



The UIVER Flyer

News from the Uiver Memorial DC-2 Restoration Project.



The exterior frame of the DC-2 cockpit has been completed.

The DC-2 once again has 'eyes'

The restoration of the cockpit windscreen frame has brought the completion of the DC-2 fuselage exterior another step closer, with most of the shining

new panels in position and awaiting their rivets. The cockpit exterior- the “eyes” of the “face” – with its curves and angles, proved one of the hardest sections for the volunteers.

Only a short section of the roof panels remain to be replaced to complete the exterior. At the same time, interior panels are being replaced and painted and most of the floor mountings have been restored.



The centre wing section has been almost stripped bare.

Just metres away, the wing centre section is being stripped bare and its components checked, discarded, repaired or replaced and they, too, will be given the same painstaking refurbishment that has been the hallmark of the project. A mammoth project in itself, the wing centre section carries the engines and the undercarriage and its completion will be a major step towards putting the aircraft back on its wheels.



The souvenir sales cabinet is the latest acquisition.

A small but important addition to the hangar is a cabinet to house our merchandise. Sourced by one of our volunteers, Karen Newton, the cabinet will provide a “shop” for souvenir sales on public days. Merchandise – T-shirts, caps, coffee mugs, books - is a vital part of fundraising for the hangar.



David Crotty speaks of his career in heritage with help from Pieter Mol.

Rotary's night of planes and pizzas

The Rotary Club of Albury North was the latest to visit the hangar, holding the club's regular meeting as a pizza night, getting an update on the Uiver project from Uiver Memorial Community Trust chairman Pieter Mol.

The guest speaker for the evening was our own David Crotty who outlined his life in "the old aeroplane business", culminating in a degree in museum studies and a career as a museum curator.

He has been associated with the Moorabbin Aviation Museum, a Catalina restoration project in New Zealand, Museums Victoria, the Australian War Memorial and, since 2012, Qantas Heritage, which takes up two days of his week. He has also worked with the Royal Flying Doctor Service museum at

Broken Hill.

Over the years he has been involved in the restoration of a Second World War Wirraway, a Mosquito bomber and a Solent flying boat in New Zealand and wrote a book on the Empire Flying Boats.

At the end of the proceedings, the Rotarians were able to wander the hangar for a close look at the restoration of the Uiver memorial DC-2.



The Bright Vehicle Preservation Society group check out the metal work.

Another group to visit the hangar was a small contingent of the Bright Vehicle Preservation Society, making up for missing out on a previous visit by the car club.

Enthusiasts who have restored a variety of vehicles dating back to 1932 – including a Mustang, Consuls, Zephyr and even a Rolls Royce – could well

appreciate the effort going into the rebuilding of the DC-2.

After a talk on the story of the Uiver, the group were able to see the work in progress in a tour of the hangar. Hangar visits help keep the Uiver story alive and spread the word on how the plans for the Uiver museum are proceeding. They can be arranged for any clubs or community groups by contacting the project manager, Russ Jacob, on 0418 691 392.



Martin Nichols came from Melbourne for the hangar open day.

Son tells the story of an Uiver rival

He was just part of the crowd at the hangar open day in October, but Martin Nichols had more than a passing interest in the 1934 air race – his father,

Reeder, was the radio operator on Roscoe Turner and Clyde Pangborn's Boeing 247D that chased the Uiver all the way from London to Melbourne.

The Boeing was the Uiver's main rival and was the third to cross the finish line just two hours and 44 minutes behind the Dutch DC-2. Because the Boeing was hot on his tail was one reason Uiver captain Koene Parmentier decided to press on from Charleville despite reports of bad weather ahead.

Born in 1904, Reeder Nichols had a hard, impoverished childhood, left school at 15 and shortly after wandered the United States seeking adventure and employment. At 19, he joined the Marine Corps where he was mentored by Commander Fred Schnell who encouraged his interest in radio and helped him develop the expertise with which he would carve a career in communications.

He was the sole survivor of a plane crash in 1928 and a year later left the Marines, installed radio equipment for Pan Am, supervised communications in South America for New York, Rio and Buenos Aires Airlines and became operations manager for Century Airlines (later American Airlines) in the mid-west and on the US west coast.

Joining Bill Lear and two others in a partnership in 1932, Reeder would build the state-of-the-art radio equipment that would be installed in Roscoe Turner's Boeing for the London to Melbourne air race and when the question arose as to who would operate it, Reeder's attitude was: "I built it, I might as well go along for the ride", although he probably did not expect the three near-death encounters en route, almost crashing into a mountain, Turner landing in the wrong direction at Baghdad and being lost and fearing they were about to run out of fuel approaching Allahabad in India, although that turned out to be a false alarm – the fuel gauges were faulty – but Reeder's radio brought them to safety.



Tired trio at Flemington: Reeder Nichols, Roscoe Turner and Clyde Pangborn.

The Boeing's radio was more advanced than the standard KLM issue in the Uiver – over the Timor Sea Reeder was contacting stations around the world, including in the United States – but its direction-finding capability was less use in Australia where there were no matching ground stations, except a mobile unit operated by the air force.

From 1936 to 1941, Reeder was chief of the radio and electrical section of the US Civil Aeronautics Administration and was sent to investigate the Hindenburg zeppelin crash in 1937, as well as other aircraft accidents.

After Pearl Harbor, Reeder was given a direct commission as a captain in the US Army and sent to Australia in March, 1942, to assess the radio needs in the north and New Guinea leading to the installation of equipment worth \$200 million today.

As commander of the US Army Air Force radio group for Australia and the south-west Pacific, he oversaw campaigns in New Guinea, The Philippines and the first group of US armed forces to land on mainland Japan and although he did not get to Tokyo for the surrender, he was instrumental in General Douglas MacArthur contacting the Japanese after the dropping of the atomic bombs, when he transmitted a message from the general on the US weather frequency he knew the Japanese monitored.



At Charleville, Turner works on the engine while Nichols fills the fuel tanks.

Highly decorated for his war service, Reeder left the military as a Brigadier General in the late 1950s. By then he had also worked for the International Civil Aviation Authority and Aeronautical Radio Incorporated.

On January 1, 1950, he settled in Sydney, where his sons Reeder (now

called Glenn) and Martin were born – Glenn followed his father into communications, Martin became a town planner. Reeder's first, Jack, born in 1932, died in 2011.

As commercial director of Standard Telephone and Cables, Reeder was instrumental in the laying of the coaxial cable between Perth and Port Hedland in the 1960s, paving the way for the development of Pilbara communications that followed, particularly the link between Dampier and Tom Price. He retired in 1969.

Martin said his father loved Australia and enjoyed the years he spent here until his death in Sydney in 1975. The following year, Western Australia named a 1,111-metre peak in the Hammersley Range Mt Reeder Nichols; it is a local landmark near the Tom Price Airport. In 2019 he was honoured with a plaque in his birthplace, Florence, Alabama, citing his achievement in the air race and his war service in the Pacific.

Big plans for the year ahead

As we approach the end of another year, the hangar will close for its Christmas-New Year break on Wednesday, December 20, and will resume on Saturday, January 13.

Next year marks the 90th anniversary of the Uiver landing and the Uiver Memorial Community Trust is planning a major celebration. Watch for details in the Uiver Flyer as well as on our website, Facebook and Instagram.



Merry Christmas and
a Happy New Year

Help us spread the word

We want the whole community to know about our project and you can help by forwarding this newsletter to others in your address book, either through email or social media. You could encourage them to also forward on the newsletter so we can expand our circulation, and invite them to subscribe and join our emailing list.

A small effort could have a big impact.



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