

First Shake Down Cruise in a Restored World War II Army Jeep

By Tom Essary, MVPA #31350

Anticipation

After 65 years a piece of America history is back on the road. Well it set idle for the last 27 years and was used on a ranch for 10 years in the 60's and 70's, but now it is painted Olive Drab again.



As found ... 27 years of setting. GPW-I00709* with M38 Arctic Top and lots of rust and dead paint.

My wife and I purchased the jeep from a friend and brought it home on 19 JAN 2008. It was running after a few hours of tinkering, but the body had to come off ... the frame and power train cleaned and repaired etc. "113 Days – Rust to Road!" 5 months later and several set backs (clutch, flywheel and radiator problems) and the weekend of dreams is a day away.

I am writing this in hopes that the weekend in the hills of SE Oklahoma riding the forestry trails will be easy and exciting ... and not because of smoke billowing from the rear axles!

This is GPW-I00709* - Estimated date of delivery is 27 FEB 1943. Nothing is known about the military history and only ownership back to 1967. The good news is that it had most of its original parts or at least GI parts from a refit and most of the Ford parts. The only major parts that needed replacing were the radiator, flywheel and clutch. There were also the expected bearings and seals that needed to be replaced.



Nephew Gabriel Johnson and "Toby"

The jeep is named "Toby" after my grandfather. He allowed me to drive a Willys jeep when I was about 11 and I have been wanting an Army jeep ever since (About 35 years).

Now the new grease is where "cheese" used to be and hundreds of miles of steep hilly dirt roads and rocky trails will be its first real action in many years. The headlights, tail lights etc. aren't connected and the horn is in a box, but the machine drives. I hope to add some parts during some down time from four wheelin' and check things over as we go. My guess is that my wife and I worked at least 600 hours on this project so far. There is

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probably another 200 hours in planning, shopping for parts, both local and on the Internet. Many phone calls and the like ... lots of work ... more than I expected, but well worth it, although there were only 2 or 3 weekends that I did not wrench on the Jeep. Now it is time for the pay off.

Step Off – H Hour

Day 1 Friday 20 JUN 2008

Several hours on highways and we have trailered the jeep to the mountains of SE OK. Along with the jeep are 3 ATVs and a small trailer to haul necessities.



Jeep and ATVs trailer bound in Honabla, OK awaiting a weekend of four wheelin'.

We arrived at the cabins and unpacked and at about 1400 started the four wheelers (jeep included) and headed out. After only a few dozen yards gray smoke was billowing out of the jeep ... “General Quarters, All Stop --- Ahooga!!!!” It turns out that “Toby” does not like to drive with the parking brake on ... “The smoking lamp is out!” The first catastrophe averted!

We drove about 25 miles over hills, through valleys and enjoyed the wilderness scenery. Everyone enjoyed there jeep ride and newly fabricated hand rails for the back made the ride easier as the passengers in the rear were allowed to stay in the jeep ;-)



Some of the kin-folks on a break. Four wheelin' can be rough work.

Day 2 Saturday 21 JUN 2008

We got a late start at about 1000. It gave me time to check out all the vehicles and installed some of the wiring for the headlights on the jeep. The morning was cool and relaxing and we were not in a hurry. The jeep enjoys the ubiquitous “jump out of second gear” and other than the new Solex carburetor hanging at a fast idle, everything was

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great. All the gears geared and all the wheels wheeled. The pine forest with hills 200 to 400 feet above the creeks or rivers in the valleys was a great World War II setting. I can envision a convoy in Belgium, Holland etc. The rocky terrain was excellent for off road vehicles and the jeep was perfectly at home. Driving at about 18 MPH in second gear seemed like an easy lope for the ancient recon vehicle. On about the third stop, we let out some air in the tires ... 35 PSI is too much for rocks ... 20 some PSI was much easier on the passengers.



A would-be Military Vehicle “field of dreams” surrounding the “shed of dreams” (maybe)

At about the 20 mile mark I stopped my ATV and rushed back a few hundred yards to take pictures of a “field of dreams”. There were about 20 deuce and a halves and a dozen GI trailers ... it was phenomenal ... centered in about 40 acres of tall grass were the vehicles neatly lined up and an old sheet iron barn in the middle of the trucks. Perhaps this was the legendary “shed of dreams” lost in the back woods in La Flore county of SE OK.



All lined up awaiting their turn on the “Red Ball Express” ... ?

