

# MOTOR POOL MESSENGER

the official monthly newsletter of the **MILITARY TRANSPORT ASSOCIATION**  
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Issue: June 2022

Editor: David Steinert



## A 1<sup>st</sup> Cavalry M577 Command Post APC in Action

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## ON THE COVER...



WIKIPEDIA  
The Free Encyclopedia

A United States 1ST Cavalry M577 command post armored personnel carrier crosses a ribbon bridge during Exercise REFORGER '83. The bridge is being held in position by Fairey Allday marine combat support boats. The M577 Command Post Carrier, also known as the M577 Command Post Vehicle or Armored Command Post Vehicle, is a variant of the M113 Armored Personnel Carrier that was developed and produced by the FMC (Food Machinery and Chemical Corporation) to function on the battlefield as a mobile command post i.e. a tactical operations centre, usually at the battalion level. In U.S. military service its official designation is *Carrier, Command Post, Light Tracked M577*.



Introduced to the U.S. Army in 1962 it soon saw operational service in the Vietnam War and also more recently in the 2003 invasion of Iraq. It is also used by many armies around the world and has

been adapted for further uses such as an armoured ambulance, emergency medical treatment vehicle and fire control vehicle. It is also used by various police forces and law enforcement agencies as a tactical response vehicle.

The M577 is easily distinguished from the M113 upon which it is based by its raised upper hull and roof-mounted auxiliary power unit (APU). Vehicles are generally unarmed.

The experience gained by the U.S. Army in the Second World War showed that close co-operation between infantry and armoured forces is a necessity. Mobile warfare increases both the scope and size of the theatre of operations, and mobile command and control posts are necessary to co-ordinate operations at the divisional, brigade and battalion levels.

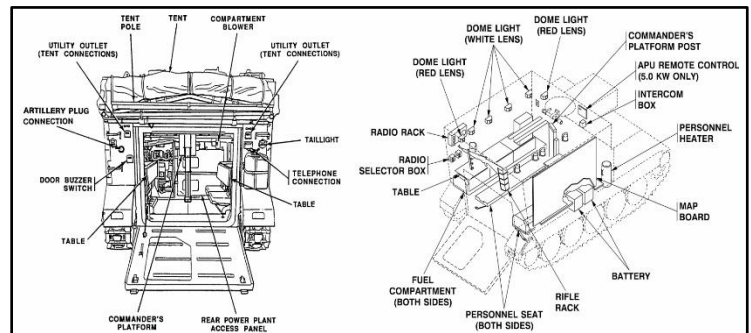
Whereas tanks and armoured cars offered a level of protection against weapons fire, they usually did not provide sufficient internal room to permit the extra personnel needed to operate all the radio sets. On the other hand, lightly or unarmed vehicles could be used to transport temporary structures (e.g. tents) that gave greater work space, but these structures lacked protection from direct and indirect weapons fire, and advancing front line units could exceed the communication range the command post, necessitating the dismantling and removal of the structure to a new

location. Furthermore, experience gained in the snow and mud in Korea showed the advantage of tracked over wheeled vehicles. As of 1960, no such vehicle existed in the U.S. Army inventory that was able to satisfy all of these requirements.



M577 with MCPS tent

The first four prototypes were built in February 1962 by United Defense Industries at the U.S. Army's Detroit Arsenal under the designation of the XM577 and were conversions of M113 APCs. Upon completion in March 1962 the first vehicle was shipped to the Aberdeen Proving Ground for engineering tests while the remaining three vehicles were shipped to the Armor, Infantry and Artillery Boards for evaluation tests.

