

# 8th Annual Petit Jean MV Rally (ARMVPA)

By Tom Essary, Arlington, TX, MVPA #31350  
Photographs by Evelyn Harless, Laurie and Tom Essary

In what must be the best kept secret of the State of Arkansas, the Arkansas Travelers (AR Military Vehicle Preservation Assn.) hosted the 8th Annual Petit Jean Military Vehicle Rally. The 4<sup>th</sup> weekend of September every year there are dozens of former military vehicles -- jeeps, trucks and tracked on hand for public view and lots of fun and games too. The site is located between the beautiful Ozark and Ouachita Mountain ranges and the scenery is reminiscent of the Ardennes Forrest, Holland fields or Normandy beach cliffs. There are expansive fields and acre after acre of mixed pines and deciduous trees. High rocky cliffs, breath taking water falls, lakes and streams and wild life abound.



Breath taking view on Magazine Mountain - west of Petit Jean Mountain, AR.



Red Bluff overlook ... some ARVMPA folks enjoying the scenery on a break during Saturdays trail ride. This ledge appears to be just barely hanging on ... many folks

## 8th Annual Petit Jean MV Rally (ARMVPA)

commented about it. This mesa is about 300 feet above the level floor of the valley and it is straight down to the bottom.

About 125 people gathered to share their interest in military vehicles. There were military vehicles representing World War II, Korea, Viet Nam and the modern day military. All were in operation, including one WWII jeep that had no body to show the drive train. It was a fully functioning vehicle.



Early models and late, OD and Air Force blue, they stand for military vigilance and integrity.



Cargo trucks at the ready.



For cargo or maintenance, these olive drab work horses served their time for Uncle Sam and are again demonstrating their readiness.

## 8th Annual Petit Jean MV Rally (ARMVPA)

On Wednesday when my family arrived in late afternoon, there were already a dozen or so historic military vehicles (HMs) parked in neat rows and folks scrambling about to set up the displays etc. The weather was super for an outdoor event. About 85 F in the afternoon ... just right. Several folks camped in tents around the parade field and one group was in a travel trailer. The rest roughed it in hotels and cabins or in their homes in the surrounding area.



Jeeps line up for the Saturday trial ride.

The nights were cool and the sky was clear and filled with millions of stars. The natural beauty of the area did not stop at sunset (which was spectacular in its own right).

Thursday morning brought a fabulous sunrise and a heavy dew with a call for long sleeves. By about 1000 most everyone seemed to be out and about and more HMs were being unloaded and driving about. More displays were being finished and things were moving into high gear. The president, Paul Harless was showing off a new M1 Carbine canvas case he had purchased and commented that he had already spent several hundred dollars and the rally was not yet in full swing.

Lewis Anderson, Rudy, AR setup a squad tent to demonstrate Army life in the field. Cot, field phones, lots of GI items to show off.

Several times on Friday and Saturday two 37 mm towed anti-tank gun replicas were fired. Needless to say everyone enjoyed the loud report and billows of smoke ... BOOM!!!! The M3 half track was a spectacle of its own. Its 40 mm gun and dual M2 cal. .50 machine guns were loud and awesome using propane and a computer controlled simulator.

## 8th Annual Petit Jean MV Rally (ARMVPA)



*"Fire in the hole!"* 37 mm towed anti-tank gun replicas were fired from time to time ... excellent work.

Korea – The Forgotten War Display – a winner in any book, taking the Best Display Award, this display showed many faces of the Korean War. The display was put together by Jeff and Gail Clark or Bartlett, TN. On display were era weapons, food service items, photos, a M38 jeep with a trailer and mounted M1919A4 machine gun. There was always a visitor viewing the display and asking questions.



KOREA, The Forgotten War Display

A Funny Hat Contest was held Saturday afternoon. About 15 lovely ladies paraded their fine hats around for the on lookers. Even president Paul Harless entered the contest with his "Stew Pot", a helmet liner adorned with corn, radishes, potatoes, celery, carrots etc. The entries included rifle and pistol cartridges, bullets, US flags, red, white and blue ribbon, flowers and even cake icing.

## 8th Annual Petit Jean MV Rally (ARMVPA)

The festive, beautiful and patriotic hats were all fabulous. All of the ladies were announced winners after the four male judges could not make a decision about a winner.



