



MOTOR POOL MESSENGER

the official monthly newsletter of the
MILITARY TRANSPORT ASSOCIATION

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Editor: Dave Steinert



First Jeep?



First Jeep?

In This Issue
Was the First
Jeep...

...A JEEP OR A TRACTOR?



THE BANTAM-In the early 1930s, the Infantry Board at Fort Benning became interested in the British Army's use of the tiny Austin 7 car in a reconnaissance role, and they obtained a car from the American Austin company in Pennsylvania

which built them under license. By 1938 American Austin had gone bankrupt and reorganized as American Bantam. They had loaned 3 cars to the Pennsylvania National Guard for trials during summer maneuvers. Bantam officials met with chiefs of Infantry and Cavalry and suggested a contract to further develop a military version of their car. A subcommittee of army officers and civilian engineers was tasked with created detailed specifications for the proposed vehicles. One of the first things they did was visit the Bantam factory and look at their existing compact cars. By the end of June 1940 specifications had been drawn up.

Bantam's chief engineer, Harold Crist, who had previously worked on the first Duesenberg, and been an engineer at Stutz Motor Company of Indianapolis for 18 years, drafted freelance Detroit designer Karl Probst to collaborate. Probst turned down Bantam initially, but agreed to work without pay after an Army request and began work on 17 July 1940.

Using off-the-shelf automotive parts where possible had partly enabled drawing up the blueprints quickly. By working backwards, Probst and Bantam's draftsmen converted what Crist and a few others had put together into drawings. The hand-built prototype was then completed in Butler,

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Pennsylvania, and driven to the Army vehicle test center at Camp Holabird, Maryland. It was delivered on 23 September 1940. The vehicle met all the Army's criteria except engine torque. The Bantam pilot (later also dubbed the "Blitz Buggy" or "Old Number One") presented Army officials with the first of what eventually evolved into the World War II U.S. military jeep

THE MINNEAPOLIS-MOLINE NTX -The Minneapolis-Moline Power Implement Company, a tractor and farm machinery producer based in Hopkins, Minnesota, maintains it invented the Jeep at Camp Ripley, Minn., in 1938, while developing the Minneapolis-Moline Model UDLX *Comfortractor*.



The most successful product designed by Minneapolis-Moline's for the military program, however, was the NTX, another four-wheel-drive vehicle that military boys referred to as a "jeep." Little more than a bench seat, a cargo box and four 9.00-20 tires on a 101-inch-wheelbase, 1 1/2-ton chassis, Minneapolis-Moline built the NTX to serve the Army Air Force's need for an aircraft towing tractor from 1942-'44.



ATTENTION MEMBERS!
THE NEXT MTA MEETING WILL BE HELD ON THURSDAY, OCTOBER 1st AT 7PM AT THE WHIPPANY AMERICAN LEGION LEGION PLACE, WHIPPANY
We will be meeting upstairs at the Legion Hall, food at 6pm, meeting at 7pm.

Military Transport Association

No Meeting-No Minutes!

The 2020 MTA Picnic

By David Steinert



Members of the MTA and their families gathered on Saturday, September 19th at Fireman's Field in Rockaway for their annual club picnic. It was a beautiful cloudless day, a little cool for this time of the year, but comfortable when wearing a light jacket and sitting in the sun. Those choosing to wear

speedos or bikinis to the picnic would have regretted their decision.

Members and their military vehicles started rolling into the picnic grounds around 11:00 am. By 12:00 pm, there were almost 15 military vehicles in attendance. Actually, there would have been exactly 15, if Pat Dolan hadn't "popped" a drive shaft on his jeep while on his way to the picnic. With all the problems Pat has had with his jeep in the past, he usually carries a lot of spare parts with him, but a spare drive shaft wouldn't fit in his glove compartment.



Around 12:30 pm, the jeep contingent of the club took off for a short trail ride along the old Morris Canal. There were almost nine jeeps in the convoy. In fact, there would have been exactly nine...if...*did I mention that Pat Dolan "popped" a drive shaft in his jeep on the way to the picnic?*

The jeep convoy made it back to the picnic grounds just as the hot dogs and hamburgers were coming off the grill. Attendees removed their masks and put on their feedbags as they joined the chow line.

