

# Trench



# Echo

(OFFICIALLY CENSORED BY GENERAL STAFF.)

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AT The Front. 27th "City of Winnipeg" Battalion. Christmas 1915.

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Lt.-Col. I. R. SNIDER,  
OFFICERS,  
N.C.O.'s & MEN  
OF THE  
27th "CITY OF WINNIPEG"  
BATTALION

DESIRE TO EXTEND TO  
THEIR MANY FRIENDS

# All Christmas Greetings

## EDITORIAL.

**S**INCE the last issue of the "Reveill " in Winnipeg there have been many changes in the Battalion. It has passed from the period of organisation and training to that of a real fighting unit, holding its "bit" of the front against the invading "Hun." Many of its members have taken on subsidiary duties: some have become sappers, digging many feet below the surface of the earth; some are police and sanitary men; and others are axemen in the forests of France. The last man detached has now become known as a rubber boot vulcaniser.

Since the last issue we have lost our former Editor, who has been recalled to Canada to demonstrate the use of the many kinds of high

explosive and deadly bombs now used at the front. Our change from a training Battalion to a fighting one has necessitated the different name of the paper. Now no "Reveill s" are sounded, and the only semblance to them is the "Trench Echo" of a gruff sergeant-major's voice at 4 a.m. calling "Stand to!"

We one and all wish to express our deep appreciation of the spirit that prompted the organisation of the "27th Battalion Ladies' Working Guild." Rumour has it that you have sent us Christmas cheer in the form of comforts, and we take this opportunity of expressing our sincere thanks for your thoughtful generosity.

We extend to the friends of the 27th Battalion our Christmas greetings and all good wishes for the New Year.

### Whizz Bangs.

What is the matter with the unmarried men of the band? Why have they allowed the married men to put it all over them? Who sends all the parcels. Now, George, speak up!

The Hun he stood on the parapet,  
And cried aloud in glee,  
"Come out, you blighted Canuck men!  
Come out, and fight with me!"  
But we sent him a gentle messenger—  
A high explosive shell,  
And when the smoke had cleared away  
That Hun was blown to—the place the  
Parson mentioned in his last week's sermon.

Would the bandmaster kindly tell us the story of the playing of "Who's your lady friend?" on St. Martin's Plain? We are told someone blundered.

Which of the bandmen, when sent for periscopes from Brigade Headquarters, lost his way returning, and eventually found himself in the firing line?

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The concert given by the band at Battle Headquarters was not appreciated by the Battalion on our right, which was just leaving the trenches at the time. Their remarks were uncomplimentary.

### SHRAPNEL FROM THE ORDERLY ROOM

Sergt. Filder: "No, sir; we have no more Army Books No. 152."

Officer No. 1: "About the promotion of a/cpl. \_\_\_\_\_ to full rank—"  
Adj't.: "I'm busy."

Officer No. 2 (coyly): "Oh, but, Adjutant, we have already sent more than our share—"  
Adj't.: "I'm busy."

### We Would Like to Know—

Who the private was who saw an apparition like a "shining barrel of beer" soaring through the sky?

Who the high functionary was who saw the cook-house go to "hell" on the self-same morning?

Who the corporal was who received a tin of "bully beef" in a parcel from one of the leading stores in London?

Who are the N.C.O.s who wish to visit "Canterbury" when on leave?

If a larger spoon could not be loaned to the officer who issues the rum?

Who is the C.S.M. who remarked to private: "Hey, big-head, where's your respirator?"

And the private who replied: "Go' blimy, S.M., I lost it in the Five Rounds Rapid this morning."

Who was the officer who spent considerable time studying the map on hearing the Battalion would move to \_\_\_\_\_ Reserve, and eventually exclaimed with disgust, "I can't find the d— place"?

Officer No. 3: "It isn't my turn for duty as orderly officer."

Adj't.: "I'm busy."

Officer No. 4: "No, sir, I haven't inspected the guards. My sergeant is attending to it; but will you please tell me—"

Adj't.: "I'm —"

(Our Correspondent here left the O.R.)



### THINGS WHICH MATTER.

“Can you let me know if all your men shaved this morning?”

