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## The destruction of the passenger terminal during the Normandy landings



Cherbourg during World War II German troops occupied the **passenger terminal and the transatlantic wet** dock during the Second World War. Armoured towers were built on the quays and the German Army Command designated the port as the Fortress of Cherbourg. During the **D-day landings in Normandy**, not that far away on Utah beach, orders were sent to destroy the infrastructures in Cherbourg. The port was one of the main sites chosen for disembarking heavy equipment.

The Quai de France collapses, taking with it the Transatlantic wet dock and its trains and gangways. The 67-metre high bell tower and part of the buildings are destroyed by explosives. The bell tower is knocked down on June 23rd 1944, just three days before Cherbourg is liberated. However, the Passenger terminal has paid a high price for the town's freedom ? the port had been rendered useless.



No ships were able to dock at the Quai de France. Access to the port was blocked by sunken ships, one of them the tender Traffic. Two thirds of the southern end of



the Transatlantic hall had been destroyed. By the end of August 1944, all the wrecks and debris had been completely removed. American soldier near Transatlantic terminal building

## **The reconstruction of Cherbourg's passenger terminal**



Whilst waiting for work to start on reconstructing the passenger terminal, two large metal tents were erected to the north of the Quai de France in order to cater for stop-overs which started up again as from 1946. In 1948, the southern hangar was inaugurated as the 'passenger terminal'.

Reconstruction work on the quay and rehabilitation of the deep water port began in 1948 thanks to a loan of 1.75 billion francs from the French government after the war; funding aimed at making the country's ports operational once more. A simple restoration project was impossible so work began using the same techniques as those employed at the end of the 1920's: solid masonry box frames were submerged in order to give maximum stability. The quay was back in full use by June 1952. Cherbourg's renovated passenger terminal was inaugurated by the President of the General Council Mr. Antoine Pinay on May 22nd during a stop-over of the prestigious liner Queen Mary.