

## **Tommies**

**7<sup>th</sup> October 1914**

Series 1 Episode 1

By Michael Chaplin

### **Commentator**

**Mickey Bliss**, Sergeant, Signals Section, Lahore Division, Indian Army

**Horace Greenwood**, 24, Sergeant, Signals Section, 2<sup>nd</sup> Division, British Expeditionary Force (BEF). Formerly a Post Office Engineer from Cheshunt.

**Maberley Dunster**, Lieutenant, B Troop, 15<sup>th</sup> King's Hussars. Attached to 2<sup>nd</sup> Division, BEF (and his horse, Bucephalus)

**Walter Oddy**, Sergeant, Signals Section, 2<sup>nd</sup> Div, BEF. Born in Hull, now lives in London. (He and his wife Gladys moved away to London after Walter was involved in anti-German rioting at the outbreak of war.)

born on Clydeside, daughter of a shipyard plater, now a nun in the convent in Beaulne

**Billy Seymour**, Private, 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion, Durham Light Infantry

**Alphonse Minet**, farmer, Aisne valley / **Hussars Sergeant**

**SCENE 1                      EXT. FIELD, NORTHERN FRANCE                      DAY**

**FX: THE SONG OF A NIGHTINGALE, FOLLOWED BY A FEMALE VOICE...**

**1. COMMENTATOR:**    A patch of earth in northern France. In the half-light of dawn a nightingale sings its final aria from the edge of an ancient wood.

**FX: A PAIR OF HORSES PULLING A PLOUGH, DRIVEN BY A FARMER, ALPHONSE MINET.**

**2. ALPHONSE:**            Allez, allez!

**3. COMMENTATOR:**                      rain, Alphonse Minet is ploughing the remnants of his wheat crop into the rich, loamy soil. The field slopes uphill to the wood. The sun rises. In this perfect day.

**4. ALPHONSE:**            À gauche, à gauche.

**FX: ALPHONSE TURNS THE HORSES. WE MIGHT BLEED IN THE TUNE OF GEORGE BUTTERWORTH VERSION OF IS MY TEAM PLOUGHING?....**

**1. COMMENTATOR: For 150 years the Minets have grown cereals for**





**1. COMMENTATOR: Sergeants Walter Oddy and Horace Greenwood**

**experience of conflict.**

**FX: AS MICKEY GETS OUT AND LIFTS THE HOOD, A TROOP OF HORSES CANTER TOWARDS THE LORRY, LED BY LIEUTENANT MABERLEY DUNSTER.**

2. DUNSTER: Morning, Sergeant! Problem?

3. MICKEY BLISS: Sir.

4. DUNSTER: That's it, you see, the average horse doesn't break down!

(LAUGHTER AND JEERS FROM DUNSTER'S MEN AS THEY PASS.)

5. MICKEY BLISS: Yes, just like your average lorry doesn't get shot from under you.

**FX: DUNSTER SUDDENLY WHEELS AND RETURNS TO MICKEY.**

6. GREENWOOD: Now you're for it! He heard you.

7. DUNSTER: Your name?

8. BLISS: Sergeant Michael Bliss, Signals Section, Lahore Division, Indian Army.

1. DUNSTER: Ah, Bliss! Don't suppose you've heard that one before.

2. MICKEY BLISS: If I'd a pound for every time, sir.

3. DUNSTER: Didn't know you chaps were over here already.

4. MICKEY BLISS: Everyone but me isn't, sir. On troopships in the Indian Ocean, last I heard. If you'll excuse me...

**5.COMMENTATOR: Unlike normal soldiers, signallers find themselves seconded to other units whenever and wherever**

6. DUNSTER: So I'm playing nursemaid to your operation today.

7. MICKEY BLISS: Lieutenant Dunster?

8. DUNSTER: It is he. Would you like a tow?

**9.COMMENTATOR: This proves unnecessary.**

**FX: (ENGINE COUGHS INTO LIFE)**

**Mickey Bliss is a consummate fixer.**

(IRONIC CHEERS FROM ODDY AND GREENWOOD)

**But not as skilled a map reader.**

1. MICKEY BLISS: Now then, where are we?
  
2. ODDY: Don't tell me you're lost.
  
3. **COMMENTATOR:** In fact the party is two miles north of the village of Bourg-et-Comin, which straddles the River Aisne and its accompanying Canal.
  
4. DUNSTER: Follow me, Sergeant. Lead on!

**FX: THE HORSES MOVE OFF, HOOVES CLATTERING ON THE ROAD.**

5. **COMMENTATOR:** in France since the outbreak of war, acting variously as probing attack force and rear-guard, picking up German stragglers and British deserters, riding nearly 200 miles in the pell-mell retreat from Mons and the counter-attack on the Marne. The eyes and ears of 2nd Division.



**SCENE 5 EXT. LANE, NEAR SOUPIR A LITTLE LATER**

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1. DUNSTER: Let me have a look.

