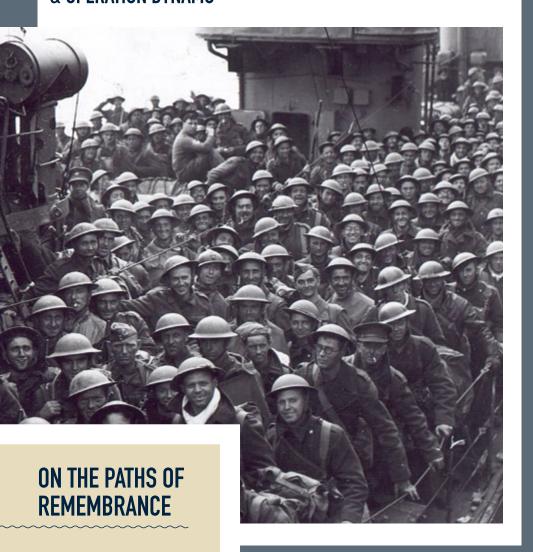


# VISITOR GUIDE



THE BATTLE OF DUNKIRK & OPERATION DYNAMO



# **/** CONTENTS

MAP – PLACES OF REMEMBRANCE	04
EXPERIENCE THE DUNKIRK SPIRIT	06
SHARE EMOTIONS	08
LEST WE FORGET	10
DIGGING DEEPER	14
ITINERARY SUGGESTIONS	16





Document edited by Office de Tourisme et des Congrès Communautaire. This guide was edited with the support of the Dunkerque District Authority - Edition 2023, Photos: Ville de Dunkerque - CMUA / Archives Dunkerque - Office de Tourisme et des Congrès Communautaire - Ville de Leffrinckoucke - Musérial fort des Dunes - Philippe Senicourt - Romaric Walgener - Emmanuel Berthier.

La Liberation Route Europe. The Dunkerque District Authority is a member of the LRE (Liberation Route Europe). Liberation Route Europe is a transnational memorial, a trail connecting WWII remembrance sites and stories across Europe Dozens of museums, regions, cities and memorial sites across Europe are part of the network. www.liberationroute.com

This guide was edited in collaboration with the Société Dunkerquoise d'Histoire et d'Archéologie, l'Association à l'Assaut des Mémoires, l'Association Culturelle Bourbourgeoise Parts de Mémoire, l'Association Mémorial du Souvenir, l'Association Zuydcoote, terre d'histoire, l'Association du Souvenir Français, l'Association de la Plaine au Bois, la Ville de Leffrinckoucke, la Ville de Gravelines, la ville de Coudekerque-Branche et la Communauté Urbaine de Dunkerque.

# Experience the Dunkirk SpiritMay 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 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 almost 130 000 French troops) 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.

/ 2

# PLACES OF REMEMBRANCE





## **DUNKERQUE 1940 OPERATION DYNAMO MUSEUM**



Rue des Chantiers de France 59140 Dunkerque +33 (0)3 74 06 02 81 www.dynamo-dunkerque.com

BUS C4 Bus stop FRAC-LAAC 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.

# 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.

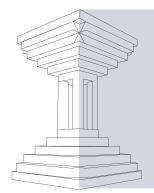
In the barracks building, the history of the area, from the Counts of Flanders to the descent into the hell of Operation Dynamo, is told in video and audio format. Heavily bombed in 1940, the Fort was the scene of the execution of resistance fighters during the German Occupation. The Fort des Dunes National Military Cemetery is located right next to the Fort.



Rue du 2 Juin-1940 59495 Leffrinckoucke +33 (0)3 28 29 13 17 www.fort-des-dunes.fr



**Bus stop FORT DES DUNES** 



## 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.

At the corner of the Avenue des Bancs de Flandre and the Avenue des Bordées.



## 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

1 6 / 7

# SHARE

# **EMOTIONS**





## 3 EAST MOLE

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)

#### **East Mole**

At the end of Rue Militaire 59140 Dunkerque



BUS 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 Devonia. 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.



BUS C20 - C21

#### For tide tables see 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

dkepaves.free.fr

## 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.

#### Restaurant Tea room « Princess Elizabeth»

Quai de l'Estacade, Dunkerque www.princesselizabeth.eu



BUS C4 - C2 - 16

# PLAINE AU BOIS

On 28th May 1940, 96 soldiers from the Royal Warwickshire Regiment, Cheshire Regiment and Royal Artillery were taken prisoner. They were locked up in a barn and most of them were 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.

GPS coordinates : 50.877818, 2.442286

Rue des Dunkirk Veterans Esquelbeca



1 9

# LEST WE **FORGET**





1687 French, British and German soldiers

from World War I, and 904 French soldiers

from World War II are buried here.

8 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.

#### **Military Cemetery**

In front of 118 Rue des Crevettes 59132 Zuydcoote.

BUS 20 - 21



#### 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** 

**BUS 20** 



## 9 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.

## Western end of the Dique des Alliés

Dunkerque

BUS C4



## 10 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.

#### **British Memorial**

4044 Route de Furnes Coudekerque-Branche

BUS 14



/ 10 / 11

# LEST WE FORGET



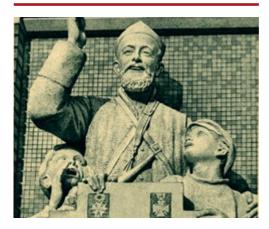
# 11 MONUMENT OF L'ABBE BONPAIN

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.

#### Military Cemetery

Place de l'Abbé Bonpain 59240 Dunkerque





# 12 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.

#### GPS: 50.985909, 2.116119

3 Route de Calais, 59820 Gravelines (next to the "Citroën" garage)



BUS 22 - 23



## 13 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.

#### **Boomkens farm**

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

## 4 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 three streets surrounded by barbed wire. They stayed there until the Liberation.

#### **Internment Camp**

Rue Marceau, Rue Gustave Delory et Rue de la Paix - 59210 Coudekerque-Branche



BUS C3

## 15 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.

#### **Bourbourg**

Place du Marché aux Chevaux - 59630 Bourbourg

**/** 12

# 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.



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

Chemin Privé, et Boulevard Vancauwenberghe, 59123 Zuydcoote



## 17 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.

#### GPS 51.061834, 2.448017

Park at the end of the Digue Europlage, 59495 Leffrinckoucke

Warning: unsecure site - access by the beach



BUS C3



## 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.

Château Coquelle ( BUS 14



Rue de Belfort, 59240 Dunkerque



### The Diary of major Philip Newman

Surgeon at the chateau Coquelle field hospital



## **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.

#### VERNAELDE FARM



165 Rue du Boernhol 59210 Coudekerque-Branche



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.

Open 2 weekends a month from April to October. Rue de Calais - Gravelines



BUS C4

/ 14 / 15

# ITINERARY SUGGESTIONS

# **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.

Don't hesitate to contact us for a tailor-made itinerary. Reservations: marketing@dunkerque-tourisme.fr



# 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)

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.



# / 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 postwar reconstruction.

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



**/** 16



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

« A conscious traveller takes care of nature! »

& VISITES

/ PARCOURS

### 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 resi-

lience, 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



# 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



# TINFORMATION 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.

## **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



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

## **CONTACT**

Tél. +33(0)3 28 26 27 28 contact@dunkerque-tourisme.fr

#visitdunkerque www.dunkerque-tourisme.fr

www.dunkirk-1940.fr



Travel free of charge 7 days a week on the entire city bus network