Hats and hats and hats ... the lovely ladies of the Arkansas Travelers show off their creations.



Paul Harless' entry – "Stew Pot"



Marsha Casey's entry – "Bullet Head"

## 8th Annual Petit Jean MV Rally (ARMVPA)

The Arkansas Army National Guard Award presented the Arkansas Travelers with was a Certificate of Recognition for supporting the soldiers of A Btry 1/206th FA during deployment operations. The certificate was signed by Cpt Anthony Q Sand. There were two strong GIs in digital camo who made the presentation.

Awards:

1. Best of Show and Best M38: 1952 Willys M38 - Jeff & Gail Clark (30227) Bartlett, TN
2. People's Choice, and Judges Choice: 1942 White M3 Half Track - Steve Smith (10390) Barnhart, MO
3. President's Choice: Korean War Display - Jeff Clark (30227) Bartlett, TN
4. Best GPW: 1945 Ford GPW - William Scott Harrison (27721) Hernando, MS
5. Best MB - 1945 Willys MB - B.J. Smith (12308) Marshall, AR
6. Best M151 - M151 A2 with 37 MM Cannon - Bill Barnes (28422) Mountain Harbor Resort, AR
7. Best M38 A1 - Willys M38A1 - Bill Thorne (28170) Flippin, AR
8. WWII Medium Weight 1st Place: 1942 WC55 - Lewis Anderson (26984) Rudy, AR
9. WWII Light Weight 1st Place: 1941 Ford GP - Steve Smith (10390) Barnhart, MO
10. Post War Heavy Weight: 2 1/2 Ton M275 A2 - Clayton Jones (23206) Petit Jean Mt., AR
11. Post War Light Weight: 1964 M718 Field Ambulance - Dorothy Reed (20897) Oakland, TN

“The Fox Hole” the Arkansas Travelers store was open for business and displayed photo albums from many events. On hand for sale were donated items, magazines and member t-shirts.

Friday and Saturday morning were Military Convoy Trail Rides. About 25 HMVs formed up at 1030 and were filled with friends and family to make a 12 mile trek through the mountains. There were jeeps, weapons carriers and cargo trucks some with trailers in tow. The sound of all of them reverberated off the tall pines as the convoy headed out.



G503 standing by ...

## 8th Annual Petit Jean MV Rally (ARMVPA)



Eager entrants for the trail ride wait there turn to move out.

Over pavement for a few miles and then off onto gravel and then to dirt ... as the roads narrowed the dust thickened. On Friday the convoy had to make an unscheduled turn as a gate was not opened. The new route ended abruptly at another locked gate and only a few feet of space on either side of the dirt path for maneuvering. A runner went back through convoy signaling to turn around. The jeeps made it without much effort but the deuce and a halves took a few saplings with them ... in about 20 minutes the column was again on the move together. It was magnificent seeing everyone working together helping guide each other backing into the trees etc. to turn around. The impromptu U-turn was a highlight of the weekend.



In a rare low dust moment, a cargo truck and jeep make a turn in the Arkansas woods. The trail was easy driving, though hilly. No mud or washes to make the ride bumpy. Maybe mud and ruts next time!

## 8th Annual Petit Jean MV Rally (ARMVPA)



At the first stop ... near the a scenic overlook.



Arriving at the second stop and another spectacular overlook.



“Keep them rolling” – making there march through the thick woods toward their next objective. Jeeps from World War II to near present all in great mechanical shape.

## 8th Annual Petit Jean MV Rally (ARMVPA)

Saturday's convoy had a similar notable moment. As is customary, each vehicle stops for a photo at a spectacular overlook. A few minutes after the portraits started a jeep returned with word that the half track had thrown a track.



Everyone pitches in to load the loose track in a deuce and a half.



1942 White M3 Half Track with the left rear “shoe” thrown. This is a rare view of the bogies on the ground. There was no other apparent damage.

