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1 September 1944

O/B NOTES TO ACCOMPANY ACTION AGAINST ENEMY, REPORTS AFTER/ AFTER  
ACTION REPORTS 1 AUGUST- 31 AUGUST 1944

The following report contains the cumulative enemy Order of Battle collected during the engagement of the 83d Infantry Division with enemy units from 4 August to 17 August 1944, in the drive towards ST MALO-DINARD.

The report is divided into two parts as follows:

Part I. Order of Battle History of the Campaign

Part II. List of units actually identified by Prisoners of War captured and the number of prisoners from each unit.

Due to the extreme fluidity of the campaign and its rapid culmination, comprehensive Order of Battle information in the conventional sense was unobtainable. A cursory glance at the table of units (Part II) shows that there was extreme disorganization among the enemy and that the Germans often threw many miscellaneous units together for hasty defense purposes. In addition, numerous prisoners were merely stragglers or members of units forced into the ST MALO pocket by the strong American attack south of AVRANCHES and west through the BRITTANY PENINSULA.

The sometimes immense number of prisoners captured made thorough interrogation impossible, and the extreme disorganization among the enemy made conventional Order of Battle investigation of little value.

For the A C of S, G-2:

*Isadore Hamlin*

ISADORE HAMLIN

2d Lt. Inf.

OIC, OB Team # 20

PART I  
ORDER OF BATTLE HISTORY OF THE CAMPAIGN

The American breakthrough to AVRANCHES and RENNES opened the gates for the invasion of BRITTANY. The speed and the power of the American drive led to the collapse of the German front and confusion among the enemy. In BRITTANY only the major ports were stubbornly defended. The 83d Inf Div was assigned the mission of capturing the port of ST MALO. This meant that the 83d had to attack three neighboring cities, PARAME, ST MALO, and ST SERVAN on the eastern bank of the RANCE RIVER, and the city of DINARD on the western bank.

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97

The enemy had a total of over 12,000 men in the area, some 8,000 of which were concentrated on the ST MALO side. These forces represented practically every conceivable unit in the German armed forces. They had been thrown hastily together and great many of them had retreated into the pocket from NORMANDY. Others were garrisoned in BRITTANY for a long time, while a small group from 319th Inf Div was ferried from the CHANNEL ISLANDS to add its bit to the defense of ST MALO.

The quality of troops varied greatly. The poor troops included the 602 Ost Bn (Russian), which deserted en masse at the first opportunity, and the two Security Bns, the 1220th "M" Bn ("M" means "Magen", in English "stomach") composed of men with serious stomach ailments, and the 1222 "O" Bn ("O" means "Ohren", in English "ears") containing soldiers in the various stages of deafness. In addition, there was a great number of reserve, replacement and "Marsche" units with little training and combat experience except for their cadres. The 83d also encountered many Marines, who often proved to be older men unfit for combat duty.

On the other hand, considerable groups of paratroopers from the 2d and 5th Para Divs and various para replacement units were in ST MALO as well as the remnants of the 77th Inf Div which had fought hard in NORMANDY.

Permanent defenses were very elaborate and were prepared over a long period of time. Captured maps and overlays and information from FFI sources showed that these defenses were designed primarily against an attack from the sea. Still, many obstacles impeded our advance up the semi-peninsula. They consisted of road blocks made of heavy concrete and iron, barbed wire entanglements, mined fields covered by AT guns, etc. The enemy also possessed a considerable amount of artillery.

A map captured on 5 August revealed the following as the main enemy units to face us on the ST MALO side of the RANCE RIVER:

- 1220 Security (Sicherungs) Bn "M"
- 1222 " " " "O"
- 1st Bn, 899 Inf Regt, 266 Inf Div
- 1st Bn, 266 Arty Regt, 266 Inf Div
- 602 Ost (Russian) Bn
- 266 Div rear services
- 1266 Coast Arty Regt

The attack on ST MALO started on 6 August with the capture of CHATEAUNEUF, DOL de BRETAGNE, and the outer defense line. The enemy had established a series of strongpoints in towns and villages on the road to ST MALO. The powerful drive of the 83d reduced these positions in short order. The prisoners captured during the first few days of the operation came from inferior fighting units which were manning the outer defenses. They included men from some thirty different replacement, training, and "Marsche" units, many of which belonged to the 158th Reserve Inf Div. About 40% of the personnel of the 602 Russian Bn left their trenches to surrender to our troops. A few prisoners were taken from the 77th

98

Inf. Div, 91st Inf Div, 266th Inf Div, 243d Inf Div, 353d Inf Div, 5th Para Div, 2d Para Trng Regt, and the two Security Bns. There was also a smattering of stragglers from still other units decimated in NORMANDY as well as Railroad and Organization Todt workers.

