

## **Additional Information for Primary Source Essay**

(See the course syllabus for a basic description of the assignment.)

Your primary source essay will analyze the experience of Canadian soldiers who fought in the Battle of Passchendaele in 1917. This battle was the last of a series of attacks launched by the British armies against German positions northeast of the city of Ypres in Belgium. These attacks began at the end of July 1917 and were known collectively as the Third Battle of Ypres. The Canadian part in this offensive began in October and concluded in November. Their objective was to capture the German-held village of Passchendaele and the surrounding high ground. The Canadians organized a multi-stage attack that would be carried out in four phases. The third phase, which occurred on November 6, 1917, involved the capture of Passchendaele itself by units of the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Canadian Divisions. Your assignment will focus on the November 6 attack, and it will be based mainly on sources from units and individuals from 2<sup>nd</sup> Canadian Division. It was in this division's assigned sector of the battlefield that the village of Passchendaele was situated.

You are not required to use each and every source provided on Brightspace for your essay. However, using as broad a range of sources as possible will give you a more complete perspective of the battle. This, in turn, will help you to write a more effective essay. To help you sort through the mass of military terminology and slang you will encounter in the sources, lists of basic definitions and abbreviations have been provided below. If you encounter an unfamiliar term or acronym not found in these lists, or if you have any questions about any technical information, please do not hesitate to ask the instructor.

You will have your own preferred manner in which to organize and analyze the information presented in the primary and secondary sources provided for this assignment. But one useful strategy for tackling this information is to look at sources that give the widest perspectives first, and then work your way through sources that present more focused perspectives.

For example, students unfamiliar with the nature of First World War military operations in general and the Passchendaele offensive in particular may wish to consult the secondary source material first. In addition to the three secondary source readings posted on Brightspace, feel free to use your textbook or any other assigned readings (such as those on the Class Schedule) that deal with the First World War).

The following websites also provide helpful introductions to the Canadian experience during the First World War. Those from Library and Archives Canada and the Canadian War Museum present predominantly thematic approaches, enlivened with images of artifacts and original documents (focusing on both home front and battlefield). The link to Veterans Affairs Canada leads to a basic chronological account of Canada's military role in the conflict. You can access this account on their main page covering the First World War. Just click on the link titled "Canada and the First World War" which you will see under the "History" heading. You will see other links on the main page covering other topics, including the Battle of Passchendaele itself.

Library and Archives Canada: Canada and the First World War  
<http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/firstworldwar/index-e.html>

Canadian War Museum: Canada and the First World War  
<http://www.warmuseum.ca/cwm/exhibitions/guerre/home-e.aspx>

Veterans Affairs Canada: Canada and the First World War  
<http://www.veterans.gc.ca/eng/remembrance/history/first-world-war>

After orienting yourself with some of the secondary source literature, it would be a good idea to look at the primary source documents on Brightspace that were produced by staff from the higher military formations of the Canadian Expeditionary Force (division and brigades). These primary sources will provide a broader perspective than those drawn from each battalion or from individual personal accounts. After you have worked through the secondary sources and the division and brigade narratives, then you should have sufficient perspective to appreciate the level of detail contained in the narratives and documents drawn from the infantry battalions, as well as the personal accounts provided by individual officers and men. For an explanation of what terms such as “division,” “brigade,” and “battalion” meant, see the section below on basic military organization and technology.

Use the maps provided in Folder H and maps in the secondary sources to help orient you to the positions occupied by various units, objectives of the attack, and the ground over which the attack was made. The artillery barrage maps are included as a useful visual representation of what is meant by a “creeping” or “rolling” artillery barrage.

In the division, brigade, and battalion narratives, you will encounter many geographical names, as well as curious-looking strings of letters and numbers (for example: D.6.c.10.90). These letters and numbers represent specific coordinates used by officers and men to identify particular objectives or points of interest on their maps. Do not worry about all of the place names or any of the map coordinates. The operational map scanned from the Canadian official history of the First World War (see reference below under Folder H) will furnish you with the most important place names for understanding the course of the battle.

