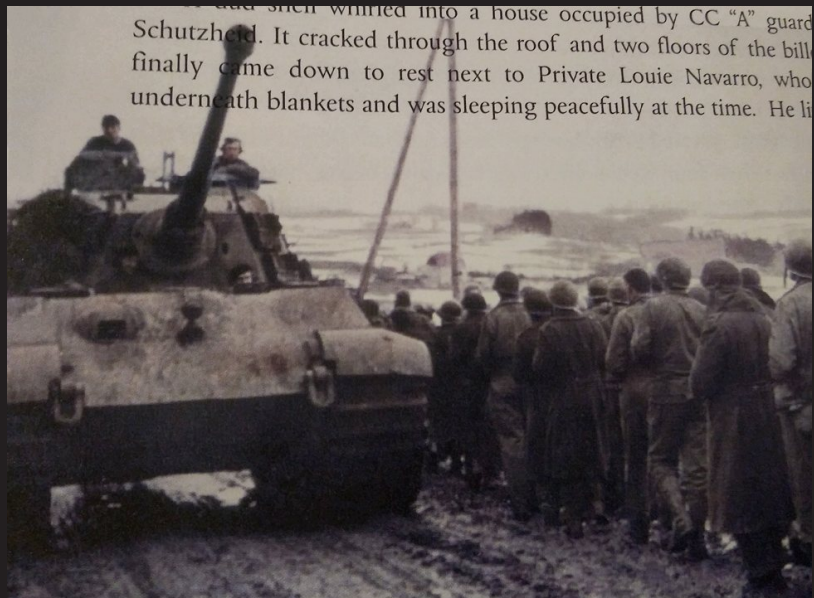




All the leaves were turning brown and gold. In some places, the snow was falling.



... and then whirled into a house occupied by CC "A" guard Schutzheld. It cracked through the roof and two floors of the building finally came down to rest next to Private Louie Navarro, who was underneath blankets and was sleeping peacefully at the time. He li





Inside central Europe there existed the concentration camps that permeated death. As the above map shows, those camps in 1944 were active and only one was liberated in 1944. Above are some of the death camps and slave camps, with the numbers that perished on selected camps. All maps and color photos are from the author's collection.

Dec 12--Peter Lorre in the old time radio circiut [mystery playhouse](#) (Nov. 28), and [mystery playhouse](#), (Dec. 12) 1944. Blechhammer oil target bombed by B-24s. U.S. First Army expands across Roer R. near Pier and Dueren. U.S. Third Army captures the V-rocket factory at Wittring in eastern France. Civilians reported evacuating Tokyo as B-29s appear over that capital. U.S. 7th Fleet departs Leyte Gulf for invasion of Mindoro.

Dec 14--The RaLa Experiment of the Manhattan Project yielded evidence that spherical implosion was possible for compression of the plutonium pit of an atomic bomb. Lembach falls to 45th Inf Div. [National Velvet](#) premieres in Technicolor in NYC. British troops begin advance in western Burma. Deanna Durbin-note the officers wearing the class A uniform- [Christmas movie of '44](#) [Command Performance Christmas](#) on radio with Bob Hope (part 1, 10 mins). *Time* magazine once described *Command Performance* as being "the best wartime program in America." At the outset in 1942, it was crappy and it broadcast only via shortwave radio. It was enhanced considerably when the Armed Forces Radio Service received permission from the 4 major radio networks to



record favorite programs on 16' transcription discs. Before you knew it, seventy programs were recorded and produced each week. Together with *Command Performance* were *Mail Call*, *GI Journal* and others that provided music and laughter from Home. Sometimes it was so goofy and cuckoo, you had to laugh. At it's peak, around 21,000 transcriptions were being shipped to troops in the E.T.O., the South Pacific and Asia with over 800 radio stations operated by servicemen, covering

As of autumn, the U.S. 1st and 9th Armies had captured 95,000 pows and the 3rd Army 75,000. There is nothing dramatic about being in a war zone. Caption at left reads "Fresh, spirited

American troops, flushed with victory are bringing in thousands of hungry, ragged, battle-weary prisoners...." Mauldin was given the Pulitzer Prize for this war-time cartoon which appeared in the Oct. 12, 1944 issue of Stars & Stripes.



all theaters of war. U.S. carrier aircraft begin 3-day “blanket” on north Philippines. Photo above are Hellcats. The former NYK liner *Oryoku Maru* left Manila with 1619 American POWs packed in the holds. U.S. Navy planes from the *Hornet* attack it, causing the ship to sink next day; 200 survivors. War is never gracious; it is cold, evil, dangerous.

