

## THE JIMMY'S ANCESTRY

The CCKW in Detail and  
The Collector's Syndrome

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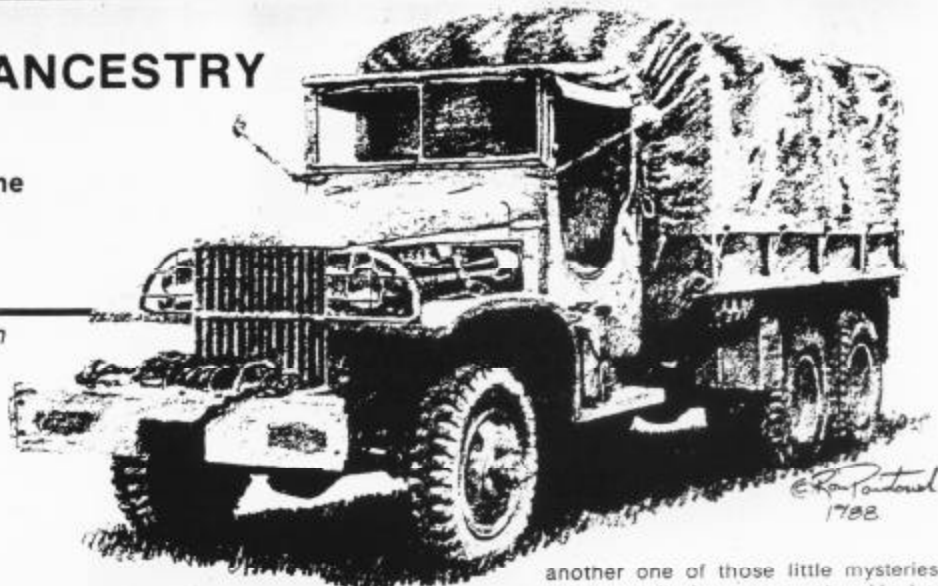
### PART VIII

## THE 1944's

### The Fifth-Series:

In January 1944, the last of the 11595/2597 (the big) contract vehicles had been delivered. It was contract and design revision time again. As with most of the earlier model changes, nothing differed much in the way of looks. The model 1619, open-cab, with its newly revised canvas and equipment stowage had arrived in its definitive form. The only cab change would be the March 1944 addition of the sheet metal lube chart holder to the rear panel. Initially the new contract, W-374-ORD-6457, was intended to be just an extension to the big contract. Even GMC considered the new trucks to be on the same production order (T-5700). However, despite the blase attitude from the paper pushers, these trucks featured some rather extensive mechanical revisions.

During the past three years, the Army had a hard time accepting the CCKW as a 2 1/2 - 5 ton truck. That's what they ordered, and that's what GMC delivered. In reality, the CCKW was a bit lightly-built and a couple of its normal service uses really overloaded the chassis i.e., mobile machine shop loads and the ill-conceived long wheelbase Cargo/Dump truck. What the Army really wanted was a half-million Diamond T 4-ton, 6x6's, that would go fifty miles an hour. That's why the M-series 2 1/2 ton trucks were much heavier design-wise, and owed more to the G-509 Diamond T, than the G-508 GMC. And, that's why the M-series dump trucks were all on short wheelbase chassis, and used commercially proportioned dump bodies.



In late February, at s/n 321678, the newly revised 1944 model (fifth series) truck entered production. The major change was a new, heavily reinforced frame. It was new from the bumper brackets back, some crossmembers were strengthened, and the side rails fishplated. In the interest of standardization, all the holes remained the same. Along with the new frame, the brake system was completely replumbed - again, from DUKW practice. Instead of the long brake hoses coming through the frame side rails and dangling quite vulnerably down to the backing plates, the new system followed Jeep/Dodge practice; a single hose connected to a centrally mounted tee on each differential housing, and axle mounted steel lines running outboard to the backing plates. The front axle, of course, had a short hose at each end to allow for the steering knuckle movement.

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At this point, there is a glitch. This revised brake plumbing is a serialized change that supposedly entered production early in 1944. As of this date, nobody has seen a truck with this brake system installed. All the owners of '44 and '45 CCKW's that I've talked to have the old style hoses on their trucks.

Unlike the fabled M29C 'Weasel' hand brake, which never appeared due to production ending before its scheduled introduction — the GMC 'Improved' brake system did exist: DUKW's and the AFKW (cab overs) had it. This is

another one of those little mysteries. Now, everybody can run out and look at the local derelict CCKW and see if the long (early) or late (short) brake hoses are installed. When you send your letter of confirmation, please be sure to send the SERIAL NUMBER and DELIVERY DATE.

Along with the chassis revision, there had to be the traditional engine change. The new model engine was the 3431. This entailed a new carburetor. The early die cast, Zenith model 28AV11, with its civilian derived clamp on the air cleaner, was replaced with a heavy-duty, cast iron, Zenith model 30B11 carburetor and a newly developed SAE/Military Standard flange mounted air cleaner. To the collector this was a mixed blessing. The air cleaner is great, the new carburetor is a real pain.

