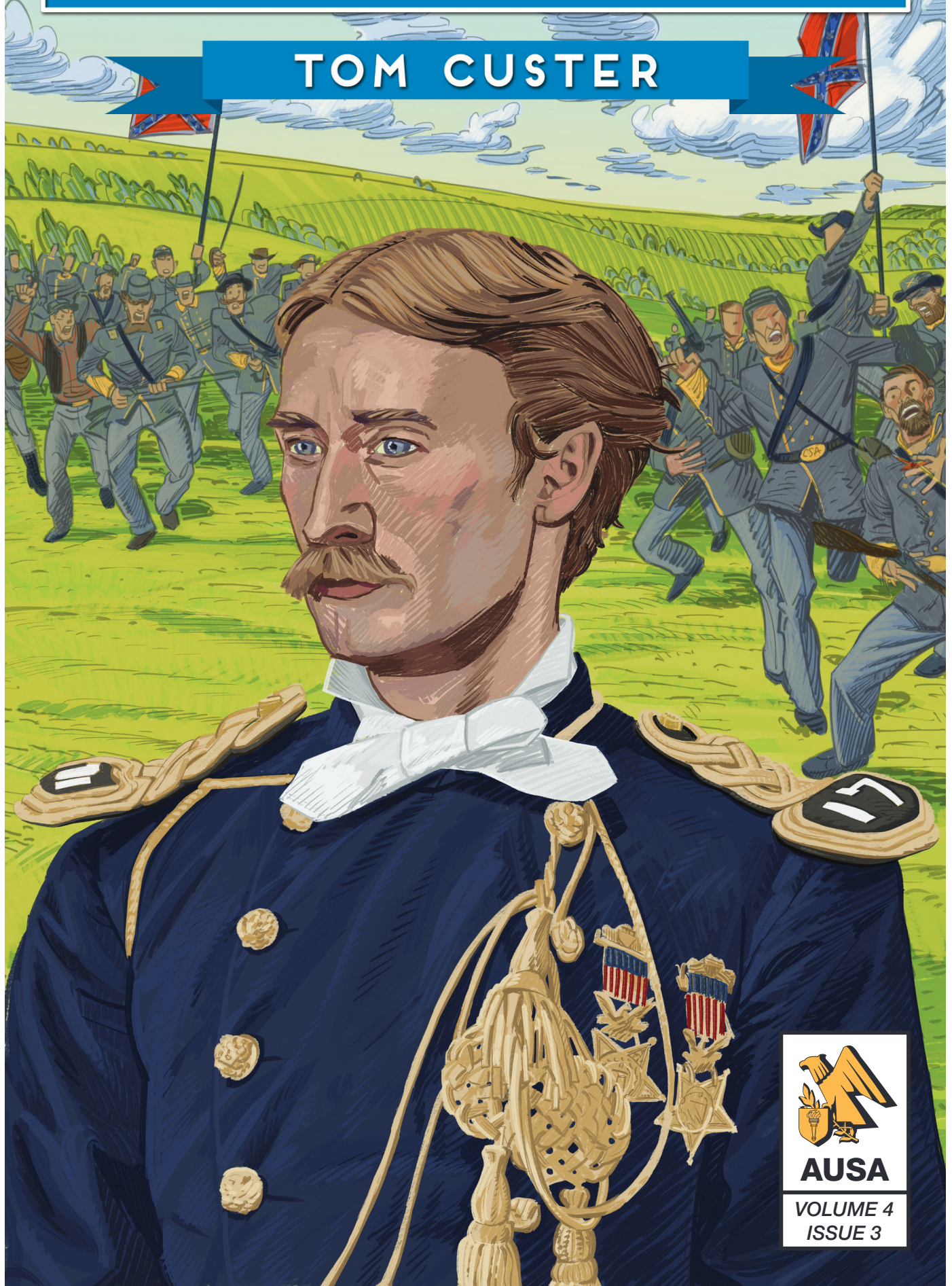


MEDAL OF HONOR

TOM CUSTER



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MEDAL OF HONOR

TOM CUSTER

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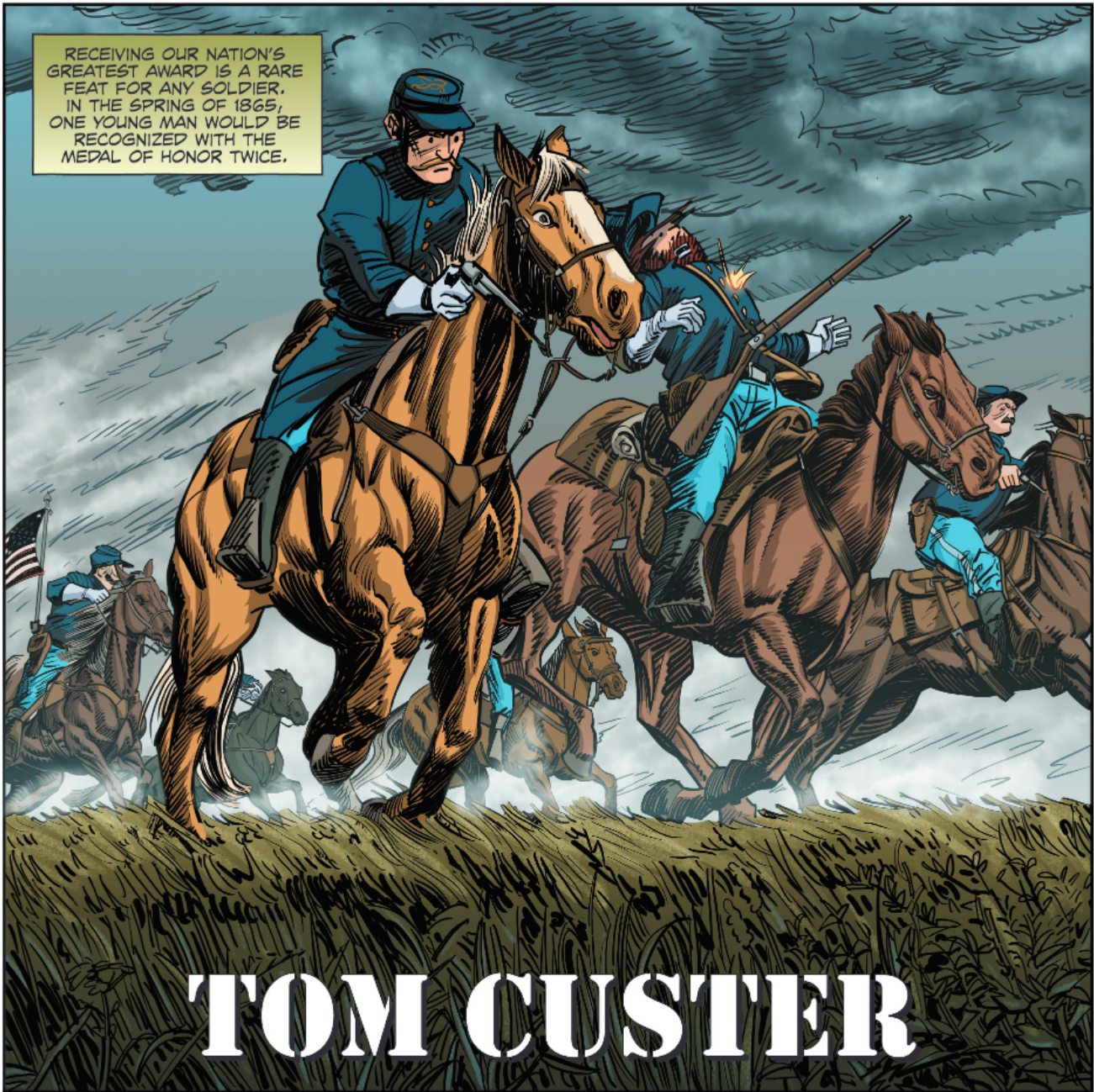
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RECEIVING OUR NATION'S GREATEST AWARD IS A RARE FEAT FOR ANY SOLDIER. IN THE SPRING OF 1865, ONE YOUNG MAN WOULD BE RECOGNIZED WITH THE MEDAL OF HONOR TWICE.



TOM CUSTER

THE YOUNGER BROTHER OF THE FAMOUS GEORGE ARMSTRONG CUSTER, THOMAS WARD CUSTER WAS BORN IN 1845 AND RAISED ON A FARM NEAR NEW RUMLEY, OHIO.

