

D-DAY

UNDER FIRE 1 *STORMING FORTRESS EUROPE*



D-DAY

UNDER FIRE 1 STORMING FORTRESS EUROPE



OSPREY
PUBLISHING

OSPREY PUBLISHING

Bloomsbury Publishing Plc
PO Box 883, Oxford, OX1 9PL, UK
1385 Broadway, 5th Floor, New York, NY 10018, USA
E-mail: info@ospreypublishing.com
www.ospreypublishing.com

OSPREY is a trademark of Osprey Publishing Ltd

First published in Great Britain in 2020

This electronic edition published in 2020 by
Bloomsbury Publishing Plc

© Osprey Publishing, 2020

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, or any information storage or retrieval system, without prior permission in writing from the publishers.

A catalogue record for this book is available from
the British Library.

ISBN: PB 9781472838780
eBook 9781472838803
ePDF 9781472838810
XML 9781472838827

Osprey Publishing supports the Woodland Trust, the UK's leading
woodland conservation charity.

To find out more about our authors and books visit
www.ospreypublishing.com. Here you will find extracts,
author interviews, details of forthcoming events and the
option to sign up for our newsletter

CREDITS

WRITERS:

Jack Chambers
Erik Hendrix

ARTISTS:

Esteve Polls
IHQ Studios
George Papadakis
Kostas Tsiakos
Jason Baroody

COVER DESIGN:

Stewart Larking

FINISHES:

Anwar Hanano
Victor Castro
Michael David Nelson
Team Comfort and Adam
Malena Salinas
Dylan Klingler
Alyssa Aman
Krystal Hertlein
Drew Norman
Alex Sophabmisay
Kelsey Neveu
Sarah Drews
Sarah Puett
Alysia Schmidt
Hanna Al-Shaer

COLOURISTS:

German Torres
IHQ Studios
Malena Salinas

LETTER:

Amanda Hendrix

EDITORS:

Erik Hendrix
Laura Callaghan
Amanda Hendrix

HISTORICAL CONSULTANT:

Gordon L. Rottman

PORTMANTEAUX PUBLISHING:

Adam Fortier
Erik Hendrix

D-DAY

UNDER FIRE 1 STORMING FORTRESS EUROPE





UNDER FIRE

INTRODUCTION TO D-DAY

STORMING FORTRESS EUROPE

It is spring 1944, and the war against Hitler's Germany has dragged on into its fifth year. France has suffered under German occupation since 1940, and since the evacuation of the British Expeditionary Force from Dunkirk in June 1940, no serious effort has been made to return Allied troops to the continent. A disastrous commando raid on Dieppe in 1942 taught the Allies a costly lesson: a frontal attack against a defended port would result in catastrophic losses.

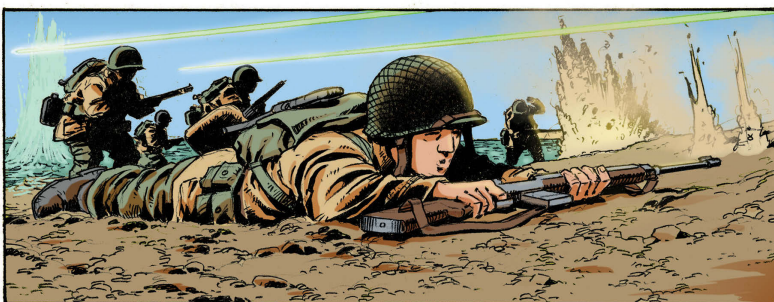
Germany is under pressure from the Soviet Union in the east, which is beginning to press the attack after blunting Hitler's offensive at Kursk in 1943 and inflicting a major defeat at Stalingrad. The western Allies have been urged by Stalin to open a 'second front' that would force Germany to divert troops and equipment from the east, but Britain and the US were not ready for the invasion of the Continent originally planned for 1943. Until now, British Prime Minister Winston Churchill and US President Franklin D. Roosevelt have pressed the fight in other theatres around the world, while training soldiers and increasing production of the equipment and landing craft needed to prepare for a decisive invasion.

