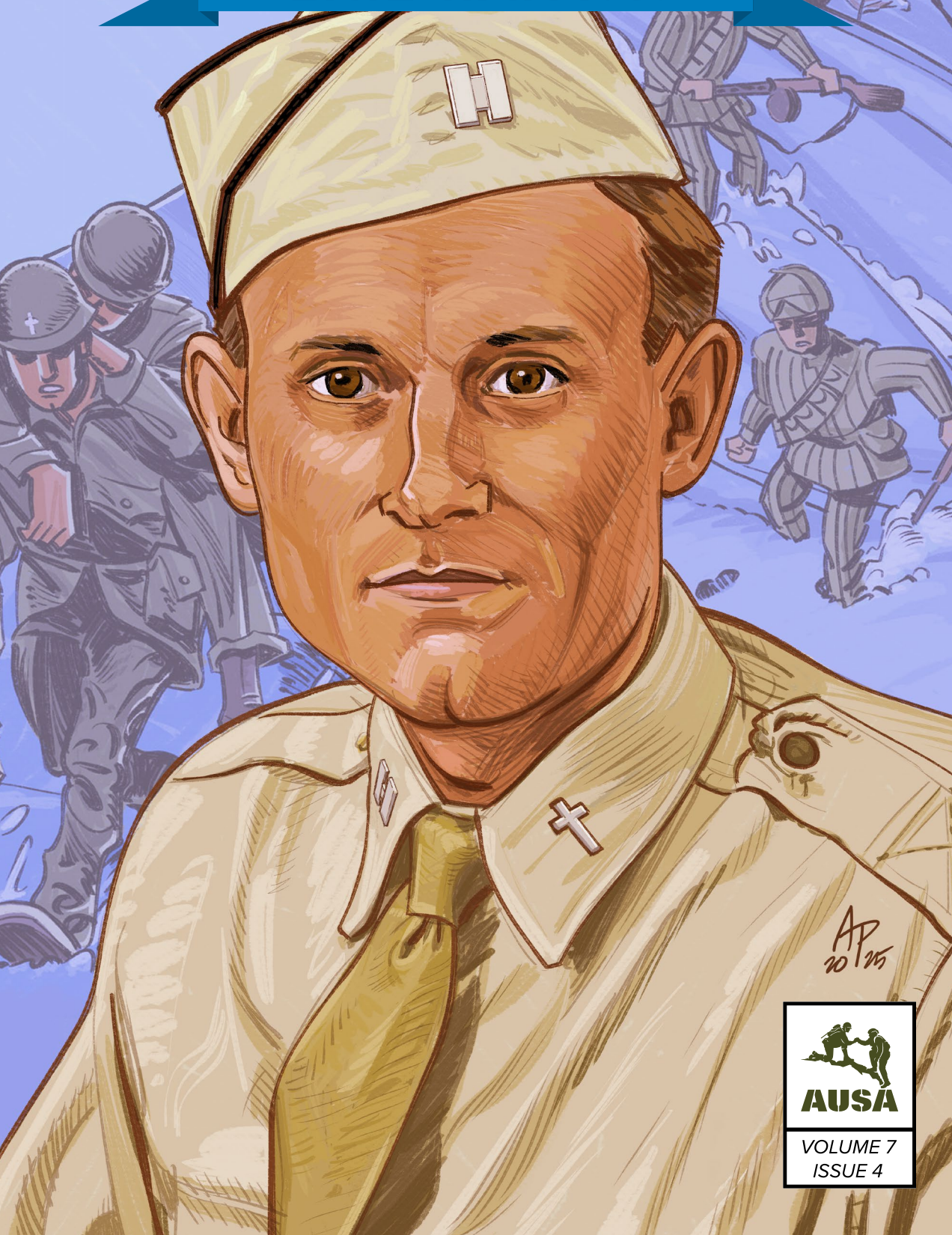


MEDAL OF HONOR

EMIL KAPAUN



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MEDAL OF HONOR

EMIL KAPAUN

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IN TIMES OF WAR, NOT ALL HEROES TAKE UP ARMS. SOME RISK THEIR LIVES TO PROVIDE SPIRITUAL AID AND MORAL SUPPORT FOR OTHERS. SUCH A MAN WAS...

