



# MOTOR POOL MESSENGER

the official monthly newsletter of the **MILITARY TRANSPORT ASSOCIATION**  
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Issue: December 2023

Editor: David Steinert



*Merry  
Christmas*

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## ON THE COVER...



WIKIPEDIA  
The Free Encyclopedia

A U.S. Army heavy-duty M520 transporter called a Goer, helps Santa Claus this Christmas while his reindeer recover from the flu.

The U.S. Army M520 Goer is a military vehicle whose design was initially conceived in the early 1950s. The M520 Goer was primarily used by the United States Army as a heavy-duty transporter for a variety of equipment, including tanks, artillery pieces, and other heavy vehicles. It was also used for other military operations such as the construction of bridges and other infrastructure.



A U.S. Army M520 Transport Vehicle

At the time, the US military was looking for a new, extreme off-road, tactical truck series, with substantially increased load-carrying capacity. According to a May 2006 article in *Classic Military Vehicle* magazine, the United States Armor Board began evaluating and testing commercially available, large, wheeled, articulated-steering, earth-moving equipment for potential tactical application in 1956 / 1957. This resulted in development contracts for 4x4 all-terrain vehicles of various weight classes being awarded to Clark Equipment, Le Tourneau-Westinghouse, and Caterpillar Tractor Company.

Clark provided a 5-short-ton (4.5 t) prototype, based on their Model 75 log-skidder, powered by a Cummins 6-cyl. diesel engine.

Caterpillar's prototype entries were in the eight-ton class and were designated: XM520 (8-ton cargo truck).

Without exception, the prototypes consisted of two segments: housing engine and driver's

compartment in the front and using the rear part as main transport unit, whereby steering was accomplished by articulating the whole front unit relative to the rear, as opposed to pivot steering the front wheels conventionally. The large wheels with large, low-pressure tires were mounted without any suspension or steering mechanism, greatly making for a simpler design. In order to keep the wheels on the ground on uneven terrain, the front and rear units could not only swivel around a vertical axis, but also along the vehicle's longitudinal axis, allowing significant articulation. In low gear ranges, the Goer had four-wheel drive capability, but on-road it was purely front-wheel drive.

The Caterpillar design did well in testing, and in 1960, the company was awarded a multimillion-dollar contract for developing eight 8-short-ton (7.3 t) cargo trucks, delivered in 1961 and 1962, as well as two 10-short-ton (9.1 t) wreckers and two 2,500-US-gallon (9,500 L; 2,100 imp gal) tankers in 1962. Another twenty-three units were ordered in 1963, then field-tested in West Germany in 1964 and in South Vietnam in 1966.

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U.S. Army Goer M559 Tanker

Not until 1971 did Caterpillar eventually receive a production contract for 1300 units: 812 M520 cargo-vehicles, 371 M559 tankers and 117 M553 wreckers. Production began in 1972 and lasted through June 1976. When fitted with its own crane, the cargo variant would be designated M877. All variants except the wrecker existed both with or

without front winch, whereas all wreckers had winches both front and rear. Early units, with a Cat D333 engine, were multi-fuel, but later ones, with the D333C power plant, were diesel only. The M520 Goer was powered by a 375 horsepower diesel engine and had a top speed of 35 miles per hour.

The M520, cataloged as "Truck, Cargo, 8-ton, 4x4", and nicknamed **the "Goer"**. As trucks go, the Caterpillar-made Goer stands out due to being articulated, much wider than other trucks, and lacking suspension on the wheels. Nevertheless, the vehicle's lack of suspension made it too bouncy on hardened surfaces, making most drivers shy away from its 31 mph (50 km/h) top speed. The method for keeping bounce to a minimum on hard roads was to gently sway the vehicle left and right at top speed.



**U.S. Army Goer M553 Wrecker**

The oscillating cab was also dangerous as entering or exiting the vehicle with the engine off could put pressure on the steering wheel and when the engine was started the cab would turn without warning. Also its oversize dimensions proved generally awkward, so in the 1980s it was replaced by the Oshkosh Heavy Expanded Mobility Tactical Truck (HEMTT) series, that combined good on-road behavior with adequate off-road performance.

As the Goers were phased out accordingly, it was done so under a demilitarization order similar to that of the M151 jeep. Core components in the steering and driveline were destroyed before the remains of the vehicle were sold off. Consequently, only very few vehicles remained in existence, in museums and private collections.



