

Question 4 - Life in the Trenches

This question is about conditions and life in the trenches on the Western Front. Study Source A, B, C and D and then answer all the questions that follow:

Source A - Photograph of German soldiers in the trenches on the Western Front in 1916.



Source B

In May 1915 Winston Churchill resigned his post as First Lord of the Admiralty and in November went as an army officer to France. On his second night in the trenches near Neuve Chapelle he wrote to his wife.

Filth and rubbish everywhere; graves built into the defences with feet and clothing breaking through the soil; water and muck on all sides. There is a non-stop sound of rifles and machine-guns, and whining of bullets which pass overhead.

Source C

An extract from a diary kept by a civilian. The writer was helping in a hospital in Britain.

3rd August 1916. One patient was a Regular soldier before 1914. He served in Gallipoli as well as France. He says that getting to the front-line trenches is a hundred times worse than being in them. It means possibly an eight-mile walk through narrow trenches each man burdened with kit. In muddy weather progress is difficult; he remembers mud waist deep. By the time the front-line trenches are reached men are dead-tired.

Source D

From a modern British history book about the First World War.

A [British] soldier usually served in the trenches only for short periods. Of 20,000 men in a division, only 2,000 were in the front line at any moment. A typical month would be: four days in the front line, four in the support trenches, eight in reserve and the remainder in rest areas.

The section of the front where a soldier served was also important. Anywhere near Ypres was always bad, but many other areas were very quiet.

Questions

a) Study Source A.

What can we learn from Source A about conditions for soldiers in the trenches.

(3)

b) Study Sources B and C.

Does Source C support the evidence of Source B about the experience for soldiers in the trenches? Explain your answer. (7)

c) Study Sources A, B, C and D, and use your own knowledge.

'Life in the trenches was unpleasant rather than dangerous.'

Use all the sources, and your own knowledge, to explain whether you agree with this view. (15)