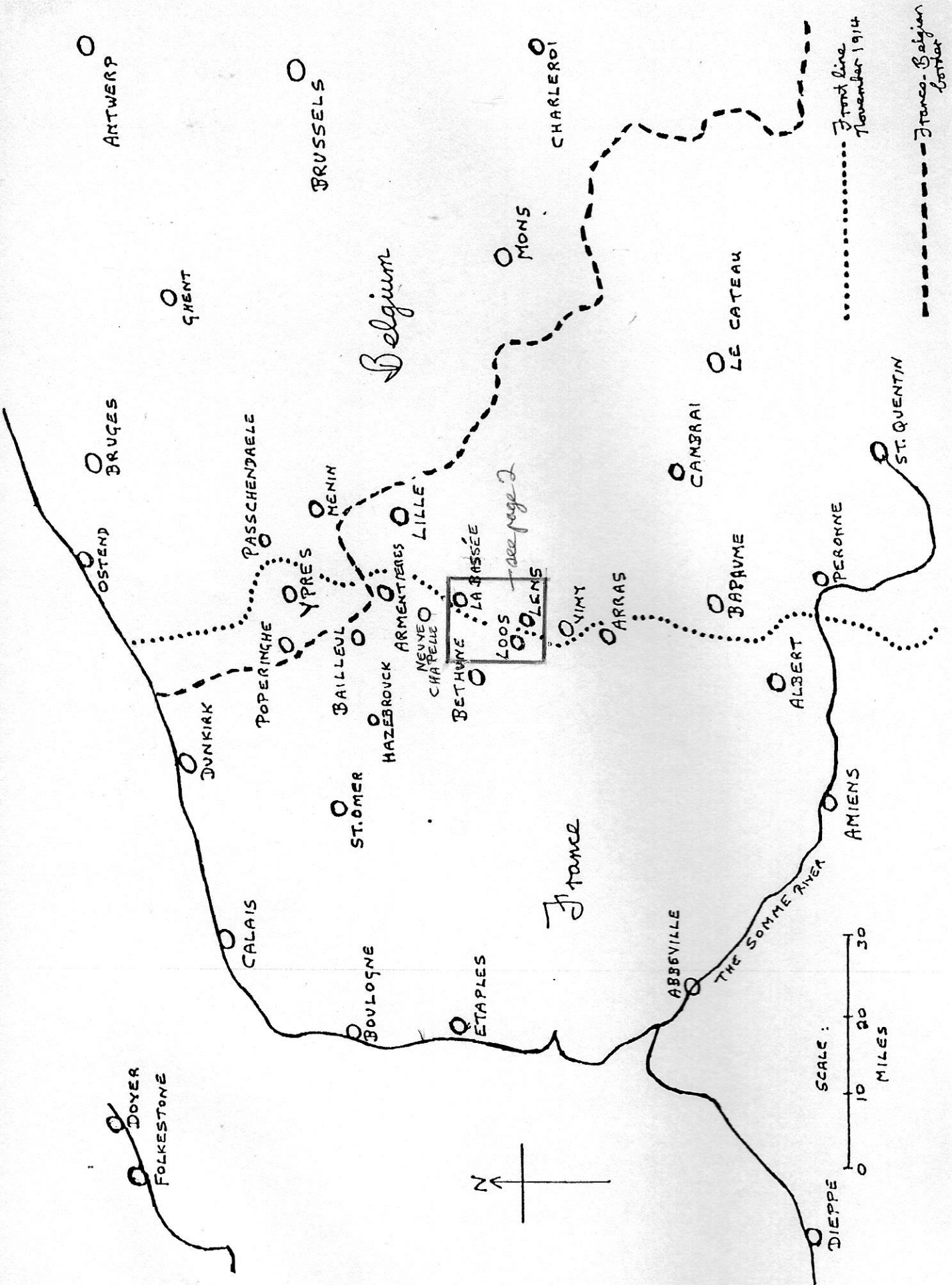


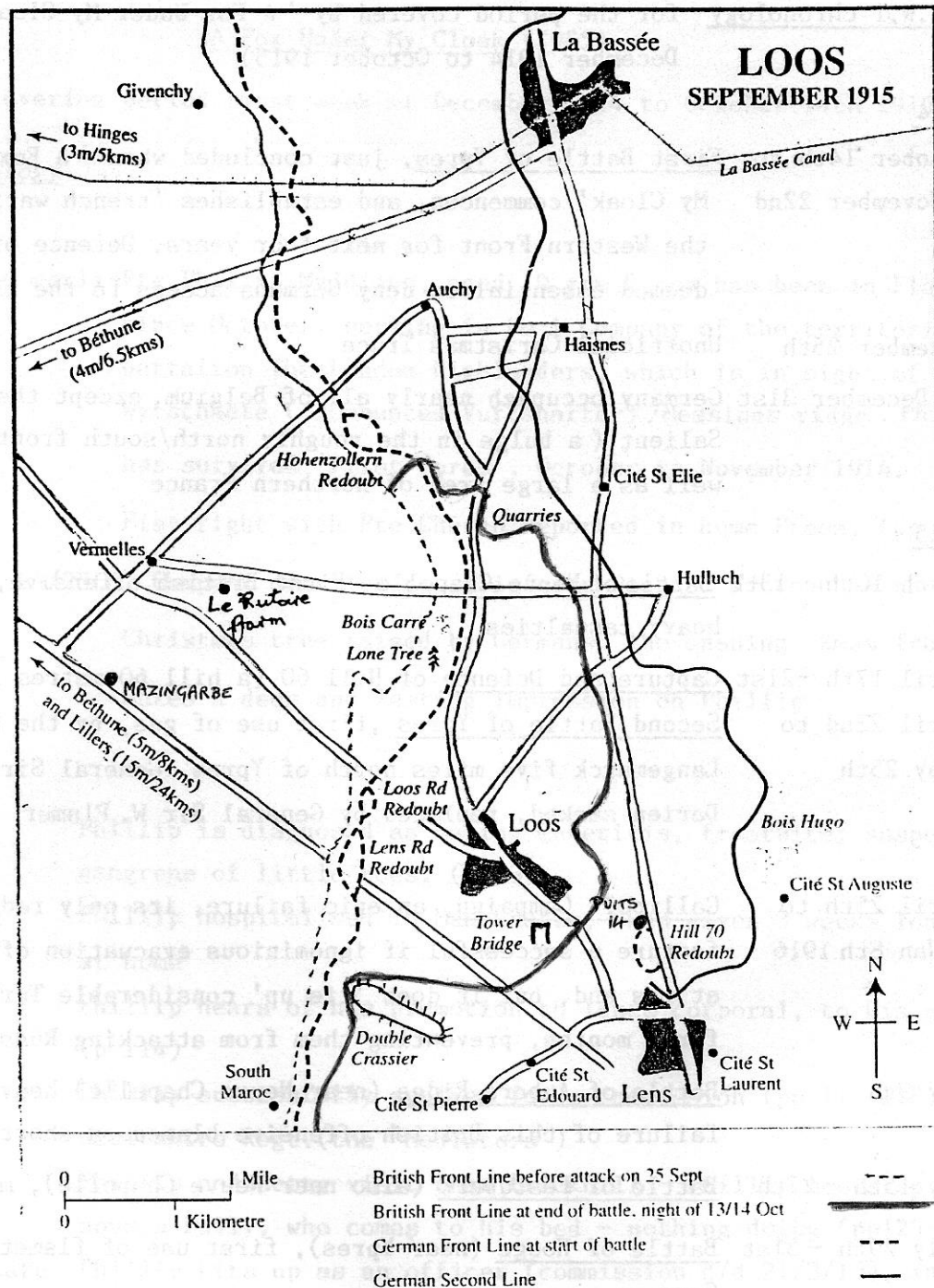
# A FOX UNDER MY CLOAK

## AN INDEX









Liddell Hart, the military historian and himself an officer in Flanders, in his 'History of the First World War' (1930), quotes the Official History: the battle 'had not improved the general situation on any way and had brought about nothing but useless slaughter of infantry'. He asserts that 'British (including 'colonial' troop ) casualties amounted to over 50,000, possibly 60,000, the Germans barely 20,000'. Richard Holmes, a later historian and researcher, claims that '2632 British casualties were caused by their own gas, but only seven of these died. Altogether, the British lost over 43,000 (including three generals), the Germans half as many.'