**ATTENTION MEMBERS!**

**THE NEXT MTA MEETING WILL BE HELD ON THURSDAY, DECEMBER 7<sup>th</sup> 2023... MEETING WILL BE HELD AT THE WHIPPANY AMERICAN LEGION IN THE MEETING ROOM IN THE BASEMENT**

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

**MTA Meeting Minutes**

**Thursday, November 2, 2023 at the American Legion Hall in Whippany, NJ**

*Minutes taken by Michele Heusel*

*Submitted by Jean Swanick*

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 pm by President **John Sobotka** and opened with *the Pledge of Allegiance* and a *moment of silence*.

**Gary Schultz** expressed sympathy for **Lisa Ratzburg's** recent passing at the age of 95. For those who aren't aware, Lisa and husband Harold were founding members of the club in 1972. Also, the recent passing of **Nick Kapotes'** wife, **Eileen**. Our deepest condolences to Nick and his family.

A motion to approve the minutes of last month was made by **Pat Dolan** and seconded by Al Mellini, *motion carried!*

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

**Financial Report – Ending October 31, 2023**

Beginning balance	\$ 47,486.65
Income	\$ 574.83
Expenditures	\$ 2,571.97
Closing balance	\$ 45,489.51

A motion to approve the financial report was made by **Carolyn Hoffman** and seconded by **Andy Salzano**.

"Hello members. As you all know, one of my responsibilities as Treasurer is to monitor our bank accounts and advise the Executive Board on spending guidelines. Just so you know, we are down from 2022 in the MTA accounts year to date. Blame goes to the poor attendance at the 2023 Swap Meet. In addition, *Vehicles in Movies* payments are way down though revenues from parades are up.

Accordingly, on behalf of the Executive Board, I remind you that dues are due January 1. In 2022, membership dues was the second largest revenue stream after parades. It is critical more than ever that we collect it in January. It's how we keep the Club healthy.

To assist, we have included a self-addressed stamped envelope in this newsletter for those who get the newsletter paper copy and you can pay by check. Additionally, you can pay by credit card by going to MTAOFNJ.org. Click on "About MTA" then click on "JOIN" and follow the prompts. You can also pay at a

meeting and checks are preferred. As a reminder, \$30 single or \$35 family. Thank you for your attention. AI

**Membership-** The club welcomed new member **Mark Fitzgerald** this evening... *Welcome Mark!*"

**President's Message-** President John Sobotka reminded the membership It's that time of year again to consider winterizing your vehicles. There are only a few more parades to go until the end of the season

**Quartermaster-** **Jim Mescher** has priced hooded, zip-up sweatshirts with embroidered logo at approximately \$26. The club discussed an appropriate number to order and anticipate having a supply to sell at the show. Men's jackets were researched and approximate price would be \$52 with embroidered logo. There are 2 versions of ladies jackets to consider, one at \$49 and another at \$54, both with embroidered logo, zippered with pockets. Cost to add an American flag would add \$3. The club plans to order by January. If interested, please reach out to Jim about the sweatshirt at 201-245-7521. Contact Gary about the jackets at 973-207-8955.

**Swap Meet-** **Jim Mescher** updated the group that all is in progress for the swap meet. It should be noted that vendor space sales will be opening up soon and the deadline to rent the same space as last year if you had not already rebooked at the last show, will be January 15<sup>th</sup>.

**Website News-** Please contact **Carolyn Hoffman** if you have any updates that need posting.

**Parades-** **Andrea Antonelli** spoke of two upcoming events; Clifton parade on Nov. 5<sup>th</sup>. If attending, please arrive at 12:30 am for line-up. The second is the Passaic Valley Holiday parade is on November 25<sup>th</sup> at 5 pm and will start at Passaic Valley High School. This parade will collect toys for under-privileged children. Please let Andrea know if you are able to participate in these two events.

Doing one or two St. Patrick's Day parades in March 2024 was then mentioned as a possible additional event the club could add to their parade roster. **Pat Dolan** advised the NYC parade on 11/7 is requesting one more vehicle, a Humvee if possible.

