

# Oldtimers return to past glory part by part

The Boomerang may fly again if the efforts of two Brisbane men come to fruition.

Greg Batts, 41, an insurance company employee, and Matt Denning, a draftsman for an aeronautical design company, have spent years rebuilding two Boomerangs without drawings or any available specifications.

Alan Bolton, who designed the Boomerang, said this was a remarkable feat.

The race is on to get a rebuilt Boomerang into the air.

Kerritt Weeks, the great American aerobatic champion who owned several warbirds, as World War II aircraft are known, is reported to have commissioned the rebuilding of one in the US.

But Greg Batts and Matt Denning are not too worried.

"They will find it impossible to rebuild an authentic Boomerang to its original specifications. Anything they build will only be a lookalike," Batts said.

He said several other Australian projects to rebuild the Boomerang were progressing, but as far as he knew only the aircraft on which he and Denning were working were being rebuilt to fly.

One of the great difficulties in rebuilding an old warplane is finding parts.

No original plans were kept as far as is known.

Old parts are found in the most amazing way. Batts and a friend re-

cently drove thousands of kilometres through three States seeking parts, following up rumors and searching paddocks which were once wartime airfields or post-war aircraft dumps.

While searching a southern NSW paddock Batts recognised a rusty piece of metal sticking out of a dam as part of a Boomerang under-ridge locking system.

When passing a house outside Charters Towers Denning spotted two Boomerang propeller spinners, regarded as unobtainable, being used as ornaments on the home's verandah.

Some parts such as internal fuel tanks have been found in use as dog kennels.

Batts and Denning said there was a treasure trove of parts from scrapped aircraft in Papua New Guinea, which would not allow any part to be taken from the country.

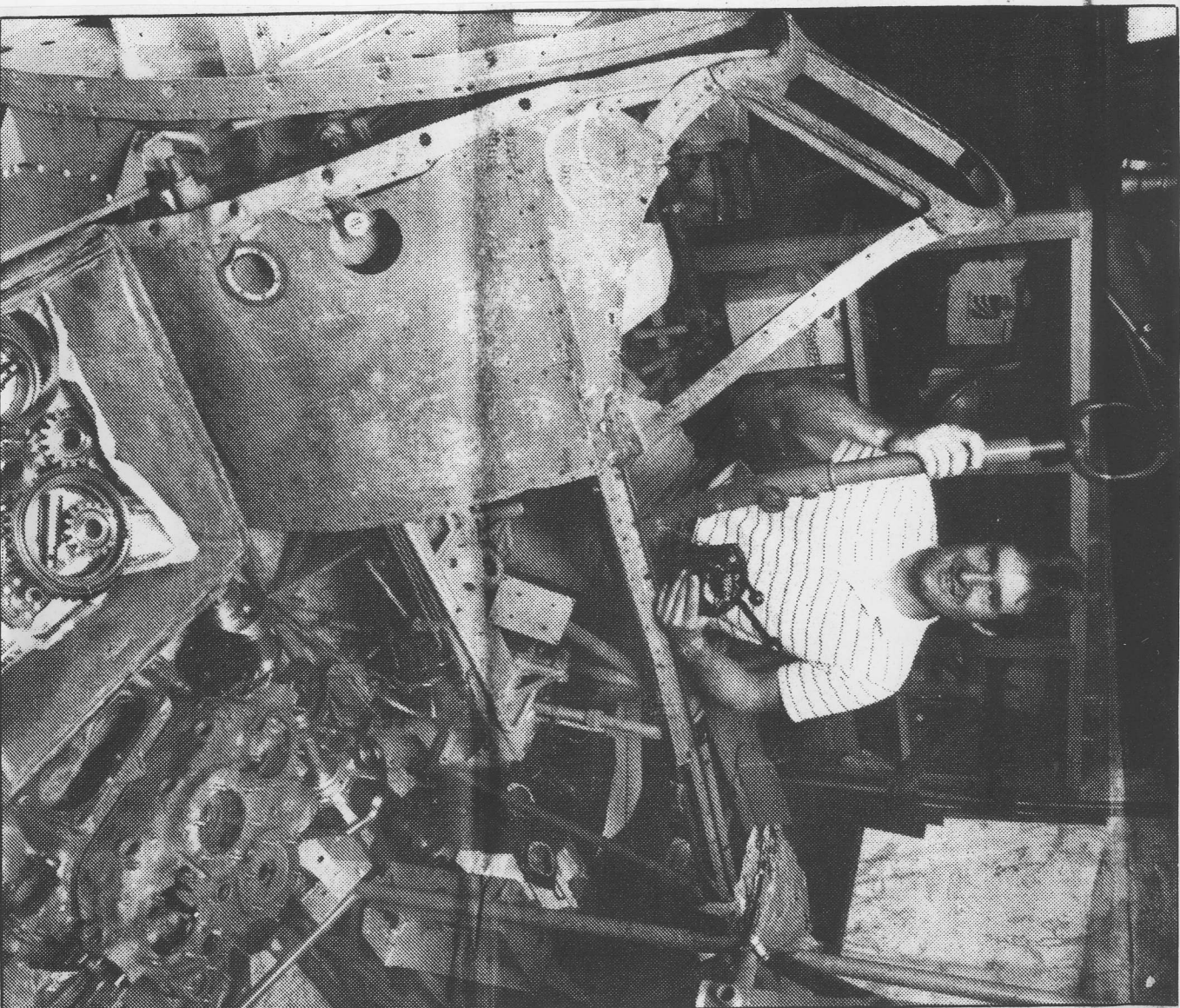
Papua New Guinea officials say old aircraft parts are part of the country's heritage.

