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Boots from the French North Coast

Among the many ports along the English Channel and the Atlantic Ocean coast only Brest, Lorient, St. Nazaire, La Rochelle, and Bordeaux may be mentioned here. The rich supplies found there are of the greatest importance for industry and for feeding the population.

On 15 August 1940 the first booty trains, mostly with goods in short supply were sent home. Up to 30 September 1940, the following raw material quantities were located and, so far as possible, transported to the distributing stations in Germany:

	<u>Located</u>	<u>Transported</u>
Steel and iron	178,000 t	9,500 t
Metals (nonferrous)	104,000 t	14,000 t
Chemical raw material and rubber	16,000 t	1,300 t
Oils and fats	2,600 t	1,800 t
Lumber 5,000 cubic meters	3,500 t	215 t
Skins and furs 59,000 pieces	800 t	450 t
Textile raw materials	23,000 t	9,500 t
Misc. raw materials	1,000 t	550 t
Total	328,900 t	37,315 t

Further removed up to 30 September 1940 were:

931 machine tools	in	258 railroad cars
101 manufacturing machines	in	11 railroad cars
36 electric motors	in	2 railroad cars
Misc. machine tools	in	<u>250 railroad cars</u>
Total		521 railroad cars

The important state-operated armaments plant in Chatellerault with about 5,000 machine tools in operation had - before the truce - a capacity of 4,000 machine guns weekly. A further increase to 25,000 machine guns per month had been planned, with a labor force of 8,000 men. The plant received an order from the OKH for assembly of 1,700 machine guns and a further order in the amount of 2,000,000 marks. Further orders were given out for cables, field glasses, tank periscopes, boilers for field kitchens, 10,000 iron barrels, life jackets, etc.

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German Navy Orders:

21 transport ships, 6 commercial ships, and 6 fishing steamers were equipped and completed for the Navy by shipyard in Nantes, St. Nazaire, Lorient, Bordeaux, and Bayonne. The shipyards, working in two shifts, received further orders for repairs and equipment. Three firms in Bordeaux are manufacturing 5,000 kapok life jackets and 90,000 cork life jackets, part of which have already been delivered. The heavy textile mill Ets. Bessonneau in Angers, is working on large navy orders for wire and hemp cordage, hammocks, pneumatic floats, pilot's lines, canvas, rope ladders, camouflage nets, and shelter halves. The first orders have been delivered.

German Air Force Orders:

The firm SNCA-O in St. Nazaire and Esoublac is assembling the US-imported aircraft type N.A. 57. As long as the stock lasts, this will be continued for the German Ministry of Air. Besides, the firm is working for the Heinkel Works (model 64).

A plant in Brest has orders for 10 "Bizerte" to be used as German emergency seaplanes.

Another five plants are manufacturing balloon winches, aircraft radio equipment, radio cars, parachute ropes, camouflage nets, and gauges for North-German Machine Plant (Nordeuma).

Among the largest heavy textile mills of France are the following five:

Le Duc-Ladevese in Champagne, Sarthe district

Dalige in Le Mane, Sarthe district

Liguge Spinning and Weaving Company in Liguge, Vienne district

Bealed (?) in Ferte Bernard, Sarthe district

Ets. Bessonneau in Angers, Maine and Loire district

These five textile mills operate together about 700 looms. They are able to manufacture heavy textiles from 350 to 1,200 gram per square meter and have a combined monthly capacity of about 250 to 300,000 square meters.

Three shops of the cotton mill in Cholet are manufacturing for the Army black-out material, throw rugs, bed sheets, towels, and handkerchieves.

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Several armament and related plants are mentioned, including their 1940 stock in raw material and finished products.⁷

Until 30 September 1940, Economic Troop H transported to Germany 68 railroad trains with 2,468 cars transporting 37,500 tons, trailer trucks 800 tons, a total of 38,300 tons of goods, consisting of metals, iron, steel, machinery, leather, 160,000 pairs of shoes, and textiles.

From Report of Economic Troop R:

At the Navy Arsenal Indret, the management had to be threatened with arrest before they arranged to recover large quantities of copper in ingots, etc. which had been dumped into the Loire River.

Until now (date unknown, possibly 30 September 1940) about 80,000 tons of goods have been located and secured, including about 4 kilograms of platinum, and considerable quantities of molybdenum.

The transportation situation is entirely unsatisfactory. The Economic Troop had to procure railroad cars by hook or crook. For lack of transportation space, the cotton stores in St. Nazaire, situated in the open, were subject to ruin. The Troop had to requisition storage space by force.