

COMPLETE 63-PAGE ACTION STORY

No.4755
£2

Commando

THE HOME OF HEROES

PRIZE
QUIZ
INSIDE



CLASH AT CAMBRAI



THE GREAT WAR
1914-1918

COMMANDO - GREAT WARRIORS

Title

CLASH AT CAMBRAI

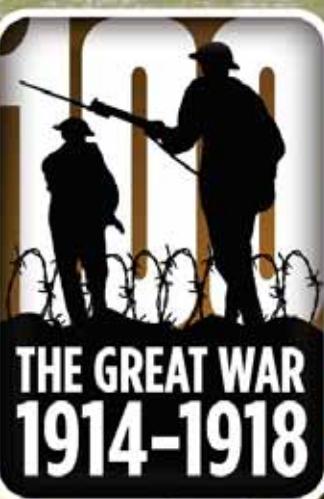
Subject

As a tribute to those who served during the years 1914-1918 — on the Home Front or the Front Line — Commando has produced a series of stories of characters caught up in the tumult of the First World War. None of them are real people but we'd like to think that the experiences they have will not be a million miles from what actually happened to so many.

Of all the ground-based weapons developed during the war, the tank has probably had more influence on warfare than any other. But the early tanks were almost as dangerous to those inside as outside. Bullet "splash", "spall" and poisonous fumes from their engines combined to make a truly hellish experience for the crews toiling inside their metal walls. Every one of them was a hero...as you shall see.

Calum Laird, Commando Editor

The series continues in two weeks with *Assault In The Alps*,
Commando No 4759



CLASH AT CAMBRAI

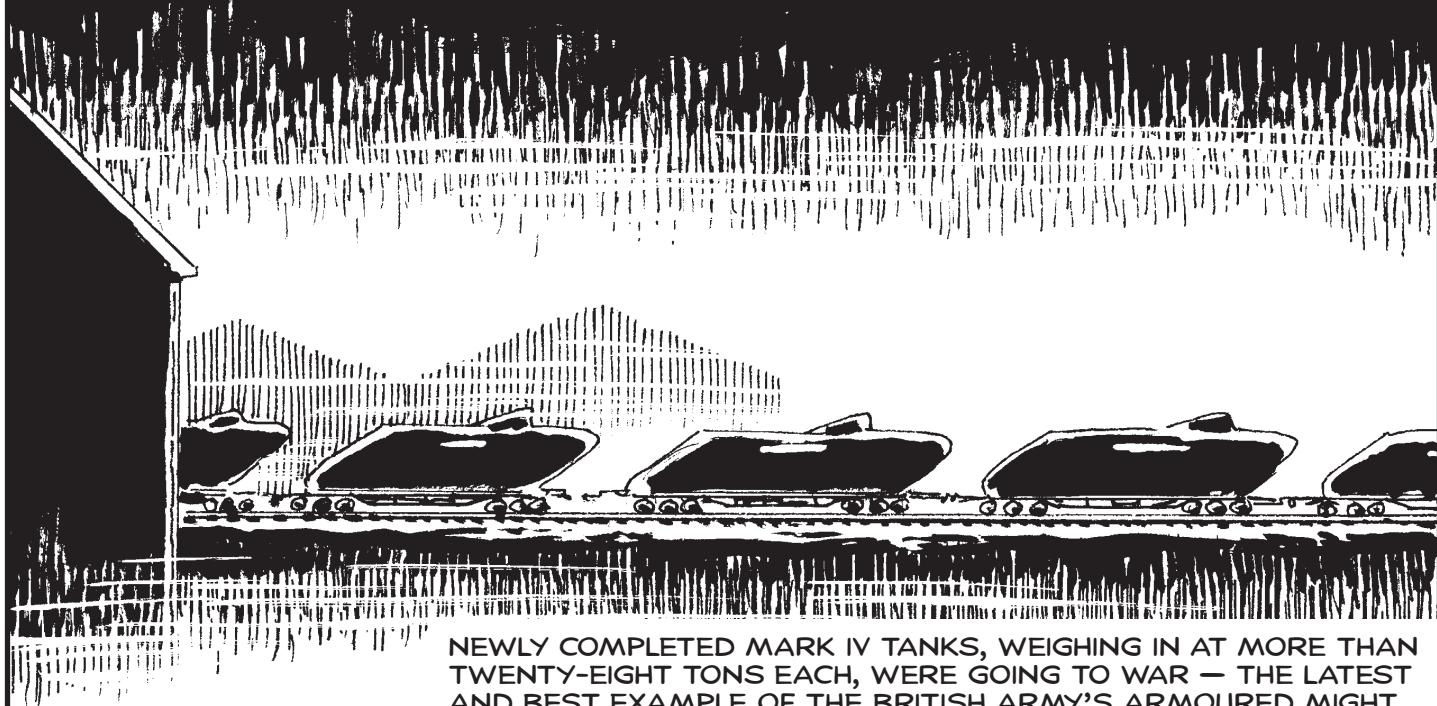
JIMMY LOMAS, NEWSPAPER BOY, HAD INFORMED THOSE PASSING HIS RAILWAY STATION SALES PITCH OF THE TRIUMPHS AND TRAGEDIES OF THE FIRST WORLD WAR WITH THE ENTHUSIASM OF A TRULY PATRIOTIC YOUTH. ANOTHER DAY WAS ABOUT TO BEGIN BUT ALL HIS ATTENTION WAS ON STAYING HIS BIKE AS HE PEDALLED INTO WORK.

LAST NIGHT'S RAIN HAS MADE THIS ROAD LIKE A SKATING RINK.

STORY
GEORGE LOW
ART
KEITH PAGE
COVER
IAN KENNEDY



WITH HIS EYES ON THE COBBLES HE HADN'T SEEN A LONG, HEAVY TRAIN CARRYING ODD-SHAPED OBJECTS CLOAKED IN TARPAULINS TRUNDLING THROUGH THE MARSHALLING YARDS JUST BEHIND THE STREET HE HAD CYCLED ALONG.



NEWLY COMPLETED MARK IV TANKS, WEIGHING IN AT MORE THAN TWENTY-EIGHT TONS EACH, WERE GOING TO WAR — THE LATEST AND BEST EXAMPLE OF THE BRITISH ARMY'S ARMoured MIGHT.

THE MEN WHO HAD TESTED THE TANKS AND WERE TRAVELLING TO SOUTHAMPTON WITH THEM WERE FROM THE ROYAL NAVAL AIR SERVICE, A UNIT MAINLY INVOLVED WITH THE AIRCRAFT THE NAVY FLEW. AIRCRAFTMAN SAM REILLY WAS NOT AS CHEERFUL AS HIS MOCKING MATES.



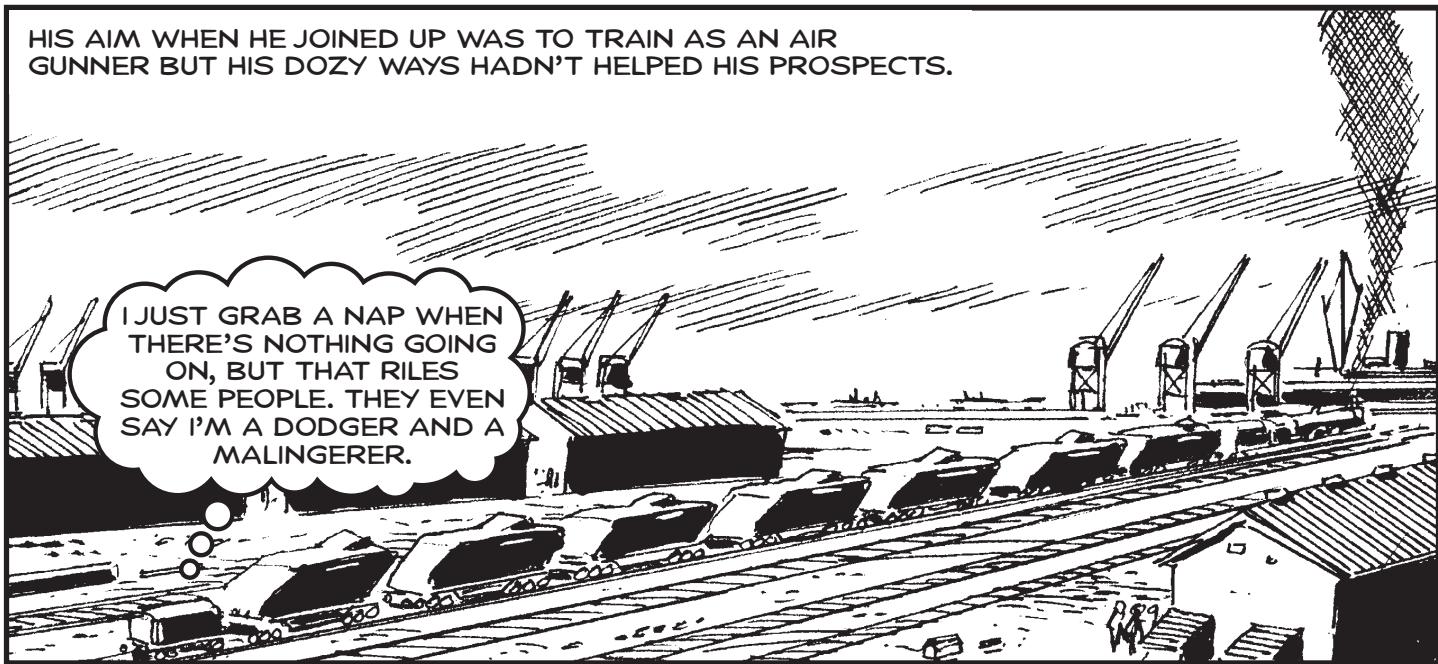
NOT ANY
BETTER, SAM?
STILL GOT
TOOTHACHE?

YOU CAN
SEE HE HAS.
I BET HE HASN'T
HAD A KIP FOR
AGES EITHER.

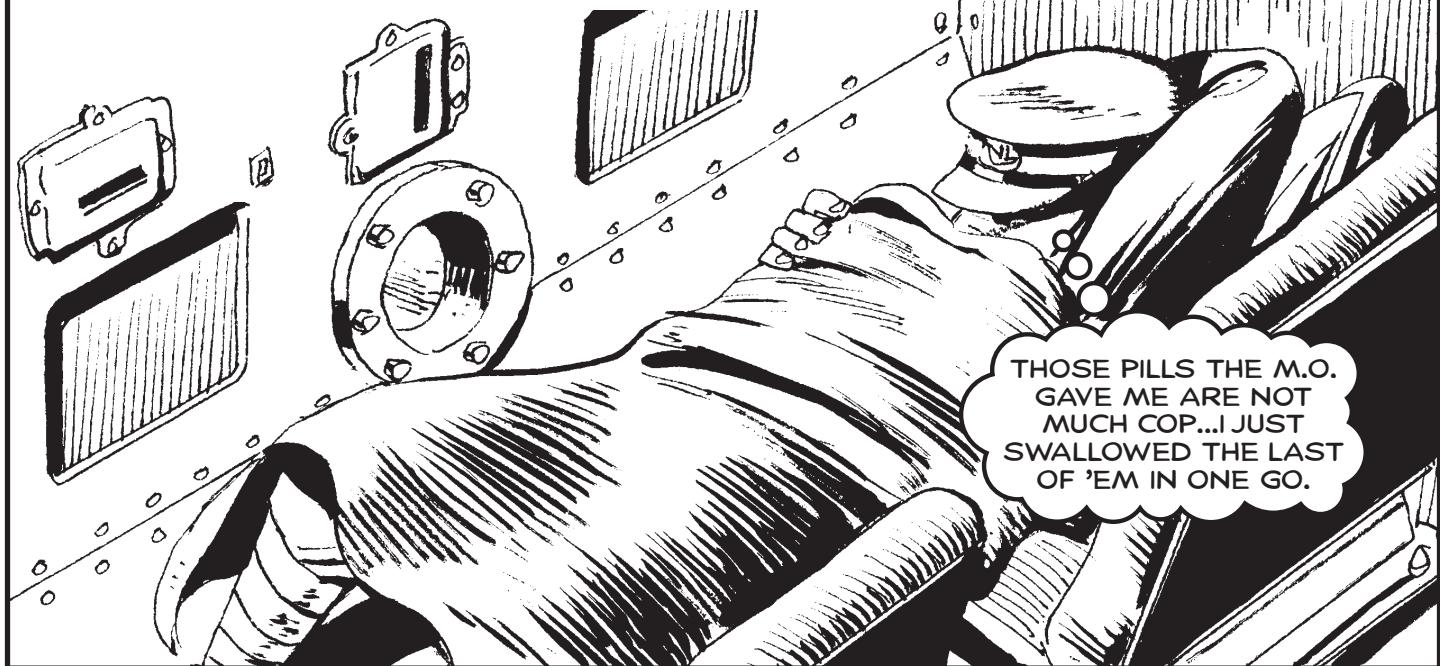
SAM WAS FAMOUS FOR BEING ABLE TO SLEEP ANYWHERE AND ANYTIME AT THE DROP OF A HAT. HIS MATES ENVIED HIM THIS TALENT, BUT PETTY OFFICERS TOOK A VERY DIM VIEW IF HE DROPPED OFF WHILE THEY WERE TALKING.



HIS AIM WHEN HE JOINED UP WAS TO TRAIN AS AN AIR GUNNER BUT HIS DOZY WAYS HADN'T HELPED HIS PROSPECTS.



BECAUSE OF HIS TOOTHACHE HE HADN'T SLEPT A WINK FOR AGES, AND THERE WAS ALWAYS A LONG WAIT BEFORE THE TANKS WERE SHUNTED ON TO THE WAITING BOAT. SEEING A CHANCE, HE SLIPPED INTO THE CRAMPED INTERIOR OF ONE OF THE TANKS AND STRETCHED OUT ON THE DRIVER'S SEATS.



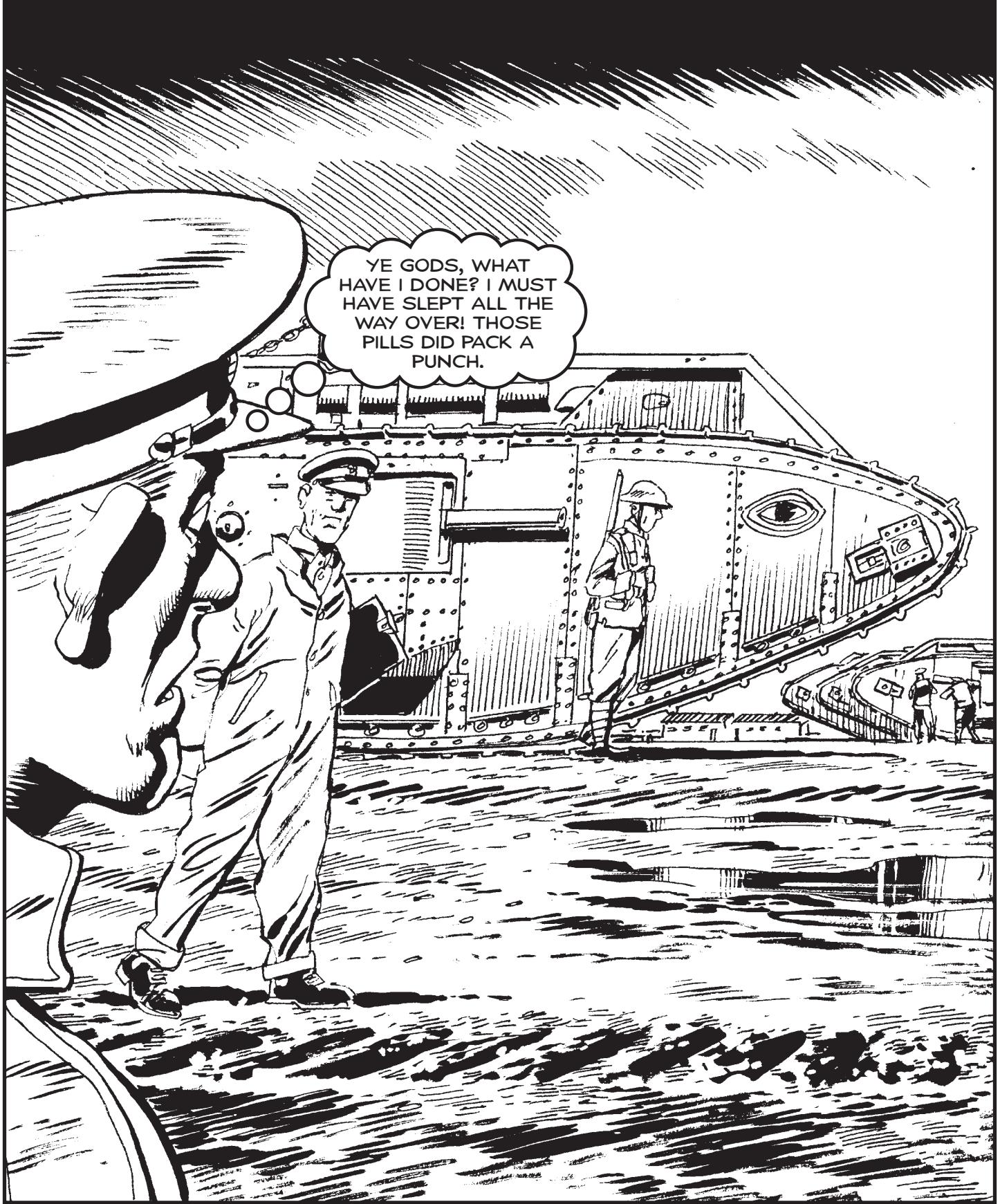
IN THE TANK HE DID FINALLY FALL ASLEEP. WHEN HE WOKE UP, THERE WAS A BITTER TASTE IN HIS MOUTH BUT THE PAIN HAD GONE.



SUSPECTING THAT THE HUSTLE AND BUSTLE OUTSIDE WAS THE TANKS BEING LOADED ON THE FERRY, HE MOVED FAST.



GETTING OUT, INSTEAD OF A FLAT CAR, HIS FEET TOUCHED SOLID GROUND IN A BUSY, NOISY TANK COLLECTION AREA. THIS WAS THE TANKODROME, AND IT WAS IN FRANCE, CLOSE TO THE WORKSHOPS AT ERIN WHERE ARMOURED VEHICLES WERE SERVICED AND REPAIRED.



BRITISH ARMY CAPTAIN HERBERT RHODES, WHO HAD STARTED THE WAR AS A CAVALRYMAN AT THE BATTLE OF MONS AND THEN COMMANDED A MARK I TANK AT THE BATTLE OF THE SOMME, BROKE INTO SAM'S THOUGHTS.



SAM KNEW THE TANK'S SPECIFICATIONS OFF BY HEART. THE SIX-POUNDER GUNS HAD BEEN SHORTENED — REDUCED TO 23 CALIBRES FROM 40 — TO AVOID DIGGING INTO UNEVEN GROUND AS HAD HAPPENED BEFORE.

...THE GUNS DID WELL WHEN WE TESTED THEM. NOT SO LIABLE TO BANG UP AGAINST OBSTACLES. AND THEY CAN BE PUSHED BACK INTO THE HULL.

IT'S GOOD TO SEE THAT A SILENCER HAS BEEN FITTED TO THE ENGINE TOO. MUCH QUIETER AND ENGINE FUMES WILL SPREAD OUTSIDE RATHER THAN INTO THE HULL.

VENTILATION HAD INDEED IMPROVED AND THE TRACKS HAD BEEN WIDENED WITH STUDS ATTACHED ON CERTAIN LINKS TO AID GRIP. AN EXTRA FUEL TANK AT THE REAR IMPROVED RANGE TO THIRTY MILES AND THE DRIVE SYSTEM'S GEAR COMPONENTS HAD BEEN CONSIDERABLY STRENGTHENED.

THOSE EXTRA ESCAPE HATCHES IN THE ROOF AND SIDES WILL PLEASE THE CREW NO END.

YES, I CAN APPRECIATE THAT, SIR.

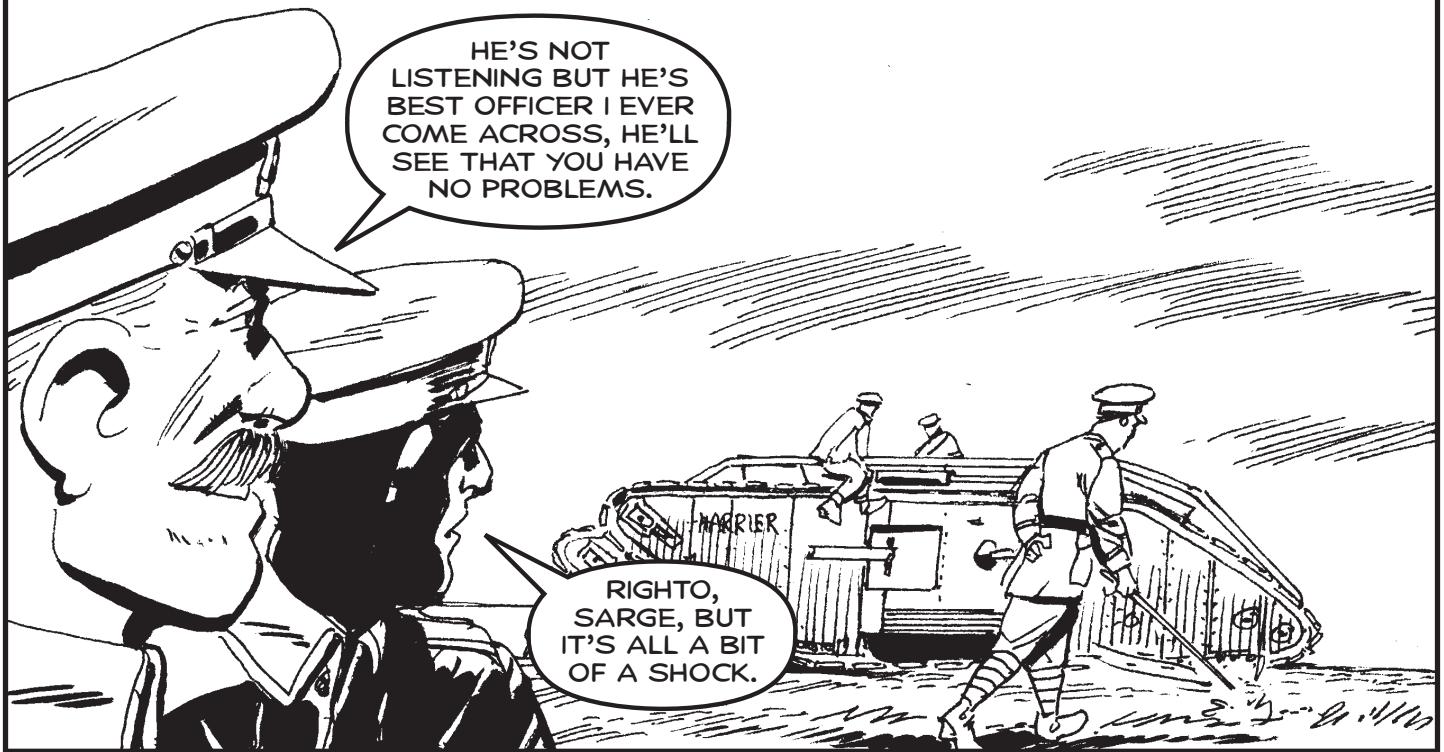
AS THEY TALKED, HERBERT'S SERGEANT AND DRIVER, ARTHUR DIXON, TURNED UP THEN. HE WAS NOT THE BEARER OF GOOD NEWS.



GETTING A REPLACEMENT FROM BASE WOULD TAKE TIME AND A MILE OF PAPERWORK. HERBERT SWUNG TOWARDS SAM...

