

Chapter 6: Canada at War



6.1 The Road to War

- In this section we explore some of the events thought to cause WWII
- Hypotheses or theories of the causes of WWII are based on the facts and events that are known
- It is important to remember that the interpretations of these events vary depending on the people interpreting them
 - Different events from the war would be emphasized depending on who was telling about it

6.1 The Road to War

- WWI was supposed to be the “war to end all wars”
- It was only 20 years after WWI that WWII began to take place
- In the summer of 1939, 11.5 million Canadians carefully watched events unfolding in Europe
- Germany was demanding territory from Poland (Britain and France were Poland’s allies)

6.1 The Road to War

- One widely accepted interpretation was that WWII in Europe was caused by the Treaty of Versailles
- The Treaty of Versailles was the peace settlement that ended WWI
- It punished Germany for starting WWI by taking away land and by forcing Germany to pay sums of money (**reparations**) to the victors of WWI

6.1 The Road to War

- The same interpretation says that Adolf Hitler and the Nazis (**National Socialist Party**) were elected to power in 1933 and that their anger towards the Treaty helped “win them the votes”
- Hitler promised that he would tear up the Treaty, and while this was not the only reason the Germans supported Hitler, it did play a significant role in his rise to power

6.1 The Road to War

- After Hitler became the **dictator** (only ruler), all political parties except the National Socialists were outlawed
- Hitler started to break the terms of the Treaty
- Britain, France and the U.S. did not react to Hitler's stand against the Treaty because they wanted to avoid another war at all costs
- This "giving in" to the Germans to avoid another war is known as **appeasement**

6.1 The Road to War

- The appeasement did not work and Hitler began to demand more and more of the territory that it lost
- Once Hitler began to demand land in Poland in September 1939, Britain and France had enough
- Germany invaded Poland on September 1st, 1939 and Britain and France declared war on Germany two days later

6.1 The Road to War (Canada at War)

- During WWI, Canada was automatically at war because it was part of the British Empire
- In 1931 Canada became independent of Britain and therefore it was their own decision whether or not to go to war
- Threats of war caused the government to decide if Canada should go to war

6.1 The Road to War

(Canada at War)

- Prime Minister William Lyon Mackenzie King compromised with Britain saying that they will fully support Britain and provide them war materials but they would only send a small volunteer army
- Canada formally declared war on Germany on September 10th, 1939
- It was a significant decision that would change Canada and its role in the world

6.2 Phases of the War

- Phase 1: September 1939 to June 1940
 - September 1: Germany invaded Poland
 - September 3: Britain and France declared war on Germany
 - Soviet Union invaded Poland
 - Germany and Soviet Union signed a non-aggression pact and agreed to divide Poland between them
 - September 10: Canada declared war on Germany
 - The Allies: France, Britain, and the Commonwealth
 - The Axis: Germany, Italy, Japan

- Global Context

- Japan and China had been at war since 1937
- Poland was quickly defeated by Germany and the Soviet Union
- Britain and France readied for an attack.
- Germany attacked Western Europe in April 1940
- The **blitzkrieg** went through Belgium and Holland and rendered the Maginot Line ineffective as a defense
- The French government surrendered to Germany

Canada's Contribution

- A small, volunteer army was sent to Britain in December 1939
- Merchant ships transported military personnel and war goods
- Many of these ships were sunk by German subs or U-boats
- Canada's air force would train allied pilots and air crews
- PM King and the liberals were re-elected in 1940

- King's policy of a small army overseas with a large-scale war production at home was popular
- A key aim was to avoid high casualties and the conscription of WWI
- When Belgium, France and Holland fell to the Germans in May 1940, Britain was left with few Allies
- Parliament passed the National Resources Mobilization Act (NMRA)
- Canada went from a limited role in the War to a total commitment to the war effort

Define the following;