Now the Allies are committed, and a vast international task force under General Dwight D. Eisenhower has been assembled in the south of England, ready to embark for the



beaches of Normandy, the chosen landing area. Relatively less well defended, these beaches are nonetheless part of Field Marshal Erwin Rommel's 'Atlantic Wall': fortified with strongpoints, mines and obstacles and defended by batteries inland. A huge intelligence operation, codenamed Fortitude, has also been under way to convince the German command that the blow will come elsewhere on the French coast: the Pas-de-Calais. This operation will prove incredibly successful, throwing the German military leadership into confusion and helping bring about catastrophic delays in the response.

On the night of 5/6 June, 1944, taking advantage of an unexpected break in bad weather, the vast force of over 5,000 ships, battleships, destroyers, minesweepers and landing craft stealthily approaches the coast of France down five channels swept clear of mines, heading for beaches codenamed Utah, Omaha, Gold, Juno and Sword. Ahead of them have gone British and American airborne assault troops, tasked with securing key bridges and roads behind the landing area to protect the invasion from the inevitable armoured counterattack. This is the Allies' one chance: if it succeeds, it will turn the tide of the war and



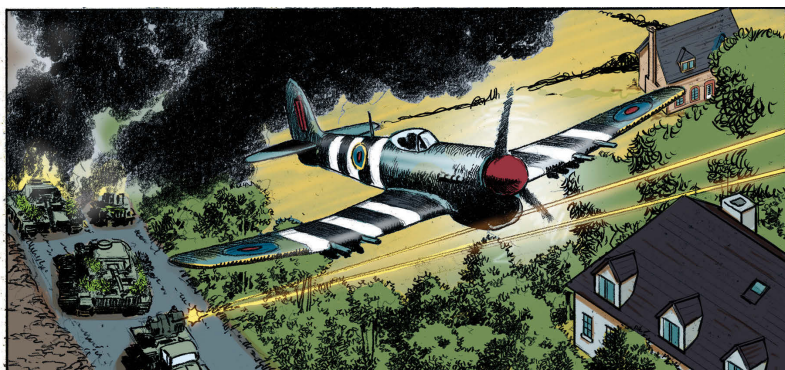
ensure Hitler's eventual defeat; if it fails, Germany will gain another year to strengthen the defences of Fortress Europe, develop the secret weapons to which Hitler attaches such importance, and turn against the advancing armies of the Soviet Union on the Eastern Front. History has nothing to offer more dramatic.

A NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

To convey the story of so complex an operation on such a vast scale is an ambitious undertaking, and to do so, we have focused on the stories of just a handful individuals and units from among the many thousands who played their part in the invasion and in the German response.

The story ranges from the airborne assaults against the town of Sainte-Mère-Église, the gun battery at Merville and the vital bridges at Bénouville and Ranville, to the German defence on the ground, the horrifically costly beach landings themselves, the US Rangers' assault on the sheer cliffs of Pointe du Hoc, the race by the 1st Special Service Brigade to relieve the exhausted paratroopers at the bridges, the chaotic response of the German command structure, the part played by French civilians and the fate of the long-awaited armoured counterattack by the 21st Panzer Division.

Although the dialogue is of course fictionalised, with the exception of the French commando, Léon Faivre, all those people named in the caption boxes are real historical figures, and their actions are reconstructed as closely as we could – with a little leeway for narrative and artistic licence.



00:00 -
MIDNIGHT

FRANCE, 6TH JUNE 1944

UTAH BEACH

OMAHA BEACH

GOLD BEACH

JUNO BEACH

SWORD BEACH



I'M FOREVER
BLOWING BUBBLES,
PRETTY BUBBLES
IN THE AIR...

THEY FLY SO HIGH,
NEARLY REACH THE SKY,
THEN LIKE MY DREAMS
THEY FADE AND DIE.

THIS IS IT,
GENTLEMEN.



