

CHAPTER SIX: WORLD WAR II 1939-1942

On 23 August 1939, the Western democracies were stunned by the announcement of the Nazi-Soviet Pact of Non-Aggression. Its most immediate effect was the strategic isolation of Poland. Should war break out between Germany and Poland, France and Britain were in no position to offer the Polish army any direct military support.

The Non-Aggression Pact offered considerable advantages for both sides. For Hitler, it eliminated the possibility of a war on two fronts if Britain and France honoured their commitment to Poland. It also secured resources for German war industries, as the Pact gave Germany access to the considerable mineral wealth of the Soviet Union. For Stalin, the agreement would allow the Soviets time to complete their industrialization program and the modernization of the Red Army. The Pact also contained secret provisions regarding the Nazi and Russian spheres of interest. It presented the Soviet Union with the opportunity to reclaim territories lost in 1919.

During the 1930's, the Soviet Union had regarded the growing power of Nazi Germany with alarm. Even before the German annexation of Austria and the Sudetenland, Stalin had approached both the French and British governments about forming a common front against Germany. After the German occupation of Czechoslovakia in March of 1939, the French and British were more receptive to

Stalin's proposals. However, there were significant obstacles to overcome. There was a considerable amount of mutual distrust and suspicion. The Polish government steadfastly refused to allow Soviet troops to enter Poland, and Stalin felt that this was absolutely essential if war broke out. After four months of frustrating and futile negotiations, Stalin decided to deal directly with Nazi Germany.

On 1 September 1939, Germany invaded Poland in response to an alleged violation of German territory by Polish troops. The French and British immediately demanded the withdrawal of German forces from Polish territory. On 3 September, both governments declared war on Germany. A week later, the Canadian Parliament followed suit, with the CCF member, J.S. Woodsworth, being the sole MP to oppose the motion to declare war.

The Axis Triumphant: 1939-1942

The first three years of the war would witness an almost uninterrupted string of victories for the Axis forces. Poland, Denmark, Norway, Luxembourg, Holland, Belgium and France would fall within the first year. By 1942, German armies had occupied much of European Russia, and Axis forces were at the gates of Cairo. In the Pacific, the Japanese

Imperial Forces had conducted a rapid series of successful operations against the Allies, and were poised to invade Australia and the Indian sub-continent.

The Polish Campaign

The speed with which the German forces overran Poland astounded the rest of the world. Even members of the German High Command were surprised by the swift collapse of Polish resistance. It was due primarily to the operational doctrine of the German armoured forces, although *panzer* divisions and motorized units made up less than a quarter of the total German force. Another significant reason was the fact that the Poles had to defend a frontier of two thousand kilometres, and deal with simultaneous attacks from the north, west and south.

Eight of the ten Polish armies were deployed along the border, with two armies held in reserve. By placing the bulk of their strength in the forward areas, the Polish dispositions were extremely vulnerable to any significant breakthrough by German forces. Much of the Polish Air Force was destroyed on the ground by initial *Luftwaffe* strikes on military airfields, and German fighters swept the remainder from the skies. By 3 September, the Germans had achieved complete command of the air. The German *Wehrmacht* implemented its offensive plans, and in less than ten days all but one of the Polish armies had been isolated or eliminated and Warsaw was encircled. *Blitzkrieg* had proven to be an irresistible force.

On the ground, German armoured and motorized forces drove deep into the rear areas. The Polish armies were cut off from their supplies and reserves, and those that did not surrender were encircled and destroyed. The German

bombers pounded Warsaw into submission, and the city was surrendered to spare the civilian population. What remained of the Polish armies withdrew to the east.

Until the middle of September, the Soviet Union had been ominously silent. Poland and the Soviet Union had negotiated a non-aggression treaty in 1934, and it appeared that Stalin was honouring its terms. However, on 17 September, Vladimir Potemkin, Deputy Commissar for Soviet Foreign Affairs, informed the Polish Ambassador that the Polish state had “ceased to exist” and that any Soviet-Polish agreements were no longer “valid.” The same day, the Red Army moved into eastern Poland to “protect” the large population of Ukrainians and Byelorussians. In reality, Stalin was merely taking the Soviet share of territory agreed to in the pact with Germany. Although the British and French had vowed that any violation of Polish sovereignty would be regarded as an act of war, they took no action when Soviet troops occupied eastern Poland.

The British and French had not anticipated that Poland would succumb so quickly. They had estimated that the Polish defence would hold long enough for the Allies to prepare and mount an offensive against Germany from the west. The Soviets were no less surprised. Although Poland’s armed forces were outnumbered by a ratio of 3:2, most military experts assumed that the tactical supremacy of defence would offset this disadvantage. Few realized that the German operational doctrines had revolutionized warfare. Mobility had been restored to the battlefield, and mechanization had altered the relationship of time and space in the conduct of war.

In the German High Command, many senior officers remained unconvinced of the value of

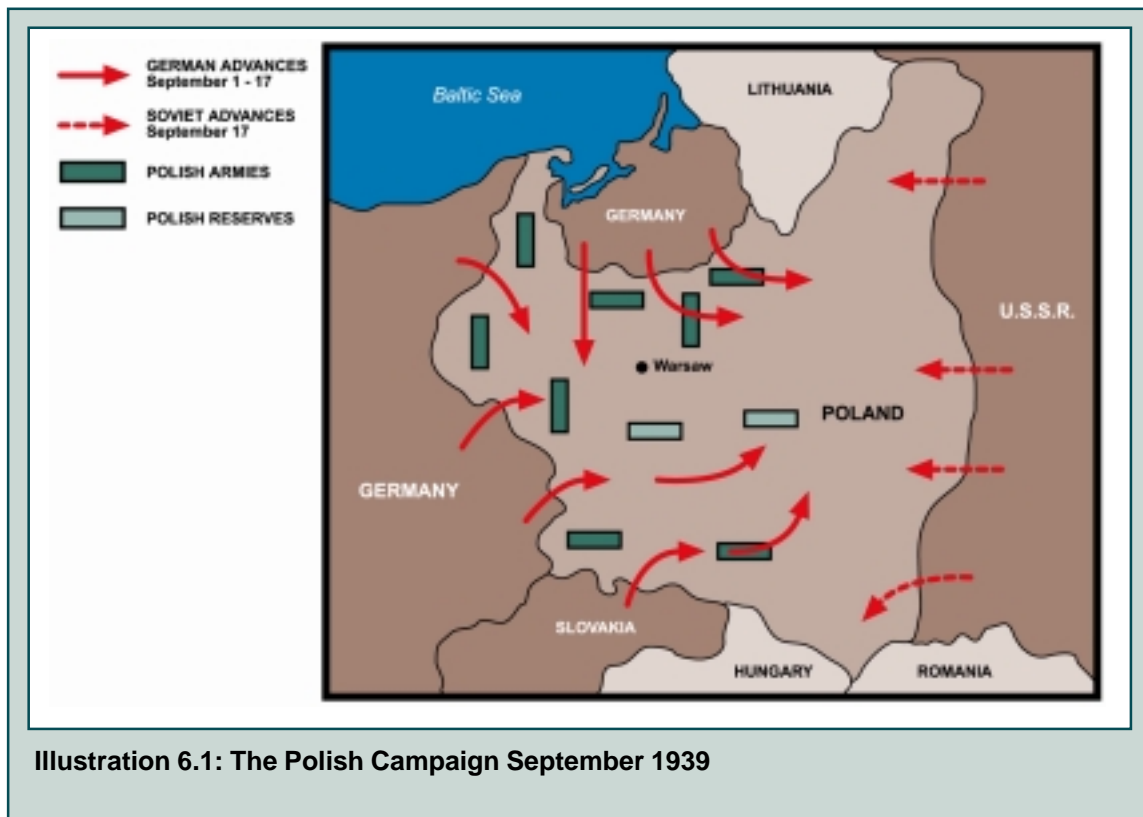


Illustration 6.1: The Polish Campaign September 1939

armoured forces. The strategic position of Poland had been weak, and its army poorly deployed. The German General Staff had produced a thorough plan of operations that left nothing to chance. The defeat of Poland was certain with or without the *panzer* divisions.¹ Similar conclusions were reached in the Soviet Union and the West. The true nature of *blitzkrieg* would not become evident until June of 1940.

