

CHAPTER FOUR:
THE SECOND WORLD WAR



**MEMORIAL FOR CANADIAN SOLDIERS
AT VIMY RIDGE**

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INTRODUCTION

By the end of the 1930s, Canadians had lived through a decade of hard times, and by 1939, with the Second World War upon them, Canadians began to experience the difficulties of fighting in yet another war. As in the First World War, Canada's involvement in the Second World War brought about significant changes in Canadian society. First, the onset of war sent unemployed Canadians back to work. Almost overnight, the economy was back at full production and expanding. As the war progressed, women played an increasing role in the economy, and relations between French and English Canadians became strained once again. Furthermore, racial tensions within Canada became evident as Japan entered the war several years later. Finally, Canada's participation as a sovereign nation in the Second World War served to enhance Canada's international reputation as a middle power in the years to follow.

I. BACKGROUND EVENTS

As mentioned earlier in dealing with the end of the First World War, the forces which brought about yet another world war were already in motion in 1919. Neither the "winners" or the "losers" of the first war were really satisfied with the treaties signed at the Paris Peace Conferences. France, for example, still was obsessed and fearful of another attack by Germany. Italy and Germany, on the other hand, felt cheated by the treaties. This left them bitter and waiting for an opportunity to correct what they thought were the shortcomings of these treaties. To add to these difficulties, European economies struggled in the 1920s and, like the rest of the industrial world, fell into a devastating economic depression in the 1930s. All of these factors produced an atmosphere which made another world war all the more likely.

In the Pacific, Japan became very aggressive. After 1931, Japan was largely run by the military. The goal of these warlords—as they were called—was to acquire a large empire by means of conquest. Almost needless to say, this aggressive posture alarmed countries like China and the United States.

In both Europe and the Pacific, war was not necessarily inevitable, but it was certainly likely. The notes to follow will enable you to understand the context of the war that Canada entered in September, 1939.

☛ A. THE RISE OF TOTALITARIANISM

It is necessary to discuss **totalitarianism** before proceeding, because the Second World War was caused by totalitarian dictators.

The word "totalitarian" or totalitarianism is likely new to you. While it is a word with many syllables, the concept is not that difficult. This term is used to describe a dictatorship. Dictatorships were certainly not new to the twentieth century. What was new, was the "total" manner in which twentieth century dictators could control their populations. Modern technology had given these new dictators many weapons and measures with which they could not only seize power, but also strictly control the populations under their rule. One should take the "total" in totalitarianism very literally. Germany and Italy were fascist totalitarian regimes, while the Soviet Union was a communist totalitarian regime. Some of the key aspects of totalitarianism were:

1. Totalitarian regimes had only one leader who had absolute power.
2. Only one ideology was allowed. No other ideologies were tolerated.
3. Secret police were used in extreme ways to instill terror in the population.
4. Totalitarian dictators allowed no dissent (opposition) and the citizens were denied their human rights.
5. Censorship and propaganda were common tools used to further control the population.
6. In the end, citizens of totalitarian regimes were left only with the freedom of their own thoughts—and they knew to keep those to themselves.

B. MUSSOLINI AND ITALIAN FASCISM

During the initial years after the First World War, the Italians were not a happy lot. They were dissatisfied with their newborn democratic form of government because they viewed it as weak and ineffective. Furthermore, they blamed their democratic leaders for getting a bad deal for Italy at the Paris Peace Conferences, for the economic chaos in Italy, and for their inability to bring stability to everyday life. Between 1919 and 1922, more and more Italians became willing to sacrifice democracy in exchange for a solution to these problems. Into this chaotic circumstance came the very skilled and very devious **Benito Mussolini**.

1. MUSSOLINI COMES TO POWER

Mussolini formed a political party called the Fascisti (fascist). By 1922, unable to achieve victory in the elections, Mussolini became frustrated, and threatened to overthrow the Italian government during his famous **March on Rome**. He had formed the Blackshirts, a quasi-military group who acted as his political goons. Mussolini gathered 26,000 of these men on the outskirts of Rome and demanded that the Italian government be turned over. King Emmanuel, rather than risk a civil war, handed Mussolini the government without a single shot being fired.

2. ITALY BECOMES A TOTALITARIAN FASCIST STATE

In order to understand this heading you should review the section on fascism in Chapter One.

According to Mussolini, the ultimate goal of a fascist government was to lead the country into a war of imperial conquest. In 1935, he invaded Ethiopia in an attempt to fulfill this goal.

While Italy itself could not pose a threat to the security of Europe as a whole, Mussolini and Hitler together, certainly contributed to the series of events which started the Second World War.

C. FAILURE OF DEMOCRACY IN GERMANY: GERMANY BECOMES A FASCIST STATE

Germany had become a democracy at the end of the First World War. Most countries become democratic because the people have a desire for freedom and want to participate in the affairs of government through elections. This was not the case in Germany. When the *Kaiser* (the German leader) abdicated (gave up power), the new leaders quickly created the **Weimar Republic** (a democracy in Germany) thinking that it would help them in the peacemaking process. The Germans hoped that by creating a democracy they would please the Americans, which would cause the Americans to push for a more lenient

settlement to be made regarding Germany. This somewhat questionable motive for adopting democratic government did not bode well for the new democracy. In fact, fourteen years later, the German people willingly sacrificed democracy. The events and forces which brought this about are briefly described in the following sections.

1. GERMANY BETWEEN 1919 AND 1933

a) German Attitudes Toward The Weimar Republic

Most Germans hated every single clause in the Treaty of Versailles. Because the democratic Weimar Republic had signed the Treaty of Versailles, these same people, at worst also hated democracy as a form of government, and at best, were highly suspicious of its ability to run Germany.

b) Economic Issues that Undermined the Weimar Republic

(i) Inflation

Inflation is an economic condition whereby the currency of a country becomes less and less valuable. Before 1923, inflation was already a serious problem in Germany, but when Germany failed to make its reparations payments, and French and Belgian troops occupied the Ruhr Valley, "ordinary" inflation became hyper-inflation. The situation climaxed when the mark (the German currency) lost all value. It had reached the point where it would have taken about 12 billion German marks to buy one Canadian dollar. The government trashed the old mark, and any money Germans had was now worth nothing. The German people were furious, not only with the French for occupying their country, but with their own government for allowing their hard-earned money to literally evaporate. People who had money in the bank (primarily the middle class) were ruined. These same people later became ardent supporters of the NAZIS.

It was during this inflation crisis that Hitler and the NAZIS first tried to overthrow the German government. While this attempt failed, the leader of the NAZIS, **Adolf Hitler**, would later gain popularity by reminding those who were ruined that he would destroy democracy, and would never again let the German people become victim to such events.

(ii) Germany and the Great Depression

For a period of about five years after the inflation crisis of 1923-24, for a period of about five years, the German government was reasonably stable, and the economy, while not flourishing, did improve. During this time, it actually looked like democracy had a chance of surviving in Germany.

In 1929, Germany, along with the rest of the industrialized world, plunged into the worst economic depression in modern history (refer to Chapter Four). As unemployment grew to staggering proportions, democracy, again, came under attack. Political parties from the far left (i.e., the communists) and parties from the far right (i.e., the NAZIS) grew in popularity with every election.

The section below will briefly describe the NAZI Party and how it managed to take over Germany and put an end to democracy. Before you begin, you should be aware that Hitler did not "shoot his way to

power”—he was elected.

