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£2

COMPLETE 63-PAGE ACTION STORY

Commando

THE SILVER COLLECTION



PHANTOM PANTHERS

COMMANDO - THE SILVER COLLECTION

Title

PHANTOM PANTHERS

Subject

Throughout Commando's 53-year history, Military Policemen (MPs) have been used by authors as a handy plot device or character archetype. On many occasions, these Army law enforcers have been officious, bullying types, bringing trumped-up charges against our plucky, salt-of-the-earth heroes.

In Phantom Panthers — drawn by the inimitable and much-missed Denis McLoughlin — we buck the trend. MP Sergeant Bill Cuthbert is likable, brave, honest...and determined to solve a battlefield mystery. Once more, Commando can turn expectations on their heads and — as we see here — the results are all the better for it.

Scott Montgomery, Deputy Editor

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STORY
ALLAN
CHALMERS

ART
DENIS
MCLOUGHLIN

COVER
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PHANTOM PANTHERS



BULLETS ARE SOLID AND REAL ENOUGH, ESPECIALLY IF THEY'RE FIRED AT YOU. BUT BILL CUTHBERT WAS SOON TO FIND OUT IN HIS TOUGH WAR THAT THERE WERE OTHER THINGS WHICH WERE NOT SO EASY TO UNDERSTAND . . .

TOWARDS THE END OF THE FIRST WORLD WAR A BELGIAN TOWN NEAR THE FRENCH-GERMAN BORDER WAS GARRISONED BY BRITISH TROOPS. MILITARY POLICE PATROLS KEPT A CLOSE EYE ON THINGS.

QUIET
TONIGHT FOR
A CHANGE.

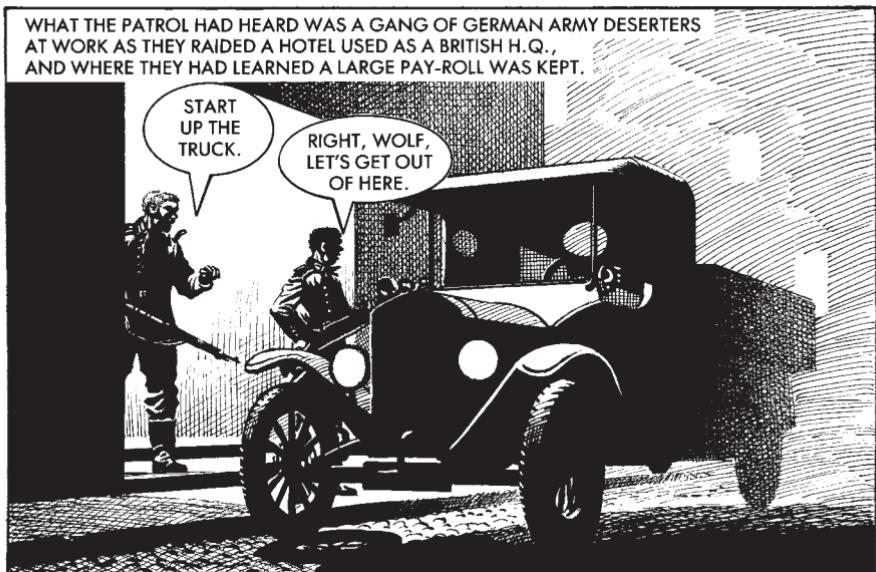
YEAH,
THAT AUSSIE MOB
HAS MOVED ON. MAKES
LIFE MORE
PEACEFUL.

THE CORPORAL IN CHARGE, IAN BLYTH, CHUCKLED QUIETLY — HE HAD SEEN IT ALL. HE STIFFENED IN ALARM, THOUGH, AS A MUFFLED THUD REACHED HIS EARS.

LISTEN,
WHAT WAS
THAT? SOUNDED IN
THE NEXT
STREET.

LET'S
MOVE IT AND
FIND OUT.

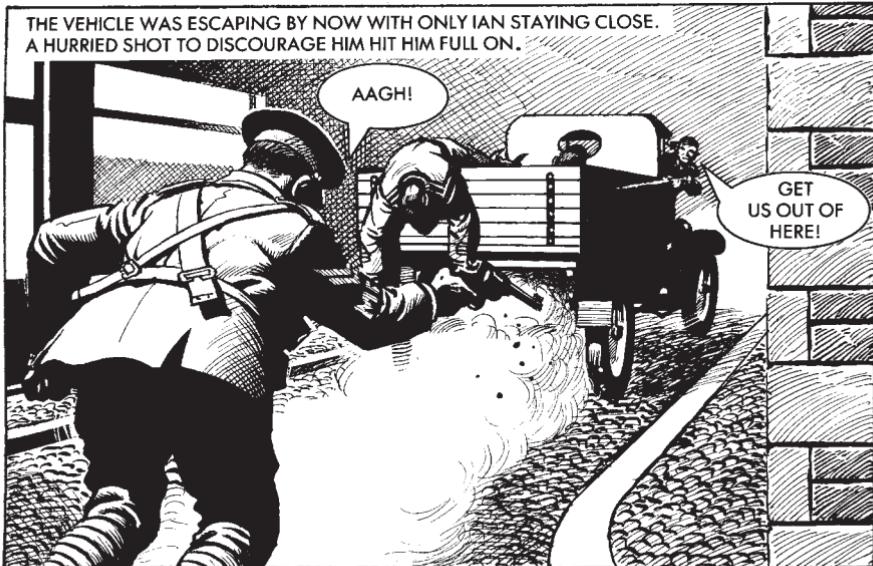
MP

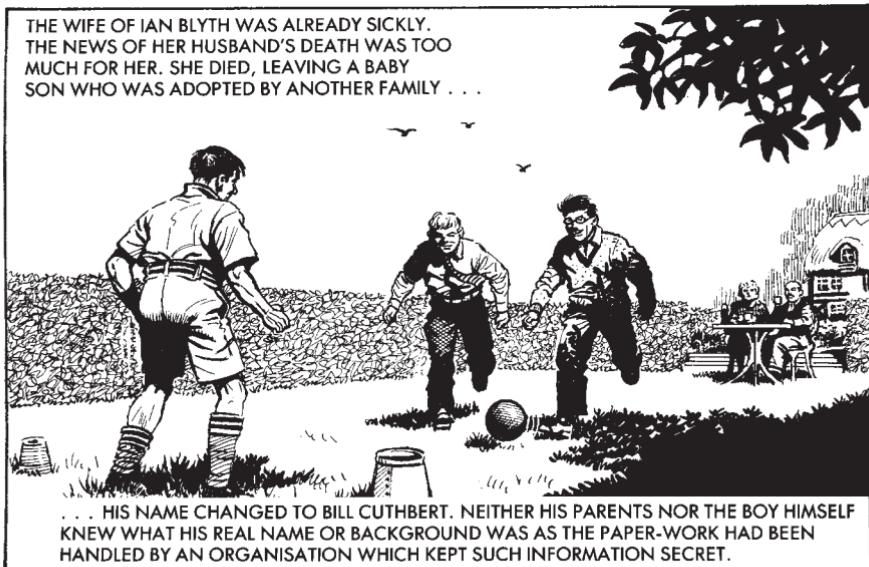


THE THIEVES ROARED AWAY, THEN OPENED FIRE WHEN CHALLENGED. THE RETURN BLAST FROM THE BRITISH WAS FAR MORE EFFECTIVE.



THE VEHICLE WAS ESCAPING BY NOW WITH ONLY IAN STAYING CLOSE. A HURRIED SHOT TO DISCOURAGE HIM HIT HIM FULL ON.