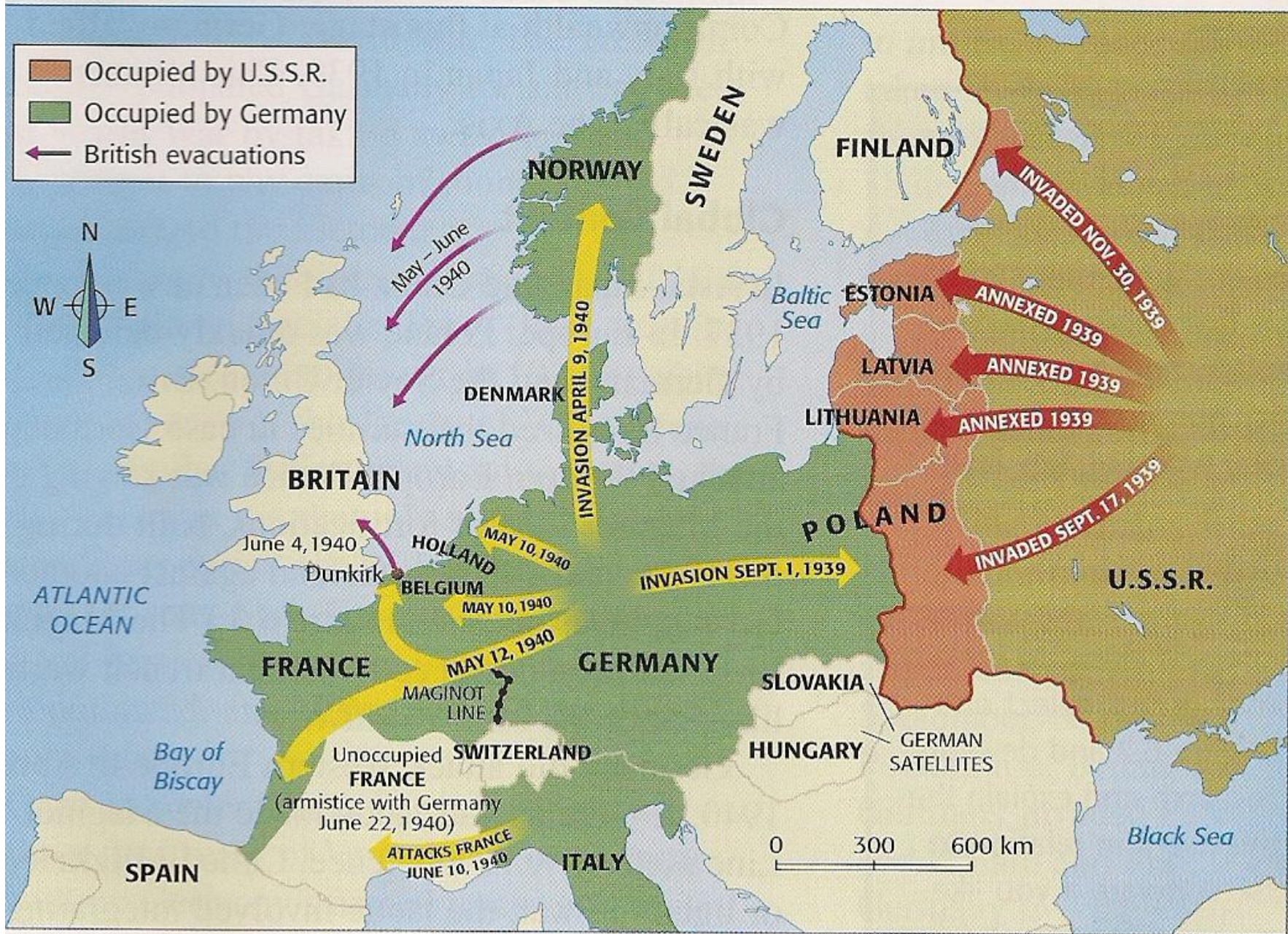
Blitzkrieg – _____

Merchant Marine – _____

Propaganda – _____

Convoys – _____

Fronts - _____



- Phase 2: June 1940 to July 1943
 - Phase 2 began badly for Britain and its allies
 - Two events were responsible for turning things around:
 1. Germany invaded the Soviet Union in June 1941, turning it into Britain's ally
 2. On Dec. 7, 1941, Japan attacked the U.S. peacetime fleet at Pearl Harbour in Hawaii
 - June 1942 – U.S. Forces at the Battle of Midway destroyed much of Japan's naval and air forces
 - October 1942 – the Allied army pushed Germany out of El Alamein in Northern Africa