Remember to answer the following two questions in the course of your essay:

- 1) To what degree was the Canadian attack carefully organized and skillfully carried out?
- 2) Were the results of the attack worth the effort and the casualties?

The answers you come up with for these questions can be used to form a thesis about the Canadian attack at Passchendaele which you should express in the introductory portion of your essay. In this respect, you may treat this assignment in the same fashion as you would any analytical research paper in a history course.

A bibliography and citation system are required for this assignment. Citations may take the form of footnotes or endnotes. Usage and general format must conform to the standards outlined in the History Department’s Style Manual available at:

<http://www.smu.ca/webfiles/HistoryStyleManualforPrint2009.pdf>

A copy of this document is also posted on Brightspace.

Bibliographic references for secondary sources have been provided on the scans of the sources themselves. As for the primary source material posted on Brightspace, these are copies of original archival documents that have very specific archival references, mostly within the holdings of Library and Archives Canada in Ottawa. Students will not be burdened with the technicalities of these archival references. Instead, a list of simplified citations is provided below which will help you identify specific primary sources in your citations and bibliography.

If you have any questions about any aspect of this assignment, please consult the instructor.

### **References to Primary Sources**

(Please refer to specific page numbers from documents in your citations, just as you would in a citation for a book or journal article. The “#” symbol in the model citations below should not be included in your own references. It simply indicates where page numbers should be placed.)

= Folder A. 2<sup>nd</sup> Canadian Division

**Contents:**

(1 pdf file) 2<sup>nd</sup> Canadian Division Narrative

**Format for first citation:** Author unknown, “2<sup>nd</sup> Canadian Division, Narrative of Operations,” 6 November 1917, p. #.

**Format for subsequent citations:** 2<sup>nd</sup> Canadian Division Narrative, p. #.

**Bibliography format:** “2<sup>nd</sup> Canadian Division, Narrative of Operations.” 6 November 1917, pp. 1-4.

(1 doc file) Infantry Casualties, 2<sup>nd</sup> Cdn Division, November 6, 1917

**Format for first and subsequent citations:** “Infantry Casualties, 2<sup>nd</sup> Canadian Division,” 6 November 1917.

**Bibliography format:** “Infantry Casualties, 2<sup>nd</sup> Canadian Division.” 6 November 1917.

= Folder B. 6<sup>th</sup> Brigade Narrative

**Contents:** 10 jpg files, each file being one page of a 10-page narrative report from 6<sup>th</sup> Brigade; therefore, treat these files as a single document.

**Format for first citation:** H.D.B. Ketchen, 6<sup>th</sup> Brigade, “Narrative Report of Operations for Capture of Passchendaele,” 20 November 1917, p. #.

**Format for subsequent citations:** 6<sup>th</sup> Brigade Narrative, p. #.

**Bibliography format:** Ketchen, H.D.B. 6<sup>th</sup> Brigade. “Narrative Report of Operations for Capture of Passchendaele.” 20 November 1917, pp. 1-10.

= Folder C. 27<sup>th</sup> Battalion

**Contents:** 4 jpg files, each file being one page of a 4-page narrative report from 27<sup>th</sup> Battalion; treat these files as a single document.

**Format for first citation:** P.J. Daly, 27<sup>th</sup> Battalion, “Narrative of Operations Covering the Attack on Passchendaele,” 9 November 1917, p. #.

**Format for subsequent citations:** 27<sup>th</sup> Battalion Narrative, p. #.

**Bibliography format:** Daly, P.J. 27<sup>th</sup> Battalion. “Narrative of Operations Covering the Attack on Passchendaele.” 9 November 1917, pp. 1-4.

= Folder D. 28<sup>th</sup> Battalion

**Contents:** (1 pdf file) 28<sup>th</sup> Battalion Narrative

**Format for first citation:** G.F.D. Bond, 28<sup>th</sup> Battalion, “Narrative of Operations for the Capture of Passchendaele and the Surrounding Heights,” 6-7 November 1917, p. #.

