



musée de la
LIBÉRATION

Breathtaking view
of **CHERBOURG**

1944

HARBOUR FOR FREEDOM



 **CHERBOURG**
en Cotentin

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE FORT DU ROULE

The Liberation museum is set inside the Fort du Roule, on top of the Roule mountain. Culminating at 117 meters above the sea, the Roule mountain is closely linked to the development of Cherbourg. The mountain takes its name from the variety of Armorican sandstone, "roule", which were used for the construction of the Cherbourg dike at the end of the 18th century.

THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE FORT

The strategic position of "le Roule" was the main reason for the construction of a fort in 1793. In 1853, Emperor Napoleon III built the present fort to prevent Cherbourg from being invaded, by land or by sea. Later, with the emergence of new machinery, the fort was dedicated to protect the town against aircraft attacks. Thus, it became the key to the defense of Cherbourg.

THE OCCUPATION OF THE MOUNTAIN BY THE GERMAN ARMY

In 1940, the fort was a key point for French resistance. Commander De-Robien and his men fought a heroic defense when German forces arrived. The mountain was eventually taken by the occupant. They dug a large net of underground galleries in the rock and built small concrete bunkers.

FROM LIBERATION TO THE MUSEUM

In 1944, Cherbourg was chosen as the initial target of the landing because of its location and its deep water port. The 7th corps of the 1st US Army was assigned the mission to occupy Cherbourg as quickly as possible.

On June 25th 1944, the 79th Infantry Division launched the assault on the Fort, which the Americans occupied in the evening. However, the German artillery pieces located below the fort continued to fire. Only a day after the encircling maneuver, infantry reduced to silence those bunkers. On June 26th, in the evening, the entire mountain was in the hands of U.S. troops.

In the fort is now located the Museum of Liberation, which traces the history of the Battle of Normandy to the liberation of Cherbourg. Opened in 1954, it is one of the most ancient World War II museum in Normandy.

THE MUSEUM

| GROUND FLOOR

Surrounded by darkness, the ground floor recalls the Occupation period, between 1940 and 1944. Six rooms narrate the civilian's everyday life, the propaganda and the preparation of the Normandy landings.

room ①

THE EXODUS AND THE RESISTANCE



On June 22nd 1940, the armistice is signed : Germans slowly enter the French territory. A part of the French population decides to flee the German invasion and heads for the south of France. This period is called the Exodus.

Another part of the population decides to organize a resistance to the invader. It's the beginning of the French Resistance. The room displays photos, audio recordings and objects to illustrate this first dark period of the war.

room ②

THE PROPAGANDA

June 1940 also marks the transformation of the 3rd Republic into the French Etat. The French and German propagandas are posted on every wall of the territory, and broadcasted by the radio. The room presents a few propaganda posters and comic strips.



room ③

THE NORMANDY LANDINGS AND THEIR PREPARATION



The deep water harbour of Cherbourg quickly appeared as a strategic point of the war : taken over by the Germans during the construction of the Atlantic Wall, it then became a starting point of the Overlord Operation, decided by the Allies in 1943. This operation became the starting point of the Liberation of all Europe.

room ④

LIVING AND SURVIVING DURING THE WAR

Rationing tickets, shoes and nylon underwear : two showcases display curious objects as well as everyday products used during the Second World War.



room ⑤

FRENCH YOUTH

This room is dedicated to the French youth and to passive defence, that is to say the way civilians could protect themselves. It also shows propaganda in children's literature, such as *The book of the moral Master* or *Once upon a time the Marechal of France*.

room ⑥

GERMAN YOUTH

This room presents the indoctrination of young Germans by the Third Reich.

| FIRST FLOOR

Upstairs, the museum retraces the story of the Landing and the Liberation. It allows the visitor to understand the role played by Cherbourg, first port liberated, in the progression of the Allied troops.

room ⑦

CHERBOURG, PORT OF THE LIBERATION

On June 6th, 1944, the Normandy Landing starts the great reconquest of France by the Allied troops. The takeover of Cherbourg, unique deep water port of the Region, is a vital and strategical target for the American troops who landed on Utah Beach. Cherbourg is liberated on June 26th. It became the center of a tremendous logistic effort : the harbor allowed the front to be resupplied by road, by rail and by the Pipe Line Under the Ocean (PLUTO), that brought petrol to the troops. Maps, photos, audio recordings, models and objects retrace the story of a town which has been, for a year, the biggest harbour in the world.



