



MOTOR POOL MESSENGER

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

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Editor: David Steinert



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ON THE COVER...



A team of U.S. Navy Swift Boats patrol a river in Vietnam.

The Patrol Craft Fast (PCF), also known as Swift Boat, were all-aluminum, 50-foot long, shallow-draft vessels operated by the United States Navy, initially to patrol the coastal areas and later for work in the interior waterways as part of the brown-water navy to interdict Vietcong movement of arms and munitions, transport South Vietnamese forces and insert specialized Navy SEAL teams for counter-insurgency (COIN) operations during the years of the Vietnam War.

Developed specifically for the Vietnam War, **Swift Boats were versatile craft “big enough to outrun anything they couldn’t outfight” but too small** to handle even a moderate ocean chop, too loud to sneak up on anyone, and too flimsy to withstand the mildest of rocket attacks. This made more difficult an already tough mission: navigating coastal waters for ships and sampans smuggling contraband to the Viet Cong, disrupting enemy supply lines on the rivers and canals of the Mekong Delta, and inserting SEALs behind enemy lines.



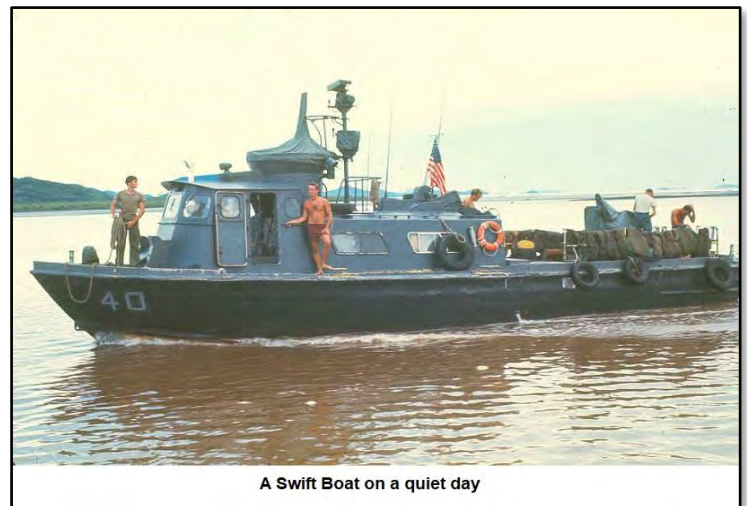
Mark I Swift Boats Patrolling the Song Cua Long near Seafloat in Vietnam

The Swift Boat was conceived in a *Naval Advisory Group*, the staff study titled "Naval Craft Requirements in a Counter Insurgency Environment," published 1 February 1965. It noted that "counterinsurgency water operations are difficult, demanding, and unique. A prevalent belief has been that COIN craft can readily be obtained from

existing commercial and naval sources when needed. Unfortunately, no concerted effort has been made to develop COIN craft specifically suited to perform the many missions needed to combat insurgent activities."

The study was positively received, and the Navy began to search for sources. Sewart Seacraft of Berwick, Louisiana (*Swiftships' predecessor*), was chosen to build the boats.

The Mark I model Swift Boats had welded aluminum hulls about 50 feet long with 13 feet beam, and draft of about five feet. They were powered by a pair of General Motors 12V71"N" Detroit marine diesel engines rated at 480 horsepower each, with a design range from 320 nautical miles at 21 knots to about 750 nautical miles at 10 knots. The normal crew for a Swift Boat was six: an officer in charge (skipper), a boatswains mate, a radar/radioman (radarman), an engineer (engineman), and two gunners (quartermaster and gunner's mate). In 1969, the crew was supplemented with a Vietnamese trainee.



A Swift Boat on a quiet day

The first two PCFs were delivered to the Navy in late August 1965. The original water taxi design had been enhanced with two .50 caliber M2 Browning machine guns in a turret above the pilot house, an over-and-under .50-caliber machine gun – 81 mm mortar combination mounted on the rear deck, a mortar ammunition box on the stern, improved habitability equipment such as bunks, a refrigerator and freezer, and a sink.

Many boats also mounted a single M60 machine gun in the forward peak tank, just in front of the forward superstructure.

The original order for 50 boats was followed shortly by an additional order for **54 more Mark I's**.

The first Swift Boats arrived in South Vietnam in October 1965. The boats were initially used as coastal patrol crafts for *Operation Market Time*, interdicting seaborne supplies on their way to supply the North Viet Cong and the People's Army of Vietnam (PAVN) forces in South Vietnam. However, the design's shallow draft and low freeboard limited their seaworthiness in open waters. These limitations, plus the difficulties being encountered in the interior waterways by the smaller, more lightly armed PBRs, led to the incorporation of Swifts to patrol the 1,500 miles of rivers and canals of Vietnam's interior waterways.