It is hoped further talks with the officials will bring permission to salvage some of the parts.

Batts and Denning are running out of space.

Batts' backyard and garage and Denning's under-the-house workshop are packed.

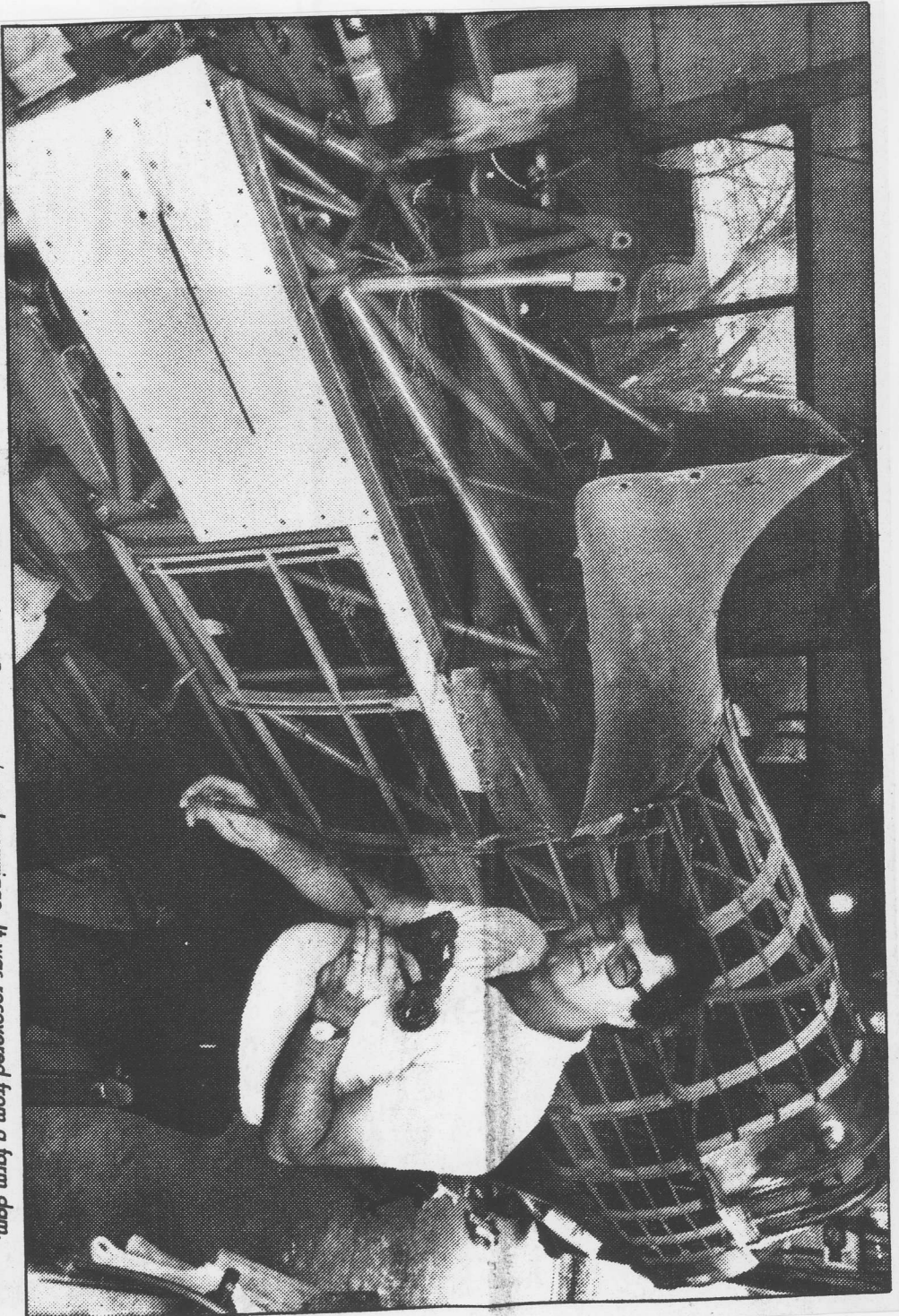
They hope somebody will give them work space, preferably on the south side, to enable them to work on their aircraft together.



Boomerang restorer Matt Denning with a control column and throttle controls salvaged from old dumps.

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Greg Batts holds a rusty piece of metal which belonged to a Boomerang's undercarriage. It was recovered from a farm dam.



2/19/00  
Greg Batts

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