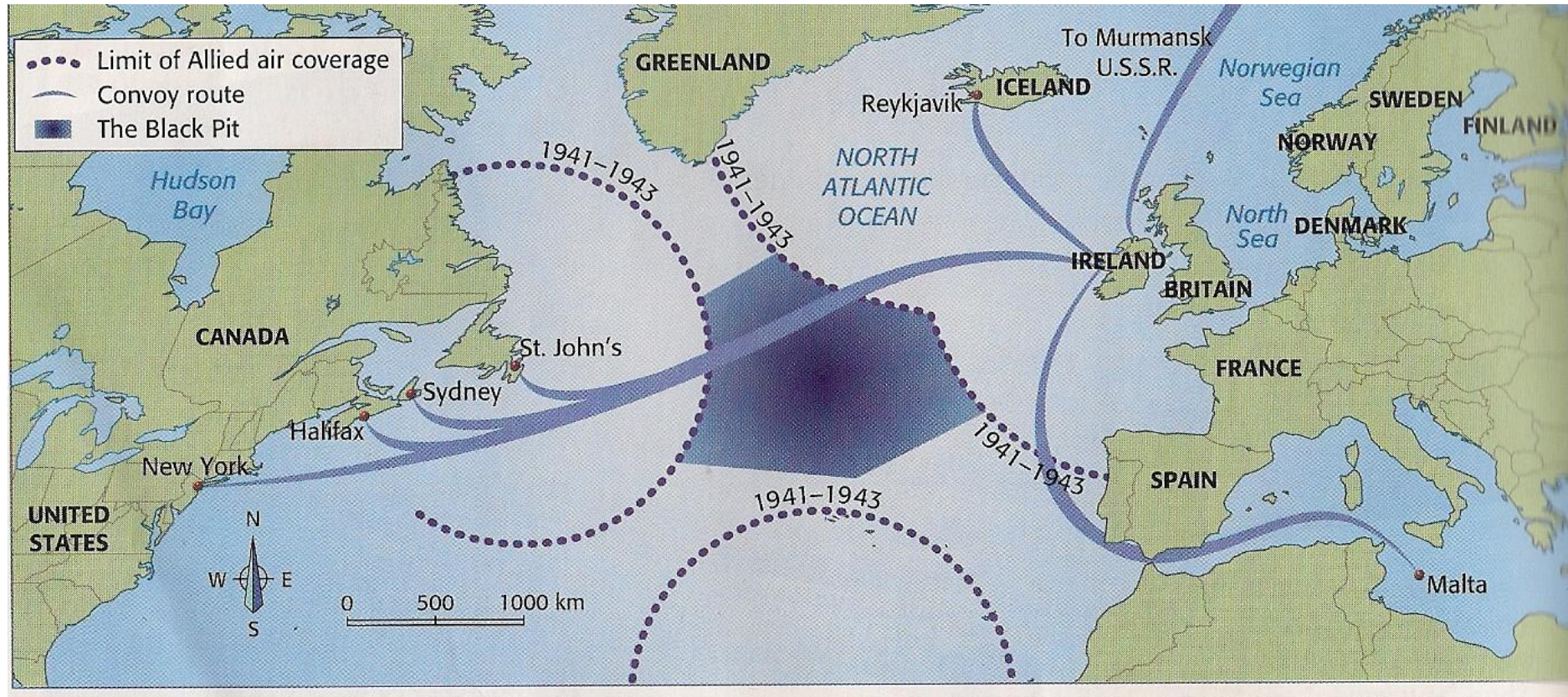
Canada's Contribution

- The navy and merchant marine fought the Battle of the Atlantic
- Canadians helped to protect the many convoys crossing the oceans
- Canadian troops fought alongside the British
- Canadian troops suffered great losses when the Japanese attacked Hong Kong in December 1941 and at the attack on Dieppe in 1942

- Battle in Hong Kong:
 - 1975 Canadians fought
 - 290 were killed
 - 1685 became prisoners of war (POWs)
 - 260 of the 1685 POWs died in captivity

- Battle at Dieppe:
 - 4963 Canadians fought
 - Over 900 killed
 - More than 1900 became POWS

The Convoy System



- Phase 3 – July 1943 to June 1944
 - after the great victories at Midway, El Alamein, and Stalingrad the balance of the war shifted in favour of the Allies
 - Allies were on the offensive on all **fronts**
 - U.S. forces pushed the Japanese back
 - Momentum shifted to the Soviet army, and the Germans began the retreat back to Berlin
 - Arial bombing of Germany escalated

Canada's Contribution

- Canada's air force had expanded greatly
- All-Canadian bomber group by 1943
- Bombing of industrial sections of German cities was carried out around the clock
- The First Canadian Division invaded the island of Sicily (Italy)
- The Allies then invaded mainland Italy
- This loss led to the eventual overthrow of the Italian government

- Italian government replaced in August 1943
- The new government surrendered in September 1943
- German forces were sent to replace the Italians
- The Italian campaign was a slow, hard-fought battle
- Canadians distinguished themselves in house-to-house and hand-to-hand combat.