Dec 15--U.S. 90th Inf Div opens assault for rest of Dillingen and Prims R. bridge on the Dillingen–Saarlautern road. U.S. and Australia land on San Jose, Mindoro, 226 miles s.e. of Manila. Invasion very important to secure an all-weather airfield to support large-scale landings on Luzon; a hazardous venture, deep into Japanese-controlled waters. Kamikazes damage escort carrier *Marcus Island*; destroyers *Paul Hamilton* and *Howorth*; and *PT-223*. French 1st Army starts offensive against Germans w. of the Rhine in Colmar area. Bandleader Maj. Glenn Miller aboard a single-engine plane (Noorduyn C-64A Norseman) piloted by Flight Officer John R. S. “Nipper” Morgan for Villacoublay, France, disappears over the English Channel. No trace of the plane or its occupants was ever found. The aircraft did not have de-icing equipment on board and it is likely that icy weather forced the plane down in the English Channel. U.S. sub *Hawkbill* sinks Japanese destroyer *Momo* w. of Luzon. A train loaded with gold and treasures departs Budapest on orders from Adolf Eichmann. The Belgian Ardennes Forest was known in early Dec. 1944 as a relatively safe area, for rest, warm food and hot showers. The terrain of the Ardennes, known in German as the Eifel, with its ravines, meandering rivers and narrow roads was not suited for a German offensive. GI troops thought they were safe. Seventy-five years later, the [Courier Journal](#) from Louisville is one of many who offer reports on the gathering in Belgium to commemorate the 75th Anniversary of the Battle of the Bulge.

Dec 16--Early in the morning near 6 am, after a heavy artillery barrage, the dark skies were aglow with lights of every description. It astounded American eyes as the lighting lit up the ground and the sky--some bounced off the clouds visible to frontline GIs. Some GIs remember the lights came before the barrage. Out of the heavy fog, through the trees, three



German armies then mounted a major surprise attack that was to cover some 80 miles from n. to s. in the Ardennes Forest, if measured on a straight line. [Battle of The Bulge](#), aka Watch On the Rhine, starts. Thousands descended on Bastogne on Dec 16, 2019, from [USA Today](#). [CBS Pittsburgh](#) has a great story of medic Clarence Gumberg. *[I looked, but ABC World Nightly News disappointed me; nada from Dec 16-18.]* The most northern unit and first to hit the U.S. in this remote area were Volksgrenadiers who overwhelmed the U.S. lines that lay near the German jump off point, between Monschau and Losheim, but the two more southern units, that first had to cross a field a kilometer wide, were held up by American machine gun and mortar fire. Volksgrenadiers were not



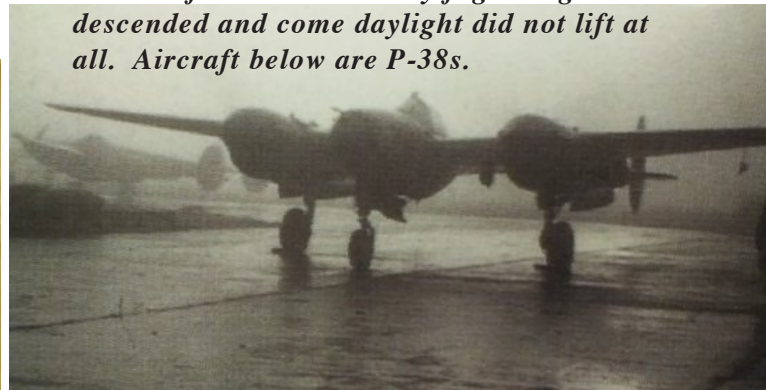
“regular” army, mainly civilians trained to defend the Fatherland, but today they were spearheads. At Elsenborn Ridge, a boomerang shaped, high ground e. of the village of Elsenborn, held a commanding view of the villages Krinkelt-Rocherath and the German border--a super important sector from which the German armor advanced. Weather prevented Allied air support, but also prevented Nazi air support. Division commanders of the 101st Airborne Maj. Gen. Maxwell Taylor and Brig. Gen. Gerald Higgins are in England, along with 16 junior officers. [Senator Deb Fischer](#) from Nebraska with a special delegation to commemorate the 75th Anniversary braves the elements. Belgium and the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg comprised the center of the

battle. Hitler hoped his plan of 200,000 men, some 24 divisions, 10 of them armored, with some 800 King Tigers and Panthers, juiced up on three and a half million specially-saved gallons of gasoline, would cripple four Allied armies and result in the U.S. and Britain negotiating a settlement in his favor. [FOX NEWS](#) reports on the Bulge. Mauthausen Concentration Camp satellite

