

## M3 75mm Gun Motor Carriage at Brent Mullins Open House 2009



Photographs by Roderick Bell  
Text by Roderick Bell

### M3 75mm Gun Motor Carriage History

After the 1940 German victories over France, Belgium, Holland, Luxembourg, Denmark, and Norway, the United States Army studied the German armored forces. From this study, the tank destroyer doctrine was born. The study theorized that the best way to counter mechanized forces was to have a force of self-propelled units that combine gunner visibility, mobility, heavy armament, and very light armor – **"Seek, Strike, and Destroy"**.



In 1941, the United States Army did not have much to work with so they looked at their assets to find a suitable chassis for a self-propelled weapon. The 75mm gun M1897A4 was available in sufficient quantities. The M1897A4 was a modernized version of the French 75mm gun and was the weapon the Army could utilize. All the Army needed now was to find the right chassis. The M3 half-track personnel carrier was available. The Army decided to marry the two to become the first United States Army Tank Destroyer.

The prototype vehicle was designated T12. A total of 86 of these vehicles were rapidly reproduced in August and September of 1941. The first 36 T12's went to Aberdeen Proving Ground for field-testing. The other 50 were sent to the United States Army in the Philippines to provide a anti-tank counter punch for General MacArthur's forces in case of a Japanese invasion.

In October 1941, the T12 became the 75mm Gun Motor Carriage M3. After field-testing of the T12 several recommendations for improvement and passed onto the design team. These improvements were included for the production runs of the vehicle. A total of 2,116 M3's and M3A1's were built. However, only around 900 saw combat and the remaining vehicles were converted into personnel carriers.

The United States Army and the United States Marine Corps both utilized the 75mm Gun Motor Carriage during World War II. The 75mm Gun Motor Carriage saw combat in the Philippines in 1941 and 1942 as well as in 1944 and 1945. A few of the T12's were captured by the Japanese Army and were used against the United States Army and United States Marines. The other combat areas were in the Southwest Pacific Area (Guadalcanal, New Guinea), North Africa, and the Central Pacific. The British used the 75mm Gun Motor Carriage in Italy until the end of the war.

### M3 75mm Gun Motor Carriage Gallery

In April 2009, **Russ Holm, Bruce Burden, Eric Choy**, and I took a road trip to the **Museum of the American G.I.** in College Station, Texas. This is also known as **Brent Mullins Open House**. We saw many restored vehicles and we attended the reenactment of storming the Siegfried line. The M3 75mm GMC **"TARHEEL"** was back again and I had a chance to get some up close photographs of it.

