

Volkswagen Third Largest Car Works



THEY CALL IT BEETLE—The Volkswagen is shown here under wraps at the Wolfsburg, West Germany, Volkswagen plant. It is called the "beetle" of the highways. The wraps are

sheets of wrapping paper taken from the shipments of American steel used to build the small German car. (UPI)

By RICHARD H. GROWALD United Press International FRANKFURT, Germany (UPI)—They call it a "beetle" and so it looks. But if you had to single out one factor that has made West Germany rich, it might well be the Volkswagen car.

Its success story is one of the great ones of our generation. At war's end all there was of Volkswagen—once plugged by Hitler as "the people's car"—was a bombed-out swampland plant.

Now the Volkswagen works is

the world's third largest auto-producer and holds more than half the foreign car market in the United States.

Volkswagen's 1200 model won Detroit's Elmer A. Sperry award for doing to the highways what Douglas DC3 did for air travel. And Heinz Nordhoff, the Volkswagen chief, doesn't mind jokes about the VW's shape. He regards the 1200's nicknames as badges of honor.

"The names beetle and bug are used in such an affectionate manner by owners that all of us consider them complimentary

and evidence of the affection which owners have for our product," Nordhoff told UPI.

Lifelong Automaker Nordhoff is a tallish, slender engineer addressed by employees as "Professor Doctor Nordhoff." Now 64, his life has been spent in the German motor industry. His wife, Charlotte, and his two daughters saw little of Nordhoff during the first Volkswagen years. He worked an 18-hour day, often sleeping on an office cot. He reorganized production (his Wolfsburg plant is now the largest single auto plant in the

world), set up a dealer network fired with missionary zeal (there are more than 700 in the United States now), gave Europe a servicing unit that reaches from the toe of Italy to arctic Norway.

In 1948 Wolfsburg produced only 19,344 cars. Volkswagen produces that many in less than four days now. Only Chevrolet produces more automobiles.

In 1949 Nordhoff sent only two Volkswagens to America. This year he is shipping—on his company's own vessels—275,000 cars and trucks.

Hitler Starts It Hitler started it all in 1933 when he summoned autodesigner Ferdinand Porsche.

Der Fuehrer dictated the car's specifications to the designer—the "people's car" (Volkswagen) seating four or five persons, able to cruise at 60 miles an hour, get 50 miles to the gallon of gas, and powered by an air-cooled motor. Hitler insisted on an air-cooled engine "because not every country doctor has a garage."

In Germany, a Volkswagen costs less today than it did in 1950. Says Nordhoff: "We have been able to hold the price level by adding more automation to our production. Here, too, is the strength of the no-change-for-change-alone philosophy. We can afford to invest large sums in automated production because of the continuity of our basic design."

ment and complained she had a car without an engine.

Gives New Twist The new big brother 1500 has given a twist to the tale. Its tiny flat engine is slipped in under the rear luggage compartment—and that caused an actual scene at the Czech-West German border recently.

Count Andreas Razumovsky, a West German music critic, had driven his new 1500 to the Communist border checkpoint. The Czech border guards ordered him out of the car for their usual search. The guards opened the front hood, opened the rear luggage compartment, looked under the dashboard. Frowning, they hunted beneath the front and rear seats and then under the car. Finally, one of them said to the count, "All right, just where is your engine?"

The count lifted the floor of his rear luggage compartment and showed them the minute engine. "Oh," said the surprised guard, "I was thinking you Westerners had finally built a car that didn't need an engine."

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Your Money's Worth

By SYLVIA PORTER

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Imagine that you're listening to the late news and suddenly you hear an announcement from Washington that the President has just signed a law which will wipe out the dollar bill and replace it with a new note worth \$2.24 on D-Day. This new note will contain 20 "dimes" and in each dime there will be 12 "pennies"—a total of 240 "pennies" worth \$2.24.

Imagine that you also are informed that all the coins and paper bills which you've used since childhood are to disappear and to be replaced with new coins and bills, each with different faces, different values, different names, and in the period before D-Day you must go through an education-re-education process of staggering proportions.

This is what is about to happen in Australia.

The Australian government is now taking the giant step of switching the entire currency setup of the entire continent of Australia from the unwieldy British-style system of pounds, shillings and pence to the simple American-style decimal system of dollars and cents. The new system of decimal currency is to be introduced in February, 1966, and the final change-over is to be completed in 1968.

This move not only marks an enormous upheaval Down Under, but it also carries immense implications for the whole world.

It signals the continuation of a relentless trend toward "decimalization" of the world's currencies—a move which only Britain and a few Commonwealth members in Africa are still resisting. It dramatizes the pull toward standardization of world trade procedures. It underlines the far-reaching impact of automated monetary machinery for offices and businesses around the globe.

As the Right Honorable Harold Holt, Treasurer of the Commonwealth of Australia, put it in an interview while he was in New York City recently, "In a world of expanding international trade there is great practical value in the simplicity of the decimal. In a world of office mechanization and electronic machines, the decimal system has great advantages over pounds, shillings and pence."

Overwhelming are the problems of re-education of Australia's 11 million people in money-figuring and of rewriting school textbooks before D-Day, they're just part of the tale.

Hundreds of thousands of cash registers, adding machines, calculators and other monetary machines must be converted from pounds to dollars. Every vending machine, and telephone booth must be refitted for decimals. Every gas pump, taxi and parking meter, typewriter and typesetting machine must register new amounts.

In banks every money-weighing machine must learn the new weight of each coin. Every checkbook and other bank form must be changed as well. An entire new supply of coins and notes must be minted and printed (Australia has more than 2 billion coins in circulation today). To handle the job by D-Day a new mint in Canberra is now under construction, is due for completion late next year.

The total cost of the change-over cannot possibly be calculated, but, as an indication, the conversion of monetary machines alone will run to \$67 million or more.

Still, says Holt, "We have no doubt that the savings over the years will far outweigh the expense." It's estimated that \$13 million annually will be "immediate savings" in extra time office workers use today to operate monetary machines, and calculate pounds and shillings by hand. It's estimated that the time it takes school children to learn the money system will be slashed in half. Everyday shopping will be simplified considerably, and the weight of coins an Australian has to carry to make everyday change will be cut 40 per cent.

There will be, Holt emphasizes, "a noticeable saving of office and clerical time in the business world and access to a much wider and, in many cases, cheaper selection of modern monetary machines."

Incidentally, during the prolonged debate over the change-over, the Australians suggested nearly 1,000 possible names for their new money, including: Baa-Baa and Do-do; Abo and Auk; Centum, Decimony and Nunotes; Platypus and Possum.

So what did those practical treasury officials settle on? Dollars and cents.

Cadets Participate In Aviation Week

Cadets from the Medford Civil Air Patrol unit participated in Federal Aviation Week observations last week end at Medford airport.

They assisted in conducting tours through the control tower and Weather Bureau facilities. Medford cadets participating included Eileen Gent, Gary Gent, Nannette Taylor, Albert Hall, Craig Stinger, Dan Osborn, and Sam Ashenbrenner. Cadets from the Grants Pass participating were Tom Doyle and Stephen Chapman. Three senior members of the Medford and Grants Pass units also participated.

Portland Banker Dies in Auto Crash

PORTLAND (UPI)—James A. Randall, 59, Portland bank official, died in a one-car accident Tuesday night.

BEST WHEAT CROP.

NEW YORK (UPI)—The Durum wheat crop for 1963-64 is one of the best in 10 years, according to a leading producer of spaghetti and macaroni products. Durum wheat is grown principally in a small triangular area in North Dakota, South Dakota and Minnesota.

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