

Journal #20



At Last! A Bon Kip!

For the past few weeks you have been bombarded with images and evidence of humanity at its worse. True, we are capable of horrible things. However, we are even more capable of greatness. In this last journal, please write some examples of the good things that humans do.

Letter

In 1914, while stationed at the front, Franz Blütenfeld wrote to his mother. He would be killed eleven days before Christmas.

Your wishing you could provide me with a bullet-proof vest is very sweet of you. But strange to say, I have no fear. None at all of bullets and shells, but only of this great spiritual loneliness. I am afraid of losing my faith in human nature, in myself, in all that is good in the world. How is it possible that it gives me more pain to bear my own loneliness than to witness the suffering of so many others. What is the good of escaping all the bullets and shells if my soul is injured?

1. What is Franz's greatest fear?
2. Why doesn't Franz tell his mother how horrible conditions are?
3. This is early in the war. If Franz had survived, how would his perception of human nature been affected by the next three years of the war?

Vocabulary:

Bon: Good, fine. When off duty, men would often be found having a '*bon time*' at the local *estaminet*. The opposite was *no bon(!)*. From French.

Canteen Medals: Beer or food stains down the front of a tunic.

Estaminet: Building found in villages and minor towns for the purpose of eating, drinking and general entertainment of troops. A typical *estaminet* would have a low roof, an open iron stove and wooden benches and tables. The proprietress would serve wine, cognac, thin beer, coffee, soup, omelettes and the most popular of all French dishes of the time - egg and chips.

Kip: Sleep, bed.

Mufti: Civilian clothes. From Arabic *mufti*, free.