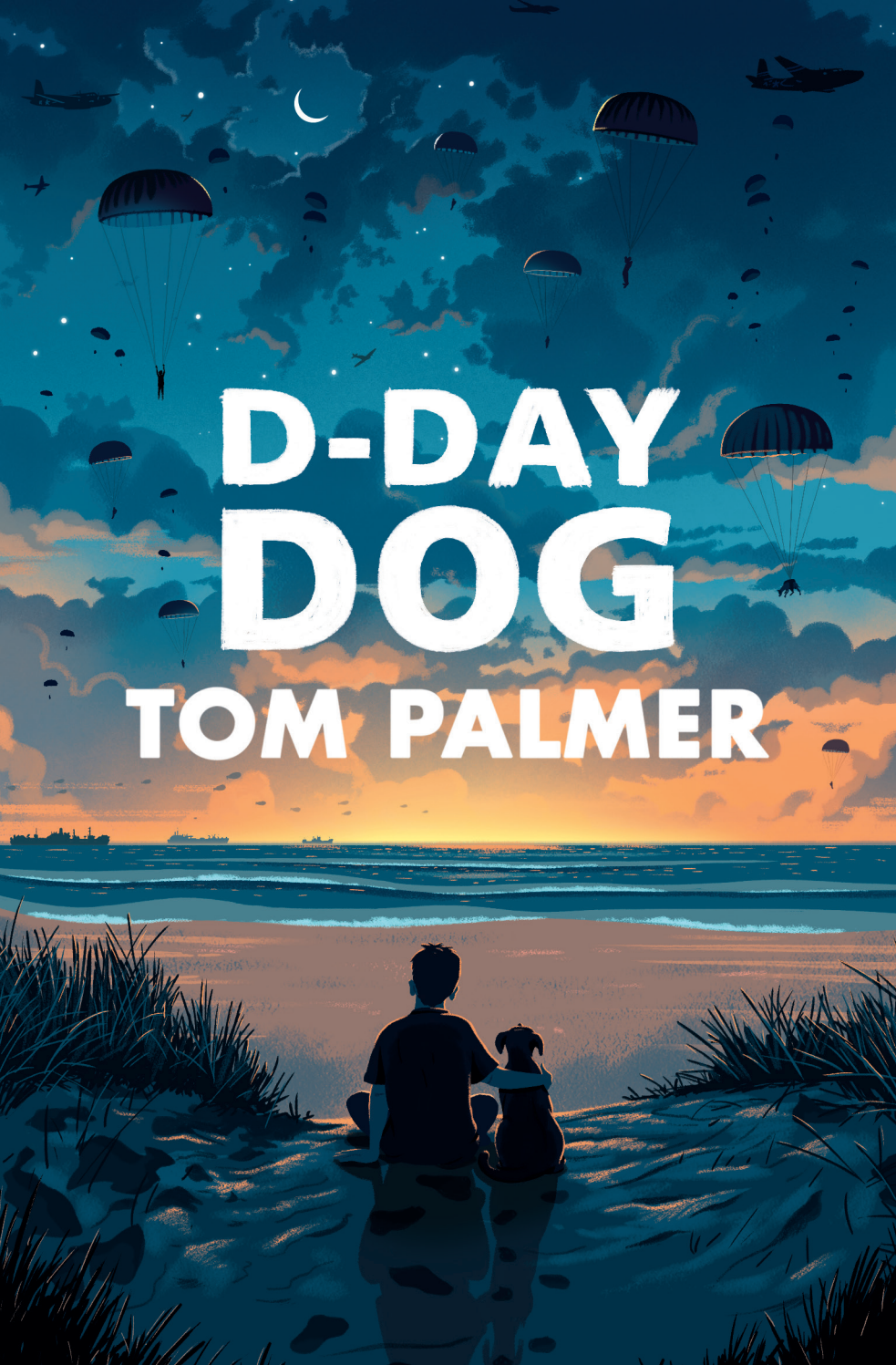

D-DAY
DOG
TOM PALMER

ALSO BY TOM PALMER

Scrum
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Rugby Academy: Deadlocked

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Defenders: Killing Ground
Defenders: Dark Arena
Defenders: Pitch Invasion

Armistice Runner
Over the Line

D-DAY DOG

TOM PALMER

Conkers



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For Ashville College, Harrogate,
who kindly took me on their Normandy
school trip, making this book possible





PART 1





ONE

Jack threw the tennis ball and watched it arc over the washing line to bounce at the far edge of the lawn. He grinned as a blur of black and white fur snatched the ball out of the air.

"Good boy, Finn. Now, fetch it."

Finn turned, ball in mouth, scampering to where Jack was crouching. The dog released the ball at the boy's feet, then sat quivering, waiting for Jack to throw it again.

"Good boy," Jack said again, staring into his dog's eager eyes.

Jack had wanted a dog all his life. He had



nagged his mum and dad month on month, year on year. And then – this February – they'd said yes.

"But you have to feed it," Mum cautioned. "You have to walk it. You have to train it. It's your dog. It means less time gaming. Can you cope with that?"

"I can. I will. I promise," Jack had gasped.

And now he'd seen that promise through. Three walks a day. Three meals a day. He'd house-trained Finn. He'd encouraged him to sleep in his crate all night without barking. And now Finn could chase a ball, bring it back and give it up.

The next thing Jack wanted to try was taking Finn out on the pavements and into town without his lead, controlling him with words, not force. But he knew that would be harder, that they would have to build up to it slowly. Jack just wished he didn't have to go back to school and leave his dog at home now the Easter holidays were nearly over.



"Good boy, Finn," Jack praised him a third time.

Then a voice came from the house. Jack and Finn looked up from their game.

"It's here." Dad was standing in front of the open patio doors. "The D-Day game; it's come, Jack. It's time for us to liberate Europe."

Jack and Finn ran towards the house. Dad had been away all weekend training with the Army Reserves, something he did several weekends a year, making Jack extremely proud. His dad was a soldier! And now that he was home, Dad would be able to tell Jack everything he'd been up to.

But first they had a new video game to play.