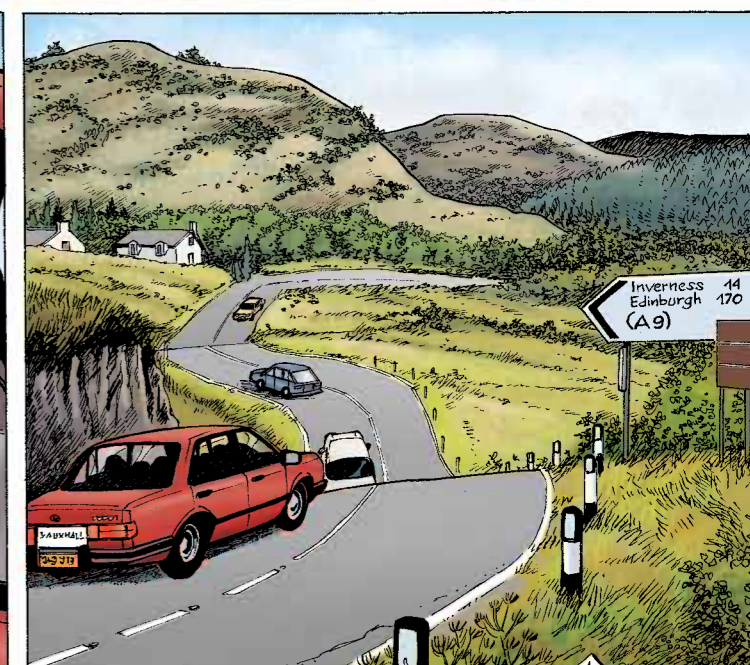
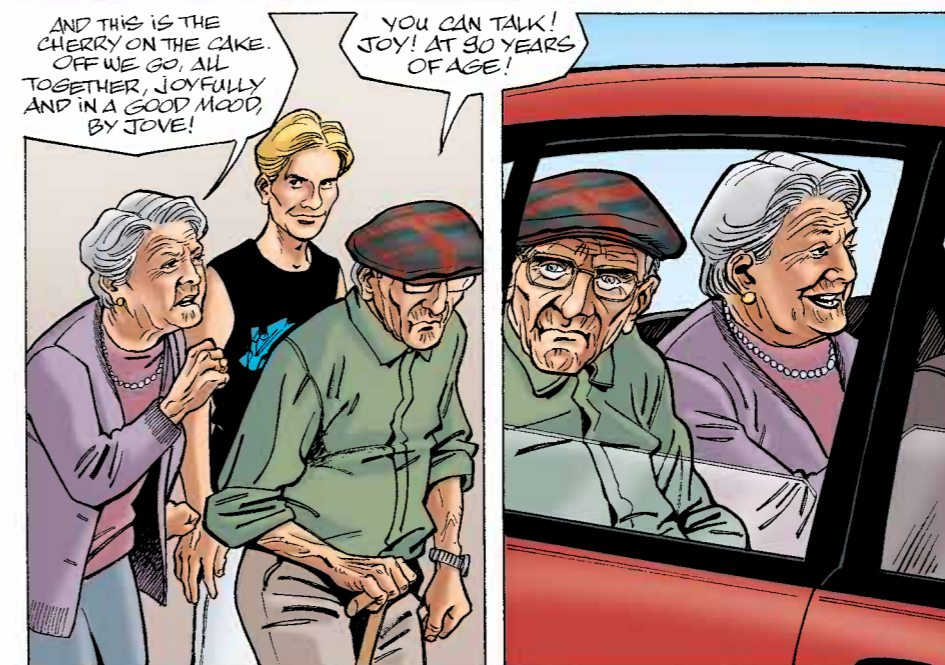
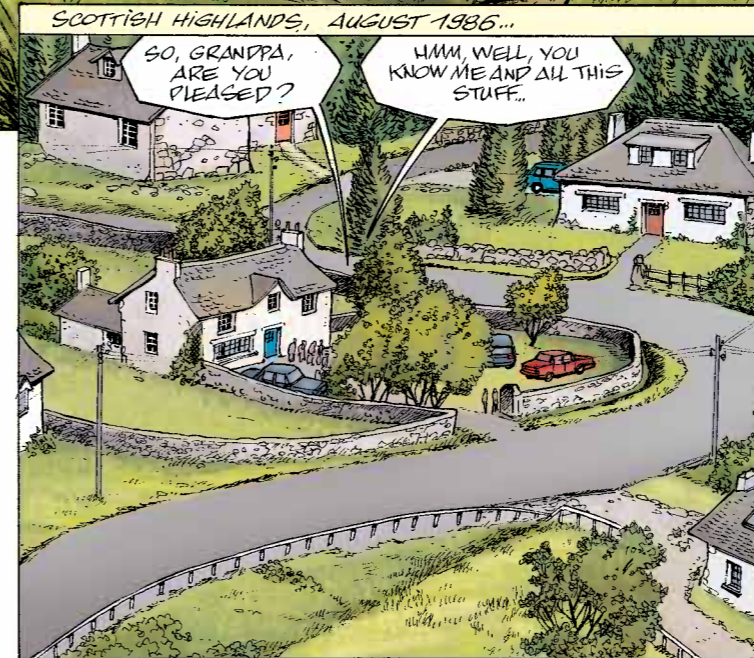
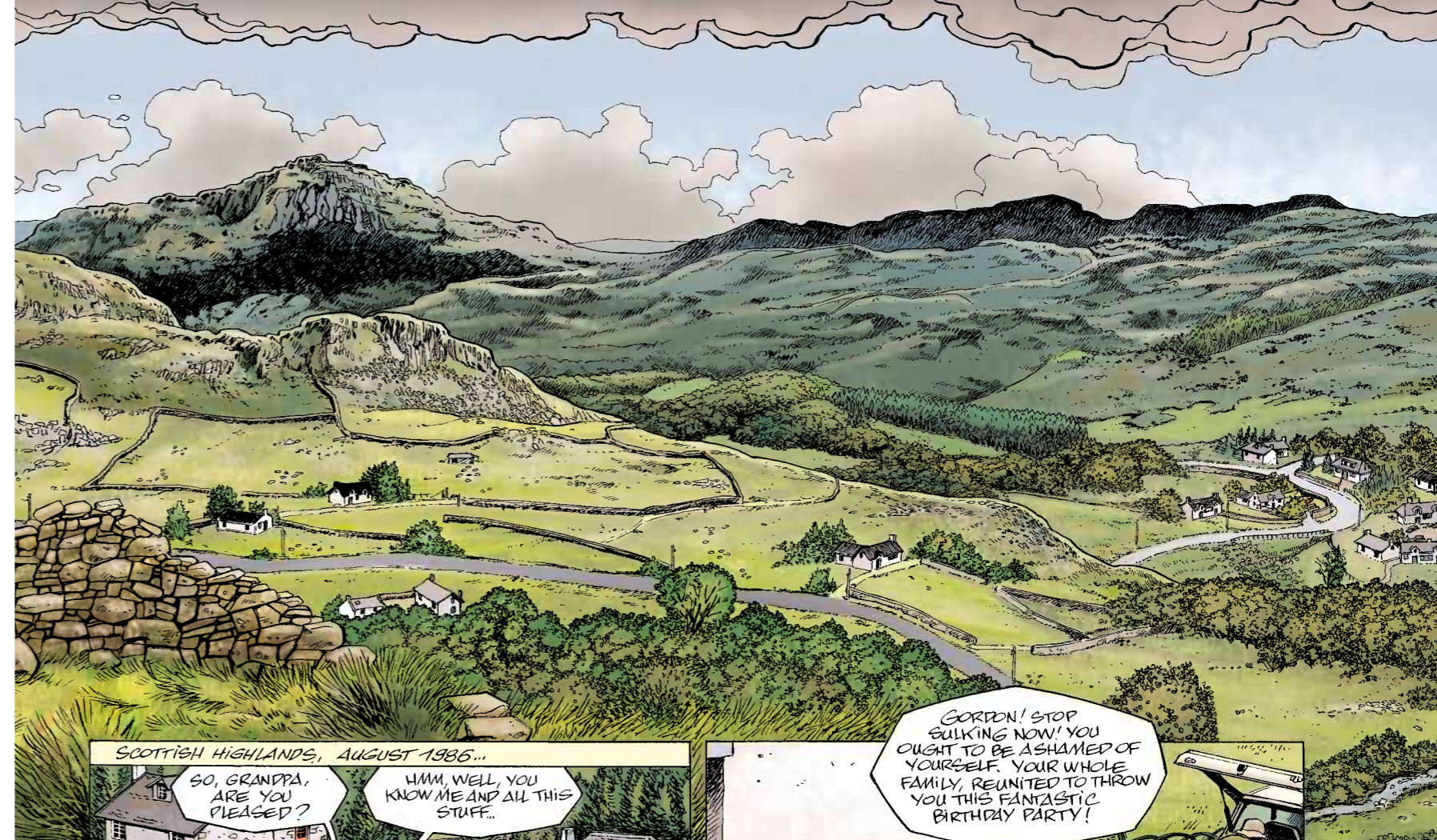


