

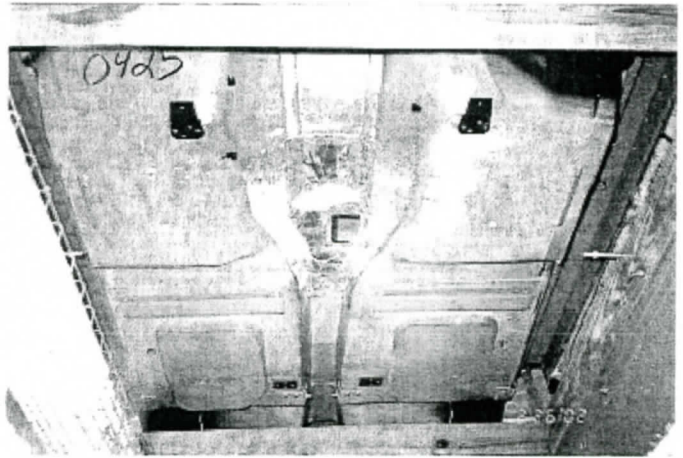
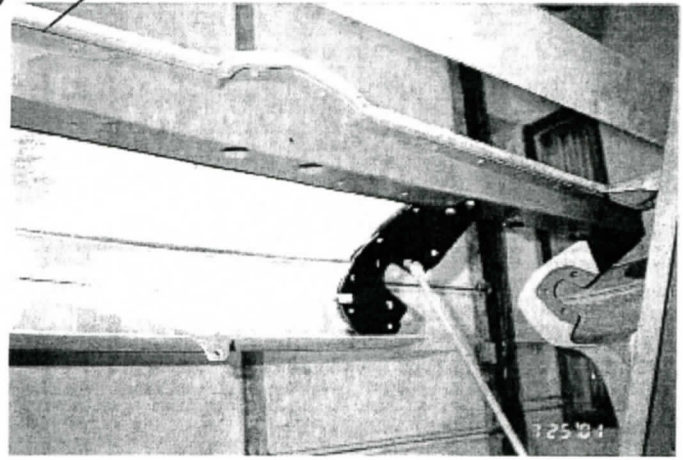
2nd article

# Midyear Underbody Restoration

One of the most overlooked areas of any restoration is the under body. This is especially true of most Corvettes. People assume that since the floor is made of fiberglass there is no rust that needs to be cleaned. This is partially true but the underbody has many metal brackets and braces that do rust.

The best way to deal with the rusted braces is to glass bead or sand blast them. Many of the braces cannot be easily removed and therefore will have to be cleaned on the body. There are a lot of braces that can be removed and by doing so it will make an easier job of cleaning them. Once you determine which braces to take off you should inspect the rivets before you remove them to match them up with the new rivets that will be needed for reinstalling the braces. The best way to remove a rivet is by grinding the tail of the rivet off then; using a punch and a hammer, carefully drive the rivet out of the floor. Be sure to label the old rivets as to which brace they come out of because there are many different sizes and shapes of rivets used. Most all Corvette part suppliers have a variety of rivets that will be needed. Once you have the braces removed you should inspect the original finish of them to determine how they were finished from the factory. Some of the braces were semi gloss black; some are green zinc primer. They were also cad or zinc plated, bare metal, or phosphate plated. There are different shades of the green zinc primer depending on the year. Also, some of the brackets are different colors depending on which plan the body was built.

Next you should clean the underbody fiberglass with soap and water. There is usually some undercoating primer and paint overspray that you may want to preserve or remove to freshly duplicate the finish. For the braces you cannot easily remove they will need to be blasted



on the body. Use duct tape to mask off the fiberglass next to the brace so you do not damage the finish of the glass. Once everything is cleaned and refinished it is time to reinstall the parts. You will need a hammer, metal block or dolly, and a friend. The factory used an air hammer and a special tip to install the rivets. You can still buy the air hammer top from Snap On Tools. If you do not have access to air tools, then the hammer and dolly method works just as well but is a little slower. Your friend will need to hold down on the rivet head from above while you hammer the rivet from the underside to hold the brace in place. The rivets are made of aluminum and are not hard to hammer. Once you have finished you will have successfully removed any rust from your floor braces and will have a well restored underbody to match all the hard work that you will have put into the rest of the car restoration.

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