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Article Summary: After a brief summation of battles since the United States entered the war, the author presents a more detailed, month-by-month summary of the battles of 1944 in World War II. In closing, he states: The Year 1944 was a year of war and of great victories...Final Victory, however, was deferred..."

Cataloging Information:

Names: Eisenhower, Nimitz, Doolittle, Montgomery, Spaatz, Tedder, Bradley, Patton, MacArthur

Photographs / Images: Long Tom [artillery] Bellows at the Japs

Year Of Battles

1944

GLENN W. GRAY

Since July our daily papers have been publishing brief paragraphs, sometimes surmounted by a small passport type photograph. Now there are standard forms which begin, "Mr. and Mrs. John Doe of Farmington have received word of the death of their son." or, "Pvt. John Doe, Jr., 23, was killed in action in Italy Nov. 17, the War Department has informed his parents." Their son may be called Pfc., Lt. (jg.), Cpl., RM 3/c, T/Sgt., or any of a score of terms. He may have given his life on Leyte, at St. Lo, over Germany or in New Guinea. He may have been in the 134th Infantry of the 35th Division at the Siegfried Line or on a DE in the Sulu Sea. His little notice may continue, "Three weeks ago his brother, Lt. Robert Doe, was reported missing in China. Another brother, Richard, is in the Navy." It sometimes ends, "His wife and daughter are visiting with his parents."

Week by week these paragraphs have increased in number, accompanied by lists of wounded, "The War Department announced today the names of 24 Nebraskans wounded in action.—Next of kin have been notified and have been kept informed directly." In July these paragraphs were exceptional. Now no day passes without several. Together they give meaning to one more press item, "Washington, Dec. 14 — (AP) Army casualties for all theaters now total 483,957. This was an increase of 9,059 for the one-week period. The latest Navy report announces 78,411 casualties, an increase of 1,291 from the previous week." The United States is a world power engaged in war.

Our first year of war consisted of six months of unrelieved defeat for ourselves and our allies that culminated in the late summer of 1942 when Germany's eighty million people had created a *Lebensraum* in which 350 million had lived in 1938, while Japan had become Greater East Asia of three million square miles inhabited by 500 million persons. The defeats ended in a great series of defensive victories: Coral Sea, Midway, Voronezh,

Stalingrad, El Alamein; that proved Germany and Japan, then at the height of their strength, could not conquer the great powers facing them. In those closing months of 1942 we undertook our first offensives. Two years later we can see that Stalingrad was over a thousand miles from the German frontier, that Guadalcanal was three thousand miles from Tokyo, and that the landings in Africa were in territory not unfriendly and where there were no Germans.

1943, except on the Russian front where major German armies were engaged and defeated, was still a year of preparation and slow progress. Tunis, Sicily, and Attu and Kiska in the Aleutians were not too costly, but at Munda we appear to have paid casualty for casualty even if not death for death. With Mussolini knocked out of the war we prepared to land in *Festung Europa* in high hopes of taking Rome and trapping a German army. We did neither, while our Rangers and the 36th Division were bloody ribbons when Salerno was over. Then in the three merciless days of Tarawa more American lives were lost than in the five months of Guadalcanal. When the campaigns of 1943 ended we held the battlefields but the cost we had paid was such that Tojo and Hitler need not have been too discouraged over getting a negotiated peace.

II

We now know that the plans for 1944 were agreed upon in late November, 1943. At Teheran the plans for a cross Channel landing accepted at Quebec were agreed upon by the Big Three. It was promised that between May 15 and June 15 British and American troops would invade Northern France, immediately following which there would be a major offensive on the Russian front. At Cairo Chiang Kai-shek probably learned the decision that our failure in Italy would deprive Mountbatten of the ships and equipment promised him at Quebec. The untried B-29's however, were definitely allocated to the Chinese front at this time together with a promise to clear north Burma and the Ledo Road. Soon thereafter Nimitz and MacArthur were given the assurances upon which they promised their offensives in 1944. In the last months of 1943 definite arrangements were made to apply



Drawing by Kerr Eby

LONG TOM BELLOWS AT THE JAPS
Photo Secured Through Courtesy of Dwight Kirsch

From the Abbott Collection

in 1944 the full strength of three world powers. It was hoped and expected that Germany would be crushed completely.

Immediately after the plan was adopted Eisenhower was called from the Mediterranean to lead the great offensive. He not only brought his experienced leaders — Montgomery, Spaatz, Tedder, Doolittle, Bradley, and Patton — with him, but immediately commenced to draw the proven divisions of the Eighth and Fifth Armies to England. That January MacArthur broke into the Bismarck Sea from the south. Arawe, Cape Gloucester, and Saidor began the task of isolating the great Japanese base at Rabaul. Nimitz's air forces started their three-week hammering of the Marshalls. The Russian winter offensive first swept across the old Polish frontier in the south, then ended the two-year siege of Leningrad and reached Estonia in the north. In January the long fight for Cassino began in the valley of Garigliano and Rapido. The attempt to turn the Gustav Line by landing at Anzio failed after a beachhead had been established. January had been successful, except in Italy. On the 28th the world was told of the Death March from Bataan.