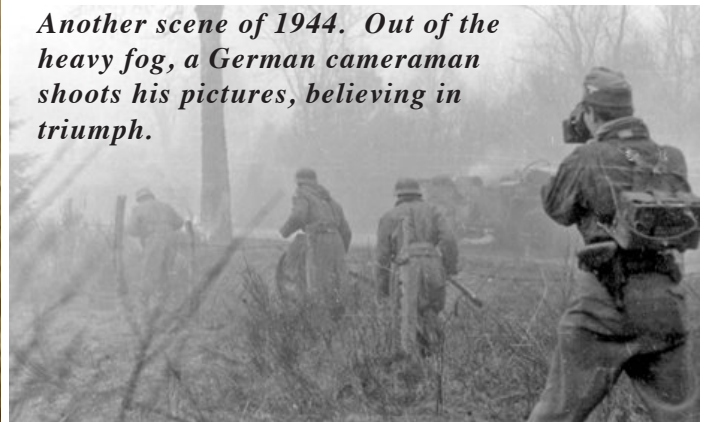
camp Gusen III begins operations in the town of Lungitz, with 262 prisoners; eventually it grows to contain 67,667 prisoners. A German V2 hits the Rex Cinema in Antwerp, Belgium which was packed for the matinee performance. The blast killed 567 people, 296 of them Allied servicemen, and injured 291, half of them soldiers. It took six days to dig out all the bodies, many of which were still sitting upright in their seats. It was the highest death toll from a V-weapon attack during the war; all cinemas and theaters of Antwerp were closed "for the duration", and gatherings of more than 50 people in any one place were banned. U.S. sub *Finback* sinks transport *Jusan Maru I-Go* some 50 miles n.w. of Chichi Jima.

Dec 17--German paratroopers drop in northern Ardennes, infiltrate and block roads in Battle of the Bulge. Stationed along [the U.S. frontline](#) were some 68,800 Americans, part of 600,000. German Tigers rupture U.S. lines in Belgium. The southern forces had penetrated, but had failed to didlodge U.S. artillery. A German officer with several copies of Operation Greif (codename for the infiltration of Germans in U.S. uniforms to cause confusion) was taken prisoner and the treacherous plan was revealed to Generals Eisenhower and Bradley. [Mighty Typhoon Cobra](#) strikes U.S. fleet [click on Sept 44 box and scroll down] 300 miles e. of Luzon in Philippine Sea and damages over 20 vessels (really Dec 18 due to International Date Line) approximately 790 officers and men were lost or killed, with another 80 injured. [Life of Riley](#) radio program far away from the Front (12/17/44.) [The Jack Benny radio](#)

Scenes of 1944. The heavy fog at night descended and come daylight did not lift at all. Aircraft below are P-38s.



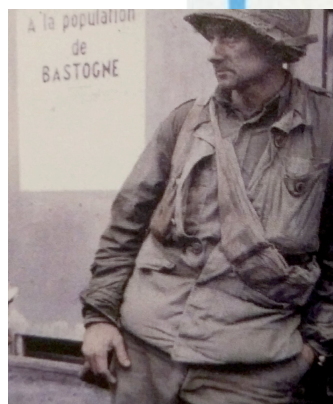
Another scene of 1944. Out of the heavy fog, a German cameraman shoots his pictures, believing in triumph.



program from America, also aired Dec 17. Jack meets Frank Sinatra. In a P-38 Lightning aircraft, U.S. ace Richard Ira Bong scored his 40th kill to become America's leading fighter ace of the war.

Dec 18--Deeply dug-in, American troops hold-on on the [Elsenborn Ridge](#) for another 8 days. Many individual acts of heroism occurred than could possibly be described. [Overall](#) it is freezingly cold, thanks UnknownWW2InColor2. Colossal air raid on Hankow; fires burn for three days. [Last Stand at Clervaux Castle](#), a deep gratitude for the educational story by author-historian Mark Felton.

