

MEDAL OF HONOR

EDDIE RICKENBACKER



AUSA

VOLUME 8
ISSUE 2

MEDAL OF HONOR

EDDIE RICKENBACKER

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SPEED AND DANGER WERE WELL KNOWN TO AMERICA'S ACE OF ACES IN THE FIRST WORLD WAR.

OCTOBER 1942. FAMED WWI AVIATOR EDDIE RICKENBACKER WAS ON A MILITARY FLIGHT TO THE PACIFIC AS THE NATION AGAIN FACED WAR.

EDDIE RICKENBACKER

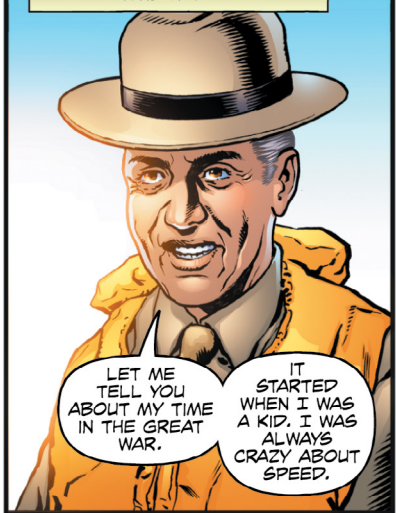
HE CARRIED A SECRET MESSAGE FOR GENERAL DOUGLAS MACARTHUR.



THEIR B-17 GOT LOST AND WAS FORCED TO DITCH.



RICKENBACKER KNEW HE HAD TO KEEP THE MEN OCCUPIED UNTIL RESCUE.

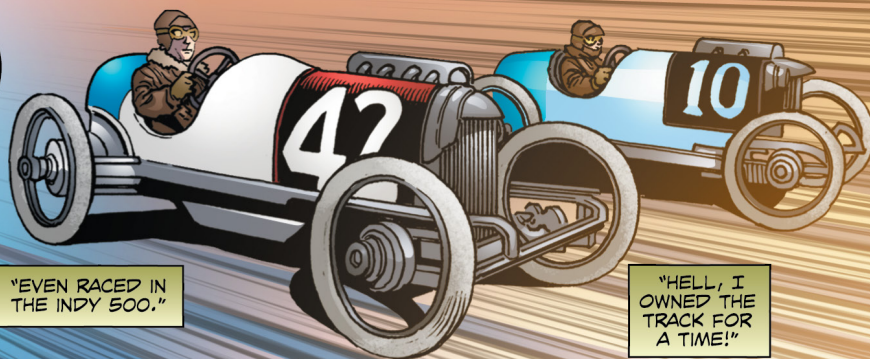


LET ME TELL YOU ABOUT MY TIME IN THE GREAT WAR.

IT STARTED WHEN I WAS A KID. I WAS ALWAYS CRAZY ABOUT SPEED.

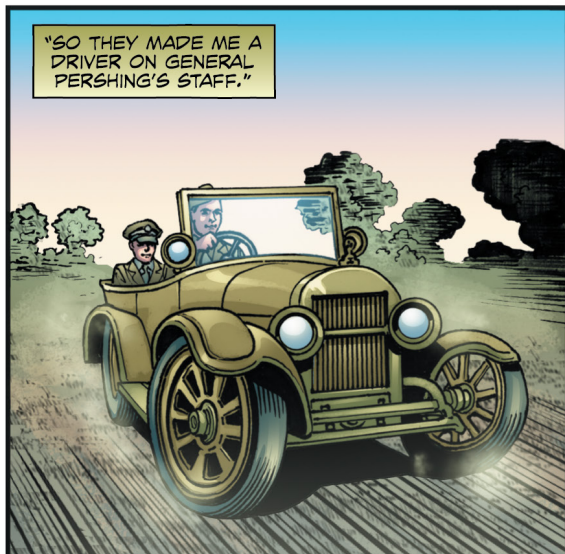


I WAS
A RACE CAR
DRIVER FOR
A WHILE...

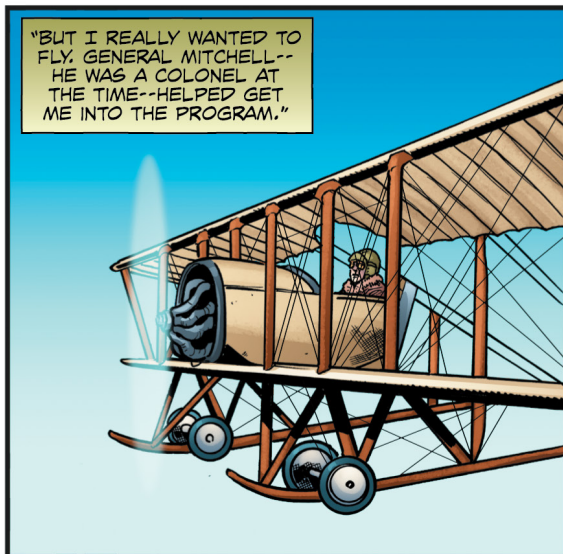


"EVEN RACED IN
THE INDY 500."

