

Customized Military Surplus Trucks

By Jim Ruen, Contributing Editor

Clinton Chitwood specializes in rebuilt customized military trucks that turn heads wherever they go.

"I put in air ride suspension, custom seats, lockout hubs, crew cabs, and lots of goodies like front and rear steering," explains Chitwood, whose company, C&C Equipment, buys and sells surplus 2 1/2-ton M35A2 military trucks. "I like doing something different on each of them, but I'll also fix them up to a custom order."

Chitwood says the market for low-priced, standard military trucks has fallen with the economy. However, customized and high-end trucks continue to sell well.

"The ones I customize sell for \$20,000 to \$55,000, and they sell real well," says Chitwood. "They're real eye catchers. When I take a crew cab style truck out on the road, people take pictures of it."

One of his best selling styles is the bobtail, or shortened, version of the 6 by 6 M35A2. He replaces the stock 12-ft. cargo bed with a 9-ft. M105 trailer bed. One axle is removed, and new rear suspension is installed.

"The first one I did was for a rancher who

wanted it to haul hay and feed cattle," says Chitwood. "Most of them are done for folks who want play toys. They are like a big 4 by 4 pickup truck."

Another popular conversion is the crew cab. The cargo bed is shortened by 3 ft. to make room for the cab. Chitwood modifies the original cab with the addition of a chopped cab from another truck. When finished, the crew cab looks factory installed.

"Our trucks are all checked out, serviced and parts replaced as needed," says Chitwood. "Most get new windshields, paint, and other cosmetics. Trucks can also be built to order with options like winches, side racks, bows/tarp for the bed, new steel hard tops, heaters, power steering, lockout hubs, air ride suspension kits and dump beds."

Another specialty offered by C&C is the Super Single 46-in. tire. Chitwood fabricates two-piece wheels to replace duals on the 2 1/2-ton trucks. Stock tires are 900 by 20 and 40 in. tall. The new tires are 900 by 15 and 46 in. tall.

"The taller and narrower wheels give the trucks a more modern look and another 9



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mph in top speed, as well as 2 1/2 in. added clearance," says Chitwood. "They make a big difference over duals for off-road performance and looks."

All trucks have turbocharged LDT 465 multi-fuel engines with five-speed manual transmissions and air shift front axles. The rear steering option is electric over hydraulic with a cylinder on the rear axle.

Chitwood also carries a full line of parts for 2 1/2 and 5-ton military surplus trucks.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, C&C Equipment, LLC, 8747 E. State Road 45, Unionville, Ind. 47468 (ph 812 336-2894; dirtdigger_97@sbcglobal.net; www.ccsurplus.com; http://stores.ebay.com/C-and-C-Equipment).

He Builds His Own Vegetable Planting Equipment

"Over the years I've saved a lot of money by building my own vegetable planting equipment, mostly from junked-out parts," says Richard Martin, Boone, Iowa.

Martin grows vegetables and melons for his market garden business. He recently converted parts from an old row crop cultivator into a low-cost, 3-pt. mounted plastic laying machine. It puts down a 4-ft. wide strip of agricultural plastic that blocks weeds and warms up the soil.

After the plastic has been laid down, another home-built machine does the planting with a big spiked wheel to make 2 1/2-in. dia. holes in the plastic that go 3 in. deep in the ground, and automatically injects water into the holes at the same time. Two workers sit on back of the machine and poke small plants into the holes.

"The plastic cover gets early planted crops up and growing faster. The warmed-up soil gives vegetables spurs growth and the plastic helps control weeds," says Martin.

The plastic-laying machine was built on the frame of an IH 4-row cultivator. The edges of the 6-mil plastic are covered by dirt as the

plastic unrolls, by disc hillers off another cultivator.

The planter was built using parts from an old combine and spring tooth field cultivator. A 3-ft. high, 8-in. wide steel wheel mounts at the center of the machine and has pyramid-shaped metal "spikes" welded onto it at 18-in. intervals. There's a small hole in the wheel under each spike. The interior of the wheel is open on one side and is divided into compartments. Water is pumped out of a tank on front of the tractor and automatically fed into the open side of the wheel. As the wheel pokes holes into the plastic, the water exits the wheel through the holes under the spikes.

To plant, the workers sit on metal seats on back of the machine and grab seedlings from trays mounted on rectangular metal holders. "Each hole gets a couple cups of water. The water really helps - I've had up to a 98 percent survival rate on some of my crops," notes Martin.

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Richard Martin converted parts from an old row crop cultivator into this 3-pt. mounted plastic laying machine. Plastic blocks weeds and warms up the soil.



Home-built planter uses a big spiked wheel to make holes in the plastic that go 3 in. deep in ground. Water is automatically injected into holes.



Double stacked combine headers free up storage space in Oldenberg's machine shed. An adapter he made to fit his tractor loader hooks up to headers, making them easy to move around.

Double-Stacked Header Storage

Dale Oldenberg found a simple way to create more storage space in his machinery storage shed by double stacking combine headers.

"I made an adapter to fit my tractor loader that hooks up to headers just like a combine does, making them easy to move around. I stack one head on a frame made out of 6-in. channel iron. The grain head goes on top and

the corn head down below. I bought the steel for the rack from a scrap yard for \$100. It's very stable. You'd have to be trying in order to tip it over," says Oldenberg.

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Wind Chime Fire Alarm

Wind chimes let Ed Mullins know when he needs to check the wood and coal stove that heats his Blacksburg, Va., home.

"I know hot air has energy, so why not use that to do something practical?" Mullins explains. "In this case, it's a safety feature."

The wind chimes hang above the stove where the hot air rises, Mullins emphasizes. The brass chimes make noise when the stove is putting out a lot of heat. They make just a little noise when the heat is moderate.

Mullins has been using his safety chime system for a decade and it's warned him many times to shut down the stove drafts and turn on the overhead fan to cool the stove down.

Conversely, if he doesn't hear any chiming, he knows it's probably time to add more fuel. Most of the time, the chimes have a gentle, soothing sound.

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Brass wind chimes hang from ceiling 8 ft. above living room stove and make noise whenever stove is putting out heat.

