

WE LEARNED ABOUT ALL THE NEW TOYS OF MODERN WARFARE: BARBED WIRE, LAND MINES, AND A REAL DOOZY, THE MACHINE GUN... THOUGHT UP BY SOME AMERICAN-BORN ENGLISHMAN WHO SUPPOSEDLY GOT THE IDEA WHEN SOMEBODY TOLD HIM, "IF YOU WANT TO MAKE A PILE OF MONEY, INVENT SOMETHING THAT WOULD LET EUROPEANS CUT EACH OTHER'S THROATS WITH GREATER FACILITY."



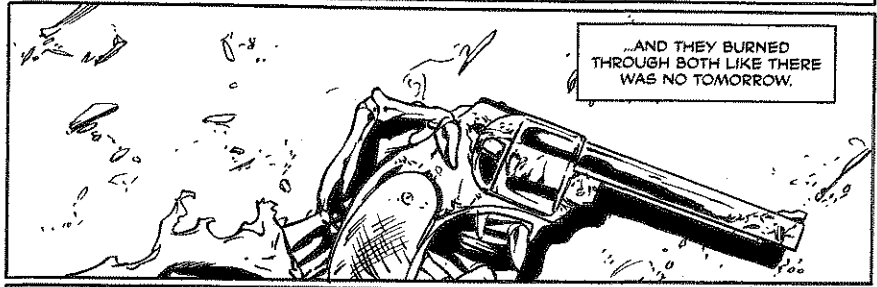
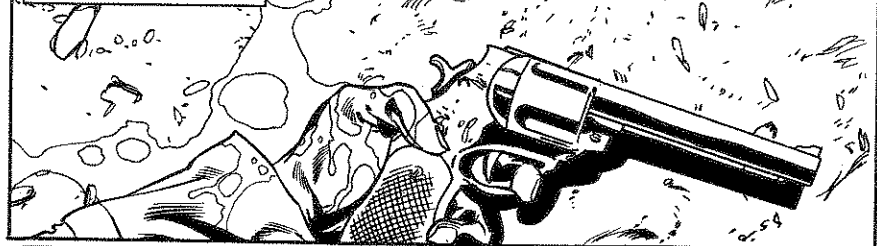
AND AT THREE HUNDRED ROUNDS A MINUTE, WHAT A PILE OF MONEY HE MUST HAVE MADE.

THE "SEWING MACHINE," THE "COFFEE MILL," THE "RIVETER," WHATEVER YOU WANNA CALL IT, THE MACHINE GUN CHANGED EVERYTHING ABOUT THAT WAR, EXCEPT THE MINDS OF THE GENERALS RUNNING IT.

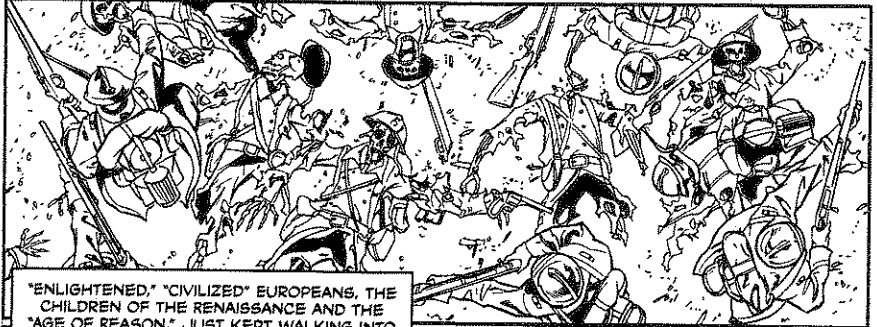


'CAUSE THE OLD MEN CALLING THE SHOTS, THE ONES WHO GREW UP BEFORE THESE NEWFANGLED WHATCHAMACALLITS... THEY STILL THOUGHT ALL YOU NEEDED WAS GOOD OLD-FASHIONED COURAGE, WHAT THE FRENCH CALLED "ELAN."

WHEN THE WAR STARTED, BOTH SIDES HAD PLENTY OF YOUNG MEN WITH PLENTY OF "ELAN"...



...AND THEY BURNED THROUGH BOTH LIKE THERE WAS NO TOMORROW.



"ENLIGHTENED," "CIVILIZED" EUROPEANS, THE CHILDREN OF THE RENAISSANCE AND THE "AGE OF REASON," JUST KEPT WALKING INTO EACH OTHER'S MACHINE GUN FIRE...



...AGAIN... AND AGAIN... AND AGAIN... AND AGAIN...

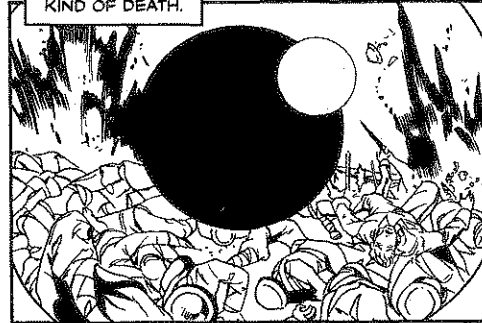
WE LEARNED ABOUT BATTLES LIKE THE "MEAT GRINDER OF VERDUN," WHERE SOMETHING LIKE 160,000 FRENCHMEN DIED IN JUST ELEVEN MONTHS...



