

Military Abbreviations, Terms and Meanings

Service personnel military files from the First World War contain many abbreviations and terms, the most common of which are explained here.

Abbreviation	Term	Meaning
Acting or a/	Acting Rank	higher rank held on a temporary basis - also known as a brevet rank for officers
Adj	Adjutant	administrative assistant to a commanding officer (below divisional level)
adm	admitted	soldiers entering hospital for medical treatment
ARD	Alberta Regimental Depot	facility in England used to assemble men and to store and administer equipment and materials
att'd	attached	to be made part of a specific unit on a temporary basis
auth	authorized, authority	designation of the individual or organization permitting the action noted
AWL or AWOL	absent without leave	away from a unit without permission; an offence under military law
Batt'n or Bn	Battalion	unit of approximately 1,000 men commanded by a lieutenant-colonel
BCRD	British Columbia Regimental Depot	facility in England used to assemble men and to store and administer equipment and materials
BEF	British Expeditionary Force	army of more than 3,000,000 men established by the Government of Britain for service overseas
Bde	Brigade	unit of approximately 4,000 men commanded by a brigadier-general
Bramshott	Bramshott	location of a Canadian military training base in Hampshire, England
Bty	Battery	artillery unit commanded by a major and composed of four or six guns or mortars
Boulogne	Boulogne	location of Canadian General Hospital (number three) in France
CADC	Canadian Army Dental Corps	corps of military dentists and other personnel providing dental services to soldiers
CAMC	Canadian Army Medical Corps	corps of military doctors, nursing sisters and other personnel providing medical treatment to soldiers
Canterbury	Canterbury	location of Canadian Military Hospital (number two) in Kent, England
CASC	Canadian Army Service Corps	branch of the military responsible for supplying troops in the field
Cav	Cavalry	soldiers who fought on horseback
CBD	Canadian Base Details	small units charged with maintaining and improving camp areas
CCAC	Canadian Casualty Assembly Centre	centre where wounded were assessed for either further treatment or return to duty
CCCC	Canadian Corps Composite Company	unit of men unfit for active duty at the front and attached to Corps Headquarters for employment
CCD	Canadian Convalescent Depot	facility where soldiers could recover from wounds and rebuild their strength
CCRC	Canadian Corps Reinforcement Centre	centre in France where troops were held before being sent to reinforce existing units
CCS	Casualty Clearing Station	first medical unit (after the Aid Post) for wounded soldiers evacuated from the front lines
CDD	Canadian Discharge Depot	centre in Canada where soldiers returning from war were released from service
CDAC	Canadian Divisional Ammunition Depot	railhead where divisional ammunition was stored before being shipped to the front
CE	Canadian Engineers	corps of men who built bridges, railway depots, camps, bases and other military installations
CEF	Canadian Expeditionary Force	force of more than 600,000 men established by the Government of Canada for service overseas
CERD	Canadian Engineer Reinforcement Depot	centre from which reinforcements were allocated to existing engineering units
CFA	Canadian Field Ambulance	unit responsible for evacuating the wounded from the front lines to medical centres
CFA	Canadian Field Artillery	organization responsible for using medium-calibre guns in direct or indirect support of infantry
CFC	Canadian Forestry Corps	units designated to cut down and process trees to provide wood and lumber
CGA	Canadian Garrison Artillery	organization responsible for using large-calibre guns against heavily fortified positions
CGH	Canadian General Hospital	permanent hospital where extensive treatment was given to the wounded
CGR	Canadian Garrison Regiment	unit of 13 battalions formed in April 1918 to perform garrison duty in Canada's 13 military districts
CL	Casualty List	list of soldiers wounded, killed, missing or taken prisoner by the enemy
CLH	Canadian Light Horse	cavalry unit, originally intended as a scouting force
CMGC	Canadian Machine Gun Corps	soldiers with machine guns responsible for supporting or defending against infantry attack
CMR	Canadian Mounted Rifles	mounted soldiers originally, later used largely as infantry
C of I	Court of Inquiry	group of officers convened to investigate specific questions or events

