

# MEDAL OF HONOR

BRUCE CRANDALL



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# MEDAL OF HONOR

BRUCE CRANDALL

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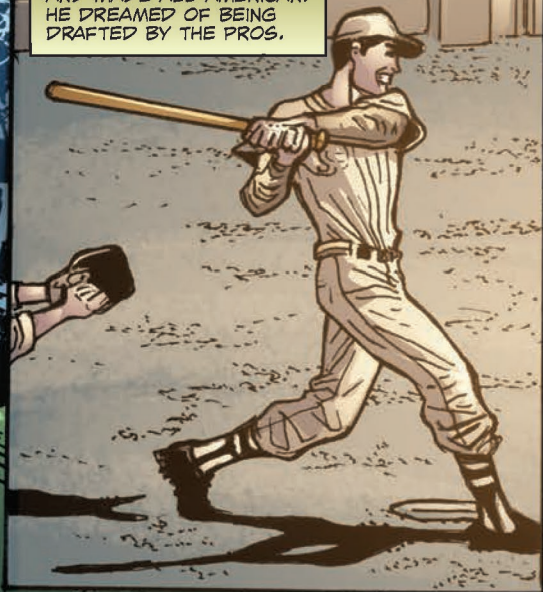
1965. THE UNITED STATES BRINGS A NEW KIND OF WARFARE TO THE JUNGLES OF VIETNAM, WITH TROOPS DROPPED INTO THE WAR ZONE VIA HELICOPTER. IT WAS AN OPERATION THAT COULD NOT HAVE SUCCEEDED WITHOUT AVIATORS LIKE...

# BRUCE CRANDALL



BORN IN OLYMPIA, WASHINGTON, BRUCE P. CRANDALL AND HIS SIBLINGS WERE RAISED BY HIS GRANDMOTHER.

CRANDALL PLAYED BASEBALL IN HIGH SCHOOL AND MADE ALL-AMERICAN. HE DREAMED OF BEING DRAFTED BY THE PROS.

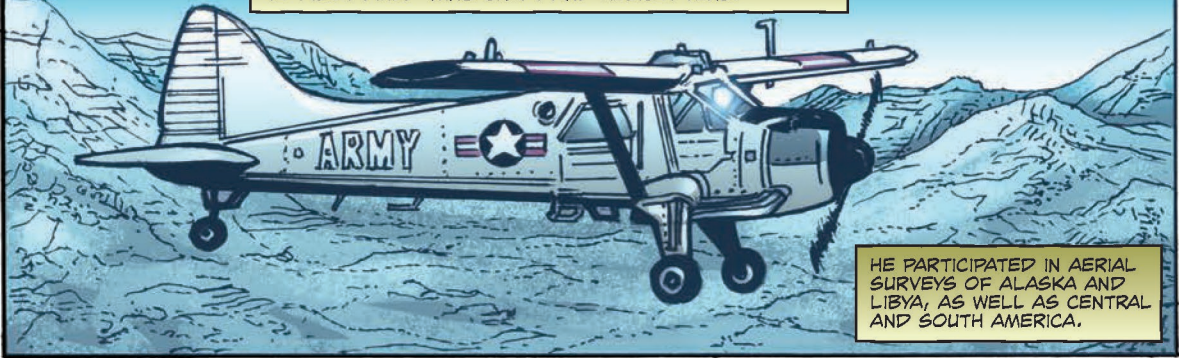


INSTEAD, HE WAS DRAFTED BY THE ARMY IN 1953.