In February MacArthur bottled up the Bismarck Sea by successful landings on Green and the Admiralty Islands. Rabaul had been bypassed. Farther north Nimitz first turned the heavily fortified eastern Marshalls to seize the atolls of Kwajalein and Eniwetok, with their great enclosed anchorages 2400 miles from Pearl Harbor. Then he sent the American fleet into the very heart of Japan's empire when he attacked the mysterious base of Truk, a thousand miles west of Kwajalein. Kwajalein showed that the lesson of Tarawa had been learned, 300 American dead for 8,000 Japanese. Admiral Nagono, Chief of the Naval General Staff was displaced while Prime Minister Tojo himself became Chief of the Army General Staff. The Emperor was troubled.

The Russians surrounded and destroyed ten German divisions south of Kiev before their winter offensive ended. In the West the attack began in the air. The rocket coast, then called the mystery coast, was continuously bombarded. In the four weeks ending February 26th, 1266 German planes were destroyed with a climax of 700 in the last week destroyed primarily over the

German factories that created them. In that one week the backbone of the German air force was broken and their plane production set back to the level of 1942. In Italy we fought bitterly at Anzio and Cassino. February was better than January.

In March the great air raids over Germany continued. In rain and mud believed impassible, the Russians in the southern Ukraine drove the German armies across Bug, Dneister and Pruth rivers. When the month ended they had entered northern Rumania and reached the Carpathians. MacArthur cleaned up the Admiralties and Nimitz the western Marshalls. Mitscher's task force again swept past Truk, this time to hit Yap and the Palau Islands. Later the Japanese announced that the Commander-in-Chief of their Combined Fleet was killed in action in March; while we stated that in the first three months of 1944 the Japanese had lost over 1400 planes to our 160. The first major offensive attempted by Japan since 1942 began March 15 when three divisions attempted to invade India and cut the line of communications for the Ledo Road. They succeeded only in reaching India. Cassino was blotted out by bombers but afterwards von Kesselring's stubborn German infantry continued to hold the town.

In mid-April the Russian spring offensive halted on the edge of the Balkans. For nine and one-half months Stalin had uninterruptedly launched one powerful drive after another until, except for White Russia, the pre-war frontiers against Germany had been reached. The Japanese, before they had lost the Admiralties completely, began the construction of a great base at Hollandia, concentrating planes and supplies, building new air fields and collecting troops. The former were destroyed in great air attacks, whereupon the troops were moved forward to meet the advancing Americans and Australians. On April 22 MacArthur's forces jumped 500 miles to seize Hollandia itself from the service troops there. In April news of allied diplomacy became both more clear and more unsatisfactory. A tungsten agreement with Spain was not as favorable as it was described. Eire refused to expel Axis diplomats, Finland and Bulgaria to get out of the war, and Turkey to get in it, all in the months preceding the great offensive. That proceeded according to plan while Rommel toured

the Atlantic wall and Englishmen wondered that their island didn't sink beneath its weight of men and equipment. In mid-April the great air strikes were redoubled, gradually shifting toward the roads and bridges in the west. Cassino became known as "Purple Heart Valley."

In May the Italian front moved at last. After the Gustav Line had been broken in a six-day battle around Cassino, a German withdrawal from central Italy began. The Russians took Sevastopol. From the 7th of May onward the average number of Allied planes over German-occupied Europe became 4000, doubling the average of previous weeks. On the 12th the Big Three warned Germany's satellites to get out of the war. Eisenhower's staff began broadcasting instructions to the European underground, but the date first chosen for invasion was allowed to pass by. The weather was bad at the critical time. Hitler wired Mussolini that despite all difficulties "the Tripartite Powers will have victory." In Burma the Japanese divisions still clung to the fringes of Kohima and Imphal. Stillwell's advance, however, reached Myitkyina where in the monsoon they were to fight nearly three months. MacArthur advanced twice; to Wadke and then to Biak in the Schoutens. He had reached the half way point from New Britain to the Philippines. On May 14 Tojo announced that the offensive against Japan was being pushed on a large scale and in a most daring manner.

III

In 1944 there were five great powers, and as May ended the strength of the three Allies reached its maximum. In the future it will be possible to estimate relative military strength more adequately. At present, however, it appears that Hitler's Reich reached the apex of its power in 1941 and 1942. Thereafter, although nearly 350 German divisions were maintained, it declined, primarily from the effects of Russian armies and Anglo-American air fleets. In May, 1944, it was strained both on the home front, where wrecked homes and factories, crippled transportation and material scarcities were requiring more desperate improvizations daily; and on the military fronts where divisions were

both being reduced in total strength and diluted by the enrollment of substandard Germans and conquered peoples. Yet Germany was still powerful, rigidly disciplined at home and with well-equipped armies. Its first line divisions remained confident of victory. Its leaders, however, realized perfectly the changing balance of power and knew that for themselves personally there would be no survival of defeat. If, and only if, German armies could hold *Festung Europa* against the coming attack they might gain a negotiated peace.