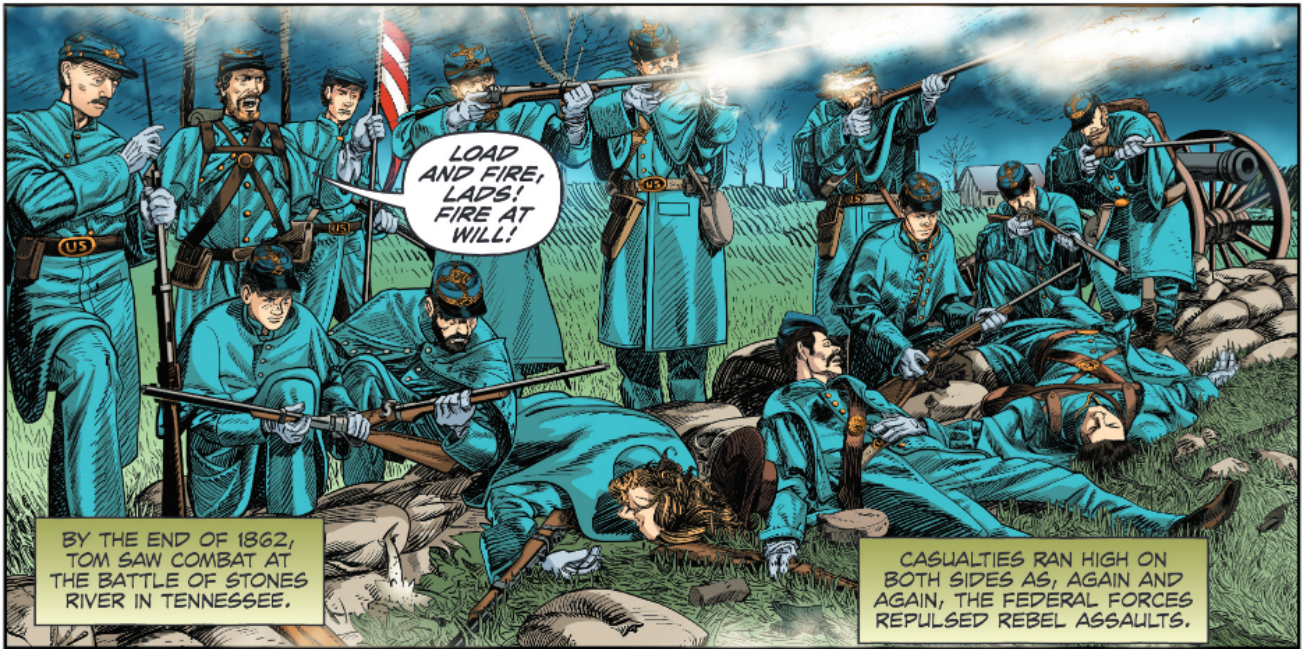


HAVE AT YOU, VILLAIN!

KEEP YOUR GUARD UP, TOM!

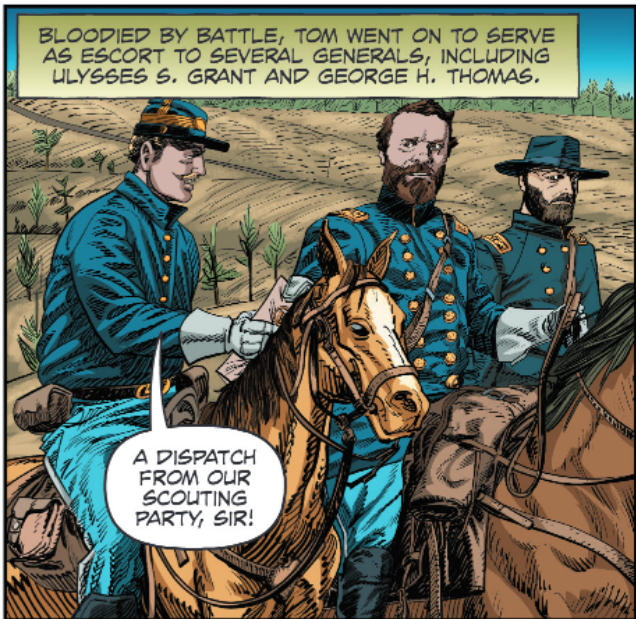


WHEN HIS COUNTRY CALLED FOR MEN TO PRESERVE THE UNION, TOM LIED ABOUT HIS AGE TO JOIN THE 21ST OHIO VOLUNTEER INFANTRY IN 1861.



BY THE END OF 1862, TOM SAW COMBAT AT THE BATTLE OF STONES RIVER IN TENNESSEE.

