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Reunited after 80 years

We were contacted recently by Rodney Brown of Brisbane who had sitting in his shed a Wright Cyclone 1820 radial engine, the same engine that powered all Douglas DC-2s. After some discussions, Rodney generously donated his engine to the UMCT.

Most remarkable is that Rodney also had the original log book for the engine, detailing all of the repairs and maintenance done to it in its military career with the RAAF during the Second World War. The engine was complete with magnetos, carburettor, generator, and exhaust system!.



Arrival at Goondiwindi, Queensland.

Rodney obtained the engine decades ago from aviation legend Jack MacDonald. Jack was a former RAAF and Korean War fighter pilot renowned for his masterful display flying of CAC-built Mustangs in Australia. Rodney and Jack also shared a love of vintage British motorcycles.

Jack MacDonald had co-founded a syndicate to purchase and restore a Douglas DC-2 with the aim of flying it from England to Melbourne in 1984 to retrace the route of the MacRobertson London-Melbourne Air Race. In 1982 Jack purchased from the Sid Marshall collection, one of the ten ex-Eastern Airlines DC-2s that had been used by the RAAF (designated as A30-9). Included in the purchase were *extra engines*, including the one Rodney would ultimately buy from Jack MacDonald.

Unfortunately, the syndicate had to abandon the project as during the teardown at Essendon the team discovered irreparable damage to the airframe, preventing A30-9 from taking to the skies ever again. Fortunately and famously, a different DC-2 - prepared in the Netherlands - made that commemorative flight for the 50th anniversary of the air race.



Rodney presenting us with the engine log book.

The engine that Rodney has donated is unique because its log book shows it was one of the engines that had originally been fitted to our DC-2 when it was designated by the RAAF as A30-11. It was last in our aircraft, port side, between 1941 and 1944. Also recorded is the date the engine was sold to Marshall Airways (1947).

The challenge for the UMCT was that we had to get the engine from Queensland to Albury. Tom, our engine specialist, attached a spare engine mount we had to a sturdy wheeled trolley and, after a practice session connecting two engine hoists to a lifting bar, all was ready for a road trip.

Towing a tandem trailer, a team of three - Pieter Mol, Ian Cossor, and John Doyle - headed off early on Wednesday, 24 July, arriving at Goondiwindi the same evening. The next morning, they drove to Brisbane via Warwick, arriving at Rodney's home in the beautiful Samford Valley by the early afternoon. The engine was still attached to the wooden frame the RAAF had bolted it to in 1944.



Manoeuvring the engine into the trailer.

After detaching the engine from the old frame, it was carefully lifted above our movable mount and, after having to remove one magneto temporarily, it was eventually lowered onto our mount and bolted down. Getting the assembly onto the trailer was relatively easy, and after securely strapping it to the trailer, the recovery team enjoyed a cuppa with Rodney and his wife before departing into Brisbane's peak hour traffic.

Toowoomba was as far as the team were able to get that evening, heading home the next morning via the Newell Highway, arriving at the Uiver hangar at about 10:45pm on Friday. With lots of helping hands from our other volunteers, unloading the engine next morning was straightforward. The 2,853-kilometre drive was well worth the effort to be able to reunite the oldest surviving DC-2 in the world with one of its original engines. We are deeply appreciative of this donation by Rodney.



The engine securely strapped down and our recovery team ready to head for home.

Tanks, a Torana and now the Douglas



After a lifetime of fixing weapons and machines for the Army, Paul Coldan has now joined the band of volunteers revitalising the Uiver memorial Douglas DC2. The fitter-machinist has brought to the Uiver restoration hangar the skills acquired since he began his career as a 15-year-old apprentice with the Army in 1981.

Apprentices are still soldiers and just like any recruit, Paul underwent basic training and later jungle training, although in a relatively peaceful period there was little opportunity for overseas deployment, apart from a couple of months on exchange in Britain.

Behind the scenes, however, the work of keeping the Army armed and mobile went on, with Paul working on a range of equipment from small arms – pistols, machine guns, mortars – to the heavy weapons – tanks, howitzers and armoured personnel carriers.

Leaving the Army after 14 years, Paul carried out the same work under the public service banner before joining a succession of private companies contracting for the Army, with Paul leading teams working on tanks and artillery at Bandiana.

Along the way, the fitter-machinist-armourer found time at home to restore a vintage motorcycle and a 1970 LC Holden Torana. He is the gardener at home and a keen fisherman, activities he can now enjoy at leisure after retiring 12 months ago, ending more than 44 years working for and with the Army.

Married for 38 years, Paul and his wife, Julie, have a small caravan for road trips but looking for a new interest in his retirement, Paul came across the Uiver project where his raft of skills is being put to good use.

Restoration update

Work on the aircraft has been progressing well during the winter months. The tapered lower surfaces where the engine nacelles will connect have been rebuilt and fitted to the wing centre section.

The restoration of the second engine nacelle is almost completed. Where needed, new sections of corroded ribs and stringers have been fabricated and installed. The nacelle skins been repaired, polished and put back in place in preparation for riveting over the next few weeks.

Tom, our engine specialist, has successfully tested the inertial starter motor of the Wright Cyclone engine he has been rebuilding for the last two years. Take a look at our Facebook or Instagram to hear how it sounds. The engines exhaust system is now finished and Tom, with others, is about to start the tedious job of wiring the ignition system.

We can't make promises but it is hoped that the the engine will be running in time for our annual anniversary open day on the 24th of October. Save the date.

We need your help

The Uiver Memorial DC-2 Restoration Project relies on donations to continue our work.

Please consider helping the project by donating to our "Give A Rivet Program" [at our website](#), or using the QR code below, or directly by visiting our hangar at 7 Bristol Court, Albury Airport on Wednesdays or Saturdays. We are a registered Australian charity and donations over \$2 are tax deductible.

A big thank you to our readers, both in Australia and overseas, for your continuing financial support.



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. A small effort could have a big impact.

