





## The American Soldier, 1944

Two powerful Japanese air attacks on 7 December 1941 on Pearl Harbor and on the U.S. airfields on Luzon all but crippled American striking power in the Pacific. After this initial success the Japanese moved south, east, and west. Refusing to succumb, the U.S. and its Allies continued to resist and by early summer 1942 began striking back. In two and a half years of hard fighting, island by island, Allied forces commanded by General Douglas MacArthur and Admiral Chester A. Nimitz drove the enemy back thousands of miles and were set for the reconquest of the Philippines.

Experiences in the South and Southwest Pacific established a pattern of island warfare that represented one of the major tactical developments of war. First, air and naval forces isolated an objective and softened its defenses. Simultaneously other forces would attack or feint toward other islands to deceive the Japanese. Whenever practicable, small units occupied neighboring islands as sites for land-based artillery. Under cover of these supporting fires, the landing forces moved from ship to shore in echelons or waves, rocket-firing landing craft in the lead and amphibian tanks and tractors following to carry the assault troops directly onto the beaches and inland. Finally came landing craft with more infantry and with tanks, artillery, and support troops. Supplies followed rapidly as the assault forces secured and expanded the beachhead.

All of the infantrymen shown on this plate wear herringbone twill suits, webbing, and belting in olive drab shade No. 7 adopted in 1943. These two-piece suits originally adopted as fatigue clothing later became the accepted summer combat clothing. They were used primarily in the Pacific areas rather than in the European Theater of Operations, where winter combat clothing was worn the year round. With the two-piece suit they wear the flesh-out leather shoe and dismounted canvas leggings used until replaced by the combat boot. All have on the M1 steel helmet and helmet liner adopted in 1941 in place of the World War I "tin hat." The soldier in the right foreground is armed with a carbine, .30-cal., M1; the soldier in the center foreground with a Thompson submachine gun, .45-cal., M1; and both have the holstered .45-cal. pistol, model 1911, A1. The soldiers in the background are armed with the rifle, .30-cal., M1.