

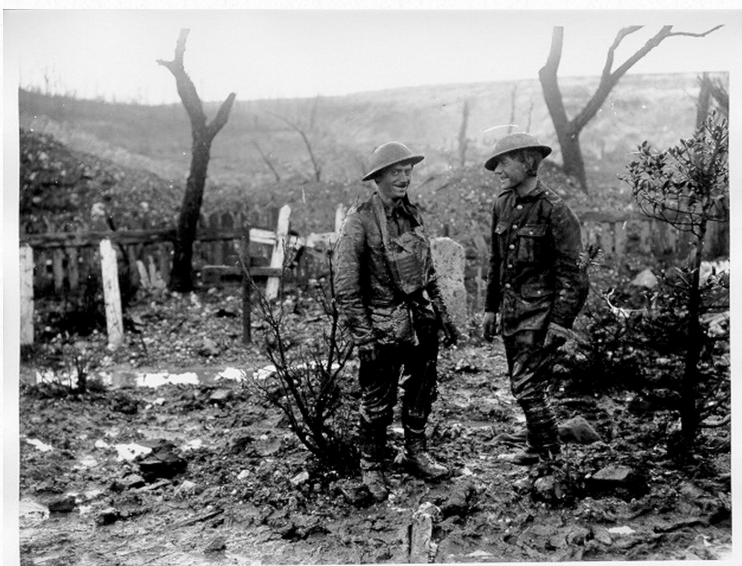
BRITISH ARMY STRUCTURE & TRENCH LANGUAGE



Galloway

UNDERSTANDING THE LANGUAGE OF THE TRENCHES

During the Great War soldiers developed a unique language of their own. Over the course of the tour you will hear many phrases and terminology you may not understand. You may find this guide useful to refer to during the tour.



Word/Phrase	Explanation
Artillery	Large calibre guns (Cannon and Howitzers).
Barrage	The firing of large numbers of shells from concentrated artillery. It is intended to stop enemy movement.
Battalion	The main infantry unit, consisting of between 800 and 1,000 men.
Battalion Aid Post	A very basic first aid station, usually at the rear of a Battalion position. This is the first place a wounded soldier would receive medical treatment.
Battery	The Artillery equivalent of an Infantry company, normally consisted of between 4-8 guns.
Billet	Temporary accommodation for troops when out of the trenches.
Blighty	Nickname used by British soldiers to describe back home in the UK.
Blighty Wound	A wound which was severe enough for the soldier to be sent back home to the UK to be treated.
Boche	Nickname for the Germans used initially by the French. The British began using it after the Germans began using gas as a weapon.
Bombardment	The firing of large numbers of shells from concentrated artillery. It is intended to stop enemy movement and to break up their defenses.
Brigade	Army formation usually consisting of three to four battalions.
Bunker	German dug-out usually better built than on the Allied side. They were both deeper and better protected.
Cartridge	Ammunition for a pistol, rifle or machine gun. This referred to both the bullets and the case which housed them.
Casualty Clearing Station	A larger medical unit outside the battle area and out of range of the guns. Sick and wounded men would be treated here.
Conscientious Objector	A person whose beliefs stop them from participating in military service. Many did join the Army, but served in non-combat roles.