**FX: INTRIGUED, DUNSTER CLIMBS ONTO THE LORRY.**

2. **COMMENTATOR:** Until now the British Expeditionary Force has mostly used the telegraph to convey information at the front, which involved riders on horseback laying lines from carts over trees, buildings and other high points, all at the gallop.

3. DUNSTER: Rather large, isn't it?

4. **COMMENTATOR:** Indeed it is. The components of the wireless set - transmitter, mast and receiver weigh 600 pounds.

5. MICKEY BLISS: Transmits Morse via a spark gap, it receives on Long Wave Mark II tuner.

6. DUNSTER: Range?

7. MICKEY BLISS: 100 miles.

8. DUNSTER: Good heavens.

9. ODDY: Yeah, If it works.

1. MICKEY BLISS: It could make such a difference, sir. I mean - It's beautiful.
2. DUNSTER: True believer, are you Bliss?
3. MICKEY BLISS: Fast, effective communication will win the war, sir.
4. DUNSTER: Not men on horseback, I presume.
5. MICKEY BLISS: I didn't say that, sir.
6. DUNSTER: And the point of today's exercise?
7. MICKEY BLISS: Well we test the set under field conditions, sir. Acquiring vital intelligence in the process.

(GREENWOOD CLEARS HIS THROAT.)

8. DUNSTER: What about you two? Are you trained to use the wireless like Sergeant Bliss here?
9. GREENWOOD: No, sir.
- 10.



**SCENE 6                      EXT. STREAM, NEAR SOUPIR                      DAY**

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**FX: WATER RUNS QUICKLY OVER GRAVEL. MICKEY, WALTER.  
HORACE AND DUNSTER SPLASH THROUGH THE SHALLOWS.**

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**1.COMMENTATOR:**     The clear waters of the Moussy tumble quickly from the heights of an escarpment to join the Aisne. Before the war, Sunday anglers caught trout in the Moussy and carp in the Aisne, and the artist Camille Pissaro painted the trees of the valley in autumn.

2. ODDY:                      Be careful, Bliss! Don't lose cover of them trees.

3. GREENWOOD:            Bet some German's got his glasses on us right now.

**4. COMMENTATOR:**

5. DUNSTER:                Fire away then, Bliss.

6. MICKEY BLISS:         So the enemy occupy the high ground up there.

7. DUNSTER:                Along the Chemin des Dames. The ladies' path, but don't get too excited. The dames have long gone.

8. GREENWOOD: And the bastards have moved in, haven't they, sir?

1. DUNSTER: So daintily put. And well established with artillery.

2. MICKEY BLISS: Well that's the thing. We're to establish the position of their guns on that ridge, and to our artillery.

3. ODDY: Sounds so bloody easy, doesn't it?

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1. MICKEY BLISS: Look. According to the map, there's a tongue of woodland going almost all the way up to that ridge. If we could get up there...
2. ODDY: What... in that lorry?
3. MICKEY BLISS: There's a track leading through the wood, see? Past a house or farm. We'd be hidden.

**FX: HE SHOWS THEM THE MAP. HE SEEMS TO HAVE CONVINCED THEM.**

4. DUNSTER: Just one thing wrong with your plan, Sergeant Bliss.
5. MICKEY BLISS: What's that, sir?
6. DUNSTER: Look downstream. The bridge taking us where you want to go.
7. ODDY: In plain sight of the enemy.
8. GREENWOOD: Try crossing that and you'd be sending your last message.
9. ODDY: They'd blow us to little bits.

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1. MICKEY BLISS: I signed up in 1900. So?
  
2. ODDY: So you'll win the long service medal.
  
4. ODDY: So tell us, any of your brown chums actually try to kill you in last 14 years?
  
5. MICKEY BLISS: What's your point?
  
6. ODDY: Me point is, me and him have done more soldiering in two months than you've ever dreamed of, sunshine.
  
7. GREENWOOD: Yeah, that's right.
  
8. ODDY: Horace were a Post Office engineer before this started. I bet he's forgotten more than they ever taught you at Aldershot.
  
9. MICKEY BLISS: Yeah, well, not about a wireless set he hasn't.
  
10. GREENWOOD: Cheeky sod...

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**SCENE 7                    EXT. LANE, NEAR SOUPIR                    DAY.**

**FX: AN ANCIENT FARM CART PULLED BY A OLD HORSE PLODS**

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**THE SCOTS SONG BONIE BELL (BY BURNS).**

(DUNSTER SUDDENLY APPEARS.)

**MUSIC IN: 8'41"**

1. DUNSTER:            Attendez s'il vous plait, mamselle!

2. CATHERINE:        Whoa, Camille! You gave me a right start there!

3. DUNSTER:            You're English?

4. CATHERINE:        I am not. Scots and proud of it.

(MICKEY JOINS DUNSTER, THEN ODDY, GREENWOOD AND THE TROOPERS.)

