



WORLD WAR II MILITARY HISTORY

- 1846 The United States issues formal declaration of war on Mexico.
- 1862 The Battle of Seven Pines.
- 1915 The *Lusitania* is torpedoed and sunk by the Germans.
- 1940 The evacuation at Dunkirk begins.
- 1942 The Battle of the Coral Sea begins.
- 1945 World War II ends in Europe.
- 1949 The Soviet blockade of Berlin ends, making the Berlin Airlift a success.
- 1960 A U-2 spy plane shot down in central Russia.
- 1969 The Battle of “Hamburger Hill” begins.
- 2011 U.S. Special Forces kill Osama bin Laden in a raid on a compound in Pakistan.

DID YOU KNOW?

The dam system in place at Locks and Dam 15 on the Mississippi River is the largest roller dam in the world. A roller dam constantly cycles water at the foot of the dam structure. As a result, objects (including humans) caught within the rolling cycle of the dam could be stuck in this rolling cycle for days. Shortly after the dam was constructed in 1933, ropes were suspended from the Government Bridge to act as a last chance of rescue for those in the water being sucked towards the dam.



- 1 Which U.S. president issued the charter for the golf club at Rock Island Arsenal?
- 2 What was name of the “shot” that the atomic cannon participated in during the Upshot-Knothole tests?
- 3 Where was the body for the “Fat Man” atomic bomb constructed?

Last Month's Answers:

- 1 In what century was gunpowder first used for the purposes of war?
9th Century
- 2 What was the rocket system that was used to take the first photo of Earth from orbit?
An American launched V-2
- 3 What program was responsible for the production of the world's first surface-to-air missiles?
The Nike Program

Answers to trivia and more are available on the ASC History Office's SharePoint page.

The Allied Liberation of Rome

Reporters were furiously typing out articles and cables to send back to the United States the morning of June 6th 1944 reporting about the fall of Rome the previous day. Suddenly a Free French War Correspondent came running into the room yelling “Viva la France, the liberation of France has begun!” One reporter commented that a short moment of silence occurred after the French correspondent had left the room and, almost in sequence, the sound of several reporters pulling paper out of their typewriters and throwing it into the trash broke the silence. So would go the short lived headlines for the fall of Rome.

Early in 1943 Lieutenant General Mark Clark was summoned to Washington D.C. for a secret meeting with President Franklin D. Roosevelt and General George C. Marshall, U.S. Army Chief of Staff, to discuss the invasion of Italy and the liberation of Rome. He was tasked to lead the 5th U.S. Army, a part of the Allied 15th Army Group, during the invasion of Italy and take Rome before the end of 1943. D-Day for the invasion, code named Operation Avalanche, was set for 9 September 1943. Originally the planners were so confident that they could quickly reach Rome, due to the original estimate of light resistance, that they had considered dropping the 82nd Airborne Division on the city shortly after the initial invasion. Fortunately for the members of the 82nd Airborne this plan was later scrapped.

Due to the unique natural terrain and the German defense plan designed by Field Marshal Albert Kesselring the defense of Italy would be conducted as far away from Germany as possible causing an unsustainable amount of casualties for the Allies. This plan would make the most of the natural defensive geography of South and Central Italy with the Germans slowly falling back over time to bleed the Allied Armies. With Adolf Hitler's final approval of the plan, four major defensive lines south of Rome were created. The most notable was the Gustav Line (nicknamed the Winter Line) with towering Italian mountain ridges stretching across the peninsula. The Benedictine sanctuary of Monte Cassino sat atop this line and dominated the valley to the south. It took the Allies from mid-November 1943 to June 1944 to fight through

all the various elements of the Winter Line, including the well-known battles at Monte Cassino. Eventually the Anzio amphibious invasion was launched in January 1944 to try and assist in breaking through the Winter Line.

On June 2nd the last German line south of Rome collapsed under the mounting Allied pressure. Remaining German units conducted a fighting withdrawal through the city. Fearing another battle of Stalingrad, German Field Marshall Kesslering ordered that there should be "no defense of Rome." Early on June 4th the first American units began to enter the city clearing it of light German resistance. LTG Clark quickly entered the city and held an impromptu press conference on the steps of the Town Hall on the Capitoline Hill that morning. He was determined that the fall of Rome be an American victory even to the point that he stationed American military police at road junctions to refuse entry to the city by British military personnel.

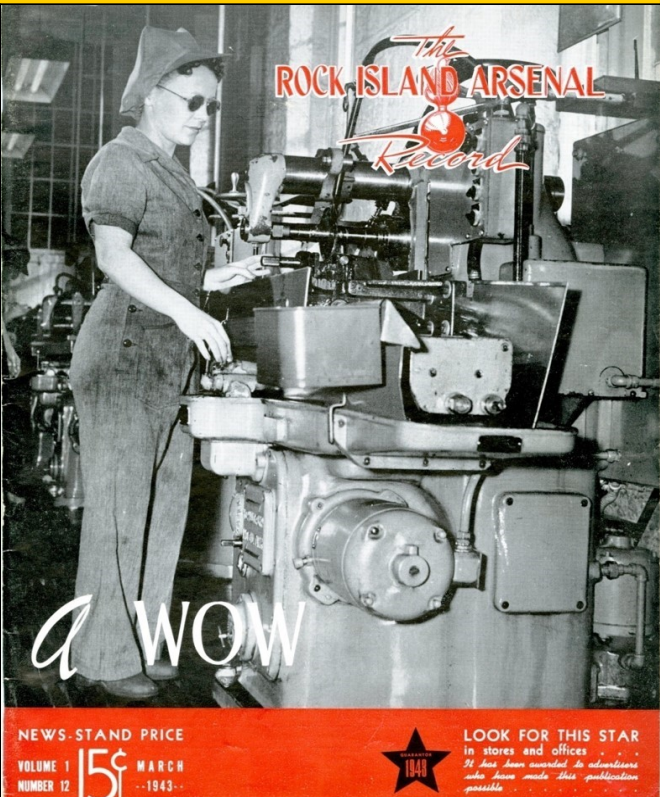
The liberation of Rome would be marked as the first Axis Capitol to fall but was celebrated by the Allies for only a handful of hours until news of the Normandy Invasion broke. The Italian Campaign quickly left the front page of newspapers around the world becoming known as the “Forgotten Front” of World War Two, much to the chagrin of the Soldiers fighting there.



Rosie the Riveter at Rock Island Arsenal

At the beginning of the Second World War, the Rock Island Arsenal employed 402 women. By 1945, this number had grown to 4,962 women, or about sixty-three percent of the Arsenal's workforce. Women held a variety of positions during the war from the office to the factory. Those working in the Ordnance Department were officially known as Women Ordnance Workers (WOWs). Across the United States, these women operated heavy cranes, crated ammunition, made weapons, assembled trucks, and accomplished anything else the war effort required of them. Rock Island Arsenal WOWs aided in the manufacture of .30 and .50 caliber machine guns (such as the Browning Machine Guns and Automatic Rifles). The WOWs assisted in the Arsenal's overall war production of nearly 85,000 .30 caliber machine guns and almost 193 million disintegrating machine gun belt links. They also worked in the Ordnance Depot as mule drivers moving supplies and equipment throughout the Arsenal.

Rosie the Riveter became a symbol of the critical contributions WOWs made to the war effort. The typical WOW uniform consisted of a plain top, slacks, safety shoes, and a bandana to keep the worker's hair out of the way. Rosie and her bandana represent the hard work and patriotism of WOWs during the Second World War, as well as their influence in redefining women's work.



You can't fathom the true meaning of legends until you've seen their history with your own eyes.

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