

The Battle of St Nazaire

signing them to the Reserve Artillery Base and urging that they be sent to France with as little delay as possible.

So well had the work of manufacture progressed that by April 15 enormous quantities of completed structural units were on the docks at the port selected for the embarkation of the expedition. A few weeks later 260 men and 18 officers set sail with the first consignment of materials, arriving at St. Nazaire on June 9.

From that time on great cargo ships plied across the submarine infested seas, back again and across again, bearing the component parts of the batteries to the shores of France and to Pershing. Whether the Hun knew of the sailing of the Navy Battery ships is, of course, not known, but it is a fact that while all of the steamers safely delivered cargoes, not once but many times, one steamer originally included in the transport list, but later withdrawn, was among the first of the victims of the submarine *U-151* operating off our coast.

Thus far none of the many difficulties had even seriously delayed the realization of the naval experts' dream, and by August 12 all of the battery material was safely in France, but the work of assembling the units had begun long before.

While the steamers were transporting the batteries, which had been reduced to their standard component parts for shipment, there began in the French port of debarkation what is now and will always be referred to by the men of the Naval Battery Expedition as "The Battle of St. Nazaire." By the time the first two steamers had tied up to the French dock, and their heavy cargoes had been snaked

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