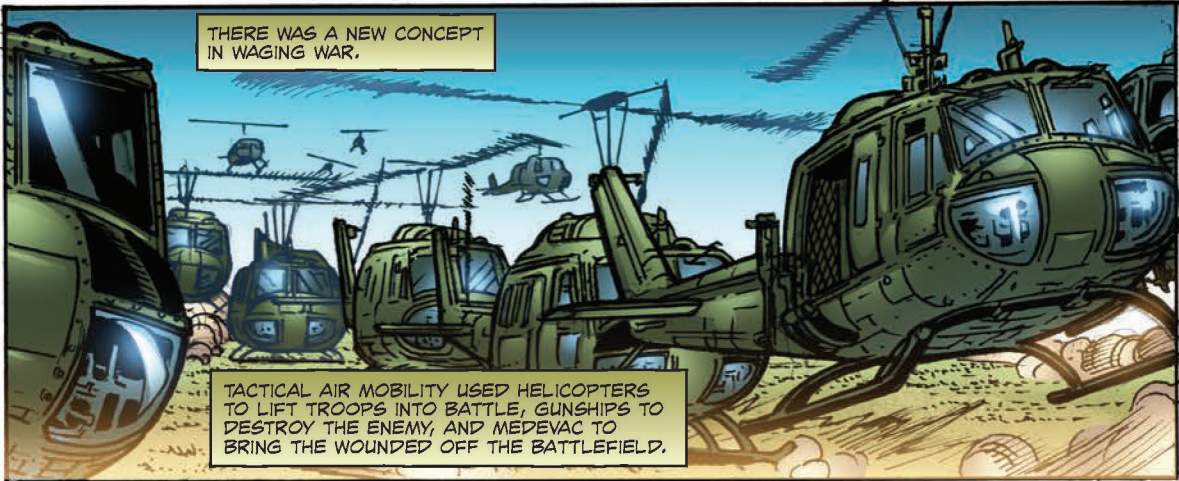


HE BECAME A COMMISSIONED OFFICER AND WAS TRAINED TO PILOT FIXED-WING CRAFT AND HELICOPTERS.



HE PARTICIPATED IN AERIAL SURVEYS OF ALASKA AND LIBYA, AS WELL AS CENTRAL AND SOUTH AMERICA.

THERE WAS A NEW CONCEPT IN WAGING WAR.



TACTICAL AIR MOBILITY USED HELICOPTERS TO LIFT TROOPS INTO BATTLE, GUNSHIPS TO DESTROY THE ENEMY, AND MEDEVAC TO BRING THE WOUNDED OFF THE BATTLEFIELD.

HE WAS ASSIGNED TO THE NEW 229TH AVIATION BATTALION OF THE 1ST CAVALRY DIVISION (AIRMOBILE).



I'VE BEEN SELECTED FOR COMPANY COMMAND.

CRANDALL'S CALL SIGN WAS ANCIENT SERPENT 6.



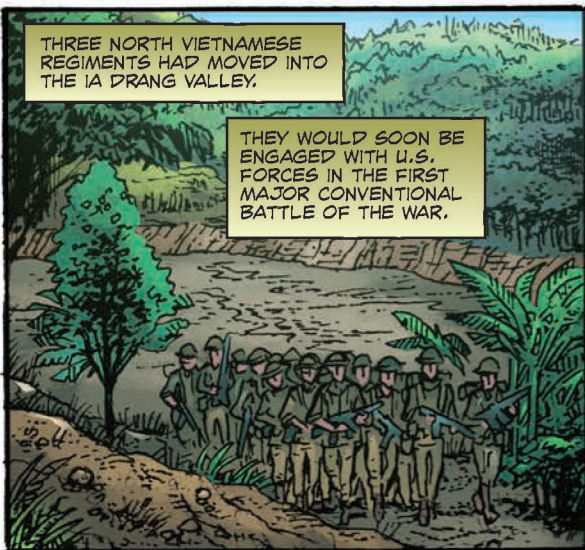
I GUESS THAT'S WHY THEY CALL YOU SNAKE.

AMONG OTHER THINGS.

THE AGE OF AIR CAVALRY HAD BEGUN.







THREE NORTH VIETNAMESE REGIMENTS HAD MOVED INTO THE IA DRANG VALLEY.

