



# 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 2023

Editor: David Steinert



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## ON THE COVER...



The Iraqi War was an armed conflict between a United States-led coalition force against the regime of Saddam Hussein from 2003 to 2011. The practice of creating heavy armored gun trucks by US Forces during the Vietnam War was carried over during

the war in Iraq. The cover photo shows a flatbed vehicle **M923A1 with armored hull and driver's cabin as well as a turret for four guns.** The cabin is mounted with twelve 7 mm machine guns M2HB while the hull is equipped with seven 62 mm machine guns M240B and a 40 mm grenade launcher MK 19. The Gun Truck was reborn.

Following the US invasion of Iraq in 2003, and the fairly quick overthrow of Saddam Hussein and his régime, the optimistic concepts and plans about developing the country of Iraq proved to be more difficult than originally believed. Instead of relaxing the circumstances, hostilities between various parties erupted. An uncivilized conflict between tribes, clans, gangs and militia groups created an ambiguous environment where many American soldiers were killed or wounded in attacks on military vehicles. Most of these vehicles were not designed to operate in zones of combat.



But the US Army infantry is not the only one who uses self-improved gun-trucks. The Special Forces use them as well, as seen on this picture of a M925A1 truck, which belongs to the Fifth Unit of the Special Forces. We can see not only the armored driver's cabin and the 12,7 mm M2HB machine-gun turret, but also an unusual reinforced bumper as well.

**One example of this was the U.S. Army's off road vehicle HMMWV or Humvee,** which was created during the Cold War and was designed as a non-armored vehicle for deployment on the periphery of a battle, mainly at the rear. The conflict in Iraq had no front or rear, the fighting was going on everywhere.

Other types of vehicles, especially heavy trucks, suffered heavy losses as well. The US Army quickly took action. It soon ordered the standardized armor kits, so-called ASK (Armor Survivability Kit), which improves the level of protection of ordinary vehicles. Also, the Army began to buy armored versions of the Humvee as well as special armored automobiles called MRAP (Mine-Resistant Ambush Protected).



The 8-wheel trucks called HEMTT were also converted into these armored improvisations. This specimen's loading platform was upgraded by a „tower“, enabling firing in all directions. It can be assumed that a vehicle modified in this way was used as a patrol car in dangerous areas.

In the meantime, American soldiers had to somehow survive until these upgraded armored vehicles arrived. So like their comrades that fought in Vietnam, they got crafty. And their ingenuity lead to the birth of these technically interesting improvisations, that surely helped in saving hundreds and thousands of men and women.



The biggest gun-truck on record in Iraq was created as a conversion of the PLS truck, very similar to the HEMTT, only with two more wheels and a pallet platform. On this platform, the soldiers have installed an armored superstructure with carriages for heavy 12,7 mm M2HB machine-guns and automatic grenade launchers Mk 19.

When it comes to materials and procedures used in building these “gun-trucks“, they’re almost always the same. The most common material used are the steel plates, often scavenged from transportation containers and discarded vehicles. Plus, the US Army bought specially for these purposes plates made of Swedish armor steel ARMOX and HARDOX. The plates (no matter their origin) were then attached to the car’s body to protect the crew, engine, tank etc.



A typical gun-truck on the HMMWV basis, basic version M998. The vehicle is equipped by armor plates, creating a secure space for the soldier up to the driver’s cabin. Armor also creates provisory driver and passenger doors and the car is as well mounted with a heavy 12,7 mm machine-gun Browning M2HB.



Among the lesser-known vehicles of the US Army, there are the HETS trucks. Every one consists of an 8-wheel truck M1070 and a semi-trailer M1000. And the M1070 trucks became objects of conversion to gun-trucks as well. This specimen got an armored superstructure with two carriages for the 12,7 mm Browning M2HB machine-guns.