A few miles later I had sped ahead of the jeep stopped and turned back to take an action photo and there was gray smoke billowing from the jeep grill ... not the parking break today ... “General Quarters ...” My son stopped the jeep and you could hear the tell tale sound of a hot engine dieing ... let’s hope it is not dead! The smoke appeared to be steam ... maybe or maybe not a good sign. As the steam cleared I found the culprit. Can it be conceivable that a 30 some year old lower radiator hose would actually break during a drive way out in the middle of nowhere ... how can it be?

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Tom Essary working on a busted radiator hose in the Oklahoma June heat.

A few minutes went by and a truck stopped to help. The miracle is that two women taking a man to get auto parts in the middle of nowhere. The second stop yielded a complete truck/auto supply with about 200 radiator hoses of various sizes and shapes to choose from ... I was

My wife had said, to bring my jeep's canvas bucket ... I was hesitant, but tossed it in ... thank God it was there. We also used a trash bag in a box to haul more water and the canvas bucket to scoop the water out of a nearby creek. A water bottle was dissected and formed a funnel, expedient and the radiator was full again. The engine roared to life and we were back on the prowl again.

We stopped at the creek for a long swim, the newly repaired jeep looking on. After the dip, I brought the canvas bucket full back to fill the radiator as there we a spewing leak coming from the back of the head gasket. The leak had mysteriously stopped and there was no need to add water. The rest of the trip the temp was about steady 140 F ... wonderful.

We made it back to the cabin at about 1900 and most everyone rested. My wife, mother-in-law and a niece went to pick blackberries and my son on a an ATV, a nephew and I in "Toby" went to climb hills and jump ditches. To everyone's advantage, both were co-located ... the blackberry vines were on almost every slope of the gravel pit where we play.

I took it easy and only hit too hard about three times ... nothing was bent or busted or any extra dripping etc. "Toby" climbed every step hill and road down them with ease. The four wheel drive in low range and second gear eased over the mounds and rocks for a leisurely romp. I was more than pleased with the performance in the gravel pit.

hoping for a roll of duct tape (why didn't I toss that in) to limp back home with a jury rigged radiator hose. The shop keeper was great matching the busted hose to a hose with the same diameter and a section with the correct profile ... wow. He was also able to find another hose with a long straight section and we were able to change the upper hose also ... imagine that both were old, hard and disaster prone?

I even picked up pizza for the crew and a short drive back ended the first phase of the "rescue". A few slices of pizza and a soda and our son and I cut the new hoses to length and things seemed water tight again.

Oh, water ... can "you" bring me the garden hose! What no garden hose way out here in the wilderness?

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Making a path over the rough hills.



“Charge!” Plenty of power and more speed than you need over rough ground.

Some slopes were about 50 degrees and some approached vertical for a foot or so at the tops ... not a problem for the World War II jeep ... the “Go Devil” engine and T-84 tranny and T-18 transfer case kept on climbing.



Left: The **Truck, ¼ Ton, 4x4** from World War II still has the power after 65 years. *Hanging two off a gravel pit ledge! G503 live on!*

The hills made for some great photo ops and the setting was like any battle field ... the absence of grass or few trees in one area seemed reminiscent of “The Rat Patrol” in North Africa and the piney forest looked like the “Ardennes Forest”.



Setting on the brink of destruction!



The sun set on a terrific excitement filled day.

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Day 3 Sunday 22 JUN 2008

A cool morning and packing started at about 0830. The jeep was pressed into service as a trailer tender. It was used to maneuver the long flatbed trailer out of the trees and to turn it around to save the side panels on the modern truck that hauled it in there. The jeep had to make a few maneuvers, but it was vastly easier than using the huge truck. The little Army jeep had no problems ... well not many, but the job was done with only a couple of dings and small bend in the pintle hook purchase ... a "battle scar!"

We set out for a 25 mile ride at about 1000. The jeep kept up with the late model ATVs and was comfortable as we made our way west toward home and civilization. The gas held out and there were no flat tire or big dings on the vehicle.

After Action Report Summary

Total mileage for "Toby" over the weekend on the trail was about 90 miles. It was refreshing to not have to fill up with gas for the weekend ... with the ATVs that is a daily chore. No one was hurt and any damage to the jeep was minor and expected/acceptable. The shake down cruise was a success and clearly this ancient mechanical marvel will be lots of fun in the future ... can't wait for the next trail trip!

