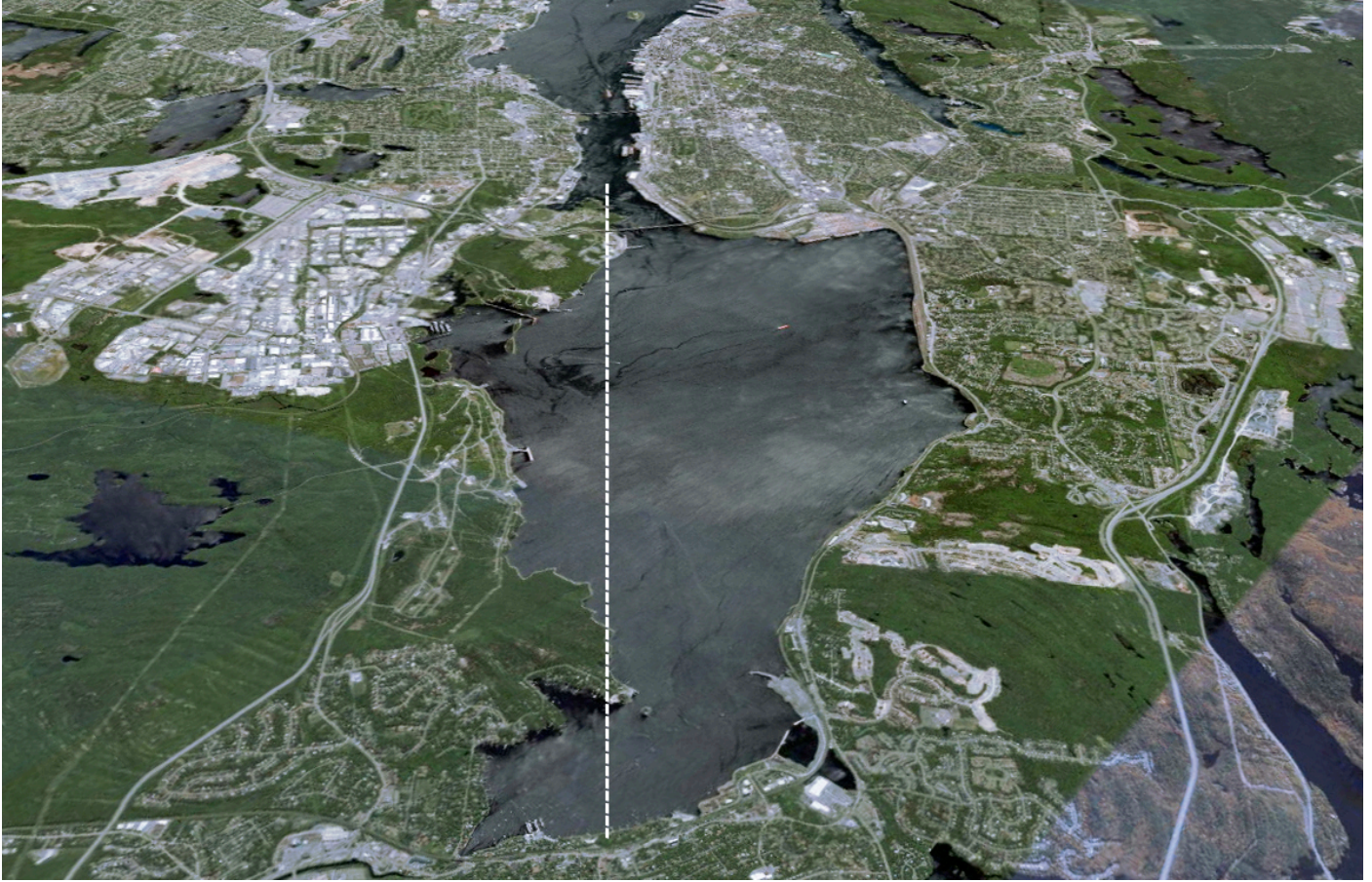


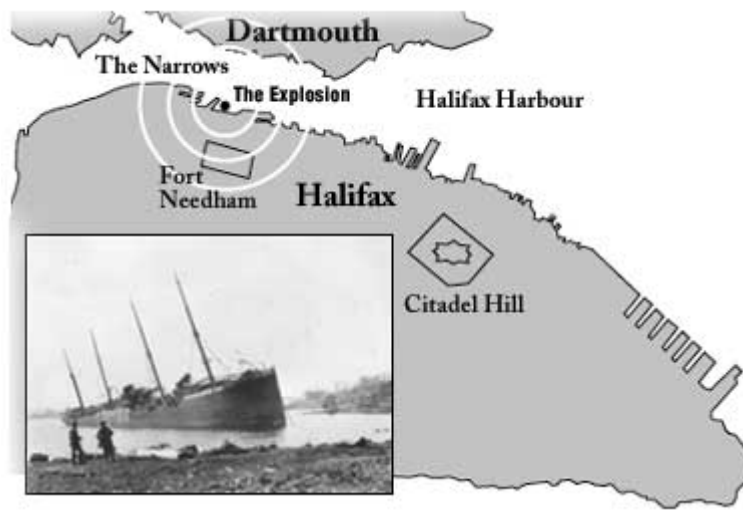
Five years after the people of Halifax buried so many of *Titanic's* victims, another ship caused a catastrophe in their own town. It remains Canada's worst man-made disaster and is the subject of several books (including *Shattered City* by Janet F. Kitz).



On the morning of December 6, 1917, a Norwegian-owned ship called *Imo* - loaded with relief items for the people of war-torn Belgium - was leaving Halifax harbor. As it traveled through the Narrows, it had to pass alongside a French-owned ship called *Mont-Blanc* - loaded with nearly 3,000 tons of explosives to aid France in World War One.