"HELL, I
OWNED THE
TRACK FOR
A TIME!"



"SO THEY MADE ME A
DRIVER ON GENERAL
PERSHING'S STAFF,"



"BUT I REALLY WANTED TO
FLY. GENERAL MITCHELL--
HE WAS A COLONEL AT
THE TIME--HELPED GET
ME INTO THE PROGRAM."



"IN MARCH OF '18, I JOINED
THE 94TH AERO SQUADRON."



"THE FLIGHT
COMMANDER--
HE HAD BEEN WITH
THE ESCADRILLE--
ASKED ME TO GO
ON PATROL."

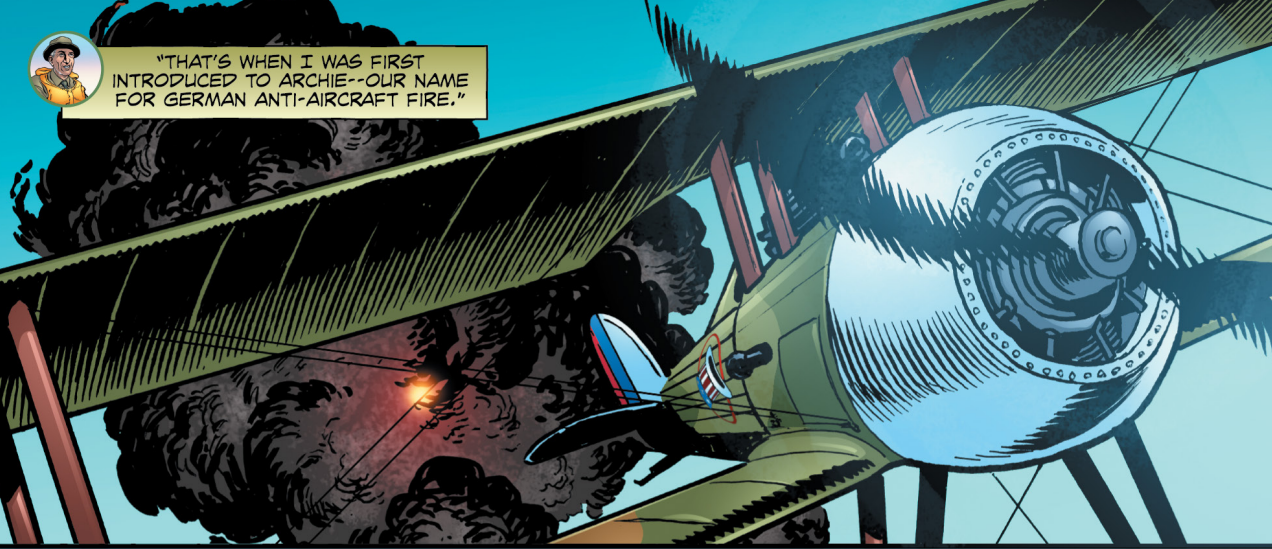
"I GOT INTO
THAT TEDDY
BEAR SUIT IN
ABOUT TEN
SECONDS
FLAT."



"I HOPED I WOULDN'T
GET SICK ON MY FIRST
TRIP OVER THE LINES."



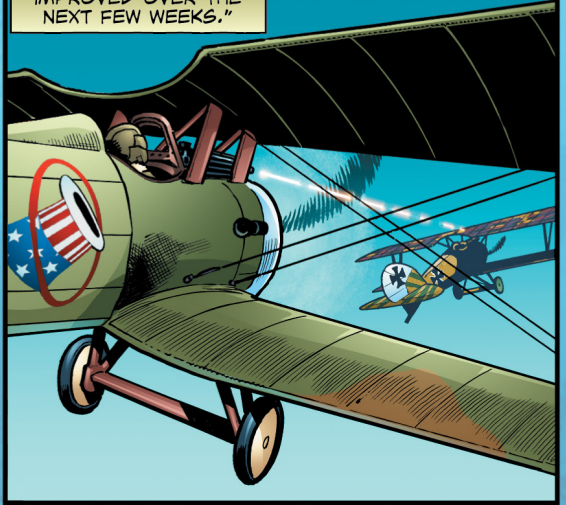
"THAT'S WHEN I WAS FIRST INTRODUCED TO ARCHIE--OUR NAME FOR GERMAN ANTI-AIRCRAFT FIRE."



