



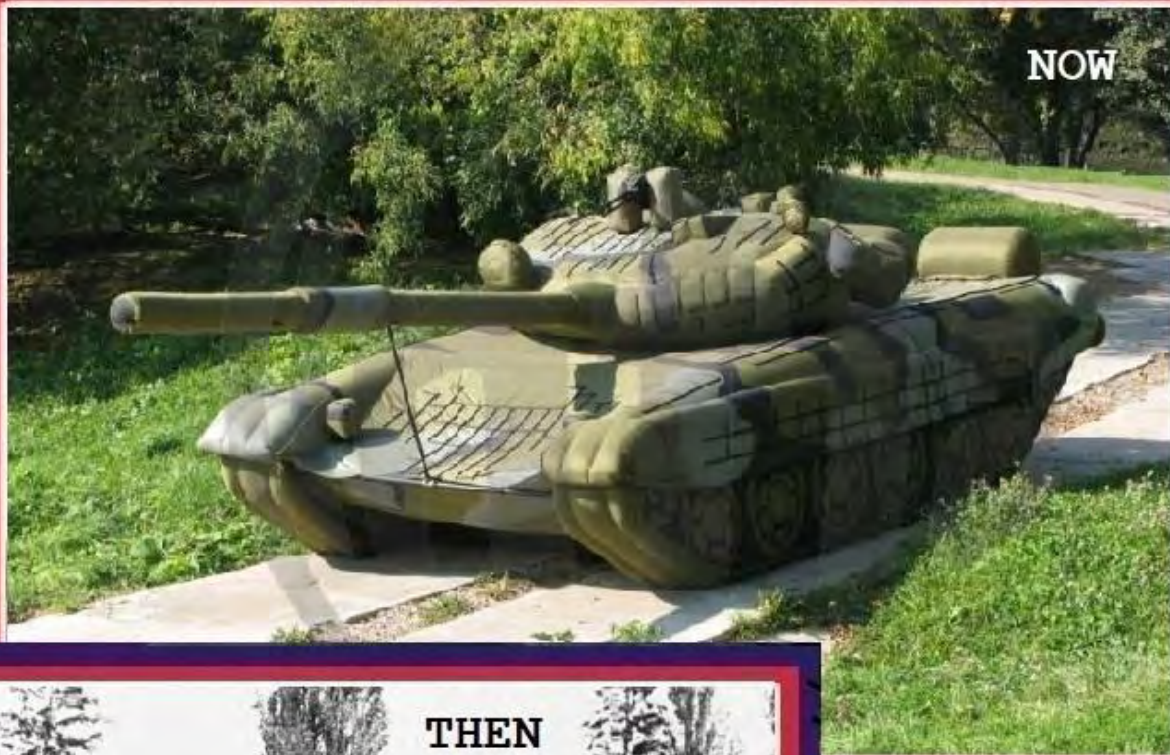
MOTOR POOL MESSENGER

the official monthly newsletter of the
MILITARY TRANSPORT ASSOCIATION

visit us online at www.MTAofNJ.org

Issue: JULY 2020

Editor: Dave Steinert



In This
Issue...

The Inflatable Army

On the cover...



THEN- A dummy tank, usually inflatable or wooden, is a type of decoy that either is intended to be mistaken by an enemy for a real tank or used for training purposes. Dummy tanks emerged soon after the introduction of real

tanks in World War I, but were not widely used until World War II. The picture on the cover shows WWI Australian troops carrying a dummy Mark V tank in September 1918.

During World War I, Allied forces made use of dummy versions of the British heavy tanks. These were constructed from a wooden framework and covered with painted Hessian cloth. The tracks were non-functional so some were fitted with concealed wheels underneath and were towed from place to place by a pair of horses. Dummy tanks, representing Allied models, were also found to have been constructed by the Germans, even though they deployed only a small number of real tanks. It is possible they were used in training, rather than for military deception.

Dummy tanks saw significantly more use during World War II by both the Allies and the Axis. German forces utilized mock tanks prior to the start of the war for practice and training exercises. Their use in military deception was pioneered by British forces, who termed them "spoofs."