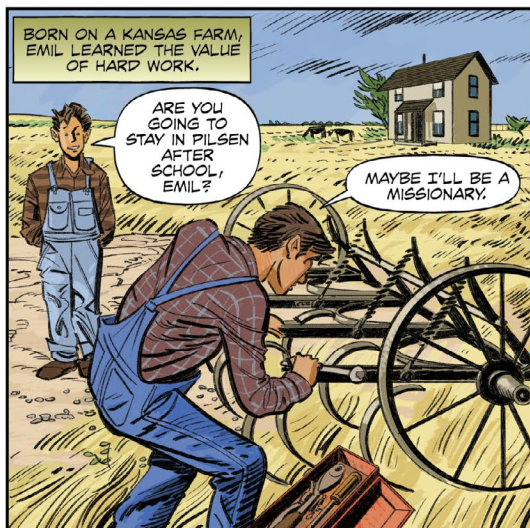
EMIL KAPAUN



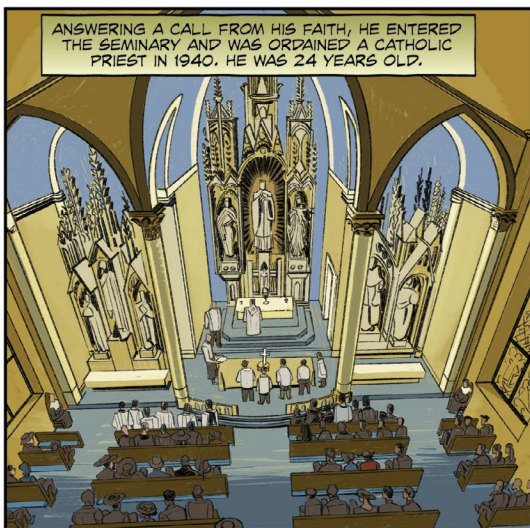
BORN ON A KANSAS FARM, EMIL LEARNED THE VALUE OF HARD WORK.

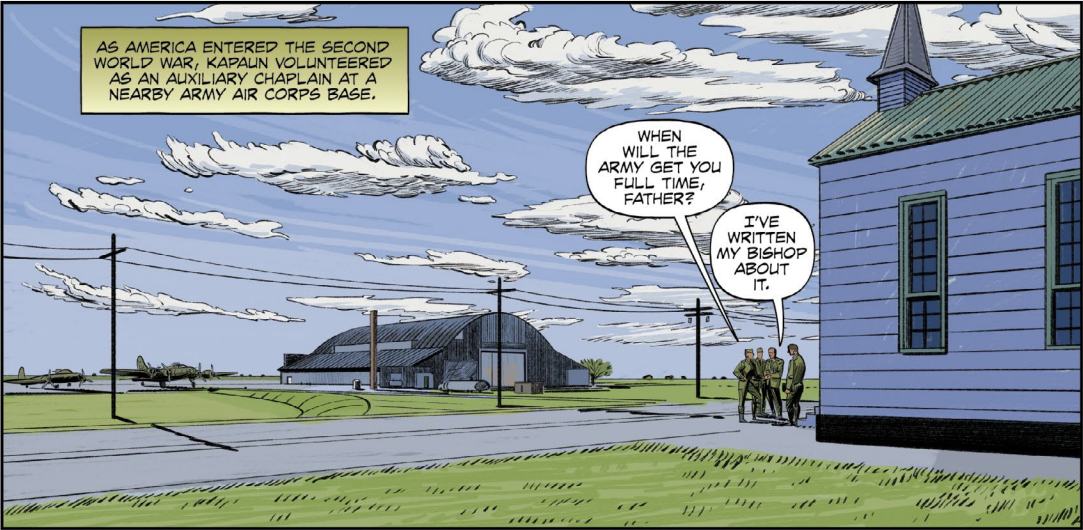
ARE YOU GOING TO STAY IN PILSEN AFTER SCHOOL, EMIL?