This breakdown of prisoners in the first few days of the offensive indicated that the enemy was employing distinctly inferior troops in the outer defense line and that the main defenses would be manned by better units with a higher fighting spirit. The 602 Russian Bn which was responsible for the defense of the left flank of the German perimeter around ST MALO was the only major enemy unit to suffer great losses during the first days of our drive.

On 13 August PARAME, ST MALO, and ST SERVAN were in our hands, but our troops had to fight from house to house in order to wrest the city proper from the Germans. Many strongpoints proved difficult to reduce and it was generally true that the units within the city fought much more stubbornly than the outer perimeter forces.

The following is a translation of the oath taken by commanders of strongpoints:

"614 is to be regarded as a strongpoint. As its commander I am lawfully obliged to defend it under all circumstances, even at the cost of my own life or the lives of my men. This oath also applies in case I am surrounded, or under siege for an undetermined number of days. In the event that I fail in the execution of my duty as commander of this strongpoint, I shall be tried in accordance with the order of the C in C West, by court martial immediately or upon return from military imprisonment."

After the fall of the town itself, only the CITADEL, a practically impregnable fortress of rock and concrete standing at the point where ST SERVAN juts into the sea, remained in German hands. It served as the enemy's headquarters, main strongpoint, and last line of resistance. Colonel von Aulock, a fanatical Nazi who saw action at STALINGRAD, commanded all enemy forces in ST MALO from the CITADEL. Von Aulock swore to fight to the last and turned back all of our appeals to stop the useless bloodshed by surrendering with his garrison estimated as 500 remaining in the CITADEL itself.

On 6 August v. Aulock issued the following order:

Commandant of  
Fortress St Malo

St Malo, 6 Aug 44

MESSAGE FOR THE TROOPS  
IN REFERENCE TO THE GENERAL SITUATION

With the breakthrough of our Panzer units towards AVRANCHES, the three to four American divisions now operating in BRITTANY are cut off.

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The Father and's eyes are upon us. If everyone discharges his duty and we hold out just a little longer we shall see the enemy now attacking us caught in the rear and destroyed by our Panzer units.

Anyone deserting or surrendering is a Schweinehund!!

This message is to be communicated to the troops immediately.

(signed)

Aulock

While some units of the 83d Inf Div were fighting in ST MALO, others were advancing along the other bank of the RANCE RIVER toward DINARD. DINARD was defended by over 4,000 troops which were almost as conglomerate a mass as those met in the ST MALO operation.

The bulk of the enemy forces at DINARD came from 3d Bn, 7th Para Regt, 2d Para Div; 1st Bn, 852d Inf Regt, 343 Inf Div; 3d Bn, 899 Inf Regt, 266 Inf Div; and the 1220th and 1222d Security Bns. The 77th Inf Div was also quite well represented. This Division, once destroyed in NORMANDY, seems to have played mainly an administrative role in the DINARD area as well as in ST MALO. Colonel Bacherer, a veteran of CHERBOURG fighting, and now the Division CO of the 77th Inf Div, was the commander of the DINARD defenses under v. Aulock.

The attack of the 83d on DINARD proceeded well from the beginning. Enemy strongpoints and "Tobruks" were overcome, and German prisoners were counted in the thousands. On 15 August, Col. Bacherer surrendered with his entire staff thus practically ending the resistance in DINARD. Other high ranking officers taken prisoner in DINARD included Col. Wittenberg of the staff of the 77th Inf Div; Major Buddenhagen, CO of the 912 AA Bn; Major Lieberich, CO of a mixed Battle Group; Major Rambach, CO of the 1st Bn, 852d Inf Regt; Major Rolschewski, CO of the 3d Bn, 7th Para Regt, and others. Prior to the attack on DINARD many officers were captured in the ST MALO sector including, Lt. Col. Jaeger, CO of a Battle Group and, Lt. Col. Soloviev, CO of the 602 Russian Bn.

On 17 August, after an artillery pounding, the CITADEL fell. Col. v. Aulock surrendered with 571 officers and men, including 200 marines.

During the entire campaign the 83d Inf Div captured well over 12,000 prisoners (see Part II for the breakdown of prisoners).

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100

## PART II.

~~RESTRICTED~~LIST OF UNITS ACTUALLY IDENTIFIED BY PRISONERS OF WAR CAPTURED AND THE NUMBER OF PRISONERS FROM EACH UNIT.

