



# TRENCH TERMS AND THEIR MEANINGS.



**T**RENCH slang is a language all its own. No dictionary will give you the meaning of half its words. For the benefit of our young Canadians who are preparing for the great struggle, and also for our American cousins who will soon be with us in the land of mud and cheap (but nasty) beer, we publish a short selection of terms in common use in the trenches, with an explanation of their meaning. Study this list thoroughly, and when you arrive in the trenches you will be able to greet the old soldier in his own language, whilst the shrapnel bursts around and the machine-gun beats its devil's tattoo in your ears—that is, of course, if the old soldier hasn't disappeared into the deepest dug-out on the first whisper of the approaching storm. There are some things we cannot teach you by mail!

**"Archies."**—This is the name given to a rapid-firing gun that is used to prevent our men looking up at enemy aeroplanes, and thus giving their position away. On an enemy aeroplane appearing, our Archies immediately commence to fire into the air at a great rate. The shells, bursting high, scatter fragments of old iron in all directions, and our troops at once beat it for cover. The enemy plane passing over thus fails to discover them. Should the guns accidentally hit one of Fritz's planes, a note of apology is immediately sent to the Kaiser, in conformity with the usual diplomatic custom.

**"Bango."**—This is a term usually applied to a violent upheaval of the earth in many places, coupled with queer noises and deafening crashes. If this appears to be on our side of No Man's Land, duck for cover. If it appears to be taking place on Fritz's side—duck just the same, as it will be our turn next probably.

**"Barrage."**—A name invented by the artillery to describe their efforts to hit an imaginary line in the atmosphere with an unlimited number of shells at the same time. We generally move this imaginary line forwards, and Fritz moves his backwards, "according to pre-arranged plan." A good motto is "Never look a gift barrage in the face." It is much healthier to chase it up from behind.

**"Big Bug."**—Not a variety of beetle, but a kind of superior "Brass Hat," who periodically descends upon us in a Rolls-Royce car, and demands that we produce our horses and our mules, our equipment and our arms, and lay bare our innermost souls for his inspection and edification. Inspires a kind of paralytic terror in everyone.

**"Bath-Mat."**—A kind of raft designed by the Engineers for the purpose of navigating communication trenches. Should the water in these trenches subside, they are then used as a sidewalk, and industrious sappers are sent to remove occasional slats, so that infantry will learn to watch where they are treading after falling through the holes so made.

**"Brass-Hats."**—These are normal human beings in civil life, who, after enlisting, are dressed up in the clothing of an officer, but with the addition of scarlet-coloured bands around the hat and various parts of the clothing, and the addition of gold leaves on the peak of the hat. The junior of these individuals are usually employed on the game of "Passed to you, please." This consists of sending a page of meaningless type-written symbols to some other "Brass-Hat," who scrawls something illegible on it, and passes it to another "Brass-Hat," or returns it. Should any "Brass-Hat" forget it, or keep it too long, the sender immediately follows it up with a "chaser." The "Brass-Hat" who gets out the largest number of chasers in a given time is deemed to be the most brilliant, and is awarded the Military Cross.

There are cases recorded of "Brass-Hats" having been seen in the trenches.

**"Bunk."**—An appliance that has been handed down from the Spanish Inquisition, used for torturing individuals. It is constructed of wood, chicken wire, and holes, and is supposed to serve as a bed. Batmen strongly recommend their use to officers for sleeping purposes, as no officer has ever been known to hesitate a second in getting out of one, however early he may have been awakened.

**"Bivvy."**—Generally an edifice erected by the private soldier from scraps of old corrugated iron, empty petrol tins, mail-sacks, sandbags, and a few pieces of stolen timber. When completed it looks like something between a battle-cruiser, Indian's wigwam, and a mansion in the Tudor style. The doors of these edifices are never closed, for the simple reason "there ain't no doors."

**"Blighty."**—A moderately painful, moderately severe wound that will allow the proud owner the privilege of hitting it across country at a fair pace, and yet guarantee his passage to England.

— Also a name given to an imaginary (to most of us) country across the Channel, where you immediately become a hero, instead of a d—d nuisance, and where pretty girls take you out in limousines for joy-rides in the country (maybe). A most desirable place.

**"Belgique."**—A kind of non-transferable ticket entitling one to a journey through aerial spaces with the prospect of becoming an angel, should one's Field Conduct Sheet be sufficiently spotless. Often acquired by people desiring a Blighty. Most men would prefer not to take a chance.

**"Communication-Trench."**—A ghastly gash in the earth's surface designed by the Engineers as an excuse for demanding infantry working parties. Generally wanders at will around the country with the object of landing the traveller back where he started. Non-swimmers should always travel over the top.

**"Ducking."**—Not being immersed in the village pond, or anything like that. Simply the gentle art of bending the upper part of one's body over until parallel with the lower portions. To be effective this movement should be done in the umpteenth part of a second, without waiting for the word "two." Is closely allied to the word "snipe." Fritz snipes, you duck. You snipe, Fritzie ducks. Care should be taken

## "PARTING WORDS"



JANE: "Bill, dear, don't bother about V.C.'s or D.C.M.'s, and if you see a whizz-bang coming get out of its way."

not to practise this movement should an auto tyre burst behind one when on leave.

**"Dug-Outs."**—Deep holes in the ground, designed for the purpose of keeping out sun and rain, and occasionally shells. The accommodation is usually divided equally between the troops and trench rats. Baby dug-outs are commonly known as "funk-holes."

**"Fritzie."**—A name given by our troops to a mildly-offensive, undesirably-dirty, highly-kultured—likewise smelling—but otherwise perfectly good citizen of the Germanic Empire, who lives in a little cave across the street from us. Doesn't come and play in our back-yard any more. Is of a very retiring disposition, and withdraws immediately a brawl starts.

**"Front Line."**—A collection of holes in the ground, old junk, sacks, tins, bottles, rum-jars, dug-outs, etc., and inhabited by profane soldiers in dirty uniforms, who haven't had the luck to get a soft job. Is usually within speaking (and smelling) distance of Fritzie, so that his artillery will have something definite to shoot at. A most desirable residential district. No estaminets.

**"In."**—The brief, but all-embracing term applied to the period of residence in the front line—"pessimistic period."

**"Out."**—Covers any period of time that you spend anywhere except the front line—"optimistic period."

IDDY-UMPTY.

(To be continued.)