

COMPLETE 63-PAGE ACTION STORY

No.4720
£2

Commando

THE GOLD COLLECTION

DESERT
WAR

1940-43



BLOOD RED DAWN

COMMANDO - GOLD COLLECTION

Title

BLOOD RED DAWN

Subject

When this story first saw the light of day, Commando's tag line was "War Stories In Pictures". And that certainly describes this tale of treachery amongst the rolling sands of the North African desert as our hero, Lieutenant Dick Woolston, seems to be at war with everybody — The Germans and his own side alike.

At first glance this tale seems very similar to Commando No 4719 (if you've not bought it yet, you should — it's a belter) but as you read, you appreciate how two writers can take the same basic premise and twist it to make it their own. Cortes' artwork certainly helps — dark, brooding stuff well-suited to a tale of espionage.

Ken Barr's cover is certainly not dark or brooding but it's definitely warlike. Which is where we came in.

Calum Laird, Commando Editor

Issue Number

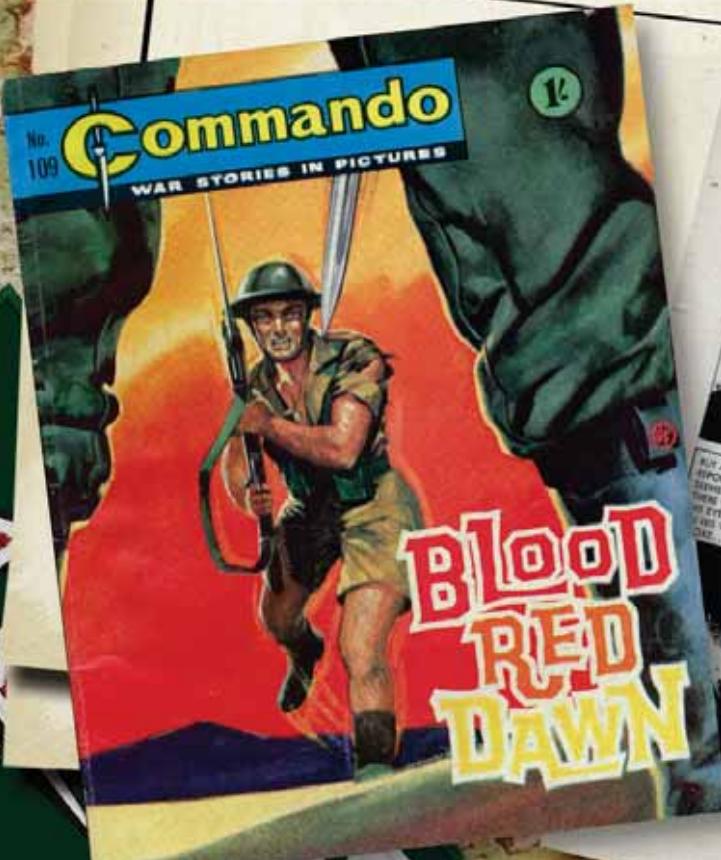
Blood Red Dawn, originally Commando No 109 (March 1964), re-issued as No 615 (January 1972)

STORY
BURNS

ART
CORTES

COVER
KEN BARR

First Published
1964
No 109



BLOOD RED DAWN

F LITTING LIKE GHOSTS OUT OF THE GREAT SAND SEA OF LIBYA, THE LONG RANGE DESERT GROUP STRUCK BLOW AFTER CRIPPLING BLOW BEHIND THE GERMAN LINES IN NORTH AFRICA. BUT FIELD-MARSHAL ERWIN ROMMEL WAS ALREADY TAKING STEPS TO COMBAT THIS MENACE TO HIS CAREFULLY-LAID PLANS.



...IT WAS THE SUMMER OF 1942, AND ARMoured CARS OF HIS CRACK AFRIKA CORPS CONVERGED ON A NAMELESS WADI IN THE DESERT.



AND AS THE BRITISH WERE CUT DOWN, THE WATER-COOLED VICKERS BLASTED A HAIL OF DEATH AT THE ARMOURED FRONT OF THE LEADING NAZI CAR.

LET'S SEE HOW YOU CAN TAKE IT, SQUARE-HEADS!

...CAUGHT WITH OUR PANTS DOWN, AND LARRY AND THE SARGE AWAY ROAD-WATCHING!



AND IN A THORN-BUSH HIDE, NOT FAR FROM THE WADI, SERGEANT ERIC WOOLSTON AND PTE. LARRY KANE HAD BEEN SPYING ON A GERMAN CONVOY HEADING ALONG THE COAST ROAD. NOW THEY STARTED UP IN ALARM AT THE VICIOUS CHATTER OF GUNFIRE FROM BEHIND THEM.

SOUNDS LIKE BAD TROUBLE, SARGE!

C'MON, LARRY — LET'S GET BACK THERE FAST!



TOGETHER THEY BROKE COVER AND RACED ACROSS THE SAND, BACK TOWARDS THE WADI AND THEIR CAMP.

WHAT A RUDDY MESS! CUT OFF MILES BEHIND JERRY LINES!

HURRY... HURRY!

BUT WHEN THEY GOT BACK THE BRIEF FIGHT WAS ALL OVER. AGAINST ARMOUR THE L.R.D.G. MEN HAD HAD NO CHANCE, AND THEIR BODIES LAY SPRAWLED ON THE BLOOD-SPATTERED SAND.

THROWING CAUTION TO THE WINDS, WOOLSTON CHARGED IN AND CUT LOOSE WITH HIS STEN GUN FROM THE HIP. THE NEAREST ARMOURED CAR RETURNED HIS FIRE, AND AS THE SPANDAU BULLETS SPAT PAST ERIC'S HEAD, LARRY KANE, WHO HAD COME DASHING IN AFTER HIM, SUDDENLY CRUMPLED IN THE SAND.

AAAAAGH!

HOLY SMOKE!
THEY'VE GOT LARRY TOO.
SOLD OUT TO THE JERRIES AGAIN,
JUST LIKE ALL THOSE OTHER PATROLS.
IF I COULD GET MY HANDS ON
THE DOUBLE-CROSSING RAT
WHO'S TELLING JERRY
EVERY MOVE WE
MAKE —

BUT NOW ERIC WAS ON HIS OWN, AND THE NEAREST ARMOURED CAR WAS TRUNDLING IN FOR THE KILL.

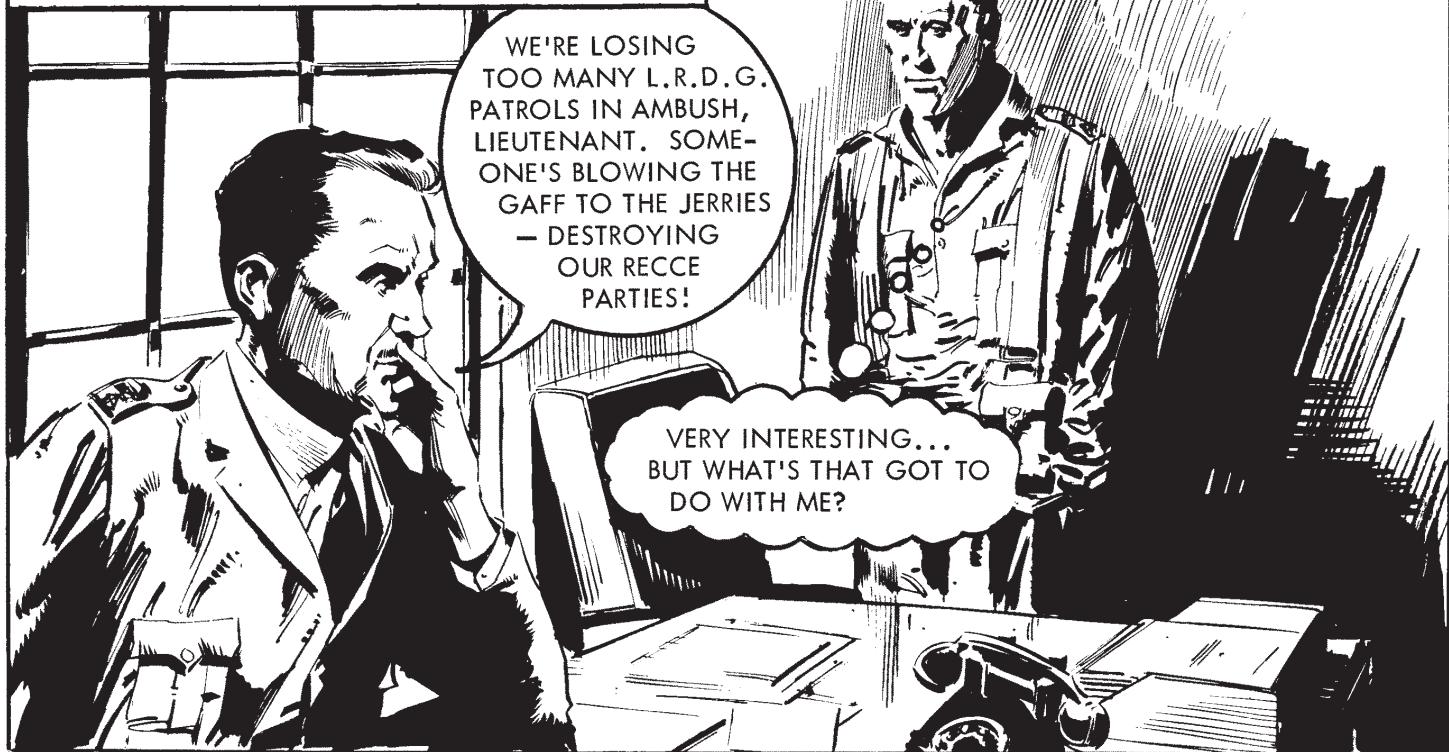
THE HAUPTMANN IN COMMAND OF THE GERMAN ARMOURED PATROL HAD NO PITY TO WASTE. TO HIM, L.R.D.G. MEN WERE BRITISH SPIES, AND HE TREATED THEM AS SUCH.



THE GERMAN HAUPTMANN HAD GOOD REASON TO BE PLEASED WITH HIMSELF. HE HAD PERSONALLY WIPE OUT THREE L.R.D.G. PATROLS IN ONE MONTH.

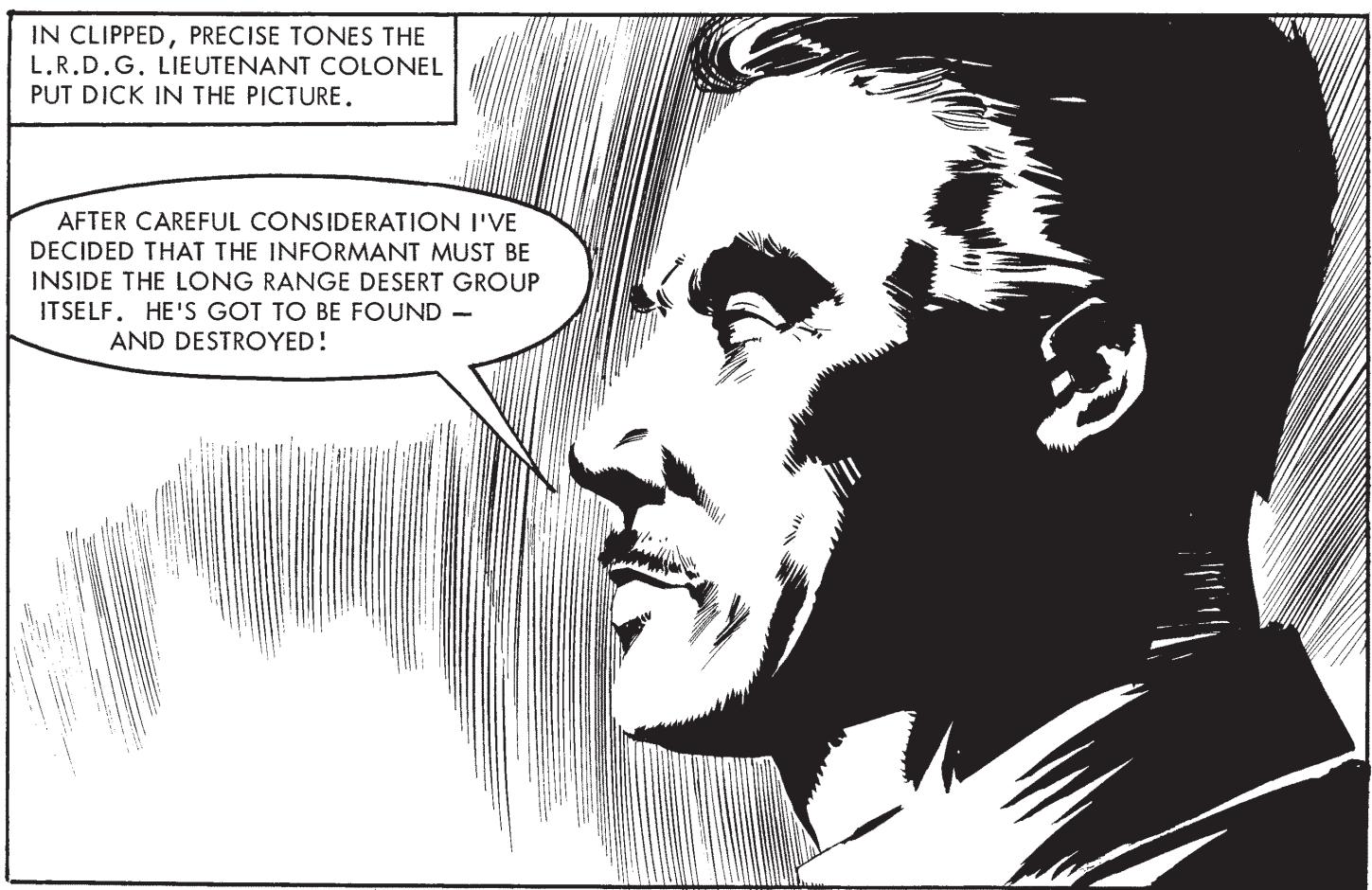


BUT THE COMPLETE LOSS OF THREE PATROLS HAD ALERTED L.R.D.G. HEADQUARTERS ... AND LIEUTENANT DICK WOOLSTON OF THE EIGHTH ARMY WAS SNATCHED OUT OF THE FRONT LINES AND RUSHED TO CAIRO.



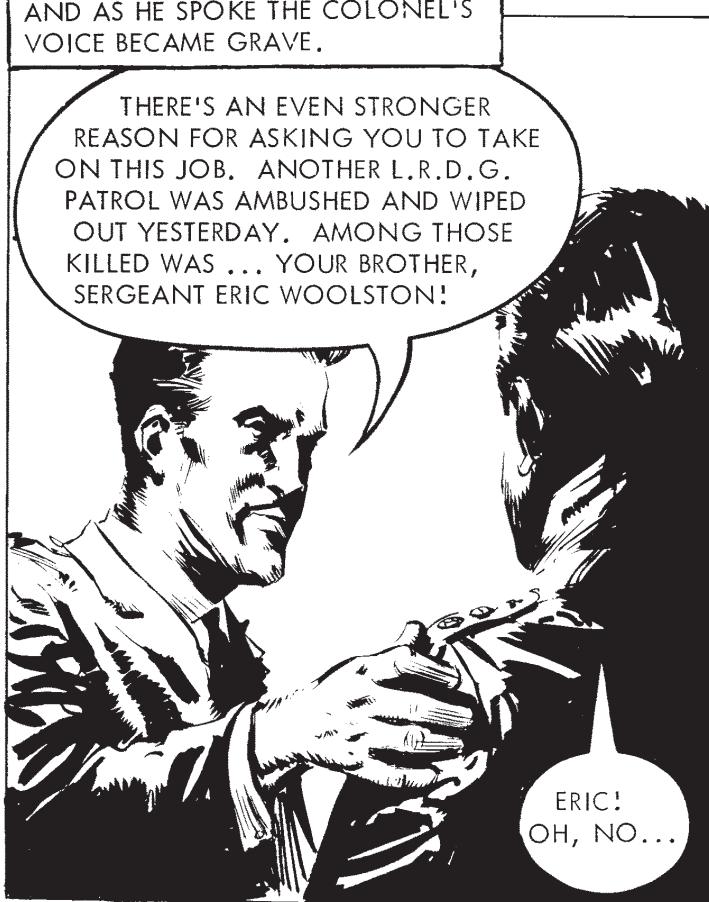
IN CLIPPED, PRECISE TONES THE L.R.D.G. LIEUTENANT COLONEL PUT DICK IN THE PICTURE.

AFTER CAREFUL CONSIDERATION I'VE DECIDED THAT THE INFORMANT MUST BE INSIDE THE LONG RANGE DESERT GROUP ITSELF. HE'S GOT TO BE FOUND — AND DESTROYED!





AND AS HE SPOKE THE COLONEL'S VOICE BECAME GRAVE.



ERIC!
OH, NO...

THE TRAGIC NEWS QUICKLY MADE UP DICK'S MIND, AND AS HE ACCEPTED THE JOB HE MADE HIMSELF A GRIM PROMISE ...



EARLY NEXT MORNING, LIEUTENANT DICK WOOLSTON LEFT CAIRO AND HEADED INTO THE SILENT SAND WASTES, BOUND FOR THE L. R.D.G. BASE AT JALO, SIX HUNDRED MILES AWAY...

HOW CAN A MAN GET SO LOW AS TO SELL HIS OWN MATES OUT TO THE JERRIES? I JUST DON'T GET IT

FOR THREE LONG DAYS HE TRAVELED UNDER THE BLAZING DESERT SUN.

AND STILL BROODING ON HIS TASK, DICK FINALLY REACHED THE OASIS. HE WAS THANKFUL ONLY THE O.C., MAJOR GILLETT, KNEW HIS PURPOSE HERE.

WELL, THIS IS JALO, SIR — A JUMPED-UP WATER HOLE IN THE MIDDLE OF NOWHERE.