2. ADOLF HITLER AND THE NAZI PARTY

Hitler had been one of those Germans who was fiercely bitter about Germany's loss in the First World War, the Treaty of Versailles, and the creation of the democratic form of government. Early in the 1920s, Hitler took over the German Socialist Workers' Party (if you write this in German, the acronym becomes **NAZI**). Under his leadership, this party came to stand for the following:

a) Extreme Nationalism

While many people, including the Germans, had previously been nationalistic, nationalism had now reached a much higher level. Ultimately, Hitler convinced many Germans that a citizen's sole reason for existence was to serve the state. It was this wave of extreme nationalism that Hitler would ride all the way into the Second World War.

b) Anti-Democratic

Hitler, while he lied about many things, never lied to the German people about what he intended to do with the democratic form of government. He said he would destroy it and turn Germany into a dictatorship.

c) Anti-Semitism

Anti-Semitism means to dislike or even hate Jewish people. Hitler blamed Germany's difficulties on the Jews, thereby creating a convenient **scapegoat** (someone punished for the errors of others) for the German people. It did not matter that there was no truth to his allegation. This lie proved to be very popular with the population because it seemingly relieved the people of their responsibility in bringing about the First World War, and the many hardships that occurred as a result. At this time, Hitler did not tell the German people that he intended to exterminate the Jews. It is unclear just when he decided to do this. However, by deriding Jews from such an early date, Hitler created an atmosphere of hatred in Germany that later would allow for unspeakable atrocities.

d) Restore Germany's Military Might

Historically, Germany had been a very militaristic country. The Treaty of Versailles had severely restricted the size of the German military, therefore, Hitler's promise to restore the military proved to be very popular with the German people.

3. HOW HITLER CAME TO POWER

- a) As the effects of the Great Depression became worse, more people decided that the Weimar government could not solve the economic problems facing Germany. This drove the voters to the left (communists) and the right (NAZIS). In 1932, the NAZIS became the largest party in the German parliament. In spite of this accomplishment, Hitler's Party was not asked to become the government. As the communists became more popular, many of the people in the middle of the political spectrum also turned to the NAZIS in an effort to halt the growing influence of the communists. Late in 1932, another election was held and Hitler became the German Chancellor (the equivalent of the Prime Minister in Canada).
- b) Although Hitler won the election, he did not have a majority. This frustrated him because he was unable to pass laws that would give him

more power. In February 1933, he called another election in an attempt to gain that majority. During this election campaign a Dutch communist burned down the *Reichstag* (the German parliament building). During the remainder of the election campaign, Hitler deviously used this event to convince Germans that a communist revolution was at hand. When the votes were counted, the NAZIS were just short of a majority. By outlawing the communists from the Reichstag, Hitler then gained the majority he had sought. He bullied the Reichstag into passing the **Enabling Act**, which effectively made him all-powerful. This act, and Hitler's subsequent actions, brought an end to democracy in Germany, and the beginning of totalitarianism.

4. NAZI GERMANY UNDER HITLER

- a) Germany became a totalitarian state without hardly any sign of protest.
- b) In June 1934, during an event referred to as the **Night of the Long Knives**, Hitler had about 1,000 people murdered. The victims of this brutal act were deemed to be enemies of the state by the NAZIS.
- c) Between 1933 and 1939, in a package of laws known as the **Nuremburg Laws**, Hitler enacted his draconian (meaning harsh and unjust) measures against the Jews. These laws meant that:
 - (i) Jews had to wear the Star of David at all times.
 - (ii) Jews lost their professional careers and their property.
 - (iii) Jews could in no way mingle with the German population.
 - (iv) Jews lost their citizenship.
- d) This package of laws was passed without resistance, and should have warned Germans and the rest of the world about Hitler's intentions. On November 9th 1938, the NAZIS encouraged the Germans to attack Jews and their property. Jewish shops were attacked, windows were smashed, Jews were beaten in public, and many were imprisoned for no reason at all. This infamous event was called **Kristallnacht** (the night glass).
- e) All human rights were abolished.
- f) The secret police—called the **Gestapo** and also the SS—became all-powerful. They could do anything they liked as long as Hitler believed they were serving the state.
- g) Germany began a rapid re-militarization (re-building of the military).
- h) Hitler was now referred to as the **Führer** (the leader). German people now greeted each other not with hello, but with the right arm stiffly raised at forty five degrees and a snappy *Heil Hitler* (honour Hitler).

D. THE SOVIET UNION UNDER STALIN

When Joseph Stalin gained complete control of the Soviet Union in 1928, he immediately began to shape the country with his vision of communism. The items below briefly describe the main characteristics of the Soviet Union under Stalin.

1. STALIN'S GOALS WITHIN THE SOVIET UNION

Stalin was a totalitarian dictator. In many ways, he was more extreme in his exercise of this extreme power than the other totalitarian dictators. Stalin wanted first and foremost to modernize the economy of the Soviet Union. He was also obsessed with his fear of another invasion by a foreign country.

Stalin understood all too well that in modern warfare, a country's level of industrialization could determine success or failure. This meant he would have to ensure industrialization at all costs. In order to achieve this goal, Stalin introduced the **Five Year Plans** and the Command Economy. The **Five-Year Plans** was Stalin's attempt for the government to completely take control of all aspects of the economy. Under these plans Stalin:

- a) Collectivized farm land by literally ending all private ownership of land. This collectivized land was then placed into very large state-owned farms. The former peasants now became paid workers. In Stalin's master plan, this step had to come first because the state needed capital (money) for investment in the other parts of his scheme.
- b) Stalin began to invest in the construction of heavy industry. Heavy industry consists of large projects like the steel and coal industries, the production of armaments, building railroads, ports, highways and airports. By emphasizing heavy industry, Stalin virtually ignored the production of consumer goods. His goal was to modernize Soviet industry so he could build a military that would be able to defend the Soviet Union.
- c) In order to achieve the above, Stalin used harsh and even brutal measures. He introduced the **Great Terror**. During this era in the 1930s, anyone who was considered an enemy of his goals was executed. Consequently, millions of Soviet citizens lost their lives.

2. STALIN'S GOALS IN THE INTERNATIONAL ARENA

Stalin's overall goal was to defend the Soviet Union. Internally, the Five Year Plans were to prepare the Soviet Union to defend itself. Stalin was more interested in participation in international affairs than Lenin had been. In 1934, the Soviet Union joined the League of Nations. Even though the League (by this time) was severely limited in its ability to promote peace, Stalin would promote collective security as best he could.

As NAZI Germany became more powerful, Stalin fully realized that the Soviet Union would one day become one of Hitler's targets. This is why Stalin signed the NAZI-Soviet Pact in August of 1939. (see page 96)

II. THE SECOND WORLD WAR

☞ A. CAUSES OF THE SECOND WORLD WAR IN EUROPE

When historians deal with large topics like the Second World War, they often separate causes into two broad categories. These are fundamental or underlying causes on the one hand, and immediate causes on the other. In the case of the Second World War, the fundamental causes could be said to create the atmosphere in which such a war is highly likely. The immediate causes are much closer in time to the actual event, and directly contribute to the coming of said event.

☞ 1. FUNDAMENTAL CAUSES: A SUMMARY

- a) The Treaty of Versailles
- b) The Great Depression
- c) The rise of Adolf Hitler and the NAZI Party
- d) The failure of the League of Nations

- e) Extreme nationalism
- f) The unwillingness of the democratic governments to intervene in places like Germany

2. IMMEDIATE CAUSES

a) The Appeasement Crises: 1936-1939

Appeasement is a policy whereby when a country becomes aggressive, other countries give the aggressor what it wants just to prevent another war. As Hitler became more aggressive in his steps to make Germany a powerful international force, Britain and France practiced appeasement. The appeasement crises are as follows:

(i) The Re-militarization of the Rhineland

The Treaty of Versailles forced Germany to remove all military presence from this region on the border with France. In March 1936, Hitler sent his troops into the Rhineland. Instead of taking action to reverse this violation of the Treaty of Versailles, Britain and France did nothing. Hitler was encouraged.

(ii) The Annexation of Austria

Annexation means to make something a part of a greater whole. In March 1938, German troops moved into Austria and made it part of Germany. Again, the democracies took no action to oppose yet another violation of the Treaty of Versailles.

(iii) Appeasement in Czechoslovakia

This crisis unfolded in two stages, and it is by far the most important immediate cause of the Second World War.

When Czechoslovakia was created, over three million Germans were included within its boundaries. They lived in the western region of Czechoslovakia bordering on Germany called the Sudetenland. Hitler desperately wanted these people to be included in Germany. The crisis came to a head in late September, 1938. After making many demands regarding the Sudetenland, Hitler finally threatened invasion on October 1st. The British and French panicked. If Hitler invaded, surely the Czechs would resist, and this would lead to war. A conference was called at Munich, Germany. At this conference, the appeasers asked Hitler what he wanted in exchange for not going to war—he demanded and got the Sudetenland. The wishes of the Czechs were completely ignored. In fact, Benes, the Czech Prime Minister, was not even allowed into the conference. In exchange for the Sudetenland, Hitler promised not to invade the remaining part of Czechoslovakia. Neville Chamberlain, the British Prime Minister and architect of the appeasement policy, proudly returned to London proclaiming a great victory.