**Format for subsequent citations:** 28<sup>th</sup> Battalion Narrative, p. #.

**Bibliography format:** Bond, G.F.D. 28<sup>th</sup> Battalion. “Narrative of Operations for the Capture of Passchendaele and the Surrounding Heights.” 6-7 November 1917, pp. 1-3.

= Folder E. 29<sup>th</sup> Battalion

**Contents:** 3 jpg files, each file being one page of a 3-page narrative report from 29<sup>th</sup> Battalion; treat these files as a single document.

**Format for first citation:** W.S. Latta, 29<sup>th</sup> Battalion, “Summary of Operations from November 4-7<sup>th</sup> 1917, Inclusive,” date unknown, p. #.

**Format for subsequent citations:** 29<sup>th</sup> Battalion Narrative, p. #.

**Bibliography format:** Latta, W.S. 29<sup>th</sup> Battalion. “Summary of Operations from November 4-7<sup>th</sup> 1917, Inclusive.” n.d., pp. 1-3.

= Folder F. 31<sup>st</sup> Battalion

**Contents:** 1 jpg file, 31<sup>st</sup> Bn, List of Officers in the Attack

**Format for first citation:** 31<sup>st</sup> Battalion, “Officers Going in to Attack on Passchendaele,” 6 November 1917.

**Format for subsequent citations:** 31<sup>st</sup> Battalion, Officers in Attack, 6 November 1917.

**Bibliography format:** 31<sup>st</sup> Battalion. “Officers Going in to Attack on Passchendaele.” 6 November 1917.

Subfolder a. 31<sup>st</sup> Bn Narrative (1 pdf file) 31<sup>st</sup> Battalion Narrative

**Format for first citation:** C.D. McPherson, 31<sup>st</sup> Battalion, “Narrative of Operations – Passchendaele Attack,” 12 November 1917, p. #.

**Format for subsequent citations:** 31<sup>st</sup> Battalion Narrative, p. #.

**Bibliography format:** McPherson, C.D. 31<sup>st</sup> Battalion. “Narrative of Operations – Passchendaele Attack.” 12 November 1917, pp. 1-5.

Subfolder b. 31<sup>st</sup> Bn Casualties (3 jpg files, each file being one page of a 3-page list of casualties suffered by the unit during its attack at Passchendaele; treat these as a single document.)

**Format for first citation:** Author unknown, 31<sup>st</sup> Battalion, “List of Casualties for Action on November 6<sup>th</sup>, 1917,” date unknown, p. #.

**Format for subsequent citations:** 31<sup>st</sup> Battalion, List of Casualties, p. #.

**Bibliography format:** 31<sup>st</sup> Battalion. “List of Casualties for Action on November 6<sup>th</sup>, 1917.” n.d., pp. 1-3.

Subfolder c. Acts of Courage, list (5 jpg files, each file being one page of a 5-page list of officers and men who performed noteworthy acts on 6-7 November 1917; treat as a single document.)

**Format for first citation:** Author unknown, 31<sup>st</sup> Battalion, “List of Officers, N.C.O.s and Men Who Did Particularly Good Work During the Operations at Passchendaele on November 6<sup>th</sup>/7<sup>th</sup> 1917,” date unknown, p. #.

**Format for subsequent citations:** 31<sup>st</sup> Battalion, List of Good Work, p. #.

**Bibliography format:** 31<sup>st</sup> Battalion. “List of Officers, N.C.O.s and Men Who Did Particularly Good Work During the Operations at Passchendaele on November 6<sup>th</sup>/7<sup>th</sup> 1917.” n.d., pp. 1-5.

= Folder G. 5<sup>th</sup> Brigade Narrative

**Contents:** 4 jpg files, each file being one page of a 4-page narrative report from 5<sup>th</sup> Brigade; treat these files as a single document.

