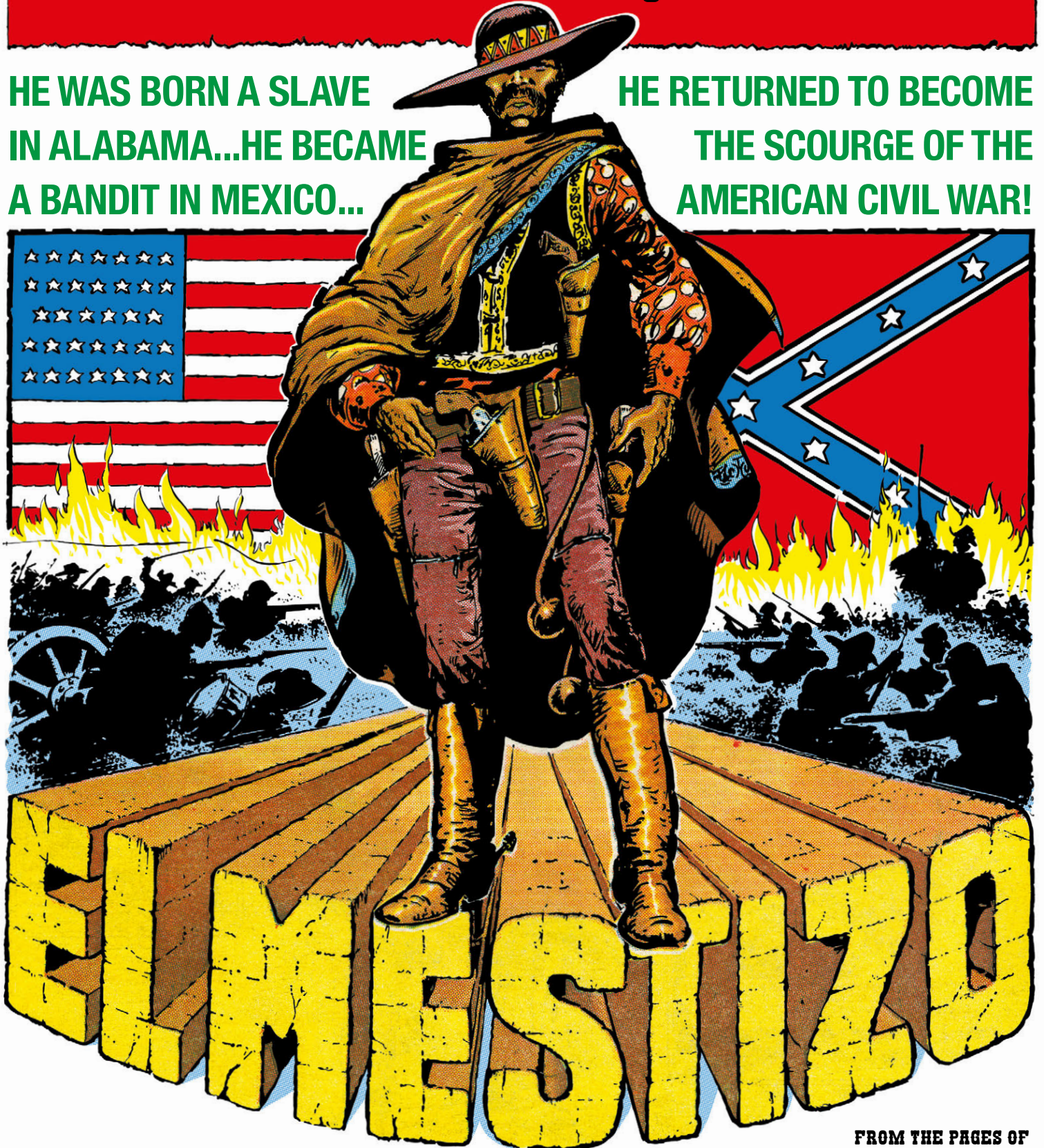


**ALAN
HEBDEN**

**CARLOS
EZQUERRA**

HE WAS BORN A SLAVE
IN ALABAMA...HE BECAME
A BANDIT IN MEXICO...

HE RETURNED TO BECOME
THE SCOURGE OF THE
AMERICAN CIVIL WAR!



FROM THE PAGES OF
BATTLE

WRITER
Alan Hebden

ARTIST
Carlos Ezquerro



Creative Director & CEO:

JASON KINGSLEY

Graphic Novel Editor:

KEITH RICHARDSON

Publishing Assistant:

OWEN JOHNSON

Chief Technical Officer:

CHRIS KINGSLEY

Junior Graphic Novel Editor:

OLIVER BALL

Graphic Design:

**OZ OSBORNE, SAM GRETTON
& MAZ SMITH**

Head of Books & Comics:

BEN SMITH

PR:

MICHAEL MOLCHER

Reprographics:

**JOSEPH MORGAN, RICHARD TUSTIAN
& EMMA DENTON**

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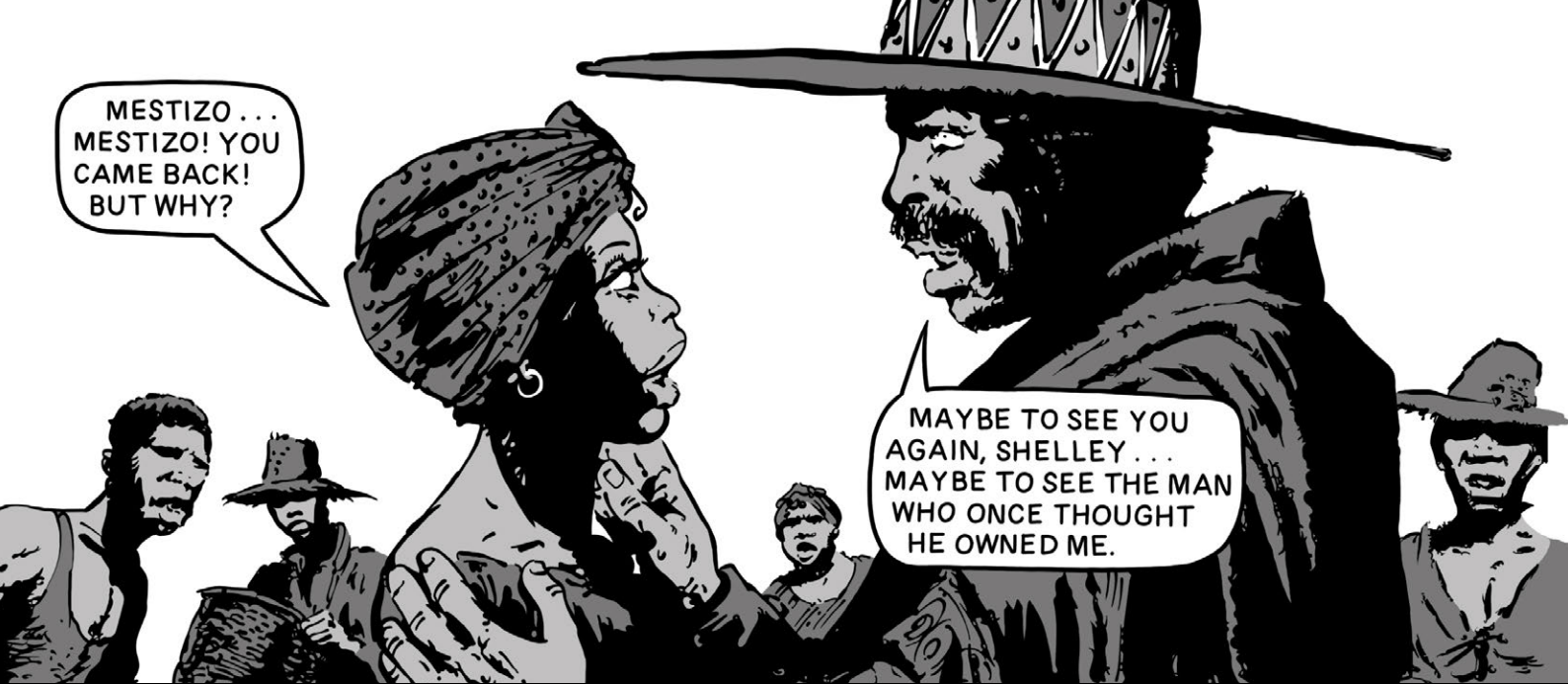
EL MESTIZO

**ALAN
HEBDEN**

To Dave Hunt, for keeping faith in a wild idea.

**CARLOS
EZQUERRA**

To my mum, my aunty Mary, my cousins, my little dogs Pitu and Gus,
and to all my neighbours from Wellesley Road in Croydon, and in
Little Heath Road, and the... nahhhhh leave it! ;)



MESTIZO...
MESTIZO! YOU
CAME BACK!
BUT WHY?

MAYBE TO SEE YOU
AGAIN, SHELLEY...
MAYBE TO SEE THE MAN
WHO ONCE THOUGHT
HE OWNED ME.

BY ANY YARDSTICK *El Mestizo* was one of **Battle's** more way out stories; a half-black, half-Mexican loner cutting a bloody swathe through the middle of the first real conflict of the Industrial Age, that explosive continent-wide convulsion we know as the American Civil War.

As the *Major Eazy/Rat Pack* crossover series came to an end, Carlos Ezquerro was keen to try something different, perhaps a type of Wild West story with a gunslinger hero. (Be careful what you wish for, Carlos!)

Unsurprisingly, Sergio Leone's '*Dollars*' trilogy came to mind, especially the final film, *The Good the Bad and the Ugly* because of its Civil War setting. I didn't want to write a Western as such, the background was too limited. By contrast, the Civil War offered a limitless canvas, but who to put centre stage?

In the end, it was a no-brainer. He could only be a third force with allegiance to neither side, a wandering, gunslinging, bolas-throwing samurai who took commissions from both but whose soul was not for sale. As a former slave himself it's safe to say Mestizo shed no tears over a Northern victory, but nor was he entirely mercenary, his revenge on those responsible for killing Shelley, the female slave he'd known, and maybe loved, being a case in point.

He remains an ambiguous figure, as all loners should. Why had he gone to Mexico? For family reasons, for profit or for pitiless vengeance? We shall never know because his existence was cut short. In the eyes of many readers it wasn't really a war story as they understood it. Given the more recent upsurge of appreciation it's received it was, perhaps, ahead of its time, particularly with respect to Carlos' evocative artwork, proof positive that he, too, enjoyed working on it.

So adios, *El Mestizo*, and may your ghost smile on this new lease of life.

ALAN HEBDEN, May 2018.

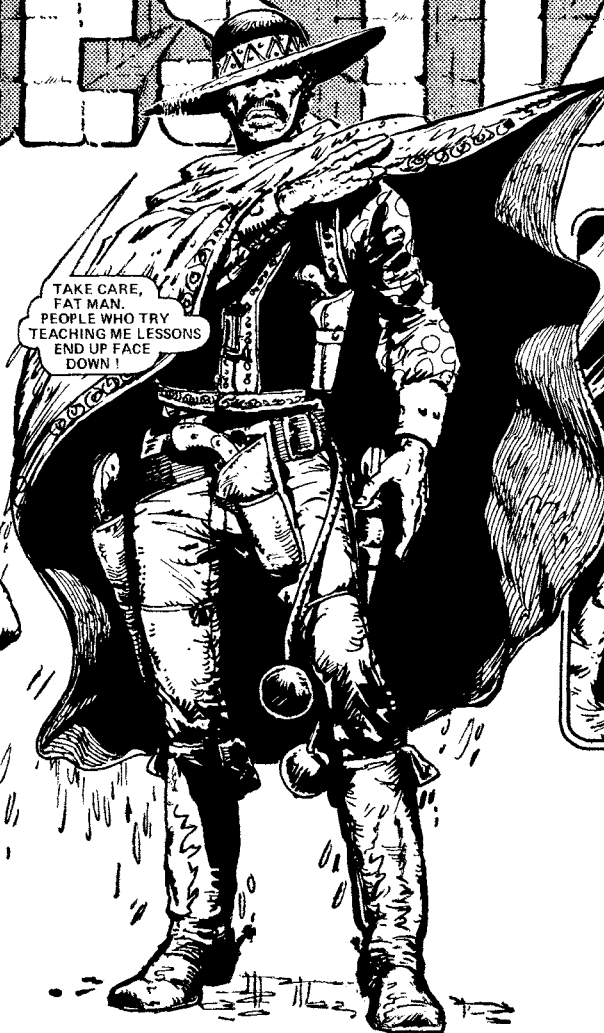
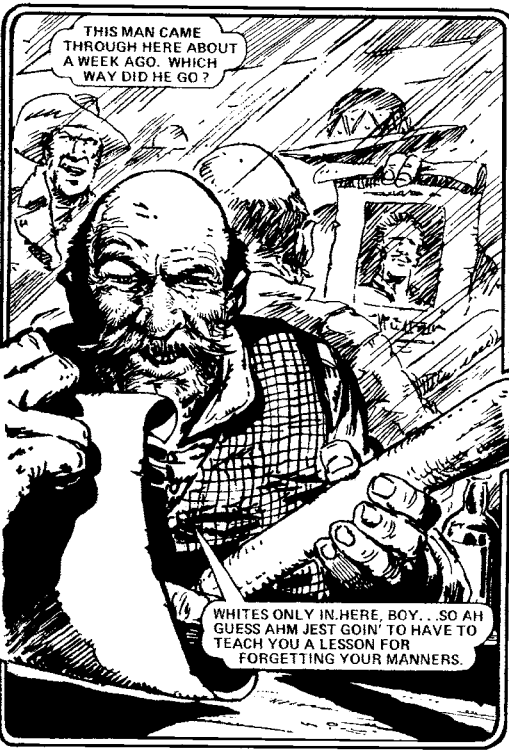
STARTS TODAY ! "BATTLE & VALIANT" BRING YOU A WAR STORY WITH A DIFFERENCE !

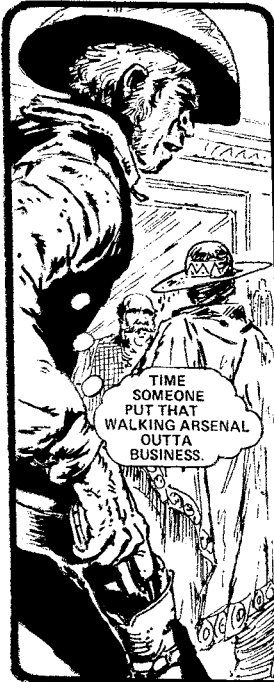


It was 1862. From the Atlantic to the Mississippi, from the Canadian border to the Gulf of Mexico the land was torn asunder by one of the most savage wars in history... the American Civil War. But in a small Texas border town it seemed a million miles away... until an avenging fury arrived from Mexico. He was...