The air cleaner became a mil-spec item, and during 1944, Dodge, Ford, Chevrolet, Studebaker, along with GMC all adopted it into production. For the M-series fan who thinks everything from the forties prehistoric and chiseled out of stone - this is also the common M37 air cleaner.

The revised carburetor, however, was one of those 'Improved Military Characteristics' that is a real pain in the caboose to collectors. The earlier carburetor and air cleaner were regular commercial items. Being commercial items, you can still get a kit for the 28AV11 from your friendly NAPA store - part number 2-1567. For collectors, this is an easy carb to work with. It has an accelerator pump, functions and adjusts like any other real carburetor and gives good performance and decent mileage.

However, off the road the 28AV is fragile. The air cleaner used the same dumb clamp-on arrangement that any car used. Despite having a brace, when pounding through ditches and over rocks, the air cleaner had a tendency to fling itself off. When it did this it sometimes broke the top off the body casting, or when it spilled its oil over the exhaust manifold and caught on fire, the carb would melt. The new vacuum balanced, cast iron Zenith that didn't have an accelerator pump offered lack-luster performance. Being a mil-spec item (non-commercial) it is very hard to get parts for. There is no NAPA kit for it. But, the new carb was part of the total optimization of the truck for off-road use. The cast iron carburetor wouldn't break, the four bolt, flange mounted air cleaner wouldn't fling itself off, and it wouldn't dump its oil down the intake. It was a tradeoff the Army very willingly

accepted. One that those of us who only drive these things in parades wish that they hadn't.

Like all the other wartime vehicles (Jeep, Dodge, etc.), after four years of improving and modifying for operation under the most adverse conditions, the new models did not run as smoothly under normal conditions as the earlier versions. This is a tendency that began in 1942, and has continued until the present. The wartime improvements such as positive crankcase ventilation, vacuum balanced carburetors and velocity governors, all tended to fight each other. As a result, the modified vehicles were harder to tune, idled erratically, and over-the-road performance dropped off as compared to the earlier ones. But, they would run, if somewhat indifferently, under almost all conditions.

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Finally, there was one visible change that was part of the new, improved 1944 CCKW. In fact, it was the last visible change ever to be made to them - the new cargo bodies. In January 1944, GMC phased the troublesome, wartime all-wood cargo bodies out of production. In its place was the composite, bolted together, steel body with wood floor. This was the new standard body used until the end of production. Just to confuse the issue, during the rest of 1944 there would be a few batches of wood-bodied trucks produced to clear out inventories, or as a result of temporary shortages of the new steel bodies.



*Externally, the only difference between the 1943 'Fourth-series' and the 1944 era 'Fifth-series' trucks, is that the cargo trucks used the late war developed composite steel/wood bed. Interestingly, no factory portraits of the late cargo body exist. This is the best available shot showing the bolted together steel bed, with the wooden floor. The metal reinforced edge, or side rail in the canvas top is most evident in this view. The quad .50 mount has to be the ultimate accessory for your 'Jimmy'.*

U.S. Army SC 206860

## ARMY MOTORS

This was just like those isolated batches of late 1942, early '43 steel bodied cargo trucks — after the wood body became standard.

The fifth-series trucks brought about another revision of the etched zinc vehicle nomenclature plate. This change was due to the new Ordnance requirement that all vehicles come equipped with permanent plates giving all shipping data. In early 1944, most tactical vehicles began showing up with the additional shipping data plate on the dash.

For some reason, GMC didn't follow the same route as everybody else with the new shipping data. Instead of just making up another separate plate with the required data, GMC revised the nomenclature plate to incorporate it. In the interest of standardization, and the perennial search for production simplification, GMC replaced the universal, 1943 style nomenclature plate with NINE individual nomenclature/shipping data plates. Each distinct factory production version of the CCKW now had its very own, unique data plate.

The chassis-cab models continued to use the 1943 style plate, with the complete vehicle dimensions/weights being on a separate plate - like most other manufacturers. Due to the widely varying weights, all twelve of the Ordnance Shop vans still in production (ST-6 body), required twelve different shipping data plates. Being an Ordnance part, applied long after the truck was built, very often these Ordnance shop van shipping plates were the only brass data plates on a CCKW. The nomenclature plates were always etched zinc. Any brass ones are postwar replacement plates.

