

GETTYSBURG THE EVE OF BATTLE

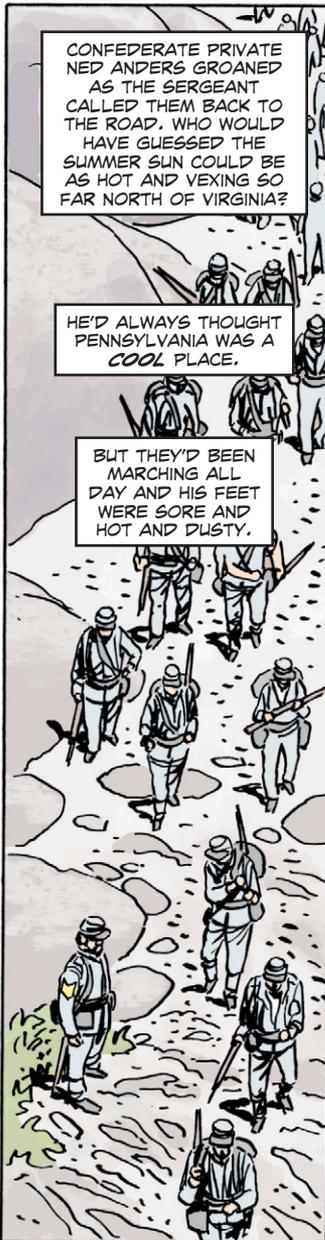
IN JULY 1863, UNION AND CONFEDERATE ARMIES CLASHED AT GETTYSBURG, PA.

VOLUMES OF BOOKS COVER THE FACTS OF THE THREE-DAY BATTLE.

LITTLE HAS BEEN WRITTEN ABOUT THE EVE OF THE BATTLE FOR THE TWO UNITS THAT WOULD FIRE THE FIRST SHOTS.

THIS IS THEIR TALE...

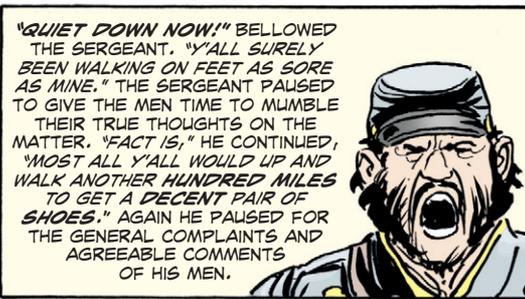
JOE KUBER



CONFEDERATE PRIVATE NED ANDERS GROANED AS THE SERGEANT CALLED THEM BACK TO THE ROAD, WHO WOULD HAVE GUESSED THE SUMMER SUN COULD BE AS HOT AND VEXING SO FAR NORTH OF VIRGINIA?

HE'D ALWAYS THOUGHT PENNSYLVANIA WAS A COOL PLACE.

BUT THEY'D BEEN MARCHING ALL DAY AND HIS FEET WERE SORE AND HOT AND DUSTY.



"**QUIET DOWN NOW!**" BELLOWED THE SERGEANT. "Y'ALL SURELY BEEN WALKING ON FEET AS SORE AS MINE." THE SERGEANT PAUSED TO GIVE THE MEN TIME TO MUMBLE THEIR TRUE THOUGHTS ON THE MATTER. "FACT IS," HE CONTINUED, "MOST ALL Y'ALL WOULD UP AND WALK ANOTHER HUNDRED MILES TO GET A DECENT PAIR OF SHOES." AGAIN HE PAUSED FOR THE GENERAL COMPLAINTS AND AGREEABLE COMMENTS OF HIS MEN.



"TIS A FACT THE COLONEL JUST GOT WORD THERE'S A WAREHOUSE FULL OF SHOES NOT ANOTHER 10 MILES EAST OF THIS HERE SPOT!" HE PAUSED, LETTING IT SINK IN. "Y'ALL WANT TO GO GET THOSE SHOES?"



THE RESPONSE WAS EVEN MORE BOISTEROUS THAN HE EXPECTED.



"WELL, WHAT ARE Y'ALL WAITING FOR? MOVE OUT!"