AND AS HE STARED AT THE SUNBURNT FACES CROWDING ROUND THE TRUCK, DICK WONDERED WHERE TO BEGIN HIS INVESTIGATIONS.

ONE OF THESE MEN SENT ERIC INTO A TRAP — ONE OF THEM'S A JERRY-LOVER ... BUT WHICH ONE?

HI, PETE,
YOU BROUGHT
ANY FAGS?

YEAH,
AND SOME
RUM!

THEN SUDDENLY A VOICE THAT HE RECOGNISED SOUNDED FROM THE CROWD, A VOICE THAT TOLD HIM HIS MISSION WAS JEOPARDIZED FROM THE VERY START.

WELL! WELL! WHAT BRINGS A COPPER DOWN TO THIS NECK OF THE DESERT? A COPPER WITH PIPS UP, TOO...



BILL WEST HAD OWNED A LITTLE RADIO SHOP IN THE EAST-END WHEN DICK WAS ON THE CRIME SQUAD BACK IN THE 1930'S. DICK HAD RUN IN A BUNCH OF THUGS WHO'D TRIED TO WRECK BILL'S SHOP, AND FOR A WHILE THEY'D BEEN PRETTY FRIENDLY.

WE WERE ALL SORRY ABOUT WHAT HAPPENED TO ERIC, DICK. YOUR POSTING DOWN HERE GOT ANYTHING TO DO WITH HIS DEATH?



DICK CURSED BITTERLY AS HE WALKED AWAY FROM THE GROUP OF L.R.D.G. MEN. BILL'S WAGGING TONGUE HAD SET THE CAT AMONG THE PIGEONS WITH A VENGEANCE.

A COPPER,
EH? I WONDER ...





DICK LISTENED CAREFULLY BEFORE HE PUT HIS FIRST QUESTION...

TELL ME, SIR — WHO KNEW THE DETAILS OF THE LAST PARTY TO BE AMBUSHED?

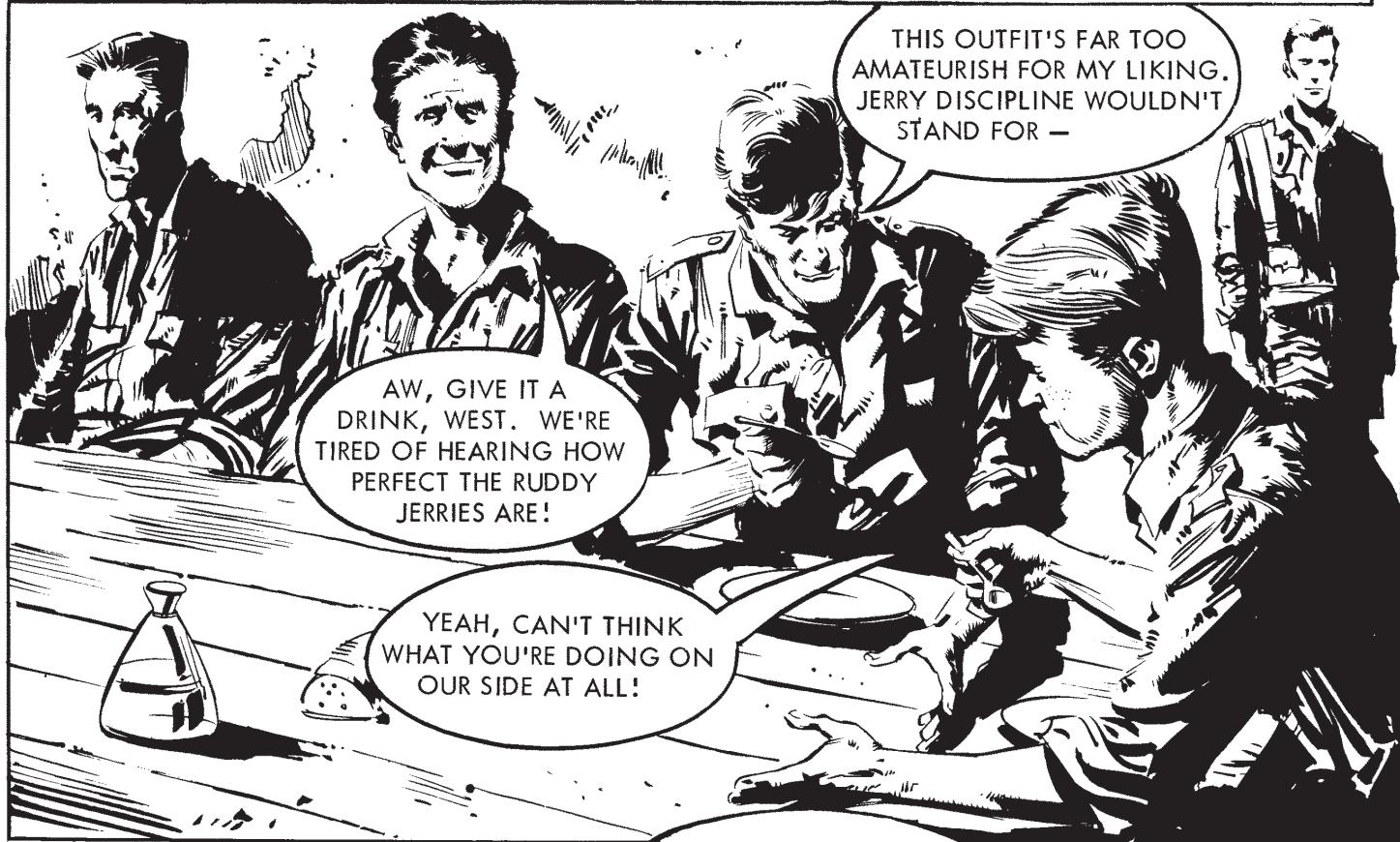
JUST ABOUT EVERYBODY IN JALO, I'M AFRAID. IT'S IMPOSSIBLE TO KEEP STRICT SECURITY IN AN OUTFIT AS SMALL AND COMPACT AS OURS.

IT WAS JUST AS HE'D EXPECTED. HE'D HAVE TO START OFF SUSPECTING EVERY MAN IN JALO, INCLUDING THE FEW ARABS WHO WORKED FOR THE L.R.D.G.

HOW ABOUT THE ARABS, SIR — ARE THEY RELIABLE?

I'D HAVE THOUGHT SO ... UNTIL NOW. BUT VERY FEW OF THEM UNDERSTAND ENGLISH. NO, I'M AFRAID IT'S MORE LIKELY TO BE ONE OF US — AND THE WHOLE GROUP'S GOING TO PIECES AS A RESULT!

AFTER HE LEFT THE MAJOR, DICK WALKED TO THE MESS ... AND SOON FOUND OUT THAT BILL WEST HADN'T CHANGED MUCH FROM THE OLD DAYS. HE STILL HAD THE SAME CHIP ON HIS SHOULDER.



DICK KNEW ALL ABOUT WEST'S SLUM BACKGROUND, THE GRINDING POVERTY OF HIS FAMILY DURING THE YEARS OF DEPRESSION — HOW HE'D BUILT UP HIS RADIO BUSINESS FROM NEXT TO NOTHING.

BUT YOU'VE GOT TO ADMIT THE NAZIS ARE EFFICIENT! THEY CERTAINLY ENDED UNEMPLOYMENT IN GERMANY. TROUBLE WITH THIS LOT, THEY'VE ALL GONE SOFT!

BILL'S STILL ON THE SAME OLD KICK. WONDER IF HE COULD BE SERIOUS? NO — THAT'S IMPOSSIBLE!

DICK'S ATTENTION WAS CAUGHT AND HELD BY A LEAN, SINEWY AUSSIE, "LUCKY" DRUMMOND. THERE WAS A STUDIED INSOLENCE IN HIS MANNER.

TOO RIGHT, BILL! THE POMMIES ARE CROOK — BUT THE HUNS ARE NO BETTER! TAKES A DIGGER TO FIGHT — NONE OF THIS "OLD CHAP" MUCK WITH US!



...AND THAT MADE HIM WONDER ABOUT LUCKY DRUMMOND. COULD THIS LOUD-MOUTHED AUSSIE BE THE INFORMER?

TAKE OUR MOB IN TOBRUK — THE AFRIKA KORPS HAD IT ALL THEIR OWN WAY TILL WE LAMMED 'EM FOR SIX! THE GOOD OLD ANZACS HAD TO SHOW YOU JOKERS HOW TO FIGHT!

GOOD OLD ANZACS! HUH, THAT'S RICH! DESCENDED FROM A BUNCH OF BLINKIN' CRIMINALS, AND NOW THEY'RE SHOOTING OFF THEIR MOUTHS WORSE THAN THE YANKS!



SUDDENLY, THE ARGUMENT WAS INTERRUPTED BY SHORT, FRENZIED BLASTS OF A WHISTLE — THE AIR-RAID ALERT. WOOLSTON DARTED FOR THE DOORS ...



OUTSIDE, HE STARED UP INTO THE HOT BLUE SKY. FIVE TWIN-ENGINED HEINKELS WERE SWEEPING IN TO ATTACK THE OASIS.



STARKLY OUTLINED AGAINST THE SKY, THE BOMBERS LOOMED OVERHEAD. DICK WATCHED THE BOMB DOORS OPEN AND UGLY BLACK SHAPES FALL AWAY...



THE STICK OF BOMBS STRADDLED THE OASIS, AND A TRUCK EXPLODED WITH AN EAR-SPLITTING BLAST. THE AIR WAS FILLED WITH SMOKE AND FLAME AND FLYING STEEL SPLINTERS.



AT TREE-TOP LEVEL, THE HEINKELS BANKED ROUND AND CAME IN ON A STRAFING RUN, THEIR GUNS BELCHING FLAME AND LEAD.





DICK WOOLSTON SCRAMBLED ON TO A TRUCK, GRABBED THE VICKERS AND BROUGHT IT TO BEAR ON ONE OF THE DIVING HEINKELS. HE PUMPED BULLETS INTO THE LEADER OF THE GERMAN FLIGHT.

GOT HIM
LINED UP... NOW
TAKE IT, YOU NAZI
SCUM!

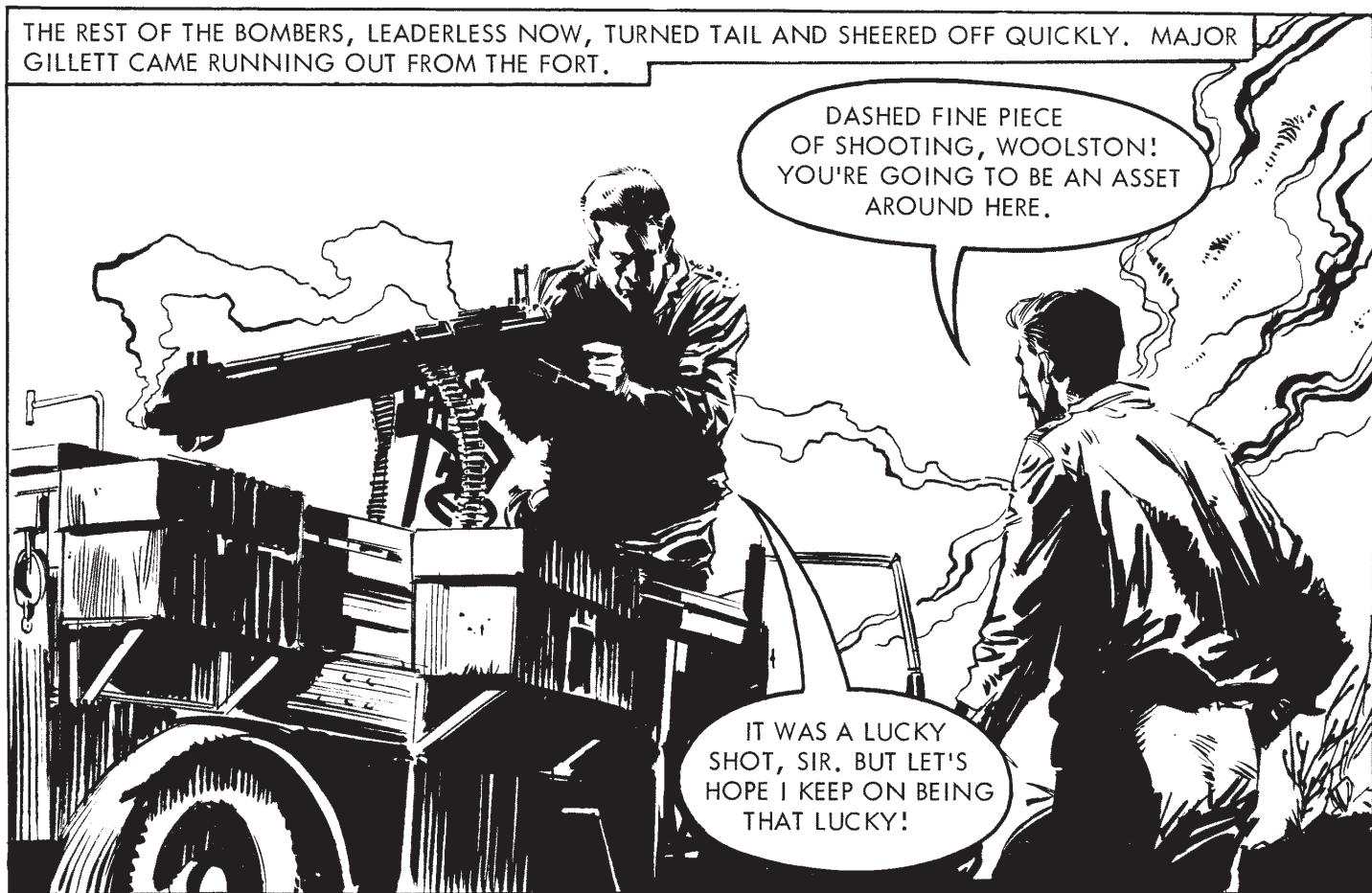


HIS RAKING FIRE SMASHED HOME. FLAMES CRACKLED FROM THE HEINKEL'S PETROL TANK, AND IT THUNDERED INTO THE SAND AT OVER TWO HUNDRED MILES AN HOUR.

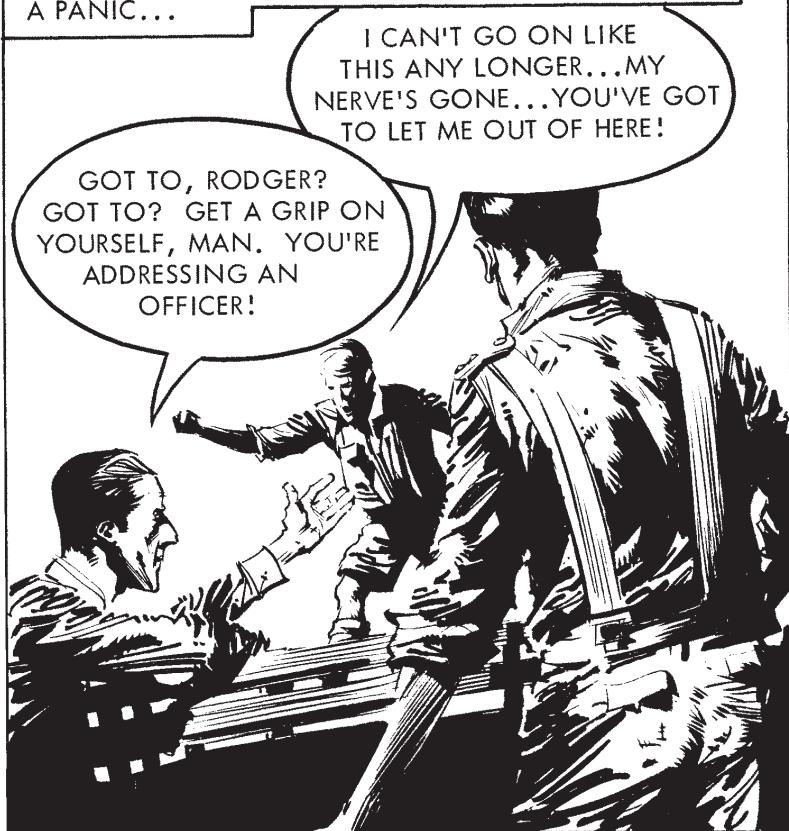
GOOD ON
YER, POMMY! YOU
NAILED ONE — GIVE
IT TO 'EM!



THE REST OF THE BOMBERS, LEADERLESS NOW, TURNED TAIL AND SHEERED OFF QUICKLY. MAJOR GILLETT CAME RUNNING OUT FROM THE FORT.



THEN WOOLSTON NOTICED THE CORPORAL WHO HAD EARLIER THROWN HIMSELF TO THE GROUND IN A PANIC...



MIKE RODGER'S EYES HELD A DESPERATE APPEAL. A TORRENT OF WORDS TUMBLED FROM HIS QUIVERING LIPS.



DICK WOOLSTON HAD SEEN MEN CRACK UP UNDER PRESSURE BEFORE. RODGER'S NERVES MUST HAVE BEEN AT BREAKING POINT.

I'D LIKE TO GO OUT WITH A PATROL, SIR, TO SEE THINGS AT FIRST HAND.

JUST AS YOU LIKE, WOOLSTON. YOU MUST DO WHAT YOU THINK BEST.



AND AS DICK WALKED BACK TO THE MESS, BILL WEST FELL INTO STEP BESIDE HIM. HE WAS LOOKING A BIT SHEEPISH.

DICK, I'VE BEEN THINKING THINGS OVER. MAYBE I SHOULDN'T HAVE YELLED OUT ABOUT YOU BEING A COPPER — IF YOU'RE HERE ON SPECIAL DUTY, I MEAN.



THAT NIGHT THE STICKY HEAT MADE SLEEP IMPOSSIBLE. DICK WENT OVER THE VARIOUS SUSPECTS AGAIN AND AGAIN IN HIS MIND.

DRUMMOND...
RODGER...IT COULD
EVEN BE THE MAJOR! BUT
HOW DO I SET ABOUT
PROVING IT?



