



# MOTOR POOL MESSENGER

the official monthly newsletter of the  
**MILITARY TRANSPORT ASSOCIATION**

visit us online at [www.MTAofNJ.org](http://www.MTAofNJ.org)

Issue: JULY 2021

Editor: Dave Steinert



In This  
Issue...

We're Scraping the Bottom of the Barrel

## ON THE COVER...



**THEN-** A WWII army engineer Caterpillar D7 is pulling a LeTourneau scraper. The inventor of the scraper, Robert Gilmour LeTourneau is not well-known name outside of the heavy construction industry. Yet today, many of the pieces

of construction equipment used by the industry are the result of his 300 patents. In 1929 he formed the R.G. LeTourneau, Inc. in Stockton, CA to build earth moving equipment of his design. In 1935 he entered into a ten-year symbiotic relationship with the Caterpillar Tractor Company. R.G. LeTourneau did not have the extensive dealership network that Caterpillar had. Caterpillar allowed R.G. Tourneau to sell its equipment at its dealerships. This benefited both companies. R.G. LeTourneau obtained immediate access to Caterpillar customers, who could purchase bulldozers and scrapers at the same place they purchased their tractors. From Caterpillar's prospective, it gave customers immediate access to the different add-on equipment that enhanced its tractor's usefulness. For the customer, it was one-stop shopping.

R.G. LeTourneau expanded his operation by building a factory in Peoria, IL, three miles from the Caterpillar plant. With the Caterpillar relationship, LeTourneau's business quickly expanded. A third plant was built in Toccoa, GA in 1938.

The entrance of the United States into WWII and its relationship with Caterpillar was a boon for LeTourneau's business. Both the US Army and US Navy needed bulldozers on its crawler tractors and scrapers to pull behind the tractors. The proximity of the Caterpillar in East Peoria, IL across the Illinois River allowed LeTourneau bulldozers to be installed on many Caterpillar tractors. LeTourneau supplied a large amount of ancillary heavy equipment used by the military during WWII. He built a fourth plant in Vicksburg, MS in 1942 and a fifth in Longview, TX in 1945. R.G. LeTourneau had also built a plant in Australia in 1941

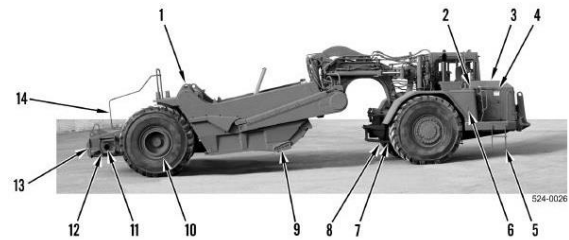
The relationship between R.G. LeTourneau and Caterpillar ended in 1945 at the end of the ten-year contract. By this time Caterpillar viewed LeTourneau as a competitor, as many of R.G. LeTourneau's inventions and new products could reduce Caterpillar's tractor business. Caterpillar started manufacturing its own wheeled tractors in 1941, bulldozers in 1946, and rubber-tired, self-propelled scrapers in 1948. For R.G. LeTourneau, with no extensive dealership network and Caterpillar and others becoming competitors, the golden years of expanding business in the late 1930's and early 1940's.

**NOW-** The Caterpillar 621G Scraper is a self-propelled, open-bowl, two-axle, single-diesel-engine-driven vehicle

with pneumatic tires. It is capable of being push loaded with a T-9 Medium Dozer, reducing bowl loading times to less than one minute, and accepting the armor Crew Protection Kit. The 621G Scraper is used for cutting, scraping, self-loading, hauling, dumping and spreading of earth during earth-moving operations. The benefit to the soldier is that The 621G Scraper provides cutting, dumping and spreading of soil in worldwide earth-moving and construction projects by U.S. Army Forces in engineer troop support.

It has a cutting width of 119 inches with a payload capacity of 52,800 pounds and 22 loose cubic yards. It can travel at 32mph. The planetary powershift transmission delivers excellent load capability. Redesigned front and rear axles accommodate wider brake shoes and drums. The neutral coast inhibitor and programmable top gear reduce wear while increasing machine performance.

Electronic controls improve machine response and provide advanced diagnostic capabilities that result in better machine availability. The Product Link option allows remote monitoring of location, machine system status, and alert indicators.