In November 1939, the Soviet Union launched an offensive against Finland. Their action was condemned by the League of Nations, but

¹ In the Polish campaign, the German army fielded 35 infantry divisions, 5 motorized divisions and 5 Panzer divisions.

League members took no action. Heroic Finnish resistance repulsed the initial Soviet attacks, but by February of 1940 the Red Army had used superior numbers to push the Finnish army back. The French and British planned to dispatch a force to Scandinavia to support the Finns, but Norway and Sweden denied access to allied troops. Finland was compelled to surrender, and ceded substantial territory to the Soviet Union. However, the poor performance of the Red Army during the “Winter War” led Hitler to underestimate Soviet military power, and this would be an important factor in his decision to invade Russia in 1941.

On the western front there was little activity during the last months of 1939 and the spring of 1940. However, German forces were

not idle. Denmark was occupied, and forces were sent to Norway to secure the “iron route.” Germany’s heavy industries were dependent upon Swedish iron ore, which was transported to nearby Norwegian ports for shipment. The German move actually forestalled a similar Allied expedition. The British had planned to cut off the German supply of iron ore by occupying Norway, but German divisions confronted allied forces. In the bitter fighting that ensued the German control of Norway was firmly established.

The Fall of France

In the west, there had been no military actions initiated by either side. However, the “Phony War”² was not destined to continue. The German General Staff had been preparing the operational plans for the invasion of France, and by December they were completed. On 10 January, an event occurred that would have momentous consequences in the following months. That day, a German reconnaissance plane crash-landed in Belgium. The officers in the plane had a copy of the German operational plans with them, and were in the process of burning the papers when Belgian soldiers apprehended them. The German High Command had no idea how many of the documents had fallen into Allied hands, but it was clear that military security had been seriously compromised.

As a result, the General Staff was obliged to prepare new plans for the invasion of France. At this point, consideration was given to a daring and innovative operational plan that had been developed by General von Manstein but originally rejected by the General Staff.

² The German equivalent was “*Sitzkrieg*”.

The Maginot presented an insurmountable obstacle to any assault. Consequently, any attack against France would have to pass through Belgium. The original plan had many of the characteristics of the Schlieffen plan. Mechanized transport would make the plan logistically feasible. However, the Allied High Command had correctly anticipated the German strategy and devised the Dyle plan, a defensive manoeuvre that would halt the German army well short of the French border.

Von Manstein’s plan called for the main area of operations to be shifted eastward to Luxembourg and southeastern Belgium. While two German armies conducted attacks in the north that would mislead the Allies about German intentions, the bulk of the German armoured forces would be concentrated for an advance through the heavily forested and hilly terrain of the Ardennes. Once the *panzer* divisions had broken through the French defenses, they would advance westward to the English Channel and cut off the bulk of the Allied armies from their supplies and reinforcements. The Ardennes was considered to be impassable to armoured vehicles by the Allied commanders, and as a result only seven poorly equipped divisions were deployed in this sector.

The German offensive began on 10 May, and allied troops marched northward to meet the anticipated attack. Far to the south, the *panzer* divisions crossed the borders of Belgium and Luxembourg. By the next day the German armour had advanced sixty miles and were poised to cross the Meuse river and push across northern France. French divisions sent to counterattack were subjected to incessant dive-bomber attacks and were pinned down. On 13 May, the *panzer* divisions had created a massive gap in the French defences and raced across northern France.

The Allied armies were unable to cope with the speed of the German operations.

The *Luftwaffe* had eliminated the possibility of any aerial reconnaissance, and its bombers had made a shambles of French communications. It wasn't until 14 May that the French High Command was fully aware of the extent of the German breakthrough. The French generals were not overly concerned as they calculated that the German advance would have to halt for supplies, and this would present the Allies with the opportunity to counterattack. This had been the case with the Schlieffen Plan in 1914 and Ludendorff's offensive in the spring of 1918. They did not realize that the Germans

had also revolutionized logistics, and their motorized supply columns had kept pace with the German *panzer* divisions.

The French launched an armoured counterattack on 17 May. Colonel Charles de Gaulle was given command of an armoured division, and in the next two days carried out a series of ill-coordinated attacks north of Laon. By 19 May, his division had withdrawn and the German advance to the west continued. Two days later, the British attempted to counter attack with two infantry divisions and a tank brigade near Arras. It too, met with failure. The *panzer* divisions reached Calais on the English Channel on 23 May. The British



Window on War: Headquarters: British Expeditionary Force Belgium: 16 May 1940

The young radio operator rushed into the tent, interrupting a crowd of staff officers huddled around a large wooden table strewn with maps.

"The Germans," he panted, "have broken through at Sedan."

Lord Gort, the Commander-in-Chief of the British Expeditionary Force, peered up from the table. "Nonsense, lad. I'd have heard something from Gamelin or Billote if that were the case. Besides, Sedan is almost a hundred miles from the frontier. The Germans couldn't possibly have covered that much ground."

"The message is from Gamelin, sir."

"Let's have it then." The aged general took the piece of paper and studied it quietly. "Hmm... it says here that Gamelin has had reports of German tanks moving west from the Ardennes. Divisional commanders were calling for reinforcements."

A young staff officer spoke up. "That can't be possible, sir. The Ardennes simply isn't suitable for armoured vehicles."

"Quite right, my boy," replied Gort. "Well, the French troops along the Meuse certainly aren't the best. Most likely some reserve officer saw a couple of armoured cars and panicked. In no time, he'd inflated them to the size of a division, tanks and all."

He continued, "Surely we'd have had some inkling of a major assault by now."

"The communications have been sketchy at best, sir. Jerry's planes have been wreaking havoc on the rear areas." The radio operator looked at Lord Gort.

"Well," the General said, "I can't imagine that this reported attack is anything more than a diversion. No, the Germans are going to push through Belgium, just like in '14. Not terribly creative, those chaps. Between the French, the Belgians and ourselves, the Jerries don't have a hope in Hades of getting to Paris, let alone the French frontier."

A corporal slipped into the tent and handed another communiqué to the radio operator, who glanced at it.

"Well, what is it?"

"Seems the Germans are moving westward in force, sir. Gamelin says that the French are preparing to counterattack with de Gaulle's tank force."

"De Gaulle! That insufferable man. Every time I've had occasion to meet him, he goes on constantly about tanks. All nonsense. The war will be won with good old-fashioned infantry and artillery. Tanks indeed!"

Expeditionary Force, the Belgian Army and a third of the French forces were encircled.