Plywood or wooden boards with metal sheet studded on them are often used as a protection against small-caliber weapons as well as plastic boards and

metal grates. Besides improved durability, soldiers often take the improvement of their vehicle on the next level by mounting on machine-guns and automatic grenade launchers. But since it’s true that a picture is worth a thousand words, you’ll sure get a better idea about these provisory ironclads by looking at the accompanying photographs.

Explanation of the abbreviations:

HEMTT = Heavy Expanded Mobility Tactical Truck  
HETS = Heavy Equipment Transport System  
HMMWV = High Mobility Multipurpose Wheeled Vehicle  
PLS = Palletized Load System.



**ATTENTION MEMBERS!  
THE MTA MEETING FOR JULY HAS  
BEEN CANCELLED!**

**MTA Meeting Minutes**

**MTA Minutes- June 1, 2023 - Legion Hall, Whippany**

The meeting was called to order at 7:07 pm by Vice-President **Gary Schultz** who opened with the *Pledge of Allegiance* and a *moment of silence*.

A motion was made to accept the May meeting minutes by **Ken Gardner** and seconded by **Pete Shaw**.

**Treasurer’s Report:** as submitted by **Al Mellini** for the month ending May 31, 2023 is as follows:

Beginning Balance	\$46,596.18
Income	1,521.67
Expenditures	<u>- 1,556.76</u>
Closing balance	\$46,561.09

A motion to accept the Treasurer’s Report was made by **Panos Diamando** and seconded by **Anita Roberts**.

**President’s Message:** While John is unable to be here tonight, he relayed the message to remind members of the Sparta Historical event weekend on June 10th and 11th at the Van Kirk Homestead Museum from 11-4 and 11-2 respectively. Please contact John if you plan to participate in this event. Please note our club picnic is on June 17th at Firemens’ Field in Rockaway from 12:30 pm to 3 pm.

**Membership:** The club is currently at 144 members in good standing.

**Newsletter:** Many thanks to all our contributors for the articles and pictures that continue being submitted. If you have any parade pictures, please send them to **Dave Steinert**.

**Quartermaster:** We still have some inventory on green shirts and a few hats. Once depleted a new order will be placed.



The MTA at the Morris Plains Memorial Day Parade

**Parades:** The club participated in 8 parades over Memorial Day weekend. Huge thank you **Andrea Antonelli** for her coordination efforts and the time she put into this.



Andrea Antonelli with her dad in the cab of her HMMWV with Nick and Juliana Heusel hitching a ride in the back at the Madison Memorial Day parade.

All the contract's requirements were met. There are 4 parades scheduled over the 4<sup>th</sup> of July; Chatham, Florham Park, Maywood and Randolph. Please sign up if you can participate. The Randolph parade date has been changed to July 8<sup>th</sup>, please see **Gary Schultz** regarding this parade.

**Swap Meet:** Vendor registrations are now closed until December. Fairgrounds contract prep begins in December. Prices may be raised dependent upon new contract fees. Show dates for next year are 4/27 and 4/28.

**Website:** Once revised, the show info for next year will be updated.

**OMS7: Jim Mescher** reflected on his visit at the recent Findlay Ohio military show and encourages anyone who has the chance to visit this huge event.

**Pat Tipton's** weasel repair is on hold and unfortunately the jeep will not be ready for the Reading Air Show this weekend although a new repair video on same is in the works.



Ken Gardner "high-jacking" Al Mellini's M38 Jeep for a drive-by in the Madison Parade

**Operation Toy Train Update:** **Tim Farrell** told the membership of the Rubber and Steel Car and Train Show event June 17<sup>th</sup>, which will be held from 11-4 at the *Port Jervis Transportation History Center*. Admission is \$5, show vehicles attend for free. Food will be available for purchase by the *Dining Car Society*.