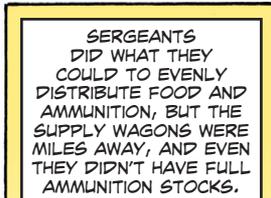


THE 10-MILE MARCH STARTED OUT AS EXUBERANTLY AS THE MEN'S TIRED FEET WOULD ALLOW.

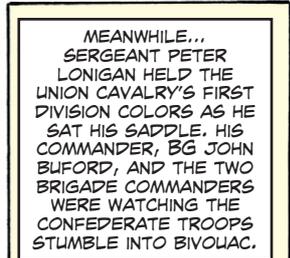
BUT THEY'D ALREADY DONE 15 MILES SINCE DAYBREAK AND THE AFTERNOON SUN SAPPED THE MEN'S STRENGTH UNTIL, AT LENGTH...



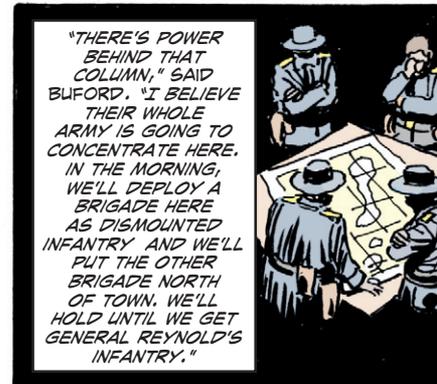
...PRIVATE ANDERS FELL EXHAUSTED WHEN MG HENRY HETH DECIDED HIS MEN NEEDED REST BEFORE RAIDING THE SMALL TOWN FOR SHOES AND SUPPLIES.



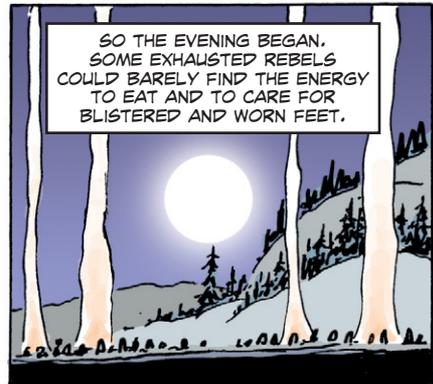
MANY SOLDIERS, USED TO HUNTING, SAW TO THEIR WEAPONS, BUT OTHERS, LIKE ANDERS WERE JUST TOO DRAINED TO CARE.



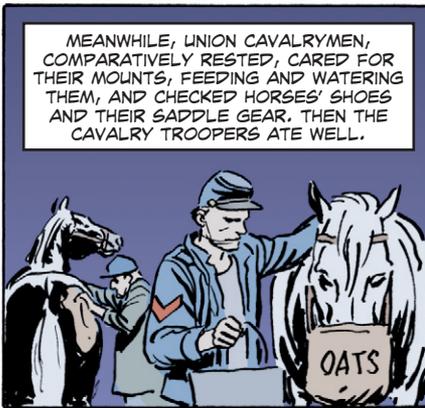
MEANWHILE... SERGEANT PETER LONIGAN HELD THE UNION CAVALRY'S FIRST DIVISION COLORS AS HE SAT HIS SADDLE. HIS COMMANDER, BG JOHN BUFORD, AND THE TWO BRIGADE COMMANDERS WERE WATCHING THE CONFEDERATE TROOPS STUMBLE INTO BIVOUAC.



"THERE'S POWER BEHIND THAT COLUMN," SAID BUFORD. "I BELIEVE THEIR WHOLE ARMY IS GOING TO CONCENTRATE HERE. IN THE MORNING, WE'LL DEPLOY A BRIGADE HERE AS DISMOUNTED INFANTRY AND WE'LL PUT THE OTHER BRIGADE NORTH OF TOWN. WE'LL HOLD UNTIL WE GET GENERAL REYNOLD'S INFANTRY."



SO THE EVENING BEGAN. SOME EXHAUSTED REBELS COULD BARELY FIND THE ENERGY TO EAT AND TO CARE FOR BLISTERED AND WORN FEET.



