

## “Tracto The Talking Robot”

County fair-goers in the 1960’s thought they were getting a glimpse of the future when they met Tracto, a “talking” robot made from scrap machinery.

Tracto was the creation of International Harvester and was used to get people excited about the company’s farm equipment. IH started its tradition of bringing robots to fairs in the 1930’s with “Harvey Harvester,” a stocky metal man built from machine parts, including a truck grill for his barrel-shaped chest.

Tracto entered the county fair circuit in later decades. According to an IH Company press release, the cheerful robot was built from 227 standard production tractor parts used on Farmall 560 tractors.

Both robots towered over visitors at 8 ft. tall. While Harvey Harvester was built to be stationary, Tracto had two tractor wheels for legs that made it possible to roll him around the fair.

Tracto is equipped with a two-way communication system powered by a transformer installed in his stomach. He “talked” through district office personnel that hid from sight and talked into the robots’ amplification systems at passersby. When Tracto talked, his eyes would light up while his head and right arm moved. It’s no surprise he became a must-see exhibit for many visitors.

A Ford dealership bought Tracto in the 1970’s and displayed him outdoors, painted blue. He was later purchased by the Darst



**Tracto was built from 227 standard production tractor parts and implements used within the brand’s Farmall 560 tractor model.**

family and then loaned in 2019 to the Bartlow Prototype IH Dealership Building in Millville, Penn. Those interested in seeing this piece of IH history in person can schedule a visit to the museum, which is open from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. on select Saturdays.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Bartlow Prototype Dealership Building Museum, 47 S Chestnut Street, Millville, Penn. 17846 (ph 570-971-3232; www.ihcc17.org).



**International Artillery Museum has genuine military equipment on display and even some for sale.**

## Artillery Museum Features Specialty Military Equipment

Located in Saint Jo, Texas, the International Artillery Museum is home to the largest private collection of modern artillery in the United States.

The museum specializes in modern artillery and focuses on pieces dating from the World Wars to the present, including artifacts from the current Russian invasion of Ukraine. Most of the equipment on display is sourced from the museum’s established overseas contacts, which in turn secure it from various military entities and governments.

While there are many private collections of military vehicles, aircraft, and tanks in the United States, this museum offers one of the only options to see a private collection of artillery.

All artillery within the museum is genuine military equipment that has been deactivated and made non-functional per the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosive’s (ATF) requirements. This means that the equipment does not work and cannot be made to work. Likewise, all the munitions on display are inert training, drill, or schooling munitions.

In many ways, the museum is a window into a past era. Anti-aircraft artillery and anti-

tank guns are being replaced as technology has improved the accuracy, range, and effectiveness of military equipment like shoulder-fired rockets. Visiting the museum gives guests a glimpse of a type of equipment that will likely never see battle again.

Within the museum is an artillery store. It’s the only place in the United States that specializes in the sale of deactivated large ordnance and crew-served weapons for purchase by private collectors and other museums. Everything offered for sale is original military production - no reproductions or “newly made” products are available. Many items for sale are of limited quantity or are even one-of-a-kind.

The museum is open Fridays and Saturdays from 10:00 to 4:00 and Sundays from 1:00 to 4:00 p.m. However, the schedule can be affected by the weather and availability of volunteers. It’s also possible to visit on other days by appointment. Admission is free, although donations are always appreciated.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, International Artillery Museum, 201 S. Main, Saint Jo, Texas 76265 (ph 940-395-9309; www.artillerymuseum.com).

# FARM SHOW



## Custom Benches Built With Truck Parts

Jason Barnett believes that old truck bodies don’t always have to end up at a salvage yard. Using his more than 20 years of metalworking experience, Barnett turns pieces of truck body cabs, doors, endgates, and boxes into extra sturdy metal benches.

His custom GMC bench uses an old truck’s tailgate and rear cab wall for a sturdy bench back. Those pieces are welded onto a section of the box sides. Sheet metal flooring and a sturdy metal frame support the bench. The truck’s original paint scheme is maintained and covered with rust-resistant lacquer.

Barnett’s Coca-Cola bench is built on a similar frame with the sides using the left and right doors from a Coca-Cola delivery truck. The bench and back resemble a large Coca-Cola cooler. Inserts in front of the seat are side panels from old wooden Coca-Cola bottle crates.

Barnett’s American flag bench is fashioned from the back of an old Ford pickup cab. He rebuilt the box sides and incorporated the rounded fenders, taillights, and license holder into the design. Its wooden floor resembles an old 1930’s pickup truck box. Barnett finished his patriotic design with a red, white and blue paint scheme that wraps across the back of the cab, down the back of the bench, and around the fenders to depict a folded flag.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Jason Barnett, Alvin, Texas (cjasonbarnett@gmail.com; Facebook: Artist Jason Barnett).



**Bench uses an old truck tailgate and rear cab wall as a back with part of the truck box sides.**



**Barnett’s American flag bench is made from an old Ford pickup cab.**

## Dogs Sniff Out Spud Diseases

“The government has spent billions of dollars during the past 50 years searching for a better way to detect bombs and they still haven’t found a better system than the nose of a dog,” says Andrea Parish, professional dog trainer and owner of Nose Knows Scouting of Dayton, Ohio.

Instead of bombs, Parish has trained her dogs to detect Potato Virus Y (PVY) and bacterial ring rot in potatoes. Her dogs detect the presence of disease days or weeks before its visual symptoms show up and cause economic loss.

She started her business in 2019 and now travels with her dogs, from Washington to Maine, sniffing out diseased potatoes in storage facilities and on conveyor belts. The dogs can also find infected plants in fields. “We can run 40 acres of crops that have zero percent of disease in 20 minutes,” she says, adding that one of her dogs can detect an infected 1-in. potato plant from 80 feet away.

Her largest job to date was to detect and remove PVY-infected potato tubers out of 80,000 lbs. of seed potatoes.

Parish trains her dogs to be “one-percenters”, which is the rare ability to go to work and love the work, hour after hour. One of her most popular training tools is the common tennis ball, which trainers use to create positive reinforcement for the dogs. Parish says, “We train the dogs from an early age so that being rewarded with the tennis ball becomes the most important thing in the world to the dog.”

Most of Parish’s work has involved detecting potato diseases because she knew many people in the potato industry, so it was a good place to start. However, she’s been encouraged by researchers in other crop areas and is training dogs to detect red-blotch virus in grapes and fire blight in apple orchards.

Parish says her primary goal with Nose Knows Scouting is to train her dogs to give farmers another tool to control disease in a timely, cost-effective way.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Nose Knows Scouting (ph 214-517-9095; www.noseknowsscouting.com).