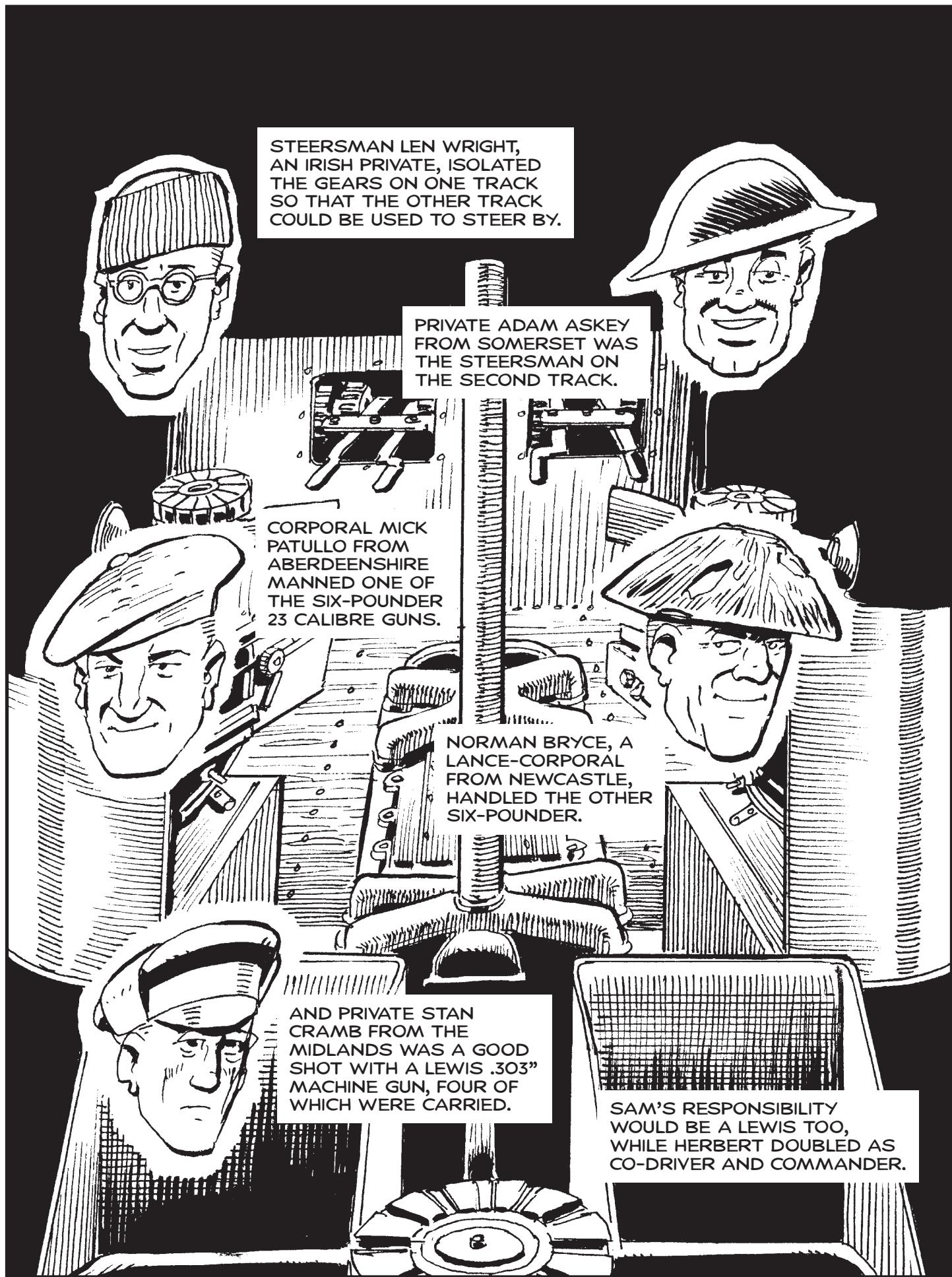


SAM TRIED TO PROTEST BUT THE CAPTAIN WAS ALREADY LEAVING. SERGEANT DIXON CHUCKLED AS HE GAVE THE NEW RECRUIT THE LOW DOWN.



WHEN THE N.C.O. MOVED FORWARD TO LOOK MORE CLOSELY AT THEIR TANK, SAM'S HEAD WAS IN A SWIRL.





**FIND
MORE
FREE
MAGAZINES**

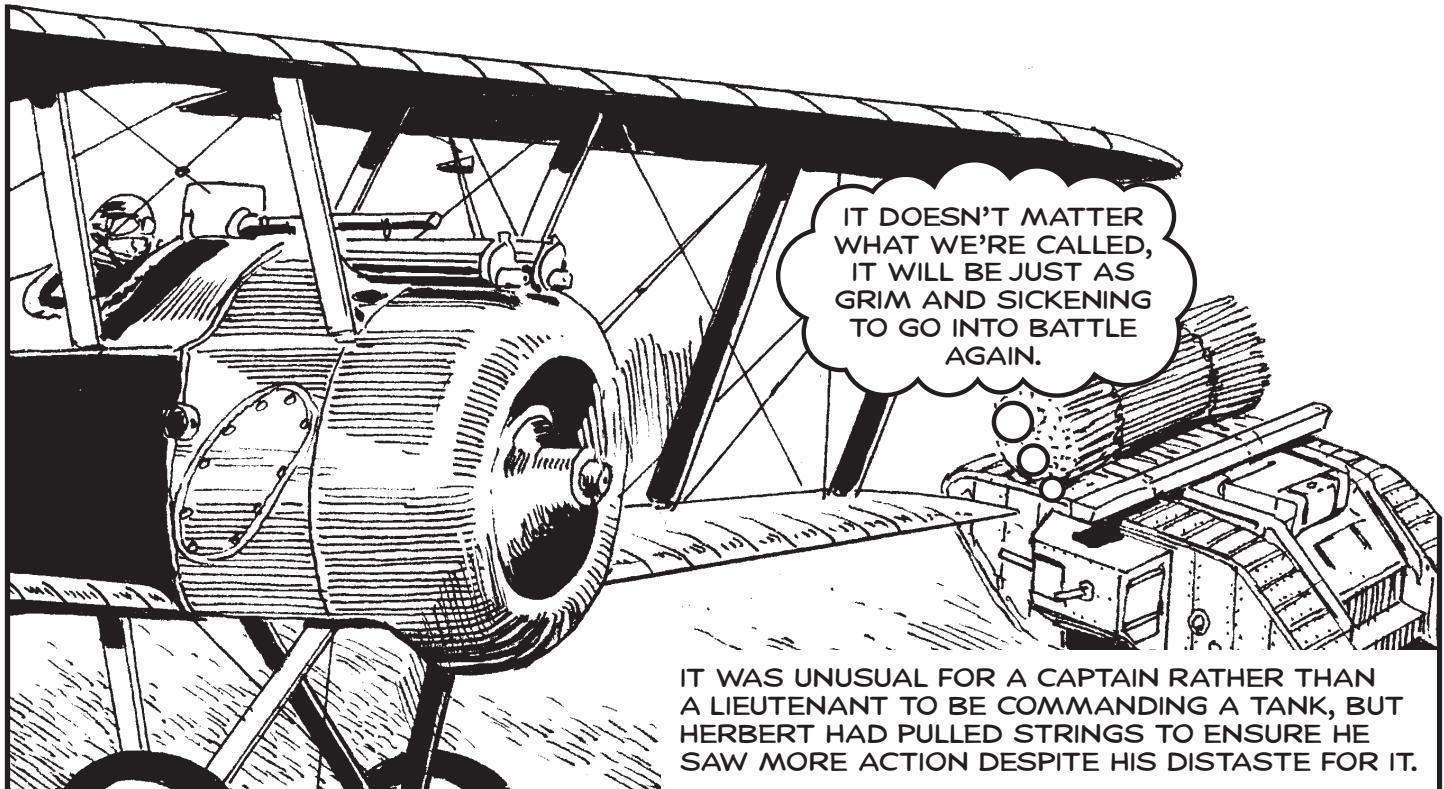
FREEMAGS.CC

THE CREW HAD TO PACK THEIR TANK WITH ALL THE FUEL, AMMO AND STORES THAT THEY REQUIRED. FRENCH ENGINEERS FROM THE REPAIR AND MAINTENANCE CENTRE ADDED THE RAILS FOR THE WOODEN UNDITCHING BEAM THEY WOULD NEED IF THEY GOT BOGGED DOWN...

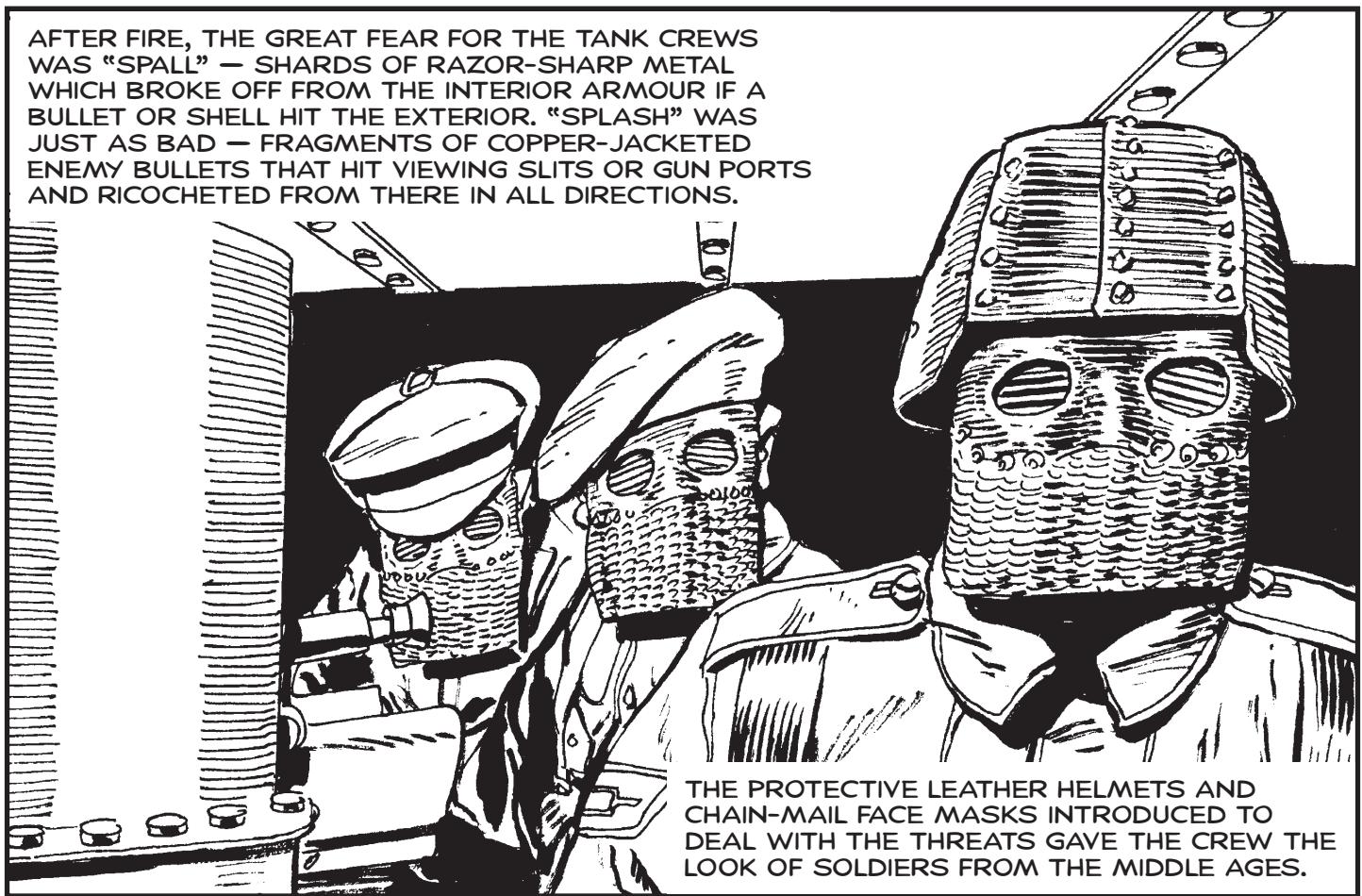


...AND ALSO FITTED THE ONE-AND-A-HALF-TON, CHAIN-BOUND FASCINE WHICH COULD BE USED TO DROP INTO A TRENCH SO THAT IT COULD BE BRIDGED. A MEDIEVAL MACE AND THE NAME "CRUSHER" PAINTED ON THE SIDE FINISHED THINGS OFF. THEN THEY HEADED FOR THE FRONT.

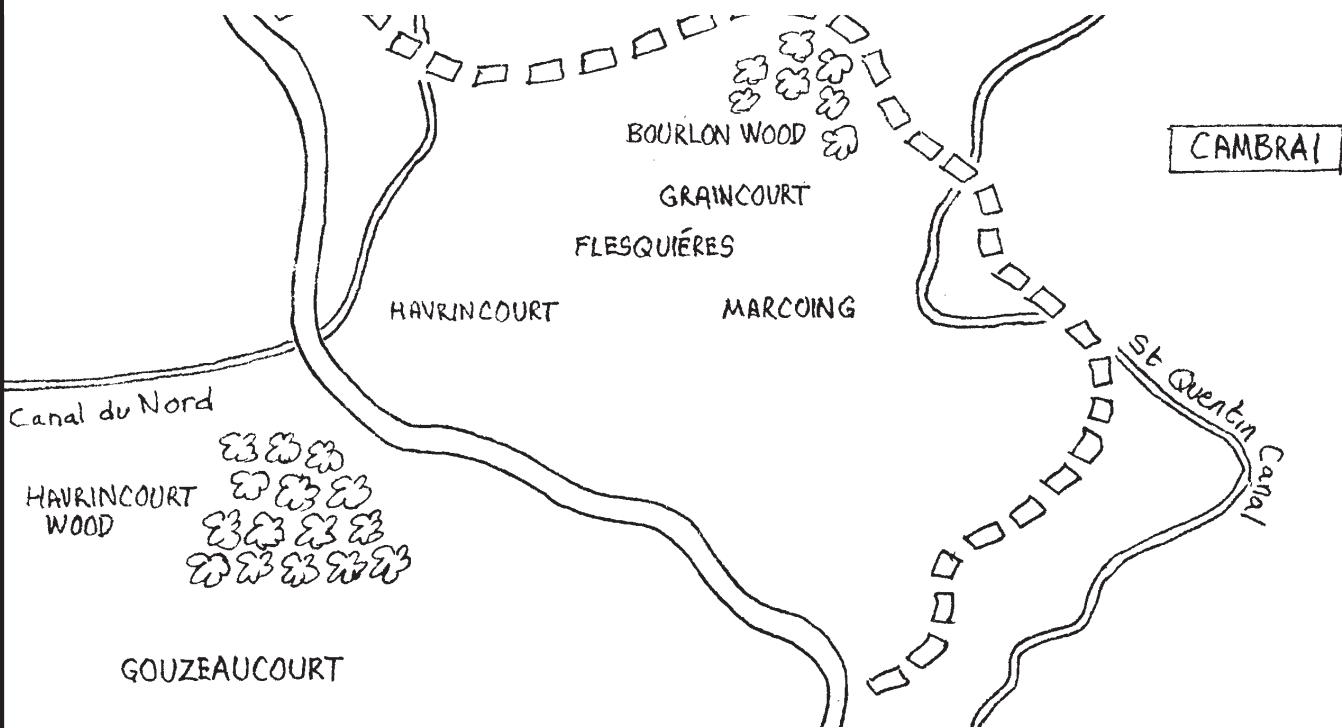
THERE HAD BEEN LITTLE TIME FOR SAM TO GET TO KNOW HIS NEW COMPANIONS, BUT HE DID LEARN THAT THE FORMATION — FIRST KNOWN AS THE HEAVY SECTION, MACHINE-GUN CORPS, TO MISLEAD THE ENEMY — HAD BEEN NAMED THE TANK CORPS IN JULY, 1917. HERBERT SUSPECTED THAT WOULD MAKE LITTLE DIFFERENCE.



AFTER FIRE, THE GREAT FEAR FOR THE TANK CREWS WAS "SPALL" — SHARDS OF RAZOR-SHARP METAL WHICH BROKE OFF FROM THE INTERIOR ARMOUR IF A BULLET OR SHELL HIT THE EXTERIOR. "SPLASH" WAS JUST AS BAD — FRAGMENTS OF COPPER-JACKETED ENEMY BULLETS THAT HIT VIEWING SLITS OR GUN PORTS AND RICOCHETED FROM THERE IN ALL DIRECTIONS.

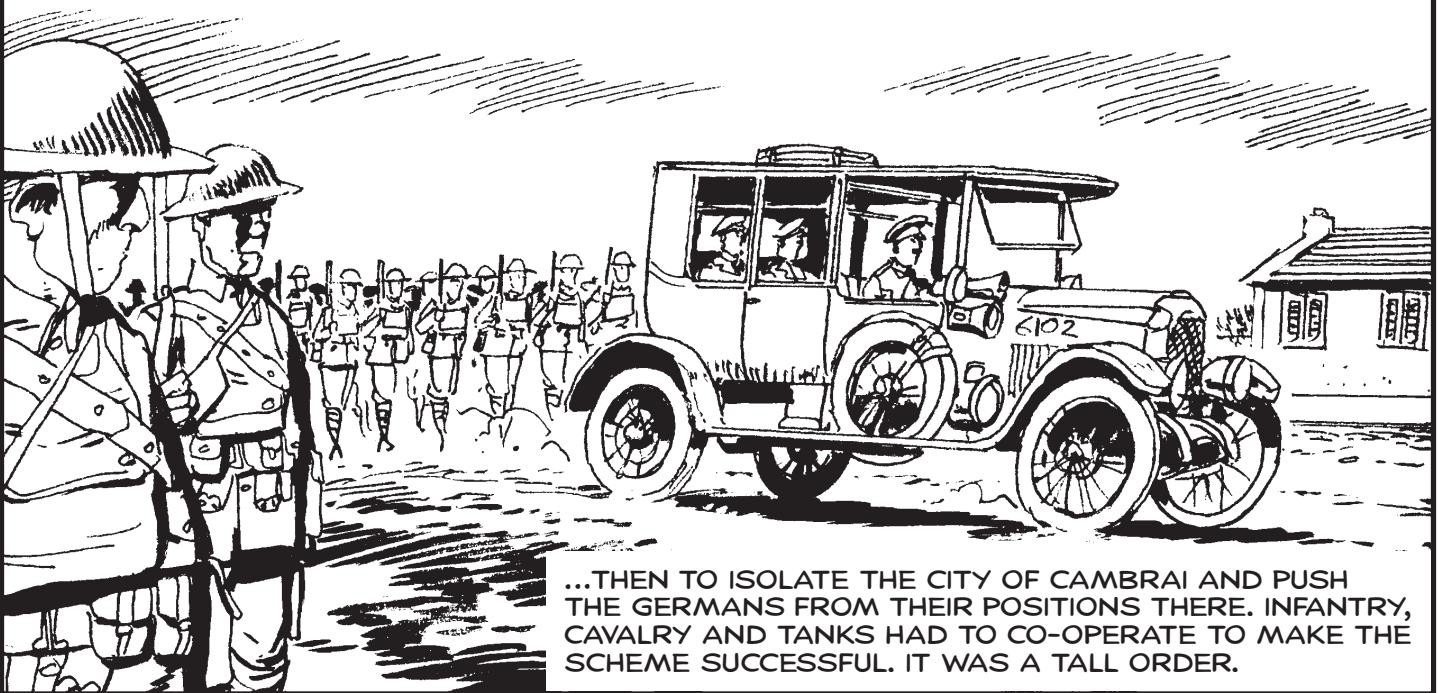


PLANS HAD ALREADY BEEN DRAWN UP TO HIT THE GERMAN HINDENBURG DEFENSIVE LINE. THE TERRAIN WAS SUITABLE FOR TANKS AND THIS WOULD BE THE OPPORTUNITY TO SEE HOW THEY WOULD FARE IN ACTION ON A GRAND SCALE.



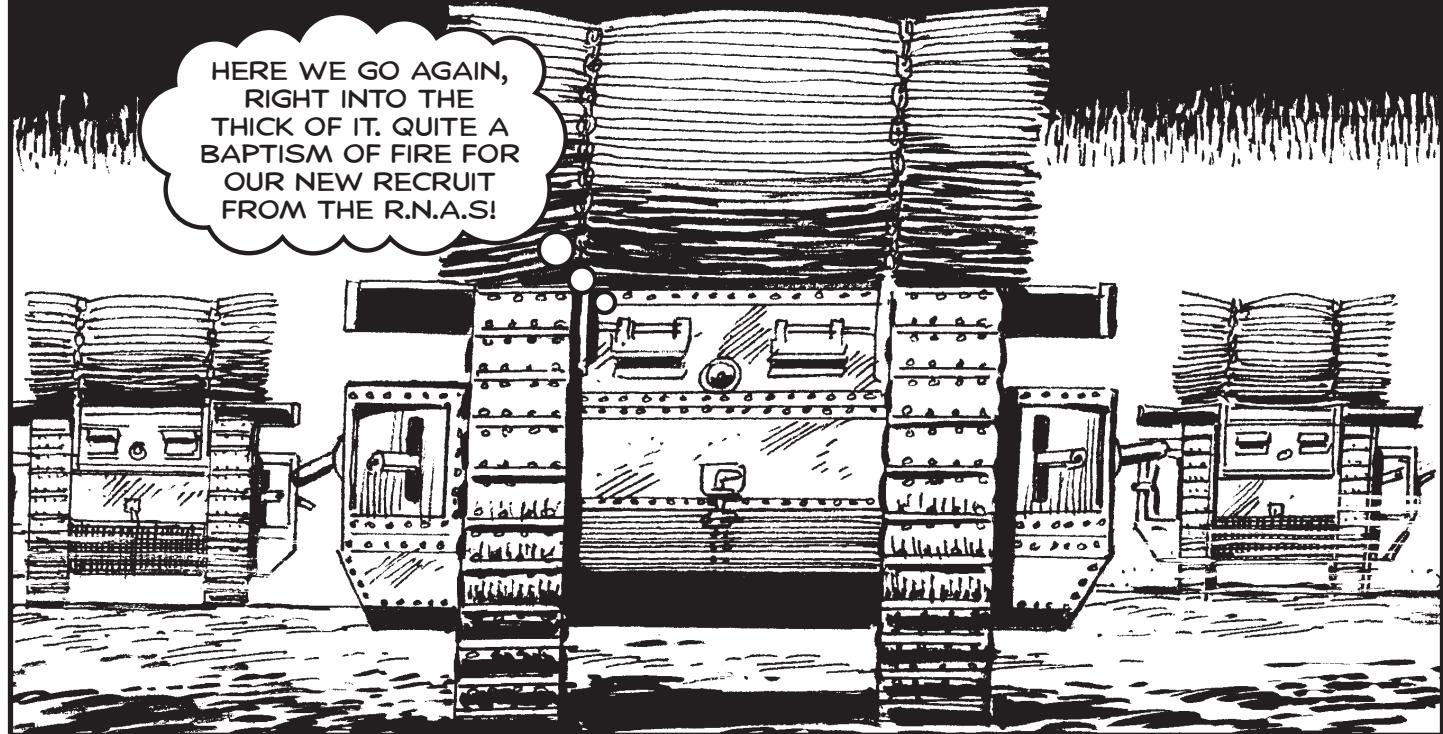
WITH THE ITALIANS NOT DOING WELL DEFENDING THE NORTH OF THEIR COUNTRY AGAINST THE AUSTRIANS, THERE WAS ALSO A NEED TO TAKE THE PRESSURE OFF THEM.

THAT AND THE NEED FOR MEN IN THE YPRES AREA MEANT FEWER SOLDIERS FOR THE ASSAULT. THE INTENTION WAS TO CROSS THE CANALS DU NORD AND DE L'ESCAUT AND TAKE THE GROUND IN BETWEEN...

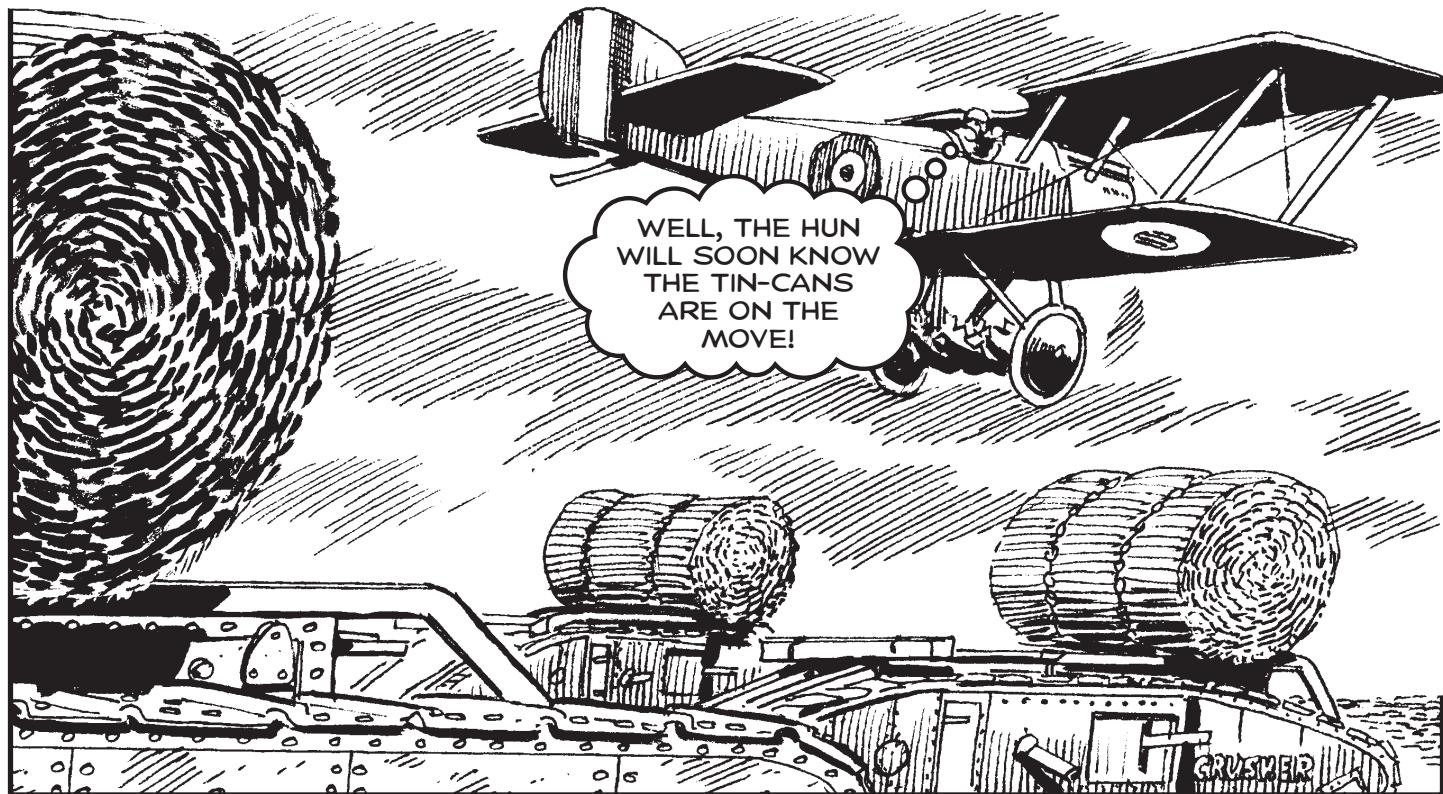


...THEN TO ISOLATE THE CITY OF CAMBRAI AND PUSH THE GERMANS FROM THEIR POSITIONS THERE. INFANTRY, CAVALRY AND TANKS HAD TO CO-OPERATE TO MAKE THE SCHEME SUCCESSFUL. IT WAS A TALL ORDER.