YPRES MEMORIES

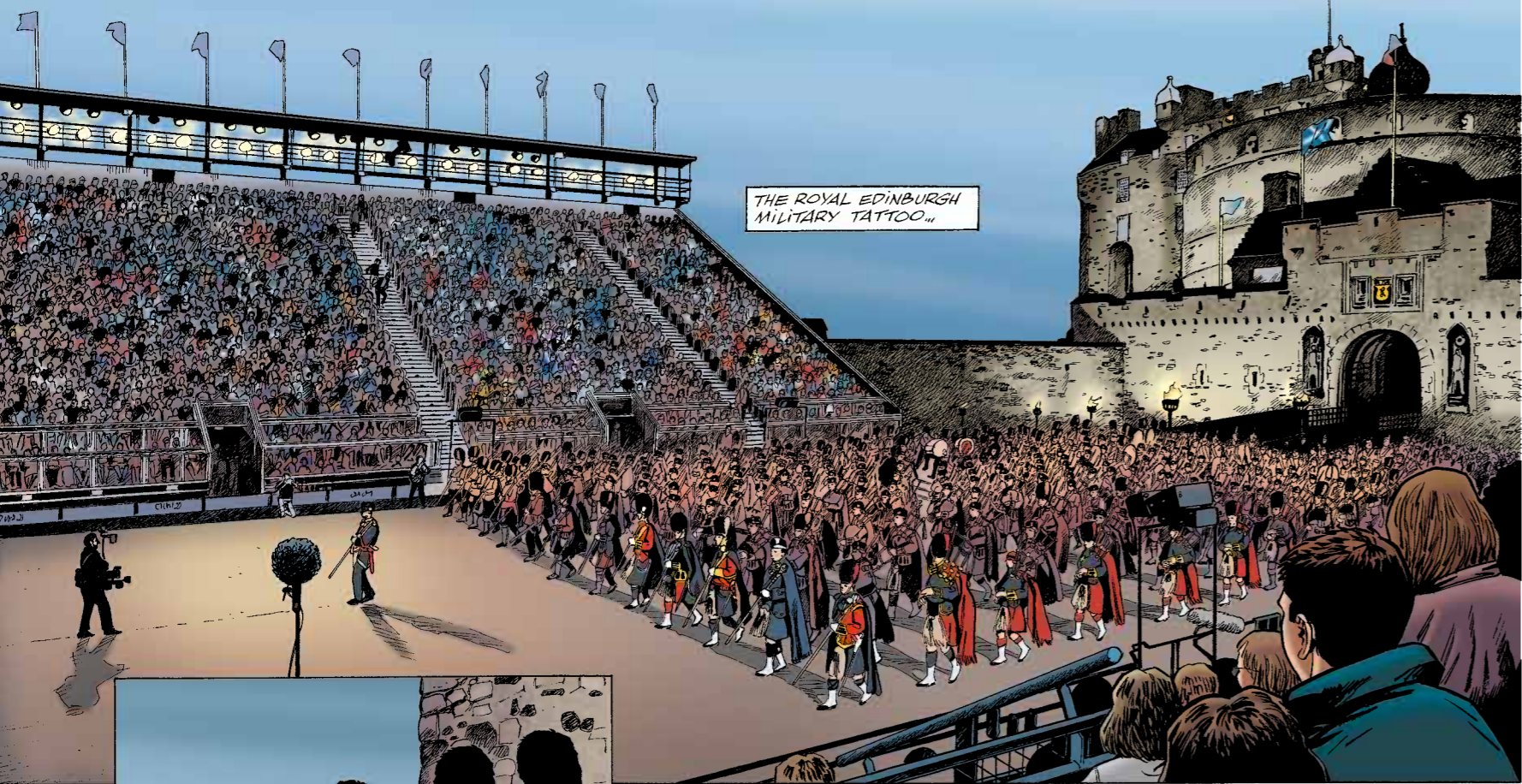


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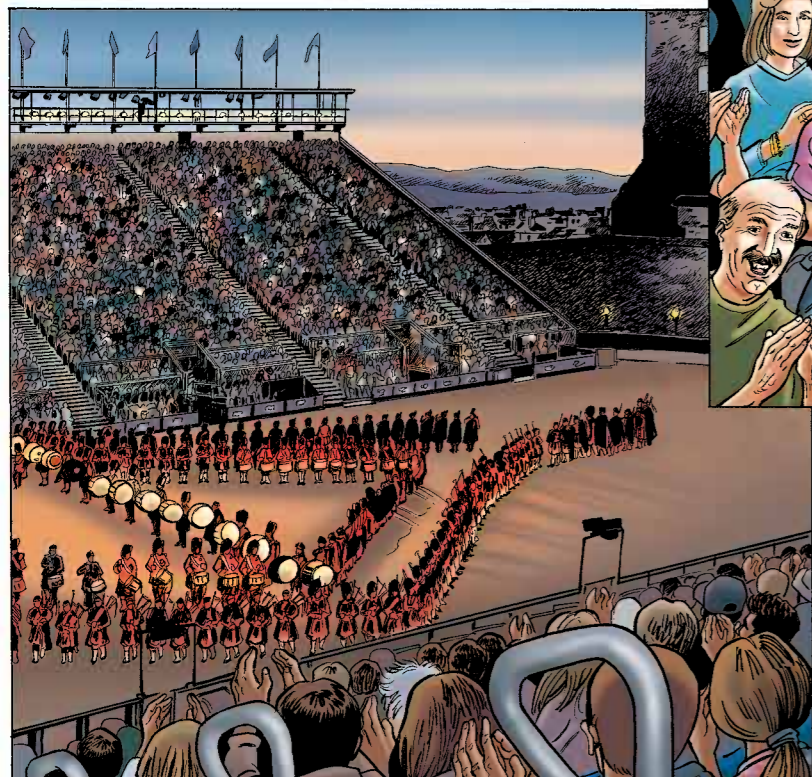


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THE ROYAL EDINBURGH MILITARY TATTOO



YPRES SECTOR, OCTOBER 1914...



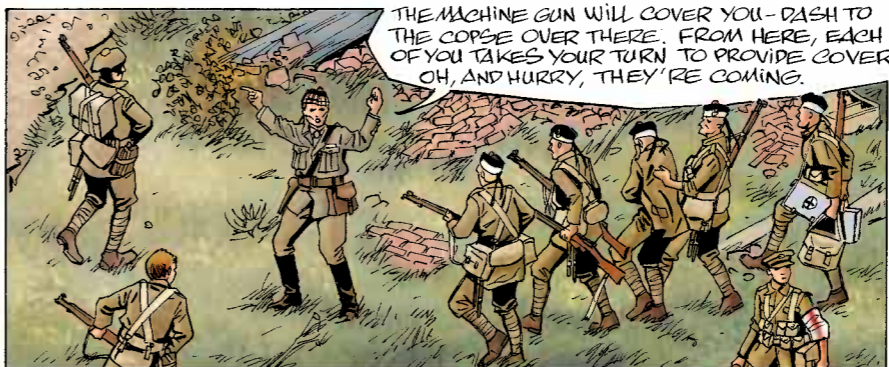
I'M DRAWING ANOTHER BLANK, HOW LONG HAS IT BEEN GOING ON FOR? THE BAGPIPES RING OUT FOR OUR ASSEMBLY; THEY BRING ME BACK TO EARTH. I'VE GONE PAST THE LIMITS OF EXHAUSTION.

THAT'S THREE DAYS NOW THAT WE'VE BEEN FIGHTING NONSTOP, PRACTICALLY WITHOUT EATING OR SLEEPING. ALL I CAN DO IS PULL THE TRIGGER ON MY LEE ENFIELD RIFLE, TO SHOOT OVER AND OVER IN THE DIRECTION SCREAMED BY SGT. HIGGINS.



GORDON, MOVE IT, WE'RE ADVANCING.

WE'RE NOT STRUGGLING FOR CARTRIDGES, THAT'S FOR SURE. EACH OF US IS FIRING OFF UP TO FOO A DAY. I DON'T EVEN KNOW IF I HIT ANY KRAUTS, BUT I SHOULD THINK I DID, LOOKING AT THE SHEER NUMBER OF BODIES STREWN AROUND THE PLACE. WHAT A MASSACRE.



