

No.4773

£2

COMPLETE 63-PAGE ACTION STORY

Commando

FOR ACTION AND ADVENTURE

DESERT
WAR

1940-43

PRIVATE APACHE



COMMANDO — BY SPECIAL REQUEST

Title

PRIVATE APACHE

Subject

When Commando fan John Warburton nominated this book for a fresh viewing, I don't think he realised how unusual it was. The artist responsible for the inside work, Jim Watson, only drew half-a-dozen issues for us — no surprise, really, as he was much in demand for the likes of Warlord and Battle. He does bring an individual style to the art, but it's still very much in the Commando style...and very good.

Author Ken Gentry hailed from the war stories, but...

The cover is from the inimitable Ian Kennedy — and is a nod to the Commando style... and very good.

With all that going on, little wonder it is

Calum Laird, Commando Editor

Issue Number

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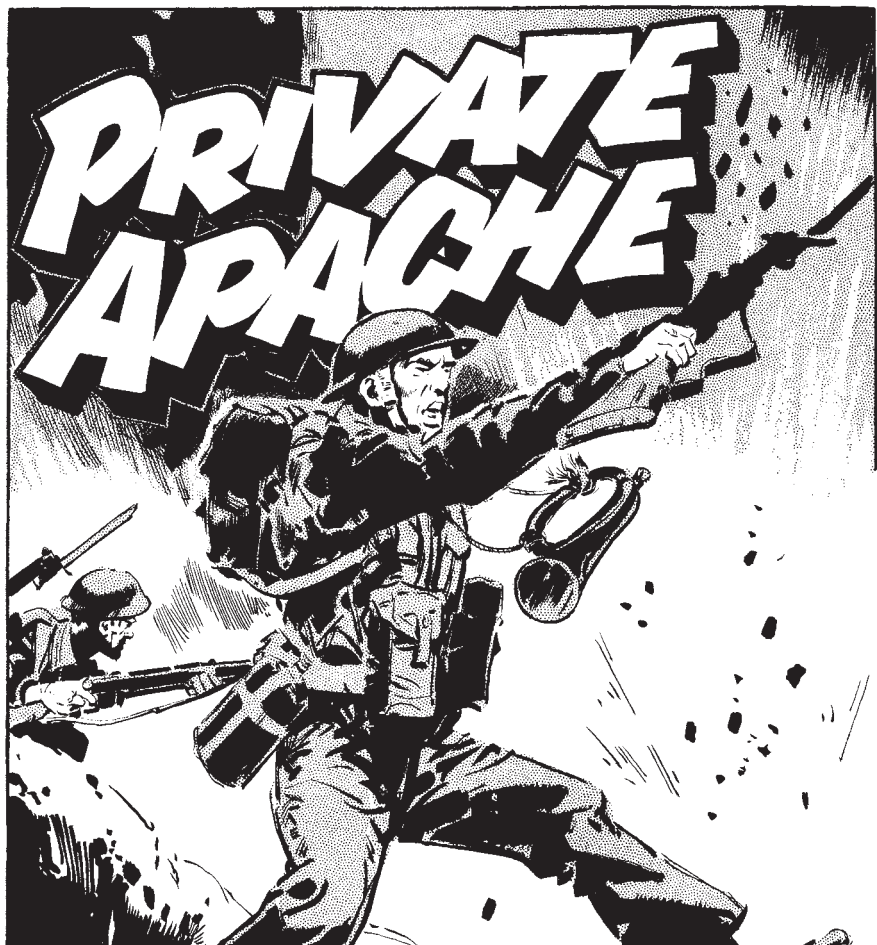
STORY
KEN GENTRY

ART
JIM WATSON

COVER
IAN KENNEDY

First Published
1975
No 912





IT'S A LONG WAY FROM THE SEARING SANDS OF ARIZONA TO THE BARREN WASTES OF THE WESTERN DESERT, BUT THAT'S THE DISTANCE A FULL-BLOODED APACHE CAME TO JOIN IN THE WAR AGAINST THE NAZIS.

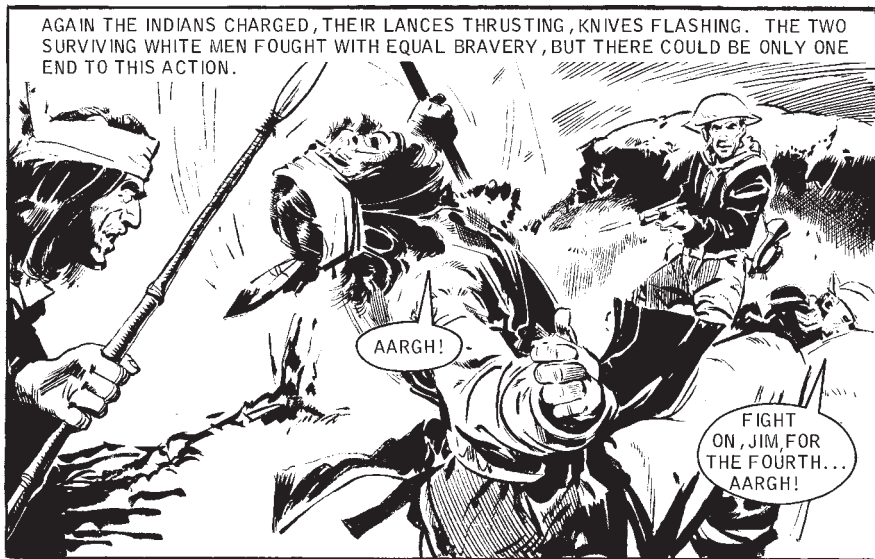
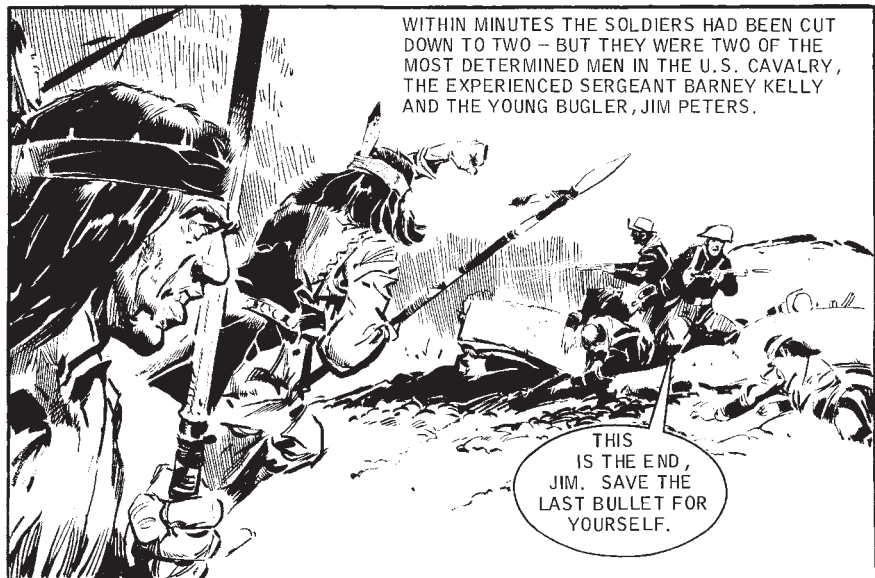
AND IT WASN'T LONG BEFORE THE GERMANS WERE SLEEPING LIGHTER AT NIGHTS, THE SENTRIES BLASTING AWAY AT ANY FLICKERING SHADOWS ON THE MOON-LIT DUNES. FOR WHO KNOWS JUST WHEN AN APACHE WILL STRIKE.

BACK IN 1870 A COMPANY OF THE FOURTH U.S. CAVALRY HAD BEEN CUT OFF BY A PACK OF FIERCE APACHE WARRIORS. SLOWLY THE WHITE MEN WERE CUT DOWN, ONE BY ONE.



WITH ONLY A FEW SOLDIERS STILL ALIVE TO FIGHT THE ODDS, THE APACHE CHIEF ORDERED HIS MEN TO MOVE IN FOR THE KILL.





THE COMPANY BUGLER FORGOT THE SERGEANT'S ADVICE ABOUT HIS LAST BULLET, KILLING AN INDIAN WITH IT, THEN USING HIS RIFLE AS A CLUB, SMASHING AT THE ENEMY.



DESPITE A GROWING WEAKNESS THE BUGLER SEIZED A LANCE FROM A FALLEN WARRIOR AND STRUCK OUT SAVAGELY.





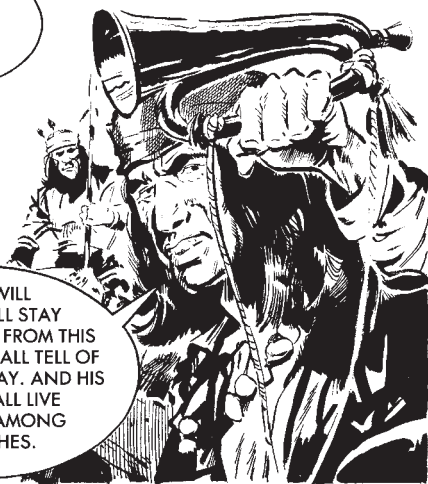
HIS STRENGTH RAN OUT AS LANCES WERE THRUST DEEP INTO HIS FLESH. SLOWLY THE SUN-BAKED SCENE FADED, THEN DARKENED FOR HIM.

AS HE LAY DEAD THE APACHE CHIEF LOOKED UPON HIM WITH RESPECT.



A GREAT FIGHTER! HE WILL RECEIVE FULL WARRIOR HONOURS.

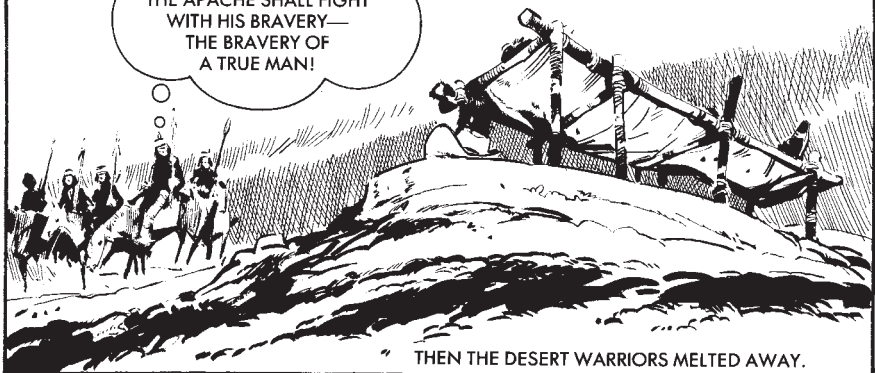
THEN THE CHIEF TOOK UP THE MAN'S BUGLE.



THIS WE WILL TAKE. IT SHALL STAY WITH MY PEOPLE FROM THIS DAY FORTH. IT SHALL TELL OF THIS MAN, THIS DAY. AND HIS MEMORY SHALL LIVE IN HONOUR AMONG THE APACHES.

THAT EVENING THE INDIANS ERECTED A SIMPLE PLATFORM FOR THE BUGLER'S BODY.

HIS MEMORY SHALL LIVE, AND THE APACHE SHALL FIGHT WITH HIS BRAVERY— THE BRAVERY OF A TRUE MAN!