AT DAWN THREE L.R.D.G. TRUCKS SET OFF ON AN OFFENSIVE PATROL — AND WITH THEM WENT LIEUTENANT DICK WOOLSTON. MAJOR GILLETT WATCHED THEM LEAVE WITH A HEAVY HEART.

HAVE I DONE THE
RIGHT THING? OR AM
I SENDING ANOTHER BUNCH
OF GOOD MEN INTO A DEATH
TRAP? WHAT CAN WOOLSTON
DO, ANYWAY...?



ALL DAY THEY DROVE ACROSS THE PITILESS DESERT UNDER A BURNING SUN. AT NIGHTFALL THEY SNEAKED THROUGH THE GERMAN LINES. NEXT DAY, THEY CONTINUED DEEPER INTO ENEMY TERRITORY...

BUT THE GOING WAS NOT ALWAYS EASY. MORE THAN ONCE THE TRUCKS BOGGED DOWN IN DRY QUICK-SAND AND THEY HAD TO USE STEEL CHANNELS TO GET MOVING AGAIN...TO LUCKY DRUMMOND'S ETERNAL DISGUST.

MUST BE PRETTY NERVE-RACKING,
ALWAYS OPERATING BEHIND JERRY'S FRONT LINE, BILL.

YOU SOON GET USED TO THAT. IT'S THE FEELING THAT ONE OF OUR LOT IS A JUDAS THAT GETS ME DOWN.

JOIN THE PERISHING BRITISH ARMY TO KILL NAZIS.
AND WHAT HAPPENS? I GET LUMBERED WITH A RUDDY SHOVEL!



MAYBE YOU'LL GET ALL THE FIGHTING YOU WANT SOON ENOUGH, LUCKY!

EVENTUALLY, THE THREE TRUCKS ARRIVED AT THE COAST ROAD, AND IN A SCRUB-LINED WADI THEY PULLED UP. WOOLSTON QUICKLY TOLD THE MEN HIS PLAN.

WE'LL DRIVE ON TO THE ROAD AFTER DARK, AND HEAD TOWARDS THE JERRY CONVOYS AT TOP SPEED. THEN YOU KEEP YOUR GUNS FIRING TILL ALL THE AMMO'S USED UP.

THAT'S MORE LIKE IT! SHOOTING UP JERRY TRANSPORT.... THERE'S NOTHING I LIKE BETTER!

DICK RECKONED THE ONLY WAY HE COULD FIND ANY CLUE TO THE TRAITOR'S IDENTITY WAS TO WATCH EACH MAN INDIVIDUALLY — AND TRUST NONE OF THEM.

I WONDER JUST HOW GENUINE DRUMMOND'S FIGHTING TALK IS? COULD BE IT'S JUST AN ACT TO FOOL EVERYBODY!

SURPRISE FAVOURED WOOLSTON'S UP AND AT 'EM TACTICS. IN THE DARK, SLEEPY GERMAN DRIVERS DIDN'T KNOW WHAT HAD HIT THEM UNTIL IT WAS TOO LATE.



THE L.R.D.G. RAIDERS RACED ON WITH VICKERS AND TOMMY-GUNS BLASTING OUT A HARSH CACOPHONY OF DEATH.



SUDDENLY DICK REALISED THAT THE VICKERS IN THE BACK OF HIS OWN TRUCK WASN'T FIRING. SUSPICIOUSLY HE SWUNG ROUND ON LUCKY DRUMMOND. THE RANGY AUSTRALIAN CURSED BITTERLY.

PERISHING THING'S JAMMED! IF THIS HAD BEEN AN AUSSIE OWEN GUN IT WOULD NEVER HAVE HAPPENED!

IT COULD ALL BE PART OF THE ACT ...BUT I CAN'T BE SURE!



NEXT MINUTE RED LAMPS GLEAMED UP AHEAD...DICK HAD TIME TO GLIMPSE THE STRIPED POLE OF A ROAD BLOCK AND ARMED SENTRY...



BUT DICK WOULDN'T HAVE BEEN SO HAPPY IF HE'D HEARD THE GERMAN OFFICER SPEAKING OVER A FIELD TELEPHONE BACK AT THE ROAD BLOCK.



DICK'S SUSPICIONS OF DRUMMOND DISAPPEARED AFTER THEY HAD BROKEN THROUGH THE ROAD BLOCK...AND SO THE GERMAN TANK AMBUSH WAS ALL THE MORE EFFECTIVE.

BLAZES! A JERRY PANZER! GET THE TRUCKS OFF THE ROAD AND OUT INTO THE DESERT. QUICK, BILL.



THE GERMAN'S FIRST SHELL THUNDERED INTO THE ROAD JUST AHEAD OF DICK'S TRUCK, COMPLETELY WRECKING IT, BUT BY SOME FANTASTIC FLUKE NO ONE WAS HURT.



THERE WAS A SOUND LIKE TEARING CANVAS AS GERMAN SCHMEISSERS RENT THE NIGHT AIR. A LEUTNANT BARKED A GUTTURAL CHALLENGE AS HE RUSHED FORWARD...



A FIERCE LIGHT BLAZED IN THE EYES OF LUCKY DRUMMOND AS HE DROPPED TO ONE KNEE AND HOSED THE ADVANCING GERMANS.



THE GERMAN LEUTNANT, CONFIDENT THAT THE CUNNINGLY-LAI'D TRAP HAD KNOCKED ALL THE FIGHT OUT OF THE ENGLANDERS, GREW CARELESS...AND DICK GOT THE DROP ON HIM.

MEIN GOTT! HAVE MERCY...KAMERAD! KAMERAD!

STEP RIGHT THIS WAY, FRITZ. YOU'LL MAKE GOOD BARGAINING MATERIAL!



HE BROKE OFF AS THE SUDDEN BARK OF A RIFLE RANG OUT BEHIND HIM. A BULLET SPAT PAST HIS EAR AND BURIED ITSELF IN THE LEUTNANT'S CHEST.

WHAT
THE DEVIL!
BILL...

SORRY, DICK! DIDN'T
HAVE A CLEAR VIEW — LOOKED
TO ME AS IF HE WAS TRYING SOMETHING ON.
ANYWAY, WE'VE NO
ROOM FOR PRISONERS!

IN A FLASH SUSPICION
OF WEST FLARED UP
AGAIN IN DICK'S MIND.
WAS HE THE TRAITOR?
HAD HE SHOT THE
GERMAN OFFICER DEAD
TO STOP HIM TALKING?

BUT THERE WAS NO TIME TO HOLD AN INQUEST.
MORE GERMANS WERE APPROACHING, AND DICK
RAN WITH BILL WEST FOR THE TWO REMAINING
TRUCKS.

STOP THEM!
STOP THEM! THEY
MUST NOT GET
AWAY!

LUCKY DRUMMOND WAS
STILL BLAZING AWAY AT
THE GERMANS AS THE
TRUCKS LURCHED FORWARD.

RIGHTO,
SPORT, I'M
COMING!

LUCKY! COME
ON, MAN! WE CAN'T
HANG AROUND HERE
ALL NIGHT!

LUCKY SWUNG ABOARD AND THE TRUCKS HURTLED FORWARD.

GOTT IM
HIMMEL! THE
ENGLANDERS ARE
BREAKING OUT!



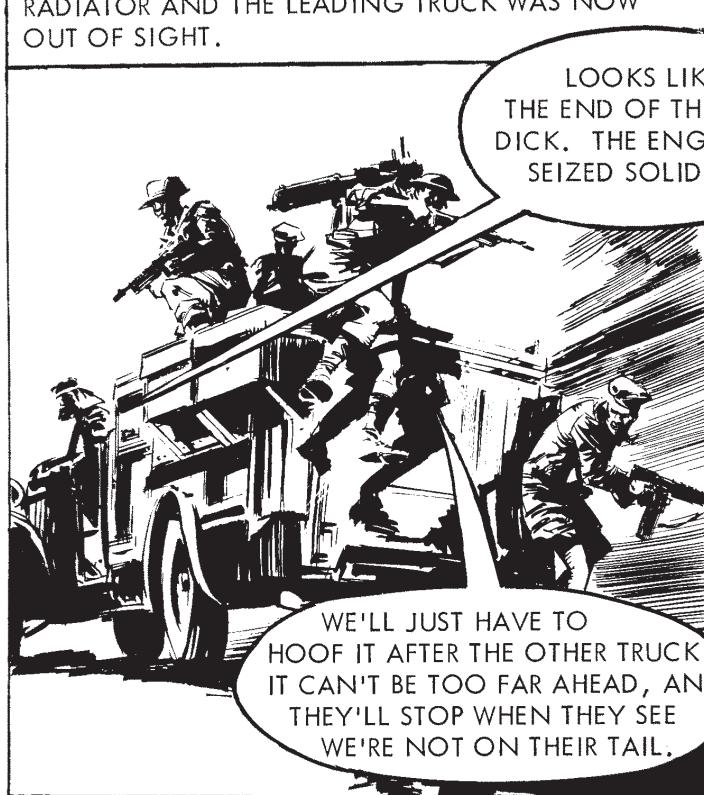
THEY HAD LEFT THE GERMANS FAR BEHIND WHEN THE TRUCK DICK WAS IN SUDDENLY COUGHED TO A STANDSTILL. A BULLET HAD SHATTERED THE RADIATOR AND THE LEADING TRUCK WAS NOW OUT OF SIGHT.

DICK SET OFF ON FOOT BUT CHECKED SUDDENLY AT AN EXCITED SHOUT FROM BILL WEST.

LOOKS LIKE
THE END OF THE LINE,
DICK. THE ENGINE'S
SEIZED SOLID!

WE'LL JUST HAVE TO
HOOF IT AFTER THE OTHER TRUCK.
IT CAN'T BE TOO FAR AHEAD, AND
THEY'LL STOP WHEN THEY SEE
WE'RE NOT ON THEIR TAIL.

DICK,
STOP! DON'T
MOVE...



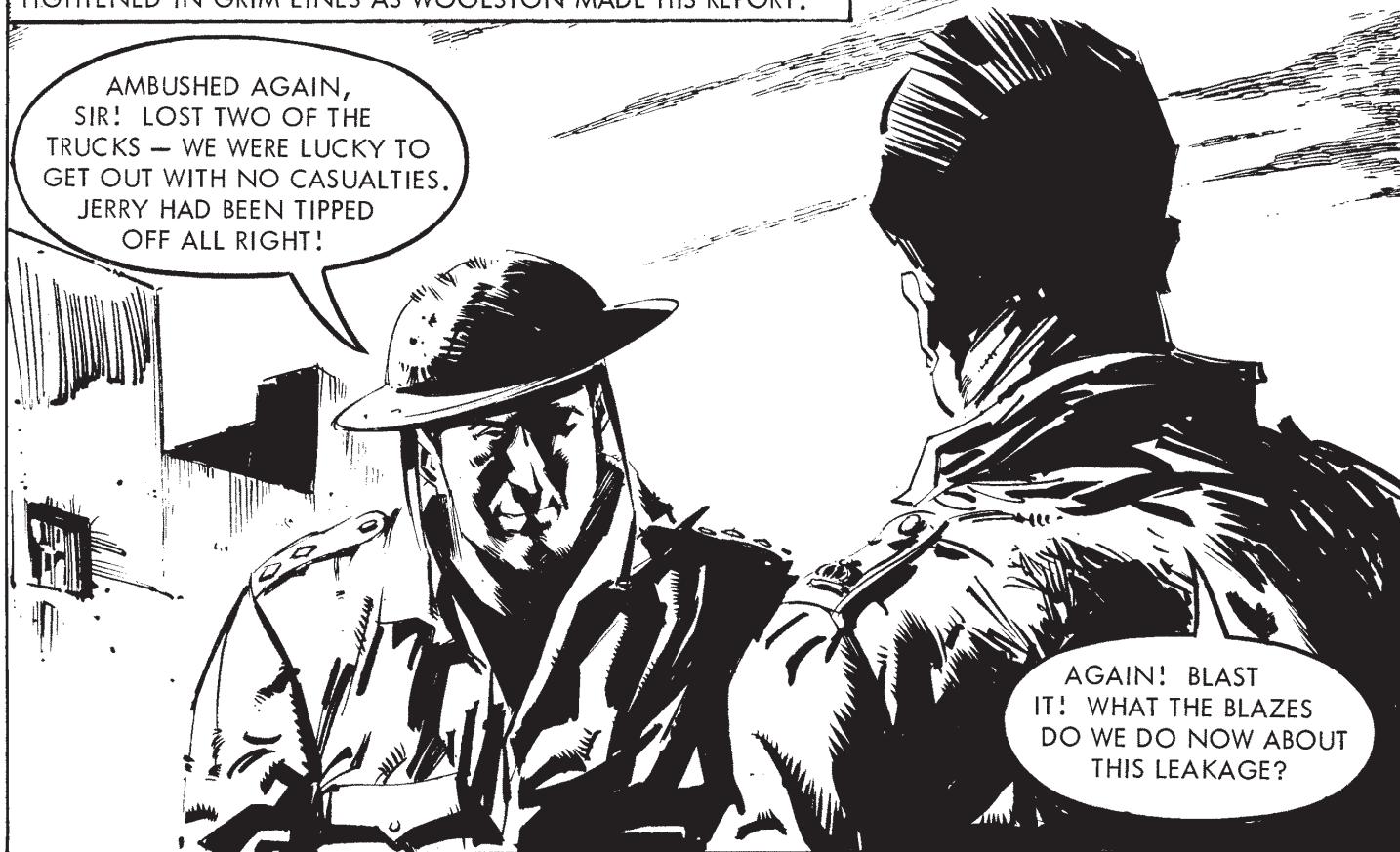
WEST PICKED HIS WAY CAREFULLY TO DICK'S SIDE. HE WAS BREATHING HARD, HIS FACE AGITATED...



AT LAST THEY CAUGHT UP WITH THE OTHER TRUCK WHICH HAD JUST TURNED BACK TO LOOK FOR THEM. AND SOON THEY WERE ALL DRIVING THROUGH THE DARKNESS BACK TOWARDS JALO.



MAJOR GILLET HAD BEEN WAITING IMPATIENTLY FOR NEWS BACK AT THE L.R.D.G. BASE. HIS FACE TIGHTENED IN GRIM LINES AS WOOLSTON MADE HIS REPORT.



DICK SENSED THE DESPAIR IN THE MAJOR'S VOICE. HE THOUGHT QUICKLY. SOMEHOW, HE HAD TO GET A LEAD ON THE TRAITOR...



WITH THE PRACTISED EYE OF A DETECTIVE, DICK WOOLSTON SEARCHED EACH MAN'S KIT-BAG. HE FOUND NOTHING INCRIMINATING UNTIL HE CAME TO THE END BED — LUCKY DRUMMOND'S BED...



MAJOR GILLETT ALMOST TORE THE SHEET OF NOTE-PAPER FROM DICK'S HAND. AS HE SCANNED THE SCRAWLED FIGURES, HIS EYES FLASHED FIRE.



WITH THE INCRIMINATING SHEET OF PAPER IN HIS HAND, THE MAJOR STALKED OUTSIDE — JUST AS LUCKY DRUMMOND WAS COMING IN...

DRUMMOND!
THIS WAS FOUND IN
YOUR KIT...BEARINGS
FOR A PATROL RENDEZ-
VOUS. YOU'D BETTER
EXPLAIN YOURSELF,
MAN — AND FOR
YOUR SAKE, I HOPE
IT'S GOOD!

YAIR? LOOKS LIKE
I CAN'T EXPLAIN IT — 'CEPT
THAT I NEVER SAW THAT SHEET
OF PAPER BEFORE IN MY
LIFE!

AND AS HE SPOKE, THE AUSTRALIAN'S VOICE SUDDENLY CHANGED, AS IF HE WAS REALISING FOR THE FIRST TIME WHAT HE WAS BEING ACCUSED OF.

YOU MUST BE
DING-BATS, COBBER!
ME — SLINGING OFF TO
THE NAZIS? THAT'S A
RICH ONE!

SILENCE!
LIEUTENANT, FALL
IN TWO MEN, AND
PLACE DRUMMOND
UNDER CLOSE
ARREST.

DICK MARCHED LUCKY DRUMMOND AWAY,
BUT THE TOUGH AUSSIE PROTESTED HIS
INNOCENCE ALL THE WAY.



AND BY THE TIME DICK HAD GOT
DRUMMOND LOCKED IN A PRISON
CELL, THE FULL FURY OF THE
AUSTRALIAN'S WRATH HAD TURNED
ON HIM.

YOU NO-GOOD, GREASY
COPPER. THIS IS ALL YOUR
DOING! KIT-BAG INSPECTIONS —
RECONNAISSANCE JAUNTS IN THE
DESERT! I'LL SETTLE WITH YOU,
PAL. SEE IF I DON'T!

AFTER SUNSET, AS THE SHADOWS LENGTHENED ABOUT THE LITTLE OASIS, DICK WOOLSTON WALKED ALONE IN THE COOL NIGHT AIR, THINKING HARD.



DEEP IN THOUGHT, DICK NEVER GUESSED THAT HE WASN'T ALONE. HE DIDN'T HEAR THE SOFT FOOT-STEPS STALKING HIM.