THE MACHINE GUN WILL COVER YOU - DASH TO THE CORPSE OVER THERE. FROM HERE, EACH OF YOU TAKES YOUR TURN TO PROVIDE COVER. OH, AND HURRY, THEY'RE COMING.

A LITTLE LATER I REALISED THAT MY COUSIN TIM WAS AMONGST THE INJURED. WHAT A COWARD I HAD BEEN. I'D NEVER BE ABLE TO FACE AUNT GINNIE AGAIN, IF I EVER GOT HOME.

BUT SARG, WHAT ABOUT THE INJURED? ARE WE LEAVING THEM BEHIND?

WE'VE NO CHOICE, THE PRISONERS WILL LOOK AFTER THEM, I HOPE. COME ON, LET'S GO.



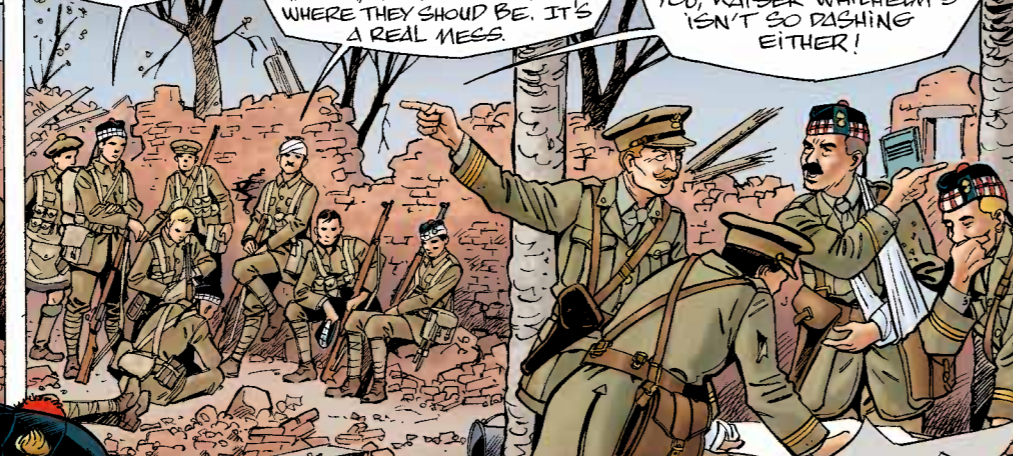
FOR A FEW MOMENTS THINGS SETTLE, AND IT'S STRANGE THE FEELING OF CALM. THE OFFICERS, WELL, THE ONES THAT ARE LEFT TRY TO RE-ORGANISE THIS MESS.



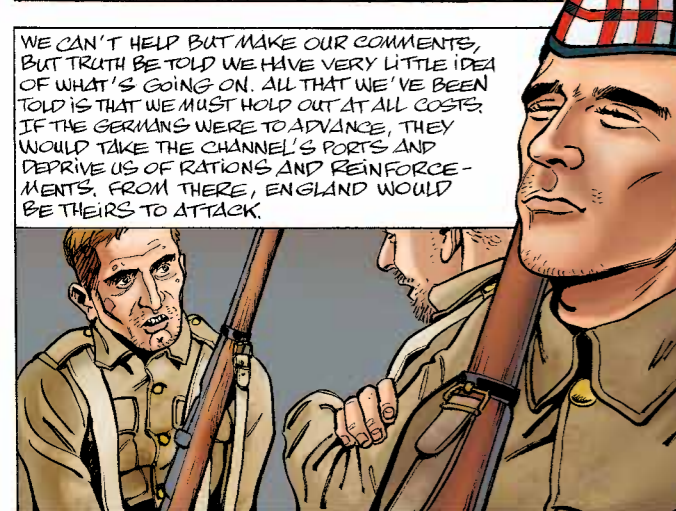
IT SEEMS THAT THEY'RE COMPLETELY OUT OF THEIR DEPTH!

WELL, THE REMAINING UNITS ARE DECIMATED AND MIXED UP! THEIR ORDERS AREN'T COMING THROUGH, AT LEAST NOT FROM WHERE THEY SHOULD BE. IT'S A REAL MESS.

AHH, IT'S IN FINE FETTLE, KING GEORGE'S GLORIOUS ARMY! MIND YOU, KAISER WILHELM'S ISN'T SO PASHING EITHER!



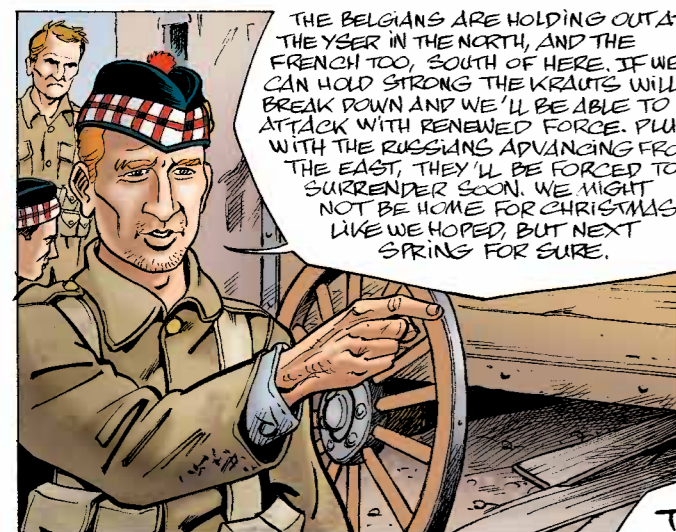
WE CAN'T HELP BUT MAKE OUR COMMENTS, BUT TRUTH BE TOLD WE HAVE VERY LITTLE IDEA OF WHAT'S GOING ON. ALL THAT WE'VE BEEN TOLD IS THAT WE MUST HOLD OUT AT ALL COSTS. IF THE GERMANS WERE TO ADVANCE, THEY WOULD TAKE THE CHANNEL'S PORTS AND DEPRIVE US OF RATIONS AND REINFORCEMENTS. FROM THERE, ENGLAND WOULD BE THEIRS TO ATTACK.



TRUE ENOUGH, SINCE THEIR DEFEAT AT THE MARNE IN SEPTEMBER THE GERMANS HAVE CHANGED THEIR PLAN. AS THEY WERE UNABLE TO TAKE PARIS, THEIR NEW OBJECTIVE IS TO GO OVER THE TOP IN THE NORTH, TAKING DUNKERQUE AND CALAIS. THE END OF THE WAR WILL BE PLAYED OUT THERE.



THE BELGIANS ARE HOLDING OUT AT THE YSER IN THE NORTH, AND THE FRENCH TOO, SOUTH OF HERE. IF WE CAN HOLD STRONG THE KRAUTS WILL BREAK DOWN AND WE'LL BE ABLE TO ATTACK WITH RENEWED FORCE. PLUS WITH THE RUSSIANS ADVANCING FROM THE EAST, THEY'LL BE FORCED TO SURRENDER SOON. WE MIGHT NOT BE HOME FOR CHRISTMAS LIKE WE HOPED, BUT NEXT SPRING FOR SURE.



WELL, WELL, WELL YOU SEEM TO BE WELL INFORMED WHERE D'YOU GET ALL THAT FROM?

I'M A JOURNALIST. I ENROLLED A MONTH BACK, AND ARRIVED THREE DAYS AGO.



A ROOKIE THAT KNOWS IT ALL! HE'S DELUDED! TO THINK, I'VE BEEN OUT HERE FOR SEVEN WEEKS WITHOUT A DAY OFF!



THE RATIONS ARE IN LADS! GRUB'S UP!



YESSS!

OVER HERE!

GET IN HERE!

Mmmmm!

THE WAY WE WOLFED DOWN THE SUPPLIES THAT HAD JUST BEEN BROUGHT TO US MADE ME THINK OF MANY THINGS, BUT NOT A GROUP OF HUMAN BEINGS EATING A MEAL.



IT'S NOT THE FIRST TIME I'VE ASKED MYSELF IF WE CAN STILL BE CLASSED AS HUMAN BEINGS.



OR, WORSE STILL, IS IT WAR THAT HAS SHOWN ME WHAT HUMANS REALLY ARE?



