

GOODFELLOW'S "DOOLITTLE RAIDER"

Sixteen B-25 Mitchell medium bombers left the flight deck of the USS Hornet to embark upon a daring daylight raid on Japan. Piloting the 16th Mitchell was Lt. William Farrow, a graduate of Goodfellow's first class and namesake of Farrow Street.

Just after noon on April 2, 1942, a small Navy aircraft carrier left Alameda Naval Air Station heading west into the Pacific. Strapped to the deck of the carrier *Hornet* were 16 dark-green bombers in place of the normal complement of fighters and torpedo planes. No less extraordinary was the carrier's destination. "The target of this task force," the *Hornet's* skipper announced as it cleared the Golden Gate Bridge, "is Tokyo!"

The last enemy to threaten the Japanese mainland had been Kublai Khan, in 1281. But this was four months after Pearl Harbor, and President Roosevelt was anxious for some way to strike at Japan and boost American morale. The plan was for the bombers to take off from the carrier when it reached a point 450 to 650 miles from Japan, strike targets in Tokyo and three other cities, and then land at friendly airfields on the Chinese mainland.

Leading the mission was Lt. Col. Jimmy Doolittle, a former test pilot with a Ph.D. in aeronautical science. Doolittle's first task had been to select a plane. Choosing the B-25 Mitchell for its range, capacity, and ability to take off in limited space, Doolittle turned to the 17th Bomb Group for his crews. As the most experienced B-25 unit in the Army Air Corps, the 17th provided Doolittle all the volunteers he required.

By April 18, the task force had moved within 800 miles of Tokyo when a Japanese picket boat spotted it. Despite the distance, the decision was taken to launch. All 16 aircraft reached their targets in Japan and released their bombs. However, darkness arrived before the aircraft reached China and, low on fuel, the pilots were left to ditch at sea, bail out, or attempt a crash landing. Even so, the effect of the mission surpassed expectations: Japan withdrew forces from war zones to defend the home islands against further attack; American morale soared; and the raid prompted Japan to attempt an invasion of Midway, with decisive results for the course of the war in the Pacific.

LT WILLIAM FARROW

At the controls of *Bat out of Hell*, the 16th aircraft, was Lt William Farrow. Tall and angular, the South Carolina native had arrived in San Angelo in February 1941 as a member of flying cadet class 41-E, Goodfellow's first class. Graduating in April, Farrow went on to Advanced training at Kelly Field before taking an assignment as a B-25 pilot with the 17th Bomb Group at Pendleton, Oregon. While there, Farrow volunteered for what Doolittle described only as a "special aviation project."



For most of the 16 Mitchells on the Doolittle mission, the target was Japan. Farrow's assignment, however, was Nagoya, an industrial city south of the capital. After dropping his four incendiary clusters on an oil depot and an aircraft factory from an altitude of 100 feet, Farrow continued west across the East China Sea for Chuchow, China, beyond the line of Japanese occupation. Making landfall at night, the crew was unable to establish radio contact with the ground and, as the fuel warning light indicator came on, bailed out over what, unfortunately, proved to be Japanese-held territory.



Farrow (right) at Eglin Field to practice short take-offs for Doolittle's "special aviation project"

The crew survived the jump but could not evade capture. Imprisoned with the crew of another Mitchell from the raid – this one piloted by Lt. Dean Hallmark, a native of Robert Lee, Texas – Farrow and seven others were moved first to Tokyo and then to Shanghai. There they were tortured and

confined in wretched conditions on a starvation diet, to the extent that Lt. Hallmark, called "Jungle Jim" for his great size and strength, could no longer walk or even stand. A mock trial in August condemned the eight to death for the raid but the Japanese subsequently commuted the sentences of five to life imprisonment. For the other three -- Farrow, Hallmark, and Farrow's engineer-gunner, Sgt. Harold Spatz – they were led to a local cemetery in October, tied to small crosses, and shot. "Don't let this get you down," 23-year old Bill Farrow had written his mother. "Just remember that God will make everything right, and that I will see you again in the hereafter." And then, in a postscript, he recalled *Thanatopsis* by Bryan:

*So live that when thy summons comes to join
The innumerable caravan that moves
To that mysterious realm, where each shall take
His chamber in the silent halls of death,
Thou go not, like the quarry slave at night,
Scourged to his dungeon, but, sustained and soothed
By an unfaltering trust, approach thy grave
Like one who wraps the drapery of his couch
About him, and lies down to pleasant dreams.*