

Effective & Inspiring Canadian Military History Learning Activities in the Classroom

Overview

- Introduction: Aaron Curtis & Valour Canada
- Challenges: Educating about Military History & War
- Pedagogical Approach
- CCMH Program: Description
 - Benchmark Skills & Processes
 - Activities & Curricular Connections
- Resources

What does Valour Canada do?

Vision:

Valour Canada is a nationally-recognized, charitable, not-for-profit organization dedicated to connecting Canadians, especially youth, to Canada's military heritage.

Mission:

Valour Canada will create engaging and effective programs to educate Canadians, with a focus on youth, about Canada's military history.

www.ValourCanada.ca

Valour Canada:


Valour Canada has almost 40 years of experience delivering military history education programs in museums and classrooms.

- Educational documentaries (190+ short videos)
- Online military history library (290+ youth-accessible articles)



**GENERAL SIR ARTHUR CURRIE,
GCMB, KCB**

Exploring the life of Canadian General Sir Arthur Currie, one of the best of First World War.




D-DAY SERIES: RCN AND OPERATION NEPTUNE

"RCN and Operation Neptune" provides a 5 chapter description of the RCN's involvement in Operation Neptune, and the larger Operation Overlord.



MOLLY LAMB BOBAK

Molly Lamb Bobak and her experience in the Canadian Women's Army Corps (CWAC) and with the War Artists Committee.



INUK L/CPL JOHN SHIWAK

Inuk Lance Corporal John Shiwak and his experience sniping in the First World War with the Royal Newfoundland Regiment.



RICHARD PIERPOINT

Richard Pierpoint: traded as a slave, then won freedom. Fought as a Ranger, then established the Coloured Corps. Assisted the underground railroad, became a legend.




OPERATION APOLLO

Exploring Operation Apollo, part of the Canadian involvement in Afghanistan.



WEAPONS IN STAR WARS

Examining Han Solo's German Mauser C96 and the Stormtroopers' Sten/Sterling-inspired submachine guns.



CONN SMYTHE

The story of Conn Smythe's WWI military service and the NHL trophy that bears his name.

Valour Canada:

- Juno Beach VR
Plus 10 other virtual tours
- History and Heritage Scholarship
Annual; Contest ends in mid-June:
\$2,000 1st place, \$500 2nd place
Task: Create a 4 - 6 minute YouTube video
- Girl Guides
Canadian Women of Valour Program
- Speaker Series
2025 highlight: Historian Tim Cook

www.ValourCanada.ca/Education



Teaching about Military History & War

What do you find most challenging?

Take 3 minutes with your group and be prepared to share the 1 or 2 of the most challenging things when it comes to teaching about MH & war.

What should our overarching goal(s) be when teaching about MH & war?

Take another 3 minutes with your group and be prepared to share what your overarching goal(s) is/are.

I have 3 learning goals:

1. War is nasty; it's the most serious thing a country can decide to do.
2. Citizens, members of the electorate, have a responsibility to vote.
3. Think for yourself (Do your due diligence and beware of propaganda).

Pedagogical Approach:

Some Common Challenges when Educating Youth:

Most youth have/are:

- short attention span
- little interest in the topic
- restless when immobile
- want to socialize
- dislike “traditional” learning methods, etc.

Therefore, to best ensure successful learning the program should be:

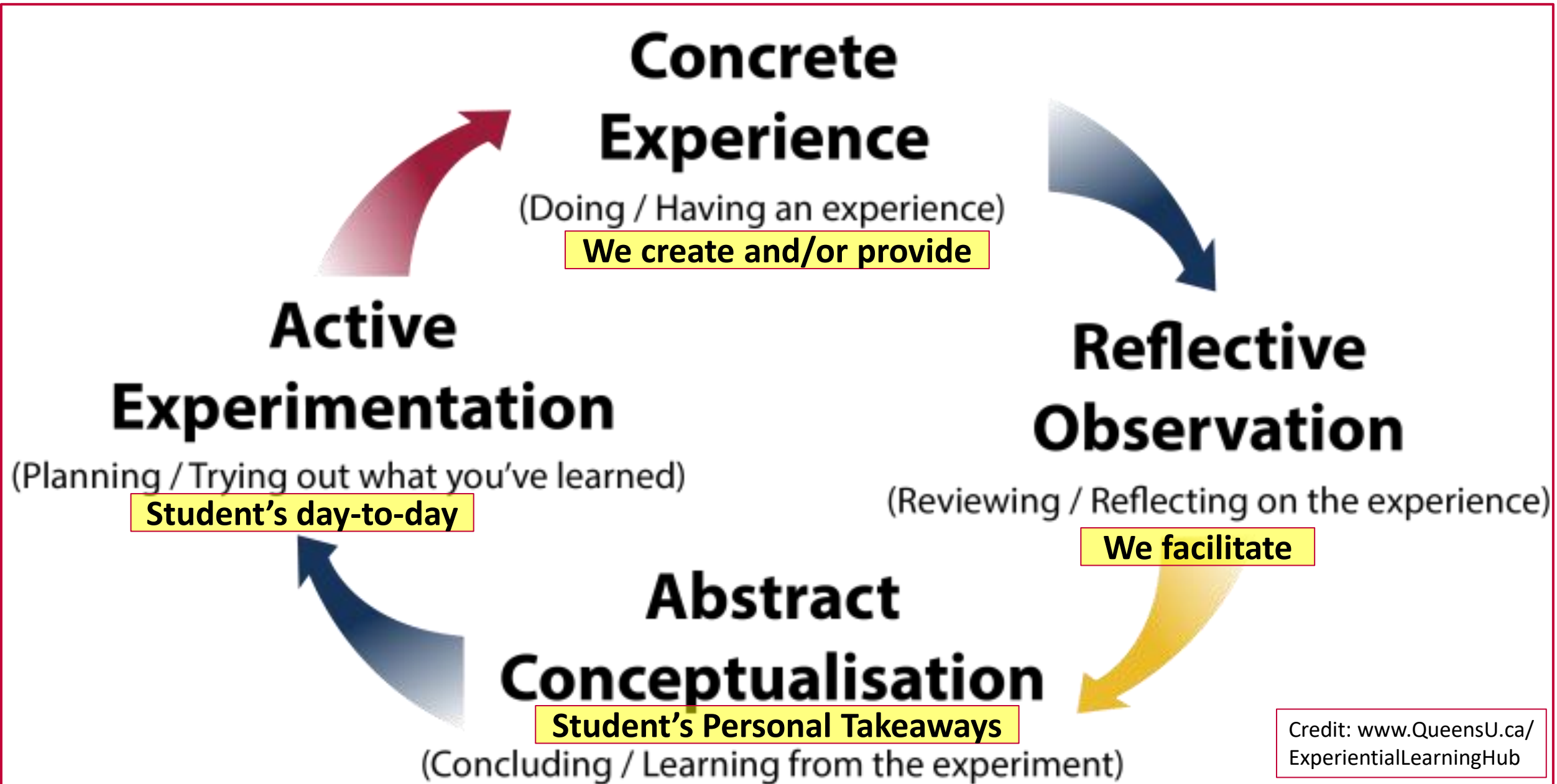
- Social and collaborative
- Real experience
- Flexible
- Active
- Local links
- **FUN !**

“Experiential” Learning
with Problem Solving and Critical Thought



Experiential Learning:

(i.e. Kolb)



Experiential Learning:

How do I create a situated learning environment in the classroom?

Design and present activities:

- that require students to **work together** to solve a problem
- that are **adaptable** (scaffolding can be integrated) to different audiences so that learning is better ensured
- that are primarily **run by the learners** i.e., the “instructor” is a facilitator of learning rather than a presenter of information
- where the learners have an opportunity to **debrief** what they’ve just done (i.e., students have time to discuss, reflect, evaluate, and validate what they’ve produced solution-wise AND the process and experience they just went through)

The Character of our Canadian Military History Program



A Grade 5 class experiencing the CCMH program at The Military Museum.

The Character of our Canadian Military History Program

What is it? A set of educational modules with curricular connections that present pieces of Canadian military history.

The program ties 3 important things together:

Canadian Military History • Group & cooperative learning • Character (Life Skills)



A series of interchangeable modules, each consisting of 3 basic parts:

1. **History** (15 min)
2. **Activity/challenge** (20 min)
3. **Debrief** (5 min)

General Curricular Connections:

Benchmark Skills and Processes:

All Activities

- Dimensions of Thinking
 - Critical Thinking
 - Geographic Thinking
 - Historical Thinking
 - Decision Making & Problem Solving
- Social Participation as Democratic Practice
 - Cooperation, Conflict Resolution, and Consensus Building
 - Social Involvement as Responsible Citizens
- Research for Deliberative Inquiry
 - Apply the Research Process
- Communication
 - Oral, Written, and Visual Skills

Communication **Courage**
Cooperation **Responsibility**
Resilience **Thoughtfulness**

Resources, CCMH Modules & Specific Curricular Connections

D-DAY, 6 June 1944: Activity # 1 HINT SHEET

First, as a group read “YOUR MISSION” on the Handout, completely and carefully, aloud if necessary.