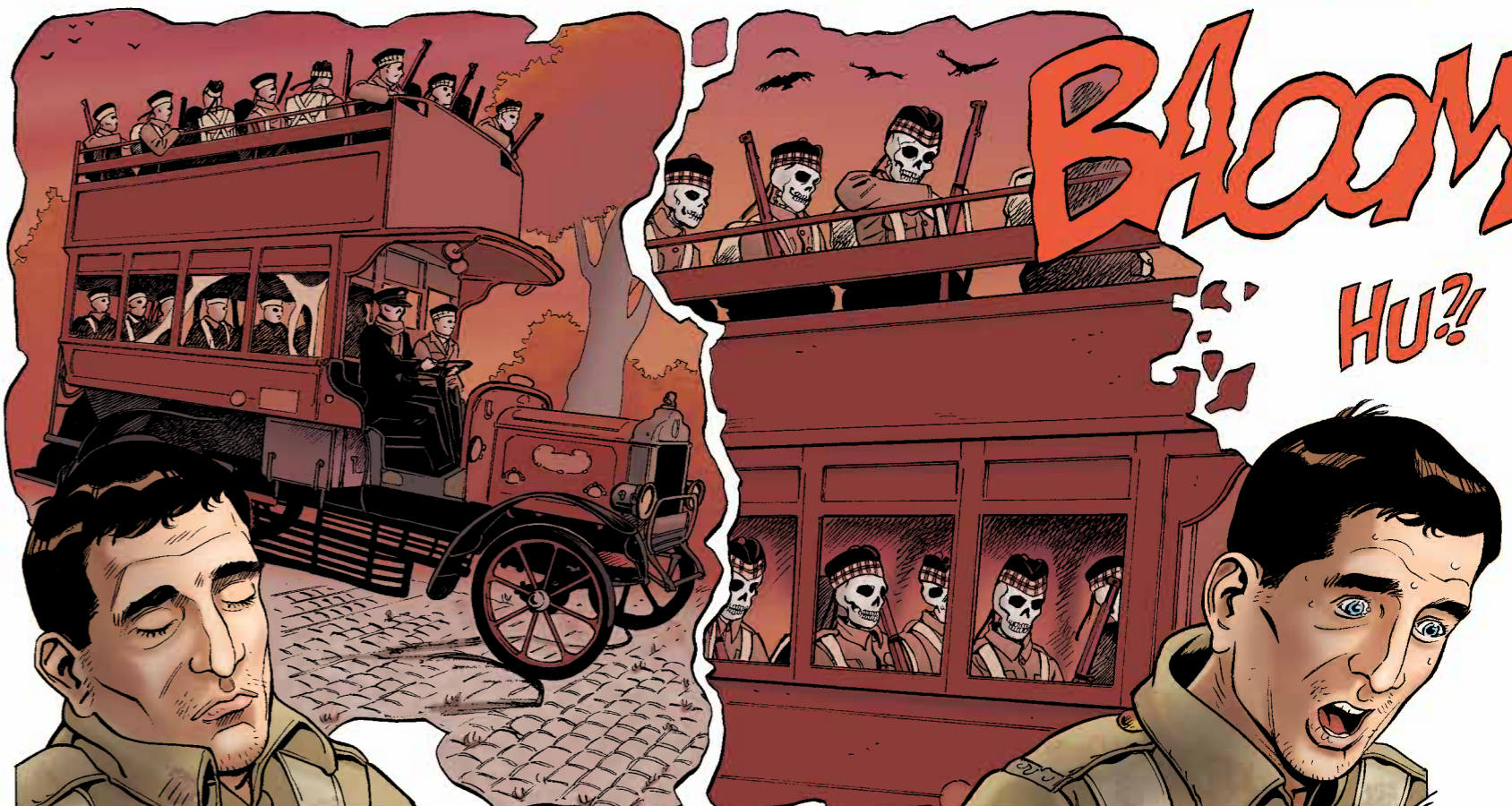
SET, HIGGINS WOULD SAY, 'YOU POSE SOME UNUSUAL QUESTIONS FOR A GUY OF YOUR AGE.'



NOW YOU MUST GET SOME SLEEP LADS, REGAIN YOUR STRENGTH.

ERRR, YES SARG!

IF IT'S AN ORDER...



IT'S STARTING AGAIN! SHELLS ARE RAINING DOWN. TAKE COVER! TAKE COVER!

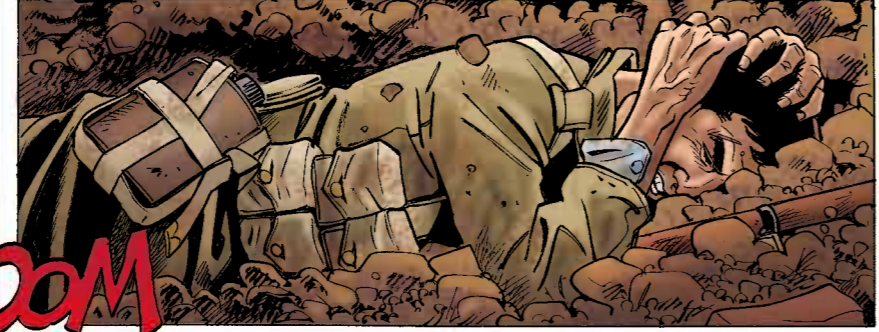
BROOM BOOM

AND THEY'VE GOT GREAT AIM, THE SCOUNDRELS!

BLA BOOM



WE KEEP AS QUIET AS WE CAN, WAITING FOR THE STORM TO PASS. WE KNOW THAT THE KRAUTS' ASSAULT WILL FOLLOW...



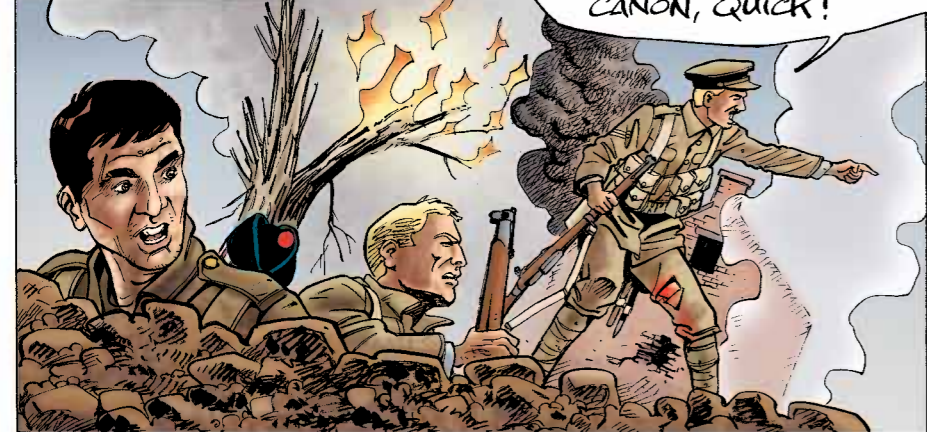
THEY SAY THAT TWO SHELLS NEVER FALL IN THE SAME SPOT, SO A GREAT BIG, HOT, STINKING SHELL HOLE IS HIGHLY SOUGHT AFTER.



GOOD GOD, IT'S STOPPED AS BRUTALLY AS IT BEGAN! THIS IS NOT GOOD...

THE HUNS ARE UPON US! BAYONETS TO THE CANON, QUICK!

DAMN, THIS'LL SORT ITSELF OUT, BODY BY BODY. IT'S MY FIRST TIME...



GOOD GOD, I PLANTED MY BAYONET IN THE BELLY OF A MAN. IT'S A HELL OF A LOT EASIER THAN IN THOSE SACS OF SAWDUST. BLOODY USELESS TRAINING!





A REAL MIRACLE! THE REINFORCEMENTS ARRIVED JUST ON TIME, FOR ME AND A HANDFUL OF OTHERS.



DO YOU REALIZE THAT WE OWE OUR LIVES TO THE ENGLISH?

MY GRANDPA'S NEVER GOING TO BELIEVE ME WHEN I TELL HIM THAT! HAHAHA!

I'M ALREADY A VETERAN! SINCE AUGUST, THAT'S THE SIXTH SET OF REINFORCEMENTS RECEIVED BY MY REGIMENT. IF IT CARRIES ON LIKE THAT, THE ENTIRETY OF BRITISH YOUTH IS GOING TO PASS THROUGH. IS THIS WAR GOING TO END BECAUSE OF A LACK OF TROOPS?

FINALLY WE GET THE CHANCE TO REGROUP, AND WE'RE SENT TO THE BACK. NEW UNITS ARE BEING PUT TOGETHER WITH THE REINFORCEMENTS, UNDER THE ORDERS OF OFFICERS FRESH FROM SANDHURST. IT'S LOOKING PROMISING...



WHILST BRINGING UP THE REAR WE SEE THE SAME CHAOS AS ON THE FRONTLINES - A BIT OF EVERYTHING.