One of the first uses of dummy tanks during the WWII was in the North African Campaign. The Royal Engineers stationed there constructed two per day; between April and June 1941, they were able to build three dummy Royal Tank Regiments, and another in November that same year. These were foldable, and thus portable; and the Royal Engineers improved them further. Jeeps were used to make the "spoofs"

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more mobile: a steel frame covered with canvas was placed on them, making a self-propelled dummy tank. The Jeep did not realistically simulate the noise or movement of a tank, but allowed the dummy to be deployed quickly. Meanwhile, the reverse was also done, to make tanks look like trucks. A further device was put into use that both created simulated tank tracks and erased real ones.



Dummy tanks, mounted on trucks, going to the forward areas in the Western Desert, 13 February 1942

Inflatable dummies consisted of a fabric covering supported by a network of pressurized rubber tubes that formed a kind of "pneumatic skeleton". These were generally preferred in the field, despite their tendency to rapidly deflate if

punctured by accident or shellfire. In one operation in September 1944, the British deployed 148 inflatable tanks close to the front line and around half were "destroyed" by fragments from German mortar and artillery fire, and by Allied bombs falling short.

Dummy tanks were used in Operation Fortitude prior to the landings at the Normandy Beaches. During this operation, they were used to confuse German intelligence in two ways: first, by making it seem that the Allies had more tanks than they did; and second, to hide and downplay the importance of the location of their real tanks in



An inflatable dummy tank, modeled after the M4 Sherman

order to make it seem that the invasion would occur at the Pas-de-Calais rather than at Normandy. However, dummy vehicles played only a small part of the overall deception plan as, at that stage of the war, the Germans were unable to fly reconnaissance planes over England and such effort would have been wasted. Dummy landing craft were stationed at ports in eastern and southeastern England where they might be observed by the Germans, but the Fortitude deception was largely carried out using double agents and false radio traffic.

At Anzio, Italy many inflatable Sherman tanks were deployed when the real tanks were elsewhere. In the Pacific Theater of Operations, the Japanese also utilized decoys; one recorded instance was during the Battle of Iwo Jima. A "tank" was surrounded by American infantry, which had been under artillery bombardment: they

found it was not real, but merely a sculpture carved out of volcanic ash.

The Red Army employed dummy tanks to increase their apparent numbers and mask their true movements.

NOW- In the Modern Era dummy tanks are still being used. During the Kosovo War, the Yugoslav Army regularly placed dummy tanks in Kosovo which misled NATO forces into thinking that they were destroying far more real tanks than actually occurred.

The United States Army has developed a modern dummy tank. It imitates the M1 Abrams tank not only in appearance, but also in its heat signature, in order to appear real to infrared detectors. One of these decoys can take fire from the enemy and still appear to be operational, thus delaying the enemy by as much as an hour, as they are forced to destroy the decoy. These M1 decoys cost only \$3,300, compared to \$4.35 million for a real M1. The decoy is also practical: when disassembled, it weighs only fifty pounds, and is roughly the same size as a duffel bag. Its generator—about the size of a 12-inch television—facilitates inflation, so that two people can erect the decoy in a few minutes. Occasionally, real tanks carry a dummy on board, to deploy when needed.



Inflatable mock-up of a T-72 tank

During the assault on Mosul, the Islamic state constructed and deployed wooden mockups of various vehicles in order to distract Coalition airstrikes.

**THE JULY MTA MEETING WILL BE HELD
ON THURSDAY, JULY 16th AT 7PM AT
THE FIREMAN'S FIELD IN ROCKAWAY**

**"Fireman's Field" is located at:
144 Beach Street, Rockaway, NJ 07866**

Military Transport Association

Confucius says:..."No Meeting...No Minutes!"

**Military Transport Association, Inc.
Summary of Funds Activity
For the Month Ending May 31, 2020**

	All Funds
Beginning balance from last month	\$ 48,652.22
Income	187.33
Expenditures	<u>(309.00)</u>
Closing balance	\$ 48,530.55

President's Message
(Not Donald Trump)

Members, I wanted to take a minute here and let you know what the MTA is planning for the Fall. First, we have scheduled a Club meeting for July 16 at 7 PM at the Fireman's field in Rockaway. It is where we had our picnic last year. We will be in the open-air pavilion, so we can spread out and wear masks. Food will be served. Details to follow. Second, Gary Schultz is organizing a trail ride for early August that will likely end at Hot Dog Johnny's on Route 46. Get your vehicle ready!!! Third, the 2020 MTA Family Picnic is September 19 at Fireman's field. Fourth, the MTA is planning a "GO" for the Swap Meet on October 17-18 pending Gov. Murphy relaxing the outdoor headcount restriction. Sadly, the Lyons VA Hospital event was cancelled, and we are still waiting on word from Lead East. We have not heard yet about Sven's Red Ball picnic. Our July 4th parades are cancelled. We are doing a good job of safeguarding our bank funds and we remain at about \$48,500. Please come out to the July meeting and show your support of the Club.

