

COMPLETE 63-PAGE ACTION STORY

No.4758
£2

Commando

THE SILVER COLLECTION



TO THE DEATH!

COMMANDO – THE SILVER COLLECTION

Title

TO THE DEATH!

Subject

Happily retired since 1999, Gordon Livingstone was one of Commando's stalwart artists, drawing hundreds of stories from the title's beginning in 1961. This 1989 book is a shining example of the distinctive line art that made him such a hit with Commando fans throughout the decades, myself included.

If you'd like to compare it to Gordon's earlier work, look no further than this month's Gold Collection classic — "Dead Of Night" (No 4756, originally No 141, from 1964). It's interesting to see that even in the earliest days of his career Mr Livingstone's work was just as memorable as it is here. Wonderful stuff.

Scott Montgomery, Deputy Editor

Issue Number

To the Death!, originally Commando No 2304 (August 1989), re-issued as No 3867 (December 2005)

STORY
CYRIL WALKER

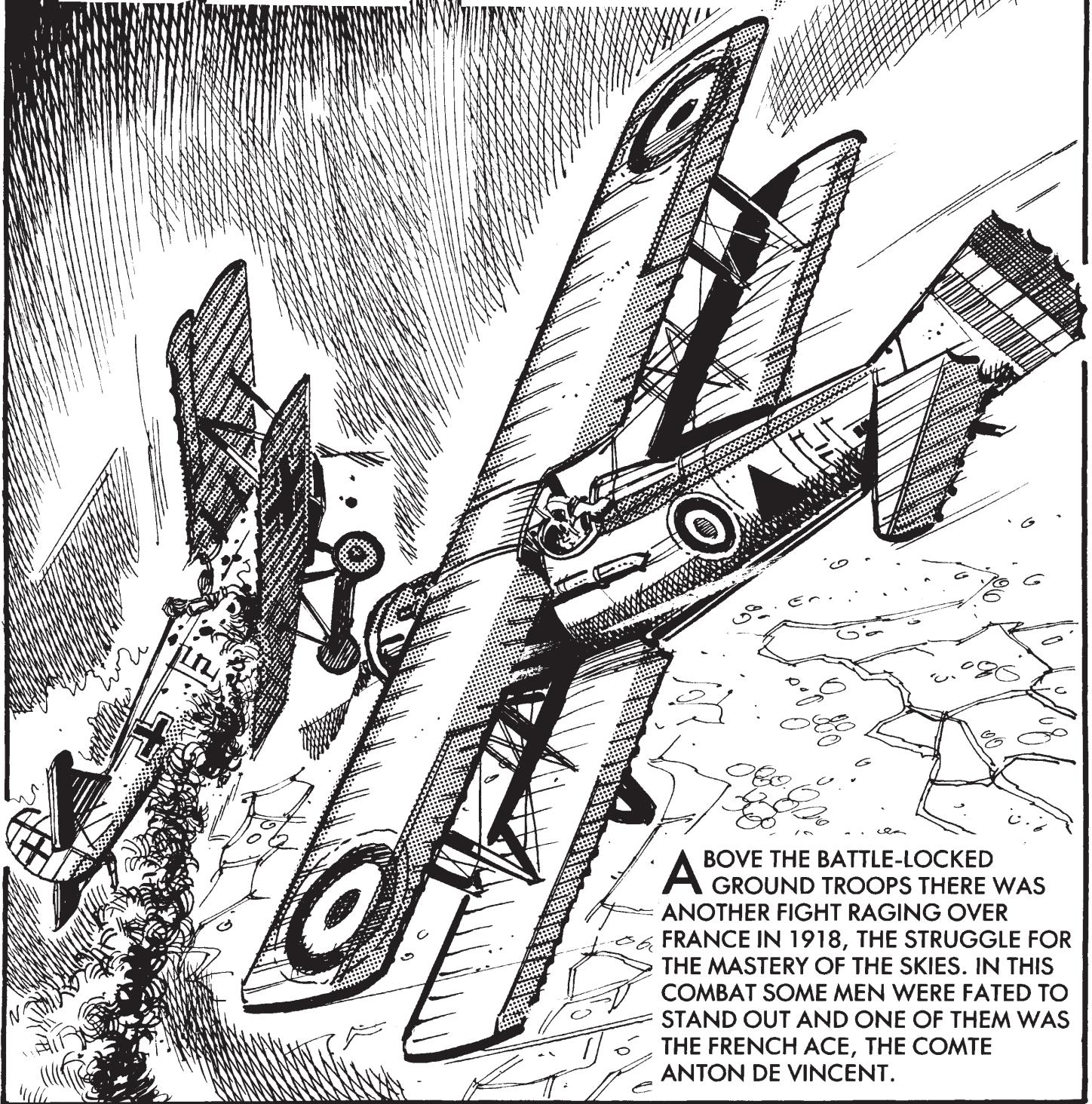
ART
GORDON
LIVINGSTONE

COVER
IAN KENNEDY

First Published
1989
No 2304



TO THE DEATH!

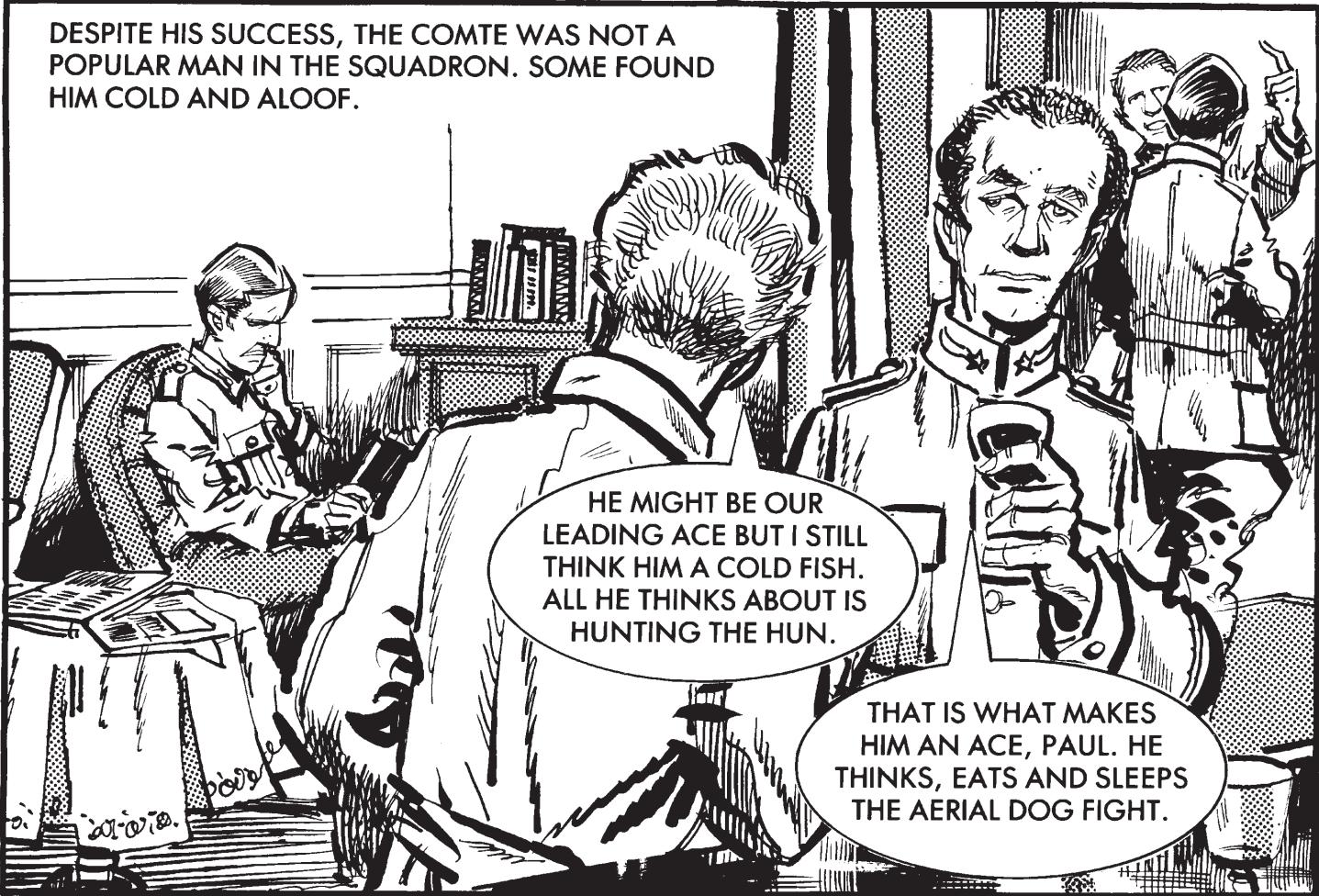


ABOVE THE BATTLE-LOCKED GROUND TROOPS THERE WAS ANOTHER FIGHT RAGING OVER FRANCE IN 1918, THE STRUGGLE FOR THE MASTERY OF THE SKIES. IN THIS COMBAT SOME MEN WERE FATED TO STAND OUT AND ONE OF THEM WAS THE FRENCH ACE, THE COMTE ANTON DE VINCENT.

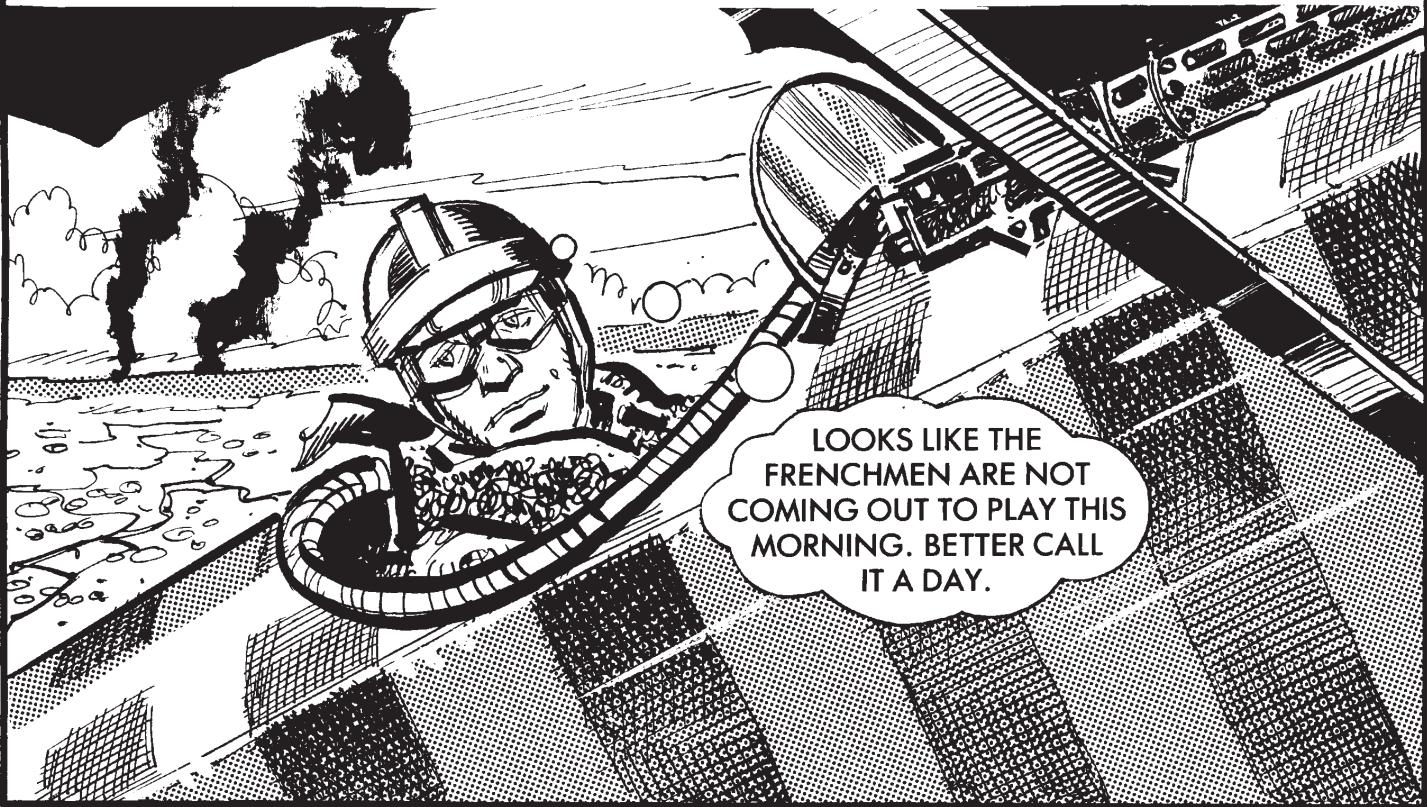
THE COUNT WAS A MAN WHO ENJOYED HIS WAR. TO HIM THE THRILL OF THE KILL WAS THE THING AND THE DUELS HE FOUGHT GAVE HIM DEEP SATISFACTION.



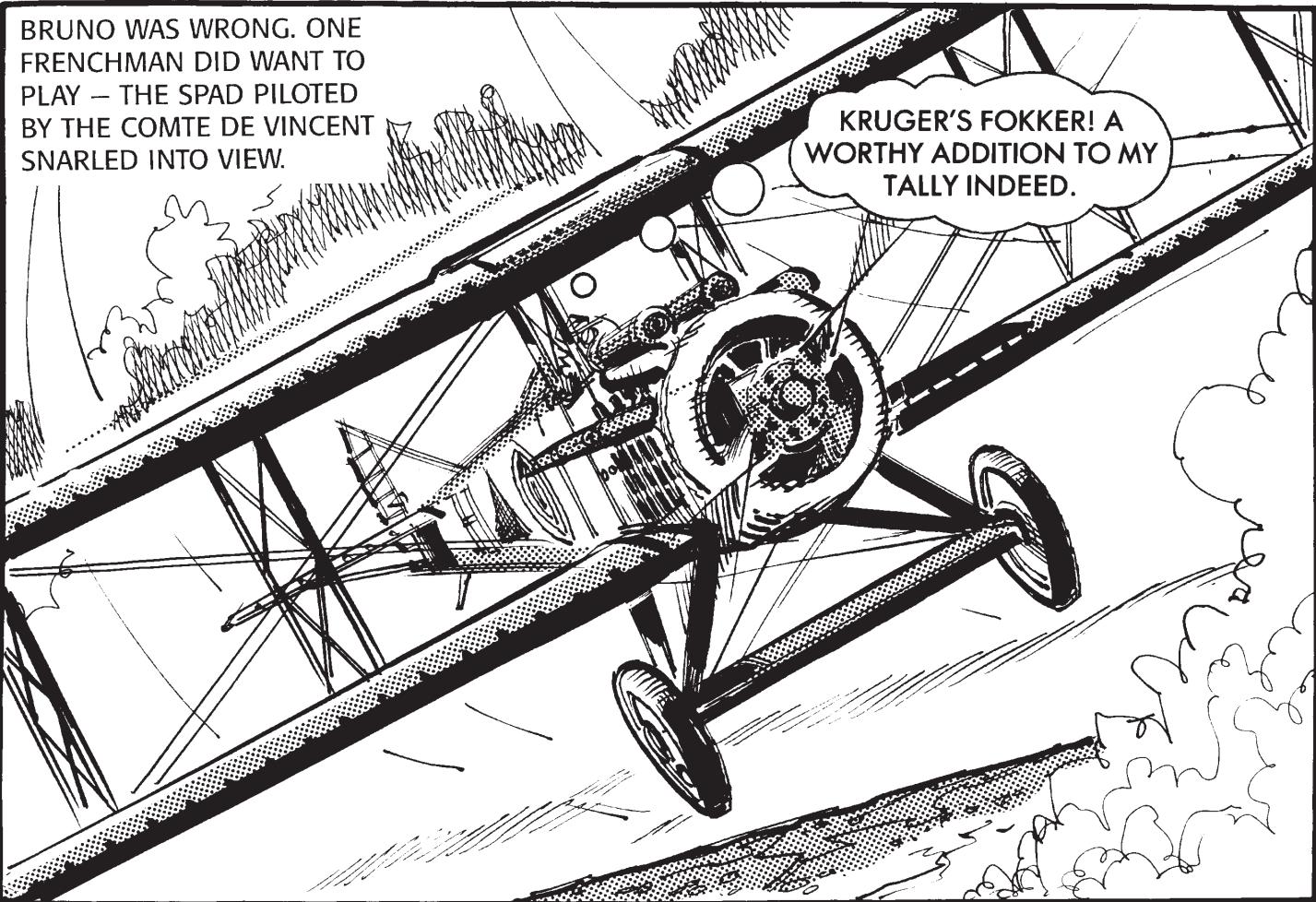
DESPITE HIS SUCCESS, THE COMTE WAS NOT A POPULAR MAN IN THE SQUADRON. SOME FOUND HIM COLD AND ALOOF.



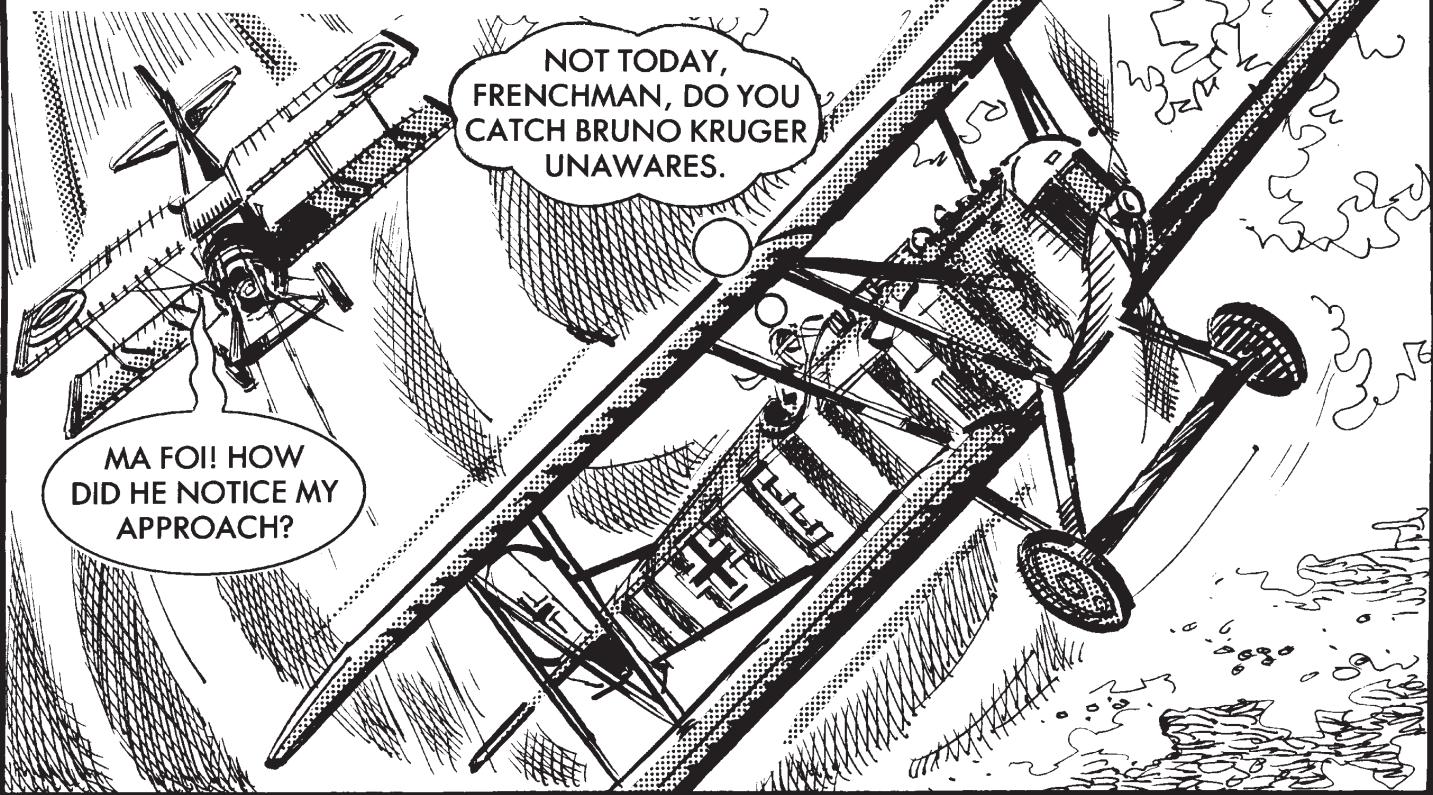
BUT THE GERMANS TOO HAD THEIR ACES, AND BRUNO KRUGER WAS SUCH A ONE. HE TOO FOUGHT HARD BUT HE HAD NONE OF THE COMTE'S IMPLACABLE HATRED OF HIS ENEMY.



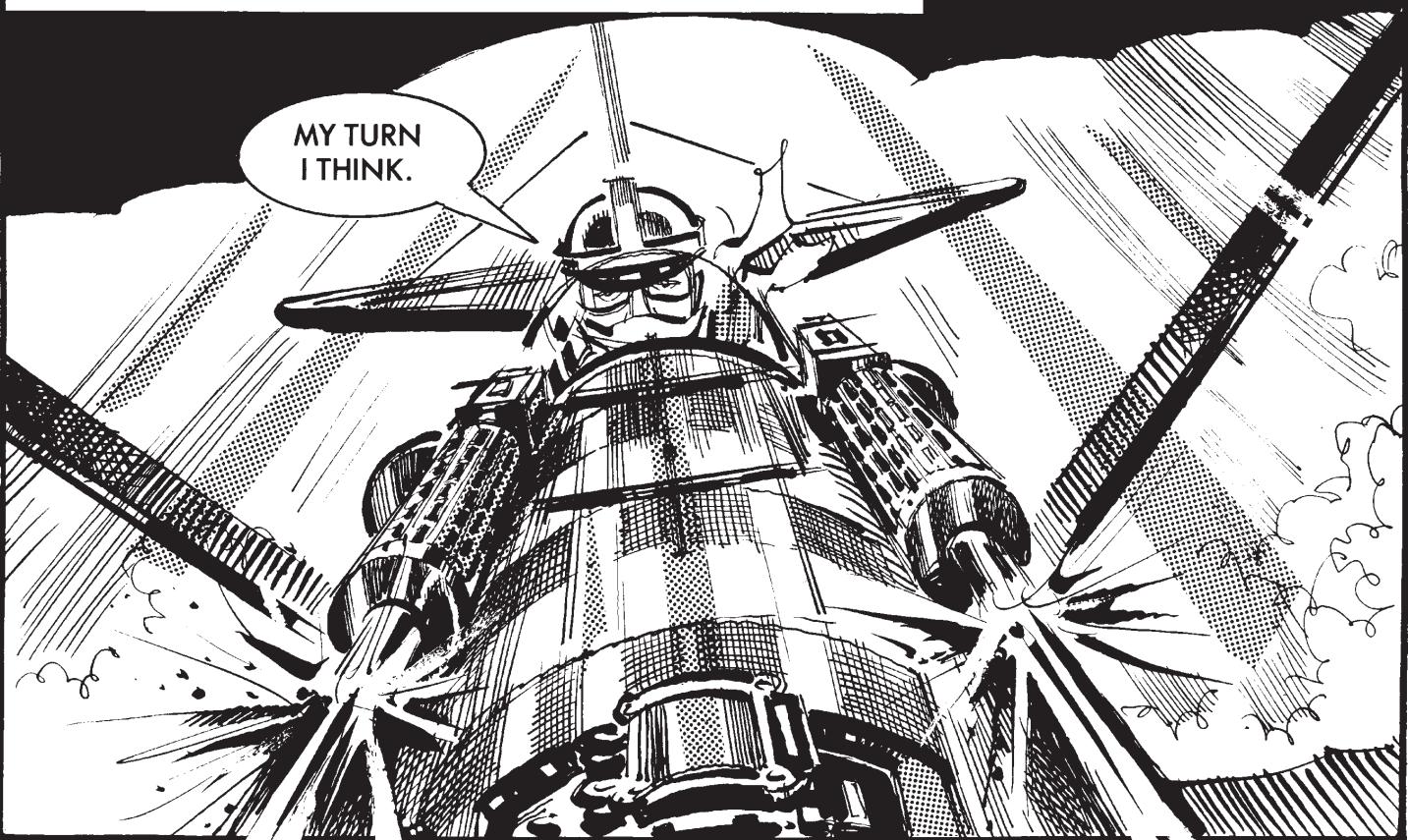
BRUNO WAS WRONG. ONE FRENCHMAN DID WANT TO PLAY – THE SPAD PILOTED BY THE COMTE DE VINCENT SNARLED INTO VIEW.



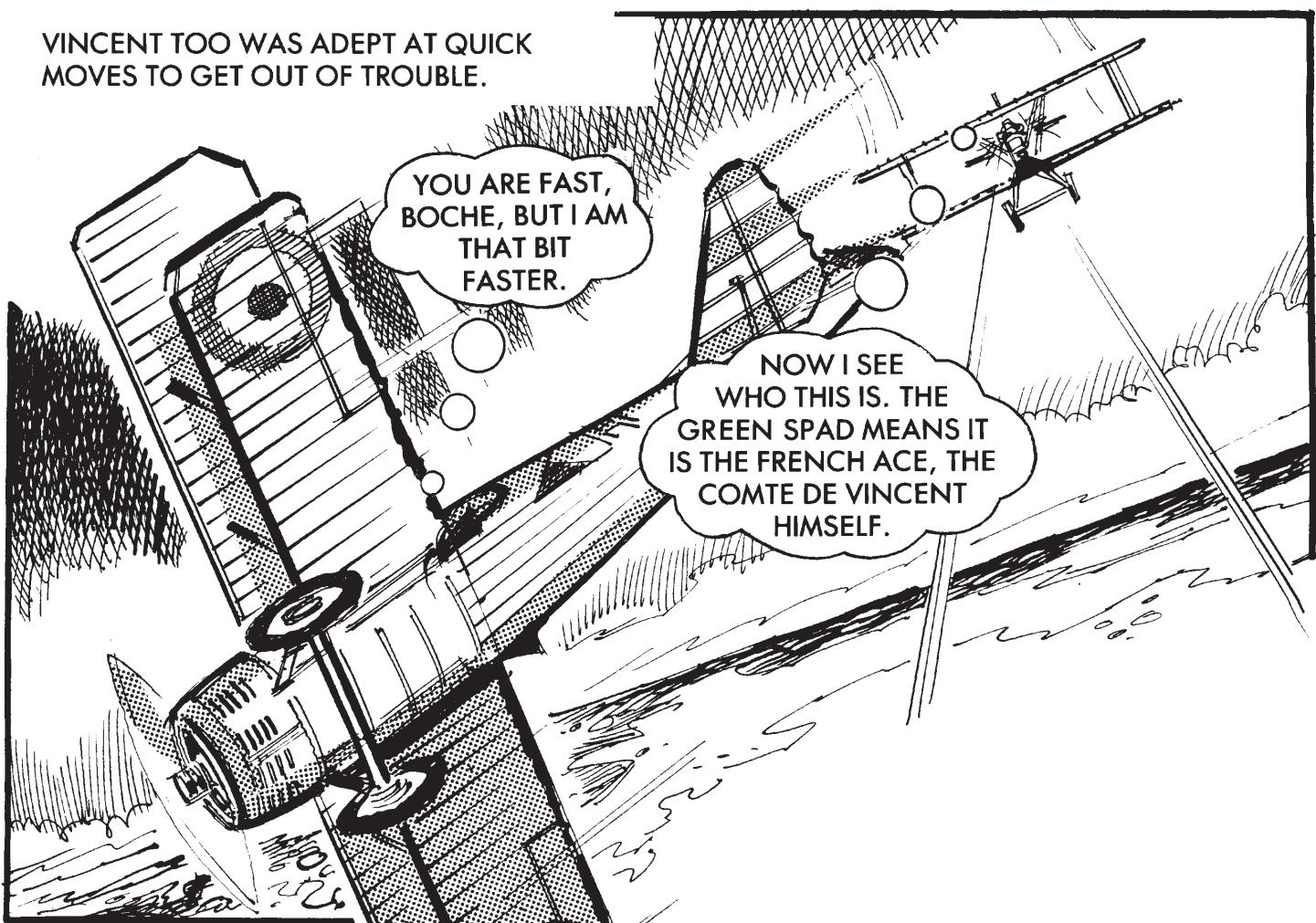
BUT KRUGER WAS FAR TOO WISE TO BE CAUGHT NAPPING. AT THE LAST SECOND HE TOOK VIOLENT AVOIDING ACTION.