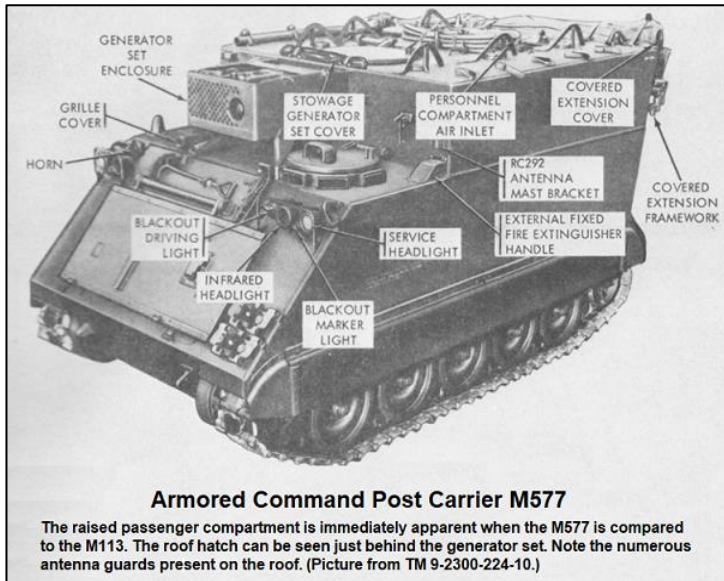


The results of all tests were generally positive and the vehicle went into immediate production with the first batch of 270 vehicles accepted into U.S. Army service between in December 1962 and March 1963. In March 1963 under Standard A Acceptance the XM577 was redesignated as the M577, indicating official status as a regular production vehicle. Production began on a second batch of 674 vehicles in November 1963, all of which entered service by the middle of 1964.

The M577 shares the chassis, lower hull and running gear from the M113 upon which it is based. The hull sides from the engine firewall to the rear cargo ramp

were extended by 25.25 in (64 cm) for a maximum headroom in the rear compartment of 74.75 in (190 cm), allowing operators to perform duties standing up. On the roof the commander's cupola of the M113 APC has been replaced with circular hatch similar to the driver's hatch, and the large rectangular hatch over the troop compartment has been dispensed with. There is no external weapons stations fitted to the M577, although most vehicles were fitted with an internal rifle rack.

Command post vehicles are equipped with additional radio sets as found in a standard M113 APC, so as to provide command and control facilities across the unit (e.g. battalion) and coordinate with other units and higher levels of command (e.g. regimental HQ). Removable antenna masts are usually carried and attached to the vehicle's roof.



In U.S. Army service each vehicle usually carries three or four different communications suites (radio sets), each providing a specific communication network according to the communications roles they were assigned e.g. to divisional headquarters, across all vehicles within the unit (battalion), etc. The suites operated over amplitude modulation (AM), continuous wave (CW) and frequency modulation (FM), with the frequencies and number of channels, and transmission and reception range determined by the set. Communication suites were originally analogue, but with the introduction of the M577A3 and A4 have mostly been upgraded to digital.

**ATTENTION MEMBERS!**  
**THE NEXT MTA MEETING WILL BE HELD ON**  
**THURSDAY, JUNE 2nd, 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, May 5th 2022 at the American Legion Hall in Whippany, NJ**

Submitted by **Jean Swanick**, Secretary

The meeting was called to order at 7:07 pm by President **John Sobotka** and opened with the *Pledge of Allegiance* and a “moment of silence”. It was requested that a motion be made to approve the minutes if there were no changes. **Tim Farrell** motioned to approve and **Dennis Vecchiarelli** seconded, *motion carried!*

The monthly financial report presented by **Al Mellini** is as follows:

### Financial Report – Ending April 30, 2022

Beginning balance	\$47,541.37
Income	\$ 585.65 (membership & swap meet income)
Expenditures	\$ 667.93
Closing balance	\$47,459.09

Al mentioned using the Square pay app has been very successful in processing payments to the club.

**50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary-** Gary Schultz mentioned that sign-ups continue for the picnic on June 18<sup>th</sup>. Please contact him if you are planning to attend so we can plan accordingly for the food. This year’s menu promises to be very tasty.

**Swap Meet-** Additional spaces have been sold since last meeting now making the Richards building 50% full and only a few outdoor uncovered spaces remain per **Tim Swanick**. The digital advertising contract for the event is in progress as well.

**Parade Report-** Please sign up if you can attend any of the Memorial Day parades and if you have not done so yet. The more vehicles in each parade the better. Note that some parades are on the Saturday. As of this meeting, East Hanover/Hanover and Lodi still need to get back to Al if having their event.

**Railroad Battalion-** Tim Farrell informed the group that 4 more boxcars were donated to the *Port Jervis Transportation History Center*. Cars from the *Erie Lackawanna Dining Car Society* have been transferred from Scranton to PJ as well. The turntable shed has been rebuilt and several other property repairs have been underway or completed ahead of the Memorial Day weekend. The camo car used for *Operation Toy Train* has been converted back to a theater car. Watch for pictures in upcoming newsletters. Everyone is encouraged to come out and see the permanent exhibits completed so far and visiting equipment. *The Liberty Historic Railway* was able to fund the movement of several cars.

