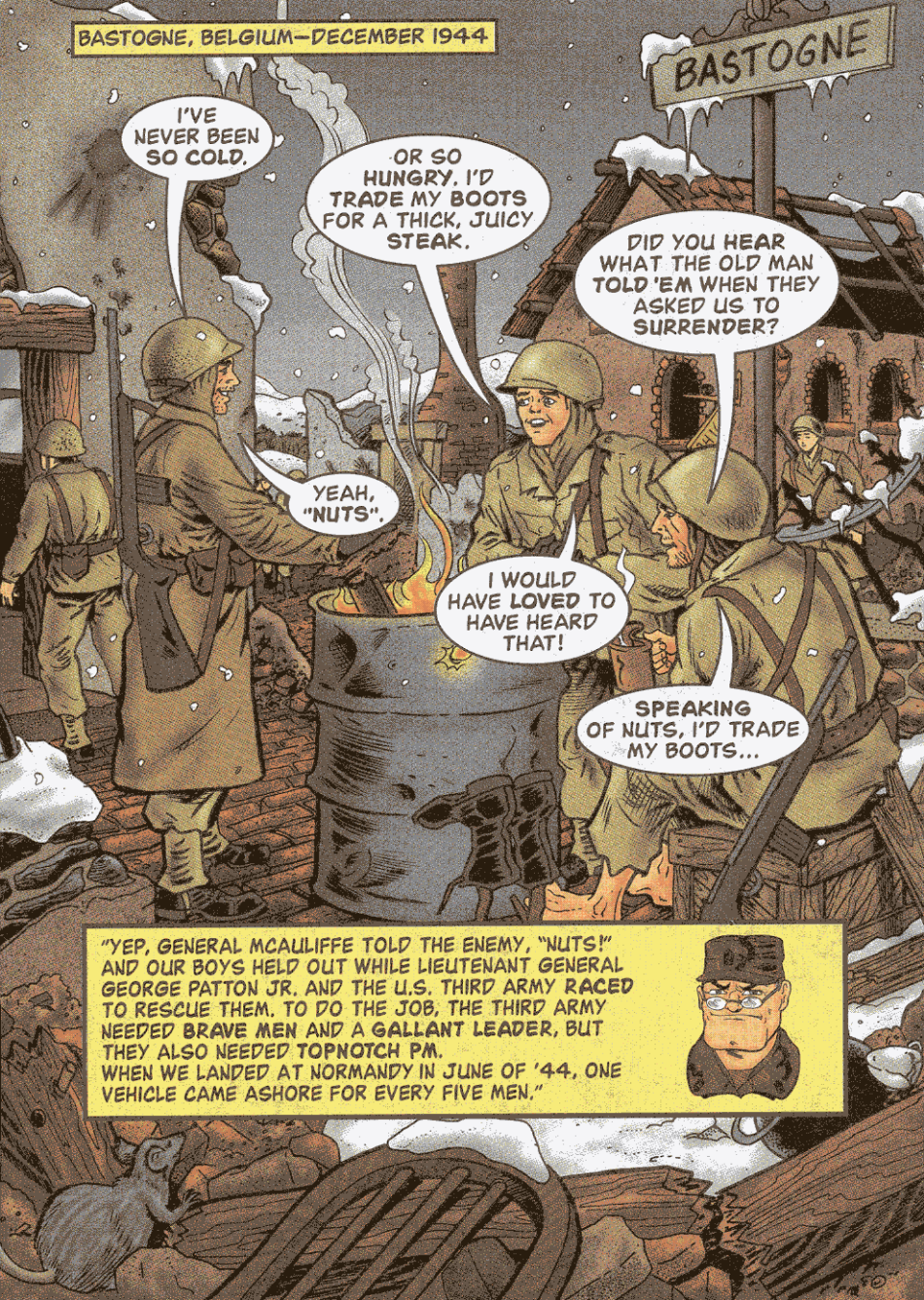
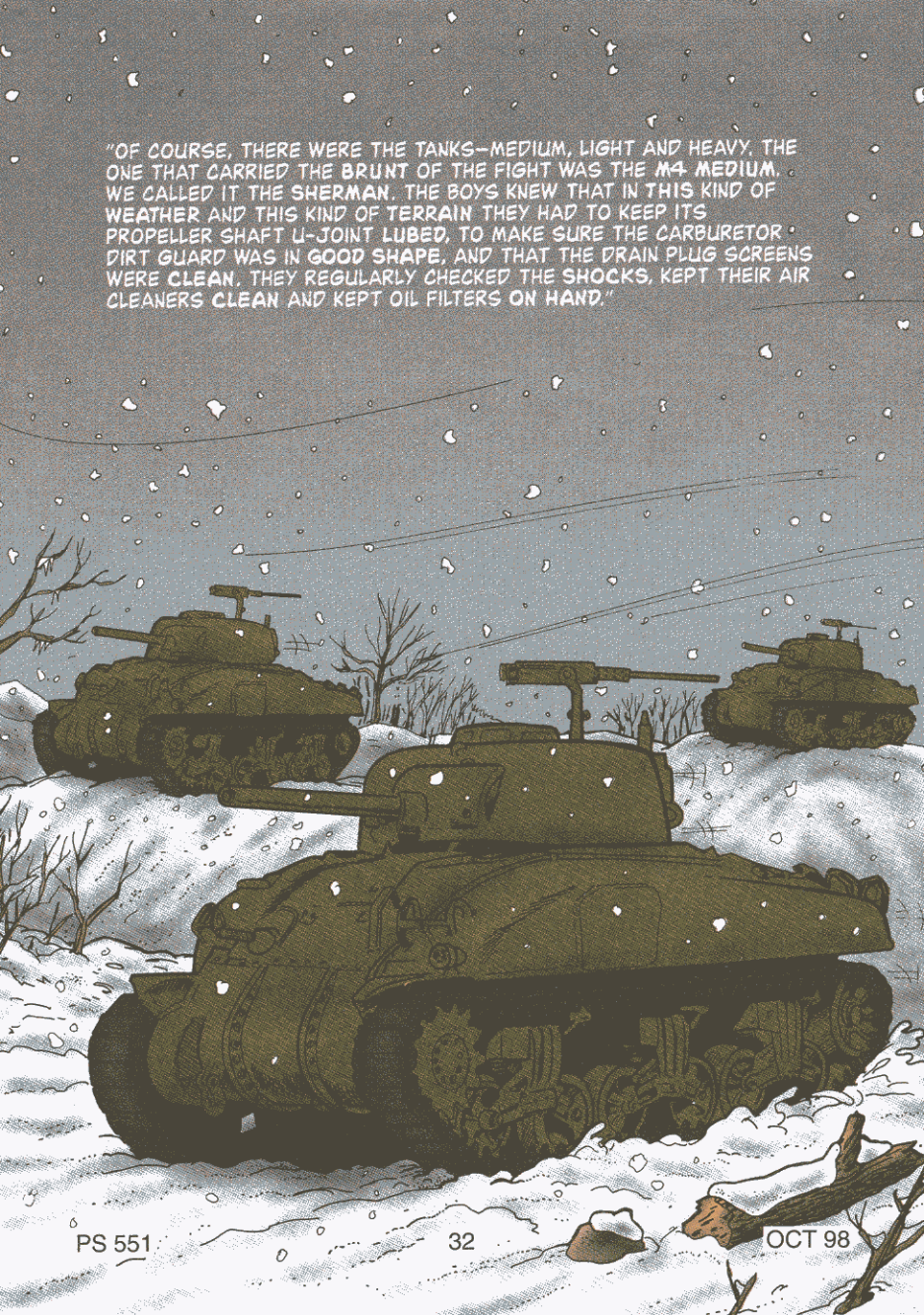
AT THE BASTOGNE HISTORICAL CENTER...
THEY ROLLED ON...
ALABAM
ARKANSAS
CALIFORNIA
COLORADO
CONNE
IT SURE IS COLD HERE IN BELGIUM.
YEAH, I'M FREEZING!
IT WAS COLD THEN TOO—BITTERLY COLD—AND IT SEEMED LIKE THE SNOW WOULD NEVER STOP.
HALF-MAST
U.S. ARMY
OCT 98