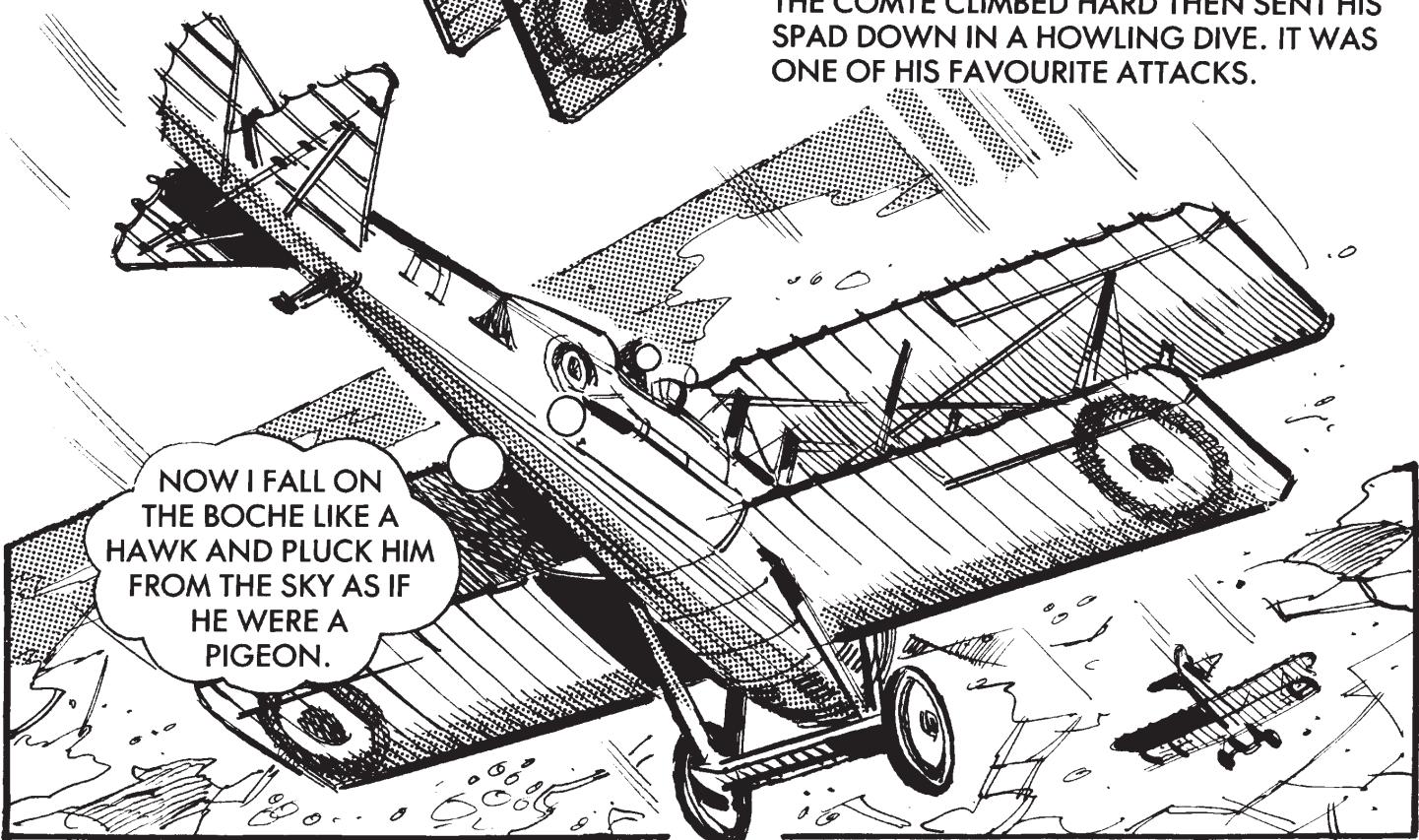
BRUNO FLIPPED THE FOKKER INTO AN ATTACK OF HIS OWN AND SLID BEHIND THE COMTE'S SPAD.



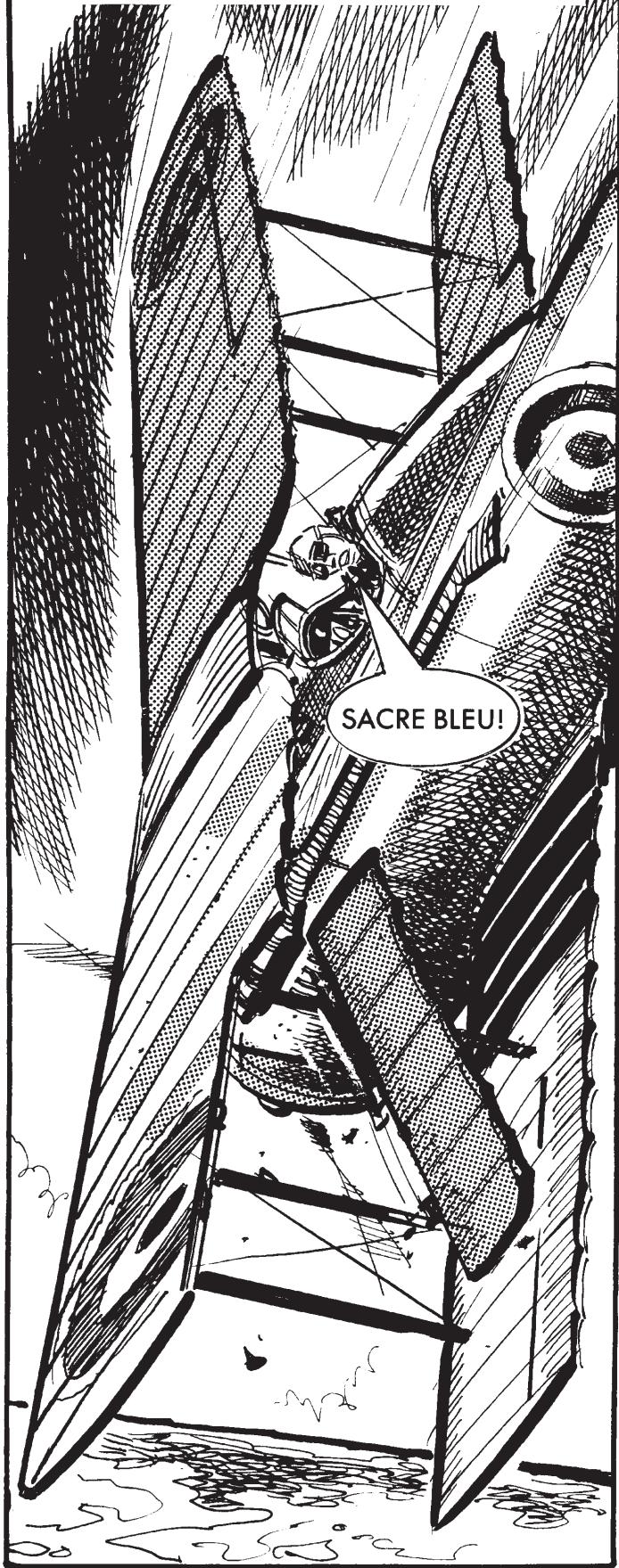
VINCENT TOO WAS ADEPT AT QUICK MOVES TO GET OUT OF TROUBLE.



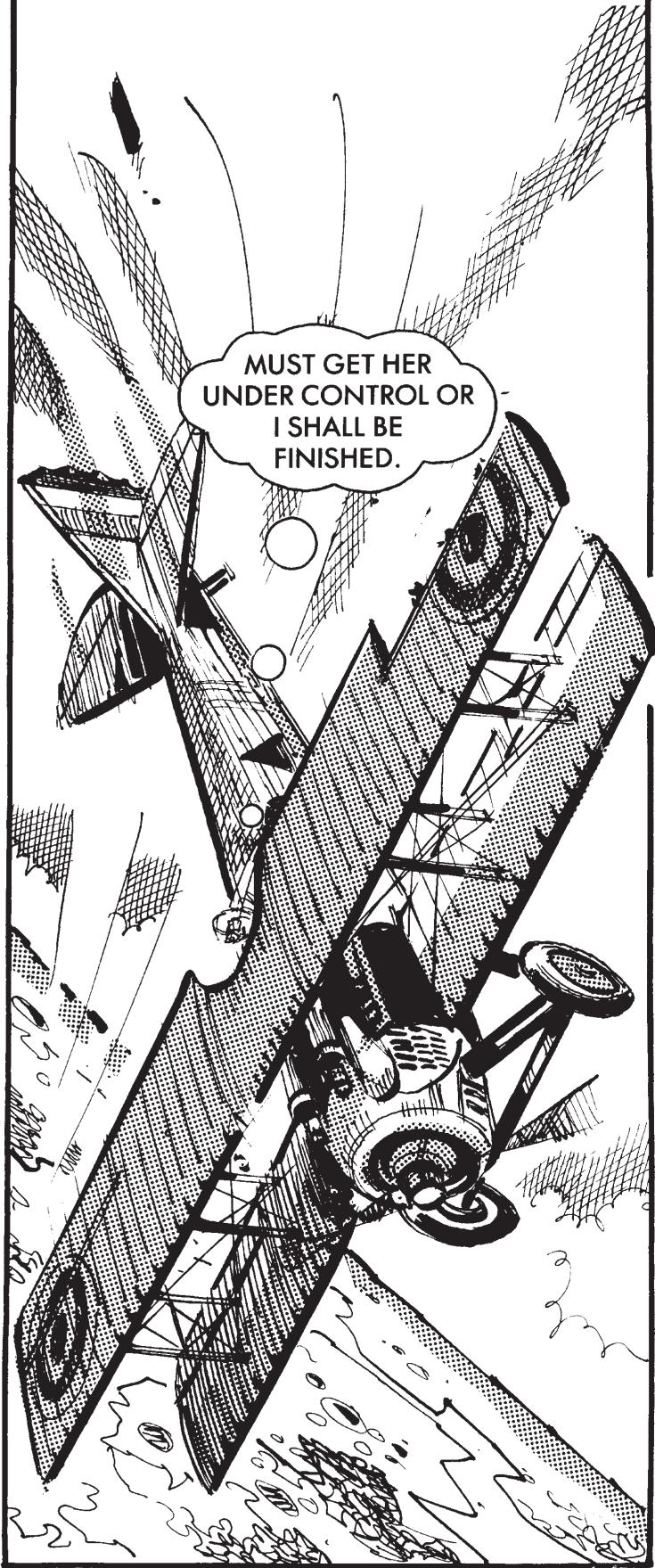
THE COMTE CLIMBED HARD THEN SENT HIS SPAD DOWN IN A HOWLING DIVE. IT WAS ONE OF HIS FAVOURITE ATTACKS.



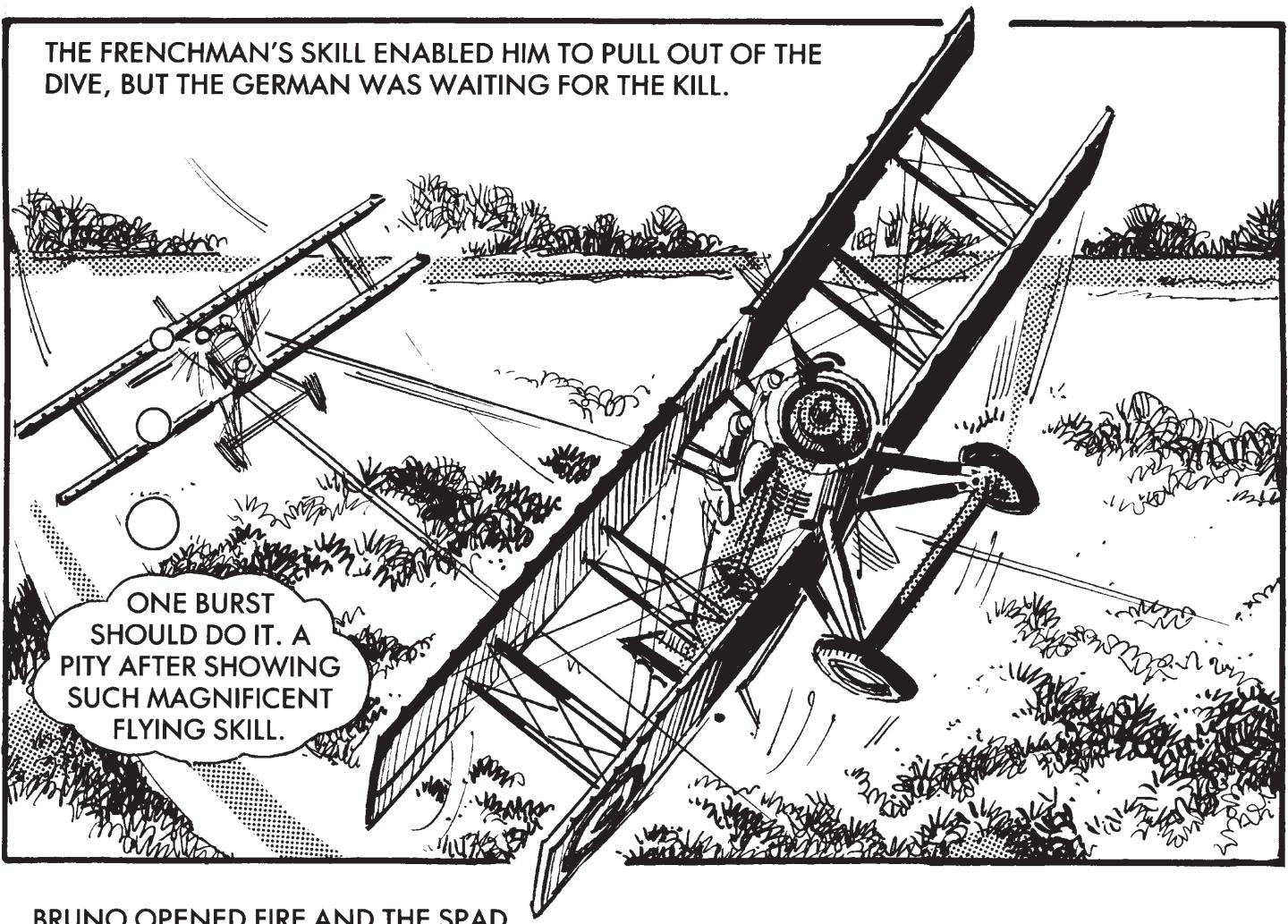
BUT THEN DISASTER STRUCK AS ONE OF THE SPAD'S AILERONS WAS TORN LOOSE BY THE FORCE OF THE SLIPSTREAM.



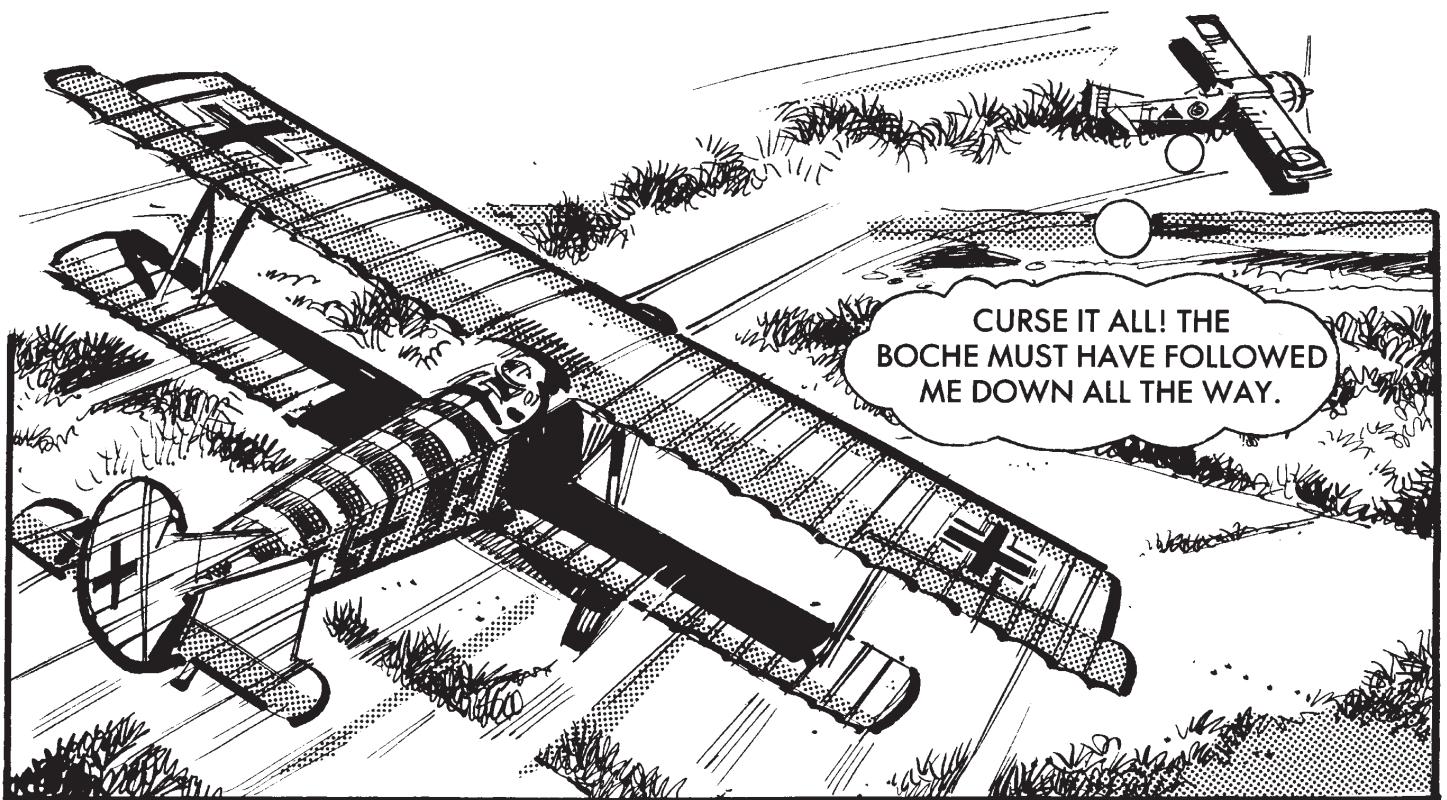
THE COMTE HAD TO FIGHT DESPERATELY TO REGAIN CONTROL AS THE SPAD WENT INTO A VIOLENT SPIN.

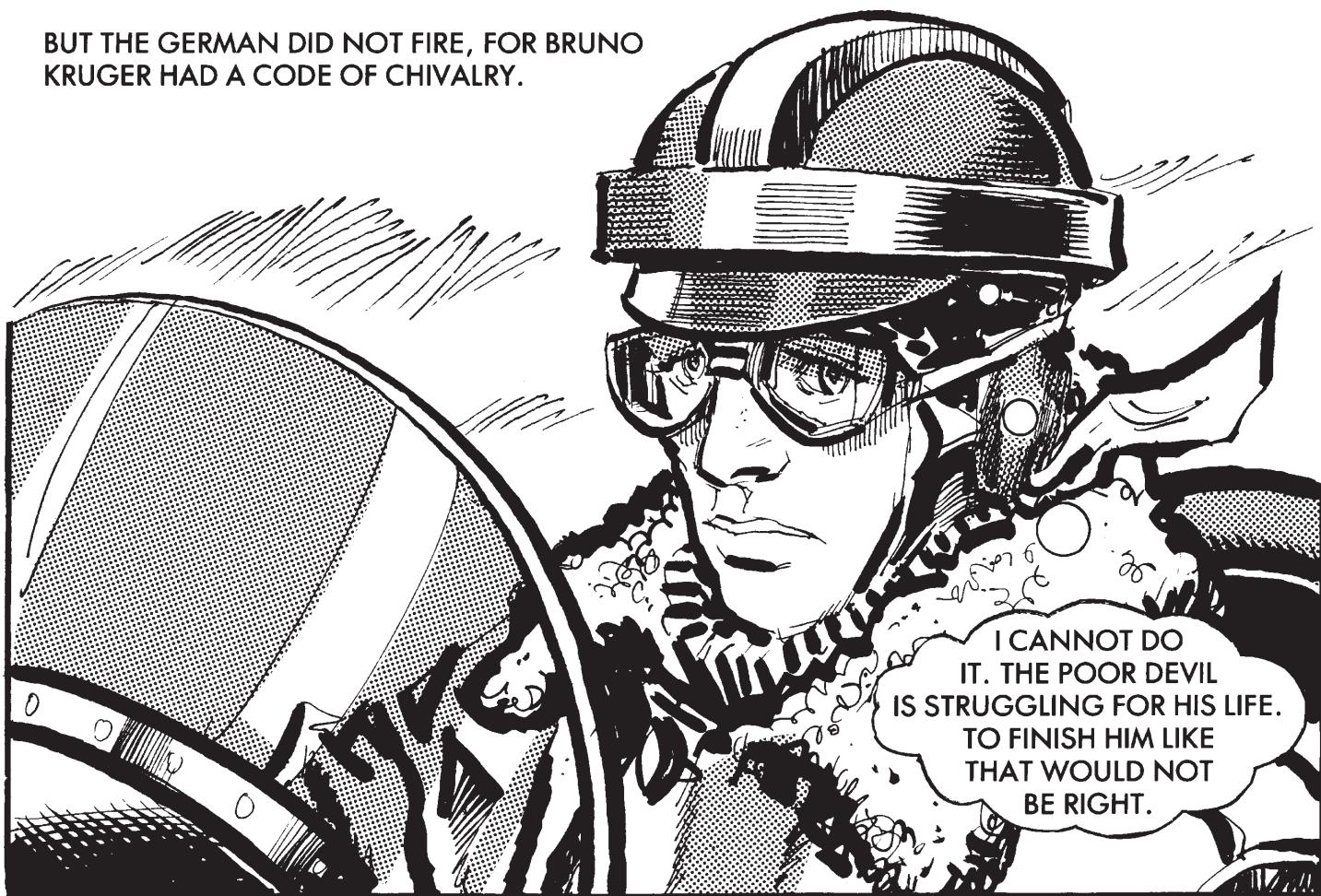
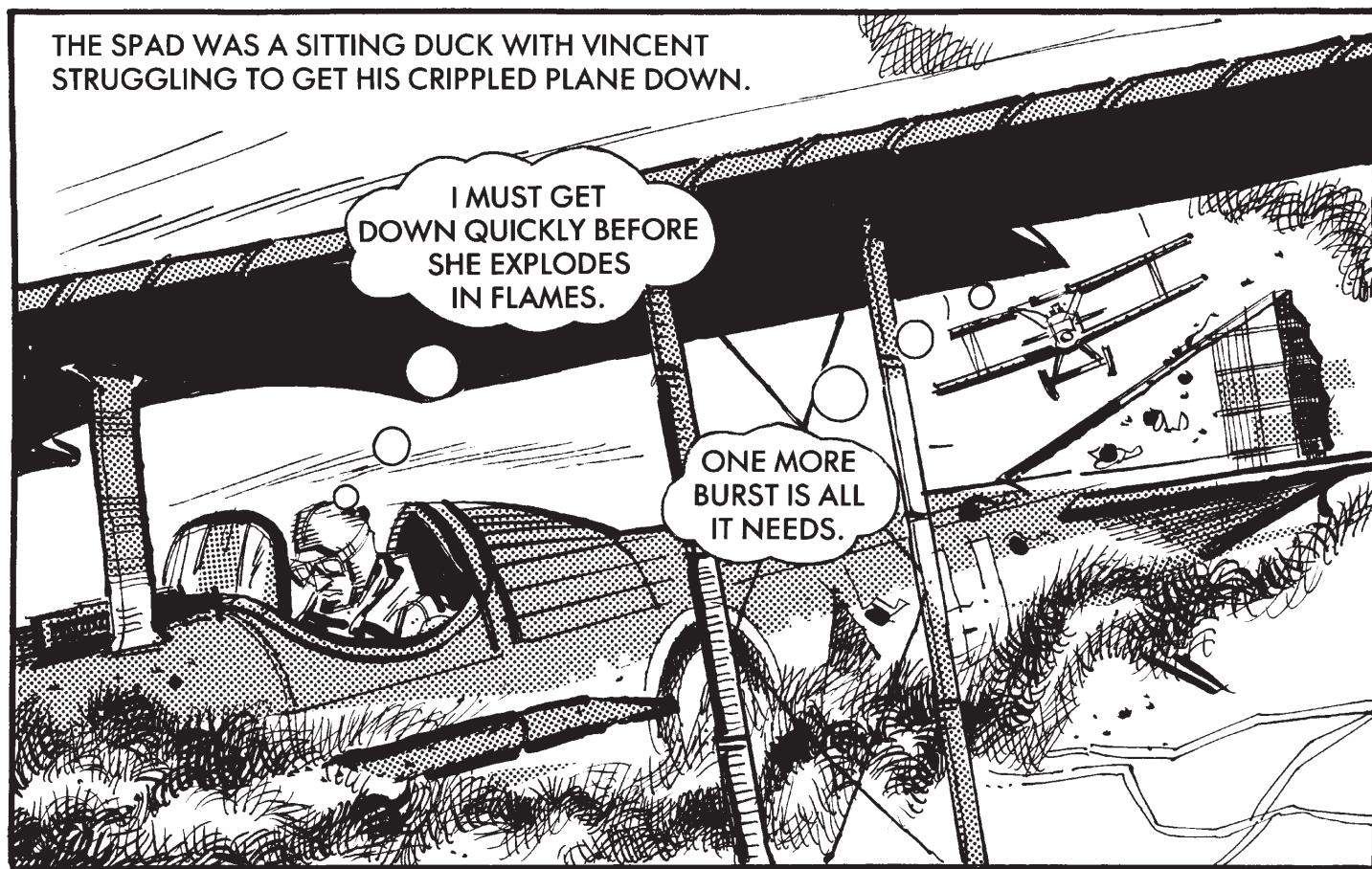


THE FRENCHMAN'S SKILL ENABLED HIM TO PULL OUT OF THE DIVE, BUT THE GERMAN WAS WAITING FOR THE KILL.



BRUNO OPENED FIRE AND THE SPAD SHUDDERED AS HIS SHOTS STRUCK HOME.





VINCENT DID GET THE SPAD DOWN, AND LEFT IT HURRIEDLY.
THEN HE HEARD THE FOKKER AS IT ROARED PAST OVERHEAD.



VINCENT STARED UP WITH NAKED HATRED IN HIS FACE AT THE WAVE THE GERMAN GAVE HIM.



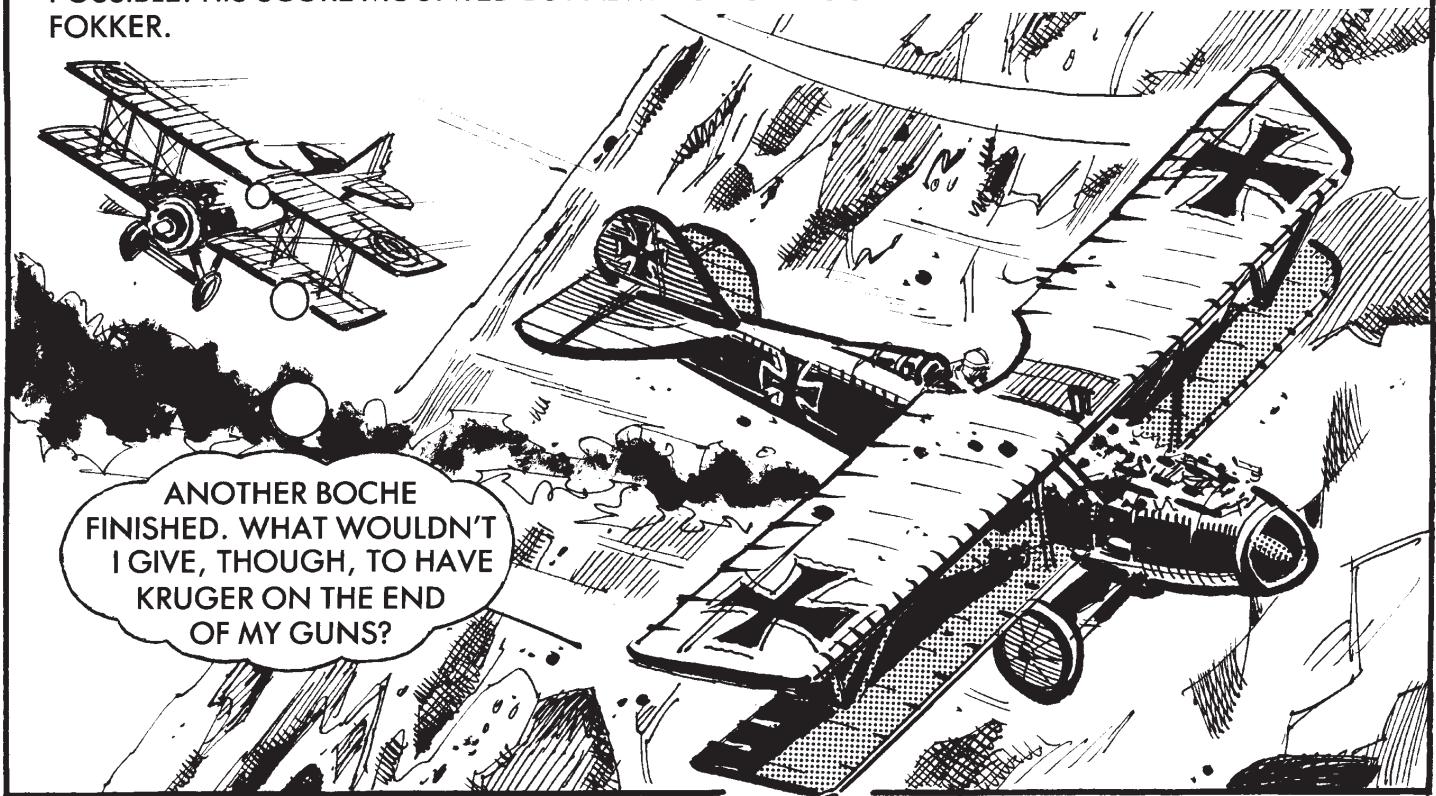
THE COMTE'S FACE WAS FIERCE. DEFEAT WAS SOMETHING HE COULD NOT ACCEPT, AND HE DREW AND FIRED HIS PISTOL.



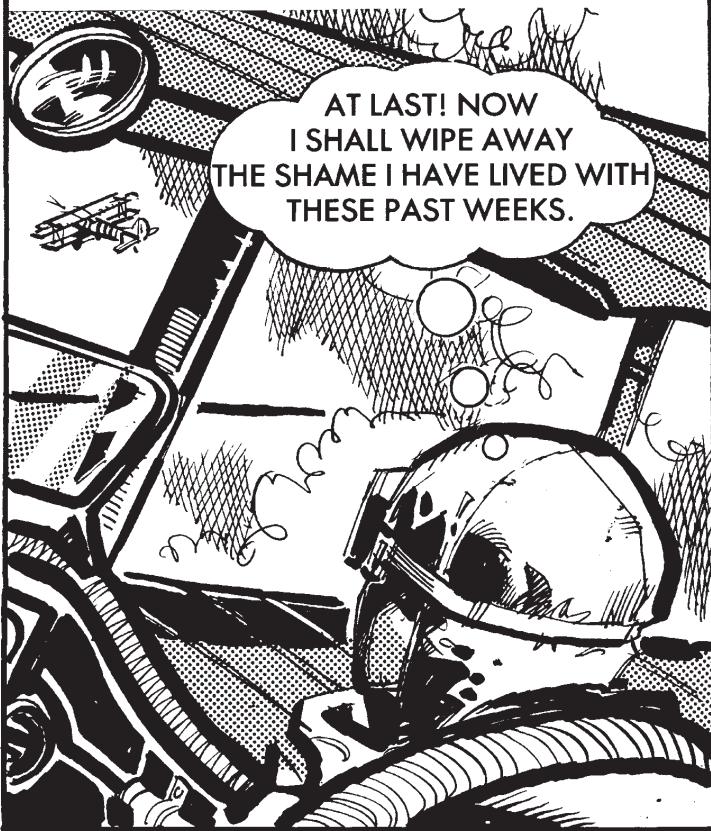
AFTER THAT ENCOUNTER, VINCENT
BECAME EVEN MORE WITHDRAWN
AND ALOOF.