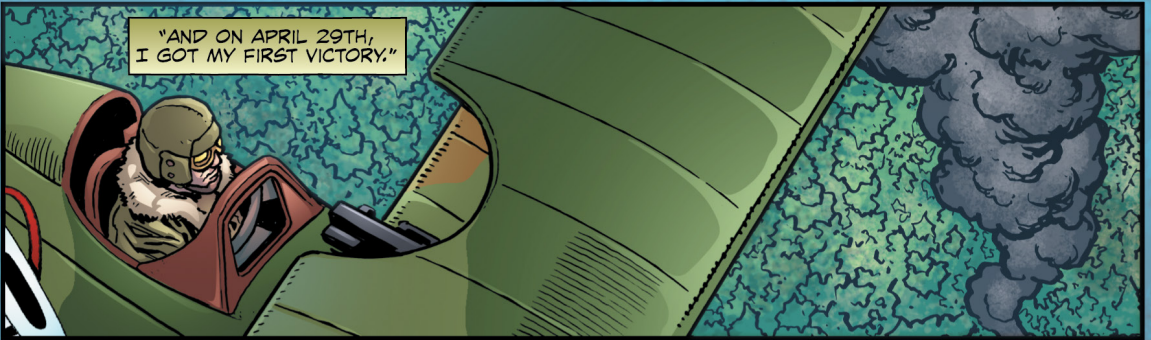
"WE GOT USED TO THE SHELLS, BUT MAJOR LUBBERY DENTED OUR PRIDE WHEN HE POINTED OUT ALL THE PLANES WE HAD FAILED TO SEE."



"MY 'VISION OF THE AIR' IMPROVED OVER THE NEXT FEW WEEKS."

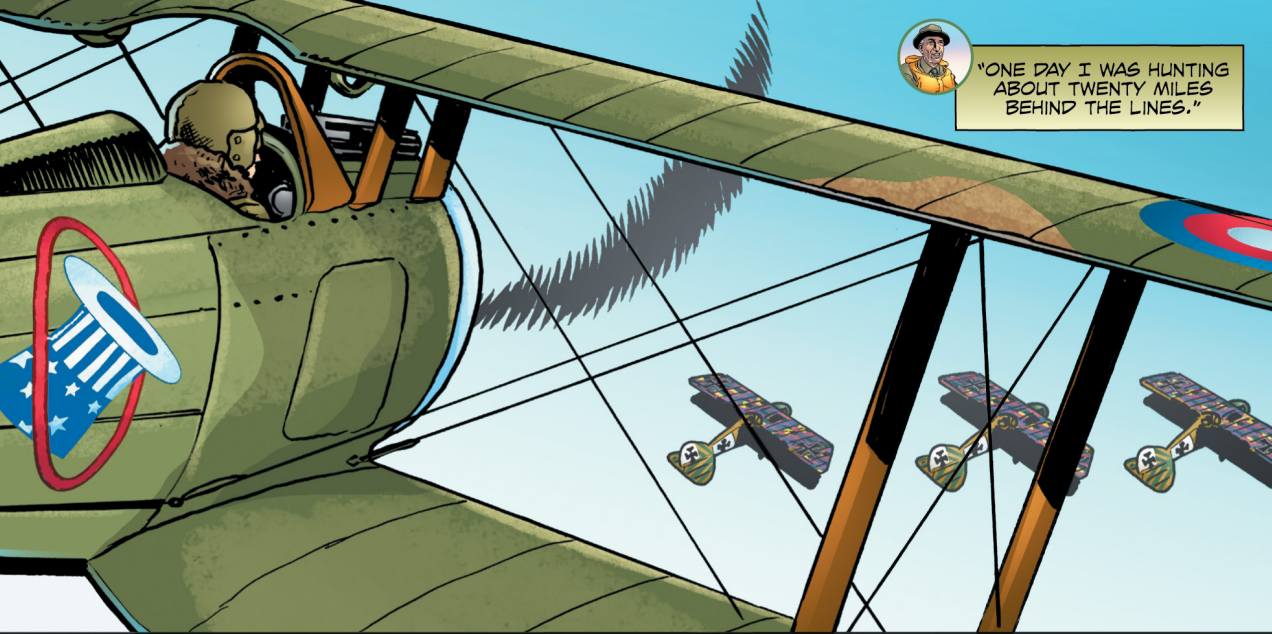


"AND ON APRIL 29TH, I GOT MY FIRST VICTORY."



