

Jeep Art?

Naming things and enhancing them, making them our own seems to be a pastime for sentient beings. Or is it an obsession? Perhaps it is only expressed heavily in folks that are already obsessed by some other “hobby”.

In a 2008 issue of the Military Vehicle Preservation Association’s *Army Motors* there was a story about top European Military Museums. In a photo a tracked vehicle in a Luxemburg Museum had a mule shoe tied or wired to the grill. I was inspired.

Aside from the normal military markings (Unit Number, Hood Number and Stars etc.) you often see the unit patch, the use of the vehicle (Chaplain) or the name given to the vehicle. I have also seen photos or news reels with steer horns and other such “civilian vehicle” accoutrements. I have not read where a tough general railed a tank crew for painting swastikas on the turret. No account has been related where a squadron commander grounding an airplane because of its nose art (“Memphis Belle”). “Killroy was here!”, nuff said?

I am an amateur blacksmith. The use of a mule shoe on a grille was right up my alley. Even though some blacksmiths did not shoe horses, (that is the job of the farrier now a-days)



horseshoeing is a large part of the blacksmith lore. The blacksmith hung a horseshoe over his fire for good luck. But unlike most everyone who turns it up to catch the luck, the blacksmith turns his downward to pour the luck out into his shop. Thus the down turned shoe on “Toby’s” grille.



Oh, “Toby”. That was my grand fathers nick name. No idea where it came from. Toby inspired me in many ways and I use many of his tools and militaria with the jeep. Naming the jeep after him seemed natural. He was in WW II from about 1944 to 1946 and was in Korea during the occupation after the war. I have photos (left) that he took of several jeeps and some weapons carriers in Korea. All stoke the Historic Military Vehicle flames in my being. I use the hood number from one of those vehicle on my jeep.

When I mention the horse shoe, folks ask why it is turned down, now you know and can pass on some history.