Military 621G Scraper (Right Side).

1	Fuel Tank Filler Neck and Cap	Provides means to fill and seal fuel tank.
2	Hydraulic Oil Tank Filler Neck and Cap	Provides means to fill and seal hydraulic oil tank.
3	Hood	Provides access to engine compartment.
4	Engine Access Doors	Provides access to engine compartment. The following fluid levels can be checked: coolant, engine oil, window washer fluid.  The following can also be accessed: engine air filter indicator, fuel system primer switch, fuel system shutoff valve, fuel/water separator, drive belts, NATO slave receptacle, battery disconnect switch.
5	Step	Provides safe means to climb on and off machine.
6	Hydraulic Oil Tank Sight Gauge	Provides means to check hydraulic oil level.
7	Transmission Sight Gauge	Upper sight gauge provides means to check transmission oil level. Oil is red in color.
8	Differential and Final Drive Oil Level Sight Gauge	Lower sight gauge provides means to check differential and final drive oil level. Oil is yellow in color.
9	Replaceable outer (router bits) and lower edges (cutting edges) of bowl.	
10	Tire Valve Stem	Provides means to check tire air pressure and fill as required.
11	Scraper Air Tank Drain and Fuel Tank Water and Sediment Drain	Provides means to drain water from scraper air system (valve located to the front of opening).  Provides means to drain water and sediment from fuel tank
12	Step	Provides safe means to climb on and off machine.
13	Push Block	Location where a push tractor contacts and assists machine.
14	Grab Handle	Provides safe hand hold for walking on rear of machine.

**ATTENTION MEMBERS!**  
**THE THURSDAY JULY 1<sup>ST</sup> MEETING WILL BE HELD AT**  
**THE WHIPPANY AMERICAN LEGION**  
**MEETING ROOM IN BASEMENT**  
*Food at 6:00PM...Meeting starts at 7:00PM*

## MTA Meeting Minutes

### MTA Meeting Minutes – June 3, 2021 at Legion Hall

Submitted by **Anita Roberts**, Recording Secretary

The first in-person 2021 meeting of the MTA was called to order and opened with the Pledge of Allegiance and a Moment of Silence for **Jayne Sobotka**. 24 members were in attendance. MTA President **Al Mellini** asked for a motion to approve the May 6, 2021 Minutes. **Pat Dolan** made the motion to approve the minutes and **Gary Schultz** seconded. *Minutes approved! Motion carried!*

Al gave a report on the state of the President. Update on the great healing powers of the President who is in therapy to strengthen bad knees.

#### Financial Report

##### May 31, 2021

<b>Beginning Balance:</b>	\$45,420.33
<b>Income:</b>	425.20
<b>Expenditures:</b>	- 794.28
<b>Ending Balance:</b>	\$45,051.25

Income is from dues and vendors for the Swap Meet. Expenditures of about \$800, most of which was for our insurance policy 2021 premium. Al mentioned that in March of 2020 we had \$48,825 in the bank so after 14 months of running the Club through COVID with limited income, we're only down \$3,000. *The Club is healthy!*

#### President's Report:

Al received an email from **John Traflet**, who now lives in Gettysburg, PA. John informed the club that the MVPA/Red Ball Memorial Day Parade had all the Viet Nam vets standing. **Just so you know, the July 1 meeting will be at the Legion and will be run by John Sobotka. Al will be on vacation.**

**Upcoming Road Trip:** **Gary Schultz** gave an updated report on the MTA trip to the *Military Technology Museum* in Wall, NJ scheduled for Saturday, June 5<sup>th</sup>, 2021. He reminded members that lunch would be provided by the Museum. (See After Action Report on Page 4).

**UPCOMING EVENTS – MTA 2021 Picnic** is scheduled for June 26, 2021 at 12:30 PM at Fireman's Field, Rockaway, NJ. See enclosed map. **Please do not arrive until 12:30 as another group is using the pavilion right before us.** Finally, we can gather for good food, an off-road trail ride and **NO MASKS** required if you are vaccinated per CDC guidance

**DONATIONS:** Al requested a motion to donate \$500 to Fireman's Field. **Pat Dolan** made the motion, **Dennis Vecchiarelli** seconded. *Motion carried!*

**Tim Swanick** suggested that the Club's Swap Meet Banner be displayed at the Rockaway Fire Department's fireworks event on Saturday July 10.