5. MICKEY BLISS:    Do you... live near here, miss?

6. CATHERINE:        Sister Catherine, if you please.

7. MICKEY BLISS:    Uh – sorry - Excuse me. You're a...nun?

8. CATHERINE:        Our convent's up the lane here.

9. MICKEY BLISS:    Ah. The house on the map.

1. CATHERINE: Look at you all! I don't know which looks grander,  
Lieutenant -

1. GREENWOOD: Swineland, you mean, sir.

(NOW THE MEN LAUGH.)

2. CATHERINE: They helped Monsieur Minet get his harvest in.

5. MICKEY BLISS: You're still here, between the lines?

6. CATHERINE: We left when the fighting started, but Sister Therèse and I came back to see to the garden. The orchard's hanging with fruit and I'm manuring the vegetable beds before winter... as you mebbes noticed.

7. MICKEY BLISS: So, you come and go across this bridge?  
(SHE ASSENTS)  
And they never bother you??

8. CATHERINE: Why should they? It's peaceful here.

9. MICKEY BLISS: Sister, is there another way of crossing this stream?



1. GREENWOOD: Damn sure we can't carry the thing.
  
2. ODDY: I know you don't want to go back to HQ with your tail between your legs, but it's a hell of a risk if you ask me....
  
3. MICKEY BLISS: You two don't have to come, do you. You could cross under cover with the Lieutenant and his men.
  
4. ODDY: No, that's not what I was getting at...
  
5. DUNSTER: Your decision, Sergeant Bliss.
  
6. MICKEY BLISS: I'll give it a go, sir.
  
7. CATHERINE: Why don't I cross the bridge at the same time? Give them a wave. To put them off the scent.
  
8. MICKEY BLISS: Nah, I don't want to put you in any danger.
  
9. CATHERINE: No! They watch me all the time.
  
10. GREENWOOD: I bet they do.
  
11. DUNSTER: Plucky girl! Off you go, Sergeant.

1. MICKEY BLISS: I appreciate your help, sister.
  
2. CATHERINE: My brother Tam's a soldier. Haven't seen any Black Watch, have you?
  
3. MICKEY BLISS: I'm sorry. I've only been in France a week.

**SCENE 9                      EXT. BANK OF STREAM, NEAR SOUPIR                      DAY**

**FX: MICKEY IS REVVING HIS ENGINE. HE THUMPS IT INTO GEAR.**

Music in: 11'34" approx

4. MICKEY BLISS: Going! Come on now... come on... come on.

**WE INTERCUT BETWEEN STREAM AND BRIDGE:**



**SCENE 10**                      **EXT. BRIDGE OVER STREAM**                      **DAY**

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(KATIE IS READY TO GO. WALTER AND HORACE CLIMB ON THE CART.)

1. ODDY:                      Right, Miss - me and Horace'll get squat here in all this horse muck.
  
2. CATHERINE:              Hup, Camille!
  
3. CATHERINE:              Is he over yet?
  
4. ODDY:                      Is he hell! Sorry, Miss.
  
5. CATHERINE:              I've heard that word before, Sergeant. In the odd sermon.
  
6. CATHERINE:              I wonder if they're watching... Hallo, boys!







**SCENE 12                      EXT. GARDEN, CONVENT                      DAY**

**FX: SUDDENLY AGITATED, CATHERINE RUNS TO THE CONVENT GARDEN.**

**SCENE 13                      INT. SHED, GARDEN                      DAY**

(OUT OF BREATH, CATHERINE APPEARS IN THE DOORWAY OF THE SHED.)

**MUSIC IN: 13'59" APPROX**

1. CATHERINE:        Where are you? Are you there?
  
2. MAN:                Yes?
  
3. CATHERINE:        Stay out of sight. There are British soldiers here!

**SCENE 14                      EXT. WOOD, NEAR CONVENT                      DAY**

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(MICKEY, DUNSTER, WALTER AND HORACE CLIMB THROUGH THE WOOD.)

1. GREENWOOD:      Wasted in a convent, eh Walter? Wonder what she looks like under that uniform.
  
2. ODDY:                      All right, Horace.
  
3. DUNSTER:              That you will never know, Sergeant. But there's one thing of which we can be entirely sure.
  
4. GREENWOOD:      Sir?
  
5. DUNSTER:              Sister Catherine isn't speculating what *you* look like under your soiled khaki. Here we are, Bliss. Let's see if your hunch is correct.
  
6. ODDY:                      It's not. Nowt.
  
7. DUNSTER:              You can see their forward line, but not the guns, even where the ridge dips to its lowest point, see?
  
