

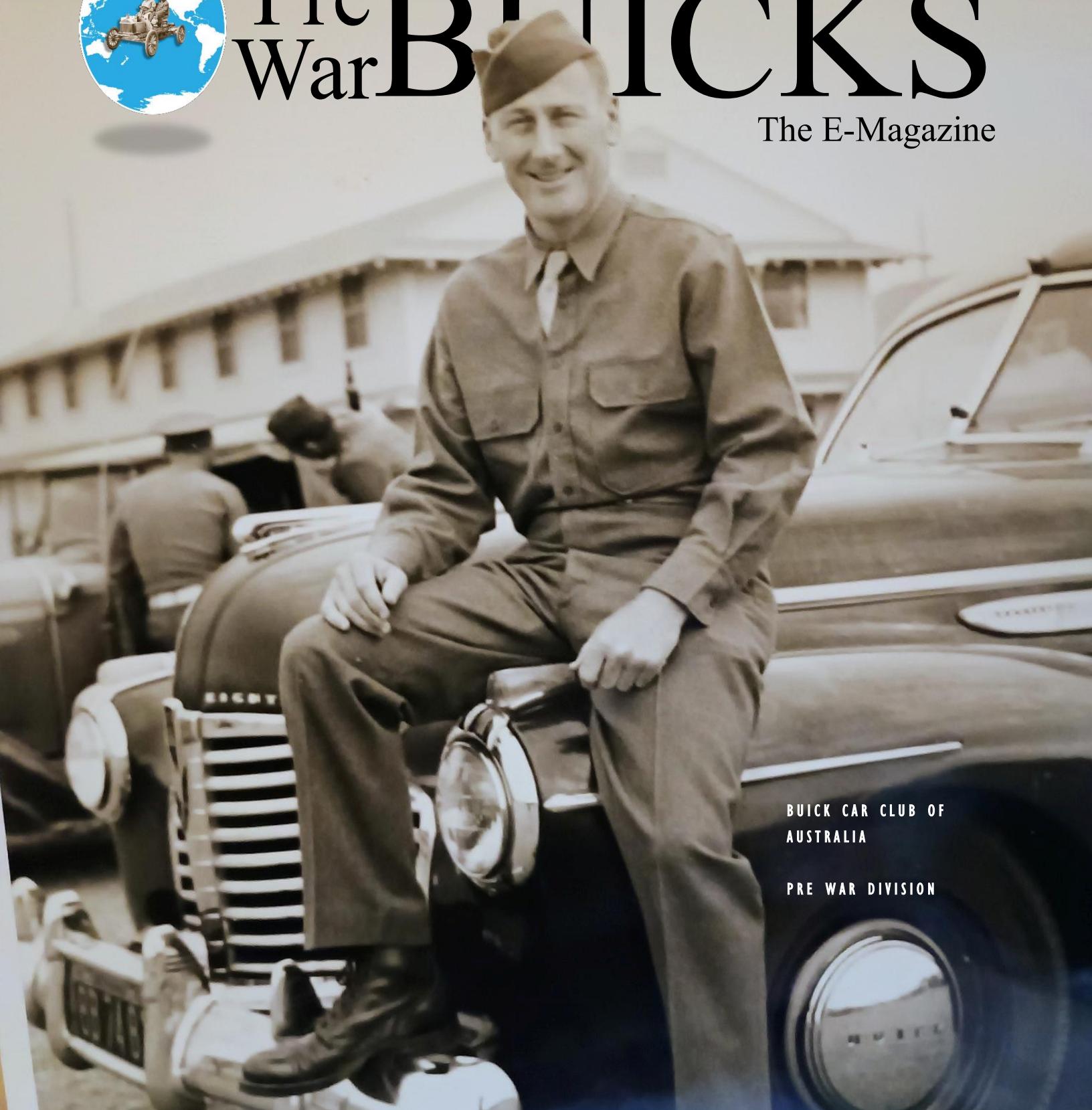
VOLUME 14 ISSUE 5

MAY 2026



Pre War BUICKS

The E-Magazine

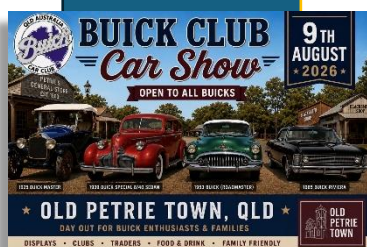


BUICK CAR CLUB OF
AUSTRALIA

PRE WAR DIVISION



“the company still kept up a high production rate.”



Editor's Comment

This edition we thought we might show a few pre war Buicks undertaking service during the periods of war that they were called upon to serve.

Our cover is a 1941 photo of a serviceman picking up his new 1941 Buick, so that should set the scene for what's to come. Not exclusively war photos, but certainly in the main.

In particular, we must thank the NSW Buick Car Club for the use of the Generals' Buicks information starting on Page 13 which is from their website. An excellent website, you might like to take a look [HERE](#) at some time.

