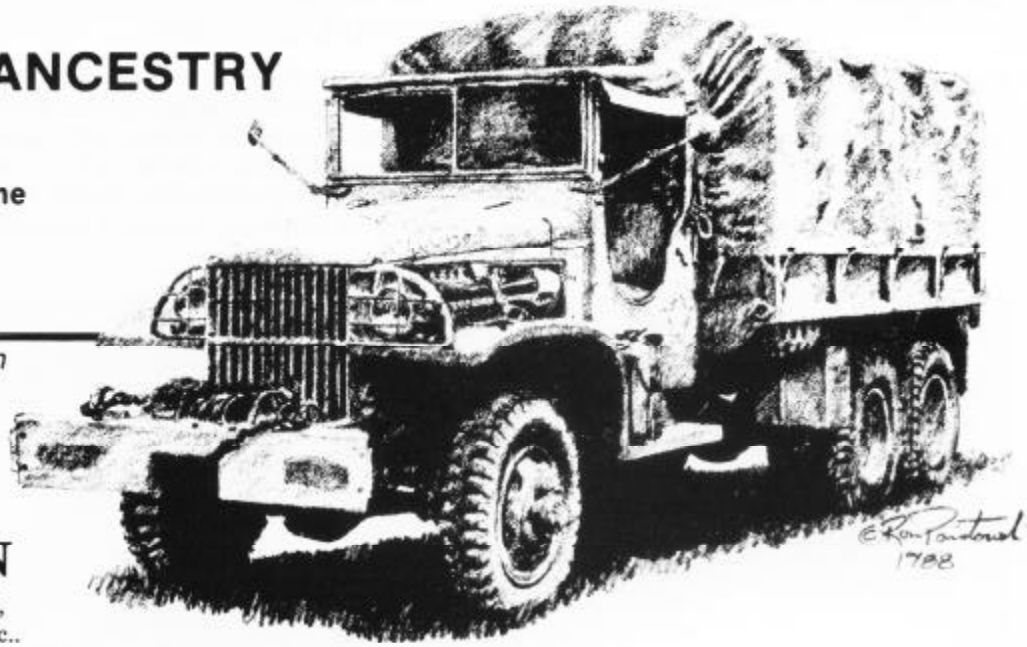
THE JIMMY'S ANCESTRY

The CCKW in Detail and The Collector's Syndrome

by
Bryce J. Sunderlin
Lansing, Michigan



CONCLUSION

CORRECTIONS, OMISSIONS, CONFESSIONS, ADDENDA, etc..

For those who have been patiently waiting for this final installment the delay has been due to a lot of loose ends that refused to be tied up, and the complete lack of photos of the last series trucks. The complete series including the last segment, was written over three years ago. However, the last correction wasn't made until September, 1991

As mentioned earlier, GMC hardly acknowledges the existence of these things, and maintains no accessible archives. However, at least for the devotee of the military stuff, GM would be aghast at how many corporate skeletons reside in the Ordnance/ Quartermaster section of the National Archives. It's from these public records and numerous letters from M.V.P.A. members that these corrections/revision have been made.

The first major error was in the second installment (ARMY MOTORS #48, p. 11). It concerned the civilian-styled ACKWX .This 'semi-production' model used a four-speed (4th direct) transmission, not the five-speed (5th overdrive) of the later models. Also, the total production of the ACKWX was the 2,644 ordered by the US.Army, plus 1,000 ordered by the French Government, for a total of 3,644. No record could be found of an order placed by Argentina. So, total production still looks as if it didn't exceed 4,000 or so.

Concerning the first series article (ARMY MOTORS #49, p. 16). The army desired a greater sustained road speed (40 miles an hour average). This was the reason for adapting the Clark 5-speed (Overdrive) transmission. To maintain this higher speed, the standard 256 engine was warmed over and the 270 was created specifically for the CCKWX. This development only took 20 days from inception to production. The block for the new military 270 was physically the same size as the 256, but it was cored differently and was heavier. The new block had reinforcing the civilian engine didn't have.

Initially, the 270 was a special military engine, and wasn't available in civilian vehicles until post war. With this larger engine, and the overdrive transmission, the redefined truck was easily able to maintain the 40-miles an hour average the army wanted.

