

# **ST NAZAIRE SUB DEPOT**

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## **STATIONS**

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## **EMBLEM SIGNIFICANCE**

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## **OPERATIONS**

### **Chateauroux Sub-Depots**

Chateauroux Air Depot commanded several sub-depots. These Sub-Depots were located at Bordeaux-Bacalan, (special clothing & medical supplies); Niort-Chize (aircraft ammunition); Metz-Frescaty (vehicles & construction supplies) St. Mihiel (conventional ammunition storage); St. Nazarene (aircraft seaport); and Les Moulin's (vehicle storage and maintenance) and the Villefranche (parts storage).

St. Nazaire is in the Loire-Atlantique Department, 284 miles (457 km) west of Paris and 18 miles (29 km) south of Autoroute All. It is a port city on the Atlantic Ocean that was heavily bombed

during WWII in an attempt to destroy submarine pens constructed there in 1941. The St. Nazaire Sub-Depot (47° 18'N - 02° 09'W) was located at the civil-military Montoir Airfield on the east edge of the city of St. Nazaire, with port access south of route D100.

St. Nazaire is located thirty-four miles (55 km) west of Nantes, France. Initially the Nantes-Bougon Airport was proposed as a secondary air depot to be operated by the 85th Air Depot Wing from Erding AB, West Germany. Nantes was deleted after site survey determined that airfield improvements would be very expensive. USAF desired a seaport air depot be built to accommodate ship delivery of tactical aircraft, but the primary delivery method became flying most single engine and multi engine aircraft across the North Atlantic ocean year round.

During the 1930s, the SNCAO Breguet Aircraft Company had its primary aircraft factory on the St. Nazaire-Montoir airport, and these hangars and shops were available in 1951. This resulted in occasional use of the St. Nazaire port facility for the shipment of aircraft, decocooning, and depot maintenance prior to fly-away to USAFE tactical units. Sud Aviation was located on the Montoir Airdrome and performed the depot function at St. Nazaire under contract from Chateauroux Air Depot. The USAF operated two escort aircraft carrier delivery ships, USNS Tripoli TCVU-64 and USNS Crotan TCVU-66, from Brookley AFB, Mobile, Alabama. These ships delivered hundreds of MDAP aircraft: T-6Gs, F-84Gs, RF-84Fs, and F-86Ks; plus USAFE aircraft: F-86Ds, F-102As, and H-21Bs. The fighter aircraft were off-loaded by cranes and towed about one mile to the Sud Aviation shops. All the factory-new F-86Ds in 1954 and the overhauled F-102A/TF-102As in 1959 were prepared for shipment to USAFE by spraying the whole aircraft with a white plastic coating "cocooning" to prevent corrosion. The Sabre Dogs and Duces were shipped on the flight deck as cargo and exposed to sea air.

They required a large amount of corrosion control work after arrival and were processed by the 7485th Air Depot Group. All fighters were inspected and test flown at Montoir Airport, then delivered to USAFE fighter interceptor squadrons in England, West Germany, and Spain.

The 2d Air Postal Sq sent two airmen to operate Det #9, APO #203. This APO was discontinued in November 1954 and a new APO was operated by the Army.

The St. Nazaire-Montoir sub-depot was not used for aircraft shipments after 1963 and the 7485th Air Depot Group was discontinued in 1961. Portions of this facility were turned over to the U.S. Army and no USAF controlled real estate remained at St. Nazaire.

The St. Nazaire-air depot facility is now used as an aircraft sub-assembly plant. The city of St. Nazaire is served by train from the Paris Gare de Montparnasse station, and is found on Michelin Map #316 Local and IGN Series Blue #1123 O.

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Sources