

THE JIMMY'S ANCESTRY

The CCKW in Detail and The Collector's Syndrome

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PART IV

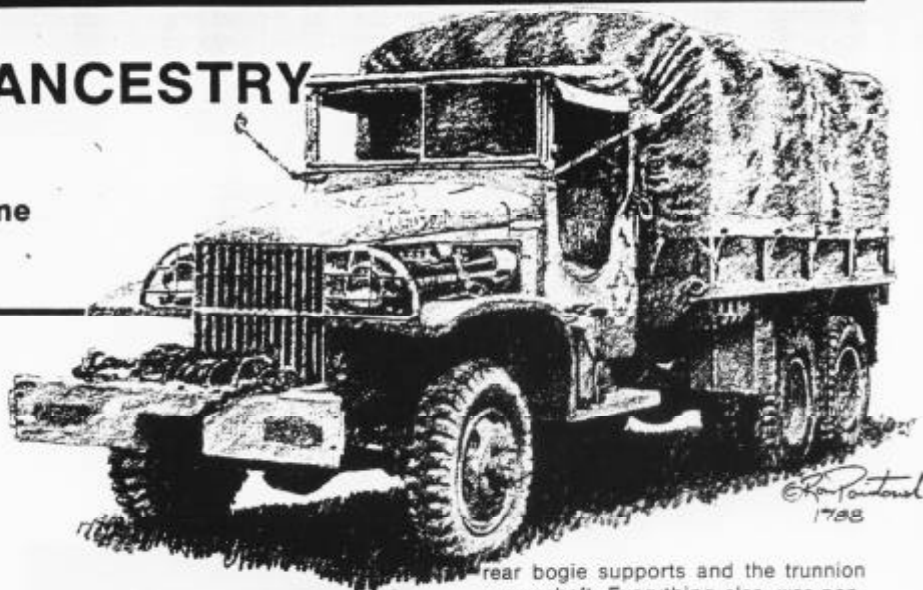
THE CCKW

The First-Series:

It was in late February, 1941, that the CCKW went into production. Earlier I had said that the CCKWX's and the first contract CCKW's were the same. Then what was the difference between them? It was the introduction of the GMC/Chevrolet developed 'corporation-style' driveline (universally known as Banjo). Since the ACKWX through CCKWX used a non-GM, outside-vendor supplied driveline, (Timken/Wisconsin Axle), GMC considered them to be a non-standard model; hence the X. What promoted this rather major change to something the Army rather liked as it was?

By mid-1940, the Army was buying all-wheel drive trucks at an unprecedented rate. Rearmament was in full swing and the horse wasn't part of the Army's plans. Among the many problems created by these huge defense contracts was an acute shortage of driven front axles, more specifically, a critical shortage of the front axle constant velocity joints. Manufacturing these components was a very complex, highly sophisticated, machining operation that made grinding hypoid ring and pinion gears look simple. There were only two small suppliers of these critical parts and they were working at full capacity. Only a year or two previously, the annual production for all-wheel drive trucks was not more than a few hundred units.

In 1940, the only way to increase production of these critical components was to bring in greatly enlarged produc-



tion capacities (like Ford or GM). The incentive was in the form of huge contracts which would justify the big automakers investing a lot of money in producing a very specialized product that had only one customer. The carrot for GM going into the all-wheel drive business was production orders for Chevrolet's G4100-series, 1 1/2 ton, 4x4's (G-506) and GM-axled CCKWX's.

In less than a year, GMC and Chevrolet developed, tooled up, and had in production, the Banjo-style axles and a couple of rugged, easily produced and maintained, transfer cases. No longer was Yellow Truck & Coach (GMC) dependent upon an outside, vendor-supplied driveline to produce what had become its primary product.

What the Banjo-style driveline lacked in sophistication, it made up for with an immensely strong axle housing that would willingly accept gross overloading. In the case of the transfer cases, they were designed for ease of production and maintenance, so one could overlook the lack of the Timken's fine bearing pre-load adjustments and long-term quiet operation. For the time, it was exactly what was required. It was also the availability of this rugged, adaptable driveline that made the successful amphibious DUKW possible.

