



POW GRAPHIC NOVEL SERIES, VOL 1 ★ 1945

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# NAZIS GIVE ME THE WILLYS

EXPERIENCE  
PFC EKSTRAND'S  
SERVICE AS A JEEP  
DRIVER IN WWII!



WRITTEN AND ILLUSTRATED BY MELINA TESTIN

STORY PROVIDED BY MALCOLM EKSTRAND VIA THE HOLT ORAL  
HISTORY PROGRAM, LISTEN AT [PRITZKERMILITARY.ORG](http://PRITZKERMILITARY.ORG)

BUILD YOUR OWN  
WILLYS MB!  
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# Malcolm Ekstrand



WWII / 26th Yankee Division

Born 13 August 1924 in Providence, RI, "Mac" was drafted in 1943. He qualified for the Army Specialized Training Program, and studied engineering at Providence College until the program ended in 1944. September 1944-April 1945, Mac served with the 26th Yankee Division in Europe. After the war, Mac became Dr. Ekstrand the Podiatrist. He passed away in 2018.

In March 1945, Patton's Third Army crossed into Germany. The 26th spent the spring neutralizing Nazi forces in the southeast corner of Germany.

1 April 1945 I was relieved of Kitchen Patrol Duty.

KP had kept me off the front lines, but came with its own hazards:



The 26th needed a new jeep driver.

Do you know how to drive?

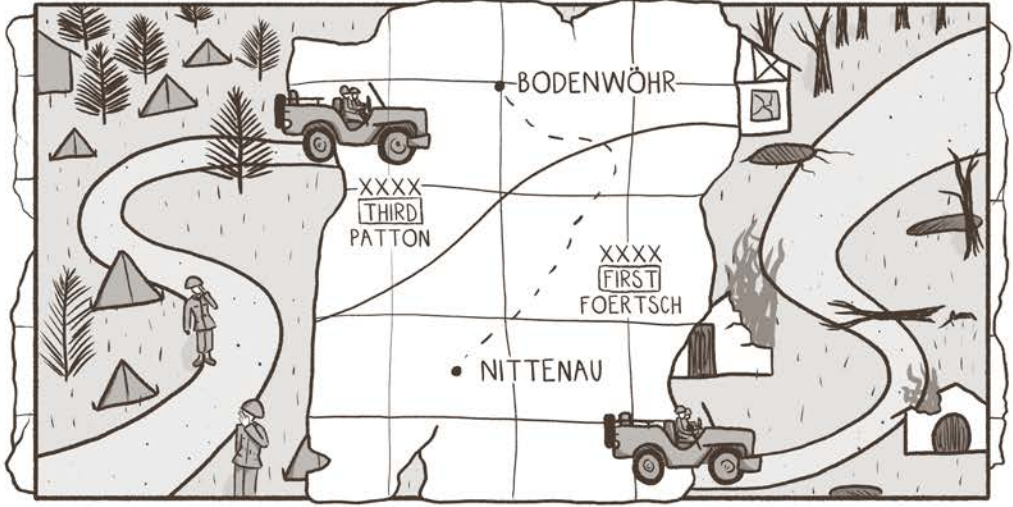
No, Sir.

You will.



I learned to drive in 2 days.

