

MEDIA ADVISORY

For Immediate Release
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**75TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE DOOLITTLE RAID
TO BE COMMEMORATED AT WORLD WAR II MEMORIAL**
*A wreath will be laid at the Pacific Arch of the Memorial in honor of
all those who took part in this daring and historic military action.*

Washington, DC – On Tuesday, April 18th at 2:30 pm, the Friends of the National World War II Memorial will host a brief ceremony and wreath presentation at the World War II Memorial’s Pacific Arch to mark the 75th anniversary of America’s daring “Doolittle Raid” over Tokyo, Japan on April 18, 1942.

Less than four months after Imperial Japan launched a surprise military attack on United States military installations on the island of Oahu in Hawaii, America struck back with an air raid on Tokyo and other key Japanese cities. The attack, the first on the main island of Japan, was planned and led by Lieutenant Colonel James “Jimmy” Doolittle of the United States Army Air Forces. Sixteen B-25B Mitchell medium bombers, each with a crew of five men, were launched from the U.S. Navy’s aircraft carrier USS Hornet deep in the Western Pacific Ocean. The plan called for them to bomb military targets in Japan, and to continue westward to land in China. Fifteen aircraft did reach China, but all crashed. Fortunately, with the help of the Chinese people, most of the Doolittle Raiders safely reached friendly forces (Japanese forces later executed as many as a quarter million Chinese citizens in retaliation for this assistance). The 16th aircraft landed at Vladivostok in the Soviet Union. That B-25 was confiscated and its crew interned for more than a year before escaping into Persia.

All but three of the 80 crew members initially survived the mission. Eight airmen were captured by the Japanese Army in China; three of those were later executed. Fourteen complete crews, except for one crewman who was killed in action, returned either to the United States or to American forces.

The Doolittle Raid caused little physical damage to Japan, but it gave a needed lift to American morale and cast doubt in Japan on the ability of its military leaders to defend their home islands.

To mark this significant event in U.S. history, Friends will be joined by WWII veterans to present wreaths at the World War II Memorial’s Pacific Arch in recognition of all those who took part in the Doolittle Raid 75 years ago. Friends’ Chairman Josiah Bunting III will offer remarks on behalf of the host organization. The ceremony will commence with the presentation of colors by the Military District of Washington’s Armed Forces Color Guard and will conclude with the playing of Taps by a bugler from the U.S. Air Force Band.

Who: World War II Veterans
Josiah Bunting III, Chairman, Friends of the National WWII Memorial
Honor Flight Tri-State
Military District of Washington Armed Forces Color Guard, Chaplain, and Bugler

Where: National World War II Memorial
17th Street between Constitution and Independence Avenues
Washington, DC

When: Tuesday, April 18, 2017 at 2:30 PM

About Friends of the National World War II Memorial (www.wwiimemorialfriends.org):

Founded in 2007, the Friends of the National World War II Memorial (Friends) is a 501(c)(3) organization dedicated to honoring and preserving the national memory of World War II. To meet this mission, Friends sponsors an annual public lecture series featuring prominent historians; hosts an annual teachers conference in Washington, DC; and collects and archives video interviews of World War II veterans and other members of the Greatest Generation. Additionally, Friends has the lead responsibility in planning and staging five or more major national commemorative events annually and each summer sponsors a dozen free public performances of military bands at the Memorial. Friends relies on private support to breathe new life into the Memorial and to ensure that it continues to serve as a living lesson for all Americans.

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