

Ninth Annual Petit Jean Military Vehicle Rally

Sep. 23-26, 2009

MVPA affiliate group The Arkansas Military Vehicle Travelers hosted a superb HMV Rally in the beautiful Petit Jean Mountains of West Central Arkansas. Sandstone mountains and pine trees with plush grass and lovely wild flowers are the major exhibits here. The setting is magnificent and the weather was clear and cool.

This Rally is in conjunction with the Museum of American Automobiles Fall car show and swap meet. Many of the Rally participants sold items and bought lots of “doodads” from the vendors.

There were lots of things to see and do while at the Rally. The little tykes rode on a train of tiny Jeeps towed by a Lawn Tractor! The four jeeps were dressed in the correct colors and marking for Army, Navy, Air Force and Marines. Everyone enjoyed seeing the children driving around as the fired Nerf bullets and whooped and hollered. These are the future of the MVPA.

Friday and Saturday Morning Trail Ride for Veterans – This annual get together is a 15-20 mile convoy in HMVs for the veterans and others who may not get a jeep or deuce-and-a-half ride very often. It is in honor of all veterans. We formed up in the parade field before H-hour of 1030 and sped away down a country highway to a nearby mountain overlook. The river at the base of Petit Jean Mountain and the valley extending to the horizon were picturesque. We spent about 30 minutes looking at the site, chatting and taking photos. Ev Harless took photos of each HMV and its crew with the valley as a back drop.

World War II Relic Saved Later Model Jeep ... pull starting still works. After tinkering with an M38 jeep, Andy Rossi was unable to revive the electrical system and Joe Allison towed the Korean era jeep with his WWII jeep. After a few runs at it, the engine fired up and off four of us went on the rest of the convoy. It was kinda of automatic for everyone to pitch in and help. It was unrehearsed and unprompted, except that someone needed help. We all shares tools, spares, etc. There were two extra jeeps standing by for just in case and one lead to guard for traffic in the front and one follow similarly. It was like we had drilled for this! The continued pleasant atmosphere with the membership is a major “selling point” for the Arkansas Travelers.

Twin 40 MM AA (ack-ack) gun named “Double Trouble” – searching the skies with a GI search light on display. This anti-aircraft gun carriage was USGI, and the gun itself was hand made part by part by Steve Smith from Missouri. The gun fired propane and oxygen via a computer chip and some valves. About 2 dozen tennis balls gave their lives to demonstrated the guns.

An excellent Home Brew 37 MM towed Anti-tank gun on display. Lewis Anderson’s skill in making this replica is unsurpassed. It would look good behind my jeep (Wink! Wink!).

GI Meals Display – From D ration candy bars, C rations in cans and K rations to MREs were available for the public to view. There were mess kits (meat cans) and insulated food containers. There was a poster showing the proper way to setup the field cleaning water for the GIs to wash there mess kits and on hand a gasoline fired water heater that set in a trash can. The display did not take up much space, but it was excellent coverage of field meals for the grunts and dog faces of the wars.

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Korean War – The Forgotten War display
MULEs on display

Vehicles from as far as Illinois and Kansas were on display throughout the meet. This year's rally included: 27 jeeps; 20 trucks; 4 mules; 14 trailers; a motorcycle; a supply wagon; and a field kitchen for a total of 68 military vehicles. All were operational. There were several project jeeps and an M715 1 ¼ ton truck for sell.

There were dozens of wonderful meals served from the Army field kitchen trailer. The folks that work countless hours on our meals are very special people and there is not way to say thank you enough. The Army field kitchen had been modernized with electricity which made meal preparation much easier. Marsha Casey and Rita Allison with their crew did a great job.

Fox Hole – AR MV Travelers vending and checking sells GI items to raise fund for next rally. The membership donates items for sell and the Fox Hole handles the work load. Ev Harless spend many hours in the Quonset hut tent making change and keep track of everything that we do. Molly Anderson continued her excellent service making WWII and more recent model “dog tags” for patrons. She uses an early model “typewriter” like machine to stamp out the tags.

A new 53' semi trailer was on hand for the first time to store all of the Rally tents, tarps, tables, cooking items and all of the other things that make such a huge Rally a huge success. Thanks to Clayton & Linda Jones for transporting the trailer from Fayetteville to Petit Jean Mountain and bringing it to the Rally area.

Entertainment on Friday night included the Gospel Sounds with a patriotic program. Karaoke with Ace Barnes and group rounded out the evening.

Winners this year were:

1. Steve Smith – Clarksville, AR: CCW – Best of Show, 1st Place World War II Heavy Weight, and Tie for Peoples' Choice; 1943 MB – Best MB; Supply Wagon – 1st Place World War II Light Weight
2. John Pojunos – Alathe, KS: WC 22 – Tie for Peoples' Choice – 1st Place World War II Medium Weight
3. Jeff Fuller – Pearcy, AR: Best GPW
4. Bruce Darden – El Dorado, AR: M35A2 - 1st Place Post War Heavy Weight
5. Ted Applegate – Charleston, AR: M1009 – 1st Place Post War Medium Weight
6. Dan Sharon – Bella Vista, AR: M276 (Mule) – 1st Place Post War Light Weight
7. Ken Smith – Silsbee, TX: Best M38
8. Joe Allison – Center Ridge, AR: Best M38 A1
9. Bill Barnes – Mountain Harbor Resort, AR: Best M151
10. Paul Harless – Ada Valley, AR: XM141 – Best Post War Prototype; GI Gourmet Display – Best Display
11. Joe Lukas – Mayflower, AR: M416 - Best Trailer
12. Jeff Clark – Bartlett, TN: Korean War Display - President's Choice
13. Jeff Stinson – Atkins, AR: M151A2 - Judges' Choice

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A BIG thanks to the judges for accomplishing the difficult task of determining winning vehicles. Because of members such as you, we can claim to have one of the better chapters in the MVPA.

The AR MV Travelers would like to extend a special thanks to Jerome & Marsha Casey and Lewis & Molly Anderson for all the work and effort on cleaning and updating the field kitchen, and for obtaining, repairing and arranging delivery of our new club trailer.

Start making plans for next years 10th Anniversary Rally on 23-25 SEP 2010.

See you on the trail.

“Press on Regardless”,

Tom Essary

MVPA #31350

See more about the Arkansas MV Travelers and more photos of the Rally on the web:
armvpa.com