Second, review the following information (again, aloud if necessary):

Hints for choosing a time and location for your invasion:

Recall these lessons learned from the failure of the Dieppe Raid in 1942:

- Surprise, Secrecy, and Deception will increase the chances for success
- Solid ground (packed sand is ok) is required to unload machines onto the land
- “Fortress Europe” and the “Atlantic Wall” ensure heavy enemy defences in all coastal areas

Other points to consider when choosing a time and location:

- “Topography”: the lay of the land. Which locations best allow huge #'s of soldiers and equipment to land?
- “Aspect”: Will your soldiers be looking into the sun as they attack?
- Time of attack: During daylight, darkness, dawn/dusk? Which is best for your attack?
- Distance from England: your naval (boat speed and cover) and aircraft range (fuel capacity)
- Distance from enemy reinforcements and the quantity available to them
- Naval minefields are not hard barriers (they can be traveled through or neutralized, but it is dangerous)
- If Day 1 is successful, does your invasion force have options on Day 2, Day 3, etc.? How easily will you be able to resupply your invading force?

**!! Look at the provided map very carefully
and talk through your ideas as a group !!**

(Don't forget to look at the Title, Date, and Key! Scale 1 mile = 1.6 km)



Private C.R. Rizza
(Highland Light
Infantry of Canada)
checking his rifle
while sitting atop a
hedgehog at Juno.

Curriculum

links:

Dependent on Social Studies grade & topic, e.g., Red Ensign, North-West Resistances, War of 1812, Fenian Raids, Louis Riel, Laura Secord, Plains of Abraham, Isaac Brock, Queenston Heights, etc.

Article Library



MOLLY LAMB BOBAK

Molly Lamb Bobak and her experience in the Canadian Women's Army Corps (CWAC) and with the War Artists' Committee.



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The story of Conn Smythe's WWI military service and the NHL trophy that bears his name.

Documentary Videos

Curriculum

links:

Dependent on Social Studies grade & topic, e.g., Tecumseh, Dieppe, D-Day, Vimy Ridge, Propaganda & War Posters, Trenches, CWAC, Chinese Labour Corps, Halifax Explosion, Victoria Cross Recipients, etc.



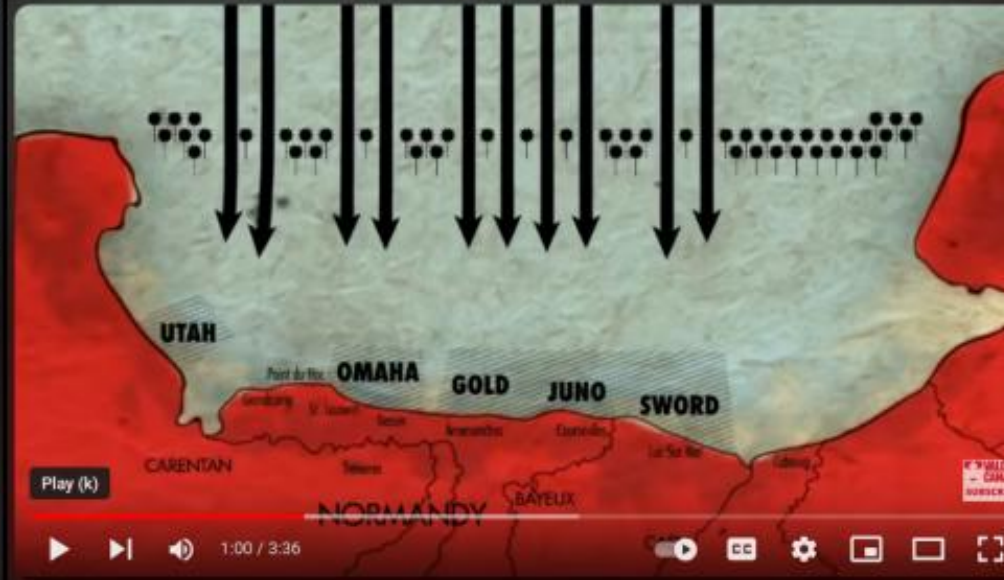
Dressing a WW1 Soldier (Pt. 1 of 2)



The Angel of Victory: Canada's Processing of The Great War (Vancouver, BC)



Japanese Canadian Internment, Second World War



D-Day: 3. Clear The Mines

Whitey the Collie Dog's Journey

Presentation:

- ELA & SS: K-1
- Collie Dog
- Fort Garry Horse Regiment
- WW2

Activity/task:
Nil, but I show
Artifacts



Curriculum link:

K-1: ELA (Stories, Communication), SS (People, Places, Community)

4 Forces of Flight

Presentation:

- Science 1 & 3
- Forces & Matter
- Cause & Effect

Activity/task:

Make a paper airplane, then test it

A photograph of a blue paper airplane resting on a wooden surface. The airplane is angled towards the bottom right. The text 'End of Step 3:' is overlaid in white on the right side of the image.

