

## **SAINT NAZAIRE : REBUILDING A WAR-RAVAGED TOWN**

On May 11th, 1945 only three days after Germany surrendered, Saint-Nazaire's residents returned to what was left of their homes. The bombing had reduced 85% of their town to rubble. Work on clearing the ruins started immediately.

And while 4,500 men laboured for on year to clear 1,900,000 cubic metres of rubble, the townspeople moved into temporary buildings. The last of these buildings , a shopping centre, was not pulled down until 1975.

The rebuilders seized the opportunity offered by the massive destruction to plan the town logically and economically. In less than 10 years, major construction had transformed the field of ruins the returning inhabitants first found into a new and modern town, built around its main artery, the avenue de la République. On February 28th, 1960, the new town hall was inaugurated, marking the end of the major reconstruction work.