

# Storm Boats & The Evinrude Storm Boat Motor

Report By: Ken Kirk

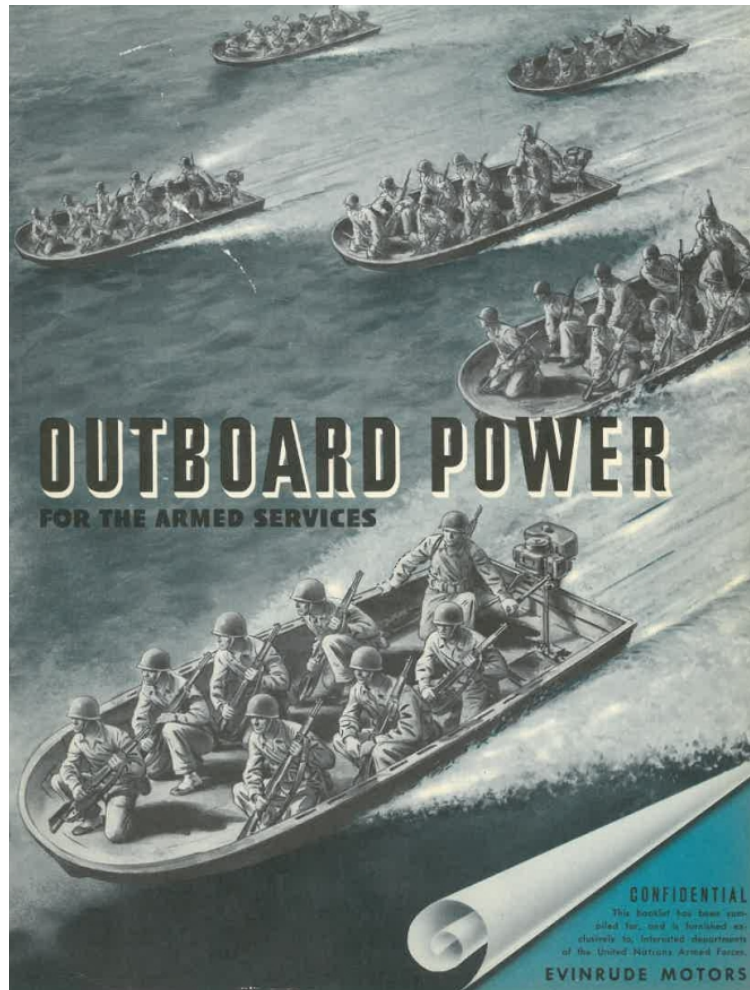
In the fall of 1944 the Allied Forces had landed in Normandy and were starting their dangerous and deadly advance across France, Belgium and Holland in an effort to push back the German forces and to liberate Europe.

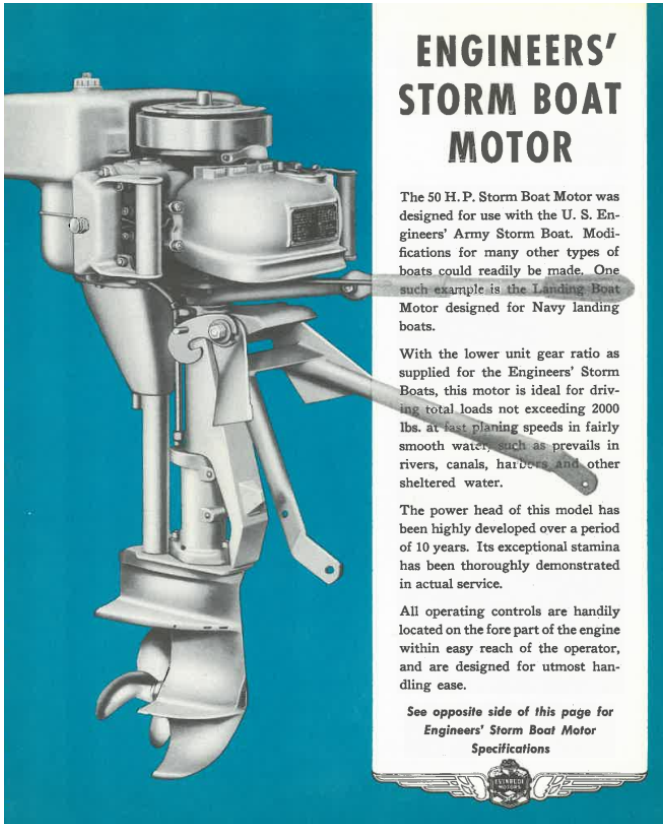
There was a tactical need for small, tough and agile watercraft to move troops and supplies quickly up, down and across the many rivers, lakes and canal systems that the advancing allied forces would encounter as they moved across the countryside.