Of course, while Buick may have stopped car production on 3rd February 1942, the company still kept up a high production rate of goods, not cars, but war goods, such as tank destroyers, munitions, engines and a whole lot more.

For the war years, Buick modified their age-old slogan as seen in this example.



If you are local in SEQ, don't miss the annual Buick car Show held on 9 August 2026 at Old Petrie Town at 901 Dayboro Road, Whiteside. Plenty to see and do, plus pre war BUICKS, what could be better.

Finally, the SEQ Pre War Tour is on again this year and only a few months away, in July this year. I recently sent out an email with the details, let me know if you didn't get it. Check the website for dates.

We trust you enjoy this edition of Pre War BUICKS and appreciate the work done by many Buick products over the periods of war that occurred between Buicks inception and the end of WW2.

1927 Sedan Drive Video



What could be nicer than going for a drive in a well restored 1927 sedan.

You also get a look at the engine which may, or may not, have the benefit of a hidden electric fuel pump. You can work it out.

At a little over three minutes in duration, it won't take up too much of your valuable time to watch.

We're calling it as a Master Six 4-Door Sedan Model 27-47 but as always, we're equally as happy to be corrected.

Make up your own mind when you watch the video [HERE](#).

Monty's Ride

When *Monty* (British Field Marshal Bernard Law Montgomery) toured New Zealand in the later 1940's (potentially 1947) he chose to ride in the rear of a Buick.

We say chose because following that Buick in a parade photo is a very English car, potentially a Lanchester complete with the famed P100 headlights so often associated with British high-end cars such as Jaguars and Bentleys.

Highly decorated, Monty had quite a handle for a name and nomenclature: Field Marshal Bernard Law Montgomery, 1st Viscount Montgomery of Alamein KG, GCB, DSO, PC, DL.

His Buick for the parade had a shorter, though possibly no less impactful title, the Buick Model 56-C Super Convertible Coupe.

Being left hand drive this Buick would have been one of the 12,181 examples that Buick made that model year and potentially one that the US military brought to New Zealand during the war. Hence its inclusion in this edition of Pre War BUICKS.

The Model 56-C rode on a 121-inch wheelbase chassis and was powered by the 248 cubic inch straight eight engine that developed 115 horsepower this year. If this model had compound carburation fitted it would have increased that power up to 125 horsepower.

This Buick went on to be sold in 1947 for an asking price of NZ£1,650.

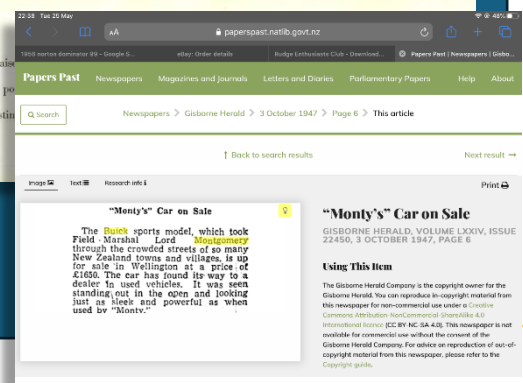
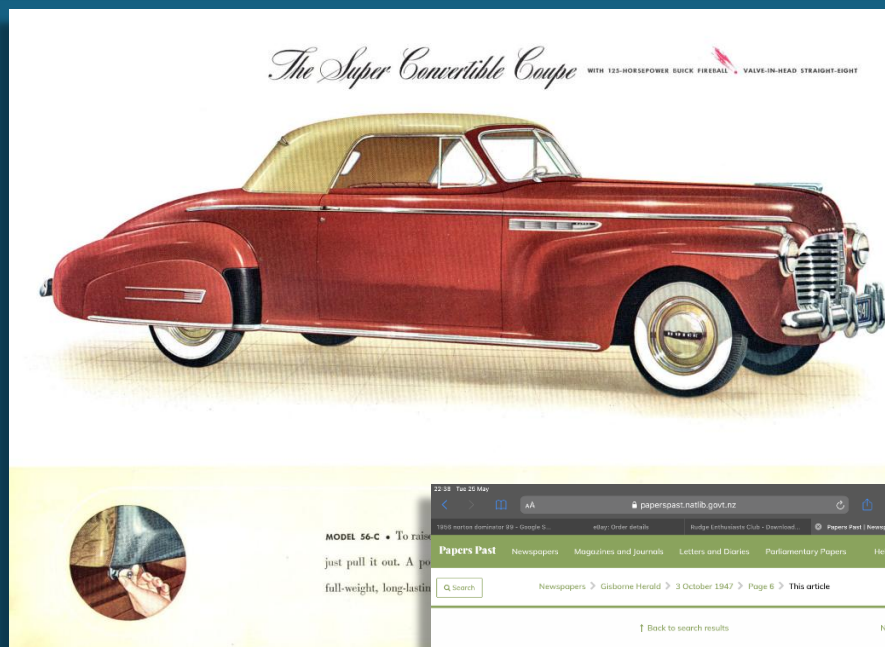
From then it is understood that the Buick was converted to right hand drive and remains in New Zealand to this day.