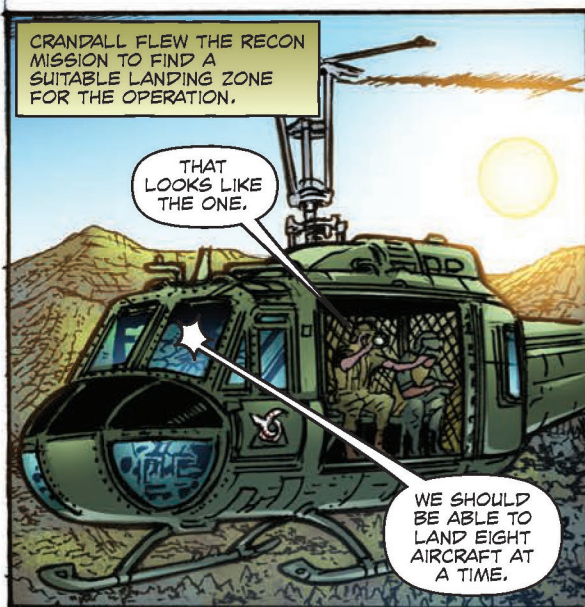
THEY WOULD SOON BE ENGAGED WITH U.S. FORCES IN THE FIRST MAJOR CONVENTIONAL BATTLE OF THE WAR.



LT. COL. HAL MOORE WOULD LEAD A BATTALION OF THE 7TH CAVALRY INTO BATTLE AGAINST THOSE TROOPS.

THEY ARE IN HERE AND THIS IS WHERE WE HAVE BEEN TASKED TO GO.

OUR MISSION IS SIMPLE: FIND THE ENEMY AND KILL THEM.



CRANDALL FLEW THE RECON MISSION TO FIND A SUITABLE LANDING ZONE FOR THE OPERATION.

THAT LOOKS LIKE THE ONE.

WE SHOULD BE ABLE TO LAND EIGHT AIRCRAFT AT A TIME.



THE ATTACK LAUNCHED FROM A SPECIAL FORCES CAMP AT PLEI ME.



NOVEMBER 14, 1965.

CRANDALL'S HUEY LED THE THIRTY-MINUTE FLIGHT TO LANDING ZONE X-RAY FOR THE FIRST OF MANY, MANY TRIPS THAT DAY.



HIS COMPANY OF SIXTEEN HUEYS CARRIED A GROUND FORCE ONLY EIGHTY STRONG.

THOSE SOLDIERS WOULD BE ON THEIR OWN UNTIL THE NEXT LIFT ARRIVED.





I THINK I SEE MOVEMENT IN THE TREE LINE.



HIT 'EM NOW! BUT WEAPONS HOLD WHEN WE LAND--WE CAN'T RISK HITTING OUR MEN ON THE GROUND.



LET'S GO!