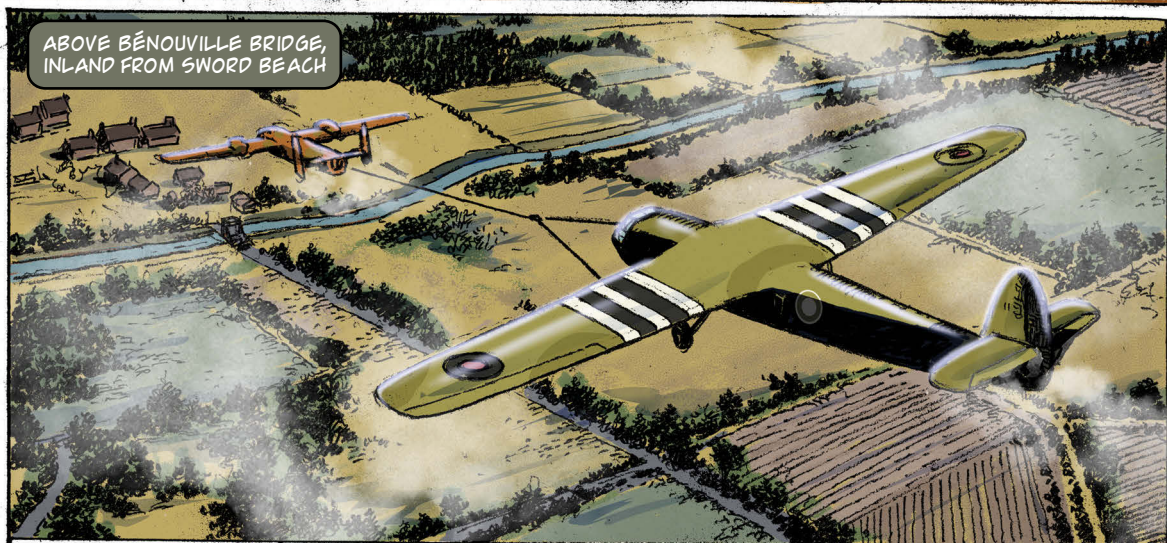
ONCE WE'RE ON THE GROUND,
WE MUST CAPTURE THE CANAL
BRIDGE INTACT AND DEFEND IT
UNTIL RELIEVED.

I KNOW YOU'RE ALL READY
FOR THIS AND I HOPE TO GOD
THE BLOODY GERMANS ARE
NOT.