The British hurriedly threw together a motley fleet of fishing boats, coastal ferries, yachts and small private craft to evacuate the Allied troops at Dunkirk. Thirty-nine destroyers were assigned escort duty. Operation “Dynamo” began on 26 May, and on the same day the Belgian Army surrendered. By 4 June, the “Mosquito armada” had managed to evacuate 338 226 allied troops, but almost all of their equipment had been abandoned on the beaches at Dunkirk.

By 5 June the German armies had redeployed and began their drive to the south. The new French Commander-in-Chief, General Weygand, who had succeeded General Gamelin, had established a new defensive system to deal with the impending German offensive. It had the potential to effectively deal with the *panzer* divisions, but its success would depend upon a strong mobile reserve of tanks. Unfortunately, most of the French armour had been squandered in de Gaulle’s counterattacks.

In spite of increased French resistance, the Germans broke through the French defences in the western and eastern sectors. Within four days they threatened to surround Paris and the remaining French armies. On 10 June, Italy declared war on France, and began to move troops into southern France. A week later, a new French government headed by the aged Marshall Pétain requested an armistice. The Germans had overrun the Low Countries and France in just six weeks.

Although the allies had enjoyed superiority in armour, the lack of an effective operational doctrine had proved to be decisive. Many of

the French and British tanks had been scattered amongst infantry divisions and assigned the role of support. Those armoured divisions that did exist were composed solely of tanks, and did not have the tactical flexibility of a German *panzer* division. The role of the *Luftwaffe* in providing support for the German armoured operations was another decisive factor. Allied troops had been subjected to almost constant air attacks that greatly reduced their ability to carry out mobile operations. In addition, allied commanders had been unable to conduct aerial reconnaissance and realign their forces to counter the German offensive.

Summer 1940

Early in December 1939, the contingents of the Canadian First Division embarked for Britain on five passenger liners escorted by four destroyers of the Royal Canadian Navy. By the end of the month, almost sixteen thousand Canadian troops had crossed the Atlantic. In the spring of 1940, the General McNaughton’s Canadian First Division was awaiting orders to cross the channel. Eighty Canadian pilots had also arrived, but the Royal Canadian Air Force had only a single squadron of planes manned by twenty-six pilots. Sixteen pilots were assigned to the RAF’s 242 “Canadian Squadron,” and the remainder were scattered throughout other British fighter units.

Although Canadian pilots had been stationed in France during April, the Canadian First Division was not sent to France until after Dunkirk. When the First Division did arrive on 14 June, German troops were already entering Paris. Three days later, the Canadians were shipped back to Britain. By that time, the Canadian contingent represented the only fully equipped division in the British Isles. While much of the British army had been evacuated

at Dunkirk, it had been forced to leave most of its equipment behind.

Britain alone had escaped the ravages of *blitzkrieg*, and was now preparing for the inevitable German invasion. On 27 July, the German High Command submitted the plans for the invasion of Britain, Operation “Sea Lion.” It consisted of two army groups composed of thirty infantry, six *panzer* and three motorized divisions, supported by two *Luftwaffe* airborne divisions. But before the Germans could

launch the invasion, it was imperative that they gain control of the skies over Britain, which would eliminate the possibility of any intervention by the RAF or Royal Navy.

While the British prepared for the aerial onslaught, the Canadian First Army was assigned the task of misleading any German aerial reconnaissance. During the summer months it marched and countermarched across the southern England in order to create the illusion of a massive force preparing to meet the Ger-

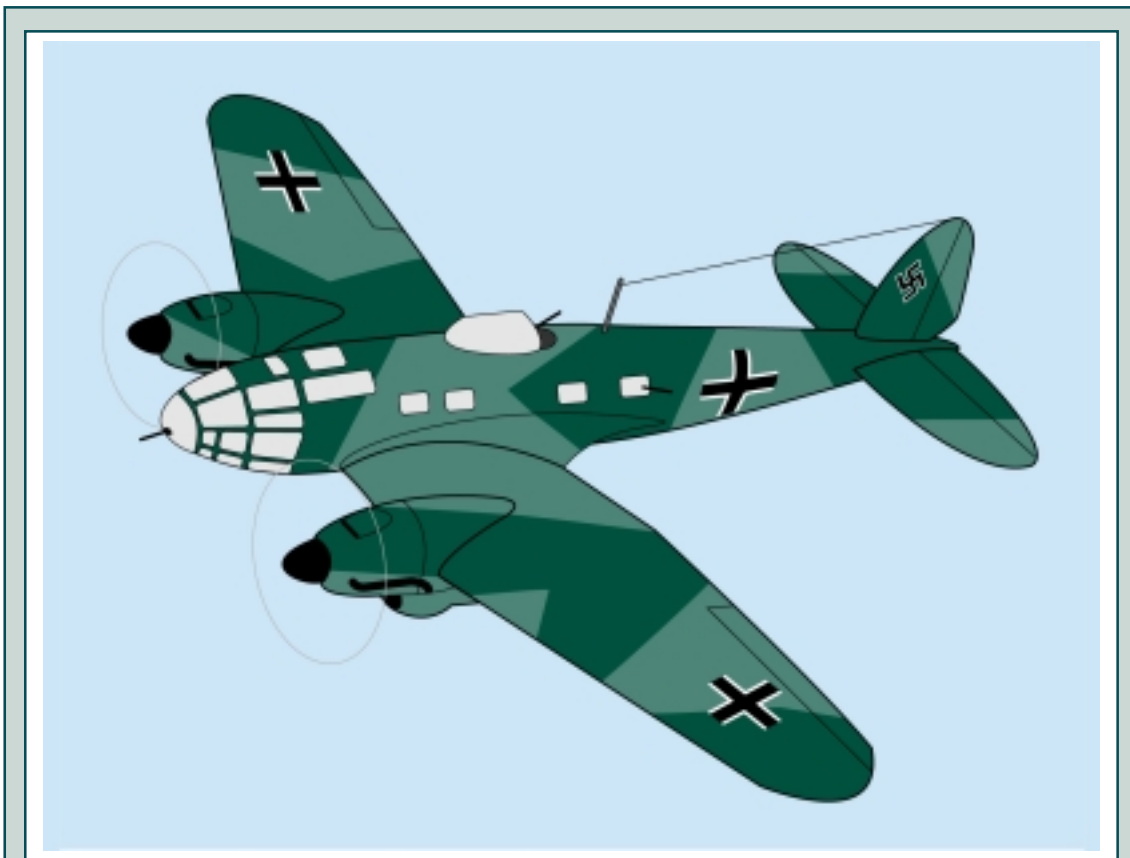


Illustration 6.3: Heinkel He 111

Maximum bomb load capacity:	4 409 lbs (2,000 kg)
Operational Range:	758 miles (1,220 kilometres)
Maximum Speed:	258 mph (415 km/h)

The Heinkel 111 was first used in the Spanish Civil War. It was a manoeuvrable craft, but suffered from a short operational range.

man invasion. The fatigued Canadian soldiers began to refer to themselves as “McNaughton’s Flying Circus.”

The *Luftwaffe* had assembled a formidable force to assail the RAF. It had nine hundred and sixty-nine bombers, three hundred and thirty-six “*Stuka*” dive-bombers, eight hundred and sixty-nine single engine Messerschmitt Bf 109 fighters and two hundred and sixty-eight twin engine Messerschmitt Bf 110 long range fighters. This impressive force would be given the task of destroying the RAF bases on the ground while clearing the skies of British fighters.

