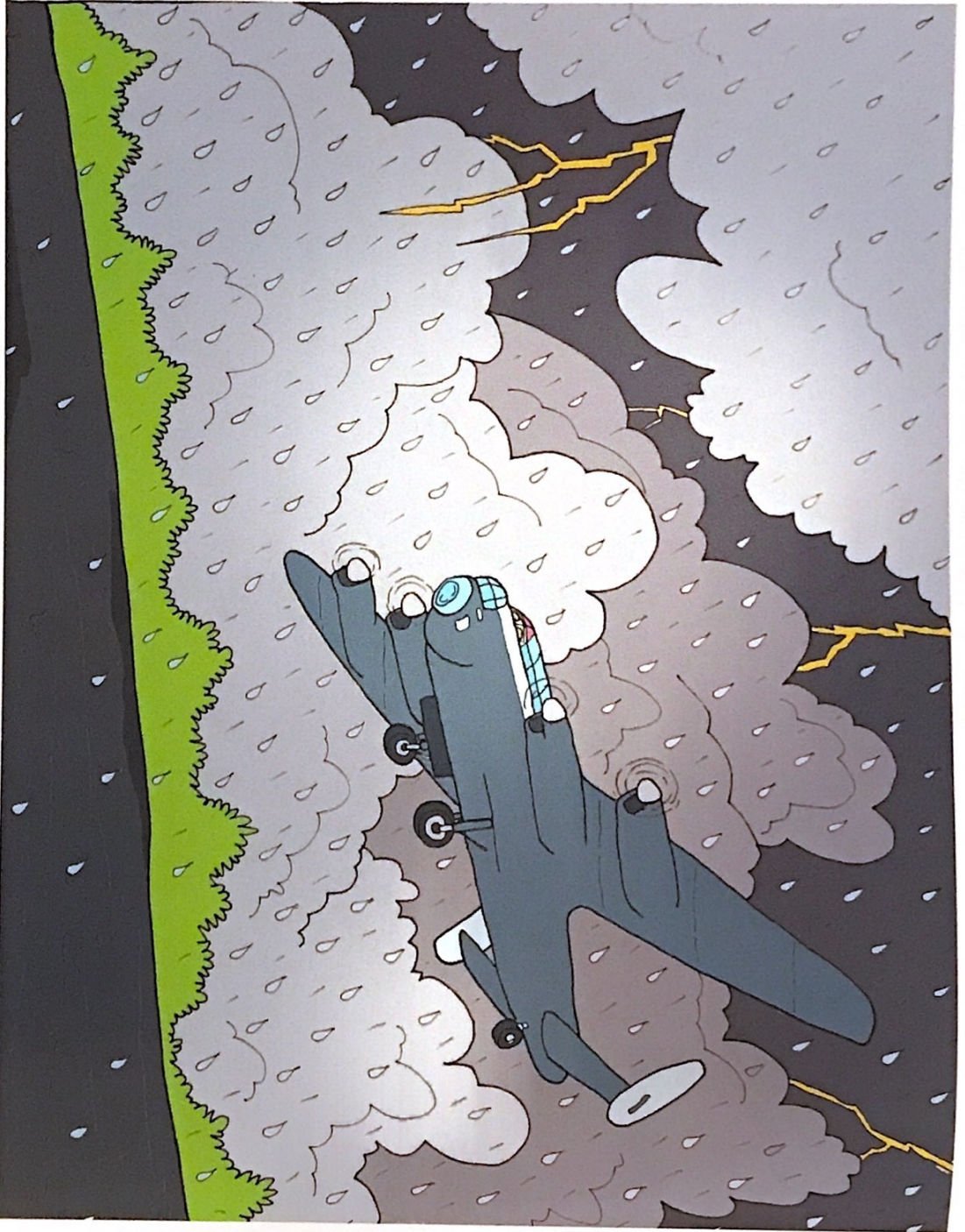




"Almost time to take off," said Pilot Bob to Bad Penny, his trusted airplane, a Lancaster bomber. "We have volunteered for a special mission."



