

them and to operate a prisoner of war enclosure.¹²

At Châtelaudren, ten miles west of St. Brieuc, Task Force A quickly overran about a company of Germans on the morning of 7 August and, accompanied by men of the French Resistance, continued five miles beyond toward Guingamp. Mine fields and antitank obstacles outside Guingamp prompted a halt. Part of the cavalry and some FFI had meanwhile made a wide detour to envelop Guingamp from the south and after infiltrating the town reported that some Germans remained but that the greater part of the garrison had withdrawn to the west. These reports and the fact that the main body of the task force had received no fire from the positions east of Guingamp encouraged General Earnest to attack despite the late hour. Against light resistance the task force took the town.¹³

The most important bridge on the double-track railway was at Morlaix, thirty miles west of Guingamp. It was an arched stone structure some thousand feet in length and two hundred feet in height, the largest railroad viaduct in France.¹⁴ Suspecting that strong German forces would be in Morlaix, General Earnest endeavored to make contact with the 6th Armored Division so that he might call for help if necessary. "Where is Six Armored Division right flank?"

¹² Verbal Msg, TUSA Spec Force Detachment in contact with FFI to VIII Corps, 1625, 6 Aug; Msg, Earnest to Middleton, 2205, 6 Aug; Journal des Marches; VIII Corps AAR, Aug.

¹³ Verbal Rpt of TF A Liaison Officer to VIII Corps, 7 Aug, TF A Jnl, entry 1200, 7 Aug; Msg, Earnest to Middleton, 0030, 8 Aug; TF A FO 4, 6 Aug.

¹⁴ ETOUSA Engr Hist Rpt 10, Combat Engineering (1945).

he radioed Middleton. Middleton's reply of necessity was rather vague.¹⁵ As the task force approached Morlaix, Ernest tried without success to reach the armored division by radio.

German troops of the 266th Division had indeed occupied Morlaix, but early on 8 August the Germans departed the town to seek refuge in Brest. Driving toward Morlaix that same morning, Task Force A encountered only about a hundred Germans deployed around a château just east of the town. Taking the strongpoint by surprise, the Americans entered Morlaix and found the railroad viaduct intact.¹⁶

On the following morning, 9 August, the task force took a bridge south of Morlaix, and General Ernest reported that he had completed his mission. FFI detachments guarding the main highways between Dinan and Landivisiau had extended their control over the smaller roads. Task Force A captured more than 1,200 Germans; FFI, about 300. American and French losses were small.¹⁷

Earnest was preparing to join the 6th Armored Division at Brest when Middleton radioed him a new mission. The task force was to return to Morlaix and proceed from there northeast to the coast to secure the beaches of the bay of St. Michel-en-Grève, where cargo arriv-

¹⁵ Msg, Earnest to Middleton, 2153, 6 Aug, received VIII Corps CP 0100, 7 Aug; Msg, Middleton to Earnest, 0400, 7 Aug.

¹⁶ VIII Corps G-3 Jnl, 8 Aug; Msg, Ernest to Middleton, 2200, 8 Aug; VIII Corps AAR, Aug. One hundred and fifty special troops had been parachuted from England into Brittany during the night of 4 August to help the FFI protect the railroad bridges at Morlaix. TUSA AAR, I, 20.

¹⁷ Msgs, Earnest to Middleton, 1352 and 1615, 9 Aug.

ing from England was to be unloaded.¹⁸ German strongpoints had earlier commanded the beach, but only mines and angle-iron obstacles remained. Earnest's troops met no opposition as they extended their control over St. Michel-en-Grève on 11 August. Three LST's hove into sight that day and prepared to unload supplies. To insure security for supply operations, the task force patrolled the coastal region, cleared disorganized German troops from the area, and took more than a thousand prisoners; losses totaled 25.¹⁹

Middleton considered recalling Task Force A to St. Malo, but the FFI commander, Eon, persuaded him otherwise. A German garrison near Paimpol still held coastal forts overlooking the western approaches to the bay of St. Brieuc, thereby denying the Allies use of the St. Brieuc port and allowing the Germans to furnish the Channel Island troops with foodstuffs procured on the mainland. Eon proposed to clear the Paimpol area and requested a display of American force during his attack. Middleton gave Eon a thousand gallons of gasoline to transport about 2,500 FFI troops and instructed Earnest to send along a few armored cars, some tank destroyers, and perhaps a battery of artillery. Expecting the FFI to carry the brunt of the combat, Middleton cau-

tioned Earnest against forming a Franco-American force under a single commander. French and Americans were to share the profits of the venture, the Americans to get the prisoners, the FFI the captured arms and equipment.²⁰