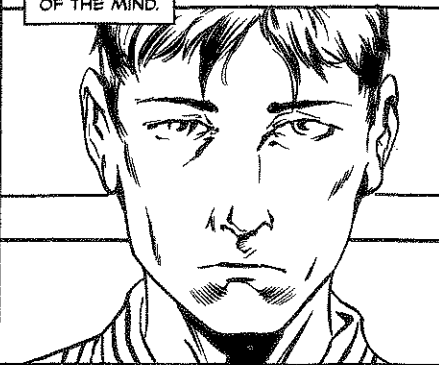
...AND "THE GREAT FIRST LIP OF THE SOMME," WHERE 20,000 BRITISH BOYS DIED IN JUST ONE DAY!



WE LEARNED ABOUT ANOTHER KIND OF DEATH.



THE DEATH OF THE MIND.



PERSONALITIES THAT CRUMBLLED TO DUST. BREATHING STATUES THAT STARED SILENTLY INTO DARKNESS.



LIKE "SPANISH FLU," IT BECAME SUCH AN EPIDEMIC THAT DOCTORS FINALLY GOT AROUND TO GIVIN' IT A NAME: "SHELL SHOCK."



FOR ME, THOSE POOR BASTARDS HAD ANOTHER NAME, ONE THAT SOME OF MY CREOLE FRIENDS USED TO TALK ABOUT.

"ZOMBIES," THE LIVING DEAD.



WE ALSO LEARNED ABOUT "NO-MAN'S-LAND", THAT THIN SNAKE OF DEAD DIRT BETWEEN THE ALLIED AND THE GERMAN TRENCHES. IN A WAR OF STALEMATE AND ATTRITION, IT SEESAWED BARELY A FEW YARDS IN EITHER DIRECTION. FROM THE ALPS TO THE NORTH SEA, MORE MEN DIED THERE THAN ANY OTHER PLACE IN THE WORLD. YOUNG MEN JUST LIKE US, WHO WERE NOW NOTHIN' BUT BONE CHIPS AMONG THE DEBRIS, AND SHELL CRATERS, AND SNIPERS...



SNIPERS LIKE THE ONE WHO KILLED DAVE ON OUR FIRST DAY AT THE FRONT.



THE FOLLOWING DAYS WERE FILLED WITH TRAININ'...



...CHORES...



...AND WAITIN'...

...FOR MORE TRAININ'...



...MORE CHORES...

LATRINE

...AND MORE WAITIN'...

WE LEARNED WE WEREN'T  
THE ONLY BLACK TROOPS  
FIGHTING FOR THE FRENCH.



THEY HAD THEIR OWN  
"COLONIAL" UNITS.



MOROCCANS AND  
SENEGALESE.



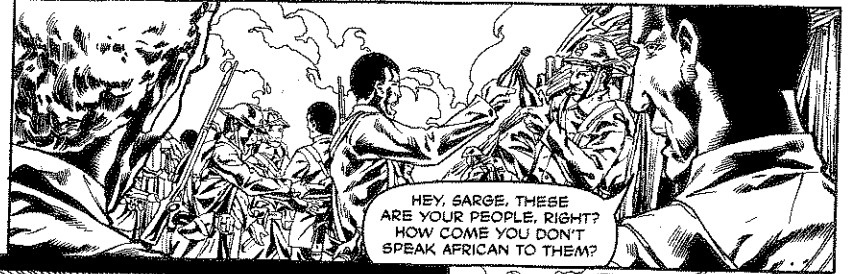
NEITHER OF US SPOKE  
MUCH FRENCH.



BUT TRADE, I'VE ALWAYS  
FOUND, IS THE BEST  
WAY TO COMMUNICATE.



AND THE BEST WAY  
TO MAKE FRIENDS.



HEY, SARGE, THESE  
ARE YOUR PEOPLE, RIGHT?  
HOW COME YOU DON'T  
SPEAK AFRICAN TO THEM?



SPEAK  
'AFRICAN' TO 'MY  
PEOPLE'?



CAN YOUR TINY  
INTUTHANE BRAIN EVEN  
IMAGINE HOW VAST OUR  
MOTHERLAND IS?



I'VE LESS IN  
COMMON WITH THESE  
CHAPS THAN THE  
FROGGIES HAVE WITH  
THE HUN.



LIKE I SAID, TRADING'S STILL THE  
BEST WAY TO MAKE FRIENDS...



SURE, SARGE, NOTHIN' IN COMMON.

UGOGO WAKHO ISFEBE!



MAYBE WE OWED 'EM MORE THAN WE KNEW.

YEAH, THEY WERE A SWELL BUNCH A' FELLAS.



SWELL BUNCH A' FELLAS, THOSE AFRICANS.



WE HAD OTHER VISITORS TOO...



AND GOOD, GOOD FIGHTERS! SO GOOD THAT I HEARD THE FRENCH GOVERNMENT USED TO ACTUALLY PAY THEM TO TAKE PRISONERS INSTEAD A' KILLIN' THEM ALL! MAYBE THE BRASS HATS IN PARIS FIGURED ALL BLACK FOLKS COULD FIGHT LIKE THAT.



...THAT WEREN'T SO SWELL.

SHOULDA USED THE BLUNT SIDE, NOW YOU'RE GONNA HAVE TO CLEAN IT.



WHY DON'T WE JUST GET RID OF 'EM ALL? GAS 'EM OUT OR SOMETHIN'.



