

PROVING GROUND

WHERE NEW IDEAS ARE TESTED

AN INDEPENDENT MULTI-CHAPTER REVIEW OF MVCC POLICIES AND EVENTS

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Number 4 Feb. 1986

REPRESENTING



Motor Pool Messenger

NORTH JERSEY CHAPTER INC.

MILITARY VEHICLE COLLECTOR'S CLUB



SOUTH JERSEY CHAPTER

MILITARY VEHICLE COLLECTORS CLUB

**OPERATION &
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MAINTENANCE**



CONNECTICUT CHAPTER

MILITARY VEHICLE COLLECTORS CLUB



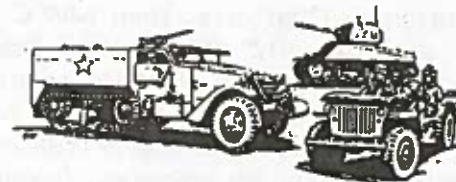
THE GPA TIMES



O. D. NEWS

a publication of the
Washington Area Chapter
of the

Military Vehicle Collectors Club



CHARLIE COMPANY NEWS

Greater New York Military Vehicle Society, Inc.

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

It has become clear, through feedback from the membership to the first issue of Proving Ground, that there are many members who are unsure of the purpose of Proving Ground and what it advocates. Listed below is the simple statement of the purpose of the Proving Ground organization of chapters.

THE PURPOSE OF THE PROVING GROUND ORGANIZATION IS TO INSURE DEMOCRATIC MEMBERSHIP REPRESENTATION AND FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY WITHIN THE MVCC.

We advocate a return to the founding principles of the MVCC which (1) allow for direct chapter representation on the Board of Directors and (2) require full financial disclosure of the use of Club monies, including a full outside financial audit annually.

THE FREE \$12.50 MEMBERSHIP DIRECTORY

How would you feel about a dues hike of \$12.50 in addition to the \$20.00 you already pay for your MVCC membership? Well, if you wanted a Membership Directory since 1984 you paid a total of \$32.50. This may not seem to earth shattering at first glance, but when you take a closer look at the circumstances surrounding the \$12.50 fee for the Membership Directory, you can't help but wonder how the Club's 1984 income of over \$90,000 was handled and how current and future income will be handled.

First, a quick history lesson. One of the nails in the coffin of the now defunct National Military Vehicle Collectors Association (the Club which preceded the MVCC) was the fact that the controlling members of the NMVCA refused to publish any sort of membership list or directory. By withholding a directory, the NMVCA effectively, intentionally or unintentionally, curtailed communication between members, limiting the flow of valuable restoration information, and limiting the strength of the Club as a whole.

When we were planning the MVCC, we realized the importance of the Membership Directory because of previous experience with the NMVCA. The cost of the Directory was to come out of membership dues and the Treasurer would set aside money each year for the next Directory to be printed. When the MVCC was founded, the Directory became one of its cornerstones. In most advertisements, promotional literature, and membership applications, the members were promised "Army Motors", "Supply Line" (after its beginning), and a Directory. In fact as late as "Army Motors" issue #27 (Winter '83) the standard description of what a member received with all classes of membership included a Membership Directory. Since 1976, four Directories have been published along with various supplements (the supplements were not distributed to all members, but only to those within the Club who needed the latest updated information). Directories D1 through D3 were supplied free to every member and paid for out of the set aside from membership dues. What went wrong with Directory D4?

