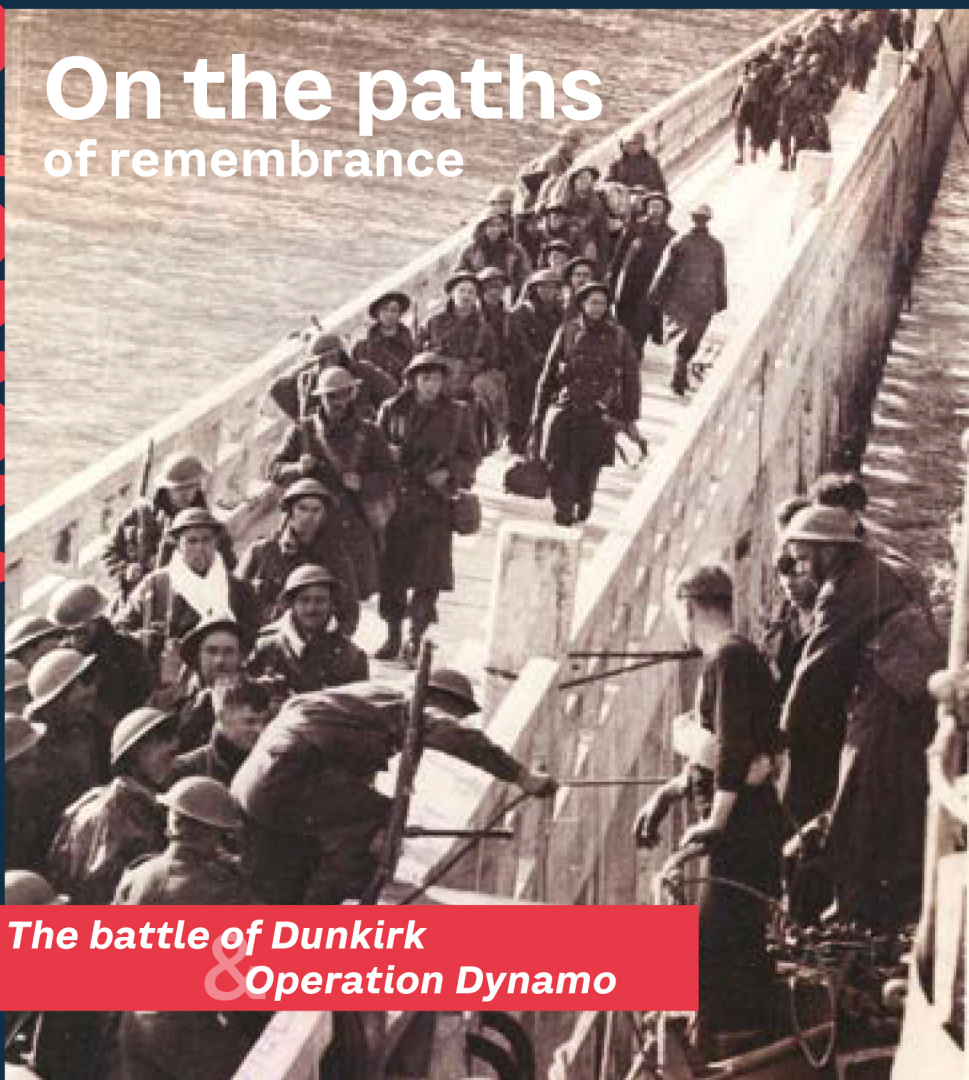


## On the paths of remembrance



**The battle of Dunkirk  
& Operation Dynamo**





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This guide was edited in collaboration with the Société Dunkerquoise d'Histoire et d'Archéologie



© Romaric Walgener / Reenactment

SO  
Dk

Experience  
**the Dunkirk  
Spirit**

May  
1940

May 1940: The North of France is swept up in the frightening upheaval of war. The German army's lightning advance towards the English Channel has entrapped the French and British troops like fish in a net. Their only chance of salvation now lies in the sea: all eyes are on Dunkirk.

