

# DISPATCHES

## GREAT WAR PUMPEE



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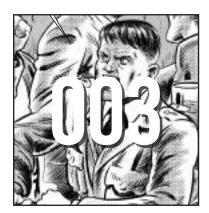
Pat Mills
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Elliot Balson
Hailey Austin
Erin Keepers
Anna Morozova

#### Thanks to:

Great War Dundee Heritage Lottery Fund This comic is part of the Great War Dundee (GWD) Hidden Histories project, which was made possible thanks to the generous support of The National Lottery Heritage Fund. It tells the story of the effect of the Great War on Dundee, and its aftermath, and draws on many of the resources and knowledge that the GWD Partnership has introduced into the public domain over the last few years.

The comic contains a story written by legendary comics creator Pat Mills, who worked at DC Thomson before creating the hugely successful British science fiction comic 2000AD (1977-present). In the 1970s Pat Mills started work on one of the most acclaimed war comics of all time, Charley's War. This told the story of Charley, an ordinary soldier in the trenches during the First World War. This is a poignant and realistic tale that remains very highly regarded. For the GWD comic Pat has written 'Ragtime Soldier', a story about a Black Watch soldier returning to Dundee in the aftermath of the First World War. and his attempts to adjust to civilian life. The artist is Gary Welsh, one of the University of Dundee's recent graduates.

The other strips included in the comic are 'The Women's Toon', written by Hailey Austin and Erin Keepers, with art by 2000AD artist Anna Morozova, and 'Casualties of War', written by Calum Laird and drawn by Elliot Balson. All these creators are graduates of the comics programme in Dundee. Ian Kennedy provides the cover artwork. We hope you appreciate all the stories!











**GREAT WAR DUNDEE PRESENTS** 

## RAGTIME SOLDIER

'DEDICATED TO EVERYONE WHO LOST THEIR



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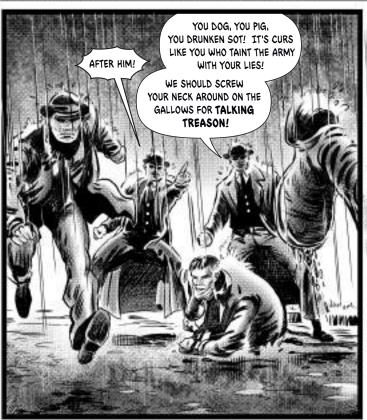






