

# ☆ A War Baby's ☆ War Baby!

*text and photos by Garrison Brown*



The I-9 Special was no thing of beauty when found, but Garrison Brown recognized that it was a rare and unusual beast.



Brown's Special was still standing on the original diamond tread dual tires, and they all still held air. The tractor has an impressive backside!

Garrison Brown got a Standard version of the I-9 in the deal. He decided to use it as a parts donor for the Special's restoration.



The story of my 1943 International Harvester Co. Model I-9 industrial tractor, serial no. 4441, began in the early 1990s when my friend Roy Trojanowski and I headed for central New Jersey to check out a miniature horse. Roy was a retiree whose hobby was raising unusual farm animals. He would ride shotgun with me to auctions and tractor shows, and I would reciprocate by riding along on his escapades.

While Roy and the owner were talking horses, I was given permission to explore the farmyard. It was not long before I found two IH Model 1-9 tractors. My collection focused on unstyled pre-World War II tractors, but the I-9's needed a closer look.

The farmer begged me to make an offer. He went into some history of how the tractors were used as Army Air Corps tow tugs during World War II. His farm was adjacent to McGuire Air Force Base, where he had acquired them. That explained why they were painted a blue-gray color.

We eventually arrived at an agreeable price. I had to haul them to Long Island through New York City, three hours distant. I had a 1989 Ford rollback truck, but it was no match for these behemoths. There was a Pennsylvania man who was scouring the truck farms in my county for John Deere parts tractors. He had already taken a few truckloads and kept coming back empty with his 18-wheeler. He agreed to deliver my two 1-9s for which I would trade him a stuck John Deere Model A with a factory-wide front.

The I-9s sat in my farmyard until 1998 when I retired and moved to a farm on the Eastern Shore of Virginia. Now the challenge was moving about 75 tractors from Long Island to my new home 450 miles away. It took me over a year, and more than 40 trips, to move all my tractors, implements, and parts. A neighboring nursery grower in Virginia sold his stock to Long Island and returned empty. He transported my heavier items.

## IH at War

The United States was at war in both the European and Pacific theaters in 1943. Life was suddenly transformed by the urgent need for wartime supplies. Soldiers were off to the warfronts, and both men and women worked factory jobs around the clock. Mothers and children performed agricultural duties, and

# Garrison Brown's restoration of an International Harvester I-9 Special commemorates the struggles of World War II



Garrison Brown did an excellent job on the restoration. The Special was returned to its World War II condition as a U.S. Air Force heavy hauler.

rationing of essentials was in full swing. Factories reduced or stopped the production of domestic goods.

IH was no exception, and in 1943, the government was its biggest customer, with military receivables being \$53,840,000, compared to regular customers at \$18,050,000. IH eliminated its investments in subsidiaries in Germany, Italy, France, Denmark, Latvia, and the Philippines. Although IH was involved in many wartime projects, the principal one was the M5 high-speed artillery tractor.

## The Restoration

The tractors had sat untouched for another 20 years. I looked at the pitiful relics and thought of Roy, who had since passed away. I would soon be 80, so if my I-9 treasure was ever going to be restored, I had better make my move. "Tempus Fugit!" The restoration began in October 2021. I focused on the I-9 Special because of its unusual options. The I-9 Standard was used for parts.

The transmission was stuck, but luckily it was in neutral. The brakes needed to be



The heavy subframe and front plate would become an integral part of the restoration. It helped shield the front-mounted winching equipment.



The beginning of the restoration revealed the heavy components supplied with the I-9 Special.



These will not simply “buff out!” Luckily, the I-9 Standard held a wealth of spare parts, including engine valve components.



The I-9 Special has a water-bath exhaust spark arrestor system to make the tractor safe when hauling trailers filled with explosives.



The heavy-duty hitch testified that the I-9 Special was a genuine pulling tractor.

freed to tow it into the shop. The transmission was freed up with some persuasion from a hammer and brass rod striking on the shifter forks and sliding gears.

While disassembling and sandblasting, it was obvious the tractor had been painted three times. The first painting was red from the factory. Next was industrial yellow. The topcoat was Air Force blue. There are many different shades of Air Force blue, so I chose the color that best matched the existing blue.

