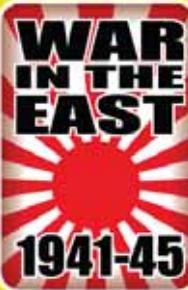


COMPLETE 63-PAGE ACTION STORY

No.4721
£2

Commando

FOR ACTION AND ADVENTURE



SKY SHARK



COMMANDO - BY SPECIAL REQUEST

Title

SKY SHARK

Subject

They say it's dangerous to revisit things you remember from long ago, especially in childhood. Things change so much that you are almost always disappointed. So, when Alan Williams suggested re-issuing this story as part of our By Special Request season, I had reservations as I'd read the book often as a child — and enjoyed it so much — that I was sure it was going to be a let-down. Fortunately this was not the case as the team of Brunt, James and Porto deliver a cracking story which was just as sound as I remembered. Phew!

On this showing, it's a pity that Sandy James only ever illustrated two Commandos and Porto did but three covers. Gordon Brunt, though, wrote around 35 stories. If they're all as good as this, they should be in the next request season.

Calum Laird, Commando Editor

Issue Number

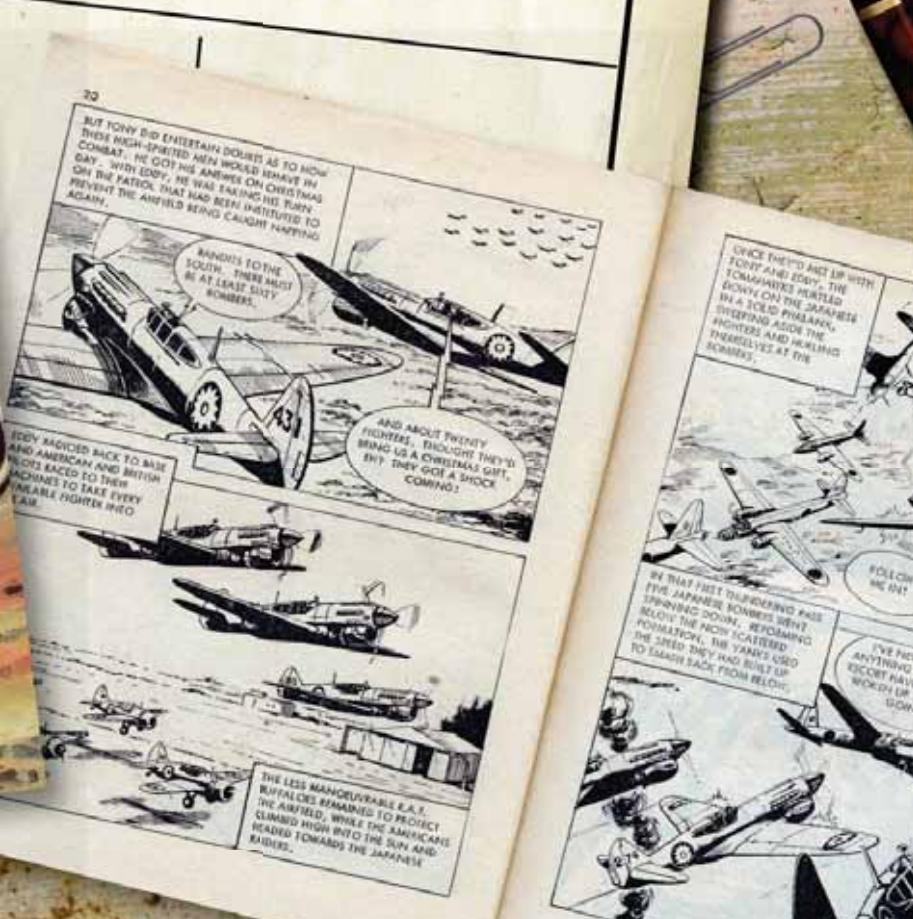
Sky Shark, originally Commando No 451 (January 1970),
re-issued as No 1291 (February 1979)

STORY
GORDON
BRUNT

ART
SANDY JAMES

COVER
PORTO

First Published
1970
No 451



SKY SHARK



A SQUADRON OF TOMAHAWK FIGHTER PLANES WITH CHINESE MARKINGS AND AMERICAN PILOTS... THESE WERE THE FAMOUS "SKY SHARKS" SO MUCH FEARED BY THE JAP AIR FORCE. WHEREVER THEY FLEW THEY RULED THE SKIES, FOR EVERY PILOT WAS AN ACE.

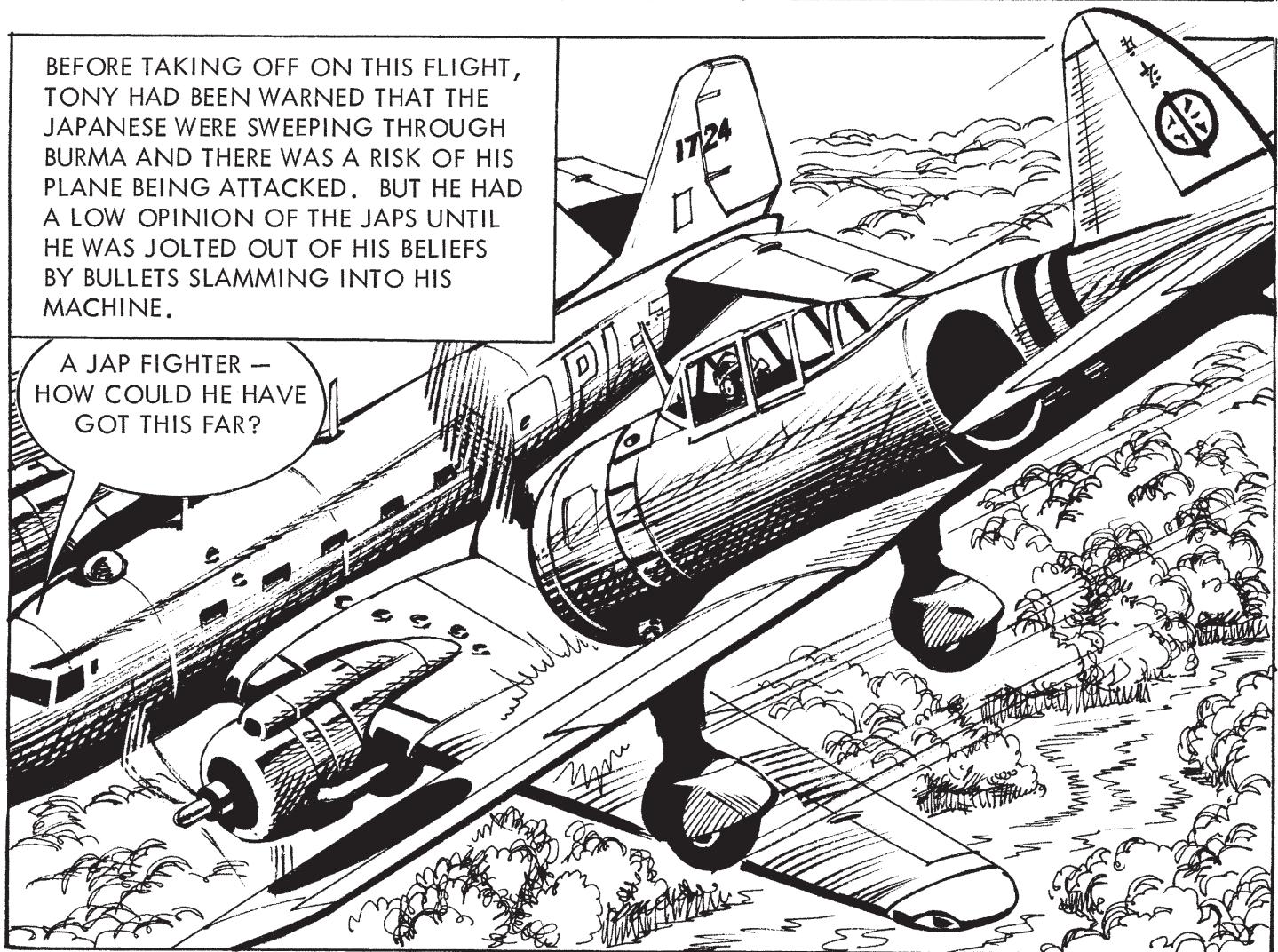
LONDON-BORN TONY GRANT HAD NEVER EVEN HEARD OF THESE AMERICANS IN DECEMBER, 1941, AS HE WAS FLYING THE LAST LEG OF THE LONG JOURNEY FROM INDIA TO BURMA IN A DOUGLAS DAKOTA.



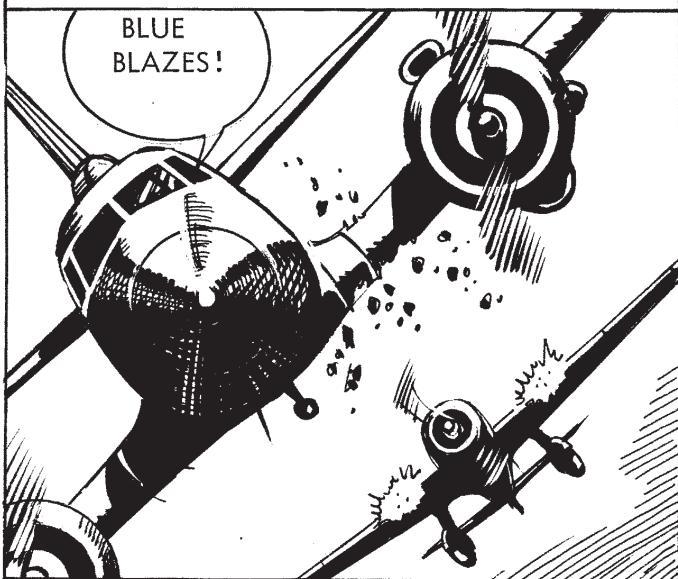
HE HAD COME TO THE FAR EAST FIVE YEARS BEFORE, AND BY HIS OWN EFFORTS HAD BUILT UP A THRIVING AIR FREIGHT BUSINESS. TONY WAS PROUD OF THE DAKOTA, THE FIRST NEW AIRCRAFT HE HAD EVER OWNED.

BEFORE TAKING OFF ON THIS FLIGHT, TONY HAD BEEN WARNED THAT THE JAPANESE WERE SWEEPING THROUGH BURMA AND THERE WAS A RISK OF HIS PLANE BEING ATTACKED. BUT HE HAD A LOW OPINION OF THE JAPS UNTIL HE WAS JOLTED OUT OF HIS BELIEFS BY BULLETS SLAMMING INTO HIS MACHINE.

A JAP FIGHTER —
HOW COULD HE HAVE
GOT THIS FAR?



SURPRISE STILL GRIPPED TONY AS THE JAP FLICKED ROUND IN A TIGHT TURN TO DIVE IN AGAIN.



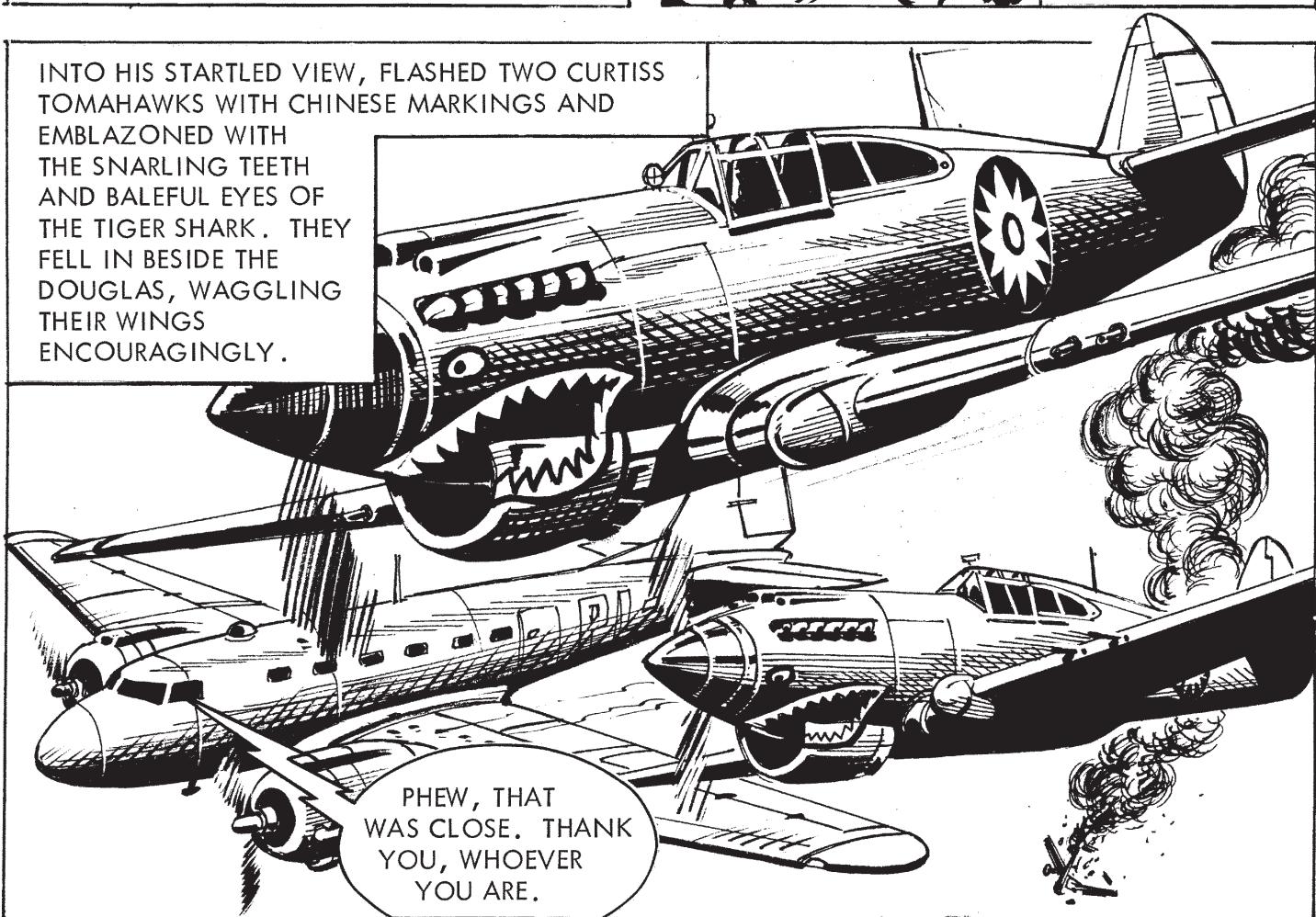
HE THEN TRIED TO AVOID THE RAKING LINES OF TRACER, BUT THE LUMBERING TRANSPORT WAS NO MATCH FOR THE TWISTING, DARTING NAKAJIMA.

HELPLESSLY HE WATCHED THE JAP FIGHTER COME IN FOR THE KILL. THEN A MIRACLE HAPPENED.



BEFORE HIS VERY EYES THE JAP FIGHTER HAD DISINTEGRATED IN A FIERY BALL.

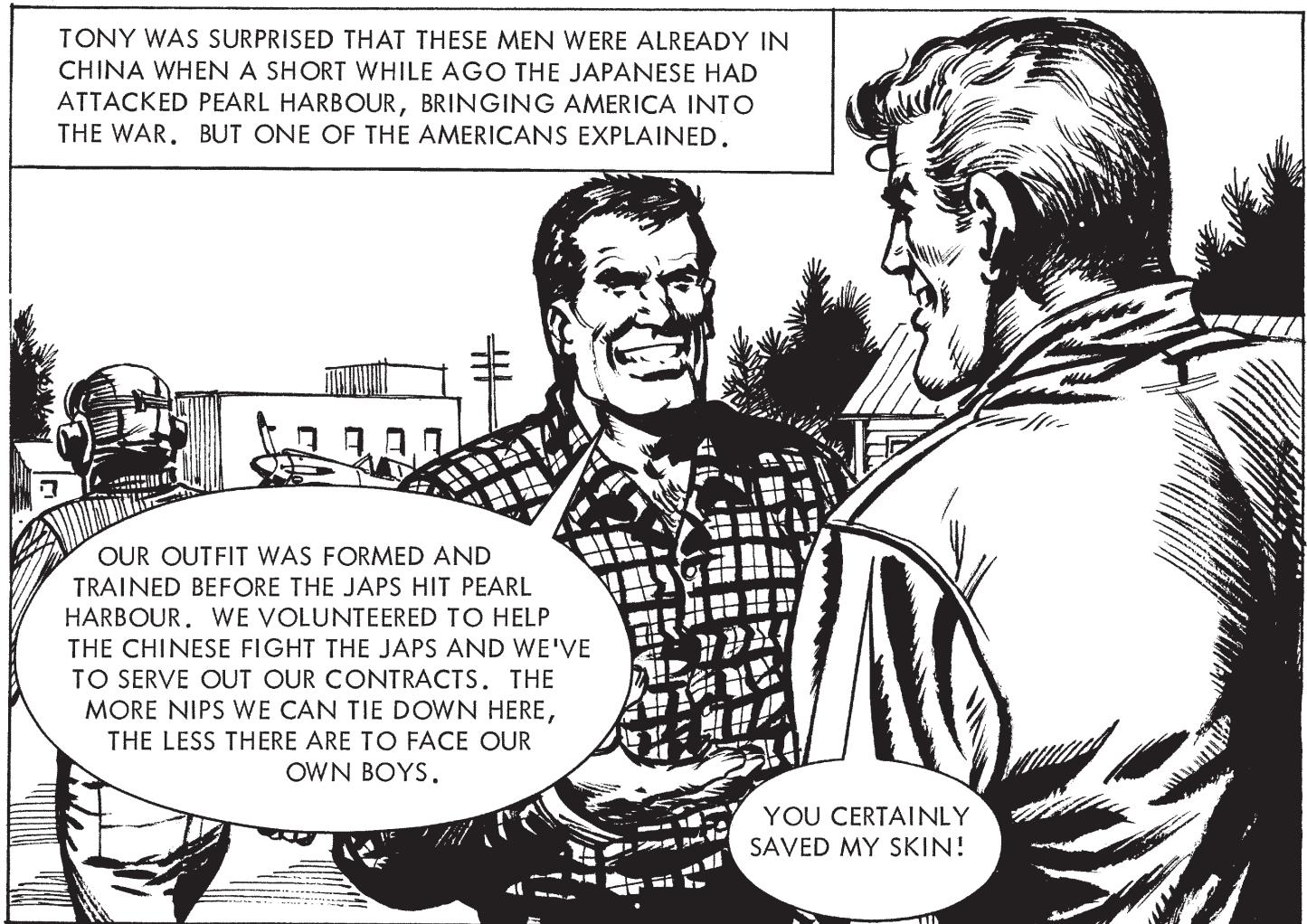
INTO HIS STARTLED VIEW, FLASHED TWO CURTISS TOMAHAWKS WITH CHINESE MARKINGS AND EMBLAZONED WITH THE SNARLING TEETH AND BALEFUL EYES OF THE TIGER SHARK. THEY FELL IN BESIDE THE DOUGLAS, WAGGLING THEIR WINGS ENCOURAGINGLY.



WITH THIS COLOURFUL ESCORT, TONY LANDED SAFELY AT AN AIRPORT ON THE EDGE OF A BURMESE TOWN. THE TOMAHAWK PILOTS CAME TO MEET HIM. HE COULD SEE AT A GLANCE THEY WERE NOT CHINESE.



TONY WAS SURPRISED THAT THESE MEN WERE ALREADY IN CHINA WHEN A SHORT WHILE AGO THE JAPANESE HAD ATTACKED PEARL HARBOUR, BRINGING AMERICA INTO THE WAR. BUT ONE OF THE AMERICANS EXPLAINED.



THE AMERICAN, WHO INTRODUCED HIMSELF AS EDDY HOLDEN FROM WYOMING, HAD BEEN A CAPTAIN IN THE AMERICAN AIR FORCE, AND NOW COMMANDED THE AMERICAN VOLUNTEER GROUP SQUADRON AT THIS BASE WHICH ALSO WAS USED BY THE R.A.F. HE TOOK TONY TO SEE HIS TOMAHAWK.

PRETTY FANCY PAINTWORK.

THE SHARK REPRESENTS EVIL TO THE JAPS, SO WE THOUGHT IT MIGHT THROW A SCARE INTO THEM. WE CALL OURSELVES THE "SKY SHARKS". LIKE TO TRY MY SHIP FOR SIZE?



SO TONY CLIMBED INTO THE FIGHTER'S NARROW COCKPIT AND EDDY EXPLAINED THE VARIOUS CONTROLS.

A LOT MORE GADGETS THAN THERE WERE ON THE OLD KITES I USED TO FLY.

HAVE YOU FLOWN FIGHTERS THEN? I THOUGHT YOU WERE AN AIRLINE PILOT.



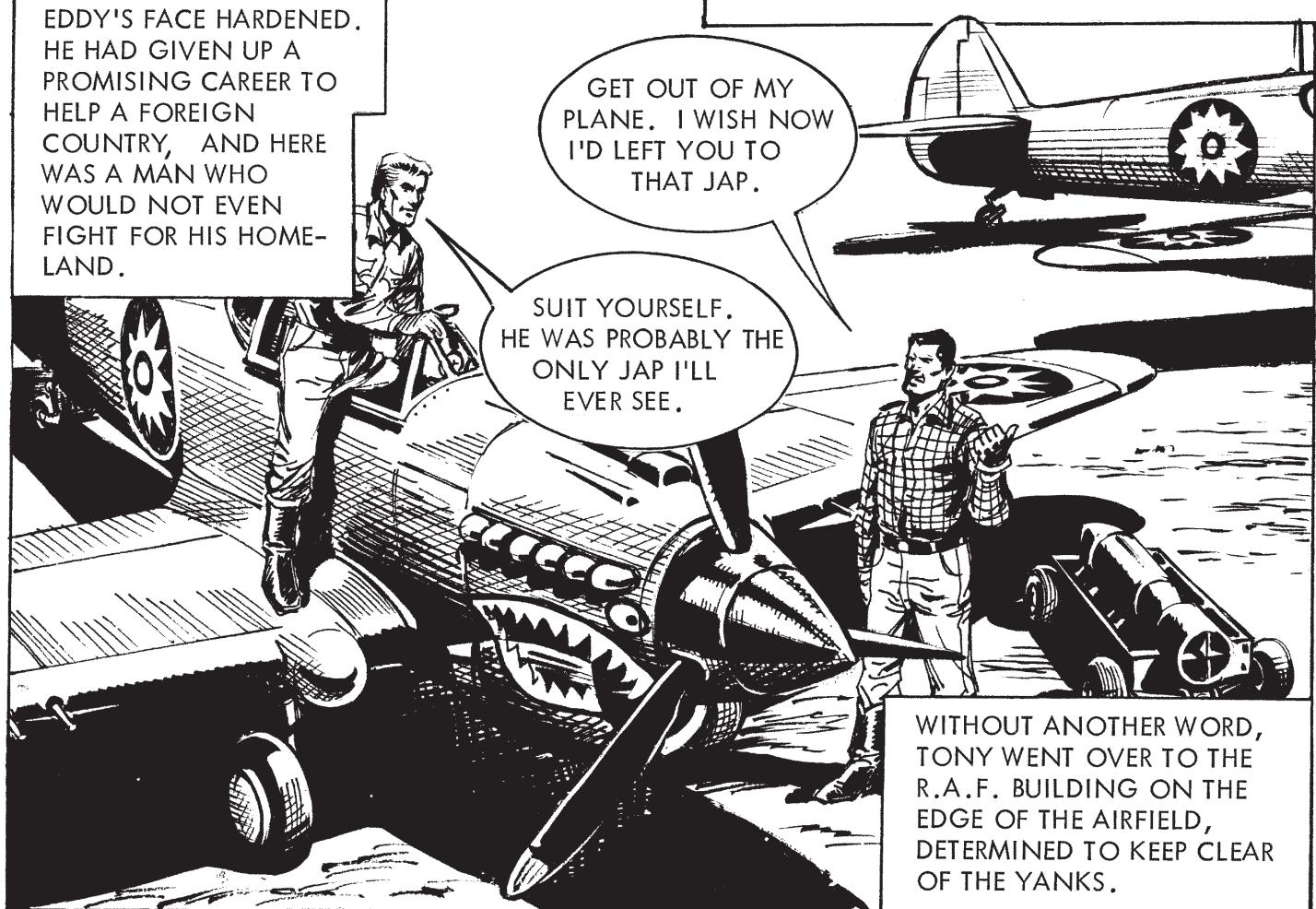
TONY EXPLAINED THAT HE HAD SERVED A SHORT SERVICE COMMISSION AS A PILOT IN THE R.A.F. BEFORE COMING OUT EAST.



I'VE SWEATED BLOOD TO BUILD UP MY BUSINESS, AND THERE ARE PLENTY OF PILOTS BACK IN ENGLAND. I'M NOT GOING TO THROW IT ALL AWAY WHEN IT'S BEGINNING TO PAY OFF.



EDDY'S FACE HARDENED. HE HAD GIVEN UP A PROMISING CAREER TO HELP A FOREIGN COUNTRY, AND HERE WAS A MAN WHO WOULD NOT EVEN FIGHT FOR HIS HOMELAND.



BUT LATER THAT SAME AFTERNOON JAPANESE BOMBERS APPEARED OVER THE AIRFIELD. WITH NO WARNING SYSTEM, THE FIRST INKLING THE DEFENDERS HAD WAS BOMBS EXPLODING.



TONY NEEDED NO SECOND BIDDING. HE DIVED INTO A NEARBY SLIT-TRENCH. PEERING OUT, HE SAW EDDY RUSHING FOR HIS TOMAHAWK, JUST AS A BOMB EXPLODED NEARBY.



IGNORING THE SHRAPNEL AND STRAFING FIGHTERS, TONY RUSHED TOWARDS EDDY.



COUGHING IN THE ACRID SMOKE AND DUST, TONY DRAGGED THE UNCONSCIOUS AMERICAN INTO THE TRENCH JUST AS A JAP FIGHTER ROARED OVERHEAD, GUNS BLAZING.

MADE IT. HEAVEN ABOVE, THEY FIGHT LIKE WILD BEASTS.

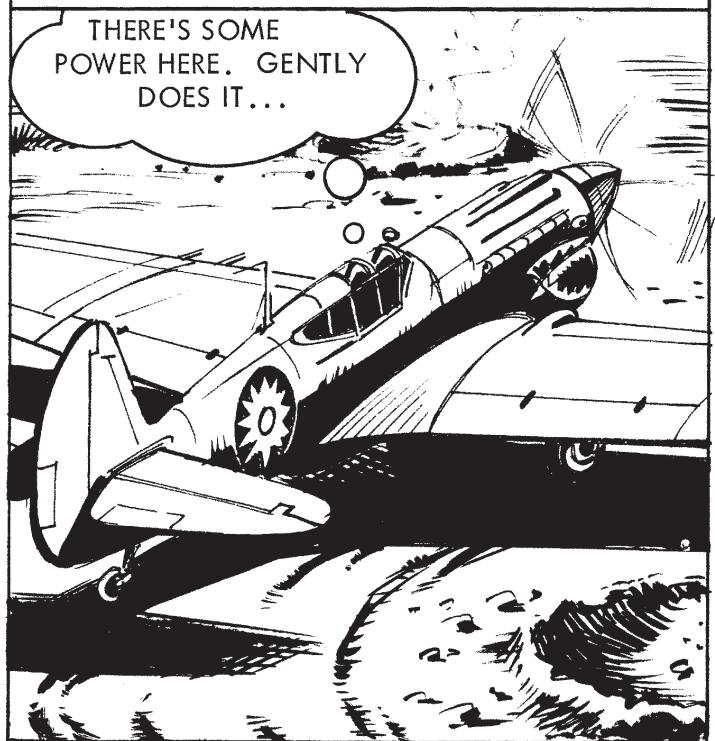
WORSE WAS TO COME. TONY GASPED IN HORROR AS THE JAP PILOT, CHEATED OF HIS PREY, LUNGED AT A GROUP OF PANIC-STRICKEN BURMESE FRANTICALLY SEEKING SHELTER.



BLACK HATRED GRIPPED TONY. THIS WASN'T WAR, IT WAS COLD-BLOODED MURDER. HIS GAZE FELL ON EDDY'S TOMAHAWK, THE SHARK MOUTH GRINNING AN INVITATION.



TONY SCRAMBLED INTO THE COCKPIT. MORE BY LUCK THAN JUDGEMENT HE FOUND THE RIGHT SWITCHES AND THE BIG ALLISON ENGINE BLARED INTO LIFE.