CASUALTIES RAN HIGH ON BOTH SIDES AS, AGAIN AND AGAIN, THE FEDERAL FORCES REPULSED REBEL ASSAULTS.



BLOODED BY BATTLE, TOM WENT ON TO SERVE AS ESCORT TO SEVERAL GENERALS, INCLUDING ULYSSES S. GRANT AND GEORGE H. THOMAS.

A DISPATCH FROM OUR SCOUTING PARTY, SIR!

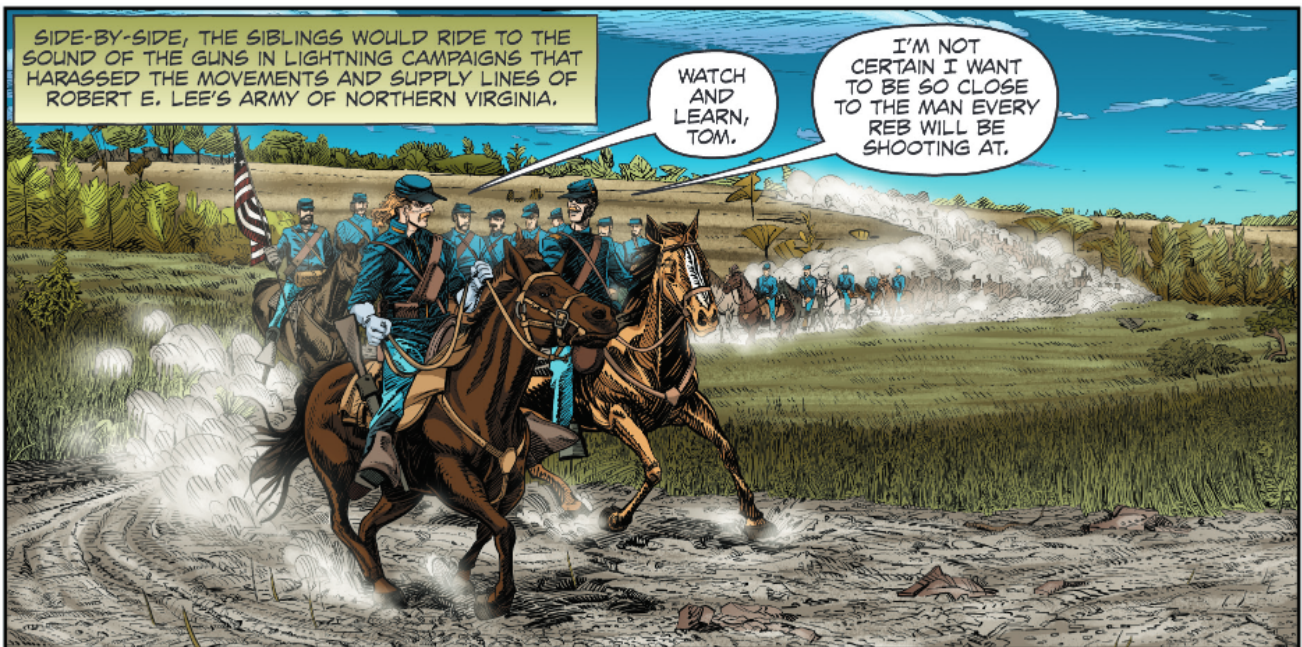


IN 1864, HE RE-ENLISTED AND WAS APPOINTED A SECOND LIEUTENANT IN THE 6TH MICHIGAN CAVALRY.

TOM BECAME AIDE-DE-CAMP TO BROTHER GEORGE WHO HAD BEEN PROMOTED TO BRIGADIER GENERAL.

REPORTING FOR DUTY, ARMSTRONG!

AT EASE, LITTLE BROTHER.



SIDE-BY-SIDE, THE SIBLINGS WOULD RIDE TO THE SOUND OF THE GUNS IN LIGHTNING CAMPAIGNS THAT HARASSED THE MOVEMENTS AND SUPPLY LINES OF ROBERT E. LEE'S ARMY OF NORTHERN VIRGINIA.

WATCH AND LEARN, TOM.

I'M NOT CERTAIN I WANT TO BE SO CLOSE TO THE MAN EVERY REB WILL BE SHOOTING AT.