BILL GREW STRONG AND WELL, A LIKEABLE LAD. HIS LIFE CHANGED COMPLETELY AGAIN, HOWEVER, WHEN BOTH HIS FOSTER PARENTS WERE KILLED IN A CAR CRASH, NOT LONG AFTER THEY HAD TOLD HIM HE WAS ADOPTED.

AUNT MILLY SAYS
SHE'LL TAKE ME IN,
BUT SHE'S GOT ENOUGH
ON HER PLATE. I'LL JOIN
THE NAVY — THAT WILL
SUIT EVERYBODY.



GOING TO SEA HAD ALWAYS BEEN A DREAM OF HIS. ON THE VERY DAY HE SET OFF TO ENLIST, HE WALKED PAST AN ARMY RECRUITING OFFICE. SOME STRANGE SENSE MADE HIM PAUSE TO LOOK IN.

ARMY RECRUITING OFFICE

BE A SOLDIER?
NOW, I NEVER THOUGHT
OF THAT BEFORE. I'LL JUST
GO IN AND ASK . . . NO
HARM IN THAT.

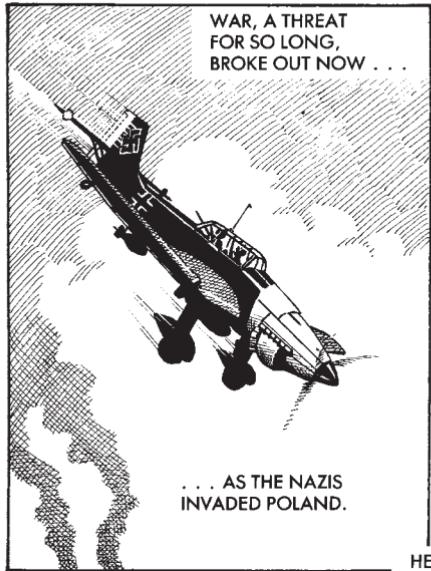
THE RESULT OF THIS WAS THAT HE ENDED UP AS A LANCE-CORPORAL IN THE MILITARY POLICE — A STRANGE TWIST OF FATE CONSIDERING THAT WAS THE UNIT HIS FATHER, OF WHOM HE STILL KNEW NOTHING, HAD BEEN IN.



HE ENJOYED HIS JOB, YET AS TIME
PASSED HE FOUND HIMSELF WONDERING
MORE AND MORE ABOUT HIS PARENTS.

SOMEBODY
SOMEWHERE MUST KNOW
SOMETHING ABOUT THEM. I'D
GIVE A LOT TO GET
SOME ANSWERS.





TO FRANCE WITH THE BRITISH EXPEDITIONARY FORCE WENT BILL'S UNIT. HE HAD OTHER THINGS TO THINK ABOUT NOW.



HE PROVED TO BE THAT AND MORE. THE WORK DONE BY THE M.P.s TO HELP ORGANISE THE RETREATING FORCES WAS A CREDIT TO THEIR NAME.



THE ENEMY HARRIED AT EVERY CHANCE,
ESPECIALLY THE PILOTS OF THE
DREADED JUNKERS 87 DIVE-BOMBERS.



BILL HAD BEEN ON THE RECEIVING END
OF THIS SORT OF ATTACK MORE THAN HE
LIKED TO REMEMBER. HE SPRIENT FOR COVER.

GET DOWN AND
KEEP DOWN. THEY
MEAN BUSINESS!

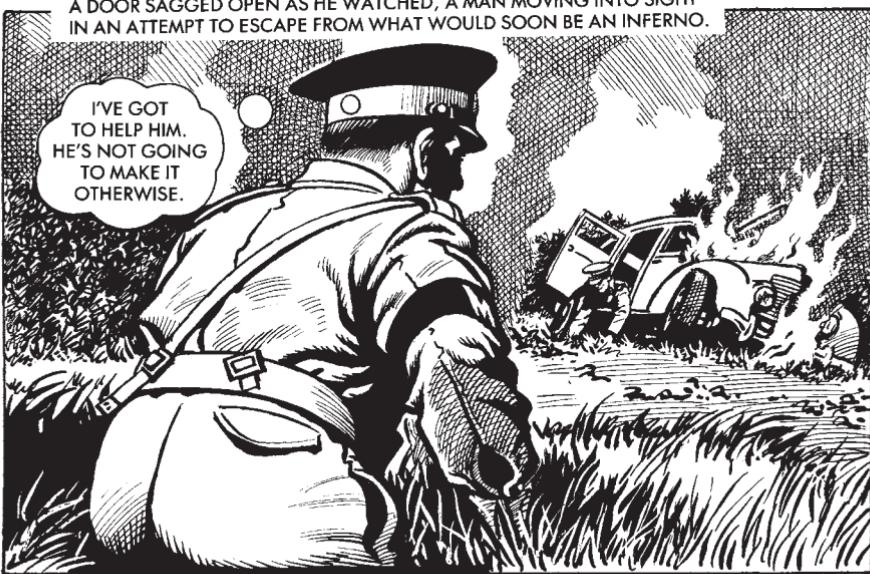
AAGH!

WHEN HE LOOKED UP AGAIN HE SAW A STAFF CAR THROWN ASIDE BY THE BLAST OF A BOMB. FINGERS OF FLAME LICKED OUT FROM THE ENGINE.



THAT
LOT IN THERE
HAVE HAD IT EVEN IF
THEY'VE SURVIVED
SO FAR.

A DOOR SAGGED OPEN AS HE WATCHED, A MAN MOVING INTO SIGHT.
IN AN ATTEMPT TO ESCAPE FROM WHAT WOULD SOON BE AN INFERO.



I'VE GOT
TO HELP HIM.
HE'S NOT GOING
TO MAKE IT
OTHERWISE.

ONLY WHEN HE GOT IN CLOSE
DID BILL REALISE THE SOLE
SURVIVOR WAS A MAJOR-GENERAL.
THE OFFICER GRIMACED IN PAIN.



HE HAD EVERY CAUSE TO BE.
THE BANSHEE WAIL OF ANOTHER
JUNKERS WAS FOLLOWED BY
A HAIL OF DEADLY BULLETS.



FIND
MORE
FREE
MAGAZINES

FREEMAGS.CC



THAT INCIDENT EARNED
BILL PLENTY PRAISE AND
PROMOTION TO CORPORAL.
HE LIKE MANY OTHERS . . .



. . . FOUGHT HIS WAY TO THE DUNKIRK BEACHES TO
THE WAITING ARMADA OF SHIPS OF EVERY SHAPE AND
SIZE WHICH TRANSPORTED THEM BACK TO BRITAIN.

FROM ENGLAND HIS UNIT WAS SHIPPED OUT TO NORTH
AFRICA WHERE HE WAS POSTED TO CAIRO TO MERGE
WITH A SQUAD WHICH WAS ALREADY OUT THERE.

IT GETS
A BIT ROWDY
AT TIMES AT NIGHT,
BUT IT'S BETTER
THAN FRANCE.

WELL,
THE WAR'S NOT THAT
FAR AWAY. YOU CAN NEVER
TELL HOW THINGS
WILL WORK OUT.

HE SOON SETTLED IN, DOING HIS DUTY WELL BUT FINDING IT ALL RATHER IRKSOME AFTER THE THRILL OF ACTION. HE FOUND HIS MIND WANDERING AT TIMES ABOUT HIS PAST.



HIS THOUGHTS WERE DISTURBED BY PANIC UP AHEAD AS A CIVILIAN CAR BARGED INTO A FRUIT STALL. A CROWD, SOME ANGRY, SOME CURIOUS, SOON GATHERED.