In the latter half of 1967, 46 Mark II boats, with a modified deck house set further back from the bow. The newer boats also had round port holes (replacing larger sliding windows) in the aft superstructure. From 1969 through 1972, 33 Mark IIIs, which were a larger version of the Mark IIs, arrived in Vietnam.



Mark II Swift Boat (1969-1972)

Most of the 193 PCFs built were used by the U.S. Navy in Vietnam and the two training bases in California. About 80 of the boats constructed were sold or given away to nations friendly to the United States.

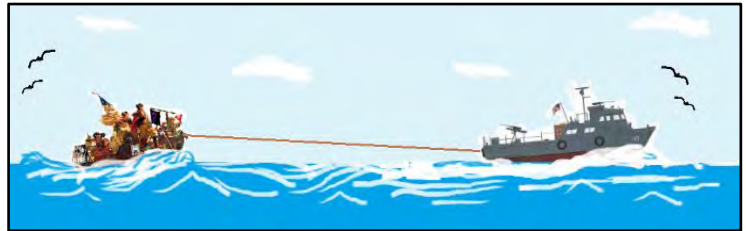
Swift Boats generally operated in teams of three to five. Each boat had an officer in charge, one of whom would also be placed in overall charge of the mission. Their missions included patrolling the waterways, searching water traffic for weapons and munitions, transporting South Vietnamese marine units and inserting Navy SEAL teams.

In conclusion, if you were a crew member on a U.S. Navy Swift Boat in Vietnam, your mission was to patrol 1,500 miles of Mekong Delta waterways and **disrupt Viet Cong supply lines...the challenge was to**

survive the threat of naval mines and enemy ambush lurking around every bend in the river your patrolling. During the Vietnam conflict 3,600 served or supported **America's PCF Swift Boat missions**. **Four hundred were wounded...fifty died.**

There has been lots of interest in the restoration of surviving World War II PT (Patrol Torpedo) boats. The closest thing to a PT boat in service during the Vietnam War was the Swift Boats.

Now, volunteers from the Maritime Museum of San Diego have restored a 1968 Swift boat. **Mark Gallant, the project manager says, "When this boat is up and running at the Maritime Museum, it will probably be the only operational swift boat in the United States and probably the world.**



ATTENTION MEMBERS!
THE NEXT MTA MEETING WILL BE HELD ON THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 7th 2023... 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

Thursday, August 3rd 2023 at the American Legion Hall in Whippany, NJ
 Submitted by *Jean Swanick*

The meeting was called to order at 7:04 pm by President **John Sobotka** and opened with the *Pledge of Allegiance* and a moment of silence. A motion to approve last month's minutes was made by **Gary Schultz** and seconded by **Tim Farrell**. Motion carried.

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

Financial Report – Ending July 31, 2023

Beginning balance	\$45,738.36
Income	\$ 4,007.66 (parade participation)
Expenditures	\$ 2,259.37
Closing balance	\$47,486.65

A motion to approve the Financial Report was made by **Tim Swanick** and seconded by **Anita Roberts**. *Motion carried!*

President's Message- John mentioned the club continues to look for donation suggestions as our club is in a healthy state.

If you have a cause that you feel the club should consider, please research the needed information and make a presentation at an upcoming meeting.

Membership- The club has recently added 2 new members and reinstated a previous member.

Newsletter- No report as **Dave Steinert** was unable to be with us tonight.

Quartermaster- Inventory will be replenished once we sell out some remaining items. Then we'll start fresh again.

Parades- Andrea Antonelli received a thank you letter from the Memorial Day committee from one of the towns the MTA attended...our participation was greatly appreciated! The upcoming parades to do are: Columbus Day 10/8, Clifton Veterans Day on 11/5. Please check your calendar and consider attending. More info to come.

Swap Meet- Jim Mescher mentioned that the swap show team met to follow up on the After Action meeting, where ideas for improvement had been discussed. An MTA price increase has been held off repeatedly in recent years, but it has become inevitable that we need to raise fees. It was unanimously agreed that the cost of admission will increase by \$1 equaling an \$8 entry fee. Vendor pricing will rise \$5 per spot for both indoor and outdoor spaces. Also, it's intended to keep display vehicles in the paved driveway area where they were this year.

Website- All members who signed up to GroupIO are reporting they are regularly receiving mailings-hurray!