MAYBE I'LL BE A MISSIONARY.



ANSWERING A CALL FROM HIS FAITH, HE ENTERED THE SEMINARY AND WAS ORDAINED A CATHOLIC PRIEST IN 1940. HE WAS 24 YEARS OLD.





AS AMERICA ENTERED THE SECOND WORLD WAR, KAPAUN VOLUNTEERED AS AN AUXILIARY CHAPLAIN AT A NEARBY ARMY AIR CORPS BASE.

WHEN WILL THE ARMY GET YOU FULL TIME, FATHER?

I'VE WRITTEN MY BISHOP ABOUT IT.



IN 1944, HE JOINED THE U.S. ARMY CHAPLAIN CORPS.

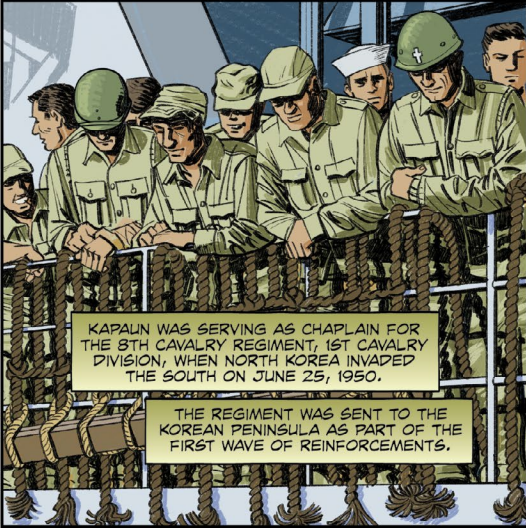
HE SERVED IN BURMA THROUGH THE END OF THE WAR.

WE PRAY THAT THE HOPE OF PRESIDENT ROOSEVELT, A TRUE PEACE AMONG NATIONS, BE REALIZED AND PRESERVED.



AFTER RETURNING TO THE STATES AND EARNING A MASTER'S DEGREE, KAPAUN RESUMED PASTORAL WORK IN KANSAS.

BUT HE FELT CALLED BACK TO MILITARY SERVICE TO FIGHT THE SPREAD OF COMMUNISM AND RETURNED TO ACTIVE DUTY IN 1948.

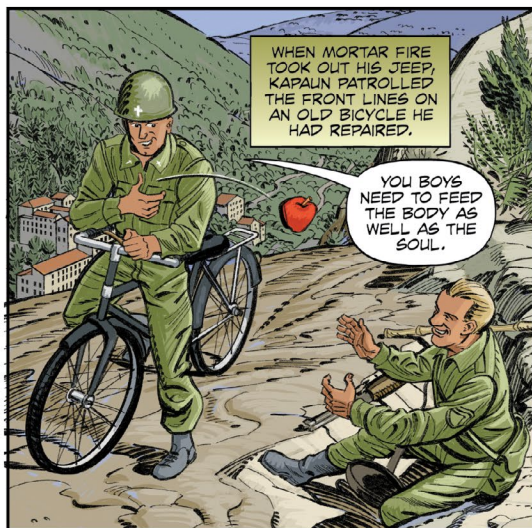


KAPAUN WAS SERVING AS CHAPLAIN FOR THE 8TH CAVALRY REGIMENT, 1ST CAVALRY DIVISION, WHEN NORTH KOREA INVADDED THE SOUTH ON JUNE 25, 1950.

THE REGIMENT WAS SENT TO THE KOREAN PENINSULA AS PART OF THE FIRST WAVE OF REINFORCEMENTS.



KAPAUN MINISTERED TO THE MEN'S SPIRITUAL NEEDS ON THE FRONT LINES.