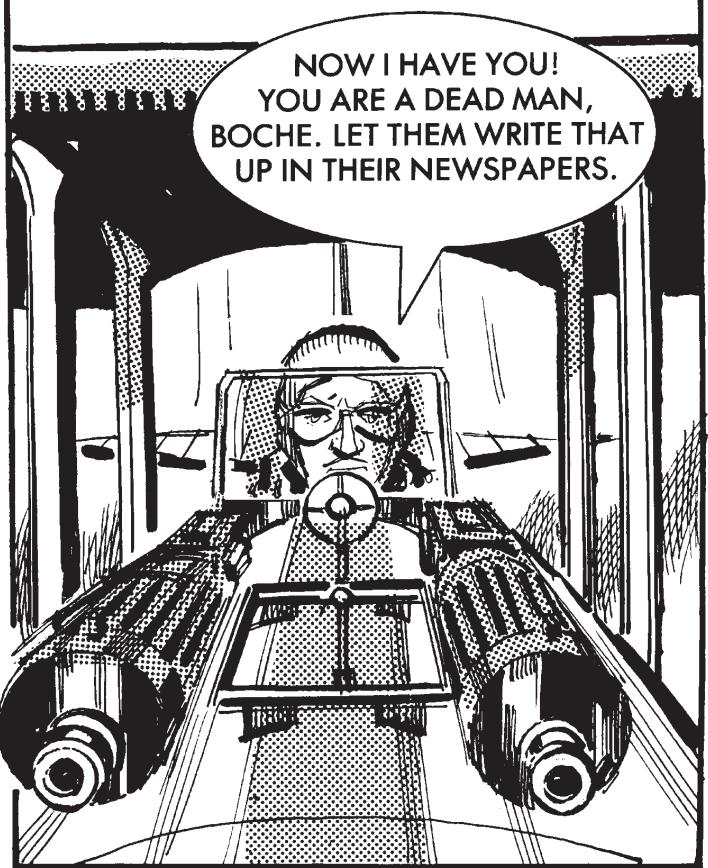
THE INCIDENT STRENGTHENED VINCENT'S DESIRE TO SHOOT DOWN AS MANY GERMANS AS POSSIBLE. HIS SCORE MOUNTED BUT ALWAYS HIS EYES SEARCHED FOR ONE PARTICULAR FOKKER.



THEN ON ONE OF HIS LONE DAWN PATROLS, HE SAW WHAT HE HAD SOUGHT FOR OVER A MONTH — THE UNMISTAKABLE MARKINGS OF KRUGER'S FIGHTER.



PUTTING HIS PLANE INTO A SHALLOW DIVE, HE WENT FOR THE FOKKER LIKE SOME CRAZED ANIMAL.



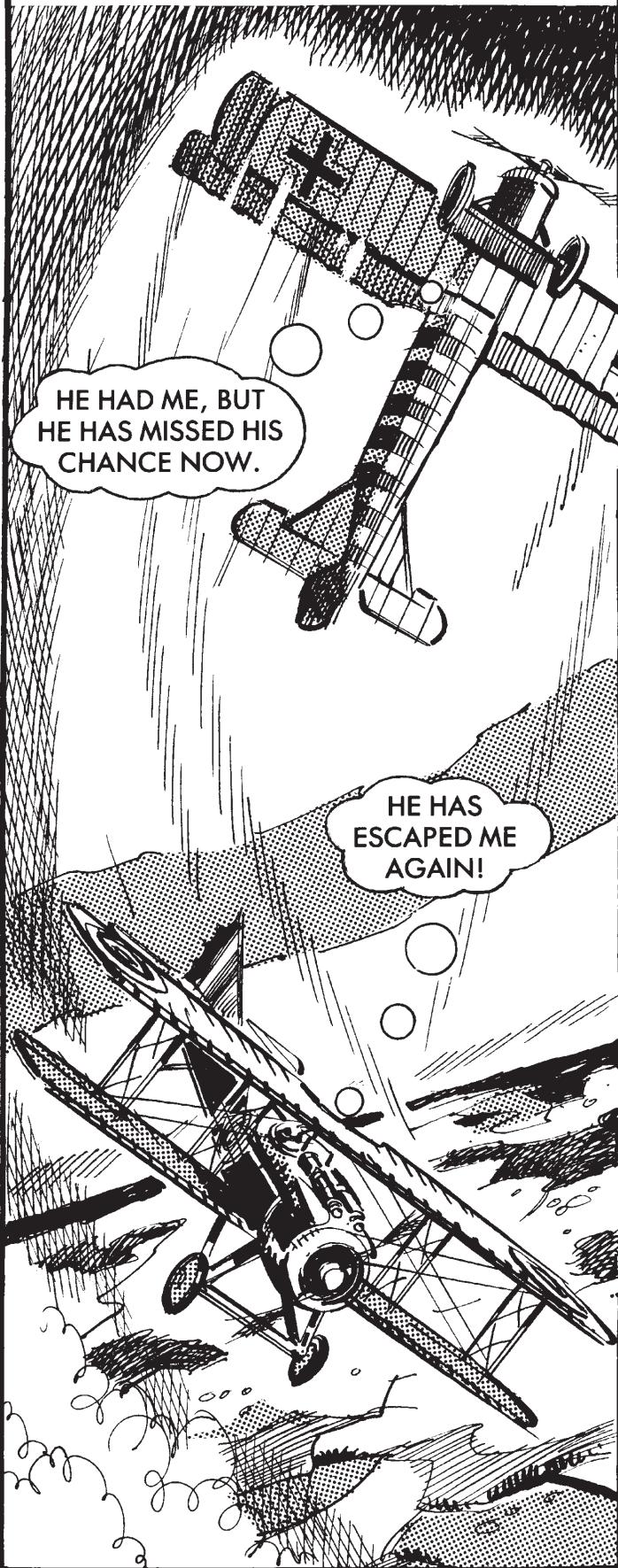
FOR ONCE BRUNO KRUGER HAD BEEN CAUGHT OFF GUARD.



BUT THE FRENCHMAN'S GUNS REMAINED SILENT, CHOOSING THIS MOMENT ABOVE ALL TO JAM.



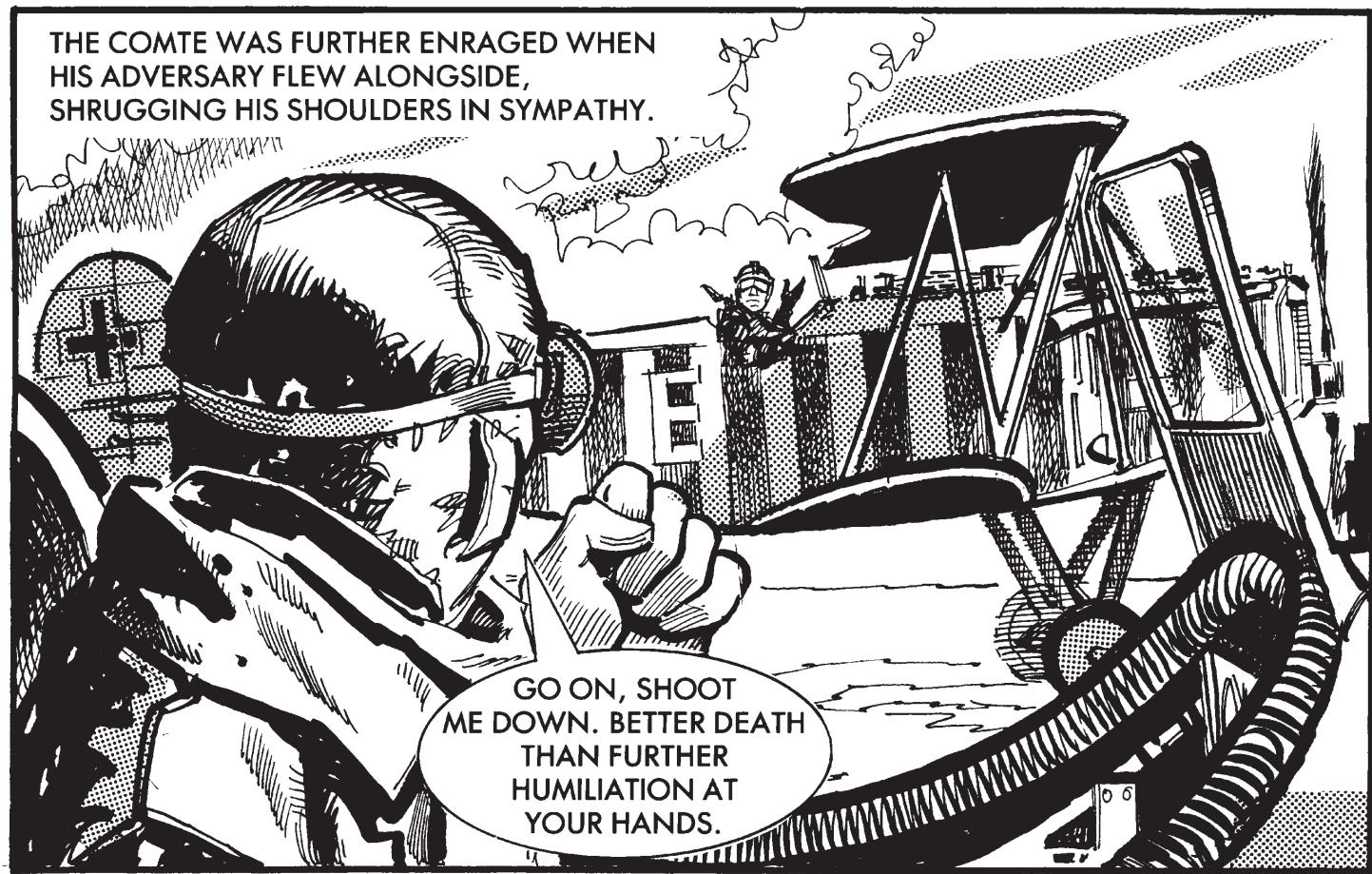
VINCENT'S GOLDEN CHANCE WAS OVER AS THE GERMAN ACE THREW HIS MACHINE OUT OF DANGER.



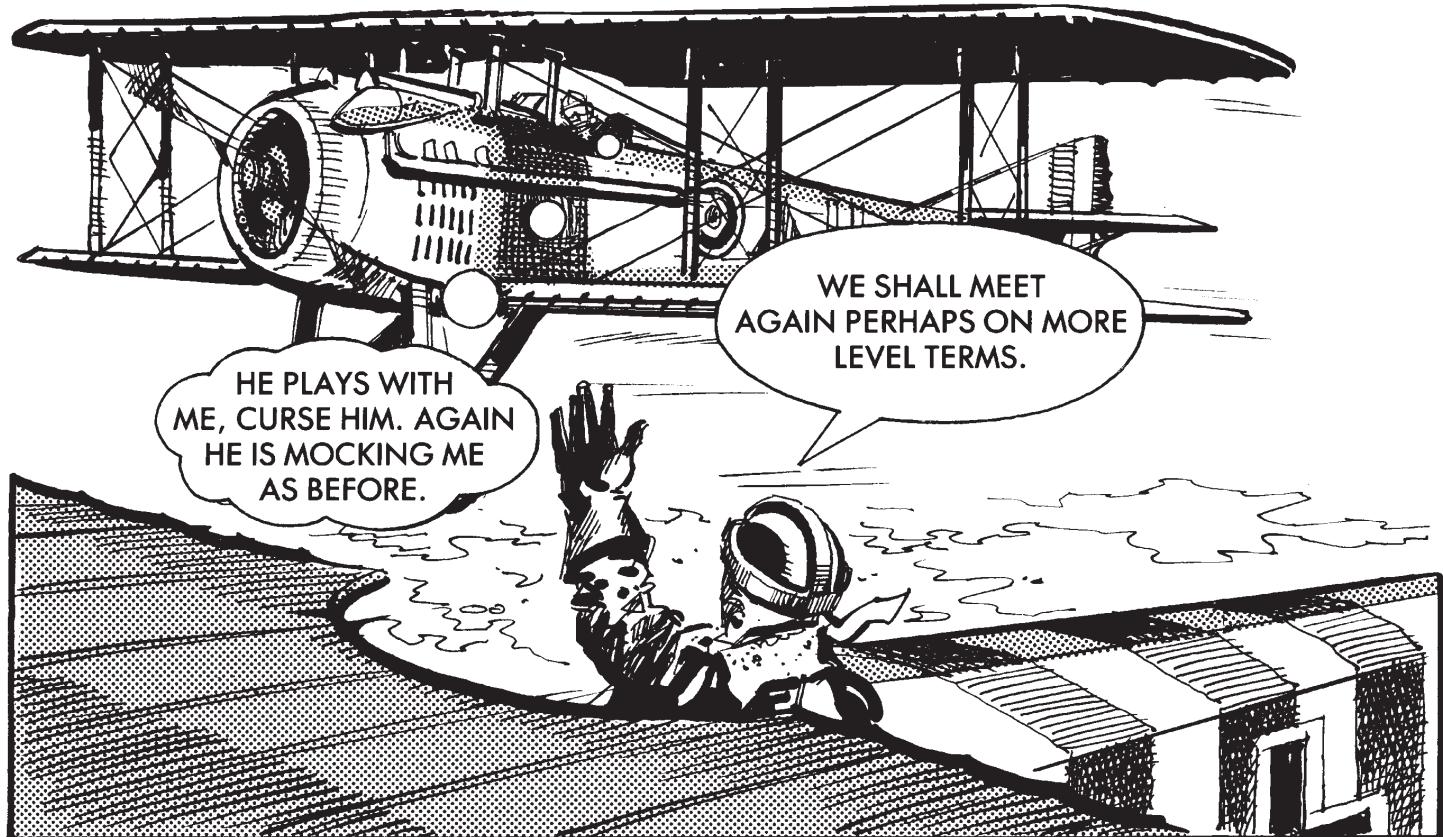
FORGETTING EVERYTHING IN HIS ATTEMPTS TO UNJAM THE MACHINE-GUN, VINCENT ALLOWED BRUNO KRUGER TO GET BACK ON HIS TAIL.



THE COMTE WAS FURTHER ENRAGED WHEN HIS ADVERSARY FLEW ALONGSIDE, SHRUGGING HIS SHOULDERS IN SYMPATHY.



BUT BRUNO'S CODE OF CHIVALRY WOULD NOT ALLOW THIS. IT WOULD NOT BE THE DONE THING TO SHOOT DOWN A DEFENCELESS MAN.



SOME INSTINCT MADE BRUNO GLANCE UP
THEN AND HE SAW SUDDEN DANGER.

QUICKLY, HE
MUST NOT DOWN
VINCENT.

IT SEEMS I
HAVE A FIGHT
ON MY HANDS THIS
MORNING AFTER ALL, DEALING
WITH THESE TWO
GENTLEMEN.

THE TWO FRENCH PILOTS WERE NO MATCH
FOR THE GERMAN ACE.

POOR DEVIL! SOME OF
THESE FRENCH PILOTS CAN
HARDLY HAVE BEEN TRAINED IN
THIS SORT OF COMBAT. THAT
ONE WAS A SHEER NOVICE.

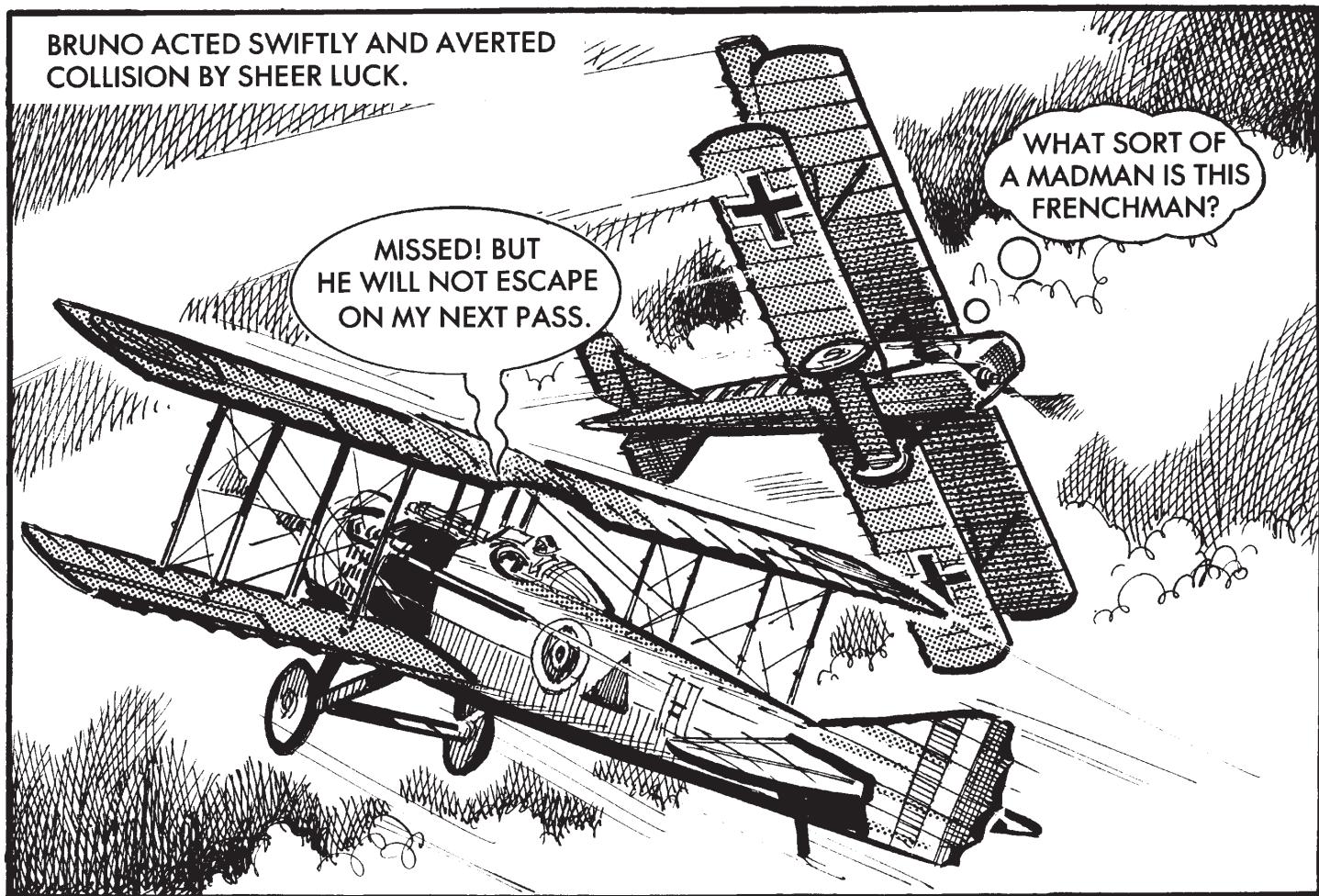
THE SECOND FRENCH PILOT FARED NO
BETTER THAN HIS COMPANION.

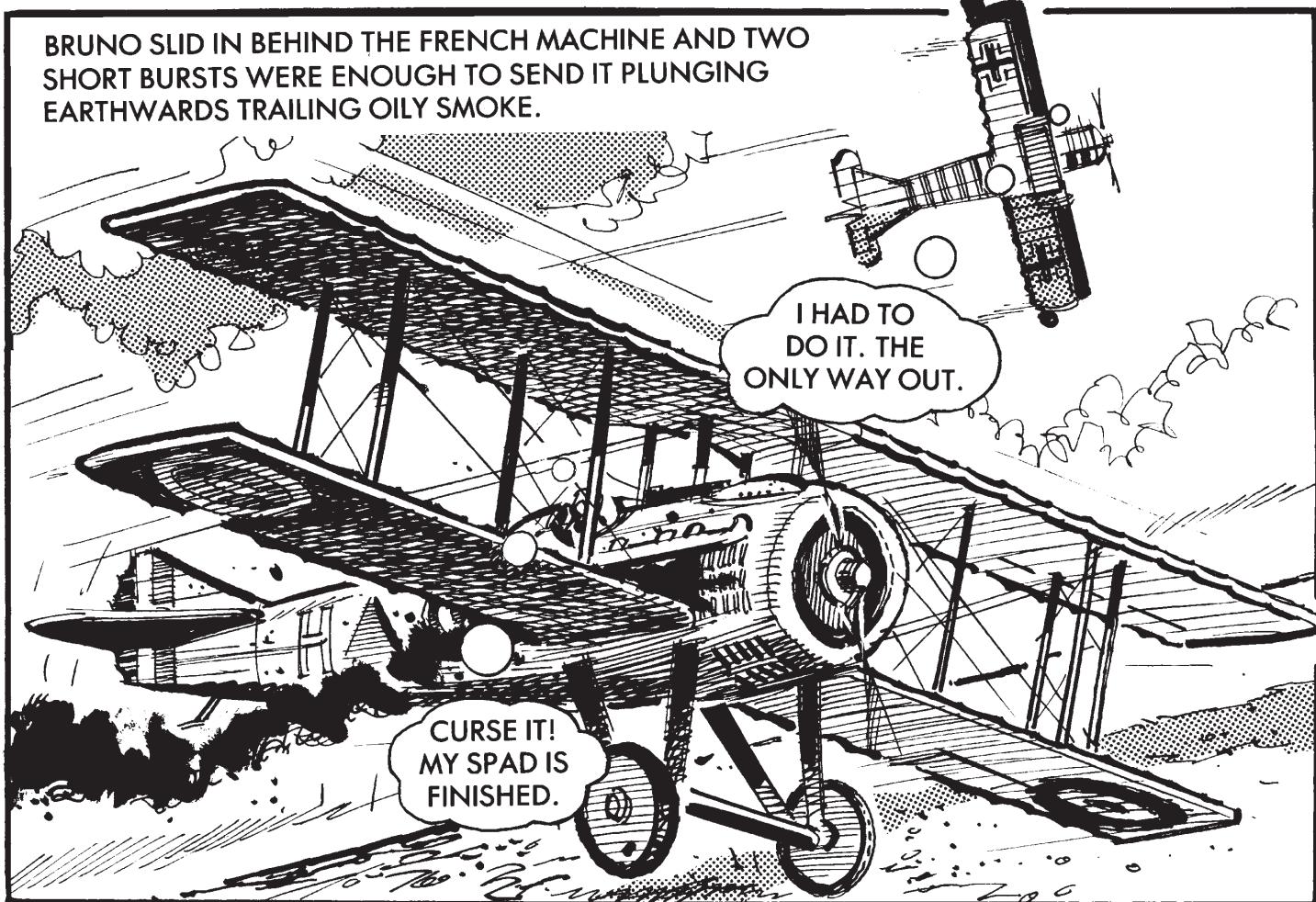
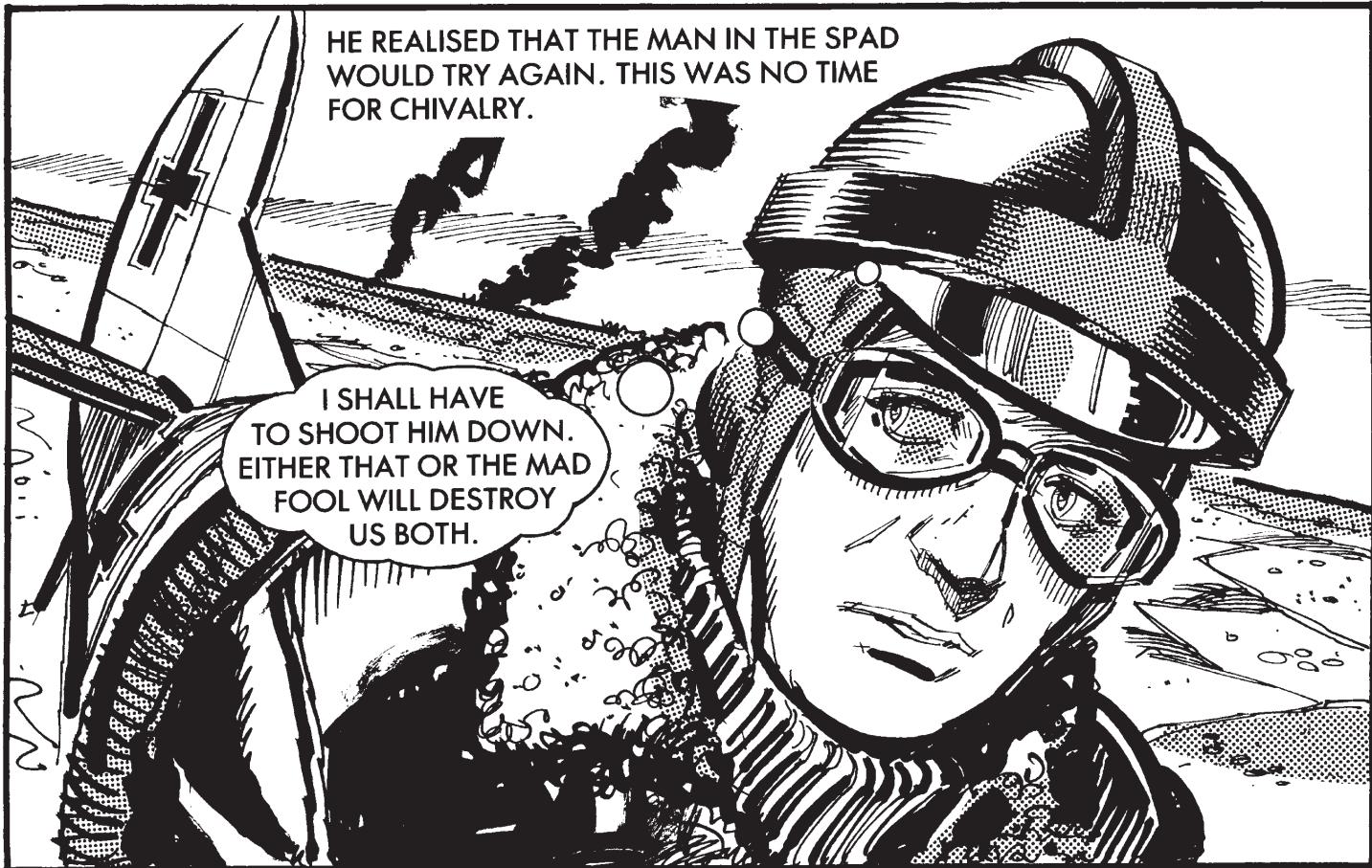
THIS GIVES
ME NO PLEASURE
BUT IT WAS THAT
FRENCHMAN
OR ME.

THEN BRUNO SAW ANOTHER DANGER COMING HEAD ON AT HIM. THE ENRAGED COMTE WAS RACING BACK INTO THE FIGHT.



BRUNO ACTED SWIFTLY AND AVERTED COLLISION BY SHEER LUCK.