MAJOR JOHN HOWARD, OXFORDSHIRE
AND BUCKINGHAMSHIRE LIGHT
INFANTRY, BRITISH 1ST AIRBORNE
DIVISION

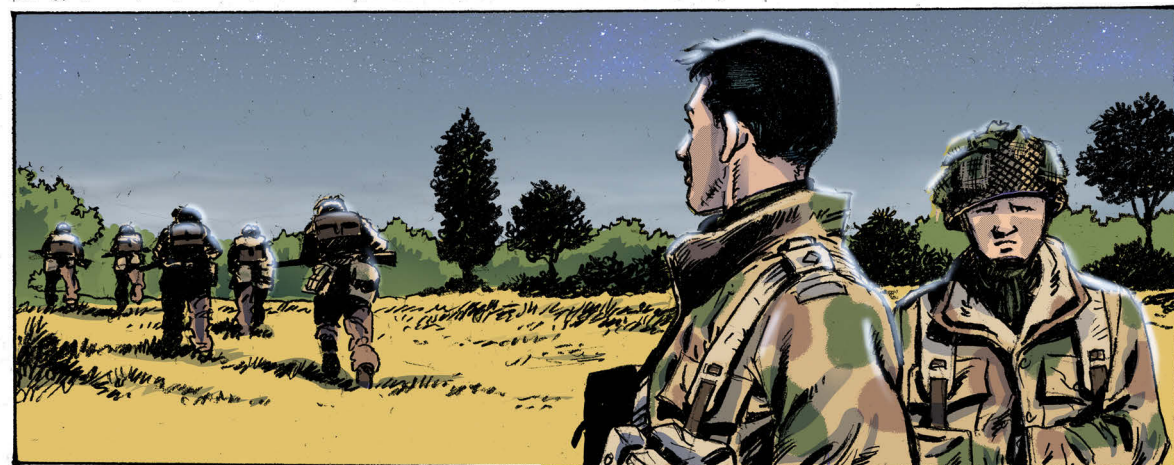


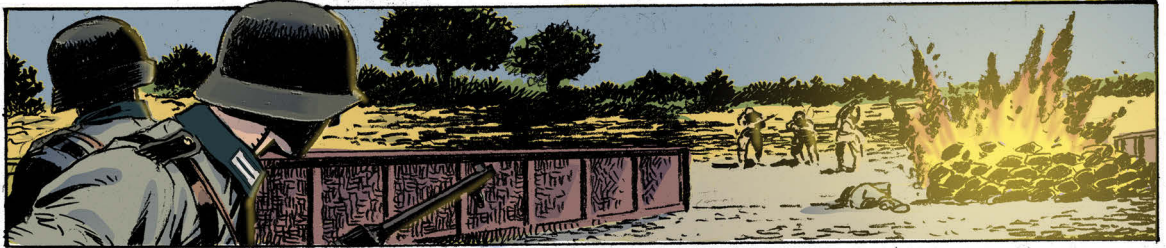
UP THE
OX AND
BUCKS!



ABOVE BÉNOUVILLE BRIDGE,
INLAND FROM SWORD BEACH







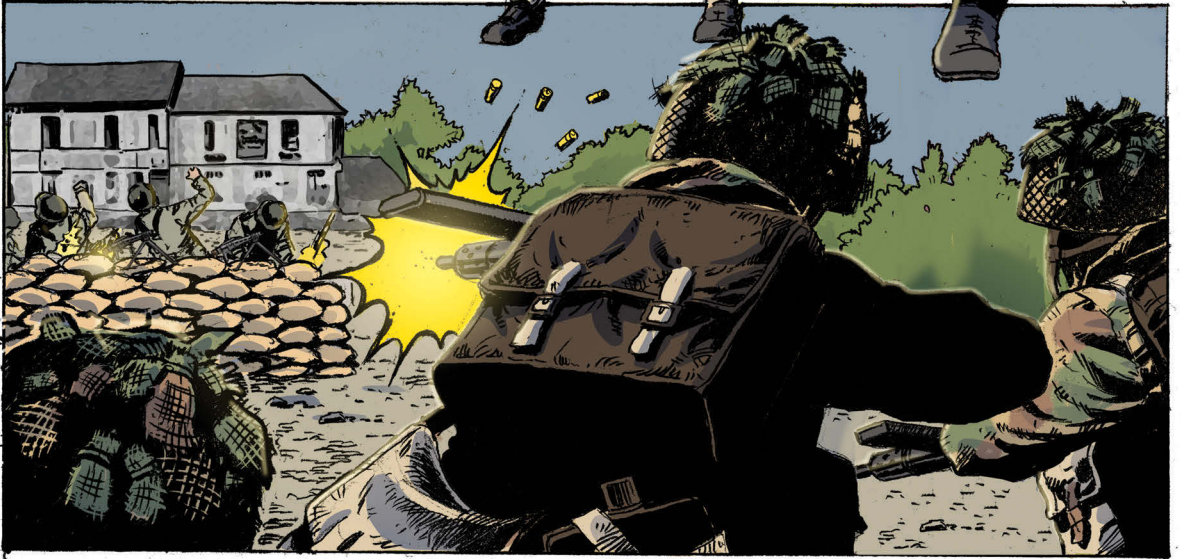


LIEUTENANT HERBERT DENHAM BROTHERIDGE:
8 DECEMBER 1915 - 6 JUNE 1944.
THE FIRST ALLIED CASUALTY OF D-DAY.