room ⑧

PRISONERS OF WAR

During the Second World War, Germany captured approx.. 1.8 million of men. Between 1945 and 1948, nearly one million of German prisoners were detained in France. The objects displayed in this room belonged to these war prisoners. They give us an insight of their everyday life.

room ⑨

CINEMA

In this room, you can watch the old movie called "Cherbourg, gate to France", given by the United States Embassy for the opening of the museum, in 1954.



room ⑩

G.I.'S, MEN AT WAR

This room is dedicated to the American soldiers : their military and personal equipment.

room ⑪

CHERBOURG 1944

In this room, you can watch photos and movie clips about the Liberation of Cherbourg, and the role of its port in the Liberation of Europe.

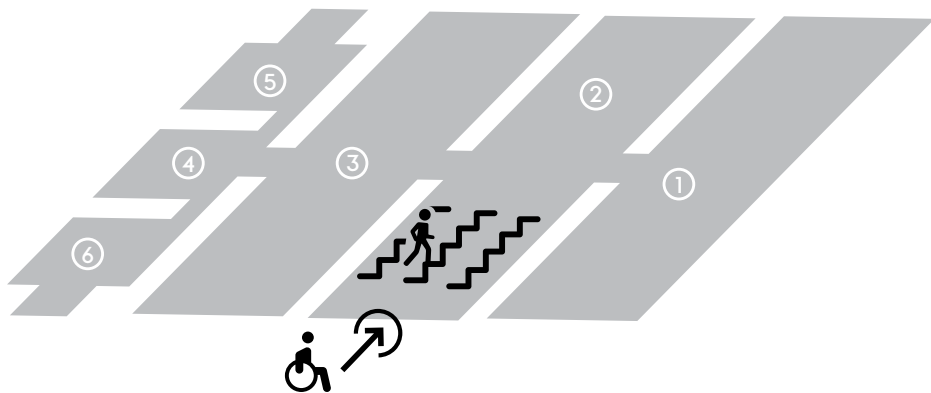


room ⑫

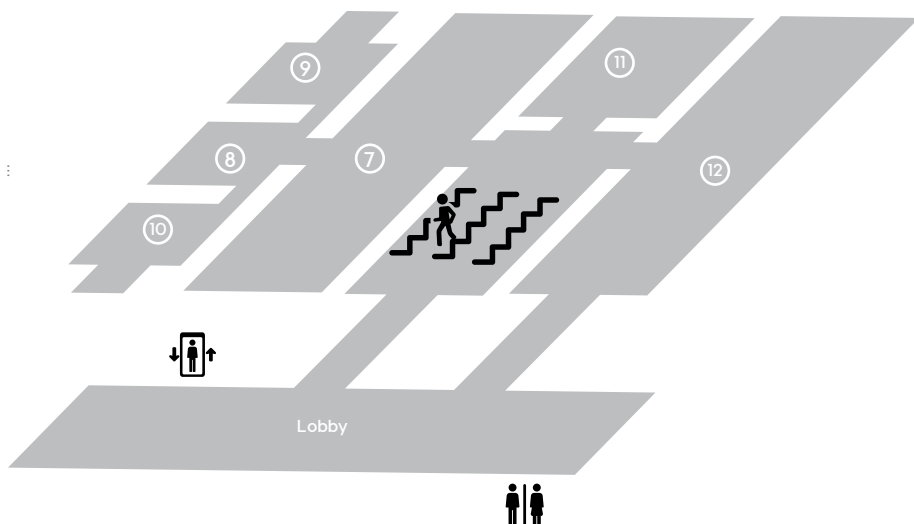
TEMPORARY EXHIBITION

PLAN DES SALLES

| GROUND FLOOR



| FIRST FLOOR



OPENING TIMES

Tuesday to Friday, 10.30 am to 12 – 2 pm to 6 pm.

Saturday and Sunday : 1 pm to 6 pm.

Closed on Mondays and national bank holidays.

RATES

Full rate : 4 euros

Low price : 2.50 euros

Free each Wednesday for all, and everyday for under 26s



Musée de la **Libération**

Fort du Roule

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