



# MOTOR POOL MESSENGER

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

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

Issue: DEC. 2021/JAN. 2022 Editor: Dave Steinert



In  
This  
Issue...

The WWII U.S. Coast Guard "Invader" Jeep

## ON THE COVER...



**THEN-** In the last issue of Motor Pool Messenger we presented an article suggesting that the generic WWII U.S. Jeep would be both uncomfortable and quite unsafe if more than four soldiers rode any length of distance at any accelerated speed. For this reason, a contract of a “Infantry Squad” vehicle was awarded to an American manufacturer in June of 2020. A design that was both quite comfortable and safe at high speeds to transport a small squad of soldiers to quickly support areas of hostile unrest.

But history tells us that in 1944, the U.S. Coast Guard presented a new design of a military vehicle called the “Invader” jeep, which could carry 10 men and travel up to 60 miles an hour. The Invader is made by sawing a standard Jeep in half and adding three feet to the middle.



**Pictured on the cover:** In 1944, at a Coastguard Station on the Atlantic Coast, U.S. Coast Guardsmen demonstrate a new super-jeep, carrying 10 men and traveling up to 60 miles an hour over sand. Officials said the super-jeep was developed to meet special problems of Coast Guard shore patrols. Chassis of a regulation jeep was halved and steel shafts inserted to add one yard to its wheelbase. Seats for 10 were installed and specially designed wheels employed to permit travel over any kind of beach.

As a basis for comparison, the regular Army jeep tried to follow the super-jeep over the same course, but floundered in the deep sand. The super-jeep was developed in the Coast Guard transportation office to meet the special demand that branch of services has for a vehicle capable of moving through sand.



The generic WWII Jeep bogs down on the same beach

Press Release from March 12, 1944: NEW YORK CITY—AFTER YEARS OF FAITHFUL SERVICE ON WORLD BATTLEFRONTS, WHERE IT HAS ROLLED UP AN IMPOSING RECORD OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS, THE ARMY'S HARDY LITTLE JEEP HAS FINALLY MET ITS SUPERIOR. THE COAST GUARD'S NEW "INVADER" JEEP, WHICH HOLDS TEN MEN, OUTRIDES AND OUT PERFORMS ITS TINY PREDECESSOR. THREE FEET LONGER THAN THE STANDARD JEEP AND EQUIPPED WITH A SPECIAL SHIELD THAT AREN'T STOPPED BY DEEP SAND, THE NEW VEHICLE NEVER GETS STUCK IN THE SAND LIKE THE STANDARD JEEP SHOWN ABOVE.

**NOW-**Today one of the U.S. Coast Guard “Invader” Jeeps is currently on displayed at the Military Technology Museum of New Jersey in Wall Township.



# ATTENTION MEMBERS!

THE NEXT MTA MEETING WILL BE HELD ON THURSDAY, JANUARY 6<sup>th</sup> 2022. MEETING WILL BE HELD AT THE WHIPPANY AMERICAN LEGION THE MEETING ROOM IN BASEMENT Food at 6:00PM...Meeting starts at 7:00PM



## MTA Meeting Minutes

MTA Meeting Minutes – Wednesday, November 8th 2021 at Legion Hall

Submitted by Anita Roberts, Recording Secretary

The December 8, 2021, meeting of the MTA was called to order by President **Al Mellini** and opened with the *Pledge of Allegiance* and a *Moment of Silence*. Al called for a motion to approve the November 11, 2021, minutes. **Dennis Vecchiarelli** made the motion which was seconded by **Bill Peaslee**. *Motion carried!*

Al gave the financial report informing the membership of the club's financial status. Expenditures incurred were from insurance premiums coming due. We have 3 insurance policies for the club that covers everything. Al reminded those attending the meeting that: **2022 MEMBERSHIP DUES ARE DUE IN JANUARY. THERE IS A SELF ADDRESSED STAMPED ENVELOPE FOR MEMBERSHIP DUES PROVIDED IN THIS NEWSLETTER.**

### Financial Report

Nov. 30, 2021

Beginning Balance:	\$48,151.61
Income:	574.09
Expenditures:	-1,840.52
Ending Balance:	\$46,885.18

