

Service to State and Country

TWO CARS AND TWO LIVES IN UNIFORM

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Chris Green's work car, a 2009 Dodge Charger with the Alaska State Trooper decals on the side and the light bar, gets its fair share of attention while he patrols the Valley. Nonetheless, it's his personal car with the POW/MIA decals that gets a lot more thumbs up and cell phones taking photos. He's even had people flag him down to get a closer look at the car.

You may have seen it on the streets in the Valley in the summer – a sleek black Charger R/T with green decals of the American flag fading into an eagle. The black and white image of a man's silhouette with a wreath below is a symbol to remember the words "You Are Not Forgotten" are on each door. The license plate reads "POW RT." What's under its hood is just as impressive. The modified 5.7 liter Hemi V-8 engine with a multi-displacement system deactivates four cylinders when they aren't needed to allow for better fuel efficiency. There's a chrome plated cowl shiny enough to reflect the "All Gave Some, Some Gave All" painted onto the bottom side of the hood. The car even has custom door step lights that shine an outline of the POW/MIA logo onto the ground.

Much like the cars he drives, Green has spent years balancing between his service to his state and to his country. After becoming a trooper in the fall of 2007, Green was called up for active duty service in October 2009. He then stayed on active duty as a reservist for four years, deploying first to Kuwait to do waterside security with the Navy, then on orders to a Coast Guard Marine Safety Unit in Port Arthur, Texas. Being separated from his wife and three children while in Ku-

wait was hard. Life was substantially easier when his family got to live with him during his time in Texas.

When he returned to Alaska and his job as an Alaska State Trooper, he went through the Public Safety Academy a second time.

"I had been gone for four years and I wanted to make sure that I was up to speed on everything," he said.

Going through 18 weeks of training at the academy involves academics, physical fitness, decision making and stress inoculation. Each recruit is challenged academically, mentally and physically. It can be stressful and intense. Green attended the academy as a recruit the first time, but attended as a trooper the second time. Because of this, he was treated a little different – he stayed in the VIP section of the academy dorms, was available to help academy staff when needed. However, he refreshed his skills as well as picked up new ones before returning to Palmer as a patrol trooper.

Aside from his job as a trooper, Green continues to serve in the Coast Guard reserves to continue his military career that started in Arkansas. His career as a Guardsman started in his 20s when he was "seeking meaning" to his life. At the time he was serving in the Arkansas Army National Guard and his six-year enlistment was about to end. It didn't appeal to him to continue his service until



Alaska State Trooper Chris Green

United States Coast Guard
Petty Officer First Class Chris Green



his mother suggested he join the Coast Guard. He looked into it and decided “it would be a great experience.” He went active duty Coast Guard in February 1998.

His first duty station was on the Coast Guard Cutter Storis based in Kodiak for two years, where he acquired the skills to become a boatswain’s mate. At the time, it was the “Queen of

the Coast Guard fleet,” bearing the gold numbers 38 to show its special status of being the oldest commissioned Coast Guard cutter in active duty.

“I am proud to have served on that ship because of its tremendous history,” he said.

In 2000, he transferred to Coast Guard military police in Kodiak, where he worked for four years and eventually became a watch captain. While working as a military police officer, Green worked with Alaska State Troopers on many occasions. That’s when he decided he wanted to eventually wear trooper blue in addition to his Coast Guard blue. His next duty was part of a brand new unit, a Marine Safety Security Team (MSST). His supervisor while he was a part of the MSST was Luis Nieves, who preceded him in becoming an Alaska State Trooper.

“He was an excellent mentor in helping me through the process,” Green said. Nieves is now the Recruitment Unit sergeant.

Despite leaving active duty, Green decided to remain a reservist because he didn’t want to throw away the military time he had built up with the six years in the Army National Guard and 9-1/2 years in the Coast Guard. He now has 22 years in the military.



Two months before Green was recalled to military active duty in 2009, he was issued one of the brand new 2009 Dodge

Besides the patriotic decals that adorn the sides, hood and truck, the POW/MIA car has service coins embedded into the doors.

Chargers the department procured as patrol vehicles. Excited to have a sleek patrol car, Green was only able to drive the car for about a month prior to taking leave before his deployment. The patrol car was turned in and reassigned to another trooper.

“I was really impressed with the power it had and how well it handled compared to my Crown Victoria police car,” he said.

He bought his own 2007 Dodge Charger R/T in 2010 at a dealership in Georgetown, Texas. At the time, it had 60,000 miles on it. He modified the 340-horsepower stock engine, added a super 44 Flowmaster exhaust, C&L Performance cold air intake; Diablosport Trinity engine programmer and upgraded the brake rotors.

