

SUNDAY, 24 DECEMBER 1944

CHINA-BURMA-INDIA THEATER

CHINA THEATER (Fourteenth Air Force): In China, 6 B-25s blast the Kunlong ferry area; 3 B-24s claim 1 tanker sunk in the S China Sea; 100+ P-40s, P-51s, and P-38s on armed reconnaissance attack targets of opportunity throughout S China, especially river, road, and rail traffic, troops, and buildings around Hengyang, Lingling, Siangtan, and Changsha; also Hong Kong area shipping is pounded (1 tanker claimed sunk and other ships damaged) and 30+ enemy aircraft claimed destroyed at Tsinan Airfield; the 16th Fighter Squadron, 51st Fighter Group, based at Chengkung with P-51s, sends a detachment to operate from Kwanghan (another detachment is at Liangshan).

INDIA-BURMA THEATER (Tenth Air Force): In Burma, 38 P-47s hit troop concentrations and supply areas at Pangkai, Man Namman, Man Om, Mong Nge, and Kyanhnyat; 6 support ground forces in the Si-U sector while 12 hit targets of opportunity along the Sinlum-Nawghkio rail line; and 8 P-47s strafe the Lashio Airfield. 287 transport sorties are flown to forward areas. The detachment of the 6th Fighter Squadron (Commando), 1st Air Commando Group, operating from Fenny, India with P-47s, returns to base at Asansol, India.

EUROPEAN THEATER OF OPERATIONS (ETO)

AIRBORNE OPERATIONS (IX Troop Carrier Command): 160 C-47s drop 160 tons of supplies at Bastogne, Belgium.

STRATEGIC OPERATIONS (Eighth Air Force): 2 missions are flown. Mission 759: 10 of 12 B-24s hit the La Pallice coastal battery in France without loss.

Mission 760: A high pressure front across W Europe brings clear weather and the Eighth AF launches a maximum effort against airfields and communications in W Germany; this was the largest air strike of WWII; 2,034 bombers and 853 fighters are dispatched; they claim 92-6-21 Luftwaffe aircraft; 12 bombers and 10 fighters are lost:

1. 858 B-17s are dispatched to hit airfields at Darmstadt (189), Frankfurt-Rheine (143), Bilbis (100), Babenhausen (96), Zellhausen (85) and Gross Ostheim (60); secondary targets hit are marshalling yards at Pforzheim (37) and Kaiserslautern (24) and Haildraum (60); 26 targets of opportunity are hit by 37 B-17s; they claim 18-5-1 aircraft; 8 B-17s are lost, 11 damaged beyond repair and 337 damaged; 15 airmen are KIA, 21 WIA and 76 MIA. Escorting are 343 of 358 P-51s; they claim 53-0-6 aircraft; 7 P-51s are lost (pilots MIA) and 1 damaged beyond repair.
2. 542 B-17s are dispatched to hit the Merzhausen air depot (198) and airfields at Giessen (74), Kirchgons (54), Nidda (53) and Ettinghausen (43); secondary targets hit are Koblenz (42), Darmstadt (7), Kaiserslautern (5) and

Babenhausen (4); 20 B-17s hit a target of opportunity; 2 B-17s are lost, 9 damaged beyond repair and 109 damaged; 21 airmen are KIA, 23 WIA and 18 MIA. Escort is provided by 350 of 368 P-51s; they claim 13-1-13 aircraft; 3 P-51s are lost (pilots MIA) and 1 damaged beyond repair.

3. 634 B-24s are dispatched to hit Euskirchen (62), Wittlich (62), Gerolstein (59), Mayen (59), Ahrweiler (54), Bitburg (35), Eller (32), Pfazel (28), Ruwer (27), Schonecken (26), Rheinbach (25), Daun (24), Wetteldorf (18), and Cochem (11); 75 others hit 18 targets of opportunity; 2 B-24s are lost, 3 damaged beyond repair and 150 damaged; 1 airman is KIA, 5 WIA and 20 MIA. Escorting are 87 of 92 P-47s and P-51s; they claim 4-0-0 aircraft without loss.

4. 24 of 24 P-51s fly a scouting mission; they claim 3-0-1 aircraft without loss.

5. 9 of 11 P-51s escort 9 Spitfires and 8 F-5s on a photo reconnaissance mission over Germany; they claim 1-0-0 aircraft without loss.

TACTICAL OPERATIONS (Ninth Air Force): 276 B-26s and A-20s hit rail bridges and communications centers in W Germany; fighters escort the 9th Bombardment Division, fly armed reconnaissance, and support the US III, VIII, and XII Corps along the S battleline of the Bulge, stretching from Echternach, Luxembourg to the area NW of Neufchateau, Belgium as the 4th Armored Division reaches the enemy's ring around Bastogne. The 160th Tactical Reconnaissance Squadron, 363d Tactical Reconnaissance Group, based at Le Culot, Belgium with F-6s and P-51s, begins operating from Conflans, France.

MEDITERRANEAN THEATER OF OPERATIONS (MTO)

STRATEGIC OPERATIONS (Fifteenth Air Force): Unfavorable weather curtails all but photo and weather reconnaissance missions.

TACTICAL OPERATIONS (Twelfth Air Force): In Italy, weather again holds operations to a minimum however, P-47s carry out very successful raid on Thiene Airfield, causing considerable damage and destroying several enemy airplanes; other missions find little activity and result in the destruction of only a few trucks and trains.

PACIFIC OCEAN AREA (POA)

AAFPOA (Seventh Air Force): 12 B-24s from Saipan Island and 38 from Guam Island strike Iwo Jima Island and 17 Saipan-based P-38s make a low-level strafing attack on Iwo Jima. 23 other B-24s, based on Saipan, bomb Chichi Jima Island. 2 B-24s on harassment strikes from the Mariana Islands hit Iwo Jima during the night of 24/25 Dec.

HQ AAF (Twentieth Air Force): Mission 15: 29 Mariana Island-based B-29s are dispatched to attack 2 airfields on Iwo Jima Island; 23 hit the primary

targets and 1 hits an alternate target without loss. The 482d, 483d and 484th Bombardment Squadrons (Very Heavy), 505th Bombardment Group (Very Heavy), arrive at North Field, Tinian Island from the US with B-29s (first mission is 30 Dec).

SOUTHWEST PACIFIC AREA [SWPA, Far East Air Force (FEAF)]: B-24s bomb Clark Field on Luzon Island, Puerto Princesa Airfield on Palawan Island, and Kudat Airfield in Borneo. B-25s and fighter-bombers blast the Goeroea area in the Moluccas Islands, bomb Silay Airfield on Negros Island and on Mindanao Island, hit San Roque barracks, the Zamboanga waterfront, and Davao Bay shipping. Again FEAF aircraft on miscellaneous small operations attack many targets throughout the Netherland East Indies and Philippine Islands.