**Format for first citation:** W. Clark-Kennedy, 5<sup>th</sup> Brigade, “Summary of Operations from 4<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> November, 1917, Inclusive,” 16 November 1917, p. #.

**Format for subsequent citations:** 5<sup>th</sup> Brigade Narrative, p. #.

**Bibliography format:** Clark-Kennedy, W. 5<sup>th</sup> Brigade. “Summary of Operations from 4<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> November, 1917, Inclusive.” 16 November 1917, pp. 1-4.

= Folder H. Maps

**Contents:** 6 jpg files. Two files depicting the supporting artillery barrage for the attack on November 6, 1917, and two depicting the sectors assigned to 6<sup>th</sup> Brigade’s battalions in the attack. The final two files are from an operational map scanned from the Canadian official history of the First World War.

**Citations:** For either of the artillery barrage maps, cite simply as  
Map, Artillery Barrage, 6 November 1917.

For either of the battalion maps, cite as

Map, Battalions, 6 November 1917.

For the maps from the official history, cite as follows:

G.W.L. Nicholson, *Canadian Expeditionary Force, 1914-1919: The Official History of the Canadian Army in the First World War* (Ottawa: Queen’s Printer, 1962), Map 9.

**Bibliography:** If you decide to cite any information from the artillery barrage or battalion maps, use the same format as for the citation. Use the standard bibliography format for a book by one author if you include Nicholson in your bibliography.

= Folder I. Miscellaneous Material

**Contents:** 1 jpg file consisting of a congratulatory message from the 6<sup>th</sup> Brigade commander to his troops for their performance at Passchendaele.

**Format for first citation:** H.D.B. Ketchen, 6<sup>th</sup> Brigade, Special Order, 8 November 1917.

**Format for subsequent citations:** 6<sup>th</sup> Brigade, Special Order.

**Bibliography format:** Ketchen, H.D.B. 6<sup>th</sup> Brigade, Special Order. 8 November 1917.

= Folder J. Personal Accounts

**Contents:** (1 pdf file) Personal Letter by Private H. Badger;

**Format for citation:** H. Badger, Personal Letter, 5 February 1918.

**Bibliography format:** Badger, H. Personal Letter. 5 February 1918.

1 doc file, 9 pages in length, titled “Selected Personal Accounts.”

**Format for citations:** This document contains a series of statements from different individuals. Be sure to specify the identity of the individual you are referencing in your citations. Follow these examples:

D.E. Macintyre, personal diary, 6 November 1917.

D.E. Macintyre, unpublished memoir, p. #.

CBC interview with R. Ferrie, veteran of the 31<sup>st</sup> Battalion.

***Bibliography format:*** For the sake of convenience, you may refer to this document in its entirety in your bibliography. Please use the following form:  
 “Selected Personal Accounts,” Battle of Passchendaele.

### **Basic Military Organization and Weapons Technology**

Army = commanded by a general (contained around 4 corps, but numbers could vary)

Corps = commanded by a lieutenant-general (the Canadian Corps contained 4 divisions plus supporting corps troops and attached units; approximate strength of 100-150,000 men)

Division = commanded by a major-general (contained 3 infantry brigades, plus artillery, machine gun, engineer, communication, medical, supply and transport units; approximate strength of 19-21,000 men)

Infantry Brigade = commanded by a brigadier-general (Canadian brigades contained 4 infantry battalions, plus headquarters staff; approximate strength of 4,000 men) The three infantry brigades serving in 2<sup>nd</sup> Canadian Division were the 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, and 6<sup>th</sup> Brigades.