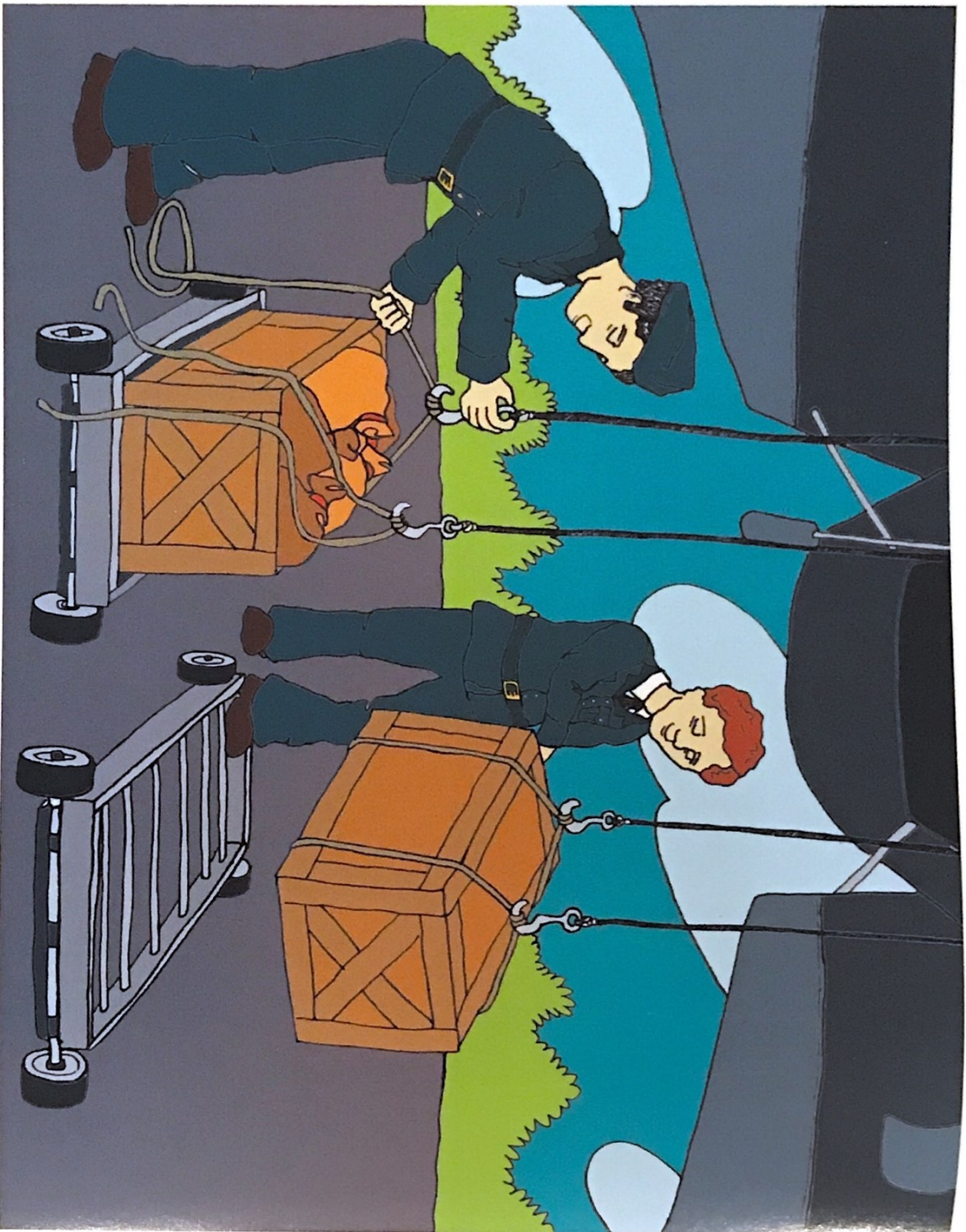
Bad Penny had been on many missions during World War Two but had never volunteered for one. She had earned her name because of the old saying: "...like a bad penny, it keeps coming back."

Bad Penny was proud of her name. She always came back.



As the ground crew loaded Bad Penny with her cargo, she whispered to Pilot Bob,
"Those do not look like bombs."

"You are correct, Bad Penny. They are not bombs," replied Pilot Bob.
"They are bundles of food. Food for the Dutch."



Bad Penny had never flown food in her bomb storage area – known as the bomb bay – before. She asked, “Can you tell me more about our special mission?”



"The people of the Netherlands are called the Dutch," explained Pilot Bob.

"Several years ago, they were invaded by an enemy army.

All their food has been taken from them to feed the enemy troops."



"The people are starving. We will fly very low and drop food near a village so they will be able to eat."