It was spotted at the 2003 Hawkes Bay Centenary celebration rally when it was owned by Mel and Colleen Cooper of Rotorua, NZ.



"Highly
decorated . . ."

Monty in a
1941 Buick
Model 56-C
Super
Convertible
Coupe



The Goering 1938 Buick Model 80-C

In the woods of Germany, we see a 1938 Buick Model 80-C, one of only 350 produced that year.

We see Herman Goering saluting Adolf Hitler in the first photo. It was also noted that Hitler had one hand held behind his back and somewhat clenched. This is a typical hand position for someone suffering with Parkinson's syndrome and there have been a number of television programs and books that have stated that Hitler did suffer from this malady. Potentially one of the reasons that Hitler acted both irrationally and impulsively when he started WW2 and also the reason for invading Russia and thus creating two fighting fronts when his generals advised him to hold off for a couple of years to consolidate the Western Front before opening an eastern front.

It is claimed that he wanted to achieve certain territorial, and more sinister outcomes, while he was still able to function.

In any event, the outcome was terrible for the entire world in general and those he persecuted in particular.

We are unsure how Goering ended up in a Buick when Mercedes appeared to be the car of choice for the Nazis.

In any event, we can't blame the car for the outcome of the war, but we can advise that the Model 80-C was a magnificent vehicle. Powered by the 320 cubic inch straight eight motor that developed 107 horsepower that year.

While the Model 80-C sold for US\$1,983 in the USA we doubt that Goering paid too much, if anything, for his ride!

"we doubt that
Goering paid
too much . . "



“Carried over from 1906 with a longer wheelbase for 1907.

A Clutch of Model G Roadsters

For model year 1907, Buick returned to Flint, and this time to stay.

Sales were up from the previous year's total of just 1400 cars to a record 4,641 cars in 1907.

The Model F and Model G were carried over from 1906, however with an extended chassis now 89 inches in wheelbase, up by two inches.

Our interest this article is the Model G Roadster.

In recent times we have come across a number of these cars that have, over the past twenty years, come up for sale at auctions on both sides of the Atlantic.

The 159 cubic inch capacity horizontally opposed two-cylinder engine located under the driver's seat and providing power to the rear wheels via a chain drive system remained, as did the two-speed planetary transmission.

However, in 1907 the underside of the Model G received a belly pan that tidied up the appearance of the vehicle.

The Model G was described as a two-passenger turtle back roadster and despite its good looks, sold only 535 examples whereas its tourer equivalent, the Model F, sold 3,465 examples.

The roadster sold for US\$1,150 in standard form and could be optioned with a top for an additional US\$70.

As for the touring car, this roadster was available in only one colour scheme, purple bodies with ivory wheels and running gear.



Interestingly, none of our three examples are painted purple with two white examples and a bright red one.

This first white Model G sold for £13,570 including buyer's premium in July 2004.

The auction catalogue at the time included these comments:

This car was acquired for the Lips Collection in 1969 from California where it had previously been owned by one W.C. Lanier. It comes with various papers recording its California history and confirmation letter from Lanier confirming complete restoration by him. This attractive right-hand drive two-seater Roadster is presented in cream livery with red coachlining and with varnished wooden wheels. It carries two bucket seats with buttoned black upholstery and is equipped with brass oil sidelamps and carries an acetylene generator on the off-side running-board. It comes also with copies of an instruction manual and a period specification sheet. The usual careful recommissioning will be rewarded following a period of museum display.

The second white Model G was for sale via Vault Cars who are located at 1164 East Elm Avenue Fullerton California USA.

Our third Model G, the bright red version went through the Bonhams auction in March of 2019 in London. We have no auction results on these last two cars.

Model G of
1907



Model G
2 and 3



The Horopito Secret Place

Horopito in New Zealand harbors one of the great wrecking yards left in this world gone mad wanting cars to disappear as fast as possible to be replaced by technological miracles with as yet unconvincing reliability and safety issues.

If you have any interest in old cars and the history of the automobile and just happen to be on the North Island of New Zealand, then you might want to drop in on the *Smash Palace*.

Not your average wrecking yard, *The Smash Palace* is setting itself up as a museum of automotive wonders. It features a collection of interesting cars in great condition but also allows you, for the price of entry, to rummage through the entire property, which is strewn with cars, both complete and dissected, that abound in this place of automotive dreams.

There are two yards to inspect, the main yard, in our opinion, is the one with the older cars, while the other, while bigger, is more in line with a modern car dismantling industry. Interesting, nevertheless!

As this is a working enterprise, everything is for sale. So, if you do find that much sought after item from a past that is now long gone, you can acquire it immediately.