### A Famous Report.

The second day after the Regiment went into the trenches, one of our companies was having rather a rough time of it from the enemy's shells, and as it is usual to report such incidents by telegraph to Battalion Headquarters, this particular company commander reported his company's experiences in words that we will give verbatim. In reading the report it may be of interest to keep in mind that German 8-inch shells are ordinarily spoken of as “coal-boxes,” but on this occasion they loomed so large to this officer that he likens them unto “box-cars.” The report read as follows:—“Our regular routine was interrupted this afternoon, left our bellies astir, and our pots and pans are either overturned or filled

with yellow clay. Our supplies don't look good. The men are terribly peeved over the situation. We have put on a fatigue party hunting for the meat, some of which they found. The soup was full of clay; am afraid not sanitary. From back to front our parapet is knocked down, and for forty feet our side-walk was shot in the air; in all things this is very inconvenient; otherwise things are satisfactory with us.

“About 3 o'clock they shelled us with ‘box-cars’ and shrapnel shells. Three shells struck six feet from our dug-outs, and a large shell ‘agin’ our kitchen, besides others in places convenient. It was owing to the presence of mind of our cook that the situation was saved, who, on seeing the shell coming, placed the soup pot between the shell and himself”

## A Night with the Battalion Scouts in "No Man's Land."

"Patrol of two men required at once!" raps out the Scout Officer. "Report immediately to O. C. 'D' Company."

The night is dark, and a drizzly rain is falling as we leave our comfortable dug-out, after having received our instructions. Buttoning up our jacket collars and pulling our balaclavas well down over our faces, we clamber on to the firing-step and await an opportune moment to get over the parapet. The time comes! The star shells have ceased their vigilant search for a moment, and the enemy's snipers are holding their fire.

Over we go. A low curse from Scout "A." He has forgotten to transfer a few precious francs from these d—d front trouser pockets to a more secure spot, and in sliding down the parapet the coins jingle merrily to mother earth, and are lost for ever in the mud.

Crouching low we make a bee-line for a small opening in our entanglements used purposely by patrols. On clearing our wire we take a small but powerful bomb from our pockets, and cocking our revolvers we commence our journey across "No Man's Land" to the German trenches.

Zip! Up goes a flare illuminating the land for a radius of several hundred yards. We crouch low, hugging the ground as a lover hugs his—nuff said! From experience we know that both sides will pour in a heavy fusillade immediately the star shell dies out; also that the enemy's sentries are anxiously straining their eyes in order to detect signs of Johnny Canuck (they call us "The Madmen") Patrols, so it behoves us to exercise considerable caution.

Taking advantage of the noise caused by rifle fire, we crawl forward for a short distance, our eyes and ears very much on the alert, for we know not the moment we may collide with

a hostile patrol. Down! We are at centre field, and can plainly see a figure a few yards in front. Crack! A faint rustle of grass and our fingers tighten on the triggers; our eyes are strained to the utmost, and we fear that the thumping of our hearts may give our position away.

We lie perfectly still for about fifteen minutes; but, except the occasional thud of a bullet close by, and the scream of a few ricochets, everything in our near vicinity is quiet. We move forward by inches to investigate our apparent opponent, only to find the dead and fast-decaying body of an unfortunate soldier who has fallen gloriously in a "charge" some time back. The rustling was caused by one of the many monster rats which frequent the trenches and the ground between the lines.

We are now within fifteen yards of the German parapet, but cannot advance further on account of a sniper being suspicious of our presence. Ping! A bullet digs its nose into the earth a few feet to our left. Hiss! Another clips the grass above our heads, and we start thinking of Home, Sweet Home, and—our past sins!

We are compelled to make our stay at this point somewhat longer than consistent with comfort, but at last we make a break, and back-pedal, by inches of course, until a convenient shell-hole is found. There a few twists are made, which would make an eel turn green with envy, and we are on our return trip. As before we await a lull in the firing, then scramble over the parapet to "safety."

We hand in our report, and stride back to our little dug-out in the West, wet through with slime and water, but happy in the thought of a dry bed and—a snort of RUM, yum! yum!!

J. M. M.

## PERSONALS.

Major D. S. Mackay has just returned from a week's leave in England, being called there by the death of his father.

It is expected that Major R. M. McLeod will shortly issue invitations for a reception to be held in his new palatial dugout in the cellar of Hennesay's Château.

Major D. S. Mackay has temporarily joined the Brigade Staff.