THE FEW WORDS OF ARABIC HE HAD LEARNED BROUGHT ABOUT SOME CALM. THE EGYPTIAN DRIVER ALMOST FELL OUT OF THE CAR IN GRATITUDE.

THANK YOU
... I THANK
YOU.

OKAY, CHUM, BUT
YOU'D DO MORE GOOD
IF YOU HAD HANDED OVER SOME
CASH TO THOSE BLOKES
TO COVER DAMAGES.

WHILE THE DRIVER DEALT WITH THIS, BILL
NOTICED THAT HIS PASSENGER WAS A EUROPEAN.
HE LEANT INTO THE CAR FOR A QUICK WORD.

WON'T
BE LONG NOW.
YOU WORKED OUT
HERE FOR SOME
TIME, SIR?

... ER,
YES ... A FEW
YEARS NOW.

THE CLIPPED ANSWER
PLUS THE MAN'S MANNER
MADE BILL SUSPICIOUS.



THE PASSENGER'S EYES NARROWED AS HE
SUDDENLY FOUND HIMSELF LOOKING DOWN
THE BARREL OF A BRITISH SERVICE REVOLVER.



THE BURLY DRIVER RETURNED JUST THEN. HE LUNGED
AT BILL, ALLOWING THE SUSPECT TO GET OUT
OF THE CAR ON THE FAR SIDE.



DOWN CRASHED BILL'S BOOT ON HIS ADVERSARY'S TOES THEN BACK CAME HIS ELBOW LIKE A PISTON. THE OTHER MAN WAS ALREADY HEADING FOR THE NEAREST CORNER.



AS THE EGYPTIAN COLLAPSED, BILL WAS OFF LIKE A SPRINTER. HE CAUGHT A GLIMPSE OF HIS TARGET IN THE MAZE OF ALLEYS AHEAD, UNAWARE THE NAZI WAS DRAWING A GUN.

CURSE THE SCHWEIN. HE NEEDS SOME DISCOURAGEMENT!





HIS PREY FELT SAFE ENOUGH BY NOW TO SLOW TO A STROLL, HIS LUGER OUT OF SIGHT AGAIN. HE LOOKED BEHIND BUT NOT ABOVE . . .



. . . TO WHERE BILL HAD SPOTTED HIM FROM HIS HIGH POSITION.

THE QUICKEST ROUTE FOR BILL TO GET CLOSER, PERHAPS EVEN OVERHAUL HIS MAN, WAS OVER THE ROOF-TOPS. HE LEAPT FROM ONE TO THE NEXT, HIS HEART IN HIS MOUTH.



THE LUCK WHICH HAD RIDDEN WITH THE GERMAN SO FAR NOW TURNED TO BILL'S ADVANTAGE. A FLIGHT OF STEPS LED HIM DOWN IN FRONT OF THE SPY WHO HAD RELAXED SUFFICIENTLY TO BE TAKEN COMPLETELY BY SURPRISE.



THAT ARREST LED TO THE BREAK-UP OF A MAJOR ESPIONAGE RING. THE GOOD WORK WON BILL MUCH PRAISE PLUS PROMOTION TO SERGEANT.



BY THE TIME THEY HAD ALL MOVED ON TO ITALY,
BILL WAS A RESPECTED AND WELL-LIKED N.C.O.
WHO COULD BE RELIED ON IN ANY TIGHT SPOT.



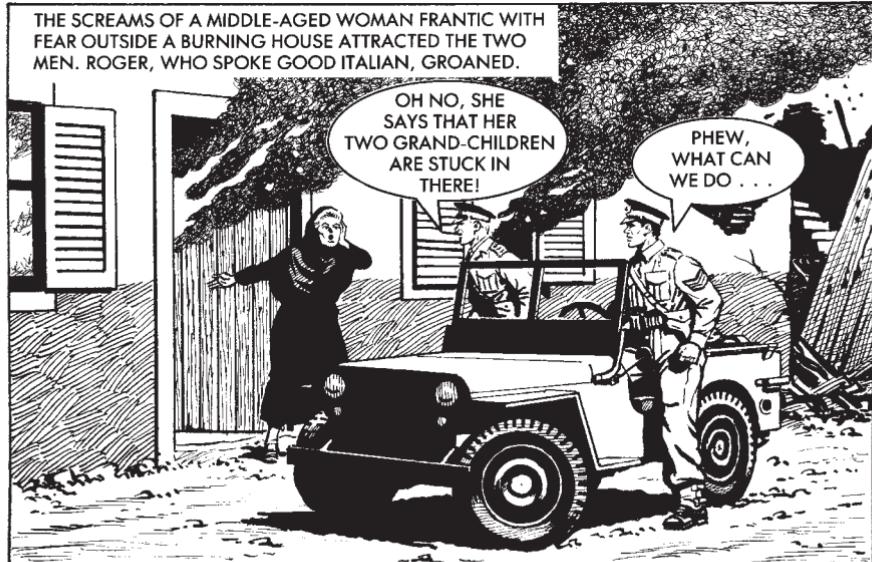
A REPLACEMENT OFFICER ARRIVED ABOUT THIS
TIME, SECONDED FROM ANOTHER UNIT. CAPTAIN ROGER
CLIVE AND BILL GOT ON TOGETHER FROM THE START.



THE GERMANS WAKENED UP WITH A VENGEANCE SHORTLY AFTER AS THE M.P.s ENTERED A VILLAGE WHICH BECAME THE TARGET FOR SOME HEAVY ARTILLERY.



THE SCREAMS OF A MIDDLE-AGED WOMAN FRANTIC WITH FEAR OUTSIDE A BURNING HOUSE ATTRACTED THE TWO MEN. ROGER, WHO SPOKE GOOD ITALIAN, GROANED.



NOBODY COULD HAVE EVER ENTERED BY THE FRONT. BILL HARED QUICKLY DOWN THE SIDE, ROGER IN PURSUIT.



EVEN AS ROGER YELLED THE WARNING, BILL VANISHED INSIDE . . .



BILL WAS ABOUT TO GIVE UP WHEN A FEARFUL WHIMPER REACHED HIS EARS.





AS THE VILLAGERS CHEERED THEM ON THEIR WAY, LITTLE BY LITTLE BILL EXPLAINED THAT HE FELT SO INVOLVED AS REGARDS CHILDREN BECAUSE OF HIS OWN UPBRINGING.

YES, I SEE
WHAT YOU MEAN.
BUT DON'T YOU KNOW
ANY MORE THAN THAT
ABOUT YOUR PAST?

OH, A
LITTLE HERE
AND THERE. NOTHING
CONCRETE,
THOUGH.

BILL HAD KNOWN ALL ALONG THAT ROGER HAD BEEN IN THE CIVILIAN POLICE BEFORE HE HAD JOINED UP. WHAT THE OFFICER SAID NEXT CAME AS A REAL SURPRISE ALL THE SAME.

LOOK, I WAS IN THE
C.I.D., AND A LOT OF
MY OLDER MATES ARE STILL
THERE. I COULD DROP THEM A
LINE AND ASK THEM TO
TRY TO TRACE YOUR
BACKGROUND.

REALLY, SIR —
IT WOULDN'T BE ANY
BOTHER? HERE, I
LIKE THE IDEA.

AS THE ITALIAN CAMPAIGN GROUND ON, THE OFFENSIVE INTO HITLER'S FORTRESS EUROPE BEGAN WITH THE INVASION OF FRANCE. BY NOW ROGER'S UNIT HAD BEEN TRANSFERRED TO THIS NEW THEATRE OF THE WAR.

WE'LL SET UP
A COMMAND POST
OVER HERE.

