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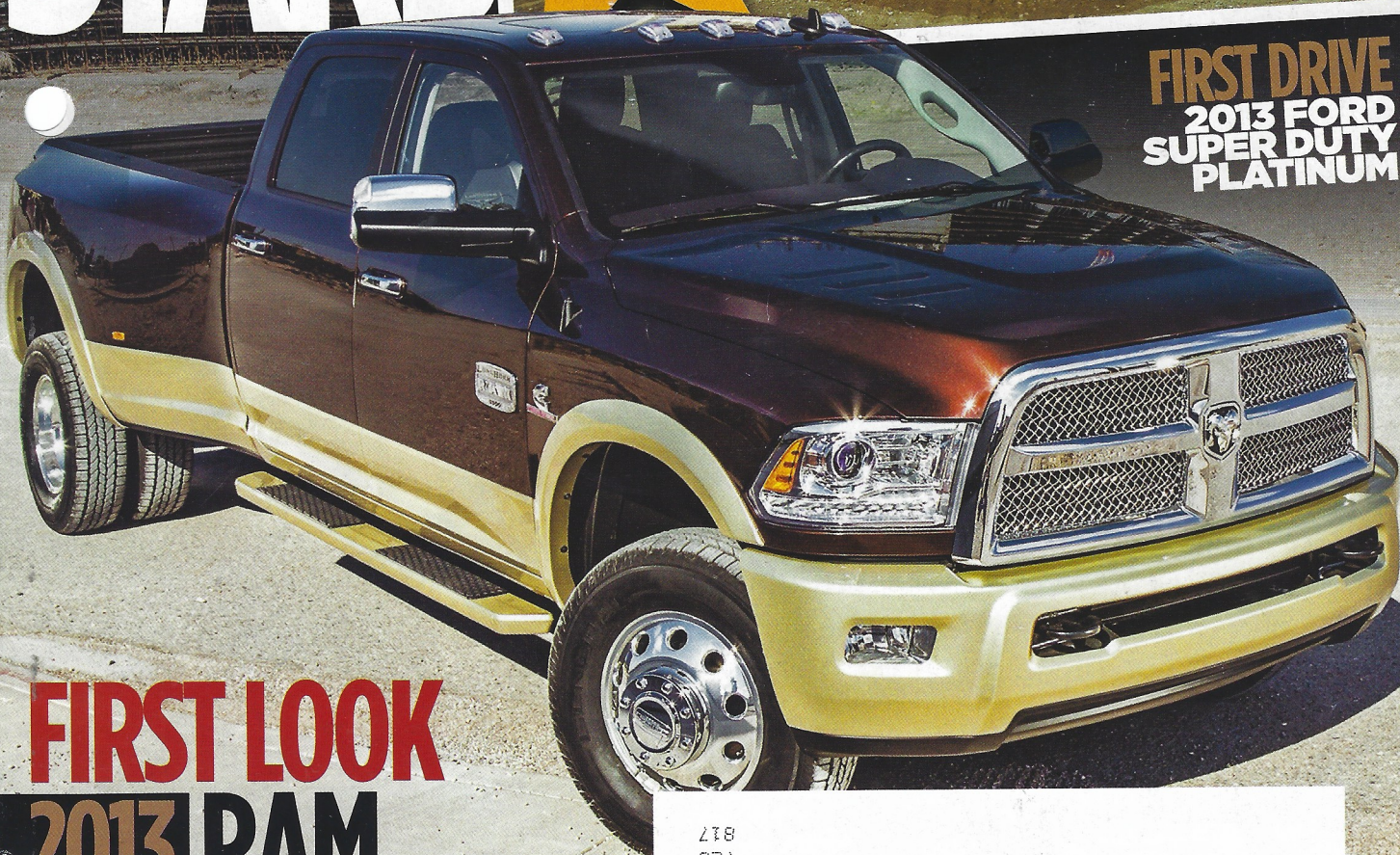
JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2013