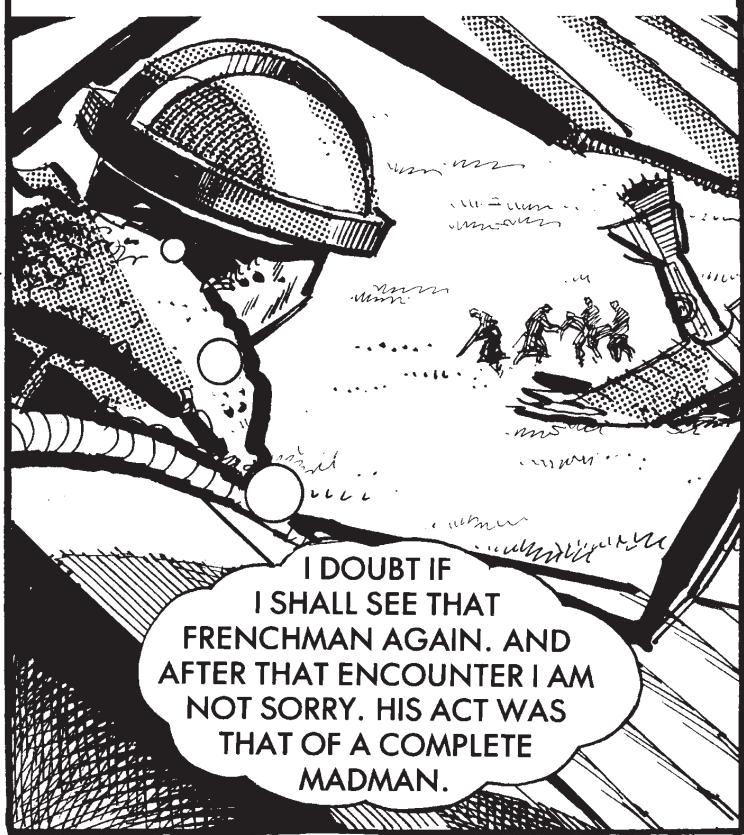




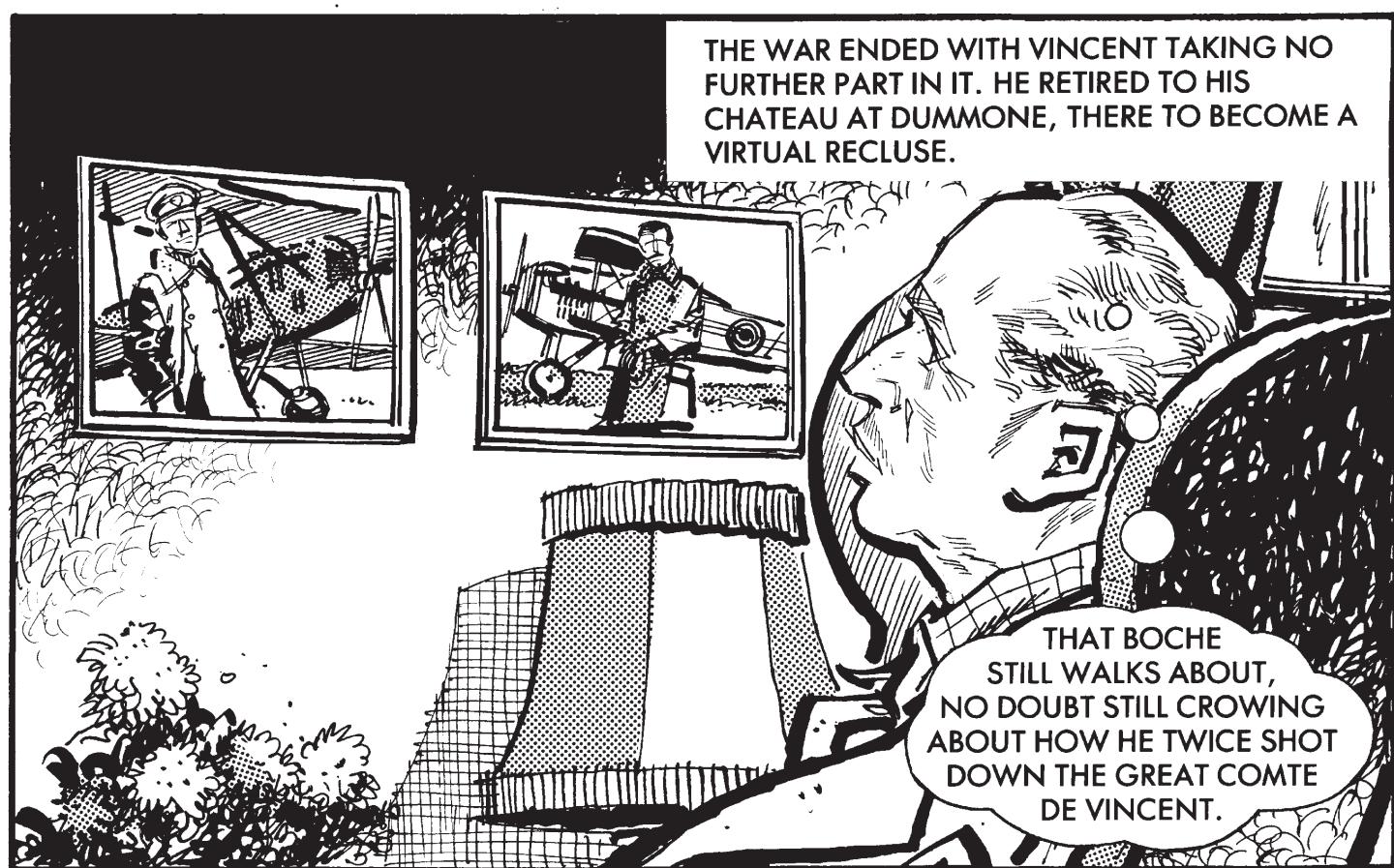
USING ALL HIS SKILL, THE COMTE DE VINCENT MANAGED TO BRING HIS CRIPPLED SPAD DOWN INTO A FIELD.



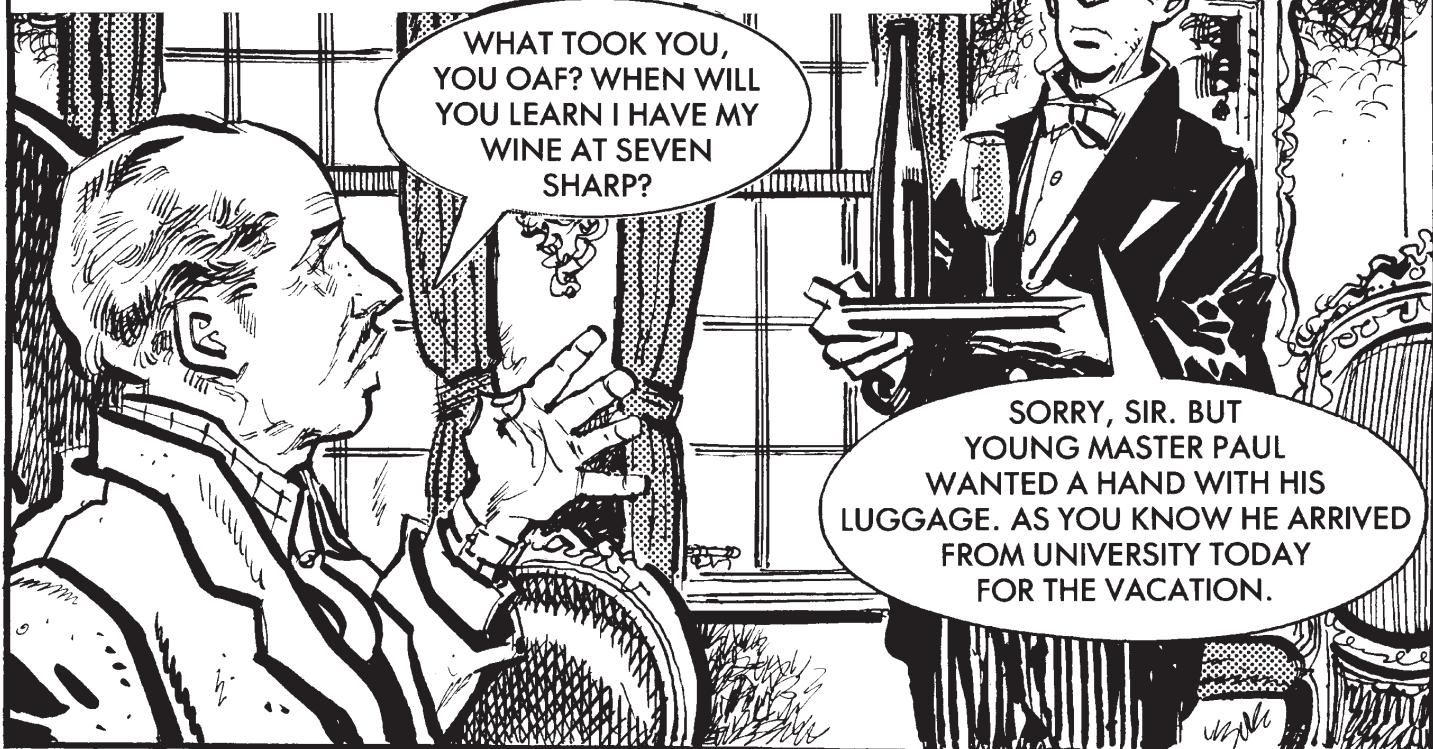
VINCENT WOULD SURVIVE THE CRASH WITH A BROKEN SHOULDER AND TWO BROKEN LEGS, BUT HIS MIND WAS TO CARRY A SCAR THAT WOULD NEVER HEAL.



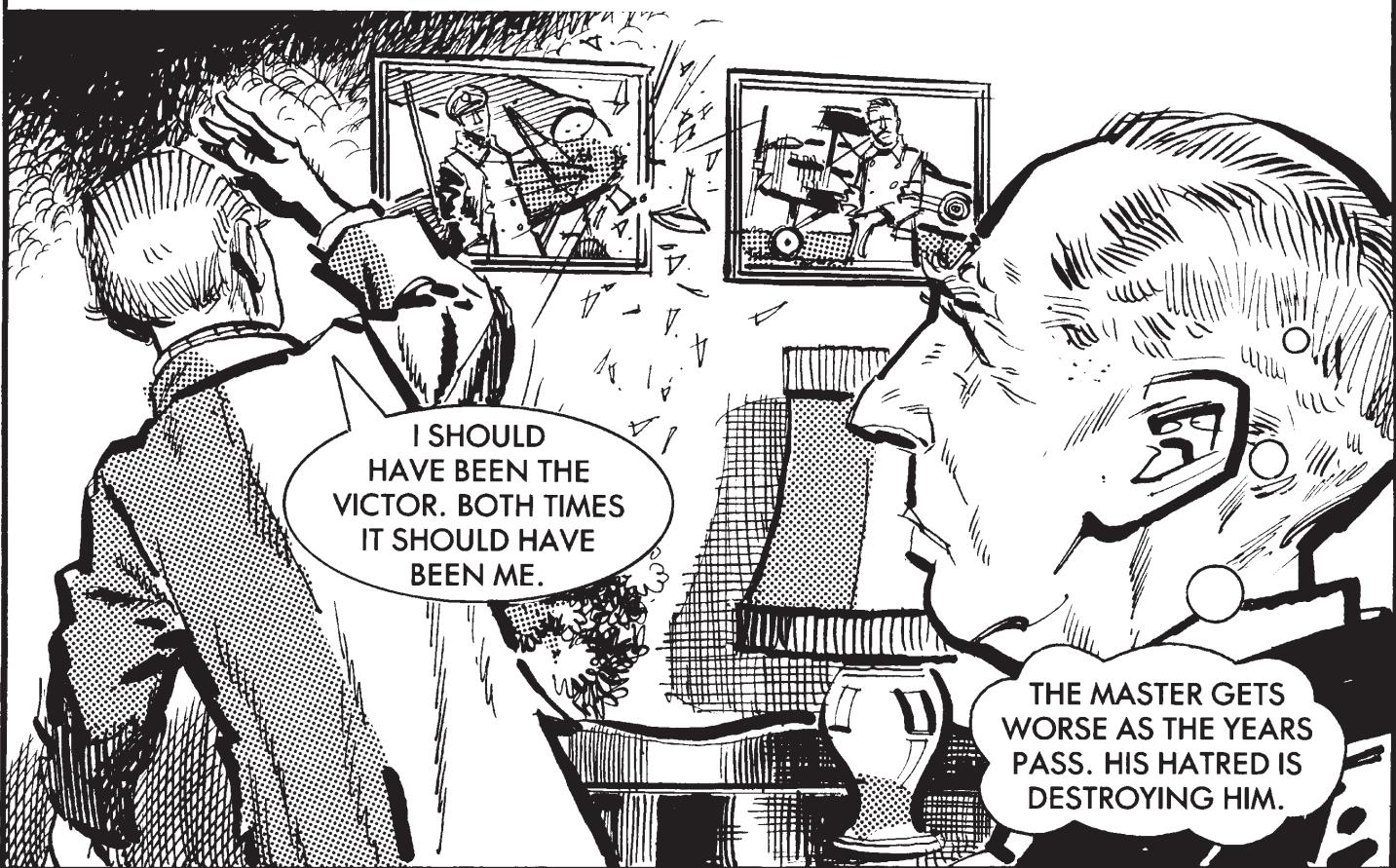
THE WAR ENDED WITH VINCENT TAKING NO FURTHER PART IN IT. HE RETIRED TO HIS CHATEAU AT DUMMONE, THERE TO BECOME A VIRTUAL RECLUSE.



AS WELL AS HIS STUDENT NEPHEW, PAUL DE VINCENT, THE COMTE LIVED WITH HIS MANSERVANT, GASTON, WHO HAD BEEN HIS AIRCRAFT MECHANIC DURING THE WAR AND WAS USED TO HIS EMPLOYER'S SHORT TEMPER.



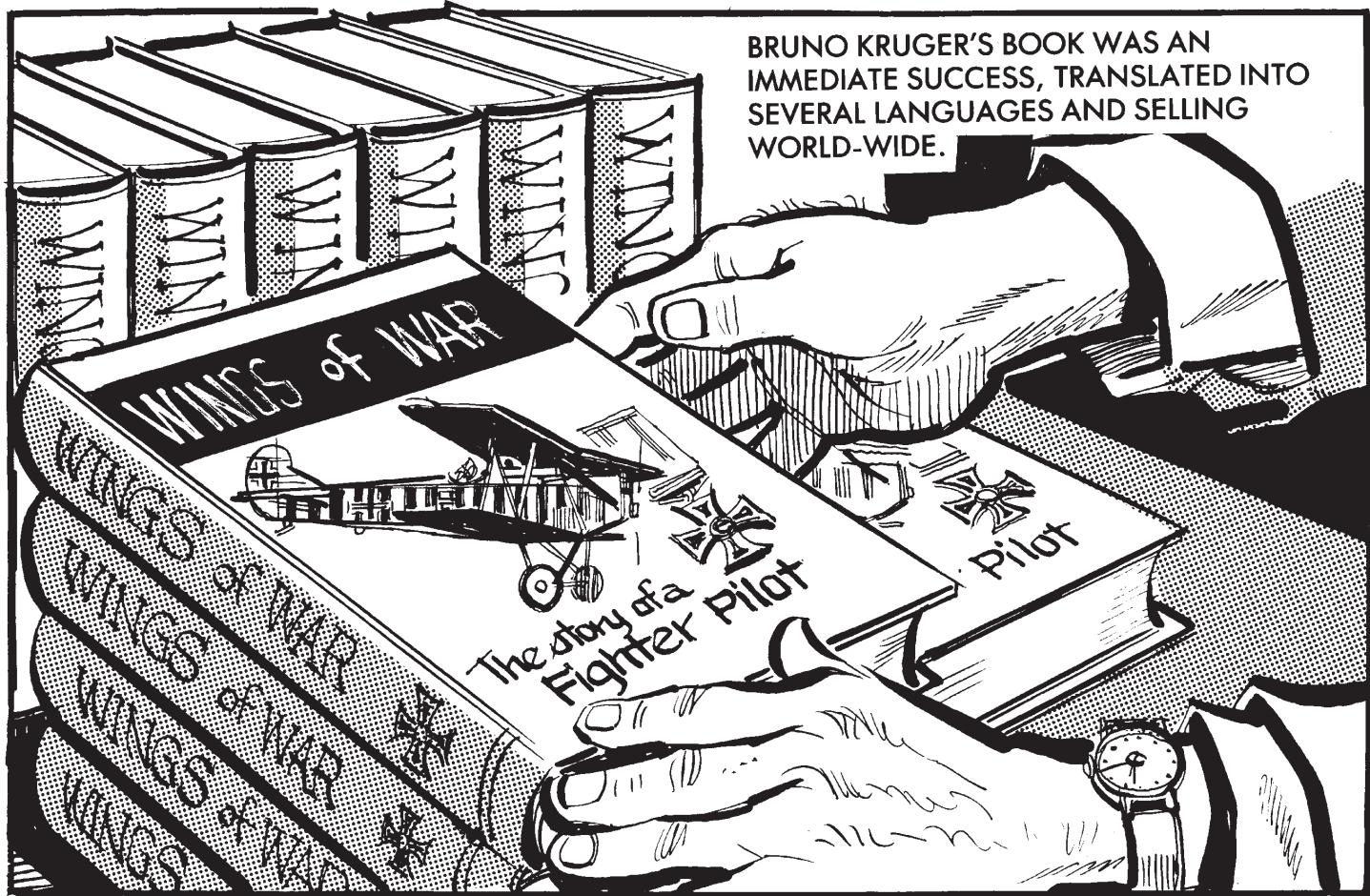
THERE WAS A NIGHTLY RITUAL THAT GASTON KNEW HAD TO BE OBSERVED AS THE COMTE ANGRILY ADDRESSED THE PICTURES OF HIS PAST.



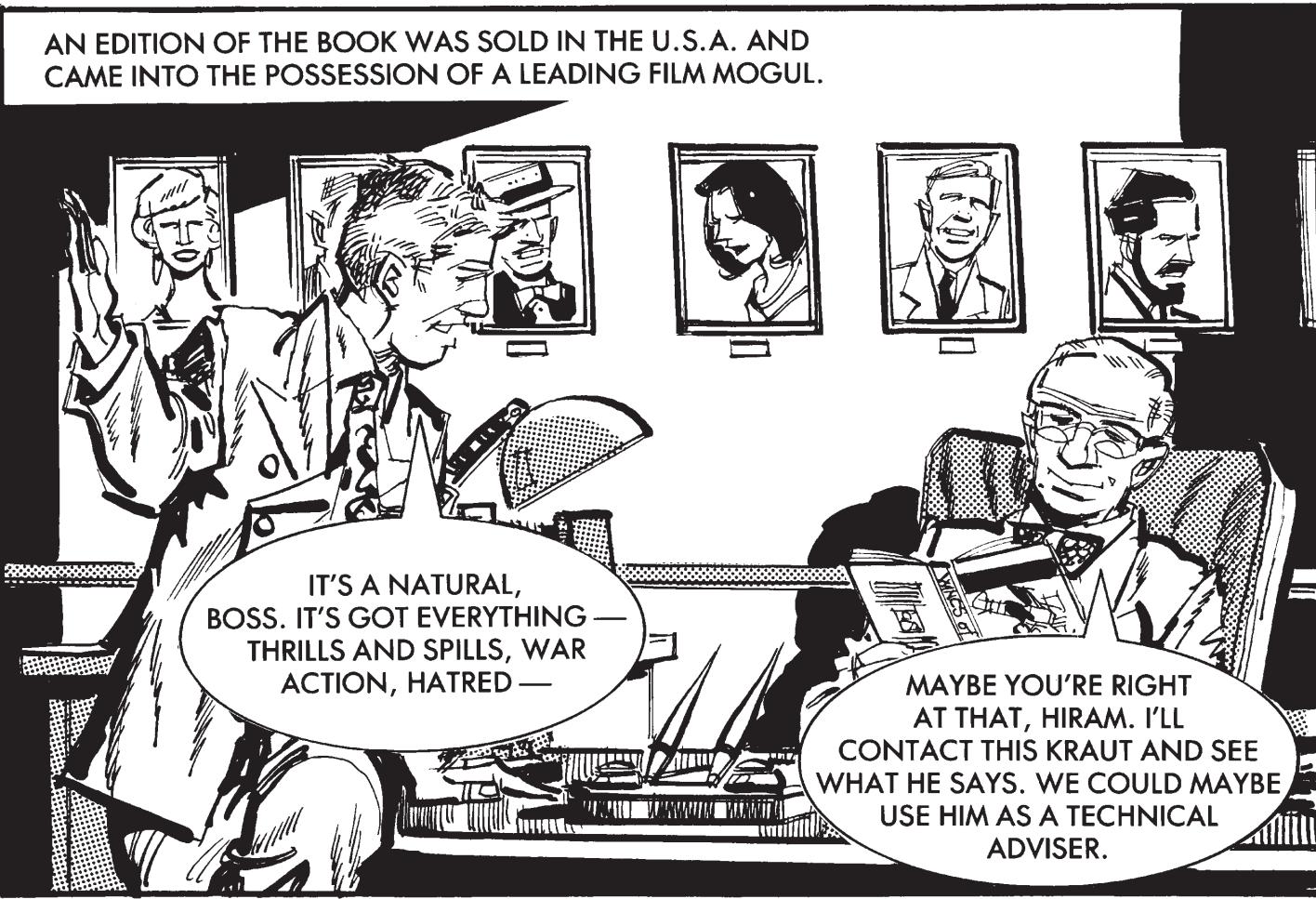
IN GERMANY, THE MAN VINCENT HATED WAS AT THAT MOMENT FINISHING THE DRAFT OF A BOOK, BASED ON THOSE DAYS ABOVE THE WAR-LOCKED TRENCHES.



BRUNO KRUGER'S BOOK WAS AN IMMEDIATE SUCCESS, TRANSLATED INTO SEVERAL LANGUAGES AND SELLING WORLD-WIDE.



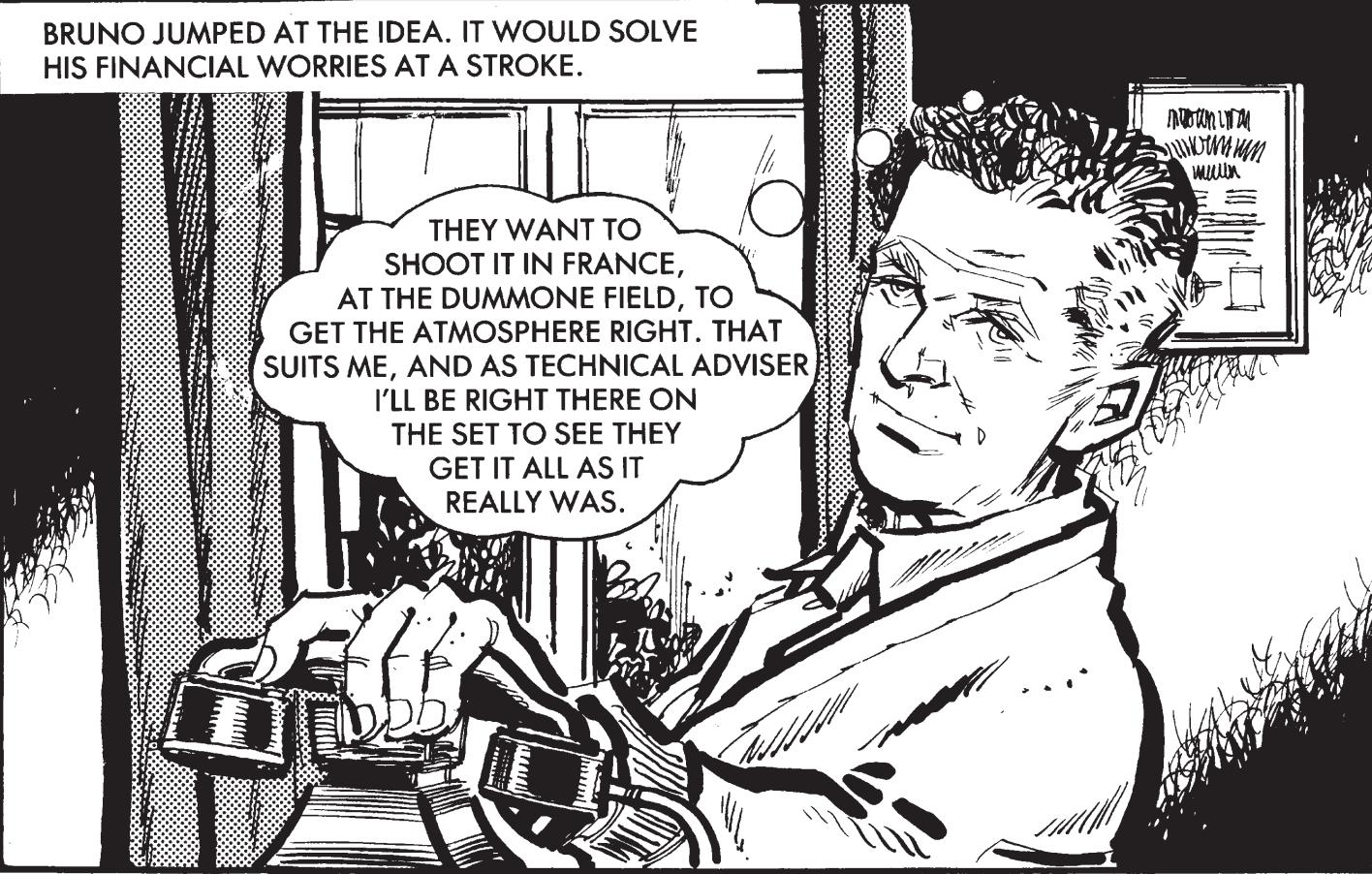
AN EDITION OF THE BOOK WAS SOLD IN THE U.S.A. AND CAME INTO THE POSSESSION OF A LEADING FILM MOGUL.



IT'S A NATURAL,
BOSS. IT'S GOT EVERYTHING —
THRILLS AND SPILLS, WAR
ACTION, HATRED —

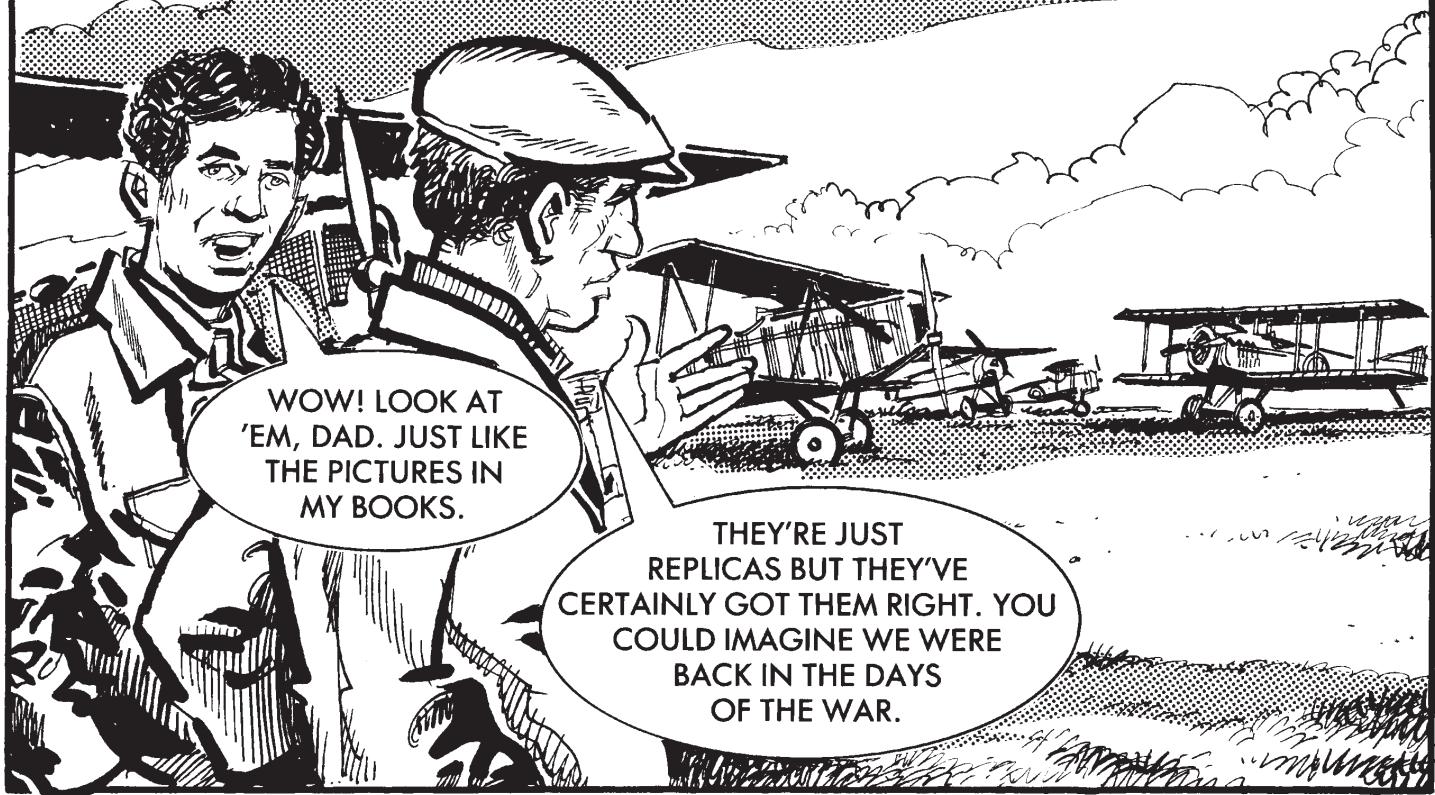
MAYBE YOU'RE RIGHT
AT THAT, HIRAM. I'LL
CONTACT THIS KRAUT AND SEE
WHAT HE SAYS. WE COULD MAYBE
USE HIM AS A TECHNICAL
ADVISER.

BRUNO JUMPED AT THE IDEA. IT WOULD SOLVE HIS FINANCIAL WORRIES AT A STROKE.



THEY WANT TO
SHOOT IT IN FRANCE,
AT THE DUMMONE FIELD, TO
GET THE ATMOSPHERE RIGHT. THAT
SUITS ME, AND AS TECHNICAL ADVISER
I'LL BE RIGHT THERE ON
THE SET TO SEE THEY
GET IT ALL AS IT
REALLY WAS.

THE MEN WHO WOULD HELP MAKE THE FILM BEGAN TO ARRIVE AT DUMMONE. AMONG THEM WAS THE BRITISH STUNTMAN, BILL GALE, WITH HIS TEENAGE SON, BOB.



BRUNO KRUGER TOO WAS IMPRESSED BY THE AIRCRAFT, ESPECIALLY THE RED AND ORANGE STRIPED FOKKER.



BOB GALE FELT A THRILL AS HE SAW THE LEGENDARY BRUNO KRUGER FOR THE FIRST TIME. HE HAD HEARD AND READ ABOUT THE GERMAN ACE AND HIS EXPLOITS SINCE HE WAS A SMALL BOY.



THE FORMER FIGHTER ACE FELT HIS SPIRITS SOAR AS THE FOKKER CLIMBED. HE WAS FREE FROM THE WORRIES OF OTHER LAND-BOUND MORTALS.

