

CHC2P Unit 3: 1939-1959: War and Peace

Activity 3: The Turning Point

Overview

In this activity, you will investigate why 1943 marked a change in who had control in World War II and also why events such as the Allied invasion of Italy and D-Day made the outcome of the war inevitable.

Lesson

1943: Better News for the Allies

In the fourth year of World War II, momentum started to swing towards the Allied side (Canada's side). Three major turning points were:

1. The Russians stopped the German advance at the city of Stalingrad. After taking 90,000 German prisoners, the Russian forces began planning an attack on the German homeland;
2. The British and American armies also defeated the German forces in the deserts of North Africa;
3. American forces began to defeat the Japanese on various islands in the Pacific Ocean area.



One of Nazi Germany's partners (aside from Japan) was Italy, ruled by the dictator, Benito Mussolini.

The disaster at Dieppe in 1942 had proven how difficult it was to attack the German-held parts of the European continent. A decision was made to attack Hitler by invading the southern part of Italy, and then advancing northward.

Since Dieppe, Canadian soldiers had seen no combat duty. They were eager for action, and in the summer of 1943, some 92,000 Canadians took part in the invasion of Italy. With troops from Britain and the United States, they captured the island of Sicily, and then moved up the Italian "boot" toward the capital city of Rome.

The Allies met heavy resistance from the occupying German forces in Italy. In the town of Ortona, the Canadian forces fought the Nazi enemy in the streets and houses for one month. At a price of 650 Canadian soldiers killed and wounded, victory was achieved at Ortona.

Six months later, on June 4, 1944, Canadian soldiers marched into Rome as part of the Allied army. They were met by the loud cheers of the Italian people who, for the most part, had been happy to see the overthrow of Mussolini in the previous year.

In total, 30 000 Canadians were killed or wounded in the Italian campaign.

Canada and the D-Day Invasion

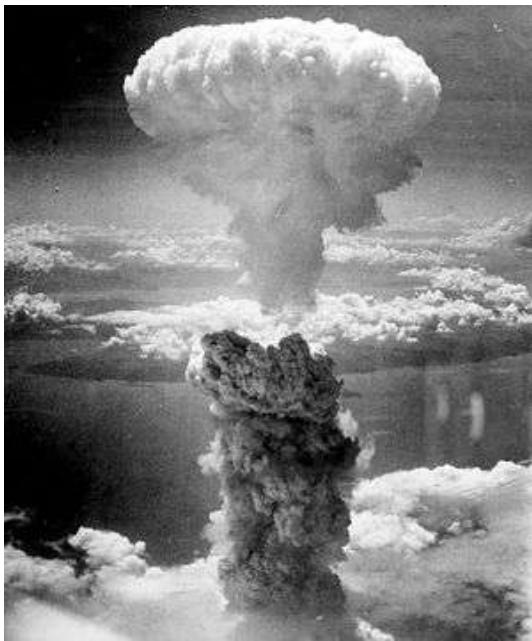


D-Day was the code name for the day (June 6, 1944) when the Allies started their massive invasion of the European continent along an 80 kilometer front of beaches in northern France. On the dawn of D-Day, 130,000 Canadian, American, and British troops went ashore at Normandy, France. Unlike the Dieppe raid, this mission was a surprise and was well organized, with massive air support.

14,000 Canadian troops waded ashore or parachuted into an area code-named "Juno Beach." All of the Allied troops fought through heavy

German resistance to work their way inland from the shore. By evening, the Canadian troops had advanced the furthest.

The End of the War in the Pacific Area



After the surrender of Germany, Japan continued the war.

American casualties were high as they attacked Japanese-occupied territories in the Pacific. Some estimated that as many as one million US troops would die in an invasion of the Japanese homeland. In this context, the US decided to use a powerful new weapon - the atomic bomb. On August 6, 1945, an atomic bomb was dropped on the Japanese city of Hiroshima.

Scientists had discovered that by splitting uranium atoms, a powerful chain reaction of high energy took place. In the so-called atomic bomb, the energy released created temperatures of several million degrees Centigrade. Immense shock waves and fireballs came from the bomb blast. Enormous winds flattened buildings. All life within

1.5 kilometres of the bomb's impact (or ground zero) was destroyed. Radiation from the bomb either killed human beings instantly or induced cancers years later.

One half of Hiroshima was destroyed and about 80,000 men, women, and children died.

When Japan did not surrender, a second bomb was dropped on Nagasaki, and the horror of death and destruction was repeated. Japan finally surrendered on August 14, 1945. Now that the atomic bomb had been used in two instances, the world feared that it might be used again in the future.

Assignment

1. In 1943, momentum began to shift in favor of the Allied Forces. List 3 major events or turning points that made this happen.
2. How was the D-Day invasion different from the “horrors” experienced by the Canadian soldiers at Dieppe? Create a chart to demonstrate 3 differences.
3. In 1945, the United States made the difficult decision to use an atomic weapon to force the Japanese to surrender. Create a chart that demonstrates 3 points in favor of the United States using the atomic bomb against Japan and 3 points against it.