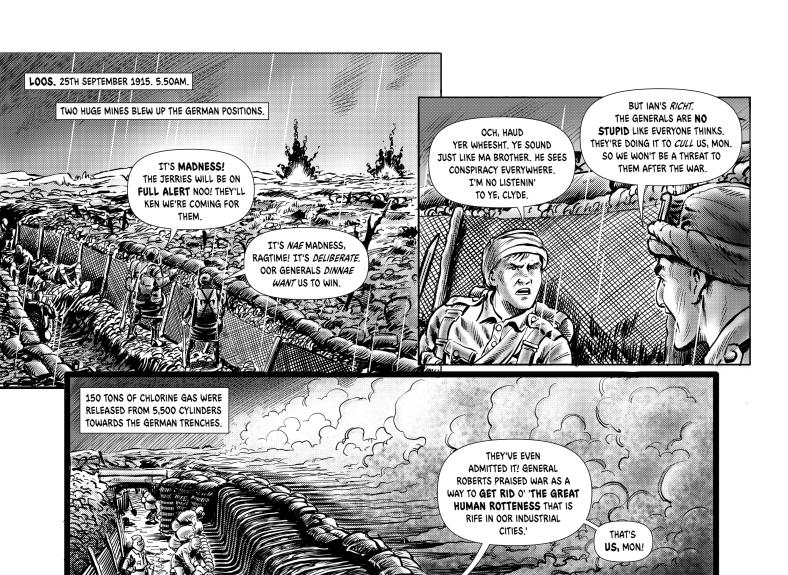










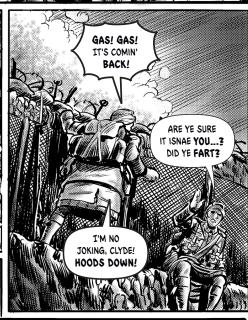




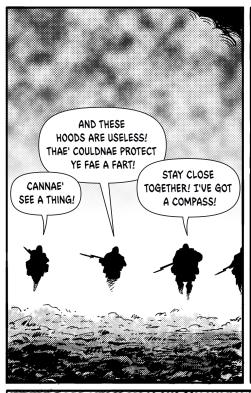


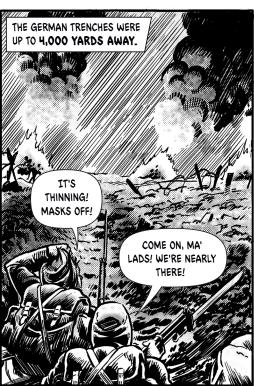






















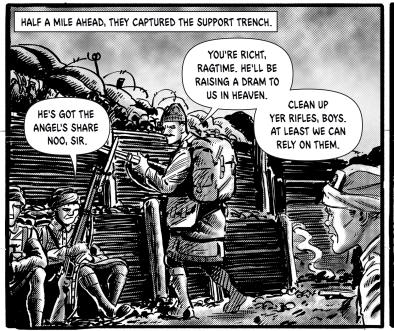


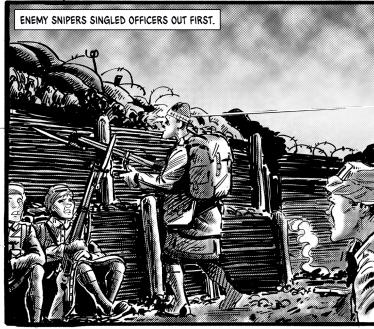




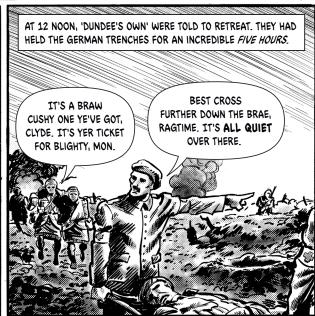








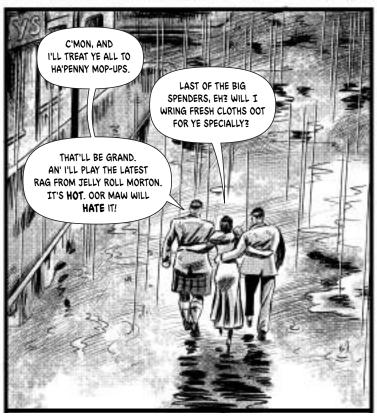










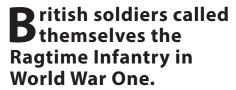




# SGOT FREE



BY PAT MILLS



It means 'dangerous and a bit crazy'. It comes from Ragtime music, which was the counter-culture music of World War One, something that seems to have been largely ignored by historians. Perhaps they're not aware of just how important 'rebellious music' is to teenagers and young people in their twenties – and that was just as true a century ago as it is today.

In a similar way, just as the music of The Doors, The Animals ('We Gotta Get Out Of This Place'), and Country Joe & The Fish ('I Feel Like I'm Fixin To Die Rag') are associated with the Vietnam War and were loved by American soldiers, so Ragtime – proto-Jazz – was loved by the British troops.

It was like they were calling themselves 'the Rock and Roll Infantry'.



Ragtime reached British shores long before the Americans brought us Jazz in 1917. I suspect that ports like Dundee and Liverpool would have been the first to receive the Ragtime sheet music from New Orleans in 1912 and 1913. New sheet music was eagerly collected by teenagers, just like vinyl was for later generations and creating playlists is today.

Ragtime often sounds rather dreary today because of scratchy, fading recordings and later versions available on Youtube, but the earliest Ragtime was rather cool. It was seen as 'dirty' music, sexy music, black music, and it was hot! For its time, it was revolutionary! The older generation hated this 'wild' new sound and the exciting dances that went with it. Inevitably, it was 'cleaned-up' with a parentsapproved version by the clean-cut, wholesome and white Irene and Vernon Castle. They successfully 'removed the stigma of vulgarity from close dancing' (Wikipedia). Dancers were advised: 'Do not shake the hips. Do not hop.'







