

# POINTE DU HOC

ARMY HISTORY ★ ARMY VALUES



**AUSA**



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ARMY HISTORY ★ ARMY VALUES

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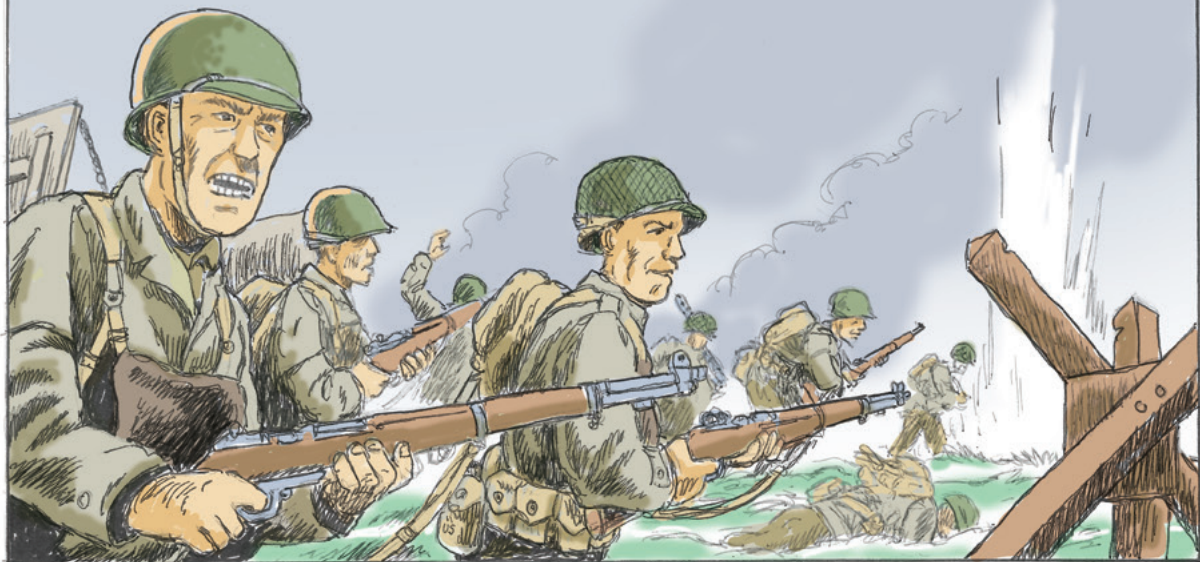


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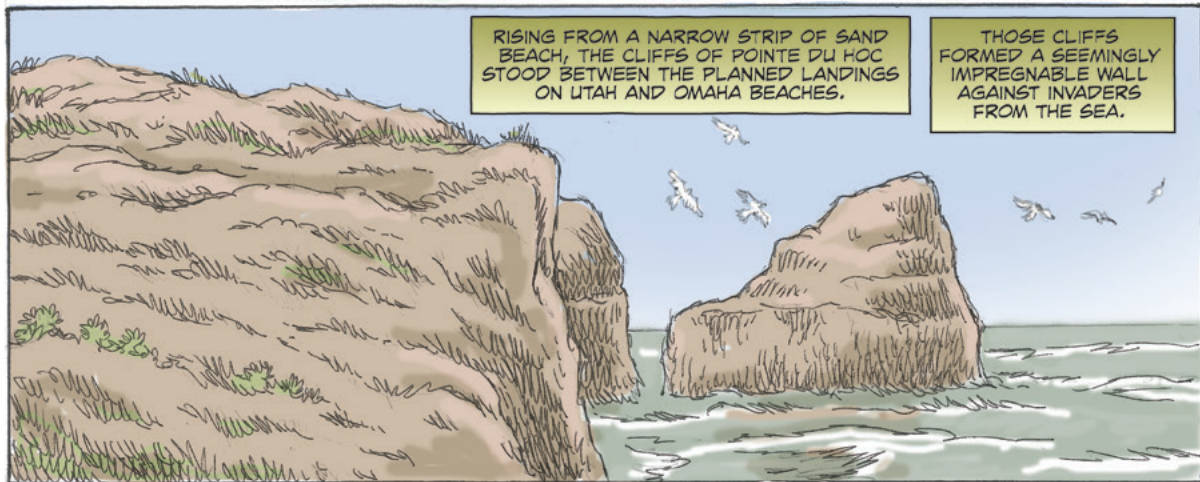
D-DAY. THE SIXTH OF JUNE, 1944. THE ALLIED LANDINGS AT NORMANDY WOULD BE THE FIRST STEP IN LIBERATING FORTRESS EUROPE. BUT ONE SPOT THREATENED TO DISRUPT THE ENTIRE OPERATION:

# POINTE DU HOC



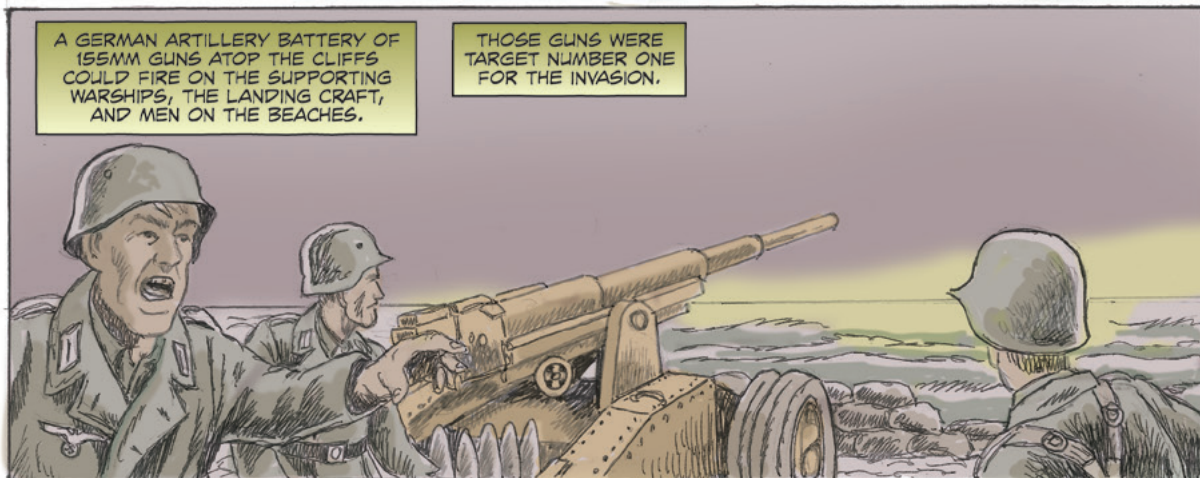
RISING FROM A NARROW STRIP OF SAND BEACH, THE CLIFFS OF POINTE DU HOC STOOD BETWEEN THE PLANNED LANDINGS ON UTAH AND OMAHA BEACHES.

THOSE CLIFFS FORMED A SEEMINGLY IMPREGNABLE WALL AGAINST INVADERS FROM THE SEA.

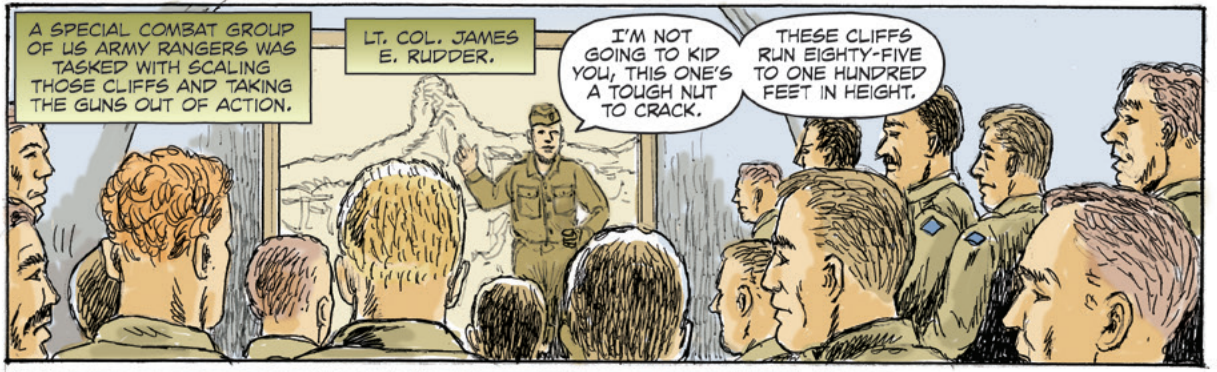


A GERMAN ARTILLERY BATTERY OF 155MM GUNS ATOP THE CLIFFS COULD FIRE ON THE SUPPORTING WARSHIPS, THE LANDING CRAFT, AND MEN ON THE BEACHES.

THOSE GUNS WERE TARGET NUMBER ONE FOR THE INVASION.







A SPECIAL COMBAT GROUP OF US ARMY RANGERS WAS TASKED WITH SCALING THOSE CLIFFS AND TAKING THE GUNS OUT OF ACTION.

LT. COL. JAMES E. RUDDER.

I'M NOT GOING TO KID YOU, THIS ONE'S A TOUGH NUT TO CRACK.

THESE CLIFFS RUN EIGHTY-FIVE TO ONE HUNDRED FEET IN HEIGHT.



ONLY THE BEST WOULD BE SELECTED FOR THE ASSAULT GROUP.