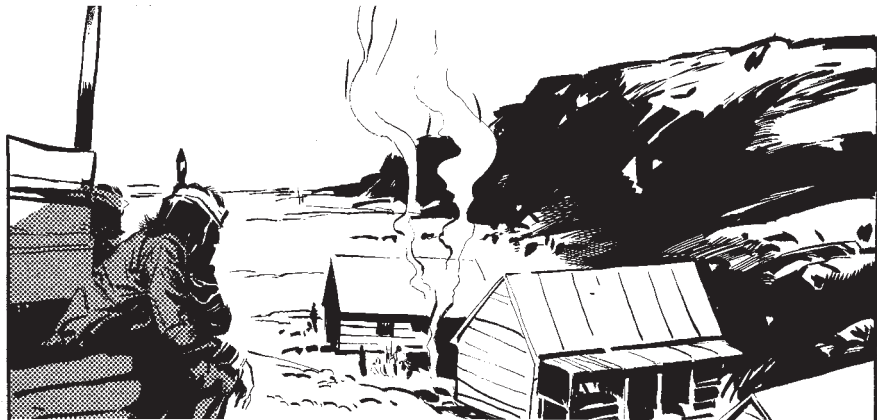


THEN THE DESERT WARRIORS MELTED AWAY.

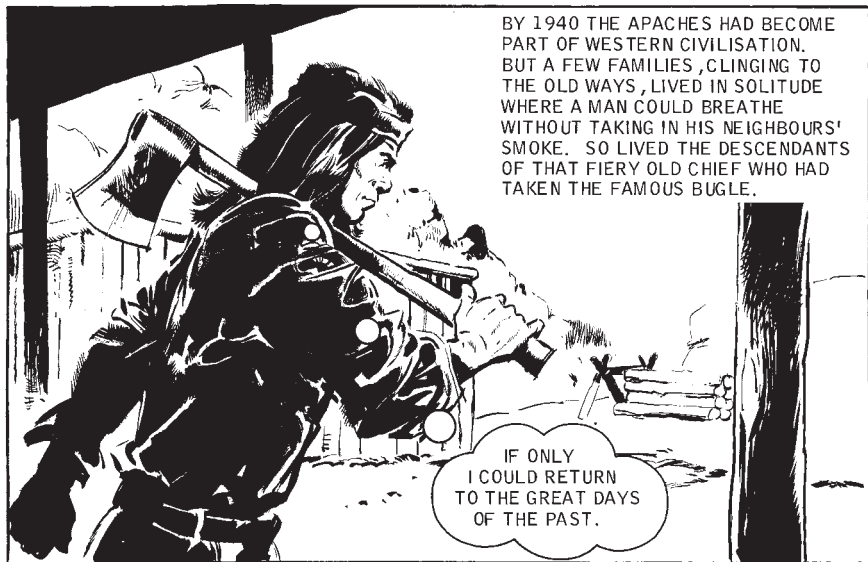
MANY TIMES AFTER THAT, THE STORY WAS TOLD – THE GLEAMING BUGLE ADMIRER. THAT BRAVE BUGLER'S FIGHT BECAME PART OF THE FOLKLORE OF THE APACHE.



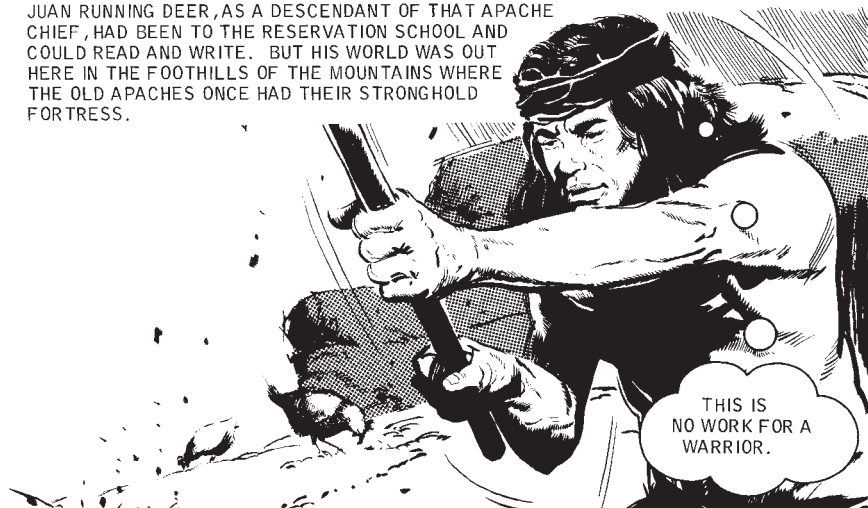
BROKEN TREATIES AND DOUBLE-DEALING SAW THE ONCE-PROUD PEOPLE CONSIDERED TO RESERVATIONS WHERE THEY SAT IN APATHY, DREAMING OF A GLORIOUS PAST – DREADING A BLEAK FUTURE.



THE YEARS PASSED AND IT SEEMED THE BRAVERY OF THE APACHES WOULD NEVER BE SEEN AGAIN. THEIR COURAGE LIVED ON ONLY IN THE STORIES TOLD AT NIGHT BY THE OLD MEN AROUND THE FIRE.



JUAN RUNNING DEER, AS A DESCENDANT OF THAT APACHE CHIEF, HAD BEEN TO THE RESERVATION SCHOOL AND COULD READ AND WRITE. BUT HIS WORLD WAS OUT HERE IN THE FOOTHILLS OF THE MOUNTAINS WHERE THE OLD APACHES ONCE HAD THEIR STRONGHOLD FORTRESS.



HE AND HIS FAMILY EKED OUT A PRECARIOUS LIVING, GROWING A FEW CROPS AND RUNNING A FEW HEAD OF CATTLE. BUT IN JUAN BURNED THE OLD FEVER OF HIS PEOPLE.

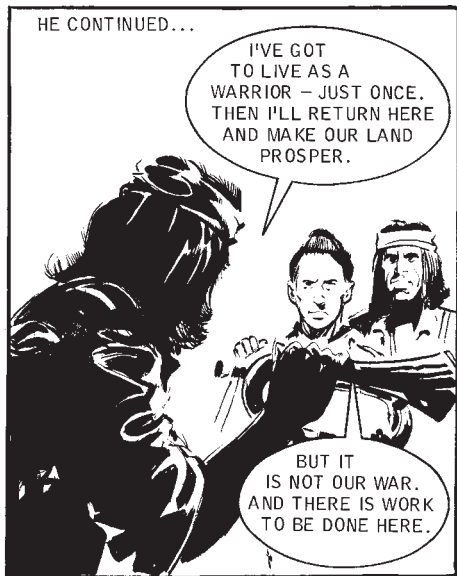
THAT OLD BUGLE WAS STILL THE FAMILY'S MOST TREASURED POSSESSION, FOR IT REFLECTED THEIR PAST GREATNESS. JUAN POLISHED IT EVERY DAY, PRACTISED THE OLD CALLS, REMEMBERING THE BURNING COURAGE OF THE SOLDIER WHO HAD DIED CARRYING IT.



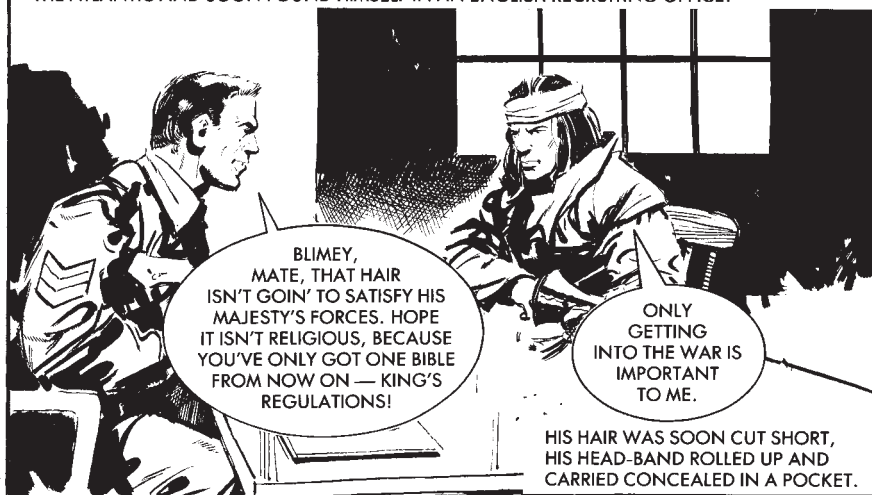
BUT THE YOUNG APACHE WAS
DETERMINED —



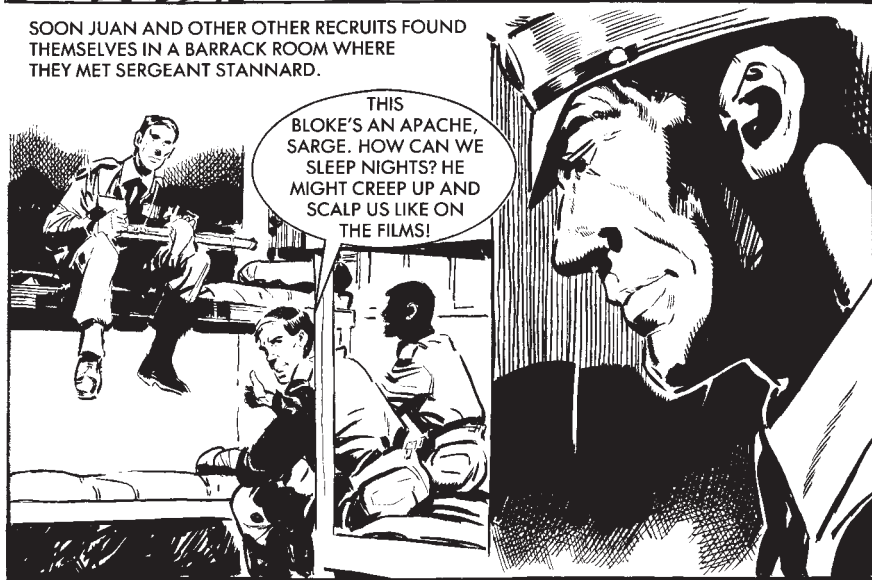
HE CONTINUED...



BUT JUAN'S FATHER, WHO SYMPATHISED WITH THE FIRES BURNING IN THE YOUNG MAN, AGREED THAT JUAN SHOULD TAKE THE BUGLE TO WAR. THE YOUNG APACHE CROSSED THE ATLANTIC AND SOON FOUND HIMSELF IN AN ENGLISH RECRUITING OFFICE.



SOON JUAN AND OTHER OTHER RECRUITS FOUND THEMSELVES IN A BARRACK ROOM WHERE THEY MET SERGEANT STANNARD.



FIND
MORE
FREE
MAGAZINES

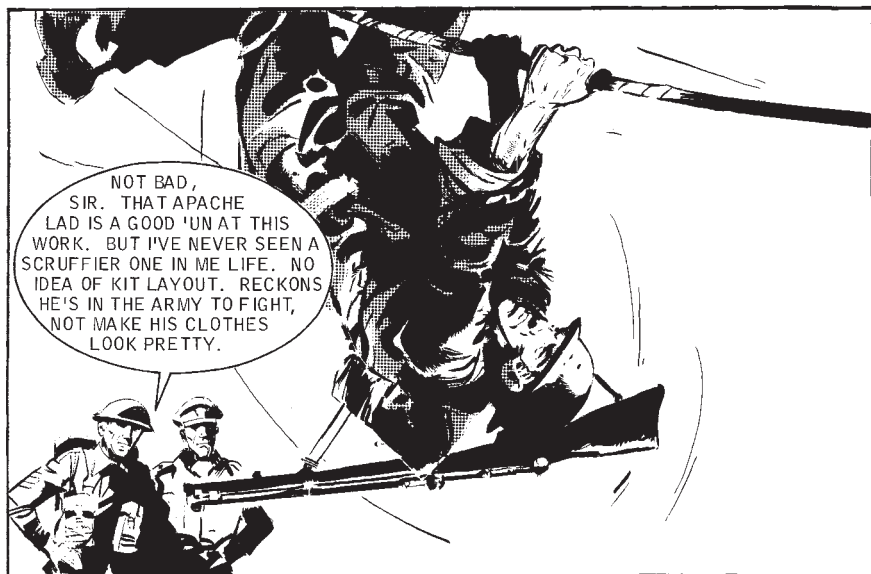
FREEMAGS.CC

JUAN UNDERSTOOD THAT THIS WAS THE ROUGH BUT GOOD-NATURED HUMOUR OF THE SOLDIER, AND HE ENJOYED BEING PART OF IT.



