

# THE PLOWSHARE

## News for John Deere Collectors



### Macy Janssen: Award-winning Teen Tractor Restorer

Macy Janssen, 16, is something of a celebrity, at least in some tractor restoration circles.

The junior at Waverly-Shell Rock High School in Waverly, Iowa, restored a Model "B" tractor as her Future Farmers of America (FFA) project when she was just 14. The Model "B" is currently on display at the *John Deere Tractor & Engine Museum*.

"Kids at my school and my family send me pictures they find online of me with my tractor, and tag me on Facebook, and say, 'Oh my gosh, it's Macy Janssen from Shell Rock, Iowa!'" Janssen said. "I can take anyone I want to the museum, so I take my grandma."

The Janssen family has a small farm with just under 20 acres of grass and hay and a few breeding heifers to show. The idea to restore

a tractor came after Janssen saw tractors that FFA and 4-H members completed at a local country fair in 2013, and she thought it would be good for her FFA Supported Agriculture Equipment (SAE) Project. Then she heard about the Titan Tire program, which provides kids with the correct tire for their completed restoration, and the project was a lock.

She started looking for a suitable tractor for the project. Janssen found the Model "B" on a tractor and farm equipment page for sale in Hawkeye, Iowa, for \$1,200. She showed it to her dad, Trent Janssen, who works at the John Deere Product Engineering Center in Waterloo, Iowa, building 350 Series and 6.8- and 4.5-liter test engines.

"He said, 'Do you want to look at it?' and I said, 'YES!'" Janssen recalled. "A man named Tim Bodley was selling the tractor, and when he found out about my project, he said he'd sell it to me for just \$800 if I kept him updated on its progress."

Bodley bought the Model "B" from a man whose family owned and used it for generations, but it had been sitting unused. Bodley bought it and got it to run, but when the starter went out, he was ready to sell.

"The thing that interested me was that Titan Tire would help out with tires for kids who restored tractors, and I thought that was great. I used to be in FFA, and I thought if people like that are willing to help out and do their part, I can do that, too."



*Photos, L to R:* The Model “B” before restoration; Macy Janssen works on her tractor; The Model “B” on display at the John Deere Tractor & Engine Museum; Macy and her dad, Trent Janssen

The Janssens brought it home, and started working on it immediately. Macy Janssen knew little about tractors beyond how to operate one.

“My dad works on newer tractors, but not tractors from 1948!” Janssen said. “I was completely lost. Dad taught me some basic things and got me up to speed. I learned a lot.”

They tore it down to the frame, and took the engine and the transmission apart. Russ Akers, a co-worker of Trent Janssen’s who does body work on cars, agreed to sandblast the tractor and some parts, and paint the chassis. Macy and her dad sandblasted some smaller parts, then primed and painted them.

They spent many nights and weekends in the family’s garage, working a total of 195 hours to complete the tractor. Within six months, Janssen was able to start it up and drive it, one of her favorite moments of the restoration.

“It was super cool. Later, kids in my FFA chapter asked, ‘What are you doing?’ I said I was restoring a Model ‘B’ tractor, and they said, ‘A girl can’t do that!’ I kind of wanted to prove them wrong.”

Now Janssen proudly displays her tractor at shows and fairs around Iowa. It received a blue ribbon at the 2014 Butler County Fair, Best in Show for Non-Livestock at the 2014 Iowa

State Fair, and the John Deere Power Systems Manager’s Choice Award at the Product Engineering Center Tractor Show in 2014, which is Janssen’s favorite award.

“Dad and I are sitting on a hill, eating our lunch, when some people came by talking about who won, and we heard them say it was my tractor, and we were like ‘Oh my gosh, it’s ours!’” Janssen recalled.

At the State Fair there were very few girls who restored tractors, and more than a few doubters.

“Out of over 60 kids who restored tractors, maybe five of them were girls. All of us at least got ribbons, some got other awards, and we kind of showed the boys up,” Janssen said. “Sometimes people didn’t believe me. They’d ask a lot of questions about what I did on different parts of the tractor, so when I could answer them confidently, they said, ‘I guess you did do it.’”

The Model “B” will be on display at the John Deere Tractor & Engine Museum through September 2016. After the museum, she wants to keep the tractor in the family.

“My dad doesn’t consider it his anymore. He said, ‘It’s yours, keep it in the family and show it to your kids.’”