'Casualties' included those killed, wounded, missing believed killed, and those taken prisoner.

'Losses' usually means those killed.

All this for about six square miles of territory, in some three weeks.

A W.W.1 chronology for the period covered by 'A Fox Under My Cloak', (early December 1914 to October 1915)

# 1914

October 14th to November 22nd First Battle of Ypres, just concluded when 'A Fox Under My Cloak' commences, and establishes 'trench warfare' on the Western Front for next four years. Defence of Ypres deemed essential to deny Germans access to the Channel ports

December 25th Unofficial Christmas Truce

by December 31st Germany occup~~ies~~ nearly all of Belgium, except the Ypres Salient (a bulge in the roughly north/south front line), as well as a large area of northern France

# 1915

March 10th - 13th Battle of Neuve Chapelle First British offensive, inconclusive, heavy casualties

April 17th - 21st Capture and Defence of Hill 60 (a hill 60 metres high near Ypres)

April 22nd to May 25th Second Battle of Ypres, first use of gas, by the Germans, near Langemarck five miles north of Ypres. General Sir Horace Smith-Darrien sacked, replaced by General Sir W. Plumer

April 25th to Jan 8th 1916 Gallipoli Campaign, an epic failure, its only redeeming feature a successful if ignominious evacuation of Allied forces at its end, but it does 'tie up' considerable Turkish forces for 8 months, preventing them from attacking Russia

May 9th Battle of Aubers Ridge (near Neuve Chapelle) heavy losses, again, failure of this British offensive blamed on shortage of shells

May 15th - 27th Battle of Festubert (also near Neuve Chapelle), more heavy losses

July 29th - 31st Battle of Hooze (near Ypres), first use of flamethrowers, by Germans

September 25th to October 13th Battle of Loos horrific loss of life on both sides, failure of largest British Army<sup>offensive</sup> in history to date blamed on the holding back of reserves by C-in-C Field Marshal Sir John French, who is sacked and relaced by General Sir Douglas Haig. First use of gas by British

October 13th first Zeppelin bombing raid on London

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A Fox Under My Cloak (1955)

covering period first week of December 1914 to October 14th 1915

A Chronology

1914

December, early-Pte Phillip Maddison, aged 19 yrs 8 mos has been in Flanders since October, serving in No 1 Company of the territorial battalion The London Highlanders, which is in sight of the Wytschaete (pronounced Vurtsharter) /Messines ridge . Phillip has survived 'First Ypres', October to November 1914.

Fist fight with Pte Church reported in home Press. (pp 28-31)

December 24/25th Company detailed to re-inforce Diehard T-trench - they see Christmas tree raised by Germans. The ensuing Xmas Truce makes a deep and lasting impression on Phillip

1915

January Phillip is diagnosed as having enteritis, frostbite, suspected gangrene of little toes. (p 73)

February Phillip hospitalised in Manchester, then given 3 weeks leave at home  
Phillip hears of his promotion to lance-corporal, to his surprise (p 114)

Phillip successfully applies for a commission (pp 113-118) in the Gaultshire Regt.(the 'Mediators')

Phillip and Hetty visit Beau Brickhill - Phillip meets up with cousin Polly, who comes to his bed - nothing doing (pp125-126)

March, late Phillip kits up as an officer (commission d/d 21/3/15), and visits Uncle Hilary, Aunt Bee and Aunt Vicky in Hampshire .