AS THE DAYS PASSED, JUAN DISCOVERED THAT HE HAD TO PREPARE HIMSELF FOR WAR.





LATER...



JOE WHITE, A YOUNG COCKNEY LAD, HAD TAKEN A SHINE TO JUAN, PROTECTED HIM FROM THE ROUGHER HUMOUR OF THOSE LADS WHO COULDN'T GET USED TO AN APACHE IN THEIR MIDST.



IT WASN'T LONG BEFORE JUAN'S REGIMENT WAS SHIPPED OUT TO THE MIDDLE EAST, WHERE THE NAZIS HAD THE BRITISH FORCES REELING.



IN THE HOT SANDS, JUAN FOUND THE CLIMATE MORE LIKE HOME. THE COMPANY SPRAWLED BEHIND SOME DUNES, KEEPING THEIR HEADS DOWN, AS THE ENEMY CLOBBERED THEM WITH MORTAR FIRE.



THE THOUGHT OF BEING BLOWN TO PIECES BEFORE HE COULD GET HAND-TO-HAND WITH THE GERMANS FILLED JUAN WITH A DARK FEAR. HE CALLED UPON THE ANCIENT SPIRIT-GODS OF HIS PEOPLE.



A FEW MILES AWAY, A NAZI DESERT STRIKE FORCE UNDER ITS SAVAGE COMMANDER, HAUPTMANN BRUNO HALLSTEIN, WATCHED THE HAVOC CAUSED BY THE GERMAN ARTILLERY.

JA, THEY
ARE NICELY
SOFTENED UP! NOW
THEY ARE READY FOR
US.



HALLSTEIN WAS A NASTY PIECE OF WORK, FEARED EVEN BY HIS OWN MEN.

AS THE SHELLING ENDED, THE BRITISHERS PICKED THEMSELVES UP, BREATHING A SIGH OF RELIEF THAT IT WAS OVER — BUT THEY WERE WRONG.

GET
BEHIND COVER —
THEY'RE COMING
FOR US!

IN FAST,
SHOOT EVERYTHING
THAT MOVES!



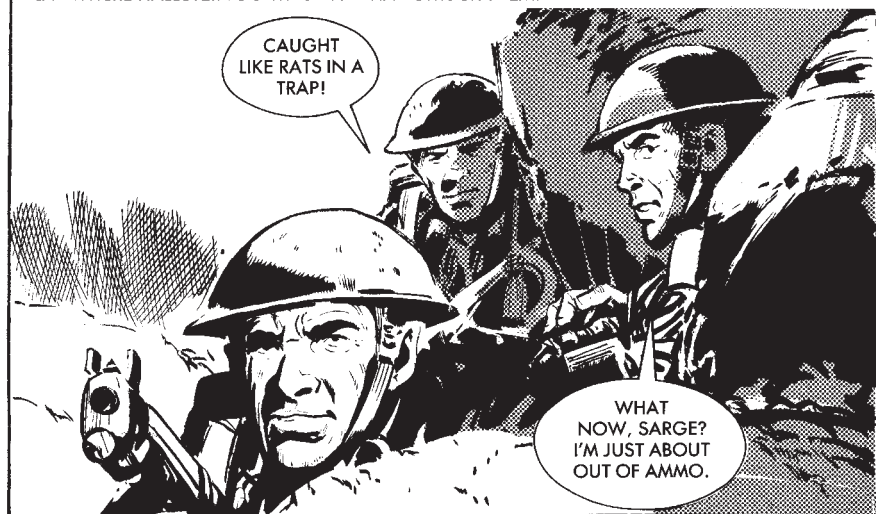
HALLSTEIN'S MEN ROARED IN, GUNS SPITTING DEATH, BARRELS HUNGRY FOR TARGETS. DAZED, THE BRITISH SHOT BACK, BUT THEY DIDN'T STAND A CHANCE.



THE NAZI LEADER SHOUTED ABOVE THE DIN —



ONLY THREE OF THEM MADE THE ROCKS — THE SERGEANT, JUAN AND JOE. THEIR MATES LAY WHERE HALLSTEIN'S SAVAGE FIRE HAD STRUCK THEM.



GRIMLY STANNARD DELIBERATED FOR A FEW SECONDS, THEN HE ROSE RELUCTANTLY TO HIS FEET —



SLOWLY JOE STOOD UP AND DID AS HIS SERGEANT ORDERED, BUT JUAN WAS HESITANT.



THAT'S AN ORDER! BLIMEY, MATE, DO YOU WANT TO DIE? AFTER ALL MY TRAINING? STAND UP! IT'S OUR DUTY TO SURVIVE.

HE COULD SEE THE SERGEANT WAS RIGHT, THERE WAS NO CHOICE OPEN TO THEM. BUT HIS HEART SANK WITHIN HIM.

AND THE GLOATING OF THEIR CAPTOR DID NOT HELP.



SO! THREE SURVIVORS! WHAT ARE WE TO DO WITH YOU, I WONDER? MY MEN DO NOT TAKE PRISONERS - WE CANNOT AFFORD TO SHARE OUR WATER.

THE EVIL LOOK IN HIS EYES BETRAYED HIS MOTIVES - HALLSTEIN DIDN'T INTEND TO TAKE THEM ALIVE.

THEN THE ARROGANT NAZI SPOTTED THE APACHE'S BUGLE -



JUAN HAD WATCHED HIS BUGLE BEING TAKEN FROM HIM AND THEN HIS WATER BOTTLE. HE SAW IN HIS MIND'S EYE THAT BRAVE CAVALRY BUGLER OF LONG AGO. WOULD HE HAVE SUBMITTED AS TAMELY AS THIS? NEVER!

ALMOST WITHOUT REALISING IT, JUAN LEAPT FOR THE NAZI'S BACK. AND FROM HIS MOUTH, AUTOMATICALLY, IN A SCREAM OF RAGE, CAME THE LEGENDARY APACHE DEATH CRY.



JUAN'S FINGERS IMMEDIATELY SEARCHED FOR THE EVIL GERMAN'S WINDPIPE AND PRESSED HARD.

DIE,
SON OF THE
DEVIL!



GET
HIM OFF ME,
YOU FOOLS...HE
WILL KILL
ME!

BUT IT WASN'T THE NAZIS WHO MOVED FIRST...

... SERGEANT STANNARD AND JOE HURLED THEMSELVES AT THE GERMANS WHO WATCHED WIDE-EYED AS THEIR LEADER WAS CRUSHED TO THE GROUND BY THIS SCREAMING SAVAGE.



THE SERGEANT GRABBED A RIFLE, GUNNED DOWN A COUPLE OF THE GERMANS WHO HAD COME TO HELP, BUT HE KNEW THEY COULDN'T TAKE ON THE LOT. ALREADY MORE NAZIS WERE RACING TO THE SCENE FROM THEIR VEHICLES.



LUCK WAS WITH THEM. UNDER THE SERGEANT'S COVERING FIRE THEY MADE THE ROCKS.



THEY HARED DOWN A NARROW RAVINE, BLESSING THE HIGH CLIFF WALLS THAT PROTECTED THEM.

HALF CHOKED, HALLSTEIN ROSE TO HIS FEET.


KEEP RUNNING, LADS. THEY'RE ON OUR HEELS!

AFTER THEM. WHY DO YOU STAND AND STARE? AFTER THEM!

HERR HAUPTMANN, A MESSAGE OVER THE RADIO! A BRITISH CONVOY APPROACHES, EIGHT MILES SOUTH OF US. WE MUST ATTACK!

THE GERMAN CURSED — HE KNEW HE WOULDN'T HAVE THE PLEASURE OF KILLING THE APACHE THIS TIME.


HE HAD BEEN IN TROUBLE WITH HIS SUPERIORS BEFORE FOR IGNORING ORDERS.



THOSE
MEN CANNOT LIVE.
THERE IS NO WATER
OUT THERE, NO FOOD.
THEY ARE DEAD MEN,
WE CAN LEAVE
THEM.

SO, HAPPY THAT THE THREE
BRITISH SOLDIERS HAD NO
CHANCE OF SURVIVAL, HE
MADE HIS WAY TO
HIS HALF-TRACK.

THE THREE FUGITIVES HAD BEEN
FORCED TO STOP AS JOE WAS
WOUNDED IN THE LEG. SURPRISED,
THEY HEARD THE NAZIS ROAR OFF —



THEY'RE
GOING! I'M GLAD
OF THAT.

GOOD.
HOW IS YOUR
LEG, JOE?

JOE GRINNED WRYLY.

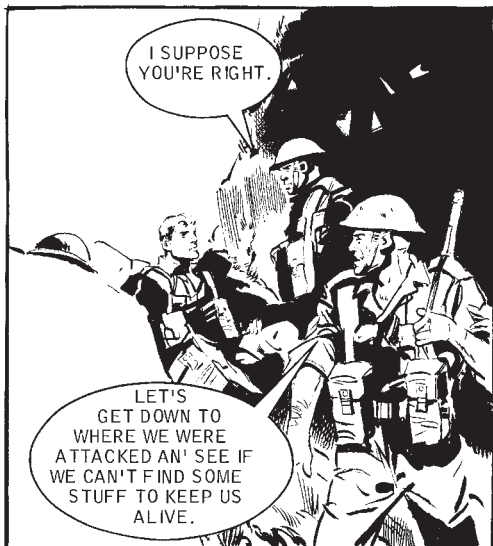
WELL,
YOU AIN'T NO
FLORENCE NIGHTIN-
GALE! BUT IT'LL BE
OK, JUAN.

OK, THE
MAN SAYS! MILES
FROM ANYWHERE, NO
WATER, NO AMMO, OUR
COMPANY SHOT TO
PIECES - YEAH,
WE'RE FINE!

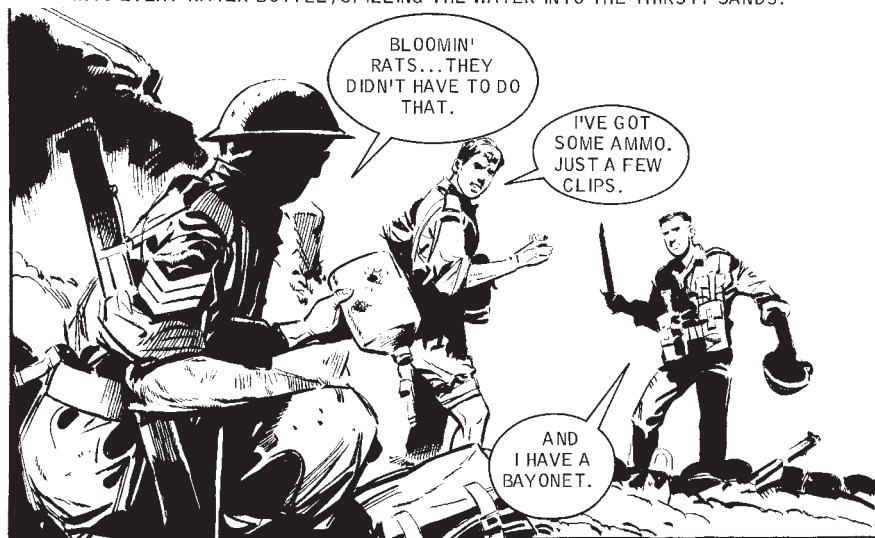
BUT JUAN HAD OTHER THINGS ON HIS MIND -

THAT
GERMAN, HE HAS
MY BUGLE. I GO
AFTER HIM, GET IT
BACK.

