

LEOH Trip

National Armed Forces Museum

July 23, 2025





The museum is located at 8611 Wallisville Road.

The **Mission Statement** of the museum is “to expand the knowledge, deepen the awareness, and provide a greater appreciation, to both visitors and local residents, of the dedication and sacrifice of those citizens in the defense of liberty”.

The **goal** is to commemorate service in any branch of the military, including active, reserve, and National Guard. The museum has three classes of members; Active, Sustaining, and Life.

How did the museum get its start?

It was founded in 1992 by Houstonian and WWII veteran Peter Burland, as a nonprofit, educational, and historical foundation. It was first housed at the West Houston Airport.

The museum moved to its current location in 2005, and led since that time by its President, Ed Farris (pictured).

His father, First Sgt. David L. Farris, was a 30-year veteran of the U.S. Army, serving his country in WW II, Korea, and Vietnam. Now the son, a former Marine sergeant, honors his father and other veterans by continuing to help preserve their heritage.

Sergeant Farris (pictured) led our tour, while sharing his extensive knowledge and some entertaining anecdotes.



M113A2 ARMORED PERSONNEL CARRIER YEARS IN SERVICE (M113 Series): 1960 - PRESENT

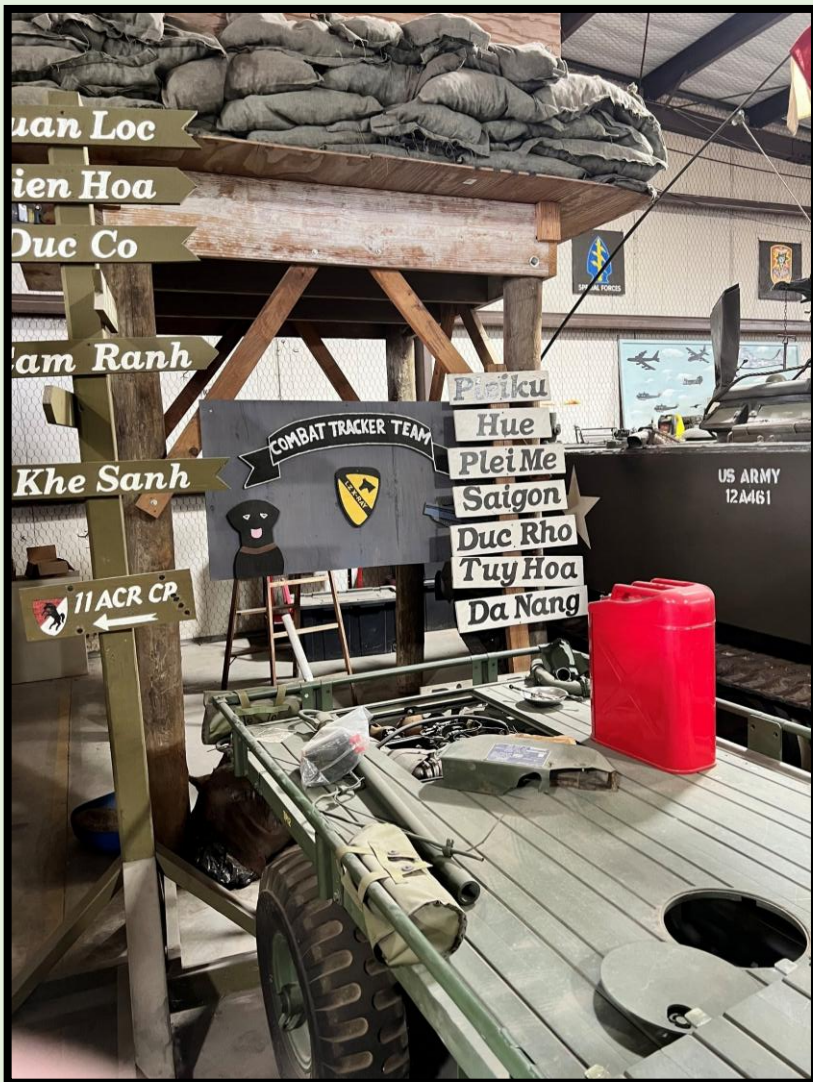
HEIGHT	8'4"	LENGTH	16'
WEIGHT	25,007 LB.	WIDTH	8'10"
FUEL CAPACITY	95 GALLONS	CAPACITY	13
TOP SPEED	40 MPH	RANGE	300 MILES
ENGINE:	GENERAL MOTORS 6V53; 6 CYLINDER DIESEL, 212 HORSEPOWER AT 2800RPM		
PRIMARY ARMAMENT:	MACHINE GUN M2HB, CAL .50	2000 ROUNDS	
SECONDARY ARMAMENT:	SMOKE GRENADE LAUNCHER	8 ROUNDS	
SPECIAL EQUIPMENT:	DRIVER NIGHT VISION VIEWER – M19 INFRARED PERISCOPE		

There are many military vehicles outside and inside a large warehouse-style building at the museum. The tour started in this building, beginning with an introduction to the M113 vehicles (above).