24 April 1945  
I drove Captain Sims to see the frontline.



Stopping

for a moment

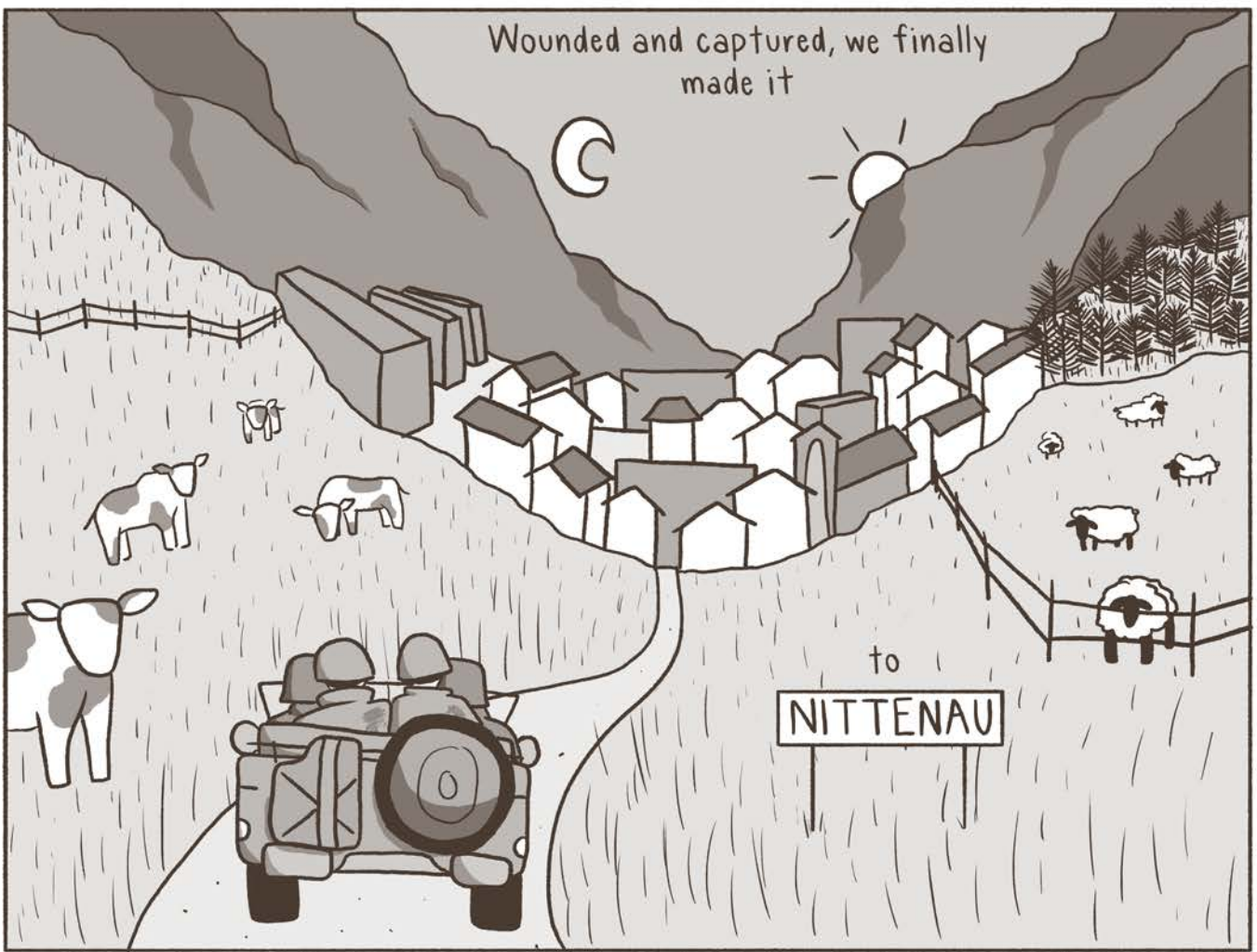


Lord, please help me.



...we ran into a bit of trouble.

Wounded and captured, we finally made it



American bombers greeted us as we arrived.



