



STORM BOAT—Making themselves as small as possible to reduce the target and lower the center of gravity, a squad starts for its objective in the new plywood craft of the Army.

ENGINEERING

Plywood for Spearheads

Storm boats of five-ply birch are being used in all theaters of operation to cross wide streams. The light craft carry 9 men, travel 23 miles an hour.

► NEW STORM boats made of plywood are being used by the Army in all theaters of operation to throw spearheads of assault troops across wide streams before bridges can be built.

Carrying a fighting team of seven fully equipped riflemen commanded by a non-commissioned officer, and a crew of two, the boat, propelled by a 50 horsepower motor, will move at 23 miles an hour, fast enough to make it a difficult target. On the return trip for more men, ammunition, or other vital supplies, with only a two-man crew it will hit up to 35 miles an hour. In an emergency it may be rowed.

The boat is 16.7 feet long by 6.5 feet wide, and weighs 650 pounds, with motor. It will carry loads of more than 1,200 pounds, drawing 16 inches while underway, 20 inches when motionless. It is not intended for surf or rough-water use.

In action, the soldiers lie face down,

head to bow, rifle in hand, and leap out, ready for combat, the instant the boat touches shore.

The landing may be a simple slowing down at the river bank up which the assault troops scramble or, if the shore is low and shelving, the light craft may be beached head on at full speed, tobogganing it high and dry. The outboard motor tilts up, away from damage, as the boat is beached. Special handles built into the gunwales make it easy for eight men to carry the boat.

The craft is constructed of flat and molded plywood, birch being used for the outer bottom and sides. Five-ply birch plywood, quarter-inch thick, is hard and resistant to abrasion from pebbles and sand when beached. Other parts of the boat are made from white oak, mahogany, and hickory plywoods.

The new storm boat was designed by a board of U. S. Army Engineers, and is now made by several builders.

In the postwar world, such a boat will be ideal for fishing and camping trips on the rivers and lakes of the United States. It is small, easy to handle, will carry a number of persons and supplies as well, and it can be carried by eight persons.

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PSYCHOLOGY

Tales of the "Supernatural" Are To Be Expected

► WITH the invasion begun and with so many more loved ones and friends in greater danger than ever before, there will undoubtedly be many more wishful yearnings toward what, to the uncritical, may seem to be unexplained and therefore "supernatural" phenomena.

On invasion day there was a double rainbow observed and reported in Washington, a meteorological phenomenon that goes without press comment on any other day. (The secondary rainbow is due to light undergoing an additional reflection and its colors are in the reverse order of the brighter rainbow.)

German propaganda sources thought it necessary to deny that the recent finding of a comet was a bad omen for the German arms. (The fact that small comets are found frequently, that this one was visible only through large telescopes in the southern hemisphere and that the discovery was made by Allied astronomers seemed to make no difference.)

We can expect the inevitable stories of mothers and sweethearts who have seen in dreams just what does happen to their soldiers at exactly the same time that it does—some will be saved "miraculously" and others will be killed. Thousands upon thousands of dreams and nightmares that don't come true will go unrecorded.

There will be hopeful attempts to communicate with the dead. Well remembered is the famous British scientist, Sir Oliver Lodge, who attempted to communicate with his soldier son killed in the first World War.

Superstition in this war has had relatively little prevalence compared with the situation in past years. One hears little about those who avoid or prefer the number 13, or the old foolishness about a black cat. Astrologers do not seem to be unusually affluent or active.

In these stressful times, however, those who attempt to live rationally will need to take a hitch in their critical faculties and be alert to superstitious invasion that may well interfere with our fighting the war.

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