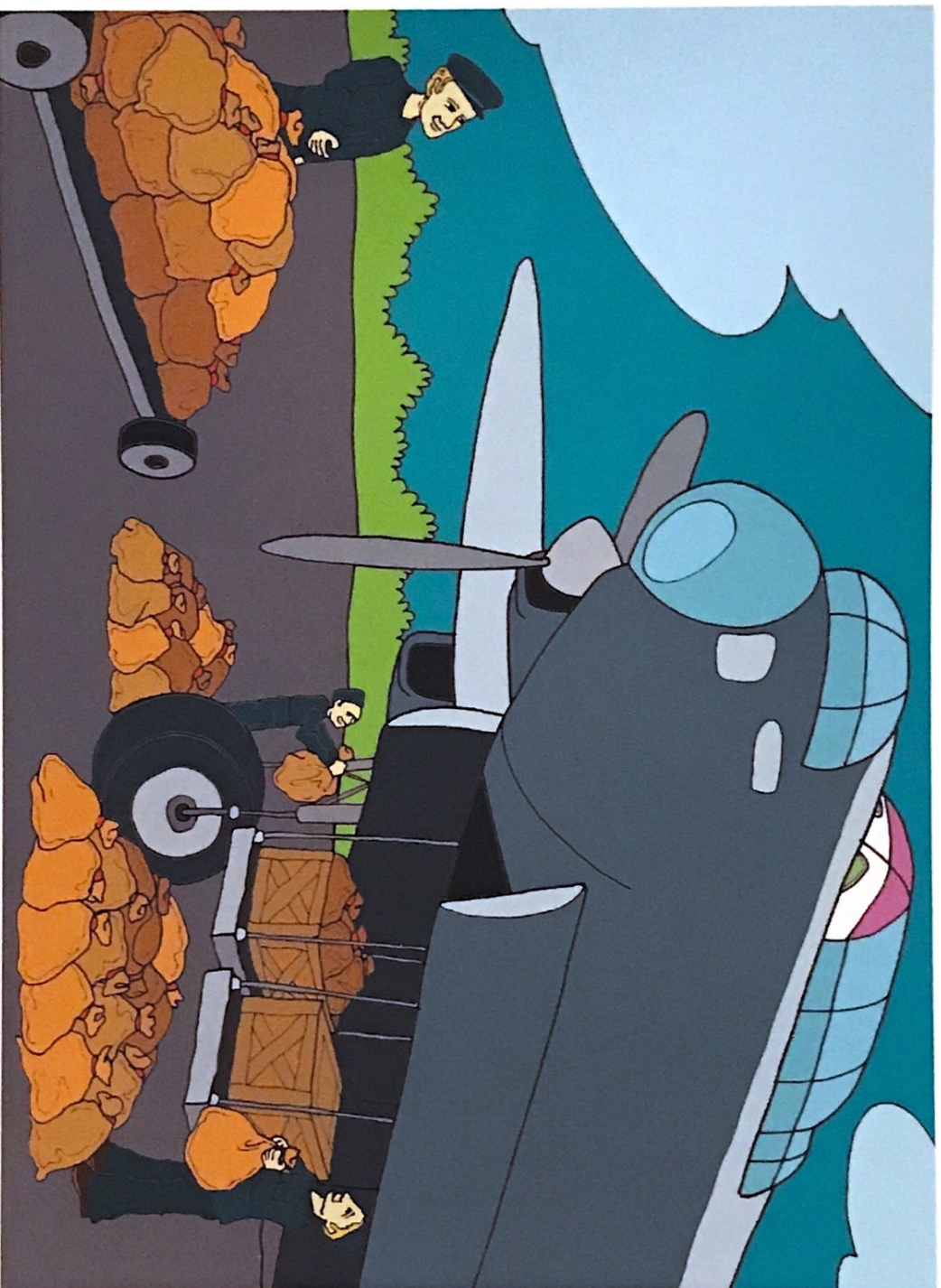


"In peace time, the Netherlands is a beautiful country. Located on the North Sea, the country is blessed with soil that grows many types of plants. Windmills dot the landscape. Fishermen bring their catch to market.

The country is best known as the 'Land of Tulips.' In the spring thousands of colorful and beautiful tulips bloom all across the land and paint the countryside like a rainbow you can reach out and touch."



"Now, several years after the Second World War started in 1939," continued Pilot Bob, "the country is not what it used to be. The Dutch barely survived 'The Hunger Winter of 1944.' The tulips cannot bloom because the people are so desperate for food, they are eating the bulbs!"



"The Allied Command is talking to the leaders of the enemy army. They know our mission is to drop food, not bombs. They have been told not to shoot at us, but there is no guarantee we will not be attacked. However, we always come back. Right, Bad Penny?"

"Roger," replied Bad Penny. "We always come back."



