



1959 COMET IMPERIAL AMBULANCE

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THE PROFESSIONAL CAR

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ON OUR COVER - Like other second-tier professional car builders, The Comet Coach Company of Blytheville, Arkansas would custom-build a funeral coach, ambulance or combination on virtually *any* chassis specified by the purchaser. Most of Comet's funeral coaches, ambulances and combinations, however, were built on Oldsmobile chassis. This alliance with the Oldsmobile Division of General Motors continued long after Comet sold its name to the Ford Motor Company. From 1960 on, the company was known as the Cotner-Bevington Corp., after the company's two owners. Cotner Bevington was later acquired by Wayne Corporation which also owned Miller-Meteor. The last Cotner-Bevington Oldsmobiles were built in 1975.

Professional cars built on Chrysler Corporation's luxury Imperial chassis are extremely rare, so we were delighted to find this photo, and the others used to illustrate this story, in the Chrysler Corporation Historical Collection files. This one-off ambulance was built for a St. Louis, Missouri ambulance operator which christened the pride of its fleet "*The Blue Guardian*". We can't help but wonder whatever happened to this car.

INSIDE BACK COVER - National and Memphian also built a few hearses and ambulances on Chrysler's Imperial chassis. This National Coach ad from the April, 1958 issue of *Fire Engineering* Magazine features four National ambulance conversions. The one at the upper left is a National Minute Man hightop on a 1957 Imperial chassis built for the Carey Fire Co. No. 1.

BACK COVER PHOTO - As this photo attests, there are *still* some great finds out there! An avid professional car photographer, Oklahoma member Steven Loftin recently found this **1938 Superior Buick Limousine Combination** owned by the Brackway Funeral Home in Crestview, Florida. This hearse/ambulance was originally used in Wisconsin. Ditch the incorrect wheel covers, wide whitewalls and the "fender-feelers" welded to the outboard ends of the painted front bumper and it wouldn't take much to restore this car to its stately original appearance.