



GARTH ENNIS • SIMON COLEBY

#4
of 6

Dreaming Eagles



ON SALE MARCH 30TH!



3: VESUVIUS

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*"BENJAMIN O. DAVIS
RAN THE NINETY-NINTH."*

*"HE DID SMILE FROM TIME
TO TIME. HE MUST'VE DONE.
I'M CERTAIN HE DID."*

*"BUT TRY AS I MIGHT,
I DON'T EVER REMEMBER
HIM DOING IT."*

BEFORE WE STARTED AT TUSKEGEE, HE WAS THE ONLY BLACK OFFICER IN THE ARMY AIR FORCE. ONLY BLACK CADET IN HIS INTAKE AT WEST POINT.

THE OTHER CADETS SILENCED HIM, MEANING NO ONE TALKED TO HIM.

FOR FOUR YEARS.

THE STRANGE THING IS HE WASN'T A VERY GOOD PILOT...

"I DON'T THINK HE EVEN CLAIMED ANY KILLS. BUT THAT'S NOT WHAT MATTERED.

"HE WAS A LEADER. THE BEST I EVER KNEW."

"HE WAS EXACTLY THE MAN WE NEEDED IN THE JOB, AND BACK THEN WE NEEDED HIM IN WAYS WE COULDN'T HAVE IMAGINED."



REMEMBER THE FIGHTER GROUP WE WERE ASSIGNED TO...?

THE, THE THIRTY-THIRD?

WELL, WHEN WE MOVED ON, THEIR COLONEL GAVE US A LITTLE PARTING GIFT.

"HE WROTE A REPORT THAT PRETTY MUCH SAID WE WERE NO USE TO THE ARMY."



"SCATTERED UNDER ATTACK, ONLY HIT UNDEFENDED TARGETS, COULDN'T FLY IN BAD WEATHER AND DIDN'T UNDERSTAND TEAMWORK. NOT OF FIGHTING CALIBER, WAS WHAT HE SAID."

"AND THAT REPORT MADE ITS WAY UP THE LINE..."



"AND DAVIS HAD TO GO AND ANSWER FOR IT."



"DAVIS LAID IT OUT FOR THEM.

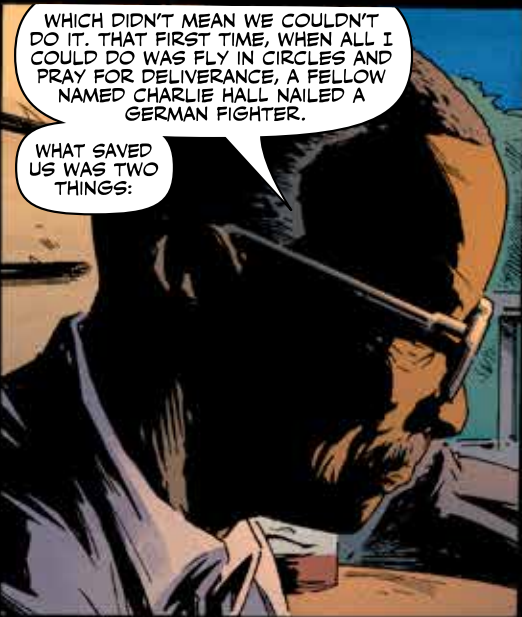
"HE KNEW WHAT WAS AT STAKE: EITHER WE STAYED IN COMBAT OR WE'D BE SENT TO FLY PATROLS OVER THE PANAMA CANAL."



"WE DID NONE OF THE THINGS THE REPORT SAID.

"WE GOT LESS REPLACEMENTS THAN ANY OTHER SQUADRON. THAT MEANT WE FLEW MORE MISSIONS--ANYTHING UP TO SIX A DAY. THAT MEANT WE WERE DOG-TIRED.

"AND THE DAMNEDEST THING: WE SEEMED TO GET MORE GROUND-ATTACK JOBS THAN ANYONE ELSE. SO WE DIDN'T HAVE MUCH CHANCE OF SHOOTING DOWN ENEMY AIRCRAFT..."



WHICH DIDN'T MEAN WE COULDN'T DO IT. THAT FIRST TIME, WHEN ALL I COULD DO WAS FLY IN CIRCLES AND PRAY FOR DELIVERANCE, A FELLOW NAMED CHARLIE HALL NAILED A GERMAN FIGHTER.

WHAT SAVED US WAS TWO THINGS:



DAVIS' TESTIMONY BEFORE THE CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEE, WHICH GOT ANOTHER REPORT GOING ON ALL THE P-40 UNITS IN THE MEDITERRANEAN. TURNED OUT WE HAD NOTHING TO BE ASHAMED OF.

AND SOMEONE, SOMEWHERE, MAKING THE POINT THAT THE PRESIDENT WOULD NOT APPRECIATE THIS NONSENSE.



AND NONSENSE IS WHAT IT WAS.

DAMN FOOLISHNESS.



"THE COLONEL WHO WROTE THAT LOUSY REPORT, HIS NAME WAS SPIKE MOMYER. AND HE WAS A GREAT FIGHTER PILOT.

"EIGHT KILLS. STILL IN THE AIR FORCE NOW, HOLDS GENERAL'S RANK. AND HE COULDN'T LOOK PAST HIS BIGOTRY AND HIS STUPIDITY TO SEE THAT WE WERE READY TO FIGHT AND HE COULD HAVE USED US...!"



HHHH.



BLACK MEN FOUGHT IN THE CIVIL WAR, SOME NO MORE THAN FREED SLAVES.

WE FOUGHT IN THE PLAINS WARS AGAINST THE INDIANS. FOUGHT IN WORLD WAR ONE.

BUT EVERY TIME THE SHOOTING STOPPED WE WENT BACK TO WHERE WE STARTED, AND THE LESSON HAD TO BE LEARNED ALL OVER AGAIN.



"WE DID BETTER WITH THE SEVENTY-NINTH, THE NEXT FIGHTER GROUP WE GOT ATTACHED TO."

"BY NOW IT WAS WINTER OF FORTY-THREE. WE'D FLOWN GROUND-ATTACK ALL THE WAY THROUGH SICILY AND THEN INTO ITALY..."



"THE ITALIANS CAPITULATED RIGHT AFTER THE INVASION."



"THE GERMANS MOST CERTAINLY DID NOT."

AAAH!