RIGHT,
SIR, I'LL SEE
TO IT. WE'RE CLOSE TO
THE FRONT, THAT'S
FOR SURE.

THEY MOVED FROM ONE HOT-SPOT TO THE NEXT IN THE BITTER BATTLES WHICH RAGED, NEVER FAR FROM THE FIGHTING AND ITS DANGER. YET BILL STILL HAD TIME TO THINK OF THE PROMISE ROGER HAD MADE.

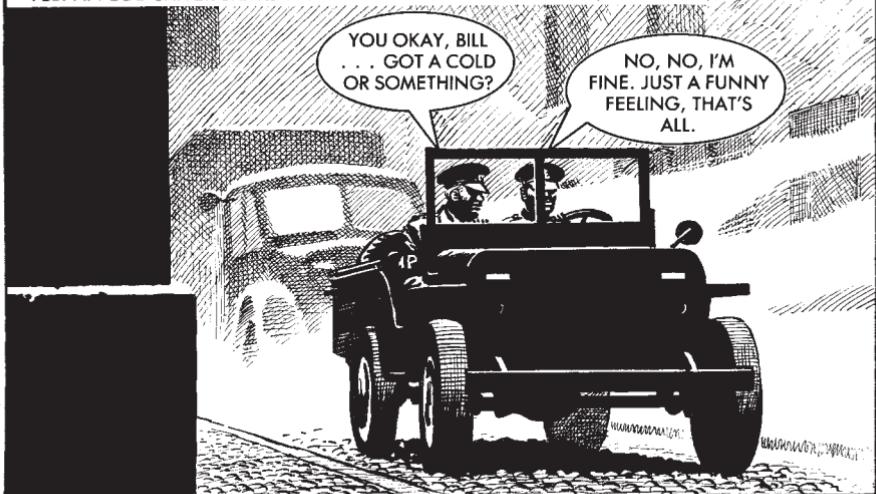
ANY
NEWS FROM
YOUR POLICE MATES
BACK HOME,
SIR?

NOT REALLY.
MY OLD BOSS IS
WORKING ON IT IN HIS SPARE
TIME. HE'LL DO THE
BUSINESS OKAY.

SOON THE ALLIED PUSH WAS GRINDING INTO BELGIUM.
THE PRESSURE NEVER LET UP ON ROGER AND HIS MEN.



WHAT BILL DID NOT KNOW WAS THAT THIS VERY TOWN WAS THE
PLACE WHERE HIS FATHER HAD BEEN KILLED ALL THOSE YEARS AGO. HE
FELT AN ODD SHIVER SHAKE HIM AS THEY ENTERED THE STREETS, THOUGH.





THE FIRST SIGN OF THE AMERICAN PRESENCE WAS HERALDED LATER BY THE SKIDDING ARRIVAL OF A JEEP EMBLAZONED WITH THE NAME "CHUCK'S CHARIOT".

MOVE OVER,
LIMEYS, I STOP
FOR NOTHING!

WHAT THE
HECK?



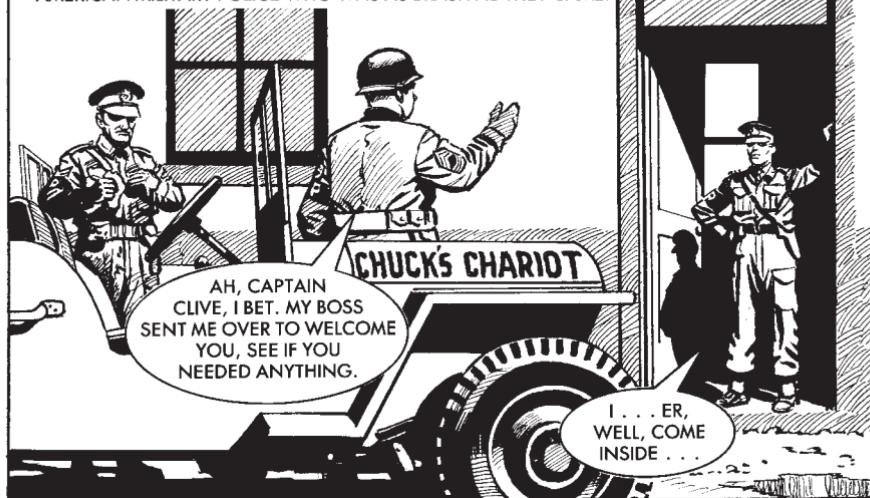
THE VEHICLE SLOWED TO A HALT WITHIN INCHES OF BILL, SHOWERING HIM WITH MUD.

SORRY,
FELLA, YOU
SHOULD HAVE BEEN
QUICKER! YOU
OKAY?

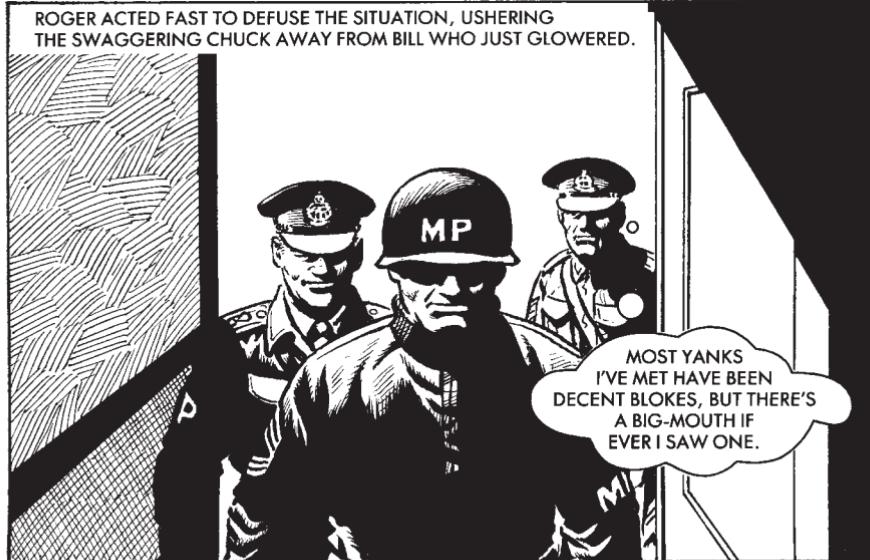
WHAT THE
BLAZES DO YOU
THINK . . .



LUCKILY ROGER CAME OUT THEN BEFORE BILL COULD GET HIS HANDS ON MASTER SERGEANT CHUCK NOLAN OF THE AMERICAN MILITARY POLICE WHO WAS AS BRASH AS THEY CAME.



ROGER ACTED FAST TO DEFUSE THE SITUATION, USHERING THE SWAGGERING CHUCK AWAY FROM BILL WHO JUST GLOWERED.



BY THE TIME CHUCK LEFT, ROGER HAD HIM MARKED DOWN AS A BLOW-BAG TOO. HE AND BILL HAD RESERVATIONS ABOUT THE TASK AHEAD.

HE NEVER STOPPED TALKING ONCE. THEY CAN'T ALL BE LIKE THAT SURELY.