The engine was freed up using various conventional methods. The rocker arms were a mass of rust and were replaced using parts from the I-9 parts tractor. The valves and seats were ground and lapped in-house.

### Details

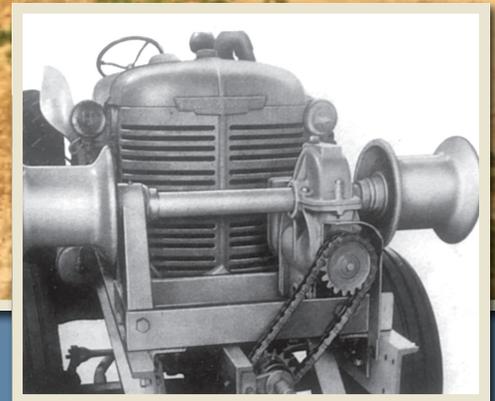
Surprisingly, this tractor had all four of the factory-issued 13.00x32, 8-ply, diamond tread rear tires, and they had never gone flat. Each fluid-filled tire weighed 465 pounds. The front tires were a different story. I removed the 7.00x20 truck tires and searched for the 10-ply 7.00x20 military front tires without any success. My friend Richard Dryden said he had good tires from an abandoned combine—they worked perfectly and looked great.

Shipping weight for the I-9 Standard was 6,290 pounds and 10,340 pounds for the I-9 Special. The I-9 Special was a tow tug used for many operations. Trailers equipped with air brakes were used to move aviation fuel, ammunition, torpedoes, and other materials. The pintle hook was swivel mounted and spring cushioned.

A Bendix-Westinghouse Model 2-UE-6 air compressor and reservoir are mounted on the right chassis support channel. The 2-cylinder compressor is lubricated from the engine oil, and water coolant is circulated directly from ports on the tractor's water pump. The compressor is driven from the engine crankshaft pulley by a V belt. The compressor pulley is the adjustable flange-type as seen on many IH cooling fans. Because the compressor is turned continuously by the crankshaft, the compressor is always pumping. The desired air pressure (100–105psi) is controlled by the air governor that operates the compressor unloader valve. The Bendix-Westinghouse



The Gar Wood front-mounted double capstan winch was driven by a shaft from the tractor's crankshaft.



The I-9's 4-cylinder gasoline engine had  $4\frac{13}{32} \times 5\frac{1}{2}$ -inch bore and stroke and ran at 1,500 rpm. IH also built the ID-9 with a diesel engine.



A Bendix-Westinghouse air compressor produced air for the air brakes on attached trailers.



The original front tires were rotten, but acceptable replacements came from an abandoned combine.



Seats mounted on the fenders were used by the ground crew members who had to hitch and unhitch trailers and connect air brakes.



pressure gauge is mounted on the hood, replacing the water temperature gauge. It is easily visible from the driver's seat. Air lines from the reservoir connect to the air brake control valve on the steering column, then connect to the towed trailer. One of the most challenging aspects of the compressor rebuild was locating piston rings.

The Gar Wood Industries Model 636E front-mounted double capstan winch is driven by a shaft from the tractor's crankshaft. The shaft has a roller chain sprocket that drives a similar sprocket on the winch. Winch speeds are based on a maximum engine speed of 1,000 rpm. One man can handle the rope tension by the number of turns of the rope on the capstan. An internal band brake prevents the winch from slipping backward when the power is stopped. The maximum winch capacity is 8,000 pounds.

On the left side of the tractor is a water muffler that connects to a flexible pipe emerging from the top of the hood. The muffler contains two to three cups of water to act as a spark arrester when hauling explosives.

The most striking feature of this I-9 Special is the huge wide fenders covering the dual wheels. Atop each fender is a seat for the attending ground crew. When unhooking or attaching the trailer, the crew must secure the air brakes—the tractor operator cannot leave his position at the controls. The operator can use either a throttle lever or a foot pedal to change engine speeds.

My I-9 Standard, with serial no. 3698 Y14, was built at the IH Milwaukee Works in February 1943. My I-9 Special has serial no. 4441 and was built in September 1943. I was also a "war baby" that year.

This was a very enjoyable, yet challenging restoration given that I had no previous exposure to so many of the unusual features. Having gone to hundreds of shows over the past 40 years, I have never seen another I-9 Special.

I only wish Roy Trojanowski could see it now! 🚧