*Best regards,
Al*
Albert Mellini
President



Liberators: The American Tank-Infantry Team in the Normandy Campaign-Part II

Jim Swanick

The first tank-infantry teams to fight in Europe weren't really teams at all. At Omaha Beach formidable defenses had been constructed at all of the draws suitable for vehicular use, and these beach exits were vital objectives that had to be secured in order for the invaders to move inland. On D-Day heavy seas, poor atmospheric conditions, and devastating enemy fire played havoc on the assault plan as well as the organization and combat effectiveness of the tanks and infantry in the first waves, and as a result the battle on the beach quickly devolved into one fought by intrepid groups of men no larger than company-size that began moving up the bluffs through holes in the enemy defense. Upon infiltrating into the rear of the beach defenses some of these groups then worked toward the draws, and between their efforts, that of armor and infantry still on the beach, and the effect of naval gunfire the strongpoints at the draws were subdued and the exits opened. During this wild melee cooperation between infantry and armor existed at the most basic level: either tanks fired at targets of opportunity, and alert infantry adjusted their actions to take advantage of the tanks' fire, or individual infantrymen made in-person contact with armored elements (or vice-versa) and directed their fire, under which the infantry would maneuver. A similar relationship was found at Utah Beach, where a lack of sustained heavy opposition more or less negated the need for more sophisticated teamwork.



Immediately behind the beaches the tank-infantry team ran into hedgerow country, otherwise known as the *bocage*. This patchwork of fields, separated by embankments topped with hedges, was to be the bane of Omar Bradley's First US Army as it tried to break out of the Normandy beachhead for the next 49 days. The hedgerows themselves are natural fences that have been cultivated and maintained over several centuries by Norman farmers, and consist of an earthen embankment one to four feet wide and three to fifteen feet tall, topped by a hedge with a similar range of dimensions. The fields they form are quite small with few openings and are easily defended by a handful of infantry. The hedgerows also restrict the employment of armor, containing it to roads and footpaths, enabling the defender to concentrate his anti-tank weapons along a known axis of advance.

Initial fighting in the *bocage* exposed the inadequacies of the tank-infantry team in brutal fashion. German positions in

the hedgerows were formidable and usually mutually supporting, bristling with machine guns sited to cover each field from several angles and backed up by mortars and artillery. American forces on the attack were plagued by a lack of experience and aggression, leading to an over-reliance on artillery fires; these were often ultimately wasted when the attackers failed to follow up quickly enough to take advantage of the bombardments' effects. The lack of pre-invasion tank-infantry training and physical nature of the hedgerows caused armor and infantry to become separated often, exposing both to defeat in detail by defending or counterattacking Germans. This was further exacerbated by inadequate radio communications.



To overcome these challenges First Army became a hotbed of ingenuity and change. Infantry battalions narrowed their fronts and refined their tactics to concentrate their strength and firepower while tank battalions and armored divisions developed homemade prongs and cutters to break through the hedgerows. To solve the communications issues telephones were installed on the back decks of M4's and arrangements were made for infantry officers to ride in the command tanks of the armored unit supporting them. A system of hand signals was also developed in order for infantry to control the fire of the tanks; this was refined by the employment of tracer ammunition, which non-coms and officers used to guide tank fire onto specific targets.

Each division developed its own tactics for "bocage busting," but the basic premise was the same. Armor raked the hedges with machine gun and cannon fire as the infantry closed with the enemy and assaulted each hedge. In some outfits the tanks breached the hedgerows immediately and advanced in line with or just behind the infantry; in others they came into the field after the infantry began their attack. Artillery fire preceded the attack on occasion, and sometimes accompanied it throughout. Mortars were used extensively, and in many outfits were integral parts of the tank-infantry team, which also often included engineers for demolitions work. Armored divisions pioneered tactics that merit their own mention. Several "married" rifle and tank companies together to create permanent tank-infantry squads, and Combat Command A of the 2d Armored Division, in conjunction with the 22d Regimental Combat Team of the 4th Division, began mounting riflemen on their M4's during their attacks- this

exploited the mobility of the tanks, placed infantry above the level of machine gun fire, and exposed German positions to attack from above as the tanks passed. Both concepts would be widely adopted.