However, the *Luftwaffe* would face some serious disadvantages. The limited operational range of the Bf 109 fighters meant that they could not give the bombers adequate protection from British fighter squadrons. The long range Bf 110 was too slow and unwieldy to cope with the faster and more agile British fighters. The *Stukas*, which had operated over Poland and France unopposed by enemy fighters, would prove to be easy targets for the Hurricanes and Spitfires. The German bomber fleet had been designed primarily as a tactical force, and would find it difficult to effectively conduct a strategic operation.



Illustration 6.4: Hawker Hurricane

Armament:	.303 Browning machine guns
Operational Range:	460 miles (740 kilometres)
Maximum Speed:	329 mph (529 km/h)

Hurricanes made up two-thirds allied fighter strength during the Battle of Britain. Both RCAF Squadron 1 and RAF Squadron 242 (Canadian) flew Hurricanes. Although slower than the Spitfire, it bore the brunt of operations against the German bomber squadron.

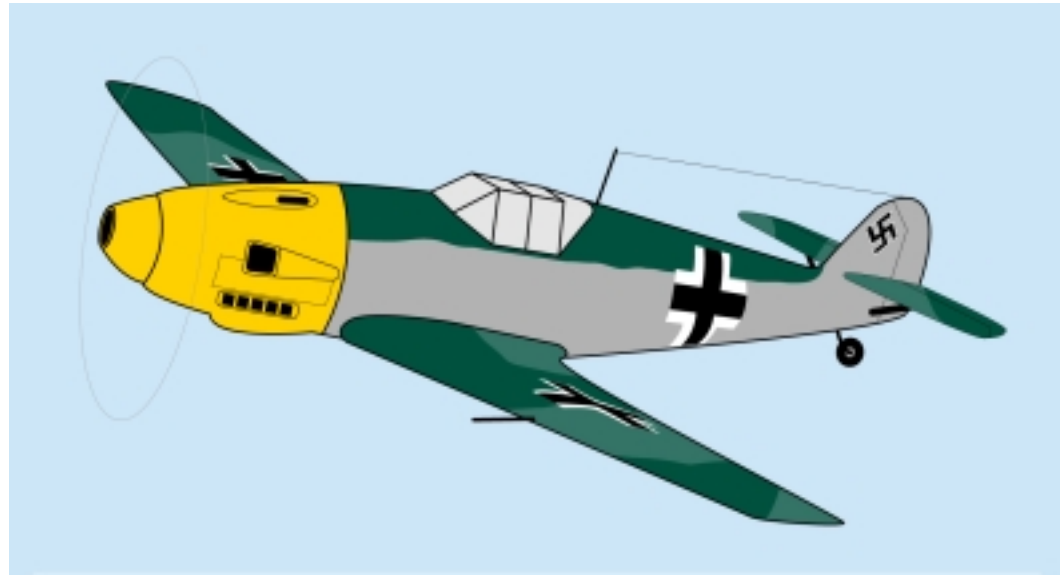


Illustration 6.5: Messerschmitt Bf-109

Armament:	Two 7.92 machine guns Two 20 mm cannon
Operational Range:	413 miles (665 kilometers)
Maximum Speed:	358 mph (573 km/h)

Although the Bf-109 was slightly less agile than the Spitfire, it had much greater firepower. Its fuel injection eliminated stalling due to high G-forces. The Messerschmitt could lose a Spitfire by going into a steep climb or dive.

The RAF and RCAF squadrons also enjoyed several advantages over the *Luftwaffe*. The first of these was the British radar system, which gave Fighter Command advanced warning of the approaching German formations. As a consequence, large numbers of fighters could be concentrated to intercept the enemy squadrons en route to their targets. Although the RAF was short of men, any allied pilot who was forced to bail out landed in friendly territory, and was immediately available for combat. German pilots in the same situation became prisoners of war, and the *Luftwaffe* was faced with the loss of personnel as well as aircraft. Initially, the British and Canadians

had only seven hundred and eight Hurricanes and Spitfires available, but British aircraft industry had significantly increased its production of fighters by mid-August.

The Battle of Britain was fought in three distinct phases. In the first, which lasted from 13 to 17 August, the *Luftwaffe* lost almost two hundred and fifty-five bombers. British fighters easily dispatched the Stukas, and bomber squadrons assigned to RAF targets in northern England had no fighter escorts and were mauled by the British squadrons. From 24 August to 6 September, the Germans continued to pound RAF bases in southern Eng-

land, destroying vital airstrips, ammunition and fuel stores and crucial aircraft maintenance facilities. The British were losing more fighters on the ground than in aerial combat. RAF and RCAF pilots were in the air almost continuously, landing only to rearm and refuel before returning to the furious battle raging in the skies over southern England. Fatigue was becoming a serious obstacle to combat performance. The *Luftwaffe* had victory within its grasp.

Late in the evening of 24 August, a German bomber formation mistakenly bombed civilian areas of London. British Prime Minister Winston Churchill immediately ordered a reprisal raid on Berlin. The following night, eighty-one bombers headed for Berlin. Many lost their way, and only twenty-nine reached their target. The damage to Berlin was negligible, but Hitler's response to the raid was to have disastrous consequences for the German air offensive over Britain. The *Luftwaffe* was ordered to concentrate its bombing operations on London. On 7 September, the first massive raid was launched against the city, and the heavy bombing would continue unabated for fifty-seven days. The RAF received a much-needed respite, and it would not waste the opportunity that the German change in strategy offered.

By concentrating all its bombing operations on London, the *Luftwaffe* suddenly found itself at a disadvantage. British and allied squadrons were able to concentrate their entire fighter strength against the attacking waves of German planes. The RAF knew not only the German objective but also the flight paths that the bombers would take to and from their target. Spitfires and Hurricanes harried the Germans from the time they first appeared over the

English Channel until they safely returned to the French coast. The *Luftwaffe* suffered staggering losses, and by October Operation Sea Lion had been postponed indefinitely.

The Canadian pilots had acquitted themselves well in the Battle. Manitoba native Mark "Hilly" Brown had downed fifteen German fighters over France, and had been promoted to flight commander in the RAF's Number One Squadron. In the early days of the Battle of Britain, he displayed a reckless courage reminiscent of Bishop and Barker's exploits in World War I. When his flight of nine Hurricanes encountered a formation of forty German fighters, he immediately attacked. Flight Lieutenant John Kent, from Winnipeg, commanded the RAF's 303 Polish Squadron and was given the nickname "Kentowski." He was credited with thirteen confirmed and two probable kills. Pilot Officer Joseph Larichelière of Montreal, flying with RAF Squadron 213, shot down six planes in two days, but was killed in action the following day. Harry Mitchell from Port Hope, Ontario, flew with RAF Squadron 87. On 14 August, he downed three planes in one day.

During the early weeks of August, Squadron Leader Ernest McNab felt that RCAF Squadron 1 was not yet combat ready, but high casualties forced Fighter Command to declare the squadron operational on 24 August. The first RCAF mission was to be a memorable one for the wrong reason. The squadron was ordered to intercept a flight of German bombers over the southeast coast, but they were unaware that Fighter Command had also dispatched three twin engine Blenheim patrol planes to the area. As a result, McNab's Hurricanes attacked the three RAF craft. At the last moment, McNab recognized the planes

and attempted to call off his fighters, but one Blenheim was shot down and the other two crash-landed after taking several hits.

Two days later, RCAF Squadron 1 was back in the air. There was no error this time.

McNab's twelve Hurricanes tore into a formation of Dornier bombers. His Flight Officer, R.L. Edwards, displayed nerves of steel as he waited until his Hurricane was at point-blank range before opening fire. The hail of bullets

tore off the tail section of the Dornier.