06.20 HOURS ON NOVEMBER 20TH, 1917, SAW THE BATTLE OF CAMBRAI BEGIN. A SURPRISE BARRAGE FROM MORE THAN A THOUSAND GUNS HIT THE ENEMY LINE, THEN ALMOST FOUR HUNDRED TANKS SURGED FORWARD.



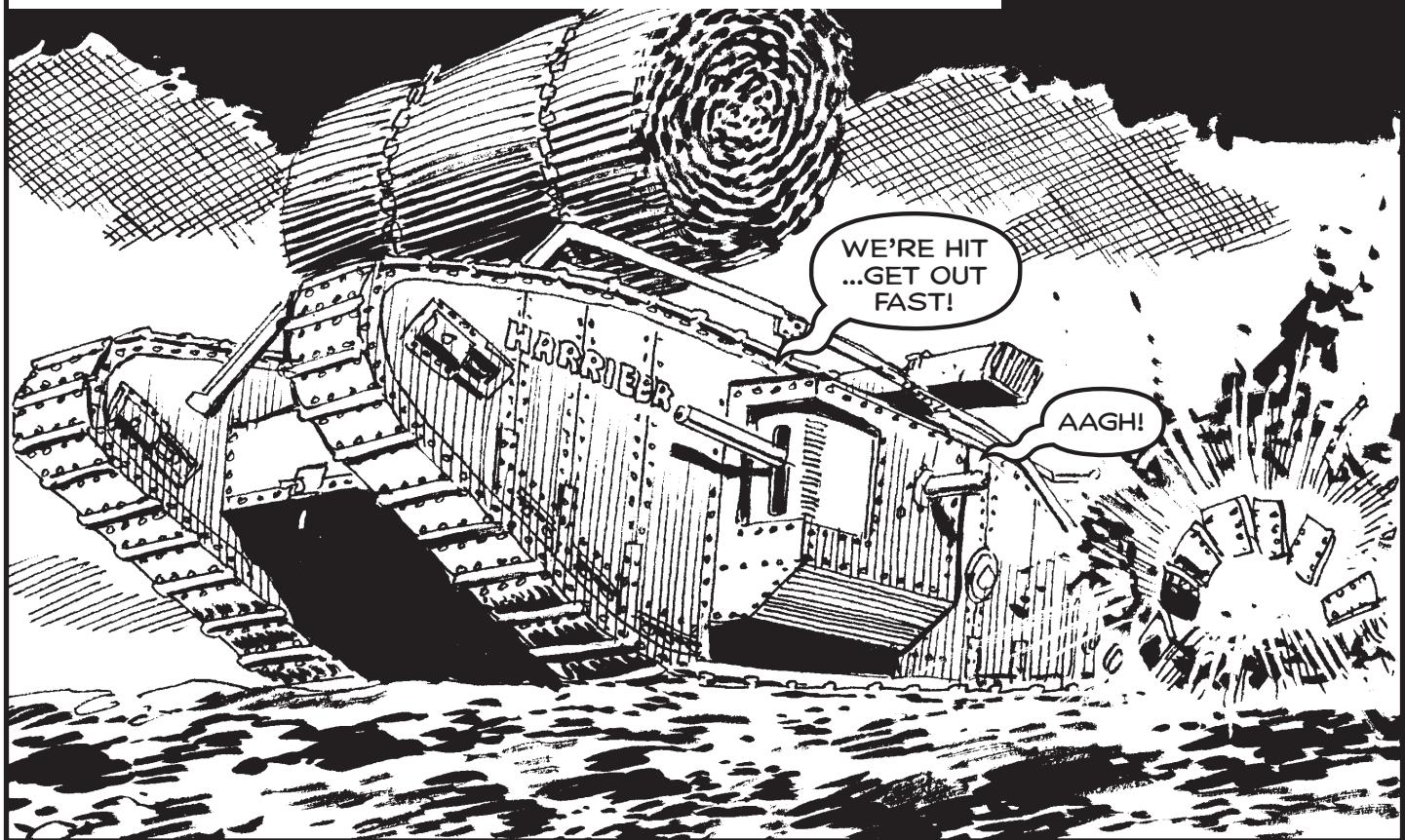
THANKS TO THE DIN AND THE LACK OF VISION, SAM WAS NOT AWARE OF IT THEN, BUT ROYAL FLYING CORPS SINGLE-SEATER SOPWITH CAMEL FIGHTERS WERE FLYING ABOVE THE BRITISH ARMOUR.



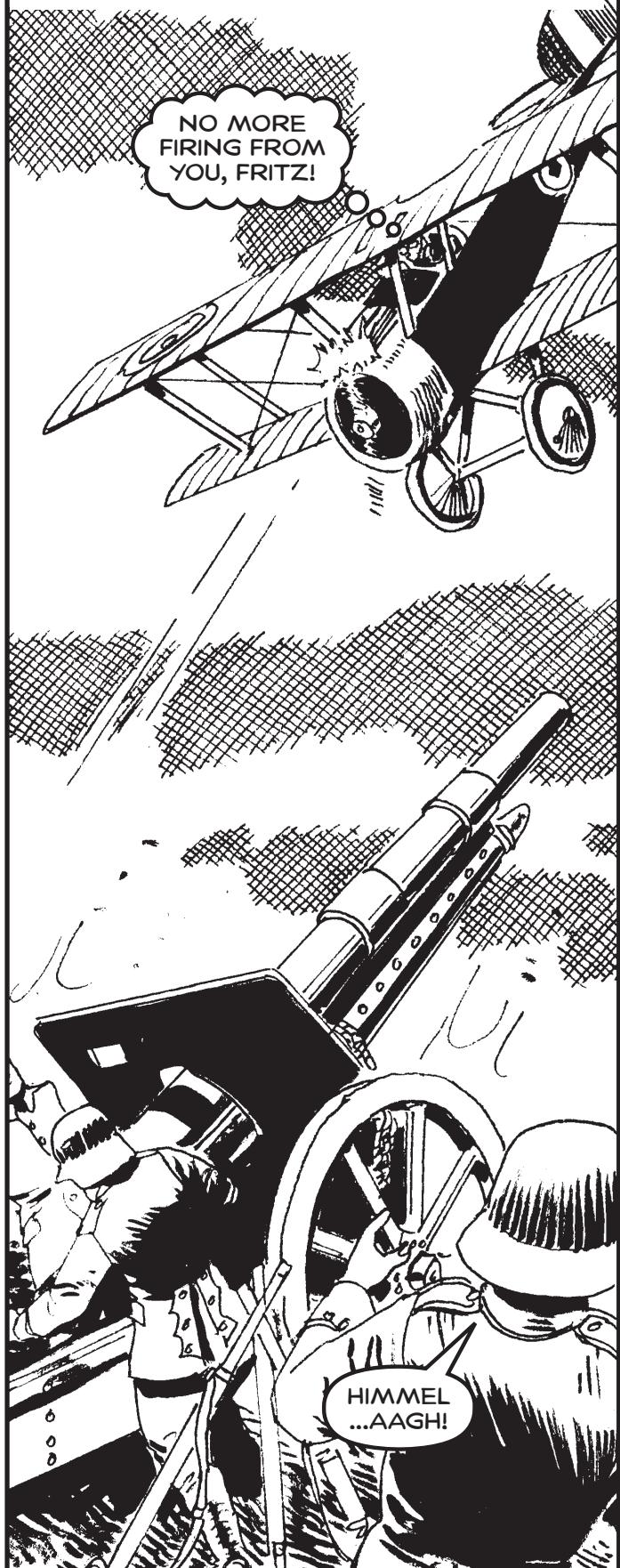
IT WAS HOPED THAT THE SOUND OF THEIR 130HP CLERGET ROTARY ENGINES WOULD HELP MASK THE GROWL OF THE MARK IVs' POWER PLANTS AND TO BEGIN WITH IT WORKED. THEN...



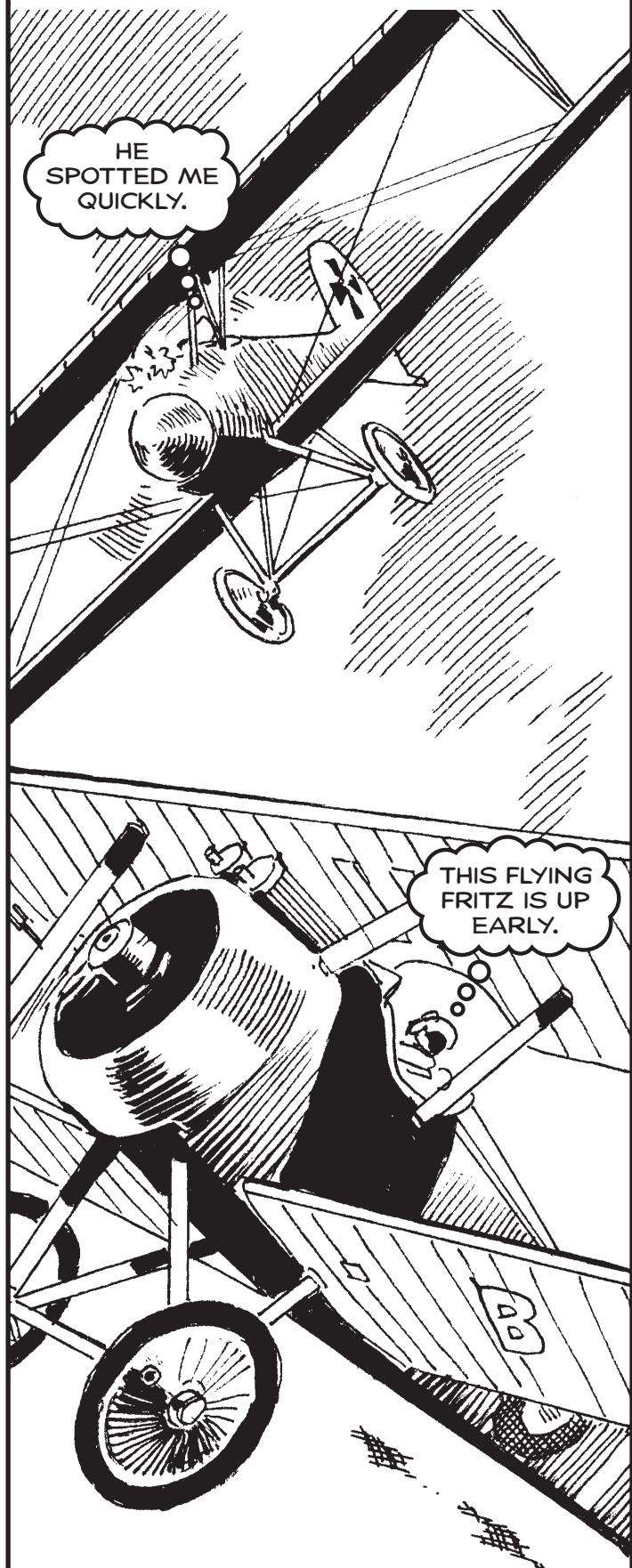
ENEMY ARTILLERY CREWS WERE QUICK TO SPOT AND RANGE ON THE ADVANCING ARMOUR AND PROVED TO BE A DEADLY MENACE.



ANOTHER ADVANTAGE OF HAVING AIR COVER WAS THAT THE SOPWITH CAMELS COULD DEAL WITH GERMAN GUN CREWS WITH THEIR TWIN SYNCHRONISED VICKERS MACHINE GUNS AND COOPER BOMBS.



THE BRITISH AIRMEN DID NOT HAVE IT ALL THEIR OWN WAY, THOUGH. GERMAN AIRCRAFT WERE ALSO AIRBORNE, PROWLING ALBATROS D.VS CLASHING WITH CLIMBING CAMELS.



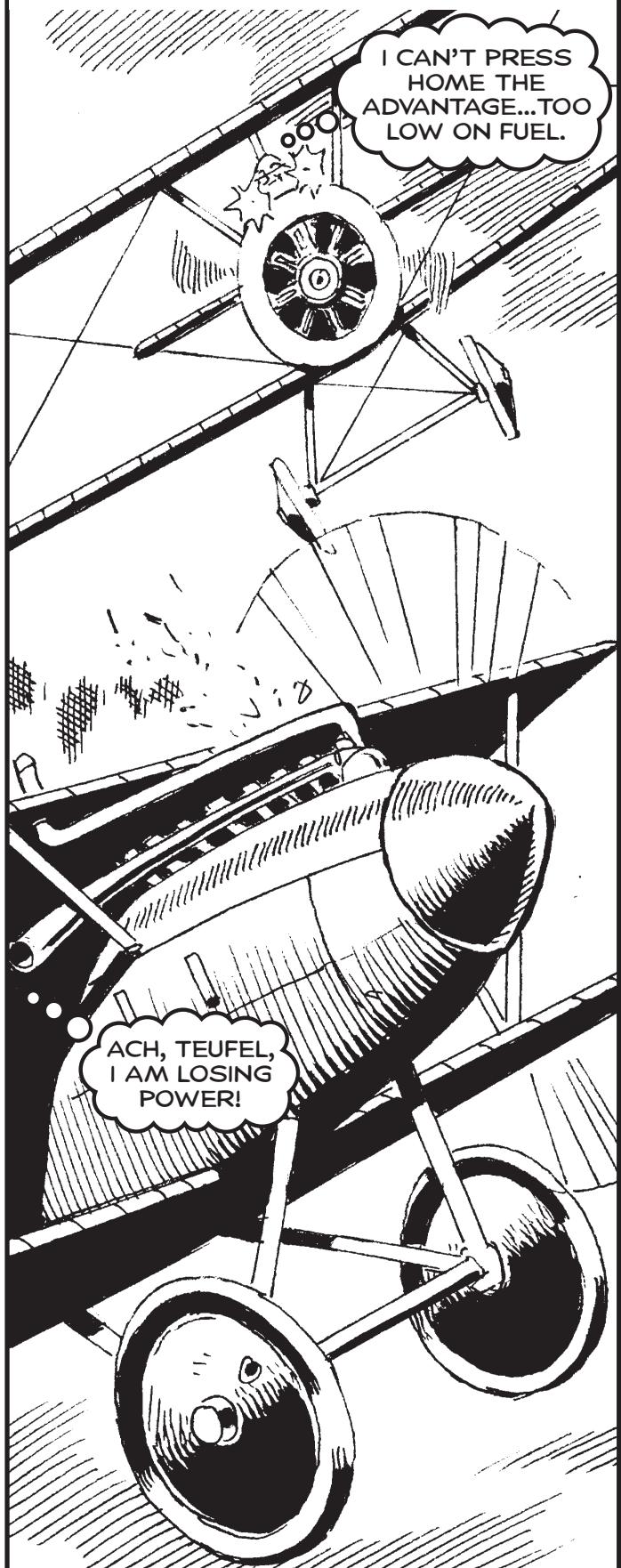
HIGH ABOVE THE BATTLING GROUND FORCES,
THESE AIRCRAFT SEEMED TO BE IN A WORLD
OF THEIR OWN, BUT THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN
SUCCESS AND FAILURE WAS JUST AS BRUTAL.

HE'S A
PERSISTENT
DEVIL.

THE
ENGLANDER
FLIES WELL.



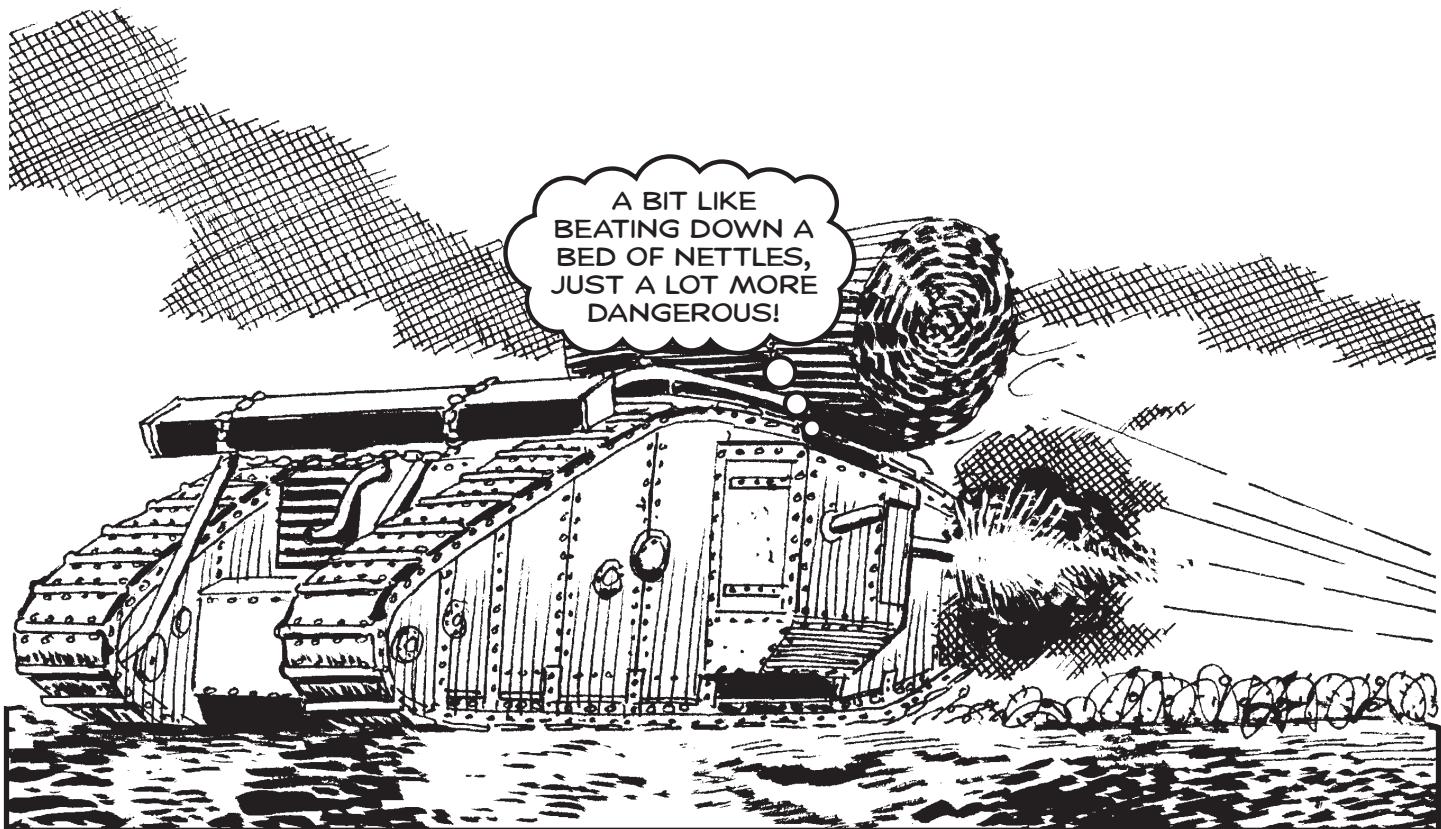
7.92MM BULLETS FROM THE TWO ENEMY O8/15 MACHINE GUNS JUST MISSED THE CAMEL, BUT THE R.F.C. PILOT DID FIRE AN ACCURATE BURST INTO HIS OPPONENT'S MERCEDES 200HP PISTON ENGINE.



SOME OF THE TOMMIES BELOW HAD ENJOYED A GRANDSTAND VIEW OF THE AERIAL CLASH. THEY CHEERED TO SEE THE GERMAN PILOT HEAD FOR HOME, HIS KITE TRAILING SMOKE.



ON THE GROUND, SPECIALLY ADAPTED TANKS WITH GRAPPLING HOOKS WOULD FOLLOW TO TEAR GAPS IN THE BARBED WIRE ENTANGLEMENTS FLATTENED BY THE LIKES OF HERBERT IN THE FIRST LANDSHIPS.



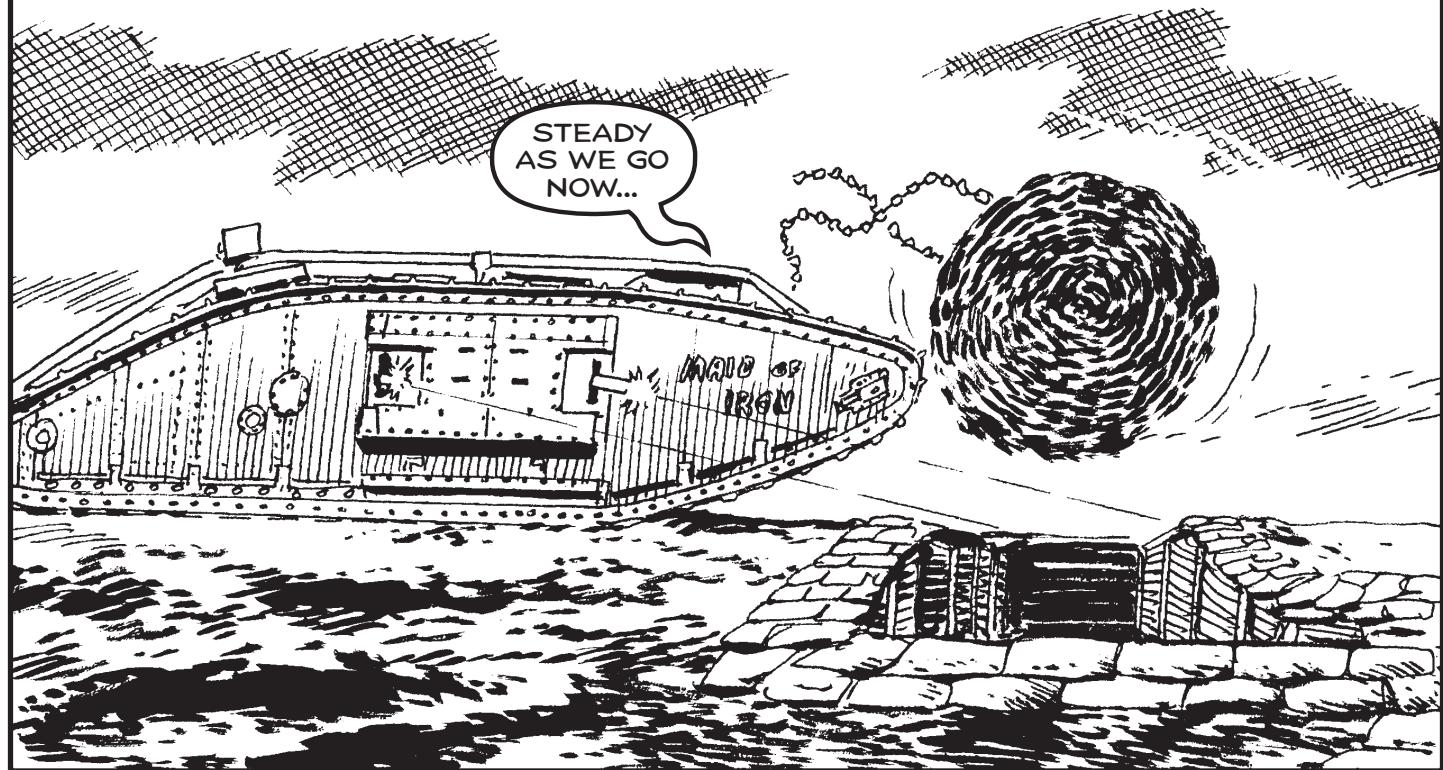
THE TASK FOR HERBERT, COMMANDING THE LEADING TANK IN A GROUP OF THREE, WAS TO KEEP THE ENEMY BUSY WHILE THE OTHER TWO METAL MONSTERS PROTECTED AND GUIDED THE FOOTSLOGGERS.



FOR SAM IT WAS A DEAFENING, UNREAL EXPERIENCE. THE SIX-POUNDER GUNS HAD BEEN FIRING FOR EFFECT AS IT WAS ALMOST IMPOSSIBLE TO AIM THEM ON THE MOVE IN A VEHICLE WITHOUT ANY SUSPENSION. THE LEWIS WITH ITS FLEXIBLE MOUNT WAS A LOT EASIER TO HANDLE AND ITS 28-ROUND MAGAZINE OF .303" BULLETS A GRIM DETERRENT.