Infantry Battalion = commanded by a lieutenant-colonel (contained 4 companies, plus administrative, communication, transport, and medical personnel; approximate strength of 1,000 men) Each battalion in a Canadian division had a numerical designation. The twelve battalions serving in 2<sup>nd</sup> Canadian Division were as follows: (in 4<sup>th</sup> Brigade) 18<sup>th</sup> Battalion, 19<sup>th</sup> Battalion, 20<sup>th</sup> Battalion, 21<sup>st</sup> Battalion; (in 5<sup>th</sup> Brigade) 22<sup>nd</sup> Battalion, 24<sup>th</sup> Battalion, 25<sup>th</sup> Battalion, 26<sup>th</sup> Battalion; (in 6<sup>th</sup> Brigade) 27<sup>th</sup> Battalion, 28<sup>th</sup> Battalion, 29<sup>th</sup> Battalion, 31<sup>st</sup> Battalion.

Company = commanded by a major or captain (contained 4 platoons; approximate strength of 200-250 men)

Platoon = commanded by a lieutenant (contained 4 sections; approximate strength of 40-60 men)

Section = commanded by a corporal or lance-corporal (approximate strength of 10-15 men)

### Canadian Infantry Weapons

Rifle = the standard infantry weapon; rate of fire approximately 12-15 rounds per minute

Bayonet = an edged weapon for cutting and thrusting; attached to the muzzle of the rifle

Lewis gun = an automatic rifle (sometimes referred to as a light machine gun, with a weight of 26 pounds). It featured a 47-round drum of ammunition and had a rate of fire of 550 rounds per minute. The weapon normally was fired in short bursts. At maximum rate of fire an entire magazine could be used up in about 5 seconds.

Bomb = the popular term in the British armies during the First World War for a hand grenade; usually thrown at ranges of 40 yards or less. The most prominent type of hand grenade used by British and Canadian troops was known as the Mills bomb.

Rifle bomb (or rifle grenade) = a grenade that could be launched from a rifle with a special attachment; had a range of 150-225 yards

### Some Heavier Weapons

Machine Gun = Vickers heavy machine gun; a belt-fed weapon mounted on a tripod; rate of fire, 450-550 rounds per minute.

Trench Mortar = a tube designed to launch a bomb-like projectile at a high angle; ideal for bombarding a trench, shell hole, or other positions; lighter and easier to move than artillery. A common type used to support infantry attacks was the 3-inch Stokes mortar, which weighed about 10 pounds and could fire up to 22 projectiles per minute; maximum range of 1,200 yards. There were many other types of mortars of varying size that fired lighter and heavier projectiles.

Artillery = came in numerous light and heavy varieties firing different weights of shell. Guns generally fired shells at a shallower trajectory over a comparatively long range. Howitzers fired shells at a steeper trajectory over shorter ranges. Types of artillery commonly used by the Canadians included the 18-pounder field gun, the 4.5-inch howitzer, 6-inch howitzer, 60-pounder field gun, and 9.2-inch howitzer.



### **Selected List of Commanding Officers and Staff Officers**

Field Marshal Sir Douglas Haig = Commander-in-Chief of the British Armies on the Western Front

Lieutenant-General Arthur Currie = General Officer Commanding (GOC) the Canadian Corps

Major-General Henry Burstall = GOC, 2<sup>nd</sup> Canadian Division

Lieutenant-Colonel N.W. Webber = Chief of Staff in charge of Operations (GSO1), 2<sup>nd</sup> Canadian Division headquarters

Major D.E. Macintyre = Staff officer, 2<sup>nd</sup> Canadian Division headquarters (in charge of training)

Brigadier-General J.M. Ross = GOC, 5<sup>th</sup> Brigade

Major W.H. Clark-Kennedy = Brigade Major, 5<sup>th</sup> Brigade (the Brigade Major was the chief staff officer of the brigade; his duties included drawing up orders for all units in the brigade, assessing intelligence, and generally seeing that the brigade commander's intentions were put into action)

Lieutenant-Colonel A.E.G. MacKenzie = Commanding Officer (CO), 26<sup>th</sup> Battalion

