

LA CITÉ DE LA MER

C H E R B O U R G

PRESS RELEASE 2019

CHERBOURG 1944... NEW PERMANENT EXHIBITION



ANNIVERSAIRE DU DÉBARQUEMENT
ET DE LA LIBÉRATION DE LA FRANCE
ET DE L'EUROPE



D-DAY
NORMANDY
LAND OF LIBERTY



La Cité de la Mer has installed a new permanent exhibition: Cherbourg 1944... And Freedom Came from the Sea, in the heart of a place epitomising the history of the liberation of Cherbourg: the Transatlantic Liner Terminal, that opened in 1933. The exhibition will be opening on 27 April 2019, in the year of the 75th anniversary of D-Day.

It lifts the veil on the twenty days between the Normandy Landings on 6 June 1944 on Utah-Beach and the liberation of the port of Cherbourg on 26 June.

The visit, immersive and interactive, includes previously unpublished images of the Allies' struggle to make progress through the Normandy countryside, the German resistance,

the bombings, and the civilians who were the innocent victims of the Battle of Normandy. The exhibition includes striking images that are rarely exhibited in public. By looking at the giant-format photos and watching contemporary films the public come to fully understand the importance of the role played by the port of Cherbourg in the logistics of the liberation of Europe. Over and above the technical feat, the exhibition illustrates the trials undergone by the people -both military and civilian- in the period immediately after the liberation.

La Cité de la Mer has also produced a new film, shown every day on the large screen in the auditorium: 20 days for Cherbourg.

An exhibition with three main sections...

1. The role of the Port of Cherbourg
2. The D-Day expedition: mapping the wrecks in the Bay of the River Seine
3. A new immersive, interactive section

...and a film

'20 days for Cherbourg', by Pascal Vannier and Agence Numériques

PARTNERS OF THE EXHIBITION 'CHERBOURG 1944... AND FREEDOM CAME FROM THE SEA»



'CHERBOURG 1944... AND FREEDOM CAME FROM THE SEA' THE EXHIBITION



THE ROLE OF THE PORT OF CHERBOURG

...SOME DATES

19 JUIN 1940: beginning of the German occupation of Cherbourg, in particular the Transatlantic liner terminal, chosen for its strategic position facing England.

AUGUST 1943: Churchill and Roosevelt, devising Operation Overlord in order to make safe an area where equipment could be stored on the European continent, chose the Cherbourg deep-water harbour.

6 JUNE 1944: the Overlord naval and airborne assault (Operation Neptune) involved troops landing on five beaches in Normandy: Utah, Omaha, Gold,



Juno and Sword. The assault was backed up by two divisions of paratroopers over Sainte-Mère-Église and Ouistreham. Two artificial ports were set up until Cherbourg could be freed: at Omaha Beach (Saint-Laurent-sur-Mer) and Gold Beach (Arromanches-les-Bains.)

26 JUNE 1944: Cherbourg was liberated, but the terminal building was destroyed and the harbour was inoperable, as the German forces had sabotaged the complete infrastructure.

NOVEMBER 1944: the harbour was made fit to operate



TESTIMONY

*General Dwight Eisenhower,
Chief of Supreme Headquarters,
Allied Expeditionary Force*

'Cherbourg [...] represented a cardinal factor in our basic logistical plans. The sea and airborne landings in the Cotentin [...] had been expressly designed to facilitate its early capture so that we might use its valuable harbor as an all-weather base through which to introduce supplies.'

...SOME FIGURES

315,000: the number of GIs who had passed through the port between July 1944 and March 1945, including 208,000 wounded soldiers being evacuated

21,800: the number of tons of equipment disembarked every day

2,332,413: the total number of tons disembarked up until March 1945. Cherbourg then became the busiest freight harbour in the world

THE 'RED BALL HIGHWAY EXPRESS'

This one-way loop-road convoy route was operational by 25 August 1944, replacing the railway that still had to be repaired. Civilians were forbidden to use the road Cherbourg, destination Chartres.