The extent of the German opposition soon drew Task Force A into what developed into a four-day engagement. After reducing a strongpoint near Lézardrieux (three miles west of Paimpol) and taking 430 prisoners, the Americans and the French launched an attack against Paimpol, cleared the town by noon, 17 August, and captured more than 2,000 prisoners and much equipment. At the same time, a reinforced battalion of the 8th Division in an independent action on 15 August cleared the Cap Fréhel area, midway between Dinan and St. Brieuc, by firing a few white phosphorus rounds of 4.2-inch mortar and rounding up 300 prisoners.

The north shore had been swept clear, an achievement that belonged largely to Task Force A. The task force had secured a useable communications net between Dinan and Landivisiau. Although the railroad was of little worth because the port of Brest was not in American hands, the Task Force A operation was significant in a later context. To a large extent it made possible the logistical support for the major effort subsequently to be exerted to capture Brest.

"To the Last Stone"

When Task Force A departed the St. Malo area to sweep the Brittany north

¹⁸ TF A FO 6, 2400, 8 Aug, and Jnl, entry 2100, 9 Aug; Msg, Middleton to Earnest, 1710, 9 Aug; Msg, Middleton to Earnest, 1810, 10 Aug, TF A Jnl; see 21 AGp, Dir M-515, 27 Jul.

¹⁹ App. A to PS SHAEF (44) 29 (First Draft), 16 Jul, SHAEF G-3 File 24533/Ops, Future Ops; Memo, Evans to Earnest, 12 Aug; Roland G. Ruppenthal, *Logistical Support of the Armies, Vol. II, UNITED STATES IN WORLD WAR II* (Washington, 1959), Ch. II; TF A Ops 1 Aug-22 Sep, a preliminary MS, OCMH Files; ETOUSA Engr Hist Rpt 10.

²⁰ Msg, Middleton to Earnest, 1530, 14 Aug; Journal des Marches; see Memo, "JTR" [Col John R. Jeter] to Evans, 15 Aug.

shore, the 83d Division stayed to complete the task already begun. Few Americans suspected at the beginning of August that St. Malo would be difficult to take, for the rapidity of the advance into Brittany had brought a heady optimism. Yet studies made in England before the invasion indicated that there were strong defenses at the harbor, and contact with the defenders in the early days of August should have confirmed the fact that the Germans would make a determined stand there. Not until 5 August, however, did American commanders acknowledge that the Germans were capable of stubborn defense. By then, General Middleton and the VIII Corps, and particularly General Macon and the 83d Division, were aware that they had a nasty job ahead of them.²¹

Originally alerted for action against Rennes and Quiberon or against Brest, Macon had supported Task Force A at St. Malo with one regiment, hoping thereby to sweep aside the allegedly insignificant opposition at the port. The resistance that developed soon changed these plans, and by 5 August the entire division was committed there.²² (*Map I*)

At first wanting St. Malo immediately, later agreeing to bypass and contain the port if its reduction required "too large a force and too much time," General Bradley finally decided that with American troops dispersing to the far corners of Brittany the St. Malo harbor would be valuable as an auxiliary supply port

²¹ VIII Corps AAR, Aug, and G-2 Per Rpts 48, 49, and 51, dated 1, 3, and 5 Aug.

²² VIII Corps FO's 9 and 10, 1 and 2 Aug, G-3 Memo, 0630, 3 Aug, and G-2 Rpt, Beaches South of Vannes, n.d.; Min of Mtg. 0900, 30 Jul, 83d Div G-2, G-3 Jnl.

