



MOTOR POOL MESSENGER

the official monthly newsletter of the
MILITARY TRANSPORT ASSOCIATION

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Issue JANUARY 2021

Editor: Dave Steinert



LATER

THEN



In This
Issue

**THE
DEVELOPMENT OF
US ARMY FIELD
ARTILLERY
DURING THE
INTERWAR PERIOD**

ON THE COVER...



THEN- A Patrol Torpedo boat (PT for short) was a motorized torpedo boat first used by the United States Navy in World War II. It was small, fast, and inexpensive to build, valued for its maneuverability and speed but hampered at the beginning of the war by ineffective torpedoes, limited armament, and comparatively fragile construction that limited some of the variants to coastal waters. In the USN they were organized in Motor Torpedo Boat Squadrons (MTBRONs).

The PT boat was very different from the first generation of torpedo boat, which had been developed at the end of the 19th century and featured a displacement hull form. These first generation torpedo boats rode low in the water, displaced up to 300 tons, and had a top speed of 25 to 27 kn. During World War I Italy, the US and UK developed the first high-performance petrol-powered motor torpedo boats, often with top speeds over 40 knots and corresponding torpedo tactics, but these projects were all quickly disbanded after the Armistice.

World War II PT boats continued to exploit some of the advances in planning hull design borrowed from offshore powerboat racing and were able to grow in both size and speed.

Propulsion was via a trio of Packard 4M-2500 and later 5M-2500 supercharged gasoline-fueled, liquid-cooled V-12 marine engines.

Primary anti-ship armament on the standard PT boat was four 21-inch Mark 8 torpedoes, each had a 466-pound TNT warhead and had a range of 16,000 yards at 36 knots. Two twin .50-inch M2 Browning heavy machine guns were mounted for anti-aircraft defense and general fire support. Some boats carried a 20 mm Oerlikon cannon

During World War II, PT boats engaged enemy warships, transports, tankers, barges, and sampans. Some were sometimes converted into gunboats, which could be effective against enemy small craft, especially armored barges used by the Japanese for inter-island transport. Several saw service with the Philippine Navy, where they were named "Q-boats".

Nicknamed "the mosquito fleet" and "devil boats" by the Japanese, the PT boat squadrons

were hailed for their daring and earned a durable place in the public imagination that remains strong into the 21st century. Their role was replaced in the U.S. Navy by fast attack craft.

LATER- Patrol Boat, Riverine, or PBR, is the United States Navy designation for a small rigid-hulled patrol boat used in the Vietnam War from March 1966 until the end of 1971.

The PBR was a versatile boat with a fiberglass hull and water jet drive which enabled it to operate in shallow, weed-choked rivers. It drew only 2 feet of water fully loaded. The drives could be pivoted to reverse direction, turn the boat in its own length, or come to a stop from full speed in a few boat lengths.

The PBR was manufactured in two versions, the first with 31 feet length and 10-foot, 7-inch beam. The Mark II version 32 feet long and 1 foot wider beam had improved drives to reduce fouling and aluminum gunwales to resist wear.

The boats were powered by dual 180 hp Detroit Diesel 6V53N engines with Jacuzzi Brothers pump-jet drives. The boats reached top speeds of 28.5 knots.

Typical armament configuration included twin M2HB .50 caliber machine guns forward in a rotating shielded tub, a single rear M2HB, one or two M60 7.62 mm light machine guns mounted on the port and starboard sides and a Mk 19 grenade launcher. There was also a full complement of M16 Rifles, shotguns, .45 ACP handguns and hand grenades. Some had a "piggyback" arrangement, a .50 cal machine gun on top of an 81mm mortar; others had a bow-mounted Mk16 Mod 4 Colt 20 mm automatic cannon, derived from the AN/M3 version of the Hispano-Suiza HS.404 and also found on the LCMs and PBRs.

The PBR was usually manned by a four-man crew. Typically, a First Class Petty Officer served as boat captain, with a gunner's mate, an engineman and a seaman on board. Each crewman was cross-trained in each other's jobs in the event one became unable to carry out his duties. Generally, PBRs operated in pairs under the command of a patrol officer who rode on one of the boats.