During the discussion of the second series trucks (ARMY MOTORS #51, p. 14), mention was made of the brush guard being revised. The identifying characteristic of the new one was that the welding ears of the vertical bars were now welded in facing each other in pairs; the old one had all the welded ears pointing outwards from the center line of the trunk. There was one other very significant change made to the brush guard. This change was pointed out by Bruce Smith. The GMC emblem on the old-style was a separate die casting bolted on the guard. In the new, revised design the emblem was the familiar sheet metal stamping spot welded to the vertical bars.

With the third series (ARMY MOTORS #52, p. 12), much was made about the definite lack of a 'when' concerning the introduction of the 'Radio Suppression' filtering system. In March, 1942, Ordnance specified that all military contract vehicles must be 'radio shielded'. With the CCKW, the production introduction of the shielding/ suppression system was 24 August 1942. Still, however, no serial was given. But, the date indicates that around s/n 103,000/105,000 should be very close. For some reason, the filter/ground strap suppression system didn't work well with the DUKW or the AFKWX. For those models, the 'tin cover' enclosure of the ignition system was developed. The DUKW started using the tin covers in September 1942, the Cab Over models didn't use it until the next batch was built in June, 1943.

With the respect to the suppression system, almost all the wartime

vehicle manuals mention that at all points where the suppression system equipment was installed, the base sheet metal was to be solder tinned, for good electrical continuity. No sooner was this implemented when it was discontinued. The solder tinning was found to very labor intensive and expensive. With the plated internal/external toothed lockwashers specified for these connections, the tinning was found to be an overkill So when reading your manuals, and looking at your freshly stripped sheet metal (be it Jeep, Dodge, or GMC), you'll probably find no trace of the 'required' tinning. Besides, tin was one of the most critical wartime metals..

The radio suppression discussion leads right into the major correction for the fourth series (ARMY MOTORS #53, p. 24). On 3 September 1943 (no serial number), the tin ignition covers were put into production on the CCKW. This was in the interest of standardization with the DUKW, and it was cheaper than the earlier system. Also, the tin covers made the ignition system quite splash and rain resistant, but not waterproof. Nowhere on the face of the earth are you going to find a CCKW with this shielding tinware intact. It's an absolute pain to work with, the covers are easily bent, never fit, and have to be removed to do anything to the ignition system. While todays high-tech Corvette uses exactly the same system, it's still a pain to work with. DUKW operators usually kept the system intact as a matter of survival (splash resistance) as it does well at keeping the essentials protected from the occasional wave. To find these tin covers for a restoration?? The only source would be a dealer in DUKW-ianna. And there is the usual rub; there are three pieces to the covers.The DUKW ones are different than the CCKW set, and the AFKWX ones are even more different. There are four or five distinct sets of these things, and they don't interchange well. Don't forget they also came in early and late sets...

The section on the fifth series hasn't been in print long enough to generate any corrections. And, the sixth series is in this issue.

These last two groups, the '44 and '45-era trucks are the definitive model. Just like the late MB/GPW's, these late models have identity crises. We haven't fiddled with them long enough to really know just what is correct. I've have a very original, January '45 truck that doesn't have the correct 'late' style brake plumbing it should have (by about 12-months), and I haven't found anybody with a '45 CCKW that does have the correct brake plumbing.. Right next to the subject truck is parked a June '45 AFKWX (cab over) that does have the correct brake plumbing. This is something to ponder. Just like it's hard to believe that the 1619 model open cab shell made it from September, 1942 to August, 1945 with as few changes as it appears to have; just the presence or lack of holes for mounting the late-style jewelry. Nothing is designed that well. Eventually, as we fiddle with these things, I'm sure there will be revelations along these lines.