BASTOGNE, BELGIUM—DECEMBER 1944
BASTOGNE
I'VE NEVER BEEN SO COLD.
OR SO HUNGRY, I'D TRADE MY BOOTS FOR A THICK, JUICY STEAK.
DID YOU HEAR WHAT THE OLD MAN TOLD 'EM WHEN THEY ASKED US TO SURRENDER?
YEAH, "NUTS".
I WOULD HAVE LOVED TO HAVE HEARD THAT!
SPEAKING OF NUTS, I'D TRADE MY BOOTS...
"YEP, GENERAL MCAULIFFE TOLD THE ENEMY, "NUTS!" AND OUR BOYS HELD OUT WHILE LIEUTENANT GENERAL GEORGE PATTON JR. AND THE U.S. THIRD ARMY RACED TO RESCUE THEM. TO DO THE JOB, THE THIRD ARMY NEEDED BRAVE MEN AND A GALLANT LEADER, BUT THEY ALSO NEEDED TOPNOTCH PM.
WHEN WE LANDED AT NORMANDY IN JUNE OF '44, ONE VEHICLE CAME ASHORE FOR EVERY FIVE MEN."

"NOW, SEVEN MONTHS LATER, AS PATTON'S ARMY RUSHED TO BASTOGNE, IT WAS PM THAT KEPT MANY OF THEM, LIKE THE 2 1/2-TON TRUCK, STILL ROLLING. THE DEUCE-AND-A-HALF WAS A WORKHORSE, BUT BAD WEATHER AND ROUGH TERRAIN CAN BREAK THE BACK OF THE BEST HORSE. TOO MANY EXHAUST MANIFOLDS WERE CRACKING, SO GOOD PM CALLED FOR CONSTANTLY CHECKING THE STUDS, CLAMPS AND WASHERS. HARDWARE THAT WAS TOO TIGHT WOULD CAUSE MANIFOLD CRACKS; HARDWARE THAT WAS TOO LOOSE DID THE SAME. JUST RIGHT WAS ALL THAT WOULD WORK."
ARE WE READY TO ROLL?
WE CHECKED ALL THE BOLTS, CLAMPS, AND STUDS. THEY'RE READY TO GO, AND SO ARE WE.

"REAR BRAKE LINES WERE ANOTHER PROBLEM. ICE AND FROZEN MUD CUT THEM LIKE A HOT KNIFE THROUGH SOFT BUTTER. PREVENTIVE MAINTENANCE CALLED FOR BOLTING A METAL SHIELD TO THE WHEEL BACKING PLATE AND THEN WELDING IT TO THE SPRING GUIDE-BRACKET. THE BRAKE LINES HELD AND THE TRUCKS ROLLED ON."
HOW'S THAT BRAKE LINE SHIELD WORKING OUT?
GREAT! THE LINES ARE PROTECTED FROM ICE AND FROZEN MUD.
"TAIL PIPES WERE CLOGGING. NOW THAT WAS A REAL MESS. PM CAME TO THE RESCUE AND CONE-SHAPED EXTENSIONS WERE ADDED."
AS SOON AS I BOLT ON THIS TAILPIPE EXTENSION, WE'LL BE READY TO ROLL.
AS YOU KNOW, YOU WON'T MOVE FAR IN THE COLD WITHOUT A RADIATOR. AND TOO MANY OF THOSE WERE SHAKING LOOSE. GOOD PM MEANT CHECKING THE HOLD-DOWN BOLTS OFTEN.
WHAT ABOUT THE JEEP?