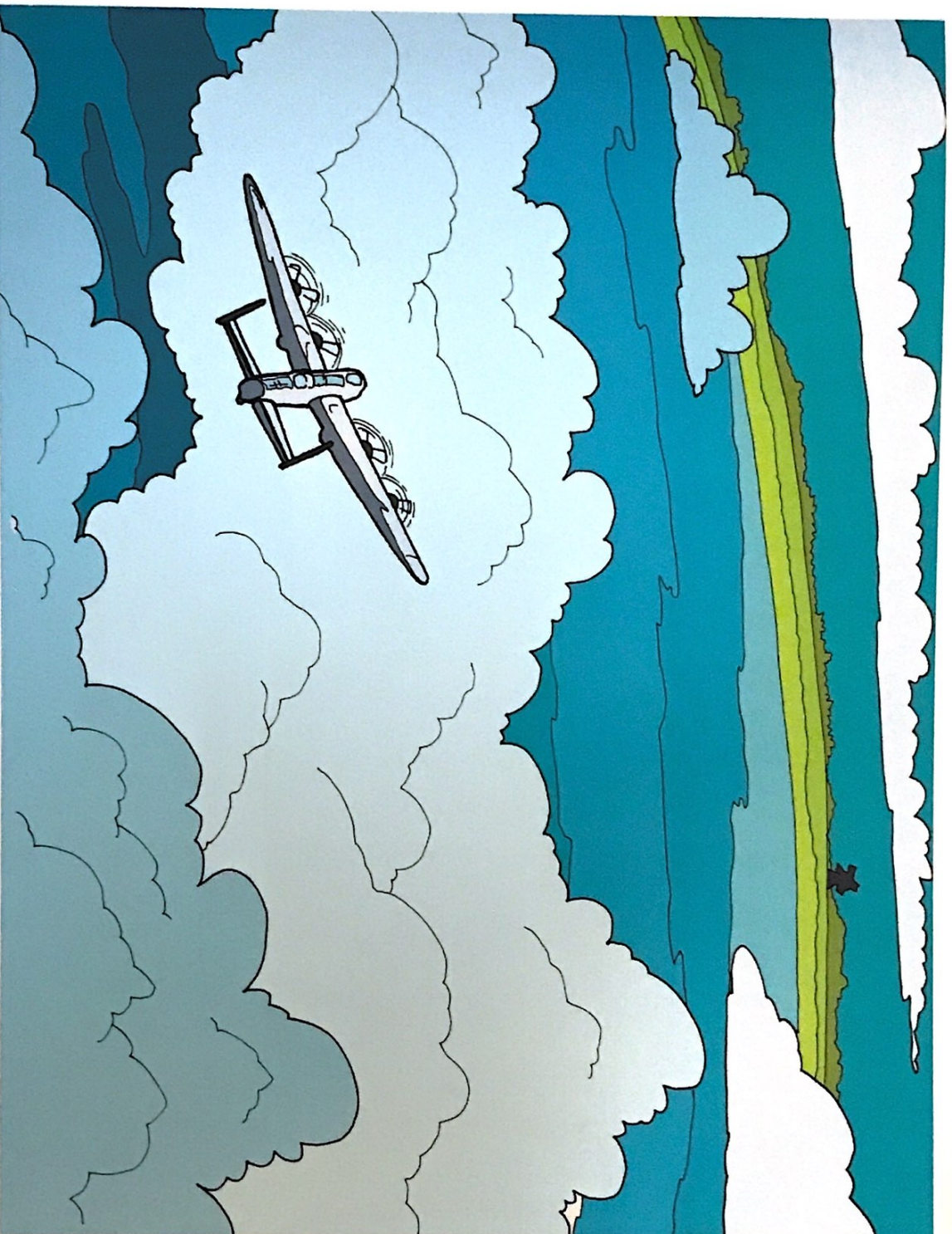
In the Netherlands, a boy named Peter had no idea how his life was about to change.



With the food loaded in the bomb bay and her crew all buckled in,
Bad Penny was ready to taxi down the runway for take off.



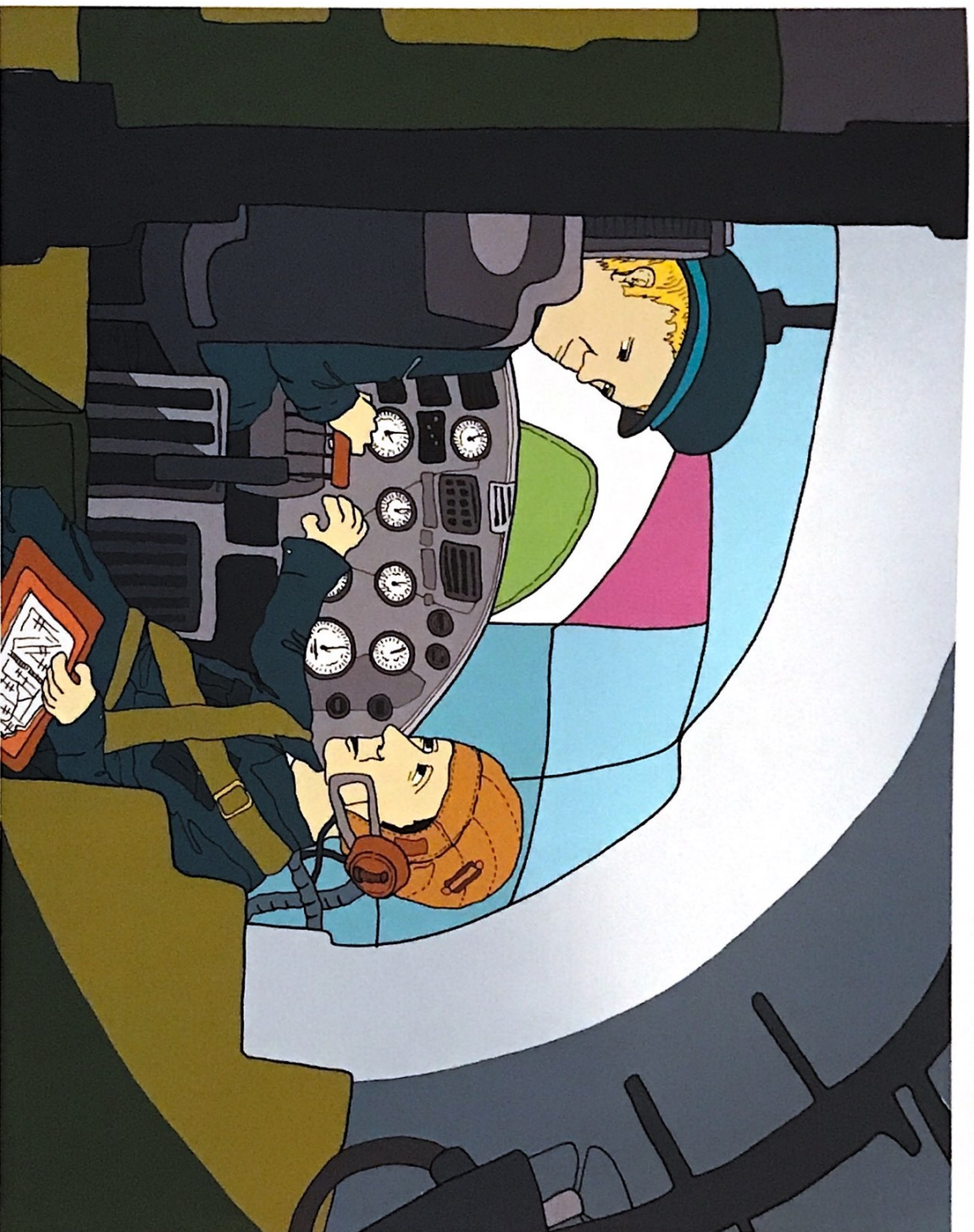
"We're up and away!" yelled Pilot Bob over the roar of the powerful Merlin engines.