The German forces would blow up every bridge as they retreated. The allies would need to attack with relatively small numbers, across waterways, establish bridge heads and then secure temporary floating bridges very quickly so that tanks, troops & supplies could advance across in large numbers.

The boats designed to carry these initial strike forces of combat engineers were called "Storm Boats", a fast assault craft. The power.....a 60 cu. in. 4 cyl. opposed firing Evinrude outboard developing 50 hp and known simply as the Storm Boat Motor.

Some early Storm Boats were designed & built by the British. A different Storm Boat was designed by the U.S. Corps. Of Engineers and were built in the U.S. These Boats were 17' long, had a 6' 8" beam and could run in very shallow water with a 4" draft. Constructed primarily of marine plywood with moulded bows for strength at the front, they also had a double bottom which was compartmentalized so to reduce the risk of sinking if the bottom was breached. They needed to have the capacity to carry eight men with all of their combat gear at a speed of 23 knots,(27 mph, 43 kph).





Both the British & U.S. Storm Boats were powered by the Evinrude Storm Boat Motor.

Evinrude Motors had been selected to develop and build the Storm Boat Motor. Evinrude had a proven motor platform in the successful Evinrude/Elto 460 racing outboards. Fast, durable and reliable. In 1943 they had easily achieved the military spec 50 hp output from the 460 platform. Evinrude also engineered a tougher lower unit with horizontal fins to keep the prop from being fouled by underwater barbed wire. A Bi-Pod mounting bracket system was designed for quick "off and on" the boat and easy tip up. It also made it almost impossible to dislodge the motor from the boat no matter what type of underwater obstacle the motor might strike or how great the impact when running up on a beach or rugged shoreline at speed.

Two initial production runs of Storm Boats were made in the U.S. One by a company in Minnesota, another run by the Century Boat Co. As the allies advanced toward the Rhine River, General Dwight D. Eisenhower ordered 400 more Storm Boats. The Pine Castle Boat Co., in Florida, won the contract. They were given three weeks to build 400 boats. Production was continuous 24 hours a day, 6 days a week. No work on Sundays. The deadline was met and 400 more Storm Boats were on the way to the front.

Perhaps one of the most daring and dramatic incidents involving Storm Boats was at the Dutch town of Arnhem and involved the Royal Canadian Engineers. The allies met strong resistance here as they attempted to cross the Rhine River and advance into the Netherlands. The battle raged for more than a week. With supplies and ammunition running low a group of more than 2,200 British paratroopers were surrounded on the banks of the Rhine and at risk of being killed or captured by the enemy. A rescue mission was executed by the combat engineers of the Royal Canadian Engineer Corp. and the British Royal Engineers. Using Storm Boats and troop barges, under the cover of darkness, the rescue mission was a success. The 2,200 men were saved in what was hailed as "The Miracle Rescue". Although the battle of Arnhem was a setback for the allies the outboard motor and Storm Boats had proven to be effective assets in combat.