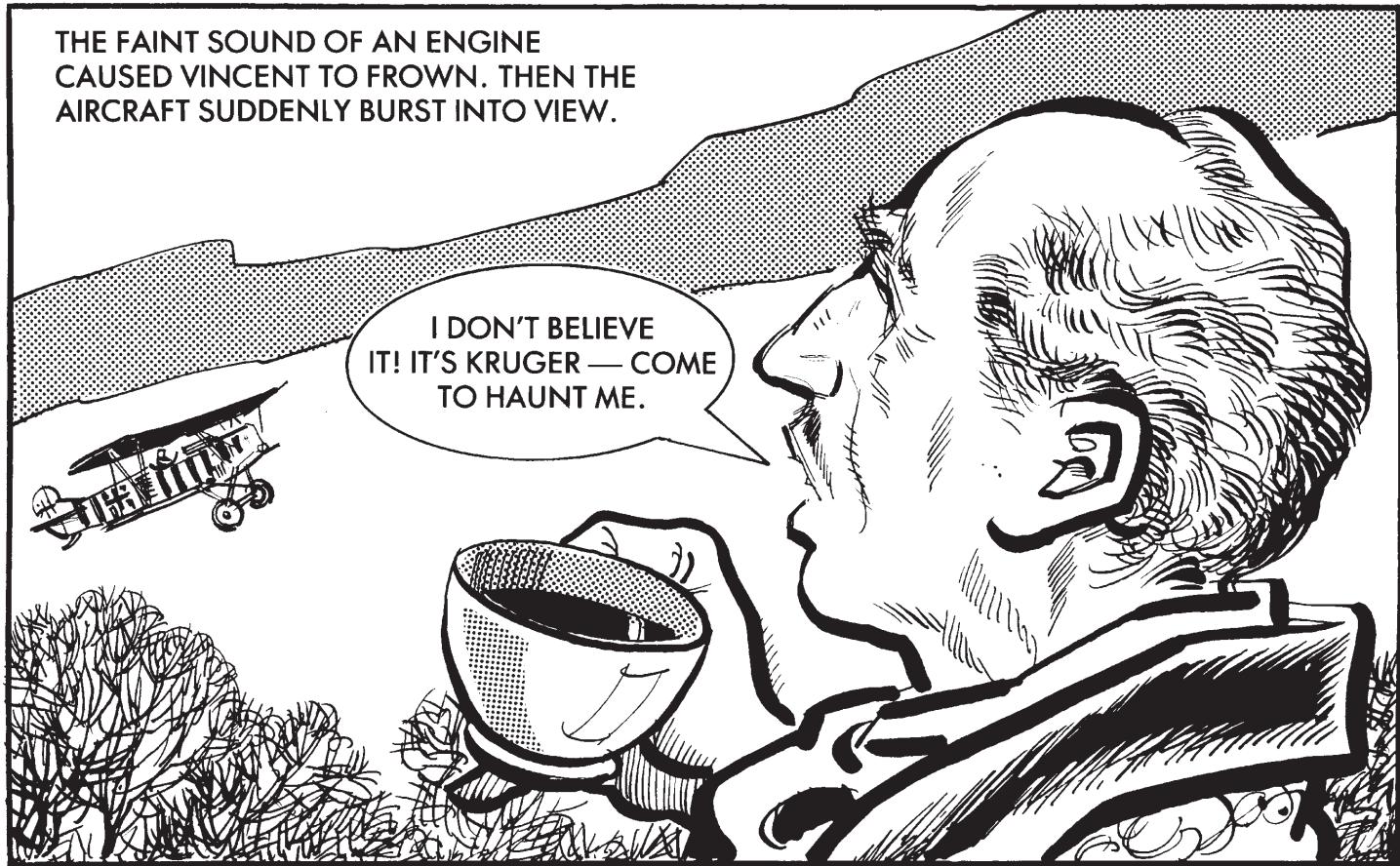
HIMMEL! I HAD
ALMOST FORGOTTEN HOW
GOOD IT WAS.

AS BRUNO SOARED LIKE AN EAGLE, NOT TOO VERY FAR AWAY THE COMTE DE VINCENT WAS TAKING HIS BREAKFAST — AS USUAL IN A SOUR MOOD.

HURRY, DOLT. WHY
MUST YOU ALWAYS BE
SO SLOW?

AH, MASTER, WHY
MUST YOU ALWAYS BE
SO IMPATIENT?

THE FAINT SOUND OF AN ENGINE CAUSED VINCENT TO FROWN. THEN THE AIRCRAFT SUDDENLY BURST INTO VIEW.



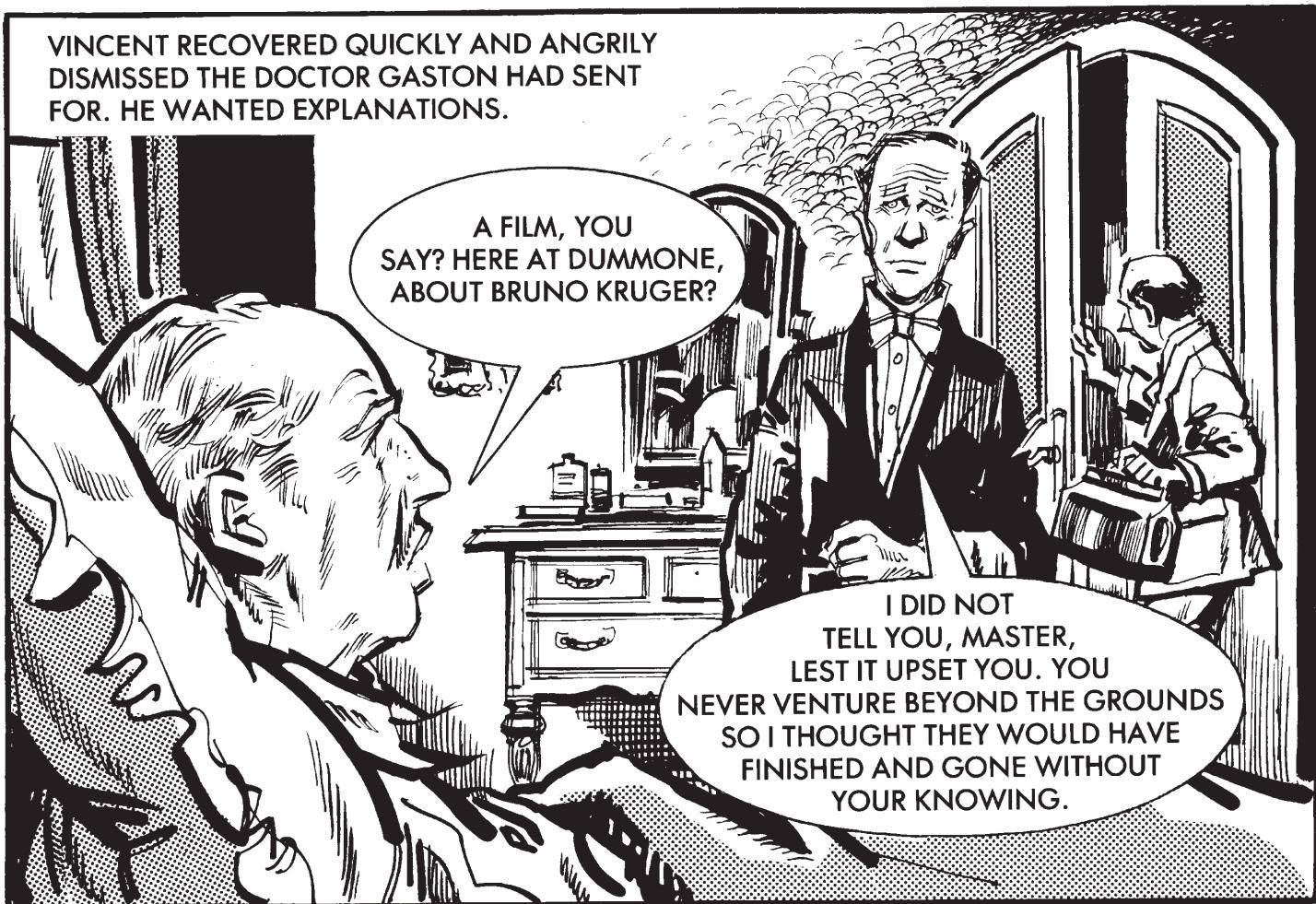
A WAILING CRY ESCAPED VINCENT THEN AS HE STARED AT THE SOARING FOKKER.



IT WAS TOO MUCH FOR THE COMTE. THE CRY TAILED OFF INTO A BUBBLING MOAN.



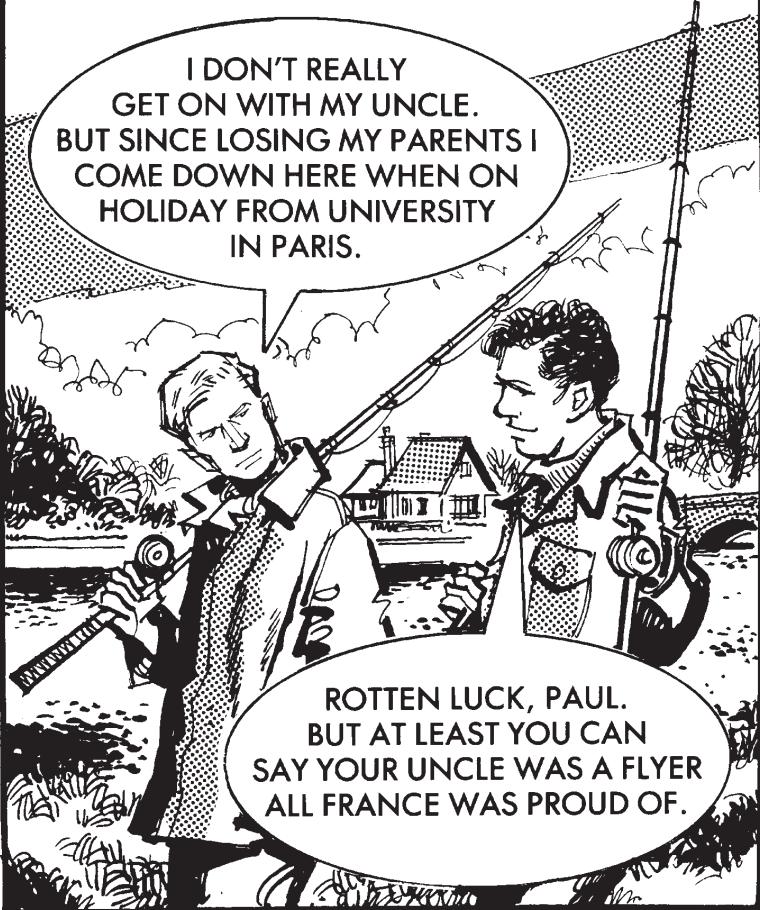
VINCENT RECOVERED QUICKLY AND ANGRILY DISMISSED THE DOCTOR GASTON HAD SENT FOR. HE WANTED EXPLANATIONS.



THE NEWS HIS ENEMY WAS ACTUALLY IN THE SAME AREA BROUGHT A SCREAM OF RAGE FROM THE COMTE.



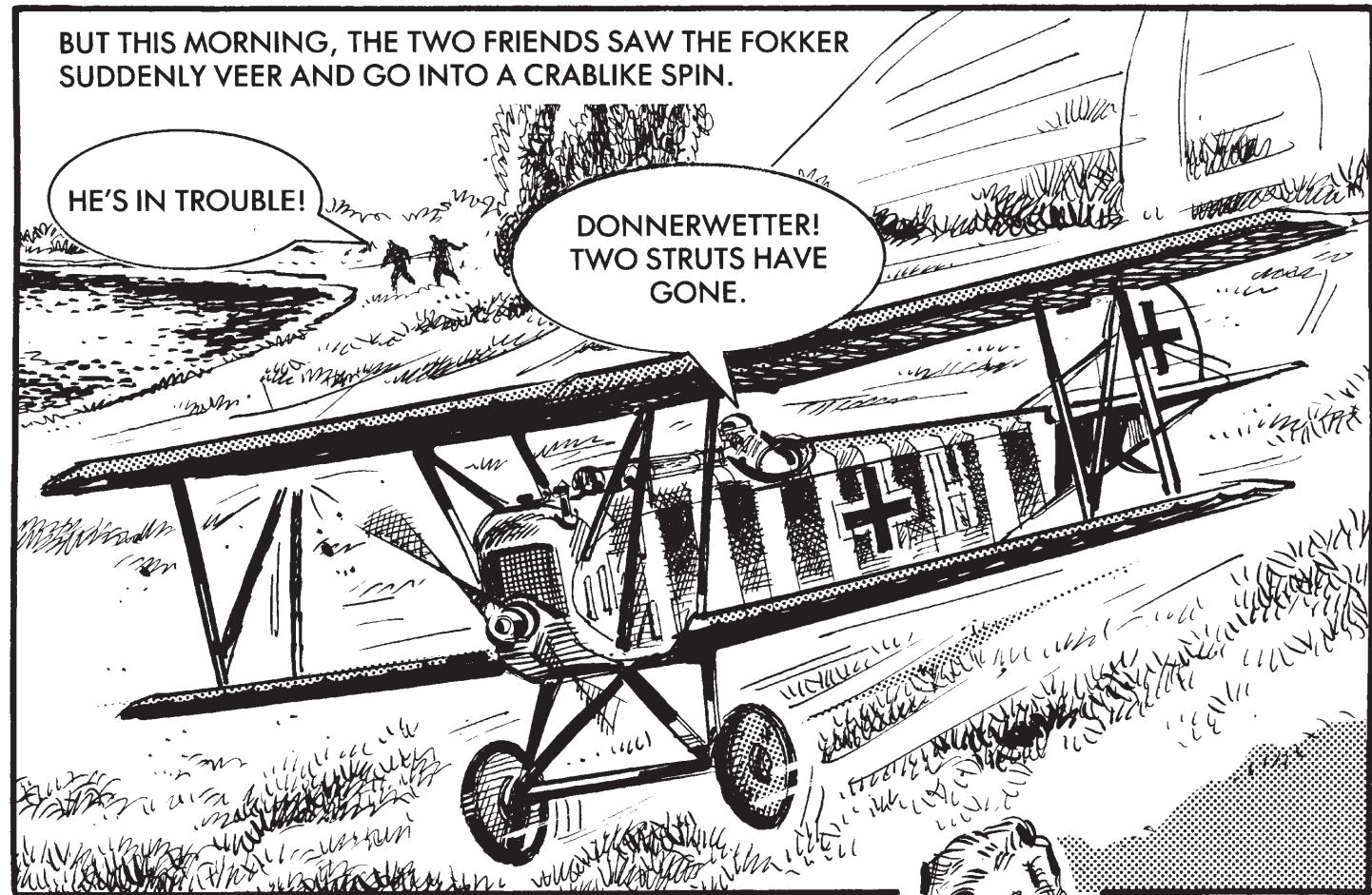
IT DID NOT TAKE THE GOOD NATURED BOB LONG TO MAKE FRIENDS AND HE FOUND ONE IN PAUL DE VINCENT, THE COMTE'S NEPHEW.



PAUL WELL KNEW HIS UNCLE'S HATRED OF THE GERMAN ACE BRUNO KRUGER. IT WORRIED HIM AT TIMES.







BOB AND PAUL GOT TO THE SCENE OF THE CRASH JUST IN TIME.

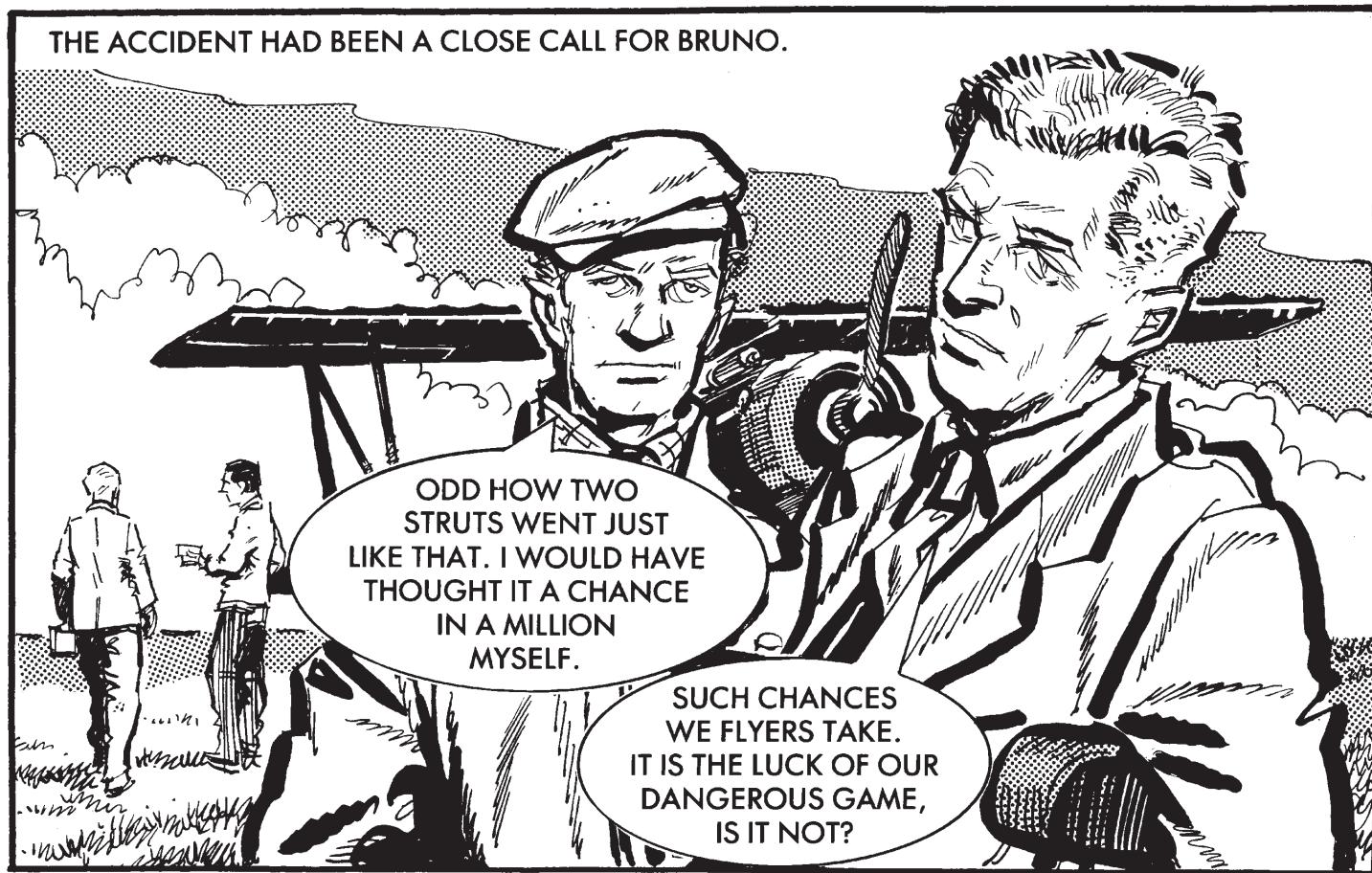


BRUNO'S LEG WAS BROKEN BUT APART FROM THAT AND SOME CUTS AND BRUISES HE WAS OTHERWISE UNHURT.

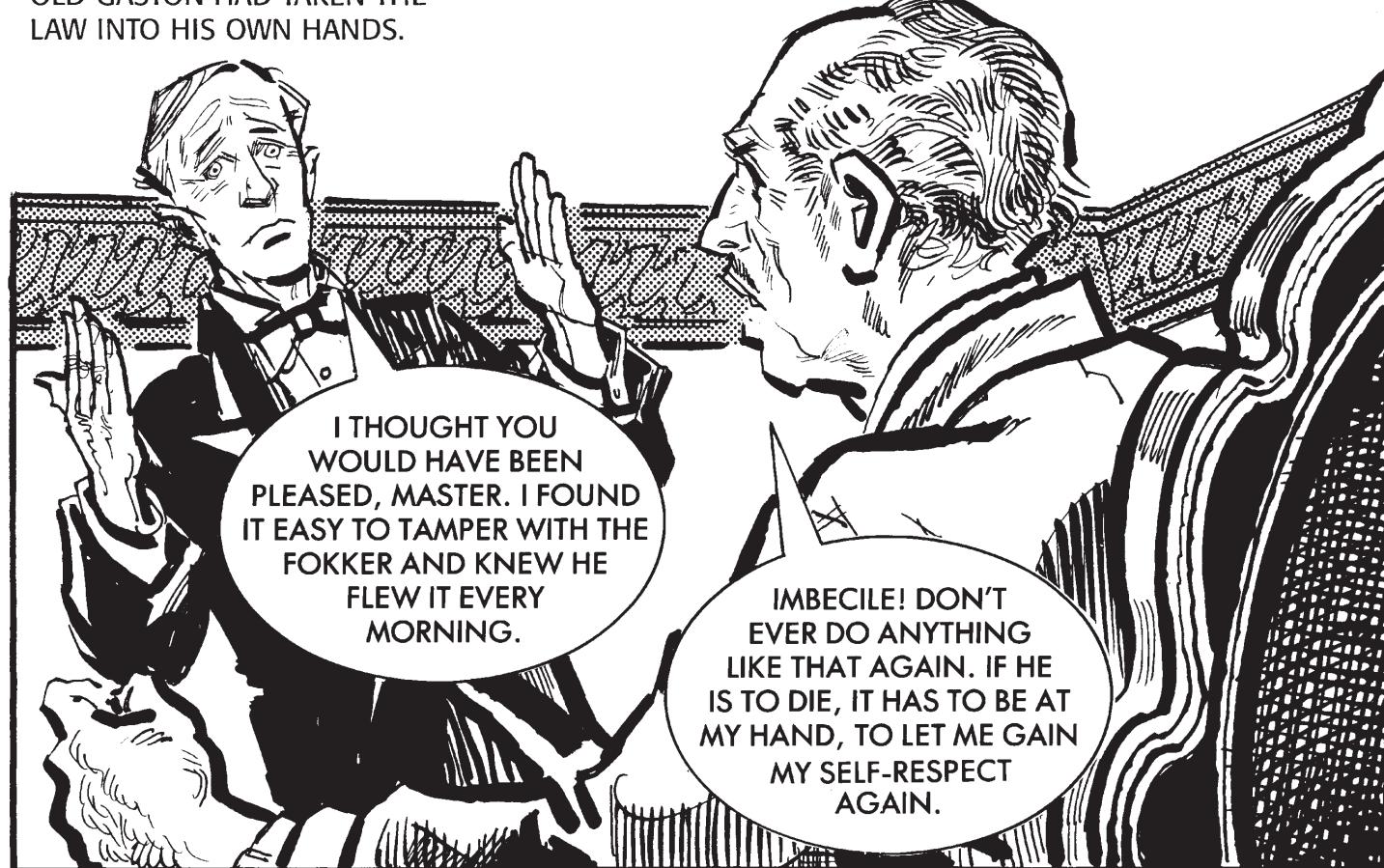


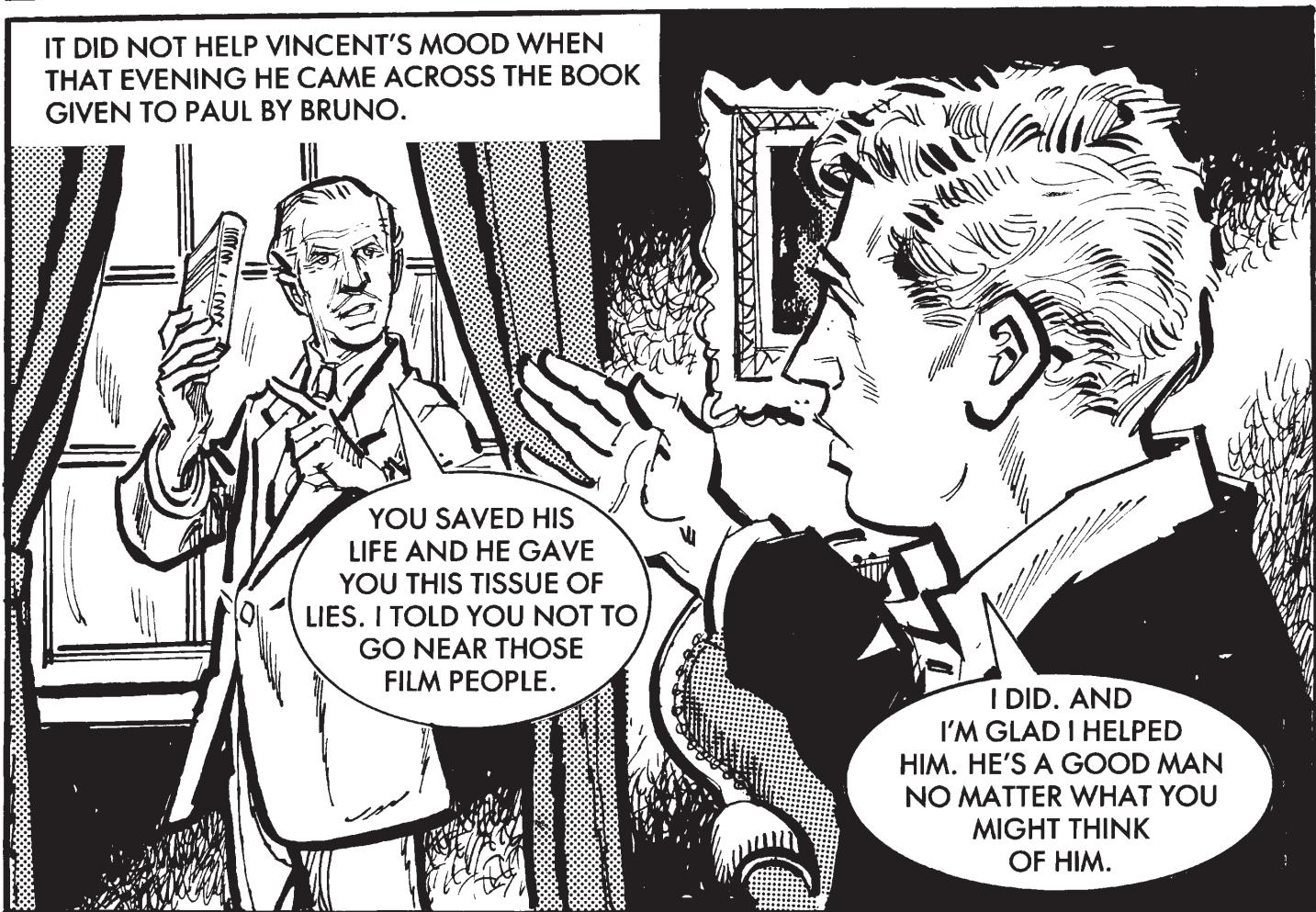
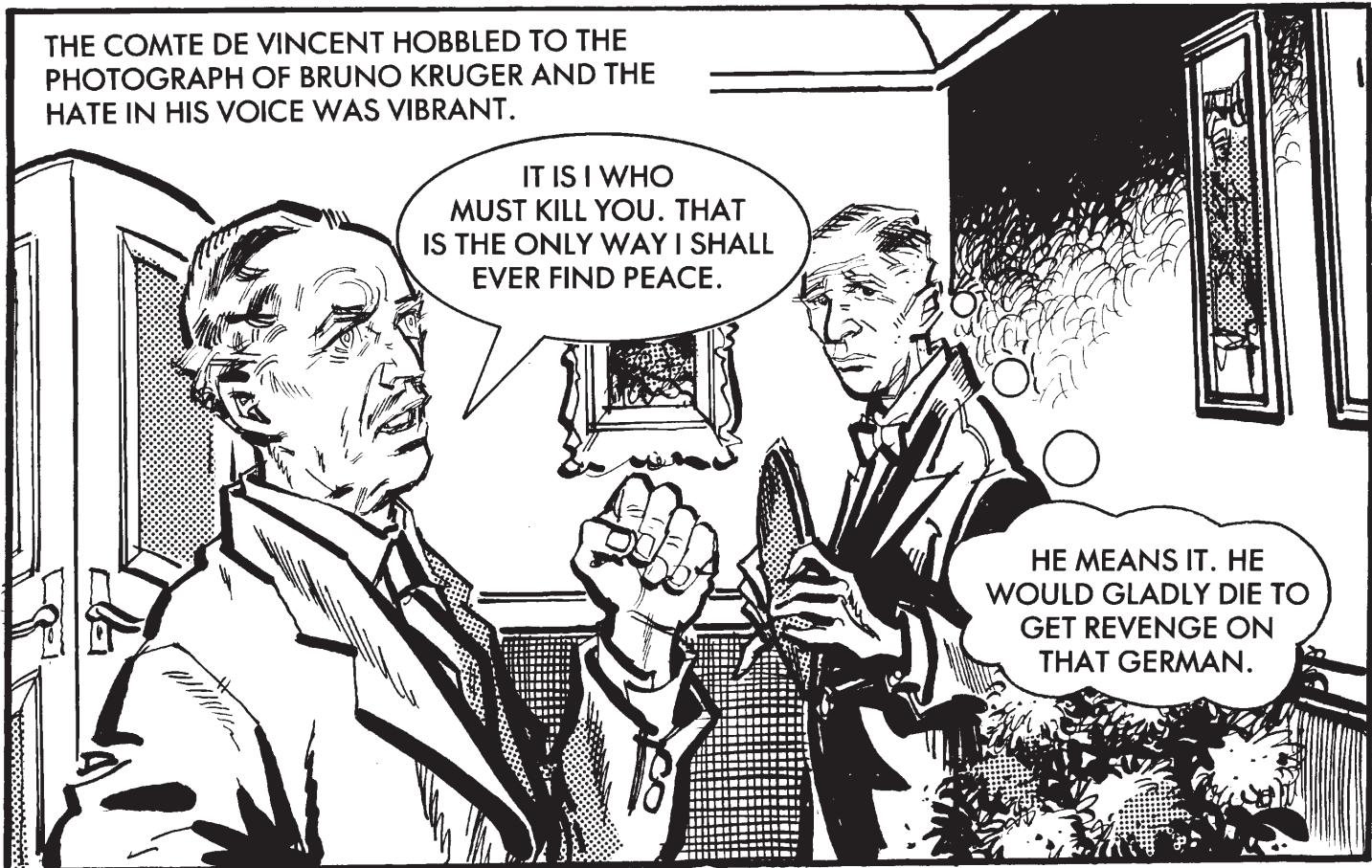
BRUNO SOUGHT OUT THE TWO FRIENDS A FEW DAYS LATER.