## A Little More About the Model “B”

In 1933, John Deere tractor engineers set out to create a new tractor for an emerging product category. With new demands for increased power, Deere’s engineers focused on strength and versatility in new tractor designs.

These traits really begin to show up in late Model “GP” tractors, most notably in the over-the-top-steer GPWT.

From those early concepts, the first tractor to go into production with new row-crop designs was the Model “A” in 1934. Equipped with the newly developed steering system, adjustable wheel spacing, raised operator platform, and power-lift, the “A” included many of the latest improvements.

The “B,” called the “HX” during preproduction, was being tested by late summer of 1933. The first Model “B” rolled off the assembly line in October 1934 in time for the 1935 model year.

The “B” was designed to do the work of four horses on farms. It was first produced with a hand-start 149-cubic-inch engine that produced 14.25 horsepower at the belt pulley, but the engineers continued to improve the Model “B.” By the end of production it





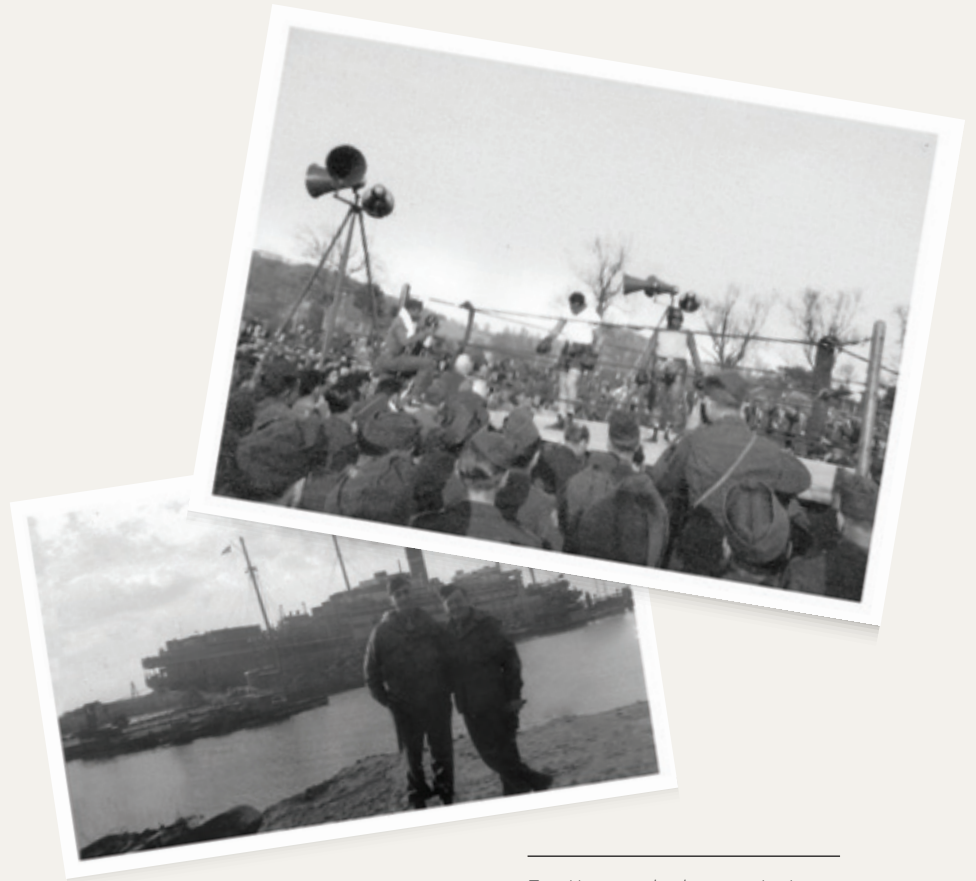
boasted a 190-cubic-inch engine with 24.39 horsepower at the belt. Along the way "Powertrol" systems were added, "Roll-O-Matic" front ends, lights, starters, and a great many attachments were made available for farmers to use with their Model "B" tractors.

Many variations also came from the first "B" design. In addition to the standard "B," Deere produced the "B" garden tractor, "BN," "BW," "BW-40," "BNH," "BWH," "BWH-40," "BR," "BO," "BI," and the machine that was used by the Lindeman Power Equipment Company of Yakima Washington as the base power unit for the "BO Lindeman" crawler.

The Model "B" was extremely versatile. With the different options and equipment, a farmer could plow, sow seed, rake hay, harvest peanuts, top beats, shell corn, grind feed, and take care of many other tasks on the farm.

