



## OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE IDAHO MILITARY VEHICLE PRESERVATION ASSOCIATION

February 2017

### The President's Corner

We had a good turnout at Covey Café for the January Meeting, in spite of the very treacherous weather. I want to thank the owner David who personally opened his restaurant after hours for us and cooked so that we could be taken care of.

New officers were elected and I want to thank everyone who volunteered. This means a lot to me and I really appreciate those who stepped up.

The IMVPA will soon have a Facebook (FB) page and a presence on Social Media, thanks to our new director, Karen W. Why are we doing this? Many people now communicate on sites such as FB. We hope to reach a wider audience and invite young people to know about our mission and hobby. To be successful we need all members who have a FB page to LIKE us and SHARE with others.

The website has been (mostly) updated for



*Sneak photo. Roy C is working on his ambulance as a winter project. The body and paint was recently done and it's amazing. What are you working on?*

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**CLUB MEETINGS: 1<sup>st</sup> Tues of the Month. Social hour 6, meeting at 7.**

**Officers:**

**President: Ron Powell**

**Vice President: Bob Schoenderwood**

**Treasurer: Bruce Gates**

**Secretary: Karen Wadley**

**Website Editor: job is open**

**Military Show Committee: Carroll Brothers**

the year 2017. If anyone sees an event that should be added or changed, let me know please!

The IMVPA military show is our primary focus over the next 3 months. There is a planning meeting on the 28<sup>th</sup> of January and anyone can attend. The show has not had high attendance over the last few years and change is imperative. We will have discussions about what it will look like, even where it will be. The Carroll brothers are taking leadership again so it will happen; we are just not sure how it will all flesh out. Over the last few meetings members voiced their various opinions on what the show should be, and some even believe we need to take a break from it. This is not my decision; it's for the committee. I will provide leadership from the top down. We already have a number of options on the table. But if members want to be involved, let us know. Your vote matters most if you are part of the process. **WE CANNOT DO IT ALONE.** For those of you who have already volunteered to help, **THANK YOU!**

Finally, in this issue we get to showcase Don's trip to Ireland. It's a long and very interesting story and takes up most of the newsletter but I felt it was important for members to know about. Don travels frequently and he contributes more to this hobby than most. He is also one of biggest collectors of the Burma truck in the world and I dare say he knows more about them than anyone.

-Ron



## It was in the news.

In January Club elections were held. Bob S was voted as VP. The current VP Mike wasn't at the meeting to defend himself but I heard he was okay with stepping down. Don W volunteered to serve as Secretary but admitted he's gone most of the year. So Karen W stepped up and volunteered as both Secretary and Social Media director. This means that the IMVPA will finally have a social media presence! Why is this important? For a long time we've discussed ways to get young

people in the organization. And quite frankly young people are on Facebook and other social media sites. So we are asking members who have a FB account to LIKE our page. Karen said it will become active around the first of the month.

What will the (Fruitland) Military show look like? Come to the planning meeting on January 28<sup>th</sup> at Covey Café at 10AM. All members are invited. There are decisions to be made. Will the show be the same as last year? Will we move the show? What will it look like? Who has a crystal ball?

## Calendar of Events:

**Military Show Planning Meeting:** (discuss the IMVPA Military Show) January 28<sup>th</sup>, 10AM at Covey Café.

**February Meeting 2017:** (discuss the IMVPA Military Show) Bruce Gates' business: 604 N 36<sup>th</sup> street Nampa

**March Meeting 2017:** Covey Café, 5017 Highway 20/26 in Caldwell.

**April Meeting 2017:** President Ron's house in Boise. BBQ grill will be used!

**In this issue!** Don W travels to Ireland to restore a very rare military jeep! Now that's dedication!



## A Trip to Ireland to Restore a Rare CJ3B by Don Wadley

This is the story of a jeep restoration project that I was involved with in the Republic of Ireland for my friend, Sean Curtis. The story begins about two years ago, when he ran across a jeep (1954 CJ3B) that had been used by the Irish Defense Forces (IDF) in the 1950&60s (Ireland has a combined military: Air, Land, Sea). It is one of only two surviving Irish military jeeps from that era, one being on display in the Irish Defense Force's museum (non-functional), the other being Sean's. These jeeps were taken out of service in the mid-60s and destroyed or sold off. This particular vehicle was sold at auction in 1964, used by the buyer for a year or so, and then had an engine failure. The owner parked it in a shed (garage/barn) where it stayed completely forgotten by history until Sean recovered it in 2014 and recognized it for what it was. An Irish Military vehicle with full provenance is a very rare find. This jeep can be placed in every police action and parade during its life in service (how many of us would like to have that for our vehicles?). It was not butchered into a dune buggy or something else and, with a bit of hard work, could be restored to what it looked like on the day it left service. So, that became the driving objective of our project: restoration, not to factory new, but to what it was on the day it left service. We also intended it to be street legal (meaning, conform to all current safety rules), fully operational and, above all, reliable. This vehicle would be driven hundreds of miles its first year back on the road and had to be ready.