**Picatiny Historical Trail Ride Update-** Tim Swanick informed everyone that last week Picatiny raised the health protection level on the base due to the rise in COVID. Any participants would have to be vaccinated or have a negative test 3 days prior to the ride and show proof of such in order to enter the base. Also, a change in command has now been scheduled at the base along with several celebratory events for same, the week prior to, and after the event date, which most likely will involve many of the guests that would come out while we are on our tour. Due to this, it was suggested that the group

may want to postpone the base visit until the fall and pick a date that does not interfere with Labor Day or Red Ball's show. The group discussed this and the majority voiced preferring to postpone the event. A new date (which will be a Sunday) will be chosen once we coordinate calendars.

**OMS7- John Sobotka** mentioned the good teamwork amongst our club members when it comes to getting a job done. On the trail ride to *Hot Dog Johnny's* last week, a member had a mechanical problem with his transmission which left him a little bit stuck. **Pat Tipton** and **Tim Swanick** explained that once the transfer case was taken apart, it was seen that the small interlock pin broke off inside, preventing the shifting out of second gear. Pat gave an interesting explanation of the surrounding parts and how the synchronizers function when everything is in sync working properly.

year and our club has again been invited to participate. See Pat if you are interested.

A motion was made to adjourn the meeting at 8:25PM by **Pat Tipton** and seconded by **Dennis Vecchiarelli**. *Motion carried!*

Respectfully submitted,  
**Jean Swanick**  
Secretary

## The Third Annual Johnny Hot Dogs Run

By Gary Schultz

The MTA team had our first Trail Ride of the season on April 30th with the *3rd Annual Johnny's Hot Dog Run!*



We had 8 Military Vehicles and 10 members show up for breakfast at the *Old Allamuchy General Store* which is now under new management and is called "*Taste Cafe*". Members complemented the Taste team for great breakfast and generous portions.



We kicked off the Convoy to Johnny's at 10:30 am and followed the first run traveling scenic RT 519 to Buttsville and *Johnny's Hot Dogs* arriving around noon.

The "peanut boiled" *Johnny's Hot Dogs* were not to be missed and the team filled up again!

### MTA 2022 Officers and Key Committee Heads

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Quartermaster and MTA Archives Custodian  
Gary Schultz

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**For the Good of the Club-** Gary Schultz had brochures for the new WWII museum that Frank Buck and his family is opening near Gettysburg this year. The collection of items includes a wide variety of militaria and vehicles. **Andy Salzano** informed the group of the *Wyckoff Salute to Veterans* program to be held May 11<sup>th</sup> at the YMCA. Please see Andy for more information. **Pat Tipton** mentioned the *East Coast Military Vehicle Rally* is coming up 5/12-5/14 in Hagerstown, MD. *The Pocono Arms Show* is being held 5/20-5/22 at the *Pocono Raceway* for any interested collectors. **Pat Dolan** confirmed The Intrepid will be holding their Memorial Day weekend this

After filling up on hot dogs and fries some members went in different directions home. But, a few of us made our way one mile north to the *Buttsville Flea Market* where the team scored some interesting finds. I got a correct WWII era brass fire extinguisher for only \$5 bucks.

We reversed course and headed back to *Tastes Cafe* for another successful conclusion of an excellent sunny day behind the wheel of our MV's and MTA comradery.

We will be working on another trail ride soon!

## COLLECTOR'S RESPIN MPM 8-2007

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### The 1942 Jeep----*Love of My Life!*

Story and Pictures by Harold Ratzburg

I guess that I developed my affection for Jeeps way back in the WWII days. I was twelve years old when the war started, so I saw lots of photos of Jeeps in magazines and newspapers. When we went to the movies on Saturday night, jeeps could be seen in the old MovieTone war newsreels. As time went on, Jeeps showed up more and more in movies and on TV in such features as *Rat Patrol*, *Combat*, and *M\*A\*S\*H\**, and my interest continued to grow.

I was raised on a dairy farm in Wisconsin and when they started producing Jeeps for the civilian market, my brother and I convinced my Dad that a Jeep would really be a handy thing to have on the farm with all its available attachments like plows, cultivators, pulleys, and wood power saws, etc.