Dec 19--U.S. 30th Inf Div holds at Stavelot, and engineers blow bridge across the Ambleve R, cutting enemy supply line north of St. Vith in the worst weather in 20 years. Near Stavelot, a phenomenal 2.5 million gallons of gasoline was secretly hidden from the Germans; it was the largest fuel depot in Europe.





Dec 20--[Radio Christmas](#) worldwide; merci Memory Lane videos. U.S. 3rd Arm Div is attached to 30th Div and assists in attack on La Gleize and Stoumont, which enemy defends effectively. In the village of [La Gleize](#) is an excellent museum. [Note, below the information is a rectangle map, click on it and a huge map springs forth. Use it like your maps you use at home when you want to see your route, just use the little hand to navigate; a piece of cake.] A column of Patton's tanks, enters Bastogne, but in one of the war's goofiest errors, HQ ordered them out in a corps-army mix-up. Gen. McAuliffe was never informed they were pulled out. Gen. Montgomery reaches



Chateaufontaine and takes command of all troops in northern shoulder of the Bulge. MacArthur claims that the Allies have won the battle for Ormoc. WASPs program deactivated.

Dec 21--U.S. forces defend Stavelot, Belgium, while the Germans surrounded Bastogne, a big road junction and RR hub, and captured St. Vith. The 101 Airborne Div had arrived in a desperate truck convoy after riding 100 miles from Reims to defend Bastogne (pre-war pop. of 4,000). They and assorted units held Bastogne. U.S. 1st Inf Div contains further attacks toward Elsenborn Ridge. Nineteen thousand Americans at [Bastogne](#) are surrounded



by a force of 45,000 Germans. Enemy crosses Neufchateau–Bastogne highway in force. Premiere in Mexico City: Walt Disney's [The Three Caballeros](#).

Dec 22--American GI's launch a fierce counterattack in the snow and fog. [Patton's Third](#) Army was responsible for the operation. [Bastogne](#) still holds on; go up to only 9min46 sec mark as the skies did not clear til Dec 23. Gen. McAuliffe refuses German demand for surrender of Bastogne, and answers "**Nuts**". Bastogne Barracks, another notable museum: 1st from a friendly and helpful Robert from UK stated: The barracks is closed and the historical part is to be handed over to civilian control at the end of 2019. Vehicle restoration will remain. Current tour is very informative but fairly long - well over 2 hours. 2nd: Nov 2019 report from [Hendrik](#) on why it ranks high. Finally, from Holland, Aug of 2019: Unfortunately this place only runs one tour series per day (in English or in French) because it is a functioning facility for tank repair. Guides are excellent and very knowledgeable. There is a huge respect for veterans. Walking through the barracks the stories are well told

and complemented nicely by the dioramas. The exhibits are impressive... but the piece de resistance is absolutely the tank hangar which is massive and contains all kinds of tanks. A tank lover's dream. [Command Performance Christmas](#) on radio with Bob Hope (part 2, 10.25 mins). 25 German prisoners of war escaped from Camp Papago Park in Phoenix, Arizona, United States. First day of winter; in 2019, it began on December 21.

Dec 23--U.S. government bans horse racing, tightens food rationing. U.S. 7th and 9th Arm divisions, remnants of 28th and 106th Inf divisions withdraw from St. Vith area. U.S. 3rd Arm Div tries but cannot clear Hotton-Soy road; loses key road junction s.e. of Manhay. It dropped to 10 degrees above zero all along Belgium. The French opened their railheads at Nantes and Redon. Gen. McAuliffe's surrounded troops included 500 badly wounded men; blankets had to be gathered up from front-line troops to wrap the wounded men. Ammo and rations very low; it became questionable whether General Patton's relief forces could break through in time. GI troops all of a sudden could see their shadows in the snow; the Sun broke through the clouds! And, from the United Kingdom to the foxholes at the Front: visibility unlimited. A C-47 airlift of 41 aircraft (241 had been vectored to Bastogne, but not many made it through) were able to drop



U.S. troops of the 347th U.S. infantry getting chow at La Roche, the frontline. On the scale of things, they were getting reinforcements to a tune of 500-600 per day.