We spotted a couple of Buicks in the yard, and we are advised that Neville Smith, well known Napier Buick enthusiast, even sent the remains of a 1936 90 Series car here at one stage. We didn't find that one, so hopefully it has returned to active service somewhere.

Once you have relived your youth by walking around the yards don't forget that the real treasures are still to be found. Climb the stairs and enter an inventory of old car jewellery, the likes of which we haven't seen before.

Check out some of the photos from that upper level and you'll see what we mean.

"you'll see
what we
mean."



“an inventory
of old car
jewellery.”



Ignoring the badge, that '36 grille
is very nice indeed!

Mao and His Staff Car

Not necessarily a war photo, however with Mao Tse-Tung standing in a pre war Buick, it certainly has the feeling of such.

This is a 1941 Roadmaster Phaeton, Model 71-C, one of 14 exported by Buick that year.

An unpopular model by 1941, this was the last production year for the Phaeton, a year that was cut short after only 312 domestic examples were constructed.

The Model 71-C sold for US\$1,775 and featured a full natural leather interior.

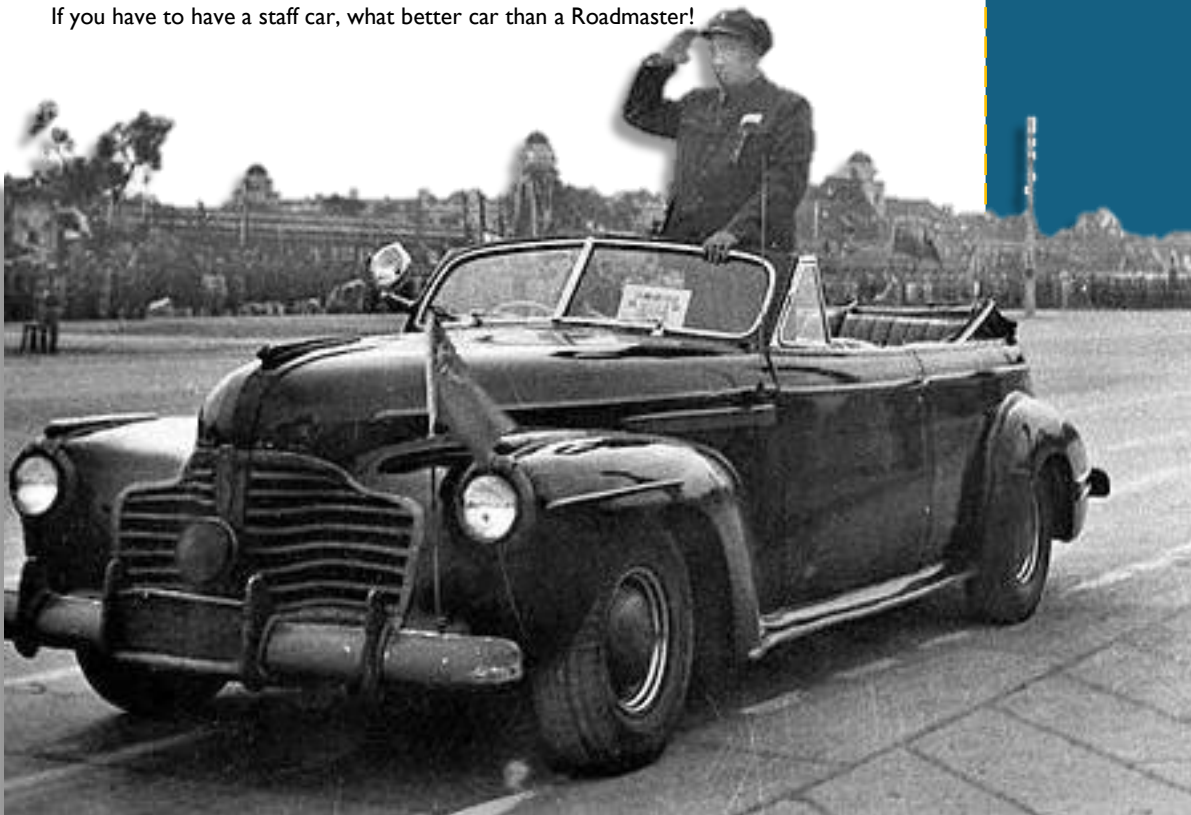
Regarding any Mao and Buick connection.

The last Emperor of China, Pu Yi, owned a Buick and after the communist revolution Mao's second in command, Zhou Enlai, used that Buick and later on other communist party leaders were seen to also use that, and other Buicks, as the brand had become a form of status symbol, perhaps.

In any event, when GM sought bankruptcy and closed several Divisions, Buick survived based mainly on the basis of its sales, and further sales potential in China.

If you have to have a staff car, what better car than a Roadmaster!

“If you have to have a staff car . . .”



Looks like
the
modellers
got the
colour
scheme
pretty right,
if not the
actual car!

WWII Navy Staff Car . . .

If you ever wanted your very own war time Buick there is perhaps a simple way to get one.

