Chapter 18

A New Player

My name is Edward Marshall. I have brown hair and hazel eyes. I was 38 in 1941.

A steady buzzing and blaring of my alarm clock woke me up to this new day, but also to this new time in history. Not 4 days ago, one of our bases in Hawaii had been attacked by our new enemy of the Japanese. The whole base was in a state of frenzy with the sudden declaration of war, preparing to be either shipped to the Pacific or protect our homeland. Even with this anticipation, I rose from my bed and commenced with the daily routine to shave, eat breakfast, and report to my superiors for any orders for the day.

Every since I was little, I wanted nothing more than to join the army and be part of something great for my family. With five sisters, I also wanted to get out of the house as soon as I turned 18 and go my own path. I trained long and hard my entire career in the military, and I continue my efforts to further myself. Finally, after long years, I had received the rank of Colonel because of my hard work and exceptional planning skills and tactics. The only drawback from this life is that I never married or had any children. I haven’t seen my family back at Chesapeake, Virginia in quite awhile either, but my mother writes constantly so I know all that is happening.

Rousing from my musing, I went ahead with the rest of the morning and headed over to HQ for briefings and reports for the day. I sat at my desk for most the morning until one of my aides informed me of an urgent meeting taking place that I must attend. Once inside the meeting, my superior, General Smith, informed us that on this day, December 11, Hitler has declared war on the United States of America. Immediately, the facts and status of our army was taken into account and numbers were looked over in case of attack. As of now, the number of military personnel was 1,801,101 with every branch of the forces in the count. The rest of my day was meetings, paperwork, requisitions, and organizing strategies for this war which we are very much now a part of.

Eight days later, on the 19th, I received a report that Hitler had taken complete control of the German Army after they had been losing badly on the Moscow front. Further into the report, it stated how the German leader had many officers removed and replaced. According to the report, the reason for this huge shift in power, besides them losing, was that Hitler did not believe in giving up captured territory, so he made himself Commander-in-Chief of the army with officers that would listen to his commands.

For the rest of the month and into next year, every available personnel was planning and preparing for troops to cross the Atlantic for the aid of the Allies into Great Britain. Supplies needed to be ordered, orders for the men needed to be delivered, and tactics planned to reach our Allies without interference from German U-boats or other war ships. What surprised me happened during the middle of all this on January 1. On that day, 26 Allied Nations signed the Declaration of the United Nations for the post war years to bring about peace again. They had tried to do this with the League of Nations but nothing had come out of it. I felt that this would change with the joining of the U.S. into this league. Also, while planning to cross to England, on January 13, the Germans began their U-boat offensive along our east coast and threatened to sink any ship that planned to head for Europe. Even with these threats, several vessels began their journeys, carrying the armed forces to the cities and bases of Great Britain.

I was aboard one of the first ships to make it to port on the large island of the United Kingdom. We had finally reached our destination after a long period of time over the rocking and rolling of the ocean that never seemed to calm. Especially in this cold, winter air. The date was January 26 when the first American forces had successfully arrived on this island. Nazi Germany and Hitler was about to meet its new player.

The next few months were a blur of preparations, planning, and meeting with other officials in both armies as we tried to work together for mutual goals. Most of our fly boys went with the English squadrons to fight the constant air raids and to fly with our own into the German air space. On April 23, the Germans launched new air raids against the cathedral cities of Britain. We retaliated seven days later with the first thousand-bomber British air raid over Cologne, Germany, doing serious damage to the city.

The next month on June 25, General Dwight D. Eisenhower arrived in London to take command a large part of the American forces stationed there. He also helped coordinate and establish the role of the United States army and army air corps within the war. By August 17, he had successfully launched the first all-American air raid in Europe over the German cities. The war planning and war in general seemed to be looking up over here in England. I was 38 years old. Everything was looking up here, but sand has a way of getting everywhere when you fight a desert war.