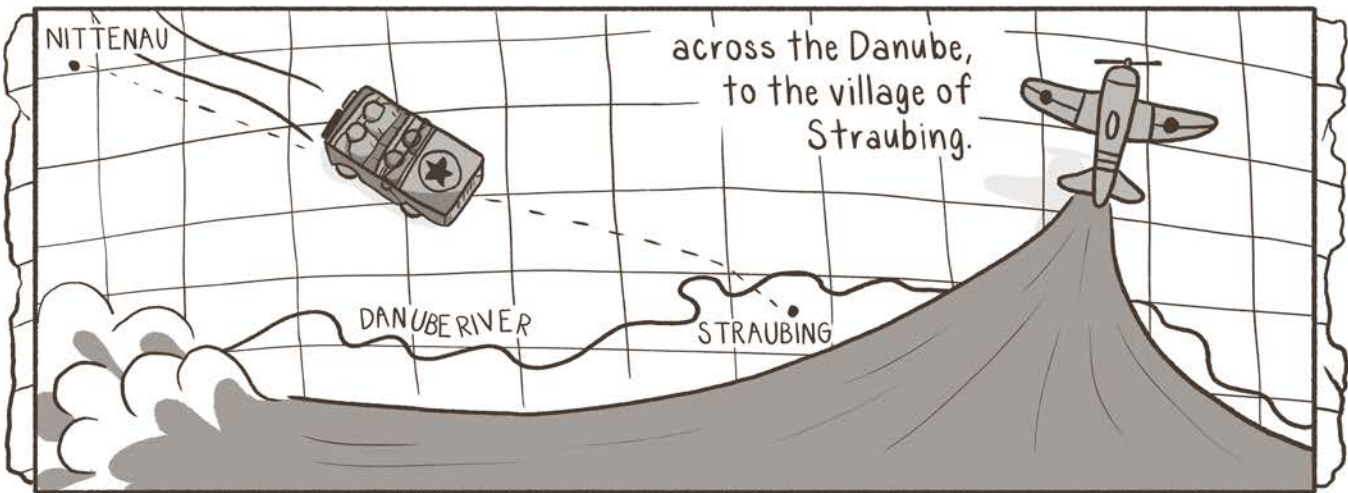
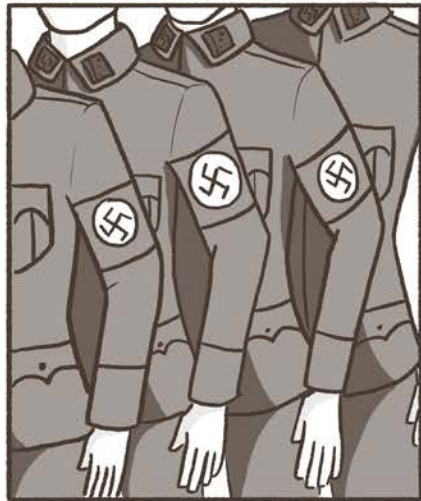
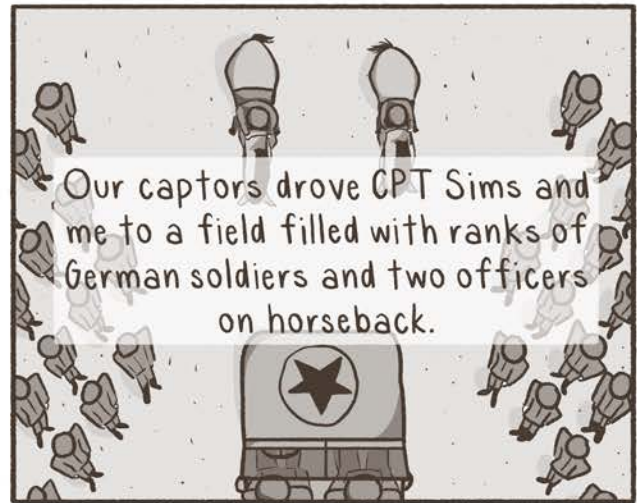
CPT Sims was taken to a bombshelter.