They were deployed in a force that grew to 250 boats, the most common craft in the River Patrol Force, Task Force 116, and were used to stop and search river traffic in areas such as

the Mekong Delta, the Rung Sat Special Zone, the Saigon River and in I Corps, in the area assigned to Task Force Clearwater, in an attempt to disrupt weapons shipments. In this role they frequently became involved in firefights with enemy soldiers on boats and on the shore, were used to insert and extract Navy SEAL teams, and were employed by the United States Army's 458th Transportation Company, known as the 458th Sea Tigers. The PBR was replaced by the Special Operations Craft – Riverine (SOC-R).



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ATTENTION MEMBERS!

Because of the latest New Jersey Pandemic Restrictions...

THE JANUARY 2021 MTA MEETING AT THE WHIPPANY AMERICAN LEGION IS CANCELLED!

...but we will be having a MTA Zoom Meeting on Thursday, January 7th 2021...

NO DECEMBER MEETING...NO MINUTES

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Members, I wanted to take this opportunity to wish all of you good health and a very Happy New Year. My hopes are that 2021 will be kind to us and we can resume our regular schedule of events by Memorial Day. That could, however, be dependent on how fast NJ distributes the vaccine. In any case, your Executive Board will be closely monitoring progress as well as planning events. I am very confident that our 2021 Swap Meet will take place in October.

We are planning a Zoom call on January 7 for our meeting. I recommend a computer with camera or an iPad to join the meeting. If you don't currently have Zoom, go to zoom.us and download the app. You will also be able to call into the meeting. More details plus an agenda will be sent out later in the week.

Please stay safe, wear your masks whether you like it or not and socially distant. As a Club, we can't afford the virus infecting us. And in closing, please support the financial health of our Club by paying your 2021 Dues ASAP. The mailing envelope with stamp was in last month's newsletter.

With respect, Al



OPERATION TOY TRUCKS TO THE RESCUE!-PHASE I

It seems like everything has been effected by the COVID-19 pandemic. People can't meet indoors, especially in large numbers, without increasing the rate of transmission and multiplying its spread. The Toys for Tots operation is high on the hurt list. People are not donating to it like they have done in years past. Operation Toy Train is unable to run. It is heart-wrenching to think that the gifts are getting sparser in this year in which these kids need a lift even more than ever. Operation Toy Trucks has had difficulty getting traction with taking on the

Toy Train's regular work. Trains run on a tight schedule, the train station gatherings are really holiday parties that attract giving, and a train can hold sooo much more than a truck. Yes, even more than a 5-ton. Despite all the challenges this year, I cannot praise *Operation Toy Train* enough for all it did this year.

It was a wet, cold and dreary morning on Saturday December 5th. The ground was soaked and puddles were everywhere. **Jean and Tim Swanick**, as well as club president **Al Mellini**, were at *Pot Belly's* in Rockaway by 0900. They were greeted by its sibling proprietors, Annmarie and Frank Arico. Annmarie and Frank had bittersweet news: *Pot Belly's* has had to close up shop. But, they said, they were going to be able to keep the *Pot Belly's* location a premier *Toys for Tots* collection point in 2021.

So, as the toys were being bagged and loaded, **Patrick and Ken Gardner** came along to help load and to supervise, respectively. With everybody helping, the loading was efficient, well done, and completed in short order. It turned out that Jean's vehicle was large enough to carry everything, and thus getting the toys to the next stage was squarely on her shoulders.



Tim Swanick putting another box on board. Mark Mellini is grabbing it and will find the right space for it onboard.

The next and last stop was Columbia Bank in Oakland, NJ. There were 15 large, clear plastic bags full of toys under their overhang when we pulled up. Marc Fox was running Oakland's toy drive, and had succeeded in keeping much of Oakland collecting toys. He also enlisted the help of Columbia Bank, across from the regular train stop, as a collection and processing point. I was talking with Marc out front and we were going over how things would work, and he was getting around to the truck. At that moment his face lit up, and he pointed and said "THAT is the TRUCK!". He saw approaching, **Mark Mellini's** camouflage 5-ton recognizable as "the military truck" from quite a distance! Mark parked it in the VIP parking space that Columbia Bank had cordoned off for him.