MEANWHILE, UNION CAVALRYMEN, COMPARATIVELY RESTED, CARED FOR THEIR MOUNTS, FEEDING AND WATERING THEM, AND CHECKED HORSES' SHOES AND THEIR SADDLE GEAR. THEN THE CAVALRY TROOPERS ATE WELL.



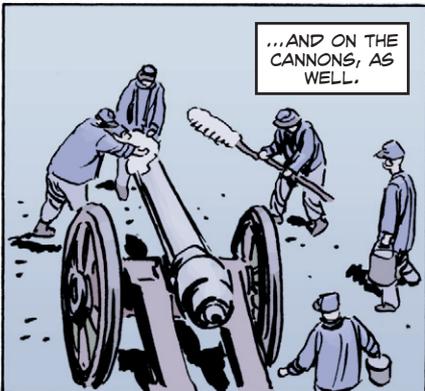
IN THE EVENING, SERGEANT LONIGAN AND HIS FELLOW NCOs INSISTED THE MEN CLEAN AND SERVICE THEIR CARBINES AND PISTOLS. INSPECTIONS FOLLOWED ON EACH WEAPON...



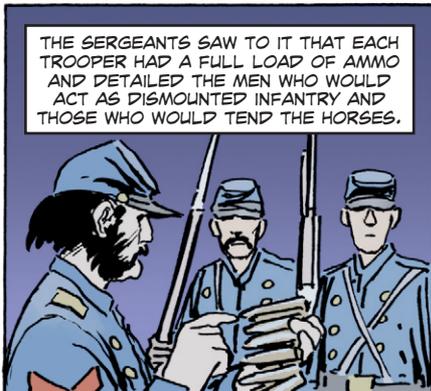
LONIGAN SAW HOW THE WELL-MAINTAINED CAVALRY CARBINES LOADED FASTER...



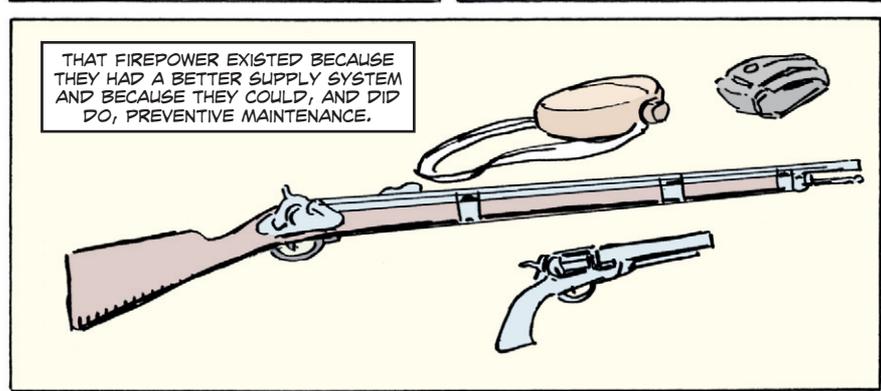
...AND ALMOST NEVER MISFIRED AS THE FRESH UNION TROOPERS MET AND HELD OFF GENERAL HETH'S CONFEDERATE DIVISION.



...AND ON THE CANNONS, AS WELL.



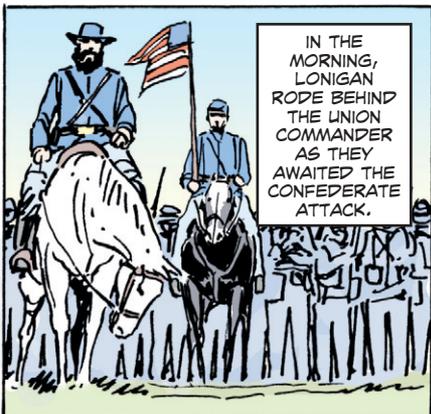
THE SERGEANTS SAW TO IT THAT EACH TROOPER HAD A FULL LOAD OF AMMO AND DETAILED THE MEN WHO WOULD ACT AS DISMOUNTED INFANTRY AND THOSE WHO WOULD TEND THE HORSES.