**LEAD EAST CAR SHOW:** *Is a go; awaiting more information!*

**PARADES:** Randolph and Florham Park are our only July 4<sup>th</sup> parades. See details in this newsletter.

**Kudos to all others who participated in the 3 parades over a miserable Memorial Day weekend. We raised the price of MTA Vehicle appearance from \$300 to \$500 so we made**

**\$1500.** *Honorable mention to **Dennis Vecchiarelli**, who protected his vehicle from the rain with his body!*



*Our rain-soaked team at Morris Plains*

**TRIUMPH CLUB:** July 11 is the Lyons Hospital Triumph Club Event. Members wishing to parade their vehicles around the hospital buildings should arrive on-site between 9 and 9:30. There are no other events at the hospital this year or food or an MTA Meeting.



*Hoods up at Secaucus Parade*

### MTA 2021 INDEPENDANCE DAY PARADES

Town & Meetup	Event Date	MTA Parade Captain
<b>Florham Park</b>	<b>7/5/2021</b>	P. Dolan
8:30 line up		973-220-9169
9:30 start		<a href="mailto:pdol621@hotmail.com">pdol621@hotmail.com</a>
Brooklata Rd and Ridgedale Ave		
<b>Randolph</b>	<b>7/3/2021</b>	G.Schultz
Quaker Church Rd & Randolph Rd		973-207-8955
9:00 line up		<a href="mailto:garyrschultz@gmail.com">garyrschultz@gmail.com</a>
10:00 start		
Lunch after parade		
JULY 3 NOT JUL 4		
PLEASE EMAIL PARADE CAPTAIN TO TELL THEM YOU WILL BE ATTENDING.		

**SWAP MEET – October 1-3 is a go!**

**OMS 7 Report –** Two reports this meeting. **Pat Dolan** gave an update on the Weasel Restoration Project. They still need to paint and if anyone wants to come up to lend a hand, Pat

extended an invitation to members who wanted to learn how to weld to get together at **Pat Tipton's**. We also had a Power Point Presentation by member **Dave Johnson** on the history of the M1 Bayonet and displayed his collection of bayonets. *Thank you Pat and Dave!*

**Al would like to inform the Club that Ken Gardner has retired from the role of Parade Coordinator. Thank you Ken, for your efforts over the last 3 years! AL NEEDS someone to volunteer to fill that role. Email Al or call him with questions. PLEASE STEP UP!!**

Motion to adjourn the meeting was made by **Jeanne Swanick**, seconded by **Panos Diamandopoulos**. *Motion carried!*

**NEXT MTA MEETING AT LEGION ON JULY 1 AT 6PM FOR FOOD! MEETING STARTS AT 7PM**

### MTA 2021 Officers and Key Committee Heads

**President- Al Mellini**

Tel: 973-723-2166 email: [albert.mellini@gmail.com](mailto:albert.mellini@gmail.com)

**Vice President- John Sobotka**

Tel: 862-266-6284 email: [jsobotka@hotmail.com](mailto:jsobotka@hotmail.com)

**Recording Secretary- Anita Roberts**

Tel: email: [akroberts356@gmail.com](mailto:akroberts356@gmail.com)

**Treasurer -Ginnie McDevitt**

Tel: 845-987-7896 email:

**Sergeant at Arms-Andrew Salzano**

Tel: 973-831-0920

**Membership Chairman- Fred Schlesinger**

Tel: 908-617-5066 email: [fred@mtaofnj.us](mailto:fred@mtaofnj.us)

**Newsletter Editor- Dave Steinert**

Tel: 973-347-9091 email: [dsteinert@mtaofnj.org](mailto:dsteinert@mtaofnj.org)

**Parade Coordinator- Ken Gardner**

Tel: 973-714-2271 email: [mtanjevents@gmail.com](mailto:mtanjevents@gmail.com)

**Swap Meet Chairman- Bill Murphy**

Tel: 973-803-9725 email: [bmurph411@gmail.com](mailto:bmurph411@gmail.com)