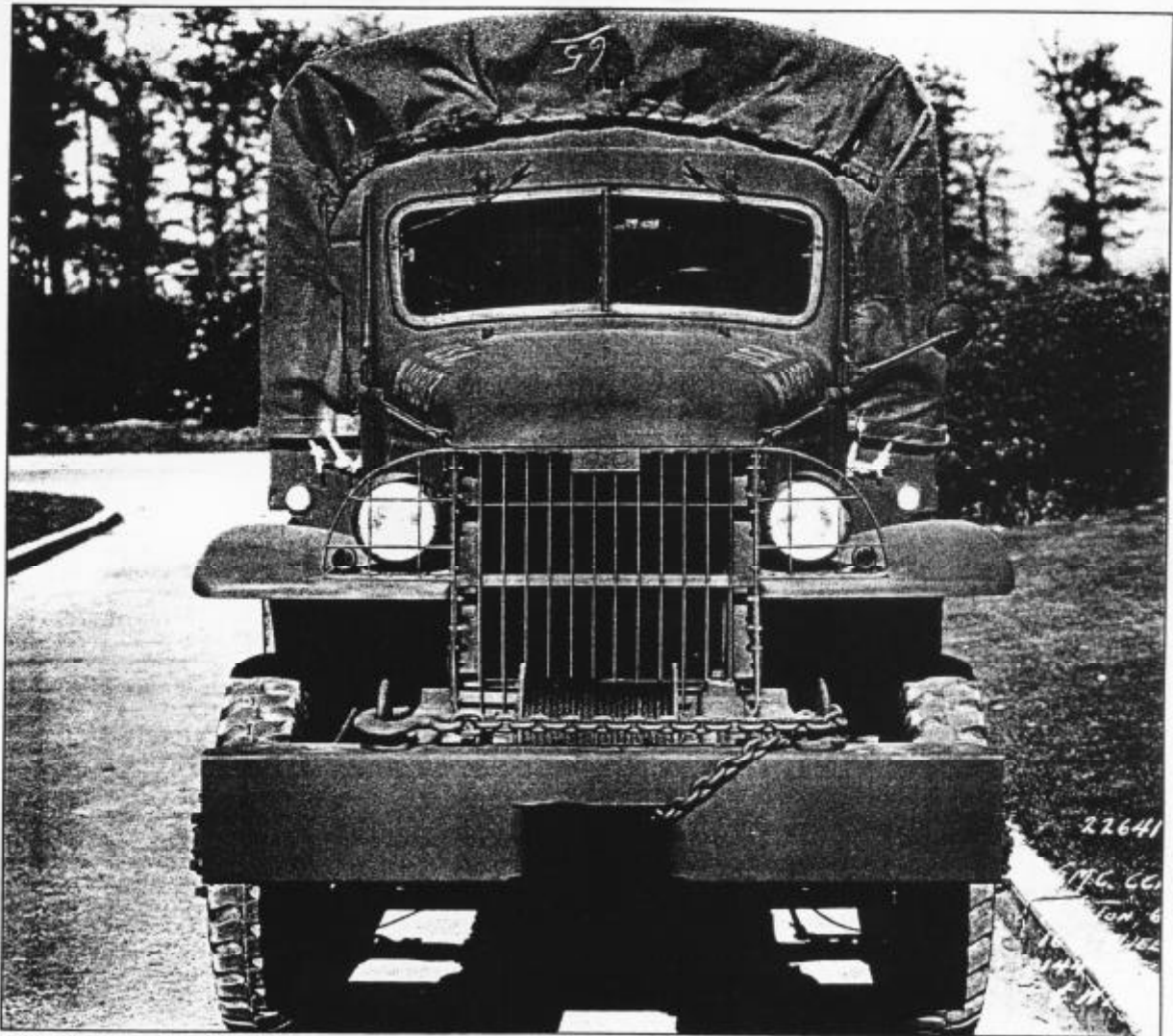
It is hard to consider the Timken and the GM-axled 6x6's as identical models. They should have had two different G-numbers, but that's another story. From the transmission's output flange, all the way to the wheel/tire assembly, the only common interchangeable parts between the Timken and the Banjo driveline were the emergency brake assembly, springs,

rear bogie supports and the trunnion cross shaft. Everything else, was non-interchangeable, including the five (now ten) propeller shafts and their u-joints, frame, front spring hangers, complete axle assemblies, brake backing plates, brake drums, wheel cylinders, hubs, wheel bearings, hub seals and even the engine oil pans.

The two completely different chassis and the increasing diversity of body types caused the serial number system to be revised. The new system simplified both company and Army record keeping by exactly denoting each truck. The new system, with its chassis/body suffix code, meant that a revised data plate had to be introduced. The Banjo-axled trucks were contracted in addition to the Timken-axled trucks. Both drivelines continued in production, in approximately equal numbers, from February, 1941, until late August, 1945.

For collectors, the production debut of the new chassis, the new model designations, etc., had no effect on the trucks' appearance. Only from the ends, where the much bulkier Banjo-axle housings were visible (with their distinctive Tic-Tack-Toe patterned cast covers), was there any difference. This lack of detail change is important since while the serial number prefix and suffixes and certain designations changed, the serial number sequence remained un-broken. The last CCKWX was serial number CCKW353-13188, and the first CCKW was CCKW353-13189-A2. For our consideration, the CCKW can be best described as a mid-season addition, or a 1941-1/2 model.

From the late February model introduction to the end of the first contract run in late May, 1941, the CCKW (nee



The CCKW can be best described as a 1941 and a 1/2 Model. For the collector its introduction has no effect on the truck's appearance. The new GMC banjo-style axle cannot be seen in this photograph.

CCKWX) continued with little detail change. Those CCKW's with the Timken (split) driveline were very much the same as the CCKWX's before them. The changes were: the two small oil filters were replaced by a single, large Standard Military Senior unit; the small 2H battery was replaced by the much larger 4H (which required a new battery carrier and cover). Also, the fuel filler neck size was increased from 2-1/4 inches to 2-1/2 inches in diameter to use a standard gas cap. And there was a newly formatted nomenclature plate on the fire wall.

There was only one other difference, and it was anything but minor. Between the CCKWX and the CCKW, both the long and short cargo bodies are different. They appear identical, but in parts books, everything (tarps, troop seat/rack assemblies, and the complete body) is listed as having different parts numbers between the two models. All of them

were supplied by Budd, so I don't know just what the difference is.

While these matters were being researched many nagging questions remained. For example, "just when did the CCKW go into production?". In fact, just exactly when any of these trucks went into actual production was a mystery. All the normal reference books, parts books, automotive histories - all places this should be answered - turned up nothing.

The answer to the production introduction popped up while looking through a very obscure GMC Service Bulletin. There, under an esoteric bit of trivia about steering gear changes, was a production serial number and date. The CCKW went into production in February, 1941, just about the same time as the Ford GP and the Willys MA.