8. MICKEY BLISS:      Yeah, we're not high enough.
  
9. ODDY:                      So... what now then, Sergeant Bliss?



1. DUNSTER:





**SCENE 15                      EXT. CLEARING, WOOD                      A LITTLE LATER**

**FX:    THE WIRELESS EQUIPMENT, WITH THE  
GRUDGING HELP OF ODDY AND GREENWOOD.**

1. GREENWOOD: What a palaver.
  
2. MICKEY BLISS: The base is always a bit stiff.
  
4. **COMMENTATOR:** **The Wireless Telegraphy Set comes with a 12-spoke aerial mounted on a 70-foot long sectional mast. It can be erected by trained men in 12 minutes. That at least is the**

(WALTER AND HORACE ARE STILL STRUGGLING. FINALLY...)

5. ODDY:                      Finally! That's it!
  
6. MICKEY BLISS: Right – you start climbing, Oddy.
  
7. ODDY:                      You want me up that tree?
  
8. MICKEY BLISS: Yeah, to call me down the numbers. But first attach this line near the top. Chuck the other end down.
  
1. ODDY:                      What for?

2. MICKEY BLISS: And pull the loose end of the aerial as high as you can.  
The more copper I can get in the air the better.
  
3. ODDY: (STARTS CLIMBING)  
I did not join the Army to climb bloody trees...
  
4. MICKEY BLISS: Now, Greenwood. You dig a hole for the earth. Deep,  
as far from the lorry as it'll go.
  
5. GREENWOOD: And I'm not a bloody sapper either.
  
6. MICKEY BLISS: The less resistance in the circuit the more juice in the air.  
If you don't mind.  
  
(HORACE GRUMBLES.)  
Are you there yet, Oddy?
  
- 7.COMMENTATOR: Meanwhile Maberley Dunster sits with his back  
against a beech tree watching Alphonse Minet and  
horse making perfect lines in the field below...**
  
9. MICKEY BLISS: Right! Pull up the aerial!

**FX: WE RETURN TO MICKEY AT THE SET WE HEAR A FILING NOISE.**

1. GREENWOOD: Earth buried. What you doing with the emery paper?
  
2. MICKEY BLISS: I'm cleaning the cup contact on the Perikon detector.  
And now... I am making sure the gap for the spark is the right width to jump.

**3.COMMENTATOR: That is, between a quarter and three-sixteenths of an inch.**

4. MICKEY BLISS: You see the moisture on the contact? Well that's not good. Touch of paraffin'll sort that out.

5. MICKEY BLISS: The Perikon detector, the receiver, we need to clean that too.....

**6.COMMENTATOR: With carbon bisulphide, an insecticide used to ensure a good harvest in the vineyards not far away.  
-built set - one of thousands in pre-war India.**

7. GREENWOOD: Never mind a signaller. You're a bloody chemist!

**8.COMMENTATOR: Precisely so. As well as many other things.**

1.

**SCENE 16 EXT. TOP OF TREE, WOOD, NORTHERN FRANCE DAY**

(WALTER'S IN THE VANTAGE POINT, MICKEY CLIMBS UP TO JOIN HIM.)

1. MICKEY BLISS: Aerial all right?
2. ODDY: I can tie a bloody knot!
3. MICKEY BLISS: Thanks for doing this. You got a light?
4. ODDY: So what you up to anyway?
5. MICKEY BLISS: It's not me. The Lieutenant's got something up his beautifully tailored sleeve.
6. WALTER ODDY: Like a bloody expensive watch.

(HE LAUGHS)

Look here. Left of the big oak to the right of the dip. No need to ask what he's up to, with his bloody pants round his ankles!

7. MICKEY BLISS: Hun with the runs, eh?
8. ODDY: Fritz with the shits! (THEY LAUGH TOGETHER.)

**FX: ODDY SHOULDERS HIS RIFLE.**

9. MICKEY BLISS: What you doing?

8. ODDY:                   What am I doing? I'm having a pot-shot.
1. MICKY BLISS:       Have you lost your senses?
2. ODDY:                   I could blow his bell end off from 'ere.
3. MICKY BLISS:       Don't be bloody stupid...
4. ODDY:                   Come on! Let's kill some Germans. That's what we're here for, in't it?
5. MICKY BLISS:       No, we're here to test the wireless set.
6. ODDY:                   It's a lot of faffin' about -
7. MICKY BLISS:       You'd give our position away, man!

(ODDY CURSES AND GRUMBLES.)

**8.**

1. ODDY: Thought we were supposed to be fighting a bloody war.



Music in: 20'23" approx

**SCENE 17 EXT. MEADOWS, NEAR SOUPIR - DAY**

(DUNSTER GIVES ORDERS TO SERGEANT AS THE HUSSARS WAIT.)

1. DUNSTER: Over the meadow, jump the fence, cross the field into that copse.
  
2. SERGEANT: In view of the enemy, sir?
  
3. DUNSTER: Precisely the point. Let's show them what the 15th Hussars can do.
  
4. SERGEANT: Swords drawn, sir?
  
5. DUNSTER: Why not? Oh look, see what I see? After him!
  
6. SERGEANT: Charge!

**FX: THE TROOP SET OFF ACROSS THE MEADOW AT A GALLOP.**

**6.COMMENTATOR: At 10.43, Lieutenant Maberley Dunster, eldest son of Viscount and Lady Appleby, leads his troop of Hussars in a breakneck charge across a meadow, in pursuit of a rather startled fox.**

8. DUNSTER: View halloo!

**1. COMMENTATOR: A stirring sight that will soon go out of military fashion.**

**SCENE 18 EXT. TOP OF TREE, WOOD, NORTHERN FRANCE DAY**

(MICKEY WATCHES THE CHARGE WITH ODDY.)