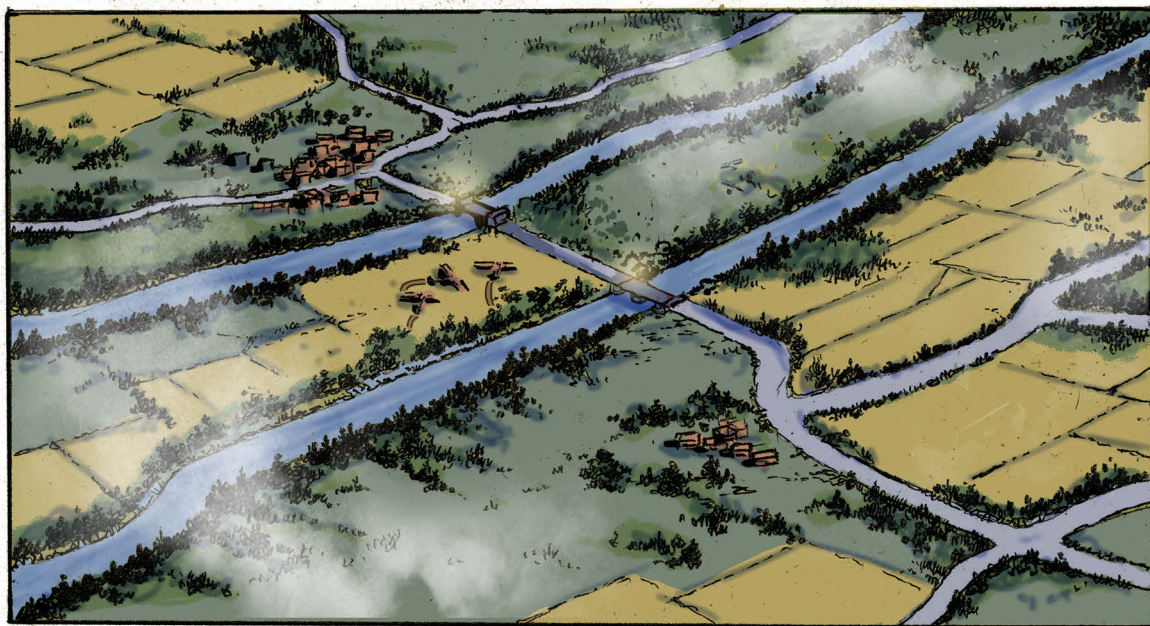


*GRENADE IN GERMAN.









00:45



STRONGPOINT 5,
UTAH BEACH



ALWIN, WILLST
DU RAUCHEN, MEIN
FREUND?



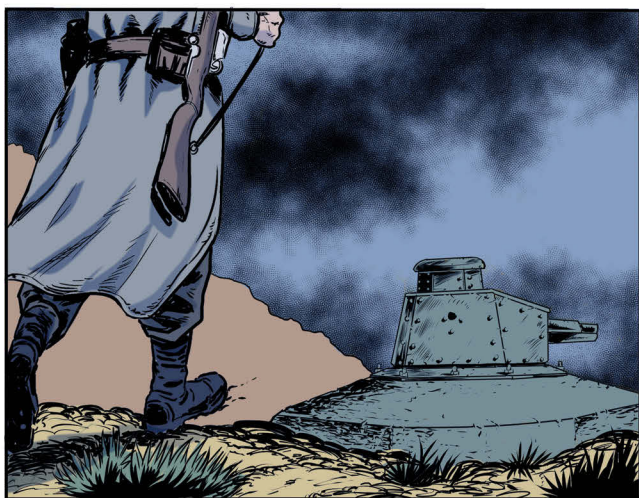
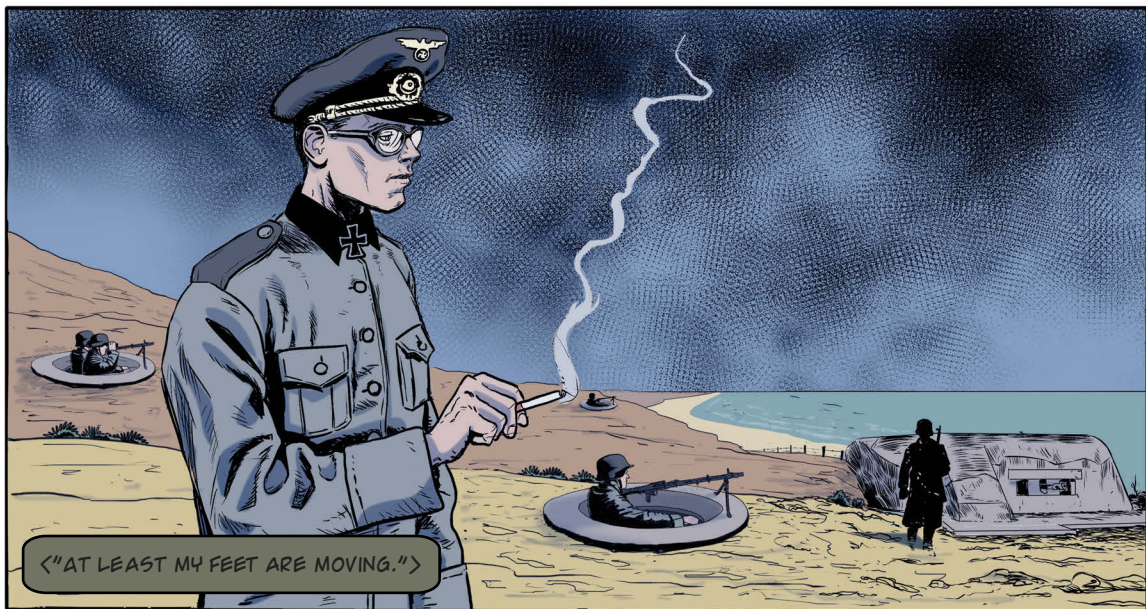
NEIN,
EUGEN.