THAT'S LIKE CLIMBIN' A TEN-STORY BUILDING.

ASK HIM IF THEY GOT AN ELEVATOR.



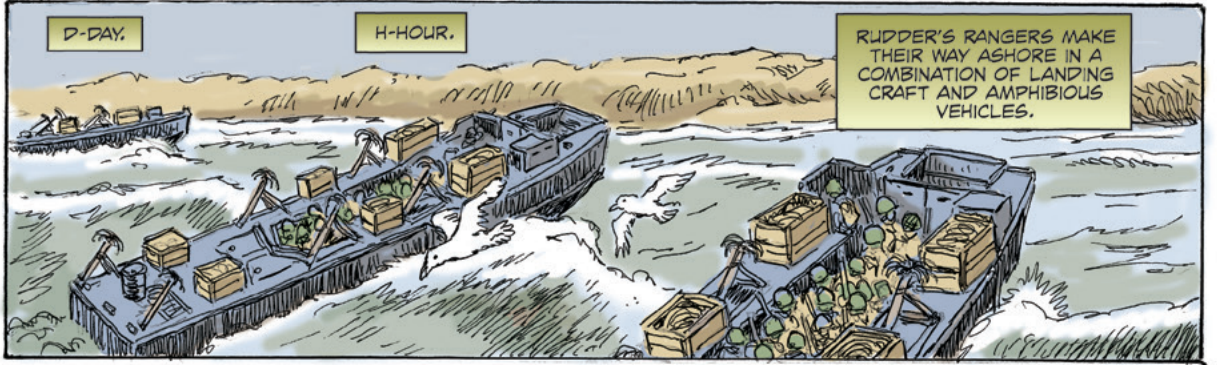
THE BOMBERS AND THE BATTLESHIPS WILL HIT THAT BATTERY HARD. BUT *WE* WILL MAKE SURE ALL SIX GUNS ARE TAKEN OUT.



IN THE MONTHS BEFORE THE PLANNED ASSAULT, THREE COMPANIES OF THE 2ND RANGER BATTALION TRAINED ALONG THE CLIFFS OF THE ISLE OF WIGHT.

THEY WERE ASSISTED BY AN EXPERIENCED BRITISH COMMANDO UNIT.

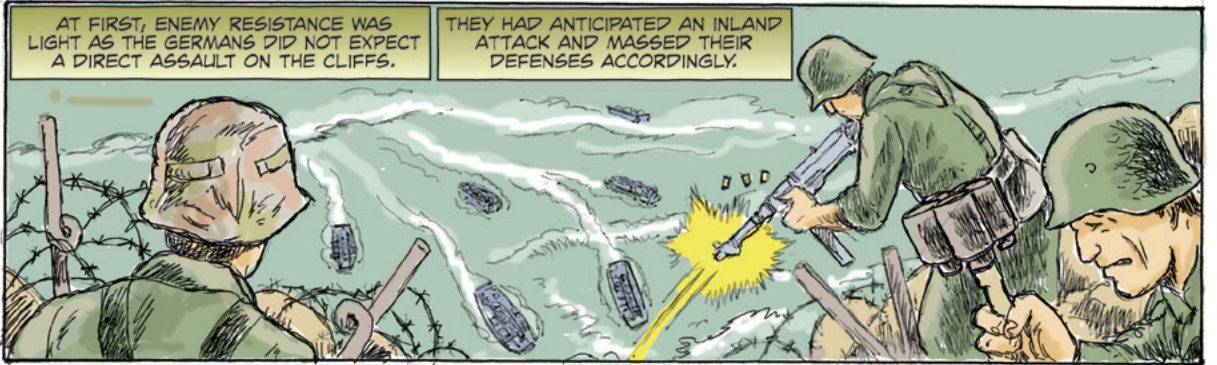
COME ON, LADS. LIVELY NOW.



D-DAY.

H-HOUR.

RUDDER'S RANGERS MAKE THEIR WAY ASHORE IN A COMBINATION OF LANDING CRAFT AND AMPHIBIOUS VEHICLES.

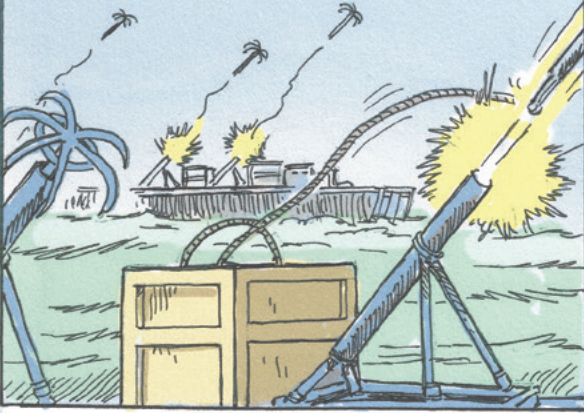


AT FIRST, ENEMY RESISTANCE WAS LIGHT AS THE GERMANS DID NOT EXPECT A DIRECT ASSAULT ON THE CLIFFS.

