

MOTOR POOL MESSENGER

the official monthly newsletter of the MILITARY TRANSPORT ASSOCIATION visit us online at www.MTAofNJ.org

Issue: April 2022 Editor: David Steinert



Page String District The Estyle East of Elsenborn-Final Chapter

ON THE COVER...



The M113 Armored Personnel Carrier is a fully tracked armored personnel carrier (APC) that was developed and also produced by the Food Machinery and Chemical Corporation (FMC). The M113 was sent to the United States Army Europe to replace the mechanized

infantry's M59 APCs from 1961. The M113 was first used in combat in April 1962 after the United States provided the South Vietnamese Army (ARVN) with heavy weaponry such as the M113, under the Military Assistance Command, Vietnam (MACV) program. Eventually, the M113 was the most widely used armored vehicle of the U.S. Army in the Vietnam War and was used to break through heavy thickets in the midst of the jungle to attack and overrun enemy positions. It was largely known as an "APC" or an "ACAV" (armored cavalry assault vehicle) by the allied forces.



The M113 was the first aluminum hull combat vehicle to be put into mass production. Much lighter than earlier similar vehicles, its aluminum armor was designed to be thick enough to protect the crew and passengers against small arms fire, but light enough that the vehicle was air transportable and moderately amphibious.

In the U.S. Army, the M113 series have long been replaced as front-line combat vehicles by the M2 and M3 Bradleys, but large numbers are still used in support roles such as armored ambulance, mortar carrier, engineer vehicle, and command vehicle. The U.S. Army's heavy brigade combat teams are

equipped with approximately 6,000 M113s and 4,000 Bradleys.

The M113's versatility spawned a wide variety of adaptations that live on worldwide and in U.S. service. These variants together currently represent about half of U.S. Army armored vehicles. To date, it is estimated that over 80,000 M113s of all types have been produced and used by over 50 countries worldwide, making it one of the most widely used armored fighting vehicles of all time. The M113 production was terminated in 2007. The Army initiated the Armored Multi-Purpose Vehicle (AMPV) program to search for a replacement.

The Vietnam War was the first combat opportunity for mechanized infantry, a technically new type of infantry with its roots in the armored infantry of World War II, now using the M113 armored personnel carrier.



In addition, the armored cavalry squadrons in Vietnam consisted largely of M113s, after replacing the intended M114 in a variety of roles, and armor battalions contained mostly M113s within their headquarters companies, such as the maintenance section, medical section, vehicle recovery section, mortar section, and the scout (reconnaissance) section. Also, the United States Army mechanized infantry units in Vietnam were fully equipped with the

M113 APC/ACAV, which consisted of one headquarters company and three line companies, normally with an authorized maximum strength of approximately 900 men. There was a total of ten U.S. mechanized infantry battalions deployed to Vietnam from 1965 until their departure in 1972.



In 2014, the United States Army selected BAE Systems proposal of a turretless variant of the Bradley Fighting Vehicle to replace over 2800 M113s in service. Thousands of M113s continue to see combat service in the Israel Defense Forces, although as of 2014 the IDF was seeking to gradually replace many of its 6,000 M113s, with other AMPVs.



ATTENTION MEMBERS!

THE NEXT MTA MEETING WILL BE HELD ON THURSDAY, APRIL 7th, 2022... MEETING WILL BE HELD AT THE WHIPPANY AMERICAN LEGION IN THE MEETING ROOM IN BASEMENT

Food at 6:00PM...Meeting starts at 7:00PM

MTA Meeting Minutes

MTA Meeting Minutes – Thursday, March 3rd 2022 at the American Legion Hall in Whippany, NJ Submitted by Jean Swanick, Secretary

The March 3, 2022 meeting of the MTA was called to order by President **John Sobotka** and opened with *The Pledge of Allegiance* and a *Moment of Silence*. John called for a motion to approve the February minutes. **Pat Dolan** motioned to approve the minutes and **Gary Schultz** seconded, *motion carried!*

Financial Report - February 28, 2022

Al Mellini presented the financial report as follows:

 Beginning Balance:
 \$ 47,021.71

 Income:
 + 1,750.96

 Expenditures:
 - 3,345.00 *

 Ending Balance:
 \$ 45,427.67

 (*) 2K of this went to fairgrounds for deposit.

