

Canada Declares War

We now know that World War II officially started on September 3, 1940, when Britain and France declared war on Germany in response to their attack of Poland. Canada waited one week – until September 9, 1940 – to declare war. The big question is why, and more importantly, how?

If you think back, when did Canada enter World War I? (write your answer below, and correct if need you need to)

By World War II, however, Canada faced a very different situation. Because of the Canadian effort and contribution to the First World War, and as a result of several other worldwide events that took its toll on the British Commonwealth (which we do not really need to get into right now), the British government began to allow its Commonwealth nations to take control of their own foreign policy.

In 1931, the Statute of Westminster was passed through the British Parliament (the House of Commons and the House of Lords, which was the model for our own Canadian Parliament) that outlined that the Commonwealth nations now had control over their own foreign policy and were able to make decisions regarding their international actions on their own. Remember, Canada became an independent country in 1867, but we did not fully control our own international affairs and foreign policy until 1931. This is CRUCIAL to remember. It might even be on a test.

So at the beginning of World War II (which broke out in which year? _____) Canada had effective control over both its domestic (which is? _____) and international affairs. We were still very close friends and allies with Great Britain, but we now had the ability to conduct our own foreign policy. When War broke out in 1939, it was naturally assumed that Canada would, in fact, join the War on the British side. In an effort to assert our independence, Canada waited several days before declaring war. There was a debate, although not really much of one, in Parliament regarding whether or not Canada should enter; in the end, however, Canada entered the War against Germany and Italy.

The Statute of Westminster of 1931 was the reason that Canada entered the war a short time after Britain and France.

Blitzkrieg



The Blitzkrieg was a German tactical move that means “Lightning War”; although it was not entirely invented by the Nazis, they were the first to use the manoeuvre in war, and used it to devastating effect. By using the air force, tanks, and infantry troops, the Nazi army was able to move through Europe and capture several countries in just a matter of weeks. The Blitzkrieg was so effective, in fact, that the Nazis were able to conquer France in a matter of six weeks; France, at the beginning of the war, was thought

to be a country that no other nation could ever take over.

The Blitzkrieg was first executed in Poland in September 1939 and signalled the outbreak of World War II. The general order of the attack was to first send in the air force to bomb military targets; heavy infantry and tanks would follow; and finally light infantry and soldiers would come in and complete the mission. This was used very effectively in Poland, Belgium and the Netherlands, and then through France.

Good demonstration of the Blitzkrieg:
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eJ74HakQZTo>

