

## **FRANCE IN 1940**

**A MUSÉE DE L'ARMÉE EXHIBITION**

**NEW DATES : 17 SEPTEMBER 2020 TO 10 JANUARY 2021**

**The year 1940 was a decisive episode in France's history. To help visitors grasp the issues at play in 1940, the Musée de l'Armée is presenting an intimate exhibition which recreates the atmosphere of that dreadful year. It covers everything from the Phony War to year-end events, including the Battle of France, Appeal of 18 June and creation of the Vichy government.**

We are now familiar with what was happening behind the scenes of the Second World War and the consequences of political and military decisions, which can lead us to forget that this was not necessarily the case in 1940 for politicians, the military and the civilian population.

The 16<sup>th</sup>, 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> June, which saw President of the Council Paul Reynaud's resignation, Marshal Pétain's speeches then General de Gaulle's Appeal, represent a real turning point in 1940.

The exhibition takes a new look at the events which shaped the history of France by highlighting shifting patterns of historical viewpoints and commemorations. The exhibition puts the year 1940 in context by showing it through the eyes of the people who lived through it, adopting a highly immersive approach.

### **And you, what would you have actually been doing in 1940?**

1940 was marked by defeat as well as the signing of armistices, start of the Occupation, creation of the French State by Marshal Pétain and emergence of General de Gaulle onto the public stage. The exhibition analyses the Battle of France and explores the consequences of defeat on French people by looking at the way they experienced the year 1940, depending on whether they were prisoners of war or refugees, interned or living in an annexed, occupied or unoccupied area, in territories belonging to the colonial empire or, the pinnacle of freedom with London as a symbol.

**The exhibition is part of a cycle of national commemorations. In 2020, as fewer and fewer witnesses remain alive, we will be marking the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Battle of France, Appeal of 18<sup>th</sup> June and creation of Free France as well as the anniversaries of General de Gaulle's birth and death (1890-1970). As a major military history museum and important commemorative site honouring General de Gaulle, the Musée de l'Armée will also be offering visitors a renovated Historical Charles de Gaulle and refurbished rooms dedicated to the Second World War.**



## ACCOMPANYING THE EXHIBITION

### VISITS FOR EVERYONE

#### Help with visits

The digital guide offers additional information for exploring the exhibition, in French and English.

#### Guided tour

A trained guide plunges visitors into the atmosphere of the year 1940 and helps them understand the events of that dreadful year, from the shock of defeat to the establishment of the Vichy regime, by exploring the daily lives of French people, whether civilians, soldiers, refugees or prisoners.

From 12 years old - The tour lasts 1.30 hrs  
Bookings: [musee-armee@cultural.fr](mailto:musee-armee@cultural.fr)

#### Special tour

A special private tour with one of the exhibition curators in the evening, once the museum is closed to the public, followed by a glass of champagne! Find out everything you need to know about this pivotal year, see life through the eyes of a French person in 1940, and get a behind-the-scenes look at the exhibition.

15 October, 26 November, 10 December 2020 and 7 January 2021  
The tour lasts 1.30 hrs  
Bookings: [musee-armee.fr](mailto:musee-armee.fr)

### FAMILY VISITS

#### Fun exhibition visit

A trained guide helps young visitors put themselves in the shoes of a Resistance fighter, foreigner or French inhabitant of the occupied area as they solve problems arising in daily life during the conflict.

14 and 28 October, 25 November and 6 December 2020  
Suitable for children from 9 upwards (the guide tailors the visit to the age of participants)  
The visit lasts 1.30 to 2 hrs (15 people maximum)  
Bookings: [jeunes@musee-armee.fr](mailto:jeunes@musee-armee.fr)

#### Open visit

Seven special panels combined with a games booklet (in French and English) for young visitors provide a fun way for them to explore the exhibition. The youngest visitors can enjoy meeting the challenge of finding a specific work in the exhibition rooms, with a gift as a prize!

### FILM CYCLE

#### Spotlight on 1940

In 1940, French directors were confronted with endless difficulties and constraints. Vichy introduced film censorship while the Nazi occupiers kept a tight grip on every level of French cinema. Measures included immediately banning the showing of US and British films. Nevertheless, people continued to make films. While directors in France clearly wanted to give cinemagoers the chance to forget about the war or the trials of everyday life for a short while with, on the whole, films dealing uniquely in pure entertainment, on the other side of the Atlantic the Hollywood studios were on the cusp of contributing to the war effort.