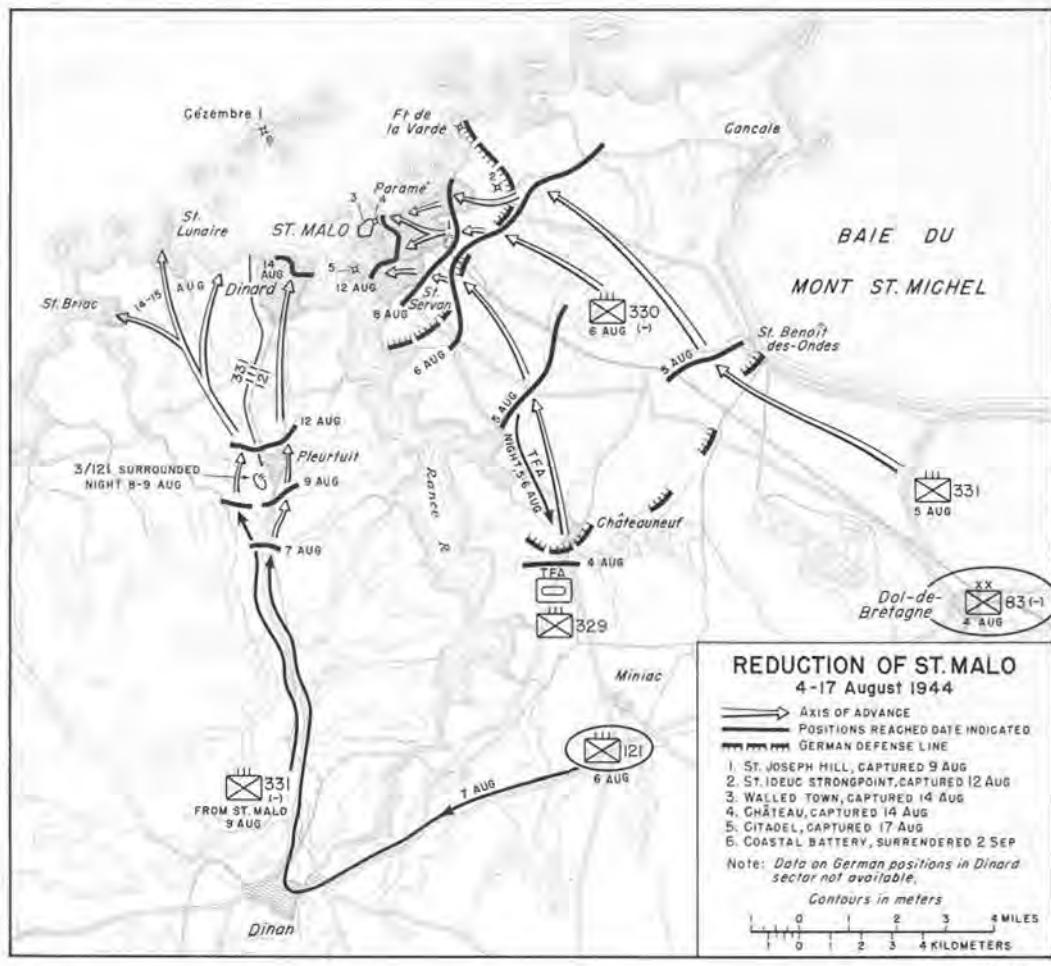
for those forces. Used by the Germans as a naval base for coastal operations and as a supply base for the Channel Islands, St. Malo could accommodate medium-sized vessels and had facilities to unload cargo at the rate of a thousand tons a day. Although naval planners had informed General Eisenhower "that we are likely to be disappointed in its possibilities as a port," Bradley ordered St. Malo taken.²³

To American commanders studying their maps, the Avranches-St. Malo area was much like the Normandy coastline where the OVERLORD landings had been made. The Bay of Mont St. Michel resembled in miniature the shape of the Bay of the Seine. The St. Malo peninsula appeared to be the Cotentin Peninsula seen through the wrong end of a telescope. The harbor of St. Malo was a smaller version of Cherbourg. The Rance River estuary provided a west coast for the St. Malo peninsula as the ocean did for the Cotentin. At the base of the Rance estuary, Dinan was in the same relation to St. Malo as Avranches was to Cherbourg.

A picturesque port, St. Malo was the birthplace of Jacques Cartier and the home of the privateers who had harassed English shipping for three centuries. Across the Rance River, more than a mile to the west, the beaches of Dinard had been a favorite with British tourists. The defenses protecting both towns comprised the fortress complex of St. Malo.

Although Frenchmen warned that about ten thousand German troops garrisoned the fortress, American estimates of German strength varied between three

²³ Ltr, Eisenhower to Montgomery, 10 Jul, SGS SHAEF File 381, OVERLORD, I (a).