Al reminded all of the option to pay dues by credit card as well as cash or check. Please submit payment as soon as possible.

From the President: Thank you to Dave Steinert for not missing a beat during his recent hip replacement recovery in producing the monthly newsletter. Please keep the suggestions coming for new ideas in helping to retain and strengthen the club membership. Pat Tipton suggested stronger marketing to help get the word out about who we are and what we do. Some discussion was had regarding participation with area scout camp programs by bringing in some vehicles for exhibition on event weekends. The most recent issue of *Military Vehicle* magazine features an article on our club...check it out!

50th Anniversary: The gear has arrived and can be purchased through Gary. Hats are \$20, shirts are \$15 and quantities are limited. The club picnic aka the Founder's BBQ will be held on June 18th at Firemens Field in Rockaway and will honor some of our founding members of the club who will be in attendance. Save the date!

<u>Swap Meet:</u> Tim Swanick reported that 3 rounds of notifications have been sent out to all vendors regarding registration information, and timeline reminder for reservation and payment for spots. A fourth notification will go out to everyone next week. The club is working on reserving dates with the fairgrounds for the 2023 show.

<u>Parade Report:</u> Al Mellini reported that 11 parade contracts have been mailed out for Memorial Day weekend. Sign-ups start tonight. There are also some St. Patrick's Day parades being held between the dates of March 5th and 26th. They are Nutley, Rutherford, Newark, Union, W. Orange, Clinton, Bayonne, Ringwood, Morristown and Midland Park. Please contact Al if you are interested in attending. **John Sobotka** mentioned that this year might be a good idea for the club to offer a small fuel reimbursement for club members attending parades with their vehicles. It's important to appreciate some

of the distances driven to get to these events. After discussion on this a motion was made by **Ken Gardner** and seconded by **Gary Schultz** for a participant to receive \$20 per parade attended to offset fuel costs. The method of disbursement is being investigated. The vote to approve was unanimous, *motion carried!*

Parade Message from Al Mellini, Acting Parade Chairman

Members, as you know, the 2022 parade season is upon us. We are working to secure contracts with 13 towns for Memorial Day parades. As of March 29, we have 6 under contract. So now is the time to sign up with the Parade Captains to drive in the parades. We NEED your support. It is critical that we staff the parades with a minimum of 3 vehicles. If you can drive from one parade to another later in the day – sign up for both. In addition, if you attend the April and/or May meetings – you can sign up there!! Please do not email the LIST - Just contact the Captains. These parades are a critical funding source for the Club. Please support them!!

	DATE	LINE UP	KICK OFF	MTA 2022 Memorial Day Parades	
TOWN				LOCATION	MTA CAPTAIN
East Hanover	?	9:30	10:00	411 Ridgedale Ave	Dolan
Hanover	30-May			- Committee Comm	Dolan
Lodi	30-May	9:30	10:00	Felician U at 262 South Main St	Swain
Madison	30-May	9:00	9:30	31 Kings Road	Dolan
Midland Park	28-May	9:00	10:00	280 Godwin Ave	Swain
Morris Plains	28-May	8:30	9:00	Franklin Place and Speedwell Ave	Dolan
New Milford	30-May	8:30	9:00	Cecchino Dr by H.S. & River Rd	Dolan
Nutley	30-May	10:30	11:00	The Nutley Oval on Franklin Ave	Vecchiarelli
Parsippany	30-May	11:30	Noon	No. Bever vyck Road Lake Hiawatha	Dolan
Rockaway VFW	30-May	10:30	11:00	75 Franklin Ave	?
Secaucus	21-May	10:30	Noon	North End .ot, 1520 Paterson Plank Rd	Swain
West Caldwell	30-May	9:00	9:30	Bloomfield Ave and Forest Ave	Vecchiarelli
Wyckoff	30-May	10:30	11:00	Cornerstone Church, 495 Wyckoff Ave	Swain
	R EMAIL PA	RADE CA	PTAIN TO SI	IGN UP OR SIGN UP AT APRIL OR MAY	CLUB MEETINGS
CAPTAINS					
Pat Dolan					
973-220-9169					1
pdol461@hotmail.c	com				
Art Swain					
201-916-6487					
aws1@optonline.n	et				
Dennis Vecchiarell					
973-900-1969					
dvecc907@gmail.c	om				