**New Business-** A member of the NJ Historical Commission came tonight and mentioned the Raritan High School band is one of 10 bands in the country who were picked to play at the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary at Normandy in 2024. Anita will look into this further to see if it may be a cause the club would like to support, to help the students get to the venue. The NJ Historical Commission has a Project Grant Program opening up and is looking for new project ideas to support.

**Operation Toy Train-** The first train run kicks off in Connecticut on Sunday, November 12, as reported by **Angie Farrell** and **Carolyn Hoffmann**.

The train schedule is available at [operationtoytrain.org](http://operationtoytrain.org). Priority is given to MTA members and experienced helpers, but if you are interested in helping out by following in your vehicle to the train stops, please contact Carolyn. WDHA interviewed Carolyn (Talks@toytrain) and is available on YouTube. Angie thanked the group for their continued support.

**Old Business-** Last month a donation was requested to support *Honor Flight of South Jersey*, a group that flies veterans to DC for the Veterans' parade and events. **Bill Dekker** made a motion to

approve which was seconded by **Andy Salzano**. Club vote was unanimous to approve a \$500 donation.

**Ken Gardner** advised that tonight is the last call for any new candidates to be listed for the open officer positions effective January 1, 2024. There being no further candidates added, the option to suspend voting was invoked and the new officers for 2024-2025 were announced:

**President, Gary Schultz,  
Vice President, Ken Gardner,  
Secretary-Michele Heusel,  
Treasurer-AI Mellini.**

### **CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL!**

**For the Good of the Club-** A reminder the *Wycoff Patriotic Luncheon and Program* held at the YMCA will be held on 11/6 at 11:30am. Thank you to **Michele Heusel** for taking the minutes tonight in Jean's absence!

A motion was made to adjourn the meeting at 8:35pm by **Pat Dolan** and seconded by **AI Mellini**.

Respectfully submitted,  
**Jean Swanick, Secretary**

**NEXT MEETING – DECEMBER 7th – Legion Hall –  
Food 6:00pm, Meeting 7:00pm**

### **Sun-setting the old MTA Email List**

The MTA will be "sun-setting" the old MTA membership email exchange list. Going forward, to exchange MTA specific emails with other MTA Members, you will have to join the new GroupIO platform. The process to join GroupIO is as follows:

1. Members will receive an invite to join GroupIO.
2. Members will need to accept the invitation from [mta-mail@groups.io](mailto:mta-mail@groups.io).
3. Bill Murphy will get a message that a person has accepted the invitation.
4. Bill Murphy will acknowledge that they have accepted the invitation.
5. The invited member then has to send an email to [mta-mail@groups.io](mailto:mta-mail@groups.io).
6. Bill Murphy will get a message that said member has sent their first message.
7. Bill Murphy acknowledges that message and then the said member becomes unmoderated and can now send emails to our new email service.

Regards, Bill Murphy

**NOTICE; Courtesy of Bill McKelvey, the following WWII vintage U.S. Army Jacket (Small size-no pants-no moth holes) will be auctioned at the December meeting. Bill will split the highest bid with the MTA 50/50.**





# Operation TOY TRAIN

## 2023 TRAIN SCHEDULE

<b>Sunday, November 12, 2023</b>		<b>Address</b>	<b>Arrive</b>	<b>Depart</b>
Waterbury, CT	Fascia's Chocolates	44 Chase River Rd.	12:00 PM	12:30 PM
Thomaston, CT	Thomaston Station	242 E. Main St.	1:00 PM	1:30 PM
East Litchfield, CT	Former East Litchfield Station Site	70 East Litchfield Rd.	2:00 PM	2:45 PM
Torrington, CT	Alfredo's Deli	170 Water St.	3:00 PM	4:00 PM

<b>Saturday, November 18, 2023</b>		<b>Address</b>	<b>Arrive</b>	<b>Depart</b>
Kutztown, PA	Kutztown Station	232 Railroad St.	11:00 AM	2:00 PM

<b>Sunday, November 19, 2023</b>		<b>Address</b>	<b>Arrive</b>	<b>Depart</b>
Salem, NJ	Market Street Grade Crossing	13 Market St.	10:00 AM	11:00 AM
Woodstown, NJ	East Avenue Grade Crossing	67 East Ave.	12:00 PM	1:00 PM
Swedesboro, NJ	Grasso Foods	9 Ogden Rd.	2:00 PM	3:00 PM