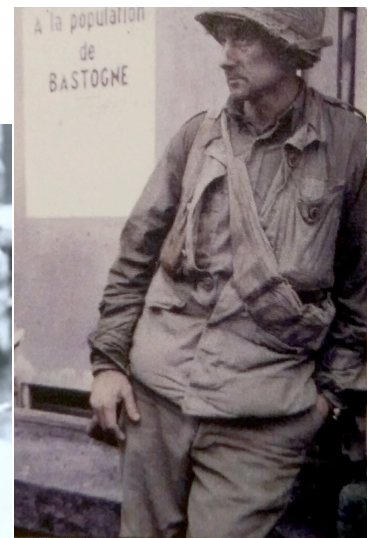
supplies, medicine and ammunition over Bastogne. Relief columns of Patton are halted along the Arlon-Bastogne and Neufchateau roads. The bad weather closed in, again. Hitler's forces try to cut through U.S. lines through Stavelot and Liege to reach Antwerp, the prize only seventy miles away. Adolf Eichmann flees Budapest, Hungary before dawn.



Dec 24--Christmas Eve. Pres. Roosevelt opens a [Christmas message](#), deep gratitude to The Furious Fourth - WWII Living History Group. Meat is rationed once more in the U.S. American air forces launch incredible 1884 Heavies and 813 P-51s across the Belgium-German frontier; here is an [8th A.F.](#) information clip of Dec 24 and one on [the Luftwaffe](#) (thanks Joost de Raaf). B-24 Liberator [Willow](#)

[Run](#) Assembly Plant. A short [radio music tribute to Glenn Miller](#), who was reported missing on the BBC. On your free time, the following is an hour video presented by author-historian Dennis Spragg at the 2017 Glenn Miller Festival held in Clarinda, Iowa, on the disappearance of Glenn Miller, Glenn Miller [Declassified](#); thanks kcbigbandjazz. U.S. 4th Arm Div clears Martelange and continues 2 miles up Arlon– Bastogne highway while CCB, on secondary road, drives to Chaumont, from which it is ousted in counterattack, or as Eisenhower put, meeting lively opposition. Bastogne is heavily damaged from German air attacks. For his initial assault, Hitler had stated, “I am determined to hold fast to the execution of this operation, regardless of any risk,” and had assumed that in the Allied command structure, the Allied Supreme Commander Dwight Eisenhower must acquire permission from his superiors before committing major strategic changes. He was dead wrong about Ike's

possible strategic shift. By the second day, Eisenhower had set in motion the reinforcements to come to the area, and by Dec 25th, 250,000 U.S. and British troops had arrived in the region; mainly American. USS *Missouri* arrives at San Francisco, California. Troopship *Leopoldville*, carrying 2,000 U.S. troops, is sunk in the English Channel; 819 men perish in the frigid seas. U.S. 17th Airborne Div is flown into France from England. U.S. 1st Inf Div repels big counterattack for Butgenbach. British 29th Arm Brigade clashes with panzer spearheads between Dinant and Ciney. USS sub *Mingo* attacked a Japanese convoy between Singapore and Brunei, Borneo, damaging an escorting gunboat and sinking tanker *Manila Maru*. New airfield, called Ellmore Field, on s. bank of Bugsanga River, is ready for limited use on Mindoro.



Dec 25--Christmas at the **Front**. Battle of Bulge Christmas. About 160 planes took part in airdrops over Bastogne; poor flying weather on Christmas Day virtually scrubbed all cargo missions-although eleven gliders brought in a team of four surgeons and some petrol. U.S. 30th Inf Div clears region n. of the Ambleve R. between Stavelot and Trois Ponts. 82nd Airborne pulls back to general line Trois Ponts-Basse-Bodeux-Bra-Manhay. *The Whistler* Christmas Bonus. Unescorted Liberty ship *Robert J Walker* sinks in Tasman Sea after torpedoed by U-862. U.S. Sub *Barbero* sinks transport *Junpo Maru* off Borneo. 77th Inf Div lands unopposed n. of Palompon and seizes barrios of Buaya and Lok as well as Palompon. Premiere of *Cant Help Singing*, in New York City. The main goal of *Operation Watch On the Rhine* had been the port city of Antwerp. However, the **offensive** was halted about 62 miles or 100 kilometers short of the city. Next step, to push them back.