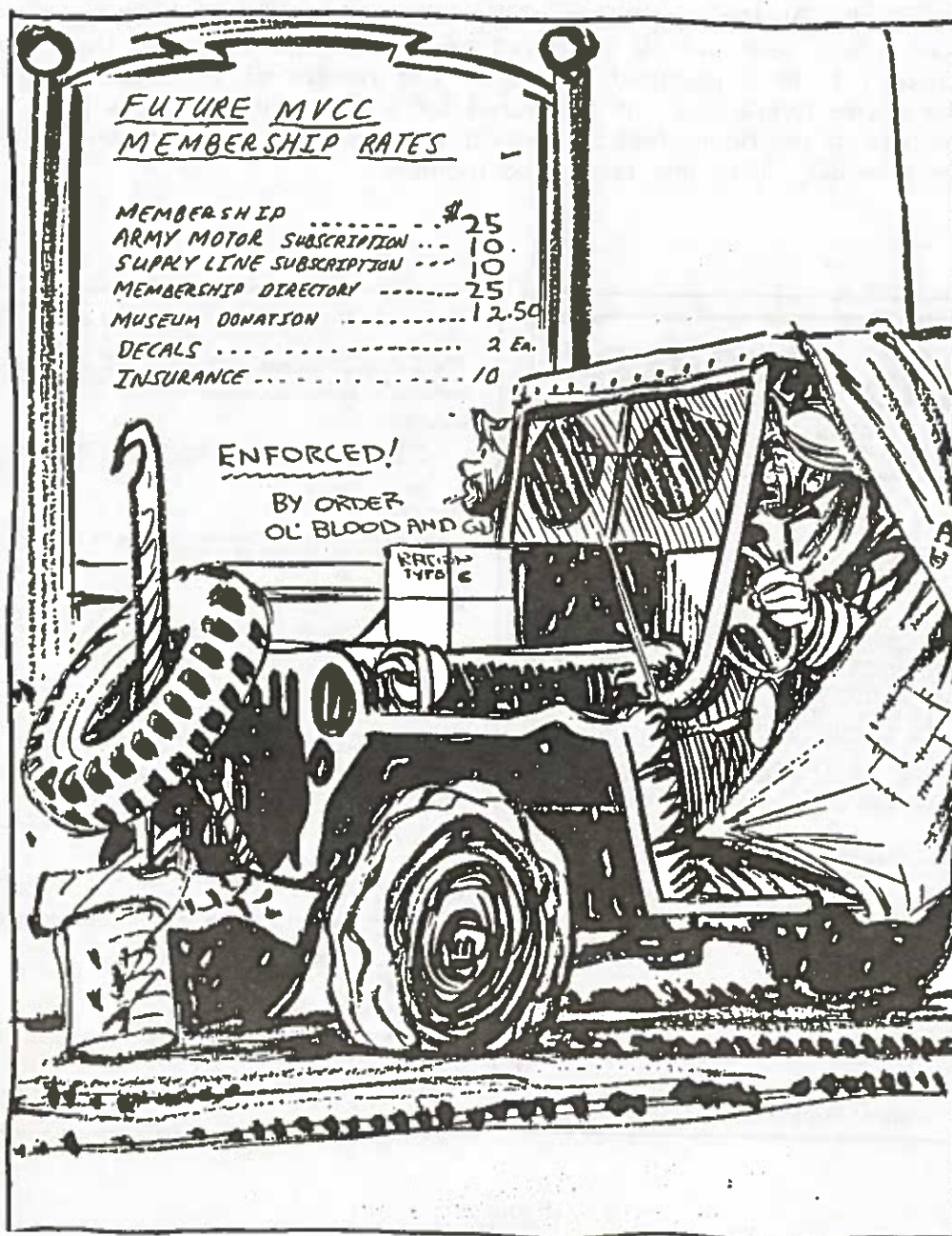
In the January "From the Treasurer ..." newsletter, which was circulated to National Officers, Board Members, Chapter Presidents, and Newsletter Editors, it was suddenly announced that the D4 Directory "will be for sale to the members for a price of \$12.50 postpaid." How was this decision reached and by whom? According to the minutes of the 1984 Board of Directors meeting at the convention in Charlotte, then MVCC President Roy Hamilton stated that the subject was discussed "at great length" at the 1983 Board of Directors meeting in Vancouver. However, a survey of the minutes of the 1983 Board meeting yield nothing in reference to the Membership Directory at all. The only reference to the Membership Directory in the 1983 convention meeting records is a statement by Secretary/Treasurer Jim Herrick to the General Membership Meeting that the Directory was being prepared. According to the minutes of the 1984 General Membership Meeting at the convention in Charlotte, Secretary/Treasurer Jim Herrick was asked a direct question as to "whether it was a Board decision to charge for the Directory. Mr. Herrick pointed out that it represented a lot of people on the Board."