Japan had reached her greatest power in the summer of 1942. Then she possessed a navy that was, for the moment, the equal of any and an army of about two and a half million men, with immense reserves of man power. Her new Greater East Asia contained the raw material for indefinite expansion. Yet only if given time to organize and exploit her new conquests could she retain the height she had reached, and American sea and air power has prevented that. Her military leaders had gambled their empire and emperor upon German military strength, Pacific distances, the savagery of their soldiery, and the "softness" of the Anglo-Saxons. Even before, on June 15, the B-29's hit the Japanese homeland, its industrial base was inadequate. Japan in May was slowly decreasing in power. She too was depending upon making victory too costly for the Allies.

Stalin's Russia had probably reached its maximum power in 1943. The world knows too little of the strain on the home front, of the drain imposed by scorched earth across a rich area conquered and reconquered, and of Russian casualties, to make a reliable estimate. On June 2 they themselves admitted 5,300,000 dead and prisoners. Colonel Lanza, military expert of the *Chicago Tribune* and not given to exaggeration on Russia, has written that in April the minimum Russian casualties were 15,000,000. Despite this, Russia in mid 1944 had probably receded little from the height of her power.

The British Commonwealth was far less powerful than its allies. Its population of European descent was smaller, and its millions of Indians and Africans were of greatly different standards in any assessment of war potential. Britain was tired, but, considering the 4,500,000 from Great Britain in the armed

services and the resources of her Empire, not far past her maximum war strength.

The United States in 1944 did not reach its full war power. It did not even operate under strain as that was understood by every other great power. In May and thereafter there was fumbling — strikes, patent hogging, bungling of rationing, grafting upon contracts, jockeying for post-war positions, conflicting governmental agencies, military miscalculation of needs, political campaigns and mudslinging, scandalous overexpansion of military administrative details, red tape. The American standard of living had probably actually risen. Yet with all these deterrents, if results rather than processes were considered, America as a military machine was functioning smoothly and efficiently. For the first time in eighty years it was approaching its potential power.

Peace-time colonels and lieutenant colonels had made of themselves a military staff capable of handling millions of men and of outthinking, in its own prepared positions, the *Oberkommando der Wehrmacht* itself. Captains, and in some cases athletic coaches, had become able divisional commanders.

The Army Air Force consisted of more than 2,000,000 men with a productive capacity behind it of more than 8000 planes a month. It had had battle experience under all conditions. By trial and error all over the world its generals had learned the possibilities and some of the limitations of air power. Some of its planes were unequalled in their spheres; all of them could meet the world's best acceptably. The United States was the greatest of the great powers in the air.

There were 3,500,000 men in the Navy. Their combat ships in number, tonnage, and fighting power practically equalled those of the rest of the world combined. In the desperate battles of 1942 its admirals had mastered the new art of the ship-plane combination. Over the Marshalls American carriers had put a thousand planes simultaneously in the air. The Japanese had attacked Pearl Harbor with 105. The United States was by far the greatest of naval powers.

The United States Army including its air force had a strength of approximately 8,000,000 men, making it either the second or third largest in the world. It probably had reached its goal of

110 combat divisions well equipped and well trained. By May about 20 of these had had combat experience in which, with minor exceptions, they had acquitted themselves well. Some, like the First Infantry, had already shown their equality with the world's best. Its equipment, piece for piece, excelled Japanese, but in some categories was inferior to German. No other army was as thoroughly equipped. Its great deficiency was battle experience.

As May, 1944, ended, the United States had completed the period of preparation and could put into action something approaching its potential power. The combination of air, sea and land strength was unequalled as was the industrial plant behind it. These had to be applied against well-fortified and well-defended coasts thousands of miles distant held by able and determined enemies who knew their imperial existence was at stake. Two great powers by their deliberate acts had chosen war and, two and one-half years after Pearl Harbor, the United States was prepared to fight.

IV

For three months the reports from every European front were only of victories; for seven months the Russian advance in the East continued. The roll of cities from which the Nazi had been expelled mounted daily. Rome, Florence, Pisa, Ravenna, Paris, Brest, Reims, Marseilles, Metz, Mons, Verdun, Chateau Thierry, Brussels, Ghent, Antwerp, Minsk, Talinn, Riga, Helsinki, Brest Litovsk, Vilna, Lwow, Bucharest, Ploesti, Sofia, Athens, Corinth, Belgrade, Liege, Strasbourg, Aachen, — the *Wehrmacht* retired from them all, while, in the Pacific, American strength alone forced Japan westward. In number of men engaged, weight and cost of material, geographical scope of operations, and victories it was the greatest year of the greatest war of history.

Nevertheless, Warsaw, Vienna, Milan, Amsterdam, Oslo, Copenhagen, Munich, and Berlin were not there although statesmen and generals had, publicly, expected them to be. On New Year's Eve the Russians on the Vistula and the Western powers beyond the Rhine were still 320 miles from Berlin.