THEY HAD ANTICIPATED AN INLAND ATTACK AND MASSES THEIR DEFENSES ACCORDINGLY.

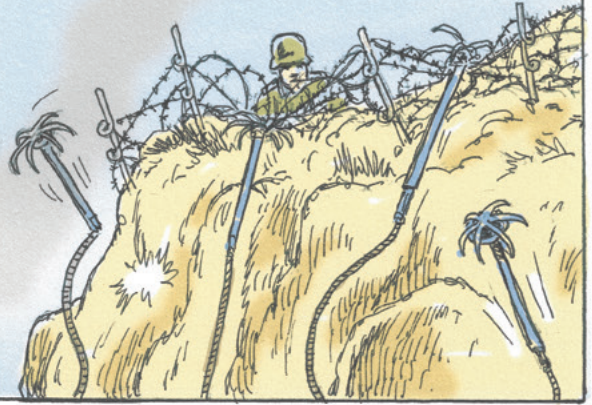


ROCKET-FIRED ROPE LINES WERE FIRED FROM THE LCAS TO ASCEND THE FACE OF THE CLIFFS.



THE WEIGHT OF THE WATERLOGGED LINES CAUSED MANY GRAPNELS TO FALL SHORT.

BUT ENOUGH REACHED THE TOP AND HELD FAST.



HEAVILY CRATERED BEACHES PREVENTED AMPHIBIOUS DUKWS FROM REACHING THE CLIFFS.

ONE RANGER BRIEFLY OFFERED SUPPRESSIVE FIRE ATOP A WILDLY SWINGING LADDER.

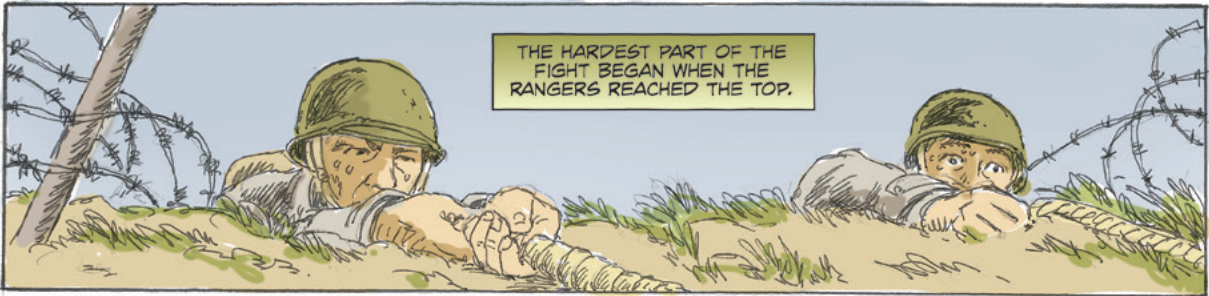


AN ENEMY MACHINE GUN POSITION POURED ENFILADING FIRE ON THE RANGERS.

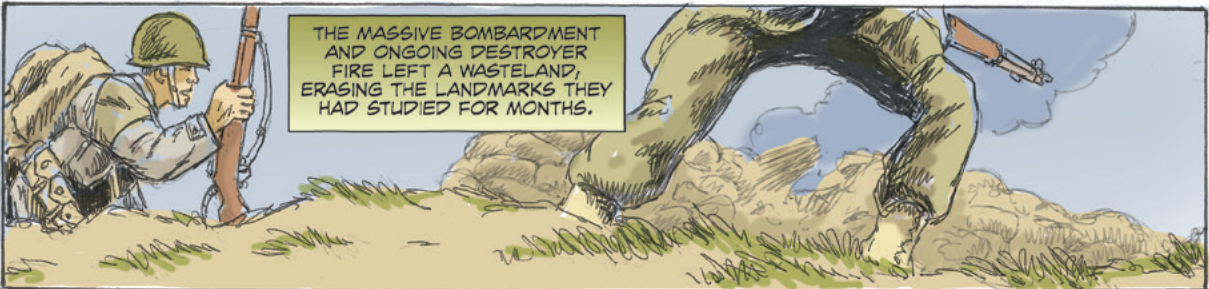
DESPITE MOUNTING CASUALTIES, THE ASSAULT ON POINTE DU HOC WAS ON.







THE HARDEST PART OF THE FIGHT BEGAN WHEN THE RANGERS REACHED THE TOP.