EL MESTIZO



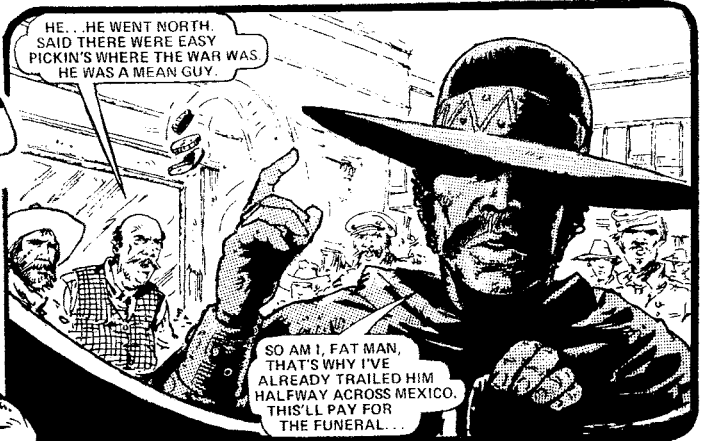


TIME
SOMEONE
PUT THAT
WALKING ARSENAL
OUTTA
BUSINESS.



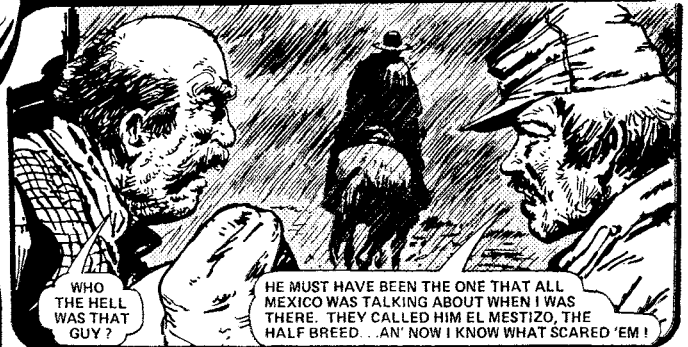
AAAARGH!

SO DO
PEOPLE WHO
TRY SHOOTING
ME IN THE
BACK NOW, IS
SOMEBODY GOING
TO TELL ME
WHICH WAY
HE WENT?



HE... HE WENT NORTH.
SAID THERE WERE EASY
PICKIN'S WHERE THE WAR WAS
HE WAS A MEAN GUY.

SO AM I, FAT MAN,
THAT'S WHY I'VE
ALREADY TRAILED HIM
HALFWAY ACROSS MEXICO.
THIS'LL PAY FOR
THE FUNERAL.



WHO
THE HELL
WAS THAT
GUY?

HE MUST HAVE BEEN THE ONE THAT ALL
MEXICO WAS TALKING ABOUT WHEN I WAS
THERE. THEY CALLED HIM EL MESTIZO, THE
HALF BREED... AN' NOW I KNOW WHAT SCARED 'EM!



A few days later,
deep in Confederate
territory -

RECKON I'M
ONLY A
COUPLE OF DAYS
BEHIND HIM
NOW... HUH!

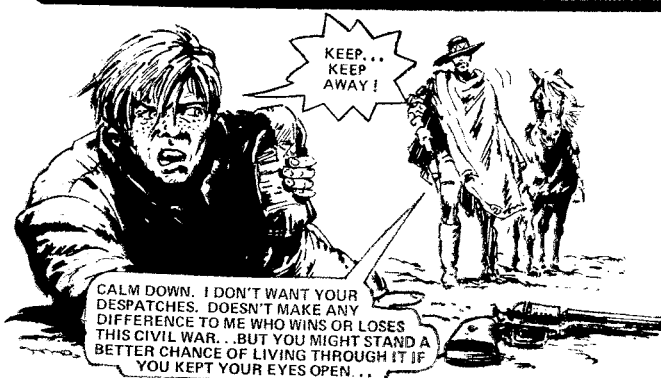
HEY, KID!
HOLD
THAT HORSE!

KEEP BACK!
AIN'T NO-ONE
GONNA STOP
ME GETTING
THESE DESPATCHES
THROUGH!

YOU'RE STOPPING,
KID... WHETHER YOU WANT
TO OR NOT!



YEEAARRH!



KEEP...
KEEP
AWAY!

CALM DOWN. I DON'T WANT YOUR
DESPATCHES. DOESN'T MAKE ANY
DIFFERENCE TO ME WHO WINS OR LOSES
THIS CIVIL WAR... BUT YOU MIGHT STAND A
BETTER CHANCE OF LIVING THROUGH IT IF
YOU KEPT YOUR EYES OPEN...



...AND DIDN'T TRY RIDING OVER
BRIDGES THAT WOULD HAVE
COLLAPSED AT THE SLIGHTEST
WEIGHT!

OH BOY,
MISTER, I'M
SORRY. I NEVER
REALISED YER
WERE TRYIN' TO
WARN ME.



Later -

STRING THEM
YANKEE MURDERERS
UP AND LET 'EM
DANGLE!

WHAT'S
HAPPENING
HERE?

YOU WANT TO KNOW WHAT'S
HAPPENIN' YOU TAKE A LOOK
INSIDE. THERE WAS A FAMILY
LIVIN' HERE TILL THESE
YANKEE BUTCHERS CARVED
EM UP.

YEAH, THAT'S REAL
BUTCHERY... AND ONLY
ONE PERSON USES A
KNIFE LIKE THAT.

IT AIN'T TRUE!
THEY WAS ALREADY
DEAD WHEN WE
GOT HERE. WE
DIDN'T DO IT!

OKAY, LET'S SEND
'EM ON
THEIR LAST RIDE!

WHAT
THE
HELL?

THEY WERE TELLING
THE TRUTH! THEY
DIDN'T DO IT!

TARNATION!
SO HELP ME, BOY...
YOU'RE GONNA PAY
FOR THIS BY TAKIN'
THEIR PLACE IN
THE NOOSE!

AND WHAT,
MAY I ASK, IS GOING
ON HERE?

GENERAL ELLIS, SIR.
THIS MADMAN HELPED A
COUPLE OF YANKEE
MURDERERS TO ESCAPE.

YOU'RE WRONG. THE MURDERER'S A
MEXICAN KILLER NAMED HUTARDO
THAT I'VE COME TO TAKE BACK.

THEY
DIDN'T
DO IT!

I DO BELIEVE YOUR THE MAN WHO SAVED
MAH DESPATCH RIDER TODAY AND SOME
VERY VALUABLE REPORTS THAT HE WAS
CARRYIN'. SO IF YOU SAY THEM YANKEES
DIDN'T DO IT AH BELIEVE YOU. YOU'D
BEST BE ON YOUR WAY AN' CATCH YOUR-
SELF THIS KILLER BEFORE HE DOES
ANYMORE DAMAGE.

I'M OBLIGED,
GENERAL... AND I'LL DO
JUST THAT.

YOU EVER WANT SOME
INTERESTIN' WORK YOU LOOK
ME UP, Y'HEAR.

I MIGHT DO THAT,
BUT NOT UNTIL THIS JOB'S
DONE. ADIOS!

A few days later
in a town occupied
by the Union army —

HUTARDO!
I'VE FOUND
YOU!

HA, IF IT IS NOT MY
PERSISTENT LEECH,
MESTIZO. BUT YOU'RE
TOO LATE, MY FRIEND.
THE UNION ARMY HAS
TAKEN ME PRISONER...
WHERE I SHALL BE
SAFE FROM YOU.

Mestizo explained to the sheriff, but —

SORRY, MUSTAZI OR WHATEVER YA NAME IS.
FEDERAL TROOPS CAUGHT HIM LOOTING AN'
ASKED ME TO HOLD HIM HERE TILL THEY CAN
PUT HIM ON TRIAL. AND HERE HE STAYS!

ADIOS,
MESTIZO!

That night —

HEY,
HUTARDO! CATCH
THIS!

WHO THE...
YAAARRGH!

STOP THEM!

YOU'RE
CRAZY,
MESTIZO!

I WAS HIRED
TO TAKE YOU BACK
TO ANSWER FOR
MURDER... AND BACK
YOU WILL GO!

But the next day —

ARE YOU THE ONE CALLED EL MESTIZO?
YOU HAVE A PRISONER OF THE UNION
ARMY. I AM GENERAL COLLINS, AND I
DEMAND THAT YOU HAND HIM OVER.

SORRY,
GENERAL — I
AM TAKING HIM
TO MEXICO
TO BE
TRIED.

FROM WHAT I HEAR YOU
DON'T ADMIT DEFEAT
VERY EASY. ALSO YOU
SAVED TWO OF MY MEN
FROM BEING LYNCHED
FOR A CRIME COMMITTED
BY THIS MAN. I GUESS I
NEVER SAW YOU HERE
TODAY. BETTER GET
GOING.

NO, NO...
YOU CANNOT LET HIM
TAKE ME!

I COULD USE SOMEBODY
LIKE YOU, MESTIZO.
IF YOU EVER COME BACK,
YOU WERE A SLAVE IN
THE SOUTH ONCE AND
THAT'S WHO WE'RE
FIGHTING TO FREE.

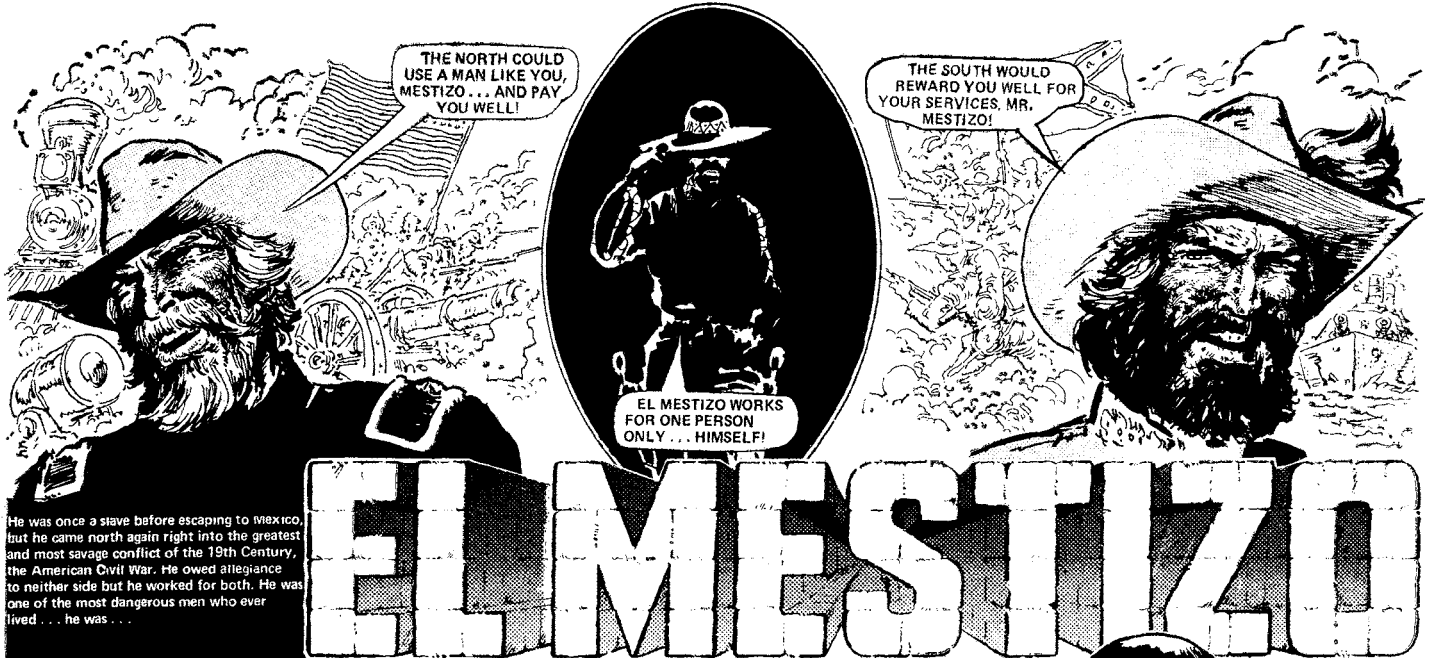
MAYBE YOU'LL
SEE ME AGAIN...
MAYBE NOT.

A week later, on the Mexican side of the Rio Grande —

YOU HAVE DONE WELL,
EL MESTIZO. HERE IS YOUR PAYMENT...
WHERE ARE YOU GOING?

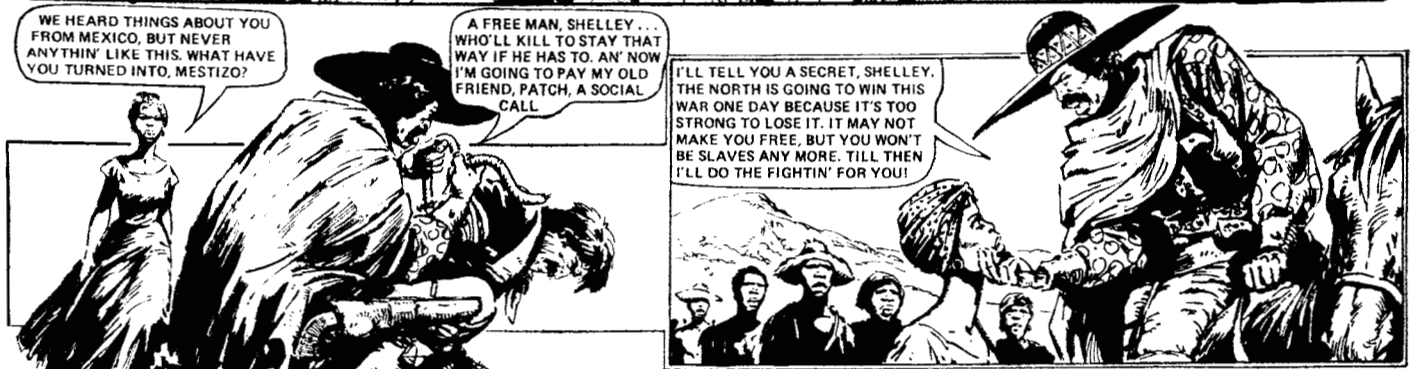
I'M GOING BACK TO AMERICA. THEY THINK
THEIR WAR HAS TWO SIDES, NORTH AND SOUTH...
BUT THEY'VE FORGOTTEN THE THIRD, EL MESTIZO!