<u>Newsletter:</u> Dave Steinert thanked Jean Swanick for her contribution of the meeting minutes to the newsletter and **Jim Swanick** for his series of articles on the Battle of the Bulge, which is greatly appreciated by Dave.

<u>Operation Toy Train Update:</u> <u>Tim Farrell</u> informed the group that a boxcar work session is being held all day on Saturday, March 5th in Port Jervis. If you are interested and able to help out it would be greatly appreciated. *Please know you WILL get dirty!*

<u>Presentation:</u> Thank you to <u>Pat Dolan</u> for sharing his slideshow on the Army's ¼-ton 4x4 jeep with original slides, which identified all the vehicle factory-equipment and accessories.

For the Good of the Club: Gary Schultz will put out a notification of the anticipated annual Hot Dog Johnny's trail ride scheduled for Saturday, April 30th. Meet at the old general store, which is now called "The Taste" for breakfast and rendezvous to lunch in Buttsville. Rain date will be Sunday, May 1st.

The Executive Board has selected club members **Jack Pellington** and **Pete Shaw** for Life Membership-*Congratulations!*

MTA Member **Fred Castenschoild**, who is also a member of the *New Jersey Triumph Club* announced their club is planning to bring back a summer event for the veterans at the Lyons Hospital, details will be forthcoming.

Pat Tipton offered it might be a good idea to plan a vehicle prep day ahead of the Memorial weekend at his farm, can be discussed further at the next meeting.

There being no further business to discuss, a motion to adjourn at 8:39 was made by **Anita Roberts** and seconded by **Bill Dekker**, motion carried!

Respectfully Submitted by Jean Swanick Secretary

MTA 2022 Officers and Key Committee Heads

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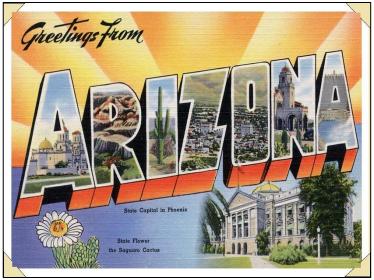
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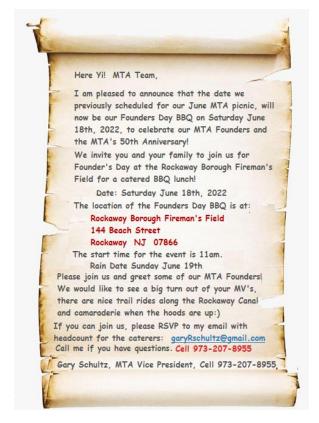






POST CARD To My New Jersey MTA Friends, This is a report from your embedded Southwestern correspondent. The local FOR ADDRESS equivalent of the MTA, The Arizona Military vehicle Collecters' Club held its annual show and apmeet from February 18, 19, and 20th at the Buckeye, Az airport. This was done in conjunction ith the annual Buckeye Air Fair so the AHVCC ATM attendance was buoyed by those attending the air fair...75 military vehicles were displayed P.O. Box 391 representing all periods from www to the present and all sizes from a Cushman Scooter up to the Budd Lake, NJ 07828 20 ton 14070... Additionally 50 vendors populated the swap meet with their wares. And your southwestern correspondent, in spite of being retired for 21 years, still finds himself having track now with a M818/3.22 combination instead of a M123/747 as in days of old. Phil Francis





Stopping Dietrich: The Battle East of Elsenborn Final Chapter

Jim Swanick

See Map II (located under "Maps") at https://www.ibiblio.org/hyperwar/USA/USA-E-Ardennes/index.html is relevant to this article.