Not actual size, but at this scale you could certainly fit plenty into a garage.

eBay has ads for several war time models and this 1936 Buick Special sedan for a reasonable US\$36.50 seemed like good value.

The photos are not great but expected when photographing through a plastic box cover.

An unusual dark blue colour, possibly a gray, and US Navy insignia makes this a bit different to the usual Khaki colours associated with war time sedans.

We went looking for Navy cars and became aware that the Army and Navy used Plymouths during WW2 and indeed the Navy painted their staff cars gray and Wiki had a sample photo of one which we reproduce here.

So, while there may never have been a Model 41 Buick Navy staff car, we can always dream . . .



Buick Special Series 40 (1936)
al Air Station Oceana Virginia (United States of America)



1940 Plymouth Navy staff car
reproduction from the Wiki website.



The Generals' Buicks

The following report appeared on the Buick Car Club (NSW) website in 2004 and details much of the interesting information regarding the use of Buick staff cars by generals in the Australian military during WWII.

After War was declared in September 1939, changes were slow to occur, the Government did not mobilise industry until half-way through 1940, so production of passenger cars went ahead as in peacetime and sales to the general public were normal, numbers delivered from Woodville for 1940 sedans were 8/40 475 & 8/60 68.

The Army had apparently made a decision to use Buicks as General Officers Staff Cars and these can be seen appearing [1940 AWM negative No.051472]*

When 1941 came around the war effort in Australia was in full swing and virtually all automobile production was for defense purposes.

A GM-Holden's paper dated 14th May 1944 and titled "Summary of bodies delivered from Woodville" indicates that 176 Buick 8/40 sedans were delivered, these were what we know as model 41 [4 door fastback]. From AWM photos most appear to be LHD, which was in keeping with Government policy to leave Defence force vehicles in the drive orientation they arrived [eg Jeeps, GMC 6x6 and Dodge 4x4]

GM-H had made a decision, that after 1940 Buick would no longer use the Holden body previously shared with Chevrolet, Pontiac and Oldsmobile, so the delivering of these model 41 sedans was, we assume part of the plan to import, fully or CKD model 41's, which continued after the War [ckd]. Some confusion was caused as GM-H placed the Lion emblem on the LH front door and welded up the holes on the RH scuttle intended for the brass rivets for the Buick Motor Division information plate this is quite obvious upon examination.

These 1941 sedans were not the "Refugee" bodies which appear on the GM-H Summary for 1942 and are listed as, Buick 24, Oldsmobile 12, Pontiac 12, Chevrolet 42 [including 18 convertibles] .

"Refugee" bodies were vehicles destined for another location but diverted to Australia due to hostilities.



Pictured above, Prime Minister Curtin [1939 series 90] meets General MacArthur [1942 series 90] at Mascot Airport, Sydney 1943.

"use Buicks as General Officers Staff Cars . ."

**“Only one 1942
remains . . .”**

The Policy to use Buicks as General Officer's Staff cars continued and Field Marshall Blamey's 1941 sedan can be seen in the extensive Army Transport Museum at Bandiana, Victoria. The Museum believes that Blamey had 6 Buicks at his disposal, apparently one in each State, this could have been policy for all Generals.

Large numbers of 1941 model 41 sedans can be found in Australian Military service [Neg Nos. 020413, 122240, 130021, 065749, 125772, 053294, 051524] here as well as Cairo, the Pacific Islands and Timor, go to AWM webpage then type Neg. No.

You will note that all these Staff cars appear to be in non-military colours General Berryman's in two-tone.

Another recipient of one of these model 41's was the Governor-General in Qld, Feb 1945 [Neg. No. 086684] although from the rear it could be 1941 or 42.

Prime Minister, Chifley appears to have a 1942 model 41 at Fisherman's Bend on the debut of the 1948 Holden.

Only one 1942 remains a model 90L which anecdotally is credited with being used by General MacArthur, [photo dated 7 June 1943 at Mascot, neg. no. 052515], this was disposed of by the Army in 1947.

The Army laid down orders regarding marking of vehicles, but as can be seen from the A.W.M. photos the Buicks allotted to Generals, only carried a number on a civilian type number plate, not painted on the bonnet and rear, as other vehicles, the Buick in Qld in 1943 [Neg. No. 053294] also carries No. 107 signifying an Aust. HQ unit vehicle.

For this information, I am indebted to Stephen Taubert and his book "Formation Signs & Vehicle Marking in the Australian Army", now available only on CD.