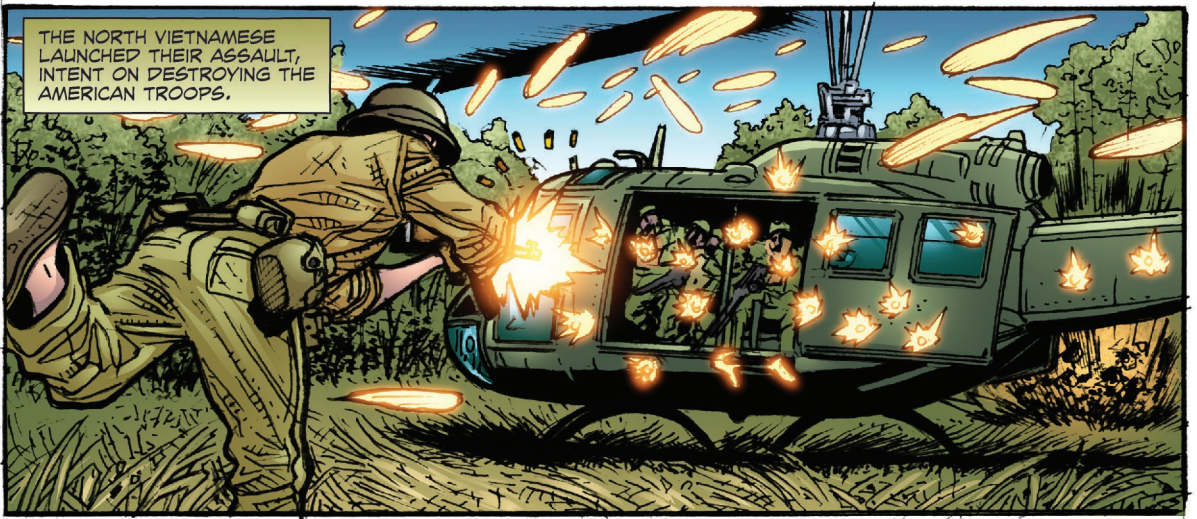
EACH HUEY OFFLOADED ITS PASSENGERS INSIDE OF TEN SECONDS.

THE FIRST FOUR TRIPS TO LZ X-RAY WENT OFF WITHOUT A HITCH.



THAT CHANGED ON THE FIFTH SORTIE.





THE NORTH VIETNAMESE LAUNCHED THEIR ASSAULT, INTENT ON DESTROYING THE AMERICAN TROOPS.



SECURE THE WOUNDED! WE'VE GOT TO GET THEM BACK TO BASE.

THE LZ'S CLOSED FOR NOW.



CRANDALL RADIOED AHEAD TO GATHER AMMUNITION FOR MOORE'S MEN.

AND I'M GOING TO NEED A NEW BIRD.



CAPTAIN ED FREEMAN VOLUNTEERED TO DELIVER THE SUPPLIES TO X-RAY.

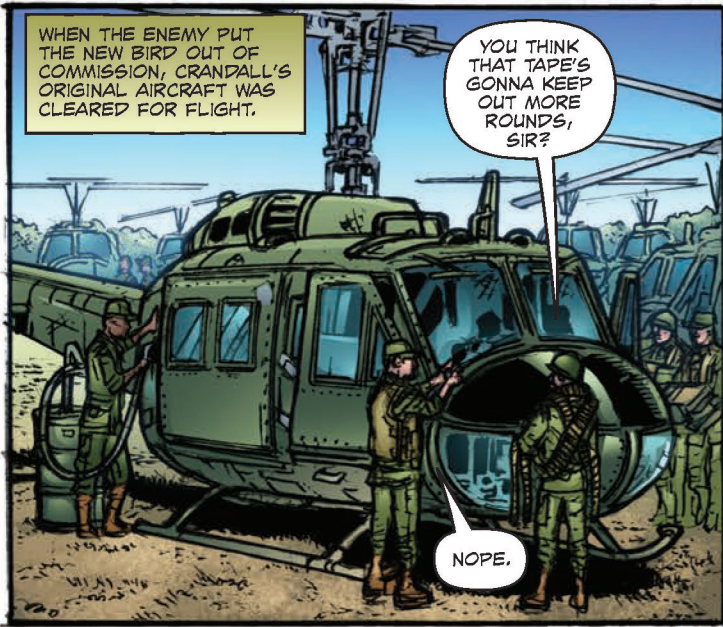
LET ME TAKE THIS ONE MYSELF.

THIS IS A TWO-SHIP OPERATION. IF ONE OF US GOES DOWN, WE NEED TO KNOW WHERE IT HAPPENS.



WHILE MEDICAL EVACUATION WAS NOT THEIR MISSION, CRANDALL AND FREEMAN BRAVED THE HOT LZ UNTIL THE WOUNDED WERE LOADED.