I HEAR THE BELGIANS HAVE BROKEN ALL THE EMBANKMENTS AND THE ENTIRE YSER PLAIN IS FLOODED?



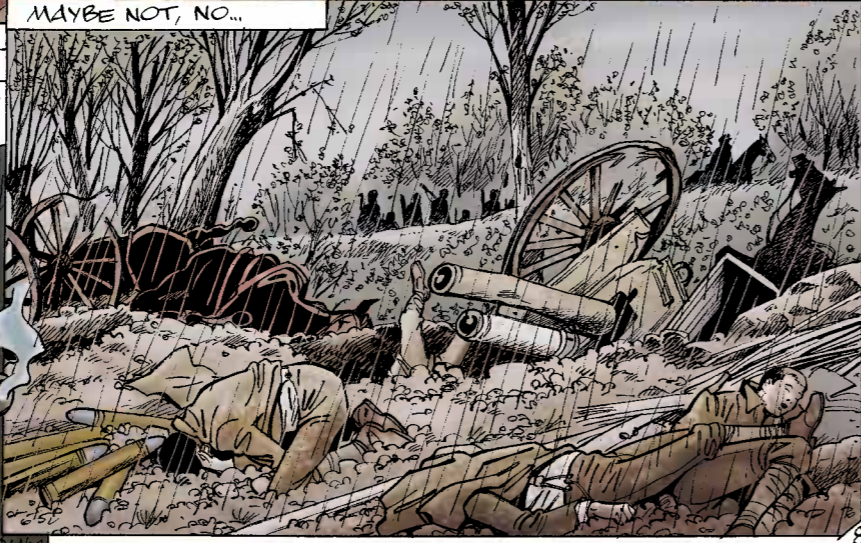
INDEED, THE KRAUTS 'LL NEVER GET THROUGH THERE. THEY'RE GOING TO COME AT US WITH FULL FORCE.

FINALLY, WE SEE OUR OWN ARTILLERY...

I HOPE THEY DO AS MUCH DAMAGE TO THE KRAUTS AS THE KRAUTS HAVE DONE TO US!



NOW, WE'RE TALKING! THERE'S A PILE OF HIDEOUTS!



MAYBE NOT, NO...



A BURNING WINDMILL AND A CRYING FAMILY - IT WAS OUR BOYS THAT SET THE FIRE AND BROUGHT IN THE MILLER FOR HAVING USED THE SAILES OF HIS WINDMILL TO COMMUNICATE INFORMATION TO THE ENEMY.

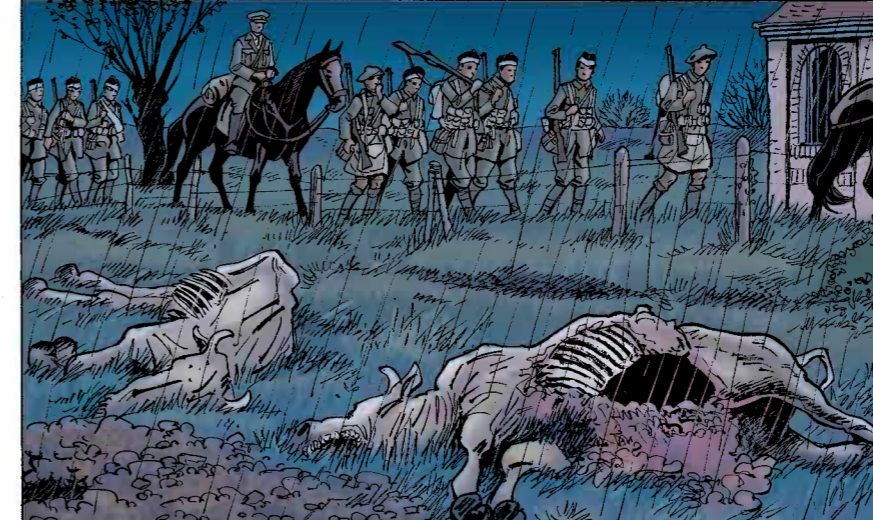
I KNOW THAT I SHOULD NEVER DOUBT THE MILITARY AUTHORITIES BUT I'M STRUGGLING TO BELIEVE THAT THESE POOR PEOPLE ARE TRAITORS.



THE JOURNALIST PILED IT ON BY TELLING US THE STORY OF A VICAR, KILLED BY FIRING SQUAD FOR CARRYING SOLDIERS' BOOTS. THE DECEPTION OF SPIES KNOWS NO LIMITS.



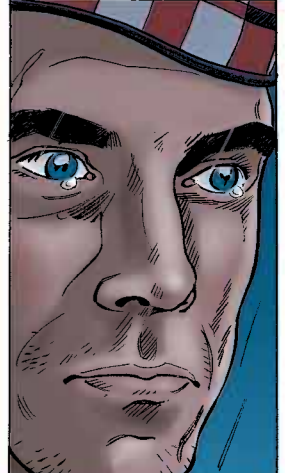
COW CARCASSES ROTTING IN THE FIELDS BROUGHT ME TO NEW LOWS. I WAS ENVELOPED IN AN INFINITE SADNESS, AND I BIT INTO MY LIPS TO STOP MYSELF FROM BREAKING DOWN INTO TEARS...



HOW WILL IT END? I WANT TO GO HOME. I'D NEVER DARE TO ADMIT IT BUT ALL I WANT IS TO BE IN MY MOTHER'S ARMS.



I'M 18 - I THOUGHT I WAS A MAN, BUT I WASN'T READY TO CONFRONT ALL OF THIS...



WHAT'S MORE, THE JOURNO ASIDE, THERE'S LITTLE CHATTER AMONGST THE RANKS. HAVING HAD THE TIME TO THINK, I'M SURE THAT I'M NOT ALONE IN HAVING DESTRUCTIVE, DARK THOUGHTS.



SEEING THE INDIAN LANCERS, CHEERS ME UP SOMEWHAT. THEY'RE PROUD AND COURAGEOUS; IT'S REASSURING TO KNOW THEY'RE ON OUR SIDE. I WOULDN'T WANT TO RUB THEM UP THE WRONG WAY! THESE COLONIAL TROOPS GIVE US A REAL ADVANTAGE.

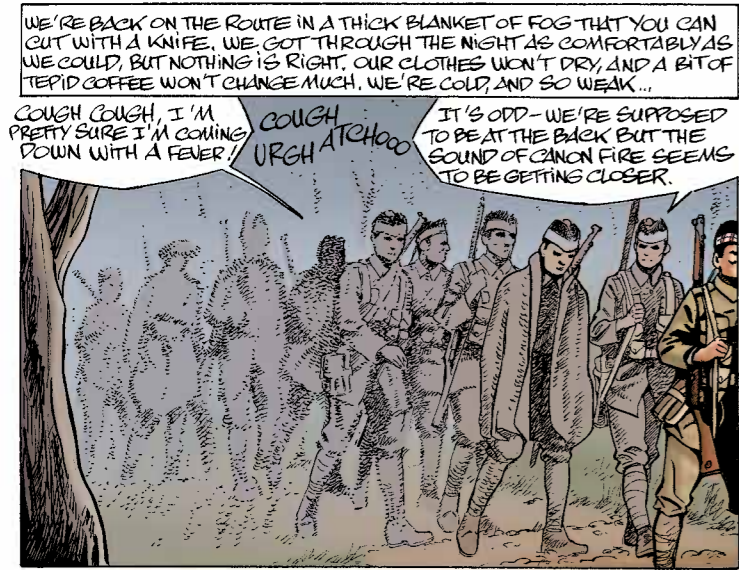


AGAIN, THE JOURNO HAS SOMETHING TO SAY ON THE SUBJECT:

SEROY KHURADIP KHAN IS THE FIRST INDIAN TO RECEIVE THE VICTORIA CROSS FOR EXCEPTIONAL BRAVERY IN THE FACE OF THE ENEMY.



(*) AWARDED BY KING GEORGE V, IN DECEMBER 1914, IN PERSON.