Ken Burns describes Ragtime in episode one of his Jazz (2001) documentary TV series. He relates how one fierce critic of the craze that was sweeping America said, 'Ragtime is syncopation gone mad. And its victims in my opinion can only be treated successfully like a dog with rabies – with a dose of lead. Whether it's a passing phase of our decadent art culture or an infectious disease come to stay, like leprosy, time alone can tell. '

In 1913, the New York Times commented, 'Can it be said that America is falling prey to the collective soul of the negro through the influence of what is popularly known as Ragtime music. If there is any tendency to such a national disaster, it should definitely be pointed out and extreme measures taken to inhibit the influence and avert the increasing danger if it has not already gone too far.'

This then was the 'dangerous' music that our forefathers were into when they went to war.

#### FRED KARNO'S ARMY

Fred Karno was the 'King of Slapstick Comedy', responsible for introducing Charlie Chaplin and Stan Laurel to the world. So when our soldiers called themselves 'Fred Karno's Army', they were really laughing at themselves. They're showing the same satirical sense of humour that we see in Monty Python and today with shows like South Park, The Simpsons and The Office.

There's a fascinating Scottish link to Fred Karno's Army. The Scottish comedian Billie Ritchie also worked for impresario Fred Karno, and Chaplin was actually inspired by Billie's drunk Scotsman walk to produce his own famous drunken tramp. There's one silent movie short of Billie – 'Almost A



Scandal' – on Youtube which is very Chaplinesque. If you can imagine Billie talking with a Scottish accent – and having a Scottish attitude – it might still come over to a modern audience!

#### LEGION OF FRONTIERSMEN

This was a vigilante organisation dedicated to preserving the British Empire and had strong connections to the Establishment and the British secret service. One leading member, Captain Hugh Pollard, actually triggered the Spanish Civil War by bringing General Franco back from exile in The Canaries. Once Franco had overthrown the government and was in power, Pollard became head of British Intelligence in Spain.

Captain Pollard is a fascinating character – a classic villain I've researched carefully for another project. He is the equivalent of George MacDonald Fraser's Flashman or Captain Snell in Charley's War. He's the leader of the Frontiersmen in this story and he is likely to appear in future Ragtime Soldier stories.

#### MEDIA BLACKOUT

Many of the facts featured in Ragtime Soldier are not widely known today. This is because during the centenary years of World War One, there was a deliberate media blackout on any book, film or TV show that took a strong anti-war position. The reason is obvious, of course: if we question what happened in the past, we may also question what is happening in the world today.

At the end of 2014 I gave a lecture at the University of Liverpool showing numerous examples of this blackout. There's an audio recording of my lecture available at www.millsverse.com/ charleyswarrevisionistspin/along with a downloadable PDF transcript of my lecture. You can also view the powerpoint presentation, which shows many relevant images from Charley's War and key characters. I gave this lecture because I was so dismayed by how the truth about World War One was being deliberately suppressed by the Establishment.

Even the brilliant Blackadder Goes Forth was barely shown during the centenary years. Perhaps this is not so surprising, as it is loathed by politicians and revisionist historians who prefer us to believe their Establishment view of the war. Today's historians have successfully revised the long accepted antiwar view of World War One as a tragic nightmare caused by the Establishment and directed by idiot Generals. They have completely transformed the conflict into a 'just war' directed by Generals who adapted to the new era and defeated an 'evil' enemy.

Such historians are known as revisionist historians. They have been particularly successful in the last two decades, largely suppressing any alternative voices that challenge their Establishment view of the truth. Thus, the massacres and insane futility of the Battle of the Somme was presented on BBC TV as 'The Somme: From Defeat to Victory'. I visited the British Library bookshop, the very heart of the Establishment, in 2014 and found numerous books on the war, but there was not one about conscientious objectors or pacifists.