LONE STARS

BIG NEWS
FROM THE STATE
FAIR OF TEXAS



FIRST DRIVE
2013 FORD
SUPER DUTY
PLATINUM



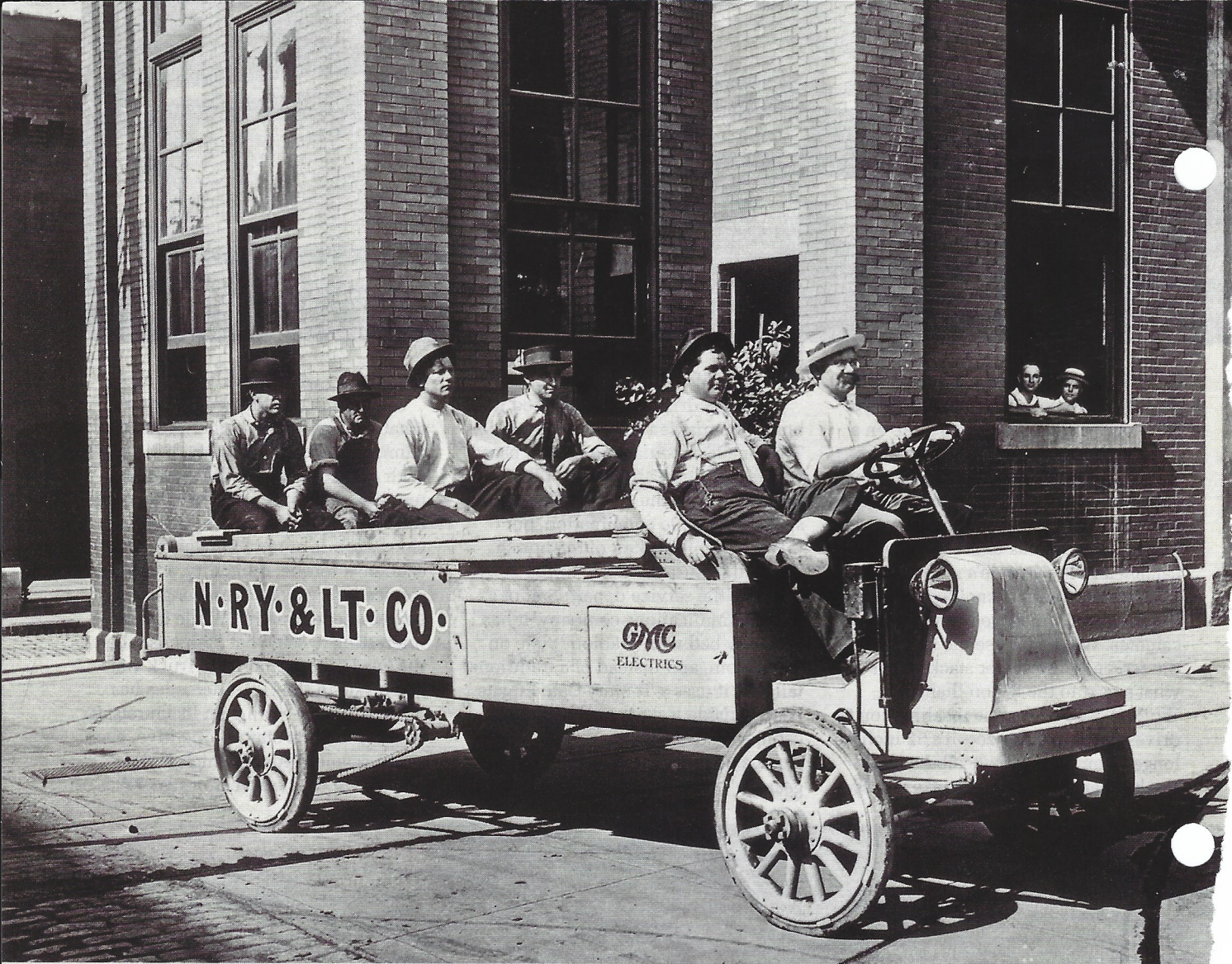
FIRST LOOK

**2013 RAM
2500/3500 HD**

PLUS COMMERCIAL SPRINTERS

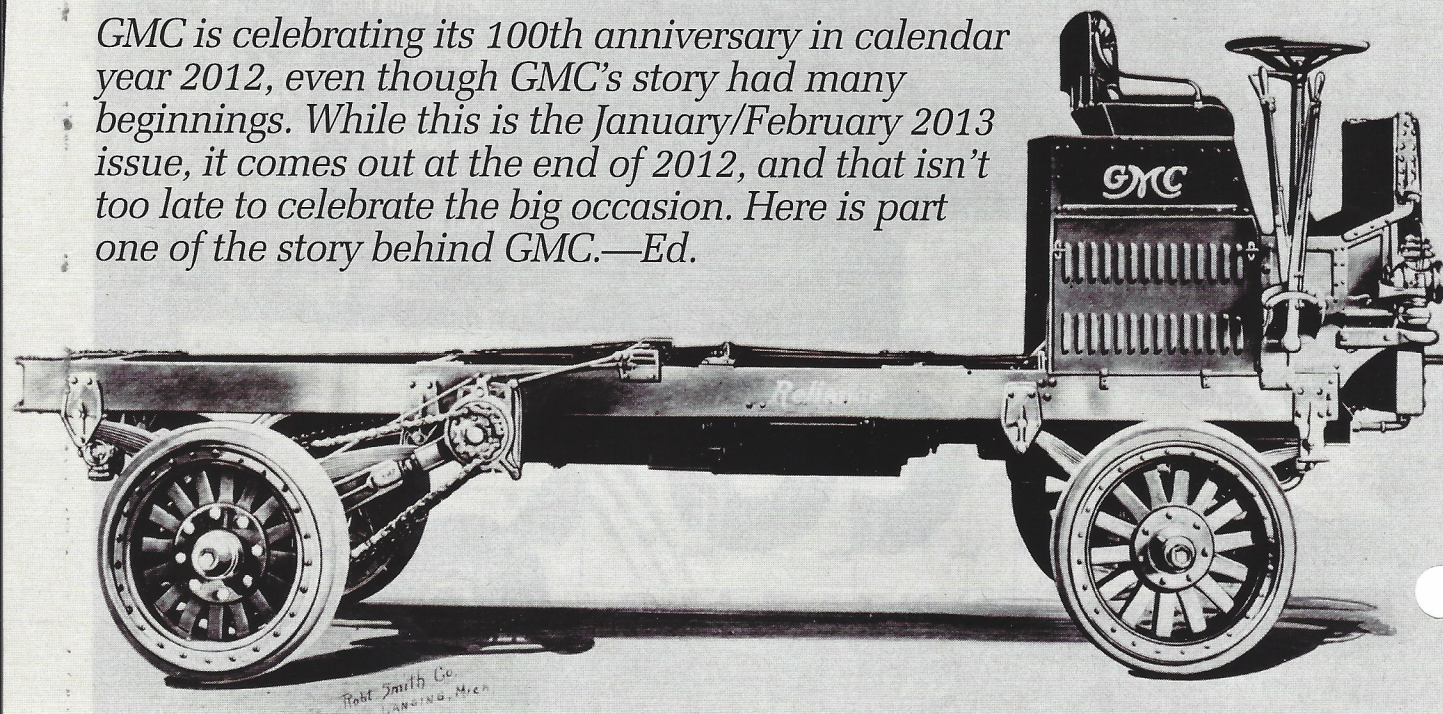
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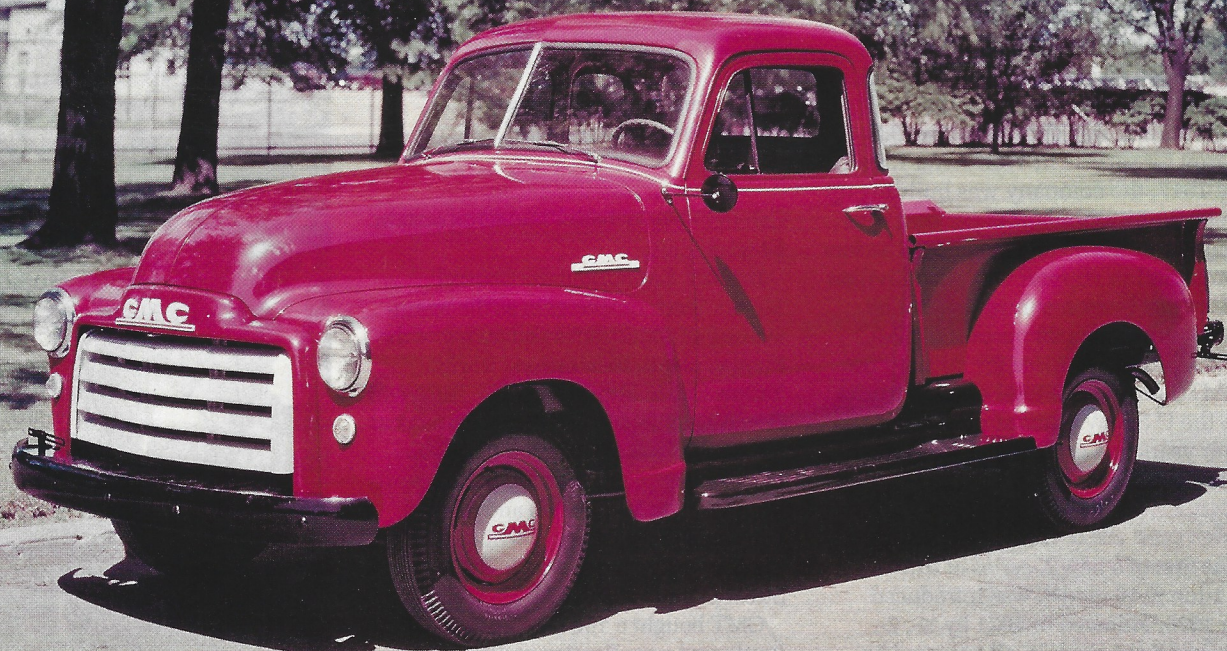


By Gary Witzenburg

GMC is celebrating its 100th anniversary in calendar year 2012, even though GMC's story had many beginnings. While this is the January/February 2013 issue, it comes out at the end of 2012, and that isn't too late to celebrate the big occasion. Here is part one of the story behind GMC.—Ed.



