

Corbitt Biederman Sterling

Reo also built airport firefighting truck on the 29XS chassis

The Army Air Forces Wrecking Truck Tractor Type C-2, 7.5 ton 6X6, was originally made by the Federal Motor Truck Company of Detroit Michigan. It was also known as the Federal model 606 series up to the 606E. The C-2 was one of the largest, if not the largest, vehicle used in the Army Air Forces. The truck was also manufactured before and during WWII by Biederman, Corbitt and possibly REO.

I've attached a copy of the Marmon-Herrington ad that the photos I sent came from. The ad indicates these trucks were built as vehicle and tank recovery wreckers, but not all was truthful in wartime. They certainly could have handled aircraft recovery. The equipment certainly looks very similar to the C-2's, except there is no 5th wheel. They definitely went to Russia, I have an M-H brochure which confirms this. M-H was known as the "Birthplace of the Arsenal of Democracy". Many of the concepts of the big and small all wheel drive trucks, from 1/2 ton to 7-1/2 ton, were developed by M-H in the 1930's. It is ironic that they didn't win any of the big contracts for U.S. all wheel drive trucks during the war, but they did a huge business with our allies with Lend-Lease. They are probably best known for converting Ford trucks to all wheel drive, starting in 1935. There were 4x4 and 6x6 models.

Technically, the only C-2's were the Corbitt, Biederman, and Federal 7-1/2 ton wreckers built for the USAAF (some say Reo also built C-2's, but I am not entirely convinced of it). There were other similar trucks built for other branches of the services, but they were not designated as C-2's. I think after the War C-2 became a generic term in the civilian world for all similar trucks. Corbitt, Biederman, Federal, *and* Reo also built the F-1 fuel tanker semi tractor, which had a nearly identical cab and chassis to the C-2 (the F-1 had a 5.5" longer wheelbase). The Federal F-1 was a model 605, the Reo a 29XS, and the Corbitt a 54SD6. The Biederman was simply an F-1. Reo also built a Cardox airport firefighting truck on the 29XS chassis (29FF ?). The Federal and Reo 7-1/2 tonners are nearly identical, the only difference in appearance besides the nameplate is the front fenders. The Federal fenders are somewhat "styled", while the Reo's are flatter in appearance. The Reo disc wheels also have more holes in them, but these are easily swapped around and not a sure thing.

Reo did build a 10 ton 6x6 aircraft salvage wrecker for the Navy, with equipment similar to the C-2. Reo built about 200 of these trucks, and a handful have survived. These trucks are not in any of the books, but are shown in a 1945 Reo Annual Report I have, plus I have photos of survivors. I have yet to come across a closeup photo of this truck while in the Navy, except for one with a cement mixer body on it (with USN markings !) The annual report does not make any mention of 7-1/2 ton wreckers, only the tractors and Cardox fire trucks.

Sterling also built a 10 ton 6x6 aircraft wrecker for the Navy in much larger numbers, the DDS235. I think the Sterling and Reo probably had similar specs, but the cabs did not look at all alike. Many of the Sterlings have survived, but not as many as the Federals. The "Stuart Motor Company" truck on your website is a Sterling DDS235, as is the red and white truck in the background of one photo (you speculate this may be a Corbitt)

I am not 100% sure on this, but I think Corbitt only built some late '30's and very early '40's model C-2's. By '42 Corbitt was up to their necks with orders for the standard 6 ton 6x6 50SD6. Corbitt was a small outfit, I would be surprised if they had production capacity for much else besides the 6 tonners. I think Federal and Biederman built all the C-2's after '42 or so, with the majority from Federal, assuming I am correct that Reo didn't build any.

If you are interested , I am the moderator for the "What Am I" on the AHS discussion page. We post a photo of a different old truck every day and folks try to guess what it is. We also have a pretty lively discussion page (Road Kill Cafe), and everyone is pretty friendly. Here is a link to the WAI if you want to check it out.

<http://www.twinbeech.com/federalc2wrecker.htm>

COMMERCIAL CAR JOURNAL

THE MAGAZINE FOR FLEET OPERATORS

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U.S. EAGLES OF THE AIR ARE SERVED BY REO GIANTS



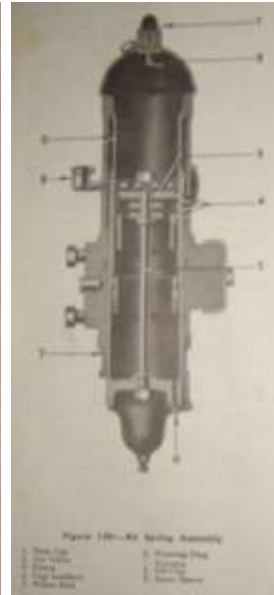
These big, powerful 10-wheel Reos, produced specially for the Army Air Corps, help keep our fighting Eagles in the air . . . keep 'em fighting. Equipped with tank trailers, they serve as airplane refueling units. Built for "tough going" by the manufacturer of AMERICA'S TOUGHEST TRUCKS, they've proved fully equal to the requirements of their appointed task — worthy bearers of the time-honored name REO.

MINNESOTA PASSENGER CAR
OFFICIAL TIRE INSPECTOR
O. P. A. # 6473, 2-4



*America's
Toughest Truck*

REO MOTORS, INC. LANSING, MICH.



One feature that all of the manufacturers had in common were the two air springs mounted on each side of the radiator just behind the bumper.

The round device just in front of the radiator is an inertia starter exactly like the ones used on WWII aircraft engines. This starter had a heavy flyweight that could be cranked up to speed. It could then be engaged to turn the engine over.