End of
Step 3:

Curriculum link:

Gr. 1,3: Matter & Energy: Properties, Movement, Forces

The Sinking of Llandoverry Castle

Presentation:

- Social 4 and up
- WW1 context
- Rules of War
- Nursing Sisters

Activity/task:

Assess items for survival in a lifeboat

ITEM	Part 1	Part 2	Part 3	Part 4	Part 5
	Your rank	Group's Rank	Pro's Rank (Answer)	Difference between Part 1 & 3	Difference between Part 2 & 3
2 boxes of chocolate bars					
A shaving mirror					
A compass					
Full container of water (25 L)					
A case of army rations (food)					
Maps of the Atlantic Ocean					
Bottle of rum (80% alcohol)					
Oil/gasoline mixture (10 L can)					
Nylon rope (5 m)					
Non-transparent plastic sheet (6 x 6 m)					
Shark repellent (Yes, this is real!)					

Your Salvaged Items:					
ITEM	Part 1	Part 2	Part 3	Part 4	Part 5
	Your rank	Group's Rank	Pro's Rank	Difference between Part 1 & 3	Difference between Part 2 & 3
2 boxes of chocolate bars					
A shaving mirror					
Some mosquito netting					
A compass					
Full container of water (25 L)					
A case of army rations					
Maps of the Atlantic Ocean					
Bottle of rum (80% alcohol)					
Oil/gasoline mixture (10 L can)					
Nylon rope (5 m)					
AM/FM radio (non-transmitting)					
Opaque plastic sheet (6 x 6 m)					
A floating seat cushion					
Shark repellent (Yes, this is real!)					
An ocean fishing kit & pole					
TOTAL	NA	NA	NA		

Note: "Differences" are always a positive number.

How did you do?
 Did you and your friends survive?
 Did your group do better or worse than yourself individually?

Scoring:

Curriculum link:
 Gr. 4+: No specific grade, but the best fit is likely Gr. 7



A Grade 8 class experiencing the CCMH program two years ago.

The Battle of Vimy Ridge

Presentation:

- Social 4 and up
- WW1 context
- Preparation
- Technological Change

Activity/task:

Duplicate the positions on the battlefield



Curriculum link:

Gr. 7 & 8: WW1, Nationalism

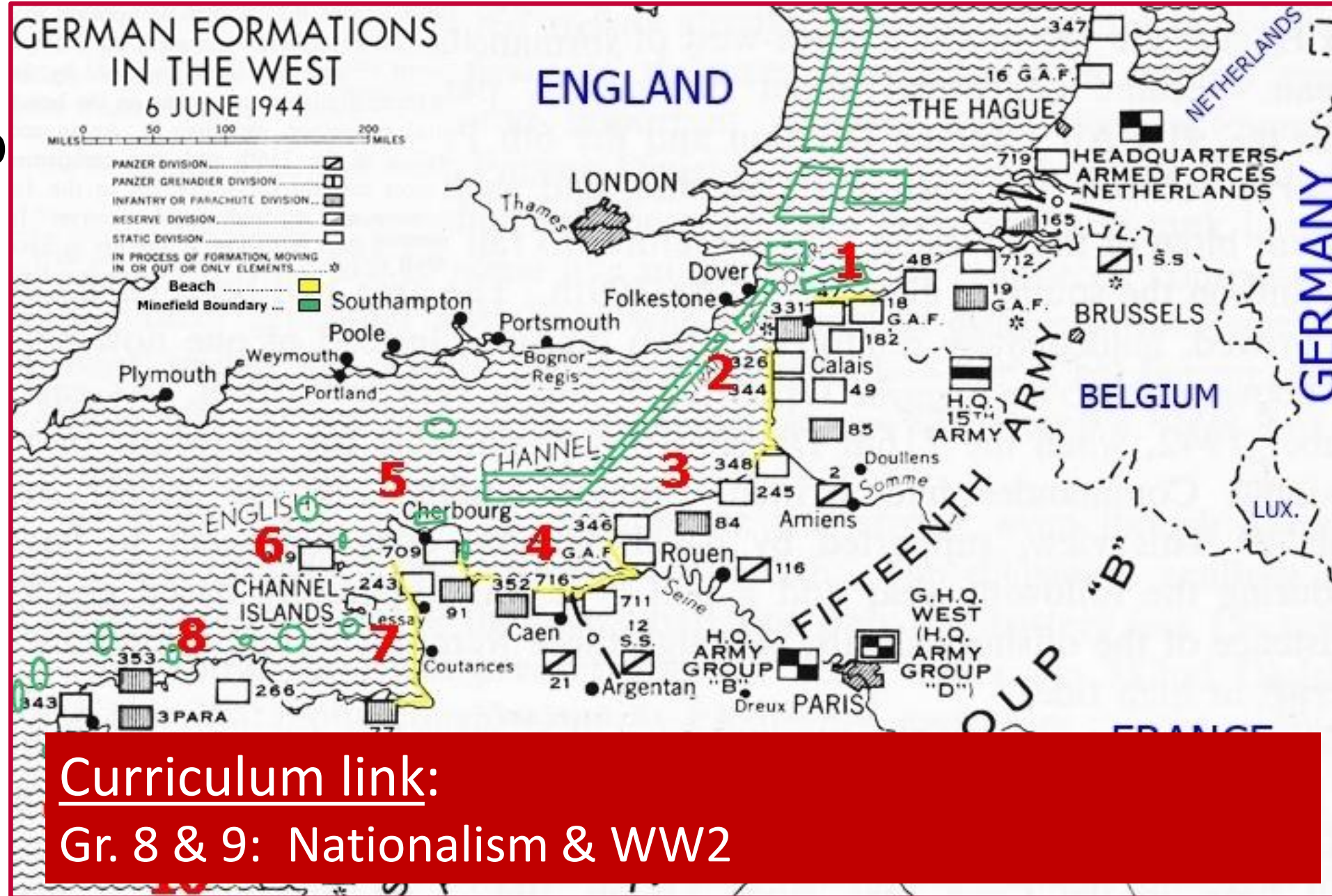
D-Day: Operation NEPTUNE

Presentation:

- Social 8 and up
- WW2
- Dieppe
- Atlantic Wall

Activity/task:

Where will
your group
attempt an
invasion?



Propaganda: Using War Posters to Develop Critical Thinking

Presentation:

- Social 5 and up
- WW1 & 2 Posters
- Propaganda Devices
- Media Literacy

Activity/task:

Different
options



Curriculum link:

Gr. 5 and up: Media Literacy, WW1 & WW2

Artifact Handling

Presentation:

- All grades
- All conflicts
- Technological change through time

Activity/task:

Show & tell style; other



Curriculum link:

All grades: Dependent on artifacts and teacher

The Character of our Canadian Military History Program



The Character of our Canadian Military History Program

Survey Results and Feedback Received:

F.S.- Most memorable thing I learned:

“shorter, more portly men make better pilot” [sic]

P.R.- It was very fun and interesting - best field trip ever

K.D.- Favorite part of the day:

“watching Kyra put on military gear + learning about the equip used in war.”

D.M.- Most memorable thing I learned: "Too many things"

J.H.- This was a really fun field trip and I like it more than the boring zoo. [sic]

E.D.- Am new to Canada i learnt alot today [sic]

N.L.- Thank you for an amazing day.

Field Trip to CFB Edmonton

Experience:

- High School only (so far)
- Hands-on
- Interact with soldiers

Activities:

- Door breaching
- Para training
- Tank targetting



Questions?

- **Download the modules** (Ppt, handouts, etc.) for free at:

<https://valourcanada.ca/education/in-museum/#CCMH>

Valour Canada's Website: www.ValourCanada.ca

Aaron's email address: aaron.curtis@valourcanada.ca

- Thank you -

Additional Resources

Website: www.ValourCanada.ca

- For **Lesson Plans**, Draft **Remembrance Day** Programs, Educational **Video** series, **Scholarship** Information, Other Programs, visit:
<https://valourcanada.ca/education/>
- **Diversity & Inclusivity** themed materials, visit:
<https://valourcanada.ca/education/classroom-resources/diversity-inclusivity/>
- For our **YouTube** channel, visit:
<https://www.youtube.com/user/canadianvalour>
- For our **Social Media**, visit:
<https://valourcanada.ca/education/websites-and-social-media/>



CONNECTING
CANADIANS
TO THEIR MILITARY
HERITAGE