



## FIFTY YEARS AGO IN WORLD WAR II

MAY-JUNE 1943

**By the middle of 1943, Japanese forces in the Pacific—already on the defensive—were being relentlessly driven from territory they had held a year earlier. U.S. offensives in the Aleutians, in New Guinea, and in the Solomon Islands foretold future victories as Imperial losses in men, ships, and aircraft mounted. With the defeat of Axis forces in North Africa, Allied attention was turning to the invasion of Sicily, as control of the Mediterranean was wrested from the Germans and Italians.**

**The following highlights of events during May and June of that year have been excerpted from A Portrait of the Stars and Stripes, Volume II, by Bud Hannings. (The book is available for \$50.00 from Seniram Publishing, Inc., P.O. Box 432, Glenside, PA 19038.)**

- 3 May** *Allied forces finalize plans for the invasion of Sicily, and General Dwight D. Eisenhower stipulates that American and British assault troops will land abreast on the south coast of the island.*
- 4 May** *The U.S. invasion force destined to land on Attu Island in the Aleutians embarks from Cold Harbor, Alaska. Due to bad weather, the invasion date is delayed until 11 May.*
- 8 May** *Three Japanese destroyers are lost to U.S. aircraft and mines in the Kuro Gulf of the Solomons.*
- 9 May** *The U.S. II Corps accepts the unconditional surrender of all German and Italian troops in its sector in Tunisia. Six German and Italian general officers are among the thousands of prisoners.*
- 11 May** *An invasion force of 11,000 men of the 7th Infantry Division conducts landings to dislodge the 2,600 Japanese defenders on Attu Island in the Aleutians.*
- 26 May** *Private Joe P. Martinez of Company K, 32d Infantry—firing a Browning automatic rifle and throwing hand grenades—leads his comrades against Japanese positions on Attu, destroying several enemy positions. Mortally wounded while clearing trenches, he is later posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor.*
- 7 June** *Guadalcanal-based American aircraft engage an attacking Japanese air assault force, shooting down 23 enemy aircraft.*
- 16 June** *In a bitter air battle, the Japanese lose nearly 100 of their 120 aircraft hurled against U.S. troops on Guadalcanal, while American losses total 6 fighters.*
- 29-30 June** *An Allied offensive (Operation CARTWHEEL) to destroy Japanese positions on Rabaul begins, with landings in the Central Solomons, the Trobriand Islands, and New Guinea.*