Mr. Lorn Cameron has left the Battalion for a while to take charge of the Army Timber Limits in Northern France. It is reported he sleeps between linen and lace and dissipates each day by having a bath before breakfast.

Captain Heyman and Mr. Complin, who have been ill, are now convalescing at an interesting old château.

Major Rodgers has left the Battalion for a few weeks to superintend the installation of heating apparatus in all billets. He says he hopes to warm up the whole of the Second Division this winter.

Mr. Harold J. Riley has returned to duty with the Battalion after attending a three weeks' machine gun course near Army Headquarters.

Mr. Prawl-Pierce is now in Kent, convalescing from the recent wound he received at the front.

## SINCE WE LEFT ENGLAND.

**A**T last we left England to take our place on the field of battle. All hearts were happy and light. In fact, so light that the vessel made the journey across the Channel, a dark ship. We were not at all sure whether we would reach land safely, owing to the possible presence of floating mines. During the voyage a man had been detailed to watch for any black lights, as the mines, I understand, are equipped with these to make them invisible to the enemy.

We arrived at — in the early morning. Everything seemed so spectral and strangely dark. I suppose we had visions of seeing France busy and gay, knowing the people of France are so happy. But on reflection, it was brought home to us that France was at war. The realisation of our dreams was consummated. We must forget our week-ends now for some time to come, and look to the work ahead.

From the station we marched to a rest camp two or three miles distant. It was an up-hill climb, and all were tired after the cramped voyage. However, we arrived there about 5 a.m., and were told that breakfast would be ready at 7.30. Those of us who had the luck to secure hut accommodation slept soundly, while a few who slept outside were fortunate, in that they were on time for breakfast owing to sleeping restlessly. After breakfast we were marched back to the station we left the previous night, to entrain for the "Somewhere in France" which everyone is so familiar with.

Well, we are all on the train, and ready and eager to get up to the front. The whistle on the engine gave a short "toot," and away we go. The familiar "all aboard" was not heard. It is these little things we miss out here. The little "nothings" that make us feel how far we are away. This feeling, though, gradually disappears with time and new experiences. The important circumstance we were grateful for was that we travelled in coaches, and not in trucks, as did the first contingent.

It was getting near the luncheon-hour. We had all kinds of bully-beef (which none of us eat now), biscuits, bread, etc. Also had some tea, sugar and milk. The ingredients were all there but the water. That contingency does not occur in Canada, as water is carried on the train, also a stove. We had neither, as the water we had in our water-bottles had been used to wash our faces in the early morning.

Luck was with us as usual, and a happy thought struck me. I put the tea, etc., in two mess tins, all ready for the boiling water. The boys said, "That looks dandy, but where is the hot water?" I smiled, and Corporal J. Robinson (our solo cornettist), who was with us, and "in" on my plan, played a drinking song. We arrived at —, where the British Army Head-

quarters are, and I jumped out. Ah! my eyes saw what I had expected to see. With the two mess tins in my hand I rushed down the platform like mad—I guess the boys thought I was—and rushed to a locomotive standing idle, and amid the rhythm of the air-pump working, I turned on the cylinder cocks, and—made our tea. I proudly walked back to our carriage with the steaming cans, amid the imploring glances of the less fortunate, while Corporal Robinson played "Perfect Day."

Arrived at our railway journey's end about 6 p.m., and detrained at —, in France. There we were told that any man who was feeling "blue" need not carry his pack, as a transport could take them to our billets. Pleased to say fewer accepted than what I had thought, as our service pack was *some* weight. We started off to our first billets. We all had heard so much of billets that we were not surprised at them when we arrived there about 8 p.m. Before we arrived there, however, we had tea and biscuits served to us by the roadside, as our field kitchen (bless it) had preceded us. We ate and drank heartily, the time being 7 p.m.

An incident happened on our way here that seemed very comical to us, and we often laugh at the recollection. An artillery orderly who was approaching on horseback saw that we were laboriously "plugging" along, and good-naturedly took the edge of the road. He did, though, unfortunately, take too fine an edge, and his faithful steed slipped into a rather deep and muddy ditch. The rider was not in the least dismayed, and clung on to the horse with grim set teeth (but, like anyone else, couldn't swallow it).