In 1952, GMC's half-tons were known as the Series 100 line. This one, a stepside, was powered by an OHV inline-six.



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GMC'S Centennial

In 1911, General Motors created the General Motors Truck Company (GMTCo) in Detroit to sell vehicles built by the Reliance Motor Car Co. and the Rapid Motor Vehicle Co., both of which were acquired soon after GM's 1908 founding. A third truckmaker that GM owned, the Randolph Motor Car Co., did not get folded into GMTCo and was sold in January 1912, according to historian and former GMC engineer Donald E. Meyer.

GM filed an application to copyright the GMC brand in 1911 and used it in public for the first time in gasoline and electric Rapid and Reliance trucks at the 1912 New York auto show. The copyright was granted

that September, and later that year, all new GM (formerly Rapid and Reliance) trucks wore the GMC badge.

Genesis

The GMC we know today dates its 100th birthday to those first 1912 GMC-branded trucks, rather than the founding of GMTCo the previous year. Yet, its history truly goes back to the formation of the Grabowski Motor Vehicle Co. in Detroit in 1900.

Brothers Max and Morris Grabowski built their first prototype truck in 1900. Powered by a single-cylinder engine under the seat, its payload was said to be a ton and its top speed

a horse-spooking 10 mph. But when their first truck proved underpowered, their second got a 15-hp twin. The Grabowskis reorganized as the Rapid Motor Vehicle Co. that year. In 1905, Rapid built a 35,000-square-foot assembly plant (on the renamed Rapid Street) on the south side of Pontiac, Michigan. Its Model B Power Wagon panel delivery truck was motivated by that same 15-hp flat-twin. Meanwhile, the Detroit-based Reliance Motor Co., established in 1902, began selling 22-hp cargo trucks and 12-passenger buses in 1903 and, by 1906, was building 1½- to 3-ton trucks powered by two-cylinder inline engines rated at 25-28 hp.

Early Years

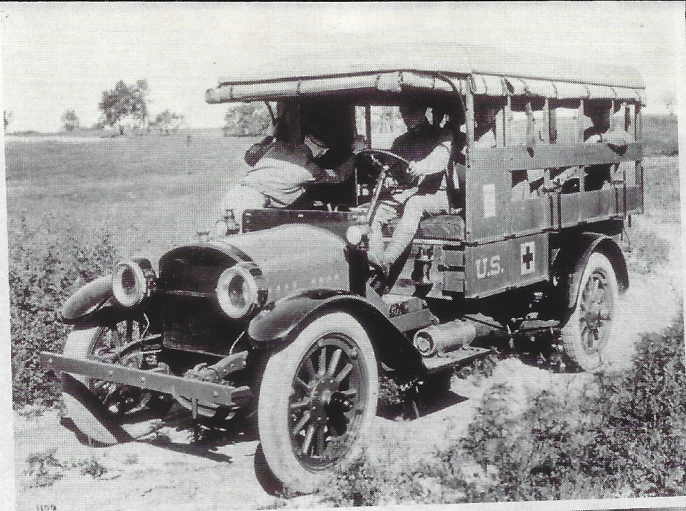
In 1913, all GM truck manufacturing was consolidated into the Rapid plant in Pontiac; all Rapid (electric) and Reliance (gasoline) trucks officially became GMCs; and three new gas-powered (1¾-, 2-, and 3-ton) models were designed by GMTC engineers. The first of a new family of trucks was introduced in 1914, and the first 200 four-cylinder light-duty (¾-ton) delivery trucks were built on Buick chassis with prices starting at \$1090.

GM established the GMC Truck Division in 1915, and production of rebranded Rapid and Reliance trucks came to an end. GMC's Model 16 ¾-ton truck was chosen by the U.S. Army for service in World War I, and by 1917, the company was building up to 50 Army ambulances per day, plus smaller numbers of 1-ton troop carriers and aviation support vehicles. Civilian truck production continued, but by 1918, more than 90 percent of GMC truck production was for military use. GMTC provided a total of 8512 trucks to the U.S. government during the war years and earned a Distinguished Service Award for its efforts.

Merger and Consolidation

The first of a new K-series of trucks, a 1-ton K-16 model, was introduced in 1920, followed in 1921 by ¾-, 2-, 3-, and 5-ton models, all powered by four-cylinder L-head engines rated from 33 to 51 hp. A Model K-20 bus chassis (GM's first) was added in 1922.