About the Area

Names like "Horse Shoe Mountain", "Big Cedar", "Talehina Drive", "Three Rivers and Honobia WMA", Glover River, Ouachita National Forest, Kiamichi Mountains and "Boktuklo Creek" are the at the site. The average elevation is about 700 ft ASL with peaks around 1800 ft. Not the Alps, but more than the plains of N. Texas. A GPS is a life saver and makes it more fun that getting stranded as all the pine trees and roads and rocks and creeks start looking alike.

The wildlife includes: Bobwhite quail, white-tailed deer, turkey, rabbit, squirrel, coyote, bobcat, opossum, gray fox, beaver, raccoon, dove, black bear, bald eagle and American alligator. There are many stream, creeks and rivers with an abundance of fish.

A land pass is required to access the Wildlife Management Areas ... check before you go. Info about that later. Note that the laws change in August 2008 so do your home work if you plan to go up there.

There are lots of cabins, camping etc. The larger towns have hotels etc.

<http://www.wildlifedepartment.com/threerivers.htm>

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Update: First Shake Down Cruise +30 Days

First Parade – 5th of July in Granbury, TX



Left: The author driving 1943 Ford GPW-I00709* in its first parade. Dan Patz enjoys the ride.

Two **100+** miles trips to the mountains in SE OK.

About 20 miles of rough four wheel drive trails and even some mud.

Over **450 miles** since the end of Phase I (The Basic Restoration)

Info Cards (4 1/4" x 5 1/2"), Handouts - Printed about 400 copies

World War II Army jeep Max Speed ~50 MPH SN GPW-I00709*
 Name: "Toby" (my grandfather) 3 Forward Gears, 1 Reverse
 Delivered to Army 27 FEB 1943 4 Wheel Drive via 2 Speed Transfer Case
Model Ford GPW 6V DC Negative Ground Electrical System
Wilys Overland Design Fold Down Windshield, Canvas Roof
 Engine: 134.2 cu in (2.2 L) **Over 650,000 jeeps made in WW II**
 60 bHP, 4 cylinders Used in every WW II theater & still going
 Weight ~ 3200 lbs Restored Jan-May 2008 - Tom & Laurie Essary
 About 20 MPG, holds 15 gals **More Details and Pictures at ad5zo.com**
 Range: About 300 miles tom@ad5zo.com arrowhead-mrpa.org
 Load: 800# - pulls 1000#
 5 passengers



A GPW in Korea 1946 - 7th ID, 17 IR GPW-I00709* in June 2008
 Wayne "Toby" Daniel Tollenaar **World War II Army jeep**
 (1926-2005) Photo Album A New Life After 65 Years!
 Served in US Army 1944-1946 ad5zo.com

Right: Added windshield from M38 Arctic Top - Wire brushed and painted, installed new glazing and used original glass. The windshield for the Arctic Top was originally straight up and attached with rigid supports. They were cut down and new bows made to allow the windshield to fold down onto the hood. An M38 tie down and some new footman loops tie it to the grill.



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Steering/Gear Shift Lock - 1/4" chain in an OD cloth sheath to protect the steering wheel and to make it "fit in". I use a brass lock that looks similar to the US issue locks.

Made a Reatining Bolt for the lest head light - using 5/16"-18 x 4" - worked great!

Heated and hammered, bent and drilled a hole for the rivet and painted.

Stars made from Magnetic Sheet 2-6" sides, 1-15" hood, 4" front bumper, 12" rear. See ad5zo.com for "template" files you can print to cut yours from.

Scrapbook – Pictures and stories (like this one) for public display.

Throttle Cable - mounted

Gas Can carrier and strap - painted and mounted

Tail Gate, Chain and Bracket (former owner alteration)

Flags and Flag holders (2 on front bumper). I painted two beam hangers used for 3/8" trheaded rod to intall conduit and sprinkler piping. The 3/8" flag dowels were "threaded" into the holders.

Pintle Hook ... With Chain Eyes bent - mounted

New Head Gasket



"Tom and Laurie Essary live in Arlington TX and are new to Arrowhead MVPA, Arkansas Travelers and the MVPA #31350. They have spent 5 months reviving 1943 GPW-I00709.. See ad5zo.com for more info about the jeep restoration etc. Tom spent about 8 years in the US Navy as an ET3 and LTjg. He served as the Damage Control Assistant (DCA) on the USS Luce DDG-38 in '85 and '86."*

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