**Webmaster- Rudy Garbely**

Tel: 973-800-9251 email: [rgarbely@gmail.com](mailto:rgarbely@gmail.com)

**Quartermaster and MTA Archives Custodian  
Gary Schultz**

Tel: 973-207-8955 email: [garyrschultz@gmail.com](mailto:garyrschultz@gmail.com)

### AAR\*: MTA Trip to the Military Technology Museum of New Jersey

Story and Photos by Gary Schultz

The MTA team had another successful visit on June 5th to the *Military Technology Museum of New Jersey* in Wall Township NJ. This was our biggest group to date with 12 members and family attending.

Museum founder Dan Jaquito and Curator Rick Wark were both on hand to host our team with tours of the updated museum facilities, displays and recent acquisitions! They also hosted lunch for the MTA team at the museum.

We had a discussion with Dan and Rick about the possibility of the museum displaying one or two of their vehicles

at the MTA October Show. We are pleased to report Rick will be joining us in October to display the museum's M-38A1 Davy Crockett Atomic Missile Jeep! This Jeep has the original Davy Crockett missile mounting system and brackets and a very authentic looking Davy Crockett missile attached!



Several months ago the MTA Membership voted to donate \$500 to the *Military Technology Museum of New Jersey*, and on this visit we were pleased that President Al Mellini was on hand to present our check to Dan and Rick in person.

If you haven't been to the *Military Technology Museum of New Jersey*, we encourage you to make a visit, as the theme of their collection strongly parallels the MTA mission statement to preserve military vehicles and educate the public on the contributions of Military Transport Technology. Visit to their website, [www.mtmnj.com](http://www.mtmnj.com).



**MTA President Al Mellini presents Museum Founder Dan Jaquito with a \$500 donation from the MTA, observed by Curator Rick Wark**

We'll be planning another MTA visit to the *Military Technology Museum* later this year and possibly combine it with a visit to the New Jersey National Guard Museum in nearby Sea Girt New Jersey.

\*After Action Report



*The MTA Executive Committee extends their deepest condolences to the John Vetter Family in his recent passing. We wish his family strength, courage and peace during this somber time.*

**Sharing Condolences on the passing of John Vetter and John's huge impact on the NJC/MTA and the early growth of the MVCC/MVPA and the Military Vehicle Hobby we all enjoy:**

**By Dennis Spence**

John Vetter was a very early member of NJC which he helped launch in 1972 which later became the MTA in 1990. In the early days of the MV hobby, John lived in Flushing, Queens, New York. His house was chock-full of books and manuals, and his basement was chock-full of automotive parts. He had so much, that when I first saw it, I called it "Sarafan East".

John's military vehicles at the time included a Ford GPA amphibian, Dodge M37, Dodge XM-152, Chrysler T-53 truck, M20 armored car, Locust tank, M3 light tank, M38A1 jeep, and numerous Reo trucks. In 1984, John won the heavy postwar truck class at the Charlotte, NC MVCC rally.



Picture of Harold Ratzburg, John Vetter, Pete Shaw, Lou Sliazis, Mark Ziegler.  
April 18th 2015

John was also the editor for the MVCC quarterly "ARMY MOTORS" publication for the first nine years of the MVCC from its launch in 1976 to 1985. John is the one who came up with the name of "Supply Line", the advertising companion to Army Motors. He did both magazines for a short

time until fellow NJC/MTA member Ollie Keenan took over as full time "Supply Line" Editor.

John later moved from New York to northern Vermont, where he bought an 85-acre farm. However, John retained his job with the Environmental Protective Agency (EPA) in New York.

Also, he was a Professor of Anthropology at Adelphi University in Long Island, New York. I believe he earned a Ph.D. in anthropology later on. He did a lot of commuting between New York and Vermont, using surplus police cruisers.

John Vetter's contributions to the MV Enthusiasts Hobby and Organizations were huge and John will be missed!



