

THE MUSHROOM TOWNS of the WEST OUTDONE ALL PRE-WAR RECORDS BROKEN HOW THE HOME OF THE PIONEER GROWS OVERNIGHT

We have seen and taken part in land rushes, theatre queues, sports lineups, bargain crushes, tramway free-for-alls and dinner parades, but never before reaching the front in such scenes of human striving and resource, determination to succeed at all costs and hurried industry as in the creation of Brigade Transports Lines in France.

Not being in a position to know the inner workings of these matters, we assume that Those in Authority decree that a certain area will be available for settlement on a defined date. Thereupon the Q.M.'s, T.O.'s and underlings affected develop an unprecedented — and occasionally tiresome — agitation. They scheme and plot and plan : they silt and weigh and discard : they make eleventh hour decisions and last minute alterations, but when the hour is finally named they show a cunning and power of contriving with which their best friends would never credit them. Silence and speed are their mottoes. They cajole, threaten and entreat to procure transportation for their thirty five pound excess officers' kit, and for all the goods and chattels which time and opportunity have brought to their doors. In the dead of night, it may be, or at that hour when soldiers yawn and the tired give forth their profoundest snore, they despatch an advance party to spy out the land, gifted with unlimited powers to beg, borrow, or otherwise acquire the material needed. These unfortunates lose their way generally, not being gifted with second sight, intuition and nerve to the degree insisted on by all Q.M.'s, T.O.'s, etc., but impelled by the urge of necessity, thrust forward by a force that knows no relenting, they, at length, reach the spot indicated, or near enough to satisfy all but the Q.M.'s, T.O.'s, etc., who have failed to get there first.

If there are other persons in occupation of the tract they proceed to cultivate amicable relations with them, invite them casually to partake of the vinous product of the country, while their confederates « go through » the victims belongings on search for the indispensable tent, the invaluable « tarp » and the humble ground-sheet.

In the chilly dawn, or by the light of the crescent moon, they scour the surrounding country for such debris of camps and hutments as promises to yield a harvest of material. And then, with hay-wire, tar paper, packing cases, gun coverings, corrugated iron and bad language, begin to throw up the shelter needed for themselves and the stranger within their lines.

Later, when the lines have been furnished with horses, soldiers, stores and chloride of lime, the camp begins to assume the appearance of a populated town. Then, when every head has its covering from the dews of night and the suns rays by day, the Q.M.'s, T.O.'s and underlings look on their handiwork and find that it is good.

Perhaps it was the same officer who noticed two peculiar looking vehicles in the transport lines.

« I never knew we had ammunition limbers in the Infantry, » he remarked. « Are those for eighteen pounders ? »

« Those, sir, are the limbers for the Mulligan Battery. » replied the Sergeant Cook as he pridefully surveyed the freshly painted forward halves of his travelling kitchens.

Medical Officer coming down trench to dressing station says to one of a long line of men :

« What's this, a working party ? »

« Yes, sir, come to carry away pills. »

DICTIONARY OF WAR TERMS

A.D.M.S. — Ailment Department — Main Squeeze
A.P.M. — A superior sort of officer done in khaki with red trimmings. The terror of evil-doers. Chief mission — to make troops wonder why they enlisted.
« Arf-a-Mo. » — A war-time substitute for tobacco and cigarettes.

Bacon. — A mythical breakfast dish rumoured to have been issued to soldiers sometime in the forgotten past. It is every soldier's ambition to get two pieces for souvenirs.

Baths. — A place where soldiers exchange old friends for new.

Batman. — The appendage of authority, the price of promotion and the crowning sorrow of commissioned rank. Rather resembles a soldier.

Bay. — The portion of a trench between two traverses. So named because it is frequently under water.

Bayonet. — A domestic utensil invaluable to cooks and quarter-master sergeants. May be used for an infinite number of purposes from cleaning puttees to picketing horses. Mistakenly supposed by some to be a weapon of offence.

Barbed Wire. — The only perennial crop in the zone of hostilities. Grows overnight. Cultivated by both sides.

Beef — Bully. — One of the chief horrors of this awful war.

Biscuit. — The other chief horror.

Bivvy. — Short for bivouac. Generally very short. Liberally furnished with clay and crawlers. A home for destitute rats.

Blanco. — A substance, not a swear-word. Designed to add the final touch to a soldier's troubles.

Blighty. — A place of everlasting peace and enjoyment. Regarded by troops as a sort of annex to Heaven. The reward of good soldiering and successful skrimshanking.

Alternatively, it may be a fairly severe wound. When a stretcher bearer tells you that you've « got a nice blighty » — make your will.

Bomber. — A peddler of Mill's Pills for Prussian Persons.

Bombing Post. — A warehouse, or show-room, of the Mills Manufacturing Co., Unlimited., where their local representatives push their goods in the face of considerable competition from dealers in foreign substitutes.

Bomb-Proof. — A sort of cyclone cellar with a reinforced roof designed to stand between the Brains of the Army and immortality.

Alternatively. — A job with the same characteristics and for the same people. Spoken of slightly by all troops unable to land one.

Bread. — (See « Bacon. »)

Cold Feet. — A trench ailment aggravated by hard work, loud noises and unpleasant sights.

Symptoms. — An intense and constant desire to land an « bomb-proof » job : reluctance to leave a « bivvy : » susceptibility to sickness of all kinds.

Cook. — A private who by reason of his occupation wields more power than a major, puts on more side than a subaltern and makes more enemies than a Hun. Occasionally cooks food.

(To be continued)

Dedicated to the R.S.M. who likes to paddle around.
(Tune. — « Happy Land. »)

There is a swimming hole
Not far away
Where we took the Major to
Only yesterday,
Oh ! how the Major yelled
When that deep hole he beheld,
Oh ! now the guide got hell
— Ten miles away.