#### THE BRITISH RESISTANCE

Thanks to our media, words like 'conscientious objectors' and 'pacifists' often now have a negative association. As if there's something weird, or wrong with people who are anti-war. It's why I now use the term 'war resisters' – a term I think is more powerful and appropriate.

Nowhere was the Resistance stronger than in Scotland and particularly in Dundee. Interestingly, many Scottish soldiers had great sympathy and understanding for the Resistance as the story Ragtime Soldier shows.

The heroes of the British Resistance have stories to tell that are easily as exciting as any story of the French Resistance during World War Two, but they will never be told elsewhere. thanks to the blackout. Comics are one of the few places to escape this censorship. There are a few similar voices out there, such as guerrilla campaigns by artists such as Darren Cullen (www.spellingmistakescostlives. com). His Action Man: Battlefield Casualties videos on Youtube are very watchable and brought down the wrath of the media upon him!

Amongst the many heroes of the British Resistance are Edwin Scrymgeour, E.D. Morel (both elected as MPs for Dundee, replacing Winston Churchill), John Maclean (Glasgow hero of Red Clydeside fame), John S. Clarke (the lion tamer who became a Glasgow MP), Sylvia Pankhurst and Alice Wheeldon (Framed by the British secret service, she was accused of trying to murder the Prime Minister with a poison dart!).

#### 'MARMALADE'!

I drew on the Great War Dundee site for my research: www.greatwardundee.com
It proved invaluable. And also contemporary accounts, including this remarkable poem written shortly after the battle. It was heart-breaking to discover that those young Black Watch soldiers from Dundee used 'Marmalade!' as their battle cry when they went over the top.

#### OOR GALLANT FOURTH

Lads o' valour, lads o' grit, Lads wha's frames are strongly knit, Lads wha strike hard whom they hit, Are in the Fourth.

The 'Great Push' found them tae the fore.

Like their sires in days of yore.

'Marmalade!' Eh, what a roar!

Cam" frae the Fourth.

They cared not for the rifles' spit, They were oot tae dae their bit, They've proved that they are lads o' grit,

Oor gallant Fourth.
'On the ba', Dundee', they cried
They as steel in fire were tried,

Nobly lived and nobly died, Lads o' the Fourth. When o' wordly cares I'm free, And I've crossed the 'sullen sea', Weel tae the fore I ken I'll see Lads o' the Fourth. The People's Journal, 16 October 1915

I also talked to a friend from Glasgow who warned me that the Dundee accent was the thickest and hardest to understand in Scotland! I guess I should have known that from my happy years living in Dundee in the 1970s. So, to ensure I got it right, I consulted 'Dundonian for Beginners', the Dundee Evening Telegraph and final dialect input from Ian Kennedy! www.eveningtelegraph. co.uk/2016/02/29/13-phrasesdundonians-understand-that-confuse-the-rest-of-scotland/

Special thanks to Phil Vaughan and Chris Murray (University of Dundee) who also advised me on the Dundee accent, to Dr Derek J Patrick (University of St Andrews) and especially to Billy Kenefick (University of Dundee). Billy vividly related how war resister Edwin Scrymgeour (the 'Dundee Lenin' according to





the local papers), defeated the mighty Winston Churchill himself! It's a story made even more remarkable by the fact that Scrymgeour was elected as a prohibitionist, who believed in 'thinking not drinking'.

Thanks to all your efforts, we finally have a successor to Charley's War. At last! It's only taken six years and a trail of previous failed attempts! That's how powerful the media blackout really is in Britain.

It's no coincidence that Ragtime Soldier was commissioned in Scotland. There is no way it could have happened elsewhere in the United Kingdom. I tried many times. Only in Scotland is such freedom of expression still possible.

#### THE DUNDEE ELECTION

The story of the 1922 Election, of Scrymgeour versus Churchill, is an explosive one. It's fortunate that comics can reveal this astonishing story and how, with grim memories of Loos, the Somme and Ypres, Dundee voted against Churchill.

I adapted the comments of J.B. Priestley ('An Inspector Calls') for 'Red' Clyde to say in the story. It sums up the horror of Loos so much better than I ever could and tells us what must have been in the minds of Dundonians when they went to the polls:

'The British command specialised in throwing men away for nothing. The tradition of an officer class, defying both imagination and common sense, killed most of my friends as surely as if those cavalry generals had come out of the chateaux with polo mallets and beaten their brains out.'