The M113 is a fully tracked armored personnel carrier (APC), first used in combat in 1962 in Vietnam, primarily used to break through heavy thickets to attack and overrun enemy positions. Their aluminum hulls were designed to be thick enough for crew protection, but light enough to be transported by air, and somewhat amphibious (rivers, streams, etc. but not oceans).

The major drawback was that enemy fire could melt the aluminum as well as cause it to catch fire when fired upon or hitting an IED; therefore, crew preferred to sit on top to avoid a fiery fate.

M113's now serve in different roles, including adaptations here and in other countries.



SPECIFICATIONS:

Length: 118.25 inches

Width: 46.60 inches

Height (platform): 27.5 inches

Weight (empty): 870 pounds

Weight (loaded): 1870 pounds

Clearance: 12 inches

Fording depth: 18 inches

Cruising Range: 90-150 miles

Engine: Gasoline, 14HP Military standard Model A042

4-Wheel Steering:

M274 2452 built 1956-1960

M274A1 1905 built 1962-1964 4 Cylinder engine

M274A2 3609 built 1964-1967

M274A3

2-Wheel Steering:

M274A4 2400 built 1965-1969 2320-930-1976

M274A5 874 built 1968-1970 2320-782-5793



The M274 is officially known as the Army Mule or Mechanical Mule. It was developed out of a requirement for an infantry ammunition, light cargo, personnel, and weapons carrier. It was adopted for service in 1957 and used with the US Army, Marine Corps, and to limited extent with the Navy, Seabees and Air Force. The first models, the M274 and the M274A1, had a four cylinder horizontally opposed, air cooled Willys engines. The later models, the M274A2, M274A3, M274A4, and M274A5 have a two cylinder, horizontally opposed air cooled military standard engine. The M274A5 has an aluminum platform while the other versions are constructed of magnesium alloy.

The M274 consists of a platform mounted on two drop axles with four wheels. The engine is rear mounted. It has no suspension system other than low pressure tires. All models are equipped with full time four-time four wheel drive, two speed transfer case, and a three forward and one reverse speed transmission. A quick change mechanism allows for either two- or four-wheel steering on the M274, A1, A2, A3, and A4 models. The mule is equipped with a cargo retaining set of rails can be raised to accommodate the payload or lowered for shipping, storage, or flat bed operations. The seat (which can be adjusted to two positions on all models except the M274 and A3) and the foot rest can be detached and stowed underneath the platform for air transport. The driver can extend the steering column brace forward to allow operation while walking or crouching in front of the vehicle. The M274A1/A2/A3/A4/A5 are equipped for sling load operations. It is designed to carry a maximum of one thousand pounds of cargo over most types of terrain, but has no published towing capability as no hitch is installed. All models of the M274 may be turned on their sides or top to ease maintenance, repair, or lubrication operations.

The first Mechanical Mules, the M274 & M274A1, had magnesium bed and axle housings with a four cylinder engine, four wheel drive and four wheel steering. The later M274A2, A3, & A4 had a magnesium beds and axle housings, four wheel drive, four wheel steering and a two cylinder engine. The last production model, the M274A5 has aluminum bed and axle housings, with four wheel drive and two wheel steering. Optional A5 extras include electric starters, fording kits, wide wheels and fender kits. Mules will operate over all types of road, cross-country terrain, and in all types of weather and are capable of fording in up to 18 inches of water without modification. The Mule weighs only 860 pounds and its rated load is 1000 pounds. A spare wheel/tire is not included as the mule will operate on three wheel/tires.

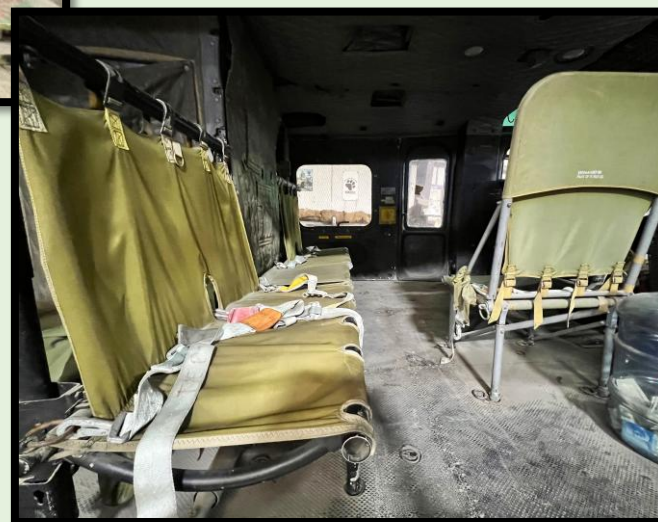
A Vietnam display includes an M274 (aka Army Mule) in the foreground. The mule could be transported by helicopter to or from a location. Its versatility meant it could be used as a 2-wheel or 4-wheel drive vehicle to transport up to 1,000 lbs of cargo, personnel, weapons, or ammunition. A spare tire was not included, as it could still run on 3 tires.