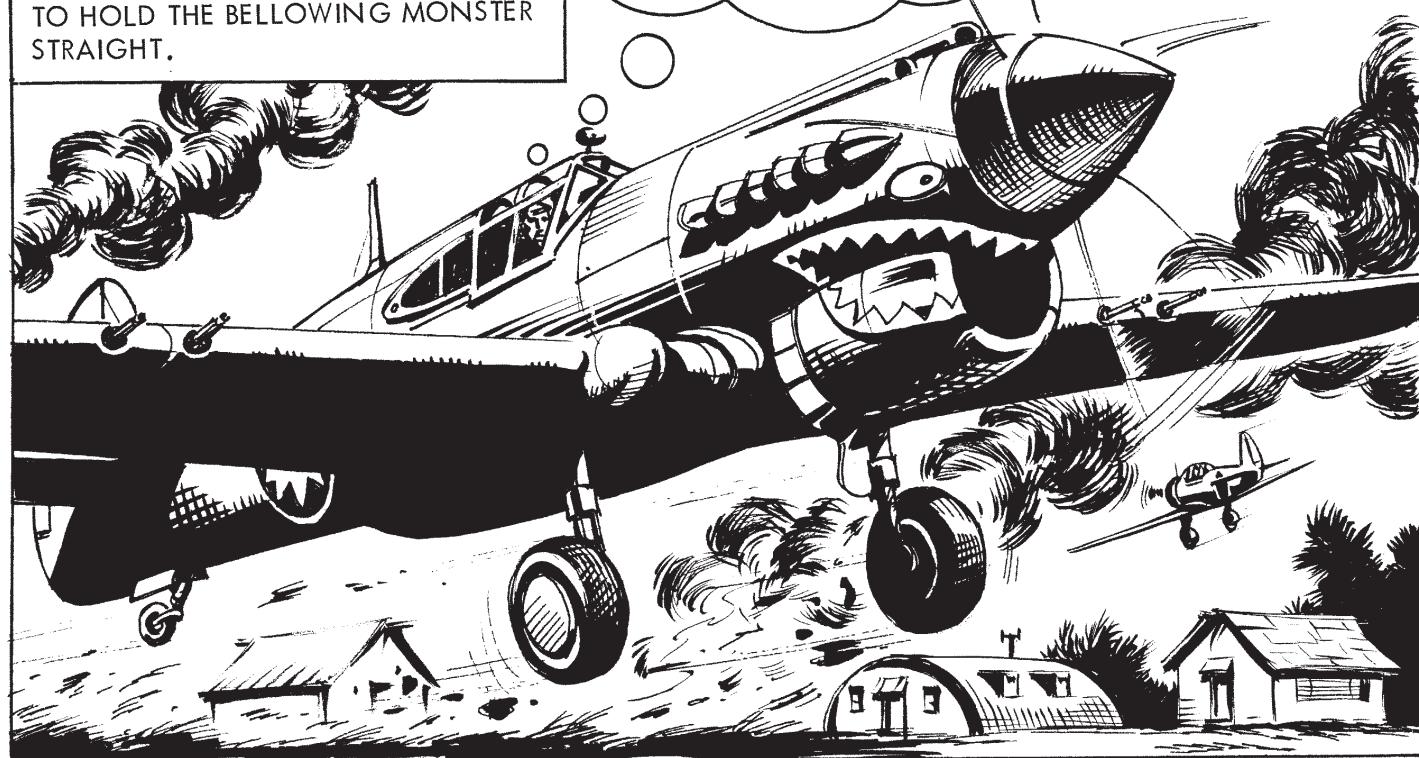


**FIND
MORE
FREE
MAGAZINES**

FREEMAGS.CC

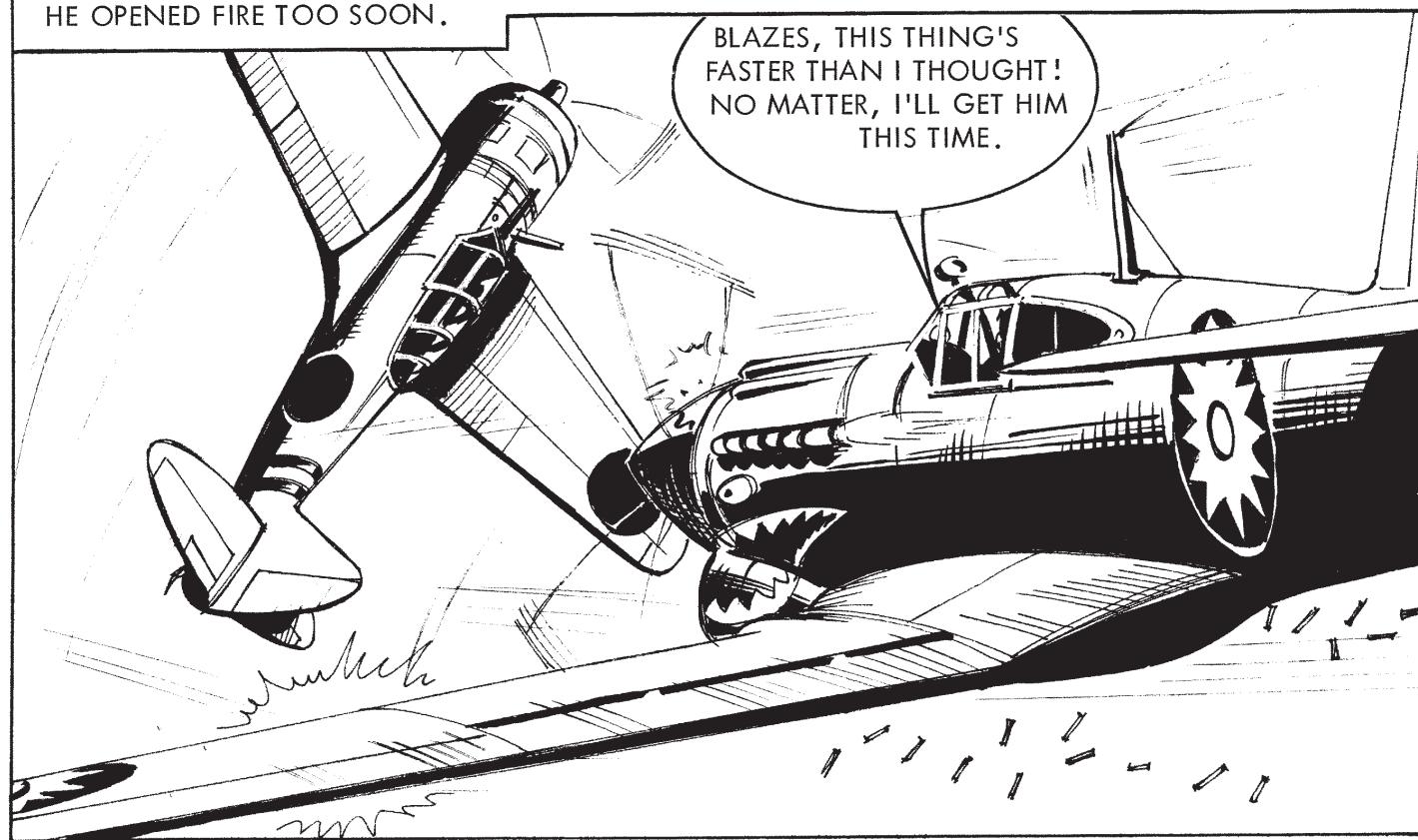
TURNING INTO WIND, HE OPENED THE THROTTLE WIDE. AS THE TOMAHAWK CATAPOULTED ACROSS THE AIRFIELD, HE FOUGHT TO HOLD THE BELLOWING MONSTER STRAIGHT.

WHEELS UP, FLAPS UP. NOW, MY MACHINE-GUNNING FRIEND, IT'S YOUR TURN.

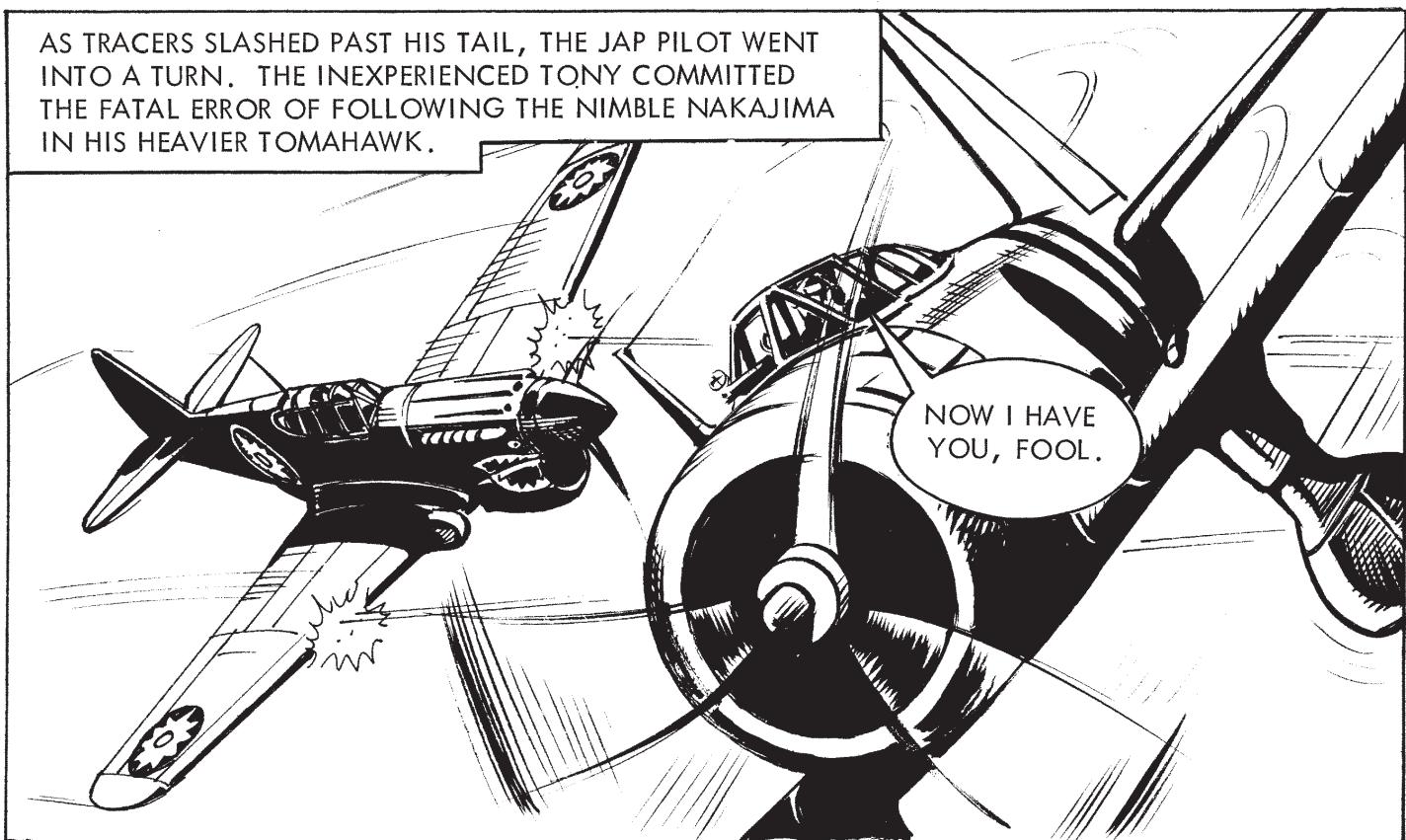


SNAPPING THE GUN SWITCH TO FIRE, TONY TORE AT THE NAKAJIMA. UNUSED TO HIS AIRCRAFT, HE OPENED FIRE TOO SOON.

BLAZES, THIS THING'S FASTER THAN I THOUGHT! NO MATTER, I'LL GET HIM THIS TIME.

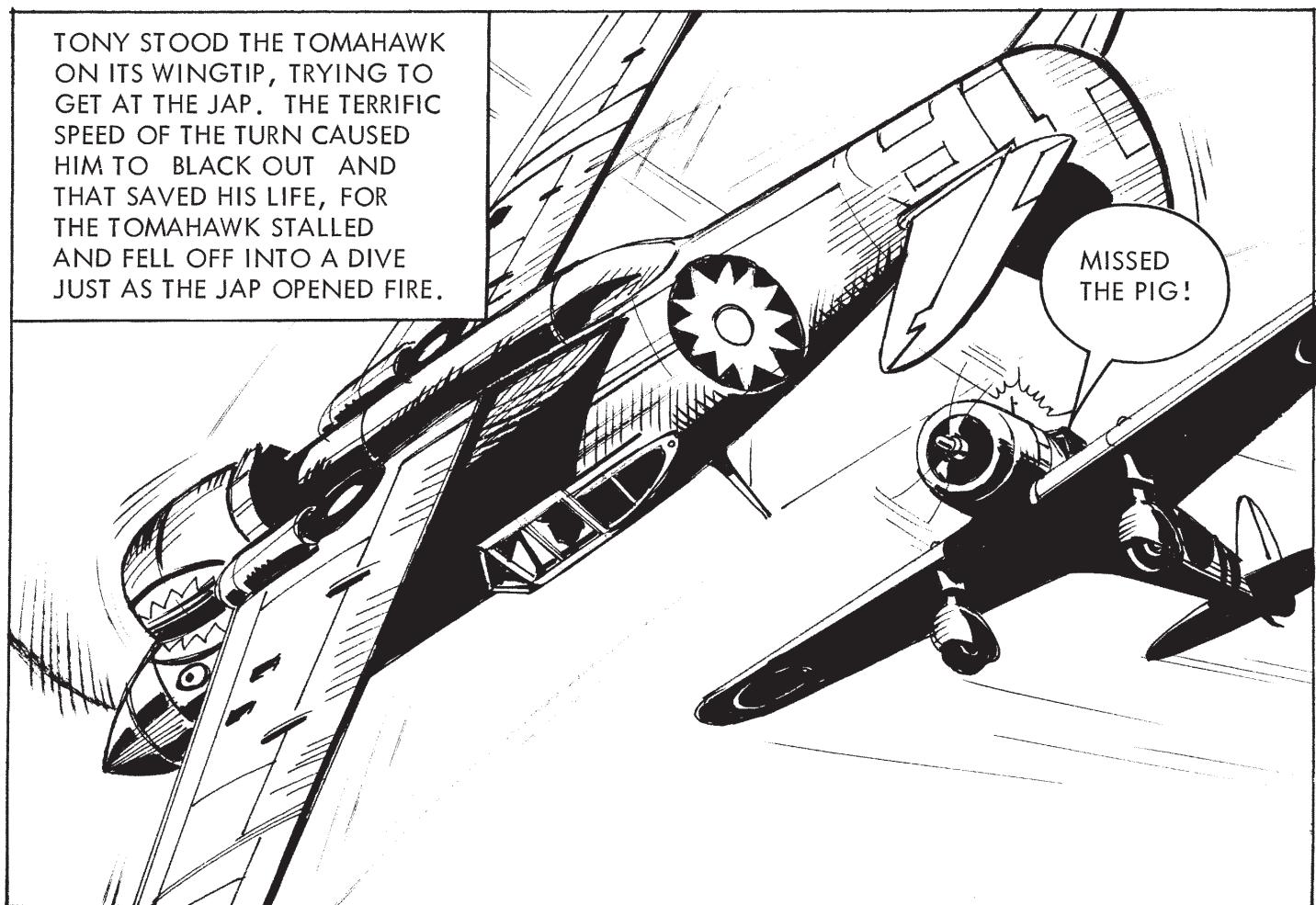


AS TRACERS SLASHED PAST HIS TAIL, THE JAP PILOT WENT INTO A TURN. THE INEXPERIENCED TONY COMMITTED THE FATAL ERROR OF FOLLOWING THE NIMBLE NAKAJIMA IN HIS HEAVIER TOMAHAWK.

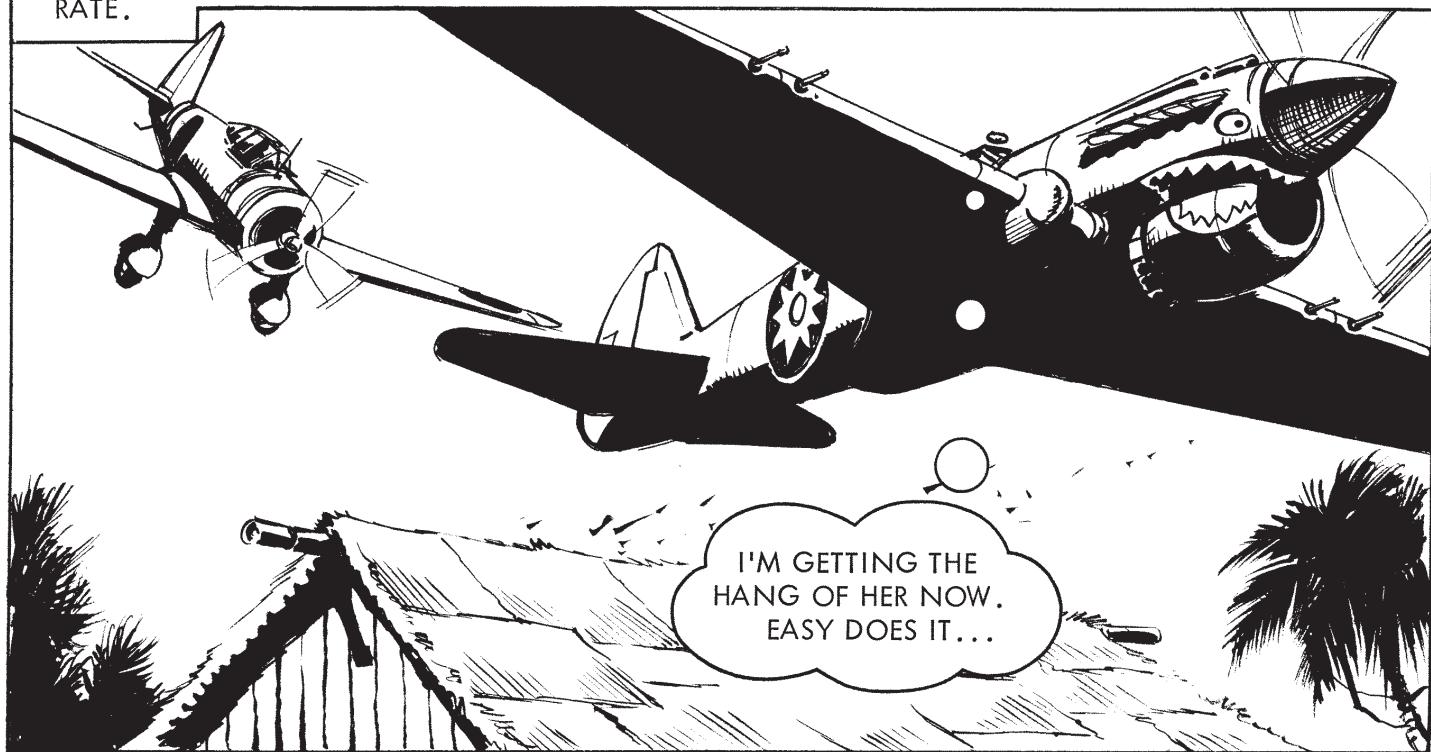


TONY STOOD THE TOMAHAWK ON ITS WINGTIP, TRYING TO GET AT THE JAP. THE TERRIFIC SPEED OF THE TURN CAUSED HIM TO BLACK OUT AND THAT SAVED HIS LIFE, FOR THE TOMAHAWK STALLED AND FELL OFF INTO A DIVE JUST AS THE JAP OPENED FIRE.

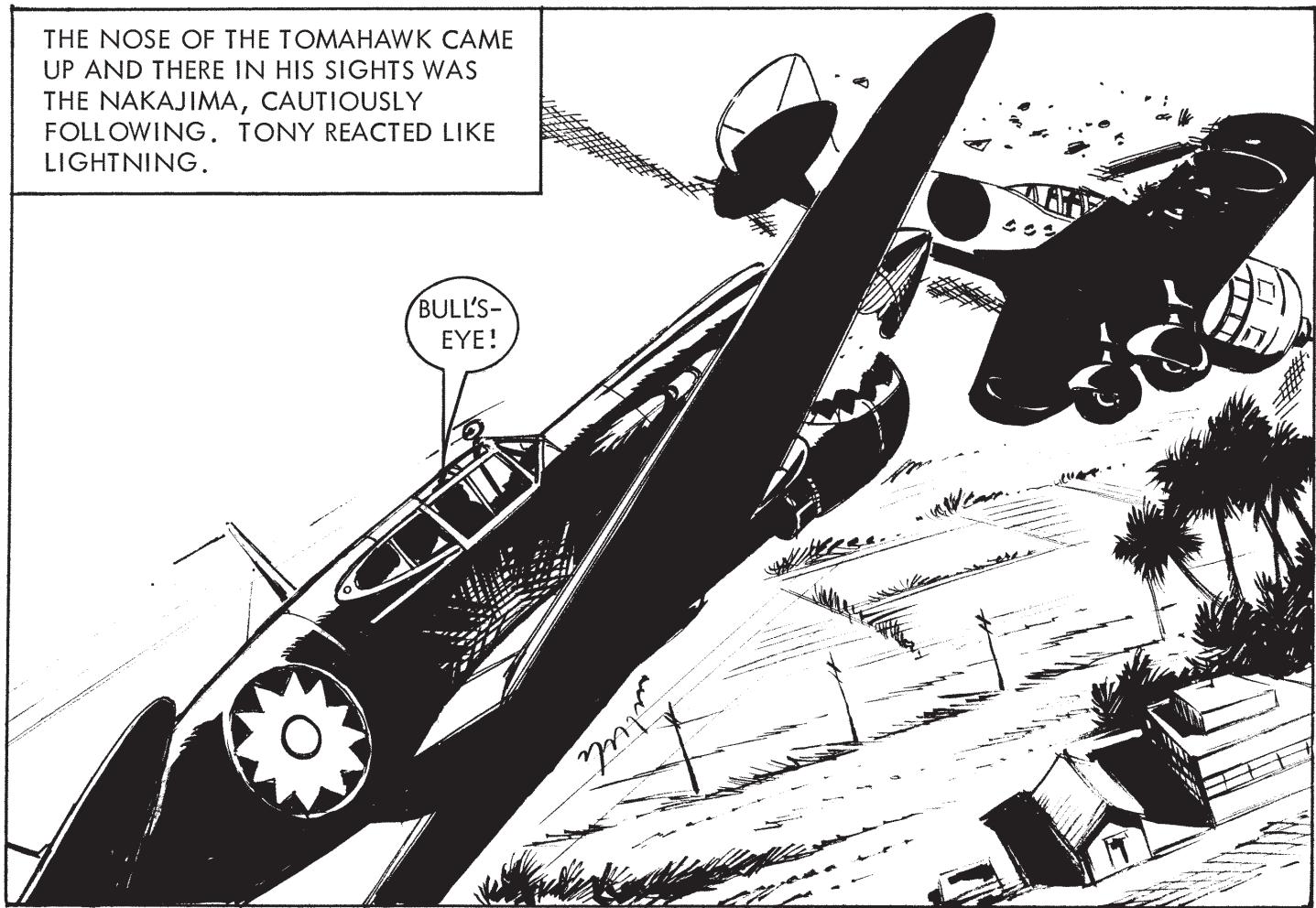
MISSSED
THE PIG!

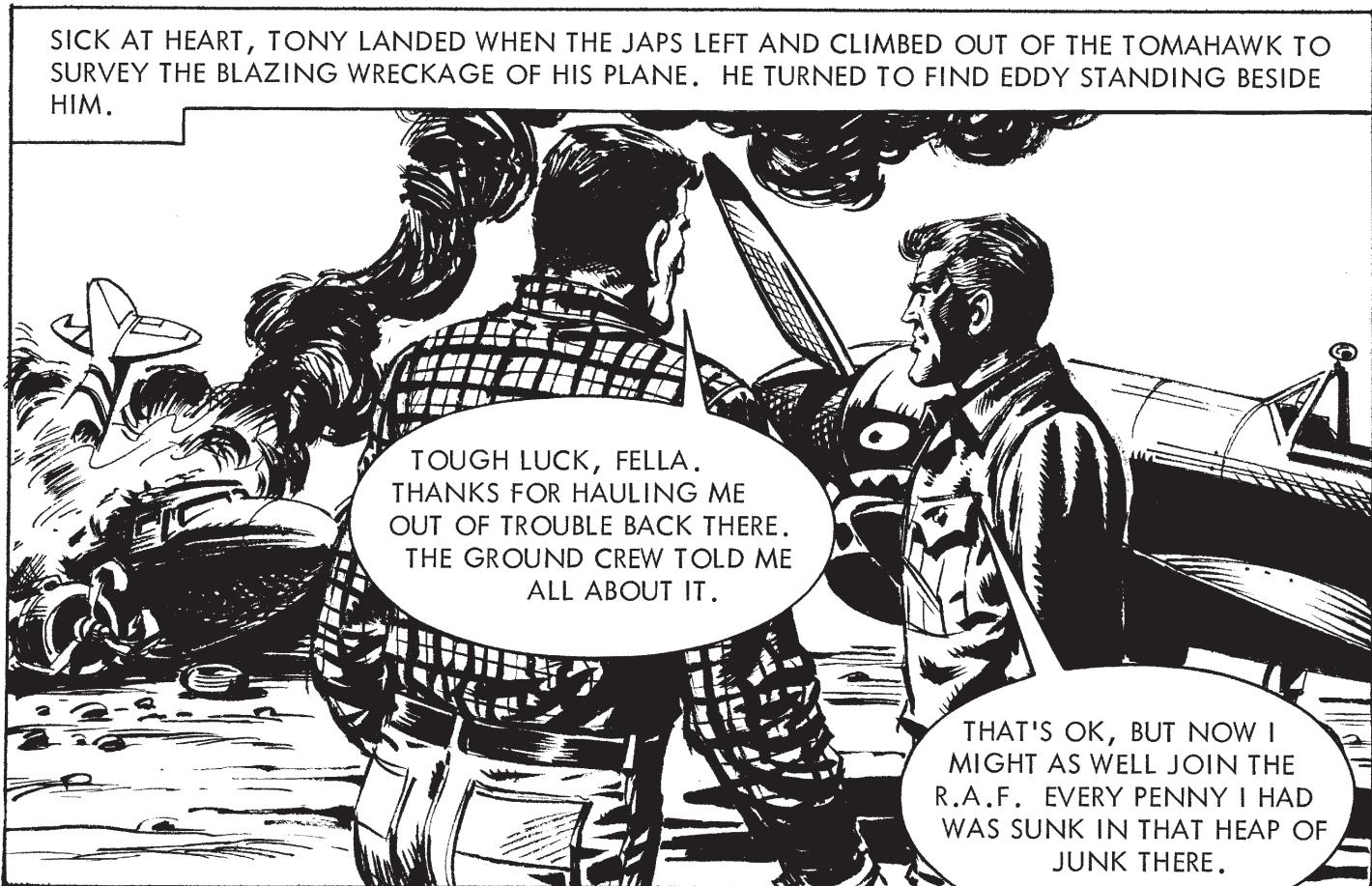


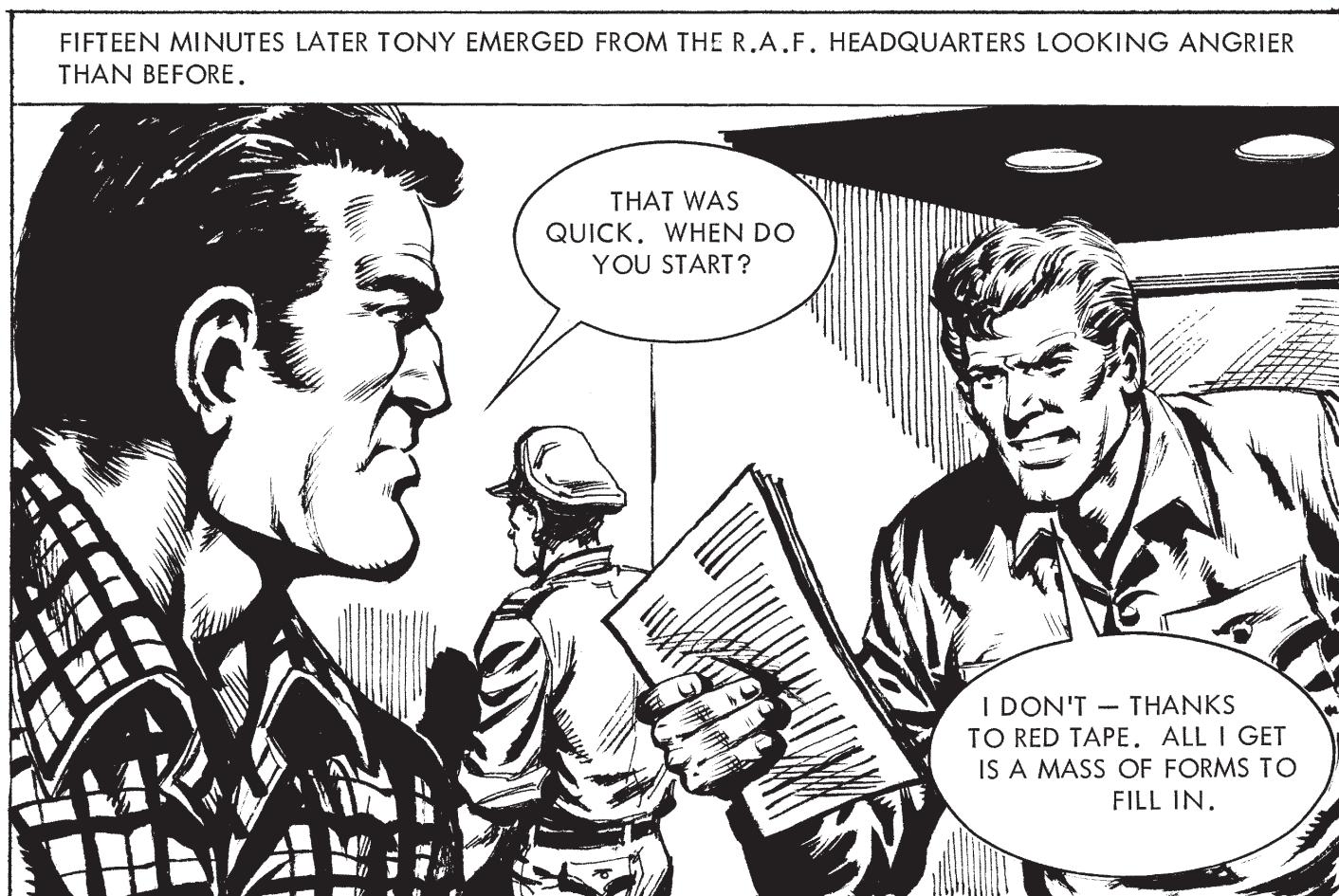
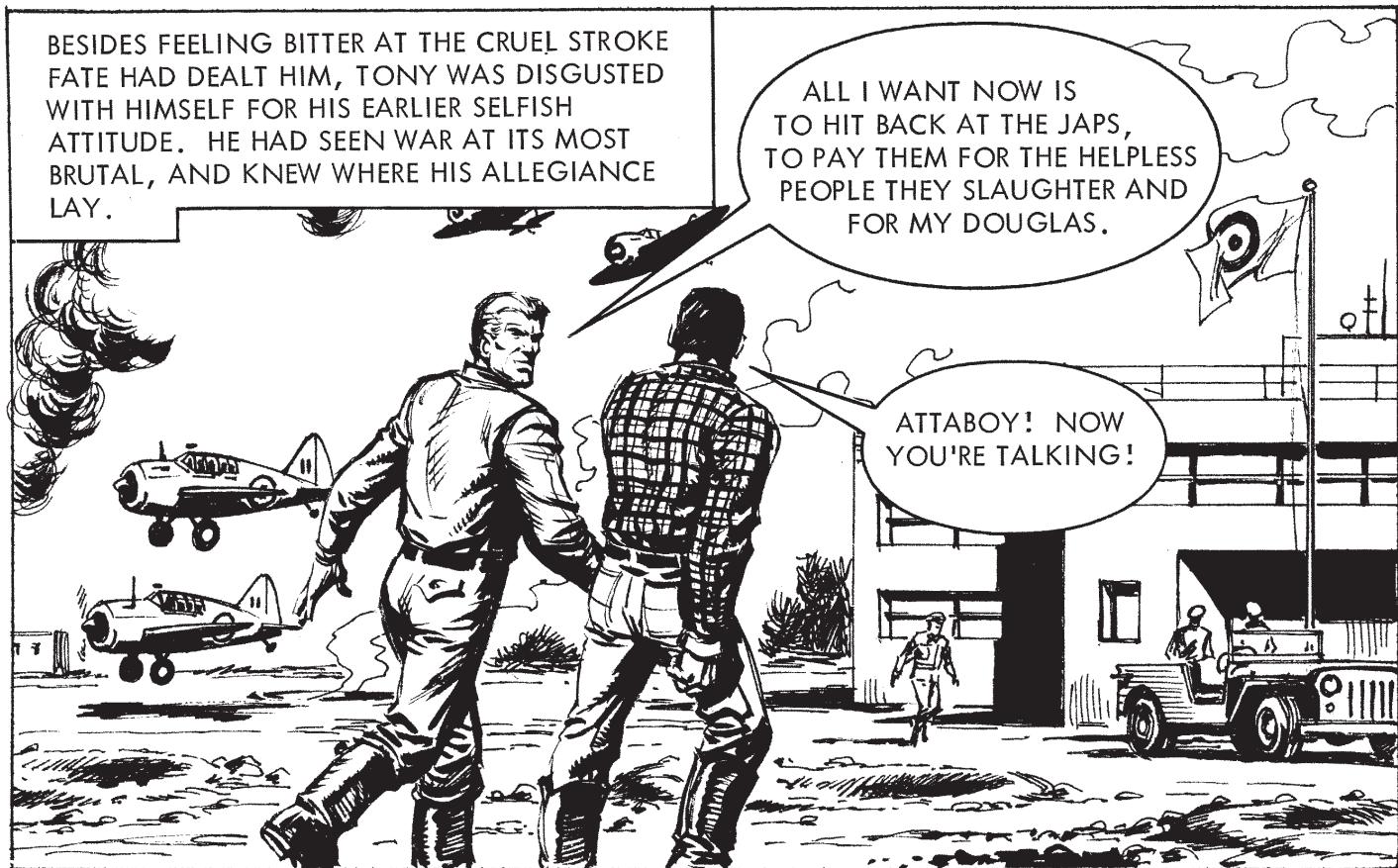
THE LIGHTLY-BUILT NAKAJIMA DARED NOT FOLLOW FOR FEAR OF PULLING ITS WINGS OFF. TONY'S VISION CLEARED AND HE SAW THE GROUND RUSHING TOWARDS HIM AT A TERRIFYING RATE.