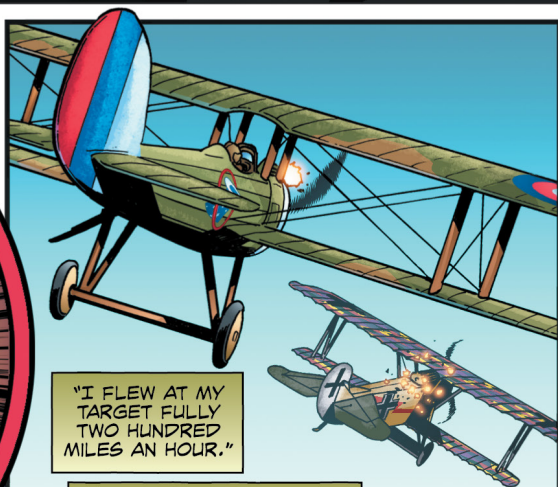
"IT ALSO EARNED MY FIRST DISTINGUISHED SERVICE CROSS."





"ONE DAY I WAS HUNTING ABOUT TWENTY MILES BEHIND THE LINES."

"THE BOCHE WEREN'T READY FOR ATTACK FROM THIS QUARTER."



"I FLEW AT MY TARGET FULLY TWO HUNDRED MILES AN HOUR."

"HE MADE THE MISTAKE OF TRYING TO OUTDIVE ME. IT COST HIM HIS LIFE."

"BUT THE STRAIN WAS TOO MUCH FOR THE CANVAS ON MY NIEUPORT."

CRACK

"I WENT INTO A TAIL SPIN AND WONDERED WHERE I WOULD STRIKE."



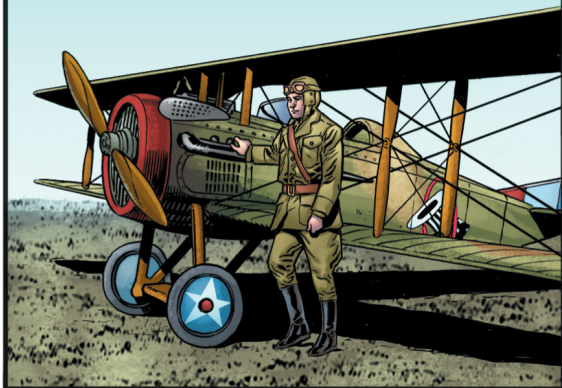
"I THREW OPEN THE THROTTLE AND REVERSED RUDDER, SOMEHOW KEEPING HER HORIZONTAL ENOUGH TO SLIDE BACK HOME."



"THAT WAS NOT A LANDING I CARE TO REPEAT."

"I WAS DELIGHTED WHEN WE GOT THE LONG-AWAITED SPADS."

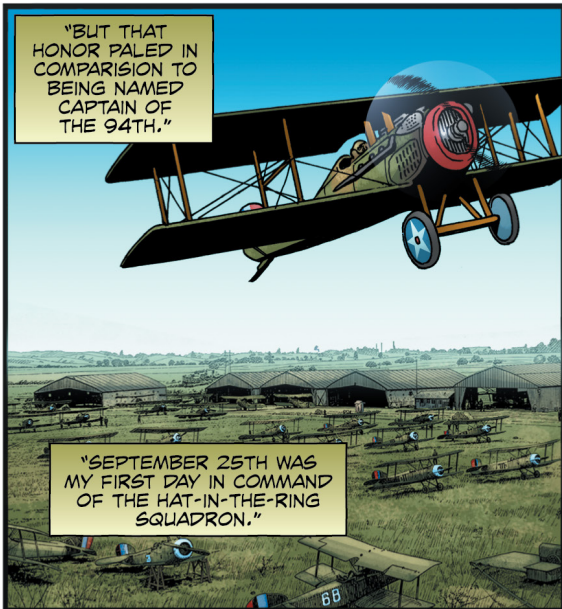
"THEY WERE MUCH FASTER AND STRONGER THAN THE NIEUPORTS."



"WITH MY NEW MACHINE, I SOON SCORED MY FIRST BACK-TO-BACK VICTORIES AND BECAME THE AMERICAN ACE OF ACES."



