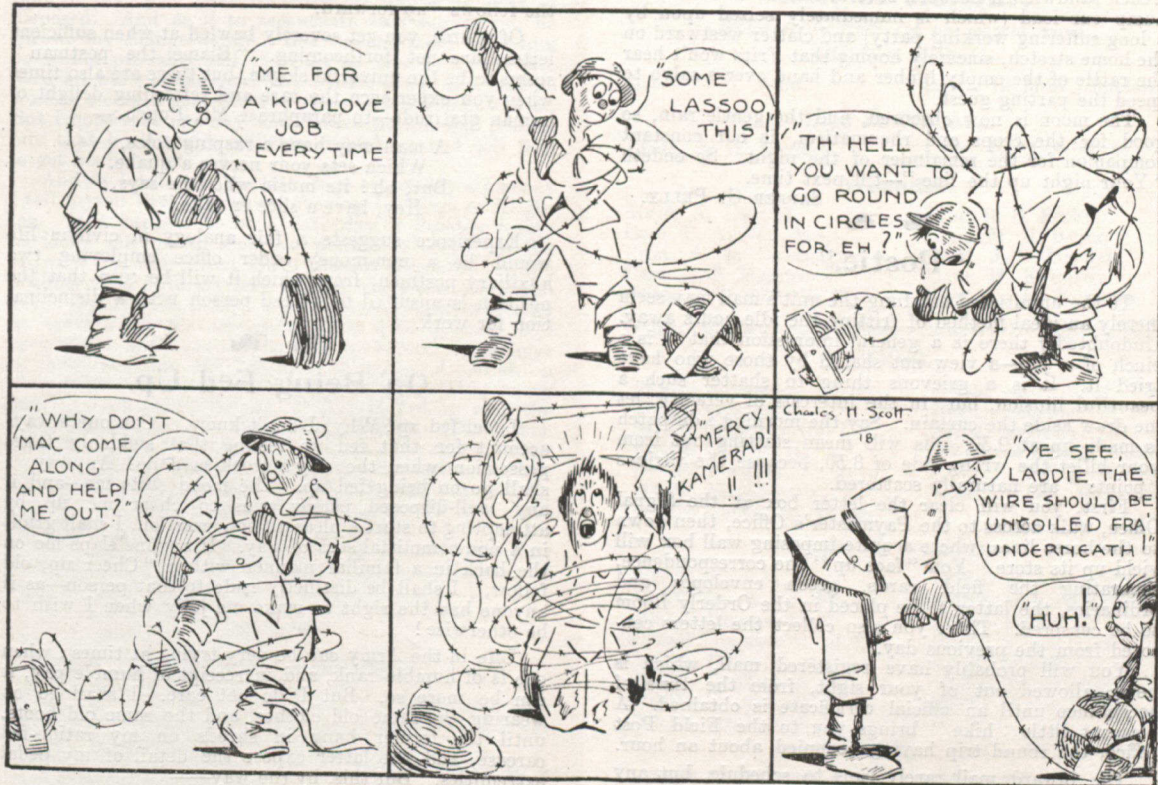


Mick Goes Wiring. Mac Helps Out.



Your Night Up the Line.

"All right, Jack, its your trip up the line to-night. Hitch into a G.S. limber, and be at the dump in twenty minutes. We've got to take a load of picks and shovels to "B" Company Headquarters. Tout sweet."

"But say, Corporal, what the—where." But I am talking to the evening breeze; the N.C.O., having given an order, has beaten it.

So I turn to in the semi-darkness of my bivvy to locate my saddle blanket, gasperator and tin lid, murmuring sweet nothings to myself the while, expressing the wish that twenty thousand blue-black devils might fly away with the entire universe. After having convinced myself that I have everything I need, I hurry across to the horse lines, where I proceed to harness up.

Why "the other fellow" puts his harness on top of mine; what causes tent guy ropes to acquire that unaccountable tendency to grow at night, so as to cross the path; and however the mischief our long eared friends can stretch their heads ten feet into the air when I try to put the bits into their hay destroyers, are minor problems.

"Come on! get a wiggle on, its time we started." Its our friend the Corporal, booted, spurred, and mounted, prepared to lead the way. I get on the required wiggle, also the near moke, and off we go. After having arrived at the dump and spent an hour, more or less, hunting for the man in charge (who was here a moment ago, but has just gone round the corner,

and will be back in "two shakes of a lamb's tail"), we get our load of "instruments of torture," and turn our faces trenchward.

The moon is now winking at us through rifts in the flying clouds, helping to light us on our ramble over shellpoxed roads, and through villages that were, but are not.

Bare, crumbling walls of chalk blocks and bricks, still towering as grave-stones to the age of peace, are all that now remain.

We see in imagination the things that were but a few short years ago, standing in such vivid contrast to that which is. Surely this is the "Damnation of Desolation." All about us the face of the earth has altered; only the same old moon gazing down on change and decay. What romance is here, what infinite—BANG!!—all our little world is filled with noise and light-blinding light. Our romantic meditations shot into the air, and our hearts into our mouths. The animals plunge and strain at the tugs. Might as well be killed as scared to death. But we soon come to earth, and realize that one of our "heavies" within a few yards of us has just coughed a nine-point-two across to Fritz.

We continue on our way, for the time more interested in our immediate surroundings than in the days that are dead.

The nightly "straff" has started, and guns are barking all along the line. A few Fritz shells come over, screeching vindictively "Ohooco! got you." But that's where they are fooled. They haven't got you at all.