Also in the election and also elected as MP, was Resistance leader E.D. Morel. He had previously exposed the atrocities of the Belgians in the Congo in 'Red Rubber'. During the war he courageously exposed how – through secret diplomacy – Britain had manipulated the other nations into war. Reading his book 'Truth and the War' (1916), I was struck by how similar it was to how Tony Blair manipulated Britain into the Iraq War in 2003.

Morel's book was the WikiLeaks of its day. And, like Julian Assange,

he would pay for his revelations. He was thrown into prison on a trumped-up charge and they broke his health so that when he emerged, 'His hair is completely white (there was hardly a tinge of white before) when he first came out, he collapsed completely, physically and mentally, largely as the result of insufficient food. He says one only gets three quarters of an hour reading in the whole day – the rest of the time is spent on prison work, etc.'

I had an interesting exchange of tweets some years back with leading revisionist historian Professor Gary Sheffield about Morel. I pointed out that Morel had shown Britain was responsible for the Great War. He courteously replied that Morel was mistaken in his views, although he didn't explain to me how.

For a Resistance leader like Morel to be elected, too, shows just how much Dundonians knew about what was really going on in the world. There were cheap anti-Establishment pamphlets (the blogs of their day) available to them and I believe they were actually better informed than we are today.

#### PROLONGING THE WAR

The case that the war was deliberately extended is made in Prolonging the Agony: How The Anglo-American Establishment Deliberately Extended WWI by Three-and-a-Half Years, by Scottish authors Jim Macgregor and Gerry Docherty (2018). See also their blog, which includes excerpts: www.ww1hiddenhistory.co.uk/

To my knowledge, no revisionist historian has ever answered their serious charges. Namely, that millions of young men died for no reason other than the Establishment's pursuit of power



and for commercial gain. I draw on their material in Ragtime Soldier.

Jim Macgregor told me that their previous book *Hidden History: The Secret Origins of the First World War*(2013) was also ignored. No mainstream newspaper has reviewed it. There's that media blackout again. Yet through quotes, hard facts, and impressive research, they prove their case beyond reasonable doubt.

Jim and Gerry are far from alone in their views that the war was deliberately prolonged. The great poet Lieutenant Siegfried Sassoon wrote an open letter of protest in 1917:

'I am making this statement as an act of wilful defiance of military authority because I believe that the war is being deliberately prolonged by those who have the power to end it. I am a soldier, convinced that I am acting on behalf of soldiers. I believe that the war upon which I entered as a war of defence and liberation has now become a war of aggression and conquest.'

By comparison, it's often claimed that the generals and politicians were stupid and incompetent and 'sleepwalked into war'.

It's a useful excuse, sometimes

suggested by historians to get the Establishment off the hook, but it's actually nonsense. Whilst personal stupidity certainly played a role, as J. B. Priestley comments above, the terrible conflict was actually calculated, deliberate and horribly clever – as Jim and Gerry show in their books. Just like the way modern wars are created. No one ever 'sleepwalks into war.'

I refer in the story to the possibility that the war was also motivated by a desire to cull the population, because they were striking for better working conditions and were seen as a threat to the Establishment. I quote General Roberts, who praised war as, 'a way to get rid of the great human rottenness that is rife in our industrial cities.' Cities like Dundee, perhaps? It's rare for Establishment figures to talk so openly, usually they know how to keep their mouths shut. But sometimes they just can't help themselves and their masks slip.

General Haig was certainly indifferent to the huge losses. 'We lament too much over death. We should regard it as a change to another room... Three years of war and the loss of one-tenth of the manhood of the nation is not too great a price to pay in so great a cause.'

#### TRADING WITH THE ENEMY

Adam Hochschild's powerful *To End All Wars* (2011) inspired Robbie's letter revealing trading with the enemy during the conflict. On Page 161, Hochschild quotes similar correspondence between the British and German armies. The binoculars used by the British at the Battle of Loos were actually supplied by the German enemy in exchange for rubber!