The Italian Campaign
9 July 1943 - 4 May 1945

-  United States Fifth Army
-  United States Seventh Army
-  British Eighth Army
-  Axis Army
-  Axis Movement
-  Gustav Line
-  Gothic Line
-  Contested Beachhead

0 20 40 60 80 100 Miles



The bombing at Dresden in February 1945 →



B-24 **bomb** strike on a German Rail yard



**Mark Henry "Hilly" Brown
Canada's 1st Ace of WW2 (14 May 1940) &
The 1st Allied pilot to fly a captured German plane in WW2**



Explain how the Allies were on the offensive on all fronts during this phase of the war.

Phase 4: June 1944 to September 1945

- Allied Invasion of Europe was called **Operation Overlord**
- Landings in Normandy are often called the **D-Day landings**
- Germany was now fighting on two fronts: the Soviet army in the east and the British, Canadian, U.S. forces in the west
- Germany's resistance eventually collapsed

- In the Pacific, the United States was closing in on the Japanese home islands
- A new weapon was being developed that the U.S. hoped would shorten the war



Canada's Contribution

- June 6, 1944 Canadian, British, and U.S. troops landed at a series of beaches on the coast of Normandy
- Canada's beach was code-named **Juno**
- The city of Caen, a road and rail centre, was the main objective
- After the Allied victories at Caen and Falaise, the Germans retreated to Belgium and the German border

- As troops increased, supplies were in high demand – ports needed to be opened up
- The First Canadian Army was assigned the task of clearing coastal areas and opening ports
- Antwerp, Belgium was key.
 - The city was captured but the port was 80km away at the mouth of the Scheldt River
 - Germans opened dikes to flood the roads to stop the Canadians
 - Canadian troops were nicknamed “water rats”

- Antwerp was captured in the Battle of the Scheldt
- The Canadian army moved on to liberate the Netherlands
- Over 6000 Canadian casualties in this campaign
- May 8, 1945 the war in Europe ended
- Canadians stayed in northern Germany to help in the return to peace
- The Air Force patrolled the skies and the Navy patrolled the North Atlantic
- **A nation of 11.5 million had put over one million men and women in uniform**

War in the Pacific

Chapter 6.3

- After the fall of Hong Kong in December 1941, Canada focused on the war in Europe
- In May 1945 over 80 000 Canadian soldiers in Europe volunteered to join the Pacific war
- Before they had time to take part, it ended abruptly in September 1945

“Manhattan Project”

- Scientists in the U.S. had developed a new weapon, the atomic bomb
- July 1945 – the first successful test
- U.S. President made the decision to drop the atomic bomb
- The purpose was to destroy the ability of the Japanese to continue to wage war thereby saving the lives of thousands of U.S. and Allied soldiers who would die in an invasion

- August 6, 1945 – atomic bomb dropped on Hiroshima
- Japan did not surrender
- August 9, 1945 – a second bomb was dropped on Nagasaki
- About 100 000 to 140 000 people died from the immediate explosions
- The same number died from radiation exposure
- September 2, 1945 – Japan surrenders

- The use of atomic weapons on Japan remains one of the most controversial decisions of the Second World War
- Most Canadians were unaware that the uranium used was from the Great Bear Lake region
- Canadian scientists played a key role in these weapons of mass destruction

Holocaust

Chapter 6.4

- From their first days in power, the Nazis began passing discriminatory laws and encouraging anti-Jewish riots
- They also repressed the Roma (Gypsies), Slavs, homosexuals, mentally and physically challenged people
- At the time, the Allies did not know the Nazi commitment to what they called the Final Solution
 - "Final Solution," the Nazi plan to exterminate the Jewish people



- January 1942 – a plan was announced to murder all of Europe's Jews and any others the German leaders wanted to eliminate.
- The extent of this plan would end up shocking the world
- An estimated six million Jews were slaughtered at death camps where they were systematically starved, worked to death, shot, or gassed

Sculpture
at the
Dachau
Camp
Memorial
Site



- The Allies held War Crimes Trials in 1946 that lasted nine months
- The world learned about the horrors that had taken place in the camps
- More have followed as Nazi officers have been found and put on trial
- In 1948, the State of Israel was established as a Jewish Homeland
- Any Jewish person in the world has the right to move to Israel



Main Building and Square for daily roll call – Dachau



Main boulevard- the foundations of the old barracks line the walkway behind the trees