What happened to the Directory reserve? Board member Dennis Spence questioned Jim Herrick at the 1984 Board meeting as to why the Directory reserve was not adequate. Herrick answered that "the reserve covered much of the printing costs and computer time for the Directory but that nothing was left over for postage." \$12.50 for postage? Something else must have been going on. The Directory problem was discussed at length at this Board meeting, but the only additional clues to the reason for the costs were statements by Directory Editor Reg Hodgson that "there was an additional cost of computer time involved", and then President Roy Hamilton "that there were other costs in addition to those already mentioned." Board member Barbara Janquitto later requested a more thorough explanation regarding what went into the choice of the \$12.50 cost. In a letter dated August 27, 1984 to Ms. Janquitto, Jim Herrick indicated that the cost covered the increased printing cost of the Directory, the increased postage costs and a portion of the newly acquired Club computer. The portion of the computers cost was "a sum equal to the direct additional costs of the computer system." In addition he states that "The reserve we held for D3 were not available for D4 due in large part to our decision to add 6 copies of "Supply Line" a year for our members."

Was it really necessary to charge \$12.50? From the Accountants Review Report statements supplied to the Directors at the 1984 Board meeting we find the Club had, as of March 31, 1984, \$20,952 in cash assets. In addition the statements show the Club had an excess of \$12,108 revenue received over expenses paid. With this kind of cash around, why burden the Directory with "Supply Line" and computer liabilities?

The point of this whole discussion is not so much what was done, but how it was done. Maybe we did need to charge members for the Directory. Maybe we do need a computer. Maybe we do need to keep a large cash reserve in the Treasury. However, is the scenario played out in the Directory affair really the way things should happen? The reasonableness of the decision to charge members for the Directory is in itself questionable. That the decision was made without the input of the full Board of Directors is inexcusable. The Directory is the symbol of one of the basic founding principles of the MVCC, that we need to be open in all our affairs. Decisions involving Club policy should be made in as open a manner as possible, and decisions which have such a major impact on the overall membership should be made not by the administrators of the Club, but by the entire Board, and then only after careful consideration.

- Oliver Kenen #102
North Jersey Chapter



HOW DECISIONS ARE MADE IN THE MVCC

Recently, two new Directors were appointed to the Board of Directors. Mike Keller and Tom Phair were appointed to give the over 650 members from the state of California some direct representation on the Board of Directors. One of these individuals replaced Roy Hamilton who resigned as of the 1985 Board meeting at the Wichita convention. The other was an addition to the Board of Directors. Both the expansion of the Board to include an additional Director, and the appointment of the individuals themselves required a majority vote by the Board of Directors.

The idea for this article was originally to illustrate to the readers, and to the Board members themselves, that the entire Board was not always contacted for their vote when a major decision, such as the appointment of additional Board members, was being decided. In fact it was felt that not all of the Board members were even informed as to the fact that a vote was taken or a particular decision made. As research for the article progressed, however, it became apparent that the issue of full representative Board participation in the decision making process was an issue which would have to be resolved if the MVCC was to continue to grow and prosper.

Proving Ground has been criticised in the past for not polling the entire Board for information before printing an article. At the suggestion of Board member Merrill Madsen, a questionnaire illustrated in Figure 1 was sent out to all Board members requesting that they complete the questionnaire and return it in a postpaid envelope. The results of the questionnaire not only illustrated that the entire Board was not contacted for a vote, but it gave a keen insight into how individual members of the Board feel as to their responsibility to report on their actions to the membership as a whole, or to one concerned member.