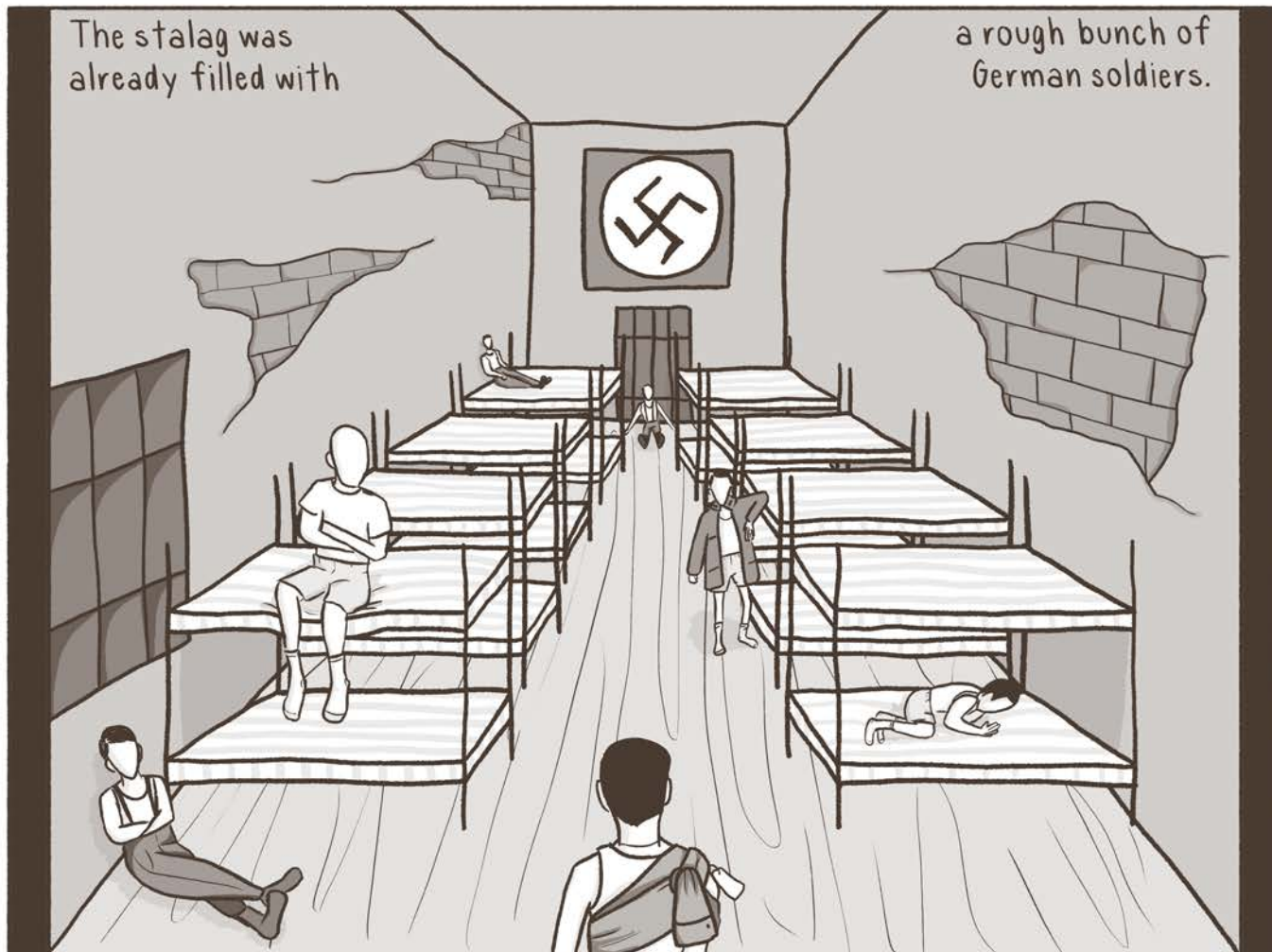


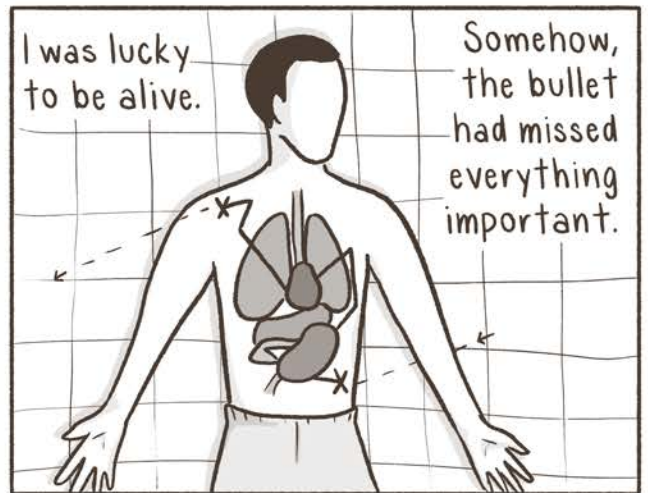
I was left outside to guard the jeep.



Lord, if I am going to die today, let it be from German guns and not from American guns.