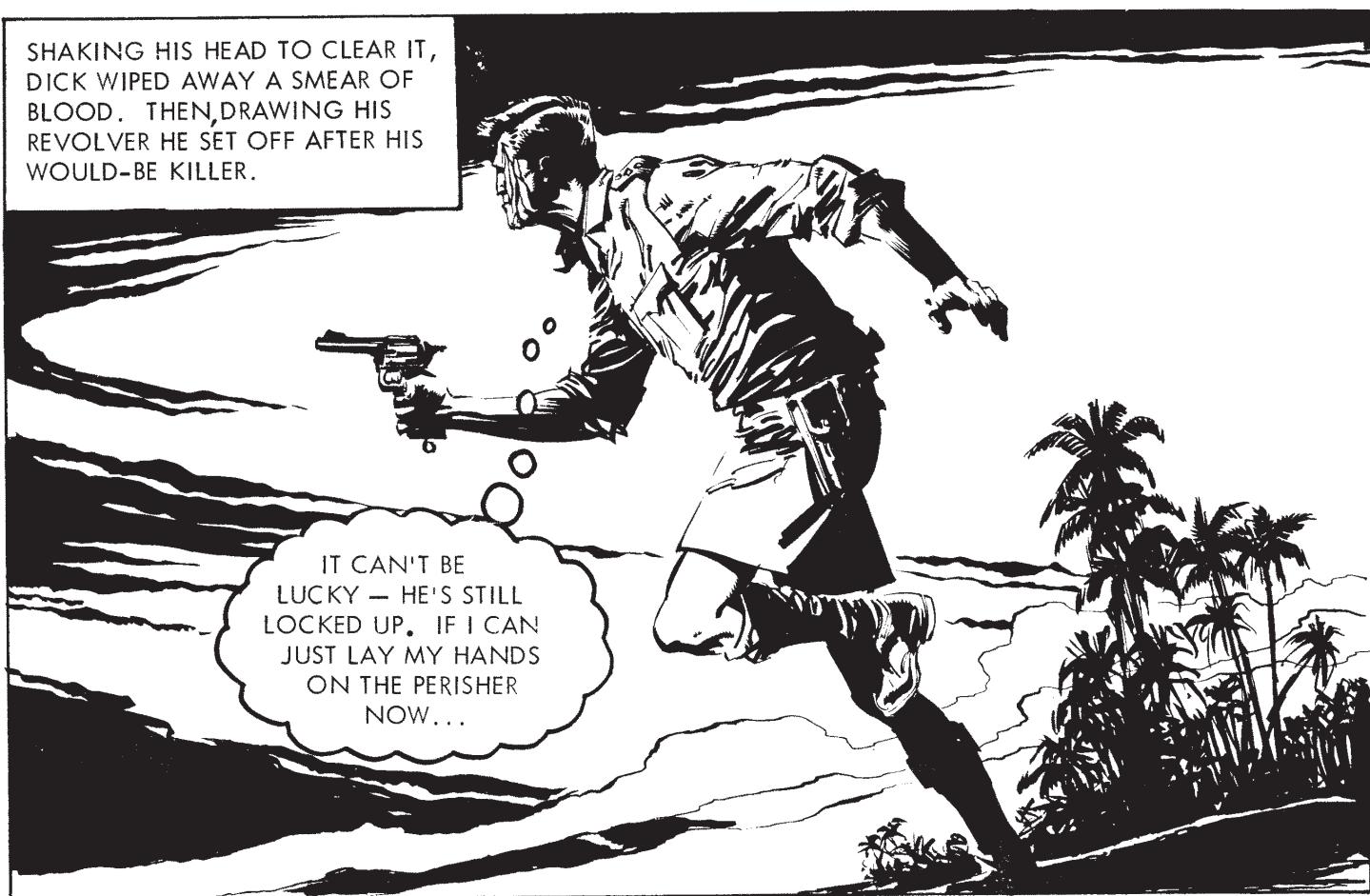
OUR FIRE-EATING
MAJOR SEEMED AWFUL
KEEN TO PIN IT ON LUCKY.
MAYBE TOO KEEN...

THERE WAS NO WARNING. A SINGLE RIFLE SHOT CRASHED THROUGH THE STILLNESS. DICK FELT THE WIND OF THE BULLET AND A MILLION FAIRY-LIGHTS EXPLODED IN HIS HEAD...



HOLY SMOKE!
SOMEBODY'S
CREASED ME!

SHAKING HIS HEAD TO CLEAR IT, DICK WIPE AWAY A SMEAR OF BLOOD. THEN, DRAWING HIS REVOLVER HE SET OFF AFTER HIS WOULD-BE KILLER.

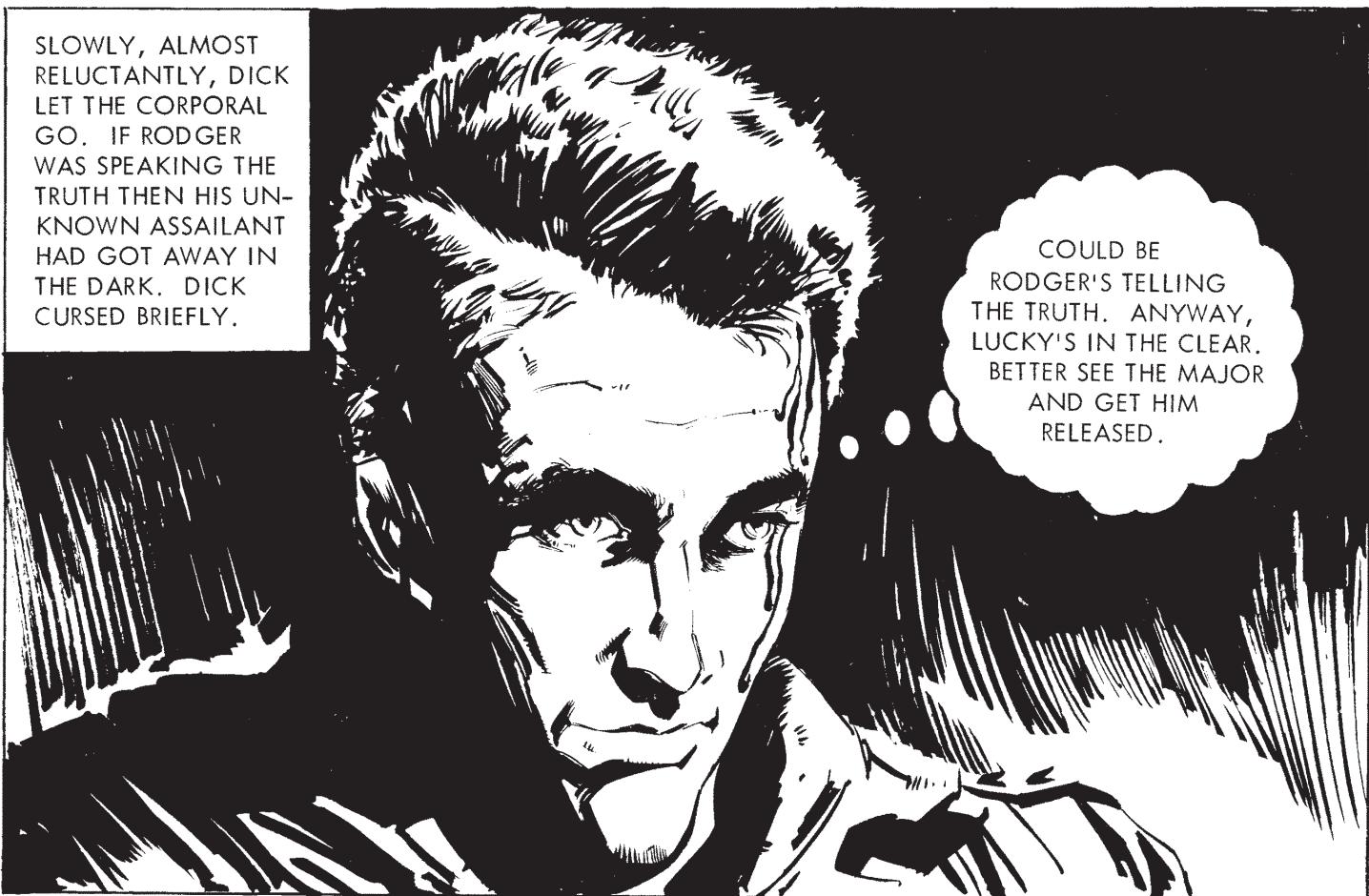


IT CAN'T BE
LUCKY — HE'S STILL
LOCKED UP. IF I CAN
JUST LAY MY HANDS
ON THE PERISHER
NOW...

SUDDENLY HE GLIMPSED A FIGURE IN THE SHADOWS AMONG THE PALM TREES, AND LUNGED FORWARD. HIS CLUTCHING HANDS GRAPPLED WITH A SOLID BODY.

RIGHT, YOU
MURDERING RAT —
LET'S HAVE A LOOK
AT YOUR DIAL!





NEXT MORNING DICK GOT AN EVEN BIGGER SHOCK GOING THROUGH HIS DEAD BROTHER'S KIT, HE FOUND ERIC'S OLD DIARY. HE HAD TO READ THE LAST ENTRY TWICE BEFORE ITS SIGNIFICANCE SANK IN.



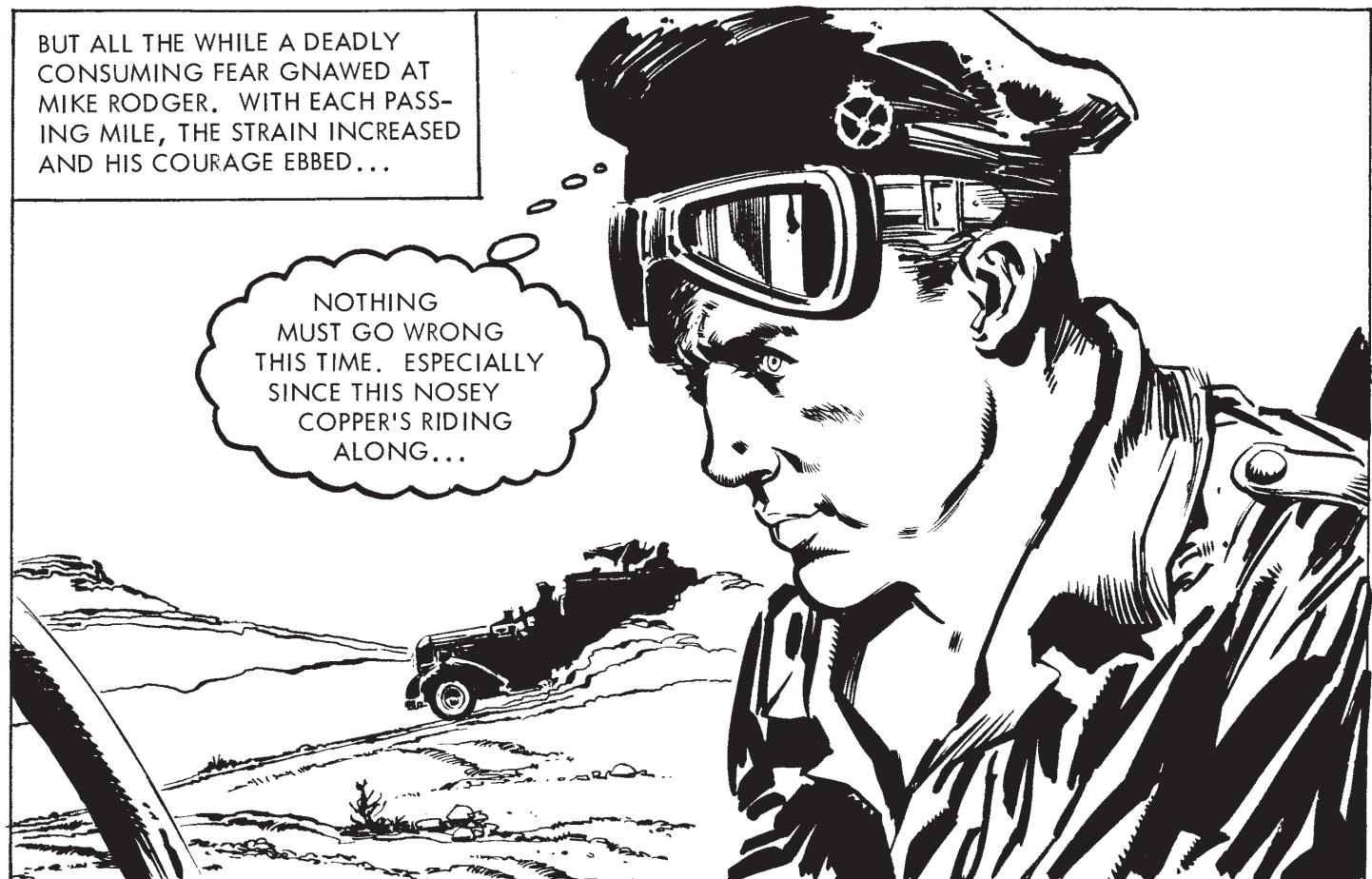
AND DICK VOLUNTEERED AGAIN TO GO OUT WITH THE NEXT PATROL. THIS TIME IT WAS TO BE A NIGHT ATTACK ON AN ENEMY-HELD AIRFIELD, AND HE MADE A POINT OF TRAVELLING WITH RODGER.



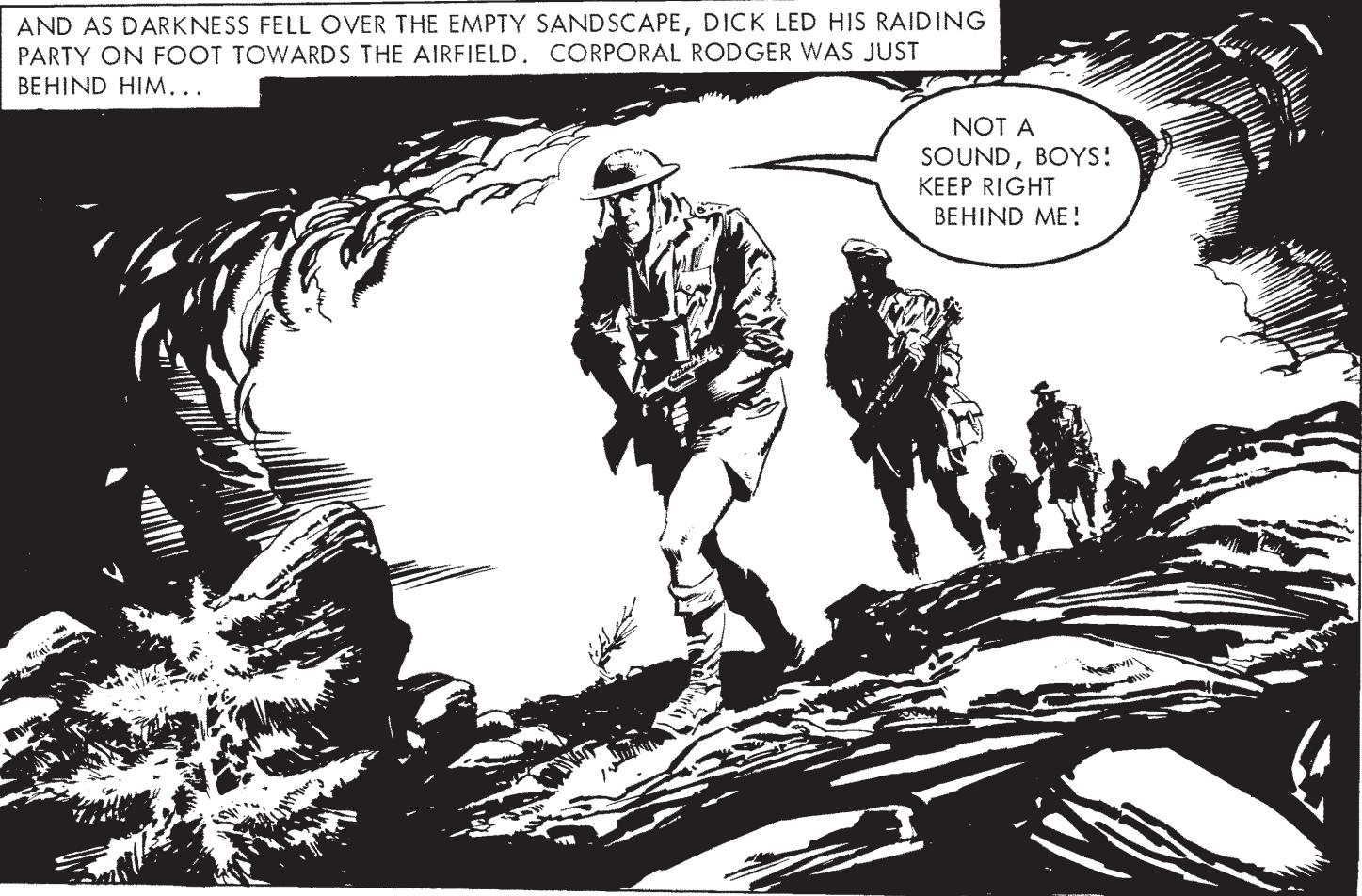
THE TRUCKS DROVE FAST ACROSS THE SUN-BAKED DESERT...ACROSS ENDLESS MILES OF WHITE DUNES GLITTERING LIKE THE WAVES OF AN OCEAN.

BEARING
NORTH-WEST NOW.
WE'RE KEEPING GOOD
TIME....