<div style="border: 2px solid black; border-radius: 15px; padding: 10px; text-align: center;"><h1 style="margin: 0;">PROVING GROUND</h1><p style="margin: 0;">WHERE NEW IDEAS ARE TESTED</p><p style="margin: 0; font-size: small;">AN INDEPENDENT MULTI-CHAPTER REVIEW OF MVCC POLICIES AND EVENTS</p></div> <p style="margin-top: 10px;">December 6, 1985</p> <p style="margin-top: 10px;">TO ALL MVCC BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEMBERS</p> <p style="margin-top: 10px;">Dear Board Member :</p> <p style="margin-top: 10px; font-size: small;">Enclosed please find a questionnaire regarding some recent decisions that have been made in the MVCC. For the most part, these questions are designed to illustrate your part in making these decisions. Some reference items are enclosed to better illustrate the reasons for these questions. These questionnaires will ultimately be used as documentation for a future article in <u>Proving Ground</u>. As you will see, the questions are not for the purpose of criticizing the particular actions as such, but rather to illustrate the participation of the entire Board of Directors in the decision making process.</p> <p style="margin-top: 10px; font-size: small;">PG has been criticized for its lack of polling the entire Board when gathering information for its articles. At the suggestion of Board member Merrill Madsen, this questionnaire is being circulated to allow all Board members to express their knowledge and opinion regarding a particular topic.</p> <p style="margin-top: 10px; font-size: small;">An addressed, stamped envelope is enclosed for your use in responding. If any Board member wishes to add additional comments regarding PG, the reforms we advocate, etc. your comments would be welcome.</p> <p style="margin-top: 10px;">Sincerely,</p> <p style="margin-top: 10px;">PROVING GROUND</p> <div style="margin-top: 10px;"><p style="margin: 0; font-size: small;">Harry Risner - Associate Editor Membership # 2201</p></div> <p style="margin-top: 10px; font-size: small;">Reply requested by 1/6/86.</p> <p style="margin-top: 20px; font-weight: bold;">120 Summers Avenue, Piscataway, N.J. 08854</p>	<p style="text-align: center; font-weight: bold; font-size: small;">PROVING GROUND BOARD OF DIRECTORS QUESTIONNAIRE #1</p> <p style="font-size: x-small;">The size of the Board of Directors was increased recently by the appointment of Mike Keller and Tom Phair as Directors. It is assumed that one of these individuals replaced Roy Hamilton who resigned as of the Wichita Convention, making one an addition to the Board.</p> <p>QUESTION #1</p> <p>Were you polled, by mail ballot, regarding the increase in the number of Directors on the Board of Directors?</p> <p>Yes ___ No ___</p> <p>QUESTION #2</p> <p>Were you polled, by telephone, regarding the increase in the number of Directors on the Board of Directors?</p> <p>Yes ___ No ___</p> <p>QUESTION #3</p> <p>Were you informed, prior to the issuance of a memo by MVCC President Jack Tomlin dated 11/25/85 which listed the two new Directors, that the size of the Board had been increased?</p> <p>Yes ___ No ___</p> <p>QUESTION #4</p> <p>Who authorized the increase in the number of Directors on the Board of Directors?</p> <p>The Board ___ The President ___ Other ___ Don't Know ___</p> <p>QUESTION #5</p> <p>Were you asked, by mail ballot, to vote for the appointment of the new Directors?</p> <p>One ___ Both ___ Neither ___</p> <p>QUESTION #6</p> <p>Were you asked, by telephone, to vote for the appointment of the new Directors?</p> <p>One ___ Both ___ Neither ___</p> <p>QUESTION #7</p> <p>Who appointed the two new Directors?</p> <p>The Board ___ The President ___ Other ___ Don't Know ___</p> <p>SIGNATURE _____ DATE _____</p>
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Figure 1

Only three Board members took the time to return the questionnaire. Predictably, these three Board members, Buz Bowling, Dennis Spence, and Barbara Janquitto were not asked to vote, nor were they even informed that a vote had been taken, and new Directors appointed. What was most surprising were the five Board members who responded by letter, but did not direct their responses to the subject of the questionnaire. Invariably, these letters were to criticise the involvement of Proving Ground in gathering this information, or to state that they were not interested in considering any of the subject matter covered in Proving Ground.

Several Board members were contacted by telephone to solicit their responses. Those Board members who would reply stated that if they had been contacted to ask their opinion, it had been by telephone, and they had placed their votes as such. The method of soliciting votes by telephone has its own built in problems however. Whenever someone contacts an individual by phone for a vote, they must be very careful not to consciously or unconsciously slant the information so as to give their particular viewpoint the best presentation. If abused, this system can be used to virtually guarantee the caller's viewpoint prevailing, because the caller merely continues to wear the listener down with rhetoric until the listener agrees and votes the caller's way. The system of telephone solicitation of votes is simply not acceptable for major decisions in an organization the size of the MVCC.