After crossing the North Sea, the shoreline of the Netherlands began to appear on the horizon. Once over land, Bad Penny would fly very low and then drop her precious cargo.

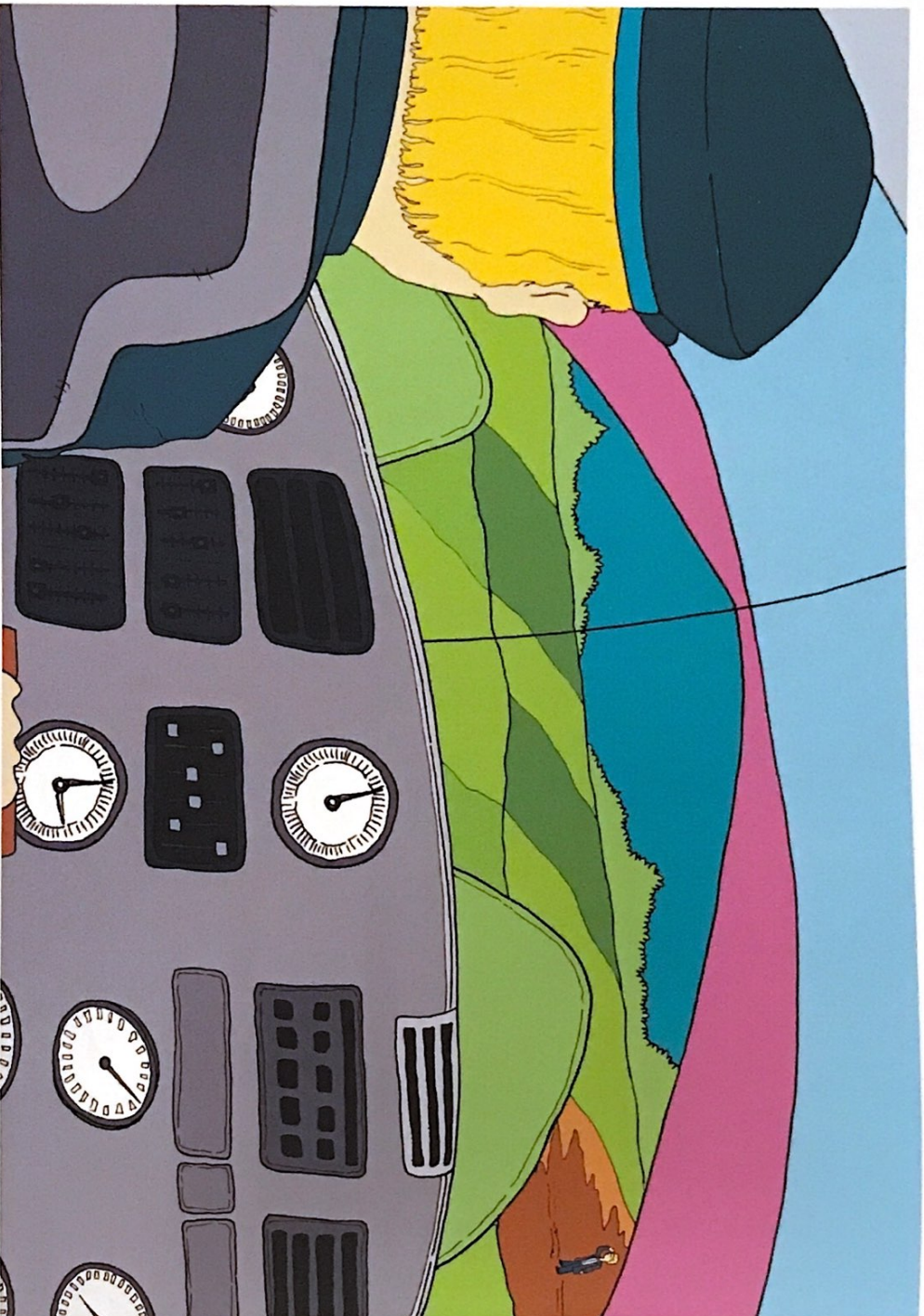


"I have the target in sight," said Bombardier Bill. His job is to release the food at the correct time so it will fall on the designated target.



"Take her in lower!" shouted Bombardier Bill.

Pilot Bob took Bad Penny as low as she had ever flown before except to take off and land. The fields looked very bare.



As Bad Penny flew lower and lower, she thought she could see a child in the field ahead.

She flew closer. Indeed, it was a young boy.
It was Peter. He was out looking for food.

"I bet he will be surprised to see what we drop from the sky!" thought Bad Penny.