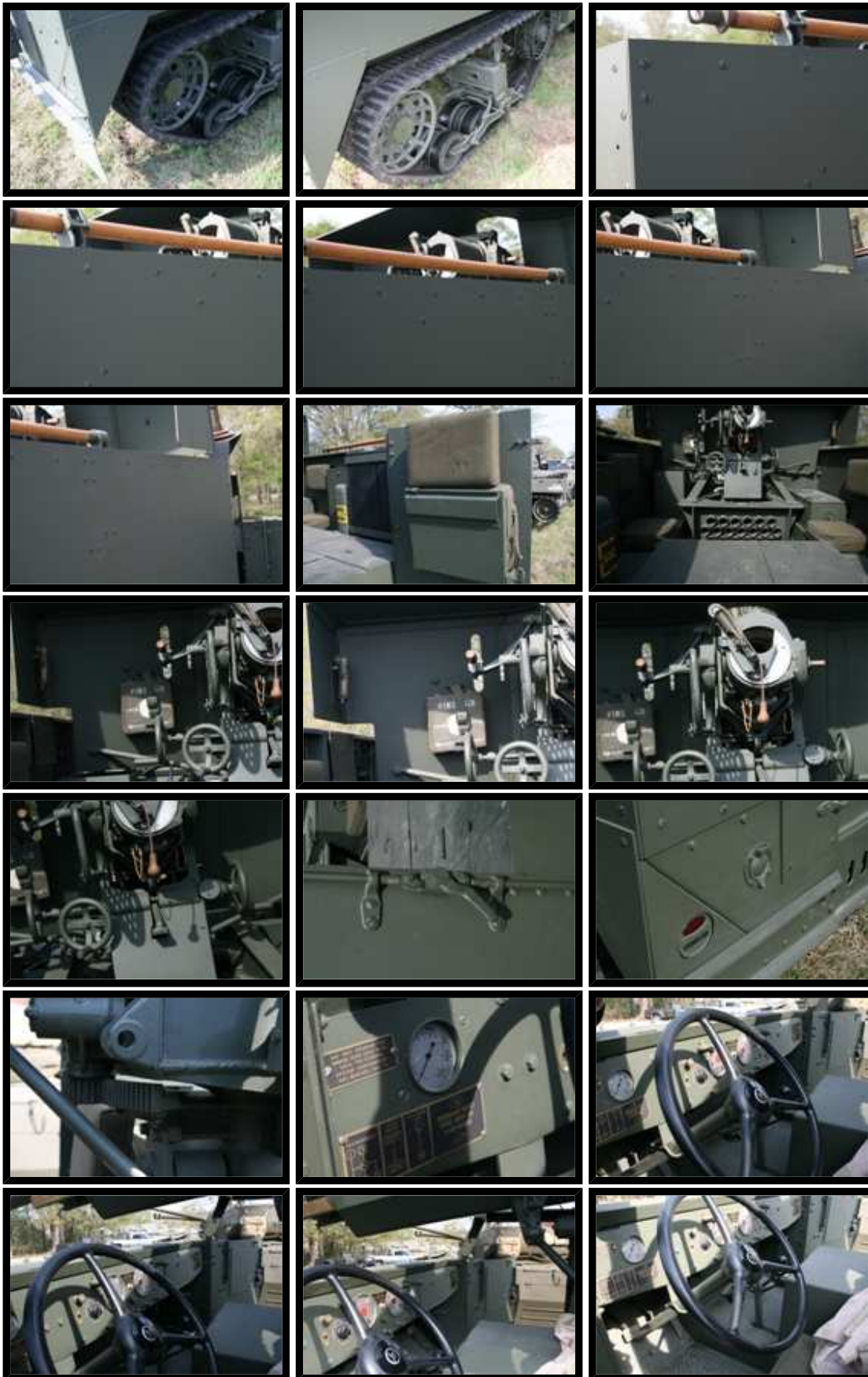


I hope that modelers who are building the new Dragon M3 75mm Gun Motor Carriage can use these shots (Kit No: 6467). **"TARHEEL"** is a USMC version of the M3 75mm Gun Motor Carriage. Last year a Marine Veteran from the Okinawa battle was reunited with his vehicle. He was able to fire the 75mm gun for the spectators.

Please note to see the a larger version of the pictures below you will need to click on the picture. **These are large files so they could be slow while downloading to your machine.** To get back to this page from the picture you clicked, hit the back arrow on your browser.





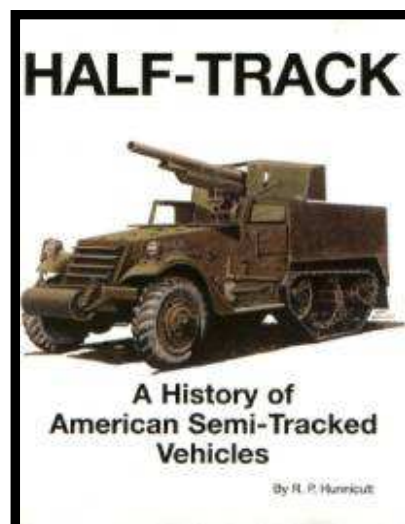
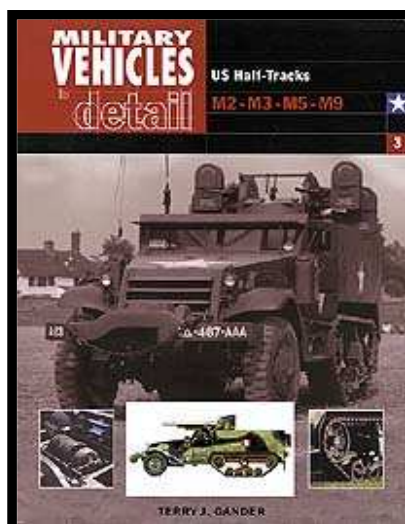




## References

---

I used the following references:



---

Return to [Articles](#).

Return to [Austin Armor Builders Society](#).