<b>Sunday, November 26, 2023</b>		<b>Address</b>	<b>Arrive</b>	<b>Depart</b>
Port Jervis, NY	Port Jervis Christkindmarkt	Front St. and Jersey Ave.	10:00 AM	5:00 PM

<b>Saturday, December 2, 2023</b>		<b>Address</b>	<b>Arrive</b>	<b>Depart</b>
Rockaway, NJ	Arico's Riverside Shoppe	26 E. Main St.	9:00 AM	9:30 AM
Dover, NJ	Dover Town Hall	37 N. Sussex St.	10:00 AM	10:50 AM
Port Murray, NJ	Port Murray Post Office	218 Main St.	1:00 PM	1:30 PM
Washington, NJ	Washington Borough Park & Pool	150 Broad St.	1:50 PM	2:10 PM
Stewartsville, NJ	Warren Street Grade Crossing	425 Warren St.	3:05 PM	3:25 PM
Phillipsburg, NJ	Phillipsburg Union (PU) Tower	84 Brainard St.	3:50 PM	4:30 PM

<b>Sunday, December 3, 2023</b>		<b>Address</b>	<b>Arrive</b>	<b>Depart</b>
Farmingdale, NJ	Main Street Grade Crossing	87 Main St.	10:00 AM	10:45 AM
Freehold, NJ	Freehold Fire Department	49 W. Main St.	11:35 AM	12:20 PM
Freehold, NJ	Builder's General Supply	222 Throckmorton St.	12:30 PM	1:15 PM
Tennent, NJ	Reed & Perrine Co.	396 Main St.	1:30 PM	2:15 PM
Jamesburg, NJ	Jamesburg Fire Department	82 W. Railroad Ave.	3:15 PM	4:00 PM

<b>Saturday, December 9, 2023</b>		<b>Address</b>	<b>Arrive</b>	<b>Depart</b>
Rochelle Park, NJ	CVS Pharmacy	150 Rochelle Ave.	9:00 AM	9:40 AM
Hawthorne, NJ	Warburton Ave. Grade Crossing	207 Warburton Ave.	10:00 AM	10:30 AM
Midland Park, NJ	Hot Dog Caboose	211 Greenwood Ave.	10:40 AM	11:10 AM
Wyckoff, NJ	Wyckoff PTO Economy Shop	399 Main St.	11:15 AM	11:55 AM
Oakland, NJ	Enterprise Rent-a-Car	393 Ramapo Valley Rd. (Route 202)	12:10 PM	1:00 PM
Pompton Lakes, NJ	Station 1 Books & Vinyl Shop	1 Station Plz.	1:15 PM	1:50 PM
Butler, NJ	Butler Museum	221 Main St.	2:05 PM	2:30 PM
Newfoundland, NJ	Newfoundland Station	1667 Green Pond Rd.	2:55 PM	3:25 PM
Sparta, NJ	Sparta Train Station	30 Station Rd.	4:00 PM	4:20 PM
Vernon, NJ	Veterans' Memorial Park	50 Vernon Crossing Rd.	4:50 PM	5:30 PM

<b>Sunday, December 10, 2023</b>		<b>Address</b>	<b>Arrive</b>	<b>Depart</b>
Warwick, NY	Kuiken Brothers	33 South St.	9:45 AM	10:20 AM
Sugar Loaf, NY	formerly Anne Marie's Country Deli	1398 Kings Hwy.	10:35 AM	11:10 AM
Montgomery, NY	Montgomery "Lumber Lot"	46 Railroad Ave.	12:45 PM	1:55 PM
Campbell Hall, NY	Hamptonburgh Caboose Museum	3 Erie St.	2:20 PM	3:30 PM
Middletown, NY	Middletown Train Station	301 N. Galleria Dr.	4:05 PM	4:30 PM

<b>Saturday, December 16, 2023</b>		<b>Address</b>	<b>Arrive</b>	<b>Depart</b>
Flanders, NJ	Flanders Fire Company #1	27 Main St.	1:00 PM	4:00 PM

## THE BATTLE OF THE BULGE SERIES

### PART V

## MOVEMENT TO CONTACT: XVIII AIRBORNE CORPS ENTERS THE FIGHT

Jim Swanick

Much like the Bastogne perimeter, the lines of what became the XVIII Airborne Corps sector coagulated over time. The first formation to arrive was Maj. Gen. Leland Hobbs' 30<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division, a battle-tested outfit nicknamed "Roosevelt's SS" by the enemy. Transferred from Ninth Army to Maj. Gen. Leonard Gerow's V Corps on 17 December, on 18 December it spread out across a broad front of seventeen miles to meet (Waffen-SS) Col. Joachim Peiper's *Kampfgruppe Peiper* of the 1<sup>st</sup> SS Panzer Division, which had skirted the V Corps line the day before to reach Stavelot.