<I WOULD LIKE TO,
BUT SOMETIMES I
WONDER IF OUR
LEUTNANT COUNTS
THE STEPS FROM
POST TO POST.>



<LEUTNANT JAHNKE
HAS TO SLEEP
SOMETIME...>

<YOU WOULD THINK, BUT
I DO NOT WANT TO FIND
OUT WHAT ASSIGNMENT
IS WORSE THAN THIS.>





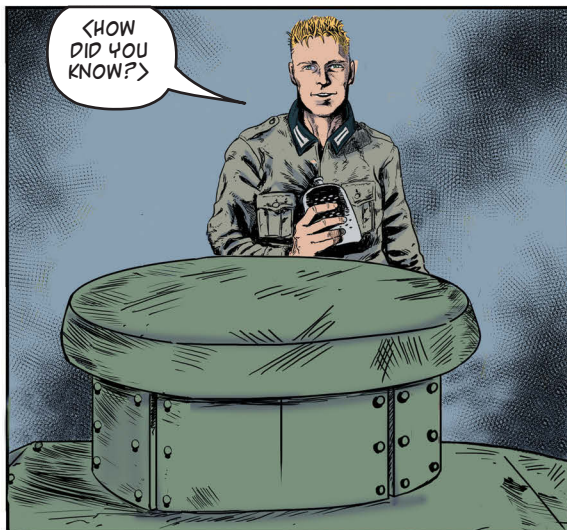
<YOU AWAKE
DOWN THERE,
RUDI?>



ALWIN!



