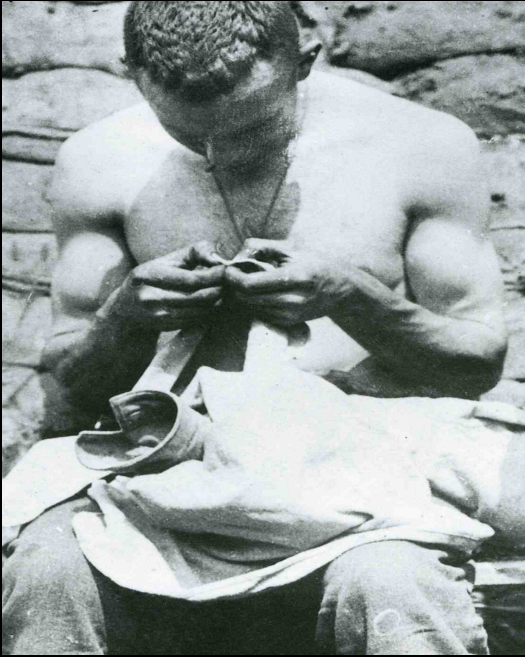


Journal #7



Delousing, one of the several grim but necessary routines that accompanied trench warfare. It was a never-ending process, because body heat hatched the hard to see eggs.

How could a system of alliances be both an advantage and a disadvantage?

Letter

Private George Coppard, With A Machine Gun to Cambrai (1969)

A full day's rest allowed us to clean up a bit, and to launch a full scale attack on lice. I sat in a quiet corner of a barn for two hours delousing myself as best I could. We were all at it, for none of us escaped their vile attentions. The things lay in the seams of trousers, in the deep furrows of long thick woolly pants, and seemed impregnable in their deep entrenchments. A lighted candle applied where they were thickest made them pop like Chinese crackers. After a session of this, my face would be covered with small blood spots from extra big fellows which had popped too vigorously. Lice hunting was called 'chatting'. In parcels from home it was usual to receive a tin of supposedly death-dealing powder or pomade, but the lice thrived on the stuff.

1. What was a major problem of front line soldiers?
2. Describe "lice hunting"?
3. What was lice hunting called? How is this word different than you supposed?

Vocabulary

Bugwarm: Small trench dugout.

Bumf: Toilet paper, or newspaper used for that purpose. Later on came to mean any excessive documentation. From *bum fodder*, an 18th century expression.

Chat: Louse. Possibly derived from *chattell*, personal belonging. Chatting was delousing.

Coffin nails: Cigarettes

Kit: British soldier's equipment

Lousy: To be covered with lice. Of course this would make one feel bad.