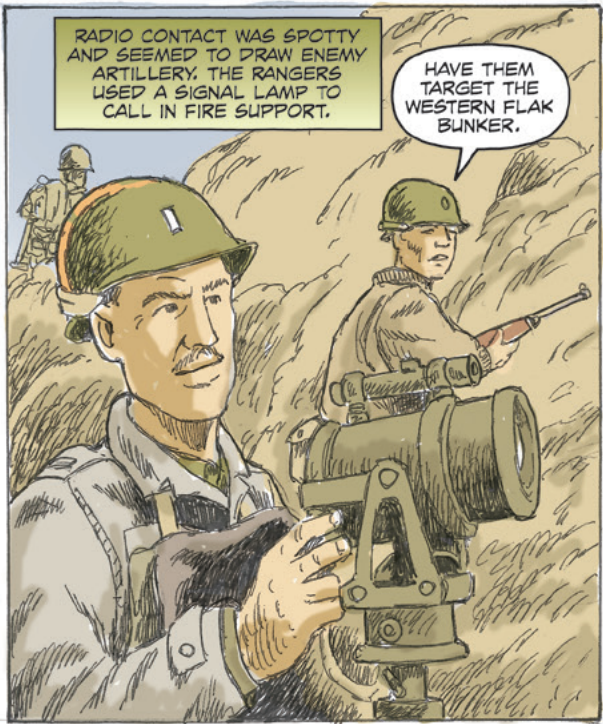


THE MASSIVE BOMBARDMENT AND ONGOING DESTROYER FIRE LEFT A WASTELAND, ERASING THE LANDMARKS THEY HAD STUDIED FOR MONTHS.



RUDDER AND ALMOST TWO HUNDRED RANGERS WERE ATOP THE CLIFFS WITHIN THIRTY MINUTES OF LANDING.

SERGEANT, I NEED YOU TO CLEAR OUT THOSE SNIPERS. WITH THESE CRATERS, THEY COULD COME AT US IN ANY DIRECTION.



RADIO CONTACT WAS SPOTTY AND SEEMED TO DRAW ENEMY ARTILLERY. THE RANGERS USED A SIGNAL LAMP TO CALL IN FIRE SUPPORT.

HAVE THEM TARGET THE WESTERN FLAK BUNKER.



THE RANGERS FANNED OUT AS SOON AS THEY REACHED THE TOP. SPEED WAS KEY.

EVERY MAN KNEW HIS MISSION: FIND HIS ASSIGNED GUN AND DESTROY IT.



THE GUN EMPLACEMENTS HAD BEEN DESTROYED BY THE PRELIMINARY BOMBARDMENT. BUT THE GUNS THEMSELVES WERE MISSING.

PAINTED TELEPHONE POLES HAD BEEN SET AS DECOYS FOR ALLIED INTELLIGENCE.

WE'LL HEAD TO THE ASSEMBLY AREA. KEEP YOUR EYES PEELED FOR THE GUNS-- THE GERMANS COULDN'T HAVE MOVED THEM FAR.

THE RANGERS MOVED TOWARD THEIR NEXT OBJECTIVE: SEIZING THE COASTAL ROAD TO PREVENT GERMAN REINFORCEMENTS FROM REACHING OMAHA BEACH.

GERMAN DEFENDERS WEREN'T GOING TO LET THAT HAPPEN WITHOUT A FIGHT.

SET UP DEFENSES HERE AND START SENDING OUT PATROLS.

JACK, COME WITH ME.

YOU AND I ARE GOING TO FIND THOSE GUNS.



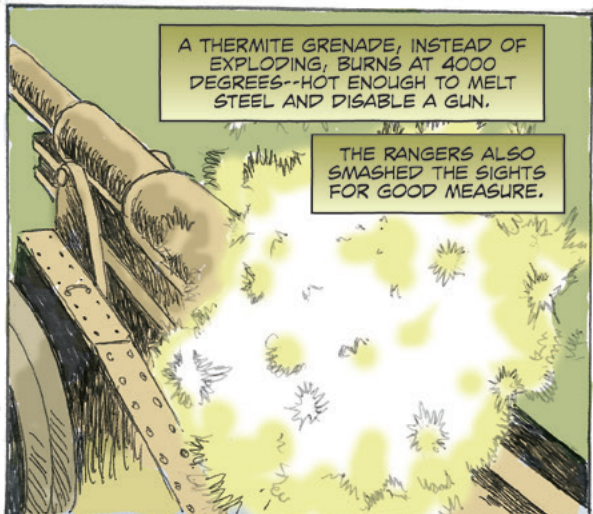


FIVE OF THE 155MM GUNS WERE HIDDEN IN THE WOODS, AIMED TO FIRE TOWARD UTAH BEACH.