SOME FIGURES:

- 412,197 tons (equipment and fuel) disembarked in ten weeks between Cherbourg, Dreux and Chartres
- 899 lorries every day
- 70 yards (64 metres): the minimum distance which had to be kept between vehicles



D-DAY EXPEDITION

MAPPING THE WRECKS IN THE BAY OF THE RIVER SEINE

During the summer of 2013, a Franco-American team conducted the international scientific operation known as the 'D-Day Expedition', organised with the support of the French Department of Underwater Archaeological Research (DRASSM), the US Navy, and the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution.

Their mission was to map the wrecked ships lying in the English Channel around the estuary of the River Seine, from the Barfleur Headland to the Cape of La Hève. Numerous types of underwater technology were brought into play (American robots, Scottish 3D scanner, Canadian submarines...) providing images, films, maps and extremely precise 3D models.

Sylvain Pascaud, who was in charge of the operation, invited veterans to dive down to the wrecks of ships on

which they themselves had been sailing.

Their aim was to find out more about Operation Neptune, the code name given to the landing of allied troops in Normandy in June 1944, and to produce a television report, 'D-Day, Ils ont Inventé le Débarquement', which was shown during the French programme Thalassa.

Some of the images, integrated into the exhibition, show the importance of the wrecks that are a trace of the ships that sank between June and December 1944:

- the *USS Susan B. Anthony* (Port-en-Bessin, 7 June)
- the *LST 523* (Saint-Marcouf Islands, 19 June)
- the *U-boat U390* (Barfleur, 5 July)
- the troop transporter *Leopoldville* (torpedoed off Cherbourg on 24 December, with 2,237 American soldiers on board, 800 of whom met their death).



THE D-DAY EXPEDITION ALSO INVOLVED...

- Experts: archaeologists, historians, cartographers, divers, veterans...
- A large study area: Approximately 200 square miles (511 square kilometres) explored in detail, and almost 400 wrecks identified
- Specific technologies: 2 ships chartered, 2 manned

submarines (prepared in La Cité de la Mer), underwater robots, sonars, depth-finders
'Everyone's heard of D-Day, but not very many people know about Operation Neptune [whose] maritime and submarine elements on 6 June left hundreds of wrecks below the sea off Normandy' Sylvain Pascaud



TESTIMONY

Sylvain Pascaud,
Head of the D-Day expedition mission
'It was both a human and a technological adventure, with much at stake on the human level.'



AN IMMERSIVE, INTERACTIVE TOUCH TABLE



This part of the exhibition, a completely new design, will help visitors understand what happened throughout the Cotentin peninsula, from east to west, and almost hour by hour, between 6 and 26 June 1944.

La Cité de la Mer invited Clémence Farell to design the layout of the interactive part of the exhibition. Clémence, who had already designed La Cité de la Mer's Titanic area, which opened in 2012, explained:

'The exhibition is immersive and interactive' Bernard Cauvin, director of La Cité de la Mer, is delighted with the new attraction: 'We have long been keen to set up this exhibition. The images take visitors through the twenty days in close proximity with the American soldiers as well as with civilians. Integrating the theme of D-Day to our centre means that we are able to claim the title of Second-World-War memorial site'.

IMMERSIVE

«Immersive» in that it actually involves exhibit design: visitors go round a large table, three metres in diameter, that looks like a giant clock, and which gives a countdown for the twenty days that made Cherbourg. Visitors, in the centre of

this giant clock structure, see the daily progress of the troops on an animated map, backed up with impressive archive material, from the Normandy landings up until the liberation of the port of Cherbourg.

INTERACTIVE

«Interactive»: around the sides of the table and within easy reach are controls with which visitors can set off archive recordings to watch. This gives visitors, as a complement to the animated map, 'a realistic view of what was happening to people in the area, and the reality of the troops' progress. This will interest all

types of visitors, giving youngsters in particular a true view of events that they usually think of as «ancient history». The recordings are set off using touch areas, and are extremely attractive in that they enable visitors to discover moving archive sequences, that speak of the Cotentin and Cherbourg.'