During our three days' stay there we had the usual inspection of rifles, ammunition, etc., and had various sports. It was here that we first saw any hostile aircraft, and our anti-aircraft guns were shelling them, and drove them to their own lines. While here we were inspected by the Army Commander.

On the Sunday, Major Beatty, our Divisional Chaplain (he is our real Chaplain, and not the world-known "reel" Chaplin), spoke to us, and we had an open-air service, our first within sound of the guns. He explained to us *why* we had come here. That it was not love of adventure or the desire to kill, but something higher and nobler. That we were here to crush the monster and his hordes from the stricken towns and villages of France and Belgium. I feel sure the spirit of his teaching was taken up by all of us, as we then stood and listened. He reminded us of the well-known term, "Remember Belgium." Past experiences have shown that we cannot possibly forget it, with its rain and mud-sodden trenches. No, we'll remember Belgium all right!

Were moved from here to a rest camp, where we stayed two or three days. At 5 p.m. the last day we were lined up before the Corps Com-

mander, who told us that we had been picked out to hold a certain part of front, and although we were fresh troops, he felt sure that he could trust us with the responsibility of doing our duty without the aid of any older battalions to teach us the art of trench warfare. We packed up that night and marched away, very pleased with the faith he had in us. Before marching away into action our ever-energetic Divisional Chaplain again reminded us of our duty, and *why* we were here. It was a very silent bunch that marched away that evening, no smoking or talking being allowed. We were left with our thoughts, and who can blame us if we all thought of our loved ones and home? Luck was against us, however, as when we arrived at —, on the — road, we were told by our Colonel that our Battalion could not go in the trenches that night, but the other half of the brigade would (I suppose our Colonel lost the toss). I cannot really say whether we were pleased or not, as we were all wet through to the skin, and the bad roads had tired us considerably. Here there are huts to sleep in, so we were "told off" and made ourselves as comfortable as possible, but sorry for the fact that we couldn't "bomb" the Huns that night. We all felt very mad with those gentlemen by this time.

Stayed here several days, so had plenty of time to get about. We were in a fair-sized village that had escaped the shell fire, and there is a nice church here. The bells do not chime though on account of complaints from the hospital, but I do not know what "complaint" they have.

The time arrived at last when we were ordered to the trenches. One cannot tell the feeling that is in you when you are going to the unknown. We had read so much of the shot and (s)hell that it made us all the more eager, yet in a measure nervous, to go through it ourselves. We were happy bombers that night. We could have burst into song, but that was not permitted. At last we reached our communication trenches. We went into K— (all trenches have familiar names), and soon got into the wet and mud. Some parts of the trench were so narrow that we got stuck, owing to our packs being too wide, and had to be pushed through by the man behind. Finally, after it seemed like hours of twisting and turning, we arrived in the front line, where the mosquitoes (bullets) were coming thick and fast. We involuntarily "ducked," but, of course, too late, and were pleased to see that the parapet was substantial.

There is a man in our section who has a remarkable red nose. He was on duty in the front line, with his bombs around him. A sentry in one of the platoons (a Scotchman) saw him coming round a traverse, or rather his nose, which sure does glow (anyhow, he does not use an illuminated wrist watch), and asked him if he had any empty bottles. The remainder of the boys laughed, but our bomber evidently didn't "catch on" and asked, "What for?" "Oh,

just to smash them up to see glass go (Glasgow) once again before I die."

When our time in the front line was over we went to —, in reserve, and had a church service. All the H.Q. details were there, including the transport. The question of confirmation came up, and quite a few were eager to be confirmed, except one driver on the transport. I asked him if he had any reason for declining, and he told me he was quite willing if the transport officer would get someone else to drive his team of mules. "Nuff sed."

Just to speak about the spirit of the boys, I would relate a little incident that happened last month. We were all in reserve at the time, when the order came, "Stand to arms." We all wondered, and vaguely hoped we were going to attack. Our officer explained to us that a mine had been exploded by the Germans on the —th Battalion. The rifle and machine-gun fire was terrific, but Mr. O'Donnel, our bandmaster, got his band together and was playing some lively airs to make us more cheerful, until stopped by the Colonel. No emergency call came, however, and we were dismissed.