The MTA thanks the *Food Crew* of Anita Roberts, Jeff Bennett, Jim Mescher and Anna Cave who cooked the dogs and burgers and served sides of potato and macaroni salad with corn-on-the-cob. We also thank Anna, Anita and Dennis Dutcher for their baking skills that produced the delicious desserts.



A few members created an area near the pavilion where they vendored various militaria, including parts for military vehicles. Unfortunately, none of the vendors had a spare drive shaft for Pat Dolan's jeep, including Tom Weaver, who brought everything other than a kitchen sink and a drive shaft.

Throughout the afternoon, there was other trail rides, while other members gathered around their military vehicles

and exchanged "war" stories. It was a great respite from what we have been dealing with the last few months to hear laughter and friendly comradery despite the current situation. About 45 attendees enjoyed a great day hosted by the MTA.

As a member of the MTA, I would like to thank our President, Al Mellini for organizing the event and Jim Swanick and the Rockaway Fire Department for the use of Fireman's Field...and if anybody has a spare drive shaft for a WWII Jeep, please call Pat Dolan.

Is it a Jeep or a Tractor?

By David Steinert

There's been several different companies that have claimed credit for inventing the Jeep. The American Bantam Car Co. of Butler, Pa., claims it introduced a jeep in February 1940, which many of today's Jeep aficionados seem to accept.

But the Minneapolis-Moline Power Implement Company, a tractor and farm machinery producer based in Hopkins, Minnesota, maintains it invented the Jeep at Camp Ripley, Minn., in 1938, while developing the Minneapolis-Moline Model UDLX *Comfortractor*.

It seems that the history and success of the Jeep has created a feisty competition among companies claiming they were the first to invent this marvel of uniqueness in vehicles. Most Jeep histories begin with Karl Probst and Bantam, then move on to Willys-Overland and Ford producing them during WWII, then shift to Willys-Overland and Kaiser's post-war civilian production of the Jeep. The story has its complexity, which continues to this day with claims and counterclaims regarding who was the true originator of this all terrain roadster.



Minneapolis-Moline Model Z Tractor and the NTX Jeep

Obscured over the years, however, was another version of the jeep from another American manufacturer, one that predates anything built by Bantam, Willys-Overland or Ford: The Minneapolis-Moline jeep.

A 1944 booklet entitled *A Wartime Report: Food, too, Fights for Freedom*, carries a section called 'The Original jeep is a Product of Minneapolis-Moline.' The pamphlet goes on to read...

'Current national publicity has obscured the fact that the first war machine named 'JEEP' was born at Minneapolis-Moline and christened at Camp Ripley, Minn.', it continues with...

'Back in 1938, Minneapolis-Moline engineers were already experimenting with the conversion of a farm tractor to an artillery prime mover. And in 1940, collaborating with Adjutant Gen. E. Al Walsh, commander of the Minnesota

National Guard, models were tested in maneuvers at Camp Ripley.'

'Since the original Minneapolis-Moline Jeep, Minneapolis-Moline has designed several additional models of military tractors in cooperation with Army and Navy officials. Several models of Minneapolis-Moline Jeeps are now being produced in quantity for the Armed Forces of the United States, and in use throughout the world.'

The Minneapolis-Moline company was formed in 1929 and quickly established itself as a leading tractor manufacturer, and in 1938 expanded the company's appeal to farmers by offering the UDLX, a fully enclosed tractor meant to both plow the fields and travel the roads. But, the UDLX was unsuccessful-only about 150 were built, and some remained on dealer lots through 1940.

With the failure of the UDLX, Minneapolis-Moline began to develop a four-wheel-drive version of its Model U tractor and offered it to the Army for testing. This new design was designated the UTX and was rated at five tons, to move around light artillery. The UTX initially used the Model DEF 41.5hp 283-cu.in. four-cylinder engine from the Model U; later, it was powered by a Model CE 75hp 425-cu.in. six-cylinder.



Along with the addition of a driven front axle, Minneapolis-Moline also added a full-width front roller bumper that allowed the UTX to climb obstacles and roll back up the other side of ravines without getting stuck. Otherwise, Minneapolis-Moline left the UTX mostly stock, reasoning that the company could quickly enter production with the tractors for the Army and that the Army could utilize various off-the-shelf attachments that Minneapolis-Moline already produced for its farm tractors.



