

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. These terms could have a variety of origins including mispronounced French terms, cultural references, pre-war military terms (often influenced by the British military's time in India), or entirely new words or phrases.

Sometimes trivializing terminology was also used to respond to the horrors they faced.

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

Nicknames developed for many of the places that the soldiers were stationed. Many English speakers had difficulties pronouncing French and Belgian place names on the Western Front.

- 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?

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