THE NOSE OF THE TOMAHAWK CAME UP AND THERE IN HIS SIGHTS WAS THE NAKAJIMA, CAUTIOUSLY FOLLOWING. TONY REACTED LIKE LIGHTNING.







TONY HAD BEEN TOLD THAT HIS APPLICATION TO JOIN THE R.A.F. WOULD HAVE TO GO THROUGH 'CHANNELS' AND IT MIGHT BE WEEKS, EVEN MONTHS, BEFORE HE RECEIVED HIS ORDERS.

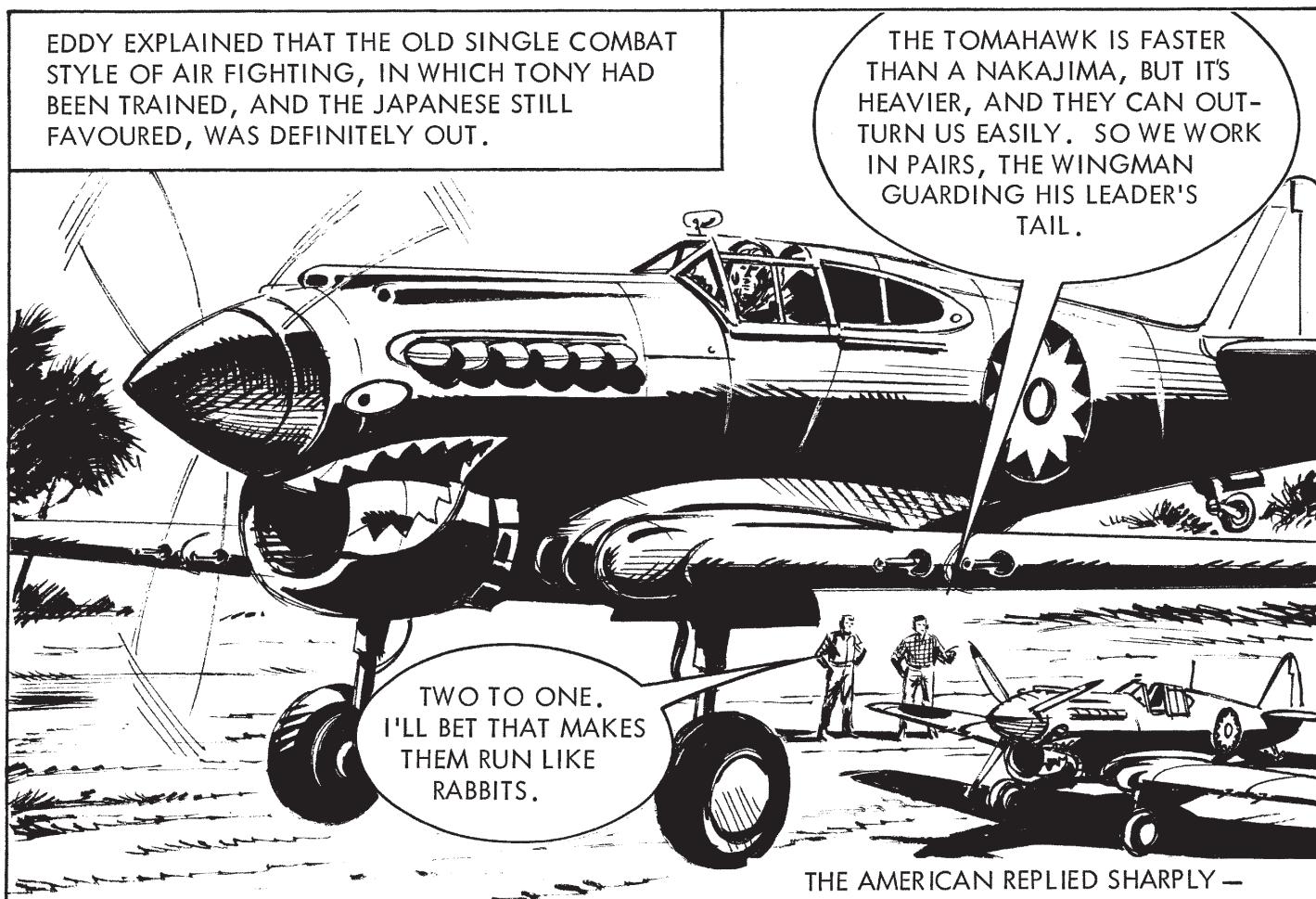
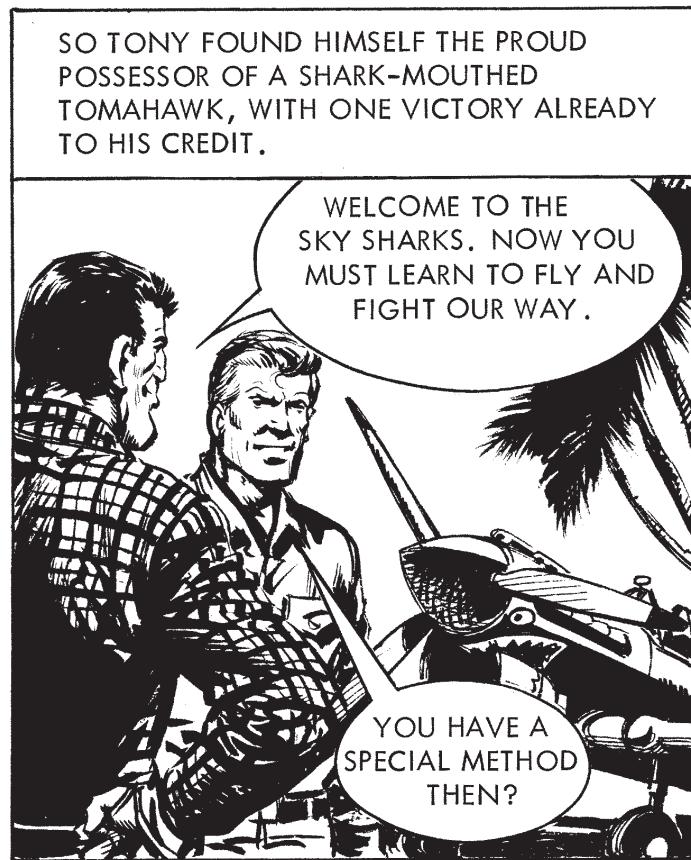
YOU CAN USE THE TIME MAKING YOUR WAY BACK TO ENGLAND.

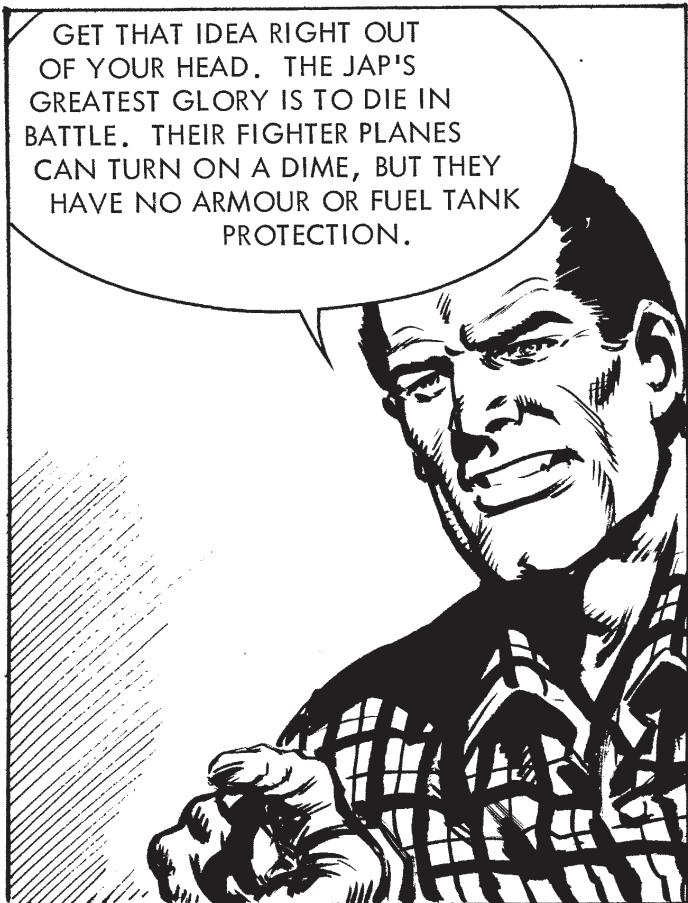
WHAT WITH? ALL I OWN NOW ARE THE CLOTHES ON MY BACK. I'M BROKE AND STRANDED.

EDDY THOUGHT FOR A MINUTE. HE HAD REFORMED HIS IDEAS ABOUT TONY.

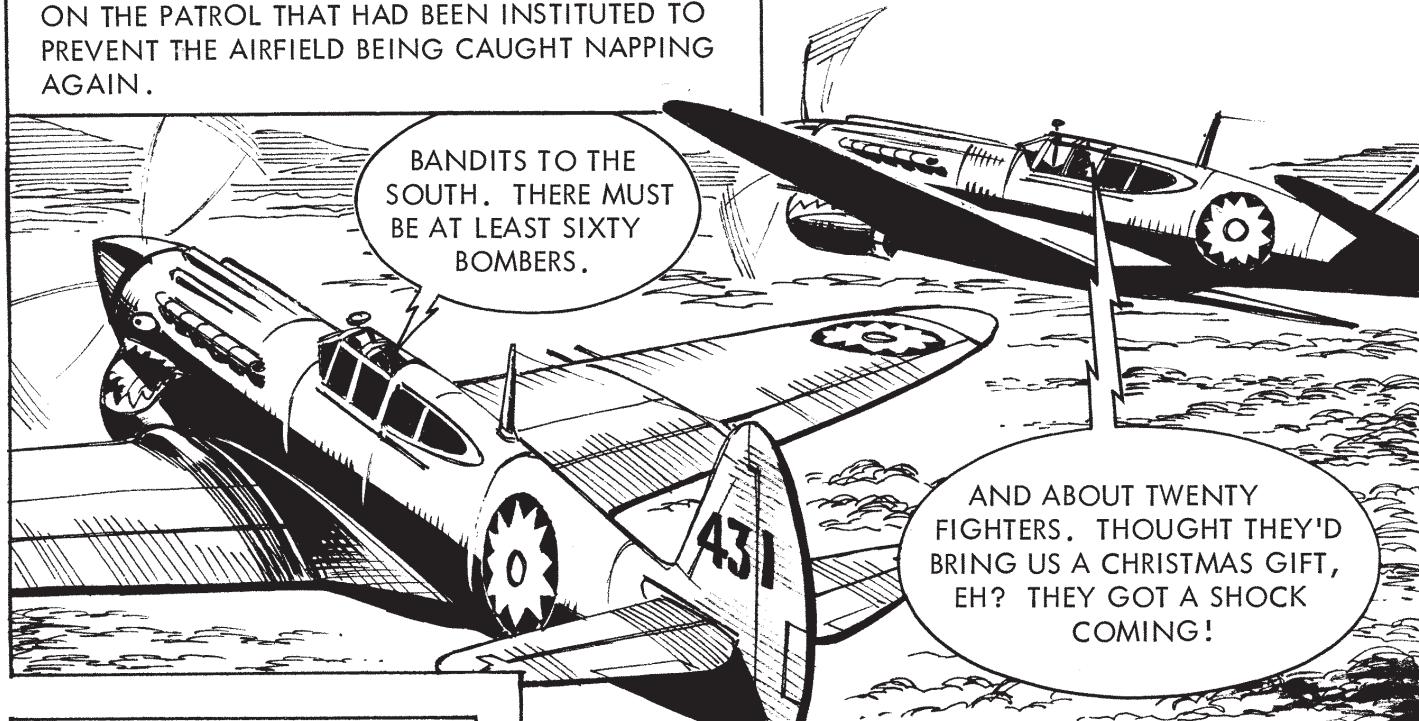
HOW WOULD YOU LIKE TO FLY WITH US? WE'VE GOT SOME SPARE CRATES. YOU COULD GET YOUR HAND IN FLYING MODERN PLANES AND GAIN SOME COMBAT EXPERIENCE. THEN YOU'LL BE ALL READY WHEN YOUR PEOPLE SEND FOR YOU.

DO YOU REALLY MEAN THAT, EDDY?

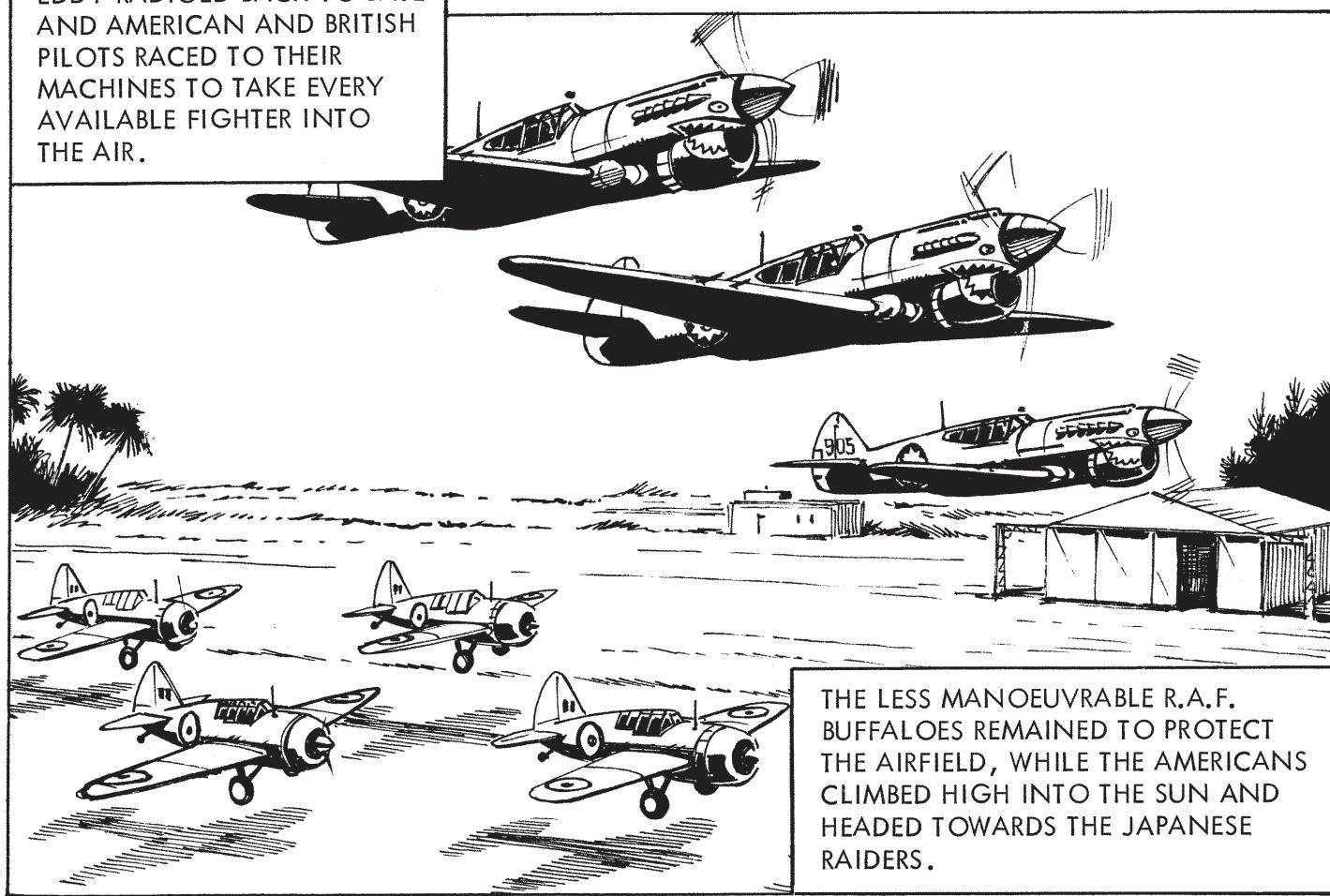




BUT TONY DID ENTERTAIN DOUBTS AS TO HOW THESE HIGH-SPRITED MEN WOULD BEHAVE IN COMBAT. HE GOT HIS ANSWER ON CHRISTMAS DAY. WITH EDDY, HE WAS TAKING HIS TURN ON THE PATROL THAT HAD BEEN INSTITUTED TO PREVENT THE AIRFIELD BEING CAUGHT NAPPING AGAIN.



EDDY RADIOED BACK TO BASE AND AMERICAN AND BRITISH PILOTS RACED TO THEIR MACHINES TO TAKE EVERY AVAILABLE FIGHTER INTO THE AIR.



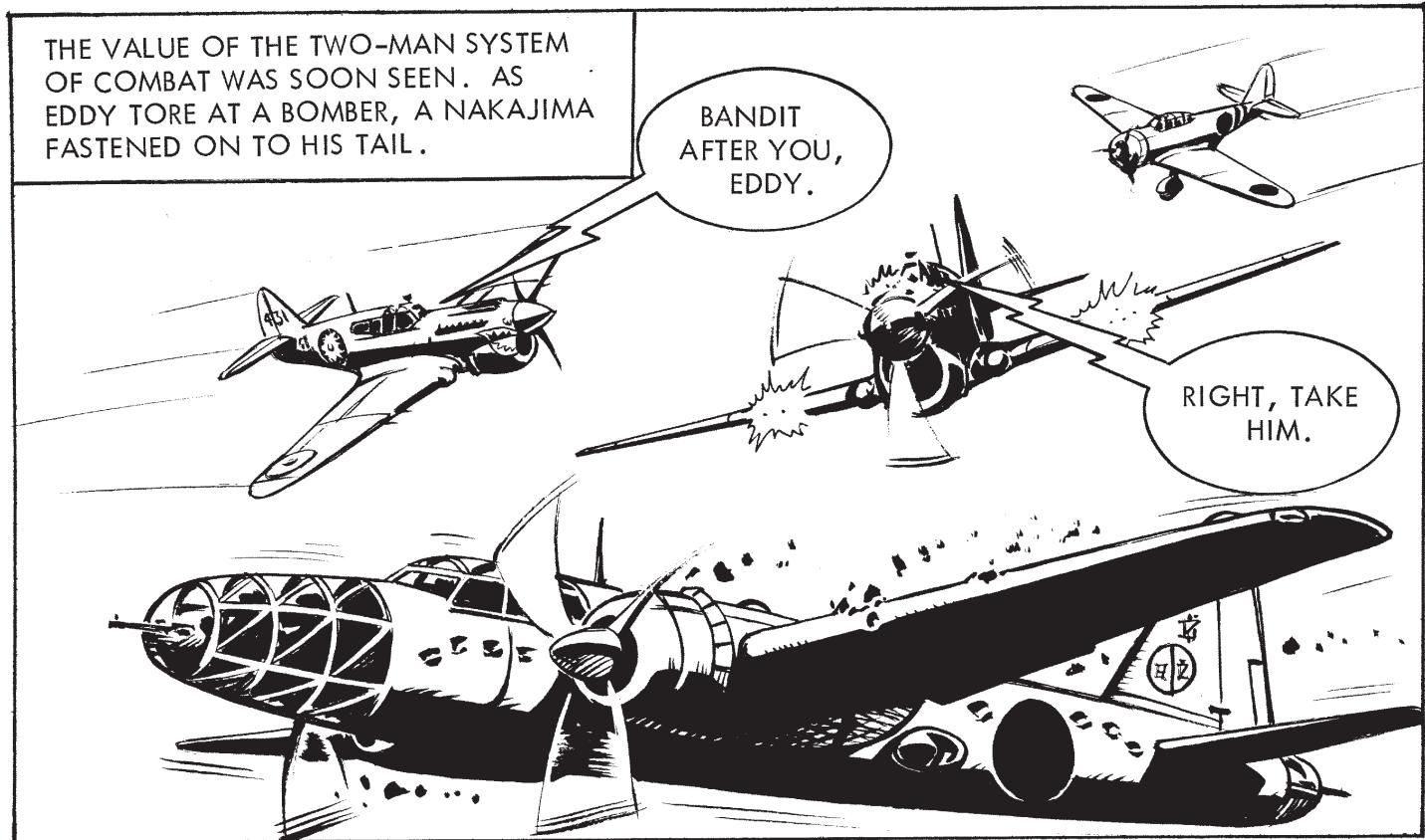
ONCE THEY'D MET UP WITH TONY AND EDDY, THE TOMAHAWKS HURTLED DOWN ON THE JAPANESE IN A SOLID PHALANX, SWEEPING ASIDE THE FIGHTERS AND HURLING THEMSELVES AT THE BOMBERS.



IN THAT FIRST THUNDERING PASS FIVE JAPANESE BOMBERS WENT SPINNING DOWN. REFORMING BELOW THE NOW SCATTERED FORMATION, THE YANKS USED THE SPEED THEY HAD BUILT UP TO SMASH BACK FROM BELOW.

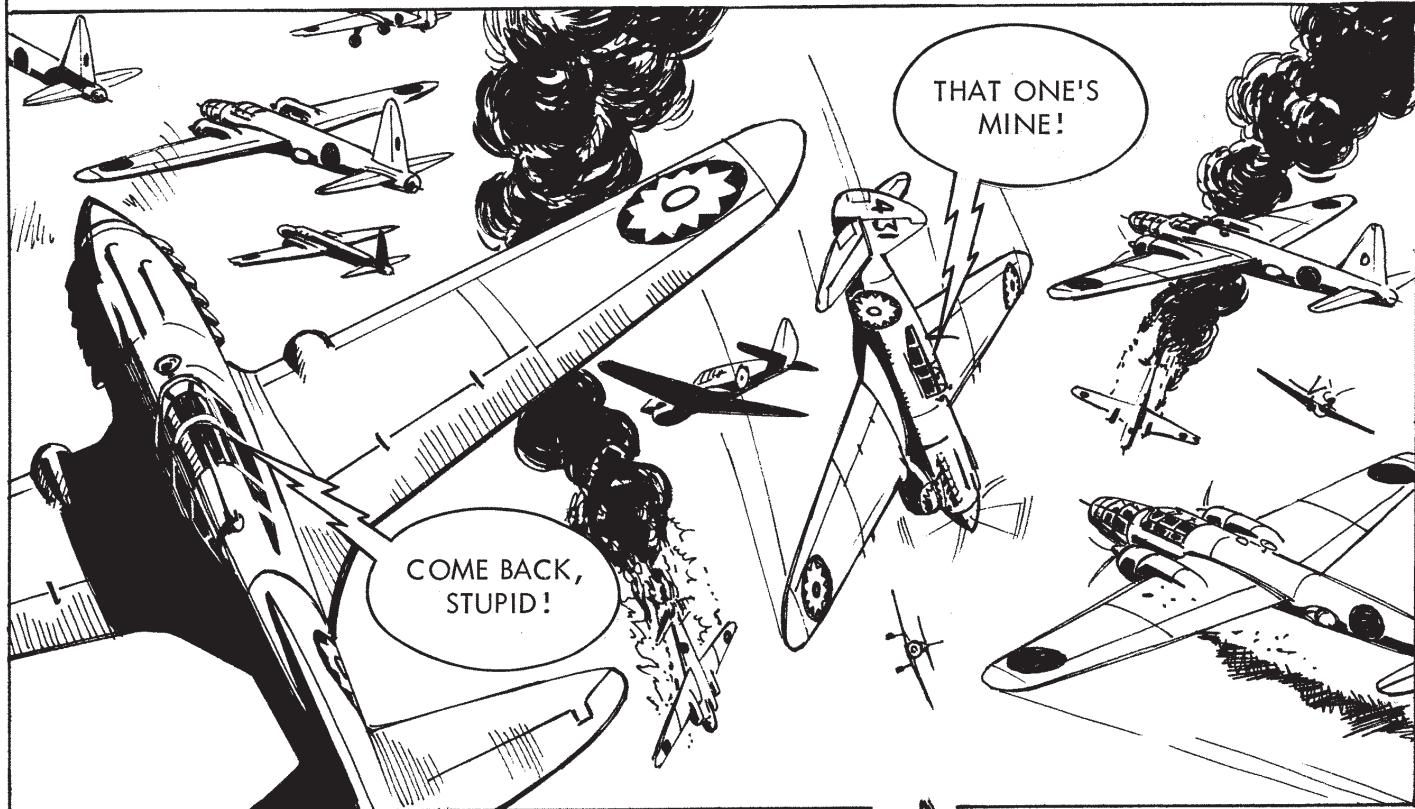
I'VE NEVER SEEN ANYTHING LIKE IT! THE ESCORT HAVE ONLY JUST WOKEN UP TO WHAT'S GOING ON.