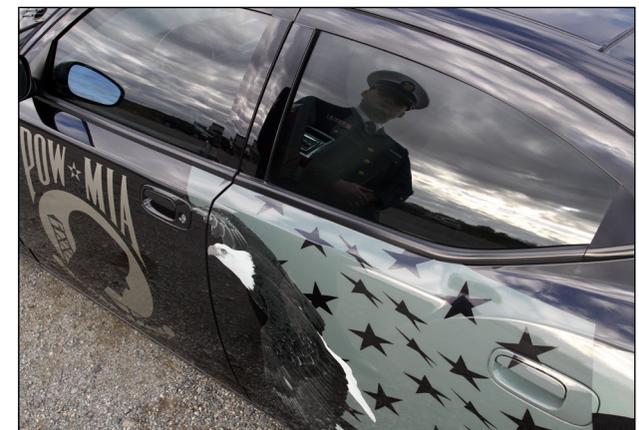
However, those are not the modifications that usually get noticed. He always knew he wanted to decorate the car in a military style theme. Since his car was black, the POW/MIA logo seemed like a perfect fit to turn his personal car into a mobile tribute to former prisoners of war and to those who are still missing.

“I knew that the POW, MIA issues have since been put on the back burner for some time and I thought it would be great to bring it back into perspective,” he said. There are still 1,639 personnel listed as missing and unaccounted for from the Vietnam War alone, according to the Department of Defense.

Most of the design ideas came to him while lying in bed at night trying to go to sleep. Green left virtually no detail untouched. Besides the patriotic decals that adorn the sides, hood and trunk, he has service coins embedded into the doors.

“I knew the challenge coins would be a great addition to the interior and the engine compartment,” he said. “Once ideas started to flow it became difficult for me to go to sleep.”

Only the inside of the gas cover door seems untouched. When this was pointed out, his wife, Sarah said “don’t give him any more ideas.”





Alaska State Trooper Chris Green

Since working on cars is a hobby of his, the mechanically inclined Green has done most of the modifications himself and has done all the design work with input from Sarah. He left the barbed wire seat embroidery and painting the barbed wire design on the wheels to someone else. It's been an ongoing project for the couple.

In the meantime, the Greens have done countless parades, car shows and veterans events.

“The most memorable time was when I was given the honor to escort

on three different occasions the remains of soldiers that were MIA,” he said. “I was able to lead the hearse from the funeral home to the grave side service. That was a tremendous honor.”

One of the first big events was the Vietnam Veterans Welcome Home celebration at Charlotte Motor Speedway in 2012. Green and Sarah drove it from Beaumont, Texas to North Carolina, and then spent hours detailing it the night before the event. As soon as they were finished, it started raining. There was no shelter to park the car at the hotel, but they were hopeful that the rain would stop by morning. It was still raining the next day, which was very disappointing not only because of the trouble to keep it clean and shiny, but they wouldn't be able to open the car doors or trunk to let people see the entire car display. After arriving at the speedway, Sarah was able to arrange for a parking spot inside the NASCAR covered garage bay. Then they frantically cleaned the entire car before the event gates opened.



“There were over 40,000 people at the event. I met many war heroes as well as a few ex-POWs,” he said. “I saw men tear up while looking at the car because it meant a lot to them that someone would be willing to recognize the POW and MIAs.”

After trailering the car from Texas to Alaska in 2013, he has

taken it to the Alaska Veteran's Memorial on the Parks Highway near Cantwell for a Memorial Day remembrance ceremony.

Because the car is so special, Green only drives it when the roads are dry and the weather is nice. He stores it inside during the winter months and waits for the first nice day of spring to drive it again.

“It never sees snow or rain,” he said, “unless I get caught out in it.”

After Green returned to the troopers from his four years of active duty service, Green was shocked that his patrol vehicle assignment was the very same 2009 Dodge Charger he was assigned prior to his deployment in 2009. The Charger started and will end its time as a trooper patrol car with Green. Due to the patrol car's age and mileage, it's scheduled to be replaced by a new Ford Taurus Interceptor. It is the last marked AST Charger still patrolling Alaska roadways. Green isn't disappointed in the upcoming switch. He looks forward to making the switch to an all-wheel drive vehicle with comparable power and torque.

Besides, he has his own custom Charger to drive.



U.S. Coast Guard Petty Officer First Class Chris Green

Chris Green shows how the door runner lights are modified to shine the outline of the POW/MIA logo.

