his crew stayed while escaping pursuing Japanese troops, visited the Enze Clinic where his pilot, Ted Lawson, had his leg amputated and his life saved, and visited Quzhou where my father and many of the Raiders stayed in an air raid shelter/cave before ultimately escaping China. During my visit to China, I was struck by how much the Chinese still revere the Doolittle Raiders. Despite the massive loss of Chinese lives at the hands of the Japanese in retaliation for the assistance the Chinese provided the Raiders, the Raiders are venerated as heroes in much of China, especially the areas like Zhejiang Province, where they traveled through after parachuting or crash landing their planes and escaping to ultimate safety. If not for the generosity and bravery of the Chinese, I am firmly convinced that my father and many of the Raiders would have been captured and possibly executed by the Japanese. Our nation owes a debt of gratitude to the Chinese for their help in saving the Raiders. As my father told me when I was visiting with him in late July at his home in Missoula, Montana, about his role in the Doolittle Raid and its aftermath: "The Chinese treated us like royalty. They had nothing, but they gave us everything they had."

James Scott's latest book, "Target Tokyo," vaults him into the upper echelons of naval if not all historians and American storytellers. While many readers have seen assorted, typically brief references to Jimmy Doolittle's earthshaking raid on Tokyo in April of 1942, "Target Tokyo" brilliantly chronicles the entire sequence of events in a compelling narrative, from the agonies of Pearl Harbor through the post-war trials of Japanese war criminals that alternately gratified and stunned the world with their unheralded and unjustified leniency. Through it all, the heroism of Doolittle and his 79 fellow raiders radiates like a blast furnace. Scott quickly demonstrates his soaring literary skills in portraying an America that was caught asleep at the switch at Pearl, but one whose government, military and public were ripe for a dramatic counterattack against Japan. As Scott makes clear, FDR, along with bombastic Chief of Naval Operations Ernest King, affable Commanding General of the U.S. Army Air Forces Henry Hap Arnold and their senior staff were eager to begin planning for a high profile

assault on Japan's evil war machine headquartered in Tokyo. The goal was to convince Japan, as their own naval chief Admiral Isoroku Yamamoto had warned repeatedly, that in attacking the United States they had picked a fight with precisely the wrong opponent. Once the broad outline of the effort to attack Tokyo directly crystalized, it was clear that the leader of such a starkly dangerous and high profile mission had to be cut from extraordinary cloth. Fortunately for the Allies then and all Americans today, that person stood ready to launch his team into history: brilliant, feisty Lieutenant Colonel Jimmy Doolittle. Every ounce of Doolittle's towering aeronautical and leadership skills, packed into a lean 5'4" frame, was brought to bear on the raid. The young airmen who joined the mission were all volunteers and remained committed to striking back at Japan in the face of mounting evidence that in doing so they were likely signing their own death warrants. As it happened, even after rigorous planning which included intense training and practice in the previously unheard of feat of flying fully loaded B-25 bombers off an aircraft carrier, their ship, the USS Hornet, was spotted by the Japanese hundreds of miles farther from Tokyo than had been planned. This fact alone and the early launch that it precipitated virtually assured that all 16 of the bomber crews would run out of gas and crash land if not get shot down first. And crash land they did: fifteen in China, the predetermined destination-- though not once on a designated field-- and one in Russia. For anyone still breathing normally after reading about the raid itself, Scott's description of the fate of the crews after Tokyo manages to be at once wrenching if not stomach turning and uplifting as the men's valor withstood every blow. It takes a steady handed master researcher and writer to keep the reader glued to every page, every detail, every heart stopping danger, every bomb and every shot. And the author does precisely that. Throughout the book, Mr. Scott makes it clear that in exchange for the raiders' heroic success and the bombing damage they dealt, including 87 dead, and the tremendous boost to American morale, the Allies paid a horrific price. While Japan wrung its hands over even the possibility that its homeland could be reached by enemy planes and outright lied when it claimed that the raiders had deliberately targeted civilians, it orchestrated massive public relations efforts which often trumped publicity efforts in the U.S. and abroad. Far worse, Japan took out the worst of its vengeance on China where over 250,000 civilians were slaughtered, often in ways nearly too vile to imagine with Nanking in the eye of this ghastly hurricane. Thus in exchange for a few hundred casualties of their own and a spray of damaged facilities, Japan murdered over a quarter million innocent human beings. Scott's penchant for thorough research, which took him around the globe, shows through on every page of Target Tokyo. His liberal use of direct quotes from those directly involved in the raid and those in close observance makes the entire story spring to life in vivid detail. For all

intents and purposes, you are right there with Doolittle and his men from pre-mission bravura right through to the suffering and death they endured and the celebrations the survivors basked in. These were our nation's sons, husbands, nephews, brothers and buddies. Their humanity glows throughout: Shorty Manch appeared alongside Ted Lawson's Ruptured Duck with a fruitcake tin in hand. "Hey," he shouted up to bombardier Bob Clever. "Will you-all do a fellow a big favor and carry my phonograph records under your seat? I'll take my record-player along in my plane and we'll meet in Chungking and have us some razz-ma-tazz." [flight instructor Hank] Miller stopped by as well, extending his hand for a farewell shake. I wish to hell I could go with you. The raiders' individual personalities are so artfully etched that the reader is staggered all the more at the gruesome execution of three of Doolittle's airmen by the Japanese: Billy Farrow, Dean Hallmark, and Harold Spatz. Quotes from young Farrow's pre-war writings are touching to the point of making the reader feel almost as if he or she has lost a close friend. For that matter, it is nearly impossible to not feel a brotherly bond with Doolittle and each of his men. Their collective sacrifices, including those associated with intense and prolonged torture, are beyond measure. In the end, this reader was left holding his head a little higher, even more proud if that is even possible of our one and only greatest generation. Their story is one for the ages. Target Tokyo will ensure that the remarkable legacy of Jimmy Doolittle's raiders endures.

My father, like Jeff Thatcher's, was also a Doolittle raider. I mention this because, while I deeply regret not having asked him more detailed questions about the raid (he died in 1967), I treasure my memories of the details he shared. (Like most other men of his generation, he did not open up about his wartime experiences. I think it was a combination of modesty, a natural disinclination to dwell on painful memories and a feeling, often stated, that he simply did his duty). James Scott's book is brilliant. Things I learned from my father are confirmed and, much more importantly, are placed in historical perspective. Information my dad did not have is supplied. For example, Scott dives deeply into Japanese records to explain how sixteen American bombers were able to carry out their mission, and escape Japanese airspace, even though the Japanese knew they were coming. There is a new generation of historians who, through research, blend the human element into factual narrative. While Scott's book is pure history, it reads like a well crafted novel. Anyone who loves history will love this book. Anyone who likes historical novels will love this book, even though it is 100% factual. I came away with a much better appreciation of how isolated events can have unanticipated results of great significance, both good and bad.

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