

The British harbour, on which construction was less advanced, suffered much less. It was decided to abandon the American harbour, and such material as could be salvaged was towed to the harbour on the Arromanches.

The value of this joint harbour can be estimated in the light of the statement by Lieutenant-General Brehon B. Somervell, Chief of U.S. Army Service Forces, who said that in 109 days since "D" day, the Allies had landed nearly 2,500,000 troops, 500,000 vehicles, and 17,000,000 ship-tons of supplies. The fall of Cherbourg went some way to replace the loss of the American synthetic port, but the lion's share of this vast total tonnage was handled by the surviving prefabricated harbour at Arromanches.

There was no intention of using these ports indefinitely. It was thought that if they lasted until Cherbourg fell, they would have justified their cost. If they lasted until the autumn—so much the better. The conception of the use of

prefabricated harbours has been brilliantly vindicated by results. The primary purpose—that of landing heavy equipment in vast quantity very quickly—was achieved by a stupendous British-American effort.

A British naval officer, at a recent showing of the port models in Washington, said: "This gigantic project, which cost 100,000,000 dollars, was worth every cent of it. Without the prefabricated ports to insure a flow of supplies over the beaches the invasion of Europe would never have been attempted."

Nor did Admiral Alan Kirk, commander of amphibious operations in the Atlantic, use exaggeration when he described the synthetic ports as "The Wonder of the Age." There can be little doubt that history will assess the Allied conception and use of prefabricated harbours for the successful invasion of Europe as being the outstanding engineering achievement of the war.



Commando!