



Forgotten Voices of Dunkirk

Joshua Levine

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It could have been the biggest military disaster suffered by the British in the Second World War, but against all odds the British Army was successfully evacuated, and 'Dunkirk spirit' became synonymous with the strength of the British people in adversity.

On the same day that Winston Churchill became Prime Minister, Nazi troops invaded Holland, Luxembourg and Belgium. The eight-month period of calm that had existed since the declaration of war was over.

But the defences constructed by the Allies in preparation failed to repel a German army with superior tactics. The British Expeditionary Force soon found themselves in an increasingly chaotic retreat. By the end of May 1940, over 400,000 Allied troops were trapped in and around the port of Dunkirk without shelter or supplies. Hitler's army was just ten miles away.

On 26 May, the British Admiralty launched Operation Dynamo. This famous rescue mission sent every available vessel - from navy destroyers and troopships to pleasure cruisers and fishing boats - over the Channel to Dunkirk. Of the 850 'Little Ships' that sailed to Dunkirk, 235 were sunk by German aircraft or mines, but over this nine day period 338,000 British and French troops were safely evacuated.

Drawing on the wealth of material from the Imperial War Museum Sound Archive, *Forgotten Voices of Dunkirk* presents in the words of both rescued and rescuers in an intimate and dramatic account of what Winston Churchill described as a 'miracle of deliverance'.

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