<THOUGHT
YOU COULD
USE THIS.>



<HOW
DID YOU
KNOW?>

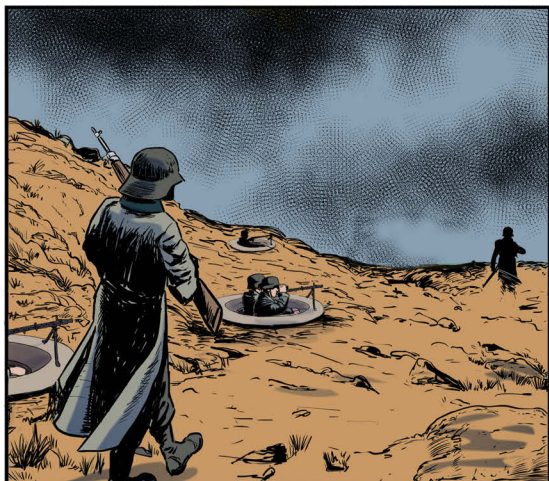
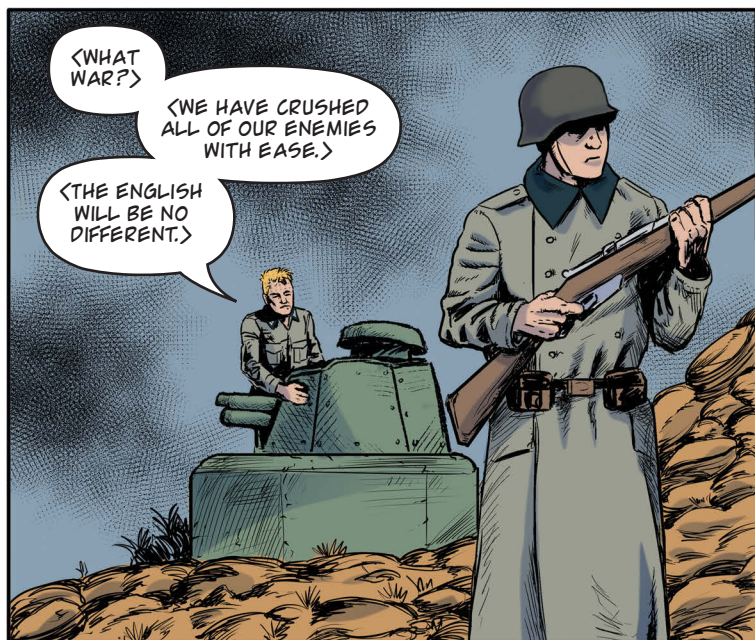


