SUNDAY, 31 DECEMBER 1944

CHINA-BURMA-INDIA THEATER

CHINA THEATER (Fourteenth Air Force): 4 B-24s claim 1 freighter sunk and another damaged off Hainan Island. 4 B-25s damage 2 bridges and destroy or damage 5 buildings at Mong Ping, Burma. In China, 35 P-40s and P-51s attack troops, horses, town areas, and railroad targets at or near Hankow, Saiping, Siangtan, Hengyang, Lingling, and Kweilin. 29 other fighters on armed reconnaissance hit targets of opportunity at several points in N French Indochina, E Burma, and S China. The detachment of the 16th Fighter Squadron, 51st Fighter Group, operating from Liangshan with P-51s, returns to base at Chengkung (another detachment is operating from Kwanghan).

INDIA-BURMA THEATER (Tenth Air Force): In Burma, 28 P-47s strafe Laihka, Namsang, Aungban, Kunlon, and Heho Airfields; 5 P-47s damage a bridge at Namhkai; a total of 65 P-47s and P-38s hit Japanese Division HQ at Ongyaw and troop concentrations and supply areas at Mongmit, Nawngka, Kawngtawng, Pangnim, Mong Tat, Kutkai, and Man Namman; a few B-25s fly night harassment missions against airfields. About 300 transport sorties are flown to forward areas throughout the day.

EUROPEAN THEATER OF OPERATIONS (ETO)

STRATEGIC OPERATIONS (Eighth Air Force): 2 missions are flown.
Mission 772: 1,327 bombers and 785 fighters hit both strategic and tactical targets in Germany; they encounter about 150 Luftwaffe fighters, mostly in the Hamburg area, and claim 88.5-11-21 aircraft; 27 bombers and 10 fighters are lost:
1. 526 B-17s are dispatched to hit oil industry targets at Hamburg (68), the Wilhemsburg refinery at Hamburg (92), the Grassbruk refinery at Hamburg (71) and the Misburg refinery (96), and the industrial area at Wenzendorf (62) and Hamburg (72); targets of opportunity are Stade (13) and Nordholz (9) Airfields, Heligoland Island (1) and other (17); they claim 26-8-16 aircraft; 27 B-17s are lost, 1 damaged beyond repair and 288 damaged; 5 airmen are KIA, 29 WIA and 248 MIA. 316 P-47s and P-51s escort and claim 59.5-2-5 aircraft in the air and 1-0-0 on the ground; 2 P-47s and 7 P-51s are lost (pilots are MIA).
2. 418 B-17s are sent to hit marshalling yards at Neuss (109) and Krefeld-Urdingen (83), the Kordel railroad at Ehrang (69), communications targets at Buzburg (34), Prum (37), and Blumenthal (34), the Lutzweiler Bridge at Koblenz (48) and the Remagen Bridge (54); 22 hit the secondary target at Monchen-Gladbach; and 2 hit a target of opportunity; 2 B-17s are damaged beyond repair and 29 damaged; 1 airman is WIA. Escorting are 162 of 171 P-51s; they claim 1-0-0 aircraft without loss.
3. 371 B-24s are sent to hit bridges at Engers (60) and Irlich (56) and

the Gus Rail Bridge at Koblenz (62) and the rail junction and rail bridge at Euskirchen (30); 10 hit the secondary, the Bingen marshalling yard and 36 hit a target of opportunity; they claim 0-1-0 aircraft; 3 B-24s are damaged beyond repair and 49 damaged; 1 airman is WIA. Escort is provided by 198 of 211 P-51s; 1 P-51 is lost (pilot MIA) and 1 damaged beyond repair.
4. 13 of 16 P-51s escort 7 F-5s and 2 Spitfires on a photo reconnaissance of the Berlin area without loss.
5. 32 of 33 P-51s fly a scouting mission claiming 1-0-0 aircraft.
Mission 773: 8 B-24s and 2 B-17s drop leaflets in France, Germany and Belgium.

TACTICAL OPERATIONS (Ninth Air Force): Weather grounds the bombers; fighters fly sweeps and armed reconnaissance, attacking numerous ground targets; the XIX Tactical Air Command supports the US III, VIII, and XX Corps around Bastogne, Belgium and between the Mosel and Saar Rivers, in Germany in the Merzig area. The 14th Liaison Squadron, XIX Tactical Air Command (attached to Twelfth Army Group) moves from Nancy, France to Luxembourg City, Luxembourg with L-5s. The 387th Fighter Squadron, 365th Fighter Group, moves from Chievres, Belgium to Metz, France with P-47s.

MEDITERRANEAN THEATER OF OPERATIONS (MTO)

TACTICAL OPERATIONS (Twelfth Air Force): In Italy during the night of 30/31 Dec, A-20s again fly intruder missions, bombing a variety of targets, including motor transport, bridges, and railroads in the Po Valley; during the day medium bombers hit the bridge at Bodrez, railroads at Piazzola Sul Brenta and near Padua, and a dump; the XXII Tactical Air Command fighter-bombers destroy 5 and damage 2 railway bridges in the Po Valley, cut rail lines at numerous places, destroy several locomotives, and destroy or damage 200+ railway cars.

PACIFIC OCEAN AREA (POA)

AAFPOA (Seventh Air Force): From Guam Island 19 B-24s hit Iwo Jima Island airfields during the day; 10 more B-24s hit the island with individual harassment raids over a 6-hour period during the night of 31 Dec/1 Jan.

HQ AAF (Twentieth Air Force): Brigadier General Haywood S Hansell, Jr, and his XXI Bomber Command Forward Echelon HQ staff close the Saipan Island HQ and move to Guam Island where the ground echelon arrived in early Dec.

SOUTHWEST PACIFIC AREA [SWPA, Far East Air Force (FEAF)]: B-24s and B-25s bomb airfields in the C Philippine Islands, on Luzon and Mindanao Islands. Other B-24s bomb Ambesia Airfield on Celebes Island, hit Dili on Timor Island, and pound airfields and supply areas throughout Halmahera Island. Fighter-bombers are active against airfields, shipping, AA guns, and various

targets of opportunity on Halmahera Island and on N Celebes Island. The 63d Troop Carrier Squadron, 403d Troop Carrier Group, based on Biak Island with C-47s, ceases operating from Noemfoor Island. The ground echelon of the 82d Tactical Reconnaissance Squadron, 71st Tactical Reconnaissance Group, begins a movement from Morotai Island to Luzon Island (air echelon is operating from San Jose, Mindoro Island with F-6 and P-40s). The 550th Night Fighter Squadron, XIII Fighter Command, based at Hollandia, New Guinea with P-61s, sends a detachment to operate from Middleburg Island.