**T4T (Toys for Tots) Update – John Sobotka** informed the membership that the first weekend was very successful, 4500 toys, 6 bikes and 2 wagons were collected. Crowd size was down but the toy collection was very strong. Next run is out of New Rochelle, to Port Jervis and then on to Warwick, NY. First time we've had a contingent of 8 marines. 15 are expected for

MTA 2022 MTA ELECTED OFFICERS	
<b>PRESIDENT</b> <b>JOHN SOBOTKA</b> 862-266-6284 jjsobotka@hotmail.com	<b>VICE PRESIDENT</b> <b>GARY SCHULTZ</b> 973-207-8955 garyschultz@gmail.com
<b>SECRETARY</b> <b>JEAN SWANICK</b> 973-647-0148 jswanick170@msn.com	<b>TREASURER</b> <b>AL MELLINI</b> 973-723-2166 albertmellini@gmail.com
<b>CLASSIFIED</b>	
MTA 2022 KEY COMMITTEE HEADS	
<b>MEMBERSHIP</b> <b>DAVID STEINERT</b> 201-407-4035 dsteinert@optonline.net	<b>SERGEANT-AT-ARMS</b> <b>ANDY SALZANO</b> 973-831-0920
<b>NEWSLETTER EDITOR</b> <b>DAVID STEINERT</b> 201-407-4035 dsteinert@optonline.net	<b>WEBMASTER</b> <b>RUBY GARBELY</b> 973-800-9251 rgarbely@mtaofnj.org
<b>CLASSIFIED</b>	
<b>PARADE COORDINATOR</b> <b>MIA-VACANT</b>	<b>QUARTERMASTER/ MTA ARCHIVE CUSTODIAN</b> <b>GARY SCHULTZ</b> 973-207-8955 garyschultz@gmail.com
<b>CLASSIFIED</b>	
<b>SWAP MEET CHAIRMAN</b> <b>MIA-VACANT</b>	

the upcoming run. One of our best years running the train. John thanked all who are working the train. 44 people are scheduled to work the train.

**Guess Speaker:** Diana Becker of the NJNG Soldiers and Family Readiness Assistance Center, covering Morris, Sussex and Warren counties. Provides resources to veterans, active military and their families spoke to the membership.

This group assists with any crisis that may develop. They are a one stop shop for those in need including employment networks, food and clothing assistance. Funding comes from the state, they receive no federal funding. They work with Military One Source and the Yellow Ribbons Programs offering financial counselling, youth programs and childcare programs. They function as a clearing house for resources for active military, vets and families. They are there to help especially during deployments with outreach to the families on a monthly basis. They are available 24/7 including nights and weekends. Volunteers are welcome. They act as a liaison between Command and readiness groups.

Al inquired if there was a demand for toys during this season. She responded that they had a relationship with Dollar Tree and they receive toys from Picatinny. Al suggested they tap into T4T.

Donations are accepted—gift cards especially. Motion to propose a \$500 from the club. **Gary Schultz** made the motion to donate to a specific cause. Request that the NJNG come up with a specific cause for an MTA donation, **Jim Mescher** seconded. Acceptance of donation/gift needs to be determined before a donation can be made. **Ben Cave** made

motion to withhold \$500 donation until it's determined who to send the check to. *Motion carried--we discuss next month!*

**OMS 7 Report – Pat Dolan** to give a short presentation on the various hand grenades used by the US, Germany and Japan and showed examples of each as well as a practice grenade. US ordinance was always painted yellow but because it was too obvious, grenades were subsequently painted green. US made its own grenades. Pat also spoke about Pearl Harbor and passed around a letter opener made from a blade from the USS Arizona. The weather prohibited displaying many of Pat's exhibits. **Ashley Jones** spoke of the repatriation for over 300 remains from the USS Arizona and Oklahoma with 6 placed in the graves for unmarked soldiers. Mission completed.