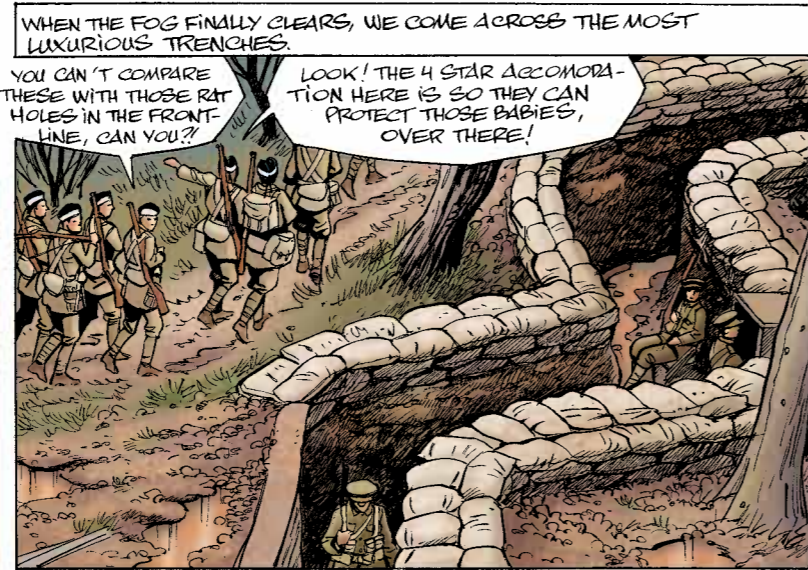


WE'RE BACK ON THE ROUTE IN A THICK BLANKET OF FOG THAT YOU CAN CUT WITH A KNIFE. WE GOT THROUGH THE NIGHT AS COMFORTABLY AS WE COULD, BUT NOTHING IS RIGHT. OUR CLOTHES WON'T DRY, AND A BIT OF TEPID COFFEE WON'T CHANGE MUCH. WE'RE COLD, AND SO WEAK...

COUGH COUGH, I'M PRETTY SURE I'M COMING DOWN WITH A FEVER!

COUGH URGH ATCHOO

IT'S ODD - WE'RE SUPPOSED TO BE AT THE BACK BUT THE SOUND OF CANNON FIRE SEEMS TO BE GETTING CLOSER.



WHEN THE FOG FINALLY CLEARS, WE COME ACROSS THE MOST LUXURIOUS TRENCHES.

YOU CAN'T COMPARE THESE WITH THOSE RAT HOLES IN THE FRONT-LINE, CAN YOU?

LOOK! THE 4 STAR ACCOMMODATION HERE IS SO THEY CAN PROTECT THOSE BABIES, OVER THERE!

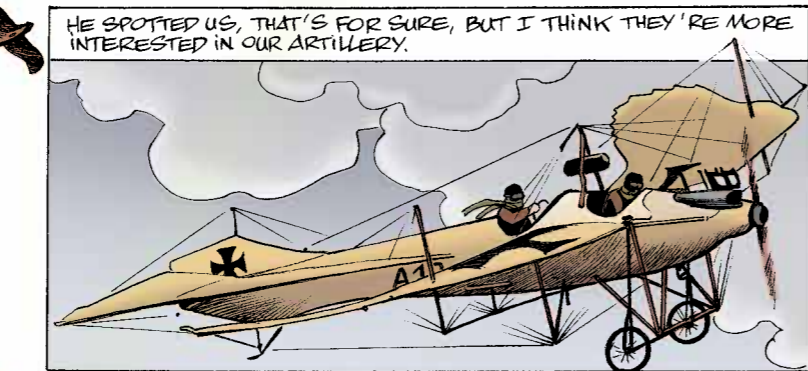
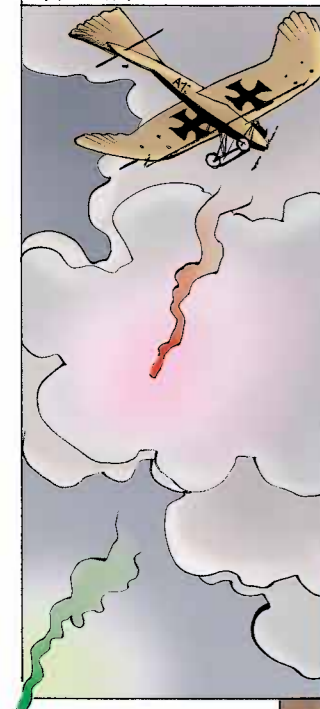


A LOAD OF WELL-CAMOUFLAGED HOWITZERS.

GET DOWN! TAUBE!

HE DROPS TWO FLARE ROCKETS RIGHT BY OUR CANNONS.

AND THEN ALL HELL BREAKS LOOSE, WITH THE GERMANS THROWING EVERYTHING THEY HAVE AT US!



HE SPOTTED US, THAT'S FOR SURE, BUT I THINK THEY'RE MORE INTERESTED IN OUR ARTILLERY.



WE TRIED TO TAKE THE BIRD DOWN, BUT IN VAIN.



BRAAOM

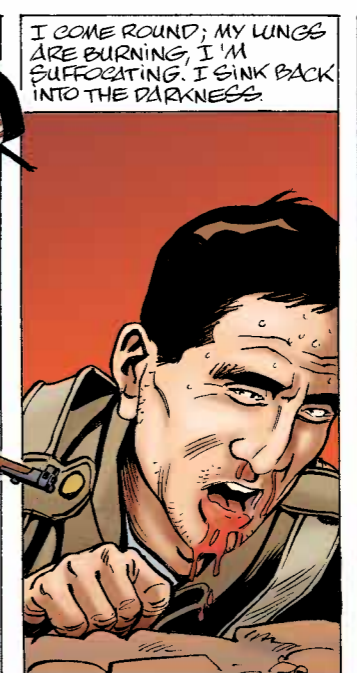
BLAOM

WE'VE GOT TO GET OUT OF HERE!



NAOOM

I TRY TO RUN BUT SWORDS OF FIRE SHOOT THROUGH MY CHEST AND THE PAIN IS UNBEARABLE. I SINK...



I COME ROUND; MY LUNGS ARE BURNING, I'M SUFFOCATING. I SINK BACK INTO THE DARKNESS.



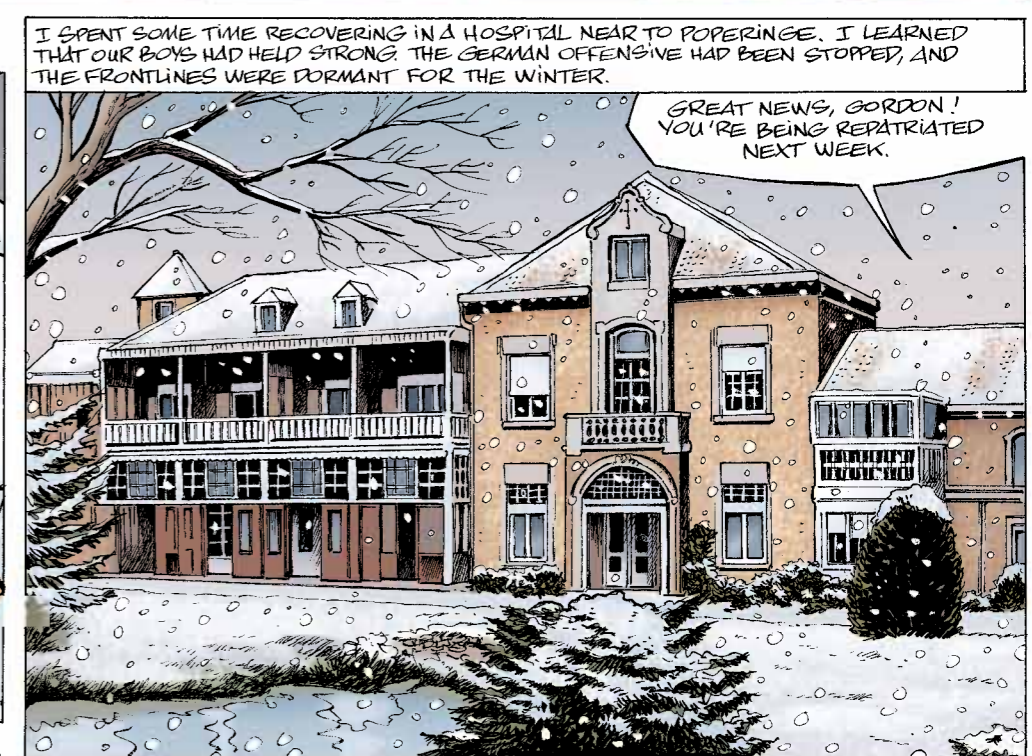
HOW MANY TIMES? I WAKE, NO MEMORIES, UNCONSCIOUS. WAKE, UNCONSCIOUS...



THEN, FINALLY: HELLO GORDON. YOU'VE COME BACK TO US THIS TIME.