The crew got to work with the loading. Mark ran things from the bed of the truck. At the bank was a room full of toys. The bank manager had been managing the collected toys, and they were getting classified and boxed by the bankers. About half of the toys were already boxed in some easily-handled moving boxes that they had gotten hold

of. **Jean and Tim Swanick, Natalie and Fabian Ledesma, Patrick Gardner** and Marc Fox and his young son Andrew got to work. There were boxes that had been assembled and packed with toys. All the boxes, and some awkward one-off bagged items, were brought to the truck and put up for loading. **Ken Gardner** helped Andrew get items up to bed height. Towards the end the bags out front were taped shut and loaded unto the truck, and Mark's packing is to be commended. Good vibes, a group picture, and we all headed our separate ways. As of the time that this is being written, **Mark Mellini** has a 5-ton full of toys parked in his garage bay. Mission nearly accomplished.

Submitted by **Ken Gardner**



(From L to R): Tim Swanick, Natalie Ledesma, Jean Swanick, Andrew Fox, Marc Fox, Mark Mellini, Fabian Ledesma, Ken Gardner and Patrick Gardner

Toys for Tots-Phase 2

On Friday, December 11th, just before 1100 hours, **Angeline Li** (my wife) and I delivered 439 toys to the Marines at Picatinny. This was a combination of our personal donations, donations from neighbors, my office, a local Cub Scout Pack, and those purchased on behalf of *Operation Toy Train*. Roughly an hour later, I returned to drop off 4 contractor sized garbage bags full of toys picked up from Fraizer Industrial in Long Valley.



Toys collected at the Mansfield Township Fire Department

On Saturday, December 12th, **Dan Morgan** (*Operation Toy Train* volunteer) and I picked up 10 *Toys for Tots* collection boxes loaded with 413 toys from the *Volunteer Railroaders Association* in Hawthorne and brought them to

Picatunny, where we were escorted directly to the *Toys for Tots* warehouse. After offloading our cargo from our civilian pickup trucks, **Carolyn Hoffman** dispatched Dan and I to assist **John Sobotka's** collection efforts. John was with the Mansfield Township Fire Department with his M1078 at a collection event. John already had donations from other collection sites in his truck, so Mansfield's 11 boxes of toys were too much for him to transport alone. We split the load between the 3 vehicles and returned to Picatunny and were again escorted to the warehouse.



Toys collected at Flanders Fire Department

On Sunday, December 13th, **John Sobotka** asked me to assist the Flanders Fire Department with their donation. I went along with **Angeline Li** and my neighbor, **Matt Wiegand**, who lent his time and the use of his pickup truck and trailer to the cause without any official membership in any connected organization. We collected 17 white *Toys for Tots* boxes from Flanders, which we delivered to an *Operation Toy Train* boxcar parked in Dover to be held for the 2021 campaign.

Finally, on Sunday, December 20th, **Carolyn Hoffman** alerted **Angeline Li** and I that **John Sobotka** needed some additional assistance at the Flanders Fire House. My wife and I took a break from our holiday shopping and drove to Flanders, where we found John's M1078 ready to be loaded. Flanders Fire Department had filled their last 4 *Toys for Tots* collection boxes, and still had most of their building's foyer piled high with trash bags full of additional donations. Angie, John, and I worked with **Kevin Dolan** of the Flanders Fire Department to load John's truck, filling the bed. Angie and I followed John to the boxcar in Dover, where we were met by **Al Mellini**. The four of us worked together to trans-load the remaining donations.

I'm disappointed that we couldn't run the train this year, but I'm happy that I was still able to donate some of my time, money, and fuel to help kids have a better holiday in this difficult time.

Submitted by Timothy Farrell



Toys for Tots warehouse at Picatunny Arsenal

OUT WITH THE OLD: THE DEVELOPMENT OF US ARMY FIELD ARTILLERY DURING THE INTERWAR PERIOD-PART II

By Jim Swanick

In the aftermath of the First World War the US Army convened several boards and committees to identify, digest, and apply the lessons of the war to the postwar Army. Three, the Hero, Lassiter, and Westervelt Boards, were destined to have considerable impact on the Field Artillery Branch. The Hero Board, meeting between December 1918 and March 1919, conducted interviews with field artillery officers within the AEF in an effort to examine training, organization, motorization, weapons, tactics, and equipment. The Lassiter Board,



Corps support: Yank gunners operate their 155mm GPF gun. Corps artillery usually provided counterbattery fire while divisional artillery supported the infantry with rolling barrages.

meanwhile, was organized by Third Army Headquarters in June of 1919 to study motorizing divisional artillery. Finally, at the insistence of Major General William Snow, Chief of Field Artillery, the War Department formed the Westervelt Board and tasked it with examining the field artillery and ammunition used by the war's participants. Through issuing their reports, the boards made several recommendations as to how to improve the Field Artillery Branch and the Army at large, including changes in training and organization, the feasibility and desirability of motorizing field artillery formations, and the standardization and modernization of field pieces and ammunition. As these recommendations were incorporated into official policy, they created a type of road map as to how the Field Artillery Branch would develop over the next 20 years.