Andy Salvano offers a ride to a young, attractive Service Woman

**New Business:** The group discussed recognition of members in good standing for 20/25 years or more. A possible option may be to recognize the person as a Life Member, thus the member would no longer pay dues or perhaps pay a half-due fee. The records will be researched for consideration of how this could/would affect the club monetarily in coming years,

therefore continued discussion will occur once more information is received. Many members voiced comment that some form of recognition should be considered and either become a by-law or policy.

**Pat Dolan** addressed the group regarding the Intrepid's Memorial Day weekend event during fleet week. Going forward, this event will be added to the parade event list so that members can plan ahead in regards to participating/Intrepid Museum has enough time to make arrangements/process everything on their end.

**MTA 2023 Officers and Key Committee Heads**

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

**Vice President- Gary Schultz**  
Tel: 973-207-8955 email: [garyrschultz@gmail.com](mailto:garyrschultz@gmail.com)

**Secretary- Jean Swanick**  
Tel: 973-647-0148 email: [jswanick170@msn.com](mailto:jswanick170@msn.com)

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

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**Sergeant at Arms-Andrew Salzano**  
Tel: 973-831-0920

**Membership Chairman- Dave Steinert**  
Tel: 973-347-9091 email: [dsteinert@mtaofnj.org](mailto:dsteinert@mtaofnj.org)

**News letter Editor- Dave Steinert**  
Tel: 973-347-9091 email: [dsteinert@mtaofnj.org](mailto:dsteinert@mtaofnj.org)

**Parade Coordinator- Andrea Antonelli**  
Tel: 973-214-1383 email: [andreaantonelli@aol.com](mailto:andreaantonelli@aol.com)

**Swap Meet Chairman- Gary Schultz**  
Tel: 973-207-8955 email: [garyrschultz@gmail.com](mailto:garyrschultz@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)

**Old Business:** A thank you letter received from the American Legion Post 242 was read by **Andy Salzano**, for the club's support to send one student to NJ Boys State.

**Good of the Club:** The Picatinny Historical Tour is still on schedule for August 12<sup>th</sup>. Please contact **Tim Swanick** if you wish to participate by July 15<sup>th</sup> as he has to submit names to proper authorities.

**Bill McKelvy** announced that the Mahan Collection Foundation will be holding their annual Open House in Basking Ridge on September 9<sup>th</sup>. This is recognized as the world's largest collection of restored Mack trucks, and includes 6 large barns of various equipment including fire trucks. Bill will send the info to the group IO email as you need to reserve a spot. Food trucks will be onsite. A tentative fall club picnic date was announced for September 16<sup>th</sup>.

A motion to adjourn at 8:10 pm was made by **Ben Cave** and seconded by **Tim Farrell**. **THE MTA MEETING FOR JULY HAS BEEN CANCELLED!**

Respectfully submitted,  
**Jean Swanick,**

## THE MTA 5<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL HOT DOG JOHNNY'S TRAIL RIDE

Submitted by Gary Schultz

The MTA 5th annual Hot Dog Johnny's Trail Ride on May 6th was a success with beautiful weather and good turnout of members.

The typical morning breakfast before the trail ride was a challenge. Our planned breakfast as before at *Taste* restaurant in Alamuchy got cancelled. The owner called four days before our scheduled breakfast to advise that due to staffing shortages her and her husband decided to close *Taste*, she choked up a bit and I could hear the sadness in her voice. They both put so much effort into launching *Taste* three years ago.

Fortunately, I was able to find another venue to serve our needs for breakfast before the trail ride. Just a mile away in the Panther Valley Mall is a small deli and Cafe called *The Market*. I spoke to the owner and she was pleased to have us and made a few special breakfast meals priced just for us at \$9.99. There was ample outdoor seating.

I had new MTA member Corey Mark and his fiancée, Catherine riding with me for their first MTA Trail Ride!

The weather was a little chilly in the morning but soon warmed up.

Instead of making the *Run* directly to *Hot Dog Johnny's*, we decided instead to go to the flea market in Butzville first. Some members reported finding goodies at a great price. After an hour or so the appetites were ready for the one mile trip up the road to Hot Dog Johnny's for their famous peanut boiled hot dogs!

