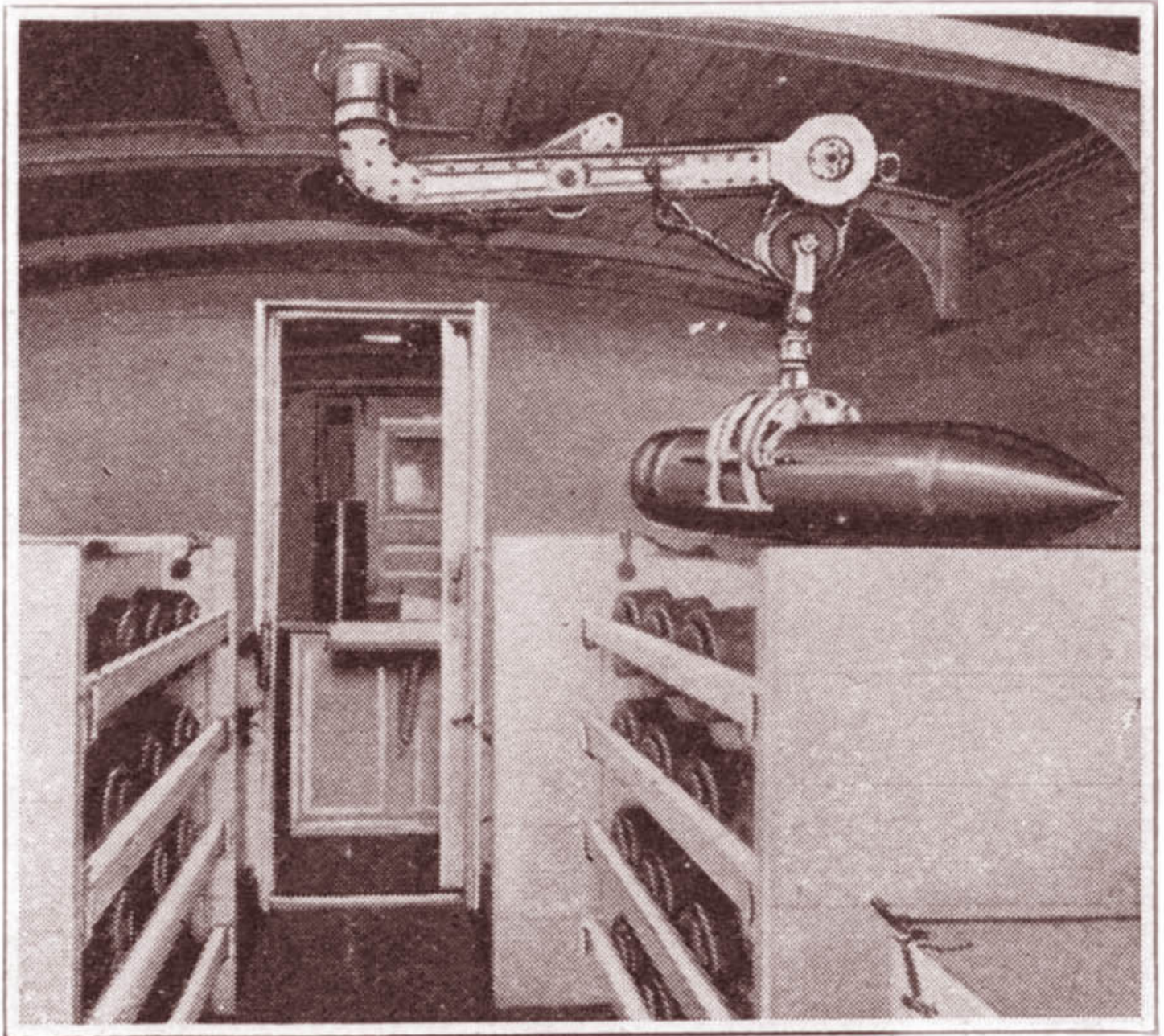


POPULAR MECHANICS

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COAST DEFENSE BY RAIL TO SOLVE PROBLEM



Interior of Ammunition Car

An entire coast-defense battery mounted on railway trucks is the answer of French military authorities to the question of how to secure positive defense over long coast lines with economy. The advantages claimed for these mobile batteries are the economy in the preparation for the defense of any place, as the batteries on wheels cost less than permanent fixed batteries and can be sent to threatened points from places where they are not needed, the only expense being for laying the rails. Then, too, no coast-defense plans can be sold to the enemy, no photographs or drawings stolen, for no permanent works indicate where the salient points of this defense are located. No special roads need be laid, for military railways may be used in time of peace for commercial purposes, and in war time, peaceful roads utilized for war purposes. The guns so far manufactured for this work are of howitzer pattern, and in 7.87-in., 6-in., and 4.7-in. sizes. They are protected by turrets, and the ammunition cars are armored. An interesting feature of one car used in the French maneuvers is an observation tower extending some 40 ft. above the rail tops.