The engineering team may never have expected the little brother of the Model "A" to be the best selling tractors in the line-up.

Over 300,000 Model "B" tractors rolled off the assembly line at John Deere's tractor factory in Waterloo, Iowa, from 1934 to June 1952.



*Top: Heavyweight champion Joe Lewis in an exhibition boxing match for the troops in England.*

*Bottom: Lucien Savoie and friend getting ready to board the S.S. Argentina for their ride home.*

## Dealer Employee's Son Recalls the John Deere Battalion

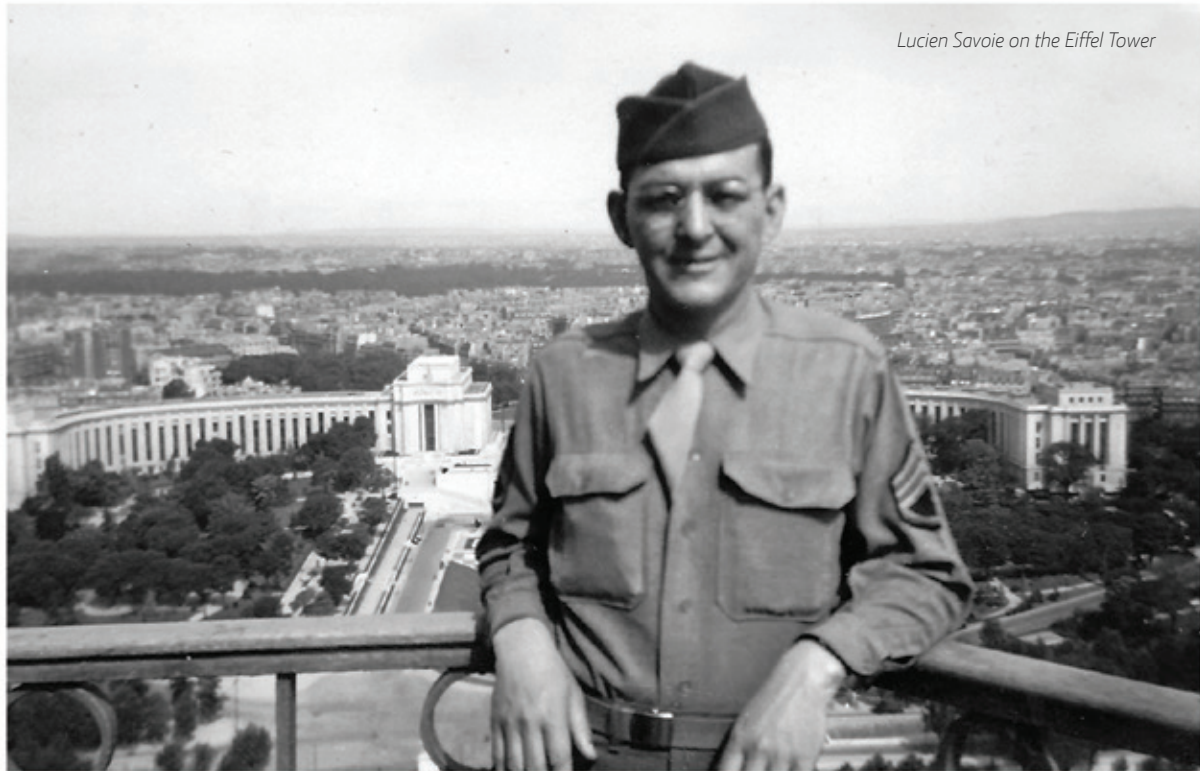
On August 15, 1942, Deere & Company issued a special bulletin.

"John Deere Employees, Dealers and their Employees have received an important call to the service of their country. The War Department has asked us and our dealers to form a U.S. Army Battalion, made up entirely of men enlisted from our organization, for service as a maintenance unit for keeping mechanized combat equipment constantly in order at an established base."

Col. Joseph L. Aman, commanding officer of the 303rd Ordnance Regiment, arrived in Moline, Illinois, in August 1942 to select officers and form the John Deere Battalion, officially known as the 608th Ordnance Maintenance Battalion. Nearly 950 men

applied, including 642 who enlisted. More than two-thirds of the battalion's total members came from John Deere dealerships. Robert Tarbell of the John Deere Plow Co., in Syracuse, New York, was the commanding officer.