Aunt Bee comes to his bed - nothing doing (pp 134-140, & p 168)

Phillip attends officers' instruction course at Sevenoaks (145) where he buys a motorcycle (pp 151-153)

At home to collect his kit he tries in vain to give his regimental badge in the form of a brooch to Helena Rolls.(p 156)

At the end of the course he reports to a Territorial unit The London Highlanders, in Suffolk (this is Newmarket, never named) (p 162) attached, it seems, to the Cambridge(shire) Regiment (the

- 1915  
(cont'd) 'Cantuvellaunians'), the battalion C.O. being Colonel 'Strawballs'.  
(p 163) Phillip is posted to C Company, billeted at Godolphin House in the High Street (Newmarket). (p 167) In ch 11 ('Life is Fun') and ch 12 ('Life is a Spree'), chs 14 & 15 ('Spree continued') Phillip, the new boy on the block, unworldly, inexperienced, who has not been to a 'decent' school and is clearly not an Oxbridge man, does not know the 'form'. Naive to the point of stupidity he suffers ragging amounting to bullying, but after setting fire to the colonel's newspaper he gets the message and applies to go back to the Front. (pp 188-189)
- May 7th Lusitania sunk by German submarine
- June Phillip meets 'Fairy' and her sisters at The Green House again - this is during May Week which of course is held in June. Meanwhile he has learned to ride a horse. (pp 210-211)
- July Strangely, the July Races are held in July. Lieut Baldersby (of Baldersby House, Baldersby, Berks) who made life hard for Phillip at Newmarket gets married, with suitable high-jinks. (p 230-233)
- August We learn that cousin Willie is at Gallipoli (p 233)
- August, mid Phillip's battalion arrive at a village near Southend-on-Sea for a training and musketry course (p 237)  
Phillip applies for a transfer to the 'Navvies Battalion', of the Middlesex Regt, whose C.O. is Colonel Broad. (p 243)  
Still at Newmarket Phillip has a quick 'fling' with 'Fairy', and tells Captain 'Jonah' Whale that he fears that he might have contracted V.D. (p 249)
- August, late Phillip is at home, prior to taking a draft of London Highlanders to France, plucks a cockerel for the Rolls family and learns that Helena loves his cousin Bertie Cakebread. (pp 259-262)  
Phillip escorts 60 London Highlanders to Boulogne (p 267) then entrains to Bethune (p 269) in time for the Big Push towards Lille. Billeted in canvas huts, he volunteers for what he hopes will be a cushy job. (p 271) Phillip and two others proceed to Helfaut via Hazebrouck and St Omer to train as gas officers. At the end of the course Phillip with his squad of 3 sergeants and 30 corporals are posted to Verquin just south of Bethune. (p 272)
- September, mid Phillip in trenches near Loos village for Big Push. He meets for the first time the amazing whisky-swilling Captain ('Spectre, Call me Westy') West, M.C. (p 273)
- September 18/19th Phillip's squad prepare the gas cylinders, in sight of Loos village and Lens town beyond the 'Tower Bridge', a coal-mine winding

1915 (cont'd) gear. (pp 279-282) A tremendous artillery barrage prepares both sides for the coming conflict, the main event of 1915, featured large in this novel. General Haig, who is to fight this battle, urges Field-Marshal Sir John French to move up reserves in support. Sir John, gnawed by anxiety, 'a fox under his cloak' (p 338), is unwilling to commit raw troops, and loses his job.

September 23rd fire breaks out in Cité St Pierre, south of Loos, behind the German lines. At night, the gas section is billeted in Mazingarbe (pp 279-282)

Sept 24th (Y/Z night) Phillip ordered to stand by, in position, by 7 p.m.