THE RANGERS NEVER FOUND THE SIXTH GUN. IT WAS LATER DISCOVERED THAT THE BARREL HAD BEEN SENT AWAY FOR REPAIR.

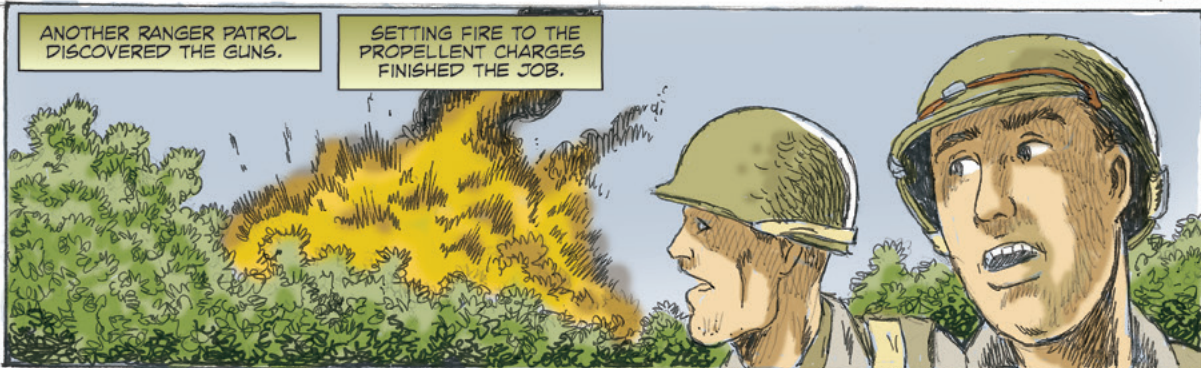


GIVE ME YOUR THERMITE GRENADE. WE'LL TAKE OUT THESE TWO AND COME BACK FOR THE REST.



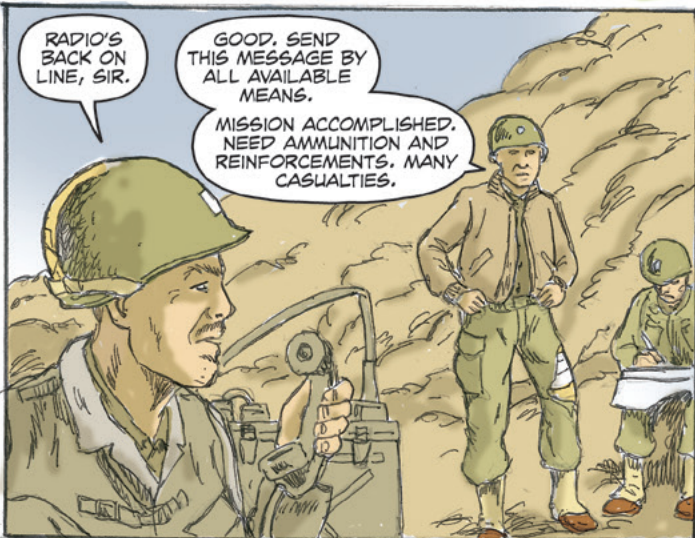
A THERMITE GRENADE, INSTEAD OF EXPLODING, BURNS AT 4000 DEGREES--HOT ENOUGH TO MELT STEEL AND DISABLE A GUN.

THE RANGERS ALSO SMASHED THE SIGHTS FOR GOOD MEASURE.



ANOTHER RANGER PATROL DISCOVERED THE GUNS.

SETTING FIRE TO THE PROPELLANT CHARGES FINISHED THE JOB.



RADIO'S BACK ON LINE, SIR.

GOOD. SEND THIS MESSAGE BY ALL AVAILABLE MEANS.

MISSION ACCOMPLISHED. NEED AMMUNITION AND REINFORCEMENTS. MANY CASUALTIES.

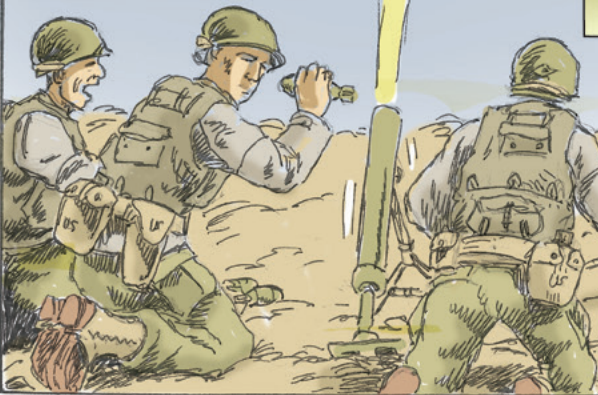


THE OTHER RANGER FORCES WERE DESPERATELY NEEDED ON OMAHA BEACH.

NO REINFORCEMENTS AVAILABLE.



