

# 10 Questions



## with Dave Newman, Eastern Surplus

**W**e are all in this together. In an effort to report on the state of different facets of the military collectibles market, *Military Vehicle Magazine* strives to discover and share the opinions of the hobby's leading dealers and collectors. This month, we had the privilege to talk with Dave Newman, owner and president of Eastern Surplus & Equipment Co., one of the leading surplus vehicle and parts dealers and shops on the East Coast.

Dave has been a military vehicle guy since he was a kid, and an incorporated dealer since 1999. With more than 25 years experience in buying, selling, trading and collecting, Dave has a very good sense of the ebbs and flows of our hobby. We are pleased to offer his response to our "10 Questions about Eastern Surplus."

***Military Vehicles Magazine (MVM): Tell us how you became interested in military vehicles.***

**Dave Newman:** I have been interested in Jeeps and 4x4 off-roading since I was a kid. One of my first vehicles was a CJ5 Jeep that I bought when I was 16 years old.

I was always drawn to military vehicles. In 1990, I attended a live government auction for scrap metal at the Philadelphia Naval Ship Yard. A Kaiser M725 1-1/4-ton ambulance crossed the block. I raised my paddle and bought it!

I spent a few years rebuilding it and then decided I needed something bigger. I bought an M35A2 6x6 from a local collector.

At the next scrap auction, I bought five trucks, kept the parts I needed for my truck and started to sell the remaining parts to other collectors. The rest, as they say, is history.

I caught the "bug" and began buying many trucks, keeping some for my-



**Dave Newman, owner and president of Eastern Surplus, bought his first Jeep when he was 16. Many years later, he operates Eastern Surplus & Equipment Co., supplying military trucks and parts to collectors, industry and government.**

self, fixing some for sale, and parting some out for scrap. A few years later, we incorporated, forming Eastern Surplus & Equipment Co.

***MVM: The foundation of your business has been providing a source for quality, reliable surplus military vehicles. What led you to specialize in this particular facet of the automotive hobby?***

**Dave Newman:** As discussed above, I have always liked military and 4-wheel-drive vehicles. It was a natural evolution for me to turn my passion and hobby into a business. It became even more "fun"

and we got to meet a lot of like-minded collectors and hobbyists who spoke the same lingo and had the same desire I did to restore, fix, and play with military vehicles.

We started to focus on larger trucks (2-1/2- and 5-ton) as they became more readily available. Having worked on them allowed for a lot of insight to be shared with collectors and customers. This became the basis for our business model of supplying quality parts, supporting the vehicles we sell, having exceptional service, along with technical know-how made available to our customers.

**MVM:** *Your shop is advertised as “over 72,000 square feet.” Take us for a little walk and explain what goes on here.*

**Dave Newman:** Our current facility is comprised of four main areas:

1. Office and Support Staff – consisting of 4 full-time parts and vehicle sales specialists and a team of administrative, management and inventory personnel.
2. Small Parts Warehouse – where all small/lightweight parts are inventoried by “neighborhoods” of vehicle types and systems.
3. Shop/Recon Facility – with 20 mechanics, technicians, body, and paint employees. The shop includes repair bays for 10 or more trucks (based on size), an end-draft paint booth 50’ long x 16’ wide x 14’ high, segregated wash/degreasing and primary body preparation room, and a fully outfitted custom metal fabrication division work area with industry certified welders on staff.
4. Bulky Items – New old stock, surplus and good take-off and tested larger parts are stored in an inventory controlled pallet rack system with digital picture assistance to ensure proper identification of requested parts. Additional parts requiring under-cover storage such as engines, sheet metal, tires, axles, and cabs are stored in a large, three-sided structure.

The yard area of approximately eight acres contains, on average, 200 vehicles in stock and ready to process through our facilities to meet our customers “just in time” requirements.

**MVM:** *Obviously, historic military vehicle enthusiasts are your customers. What other business or individuals turn to Eastern Surplus?*

**Dave Newman:** While the roots of our business are well set in the collector/hobby world, we have expanded our customer base as our business continues to grow and change.

Our sales of vehicles and parts to commercial and industrial users throughout the United States has expanded considerably. These include oil and gas, municipal, emergency management, and construction based buyers. Our trucks were heavily deployed in the recent super storm Hurricane Sandy on the New Jersey coast and participated in saving many lives.

One of our biggest projects was the



**Around 1999, Dave incorporated his hobby into a business. Eastern Surplus focused on larger trucks (2-1/2- and 5-ton) as they became more available.**



**Eastern’s most unusual customer request led to the design and construction of a “Brush Buster” back-country fire truck. Now, Eastern Surplus offers the “Brush Trucks” to all of its fire department customers—each one custom-built to meet special requirements.**

supply of a fleet of custom-designed and built M923 cargo trucks. Six Flags Great Adventure Theme Park - Safari Off Road Adventure in New Jersey utilizes them.