The Italian campaign of 1944 was, at the very best, only partially successful. Approximately 25 German divisions under

Albert von Kesselring fought delaying actions from Cassino up the boot of Italy to the Gothic Line. No appreciable number of Germans were cut off in the process while central Italy was thoroughly wrecked. There were a score of reasons for the Allied failure to reach the Alps, but none of them reflected upon the willingness and bravery of the Allied troops. Kesselring and his key divisions were good; entirely apart from American opinion, quite as accurate, that the Italian Campaign was a mess.

The Russian summer campaign opened on June 10. Two-thirds of the German ground forces and all those of the satellite countries were in position on this 2000-mile front. Stalin, in his anniversary speech, described seven major offensives as having taken place in the five months preceding November 6. Comparison of German and Russian communiqués disclosed ten or more campaigns, the difference being such bloody but inconclusive drives as that northeast of Warsaw in August-September and the invasion of East Prussia in October. Two were great victories. The June-July White Russian offensive destroyed three German armies, advanced 350 miles closer to Berlin, and precipitated the July 20th attempt on Hitler's life. The Rumanian offensive of August-September destroyed two German armies, advanced 550 miles westward, and cleared the Balkans. Others forced Finland out of the war, cleared Estonia and the greater part of Latvia, and established a bridgehead across the Vistula in the south. The satellite countries were compelled to change sides and, with the exception of small areas around Libau on the Baltic and in Hungary, Germany was driven within her eastern frontiers of 1941. No less than a million German troops were eliminated from the war.

A Russian journalist has described the character of German defense when the Red Army invaded East Prussia.

"Deep trenches run in an endless chain, linked by communication trenches. In one small sector the enemy built 18 pillboxes with iron and concrete walls two and one-half to three meters thick. Some of the pillboxes have revolving armored turrets facilitating circular fire. Near the town of Schirwindt, captured by Soviet troops, a three-story pillbox was taken with a garrison of 69 soldiers. This pillbox fortress even had a drinking-water well. In seven of its embrasures the Germans had placed machine guns; in the eighth a 75 mm. gun. The soil is filled with mines and high explosive shells; minefields form an unbroken chain along the bor-

der, reaching a kilometer and more in depth. Picked Prussian units were stationed here and Hitler ordered them not to retreat one step. Each soldier and officer was warned that retreat would be punished by death."

One month later the American First Army discovered the same thing between Aachen and Cologne. The Red Army drove about thirty miles into East Prussia before it was halted. In the last two months of the year the Russians, in heavy fighting that probably included the biggest tank battles of 1944, built up their drive in Hungary, entering Budapest as the year ended.

The greatest land battles ever fought by the United States began on June 6. The quarter million men landed on that day became approximately four million, probably sixty per cent American, before the end of the year. The Atlantic Wall was broken, France liberated, and Germany invaded from the west. Over one million German soldiers were captured or killed. The seven months of battle put the power of the United States to the ultimate test. Both troops and leaders were found decidedly satisfactory. The forces under Eisenhower, leaders and men, proved their equality with the German and Russian military machines considered the best in the world.

The full plan has not been published but the various bits of it that have been disclosed called for a preliminary landing that immediately would capture Caen and Cherbourg, a second landing on the southern coast of Brittany that would coincide with a southward drive from the beachhead first established, a united drive toward the Seine that would coincide with a Mediterranean landing, a major battle probably southeast of Paris, and pursuit to the German frontier. Battles notoriously do not proceed according to plan.

As fought, the first stage, the establishment of the beachhead, took place in June. July consisted of attempts to break through the German ring, the last and successful one of which began July 25. Pursuit, carried much farther than considered possible, continued throughout August. On August 15 the Mediterranean landing was made, after which pursuit followed from the south. Pursuit ended along the line of the German frontier of 1941 from Switzerland to Maastricht in Holland, and thence

westward along the Dutch frontier to the sea. During this stage of the campaign popular expectation that Germany would be crushed by Thanksgiving or Christmas at the latest was encouraged by official statements. Pursuit was immediately followed by attempts to break the German fortified lines before they could reorganize and by an air-borne force attempt to cross the river barriers of Holland. These were only partially successful. October and the first half of November consisted of local attacks along the German frontier while the British and Canadians cleared south Holland and Antwerp. Between November 15 and December 15 a major assault by armies of 2,000,000 men was made along the north-south line. The German frontier of 1939 was reached along nearly all the Luxembourg to Switzerland line, but the First Army drive east of Aachen made only slight progress. A powerful German attack between the two American offensive zones was launched December 15. This battle of the Ardennes ended the American attacks.

In the first stage of the campaign 250,000 men were landed in 24 hours. They were carried and protected by 4000 ships and 20,000 plane sorties. Eisenhower for the third time gained surprise by the place he had chosen for the assault. The British inability to reach Caen together with the American sea-and-air landed troops finding themselves separated by a German division then on maneuvers were the major failures of the day. Allied destruction of bridges and air attacks were so thorough that Rommel was never able to launch powerful counterattacks, despite the fact that some of the German strong points within the beachhead held out for two weeks. Fulfillment of the Allied timetable was further delayed by the destruction in a gale of the American artificial port. When Cherbourg was captured on June 27 the Germans claimed without contradiction that Eisenhower was nearly three weeks behind schedule. Captured records show that Hitler commanded that the beachhead be eliminated by evening of the first day. Thereafter we have little knowledge of any German schedule.