YOU AIN'T
GOIN' ANYWHERE
WITHOUT MY SAY-SO! WE
AIN'T CHASIN' AFTER A
HEAVILY-ARMED NAZI DESERT
STRIKE FORCE JUST TO
GET BACK A BLOOMIN'
ANTIQUE!



WHEN THEY REACHED THE CARNAGE, MORE BAD NEWS. THE GERMANS HAD SHOT INTO EVERY WATER BOTTLE, SPILLING THE WATER INTO THE THIRSTY SANDS.

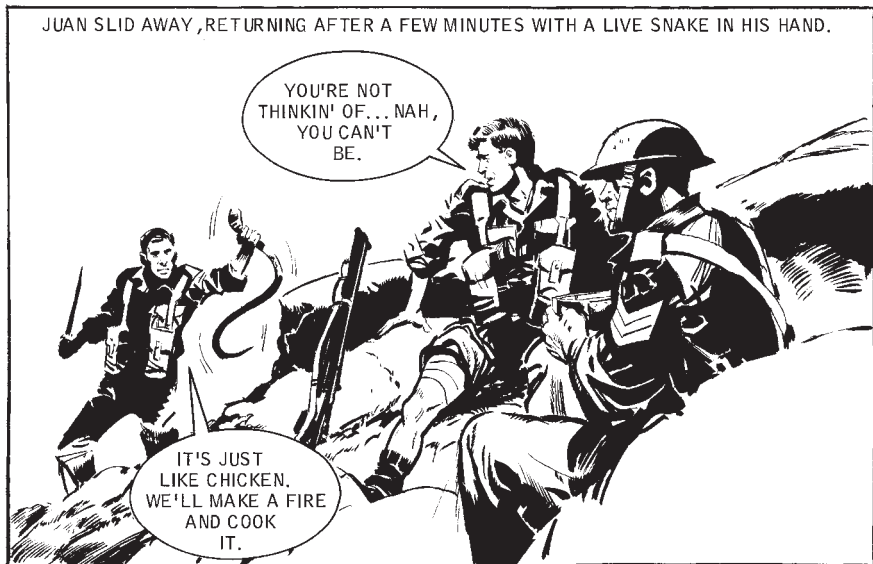


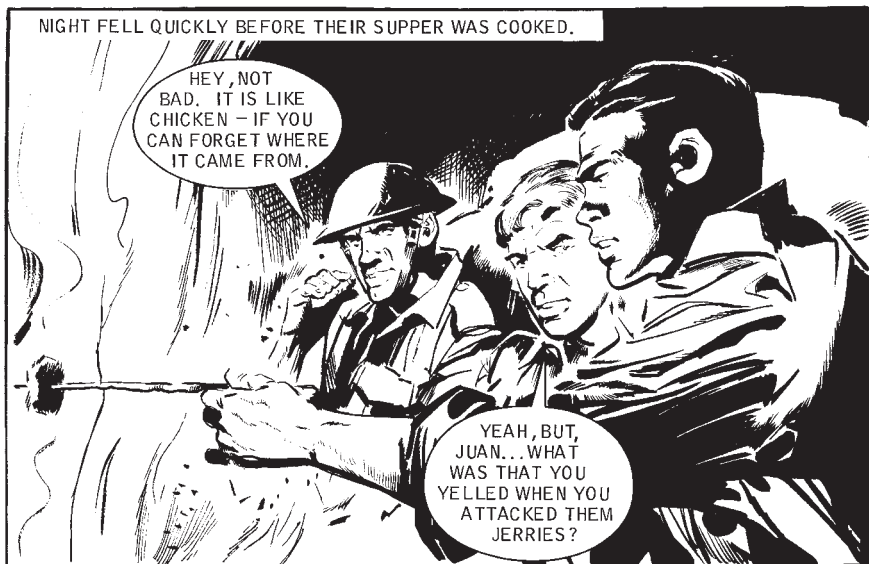
THE FACT THAT HE WAS ARMED AGAIN FILLED JUAN WITH CONFIDENCE. HE LOOKED AROUND, HIS SENSES ALERT, TAKING EVERYTHING IN.



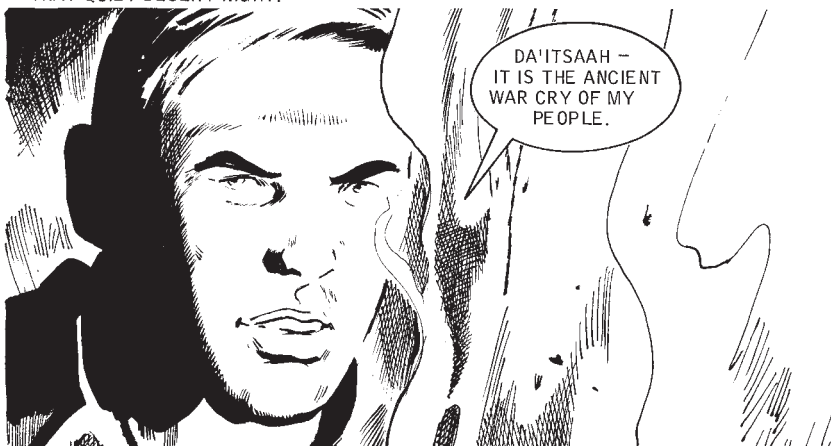
WHEN THEY RETURNED TO THE ROCKS, EACH MAN NOW WITH A RIFLE, JUAN DUG INTO THE ROCK BEHIND A SMALL PATCH OF PALE MOSS.





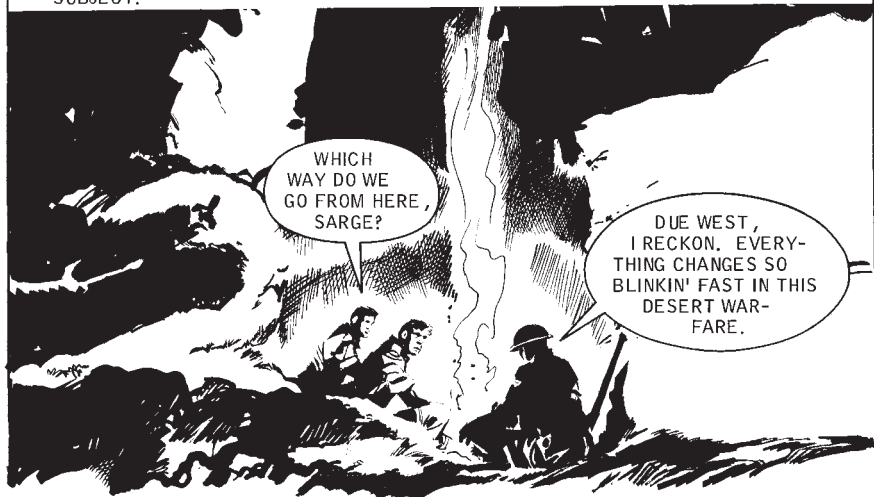


IT WAS SOME WHILE BEFORE HE ANSWERED, AND THE WORDS SOUNDED ALMOST EERIE IN THAT QUIET DESERT NIGHT.

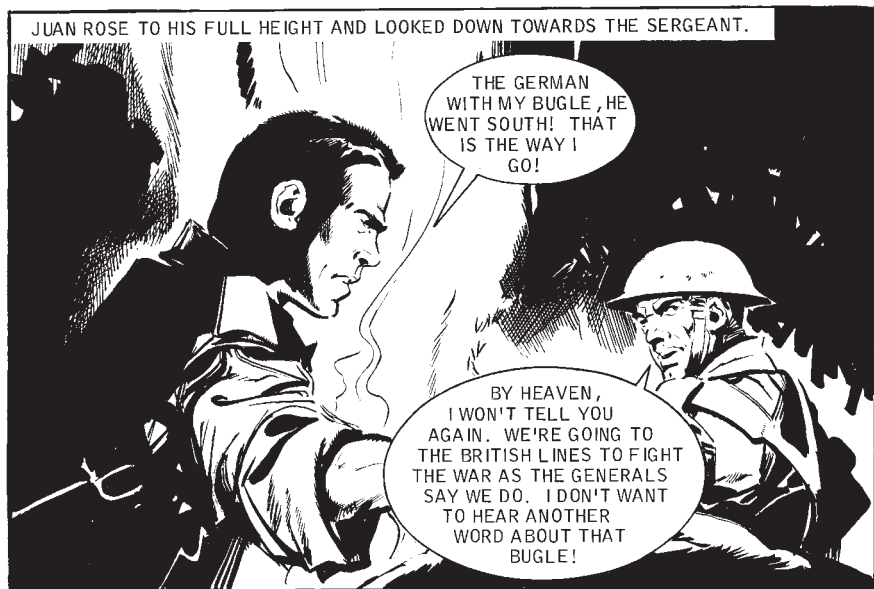


THE SHADOWS OF THE FIRE FLICKERED ACROSS HIS FACE, EMPHASISING THE HIGH CHEEK-BONES, THE PROUD LOOKS OF A WARRIOR RACE WHICH HAD SURVIVED CENTURIES OF SAVAGE FEUDING.

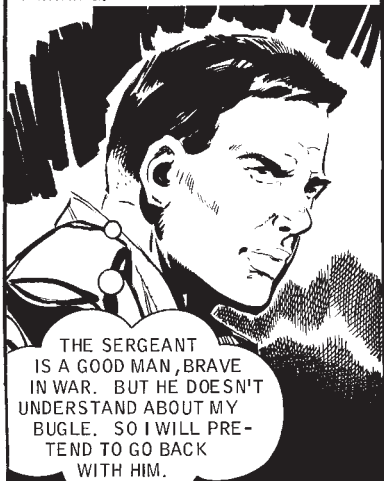
JOE FELT A SHIVER GO UP HIS SPINE AS JUAN REPLIED. HE QUICKLY CHANGED THE SUBJECT.



JUAN ROSE TO HIS FULL HEIGHT AND LOOKED DOWN TOWARDS THE SERGEANT.

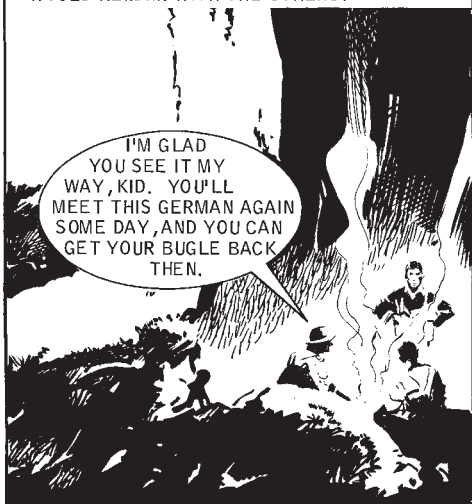


JUAN HEARD THE SERGEANT'S WORDS, BUT SUDDENLY BECAME IMPASSIVE, ALL INDIAN, GIVING NO SIGN OF HIS THINKING.



