

## **A NECESSARY WAR**

### **(Part II)**

**In his mosaic of war and remembrance, Ken Burns has again painted a tapestry of perspective and captured the essence of World War II.....in all its moments of pageantry, sacrifice, brutality and commitment. Like his civil war masterpiece, the dead seem to be everywhere, staring up at us, and seemingly asking, 'why me'? Futility of war seems poignant! Is war ever a solution? Here it seems so.**

**WWII actually began when three German Army Groups invaded Poland on 1 Sept and Britain/France honored agreement and declared war on 3rd. Japan and Germany had long ago left the League of Nations and continued their undisguised march for economic and military mastery of respective spheres.**

**Earlier this writer hop-scotched through the first moments after Pearl Harbor highlighting the effect of the attack, first reactions of reply and the realization by the homefront this was war and 'katy bar the door': thankful that our aircraft carriers had not been at Pearl, still terrible damage left a battered fleet and 2000 dead; Psychological boost by Doolittle raiders(16 B25 bombers left Carrier Hornet, for the 600 mile trip to bomb Tokyo), hence to China, a one-way trip. Many did not make it, others crashed and some were executed. Morale at home skyrocketed.**

**Early battle in the Coral Sea, a standoff, but a prelude to the Guadalcanal landing and Midway. An embargo of Japanese war materials and asset freezing in July of 1941, oil crucial, seemed to assure a Japanese response. Secret code-breaking aided in knowledge of Japanese plans, and crucial at Midway. Plans to knock out the remaining US fleet were thwarted and Alaskan lodgement of a few units were targeted. 4 Japanese carriers sunk.**

**Burns visited Sacramento and showed early pics of the all-black 4909 Aviation Support unit in everyday work and play. Negroes within displayed their duties and a swing band of competence. Burt Wilson, too young to go, remembers his Victory Garden- a staple for the wartime; your author used this grown by a friend to aid his graduation from high school. The Phillips family: Katherine and Marine Sydney recall early Mobile, the War and his trek in Guadalcanal. Horrors of prison starvation, torture, and the desire to survive we see Frazier again. Aanenson of Luverne his fighter aircraft full of bullet holes crash lands at an English airbase, and Babe Ciarlo of Waterbury dies in the valley near Cassino.**

**Ed Rinck's sinus derails army duty and he returns, joining Don Carmichael at Tom Crumplars, Westwood Village malt shop and 'fame arrives'. Selected to play bit parts in 'See Here Private Hargrove and Shine on Harvest Moon'-a movie career interrupted when Carmichael -his skinny frame vibrating with excitement-joins the Army, Feb 1943.**

**Owen Stanleys in New Guinea are scaled by American and Australian forces pushing Japs to the other side, dead Americans at Buna beach lie in the sand -a Life Magazine cover. Marianas(Saipan, Tinian and Guam) are struck where Americans lose 16,000 and the Japanese leave 30,000 dead and in ominous fatalism, Japanese civilians jump from the cliffs in Saipan rather than give in.**

**Correspondent Ernie Pyle becoming the GI favorite remembers infantry in Sicily as he trudged with them: "It's the perpetual, choking dust, the muscle-racking hard ground, the snatched food sitting ill on the stomach, the heat, the flies, the dirty feet and**

**the constant roar of engines and the perpetual moving and the never settling down, and the go, go, go, night and day, and on through the night again. Eventually it all works itself into an emotional tapestry of one dull, dead pattern-yesterday is tomorrow and Troina is Randazzo and when will it ever stop and God I'm so tired."**

**Stalingrad falls, and the great battle of Kursk takes place near Kharkov, forming a Russian salient in German lines; attempts at cutting off the base as in past successes become the Waterloo of German armor as the war see-saws in many theaters in this year.**

**Internment becomes enlistment potential for some Japanese youth who finish infantry basic training and become part of the 100th Infantry battalion soon to become legendary in Italy. High school pals Tadashi Matsuoka and Tom Ishii are selected. Combat units are created: 555th Airborne Battalion, an all-black unit begins its legacy. Tuskegee Aviators both fighter and bomber are trained. Eisenhower initiates black infantry platoons and integrates - somewhat. Black 92nd Infantry division is born.**

**An all Canadian raid at Dieppe, France -aimed at checking coastal defenses, German reaction and potential for cross-channel invasion had mixed results and influenced time for the main attack to wait till 1944. In the meantime, England became an military arsenal in waiting.**

**Private Don Carmichael arrives at Liverpool in May of 1944 trained as a Light Tank crewman and recalls playing baseball till midnight and while on guard as the night turned to 6 June....black air plane shapes roared endlessly in the night towards France.**