During June and July both armies gradually built up strength. As Allied attempts to push south were repeatedly halted, German propaganda began to boast that the Allies were unable to progress

beyond the range of their fleet's heavy guns. Allied commentators spoke of Montgomery's conservatism and the Normandy hedgerows. Our airmen fatally wounded Rommel about July 21, after his superior, von Rundstedt, had been removed by Hitler and his subordinate, Dollman of the Seventh Army, killed.

American correspondents insist that credit for the successful breakthrough belongs to General Omar Bradley. The attack was begun on July 25 by 3000 American planes, half of them B-17s and B-24s. They were followed by an attack by four infantry divisions who prepared the holes through which the Second and Third Armored Divisions poured. Then Bradley sent the Third Army through. His final orders to Patton are reported as "Let 'er rip!" By the 29th the German estimate was 24 American divisions in action. On the 31st von Kluge first ordered his left to fall back on Avranches, already taken by the Americans, and then informed *der fuehrer's* headquarters of the disintegration of a German Army Corps and of the incompetence of his new SS general. The American First and Third Armies were already loose in France. It is reported that von Kluge committed suicide when the magnitude of the defeat became apparent.

Between August 7 and 12 five German panzer divisions attacked the American division holding open the gap. After they had narrowed it by a third they were hit by R.A.F. rocket-firing Typhoons. Thereafter the German armies tried to escape from France. Great numbers were killed or captured in battle for the Falaise gap before August 21 but the Germans got the remains of their best divisions away. The four Allied armies in action leap-frogged one another repeatedly during August but after Patton's Third won crossing of the Seine, northwest of Paris August 20 and southeast of Paris five days later, the pursuit followed a fixed plan.

The First Canadian Army moved along the coast besieging and storming Germans left in the ports. The Second British Army farther inland was held up by the American First around Mons but thereafter raced through Brussels to capture, September 4, Antwerp, undamaged. Hodges' American First Army cut off and captured around Mons the German corps ordered to defend the Siegfried Line at Aachen and thereafter pushed through Liege

into Germany where, on September 12, it broke through the permanent works of the Line south of Aachen. The Third Army southeast of Paris reached the Meuse at Verdun as August ended and Nancy and Metz on the Moselle September 2. The Seventh Army landed east of Toulon on August 15 and pursued the retreating Germans up the Rhone. On the 28th it failed to cut off their retreat at Montilmar although nearly all their equipment was destroyed. It made contact with the Third Army, whose southern flank had hitherto been effectively guarded against 30,000 Germans by the 19th Tactical Air Command of the Ninth Air Force, on September 13.

Pursuit beyond the Seine was a desperate gamble for supplies, which were exhausted when the Meuse was crossed. Hodges abandoned a great part of his artillery in order to use their trucks for fuel, while it has been reported that Patton sent out his brigadier-generals to hijack others' fuel trains. The Red Ball was not organized until August 24. Patton's tanks ran dry before they stopped. A Third Army patrol was the first to cross the pre-war German frontier. Nevertheless, by the beginning of September Allied headquarters realized that another major defeat must be imposed upon Germany.

German strategy had left powerful forces in the major ports. The Allied high command faced a situation in which their battle-line was along the German frontier instead of across northern France, the ports upon which they had planned were both not available and not the proper ones for this new battle, and 100 new German divisions at the least would be ready in the spring of 1945. The decision was to make one more attack immediately, clear the necessary ports, and attempt to reach the Rhine before German forces could be reequipped. Eight combat divisions sailed from the United States in September to strengthen the more than 60 already at the fronts.

The Third Army began an attack upon Metz and the First Army one upon Aachen before three divisions of the First Airborne Army attempted to cross the Dutch rivers. Between September 17 and 27 an advance of 45 miles over two of the three barriers was made but attention focused upon the British division landed at Arnhem. This had to be withdrawn. The First Army

was held in Huertgen Forest south of Aachen and the Third at Fort Driant before Metz. The ports of Le Havre, Boulogne, Brest, and Calais were captured, while the Canadian First Army began the major campaign to clear the approaches to Antwerp, that was not completed until early November. General Marshall flew to Paris on October 6 where he decided in favor of the great November offensive.

The last offensive of 1944 was planned both to prevent the accumulation of German reserves and to reach the Rhine. It was not a success. The Rhine was reached over most of its length in Alsace-Lorraine, the Third Army reached the Saar frontier of Germany, but the First was held before the Roer River for a month until von Rundstedt's counterattack disclosed at least 20 crack German divisions massed against it. As 1944 closed, around Bastogne the German counteroffensive appeared to have succeeded only in ending the Allied offensive. American opinion appeared to be more plagued over failure to destroy Nazidom than proud of the great record of its armies in 1944.