Dec 26--Patton's relief **reaches** through to Bastogne. First Army supported by Third Army and five U.S. fighter-bomber groups knock out 690 motor



vehicles, 25 planes, 90 tanks and armored vehicles, 44 gun positions, 143 rail cars, 2 bridges, and cut 5 highways. In Italy, Lt. John R. Fox, from Ohio, graduate of Wilberforce University, as forward observer on the second floor of a house with two platoons, directed artillery fire. He belonged to the segregated 92nd Infantry Div fighting the German 14th Army at Sommo-colonia. He had ample time to withdraw, but instead continued sending fire directions. Of 70 "Buffalo Soldiers" and 25 Italian Partisans, only 18 survived. His bravery led to the demise of at least 100 Germans, and delaying the attack until forces could be organized for an attack. In 1982, Lt. John R. Fox was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross--upgraded from a Bronze Star--and upon further review, the Medal of Honor, in 1997. Siege of Budapest begins by Soviet forces. Australian destroyer HMAS *Quickmatch* rescues the 40 merchant sailors, one passenger and the 26-man Armed Guard of freighter *Robert J. Walker*, that had been torpedoed in the Tasman Sea. P-51 fighters of the U.S. 14th A.F. attack Tianhe Airfield in Guangzhou, Guangdong Province, China, claiming 10 Japanese fighters destroyed; 2 P-51 fighters shot down. **THE MOLLE MYSTERY THEATER** tension and suspense in Singapore, aired on Dec 26, 1944 (about 24 mins). American OSS personnel in Slovakia are captured in a surprise raid by a German intelligence unit. But, Slovak agent Maria Gulovich helped 2 American and 2 British agents escape. In 2002, Jim Downs authored *World War II: OSS Tragedy in Slovakia*.





A column of American troops trudges past a King Tiger and a German cameraman. They were marched to Germany, the largest number of captured Americans since the fall of Bataan, 1942. 56-ton Tiger Tanks had an armament of an 88mm main gun. Shermans had 75mm but later a 90.

Dec 27--German spearhead, notably the 1st SS Panzer Div, led by Col. Joachim Peiper, a veteran of the Russian Front, never found out the true extent of the fuel depot near Stavelot--big enough to supply all his tanks--instead they turned south. Sister Sara Salkahazi was killed by the Arrow Cross, the Hungarian allies of the Nazis, for hiding Jews in a Budapest building used by her religious order, the Sisters of Social Service. In 2006, she was beatified by Pope Benedict XVI.

Dec 28--Convoy bound for Mindoro is hit by Japanese aircraft. Kamikazes crash tank landing ship *LST-750* and U.S. freighters *William Sharon* and *John Burke*. *John Burke*, carrying ammunition, explodes, the cataclysmic blast damaging auxiliary *Porcupine* and *PT-332*.

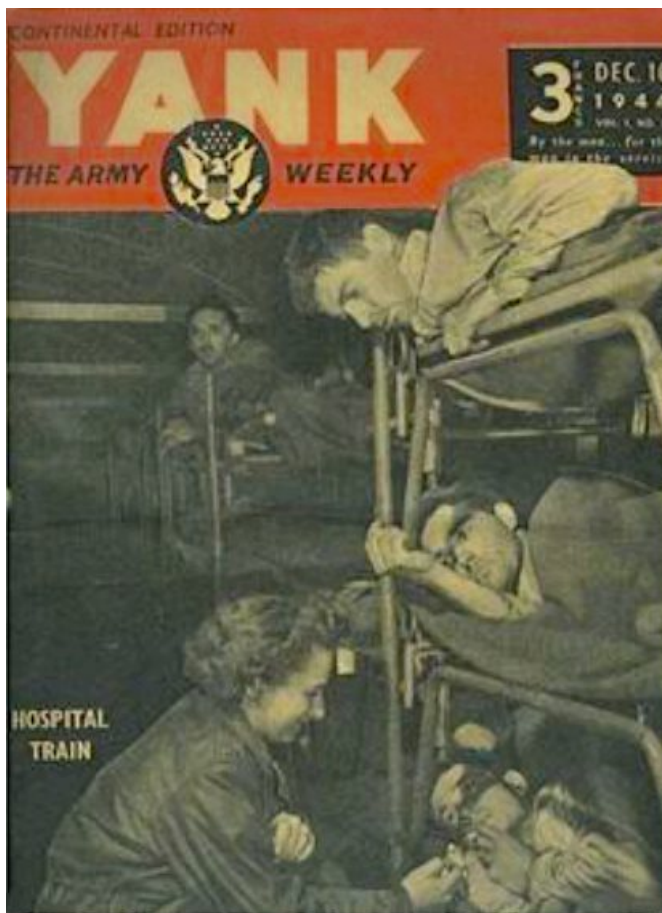
No survivors from the *John Burke*. *William Sharon*, set afire by a kamikaze and gutted by fires that are ultimately controlled, is abandoned. U.S. sub *Dace* attacks Japanese convoy, sinks supply ship *Nozaki* off Cape Varella, French Indochina. Motion picture Herald announces that Bing Crosby was the top 1944 box-office attraction.