Meanwhile, the Yellow Sleeve-Valve Engine Works (a subsidiary of Yellow Cab) of East Moline, Illinois, began building four-cylinder Yellow Knight engines for trucks, coaches, and taxis in 1923. The following year, Yellow



GMC's ambulances were used by the U.S. Army in World War I.

Cab light trucks began replacing certain GMC models.

In 1925, GM created the General Motors Truck Corporation as the manufacturer of GMC trucks and owner of the Pontiac plants, then merged it with Yellow Cab to form the Yellow Truck and Coach Manufacturing Co. as a 57-percent owned GM subsidiary. In 1926, GMC management, sales, and advertising staffs transferred to Yellow Cab and merged with its staffs in Chicago, while GMC Truck Engineering moved to the Rapid Street plant in Pontiac.

GMT bought a 160-acre farm on South Boulevard near Pontiac in 1926. In 1927, the first of a new T-series of 1- and 2-ton trucks powered by 207- and 274-cid Buick I-6 engines was announced, while an unrelated Model T-10 ½-ton Deluxe Delivery Truck—designed and built by Pontiac and powered by a 189-cid I-6 engine—made its debut as the result of a program initiated two years earlier by GM president Alfred Sloan to



develop lower-cost, more competitive light trucks. The higher-cost Yellow Cab light trucks were soon dropped, and GMC truck sales rose to nearly 13,000 in 1927.

Work crews toiled 24 hours a day in two 12-hour shifts to complete the new South Boulevard Plant 2, which built its first truck in January 1928, less than six months after construction began. By the end of March, it was producing 150 trucks a day, and GMC and YT&CMC staffs were moving into the new administration building, historian Meyer reports. All GMC truck engineering and manufacturing was consolidated in Pontiac, and GMC took over design and development of its six-cylinder OHV engines from Buick.



A cab and chassis from 1925.



This is a 1909 Rapid Model F six-passenger combination car. Rapid soon became part of GMC.

Depression and Recovery

Less than a year after the stock market crashed, a new Plant 2 engineering wing was completed. Engineering operations moved there from the Rapid St. Plant 1 in July 1930, and all GMC engine production was consolidated into Plant 1. In 1931, a new 1-ton T-18

model debuted with cab and front sheetmetal shared with Chevrolet, and two super-heavy-duty models (for off-road construction and mining) powered by a 150-hp, 616-cid "Super Duty" engine were added to the line. But in 1931, production slumped to just 9000 units because of the Depres-



This 1931 GMC Sleeper Tractor delivering the goods.

sion, then to fewer than 6000 in 1932 amidst drastic production cuts, layoffs, and reduced work hours and pay for those fortunate to keep their jobs.

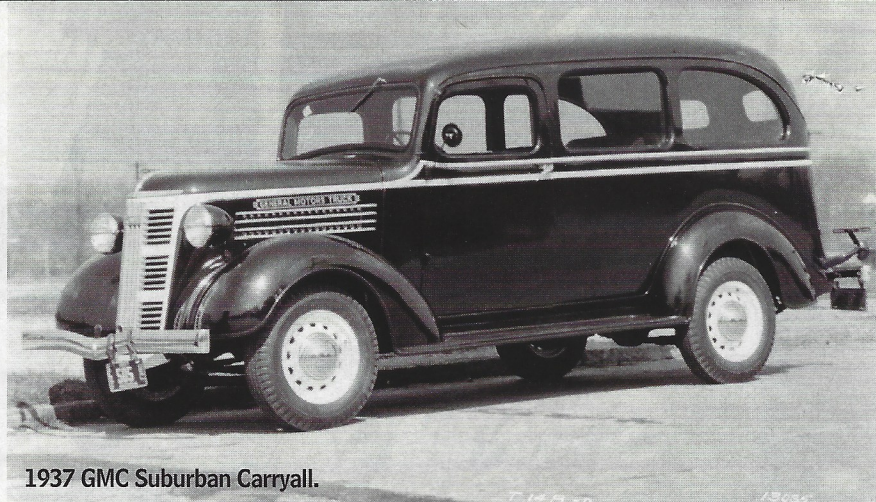
GMC suspended light-duty truck production through 1933 and most of 1934, but six new T-series models were introduced with GVWRs from 10,000 to 30,000 pounds. Production rebounded to more than 8000 vehicles

Feature GMC 100

in 1933, then nearly 14,000 in 1934 as GMC's first cab-over-engine (COE) models joined the line.