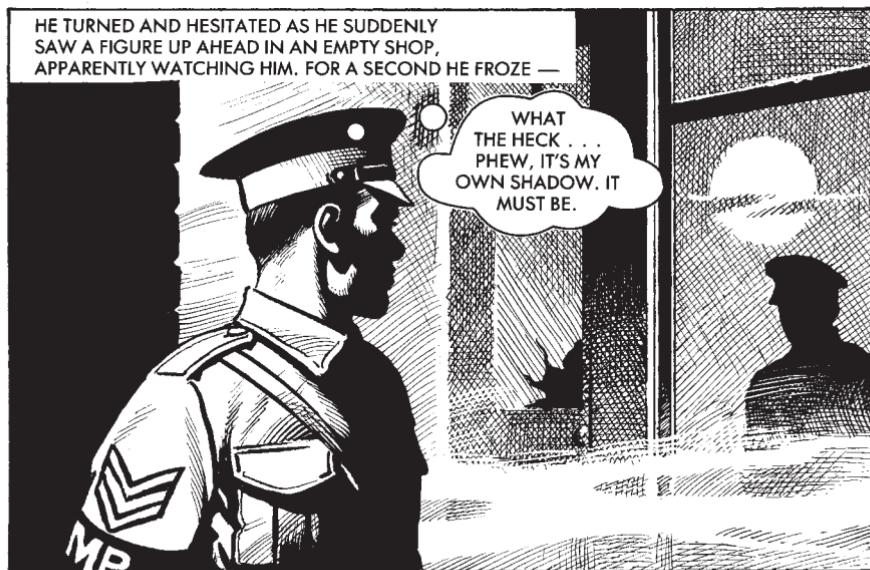
I BET THAT'S WHAT THEY SAID ABOUT ATILLA THE HUN!

HE DID KNOW WHAT HE WAS ON ABOUT, THOUGH.

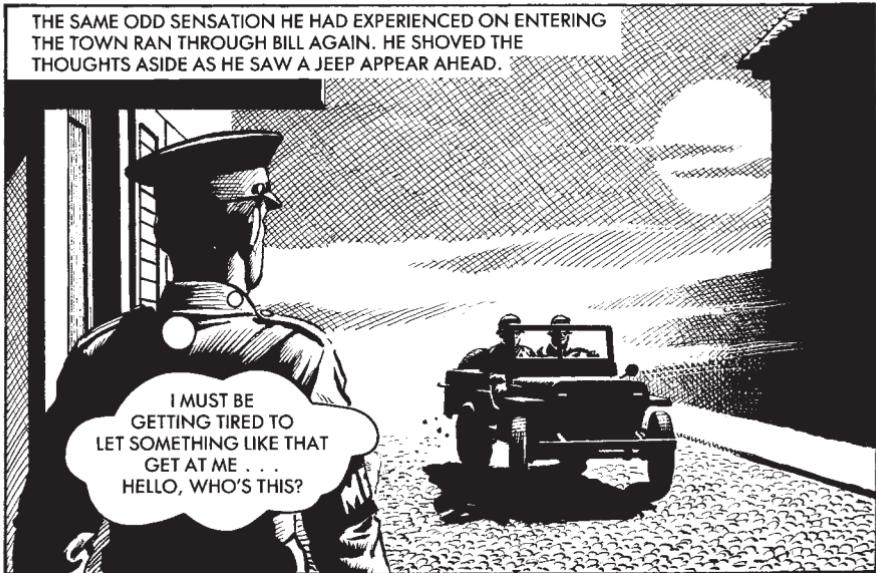
THAT'S A RELIEF . . . WE'LL JUST HAVE TO TAKE THINGS AS THEY COME.

A RELATIVE CALM DESCENDED ABOUT NOW. ROGER SPENT HIS TIME CATCHING UP ON THE ROUTINE TASKS . . .

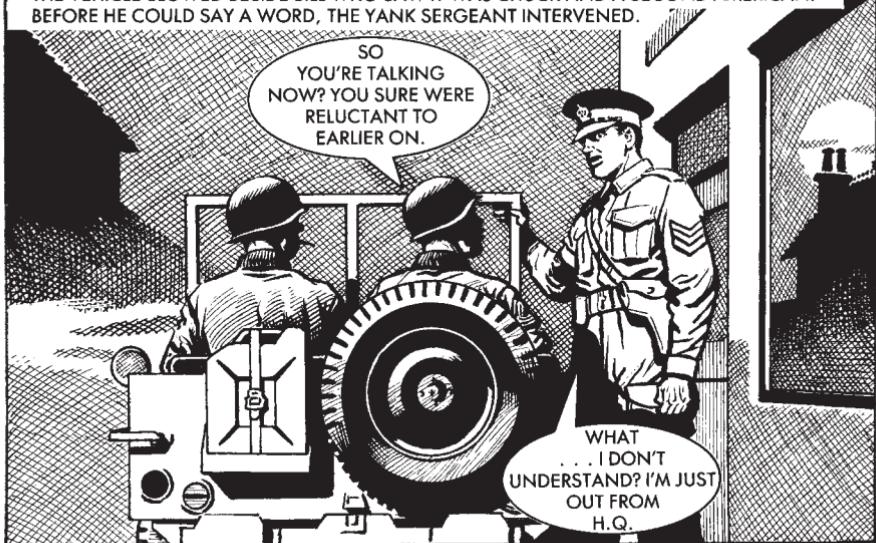




THE SAME ODD SENSATION HE HAD EXPERIENCED ON ENTERING THE TOWN RAN THROUGH BILL AGAIN. HE SHOVED THE THOUGHTS ASIDE AS HE SAW A JEEP APPEAR AHEAD.



THE VEHICLE SLOWED BESIDE BILL WHO SAW IT WAS CHUCK AND A SECOND AMERICAN. BEFORE HE COULD SAY A WORD, THE YANK SERGEANT INTERVENED.



APPARENTLY, CHUCK AND HIS COLLEAGUE HAD BEEN ON PATROL, PASSING DOWN A DARK ALLEY, WHEN THEY HAD SEEN A DIM FIGURE THEY HAD TAKEN TO BE BILL UP AHEAD.

I YELLED TO OFFER
YOU A LIFT, BUT YOU
JUST SLOPED OFF WITHOUT A
WORD. BOY, ARE YOU LIMEYS
A PAIN AT TIMES!



BILL PROTESTED HIS INNOCENCE AGAIN.
HE KNEW NOTHING OF THIS AT ALL.

IT MUST HAVE
BEEN SOMEBODY ELSE.
I WAS NEVER . . .

OKAY, OKAY, I
GET THE MESSAGE. JUST
DON'T EXPECT ANY HELP FROM
ME WHEN YOU FIND
YOURSELF IN A FIX.

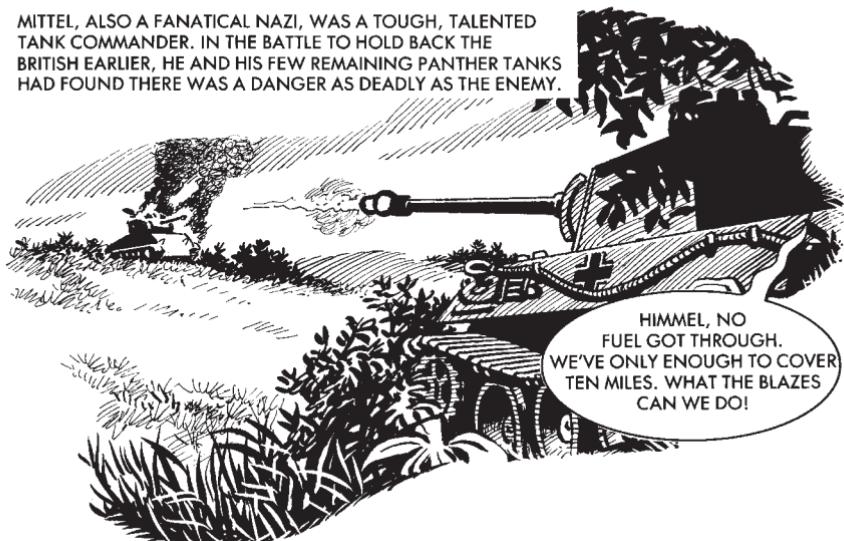


THE EPISODE HAD MORE THAN PUZZLED BILL. THERE WAS SOMETHING ODDLY ALARMING ABOUT IT, ESPECIALLY WHEN HE RECALLED HOW HE HAD SEEN THE FIGURE HE HAD TAKEN TO BE HIS SHADOW IN THAT WINDOW EARLIER.