The UTX went to the Aberdeen Proving Ground in Maryland, but earned its place in history in August 1940 at Camp Ripley, Minnesota, when Sergeant James T. O'Brien of the 109th Ordnance Company of the Minnesota National Guard noted the overall proficiency of the tractors, especially when pulling a stuck howitzer out of the mud. Inspired by the "Eugene the Jeep" character in the Popeye comic strip, O'Brien first hung from the tractor's radiator cap a sign painted with the word "Jeep," then painted the word "Jeep" itself on the flanks of the tractor.



Minneapolis-Moline chronicled the christening in a wartime advertisement: "This new MM army vehicle was not a crawler, tractor, truck nor tank, and yet it could do almost anything and it knew all the answers. Because of this, it brought to mind the Popeye cartoon figure called 'Jeep' which was neither fowl nor beast, but knew all the answers and could do almost anything.

But the UTX had a problem pulling the heavier artillery the Army required, and could not reach decent highway speeds (it topped out at around 20-30 MPH). Reportedly, Minneapolis-Moline built just six UTXs, but the company followed with several other military tractors, including a lighter version called the ZTX, and a heavier six-wheeled version called the GTX.

But the most successful product of Minneapolis-Moline's military program, however, was the NTX, another four-



wheel-drive vehicle that military boys referred to as a "jeep." The NTX engine, which was unique in a few ways. First, it used a fully hydraulic valve train--that is, the camshaft pushed a plunger, which hydraulically actuated the valves. Second, while the valves were located in the engine block, as with an L-head engine, they were positioned horizontally. The cylinder head was located on the side of the block and the exhaust and intake ports were located on the top of the block.

Behind the four-cylinder engine was a dual-range five-speed transmission (effectively making it a 10-speed) and a chain-driven transfer case, all mounted in a unit with the rear axle, allowing no rear suspension whatsoever, just as in the Minneapolis-Moline farm tractors. The front axle, a Timken unit,

was also mounted rigidly to the frame. Theoretical top speed was 43 MPH.

Just as Minneapolis-Moline built the estimated 840 NTX tractors, the company stepped into the wartime dispute between Bantam and Willys-Overland over who should receive credit for originating the 1/4-ton jeep reconnaissance vehicle. Minneapolis-Moline pointed both to the UTX and the NTX as evidence that the "Jeep" name rightfully belonged on its products.

Though Minneapolis-Moline lodged a formal complaint with the Federal Trade Commission in 1943, the company also appealed to the public. Minneapolis-Moline took out plenty of ads and published plenty of pamphlets staking a claim for the Jeep name. It also sent out a string of press releases over the next two years noting how the UTX and NTX--both referred to in the press releases as "Jeeps"--proved themselves in the war effort. One, in particular, noted how an NTX "help(ed) save lives of war heroes" by clearing a damaged plane off a runway so a squadron low on fuel could land.

But the Federal Trade Commission ruled in favor of Bantam in May 1943 and continued to scold Willys-Overland after the war for advertising that it had created the Jeep, but largely ignored Minneapolis-Moline's claim.

With the FTC ruling, the company continued farm tractor production after the war, but returned to its typical tractor designs and never again built anything like the NTX.

Green Inferno: The American Tank-Infantry Team in Woodland Combat-Part IV

By Jim Swanick

Static fortifications were not the only physical obstacles in the path of 12th Army Group in the fall of 1944. The many forested patches, ridges, and hill masses of Lorraine served to sap the strength of Third Army units during the November offensive, while the Hürtgen Forest shattered half a dozen divisions of the First Army in some of the worst fighting of the war. Doctrine called for bypassing forests if possible; frontal attacks were to be mounted if not. Nowhere was any mention made of using tanks in an offensive role in dense woods; in Lorraine, where wooded areas were islands in a sea of open ground, the nature of the battlefield demanded that armor sweep past the forests to attack adjacent villages while infantry cleared the woods. In this vein the armor contributed to the effort in the forest by its actions on their flanks, helping to unhinge the German defense through neutralization of their lines of communication, making their positions untenable. The terrain within the First Army sector precluded this option for Hodges' command, however. Described in the army's official history as "a seemingly impenetrable mass, a vast, undulating, blackish-green ocean stretching as far as the eye can see," the Hürtgen Forest, actually a collection of several forests along the border, was the antithesis of the terrain encountered in Lorraine. Here open ground was sparse and concentrated generally on a handful of elevated plateaus that contained the road network and villages within the forest. Initial efforts to penetrate and clear the forest consisted of limited objective attacks inspired by honest concerns, but these quickly snowballed into corps-sized efforts with vague objectives launched directly into the teeth of tenacious German defenses. With no room to maneuver like their comrades in Lorraine, cross-country frontal attacks became the rule, and this ancillary

