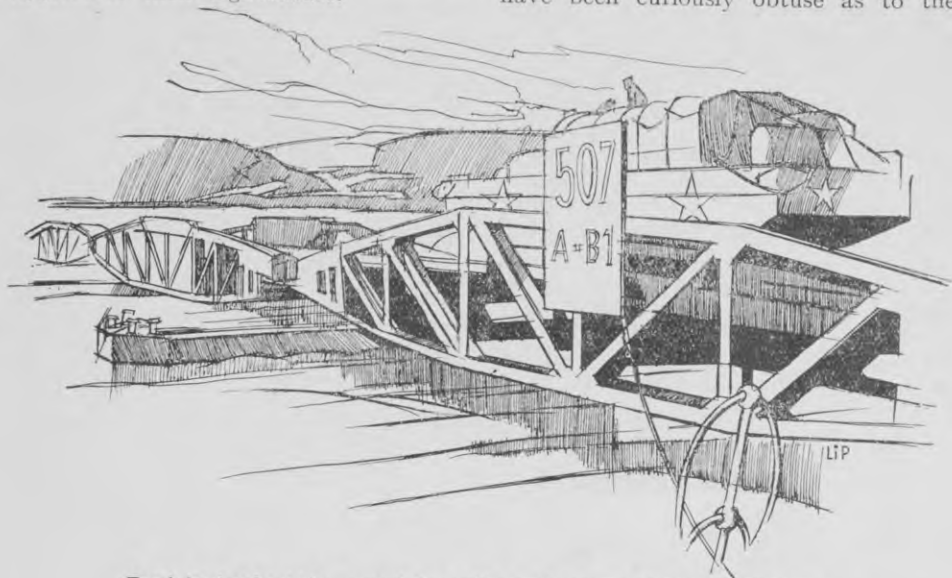


tainly were, but the Nazis had no part in their sinking.

Meanwhile, from the "parking areas" in Britain, the concrete caissons, accompanied by a cloud of tugs, had begun their journey. It is known that German reconnaissance planes had spotted the building of the caissons, but failed to appreciate their significance.

over the floats, and arrived at the concrete wall as a smaller wave no longer dangerous.

By "D" day plus twelve both the British and the American ports were more than half-completed, and many supplies were being landed. The German observers on the Normandy coast seem to have been curiously obtuse as to the



*Truck-loads of supplies moved from ship to shore over floating steel piers.*

The first of the flock crossed the Channel unmolested, but by the second day the Nazis did attack from the air, only to find that the "Noah's Arks" carried a sting in their ingenious shapes, in the form of their Bofors guns. This being too much like hard work, the Nazi planes concentrated on the tugs, and some men and equipment were lost. This had been foreseen, and even when the plan had been completed, there were still spare caissons in the British "parking-places." By "D" day plus three the caissons were arriving at both British and American ports at the rate of four to six a day, and the concrete sea-walls grew, enclosing an ever-larger area in which great ships could be unloaded in safety. The steel floats were moored about a mile to seaward of the concrete harbour walls. A great wave lost half its force in breaking

purpose of the curious happenings under their very noses. By the time they attempted air assault on the synthetic ports it was much too late. Every caisson and every blockship flew its own barrage balloon, and most intense anti-aircraft fire was put up by the batteries installed on both caissons and ships. To make assurance doubly sure, fighter-cover was maintained overall, and German planes stood no chance.

On "D" day plus twelve, June 18, the worst gale for forty years blew in from the north-east at 70 m.p.h. The American port, less fortunate than the British one, which was partially protected by a reef, was completely wrecked. The gale lasted for three days, during which time mountainous seas tore loose the 15,000 ton floating breakwaters, smashed the concrete caissons, and ripped up pier-heads and bridging.