McNab also downed a Dornier, and when the squadron returned to base, it had accounted for seven downed German bombers. However, Flight Officer Edwards had not survived the encounter and became the first RCAF pilot to die in combat.

The RCAF Squadron 1 saw continuous action along the southern coast on 31 August. During a morning patrol, Bf 109s swooped down and



Illustration 6.6: Supermarine Spitfire

Armament:	Eight .303 Browning machine guns
Operational Range:	660 miles (1,062 kilometres)
Maximum Speed:	408 mph (675 km/h)

The Spitfire was responsible for dealing with the German fighter escorts while Hurricane squadrons attacked the bombers. It was a highly manoeuvrable fighter due to its elliptical wing design.

attacked “out of the sun.” Three Hurricanes took heavy damage and the pilots bailed out. Flight Officers George Hyde and Vaughn Corbett suffered burns to their hands, legs and faces. Corbett went through the terrible ordeal of plummeting almost two kilometres before his parachute finally opened. When Bill Sprenger’s Hurricane was riddled with bullets, the instrument panel exploded in his face and his controls disintegrated. His plane had fallen fifteen hundred metres before he could get the emergency hatch opened. That afternoon the squadron was called into action again. The Canadians destroyed two bombers and three fighters, but lost one of their own planes. The pilot, Jean-Paul Desloges, was badly burned, but managed to bail out and parachute to safety. RCAF squadron was holding its own in the desperate struggle against the *Luftwaffe*.

The legendary Douglas Bader commanded the RAF 242 “Canadian Squadron.” Bader had lost both legs in an accident in 1931, but that had not prevented him from becoming one of the RAF’s leading aces. Unlike other British squadron leaders, he slept with his pilots in their quarters. His two artificial legs were stationed at the foot of his bed in the event of an emergency. Bader was not initially impressed with the rather casual attitude of the Canadians towards dress and discipline, but he swore that there were no better pilots in the RAF.

The 242 squadron’s baptism of fire could not have been more impressive. On 30 August, they were sent up to intercept a formation of over one hundred bombers and long range Bf 110 fighters. Bader led his squadron in a well-coordinated attack that ripped apart the German formation. He watched his wingman, William McKnight, bank to the left in pursuit of three German fighters. The Canadian

squadron downed twelve bombers and damaged several others. The rest had broken off and fled for home, unable to continue their mission. Not one bomb had been dropped on British targets, and Squadron 242 had not lost a plane. Bader had shot down two German fighters and his wingman, William McKnight, had done him one better. As the Battle of Britain raged into September, the Canadian squadron continued to down enemy planes at a remarkable rate.

The Germans had lost one thousand seven hundred and thirty-three aircraft in the Battle of Britain. The allied losses totaled one thousand three hundred and seven-nine fighters, but more significantly, only four hundred and fourteen pilots. The loss of highly trained pilots and crews would have a significant effect on the *Luftwaffe* in subsequent operations, and the allied pilots had bought valuable time. However, by the end of 1940 the Axis powers were undisputed masters of Europe, and Britain would face even a graver threat at sea.

War in the Atlantic

“The only thing that really frightened me was the U-boat peril... The Battle of the Atlantic was the dominating factor all through the war.”

-Winston Churchill

By the summer of 1940, the prospects of the war looked grim for Britain and her commonwealth allies. Preparations had been made to evacuate the Royal Family and British government to Canada in the event of a German invasion. Once the immediate threat of a German invasion had passed, however, Britain was still faced with the Herculean task of re-equipping its army and maintaining its forces in the Mediterranean and Middle East.

Virtually all the materials needed by British factories would have to be shipped across the Atlantic from the eastern ports Halifax and Sydney. Furthermore, Canadian agricultural produce was essential to sustain the British civilian population.

The Royal Navy did not have the resources to meet the demands of the war in Europe and guard transatlantic convoys laden with vital war materials. The growing threat of war in the Pacific prevented the Royal Navy from transferring warships stationed in Singapore to the European theatre. The Royal Canadian Navy would have to take on the responsibility for protecting convoys from the time they left Nova Scotia until British warships assumed escort duties in the eastern Atlantic. The tiny RCN was ill equipped for the formidable task that confronted it.

In the early months of the war, the *Kriegsmarine* had forty-six submarines available for action, but less than a third could be deployed to attack Atlantic convoys at any given time. The German submarines bases were located along the North Sea coast of Germany, and consumed much of their fuel just getting to their North Atlantic patrol areas. As a consequence, U-boats could spend a very limited amount of time along the main areas of convoy operations. After the fall of France, however, the French ports became available as bases for submarine operations, giving the U-boats ready access to the Atlantic shipping routes.

Initially, Admiral Raeder had planned to make extensive use of his “commerce raiders” against allied convoys. The Royal Navy went to great lengths to hunt down these pocket battleships; the operations to eliminate the *Graf Spee* and *Bismarck* were perhaps the most

well known of these. However, the damage inflicted by Germany’s commerce raiders was minimal. By the end of 1940, the pocket battleships had managed to sink only eleven merchant ships. It was clear to Raeder that German operations in the Atlantic would have to be carried out by submarines.

The commander of the submarine fleet, Rear Admiral Karl Dönitz, had been formulating a new method of operations for U-boats. He abandoned the practice of sending out submarines on individual patrols and developed *Rudeltaktik*, with submarines conducting coordinated patrols over wide areas and concentrating their forces to attack convoys. It depended upon a sophisticated radio communications network. Once a U-boat had reported the sighting of a convoy to headquarters, Dönitz would then direct other submarines in the area to an intercept location. Once the U-boats had concentrated, they would conduct a surface attack at night. In order to reduce the effectiveness of the armed escort, the U-boats would surface in the middle of the convoy, enabling them to launch torpedoes from fore and aft tubes at close range. To the British, the U-boat groups became known as “wolf packs.”

The wolf pack tactics proved to be devastating. During the initial stages of convoy operations, merchant fleets were assigned only two escorts vessels. One of the first convoys that left Halifax lost sixteen of its sixty merchant ships in a single wolf pack attack. Neither the escorts nor other merchant ships were permitted to stop and pick up survivors. While those sailors that did manage to evacuate the stricken ships in lifeboats had some hope of rescue, the majority perished in the frigid waters of the North Atlantic.

Window on War: Behind French Lines: 20 May 1940

French Captain François LeBlanc trudged wearily along at the head of his company. He imagined that they were some distance from the front. News from the forward areas had been imprecise, and none of the high command seemed to know exactly what was going on. It seemed that his unit had been marching for no apparent reason. Except for the occasional German reconnaissance plane, there had been no sign of the enemy.

"Where are our planes?" he wondered aloud, to no one in particular.

"*Pardon?*" His lieutenant had fallen in step with François.

"Nothing, I was just wondering where our air force was?"

The column was just entering a small town. There seemed to be a disturbance some distance ahead, probably in the town square. Just as they rounded the corner, they were stunned to see a group of tanks. Their dark grey colour and insignia left no doubt in his mind. They were German tanks.

"What were the Germans doing here?" he asked himself.

A young German officer strode up to the French captain. He smiled, clicked his heels and saluted.

"Please inform your men that they are now prisoners of war."

"Prisoners of war?" François was too astonished to reply intelligibly. "What are you doing here, so far from the front?"

"This is the front." was the Germans curt reply.