OMS7- Pat Dolan and **Tim Swanick** talked about the ongoing issue with replacement parts nationwide. They, among others in the hobby have been dealing with transmission and tie rod components. Be careful of what you are ordering, the vendor you use and where it is being manufactured. Replacement parts are coming in either too short, not properly treated (hardened), etc. A reliable vendor will be willing to take these parts back and issue refunds, but others out there are flat out refusing to do so.

Operation Toy Train- Tim Farrell reported that our stops are expanding this year! Thank you to **John Sobotka** for helping make this happen. There will be groups doing runs in CT and PA. It's important to note that the trains take in all the costs, but are kept to railroad rules in running these routes. A new merchandise line was presented tonight by **Angie Farrell**, including but not limited to; ornaments, assorted tumblers, wood signs, etc. You can see more of the line on August 26th in Port Jervis. A Museum Crawl will celebrate the opening of 3 museums in Port Jervis including the Tri-State Railway Society and the Fire Museum. This will run from 12-4.

New Business- Tim Swanick asked the club to consider a donation request to Picatinny-he will find out whom would benefit the most, i.e. the Family Readiness Unit, MWR or Historical Society. **Jim Mescher** motioned to give a \$500 donation to the appropriate group. **Gary Scholtz** asked the club to consider a future donation to the NJ National Guard currently housed in the old Atlantic City armory. This would be for needed kitchen supplies.

UPCOMING MTA EVENTS

The Sussex Fairgrounds is requesting vehicles for their Touch a Truck day on August 9th, from 12-7. Please let Gary know if you are available to bring a vehicle up.

The Picatinny Historical Tour is set for August 12th. Those going will receive one final email over the next week with the details for that event.

Pat Dolan announced LEAD EAST will run Thursday 8/31 through Saturday 9/2 at the Parsippany Hilton. Our group has been assigned a somewhat covered parking area this year. Please contact Pat with your availability as we have limited spots.

Bill McKelvey sent out an email to register for the Mahan Collection Open House on September 9th to the entire club. You must register if you wish to attend. There is no entrance fee however donations are being accepted, and there will be food trucks on the premises to purchase food.

Diane's Dairy in Towaco in the Red Barn Plaza has reached out to the club asking for vehicles to attend their August 26th show. They hold a car show every Saturday in the summer, however this gathering will be a surprise to honor a WWII veteran who will be turning a very sharp 101. Time for the show is 3-8. The lot holds about 60 vehicles, so it is recommended you arrive closer to the starting time if attending.

Gary Schultz mentioned the *Lackawanna Cut Off Society* is planning an open house at the train station in Green Township in the fall and has asked if the club could provide some vehicles, more info to come

NOMINATING COMMITTEE

A nominating committee is needed to help with officer elections. Thank you to **Ken Gardner** for offering to chair it, **Joe Travelli** and **Jim Mescher** for accepting teller spots. **John Sobotka** (President) and **Jean Swanick** (Secretary) not be seeking re-election.

Old News- Joe Travelli was able to attend tonight and was presented with his *Harold Ratzburg Award - Thanks Joe for all you do!*

Good of the Club- Ashley Lamac suggested some future trip ideas that might be nice to plan including a northeast group trip to visit some of our nation's monuments, or the American Merchant Marine Museum in Kings Point, NY. **Art Swain** mentioned the Red Ball club show is only weeks away, Friday and Saturday September 29th and 30th in Gilbert, PA. The Merrimack Valley Military Vehicle Collectors Club rally dates have been announced as July 25-27, 2024 in Ware, NH. Check out their website for details, this event requires early registration.

A motion was made to adjourn the meeting at 8:30 by **Pat Dolan** and seconded by **Anita Roberts**.

NEXT MEETING – THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 7th – Whippany Legion Hall – Food 6:00pm, Meeting 7:00pm

Respectfully Submitted by
Jean Swanick,
Secretary

MTA 2023 Officers and Key Committee Heads

President- John Sobotka

Tel: 862-266-6284 email: jsobotka@hotmail.com

Vice President- Gary Schultz

Tel: 973-207-8955 email: garyrschultz@gmail.com

Secretary- Jean Swanick

Tel: 973-647-0148 email: jswanick170@msn.com

Treasurer - Al Mellini

Tel: 973-723-2166 email: albert.mellini@gmail.com

Sergeant at Arms- Andrew Salzano

Tel: 973-831-0920

Membership Chairman- Dave Steinert

Tel: 201-407-4035 email: dsteinert@mtaofnj.org

News letter Editor- Dave Steinert

Tel: 201-407-4035 email: dsteinert@mtaofnj.org

Parade Coordinator Andrea Antonelli

Tel: 973-214-1383 email: andreaantonelli@aol.com

Swap Meet Chairman- Gary Schultz

Tel: 973-207-8955 email: garyrschultz@gmail.com

Webmaster- Rudy Garbely

Tel: 973-800-9251 email: rgarbely@gmail.com

Quartermaster and MTA Archives Custodian
Gary Schultz

Tel: 973-207-8955 email: garyrschultz@gmail.com

The MTA Does Picatinny Arsenal

Picatinny Historical Tour

Saturday, August 12, 2023

(Submitted by a Tour Participant)