U.S. Sherman tank with a "hedgerow" cutter blade

Combat in the *bocage* was brutal and progress was slow, but the formations of First Army soon became battle-wise and confident. The infantry learned to keep moving to stay alive under fire and to pin the enemy down by firing at suspected enemy positions rather than waiting for targets to show themselves. Tank destroyers were found to be effective at cracking pillboxes, with the caveat that they had to be employed at range, as their open turrets rendered the crew vulnerable to sniper fire and hand grenades. The BAR, more mobile than the light machine guns, proved to be a vital weapon in the hedgerows, and in the close combat of the tight fields the shortcomings of the M4's 75mm cannon were negated, while its superior mobility and rate of turret traverse gave it an advantage over German armor.



As June became July First Army slugged its way forward. Cherbourg, the port city at the tip of the Cotentin peninsula, fell on 27 June; St. Lô, the critical communications hub, followed on 18 July. By the end of the month First Army was poised to break out of the Normandy beachhead, and on 25 July launched Operation COBRA. In the aftermath of a massive aerial bombardment J. Lawton Collins' VII Corps shattered enemy defenses to its front and plunged through the gap. Break-in became breakthrough and breakthrough soon

turned into an exploitation, as over the next six days the left flank of the German *Seventh Army* was crushed. Third US Army, under Patton, became operational and began driving south with orders to clear the Brittany peninsula. Recognizing that the German forces within Brittany were largely static formations Patton begged for approval to turn east instead and got it. Troy Middleton's VIII Corps proceeded into the peninsula with the objectives of isolating its port cities and seizing Brest; behind them the rest of Third Army began a sweeping drive



A line of American Sherman tanks hugs a hedgerow in Normandy in the summer of 1944. After the failure of the attack on Hill 192 in June, the men of the 2nd Division trained with armored units to coordinate their attack on July 11.

through the rear of *Seventh Army*. The Germans responded, attempting to seize Avranches and isolate Patton's command, but this counterthrust failed when it crashed headlong into the 30th Division at Mortain. For the next two weeks the US 12th and British 21st Army Groups maneuvered in an abortive attempt to encircle and destroy *Army Group B* (German *Fifth Panzer* and *Seventh Armies*) west of the Seine. Though both German armies were severely mauled they escaped the Falaise Pocket with most of their manpower, and a whirlwind pursuit commenced as the *Army Group B* fell into a rout.



During the breakout and pursuit tank-mounted infantry spearheaded the advance of armored and infantry divisions alike. In many outfits the infantry dismounted only in the face of heavy resistance, which often took the form of roadblocks positioned at rivers, crossroads, and villages. In assaulting these positions armor or tank destroyers provided the base of fire for the infantry, which maneuvered to either unseat or destroy the enemy. M4's engaged enemy tanks with both armor

piercing and high explosive ammunition, utilizing white phosphorus to blind their opponents in order to manufacture an opportunity to maneuver to the enemy's flank and obtain a kill shot. This was particularly useful in fighting Mark V's, as the main armament of the Sherman was incapable of penetrating the Panther's frontal armor at any range. Tanks also helped to overcome enemy armor by covering bazooka-men by fire, allowing them to maneuver to the target's flanks or rear.



The pursuit ended in the first weeks of September as the Allies ran up against the German frontier. On 15 August Jacob Devers' 6th US Army Group, comprised of the Seventh US and First French Armies, came ashore in southern France, and their arrival forced *Army Group G* to withdraw to Alsace-Lorraine. Thus at the beginning of autumn 1944 the Western Allies had liberated the vast majority of France, most of Belgium, and stood on the precipice of Germany herself. Victory was in sight, but it was not to be. As the Anglo-American coalition bellied up to the German border, they were halted by a critical supply shortage and rapidly stiffening resistance on the part of the enemy. The problem of the former was a result of the fact that Allied forces had reached the frontier eight months ahead of schedule, overwhelming their logistical network; the latter was the doing of Field Marshal Walter Model, who had been called in from the East to apply a tourniquet to the hemorrhage that was now the Western Front. Upon taking charge of *OB-West* the "Führer's Fireman" evacuated his new command from France and pulled back the reins on the German collapse, reforming the units shattered in Normandy and reinforcing them with new arrivals fresh from training, rear service areas, and other fronts. By the second week of September Model's efforts had, in Bradley's words, "grafted a new backbone on the German army." This resurrection came at the worst possible moment for the Americans, as the supply crisis had temporarily stopped Third Army outright and put First Army on borrowed time. The arrival of new German units at the front blunted both armies' efforts to blitz to the Rhine, and as inadequate supplies were at hand to conduct concerted offensive operations, 12th Army Group ground to a halt.