MAP 11

and six thousand. As late as 12 August VIII Corps was accepting the figure of five thousand, even though in actuality more than twelve thousand Germans occupied St. Malo and Dinard, with about two thirds of that number on the St. Malo side of the Rance.²⁴

When the true numerical strength of

the garrison became known after the battle, some Americans began to feel that the haste displayed in getting the Brittany exploitation under way had enabled the Germans to build up their St. Malo forces. In bypassing the port and its approaches, the Americans permitted numerous small garrisons in the surrounding countryside, as well as stragglers from the Cotentin, to take refuge in the fortress. The absence of Allied naval patrols offshore had allowed rein-

²⁴ TF A FO 2, 1159, 4 Aug; 83d Div FO's 21 and 22, 1800, 4 Aug, and 0100, 6 Aug, and Annex 1 to G-2 Per Rpt 44, 16 Aug; G-3 Per Rpt 33, 1600, 5 Aug; VIII Corps G-2 Weekly Per Rpt 8, 12 Aug.

forcement and supply to be brought into the harbor from the Channel Islands. The growth of the garrison, which could not have occurred had the Americans thrust rapidly to the port upon entering Brittany, made reduction of the town a major task.

Though estimates of German strength were incorrect, American intelligence was right in its growing realization that the enemy in St. Malo firmly intended to resist. The garrison commander had rejected a proposal by French civilian officials that he surrender in order to save the nearby towns from damage. He had announced that "he would defend St. Malo to the last man even if the last man had to be himself."²⁵ That he could make a strong fight in support of his boast soon became evident.

In early August outposts between Dol-de-Bretagne and Dinan were withdrawn to the Châteauneuf-St. Benoît-des-Ondes line, which consisted of antitank obstacles and guns, roadblocks, wire entanglements, mine fields, and machine gun emplacements. Although the co-ordinated attack, launched on 5 August by the 83d Division and Task Force A (the latter alone taking 655 prisoners), pierced this line and secured Châteauneuf, the stubborn opposition gave advance notice that the defense would stiffen as the Germans drew more closely around St. Malo.²⁶

Hoping to outflank and isolate the St. Malo defensive complex, General Macon on 5 August sent a battalion of the 329th Infantry across the Rance in assault boats to cut the Dinan-Dinard road, a move

²⁵ 83d Div G-2 Per Rpts 32 and 33, 1800, 4 Aug, and 1600, 5 Aug.

²⁶ 83d Div FO 21, G-2 Per Rpt 32, 1800, 4 Aug, and AAR, Aug.

that was to be the preliminary action for a swift thrust to Dinard. Though the battalion crossed the river, the men uncovered such strong resistance on the west bank of the Rance that Macon quickly recalled them. Adding impetus to this decision was the discovery by the 331st Infantry, in the right of the division sector, of a much easier approach to St. Malo. Moving north in the area east of Châteauneuf toward Cancale, on the east coast of the St. Malo peninsula, the 331st encountered light covering forces defending canals, roadblocks, and mine fields. What the Germans were covering was their consolidation of forces on the main defense line of St. Malo.

That evening, 5 August, as Task Force A prepared to slip away to fulfill its original mission, the German commander prepared a last-ditch defense. As part of this activity, the fortress commander abandoned Cancale, which was occupied by the 331st Infantry on the following morning and immediately surveyed for use as a port for landing craft. The German commander also abandoned Dinan, which was surrounded on the following day by FFI troops who reported that several hundred Germans were willing to surrender, but only to Americans.²⁷ By then, the 83d Division was attacking toward St. Malo with three regiments abreast—the 329th on the left, the 330th in the center, and the 331st on the right—and was in contact with the main defenses of the St. Malo fortress.

On the St. Malo side of the Rance, the fortress encompassed three communities on the western tip of the peninsula. In

²⁷ Msg, Macon (signed [Lt Col Robert W.] Hartman) to Middleton, 6 Aug; 83d Div G-3 Per Rpt 5, 1200, 7 Aug.

the center was the walled town of St. Malo, originally an island accessible from the mainland only at low tide. Guarding the landward entrance into town was the fifteenth century château of Anne of Brittany. Protecting the town from seaward invasion were thick ramparts of stone. East of St. Malo and adjacent to it was the relatively modern suburb of Paramé, where bourgeois homes and resort hotels lined broad boulevards. South of St. Malo and across the harbor was the fishing port of St. Servan-sur-Mer. Not really on the ocean but on the Rance River estuary, St. Servan was the ferry terminus for the regular boat runs to Dinard. Dug into a rocky promontory on a peninsula between St. Malo harbor and the port of St. Servan was a casemented fort called the Citadel, the headquarters of the German commander.