PRACTICAL INFORMATION :

The exhibition is included in the price of an entrance ticket for La Cité de la Mer.

Free for primary-school children.

A ticket to visit the exhibition on its own costs €3.50 for adults and €2 for 12 to 17 year olds

20 DAYS FOR CHERBOURG THE FILM





**TEASER 20 DAYS
FOR CHERBOURG**

[Click here
to watch the video](#)



La Cité de la Mer asked the director Pascal Vannier to write a film on the incredible advance of the Allies: from Utah-Beach, on 6 June 1944, to the port of Cherbourg, on 26 June. 'This epic event, that was supposed to be over very quickly, eventually lasted twenty days; it had just one aim: to recapture the port of Cherbourg from the Germans and make it into the nerve centre for the logistics required to free Europe from the yoke of the Nazis', explained Bernard Cauvin, director of La Cité de la Mer, who produced the film.

The film will enable visitors to understand why, in December 1943, General Eisenhower decided to add a fifth beach, Utah-Beach, in the Manche department, to the four already included in plans for the Allies to land in Calvados. 13,000 American soldiers passed through the sky over Sainte-Mère-Église and the surrounding marshes. Those who survived the landings

fought stoutly for twenty days across the whole of the Cotentin peninsula. 'Nobody had told the story in its entirety,' said Pascal Vannier, 'The film fills a gap.'

In partnership with Le Mémorial de Caen

'Le Mémorial de Caen has been kind enough to provide us with archive images which had never been shown in public because they had not been digitized', said Pascal Vannier. 'They are images from the American and German archives. We have really let the images speak for themselves; there is very little commentary.' Most of the films are black and white, but some are in colour, such as the episodes filmed by the American reporter Jack Lieb. There are also thousands of photos, immersing visitors in the worst of the suffering, alongside the civilian population, and with the impression of literally advancing side by side with the GIs.

SOME FIGURES

8 MILLION: the number of litres of fuel delivered every day for transporting the GIs

300,000: the number of American wounded who passed through the port of Cherbourg

7: the number of years it took for the port of Cherbourg to recover from its wounds

PRACTICAL INFORMATION :

Film included with no extra charge in our permanent exhibition. Shown in the auditorium, subject to availability. Further information can be found on: citedelamer.com

LA CITÉ DE LA MER IN THE HEART OF ADVENTURE



Since our centre devoted to the fantastic adventure of the ocean depths opened to visitors in Normandy in 2002, over 3.7 million visitors have marvelled at its attractions. Its original theme and its network of partners mean that it is becoming ever more well known, both in France and abroad!

La Cité de la Mer is a tourism attraction born from a double purpose: to save the Art deco Transatlantic liner terminal and to open to the public the largest submarine in the world available to visit - France's first nuclear-powered ballistic submarine, *Le Redoutable*. The various exhibits provide an original way to discover the world's oceans through an epic adventure in the ocean depths.

Launched by General de Gaulle in 1967 in the Cherbourg navy shipyard, *Le Redoutable* was France's first nuclear-powered ballistic submarine. This 420-foot-long giant, symbol of France's deterrent policy, patrolled the world's seas for over twenty years. Visitors go on board the submarine and discover the secret world of submariners. The audio guides, available in two versions ('expert' and 'family'), describe all aspects of the daily life shared by the 135 crew members during their seventy-day patrols, from the operational areas to the living quarters and the chart room.

Two more permanent sections have been added to La Cité de la Mer since it opened. Since 2008, **families have been able to experience the virtual attraction 'Walking into the Depths'** living through the adventure and discovering the ocean depths. The 50-minute-long

trip, during which visitors are divided into crews, is made up of training areas followed by virtual diving capsules. Then comes a surprise to conclude the adventure... where the visitors can see themselves walking under the sea!

