On 16th March 2006, Lorient signed the ‘Town of Art and History’ convention with the Ministry of Culture and Communication, and became a member of the national network of ‘Towns and Regions of Art and History’.

Only local communities that value their cultural heritage may aspire to this distinction granted by the Ministry of Culture and Communication, Heritage Department (Architecture Office). It guarantees the proficiency and high-level services of guides and the local architecture and heritage officers. From ancient remains to twentieth-century architecture, a network of 181 towns and regions throughout France offer you their expertise.

Nearby places of interest:
- Concarneau, Dinan, Dinard, Fougères, Morlaix, Quimper, Rennes, Vannes, and Vitré (all designated Towns or Regions of Art and History)

Discover the story of Lorient, a Town of Art and History...
- with a guide appointed by the ministry of culture and communication.

The guide knows all the facets of Lorient and provides the key details of each place, so that you can better understand the development of the city and its districts. Don’t hesitate to ask him any questions you may have.

The Architecture and Cultural Heritage Office, which coordinates the initiatives of Lorient, Town of Art and History, has designed this information brochure. It offers various tours and projects throughout the year.

Groups
Lorient, Town of Art and History, offers guided tours for groups by reservation throughout the year.

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Early infrastructures: the Scorf base and the dominions

The German High Command quickly decided that the dockyard facilities on the west coast of France would make a perfect launching point for the Battle of the Atlantic and protecting submarine against air raids.

From April, the 1st Stuka formation carried out its first raid on the small Scorf submarine base. From September 1st, it could house two type VI or type VII U-boats at high tide.

Meanwhile, a new submarine base, built one on either side of the slipway, the racing center.

The Kermranc base

In Lorient, little did people know about the scale of the upcoming projects. Between December 1940, the tip of the Kermranc peninsula was surveyed. All its buildings were destroyed to make space for the new submarine base in British territory.

Between February 1941 and January 1942, 15,000 workers built three concrete bunkers successively, representing a total reinforced concrete volume of 1.5 million cubic meters. The new Kermranc base sub-chamber could shelter the nearest powerful bows of the time and house more than twenty-five submarines.

A new system for a dry base: the built during 1941. The K and KII bunkers face each other and are connected by a 295 feet wide central apron for manoeuvring submarines. This dry bay and an unprecedented system allowing the submarines to be lifted clear of the water, the slipway, and a mobile railway that moved submarines to serve the 12 pens of the K and KII bunkers.

The submarine, anchored to its cradle, was then manoeuvred into the channel bay by one of two specially designed cranes.

A town under concrete

As construction work progressed and new developments allowed its armoury, the base became a true "island" under the concrete. An electrical and thermal power station and a tower where submarines remained for engineining in the event of a shipwreck were built at K1. Equipped with a protected transformer, KII bunker also included a feature that could house up to 1,000 submarines and numerous storage tanks and space. KIII is surrounded by restricted warzone on the landward side on three sides. It houses the three bunkers and provides access with the help needed to carry out their activities.

The base, and especially KII bunker, housed naval equipment during the siege of the port of Lorient that lasted until 10th May 1945.

The French base

The Kermranc site was used by the US Navy during World War II. In the early 1990s, the site was primarily used as a research and development facility. In 1997, the departure for Toulon of the “Sirene”, the last submarine based in Keroman, marked the end of submarine activities at the point of Keroman.

The Keroman submarine base represents a major concern for public finances and a challenge for the environmental community, various pressure groups. The site represents the development of a national hub for highlighting the economy and tourism of the site. The Keroman base, a key site active from Norway to the border between France and Spain, for a major international center for nautical heritage and primary intrusion in understanding twentieth century history.