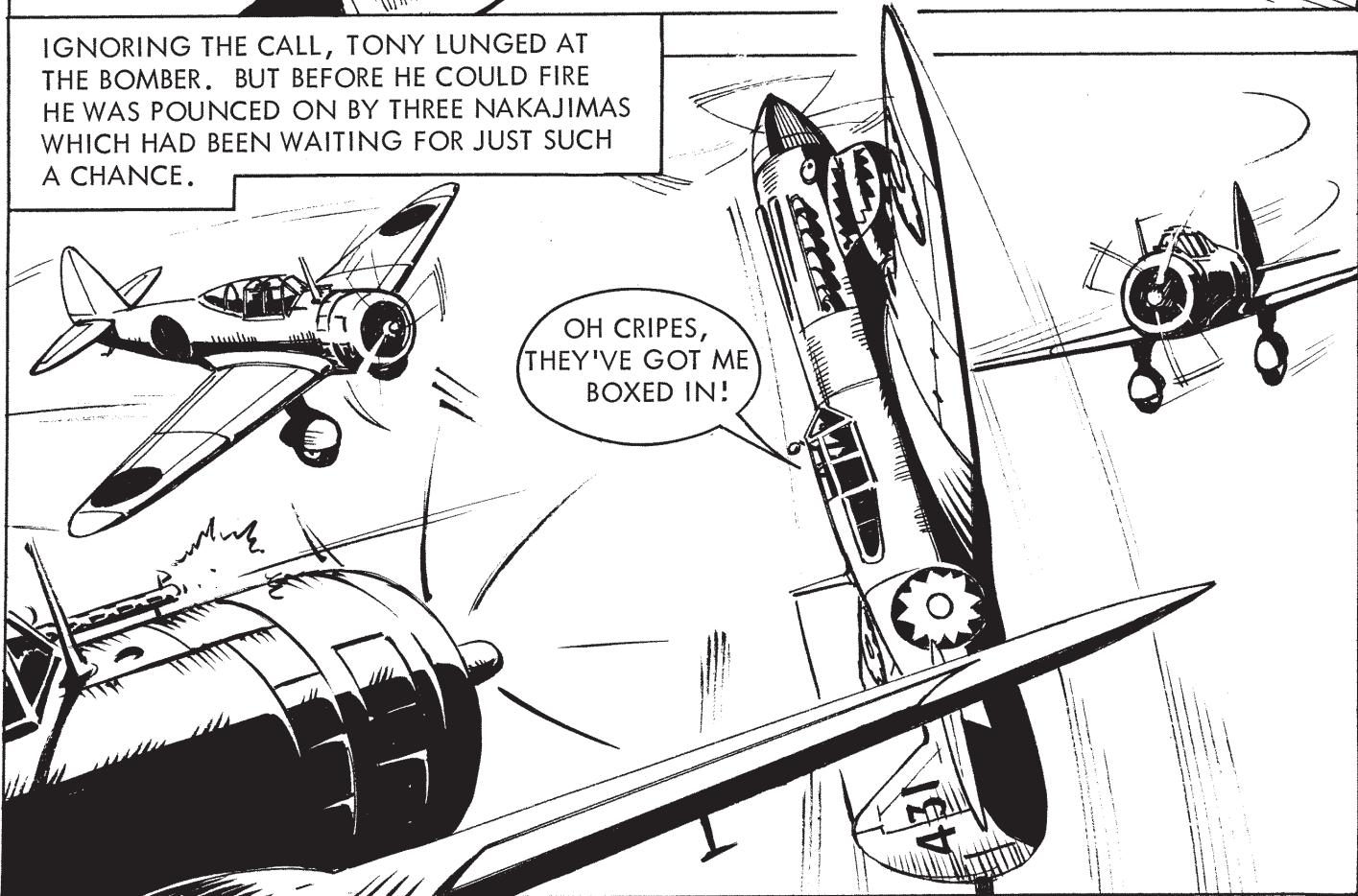




THE SAME TECHNIQUE WAS EMPLOYED AGAINST THE FRESH WAVE OF BOMBERS WITH THE SAME RESULTS. AFIRE WITH BATTLE FEVER, TONY WAS BORED WITH TAMELY FOLLOWING EDDY ABOUT. HE SPOTTED A STRAGGLING BOMBER...



IGNORING THE CALL, TONY LUNGED AT THE BOMBER. BUT BEFORE HE COULD FIRE HE WAS POUNCED ON BY THREE NAKAJIMAS WHICH HAD BEEN WAITING FOR JUST SUCH A CHANCE.



AND REGARDLESS WHICH WAY HE TURNED,
A JAP WAS WAITING.



THEN FOR THE SECOND TIME THAT WEEK, EDDY
SAVED TONY'S LIFE.



BACK AT BASE, TONY RUEFULLY SURVEYED
THE FRESH BULLET HOLES IN HIS TOMAHAWK
AS EDDY APPEARED.

YOU'RE THE GUY WHO WAS
BEEFING ABOUT DISCIPLINE,
YET YOU GO HARING OFF ON
YOUR OWN. NOW YOU SEE
WHAT IT GOT YOU. JERKS LIKE
YOU ARE A DIME A DOZEN,
BUT PLANES COST MONEY.

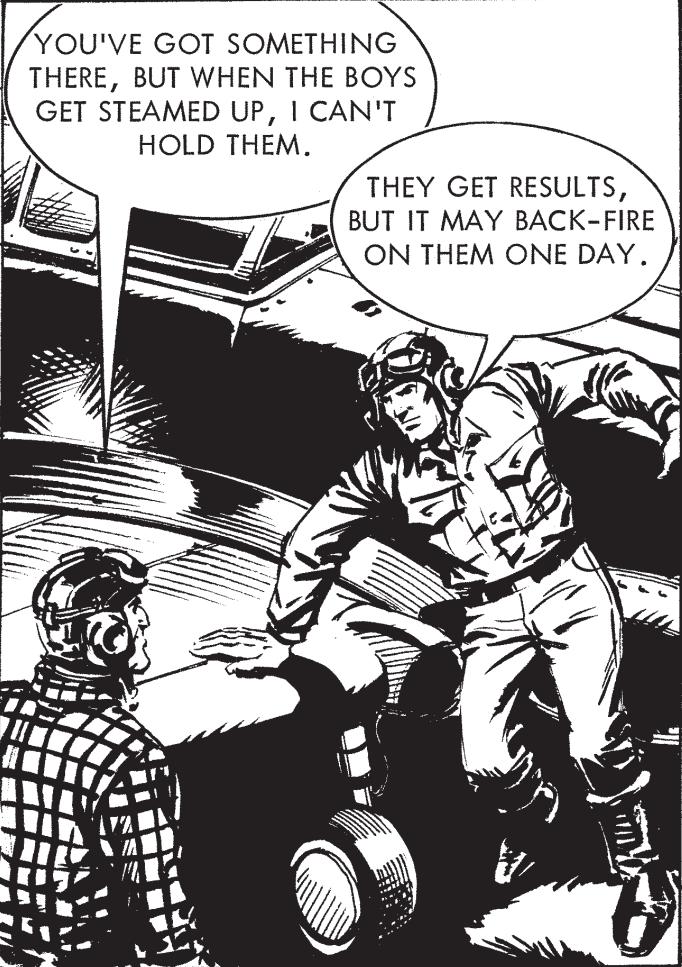


EDDY SMILED. HE LIKED A MAN WHO WOULD ADMIT HIS FAULTS WITHOUT MAKING EXCUSES.



YOU'VE LEARNED YOUR LESSON I GUESS, SO WE'LL LET YOU OFF THIS TIME. BUT NOW YOU SEE THE IMPORTANCE OF TEAM WORK.

AND HOW! BUT ON THAT POINT, IF YOUR CHAPS HELD TOGETHER MORE AFTER THE FIRST ATTACK, THEY'D GET A LOT MORE BOMBERS. I NOTICED THAT JAPS HOLD FORMATIONS TO THE LAST GASP.



SO, AFTER THEIR TROUNCING, THE JAPS STAYED AWAY. THE FRUITLESS PATROLLING, COUPLED WITH THE STEAMY HEAT, FRAYED THE PILOTS' NERVES.

THEY GET RESULTS, BUT IT MAY BACK-FIRE ON THEM ONE DAY.

NUTS! WHY DON'T WE FIND OURSELVES SOME JAPS, INSTEAD OF SITTING AROUND.



THAT MIGHT BE QUITE AN IDEA...

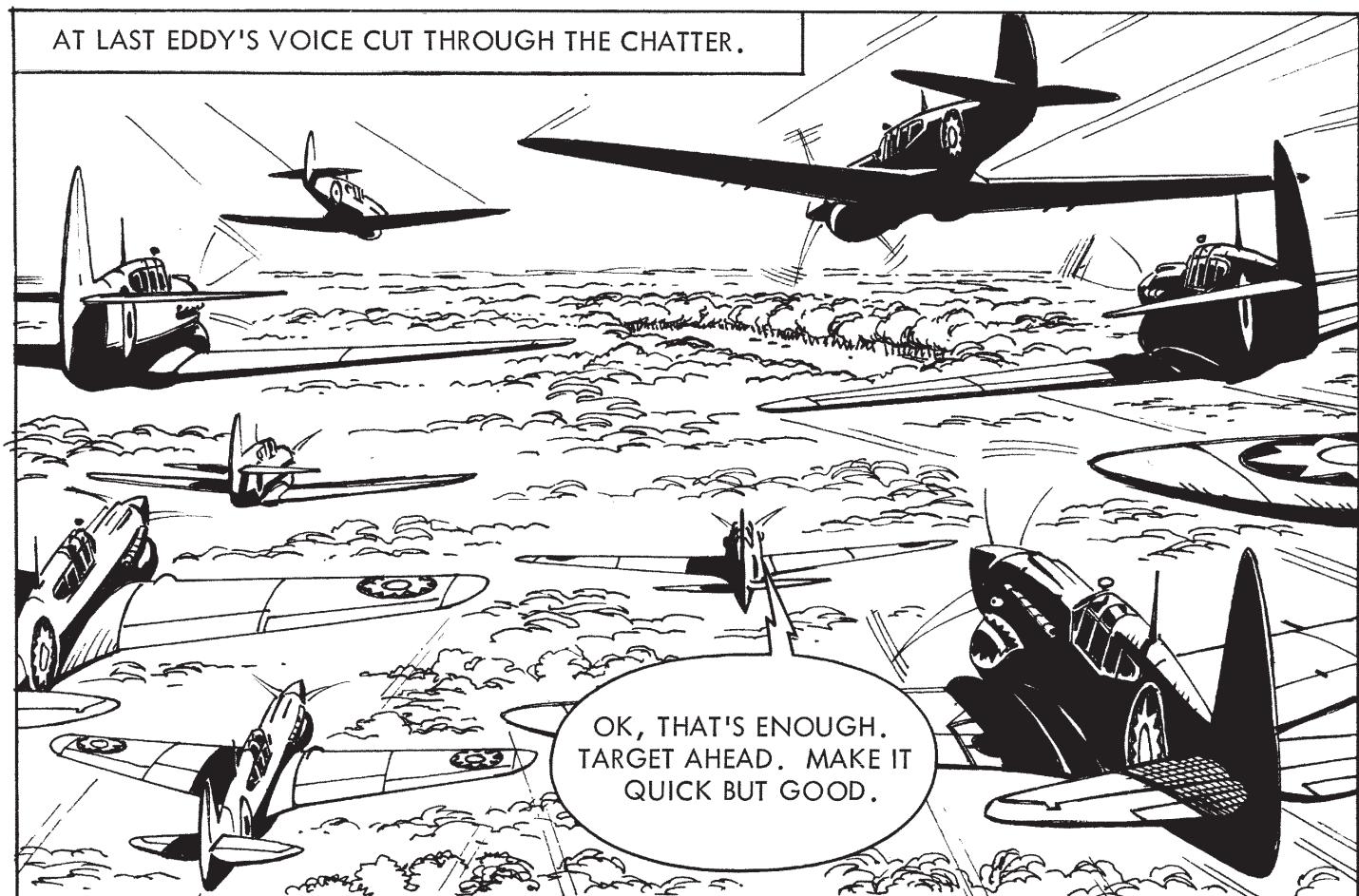
THE AIR OF BOREDOM VANISHED LIKE MAGIC. ALL EYES TURNED EAGERLY TOWARDS EDDY.

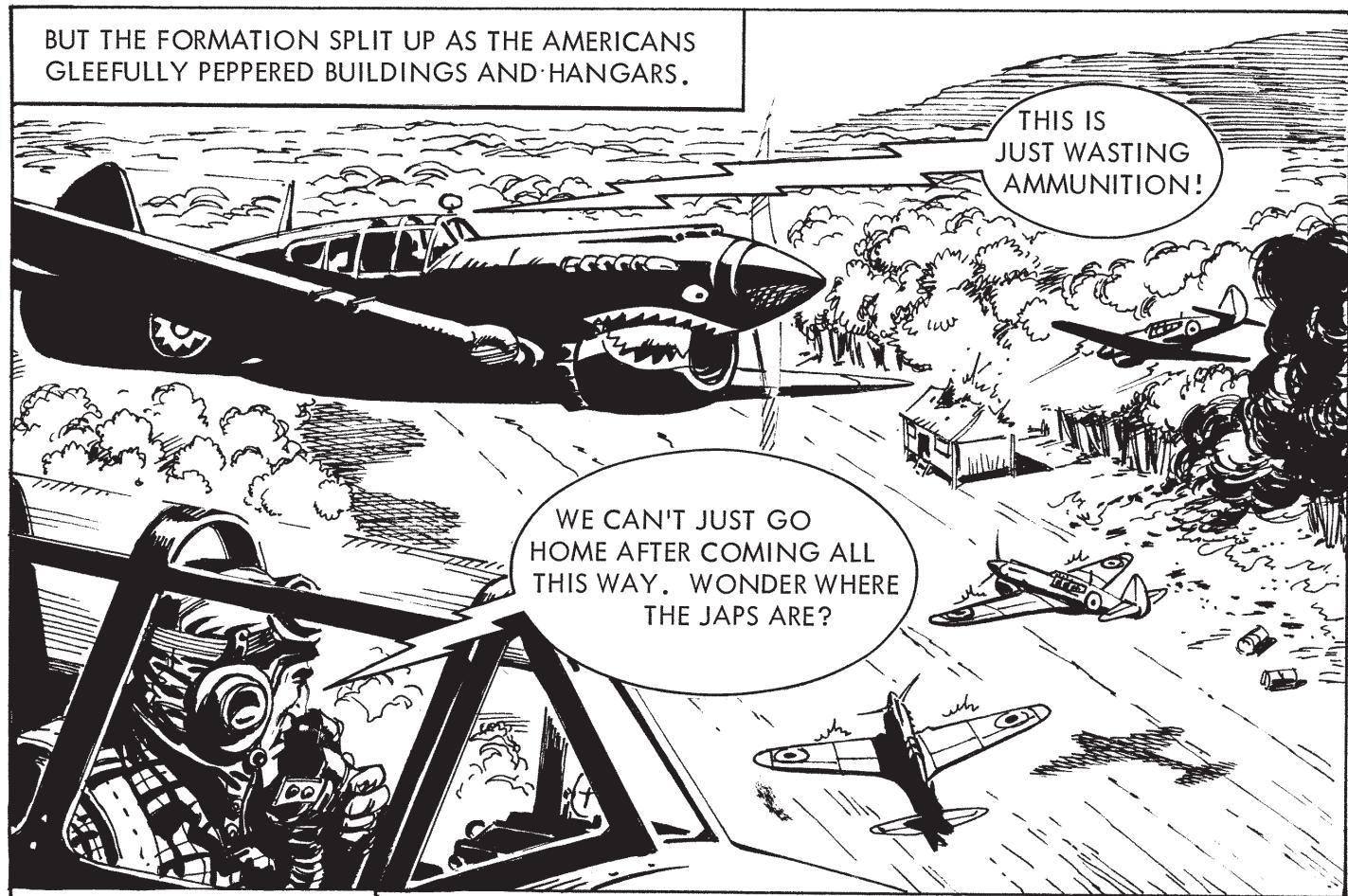


THEY ALL RUSHED TO THE HUT TO SCRUTINISE THE MAP AND SAW THAT A JAP AIRFIELD IN THAILAND WAS WITHIN RANGE OF THE TOMAHAWKS. EXCITEMENT MOUNTED.

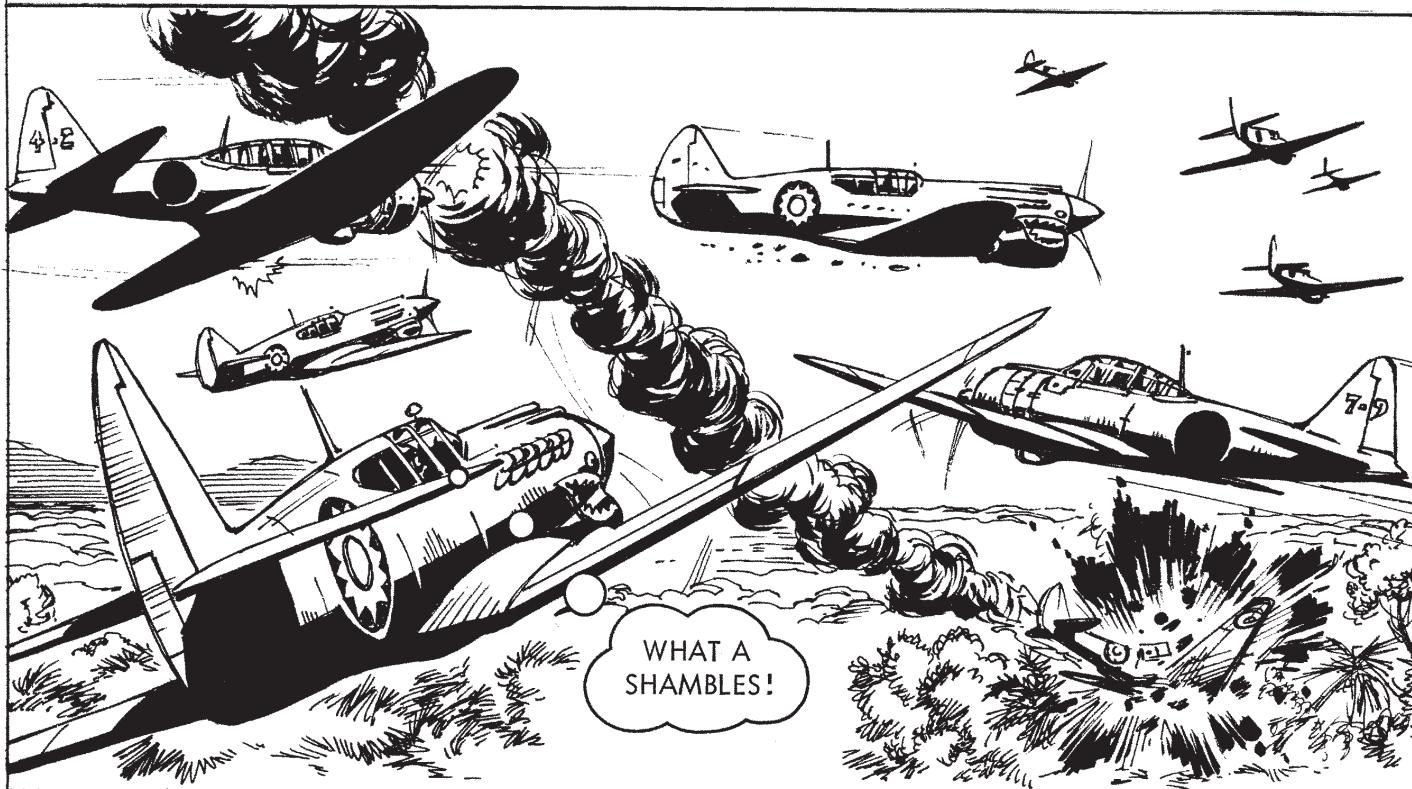








FRANTICALLY THE AMERICANS TRIED TO GAIN HEIGHT, BUT THE DEADLY JAP FIGHTERS SLASHED AT THEM AS THEY FLED ACROSS THE THICK JUNGLE.



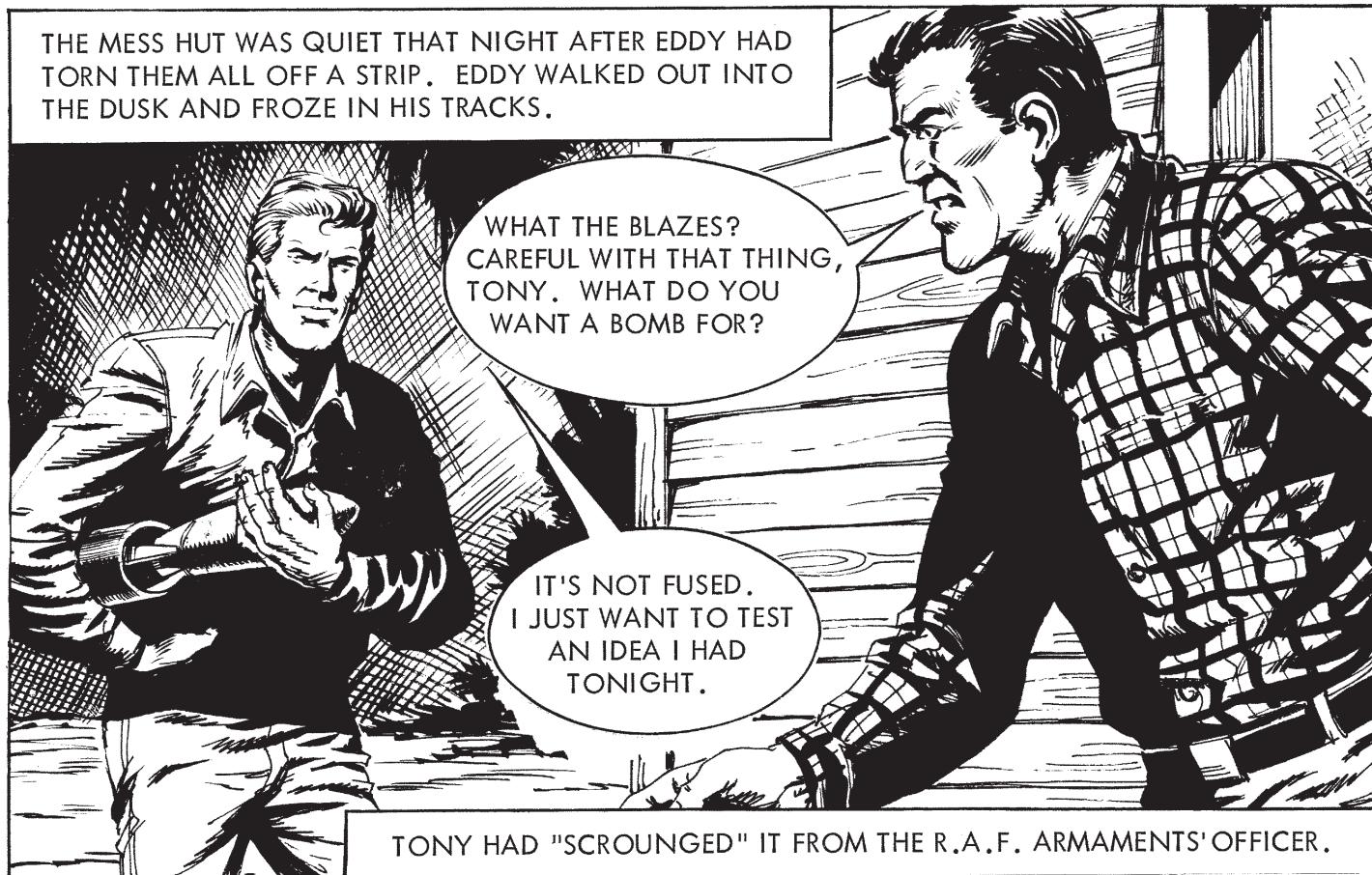
EVADING THE JAPS, THE SHAKEN YANKS RETURNED TO BASE. FOUR DID NOT COME BACK. BITTERNESS AND ANGER WELLED UP.

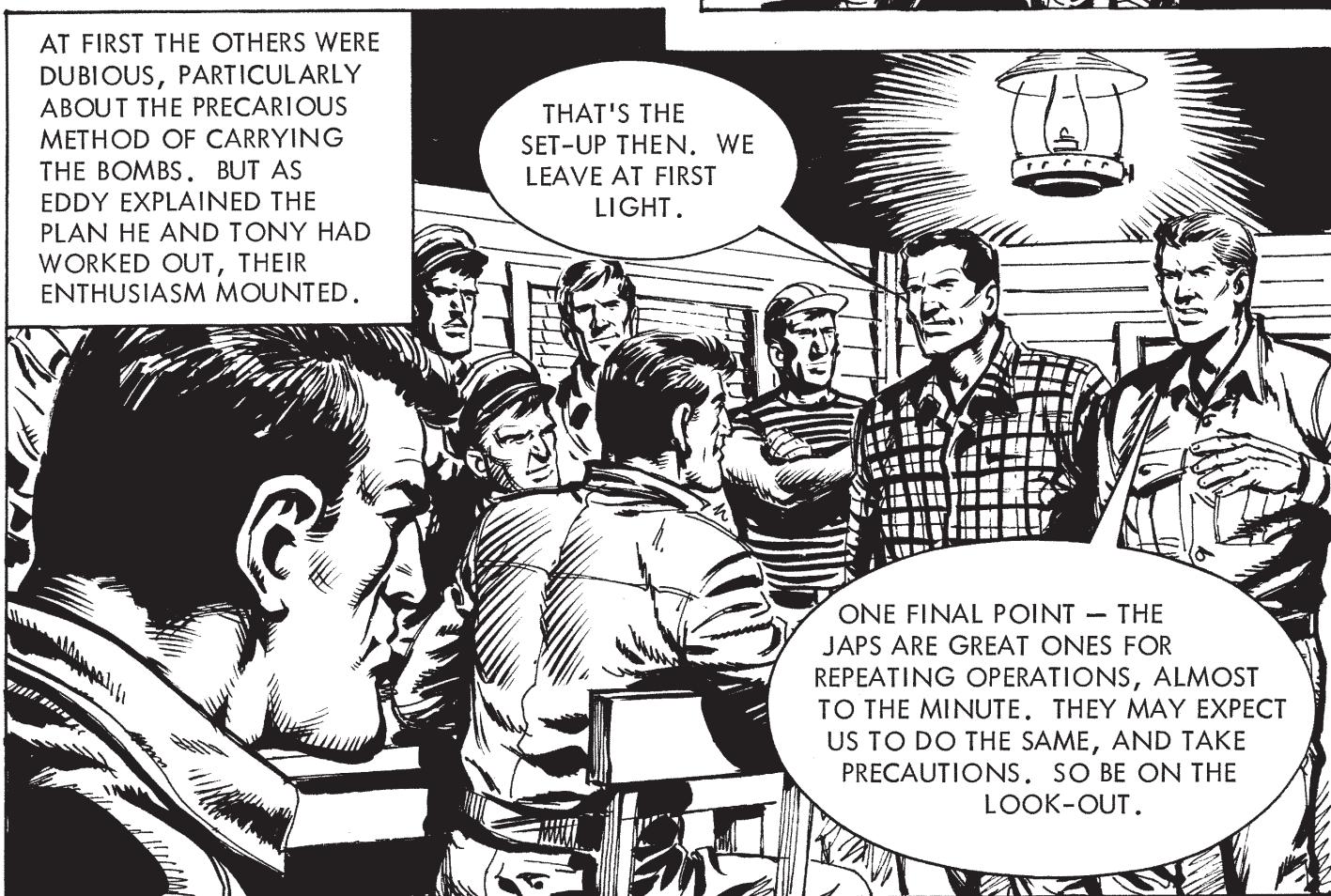
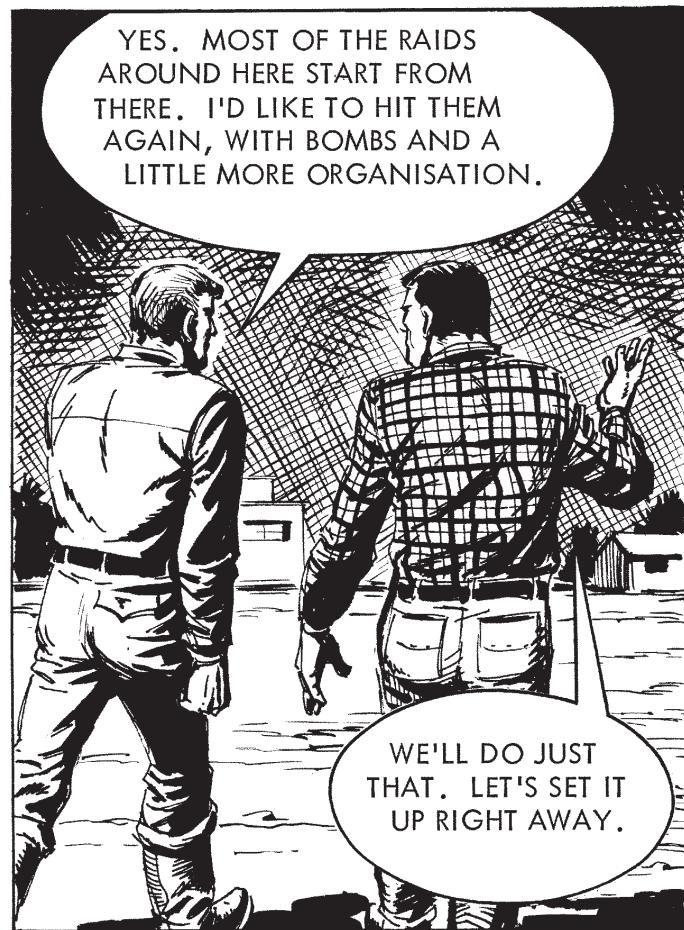
SO MUCH FOR YOUR SCREWBALL IDEA, HOLDEN!

NOW, WAIT A MINUTE. HOW WAS I TO KNOW THEY'D BE WAITING FOR US?

BECAUSE THEY KNEW WE WERE COMING.