### **The U.S. Army in the Battle of the Bulge-Part I Attrition: The Fall Campaign and the Lead-up to the German Winter Offensive**

By Jim Swanick

When the advance of 12<sup>th</sup> Army Group sputtered out in the first week of September its armies were scattered across France. First US Army covered a front running from Hasselt, Belgium, to a point south of Longwy, France; here Third US Army's sector began, which ran south past Toul, where its flank dangled and maintained contact with Lt. Gen. Alexander Patch's Seventh US Army (under 6<sup>th</sup> Army Group) through prodigious patrolling by cavalry elements. Ninth US Army was in Brittany. Initially both First and Third Army blitzed forward in attempts to maintain the pursuit, the former looking to hurdle the Siegfried Line and the latter seeking to bridge the Moselle.

First Army found some success, breaching the line southeast of Aachen in the Stolberg Corridor and attaining multiple break-ins in the Ardennes. Of these, however, only the breakthrough in the Stolberg Corridor held any promise of being exploitable. Third Army, meanwhile, had been immobilized by a gasoline shortage from 1-6 September; by the time the advance resumed the Germans had gathered themselves. Attempts to jump the Moselle and continue toward the Rhine met with limited success, as Maj. Gen. Manton Eddy's XII Corps established bridgeheads over the river and unleashed the 4<sup>th</sup> Armored Division in a spectacular cavalry dash replete with running battles to encircle Nancy.

To the north, however, Maj. Gen. Walton Walker's XX Corps butted up against the outer works of Fortress Metz and were stopped cold after crossing the river at Arnaville. With the preponderance of theater supplies shifted to Field Marshal Bernard Law Montgomery's 21 Army Group in reflection of its efforts to clear the Scheldt Estuary and open Antwerp both field armies settled down for the rest of the month, their advances having petered out.

Third Army parried a pitiful attempt of a counterattack by German armor at Arracourt, while First Army began its dubious efforts in the Hürtgen Forest. Far to the rear in Brittany, meanwhile, Ninth Army had taken control of VIII Corps, embroiled in the siege of Brest. Following the reduction of the port, the facilities of which had been destroyed by the enemy, Simpson's command came eastward. October saw First Army breach the Siegfried Line north of Aachen and encircle and reduce that city even as it intensified its efforts within the Hürtgen Forest. Patton, meanwhile, spent the

month building up stocks of supplies and conducting limited attacks, including the abortive attempt to reduce Fort Driant. 12<sup>th</sup> Army Group received several new divisions to augment its strength in anticipation of driving onward to the Rhine, and in the second and third weeks of November all three of its field armies took to the offensive.



**Hull Down: An M4 of the 2d Armored Division settles in after exploiting the 30<sup>th</sup> Division's breach in the Siegfried Line in October 1944. The open ground here is characteristic of the Roer Plain**

The November offensives saw 12<sup>th</sup> Army Group embark on a period of what one historian would call "high adventure." Ninth Army attacked northeastward, driving across the Aachen Gap as First Army attacked up the Stolberg Corridor, the latter continuing to batter through the Hürtgen Forest all the while.

Third Army, meanwhile, descended on Metz, enveloping it and pivoting eastward toward the Saar. The November offensives were characterized by extremely heavy fighting that halved rifle and tank companies alike in days. In the Ninth and much of the First Army sectors tank-infantry teams were forced to attack over muddy, open ground that bogged down the tanks and exposed riflemen to savage fire from German tank-infantry teams deployed around and within village strongpoints. Much of Third Army advanced under similar conditions. Those that did not were forced to slog through the woods. Neither First nor Third nor Ninth Army reached the Rhine; for 102,000 battle casualties and at least 114,000 non-battle losses from September-December 12<sup>th</sup> Army Group attained the Roer and Saar Rivers. The Rhine was not the only objective however, as a key point of the US Army's concept of warfighting was and remains that the destruction of enemy forces in the field is a key component of victory. The fall campaign saw Bradley's command kill, wound, and capture several hundred thousand German soldiers on a scale that remains unknown, losses that the enemy could not absorb and replace. In this regard the Siegfried Line and Lorraine campaigns were successful. Furthermore, fighting was still ongoing when the Ardennes offensive began- indeed, at that point in time Hodges was attacking to obtain the Roer River dams in preparation of a First and Ninth Army drive across that river, and Patton was moving into the *Westwall* fortifications beyond the Saar. The Germans may have slowed the Allied advance, but they had not stopped it. By December 1944 the formations of 12<sup>th</sup> Army Group were, for the most part, thoroughly blooded. One month later, on 1 January 1945, two field army headquarters, six corps headquarters, and 29 divisions, along with assorted attachments, had been committed to the Battle of the Bulge.