"Old Hickory's" wide dispersion reflected its orders, which were to seize and defend Malmedy and Stavelot while keeping *KG Peiper* from moving north through the valley of the Amblève River or west through Werbomont. To accomplish these tasks Hobbs sent the 117<sup>th</sup> Infantry to Stavelot and the 120<sup>th</sup> Infantry to Malmedy, while most of the 119<sup>th</sup> Infantry blocked the Amblève River valley at Stoumont. 2/119 took up positions in front of Werbomont to cover the assembly of Maj. Gen. Jim Gavin's 82<sup>d</sup> Airborne Division. Before the day was out both the 117<sup>th</sup> and 119<sup>th</sup> Infantry were in contact with Peiper's troops.

Throughout 18 December Peiper had attempted to continue to the west. Having transited Stavelot before the arrival of the 117<sup>th</sup> Infantry, by midday his tanks were approaching Trois Ponts, at the confluence of the Salm and Amblève Rivers. Here Co. C of the 51<sup>st</sup> Engineer Battalion blew all three bridges over the rivers in the face of Peiper's men, turning him north to get at Werbomont via La Gleize and Cheneux. As the column crossed the Amblève at Cheneux it was worked over by Allied aircraft for nearly two hours, which knocked out a Panther just past the bridge. By the time the column got going again it was too late; a squad from the 291<sup>st</sup> Engineer Battalion had reached Habiemont and wired the bridge over the Lienne Creek there for demolition. As the lead tank approached the bridge, it was blown sky high, and when further efforts to cross the Lienne proved fruitless Peiper turned back toward Stoumont.



Maj. Gen. Matt Ridgway,  
XVIII Airborne Corps CG

These were then, the circumstances under which the XVIII Airborne Corps HQ arrived at the front. The bulk of its members were green, but the corps commander and most of his staff had come out of the 82<sup>d</sup> Airborne Division. Maj. Gen. Matt Ridgway had led the "All Americans" with distinction in Sicily, Italy, and Normandy, and on his elevation to

corps command had turned it over to Gavin. As Ridgway and most of his staff were in England inspecting the 17<sup>th</sup> Airborne Division and the more senior division commander (Maj. Gen. Maxwell Taylor of the 101<sup>st</sup> Airborne Division) within the corps was in the United States at the time of the attack, it fell to Gavin to get the corps on the road following its commitment late on 17 December.

After issuing orders for the 82<sup>d</sup> and 101<sup>st</sup> to go to Bastogne, Gavin drove through the night to report to First Army on the morning of 18 December. There his orders changed: one division was to go to Werbomont, the other would continue to Bastogne and be attached to VIII Corps. Gavin picked the 82<sup>d</sup>, in the lead, to be diverted northward. The division began arriving in Werbomont at 2000 that evening and quickly secured the crossroads before fanning out to cover the line Cheneux-Trois Ponts-Vielsalm on 19 December.

Dawn on 19 December saw heavy fighting erupt across the 30<sup>th</sup> Division front. *KG Peiper* drove 3/119 out of Stoumont, but at Stavelot the 1<sup>st</sup> SS Panzer Division's reconnaissance battalion, following in Peiper's footsteps, was unable to make a dent in the lines of 1/117. Here the GI's went over to the offensive and consolidated their control over the town, aided by the 113<sup>th</sup> FA Battalion, which fired at a rate of three rounds per gun per minute for three hours. At the end of the day Peiper, cut off, all but out of fuel, and unable to exploit his success at Stoumont, requested permission to bring his command out but was denied.