**For the Good of the Club:**

Motion to adjourn the meeting was made by **John Sobotka**, seconded by **Jim Mescher**.  
*Motion carried!*



## Final Results of the 2021 Toys for Tots Campaign

*Thank you just doesn't seem to be enough...*

*The Operation Toy Train crew knows by now that I try very hard to make sure I thank everyone, often, as we all run around crazy, working our butts off for 4 days. This year that just doesn't seem enough.*



*It would have been totally understandable if the weekend of 4 & 5 Dec was a little tough after a year off. It had been 2 years since we all did this. But no, this crew jumped right back in like we had done it yesterday and the weekend went great. **Al Mellini, Jean Swanick, Anita Roberts and Ken Gardner** got started early, making sure we had hot food and drinks all day long. Without "Cookie's Cafe" and our amazing food crew, I don't think our volunteers would get through the day!*

***Tim Farrell, Taras Terlecky & Jack Pellington** recognized early on that first of all, their smaller crew would need a bit of a boost for the NYS&W run on 12/11/2021, and*

*so we called in favors. We were joined by several new volunteers who were familiar with the train, but had not yet been on board. I think it's safe to say they were impressed, but more importantly, they were a huge asset to the operation. Good thing we did because 11 Dec was INSANE! The Orange Lantern in Paramus, NJ showed up to Rochelle Park with TWO TRUCKS filled with toys... 6,311 toys to be exact! Plus, Rochelle Park Police, a local motorcycle club, and the local VFW. The volunteers all worked so well together, even through the craziness of not having a baggage car, they could count in while we moved, and got it all done anyway. This was all capped off at the end by pulling the equipment into its new home in Port Jervis to a great crowd, and watching TOYX 1775, affectionately called "the green car", take a spin on the turntable.*



*We collected 31,819 toys over 4 days, and there are still more coming in as **John Sobotka & Tim** do mop up runs. We'll get the breakdown out to everyone once we have it.*

*Read that again though: **31,819 toys**. Unbelievable. When Tim showed me that number at dinner on Sunday, 12 Dec I broke into tears.*

*I cannot thank our volunteers enough for devoting so much time during the crazy holiday season to bring joy to so many children. The Marines once told me they average about 5 toys per child, so we provided toys for almost 6400 children and counting.*

*Wishing you all peace, love and joy this holiday season and into the new year.*

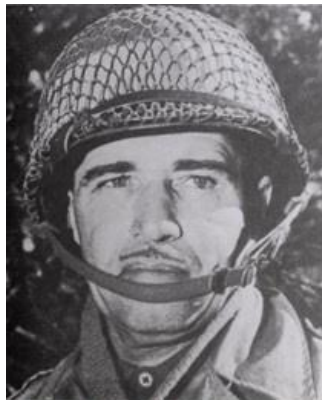
Sincerely,  
**Carolyn Hoffman**  
President of Operation Toy Train

## THE BAPTISM OF THE GOLDEN LIONS-PART VI

By Jim Swanick

The northern wing of the German *Fifth Panzer Army*, that which would strike Maj. Gen. Alan W. Jones' U.S. 106<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division, fondly known as the "Golden Lions", was Lt. Gen. Walter Lucht's LXVI Corps. Comprised of the 18<sup>th</sup> and 62<sup>d</sup> Volksgrenadier Divisions, the corps was to force the Our River behind the Golden Lions, seize the vital road center of St. Vith, and drive on the Meuse so as to cross it on either side of Andenne.

On Lucht's right the 1 SS Panzer Corps, subordinate element of (Waffen-SS) Gen. Sepp Dietrich's Sixth Panzer Army commanded by (Waffen-SS) Maj. Gen. Hermann Priess, would attack on either side of Udenbreth with three infantry divisions to secure a breakthrough before unleashing the 1<sup>st</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> SS Panzer Divisions for exploitation. Following the commitment of the armor the infantry would revert to army control, whereupon they would be repositioned to cover the northern shoulder of the operation as the tanks raced for the Meuse. As the boundary between the armies of Manteuffel and Dietrich ran through the Losheim Gap, its defenders, Col. Mark Devine's 14<sup>th</sup> Cavalry Group, would be struck not only by the main effort of the 18<sup>th</sup> VG Division as it swung north of the Schnee Eifel but also Priess' left wing, the 3d Parachute Division.