We now market our services to foreign governments and commercial users throughout the world. We routinely recondition vehicle fleets to like-new condition for overseas military applications.

We are now a US military contractor. Our sales to the US government have grown steadily during the past 3 years since gaining this status.

**MVM:** *Tell us about the most unusual vehicle customer request you have been able to fulfill.*

**Dave Newman:** The most unusual request for a vehicle came from a rural fire department that wanted a “Brush Buster” back-country fire truck. At that time, we had not heard this expression, so

they sent us some pictures. We ended up custom-designing our own variant of the truck, hired certified welders, bought all the necessary equipment, and built them a truck. Now, we offer the Brush Trucks to all of our fire department customers, custom-built to their requirements.

**MVM:** *The DLA’s recent release of HMMWVs for surplus sale will have an impact on the entire hobby. How does it affect Eastern Surplus?*

**Dave Newman:** The recent release of HMMWV’s has been an interesting change. Several years ago, we purchased the parts inventory of Clark Truck Parts and several parts lines from Saturn Surplus. Included in their inventory were vast quantities of NOS and good used HMMWV parts. We have recently finished inventorying these parts and most can be seen with great pictures and de-

scriptions on our web page [www.easternsurplus.net](http://www.easternsurplus.net).

This means that buyers will have access to all the parts they need to maintain and restore their “new” purchase. The fact that the trucks are being sold for off-road use only raises concern, but I think the demand will remain strong for these trucks into the future.

**MVM:** *The vehicles you sell are “re-built.” What does this usually involve?*

**Dave Newman:** We offer our vehicles in several condition levels after determining a customer’s requirement, from “Basic Readiness” up to “Full Restoration.” We create a detailed QA/QC work list, outlining work to be accomplished to each system on the truck, including cosmetic requirements.

Each line on the work list will show the technician/mechanic who completed the task and the date. All of the work is then confirmed completed by one of our supervisors and finally reviewed and confirmed by an officer of the company.

This process applies to all of our truck builds. It has enabled us to deliver the highest-quality product in the marketplace.



**Whether providing a collector with a reliable trail-drive or a municipality with a go-anywhere snow plow, Eastern Surplus has the vehicles and the skills to provide a reliable, professionally prepared military vehicle.**

**MVM:** *What sort of “pitfalls” do new historic military vehicles owners commonly bring to you? What advice would you give them before they purchased a vehicle?*

**Dave Newman:** Today, new military vehicle enthusiasts have phenomenal access to vehicles and parts via the Internet. We find many people “click and buy” and figure out after they own something just what they have gotten themselves into.

There is a lot of misinformation on



**Eastern Surplus’ shop facility includes repair bays for 10 or more trucks, an end-draft paint booth, segregated wash/degreasing and primary body preparation room, and a fully outfitted custom metal fabrication division work area.**

the Internet: part numbers, NSN (National Stock Numbers), and described application of parts are not always accurate. We devote considerable effort to provide clear and concise data and information to customers through our web page and soon to be launched online store – to help users get the correct information for their needs.

We recommend researching your

**Dave Newman:** Like many other collectors, my personal vehicles don’t get as much use as I would like. When sitting un-used, batteries, brakes and fuel systems tend to degrade.

I recommend starting your vehicle at least two times per year, drive it a little – even if only up and down your driveway. While this is not as good as driving in the 4th of July Parade or to an organized trail ride, it will extend the life of your vehicle and especially, the systems mentioned above.

**MVM:** *For our last question, we want you to look into your crystal ball. Tell us how you see the historic military vehicle hobby changing during the next 10 years. What advice do you have for current vehicle owners?*

**Dave Newman:** We feel very positive about the future of our hobby with so many trucks being surplused by the government and with the Internet providing great worldwide access to trucks, parts and information. It seems we are well-poised to remain strong and hopefully, grow our membership into the foreseeable future. 🌟

purchase before you commit. Call or talk to sellers (dealers or individuals), ask for detailed pictures of the items being offered. Learn all you can.

**MVM:** *A lot of people in our hobby don’t put a lot of miles on their vehicles... maybe only a few hundred each year. But, they might own that vehicle for 15 or 20 years. What advice for historic military vehicle hobbyists do you have for maximizing the life their vehicles?*

*We are proud to be able to talk with the hobby’s leaders. For more information on Eastern Surplus & Equipment Co., you may call (toll-free in the U.S.) 855.332.0500 or email [dave@easternsurplus.net](mailto:dave@easternsurplus.net). To see their current offerings, log onto [www.EasternSurplus.net](http://www.EasternSurplus.net)*

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