The appeasement policy came crashing down on March 15th 1939, when Hitler's troops invaded the rest of Czechoslovakia and Czechoslovakia ceased to exist. Everyone, including Chamberlain, now knew that appeasement had been a failure, and that a large European war was imminent.

b) The NAZI-Soviet Pact and the Coming of the Second World War

Stalin and the Soviet Union had played almost no role in the ap-

peasement crises. Because the Soviet Union was communist, the western democracies were unwilling to cooperate with Stalin. Stalin had approached Britain and France trying to convince them that their three countries should try to collectively scare Hitler into behaving himself. Stalin was bluntly turned down.

Hitler had long and very publicly declared that Nazism would attack and eradicate communism in the Soviet Union. Hence Stalin's fear of NAZI Germany was well justified. When Hitler approached Stalin to make a non-aggression pact (a deal whereby they would promise not to attack each other) the world was shocked. This "deal" was signed on August 23rd 1939, in the form of the NAZI-Soviet Non-Aggression Pact. Germany and the Soviet Union agreed not to attack each other, and to divide Poland between them. Don't be fooled by the terms of this agreement. Both Stalin and Hitler knew that the other was lying about the non-aggression aspect of the pact. Both wanted to gain time. Hitler wanted to avoid a two-front war when he attacked Poland, and Stalin wanted to buy time to prepare for the inevitable war against Germany.

Essentially, signing the pact cleared the way for Hitler to start the Second World War.

III. THE EVENTS OF THE EUROPEAN THEATRE

A. THE WAR IN EUROPE, SEPTEMBER 1939 TO MAY 1940

The years of appeasement had given Hitler what he wanted—a chance to rebuild Germany's military machine and gain some valuable territory. He no longer needed the concessions of Britain and France to attain his goals. He would now use military force to pursue German interests.

1. THE INVASION OF POLAND, 1939

- a) On September 1, 1939 the NAZIS invaded Poland, and the Second World War began.
- b) The NAZIS used *blitzkrieg* tactics (meaning "lightning" war)—airplanes led the attack to knock out key enemy positions, which was immediately followed by tank and motorized infantry attacks. The attacking forces would sweep past the enemy, and then close in behind the enemy thereby trapping him. Using this strategy, German forces swept through Poland encountering very little resistance.
- c) France and Britain immediately declared war on Germany. Even though Canada was not automatically obligated to be at war as part of the British Empire (as was the case in the First World War), Canada's declaration of war followed a week later. Many Canadians still felt strong ties to Britain, and also felt that German aggression must be stopped. Leaders in Quebec supported Canada's entry into the war based on Prime Minister Mackenzie King's promise that **conscription** (compulsory military service) would never be required.

2. THE PHONY WAR

From October 1939 to April 1940, everyone expected Germany to attack Western Europe, but bad weather and indecision prevented this from happening. Allied troops and Canadian soldiers waited for the attack. Historians refer

to this period as the **Phony War** even though war was a reality in Czechoslovakia, Poland and Finland.

B. THE WAR IN WESTERN EUROPE, BEGINNING MAY 1940

In May 1940, war in Western Europe began, although few Canadian troops were engaged in battle before 1942 (most Canadian soldiers were stationed in Britain preparing to fight off a German invasion). In the Spring of 1941, the war on the western front began in earnest. Hitler's forces quickly took Norway, Denmark, Belgium and Holland. German troops then marched into France.

1. EVACUATION OF DUNKIRK, 1940

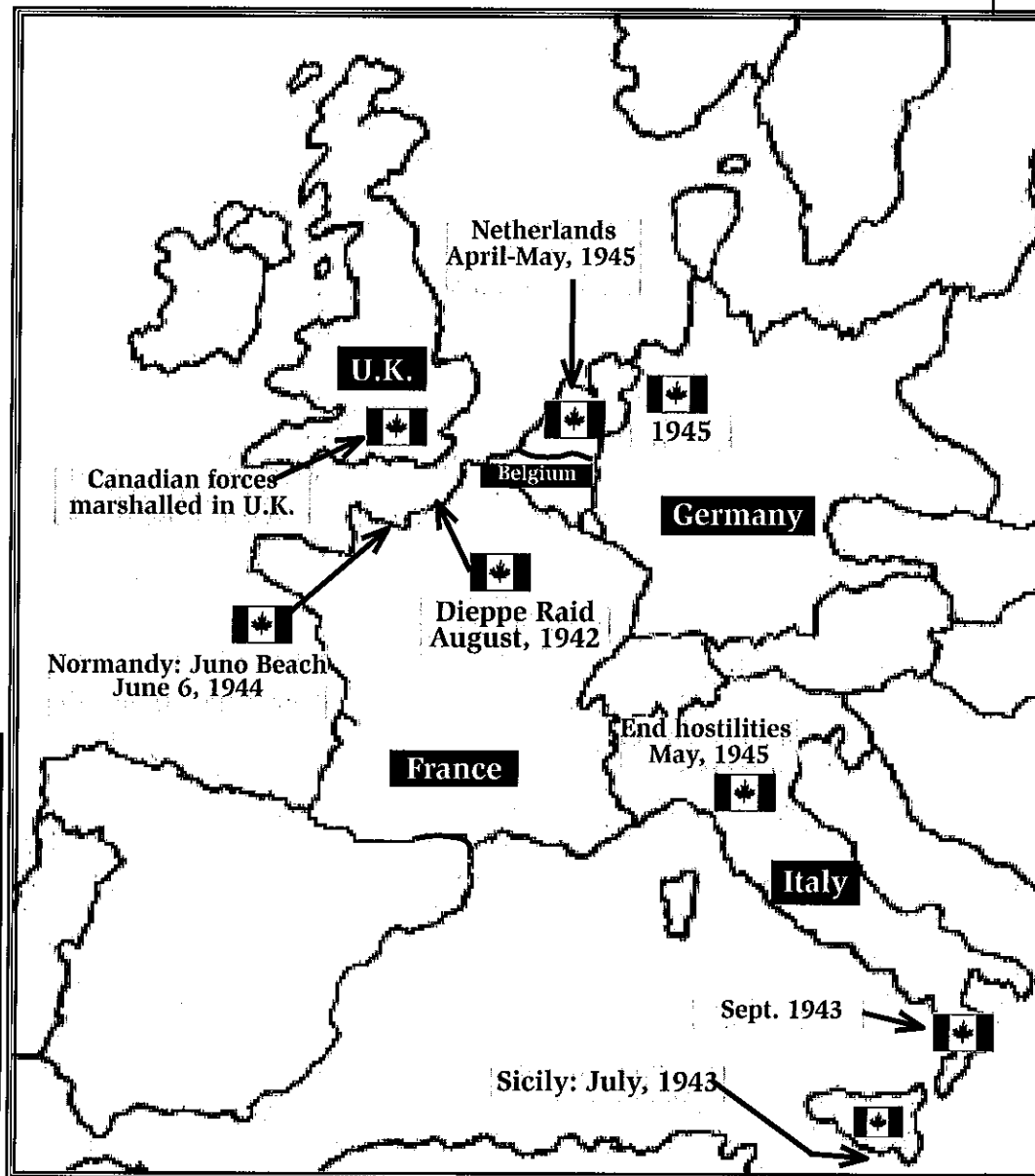
- a) With the collapse of Belgium, British and French troops retreated to the French beaches of **Dunkirk** on the English Channel only to become trapped.
- b) Approximately 900 ships sailed from England and rescued 340,000 soldiers from Dunkirk.
- c) The evacuation at Dunkirk was significant because it represented a moral victory for the Allies, and saved the best of the British forces who would live to fight another day.
- d) A few weeks after the evacuation, France surrendered to Germany.