Efforts to apply the lessons of the World War were carried out with vigor in the war's immediate aftermath. The National Defense Act of 1920 defined the size of the postwar Army and informed its policies and duties, and in the same year the infantry division was reorganized. Having recognized that the wartime "square" division of 28,000 men was cumbersome and unwieldy, the new division retained the square structure of two brigades of two regiments but eliminated 8,000 men by reducing the size of the battalion. It also retained the wartime field artillery brigade of three regiments, two of 75mm guns and one of howitzers. As the Army desired but did not possess a 105mm howitzer for use in the howitzer regiment, it was

decided that it would be staffed by 75mm howitzers until a suitable 105mm howitzer could be developed.

With the reorganization of the infantry division complete, attention turned to more intellectual matters. In December of 1920 the Commandant of the General Service Schools, Brigadier General Hugh Drum, was ordered to review and revise *Field Service Regulations 1914 (FSR 1914)*, the manual in which the Army conveyed its concepts of warfare.



On The Way! A Yank French 75 in action.

Submitted in 1921 by Drum and his successor as commandant, Brigadier General Hanson Ely, the proposed changes to the Army's doctrine were found impressive but lacking focus. Following editing and a rewrite by a committee appointed to improve on Drum and Ely's work, the final draft of the new manual was completed in the spring of 1923 and approved in November of that year. *FSR 1923* took to heart the lessons of the war; no more was the infantry to achieve fire superiority with rifle fire before conducting a bayonet charge. Although the rifle and bayonet remained their "principal offensive weapon," infantry formations were now expected to utilize all organic arms to overcome the enemy, including automatic rifles, machine guns, tanks, and infantry cannon. *FSR 1923* also included a newfound appreciation for the role and capabilities of field artillery. Unlike *FSR 1914*, which simply stated that the role of field artillery was to support the infantry, *FSR 1923* made it clear that the fire of field artillery had many uses. It defined direct and general support roles for divisional artillery, charging the former with direct support of the infantry and the latter with longer-range missions such as targeting command posts, reserves, observation posts, and counterbattery. Finally, it admitted that field artillery possessed the best means of destroying material targets and offered that its "powerful" support was required when conducting frontal assaults against organized defensive positions.

Although the Army made excellent progress in revising its doctrine and reorganizing the infantry division, it had a much harder time developing new weaponry and motorizing the field artillery. Both the Hero and Lassiter Boards recommended motorizing the bulk of the Army's field artillery; retention of

horse-drawn formations was to be temporary, a stopgap measure until the all-terrain capability and reliability of motor vehicles improved. Even with existing technology, however, it was recommended that the howitzers and half of the guns in the division, or 2/3 of divisional artillery, be motorized as soon as possible. The Westervelt Board, meanwhile, recommended that the Army replace its field artillery arsenal in full. Neither of these goals would come to pass despite a desire to pursue them. Although the National Defense Act of 1920 had authorized a standing army of 17,000 officers and 280,000 enlisted men, by 1922 this had been reduced to 12,000 officers and 125,000 men. Funding took a dramatic hit as well, falling from nearly \$400,000,000 in 1921 to roughly \$256,500,000 by 1925. Although the budget would rise above \$330,000,000 per year for most of the 1930's, manpower did not experience a similar boost, remaining far below 200,000 officers and men from 1922 to 1940.



**An American gun crew loads their "French 75."
Each divisional field artillery brigade contained two regiments of 75's and one of 155mm howitzers.**

The effect that such conditions had on the Army was devastating, essentially stunting all technological growth, and the Field Artillery Branch was no exception. Several experimental 75mm guns were built, and one, meeting Westervelt Board specifications, was adopted in 1926 as the standard field piece of the 75mm gun regiments. With no money to purchase the weapons, however, very few were acquired, and the Army continued to use First World War-vintage guns (of which three types existed) to staff these units.