<u>UNIT</u>	<u>NO. OF PWs</u>	<u>UNIT</u>	<u>NO. OF PWs</u>
<u>2 Parachute Division</u>		583 Inf Regt	10
7 Para Regt	539	584 Inf Regt	12
2 Para Regt	2	319 Arty Regt	8
6 Para Regt	3	319 Engr Bn	1
Para Regt ZBV	36	319 Mob Bn	1
2 Para Arty Regt	1	319 Veterinary Co	1
2 Para Sig Bn	3	319 Division Supply	2
<u>5 Parachute Division</u>		<u>343 Infantry Division</u>	
13 and 14 Para Regts	88	852 Inf Regt	650
5 Para AA Bn	27	<u>353 Infantry Division</u>	
5 Para Engr Bn	22	942 Inf Regt	1
5 Para AT Bn	19	353 Sig Bn	2
5 Para Arty Regt	1	<u>709 Infantry Division</u>	
5 Para Sig Bn	10	729 Inf Regt	1
5 Para Supply	220	709 AA Bn	1
<u>17 SS Pz Gren Div "GvB"</u>		<u>Various Reserve Replacement</u>	
38 SS Pz Gren Regt	1	<u>Units. (Total for all). 1700</u>	
<u>77 Infantry Division</u>		<u>158 Reserve Infantry Div</u>	
1049 Inf Regt	36	213 Res Inf Regt	
1050 Inf Regt	17	318 Res Inf Bn	
177 Arty Regt	8	472 Res Inf Bn	
177 AT Bn	1	354 Res Inf Bn	
177 Sig Bn	120	221 Res Inf Regt	
177 Engr Bn	10	375 Res Inf Bn	
Division Headquarters	532	360 Res Inf Bn	
Division Supply	360	18 Res Inf Regt	
<u>91 Infantry Division</u>		221 Res Arty Regt	
1058 Inf Regt	5	213 Res Arty Bn	
1058 Medical Co (?)	5	2 Marsch Bn	
<u>243 Infantry Division</u>		221 Res Motor Co(?)	
922 Inf Regt	1	158 Marsch Bn (?)	
243 Engr Bn	1	158 Replacement Bn (?)	
<u>265 Infantry Division</u>		213 Res Engr Bn (?)	
896 Inf Regt	18	213 Res Sig Co (?)	
<u>266 Infantry Division</u>		158 Res Sig Co (?)	
897 Inf Regt	87	213 Res AT Bn (?)	
899 Inf Regt	460	213 Res Inf How Co (?)	
266 Arty Regt	240	158 Res Engr Co (?)	
266 Engr Bn	4	<u>Other Units</u>	
Division Supply	24	2 Res Inf Bn	
<u>319 Infantry Division</u>		49 Res Inf Bn	
582 Inf Regt	19	54 Res Inf Bn	
		83 Res Inf Bn	
		333 Res Inf Bn	
		406 Res Inf Bn	
		455 Res Inf Bn	

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101

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<u>UNIT</u>	<u>NO. OF PWs</u>	<u>UNIT</u>	<u>NO. OF PWs</u>
833 Res Inf Bn		<u>582 Eastern Btry</u>	88
894 Res Inf Bn		<u>Mine Laying Co</u>	20
18 Res Arty Bn		<u>Medical Transport Co</u>	32
62 Res AT Bn		<u>Medics</u>	70
204 Res AT Regt		<u>Festungskommandantur</u>	
<u>Security (Sicherungs) Units</u>		<u>ST MALO LXXIV</u>	49
195 Security Regt	5	<u>Jersey Kommandantur</u>	1
282 Security Bn "M"	5	<u>Sailors</u>	33
521 Security Bn	3	<u>Customs Officials</u>	43
1220 Security Bn "M"	500	<u>Organization Todt</u>	26
1221 Security Bn "O"	3	<u>NSKK</u>	14
1222 Security Bn "O"	700	<u>Technical Emergency Corps</u>	3
<u>Marines</u>	1600	<u>Railroad Workers</u>	8
<u>602 Eastern Bn</u>	590	<u>Workers (Poles, Belgians, Italians, etc.)</u>	246
<u>Fortress Co ST MALO</u>	500		
<u>912 AA Bn</u>	279		
<u>2 Para Trng Regt</u>	200		
<u>3 Para Trng Regt</u>	3		
<u>53 Flieger Regt</u>	1		
<u>1041 Inf Regt</u>	2		
<u>1266 Coast Arty Regt</u>	89		
<u>1271 Coast Arty Regt</u>	94		
<u>XI Flieger Korps</u>	1		
<u>12 Landesschuetzen Bn</u>	60		
<u>16 Machine Gun Bn</u>	16		
<u>292 AA Bn</u>	3		
<u>341 Assault Gun Bn</u>	43		
<u>450 Mobile Bn</u>	3		
<u>602 Mobile Bn</u>	2		
<u>797 Eastern Bn</u>	23		
<u>857 Landesschuetzen Bn</u>	8		
<u>102 Barrage Balloon Unit</u>	27		
		<u>TOTAL PWs PROCESSED</u>	10,713
		<u>PWs NOT PROCESSED</u>	654
		<u>TOTAL PWs FOR OPERATION</u>	11,367
		<u>PWs THROUGH MEDICAL CHANNELS</u>	984
		<u>GRAND TOTAL (including PWs evacuated through medical channels)</u>	12,351
		<u>ENEMY DEAD BURIED BY 83d INF DIV</u>	503