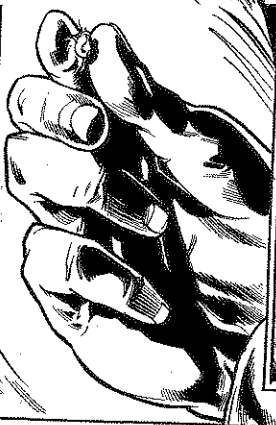
SIDES, WE GOT OTHER FRIENDS TO DEAL WITH.



WE NEED 'EM, WHO'S GONNA CLEAN UP ALL THOSE DEAD BODIES OUT THERE IN NO-MAN'S-LAND?

WE'D PICK 'EM OUT EVERY DAY, DROP 'EM IN CANDLES OR FRYING PANS, HEAR THEM GO POP-POP-POP, OR JUST RUN OUR PANTS OVER A CANDLE AND HEAR 'EM CRACKLE BY THE HUNDREDS. AND ALL THE TIME IT SEEMED LIKE WE WERE JUST MAKIN' ROOM FOR MORE.

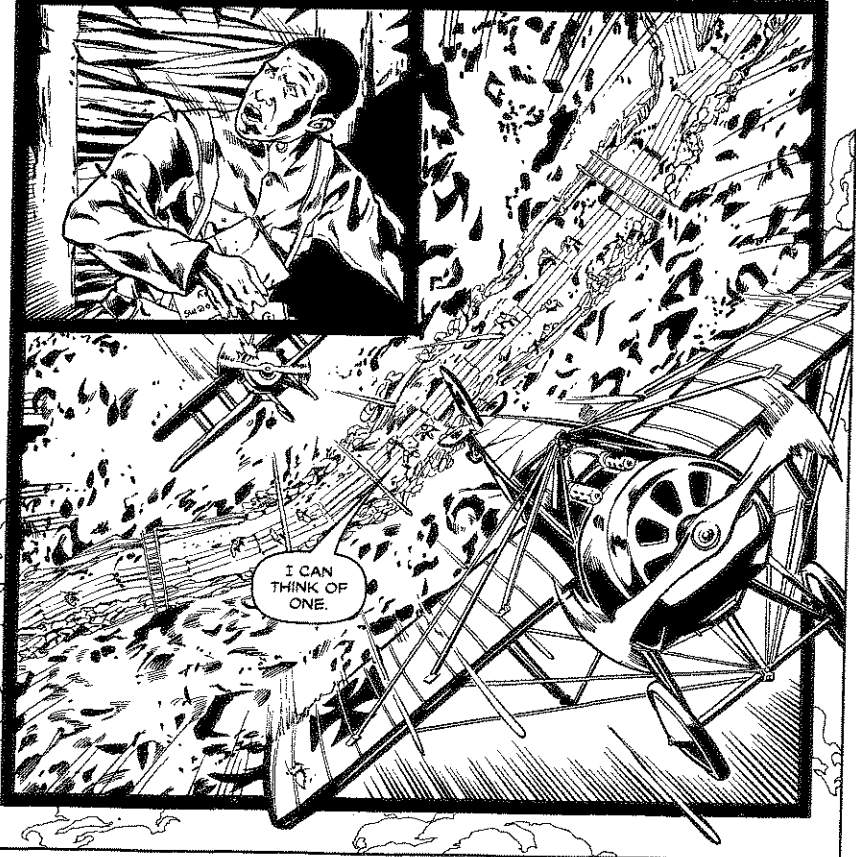
WE HAD "COOTIES," BODY LICE, IN OUR CLOTHES, OUR HAIR, HELL, EVEN OUR EYEBROWS.



MUD, COOTIES, RATS AS BIG AS A PULLMAN SLEEPER CAR. HELLUVA WAY TO FIGHT A WAR.



YOU GOT A BETTER WAY, JOHNSON?



I CAN THINK OF ONE.



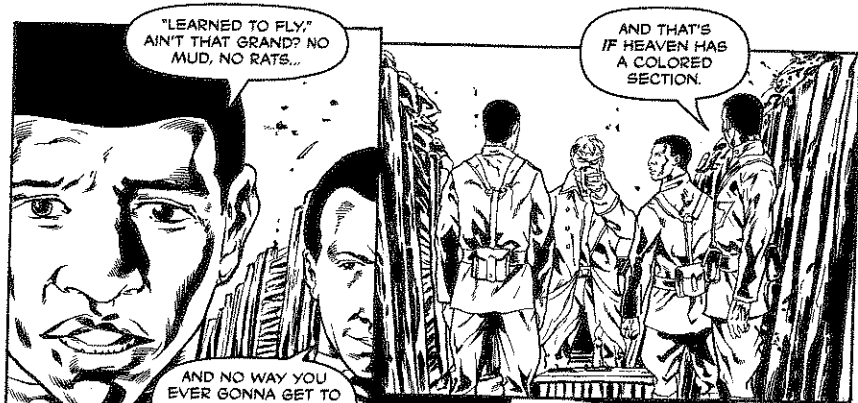
THAT PILOT,  
HE IS ONE OF  
YOURS.



ONE  
OF US? YOU  
MEAN...

AMERICAN.

EUGENE JAUQUES  
BULLARD CAME HERE TO  
FIGHT WITH OUR FOREIGN  
LEGION BEFORE HE  
LEARNED TO FLY.



"LEARNED TO FLY,"  
AIN'T THAT GRAND? NO  
MUD, NO RATS...

AND THAT'S  
IF HEAVEN HAS  
A COLORED  
SECTION.

AND NO WAY YOU  
EVER GONNA GET TO  
FLY, 'CEPT ON THE  
WAY TO HEAVEN.

