

# Custom-Built Man Lift Trailer

Cole Hardman custom-built his own man lift using parts from a surplus military trailer, a lift from a junkyard bucket truck, and lots of steel from his scrap pile. The result is a versatile man lift he is confident will fit multiple needs.

"I needed it for building a farm shop," says Hardman. "I'm also a beekeeper and figure it will be handy for swarm removal."

The military trailer cost him \$450 at a military surplus auction. Equipped with air brakes, it had carried a big generator and was built to be pulled behind a 5-ton truck.

"I stripped the air brakes off as it would be towed behind a 1-ton truck without air brakes," says Hardman. "It also had a mechanical parking brake that I set when using the man lift."

The bucket truck was scheduled to be scrapped. However, the lift with its 37 ft. working height, was still in good shape and equipped with auxiliary hydraulics. Hardman spent about \$1,000 on it. The only repair needed was to rewire the boom unit.

"I used a piece of 1-in. steel from a bridge that was being torn down to fabricate a mounting plate," says Hardman. "With it bolted to the trailer bed, I set the lift in place."

Hardman came up with simple and easy-to-set outriggers. He welded 2 1/2-sq. in. receiver hitches on all four corners. The outriggers are 8,000-lb. trailer jacks mounted to 2-in. sq. tubing.

"I just slide the outriggers into the receiver hitches and adjust their heights," says Hardman. "I have less than \$3,000 in the whole thing. About half of that is the steel tubing and trailer jacks."

The hydraulic pump on the lift was powered by a pto while on the truck. Hardman plans to replace the pto drive with a small engine to power the pump. In the meantime, he's using the lift's backup 12-volt pump.

"It runs great," he says. "I have two deep cycle batteries mounted on the trailer, plus a plug with 2-gauge wire so it can run off



Hardman's lift has a 37 ft. working height and is rated for 350 lbs. with the boom extended.

the truck's electrical system as well," says Hardman. "The lift is rated for 350 lbs. with the boom extended or 500 if not extended. I plan to use it to set trusses in place."

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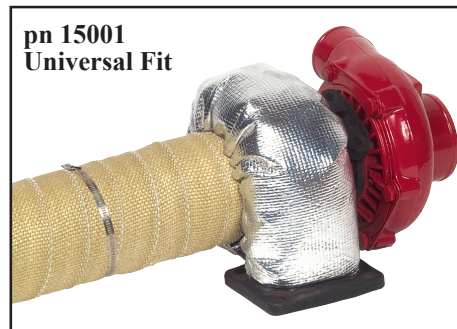
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Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Thermo-Tec Automotive, P.O. Box 96, Greenwich, Ohio. 44837 (ph 800-274-8437; outside the U.S. 419-962-4556; www.thermotec.com).

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