But comes the day when Dad goes to town to order a Jeep, that darned Jeep dealer says to my Dad, "Louie, you really don't need a Jeep. A Ford-Ferguson tractor would serve you better." Yes, the dealer just happened to also handle Ford tractors, so there went our dreams of having a Jeep on the farm. I've hated that dealer ever since. Of course, he is long gone now. But looking at it more realistically, with the benefit of more mature judgment at my age, I'd say that the dealer was probably correct.

Fast-forward about 25 years, and I am 41 years old and still fascinated about owning a Jeep. My career is established, the family is started, and there is a little extra money and time for big toys. I found an ad in the local paper for a WWII Jeep in a town nearby and went to check it out. There in back yard, sat a real honest to goodness WWII Jeep, slowly sinking into the mud after many years of being just parked there. It had the most god-awful looking, wooden, homemade top on it, no fabric on the seats, and a good abundance of rust, but----it was at a price I could afford, so the deal was made and I dragged it home.

My wife was not impressed by my purchase. The wooden top was stripped off immediately and I found some seat cushions for it somewhere and I had my very first Jeep. Without the wooden top, it started to look like a Military Jeep and I was a happy Green Machine owner. Mechanically speaking, it was not in great shape. It would start reliably only when I jumped it with a spare 12-volt battery that I always had to carry, but it was my JEEP, and life was good.

Remember now, that my story is now taking place in the early 1970s. Military vehicle collecting was in its infancy, and there were no military vehicle magazines or clubs around that one could turn to for advice or guidance. The only literature that I could find was an Army manual on the jeep, and somewhere I accumulated a copy of "Hail to the Jeep" by A. Wade Wells. These were to be my bibles showing how a military jeep should look.

So, armed with all this limited information, I began to look for parts and equipment that I could buy to restore the Jeep to look like a real, combat ready, WWII Jeep as shown in the photos of my reference books.

After a few months of searching, I ran across an ad in a "Rock and Dirt" publication for heavy-duty equipment for building contractors. It showed me that there was a Military Surplus Truck dealer named *Sarafan* located in Spring Valley NY, not too far away from my home. The ad even showed a picture of a Jeep, so you know where I had to go as soon as possible. I visited *Sarafan* a couple of times looking for parts for my rust bucket, and then, on another visit in February, 1972, I found the so-called 'Love of my Life'. There sat this WWII Military Jeep in a snow bank. As far as I could tell, it was complete and in great condition. There were no rust holes through which I could see the ground. Even the toolboxes at the rear of the fenders were without rust holes. It even had the original little chains that held the thumbscrews for the top bows and the windshield so they would not get lost. I was impressed.

In addition to that, the Jeep had neat little modifications, like the following: 1. There was a field-installed toolbox under the



rear seat. It held equipment in place directly beneath the folding rear seat that had a padlock hasp that could be locked to prevent pilferage. 2. There was a turn signal system installed. The lights were neatly set into the rear corners of the body and into the front of the grill in front so that they did not detract from the military appearance of the Jeep. 3. In front of the radiator, but behind the grill, was mounted, what appeared to be a window shade. The shade could be raised or lowered by means of a chain that ran up and over the radiator and engine so that the shade could be adjusted from the drivers seat inside the cab. 4. There was a small heater neatly installed up under the dash directly over the driver's feet.

The things that the Jeep did not have that bothered me a little bit, was that it didn't have a gas can bracket or combat rims, but I figured that I could add them later. My dilemma of course, was that I already had a Jeep at home, which did not impress my wife at all, and to come home and tell her I bought another one would certainly impress her even less. I kept walking away from the jeep to look in other parts of the yard for stuff I needed for my hulk, but the jeep in the snow bank kept drawing me back. I had to have it!

So, throwing caution to the winds, I went for it and put a \$50.00 deposit down for the \$950 Jeep, as is, with a full GI canvas top, with swinging doors and side curtains included. I would return the following weekend to take it home. I had trouble sleeping that week because I kept thinking that something had to go bad. Maybe the dealer misquoted the price on this, in my eyes, a near perfect jeep. Maybe the deal would fall through for some reason out of my control. I was nervous about my good fortune.