RUDDER'S MEN PREPARED FOR THE INEVITABLE COUNTERATTACK.



NEWLY ARRIVED GERMAN GRENADIERS PUT UP A TOUGHER FIGHT THAN THEIR COUNTERPARTS FROM THE ARTILLERY BATTERY.

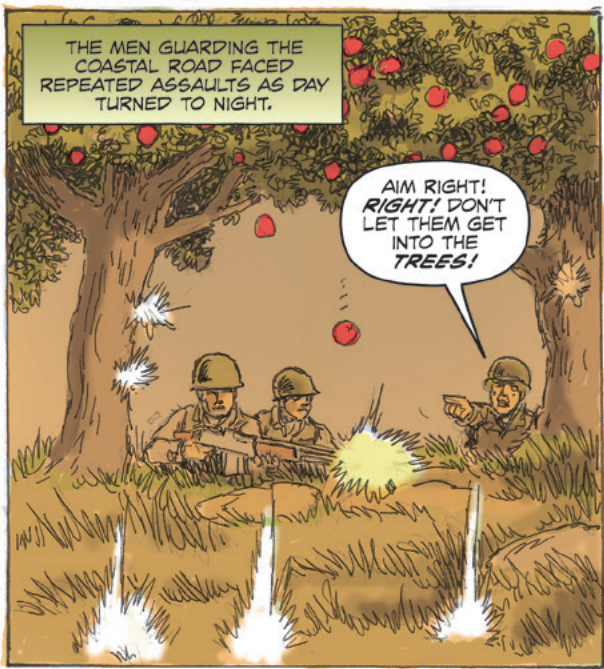


MAKE RANGE SIXTY YARDS.

THE FINAL PROTECTIVE FIRES FORCED THE ENEMY TO WITHDRAW THAT AFTERNOON.



THE MEN GUARDING THE COASTAL ROAD FACED REPEATED ASSAULTS AS DAY TURNED TO NIGHT.



AIM RIGHT! RIGHT! DON'T LET THEM GET INTO THE TREES!

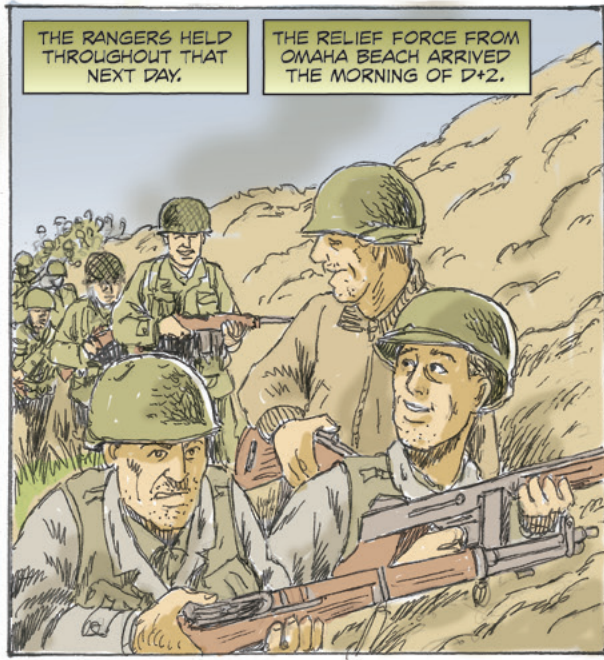
A THIRD ATTACK, COMING IN THE PRE-DAWN HOURS, CAUSED MANY CASUALTIES.



THE RANGERS WERE FORCED TO WITHDRAW TO THE TIGHTER PERIMETER AROUND THE COMMAND POST.

THE RANGERS HELD THROUGHOUT THAT NEXT DAY.

THE RELIEF FORCE FROM OMAHA BEACH ARRIVED THE MORNING OF D+2.





THE RANGERS  
SUCCEEDED AT  
POINTE DU HOC, BUT  
AT A HEAVY COST.

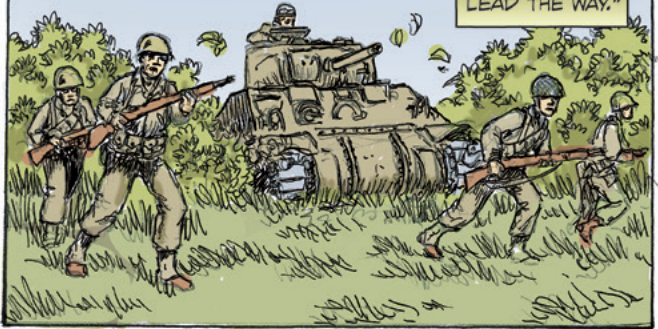
OF THE 225 MEN WHO  
HAD LANDED AT THE  
CLIFFS, ONLY 90 COULD  
STILL BEAR ARMS.