THE SERGEANT IS A GOOD MAN, BRAVE IN WAR. BUT HE DOESN'T UNDERSTAND ABOUT MY BUGLE. SO I WILL PRETEND TO GO BACK WITH HIM.

THE APACHE NODDED IN AGREEMENT WITH HIS SERGEANT, GIVING THE IMPRESSION THAT HE WOULD REMAIN WITH THE OTHERS.



I'M GLAD YOU SEE IT MY WAY, KID. YOU'LL MEET THIS GERMAN AGAIN SOME DAY, AND YOU CAN GET YOUR BUGLE BACK THEN.

MEANWHILE HALLSTEIN AND HIS FORCE HAD STRUCK AGAIN, COMPLETELY DESTROYING ANOTHER BRITISH CONVOY, LEAVING THE SANDS CRIMSON WITH BLOOD.



THE NAZI WAS A KILLER. ALL OTHER GERMAN UNITS - AND MANY OF HIS OWN MEN - DETESTED HIM.



NOW WE
RETURN TO OUR
SUPPLY BASE AND
PREPARE FOR ANOTHER
ACTION AGAINST THESE
STUPID ENGLISH-
MEN.

JUAN'S BUGLE SWUNG FROM A HOOK INSIDE HIS HALF-TRACK. ALREADY IT WAS GETTING DULL. JUAN HAD POLISHED IT EVERY DAY - BUT NOT HALLSTEIN.

OFF ROARED THE NAZIS, FACES FLUSHED WITH TRIUMPH. THINGS LOOKED GOOD FROM THEIR POINT OF VIEW, FOR THE ALLIES WERE ON THE RUN THROUGHOUT THE ENTIRE WAR AREA.



JA, THE
HAUPTMANN
SPEAKS THE TRUTH.
THEY ARE DONE FOR,
THESE ENGLAND-
ERS.

THEY
CANNOT MATCH
US. THE OLD DESERT
FOX, ROMMEL, HE
HAS THEIR
MEASURE.

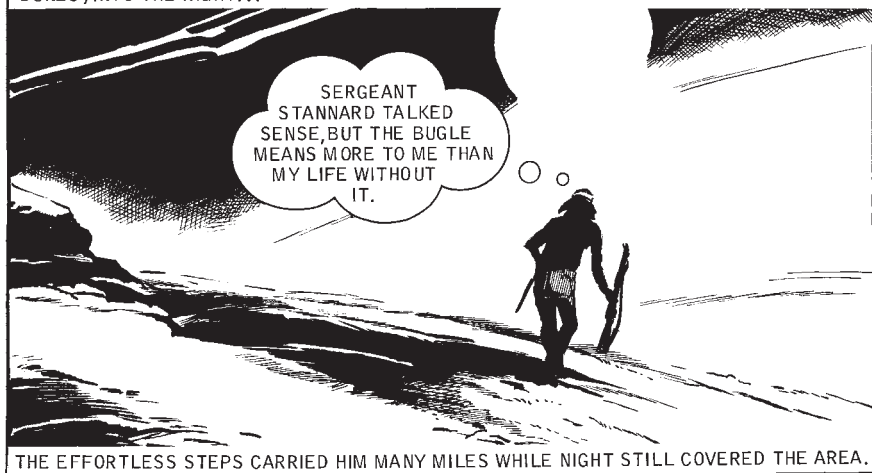
HAD THEY OVERHEARD A BRITISH HIGH COMMAND CONFERENCE IN A TENT NOT FORTY MILES AWAY, THEIR TRIUMPH WOULD HAVE BEEN DOUBLED.



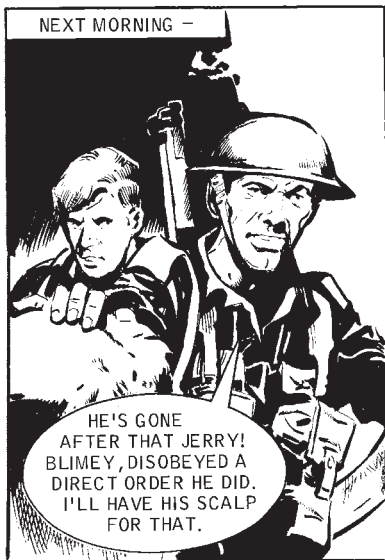
THAT NIGHT, JUAN SAT WATCH WHILST THE SERGEANT AND JOE GRABBED A FEW HOURS' SLEEP. BOTH WERE CONFIDENT THAT THEY'D MAKE IT BACK TO THE BRITISH LINES.



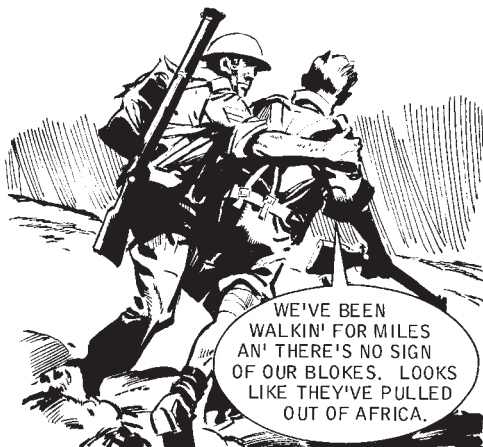
HE TOOK HIS INDIAN HEAD-BAND FROM ITS PLACE OF SAFE-KEEPING BEFORE SOLEMNLY BINDING IT ON. THEN HE MOVED OUT, LEAVING ALL THE COLLECTED WATER AND FOOD FOR HIS COMPANIONS. LIKE A COPPER-COLOURED GHOST HE VANISHED OVER THE SLEEPING DUNES, INTO THE NIGHT...



NEXT MORNING -



SO THE TWO BRITISH SOLDIERS CONTINUED THEIR JOURNEY ALONE, JOE STILL FEELING PAIN FROM HIS INJURED LEG.

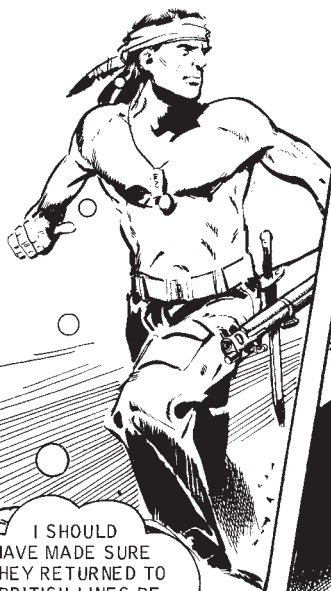




THE SERGEANT THOUGHT DEEP AND HARD, BUT JOE KNEW HE HAD ALREADY DECIDED.



MEANWHILE JUAN HAD HAD SECOND THOUGHTS ABOUT LEAVING JOE AND SERGEANT STANNARD ALONE TO FEND FOR THEMSELVES.



I SHOULD HAVE MADE SURE THEY RETURNED TO BRITISH LINES BEFORE I LEFT THEM.

SO, PRICKED BY HIS CONSCIENCE, THE RED INDIAN TURNED BACK TO LOOK FOR HIS FRIENDS.

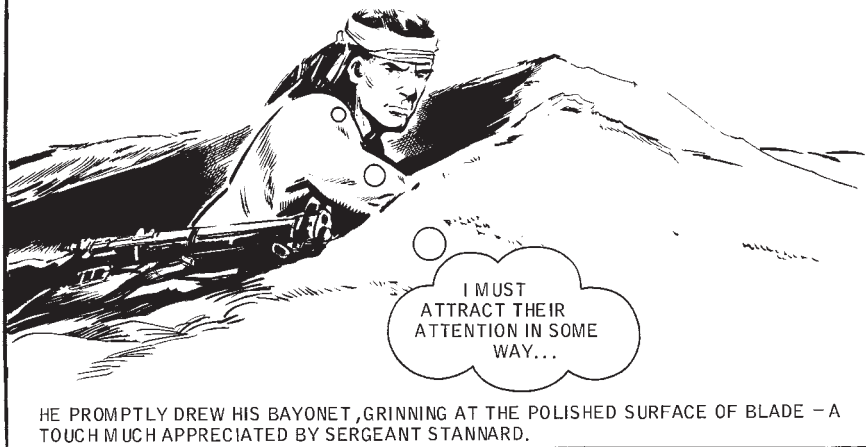
COMING IN THE OPPOSITE DIRECTION, JOE AND SERGEANT STANNARD WERE BEGINNING TO FEEL A LITTLE LOST AND THIRSTY.

I RECKON WE'VE HAD IT, JOE. WE'LL NEVER LAST IN THIS SUN.



JUST THINK. BEFORE THE WAR I WOULD HAVE GIVEN MY RIGHT ARM FOR A TAN LIKE THIS.

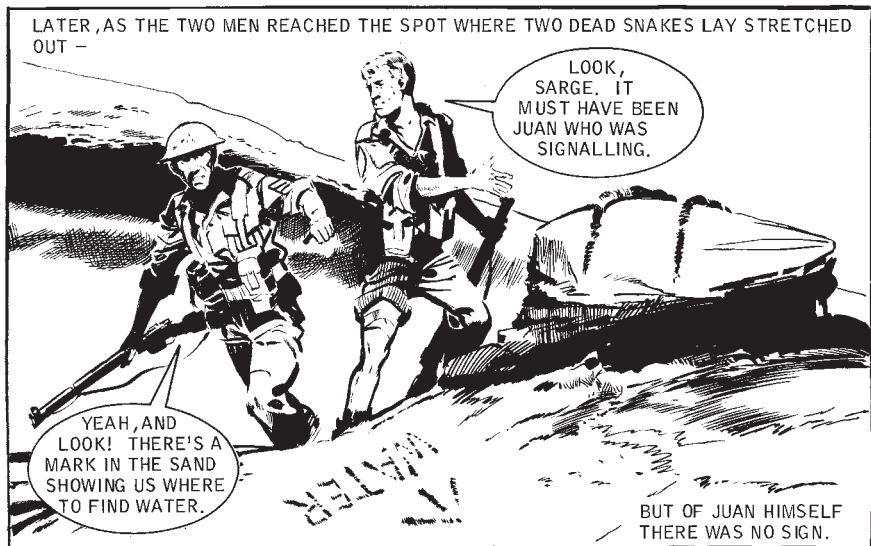
A FEW HOURS LATER JUAN REACHED THE CREST OF A HUGE SAND DUNE. HIS HAWKLIKE EYES PIERCED THE DISTANCE AND SAW THE MINUTE FIGURES OF SERGEANT STANNARD AND JOE.



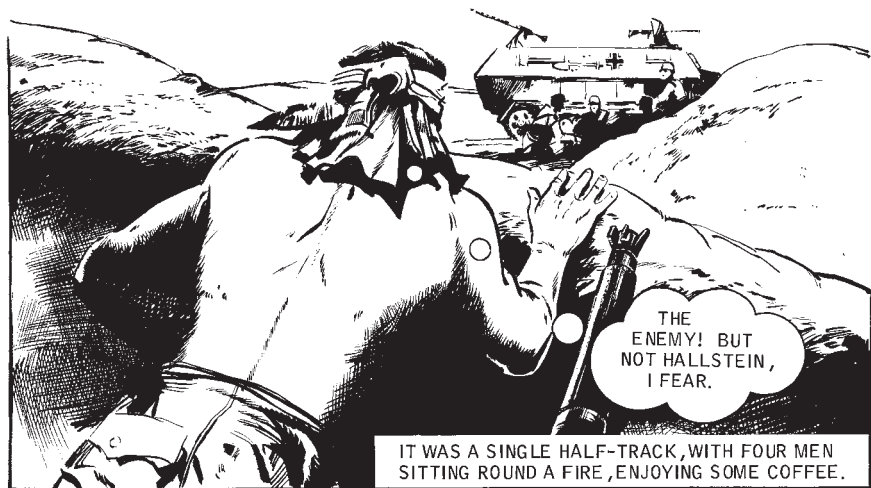
HE LET THE SUN'S RAYS CATCH THE STEEL, USING THE BAYONET AS A HELIOGRAPH...