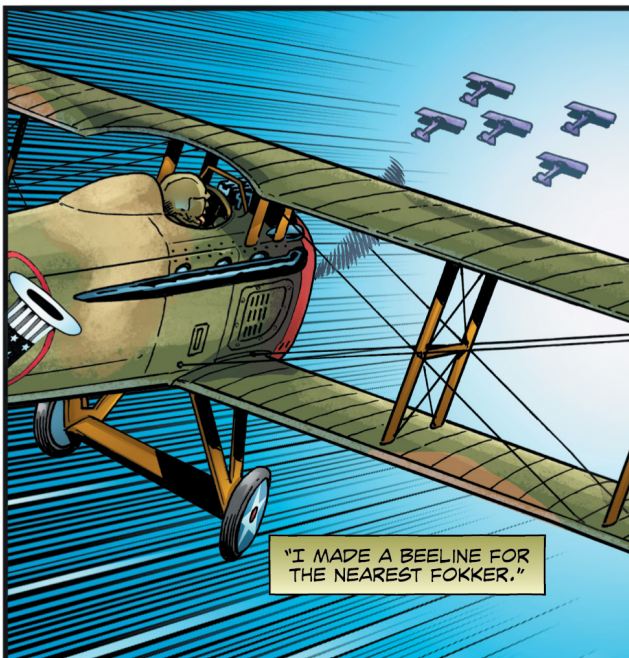
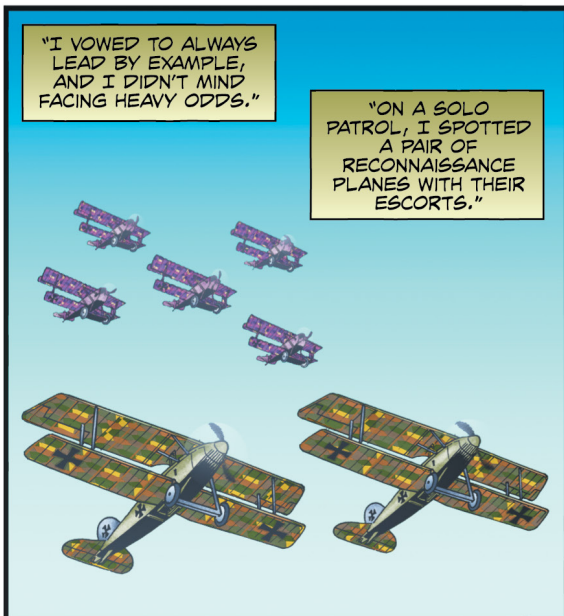
"BUT THAT HONOR PALED IN COMPARISON TO BEING NAMED CAPTAIN OF THE 94TH."



"SEPTEMBER 25TH WAS MY FIRST DAY IN COMMAND OF THE HAT-IN-THE-RING SQUADRON."

"I VOWED TO ALWAYS LEAD BY EXAMPLE, AND I DIDN'T MIND FACING HEAVY ODDS."

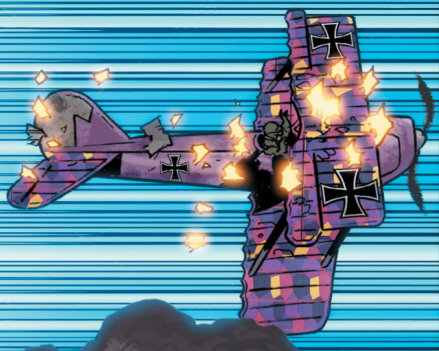
"ON A SOLO PATROL, I SPOTTED A PAIR OF RECONNAISSANCE PLANES WITH THEIR ESCORTS."



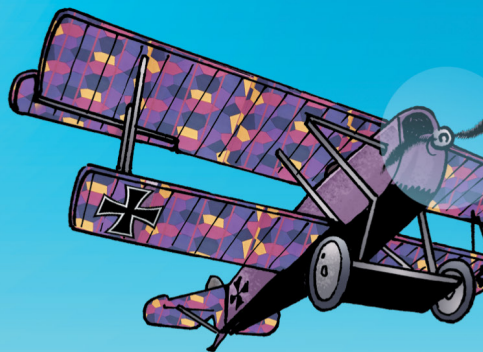
"I MADE A BEELINE FOR THE NEAREST FOKKER."



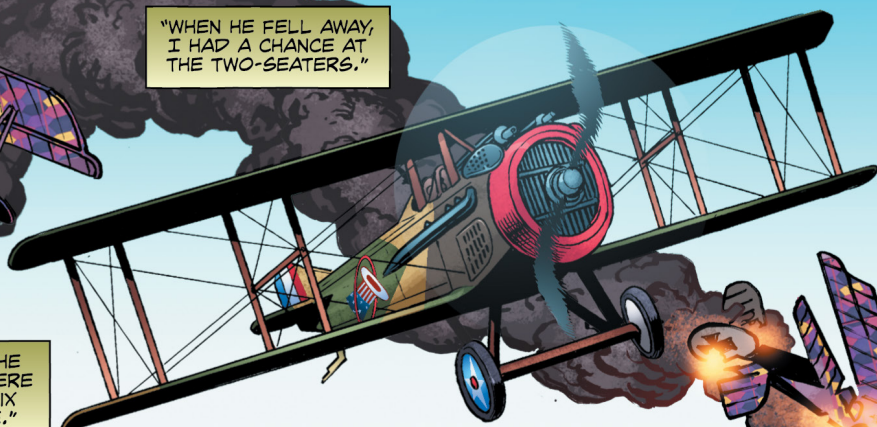
"I HAD HIM IN MY SIGHTS AND PULLED BOTH TRIGGERS FOR A LONG BURST."



