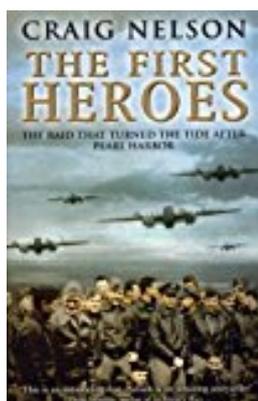


[PDF] The First Heroes

Craig W. Nelson - pdf download free book



Books Details:

Title: The First Heroes
Author: Craig W. Nelson
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Description:

From Publishers Weekly Planned in the aftermath of Pearl Harbor at the behest of President Roosevelt, the U.S. bombing raids on Japan in spring 1942 were the first U.S. strikes of the war. Colonel Jimmy Doolittle of the Army Air Force, in consultation with the U.S. Navy, planned for B-25 medium bombers to take off from the aircraft carrier U.S.S. Hornet, hit targets including Tokyo and land at airfields in unoccupied China. The project was innovative and risky, as no medium bomber had ever taken off from an aircraft carrier, and at the time, Allied forces were being constantly beaten by the Japanese. Nelson (*Let's Get Lost*), whose father was a WWII Air Force pilot in New Guinea and whose mother served as a wartime air traffic controller in Atlanta, digs deeply into the planning, training and carrying out of the mission, sometimes awkwardly employing military slang,

but infusing the account with infectious enthusiasm and numerous engaging first-person accounts. All the planes successfully took off and bombed their targets, but a last-minute hitch left them without enough fuel; most reached Allied lines, but eight crew members were captured by the Japanese and tried as war criminals: three were executed. The fates and subsequent careers of all the veterans quoted in the book are warmly detailed, making this an involving account of a lesser known period of the war.

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From Library Journal The Doolittle Raid in April 1942 consisted of 16 B-25 bombers, crewed by 80 volunteers, who made the first air raid on the home islands of Japan. Four months after Pearl Harbor, they struggled off the USS Hornet, flew halfway across the Pacific, bombed Tokyo, and carried on into China. The attack went well and had strategic overtones far out of proportion to the modest damage inflicted: American pride was rejuvenated and Japanese overconfidence pricked. Fifteen of the planes crashed in China, while one crew landed safely in Vladivostok and was interned for a year. Of the participants, 80 percent survived, and most went on to other wartime duties. Nelson ably picks out the threads of the operation, from training to recovery of the flyers. There is interesting pre- and postwar biographical information about the 80 airmen, but the author is much less comfortable discussing grand strategy and the conduct of the war in the Pacific and European theaters. Although at times overly enthusiastic and overwritten, this book will find a place in every substantial World War II collection. Edwin B. Burgess, U.S. Army Combined Arms Research Lib., Fort Leavenworth, KS

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