**Maj. Gen. Alan W. Jones,  
106<sup>th</sup> Division CG**

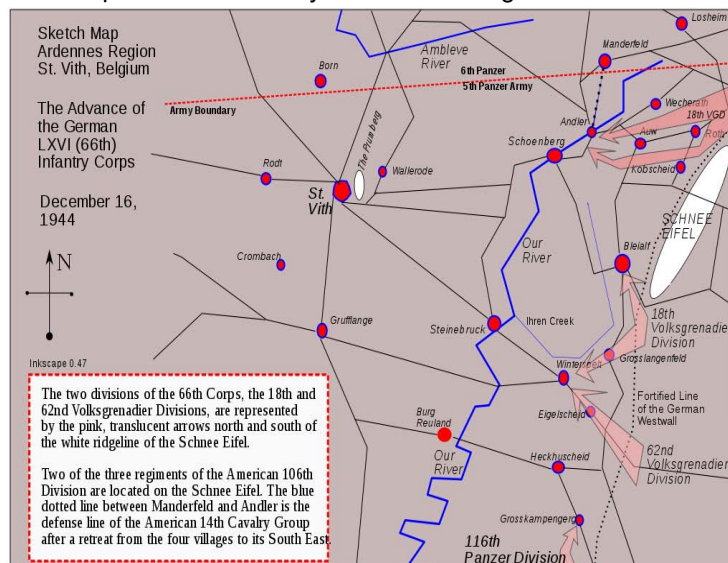
The German formations arrayed for the offensive in this sector were, as elsewhere, of a mixed variety. The 3d Parachute Division had been totally destroyed in Normandy and rebuilt using Luftwaffe ground crews untrained in infantry combat. It was also attacking understrength, as one of its regiments remained in the lines near Düren and it lacked its organic assault guns. Under orders to drive through the northern half of the Losheim Gap, the division was to advance ten miles to the west to the Schoppen-Eibertingen line in an

effort to open roads for the tanks behind it.

The 18<sup>th</sup> VG Division, on its left, had been raised out of the remnants of the 18<sup>th</sup> Luftwaffe Division, and so it too contained large numbers of Luftwaffe troops, augmented by as many naval personnel. Rounded out by middle-aged men combed from industry, the division was characterized by a unique lack of combat experience among its members. Tasked with the main effort of LXVI Corps, it would envelop the Schnee Eifel ridgeline from both ends. The balance of its forces would drive through the southern half of the Losheim Gap, exploiting a gap of nearly two miles between the cavalry and the positions of the 106<sup>th</sup> Division, as its remaining regiment pushed around the southern terminus of the ridge in the vicinity of Bleialf. All would then advance on Schönberg, completing the encirclement and crossing the Our there before seizing St. Vith. The 62d VG Division, meanwhile, itself a new iteration of a shattered formation filled out by men from Silesia and Hitler Youth from Cologne and Düsseldorf, would attack along the Habscheid-Winterspelt-Steinebrück axis, crossing the Our at Steinebrück. That accomplished, it would proceed to St. Vith.

The dispositions of the 106<sup>th</sup> Division can best be described as three distinct, loosely connected defensive lines. In the north the attached 14<sup>th</sup> Cavalry Group maintained a series of eight strongpoints in the Losheim Gap; none were mutually supporting, though they had been hardened with wire and minefields. On the group left detachments of A/820<sup>th</sup> TD Battalion

held Lanzerath, Merlscheid, and Berterath. The rest of the sector was held by the 18<sup>th</sup> Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron. In the center, Troop C held Weckerath, Afst, and Krewinkel; on the right Troop A outposted Roth and Kobscheid. Troop E and Co. F, assault guns and light tanks respectively, were in Manderfeld. The 32d Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron, just relieved of duties supporting the 8<sup>th</sup> Division, was in reserve at Vielsalm 20 miles to the rear. In addition, the group's firepower had been augmented by the attachment of the 275<sup>th</sup> Armored FA Battalion. A gap of 1.5 miles separated the cavalry from Col. George L. Descheneaux's



422d and Col. Charles Cavender's 423d Infantry Regiments. All three battalions of the 422d and one of the 423d were in line on the Schnee Eifel ridge; at the southern terminus 1/423 refused that outfit's line to the west toward Bleialf. A gap of roughly one mile existed between 1/423 and Bleialf proper, where the lines of a 350-man strong provisional battalion picked up and ran south to just north of Grosslangenfeld. Now another gap of 4,000 yards interrupted the line; it was only lightly held by a scratch force of recon, AT, and Cannon Co. troops under the command of Col. Alexander Reid's 424<sup>th</sup> Infantry, whose main positions began just southwest of the Weissenhof road junction and continued south to a spot north of Grosskampenberg. Two battalions, 1/424 at Steinebrück and 2/423 at Born, were held in division reserve.