Very few people knew the *Mont-Blanc* was carrying munitions. She was not flying a red flag (so as not to tip-off any German U-boats which might be lurking nearby). Local pilots, who knew how to navigate the waters of the harbor, were at the helm of both ships.

Suddenly, the *Imo* struck the *Mont-Blanc*. Harbor collisions sometimes occur, without much consequence except to the impacted vessels, but this situation was different.

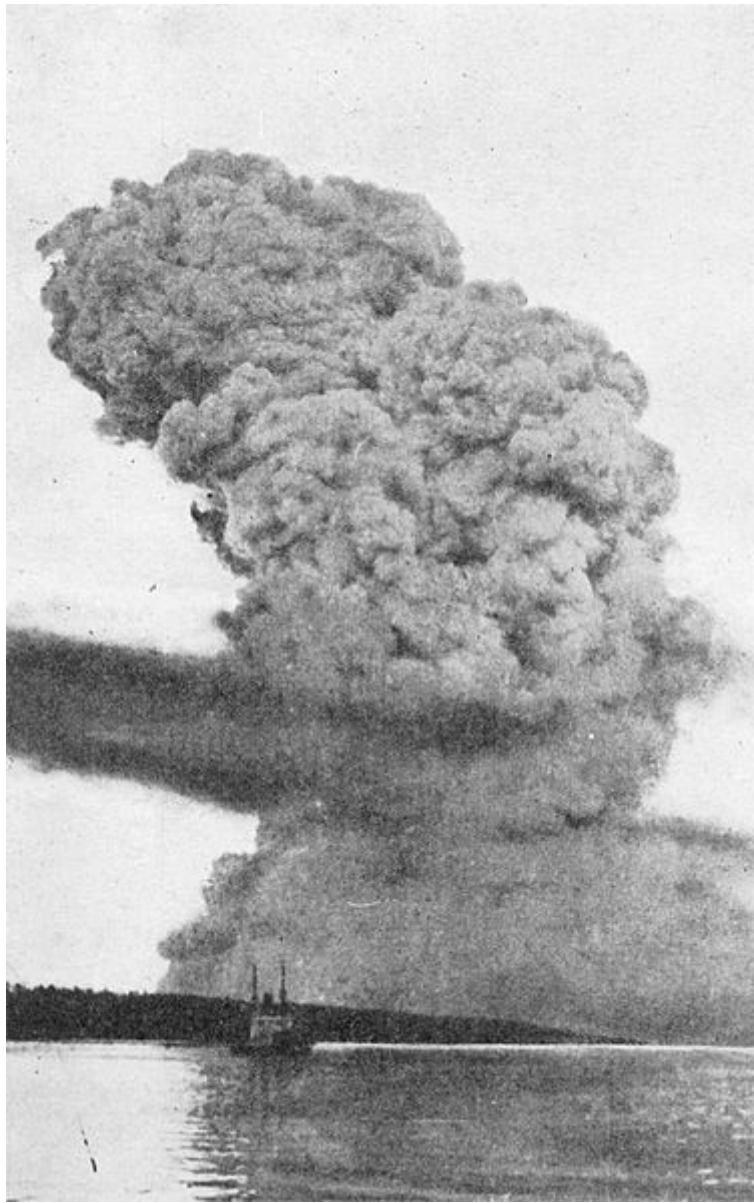


Barrels of benzol, stored on *Mont-Blanc's* outer decks, caught fire. The spectacle attracted the attention of many people who gathered along the harbor shore or watched from behind glass windows.