Shortly after the recovery, Sean dug into the jeep. This is where my part in the story began. I was able to pull the configuration details based on its serial number and which dealership sold it to the IDF in 1954. We also had the advantage that vehicles of that era were always used in the Easter Day parade commemorating the 1916 Easter Uprising (leading to Irish independence from England). Every Parade was well photographed, documenting an excellent record of what it looked like and any accessories added over time by the IDF. The jeep was mostly disassembled (especially the engine) by the previous owner in his attempt to repair it. Like many vehicles we have all run into, that's the condition it was left in for nearly 50 years – disassembled in a shed in a very humid climate. Sean, an experienced mechanic, military vehicle owner, and maintainer of his own equipment (including tanks and APCs), started to rebuild the engine. This is where it got interesting. Getting parts for a non-WWII Willy's Jeep with overhead valves turned out to be a not-so-easy task in Ireland (or even in Europe). He would order parts and they wouldn't even be close to fitting. Spare parts for M38A1s are still not common in Europe, either. I started ordering parts from US vendors to help him out and even they didn't fit! I never would have believed that getting parts for a CJ3B would be that hard. Well, I was wrong. Apparently, there is virtually no demand for CJ3B parts anywhere. Finding a vendor that actually was knowledgeable when ordering parts for the variants of the CJ3B became problematic. Progress on the jeep was painfully slow through 2015 because of parts sourcing issues, shipping both ways and just plain frustration level in dealing with vendors when parts didn't fit. We were running out of time. Sean's goal was to have the Jeep running and restored by the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Easter Uprising in March of 2016. As the Centennial of the birth of their country, 2016 is a very big year for Ireland, with celebrations scheduled throughout the year. This Jeep needed to be ready by March 1. In July 2015, I agreed to come over and help make that goal. Sean and I decided on the end of January and started planning for an all-out effort. We would start January 18 and finish fourteen days later with a running, drivable, reliable vehicle in proper colors. I started collecting parts and verifying against known CJ3Bs while Sean started repairing vehicle sheet metal assemblies, brakes, etc., and organizing resources we might need if issues arose during the two-week window. He started aggressively working on rebuilding damaged areas on the tub and sheet metal from 50 years of accumulated rust, leaving the engine alone under the assumption that it would run and no other major issues would stop us.

January 18, I took 140+ lbs. of parts, manuals and test boxes to Ireland. I had manuals for each of the three versions of the CJ3B jeep plus manuals for the M38A1 jeep and the universal jeep service manual from the late 50s family, just in case. As I found out, a power pack configuration for a CJ3B is not the same as a M38A1 – close, but not the same (for example, this CJ3B uses the starter motor mounting configuration for a MB, not a CJ2B or M38A1 or CJ5). I brought along a distributor, carburetor, alternator (yes, we upgraded to an alternator for reliability – this vehicle was originally 12 volts), and all external lighting fixtures, plus timing gears, brass pipe fittings, brake parts, oil & brake lines, gaskets, sealant, etc. Three full cases of parts that must have caused a fit for the TSA, but all customs forms were pre-filed and everything arrived without issue in Ireland. Fortunately for us, because we needed every piece of it, and more! We ended up

buying some parts on EBay from the States and had them overnighted. Just try finding exhaust manifold gaskets, bolts/nuts with English threads for a 1950s Willy's Jeep engine. HA! The local suppliers laughed at us.

The plan of attack during my visit was quite simple. Get up in the morning at 7am, have breakfast, go to the shed and start working, have someone make sandwiches and tea for lunch, work till 9pm, have dinner, go to bed. Repeat for 14 days or until done, whichever came first. However, a bit of luck changed our plan. Along the way, in Sean's researching the history of the vehicle in the IDF archives, the IDF National Magazine, *AN COSANTIOR*, found out about the jeep restoration project. This is where a nice little project took on a rigid schedule with a very aggressive goal. The first thing that happened when I got to Sean's on the morning of my arrival in Ireland was an interview with the editor of *AN COSANTIOR* and photographer. Pictures were taken of the jeep as we started the project and they were coming back at the scheduled end to take the after pictures. We had become the focus of the April issue of the *AN COSANTIOR* magazine to be published Ireland-wide. However, a scheduling conflict required us to cut five days off our original end goal so that a schedule for the April issue could be met. The gauntlet had been thrown down, a challenge made. Could we make it happen in nine days? We didn't even know for sure if the engine block needed to be machined. No pressure; no pressure at all. Who needs sleep?