25th (Z morning) Zero hour 5.50 ack emma for release of gas, infantry attack to be at 6.30. (p 297) The Battle of Loos begins. (p 307) We find Phillip and 'Spectre' in No Man's Land near Lone Tree (a shattered cherry tree at the edge of the Bois Carré), beyond the front line, a belt of barbed wire stretching southwards to the Loos Road Redoubt (a heavily fortified German position). The Company is ordered to make another frontal attack on uncut wire. Phillip hopes that his gas brassard (armband, I think) might excuse him from taking an active part in the battle, (p 316), and he thinks that he may have had a whiff of his own gas. Spectre West is severely wounded (p 319) and asks Phillip to give his love to his mother at the family pub The Grapes, Lime Street, London. He also instructs him to get round the enemy flank at Lone Tree. Phillip, now the senior surviving officer, takes over command of the battalion (a colonel's job). (pp 320-321) He takes the battalion forward through the wrecked Bois Carré around the Lone Tree to pass the enemy flank as ordered by Westy. To his surprise scores of Germans, officers and men, surrender to him (p 324) just before Captain 'Pluggy' Marsden shows up to take over. (p 326), and Phillip hurries to report back to Mazingarbe, past Hill 69 (on which the Loos Road Redoubt is situated). He meets a Scottish major who tells him that the German front is broken. (p 328) At Mazingarbe he tells the major of sappers that the Lone Tree position has been given up by the Germans (p 329), and in turn is told that 'things are going well'. (p 330)

The Medical Officer examines Phillip and finds a heart 'condition' and some inflammation from gas, and awards him four days light duty. (p 336) After a short amazing interlude with his batman 'Twinkle', Phillip comes across some of the old 'Cantuvellaunians', 'Strawballs', 'Jonah', 'the 'Infant Hercules' and others, but avoids them.



1915

Sept 25th By now Haig's First Army is spent, two thirds of the combatants  
(cont'd) killed or wounded.( ch 23)

Phillip meets up with the Cantuvellaunians again and suggests to Colonel 'Strawballs' and then to Brigadier 'Crasher' that they might press on with the attack ordered for 11.30 pip emma by Haig (p 348) towards the 'Tower Bridge' and the Hohenzollern Redoubt, to fill the gap left by the Germans, before dark. Phillip is asked to show the way (p 349) towards the burning village of Loos on their right and Lone Tree and the Bois Carré on the left, eventually, after midnight, reaching Le Rutoire farm to find the transport section, rations, water and ammunition. (pp 353-354) No actual combat is recorded, actually the Cantuvellaunians, without water, seem to have lost their way in the dimly moon-lit shambles. In the morning the attack is resumed, but overnight the empty and unwired German positions have been made good and the Cantuvellaunians are mown down by machine-gun fire and shells fired over open sights from Hulluch. 'Strawballs', 'Jonah the Whale', Major Rhodes, Captain O'Connor and many more are killed

Sept 26th Phillip is taken prisoner but allowed to lead wounded British back to Le Rutoire farm (pp 358-361) past the Lone Tree again. He meets cousin Lieut. Bertie Cakebread (p.363) and explains that he is a gas officer and supposed to be at Mazingarbe, where he soon arrives, to be met by 'Twinkle'. (p 365)

Sept 27th The following day after breakfast Phillip wanders around the broken ground again within sound of German machine-guns on Hill 70 (a 70-metre high hill) just north of the town of Lens. He climbs Tower Bridge, the huge twin-tower colliery winding-gear within sight of the Double Crassier, a vast double slag heap a mile south of Loos.(ch 27) From the top of the iron towers he looks down upon the battlefield of Loos. North<sup>h</sup>wards was Hulluch, two miles away, and beyond that La Bassee and Auchy. There too lay the dreaded Hohenzollern Redoubt, now back in German hands. On the left were Vermelles and Bethune; to the south was Vimy Ridge.

Back in his billet, still on 'light duty', Phillip finds that Twinkle, now revealed as 'Mad Jack' the deserter (pp 380-381) has been arrested by the military police. Then he himself is arrested as a suspected deserter but is released when vouched for by 'Nosey' (Major Orlebar, now a colonel).(p 382)

Phillip learns of the enormous losses in the battalion. Westy, minus an eye and a hand, is in the Duchess of Westminster's hospital at



1915

September, Le Touquet (this hospital was in fact the converted main gambling late hall of the famous casino, funded by Constance, the duchess).