Ridgway arrived in Werbomont on the morning of the 19<sup>th</sup>, having made it as far as Bastogne the night before. A briefing from Hodges at Chaudfontaine outlined for him the corps mission: to plug the widening gap between V and VIII Corps by defending the line Stavelot-Trois Ponts-Houffalize-La Roche-Hotton; to destroy *KG Peiper*; and to contact and support the units at St. Vith. To carry out his orders Ridgway would have Gavin's 82<sup>d</sup> Airborne, Hobbs' 30<sup>th</sup> Division, and Maj. Gen. Maurice Rose's veteran 3<sup>d</sup> Armored Division, less CCA and CCB.



Glidermen of the 325th GIR move into position.

Ridgway's intention on 20 December was to take the fight to the enemy. CCB/3 was under First Army orders to cut the roads west of Stavelot and attack Stoumont and La Gleize in support of the 119<sup>th</sup> Infantry, so to compliment this drive Ridgway ordered Gavin to clear out the area between Cheneux and Trois Ponts before pushing east to meet CCB and encircle *KG Peiper*. The dregs of the 3<sup>d</sup> Armored would meanwhile advance to contact in the Hotton-Manhay sector to locate a significant enemy force believed to operating in the area.

The "significant force" on the corps' western flank was Brig. Gen. Siegfried von Waldenburg's 116<sup>th</sup> Panzer Division. This unit had reached Houffalize on the morning of 19 December only to be diverted south by the commander of LVIII Panzer Corps, Lt. Gen. Walter Krüger, on the assumption that the town was well defended. Waldenburg turned toward Ourtheville, but Krüger's doubt that the bridge there could be captured intact led him to order the division to march through the night back to Houffalize. And so the 116<sup>th</sup> Panzer had turned around, giving up a full day's worth of progress to advance on La Roche and Samrée on 20 December.

The 116<sup>th</sup> Panzer Division's countermarch put it on a collision course with the 3<sup>d</sup> Armored Division. With only CCR and a handful of scouts at his disposal, Rose organized three task forces that he sent south out of Hotton. TF's Hogan and Kane reached La Roche and Manhay without incident, but on reaching Dochamp TF Tucker was alerted to an attack on the 7<sup>th</sup> Armored Division supply trains in Samrée. Tucker moved to assist but lost several M4's to enemy fire as he approached the town, forcing him to withdraw to Amonines as the "Lucky Seventh" rear echelon men were overrun. In their victory



the attackers, the bulk of the 116<sup>th</sup> Panzer Division, took receipt of 25,000 gallons of much-needed gasoline and a king's ransom in rations.

Tucker's clash at Samrée led Rose to reinforce him with the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion of the 36<sup>th</sup> Armored Infantry Regiment, led by Lt. Col. Bill Orr. Orr took over the task force and was given orders to recapture Samrée on 21 December, but this was not to be, as Krüger had sent a detachment marching through the night to cut the Soy-Hotton road. At 0730 this force debouched from the woods east of Hotton and took the village under fire. Both TF Hogan and TF Howze, Rose's reserve, were sent to relieve the garrison, but were stopped, with TF Hogan surrounded at Marcouray. TF Orr, meanwhile, attempted to reclaim Dochamps but was shoved back to Amonines, where it was taken under siege despite efforts to assist by TF Kane.

As the Spearheaders fought their confusing, whirling battle with the 116<sup>th</sup> Panzer Division the 30<sup>th</sup> Division continued to lock horns with *KG Peiper*. Throughout 20 and 21 December the 119<sup>th</sup> Infantry, in conjunction with TF Jordan of CCB/3, attempted to crush the German resistance in Stoumont but made little progress. By the end of 21 December the ferocity of the back-and-forth fighting had sapped the strength of the Americans to the point at which they were able to hold their gains but unable to add to them. To the east 3/117 and TF McGeorge worked to subdue La Gleize, while 1/117 held at Stavelot in the face of fanatical attacks by 1<sup>st</sup> SS Panzer Division elements that charged over the bodies of fallen comrades and tried to wade the icy Amblève under fire. Though TF McGeorge was blunted, a drive by TF Lovelady cut the road between La Gleize and Trois Ponts, severing a tenuous line of supply to Peiper that had been established by reinforcing a footbridge over the Salm.



A bazooka team from the 504<sup>th</sup> PIR covers the road near Cheneux, 20 December 1944.