At the cessation of the opening barrage three regiments, one of the 3d Parachute Division and two of the 18<sup>th</sup> VG Division, surged into the Losheim Gap. The isolated cavalry outposts came under pressure in rapid sequence, with the group S-3 reporting contact at Roth, Kobscheid, and Krewinkel as early as 0600. By 0800 all hands were engaged. Devine acted quickly, alerting the 32d Cav for movement at 0600 before requesting permission to bring it forward at 0640.

Across his front, meanwhile, the situation began to unravel. On his left the TD men, ill-equipped to fight infantry, were overwhelmed by the deluge of paratroopers; they lost 7 of their 10 (towed) guns as the survivors scrambled for Manderfeld. At 0830 Troop A in Roth reported a tank 75 yards from the CP "belting us with direct fire," prompting a response from Lt. Col. William



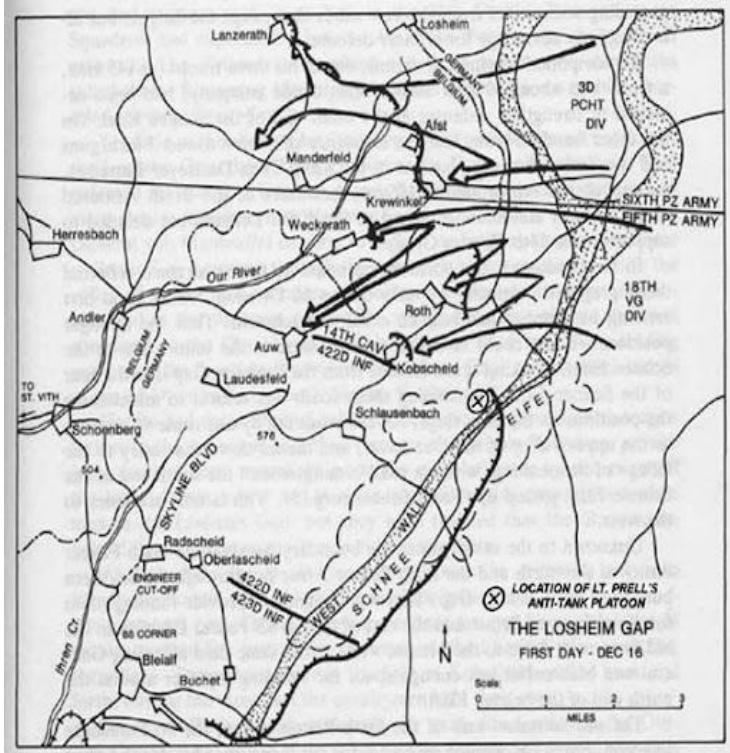
**The 106<sup>th</sup> Division's 589<sup>th</sup> FA Battalion  
nears St. Vith, 8 December 1944,  
enroute to the front**



**The 422d Infantry of the 106<sup>th</sup> Division  
nears Schönberg en route to the front,  
8 December 1944**

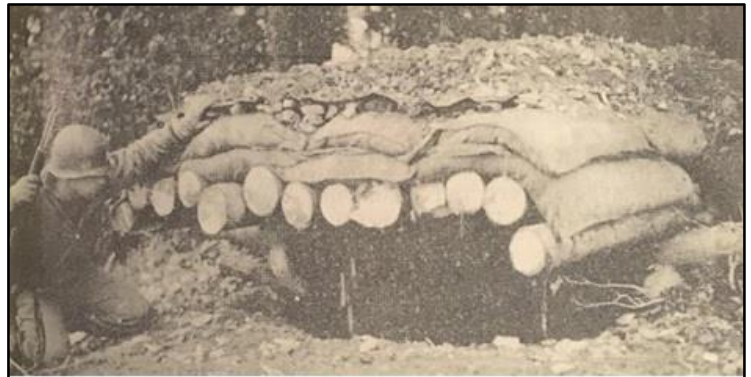
Damon, CO of the 18<sup>th</sup> Cav, who subsequently sent light tanks toward Roth and Weckerath. This had little impact, however, as the tanks sent to Roth were stopped by fire from Auw while those dispatched to Weckerath were unable to prevent Troop C from being dislodged. At 1100 the Roth garrison tried unsuccessfully to withdraw; an hour later Troop C fell back from the Weckerath area as the 275<sup>th</sup> Armored FA dumped shells into the village to counterattack by fire.