engagement quickly devolved into a nightmarish orgy of destruction.

Much like the *bocage*, the woodlands of the frontier and eastern Lorraine compartmentalized the battlefield and negated much of the firepower that troops could bring to bear. The effects of American field artillery were suppressed considerably, as targets were difficult to ascertain and shells tended to explode in the canopy. This latter consequence showered exposed infantry (i.e. the advancing American soldiers) with a deadly mix of wooden shards and shrapnel, but German positions in the forests consisted of concrete bunkers



reinforced by log-roofed field fortifications that protected the occupants from all manner of shellfire outside of a direct hit. Although firebreaks and trails were common, road networks in the forests were limited; they regularly did not lead toward the assigned objectives. Roadblocks, mines, German artillery, and poor weather constantly halted movement along these undeveloped pathways, to the point that getting supplies and reinforcements forward unscathed and on schedule often became battles of monumental proportion on their own. The paucity and disrepair of the road networks as well as their constant interdiction forced attackers to move cross-country, which proved a major obstacle to getting armor into the fight as the sheer density of the forests and sharp terrain made cross-country movement nigh impossible for tanks. Wandering into extensive minefields and becoming physically lost became regular experiences for infantry, and these factors combined with mud and the thick undergrowth of the forest to slow the cross-country movement of rifle companies to a crawl. These same hindrances prevented adequate supply, evacuation of wounded, and forward movement once under fire. Retaining effective communication and coordination was a serious challenge as well, as German mortar and artillery fire constantly cut telephone lines and handheld and backpack radios had great difficulty transmitting through the trees and over the ridges.

In Patton's sector the woods worth fighting over covered commanding terrain- therefore their seizure was desirable and necessary. Clearing the ridges included capturing villages and terrain on their environs as well, and because these objectives were located on open ground more suitable for armor and more deadly to infantry the bulk of armored support went to these efforts. This lopsided distribution of firepower was further compounded by the constrictive characteristics of the forests, with the result that the

brunt of close-in fighting was carried by the infantry with armor occasionally making end runs around the flank of the forests or putting in appearances to lend fire support where possible. Inside the woods the riflemen found themselves facing similar circumstances as their brethren in the Hürtgen Forest. Outfits became disorganized while moving through the forest, delaying attacks and allowing intrepid German infantrymen to infiltrate into the rear where they attacked company and battalion lines of communication. Trench foot became an existential threat as winter set in. Mines abounded. Finally, the inability to get armor into the fight served to frustrate officers and men up and down the chain of command, who decried such difficulties in post-battle interviews and after-action reports. In order to overcome these challenges and the heavy losses they caused, infantry divisions were usually forced to bring multiple regiments or even the entirety of the division into line.

Forest-fighting in the Third Army sector proved to be short, though savage, but this was not the case for units in First Army. Unlike the Third Army sector the Hürtgen Forest provided no opportunity to employ armor in the capture of primary objectives on open ground, save for against the villages atop the plateaus in the heart of the forest. Because the roads leading onto the ridges had been rendered more or less impassable, however, tanks were forced to rely on the infantry to break a trail through the forest to positions from which assaults on the villages could be mounted. Therefore, with few exceptions, tanks could only be employed once this had been accomplished.



