

Humanity in War

Research Issue: Operation Manna was a humanitarian effort aimed at feeding the starving Dutch population during the Second World War. Occurring towards the end of the war, Operation Manna represented a shift from military operations (strategic bombing) to providing humanitarian aid for civilian populations.

Background: Operation Manna was an Allied air operation aimed at feeding the starving people of the Netherlands. The first bombers loaded with food rations left Allied air bases on April 29, 1945. By the time Operation Manna ended on May 8, over 11,000 tons of food had been dropped from low-flying bomber aircraft to a waiting Dutch population.

KEY KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS



What key knowledge and skills will student acquire as a result of this activity?

- **Learn** about Operation Manna.
- **Interpret** a primary document connected to the final days of the Second World War in the Netherlands.
- **Assess** the impact of Operation Manna, and the Liberation of the Netherlands, on the relationship between Canada and the Netherlands since the Second World War.

HISTORICAL CONCEPTS



Continuity and Change

History often features aspects of continuity and change within various issues and themes. History may also mean progress for one group of people, but decline for another.

Perspective

How do we view the differences between our present-day lives, and the decisions made by earlier generations?

ACTIVITY



The following video was taken during the Allied air operation codenamed “Operation Manna”. The video reveals how low bomber aircraft flew in order to drop food to a desperate population. The video is 1:45 minutes long, but does not have an audio track.

Each pair of students (or groups of three or four) will be responsible for writing a 1:45-minute audio commentary for the video, providing background information on Operation Manna. Each pair or group has the option of writing its commentary from the perspective of the air crew (refer to the capsule video) or of civilians (refer to the capsule video). Students should review the links below, including primary evidence and other information, to develop a deeper understanding of Operation Manna.

As each pair or group shares its commentary with other pairs or groups, all students should be looking for the differences in their various perspectives on Operation Manna.

Video Footage: Operation Manna

Operation Manna, Food Dropping over Rotterdam in April 1945:

www.youtube.com/watch?v=c6r66DCvp9I

ONLINE SOURCES

Primary Evidence

www.cmp-cpm.forces.gc.ca/dhh-dhp/his/rep-rap/doc/cmhq/CMHQ-152.pdf (pp. 26-29)

Secondary Sources

Legion Magazine:

legionmagazine.com/en/2015/05/sweetest-of-springs/

Royal Airforce Museum:

www.rafmuseum.org.uk/blog/operation-manna-29th-april-to-8th-may-1945/

Bomber Command:

www.bombercommandmuseum.ca/manna.html

Radio Canada International:

www.rcinet.ca/en/2015/04/27/history-april-27-1945-two-crazy-canadians-who-helped-a-starving-holland/

Additional Activity

The War and the Canadian Experience has a series of lesson plans that deal with a variety of aspects connected to the Liberation of the Netherlands. These lesson plans can be accessed at:

www.warandthecanadianexperience.com/liberation-of-the-netherlands.html



CANADA AVIATION
AND SPACE MUSEUM
MUSÉE DE L'AVIATION
ET DE L'ESPACE
DU CANADA