

# COMME EN 40

Young  
people

from September 17, 2020 to January 10, 2021

*Welcome to the exhibition France in 1940. This game booklet gives you the opportunity to discover people's lives in 1940, during the Second World War. On 3 September 1939, France and Great Britain declared war to Nazi Germany, led by Adolf Hitler. During several months, French and German soldiers challenged each other at the border but did not fight. This period became known as the «Phoney War».*

# The Phoney War (3 September 1939 - 10 May 1940)

1. Find the original version of this drawing and circle the 7 differences on the image opposite.



This cartoon was made by a French soldier. It refers to both the Phoney War and the inactive soldiers who wanted to have fun to lift their spirits.

At the time, several wars were fought and campaigns led by the Germans and the Russians, their allies, in Poland, Finland, Norway and the Balkans. The French fighters, who were entrenched in a fortified border system, called *ligne Maginot*, were waiting, bored, and some felt demoralised.

# The Battle of France (10 May - 25 June 1940)

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→ **Observe** the objects and archives on the Battle of France, during which the German military led operations against the French, Belgian and British troops. The German army invaded the Netherlands, Belgium and part of France. This caused the flight of millions of civilians: women, children and men too young or too old to be conscripted into the army. They set out in exodus, meaning they left their homes with a few belongings to flee the war and seek refuge in the south of France, a zone which was not controlled by the Germans.

**2.** Find the photograph of a family of refugees using the following detail. Then, link each caption to the image.



- The teenage girl, her brother and perhaps their grandmother watch the photographer without a smile.

- The father and his son are wearing military caps.

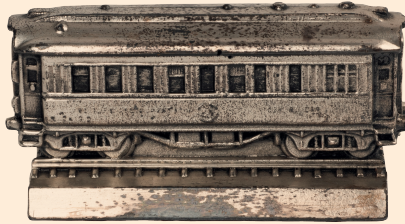
- What type of vehicle is going in the opposite direction to the refugees?

- At the back of the horse-drawn wagon, under a tarpaulin, the family of refugees stacked up a few items.

- The mother speaks to her youngest daughter.

→ **Frenchmen! (...) I give to France the gift of my person...**

On 17 June 1940, Marshal Pétain, Chief of State of France, announced on the radio that he intended to request an armistice with Germany. To demoralise the French soldiers, the German propaganda services reissued his message in leaflets (= printed sheets of paper) which were then dropped from airplanes.



## Two armistices (22 June and 24 June 1940)

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The signing of an armistice halts the fighting between war-torn countries that want to start restoring peace.

**3.** Using the two clues above, find the objects and fill in the text below.

• 22 June, armistice between the German and the French, signed in a w \_ \_ \* \* | in the forest of ☉ \* ☐ \* | \* \* | \* near Rethondes.

code: ☉ = c ; \* = e ; \* = g ; = i ; ☐ = m ; | = n ; \* = o ; \* = p

• 24 June, armistice between the Italians and the French, signed in Olgiatea near \_ \_ \_ \_ . (clue : the 1<sup>st</sup> letter is also the 18<sup>th</sup> letter of the alphabet)

Continue to the 2<sup>nd</sup> exhibition room and look for the banjo used by a prisoner of war.

After the signature of the armistices (= end of the fighting) with Germany and Italy, 1,850,000 French soldiers were captured. For them, a harsh life started in camps. They wore their uniforms, on which the letters KG could be painted («Kriegsgefangene» in German, meaning prisoner of war). They also wore identity badges around their necks like the ones you can see nearby.

## German occupation (1940-1944)

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In the occupied zone, the German army replaced the French flag with the Nazi swastika adorned red flag and the French signposts were replaced by signs in German, which was a way of truly asserting its domination but also to make it easier to travel within the occupied zone.

4.

Using these two letters, find the signpost which indicates the hospital in German :

e o

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→ **Position yourself** in front of the first poster, drawn by the Austrian artist Théo Matejko (1893-1946) and released by the Nazi regime in France, used to reassure the French people living in the occupied zone. Here are some clues. A smiling and strong German soldier. A French boy wearing a French looking beret, eating a slice of bread, smiling in the soldier's arms. The girls are not eating, they are hungry and are watching the slice of bread. A graffiti, "Et quoi encore ? EC 1940" (What next? EC 1940) was added by a French person who disagreed with the message on the poster: E. Criks, jeweller in Paris.

→ **Have you noticed** this beautiful head protection? Strange, it does not look like it originated from 1940! As it happens, this helmet, belonging to the Count Palatin Wolfgang (1494-1558), as well as other objects, had been spoliated (= seized, taken) from the Musée de l'Armée by the *Wehrmacht* (= the army of the Third Reich). This helmet had been brought back by the French, as a war prize, in 1800. During every conflict, works of art are recovered as spoils of war by the winners.

## The "nono" zone

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→ **The «nono» zone** was the zone unoccupied by the German army and was under the control of the French State. It was better known as the "Vichy regime" and led by Marshal Pétain.

Upon the request of Marshal Pétain, the General La Porte du Theil took care of the young French men by forcing them to enrol in a compulsory civilian service lasting 6 to 8 months (Act of 30 July 1940). Better known as youth camps, they were inspired by the Scout Association of France. The Third Reich also set up a labour service in 1935, which called up 18-year-old German boys and girls.

5.

Observe the uniform worn by men in youth camps and circle the correct one.



# Free France

General de Gaulle, who went to London with the support of the British Prime Minister Winston Churchill, wanted France to continue to fight alongside Great Britain. Following his 18 June appeal, Charles de Gaulle created Free France. The Free France armed forces were called the Free French Forces. At the end of August 1940, three French Equatorial African countries (Chad, Congo, Ubangi-Shari), as well as Cameroon joined Free France.

**6.** On the map below, draw a Cross of Lorraine, symbol of Free France, on each of the four countries mentioned above.



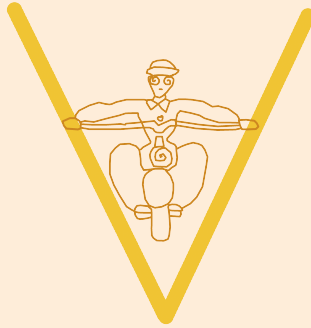
In October 1940, General de Gaulle wanted to use French Equatorial Africa as a base to launch attacks against Libya, which was then controlled by the Axis forces (Italy, Germany). Upon his request, Colonel Leclerc, Battalion Commander Koenig and Free French Forces fought against Marshal Pétain's French Vichy troops and seized Gabon.

7.

Add a Cross of Lorraine on Gabon.

8.

Go on the quest of the ornate object on the drawing below.



9.

Which regiment does it represent?

- a - the weight-lifting section of the regiment of Cameroonian Light Infantry
- b - the motorcyclist section of the regiment of Cameroonian Light Infantry

Did you notice the « V » for victory?

10.

Draw a Cross of Lorraine as it appears on the flag.

## The Battle of Britain

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→ **Discover**, using objects featured in this last part of the exhibition: The Battle of Britain. Hitler, leader of Nazi Germany, and Göring, Chief of the German Air Force, called Luftwaffe, wanted to invade England... which is an island. The battle of Britain started in July 1940 and did not end until May 1941. One of the most renowned episodes in this battle was the Blitz (= lightning in German) when cities and factories were bombarded to dishearten the British.

3 - wagon in the forest of Compiègne; Rome; 4 - Orszázarétt; 5 - b; 9 - b.

Answers :