Le Havre

Le Havre (pronounced roughly as "Le Ah-ver") sits on the coast of the English Channel. The city's name means "the harbour", and it has the second-largest port in France.

It is one of the rare cities in France that was not created during the Roman period. Le Havre was only founded in 1517, created specifically as a harbour city by France. Many of France's expeditions to North America were launched from this harbour.

Le Havre suffered more than any other French city during the Second World War. It was bombed repeatedly by the Allies when it was occupied by Nazi Germany, especially during the Battle of Normandy. More than 12,000 homes were destroyed, and 90 percent of the city was left in ruins.

After the war, Le Havre was rebuilt from the ground up. The rebuilt city centre is now a UNESCO World Heritage Site, one of the only such sites in the world that was built in the modern era.

Population: 246,195

210 kilometres to Paris!