

## WWII Truck Parts Supply Depot

Try to find a part for a WWII 1 1/2-ton Chevy or 2 1/2-ton GMC truck, and you'll probably end up at Bob Muller's website, Vehicles of Victory. Muller says the website and business are a labor of love.

"I get to meet really neat people and learn the history of these trucks," says Muller. "It is fun to help people who have just started with their first truck."

Muller is a self-professed history buff with no initial interest or training in mechanics. Starting a parts business grew out of necessity. A student of World War II, he jumped at the chance to buy a truck from that time period, even though it needed a new engine and other parts. In the process, he found another similar truck that needed a new body, and he found himself searching for parts.

"I figured, what a shame for others with WW II trucks to go through the same process of trying to find parts," recalls Muller.

He soon started chasing down information on WW II Chevy trucks, labeled by the company as "Vehicles of Victory." About 150,000 Chevy 1 1/2-ton trucks were manufactured, with some going to the Army and Army Air Corps, but the largest share being sent to Allied forces, particularly Britain and Russia. This has made finding the trucks and parts harder.

The Chevys were equipped with 4-WD, four-speed non-synchromesh transmissions and 83 hp, 235-cu. in. engines. They were used for everything from towing artillery to firefighting and hauling troops and sup-

plies, with special body configurations for special tasks.

Less was known about the GMC trucks even though nearly 600,000 2 1/2-ton, or deuce and a half, GMC's were built during the war.

The 6-wheel drive GMC "Deuce" was equipped with a 91.5 hp, GMC 270 (269.5 cu. in.) 6-cyl. engine. The transmission had five forward and one reverse gear with a two-speed transfer case.

He also learned that the trucks were a mixture of durability and vulnerability. Designed for what everyone hoped would be a short-lived war, body parts were often constructed without drain holes, encouraging rust and deterioration. And yet mechanically, they wouldn't quit. In fact, many European armies were still using the GMC deuce and a half as their major transport vehicles as late as the 1980's and early 1990's, in the case of the Norwegian army.

"No other truck has run so well for so long. They were in use for nearly 60 years," says Muller. "Parts were still being made for them 20 years after they were first manufactured."

Even after being retired from the various armies, the trucks found homes on farms as silage wagons and manure wagons. Today, they are sought-after collectors' items in Europe as well as in the U.S.

Muller started by making reproductions of hard-to-find and often missing items like stake pockets, tailgates and mud flaps for his own trucks. Soon it developed into a niche market as he began making and selling them



Check out Bob Muller's website, [www.VehiclesofVictory.com](http://www.VehiclesofVictory.com), and you'll find a wide variety of World War II truck parts and information.

and other parts, as well as buying and selling trucks.

"From that, I started running into people at shows who had parts for sale," explains Muller. "I just had a guy call me. He said his dad had lots of old GM parts in his garage and asked if I could use them."

Today, he estimates he is one of the largest outlets of WW II GMC and Chevy truck parts around. Though parts are getting hard to find, an occasional treasure trove still exists. Muller recently bought Chevy and GMC parts from a company in Chicago that had two warehouses loaded with parts, including Diamond D, Studebaker and others. The owner had bought them as surplus parts after the war and never touched them since.

The website has grown from a parts and

specifications listing to include background information on Chevy trucks, technical tips on restoring the trucks, a photo gallery and a free listing of vehicles for sale and vehicles and parts that are being sought. Muller also posts informational pieces on WW II trucks and the men who drove them and sells some promotional items.

"I hear from collectors all over the world," says Muller. "Neither the Germans nor the British had anything equal to these trucks. They were well-engineered and certainly rugged."

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## Modified "Hunt Vee" Makes Great All-Purpose ATV

A few alterations to Billy Brown's 6-wheel amphibious Hunt Vee, manufactured by Power-Trac in Tazewell, Va., have turned it into the ultimate service vehicle. The heavy-duty 1,625-lb. ATV, with its 12-gauge steel body and 25-hp gas engine, will go just about anywhere, and 25 and 50-amp outlets on the ATV's control panel make electrical tool use easy. Modifications Brown and his son have made make it handier and safer on their mountainous terrain.

"I use it to transport tools, spray tanks, and air tank and gas cans as needed up over the mountains," says Brown. "We welded a removable roll cage over the top and added a canopy with roll-down sides. We also added two rear seats with fold-down backs and seat belts."

When the seats are folded down, a removable deck can be set over the top for hauling cargo. Brown added 2-in. receiver hitches to the front and rear. He then welded a winch to the bottom of a 2-in. ball mount so he can use either the ball or winch by flipping the hitch over.

He also made a slight modification to the winch. "I put a pulley on the winch cable," says Brown. "When I want to pull something, I hook the pulley to the object. Then I run the cable back to the ATV and hook it to the ball. I lose half the length of the cable, but the pulley doubles my pulling power."

The Hunt Vee sells for \$9,000 from the factory. Brown had to wait 7 months to get one as only a limited number are made each year. The company's main business is articulated, industrial tractors for use in mines and other industrial uses. The Hunt Vee is the only machine Brown has found with reversing wheels for steering. A single lever on the control panel controls both steering and forward or reverse. The only other controls are ignition and throttle. Each wheel is hydraulically driven, so turning or braking is a matter of reversing fluid to one side or both.

"I looked all over the U.S. and Canada for an all hydraulic drive," says Brown. "I don't like chains, clutches or belts. They wear out too fast. I just have to keep the hydraulic pumps and filters in shape."

The only thing Brown didn't like about the ATV was the 16-gauge steel hood over the engine. It was too heavy for him to lift easily, so he and his son cut it in two and hinged it in the center. The bat-wings make it easy to do engine maintenance.

With a top land speed of 14 mph and a top water speed of 3 mph, the Hunt Vee won't win any races, but Brown doesn't care. Its 5-ft. width and zero-turning capability make it extremely maneuverable in the woods. A company recommendation also makes it easy to run, even on cold mornings.

"Power-Trak recommends using 5W 30



"I use it to transport tools, spray tanks, and air tank and gas cans as needed up over the mountains," says Billy Brown, who turned his 6-wheel amphibious Hunt Vee into what he calls the ultimate in service vehicles.

motor oil instead of hydraulic fluid," explains Brown. "It works better and warms up faster in the winter."

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Va. 25003 (ph 304 756-9676) or Power-Trac, Inc., Tazewell Industrial Park, Tazewell, Va. 24651 (ph 276 988-6938 or 800 843-9273; fax 276 988-9566; [info@power-trac.com](mailto:info@power-trac.com); [www.power-trac.com](http://www.power-trac.com)).

## Pint-Sized "Kuhn" Lawn Mower

"I work for a neighboring farmer who owns a big blue Ford New Holland 4-WD tractor, as well as an orange Kuhn FC 4000R disc mower. I enjoy operating both machines so I built my own pull-type, 36-in. lawn mower to look like a big Kuhn mower and painted it orange. I pull it off to the side behind a New Holland riding mower that's equipped with a 48-in. deck. It lets me cut 7 ft. at a time," says Chris Ross, Pawlet, Vt.

The "Kohn" mower, as he calls it, rides on a pair of 8-in. wheels off an old garden trac-

tor. He used sheet metal to make the body of the machine. A big hitch, made from 4-in. rectangular tubing, extends from the housing up to the tractor's drawbar. A white canvas skirt mounts around the bottom of the deck to keep grass from flying out. The front part of the deck is supported by a gauge wheel, which came with the ATV mower.

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