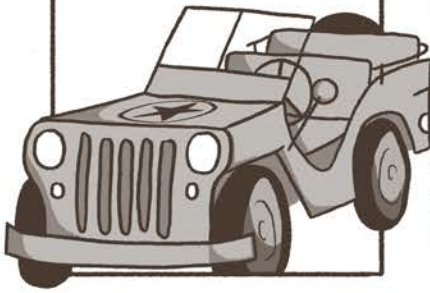




The US Army gave me the Purple Heart



## WILLYS MB JEEP

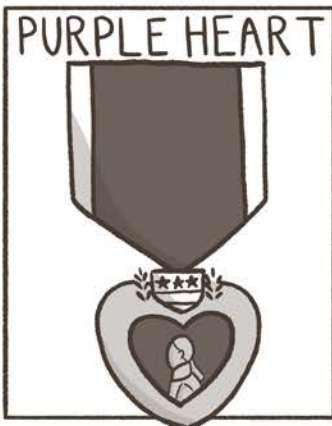


Willys MB jeeps were produced in the United States during WWII, 1941-1945. The Army selected auto manufacturer Willys (pronounced Willis) as the manufacturer of military jeeps, though Ford factories also manufactured a GPW (General Purpose Willys) jeep to keep up with demand. The Willys Military Model B became one of the most recognizable vehicles of the war. Thanks to their versatility and rugged design, more than 600,000 jeeps were built during WWII. American jeeps were valued tools and desirable even to the enemy, like the Germans who captured Mac's jeep.

The Army Specialized Training Program (ASTP) was a wartime program, 1942-1944, designed to train officers for the Army in a college setting, while ROTC was suspended during WWII. During basic training, recruits took an exam to qualify for the program. Only 2% of Army recruits earned a spot in the ASTP to study Engineering, Medicine, or Foreign Language. As preparations began for the June 1944 D-Day invasion, ASTP dissolved, transferring thousands of students, like Mac, to combat divisions.

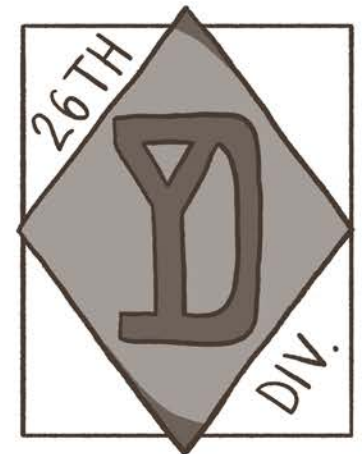


## PURPLE HEART



The Purple Heart is a medal awarded to service members wounded or killed in action. First awarded in 1932, the Purple Heart is a modern version of the Badge of Military Merit, introduced by George Washington in 1782. More than 1 million Purple Hearts, depicting George Washington, were awarded during WWII, and the medal continues to be awarded today. National Purple Heart day is celebrated annually on 7 August.

The 26th Yankee Division was founded as the Massachusetts Army National Guard. Mac found himself in the 26th after the ASTP dissolved, and soon landed with the division at Utah Beach three months after D-Day, 7 September 1944. The 26th spent the fall fighting through France and the winter locked in Luxemburg during the Battle of the Bulge. In March, the 26th crossed the Rhine River and spent the spring neutralizing Southeastern Germany. The equestrian German officers Mac encountered near Nittenau surrendered to the 26th within days of his capture.



Kitchen Patrol Duty (KP) is a generally undesirable job given to junior enlisted soldiers which involves preparing and serving chow, and cleaning the kitchen and mess tent.