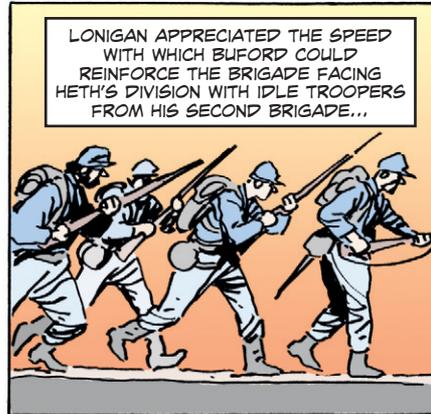
THAT FIREPOWER EXISTED BECAUSE THEY HAD A BETTER SUPPLY SYSTEM AND BECAUSE THEY COULD, AND DID DO, PREVENTIVE MAINTENANCE.



WITH ALL IN READINESS, THE TROOPERS RESTED AND WAITED FOR THE COMING BATTLE.



IN THE MORNING, LONIGAN RODE BEHIND THE UNION COMMANDER AS THEY AWAITED THE CONFEDERATE ATTACK.



LONIGAN APPRECIATED THE SPEED WITH WHICH BUFORD COULD REINFORCE THE BRIGADE FACING HETH'S DIVISION WITH IDLE TROOPERS FROM HIS SECOND BRIGADE...



...WHO WERE WAITING TO BLOCK CONFEDERATE UNITS COMING FROM THE NORTH OF THE TOWN.



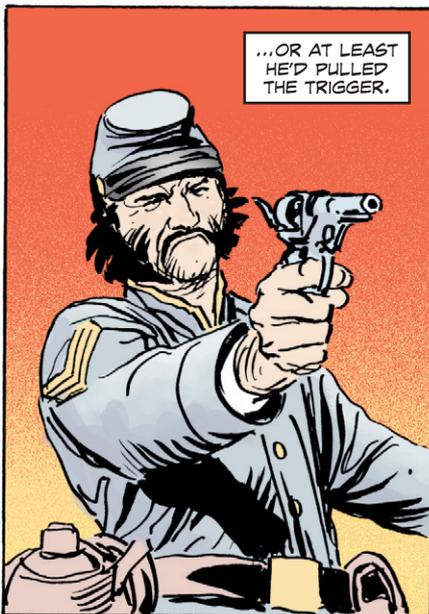
ANDER'S UNIT MOVED UP, IN LINE OF BATTLE THEY PREPARED TO FIRE EN MASSE AT THE UNION LINE.



HIS SERGEANT SIGHTED THE UNION COLOR BEARER RIDING BEHIND THE LINE, DREW A BEAD, AND ON THE ORDER, FIRED...



HETH'S DIVISION WAS HAMPERED BOTH BY A LACK OF SHOES...



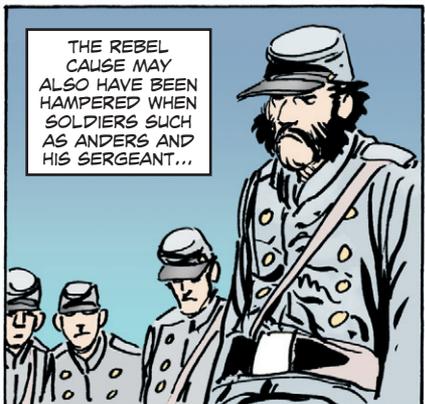
...OR AT LEAST HE'D PULLED THE TRIGGER.



BUT THE HAMMER DIDN'T FALL BECAUSE DIRT HAD JAMMED THE HAMMER.



...AND A SUPPLY CHAIN THAT COULDN'T PROVIDE MATERIEL AS QUICKLY AS NEEDED.



THE REBEL CAUSE MAY ALSO HAVE BEEN HAMPERED WHEN SOLDIERS SUCH AS ANDERS AND HIS SERGEANT...



...FOUND THEIR POWDER WAS DAMP...



...OR THEIR PISTOL AND MUSKET HAMMERS FOULED.

THE ATTENTION YOU
GIVE TO PREVENTIVE
MAINTENANCE NOW MAY
MEAN THE DIFFERENCE
BETWEEN LIFE AND DEATH,
OR VICTORY OR DEFEAT.



WHICH DO
YOU
PREFER?