Efforts to develop a modern 105mm howitzer culminated in the creation and standardization of the 105mm Howitzer M1 in 1928, but budgetary constraints again prevented the Army from purchasing it, to the point that none were ever manufactured. The failure to procure the M1 forced the Army to staff the division howitzer regiment with 155mm howitzers of First World War vintage. Despite these setbacks, however, the Army continued to tinker with the M1's design. Improved shell design in the early 1930's required modification of the M1's tube, thus creating the 105mm M2, and development of the 105mm M2 continued throughout the

1930's as the Army, satisfied with the howitzer, searched for a suitable carriage for it.

The quest to motorize the Field Artillery Branch met a more positive fate. In the aftermath of the war the Army understood that it had to motorize or mechanize all medium and heavy artillery pieces (155mm and larger) due to their size, but lack of funding and the ongoing rapid evolution of automotive technology caused it to balk at motorizing its light field pieces. These pieces, the divisional 75mm guns and howitzers, were small enough to be pulled by horses, and had to be highly mobile in order to keep up with the division's advancing infantry. Motorizing these pieces had several pros and cons, as doing away with horses would vastly simplify and expedite changing positions but might make moving forward over rough ground very difficult. Generally speaking, most field artillery officers approved of motorization, but wanted to make sure that trucks were reliable and capable enough before adopting them in full. This rational timidity combined with lack of funding to prevent the Army from doing anything more than minor efforts to motorize the branch's light field pieces until the early 1930's, when Major General Harry Bishop, Chief of Field Artillery, intervened. Bishop took the War Department to task over its failure to motorize the branch, pointing out that automotive technology had advanced sufficiently to render the horse obsolete in both reliability and mobility. For his trouble Bishop was allowed to conduct further tests using light trucks and light field pieces, which were completed with positive results in March of 1933. Meanwhile, Army Chief of Staff General Douglas MacArthur launched an ambitious modernization program. These factors, combined with a declining national horse population and recognition that the Army's arsenal was obsolete, led the War Department to motorize approximately 70% of its light field artillery throughout the 30's by way of modernizing many of its M1897 75mm guns. Therefore, at the end of the Interwar Period the Field Artillery Branch had successfully begun the process of motorization, making considerable progress in that regard, but had been unsuccessful in procuring the funding necessary to update its now woefully outdated arsenal.

During the 1930's, modest attempts to consolidate, standardize, and improve Army publications snowballed into doctrinal revision. The resulting document, *FM 100-5, Tentative Field Service Regulations,*

Operations, was published on 1 October 1939. It was not well received, espousing most of the same concepts of *FSR 1923*, many of which had been fundamentally altered through the technological progression of the past fifteen years. It also spoke in uncertain terminology, warning against potential threats to which the Army had no response for lack of funding or interest. The new manual's treatment of field artillery remained mostly unchanged from *FSR 1923*, and the basic combined arms operation remained an infantry-artillery one. Although provisions had been made to interface field artillery with cavalry, the same could not be said regarding armor. Therefore, as Europe lurched toward war, the United States went back to the drawing board in terms of doctrinal revision, delaying adoption of the new manual until 1941 in an effort to improve it.

At the end of the Interwar Period the United States Army was not prepared for war. It had taken steps to

modernize, but its arsenal remained woefully obsolete. It lacked modern tanks, antitank armaments, and infantry weapons, had all but ignored developing close air support capabilities, and was guided by doctrine that, though stellar on its adoption, had been developed nearly 20 years prior. It had succeeded in motorizing most of its field artillery through the adoption of trucks and tractors, but the guns and howitzers that they towed were the same that had fought the last war. It would not be until the outbreak of war in Europe and the triumph of Nazi Germany in France that the United States took modernizing its army seriously. *...continued in Part III in the next issue of Motor Pool Messenger.*

Military Transport Association, Inc. Summary of Funds Activity For the Month Ending Nov 30, 2020		
		All Funds
Beginning balance from last month	\$	51,320.73
Income		4,600.00
Expenditures		(11,445.54)
Closing balance	\$	44,475.19



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. Will take a M35a2 ring mount in trade. Kirk Stinson 862-209-0933

Military Transport Association

P.O. Box 391
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**THE JANUARY MTA MEETING
HAS BEEN CANCELLED!**



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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