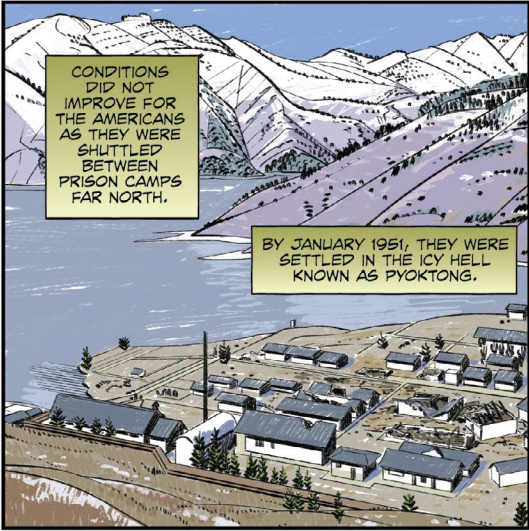






SHARING HIS LIVING BURDEN
WITH ANOTHER SOLDIER,
KAPALIN JOINED A CRUEL
DEATH MARCH TO THE NORTH.

ALL THAT FELL TO
WOUNDS, ILLNESS, OR
THE COLD WERE SHOT
OR LEFT TO DIE.



CONDITIONS
DID NOT
IMPROVE FOR
THE AMERICANS
AS THEY WERE
SHUTTLED
BETWEEN
PRISON CAMPS
FAR NORTH.

BY JANUARY 1951, THEY WERE
SETTLED IN THE ICY HELL
KNOWN AS PYOKTONG.



KAPALIN WAS HORRIFIED AT THE
UNHEATED HUTS AND STARVATION
DIET IN EFFECT AT THE CAMP.

THE MEN WERE
SEPARATED
INTO OFFICER
AND ENLISTED
COMPOUNDS. ALL
WERE EXHAUSTED,
MALNOURISHED,
AND ILL.



THE CHAPLAIN GATHERED THE
OFFICERS EVERY NIGHT FOR PRAYER.

OUR
FATHER,
WHO ART IN
HEAVEN...

THAT'S GOOD,
LOUDER, SO ALL
THE BOYS WILL
HEAR US.

THEY
MUST NOT
LOSE
HOPE.

OUR
FATHER,
WHO ART IN
HEAVEN...



NOT CONTENT TO BOLSTER MORALE FROM
AFAR, KAPALIN BEGAN TO SNEAK PAST THE
GUARDS TO VISIT THE ENLISTED CAMPS.

HE SHARED NEWS,
ENCOURAGEMENT,
AND WHATEVER
SUPPLIES HE
COULD FIND.



HE USED MECHANICAL SKILLS ACQUIRED BACK ON THE FAMILY FARM TO FASHION VESSELS FOR MELTING SNOW. CLEAN WATER HELPED FIGHT RAMPANT DYSENTERY IN THE CAMPS.

"COFFEE" IS READY, BOYS.



HE CARED FOR THE SICK, CLEANING THEIR WOUNDS AND WASHING THEIR SOILED CLOTHING.



HE "BORROWED" FOOD FROM THEIR GUARDS TO HELP FEED HIS HUNGRY FLOCK.

ST. DISMAS, PLEASE FORGIVE ME THIS TRESPASS.
AND KEEP AN EYE OUT FOR THE GUARDS.



HE WAS EXPOSED TO SUBZERO TEMPERATURES AS PUNISHMENT.

ONE TIME HE WAS CAUGHT BREAKING APART A FENCE FOR FIREWOOD.