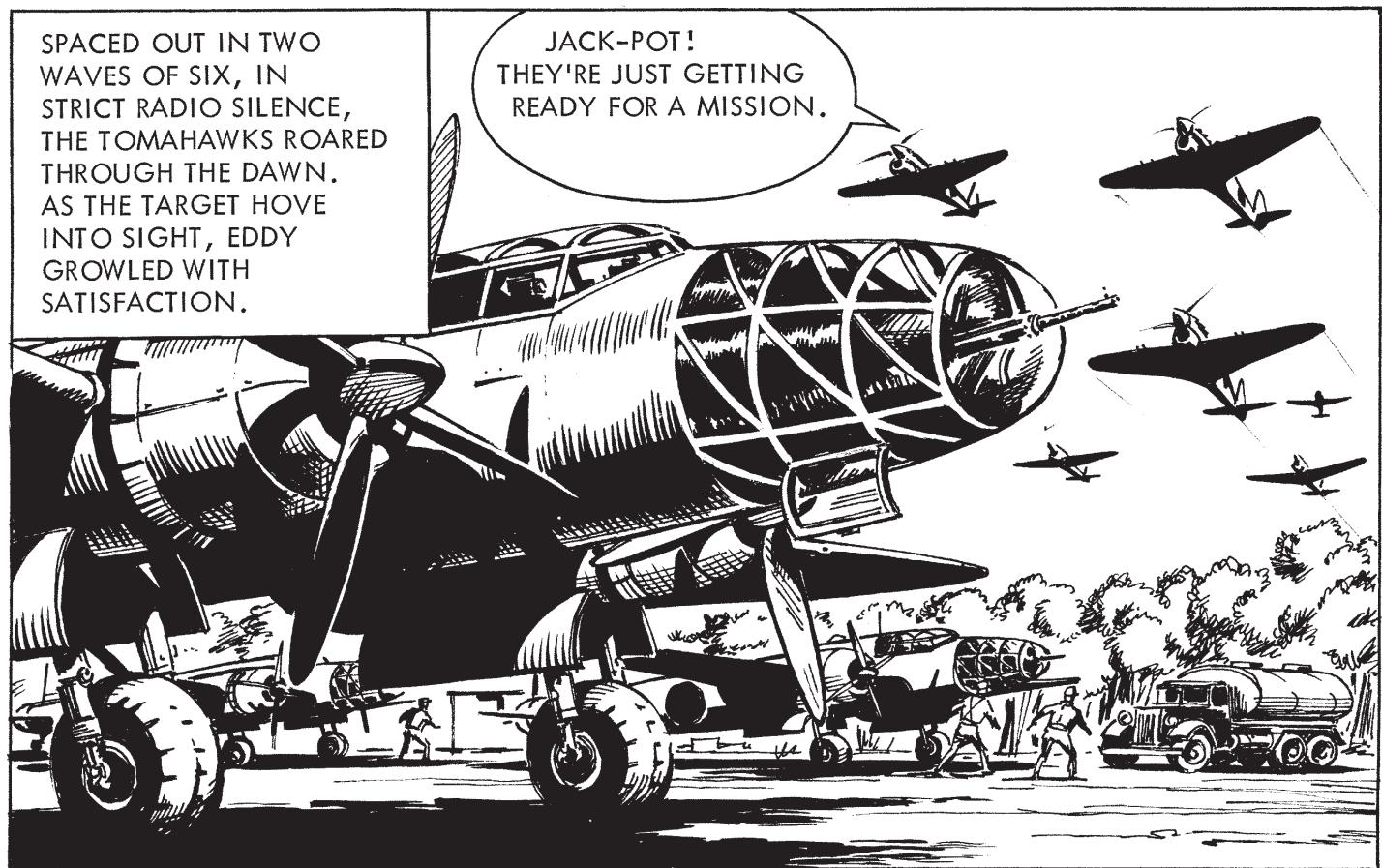
DAWN WAS JUST MELLLOWING THE EASTERN SKY WHEN THE AMERICANS GATHERED FOR A FINAL BRIEFING BEFORE TAKE-OFF NEXT MORNING.

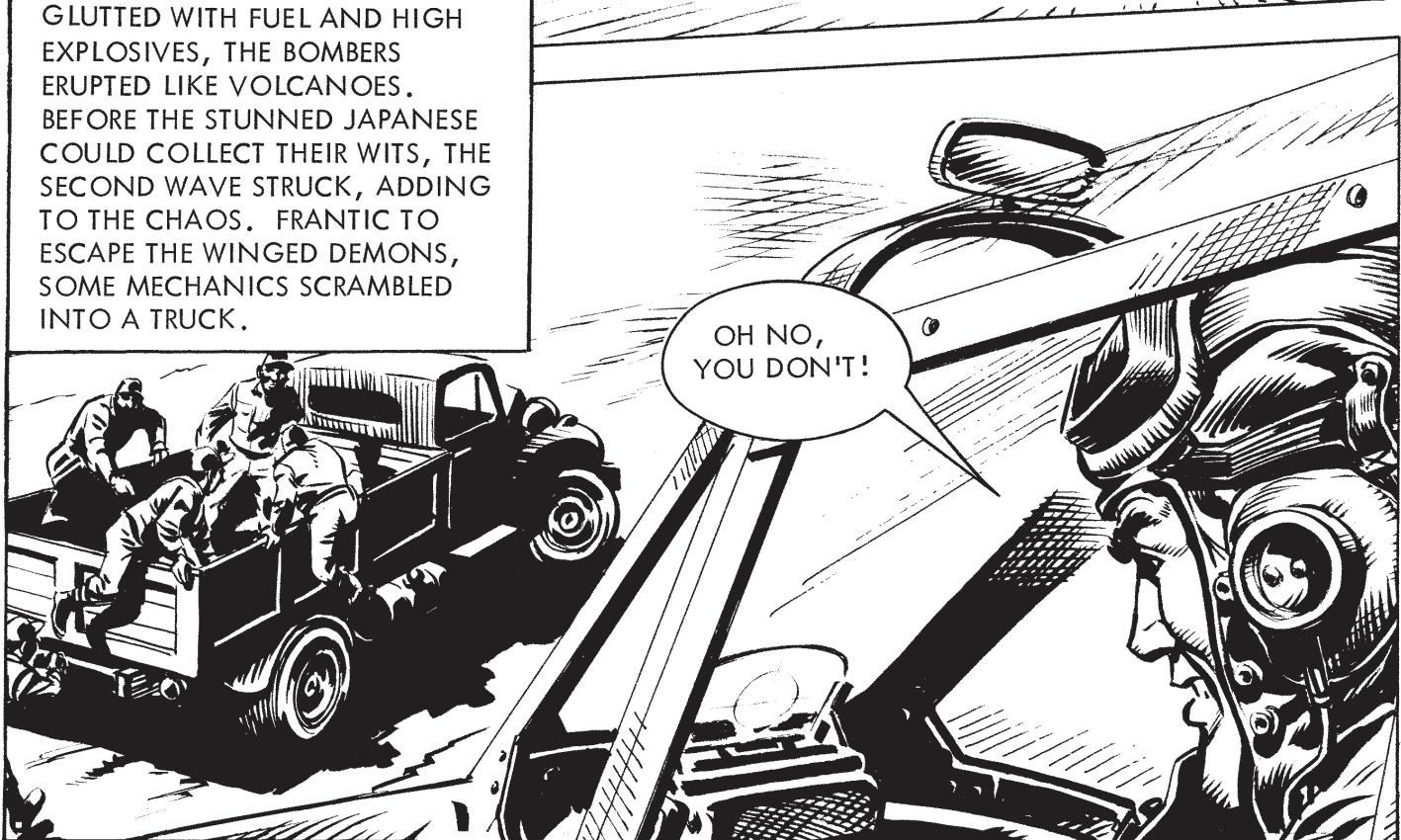
REMEMBER NOW, IF ONE OF YOU MONKEYS SO MUCH AS SNEEZES INTO THE RADIO I'LL PERSONALLY BLAST HIM.
OK, LET'S GO.

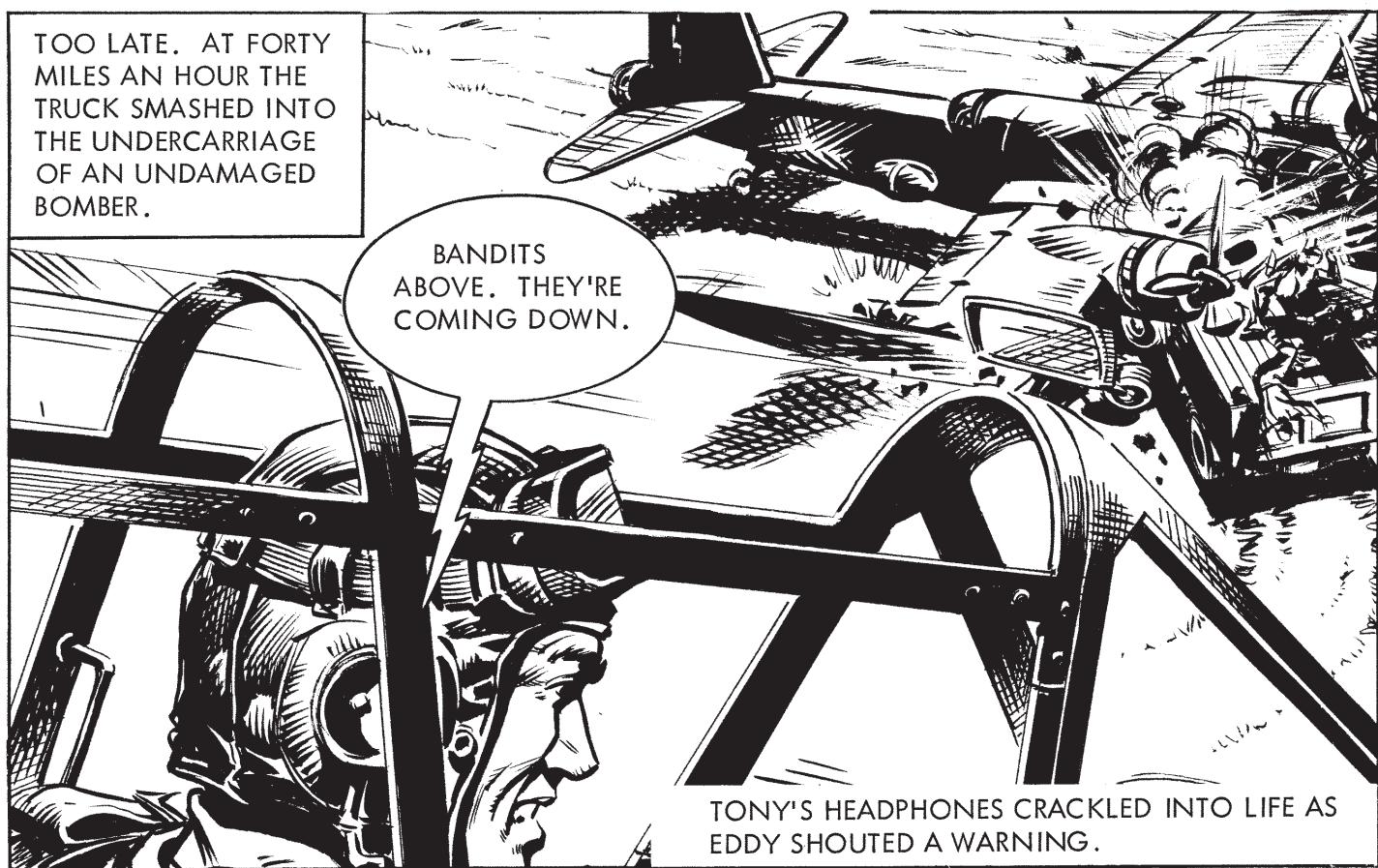
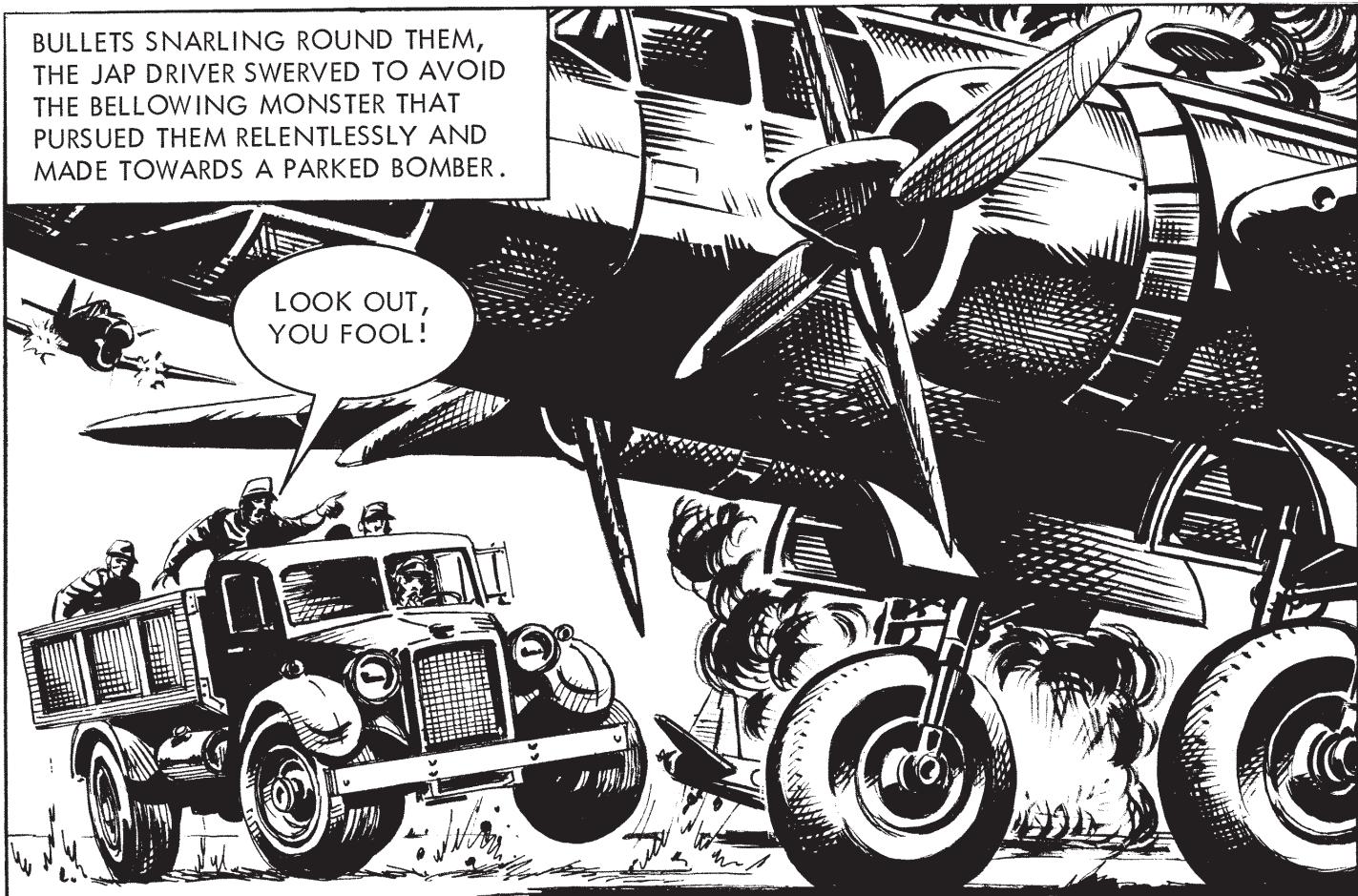


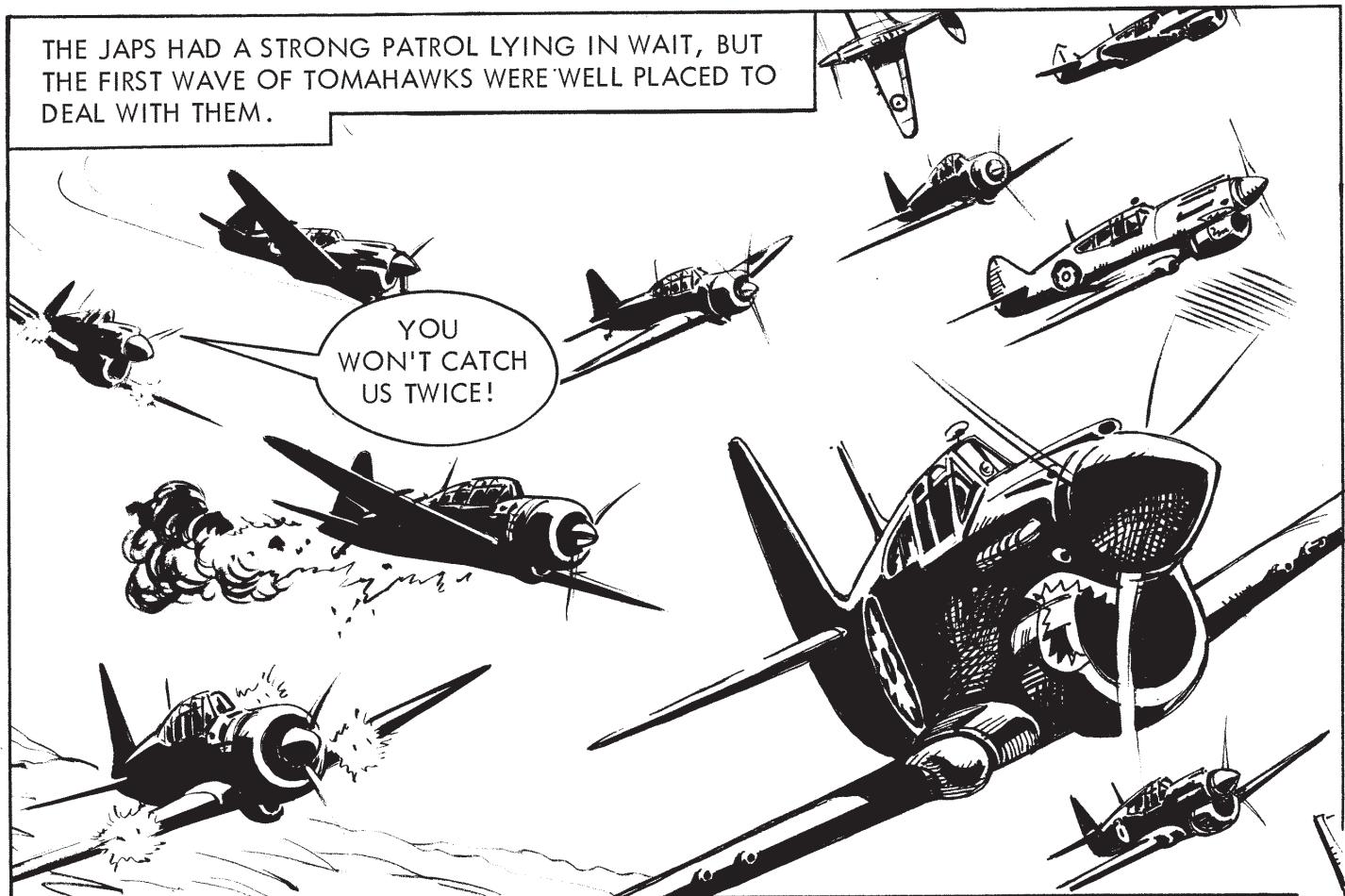
SPACED OUT IN TWO WAVES OF SIX, IN STRICT RADIO SILENCE, THE TOMAHAWKS ROARED THROUGH THE DAWN. AS THE TARGET HOVED INTO SIGHT, EDDY GROWLED WITH SATISFACTION.

JACK-POT!
THEY'RE JUST GETTING READY FOR A MISSION.

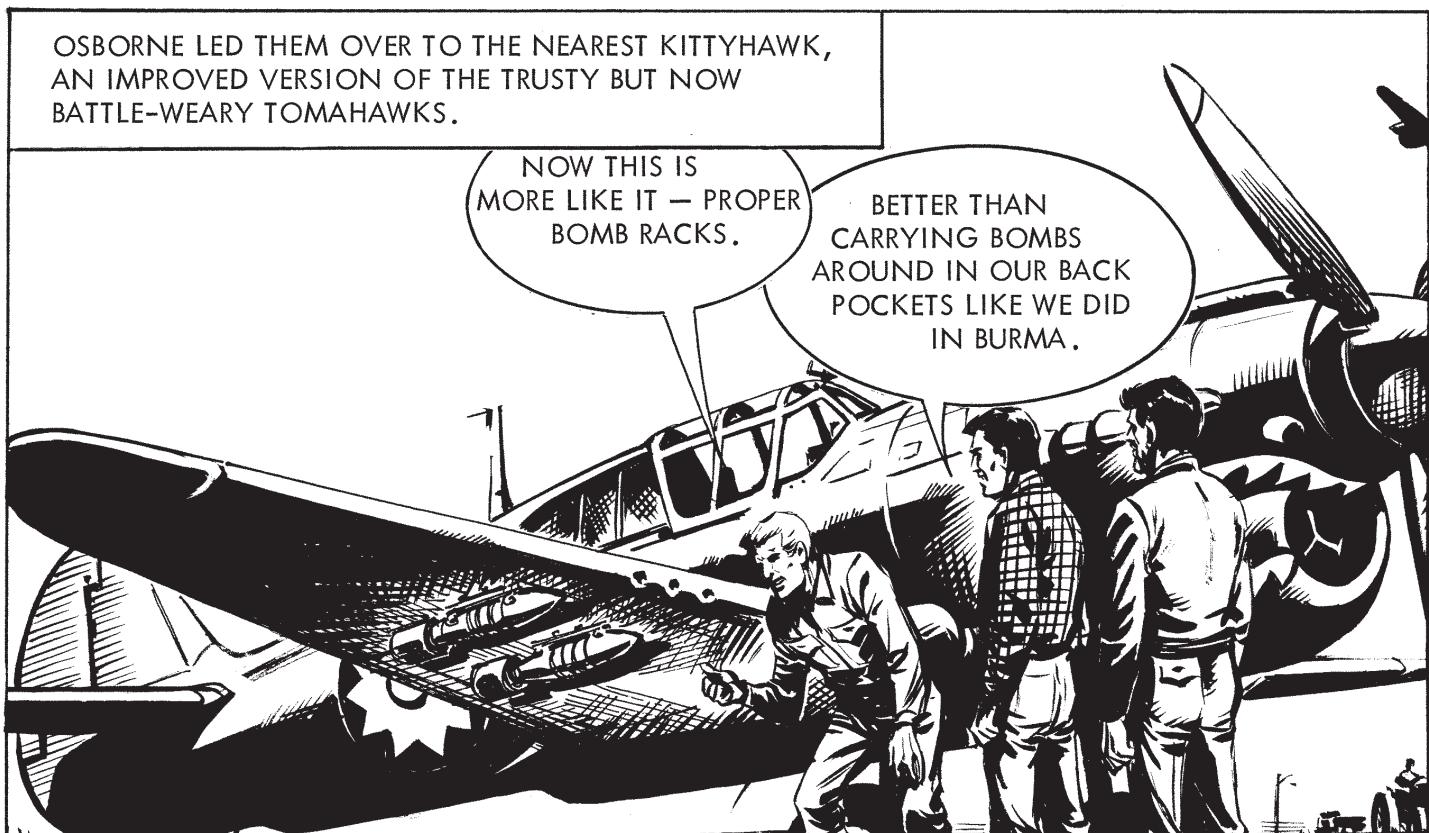












AND THEY SOON TRIED THEIR NEW MOUNTS IN ACTION AGAINST THE JAPANESE UNITS WHICH BROUGHT SUPPLIES AND REINFORCEMENTS INTO BURMA.



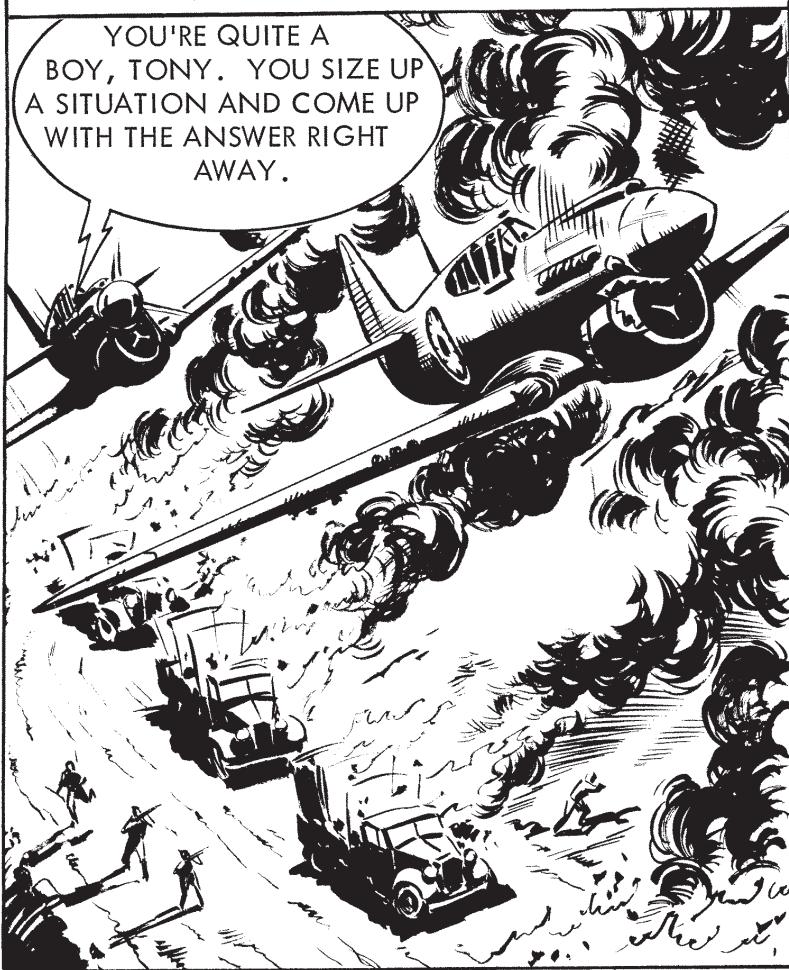
THE JAPANESE DRIVERS LOOKED UP IN TERROR AS THE ROAR OF ENGINES SMOTE THEIR EARS. TONY'S FIRST BOMB SHATTERED THE LEADING LORRY IN A FIERY BLAST.



THE ROAD WAS PERCHED ON A STARK MOUNTAINSIDE. THERE WAS NO COVER, NOWHERE TO HIDE. FANATICALLY BRAVE, THE JAPANESE SOLDIERS BLAZED AT THEIR TORMENTORS WITH RIFLES.



UP AND DOWN THE CONVOY THE KITTYHAWKS RAGED UNTIL IT WAS COMPLETELY WRECKED.



YOU'RE QUITE A BOY, TONY. YOU SIZE UP A SITUATION AND COME UP WITH THE ANSWER RIGHT AWAY.

THIS BATTERING OF JAP SUPPLY LINES ENCOURAGED THE CHINESE TO PREPARE A MAJOR ATTACK. BUT ONE SNAG REMAINED.

SOMEWHERE IN THIS AREA THE JAPANESE HAVE A LONG RANGE GUN CONCEALED. UNTIL IT'S KNOCKED OUT, THE ATTACK CAN'T START. FIND IT AND DESTROY IT.



EASIER SAID THAN DONE. THE WILD MOUNTAINOUS COUNTRY OFFERED CONCEALMENT FOR A WHOLE ARMY OF GUNS.

MAYBE WE COULD SPOT THE MUZZLE-FLASH.

VERY UNLIKELY. THEY'D HOLD THEIR FIRE IF THERE ARE PLANES ABOUT.

DISGRUNTLED AT THEIR FRUITLESS SEARCH, THEY RETURNED TO BASE. ONE PATROL, HOWEVER, GRINNED BROADLY —

WE FOUND TWO TRUCKS AND CLOBBERED THEM. MUST HAVE BEEN FULL OF AMMUNITION FOR THEY WENT UP WITH A HECK OF A BANG.

YEAH, THEY EVEN TRIED TO SAVE SOME OF IT. THEY WERE TRYING TO MANHANDLE BIG SHELLS OUT OF ONE OF THE TRUCKS BEFORE IT BLEW UP.

TONY PRICKED UP HIS EARS AT THE NEWS. AN IDEA BEGAN TO FORM AS HE FELL IN BESIDE THE JUBILANT PILOTS.

WHERE DID
YOU SEE THESE
LORRIES?

ABOUT FIVE MILES
NORTH OF KUTCHING.
LORD KNOWS WHAT THEY
WERE DOING OUT THERE
IN THE WILDS.

TONY ORDERED HIS AIRCRAFT TO BE RE-FUELLED AND EDDY JOINED HIM.

GOT A
HUNCH?

TWO TRUCKS UNLOADING
SHELLS IN THE MIDDLE OF NOWHERE
— THAT GUN MUST BE CLOSE BY.

THEY FOUND THE BURNED-OUT TRUCKS EASILY
AND COMBED THE AREA AT TREE-TOP HEIGHT.
BUT OF THE GUN THEY SAW NOTHING.

WELL, YOU
CAN'T BE RIGHT
EVERY TIME.

SOMEWHERE DOWN
THERE THOSE LITTLE PERISHERS
ARE LAUGHING THEMSELVES
SICK AT US.

EVEN WHEN THEY HAD TO GIVE UP AND RETURN TO BASE, TONY WAS CONVINCED HE WAS RIGHT. HE BROODED ALL THAT EVENING, EVEN ALTHOUGH EDDY TRIED TO CONSOLE HIM.



TONY JUMPED TO HIS FEET AND SHOOK EDDY GLEEFULLY.

EDDY - YOU'VE SOLVED THE PROBLEM. LET'S GO...