"Food away!" yelled Bombardier Bill. Bad Penny was flying so low that Bombardier Bill waved at Peter and Bad Penny wagged her wings to say hello.

Bad Penny thought, "I hope that boy can take lots of food back to his home."



This food drop was the first of many successful missions Bad Penny and other airplanes flew over the Netherlands as part of "Operation Manna." The war would soon be over and Canadian and other Allied forces would be the first friendly armies to enter the Netherlands and free the Dutch.



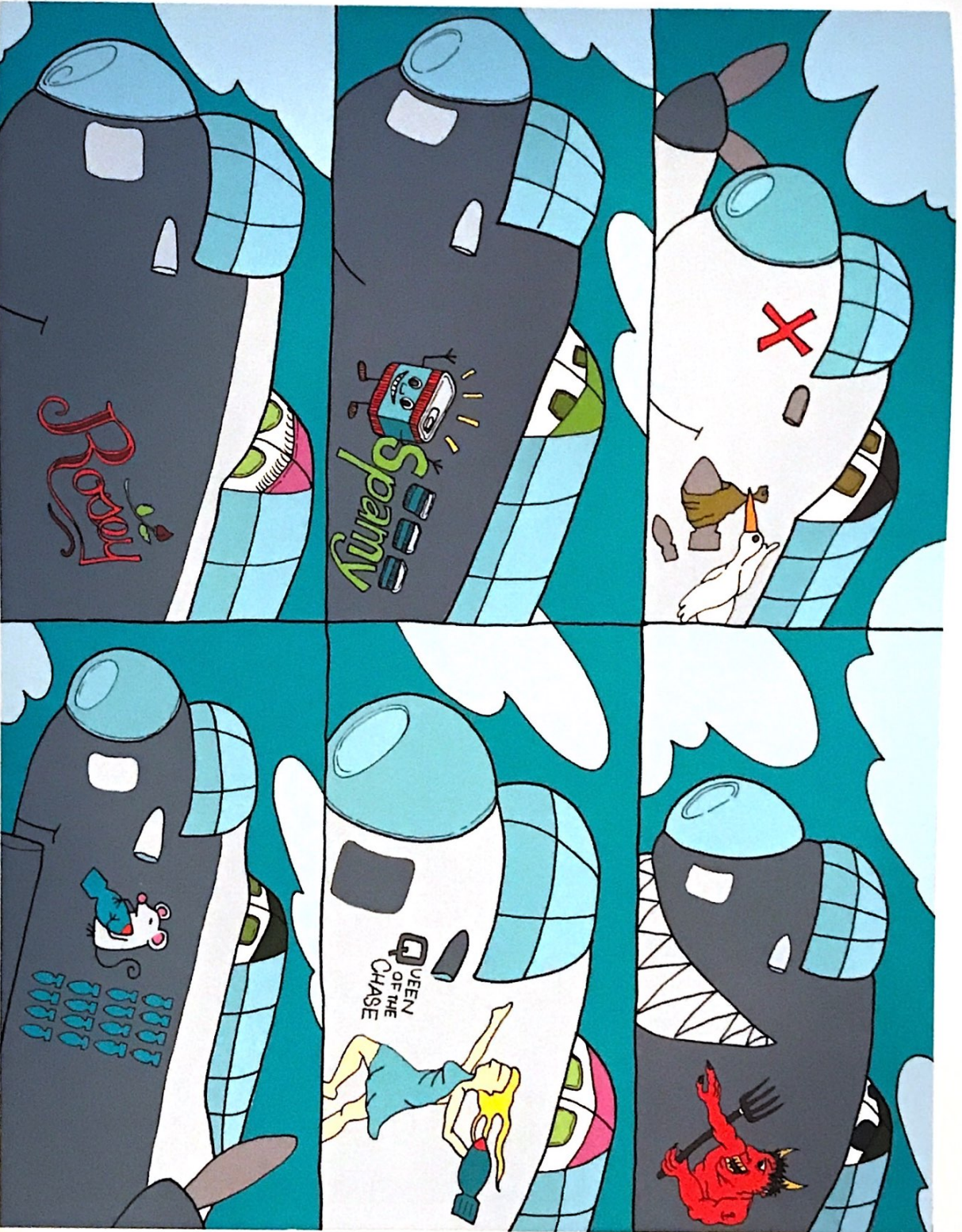
"Operation Manna" was thought of and carried out by the Allied Command, including the armies of Canada and the United States, to help solve the country's serious food shortage.