SOME TANKS HAD ALREADY BROKEN DOWN OR RUN INTO TROUBLE. ONE "FEMALE" VERSION OF THE MARK IV DROPPED ITS FASCINE PRIOR TO CROSSING A TRENCH, THE FEMALE CARRIED NO HEAVY GUNS BEING ARMED INSTEAD WITH SIX LEWIS MACHINE GUNS, JUDGED TO BE A BETTER ARRANGEMENT TO REPEL ATTACKING INFANTRY.



ALL CREWS HAD PRACTISED THIS MANOEUVRE EARLIER IN AN AREA OF CAPTURED ENEMY TRENCHES, BUT THIS TIME, THE OPPOSITE SIDE OF THIS OBSTACLE CRUMBLED UNDER THE WEIGHT.



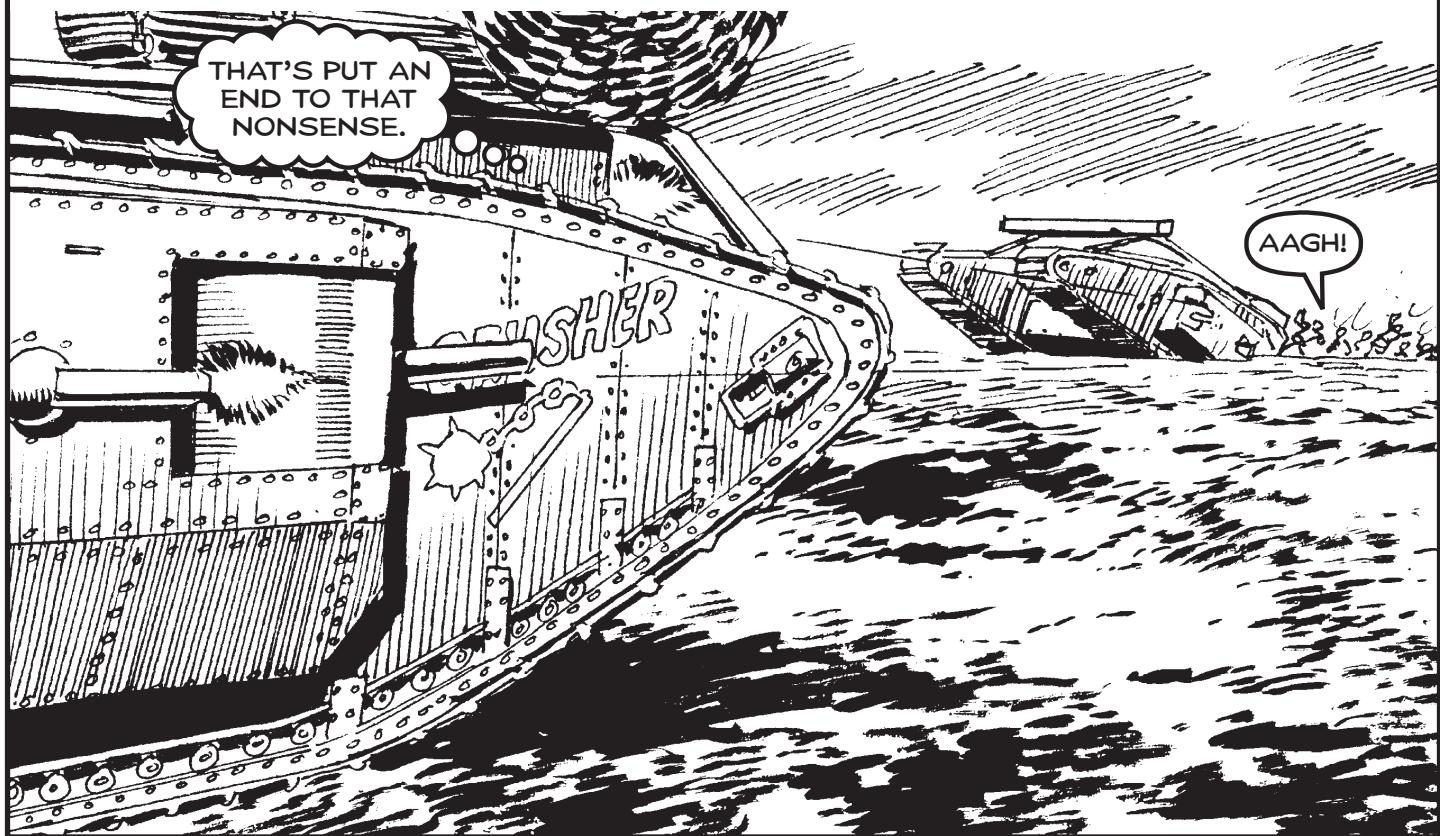
A GERMAN INFANTRY SQUAD HAD BEEN LYING LOW AND NOW EMERGED TO ATTACK THE STRANDED TANK.



EARLIER BRITISH TANKS HAD SUFFERED WHEN FIRED ON BY THE GERMAN ARMOUR-PIERCING, 57MM-LONG "K" BULLET, DESIGNED TO BE USED WITH A STANDARD MAUSER RIFLE. THE MARK IV'S UPGRADED 14MM FRONTAL ARMOUR WAS NOT SO VULNERABLE.



THE SITUATION GOT WORSE FOR THE ENEMY FOOT SOLDIERS WHEN HERBERT AND THE REST OF CRUSHER'S CREW TOOK A HAND. LEWIS MACHINE-GUN FIRE DECIMATED THE OPPosition.



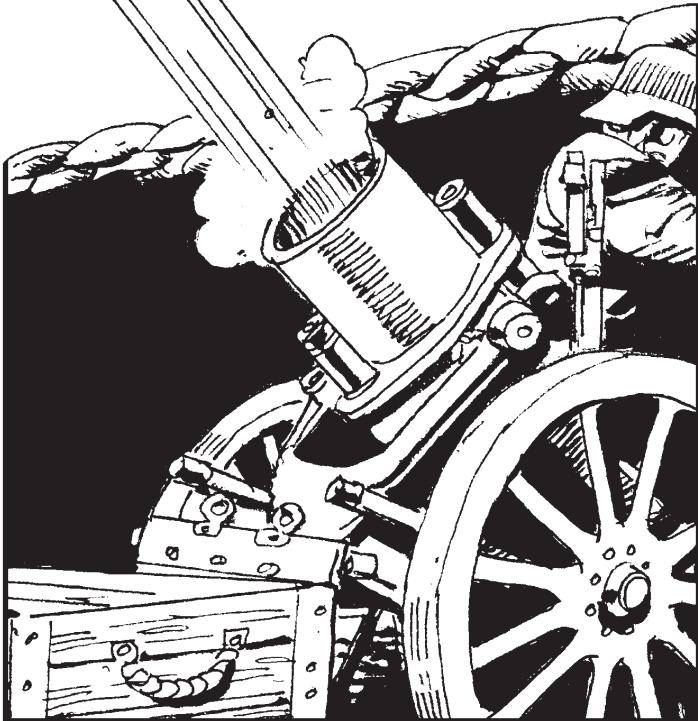
GERMAN INFANTRY HAD FOUGHT TANKS BEFORE, BUT THEY STILL FEARED THE MIGHTY METAL MONSTERS WHICH GROUND TOWARDS THEM AT LESS THAN FOUR MILES PER HOUR.



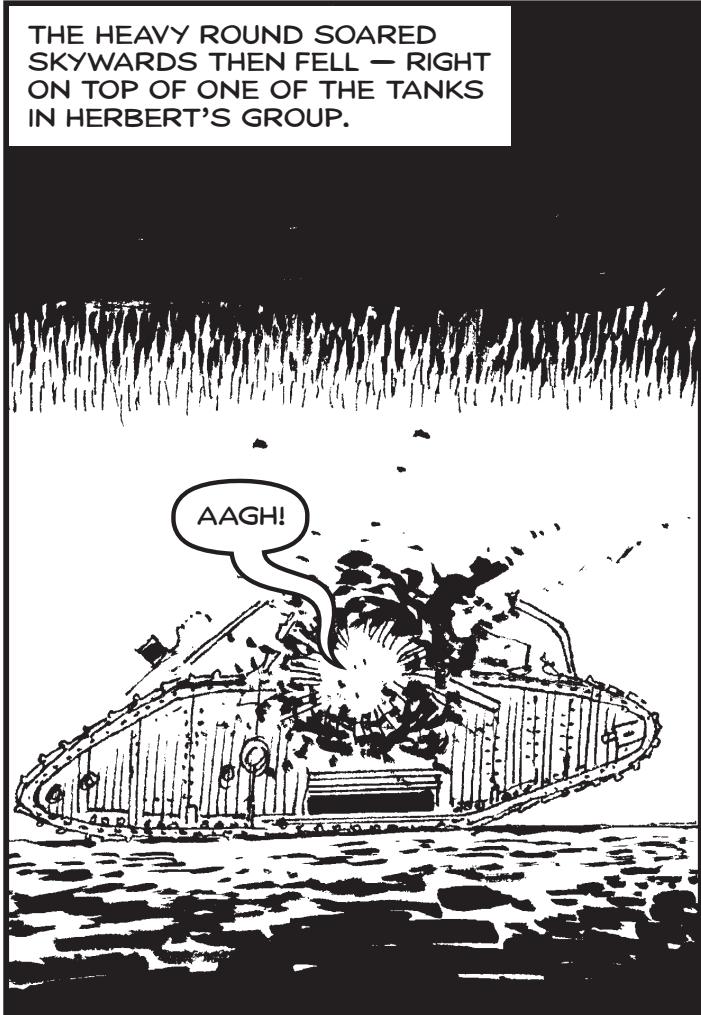
THE METAL REINFORCED OAK UNDITCHING BEAM WAS DESIGNED TO BE MECHANICALLY MANOEUVRED ON RAILS ALONG THE TOP OF THE MARK IV AND THEN DROPPED IN FRONT OF THE TANK. THE SOLID SURFACE TO GRIP ON WOULD HOPEFULLY FREE THE VEHICLE, BUT THE PASSING INFANTRY WERE NOT TOO HOPEFUL.



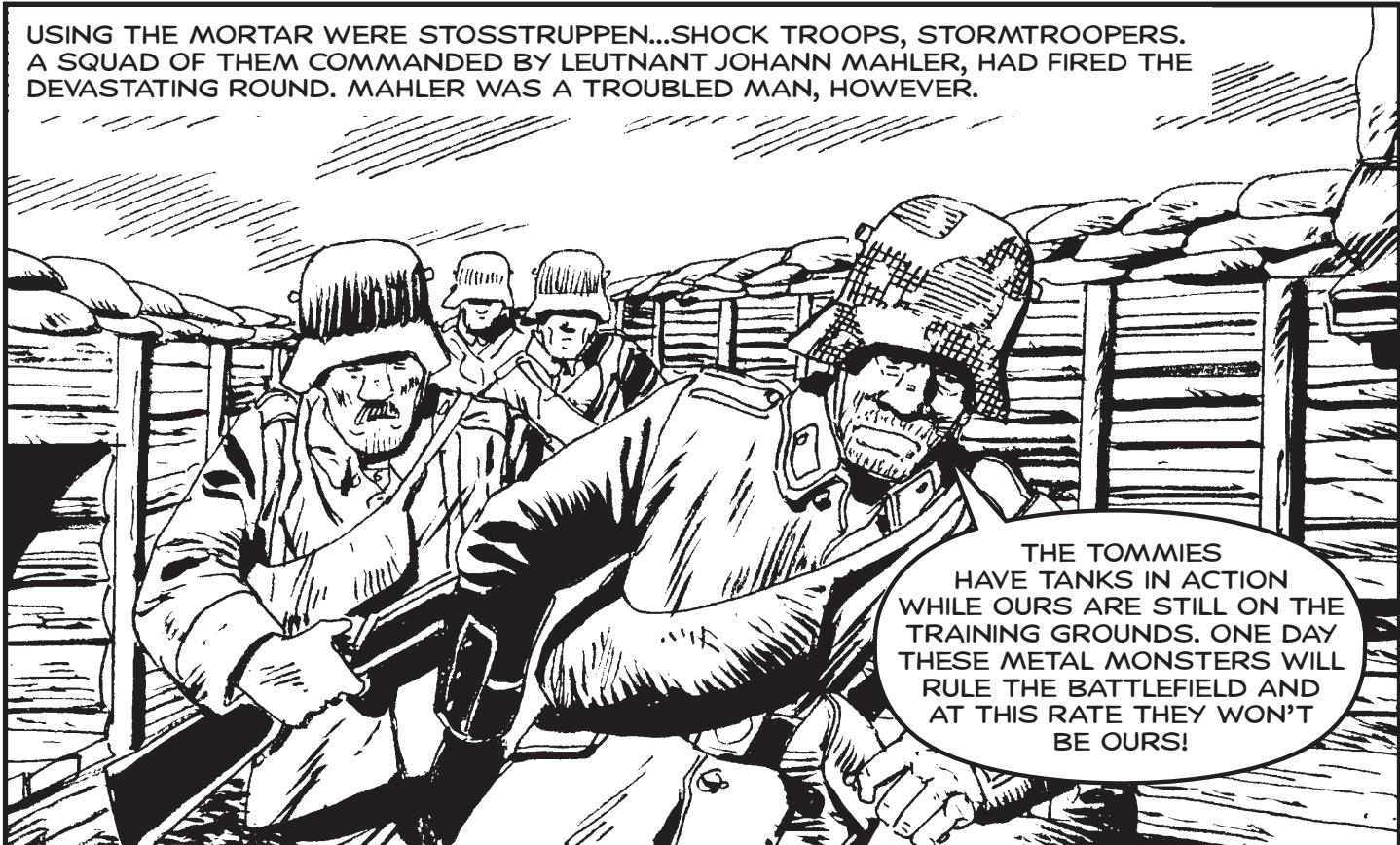
NOT ALL THE GERMANS WERE RUNNING. ONE OF THEIR 25CM TRENCH MORTARS FIRING FROM COVER UP AHEAD WAS NO JOKE FOR THEY HAD PERFECTED THE USE OF THESE DEADLY WEAPONS.



THE HEAVY ROUND SOARED SKYWARDS THEN FELL — RIGHT ON TOP OF ONE OF THE TANKS IN HERBERT'S GROUP.



USING THE MORTAR WERE STOSSTRUPPEN...SHOCK TROOPS, STORMTROOPERS. A SQUAD OF THEM COMMANDED BY LEUTNANT JOHANN MAHLER, HAD FIRED THE DEVASTATING ROUND. MAHLER WAS A TROUBLED MAN, HOWEVER.



MAHLER HAD BEEN IN UNIFORM FROM VERY EARLY ON. BEGINNING AS A HUMBLE PRIVATE, HE HAD WORKED HIS WAY UP THE LADDER THANKS TO HIS COURAGE AND A SMATTERING OF LUCK. FINALLY HE HAD BEEN COMMISSIONED, QUITE AN ACHIEVEMENT FOR A STREET URCHIN FROM BREMEN.



FELDWEBEL HANS GRAUN WAS A CAREER SOLDIER WHO EXPECTED HIS OFFICERS TO HAVE POLITE ACCENTS AND GOOD BACKGROUNDS. HE DID NOT DOUBT HIS LEUTNANT'S COURAGE, BUT HE DID QUERY HIM HAVING BEEN MADE AN OFFICER IN THE FIRST PLACE.



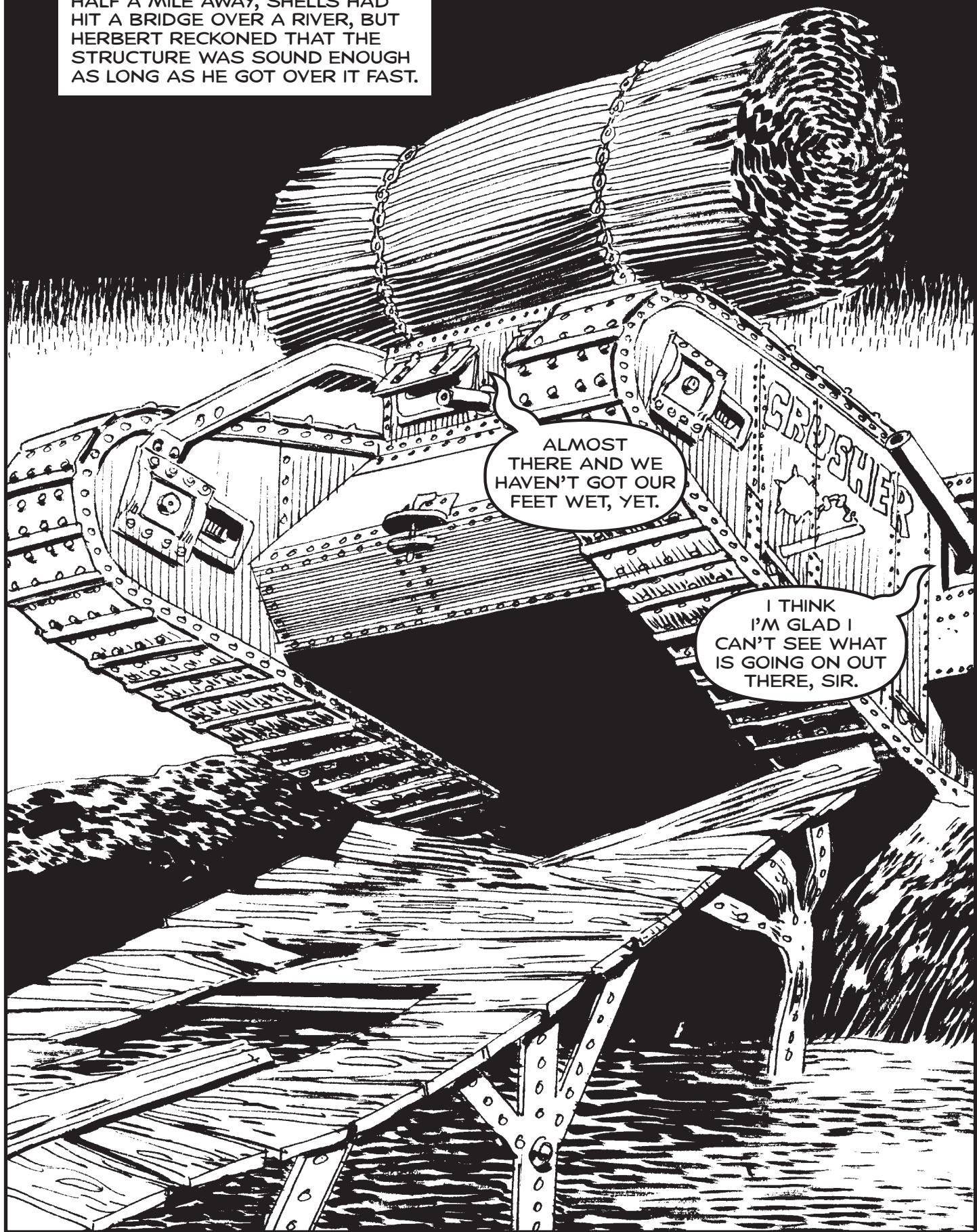
GRAUN KNEW IT TROUBLED THE MEN TO KNOW THAT THEIR OFFICER HAD FOUGHT HARDER AND WAS TOUGHER THAN ANY OF THEM...AND KNEW ALL THE DODGES THEY MIGHT TRY TO PULL.



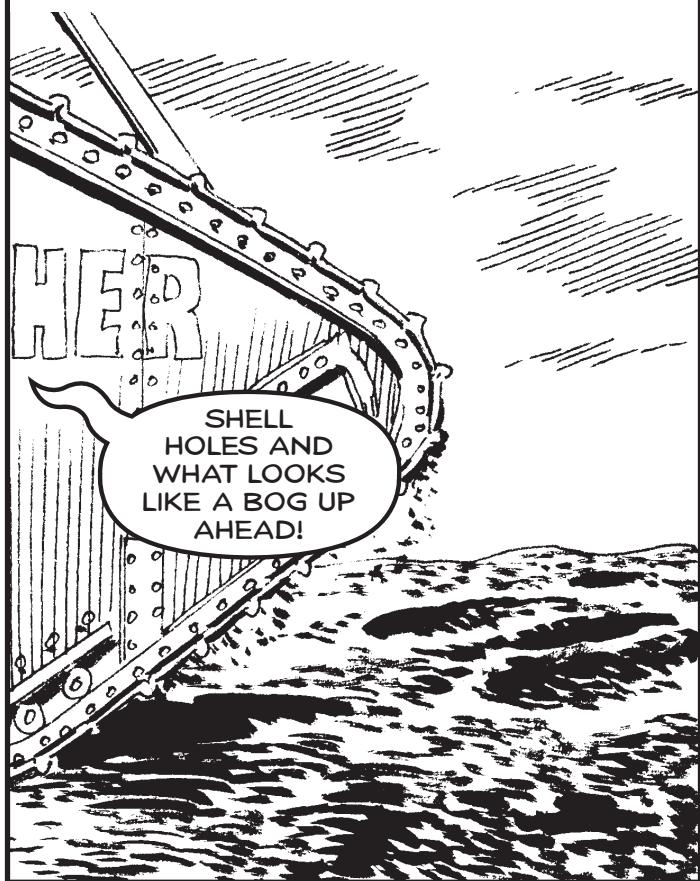
MAHLER WAS WELL AWARE OF ALL THIS, BUT HE DIDN'T CARE A JOT. HE WAS A NATURAL SOLDIER WHO DIDN'T NEED FANCY STAFF LECTURES TO READ A BATTLEFIELD. SOME SENIOR OFFICERS WOULD HAVE BENEFITTED FROM HIS INSIGHT.

THEY ATTACK, WE COUNTER-ATTACK. MEN DIE FOR THE SAME MISERABLE METRES OF FRENCH OR BELGIAN MUD. TO WIN WE NEED TO BE FAR MORE MOBILE AND THE ENGLANDERS ARE SHOWING US THE WAY WITH THEIR TANKS.

HALF A MILE AWAY, SHELLS HAD HIT A BRIDGE OVER A RIVER, BUT HERBERT RECKONED THAT THE STRUCTURE WAS SOUND ENOUGH AS LONG AS HE GOT OVER IT FAST.



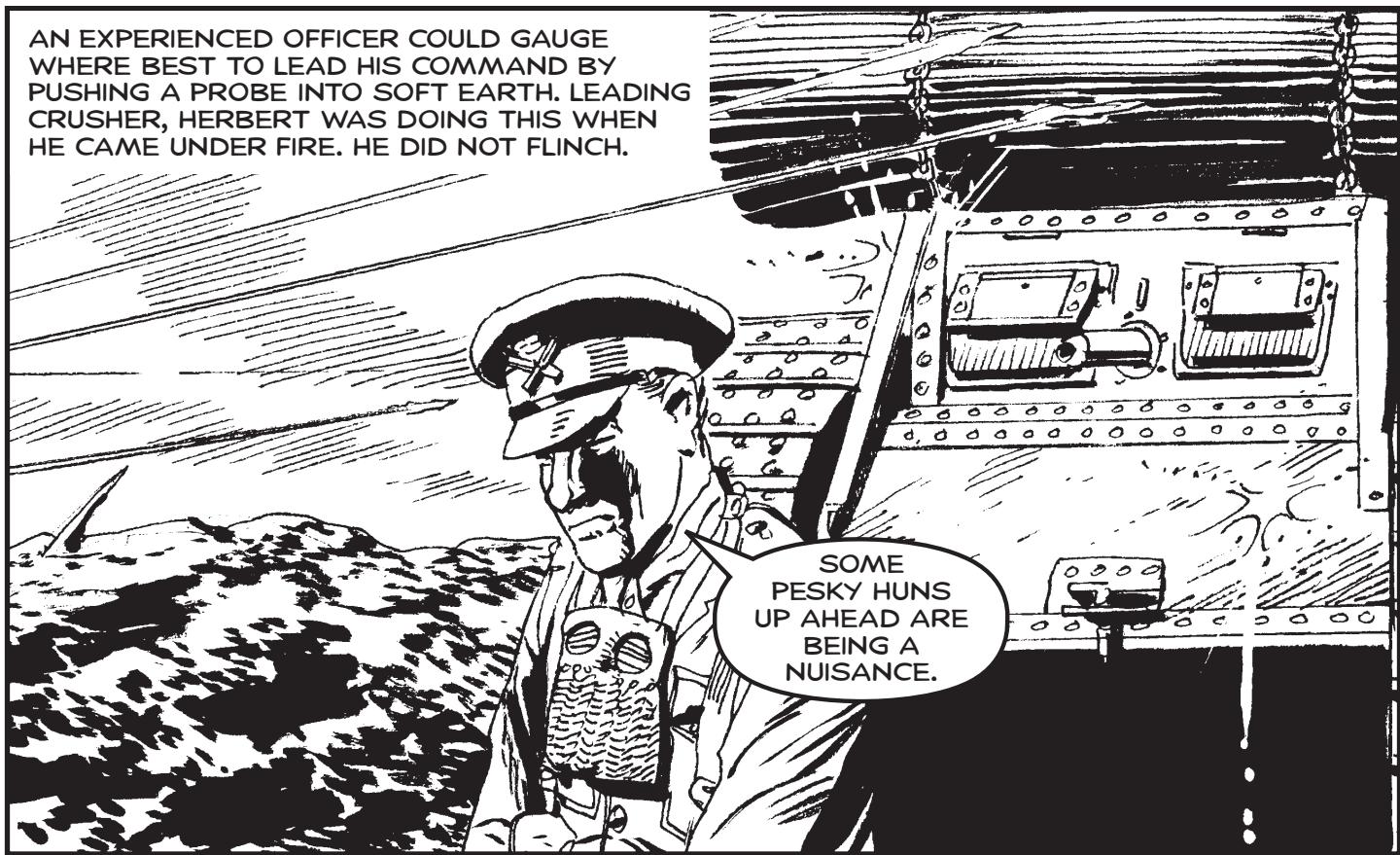
THEN THE CREW FIRST FELT AND THEN BECAME AWARE THAT THE GROUND HAD BECOME MUCH SOFTER.