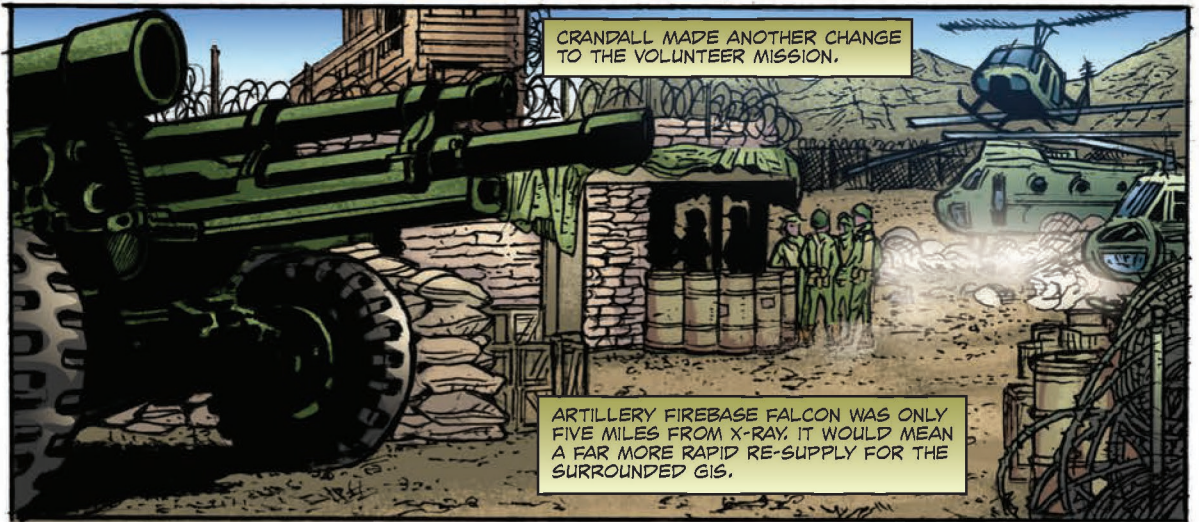
WHEN THE ENEMY PUT THE NEW BIRD OUT OF COMMISSION, CRANDALL'S ORIGINAL AIRCRAFT WAS CLEARED FOR FLIGHT.

YOU THINK THAT TAPE'S GONNA KEEP OUT MORE ROUNDS, SIR?

NOPE.



BUT IT HELPS ME KEEP TRACK OF NEW HOLES.



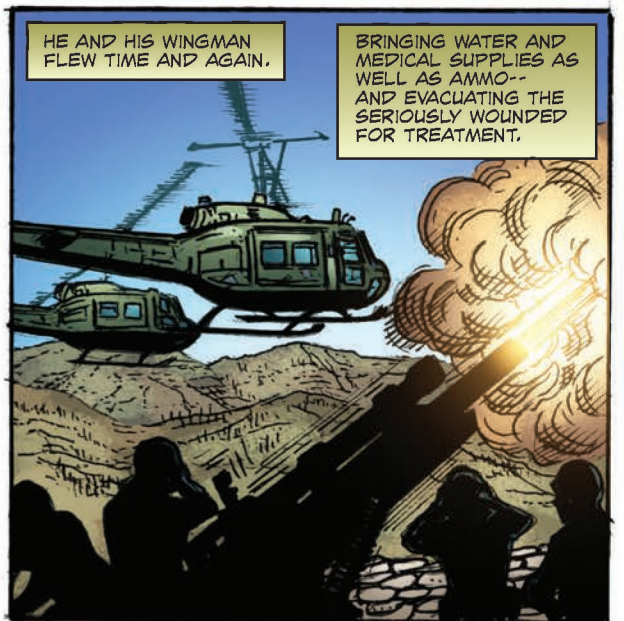
CRANDALL MADE ANOTHER CHANGE TO THE VOLUNTEER MISSION.