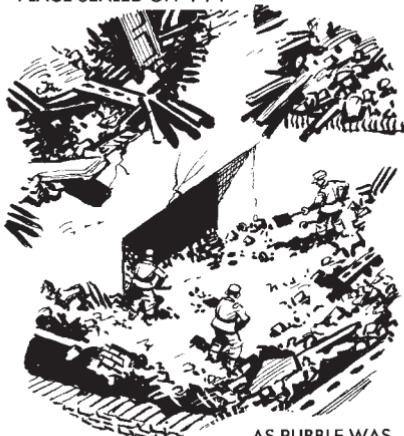
MITTEL, ALSO A FANATICAL NAZI, WAS A TOUGH, TALENTED TANK COMMANDER. IN THE BATTLE TO HOLD BACK THE BRITISH EARLIER, HE AND HIS FEW REMAINING PANTHER TANKS HAD FOUND THERE WAS A DANGER AS DEADLY AS THE ENEMY.



HIS ULTIMATE IDEA WAS AS BRAVE AS IT WAS OUTLANDISH. HE LED HIS FOUR PANZERS BELOW GROUND INTO THE BASEMENT GARAGE OF THE BADLY-SHATTERED HOTEL WHERE STAFF OFFICERS HAD ONCE STAYED, THE VERY PLACE WHERE BILL'S FATHER HAD DIED.



A LOT OF MUSCLE
HAD SEEN THE HIDING
PLACE SEALED OFF . . .



. . . AS RUBBLE WAS
PILE OVER THE
ENTRANCE.

THE RESOURCEFUL CAPTAIN HAD THEN LED
HIS MEN SAFELY BACK BEHIND THEIR OWN
LINES . . .



. . . WHERE HE HAD SUGGESTED A
DARING PLAN TO HIS SUPERIORS.

THE IDEA WAS TO INFILTRATE THE ALLIED LINES WITH A FUEL SUPPLY FOR THE HIDDEN TANKS. IF THEY COULD BE GOT BACK INTO ACTION THEY WOULD CAUSE UNTOLD CHAOS. KEIL AND HIS CUT-THROATS WERE THE PERFECT MEANS TO ACHIEVE THIS END.



THE ROUTE AHEAD MADE USE OF A CRISS-CROSS OF LOCAL ROADS. UNFORTUNATELY ON ONE FORK A BRITISH M.P. PATROL WAS GOING ABOUT A ROUTINE RECCE OF THE AREA.



THE SERGEANT IN CHARGE OF THE BRITISH CONTINGENT WAS PUZZLED, HOWEVER. HE HAD NOT BEEN TOLD OF ANY YANK UNITS IN THIS SECTOR, AND HE ASSUMED THEY HAD GOT LOST.



A CURT ORDER, A HAIL OF LEAD . . . THE AMAZED ALLIED SOLDIERS WERE CUT DOWN BEFORE THEY EVEN HAD TIME TO BE SURPRISED.



NOBODY ELSE STIRRED WITHIN CLOSE PROXIMITY OF THE EXECUTIONS. GRIMLY THE ASSASSIN ORDERED HIS UNIT FORWARD AGAIN.



THE VICTIMS WERE FOUND AT DAY-BREAK. ONE OF THEM, STILL BREATHING AND NO MORE, WAS RUSHED OFF TO HOSPITAL WHILE ROGER'S UNIT COMBED THE AREA.

IT'S AN ODD ONE, BILL.
THAT SURVIVOR COULD ONLY MUMBLE ON ABOUT "YANKS".

PROBABLY DELIRIOUS.
I RECKON IT WAS A STRANDED SQUAD TRYING TO GET BACK TO THEIR OWN LINES THAT DID THIS.

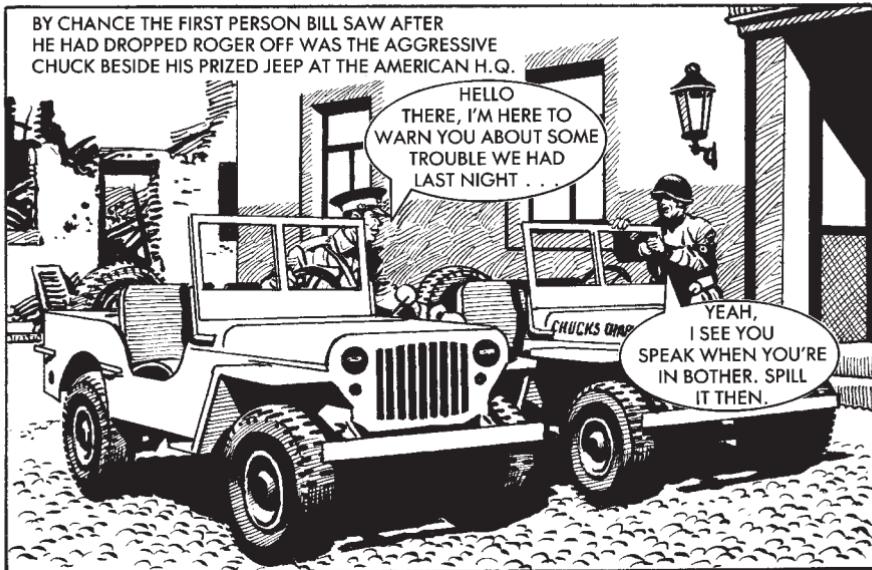


THE INCIDENT HAD SHAKEN THEM ALL, EMPHASISING THE NEED FOR EXTRA VIGILANCE. ROGER AND BILL KNEW WHAT HAD TO BE DONE.

GET IN TOUCH WITH THE YANKS WHILE I REPORT BACK TO H.Q.

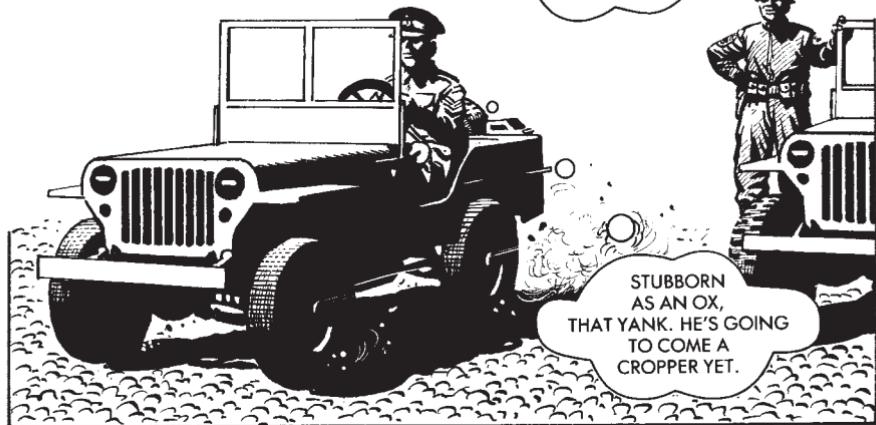
RIGHT, SIR.





FUMING SILENTLY, BILL SLIPPED INTO GEAR AND SPED OFF. HIS AMERICAN COUNTERPART WATCHED HIM GO, HIS THOUGHTS JUST AS DARK.

BIG-HEADED LIMEY, WON'T SPEAK ONE TIME THEN EXPECTS ME TO LISTEN THE NEXT!