Late in 1943, the last new production model CCKW was introduced; the M27 (wooden body) /M27B1 (composite steel body) Bomb Service Truck. This model is kind of odd. It was a genuine, factory production model (all its parts are in the ORD 9 G-508, parts book), along with the cargo, dump, water and gas tankers. But, it didn't have its own serial number body code suffix. These trucks were built on special -1 coded frames. Why were they special? They were wired dif-

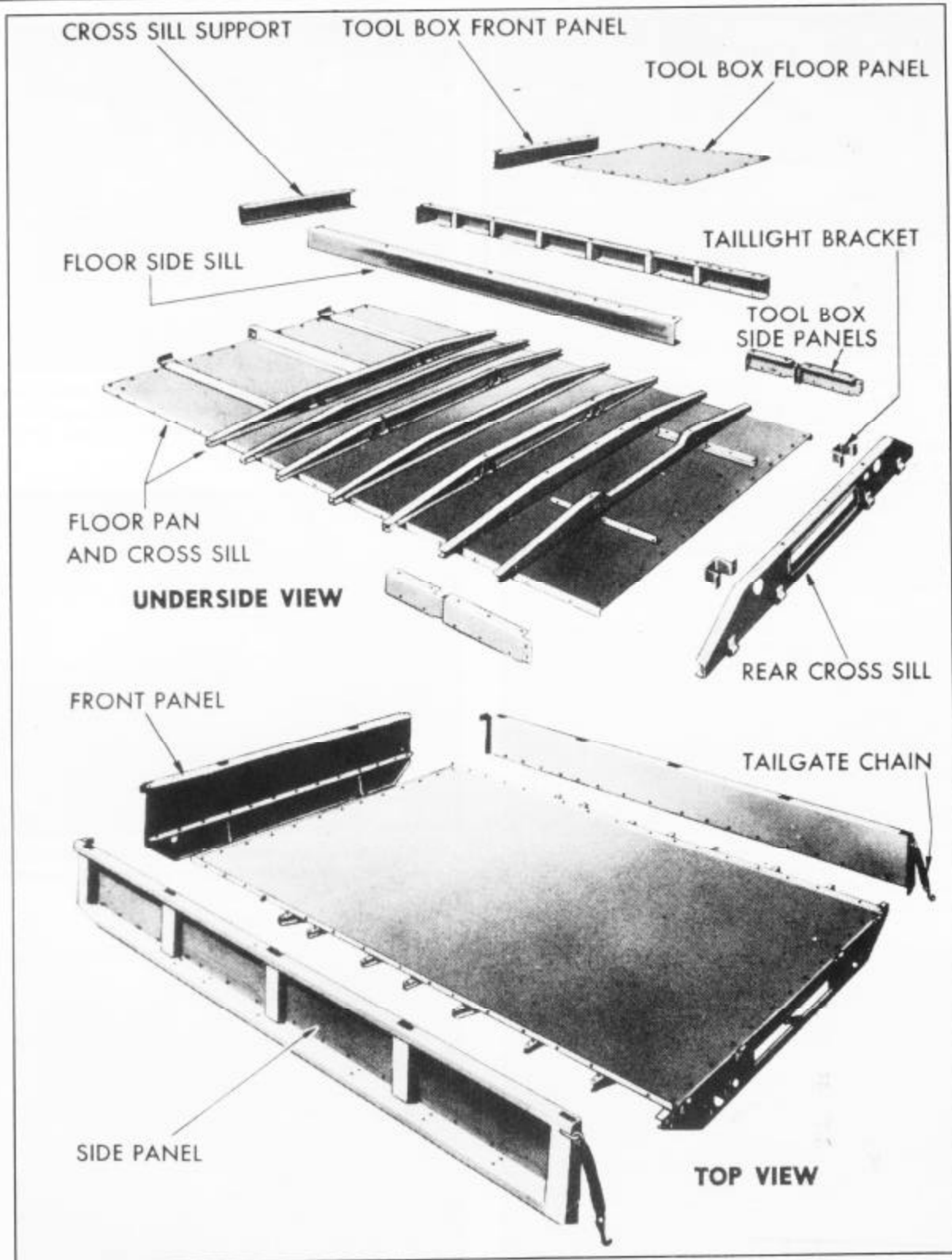
ferently than any other CCKW. They were the only CCKW's to come equipped with factory installed electric trailer brake controls. ORD 9 gives the serial number blocks of these trucks.

What makes the electric trailer brake controls so special? Nothing, that's what so odd about it. Many WW II era trucks came factory equipped with them. I believe that most, if not all, half-tracks and a goodly percentage of the 6 ton, 6x6's came with them. The electric brake controls should have at least been a standard item with the short wheelbase 352's. The CCKW 352 was produced exclusively for the Field Artillery, as prime movers for 75 to 105mm towed guns which all had electric brakes. So, every Jimmy that was used to tow a gun carriage, had to have a field-installed electric brake control kit (Kit 8-A-2000). The trucks should have had them from the factory.

This takes us up to November 1944, and the next installment.



*A rear view showing the late composite steel/wood cargobody. The load? Just over five tons of gas filled jerrycans. The steel bodied truck is matched to a steel-bodied one ton T-6 trailer. Dveon, England. Jan. 1944. U.S. Army SC 280107*



*Unit breakdown of the late, bolted-up, steel floored, composite body. The wood-floor version (the true composite body) used the same individual 2 x 4 (6") boards and steel runners as the all-wood body used.*