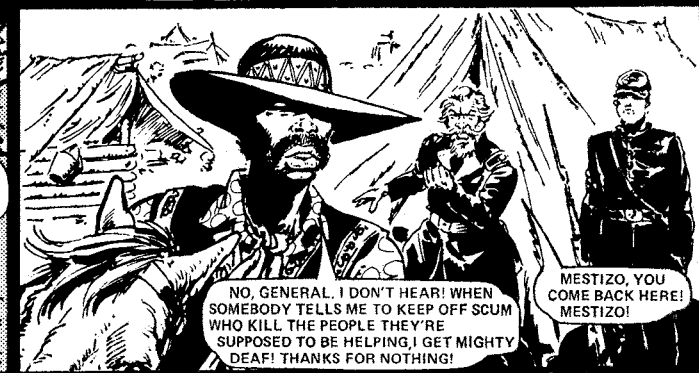
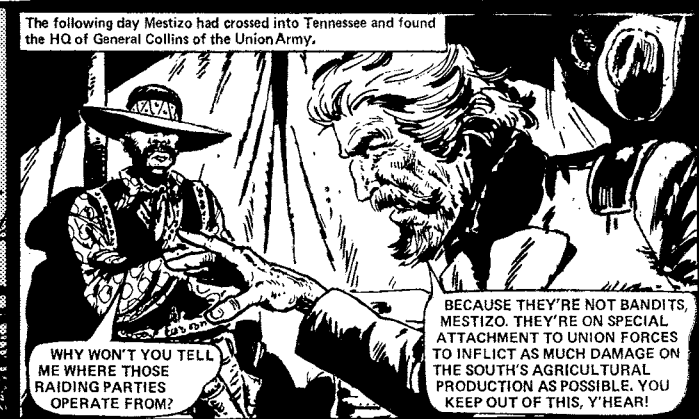
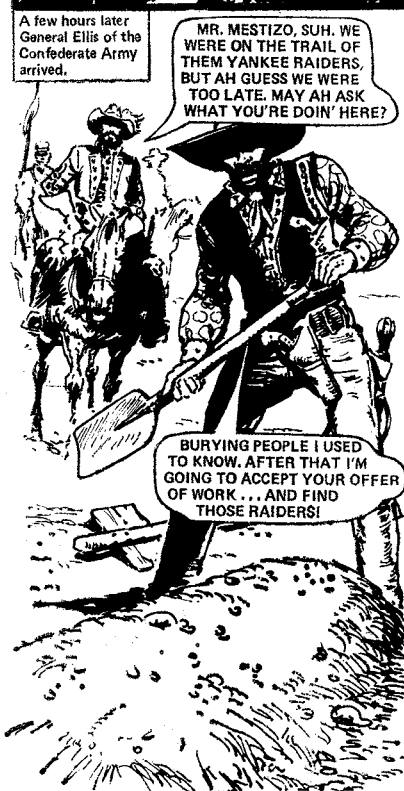
ACTION WITH EL MESTIZO – THE THIRD SIDE TO THE AMERICAN CIVIL WAR !



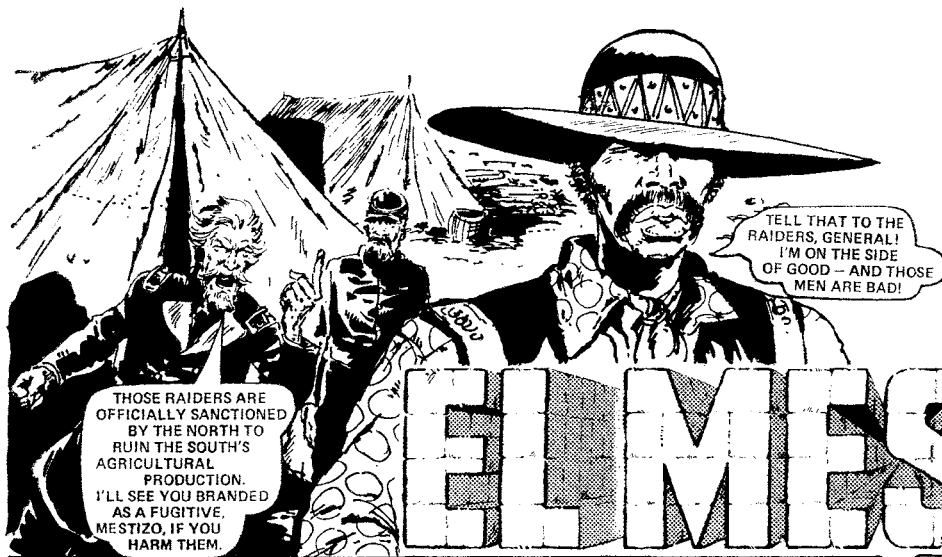
He was once a slave before escaping to Mexico, but he came north again right into the greatest and most savage conflict of the 19th Century, the American Civil War. He owed allegiance to neither side but he worked for both. He was one of the most dangerous men who ever lived... he was...







A ONE-MAN ARMY CAUGHT IN THE MIDDLE OF AMERICA'S CIVIL WAR !



El Mestizo, once a slave before escaping to Mexico, has come north again and finds himself in the middle of the most savage conflict of the 19th Century... the American Civil War. Now Mestizo is after raiders who ruthlessly pillaged a plantation and killed many of his friends. But he receives little help from his friend in the Union Army, General Collins.

THOSE RAIDERS ARE OFFICIALLY SANCTIONED BY THE NORTH TO RUIN THE SOUTH'S AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION. I'LL SEE YOU BRANDED AS A FUGITIVE, MESTIZO, IF YOU HARM THEM.

EL MESTIZO

Mestizo rode into the hills of southern Tennessee.

IF I START SHOOTING I'LL BE A WANTED MAN BY THE NORTH, BUT I GUESS IT DOESN'T MATTER ANYMORE. I OWE THIS JOB TO SHELLEY - THOSE RAIDERS MURDERED HER.

Suddenly, a shout rang out -

SOUNDS LIKE SOMEBODY'S GOT A PROBLEM OF THEIR OWN!

It was a Tennessee mountain man caught in his own trap -

DONE FOR. CAN'T REACH MAH GUN.

EZQUERRA

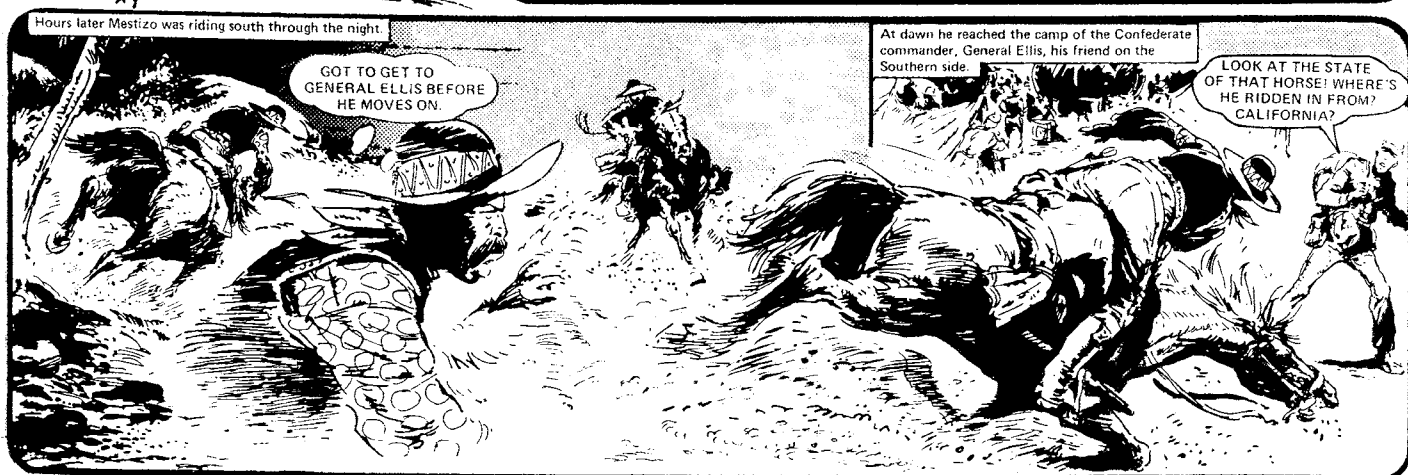
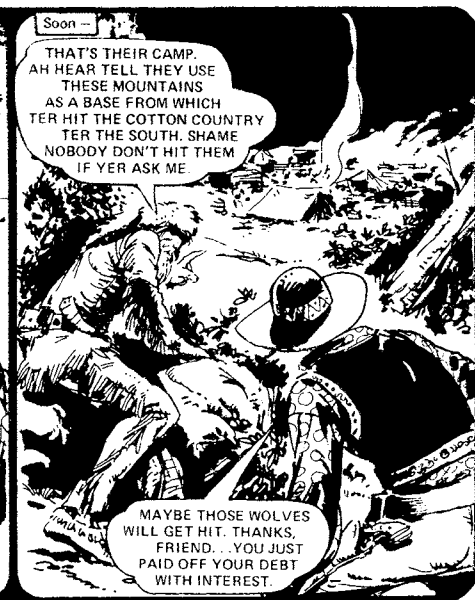
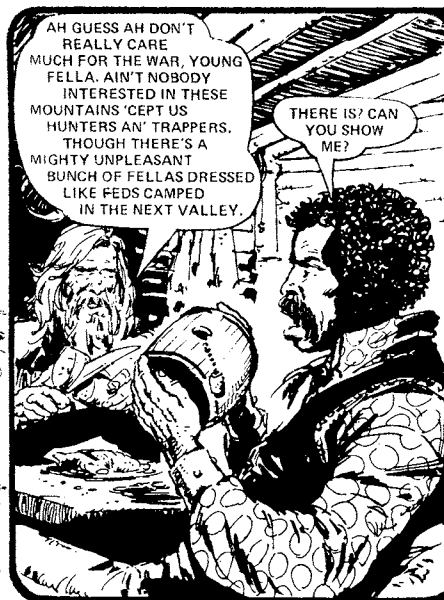


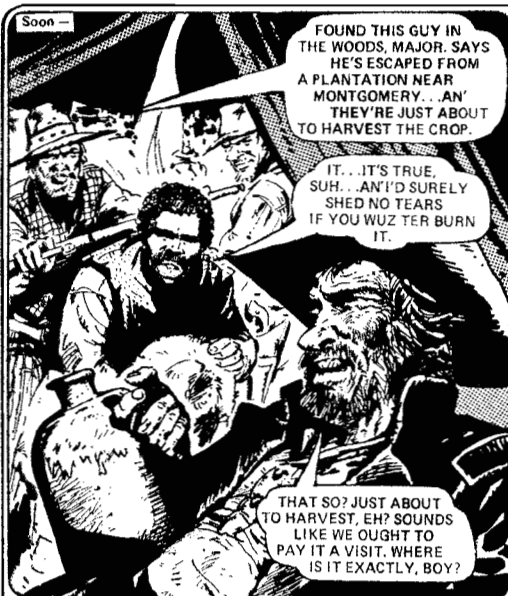
SAY, THAT WAS MIGHTY FANCY SHOOTING, BOY!

MY PLEASURE, OLD MAN!

YOU SURE STOPPED THAT OLD FURBAG FROM MAKING ME HIS NEXT MEAL. I OWE YA, FELLA.

A HOT MEAL WILL DO AS THANKS.





ACTION WITH EL MESTIZO...THE THIRD SIDE TO THE AMERICAN CIVIL WAR!



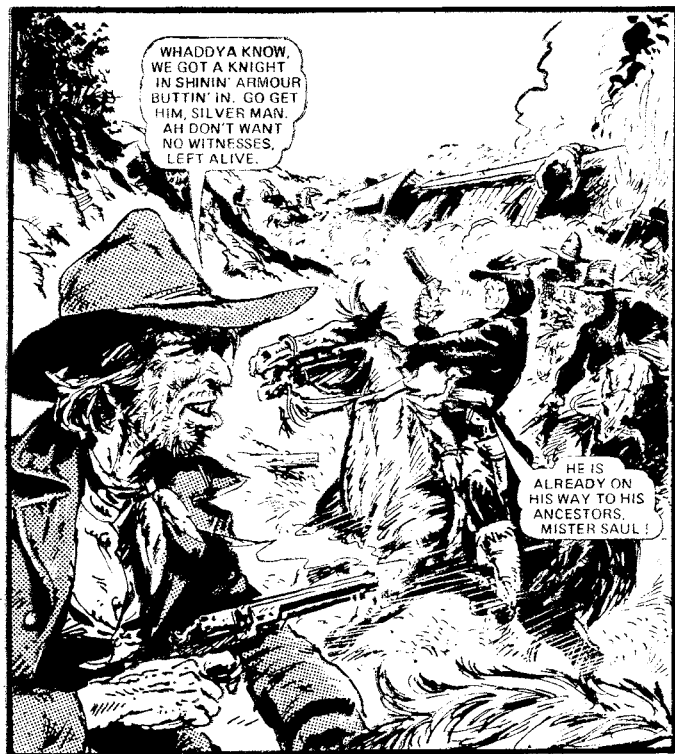
He came north from Mexico into a continent being torn apart by the greatest and most savage conflict of the 19th century... the American Civil War. He owed allegiance to neither side yet worked for both. He was one of the most dangerous men who have ever lived... he was...

EL MESTIZO

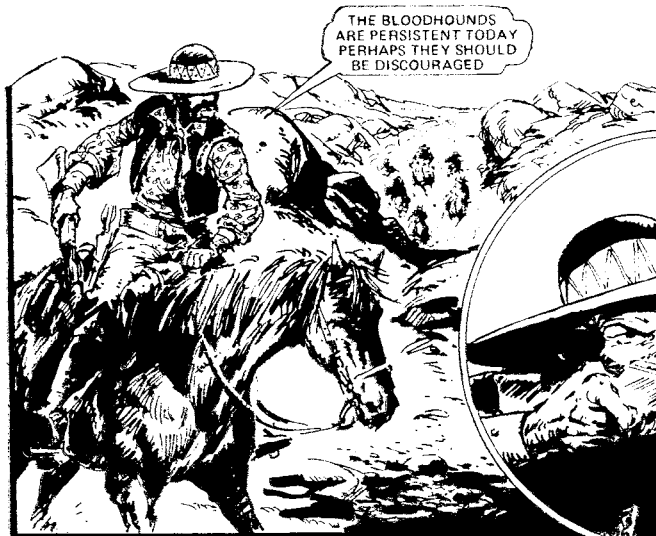
It was the first war in which railways were extensively used... for many purposes.