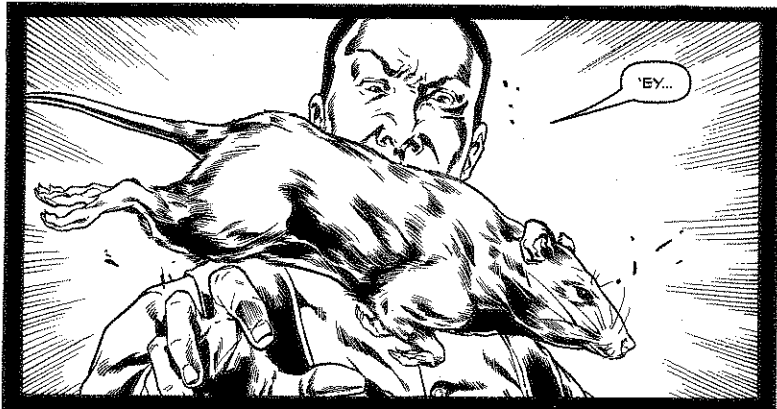


WHAT  
THE...

THE  
GUNS...



...THEY  
GETTIN'  
LOUDER?





BIG GUNS WERE THE KING OF THE BATTLEFIELD, WITH BOTH SIDES BLASTIN' EACH OTHER'S TRENCHES AS REGULAR AS SPRINGTIME RAIN.



DUVAL,  
ARRETEZ!



DAMNEZ-VOUS,  
REDOUBLEZ!!

THOUSANDS OF GUNS, SOME SO BIG THEY COULD HIT PARIS, SOME SO LOUD THEY COULD BE HEARD IN ENGLAND. SO MANY SHELLS WERE FIRED THAT AT ONE POINT THEY AVERAGED SIXTY EVERY SECOND... SO MANY THAT EVEN THE "DUDS," BURIED AND LONG FORGOTTEN, KEEP KILLIN' FOLKS TO THIS DAY.

YOU NEVER FORGET THAT FEELIN', BEIN' SO HELPLESS... SO EXPOSED... AND JUST SO GODDAMN SCARED.

DUVAL,  
QU'EST-CE QUE  
TU FAIS??



MAMAN!

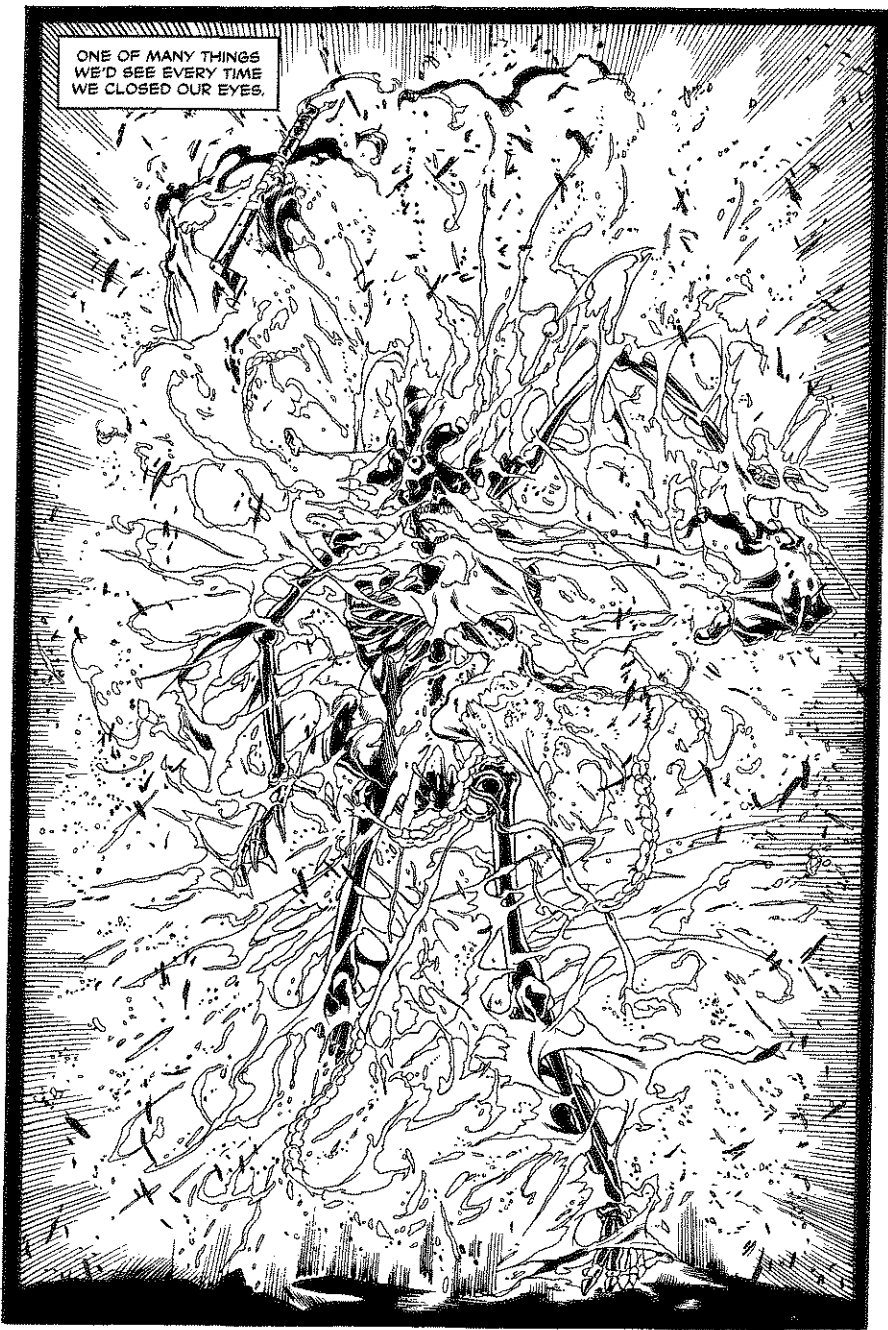


DUVAL!!!!