Com	Command	unit under the command of one officer or non-commissioned officer
CO	Commanding Officer	any officer in command of a specific unit (usually battalion level and up)
Conv	Convalescent	a soldier recovering from wounds or illness
CORD	Central Ontario Regimental Depot	facility in England used to assemble men and to store and administer equipment and materials
Coy	Company	unit of approximately 200 men, divided into 4 platoons
CRCR	Canadian Reserve Cavalry Regiment	cavalry reserve unit based in England
CRT	Canadian Railway Troops	men recruited and organized to operate railways in rear areas
CSM	Company Sergeant-Major	senior non-commissioned officer in a company
DAC	Divisional Ammunition Company	organization responsible for supplying ammunition to a division
DCM	Distinguished Conduct Medal	medal for bravery awarded to other ranks (non-officers)
dis	discharged	released from the military service, or from a hospital
Div	Division	unit of approximately 12,000 men commanded by a major-general
DO	Daily Order (of a unit)	administration orders issued to mark personnel changes of a unit (transfers, hospitalizations, etc.)
D of W	Died of Wounds	official cause of death
Dvr	Driver	designation or rank of a soldier who drives vehicles
East Sandling	East Sandling	location of Canadian military training base in Kent, England
emb	embarked	went aboard ship for departure overseas; Canada to Britain or Canada to France
EORD	Eastern Ontario Regimental Depot	facility in England used to assemble men and to store and administer equipment and materials
Frac	Fractured	medical term for a broken bone
GC Badge	Good Conduct Badge	award for good conduct during service
Gen	General	commanding officer at division or corps level
GHQ	General Headquarters	command centre from which corps or army commanders direct the war
Gnr	Gunner	lowest rank in the Royal Canadian Artillery (equivalent to private)
GSW	Gunshot Wound	wound caused by a bullet
GOC	General Officer Commanding	highest ranking general, usually at corps level
HMS	His Majesty's Ship	vessel under the control of the Royal Navy
HMT	His Majesty's Troopship	designated ship carrying troops between Canada and England and England and France
Hosp	Hospital	designated location where soldiers receive medical treatment
How	Howitzer	an artillery weapon (various calibres) capable of firing shells in a low or high arc
HQ	Headquarters	command centre for a military unit in the field (company level and above)
inv "wd"	invalided wounded	a soldier transferred away from the front as a result of wounds received in action
KIA	Killed in Action	designation of how a soldier died
LG (Lon Gaz)	London Gazette	official British government publication of decorations, honours and promotions
LMB	Light Mortar Battery	front line unit of light mortars used for direct fire support
LSH	Lord Strathcona's Horse (Royal Canadians)	cavalry unit first established for the South African War
M&D	Medals and Decorations	list of theatre medals or decorations received for military service, as well as special citations
MC	Military Cross	award given to officers for specific act(s) of bravery, or for meritorious service
MD	Military District (or Depot)	designated military administrative areas in Canada (13 in number)
MIA	Missing in action	casualty whose whereabouts and status (alive, dead or captured) after an action are unknown
MID	Mentioned-in-Despatches	commendation by commanding officer for outstanding or meritorious service
Mil	Military	organization responsible for defending a country or for the conduct of a war
Miss	missing	location of an individual is unknown
MM	Military Medal	medal for bravery awarded to other ranks (non-officers)
MRD	Manitoba Regimental Depot	facility behind front used to assemble men and to store and administer equipment and materials
NCO	non-commissioned officer	non-commissioned officer

NSRD	Nova Scotia Regimental Depot	facility behind front used to assemble men and to store and administer equipment and materials
NYD	not yet determined	a medical condition not yet diagnosed
OMFC	Overseas Military Forces of Canada	Canadian cabinet ministry that conducted Canadian military affairs in London, England
Orpington	Orpington	location of military hospital in Kent, England
O.S.	Overseas	all areas outside the territorial waters of North America
P&S	Plaque and Scroll (Memorial)	given to the families of soldiers who died during service
Pnr	Pioneer	member of a pioneer battalion, used for specialized engineering work in rear areas
PPCLI	Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry	Canadian regiment of experienced soldiers privately established by Hamilton Galt
pres	presumed	official term not available
Proc	proceeded	official term not available
Pte	Private	lowest rank of enlisted soldier
Pt. II O	Part II Orders	administrative orders issued by a unit (see DO)
PUO	Pyrexia of unknown origin	fever of an undetermined cause
QRD	Quebec Regimental Depot	facility in England used to assemble men and to store and administer equipment and materials
RAF	Royal Air Force	British air force (Royal Flying Corps [RFC] before April 1918)
RCD	Royal Canadian Dragoons	heavy cavalry unit
RCHA	Royal Canadian Horse Artillery	specific regiment of artillery inside the Royal Canadian Artillery
RCR	Royal Canadian Regiment	one of the oldest Canadian infantry regiments, founded in 1883
rem	remained	stayed in an area, or stayed on duty
Res	Reserve	force of men remaining behind the lines to reinforce the front lines where needed
RFB	Reported from Base	unit base report about a soldier
RFC	Royal Flying Corps	see RAF
RSM	Regimental Sergeant-Major	senior non-commissioned officer in a regiment
RTC	Returned to Corps	a soldier returning to duty
RTU	Returned to Unit	a soldier returning to a unit following illness, wounds, leave or training
Salisbury	Salisbury	location of first Canadian military training base in Southwest England in 1915
Seaford	Seaford	location of Canadian military training base in Sussex, England
SEF	Siberian Expeditionary Force	small international force sent to Russia in 1918 to help anti-communist forces
Shorncliffe	Shorncliffe	location of Canadian military training base in Kent, England
SOS	Struck off strength (of a unit)	when a soldier ceases to be a member of a unit because of transfer, injury or death
Spr	Sapper	lowest enlisted rank in Canadian Engineers (see CE)
SS	Steamship	transport vessel used to carry troops and equipment
Staty	Stationary (Hospital)	large movable hospital of between 400 and 1,000 beds
SW	Shrapnel (Shell) wound	type of wound received from shrapnel or shell fragment
TMB	Trench Mortar Battery	small- to medium-calibre mortars used in infantry support and to shell enemy trenches
TOS	Taken on strength (of a unit)	entry of a soldier to a unit
Tpr	Trooper	lowest rank in a cavalry unit
trans	transferred	to be sent from one unit or location to another
unk	unknown	location of a soldier is not known
Wilton	Wilton	location of Canadian military training base in Wiltshire, England (on Salisbury Plain)
w, (w)	wounded	injury caused by enemy action