1. MICKEY BLISS: Look at them!

2. ODDY: Well the daft bugger!

**FX: THE SCREAM OF AN**

**SCENE 19**

**EXT. MEADOWS, NEAR SOUPIR**

**SCENE 20**                      **EXT. WOOD, NEAR CONVENT**                      **DAY**

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(BACK ON THE GROUND. MURMURING TO HIMSELF, MICKEY TAPS THE CO-ORDINATES OF THE ARTILLERY POSITIONS IN MORSE. WALTER AND HORACE ARE WITH HIM.)

1. MICKEY BLISS: There. Gone.

2. ODDY: Sure?

3. MICKEY BLISS: When can you be sure? I've sent it twice.

4. ODDY: Could have laid a telegraph line. No fuss and hell of a lot quicker.

5. MICKEY BLISS: But we didn't. We're trying something new. We're signals – the future, yes? Why don't you give it a chance?

6. ODDY: I'll tell you. Cos I don't reckon it's up to much.

7. GREENWOOD: Now we wait till our guns open up.

6. ODDY: I'll tell you. Cos I don't reckon it's up to much.

(WALTER GRUNTS)

7. GREENWOOD: I'm starving, Walter.

1. ODDY: See what you can rustle up then, old lad. Go and forage.
2. MICKEY BLISS: Get thee to a nunnery.
3. GREENWOOD: Eh?
4. MICKEY BLISS: The fruit in the convent orchard. Sister Catherine'll give you something.
5. GREENWOOD: She might, mightn't she?

**MUSIC IN: 22' 31" APPROX**

**SCENE 21**                      **EXT. GARDEN, CONVENT**                      **DAY**

(CATHERINE IS WORKING IN THE GARDEN, SINGING AS SHE DIGS. SHE DOESN'T NOTICE HORACE COMING UP BEHIND HER.)

1. GREENWOOD:    Hallo.

2. CATHERINE:     Oh. You gave me a surprise.

3. GREENWOOD:    Nice one, I hope.

4. CATHERINE:     Why were the guns firing?

5. GREENWOOD:    Oh, just trying them out, I reckon.

(HE LAUGHS AWKWARDLY)

Um... hope you don't mind me saying. I'm not trying to be forward, but you're very...pretty.

6. CATHERINE:     Thank you. Now, if you'll excuse me I...

7. GREENWOOD:    I don't have a sweetheart. Girls don't seem interested in Horace Greenwood.

8. CATHERINE:     I'm sorry.

1. GREENWOOD: Can I write you? After we're gone? Would you write a line back? I'm not trying to be funny.
2. CATHERINE: If you like.
3. GREENWOOD: Yes. I should like that very much.
4. CATHERINE: Was there...something else?
5. GREENWOOD: The boys are getting peckish. Could you spare some apples and plums?
6. CATHERINE: I can do better than fruit. I've bread and sausage in the kitchen...
7. GREENWOOD: (HEADING OFF)  
Got a sack? In the shed maybe?
8. CATHERINE: (FOLLOWING, ANXIOUS)  
I'll get you a sack. Don't go in there!



**SCENE 22                      INT. SHED, CONVENT GARDEN                      DAY**

(HORACE ENTERS THE SHED. CATHERINE FOLLOWS.)

1. GREENWOOD: Oh, dark in here, isn't it?

1. SEYMOUR:        Back away I said.
  
2. CATHERINE:     It's all right, he's...
  
3. SEYMOUR:        I'm warning you.
  
4. GREENWOOD:    I get it. Bloody deserter!
  
5. CATHERINE:     Watch out - his rifle!

**FX: SEYMOUR JUMPS HORACE AND CLUBS HIM WITH HIS OWN RIFLE.  
HORACE FALLS TO THE FLOOR, GROANING.**

**SCENE 23**                      **EXT. WOOD, NEAR CONVENT**                      **DAY**

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(DUNSTER AND HIS MEN RETURN TO MICKEY AT THE SET.)

1. DUNSTER:            All well, Sergeant?
  
2. MICKEY BLISS:    No. I got the message away, but haven't had an acknowledgement.
  
3. DUNSTER:            Meaning?
  
4. MICKEY BLISS:    Any number of things. Enemy jamming our signal, sunspots, the set's gone phut ...
  
5. DUNSTER:            As I said before, machines never seem to be wholly reliable do they?
  
6. MICKEY BLISS:    The kit's very new, sir. But it's my job to make it work. Give it a good revving, Oddy!

1. DUNSTER:           And if this doesn't work? Rather a shame if our gallop was in vain.

**FX: ODDY STOPS REVVING THE ENGINE.**

Hallo, what are those two up to?