This cannot be explained away as an isolated incident, a single error of judgement. It was going on all the time. There are numerous other sources that show Britain, Germany and France were all regularly trading arms materials and doing deals with each other during the war: High explosives, poison gas, guns, aluminium for Zeppelins, barbed wire, Zeiss sniper lenses. And more.

For example, 'French bauxite also entered Switzerland freely during the war, was there manufactured into aluminium, and then shipped into Germany for the construction of submarines.' Merchants of Death by H. C. Engelbrecht and F. C. Hanighen (1934).

'Vickers had been supplying the Turkish artillery with shells which were fired into the Australian, New Zealand and British troops as they were scrambling up Anzac Cove... their weapons mashed up into bloody pulp... the flower of Anzac, the youth of Australia and New Zealand, yes, and of the youth of our own country.' Iron, Blood and Profits by George Seldes (1934).

Trading with the enemy is, of course, treason. This is noticeably not a subject covered by today's historians because it would destroy their claim that World War One was a just war.

### THE NEXT RAGTIME SOLDIER STORY?

You must have wondered, as I have, how soldiers could face going over the top to almost certain death. How is that possible? It seems insane. It's heroism far above and beyond the call of duty.

In many cases, like at Loos, I'm sure it was youthful optimism, fighting spirit, comradeship, not wanting to let their mates down, pride in their city, their regiment, their King and Country that motivated them.

But there are darker aspects to the war that I didn't know about when I wrote *Charley's War*, that I'd like to return to in future stories about the Ragtime Soldier and his comrades in the aftermath of war.

One of them is the widespread military supply of cocaine to the troops – 'Forced March' – issued to British, French and German soldiers via a factory in neutral Holland. See:

https://www.vice.com/en\_us/ article/xdvnd3/holland-was-theworlds-biggest-coke-manufacturer Here's what researcher Connie Braam said:

'Forced March packed more punch: it contained both caffeine and cocaine. And that combination really gets you going. I checked it with pharmacologists, and they told me this stuff made you crazy. These pills were really heavy. And millions were made. Which was handy for usage, because taking cocaine in powder form isn't very practical in the trenches... And perhaps a lot of soldiers wouldn't take the stuff voluntarily. So I suspect that in a lot of cases it was mixed with rum. A lot of soldiers were given a mug of rum before they went over the top and out of the trenches. And sometimes it would be rum with coke. Mixing alcohol with cocaine doubles the effects of the stuff. But that's not something that's reflected in the movies or in general knowledge about the Great War.

Hundreds of thousands heavily addicted soldiers were walking around through Europe after the war. I found articles about that in The Times. One article reported about hundreds of addicted veterans roaming the British streets to rob pharmacists.'

It's known that troops were sometimes given the tablets to help them complete long marches, but this is something altogether different, and it would explain the huge number of tablets produced in Holland and sold to the different combatants. So I can see my next story where our Ragtime Soldier finds an addicted and crazy comrade breaking into a chemist's during the aftermath. Robbie learns the shocking truth about why his friend is an addict – after he regularly took his 'rum' ration before 'Going over the top' during the Battle of the Somme. Influenced by Scrymgeour, and having taken the Pledge to please his mum, Robbie was teetotal at the time and thus he was not affected by 'Forced March'.

Revealing the darker side of war doesn't take away from soldiers' courage: it can only add to our understanding of what happened to them. And make us value these heroes all the more as we appreciate just how badly they were treated.

Today, anything that might challenge the Establishment view of the Great War as a tragic, terrible, yet noble and righteous war for freedom simply never happened.