## THE 2023 MTA ANNUAL PICNIC

Submitted by Gary Schultz

The MTA June 17th Picnic was a welcome opportunity to chat with members and their families including several members new and old that don't normally go to the monthly meetings. Our newest member Cory Mark joined us all the way from Piscataway.



The weather held out, the forecasted thunderstorms didn't turn out for the picnic, and we had approximately 36 members in attendance.

We had a good turnout of ten military vehicles, half were Humvees, the largest number of Humvees at a picnic for sure!

Our President, John Sobotka spoke and thanked those who worked so hard to organize and successfully conduct the April MTA Military Show, despite the perpetual rainy conditions.

John also thanked Cookie's" Catering team for their hard work putting the picnic together, *the Food Was Excellent!*

The MTA Executive Board authorized a second round of seven Harold Ratzburg Awards presented to deserving members for years of dedicated support and service to the MTA. This round of Harold Ratzburg Awards honored six dedicated members that don't even own a military vehicle and truly do much of our volunteer work!

I was pleased and honored to present the Harold Ratzburg Awards to the following MTA members: Ken Gardner, Joe Travelli, Anita Roberts, Bill Murphy, Chris VanOrden, Carolyn Hoffman and Jeff Bennett.

Joe, Carolyn and Bill were not in attendance at the picnic, but not to worry we will get your Award plaques to you.

A special thanks to Ken Gardner for spearheading this year's picnic, job well done! *Looking forward to the next picnic in September!*

### July 4<sup>th</sup> Parades

*Hello my fellow MTA members. The time has arrived for another round of parades. We have a big parade in Randolph on July 8 that Gary Schultz is coordinating. However, there are three parades on July 4 that I am in desperate need of vehicles. Maywood and Chatham have the least amount of participants signed up for and Florham Park has plenty of vehicles to meet our contract commitment. However, I would appreciate any help we can get. Please remember the parades generate revenue for the club, but we have to guarantee a certain amount of vehicles. Please either email me or text me if you are able to participate in any of the parades. I am also looking for a driver for my second truck if needed.*

*Thank you.  
Andrea Antonelli  
973-214-1383*

### Gun and Military Show

July 7 - July 9, 2023

FORKS OF THE DELAWARE  
HISTORICAL ARMS  
SOCIETY, INC.

Allentown Fairgrounds  
302 N 17th St  
Allentown, PA 18104

Saturday: 9:00am - 4:00pm  
Sunday: 9:00am - 1:00pm



Military Weekend at the  
new World War II  
American Experience Museum  
845 Crooked Creek Road  
Gettysburg, PA 17325  
717-253-3414  
[www.visitww2.org](http://www.visitww2.org)

- Military Vehicle Show
- Militaria and Military Vehicle Flea Market
- WWI-Vietnam Living History Encampment
- Vehicle Demonstrations
- Friday Night: WWII Big Band Dance
- All Eras Military Vehicles Welcome / Featuring Halftracks

For Vehicle Registration,  
Vendors and Living History  
Displays, email:  
[museum@visitww2.org](mailto:museum@visitww2.org)

Tickets available in  
advance or day of event

# CLASSIFIEDS

To add or remove listings from the Classifieds, please email Dave Steinert at [dsteinert@mtaofnj.org](mailto:dsteinert@mtaofnj.org) or call 201-407-4035.

**For Sale:** Own the world's best tailgating/cooking trailer. MKT 95 in operational condition. Includes 2 M-59 Ranges and 4 MBU V3 burners, griddle, and V3 Power Converter with correct MBU Branch cabling. Asking \$5000. Call John at (973)600-9486.