The following year brought a new YT&CMC president, Irving Babcock, who believed that trucks should look as fresh as cars, and that GMC should compete in the light-truck market with Chevy, Ford, and Dodge. In 1936, the GM Truck Corp. was dissolved and YT&CMC took sole responsibility for building GMC trucks. GM Truck and Coach Division became the sales subsidiary, and 15 new models were released. The most popular proved to be 85-hp, 213-cid I-6-powered T-14 ½-ton pickup and panel trucks, which accounted for 42 percent of the 35,000-plus GMC trucks produced that year as the economy recovered. GMC also began building 1½-ton 4x4 military trucks for the U.S. Army.

In 1937, GM founded Detroit Diesel Engine Division to build compact diesels, and a dozen new conventional cab and 11 COE models were intro-



1937 GMC Suburban Carryall.

duced with streamlined styling, the first by GM styling staff. Chevrolet and GMC launched their first Suburban Carryall utility vehicles, earliest ancestors of the Chevy Suburban and GMC Yukon XL still popular today. Production totaled a record 57,350 units, a solid fifth among U.S. truckmakers.

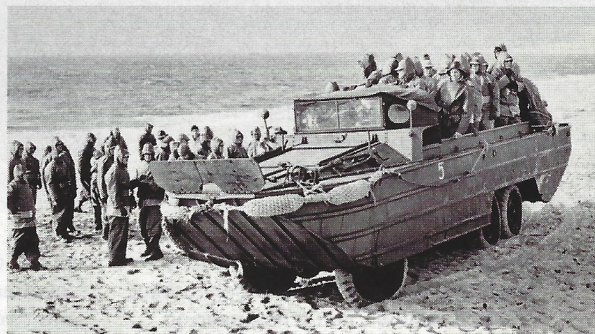
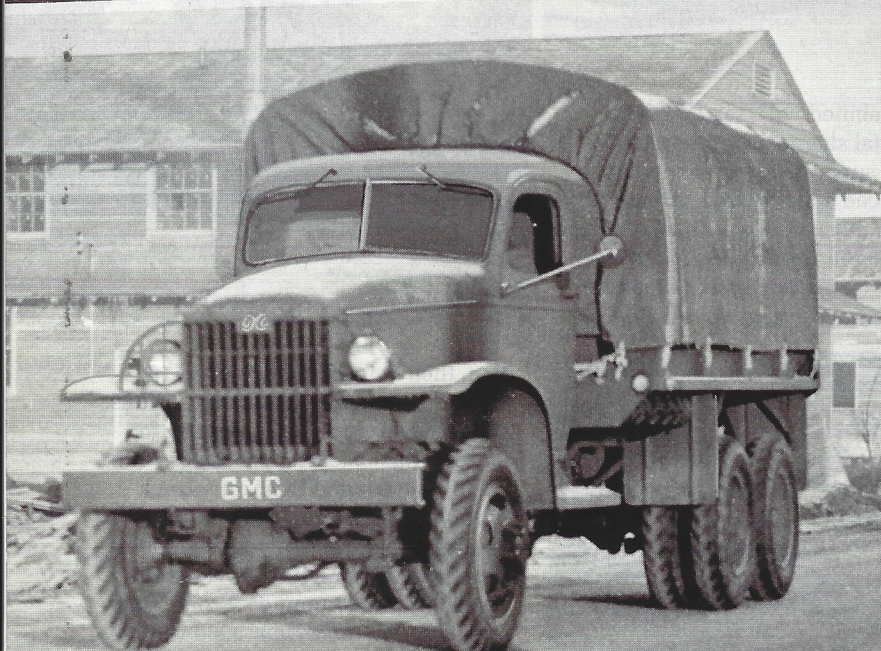
In and Out of War

Detroit Diesel launched its first family of two-, three-, four-, and six-cylinder diesels with Roots blowers in 1938, and a new A series of light-duty pickup, panel, and stake-rack models was announced for 1939. They boasted redesigned (Chevrolet) cabs with 2-piece V windshields and new 228- and 248-cid GMC engines. World War II began in Europe in September 1939, and production reached nearly 45,000 units, including some 1600 military trucks.

The 6x6 Duck (aka DUKW 353) was an amphibious troop and cargo carrier. Ducks were used at the Normandy Landing.

In 1940, GMC added an extension to Plant 2 and purchased additional buildings for sheetmetal work and storage. The next year, it launched new 105-hp, 270-cid 2½-ton 6x6 trucks in a variety of body styles for the U.S. Army and allied forces, and these rugged, reliable workhorses soon became known by the troops as Jimmys or Deuce and a Halfs. More than half of the 111,000-plus GMC trucks built in 1941 were for the military.