Yet the politicians, generals and arms manufacturers who deliberately started and prolonged the war, 'sacrificing' an entire generation of Ragtime Soldiers for their power and profit, clearly should have faced a Nuremburg-style War Crimes Tribunal after the conflict. Instead, they got away with their crimes. **Scot-free.** 



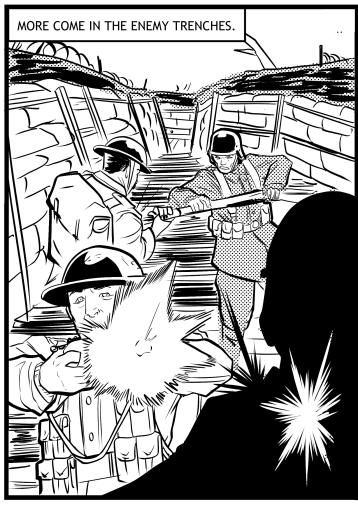


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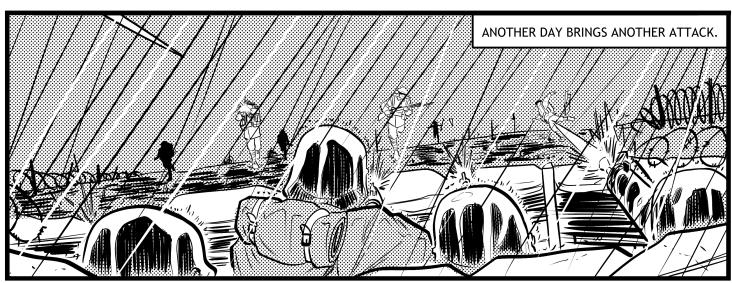
















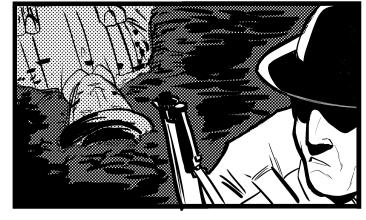


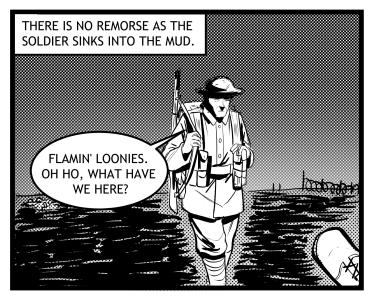


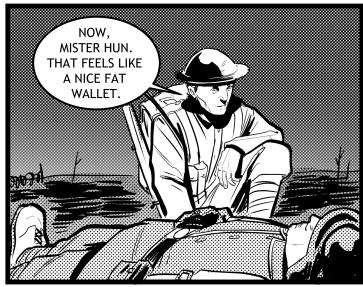






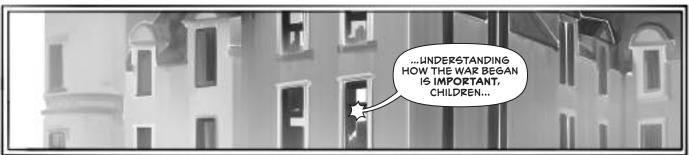


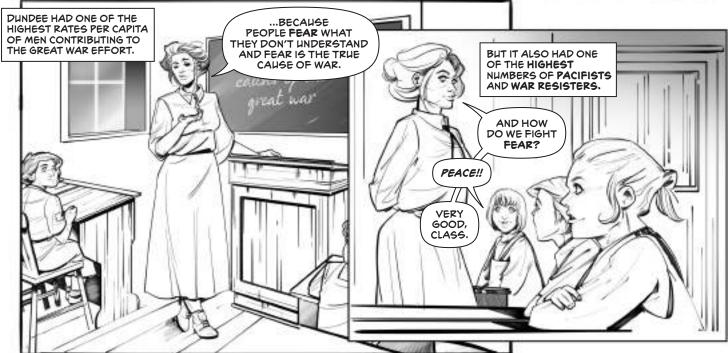














SCRIPT: HAILEY AUSTIN & ERIN KEEPERS ART: ANNA MOROZOVA LETTERS: EMMELINE PANKHURST

AND THOSE WAR LOVERS HAVE NO IDEA WHAT'S COMING THEIR WAY! I DON'T
IMAGINE IT WILL
BE AN EXCITING
PROTEST, MISS
MUNITIONETTE.

I CAN'T BELIEVE
THEY **STOPPED** FIGHTING
FOR THE VOTE AND JUMPED
IN BED WITH THE WAR
EFFORT!