(The 2 young boys were part of the Volksgrenadiers.)

Dec 29--The Arlon-Bastogne highway is opened. German sub *U-772* attacks convoy TBC 21 in the English Channel; Freighter *Arthur Sewall* is hit, freighter *Black Hawk* is hit; both written off as a total loss.

Dec 30--King George II of Greece proclaimed a regency to rule his country, in other words, he renounced his throne. U.S. carriers *Ticonderoga*, *Hancock*, *Lexington*, and *Independence* limp out of Ulithi Atoll. U.S. sub *Razorback* attacks Japanese Manila-to-Takao convoy about 60 miles s.e. of Formosa (Taiwan), sinks destroyer *Kuretake* in Bashii Channel. British troops come to the aid of



U.S. troops enjoyed reading Yank magazine, a weekly magazine covering all theaters with each of the 21 editions a bit different. It reminded them of the reasons for fighting. Battleship "Iowa" in December of 1944. Navy WAVG being inoculated prior to overseas duty.

U.S. troops at Houffalize, Belgium. The Infantry Landing Ship *Empire Javelin* was torpedoed and sunk by the German U-boat *U-772* in the English Channel. Among the passengers were 208 officers and 624 enlisted men of the main body of a newly raised U.S. 15th Army. Most were rescued by the French frigate *L'Escarmouche*. 150 female prisoners of Auschwitz Concentration Camp are utilized to demolish crematorium III. 50 female prisoners worked in the forestry-demolition squad (Gehölz-Abbruchkommando), which was filling in the incineration pits, covering them with grass and planting small trees on the grounds of crematorium IV. A V-2 rocket hits a house on Croham Valley Road, Croydon, London, England, killing all occupants. **Montgomery** Montgomery.

Dec 31--One B-17 Flying Fortress bomber of the U.S. 8th Air Force attacks Helgoland, Germany. U.S. and French troops in the Alsace area are struck by a fierce German counterattack (*Operation Nordwind*) part of a last German offensive in the West, along Alsace, the Rhineland-Palatinate and also Lorraine in mountainous eastern France. Understrength but so devastating, Eisenhower considered a general withdrawal from Alsace, which raised de Gaulle's blood pressure, and as he called it, potentially a "national disaster" as it would leave many Alsatians vulnerable. It too would lower morale of U.S. troops who had fought so hard to secure Alsace, but Churchill

intervened and as the order to retreat to the west of the Vosges Mtns was rescinded, the Germans were pushed back, but not til January...and, at a bitter cost: 15,600 U.S. casualties; the Germans 25,000. Polish Provisional Govt. is established by Moscow, Polish leaders in London protest unavailingly. The British bomb the Gestapo headquarters in Oslo, Norway. U.S. 8th Army units start to replace U.S. 6th Army units on Leyte Island. British sub HMS *Shakespeare* sinks merchant cargo ship *Unryu Maru* e. of Port Blair.

Jan 1--The German Luftwaffe launches a great raid of some 700 planes against Allied airfields in France, Belgium, the Netherlands; this *Operation Bodenplatte* destroyed or damaged 520 Allied aircraft (424?), but they lost 280 aircraft and worse 234 pilots. The Luftwaffe was never able to mount another offensive in this scale again. Eisenhower called for British troops under Montgomery in conjunction with the U.S. Third Army to strike Jan 1, Monty from the n., Patton from the s. but Monty's assault never came; the British general objected to launching his part of the offensive, as he had believed that his men were not equipped to deal with the cold weather. The German ground forces trapped in the "pocket" were thus able to escape. Montgomery did not commit his forces until Jan 3.

Jan 3-4--Germany attempts a final attack on Bastogne.

Jan 8--Hitler authorizes a withdrawal from the tip of the Bulge.

Jan 16--U.S. First and Third Army meet at Houfallize. Also, by this date, the Allied forces regained a bulk of the territory held before the Bulge offensive.

(To be continued. And, watch for 1945 on my web.)