LATER, AS THE TWO MEN REACHED THE SPOT WHERE TWO DEAD SNAKES LAY STRETCHED OUT -



SATISFIED HIS FRIENDS WOULD LAST OUT A LITTLE LONGER, JUAN WAS ON THE WARPATH AGAIN.



JUAN'S BLOOD SANG IN HIS VEINS, FOR THIS WAS WAR AS HIS ANCESTORS KNEW IT - MAN TO MAN. HE SNAKED CLOSER TO THE GERMANS, EVEN DISDAINING TO USE HIS RIFLE.



THE NAZIS WERE OFF GUARD, FOR THEY THOUGHT THEY HELD ALL THIS TERRITORY. LITTLE DID THEY REALISE WHAT WAS CREEPING UP ON THEM.



THEIR LAUGHTER TURNED TO DISBELIEF AS A FIGURE OUT OF THE PAST LEPT INTO ACTION.



JUAN'S BAYONET FOUND THE NEAREST GERMAN'S HEART AND HE DIED INSTANTLY.

THEN HE TURNED ON THE OTHERS, A FULL-BLOODED APACHE WITH REVENGE SHOWING CLEARLY ON HIS FACE.



HIS FLASHING BAYONET FOUND ANOTHER VICTIM, BUT THE GERMANS WERE QUICK TO RECOVER. RIFLES UP, THEIR FINGERS WHITENED ON THE TRIGGERS – JUAN WAS SECONDS FROM DEATH.



THEN TWO RIFLES BARKED. BULLETS RIPPED THROUGH THAT BAKING AIR, BUT JUAN REMAINED STANDING – AND THE TWO NAZIS BIT THE DUST.



IT WASN'T THE GODS WHO HAD HELPED HIM, BUT SERGEANT STANNARD AND JOE WHITE.

IT WAS MORE GOOD LUCK THAN THEIR TRACKING ABILITY WHICH HAD BROUGHT THE TWO MEN TO THEIR APACHE FRIEND.



SERGEANT STANNARD WAS ABOUT TO GIVE JUAN A BLASTING FOR MAKING OFF WITHOUT THEM, BUT HE WAS SO IMPRESSED BY HIS COURAGE THAT HE FORGOT THE REBUKE.



LUCKILY SERGEANT STANNARD HAD TAKEN A COURSE ON ENEMY VEHICLES. SO, WITH A LITTLE TRIAL AND ERROR, HE SOON MANAGED THE CONTROLS OF THE GERMAN HALF-TRACK.



THEY DIDN'T ARGUE WITH HIM. OUT IN THESE ENDLESS SAND WASTES, JUAN WAS IN CHARGE. HE SEEMED TO HAVE A SIXTH SENSE WHICH TOLD HIM THE DIRECTION TO TAKE.

MEANWHILE, IN THE FAR-OFF BRITISH LINES...



NOW WAS THE TIME FOR A COUNTER-ATTACK, AND THE MAIN ATTEMPT WAS TO BE MADE AT THE BARREN WASTES OF THE SUKMAR PASS.



THIS AREA IS EMPTY OF GERMANS. OUR COMPANY IS GOING TO DRIVE FAST FOR THE SUKMAR PASS, MOVE THROUGH IT, THEN CIRCLE BEHIND THE ADVANCING NAZIS AND PLAY HAVOC WITH THEIR SUPPLY LINES.

THEN ANOTHER COMPANY WILL MOVE IN FROM THE OTHER SIDE.

VERY INTERESTING! THIS WILL BE WORTH MUCH TO THE GERMANS.



NOBODY NOTICED THE ARAB WHO HAD HEARD EVERY WORD. A CAMP CLEANER, HE WAS ALSO IN THE PAY OF THE NAZIS.

A FEW HOURS LATER, AS THE BRITISH FORCE SPED FOR THE PASS, GERMAN H. Q. RELAYED ORDERS TO HAUPTMANN HALLSTEIN WHOSE STRIKE FORCE WAS CLOSEST TO THE PASS.

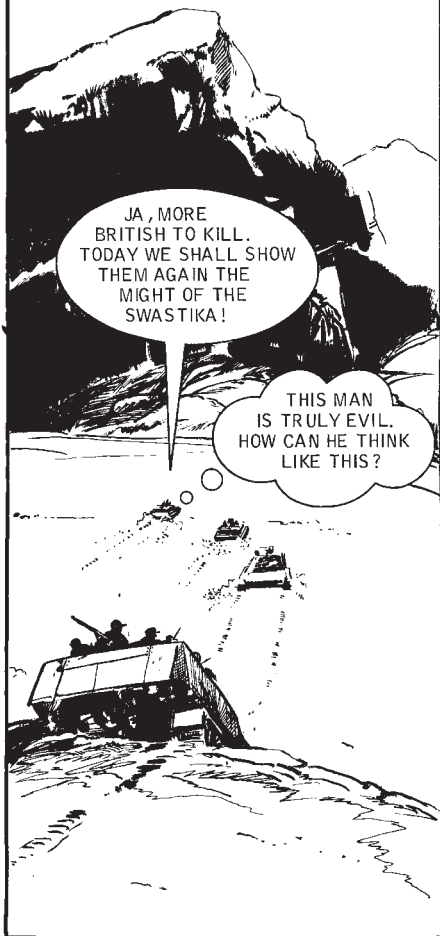
GUT! WE
AMBUSH THE BRITISH
AT THE SUKMAR PASS.
TELL THE MEN TO MOVE
AT ONCE.

JA, HERR
HAUPTMANN.

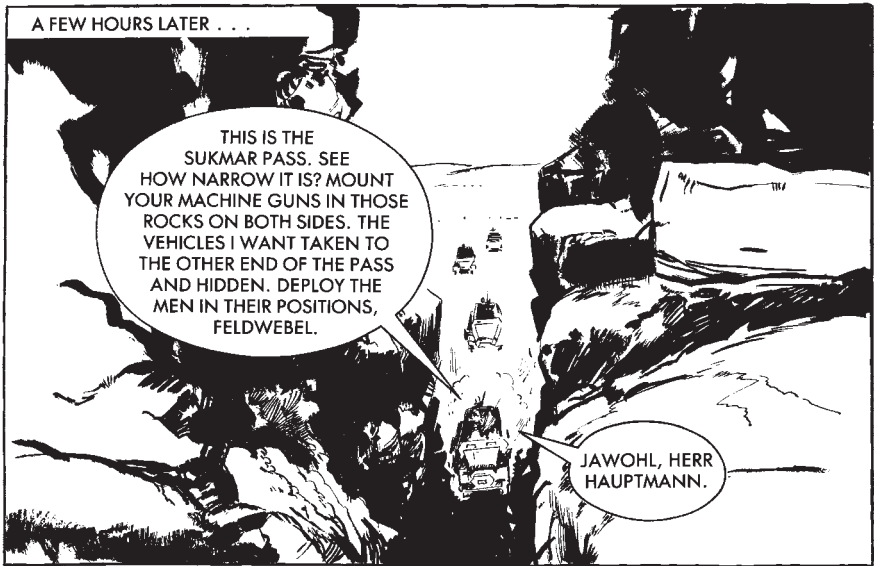
HE WAS SUPPLIED AND READY. GRINNING, THE SAVAGE NAZI ORDERED HIS STRIKE FORCE TO MOVE.

JA, MORE
BRITISH TO KILL.
TODAY WE SHALL SHOW
THEM AGAIN THE
MIGHT OF THE
SWASTIKA!

THIS MAN
IS TRULY EVIL.
HOW CAN HE THINK
LIKE THIS?



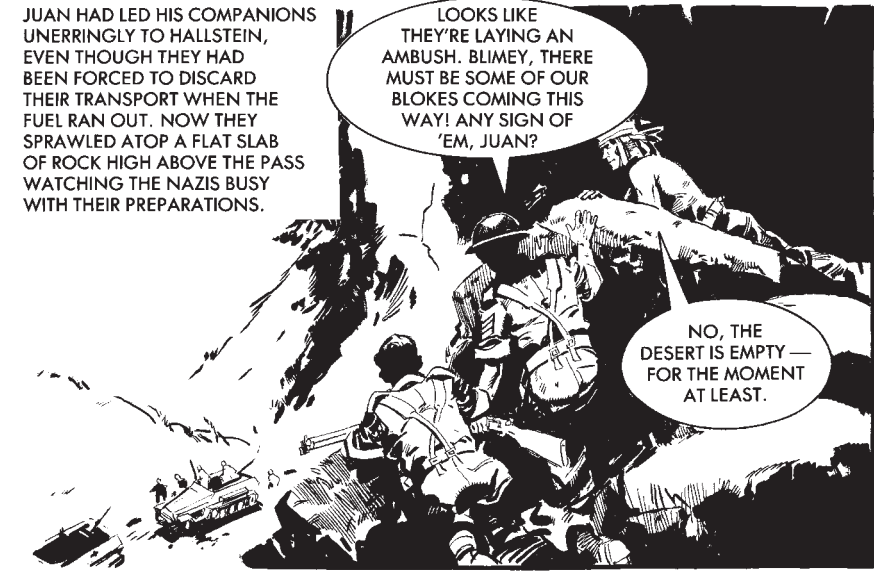
A FEW HOURS LATER . . .



THIS IS THE SUKMAR PASS. SEE HOW NARROW IT IS? MOUNT YOUR MACHINE GUNS IN THOSE ROCKS ON BOTH SIDES. THE VEHICLES I WANT TAKEN TO THE OTHER END OF THE PASS AND HIDDEN. DEPLOY THE MEN IN THEIR POSITIONS, FELDWEBEL.

JAWOHL, HERR HAUPTMANN.

JUAN HAD LED HIS COMPANIONS UNERRINGLY TO HALLSTEIN, EVEN THOUGH THEY HAD BEEN FORCED TO DISCARD THEIR TRANSPORT WHEN THE FUEL RAN OUT. NOW THEY SPRAWLED ATOP A FLAT SLAB OF ROCK HIGH ABOVE THE PASS WATCHING THE NAZIS BUSY WITH THEIR PREPARATIONS.



LOOKS LIKE THEY'RE LAYING AN AMBUSH. BLIMEY, THERE MUST BE SOME OF OUR BLOKES COMING THIS WAY! ANY SIGN OF 'EM, JUAN?

NO, THE DESERT IS EMPTY — FOR THE MOMENT AT LEAST.

DOWN BELOW IN THE PASS, HALLSTEIN WAS BELLOWING ORDERS IN HIS USUAL ARROGANT WAY.



GET A MOVE ON, WE DON'T HAVE ALL DAY. I WANT OUR TRACKS CLEARED SO THE BRITISH DON'T BECOME SUSPICIOUS.

STANNARD SHREWDLY SIZED UP THE SITUATION —



THEY'VE TAKEN ALL THEIR VEHICLES THROUGH THE PASS, SO IF WE GRAB A TRUCK, BELT THROUGH THE PASS AS OUR BLOKES ARRIVE, WE CAN SPOIL THIS LITTLE AMBUSH.