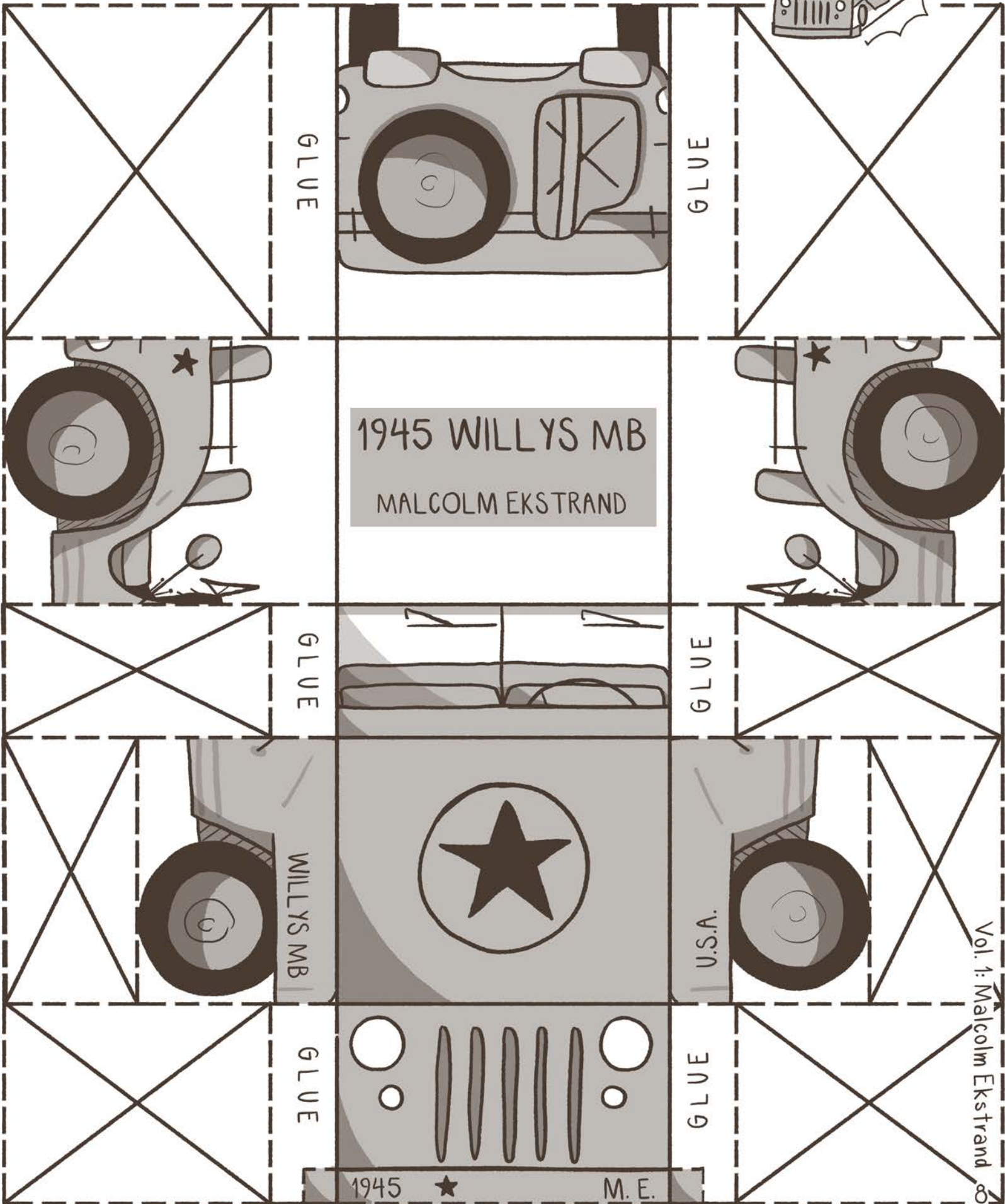
George S. Patton was an American general during WWII. He commanded the Third US Army in France and Germany, including the 26th Yankee Division, 1944-1945.

Stalag is an abbreviation of the German word for Prisoner of War Camp. At the Stalag in Straubing, Mac and other POWs were only fed one slice of bread a day.

A Mobile Army Surgical Hospital (MASH) was a sophisticated field hospital introduced during WWII to treat major wounds requiring immediate attention.



Build a Willys MB like the one Mac drove in WWII!  
cut along the dotted lines, fold along the solid lines, glue as directed



1945 WILLYS MB  
MALCOLM EKSTRAND

GLUE

GLUE

GLUE

GLUE

WILLYS MB

U.S.A.

GLUE

GLUE

1945 ★ M. E.