2. MICKEY BLISS: Sir?

3. DUNSTER:           Bottom of the meadow, heading east, making a tempting target for a sniper.

**FX: DISTANT RIFLE FIRE BEGINS**

There they go. The one in front... that isn't our nun, is it?



**FX: BILLY LIFTS CATHERINE AND RUNS WITH HER. DUNSTER APPROACHES ON HIS HORSE.**

1. DUNSTER:           Here - let me take her!

**FX: NOW WE HEAR THE SCREAM OF INCOMING SHELL-FIRE**

2. SEYMOUR:           Where's that from?

**SCENE 25                      EXT. WOOD, NORTHERN FRANCE                      DAY**

(THE TRIUMPHANT MICKEY IS AT THE WIRELESS, ODDY UP THE TREE.)

1. MICKEY BLISS:            It worked! It bloody worked!

(ODDY BELLOWS DOWN INSTRUCTIONS.)

2. ODDY:                      Up one eight hundred, right five hundred. Can you hear me?

3. ~~MIC~~KEY BLISS:    Up one eight hundred, right five hundred!

**FX: HE SENDS ANOTHER MESSAGE: VE CD CD V AB P UP1800X  
R500X S FFE AR . THE BRITISH FIRE IS INTENSE.                      :**

4. GREENWOOD:

**1.COMMENTATOR:**

**purpose of**

**infantry as *his* artillery. By firing at the ridge, the British gunners have alerted the German batteries to their positions, will knock out who first. This is unlikely to be the**

**for the -new  
wireless set has stopped working.**

(WALTER RETURNS, FROM THE TOP OF THE TREE.)

2. ODDY: Dammit man, didn't you hear me? I gave you new coordinates.

3. MICKEY BLISS: I sent them.

4. ODDY: Knackered, isn't it? Your precious bloody wireless!

**FX: A SHELL LANDS NEARBY.**

5. MICKEY BLISS: Have you got any chocolate?

6. GREENWOOD: Eh?

7. MICKEY BLISS: Chocolate, silver paper, that's all I want.



1. GREENWOOD: I've got a Fry's bar.

2. MICKEY BLISS: Hand it over.

**FX: MICKEY GETS TO WORK. A SHELL LANDS NEARBY.**

3. GREENWOOD: Bloody Ada!

**4.COMMENTATOR: While most of the German batteries ranged along the Chemin des Dames direct their fire at the British artillery, some are now targeting the interlopers in no-land. At 12.15, the w 0 1 less part 0 y thus find themselves being shelled by both sides.**

5. ODDY: What you doing anyway?

6. MICKEY BLISS: I am replacing the contact strip in the transmitter, to improve the spark.

7. ODDY: Yeah, you hope.

**FX: ANOTHER SHELL LANDS**

Jesus. That was close.

8. GREENWOOD: I'm not liking this, Walter. I'm not liking this at all.

(HE STARTS HUMMING LOUDLY, OUT OF TUNE. MICKEY WORKS.)

1. MICKEY BLISS: Nearly with you, sir.

**FX: TRANSMITTER CLICKS: VE CD CD V AB P UP1800X R500X S FFE  
AR .**

**2.COMMENTATOR: Mickey Bliss will remember the skirmish on the Aisne for the rest of his life, not because he calmly put his training to good use in difficult circumstances, but because in the end his cool expertise was of no consequence whatsoever.**

**FX: THE MORSE GOES ON TAPPING. THE SHELLING GETS CLOSER  
AND CLOSER. THE HORSES START WHINNYING WITH FEAR.**

3. ODDY: Hell's teeth. They're giving us plenty of hate.

4. GREENWOOD: Can we go now, Walter? Home to Mother?

5. MICKEY BLISS: Quiet!

**FX: FINAL TAPPING**

Corrected co-ordinates sent, sir.

7. DUNSTER: But apparently not received.

**FX: FURTHER SHELLS LAND THE NOISE IS TERRIFYING.**

Tommies: 7<sup>th</sup>

**SCENE 26      EXT. TOP OF TREE, WOOD NEAR CONVENT - A LITTLE  
LATER**





**SCENE 27                      EXT. WOOD, NEAR CONVENT    DAY**

**FX: IN THE EYE OF THE STORM, WALTER AND HORACE FINISH**

**PACKING UP THE LORRY,**

(HORACE JUST KEEPING CONTROL OF HIMSELF.)



1. MICKEY BLISS: Listen. Those last few shells...
  
2. ODDY: Nearly did for us, aye.
  
3. MICKEY BLISS: No, but one was a dud. I saw where it fell. We could use it...
  
4. ODDY: For what?
  
5. MICKEY BLISS: The angle of alignment will tell where it's come from. We'll dig it out.
  
6. ODDY: Have you got summit up with ya?
  
7. MICKEY BLISS: The fuse timer – that's gonna show how long it's run. If we did the maths we could get spot-on co-ordinates back to our guns.
  