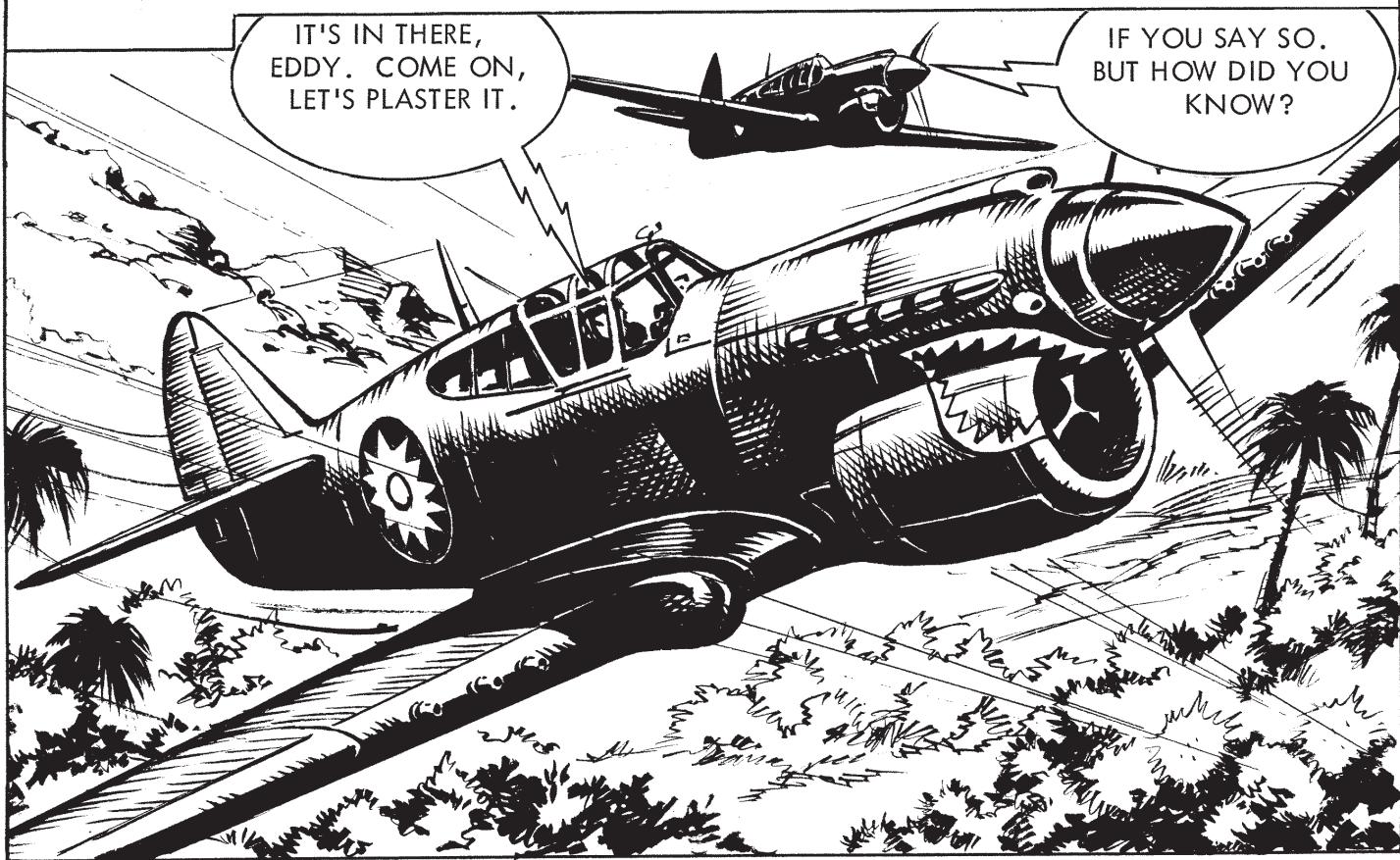
EASY PAL.
WE CAN'T DO ANYTHING
UNTIL MORNING.

SOON AFTER DAWN THE TWO KITTYHAWKS WERE BACK AT THE SCENE. THE WRECKED TRUCKS HAD BEEN REMOVED.

OK, PROFESSOR.
WHAT NOW?

A LITTLE
EXPERIMENT ...

TONY CLIMBED AWAY TO DIVE ON THE CLUMPS OF TREES. EDDY HONESTLY THOUGHT HIS FRIEND HAD TAKEN LEAVE OF HIS SENSES. THEN A STREAM OF TRACER SLASHED UPWARDS.



BUT EDDY GOT NO ANSWER AS TONY SWOOPED IN TO DROP BOMBS RIGHT ON THE CLUMP OF TREES.



THE BOMB EXPLODED, HURLING UP CLOUDS OF DUST AND DEBRIS, AND THERE LAY THE SNOUT OF A MASSIVE HOWITZER.

JEEPERS, IT'S A BIG ONE. IT BEATS ME HOW YOU KNEW.

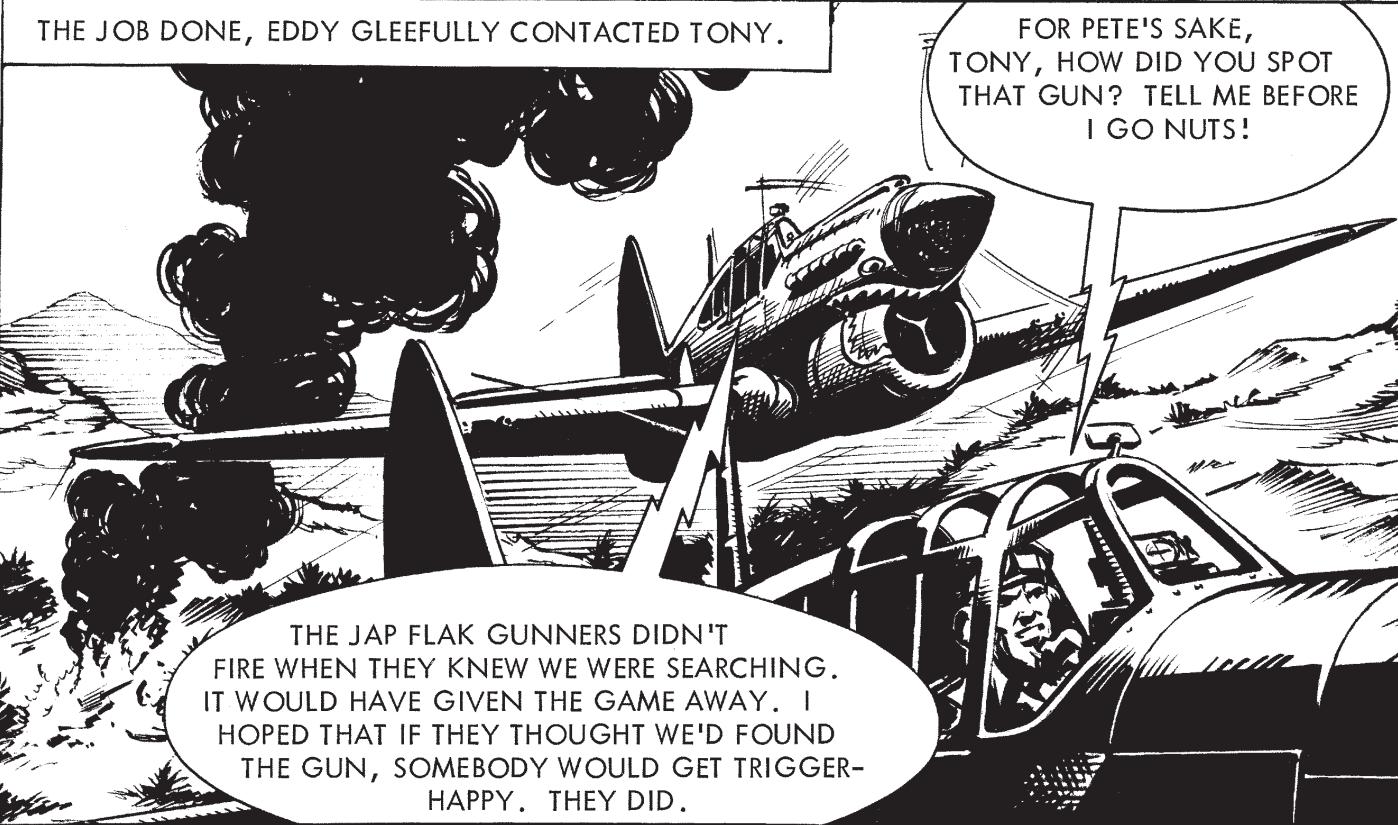
EXPLANATIONS LATER. I'LL TAKE CARE OF THE FLAK. YOU GET THAT GUN.

WHILE TONY POUNDED THE NOW EXPOSED ANTI-AIRCRAFT GUNS, EDDY SWOOPED DOWN, HIS BOMBS CURVING FROM THEIR RACKS.

WHAT A LOVELY BANG!

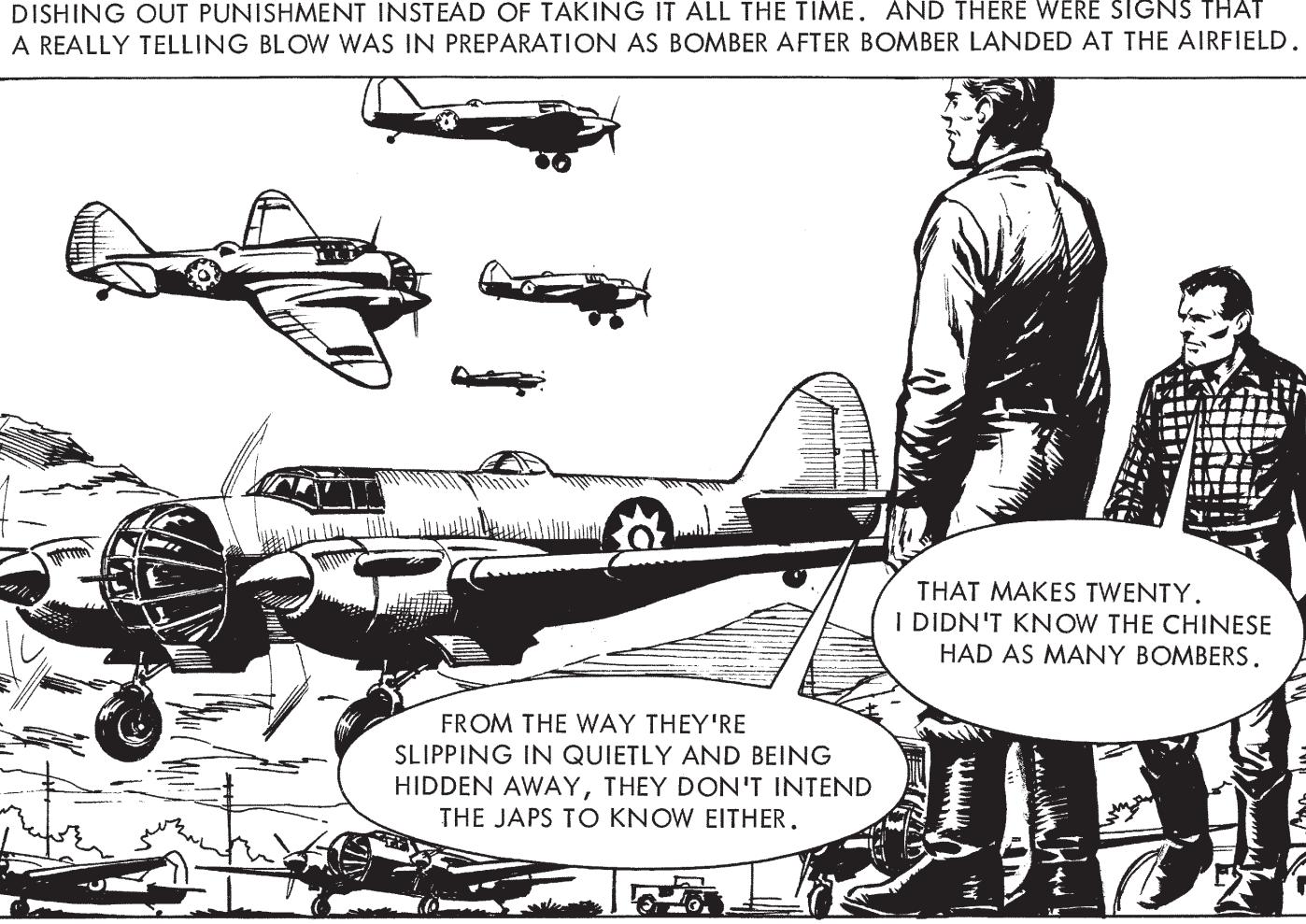
THE JOB DONE, EDDY GLEEFULLY CONTACTED TONY.

FOR PETE'S SAKE,
TONY, HOW DID YOU SPOT
THAT GUN? TELL ME BEFORE
I GO NUTS!



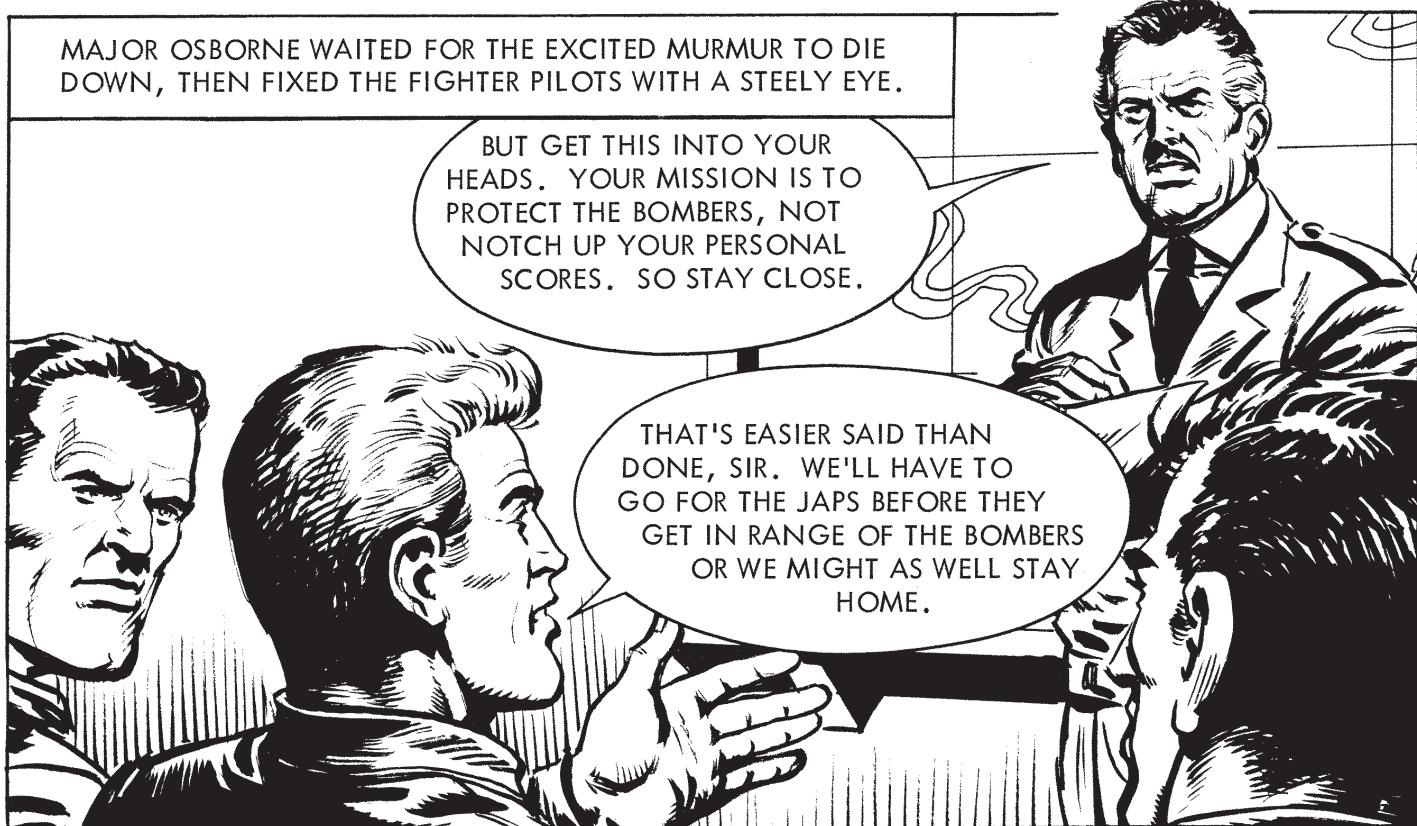
THE JAP FLAK GUNNERS DIDN'T FIRE WHEN THEY KNEW WE WERE SEARCHING. IT WOULD HAVE GIVEN THE GAME AWAY. I HOPED THAT IF THEY THOUGHT WE'D FOUND THE GUN, SOMEBODY WOULD GET TRIGGER-HAPPY. THEY DID.

THE OTHERS WERE VERY PLEASED AT THE DESTRUCTION OF THE BIG GUN. THEY WERE ENJOYING DISHING OUT PUNISHMENT INSTEAD OF TAKING IT ALL THE TIME. AND THERE WERE SIGNS THAT A REALLY TELLING BLOW WAS IN PREPARATION AS BOMBER AFTER BOMBER LANDED AT THE AIRFIELD.



THAT MAKES TWENTY.
I DIDN'T KNOW THE CHINESE
HAD AS MANY BOMBERS.

FROM THE WAY THEY'RE SLIPPING IN QUIETLY AND BEING HIDDEN AWAY, THEY DON'T INTEND THE JAPS TO KNOW EITHER.





THERE WAS A GROWL OF ASSENT FROM THE AMERICANS. OSBORNE QUELLED IT WITH A GLANCE.

I LIKE THE SET-UP.
WE'LL USE IT. TO SAVE ANY ARGUMENTS, WE'LL DRAW LOTS AS TO WHO FLIES WHERE.

IMMEDIATELY TONY AND EDDY VOLUNTEERED TO FLY AS CLOSE ESCORT.

AFTER THE LOTS WERE DRAWN AND EVERYTHING WAS SETTLED, OSBORNE HAD A FINAL WORD.

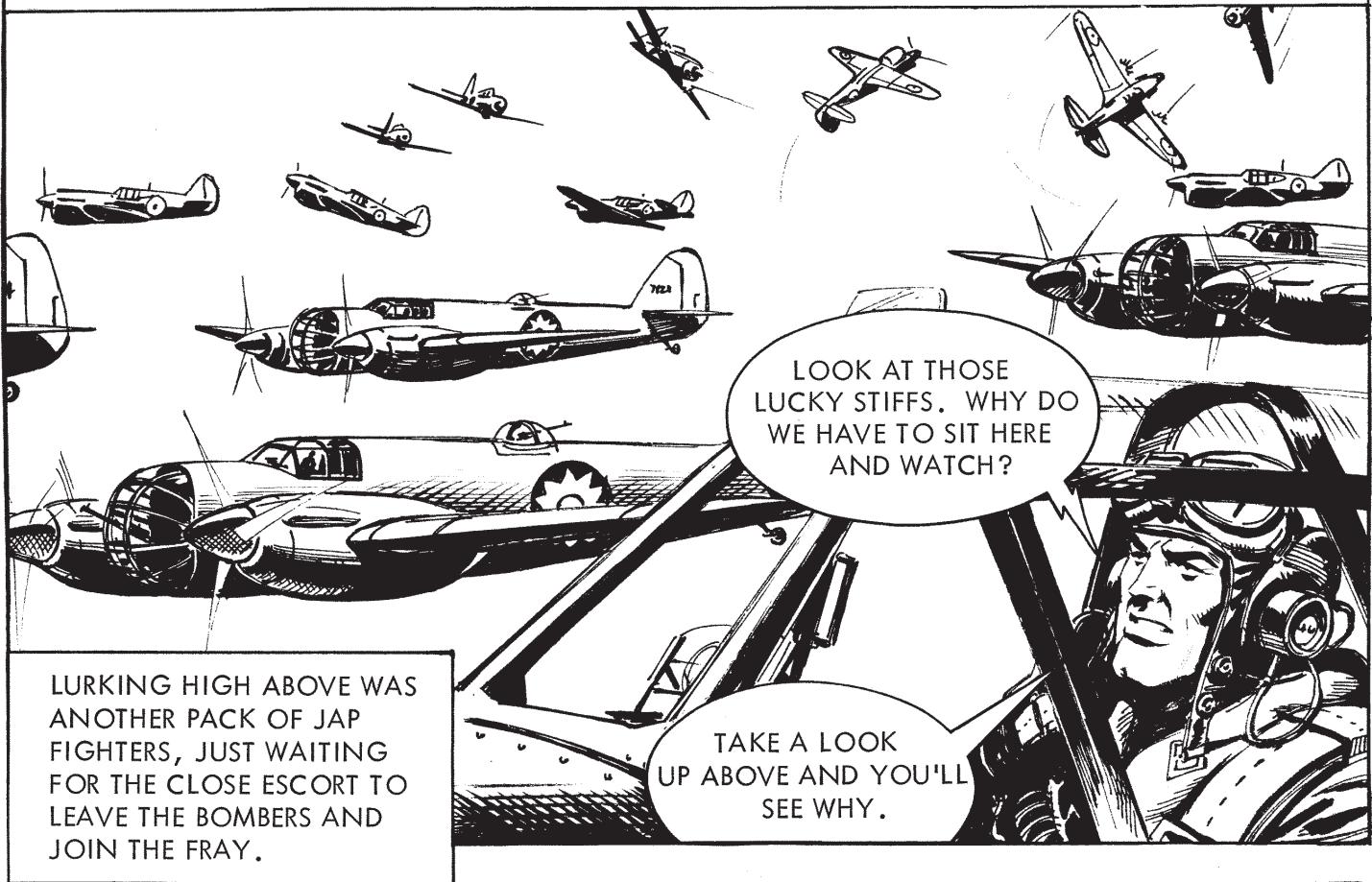
SO EDDY HOLDEN WILL BE ESCORT COMMANDER. REMEMBER YOUR JOB IS TO GET THE BOMBERS TO THE TARGET AND SAFELY HOME AGAIN. RIGHT, LET'S HIT THE SACK. WE'VE A BUSY DAY TOMORROW.

AT DAWN NEXT MORNING THE STILLNESS WAS SHATTERED BY THE COUGHING ROAR OF ENGINES WAKING TO LIFE. CAMOUFLAGE WAS STRIPPED AWAY, AND THE BOMBERS LUMBERED INTO THE AIR TO JOIN THE WAITING KITTYHAWKS.

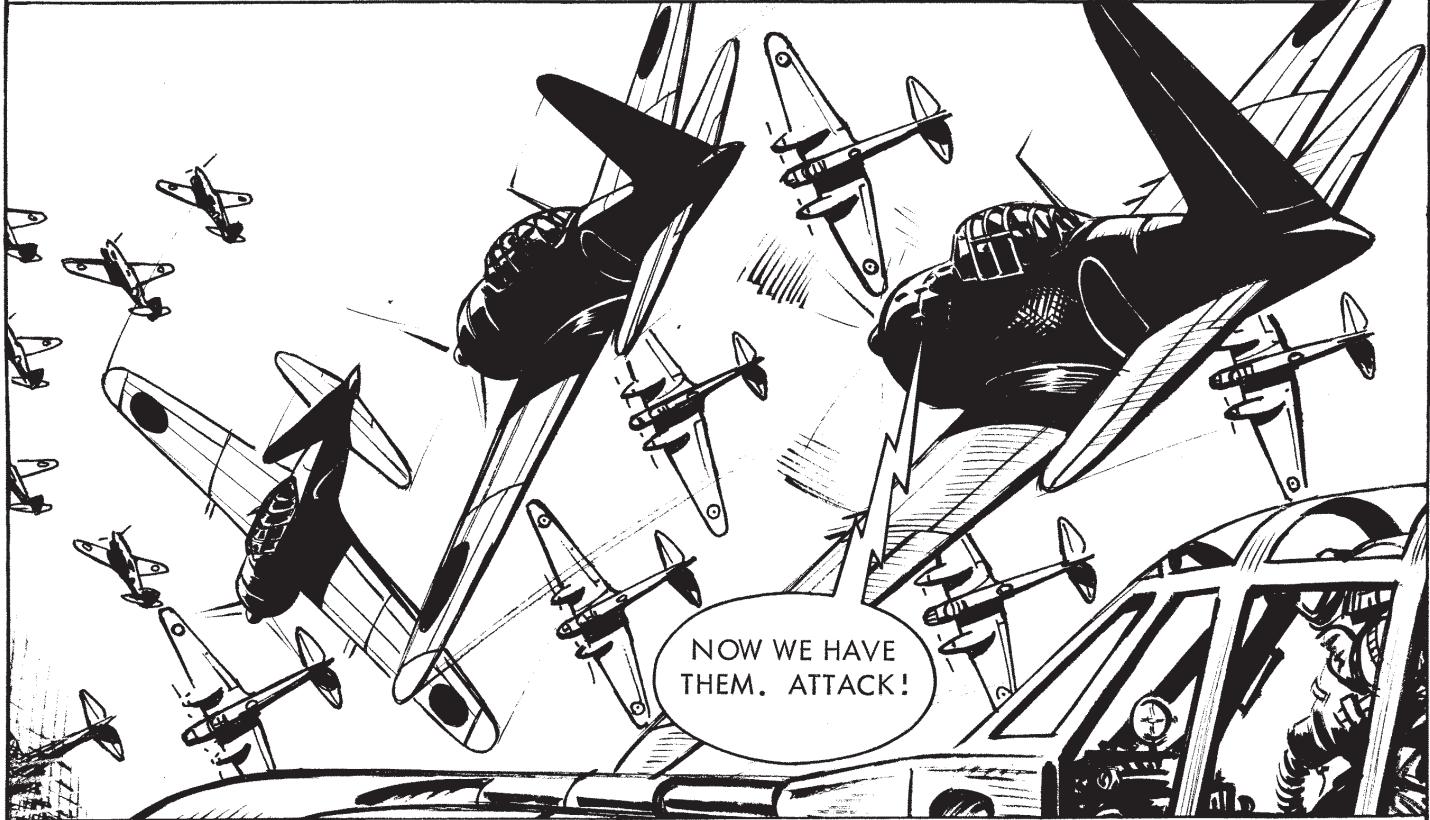


CHINESE VILLAGERS WAVED AND CHEERED AS THE STRIKE FORCE SWEEP OVERHEAD. NEVER BEFORE HAD THEY SEEN SO MANY FRIENDLY AIRCRAFT.

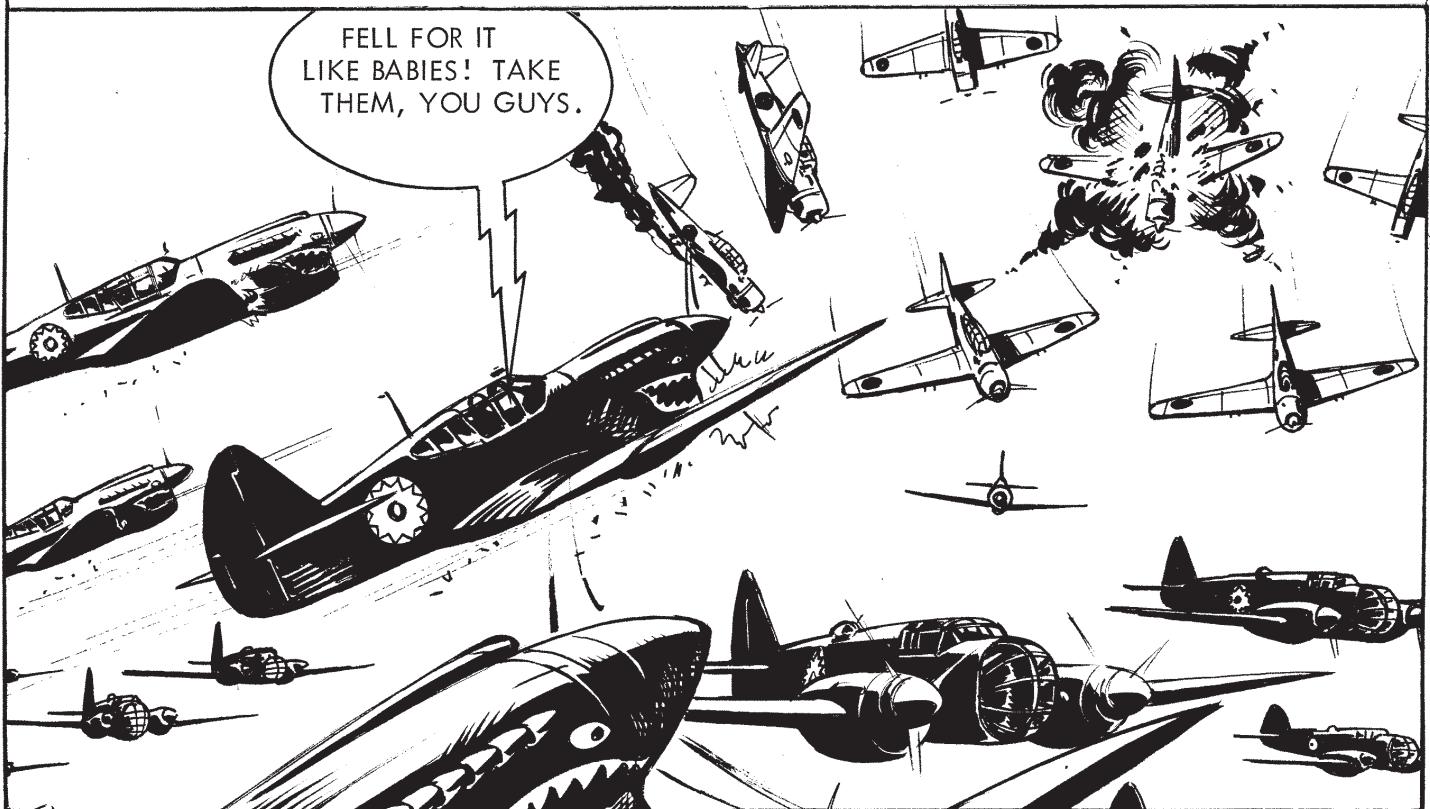
A FORMATION THIS SIZE COULD NOT GO UNDETECTED FOR LONG. JAP FIGHTERS ROSE TO MEET THE CHALLENGE, AND THE OTHER ESCORT WERE SOON HEAVILY ENGAGED.