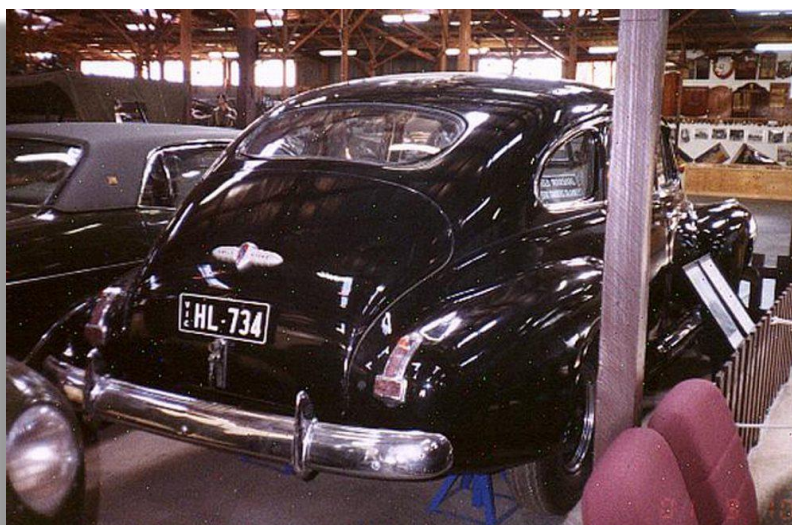
Wartime conditions and abuse took a heavy toll on passenger vehicles, which is why these and all 1941 ex-Army cars are extremely rare to-day.

Pictured below: General Blamey's 41 Buick, Bandiana Museum

Also, ten pictures by courtesy of The Australian War Memorial.

Copies of these images are available from the AWM website.

*Article and pictures researched and contributed by David Wolfe
(* AWM – Australian War Memorial)
Posted 03/2004*





www.awm.gov.au

051524



www.awm.gov.au

130021



“General
Berryman’s in
two tone.”

Generals'
Buicks



www.awm.gov.au
1941 Buick - Queensland 1943

053294
AWM Neg No 053294



www.awm.gov.au
1941 Buick - Balikpapan 1945

122240
AWM Neg No 122240



www.awm.gov.au
1941 Buick - Cairo 1941

020413
AWM Neg No 020413



www.awm.gov.au
1941 Buick - Queensland 1944

065749
AWM Neg No 065749



www.awm.gov.au
1942 Buick - Governor General 1945

086684
AWM Neg No 086684



1941 Buick - Lae 1944

AWM Neg No 077459

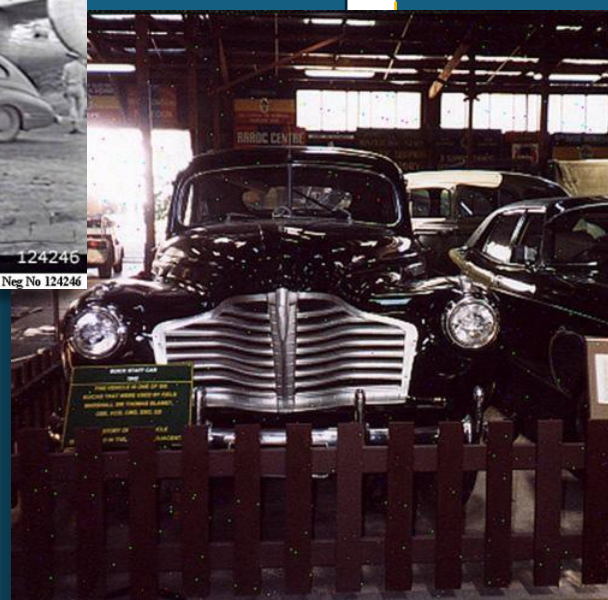
General's
Buicks



1941 Buick with Liberator - Morotai 1946

AWM Neg No 124246

Right: General Blaney's 41 Buick at the
Bandiana Museum



"It was
captured . . ."

Ambulances at War

We can hardly look at Buicks at war without a quick dive into the world of war time ambulances.

Regular readers may recall we did a deep dive into this area of automobilia some years ago and so this time not so deep, hopefully interesting, nevertheless.

Let's start at the factory.

Yes, Buick did have a factory ambulance during World War I. Our photos courtesy of the *Buickman* website depict the factory ambulance at Flint with the factory medical staff surrounding it. You may suggest that this is hardly what a war ambulance should be, and you may be correct, but we had to include it for completeness.

The second ambulance is captured whilst still in Canada and depicts a Canadian Red Cross Society ambulance prior to shipment to Europe.

From the *Just a Car Guy* website we bring you a 1912 Buick that became an ambulance during the First World War and comes complete with a story which we reproduce here.

1912 Buick, American Red Cross vehicle number 144,694. brought to France in 1914 by the Norton-Harjes Volunteer Unit, and the wooden ambulance body added there.

The ambulance was taken over by the American Red Cross in 1917 and used in the British and French sections. The ambulance was decorated with three Croix de Guerre medals (painted on right side) each time the ambulance section was cited for their actions.

It was "captured" in the Montdidier section in the spring of 1918 by the Germans. When the U.S. 27th and 32nd Divisions pushed into Montdidier later in 1918, they found the Buick lying in a park, stripped of tires and radiator.