V

While the greater part of American power was engaged against Germany, four land campaigns were fought against Japan. The campaign in China, Japan's only offensive, consisted of Japanese occupation of the American airfields in southeast China. Neither Chiang Kai-shek's armies nor Chennault's Fourteenth Air Force were able to prevent this. Unfortunately, some of the facts concerning the Chinese government first became generally known in the United States at a time when both American politics were unusually high tempered and the Chinese government unusually near collapse. Madame Chiang's popularity in America and the heroic stature of Chinese peasant and coolie had led to so great an adulation of everything Chinese that probably nothing less than the combination of accounts of reputable American correspondents after they were outside Chinese censorship, stories of returned American soldiers, discourteous retorts exchanged between the C. B. I. theatre and Hollywood stars, and the recall of Stillwell could have led to better American understanding of the Chinese problem. In the summer of 1944, however, such

sensational material as Chiang's formal description of his marital relations received little notice. Too many Americans were dying. As the year ended there was little optimism concerning China in the United States.

The Burma campaign was almost entirely British. After holding the Japanese spring offensive the British, during the monsoons, methodically destroyed the invading force. Meanwhile, American-trained Chinese and a small American force continued fighting for the little town of Myitkyina. Casualties throughout Burma were far greater from tropical disease than the Japanese. Ledo and Burma Roads were practically open at the end of the year and the Japanese were evacuating north Burma.

Approximately one-third of America's ground forces and four-fifths of her naval power were directed across the Pacific at the Japanese Empire. American opinion could have been well satisfied if the first five month's progress in 1944 had been divided into the twelve, yet during the last seven months the two American campaigns moved more and more rapidly toward a climax. MacArthur's forces that in January had started from the southeastern entrance of the Bismarck Sea and Nimitz's from the Marshalls combined on October 19 in our return to the Philippines. The Japanese battle fleet after two years of evasion was compelled to offer battle and, unlike the American in 1942, was defeated.

MacArthur's well-publicized campaign had been a model of precision and daring that enabled his aides to exult that the Sixth Army, in its long record of amphibious operations, never had to fight its way up the beaches. It had begun the year with a jump of 110 miles to Saidor on January 3; thereafter in turn 200 miles more to Los Negros on February 27, 500 to Hollandia on April 22, 125 to Wadke on May 17, 200 to Biak on May 27, 100 to Noemfoor on July 2, 200 to Sansapoor on July 30, and 300 more to Morotai on September 15. The record allowed some boasting. Approximately ten American divisions, together with Australian troops and U. S. Marines, had been identified with MacArthur. The Fifth and Thirteenth Air Forces together with the Seventh Fleet formed the other branches under his command. These had been slowly increased in size and throughout the year received

support when necessary from Nimitz's fast carrier task force. MacArthur's technique made full use of air power, landed where the Japanese weren't and suffered remarkably few casualties.

Admiral Nimitz's command used four Army and four Marine divisions during the year together with the Seventh Air Force. In Admirals Spruance of the Fifth Fleet, Halsey of the Third, and Mitscher and McCain of the fast carrier task force he had brought together a team that deserves the fame the English have given Nelson's captains. On January 31 Kwajalein, 400 miles from Tarawa and 2500 from Pearl Harbor, was invaded. The major landings thereafter were: Eniwetok, 350 miles from Kwajalein on February 18, Saipan, 1100 from Eniwetok on June 15, and Paeliu in the Palaus 950 miles from Saipan on September 15. Although the Central Pacific did not offer the choice in landings found in the Southwest, Marine tactics appear to have been somewhat responsible for the casualty rates.

Decisions for the time and place of the invasion of the Philippines were reached at Pearl Harbor in late July when President Roosevelt, General MacArthur and Admiral Nimitz held a three-day conference. **These plans, however,** were speeded up as a result of the great carrier attacks of September. The actual landing on Leyte October 19 was several weeks ahead of schedule. Troops from both the Southwest and Central Pacific Theatres covered by the Third and Seventh Fleets gained surprise by the point of landing. The United States, while its major strength was engaged on the German frontiers, had returned 7000 miles from the Pacific Coast. The decisions were made at a time when it was expected that German organized resistance would soon collapse. As the year ended warnings were appearing that the rapid advance against Japan must not be expected to continue.

The rapid advance had been made possible by the fleet. Although no Japanese capital ship had appeared in action since 1942, the power concentrated under Nimitz first became apparent when Truk, then a thousand miles beyond American advanced positions, was raided on February 16. A large Japanese fleet had been sheltered there twelve days earlier and had disappeared before the attack. Then on March 30, Palau, 1000 miles beyond Truk, was hit. Again there were no capital ships present but an American

submarine had placed a torpedo in a Japanese battleship as it withdrew. Thereafter, Mitscher's carriers could feel they were in home waters as they covered MacArthur at Hollandia and returned by Truk. A Nebraska sailor returned from the Pacific has said, "We used to feel leary going out into strange waters but now we just go where we please." The change took place between Truk and Palau.

