

Chapter Contacts

Please forward to your members!

When Chattanooga was announced as the 2019 IPMS/USA convention location, there were a few murmurs of “Chat-a-who? What are we going to do THERE?”

As it turns out, there are a LOT of things to see and do in Chattanooga! It’s one of my favorite cities: In my nearly thirty years in a central Georgia Corvette club, we always had enthusiastic participation when that city on the Tennessee River was the overnight weekend “cruise” destination.

You’ll hear more later about Chattanooga’s world-class aquarium, and its surprisingly rich ART scene, the centerpiece being the very impressive Hunter Museum of American Art, perched on a spectacular bluff overlooking the Tennessee River.



There is a also neat minor league baseball stadium within walking distance of the convention: I don’t know if the “Chattanooga Lookouts” will be playing during our convention. There are all sorts of neat restaurants and

other places of interest to enjoy your time away from the convention vendor room. But one of my personal favorites is something called the “International Towing and Recovery Museum”. The connection of tow trucks to Chattanooga is the city being where the “wrecker” or tow truck was first manufactured.



It has been a number of years since I visited the museum in its original storefront venue, and they have since moved to their permanent location, seen in the above screen shot of a Google Maps “street view”.



The museum has tow vehicles in all shapes, sizes, vintages, colors, and histories, but my favorite is the Big Green Machine seen near the bottom of this page. It is true combat veteran, having been documented as one of the vehicles that kept the “Red Ball Express” running across Europe in WWII.

And what was the “Red Ball Express”? Well, while we all know about the Big Heroes of the Big Battles, it is just plain dull logistics”getting there first with the most”**that wins wars, and specifically the Red Ball Express was the miracle that kept Patton’s charge moving so fast that his enemy couldn’t form an effective defense for hundreds of miles.



Think of it as a continuous bucket chain supply conveyor, with each “bucket” being a GMC “deuce and a half” truck. Running day and night in one huge continuous high-speed convoy, the Red Ball shuttled troops, ammunition, food, fuel



....and other needed supplies and equipment to General Patton forces as they stormed across France toward Germany in the late summer and fall of 1944, never stopping for anything. But it wasn’t that there weren’t difficulties!

The young drivers abused their trucks trying too hard, the combat-torn French roads were bad and getting worse fast, and overloaded trucks broke down or wound up in French ditches. And when one broke down or was in a ditch, it was the Red Ball wreckers ...including the specific truck pictured below....that got them out and moving again.



The 1943 wrecker in the Chattanooga museum is a Diamond T* model 969A. It has been documented as supporting the Red Ball all the way across France: after the victory in Europe it was given to the French military, and after a long list of ownership changes eventually found its way back home in 1997.

For more on the Red Ball Express, see:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Red_Ball_Express

<http://towweek.com/road-track/511-red-ball-express-wrecker>

http://redballonline.org/About_Us.htm

But I almost forgot about Chattanooga's newsletter! Chapter news includes a lot of photos of members' models



....which among many others included Gary Haars 1/35th M10 Tank Destroyer, which is listed as from the "new tool" Tamiya kit.

So, what else is there? Lots and lots and LOTS as a matter of fact, including an I'm-still-reading-it book review, of a biggest-ever-reference SO big that Jeff Mattheiss MUST be pulling an early April Fool's Day joke on us! Then Amazon confirmed that it's all true: a sample of statistics about the book per Amazon (<https://www.amazon.com/Kursk-Battle-Prokhorovka-Christopher-Lawrence/dp/0971385254>)

Kursk: The Battle of Prokhorovk has:

1. Nearly SEVENTEEN HUNDRED oversized pages...
2. TWENTY-NINE fold out maps...
3. NINETY-FOUR maps in the text...
4. FORTY-ONE charts
4. HUNDREDS of tables, statistical sheets, separate sidebars, and photographs....and it weighs ELEVEN POUNDS.

....oh, and per Amazon you can get your very own USED copy for as little 205. Dollars.



*** Among American automotive names, “Diamond T” is a name you may have never heard, but is still not-quite-faded from living memory. Like all the other old auto industry names, it has its own following and “collectible status”**

! <https://www.hemmings.com/classifieds/cars-for-sale/diamond-t>

But among truck aficionados, the name “Diamond T” is still remembered for a line of excellent heavy trucks with a symbolic logo of a diamond shape



.....implying strength and durabilitycombined with the initial of founder C.A. Tilt. Beginning in Chicago in 1905, the company built thousands of big (and some not so big) trucks up through WWII, but the name has disappeared today in a complex trail of mergers and acquisitions. See https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Diamond_T

**** Finding all the information about the WWII Red Ball Express stirred my own memories of combat logistics, but in Vietnam. On my first two trips to that unhappy land I had flown beans and bullets with the C-123, and then the C-130. But those Air Force in-country experiences had earned me the dubious honor for my LAST, supposedly “staff” tour, as an airlift advisor attached to the Army’s 25th Infantry Division at Cu Chi.**



Since I was working and living with my Army transportation opposite number, I naturally got involved in ground convoys like those pictured here. Being on the road with those convoys gave me an undying respect for all the nameless young draftee truck drivers pounding their big rigs over the bad-and-getting-worse highway system; day after day after day after day, without respite; and ESPECIALLY during the infamous Tet Offensive in 1968.



But the thought of catching an RPG when you have 5,000 gallons of jet fuel (for the helicopters) attached to your fifth wheel isn't something to think about too much.....



.....nor are the command detonated bombs (they'd be called "I.E.D.'s" today) buried in the potholed roadway....