It was taken back to the repair depot at Parc des Princes, Paris. By late 1919, it was sent to Washington DC and placed at the Red Cross National Headquarters.

It was placed in storage in Landover, Maryland prior to 1966, then stored in Silver Hills until 74, then it was at the US Quartermaster Museum at Fort Lee, VA until '87 when it came to the Liberty Memorial Museum.



**McLaughlin-Buick
ambulance.
Photo:
Saskatoon
Public Library**

During the Second World War in Great Britain, large and powerful cars were acquired by local authorities for conversion for use as ambulances, both locally and in Europe.

An angle we hadn't considered here was revealed in a comment on the Greater Manchester Transport Society website

... that in 1940 the civil defence authority was in need of ambulances to cope with civilian casualties from the expected bombing raids. They bought up second-hand cars and converted them in various locations; Wolseley in Birmingham got a contract to convert some cars. The civil defence obviously preferred large and powerful cars, which was a godsend for owners of such white elephants, since they were able to get rid of them probably at better than normal market values. With the horsepower tax now at 25 shillings per hp and fuel rationing, such cars would be expensive to run, if they could be run at all, so they just sat around and were worth very little.

Photos reveal a 1934 Buick undergoing conversion, along with other local large cars including a Crossley.

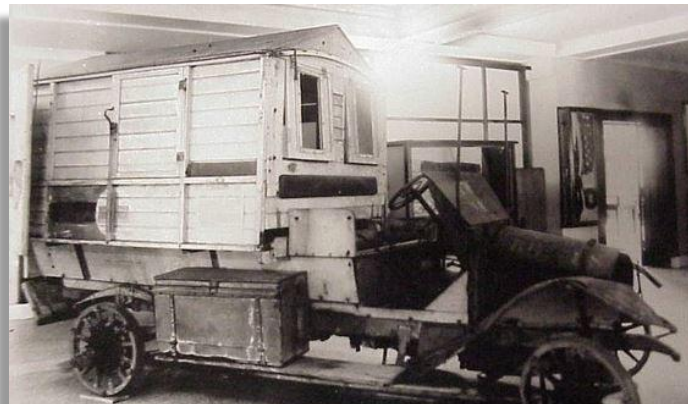


Emergency drill at Buick Motor Company, 1917. (Courtesy of Dorothy A. Major)

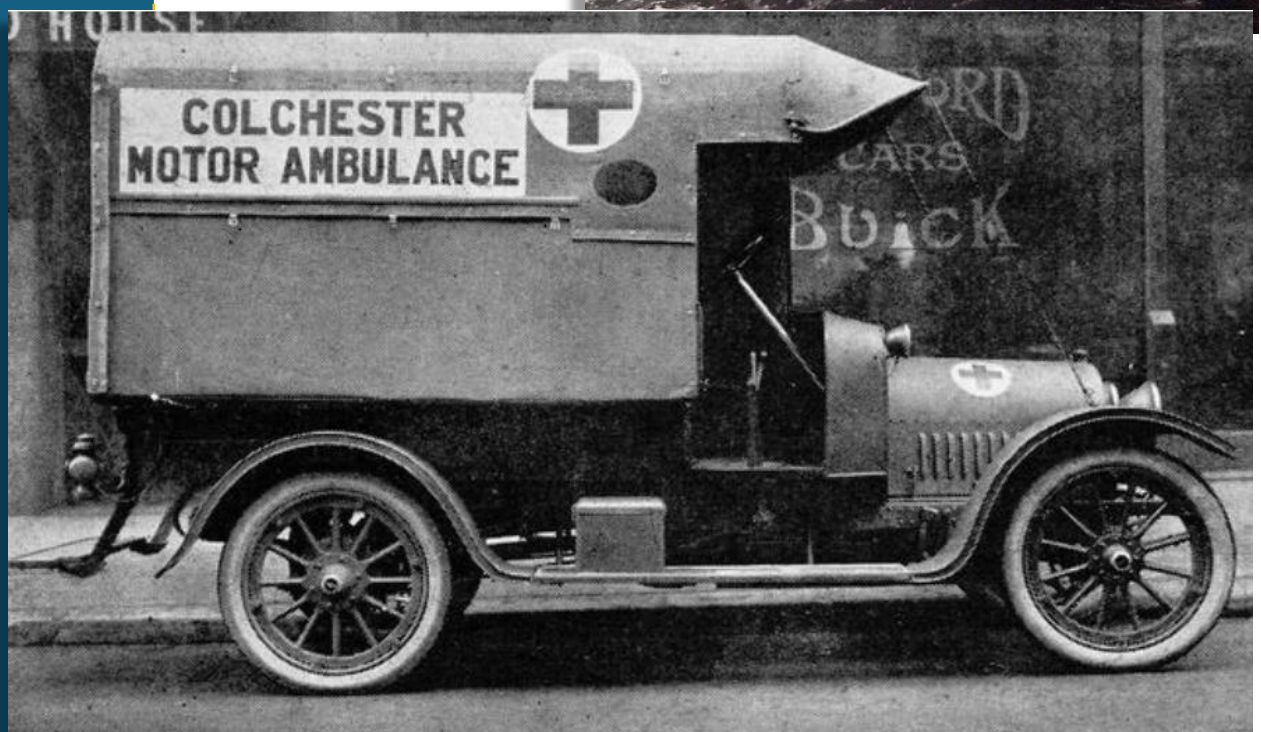
The 1917
photo of the
factory Buick
ambulance!