Envisioned on 19 May and carried out from 26 May to 4 June, Operation Dynamo led to the evacuation of the British Expeditionary Force and thousands of northern French soldiers. It was the largest evacuation effort in military history, and an unimaginable success at the heart of a humiliating defeat, a “miracle” that allowed 338,226 allied soldiers (including 123,095 French and 16,816 Belgian soldiers) to escape the hell of Dunkirk and reach Great Britain, the nation that had become the spearhead of the fight against the Nazis.

**Each stage of this “path of remembrance”** pays homage to all of the Allied forces who embodied the “Dunkirk spirit,” an immense hope of resistance and liberation.



## The battle of Dunkirk and Operation Dynamo

- 1<sup>st</sup> september 1939**  
WWII begins when Germany invades Poland.
- 3 september 1939**  
France and England declare war on Germany.
- 10 may 1940**  
The German offensive begins.
- 18 may 1940**  
First heavy bombing of Dunkirk. This was the beginning of a major exodus of the population of Dunkirk.
- 24 may 1940**  
Battle of Dunkirk begins – Arrival of German troops on the river Aa, between Gravelines and Watten.
- 26 may 1940**  
The British launch the evacuation from Dunkirk called 'Operation Dynamo'.
- 27 may 1940**  
The German air force crushes the city with thousands of bombs.
- 29 may 1940**  
Start of mass embarkation of French troops.
- 4 june 1940**  
End of Operation Dynamo – the Germans enter Dunkirk.



## Légende :

Grand site des Dunes de Flandre

"Vélo maritime" bicycle route  
EuroVelo 4



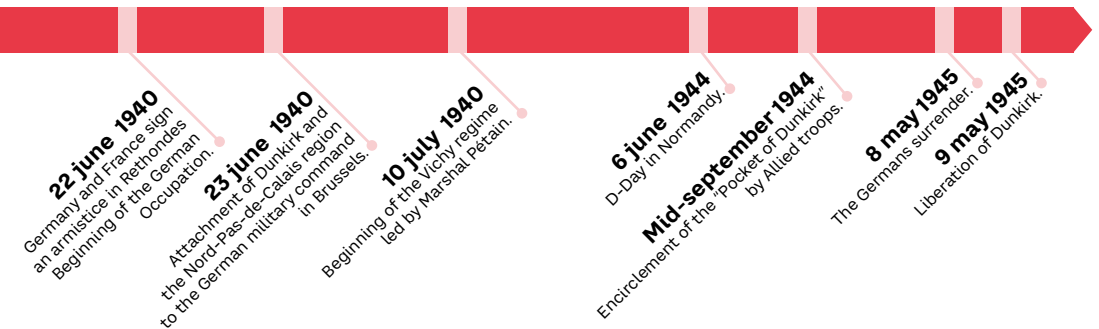
Rallye-jeu

**i** Tourist office

**1 2 3** Remembrance sites



## World War II major events timeline



# Experience the Dunkirk Spirit

## Dunkerque 1940 Operation Dynamo Museum

Located in 19th century fortifications, which were part of the headquarters of the French army in 1940, the Dunkirk War Museum tells the incredible story of the battle and of the evacuation of more than 338,000 allied soldiers from the 'Pocket of Dunkerque' with a rich exhibition of maps, pictures and both allied and German military material. Mock-ups of the sites of the operation, uniforms and weapons complete the collection. A 15-minute film using dramatic period footage gives an excellent account of the events of May-June 1940.

### ① **Dunkerque 1940 Operation Dynamo museum**

**Courtines du bastion**

32 Rue des Chantiers de France, Dunkerque

 C4

[www.dynamo-dunkerque.com](http://www.dynamo-dunkerque.com)



© Philippe Sénicourt

## Musérial fort des Dunes

If you like immersive tours, you have come to the right place. Enter the fortifications through a long dark tunnel. The courtyard, flooded in light, is an example of late 19th century military architecture. At the heart of the underground tunnels, the meticulous scenography traces the tragedies of a place buried in the sand.

In the barracks building, the history of the area, from the Counts of Flanders to the descent into the hell of Operation Dynamo, is told in video and audio



format. Heavily bombed in 1940, the Fort was the scene of the execution of resistance fighters during the German Occupation. The Fort des Dunes National Military Cemetery is located right next to the Fort.

