Australian War Memorial

Read this letter, which contains the sort of language soldiers used on Gallipoli. On the next page is a [list of slang terms](http://www.awm.gov.au/education/activities/slang/list) which will help you to work out what Bert means. Try to work out the meaning before you use the list! Do you think this soldier would understand the slang that you use today? Think of words that you use that he would not understand, such as "cool".

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| |  | | --- | | Dear Alf  Here I am propped on the peninsh with a crowd of other tourists, so I thought I'd grab a few mos now that the brass hats have gone off to have a chin-wag and tell you a bit about what it's like stoushing with Abdul. Well, most of the time we're bored to death, the rest of the time we're scared to death, especially when auntie visits or a cricket ball comes over. We spend a lot of time swinging the banjo, and only yesterday had to put in an new winze, following damage to our trenches from Beachy Bill. ANZAC soup all over no-man's-land. The food's pretty crook. Most days the babbling brook brings bully and hard tack; we were hoping the arrival of a supply ship meant we'd be getting axle grease with it today, but apparently that was just a furphy. We had a couple of bumrushers here this morning, warning that the base wallahs would be arranging short arm inspection before we were allowed to go on leave, so we had better make sure we were wearing clean chat-bags. Where do you think we're going to find water to wash them in? You should've seen the look on his dial when I asked him that! It's enough to make a man ask for an Aussy.  Well, old chap, must fly. Give my regards to Kathleen and Florence and send us a few packets of coffin nails next time you write.  Your palBert | |

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When you have worked out what the soldier meant in the extract above, try writing your own letter, using current slang. Do you think your grandparents would understand what you have written? Do you think your future grandchildren will? What does this tell you about the nature of slang?

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| **Abdul** | name for a Turkish soldier |
| **ANZAC soup** | shell-hole polluted by a corpse |
| **auntie** | a Turkish broomstick bomb |
| **Aussy** | Australia; an Australian soldier; a wound bad enough to get a soldier back to Australia |
| **axle grease** | butter |
| **babbling brook** | an army cook |
| **base wallah** | someone employed behind the front line |
| **Beachy Bill** | a Turkish artillery piece which shelled the beach at ANZAC |
| **brass hats** | senior officers |
| **Bully (beef)** | salted canned beef |
| **Bumbrusher** | an officer's servant |
| **chat-bags** | underclothes |
| **coffin nail** | cigarette |
| **cricket ball** | a Turkish grenade made of iron, the size and shape of a cricket ball, with a burning fuse. If possible, catch and throw back. (Compare this with a jam tin bomb.) |
| **dial** | face |
| **furphy** | a rumour |
| **peninsh** | peninsula (Gallipoli) |
| **short arm inspection** | medical examination of the penis to check for conditions such as STDs |
| **stoush** | fight |
| **swing the banjo** | shovel dirt |
| **tourist** | Australian soldiers (1st Division), often known as "six bob a day tourists" |
| **winze** | an underground connection between two trenches |

Some more Gallipoli slang:

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| **body snatcher** | member of a raiding party |
| **gay** | whisky |
| **knock** | wound |
| **lucifer** | match |
| **wind-up** | fright |
| **would-to-Godder** | a civilian who "would to God" he could go off to the war |