

## A Cooling System Tip: Repairing a Condenser

By Mike Woodburn

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With this short article, I would like to pass on another cooling system tip to those of you who may have to make minor repairs to the condenser on their Fairmont single- or twin-cylinder engines.

Over the last year or so, the gasket between the condenser and water hopper on my 1938 Fairmont, M9 OD-B single-cylinder engine had gradually deteriorated to the point where steam was escaping in great quantities. The car still ran great, but the water deposits at the leak location were gradually leaving a mess on the front of the water hopper. It was time to replace the gasket!

The Fairmont condenser on my M9 is attached to the water hopper by means of several bolts which fasten onto the base of the condenser housing.

Over the years I had heard numerous complaints from several NARCOA members who had twisted off a large percentage of these bolts in the process of removing the condenser. Even though it is no great problem to drill out broken off bolts and replace them with new ones, I came up with

an idea that would eliminate this problem altogether.

You see, the Fairmont water hopper is made of *aluminum*, which expands and contracts greatly with heat and cold. The idea hit me that if the engine were hot, the bolts would release much easier. So, I fired up the old M9, and let it heat up to "steaming temperature". The first twist of the wrench proved my theory to be correct . . . and they came off slicker'n a whistle! After I saw that the bolts would come off easily, I shut the engine down and finished the removal of the remaining ones. Not a single bolt gave me trouble!

After the engine cooled down, I proceeded to flush the hopper and condenser with the garden hose. The only problem I had with this, though, was that apparently a chipmunk had stashed his winter's supply of chestnuts in my water hopper one winter when I had left the cap off! To fix this, I removed the drain cock, and poked the chestnut "chips" out of the bottom of the water hopper with a length of stiff wire.

After the cleanup and flush, I applied a new gasket to the head of the water hopper and reinstalled the condenser. Now my M9 is ready to hit the high iron again!