First Army had been on the continent since D-Day, with Hodges having been present as Bradley's second-in-command in Normandy; though Third Army had not been activated until 1 August, in Patton it had a commander that had cut his teeth in army command in Sicily. V, VII, and VIII Corps were all old hands, having been in action since June, with V and VII Corps having landed on D-Day. Two, VII and VIII Corps, possessed outstanding combat commanders in Maj. Generals J. Lawton Collins and Troy Middleton; Maj. Gen. Leonard T. Gerow, at V Corps, was able if nothing special. XII Corps had been activated with Third Army; its commanding general Eddy was a veteran infantryman that had led the crack 9<sup>th</sup> Division through North Africa, Sicily, and Normandy. Maj. Gen. Matthew B. Ridgway was new to corps command, having taken over the recently activated XVIII (Airborne) Corps following the Normandy campaign, but he had led the 82d Airborne Division in Sicily, Italy, and Normandy. Only III Corps with the untested, but considered able Maj. Gen. John Milliken was fully new to the war.



**Armored Fist: 8<sup>th</sup> Division tank riders broke into the village of Hürtgen atop M4's of the 709<sup>th</sup> Tank Battalion on 28 November 1944**

Of the 29 divisions present in the Bulge on 1 January, 17 had fought in Normandy and two more had entered combat in August. Of the remaining ten, three had participated in a major combat action prior to December. Thus, as of 16 December, both field army commands, five of six corps headquarters or commanders, and 76% of the 29 divisions that would ultimately find themselves along the German salient had experienced at least one major action, with the majority possessing a considerable amount of combat experience that had taught them how best to employ infantry, armor, and artillery in concert to defeat the enemy. There was a caveat to this, however: all of this experience, for the most part, had been gained through attacking. The US Army had not yet been tested in throwing back a bona fide, large-scale enemy offensive. Therefore, several questions as to how 12<sup>th</sup> Army Group would respond to the German attack, which it did not expect nor forecast, remained. How would the veteran formations, many of which were severely depleted or had just taken receipt of large numbers of replacements as a result of the autumn fighting, perform in their first large-scale defensive action of the war? How would the seven divisions and single corps command that were yet to be tested in any kind of serious combat fare? And how would their failures and successes affect the outcome of the battle? In examining how the US Army fought the Battle of the Bulge at the division and corps level, these questions

can be answered, as well as a larger one: why did the US Army win? Planning for what became Operation AUTUMN MIST (originally WATCH ON THE RHINE) began as early as August 1944, when Hitler expressed his desire to launch a major offensive in the West in November. By mid-September Hitler had decided that it would occur in the Ardennes with its objective as Antwerp. Planning continued throughout the fall as Allied offensives pushed the start date back to mid-December. 12<sup>th</sup> Army Group's efforts during November tied down several formations that had been marked for removal from the front in preparation for their use in AUTUMN MIST and forced the commitment of a few divisions that had been carefully husbanded for the same purpose. Even as this occurred von Rundstedt's *OB-West* successfully conducted widespread deception operations and maintained the strictest of secrecy as it prepared to launch the offensive. Across the lines Allied G-2's at all levels failed to both identify that something was brewing and to thoroughly analyze intelligence derived from ULTRA intercepts that pointed to the build-up occurring in the Eifel, opposite the Ardennes



**78<sup>th</sup> "Lightning" Division GI's advance past two knocked out German tank destroyers in Kesternich in early December 1944**

The plan as ultimately executed involved three field armies, with a fourth on standby for commitment. Field Marshal Walter Model's *Army Group B* commanded, in order from north to south, the *Fifteenth Army*, the *Sixth Panzer Army*, the *Fifth Panzer Army*, and the *Seventh Army*. *Sixth Panzer Army*, with a core of SS armored divisions, had the main effort: it was to drive on Antwerp via Liège. On its left *Fifth Panzer Army* would cross the Meuse at Namur and shoot toward Brussels, protecting *Sixth Panzer Army's* flank. The *Seventh Army* would attack to the Meuse, covering the left of the entire offensive. *Fifteenth Army* was on standby to conduct offensive operations in the Aachen sector, and to the north *Army Group Student* was alerted for its possible use against Montgomery's 21 Army Group. The overall military objective of the operation was to, by seizing Antwerp and isolating the Allied army groups, destroy or force the evacuation of 21 Army Group, which Hitler believed would shatter the Anglo-American alliance. This was a strategic goal, not an operational one: Hitler was hoping to knock the Western Allies out of the war entirely.