The sad part about the way these decisions were made is that they did not need to be made in this manner. The Board has in place a mechanism so that the entire Board can be polled by mail on a particular issue, and a written record kept of the vote. MVCC President Jack Tomlin recognized at the Wichita Board meeting the use of the two forms, illustrated in Figure 2, which were to be used when Board members wished to initiate some action between scheduled Board meetings. These forms would be used in much the same manner as the questionnaire that was used to question the Board about their vote on the new Directors. When a Director proposes action on a particular topic, he would describe the action on the Information/Action/Policy Form. Copies of these forms would be sent to all Directors along with a blank Information/Action/Policy Return Sheet. After a specified period of time the Board member initiating the action would tally up the responses received, and if there was a quorum actively voting, the majority vote would decide the question.

The figure contains two forms side-by-side. The left form is titled 'Information/Action/Policy Form' and includes fields for 'To: (affix B of D label)', 'Date:', 'From: (affix B of D label)', and 'Ph. #'. It has sections for 'Proposal Title:', 'Suggestion/Proposal/Policy Issue:', 'Rationale for Suggestion/Change:' with a numbered list (1, 2, 3), 'Possible Disadvantages:', 'Method of Implementation:', and 'Additional Comments:'. A note says 'use additional space if necessary'. The right form is titled 'Information/Action/Policy Return Sheet' and includes fields for 'Proposal Title:', 'Return to: (affix B of D label)', 'Return by: enter date needed', 'From: (affix B of D label)', and 'Ph. #'. It has a 'Comments:' section with three options: 'I agree with the above proposal as stated', 'I agree with the above proposal with the additional comments below.', and 'I disagree with the above proposal as stated.'. It also has a section for 'Additional Information needed/Comments:' with three lines for writing.

Figure 2

If used properly, this method would allow complete involvement by the entire Board on any given action. For the action of appointing new Directors however, whichever Board member initiated the action either did not want to involve the entire Board, or did not feel it was necessary.

The record of the Club to date on Board decisions made between meetings is not good. In fact, several decisions which have had a major impact on the Club were made between Board meetings without the benefit of the input of the full Board. A good example from recent Club history concerned the purchase of the Club computer. At the 1982 Board of Directors meeting at the Kansas City convention, the Board approved, in principle, the decision to purchase a computer for use in Club administration. In a letter to then MVCC President Roy Hamilton dated May 11, 1983, Jim Herrick describes why he feels that the purchase of a computer for the Club is necessary. He describes the system he feels is best suited to the needs of the Club and goes on to describe his projections as to how much it would cost. The final paragraph of this letter illustrates how the Board ultimately "made" this decision. In this letter from the Secretary-/Treasurer to the President, and copied to all members of the Board of Directors, Jim Herrick states "As you recall, this matter was discussed at the 1982 Board meeting at Kansas City and a decision was made in principle to obtain a computer. We are now asking that if any member objects to our borrowing between \$12,000 and \$13,000 for around three years to accomplish this. Majority will rule. We would like to hear from every member of the Board. This is why we have a Board. If, however, we don't hear from you by the 30th of May, we will consider your response to be positive and act accordingly."

Another item of major importance was the decision to charge members for the D4 Membership Directory. In this case it is obvious that the entire Board was not involved in the decision because 1984 Board of Directors meeting minutes show that the meeting was dominated by a discussion of how and why this decision was made. It was directly because of this experience that the Information/Action/Policy forms were developed, but to date Club officers show little interest in using this system.

The MVCC is no longer a small operation which can be run by a group of friends communicating occasionally by telephone. It is a major non-profit corporation which requires that all major decisions of action, expenditure, and policy be made by a fully informed Board of Directors, all of whose opinions are solicited. If the MVCC is to continue to grow and prosper, Club officers and Board members must give up the notion of a tightly controlled non-representative organization. As more and more members become directly affected by each decision, these members require that they be represented in the decision making process, and that their representative be fully included and informed as these decisions are made.

- Harry Rimmer #2201
North Jersey Chapter