Two deuces and about 6 men stayed with the half track. A few phone calls were made and some food hauled out to the mishap. Nothing but the left thrown track seemed to be broken or damaged on the half track ... the busted track was loaded into one of the deuces and did not present any problem. After several hours one of the members who lives in the immediate area arrived with a truck and flatbed trailer that could negotiate the narrow dirt roads and picked up the wounded half track. Everyone cheered when the remainder of the morning's convoy rolled into camp later in the afternoon. In a bit the half track was unloaded and was again entertaining the crowds with the “*crack-crack-crack*” of simulated machine gun fire and the *k-boom* of the 40 mm.

## 8th Annual Petit Jean MV Rally (ARMVPA)



The 1942 White M3 Half track readies for the trail ride. The guns are ready also.

This was a terrific public display in keeping with the groups mission. Hundreds of on lookers stopped by, talked with veterans and other HMV owners. Visitors were setting in the vehicles for a picture, asked questions or waiting in line for dog tags to be made to order.



Molly Anderson (seated) worked many hours stamping out dozens of dog tags. Patrons wait patiently as the ancient stamping machine whirs and clunks away.

## 8th Annual Petit Jean MV Rally (ARMVPA)

I was not counting but there were dozens of spectators coming and going throughout each day. The spectators started showing up at 0730 or so and continuing almost until dark.

A free lance film maker stopped by and interviewed club co-founder Joe Allison. Joe explained how the group started and some of its history. Tom Essary continued with a short discussion on how he got involved with HMVs. He was raised around the national guard as his father was in a first sergeant in the OKNG in the late 50's and early 60's. Tom is enamored by all things military. Late in 2007 he bought a WWII jeep and sought out HMV groups. He then made a tour of the jeeps and explained something about each one ... period, power, differences as they went along.

Late on Saturday after most of the clean up ... two Travelers got to drive Gerome Casey's newly acquired deuce and a half. David Hopkins of Little Rock, AR took his two sons for a drive out on the highway. When they returned, Tom Essary from Arlington, TX drove around the swap meet area. It was a first for driving a deuce for both Hopkins and Essary and it was a blast. Thanks Gerome!



David Hopkins ends his drive in a deuce and a half while one son rides in the bed and one in the cab. Gerome Casey looks on at the right.

There were 45 HMVs, 18 trailers and 2 cannons. In the mix of HMVs were (not all inclusive):

- White M3 Half Track
- (Dodge?) Staff car
- WWII GP, MB and GPW jeeps
- M38, M38A1 and M151 jeeps
- M37 weapons carriers
- M1009 CUCV

## 8th Annual Petit Jean MV Rally (ARMVPA)

Chevy Truck (1 ½ ton)

Several versions of the 2 ½ ton trucks

A Semi Tractor with tank trailer

M274A5 Mule

Many jeep and truck trailers ... cargo and fuel haulers

M718 Field Ambulance

Chevy 1 ton van – Air Force Blue with original markings

2 37 mm towed anti tank guns

WC 55 weapons carrier with a 37 mm anti tank gun

Lots of M1919A4 caliber .30 and M2HB caliber .50 vehicle mounted machine guns

Many of the vehicles sported tools, gear and rifles



The authors 1943 Ford GPW with tools and militaria displayed. A M38A1 to the right and the back of a 1993 XM-141 further over.

The auto show provided lots of vendors and antique cars. There were several vendors with military items also.

The Museum of Autos hosts a Swap Meet and Car show every year ... looking forward to seeing you at the Ninth Annual Petit Jean Military Vehicle Rally 24-26 SEP 2009.

[www.armvpa.com](http://www.armvpa.com)

[www.museumofautos.com](http://www.museumofautos.com)

[www.petitjeanstatepark.com](http://www.petitjeanstatepark.com)

## 8th Annual Petit Jean MV Rally (ARMVPA)

*Tom and Laurie Essary live in Arlington, TX and are new to Arrowhead MVPA, Arkansas Travelers and MVPA #31350. They spent 5 months in early 2008 reviving 1943 GPW-I00709\*. See [ad5zo.com](http://ad5zo.com) for more info about the jeep restoration etc. Tom spent about 8 years in the US Navy as an ET3 and LTjg. He served as the Damage Control Assistant (DCA) on Guided Missile Destroyer USS Luce DDG-38 in '85 and '86. Tom can be reached at [tom@ad5zo.com](mailto:tom@ad5zo.com).*