Despite some heat, the weather held out Saturday for club members who were registered for the long-awaited historical tour of Picatinny Arsenal as it is currently named today, organized by Tim Swanick. The MTA had 11 military vehicles and about 25 members attending. The MTA made 7 stops throughout the base where our hosts explained the

building/location and also the events that took place over time at Picatinny.

Many thanks to base historians and archivists Jason and Jeff, and base photographer Todd. These men kindly donated their time for the tour and gladly answered any and all questions.



We made multiple stops at different locations on the base, which ultimately was first known as the "Middle Forge Tract" of just under 1,200 acres back in the day and grew over time to almost 6,000 acres present day. We learned about the one "C" versus two "C's" in Picatinny, viewed displays of artillery from the Civil War, WWII and present day as well as some other arms and munition displays. So many interesting



facts and stories are part of the history of this installation.

The Walton burial ground is one of 2 cemeteries and dates to 1787, with somewhere between 80-100 bodies are interred there. Fire station #2 once served as a stable and is built from original stone quarried on the property-did you know there were 2 quarries on the base at one time? The Canon gates were really built from cannon and cannonballs and are original constructed in 1885.

The devastating explosion at the adjoining Navy depot that rocked the surrounding communities one evening in 1926, was confirmed to have been started by lightning. And there's so much more. What a great place for a 3-hour tour!..with a happier ending than Gilligan's Island!

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE 458TH PBR

They were a small, tight-knit crew of Army Transportation Corps soldiers who came to Vietnam to run a combination barge and truck operation but who ended up taking on the dangerous work of patrolling harbors and rivers.

This is not the full story of the officers and enlisted men who became soldiers and then sailors, volunteers for the one and only 458th Army 'PBR' (Patrol Boat River) company also known as the "Sea Tigers".

The 458th can trace its roots back to June 2, 1943, during WWII. At that time, the 458th was an Amphibian Truck Company bound for England, France and Omaha Beach. There the 458th provided direct support using a new 2.5-ton transport machine, aka "DUKW". Taking supplies directly from the ship to the frontline support units to unload. Later they also participated in the Northern France, Rhineland and other operations, earning the unit an Arrowhead and Croix de Gerre with palm for its actions.

In June of 1964 the 458th Transportation Company gave up their "DUKW's" for newer Lighter Amphibious Re-supply Cargo or "LARC", which carried 5 tons material, ship to shore. The 458th "LARC" was

458th SEA TIGERS ASSOCIATION

DUKW DRIVING

by Walt Kierzkowski

Driving the DUKW's was a lot of fun! It's that first time you get to drive into the sea and when you are coming up to moor alongside of the ship and try hitting the brakes!!! They don't work!!! You soon learn how to overcome that: learning how to reverse the prop, cutting down on your speed, etc. You have to get the crewman to hook up the mooring line and then you turn your wheels out so that you're up against the hull of the ship. Then you let the throttle out a bit to keep tension on the line.

We used to work in pairs. One DUKW would hold the other up against the side of the ship while the Terminal Service people would have to climb the cargo net on the side. I've climbed that net many times since. I would sometimes have to hang out the mooring lines for the DUKW's and landing craft to hook up to. The US Army had a cargo ship named the *Hickory Knoll*. It had no holding tanks back in the 50's. We were working with the Marines at the time. (They used to give us a hard time at Little Creek or in town if you were in uniform etc...you get the picture). Well, the Marines had to come in from the fantail in order to get to one of the cargo holds that held their supplies. We would give a hand signal to somebody in the rear head and all of a sudden the marines would get a "shower". We never really flushed anything but CLEAN water on them, but you can imagine what they thought as they passed through the untimely shower. They could have stormed the ship like a bunch of pirates since we had the cargo nets hung out, but their officers always kept them at bay. This was just a bit of payback. ☺