When in rest at — I was struck by a notice, "Hair-cutting and Shaving." I needed a shave, and opened the door leading to a room in an ordinary house, and the "barber's" chair was just an ordinary chair. A boy lathered my beard while the soldier who had been lathered was being shaved. I could hear his groans, and wondered if I could stick it, and, like the artilleryman, had grim-set teeth. Presently the one being shaved gave a yell. The Belgian "barber" looked surprised, and asked, "Does ze razor hurt?" I could not get the inaudible reply, but the "barber" explained by gestures that he could get the beard off all right if the handle of the razor didn't break. By this time I was nervous. I jumped up, paid the 2 centimes (1 penny), the price of a whole "shave," and beat it.

We are all used to trench life by now, but cannot get used to the wet and cold. No coke is supplied to us Headquarter bombers at present, but I hope we soon shall be, as it is very cold at times in the trenches. Some parts of the trenches are so deep with water that I think the Navy are taking them over with a squadron of monitors.

Think I have dwelt long enough on a few experiences, so shall quit, wishing all Winnipeg a Merry Christmas and a Bright, Prosperous New Year.

A. V. MOORE, Sergt.

27th Batt., Grenade Sec.,  
Headquarters Staff,  
Belgium.

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**PUBLIC NOTICE.**

ANYONE Requiring the Assistance of "B" Company's Midnight Bombers, please apply to "Eskimoffat," Number 53. Terms without reason.



### Those Dark November Nights.

Major (tapping dummy placed to draw enemy's fire):

"See anything?"

"See anything?"

"Stand aside a minute while I put up a flare"!!

"Who in H—is sentry in this bay, anyway?"

### Story of An Effort.

He was a bandsman. At least that is the capacity in which he started out, and he fulfilled the duties of that rank for several months with more or less varying success; then one day, in a moment of mental aberration, we allowed him to become cook. How the appointment came about was in this wise. No one had any idea that the man who was filling that position at the time had the least intention of vacating; but, alas! someone—so rumour hath it—suffering from an overdose of *estamination*, informed him that he, the speaker, could make better "mulligan" out of cast-off gas helmets than he, the cook, could make out of the best materials ever produced. The cook took um-

brage at the insult, and promptly proceeded to clean up the speaker, which he did in the most brilliant and soulful manner. We went supperless that evening. When questioned as to the absence of the evening meal, the cook told all and sundry to go to—Terra del Fuego and hunt for their supper, as he was blankety-blank well through. There was a mournful and hungry procession of bandsmen wandering around camp that evening sniffing at every cook-pot, but there was nothing doing anywhere. Then it dawned on some bright intellect that, unless we appointed someone in the seceder's place that we should also be breakfastless the following morning. Questions were put to several as to their ability in the culinary line, but each and all proved an alibi. At last it was decided to form a sort of coalition-cook, if we might so term it, to consist of three or four bandsmen, of which the hero of this story was part. The coalition-cook lasted half a day, and by evening had settled itself definitely into cook.

We have ever been of a forgiving and kindly turn, but there are times when even the sweetest and kindest of dispositions will sour. This is how it came about and encompassed the fall of the cook, and almost the death of thirty or more unsuspecting souls.

For weeks we had been trying to "sic him on" to make a pudding of some kind, and one day he promised he would try. He did. On that day we ate little for breakfast, so that we might leave room enough for the pudding, and impatiently waited for noon. Noon came at last, and with it the pudding. We thought we detected a peculiar odour emanating from the dheksi lid upon which it was reposing, but we immediately put it down to our olfactory nerve being out of plumb. Each one advanced hoping the knife might slip, and thus give him a larger share than his fellows, but the dispenser of the delectable dish was an old hand at the job, who knew to a fraction how much each should receive. Why dwell on what followed?

At the trial cook said the charge of attempting to poison the band was a base calumny and a serious reflection on his character and ability. Asked what happened, he stated that as he had no suet he decided to use butter in making up the dough, and, unfortunately, being a little near-sighted, he had used dubbin instead; "but," said he, "they should have been very grateful, for dubbin keeps water out of leather, and the application their 'in-nards' received would help to keep out the water that got mixed up with their rum." Case dismissed. Cook also.

★★

### Shrapnel Limerick.

There was a young man of Bailleul,  
Who thought he could just play the fool,  
With a live shrapnel shell,  
But it blew him to—well—  
To a place that could scarce be called cool.

## The Midnight Bombers.

BY THE  
MIDNIGHT BOMBING NON-COMS.