While the rest of "Roosevelt's SS" dealt with Peiper, the 120<sup>th</sup> Infantry was struck by (Waffen-SS) Lt. Col. Otto Skorzeny's 150<sup>th</sup> Panzer Brigade, which had been formed to infiltrate US lines using English-speaking troops in American uniforms. With this plan no longer feasible due to the delays in the advance to the Meuse, Skorzeny had recommended his unit be committed as a conventional force. Throughout 21 December it attempted to batter its way past the 120<sup>th</sup> Infantry and assorted supporting units, its main effort landing along the unit boundary dividing the 120<sup>th</sup> Infantry's zone of action from that of the 117<sup>th</sup> Infantry. Though Skorzeny's men succeeded in denting the line here, which ruffled feathers all the way up to First Army HQ, fire from both units crushed his tanks while artillery shells equipped with proximity fuses tore into the infantry. The first and last attacks on Malmedy failed.

In contrast to the other units in the corps, the 82<sup>d</sup> Airborne Division had come into position largely without incident. In the center of its line the 505<sup>th</sup> Parachute Infantry Regiment (PIR) had taken up positions on the Salm River running from Trois Ponts to Raspaille, where the lines of the 508<sup>th</sup> PIR picked up and ran south through Vielsalm and Salmchâteau before turning 90 degrees and extending to the west along the Their-du-Mont ridgeline to Grand-Sart. On 21

December the 325<sup>th</sup> Glider Infantry Regiment came down to extend the line further west to Hebronval, with an outpost in Regne. Only the 504<sup>th</sup> PIR, arrayed along the southern bank of the Amblève on the division left, had done any serious fighting, having descended upon the tail end of Peiper's column at Cheneux and destroyed it in two days of brutal close-quarters fighting that severely mauled 1/504.

By the close of 21 December XVIII Airborne Corps had concluded its advance to contact. On its left the 30<sup>th</sup> Division had clamped down on *KG Peiper*. In the center the 82<sup>d</sup> Airborne Division had established a line of outposts and strongpoints that barred movement over the Salm and via the road network to the west. It had also contacted the forces at St. Vith. On the corps right the 3<sup>d</sup> Armored, though lacking CCA and CCB, had stymied the advance of the 116<sup>th</sup> Panzer Division. Behind its shield the 84<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division, the vanguard of Maj. Gen. J. Lawton Collins' VII Corps, had begun to assemble to the west at Marche.

With the establishment of this relatively solid line the battle entered a new phase. Most of Ridgway's chips were on the battlefield; all he had left were 4,000 veteran paratroopers of the independent 509<sup>th</sup> and 551<sup>st</sup> Parachute Infantry Battalions and 517<sup>th</sup> PIR. These formations had fought in the Mediterranean and southern France and had departed their rest areas after the airborne divisions. With these forces now in hand, Ridgway parceled them out to those that needed them: the 551<sup>st</sup> went to the 30<sup>th</sup> Division while the 3<sup>d</sup> Armored received the 509<sup>th</sup> and 1/517. The remainder of the 517<sup>th</sup> went into corps reserve at Werbomont.

While coming into position, the XVIII Airborne Corps had met the spearheads of the German forces arrayed against them. Thus, while Ridgway, stretched over a wide front and lacking 2/3 of one of his divisions, was scraping around for men, his opponents were building in strength. Both divisions of *II SS Panzer Corps* had come up and were poised to strike the 82<sup>d</sup> Airborne Division, and the 560<sup>th</sup> VG Division, trailing the 116<sup>th</sup> Panzer, would enter the fight in strength against the hard-pressed 3<sup>d</sup> Armored. Most troubling, however, was that on the night of 21 December the perimeter around St. Vith finally ruptured. The fate of the reeling defenders, in danger of being destroyed outright, remained to be seen.

## CLASSIFIED

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: 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)**

**WANTED: Hello MTA Members, I am in search of a 1953 Dodge Power Giant D300 early two-whole Hydrovac brake unit. This unit can be found on many similar sized vehicles. Please contact me for any information / leads @ Bob Leach (mobile) 201-663-1093 or Email : [robertleach59@aol.com](mailto:robertleach59@aol.com).**



# Military Transport Association

P.O. Box 391  
Budd Lake, NJ 07828

THE NEXT MTA MEETING WILL  
BE HELD ON THURSDAY, DECEMBER 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](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

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