AND SO THE TRAINS WHICH CARRIED THEM TO WAR AS SOLDIERS BRING THEIR MANGLED BODIES HOME AGAIN. THEY SHOULD HAVE LEFT THE KILLING... AND DYING, TO THE PROFESSIONALS.





But a few hours later -





SOUND COMIN' FROM BEHIND THAT ROCK. IT'S GOTTA BE HIM!



SAY YA PRAYERS... HUH?

YOU FOOL! GET AWAY FROM THERE!



GOOD ADVICE, DOG... BUT A LITTLE LATE. MEET MY PETS!

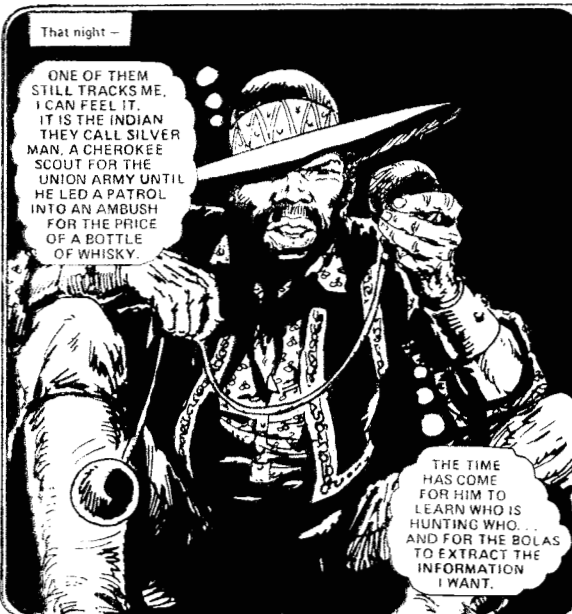
EEEE... RATTLES!



I'M THROUGH! I DIDN'T DESERT JEST TO GET KILLED CHASIN' A MEAN GUY LIKE THAT.

ME, TOO!

THEN GO, SCUM! I WILL TRACK HIM MYSELF. NOBODY GETS AWAY FROM SILVER MAN!



That night -

ONE OF THEM STILL TRACKS ME. I CAN FEEL IT. IT IS THE INDIAN THEY CALL SILVER MAN. A CHEROKEE SCOUT FOR THE UNION ARMY UNTIL HE LED A PATROL INTO AN AMBUSH FOR THE PRICE OF A BOTTLE OF WHISKY.

THE TIME HAS COME FOR HIM TO LEARN WHO IS HUNTING WHO... AND FOR THE BOLS TO EXTRACT THE INFORMATION I WANT.



Soon, all was quiet.



SLEEP WELL! FOOL... YOU ARE NEVER GOING TO WAKE AGAIN.



HUH?



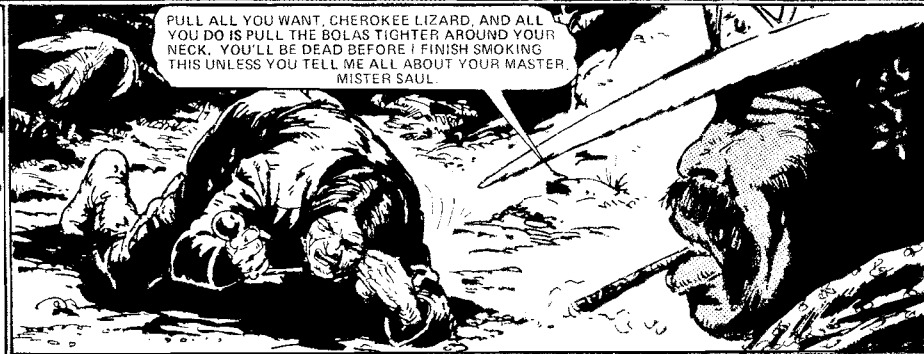
UUURGH..!



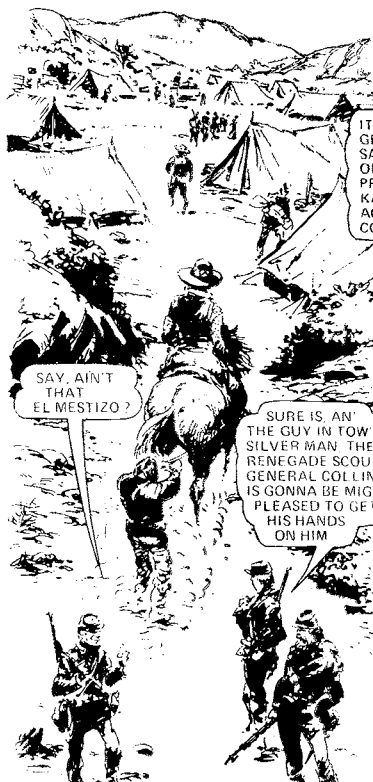
WELCOME, SILVER MAN! I'VE BEEN WAITING FOR YOU. YOU DID A VERY STUPID THING WHEN YOU DECIDED TO COME AFTER ME.

UUURRRH! MES... MESTIZO!

Two days later at the Field HQ of the Union Army —



PULL ALL YOU WANT, CHEROKEE LIZARD, AND ALL YOU DO IS PULL THE BOLAS TIGHTER AROUND YOUR NECK. YOU'LL BE DEAD BEFORE I FINISH SMOKING THIS UNLESS YOU TELL ME ALL ABOUT YOUR MASTER, MISTER SAUL.



SAY, AIN'T THAT EL MESTIZO?

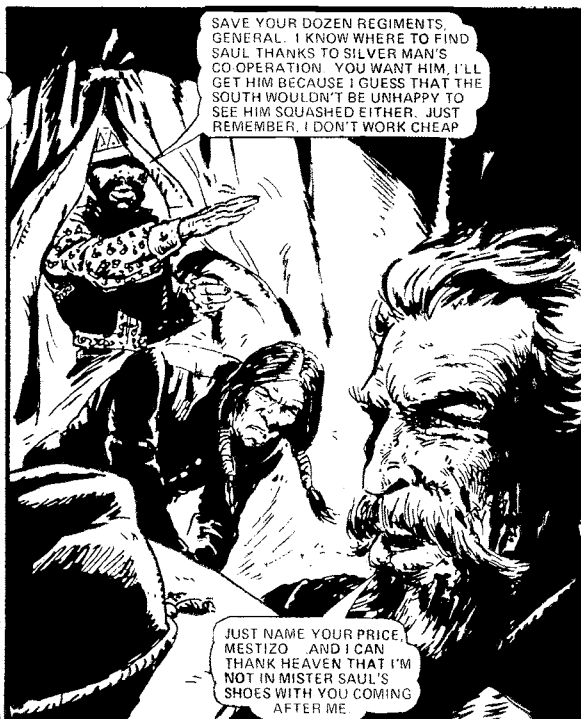
SURE IS, AN' THE GUY IN TOW'S SILVER MAN. THE RENEGADE SCOUT GENERAL COLLINS IS GONNA BE MIGHTY PLEASED TO GET HIS HANDS ON HIM.



In the tent was General Collins.

IT'S GETTING OUT OF HAND, GENERAL. THIS FELLA SAUL'S BUILDIN' AN ARMY OF DESERTERS. HE'S PRACTICALLY TAKEN OVER KANSAS, SITTIN' RIGHT ACROSS OUR LINES OF COMMUNICATION WITH THE WEST.

IF ONLY WE KNEW WHERE HE WAS EXACTLY I'D HAVE A DOZEN REGIMENTS WIPE OUT HIM AND HIS MERCENARY LICE TOMORROW.



SAVE YOUR DOZEN REGIMENTS, GENERAL. I KNOW WHERE TO FIND SAUL. THANKS TO SILVER MAN'S CO-OPERATION. YOU WANT HIM, I'LL GET HIM BECAUSE I GUESS THAT THE SOUTH WOULDN'T BE UNHAPPY TO SEE HIM SQUASHED EITHER. JUST REMEMBER, I DON'T WORK CHEAP.

JUST NAME YOUR PRICE, MESTIZO. AND I CAN THANK HEAVEN THAT I'M NOT IN MISTER SAUL'S SHOES WITH YOU COMING AFTER ME.

ACTION WITH EL MESTIZO – TAKING ON ALLCOMERS IN THE U.S. CIVIL WAR !

AMERICA 1862... A COUNTRY TORN APART BY THE VICIOUS CIVIL WAR BETWEEN NORTH AND SOUTH! IN THE MIDDLE IS EL MESTIZO, BORN A SLAVE IN ALABAMA AND LIVING AS A BANDIT IN MEXICO UNTIL HE RETURNED TO FIGHT ON THE SIDE OF GOOD. NOW HE IS ABOUT TO TRACK DOWN NATHAN SAUL—THE LEADER OF A RENEGADE ARMY OF DESERTERS FROM BOTH SIDES—AFTER LEARNING SAUL'S WHEREABOUTS FROM HIS MURDEROUS CHEROKEE SCOUT, SILVER MAN. BUT BEFORE HE LEAVES, HE EXTRACTS PAYMENT FROM GENERAL COLLINS OF THE UNION ARMY.



EL MESTIZO

The next day they were riding west towards the plains of Kansas.





Soon -





MESTIZO ENTERS SAUL'S CAMP – ONLY ONE OF THEM WILL LEAVE ALIVE !

El Mestizo is after Nathan Saul, leader of a renegade army of deserters from both sides during the American Civil War. He's captured Silver Man, Saul's murderous Cherokee scout, and forced him to take him to Saul's base. But just before they ride in...

YOU'RE GIVING ME YOUR WEAPONS, MESTIZO. CURSE YOU! YOU KNOW I CANNOT KILL YOU!

I'VE SAVED YOUR LIFE ONCE AND BEING A CHEROKEE YOU'VE GOT TO REPAY ME!

BY TAKING YOU INTO SAUL'S BASE, BUT THEN WHAT AM I SUPPOSED TO DO? GIVE YOU YOUR GUNS BACK TO KILL SAUL WITH?

NO, CHEROKEE, YOU WILL HAVE REPAYED ME IN FULL THE MOMENT YOU RETURN THIS BOLAS TO ME.

EL MESTIZO

A few minutes later —

SILVER MAN'S BACK... AN' HE'S GOT MESTIZO!

HAW, HAW... SO MUCH FOR THE GREAT MESTIZO!

C. S. EZQUEERRA

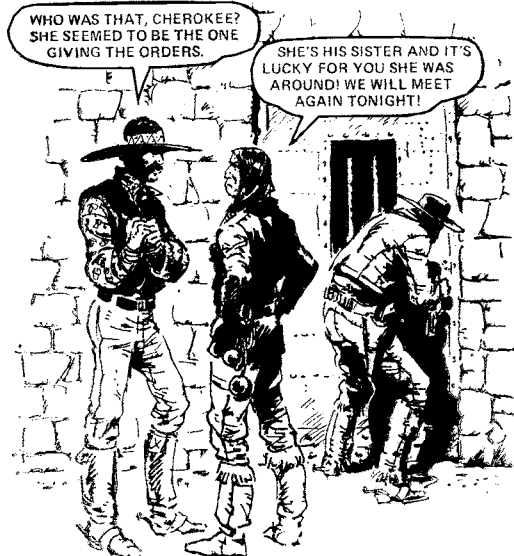
YOU LOOK KINDA THIRSTY, MESTIZO... HAVE A DRINK!

BY MY ANCESTORS —

I DID NOT BRING THIS MAN BACK FOR FOOLS TO PLAY WITH!

YEEERRGH!

DIABLOS! THE INDIAN KILLS EASILY.





That night—



After Silver Man had gone —



Outside, Mestizo took the guard's gun. And —



The guard was dealt with —





The following dawn --



MESTIZO HAS EXPLOSIVE NEWS — BUT NO ONE WILL BELIEVE HIM !

During the 1860's the American Civil War was fought over huge areas of land. The opposing forces moved swiftly when they had to, though a Northern artillery unit travelling through the sunny countryside of Mississippi encountered a man who could move faster than all of them. His name was El Mestizo.

HI THERE. MY HORSE HAS THROWN A SHOE. MIND GIVING ME A RIDE?

WHAT DO YOU THINK THIS IS, FELLA... A WAGON TRAIN?



NO, I'D SAY YOU WERE ARTILLERY ON ITS WAY TO PUT AN END TO THE SIEGE AT FORT CORMAN.

THAT'S RIGHT — BUT YOU AIN'T COMING!



THE NAME'S MESTIZO, AND I AM COMING. BESIDES, I'VE GOT SOME INFORMATION FOR YOUR COMMANDER THERE.

MESTIZO? WOW, THAT GUY'S SUPPOSED TO BE DYNAMITE.



EL MESTIZO

Mestizo got his ride.

YOUR INFORMATION JUST BETTER BE GOOD, MESTIZO.

SORRY, IT'S BAD!



Later, in the Union Camp --



WITH THESE EXTRA GUNS ARRIVING I'LL FINALLY BE ABLE TO LAUNCH A SUCCESSFUL ATTACK ON FORT CORMAN, MESTIZO. WHAT INFORMATION COULD OUTWEIGH THAT?

THE FACT THAT THERE ARE A DOZEN REGIMENTS OF THE CONFEDERATE ARMY ON THEIR WAY HERE TO RAISE YOUR SIEGE! I'D GET OUT WHILE YOU CAN.