MAMAN!  
MAMAN!!!!

THAT WAS THE FIRST TIME WE SAW WHAT A "JACK JOHNSON" COULD DO TO A HUMAN BODY.

ONE OF MANY THINGS WE'D SEE EVERY TIME WE CLOSED OUR EYES.







...AFTER  
THEY'VE SEEN  
PAREE.

C'MON!

HOW YA GONNA  
KEEP 'EM AWAY FROM  
BROADWAY!



JAZZIN'  
AROUND AND PAINTIN'  
THE TOWN...

HOW YA  
GONNA KEEP 'EM AWAY  
FROM HARM...



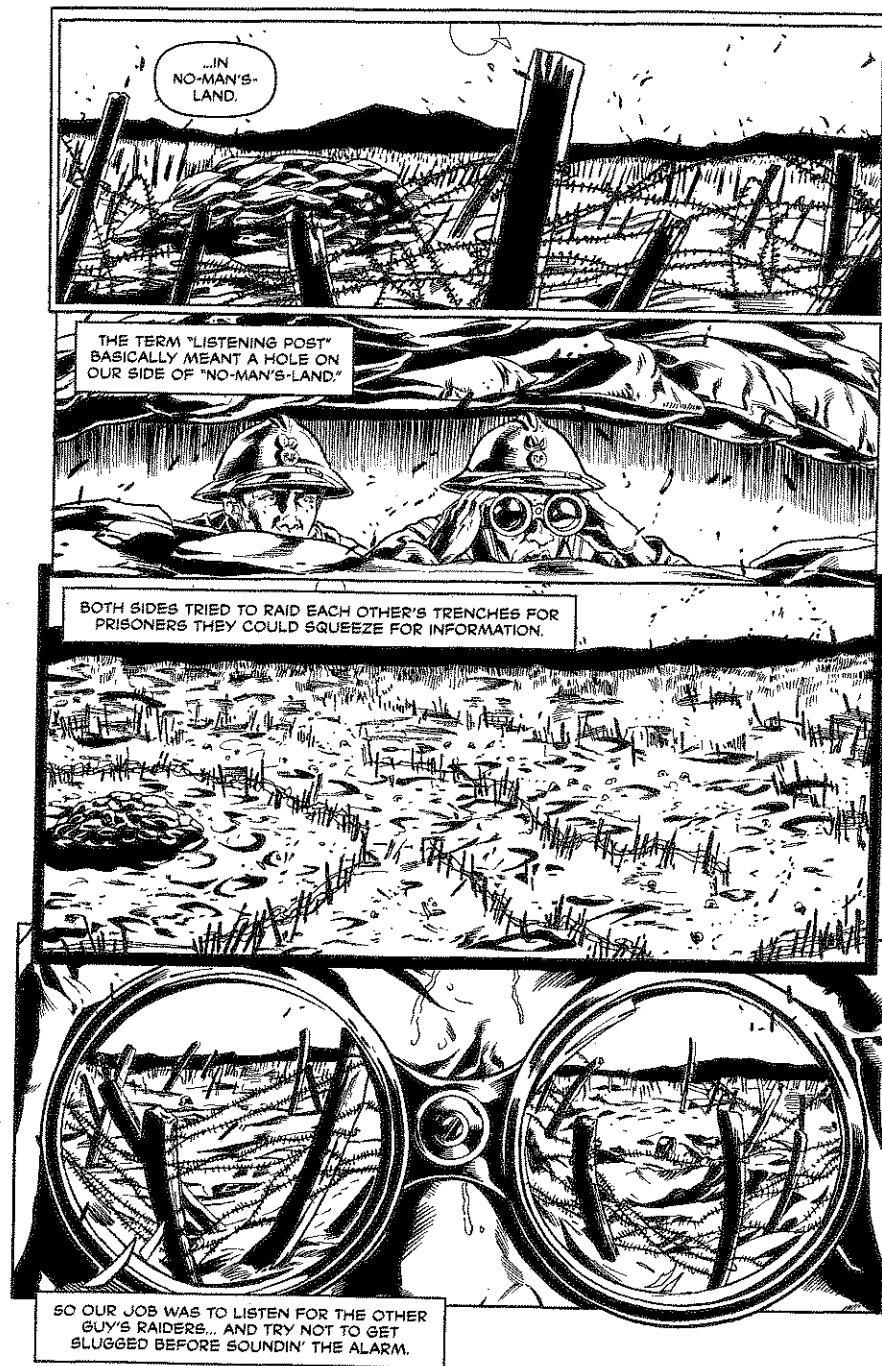
THAT'S A  
MYSTERY...



THEY'LL  
NEVER WANT TO  
SEE A RAKE OR  
PLOW...

AND WHO THE  
DEUCE CAN PARLAYVOUS  
A COW...

HHHOW YA  
GONNA KEEP  
'EM DOWN ON  
THE FARM...