2. BATTLE OF BRITAIN, 1940

- a) Hitler used air attacks on Britain to prepare for an amphibious invasion. He needed control of the air to destroy the Royal Navy that patrolled the English Channel and protected Britain. He also planned to destroy Britain's fighter planes and factories, along with the morale of the British people.
- b) During the summer of 1940, the British **Royal Air Force (RAF)** and the German **Luftwaffe** (air force) fought in the airspace over Britain. Individual Canadians served in Britain's air force. This became known as the **Battle of Britain**.
- c) Even though the British were outnumbered 3:1, they had superior fighter planes and a large advantage through their use of **radar**. Using radio waves, the British could detect German bomber and fighter squadrons while they were still over the Channel. Another huge advantage for the British was their possession of the Enigma, the German cipher machine, which enabled the British to receive and decode German messages.
- d) In August 1940, a German bomber squadron got lost and accidentally bombed civilians in London. In retaliation, British Prime Minister Winston Churchill bombed the German city of Berlin. Consequently, Hitler abandoned assault on the RAF airfields, and ordered daylight bombing raids on London (known as the **Blitz**).
- e) This shift in strategy likely cost Hitler the Battle of Britain. Most importantly, it gave the RAF a chance to train new pilots and to rebuild its strength.
- f) Later in August and September, the RAF was able to regroup and win the Battle of Britain. This was significant because it was the first time that Hitler had been denied conquest, and the protection of Britain provided the Allies with a springboard from which to launch the invasion of Europe later on in the war.

3. CANADIANS AT DIEPPE, 1942

- a) In the early months of 1942, the war was not going well for the Allies. In the Soviet Union, in Egypt, and in North Africa, it seemed likely to be a long uphill battle. Additionally, Stalin was calling for the long-awaited "second front" to open up in Western Europe to divert some of the pressure they were facing in the Soviet Union.



CANADIAN FORCES IN EUROPE DURING THE SECOND WORLD WAR

- b) Although the time was not yet right for a full-scale Allied invasion on the Western Front, something smaller was planned to reassure the Soviet Union, and to serve as a rehearsal for the real invasion of Europe.
- c) In August 1942, close to 5,000 Canadian soldiers landed at **Dieppe** on the coast of France. Their objective was to take the beach and the town of Dieppe back from the Germans. Upon arrival, the soldiers were mowed down on the beach by German fire.

- d) By early afternoon, 900 Canadian soldiers were dead or dying, 1,000 were wounded, and 1,900 were taken prisoner. More Canadian troops died in these few hours than on any other day of the Second World War.
- e) The plan began to unravel even before it started. Although great secrecy was required for the attack, part of the Allied flotilla of landing craft encountered an enemy convoy and a noisy fight ensued—thus losing the element of surprise. Additionally, at the last minute, the British decided to forgo a planned aerial bombardment of the Dieppe fortifications.
- f) Canadian troops became involved at Dieppe for a number of reasons. At home, Prime Minister Mackenzie King was going through the conscription crisis, and desperately needed a diversion. It has also been suggested that Canadian troops were considered by other Allied powers to be expendable.
- g) The disaster at Dieppe taught the Allies that heavy air and sea support would be required for any future invasion of France. Some historians suggest that lessons learned at Dieppe saved lives on the beaches of Normandy later on in the war.

C. THE EASTERN FRONT, 1939-1941

Although most people are more familiar with events on the Western Front of the Second World War, these events do not measure up to the intensity and size of the battles on the Eastern Front. The war in the East, much like the war in the West, began slowly. The major event is the epic battle between the NAZIS and the Soviets, which began in June, 1941.

1. INVASION OF THE SOVIET UNION, 1941

- a) Hitler's motives for invading the Soviet Union were twofold. Hitler had long spoken of *Lebensraum* (living space). This policy was a part of the NAZI racial program. It stated that "inferior" races should be conquered and enslaved so that the "superior" Germans had more living space. The main target of *Lebensraum* was the Soviet Union. It had vast resources desperately needed by Germany. Furthermore, by attacking the Soviet Union, Hitler was also trying to, once and for all, destroy his ideological arch rival—communism.
- b) On June 22nd 1941, Hitler broke the NAZI-Soviet Pact by initiating **Operation Barbarossa**, the code name for a massive invasion of the Soviet Union.
- c) When Operation Barbarossa began, 3 million German troops smashed into the Soviet Union. The Soviets were caught completely by surprise. In response, Stalin used a "scorched earth" policy against the NAZIS as they advanced. As the Red Army retreated, they destroyed everything—livestock, supplies and machinery so that the NAZIS would have nothing to use.
- d) By Christmas of 1941, the Germans were stopped just outside of Moscow. However, the battle for the Soviet Union was far from over. We will examine the remainder of the war on the Eastern Front in Section F.

D. NORTH AFRICA

- 1. The war in North Africa started in September 1940, when Mussolini attacked Egypt. British forces resisted this attack, and German forces, commanded by General Erwin Rommel, went to the aid of the Italians. This battle for control of Egypt culminated at the **Battle of El Alamein** (60 miles west of Cairo) in October, 1942. This decisive victory for the British, led by General Bernard

Montgomery, proved to be a turning point not only in North Africa, but in the entire war. It was the first time that the Allies had defeated the forces of the fascist countries.

2. By defeating the Germans at El Alamein, the Allies prevented the Germans from seizing the Suez Canal, and denied Hitler the important oil resources of the Middle East.
3. After El Alamein, the Allies, soon to be joined by the United States, steadily forced the Germans into retreat in North Africa until they were eventually defeated.

E. THE BATTLE OF THE ATLANTIC

1. The **Battle of the Atlantic** was the longest campaign of the Second World War. The war in the Atlantic was fought for control of the shipping lanes between North America and Britain. Germany's goal was to cut off all Allied supplies to Britain, in the hopes of starving Britain into submission.
2. The British and Canadian (and later the American) navies became committed to putting an end to the German submarine threat. German submarines operated in groups called "wolfpacks" out of ports in occupied countries. **U-boats** were active even within Canadian waters—in the St. Lawrence River they sank at least 21 ships.
3. By 1941, German U-boats were sinking Allied ships faster than they could be built. Allied supply ships began sailing in **convoys** (merchant ships surrounded by destroyers for protection). The **Royal Canadian Navy** provided much of the protection with their small warships called **corvettes**.
4. Gradually the convoy system saw some success as more ships were added to the escort fleets, and training of the crews was improved. The Royal Canadian Air Force was provided with long-range bombers that could cover the convoys until they reached British airspace. The development of **sonar** also played a major role in reversing the flow of the Battle of the Atlantic. (Sonar works in water much like radar works in the air, but instead of using radio waves, sonar uses sound). The sound bounced off the enemy submarines, alerting the Allies to their presence.
5. By 1943, German wolfpacks became less effective as they suffered heavy damages from the depth charges (explosives) dropped by escort ships, and bombs dropped by Allied planes—the Allies had won the Battle of the Atlantic.
6. Although initially, the Royal Canadian Navy only consisted of 13 ships and about 3,000 sailors, by the end of the war, it had expanded to include 370 ships and almost 100,000 personnel. Over 2,000 members of the Royal Canadian Navy lost their lives in combat in the Atlantic. The Battle of the Atlantic was arguably Canada's most decisive contribution to the war effort. Canada's enormous effort in the struggle was crucial to Allied victory.
7. Canadian citizens who were not enlisted in the armed forces also played a large role in the Battle of the Atlantic as they manned the freighters that transported war materials to Europe. These citizens serving in the merchant marine were exposed to great danger as their ships were so lightly armed that they were easy prey for the German submarines. It is only in recent years that the merchant sailors have been given official recognition for their contribution to the Second World War.

F. THE EASTERN FRONT, 1942-1945

The harsh winter of the Soviet Union took its toll on the occupying German forces. While the German forces dug in for winter and suffered huge losses, the Soviets launched an attack as if to prove they could fight through the winter. In the Spring, the conflict in the Soviet Union continued along a 2,000 mile front. The turning point of this largest of all battles took place at the southern city of Stalingrad between September 1942, and the end of January 1943. Hitler did not attack Stalingrad because it had valuable resources—he could have ignored it. He attacked it because it was named after Stalin. His strategic goal in the region was to go past Stalingrad and secure the Caucasus oil fields. By late January 1943, the Soviets had a smashing victory either killing or capturing the entire German army in the region. This victory against Hitler's best army was an enormous boost in Allied morale as a whole. Stalin had proven that the once invincible German war machine could not only be defeated, but defeated decisively. After the **Battle of Stalingrad** the Germans suffered defeat after defeat on the eastern front, as Stalin's forces moved ever closer to Berlin. After El Alamein, Stalingrad was the second turning point battle of the Second World War.

