

The Second World War

1939–1945

Background:

- After World War I Newfoundland had suffered both economic and social losses.
- The years between the wars saw Newfoundland suffer with heavy debts, low employment, the Great Depression and social problems.
- The Second World War brought many changes to Newfoundland.

World War II:

- Newfoundland was of strategic importance for it's location
- Building of military bases created employment
- Increased demand for NL's products (fish, timber, iron ore)
- Point of departure of warships & merchant supply ship

Why did the Second World War start?

- During the years between the wars there was an event called The Depression.
- The Depression was an economic event that caused many people to be out of work & not have enough money for basis needs.
- When people's basic needs are not met it created tension and caused people to look at other ways of having a society organized.

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- They began to turn away from democratic governments.
- Democratic governments seemed unable to stop the economic downturn and help people meet their basic needs.
- Because of this people began to turn away from democracy and look to other forms of government for leadership. There were other forms of government that saw war as a solution to economic problems.

How did the Second World War start?

- German dictator Adolf Hitler invaded Poland
- Britain and France declared war on Germany in response
- Italy and Japan joined Germany
- Soviet Union and United States joined Britain

Where did World War II take place?

- This war was fought from the land, sea, and air.
- There was fighting in Europe during WW II. In addition to the European battle fronts, there were battles in:
 - Asia
 - Africa
 - Australia
- In addition, to the war in the Atlantic Ocean there were also naval battles in the:
 - Pacific Ocean
 - Indian Ocean
 - Mediterranean Sea

- **THEATRE OF WAR:** the geographical location of a major battle.

Hardships of World War II:

- Inadequate communication technology
- Primitive air and naval technology
- Difficult weather conditions
- Language barriers
- Cultural differences/misunderstandings
- Insufficient food rations
- Inadequate health services
- Difficulty sending/receiving mail
- Loneliness and distances from home country/family

Newfoundland Enlistment: (pg 189–191)

- At the outbreak of war Newfoundland was part of the British Empire.
- We did not recruit men for our Newfoundland forces like they did in World War I.
- Newfoundland men joined the British Armed Forces. This reduced the financial commitment to outfit the men.
- Britain would be responsible for the money to supply these soldiers. Due to the large number of Newfoundlanders who joined there were special units designated as “Newfoundland” units.
- This helped to keep the men together and allowed some level of comradeship between the men.

- **Women also enlisted for military service during the war. The Canadian Armed Forces had three women's branches:**
 1. **Women's Royal Canadian Naval Service**– these women served in Newfoundland, Canada, Northern Ireland and Scotland
 2. **Women's Division of the Royal Canadian Air Force**
 3. **Canadian Women's Army Corps** – on the first day of recruitment 126 women signed up in St. John's

- “Not Found Lying Down” = NFLD**
- **This was the slogan applied to the Newfoundland men. What do you think it is meant to imply?**

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN WW I & WW II:

- Below is a list of differences between how World War I and World War II was fought.
 - 1. Warfare was slower during the Worlds War I as compared with the fast pace of World War II.
 - 2. World War I took place mainly on land and soldiers used trenches to hide in before they attacked the enemy; World War II included battles at sea, on land and in the air
 - 3. There were less casualties than World War I but more people served during World War II and there were more branches of military services
 - 4. While many went overseas during World War II, many played an important role on the home front protecting strategic sites and residents from attack.
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- 5. World War II took place in very close proximity to our shores since German U-boats sank ships in Conception Bay and along our coastline, there was a fear that Newfoundland and Labrador might be directly attacked; World War I took place exclusively in other countries with very little contact with Newfoundland shores.
 - 6. The construction of military bases in Newfoundland and Labrador during World War II resulted from our strategic importance to the Allies at that time– this is not true of World War I.
 - 7. During World War II the Newfoundland Regiment protected bases and vulnerable points such as Bell Island, Gander, Botwood, Torbay and Goose Bay.
 - 8. The Germans actually set up a secret weather station in Labrador during World War II
 - 9. Instead of creating and financing its own regiment, the Commission of Government recruited Newfoundlanders and Labradoreans for the British Forces.

10. Women served in various branches of the military during both wars but not at the front lines.
11. Women served in the various patriotic groups which provided services and goods to the fighting men overseas.
12. More women (over 500) enlisted and served during World War II –much larger than World War I.
13. Women served in 3 branches of the armed services during World War II, Women's Royal Canadian Naval Service, Women's Division of the Royal Canadian Air Force and Canadian Women's Army Corps.
14. Women served not only in the Women's Patriotic Associations (WPA) during both world wars but also in the Newfoundland Patriotic Association (NPA) centered in St. John's during World War II.