

Journal #5



Australian troops on the Western Front use a makeshift mirror periscope to survey the action on 18 May 1918. Among the British Commonwealth Forces, the ANZAC and Canadian Corp were considered elite units and thus suffered proportionately more casualties.

The start of World War One has often been stated to start with “the spark” of Franz Ferdinand’s assassination in Sarajevo. Why is this explanation much too simplistic?

Letter

Philip Gibbs, after the war in his book *The Pageant of the Years* (1946)

The cheery optimism of our generals always thought we were going forward, and therefore it was not worth while making ourselves comfortable and safe. We never made a dugout worthy of the name. But the Germans worked like beavers, and after their retreat I went down into dugouts, forty feet deep, connected with passages and with separate exits. Many of them were paneled, and had excellent bathrooms for the officers with a little gadget where the gentleman in the bath might place his cigar during his ablutions - a very German idea.

1. Why did the British generals not "care" for the comfort of their troops?
2. Describe the German dug-outs.
3. Why were the Germans willing to go to such effort?

Vocabulary

Blighty: England, home. From Hindustani *Bilayati*, foreign land.

Bollocks: Not true. Nonsense. Male bovine excrement. B.S.

Doolally: Insane, mad.

Dug-Out Disease: Facetious term for fear, which kept those thus affected (and whose rank permitted a choice) within the safety of their dug-outs.

Jerry: A German soldier. Expression became popular later in the war, eventually coming into it's own during World War Two. Supposedly in reference to the German helmet's similarity to a jeroboam, a chamber-pot.

Hun: A German soldier. Kaiser Wilhelm II urged his troops to behave like the barbarian *Huns* in order to instill fear into the enemy. The name was further popularized when British soldiers discovered that Germans wore belt buckles with the words *Gott Mit Uns*. (God is with us)