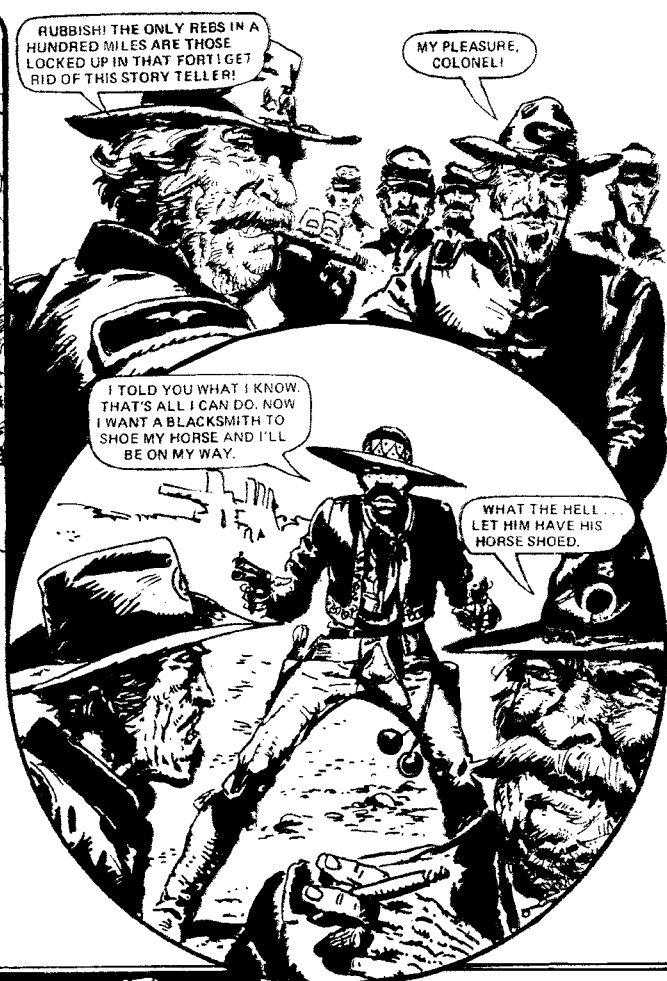
OKAY, MISTER, THAT SHOE'S ALRIGHT NOW. I SEE THE ASSAULT ON THE FORT'S STARTING. GUESS YOU MUST BE MIGHTY HAPPY TO BE HEADING IN THE OPPOSITE DIRECTION.

GUESS I WOULD BE ...



RUBBISH! THE ONLY REBS IN A HUNDRED MILES ARE THOSE LOCKED UP IN THAT FORT! GET RID OF THIS STORY TELLER!

MY PLEASURE, COLONEL!



I TOLD YOU WHAT I KNOW. THAT'S ALL I CAN DO. NOW I WANT A BLACKSMITH TO SHOE MY HORSE AND I'LL BE ON MY WAY.

WHAT THE HELL... LET HIM HAVE HIS HORSE SHOED.



... EXCEPT THAT I HAPPEN TO HAVE AN APPOINTMENT AT THE FORT. AND NO BATTLE'S GOING TO STOP ME KEEPING IT.

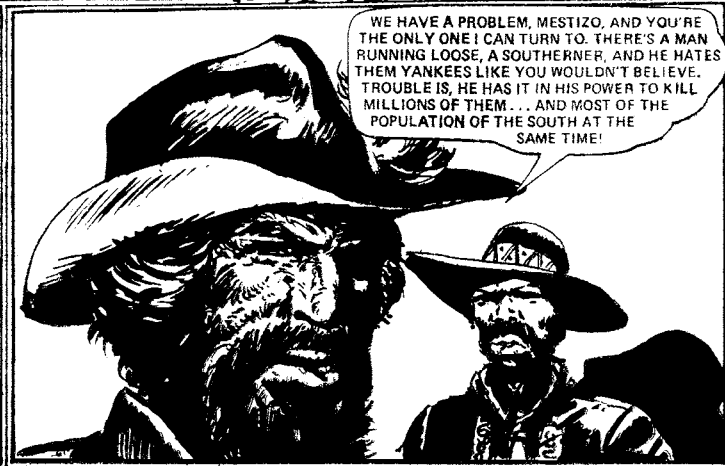
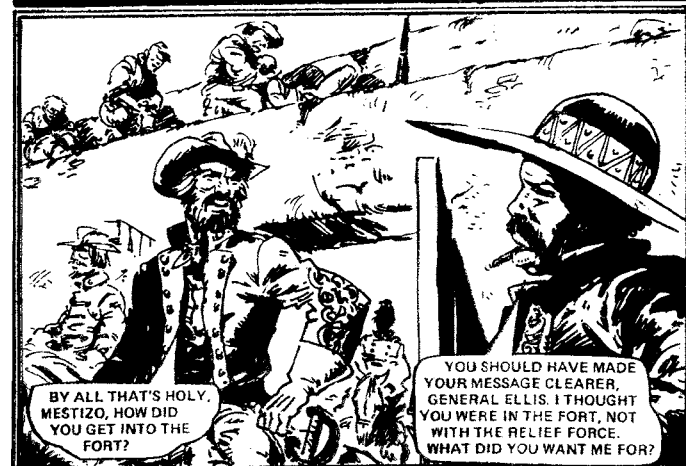
GET READY, MEN. WE'LL TAKE THAT FORT FROM JOHNNY REB BEFORE THE DAY'S THROUGH!



OVER 'EM, GIRL! WE CAN'T WAIT ALL DAY FOR THEIR ATTACK TO BEGIN!







BATTLE-ACTION FROM THE VICIOUS AMERICAN CIVIL WAR !

America, 1862—a country torn apart by civil war. In the middle is El Mestizo, a one-man army who undertakes missions for both sides. Now he is with General Ellis of the Confederate Army, who is about to send him on his most vital assignment yet!

THERE'S A DOCTOR FROM CAROLINA CALLED KIT BRADER WHO'S CARRYING ENOUGH BUBONIC PLAGUE STRAIN IN A SEALED BOTTLE TO START A SECOND BLACK DEATH!

AND YOU SAY HIS SON DIED IN A UNION PRISON CAMP, AND HE'S PLANNING TO AVENGE HIM BY STARTING AN EPIDEMIC IN ONE OF THE NORTHERN CITIES!

THAT'S IT, MESTIZO. BUT THE PLAGUE WILL HIT THE SOUTH AS WELL. SO FIND BRADER! MORE IMPORTANTLY, FIND THAT BOTTLE!

I'VE A FEELING EXPENSES WILL BE PRETTY HIGH ON THIS JOB. SEE YOU, GENERAL!

EL MESTIZO

A few days later Mestizo reached Atlanta.

THIS HOUSE IS WHERE THE DOCTOR USED TO LIVE. BETTER TAKE A QUIET LOOK INSIDE.

He went around to the back of the house.

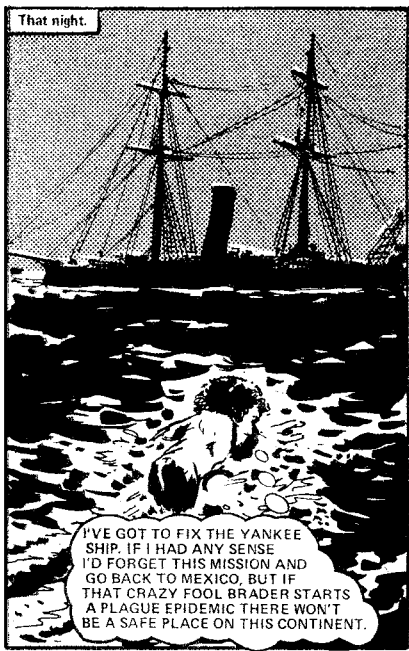


HMM, THE STUDY. WHERE PEOPLE USUALLY LEAVE PAPERS LYING AROUND.



YES, LETTERS FROM THE SKIPPER OF A SHIP IN SAVANNAH PORT. BRADER'S PLANNING TO GO NORTH BY SEA, SLIPPING THROUGH THE UNION BLOCKADE.





ACTION WITH EL MESTIZO – THE THIRD SIDE TO THE AMERICAN CIVIL WAR !



America 1862 – a country torn apart by Civil War. In the middle is El Mestizo, a one-man army, who undertakes missions for both sides. Now Mestizo is on the trail of a Southern doctor called Kit Brader, who is planning to release spores of bubonic plague in a Northern city to trigger off a deadly epidemic. Brader is heading north by sea ... and so is Mestizo.

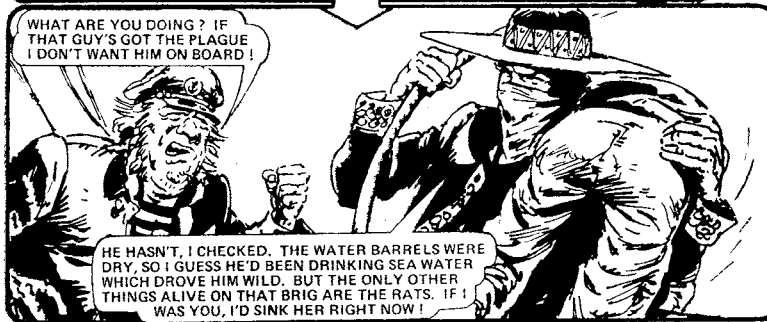


EL MESTIZO



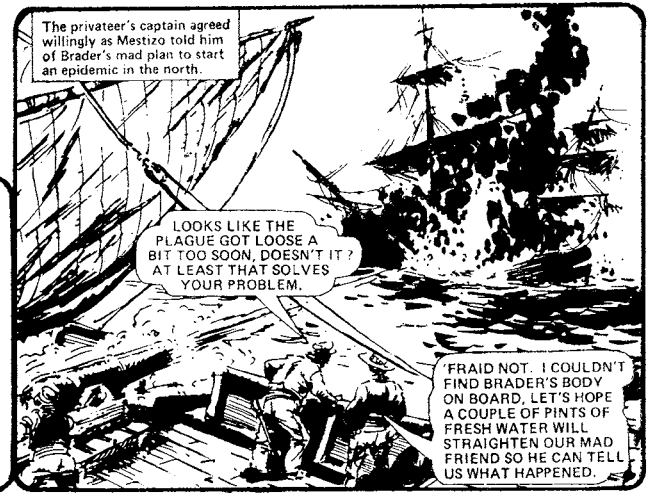
STAY WHERE YOU ARE, CAPTAIN! THIS SHIP'S BEEN STRICKEN BY THE PLAGUE!

THE PLAGUE? WHAT THE HELL'S GOING ON, MESTIZO?



WHAT ARE YOU DOING? IF THAT GUY'S GOT THE PLAGUE I DON'T WANT HIM ON BOARD!

HE HASN'T, I CHECKED. THE WATER BARRELS WERE DRY, SO I GUESS HE'D BEEN DRINKING SEA WATER WHICH DROVE HIM WILD. BUT THE ONLY OTHER THINGS ALIVE ON THAT BRIG ARE THE RATS. IF I WAS YOU, I'D SINK HER RIGHT NOW!



The privateer's captain agreed willingly as Mestizo told him of Brader's mad plan to start an epidemic in the north.

LOOKS LIKE THE PLAGUE GOT LOOSE A BIT TOO SOON, DOESN'T IT? AT LEAST THAT SOLVES YOUR PROBLEM.

FRAID NOT. I COULDN'T FIND BRADER'S BODY ON BOARD. LET'S HOPE A COUPLE OF PINTS OF FRESH WATER WILL STRAIGHTEN OUR MAD FRIEND SO HE CAN TELL US WHAT HAPPENED.



AFTER WE LEFT SAVANNAH THIS GUY BRADER WANTED THE SKIPPER TO TAKE THE BRIG STRAIGHT INTO A UNION PORT INSTEAD OF GOING TO CANADA. WHEN THE SKIPPER REFUSED BRADER SMASHED MOST OF THE WATER BARRELS...

That was the limit. The skipper had him put adrift.

IF YOU'RE SO KEEN ON GETTING TO FEDERAL TERRITORY THEN GET ROWING! IT'S LESS THAN THIRTY MILES TO THE COAST OF NEW JERSEY!

YOU'LL BE SORRY! BELIEVE ME, YOU'LL NEVER MAKE IT HOME AGAIN... NEVER!

Brader was right. The next day we were struck by plague. The whole crew was dead inside thirty-six hours, except me... but the only thing I had left to drink was sea water, until you rescued me.



BRADER MUST HAVE LEFT SOME OF THE PLAGUE BEHIND AS A PARTING GIFT. COULD HE HAVE MADE THE COAST?

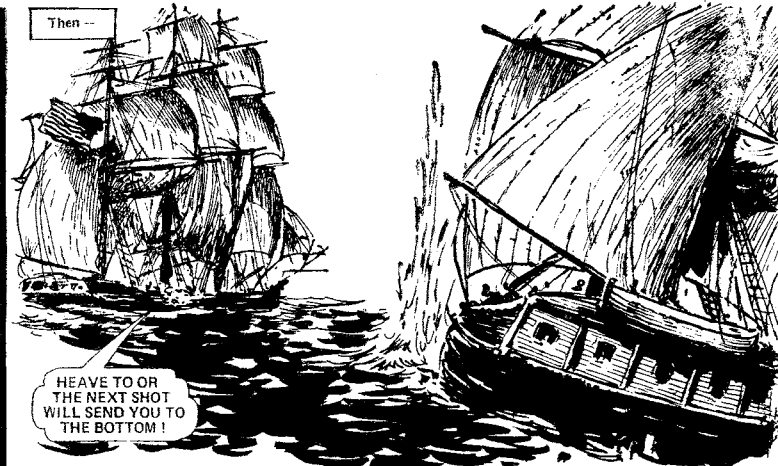
YEAH, THE CURRENTS WOULD HAVE BEEN IN HIS FAVOUR.

SHIP AHOY! SHE'S A FEDERAL FRIGATE!



CAN SHE CATCH US?

NORMALLY, NO! BUT SHE'S CAUGHT US NAPPING! WE'RE IN BIG TROUBLE, MESTIZO!



Then --

HEAVE TO OR THE NEXT SHOT WILL SEND YOU TO THE BOTTOM!



WE'VE HAD IT, MESTIZO. THE FRIGATE OUTGUNS US. I'LL HAVE TO SURRENDER -- CURSE 'EM!

But then another ship appeared on the scene, more powerful than either of the American ships.