HERBERT SLIPPED OUT AND PREPARED TO WALK AHEAD WITH AN ASHPLANT CUT TO SIZE WHICH HE WOULD USE TO TEST THE GOING.



AN EXPERIENCED OFFICER COULD GAUGE WHERE BEST TO LEAD HIS COMMAND BY PUSHING A PROBE INTO SOFT EARTH. LEADING CRUSHER, HERBERT WAS DOING THIS WHEN HE CAME UNDER FIRE. HE DID NOT FLINCH.



RAPID RETURN FIRE FROM CRUSHER'S LETHAL LEWIS GUNS DEALT WITH THE DANGER.



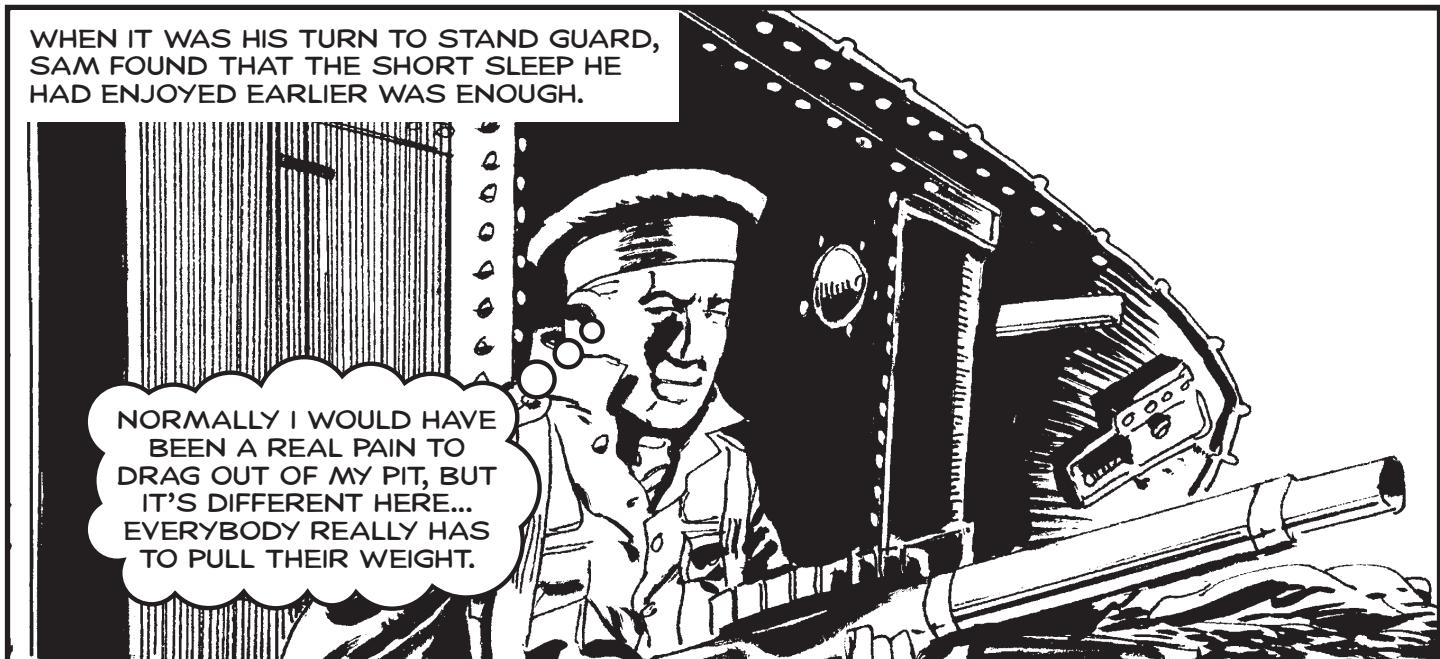
AS OFTEN HAPPENED, THE TANKS OUTSTRIPPED THEIR INFANTRY AND LOST CONTACT WITH THEIR SQUADRONS. AS THE LIGHT BEGAN TO FADE, HERBERT SOUGHT SHELTER IN A DIP IN THE LANDSCAPE. HE AND SAM WERE THE FIRST OUT OF THE VEHICLE.



THE REST OF THE CREW SAID LITTLE BUT IT WAS CLEAR THAT SAM HAD MADE THE GRADE IN THEIR EYES. SERGEANT DIXON HANDED HIM SOME GRUB AND A MUG OF TEA FROM THEIR STASH.



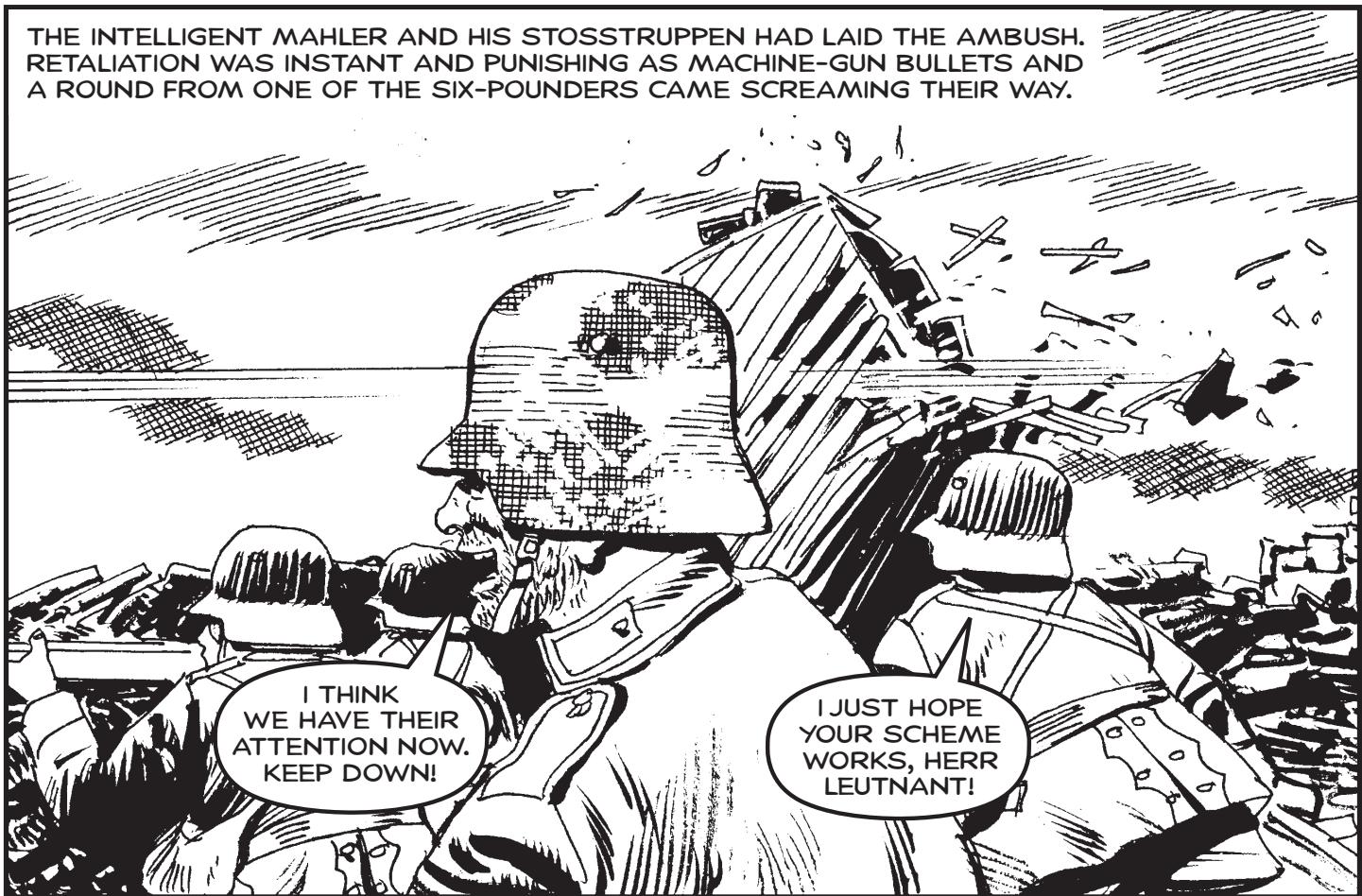
WHEN IT WAS HIS TURN TO STAND GUARD,
SAM FOUND THAT THE SHORT SLEEP HE
HAD ENJOYED EARLIER WAS ENOUGH.



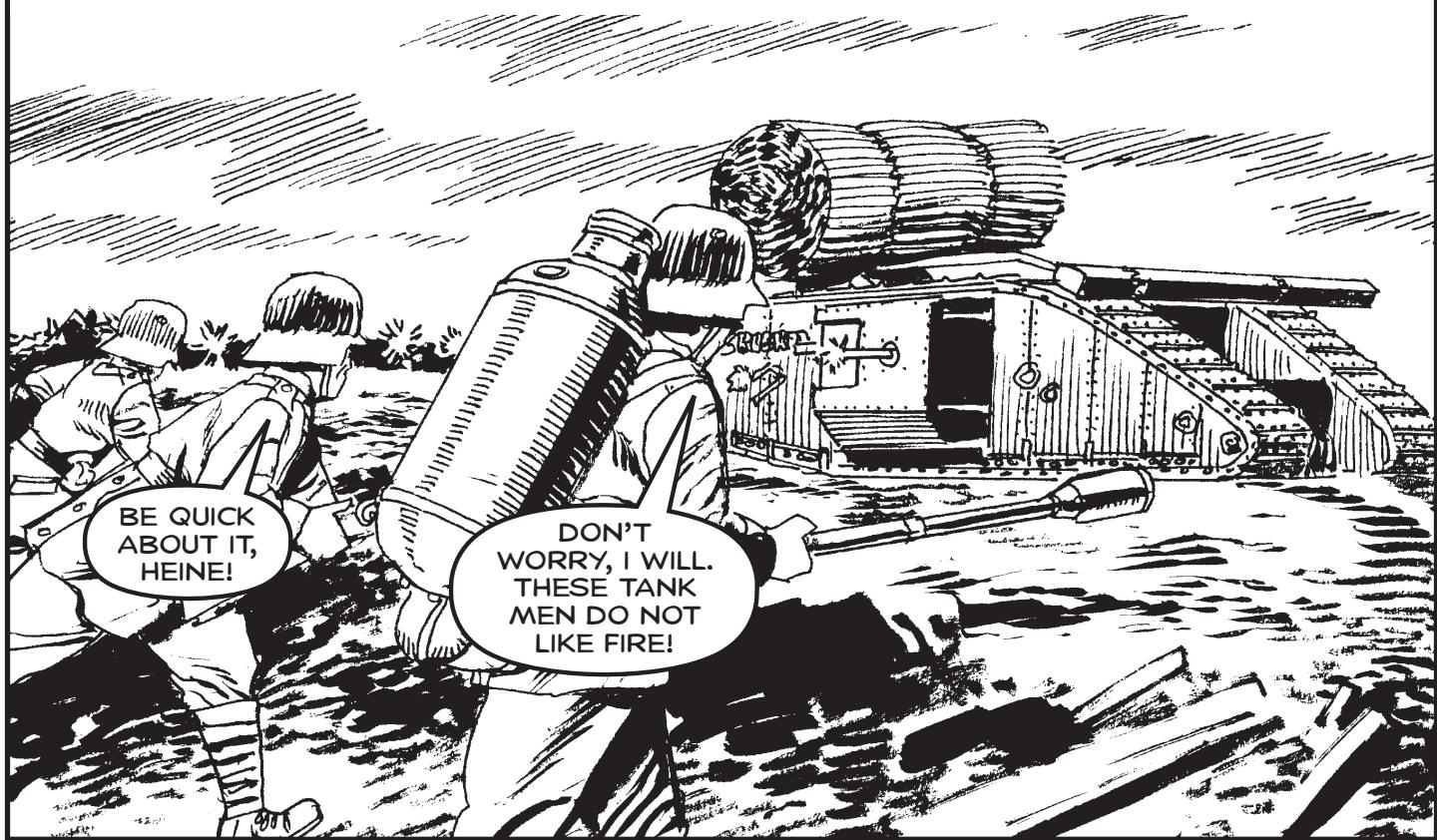
THEY ADVANCED AGAIN AT FIRST LIGHT. HERBERT HAD THE ROOF HATCH OPEN FOR LIGHT AND AIR, BUT HEAVY FIRE FROM A RUINED VILLAGE UP AHEAD SAW HIM RISING TO CLOSE IT.



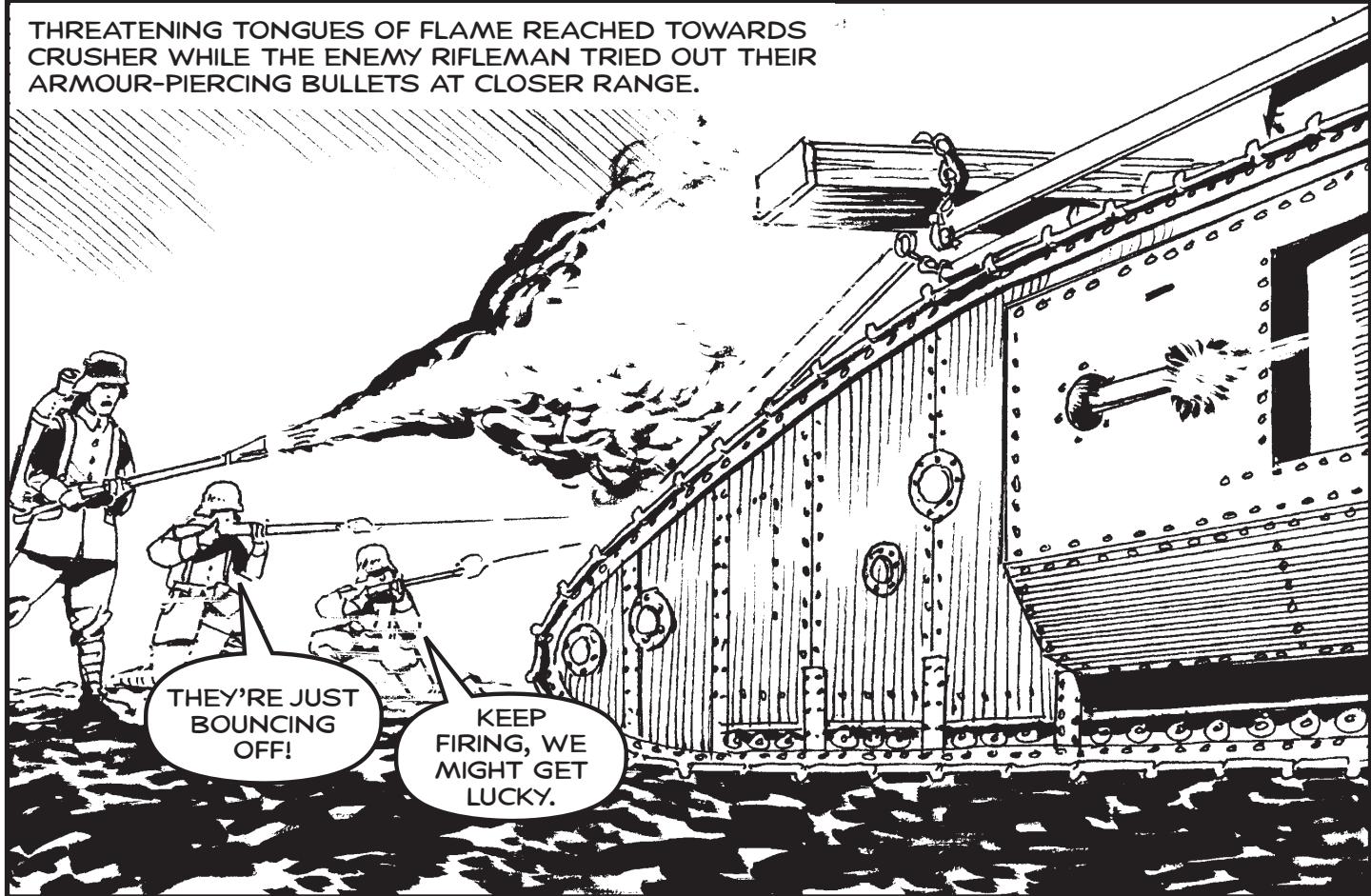
THE INTELLIGENT MAHLER AND HIS STOSSTRUPPEN HAD LAID THE AMBUSH. RETALIATION WAS INSTANT AND PUNISHING AS MACHINE-GUN BULLETS AND A ROUND FROM ONE OF THE SIX-POUNDERS CAME SCREAMING THEIR WAY.



MAHLER'S UNIT HAD SUFFERED LOSSES, BUT WAS STILL A REAL THREAT. THREE OF HIS MEN HAD CREEPT AROUND THE TANK — TWO WERE ACTING AS ESCORT TO A THIRD WHO WAS KITTED OUT WITH A VERY FRIGHTENING WEAPON...A FLAME-THROWER.



THREATENING TONGUES OF FLAME REACHED TOWARDS CRUSHER WHILE THE ENEMY RIFLEMAN TRIED OUT THEIR ARMOUR-PIERCING BULLETS AT CLOSER RANGE.



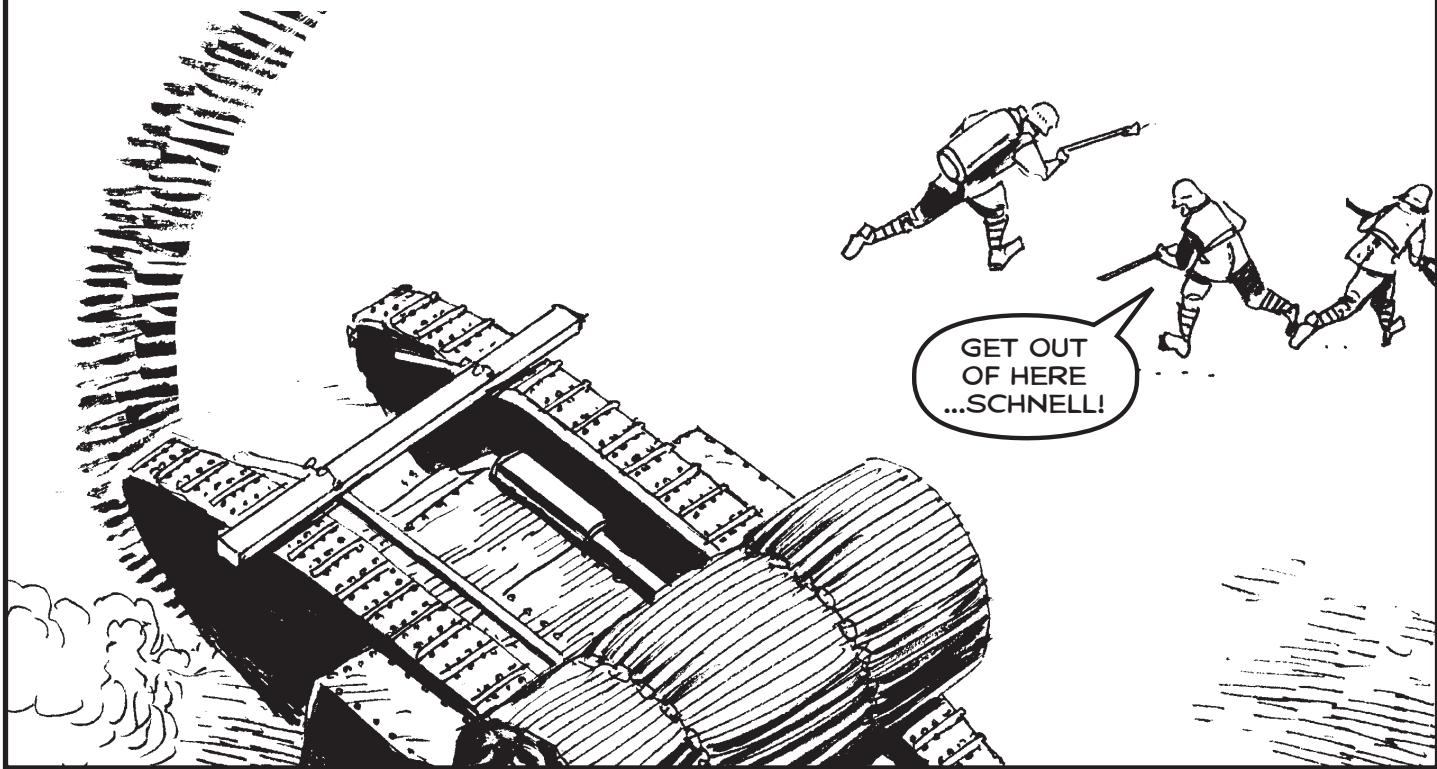
IT WAS LEN, ONE OF THE STEERSMEN, WHO SPOTTED THE SMOKE FILTERING IN.



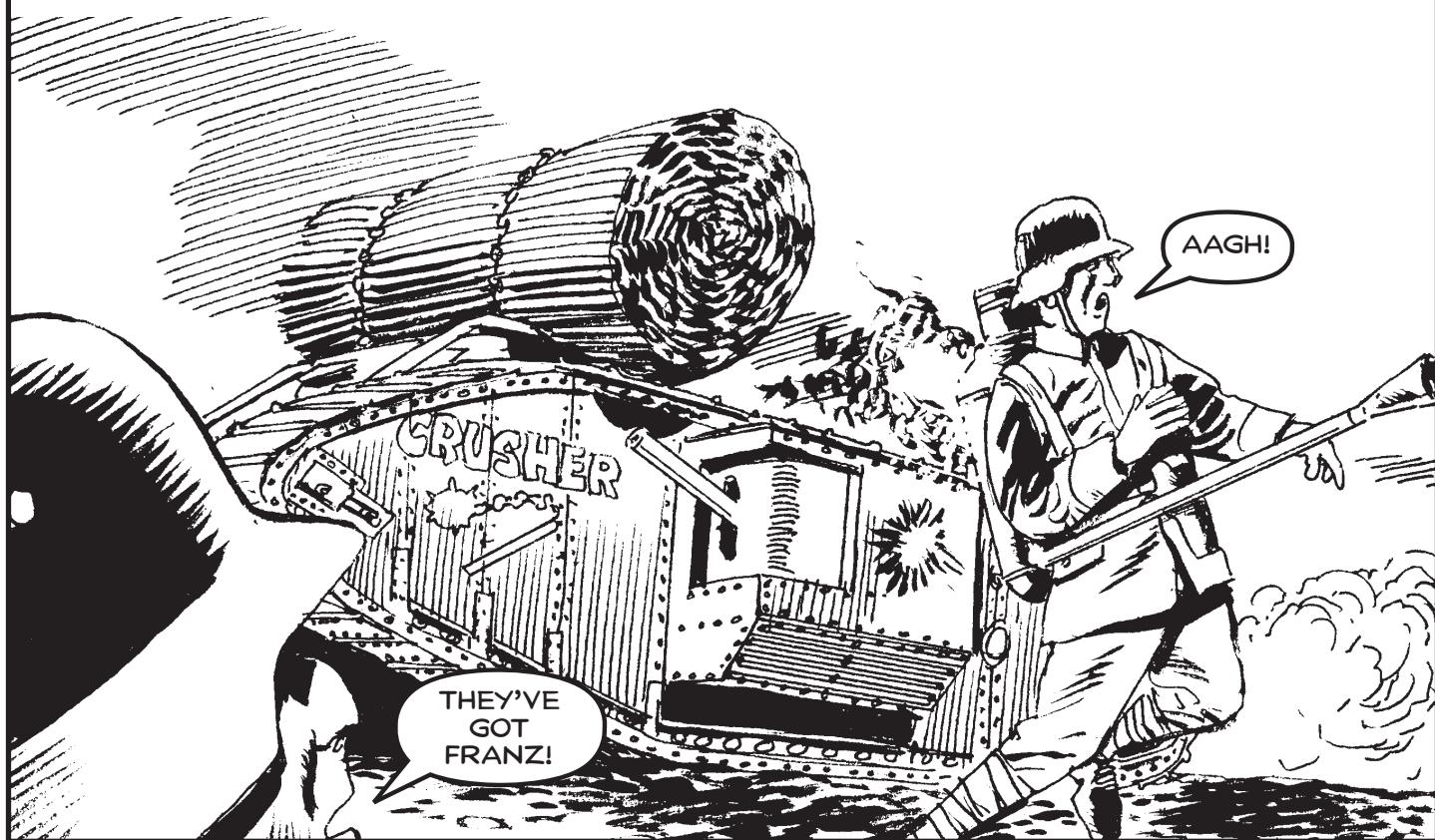
MICK SPRANG FROM HIS SIX-POUNDER TO ACTIVATE A FIRE EXTINGUISHER.