Continued in the next issue of *Motor Pool Messenger*
Concrete Breakwater: The American Tank-Infantry Team and Heavy Fortifications-Part III

A Recent Email from Our Embedded Member in Arizona



The photo below was taken at the MTA show for 2004 which was held at the Dover Armory on RT 15.

It shows then SP4 Sheila (Rutkowski) McNeil with a M274 mule with my M123. The big and the little. M123 was subsequently acquired by noted military and Mack truck collector Gary Mahan of Bedminster, NJ along with the companion M172 25t trailer...Submitted by Phil Francis



CLASSIFIEDS

To add or remove listings from the Classifieds, please email Dave Steinert at dsteinert@mtaofnj.org or call 973-347-9091.

FOR SALE - M725 \$3,800.00, Ammo trailer \$350, 1957 DAF 1-ton troop carrier. Rare, not many of these around \$6,000, M109A3-shop van with benches and shelves. Good shape \$4,500. Call or text Jude Meehan 732-433-3359.

Parts for Sale- 230 CI M725 motor, ran when pulled, burns oil \$200, M725 litter racks-best offer, M725 Rear doors, some dents, no rust \$200 for the pair, M715 windshield frame, minor surface rust \$150, NOS in packing Southwind heater for M725 possible M-43 best offer, M37 windshield frame outer only \$75, M725-M715 rims with lock rings –make offer. Many more items available, too many to list. Call for more information. Call Matt Ziegler, cell 973-445-3890, email : Mattrziegler@gmail.com

For Sale: 1964 Ford M151, current Odometer: 34252. Currently registered and inspected in New York State. Comes with Army radio, mounted machine gun (disabled firearm) w/ mount and cartridges, trailer, plastics to go over vehicle (no photo included, but available at request) as well as two large boxes of extra parts. Vehicle has always been

garage kept. Buyer is responsible for pick-up or to arrange for shipment for out of town sales. This vehicle has not been cut. Asking \$18,000. Located in Pine Island NY. Please contact Lodzia - 845-258-4493 or Vince - 845-728-9191.

For Sale: Replica 81mm mortar. M1 tube and bi-pod. M4 sight. Has incorrect M23A1 two-piece base (Nam era?). The tube is original with 1 pin cross welded and a dummy cup welded on. Comes with one practice round (inert) in a newer tared tube. And a wooden ammo crate. Asking \$3000.00 . Will take a M35a2 ring mount in trade. Kirk Stinson 862-209-0933

For Sale: I have many Jeep and M37 parts for sale, call Tom Weaver @ 973-627-9448.

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The next MTA monthly meeting
**THE JULY MTA MEETING WILL
BE HELD ON THURSDAY, JULY 16th
AT 7PM AT FIREMAN'S FIELD
IN ROCKAWAY**



a chapter of the Military Vehicle Preservation Association

The Military Transport Association is dedicated to the education and preservation of historic to present military vehicles. Members enjoy restoring, displaying, and operating military vehicles of all types, from bicycles to tanks.

But trucks and Jeeps aren't all we do! Join today and participate with us at our annual Toys for Tots train ride and toy drive, help at our annual Swap Meet at the Sussex County Fairgrounds, or attend our special events for veterans. Our lively, informative monthly meetings are held in Whippany, NJ.

You do not have to own a military vehicle to be part of this exciting and active hobby - you just need a desire to do your part in keeping our military history alive. All you need to join the MTA is to fill out the the form below, include your dues payment, and mail it to the address below. Alternately, you can give your form and dues to any MTA member you meet at any of our events.

for more information, visit our website at www.MTAofNJ.org

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