Although the Germans at St. Malo and Dinard were fighting with their backs to the sea, they had powerful support from artillery placed on the small island of Cézembre, not quite three miles offshore. The Channel islands of Jersey, Guernsey, and Alderney could furnish the St. Malo fortress supplies by water and receive German casualties.²⁸

Hundreds of volunteer and impressed Todt workers had poured tons of concrete over steel for more than two years,

but the fortifications of St. Malo were not finished. Permanent coastal guns, for example, had not been installed in the Citadel, and only half a dozen field pieces, still with wheels, stood provisionally behind the firing apertures. The Germans had planned to dig an enormous antitank ditch across the St. Malo peninsula from the Rance to the sea and fill it with water, but the excavations were far from complete. Another weakness of the fortress was that it faced seaward against an expected Allied invasion from the sea. Barbed wire and other obstacles decorated the beaches.

Despite these deficiencies, the Germans were able to adjust quickly to a threat from the landward side of St. Malo. Enabling them to do so was a ring of strongpoints that barred the ground approaches. The most important were the coastal Fort la Varde, east of St. Malo; the strongpoint of St. Ideuc, on the eastern edge of Paramé; and positions on St. Joseph's Hill, in the southeast outskirts of St. Malo. The defense installations were mutually supporting, and underground wires assured telephonic communication among the principal garrisons. Stores of supplies, ammunition, water, and food, had been stockpiled in preparation against siege. As judged by *OB WEST*, the St. Malo fortifications were the most advanced of any fortress in the west.²⁹

The commander of St. Malo, Col. Andreas von Aulock, was somewhat disappointed to have been relegated to a static fortress, for he would have preferred to gain striking offensive victories for his Fuehrer. Yet whether he understood the strategic importance of Hitler's

²⁸ Msgs., Macon to Middleton, 2120, 9 Aug, and 1830, 11 Aug. R. Fouque, *La Cité, Bastion de la Forteresse de Saint-Malo* (n.p., 1945) (hereafter cited as Fouque, *La Cité*), contains the best description of the St. Malo fortress, the best account of the activities of the relatively few French who remained there during the battle, and the clearest narrative of German conduct. See also Dr. Paul Aubry, *L'Agonie de Saint-Malo* (Rennes, 1945) and *La Ruée sur Saint-Malo* (Rennes, 1947) for the events that occurred within the fortress.

²⁹ *OB WEST*, a Study in Command, II, 9.

fortress policy or not, he prepared to do what was required of him. A veteran of Stalingrad who promised to make his defense of St. Malo "another Stalingrad," Aulock stated, "I was placed in command of this fortress. I did not request it. I will execute the orders I have received and, doing my duty as a soldier, I will fight to the last stone."³⁰

Aulock, who had always been correct in his official relations with the French, could not understand why the inhabitants of St. Malo regarded him as an enemy. For their own good, he had suggested soon after the Allied landings in Normandy that the French evacuate the town, which was sure to be a battlefield. Despite Allied air bombardment on 17 July and again on 1 August, very few families had departed. The approach of U.S. ground forces prompted Aulock to clear his decks. Calling several town officials into conference on 3 August, he informed them that they were fine fellows but that he preferred to have them "in front of me rather than behind my back." Furthermore, since he wished to spare the population harm from the battle about to commence, most of the civilians had to go.

To French requests that he save historic St. Malo from destruction by declaring it an open city, Aulock answered that he had referred that question to Kluge, who had transmitted it to Hitler. Hitler had replied that in warfare there was no such thing as a historic city. "You will fight to the last man," he had ordered. As added justification to help the French comprehend Hitler's decision, Aulock explained that he com-

manded several small armed vessels that would have to maneuver in St. Malo waters. Since these boats constituted a legitimate military target, he could not declare the town an open city.³¹

Two days later, during the early evening of 5 August, a long line of French men, women, and children departed St. Malo in compliance with Aulock's order and entered American lines. Displaying white handkerchiefs and flags, carrying suitcases and pushing carts, most of the French population had left their homes reluctantly.