Taking a DUKW off a hard road and driving into the sand dunes was an experience in itself. First, you were to lower the tire pressure down to around 10 PSI's or less, from the lever on the dash. (It gave estimated pressures for different types of terrain). This made it easier to maneuver through the dunes without getting stuck. All DUKW's had winches on the fantails. (A compartment on the stern allowed access to replace the shear pin, in case it snapped on

the drive). DUKW crewmen were issued a Bowie knife, pliers, and screwdriver in a scabbard that you could put on your belt. Each vehicle also carried Heavy-duty gloves, a flashlight, small tool pouch, and a 6-volt pistol trigger-type spot/signal light. We mainly used the winch to tow back disabled DUKW's from out at sea. The SOP was to run in pairs. Certain DUKW's had an A-frame derrick mounted on them to help load and offload cargo. These were referred to as "Molly DUKW's"

Yes, if I ever hit the lotto I would love to buy a DUKW and restore it and run it. I would take my friends out fishing...get them all excited as you race towards the water with them unprepared for what's coming next... maybe leave the manual drains open (not the three brass plugs underneath) so it would flood a bit, getting the water to slap up against the floor and have the water shoot up alongside the cargo compartment where they would be sitting! Yes, A DUKW can be a lot of fun to drive!



DUKW



This article was written several years ago and submitted by Walt Kierzkowski (pictured above) who served in the 458th Sea Tigers and was awarded the Naval Yacht Citation, but served in the U.S. Army.



LARC-LX unloading a smaller aluminum-hulled LARC-V

assigned to the 10th BAT, 4th Transportation Command and later deployed to Cam Ranh Bay, RVN (Republic of Vietnam) in October 1966. Their mission and areas of operations were expanded in short order to include Nha Trang, Phan Rang, Phan Thiet and Vung Ro Bay.

Patrol Boat River, (PBR's) were the first fast attack fiberglass patrol boats their kind introduced into a war theater by US Army. It was also the first and only time the US Army provided for the use of this style of watercraft boats within the transportation community. Due to the nature, firepower of the boat and required work of a PBR sailor, volunteer Army Marines underwent special training with the US Navy at Mare Island, CA. ALL Army PBR sailors were volunteers. Army PBR's were identical to Navy BPR's.

The 458th PBR was active throughout the majority of the Vietnam Campaign. Many of their operations are now history and can be found in books and journals. The 458th was inactivated in Vietnam on 1 September 1971. As part of the 18th Military Police (MP) Brigade, the 458th received the Meritorious Unit Commendation for the period of 26 September 1967 to 31 October 1968 and the Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry with Palm for 1966 to 1971.



CLASSIFIEDS

To add or remove listings from the Classifieds, please email Dave Steinert at 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. Bob (mobile) 201-663-1093 or Email: rrobertleach59@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 201-663-1093 or Email: rrobertleach59@aol.com.

WANTED: Hello MTA Members, I Am In Search Of Garage Space To Rent. I have two antique vehicles and other items I need to store. Please contact me for any information / leads @ Bob Leach (mobile) 201-663-1093 or Email : rrobertleach59@aol.com.

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 : Mattrziegler@gmail.com

TALL TIMBER TACTICAL
PRESENTS




**THE GREAT POCONO ARMS
& MILITARY SHOW**
At Pocono Raceway
September 8th -10th 2023
Show Hours
Friday: 12:00pm - 6:00pm
Saturday: 9:00am - 5:00pm
Sunday: 9:00am - 3:00pm




**REDBALL
FALL SWAP MEET
SEPT. 22-23, 2023**
8:00 AM - 12:00 PM
West End Fair Grounds
570 Fairground Rd
Gilbert, PA 18331

Gun and Military Show
October 13th - 15th, 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

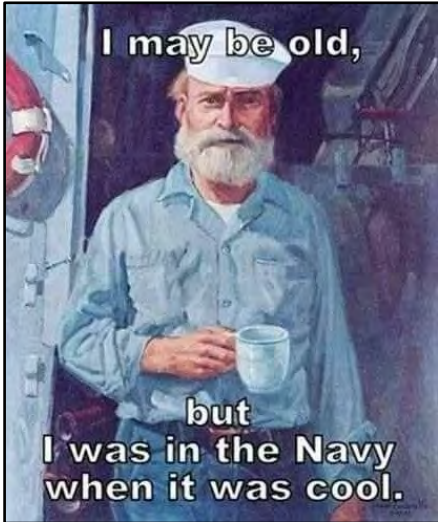


**MEADOWLANDS
ANTIQUA MILITARIA SHOW**
Saturday
October 21, 2023
All Wars All Conflicts
www.meadowlandsmilitaria.com

Military Transport Association

P.O. Box 391
Budd Lake, NJ 07828

**THE NEXT MTA MEETING WILL
BE HELD ON THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 7th
AT THE WHIPPANY AMERICAN
LEGION POST AT 7PM**



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

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.