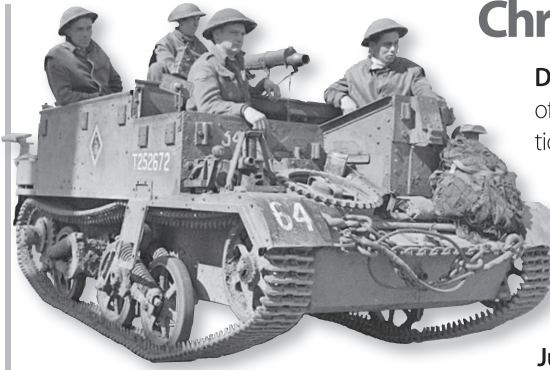


The Second World War

CANADA'S ROLE IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR

Our country's great efforts in the Second World War involved virtually the whole country whether by serving in the military or by serving on the home front in industry or agriculture. More than one million Canadians and Newfoundlanders served in the military — more than 45,000 gave their lives and another 55,000 were wounded. While the great powers made more significant contributions to the war effort; for a country of only 11 million people Canada's contribution was remarkable. At war's end, Canada had become a significant military power with the world's third largest navy, the fourth largest air force and an army of six divisions. Canada had grown significantly through the ordeal of war and assumed new responsibilities as a leading member of the world community.



September 3, 1939: The passenger liner *Athenia* is torpedoed, killing the first Canadian of the war, stewardess Hannah Baird of Quebec.

September 10, 1939: Canada declares war on Germany - the first and only time Canada has declared war on another country on its own.

September 14, 1939: The Prime Minister, William Lyon MacKenzie King, declares that Canada should be the arsenal of the Allies and pledges not to institute conscription.

September 16, 1939: The first Canadian convoy of merchant ships sails for Britain.

November 13, 1939: An advance party of Canadian officers lands in Britain.

Chronology of the Second World War

December 17, 1939: The first of the main body of Canadian troops arrive in Scotland; inauguration of the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan to train pilots and aircrew in Canada, away from the fighting.

April 9, 1940: Canada creates a Department of Munitions and Supply to manage the production of war material.

June 12, 1940: The 1st Brigade of the Canadian 1st Division lands in France; they are forced to leave days later when France surrenders to the Nazis.

November-December 1941: Canadian troops are stationed at Hong Kong; on December 8, 1941, Hong Kong is attacked by the Japanese; on December 25 Hong Kong falls (of 1,975 Canadian troops, 290 were killed with the remaining 1,685 taken prisoner; a further 260 of these Canadians would die as prisoners of war before the end of the war).

April 4, 1942: A Royal Canadian Air Force plane spots the Japanese fleet en route to Ceylon (Sri Lanka) and gives warning in time for successful defence of the island (Winston Churchill cites this episode as "the most dangerous moment of the war").

April 27, 1942: The National Plebiscite and subsequent amendment to the National Resource Mobilization Act authorize conscription.

August 19, 1942: The Dieppe Raid sees a force of more than 6,000 Allied soldiers (almost 5000 of whom were Canadian) taking part in a raid in occupied France. The operation would prove to be a failure, with 1,946 of the force being taken prisoner and 916 Canadians losing their lives.

May 1943: The most dangerous period in the Battle of the Atlantic draws to a close; more than 1,200 Canadian and Newfoundland merchant seamen had been killed at sea since the beginning of the war.

July 10, 1943: Canadians, forming a part of the British 8th Army, join in the invasion of Italy.

August 17, 1943: The conquest of Sicily is completed.

September 3, 1943: On the fourth anniversary of Britain and France's declaration of war on Germany, Canadian troops join Allied forces in the invasion of the Italian mainland.

December 28, 1943: After heavy fighting, Canadian troops occupy Ortona, on Italy's east coast.

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NOVEMBER 11



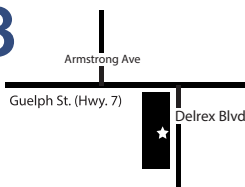
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