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INGENUITY SAVES LOST SHIPS

Twelve miles downstream from the French town of Nantes, the Germans blocked the river Loire by sinking shipping in the fairway, as a defence against the Allied Naval forces. Postwar attempts to clear the deepwater channel near the ships proved unsuccessful until the engineers devised a scheme to dredge a new course in the riverbed and save the ships as well.

If salvaged, the vessels would repay the cost of the whole operation, and the largest of them, a whaling depot ship of modern design, would prove of great service to the reduced Merchant Navy of the Republic.

Massive pumps were installed inside the breakwater formed by the sunken ships and the water was pumped outwards.

In eighteen months this flow of water forced the river to change its course into two deepwater channels which by-pass the wrecks, leaving them on an island in the middle. Eventually the ships will stand out high and dry.

Divers are already at work assessing the task which will face the shipwrights when they can make the lost ships seaworthy. France will regain her shipping and Nantes a new deepwater channel to the sea.