

## FIFTY YEARS AGO IN WORLD WAR II JULY-AUGUST 1944

By the mid-summer of 1944, the Allied foothold in France had expanded rapidly as reinforcements poured across the Channel and built up momentum for the offensive that would sweep the Wehrmacht from territories they had occupied for four years. Rome was in Allied hands, B-29 bombers had begun hitting the home islands of Japan, and Guam would soon fall to U.S. Marine and Army units. American bombers of the Fifteenth Air Force continue to hammer the Ploesti oilfields of Rumania, and troops of the First White Russian Front recapture Brest-Litovsk. The American VI Corps' landing on France's southern coast forces Germany to turn and fight in yet another direction.

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 Seniram Publishing, Inc., P.O. Box 432, Glenside, PA 19038.

- 1 July            *The Cherbourg Peninsula falls as the 9th Infantry Division clears the last resistance from Cap de la Hague.*
- 4 July            *The U.S. generals in command in Normandy decide to uphold the traditional 48-gun Independence Day Salute at noon, but with some minor changes: All 1,100 guns will be pointed at the Germans, and every gun will fire, all timed so the rounds will land at 1200.*
- 12 July          *During the advance to Arno, Italy, Sergeant Roy Harmon's squad is pinned down by three German machinegun nests camouflaged as haystacks. He orders his squad to stay in place as he rushes the nests. Armed with a submachine gun and grenades, he destroys the first and is wounded destroying the second. As he rushes the third, he is wounded again, but continues, crawling on his knees. As he prepares to throw a grenade, he is wounded twice more, the second a mortal wound. As he falls, he releases the grenade and destroys the final machinegun. He saves the rest of his platoon and is posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor.*
- 16 July          *Soviet forces advance toward East Prussia, capturing the strategically vital rail junctions of Grodno.*
- 24 July          *Rear Admiral H. W. Hill's task force invades Tinian, in the Marianas, as the 2d Marine Division creates an amphibious diversion and the 4th Marine Division slips in the "back door."*
- 1 August        *Myitkyina finally falls, drastically changing British policy from one of avoiding combat in Burma to General Stilwell's preferred tactic of meeting the Japanese head-on.*
- 15 August       *The U.S. 7th Army lands in southern France to drive the defending Germans into the advancing troops of the U.S. 12th Army Group.*
- 22 August       *Iasi, Rumania, collapses as the Soviet Red Army approaches. The next day, the Rumanian king unconditionally surrenders his country.*
- 25 August       *Paris is almost completely surrounded by U.S. troops. French General Leclerc enters the city to accept the Germans' surrender.*
- 31 August       *A U.S. carrier task force begins a three-day bombardment of Iwo Jima and the Bonin Islands in preparation for invasion.*