SOON THERE WAS A BIGGER PROBLEM TO CONCERN ALL AS THE GERMANS MOUNTED A LAST DESPERATE COUNTER-ATTACK IN THE AREA OF THE ARDENNES. THE "BATTLE OF THE BULGE" HAD BEGUN.

DRIVE ON!

AAAGH!

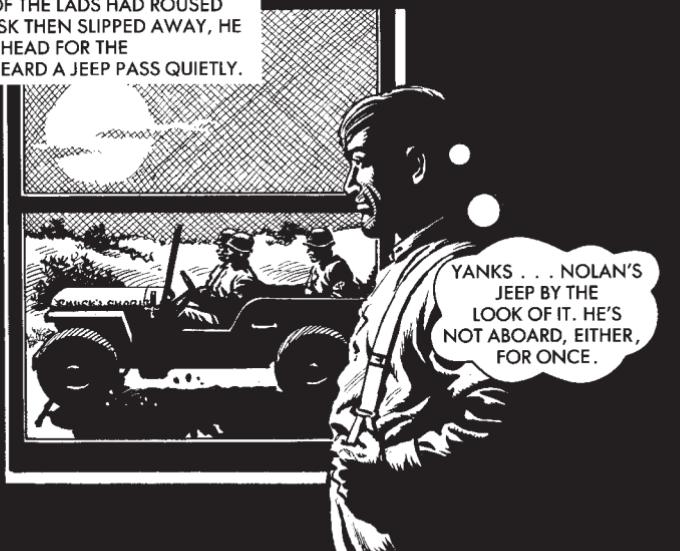


ROGER'S SQUAD WERE ALLOTTED MANY EXTRA TASKS BECAUSE OF ALL THIS. SOUND ASLEEP AFTER A PARTICULARLY HARD DAY, BILL CAME AWAKE ONE NIGHT . . .



. . . WITH THE SENSATION THAT SOMEBODY HAD BEEN SHAKING AT HIS SHOULDER.

ASSUMING ONE OF THE LADS HAD ROUSED HIM FOR SOME TASK THEN SLIPPED AWAY, HE ROSE SLEEPILY TO HEAD FOR THE WINDOW AS HE HEARD A JEEP PASS QUIETLY.



HE DIDN'T GIVE IT A SECOND THOUGHT AS ROGER APPEARED, PUZZLED BY BILL BEING UP UNNECESSARILY.

ONE OF
THE LADS GAVE ME A
SHAKE. I THOUGHT YOU
WANTED SOMETHING,
SIR.

NOT ME. I
JUST WOKE WHEN
I HEARD YOU. NONE
OF THE SQUAD HAS
BEEN NEAR ME.

NOBODY COULD EXPLAIN THE PECULIAR OCCURRENCE AND EVERY MAN IN THE POST WAS SOON ACCOUNTED FOR. BILL EXPERIENCED THE STRANGE UNEASY FEELING AGAIN.

NO, NOTHING
DOING. YOU MUST
HAVE BEEN DREAMING.

I SUPPOSE
SO. I WAS
PRETTY SURE, MIND YOU
... HERE, WAIT A
MINUTE!

KNOWING THAT HIS SERGEANT WAS NOT GIVEN TO WILD IDEAS, ROGER LISTENED CLOSELY.

I CAN'T EXPLAIN IT ALL, SIR,
BUT THERE'S SOMETHING ODD GOING ON. NOW WHY WASN'T NOLAN IN HIS PRECIOUS JEEP . . .



THAT FACT, NAGGING AT BILL UNDER THE SURFACE FOR MINUTES NOW, CLINCHED IT FOR HIM.

LET'S CONTACT THE YANKS, SIR, SEE IF THEY KNOW WHERE NOLAN IS.



A CALL TO THE AMERICANS REVEALED THAT THEIR MASTER SERGEANT HAD BEEN OUT OF RADIO CONTACT FOR SOME HOURS. ROGER DECIDED THERE AND THEN TO DO SOME INVESTIGATING, SO A HANDFUL OF MEN WERE ROUSED.

WHAT'S THE DRILL, SIR?

FIND THAT JEEP FIRST.
IT SHOULD LEAD US TO ANY PROBLEM THERE IS.





NOT SO FAR BELOW GROUND, THOUGH, THE INFILTRATORS HAD FINALLY REACHED THEIR OBJECTIVE. SO FAR MITTEL AND KEIL RATED THEIR PROJECT AS A GREAT SUCCESS.

IT IS THANKS TO YOUR MEN THAT WE GOT THROUGH.

JA, BUT LET'S NOT WASTE TIME. THE QUICKER THE PANZERS ARE FUELLED UP THE BETTER.



THAT WAS WELL IN HAND. A HUMAN CHAIN OF THE BOGUS YANK M.P.s WAS EVEN AT THAT MOMENT FERRING THE PRECIOUS JUICE ACROSS THE RUBBLE TOWARDS A WELL-HIDDEN DOOR.

FASTER, RUDI, LET'S SEE YOU BREAK SWEAT.

YOU'D BEST KEEP UP OR KEIL WILL BLAST YOU!



ONE OF THE TEAM STUMBLED THEN, TWISTING HIS ANKLE. HE CURSED FLUENTLY — IN GERMAN.



THE VOICE CARRIED CLEARLY TO THE HIDDEN WATCHERS. THEY HAD GOT THE PROOF THEY NEEDED.



SLOWLY, INCH BY DIFFICULT INCH, THE TWO FRIENDS CRAWLED FORWARD OVER THE JAGGED RUBBLE, THEIR NERVES STRETCHING BY THE SECOND.





THE RIP OF THE M3 SUB-MACHINE GUN ALERTED BILL AND ROGER IMMEDIATELY AS THE GUARD CONTINUED TO BLAST AWAY.



THE SENTRY WAS DEALT WITH QUICKLY BY THE TWO BRITISH. THEY KNEW NOW THAT THE BALLOON WAS WELL AND TRULY UP.



A SAVAGE SKIRMISH DEVELOPED BETWEEN THE GENUINE BRITISH M.P.s AND THE BOGUS AMERICANS. IT WOULD CLEARLY BE A BATTLE TO THE FINISH.



BELOW GROUND THE ENEMY WERE QUICKLY AWARE OF THE PROBLEM. THE PANTHERS WERE ALL SET TO GO NOW, KEIL READY TO SACRIFICE ALL HIS MEN ABOVE IN THE ATTEMPT TO MAKE THIS PLAN A SUCCESS.





THE FIRST PANZER ABOVE GROUND PREPARED TO BUY TIME FOR THE OTHER TANKS AS IT HOSED THE GROUND WHERE THE BRITISH LAY.

YE GODS,
WE CAN'T STOP
THEM!

WE'VE GOT TO TRY,
THOUGH. HOW MANY
OF THEM ARE
THEY?



THE SECOND PANTHER WAS ALREADY IN VIEW, KEIL CROUCHED ON IT, YELLING LIKE A MADMAN ABOVE THE DIN OF THE FIGHTING.

FORWARD,
SWIPE THEM ASIDE
— DON'T FALTER!



THE M.P.s COULD DO NOTHING AT ALL EXCEPT FALL BACK AND HOPE THE NOISE WOULD BRING OTHERS BETTER EQUIPPED TO DEAL WITH THE THREAT.

GET INTO
BETTER COVER,
LADS.

BRING
THE WOUNDED
WITH YOU!

NOTHING, KEIL GLOATED, COULD STOP THESE METAL MONSTERS NOW. SOON THEY WOULD CUT A SWATH OF DESTRUCTION ALONG BEHIND THE ALLIED LINES.

KEEP
MOVING — WE
CAN'T BE HALTED. WHO
IS THERE TO
CHALLENGE US?