FOR THE REMAINDER OF THAT YEAR, TOM CLUSTER DISTINGUISHED HIMSELF IN ACTIONS ACROSS THE SHENANDOAH VALLEY.

HE WOULD EARN A PROMOTION TO BREVET MAJOR.



IN THE EARLY MONTHS OF 1865, THE CONFEDERATE DEFENSES AT THEIR CAPITAL IN RICHMOND, VIRGINIA, AND AT NEARBY PETERSBURG BEGAN TO ERODE UNDER CONSTANT BOMBARDMENT FROM UNION ARTILLERY.



AT THE BEGINNING OF APRIL, THE UNION ARMY FORCED THE REBELS TO EVACUATE THEIR POSITIONS.

ROBERT E. LEE'S STRATEGY WAS TO FLEE WITH HIS REMAINING FORCES AND COMBINE WITH GENERAL JOSEPH E. JOHNSTON'S ARMY IN NORTH CAROLINA.



IT WAS IMPERATIVE FOR THE UNION ARMY TO REMAIN CLOSE TO LEE'S RETREATING FORCES AND CHOOSE GROUND UPON WHICH TO DO BATTLE.





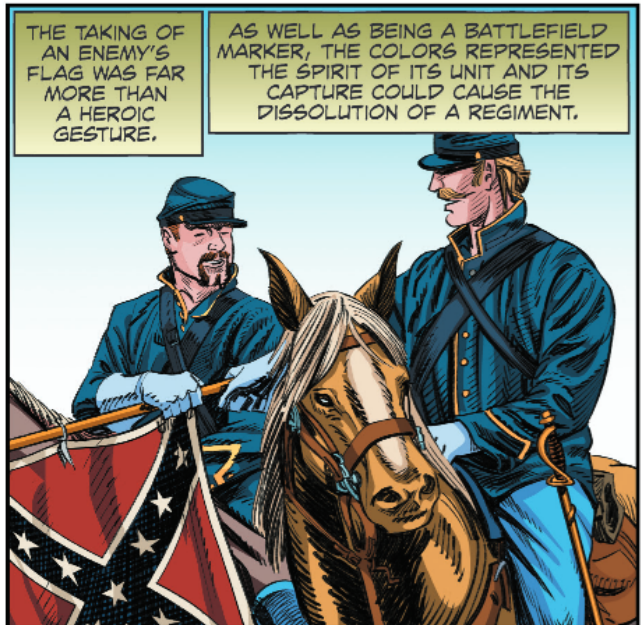
WHEN THE EXCHANGE WAS OVER, TOM CUSTER HAD TAKEN FOURTEEN PRISONERS AS WELL AS THEIR COLORS.

GROUND YOUR ARMS OR BE SHOT!



HIS BIG BROTHER WOULD WRITE: "GOD HAS BLESSED US WITH VICTORY. TOM IN THE MOST GALLANT MANNER CAPTURED THE BATTLE FLAG OF THE SECOND NORTH CAROLINA CAVALRY."

TAKE THESE REBS IN HAND, MEN.



THE TAKING OF AN ENEMY'S FLAG WAS FAR MORE THAN A HEROIC GESTURE.

AS WELL AS BEING A BATTLEFIELD MARKER, THE COLORS REPRESENTED THE SPIRIT OF ITS UNIT AND ITS CAPTURE COULD CAUSE THE DISSOLUTION OF A REGIMENT.