Without Operation Manna (Manna meaning "food from heaven"), many more Dutch citizens would have died.

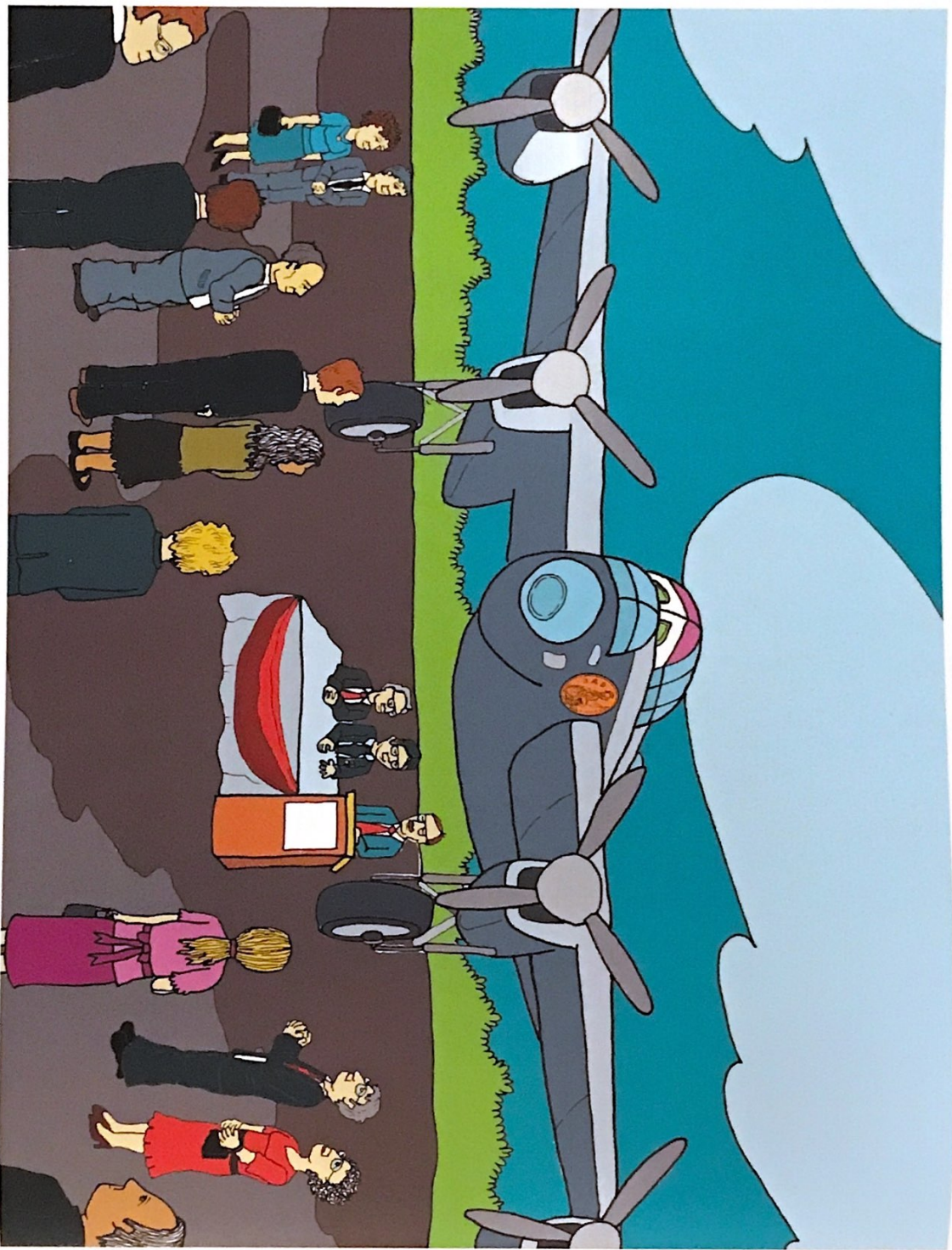
Because of the bravery of these pilots and the freeing of the Netherlands by Canadian and other Allied armies, the Dutch are very grateful to those countries to this day.