8. ODDY: Listen Bliss, thanks to you, today's been a complete bloody shambles...
  
9. MICKEY BLISS: We could turn it round!

**FX: ANOTHER SHELL LANDS...**

**1.COMMENTATOR: In the literal heat of the moment, Mickey can think of nothing but the pure brilliance of his idea.**

2. ODDY: If we'd used our telegraph kit instead, we'd be back safe now wouldn't we. With our feet up, having us nice mug of cocoa.

3. MICKEY BLISS: Don't you want to get the job done, then? Come on, we'll do our duty.

4. ODDY: Don't you preach to me about duty, sonny. I were doing mine while you were on your pleasure cruise.

**FX: A SHELL LANDS NEARBY.**

(HORACE JUMPS A MILE, STARTS MUMBLING THE COLLECT FOR GRACE.)

5. GREENWOOD: O God who art the author of peace and lover of concord...

6. MICKEY BLISS: What's up with him?

7. ODDY: What's up with him? His duty nearly finished him off.

8. GREENWOOD: Defend us thy humble servants in all assaults of our enemies...

1. ODDY: Look, are you coming or not? Let's go!
2. MICKEY BLISS: Pass me the shovel from under the seat.
3. GREENWOOD: That we may not fear the power of any adversaries...
4. ODDY: Don't be daft! You can't.
5. MICKEY BLISS: The shovel!
6. ODDY: It'll be buried deep, you won't be able to lug it on your own. They'll get you before you're started...
7. MICKEY BLISS: It's my job.
8. ODDY: (GENTLE NOW)  
Listen lad, I'm saying this for your own good. Don't do it.  
Leave it Bliss!
9. GREENWOOD: Through the might of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

(MICKEY GETS THE SHOVEL AND GOES.)

**SCENE 28**                      **EXT. FIELD, NEAR SOUPIR**                      **DAY**

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(MICKEY RUNS INTO THE FIELD.)

**1.COMMENTATOR:** So it is that Mickey makes his way into an  
unremarkable field in northern France. But this day,  
October 7 1914, Sergeant BSMC P MICID 2BDC BDC BDC BDC

**SCENE 30                      EXT. FIELD, NEAR SOUPIR -                      DAY**

MICKEY RUNS INTO THE FIELD, FOLLOWED BY WALTER AND HORACE.

1. ODDY:                      Bliss! Wait!

**2.COMMENTATOR: The field in which the dud shell has landed was ploughed just a few hours before by Farmer Minet**

**immaculate straight lines, more or less obliterated by the British and German guns. Mickey dodges the divots and holes and finds the place where the shell fell to earth. Calculating the angle of entry, he digs gingerly down to find the unexploded shell.**

**FX: WE HEAR THE SOUND OF THIS. WALTER JOINS HIM.**

3. MICKEY BLISS: Thanks.

4. ODDY:                      I don't want your thanks. (HE SEES HORACE COMING) Get back, Horace! Get back son!

**5.COMMENTATOR: But Horace is beyond reason. For him, Walter represents safety. But not here, not now, for the three men have been spotted...**

**FX: BULLETS THUD INTO EARTH AROUND THEM.**

1. ODDY: Snipers! Get down, Horace! Get down!

2. MICKEY BLISS: Here it is! Don't touch it!

**3.COMMENTATOR: The shell lies steaming in a tunnel of scorched earth two feet down. Mickey examines it closely.**

4. MICKEY BLISS: Now then. Let' !

**1.COMMENTATOR: Carrying a 15-pound shell, Mickey and Walter run for the safety of the trees, spurred on by their watching comrades.**

2. HUSSARS (OFF): Run, lads! Run for it!

3. GREENWOOD: Don't leave me, Walter...

(WALTER STOPS AND TURNS.)

4. ODDY: What you doing, Horace! You hit?

**5.COMMENTATOR: In fact Horace is merely burying himself into the remnants of a furrow, but Walter assumes otherwise.**

6. GREENWOOD: Help me, Wally!

7. ODDY: I'm coming! I'm coming!

**8.COMMENTATOR: Walter drops the shell. And runs to his friend - and his destiny.**

9. ODDY: I'm coming, old lad!

10. MICKEY BLISS: Don't!





1. GREENWOOD: Don't leave, Wally! Don't leave me.

**2.COMMENTATOR: Horace Greenwood hugs the furrow till nightfall, then walks the three miles back to divisional HQ. As for the fateful shell dropped by Oddy, that remains in the field until uncovered by a tractor driven by**

**SCENE 31**                      **EXT. ROAD, VALLEY -**                      **DAY**

**FX: THE LORRY TRUNDLES DOWN HILL, MICKEY DRIVES, WALTER LAID IN THE BACK. CATHERINE APPROACHES AS THE LORRY STOPS.**

1. CATHERINE:        Sergeant Bliss!

2. MICKEY BLISS:    Are you all right, Sister?

2. CATHERINE:        Hurts like billy-o, but it should heal right enough if I look after it. Won't be doing any gardening for a bit, not that we can go back to the convent, not much of it left.