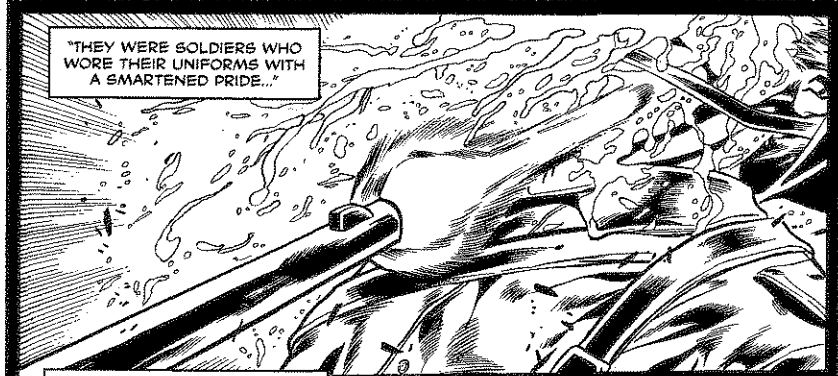




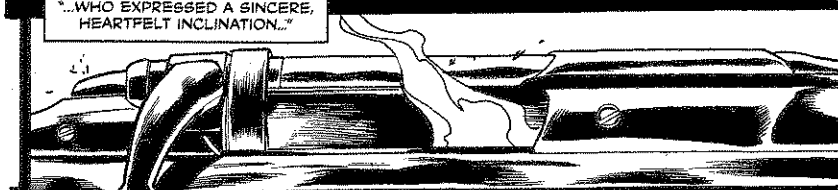
WHAT HAPPENED NEXT BECAME ONE OF THE MOST PUBLICIZED EVENTS OF THE WAR. IRVIN S. COBB, A WHITE SOUTHERN JOURNALIST, AND AN OUTSPOKEN BIGOT TO BOOT, DESCRIBED THE INCIDENT BY WRITING...



"IF EVER PROOF WAS NEEDED, WHICH IT IS NOT, THAT THE COLOR OF A MAN'S SKIN HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH THE COLOR OF HIS SOUL, THIS TWAIN THEN AND THERE OFFERED IT IN ABUNDANCE."



"THEY WERE SOLDIERS WHO WORE THEIR UNIFORMS WITH A SMARTENED PRIDE..."



"...WHO EXPRESSED A SINCERE, HEARTFELT INCLINATION..."

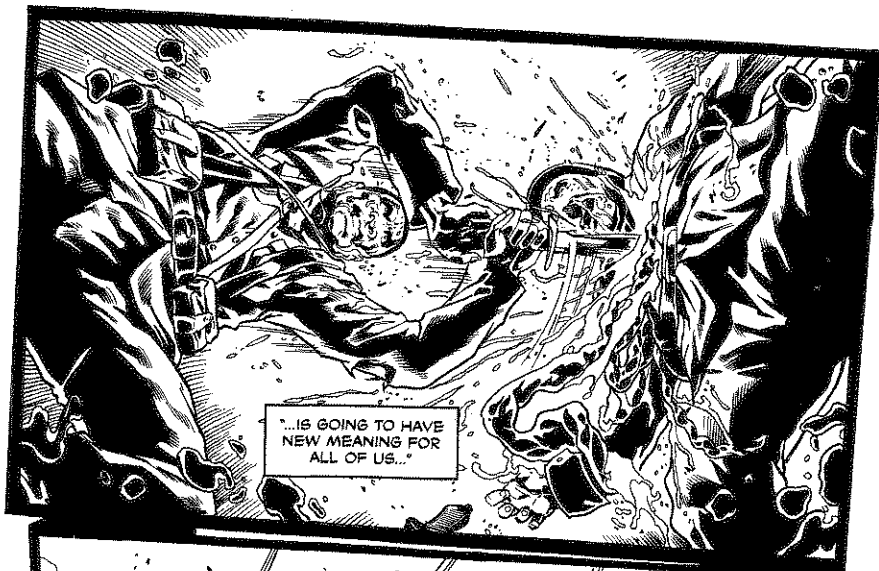


"...TO GET A WHACK AT THEIR FOE..."

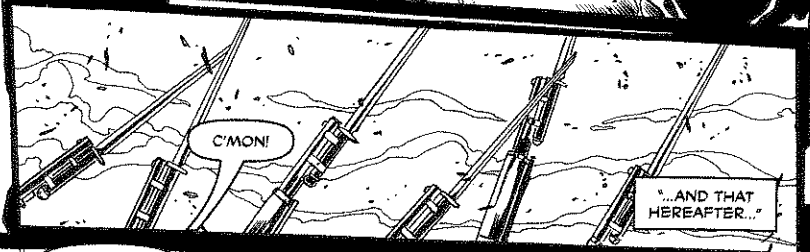


JOHNSON!





"...IS GOING TO HAVE NEW MEANING FOR ALL OF US..."



C'MON!

"...AND THAT HEREAFTER..."



JOHNSON!  
ROBERTS!  
WE'RE COMING!  
WE'RE...

"...N-I-G-G-E-R..."



HOLY...

...MERDE.

"...WILL MERELY BE ANOTHER WAY OF SPELLING THE WORD..."



"AMERICAN..."





I LOOK LIKE A GORILLA.



WHADYA EXPECT? THE ARTIST WAS WHITE. NEXT TIME WE'LL GET PRIVATE PIPPIN\* TO PAINT A REAL PRETTY PORTRAIT OF YOU.