On the appointed day however, I returned to drive my treasure home, and all went well. I found that it would move only in 4WD, but it would move and that was all that mattered. I drove it home. Then the challenge began. What more could I learn about jeeps, how could I fix whatever was wrong with it etc, etc, and etc....*continued on page 7.*

## 35 Years Ago in the MTA

By David Steinert

In September, 1987, the MTA hosted its first East Coast Fally Rally on 175 acres of property in Stillwater, NJ. This large piece of property was owned by MTA member, Bob Hauck.

The rally advertised a flea market area filled with vendors selling their military related memorabilia traveling from many states. A special display area for the judging of military vehicles and on-site trail rides on dirt trails.

For those who are less adventurous, there would be scenic trail rides on improved roads to the Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area, and a "special area", called Vulture Valley, which was reserved for military vehicles only, to test the performance of their capabilities. (Use at your own risk).

There would be plenty of areas for free camping. No charge for military vehicles. General admission would be \$1, young people under the age of 12 were admitted free. The rally was scheduled for September 19 and 20.

Unfortunately, there was prolonged rain just prior to the rally, which resulted in soggy grounds prior to Saturday.

Certain areas were unusable for parking cars and the small vendor area was quite muddy.

Fortunately, the rain finally ended at daybreak on Saturday morning, after a drizzle all day Friday. Despite all the weather issues, vendors and visitors from up and down the east coast made the trip to northwestern New Jersey.

Shortly after the event, members of the MTA made a post-mortem evaluation of the rally and determined that the show was not a complete failure and plans were quickly made for another rally the following year. Improvements to the property included a larger rain-resistant vendor and parking facilities. Also, a larger military vehicle display area.

The MTA had a huge amount work ahead of them in preparing the site for the rally in 1988. Almost, immediately work parties were organized and dates were scheduled to begin the tedious job of preparing the property for next year's rally.



MTA work party on April 17: (1988)

Front, L to R, Tom Hauck, John Boyle, Lou Sliazis, Dennis Spence, Harold Ratzburg, Lou Vita(junior, and senior), Al Axelrad, Frank Nasto, Steve Thompson.  
Back, L to R, Bob Hauck(sitting on loader), Tom Weaver.

So, with the Jeep in my garage, I studied it to see how it was different from my information sources. The first thing that struck me was seeing on the title that it was a Ford Jeep (VIN or serial no. 4596). I knew from some source, that Ford Jeeps had a square cross-member in front of the radiator, but the Jeep that I had, had the round Willys type cross-member. Something was wrong here, except the data plate on the glove box door said Ford, # 4596. But, who was I to argue with the powers that be. The title was good and I had my Jeep.

As you may have figured out by now, my Jeep turned out to be one of those rare ones, where everything on the jeep was made by Ford, except for the frame. Early in the war, Ford could not turn out Jeep frames fast enough and had to acquire frames from Willys or A. O. Smith in Milwaukee in order to keep up with the needed war production.

In time, after I knew where to look, I found the Ford markings on top of the Willys frame in front of the left motor mount bracket. The other information on the gear plate and caution plate on the glove box door was in some foreign language and it took me several years to find out that it was Norwegian.

The only real mechanical problem I had with my "new" Jeep was that it would move only in 4WD. I finally found that the problem was a sheared off rear axle. I was fortunate in that the axle had sheared off cleanly and when I pulled the axle out, I found that the sheared off piece had been removed from the axle housing by someone before me. So all that needed to be done was install a newly purchased axle, from *Sarafan*, of course.



*Sarafan* had everything, and they were really pretty handy for my shopping trips. The military full canvas top that came in the deal was a real find. It is of Korean War vintage, in that the door openings are closed with a swinging door instead of the zipper variety as found on WWII full tops. When installed, it became a very cozy enclosure, especially when that little heater installed over the driver's feet was running full blast. So, finally, my new toy was well on its way to looking "military"...like it showed in my reference books.

In the following years, I gradually found other neat stuff to mount on my Jeep. My opinion has always been that the more stuff you hang or mount on a Jeep, the "cooler" it looks. So along came the following:

A CAPSTAN WINCH---An old friend and Jeep owner, Ted Bromage, advised me that *Sarafan* had Jeep capstan winches for sale. The winches were still in their original GI packing crates. The set came in three crates and included the complete setup, ie, heavier front springs, rope, oil for the gears, the mounting plate, the winch itself and all the attachments and the instructions for mounting. I really needed that and so Ted purchased and delivered the crates to my house and the winch was mounted. If I remember correctly, the complete set cost \$75.00

A M-48 DASH MOUNT---for a machinegun or BAR. Looking in a Shotgun News newspaper that I subscribed to, I found an ad for the dashboard mount. The cost was \$25.00 for the complete kit, but money was tight and I had to hold off. Then the price went up to \$50.00 and a little later to \$75.00 at which point I figured I had better get it now. So I did.