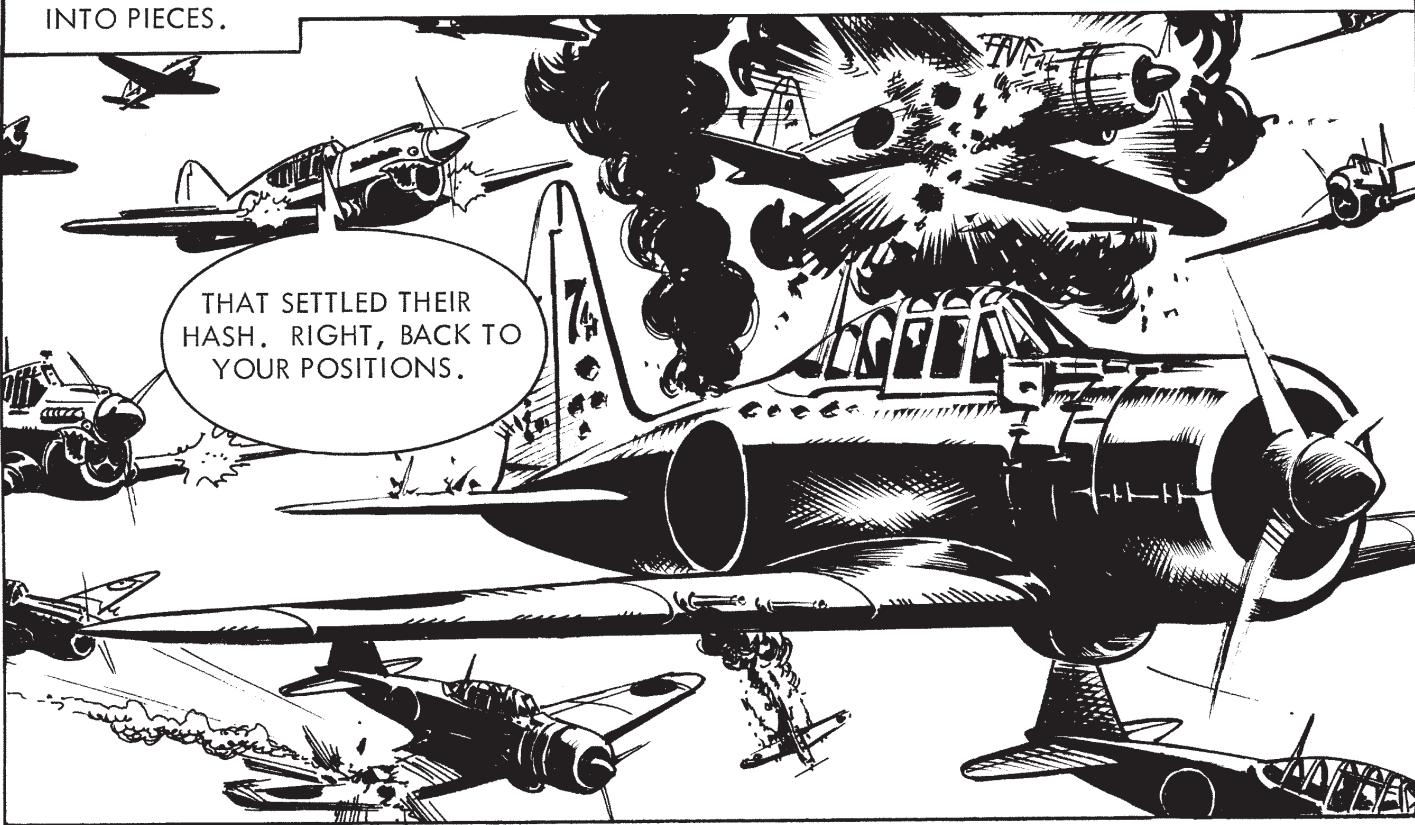
EDDY DELIBERATELY LED THE CLOSE ESCORT AWAY FROM THE BOMBERS AS IF GOING TO ASSIST THE SECTION OF THE OUTER RING STILL ENGAGED. THE HOVERING JAP FIGHTERS TOOK THE BAIT.



BUT AS THE TRIUMPHANT JAPANESE PREPARED FOR A MASSACRE, EDDY'S KITTYHAWK WHIRLED AND CAME CLIMBING UP TOWARDS THEM, GUNS BLAZING.

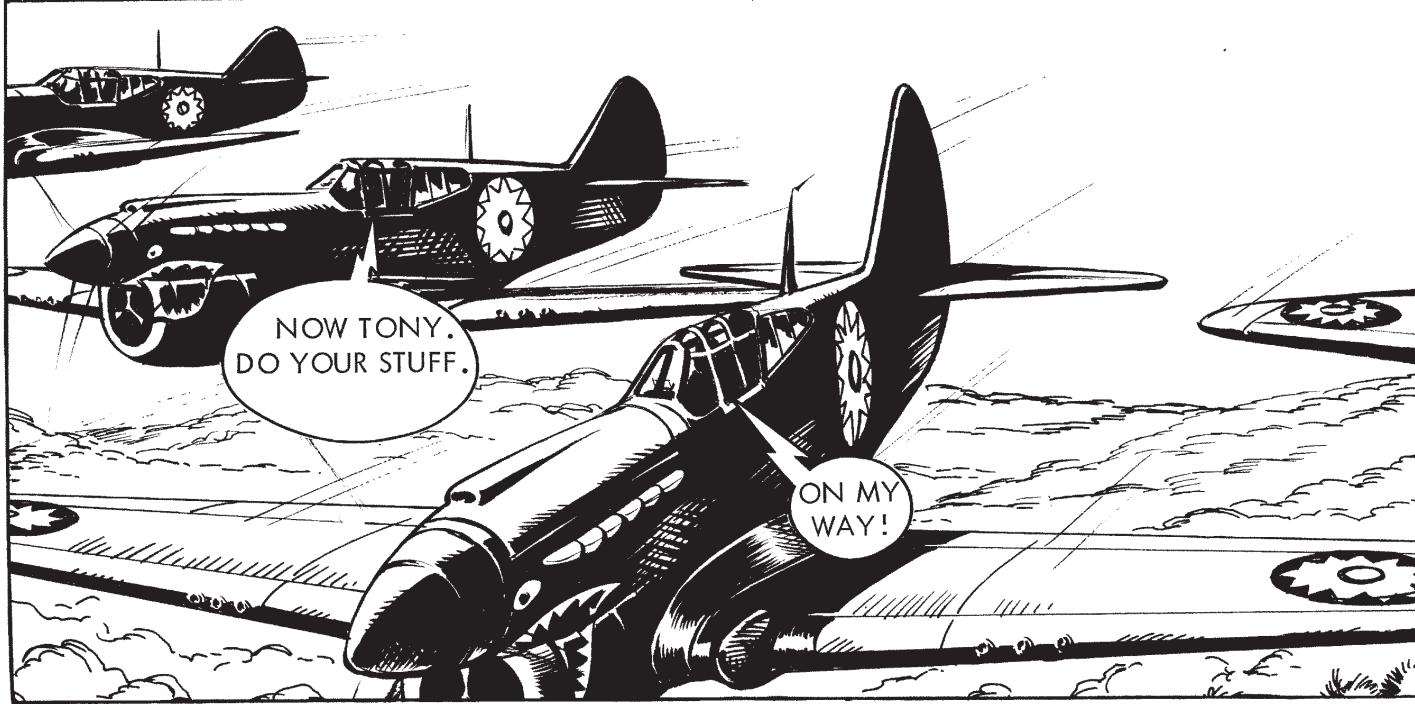
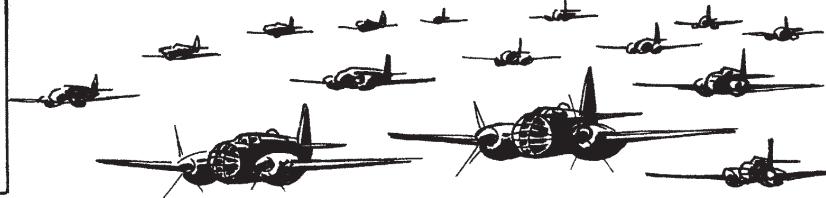


THE JAPANESE PILOTS SHEERED OFF WILDLY BEFORE THE ONSLAUGHT, ONLY TO RUN INTO THE WAITING GUNS OF THE OTHER RING.. CAUGHT BETWEEN TWO FIRES, THEY WERE SWIFTLY CUT INTO PIECES.



THAT SETTLED THEIR HASH. RIGHT, BACK TO YOUR POSITIONS.

THEN THEIR TARGET APPEARED ON THE HORIZON, AND THE FIRST WICKED BLACK PUFFS OF ANTI-AIRCRAFT FIRE APPEARED. THE NEXT STAGE OF THE PLAN WENT INTO OPERATION.



NOW TONY.
DO YOUR STUFF.

ON MY
WAY!

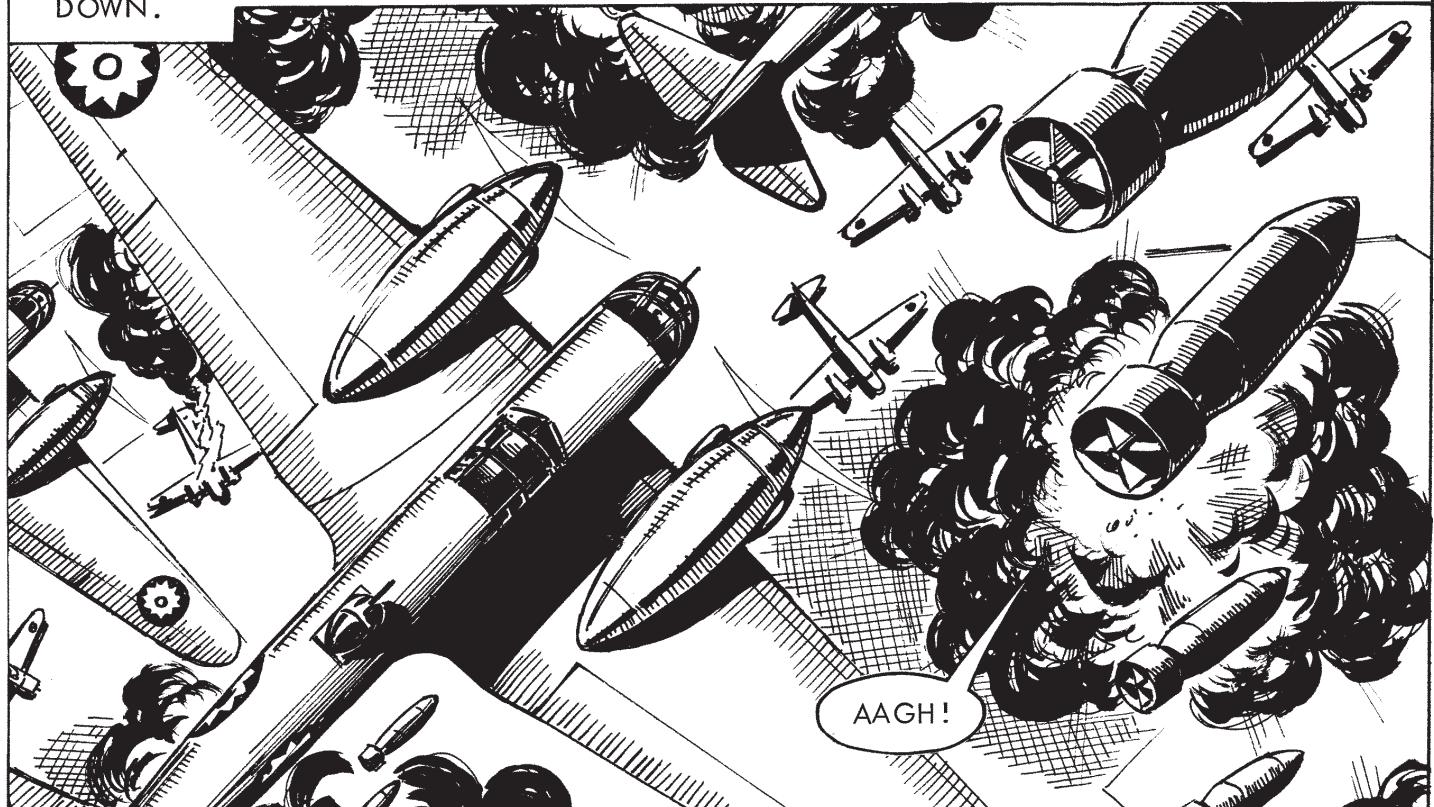
SIX KITTYHAWKS LED BY TONY RACED AHEAD OF THE BOMBERS AND FLUNG THEMSELVES ON THE ANTI-AIRCRAFT EMPLACEMENTS SURROUNDING THE AIRFIELD.

ALL THOSE JAP KITES. THIS IS GOING TO BE SOME PRANG.

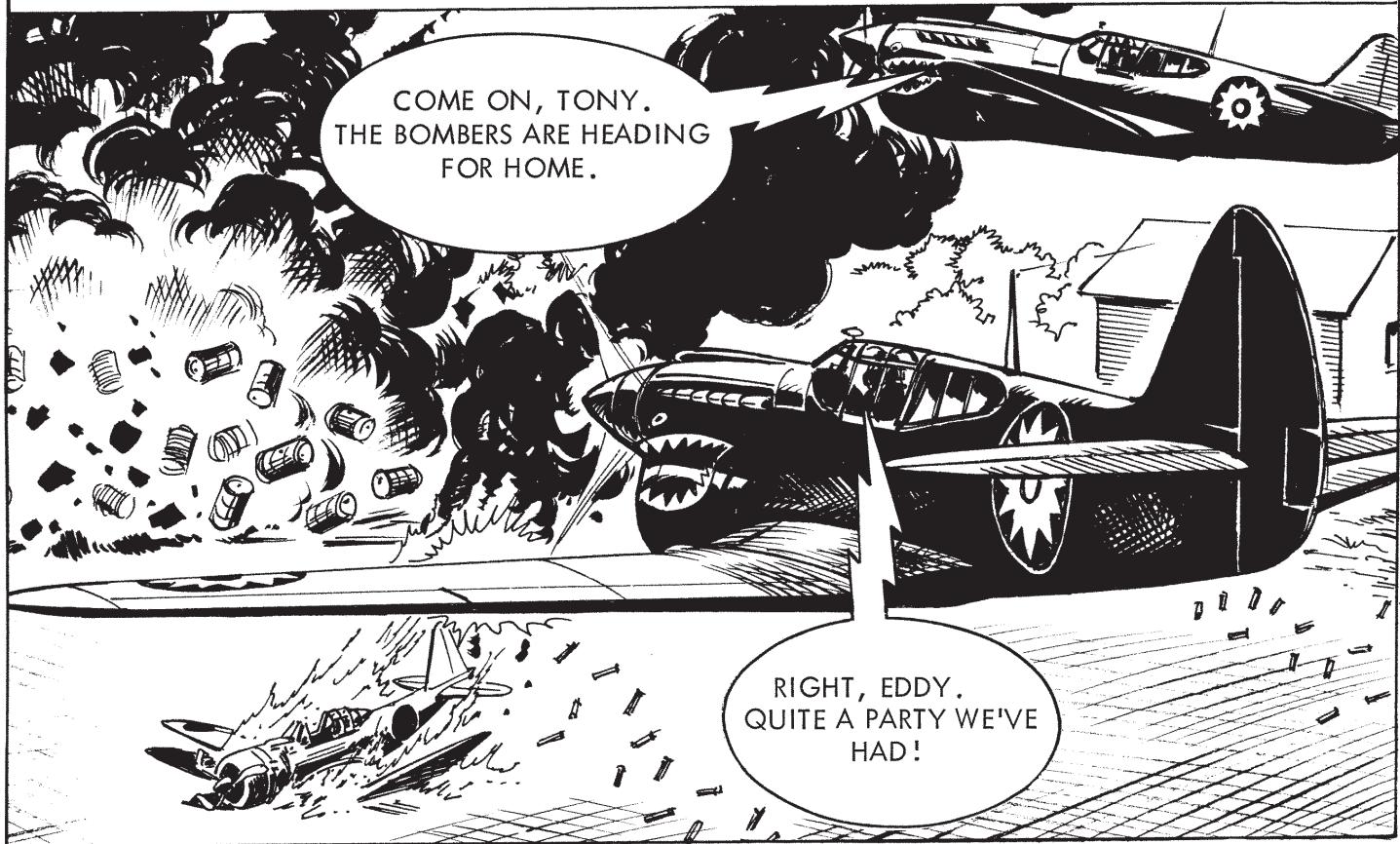


NEVER DREAMING THEY WOULD EVER BE ATTACKED IN FORCE, THE JAPANESE HAD PARKED THEIR AIRCRAFT IN NEAT RANKS, PERFECT TARGETS FOR THE BOMBS THAT NOW CAME STREAMING DOWN.

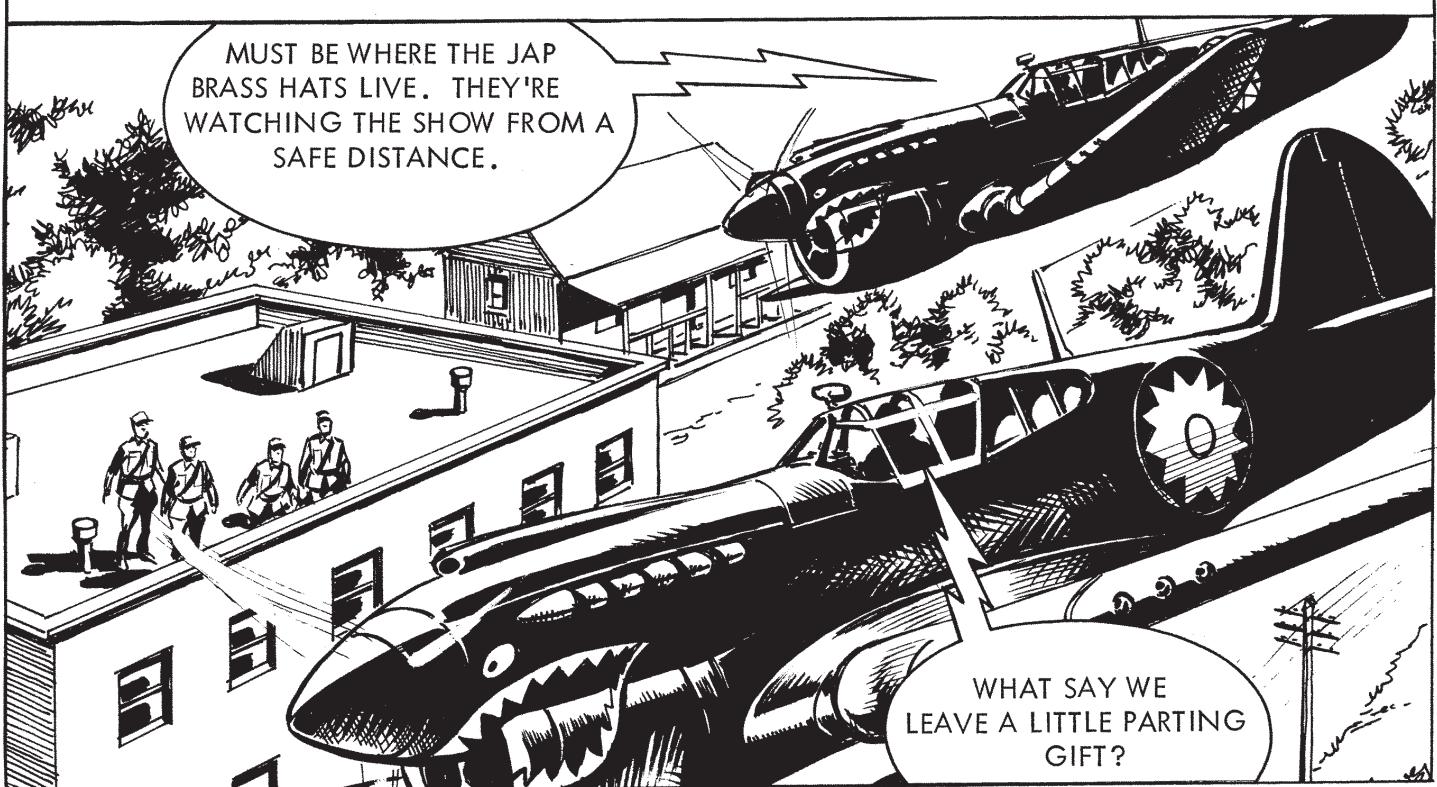
AAGH!



NOW THE PATIENCE OF THE CLOSE ESCORT WAS REWARDED. JOINING UP WITH TONY, EDDY LED THEM IN STRAFING RUNS THAT COMPLETED THE HAVOC STARTED BY THE BOMBERS.



AS THE TWO KITTYHAWKS SOARED ABOVE THE DESTRUCTION, TONY NOTICED UNIFORMED FIGURES STANDING ON THE ROOF OF A LARGE BUILDING A LITTLE WAY FROM THE AIRFIELD.



THE HIGH-RANKING OFFICERS FLED SHRIEKING WITH TERROR AS TWO SHARK-MOUTHED DEMONS HURTLED DOWN ON THEM, HURLING JAVELINS OF FIRE AND DEATH.

RUN,
GENTLEMEN,
RUN!



SECONDS LATER IT WAS ALL OVER.

RECKON THERE'LL
BE SOME VACANCIES FOR
THE TOP JOBS AROUND
HERE.



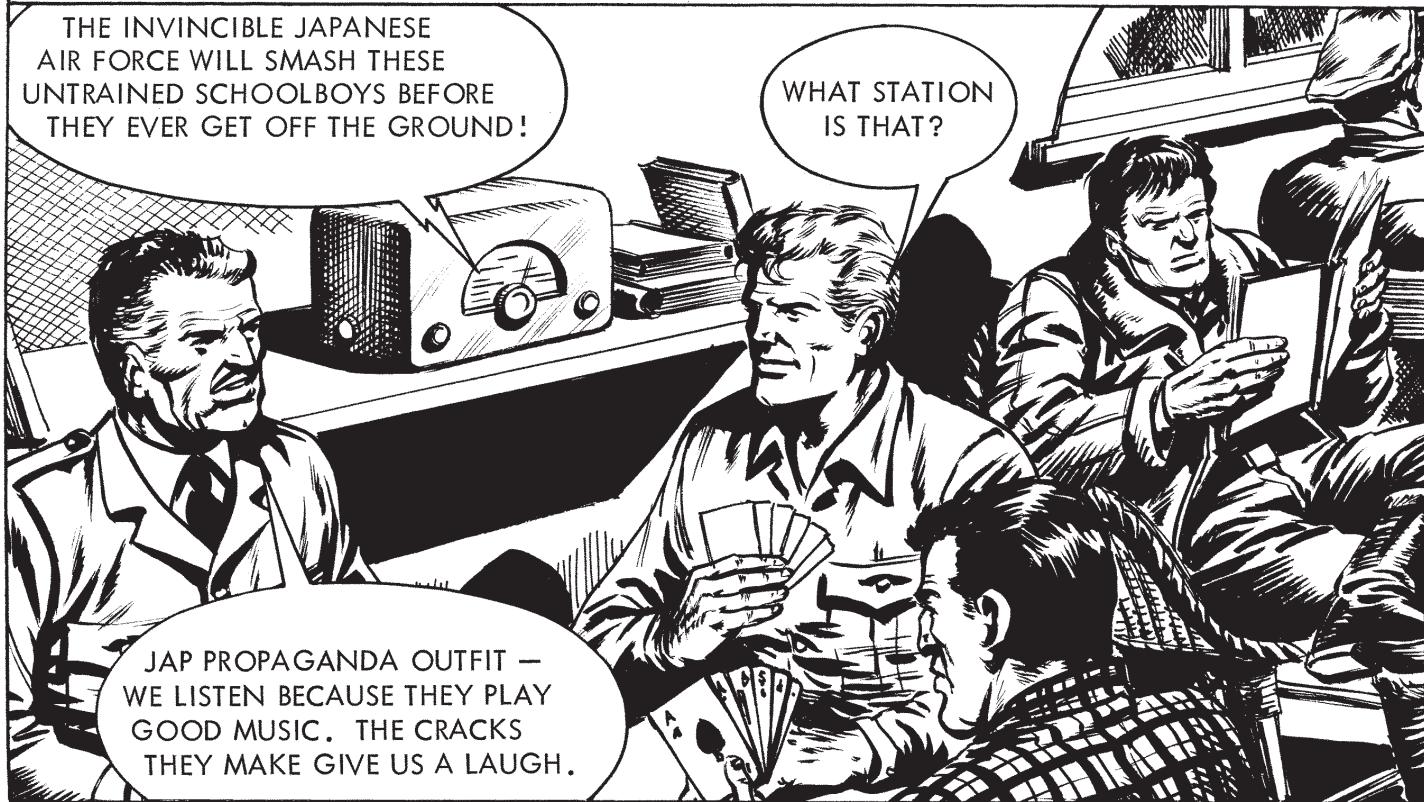
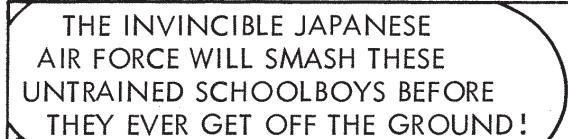
THE STRIKE FORCE RETURNED IN TRIUMPH TO BASE WHERE OSBORNE WAS ANXIOUSLY WAITING.



THE AMERICANS WERE SOON TO DISBAND WHEN THEIR CONTRACTS WITH THE CHINESE GOVERNMENT RAN OUT. THEIR PLACE WAS TO BE TAKEN BY UNITS OF THE U.S. ARMY AIR FORCE UNITS, ALREADY ASSEMBLING AT A BASE CLOSE BY.



THERE WAS NOT MUCH TO DO WHILE THEY WAITED BUT PLAY CARDS AND LISTEN TO THE RADIO.



OSBORNE BECAME THOUGHTFUL, CARD GAME FORGOTTEN. THE OTHERS WATCHED EXPECTANTLY...

I RECKON THE JAPS ARE PLANNING TO HIT THE AIR FORCE WHEN THEY'RE READY FOR ACTION. HERE'S A CHANCE FOR US TO GO OUT WITH A BANG.

WE'RE LISTENING...

THE PLAN WAS A SIMPLE TRAP WITH A JUICY BAIT AND SHARP JAWS. BUT IT HAD TO BE SPRUNG AT JUST THE RIGHT MOMENT.

I'LL FLY DOWN AND TALK TO THE ARMY AIR FORCE BOYS. THEY'LL WANT TO BE IN ON THIS.

LATER THAT WEEK, IN ONES AND TWOS, TO AVOID AROUSING THE INTEREST OF ENEMY AGENTS, THE SKY SHARKS FLEW TO THE ARMY AIR FORCE BASE WHERE THEIR LINES WERE CLEVERLY CAMOUFLAGED. AND...

THE FIRST PART OF THE MAJOR'S PLAN?

YES, THOSE DUMMY KITTYHAWKS WILL BE PARKED ON THE AIRFIELD TO KID THE JAPS THEY'VE CAUGHT US ALL ON THE GROUND.

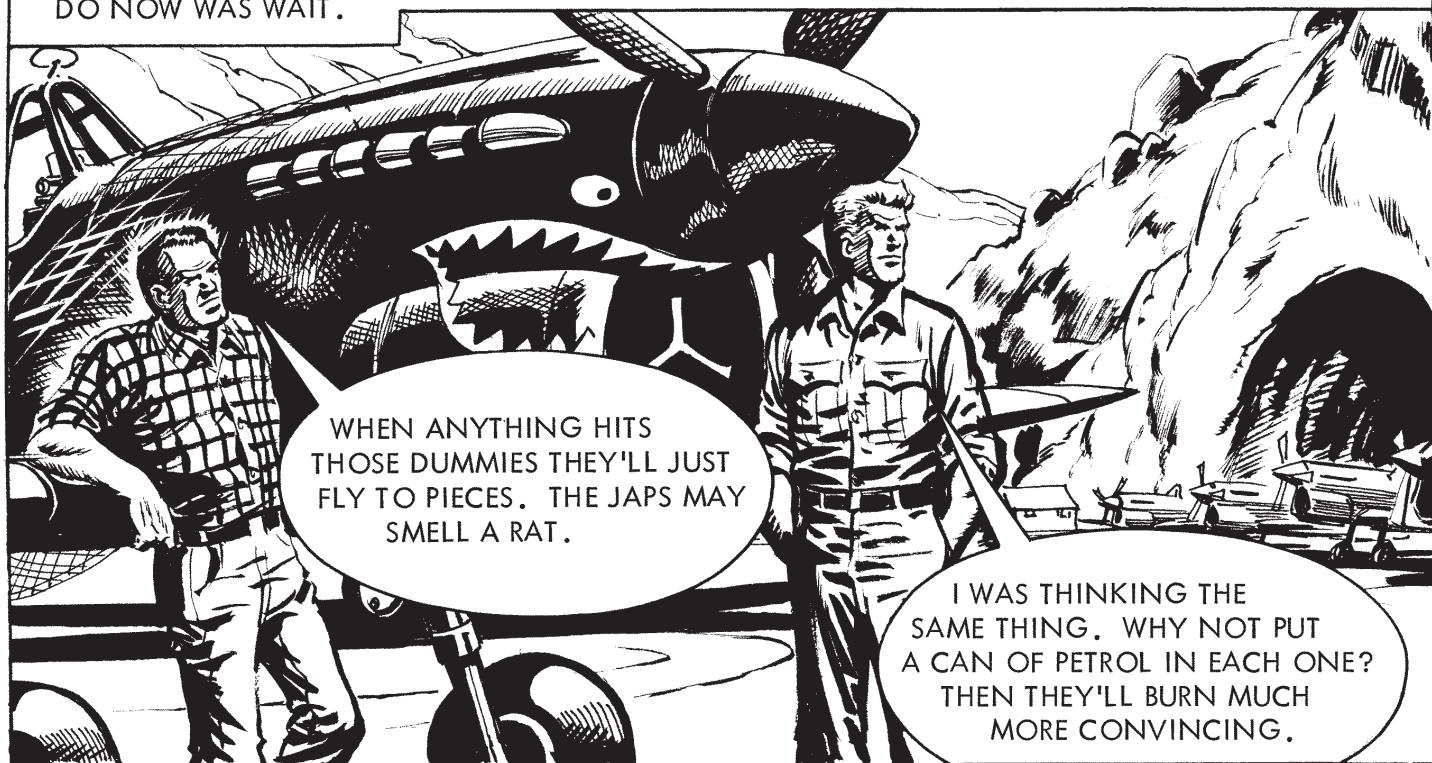
THE WOOD AND CANVAS DUMMIES LOOKED CONVINCINGLY LIKE REAL KITTYHAWKS WHEN VIEWED FROM THE AIR. JAPANESE RECONNAISSANCE AIRCRAFT WERE ALLOWED TO COME AND GO WITHOUT HINDRANCE.



