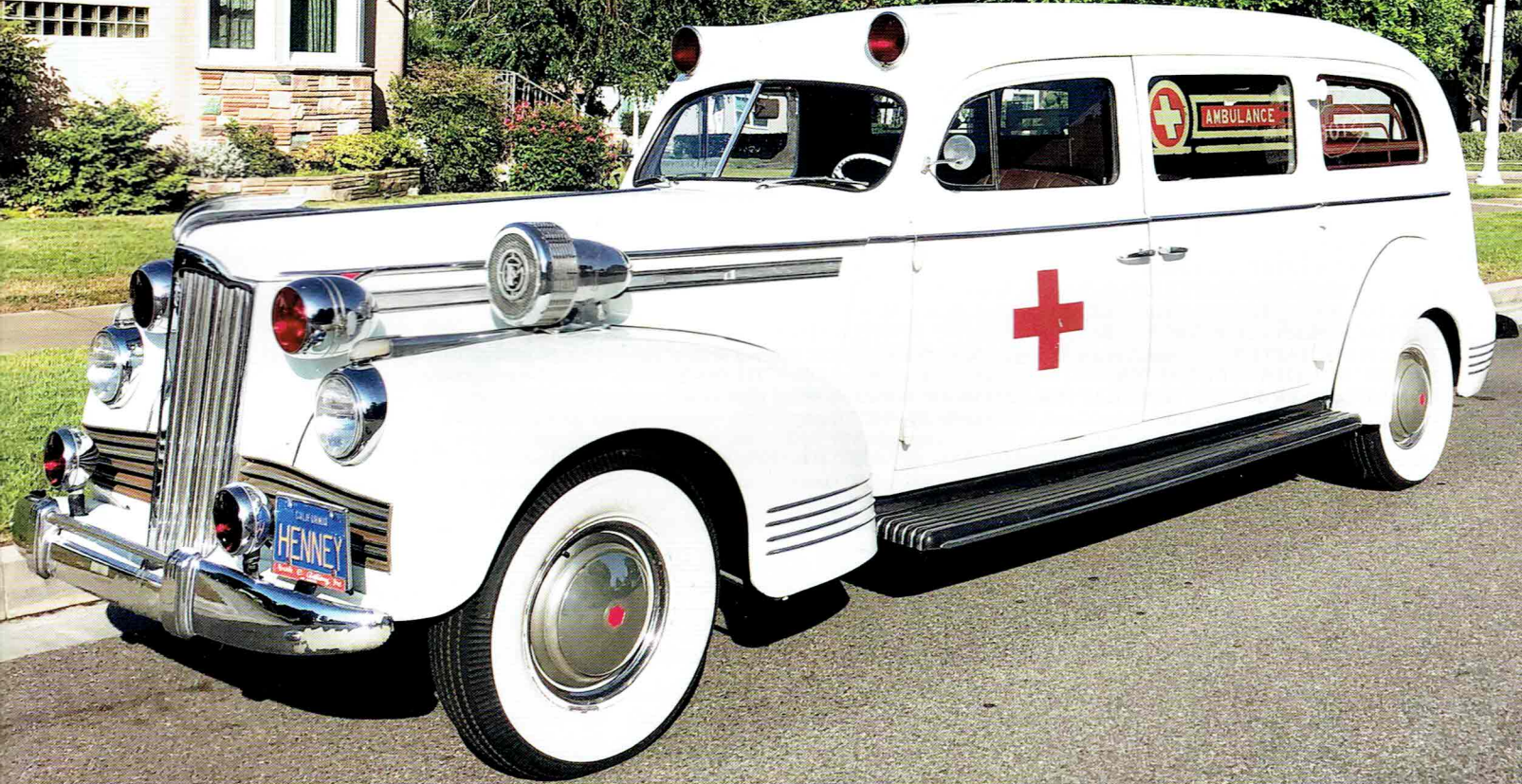


The **PROFESSIONAL** *CAR*



**THE 1942
PROFESSIONAL CARS**



NUMBER 192

1st Quarter 2022

The Professional Car

Issue Number 192

First Quarter 2022

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COVER PHOTOS – “*As rare as hen’s teeth*” is a much overused expression that refers to anything that is so rare that it’s all but non-existent. But that pithy phrase certainly applies to the car that graces the front and back covers of this issue. Two years ago, Lou Farah – who founded and runs Professional Cars International, the West Coast club for owners and devotees of vintage ambulances and funeral vehicles – acquired this 1942 Henney Packard ambulance purely by chance when a local auto museum was thinning out its collection. Talk about being in the right place at the right time! Lou shares his remarkable good-luck story with all of us elsewhere in this issue.

EDITOR’S MESSAGE – The 1942 model year was an epochal one in American auto industry history. The ‘41 model year had been a very good one for U.S. auto manufacturers – including the professional-car industry. Expectations were high that 1942 would be just as good, maybe even better, despite ominous war clouds that had been gathering since Hitler’s armies overran Europe and the British Empire declared war on Nazi Germany two years earlier. Like a bolt from the blue, everything changed on December 7, 1941 when Japanese planes attacked the U.S. naval base at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii. Within hours of the infamous sneak attack, the United States declared war on both Japan and Germany. Almost overnight, American industry converted to all-out war production. Auto production was halted in early 1942. Soon, tanks and other military vehicles, aircraft engines, and guns were rolling off former auto assembly lines.

As also reported in this issue, the professional-car industry contributed to America’s massive war effort. Because of the abbreviated model year, 1942 automobiles – including professional cars – are relatively rare today. We’re delighted to be able to include photos of many of those “*Fightin’ ‘42s*” in this issue.

– Walt McCall