ARTILLERY FIREBASE FALCON WAS ONLY FIVE MILES FROM X-RAY. IT WOULD MEAN A FAR MORE RAPID RE-SUPPLY FOR THE SURROUNDED GIs.



IT WOULD ALSO MEAN MORE TRIPS, MORE TIME IN THE AIR ABOVE THE LANDING ZONE.

KEEP IT COMING! THEY'LL NEED EVERY ROUND!



HE AND HIS WINGMAN FLEW TIME AND AGAIN.

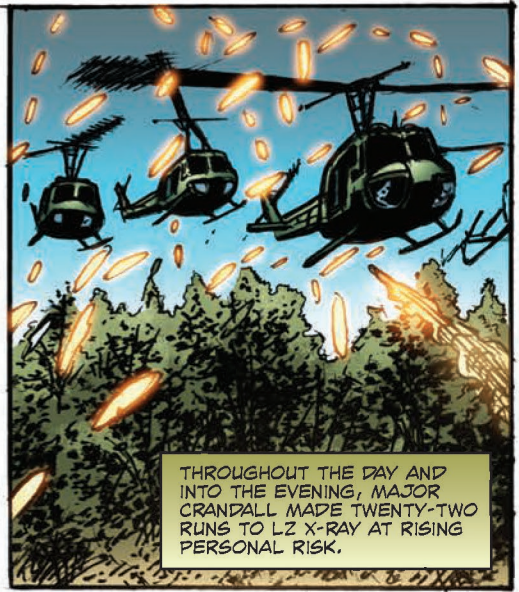
BRINGING WATER AND MEDICAL SUPPLIES AS WELL AS AMMO-- AND EVACUATING THE SERIOUSLY WOUNDED FOR TREATMENT.



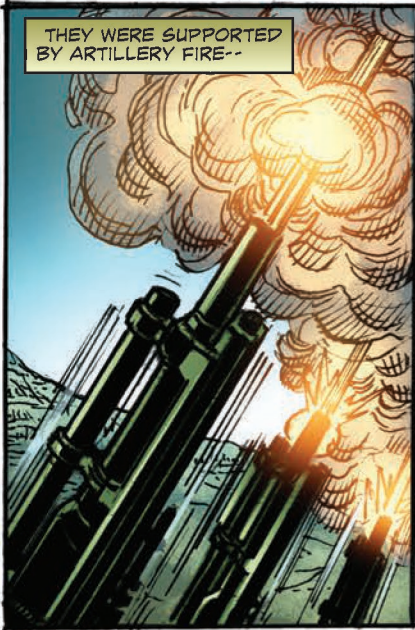


THE RE-SUPPLY BOLSTERED THE MORALE OF THE BELEAGUERED MEN.

AND GAVE THEM THE MEANS TO HOLD OUT AGAINST THE SEVEN-TO-ONE ODDS IN THE HUNDRED-DEGREE HEAT.



THROUGHOUT THE DAY AND INTO THE EVENING, MAJOR CRANDALL MADE TWENTY-TWO RUNS TO LZ X-RAY AT RISING PERSONAL RISK.



THEY WERE SUPPORTED BY ARTILLERY FIRE--



--REINFORCEMENTS--



--AND A B-52 STRIKE ON THE NVA STRONGHOLD.



CRANDALL AND FREEMAN HAD BROUGHT OVER SEVENTY MEN TO SAFETY.