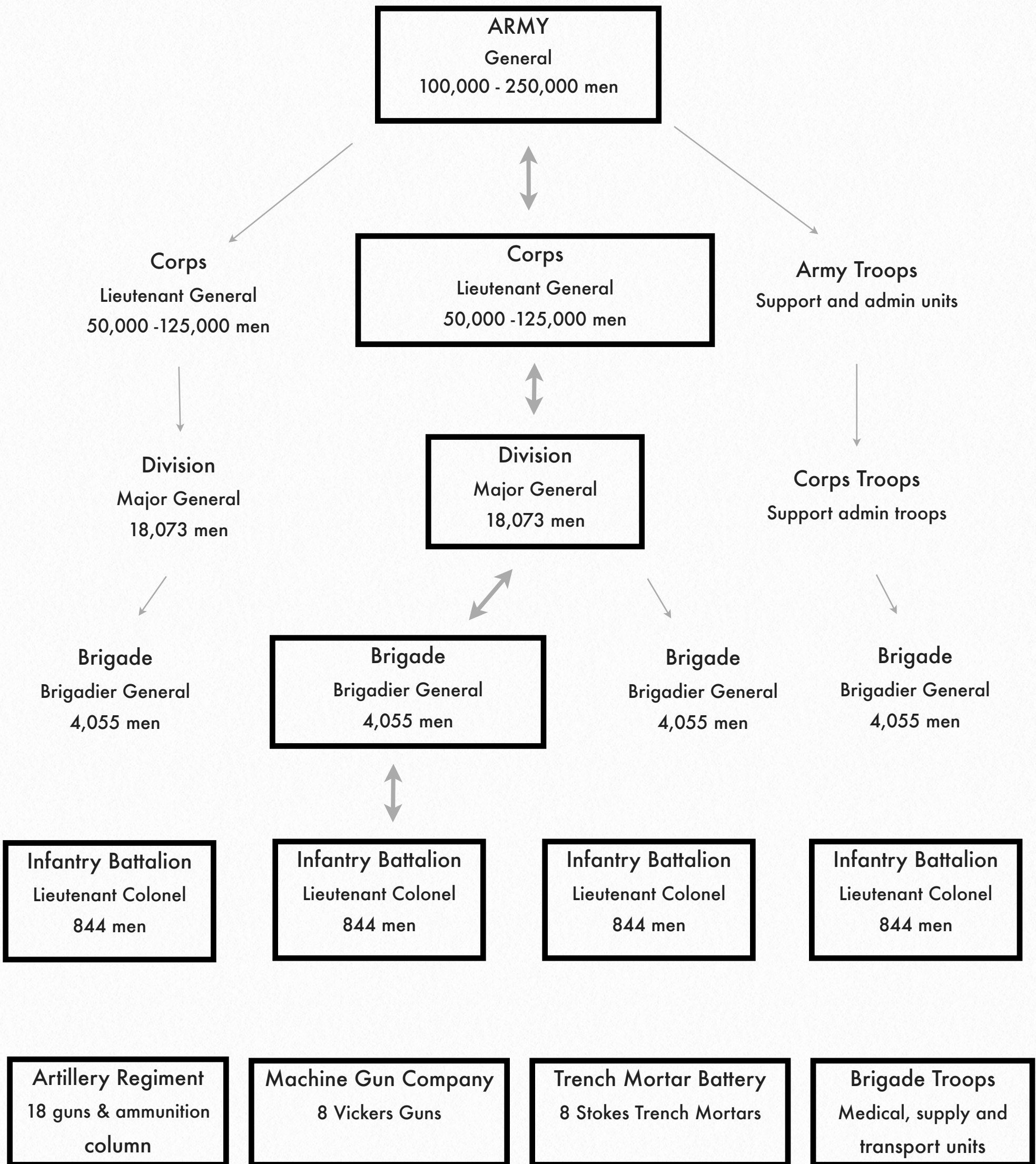
Word/Phrase	Explanation
Conscription	Compulsory military service. This was introduced in the UK in March 1916. Both France and Germany already had this in place prior to the war.
Digging In	The act of digging trenches.
Digger	The Australian nickname for soldiers used by the general public.
Diversion	An action designed to mislead the enemy to the actual intentions.
Division	Army formation usually consisting of three or four brigades.
Dressing Station	Medical unit staffed by a number of doctors and nurses. These stations were very close to the front line. This was the second tier of the medical chain a wounded soldier would transit through.
Dug-Out	A hole cut into the side of a trench or a deeper underground chamber dug as a protection from enemy fire.
Fritz	A nickname given to the Germans by the British.
Fodder	Food for animals.
Gunner	The rank of a Private soldier in the Royal Artillery. Also the collective name for members of the Royal Artillery.
Hun	A nickname given to the Germans by British propaganda.
Kitchener's Men	The volunteers of 1914 and 1915 who answered Kitchener's call to fight. The units they joined later became known as "Kitchener's Army".
Mentioned in Dispatches	This was the naming of an individual or group of individuals to give credit for an act of bravery which didn't qualify for a medal.
NCO	The abbreviation for a Non-Commissioned Officer. For example, Lance-Corporal.
New Army	The force of men recruited by the Minister of War in 1914, Lord Kitchener. Another name for Kitchener's volunteers.
No Man's Land	The term to describe the area of land between two opposing Army's trenches.
Observation Balloon	Large inflatable balloon winched up with an observer to watch enemy positions, movement on the ground and direct artillery fire.
Over the Top	The term used to describe men emerging from their trenches to attack enemy positions.
Parapet	The top of the trench on the side facing the enemy. These were usually a low wall of sandbags with firing steps.
Parados	The rear of the trench. This was a raised lip to the rear of the trench which was higher than a Parapet. This was to stop soldiers from being silhouetted when using the firing step.