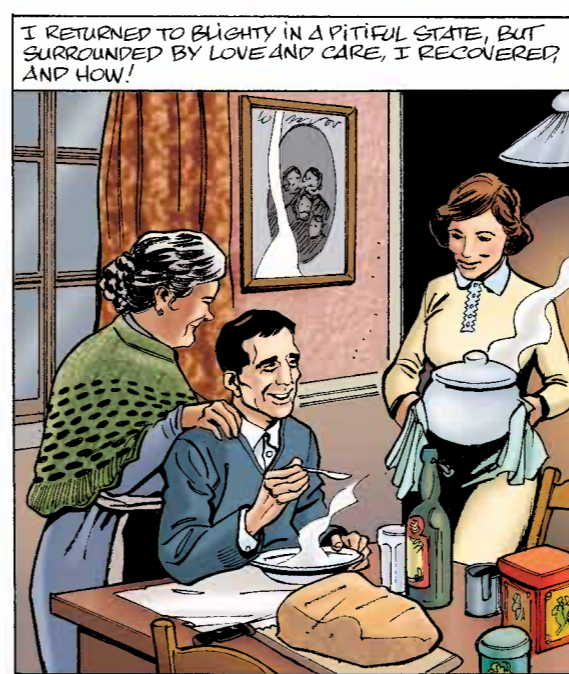
YOU'RE A REAL MIRACLE. THE DOCTORS HAD LITTLE HOPE, BUT YOU CLUNG ONTO LIFE. I PRAYED FOR YOU EVERY DAY.

THANK... YOU...

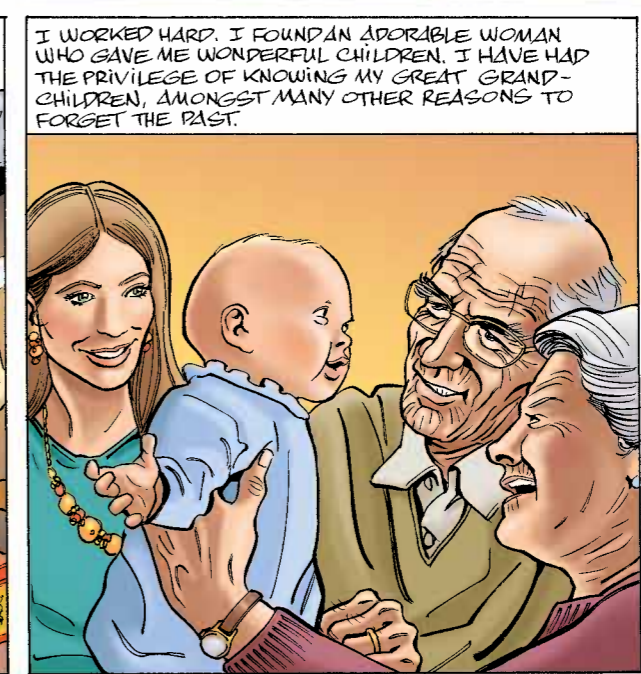


I SPENT SOME TIME RECOVERING IN A HOSPITAL NEAR TO POPERINGE. I LEARNED THAT OUR BOYS HAD HELD STRONG. THE GERMAN OFFENSIVE HAD BEEN STOPPED, AND THE FRONTLINES WERE DORMANT FOR THE WINTER.

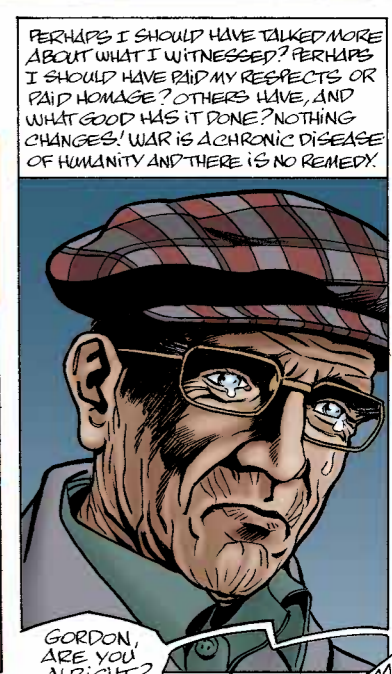
GREAT NEWS, GORDON! YOU'RE BEING REPATRIATED NEXT WEEK.



I RETURNED TO BLIGHTY IN A PITIFUL STATE, BUT SURROUNDED BY LOVE AND CARE, I RECOVERED, AND HOW!



I WORKED HARD. I FOUND AN ADORABLE WOMAN WHO GAVE ME WONDERFUL CHILDREN. I HAVE HAD THE PRIVILEGE OF KNOWING MY GREAT GRAND-CHILDREN, AMONGST MANY OTHER REASONS TO FORGET THE PAST.



PERHAPS I SHOULD HAVE TALKED MORE ABOUT WHAT I WITNESSED? PERHAPS I SHOULD HAVE PAID MY RESPECTS OR PAID HOMAGE? OTHERS HAVE, AND WHAT GOOD HAS IT DONE? NOTHING CHANGES! WAR IS A CHRONIC DISEASE OF HUMANITY AND THERE IS NO REMEDY.

GORDON, ARE YOU ALRIGHT?



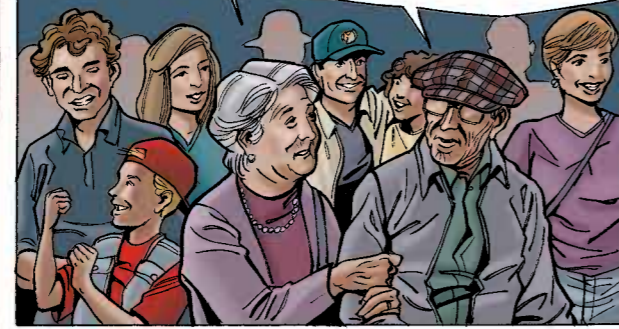
EDINBURGH, AUGUST 1986...

YEAH, YES... I'M ALRIGHT.

I NEVER THOUGHT THAT AFTER ALL THESE YEARS...

ME NEITHER! DON'T WORRY, I WAS HAPPY TO REVISIT THE PAST AND FIND SOME OLD FRIENDS.

IT FEELS ALMOST LIKE THEY HAVN'T ALL BEEN KILLED IN YPRES, BACK IN 1914.



YOU'VE NEVER REALLY LIKE TALKING ABOUT ALL THAT, HAVE YOU?

WELL, OTHERS HAVE ALWAYS TALKED FOR YOU! YOUR COUSIN TIM, FOR EXAMPLE! HE NEVER MISSED AN OPPORTUNITY TO TELL HIS WAR-STORIES, THAT ONE!

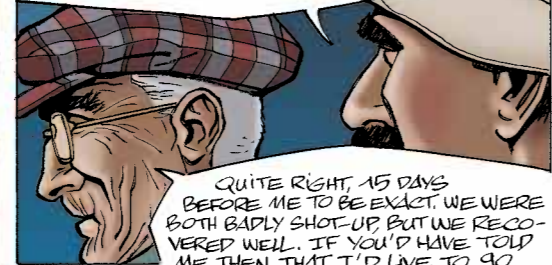


TRUE, TRUE, I SOONER WANTED TO TRY TO FORGET BUT...

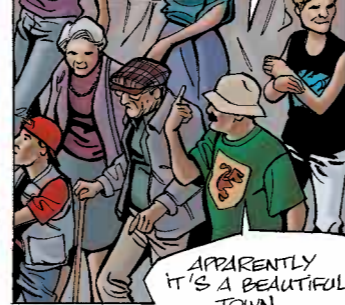
YEAH...

TRUE, HE MUST HAVE TOLD ME TWENTY TIMES ABOUT HIS TIME AS A PRISONER OF WAR - HOW HE WAS BADLY INJURED AND THE GERMANS TREATED HIM AND RELEASED HIM A FEW DAYS LATER, DURING ONE OF OUR COUNTER-ATTACKS. A BIT BANAL, NO? HE CAME BACK TO THE COUNTRY BEFORE YOU DIDN'T HE?