**Ron Stevenson's recreated Storm Boat with restored Evinrude Storm Boat Motor.**

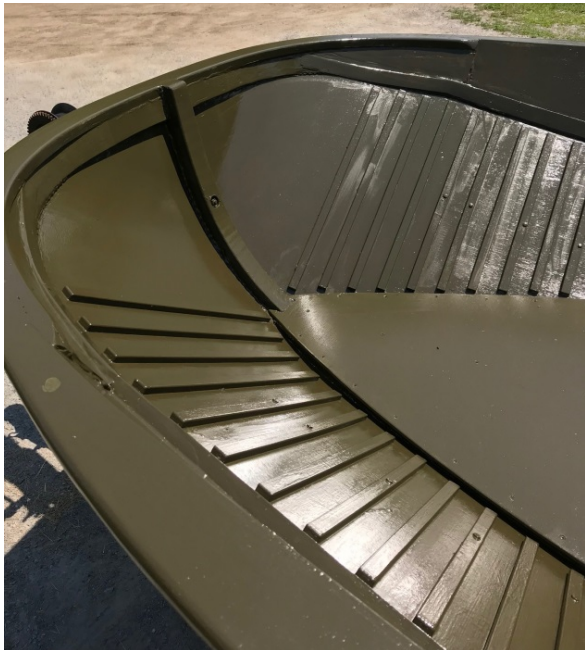
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## **Storm Boats & The Evinrude Storm Boat Motor**

At the end of WWII Storm Boats virtually disappeared. The Evinrude Storm Boat Motors that had been allocated to the Royal Canadian Engineers and survived the war, eventually found their way to the Crown Assets Disposal Corporation where they were painted blue & white and sold to the general public. Several of these motors are now in the hands of our MLAOC members. Ron Stevenson, our President, is one of these fortunate few.

Inspired by the historical significance of the Storm Boat Motor and the boat that it powered, Ron set out to find a Storm Boat to run his motor on. It was soon evident that this was mission impossible. Next...Ron attempted to track down the builder of the Storm Boats, Castle Pine Boat works in Florida. Turns out the derivative company is still in business today and still building boats. And better still....they have contact with a life long employee who was involved with building the Storm Boats. The ultimate outcome was that they still had the building plans in their archives and YES Ron...you can have a copy.

As a result Ron has had a totally correct Storm Boat replica built by fellow MLAOC member George Publow of Picton. Ron and son Jeff proudly displayed and demonstrated their Storm Boat & restored Evinrude Storm Boat Motor at the ACBS Gravenhurst Boat Show this past summer. What a great piece of outboard motor and Canadian Military History.



**Flared bows at the nose provided added strength to absorb hard impact landings.**



**Bottom framing was designed to form water tight compartments & superior strength. Flat floor over the framing created a water tight double bottom.**



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**Evinrude Powered WWII Storm Boat at full speed.**

### **Follow Up.....**

For the full story of the Royal Canadian Engineers & Storm Boats, there are two great books written by John Sliz ... "The Storm Boat Kings" & "River Assault- Operation Duck". You can also Google "The Storm Boat Kings".

After the war ended, Evinrude attempted to convert the Storm Boat Motor for consumer and commercial sale. The biggest change was that the Bi-Pod transom mounting system was replaced by the traditional thumb screw transom mounting bracket. The motors were branded the Evinrude "Big Four", Model # 8014.

They were produced for one year only, 1946. The market was just not ready for a 50 hp outboard. Evinrude would not produce a 50 hp motor again until 1958 when they introduced the V-4, 50 hp, Starflite.

The Pine Castle Boat Company became experts in building strong, light weight plywood boats capable of handling high horsepower inboard motors. They introduced the Correct Craft brand that became the preferred water ski tow boat in the 1950's & 60's and was used exclusively at Cypress Gardens Florida, the water ski capital of the world, for many years. Today the successor company builds the high performance Nautique line of ski & wakeboard boats.



**Jeff Stevenson at the tiller of Ron's 4 cyl, 50HP Evinrude Storm Boat Motor.**



**Ron Stevenson's restored & running Evinrude Storm Boat Motor.**