THOMAS M. JOHNSON, NEW YORK EVENING SUN, MARTIN GREEN, NEW YORK EVENING WORLD, AND OF COURSE, THE NOTORIOUS MR. COBB! AND NOW, THANKS TO YOU, WE'RE FAMOUS IN GERMANY TOO!

"THE HARLEM HELLFIGHTERS." THAT'S WHAT FRITZEE'S CALLIN' US NOW, "THE HARLEM HELLFIGHTERS!"

WHO CARES 'BOUT THE DAMN PICTURE! NEWSPAPERMEN CAN'T GET ENOUGH A' YOU!

\*HORACE PIPPIN - A 369TH SOLDIER WHO LATER BECAME ONE OF THE MOST PROMINENT BLACK ARTISTS OF THE EARLY 20TH CENTURY.

YAH THINK IT'LL BE ENOUGH TO GET ME MY MEDAL A' HONOR?

UNTIL THEN, THIS WILL HAVE TO DO.

THE FRENCH CROIX DE GUERRE, THE "CROSS OF WAR."



AND YOU ARE THE FIRST AMERICAN, BLACK OR WHITE, TO WIN IT.

I'M BOTH PROUD AND SORRY TO SAY...



...YOU WON'T BE THE LAST.



JUDGMENT DAY.



WE HIT FRITZEE'S TRENCH, NAB SOME BUSHERS\* ALIVE...

\*THE AMERICANIZED VERSION OF THE FRENCH WORD BOCHE.



...AND HUSTLE 'EM BACK HERE LICKETY-SPLIT.



AND FOR HEAVEN'S SAKE, CHECK AND RECHECK THE BLOODY SEALS ON YOUR BLOODY GAS MASKS!



CHECK YOUR WEAPONS AND AMMO, MAKE SURE NOTHING RATTLES.

LIEUTENANT, THIS IS YOUR FIRST TIME LEADING MEN IN COMBAT, NO?



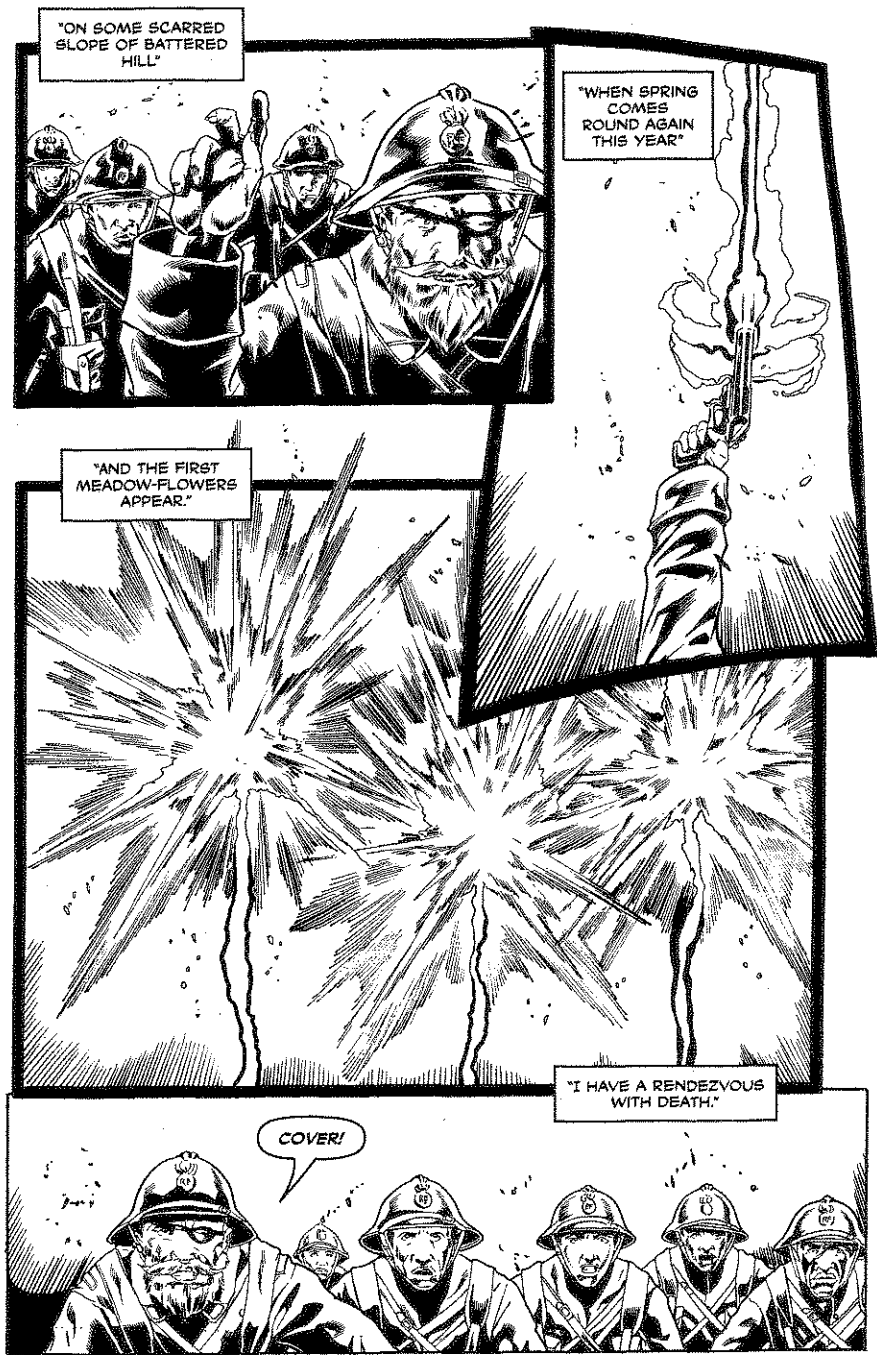


"IT MAY BE HE SHALL TAKE MY HAND"

"AND LEAD ME INTO HIS DARK LAND."