G. THE ITALIAN CAMPAIGN

By the middle of 1943, the Germans had been defeated in North Africa, and were in retreat on the Eastern Front. The Allies moved to eliminate all sources of trouble from the Germans before the planned re-invasion of Western Europe. The Allied plan was to first take the island of Sicily, just off the coast of mainland Italy, in preparation for a landing on Italy itself.

1. LANDING ON SICILY, JULY 1943

- a) The Allied attack on Sicily was designed to take pressure off of the Soviet Allies and divert Germans from north-western Europe where the attack on Normandy (the re-invasion of Europe) was being planned.
- b) Allied forces, including Canadian soldiers, landed on Sicily using an amphibious attack. Although Hitler sent many German soldiers to hold Italy, the Allies captured Sicily in one month. The way was now clear for a similar landing on the Italian mainland.

2. TAKING ITALY

- a) Allied troops began to move into the peninsula of Italy. Canadian forces pushed forward through Italy until the German army stopped them at Ortona. Vicious fighting occurred throughout December 1943.
- b) The Germans were finally driven back by a French-Canadian unit (the **Vandoos**). Canadian troops succeeded in breaking through the last line of German defences before Rome, and then continued through to free northern Italy in the fall of 1944.
- c) The fighting in Italy was some of the toughest of the war. In late April 1945, Mussolini was captured by Italians who were not soldiers in his regular army. Mussolini and his mistress were hung and "displayed" for several days in the streets of Milan.
- d) The capture of Italy was an important step towards the liberation of Europe. It also required many German troops, thereby making them unavailable for the defence of France.

H. NORMANDY LANDING TO THE END OF THE WAR IN WESTERN EUROPE

By mid 1944, the Allies were ready to liberate France and Germany itself. Hitler had anticipated such an attempt, and every precaution had been taken by the Germans to make an Allied landing as difficult as possible.

1. THE NORMANDY LANDING, JUNE 6, 1944 (OPERATION OVERLORD OR D-DAY)

- a) **Operation Overlord** was the great Allied invasion of German-held Europe. The Allies planned to use naval and aerial bombardment to knock out German defences. The invasion of Normandy, on the coast of France, over one year in preparation, was perhaps the most complex military operation ever attempted.
- b) This was the largest Canadian military operation of the Second World War—there were 14,000 Canadian soldiers, 100 ships, and 36 bomber squadrons from the Royal Canadian Air Force.
- c) Canadian forces were assigned the target of a beachfront code-named **Juno**, consisting of eight kilometres of coastline. Juno was one of five such targets at Normandy.
- d) Within one week, there were over 300,000 Allied soldiers on the shores of Normandy, and after one month, there were over 1 million soldiers and 200,000 Allied military vehicles.
- e) The Allies finally had a foothold in Europe from which they could begin pushing back the German armies.
- f) In total, over 5,000 Canadians were killed on the shores of Normandy, and there were more than 200,000 Allied casualties. German losses were catastrophic—nearly 200,000 were killed, wounded, or missing, and an equal number were taken prisoner. While each side suffered similar casualties, this was much more catastrophic for the Germans than the Allies because Germany had a limited number of forces to call on for future battles, while the Allies now seemed to have a limitless supply.

2. THE LIBERATION OF HOLLAND, MAY 1945

- a) After D-Day, Canadian troops distinguished themselves in a year of long, hard fighting with other Allied forces, pushing the German armies out of France and other parts of Western Europe.
- b) On May 5, 1945, Canadian forces drove the NAZIS to retreat from Holland and surrender. This important Canadian victory allowed Allied troops to continue forward towards Germany.

3. BERLIN, APRIL 1945

In late April 1945, American and Soviet forces met in Germany, south of Berlin. The Soviets turned their attention to demolishing the city.

4. ON APRIL 30, 1945, HITLER COMMITTED SUICIDE.**5. MAY 8, 1945, V-E DAY**

V-E Day (Victory in Europe) was announced when the last German troops surrendered.

IV. THE WAR IN THE PACIFIC THEATRE**A. INTRODUCTION**

Although the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbour was not intended to draw the Americans into the Second World War, this is what happened. The Japanese

determined that they would first need to defeat the American navy based at Pearl Harbour if they were to continue on a war of conquest in the Pacific. However, in response to the attack on Pearl Harbour, the Americans declared war on Japan on December 8, 1941.

1. THE JAPANESE OFFENSIVE (PEARL HARBOUR)

a) Militarism in Japan

(i) In the 1920s, Japan was caught between its traditional heritage and the urge to modernize. Radicals called for a complete rejection of Western ways and wanted a militaristic government based on National Socialism— an echo of the NAZI movement in Germany.

(ii) Japan's military was very strong, and had a number of advantages over the civilian government, i.e., it had the organization and weapons to impose its will.

b) Japanese Imperialist Expansion

(i) As new leaders came to power in China in 1928, Japan felt that its imperialistic interests were threatened.

(ii) Japan's need to acquire new territories was strong—the economic Depression, coupled with a growing population, intensified Japan's need for raw materials and access to markets.

(iii) There were increasing clashes between the Japanese military and the civilian government. These tensions led the Japanese Army to take actions not sanctioned by the government.

c) Events Leading up to Pearl Harbour

(i) In 1931, the Japanese Army invaded Manchuria, without the consent of its own government.

(ii) Military conspirators made plans to terrorize the civilian government of Japan and force the country to accept martial law.

(iii) There was inner turmoil in Japan. The Prime Minister was assassinated, which was followed by vicious in-fighting between factions of the army. Hit squads were sent to kill major political figures.

(iv) After France fell in June 1940, the Japanese quickly occupied most of French Indo-China. American President Roosevelt responded by freezing Japanese assets in American banks. Roosevelt also refused to sell Japan any more oil or scrap metal—two products it needed desperately to supply its war industries.

(v) Cut off from major supplies, Japanese military commanders insisted that war with the United States was the only solution.

d) Pearl Harbour

On December 7, 1941, the Japanese launched a surprise attack on the American naval base in **Pearl Harbour**, Hawaii. The attack was intended to give the Japanese Navy control of the Pacific in preparation for future attacks. On December 8, President Roosevelt gave his famous "Day of Infamy" speech, and the United States, as well as Britain, declared war on Japan. As a result, Hitler declared war on the United States in support of the Japanese, and the United States declared war on Germany. Finally, Britain had the ally it had been waiting for in the struggle against fascism in Europe.

2. JAPANESE AGGRESSION IN THE PACIFIC

The Japanese attack on Pearl Harbour was followed by very quick and devastating attacks on many parts of the Far Eastern Pacific. Japan was also threatening Australia.

a) Canadians at Hong Kong

As a result of the American declaration of war after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbour, Canada declared war against Japan.

Canadians were sent to fight the Japanese in the British colony of Hong Kong—this was the first time Canadians saw active battle in the Second World War.

Canadian troops faced an impossible task. They were forced to surrender after 17 days of fighting, when supplies and ammunition ran out. Overall, 500 Canadian soldiers were wounded, and 290 soldiers were killed. Those soldiers who were captured were put into Japanese **Prisoner of War (POW)** camps and were treated very harshly. In total, 267 Canadian POWs died in Japanese camps.

