

Johnson OK Series Production

Report by: Adam Gibb

As an addition to my article in the March and June 2019 MLAOC Newsletters, I have some notes about the production of the OK series outboards. I recently found a list of motors produced in the Outboard Marine Plant in Peterborough, ON between 1945 and 1954. Combining these numbers with the list previously compiled by the MLC, it allows for a total account of all of the OK series motors produced in Canada.

The production numbers presented here are as the motors were listed by OMC. Some of the motors may have been converted from short shaft to long shaft, or vice versa. These conversions may have been done at the plant to fill orders from dealers, or in the field when a motor was put into service on a different boat. It is also assumed that these numbers represent the units produced in a calendar year, and not when the motors were shipped or sold. The totals are as recorded by OMC. One example of an OK-20 was recently found that is listed as a short shaft serial number, however it currently has a long shaft midsection; changed at some point in the last 60 years.

The production totals for 1931-1945 are fairly low numbers. A result of the sales decrease during the depression and production

being shared with the US plant would account for this. During these years, the motors were produced in small batches of 25 motors or less. In some cases production alternated rapidly between OK and OKL motors. It appears as if the motors were being built to supply dealer orders without building up too much inventory at the plant.

In the postwar years, the OK series was no longer produced in the US. With production limited to Canada and the motors being positioned as a budget motor for tough service, the production habits changed dramatically. It seems that almost all OK 15 and OK 20 production was done in 2 large batches throughout the year, with an occasional third batch late in the year to finish filling orders.

The high production of OKL-15 models in 1948 is an anomaly. OMC may have had large orders from an Industrial or Government contract that required this unusually high number of long shafts to be produced, but this is only speculation.

OK Production Numbers, 1931 -1950

Model	1931	1932	1933	1934	1935	1936	1937	1938	1939	1940	1945	1946	1947	1948	1949	1950	Total	
OK-55	186	158															344	Canadian production only. Also built in Waukegan
OKL-55	10	9															19	
OK-60			115	44													159	
OKL-60			6	9													15	
OK-75					187	150	193	116	157								803	
OKL-75					13	0	20	20	42								95	
OK-10									1	209	3						213	Total Production. Only built in Peterborough
OKL-10										22							22	
OK-15											2	650	1755	600			3007	
OKL-15												50	95	400			545	
OK-20															1097	505	1602	
OKL-20															53	95	148	

Source: Dealer Bulletin From OMC of Canada

Early OK-15 Decals

In the previous article I refer to the decals used on the OK series motors as type 1 to 4. It was unclear when the change was made from the Type 3 decal to Type 4. I have recently found some more 1946 OK 15s with original decals. The motor with serial number 49357 has the Type 3 decal. By serial number 49415, the factory had switched to the Type 4 decal which was used through to the end of production in 1950. The change was made somewhere in the 58 motors between these two numbers. These two motors are part of the first batch of OK 15s produced in early 1946 when the OK 10 was replaced.

If anyone else has an early OK 15 I would be interested in hearing from you.

adamgibb1961@gmail.com