## ② Musérial - fort des Dunes

Chemin du Fort, Leffrinckoucke

🚶 C1 - C2

[www.fort-des-dunes.fr/en](http://www.fort-des-dunes.fr/en)

## Good to know...

### A STORY THAT INSPIRES DIRECTORS

Directors love to set up their cameras in our region.

Over the decades, various films tell the story of the battle of Dunkirk and Operation Dynamo from very different perspectives.

#### **Dunkirk (1958)**

directed by Leslie Norman

#### **Week-end à Zuydcoote (1964)**

directed by Henry Verneuil

#### **Atonement (2009)**

directed by Joe Wright

#### **Dunkirk (2017)**

directed by Christopher Nolan



© Fort des dunes

# Share emotions

## East Mole and Dunkirk Malo-les-Bains promenade

Between hope and disappointment, from the East Mole, aboard all kinds of ships, thousands of soldiers braved the winds, land mines and German Stukas to reach England. The British Expeditionary Force and many soldiers of the French Army have known their darkest hours during the evacuation via the North Sea.

Walk along the East Mole to see the panoramic view of the beaches of Operation Dynamo. It is worth it. (Beaches of Malo-les-Bains, Leffrinckoucke, Zuydcoote, Bray-Dunes, La Panne)

### ③ East Mole

At the end of Rue Militaire, 59140 Dunkerque

📍 C4



## Shipwrecks on the North Sea coast

At low tide, take the chance to see the wreck of the Crested Eagle, a Thames paddle steamer, up close. During Operation Dynamo, the ship was hit by German dive bombers. The captain decided to beach the blazing ship at Zuydcoote, east of Dunkirk. More than 300 soldiers were killed in the inferno, and some of the bodies were never found.

Just a few hundred meters away, you can see the wreck of the Devonian. This ship, converted into a minesweeper, was badly damaged during the battle. Her Captain voluntarily beached the ship, helping the troops reach other ships offshore in the following days.

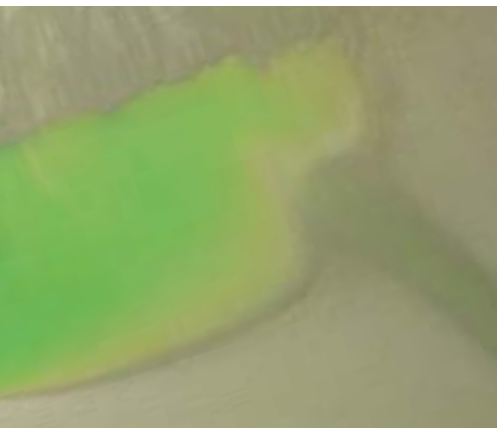
### ④ For tide tables see [www.maree.info](http://www.maree.info)

There is a carpark on Rue de Wattrelos in Zuydcoote.

Once on the beach, the shipwreck is 500 metres away on your right. A commemorative sculpture made by students of a local school sits near the beach. 🕒 20 - 21 <http://dkepaves.free.fr>

© Bruno Pruvost





## Little Ship "Princess Elizabeth"

Built in Britain in 1926-1927, this paddle steamer was first used as an excursion steamer and ferry between Southampton and the Isle of Wight. At the outset of World War II she was converted into a minesweeper and, a year later, she took part in Operation Dynamo. Princess Elizabeth made four trips from Dover to Dunkerque to rescue 1673 men in total, among which were 500 French soldiers.

Take your adventure to the next level, and enjoy the 1940s-themed menu, dining on one of the Princess Elizabeth's decks.

### 5 Restaurant Tea room « Princess Elizabeth »

Quai de l'Estacade, Dunkerque

☎ C2 - C4 - 16

[www.princesselizabeth.eu](http://www.princesselizabeth.eu)

## Plaine au bois- Esquelbecq

On 28th May 1940, 80 soldiers from the Royal Warwickshire Regiment, Cheshire Regiment and Royal Artillery were taken prisoner. They were locked up in a barn and brutally executed by members of the SS Leibstandarte Adolf Hitler, the Führer's personal guard. The site of the massacre, known as the Plaine Au Bois, is now a place of remembrance located in the Flemish countryside.