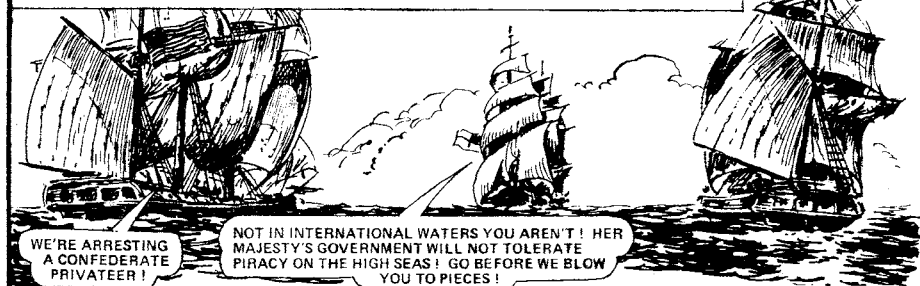


BELAY THAT ORDER TO HEAVE TO!

WHO THE HELL'S THAT?

SHE'S A BRITISH MAN OF WAR, AND SHE OUTGUNS ALL OF US! WE'RE IN INTERNATIONAL WATERS AND THE ROYAL NAVY DOESN'T TAKE KINDLY TO THE FEDS TRYING TO SINK US. THIS IS GOING TO BE FUN.

In the 1860s the Royal Navy was the most powerful in the world, and it took no sides in the American Civil War.



WE'RE ARRESTING A CONFEDERATE PRIVATEER!

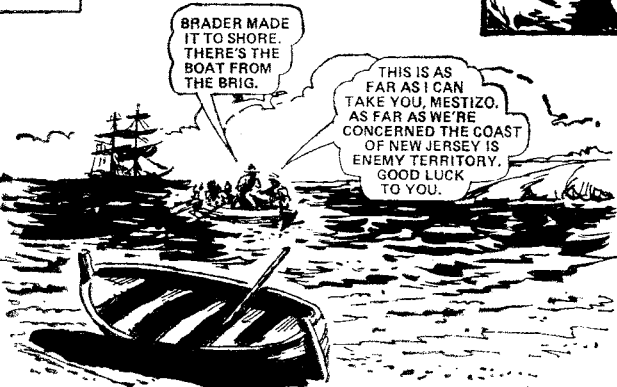
NOT IN INTERNATIONAL WATERS YOU AREN'T! HER MAJESTY'S GOVERNMENT WILL NOT TOLERATE PIRACY ON THE HIGH SEAS! GO BEFORE WE BLOW YOU TO PIECES!



SEE! NO WAY THEY CAN ARGUE WITH THE BRITISH!

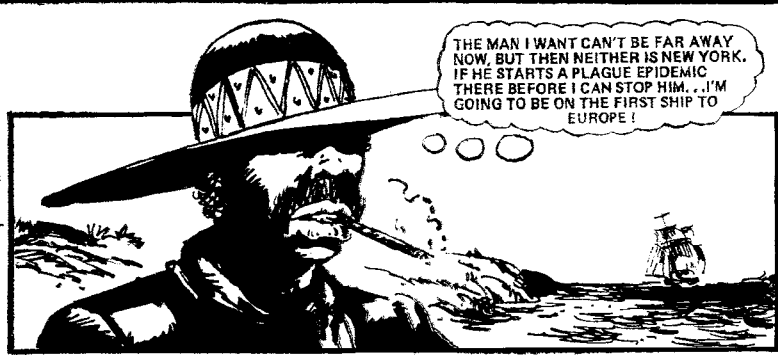
LOOKS LIKE THE BRITISH ARE THE SAME AS ME... THEY DON'T TAKE SIDES! NICE TO SEE SOMEBODY WHO KNOWS WHAT THEY'RE DOING!

Later --



BRADER MADE IT TO SHORE. THERE'S THE BOAT FROM THE BRIG.

THIS IS AS FAR AS I CAN TAKE YOU, MESTIZO. AS FAR AS WE'RE CONCERNED THE COAST OF NEW JERSEY IS ENEMY TERRITORY. GOOD LUCK TO YOU.



THE MAN I WANT CAN'T BE FAR AWAY NOW, BUT THEN NEITHER IS NEW YORK. IF HE STARTS A PLAGUE EPIDEMIC THERE BEFORE I CAN STOP HIM... I'M GOING TO BE ON THE FIRST SHIP TO EUROPE!

IN THE AMERICAN CIVIL WAR THERE WAS THE NORTH, THE SOUTH AND EL MESTIZO !

America, 1862 — a country torn apart by Civil War. In the middle is El Mestizo, a one-man army who undertakes missions for both sides. Now Mestizo is on the trail of a southern doctor called Kit Brader who is planning to release spores of bubonic plague in a northern city to trigger a deadly epidemic. Brader reaches the New Jersey coast not far from New York... with Mestizo only hours behind him !



EL MESTIZO

A few minutes later on a nearby road —





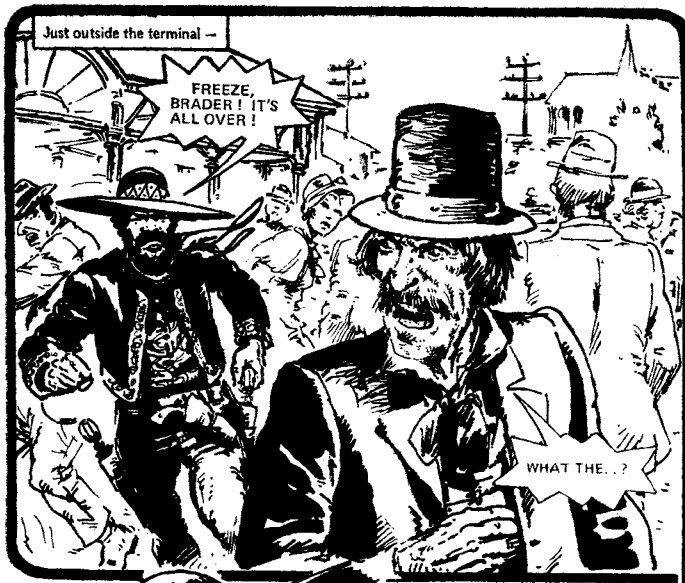
Mestizo rode into the nearest town and started asking questions —





The train called the Flyer soon earned its name.





TRANSLATE EL MESTIZO AND YOU GET SHEER DYNAMITE !

America, 1862, a country torn apart by civil war. In the middle is El Mestizo, a trouble-shooter who undertakes missions for both sides. But now he is relaxing in a prison cell in Washington.



*See last week's episode - Ed.

Mestizo told Collins the whole story of the adventure which had culminated in his wrongful arrest. And -



EL MESTIZO



The next day they were on Collins' command train heading south to the Appalachian front.





REBEL
ARTILLERY FIRE —
AAARGH!



MESTIZO,
COME BACK!
WE CAN
HOLD OUT!

LIKE HELL!
THERE MUST BE
HALF THE CONFEDERATE
ARMY ON THAT HILL!



THIS IS THE
SORT OF TRANSPORT
I PREFER. RAILROAD
TRACKS ARE JUST
A LITTLE BIT TOO
PREDICTABLE.



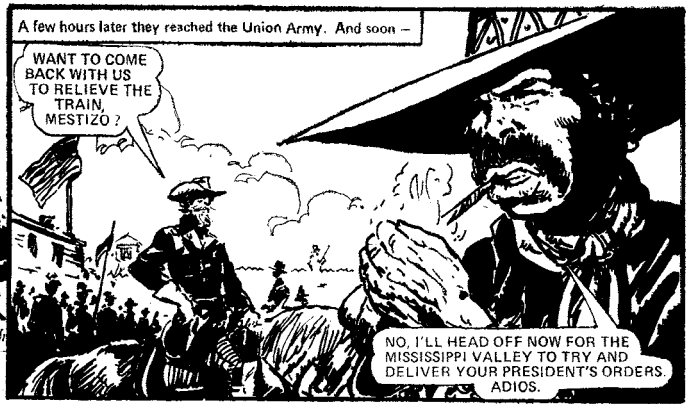
WHOA, BOY!
I WANT TO GET
OUT OF HERE AS MUCH
AS YOU, BUT I
THINK WE'D BETTER
RESCUE MY
EMPLOYER FIRST!



WE'LL NEVER
HOLD THEM REBS
THIS TIME,
GENERAL!

IN THAT
CASE THEY'RE
GONNA FIND
THAT I DON'T
COME CHEAP!





A few miles further on—



ACTION WITH EL MESTIZO . . . THE EFFECT IS SHATTERING !

America, 1862 - a country torn apart by civil war. In the middle is El Mestizo, a one-man army who undertakes missions for both sides. Mestizo is carrying orders from President Lincoln to a Union general called Van Burin, whose brutal actions in the Mississippi Valley have sparked off massive Southern reprisals. But Confederate troops have captured Mestizo.

I'M NO YANKEE MESSENGER. THOSE ARE ORDERS FOR VAN BURIN TO PULL OUT. THE FEDS WANT HIM OUT OF IT AS MUCH AS YOUR LOT.

OKAY, YANKEE MESSENGER, WE'LL HANG YA FIRST THEN TAKE A LOOK AT THEM ORDERS IN FULL!

AMATEURS! THEY DIDN'T SEARCH ME WELL ENOUGH TO FIND THE BLADE UP MY SLEEVE.

YAAA! GET, YOU NAG!

HE'S FREE!

THOSE WHO KNOW EL MESTIZO WOULD HAVE KILLED HIM FIRST . . . BEFORE IT WAS TOO LATE!

ADIOS, AMIGOS!

LET'S GIT AFTER HIM!

ARE YOU DEAF OR SUMMAT? THAT GUY WAS EL MESTIZO. WE'D BETTER GET BACK TO BASE WITH THEM ORDERS HE WAS CARRYIN'.

EL MESTIZO

A few miles away —



That night —



STILL WORRIED ABOUT MESTIZO? WE AIN'T BIN TRAILED, AND WHAT IF WE HAVE? HE AIN'T ARMED.



Soon —



The heat of the fire exploded the cartridges.





PARTY'S OVER!
YOU'VE GOT SOME
THINGS BELONGING TO
ME, I BELIEVE!

Mestizo recovered his guns and the
Presidential orders.

HEY,
WHAT ABOUT
OUR
HORSES?

GOOD
QUESTION.
YOU CAN THINK
ABOUT THEM WHILE
YOU WALK!

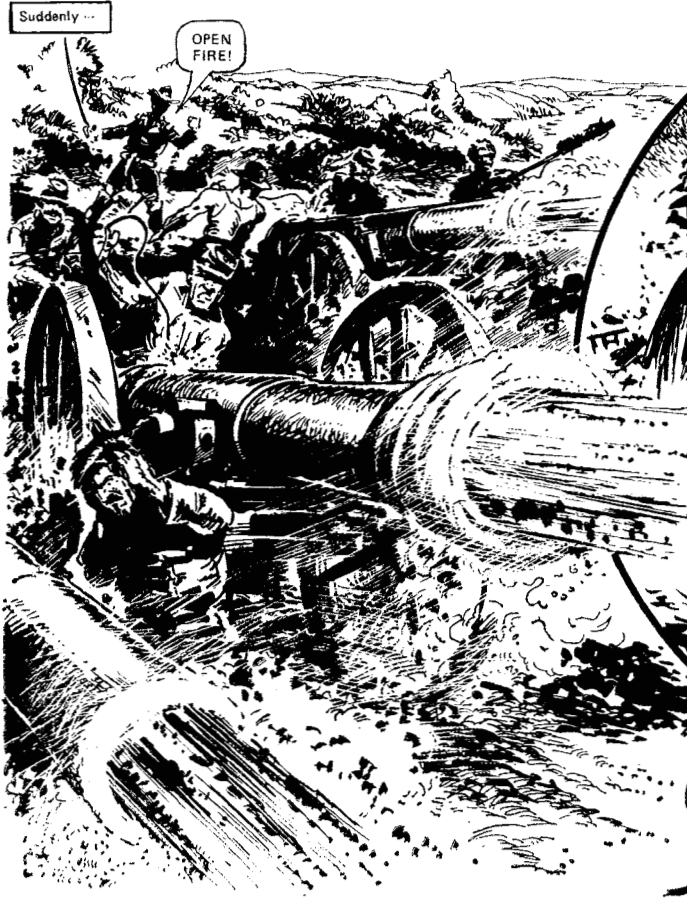


Next morning he reached the
Mississippi ...

A LOT OF
HORSES AND
ARTILLERY PASSED
HERE RECENTLY.
IT HAS TO BE
VAN BURIN'S
FORCES.



SOMETHING'S
SPOOKED THOSE
BIRDS. WHAT'S UP ON
THAT BLUFF?



Suddenly ...

OPEN
FIRE!



The Confederate steamer
suffered direct hits!

AAARGH!

THE RIVER'S IN
FLOOD. THE SURVIVORS
DON'T STAND A CHANCE IN
THAT CURRENT. NOW I SEE WHY
WASHINGTON WANTS VAN
BURIN OUT OF THE WAY.
HE'S NOT A SOLDIER,
HE'S A MURDERER!

Mestizo rode into Van Burin's camp —



MESTIZO GIVES VAN BURIN THE CHANCE TO DIE LIKE A SOLDIER !

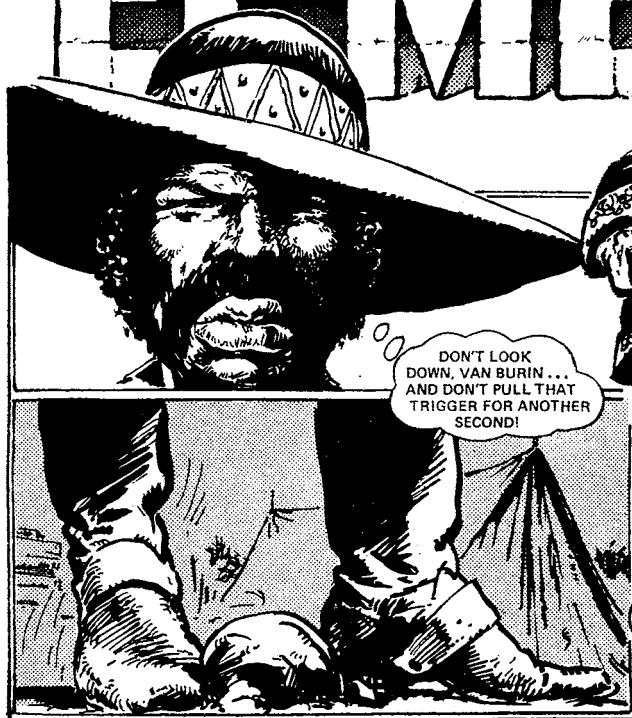
America, in the 1860s, a country torn apart by a vicious civil war. In the middle is El Mestizo, a one-man army who carries out missions for both sides. Now he has just delivered withdrawal orders to a Union general called Van Burin, whose brutal campaign in the Mississippi Valley has sparked off massive Southern reprisals. But Van Burin's reply is to pull a gun!