Dawn on 17 December found Maj. Gen. Walter Lauer's 99th Infantry Division under considerable pressure. Its center, the 393d Infantry, had succeeded in holding off the 277th Volksgrenadier Division, but this regiment's left had collapsed. That battalion (3/393) was to counterattack and regain its original positions. On the division right the 394th Infantry had kept the 12th VG Division out of Losheimergraben, but had been forced to all but abandon Buchholz Station. Both regiments had suffered heavy



SS men of 1st SS Panzer Division loot the bodies of executed prisoners in Honsfeld, 17 December

losses. Only the division left, the 395th Infantry, had survived 16 December intact.

The day began with a scare. At 0500 the point element of *Kampfgruppe* (*KG*) *Peiper* blew through Buchholz Station and out of the woods. It seized Honsfeld, where it shot and killed at least 15 prisoners, and continued to Büllingen. By 0630 the

2d Infantry Division CP in Wirtzfeld was scrambling to organize a defense. Peiper, however, had only taken a detour to avoid a poor stretch of Route D; though he sent a patrol toward Wirtzfeld, he returned to Route D to continue to the Meuse.

As Peiper was rolling into Büllingen the 12th VG Division

resumed its efforts to dislodge the savaged 394th Infantry. By 1400 the regimental front had penetrated in several places and Lauer ordered it to withdraw to Mürringen. the north. To meanwhile, KG Müller of the 12th SS Panzer Division crashed into 3/393's counterattack head-on. Here the situation rapidly deteriorated as Müller attacked with a battalion of infantry supported by TD's, and by 1100 the regiment was falling back.



As the Checkerboarders

fought to keep *I SS Panzer Corps* at bay Maj. Gen. Walter Robertson was working on extricating his 2d Division. Around 0730 the V Corps commander, Maj. Gen. Leonard T. Gerow, finally received permission to "act as he saw fit" regarding the 2d Division's attack on Wahlerscheid. He immediately ordered Robertson to fall back on the "twin villages" of Krinkelt and Rocherath, directly behind the determined but collapsing 99th Division. Robertson, who had spent the night crafting and disseminating his withdrawal plan, now put it in motion. The Indianhead Division would "skin the cat," that is withdraw the 9th Infantry, farthest forward and most heavily engaged, back through the 38th Infantry, at which point the 9th would pause to cover the

38th as it withdrew. In this fashion the division would break contact at Wahlerscheid and withdraw to the Twin Villages.

The withdrawal from the salient commenced at 0800 and took most of the day; the last unit to pull out did so at 1415. Even as it withdrew, however, the division became engaged. Late on 16 December two battalions of the 23d Infantry, Lt. Col. John Hightower's 1st and Lt. Col. Paul Tuttle's 3d, had taken up positions behind the 394th and 393d Infantry Regiments. Thus, as the exhausted and mangled "Battle Babies" withdrew through the Twin Villages, the pursuing enemy ran into this next line of defenses.

The first blows fell upon Tuttle's 3/23, in position behind 3/393. Shortly after noon the infantry elements of KG Müller



Lt. Col. William D. McKinley commander of the 1st Battalion of the 9th Infantry

advancing down Route A slammed into I/23, and over the next few hours the battalion withstood seven infantry assaults. Finally, at 1530, five TD's engaged I/23 at close range. Lacking weapons, 1/23 collapsed, precipitating the withdrawal of the rest of the battalion. Robertson, aware of 3/23's plight, acted quickly. He intercepted K/9 and Lt. Col. William D. McKinley's 1/9 on the road north of Rocherath and sent both east to a crossroads in the fields behind 3/23. Hightower's 1/23, meanwhile, came under attack at Hünningen. From

1600 on it fought off seven attacks from a regiment of the *12th VG Division*, preventing it from accessing the Twin Villages from the south and allowing the 394th Infantry to reach Mürringen. That night, it and the 394th withdrew northward.

McKinley's reinforced 1/9 began filtering into the Lausdell Crossroads around the same time that 3/23 withdrew from the woods. Having attacked as part of the main effort at Wahlerscheid, the combined force was seriously depleted, mustering only 515 officers and men. Robertson's orders to the battalion were simple, and grim: to hold the exposed, poorly defensible crossroads "at all costs" and "until ordered otherwise."