<EVERY DAY, YOU TELL ME
IT'S COLD AS A CRYPT DOWN
THERE.>

<I FIGURE THIS
WILL MAKE YOUR
NIGHT A LITTLE
WARMER.>



<DON'T DRINK IT ALL,
RUDI, OR YOU'LL
SLEEP THROUGH
THE WAR!>





<I'VE TOLD HIM, ANY COLDER, AND HIS EYES MAY STICK TO THOSE BINOCULARS.>

<HE DOESN'T LISTEN TO ME.>

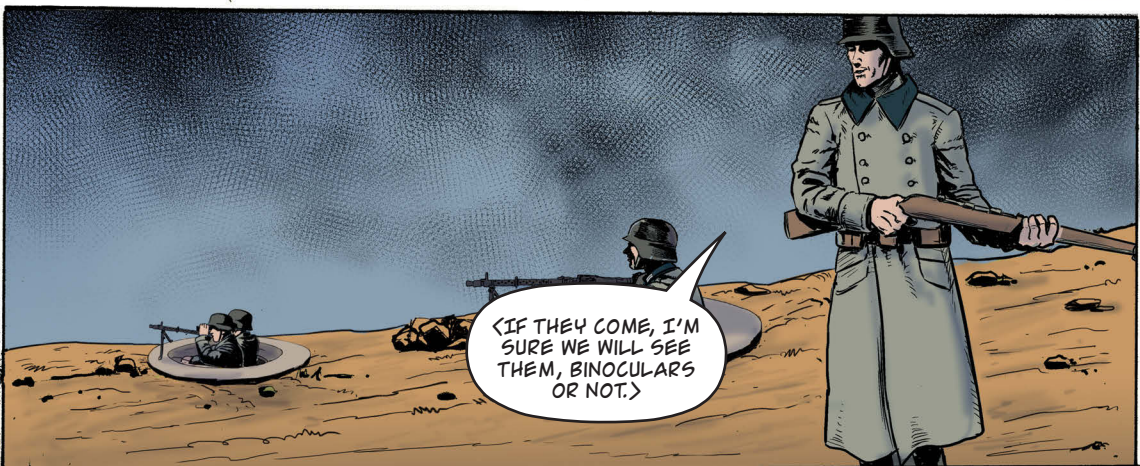


<THEY TELL ME TO WATCH FOR THE ENGLISH CROSSING THE CHANNEL, AND I WATCH FOR THE ENGLISH CROSSING THE CHANNEL.>

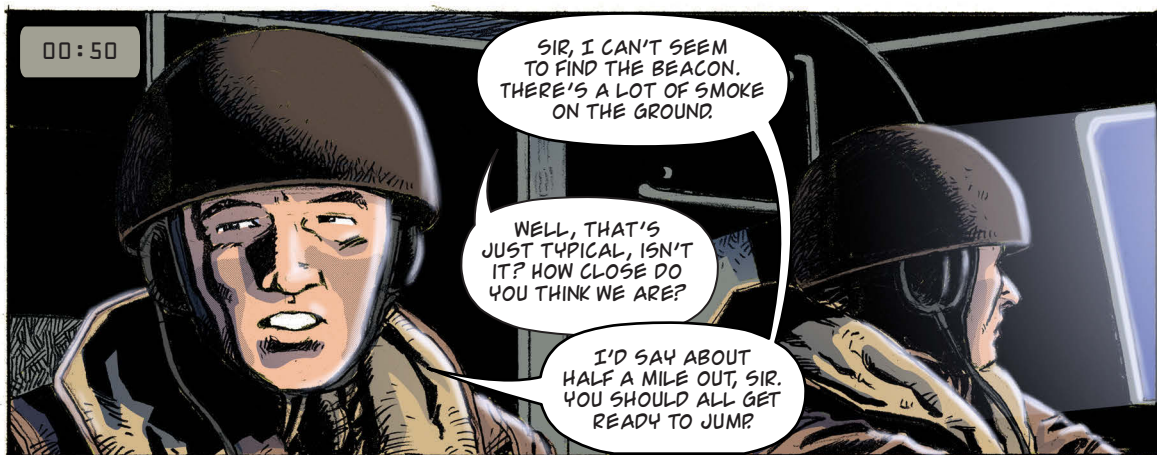


<I HEARD THE WEATHER'S GOING TO BE LIKE THIS FOR A WHILE.>

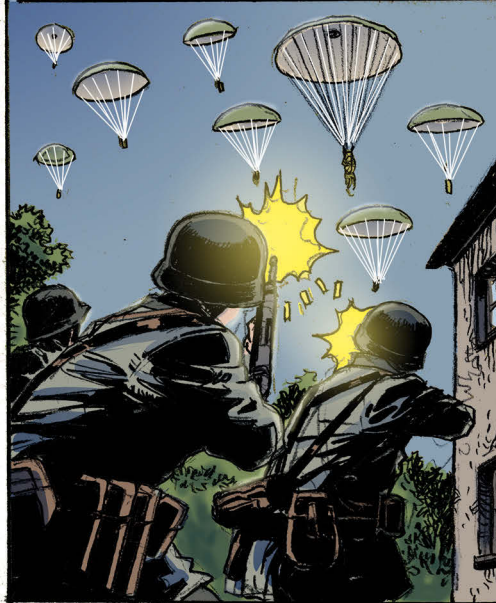
<I'D RATHER NOT BE BLIND WHEN THEY ARRIVE.>



<IF THEY COME, I'M SURE WE WILL SEE THEM, BINOCULARS OR NOT.>















THE FRENCH
COUNTRYSIDE

HEADING TOWARD
MERVILLE BATTERY.

LIEUTENANT-COLONEL
TERENCE OTWAY



I DON'T THINK
WE'RE SUPPOSED TO
BE HERE, DO YOU?

HONESTLY
MATE, I'M
NOT SURE.

BLIMEY, I
HOPE THE C.O.
KNOWS A BIT MORE
THAN WE DO THEN.



WE'RE ABOUT
400 YARDS
EAST OF THE
DROP ZONE.

WE NEED TO
REGROUP WITH THE
ARTILLERY AND VEHICLES
AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

SIR!

SO, LET'S
GET A MOVE
ON, GENTS!

01:03

BOOM

SAINTE-MÈRE-ÉGLISE, FRANCE,
INLAND FROM UTAH BEACH

<HAVE YOU SEEN
MONSIEUR HAIRON?
IS HE HOME?>

<CALL
THE FIRE
BRIGADE!> *

FEU!

*TRANSLATED FROM FRENCH.

<DID ANYONE
SEE WHAT
HAPPENED?>

J'AI ENTENDU
UN AVION!

JE ME SUIS
CACHE DANS
LE PLACARD.

C'ÉTAIT
UNE BOMBE!





