

Certificate to Accompany the Award of the



Air Commando Hall of Fame

Inducted on October 18th, 2014 to

Lt Col Richard Cole

In the early days of World War II, the United States was desperate to avenge the Japanese's cowardly attack on Pearl Harbor. After consultations with senior Army Air Force and Navy commanders, a special operations mission was personally ordered by President Roosevelt to strike the Japanese. On 18 April 1942, 80 brave men flew 16 B-25 bombers off the deck of the aircraft carrier Hornet deep in the western Pacific. These brave warriors were all volunteers, unaware of the mission, destination or the risks they faced, but went into harms way knowing their country needed them. This was at a critical time in the war with morale sagging due to a series of military setbacks. Sitting alongside then Lt Col Jimmy Doolittle, aircraft commander of aircraft number 1, was copilot, 1st Lt Richard Cole hoping the earlier than scheduled take off would still allow them to safely reach China.

The success of the raid was historic in precedence and was an immediate morale booster to the American fighting spirit. The Japanese responded quickly and their devastating defeat at the Battle of Midway turned the tide of the war in the Pacific. After successfully evading the Japanese after bailing out over China, Lt Cole was assigned combat duty in the China/Burma/India theater flying both fighters and trooper carrier aircraft. Two years later, Captain Cole as an Air Commando C-47 pilot, participated in "Operation Thursday," the aerial invasion of Burma which introduced a new concept of fighting deep behind enemy lines supplied solely by air. Today, after turning 99 years of age on 7 September 2014, Lt Col. Cole is the oldest of the 4 remaining Doolittle Raiders and is the only airman to have participated in both the Doolittle Raid and the aerial invasion of Burma, two of the most important and daring missions in special operations history.

The distinctive accomplishments of Lt Colonel Cole in a lifetime of dedicated service to his country have elevated him to icon status as again manifested in the recent 71st Doolittle Raiders final reunion in Fort Walton Beach, FL and reflects great credit upon himself, the Air Commandos and the United States Air Force.