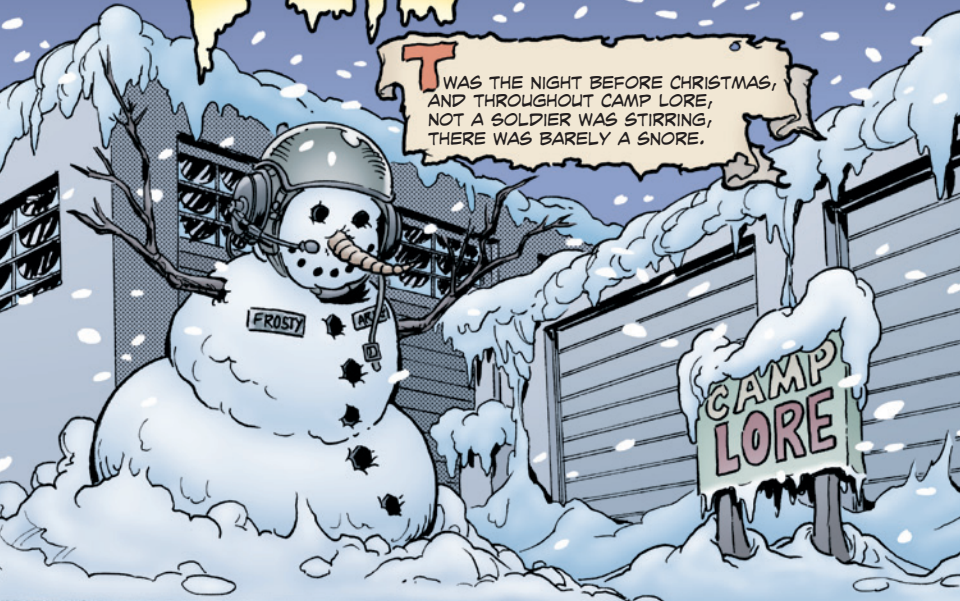


THE NIGHT BEFORE A

PM CHRISTMAS

T WAS THE NIGHT BEFORE CHRISTMAS,
AND THROUGHOUT CAMP LORE,
NOT A SOLDIER WAS STIRRING,
THERE WAS BARELY A SNORE.



THE STOCKINGS WERE
HUNG ON THE MOTOR
POOL WALLS,
IN HOPES THEY'D
BE FILLED BY OL'
SANTA CLAUS.



PS 733

THE OPERATORS AND
MECHANICS WERE SNUG
IN THEIR RACKS,
WHILE DREAMS OF PM
HAD THEM COMPLETELY
RELAXED.



27

AND ME, THE 1ST
SERGEANT, HAD JUST
CLIMBED INTO BED.
I WAS CLOSING MY
EYES AS I LAY DOWN
MY HEAD.



DEC 13

**THUD
BOINK
CLUNK
BONK
CWOOSH**

WHEN OUT IN THE MOTOR POOL THERE CAME A GREAT NOISE, I HOPPED STRAIGHT OUT OF BED, BARELY KEEPING MY POISE. OVER TO THE WINDOW I RAN REALLY FAST, AND PUSHED IT WIDE OPEN SO I COULD SEE WHAT HAD PASSED.



THE SODIUM LIGHTS SPREAD A DIM YELLOW GLOW, ON THE SNOW-COVERED TRUCKS IN THE LOT DOWN BELOW. MY EYES POPPED WIDE OPEN AS ON THAT WINTER FRONTIER, FLEW A BIG RED SLEIGH PULLED BY EIGHT FEISTY REINDEER.

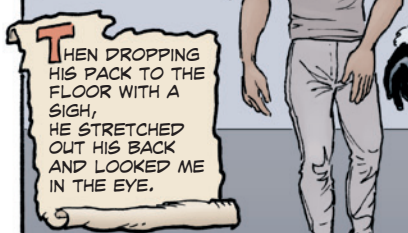
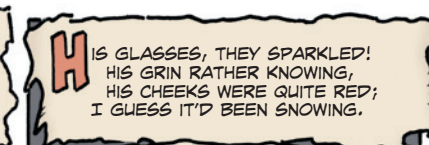
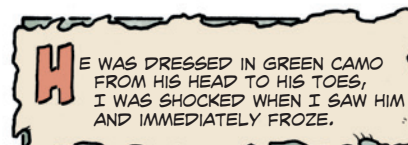


AT THE REINS WAS A DRIVER WITH A BIG SQUARE JAW, I KNEW RIGHT AWAY IT MUST BE HALF-MAST SANTA CLAUS! FASTER THAN LIGHTNING ALL HIS REINDEER DID FLY, AND HE SHOUTED THEIR NAMES AS THEY MOVED 'CROSS THE SKY!



NOW, DUDLEY! NOW, SMEDLEY! NOW, PERCY AND JOE! ON, SEYMOUR! ON, CRUSTY! ON DEXTER AND MOE!

TO THE TOP OF THE MOTOR POOL, QUICK AS CAN BE! I'VE GOT TMS TO DELIVER FOR THESE SOLDIERS TO SEE!"



WITH FINGER TO LIPS, AND A "SHHH!" AS HIS PLEA, HE DUG THROUGH HIS PACK AS HE DROPPED TO ONE KNEE. LUBE ORDERS, MULTIMETERS, GREASE GUNS AND PLIERS, WHEN I THOUGHT HE WAS DONE, HE PULLED OUT SOME TIRES!



ALL THESE GIFTS WENT IN STOCKINGS OR RIGHT ON THE FLOOR, THEN HE WENT BACK TO HIS PACK AND DUG OUT SOME MORE! IT TOOK QUITE A WHILE BEFORE HIS BAG WAS DEFLATED, - BUT THE EMPTIER IT GOT, THE MORE HE SEEMED ELATED!



FINISHED AT LAST AND PACK NOW QUITE BARE, HE TURNED FROM HIS WORK AND CLIMBED UP THE STAIR. BEFORE HE COULD VANISH, HE GAVE ME A WINK,



AND THEN HE WAS GONE, BEFORE I COULD BLINK.



HE JUMPED IN HIS SLEIGH
AND I LOOKED BACK OUTSIDE,
AS THEY TOOK TO THE SKY
LIKE A SHIP AT HIGH TIDE.

BUT I HEARD HIM CALL OUT
AS HE SPED THROUGH
THE NIGHT,

REMEMBER
THIS
CHRISTMAS
TO KEEP PM
BURNING
BRIGHT!

END