Before landing the lead role, Whitehead went through three months of auditions.

**From the Front Line**

**Fionn Whitehead** had to step away. Following an hours-long shoot of the World War II film Dunkirk, in which he plays fresh-faced private Tommy, “I had to go have food with friends and have a laugh,” says the Brit, 20. “I had to shake off the day. Otherwise, I would have been dragged down.”

Shooting the **Christopher Nolan** thriller (out July 21) — about the 1940 battle that pinned 400,000 Allied soldiers on a French beach, between the English Channel and the German army — on location made for “a very intense atmosphere,” he adds. “We shot in Dunkirk. The destruction was sobering.” He gets into the action for *Us.*

**Q:** While training, was there ever a moment where you thought you couldn’t pull off a stunt?

You make yourself do the physical aspects for a Chris Nolan film! There was no excuse not to get into shape. I was surrounded by five burly stunt guys constantly telling me I could do it and forcing me through these exercises.

**Q:** Did filming ever feel too real?

There was a lot of imagination needed because of the world Chris built and the incredible sets constructed. But to say I’ve been through the same thing as those guys would be disrespectful.

There was a food truck on set!

**Q:** Why is it important for audiences to see this episode in history?

This is an event that we should look back on as a point of reference. It shaped the war. The spirit of Dunkirk is something everyone grew up learning about. After Dunkirk, everyone came together and it set the tone in the U.K.