

First World War Slang

The First World War impacted all aspects of society, including language. Soldiers developed new slang terms in response to their experiences. The terms came from a variety of sources such as old army terms, popular cultural, poor pronunciation, or new phrases.

Some terms sometimes helped to reduce the horrors of war by using trivializing terminology.

- Potato mashers – German grenades
- Whizz bangs – small calibre shells

Place names could also be changed quite drastically. Many English speakers had some very interesting pronunciations for French and Belgian place names.

- Bailleul is a French town near the Belgian border that was known as Balloo

Some Allied Slang from the First World War

Can you match the slang term to its meaning?

Ypres _____	1. Cemetery
Rest camp _____	2. A lot
Cold meat ticket _____	3. Right away
Chat _____	4. Identify disk (dog tags)
Boko _____	5. Tank
Godewaersvelde _____	6. Barbed wire
Toot sweet _____	7. Wipers
Land creeper _____	8. Afraid
Windy _____	9. God wears velvet
Cheveux de frise _____	10. Louse