Then, the unthinkable happened at about 9:04 am (local time).



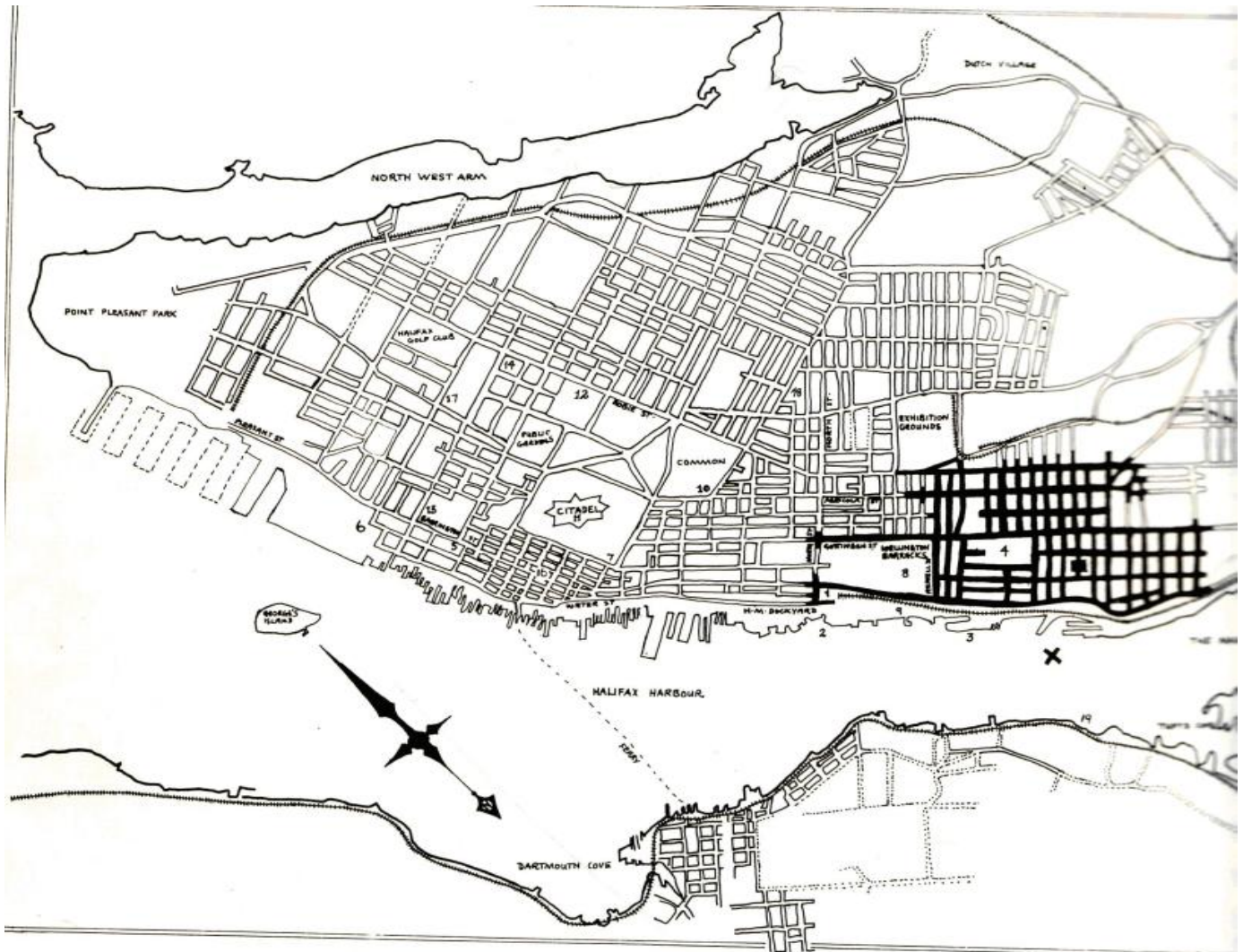
When the flames from the burning benzol reached the cargo hold, they ignited 226,797 kg of TNT, 1,602,519 kg of wet picric acid, 544,311 kg of dry picric acid and 56,301 kg of guncotton.



A massive explosion disintegrated the *Mont-Blanc* (whose crew had already abandoned ship), crippled the *Imo* (killing some of its crew) and devastated both Halifax and the nearby town of Dartmouth.

Soon after, an explosion-caused tsunami sent 18 meters (nearly 60 feet) of sea water above the highwater mark on the Halifax side of the harbor. In a matter of minutes, more than 1500 people were dead while thousands more were injured and/or homeless.

