

First of all, there's the danger angle. People will say that it's dangerous working in an ordnance plant. It is dangerous--but just because it is more dangerous than work in other types of plants, the safety precautions which are taken are very much more complete than in other types of plants. Any of you who have been through a shell-loading or powder plant knows how they make you wear shoes without any metal in them, make you leave your keys and your belt buckles and your hard money outside--make you get rid of anything that might strike a spark.

And those precautions work. Here's something that may surprise you--it did me. Only one industry has a better accident record than the powder and shell-loading plants. What industry? The women's clothing industry, gentlemen!

Now somebody may ask you why we need so many heavy guns, so much heavy gun ammunition. Somebody may say that we didn't shoot off such huge quantities of ammunition in the last war. That's quite true--we didn't. In one month of the battle of Cassino, General Mark Clark's Fifth Army alone used 64,750,000 pounds of heavy artillery ammunition. That leaves out aircraft bombs, machine-gun, rifle, and mortar ammunition and it is, I'm sure you'll agree, a staggering figure.

Yes, we're using a lot more heavy gun ammunition in this war. And we're using more airplanes too--more tanks--more of a lot of things. In other words, the business of fighting a war changes--and one of the changes is a need for heavy gun ammunition much greater than any one could have imagined.

But that's only one angle of the problem. Because the fact is, our Army could fight this war without so much heavy gun ammunition. They could use men instead. Instead of paving the way for an infantry advance with a battering barrage from heavy artillery, they could send the infantry in behind a smaller barrage. And the infantry might get there too, might take such-and-such a position in France, or such-and-such a position on a Pacific Island. But not so many of them would get there, would be alive when the position was taken--a great many more would be killed.....

I don't know whether any of you read the story a few weeks ago in one of the big magazines about what made the invasion of Normandy succeed, with thirty percent fewer casualties than had been expected. Just one thing kept those casualties down--the tremendous artillery barrage from naval ships that preceded the attack on the beaches. Yes, it was a naval barrage, but it was none the less artillery--seaborne artillery, if you want to call it that. It is possible that the invasion would have succeeded without this barrage--but it would have succeeded at the cost of a great many more good American boys.