On June 19 the F.C.C. recorded a Japanese radio announcement, "It has been announced in Tokyo that the Japanese Navy in the near future will win a great naval victory in the Central Pacific." This is officially called the First Battle of the Philippine Sea, unofficially Navy pilots refer to it as the Marianas Turkey Shoot. On June 19 a Japanese Fleet that included at least four battleships and six carriers attacked the naval forces covering the Saipan landing. That afternoon 402 Japanese planes were destroyed at a cost of four ships damaged, none seriously, and 27 planes. The attack had been planned as a shuttle operation between the Japanese fleet and Marianas' air fields that would keep the fleet beyond the range of American carrier-based planes. On the following afternoon, however, the American carrier force attacked at extreme range. Damaged were one battleship, five carriers, three cruisers, and three destroyers, of which two carriers and one destroyer were sunk. We lost 95 planes, many from lack of fuel, but only 49 men.

The Japanese communique of June 23 read, "Although five enemy aircraft carriers and more than one battleship were sunk or damaged, we were unable to inflict a decisive blow upon the enemy." It described the American fleet as "centered around more than twenty and some aircraft carriers and more than a dozen battleships." Japan had encountered Spruance's Fifth Fleet with Mitscher's fast carriers, Task Force 58. When, after the conquest of Saipan, Rota, and Guam, it returned to base it had sunk 85 ships, damaged 187 others and destroyed 1,151 planes.

Announcement in Japan of the loss of Saipan was followed by Tojo's resignation and relegation to reserve status. However, his successor Koiso was chosen from the same clique of army officers. The new government on August 15 analysed the military situation to its eastern allies. Although, this statement declared,

Japanese air power was only one-third that of its enemies, Japan had absolute confidence in victory. The decisive battle would be fought on a line linking Japan with the Philippines on which she would have "undisputed control of the air." Nimitz's and MacArthur's shortage of manpower, it concluded, made a great offensive virtually impossible, yet Japan was extensively preparing for a decisive battle.

On August 28 Halsey's Third Fleet replaced the Fifth, some of the ships of which were added to Kinkaid's Seventh Fleet. Halsey had, with Mitscher's carriers, over a hundred combat ships with which to cover the various landings planned. In eight combat actions before September 23 his fleet ranged 1600 miles from Morotai to the Bonins, destroying 137 ships and 968 planes while also covering the Morotai and Palau landings. On October 9 it attacked the Ryukyu Islands, 200 miles from Japan itself, and thus began the great raids planned to pave the way for new landings on Yap and the Philippines. In the week following the carriers swung slowly southward from the Ryukyus to Formosa and then to Luzon. Meanwhile, the Japanese communiques and radio daily grew more ecstatic in descriptions of victory. On October 15 they reported officially that seven American carriers had been sunk and that their forces were in full pursuit of the fleeing American fleet while subjecting it to heavy fire. Radio Tokyo claimed 17 carriers sunk among 50 ships sunk or damaged. The following day the official report was 11 carriers sunk and six damaged while newscasts described wild joy in Tokyo over the American defeat.

Halsey's reports described attacks by fleets of Japanese planes flying south from the home islands. These he reported were followed by a strong naval force which quickly turned about upon discovering that he was "retiring at high speed toward it." American losses for the week were 94 planes lost and two medium-sized vessels out of action in comparison with 915 Japanese planes destroyed, 128 ships sunk, and 184 damaged. Halsey immediately requested that the landing on Yap be abandoned and that on Leyte advanced. On October 18, protected by both the Third and Seventh fleets, troops from the Central and Southwest Pacific combined under MacArthur to land in the Philippines.

Japanese reaction was rapid and powerful. On the 23rd American submarines began to detect the assembly of enemy vessels from all quarters of Japan's empire. By the 26th, at least 67 combat ships had been in action against the American fleets and, in the Second Battle of the Philippine Sea, decisively defeated in one of the great naval battles of history.

On the first day submarines detected a strong fleet to the southwest from which they sank two cruisers and damaged a third. One submarine was lost on a reef but after its crew was saved. Off Luzon a fourth cruiser was torpedoed by another submarine. Later the same day carrier planes located two fleets, one of sixteen vessels including two battleships and another of 28 in which there were five battleships, threading their way through the islands toward Leyte.

On the following day American carrier planes continuously attacked these two fleets, damaging many vessels and leaving the new battleship *Musashi* in a sinking condition. Meanwhile, Japanese land-based planes attacked shipping on Leyte Gulf and one of Mitscher's carrier groups off Luzon. The *Princeton* from this group was destroyed, the first major unit lost since the Solomons campaign. Late in the afternoon Japanese carrier planes began to attack the Third Fleet, the larger of the two fleets steaming towards Leyte turned about, and a naval plane reported a large Japanese fleet coming down from the north. The new fleet included both battleships and carriers to a total of between 17 and 27 vessels. Halsey decided to gather as much of the Third Fleet as possible for an attack upon this new opponent.