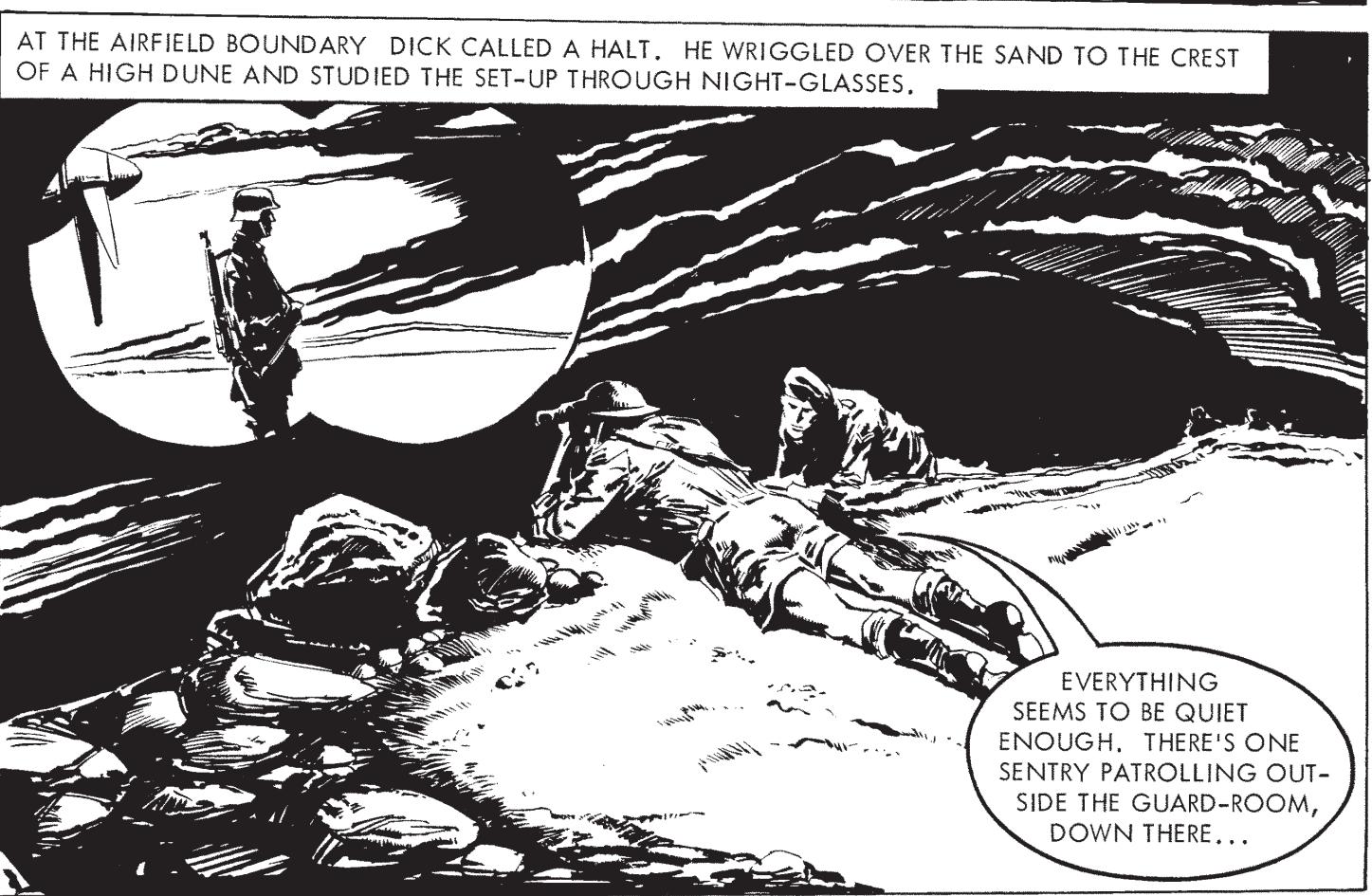


AND AS DARKNESS FELL OVER THE EMPTY SANDSCAPE, DICK LED HIS RAIDING PARTY ON FOOT TOWARDS THE AIRFIELD. CORPORAL RODGER WAS JUST BEHIND HIM...



NOT A
SOUND, BOYS!
KEEP RIGHT
BEHIND ME!

AT THE AIRFIELD BOUNDARY DICK CALLED A HALT. HE WRIGGLED OVER THE SAND TO THE CREST OF A HIGH DUNE AND STUDIED THE SET-UP THROUGH NIGHT-GLASSES.



EVERYTHING
SEEMS TO BE QUIET
ENOUGH. THERE'S ONE
SENTRY PATROLLING OUT-
SIDE THE GUARD-ROOM,
DOWN THERE...

THEY DIDN'T SEEM TO BE EXPECTED, SO DICK GAVE THE SIGNAL TO CUT THE BOUNDARY WIRE. BUT AS THEY MADE THEIR WAY THROUGH, HE GLANCED BACK AT RODGER. THE CORPORAL'S FACE WAS GREEN WITH TERROR.

THE BLOKE'S
REALLY TERRIFIED -
WONDER IF HE KNOWS
SOMETHING.



BUT WHEN HE REACHED THE FIRST STUKA HE DISMISSED RODGER FROM HIS MIND. HE LAID ONE OF THE STICKY BOMBS ON THE WING, AGAINST THE FUSELAGE AND CLOSE TO THE ENGINE.

THAT'S ONE JERRY KITE THAT WON'T BOTHER US ON THE WAY BACK!



THEN, AS IF AT A GIVEN SIGNAL, THE AIRFIELD LIGHTS BLAZED ON, ILLUMINATING THE RAIDERS AGAINST A SEA OF WHITE. DICK CURSED BITTERLY AS A FUSILLADE OF TRACER SWEPT THROUGH HIS THINNING RANKS...



THE JAWS OF THE TWO-PRONGED TRAP SNAPPED SHUT, AS HIDDEN GERMANS SPRANG UP BETWEEN THE L.R.D.G. PATROL AND THE GAP THEY HAD CUT IN THE BOUNDARY WIRE. DICK FOUGHT A DESPERATE REAR-GUARD ACTION, AND YELLED AT HIS OTHER MEN TO SMASH THEIR WAY THROUGH.





BUT ONE MAN WAS NO LONGER FIGHTING. MIKE RODGER HAD HAD ENOUGH. WITH HIS WHOLE BODY SHAKING AND HIS HANDS Oozing sweat, he thought only of saving his own skin.



DICK COULD HEAR THE CORPORAL'S TERRIFIED VOICE EVEN ABOVE THE NOISE OF THE BATTLE AS HE RAN SLOBBERING TOWARDS THE GERMAN LINES.



AND THAT WAS THE LAST HE SAW OF MIKE RODGER. THE SURVIVORS BROKE THE GERMAN RING AND RACED FOR THEIR TRUCKS. ENGINES ROARED INTO LIFE AND THEY WERE SOON LURCHING AWAY INTO THE DESERT.



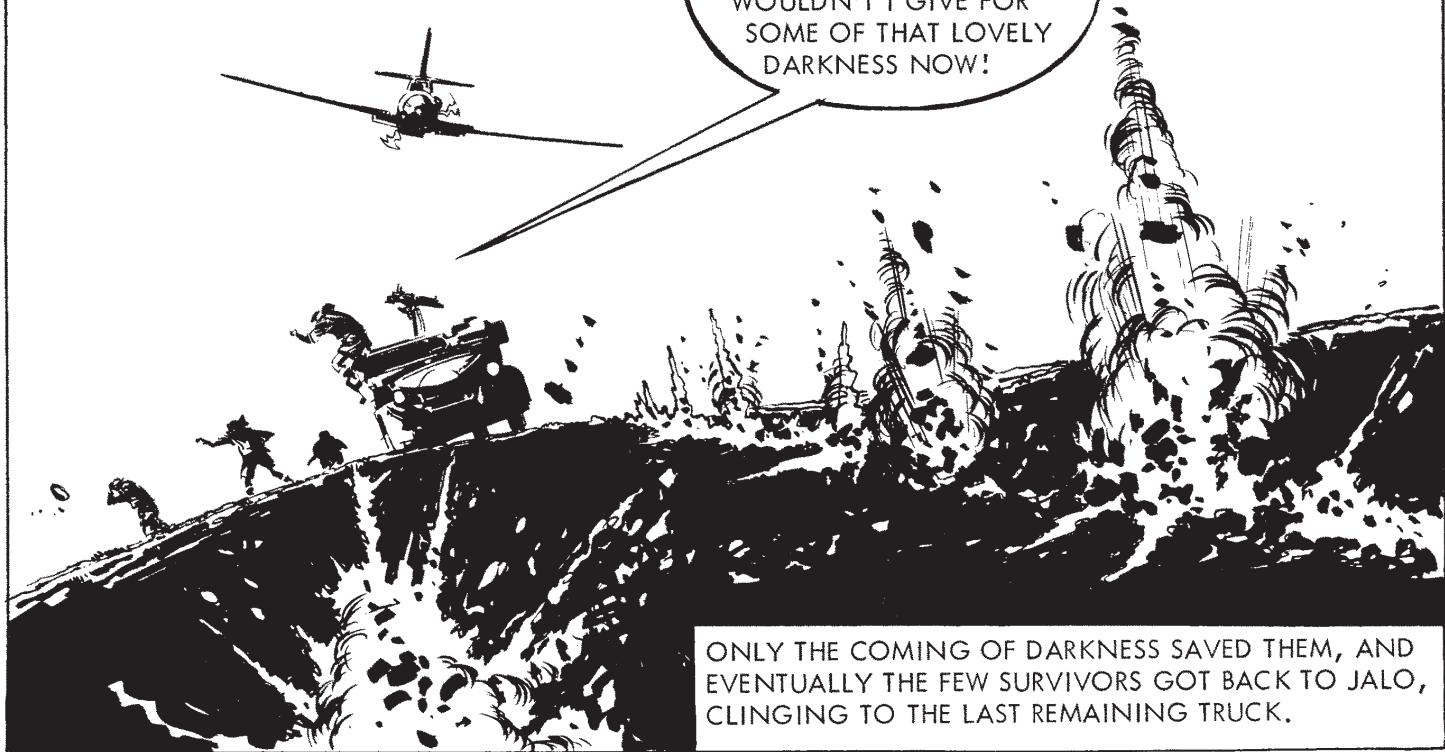
GERMAN AIRCRAFT FOUND THEM AT DAWN, AND IN THE SAVAGE STRAFING ATTACK THAT FOLLOWED, ONE TRUCK WAS HIT AND BURNT OUT.



AND THE FACT THAT THEY WERE READY TO DIVERT FIGHTER PLANES TO FORM AN AIR-AMBUSH, SHOWED DICK HOW MUCH GERMAN HIGH COMMAND WANTED RID OF THEM.



ALL DAY THEY WERE HARASSED MERCILESSLY BY THE ME.109s, OFTEN FORCED OFF COURSE AND INTO QUICKSAND.

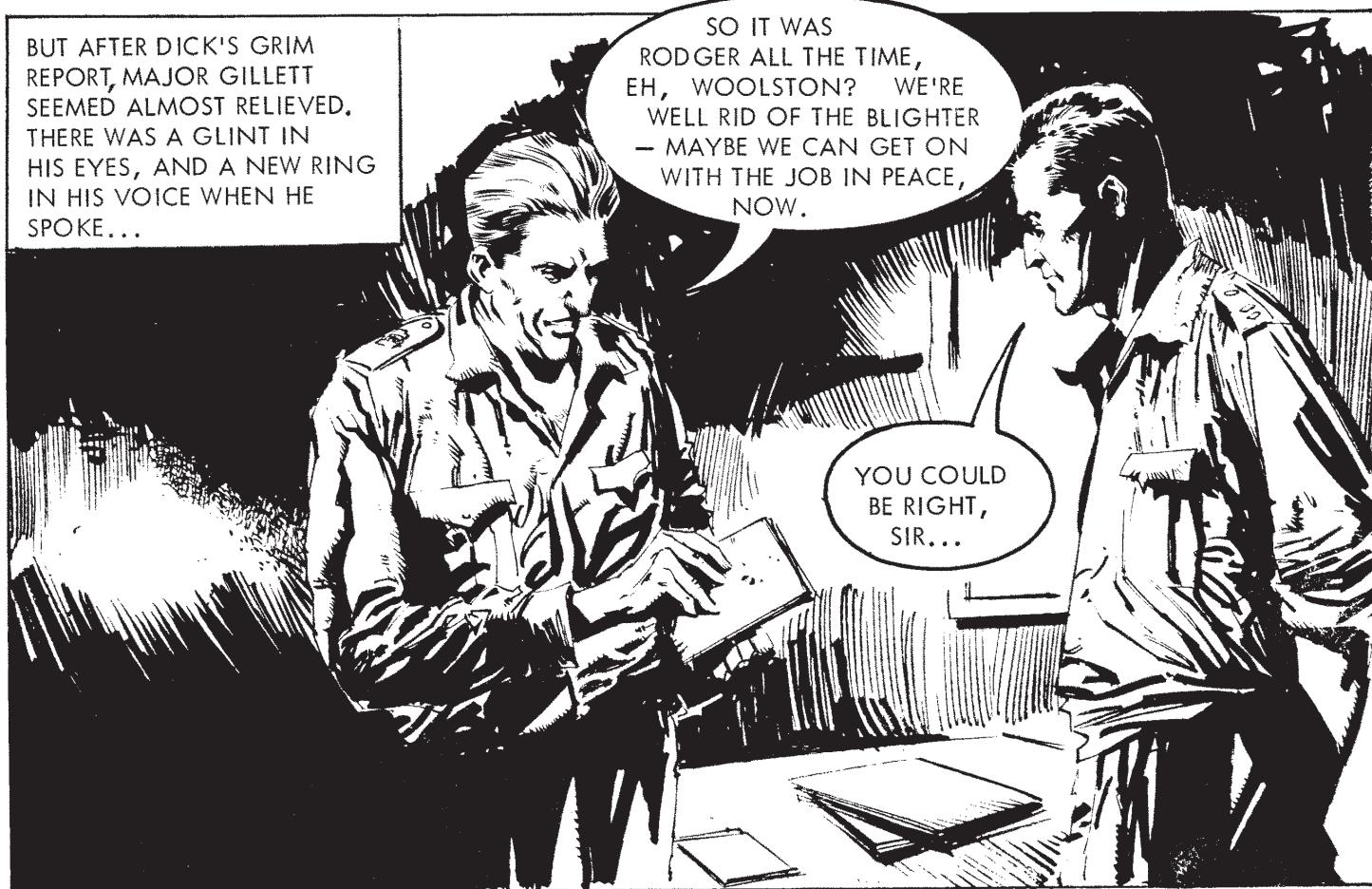


ONLY THE COMING OF DARKNESS SAVED THEM, AND EVENTUALLY THE FEW SURVIVORS GOT BACK TO JALO, CLINGING TO THE LAST REMAINING TRUCK.

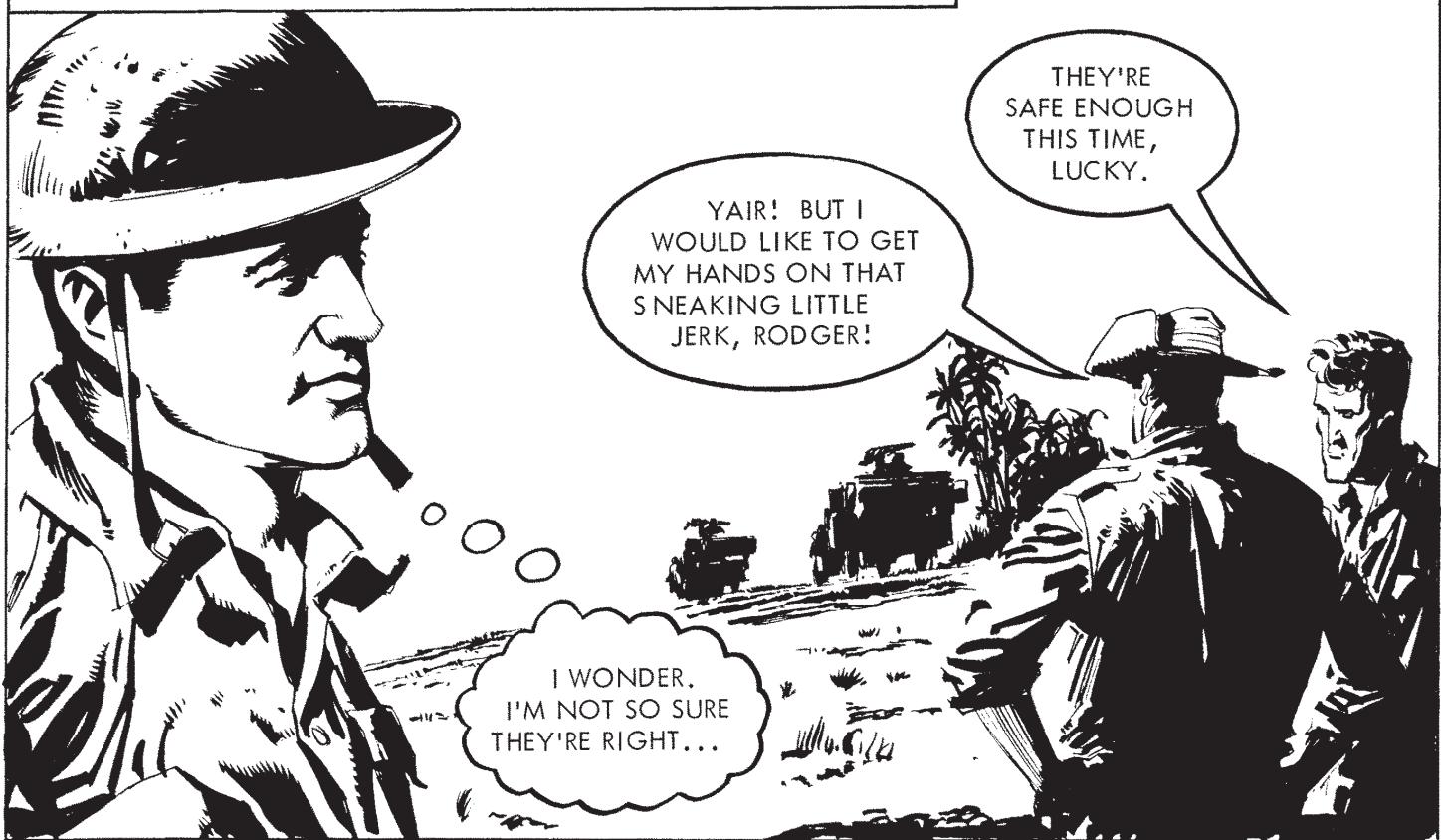
BUT AFTER DICK'S GRIM REPORT, MAJOR GILLET SEEMED ALMOST RELIEVED. THERE WAS A GLINT IN HIS EYES, AND A NEW RING IN HIS VOICE WHEN HE SPOKE...

SO IT WAS
RODGER ALL THE TIME,
EH, WOOLSTON? WE'RE
WELL RID OF THE BLIGHTER
— MAYBE WE CAN GET ON
WITH THE JOB IN PEACE,
NOW.

YOU COULD
BE RIGHT,
SIR...