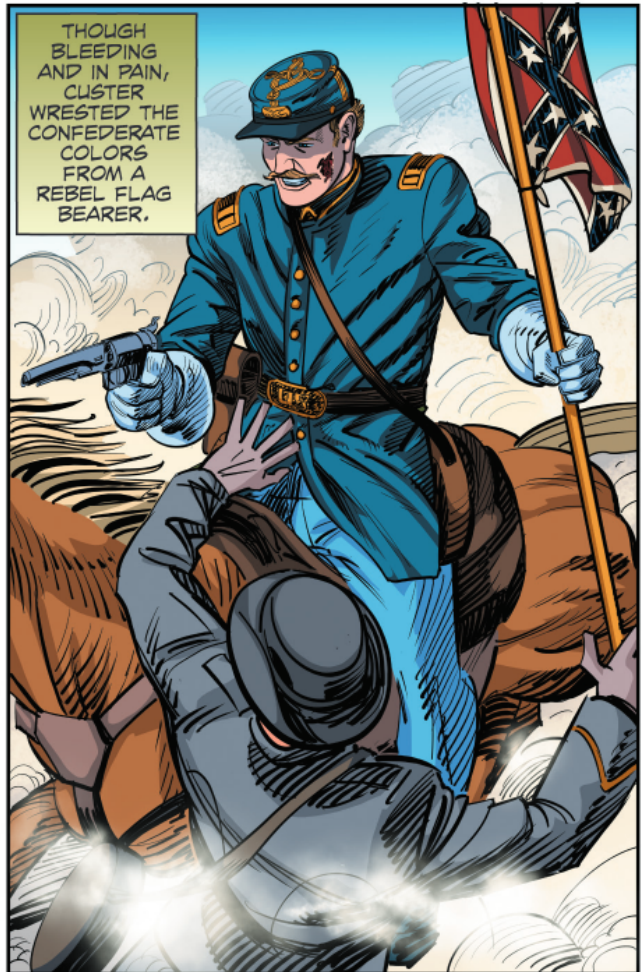


THE REMAINS OF THE REBEL ARMY, EXHAUSTED AND STARVING, MARCHED TO REACH FARMVILLE AND FRESH SUPPLIES.



ON APRIL 6 THEY REACHED A CHOKEPOINT AT SAILOR'S CREEK.

TOM CUSTER AND HIS HORSEMEN WERE THERE.

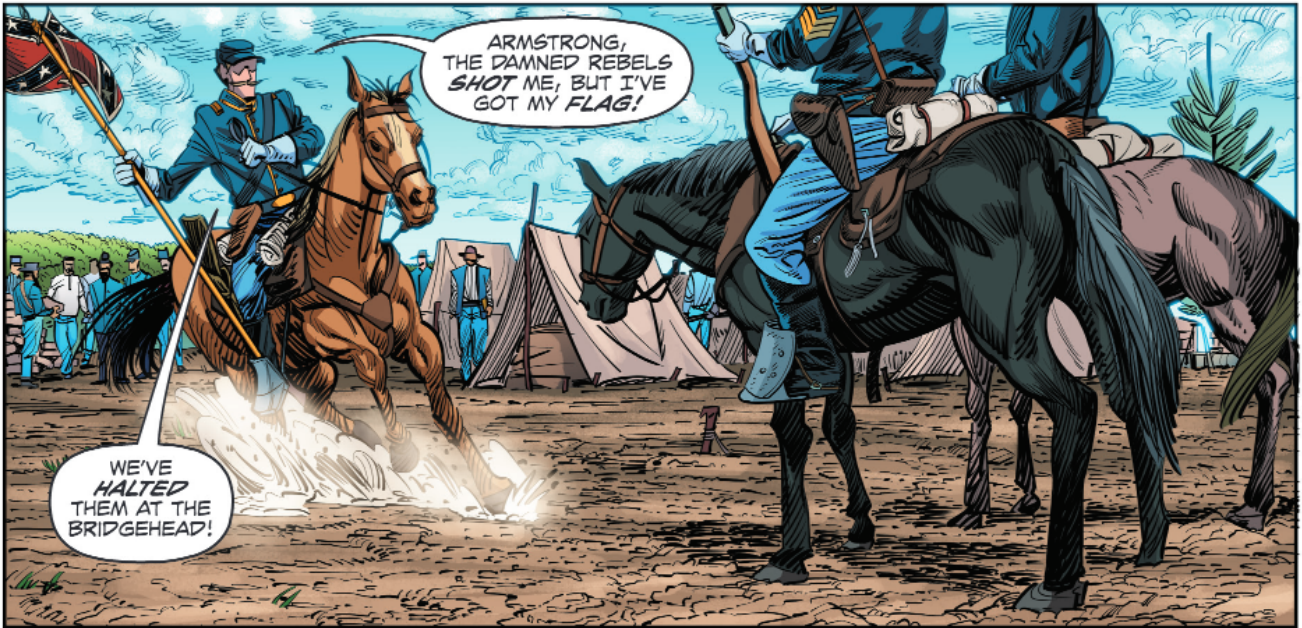




HE RODE
BACK TO HIS
OWN LINES
HOLDING THE
CAPTURED
FLAG OVER
HIS HEAD.



FOR
GOD'S
SAKE, TOM,
FURL THAT
FLAG OR
THEY'LL FIRE
ON YOU!



ARMSTRONG,
THE DAMNED REBELS
SHOT ME, BUT I'VE
GOT MY FLAG!

