



By Rod and Donna Garrity

TRANSPORT WAIRARAPA FORD 2418 REBORN

An important piece of Wairarapa trucking history returned to the road recently, when a Ford DT 2418, painted in Transport Wairarapa's green and white livery emerged from restoration.

It all started from an idea we had to restore a truck for local truck driving legend, Doug Gray. Doug is a member of the Northern Classic Commercials and has always gone on the truck rallies with us, so we decided to restore a truck for him that was the same as the truck he drove for Transport Wairarapa, Number 36.

Doug is the grandson of one of the founders of Transport Wairarapa, Mr F B Gray, who along with 18 other smaller Carriers jointed up to form Transport Wairarapa in 1940. In 1965 Bill Hargreaves purchased Transport Wairarapa and onsold it to Farmers Transport in 1993.

Our first problem was to find a suitable truck. There were several shorter wheel base trucks around, however we were able to locate a long wheel base model in a shed in Waipawa.

At this stage our mechanic/restorer, Richard Herrick from Masterton, who had worked as one of Transport Wairarapa's mechanics, became involved. There was nothing about Ford 2418s that Richard hadn't rebuilt, repaired or straightened before as Transport Wairarapa operated over 60 of these trucks in various configurations – tractor units, dumpers, drop siders and flatdecks.

Richard is also a keen member of Northern Classic Commercials and accompanies us on all the rallies.

We went and had a look at the truck. Richard reckoned we could do something with this one so we agreed on a price and drove it home. The Ford had a 22 foot tipping



How the truck arrived



The cab undergoing its transformation



flatdeck fitted. Back at Richard's shed, the under body hoist was removed and four feet was added to the end of the chassis, along with a drawbeam and Ringfeder. The deck was lengthened out to 24 feet and a Transport Wairarapa headboard was added by Rick Cottle Engineering (Rick was also an engineer for Transport Wairarapa and had built decks for them in the past).

The cab on the truck we purchased was a later model cab but Richard was able to source a suitable replacement and we were able to do a straight swap. This new cab was stripped out and taken to Doug Gray's son-in-law, Rex Gallon of Spraycraft, who was responsible for all of the painting.

The chassis and wheels were painted and were taken back to Richard's workshop, where he stripped a lot of the motor down, rebuilt a lot of the componentry, accelerator linkages, gear linkages, water pipes, air intakes, wiring, Eaton 2-speed motors and compressor. Then he added an air dryer and re-routed a lot of the air lines. When it was all put back together Rex re-painted the motor in frame, back to its original Cummins brown. The radiator was removed, inspected and re-painted, along with the traditional yellow fan blade.

Next the cab shell was fitted to the chassis, the glass and new rubbers were fitted. Then Richard completely re-wired the cab, adding the heater and the entire dash, which is no easy task, as the dash was put in and out four times before he was completely satisfied that it was perfect. The seats and upholstery were fitted.

Doug had a V8 sign off a 1938 Ford car on the original Number 36. Magoos of Masterton supplied an exact replica.

The truck was driven back to our yard in Greytown, where the deck was fitted back on the chassis, after all the wooden decking was replaced. We then took it back to Rex's, where he painted the deck and did the final touch ups. It was here that Phil Workman, the local signwriter, added the Transport Wairarapa sign writing to the door. The truck was taken to VTNZ and passed with a clean sheet.

The Presentation

As a fitting finale, on October 29, we held a launch at Richard Herrick Transport Repairs workshop. We invited all those people who had been involved in the restoration as well as many past employees of Transport Wairarapa. We had a display of photographs of Transport Wairarapa history and a barbeque and refreshments were provided throughout the day. It was great to see so many familiar faces.

The restoration from start to finish took 10 months and this was due to the expertise, knowledge and co-operation of the entire restoration team. So we thank all those involved in bringing this idea to reality. But special thanks must go to Richard Herrick and Rex Gallon for their many hours spent on this project.

Number 36's maiden voyage, driven by Doug Gray, was on the Northern Classics Commercials' Forgotten Highway Rally through Whangamomona. It was really good to see the old colours back on the road once again. **VD**



Looking the part, and back on the road, the finished D Series with Doug Gray at the wheel



The completed rolling chassis



Richard Herrick working on the engine



Easing the cab into place



Good progress



Waiting for a deck



Finished and ready to go

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