

vision special staff officers—such as the inspector general and the G-4 action officers.

Whether functioning as the second-in-command, the staff coordinator, the staff trainer, or the materiel readiness officer, the XO can make a valuable contribution to the overall combat readiness of a bat-

talion. Both aspiring executive officers and battalion commanders might think of the XO as not only the battalion commander's right-hand man but also as the company commanders' chief supporter. When the XO functions in this twin capacity, the result will be an effective and efficient team.

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FIFTY YEARS AGO IN WORLD WAR II SEPTEMBER-OCTOBER 1943

In the autumn of 1943 the German offensive in Russia had lost its momentum. Major battles, such as at Kursk in July, had inflicted heavy losses in men and materiel. In the Pacific, Japanese dreams of conquest now lay in the wreckage of their ships, planes, and installations. In Italy, Mussolini's vision of glory had been replaced by the reality of Allied forces landing at Sicily, Naples, Salerno, and Tarento. None of these gains would have been possible without the sacrifices made by the soldiers, sailors, marines, and airmen of the United States and her Allies.

These and other highlights of World War II are drawn from Bud Hannings' A Portrait of the Stars and Stripes, Volume II (available for \$50.00 from Sentram Publishing, Inc., P.O. Box 432, Glenside, PA 19038).

- 1 September** *Admiral Chester W. Nimitz receives orders to seize Wake, Eniwetok, and Kusaie Islands after the ongoing invasion of the Marshall Islands is completed.*
- 5 September** *U.S. pilots shoot down 41 Japanese fighters as an Australian-American force captures Lae, New Guinea.*
- 9 September** *The invasion of Italy commences with Lieutenant General Mark Clark's Fifth Army landing on the beaches south of Naples, in the face of stiff German and Italian resistance. Despite enemy counterattacks, the beachhead holds.*
- 11 September** *In the Solomon Islands, a new weapon, the 4.2-inch mortar, is used for the first time. Its increased range and effectiveness provide commanders with even more responsive, devastating indirect fire support.*
- 13 September** *When his platoon is pinned down by intense German fire east of Naples, Corporal Charles E. Kelly, Company L, 143d Infantry, mans a machinegun and returns fire until out of ammunition. He then pulls the safety pins out of 60mm mortar shells and throws them as grenades. Finally, using a rocket launcher, Corporal Kelly succeeds in holding the enemy at bay. His heroism and spirit are later recognized when he receives the Medal of Honor.*
- 1 October** *Naples falls to British and American forces.*
- 8 October** *Elements of the 30th Infantry, 3d Infantry Division, attack across the Volturno River near Amorosi in pursuit of withdrawing German forces and establish a bridgehead.*
- 17 October** *Major Gregory "Pappy" Boyington's Marine Fighter Squadron 214 shoots down 20 Japanese fighters at Kahili, in the Solomon Islands, without losing a single aircraft.*
- 23 October** *The U.S. 133d Infantry, 34th Infantry Division, captures San Angelo d'Alife in Italy after facing heavy resistance on the preceding day.*
- 30 October** *U.S. Marines complete preparations for the invasion of Bougainville, Solomon Islands.*