THE OTHER STEERSMAN, ADAM, ISOLATED THE GEARS ON ONE TRACK ALLOWING THE TANK TO SWIVEL AND FACE THE THREAT, BUT THE GERMANS WERE ALREADY ON THE RUN.



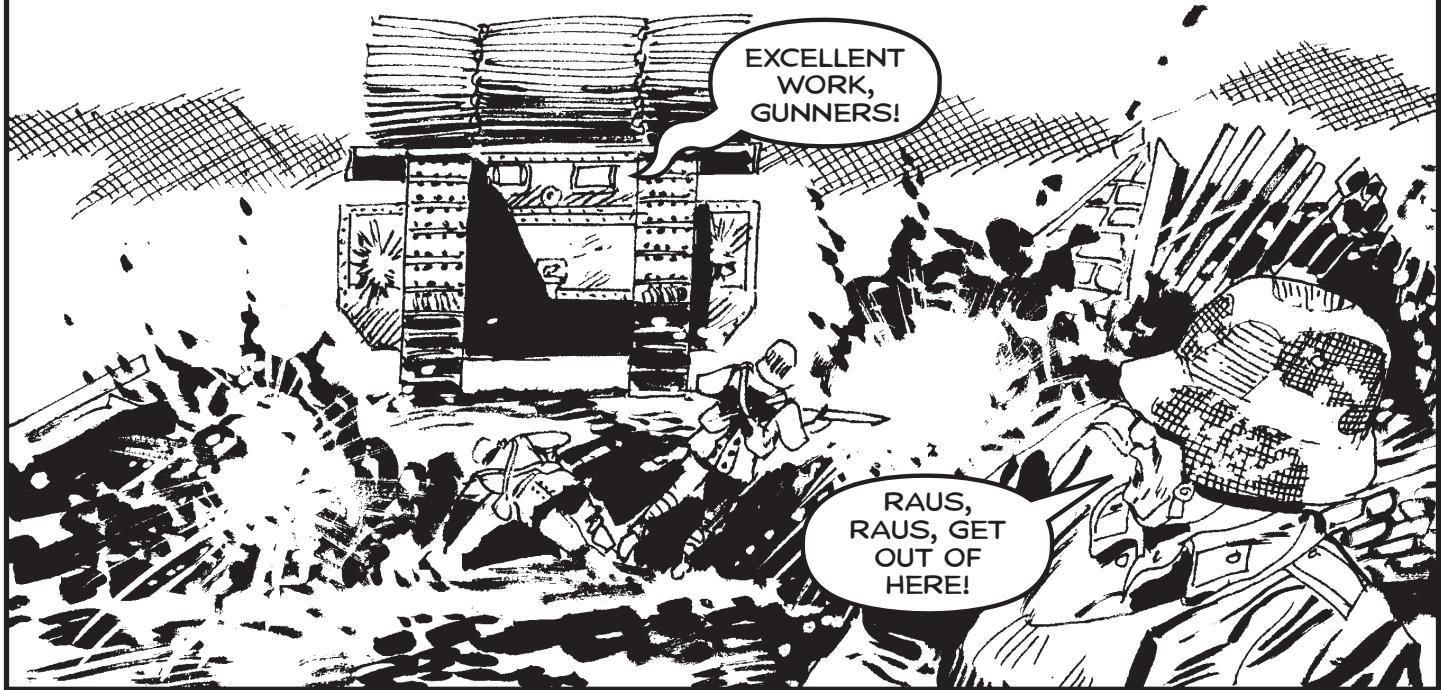
THE ATTACKERS WERE NOT FLEET ENOUGH OF FOOT, THOUGH. SAM'S FELLOW LEWIS-GUNNER, STAN, TAPPED OFF A RIPPING SALVO OF .303" BULLETS.



ROUNDS PIERCED AND DETONATED THE FLAMMENWERFER'S FUEL TANK. THE RESULTING EXPLOSION ENDED THE WAR FOR THE OPERATOR AND HIS COMRADES.



WITH THE GOING FLAT AND RELATIVELY EVEN, THE MARK IV PRESSED ON. BOTH SPONSON GUNS BOOMED. IT WAS TIME FOR MAHLER AND HIS MEN TO RETREAT.



IT WAS NOT GOOD COUNTRY TO GO IN FULL PURSUIT. HERBERT WANTED A HALT ANYWAY AS HE FEARED THE FLAMES HAD DAMAGED SOME OF THE VEHICLE'S COMPONENTS.



WHEN THE DAMAGE REPORTS WERE IN, THE SERGEANT AND OFFICER LOOKED ON WITH RESPECT AS SAM CALLED ON ALL HIS KNOWLEDGE OF TANK TESTING TO HELP COME UP WITH THE ANSWERS.



BRITISH INFANTRY HAD ADVANCED FAR IN CERTAIN AREAS, SOME MEETING LITTLE OPPPOSITION. ONE PLATOON HAD BEGUN TO RELAX A LITTLE, ALTHOUGH THEIR OFFICER HADN'T.



THEIR LIEUTENANT WAS RIGHT TO BE WARY, THEY HAD STRAYED WITHIN RANGE OF LEUTNANT MAHLER AND HIS MEN. GRENADES AND MAUSER GEWEHR 98 RIFLE FIRE WAS THEIR CALLING CARD.

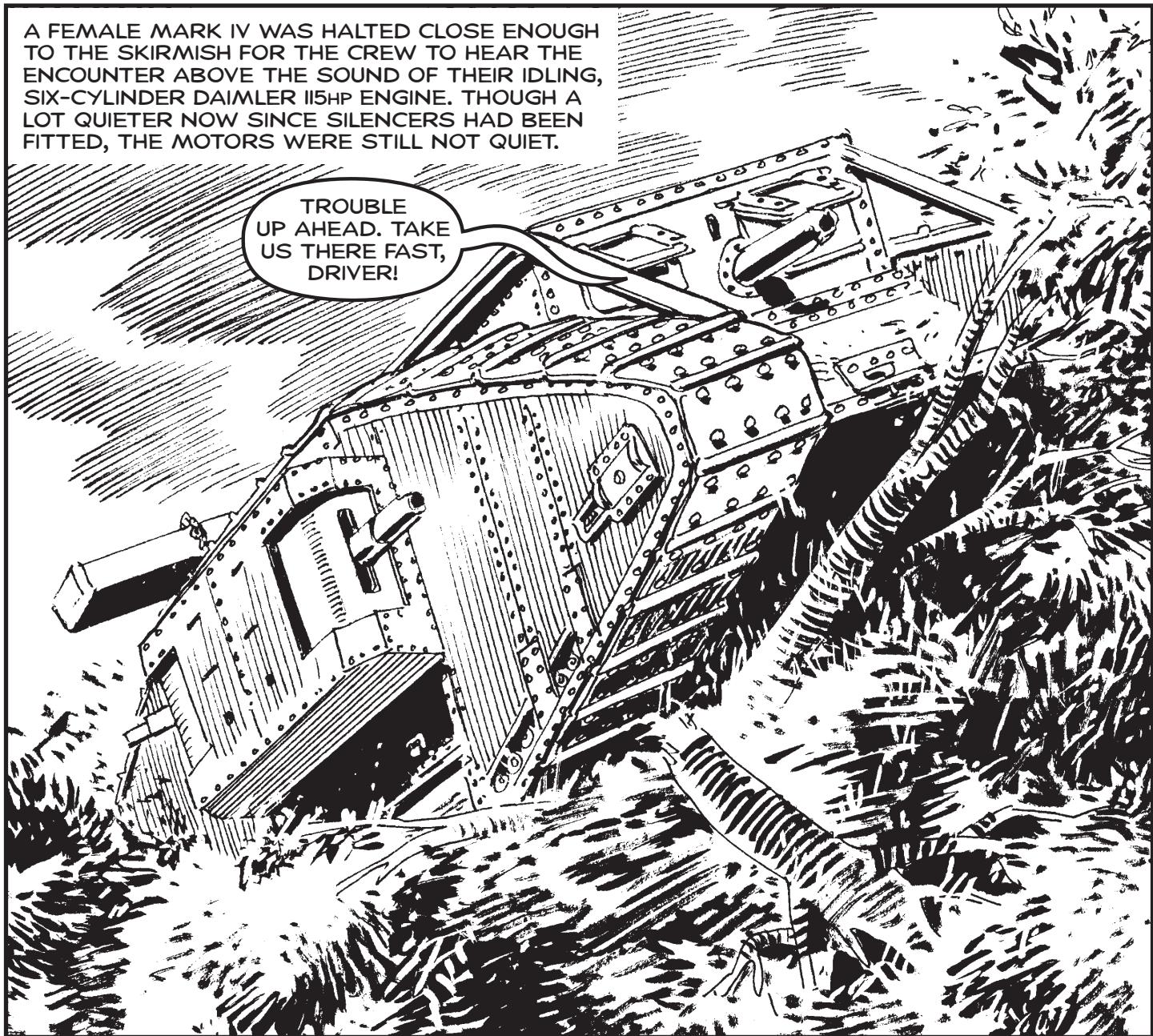


IT WAS A BRUTAL START TO ANY SKIRMISH.
THE BRITISH WHO HAD NOT ALREADY FALLEN
RECOVERED FAST TO RETALIATE.



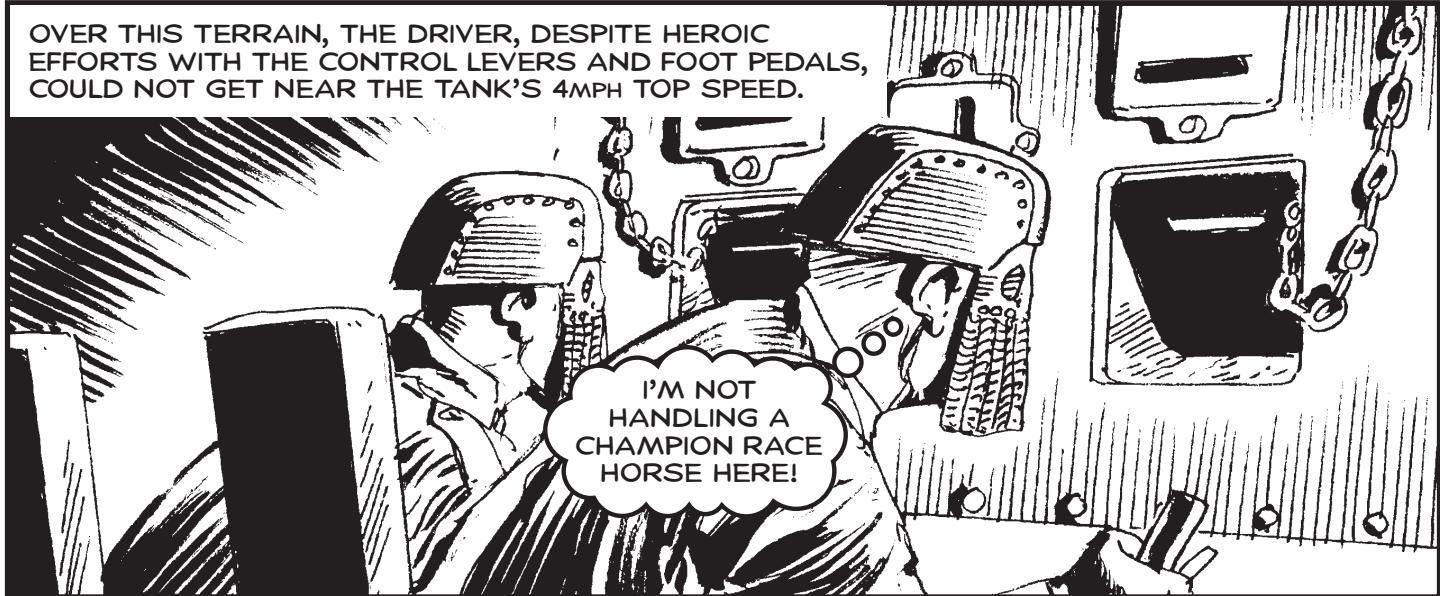
A FEMALE MARK IV WAS HALTED CLOSE ENOUGH TO THE SKIRMISH FOR THE CREW TO HEAR THE ENCOUNTER ABOVE THE SOUND OF THEIR IDLING, SIX-CYLINDER DAIMLER 115HP ENGINE. THOUGH A LOT QUIETER NOW SINCE SILENCERS HAD BEEN FITTED, THE MOTORS WERE STILL NOT QUIET.

TROUBLE
UP AHEAD. TAKE
US THERE FAST,
DRIVER!



OVER THIS TERRAIN, THE DRIVER, DESPITE HEROIC EFFORTS WITH THE CONTROL LEVERS AND FOOT PEDALS, COULD NOT GET NEAR THE TANK'S 4MPH TOP SPEED.

I'M NOT
HANDLING A
CHAMPION RACE
HORSE HERE!



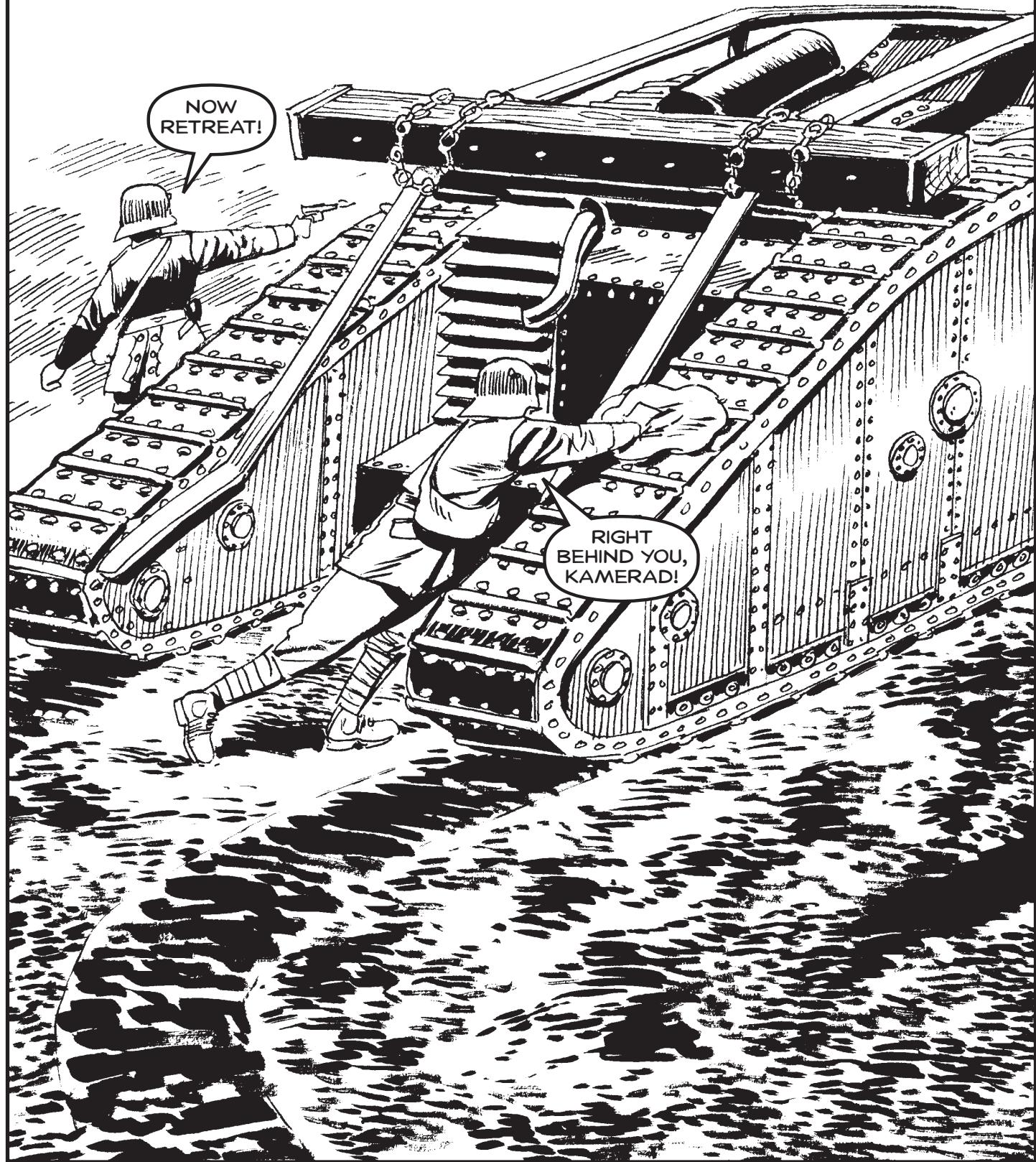
THE TANK DID GET THERE BEFORE ALL WAS LOST. WHAT LEWIS GUNS COULD BE BROUGHT TO BEAR TATTOOED THEIR OWN PATTERN OF DEATH AND DESTRUCTION.



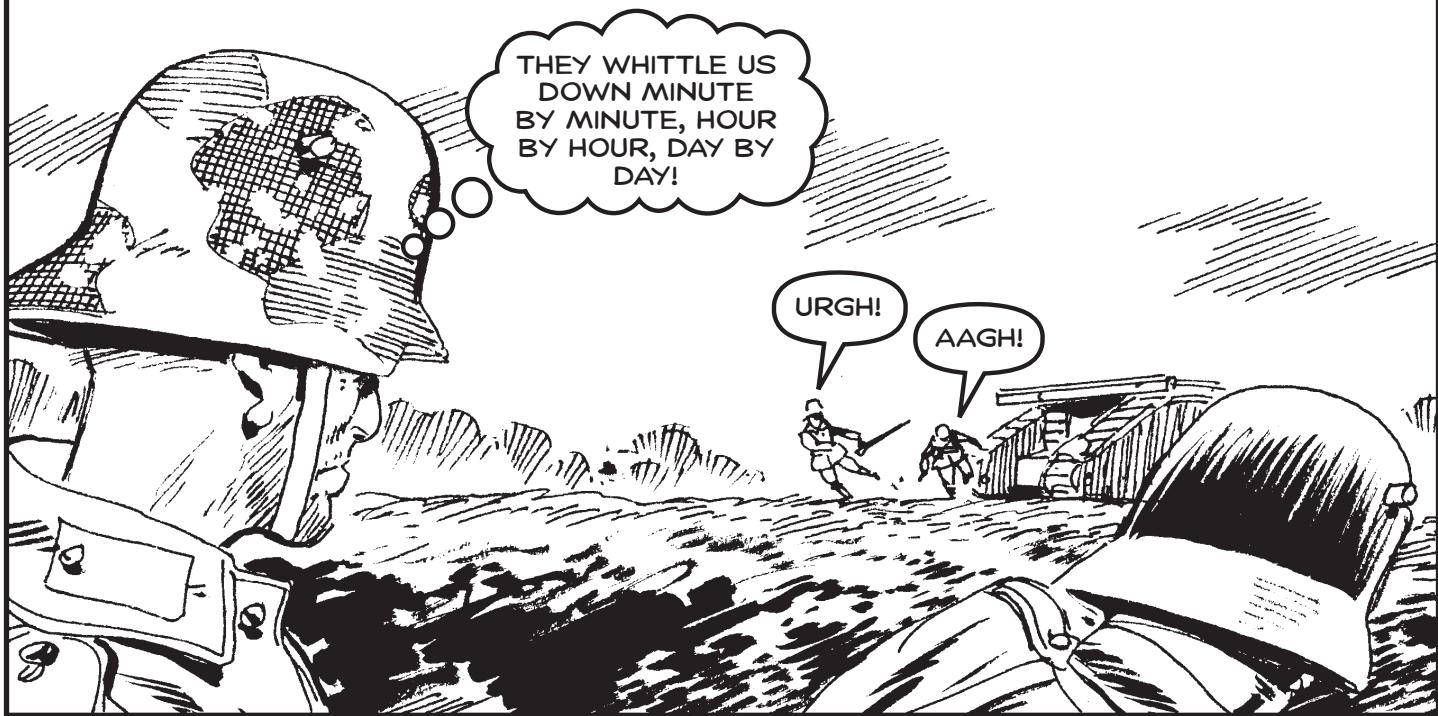
BUT ALREADY THE STORMTROOPERS HAD DEVISED MANY WAYS OF TACKLING TANKS. WITH ONE MAN ACTING AS BACK-UP AND ANOTHER CARRYING A SACK OF PRIMED GRENADES A PAIR MADE FOR THE MARK IV.



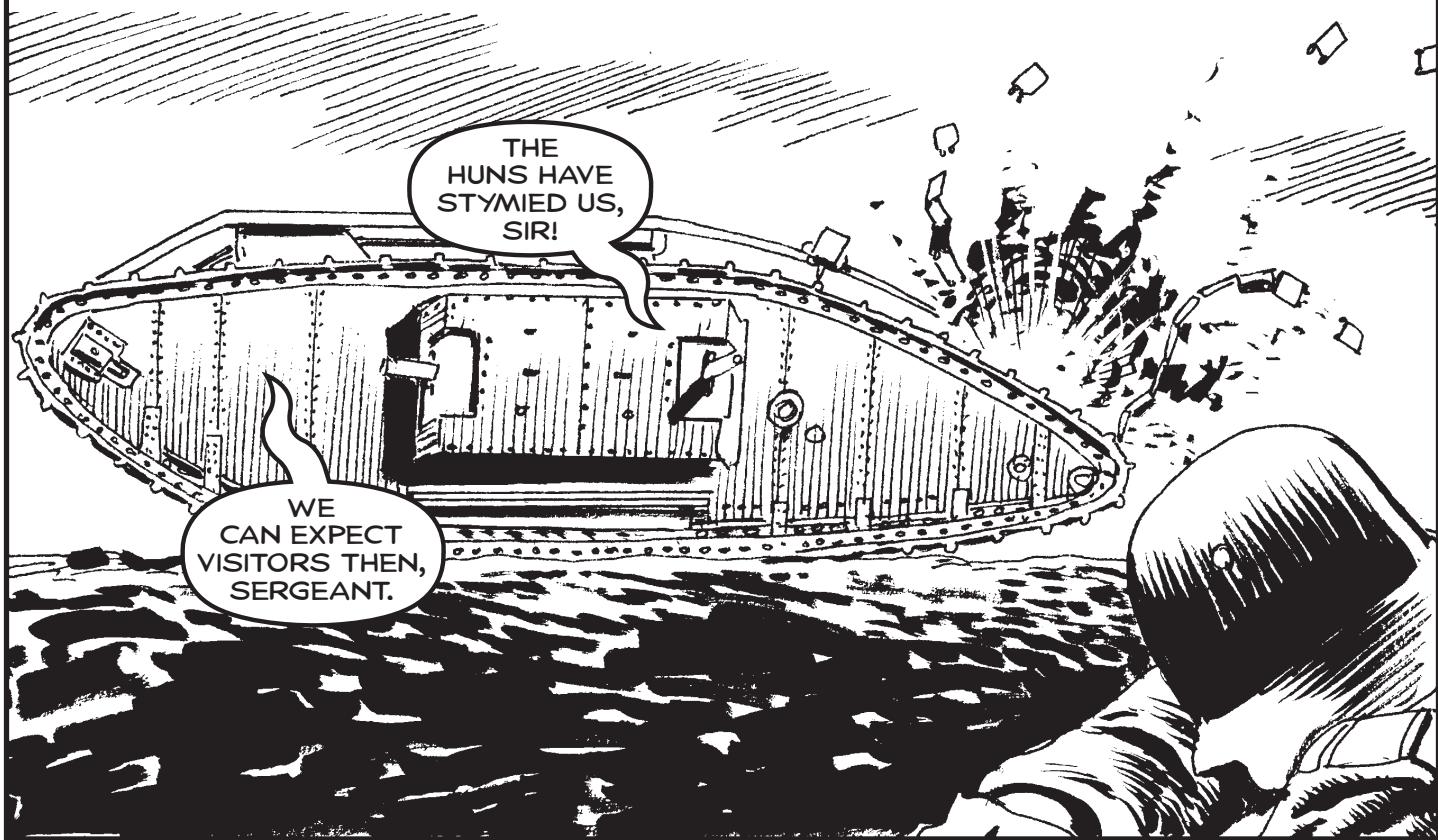
USING THE TANK AS COVER WHEN IT SLOWED TO MANOEUVRE,
THE DARING SOLDIERS OF THE KAISER LEFT THEIR CALLING
CARD — THE HIGH-EXPLOSIVE ATTACHED TO THE MOVING TRACK.



