

The nature of warfare changed dramatically from WWI due to advances in aircraft, tanks, ships and other weaponry. This war was highly mobile, unlike the static trench warfare of WWI. Nfld. troops overseas were renowned soldiers, particularly those who joined the Navy. They were thought to be the most skillful and hardiest boatmen on the sea. Many joined the Air force as well as field regiments and fought in many important battles. Some were captured as Prisoners of War (POW) which was when the enemy captured a soldier in an area conflict.

Aviation: Nfld.'s location made it a very important and popular place even before the war. Gander was used as a refueling station for Airline companies who flew between North America and Europe. As the war began its ideal position made it an important place for the allied war effort. Bases were built in Torbay, Goose Bay, Argentia, Stephenville and the already existing Gander made these places hubs of the intense wartime activities. Goose Bay and Gander airports were used as a stop over for planes that were flying across the Atlantic to Europe. It was safer to fly them rather than shipping them by sea due to the German U-boats.

Wartime Military Bases: Canadian and American governments spent hundreds of millions of dollars on bases. Canada through an arrangement with Britain assumed responsibility for defense of Nfld. Canada took over the operation of important airbases and built an airport in Torbay, now the St. John's International Airport as well as began construction of the Goose Bay airbase in 1941.

The Americans signed a deal with Britain called the Destroyers for Bases Deal which they provided 50 destroyers to aid and protect cargo ships heading to Europe. Through this arrangement US received leases for 99 years to establish bases on British-controlled territories which included Nfld. They built bases in Argentia, Placentia Bay, Pleasantville, Stephenville and shared the use of bases in Goose Bay, Gander and St. John's with the Canadian Military.

Blackout on St John's: due to the threat of enemy air raids, curfews and blackouts became mandatory. Sirens were installed and when they sounded people had to remain where they were and cover all doors and windows.

Internment Camps: Nfld. imprisoned residents with the same background as the enemy, such as Germans, Japanese and Italians. The camps were temporary places of confinement and the civilian prisoners were known as internees. There was debate of whether these camps were fair because people's rights were denied in the name of national security.

Sinking of the SS Caribou: this was a reminder of Germany's naval power and how close they came to the shores of Nfld. In 1942 a passenger ferry called the SS Caribou was hit by a torpedo from a German submarine while traveling from North Sydney to Port aux Basques. Of the 238 people, 137 were killed and many of them women and children. Also the sinking of ore ships off the Coast of Bell Island resulted in the deaths of 69 seamen. There is little doubt that these attacks were Germany's attempt to destroy the valuable iron ore supply.

German Weather Station in Labrador: the German submarine U-537 was used to carry materials for an automatic weather station from Germany to Martin Bay in Labrador. It was the only armed German landing in North America. The station comprised of ten canisters containing batteries, a transmitter and measuring devices so they could receive weather signals to help formulate weather forecasts to give to their ships and u-boats in the Atlantic. To disguise their actions the Germans would leave empty packs of American cigarettes lying around to make it look like an allied station. It remained undiscovered until a former employee of the manufacturer of the station discovered evidence of its existence and eluded the Canadian armed forces. The coast guard discovered it in 1980.