When American troops on 6 August came within range of the artillery on the island of Cézembre, German guns opened fire. One of the first shells struck the spire of the St. Malo cathedral. The steeple toppled over, a bad omen, the French believed. Later in the day fires broke out in the town. Frenchmen soon became convinced that the Germans had inadvertently spilled gasoline while burning codes and documents and that the few SS troops of the garrison with deliberate malice not only refused to permit fire fighters to put out the blaze but started others. The Americans unintentionally assisted by cutting the town's water supply in hope of encouraging German surrender, a hope concurred in by the mayor of St. Servan-sur-Mer, who had volunteered the necessary information on the location of the water valves. On the following morning, 7 August, the Germans added to the holocaust by setting off prepared demolitions that destroyed the port completely—quays, locks, breakwaters, and

³⁰ Fouque, *La Cité*, pp. 33-34; see also pp. 25, 44-45, and Plate 7.

³¹ As it turned out, the few vessels were quite unimportant in the military action that developed. Fighter-bombers soon drove them from the St. Malo waters.

harbor machinery. For a week, as the town burned, a pall of smoke hovered over the St. Malo battlefield.³²

In contact with the main defenses of the St. Malo fortress by the afternoon of 6 August, the 83d Division attacked positions forming a semicircle from the Rance to the sea. Belts of wire, large mine fields, rows of steel gates, antitank obstacles, and ditches were protected by machine gunners in pillboxes. Though the attack involved co-ordinated action by all three regiments and utilized air power and artillery, advances were markedly limited. Any last illusions that the battle might be swiftly terminated vanished.³³ To reinforce the 83d Division, General Middleton drew upon the 8th Division at Rennes for an infantry regiment (the 121st) and a medium tank company, which he attached to Macon's command; took a battalion of the corps artillery that had been attached to the 79th Division and ordered it into the St. Malo area; and requested increased air support.³⁴

On 7 August the three organic regiments of the 83d Division renewed the attack toward St. Malo after a fifteen-minute artillery preparation. In the center of the division sector the German strongpoint on St. Joseph's Hill, tested on the previous day, continued to hold. Guns emplaced in a granite quarry on the hill, cavelike troop shelters hewed out of rock, and the dominating ground itself gave the German defenders such advantages that the 330th Infantry (Col.

Robert T. Foster) could not even maneuver into position for an actual assault. The only genuine hope of success rested with sustained artillery fire. While division and corps battalions delivered concentrated shelling, the infantry tried to inch up the hill. Not the infantry progress, which was infinitesimal, but constant and severe artillery and tank destroyer pounding for two days finally produced results. On 9 August more than 400 Germans on St. Joseph's Hill laid down their arms and marched out under a white flag.³⁵

The elimination of St. Joseph's Hill enabled the troops on both flanks to surge forward rapidly. On the right, Colonel York's 331st Infantry drove northward through Paramé to the sea, cutting off the enemy garrisons at St. Ideuc and la Varde. On the left, Colonel Crabill's 329th Infantry moved through St. Servan to the very gates of the Citadel.

By 9 August, after five days of attack, the 83d Division had eliminated the major strongpoint on St. Joseph's Hill, had knocked out many individual bunkers and pillboxes, had captured about 3,500 prisoners, and was in possession of St. Servan and Paramé.³⁶ Yet for all this real achievement, resistance at St. Ideuc and la Varde, in the walled town of St. Malo itself, and fire from the Citadel continued undiminished, while supporting fires from Dinard and Cézembre rained down with telling effect.

The Reduction of Dinard

³² Aubrey, *L'Agonie de Saint-Malo*, pp. 49-50; 83d Div G-2, G-3 Jnl, entry 0945, 8 Jul.

³³ See 83d Div G-2 Per Rpt, 1600, 6 Aug.

³⁴ Msg, Middleton to Stroh, 5 Aug; Msg, Middleton to Jeter, 1200, 6 Aug; Msg, Macon to Middleton, 0035, 6 Aug; VIII Corps Msg, 6 Aug.

Though ground forces alone could only shell the Ile de Cézembre with ar-

³⁵ 330th Inf G-3 Rpt, 1130, 9 Aug.

³⁶ Msg, Macon to Middleton, 1535, 9 Aug.

tillery, Dinard was approachable by land. On 7 August, while the 83d Division was launching its attack on St. Malo, the 121st Infantry (Col. John R. Jeter) had crossed the Rance to destroy the Dinard garrison.³⁷ Colonel Jeter dispatched a small force to take the surrender of the enemy force at Dinan, which had promised the FFI to capitulate to the Americans. Turning north from Dinan, the main body of the 121st Infantry soon came under heavy artillery fire.