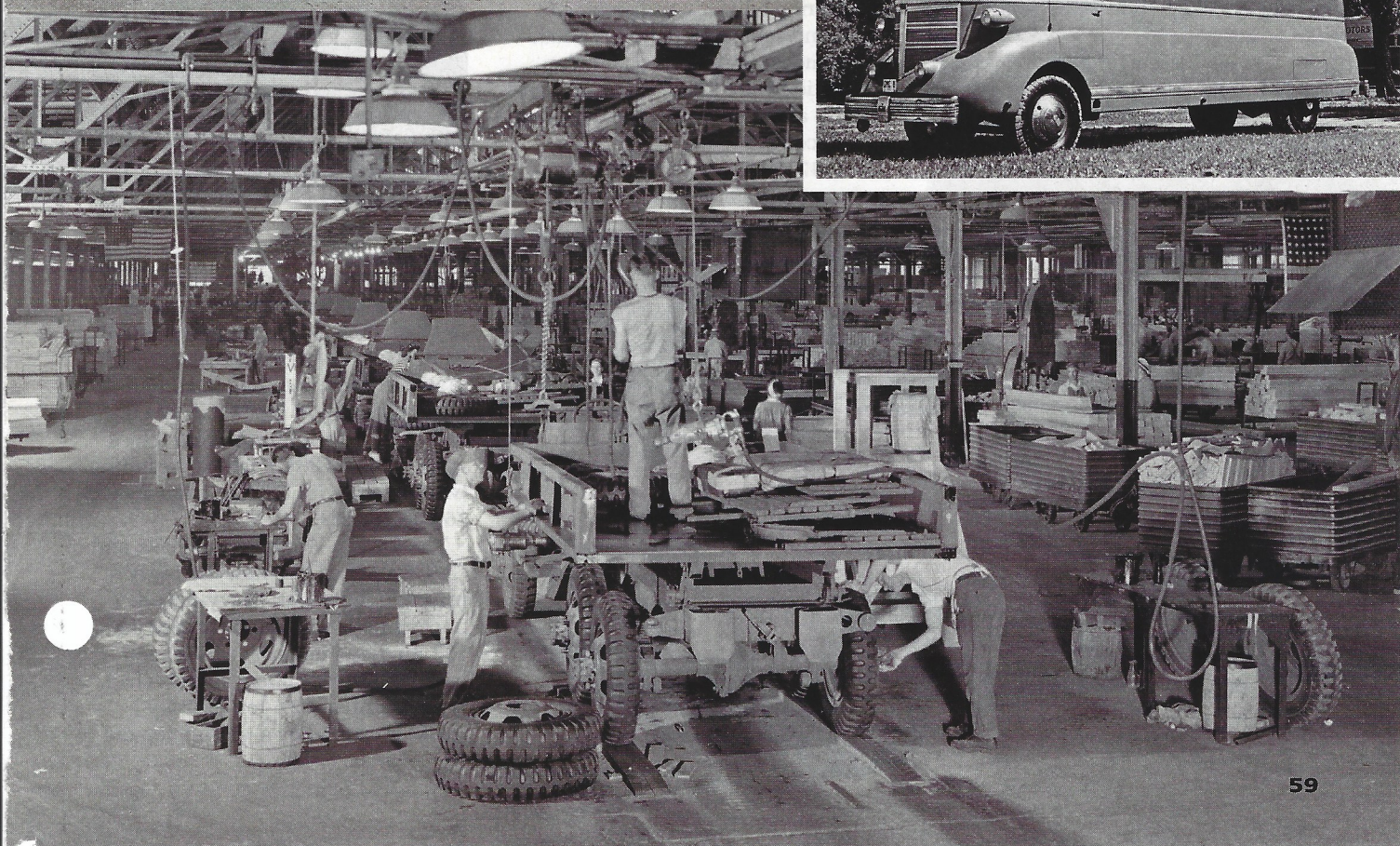
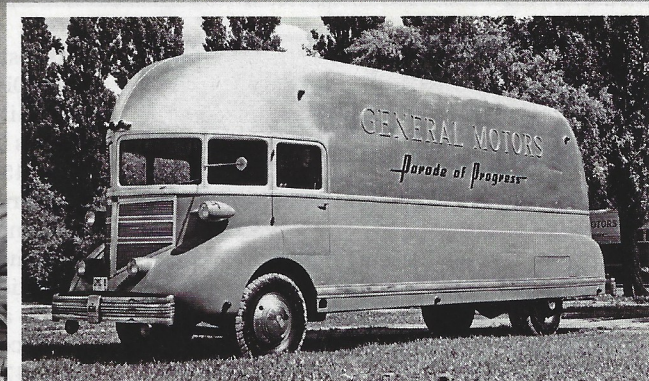
After the U.S. entered the war in 1941, the government ordered civilian production suspended until the following June. November brought the start of production of a new 6x6 amphibious cargo/troop carrier known as the Duck, a truck that won an Army-Navy award for excellence in 1943. In September 1943, GM acquired YT&CMC, only to dissolve it the next



Deuce and a Halfs were rugged and reliable, and GMC produced more than 500,000 of them by the end of World War II.