As the remains of the 18<sup>th</sup> Cav staggered into Manderfeld they passed through a line that Devine had been building since 1100. At that time the 32d Cav had begun arriving, and Devine had immediately moved it into position, placing the bulk in and around Manderfeld and sending a detachment northwest to Holzheim to bridge the gap between the cavalry and the 99<sup>th</sup> Division. He also ordered the squadron to counterattack into the Losheim Gap to restore the line, reestablish contact with the 99<sup>th</sup> Division, and protect the northern flank of the 106<sup>th</sup> Division. This thrust, which began at 1400, ran into a battalion of paratroopers supported by self-propelled guns and sputtered out halfway between Manderfeld and Lanzerath. In its aftermath Devine, aware that both his flanks were in the air and that enemy troops were pouring past his left, requested permission to pull back to the line Andler-Holzheim north of Schönberg. Division approved, and by 1700 the 14<sup>th</sup> Cavalry Group had withdrawn entirely from the Losheim Gap.



The withdrawal of the cavalry did little to endanger the 106<sup>th</sup> Division, largely because it was already in trouble. Battle had come to the division early, crashing into the 422d and 423d Infantry Regiments at the cessation of the opening barrage. It hit the 424<sup>th</sup> Infantry even sooner, at 0550 before the artillery lifted. With all three regiments engaged to varying degrees the calls came pouring into division headquarters, where Jones had been awakened by big 14-inch shells raining down on St. Vith. Jones had already heard from Middleton: at 0632 the corps commander had informed him that the 99<sup>th</sup> Division was under “heavy” attack, and that a patrol it had sent into the Losheim Gap reported it

“overrun” with enemy troops. Now he received calls from Cavender and Reid, who iterated identical demands: to give them their battalions which he held in reserve. He turned both down. Cavender had a serious problem: volksgrenadiers had charged into the gap separating his regiment from Reid’s 424<sup>th</sup> to seize Bleialf as early as 0800. Seeking to hold onto the village lest the



**A typical dugout on the Schnee Eifel**

enemy plunge into the division rear the former constructed a makeshift battalion out of B/ 81<sup>st</sup> Engineer Battalion and men from the regimental service, cannon, and HQ companies, which he hurled into the town in a bitter close quarters brawl. Such desperate measures proved effective, and by mid-afternoon Bleialf was back in American hands. Reid, meanwhile, had a similar conundrum, as his Cannon Co. at Eigelscheid astride the road to Steinebrück was under heavy assault and sagging. Thankfully the assistant division commander, Brig. Gen. Herbert T. Perrin, was at Winterspelt and released C/424 on his own authority. Although neither the commitment of Co. C nor that of the rest of 1/424 just prior to noon were able to save Eigelscheid, they did save Winterspelt, as the battalion arrived in the latter as it came under assault from troops attacking from the direction of Grosslangenfeld. Though these actions temporarily stabilized the southern positions of the division, the northern flank remained in freefall. Here the village of Auw, held by engineers and the target of a predawn advance that exploited the gap between Weckerath and Roth, by noon had been subdued well enough by infantry and assault guns to be used as a launching pad for assaults against the positions of the division’s 589<sup>th</sup> and 592d FA Battalions.



**Maj. Gen. Troy Middleton,  
VIII Corps Commander**

In response Col. Descheneaux of the 422d Infantry reinforced his reserve (L/422) with men from the AT and Cannon Companies, gave the ad-hoc battalion the support of Cannon Co.’s howitzers, and sent it toward the town. This effort was making good progress when it was recalled to Schlausenbach to defend the regimental CP from infiltrators. Now, with daylight fading, the division left wide open as far back as Andler, the artillery behind the 422d Infantry under attack, and the Germans in Auw free to press down the Skyline Drive,

Jones decided to act. At 1215 he had moved his remaining reserve, 2/423, to Schönberg; now at 2030 he ordered



# Military Transport Association

P.O. Box 391  
Budd Lake, NJ 07828

THE THURSDAY, JANUARY 6th  
MEETING WILL BE HELD AT  
THE WHIPPANY AMERICAN  
LEGION POST AT 7PM



**MERRY CHRISTMAS AND HAPPY  
NEW YEAR TO ALL OUR MTA  
MEMBERS!**



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)

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Street: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_ (cell preferred)

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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:

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