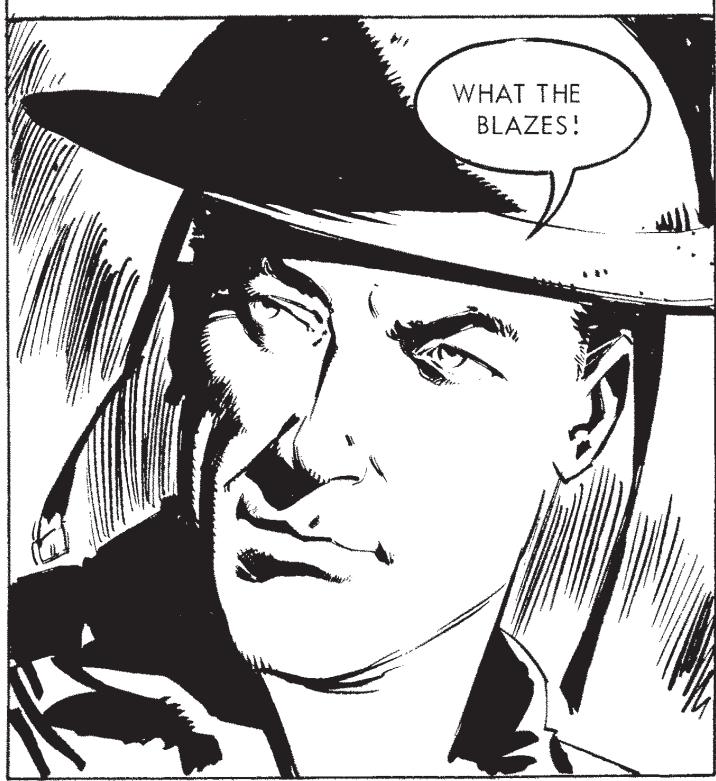
TENSION AT THE JALO OASIS LIFTED IMMEDIATELY. THE MEN ALL ASSUMED THAT RODGER WAS THE TRAITOR...ONLY DICK WOOLSTON STILL HAD A NAGGING DOUBT.



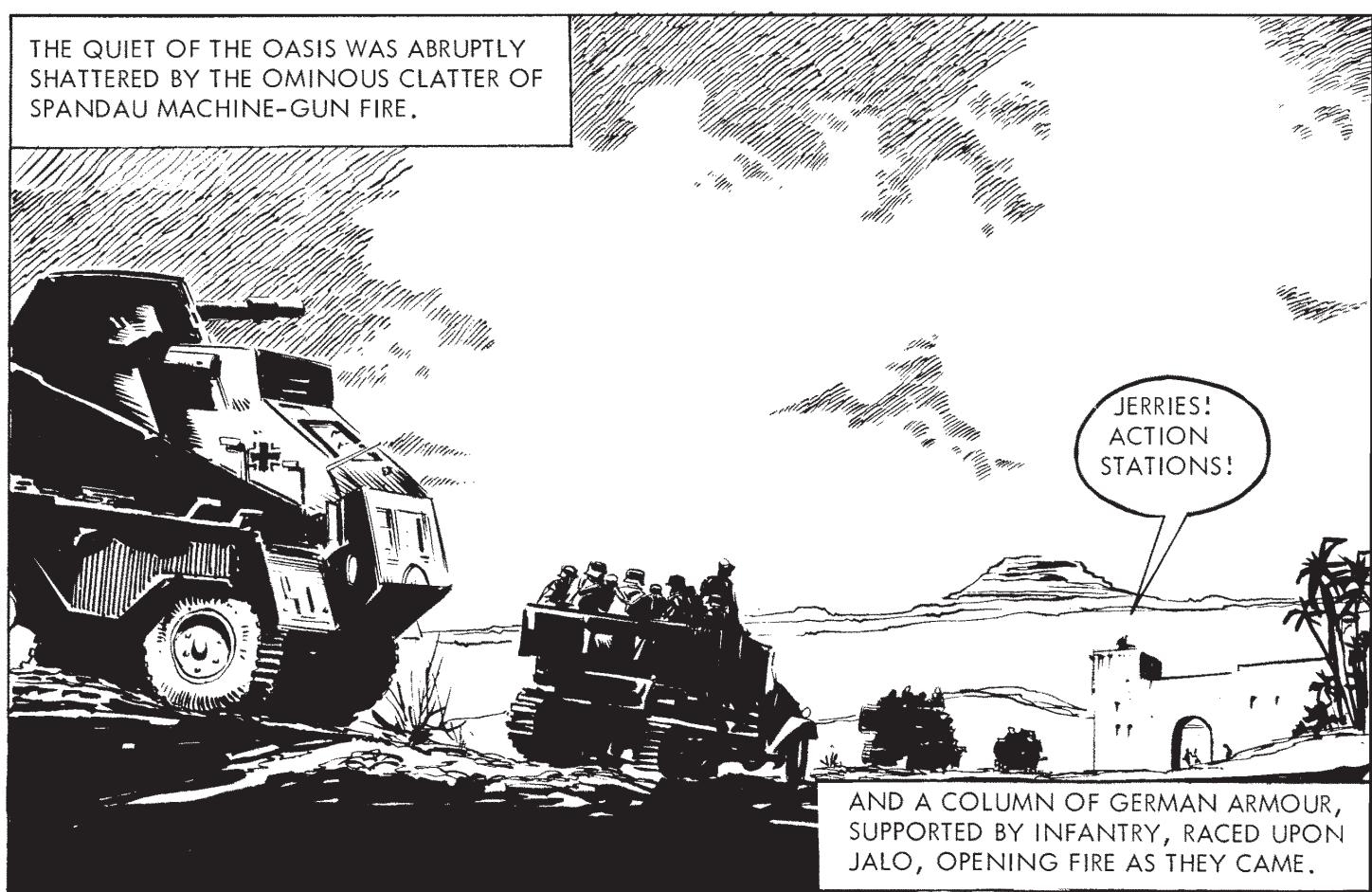
AND DICK DIDN'T HAVE TO WAIT LONG BEFORE HIS DOUBTS WERE CONFIRMED — BY RADIO.



DESPONDENTLY DICK WALKED AWAY FROM THE MAJOR. HE HAD TO FIND THIS TRAITOR SOMEHOW, AND NOT JUST FOR ERIC. THEN SUDDENLY SHRILL WHISTLE BLASTS SOUNDED AN ALERT.



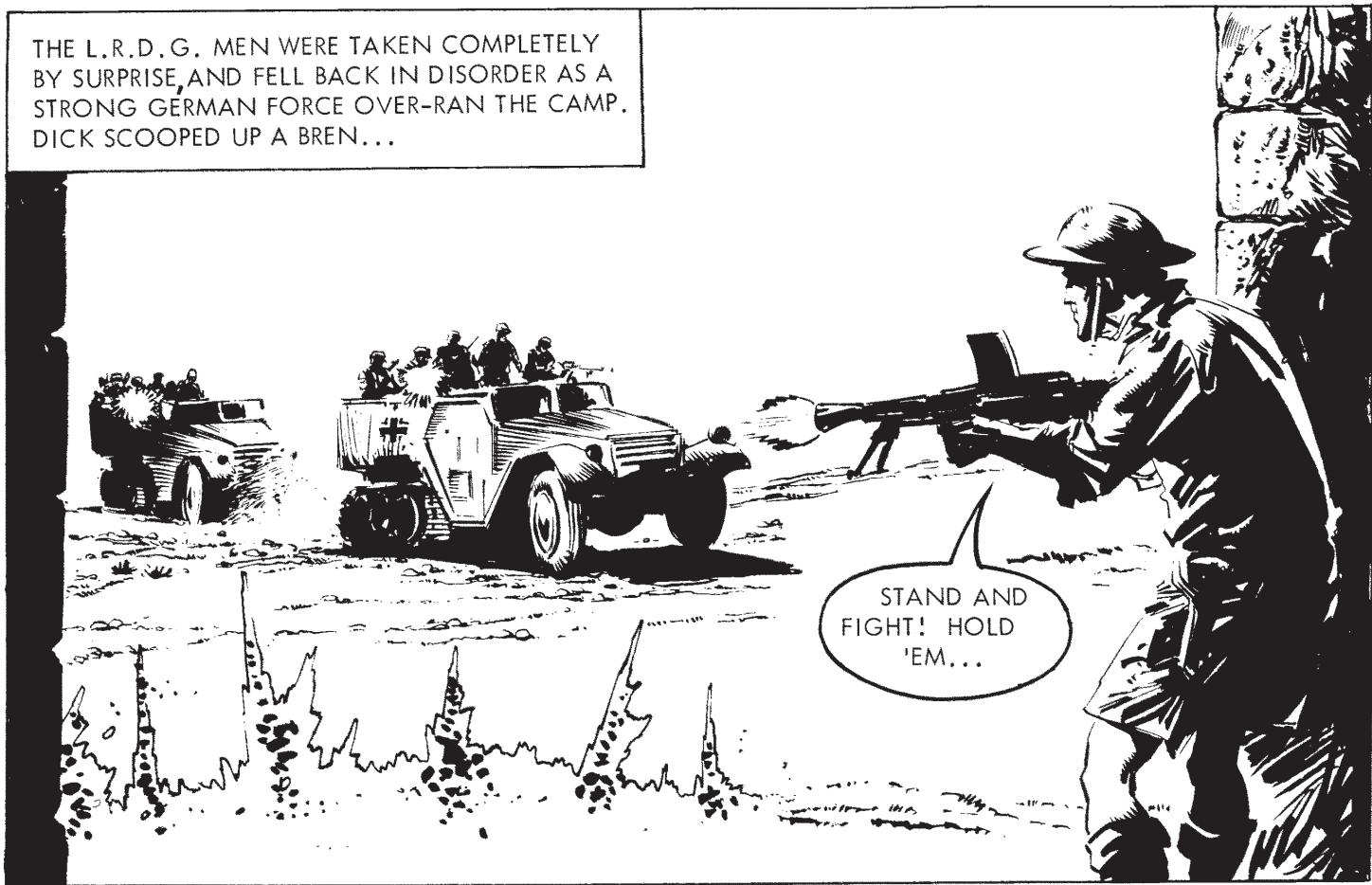
THE QUIET OF THE OASIS WAS ABRUPTLY SHATTERED BY THE OMINOUS CLATTER OF SPANDAU MACHINE-GUN FIRE.



THE L.R.D.G. MEN WERE TAKEN COMPLETELY BY SURPRISE, AND FELL BACK IN DISORDER AS A STRONG GERMAN FORCE OVER-RAN THE CAMP. DICK SCOOPED UP A BREN...

AND A COLUMN OF GERMAN ARMOUR,
SUPPORTED BY INFANTRY, RACED UPON
JALO, OPENING FIRE AS THEY CAME.

STAND AND
FIGHT! HOLD
'EM...



LUCKY DRUMMOND GRABBED A HANDFUL OF GRENADES AND MOUNTED THE STONE WALL OF THE FORT. THEN WITH DEADLY ACCURACY HE LOBBED THEM AMONG THE ADVANCING NAZIS.



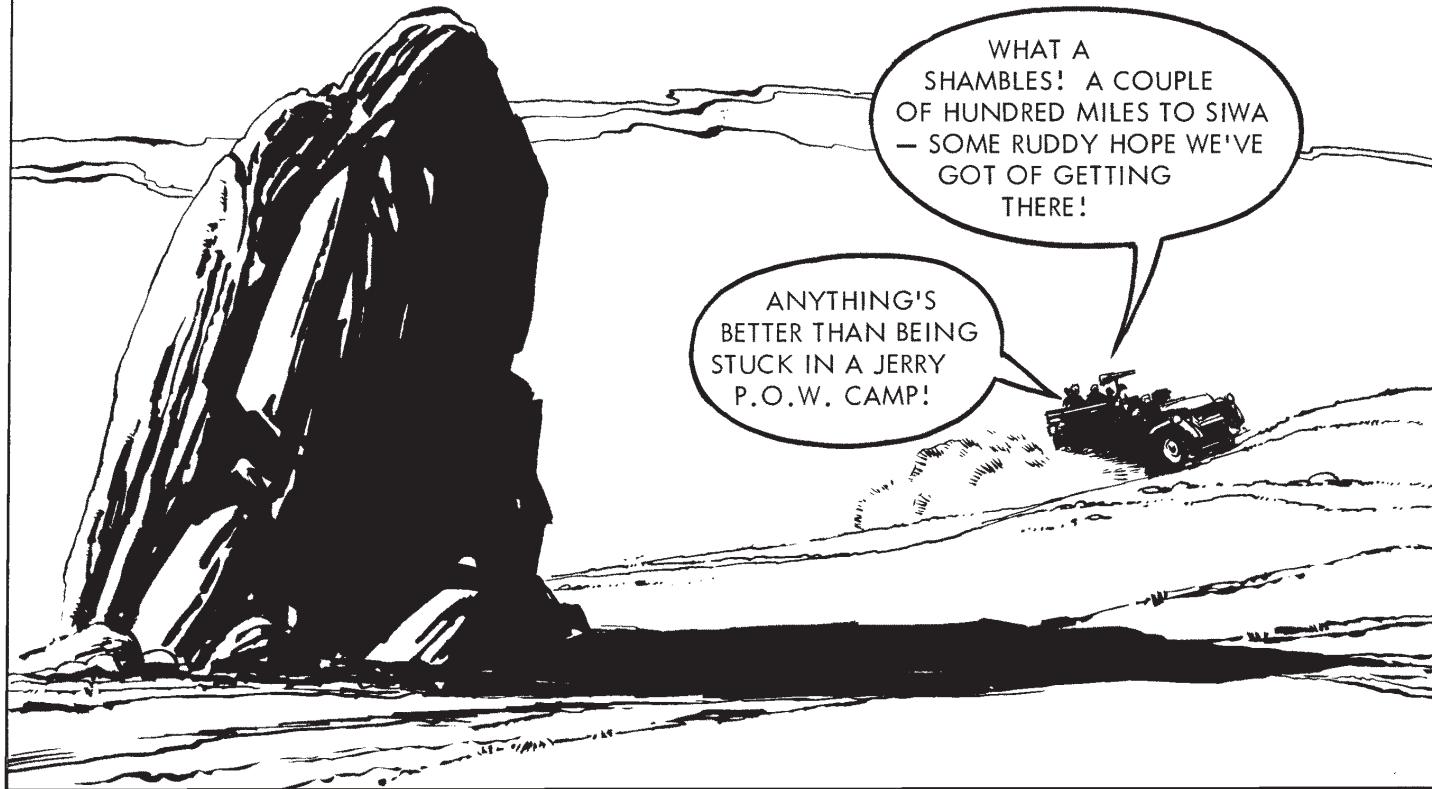
MAJOR GILLET QUICKLY REALISED THEIR POSITION WAS UNTENABLE AGAINST AN ATTACK ON THIS SCALE. RELUCTANTLY, HE GAVE THE ORDER TO RETREAT...



IT WAS THE LAST ORDER THE MAJOR EVER GAVE. A TORRENT OF LEAD FROM THE GERMAN'S SCHMEISSER, FIRED AT POINT-BLANK RANGE, RIPPED INTO HIS BODY.



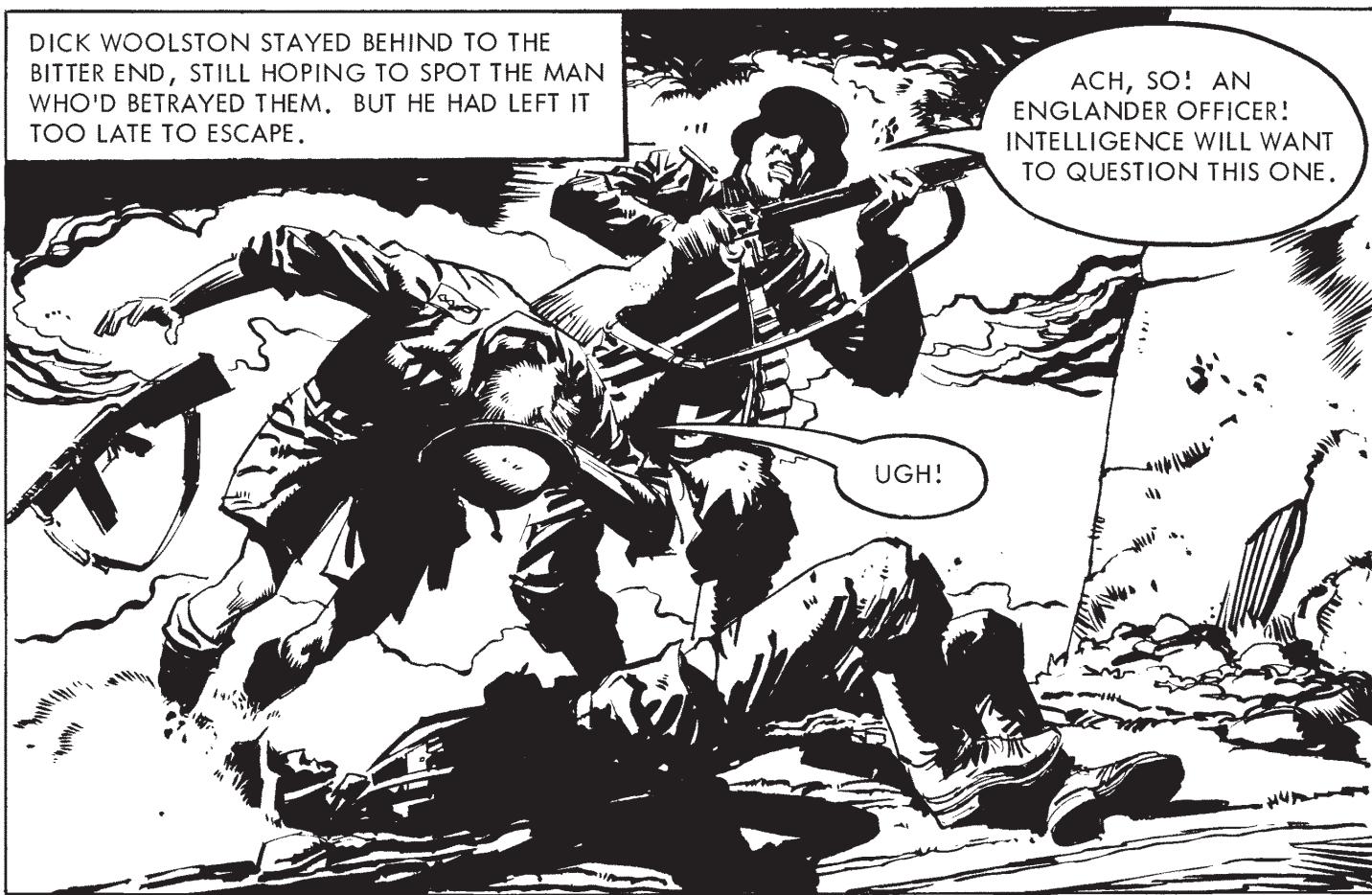
THE MEN OF THE LONG RANGE DESERT GROUP BROKE AND FLED. ONLY ONE TRUCK MANAGED TO GET AWAY UNSCATHED. OTHER SURVIVORS ON FOOT SET OUT ACROSS THE WATERLESS WILDERNESS...



