



Dunkirk





YEAR 12 ESCAPE TO DUNKIRK!

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Christopher Nolan's *Dunkirk* is a cinematic and historical masterpiece. On Monday 24 July, students from Year 12 Modern History, accompanied by several other curious students and teachers, attended an afternoon session of *Dunkirk* at Liverpool Event Cinemas. The movie surrounds the famous evacuation of over 340,000 Allied troops from the shores of Dunkirk during the Battle of France in 1940, and thus is tied intimately to the final Modern History Higher School Certificate unit, 'Conflict in Europe' which follows the course of World War Two from its origins in 1935 to its conclusion in 1945. The movie follows three concurrent and crosscutting storylines: one following a week of experiences of two young infantry soldiers trapped on the Dunkirk shoreline; the second following a single day in the life of a British man, his son, and a friend, who bravely navigate their small private boat across the English Channel in the hope of playing their part in the saving of the soldiers' lives; the final following a single hour of a British RAF fighter pilot (played convincingly by Tom Hardy) as he maneuvers his Supermarine Spitfire through various dog battles in the skies above the English Channel. The movie cuts back-and-forth between the three stories, labeled as *The Mole*, *The Sea*, and *The Air* respectively, but it becomes clear over the movie's duration that the stories have more in common than their geographical proximity.

Before entering, students were treated to a personal insight into the experiences of an Allied soldier who survived the evacuation, as Mr. Palmer shared his Pop's memories of escaping from Dunkirk as well as his medals.

The film, largely devoid of dialogue and scored by Hans Zimmer, has received rave reviews for its vivid depiction of the evacuation of British troops from the shores of Dunkirk in the early months of World War Two, one of the most famous naval evacuations in human history. Furthermore, it has created a flurry in academic historical sources with regards to its historical accuracy, with Nolan choosing to leave out any references to the Nazis and their previous success during the opening months of World War Two. As warned by reviews, the students found themselves breathless from the heart-stopping dog fights to the gut-wrenching scenes in sinking Allied ships to the distant lapping of the waves along the Dunkirk shoreline. The entire movie felt tense, teased out dramatically by a constantly-ticking clock and the horrific screams of the German Ju-87 Stuka lining up for another strafing of the shoreline or an Allied ship.

The History Department would like to thank the students of Year Twelve for their excellent reflections upon the movie and their behaviour throughout the excursion, the College Executive and Event Cinemas Liverpool for their support of the students' learning, and Matt Palmer for sharing his Pop's insights.

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