3. TURNING THE TIDE IN THE PACIFIC

After the United States declared war on Japan, the Americans had to restructure their economy and military forces to prepare for what everyone knew would be a long war. They could not strike back immediately with full force. This enabled the Japanese to go on a rapid and vast war of conquest. Before you begin, you should realize that while Canada and other Allies participated in the Pacific, the main force in this theatre was the Americans. The events listed below are the main features of how the Allies achieved victory in the Pacific:

a) The Battle of Midway, June 1942

This battle marks the turning point in the Pacific theatre. The Midway Islands lie northwest of Hawaii. As the Japanese were preparing to conquer these islands, the Americans intercepted the Japanese fleet and soundly defeated them. This is the turning point because the Japanese string of victories was over. Furthermore, the American fleet sank the best units of the Japanese aircraft carriers, which allowed the Americans to control the waters of the Pacific. After Midway, the Japanese were on the defensive.

b) Island Hopping

Instead of attacking and re-capturing every island taken by the Japanese, the American strategy was to select key islands about 400 miles apart. By taking several islands, they were able to progressively move their base for attack that much closer to Japan itself. The Americans simply ignored the islands in between because they could now cut off supplies to these islands.

c) Battle of Leyte Gulf

Leyte Gulf is in the Philippines. In this battle, the Americans took on virtually the whole Japanese fleet. The American navy sank one half of the Japanese fleet including four more aircraft carriers. It was during this battle that the Japanese introduced the kamikaze suicide technique. Kamikaze pilots would load their planes with explosives, and deliberately try to crash them into American ships.

d) Iwo Jima and Okinawa

By the Spring of 1945, the American forces had captured Iwo Jima and Okinawa, two Japanese islands just south of the Japanese homeland. It was from here that they were going to launch the final phase of the war. However, as the section below will show you, other events intervened.

4. THE FINAL STAGES OF WAR IN THE PACIFIC

In March 1945, the Americans began the systematic fire bombing of Tokyo. It was believed that this would urge the Japanese to surrender. Although the resulting firestorms caused great loss of life and huge property damage, no surrender was forthcoming.

a) The Manhattan Project

(i) Since March of 1943, the United States had funded a very secret, very expensive project to determine if it was possible to create an atomic bomb.

(ii) In 1945, US President Harry S. Truman (Roosevelt had died earlier that year) learned that the atomic test at Los Alamos, New Mexico had been successful. He now had another option for ending the war in the Pacific.

(iii) The top-secret effort cost two billion dollars and employed 120,000 personnel.

(iv) After the test at Los Alamos, the Americans had only two bombs which were ready for use in the summer of 1945—a spherical plutonium bomb nicknamed “Fat Man,” and a sausage-shaped uranium bomb known as “Little Boy.”

b) Truman’s Decision

(i) On June 1, 1945, the US Secretary of War recommended that the bombs should be dropped without prior warning on Japanese military targets in an urban setting.

(ii) Three prominent scientists disagreed—they urged giving the Japanese a demonstration explosion over an isolated area, using the bomb only as a last resort.

(iii) Truman rejected their views as “impractical” and had no trouble making what he viewed as a “military decision” to drop the bomb in a populated area. His belief was that this would shorten the war and save American lives.

c) Hiroshima, August 6, 1945

(i) American military planners informed Truman that he could expect from 1 to 1.5 million American casualties and another 12-18 months of fighting to take the islands of Japan using conventional warfare.

(ii) Therefore, Truman decided to use the atomic bomb on the Japanese City of **Hiroshima**.

(iii) “Little Boy” was dropped on the industrial city of 340,000 people. The explosion at Ground Zero created temperatures of 540,000 degrees Fahrenheit. Beyond this meltdown zone, an immense firestorm gutted the city, destroying 60,000 of 92,000 buildings.

(iv) The official death count was 78,000, but an additional 60,000 people died later of atomic bomb-related injuries or diseases.

d) Nagasaki, August 9, 1945

(i) Since Japan did not surrender immediately, Truman ordered the next atomic bomb dropped on the Japanese City of **Nagasaki**.

(ii) "Fat Man" was dropped on a city of 250,000 and the death toll reached over 35,000 people.

(iii) A total of approximately 170,000 people died due to both atomic bombs.

e) Peace, August 14, 1945 V-J Day (Victory in Japan)

On August 14, 1945, the Japanese government sued for peace, and the Second World War was over.

V. THE CANADIAN HOME FRONT

A. THE ROLE OF WOMEN

1. THE ROLE OF WOMEN OVERSEAS

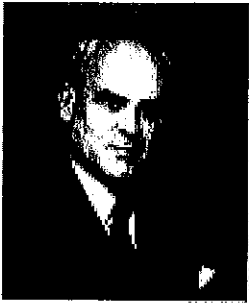
a) In 1941, for the first time in Canadian history, official women's branches of the army (the **Canadian Women's Army Corps- CWAC**), air force (the **RCAF- Women's Division**), and navy (the **Women's Royal Canadian Naval Service - called "Wrens"**) were created. By the end of the war, more than 46,000 Canadian women served overseas—as cooks, nurses, pilots, mechanics, welders, and radar operators. Canadian women were also assigned to coastal defences, and some even flew planes across the Atlantic in Ferry Command. During Ferry Command, nearly 10,000 planes were flown from North America to Britain. These trans-Atlantic flights were very dangerous—over 500 flyers died while making the trip.

b) Women from Britain, the United States, and Australia also served overseas in various capacities. The most dangerous job for women was to serve as part of the Special Operations Executive (SOE). Women who served in this capacity worked as secret agents, who were parachuted into occupied France to find out all that they could to help the Allies plan the invasion of Normandy. Women worked as saboteurs, couriers and radio operators for the SOE. Additionally, during the Battle of Britain, women worked at top-secret radar stations to alert the Allies of incoming planes.

2. THE ROLE OF WOMEN ON THE HOME FRONT

a) There was a dramatic increase in the number of women in the Canadian workforce. Factories began to operate seven days a week, 12 hours a day. By 1944, the number of women in the work force had reached over 1 million.

b) Even though women began to hold the same jobs as men, they were still paid less for the same work. Although the Canadian government provided daycare and tax breaks to women during the war, when the war ended, these provisions were removed. Again, most people expected that women would give up their jobs to returning soldiers when the war was over. In places like Surrey, B.C., women who taught school during the war lost their jobs to men returning from the front.



C.D. Howe

B. PRODUCTION

1. When the Second World War began, the economic Depression of the 1930s was officially over. The whole economy was focused on maintaining the flow of weapons and supplies to Britain.
2. Many industries were involved in the war production effort. Canadian factories created bombs, bullets, ships, aircraft, and armoured cars. Automobile factories stopped manufacturing cars, and re-tooled to make vehicles suitable for the battle front. This concentration of Canadian industries on wartime production was called the "total war effort."
3. The Canadian government played a much-expanded role in the Second World War. There were Crown Corporations dedicated to all aspects of wartime production, and the federal government introduced rationing (restrictions on products such as gas, coffee, tea, butter, milk, sugar and meat). As an example of the government's commitment to production, the **War Supply Board** was created and managed by C.D. Howe. He was given almost dictatorial powers working in the War Supply Board, the goal of which was to organize Canadian industry toward the singular purpose of supplying the front. The government paid for this increased spending on the war effort through taxes, war bond sales, and gold payments from Britain.
4. When the American government introduced the **Lend Lease Act** in 1941, which allowed Allied countries to buy materials from the United States without having to pay up front, the Canadian government was worried that Allied countries would no longer buy from Canada. Prime Minister King and President Roosevelt issued the **Hyde Park Declaration**, which stated that the United States would buy more raw materials from Canada, and would supply Canada with American parts for weapons production.

C. PROPAGANDA

Propaganda is a term used to describe information that is spread for the purpose of promoting a particular cause. The information disseminated as propaganda during the Second World War was not necessarily truthful. The National Film Board of Canada developed hundreds of documentaries and short films to encourage Canadians to participate in the war effort. Posters were also widely used to create an image of the enemy as evil, and to discourage Canadians from carelessly talking about wartime matters.

D. CANADIAN TRAINING FACILITIES

1. THE BRITISH COMMONWEALTH AIR TRAINING PLAN

In 1939, Canada developed the **British Commonwealth Air Training Plan**, which created facilities in Canada to train pilots and other crew members from Commonwealth countries. By 1942, there was a huge demand for pilots as Allied countries began the systematic bombing of German cities. Allied planes flew across enemy lines to bomb cities, dams, and industries. By the end of the war, more than 130,000 air personnel were trained at over 230 sites across Canada.

2. CAMP X

Camp X was a special spy training facility located just outside of Oshawa, Ontario. Camp X opened a few days after the Japanese bombing of Pearl Harbour. Canadian, British, and American spies were trained at this top-secret school. Several Canadian spies served "behind the lines," providing valuable informa-

tion about the enemy, and to participate in acts of sabotage. Most Canadian government and military leaders did not even know that Camp X existed. Camp X trained 500 agents to work around the world. Camp X also had a top-secret communications centre, where a complex radio called Hydra, intercepted enemy signals and transmitted information between North America and Britain.