DICK WOOLSTON STAYED BEHIND TO THE BITTER END, STILL HOPING TO SPOT THE MAN WHO'D BETRAYED THEM. BUT HE HAD LEFT IT TOO LATE TO ESCAPE.

ACH, SO! AN ENGLANDER OFFICER! INTELLIGENCE WILL WANT TO QUESTION THIS ONE.

UGH!



WHEN HE REGAINED CONSCIOUSNESS HE FOUND HIMSELF IN A TEMPORARY PRISON CAGE AT GERMAN HEAD-QUARTERS.



HE WAS SOON HAULED BEFORE AN INTELLIGENCE OFFICER FOR INTERROGATION. BUT THE GERMANS WERE GOING TO GET NOTHING OUT OF DICK WOOLSTON —





THE JEEP DRIVER WAS JOINED BY A GERMAN COLONEL, AND TOGETHER THEY ASCENDED THE STEPS. AS THEIR VOICES DRIFTED UP TO HIM DICK COULD STILL HARDLY BELIEVE THE TRUTH.



THE BLOOD POUNDED WILDLY THROUGH DICK'S BRAIN. ALL HE WANTED NOW WAS TO SMASH HIS FIST INTO THAT EVIL, LYING, TRAITOROUS MOUTH...TO SILENCE IT FOREVER —



BILL WEST REACHED THE TERRACE. HIS GLANCE RESTED IDLY ON THE INTELLIGENCE OFFICER...THEN HIS EXPRESSION UNDERWENT A SUDDEN CHANGE.



THE TWO FRIENDS STARED AT EACH OTHER FOR A LONG MOMENT, WEST TRYING TO LOOK CHEERFUL, WOOLSTON ALMOST CHOKING WITH BITTERNESS.



FIND
MORE
FREE
MAGAZINES

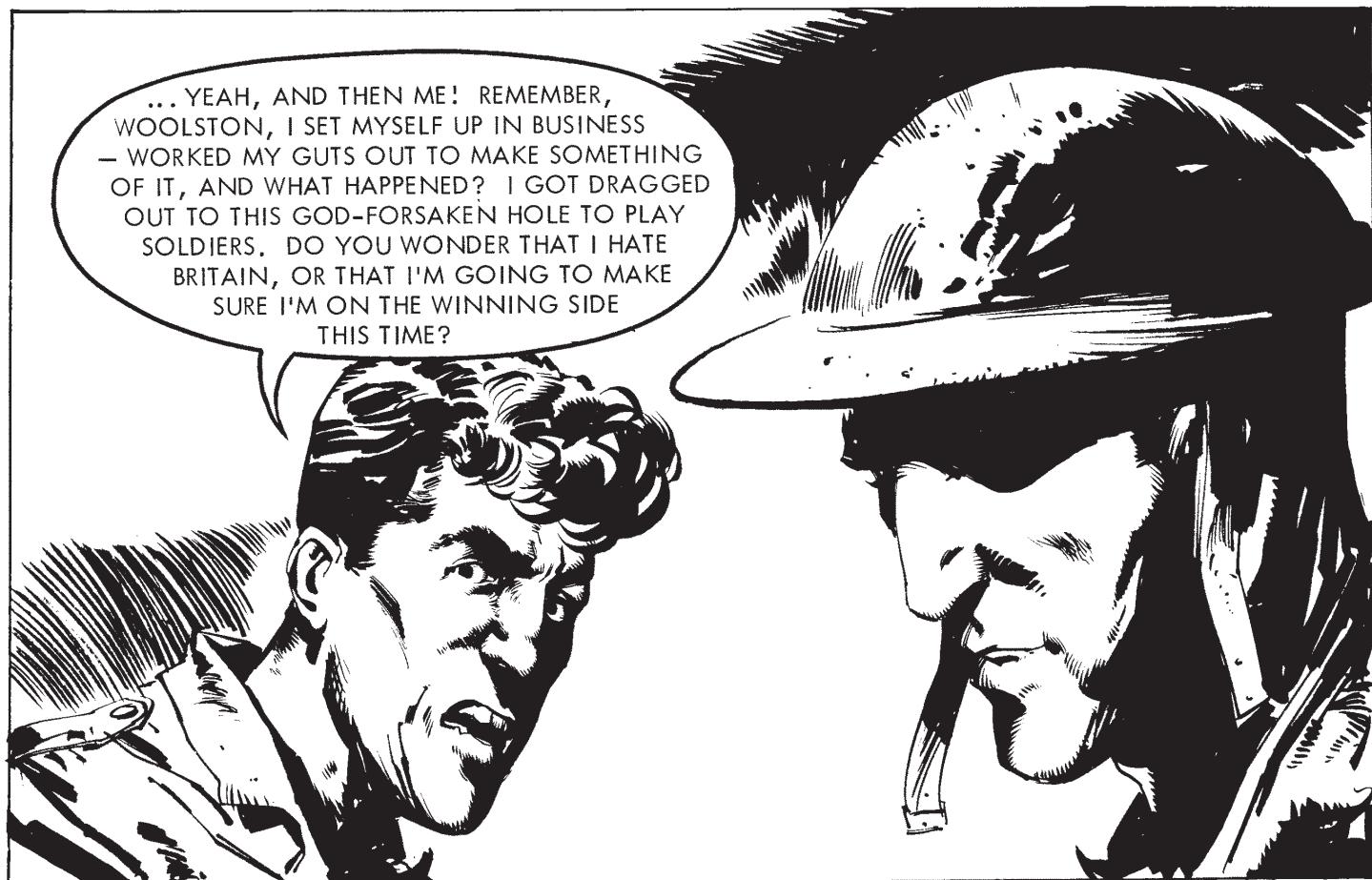
FREEMAGS.CC

BUT WEST DIDN'T SEEM TO HAVE ANY FEELING OF GUILT. HIS TONE HARDENED AND HE TOOK A STEP CLOSER TO DICK.

LISTEN, MATE. IF ANYBODY SHOULD UNDERSTAND THIS, IT'S YOU. REMEMBER HOW MY OLD MAN WAS TREATED AFTER THE LAST WAR? HOW HE LOST A LEG AT YPRES AND COULDN'T GET A JOB WHEN HE CAME HOME? HE HAD A FAMILY TO BRING UP, AND DIDN'T GET A PENNY FROM THE COUNTRY HE GAVE HIS RUDDY LEG FOR...



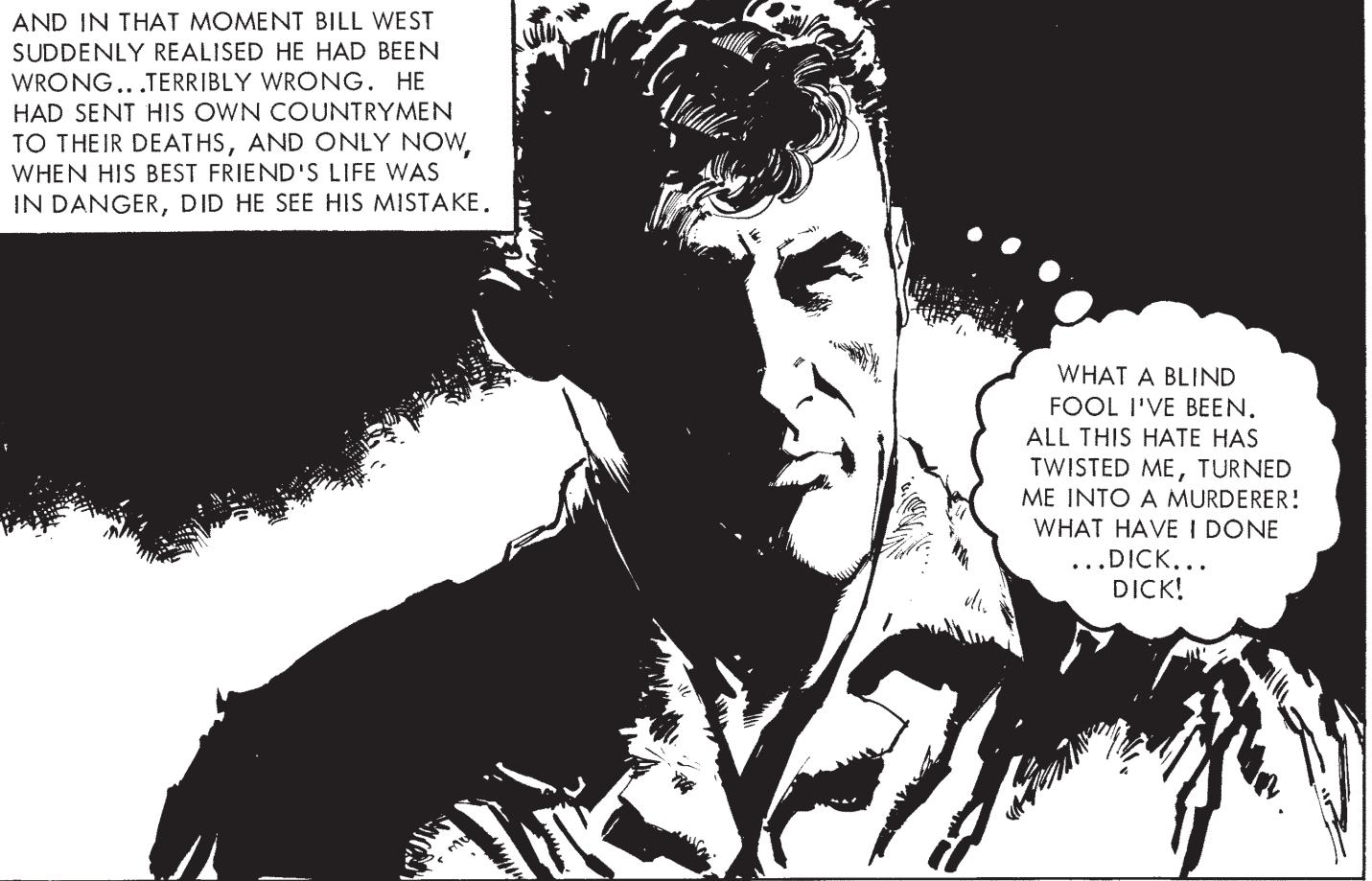
... YEAH, AND THEN ME! REMEMBER, WOOLSTON, I SET MYSELF UP IN BUSINESS — WORKED MY GUTS OUT TO MAKE SOMETHING OF IT, AND WHAT HAPPENED? I GOT DRAGGED OUT TO THIS GOD-FORSAKEN HOLE TO PLAY SOLDIERS. DO YOU WONDER THAT I HATE BRITAIN, OR THAT I'M GOING TO MAKE SURE I'M ON THE WINNING SIDE THIS TIME?







AND IN THAT MOMENT BILL WEST SUDDENLY REALISED HE HAD BEEN WRONG... TERRIBLY WRONG. HE HAD SENT HIS OWN COUNTRYMEN TO THEIR DEATHS, AND ONLY NOW, WHEN HIS BEST FRIEND'S LIFE WAS IN DANGER, DID HE SEE HIS MISTAKE.

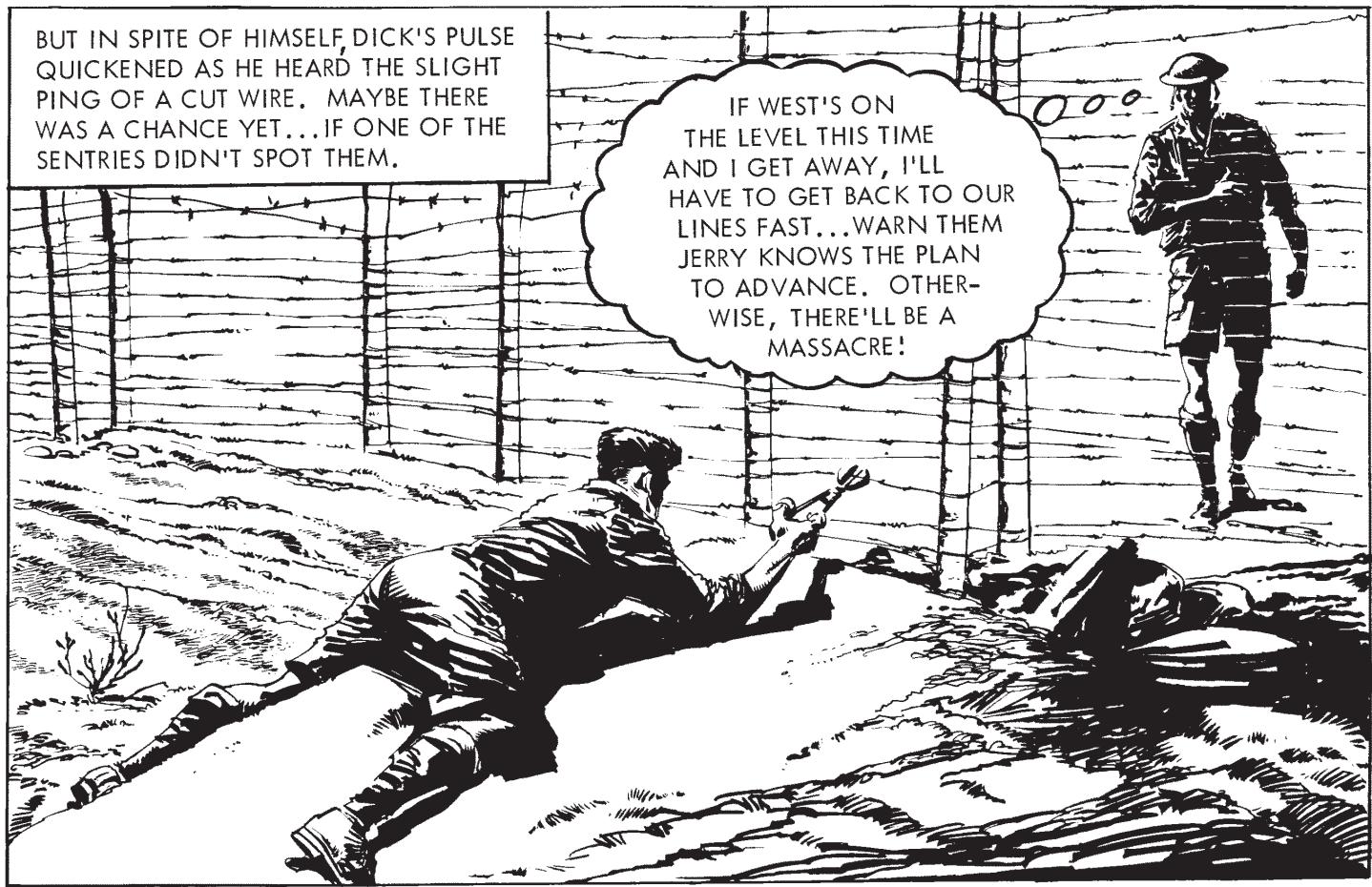
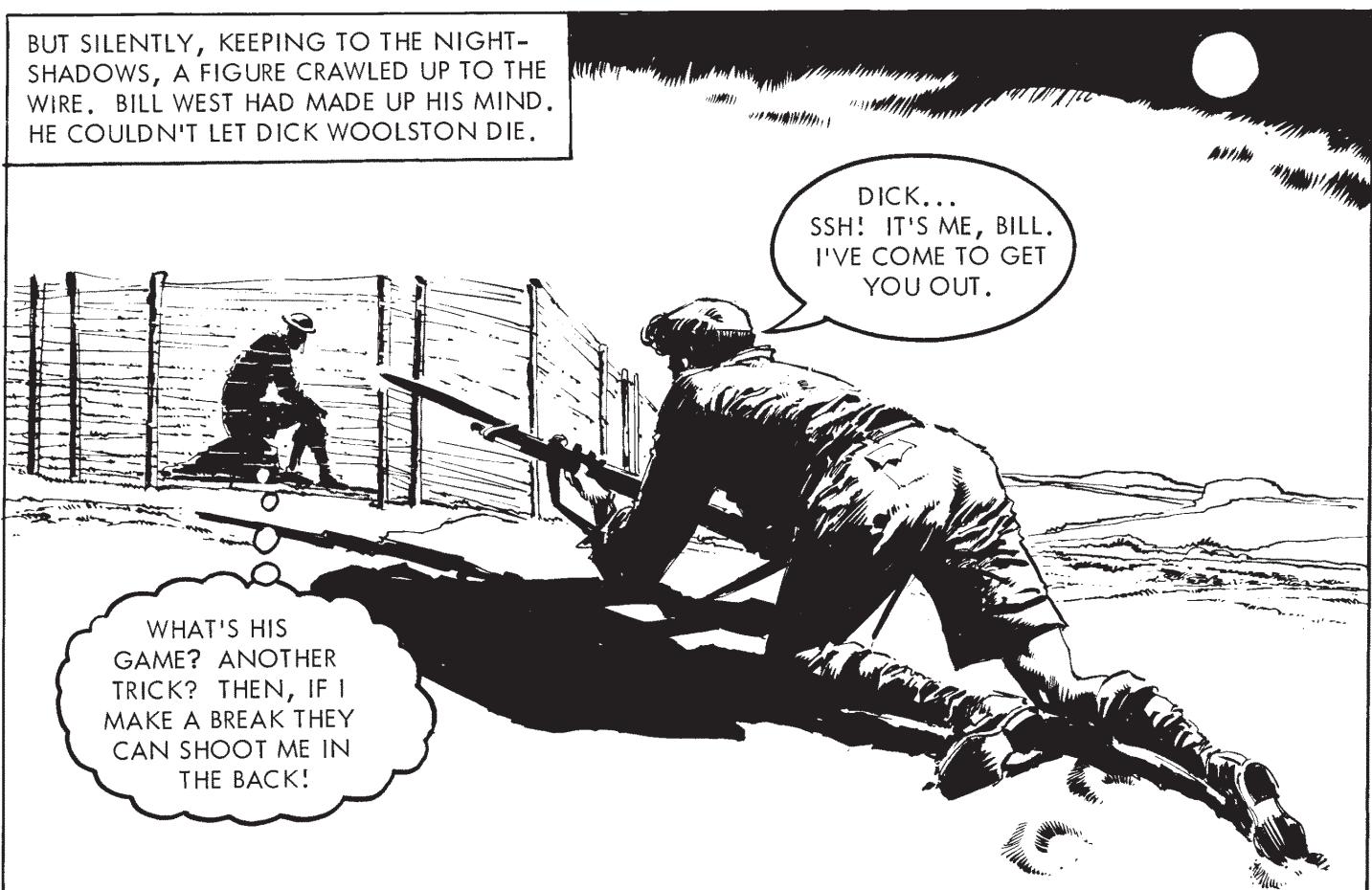


WHAT A BLIND FOOL I'VE BEEN.
ALL THIS HATE HAS
TWISTED ME, TURNED
ME INTO A MURDERER!
WHAT HAVE I DONE
...DICK...
DICK!