Brigadier-General H.D.B. Ketchen = GOC, 6<sup>th</sup> Brigade

Major F.E. Grosvenor = Brigade Major, 6<sup>th</sup> Brigade

Lieutenant-Colonel P.J. Daly = CO, 27<sup>th</sup> Battalion

Lieutenant-Colonel A. Ross = CO, 28<sup>th</sup> Battalion

Major G.F.D. Bond = Adjutant, 28<sup>th</sup> Battalion (officer in charge of all matters relating to personnel within the battalion)

Lieutenant-Colonel W.S. Latta = CO, 29<sup>th</sup> Battalion

Lieutenant-Colonel A.H. Bell = CO, 31<sup>st</sup> Battalion (absent during operations at Passchendaele)

Major C.D. McPherson = temporary CO, 31<sup>st</sup> Battalion (during Lt.-Col. Bell's absence)

## **List of Abbreviations**

Bde	brigade
Bn or Battn	battalion
Cdn	Canadian
C-in-C	Commander-in-Chief
CMG	Companion of the Most Distinguished Order of St. Michael and St. George
CO	commanding officer
Coy	company
Cpl	corporal
Div	division
DSO	Distinguished Service Order (a prestigious medal awarded to officers; these letters were sometimes written after the name of the officer to whom they were awarded, i.e. Lieutenant-Colonel W.S. Latta, DSO)
GOC	General Officer Commanding (in reference to a brigade, division, or corps commander)
GSO	General Staff Officer (usually followed by a number; i.e. GSO1, GSO2, or GSO3, indicating the staff officer's grade and responsibilities at headquarters)
how	howitzer
HQ	headquarters
L/Cpl	lance corporal
Lieut	lieutenant
MC	Military Cross (a medal awarded for gallantry or meritorious service)
MG	machine gun
NCO	non-commissioned officer (i.e. sergeant, corporal)
NE	north-east
NW	north-west
OC	officer commanding; a term applied to an officer in charge of a sub-unit (smaller in size than a battalion), such as a company or platoon.
OR	other ranks (any personnel lower in rank than a commissioned officer; included sergeants, corporals, and private soldiers)
pr	"pounder" (an artillery designation, as in 18-pounder field gun; the weight refers to the weight of the shell fired)
Pte	private
RFC	Royal Flying Corps
rds	rounds
SAA	Small arms ammunition (i.e. bullets for rifles, pistols, machine guns)
SE	south-east
Sgt	sergeant
SOS	an emergency signal
SW	south-west
TM	trench mortar

## **Terminology**

barrage – a dense concentration of artillery fire designed suppress enemy activity and cover the movement of friendly ground forces.

billet – A place in which troops were quartered when out of the front lines on rest. It might be a civilian home, a barn, or other usable building.

Boche – A derogatory name for the Germans

cable – Telephone cable; buried cable was much less vulnerable to shellfire.

consolidation – The process of strengthening and fortifying a position recently captured from the enemy.

contact aircraft – An airplane assigned to observe the position of attacking troops, or troops engaged in consolidation efforts immediately following an advance. Aircrew on such missions (called contact patrols) would report the position of an attacking force to senior officers behind the lines charting the progress of their mens' efforts.

creeping (or rolling) barrage – An artillery barrage that moved at a predetermined pace ahead of an advancing group of infantry. Artillery batteries firing a creeping barrage would drop a line of exploding shells that would creep ahead of the infantry in “lifts” of, for example, 100 yards every three minutes (the pace could vary). The infantry would follow closely behind the barrage at a distance of 40 to 60 yards. The purpose of the barrage was to suppress enemy defences and screen the attacking force, allowing the vulnerable attackers to get within striking distance of enemy positions.

duck walk/duckboards – A ladder-like assemblage of wooden planks laid on the surface of the mud to provide some solid footing for the men.

dummy attack – A fake attack intended to divert the enemy's attention; sometimes carried out along the flank of a real attack.

dump – A position designated for the accumulation and storage of supplies and ammunition.