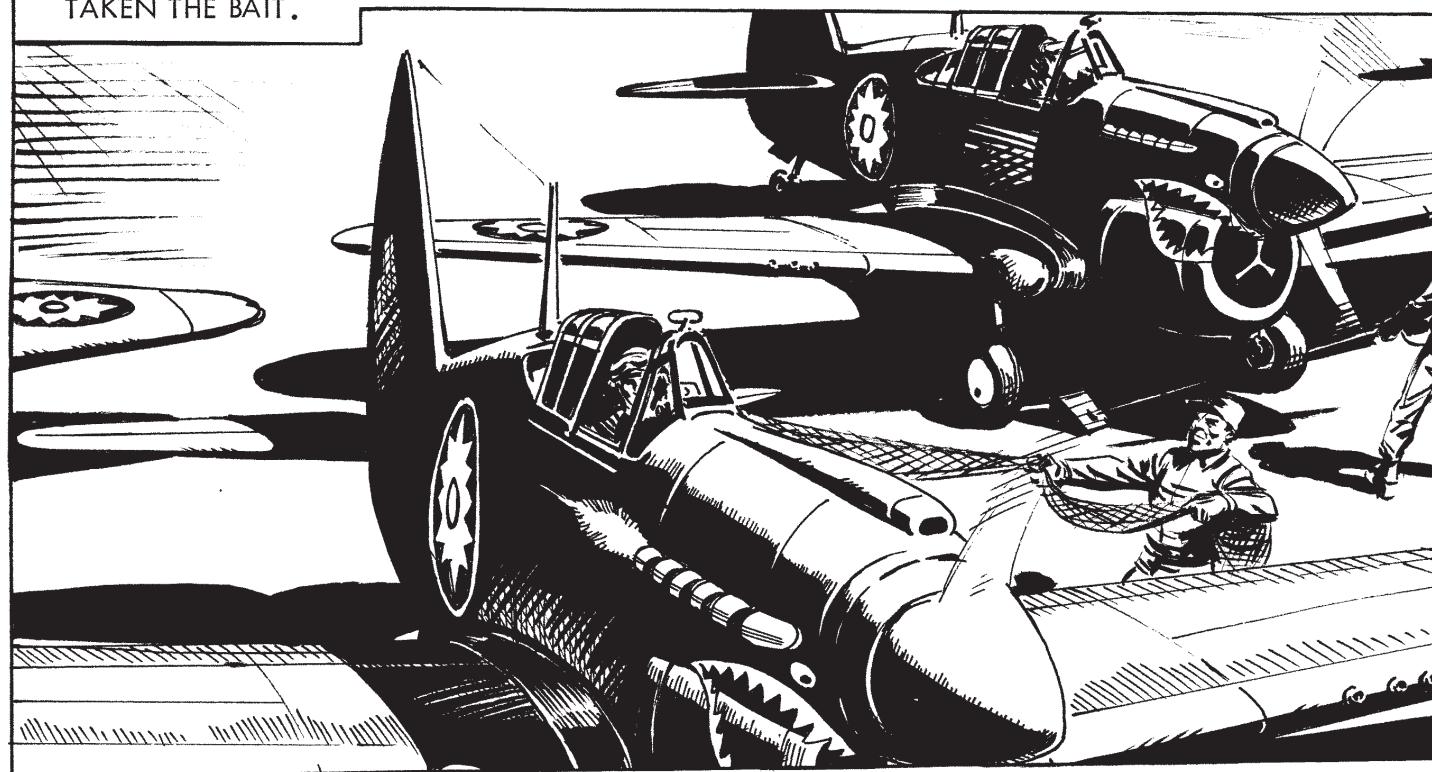
IT WAS KNOWN THAT JAPANESE AGENTS OPERATED IN THE NEARBY TOWN. OSBORNE PUT THIS KNOWLEDGE TO GOOD USE WHEN HE CALLED TOGETHER SOME OF THE AMERICAN ARMY AIR FORCE PILOTS.



NEXT DAY THE AMERICAN PILOTS WERE AT READINESS FROM FIRST LIGHT. OBSERVATION POSTS WOULD GIVE WARNING OF THE APPROACH OF THE EXPECTED ENEMY RAID. ALL THEY COULD DO NOW WAS WAIT.



THE SUGGESTION WAS ACTED UPON AT ONCE. HARDLY HAD THE JOB BEEN COMPLETED THAN A LARGE FORCE OF JAP FIGHTERS WAS REPORTED HEADING FOR THE BASE. THE JAPANESE HAD TAKEN THE BAIT.



CAMOUFLAGE NETS WERE WHISKED AWAY AND ENGINES ROARED AS THE KITTYHAWKS SWEEPED INTO THE AIR. THE STAGE WAS SET FOR THEM TO TAKE THEIR FINAL BITE AT THE ENEMY.

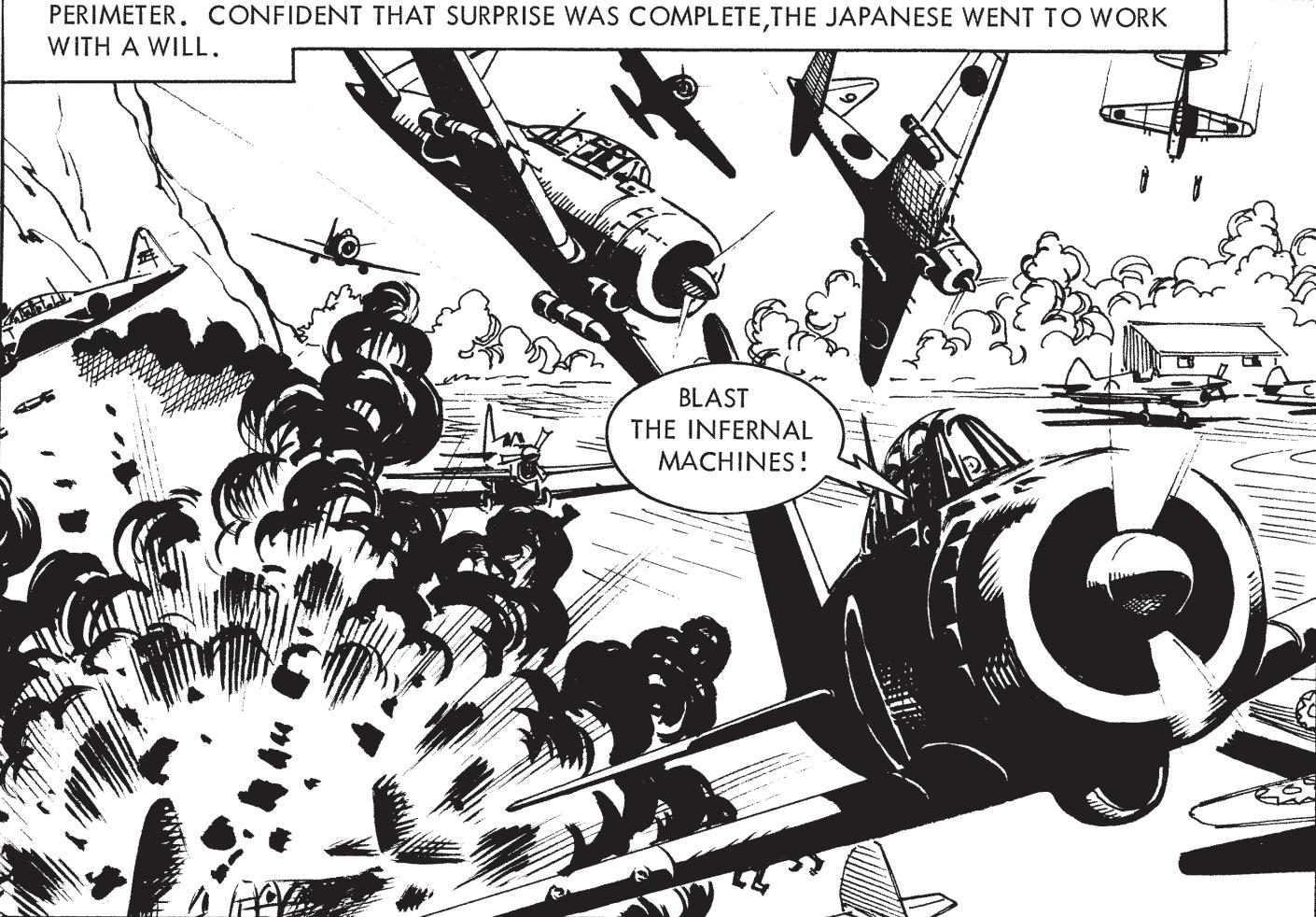
THE KITTYHAWKS CLIMBED HIGH INTO THE SUN TO LIE IN WAIT. ON THE AIRFIELD THE DUST SETTLED AS CALM RETURNED. THE DUMMY AIRCRAFT LAY UNPROTECTED AND THE TRAP WAS SET.



HERE THEY
COME. NOT A
WORD NOW.

OSBORNE WAS IN RADIO CONTACT WITH THE KITTYHAWKS WHICH WERE CIRCLING HIGH ABOVE, HIDDEN FROM THE JAPS.

THERE LAY THE AIRFIELD, UNPROTECTED, THE DUMMY KITTYHAWKS PARKED ROUND THE PERIMETER. CONFIDENT THAT SURPRISE WAS COMPLETE, THE JAPANESE WENT TO WORK WITH A WILL.



BLAST
THE INFERNAL
MACHINES!

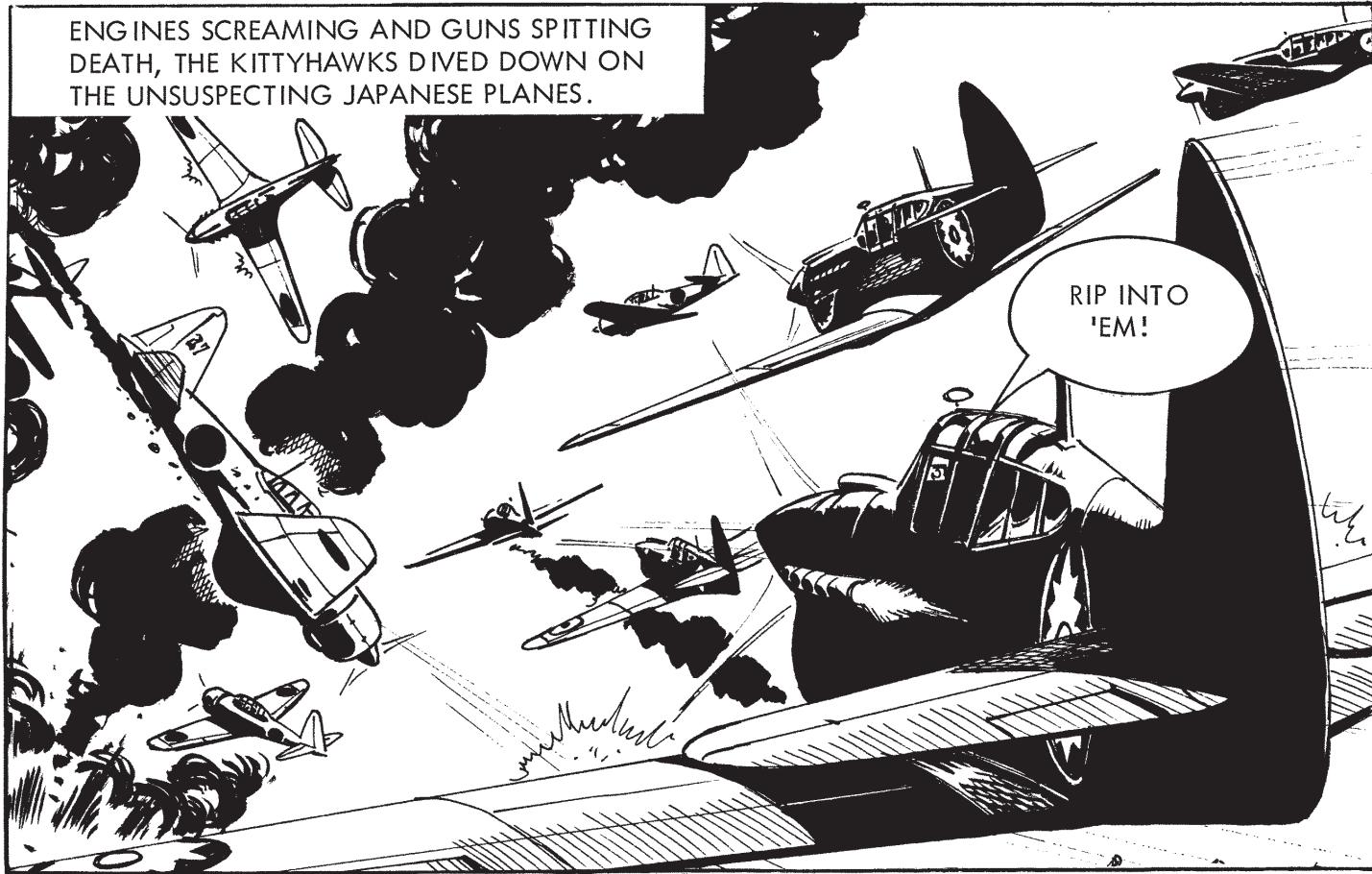
HIGH ABOVE, IN STRICT RADIO SILENCE, THE AMERICANS CIRCLED, FIDGETING IN THEIR SEATS AS THEY WATCHED THE CARNIVAL OF DESTRUCTION.



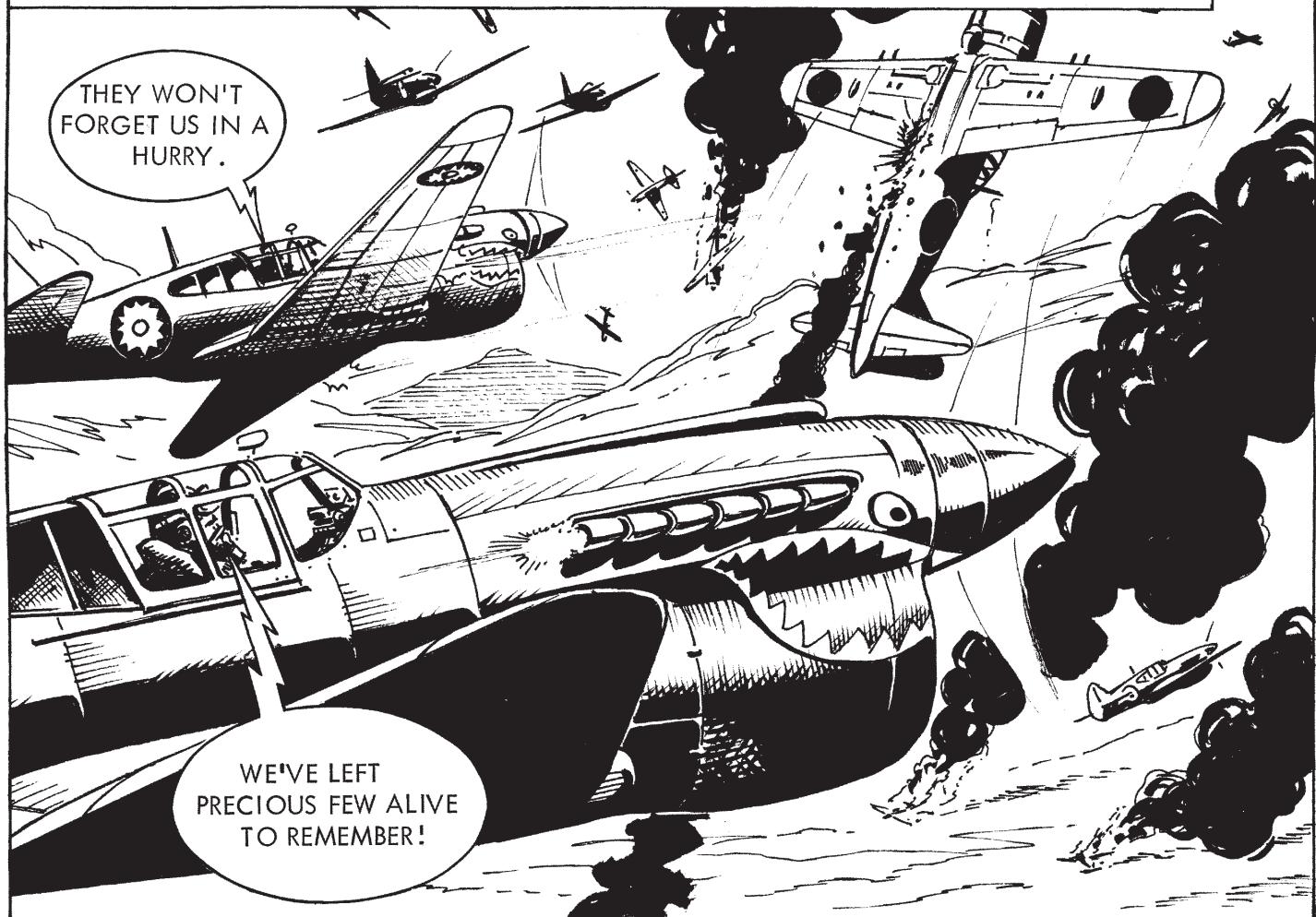
BUT OSBORNE KNEW WHAT HE WAS DOING. CALMLY HE WATCHED THE JAPANESE SQUANDER FUEL AND AMMUNITION IN AN ORGY OF HATE. AT LAST THEY BEGAN TO DRAW AWAY.



ENGINES SCREAMING AND GUNS SPITTING DEATH, THE KITTYHAWKS DIVED DOWN ON THE UNSUSPECTING JAPANESE PLANES.

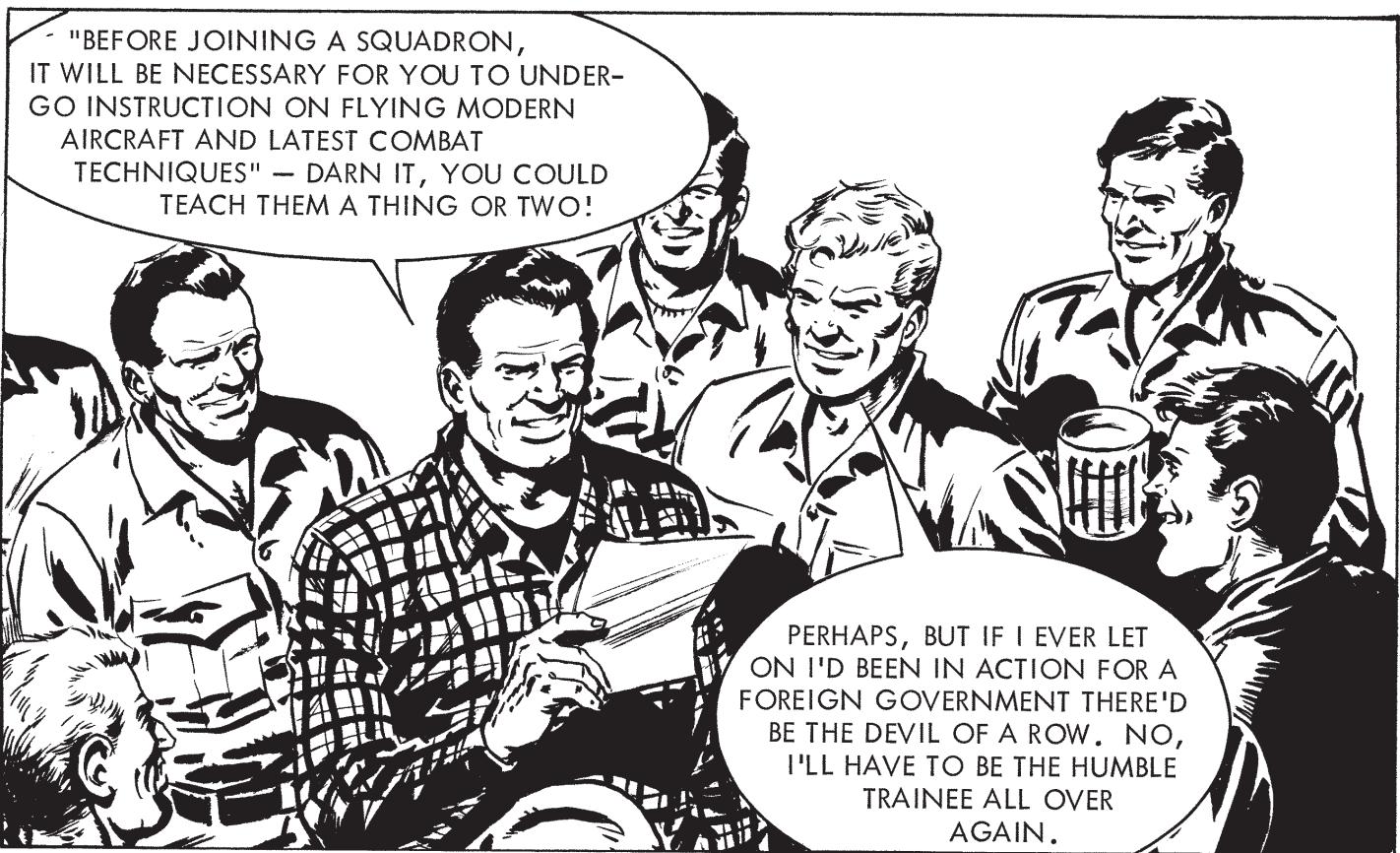
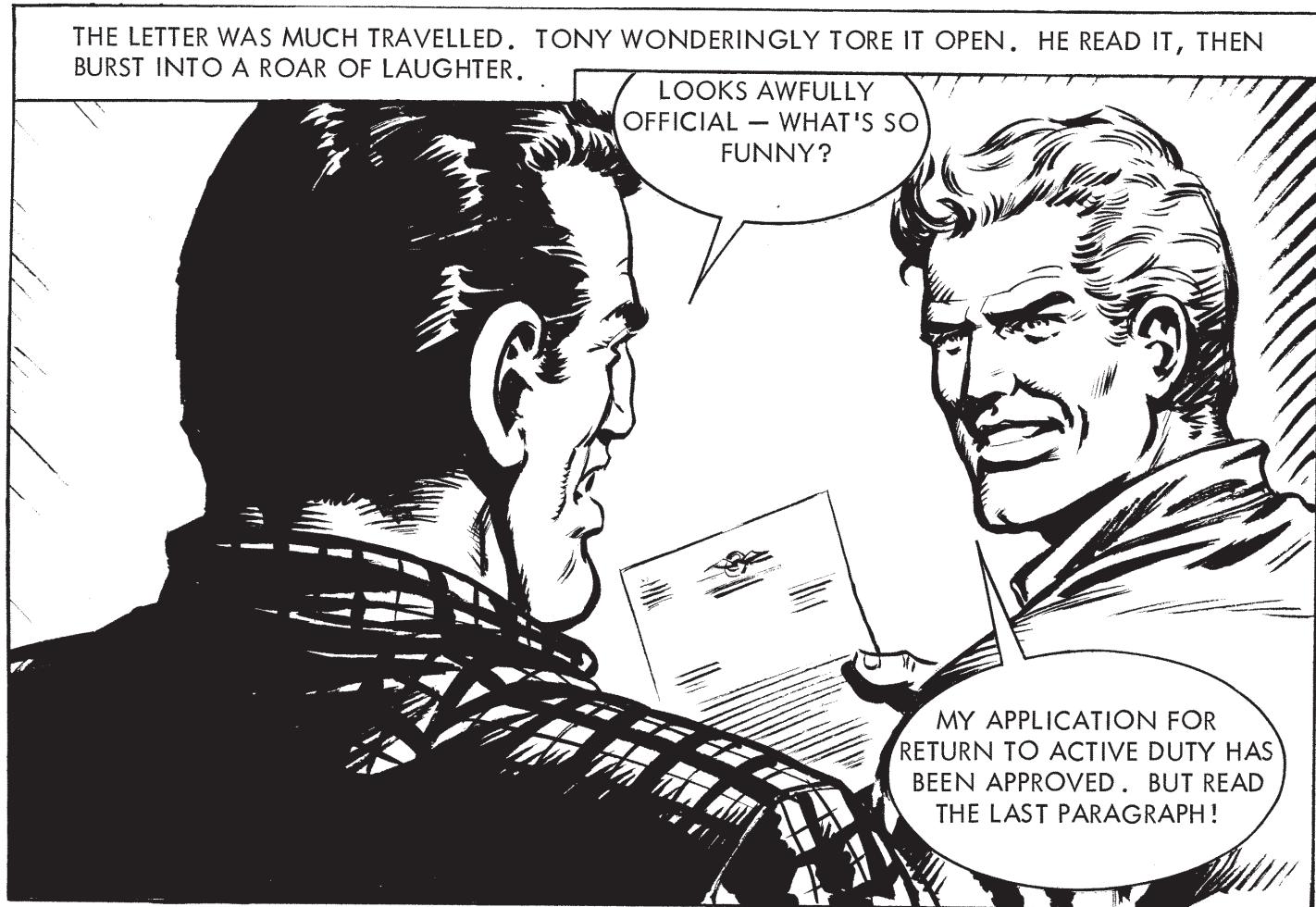


FEW OF THE ENEMY HAD ANYTHING TO SHOOT BACK WITH AND FLED FOR THEIR LIVES. THE YANKS HUNTED THEM DOWN AND DESTROYED THEM WITH FIENDISH FEROCITY.



FLUSHED WITH SUCCESS, THE SKY SHARKS HEADED BACK TO THEIR OLD BASE WHERE A MONUMENTAL COMBINED CELEBRATION AND FAREWELL PARTY GOT UNDER WAY. IN THE MIDST OF THE FESTIVITIES, A CHINESE ORDERLY HANDED TONY A LETTER.





RED TAPE HAD REACHED OUT AND BOUND TONY FIRMLY IN ITS COILS. BUT HE DIDN'T CARE. HE HAD LEARNED MUCH IN THESE HECTIC WEEKS THAT WAS TO STAND HIM IN GOOD STEAD IN THE YEARS TO COME.



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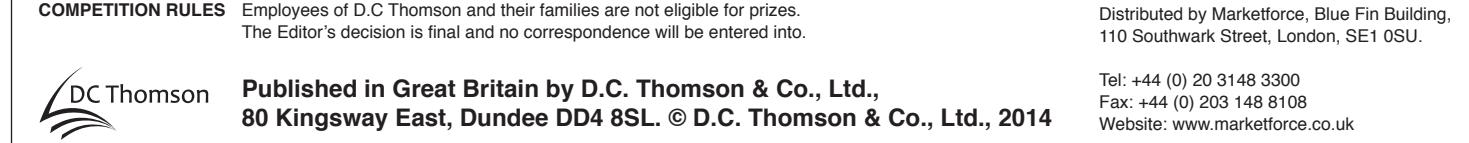
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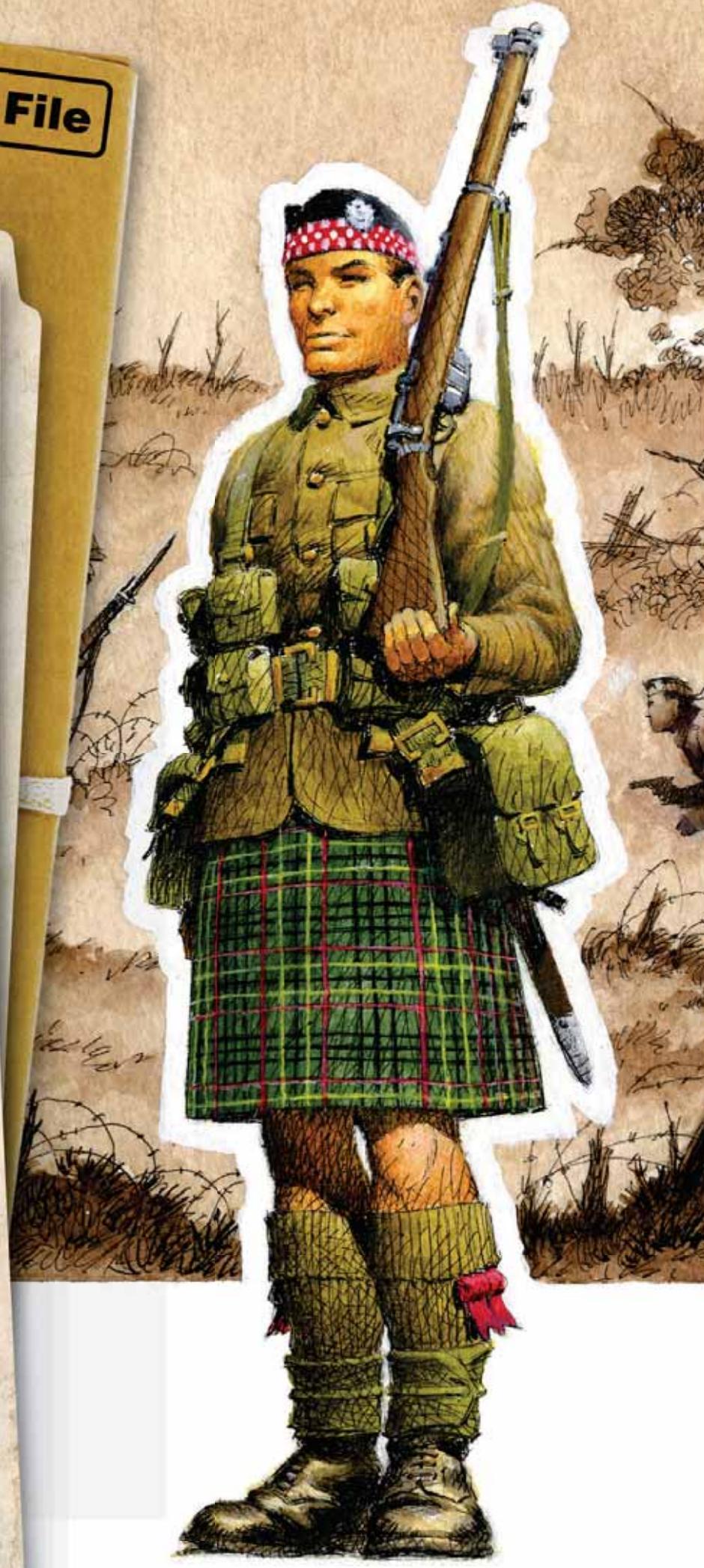
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