After the war, Bad Penny was retired from active duty. Because she had been so busy flying her missions (called sorties) there had never been an opportunity to dedicate her name and nose art.



Nose art is painted on the side of a plane's nose to identify the airplane.



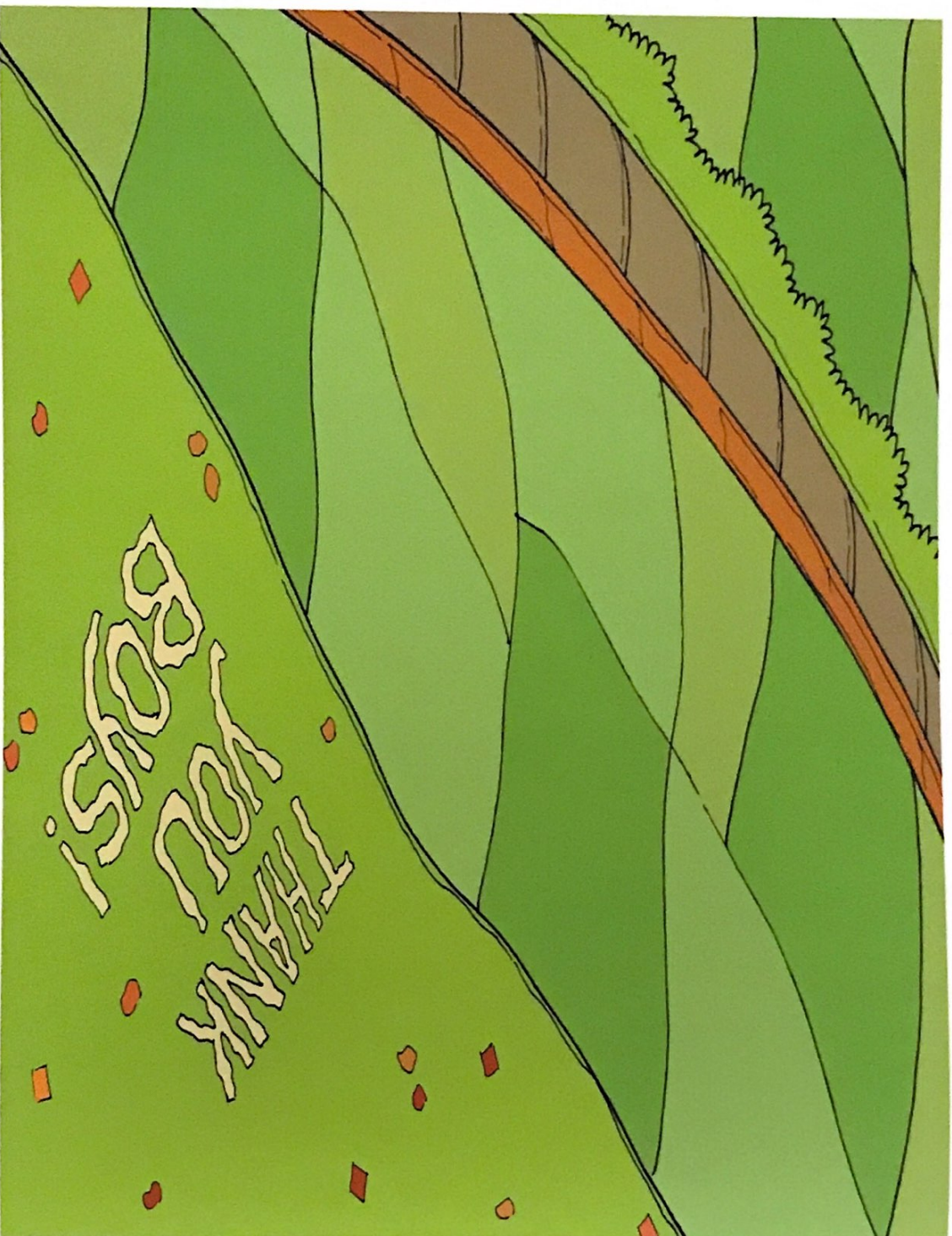
Many years later, a ceremony was held at the Canadian Historical Aircraft Association hangar in Windsor, Ontario, Canada, Pilot Bob's hometown. The event was held to officially present Bad Penny's nose art and recognize her name.



A man approached Bad Penny and gently reached out to pat her nose.

"My name is Peter. I was the little boy in the field when you flew your first food drop mission," he said. "I always wanted to meet you and say 'thank you' for being so brave. I am glad you came back, Bad Penny."

Bad Penny smiled widely. "I will never forget you Peter. I waved to you as we flew by. I am so pleased you came to see me on this special day."



Every year, as a thank you to all Canadians for their help during WWII, the Netherlands gives Canada a "Gift of Tulips". Thousands of tulip bulbs arrive in Canada as a thank you to all Canadians for helping the Netherlands during World War Two and to keep the friendship between the two countries strong.