Before turning the lights out on this, a parting thought. Since this series started in print, CCKW's are actually being collected. Certainly not common yet, they are being collected and restored. Due to their size, a CCKW is nothing that you would willingly tackle a frame-up restoration for a beaten down dog of a truck (even at a $200.00 price). It's not a viable candidate for restoration. There is no way you can justify the cost of doing it, versus paying a surplus dealer $3,000,00 for a nice ex-Dutch, Greek, or whatever. But remember, no matter how few miles they have, none of those trucks are original. Some are more original then others, but none are simon pure. Only extreme care at the time of selection will save you. I mentioned in the first installment going to the dealer and finding the crispest truck in the row. Remember the one still wrapped in cosmolene, with all new tires on it? I can guarantee it probably isn't the truck you really want to buy for restoration. Does the truck match the serial number (the restorers greatest fear)? It's a cargo truck, does the serial number suffix say -A1, -A2, -B1 or -B2? It has a closed cab, is the serial number less them 216,000. If it's a closed cab, it better not be any higher. Oh, the serial is higher than 216,000. Well, it's a collection of GMC-like parts. The charts in the first installment supply most of the information you need to buy a correct truck, if you want one. If you just want a sweet running truck that won't take an arm and leg to put on the road, then the cosmolene wrapped one with the twelve new tires and 1976 depot rebuild tag is the one you want. Just don't try to sell it as a restored truck, and expect big bucks for a collection of mismatched parts.

Where is this going? Right now, CCKW's are being collected and, as of late, absolutely the nicest batch of trucks being snapped up by collectors, is a group of ex-Dutch 1944/45 CCKW Cargo/Dump Trucks (model H1/H2). They all look like they came out of cellophane wrappers.The Dutch got them in the early fifties as 'MAPP equipment, all reconditioned by the U.S Army before they were turned over. That means in 1945 the trucks were parked at some depot, and in 1950 (Korea) the Army couldn't get them started, so they were sent through a reconditioning program (they still do this). The Dutch army got a flock of really nice trucks. For some reason, they didn't have a any use for them, so all these crisp dump trucks stayed parked in Dutch depots and accumulated no miles. After being parked for so long they wouldn't start, the brakes wouldn't work, and the wood steering wheels disintegrated. The Dutch sent them through their own reconditioning program; put in a new clutch, plastic steering wheel, fixed the brakes and horn, drilled a few hundred holes and mounted a NATO light package and parked them again! The Dutch army didn't care if the steering wheel, ignition parts, or anything else came out of orange and green GMC 'script' boxes. Eventually, because the dumps were the best of the fleet, they were the last of the Dutch GMC's to be surplused out to Mr.Van Damm. So, by some fluke, in 1990, you're able to buy a nice 1945 GMC dump truck, with no miles on it.

The cargo dump is one of the rarer of the standard CCKW production

models; only 47,098 were built, with winch and open cab. The really rare ones were those built without winch - 1,301. They are numerically rare by production, but some are in the M.V.P.A. Like Dodge Command Cars, and Ford GP's, they're rare, but common in collections.

If there were any of these trucks destined to become extinct through abuse, they were the cargo dump versions. It was a rather ill-conceived model. A great idea when they thought it up, but not in practice . The truck wasn't intended to be a 'gravel truck'. It was intended to be issued to the combat engineers to carry inflated rubber bridge pontoons. When the troops got it, they assumed that it was just what it looked like a gravel truck. Before going any further, only the initial, engineering prototype had a closed cab. All production models were open cab, having entered production in mid-1943. Photos of the closed cab prototype appear in several mid-war publications.

The problem with the design was it s size. It was too big - the 12-foot body, on the long wheelbase chassis. If these had been built with the short body on the short chassis, all would have been fine, the truck would have been proportioned to its actual capacity. The CCKW is at best a nominal 5-ton truck, and that's in absolute terms. The cargo volume of the long cargo body was about 10-tons, even with the body partition up. The box divider was more for center of gravity reasons than load limiting, so the truck wouldn't fall over sideways when the body was raised up. The body would hold 10-tons by volume, and the hoist would lift it. There wasn't any constraint to haul less then 10-tons in them (there was a war on). The limitation was that the frame wouldn't take the abuse. Those built with the Timken 'Split' axles (model H1) were really fragile. The Timken '30-series axle housing wasn't designed for that kind of load - they were intended for 1 1/2 to 3-ton trucks. Now, the GM 'Banjo' style axle housing, much to their credit, would very willing take the abuse, but the frame and drive line parts (axle shafts, universal joints, etc.) wouldn't.

The reality of the design's limitations are easy to see when the trucks were replaced with the M-series. There wasn't anything like the 'cargo-dump'. The 'M-series' dump trucks all had commercially proportioned bodies that would only hold the designed load capacity.

That, finally, wraps all this up. Now, you can all go out and help make Holland beautiful by buying up all those horrid old trucks cluttering up the surplus dealers lots. And, best of all, Reg will have room for M-series articles.

AH