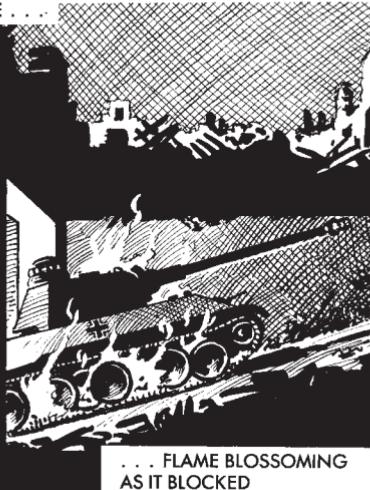
AMAZINGLY HE GOT AN ANSWER HE DID NOT EXPECT AS THE HEAVY GUNS OF TWO CROMWELL TANKS BOOMED. THE OTHER PANTHER ABOVE GROUND SHOOK TO A DAMAGING HIT.



NOTHING HAD PREPARED THE FANATIC NAZI FOR THE HAMMER BLOW WHICH CAME NEXT AS THE TANK HE CROUCHED ON WAS ALSO STRUCK. HE WAS DEAD BEFORE HE HIT THE GROUND.



THE THIRD PANZER TO RISE INTO VIEW RAN STRAIGHT INTO THE CROMWELLS' COMBINED FIRE . . .



... FLAME BLOSSOMING AS IT BLOCKED THE EXIT.

WITH THE TABLES TURNED, THE INFANTRY BROKE QUICKLY UNDER PRESSURE.



DOWN BELOW ONLY THE TANK COMMANDED BY MITTEL AWAITED. THEIR FATE WAS SEALED WHEN THE WRECK BLOCKING THE WAY OUT EXPLODED AGAIN AND AGAIN.



YET THERE WAS NOWHERE TO GO. ALL THERE PERISHED.

THE FIGHT HAD GONE OUT OF THE SURVIVING GERMANS. ONE BY ONE THEY ACKNOWLEDGED DEFEAT NOW THAT THEIR LEADERS WERE DEAD.



BILL SOUGHT OUT THE LAST TWO OF THE INTRUDER SQUAD, ONE OF WHOM SPOKE BITTERLY.



STILL PUZZLED, BILL ANSWERED A SHOUT FROM ROGER WHO HAD BEEN TALKING WITH THE BRITISH TANK C.O. WHO ALSO POSED A STRANGE QUESTION.

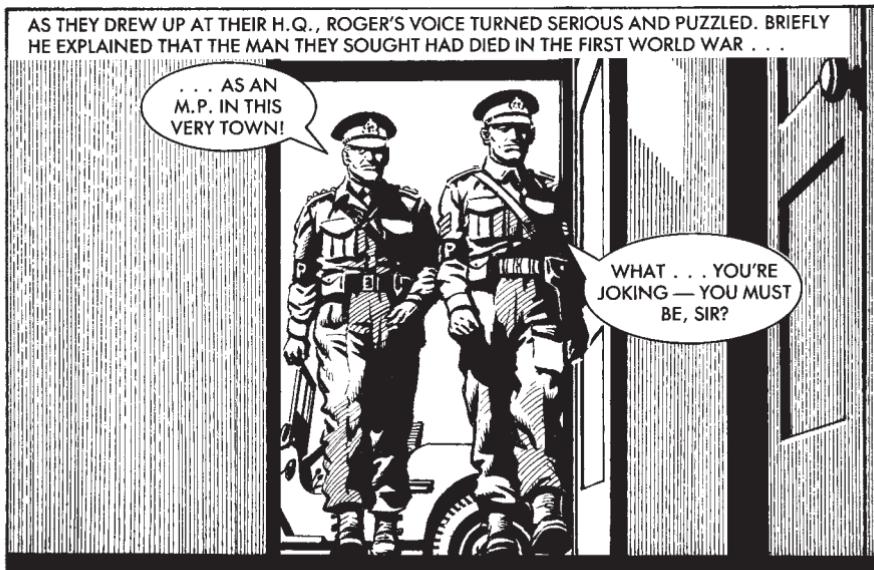
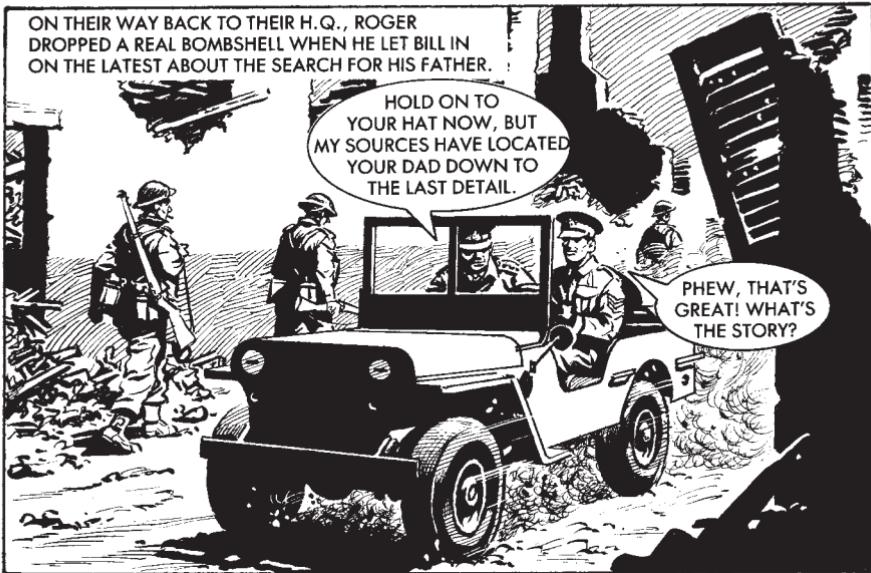


THE CROMWELL COMMANDER WAS SURE IT WAS A BRITISH M.P., AND HE HAD ASKED FOR DIRECTIONS IN THE FIRST PLACE BECAUSE THERE HAD BEEN A LOT OF CONFUSION WITH POOR MAPS.



REPORTS WERE WRITTEN, THE SITUATION TIDIED UP. THE BRITISH PAIR SOON LEARNED THAT CHUCK HAD BEEN FOUND ALIVE BUT WOUNDED IN A WOOD. THEY SAW HIM IN THE NEAREST FIELD HOSPITAL NEXT DAY.





ROGER KNEW IT WAS NO MISTAKE. ALL HAD BEEN DOUBLE-CHECKED. IT TOOK BILL'S BREATH AWAY.

BUT THAT MEANS . . . THAT ODD FIGURE I SAW, THAT THE OTHERS SAW . . . DO YOU THINK . . .

SOME KIND OF GHOST KEEPING AN EYE ON YOU? IT'S A CRAZY IDEA, BUT YOU NEVER KNOW.

THE SILENCE AS THE TWO BATTLE-HARDENED MEN THOUGHT OVER WHAT COULD ONLY BE DESCRIBED AS A WILD NOTION . . .

. . . WAS BROKEN ONLY BY THE SOUND OF THE HEAVY OFFICE DOOR AS IT CLICKED FIRMLY SHUT WITH NONE OF THE TWO WITHIN DISTANCE OF IT.

THAT'S ME CONVINCED FOR ONE!

WHAT THE HECK!

NOBODY ELSE EVER LEARNED ONE WORD ABOUT THIS AMAZING STORY. AND BILL AND ROGER, WITH THEIR PART IN THE WAR STILL TO PLAY, KNEW BETTER THAN TO LAUGH AT THE STRANGE GOINGS-ON IN THAT QUIET TOWN . . .



Commando
THE END

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