**For Sale-** M38 Jeep 1951, 27,638 miles, Engine & Transmission Rebuilt, New Parking Brake System, Drive Shafts, Chassis Cleaned & Painted, All Parts Cleaned Primed & Painted, New Radiator & Water Pump, New Belts etc. Government Rebuilt Starter & Generator, 24 Volt System, All Military Parts, All New Dorman Hardware, All Military TM Books. Some assembly required to drive. Needs Brakes & Wiring Harness To Complete. Tow Bar & Beechwood Canvas Cover Included. Good Title & QQ plates NJ approved. \$10K. Email : [robertleach59@aol.com](mailto:robertleach59@aol.com).

**For Sale-** CJ5 Jeep 1965, 31,678 miles, Complete Full Body Metal Cap (Meyers), Starts, Runs, Drives As Is, New Rear Leaf Springs, & Complete Brake Rebuild Parts For All Four Corners, Plow Frame, Hydraulics & Blade, Extra Set of Metal Doors. Good Title & Current Nj Paperwork, \$8K, Bob Email [robertleach59@aol.com](mailto:robertleach59@aol.com).

**For Sale-** Willys Jeep 1950 CJ3A, L-Head, std 3 spd driveline, w/ Warn Overdrive, all recently rebuilt, newly recovered seats w/ OD Canvas, new Bestop 5140301 Black Tigertop (uninstalled) and full 4-wheel disc brake conversion kit (uninstalled). Spare parts include new reproduction body tub, steel rim set, roll bar, cabin heater. \$12,000. George Wagner, cell 201-274-6694, email [wagnergm@verizon.net](mailto:wagnergm@verizon.net).

**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.

**Parts for Sale-** 230 CI M725 motor, ran when pulled, burns oil \$200, M725 litter racks-best offer, M725 Rear doors, some dents, no rust \$200 for the pair, M715 windshield frame, minor surface rust \$150, NOS in packing Southwind heater for M725 possible M-43 best offer, M37 windshield frame outer only \$75, M725-M715 rims with lock rings – make offer. Many more items available, too many to list. Call for more information. Call Matt Ziegler, cell 973-445-3890, email : [Matrziegler@gmail.com](mailto:Matrziegler@gmail.com)

The Mahan Collection Foundation will be holding their annual Open House in Basking Ridge on September 9<sup>th</sup>. This is recognized as the world's largest collection of restored Mack trucks, and includes 6 large barns of various equipment including fire trucks. Bill will send the info to the group IO email as you need to reserve a spot. Food trucks will be onsite.



YOU'RE INVITED  
THE MAHAN COLLECTION FOUNDATION  
**OPEN HOUSE**

• September 9th •  
• 9am – 3pm •  
• 53 Cross Road Basking Ridge •

All the barns will be open!  
Come check out what we've been up to.  
Lots of new restoration projects and acquisitions to see!

Food Trucks on site for lunch  
RSVP  
[info@themahancollection.org](mailto:info@themahancollection.org)  
Donations Accepted Day of Event  
RAIN OR SHINE



Another example of a Gun Truck from the Iraq War



# Military Transport Association

P.O. Box 391  
Budd Lake, NJ 07828

**THE JULY 2023 MTA MEETING  
HAS BEEN CANCELLED!**



a chapter of the Military Vehicle Preservation Association

The Military Transport Association is dedicated to the education and preservation of historic to present military vehicles. Members enjoy restoring, displaying, and operating military vehicles of all types, from bicycles to tanks.

But trucks and Jeeps aren't all we do! Join today and participate with us at our annual Toys for Tots train ride and toy drive, help at our annual Swap Meet at the Sussex County Fairgrounds, or attend our special events for veterans. Our lively, informative monthly meetings are held in Whippany, NJ.

You do not have to own a military vehicle to be part of this exciting and active hobby - you just need a desire to do your part in keeping our military history alive. All you need to join the MTA is to fill out the the form below, include your dues payment, and mail it to the address below. Alternately, you can give your form and dues to any MTA member you meet at any of our events.

for more information, visit our website at [www.MTAofNJ.org](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.*