enfilade – Firepower directed against the length of a target, such as the flank of a line (or rank) of advancing troops, or the front or rear of a column of marching troops. This means that the bullets fired against the body of troops are traveling down the length of the line or column. Soldiers disposed along the length of a trench are subject to enfilade fire if enemy troops are able to fire down the length of the trench. To be subject to enfilade fire is one of the most deadly situations in which a body of troops can find itself.

fire and movement – A style of fighting in which one or more small groups of infantry, such as a platoon or section, would manoeuvre under the covering fire of neighboring platoons and sections. Groups supplying covering fire would suppress an enemy position, thereby allowing other small groups to move forward or around a flank to capture or destroy it. Groups might alternate roles (manoeuvring and providing covering fire) in “leapfrog” fashion.

flank – The side of an army or any of its constituent parts (like a corps, division, brigade, battalion, or smaller body of troops). For example, to attack a battalion’s left flank means to attack the left side of its position. The flanks of a unit or formation are usually more exposed and vulnerable than its front.

formation – A higher-level military organization, such as a brigade, division, or corps.

Fritz – Another popular nickname applied to German troops, either singly or collectively.

frontage – The lateral space occupied by a unit or formation facing the enemy. For example, a company attacking on a three-platoon frontage, advanced with three of its platoons side by side.

funk-hole – A small dugout or other form of shelter.

“He,” “him,” “his,” – Pronouns frequently used in reference to the enemy. It was a common convention among British and Canadian troops to refer to the German forces in a personalized and singular manner. For example: “Last night he launched a raid on our forward positions, so today in retaliation, we bombarded his front lines with heavy artillery.”

jumping-off line – The “starting line” from which a unit or formation launches its attack; it may consist of a particular stretch of trench or other physical feature, or it may simply correspond to a given set of map coordinates

*Minenwerfer* – A German trench mortar; literally meant “mine thrower.”

mopping up – Clearing a captured stretch of ground from any remaining enemy personnel.

pillbox – A fortified strongpoint made of reinforced concrete. The Germans employed many pillboxes at Passchendaele because the ground was too wet to construct deep trenches. For the most part, pillboxes were used simply as shelters from artillery fire. Contrary to popular belief, machine guns generally were not fired from within pillboxes. Typically, the garrison of a particular pillbox would emerge when an artillery barrage had passed by and take up firing positions in nearby shallow trenches or shell holes on the flanks of, or behind, the pillbox. However, there likely were some instances in which a pillbox garrison chose to fight from within the pillbox itself, firing rifles and machine guns through the narrow view slits.

power buzzer – A type of communication device that transmitted electrical impulses through the earth which could be picked up by a receiver; had a range of approximately 2,000 yards.

“The Salient” – The notorious Ypres Salient; a bulge in the front lines extending eastward around the Allied-held Belgian city of Ypres. Because of the disposition of the trenches in this salient, German artillery could fire into the British and Canadian front lines and rear areas from the north, the east, and the south.

runners – Soldiers who carried messages, orders, and other information as quickly as possible by foot.

scouts – Troops responsible for reconnaissance and intelligence duties within a battalion

taped course – A training area, usually established well behind the front lines, on which units rehearsed an attack. The course was designed to represent the actual ground over which a unit would advance. Long strips of material known as “tapes” were staked out on the ground to indicate the location and shape of enemy trenches or other positions. During practice attacks on a taped course, a creeping artillery barrage might be simulated by a line of men (mounted or on foot) carrying flags which would move ahead of the infantry at the same pace prescribed for the actual creeping barrage.

unit – A lower-level organization, such as an infantry battalion; a sub-unit would be one of a unit’s constituent groups, such as a company or platoon. A sufficient number of units grouped under an organized headquarters and staff would constitute a formation.

Very light – A small rocket fired from a special pistol. The rocket’s detonation in the air could be used to illuminate a stretch of ground at night, or it could be used as a visual signal (often to indicate the successful capture of an objective). Basically, a signal flare.

wave – A group of troops moving forward at the same time during an attack. Attacking units often disposed their troops in several successive waves.

Zero day/hour – The commencement day or hour of an attack.