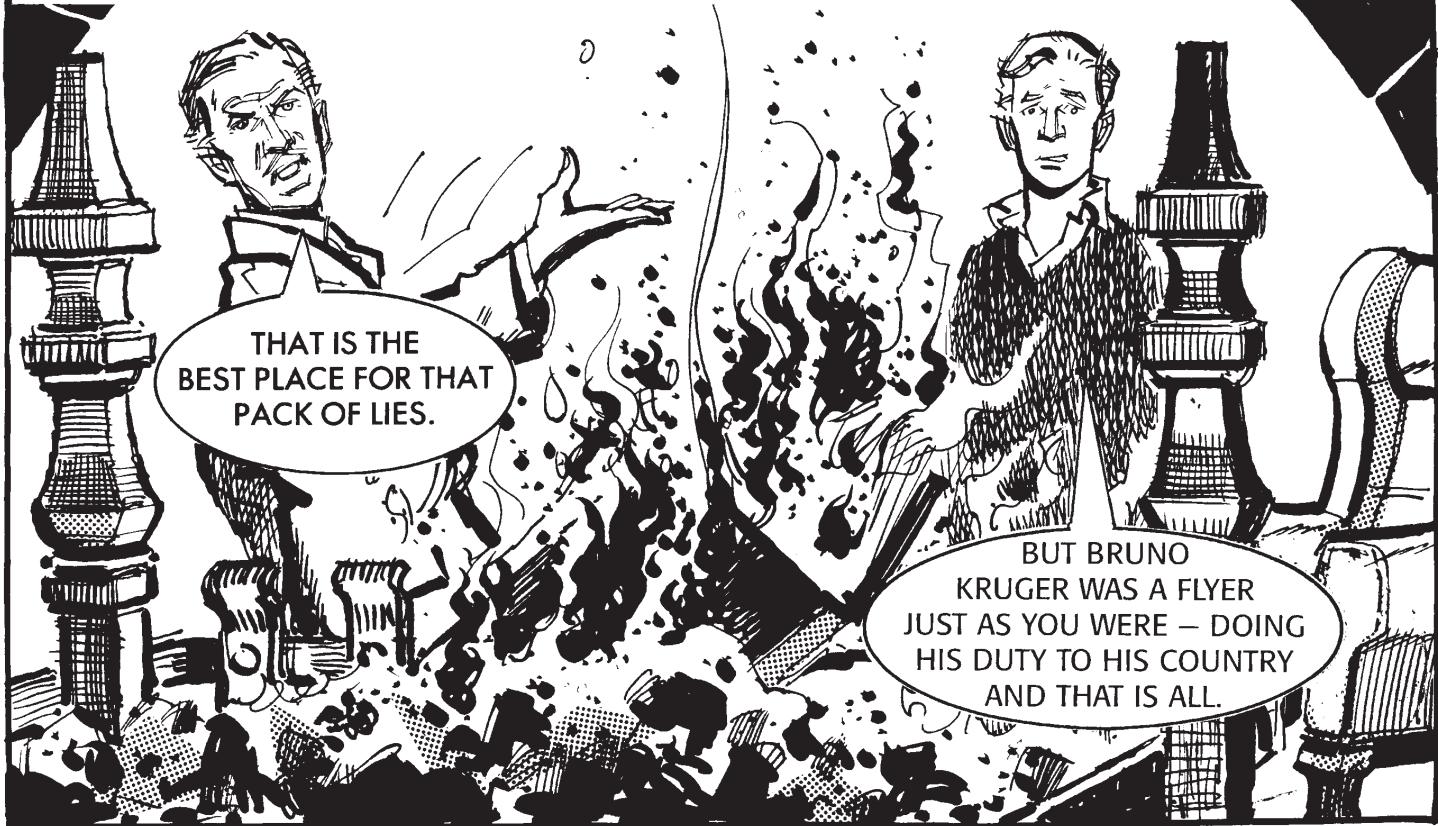


BUT IT HAD BEEN NO ACCIDENT. OLD GASTON HAD TAKEN THE LAW INTO HIS OWN HANDS.

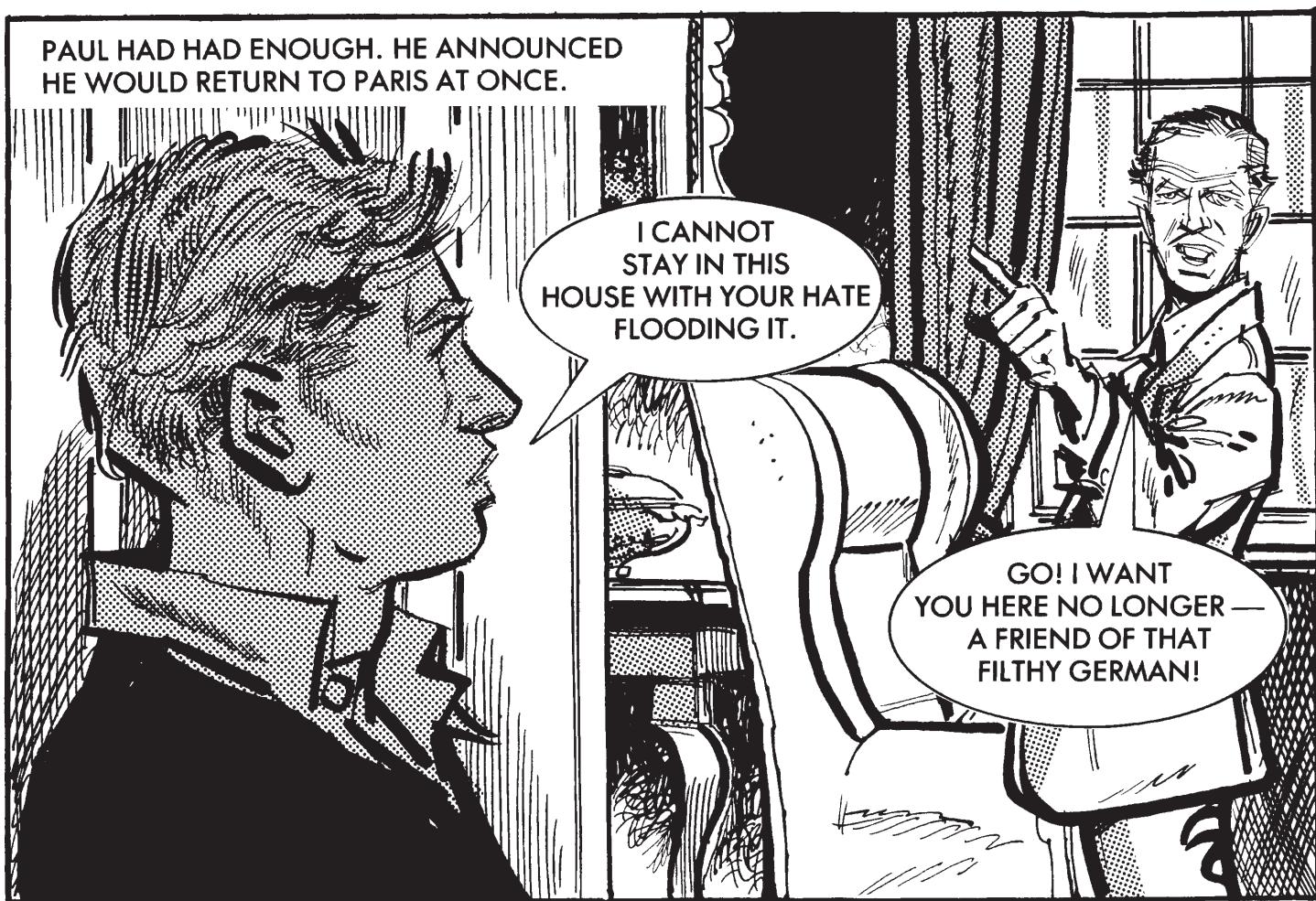


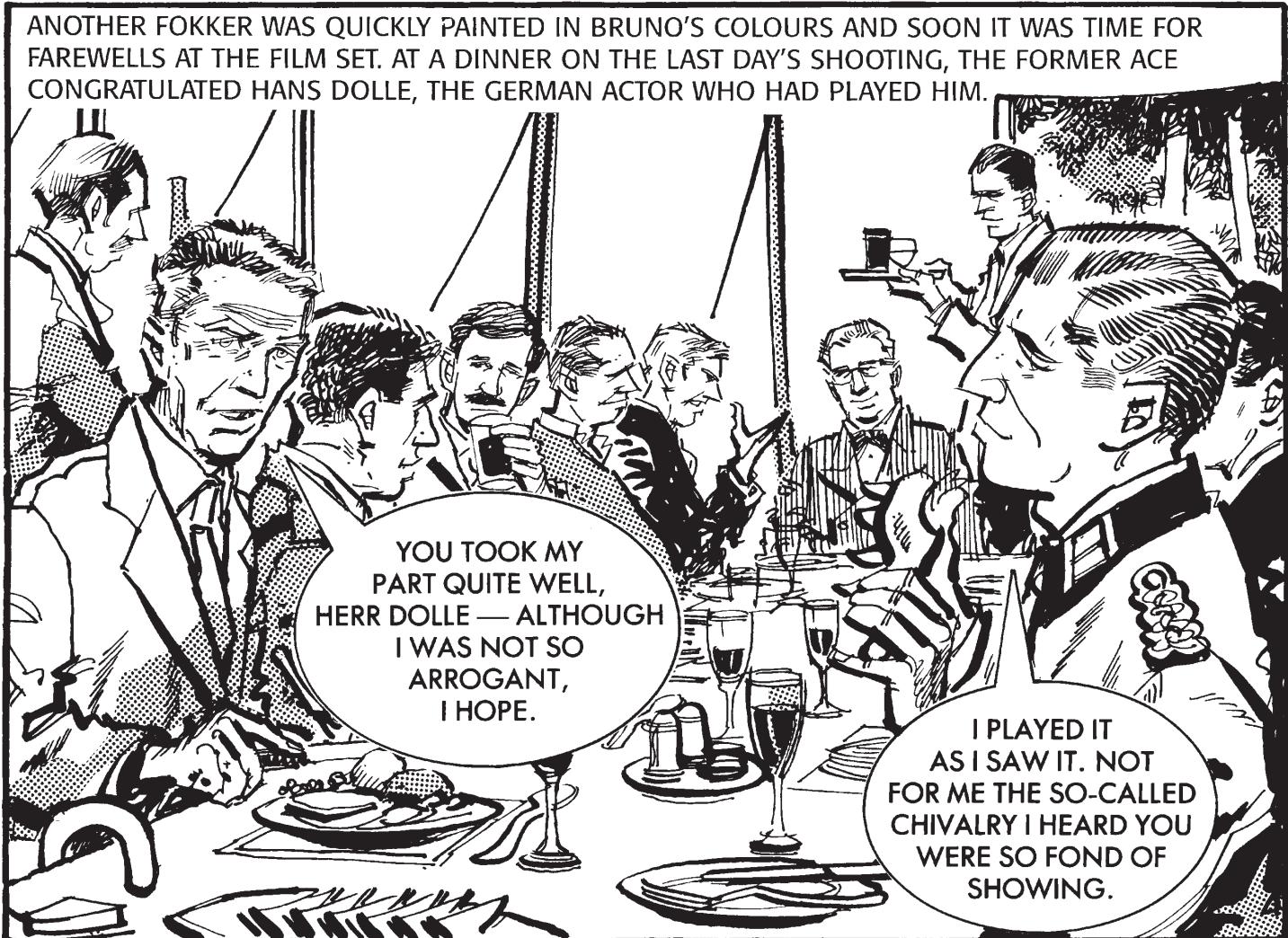


VINCENT ACTED QUICKLY BEFORE PAUL GUESSED HIS INTENTION.
THE BOOK WAS SENT SPINNING INTO THE FIRE.

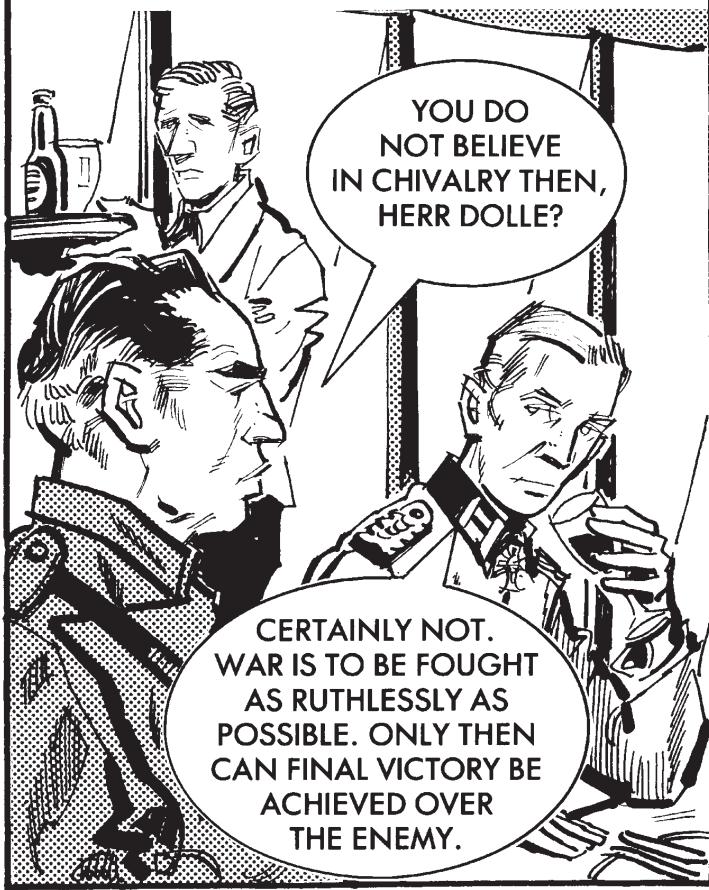


PAUL HAD HAD ENOUGH. HE ANNOUNCED
HE WOULD RETURN TO PARIS AT ONCE.





DOLLE HIMSELF WAS ABOUT TO ENTER THE LUFTWAFFE. IT WAS WELL KNOWN HE WAS A FIRM NAZI.



SOON AFTER HE AND HIS FATHER WENT BACK TO ENGLAND, BOB JOINED THE ROYAL AIR FORCE. NOW ALL TALK WAS OF A WAR THAT SEEMED CERTAIN.



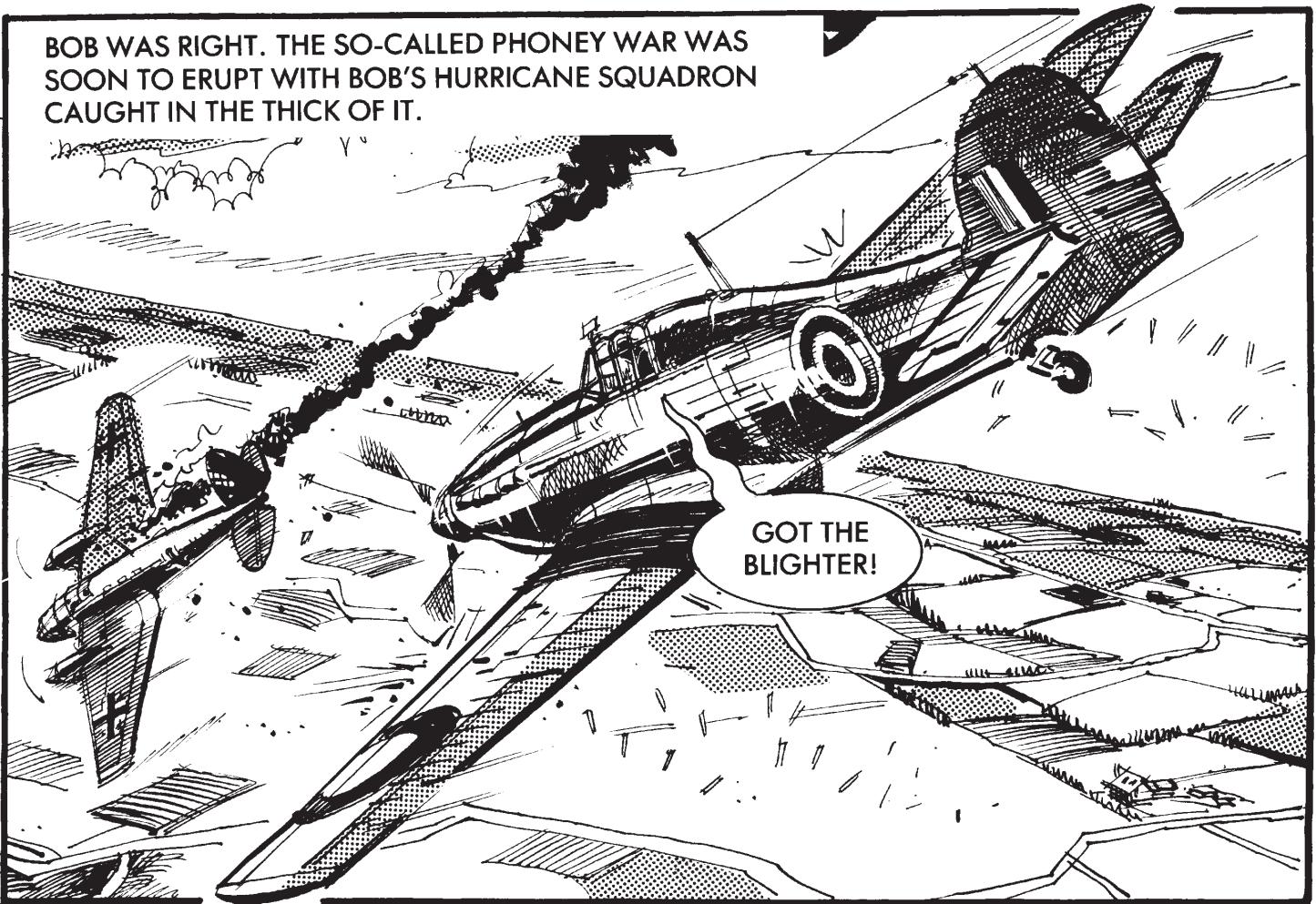
SEPTEMBER, 1939, AND WAR INDEED CAME ONCE MORE TO THE PEOPLE OF EUROPE.



BOB WAS TO ACHIEVE HIS AMBITION AND WAS SELECTED FOR FIGHTERS. SOON HE WAS WITH HIS SQUADRON IN FRANCE, LIKE THE YOUNG MEN OF ANOTHER WAR.



BOB WAS RIGHT. THE SO-CALLED PHONEY WAR WAS SOON TO ERUPT WITH BOB'S HURRICANE SQUADRON CAUGHT IN THE THICK OF IT.



ON THE GERMAN SIDE HANS DOLLE WAS NOW A FULLY FLEDGED LUFTWAFFE PILOT AND WAS PROVING TO BE AN EXCEPTIONAL FIGHTER IN THE AIR.

EASY MEAT
THESE FRENCH PLANES.
TOO SLOW AND WITH NO FIREPOWER
WORTH TALKING ABOUT.

DOLLE SOON CAUGHT THE ATTENTION OF THE GERMAN PRESS WHO WERE EVER READY TO HAVE A FOLK HERO.

SO THAT IS
DOLLE. MAKING QUITE
A NAME FOR HIMSELF, THAT
YOUNG MAN. THE FUHRER HIMSELF
HAS SENT CONGRATULATIONS
TO HIM.

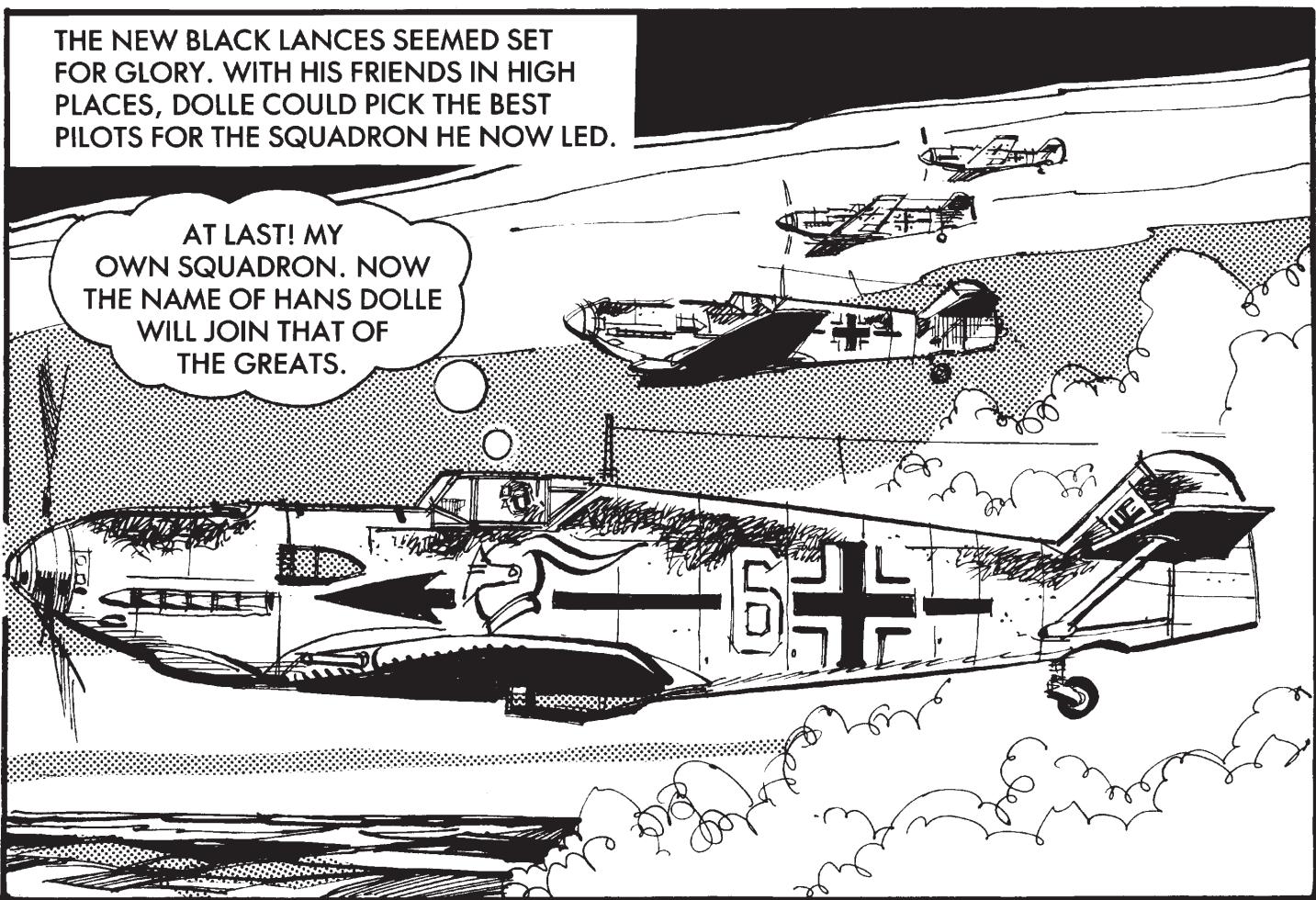
HE WILL BE
ANOTHER RICHTHOFEN
OR KRUGER, GENTLEMEN,
YOU MAY DEPEND
ON IT.

DOLLE WAS NOT SLOW TO GRAB THE PUBLICITY AND SEEMED TO REVEL IN IT. BRUNO KRUGER WAS NOT IMPRESSED.

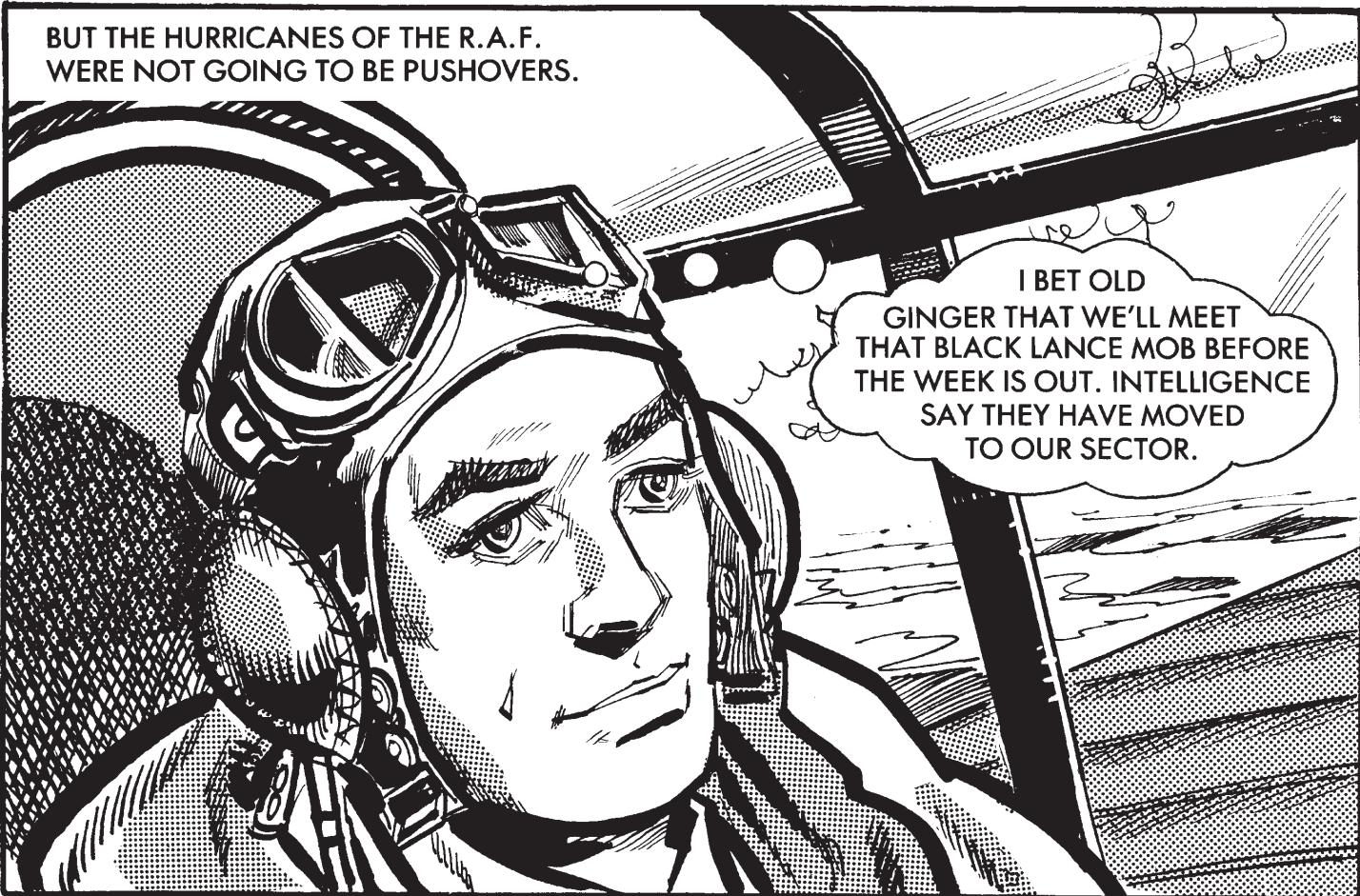


THE NEW BLACK LANCES SEEMED SET FOR GLORY. WITH HIS FRIENDS IN HIGH PLACES, DOLLE COULD PICK THE BEST PILOTS FOR THE SQUADRON HE NOW LED.

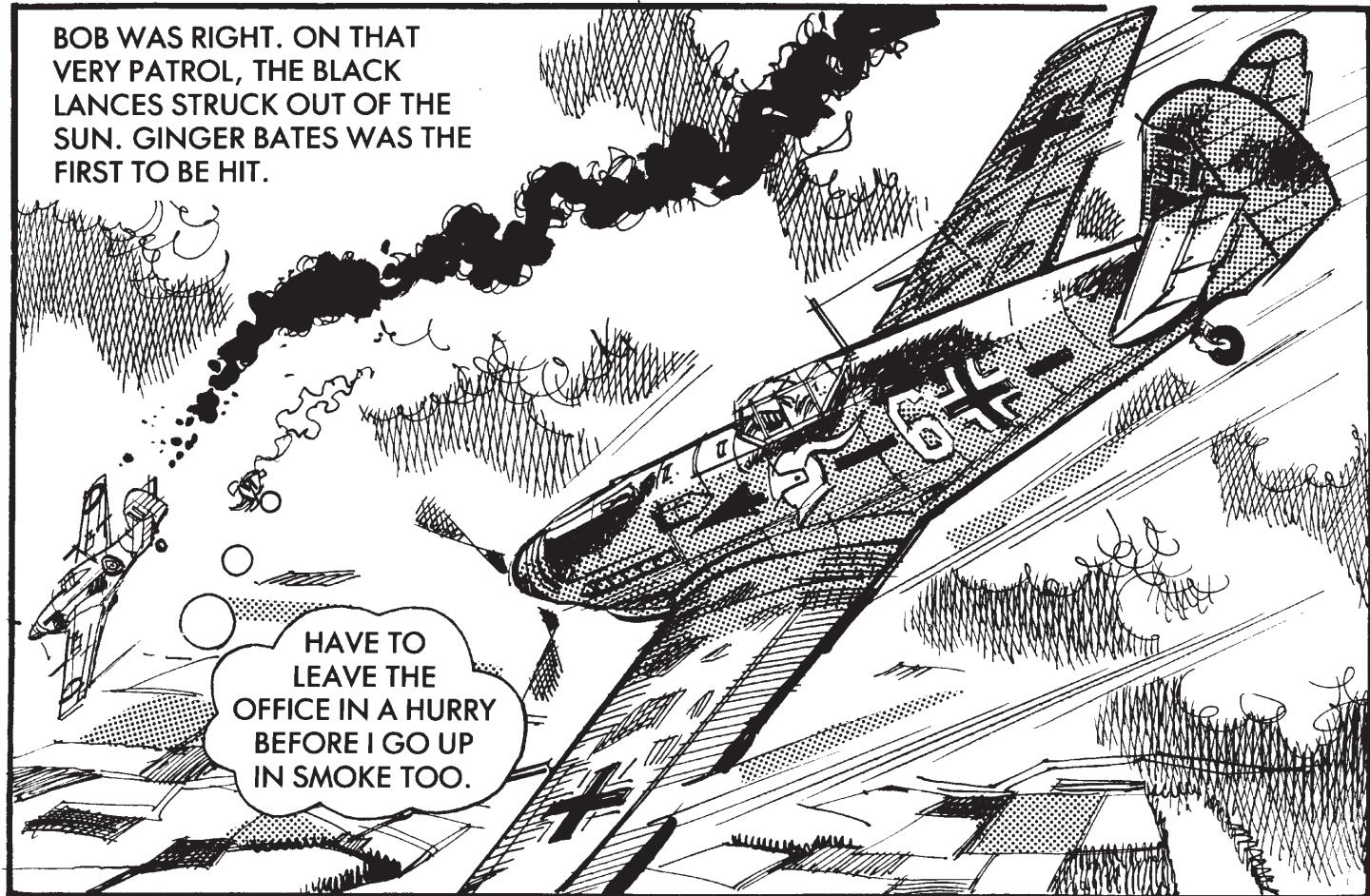
AT LAST! MY OWN SQUADRON. NOW THE NAME OF HANS DOLLE WILL JOIN THAT OF THE GREATS.