Confused fighting erupted at the crossroads around 1830 when a handful of German TD's, groping through the night ignorant of the American positions, rode straight through B/9's lines. An artillery strike directed onto the armor kicked off the battle, which rapidly escalated as *KG Müller* went into the attack. Over the next five hours several groups of TD's, supported by Müller's dwindling number of infantry, streamed out of the woods toward 1/9. Each was repulsed even as the TD's penetrated the American line, where they were knocked out by roving bazooka teams. One platoon-sized element avoided 1/9 by slipping through

the fields to the south and reached the southern edge of Rocherath, where it knocked out three M4's and captured the bulk of B/38 before withdrawing around 0600. In the final attack, launched at 2230, a desperate plea for fire support went outthree



Casualties of the Dom Bütgenbach fighting. These German TD's made for poor assault guns

minutes later, the massed fire of seven FA battalions answered. The attack failed, and around midnight the battle petered out.

During the night the Germans reorganized. For the 18 December attack on the Twin Villages they gathered the full strength of the 12th SS Panzer Division's tank regiment, what was left of KG Müller, and the remnants of the 277th VG Division, which had been shattered in its attacks on 16 December. At 0600, this sizable force descended upon the Lausdell Crossroads.

The first attack kicked off in an extremely thick fog. Panthers led the way, riflemen clinging to their decks, and Mark IV's followed with infantry on foot behind them. The armor was allowed to pass through the battalion position, whereupon they were stalked by bazooka teams, while frontline elements engaged the infantry in close combat with knives and bayonets. This effort faltered, but a second, launched at 0830, was more successful. Here the tanks, under orders to bypass 1/9 and make for Rocherath, overran Co.'s A and K on the battalion right. The infantry behind them attempted to mop up but were crushed by a 30-minute barrage laid down on top of A/9's positions at the company commander's request. With most of their infantry support dead or dying in the fields around 1/9, the tanks rumbled on toward Rocherath.

Waiting for the armor was Col. Francis Boos's 38th Infantry, reinforced by tanks and TD's of the 741st Tank and 644th TD Battalions. At 0730 the first tanks crept into Rocherath, where



An M10 of the 644th TD Battalion, partially hidden by debris, stands guard at Wirtzfeld on 17 December

AT/38 opened up with bazooka and arms small fire, knocking several out and cutting down what remained of their infantry support. Rebuffed here, the **Panthers** started working their way south, where several fell prey to flank shots from tanks and TD's concealed in

the alleys. For the rest of the day the battle ebbed and flowed as the 12th SS Panzer Division mustered three assaults during the afternoon and evening, ultimately succeeding in wresting half of the village mass from the Gl's at heavy cost. At 1700, with the 99th Division having withdrawn to the Elsenborn Ridge, Robertson notified his subordinates that they would abandon the Twin Villages the following day.

Three days of heavy, inconclusive fighting had badly mauled the elements of *I SS Panzer Corps* clustered around the Twin Villages. Due to this lack of progress, *Sixth Panzer Army* shifted the corps axis of attack to the south, along Route C. Here the last of the *12th SS Panzer Division's* fresh troops would be augmented by the remains of the division's tank regiment in an attempt to drive from Büllingen through Bütgenbach.

Reorienting the depleted armored division down Route C brought Lt. Col. Derrill Daniel's 2d Battalion of the 26th Infantry into the fight. This veteran outfit, an element of the fabled 1st Infantry Division, had been very roughly handled in fighting in the Hürtgen Forest in early December before coming south on 16 December. It had dug in at Dom Bütgenbach, a manor farm halfway between Bütgenbach and Büllingen on Route C. Aware of the crucial nature of their mission to block the road and seeking to instill determination in their hearts of their men (largely new replacements), the unit's leaders adopted and disseminated a motto for the operation: "We Fight and Die Here."