The 121st Infantry quickly discovered that every usable road to Dinard was barred by roadblocks of concrete, rock, felled trees, and barbed wire, each covered by camouflaged strongpoints manned by from twenty to eighty men armed with a high proportion of automatic weapons. The Germans also had constructed underground pillboxes and iron rail fences, strung double-apron barbed wire and concertina entanglements, and laid extensive mine fields. The pillboxes seemed unaffected by American artillery fire. German machine gun, small arms, mortar, and artillery fire harassed every American attempt to blast passageways through the other obstacles.

The 121st Infantry's advance was painfully slow. On the afternoon of 8 August, the 3d Battalion entered the village of Pleurtuit, less than four miles from Dinard. In the process it had reduced three pillboxes by close-in engineer and infantry action. As the troops moved into the village, several German tanks came in from the flanks and cut behind the battalion. Re-establishing a previously destroyed roadblock, German infantrymen isolated the unit.

³⁷ The following account is largely from the 121st Inf AAR, Aug.

Despite the support of strong artillery, mortar, and tank destroyer fire, the rest of the 121st Infantry could not break through to the battalion. Discouragement and tragedy marked the efforts. Two artillery planes, after successfully dropping blood plasma to the 3d Battalion, locked wings and crashed, their pilots and observers killed. A third plane was shot down by enemy fire. Two other planes flying observation missions in support of the isolated unit collided and crashed.³⁸

The isolation of the 121st Infantry's 3d Battalion confirmed General Macon's impression that in general the regiment's performance west of the Rance had been far from brilliant, but only on 9 August, when St. Joseph's Hill fell, was General Macon able to turn full attention to the situation. When the capitulation of St. Joseph's Hill enabled the 83d Division to occupy St. Servan and Paramé, Macon decided to reorganize his forces, reshape the battle, and give priority to the reduction of Dinard.

Eliminating the Dinard garrison, a task General Macon judged to be relatively easy, would serve four purposes: it would stop part of the effective artillery fire that came from across the Rance; it would block the possibility that German troops might escape from the St. Malo fortress westward toward Brest; it would release the isolated battalion of the 121st Infantry; and it would make possible the return of the 121st to its parent organization for possible participation in a strong attack against Brest, an operation then under discussion.

³⁸ VIII Corps G-2 Per Rpt 56, 2400, 10 Aug, and G-2 Weekly Rpt 8, 12 Aug; 83d Div FO 23, 2240, 6 Aug.



BEACH AT DINARD, showing underwater obstacles planted by the Germans to prevent amphibious landings.

To help the 121st Infantry take Dinard, General Macon first reshuffled his organic forces by replacing the 331st Infantry in the Paramé sector with the 330th and moving the 331st across the Rance to reinforce the 121st. Finally, he took personal command of the Dinard operation.³⁹

On 11 August, when General Macon got a co-ordinated attack on Dinard under way, physical contact with the 3d Battalion, 121st Infantry, still had not been established. The advance through the strongly fortified and stubbornly defended area continued painfully slow. The climax of a discouraging day came in the evening when a counterattack was repulsed with difficulty. "I want Monarch 6 [General Middleton] to know," a somewhat chastened General Macon radioed to the corps headquarters, "that

the resistance we are meeting south of Dinard is more determined than I anticipated."⁴⁰

The defense of Dinard was in the capable hands of Colonel Bacherer, who commanded a kampfgruppe composed in the main of remnants of the 77th Division, veterans of earlier fighting in the Cotentin. Creating their own field expedients to augment the existing fortifications of the Dinard portion of the St. Malo fortress, the men fought ably. To a surrender ultimatum from General Macon, Bacherer replied defiantly: "Every house must become a fortress, every stone a hiding place, and for every stone we shall fight."⁴¹

Despite the excellence of the German positions and the will to resist, the Germans could not indefinitely withstand the pressure of two regiments plus the increasing power of a growing number of corps artillery battalions in support. On the afternoon of 12 August, the 331st

³⁹ 83d Div G-2, G-3 Jnl, entries 1110, 1440, and 1800, 9 Aug, and FO 24, 0200, 10 Aug. The 330th Infantry, which had detached a battalion for duty with Task Force A, took control of a battalion and an additional rifle company of the 331st; the 331st took a battalion of the 330th under its control.

⁴⁰ Msg, Macon to Evans, 1400, 11 Aug.

⁴¹ 83d Div G-2 Per Rpt 40, 1600, 12 Aug.