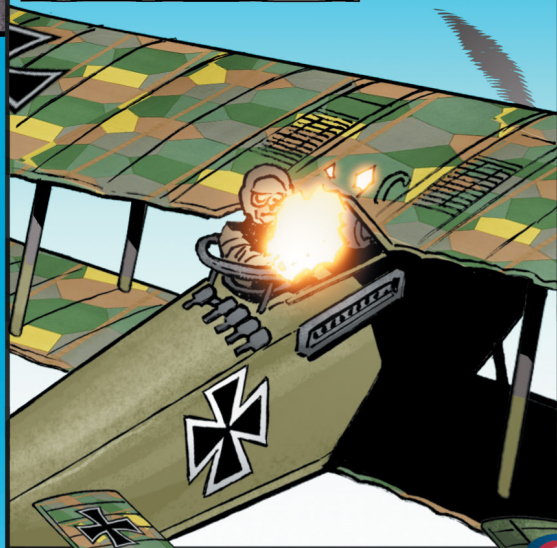
"WHEN HE FELL AWAY, I HAD A CHANCE AT THE TWO-SEATERS."



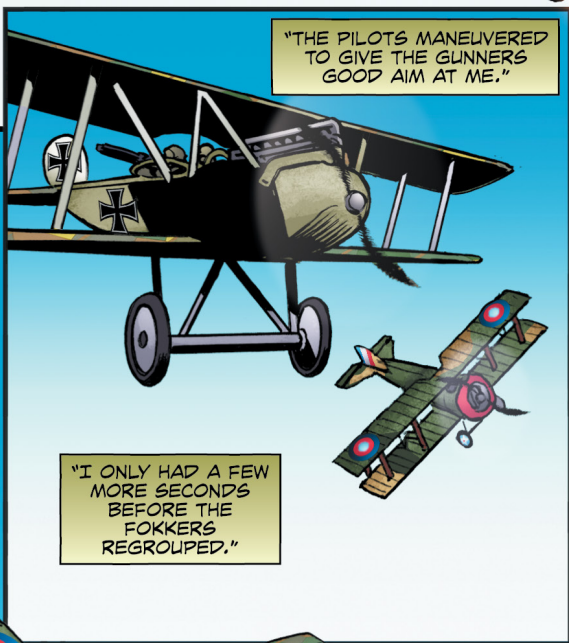
"NOW THE ODDS WERE ONLY SIX TO ONE."



"THE OBSERVERS IN THE LEAD PLANES BEGAN FIRING AT ME AND THE DANCE BEGAN."

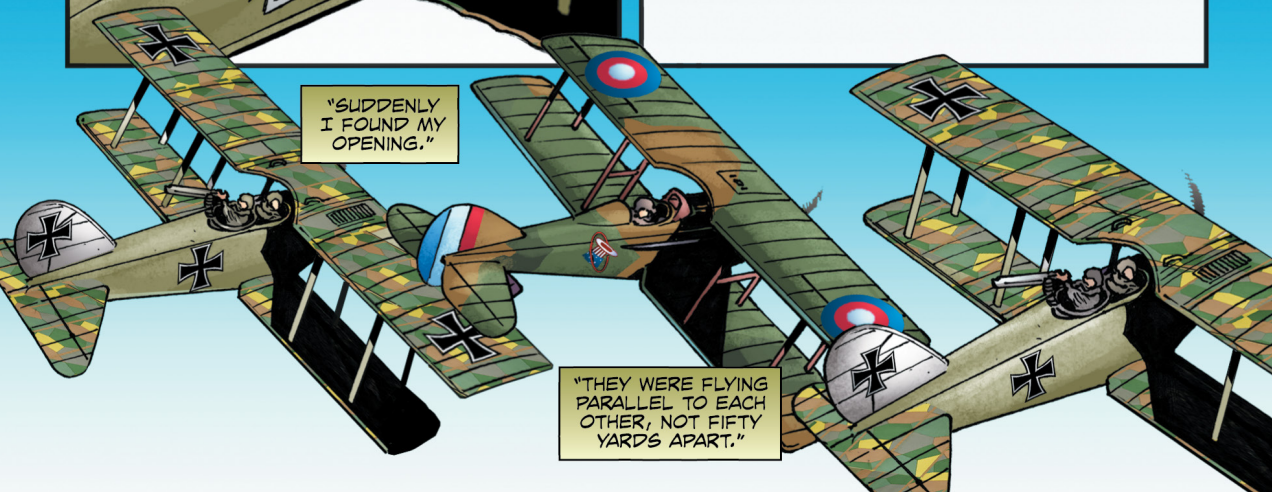


"THE PILOTS MANEUVERED TO GIVE THE GUNNERS GOOD AIM AT ME."