MEANWHILE, IN THE PRISON COMPOUND, WOOLSTON SAT UNDER THE STARS LISTENING TO THE TREAD OF THE GERMAN SENTRIES AS THEY MARCHED UP AND DOWN. IN A FEW HOURS TIME HE WAS GOING TO BE SHOT, AND THERE JUST DIDN'T SEEM TO BE A THING HE COULD DO ABOUT IT.



PRETTY
HOPELESS... WIRE
AND ARMED GUARDS.
EVEN IF I MANAGED TO
CLIMB OUT, HOW WOULD
I GET AWAY?



HE WAS HALF-WAY THROUGH THE WIRE WHEN A GUTTURAL SHOUT RANG OUT.



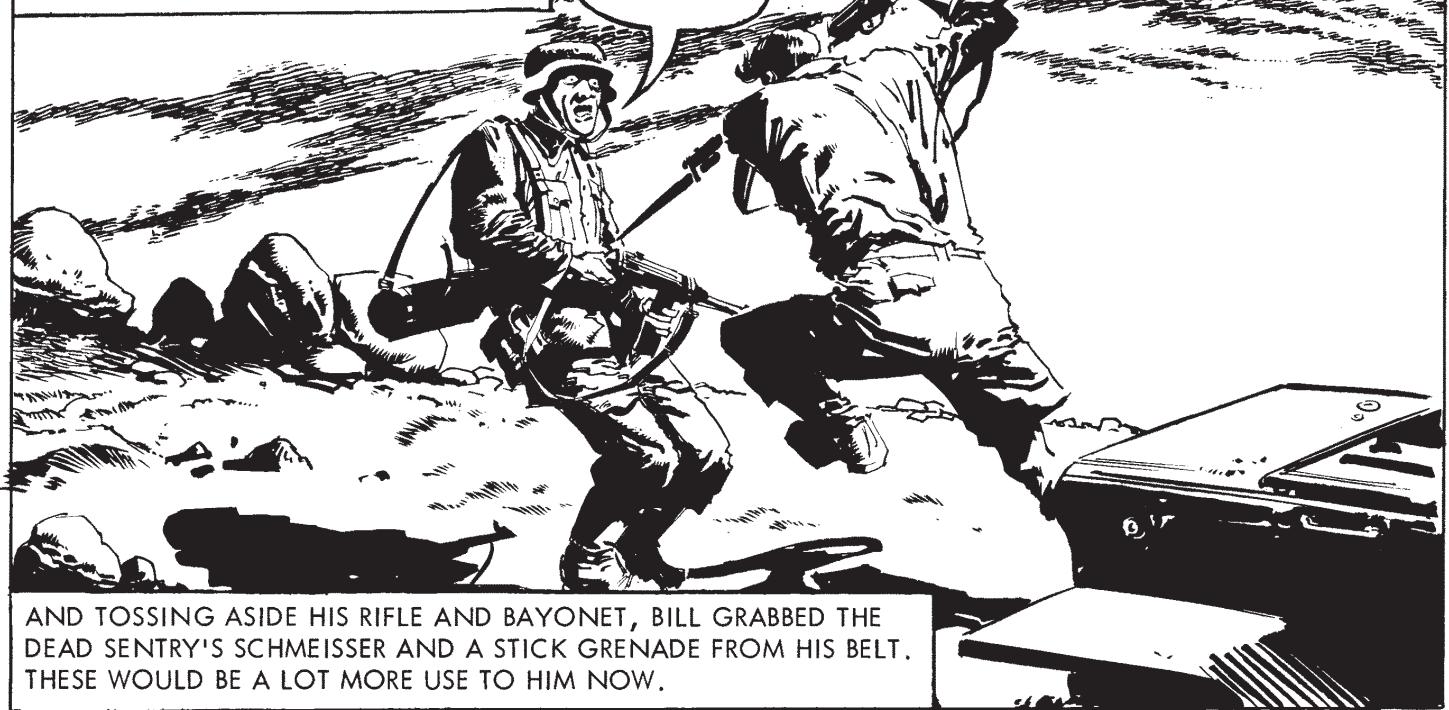
BUT THE SENTRY SCRAMBLED THROUGH THE WIRE AFTER THEM, HIS SCHMEISSER BLAZING. DICK FALTERED IN HIS STRIDE AND STAGGERED AGAINST WEST. BEHIND THEM, JACKBOOTS POUNDED.





BUT DICK KNEW IT WAS MORE IMPORTANT THAT THEY SHOULD GET BACK TO WARN BRITISH H.Q. OF THE GERMAN TRAP. BILL WEST TOOK CARE OF THE SENTRY QUICKLY, RUTHLESSLY.

AEEAAGH!



AND TOSING ASIDE HIS RIFLE AND BAYONET, BILL GRABBED THE DEAD SENTRY'S SCHMEISSER AND A STICK GRENADE FROM HIS BELT. THESE WOULD BE A LOT MORE USE TO HIM NOW.

WEST WAS BACK BESIDE DICK IN A FLASH AND HELPING HIM TO THE JEEP, AS SCHMEISSER BULLETS SCORCHED THE AIR AROUND THEM.

BUT EVEN AS DICK STARTED THE MOTOR, A SEARCHLIGHT BLAZED OUT, MAKING THEM A PERFECT TARGET FOR ENEMY GUNNERS.

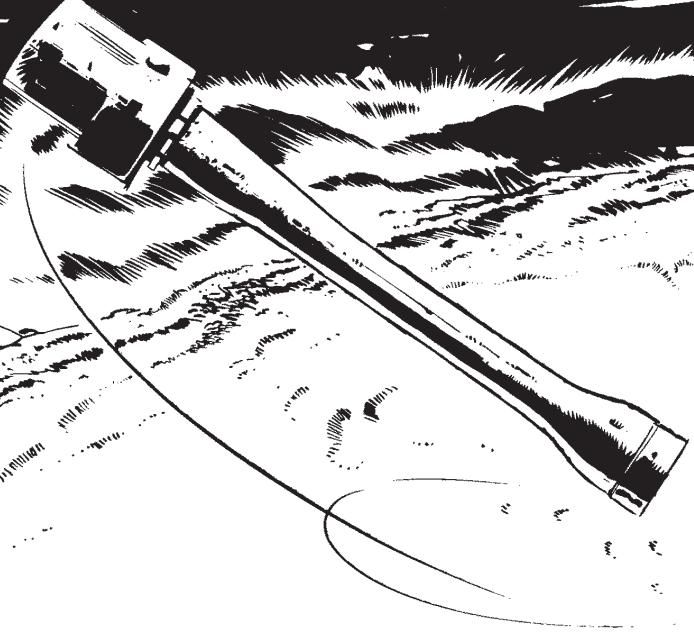
CAN YOU DRIVE,
DICK? I'LL STAY AND HOLD
THEM OFF TO GIVE YOU A CHANCE.
I OWE YOU THAT...

DON'T BE A
FOOL! GET ABOARD
— I'M FIT ENOUGH
TO DRIVE.

HIMMEL! THERE
THEY ARE — THEY MUST
NOT ESCAPE. KILL THE
SCHWEIHUND'S!



DESPERATELY BILL WEST HURLED A STICK GRENADE AT THE SEARCHLIGHT...



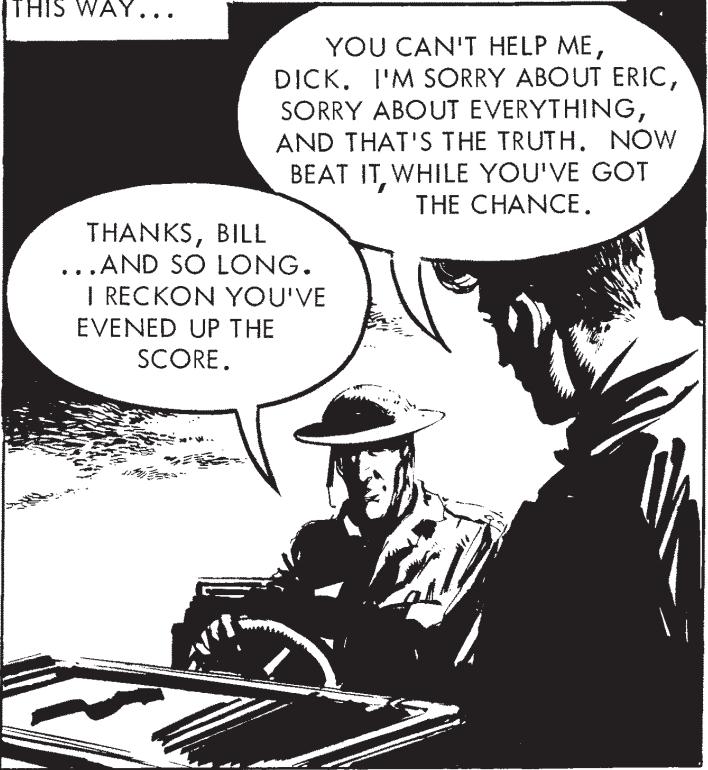
GET MOVING,
DICK — DON'T
WAIT FOR ME!

THE GRENADE SCORED A BULL'S EYE, AND THE LIGHT WENT OUT IN AN EXPLOSION OF SHATTERED GLASS.



GO ON,
DICK. GET TO
BLAZES OUT
OF HERE!

BUT STILL DICK HESITATED. IF HE TOOK BILL BACK, IT WOULD BE TO FACE A FIRING SQUAD. AND ONE OF THEM HAD TO WARN THE EIGHTH ARMY THAT THE ATTACK PLAN WAS KNOWN. MAYBE IT WAS BEST THIS WAY...



YOU CAN'T HELP ME,
DICK. I'M SORRY ABOUT ERIC,
SORRY ABOUT EVERYTHING,
AND THAT'S THE TRUTH. NOW
BEAT IT WHILE YOU'VE GOT
THE CHANCE.

THANKS, BILL
...AND SO LONG.
I RECKON YOU'VE
EVENED UP THE
SCORE.

DICK WAITED NO LONGER. HE CRASHED HOME THE GEARS AND STAMPED ON THE ACCELERATOR. THE JEEP SCREAMED AWAY IN A WIDE TURN OUT INTO THE NIGHT.

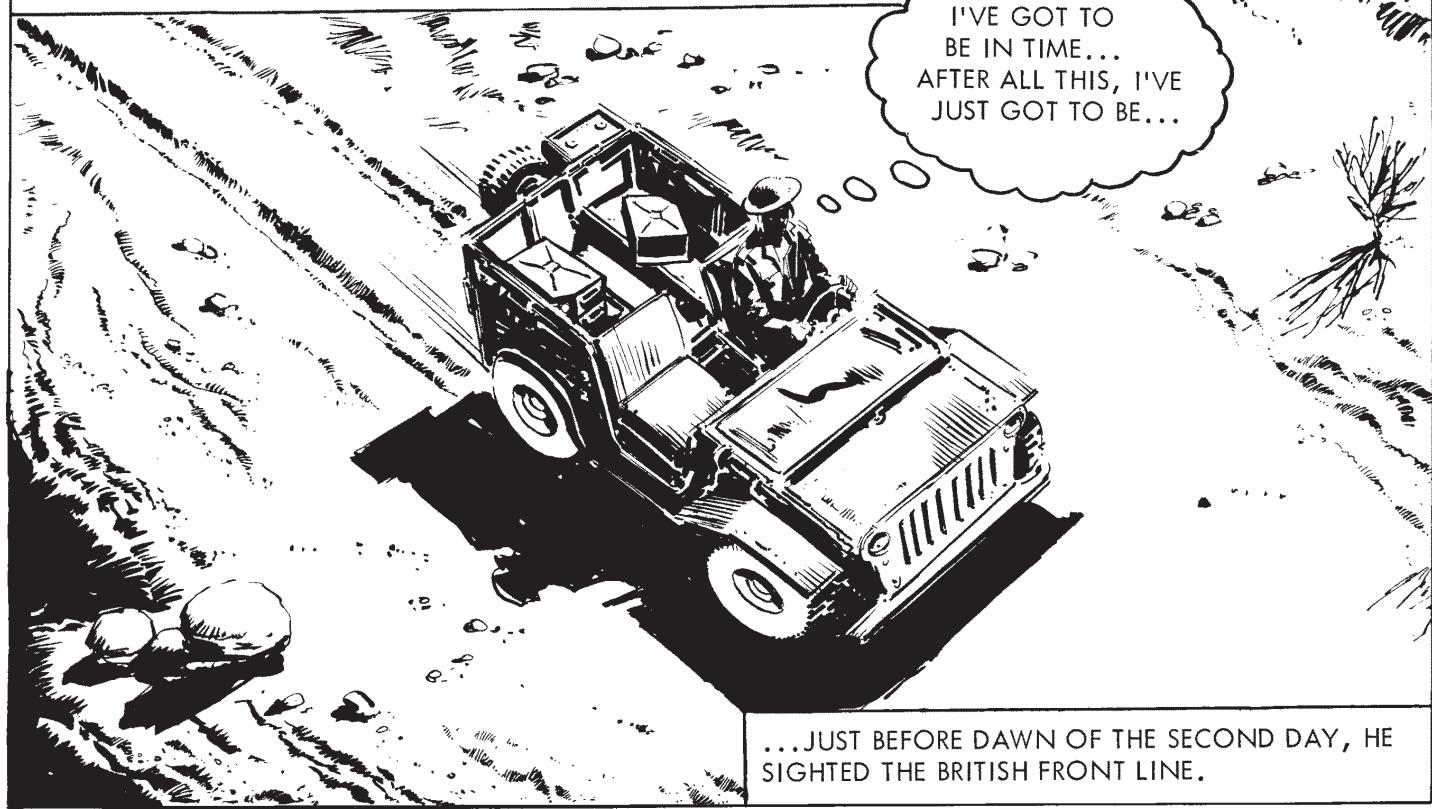


AND BEHIND HIM, BILL WEST HELD THE GERMANS OFF JUST LONG ENOUGH FOR DICK TO GET CLEAR. THEN A SUDDEN FLURRY OF SPANDAU BULLETS BROUGHT HIS LAST DEFIANT STAND TO AN END.



DICK WOOLSTON RACED ON, THE MILES FLASHING BY UNDER THE JEEP'S SPINNING TYRES. HE DROVE LIKE A MAN POSSESSED, NIGHT AND DAY...

I'VE GOT TO BE IN TIME... AFTER ALL THIS, I'VE JUST GOT TO BE...



AT THE FORWARD BRITISH LINES HE ALMOST TOPPLED OUT OF THE JEEP, HE WAS SO WEAK. A CAPTAIN LISTENED INTENTLY WHILE HE BLURTED OUT HIS STORY.

THIS IS FANTASTIC NEWS, LIEUTENANT! I MUST GET ON TO BRIGADE AT ONCE — OUR ADVANCE HASN'T STARTED YET.

...AND LEAVING DICK WITH THE M.O. THE CAPTAIN HURRIED AWAY TO HALT THE BRITISH ADVANCE. THIS WAS ONE AMBUSH THEY WOULD NOT WALK INTO.



AND EVEN AFTER IT WAS ALL OVER, AND THE GERMANS HAD BEEN SMASHED BACK BY THE BRITISH SPEARHEAD, DICK NEVER REVEALED THE TRAITOR'S NAME. BILL WEST HAD ERASED HIS GUILT WITH HIS OWN LIFE, AND IN DICK'S BOOK THAT WAS ENOUGH FOR ANY MAN. HE WAS JUST IN TIME TO REJOIN HIS UNIT FOR THE EIGHTH ARMY'S FINAL ASSAULT THAT WAS TO DRIVE ROMMEL OUT OF NORTH AFRICA FOR GOOD.



UP AND AT 'EM, LADS. THIS TIME IT'LL BE FOR KEEPS!

Commando
THE END

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TWO MEN WENT TO WAR
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The Commando File

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