Bombing is an art, at least some non-coms. think so, because, during the duration of our many days' rest which we get in the rest camps so often, which we are not entitled to, a certain two non-coms. who think themselves "it" as far as midnight bombing is concerned, open up their most powerful and effective attack with various bombs, a few of which I will mention. Firstly, there is the rum-bottle bomb, which is most effective when thrown with good effects.

Secondly, there is what is called, by the men who have achieved the great successes in this particular line of trench warfare, the sand-bag bomb, this bomb being of a very interesting class, which renders it necessary for me to explain in detail. First one sergeant steals a sack of coke from an unknown quarter, which, towards midnight, is practically all used, but I must add that it takes great effect on the observation of the enemy when the discharge takes place. Perhaps the N.C.O. who received this would be only too glad to explain the effects.

To cut a long story short, as most old soldiers do (?), I will finish by explaining just how the gas attacks are carried out. You will know, if you don't already, that it has been found necessary to use gas in order to make the attack successful, and just how this is done I will explain.

The bombers are equipped and accompanied by bayonet men; they creep up one by one to the supposed parapet, which is a table in the middle of the room; there they peep over. Then up goes a flare (an electric torch), one man puffs his cigarette and blows the smoke, representing gas, over the table (parapet); then comes the shouting and moaning of the enemy's wounded (which is represented by two or three sergeants who have just been aroused by the row); over they throw the rum-bottle bombs, sand-bag bombs, jam-tin bombs, boot bombs, brick bombs, and several other dangerous implements of war such as these.

I might say that these non-coms., the names of which I dare not mention, always open an attack in their company quarters after the closing of the Eskimoffat.

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### The Signaller's Siloque.

On the Trench 'Phone at H.Q.  
The daily routine on the buzzer  
Is exacting in many a way.  
After sending a ——— message  
Someone will politely say:—

"I really fail to get you.  
Say! read the text over again.  
Ah! that's right; now will you please  
Repeat last three words of same?"

After a few alterations,  
And a little chat about home,  
Up comes the usual "Can't hear you,  
Shake your microphone."

After receiving three "R. Dons,"  
You begin to think it is Pax,  
When hesitatingly comes a pip-pip,  
Who's that? I thought so! Pic-Ax.

Well, after settling the difference,  
And the little tour is complete,  
Someone buzzes excitedly,  
"I've three messages—bin waitin' a  
week."

You just start out on the journey,  
And fairly get stuck to the seat.  
Hell!!! Someone shouts "Priority,  
The Colonel wishes to speak."

After a good deal of straffing,  
And shake your microphone,  
You finally get restarted,  
With never a sight of home.

No. 1 R. Don, No. 2 half through,  
Nothing strange to reveal.  
A tap on the back, and "Say, my lad,"  
Heavens, it's Captain Steel!

With head in a whirl, you send MQ,  
And wonder what's coming next.  
A little trench talk and that's O.K.,  
Now once again for the text.

No. 2 all through, No. 3 well away.  
What's that? Oh! come off the ball.  
Great Julius feeds and Holy Smoke,  
It's a blooming artillery call.

All right, old dear, you call ———  
The germs are sending us bums,  
All right, old cock, just knock off their  
block

With a few little pills from your guns.  
Say! you chaps, who think we've snaps,  
Just think of us when over the brine.  
Brandon for some, and the Peg for most,  
But it'll likely be Selkirk for mine.

H. H. W. (Sigs. Section).

### ADVERTISEMENTS.

**E. J. McELROY,**  
Cornettist.

Solos during any darned old packet.  
Also the T. Farm Quartette, consisting of Signors Ban-  
yardi, Swalesto, Vapini, and Robisoni.  
Machonochie rations, B.D.V.'s, or Woodbines not  
accepted as payment.

**E. TAYLOR,**

Pastry Cook and Confectioner, Violinist, and  
Bass Drummer.

Dog-biscuit puddings, consommé of puttees, rubber boot  
paté, and other comestibles on short notice.  
No other connection. No business during bombardment.

**FOR SALE.**

Fine Dug-out, Front Line; Good view (of the Enemy).  
Plenty of water (when you don't want it!).  
Could be raised at a moment's notice (Enemy's Mine).  
Full particulars on application, GEN. COMPLIN,  
Master of the Bull Ring.