

# the BELT PULLEY



*"Pulling Collectors  
Together"*

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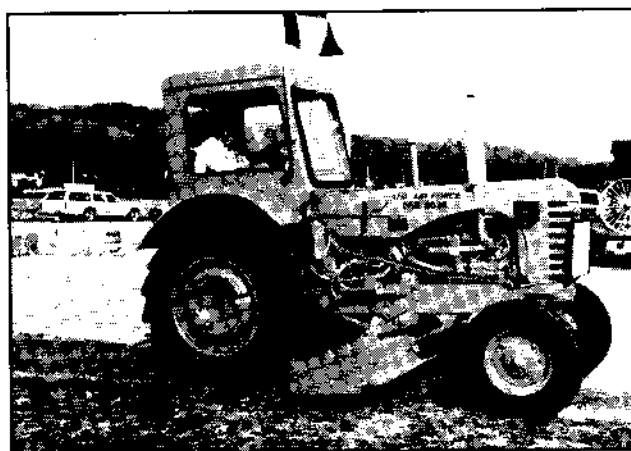
# Massey Harris *Join The* AIR FORCE

Massey Harris was always one of the best companies to suit a tractor to the farmers specific needs with a virtual smorgasbord of fuel options and configurations. Massey Harris even went as far as to meet the specific needs of the United States Air Force.

In 1946 Massey introduced their 44 series and it quickly became their all time best seller with 44 production making up as much as 50% of Massey's total production from 1950 to '52.

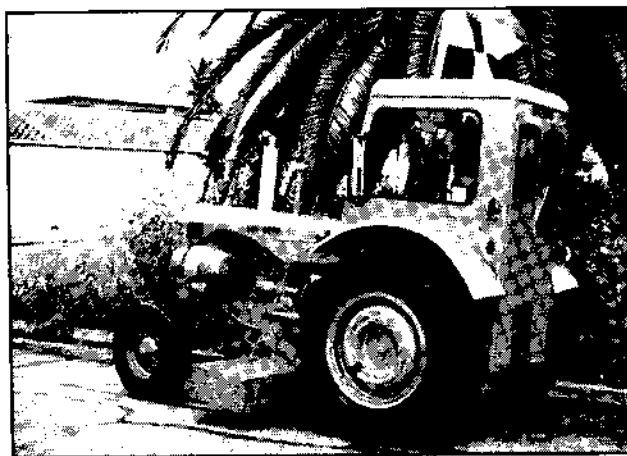
Massey courted the Air Force and Navy with an Industrial version of the 44. No literature of trade journals show that Massey ever offered an industrial 44 to the general population. Massey was not heavy into the industrial market as many companies were. One can only hypothesize that Massey envisioned large military contracts and built these special tractors. One oddity about the 244's is that they were all 6 cylinders as opposed to the much more common 4 cylinder motor.

There were two variations of these tractors, the I-244 and the FSI-244. The only apparent difference is that the I-244 does not have a



power take off and the FSI-244 does. There are identification plates that specify whether or not it was a Navy or Air Force tractor. According to Massey production records, the Navy was not quite as infatuated with the tractor as the Air Force was.

Only 38 tractors were produced for the Navy, all being I-244's. Air Force tractors built included 243 FSI-244's and 389 I-244's. Any way you look at it, any of them are an extremely rare tractor. When you take the high casualty rate that most obsolete military equipment has, there are probably only a handful left.



John Johnson can thank his job for helping locate his tractor. "Part of my job was locating and buying used and surplus equipment for the county. After I retired, I decided to restore farm tractors to give me something to do, as I hate to see the old equipment scrapped. I remembered this unit from years ago, as I had seen it in a yard in Utah, and figured it would be a nice project as it was the only one like it that I had seen. I called the owner and he said he was liquidating his business but he still had the

tractor. He got it from another surplus dealer about 25 years ago with the intention of putting it to work around the trucking yards and construction sites. The deal didn't work out so it just sat in his yard. I went to Utah to talk to him and he had changed his mind and said he wanted to keep it. He had sold or scrapped about everything in his yard but the tractor, an 80 HP Sturdevant steam engine and an 18-32 Case cross motor tractor.

I convinced him I would not scrap these units but would restore them. He said, "I am 72 years old and have not done anything with them and my kids are not interested in them. If you will take care of them, we can make a deal."

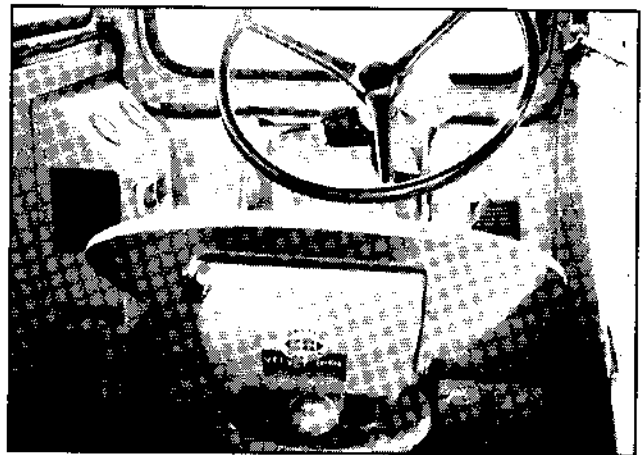
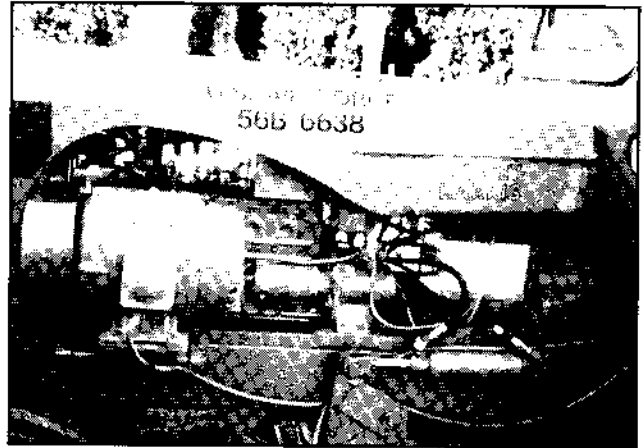
The tractor had sat out for well over 20 years and the tires were flat and rotten, glass and gauges broken, grill pushed in and torn but the engine was free. It was really a fairly easy restoration. The sediment bowl had broken and drained the tank so I didn't have to deal with stale, gummy gas. The carb had water in it and had frozen and broken the bowl casting. The magneto points were corroded and two cylinders had valves stuck.

The only sheet metal work was on the grill. Not a lot more was required, other than a complete rewire, change hoses and belts, hydraulic hoses, and replace gauges. I put in new glass and tires, inspected the brakes and gear cases, and clean up both generators and the starter. I gave it three coats of acrylic enamel and had the decals made.

The tractor has a large magnetic sweeper that is powered by a 125 volt D.C. generator that is belt driven. It is raised and lowered hydraulically. The manufacturer's plate says "Built by Sabre Metal Products, Lyons, Ill." They are not listed in the Thomas Register and Directory Assistance has no listing for them. The magnet and controls are built by

Fermont Electric. I don't know how many were made with the sweeper."

Although the sweeper was originally intended to pick up debris off of airport runways I sure would be handy for that elusive bolt that always ends up in the tall grass while working on a tractor!



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