THE RE-JOINED UNITS  
MOVED DEEPER INTO  
ENEMY-HELD COUNTRY.

IT WAS THEIR JOB  
DESCRIPTION AND WOULD  
BECOME THEIR MOTTO.

"RANGERS  
LEAD THE WAY."



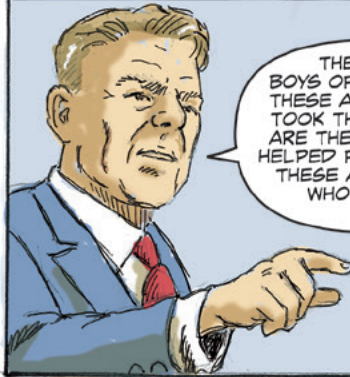
THE MEN WHO FOUGHT AT POINTE DU HOC  
WENT ON TO SEE ACTION IN THE CHERBOURG  
PENINSULA, IN THE HÜRTGEN FOREST, AND  
IN THE BATTLE OF THE BULGE.

THESE CITIZEN-SOLDIERS  
FOUGHT UNTIL VICTORY  
WAS COMPLETE.

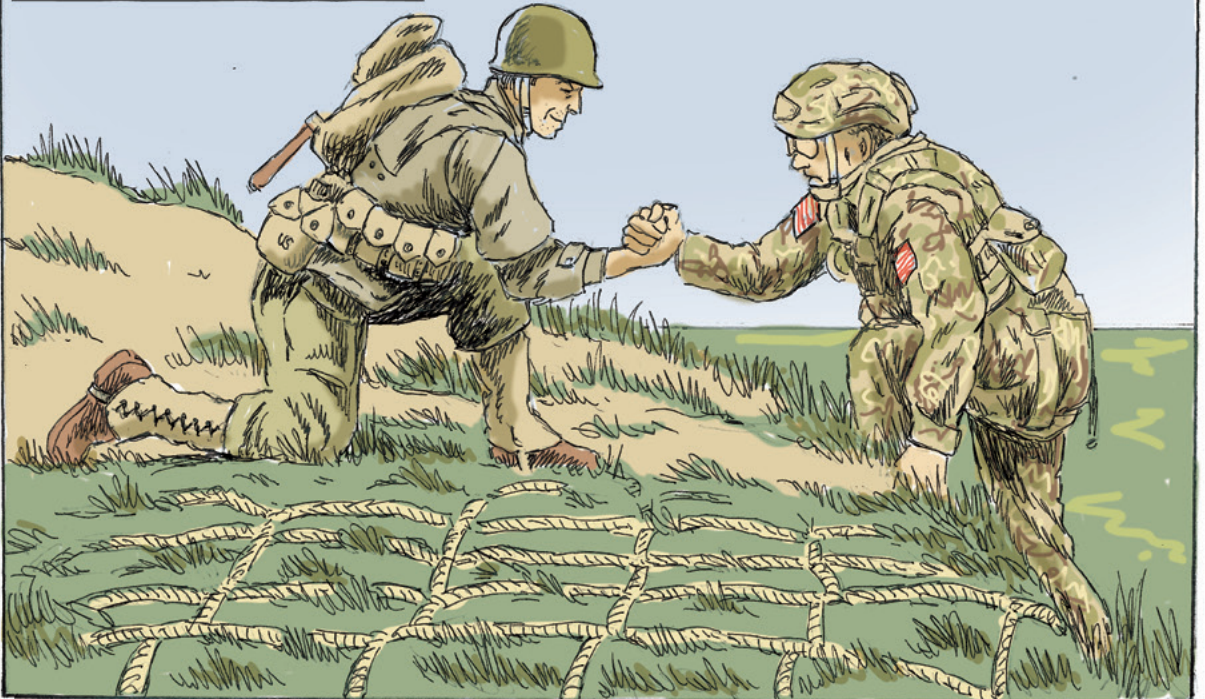


ON THE FORTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF  
D-DAY, RONALD REAGAN GAVE HONOR TO  
THE MEN OF THE RANGER BATTALIONS.

THESE ARE THE  
BOYS OF POINTE DU HOC.  
THESE ARE THE MEN WHO  
TOOK THE CLIFFS. THESE  
ARE THE CHAMPIONS WHO  
HELPED FREE A CONTINENT.  
THESE ARE THE HEROES  
WHO HELPED END  
A WAR.



CREATED BY NEED, FORGED IN WAR,  
THE RANGER TRADITION CONTINUES ON  
WITH A LEGACY OF ENDURANCE,  
TENACITY, AND COURAGE SHOWN BY  
THE BRAVE MEN WHO TOOK ON THE  
IMPOSSIBLE AND WON.









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