



And Then There Were Six

By Dan Friend dfriend001@cfl.rr.com

A week ago only two of the US Army tugboats built at the Lake Beresford boatworks were known to possibly exist: *four more* have been found this week.

Earlier this week I spoke with John Higgins, a transplanted Englishman and engineer now living in Stockholm, Sweden. He's consulting with owner Margareta Omberg on the restoration of **DeLand Warboat ST 479**: the only known Beresford

"ST" in existence that probably was at D-Day at Normandy on June 6, 1944. It's in amazingly original condition with its 650HP Clark engine; the original chain steering gear; and a wheelhouse built largely with 30mm German tank armor! The website records indicate it was "damaged by a German grenade" at some point and the upper structure needed repair. While this might have solved the grenade attack problem, it did little to help the top-heavy nature of the all-steel tugs which clearly should not be out in the sea during rough weather. This boat has the distinction of being the only one mentioned directly in action with the enemy and as such deserves a unique status: a true WW2 D-Day veteran, built right here in DeLand.

That amazing news was soon trumped by additional Internet research using multiple search engines that turned up three more *DeLand Warboats*: two more in Finland, and one in Venezuela.

All three of the other newly-discovered boats, and one of the earlier known boats, have modifications. The **ST 341**, now "Danta" in Venezuela, looks to have had the upper deck completely removed. It's been replaced with a much lower and smaller cabin setup. She looks a bit rough.

As far as the 3 boats in Finland go, **ST 342**, the "Normandia", looks almost modern; with a well-designed upper wheel house area. Judging from the photos it probably is the most valuable today of the boats. "Famnen", **ST 343** has had an extended upper deck nicely built that looks like it might be a fishing or passenger vessel. The third boat is **ST 476**, "Purha", which has had the upper areas reworked but is in good working shape. My guess is most of these boats have replacement engines as well. The search continues: four more boats are still unaccounted for. But it's been amazing to find that six out of the 22 AMC US ARMY ST tugboats built in time to serve in WW2..... are still in service! **ST 478**, the 6th boat was in Paris, France, as of 2007. No photo yet!

ST 479 now "Tiger" in Stockholm, Sweden