Word/Phrase	Explanation
Poilu	Literally meaning 'hairy one'. This was the term used by the French public to describe their soldiers.
Regiment	In the Royal Artillery, Cavalry or Royal Engineers, it is the equivalent to an Infantry Battalion.
Regular	A pre-war professional soldier who made a career out of the armed forces.
RFC/RNAS	Royal Flying Corps/Royal Naval Air Service. These were the fighting air units of the two services. They were merged in April 1918 to become the Royal Air Force.
Salient	A 'bulge' in the line into enemy territory. A particularly dangerous position because it could be fired upon from three sides.
Sapper	The rank of a Private soldier in the Royal Engineers. Also a collective name for members of the Royal Engineers.
Shell Shock	The name used during WWI for psychological trauma caused by combat. Today this is now known as Post Traumatic Stress Disorder or PTSD. This was not very well understood at the time.
Territorial	A part time volunteer of the British Army. These soldiers were members of the Territorial Army (TA). The TA bore the brunt of the war in 1915 due to heavy losses in the regular Army in 1914.
Tommy	The nickname for the British Army soldier. This was used by the British public during the war.



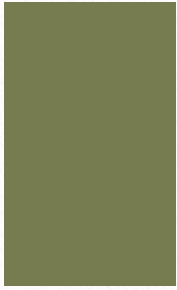
British soldiers going 'over the top'. IWM

BRITISH ARMY STRUCTURE 1914-1918



BRITISH ARMY RANK STRUCTURE 1914-1918

WARRANT AND NON COMMISSIONED OFFICERS



Private (Pte)

The most junior rank in the Army. Some units referred to them using different names.

For example:

- Artillery - Gunner
- Engineers - Sapper
- Rifle Regiment - Rifleman



Lance Corporal (LCpl)

The junior rank of NCO. Second in command of a Section which consisted of 8 men.



Corporal (Cpl)

Commands a Section which consisted of 8 men.



Sergeant (Sgt)

The Sergeant was the most senior NCO in the Platoon which was made up of up to 70 men. He was the Platoon Commanders right hand man and was second in command. This meant he would take over should the Platoon Commander be killed or be unavailable.



Colour/Staff Sergeant (CSgt/SSgt)

This rank was the senior grade of a Sergeant and the highest ranking NCO. They would often be charged with maintaining the stores and supplies for the Company.



Warrant Officer Class 2 (WO2)

Referred to as 'Company Sergeant Major' (CSM). They are the most senior soldier in the Company and answers directly to the Company Commander. Responsible for discipline and administration at Company level (227 men).



Warrant Officer Class 1 (WO1)

The most senior soldier in the Battalion and generally both hugely powerful and respected. They had a wide ranging role, answering directly to the Commanding Officer. They would also act as the COs advisor, being his eyes and ears.

BRITISH ARMY RANK STRUCTURE 1914-1918

OFFICERS



Second Lieutenant (2Lt)

Commands a Platoon of up to 70 men.



Lieutenant (Lt)

Commands a Platoon of men of up to 70 men. May also command a Company if no Captain is available.



Captain (Capt)

Commands a Company of 227 men, consisting of 4 Rifle Companies and a Headquarters Company (HQ Coy).



Major (Maj)

Second in Command of an Infantry Battalion. If needed to, they may command a Battalion if no Lt Colonel is available.



Lieutenant Colonel (Lt Col)

Commands an Infantry Battalion of 800-1,000 men. This was different in non-infantry units as the equivalent was known as a Regiment. This is the case in the Engineers, Cavalry and Artillery.



Colonel (Col)

Commands a Battalion of 800-1,000 men, but could command a Brigade if there was no Brigadier available.



Brigadier (Brig)

Commands a Brigade which in WWI would consist up of 4-5 Battalions.

BRITISH ARMY RANK STRUCTURE 1914-1918

GENERALS



Major General (Maj Gen)

Commander of a Division which was made up of 3-4 Brigades during WWI.



Lieutenant General (Lt Gen)

Commands a Corps which was made up of 2 or more Divisions (see above)



General (Gen)

Commands an Army which is made up of two or more Corps.



Field Marshal

The most senior rank in the British Army. They would usually be the commander of an area of operations, commanding two or more Armies. The rank no longer exists in the current British Army due to its smaller scale.



Field Marshal Sir Douglas Haig with his Army Commanders in Cambrai on 11th November 1918 - IWM