Just then, an older woman rushed into the street, apparently overjoyed to see the German troops. She approached the German officer.

"*Bienvenue, Anglais!*" she greeted the officer warmly.

"*Mais non, Madame, nous sommes Allemands*"

"*Mon Dieu, des Barbares!*" she cried and quickly bolted into her house.

For Captain François LeBlanc and his men, the war was over.

As the Atlantic war began to make greater demands on the RCN, it received additional escort vessels. The British and Americans had negotiated a “lend-lease” agreement that allowed the Royal Navy to acquire fifty American destroyers that had been built in 1918. The RCN received seven of these. The Canadian Navy was also bolstered by the addition of fourteen corvettes constructed in Canadian shipyards. But at the same time, the German production of U-boats had increased substantially, and wolf pack activity became incessant. By the autumn of 1940, the wolf packs were beginning to take a heavy toll of allied shipping. Convoy SC-7 was assailed by a pack of seven U-boats. Of the thirty-five ships that had left Halifax and Sydney, only fifteen reached their destination. However, the worst was yet to come.

The following year, U-boats began to appear in larger numbers, and extended their range of operations to the Nova Scotia coast and even the Gulf of St. Lawrence. With the German invasion of the Soviet Union in June 1941, both Canadian merchant ships and escorts were also committed to convoy duties on the “Murmansk run,” delivering supplies to a beleaguered Russia. The resources of the RCN were being stretched to the limit at a time when the Battle of the Atlantic was beginning to intensify.

By the spring of 1942, the U-boats had gained the upper hand and threatened to cut off Britain’s vital lifeline to North America. Although the United States was now involved in the war, the majority of American naval strength was deployed in the Pacific, and the Royal Canadian Navy continued to bear the responsibility for the security of the western Atlantic convoy routes. In May of that year, the number of allied ships lost to the wolf

packs had reached alarming proportions. More significantly, many of the merchant vessels sunk were carrying vital oil and bauxite³ and this had the potential to seriously curtail air operations and the production of aircraft. Although U-boat activity subsided in the summer months, Dönitz was marshalling his forces for a massive U-boat offensive in the autumn.

When the U-boats renewed their activities, the convoys would sustain unprecedented losses. In the month of November, the allies lost one hundred and seventeen ships. By the beginning of 1943, it appeared that the German submarine force was on the verge of winning complete control of the Atlantic shipping lanes. The possibility of the allies assembling sufficient troops and *matériel* in Britain for the invasion of Nazi-occupied Europe seemed remote.

Dieppe

The Duke of Wellington, perhaps Britain’s greatest battlefield commander, was once asked about his experiences as a junior officer in the disastrous British campaign in the Netherlands in 1794. He replied:

“Why – I learned what one ought not to do, and that is always something.”

If the Canadian experience at Dieppe was to have any lasting importance in the eventual outcome of the war in Europe, then Wellington’s comments are perhaps the most appropriate.

³ Aluminum ore.

While at the time no one could foresee the tragic consequences of the Dieppe raid, valuable lessons would be learned that ensured the success of the D-Day landings on 6 June 1944.

It could be argued that the amphibious operations conducted by the allies in North Africa later in the year would have served the same purpose. However, the landing of British and American troops in Morocco and Algeria were unopposed. Any similar operation conducted upon the coast of France would have to deal with stiff enemy resistance in strongly fortified positions. For that reason, the Dieppe raid was necessary. It must be added though, that the preparations made for the operation were not adequate and contributed much to the failure of the operation.

The British government was under considerable pressure to take some kind of military action in Western Europe. Stalin was particularly insistent, as the majority of the German Army was deployed on the Eastern front in 1942 and had renewed its offensive operations, threatening to seize vital oilfields. The American government was also under considerable public pressure. Roosevelt was demanding that the allies create a “second front” as soon as possible to relieve the pressure on the Red Army. But at the same time, the United States was heavily committed to the war in the Pacific, and the responsibility for establishing a second front would fall upon Britain and her commonwealth allies.

There were other factors that prevented the British from meeting American and Russian demands. The U-boat campaign had reduced the flow of men and *matériel* from North America to a trickle, and it was impossible to accumulate the forces necessary to open a second front. The British had also committed

the bulk of their military resources to the North African theatre. Churchill was adamant that no landing in France could take place until the allies were in a position to maintain their presence on the continent. In the end, Churchill agreed with Roosevelt’s suggestion to stage a “sacrifice” landing on the French coast. As subsequent events would show, Roosevelt’s choice of words was prophetic.

The Canadian troops in Britain were frustrated because they had yet to see any action. The Australians and New Zealanders were fighting in North Africa alongside the British, yet the Canadians had been stationed in Britain for two and a half uneventful years. They were chosen for the Dieppe operation because they were well-equipped and considered to be some of the best trained allied troops, although this appraisal had more to do with the reputation gained in World War I than any recent evaluation of Canadian soldiers.

One British senior officer, Lieutenant-General Montgomery, felt that the proposed Dieppe operation had little hope of success. He was concerned about committing untried troops and officers to the raid, and felt that bravery was no substitute for experience. He was delighted when the operation was cancelled, and recommended that the assault be postponed indefinitely. However, Montgomery had just accepted command of the British Eighth Army in North Africa when the decision was made to go ahead with the operation in August.

The Dieppe raid had originally been scheduled for early July, but had been delayed, then cancelled by poor weather conditions. The soldiers had been fully briefed on their mission and objectives, and were given leave after the cancellation. This had the potential to com-

Profile: Canadian Aircraft Production

The Canadian aircraft industry had been non-existent in 1939, yet in the following five years it was to produce an amazing number of planes, including transport aircraft and trainers as well as combat aircraft. The majority of planes were manufactured by De Haviland, Federal Aircraft Limited, Victory Aircraft Limited and the Canadian Car and Foundry Company. The following are production numbers for some of the trainers and combat aircraft built in Canada:

Harvard Single-Engine Trainer:	3 985
Anson Twin-Engine Trainer:	2 882
Mosquito Fighter/Bomber:	1 134
Hawker Hurricane Fighter:	1 932
Lancaster Bomber:	430
Hampden Bomber:	160
Catalina PBY Amphibious Patrol Craft	691

Canadian built planes saw service with the RAF, RCAF, USAAF and the USNAF. The Canadian manufacturing sector became highly diversified during the war years, and would provide a solid foundation for economic growth and prosperity in the post-war era.

promise the secrecy that surrounded the operation, and there was every possibility that German intelligence had learned of the proposed raid. Regardless, the Canadian commanders who had accepted the original assignment with enthusiasm were still eager when the raid was rescheduled for mid-August.

The Second Division of the First Canadian Corps commanded by Major General J.H. Roberts, together with one thousand British Paratroopers and ninety American Rangers, would conduct the raid. The Second Division consisted of The Cameron Highlanders of Winnipeg, the South Saskatchewan Regiment, les Fusiliers Mont-Royal, the Royal Hamilton Light Infantry, the Royal Regiment from Toronto, the Essex Scottish Regiment from Windsor and the Calgary Tank Regi-

ment, which was equipped with the newest Churchill tanks.

Dieppe and the surrounding area had been the subject of several aerial reconnaissance missions, and detailed maps of the town and countryside had been prepared. However, the aerial photographs had not detected the artillery and machine gun emplacements that riddled the cliff faces on either side of the harbour. In addition, there was no way to determine that the shale rock on the beaches would make it extremely difficult for the tanks to manoeuvre. It had also been decided not to precede the landings with a heavy bombardment from naval guns. The tank commanders were concerned that rubble from the shelling would block the streets and prevent the tanks from moving into Dieppe.