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102

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HEADQUARTERS 85D INFANTRY DIV. ON  
MII Team 428

1 Sept 44

**SUBJECT:** Action Against Enemy, Report After/After Action Reports.

**TO :** The Adjutant General, Washington D. C., thru AC of S, G-2, 85d Inf Div.

1. In compliance with letter Hq 85d Inf Div, Office of the Commanding General, dated 20 July 44, File No. 319.1/401, subject as above, the following report is submitted:

1 Aug

2 Aug

3 Aug

Civilians interviewed these dates had no knowledge of enemy movements or activities.

4 Aug

Two civilians with knowledge of enemy activities were interviewed near PORTO-ROSON and information obtained consisted of a flying-bomb installation, gasoline depot, ammunition depot, blockhouses, AT barrier, underground depot with rail and tunnel system, concentration of troops, German CP, German Hq, Arty emplacements, AT line, morale, in the vicinities of Le SIMONNAIS, ROCHNEUF, ST MALO, ST SERVAN, FORT-de-la-CITE, ST COULOMB, Le VIVIER-sur-MER.

5 Aug

Thirteen civilians with knowledge of enemy activities were interviewed at ST PIERRE-de-PLESQUEN, BLACKFISH CP, DOL, respectively and information obtained consisted of locks destroyed by enemy, boat positions, troop concentrations, AT wall, pillboxes, tanks, machinegun emplacements, German Hq, barracks, minefields, strongpoint, gasoline and ammunition depot, mined bridge, AT ditches, blockhouses, electric transformer, airfield, machinegun emplacements, morale, coastal defenses, conversion of vessels into Anti-aircraft ships, mined roads, cannon emplacements, barricades, results of our artillery fire, in the vicinities of MOLE-se-ST MALO, CHATEAUNEUF, VIEUX-BOURG, La BARONNIE, FORT-de-CHATEAUNEUF, Le MANE, La VILLE-es-HURIAUX, Le ROGERAIS, Le QUINTINAIS, La METRIE, Le BOURGNEUF, Le VILLAGUERIE, DINARD, La BEGAUDIERE, DINAN, ST SOLEN, GRAND BEY, PTE-de-CORBIERES, Le BLESSIN, PONT-de-BLANC ESSUY, BIEZ-JEAN River, Le BOUILLON, La GOUESNIERE, ST MALO, RANCE River, CANCALE, La BOURELAIS, La FLOURIE, ST SERVAN, PLEURTUIT, Islands of JERSEY and GUERNSEY.

6 Aug

Three civilians with knowledge of enemy activities were interviewed at BLACKBOY Stragglers CP, DIV ARTY CP, and BLACKSTONE FWD CP respectively and information obtained consisted of AA on ships in harbors, fortified towers, German Harbor Commander's office, food depot, troop concentration, air-raid shelter, gun emplacements, Hq Defense Commander's CP, mine d areas, booms across locks, mined lighthouse, terrain features, German destruction of telephone exchange building, morale, blockhouses, fortifications, preparation by Germans to destroy installations, electric motors, in the vicinities of ST MALO, ELLUSE-de-NOYE, YFFINIAC, ST BRIAC, GUINCAMP, CHATELAUDREN, BREST, ST BRIEUC, HILLION, LAMBALE, BROONS, CHATEAU-de-LOIR, RENNES, NOYAL, JUGON, PLELAN, DINAN., La METRIE-aux-HOMETS, VILLEGAUTIER, ST LUMAIRE.

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