E. CONSCRIPTION

1. In 1939, Prime Minister King made an election promise that he would not introduce conscription (compulsory military service) for overseas duty. By 1940, King implemented the **National Resource Mobilization Act** which required all men to help with the war effort, but not to serve overseas.
2. However, by 1942, there was a need for more troops overseas. King held a **plebiscite** (a vote on a single issue) asking Canadians to release him from his promise not to introduce conscription. While the majority of Canadians supported conscription, the majority of French Canadians did not.
3. In the end, as the war was drawing to a close, conscription had sent 13,000 Canadians overseas, although only 2,000 ever reached the front lines.
4. Despite dissatisfaction with King's decision, he did manage to avoid causing the same tensions as the conscription crisis in 1917. This time, French-English relations were strained, but not broken.

F. ENEMY ALIENS

1. Again, as in the First World War, the government required groups of Canadians whose ancestry was of one of the enemy countries to register as **enemy aliens** for fear that they might be spies or might commit acts of sabotage. Over 100,000 Canadians were forced to register, and about 650 were interned in camps.
2. The government banned any pro-NAZI political parties, as well as the Communist Party of Canada.
3. Religious groups who practiced pacifism were met with open hostility. Among these groups were Jehovah Witnesses, Quakers, Hutterites, Mennonites, and Doukhobors. Many members of these groups avoided military service by pleading that they were conscientious objectors. After an appearance before a judge they were offered other public service work in lieu of direct military service.
4. There was outright discrimination against black Canadians until 1942. However, as the war went on and black and white Canadians served together in the armed forces, black Canadians began to demand equality in other areas. Similarly, aboriginal peoples believed that if they were willing to fight and die for their country, they should share the same rights as all Canadian citizens.
5. There was also prejudice against refugees from Europe (people who were fleeing persecution). Canada made it particularly difficult for Jewish refugees to enter the country. (Refer to page 110 for details of the St. Louis Incident.)
 - a) The most horrifying legacy of the NAZI regime was its deliberate effort to eliminate Europe's Jewish population. Eventually, many Jewish people were rounded up and taken to concentration camps (often called death camps), where six million Jewish people were killed. Many Jewish people tried

to flee Europe in order to escape this fate.

- b) Anti-Semitism (hatred for Jewish people) existed in Canada even before the Second World War. Some people refused to hire Jewish judges, lawyers, professors, and teachers. Many clubs and resorts openly displayed signs on their doors declaring "No Jews Allowed."
- c) Several small fascist parties were formed in Canada during the 1930s, which were anti-Jewish, anti-Black and anti-Asian. Also, Canada's immigration policy was restrictive—British and American immigrants were "preferred," while immigrants of other backgrounds were actively discouraged.
- d) In 1938, the Canadian League of Nations Society met with Prime Minister Mackenzie King to appeal to the government to accept Jewish refugees from Europe based on humanitarian grounds. One government official summarized the situation this way: "We don't want to take too many Jews, but in the present circumstances particularly, we don't want to say so." When asked how many Jews the Canadian government intended to allow to enter Canada, another government official responded by saying, "None is too many."

6. JAPANESE INTERNMENT

a) History

(i) In 1907, there was a race riot in Vancouver where approximately 5,000 racist Canadians smashed the windows of Japanese homes and stores, and terrorized Japanese Canadians so that they would leave Canada.

(ii) White Canadians were frustrated because Japanese people were usually competing with them for jobs, and were willing to work for lower wages.

(iii) In 1928, Prime Minister Mackenzie King limited the number of Japanese immigrants coming to Canada in order to control their population growth, so as to lessen the risk of future riots. Only 150 Japanese people were allowed to enter Canada each year.

(iv) Before the Second World War, Japanese and Chinese Canadians were denied the right to vote, and were not permitted to join the armed forces.

b) After Pearl Harbour

(i) People feared that Japanese Canadians might supply Japan with secret information or even help them to invade Canada.

(ii) In 1942, the internment of Japanese Canadians began. Japanese Canadians were stripped of their rights. Men, women, and children were fingerprinted, photographed, and given an identification number. They were required to carry identification cards at all times.

(iii) Japanese Canadians were forced to choose between deportation to Japan, or relocation away from the west coast. Most chose to relocate.

(iv) In total, 22,000 Japanese Canadians were sent to **internment camps**—14,000 of whom were born in Canada.

(v) In 1943, the Canadian government passed a law called the **Custodian of Aliens Act**, which allowed the possessions of Japanese Canadians to be sold without their permission. The items were sold quickly, forcing prices to unrealistically low levels. The money that was raised from these auctions went to the realtors and the auctioneers, then it went to paying for storage and handling charges. Essentially, the Japanese had to pay

for their stay at the internment camps.

(vi) In 1944, a law was passed stating that the Japanese could be deported to Japan if they did not leave British Columbia, even if they were born in Canada.

(vii) By 1946, after the war was over, Japanese Canadians were released from the internment camps.

c) Compensation

In 1988, 46 years after the first internment camps, Japanese Canadians were compensated (given money) for all that they had endured during the war. Prime Minister Brian Mulroney signed a compensation package giving \$21,000 for each internee's survivor. In total, \$12 million dollars was paid out.

VI. ISSUES AND POLITICS OF THE SECOND WORLD WAR

A. THE HOLOCAUST

The term **Holocaust** comes from the Greek *holos* (whole) and *kaustos* (burnt). It is used to describe Hitler's massive attempt to exterminate all of the Jewish people in Europe during the Second World War, resulting in the deaths of over six million Jews. Hitler was obsessed with the complete destruction and annihilation of the Jewish race.

1. ANTI-SEMITISM

Before the Second World War, there were 600,000 German people who were of Jewish descent. Some Germans, envious of the success of German Jews, were easily convinced by NAZI propaganda against Jewish people. Anti-Semitism was widespread. Adolf Hitler believed that this hatred of the Jews would draw German people closer together, and make them more loyal and obedient. (Refer to page 100 for events leading up to the Holocaust.)

As a result of persecution (persecution is the act of treating badly or oppressing, especially for religious, racial or political reasons), the Jewish people fled to neighbouring countries that also would soon be occupied by the NAZIS. Many countries would not accept Jewish refugees because of anti-Semitic feelings among their own populations.

2. THE ST. LOUIS INCIDENT

a) After *Kristallnacht* in 1938 (refer to page 93), many Jewish people desperately tried to leave Germany. It had become increasingly difficult and costly to obtain visas and the necessary funds to enter another country, due to toughened immigration procedures. The ocean liner **St. Louis** presented an opportunity that, for many, seemed to be the last hope for escape. The ship was to take Jewish refugees from Germany to Cuba, where they would await their quota number to enter the United States.

b) Upon arrival in Cuba, the ship was told to anchor in the harbour, but was not allowed to land. A lengthy period of negotiations ensued. Unknown to the captain of the *St. Louis*, Cuba had passed a new decree mid-voyage which cancelled the landing permits that the Jewish refugees had purchased. Many people in Cuba blamed incoming refugees for the poor performance of their economy.

c) During the negotiations to allow the *St. Louis* to land, NAZI Minister of Propaganda, Joseph Goebbels, sent agents to Havana, Cuba to stir

up anti-Semitism and fabricate criminal backgrounds for the passengers. Soon, these refugees were seen as a threat.

- d) When the St. Louis was turned away from Cuba it attempted to land in Florida with no success, and in June 1939, it arrived off Canada's East Coast, carrying 907 Jewish people, including 400 women and children.
- e) The Canadian government determined that Jewish refugees would not make good settlers. The St. Louis was forced to return to Europe, and many of those on board eventually died in NAZI concentration camps.

3. GHETTOS

By 1939, 80,000 Jewish people were forced into **ghettos**—designated areas in the city where Jews were compelled to live. Ghettos for Jews became very common.