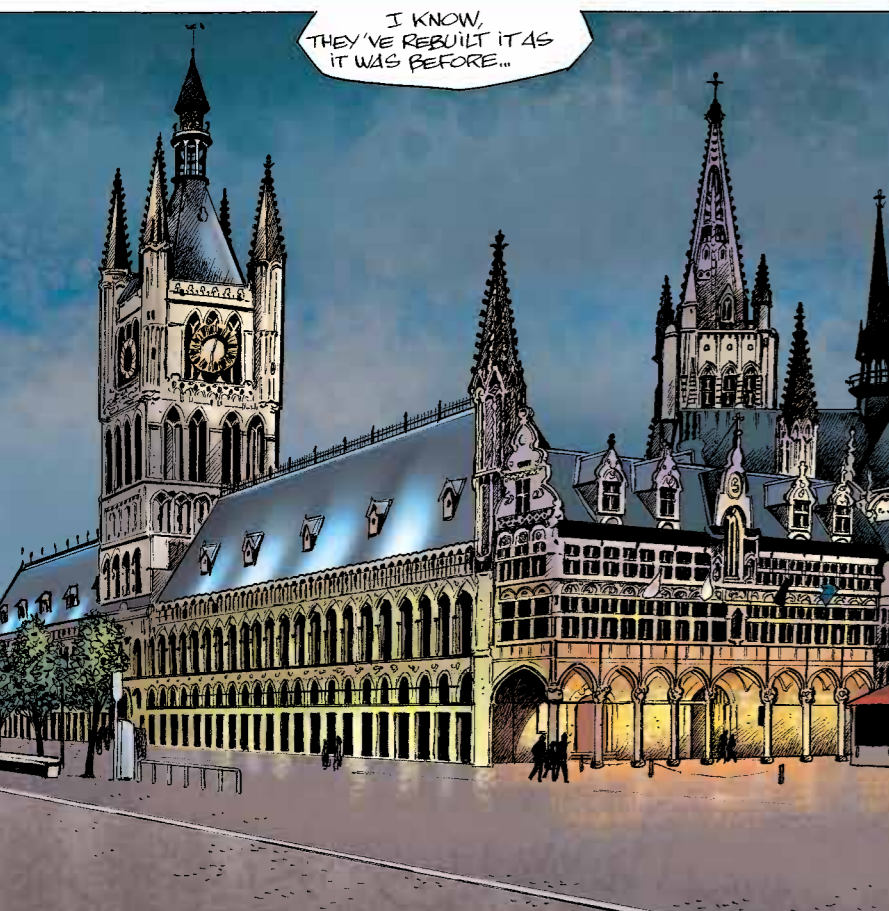
PLUS, IT'S NOT OVER YET. THERE'S STILL PLENTY OF TIME FOR YOU TO VISIT YPRES. ARE YOU SURE YOU DON'T FANCY GOING BACK, JUST ONCE?



QUITE RIGHT, 15 DAYS BEFORE ME TO BE EXACT. WE WERE BOTH BADLY SHOT-UP, BUT WE RECOVERED WELL... IF YOU'D HAVE TOLD ME THEN THAT I'D LIVE TO GO...



APPARENTLY IT'S A BEAUTIFUL TOWN...



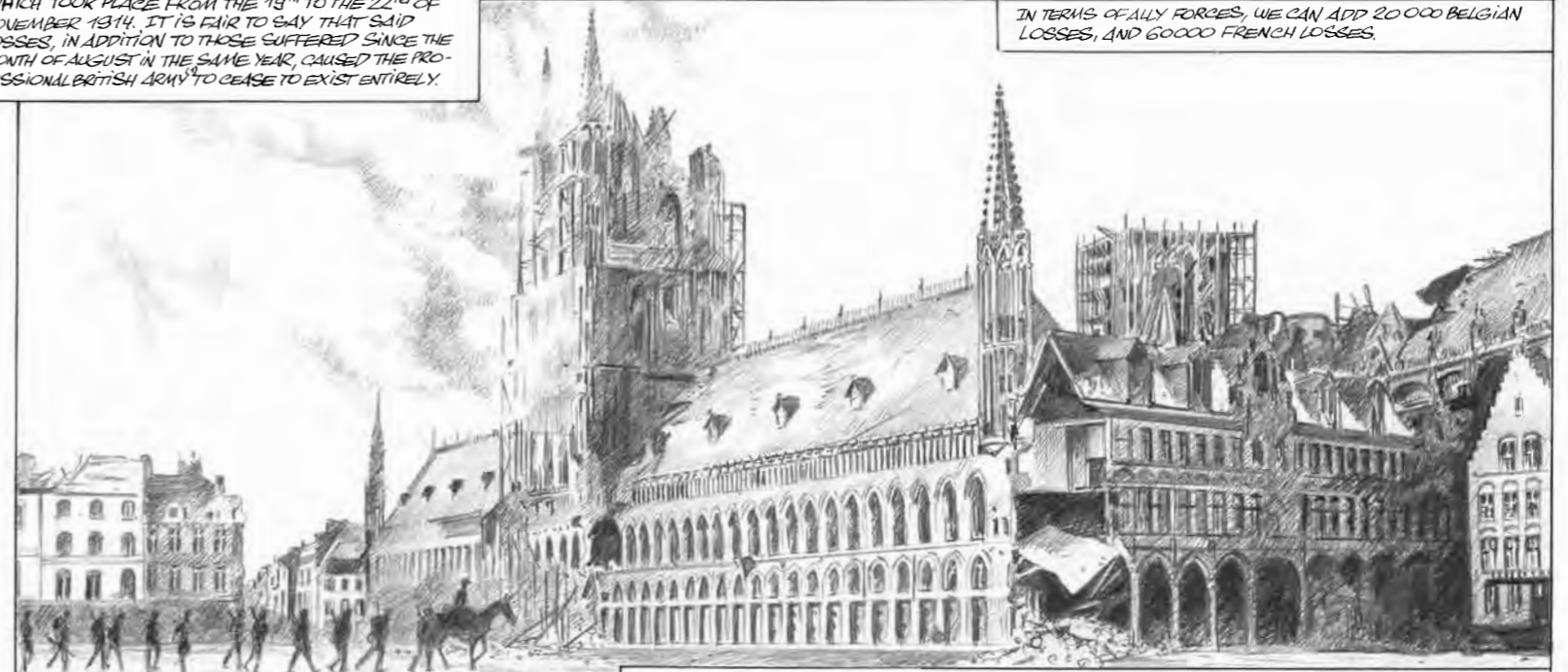
I KNOW, THEY'VE REBUILT IT AS IT WAS BEFORE...

... BUT WITH A FEW MORE CEMETERIES.



GORDON IS ONE OF SOME 60,000 LOSSES SUFFERED BY THE BEF DURING THE 'FIRST BATTLE OF YPRES', WHICH TOOK PLACE FROM THE 19TH TO THE 22ND OF NOVEMBER 1914. IT IS FAIR TO SAY THAT SAID LOSSES, IN ADDITION TO THOSE SUFFERED SINCE THE MONTH OF AUGUST IN THE SAME YEAR, CAUSED THE PROFESSIONAL BRITISH ARMY TO CEASE TO EXIST ENTIRELY.

IN TERMS OF ALLY FORCES, WE CAN ADD 20,000 BELGIAN LOSSES, AND 60,000 FRENCH LOSSES.



EVEN IF, AT TIMES, IT SEEMED IMPOSSIBLE, THE ALLIED FORCES HELD. THEY ACHIEVED A STRATEGIC VICTORY. IT WAS A BITTER AND COSTLY VICTORY, BUT A VICTORY ALL THE SAME.

(1) NICKNAMED 'THE CONTEMPTIBLE LITTLE ARMY' BY KAISER WILHELM II.

THE GERMANS NICKNAMED THIS BATTLE 'DER KINDERMORD BEI YPERN' (THE MASSACRE OF THE INNOCENT AT YPRES.) THEY USED ALL OF THEIR AVAILABLE FORCE IN THE MELEE, INCLUDING A LARGE NUMBER OF INEXPERIENCED RECRUITS, IN AN ATTEMPT TO BREAK THROUGH.



THE OFFICIAL COUNT OF GERMAN LOSSES IS 135,000, BUT MANY PEOPLE SPECULATE THAT THE REAL NUMBER HAS BEEN HALVED.

REGARDLESS, THE MOST IMPORTANT LESSON OF THE BATTLE, ONE THAT WOULD FAIL TO BE REMEMBERED BY THE ENTIRETY OF THE BELLIGERENTS, WAS THIS: THE DEFENSIVE PREVAILED OVER THE OFFENSIVE.

AFTER A PERIOD OF RELATIVE INACTIVITY DURING THE WINTER 14-15, THE ALLIED FORCES REGROUPED DURING THE FOLLOWING SPRING. WARTIME WOULD SEE 5 BATTLES OF YPRES, ALL EQUALLY BLOODY AND STRATEGICALLY INEFFICIENT, DURING THIS TIME THE REGION WOULD PAY A HEAVY TOLL.



THE BEAUTIFUL TOWN OF YPRES AND ITS SURROUNDINGS, DISCOVERED BY GORDON ON HIS ARRIVAL IN FLANDERS, IS NOTHING MORE THAN FIELDS OF RUIN AND DESOLATION WHEN HENRY ARRIVES FOR HIS TURN...