Charles Deere Wiman, president of Deere & Company, resigned his position to accept a commission as colonel of the Ordnance Department, but at the request of the War Production Board returned to civilian status to serve as director of the farm machinery and equipment division of the War Production Board, based in Washington, D.C.



*Lucien Savoie on the Eiffel Tower*

Activated at Camp Sutton in North Carolina, the battalion received training in Pomona and Arcadia, California, and shipped overseas. They spent a year repairing tanks and artillery, first at Warminster, England, and then at the recently occupied plant in Famillereaux, Belgium.

Two men from the Rice City Tractor Corp. dealership in Crowley, Louisiana, enlisted as part of the John Deere Battalion. Lucien Savoie and Leo Milton Miers joined the 700 men who went to Savanna, Illinois, for training in 1942 before heading to Camp Sutton in January 1943. Eventually, they sailed to Warminster, England, where they spent over a year repairing and maintaining machinery.

Their Louisiana roots served Savoie and Miers well. Their ability to speak French led to their selection to serve

as interpreters when the battalion deployed to France and Belgium. They served for the remainder of the war and returned to the United States on New Year's Day, 1946.

David Savoie, Lucien's son, travelled to Belgium in 1992 and visited with two members of the family who had housed the Louisiana men during their time in Brussels.

"They were in their mid-teens when Dad was there, and knew him very well. They showed me a letter Dad had written to them after the war, and I left with a dozen Belgian waffles," Savoie recalled.

Today, David Savoie treasures a series of photo books created by his father, Lucien, and continues to share his father's stories. He also followed his father professionally, and manages

John Deere stores for Quality Equipment in southwest Louisiana. John Deere hosted an annual reunion of battalion members in Moline until 2000. David Savoie said his father and Miers attended several of the John Deere Battalion reunions up until the late eighties, and David had the opportunity to attend one himself.

"I was attending a product show in Moline in August of 1994, the same time a reunion was held. Dad passed away in 1991, but I informed the organizers that I'd be able to attend part of the event," Savoie said. "I cannot describe the feeling when I first walked up and members greeted me. The organizers told battalion members I would be there, and I have never felt more honored and appreciated than for the welcome they gave me."





## Along with the falling leaves and dropping temperatures, change is in the air for *The Plowshare!*

You've probably read in previous issues that *The Plowshare* is going digital, starting with the January issue. Many of you have already subscribed to our e-version, so you know about the added content, such as historical videos and links to more stories and related John Deere information.

If you've already subscribed to the e-version of *The Plowshare*, thank you! You'll keep getting the newsletter without any further action. If you haven't, it's easy to switch! Follow the instructions on the back page of this issue; it will only take a few minutes. Subscribe today to make sure you don't miss anything.

This year, we started linking to videos in some of the stories in *The Plowshare*. These videos are vintage reel-to-reel movies, footage from product launches, and promotional films converted to a digital format for all to see.

For those who like a printed copy of *The Plowshare* newsletter, you can still print the online version to keep in your collection. Maybe you'd like to read some back issues — now you can look at issues dating back to 2009 on *The Plowshare* page at John Deere.com.

On the back page of this issue, you can see how to change your subscription over to the e-version. The e-version of *The Plowshare* will continue at no charge to you. We hope that you'll take the time to sign up so you continue to receive *The Plowshare*. We think you'll be excited by the extras you get online.

We enjoy bringing you the historic information and collectors' stories that aren't available elsewhere, and we look forward to the opportunity to bring you even more John Deere content with this switch to digital. For example, if you're reading the e-version now, you can watch this terrific excerpt from a John Deere film called, "*From One Anvil.*" ▶ [Watch the video](#)

Thank you, one and all! I look forward to another great year of stories and laughs in 2016.

Keep your hand on the throttle and your plow in the ground.

**Brian Holst**  
Manager, John Deere Heritage Marketing

# THE PLOWSHARE

## JOHN DEERE

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## Going All Digital in 2016, Last Print Issue

If you've been reading the back page of *The Plowshare* in the last few issues, then you already know our exciting news — this publication is going all digital in 2016! This is the last print issue of *The Plowshare*. We know not everyone reads *The Plowshare* online, but in a digital age, here are three good reasons to make the switch:

1. **We can offer additional, never-before-seen content online. Want us to prove it?**  
If you're reading a digital version, you can [click here](#) to see rare footage of our then Deere & Company President, Burton Peek, addressing over 4,000 people in Waterloo, Iowa, when John Deere received the Army-Navy "E" Award.
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