4. FINAL SOLUTION, 1941

By 1941, Hitler's obsession with the complete annihilation of the Jewish race took on a horrible reality called the **Final Solution**. Hitler ordered that all Jews in NAZI-occupied Europe be rounded up and sent to extermination camps to be killed en masse in gas chambers. This was called **genocide**—the systematic extermination of a religious or racial group. Jewish communities were herded into railcars and shipped to concentration camps spread across the German-occupied territories. Many Jewish people died en route because of lack of food, water, and air on the trains.

- a) Once they arrived at the camps, Jewish people were killed by starvation, exhaustion, disease, torture or execution. The NAZIS also carried out inhumane medical experiments, which amounted to crude and horrible methods of torture. Prisoners were made to ingest toxic and fatal substances, such as typhus, tetanus, and malaria to test their immunity to these organisms. Alternatively, powdered glass or wood splinters mixed with water were injected into their veins. Jewish people were thrown alive into vats of freezing or boiling water, or intentionally burned and then denied medical treatment. Healthy individuals were operated upon without anaesthesia to study the effects of shock to the system.
 - b) After facing death in the gas chambers, the gold fillings in teeth were removed and used to supplement Hitler's stockpile of gold. Skin was made into lampshades and gloves, and bones were used as fertilizer. Hair was shaved upon arrival at the camps and was used to stuff mattresses.
 - c) At **Auschwitz** Death Camp alone, over one million people were killed by the NAZIS. Millions of other people were executed in the same manner at other sites due to their beliefs, race, or sexual orientation.
5. In total, it is estimated that 10 million people died in NAZI concentration camps during the Second World War. Of those, 6 million were Jews, who remain the largest group ever to face genocide. It is estimated that 1 million children also were killed in the Holocaust.

B. TECHNOLOGY AND COMMUNICATIONS

The Second World War saw a rapid and intense improvement of the technology used to fight the war. In the European theatre, the airplane and the tank were the main weapons. It is not surprising then that these two machines progressed in leaps and bounds during the war. Airplanes became faster, more maneuverable, and could carry greater payloads. Tanks too, became larger, faster, and had greater destructive power.

Not all technological improvements involved weapons. The British development of radar played a crucial role in battles such as the Battle of Britain. This device could "see" airplanes coming and predict where they were going by judging their speed and direction. This was a huge advantage because the appropriate fighter craft could then be deployed to interrupt the attack. Likewise, sonar, a sound listening device, could detect submarines under the water that were seeking to destroy Allied ships. The British and American development of this device played a large role in the Battle of the Atlantic. In both of these areas the Allies had a large advantage over the Germans.

German scientists developed the rocket and the jet engine during the war. In these two areas the Germans had the advantage, but the war ended before they could have a devastating effect.

While today we think of the radio largely as a piece of technology that we use for news and entertainment, during the war both sides used it extensively for keeping the home front aware of the events of the war. This was done to boost morale. Needless to say, radio was often used to broadcast propaganda.

The ultimate "tool of war" of course was the development of the nuclear bomb (already discussed). This weapon not only brought a rapid end to the Second World War, but was also a warning about the possibilities regarding future wars.

C. WAR CRIMINALS AND CRIMES AGAINST HUMANITY

The atrocities committed by the NAZIS were on a scale never before seen. As the war in Europe was winding down, one death camp after another was discovered and the true scope of NAZI crimes was becoming clear. A decision was made by the Allies that the perpetrators of these atrocities would be punished. Never before in the history of warfare had leaders legally charged other leaders for their immoral actions during a war. In 1946, the Allies set up a war crimes court at **Nuremberg**. Exactly 177 NAZIS were indicted for crimes related to starting the war, and more importantly, for crimes committed during the Holocaust. Of the 177, only three were acquitted. Several of the guilty were hanged, while many were given lengthy prison sentences.

D. WARTIME CONFERENCES

During the war, the Allied leaders met often to discuss war strategy and what would happen once the victory was achieved. In all, there were seven major conferences. The most important were:

1. TEHRAN, NOVEMBER-DECEMBER 1943

The Tehran conference was held in Iran. It was the first time that the big three (Roosevelt, Churchill and Stalin) met. The meeting did not accomplish a whole lot, but cordial relations were established between the two democratic leaders and the dictator, Stalin.

2. YALTA, FEBRUARY 1945

This conference in the south of the Soviet Union made a number of decisions regarding the future of Germany:

- a) Germany was to be divided into zones of occupation once the war was over.
- b) A war crimes court was to be established at Nuremberg.
- c) Stalin promised to hold free elections in the countries he was liberating from the NAZIS. (He did not keep his promise.)

3. POTSDAM, JULY 1945

The Potsdam conference was held near Berlin. The former war allies were to make decisions regarding the future of Germany and Europe. This was supposed to be a planning session for the peace conference. Instead, because democratic and communist leaders no longer trusted each other now that the war was over, in reality it was more like setting the stage for the next war, namely, the Cold War.

VII. CANADA AFTER THE SECOND WORLD WAR**A. EFFECTS OF THE WAR****1. ECONOMIC EFFECTS**

- a) Canada's economy grew due to all of its contributions to the war effort. By 1945, the Canadian economy was booming, even though debt from the war was over \$10 billion.
- b) Industrial and manufacturing production grew to overtake agriculture as the most important economic sector in Canada.

2. POLITICAL EFFECTS

- a) Canada gained an international reputation and established itself as a middle power (smaller than a great power, but wealthier than smaller or poorer nations), taking on a more active global role. Canada was ready to play an important part in creating the United Nations, and as an important middle power in the postwar international community.
- b) Canadian troops were recognized for their numerous contributions to the war (Dieppe, Hong Kong, Normandy, and the Liberation of Holland).
- c) Prime Minister King averted a conscription crisis, and therefore French-English relations were merely strained, not broken.
- d) The Canadian government intervened more frequently in the lives of Canadians, and the social safety net was further strengthened.
- e) The contributions of black and aboriginal peoples, as well as other minority groups to the Second World War advanced the cause of civil rights in Canada.

3. SOCIAL EFFECTS

- a) Women achieved greater recognition for their contributions to the war effort.
- b) Canada became a more tolerant nation, as it eventually agreed to accept displaced persons and refugees from Europe.
- c) Canada experienced a "baby boom" and a significant wave of immigration (including "war brides" women from Europe who married enlisted men).
- d) Canada lost over 42,000 people to the war.

B. IMMIGRATION AFTER THE WAR**1. PIER 21**

- a) In 1947, Pier 21 in Halifax officially reopened for immigration and was faced with the challenge of processing huge numbers of war brides who came from England, Scotland and Wales. Approximately 48,000 war brides and 22,000 children were processed at Pier 21.
- b) In addition to war brides, over 500,000 other newcomers arrived at Pier

21, including many displaced people and refugees.

MUST KNOW LIST

Unless otherwise specified, all sub-headings that fall under the sections listed below should also be considered as "Must Know."

I. BACKGROUND EVENTS

A. THE RISE OF TOTALITARIANISM

C. FAILURE OF DEMOCRACY IN GERMANY

1. GERMANY BETWEEN 1919 AND 1933
4. NAZI GERMANY UNDER HITLER

II. THE SECOND WORLD WAR

A. CAUSES OF THE SECOND WORLD WAR

1. FUNDAMENTAL CAUSES: A SUMMARY
2. IMMEDIATE CAUSES

III. THE EVENTS OF THE EUROPEAN THEATRE

B. THE WAR IN WESTERN EUROPE, BEGINNING MAY 1940

3. CANADIANS AT DIEPPE, 1942

MAP: CANADIAN FORCES IN EUROPE DURING THE SECOND WORLD WAR (PAGE 106)

E. THE BATTLE OF THE ATLANTIC

G. THE ITALIAN CAMPAIGN

H. NORMANDY LANDING TO THE END OF THE WAR IN WESTERN EUROPE

IV. THE WAR IN THE PACIFIC THEATRE

A. INTRODUCTION

2. JAPANESE AGGRESSION IN THE PACIFIC
 - a) Canadians At Hong Kong
4. THE FINAL STAGES OF WAR IN THE PACIFIC

V. THE CANADIAN HOME FRONT

VI. ISSUES AND POLITICS OF THE SECOND WORLD WAR

A. THE HOLOCAUST

VII. CANADA AFTER THE SECOND WORLD WAR