Some people who survived were blinded for life from flying glass shards. The Richmond area of Halifax - near Fort Needham - was obliterated, left with little more than standing ruins.



SKETCHMAP of HALIFAX - 1917

M78

X EXPLOSION SITE

1. RICHMOND OR NORTH ST. STATION.
2. H.M.S. NIOBE DEPOT SHIP.
3. S.S. PICTON AT SUGAR REFINERS WHARF.
4. FORT NEEDHAM
5. ST. MARYS CATHEDRAL
6. GAS HOLDERS
7. MILITARY HOSPITAL

AREA TOTALLY DESTROYED MARKED BLACK.

8. THE MAGAZINE.
9. THE ORDINANCE.
10. ARMOURY.
11. CITADEL.
12. CAMP HILL HOSPITAL.
13. HALIFAX INFIRMARY.
14. DALHOUSIE COLLEGE.

15. NO 10 TRAIN.
16. CITY HALL.
17. VICTORIA GENERAL.
18. CHEBUCTO SCHOOL MORGUE.
19. IMD BEACHED HERE

This clip, from the miniseries "Shattered City: The Halifax Explosion," recreates what happened when the world's worst man made explosion (before the Hiroshima atomic bomb) devastated Halifax and Dartmouth.

Credits:

Clip from "Shattered City: The Halifax Explosion," copyright CBC, all rights reserved. Clip online via CBC and YouTube. Provided here as fair use for educational purposes and to acquaint new viewers with the production.

Director:

Bruce Pittman

Producers:

Heather Haldane and Jenipher Ritchie

Miniseries teleplay:

Keith Ross Leckie

Starring:

Vincent Walsh

Shauna MacDonald

Music:

Christopher Dedrick

Cinematography:

Rene Ohashi

Studio:

Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC)

Tapestry Pictures

Distributor:

Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC)

Release date: October 26, 2003

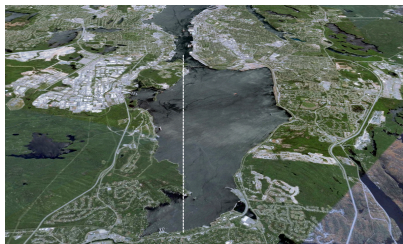
See Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/Halifax-Explosion-A-Devastated-City1>

See Learning Tasks for this story online at:

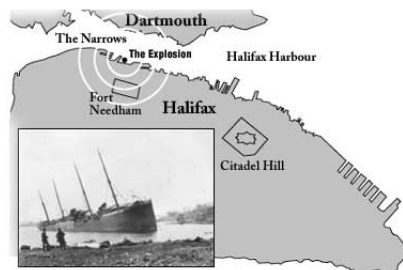
<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicActivities/Halifax-Explosion-A-Devastated-City1>

Media Stream



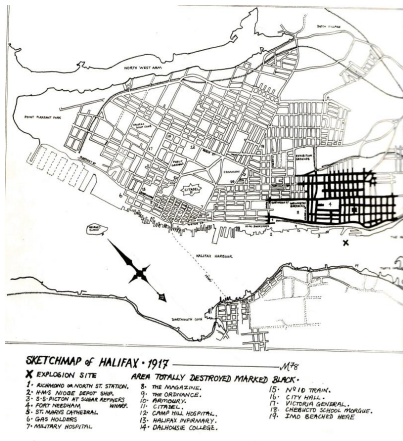
Halifax Explosion - Google Earth Map

View this asset at: <http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/>



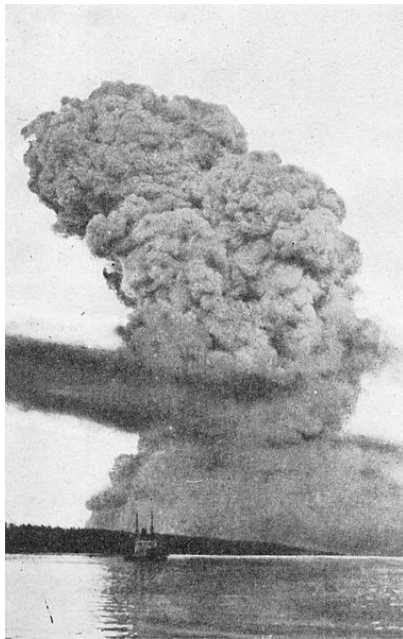
Halifax Explosion Location

View this asset at: <http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/>



Halifax Explosion Destruction Area

View this asset at: <http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/>



Halifax Explosion Blast

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Halifax Explosion Timepiece

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