Phillip is posted to No 1 Company as acting company commander, and we find him on horseback. (p 383)

October, Phillip thinks to visit cousin Bertie at Verquinal but misse him. first week (p 386)

Another assault, with gas, upon the Hohenzollern Redoubt is being prepared when Phillip's exchange into the 'Diehards' (Middlesex Regt) comes through, and although 'Nosey' has just decided to confirm him in the command of No 1 Company with the rank of temporary captain he sets out for Bethune station en route for England. At Bethune he learns that Bertie has been killed and his body brought back for burial at Vermelles.(p 388)

Phillip leaves the Gaultshires with some regret, although he looks forward to being a non-combatant in the 'Navvies Battalion' of the 'Diehards'. (p 389) Arriving at Victoria he catches a glimpse of 'Crasher' and his brigade major 'Little Willie'. He reads newspaper headlines 'Loos battle flares up'.

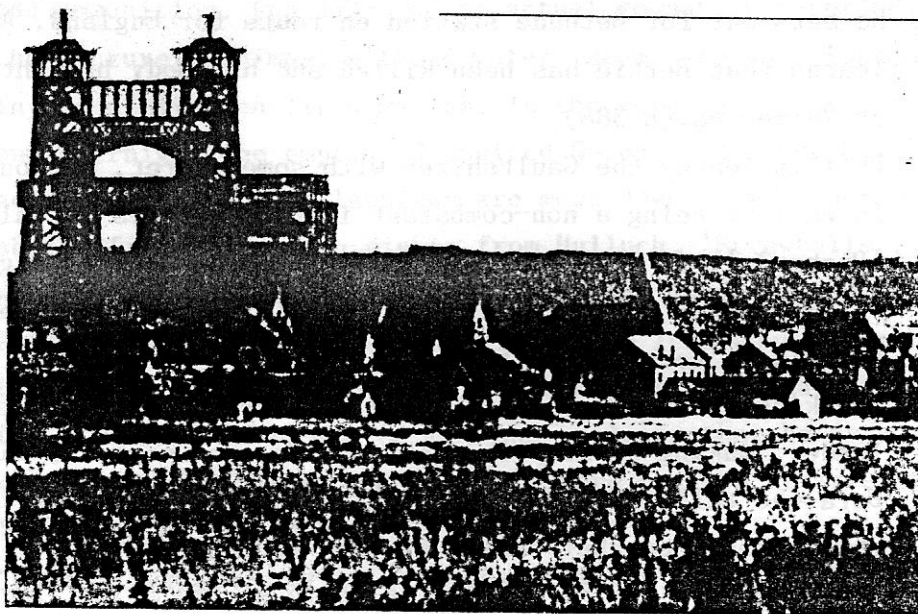
October 11th Walking across Trafalgar Square he hears Sylvia, the suffragette leader, making a 'Stop the War' speech, and meets up with his Aunt Dora who tells him that a Pte J.S.Nobbs has been shot for desertion, and he realises that this must have been his ex-batman Twinkle.(p 392) Arriving at Hillside Road he calls in at the Rolls' home to commiserate with Helena about Bertie's death. He pops in to see his own mother and then Mrs Neville on his way to Freddy's bar.(p 399) In Freddy's there are two bowler-hatted strangers looking out for the bogus Major Wilkins. Remembering poor old Twinkle (and Spectre West) Phillip and Eugene walk down to the Roebuck inn to warn the billiards-playing Wilkins who bolts on to a bus.(p 403-405) Back at Freddy's the chums meet up with Tom Cundall of the Royal Flying Corps, Tom Ching and others. The lugubrious 'Sailor' Jenkins tells him that it is known that spies are about, and warns him about his suspicious attitude towards the Germans.

October 13th There are also Zeppelins about. (ch 30) (The first Zeppelin bombing raid took place on October 13th.) A bomb falls nearby. The inebriated Dr Dashwood insists on taking Phillip and Eugene into the Conservative Club for a drink, but they soon escape to Mrs Neville's, listening to anti-aircraft guns.

1915

October 13th At home, Mavis is panicking, but cousin Polly, visiting,  
(cont'd) walks with Phillip on the Hill, and they get together on  
the grass,(pp 414-415) while Richard, Special Constable,  
fagged out, labours on with his air-raid warden's duties.

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'Tower Bridge', Loos, before and after ('Fox', pp 375-380)