On the night of 18 August, a small armada of two hundred and fifty two craft embarked from four British ports for the French coast, seventy miles distant. At 2:55 A.M., the ships began to put their landing craft into the water, and within the hour the force was just sixteen kilometres from the beaches. Radio silence was strictly maintained, and it appeared that the Canadians would achieve complete surprise. At 3:47 A.M., twenty-three landing craft and their escorts encountered a small German convoy. Sporadic fire was exchanged, and little damage done, but the German troops along the coast had been alerted.

When the Canadians began their landings at 5:20 A.M., they were met by furious resistance. Fire from the cliffs and the fortified seawall rained down upon the Canadians as they scrambled onto the beaches. Many were cut down while they were still struggling through the surf, and those that survived were pinned down along the seawall. When the tanks arrived, the beach was already littered with corpses. Many of the engineers who were to blow breaches in the seawall and destroy anti-tank obstacles were either casualties or pinned down by German fire. Most of the tanks were bogged down in the slippery shale, and were destroyed by anti-tank guns positioned along the cliffs. The few that managed to get off the beach had their path effectively blocked by the seawall and concrete tank traps.

On either side of Dieppe, the Canadian units fared slightly better. The South Saskatchewan Regiment and Cameron Highlanders did not come under intense fire until they had landed, but several attempts to cross a bridge and gain their objective were thwarted by heavy German artillery and machine gun fire. Lieutenant Colonel Cecil Merritt led a determined charge that gained the bridge, but could not press

beyond it. He was awarded the Victoria Cross for his actions at Dieppe, but the raid was doomed to failure.

Elsewhere, the slaughter continued. It became clear that the troops must be withdrawn, but to do so under heavy fire in broad daylight would prove to be almost impossible. Soon after the evacuation had begun, it was clear that many Canadians would be left behind. Any attempts to retrieve the whole force would mean the destruction of most of the naval units. Reluctantly, the decision was made to return to Britain with the few troops that could be evacuated. On the main beaches, Reverend John Foote of the Hamilton Light Infantry helped wounded men into boats, but as the last of the craft left, he chose to stay behind to tend the wounded still on the beach. He too would be awarded the Victoria Cross.

Of the five thousand Canadian troops that had embarked for Dieppe, less than half returned. Nine hundred Canadians had been killed, and two thousand taken prisoner.⁴

In a communiqué dated 1340 hours, 19 August, Major General Roberts sent the following message:

“Very heavy casualties in men and ships. Did everything possible to get men off but in order to get any home had to come to sad decision to abandon remainder. This was joint decision by force commanders. Obviously, operation completely lacked surprise.”

⁴ The units assigned to attack the town itself suffered the heaviest losses. With the Royal Hamilton Light Infantry, only 217 of 582 men returned. Only 65 of the Royal Regiment's 553 were evacuated, and the Essex Scottish lost 501 of its 553 officers and men.

After the dismal failure of the raid, Roberts was made the scapegoat for the disaster at Dieppe. Yet it was clear that there were several reasons for its failure, and the General Staff that planned the raid and briefed the front line officers should assume a major portion of the responsibility for its failure.

Yet the majority of Allied commanders involved in the 1944 Normandy invasion were almost unanimous in their opinion about the Dieppe raid. General Dwight D. Eisenhower stated that the Dieppe operation “did much to confirm convictions that the coastal fortifications in France could be successfully breached on a large scale.” Lord Mountbatten declared that the Battle of Normandy had been “won on the beaches of Dieppe.” The Canadian General Crerar was the most precise in his evaluation of the Dieppe raid. After subsequent investigations had shown that the Germans had not anticipated the raid, he told a group of officers that prior to August of 1942 the prevailing opinion of the High Command was that tactical surprise would be sufficient to conduct a successful large scale landing in Europe. Dieppe had illustrated that an invasion could only be accomplished with overwhelming fire support from naval and air forces.

War in the Pacific

Since 1937, the Japanese had been at war, and their forces had pushed steadily into China. In the upper echelons of the Japanese Imperial establishment, however, there had been considerable debate over the direction of Japanese expansion. The *Tosei* faction favoured continued expansion to the south, while the *Kodo* elements in the army considered Russia the most dangerous threat to Japanese Imperial ambitions. The antipathy for Russia had its

roots in the 1905 war, and many *Kodo* members were violently anti-communist. They argued that expansion to the south would inevitably lead to a confrontation with America and Britain, and Japan did not have the resources to wage such a war. The *Kodo* faction felt that Japanese expansion into Asiatic Russia would secure the vast mineral wealth of Siberia for the Empire. The Soviet Union was ideologically isolated from the western powers, and could expect no support in the event of a war with Japan. However, events after 1936 would do much to undermine the *Kodo* position.

The Japanese and Soviets shared an extensive border, and mutual distrust had caused both nations to deploy substantial military forces along the common frontier. Large scale clashes between Soviet and Imperial troops occurred near Chengufan in 1938 and Nomohan the following year. The Japanese army had been severely mauled in these confrontations. The Soviet use of large tank formations had been the difference; the Japanese had not pursued the development of an independent armoured force, and while the Japanese Army had a few tanks, they were obsolescent by western standards.⁵ Clearly, a war with Russia would be more costly than the *Kodo* faction had thought. In 1941, the ascendancy of the *Tosei* faction was confirmed with the negotiation of a Japanese-Soviet non-aggression pact.

The rapid collapse of the French and British armies in Europe offered opportunities for an

⁵ The Soviets tested their most advanced tanks in the Far East. The T-34, which went into mass production in 1940, was employed in small numbers at Nomohan in 1939, and proved to be far superior to the heaviest German tanks in 1941.

ambitious program of expansion into Southeast Asia. The Royal Navy was in no position to reinforce its Far Eastern fleet, and the French were no longer a military presence in Indochina.

The *Tosei* argument was strengthened by the isolationist stance taken by the United States. It could no longer be assumed that expansion to the south would lead to a confrontation with the Americans, and the British were preoccupied with the war against Germany.

In July 1941, the Japanese established a “protectorate” over French Indochina, with Germany’s tacit approval. The Japanese were now in easy striking distance of the resource rich British colonies in Southeast Asia and the Dutch East Indies.⁶ President Roosevelt responded by freezing Japanese assets in America and suspending all financial and trading relations with Japan. The British and Dutch governments followed the American lead, and the Japanese were cut off from their supplies of oil, steel and rubber.

In November, the Japanese Prime Minister, Tojo Hideki delivered an ultimatum to the American Government. The Japanese would withdraw from Indochina if the United States would release Japanese assets, halt the buildup the American forces in the Philippines and cut off American aid to Nationalist China. Tojo did not expect the Americans to agree, and had already directed the Imperial Navy to prepare for a strike against the American Pacific fleet at Pearl Harbour. At the same time, the Japanese Imperial Army was preparing to launch a series of attacks against the Philippines, Dutch East

Indies and the British colonies of Singapore, Malaysia and Hong Kong.

On 7 December 1941 the Japanese Imperial Navy struck at the American fleet in Pearl Harbor with dive-bombers and torpedo planes under a protective umbrella of Japanese fighters. The same day, Japanese Army bombers struck the Philippines and most of the American combat planes were destroyed on the ground. Further south, the Japanese Imperial Army began its advance on the British and Dutch colonies in Southeast Asia. On the Chinese mainland, Japanese troops were fast approaching the British colony of Hong Kong. The code word for the attack on Hong Kong was “*Hana-Saku*.”