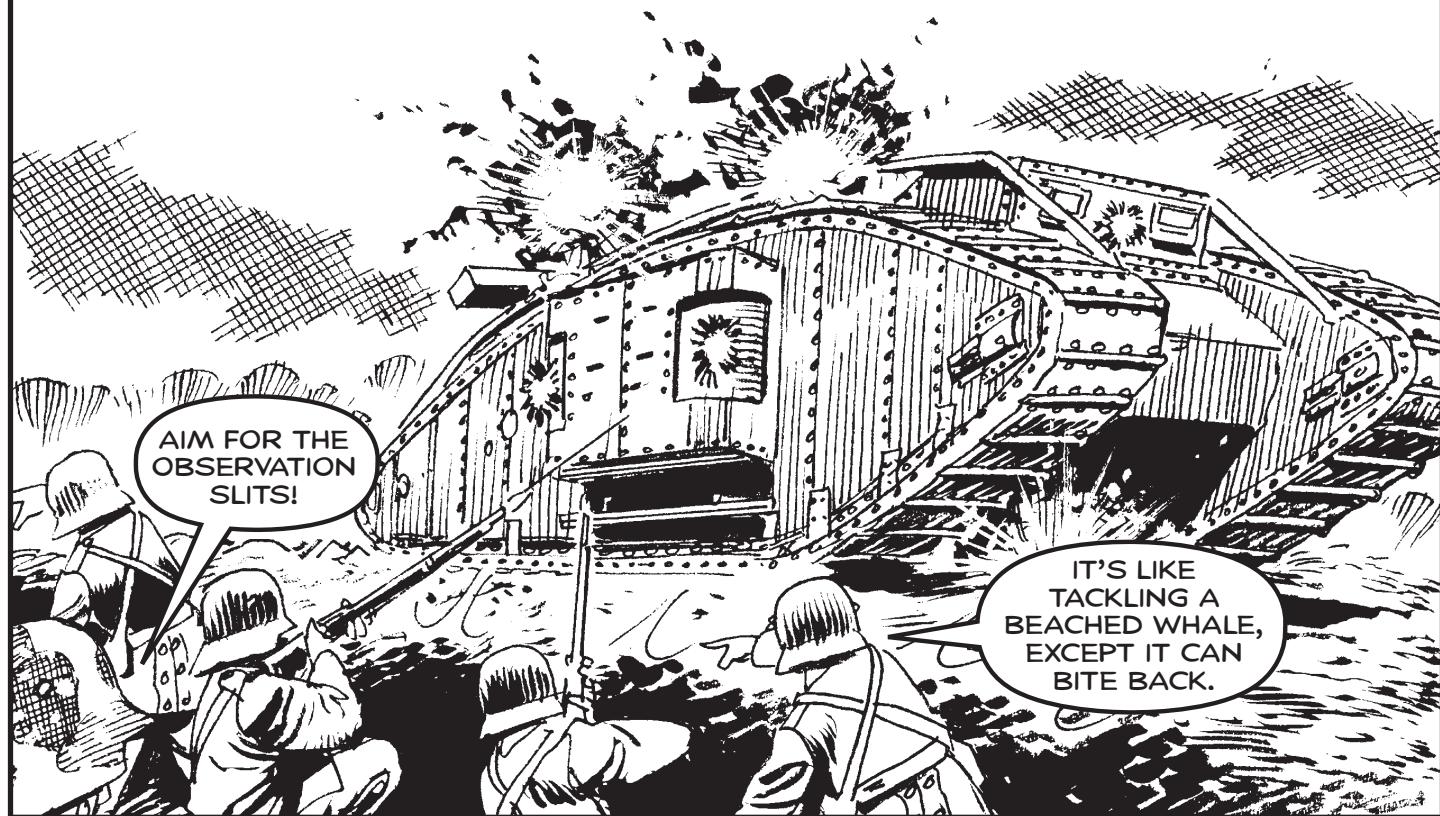
THE BRITISH INFANTRYMEN, LEE-ENFIELD RIFLES AT THE READY, CAUGHT A GLIMPSE OF THE SPRINTING SABOTEURS AND PROVED ONCE AGAIN THAT NOBODY CAN OUTRUN A BULLET. MAHLER CURSED AS TWO MORE OF HIS MEN PAID THE ULTIMATE PRICE.



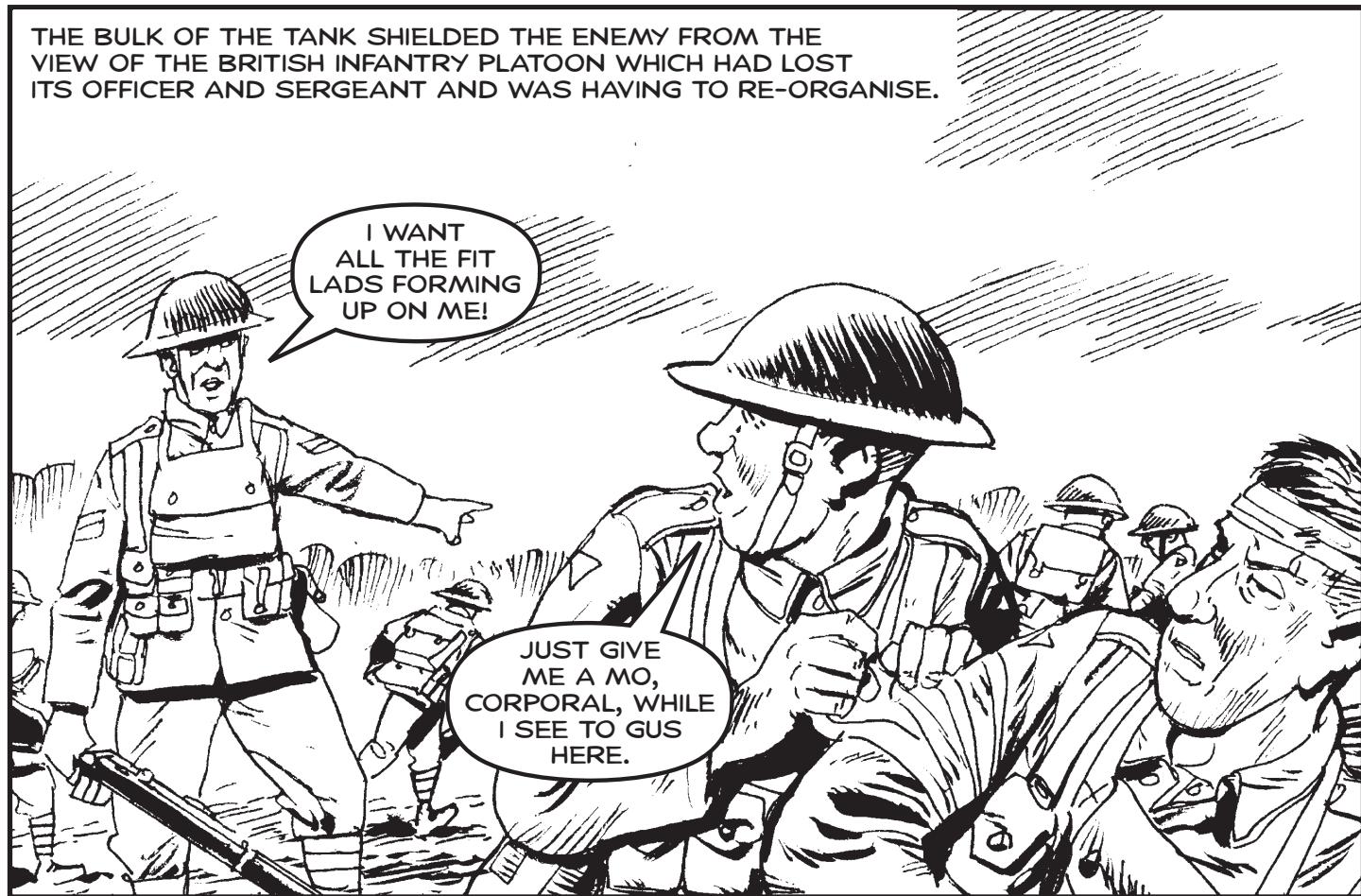
THE GRENADES DETONATED AND THE FORCE WAS ENOUGH TO SNAP THE TRACK OF THE TANK. IT WAS A SITTING TARGET NOW THAT COULD NOT MANOEUVRE.



THE STOSSTRUPPEN LITERALLY THREW EVERYTHING THEY HAD AT THE STRANDED ARMoured MONSTER. THE MACHINE GUNNERS INSIDE WHO DID HAVE A FIELD OF FIRE RETALIATED.



THE BULK OF THE TANK SHIELDED THE ENEMY FROM THE VIEW OF THE BRITISH INFANTRY PLATOON WHICH HAD LOST ITS OFFICER AND SERGEANT AND WAS HAVING TO RE-ORGANISE.



THE TANK CREW WERE IN BIG TROUBLE TOO. A "SPLASH" RICOCHET FOUND A GAP IN THE MASK OF ONE STEERSMAN AND HE WAS HIT.



THE BATTLE-SAVVY MAHLER SAW THE OPPORTUNITY TO TACKLE THE BRITISH FOOT SOLDIERS FIRST.



THE KILOMETRE-GUZZLERS — A DEROGATORY PHRASE FOR FOOT-SLOGGING INFANTRY — WERE BETTER PREPARED BY NOW, THOUGH. THEY SPOTTED THE ENEMY INFILTRATORS AND A FIERCE FIRE-FIGHT FLARED.



THE STOSSTRUPPEN LEUTNANT SAW HIS MEN FALTER, BUT HE WAS STILL DETERMINED TO DESTROY THE TANK.

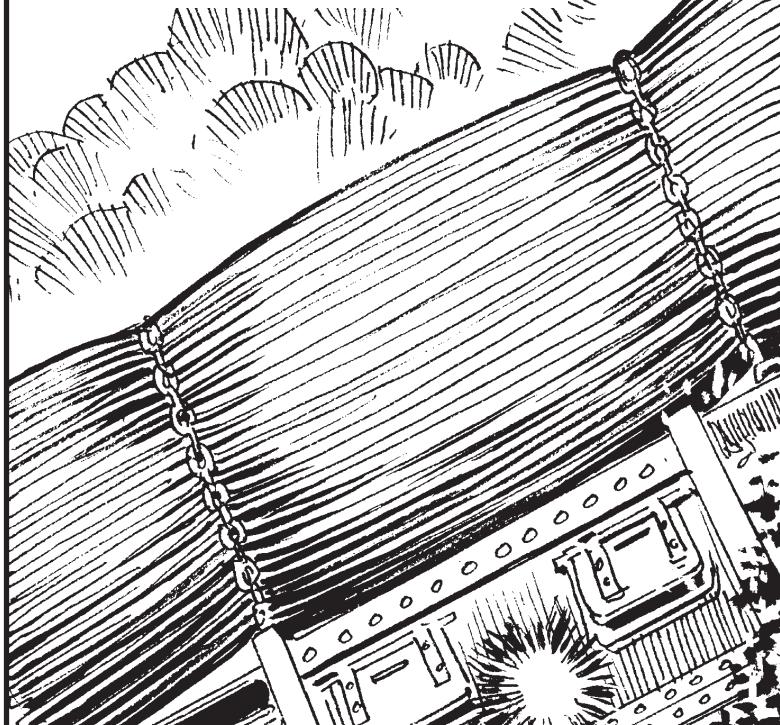


YET EVEN AS THE POTATO MASHER LEFT THE ENEMY OFFICER'S HAND...

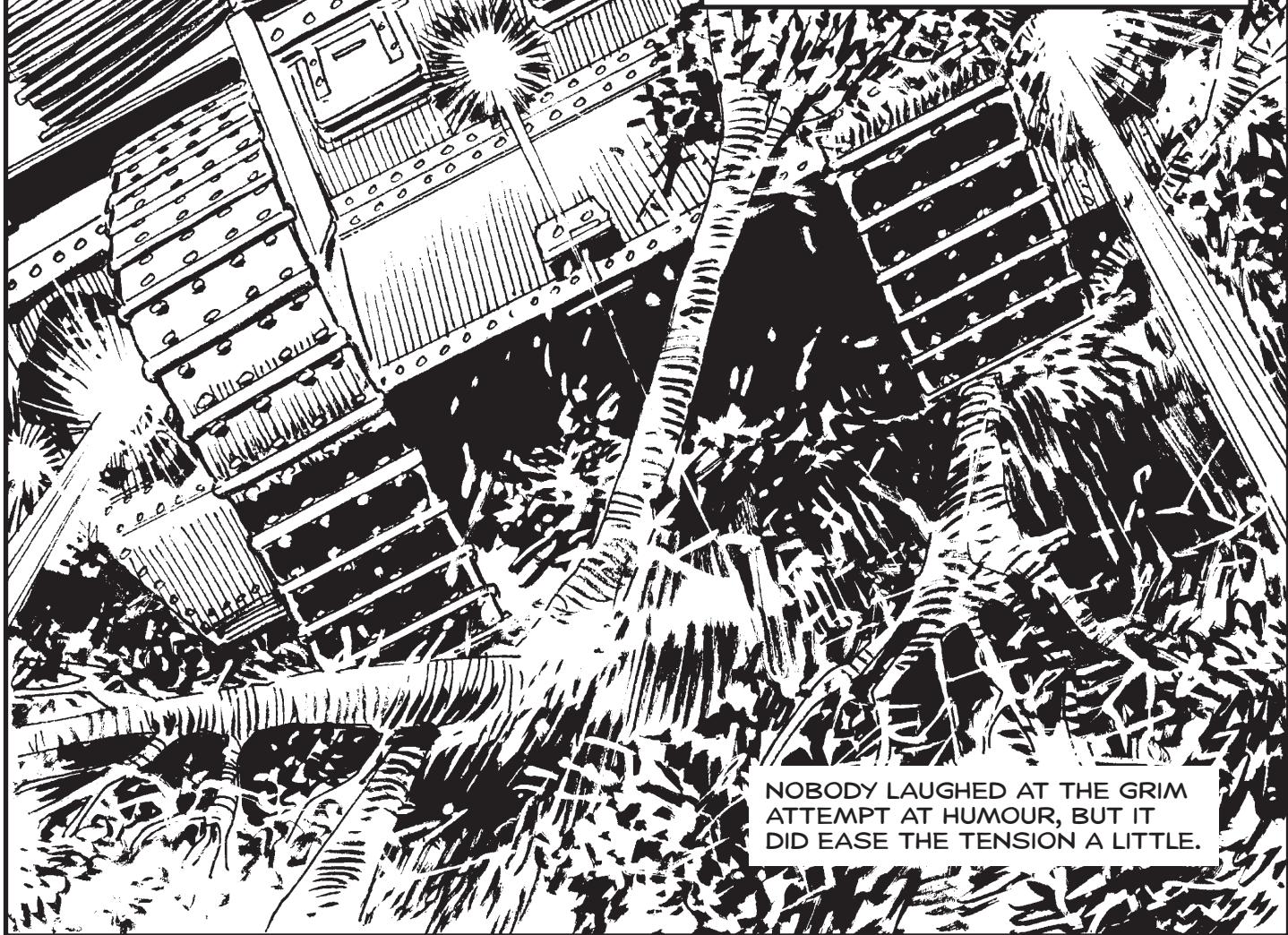


...THE GROUND QUAKED...AND NOT FROM AN EXPLOSION.

CRUSHER WAS JOINING THE BATTLE. HERBERT AND HIS CREW HAD PUT THEIR TANK TO RIGHTS AND HEARD THE SOUNDS OF BATTLE. THEY DID NOT WANT TO MISS OUT.



ONLY FIRE
AT THE ONES IN
FIELD GREY...THE
HUNS IN OTHER
WORDS!



NOBODY LAUGHED AT THE GRIM
ATTEMPT AT HUMOUR, BUT IT
DID EASE THE TENSION A LITTLE.

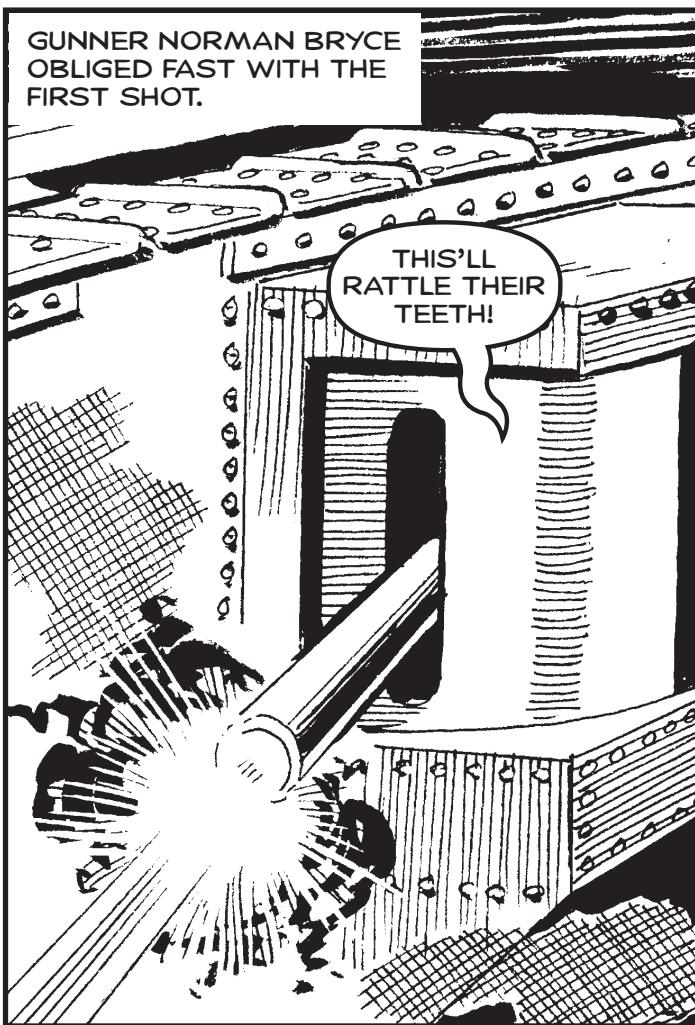
THE FIRST VAGUE SHAPES SPOTTED WERE THE ENEMY TROOPERS TRYING TO MOP UP THE INFANTRY PLATOON. LEWIS GUNS THUNDERED OUT WITH THEIR DISTINCTIVE SOUND.



THE BRITISH SOLDIERS, THE SAME MEN WHO HAD MOCKED THE TANK DITCHED IN THE TRENCH WHEN THE BATTLE HAD BEGUN, WERE A LOT MORE RESPECTFUL NOW.



INSIDE CRUSHER, EVEN WITH HIS RESTRICTED VISION, HERBERT HAD SEEN ENOUGH TO REALISE WHAT THE SITUATION WAS. HE RUMBLED BETWEEN THE DISABLED MARK IV AND THE STORMTROOPERS WHO PULLED BACK INTO BETTER COVER.



THE CREW OF THE FEMALE MARK IV HAD BEEN KNOCKED ABOUT SAVAGELY. THE FEW FIT MEN HELPED THE LEAST WOUNDED OUT BUT THERE WAS LITTLE HOPE FOR THOSE LEFT INSIDE.



HERBERT KNEW THIS WAS THE TIME TO PUSH AT THE SURVIVING STORMTROOPERS. STAN CRAMB, HIS LEWIS IN CONSTANT USE, HAD BEEN KEEPING AN EYE ON THE SITUATION AND SHOUTED A REPORT.



FOR MAHLER IT WAS A TOUGH DECISION TO MAKE,
BUT HE SAW HE HAD LITTLE OPTION BUT TO PULL OUT.



THEY SLID FROM VIEW IN GOOD COVER AMONGST BUSHES AND TREES, BUT THEY COULD STILL HEAR CRUSHER'S ENGINE REVING. THEN ONE OF THE GERMANS DETECTED ANOTHER NOISE...



IT WASN'T THE BRITISH. THE SOUND HAD COME FROM A FELLOW STORMTROOPER, A ONE-EYED SERGEANT CALLED HANS SPATZEN — WHO HAD SURVIVED A SCORE OF NARROW SQUEAKS — AND WAS KNOWN TO THE LEUTNANT.

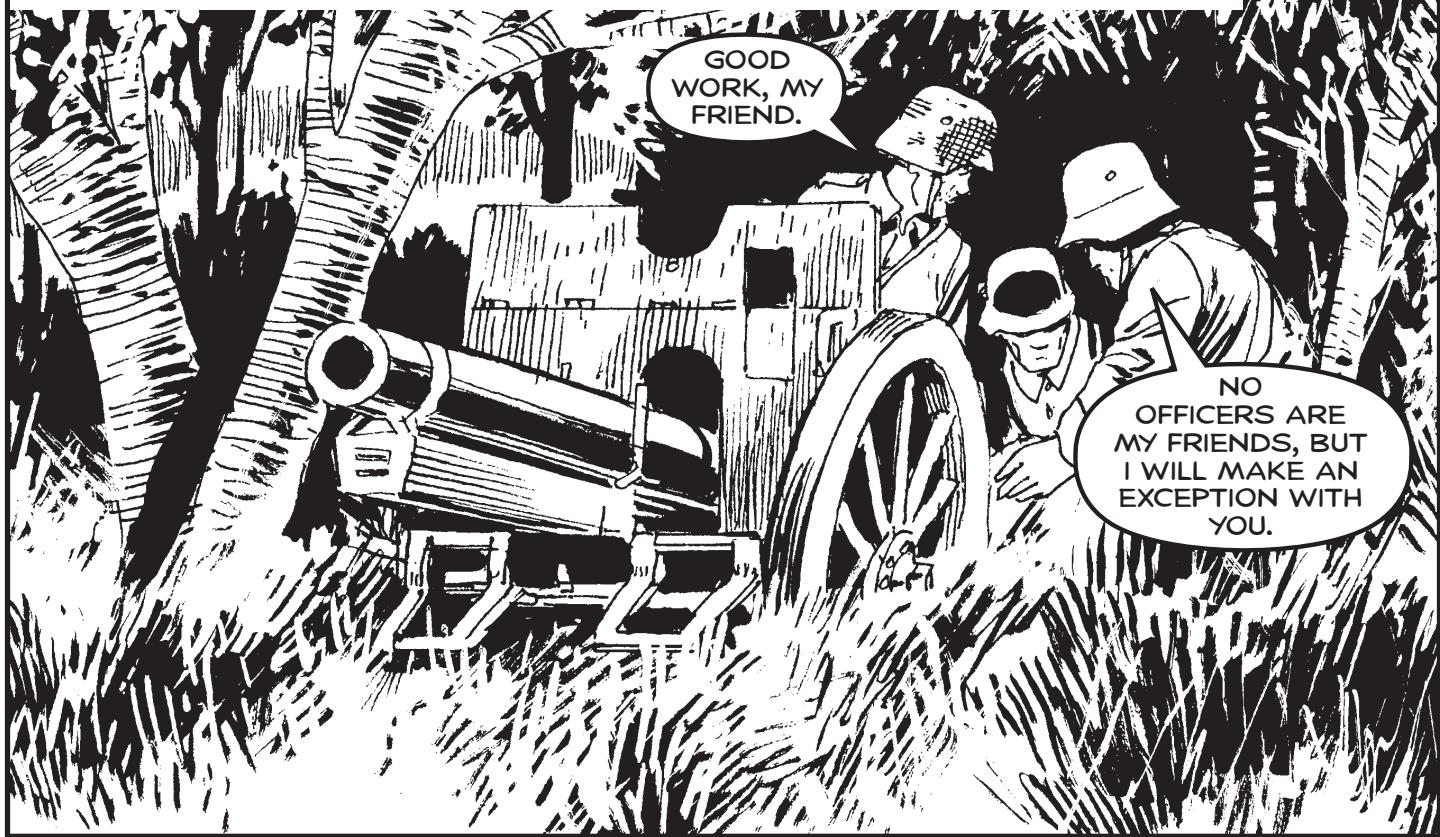


THE FELDWEBEL WAS AN OLD COMRADE-IN-ARMS WHO, LIKE MAHLER, HAD BEEN RECRUITED INTO THE STOSSTRUPPEN EARLY ON. SPATZEN HAD MADE SERGEANT, BUT HE BORE NO GRUDGE THAT HIS OLD TRENCH-MATE WAS AN OFFICER.





