

CHC2P Unit 3: 1939-1959: War and Peace

Activity 2: Dieppe and Hong Kong

Overview

In this activity, you will examine a variety of challenging events for the Allies in the middle stages of World War II. These include the failure of Dieppe, the entrance of Japan into the war and the Canadian defeat in Hong Kong.

Lesson

Canada and the Horrors of Dieppe



The Canadian Army eagerly accepted a British plan to strike at the French port of Dieppe. On the morning of 19 August 1942, 5000 Canadian troops, led by British commanders, attacked the German defenses at Dieppe.

The success of the raid depended on surprise and darkness. The Canadian troops lost both of those advantages when German patrols discovered the invasion and delayed it.

Attempting to land at several locations, the Canadian troops were met in daylight with German machine gunfire from high cliffs.

Most of the attackers suffered casualties or were taken prisoner. 907 Canadians lost their lives and 2000 were captured.

Some said the raid was a valuable lesson for later invasions. Others argued that the entire episode was a poorly-planned blunder, for which Canada paid a scandalous cost.

War in the East

In 1940, Hitler signed a friendship treaty with the military leadership in Japan. The undemocratic government of Japan was eager to take over neighboring countries so that Japan's population and industry would have room to expand.

Canada and the Horrors of Hong Kong

The city of Hong Kong in China belonged to England, which had obtained a 99-year lease (which ended in 1997) on the rich territory.

In November 1941, Canada answered a British request by sending 2000 soldiers to help defend the city against possible Japanese attack. Like Dieppe, this proved to be almost a suicide mission for the Canadian soldiers, many of whom had not yet finished basic training in Canada.

They were no match for a much larger and better trained Japanese force that attacked in early December. The Canadian defenders and their British allies fought fiercely and valiantly in a battle that lasted for 17 days, and ended on Christmas Day. After it was over, 300 Canadians were dead and 500 wounded. Of the remaining captured Canadians, 250 died in Japanese prisoner of war camps.

Assignment

1. List 2 reasons why the attack on Dieppe in 1942 was a large failure for the Canadian armed forces.
2. List 2 reasons why Japan signed a military treaty with Hitler?
3. List 4 horrors experienced by the Canadian forces in Hong Kong.