Right: 1912
Buick,
converted for
service in
WWI



Below: a Bedford-Buick
Ambulance from WWI





1934 Buick furthest from the camera and a similar aged Crossley, nearest.



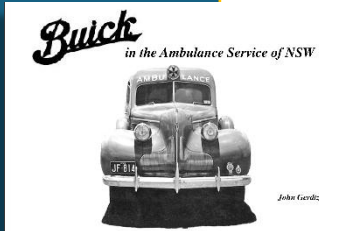
Two Buicks, one awaiting conversion, furthest from camera.

NSW Ambulances

An interesting upshot of Buick's participation in the first world war was the repurposing of Buick vehicles, in particular D4 and E4 models that were used as light trucks and ambulances, initially for the US Army and after the war for commercial and local authority use when sold as war surplus vehicles.

The ambulance field became a Buick niche market here in Australia in the years between the world wars. John Gerditz has produced an excellent book on these vehicles, and we provide just two photos from that for your information.

Buick in the Ambulance Service of New South Wales by John Gerditz is available for viewing [HERE](#).



1924 Buick
Master Six –
Liverpool
(Sydney) –
John Gerditz



1936 Buick –
Armidale
(NSW)
District – John
Gerditz



The Buick Military Tractor

Trench warfare during World War I was a horrific experience for all involved and it was in late 1916 that the British Army used a few crude tanks to break the stalemate that entrenched soldiers were suffering under.

The tanks were too crude and through poor tactics and unreliability of the tanks, it was deemed to be unsuccessful in many ways. However, the use of machinery to break the stalemate was the obvious solution.

By late 1917 and with the British, French and now the US involved, a high campaign using tanks was developed for 1919 and the need to a support vehicle to carry the support infantry and supplies became more critical than ever.

Horse drawn equipment could not keep up with the tanks and so a plan to develop a military tractor was devised by a British Colonel, Henry Newton to develop such a vehicle.

Called the Newton Tractor, a specification was developed, and the plan was for multiple manufacturers to provide the skeleton chassis and drive train to then be bodied in England.

Among the manufacturers was Buick, an obvious choice, plus Studebaker and Willys-Overland.

We have a link to a video of one of these Buick Military Tractors under trial for you to view [HERE](#).

These tractors were required to have the ability to travel at 5 mph whilst towing a 3-ton load plus towing an artillery field piece at the same time.

You might enjoy reading a comprehensive story about the development and ultimate outcome of the decision to build the Newton Tractor and if so, we recommend you look [HERE](#).

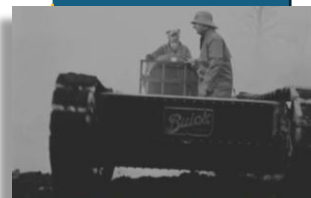
What Next in the E-Magazine

We not only feature a 1932 Model 32-55X on our cover next month, but we also take a look at two of these rare cars that sold at auction in 2025, one all American version and one that travelled to Australia to receive its Holden's body and then returned via Canada.

It's an amazing pair of very rare phaetons!

Where did miniature golf start up in the US, well beside a Buick dealer we thought for a while, until we dug a bit deeper and scored an eagle in the process.

We also uncover the bear facts about the Model 96-S introduced in 1931 and soon to grace your reading in the June edition of Pre War BUICKS.



The Buick Car Club of Australia Qld Inc.

Web:

<https://www.buickcarclubqld.com.au/>

This e-magazine is produced under the auspices of the Buick Car Club of Australia Qld Inc. to cater for the needs of car enthusiasts with an interest in Pre War Buicks.

It is a medium created for the exchange of stories and ideas. Its aim is to support enthusiasts in the preservation and use of the Buick Automobiles built between 1903 and the end of 1941.

The editors welcome contributions at prewarbuicks@gmail.com

The editors reserve the right to include submitted articles or not at their discretion.

When Better Automobiles Were Built
Buick Will Built Them, Pre War

Previous editions of the eMagazine are available here: [On Line Magazine](#)

War was never
constrained . .”

The Last Word in War Loads

This 1916 Buick D-4 truck is seen transporting men to places now unknown.

Whether they were off to some remote rail head and on to a war that was raging in Europe, we can only guess.

Buick exported 1,327 of these vehicles, in both chassis only and express body styles, and gave them a 1500 pounds maximum load. War was never constrained by limits, and we suggest that this load limit was never considered when the job needed to be done.