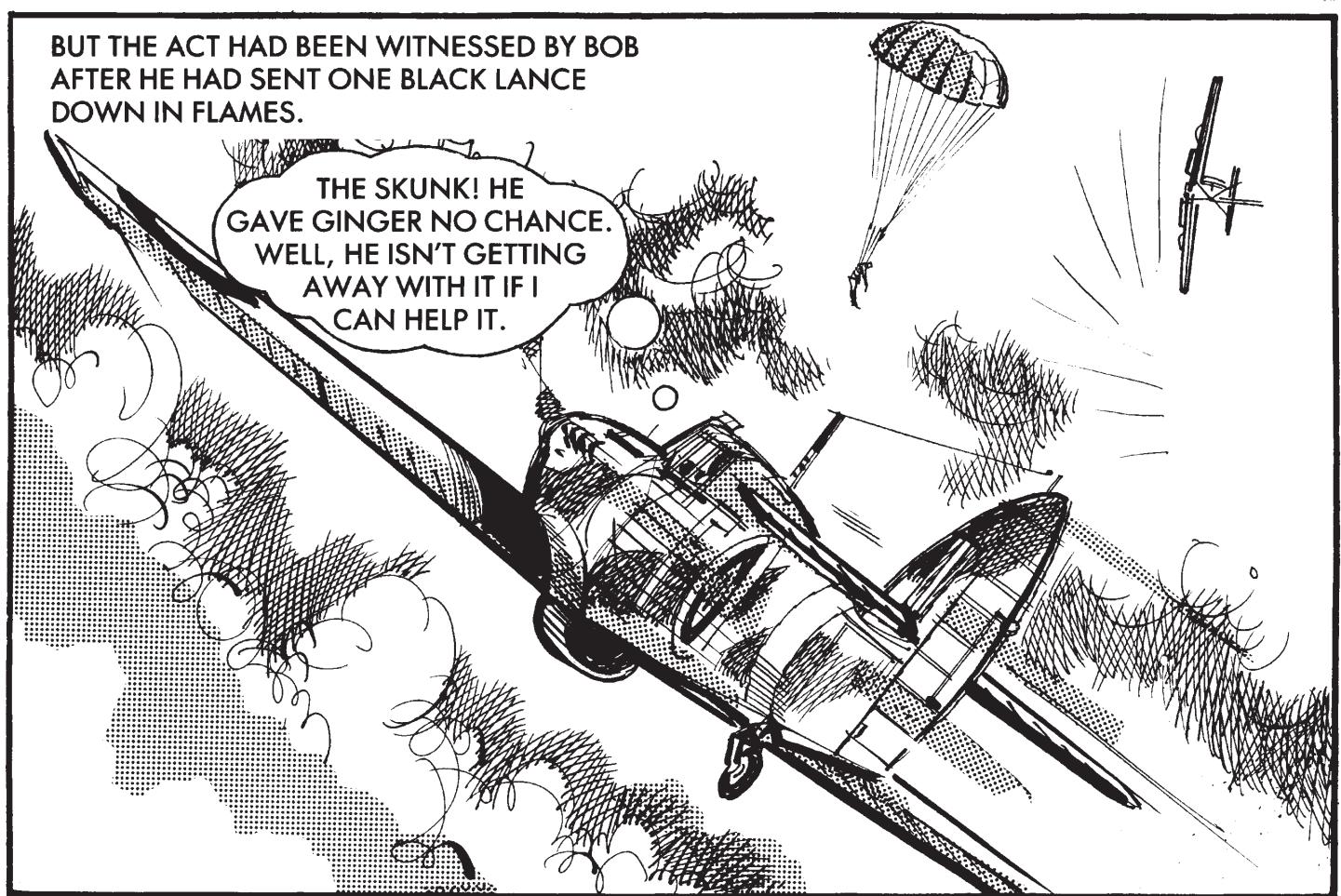


BUT THE HURRICANES OF THE R.A.F.
WERE NOT GOING TO BE PUSHOVERS.



BOB WAS RIGHT. ON THAT
VERY PATROL, THE BLACK
LANCES STRUCK OUT OF THE
SUN. GINGER BATES WAS THE
FIRST TO BE HIT.





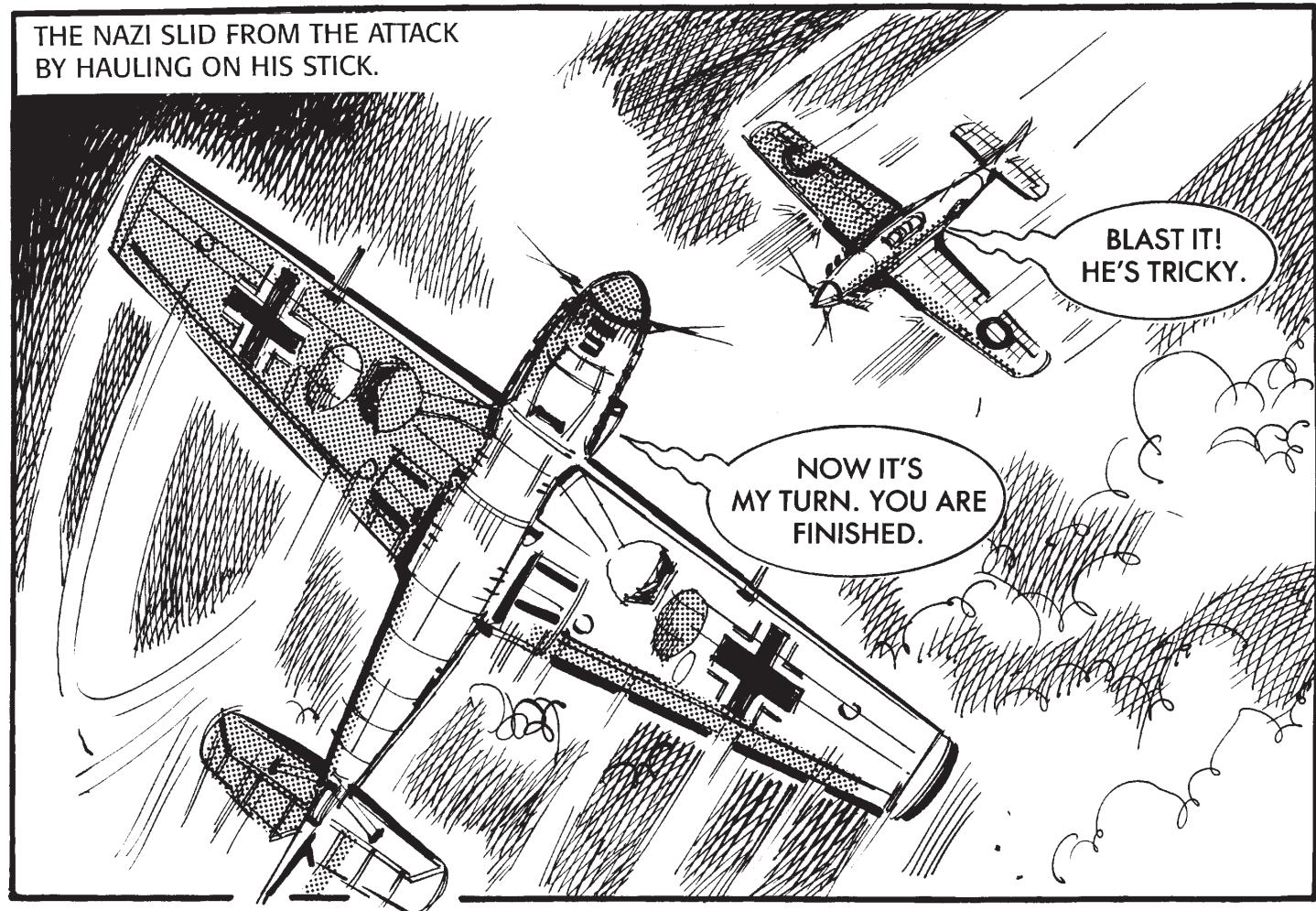
DOLLE SAW THE LONE HURRICANE STREAKING FOR HIM AND SWUNG TO MEET THE ATTACK CONFIDENTLY.



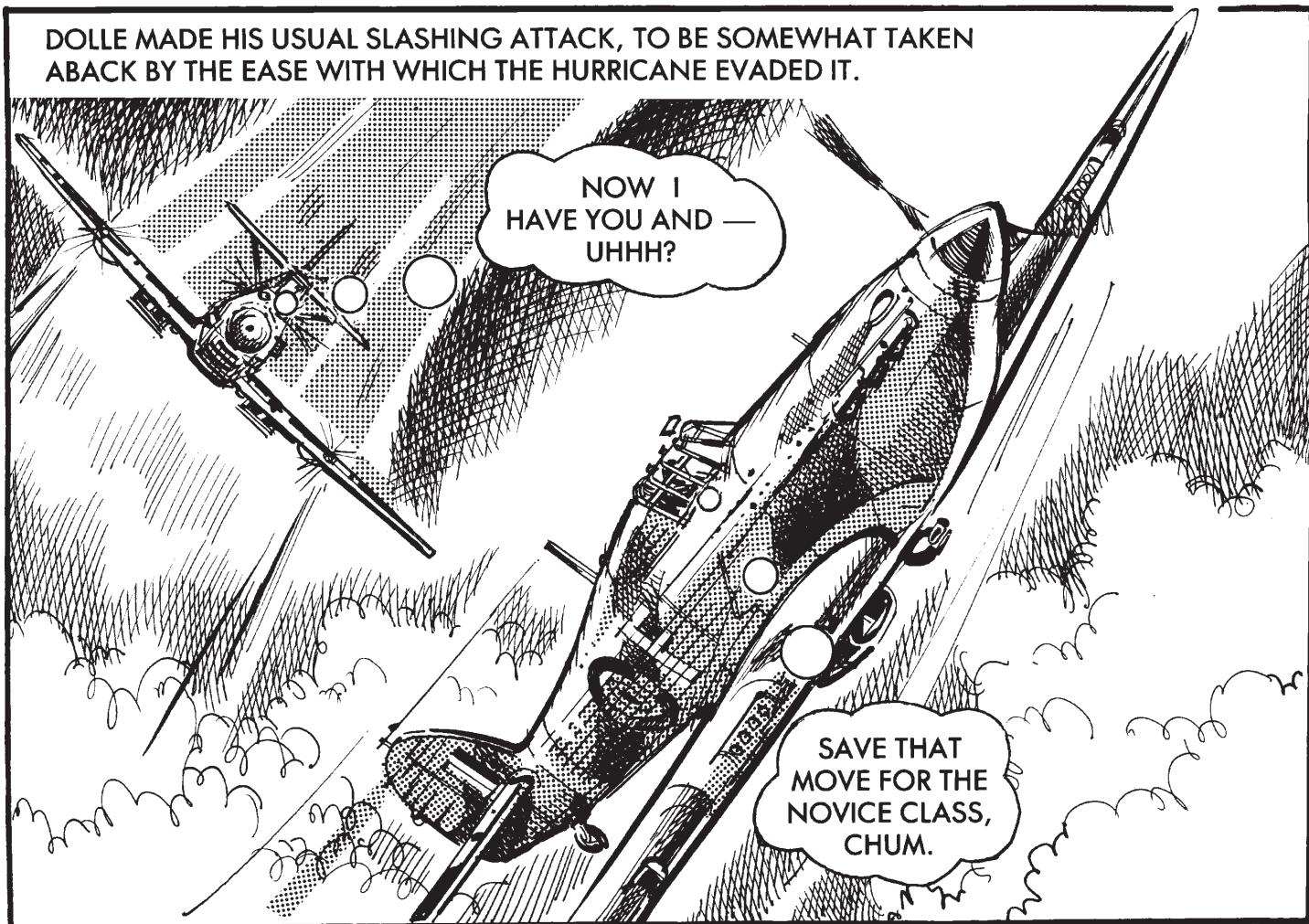
ANGER COURSING THROUGH HIM, BOB OPENED UP AT EXTREME RANGE, HIS ONE THOUGHT BEING TO AVENGE HIS CHUM.



THE NAZI SLID FROM THE ATTACK BY HAULING ON HIS STICK.



DOLLE MADE HIS USUAL SLASHING ATTACK, TO BE SOMEWHAT TAKEN ABACK BY THE EASE WITH WHICH THE HURRICANE EVADED IT.



THE HURRICANE THEN OUTMANOEUVRED THE DIVING MESSERSCHMITT. ONE BURST MADE THE ENEMY MACHINE SHUDDER AND BURST INTO SMOKE AND FLAME.



BUT IN HIS EAGERNESS TO NAIL THE Me109, BOB FORGOT ONE GOLDEN RULE AND WAS TO PAY FOR IT. ANOTHER MESSERSCHMITT HAD COME ROCKETING OUT OF THE SUN.

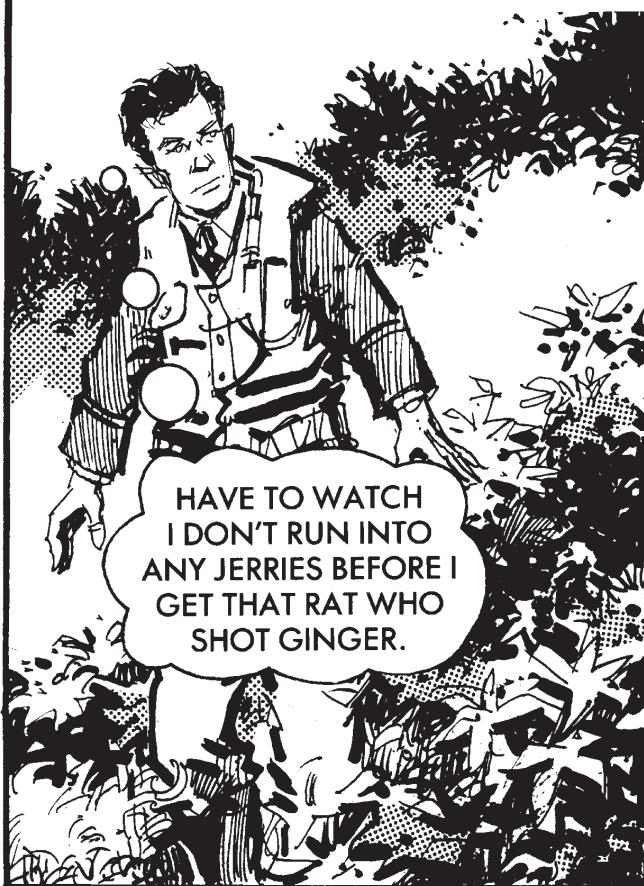
HECK! NEVER
SAW THAT BLIGHTER.
NAILED ME
PROPER.

OUR LEADER
IS AVENGED. AT
LEAST HE MANAGED
TO BALE OUT.

AS HE SWUNG EARTHWARDS, BOB CAUGHT SIGHT OF HIS OPPONENT ALSO DESCENDING BY PARACHUTE.

MURDER MY
MATE, WOULD YOU?
THIS FIGHT ISN'T
OVER YET.

DOWN SAFELY, BOB BEGAN TO SEARCH FOR THE ENEMY PILOT.



THEN THE TWO MEN CAME FACE TO FACE.



WITH A SNARL DOLLE WENT FOR HIS LUGER BUT BOB LAUNCHED HIMSELF AT THE NAZI.



BOB PUT A LOT INTO THE PUNCH HE THREW FIRST AND IT HIT THE TARGET.



FOLLOWING THE FIRST PUNCH WITH A SECOND, BOB SENT THE GERMAN FLYING.



BUT BOB DID NOT GET THE OPPORTUNITY TO FOLLOW UP THE FIGHT.



BOB DIDN'T WASTE TIME WITH THE GERMAN PILOT THEN.



DOLLE SAW BOB VANISH INTO THE TREES AND SCRAMBLED TO HIS FEET WITH MURDER IN HIS EYES.

DON'T STAND THERE GAPING,
FOOLS! GET AFTER HIM. I WANT THAT
PILOT DEAD.

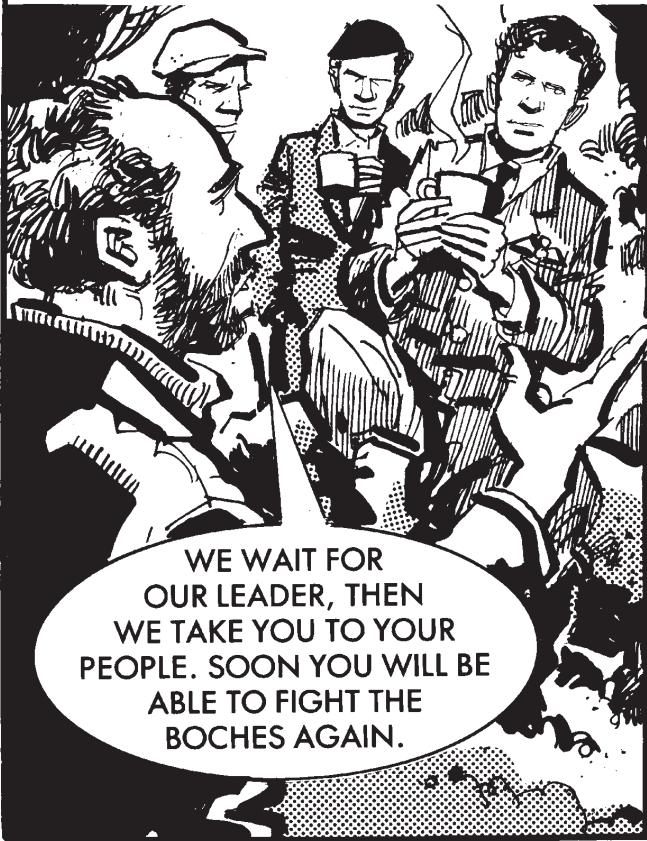
JAWOHL!

IF THOSE
TWO HAD A
SCRAP BEFORE WE
CAME, I CAN SEE
WHO WON IT.

THE NAZI HAD SUFFERED THE
HUMILIATION OF BEING SHOT
DOWN AND THEN LOSING
THE FIST FIGHT TOO.

IF ONLY I
COULD GET MY
HANDS ON HIM! I
ALMOST HOPE THEY DON'T
SHOOT HIM ON
SIGHT.

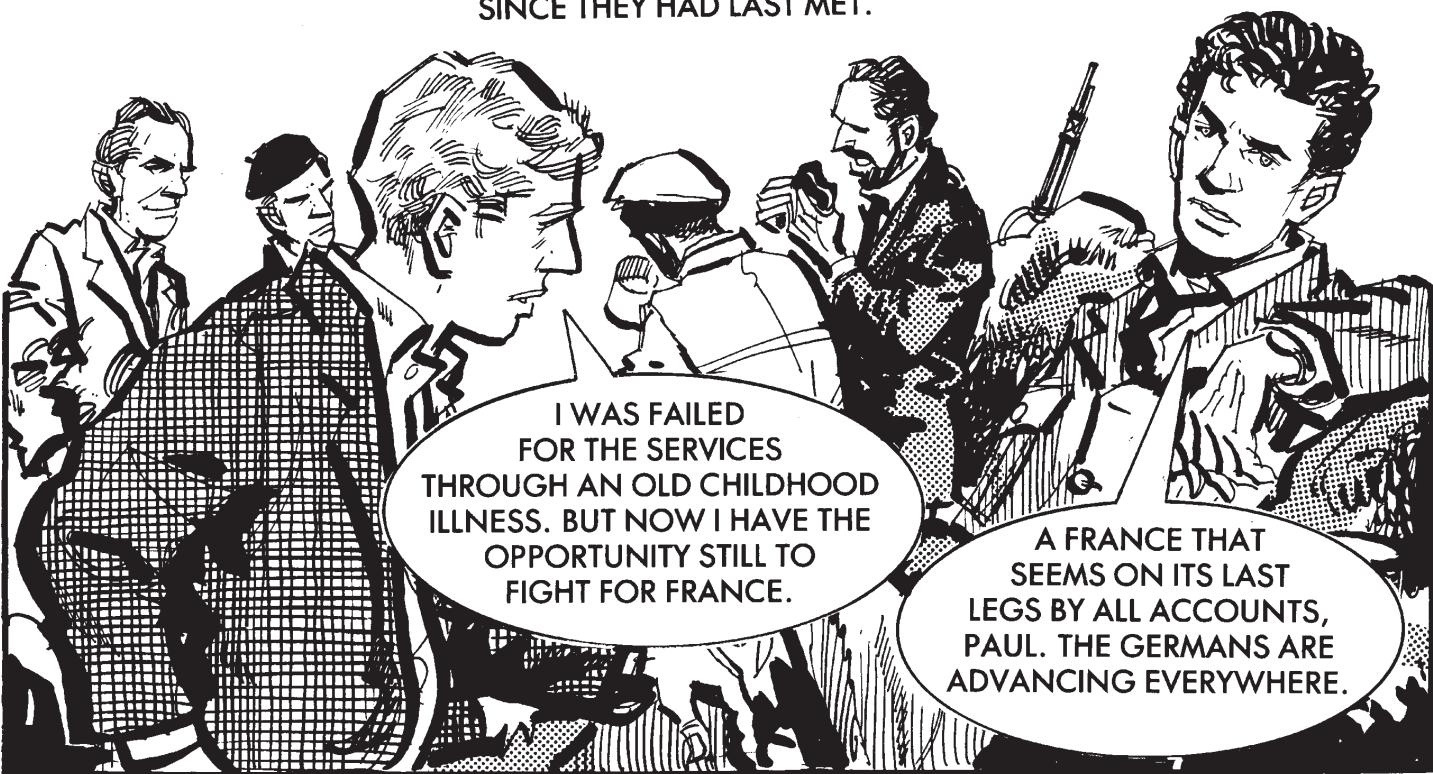
THE GERMAN WAS TO BE DISAPPOINTED AS BOB HAD THE GOOD FORTUNE TO MEET FRIENDS, FRENCH RESISTANCE FIGHTERS WHO WHISKED HIM AWAY FROM THE PURSUING SOLDIERS.



WHEN THE LEADER ARRIVED, TO BOB'S SURPRISE, IT WAS SOMEONE HE KNEW WELL.



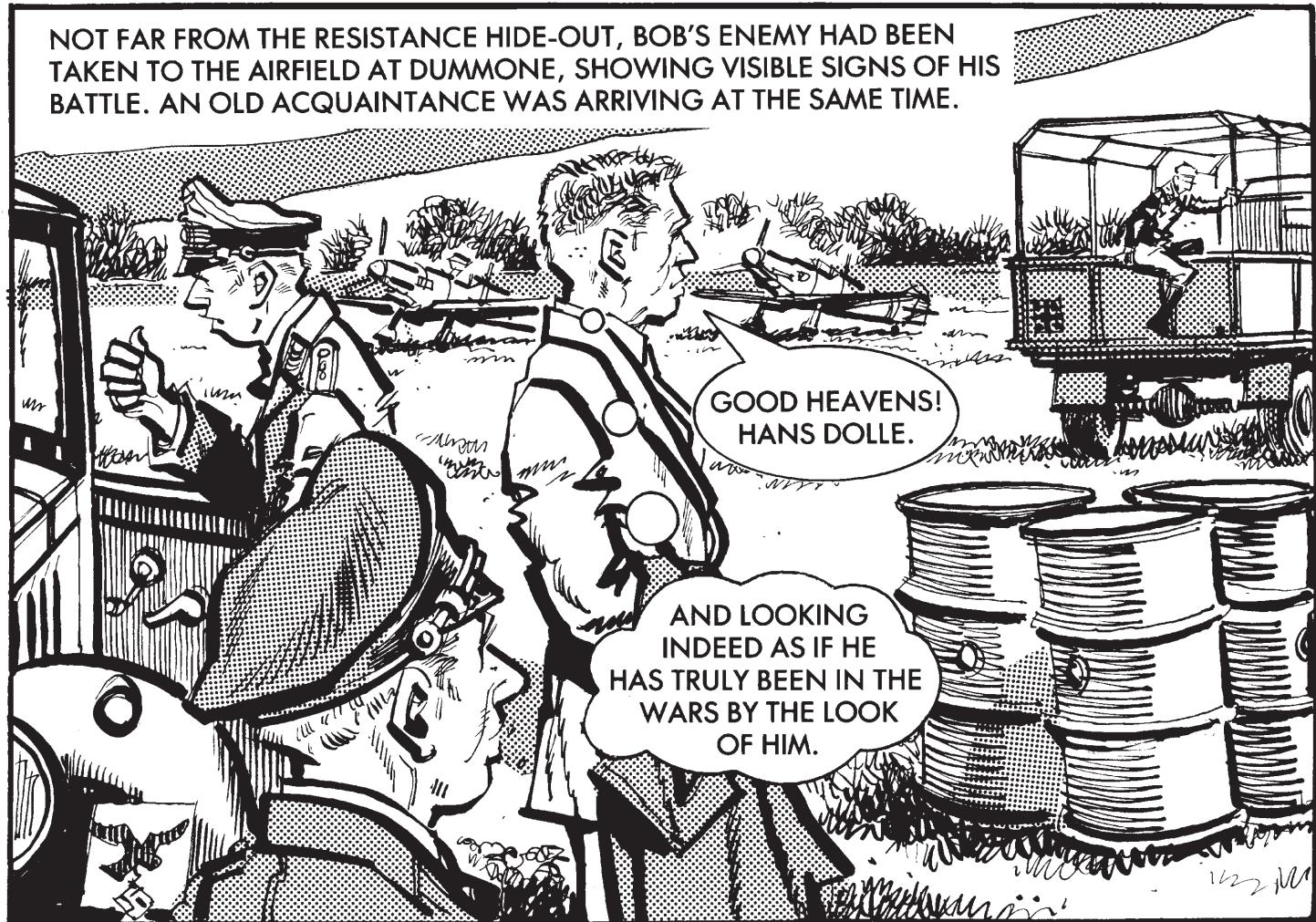
PAUL EXPLAINED WHAT HE HAD BEEN DOING SINCE THEY HAD LAST MET.



EVEN AFTER FRANCE FELL THE FIGHT WOULD GO ON,
ACCORDING TO PAUL.



NOT FAR FROM THE RESISTANCE HIDE-OUT, BOB'S ENEMY HAD BEEN
TAKEN TO THE AIRFIELD AT DUMMONE, SHOWING VISIBLE SIGNS OF HIS
BATTLE. AN OLD ACQUAINTANCE WAS ARRIVING AT THE SAME TIME.



BRUNO KRUGER WAS ON A MORALE BOOSTING TOUR OF NEWLY CAPTURED AIRFIELDS. HE COULD NOT HAVE CHOSEN A WORSE TIME AS FAR AS HANS DOLLE WAS CONCERNED.



STILL CHUCKLING, BRUNO ENTERED THE OFFICE OF THE STATION COMMANDER, WHO HAD AN IDEA TO PUT TO HIM.



THE STATION COMMANDER EXPLAINED THAT THE REPLICA FOKKERS FROM BRUNO'S PRE-WAR FILM HAD BEEN FOUND STORED IN THE AIRFIELD HANGARS.

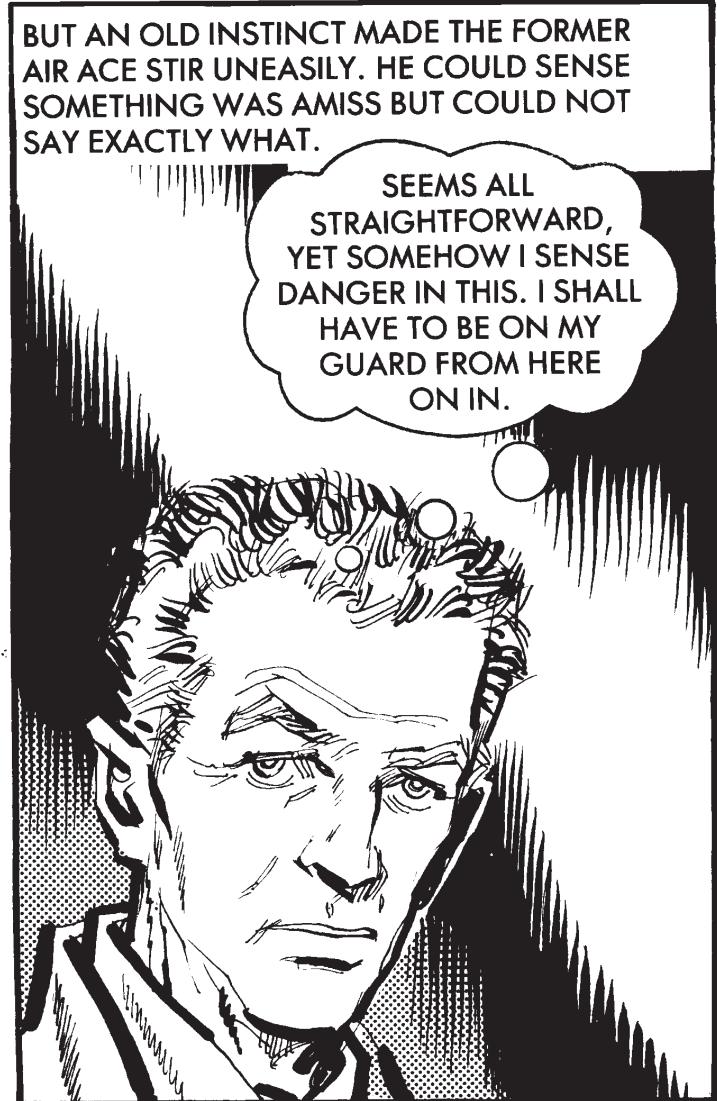
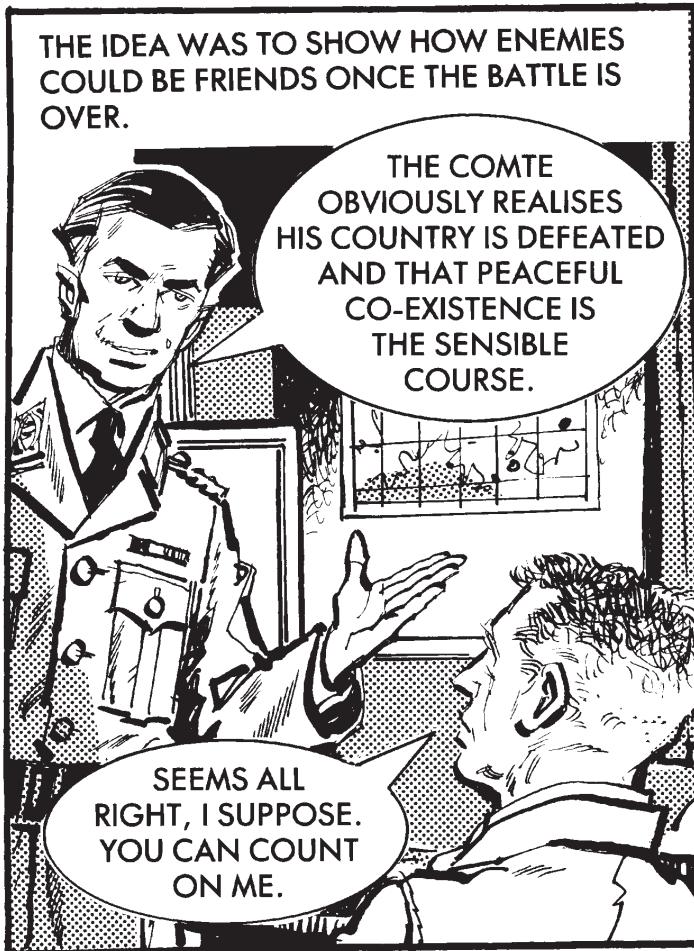


THE STATION COMMANDER WAS FULL OF ENTHUSIASM FOR HIS IDEA AND EXPLAINED THAT HE HAD ALREADY SPOKEN TO THE COMTE DE VINCENT WHO HAD AGREED TO TAKE PART.