In the permanent area called **'Titanic, Return to Cherbourg'**, opened in 2012, visitors relive the crossing made by the legendary liner, from the time she called in at Cherbourg until the night of the tragic shipwreck.

The visit starts in the magnificent Baggage Hall, where visitors discover a host of fascinating lives: first European emigrants leaving for the Americas, and then the 281 passengers who boarded the Titanic in Cherbourg. After going along the reconstitution of the liner's hull, visitors are taken back through time to an area where they are immersed in three sequences: the crossing, the collision and the shipwreck - combining recordings of passengers, photos, reconstitutions of scenes in decors showing first, second and third class quarters, and the Captain and crew area.

The iconic craft involved in deep-sea diving, the vessels themselves or 1:1-scale models, await visitors as they arrive in **the Great Hall of Men and Machines**. All the submersibles that have gone down to explore the legendary wreck of the Titanic are there: *Nautilus*, *Alvin* and *Mir*. In 2014, an actual-size eight-metre-high model of James Cameron's submersible, the *DEEPSEA CHALLENGER*, completed the exhibits in this area. It was on board this vessel in 2012 that the director of Avatar and Titanic dived -10,908 metres (6.78 miles).

NEW 2019

THE OCEAN OF THE FUTURE

Through 3 floors of spectacular multimedia display, discover the Ocean, the last wild region of the planet. During your family trip, you will marvel at 17 stunning aquariums full of life and colour, especially our abyssal aquarium 11 metres deep. You will share incredible moments of wondering thanks to large glass screens displaying dolphins, sharks and whales... You will also be surprised by the mysterious world of the infinitesimally small : Plankton ! Did you know that plankton is the source of 50% of the oxygen on the planet? From the surface to the bottom of the sea, our new exhibition reveals our blue planet and her promises. A world we need to protect now!

PRATICAL INFORMATION

PHOTO LIBRARY



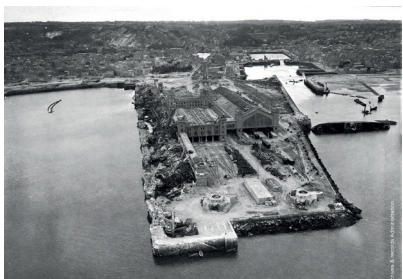
Cherbourg 1944, le port saboté
©U.S National Archives and Records Administration



Patrouille américaine de la 4^e division d'infanterie sortant de la gare maritime. ©Bibliothèque Jacques Prévert / Ville de Cherbourg-Octeville



La gare maritime transatlantique en partie détruite
©Bibliothèque Jacques Prévert / Ville de Cherbourg-Octeville



07 août 1944 : la gare maritime
©U.S National Archives and Records Administration



Exposition «Cherbourg 1944... et la liberté vint de la mer»
©La Cité de la Mer



Visuel scénographique de la table tactile
©Agence Clémence Farrell

RATES AND HOURS

INDIVIDUAL RATES 2019 :

Children from 5 to 17 inclusive : € 14 / Adults : € 19
Under 5 years* : no admission charge**

OPENING TIMES :

Open throughout the year from 10am to 6pm
In July and August : 9:30am to 7pm

Please note that tickets sales stop an hour and a half before the centre closes.

* Free for children under 5 accompanied by an adult buying a ticket

**Please note that, for safety reasons, children under five are not allowed to visit *Le Redoutable* submarine. Free for children under 5 accompanied by an adult buying a ticket.

When there is a cruise ship in the harbour, the Emigration area is closed to the public.

To make the most of your visit, we advise you to arrive in La Cité de la Mer during the morning. Your tour around our complex will be all the most pleasurable. Your ticket is valid for the whole day. You can leave the complex, have your lunch, and come back to carry on your tour at leisure. We hope to see you soon in La Cité de la Mer.

Peak periods : When there are a lot of visitors in the complex, the "Walking into the Depths" attraction will be accessible as places become available. It is therefore advisable to arrive as soon as the centre opens, to be sure of having place.

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