A FIRST AID KIT MOUNTING BRACKET---for mounting the first aid kit under the dash. I had read about the modification of later war Jeeps that included a mount to hold the first aid kit up and out of the way under the dash, instead of carrying them in the tool compartments. But there were no loose ones showing up at the rallies. I was able to borrow a bracket from another Jeep owner, and a very handy and talented friend, Ronnie Brodzinsky, reproduced an exact copy off it. This was way back before any other people started to reproduce the Jeep parts.

A .50 CAL, GAS FIRERING, MACHINE GUN AND PEDESTAL MOUNT---The pedestal mount was found in the attic of a book dealer and was purchased for \$275.00, complete with, pintle, travel lock bar and support legs. For a long time, the pedestal sported a wooden mock-up .50 Cal MG covered by a GI MG cover. (Only once did a cop stop me to ask to look to see what was under the cover) Then, at some rally, I ran across a GI issue, gas-firing (propane and oxygen) mockup of a .50 Cal that was used to provide the noise when training the troops. The mockup looked more like some kind of a space gun, but it had the inside workings that I figured might be built into a .50 Cal replica. I do not have talents like that, but my handy and talented friend Ronnie had, so with the gas-firing mockup and a supply of real .50 Cal MG parts, Ronnie put together a most realistic, gas-firing replica that would make noise at a parade like you wouldn't believe. Dogs ran for cover and little kids covered their ears, but it was a real crowd pleaser.

So in the last 20 years, I have not done much with it except drive it in parades and a little off road. Looking back, I realized that my "Baby" was an original EARLY, GPW with very unique features that today would give a true fanatic Jeep collector, palpitations of the heart to find in such an original condition. But I do not regret to have NOT left it as a show vehicle. I have had too much fun with it as a driver and as an active WWII re-enactor in my younger days

## CLASSIFIEDS

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

For Sale: 1963 Dodge M43 B1 w/o winch in very good condition. Comes with a large amount of spare parts and accessories. If there is an interest, contact Michael Maglio at 973-697 9419.

For Sale- Military 500 Gallon Water Buffalo for sale; \$300 or BO. Call John Sobotka at (862)-266-6284.

For Sale: 1952 M37 unrestored with good bill of sale, \$3000. Call Tom Weaver @ 973-627-9448.

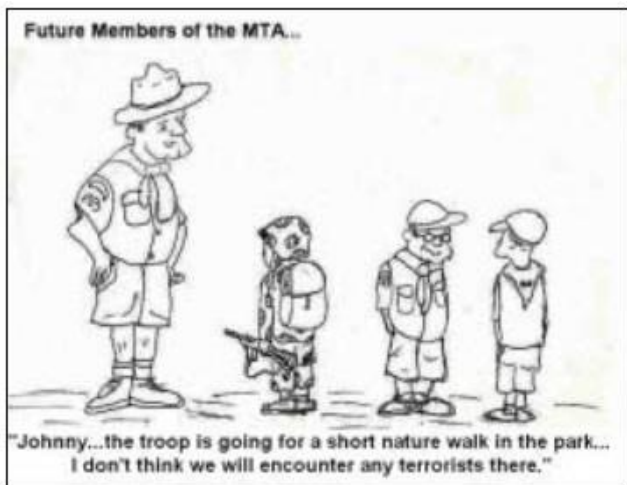
For Sale - M725 \$3,800.00, Ammo trailer \$350, 1957 DAF 1- ton troop carrier. Rare, not many of these around \$6,000, M109A3-shop van with benches and shelves. Good shape \$4,500. Call or text Jude Meehan 732-433-3359.

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 : [Mattrziegler@gmail.com](mailto:Mattrziegler@gmail.com)

# Military Transport Association

P.O. Box 391  
Budd Lake, NJ 07828

**THE NEXT MTA MEETING WILL  
BE HELD ON JUNE 2nd  
AT THE WHIPPANY AMERICAN  
LEGION POST AT 7PM**



## a chapter of the MVPA



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](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.*