

Name: _____ Date: _____ Period: _____

TO
THE
PAST

Directions: After reading the background information and examining the source, answer the questions below.

Background Information: *The War of 1812 was a conflict fought from 1812 to 1815 between the United States and Britain (including British North America, in present-day Canada) over issues of trade, territorial expansion, and Indigenous sovereignty along the North American frontier.*

Featured Source 1:

"(...) I begin to feel the want of cloth **trouser**...And moreover the mornings are getting cool. And a fellow will soon begin to look funny in summer clothes. Get me a pair of grey trousers made like Robert Stanton's (...)"

Trouser: pants

Source: Extract from an original letter from Thomas G. Ridout to his brother George Ridout, September 4, 1813 Thomas Ridout family fonds Reference Code: F 43, box MU 2390 Archives of Ontario

Featured Source 2:

"I have furnished barracks for one hundred and twenty men and they are all on the spot, including the Rifle Company now on duty here. And all are in the greatest want of almost every necessary. And I have this day received a letter from Col. Vincent referring me to you for stoves, blankets, etc. and I must observe that we are in as great want of shoes, pantaloons, jackets, and watch coats for the Guard"

Furnished:
pants
Barracks:
Soldiers Housing

Source: Extract from an original letter from Colonel Joel Stone to Colonel Lethbridge, October 25, 1812 Joel Stone family fonds Reference Code: F 536, MU 2892 Archives of Ontario

Featured Source 3:

"We have had a most harassing journey of 10 days to this place when we arrived last night in a snow storm. It has been snowing all day & is now half a foot deep. ... Frequently I had to go middle deep in a mud hole & unload the wagon & carry heavy trunks 50 yards waist deep in the **mire** & reload the wagon. Sometimes put my shoulder to the **fore** wheel & raise it up. One night the wagon [upset] going up a steep hill in the woods...Gee I carried the load up to the top..."

Fore: Front
Mire: Mud

Source: Extract from an original letter from Thomas G. Ridout (Kingston) to his father Thomas Ridout, November 1, 1813 Thomas Ridout family fonds Reference Code: F 43, box MU 2390 Archives of Ontario

Featured Source 4:

"Give me leave Sir to remark the duty I owe to my fellow creatures and as a true patriot to my country to remind you at the certain **calamity** that must befall us if the Militia are thus continued to be cawled [called] from their families. If they are cawled [called] one month or six weeks from their farms they can put no spring grain in the ground and the consequence will be that their families must **inevitably** suffer. The famine even threatens before the **ensuing** harvest when there is but little **sown** that can be rept [reaped] if the farmers are prevented from putting in spring grain the famine will undoubtedly be dreadful."

Calamity: pants
Inevitably:
Unavoidably
Ensuing: Next
Sown: Planted

Source: Letter from Lieutenant Colonel Benoni Wiltse to Colonel Joel Stone, April 13, 1813 Joel Stone family fonds Reference Code: F 536, box MU 2892 Archives of Ontario

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Your Task: Students have been asked to summarize the factors that may have contributed to the desertion of British soldiers during the War of 1812. Rate their summaries on the proficiency scales provided and justify your answer.

Student 1

Taken together, these sources suggest that some soldiers and militia members may have deserted because military service involved extreme hardship. Letters describe shortages of clothing, food, and supplies, exhausting travel in bad weather, poor living conditions, and widespread disease. Other sources show concern about families at home, especially the risk of famine if farmers were kept away from their land. These difficult conditions may have pushed some men to leave the service.

Emerging	Developing	Proficient	Extending
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Explanation for rating:

Student 1

These sources prove that soldiers deserted because army life was unbearable for everyone involved. All soldiers lacked proper clothing, food, and shelter, were constantly sick, and faced dangerous travel conditions. Disease killed far more men than fighting, showing that the army could not protect its soldiers at all. Because farmers were taken away from their land, their families were guaranteed to starve, so desertion was the only reasonable outcome for most men serving in the militia.

Emerging	Developing	Proficient	Extending
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Explanation for rating: