

TRENCH TERMS AND THEIR MEANINGS

(continued)

Listening Post.

A squad of carefully trained soldiers placed between the lines in "no-man's-land" to gauge the ration shortage of the enemy by the amount of noise he makes in eating. Have been known to detect signs of Fritzie coming over on a raid, but this is unusual. The Scouts like to have lots of Listening Posts out as it saves them the trouble of roaming no-man's-land, and, incidentally, adds to their span of life--and sleep.

« Minnie. »

A dark lady of uncertain age and vicious intentions who swoops down on unsuspecting Canadian soldiers and heralds her arrival with much unseemly noise. All self-respecting soldiers refuse to associate with her unless compelled to do so, and many revile her in absolutely unprintable terms. This seems to have no effect on the hussy who persists in her unwelcome visits. She is of enemy origin and her full name in her own country is "Minenwerfer".

« M. and D. »

The total amount of sympathy handed out to suffering humanity by members of the medical profession on morning sick-parades. The "M" means "medecine" which consists generally of sarcastic advice on the question of beating it and not returning thither. The "D" represents "duty" which in these unsettled days may mean anything from going over the top to the latest thing in drill, such as turning about in four movements without letting the feet touch the ground.

« No-Man's — Land ».

A stretch of wild waste land between two rows of entrenchments set aside as a playground for Scouts, Listening Posts and Patrols. These various details are furnished by each of two opposing forces who hold the entrenchments, and they are allowed to go out each night and play at "Catch me-stroked me". Many of these details are of a very shy and retiring disposition so that there is very little "catching", or "stroking".

This land is only good for cultivating shell-holes, mine-craters, wire and stakes, of which large crops often spring up in a single night.

« O. P. »

Commonly pronounced "Oh, Pip". This is merely an abbreviation for "Observation Post", and may be any place from the top of a factory chimney to a little two by twice cubby-hole with a loop-hole in the worst straffed corner of a trench. The object of it is to allow the observer to see Fritz without embarrassing him by letting him know he is being watched. When this object is attained Fritzie gets straffed; when it isn't the the observer gets straffed--and they put up a little white cross, select a new O. P., and indent for another observer.

« Overland. »

A hair-raising, temper-drestraying journey to the trenches at night, when communication-trenches have caved in and the Subway isn't

running. Consists chiefly of falling into disused trenches, tripping over telephone wires, slipping into shell-holes, getting mixed with barbed-wire and flopping to avoid machine-gun fire in about the following proportions. Taking the average number of mishaps on any one trip at 240, the percentage would be: "falls" 27 %, "trips" 19 %, "slips" 24 %, "getting mixed" 7 %, "flops" 21 %, "easy going" 1 %.

« Over the Top. »

A much over-rated pastime indulged in by the infantry when in need of a change of scenery and more souvenirs. Usually takes place in the early hours of the morning when self-respecting people would prefer to sleep, and has for its object the establishment of a new no-man's-land where fresh crops of wire, etc., may be raised.

« Pioneer Party. »

A band of desperate citizens clad in khaki who steal out in the middle of the night to tear up the face of this fair country with picks and shovels. Judging by their remarks these individuals generally work under protest. Their chief mission appears to be constructing elaborate entrenchments for the edification of Fritzie's artillerymen who otherwise would have nothing to shoot at.

« Resting. »

A period of torture for infantry during which they are taken away from their trench homes to some compound in rear, and assiduously instructed in the art of cleaning buttons and shining mess-tins, saluting by number and by request, and such intricate knowledge as the correct manner of pointing the toe in the "slow march". After a couple of weeks of "rest" they are generally quite willing to return to the trenches.

« Rations. »

An all-embracing term covering things eatable and things issued to eat, such as "Biscuits", "Bully" and "Maconachies". It is believed that in the earlier stages of the war rum also was issued as a ration, and many old soldiers insist that this was done, but in view of the many incredible stories they tell of those early days very little faith is placed in their statements.

Support Trench.

Originally intended to contain soldiers who would support their comrades in front in case of trouble. The only things it supports now are Batmen, Runners, Scouts, H. Q., etc., and anyone who really objects to living in the frontest of front lines.

« Sausage-right ! Sausage--left ! »

A terse expression of warning issued generally in a falsetto voice as a long sinister shape tumbles over itself through the air towards our trenches, usually followed by a wild scramble in the direction indicated — Oh, no, dear reader, not to partake of the toothsome morsel, but to get away from it. This particular type of sausage being a variety of overgrown "Minnie" loaded for bear, and not very particular just what happens to you should you stay around to hear its little talk.

(To be continued)