SOON HALLSTEIN'S HALF-TRACK WAS TAKEN THROUGH TO JOIN THE OTHERS. NOW THE BRUTAL OFFICER WAITED IN THE ROCKS WITH HIS MEN, EAGER TO HURL DEATH DOWN INTO THE NARROW PASS.

IT WILL BE A ROUT. ONCE IN, THEY CANNOT TURN, THEY CANNOT MANOEUVRE. THEY CAN ONLY STAND AND DIE DOWN THERE!



THIS WORK HAD TO BE DONE IN SILENCE ,BUT STANNARD WAS IN QUICK TO HELP JUAN OUT.



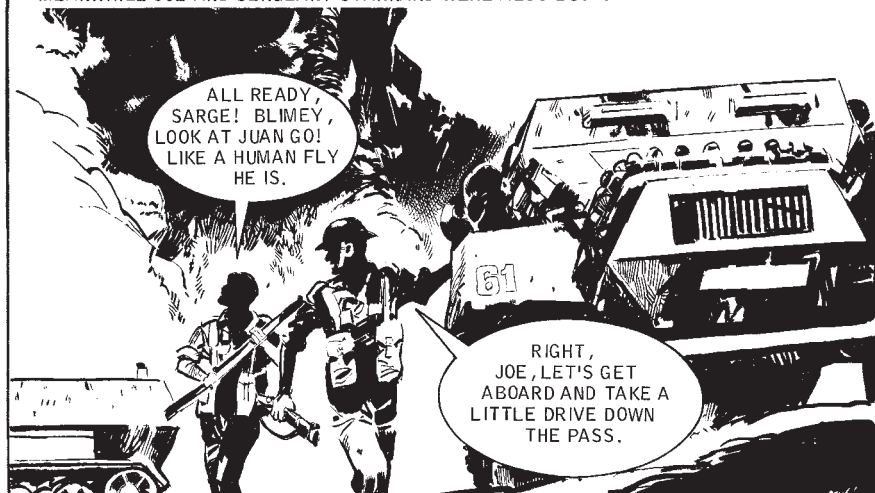
SERGEANT STANNARD JUST ABOUT HAD A FIT AT THE MENTION OF THE BUGLE - UNTIL HE HEARD WHAT JUAN HAD IN MIND.



AS THE SERGEANT AND JOE SET ABOUT WRECKING THE NAZIS' ENGINES, JUAN, HIS BELOVED BUGLE SAFELY AROUND HIS NECK ONCE MORE, STARTED THE HARD CLIMB UPWARDS.



MEANWHILE JOE AND SERGEANT STANNARD WERE ALSO BUSY.



THEY DESTROYED ALL BUT ONE VEHICLE. JOE CLIMBED IN WITH ONE OF THE GUARD'S SCHMEISSERS WHILE THE SERGEANT GOT BEHIND THE WHEEL.

THE ROAR OF THE ENGINE AS STANNARD STARTED UP A HALF-TRACK CAME CLEARLY DOWN THE PASS.

HIMMEL,
WHICH FOOL IS
THAT? FELDWEBEL,
TAKE A MAN AND SEE
THAT WE HAVE TOTAL
SILENCE BACK
THERE.

ZU
BEFEHL, HERR
HAUPTMANN.

THE STOLEN GERMAN HALF-TRACK AND TWO GERMANS MET UP HALF WAY THROUGH THE PASS.

GET READY
WITH THAT GUN,
JOE.

HIMMEL,
HAVE THEY GONE
MAD? SHOOT THEM,
WERNER, BEFORE THEY
SPOIL EVERYTHING
AND WARN THE
ENGLANDERS.

AS THEY PASSED THE TWO GERMANS, JOE GAVE A BURST WITH HIS STOLEN SCHMEISSER AND SAW THE SOLDIER FALL. THE GERMAN N.C.O. HAMMERED FIRE BACK AT THEM.



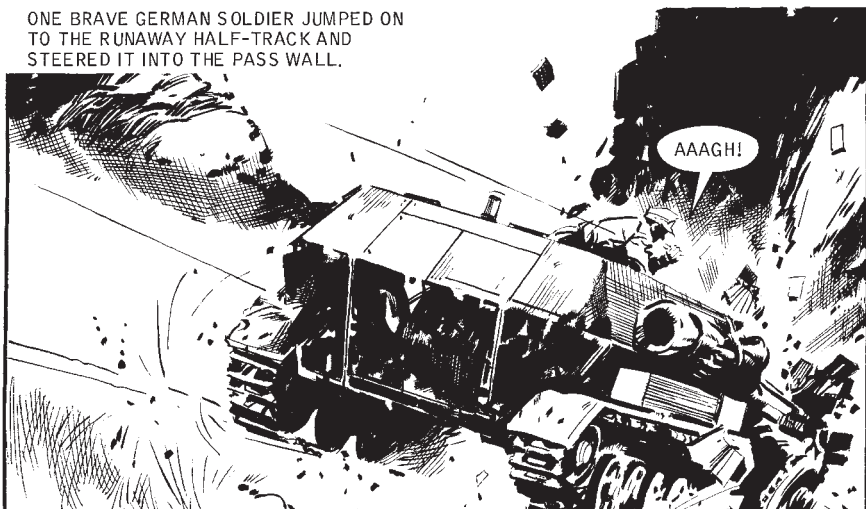
THE SECOND GERMAN WENT DOWN AS JOE'S BULLETS FOUND THEIR MARK.



HALLSTEIN'S FACE TWISTED IN A SNARL AS HE HEARD THOSE SHOTS AND SAW THE DESERTED HALF-TRACK RACING TOWARDS HIM.

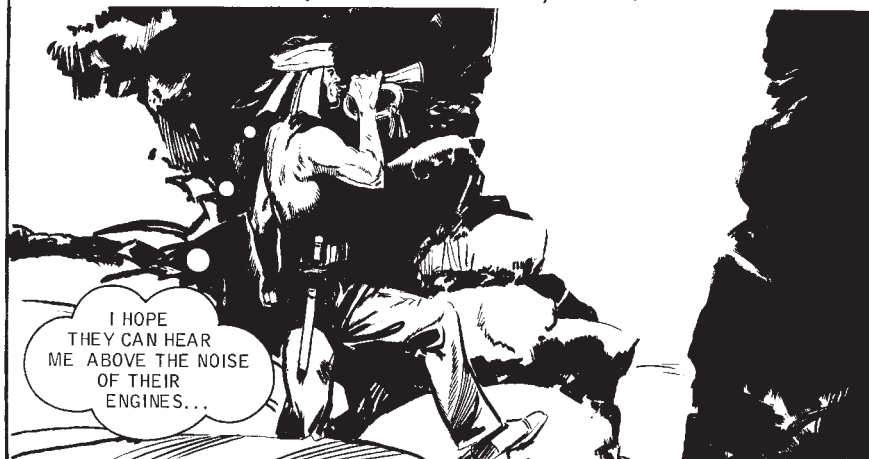


ONE BRAVE GERMAN SOLDIER JUMPED ON TO THE RUNAWAY HALF-TRACK AND STEERED IT INTO THE PASS WALL.



BUT THE TRUCK DID WHAT SERGEANT STANNARD PLANNED IT SHOULD DO. IT STOPPED THE GERMANS FROM LOOKING UPWARDS TO WHERE JUAN HAD MOUNTED TO A HIGH LEDGE.

HIS DEEP CHEST HEAVING AS HE SUCKED AIR INTO HIS TORTURED LUNGS, JUAN SAW THAT THE BRITISH WERE A QUARTER OF A MILE AWAY, NO MORE.



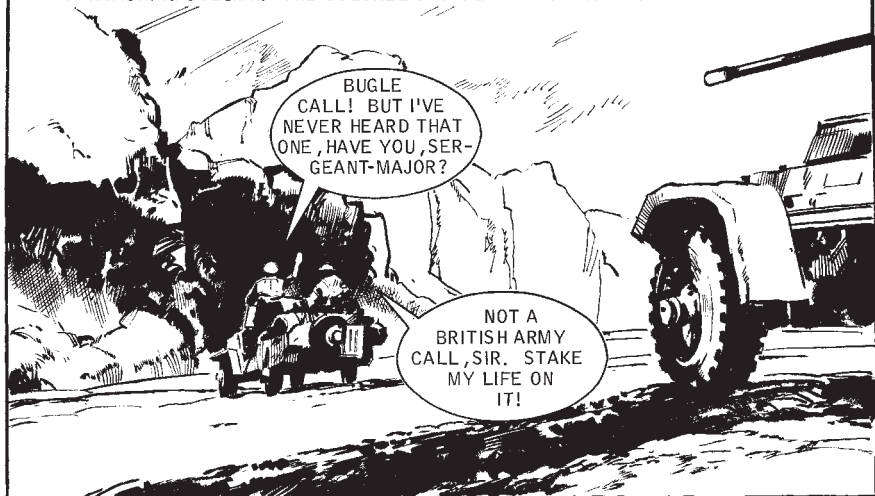
THE BUGLE COLD ON HIS LIPS, HE READIED TO MAKE THE CALL HE PLAYED BEST – "BOOTS AND SADDLES".

THE NOTES OF THE FAMOUS U.S. CAVALRY CALL FLOATED OUT TRUE AND PURE IN THAT HOT, SEARING AIR. AND AS HE PLAYED, IT SEEMED TO JUAN THAT ANOTHER SOLDIER WAS CLOSE TO HIM – A SOLDIER WEARING THE UNIFORM OF THE FOURTH U.S. CAVALRY.



THERE WAS AN APPROVING SMILE ON THE CAVALRY-MAN'S FACE AS ONE COURAGEOUS BUGLER SALUTED ANOTHER.

FORTUNATELY THOSE SILVER NOTES WERE HEARD ABOVE THE ENGINE ROAR OF THE APPROACHING COLUMN. THE COLONEL STOPPED THE VEHICLES.



BUGLE CALL! BUT I'VE NEVER HEARD THAT ONE, HAVE YOU, SER-GEANT-MAJOR?

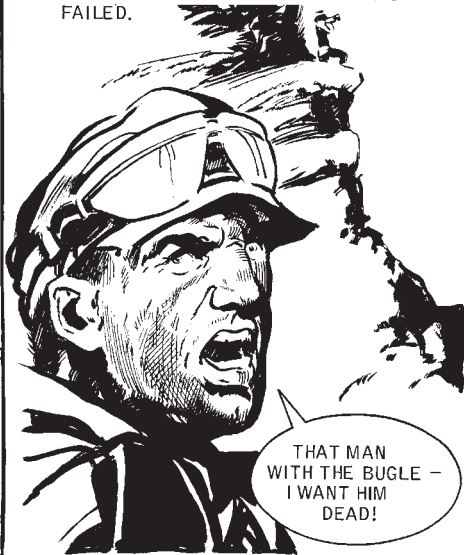
NOT A BRITISH ARMY CALL, SIR. STAKE MY LIFE ON IT!

THE BRITISH C. O. WAS A WILY OLD CAMPAIGNER —

SOMETHING FUNNY GOING ON OVER THERE. SEND A FEW MEN ACROSS TO INVESTIGATE.

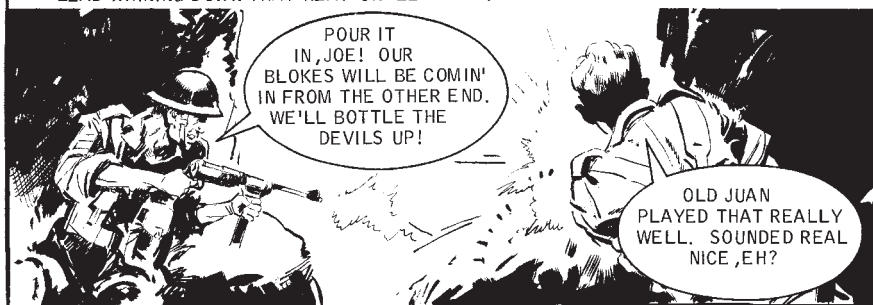


HALLSTEIN KNEW THEN THAT HE HAD FAILED.