(A MOANING FROM THE LORRY)

                                  Your friend. Is he all right?

3. MICKEY BLISS:    Shrapnel. Stomach and leg.

(CATHERINE INSPECTS THE LORRY. SHE GASPS AT THE SIGHT.)

4. CATHERINE:        Oh my, poor man.

5. ODDY:                Ingrid? Are you

7. MICKEY BLISS: I suppose. I'm sorry - about everything.

1. CATHERINE: Not your fault, was it? What'll happen to Billy, Sergeant?

2. MICKEY BLISS: That's not my decision, I'm glad to say.

3. CATHERINE: He could have run away but he came back to help me.

**MUSIC: 37' APPROX**

**SCENE 32                      EXT. ANOTHER PART OF THE WOOD -                      DAY**

DUNSTER WITH HIS DISTRESSED HORSE, HIS MEN STANDING  
AROUND.

1. DUNSTER:                      I know, I know. Easy now, easy now.

(HE STANDS)

Someone get me a bag of hay.

2. SERGEANT:                      What you going to do, sir?

3. DUNSTER:                      Hold his head for me.

4. CATHERINE:                      Look at him, the poor beast.

**5.COMMENTATOR: A fine grey, Bue - short for Bucephalus, the horse  
ridden by Alexander the Great - has been  
since he was 15. They joined the Hussars together.  
Bue is grievously wounded. A piece of shell has  
penetrated his chest. Dunster knows only one thing  
can save him...**

6. DUNSTER:                      Steady now, steady now.

(THE WATCHING SOLDIERS GASP, SOME WITH HORROR.)

**1.COMMENTATOR:**

**wound, finds the fist-sized piece of still hot shell case and pulls it out**

**FX: BUE WHINNIES.**

2. SERGEANT: My God, sir!

3. DUNSTER: Quick! The straw!

**4.COMMENTATOR: hen plugs the wound with handfuls of straw.**

**FX: HE DOES THIS...**

5. DUNSTER: All right, lad. Well done, well done.

(MICKEY APPROACHES.)

6. MICKEY BLISS: Need to get Sergeant Oddy seen to, sir.

7. DUNSTER: Hand over our deserter to the appropriate authority, will you?

8. MICKEY BLISS: Sir. Will he...?

1. DUNSTER: For the high jump, I fear. Quite literally. Your responsibility now. Odd sort of day, wasn't it?
2. MICKEY BLISS: 14 years a soldier, never seen anything like it.
3. DUNSTER: You did all right. Way you ran across that field...
4. MICKEY BLISS: Like a moth to the flame.
5. DUNSTER: Admirable. What's that?
6. MICKEY BLISS: Not impo

**SCENE 33 EXT. BACK OF LORRY, WOOD, NEAR SOUPIR DAY**

CATHERINE IS BANDAGING ODDY AS BEST SHE CAN. HE ACKNOWLEDGES HER BUT DOESN'T REALLY KNOW WHO SHE IS.

1. CATHERINE: There you go, my man. I've bandaged you good and proper. You'll be fine. Just you see.

2. ODDY: Thank you, Ingrid. Thank you so much.

3. CATHERINE: Goodbye, dear.

(SHE KISSES HIM)

That's it, Sergeant Bliss!

**FX: MICKEY CRASHES THE LORRY INTO GEAR AND IT MOVES.**

4. ODDY: When will I see you again, Ingrid?

**5.COMMENTATOR: Long after she has left holy orders and returned to Clydeside to work eventually as a district nurse,**

**Oddy, and who the elusive Ingrid was. She could never have guessed. Ingrid was the daughter of a**

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Tommies: 7<sup>th</sup> October 1914





1. SEYMOUR: Beg pardon?
2. MICKEY BLISS: But change your story. When you reach your battalion, tell them you got stranded the other side of that ridge, and last night you slipped through their lines in the dark.
3. SEYMOUR: Thank you, Sergeant.
4. MICKEY BLISS: Don't thank me. You thank Sergeant Oddy there.
5. SEYMOUR: What was it all about anyway? What were you trying to do?
6. MICKEY BLISS: Go before I change my mind.

**FX: BILLY JUMPS DOWN. HIS BOOTS CLATTER AWAY. MICKEY SIGHS.**

**7.COMMENTATOR: temporary. He will die  
three months later, near Armentières.**

**FX: MICKEY STARTS THE ENGINE. IT SLOWLY DRIVES AWAY.**

**1.COMMENTATOR:**

**of the Aisne. An hour later as dusk falls, Maberley Dunster coaxes Bue onto his feet and the Hussars leave the shattered woods and fields of Beaulne. As**

**The End.**