"I ONLY HAD A FEW MORE SECONDS BEFORE THE FOKKERS REGROUPED."

"SUDDENLY I FOUND MY OPENING."



"THEY WERE FLYING PARALLEL TO EACH OTHER, NOT FIFTY YARDS APART."



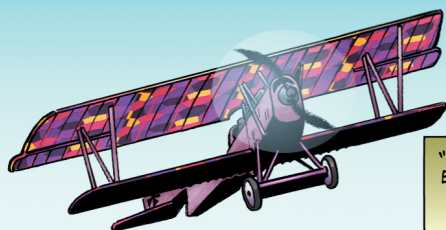
"I SIDESLIPPED BETWEEN THEM AND STARTED FIRING."



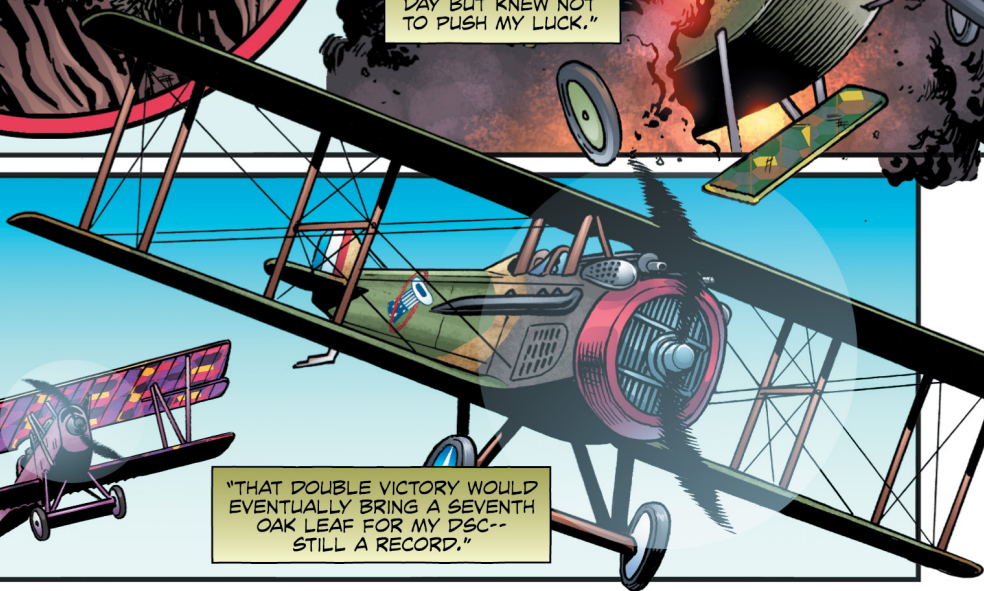
"I GOT MY SECOND DOWNING OF THE DAY BUT KNEW NOT TO PUSH MY LUCK."



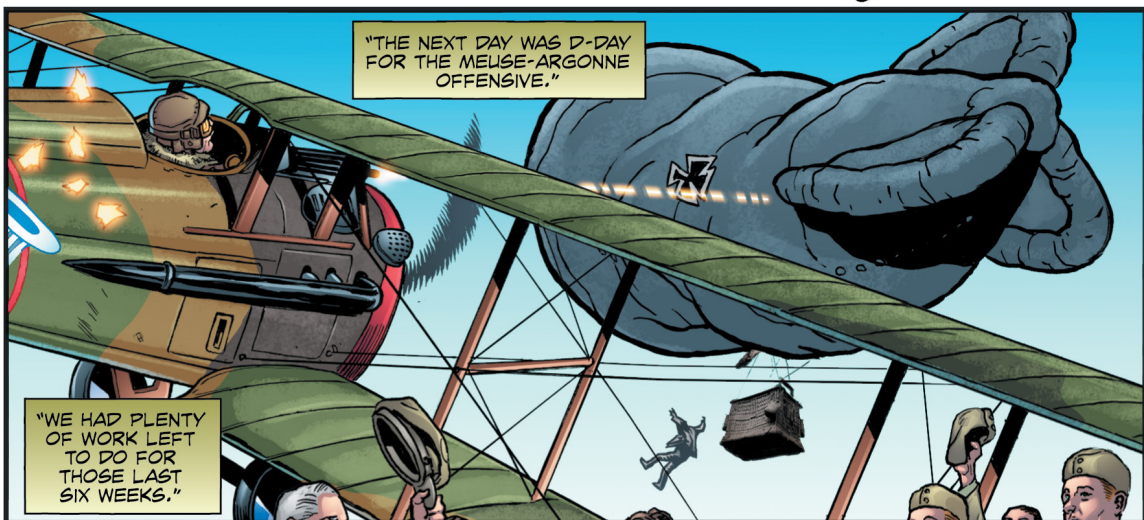
"I TURNED ON THE GAS AND PIQUED FOR MY OWN LINES."



