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FACTORY MADE INVASION PORT

These pictures, just released, tell the story of one of the mightiest of engineering feats - a feat that has revolutionised modern warfare. Vast artificial harbours, secretly prefabricated in Britain by thousands of workers, helped to make possible the invasion of Normandy. Two fully-equipped ports, as large and impregnable as Gibraltar, with huge steel and concrete caissons, looking like floating blocks of flats, - these were built in seven months, and towed to Normandy in sections three days after our landings. Wrecked landing-craft were blown up with depth charges to clear the channel.

The vastness of the operation took the Germans completely by surprise. They didn't believe it possible to carry through a great invasion without large ports in our possession - to disembark troops and supplies - And they were right. But what they did not realise was that the ports were already completed, down to the last detail, and only waiting to be assembled off the Normandy beaches. It was this miscalculation that stopped the enemy from bringing his full weight to bear against our forces during those first vital weeks after our landings. By then it was too late; for within a month, despite the worst June gales for 40 years, one of the harbours was in working order.

This is one of the "whales", with power-operated derricks to deal with the unloading of supplies, which form an important part of "Port Winston," as the Merchant Navy calls the great factory-built harbour. The official name of this staggering piece of engineering is "Harbour B" (B for British); and it lies off the once sleepy Normandy town of Arromanches.

This diagram shows the layout of the port. Many ships were sunk by our own sailers to form breakwaters. The harbour now takes anything from light coasters to 7,000-ton Liberty ships, carrying all the essentials of modern war.

Thirteen miles of piers and causeways were ferried over in 480 ft. sections. No wonder the rumour started that a bridge was being built across the Channel!

The second harbour (intended for use by the Americans), was so badly damaged by the high seas that parts of it became unusable, and when Cherbourg fell, work on it was discontinued. For months, scientists had studied the behaviour of the weather, but they could not foresee such a furious gale as this.

Shipping was piled up and wrecked by the heavy seas. But the harbour was not a total loss; much of it was salvaged and used to strengthen and enlarge Port Winston.

Had the gale continued for another week, the whole operation would have been endangered; but at last it subsided. Now with every tide, vast quantities of war material are unloaded, to be used in the relentless Allied drive. A mighty feat has been successfully accomplished. What Hitler would have liked to do - what Napoleon failed to do - our engineers triumphantly carried out.