On the third day three separate engagements took place, one with each of the enemy fleets. Between midnight and dawn Kincaid's six battleships destroyed the southernmost of the Japanese forces in a 20-mile stretch of Surigao Strait. From dawn to midday Halsey's Third hit the Japanese northern fleet, eventually destroying all of its carriers and damaging severely one of its battleships. Only 17 ships were found although 14 transports were located. Between 6 and 10 a.m. the central Japanese force, which during the night had turned again and passed through San Bernadino Strait, attacked a small group of escort carriers sinking one carrier, two destroyers and one destroyer escort. Attacks

by land planes later sank another escort carrier. This Japanese force lost at least two cruisers and two destroyers, although Halsey failed to intercept it.

On the following days American planes and submarines attacked fleeing Japanese vessels, probably sinking several and damaging many. A total of eight American vessels—one light carrier, two escort carriers, two destroyers, one destroyer escort, one submarine and one PT boat — had been lost. Japanese losses included at least three battleships, four carriers, eight cruisers, and nine destroyers. Probably no less than 30 ships were sunk. The Second Battle of the Philippine Sea drove the Japanese surface fleet from the western Pacific and confined it to the seas bordering Asia itself.

VI

New weapons appeared during the year together with the promise of more to come, all of which caused fear among those who saw them as foreshadowing the terrors of "the next war." America produced the B-29, capable of carrying a bomb-load to an objective 1500 miles distant and then returning to base. It was being used in fleets of 100 planes, and, either in fleets or individually, was over Japan daily as the year ended. Mightier sisters were promised.

Jet-propelled planes developed by both Germany and the Allies were put in use. The German plane displayed speed and rate of climb unequalled by any other. Neither side, however, was able to conquer the problem of high fuel consumption that limited the range of the new motor. The new German rocket-propelled, distinct from the rocket-assisted take-off, plane probably could reach altitudes previously impractical. As early as November luminous balls arose and accompanied Allied planes over Germany. No other damage, other than to nerves, was reported from these before the year ended.

In June Germany began firing V-1 against England and in October V-2. The first was a jet-propelled robot plane with a war head of a ton of high explosive. Earlier it might have compelled the English to make peace. At 250 miles range it was effective only against area targets and its speed was slightly less

than that of the fastest fighter planes. Its effect was minimized by the defense measurers used against bombers but it was brought under control only by occupation of its launching sites. V-2 was a 50-foot rocket that shot its one-ton war head in an arc 60 miles above the surface. Its range was greater but its accuracy less than that of V-1. Since it required only a simple launching site and travelled faster than sound it was more difficult to combat effectively. Transport lines between the places of manufacture and those of launching were attacked as the best available defence. Allied scientists announced that both weapons were at an early stage of development as German propagandists declared that they would be used against New York City in this war.

The certainty that the weapons used in 1944 would be extended and perfected in a generation, thus enabling any industrial state to devastate the great cities of another state by surprise attack, gave a new urgency to the problems of peacemaking. In 1944 the normal conferences among the Big Three occurred although there was no repetition of Teheran. A series of international conferences were held to make recommendations upon monetary problems, oil, air, and post-war international organization. The last, held at Dumbarton Oaks in the late summer, released proposals for an international organization to prevent future war that received the sponsorship of Roosevelt, Churchill and Stalin. It proposed to place the power to prevent war in a Supreme Council of eleven members. The five great powers were each to have a permanent seat on this Council with the remaining six filled by election by all states. The organization was to have no control over the domestic concerns of any state nor any military power other than that granted to it by member states.

Meanwhile, as the year passed and victory appeared more imminent the rivalries and antagonisms of the three world powers flared, the more strongly because of their suppression during the dangerous days. Russian military successes in the Balkans were not entirely welcome in the Anglo-Saxon countries. Russian intent concerning her western frontier, although announced earlier, aroused greater antagonism as it neared fulfillment. Dislike of Communism became fear of Russia. The British wish, intensified by the destruction wrought by V-1 and V-2, to form a bloc

of western states was resented in Russia. Their support of conservative parties in European countries was resented in the United States. The permanent acquisition by the United States of a trans-Atlantic base in Liberia, the negotiations for similar rights in the Galapagos, and the announced intention of retaining the islands conquered from Japan, all appeared imperialistic to other countries. The pre-war rivalries over merchant shipping, air lines, and oil reappeared in public; each people thinking and in general being led to think of its own sacrifice and altruism as compared with the egotism and selfishness of its allies.

The year 1944 was a year of war and of great victories, the greatest in the history of our country. Final Victory, however, was deferred and a great danger appeared that the self-interest shown by each of the world powers would react against the adoption of any world organization for lasting peace.

“Washington, Dec. 28 — (AP) War casualties of the armed services reached 628,411 December 14 — two days prior to the big German offensive in western Europe.”

“Lincoln, Dec. 31 — Pfc. ———, 19, battlescarred veteran of eight campaigns in the south Pacific and holder of the Purple Heart, arrived in Lincoln Saturday night. Pfc. ——— has been honorably discharged from the service after receiving major wounds in one of the eight major battles in which he participated. He has already lost his father and one brother in this war and his mother is a member of the WAC stationed at Des Moines.”