REUNION

THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF THE UNITED STATES AIR FORCE PULLED OUT ALL STOPS TO HONOR THE 75TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE DOOLITTLE TOKYO RAIDERS

PHOTOGRAPHY BY SCOTT SLOCUM

The 75th anniversary of the Doolittle Raid on Japan was held this past 17/18 April at the National Museum of the USAF. Dick Cole, as the Last Raider, was the honored guest of the event that was attended by thousands. It should be noted that of the 80 Raiders, three lost their lives when their aircraft went down during the raid, three were victims of a fake "trial" and executed by the Japanese, and one died as a POW. Twelve Raiders died during the remainder of the war, with ten of those KIA.

The NMUSAF put on a first-class event and the two-day tribute began on 17 April, with civilian B-25s arriving from around the country. The eleven planes were placed on static display on the museum grounds so that the visiting public could get a good look at each aircraft and speak with the crews. The event continued on the Wright-Patterson AFB flight line as two North American/Rockwell B-1B Lancer strategic bombers from the 28th Bomb Wing at Ellsworth AFB, South Dakota, arrived and were positioned on static display outside the base operations building for a nose art unveiling ceremony and christening of one of the aircraft as the *Ruptured Duck* — in honor of Ted Lawson and his crew's B-25B that took off from USS *Hornet*.

On the morning of the 18th, Lt. Col. Cole was joined by members of his family, family members of S/Sgt. David Thatcher, and honorary Raiders and senior USAF leaders for a private Goblet turnover ceremony in the Arnold Room of the Museum. Cole turned over Thatcher's goblet to honor his fellow Raider, who passed away on 22 June 2016.

Cindy Chal, Cole's daughter, stated, "The Raiders' never felt like they were any more important than the other WWII personnel. They were amazed to be singled out and treated with such honor. They never looked at the mission as any type of one-way, or suicide mission.'

Later in the day, spectators gathered at the NMUSAF's Memorial Park to honor the 79 Raiders who had passed. The B-25s performed two flyovers prior to the start of the service, one in missing man formation. This was followed by speeches from various dignitaries. At the conclusion of the memorial service, two B-1Bs overflew the Memorial Park at a speed of .9 Mach and went into an unrestricted climb as a tribute to the Doolittle Tokyo Raiders who pioneered the concept of global strike — the idea that no target on earth is safe from the reach of American airpower.

Scott Slocum picked four of the Mitchells to symbolize the Doolittle Tokyo Raid. The aircraft were: *Panchito, God and Country, Barbie*, and *Betty's Dream*. **WI**

On 18 April 1942, airmen of the US Army Air Forces, led by Lt. Col. James H. (Jimmy) Doolittle, carried the Battle of the Pacific to the heart of the Japanese empire with a surprising and daring raid on military targets at Tokyo, Yokohama, Yokosuka, Nagoya, and Kobe. This heroic attack against these major cities was the result of coordination between the Army Air Forces and the US Navy, which carried the 16 North American B-25 medium bombers aboard the carrier USS *Hornet* to within take-off distance of the Japanese Islands. Here, a pair of alert escorts follow the USS *Hornet* to protect her lethal cargo of B-25 bombers. (USAF)