**Eighty copper beeches were symbolically planted on the path leading to the Plaine Au Bois.**

6 GPS coordinates : 50.877818,  
2.442286

*Rue des Dunkirk Veterans, Esquelbecq.*



© Romaric Walgener





# Lest we forget



## Zuydcoote National Military Cemetery

1687 French, British and German soldiers from World War I, and 904 French soldiers from World War II are buried here.

### 7 Military Cemetery

*In front of 118 Rue des Crevettes, 59132 Zuydcoote.*

🕒 20 - 21

## 12<sup>nd</sup> DIM Monument

Located on the seafront promenade of Bray-Dunes, this monument pays tribute to the soldiers of the 12th Motorized Infantry Division (DIM) who defended the frontline at the east of the Dunkirk pocket during Operation Dynamo.

### 8 12<sup>nd</sup> DIM Monument

*At the corner of the Digue de Mer and of the Avenue du Général de Gaulle, 59132 Bray-Dunes*

🕒 20



## Allied Memorial

Located on the Dunkirk Malo-les-Bains promenade, and the spot of the annual commemorative ceremony, this monument pays tribute to the Allied soldiers who fell during the Battle of Dunkirk and Operation Dynamo..

### 9 *Western end of the Digue des Alliés*



© Ville de Dunkerque

## British Memorial

At the heart of the Dunkirk cemetery, this memorial honours the soldiers of the British Expeditionary Force who have no known grave. Inaugurated in 1957, it is located next to the 810 graves of soldiers who fell during the events of May-June 1940.

### 10 *British Memorial*

4044 Route de Furnes, Coudekerque-Branche

 14





© CMUA/Archives Dunkerque

# Lest we forget

## Monument of l'Abbé Bonpain

An emblematic Resistance fighter from Dunkirk, l'Abbé Bonpain enabled the passage of people into the free zone and the transmission of information. This priest from Rosendaël (a neighbourhood of Dunkirk) inspired his parishioners with the spirit of resistance. Executed in 1943, he was buried at Dunkerque cemetery.

### 11 Monument of l'Abbé Bonpain

Place de l'Abbé Bonpain, 59240 Dunkerque

C1



## The tragedy at Le Cochon Noir

In Gravelines, a monument pays tribute to more than 200 civilians, mostly Belgians, killed while they were caught in a crossfire between the Allies and the Germans on 24 May 1940.

### 12 GPS : 50.985909, 2.116119

3 Route de Calais, 59280 Gravelines

(next to the "Citroën" garage).

22 - 23



© Office de Tourisme  
Communautaire Dunkerque



© CMUA/Archives Dunkerque

## Boomkens farm (nowadays called Jean Bart farm)

Near the farmhouse, a commemorative plaque pays tribute to the soldiers of the seventh GRDI (Infantry Division Reconnaissance Group) who fought hard during the battle on 2 June 1940. It also pays tribute to the Vandamme family - residents of the farm, who paid a heavy toll during this battle.

### 13 Boomkens farm

At the corner of the Route de Tétéghem and the Route des Neiges, 59380 Tétéghem  
Coudekerque-Village

## Coudekerque internment camp

In the first half of 1944, the Germans demanded the departure of civilians who were not useful to the economy. Some people resisted being evacuated. At the end of the war, in the town of Coudekerque, 270 civilians were penned in in three streets surrounded by barbed wire. They stayed there until the Liberation.

### 14 Internment camp

Rue Marceau, Rue Gustave Delory et Rue de la Paix, 59155 Coudekerque-Branche



## Bourbourg

To counter a German offensive, gunners set up an observation post at the highest point of the bell tower in Bourbourg. The attack by the infantry of the "Gross Deutschland" regiment was repelled but it did not prevent the bell tower from being burnt down by the enemy.

