

ONE SOLDIER'S DREAM



Shortly after his graduation from high school in 1985, Bob Metcalf joined the United States Army, and upon completion of basic training began serving a six year tour of active duty in Germany. When his tour ended, Bob returned home to Indiana with his new wife and began putting together a civilian life. He enlisted in the Indiana National Guard, got a job and started a family. Somewhere along the line, he found just the car that he had wanted for a long time - a 1967 Plymouth *Barracuda*. It didn't look like much when he bought it, but he just knew that someday he would transform it into a vehicle that would be the envy of all who saw it. Unfortunately, as so often happens to dreams of the young, reality reared its ugly head and disrupted that beautiful dream. There were just too many other things that had higher priorities. There was never enough time or money to devote to restoring the *Barracuda*. So, as the years went by, the little A-Body sat quietly in the garage - untouched and waiting for the TLC that would bring it back to life. Then, just as Bob thought he was beginning to see a light at the end of the tunnel, he received a note from his Uncle Sam. It seems that his National Guard unit was being activated, and Bob, even though he was to retire in May, 2005 was assigned to a two year tour of duty in Iraq.

Fortunately, life was not all doom and gloom. Sean Burns and Jimmy Johns, a couple of Bob's friends decided to help make one of Bob's dreams come true. With Sean and Jimmy leading the way, several members of the Land Yacht Club and the Michiana Mopar Association have undertaken the task of restoring his *Barracuda* to its former glory with the intention of surprising Bob with it when he returns home from his Mideast tour. There are many parts needed, and a lot of work to do, but these guys are thoroughly committed to showing this local soldier how much they appreciate the sacrifices he is making in the service of our country. Sean has undertaken the task of soliciting individuals and businesses for needed parts and services, and Jimmy has dedicated himself to coordinating the bodywork and painting. Ron Conley of the MMA has donated a low mileage 318 C.I. engine and matching 904 Torqueflite transmission. Several other members of the MMA will be working with Ron in tearing down the engine and transmission and rebuilding them to ensure that everything is up to snuff before they're installed in the little fish.

While a '68 Barracuda has already been obtained as a parts donor car, there are many items that are still needed, and are not available on either vehicle. Anyone who cares to donate to this worthy cause, or who knows where the needed parts can be obtained reasonably should contact Sean. His e-mail address is SeanB2000@aol.com. All commercial donations (for cash, parts and/or labor) will receive appropriate acknowledgements on a display board that will accompany the Barracuda as it makes the rounds of local shows and events. Any help provided for this project will be greatly appreciated by all involved. Listed below are some of the items that are currently needed:

- Paint - Color and paint scheme are not written in stone, yet
- Clearcoat
- Brake Parts - Lines, Hoses & Master Cylinder (9" drums all around)
- Brake Drum Turning - In the event that any of the 8 drums we currently have are still within turning specifications
- Weather Stripping - Any and all (doors & trunk are needed first)
- Back-Up Light Assy's. - Even if badly pitted
- Windshield
- Rear Window Gasket and Lock-strip - We have the rear glass
- Drip Rail Trim (for Fastback)
- Driver's Side Headlight Trim for '68 Barracuda Grill
- Transmission Cooler Lines
- Pair of Sun Visors (black or white)
- Headliner w/bows for a Fastback

Progress Update From Sean on 12-08-05

Denny Rose has started on the braking system, and I am cleaning and detailing pieces for the dashboard/firewall area. Did I mention that we finally got some paint on the door jams? It's kinda like Viper Blue (or close to it) and it's rally looking nice. We are going to try like heck to keep this thing a secret from Bob who will be coming home shortly. Body and paint should be finished soon, and then we have a couple of guys that will help us with the wiring and interior work.

We still need a qualified individual to install the front and rear glass. Any suggestions? We have a set of American Racing slotted mags donated to the project that are in need of some "serious cleaning". I'm hoping TireRack may help us out with a set of tires - cross your fingers. I have purchased a pile of stuff from YearOne and The Paddock. The folks at The Paddock mentioned that they would like some pictures of the car when it's done to possibly use in their next catalog.

Can anyone give me an update on how the engine build is going? I think Mike Slater may rebuild the transmission for us - if I can just get it over to him. NOTE TO SELF AND OTHERS: If you're going to sandblast a car, be sure to strip it **COMPLETELY!**

I had to throw out the wiper transmissions - they were frozen solid. Fortunately, I was able to get them replaced. Paul Ferris is helping with some sound deadener and insulation for the firewall. There's yet more body filler to sand - I'm really getting a bit sick of this by now! I don't actually care if the body is wavy, any more. No, that's wrong - I really do care.

**That's about it for now,
Sean Burns**

EPILOGUE

To make a long story short, Bob returned home from his tour, and his friends were able to keep project "One Soldier's Dream" a secret from him. Finally, on March 25, 2006, a couple of Bob's "buddies" talked him into going to the *Cavalcade of Wheels* car show that was being held in the Joyce Athletic and Convocation Center on the University of Notre Dame campus.

As they were walking around looking at cars, Bob had to fight his way through a crowd of people in order to look at a blue '67 Barracuda with red, white and blue stripes on it. Sure, it was a nice looking car, but the show had a lot of nice looking cars in it. Just what was so special about this one? He mentioned to his friends that he'd like to have a car like this one, one of these days - to which one his friends replied "**It's yours.**"

The people gathered around the car were in on the secret, and they started clapping when Bob was told again, (this time loud enough for everyone to hear) "**It's yours!**". That statement still didn't seem to be sinking in until a representative from WSBT-TV approached him with microphone in hand asking Bob what he thought about his friends rebuilding his car as a surprise for him while he was gone. Still incredulous, Bob turned around and asked Sean "**Are you kidding me? - Is this really my car?**" After being assured that it was, indeed, his car Bob turned back to the television interviewer, but he had hard time talking right away, and completing the interview.

The presentation was shown on South Bend television and a story was printed in *The South Bend Tribune*. By Sunday, the story hit the AP News Wire Service, and was printed in newspapers and reported on television all over the United States.

This was a touching story, not only for Bob, but for many servicemen around the world, as well. It let them know that their sacrifices in the service of their country are not forgotten and are sincerely appreciated. Sean and Jimmy were the impetus driving this project, but they could not have completed it without **lots** of help from **lots** of people and organizations. Some of them are listed below, and there are probably still others whose names have been missed. To those people who contributed, but whose names are not here, we apologize. Anyway, thanks go out to:

Sean Burns, Jimmy Johns, John Johnston, Miles Barden, Joe Richards, Todd Stanton, Tim Kennedy, Paul Ferris (of Paul's Interiors), Dan Carpenter, Greg Wegenke, Don Carrico, Steve Schumann, Tim Holland, Chuck Reeves, Mike Slater (of Slater's Automotive), Brad Metcalf, Troy Rider, Bob Lippert, Arnie (of Auto Glass), Dave and Sue Ferris, Akos (of Discount Muffler), Auto Zone (on Lincolnway East in Mishawaka), Rankin Automotive, Steve Huddleston, Brian Haugle, Steve Smith, Gene Wilkerson, Dave Argent, Greg (from Finishmaster), Michiana Mopar Association, Lane Automotive, Scott Wahlstrom

Your Contributions To This Project Are Greatly Appreciated!