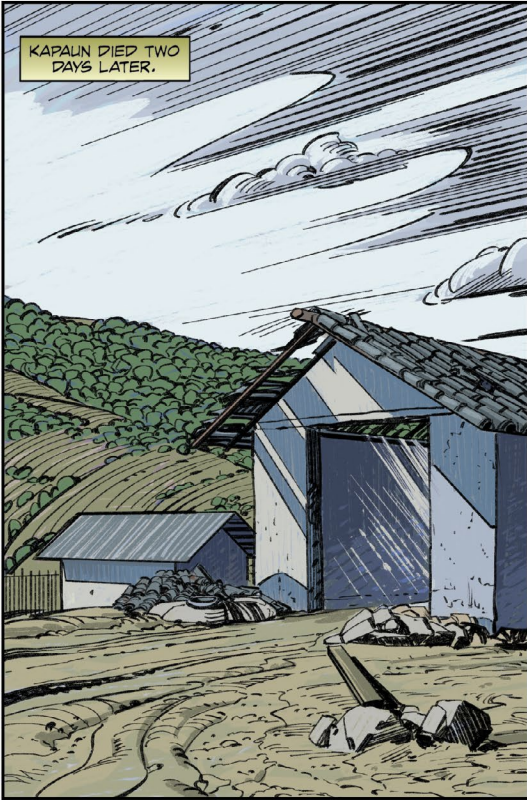


NO MATTER WHAT HAPPENED, HE KEPT UP THE MEN'S SPIRITS WITH FAITH AND HUMOR.

READY FOR ANOTHER DAY, FATHER?

NE ILLEGITIMI CARBORUNDUM ESSE.





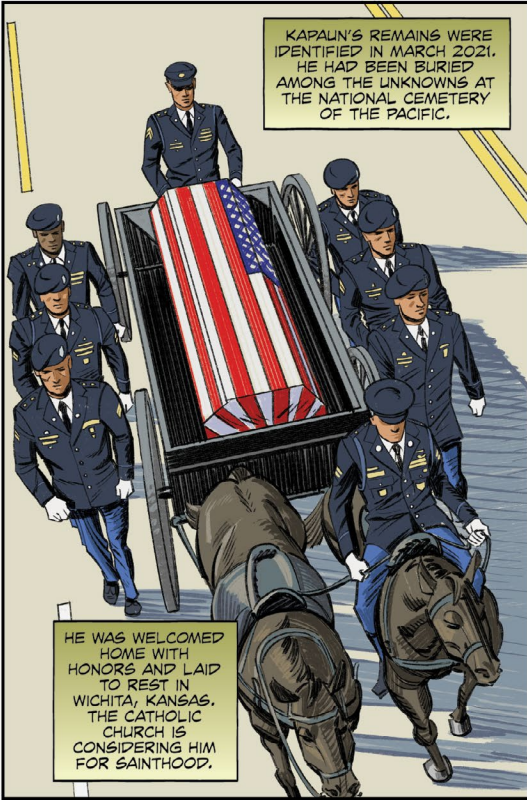
KAPAUN DIED TWO DAYS LATER.



THE CHAPLAIN'S FELLOW PRISONERS WORKED FOR YEARS TO GET HIM THE RECOGNITION HE DESERVED. THEIR WORK WAS REWARDED ON APRIL 11, 2013.

I CAN'T IMAGINE A BETTER EXAMPLE FOR ALL OF US.

FATHER KAPAUN'S LIFE, I THINK, IS A TESTIMONY TO THE HUMAN SPIRIT, THE POWER OF FAITH, AND REMINDS US OF THE GOOD THAT WE CAN DO EACH AND EVERY DAY.



KAPAUN'S REMAINS WERE IDENTIFIED IN MARCH 2021. HE HAD BEEN BURIED AMONG THE UNKNOWN'S AT THE NATIONAL CEMETERY OF THE PACIFIC.

HE WAS WELCOMED HOME WITH HONORS AND LAID TO REST IN WICHITA, KANSAS. THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IS CONSIDERING HIM FOR SAINTHOOD.



FATHER EMIL KAPAUN REPEATEDLY RISKED HIS LIFE TO SAVE HIS FELLOW AMERICANS. HE INSPIRED OTHERS TO SURVIVE HELLISH CONDITIONS AND RETAIN THEIR FAITH IN GOD AND COUNTRY.

HE IS THE MOST DECORATED CHAPLAIN IN ARMY HISTORY.

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