### 15 Bourbourg

Place du Marché aux Chevaux, 59630 Bourbourg



# Digging deeper

## Ferme Nord and Zuydcoote Sanatorium

What you see here are two beautiful buildings nestled in a natural setting. Transformed into a military hospital during WWI and WWII, the Sanatorium treated 10.000 wounded soldiers in May-June 1940. It was used as the setting for the film "Weekend à Zuydcoote" in 1964.

The Ferme Nord, with its regionalist red brick architecture, opens up to a beautiful natural reserve. The typical 20th century industrial farm supplied the sanatorium with food. During the Battle of Dunkirk, it was used as a back-up for the already overcrowded hospital.



### 16 House of the future Grand Site des dunes de Flandre

Chemin Privé, et Boulevard

Vancauwenberghes,

59123 Zuydcoote

🕒 20 - 21



## Zuydcoote battery

Complementing the land defence role of the Fort des Dunes, the coastal battery of Zuydcoote, built in 1879, extends along the North Sea shore. The bunkers of the Atlantic Wall were added during the German Occupation. Nowadays, the impressive layout of the site contrasts with the calm and beauty of the area.

*As the buildings are unstable and dangerous, do not climb on them.*

### 17 Zuydcoote battery GPS coordinates 51.061834, 2.448017.

Park at the end of the Digue Europlage,  
59495 Leffrinckoucke

🕒 C3

Warning: unsecure site - access by the beach





## Château Coquelle

Here is an old house transformed into a British field hospital from 28 May 1940. Two surgical teams worked hard under the falling bombs. The basement served as an operating theatre.

It was lit by a single light bulb and later only by candlelight.

### 18 Château Coquelle

Rue de Belfort, 59240 Dunkerque



14

## Vernaelde Farm

Around the farm, you can take a walk along the Liberation Trail. Along a pleasant walking path, bunkers and shelters bear witness to the fortifications built by the Germans during the Occupation.

### 19 Vernaelde Farm

165 Rue du Boernhol, 59210 Coudekerque-Branche



17



© Ferme Vernaelde

## Gravelines Bunker of the Command Post of the General Staff



© Ville de Gravelines

Although Operation Dynamo concentrated its deployment in the port of Dunkirk and on the beaches, the entire destination is full of traces of WWII. Visit a restored bunker, the former command post of the German General Staff, and discover the history of the inhabitants during the Occupation. Continue your journey with the "chemin de ronde", a rampart walk of the fortified town of Gravelines.

### 20 Opening in autumn 2021

Rue de Calais, Gravelines



22, 23

# Itinerary suggestions & more

**If you've got 2 hours**



## **Combine the Dunkerque 1940 Museum & the East Mole of Malo-les-Bains**

Visit the Dunkerque 1940 Museum – Explore the area and take a walk to the East Mole (a 10 minutes' walk). The East Mole is located at the entrance of the port. The fishermen and locals like to spend time there. The panoramic view of Dunkirk Malo-les-Bains beach is worth a visit.



## **Combine the Musérial of the fort des Dunes and the nature reserve**

Explore the Musérial of the fort des Dunes – From the fort, extend your visit to the North Sea shore on the paths of the nature reserve of the Grand site of the Dunes de Flandre. Half buried under the sand, the Zuydcoote battery located along the sandy beach of Leffrinckoucke and the bunkers of the Atlantic Wall are impressive relics from the military past.

© Jean-François Sabiaux

## If you've got 2 days

### Day 1

In order to organise your itinerary, check the tide tables before you start out to the beaches to see the wrecks ([www.maree.info](http://www.maree.info)).

Operation Dynamo turned into a tragedy for many of the ships that ran aground on our beaches. On the shore of Zuydcoote, observe, at low tide, the Crested Eagle, a 91-metre ship sunk on 29 May 1940. Visit the nearby French National Cemetery. Enjoy the open air of the Dune Dewulf, a nature reserve that surrounds the Ferme Nord and the former military hospital. After a meal on the seafront or on board Little Ship Princess Elizabeth, visit the Dunkerque 1940 Museum.