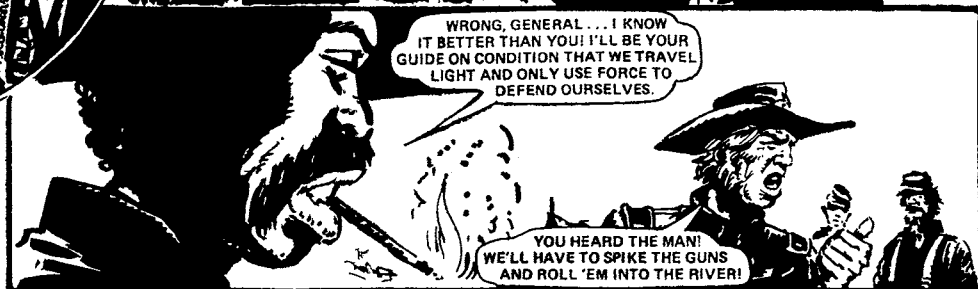
I'LL TELL YOU JUST WHAT YOU CAN DO WITH THOSE ORDERS, MISTER!

DIABLOS! HE'S GOING TO BLOW MY HEAD OFF!



EL MESTIZO



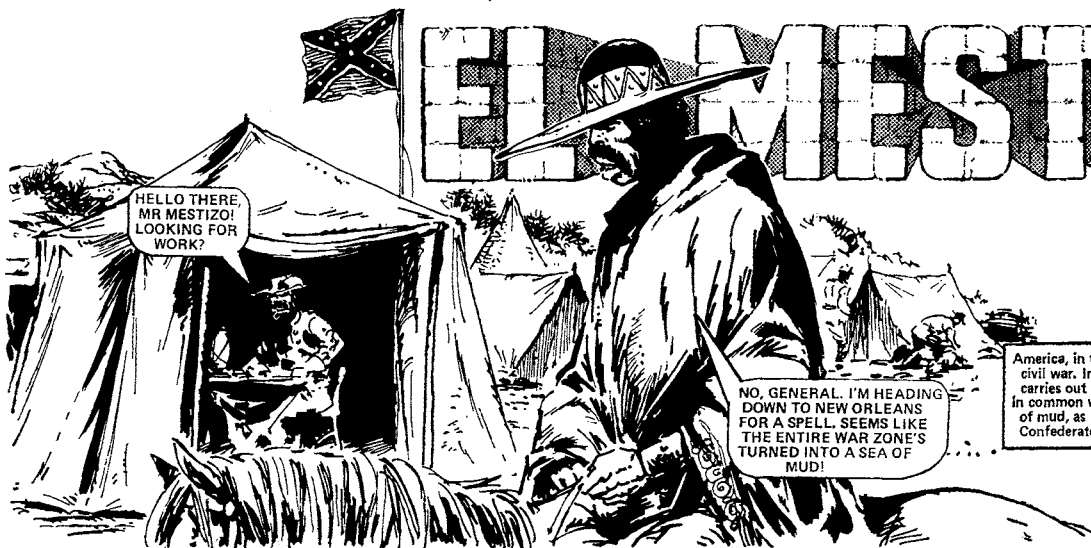






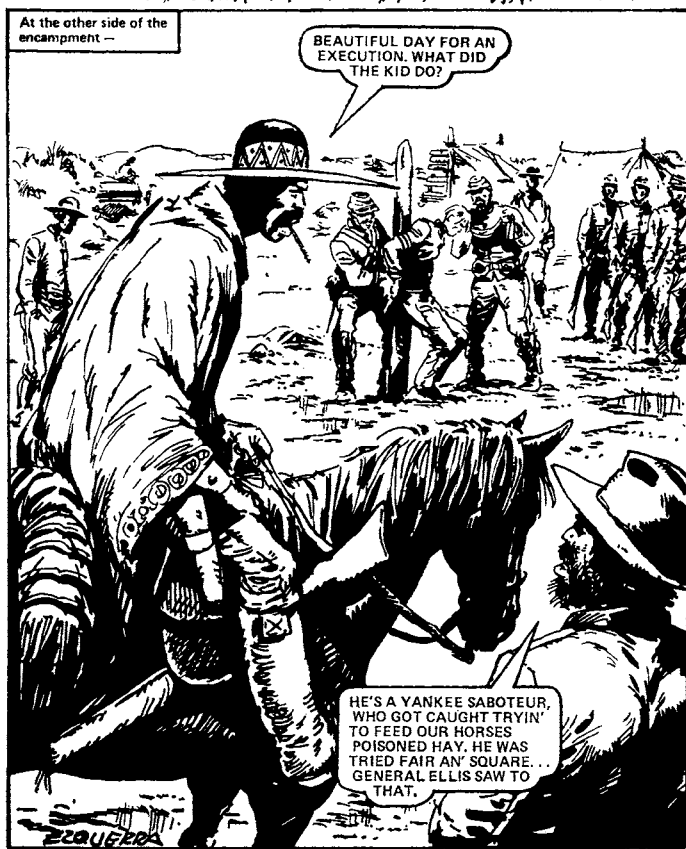
IN A COUNTRY GONE MAD, EL MESTIZO IS THE ONLY ONE WHO KEEPS HIS HEAD !

EL MESTIZO



NO, GENERAL. I'M HEADING DOWN TO NEW ORLEANS FOR A SPELL. SEEMS LIKE THE ENTIRE WAR ZONE'S TURNED INTO A SEA OF MUD!

America, in the 1860's -- a country torn apart by a vicious civil war. In the middle is El Mestizo, a one-man army who carries out missions for both sides. In common with most wars, this war produces an abundance of mud, as El Mestizo is discovering while riding through Confederate positions commanded by General Ellis.



BEAUTIFUL DAY FOR AN EXECUTION. WHAT DID THE KID DO?

HE'S A YANKEE SABOTEUR, WHO GOT CAUGHT TRYIN' TO FEED OUR HORSES POISONED HAY. HE WAS TRIED FAIR AN' SQUARE... GENERAL ELLIS SAW TO THAT.



KID'S PROBABLY NO MORE THAN SEVENTEEN... BUT THEN THIS WAR SCRAPPED AGE LIMITS A LONG TIME AGO.

READY... AIM...

BY ALL THAT'S SACRED... IT'S HANK!



Suddenly -- HAVE YOU GONE CRAZY, SOLDIER?

NO, SIR... BUT THAT MAN YOU WANT ME TO SHOOT IS MY YOUNGER BROTHER, HANK!

THERE'S A TURN UP. I'D HEARD STORIES OF BROTHER FIGHTING BROTHER IN THIS WAR, BUT THIS IS THE FIRST TIME I'VE COME ACROSS IT.



CUT HIM LOOSE AN' GET US A COUPLA HORSES! HURRY, BEFORE I BLOW THE MAJOR IN HALF!

DO AS HE SAYS — HE ISN'T KIDDIN'!



WE'LL DUMP THE MAJOR JUST AS SOON AS WE'RE CLEAR OF YOUR GUNS.

SOMEBODY TELL GENERAL ELLIS!

ADIOS, AMIGOS...! HOPE YOU MAKE IT, WHEREVER YOU'RE GOING.



The general was not amused —

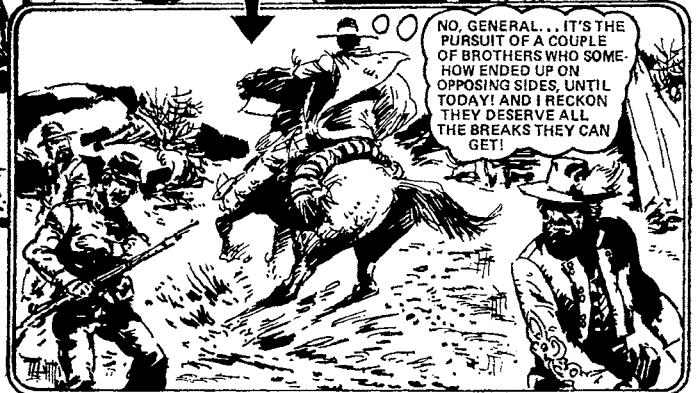
GET AFTER THEM! GLAD TO SEE YOU THINK IT'S SO FUNNY, MESTIZO!

YOU KNOW THE OLD SAYING, GENERAL... BLOOD IS THICKER THAN WATER...



...OR MUD, FOR THAT MATTER! THINK I'LL TAG ALONG WITH YOUR POSSE AND WATCH THE FUN!

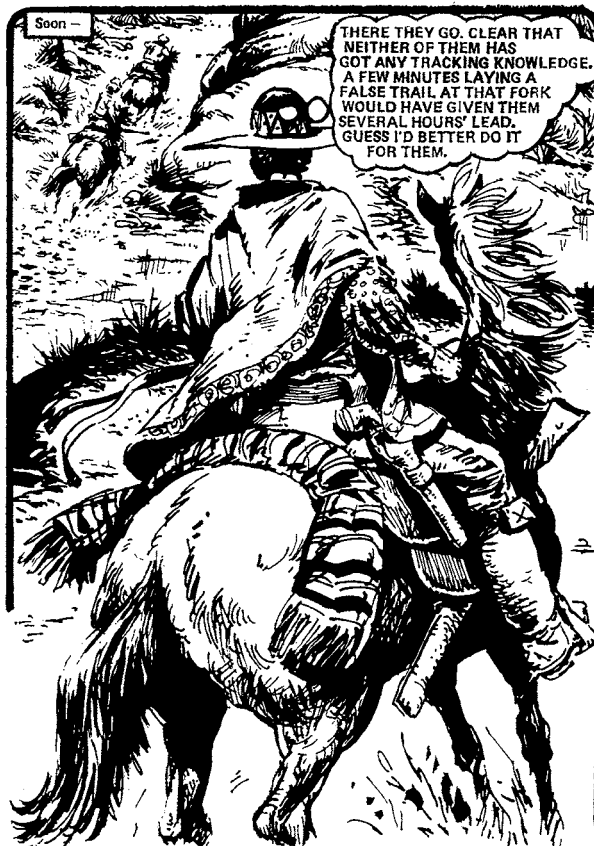
DON'T INTERFERE, MESTIZO! THIS IS A MILITARY MATTER... THE PURSUIT OF A SABOTEUR AND A DESERTER!

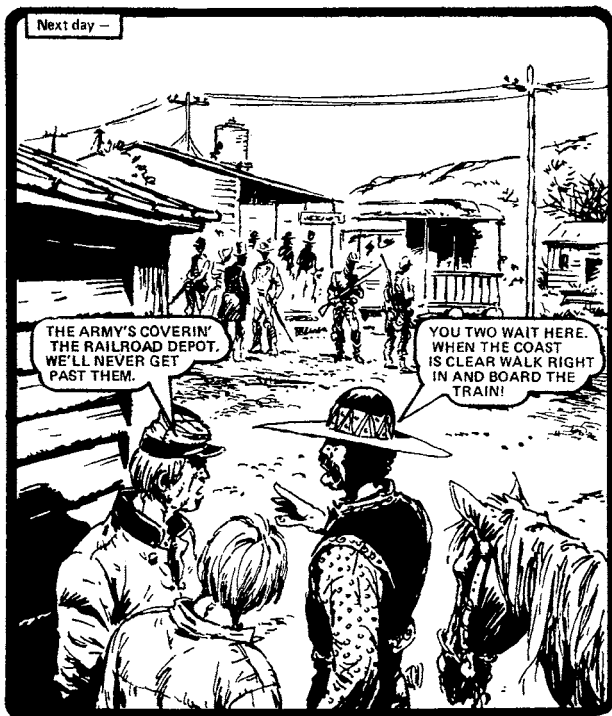


NO, GENERAL... IT'S THE PURSUIT OF A COUPLE OF BROTHERS WHO SOMEHOW ENDED UP ON OPPOSING SIDES, UNTIL TODAY! AND I RECKON THEY DESERVE ALL THE BREAKS THEY CAN GET!



GOT TO GET AHEAD OF THE PURSUIT PARTY!



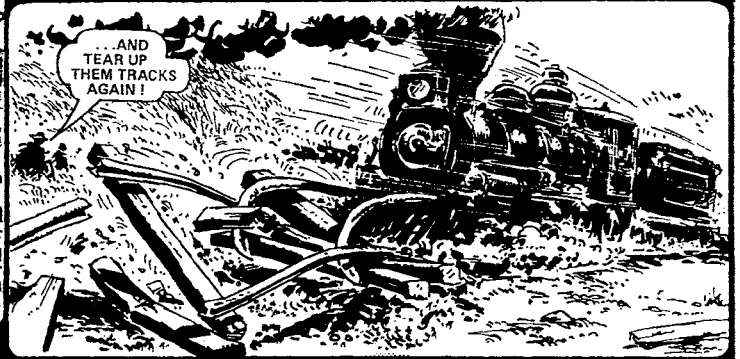


ACTION FROM THE AMERICAN CIVIL WAR !

Within the framework of the American Civil War there operated units drawn from the same town or country area which were almost private armies in themselves. Sawmont's Cavalry was one of these units. Led by Colonel Sawmont these ferocious riders fought and died for the North.



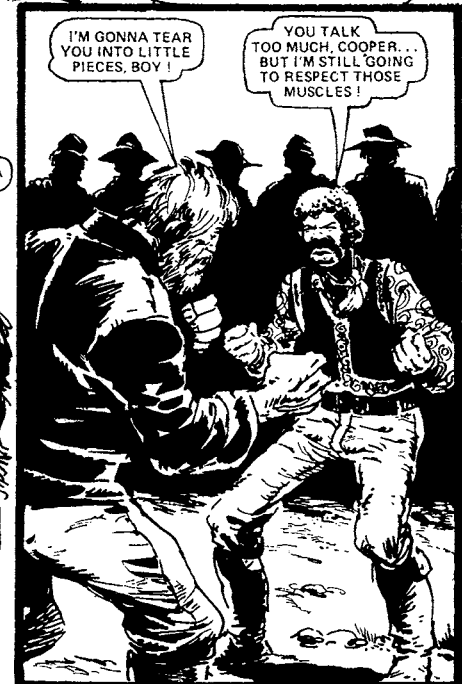
The Confederate troops were no match for the Yankee riders, and...