The first weighted moves toward Bütgenbach occurred early on 19 December. At 0215, 20 truckloads of infantry and 6-12 assault guns of the 12th VG Division emerged from Büllingen and unloaded directly in front of 2/26. Fire from the 33d FA Battalion was prompt, and it and the battalion's AT weapons squashed this attack inside the course of an hour. A second probe by the 26th SS Panzergrenadier (PG) Regiment at 1010 met a similar fate, and the enemy contented himself with shelling the Americans for the rest of the day. To the east, meanwhile, the 2d Division pulled out of the Twin Villages without a hitch.

By evening on 19 December enough of the 12th SS Panzer Division had assembled in Büllingen to allow for it to drive on the manor farm. For its initial attack the division would utilize its last fresh reserves, the 26th SS PG Regiment and a battalion of TD's. These were grouped into KG Kuhlmann, and at 0330 the battlegroup approached Dom Bütgenbach. The GI's allowed the armor to pass through their foxhole line, where they were engaged by tanks, TD's, and AT guns, and called artillery down on the infantry. This effort was successfully checked, but at 0545 KG Kuhlmann returned, opening a series of assaults against 2/26 from both the east and south. These hammer blows tore into the battalion center and placed heavy pressure on the flanks, but incessant, devastating fires from the artillery, the efforts of the tanks and TD's, and a gutsy performance by the battalion AT gunners drove them back. By 0830 KG Kuhlmann had been repulsed with heavy losses, especially among the TD's. Two more attacks launched during the afternoon also failed, and during the night the division reorganized for another attempt to open Route

The 21 December attack on the farm was the largest mounted by the 12^{th} SS Panzer Division. By this point the remains of the division's armored regiment had filtered into Büllingen, giving the division some three dozen tanks and TD's with which to support three panzergrenadier battalions. The original plan of attack called for this force to flank 2/26 from the west prior to dawn, but this concept was abandoned when one of the infantry battalions became lost en route to its point of departure. As a result, the attack kicked off in daylight, and saw the division drive against 2/26 in a massive frontal assault.

The attack came forward at 0645, preceded by an artillery barrage that tore into 2/26 and inflicted heavy casualties and opened wide gaps in the line. At the cost of a handful of tanks the armor overran two platoons of AT/26 on the battalion right and penetrated into the manor farm, where they were engaged by two tanks of C/745. The M4's whittled the attackers from five to three at their own cost, and the surviving German tanks took up positions inside the farm and began shelling the battalion CP.

The penetration into the CP area was a pyrrhic victory for the 12th SS Panzer Division. By 21 December the Elsenborn Ridge had become a hornet's nest of American artillery positions, and during the day 12 battalions of redlegs responded to Daniel's request for a "ring of steel" to be placed in front of the battalion position. Not a single German infantryman penetrated the line, and as a result, the attack lost all momentum. At 1500 a 90mm AA gun overlooking the manor drove the final tank away from the CP, and by 1600 the attack was over. A final effort was made on 22 December, in which the 12th VG Division attacked from Wirtzfeld while the 12th SS Panzer Division executed the flanking maneuver originally planned for 21 December, but this failed as well.

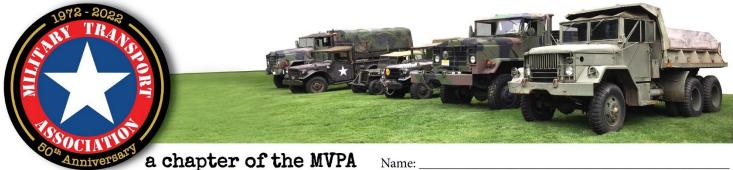
The Sixth Panzer Army was dead in the water!

THE END

Military Transport Association P.O. Box 391

THE NEXT MTA MEETING WILL BE HELD ON MARCH 7rd AT THE WHIPPANY AMERICAN LEGION POST AT 7PM





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.

Or, join online today at www.MTAofNJ.org!

Name:						
Street:						
City:	State: ZIP:					
Phone: ()	(cell preferred)					
Email:						
MTA Membership Level:	Single (\$30)					
Are you a member of MVPA? Yes No						
Military vehicles owned:						
Return form with \$ annua	l dues and \$ donation to:					
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