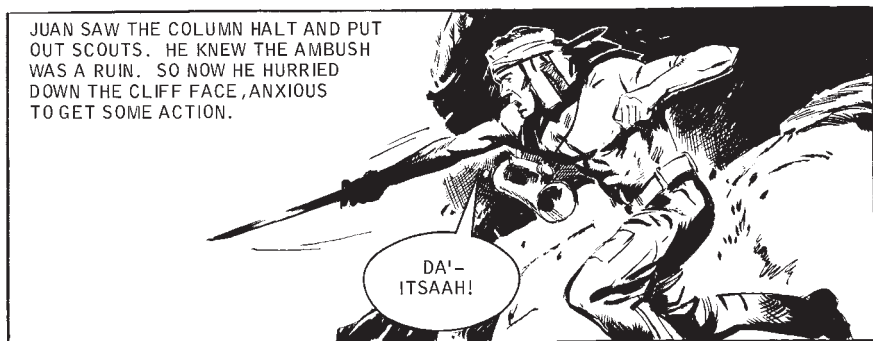


THAT MAN WITH THE BUGLE — I WANT HIM DEAD!

THEN THE SERGEANT AND JOE OPENED UP WITH SCHMEISSERS, SENDING A HAIL OF LEAD WHINING DOWN THAT HEAT-CRAZED PASS.



JUAN SAW THE COLUMN HALT AND PUT OUT SCOUTS. HE KNEW THE AMBUSH WAS A RUIN. SO NOW HE HURRIED DOWN THE CLIFF FACE, ANXIOUS TO GET SOME ACTION.



HIS VOICE, SCREAMING THAT OLD WAR CRY, ECHOED ABOUT THE CANYON WALLS. JOE, ALWAYS FANCYING HIMSELF AS AN INDIAN, COPIED IT IN TRUE WESTERN STYLE.



WHEN THE APACHE INDIAN REACHED GROUND LEVEL AGAIN, HALLSTEIN MADE STRAIGHT FOR HIM, DESPERATE TO KILL THE MAN WHO HAD RUINED HIS PLAN.

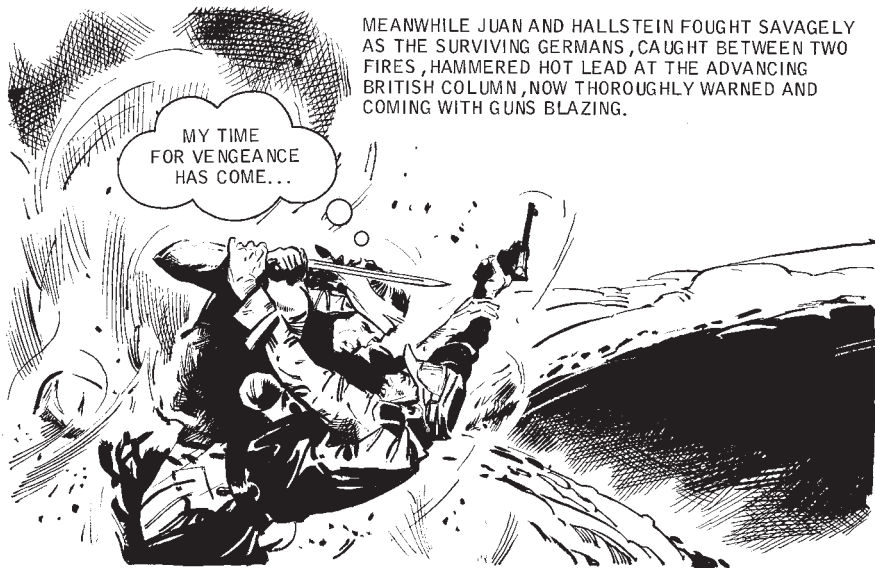


THE SERGEANT AND JOE HAD FOUND STICK GRENADES AMONG THE STRIKE FORCE VEHICLES AND NOW THREW THEM AT THE GERMANS.



MEANWHILE JUAN AND HALLSTEIN FOUGHT SAVAGELY AS THE SURVIVING GERMANS, CAUGHT BETWEEN TWO FIRES, HAMMERED HOT LEAD AT THE ADVANCING BRITISH COLUMN, NOW THOROUGHLY WARNED AND COMING WITH GUNS BLAZING.

MY TIME
FOR VENGEANCE
HAS COME...



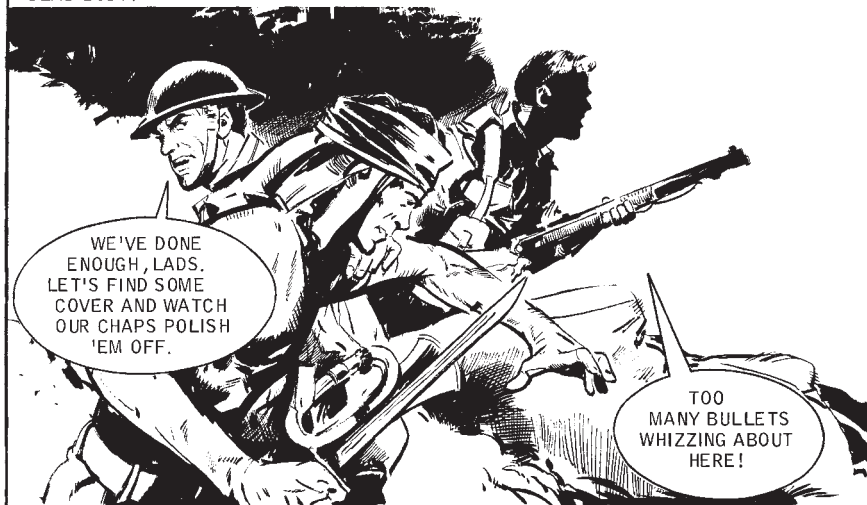
EVERY MUSCLE IN
JUAN'S BODY CAME
INTO PLAY, AND HE
HAD THE NAZI AT
HIS MERCY -

DA' -
ITSAAH!



HALLSTEIN HEARD THE FEARSOME CRY ONCE MORE - THEN HIS EVIL LIFE WAS CUT SHORT.

AND WITHIN SECONDS SERGEANT STANNARD AND JOE HAD JOINED JUAN OVER HALLSTEIN'S DEAD BODY.



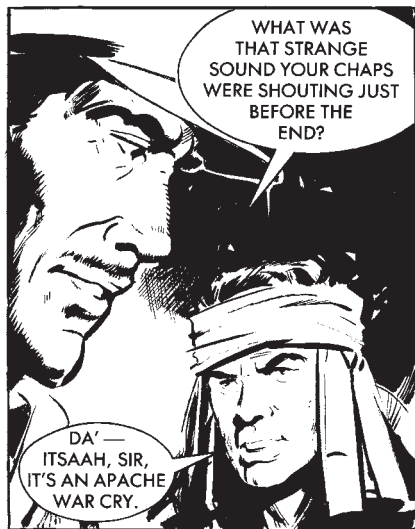
THEY MADE TO GO, BUT JUAN TOOK A LAST LOOK AT THE DEAD NAZI.





THE BATTLE WAS OVER, THE AMBUSH SMASHED, AND HALLSTEIN'S STRIKE FORCE A THING OF THE PAST. THE COMMANDER OF THE BRITISH COLUMN STRODE OVER, DELIGHTED.





THE COLUMN THREADED ITS WAY THROUGH A PASS THAT WAS NOW EMPTY OF MENACE. AHEAD LAY A GRIM SUCCESSION OF BATTLES AS THE ALLIES BATTLED TO CUT THE NAZI SUPPLY LINES, AND STRANGLE THE FRONT-LINE TROOPS INTO STARVATION AND SURRENDER.



JUAN'S STORY SOON SPREAD, AND HIS BATTLE CRY WAS PROUDLY CLAIMED BY ALL HIS UNIT AS THEY WERE THROWN INTO ACTION AGAIN AND AGAIN.

AT THE
TROT, LADS -
WINKLE 'EM
OUT!

DA' -
ITSAAH!

AND NEVER AGAIN DID SERGEANT STANNARD DO ANYTHING BUT PRAISE THE BUGLE. IN FACT, HE ENCOURAGED JUAN TO PLAY IT.

GIVE IT
ANOTHER TOOT,
JUAN - IT GIVES
JERRY THE
SHIVERS!

NOT
EXACTLY MUSIC
TO DANCE TO,
THOUGH, IS
IT?

THAT BUGLE WENT SAFELY BACK TO THE STATES WITH JUAN AT THE END OF THE WAR... BUT NOT BEFORE IT HAD SOUNDED BATTLE CRIES IN ITALY AND EUROPE, HIGH ABOVE THE DIN OF SAVAGE FIGHTING.



AND JUAN STILL POLISHES IT TO THIS DAY - DENTED THOUGH IT IS, HERE AND THERE, BY RICOCHETTING BULLETS. AND THERE'S QUITE A FEW VETERANS LIKE SERGEANT STANNARD AND JOE WHO CAN STILL TELL A FEW STORIES ABOUT THE APACHE BUGLER IN THE BRITISH ARMY...

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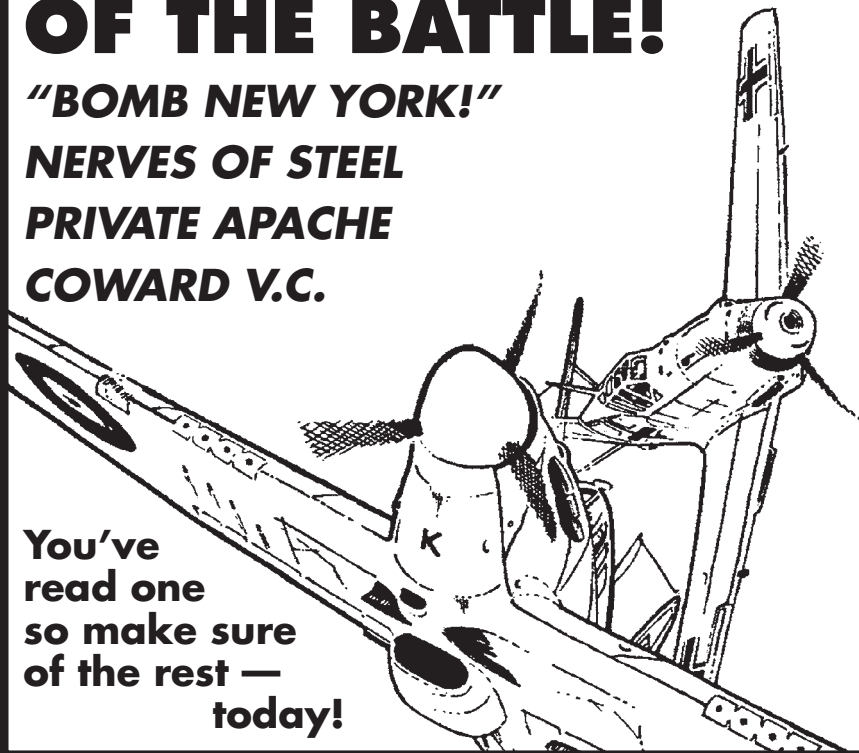
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