Infantry fighting in the Hürtgen Forest adapted quickly- or they died. The inability to concentrate was a crippling problem during the campaign, as for most of the battle only one division was on-line at a time and that unit was often the only formation attacking in the immediate area. As a result, divisions were assigned ancillary objectives that served to widen the scope of their mission to a point where even battalions were separated from each other. Thus, the combined firepower of the division was frittered away, and the battle devolved into a series of small unit actions at the company, platoon, and squad level. German positions within the actual forest consisted of *Westwall* pillboxes strengthened by field fortifications, barbed wire, extensive minefields, and booby traps. Infantry manned the line, backed up by varying types of armor reserved for conducting counterthrusts and occasionally employed in the defense. Lanes of fire were cleared by "tunneling" through the

undergrowth and bottom tree branches, keeping enemy emplacements and firing positions concealed from the advancing Americans. Ammunition for artillery and mortars was seemingly endless; American troops were constantly forced to try and fight their way forward under heavy barrages. In an attempt to reduce casualties caused by tree bursts riflemen soon began hugging tree trunks while standing rather than hitting the dirt when shelled. In the face of such staunch defenses at least two divisions adopted assault tactics, splitting rifle companies into two assault and two support groups, the former built around BAR's and grenades and the latter comprised of light machine guns and mortars. Expert scouts led the assault groups, which advanced on parallel courses and laid wire as they went with the support groups in tow, ready to provide cover by fire to enable the assault group to close with the enemy. Reserves were held back to be committed along previously broken trails in areas of maximum penetration during an attack, and pillboxes and strongpoints were bypassed where possible to be neutralized by follow-on forces. During the cross-country assault, tanks fired in support of the infantry to neutralize pillboxes, destroy wire, or generally suppress the enemy. They were usually forced to do so from firebreaks and trails due to the density of the forest; once the attack progressed beyond the range of the firebreaks or the progress of the armor was blocked by fire, mines, mud, or obstacles (including their own losses, as knocked out, bogged down, or otherwise disabled tanks often blocked the entirety of the trail) the riflemen were stripped of their tank support. The hallmarks of *bocage* innovation returned, as telephones reappeared on the back decks of the armor, infantry-compatible radio sets were reinstalled in the turrets, and visual signals for directing fire were reiterated. Armored forces also modified their ammunition loads to favor armor-piercing shells so as to avoid causing tree bursts over their own riflemen. Tank destroyer crews sought to minimize casualties to tree bursts by covering their open turrets with logs. During fighting in the woods, terrain usually kept tank employment to a maximum of platoon or even section (two tanks) strength, but once the wood's edge was gained and tank-infantry attacks launched on open ground larger concentrations were possible and employed.

Stay tune for Part V in the next issue of Motor Pool Messenger...

CLASSIFIEDS

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

For Sale: Two 1952 Dodge M37s. One restored and in good condition, \$4500. Another 1952 M37 unrestored, \$3200. I also have many Jeep and M37 parts for sale, call Tom Weaver @ 973-627-9448.

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 : Matrziegler@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

1942 Willy's Slat Grill Jeep. Entered service Jan. 12, 1942. Original body restored. Runs & looks good.
\$18,500 W/O Display Armament







Roger de Socarras, Bucks County, PA
Email...tinear@epix.net
Phone 610 847 2798

FOR SALE

1941 Dodge WC7 Command Car. It has all doors, new top, leather seats, pioneer tool kit.
All original. \$27,500

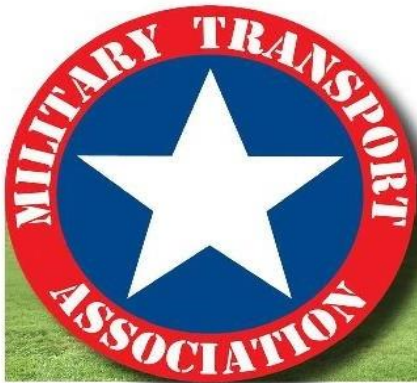



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Military Transport Association

P.O. Box 391
Budd Lake, NJ 07828

The next MTA monthly meeting
will be held on **Thursday, October 1st**
7:00PM at the **Whippany American**
Legion Hall, Legion Place, Whippany, NJ



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

Name: _____

Street: _____

City: _____ State: _____ ZIP: _____

Phone: (____) _____ - _____ (cell preferred)

Email: _____

MTA Membership Level: Single (\$30) Family (\$35)

Are you a member of MVPA? Yes No

Military vehicles owned: _____

Return form with \$____ annual dues and \$____ donation to:

Military Transport Association, Inc.
P.O. Box 391
Budd Lake, NJ 07828

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