"THAT DOUBLE VICTORY WOULD EVENTUALLY BRING A SEVENTH OAK LEAF FOR MY DSC-- STILL A RECORD."



"THE NEXT DAY WAS D-DAY FOR THE MEUSE-ARGONNE OFFENSIVE."



"WE HAD PLENTY OF WORK LEFT TO DO FOR THOSE LAST SIX WEEKS."

"BY WAR'S END, THE SQUADRON HAD MORE VICTORIES THAN ANY OTHER."

"AND I HAD TWENTY-SIX OF THEM."





"WHEN I GOT BACK HOME,
I WAS STILL AMERICA'S
ACE OF ACES."

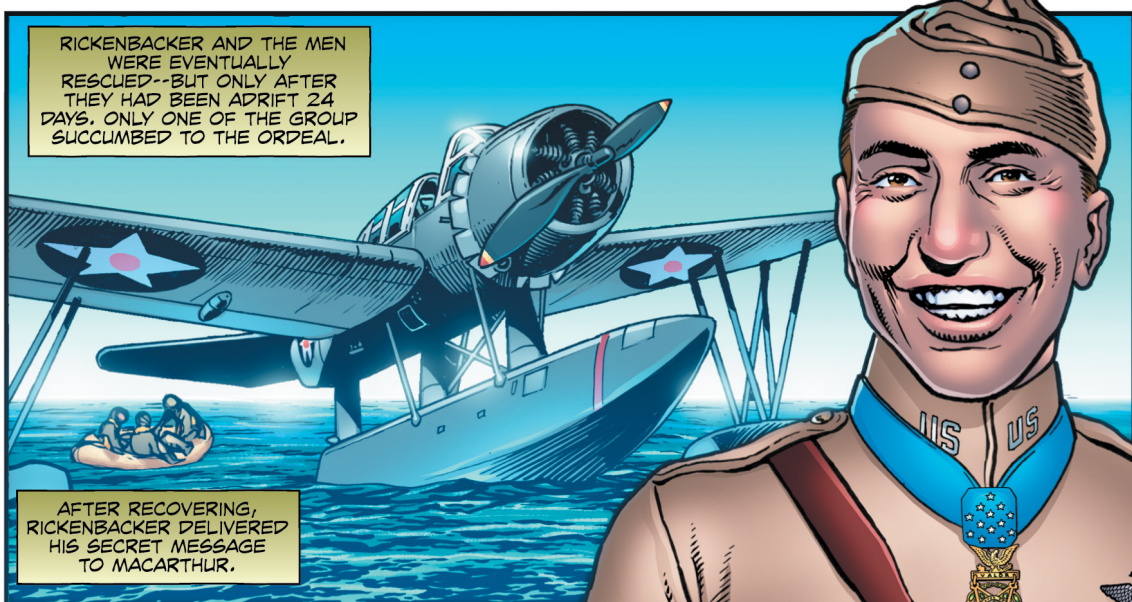


"AND FINALLY,
A FEW YEARS LATER,
CONGRESS DECIDED
TO AWARD ME THE
MEDAL OF HONOR."



NOW WE
HAVE TO GET
READY FOR
THIS NEXT
WAR.

FIRST,
WE NEED TO
KEEP WATCH
FOR ANY SHIP
OR PLANE.



RICKENBACKER AND THE MEN
WERE EVENTUALLY
RESCUED--BUT ONLY AFTER
THEY HAD BEEN ADRIFT 24
DAYS. ONLY ONE OF THE GROUP
SUCCUMBED TO THE ORDEAL.

AFTER RECOVERING,
RICKENBACKER DELIVERED
HIS SECRET MESSAGE
TO MACARTHUR.

THE WORLD NEVER
LEARNED ITS
CONTENTS.

BUT THEY WOULD
ALWAYS REMEMBER
THE EXTRAORDINARY
STORY OF EDDIE
RICKENBACKER.

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