We broke the work up into two areas of responsibility. I took the power train and electronics, Sean took everything else, and we worked in parallel, helping each other when the need arose. We had others come from his local vehicle club and help with paint scrapping, de-rusting and lifting for three days. Without them we never would have made it, they were a big help! We stripped the engine down to the block and rebuilt it from there, rechecking (Sean had done this once earlier in the year) for wear and damage to the crank, cam, and pressed bearings before reassembly. Then we retimed the engine and installed all accessories. We started the engine on Day Two and ran it briefly, verifying that it had good oil pressure, good performance, and no leaks, etc. Then we completely stripped it of accessories and painted the frame, running gear and power pack assembly flat black. Day Three, we reassembled the engine accessories and radiator and started building up the jeep to get it ready for the tub. We went into a test-fix-test cycle where the engine was run until there were no leaks of water, oil, etc., for half an hour from anything related to the running gear or engine. It's a lot easier to fix all this before the tub gets added (the engine purrs like a kitten now, great oil pressure). We did have an issue with the engine overheating until I found out that the thermostat sold to me in Boise was a 205-degree thermostat in a 140-labeled box. That was replaced and all was well. The chassis was now ready for vehicle completion.

At this point, I turned the chassis over to Sean for tub /vehicle build-up while I went to design and build up a new wiring harness. I could have matched the original harness but that wasn't sufficient. EU requirements for vehicles driven on roads must conform to all safety lighting standards as new vehicles. Turn signals, flashers, etc., needed to be added, no exceptions. We were going to use the original light fixtures, which were new units but had only two light circuits, and not just bolt on extra light fixtures to meet requirements. I designed a controller to multitask each light circuit depending on lighting demands. Each fixture has effectively four light circuits now. It looks like it did in 1964, but with a higher level of functionality.

About this time, while cleaning up the gas tank for painting, we discovered that the only thing holding the gas in was the corrosion on the outside. I should mention that it didn't leak until we cleaned it. Of course, finding a CJ3B gas tank was impossible over there and getting one shipped from the states was going to cost more than the tank. So, we had the one we had rebuilt. This in itself is an interesting discovery/story. Sometimes you find the best things and people in the most unlikely of places (ask me about it sometime when we are killing time at an event). After getting that resolved, great progress was being made on getting all the metal ready to paint and we needed to get the paint color mixed. It's not like here in the States, where you go to the store, pick your color, and they mix it up fairly soon, if not while you wait. There it takes four days to get a mixed paint to order. And, you sure hope they did it right because, if they didn't match it, it's another four days to wait. It was going to be tight, timing-wise. We were on time getting the physical stuff ready for painting, but the time crunch only left us the night before the *AN COSANTIOR* editor's return to paint (with any hope of it hardening enough to touch), and that was only if the paint was the correct color. Fortunately, it was! We mounted the glass in the windshield and then masked it and the rest of the vehicle.

Sean wanted to paint the vehicle as the military would have, i.e. assembled, even though we could have painted each major assembly separately.

The last 12-hour work day before painting commenced was a flurry of activity on every front. Wiring was installed after pretest on the bench and full functional testing conducted, including engine starting and verification of all gauges and lights. All vehicle accessories, brackets, fixtures, seats, etc. were installed and checked for fit, then removed for painting. We masked the underbody to protect the black frame areas. All this took us until 10pm, when we broke for dinner. Sean started painting with a primer coat at 10:30pm and finished the final coat at 2am. As we only had one paint mask, I stood outside the shed and watched through the window in the rain, occasionally yelling inside to point out some area he had missed. I should mention that it only stopped raining on one day for an afternoon during the entire project. We just worked out in the rain when necessary (such as January in Ireland).

The morning of Day Nine, we needed to be finished for photos but still had to install the light fixtures, paint the accent black detail, install the accessories (seats, etc.), and build and mount the seat cushions. We finished just as the editor and photographer arrived at 8:30am. At this point, everything matched the photographs of the vehicle except for one item: the radio (something not easy to find in Ireland!). I had been searching the web for units available in the UK and the US without much luck, their price range being far beyond our limited resources. So, we took the rest of the day off and went in with our wives to tea in downtown Dublin (playing tourist). While we were there, a gentleman showed up at Sean's place of business and donated a complete radio set that had been used on these jeeps. It's possible that it could have been the original radio as there were very few of them owned by the IDF in the 50s and 60s. The gentleman had heard of our project and was looking for a home for his father's favorite radio. He had no intention of selling it. His father had been a radio operator when he was in the service and, when the radios were scrapped he acquired one and used it as a ham radio for years after he retired. This project seemed like the ideal place to put it, as it would be appreciated.

As a finished project, the vehicle now looks exactly like the last photos taken of it from the archive. Since the restoration, this vehicle has taken part in many displays in celebration of Irish independence.