EL MESTIZO



A former slave who escaped to Mexico, El Mestizo returned to America to earn money by undertaking missions for both sides in the Civil War.





SAY YOUR PRAYERS...
OOOF!

But —



DIABLOS!
IT'S LIKE
HE'S MADE
OF STEEL!
WILL NOTHING
STOP HIM?



NOW I'M
GONNA SQUEEZE
YOU DRY!

HE ISN'T JOKING!
HE'LL CAVE IN
MY RIBS...



... IF I
DON'T DO
SOMETHING
ABOUT IT!

YEEAARGH!

I DIDN'T
WANT TO HARM
THE MERCHANDISE...
BUT I GUESS YOU
LEAVE ME NO
CHOICE!



WELL, WELL —
A KNIFE!
YOU'RE A
SORE LOSER!

DEAD
RIGHT, BOY...
I DON'T EVER
LOSE!



AAARGH!

YOU LOSE, COOPER!
YA WERE BEATEN BY
THE BETTER MAN... AN'
HE CAN HAVE YA!



Soon —

SORRY TO
SEE YA GO,
MESTIZO. I GUESS
I COULDN'T INTEREST
YOU IN A
SCOUTING JOB!

NOT TODAY,
COLONEL...
BUT HAVE FUN
TEARING UP
RAILROAD
TRACKS!

ACTION FROM THE AMERICAN CIVIL WAR WITH EL MESTIZO !

1865, and the writing is on the wall for the Confederate Army. After four terrible years of civil war it is being overwhelmed by the incomparably larger and better equipped Union forces under the iron command of General Ulysses Grant. The Northern states, with their massively greater resources, are finally winning a war which they could never really have lost!

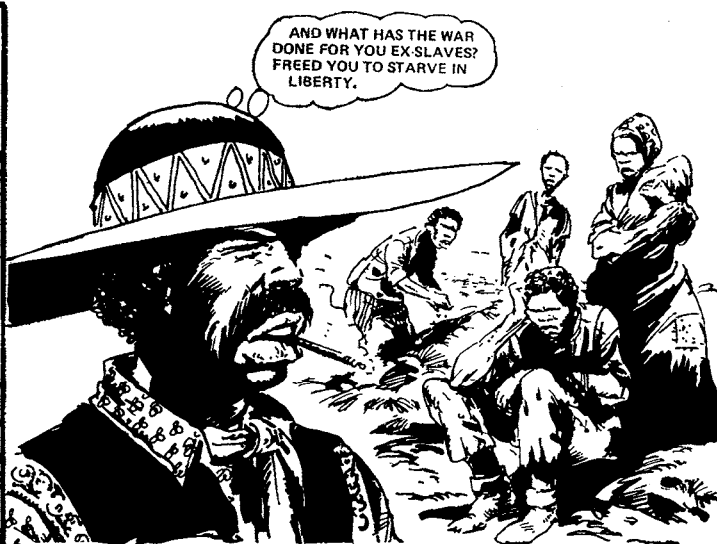


JOHNNY REB'S CRUMBLING ON ALL FRONTS... AN' THERE AIN'T NOWHERE LEFT FOR HIM TO RUN!

The Southern countryside, once cared for by the toil of a million slaves, was now laid waste, and through it roamed a man who many years earlier had been one of those slaves... El Mestizo.

THE SOUTH GRABBED A TIGER BY THE TAIL WHEN IT WENT AGAINST LINCOLN, AND THE TIGER WON'T BE SATISFIED WITH SIMPLY BITING OFF THE HAND!

AND WHAT HAS THE WAR DONE FOR YOU EX-SLAVES? FREED YOU TO STARVE IN LIBERTY.



EL MESTIZO

But not all the freed slaves were frightened or starving.

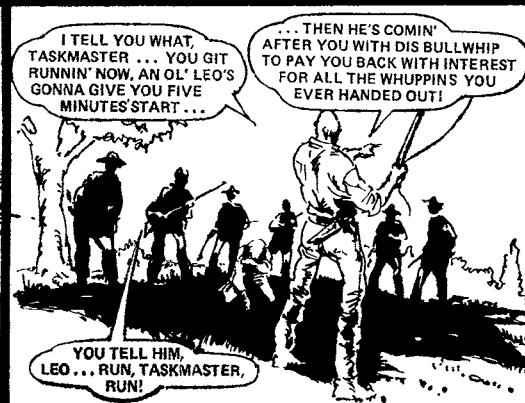


HO, HO, HO... ON YOUR FEET, TASKMASTER! STAND UP, I SAY... BEFORE I SPLIT YOU DOWN THE MIDDLE WITH THIS!



YEAH, STAND UP!

NO... NO MORE... PLEASE!



I TELL YOU WHAT, TASKMASTER... YOU GIT RUNNIN' NOW, AN OL' LEO'S GONNA GIVE YOU FIVE MINUTES' START...

... THEN HE'S COMIN' AFTER YOU WITH DIS BULLWHIP TO PAY YOU BACK WITH INTEREST FOR ALL THE WHUPPINS YOU EVER HANDED OUT!

YOU TELL HIM, LEO... RUN, TASKMASTER, RUN!

A few minutes later.

HELP... HELP ME!

WHOA! WHO'S ON YOUR TAIL, FELLA?



NOW I SEE WHO'S AFTER YOU!

STAY OUTTA THIS, BROTHER! HE'S ALL MINE!



WRONG BROTHER... HE'S NOBODY'S!

AAAARGH!



THE NAME'S EL MESTIZO.

EL... EL MESTIZO! HONEST, FRIEND, AH DIDN'T KNOW WHO YOU WUZ. THAT... THAT FELLA WE WUZ CHASIN' USED TO BE OUR TASKMASTER.



TH... THANKS, MISTER.

DON'T THANK ME YET. YOU, BALDY... WERE YOU GOING TO BREAK HIM UP WITH THAT BULLWHIP?



WHY NOT? AH'VE BEEN FORCED TO WATCH WHILE HE'S WHUPPED OTHER MEN TO DEATH WITH THAT THING!



THEN HE DESERVES HANGING... NOT HUNTING DOWN BY A HOWLING PACK OF DRUNKEN KILLERS!

YEAH... NICE IDEA. AH'LL GIT A ROPE!

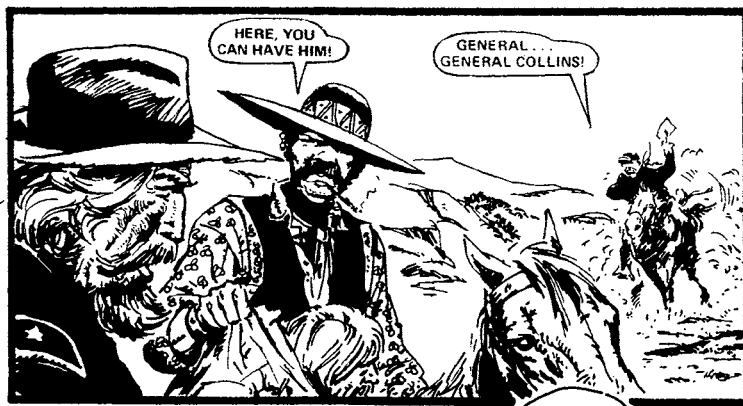
UUUURGH!

HANGING, I SAID... NOT LYNCHING! AND ONLY IF A COURT FINDS HIM GUILTY. I'LL TAKE HIM FOR NOW, BUT YOU LOT REMEMBER ONE THING...

THE YANKEES HAVEN'T FOUGHT THE BLOODIEST WAR IN HISTORY SO YOU CAN GO HUNTING DOWN ANY WHITE MAN YOU SEE. YOU'RE FREE MEN NOW... SO ACT LIKE IT!



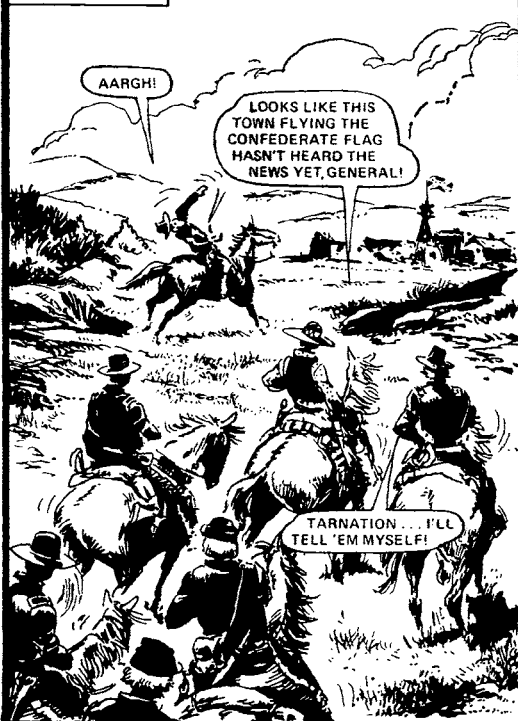
An hour later Mestizo encountered General Collins of the Union Army.



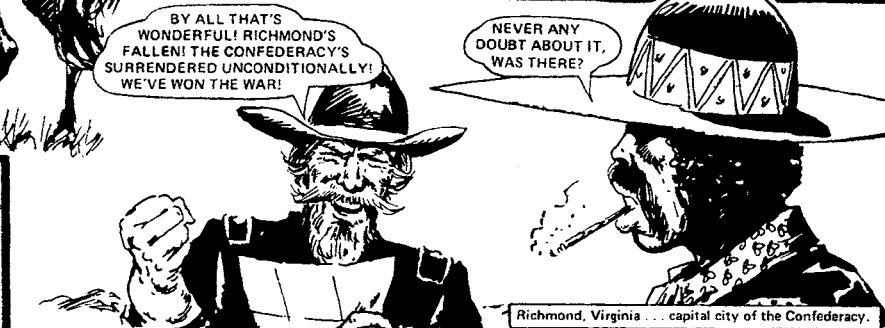
BY ALL THAT'S WONDERFUL! RICHMOND'S FALLEN! THE CONFEDERACY'S SURRENDERED UNCONDITIONALLY! WE'VE WON THE WAR!

NEVER ANY DOUBT ABOUT IT, WAS THERE?

But half an hour later

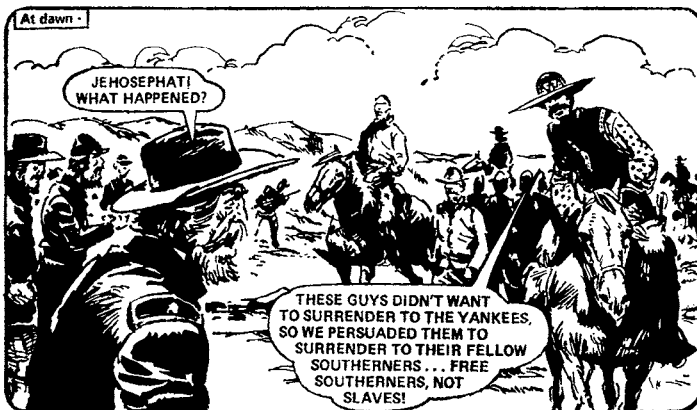
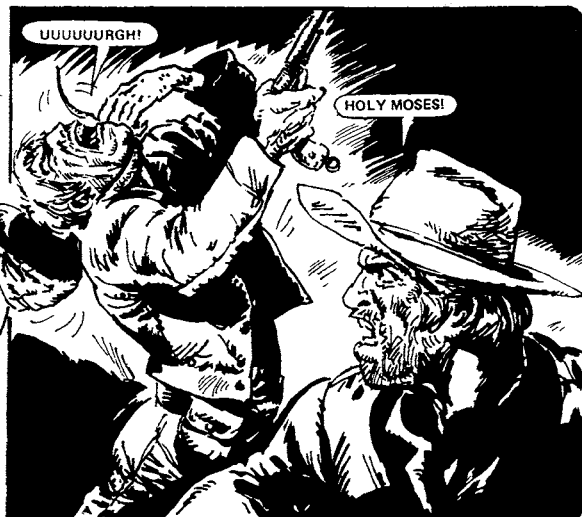


And when Collins gave the order to attack



It didn't take Mestizo long to find Leo and his men.







ALAN HEBDEN

Alan Hebden scripted a number of comics in the late 1970s and early 1980s, including strips for **Battle** such as *The Rat Pack* with artists Carlos Ezquerra, Massimo Belardinelli and Eric Bradbury, *Major Eazy* with Carlos Ezquerra, *War Dog* and *Fighting Mann* with Cam Kennedy and both *Death Squad* and *Crazy Keller* with Eric Bradbury. For **Starlord** he wrote *Mind Wars* which featured the art of Jesus Redondo, and he scripted the majority of *Planet of the Damned* (it's opening having been scripted by Pat Mills). His prolific work for **2000 AD** included *Meltdown Man* and the sequel to *Harlem Heroes* with Massimo Bellardinelli. He also scripted *Death Planet* which featured the first female lead in a **2000 AD** strip. Alan is still working in the industry today, writing various war stories for DC Thomson's **Commando** and is also currently working on a violent, sexy novel that follows a blood-soaked trail of retribution, from the India of the Raj on the eve of WW1 to England and Italy at the start of the Swinging Sixties.



CARLOS EZQUERRA

As co-creator of *Judge Dredd*, **Carlos Ezquerra** designed the classic original costume as well as visually conceptualising Mega-City One. He also co-created *Strontium Dog*. He has also illustrated *A.B.C. Warriors*, *Judge Anderson*, *Tharg the Mighty*, *Al's Baby* and *Cursed Earth Koburn* amongst many others. Outside of the 'Galaxy's Greatest Comic', Ezquerra first illustrated *Third World War* in *Crisis* magazine, and has since become a regular collaborator with Garth Ennis, working on *Adventures in the Rifle Brigade*, *Bloody Mary*, *Just a Pilgrim*, *Condors* and *The Magnificent Kevin*. He also pencilled two special *Preacher* episodes.





GET READY, MEN. WE'LL
TAKE THAT FORT FROM
JOHNNY REB BEFORE
THE DAY'S THROUGH!

YOU'RE BEYOND ACCURATE
RANGE, BUT I'LL JUST GIVE
IT ONE SHOT. IF I MISS, YOU
CAN LIVE. IF I DON'T MISS...
THEN I DON'T MISS.

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