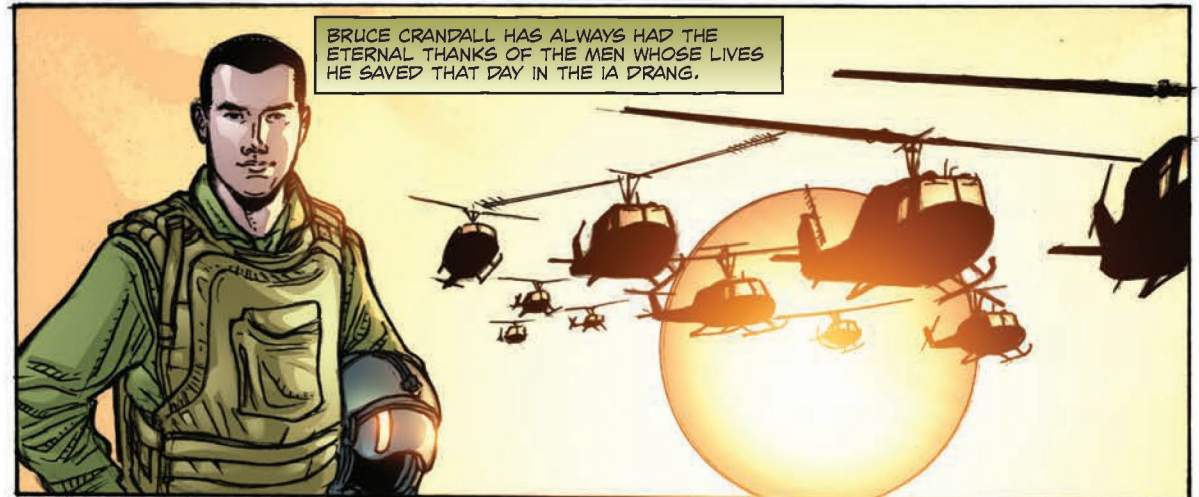
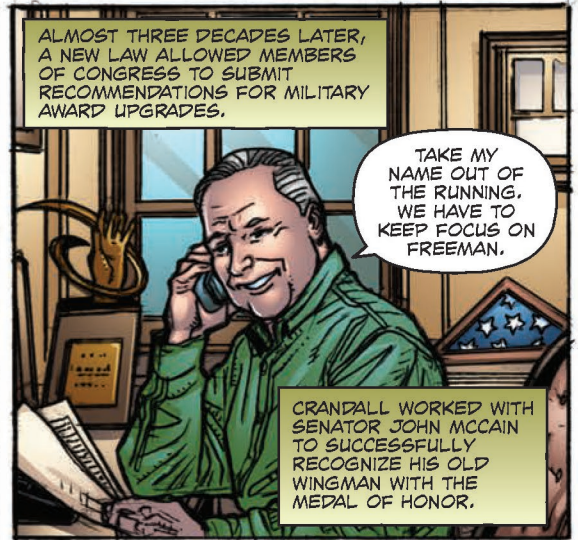
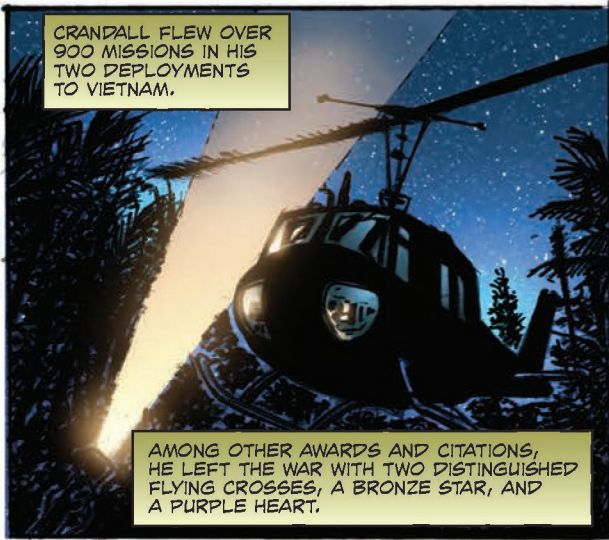
BY DAY THREE THE ENEMY WITHDREW FROM X-RAY. THE FIRST BATTLE FOR THE IA DRANG VALLEY WAS OVER.



CAN I OFFER YOU A RIDE, COLONEL?

I COULD USE A DRINK.







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