**FIND
MORE
FREE
MAGAZINES**

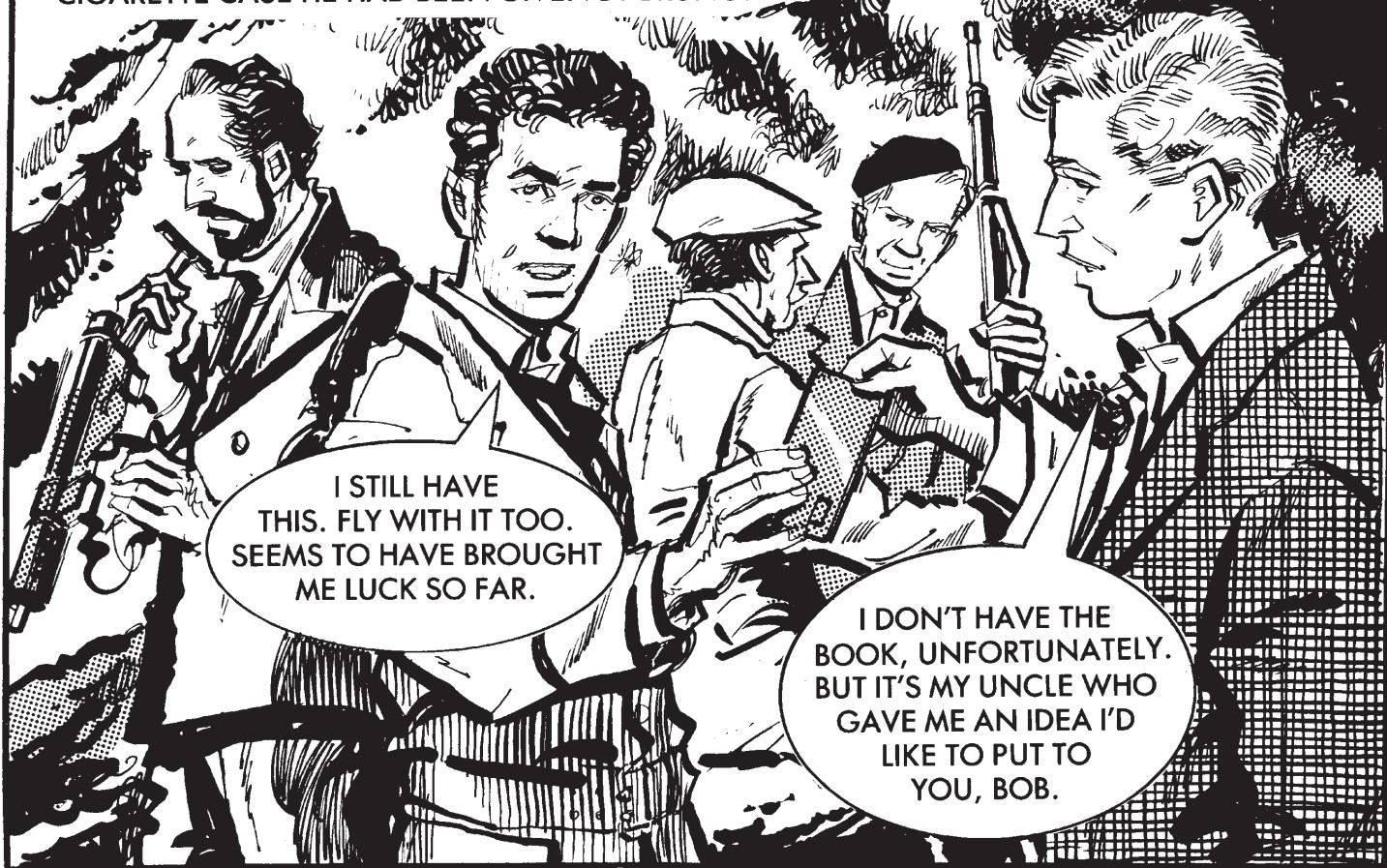
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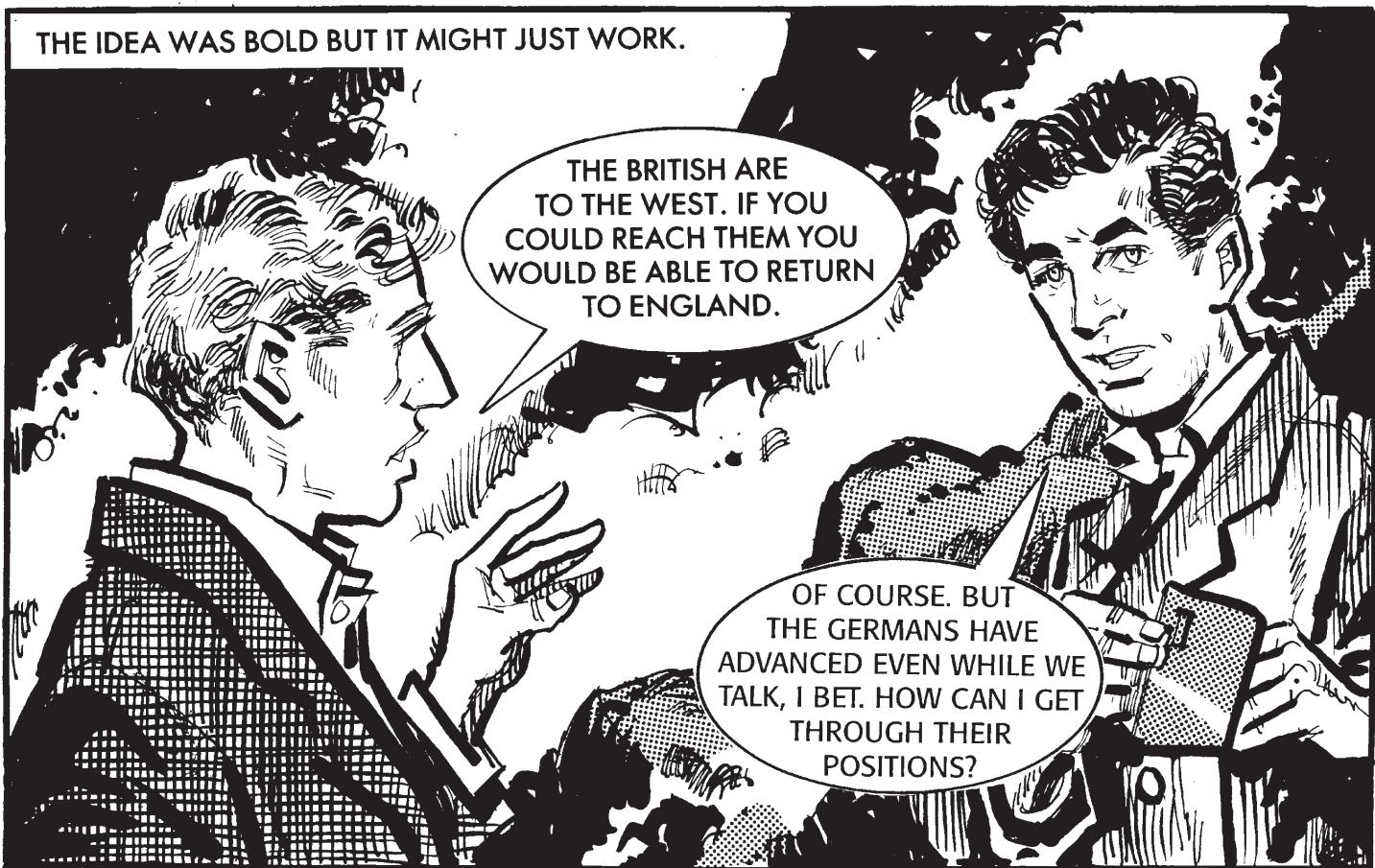
THE NEWS OF THE PROPOSED FILM REACHED HANS DOLLE, WHO DID NOT LIKE IT ONE BIT.



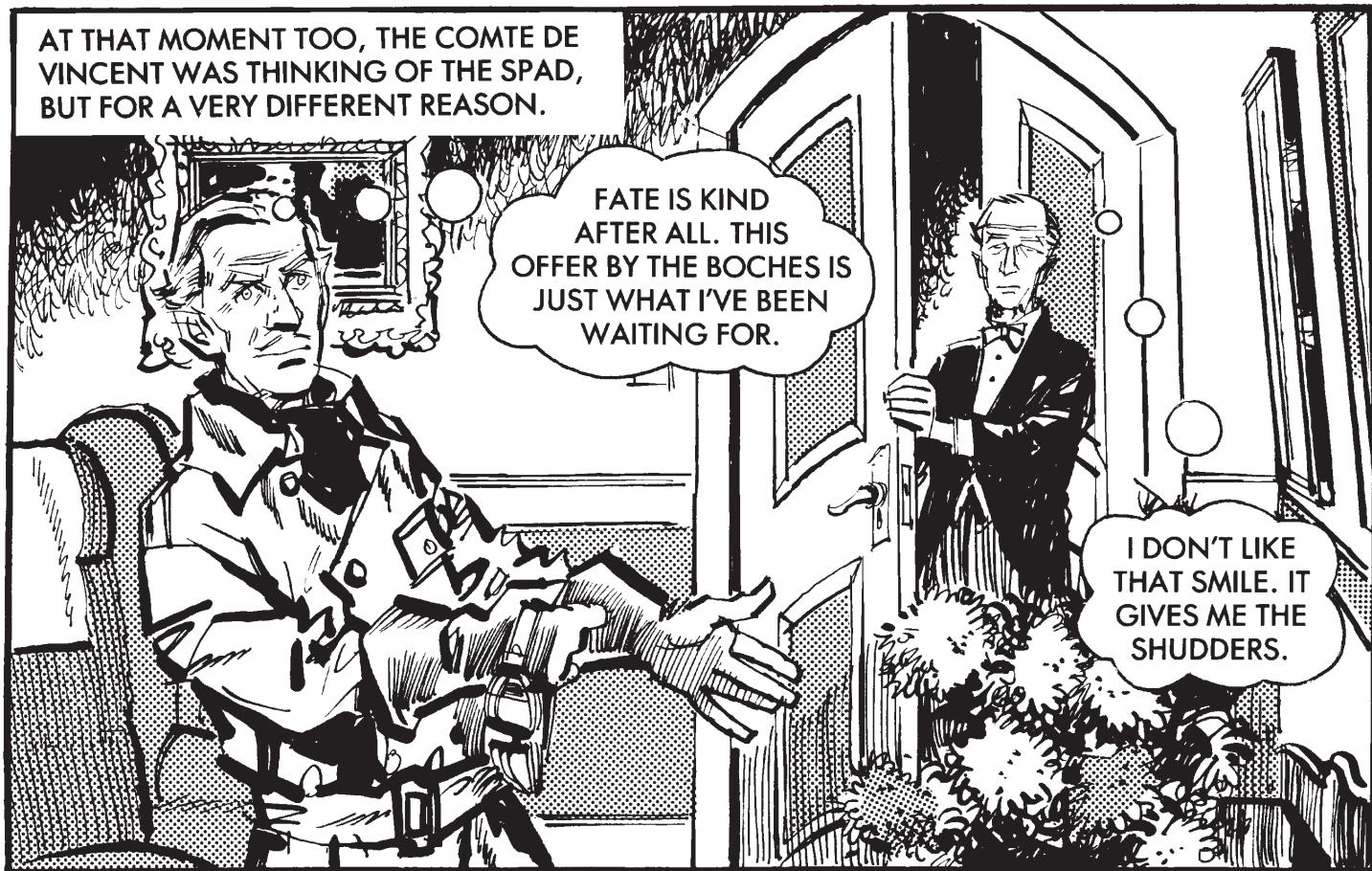
AT THE CAVE HIDE-OUT, PAUL AND BOB WERE TALKING OF OLD TIMES, BOB PRODUCING THE CIGARETTE CASE HE HAD BEEN GIVEN BY BRUNO.



THE IDEA WAS BOLD BUT IT MIGHT JUST WORK.













BOB MADE A MOVE TO PLACATE ANTON DE VINCENT BUT THE FRENCHMAN MISTOOK IT FOR A THREAT AND FIRED.



AS GASTON AND PAUL GRAPPLED, VINCENT MOVED FAST, INTENT ON HIS PLAN ABOVE ALL ELSE.



PAUL SHOOK OFF THE ELDERLY GASTON BUT IT WAS TOO LATE TO STOP HIS UNCLE.

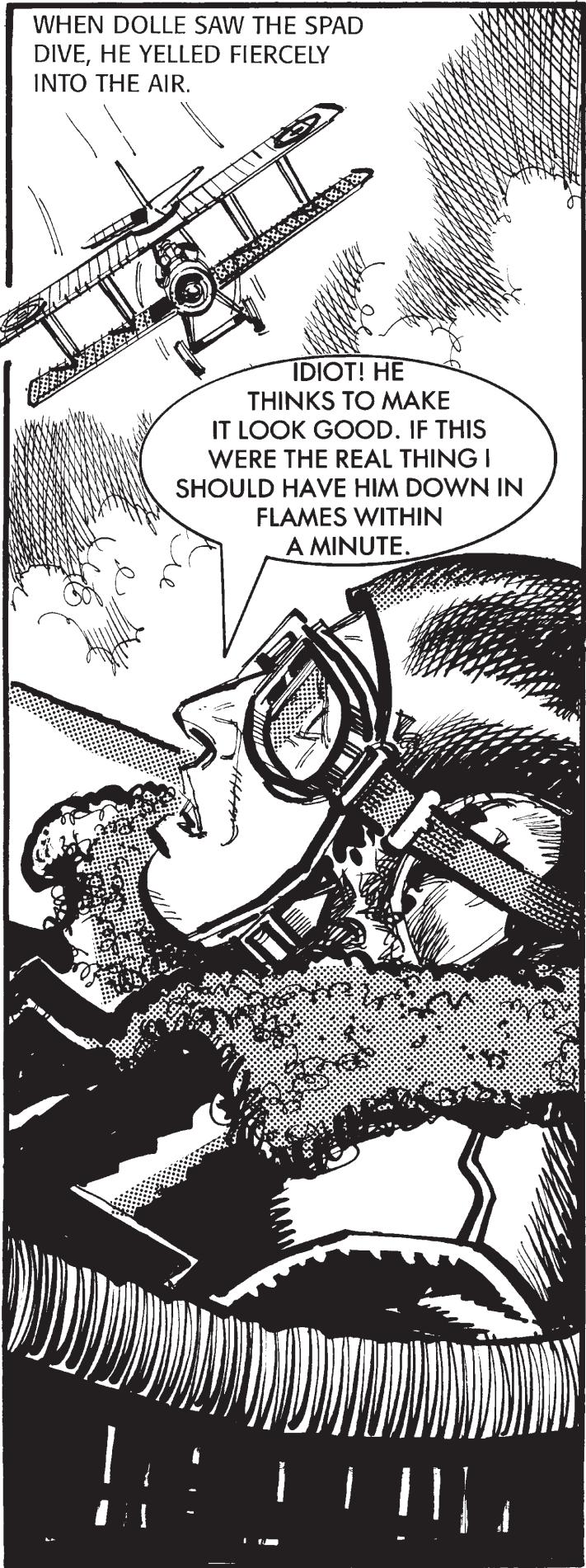


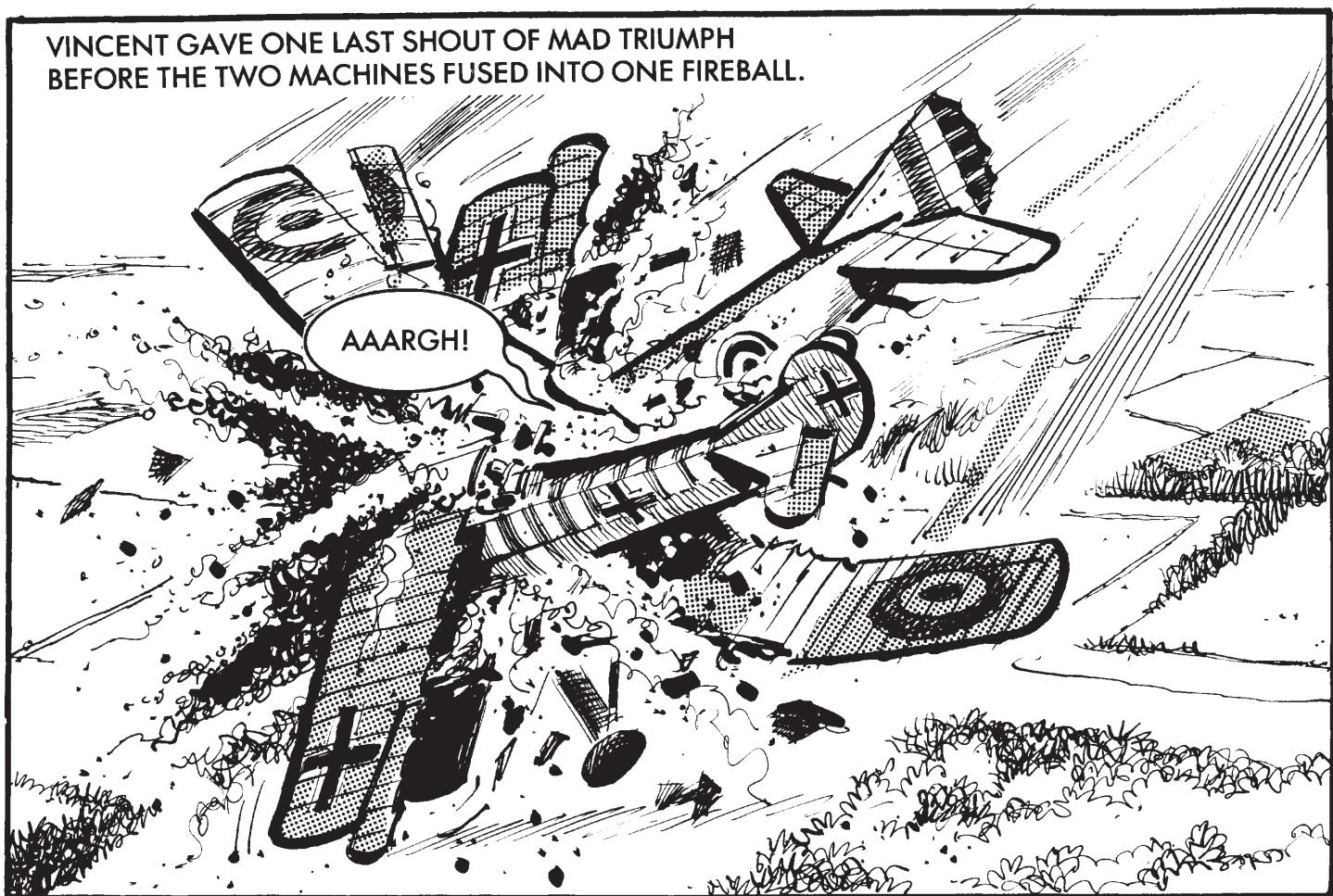
AT THE AIRFIELD TOO THERE HAD BEEN A CHANGE OF PLAN, AS THE ARROGANT DOLLE WAS QUICK TO POINT OUT TO BRUNO.



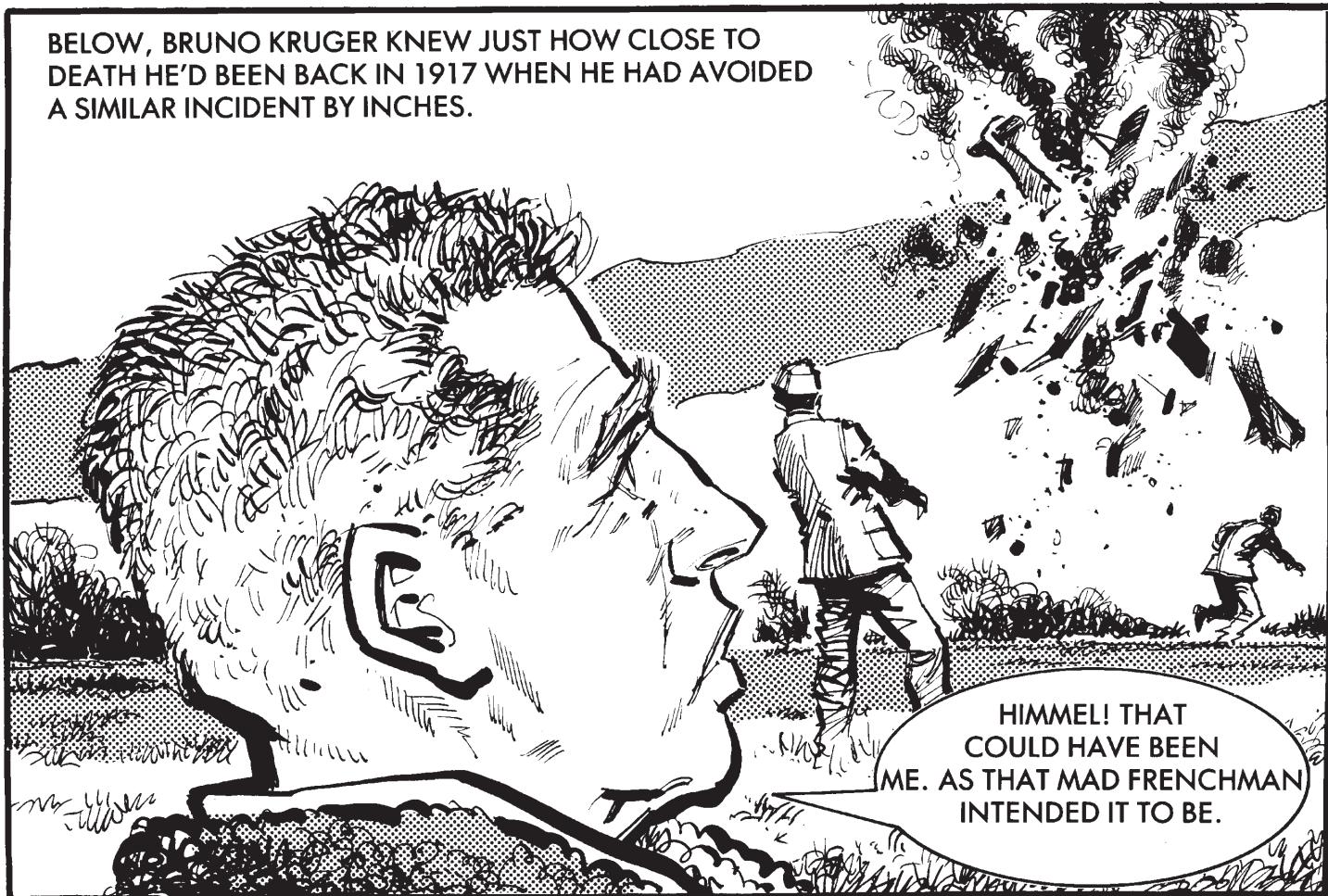
THE FOKKER LIFTED AS THE FRENCH MACHINE HOVED INTO SIGHT. THE CAMERAMAN GOT READY FOR WHAT WAS TO FOLLOW, LITTLE KNOWING HOW DRAMATIC IT WAS TO BE.







BELOW, BRUNO KRUGER KNEW JUST HOW CLOSE TO DEATH HE'D BEEN BACK IN 1917 WHEN HE HAD AVOIDED A SIMILAR INCIDENT BY INCHES.



THE COMTE DE VINCENT HAD FOUGHT HIS LAST BATTLE AS ONLY HE KNEW HOW — TO THE DEATH. HIS NEPHEW MANAGED TO SMUGGLE BOB THROUGH TO THE BRITISH LINES AND HE RETURNED TO ENGLAND IN TIME TO DEFEND HIS COUNTRY AGAINST THE MIGHT OF THE LUFTWAFFE IN THE BATTLE OF BRITAIN.



AND ON EVERY FLIGHT, TUCKED IN A POCKET, WAS A BATTERED CIGARETTE CASE, THE GIFT OF A GERMAN PILOT, A KNIGHT OF THE AIR FROM AN AGE GONE BY.

Commando
THE END

APPROVED BY THE
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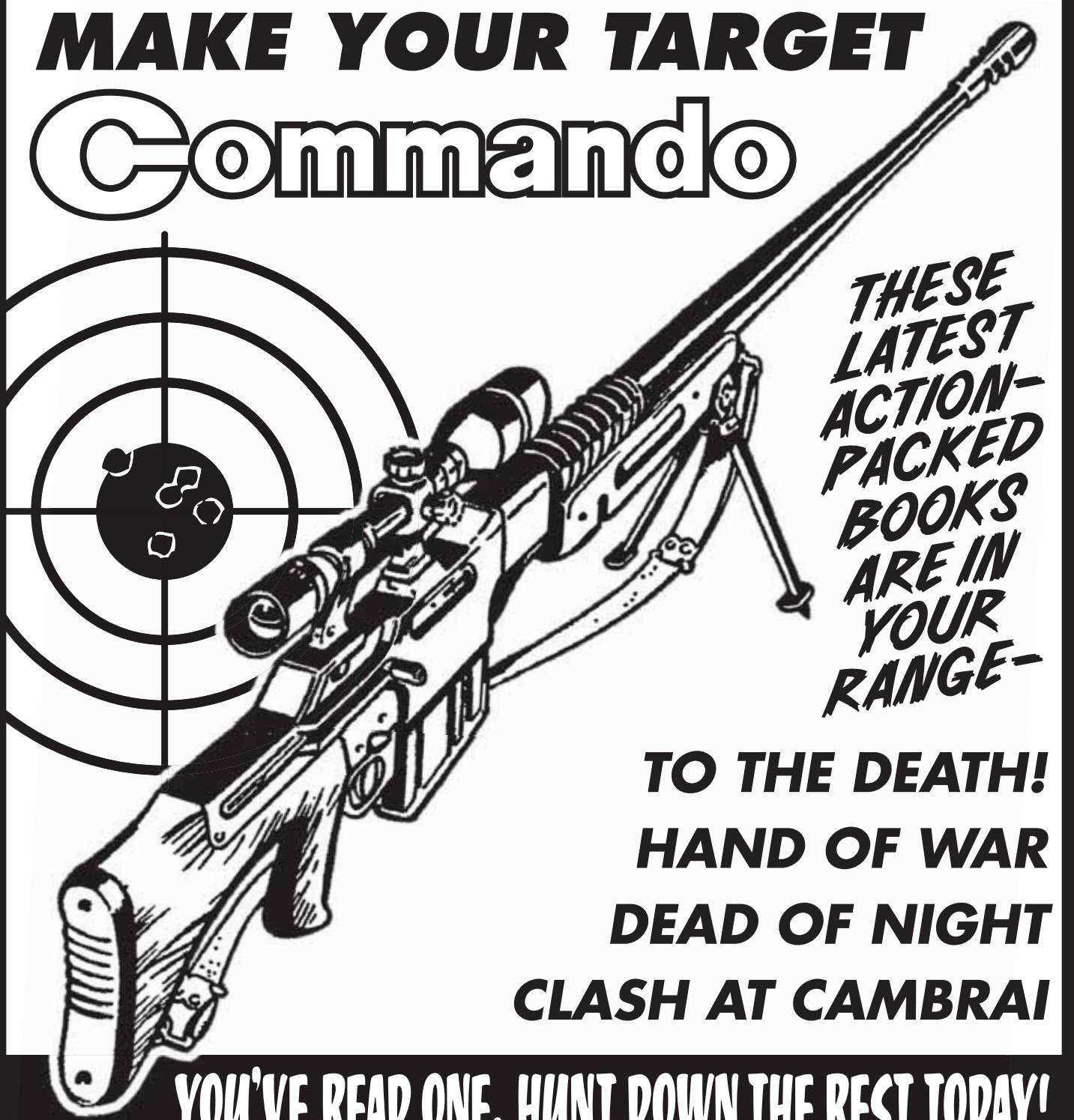
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