WE'VE
HALTED
THEM AT THE
BRIDGEHEAD!



WE CAN
BREAK THEM
THERE,
BROTHER.

WE SHALL,
TOM. BUT
YOU WILL SEE
THE FIELD
SURGEON.

I'M
PERFECTLY
FIT FOR
DUTY.



SERGEANTS!

ARREST
THIS MAN AND
CONVEY HIM TO
THE HOSPITAL
TENT!

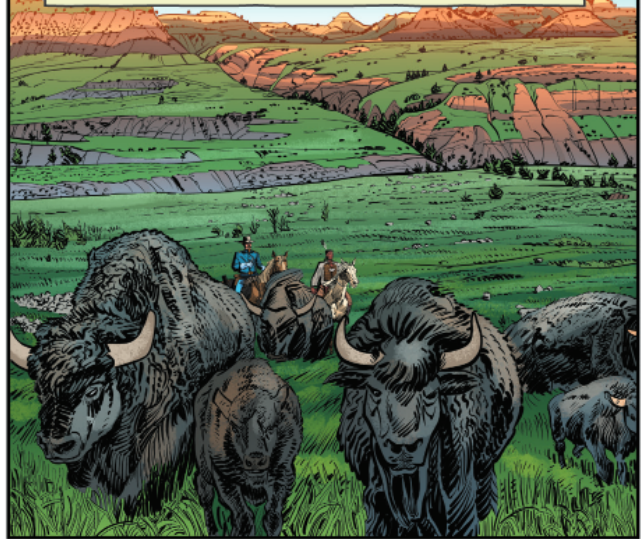
THREE DAYS AFTER SAILOR'S CREEK, LEE SURRENDERED AT APPOMATTOX COURTHOUSE.



AND TOM CUSTER WOULD BE PROMOTED TO BREVET LIEUTENANT COLONEL.

HE RECEIVED TWO MEDALS OF HONOR FOR SEPARATE ACTIONS AT NAMOZINE CHURCH AND SAILOR'S CREEK.

TOM WOULD CONTINUE SERVICE IN THE WEST, PARTICIPATING IN CAMPAIGNS AND EXPEDITIONS AGAINST THE LAKOTA AND CHEYENNE AS AN OFFICER IN THE 7TH CAVALRY.



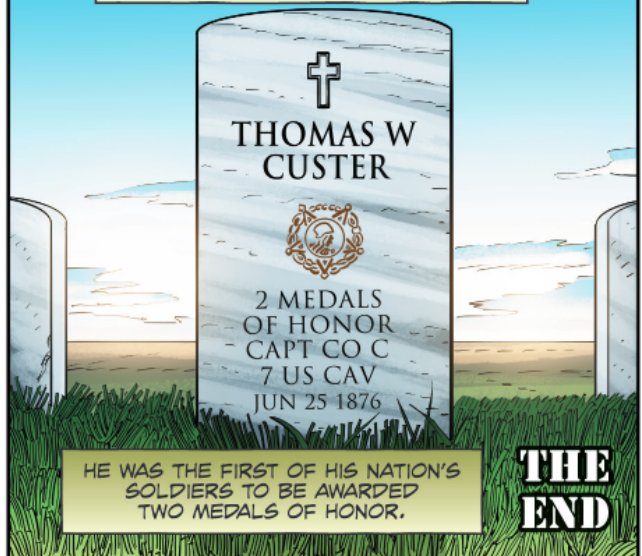
HE WAS INSTRUMENTAL IN THE ARREST OF THE LAKOTA CHIEF RAIN-IN-THE-FACE.

JUNE 25, 1876.



EVER IN THE SHADOW OF HIS MORE-FAMOUS SIBLING, THOMAS WARD CUSTER WOULD DIE ALONG WITH GEORGE AND THEIR YOUNGER BROTHER BOSTON AT THE LITTLE BIG HORN IN MONTANA TERRITORY.

TOM CUSTER'S REMAINS ARE NOW INTERRED IN AN HONORED PLACE AT FORT LEAVENWORTH IN KANSAS.



THOMAS W CUSTER

2 MEDALS OF HONOR
- CAPT CO C
7 US CAV
JUN 25 1876

HE WAS THE FIRST OF HIS NATION'S SOLDIERS TO BE AWARDED TWO MEDALS OF HONOR.

THE END

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