"WE ALL KNOW THE 1/4-TON TRUCK WAS THERE. THAT JEEP DID ITS JOB AND DID IT WELL. BUT THE COLD AND STRESS MADE FOR METAL FATIGUE. FRAMES WERE CRACKING AND BREAKING AROUND THE REAR SPRING HANGER. SO THE BOYS GRABBED SOME PM AND MADE A REINFORCEMENT PLATE TO KNOCK OUT THE TROUBLE. SNOW, SLUSH AND WATER WERE GETTING INTO THE AIR CLEANER TUBE. PM AND SOME WATERPROOF TAPE SOLVED THAT PROBLEM. AND THE QUARTER-TONS ROLLED ON."
WE'VE GOT A CRACK IN THE FRAME NEAR THE REAR SPRING HANGER.
IS THERE ANY WAY TO REINFORCE IT?
YOU MEAN LIKE A PLATE?
WORKS FOR ME.
I'LL GET RIGHT ON IT.
I'LL GET SOME WATERPROOF TAPE AND TAKE CARE OF THE AIR CLEANER.


"OF COURSE, THERE WERE THE TANKS—MEDIUM, LIGHT AND HEAVY. THE ONE THAT CARRIED THE BRUNT OF THE FIGHT WAS THE M4 MEDIUM. WE CALLED IT THE SHERMAN. THE BOYS KNEW THAT IN THIS KIND OF WEATHER AND THIS KIND OF TERRAIN THEY HAD TO KEEP ITS PROPELLER SHAFT U-JOINT LUBED, TO MAKE SURE THE CARBURETOR DIRT GUARD WAS IN GOOD SHAPE, AND THAT THE DRAIN PLUG SCREENS WERE CLEAN. THEY REGULARLY CHECKED THE SHOCKS, KEPT THEIR AIR CLEANERS CLEAN AND KEPT OIL FILTERS ON HAND."

"AND WITH TANKS, THEY NEEDED THE M25 TANK TRANSPORTER. BUT THERE WAS A PROBLEM WITH THE WHEEL RING STUDS SHEARING OFF. VETERANS SAID THERE WAS NOTHING FUNNY ABOUT WATCHING A 40-TON TANK TRANSPORTER TOTING A MEDIUM TANK DOWN AN ICE-ENCRUSTED ROAD WHEN A FEW OF THE STUDS LET GO AND THE TIRE TUBE CREPT OUT LIKE A BLISTER AND SUDDENLY EXPLODED. PM DEMANDED A FIX AND THE BOYS ANSWERED THE CALL. THEY GRABBED THE STRONGER HUB BOLT FROM THE 1 1/2-TON DODGE, FOUND THAT IT FIT AND WORKED, AND ROLLED ON."
IT'S A GOOD THING WE CAUGHT THAT BLISTER WHEN WE DID, A BLOWOUT ON THESE ICY ROADS WOULD'VE BEEN REAL TROUBLE.
THE STRONGER HUB BOLTS SHOULD HELP, BUT STILL KEEP AN EYE ON 'EM.
LET'S GET THIS TANK TO REPAIR SO IT CAN GET BACK IN THE FIGHT!

"PM, PATTON AND LOTS OF GUTS GAVE THE GUYS AT BASTOGNE A GOOD NEW YEAR'S."
BASTOGNE
R-R-R-R-R-R-R-R-R-R-R
"IN 1944, MAJOR GENERAL A. C. GILLEM, JR., THE COMMANDING GENERAL OF THE ARMORED COMMAND SAID, "THE STOUTEST ARMOR IS NO PROTECTION AGAINST NEGLECT. PREVENTIVE MAINTENANCE MUST BE AS RELENTLESS AS OUR TANKS IN COMBAT...." THAT'S WHAT THE WINTER DEMANDS—*RELENTLESS PM*."