The Defence of Hong Kong

In September of 1941, the British requested two Canadian battalions to reinforce the garrison in Hong Kong. The Quebec Royal Rifles and the Winnipeg Grenadiers were both classified as “insufficiently trained” and not ready for combat operations. Both had just returned from garrison duties; the Quebec battalion had been stationed in Newfoundland while the Winnipeg battalion had been assigned to the West Indies. By 27 October, the battalions had been assembled in Vancouver and boarded the ship *Awatea*. Their destination had remained a closely guarded secret, but their orders included the defense of the colony of Hong Kong “should the occasion arise.”

The one thousand nine hundred and seventy-five Canadians joined the British garrison on 16 November. It was composed of three Royal Artillery regiments of Indian and British troops, the Royal Scots Infantry battalion, the Middlesex Regiment (machine gun battalion), the Seventh Rajput Regiment, the Fourteenth

⁶ Present day Indonesia.

Punjab Regiment and the Hong Kong Volunteers Defence Corps, a militia unit. Few men in the garrison expected that they would see any action because the “real” war was on the other side of the world.

On the morning of 8 December (7 December in Hawaii) air raid sirens sounded as Japanese dive-bombers swooped down over Hong Kong. They carried out a series of precise bombing runs, and seemed to know where all the barracks were located.⁷ They were unchallenged. The six British fighters had been destroyed on the ground by the first wave of attackers. The Canadians rushed through the chaos and prepared to cross over to the defensive positions on the mainland. The Chinese civilians were suffering heavy casualties as well, and many others were in a state of anguish. The Japanese atrocities committed against thousands of Chinese civilians during the “Rape of Nanking” were still fresh in their minds.

The Japanese troops were tough veterans of four years of combat while the Canadians had no experience. A considerable number were raw recruits that had been hastily added to the battalions, and some had never fired a shot. Many received their basic weapon training in the hills behind battalion headquarters in Hong Kong. When the Canadians finally faced the Japanese, some soldiers forgot to pull the pin before throwing a grenade.

The Canadians were awed by the formidable combination of skill and reckless courage displayed by the Japanese troops, yet somehow

⁷ Japanese soldiers had infiltrated Hong Kong disguised as Chinese labourers and entered the City with the daily crowds of workers that came over from the mainland to work in Hong Kong.

they managed to survive the first onslaughts and gain some confidence. The two Indian Regiments excelled in the savage fighting around the defensive perimeter, and actually wept when they were ordered to retreat toward hastily constructed defensive positions closer to the coast. For them, it seemed almost shameful to give up the positions they had so heroically defended.

Miraculously, the Hong Kong garrison continued to hold the Japanese at bay. As the days progressed, the defenders slowly fell back. The Canadians not only repulsed Japanese attacks but also launched their own counterattacks. The Japanese pressure was relentless, but they had abandoned their massed infantry assaults and relied upon accurate mortar fire to decimate the defenders’ ranks. Some units were surrounded but refused to surrender. The exhausted Royal Rifles continued doggedly cling to their positions, but mounting casualties forced them to retreat toward Hong Kong. The City of Kowloon fell on 13 December, and the Japanese demanded the surrender of the Hong Kong garrison. The Japanese demand was refused, and the garrison began to prepare for the defence of Hong Kong itself.

The Royal Rifles repelled a Japanese attempt to land on the island on the night of the 15th, and two days later the Japanese again demanded the garrison’s surrender, this time accompanied by threats of indiscriminate bombardment. The garrison refused to surrender, and the final phase in the battle for Hong Kong began. The Japanese pounded the city on 18 December, and then landed in force. The garrison’s situation was hopeless but the resistance continued. The Canadian commander, Brigadier Lawson, was surrounded at his headquarters and died fighting. Sergeant Major John Borne led a bayonet charge to push the Japanese



Illustration 6.7: The Defence of Hong Kong, 8-25 December 1941

back. Later that day, a Japanese grenade landed in the midst of his men. He threw himself onto it to save his unit, and was killed when it detonated under him. He would be awarded the Victoria Cross posthumously for this act of selfless courage.

The Rajput regiment had been virtually wiped out in the fighting, and the rest of the Hong Kong units had suffered heavy casualties. Twenty-five thousand Japanese troops were swarming onto the island, yet the garrison managed to hold out for a few more days. On Christmas day, the Hong Kong garrison finally surrendered. The Japanese commanders were in a bad temper. The battle for Hong Kong had lasted seventeen days, two weeks longer

than they had planned. Many of the wounded were bayoneted, and prisoners were shot or forced to jump off cliffs onto the rocks below.

The Canadian casualties were two hundred and ninety dead and four hundred and ninety-three wounded. The rest were taken prisoner. Eleven hundred and eighty four were crammed into the hold of a merchant ship and sent to Japan as forced labour, and many of them would die in the atrocious conditions of the Japanese prison camps. Ironically, the least experienced Canadian soldiers had been the first to see action, and their defence of Hong Kong would prove to be one of the most heroic examples of courage ever displayed by Canadian troops.

Following the conquests of Singapore, Malaysia and the Dutch East Indies, the Japanese Imperial forces would enjoy an uninterrupted string of victories in the early months of the Pacific war. The Battle of Midway in June of 1942 would be the first serious defeat suffered by Japan, and it would ultimately prove to be a decisive one. ■

Chapter Summary

The years 1939 to 1942 had witnessed the dawn of total war. The German army had revolutionized land warfare, and had introduced the concept of the tactical coordination of air and ground units. Rear-Admiral Dönitz had developed operational doctrines that made the submarine a formidable strategic weapon. At the same time, the Japanese had demonstrated the potential of naval airpower, and the aircraft carrier would replace the battleship as the most important component of a modern navy.

The Allied nations in general, and Canada in particular, were not prepared for this new type of warfare. The rapid series of victories by the Axis forces were due in part to the refusal of the western democracies to maintain or upgrade their armed forces. The advances in military technology had greatly extended the range of military operations, and war had assumed truly global proportions. For the first time, civilian populations would be regarded as valid strategic targets.

Recalling Facts

1. Identify the following items:

Blitzkrieg

The Dyle Plan

Dieppe

Charles de Gaulle

Douglas Bader

Brigadier Lawson

Karl Dönitz

The Winter War

Operation Sea Lion

Tosei Faction

General McNaughton

Major General Roberts

Sergeant Major John Osborne

Pearl Harbour

Tojo Hideki

Chapter Review

1. What was the significance of the Nazi-Soviet Non-Aggression Pact in 1939?
2. What role did the following play in the defeat of Poland?
 - a. The German armoured forces
 - b. The deployment of Polish Armies
 - c. The *Luftwaffe*
3. What was the condition of the Canadian armed forces in 1939?
4. What was the major turning point in the Battle of Britain?
5.
 - a. Why was the Royal Canadian Navy assigned the responsibility for Atlantic convoy protection?
 - b. How did the Germans revolutionize submarine warfare?
6. State the main reasons for the Dieppe raid.
7. What were the main factors that led to the Japanese decision to attack the United States and Britain in 1941?

Critical Thinking

Evaluating Opinions

1. The famous American combat and test pilot, Chuck Yeager, stated that in combat, "it's the man, not the machine." Evaluate this statement in terms of tank warfare in France in 1940.
2. Nations must maintain a strong military establishment in order to avoid war. Comment on the validity of this opinion.