



FILM: **DUNKIRK**

FDG RATING: 3.8 ☺☺☺☺○  
Film Discussion Group (FDG) Scale is 1-5 (5 is best)

Christopher Nolan: *Director, Writer*  
Ensemble Cast:  
Fionn Whitehead: *Tommy*  
Tom Hardy: *Farrier (Spitfire pilot)*  
Kenneth Branagh: *Commander Bolton*  
Mark Rylance: *Mr. Dawson (Moonstone skipper)*

DATE: Aug. 20, 2017

**DISCUSSION SUMMARY: DUNKIRK**

Dunkirk is a masterful war movie that puts you right in the center of the men who are experiencing the chaos, deafening sounds, physical and emotional exhaustion, shell shock, and desperation while struggling to find the ounce of remaining bravery and will to persevere. It's late May 1940, and the Germans have penned in 400,000 Allied soldiers (including more than 200,000 members of the British Expeditionary Force, the British army in Western Europe) in the French port city of Dunkirk. The British, faced with the capture or possible annihilation of their troops, initiated a seemingly impossible rescue. Big military ships make massive targets for German bombers and U-boat attacks, so civilians with any sailing vessel from fishing trawlers to pleasure yachts were asked to steer across the English Channel to rescue as many of the stranded soldiers as possible. History recognizes this mission, named Operation Dynamo, as a near-mythic accomplishment. Churchill predicted 30,000 men might be evacuated. Unbelievably, over 338,000 Allied troops reached England.

One of our resident reviewers watched the film three times, appreciating the unique structure of three separate narratives (land, sea and sky) from three different chronologies (one week, one day, one hour), and noting the power of minimal dialog with little character development to keep the story honest. He believes the flying scenes were the best he has ever seen, made especially dazzling through IMAX digital technology.

The acting was extremely compelling from the beginning with the two young soldiers, to the dramatic pilot scenes. And of course, well known British actors Kenneth Branagh as Commander Bolton, and Mark Rylance as the civilian skipper of Moonstone, gave commanding performances. But one reviewer felt their performances weren't as memorable as in their other films.

Lots of "pluses" but we did have a few "minuses". Many scenes were intensely powerful and conveyed overwhelming vulnerability such as the sailor drowning under water and the pilot in the cockpit as he dive bombs in the air. However, one reviewer was expecting a more in-depth story about the civilian rescuers. We really only get to know the skipper of the Moonstone and his son. Another reviewer criticized the electronic music sounds as distracting.

There's no denying that Dunkirk portrays the anguish of trying to survive a war, in a brilliant original, intimate style. Even those of us who tend to avoid war films, agree that this film was exceptionally well done. We rallied an admirable 3.8 for Dunkirk on our scale of 1 to 5. 5 is the best.



See you at the movies!  
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