**Experience the events from different perspectives with the free Dunkirk Operation Dynamo smartphone app.**



*Ancien navire-école allemand, le Duchesse Anne est un dédommagement de guerre à la France racheté par la ville de Dunkerque en 1981.*

© Romaric Walgener

### Day 2

At 12 miles from Dunkirk, la Plaine au Bois in Esquelbecq is a discreet but important memorial site. On the way back, make a stop at the British Memorial at Dunkirk. After a meal on the seafront or on board Little Ship Princess Elizabeth, visit the Musérial of the fort des Dunes, an exceptional site nestled in the heart of the Grand Site des Dunes de Flandre. Continue your discovery along the Atlantic Wall facing the North Sea. Don't leave without visiting the town centre of Dunkirk, an example of a successful post-war reconstruction.

**Take the aerial tour of the sites of the battle of Dunkirk.**



© Emmanuel Berthier

*Don't hesitate to contact us for a tailor-made itinerary.  
Reservations: [marketing@dunkerque-tourisme.fr](mailto:marketing@dunkerque-tourisme.fr)*



# Dunkirk Today

© Cud

2700 acres of preserved nature,  
from the East Mole to the Belgian border.

## The Grand Site of the Dunes de Flandre

With the passing of time, nature continues to absorb the scars and the vestiges of the battle of Dunkirk and Operation Dynamo.

Some memorial sites are located at the heart of landscapes which are now quiet and peaceful. To the east of Dunkirk, you can explore the Grand Site of the Dunes de Flandre. The natural reserves provide an exceptional background to relics of a painful past. The area has shown its resilience, and nowadays boasts a remarkable biodiversity.

Along the North Sea shore, hundreds of acres of nature and unusual landscapes will inspire your journey.

***A piece of advice: You will need a good pair of shoes, sun cream, a water bottle and a camera.***

[www.grandsite-dunesdeflandre.com](http://www.grandsite-dunesdeflandre.com)

**« A conscious traveller  
takes care of nature! »**

## An immersive experience with the Dunkirk 1940 smartphone app!

A true exploration of history. Download the official Operation Dynamo - Dunkirk 1940 app. In this app, archives, reconstructions and interactive images will guide you through the streets of Dunkirk, on the beaches and in the dunes. The open-air immersive experience retraces the war

episodes "as if you were there". You can choose to walk in the footsteps of a French or an English soldier, but you can also choose to immerse yourself among the civilians, through the eyes of little Louisette.

***Fun and immersive!***

*Free smartphone app available for smartphone on Android and IOS*

## Information boards

An interesting way to discover history as you walk or ride your bicycle along 30 boards located at noteworthy sites in the town centre and along Dunkirk beach.

## The hourglass

Next to the Dunkirk 1940 Museum, the artist Séverine Hubard created a monument made of concrete, in 2017. It commemorates Operation Dynamo. The hourglass symbolises the frantic race against the clock against the enemy.

*At the corner of the Avenue des Bords de  
Flandre and the Avenue des Bordées*

*Rue des Chantiers de Franc, 59140 Dunkerque*



## Leon's Journal

Initially created for school children from Year 5 to Year 7, Leon's journal is a family read for anyone interested in the wanderings of a young child during World War II. The illustrator Camille Demey-Nguyen reveals the daily life of children and teenagers in Dunkirk from 1940 to 1945 through the eyes of Leon, an 11 years old boy.

**What we think of it:** Pleasant to read, presented as an original holiday book, it gives the keys to understand the painful episodes of World War II. Bravo Léon!

[www.dunkirk-1940.fr](http://www.dunkirk-1940.fr)

## Guided tours

Booking a private Battlefield Tour is a privileged way to discover and to experience the story of the Battle of Dunkirk and Operation Dynamo.

**A specialist guide accompanies you:**

- In your car
- On foot
- By bicycle
- In the Tourist Office car

*For information and bookings:*

*call us on +33 (0)3 28 26 27 31*

*Or*

*send an email to: [marketing@dunkerque-tourisme.fr](mailto:marketing@dunkerque-tourisme.fr)*





## Dunkerque - Centre-ville

Le Beffroi

Rue de l'Amiral Ronarc'h

Dunkerque +33 (0)3 28 66 79 21



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  #visitdunkerque

**[www.dunkirk-1940.fr](http://www.dunkirk-1940.fr)**

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2 €