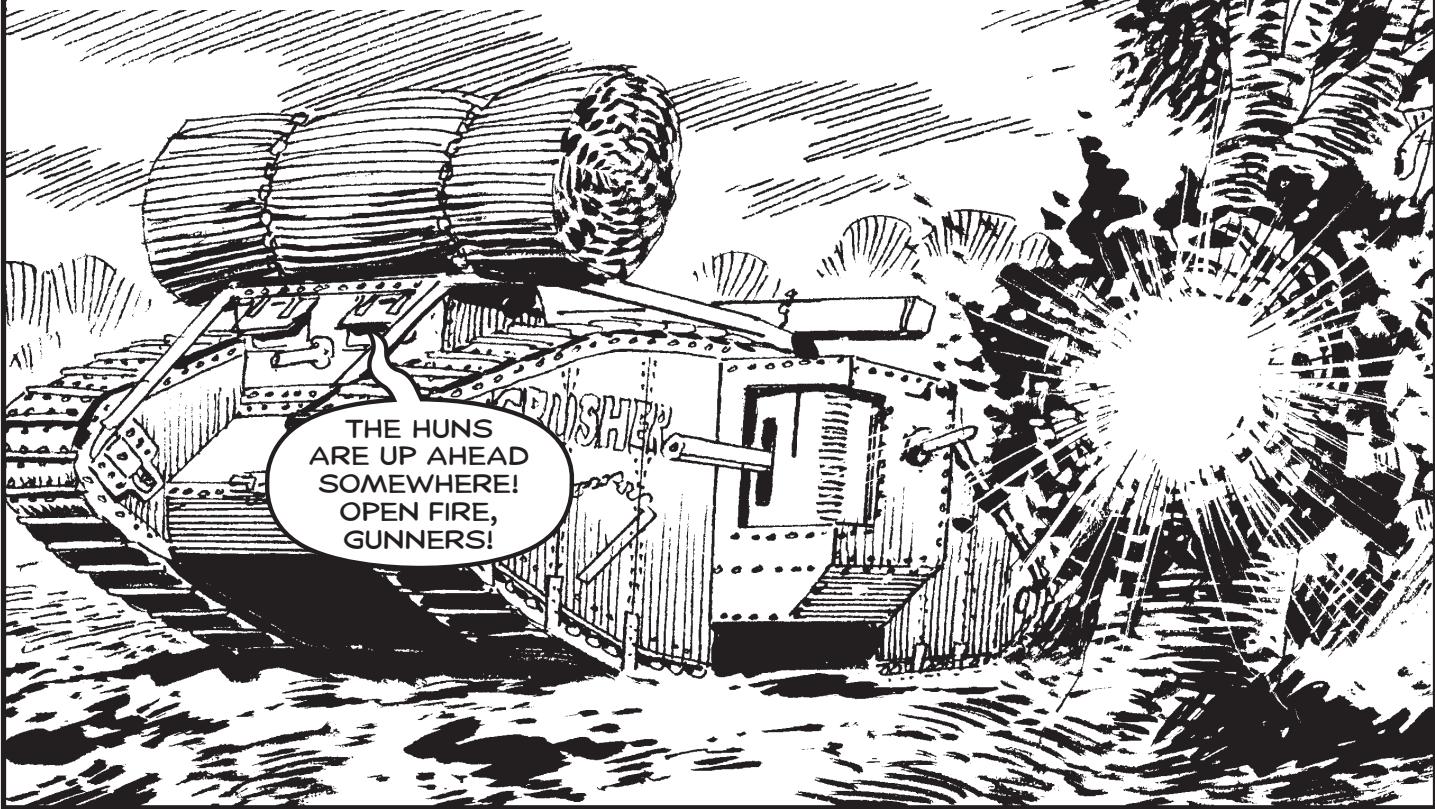
...STORMTROOPERS HAD ALSO REALISED THAT THEY NEEDED MORE FIREPOWER. BEGGING, BORROWING OR STEALING A RELATIVELY LIGHT 77MM FELDKANONE 96S AND DRAGGING THEM THROUGH THE MUD WAS ONE OPTION.



THE SOUND OF THE MARK IV DAIMLER ENGINE WAS COMING CLOSER, BUT HERBERT DID NOT LIKE THE LOOK OF THE INCREASINGLY DENSE UNDERGROWTH AHEAD. HE CALLED A HALT.



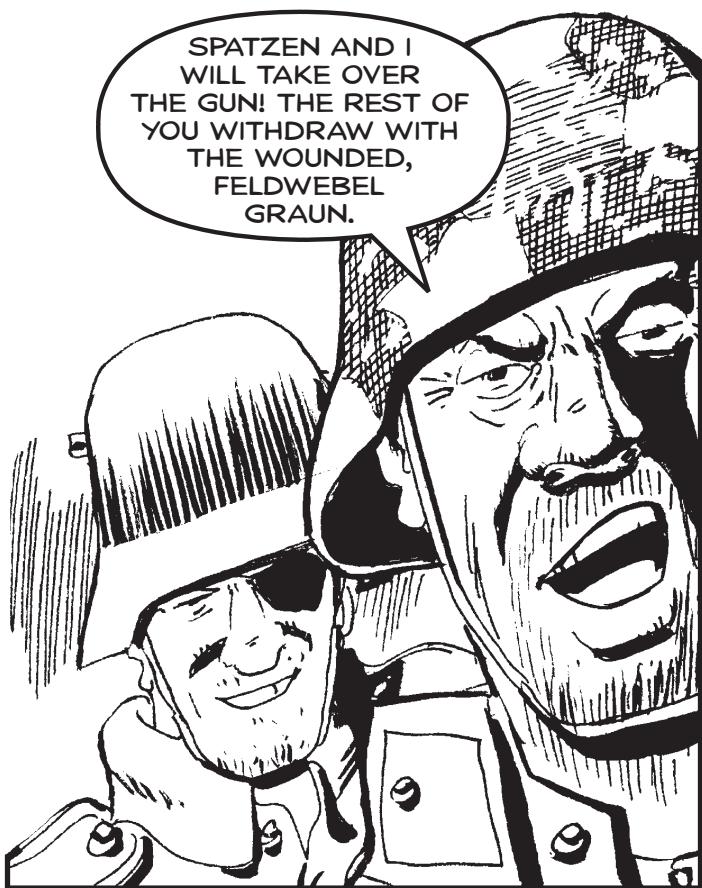
IT COULD TAKE SERGEANT DIXON AND HIS TWO STEERSMEN, LEN AND ADAM, ALMOST FIVE MINUTES TO ACCOMPLISH A U-TURN WITH CRUSHER. THEY HAD JUST BEGUN THE LABORIOUS PROCEDURE WHEN A 77MM SHELL MISSED BY A FRACTION, SLAMMING INTO A TREE.



MICK AND NORMAN WERE BOTH AIMING BLIND, BUT ONE OF THEIR SIX-POUNDER ROUNDS DID DREADFUL DAMAGE TO THE HIDDEN OPPPOSITION.



MAHLER BELLOWED ORDERS AT ONCE.



GRAUN OBeyed AT ONCE TO ORGANISE THE OTHER MEN.



RELISHING THE ACTION, SPATZEN BUCKLED DOWN TO HELP LOAD AND FIRE ANOTHER 77MM ANTI-TANK ROUND.



THE LAST ROUND WOULD NOT BE NEEDED ANYWAY AS THE PREVIOUS SHELL HAD STRUCK HOME SQUARE AND TRUE. THE IMPACT SHOOK CRUSHER. SAM, HIS CAP DISLODGED, HIT HIS HEAD HARD WHEN HE WAS FLUNG AGAINST SOLID METAL.



THE TWO GERMANS HEARD AND FELT THE SHOCKWAVE FROM THEIR HIT, BUT THEIR CRIES OF JUBILATION DIED ON THEIR LIPS. A TREE HIT EARLIER BY THE SHELL THAT HAD MISSED THE STORMTROOPERS BEGAN TO TOPPLE.



THERE WAS NO ESCAPE. SPATZEN'S CHARMED LIFE WAS OVER.



DESPITE HIS LEUTNANT'S ORDERS, GRAUN AND ONE OF THE MEN HAD STAYED CLOSE TO GIVE COVERING FIRE IF REQUIRED. THEY SAW SPATZEN WAS PAST ALL HELP, BUT THEY DID GRAB MAHLER.



MAHLER WAS OUT COLD. HE WOULD DISCOVER WHEN HE CAME TO THAT THE SURVIVING STOSSTRUPPEN, ESPECIALLY GRAUN, HAD ACCEPTED HIM AT LAST.



IT HAD TAKEN A LOT OF TIME, AND PERHAPS HE WOULD NOT LIVE LONG ENOUGH TO ENJOY IT WHEN THEY ALL WENT BACK INTO ACTION, BUT HE HAD FINALLY WON THEIR RESPECT.

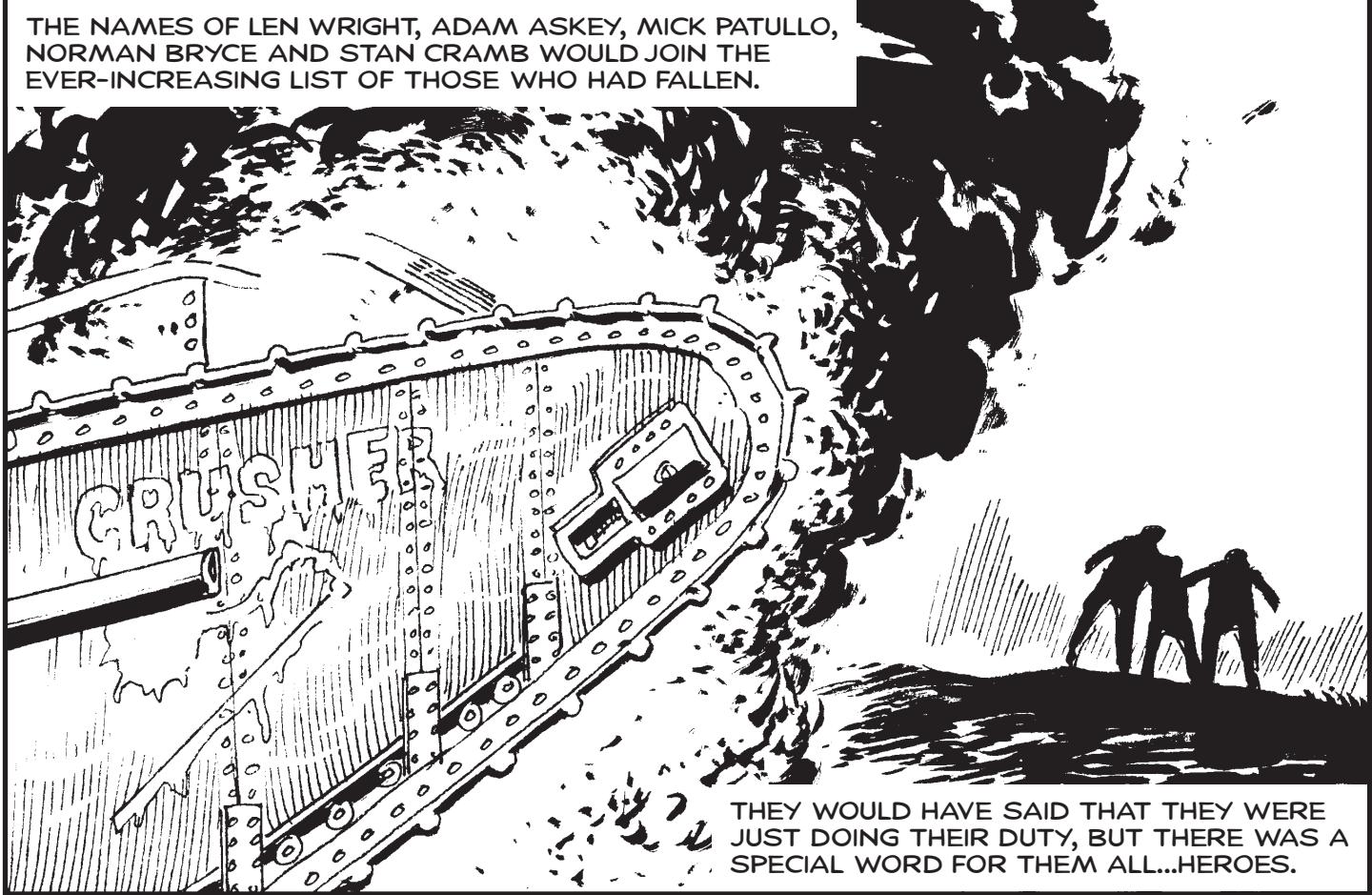
AS FOR THE BRITISH, A SEMI-CONSCIOUS SERGEANT DIXON HAD STUMBLLED FROM THE SMOKING WRECKAGE. SAM HAD BEEN GRABBED BY HERBERT WHOSE SHOULDER WAS GASHED AND THEY TOO TUMBLED FREE.



THAT WAS NOT POSSIBLE AS AMMO AND FUEL FED THE FLAMES. THE OTHERS WERE ALREADY PAST ALL HELP. THE THREE SURVIVORS KNEW THAT.



THE NAMES OF LEN WRIGHT, ADAM ASKEY, MICK PATULLO, NORMAN BRYCE AND STAN CRAMB WOULD JOIN THE EVER-INCREASING LIST OF THOSE WHO HAD FALLEN.



THEY WOULD HAVE SAID THAT THEY WERE JUST DOING THEIR DUTY, BUT THERE WAS A SPECIAL WORD FOR THEM ALL...HEROES.

THE THREE SURVIVORS WERE PICKED UP BY STRETCHER-BEARERS RISKING LIFE AND LIMB TO BRING IN THE WOUNDED. HERBERT WOKE NEXT DAY IN AN AID STATION WITH HIS SHOULDER BANDAGED AND HIS BODY ACHING. DIXON WAS ON HIS FEET BUT LOOKING LIKE HE HAD BEEN THROUGH THE MILL.

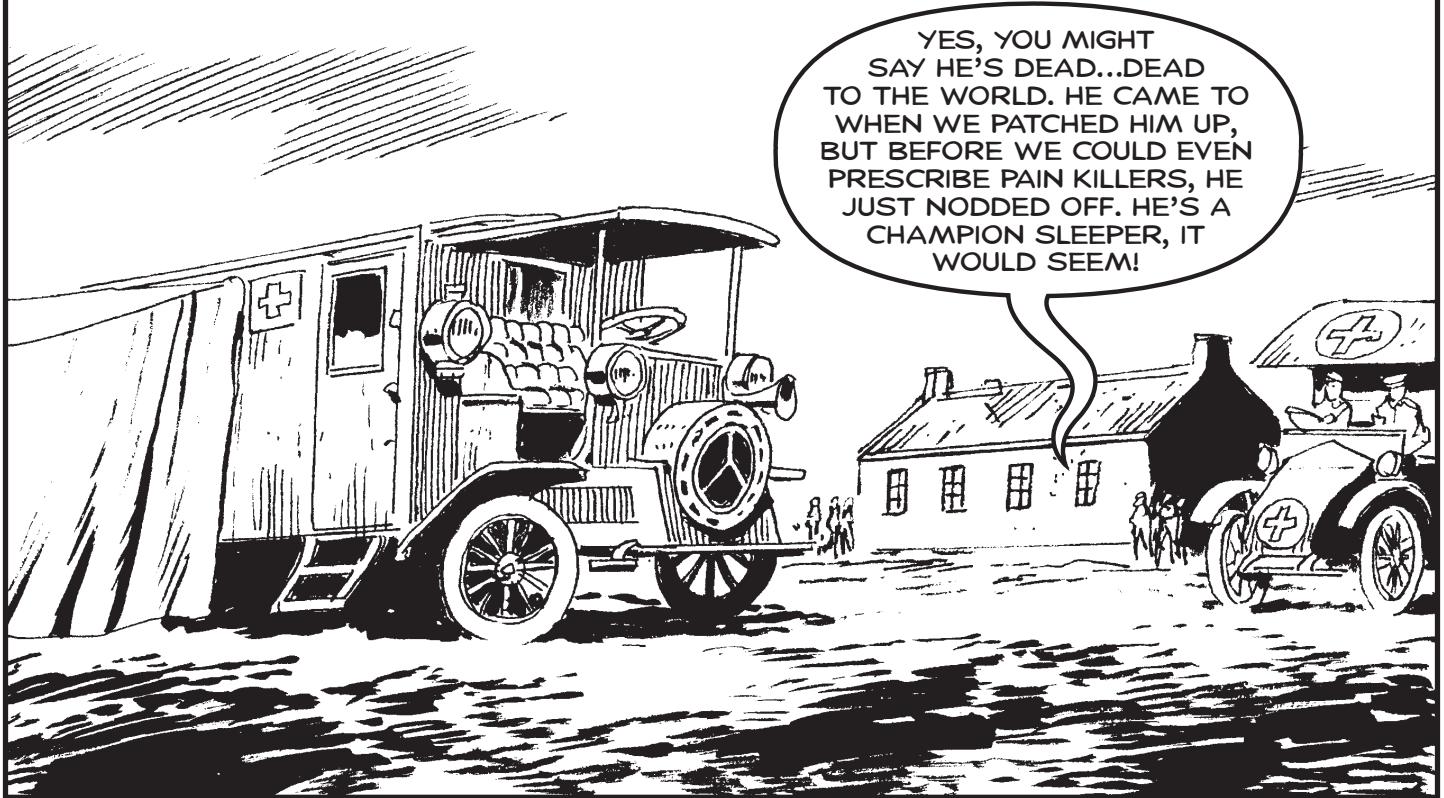


AS HERBERT TOOK ALL THIS IN, HE GLANCED AROUND AND SAW THAT SAM WAS STRETCHED OUT MOTIONLESS, HIS HEAD BANDAGED, IN THE NEXT BED.

OUR PLUCKY AIRCRAFTMAN! HE'S NOT LOOKING GOOD. IN FACT, IS HE...



A VERY TIRED BUT
STILL CHEERFUL
DOCTOR SPOKE UP.



ALL THREE WERE DISCHARGED BACK TO DUTY AT THE SAME TIME. DIXON AND HERBERT WOULD SERVE AT THE TANKODROME UNTIL THEY WERE FULLY FIT AGAIN, BUT IT WAS BACK TO BLIGHTY AND HIS R.N.A.S. BASE FOR SAM.



THE ALLIED STRATEGY HAD SEEN GROUND WON WITH A NINE-MILE BITE INTO THE GERMAN DEFENCES. THE CAVALRY HAD NOT BEEN ABLE TO PLAY THEIR FULL PART, AND BY THE END OF NOVEMBER THE ENEMY WERE COUNTER-ATTACKING.



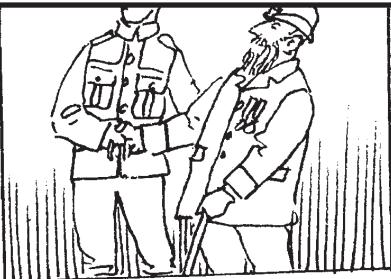
THE ALLIES FELL BACK ON DECEMBER 5TH AND 6TH. SOME OF THE TERRITORY GAINED WITH SUCH EFFORT WAS LOST.

EACH SIDE HAD LOST SOMETHING LIKE 40,000 CASUALTIES. THE TANKS HAD FARED WELL IN SOME WAYS AND NOT SO WELL IN OTHERS. THEY WERE STILL NOT MANOEUVRABLE ENOUGH AND HAD CHINKS IN THEIR ARMOUR...



...BUT THE TACTICS USED OVERALL HAD GIVEN A HINT THAT SIMILAR STRATEGIES COULD UNLOCK THE STALEMATE OF TRENCH WARFARE THAT HELD EUROPE IN ITS GRIP.

BACK AT THE RAILWAY STATION WHERE HE SPENT ALMOST ALL HIS LIFE, JIMMY LOMAS WAS IN FULL SONG ABOUT THE SUCCESS OF THE BRITISH ARMOURED UNITS. HE WAS BLISSFULLY UNAWARE OF HOW CLOSE HE HAD BEEN TO THOSE TIN-CANS WHEN THEY HAD TRUNDLED PAST ON THEIR WAY WITH SAM TO FRANCE.



A CHIP OFF THE OLD BLOCK
TO MAINTAIN THE HONOUR & GLORY
OF THE
BRITISH EMPIRE

WHO
WOULD BELIEVE IT?
METAL MONSTERS
HOUND THE
HUN!

TANKS
COME UP
TRUMPS

CRUSHER AND THE LIKE
MIGHT HAVE DONE THAT,
BUT THERE WAS STILL
MUCH FIGHTING TO FACE.
WOULD JIMMY BE ONE OF
THE YOUNG MEN EVENTUALLY
DRAWN INTO THAT STRUGGLE?

Commando
THE END

APPROVED BY THE
QUARTERMASTER
Date 20 NOVEMBER 2014

UK
ISSUE
DATE

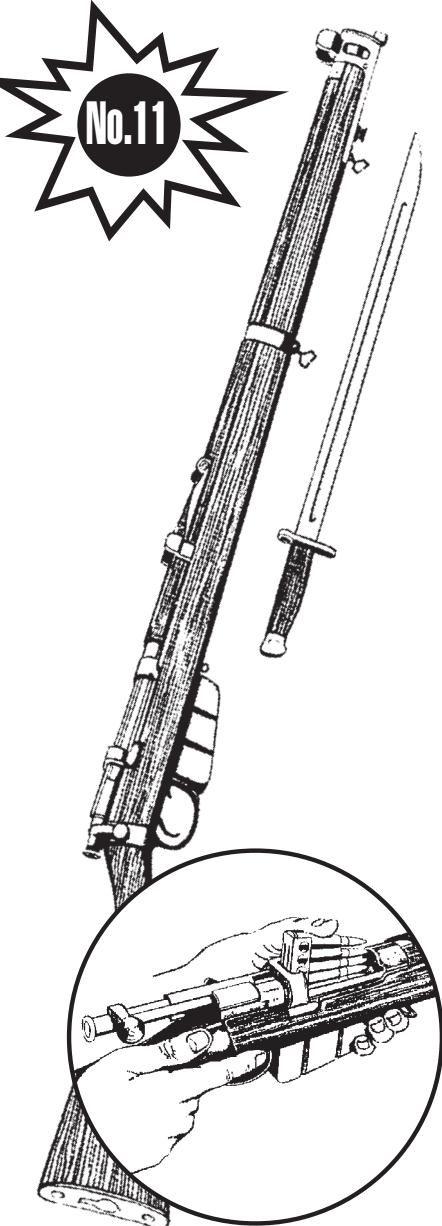
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BATTLE FILE

BATTLE OF CAMBRAI (France)
November 20 to December 3, 1917



Commanding: General Sir Douglas Haig.
 British

General Erich Ludendorff.
 German Empire

Armies: British Third Army and the Tank Corps.
German Second Army.

Objective: The Tank Corps want to prove their worth and based on this a major breakthrough is planned.

Outcome: Cavalry Corps cannot advance fast enough to take advantage of early knock-out punch and the enemy regain lost territory.

Casualties: British: 44,000. German: 53,000 German.

Remarks: Later, in October, 1918, on the same ground, British and German tank units would clash for the first time.

We hope you enjoyed this eleventh part of our Great Warriors series, the next one follows in two weeks (No 4759) so remember to tell everyone you know who'll be interested. In the meantime, take a look at the quiz opposite — there's a chance to test your knowledge and win a 10-story Carlton Collection at the same time.

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INTEL TEST

Test your Great War Knowledge and try to win a copy of "Over The Top!" the latest collection of Commando stories from Carlton. There are ten WW1 stories we know you'll enjoy...if you win! Good luck!

- 1.) Who suffered from Dug-Out Disease?
- 2.) What did British soldiers do when a Rum Jar came their way?
- 3.) What was a salient?
- 4.) Who was Hans Wurst?
- 5.) Q-ships were introduced for what task?
- 6.) The plaque covering the grave of the Unknown Soldier in Westminster

ANSWERS:

- 1.) Those in the British Army whose rank allowed them to keep under cover deep in a dug-out.
- 2.) Duck. It was a projectile from the feared German trench mortars.
- 3.) Any part of the line of trenches which jutted out into enemy territory.
- 4.) The typical German soldier; literally Johnnny Shausage, a version of Tommy Atkins.
- 5.) Royal Navy vessels fitted with concealed guns and disguised as merchant ships to lure Old soldiers never die...young ones wish they would!"
- 6.) Belgium. The soil which fills the grave came from France.
- 7.) "Old soldiers never die...young ones wish they would!"

Send your answer to the prize question to: **Great Warriors Quiz No 11, Commando, DC Thomson & Co., Ltd., 80 Kingsway East, Dundee, DD4 8SL.** Postal entries only, photocopies acceptable. The winner will be selected at random from all the correct answers. The editor's decision is final and no correspondence can be entered into. Closing date 27 November, 2014.

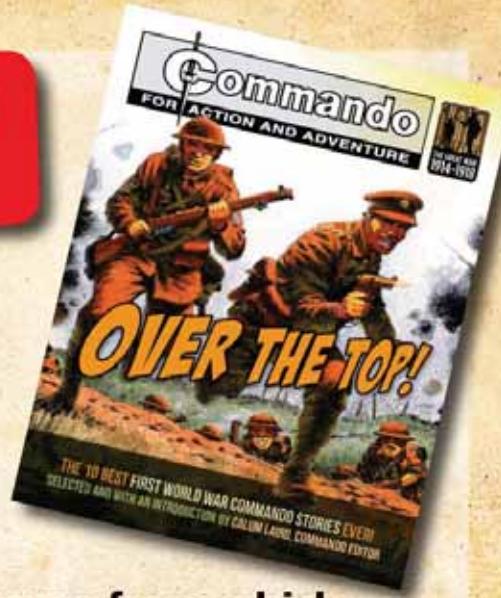
A dangerous spot exposed to machine gun or shell fire near Menin (Ypres) was known as what?

Name.....

Address.....

.....

Postcode.....



Abbey comes from which country?

- 7.) "Old soldiers never die...they simply fade away" ends the first verse of a popular British marching song. How does the second verse end?

PRIZE QUESTION

A dangerous spot exposed to machine gun or shell fire near Menin (Ypres) was known as what?



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CLASH AT CAMBRAI

On the morning of the 28th of June 1914, two pistol shots fired in a Sarajevo street plunged the world into war.

Three years later the awful struggle had changed the face of Europe, and warfare, forever. First the machine gun and then the aircraft had brought the machine to the battlefield. Now it was the turn of another product of the arms industry to make its presence felt — the tank.

Caught up in all this was a young aircraftsman who had managed to get himself inside a tank. Question was, could he get out again?



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