"AND CLOSE MY EYES AND QUENCH MY BREATH."

"IT MAY BE I SHALL PASS HIM STILL"



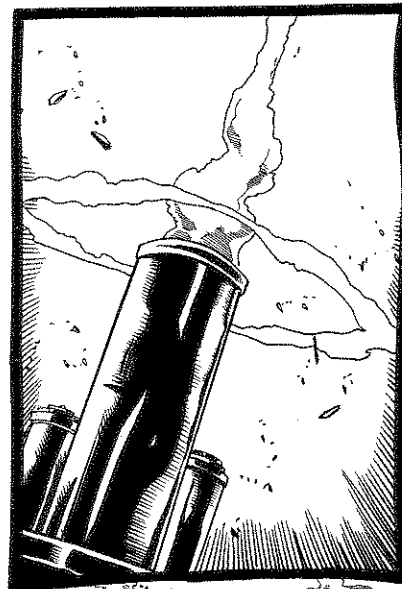
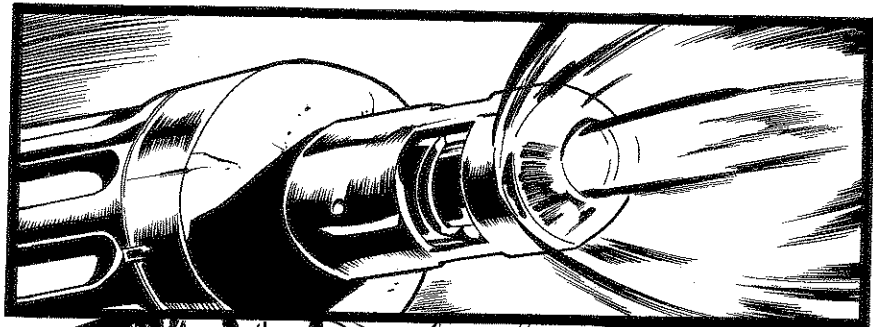
"ON SOME SCARRED SLOPE OF BATTERED HILL"

"WHEN SPRING COMES ROUND AGAIN THIS YEAR"

"AND THE FIRST MEADOW-FLOWERS APPEAR."

"I HAVE A RENDEZVOUS WITH DEATH."

COVER!





IT SMELLED LIKE MOLDY HAY.

IT WAS DESIGNED TO FLOAT DOWN, NOT UP, SO A MAN DIVING FOR COVER WOULD HAVE TO LIE IN IT TILL THE SHOOTING STOPPED.

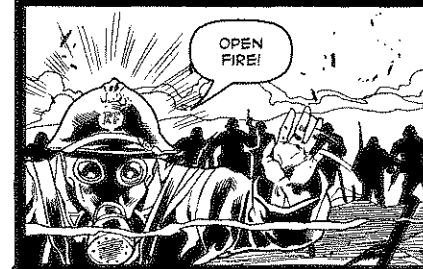
IT DIDN'T ALWAYS KILL RIGHT AWAY. I ONCE HEARD THAT THE GENIUS WHO INVENTED IT GOT HIMSELF A GOOD WHIFF, WENT TO A PARTY, AND DIED LATER THAT NIGHT.

WHETHER THAT'S TRUE OR NOT, I DON'T KNOW, BUT BOTH SIDES MADE SURE TO MIX THEIR PHOSGENE WITH OTHER GASES...

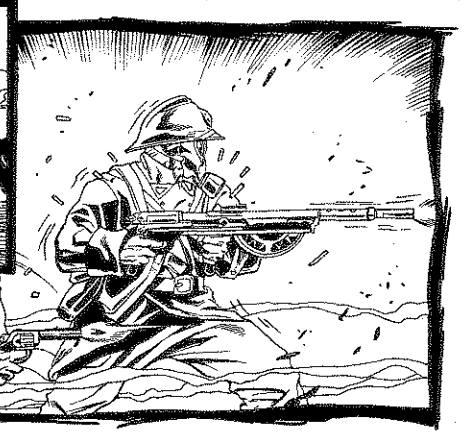
...JUST TO BE ON THE SAFE SIDE.



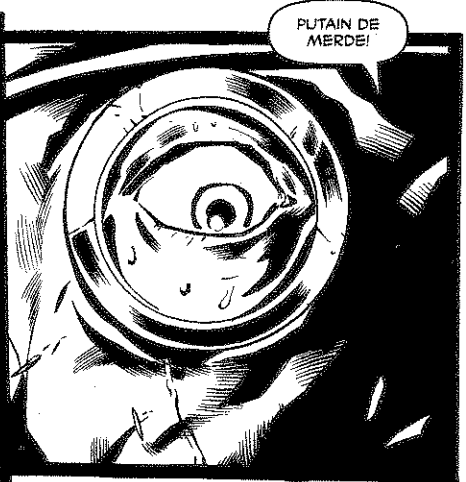
JETZT ANMELDEN!



OPEN FIRE!



WEAPON JAM!



PUTAIN DE MERDE!