Hitler's grand plan possessed several glaring flaws. For starters, the German Army of December 1944 was incapable of the type of offensive action that the plan called for. In terms of effectiveness, it was even light-years removed from that which had fought in Normandy. Like that army, this one could take heart in its stock of veteran officers; but this time around many of the men they led were not just inadequate in one form or another, they were not even soldiers, rather sailors and airmen repurposed as infantry. This may have been sufficient in a defensive posture

where the ground played to their positions, but in an all-out offensive over terrain that favored the enemy it was bound to prove a distinct liability. Furthermore, even Hitler acceded that several environmental and operational factors had to be met as a prerequisite for the possibility of German success, most notably the need for poor weather and a sluggish or misdirected Allied response. Not only mother nature but also the actions of SHAEF, as well as those of the American formations in the line, would have to favor the Germans.



**Two 9<sup>th</sup> Division GI's try to stay out of the rain in the vicinity of Geich, 11 December 1944**

There were logistical concerns as well; despite the fact that a vast artillery park had been produced for the operation, from the outset a lack of ammunition would hinder its employment, and so too was there a serious gasoline shortage that was further complicated by the inability to get much of what had been stockpiled across the Rhine in a timely manner. The road net, finally, was incapable of supporting such a large force, particularly in bad weather where vehicles and armor would degrade much of it. Under such conditions, Hitler's plan to drive 100 miles into the Allied rear, seize Antwerp, and ultimately split the Anglo-American alliance was

quite fantastical, a notion supported by the fact that none of the primary subordinates involved, from army to General Staff level, endorsed it.

There was, however, a chance for operational success. Even if the plan misfired there still stood the possibility of smashing several American formations, a field army's worth perhaps, and success in this endeavor would be a significant blow to the capabilities of the Western Allies. It would only delay what was at this point the inevitable, to be sure, but it would allow the Germans the breathing room necessary to fight off the next big thrust by the Soviets.

Despite the serious deficiencies in the forces scraped together to execute the plan the abundance of armor within *Fifth* and *Sixth Panzer Armies* lent the attackers a considerable degree of firepower and mobility, and in any case the steep numerical advantage at the outset of the battle was bound to guarantee at least some degree of initial success. Therefore, provided the weather cooperated and the Americans gave anything less than a stellar performance, there stood a chance at buying some time.

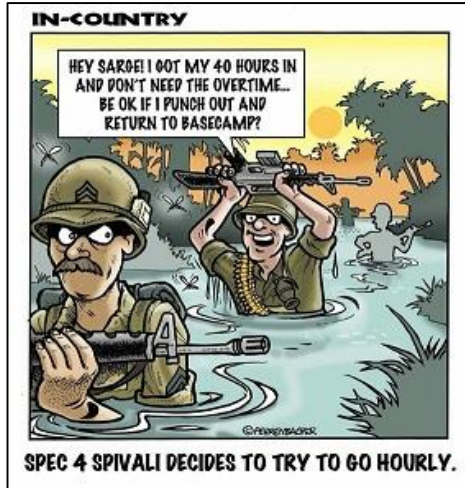
***The U.S. Army in the Battle of the Bulge-Part II, continues in the next issue of Motor Pool Messenger...***



# Military Transport Association

P.O. Box 391  
Budd Lake, NJ 07828

**THE THURSDAY JULY 1<sup>st</sup> MEETING  
WILL BE HELD AT THE WHIPPANY  
AMERICAN LEGION POST**



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](http://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

*Contributions, gifts, or membership dues made or paid to the Military Transport Association, a 501(c)(4) organization, are non-refundable or transferable, and are NOT deductible as charitable contributions for federal tax purposes.*