Above, the 1940 Futurliner Concept bus. At right, the 1936 GM Parade of Progress Streamliner, and below, Deuce and a Halfs being built in 1944.





GMC also built buses. This is an example from 1950.



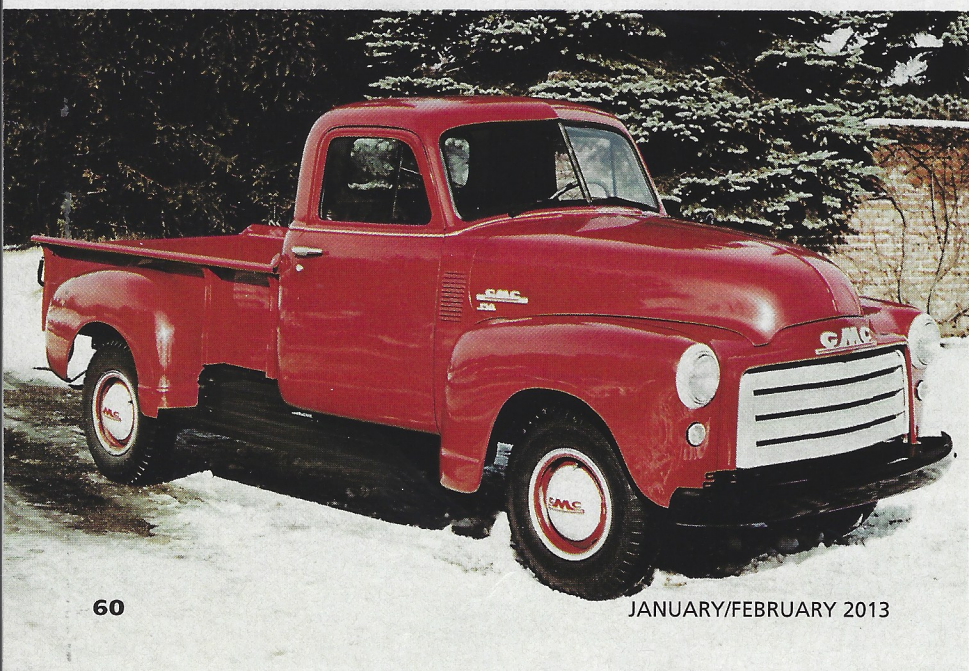
day to establish the GMC Truck and Coach Division. No civilian vehicles were built that year, so the 132,000 vehicles built were all military.

In 1945, GMC started work on a new engineering building and an engine plant, and soon after the war ended, government restrictions on civilian production were lifted. A new E-series of light- and medium-duty trucks was introduced for 1946.

In 1947, GMC launched its full postwar program of light-, medium-



GMC's Suburban Carryall was a truck-based vehicle made to appeal to families.



duty, and COE trucks with redesigned chassis and larger, more comfortable cabs. Production recovered to 92,677 in 1948, then a new peacetime record. New heavy-duty H-series trucks followed in 1949, swelling the lineup to a mind-boggling 75 models in 224 body and chassis variations powered by a range of nine GMC engines, including two diesels, with GVWRs from 4600 to 75,000 pounds.

The Korean War began in 1950, and GMC launched two new modestly priced, lightweight, heavy-duty 4x2 tractors with medium-duty cabs and 133-hp diesel engines, which soon became the best-sellers in their class. A new family of 2½-ton military trucks, powered by a 145-hp 302-cid



I-6 gas engine through a Hydra-Matic four-speed automatic transmission, followed in 1951. The Korean War ended in 1953, and GMC's light- and medium-duty trucks were nicely restyled for 1954 with new one-piece windshields and improved instru-

ment panels. A 125-hp 248-cid I-6 was standard and four-speed automatic transmissions and power steering became widely available.

The real game-changers came in 1955, as GM got serious about making its light trucks more appealing to

passenger-car buyers. Styling—by a talented young designer named Chuck Jordan, who would rise to become GM Design vice president—was all-new and more carlike, with hooded headlamps, wraparound windshields, improved interiors, and passenger-car tubeless tires; and V-8 engines became optionally available for the first time.

These revolutionary light- and medium-duty trucks were marketed as Blue Chip models, and limited-production upscale versions with smooth, fiberglass beds were dubbed Town and Country—a name Chrysler immediately claimed as its own and forced GMC to change, to Suburban. Production reached nearly 105,000 that year, a new peacetime record. **TT**



GMC L'Universelle show truck.