24 September 2020 to 7 January 2021 at 7 pm - Austerlitz Auditorium  
Booking required, admission free subject to seat availability: [musee-armee.fr](mailto:musee-armee.fr) - +33 (0)1 44 42 38 77

### CONFERENCE CYCLE

#### 1940: a dreadful year

The conference cycle takes a new look at some of the key events and people marking the year 1940 with talks by leading specialists on the period.

Dates to come - At 1.45 pm - Talks last 1.15 hrs - Austerlitz Auditorium  
Booking required, admission free subject to seat availability: [histoire@musee-armee.fr](mailto:histoire@musee-armee.fr)

### **Patronage**

The exhibition is organised under the patronage of Emmanuel Macron, President of the French Republic.

### **Curators – Musée de l'Armée**

**Lieutenant-Colonel Christophe Bertrand**, head of the contemporary department

**Jordan Gaspin**, contemporary department

**Vincent Giraudier**, head of the Historial Charles de Gaulle

**Carine Lachèvre**, assistant curator of the Historial Charles de Gaulle

Assisted by **Madeleine Armanet, Laurent Charbonneau, Anne-Sixtine Clévenot, Camille Cros** and **Nathalie Poudroux**

### **Layout design**

Je Formule (Juliette Dupuy and Myriam Rose)

### **Graphic Design**

Estelle Maugras

### **Lighting design**

Studio Vaste (Mathilde Camouin and Julia Kravtsova)

### **Graphic communication**

Wijntje van Rooijen & Pierre Peronnet

### **DID YOU KNOW?**

On 18 June 1940, a voice rang out over the airwaves of the BBC, reaching the ears of thousands of attentive listeners. It was the resolute voice of... Winston Churchill, the British prime minister; a few days after the Dunkirk evacuation, giving a speech that became known as *Their Finest Hour*.

It is the third speech visitors will be able to listen to at the exhibition, following on from speeches by Paul Reynaud on 13<sup>th</sup> June and Marshall Pétain on 17<sup>th</sup> June, both heard by an equally large number of French listeners at the time. After the portraits of these orators is a drawing of a kepi. It belonged to a fourth speaker, whose speech was not recorded. Churchill gave permission to Charles de Gaulle, then unknown to the public, to step up to the BBC microphone a few hours after his own speech, on 18<sup>th</sup> June. It was the first of 67 speeches General de Gaulle, who gained the nickname «the microphone general», gave over the BBC airwaves during the war.

The few minutes spent listening give visitors a glimpse of the complexity of accessing information at the time: with contradictory facts and figures, criticism of enemy broadcasts, censorship and threats, who should be believed? Who should be listened to? The foundations of the war of the airwaves were laid in 1940.



BBC microphone, 1940, Paris, Musée de l'Armée  
© Paris, Musée de l'Armée Dist. RMN-Grand Palais/Laurent Sully-Jaumes

## EXHIBITION PARTNERS

The exhibition is organised with the support of CIC, a key partner to the Musée de l'Armée, as well as Groupe ADP and Fondation de Gaulle, the exhibition's two major sponsors



It has also benefited from the generous support of:



## PRACTICAL INFORMATION

Full programme and on-line ticket sales: [musee-armee.fr](http://musee-armee.fr)

The exhibition is open every day: 10 am - 6 pm, late opening until 9 pm every Tuesday

Musée de l'Armée  
Hôtel national des Invalides  
129, rue de Grenelle 75 007 Paris

[musee-armee.fr](http://musee-armee.fr)

**#CommeEn40**



## PRESS CONTACT

Agence Alambret Communication  
Margaux Graire  
[margaux@alambret.com](mailto:margaux@alambret.com) - 01 48 87 70 77

---

## MUSÉE DE L'ARMÉE

The sixth most popular Parisian museum with over 1.2 million visitors in 2019, the Musée de l'Armée offers visitors a chance to discover the Hôtel des Invalides and its famous Dome, which houses the tomb of Napoleon I, and to explore the history of France through its collections. Founded in 1905, the Musée de l'Armée boasts one of the world's most extensive military history collections, with close to 500,000 pieces hailing from the Bronze Age to the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Guided tours and educational workshops, temporary exhibitions, conferences and symposiums, films, special activities, concerts and other events also take place throughout the year.