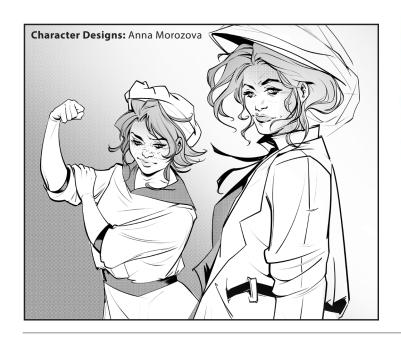




## THUMBNAILS & DESIGNS



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Thumbnails & Character Designs: Elliot Balson





### **CONTRIBUTORS**



PAT MILLS is the creator and first editor of 2000AD. He developed Judge Dredd and is the writer-creator of many of 2000AD's most popular stories. He also created Action and co-created Battle Picture Weekly and Misty. He was the key writer on Crisis, with his political thriller about transnational food corporations, Third World War

www.millsverse.com



HAILEY AUSTIN is a freelance comics writer when she's not writing her comics PhD. She has contributed 'Steel Inferno' and other stories to DC Thomson's Commando comics, and created some of her own. Follow her on Twitter @HaileyJayAustin or contact her at h.z.austin@dundee.ac.uk Image: Letty Wilson



IAN KENNEDY joined DC Thomson's in 1949. During the 1950's Kennedy mainly illustrated war comics. From the 1970s onward, Kennedy began to specialise in science fiction comics, regularly producing work for 2000AD and Starlord. He has also worked for Warlord, Starblazer, Battle, Eagle and continues to work for Commando to this day.



erin Keepers has been active in the comics field since 2014 when she graduated from the University of Dundee with a Masters in Comic Book Studies. Most of her comics are about outer space and/or feminism. Find her work at www.ErinKeepers. com or on Twitter and Instagram @ErinKeepers.



**GARY WELSH** is a graduate of the MDes Comics and Graphic Novels course at the University of Dundee. He is also an alumnus of the undergraduate animation course at **Duncan of Jordanstone** College of Art & Design. He is currently working as a freelance comic book artist in Scotland. Find his work at: www.artstation.com/ aw2000



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**PHILLIP VAUGHAN** is a Senior Lecturer and **Programme Director** at the University of Dundee. He has worked with the BBC, Sony, DC Comics, Warner Bros and EIDOS. He has credits on work such as Braveheart, Farscape, Star Trek, Wallace and Gromit, Tom & Jerry, Commando and Superman. He currently hosts a podcast for Comic Scene Magazine. @phillipbvaughan



CALUM LAIRD is
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He started working at
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ELLIOT BALSON is a Dundee Studies in Comics graduate, and now works as a freelance artist, working on various University projects, Comichaus and self-published work such as Untethered.

Search for 'Ell Balson Art' on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter.

https://www.artstation.com/ellbalson

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### RAGTIME SOLDIER

"Joe's an incredibly hard act to follow, but Gary and Phil have cracked it. Today, Charleys War is selling more strongly than ever, which proves there is a huge audience for antiwar stories, particularly among younger readers. Despite this commercial success, the genre is still sadly neglected in favour of escapist fantasy. I guess because of editors' and publishers' personal preference, even if their audience feels differently. I hope Ragtime Soldier goes some way to changing things and encouraging others to produce stories about the genuine, real life heroes who were our forefathers. There are so many more stories about the truth of WWI waiting to be told..."

#### Pat Mills

Robbie McTaggart is a talented player of Ragtime music, the rebellious new music loved by teenagers; hence why the troops called themselves 'The Ragtime Infantry'. It was the hot music of its day and therefore was hated by parents and the older generation.

Robbie is also a member of Dundee's legendary Black Watch – the Fighting Fourth – who went over the top to the battle cry of 'Marmalade!'

'Ragtime Soldier' is a story with a twist because it also deals with an incredible event after the war when a member of the War Resistance movement sensationally beat Winston Churchill in the Dundee election and became Member of Parliament.

Also featured in this publication is 'The Women's Toon', a story about the Suffragette movement in Dundee, and 'Casualties of War', which is a tale from the World War One trenches.