Why are vehicles, including armored tanks, etc. used in combat provided with air conditioning? For comfort? No, for computers!



Huge multi-use vehicles can be seen throughout the building, such as the 4x4 Cougar MRAP above, which, along with crew, can survive IED explosions. These museum vehicles were used for assistance following Hurricane Harvey.



This 'Huey' saw service in Vietnam. We learned that whoever sat in the side-facing seat in the back was responsible for periodically checking on the personnel to his left. Sergeant Farris shared that he rode in a Huey with his legs hanging over the side, thinking he had securely belted himself in. That was not the case. Luckily, he survived to tell the tale!



To the left:

An example of a typical temporary camp set-up

To the right:

Sergeant Farris discussed the uses and versatility of jeeps of this type.



To the left:

An example of a typical German road sign

To the right:

A typical medic supply kit



The *Lady Be Good's* Mysterious Disappearance

A display case holds a replica of the WWII bomber “Lady Be Good”, as it looked when found in the Libyan Desert in 1958. The plane and 9-member crew disappeared in April 1943 during a routine bombing run from Libya to Italy. Some of the details of the harrowing aftermath were obtained from two crew member pocket-sized journals, normally used for daily flight entries.

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Sgt. Farris related the most likely scenario leading up to the crash. Following their bombing run, the exhausted crew fell asleep, including the crew member assigned to stay awake. The plane then flew on beyond its designated landing site, until it finally ran out of gas. As it was going down, crew members awoke and parachuted out. One crew member died when his chute failed to deploy. The remaining 8 landed safely. According to journal entries, they struggled more than a week to walk out of the desert, rationing their small water supply, yet dying one by one.

Once the plane and bodies were finally located 15 years later, their remains, with the exception of one crew member, were returned to their families.

The “Lady Be Good” Crew



1<sup>st</sup> Lt. William Hatton, Pilot, 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. Robert Toner, Copilot, 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. Dp Hays, Navigator,  
2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. John Woravka, Bombardier, Sgt. Harold Ripslinger, Engineer,  
Sgt. Robert LaMotte, Radio Operator, Sgt. Guy Shelly, Gunner, Sgt. Vernon Moore, Gunner,  
Stg. Samuel Adams, Gunner.







Following the tour of military vehicles and equipment, everyone enjoyed viewing memorabilia in the air-conditioned part of the museum!

Items on view included service uniforms and a variety of weapons.

Several countries were represented in these displays.

To learn much more, go to [nusafm.us](http://nusafm.us) and/or visit the museum for a small admission fee.

Military personnel and veterans are always welcomed with free admission.

Monetary donations are always welcome!

The museum also welcomes donated veteran military items/memorabilia for display..



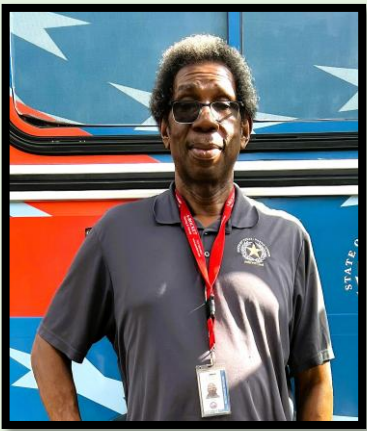


Museum tours can make you hungry!  
Delicious food and drink awaited everyone at  
***Jonathan's the Rub!***



Jonathan claims to be the oldest line cook in Houston. His purpose and mission has been to provide guests with excellent food in an unmatched dining experience. The restaurant name originated with his special combination of spicy, salty, sweet, and savory spices (also, it just might refer to a quote from Shakespeare's *Hamlet*). Everyone enjoyed delicious food and excellent service in a beautiful setting.





Thank you, Precinct One bus driver **Roderick**, for a safe trip, and Thank you, **Ann**, for planning yet another very informative and interesting trip!



## Future Trip

**Wednesday, August 13: Houston Center for Contemporary Craft**

Travel by car/carpool or rail to the Center at 4848 Main Street. Enjoy a docent-led one-hour tour to view current exhibitions, interact with resident artists, and visit the Craft Garden, which utilizes plants in crafting. Lunch will follow at *Fia's Pizzeria* nearby.

Trips for September and beyond are in the planning stages. Stay tuned!

## Signing Up for a Trip



Trip Coordinator Ann Fairchild may be contacted at [fairann@sbcglobal.net](mailto:fairann@sbcglobal.net) or 281-686-1325.



She will publish complete trip details, with the opportunity to sign up, closer to the trip date.

If the traveler quota is full, you may ask to be put on a waiting list.