



Back from the brink!

Canadian Military Pattern (CMP) trucks were a range of military trucks, made in large numbers, and in numerous variants, by Canada during World War II, compliant to British Army specifications, primarily intended for use in the armies of the British Commonwealth allies, but also serving in other units of the British Empire. Over 800,000 were produced.

We were fortunate enough to clear out a barn in Natal some years ago which contained an interesting cross section of old items. These included two Leyland Comet trucks, a crawler tractor and two World War 2 CMPs. These ubiquitous trucks were everywhere during World War 2 and were highly successful. Many versions depended on the ultra- reliable Ford V8 flat head engines which appear in different guises throughout the Sandstone Heritage Trust vehicle collection.

Canadian Military Pattern trucks not only motorized the militaries of Britain, Canada, Australia and New Zealand, but were also sent to the Soviet Union following the Nazi invasion, as part of Canada's Gift and Mutual Aid program to the Allies. During the War, CMP trucks saw service around the world in the North African Campaign, the Allied invasion of Sicily, the Italian Campaign, the Soviet Front, the Burma Campaign, the Battle of the Philippines (1941–42), the liberation of Northwest Europe, and the Western Allied invasion of Germany. CMP trucks also served in post-war conflicts in Indonesia, French Indochina, and the Portuguese colonies in Africa. The wide variety of truck body designs included general service (GS), water tanker, fuel tanker, vehicle recovery (tow truck), dental clinic, mobile laundry, wireless house, machinery (machine shop), folding boat transport, and anti-tank gun tractor. They were powered by either a Ford or Chevrolet engine with options of two or four wheel drive.



Our two CMP “barn finds”.

Although often referred to as “Canadian Fords”, they were built both by Ford and Chevrolet with a further derivative (although totally different in design) from Dodge. Sandstone, currently, has two working examples, a Ford and a Chevrolet. The Ford unit referred to in the article will be the third running unit.

Restoration of the better of these two started a few months ago and we are pleased to advise that it is in remarkably good condition. The engine had probably not run since World War 2 but Johan van der Hoven, who was a specialist on these particular old Ford engines, has got it running which was remarkable because considering that almost no spares were required, the engine just needed some TLC and now it is running. Interestingly the engine design was a gas guzzler and in other applications, such as the Marmon-Herrington armoured car, was sometimes replaced with a diesel alternative as was done with the Marmon-Herrington in our collection.

Interestingly the example now running has some bullet holes in the windscreen that we are leaving as is. Also of interest is that the windscreen angle on these vehicles is designed to avoid reflections from sunlight which could betray the presence of the vehicle to the enemy.

We expect to return this vehicle to good running order during the course of the year and then it will be left in its original patina.