



1940 SUPERIOR PONTIAC AMBULANCE

NATIONAL COACHES OF KNIGHTSTOWN

THE PROFESSIONAL CAR

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IN THIS ISSUE : NATIONAL COACHES OF KNIGHTSTOWN, INDIANA
OWNER'S PRIDE: 1961 MILLER-METEOR LANDAU
OUT OF THE ORDINARY: MERCEDES-BENZ HEARSEs

ON OUR COVER: Contrary to our customary practice, the photo on the cover of this issue is unrelated to anything you will find inside. We just thought it was a neat picture. The vehicle is a factory-fresh 1940 Superior-Pontiac Ambulance. The photo appears to have been taken on the New York docks prior to America's entry into the escalating Second World War. The ambulance, built by the Superior Coach Corp. of Lima OH, was being shipped to the Government of Finland. The plaque on the front door would indicate that the ambulance was being donated as a gift, possibly from the American Legion. We think it catches the patriotic fervor of those perilous times. Wonder what ever became of this vehicle? Was it destroyed during the war, did it soldier on after the end of hostilities or did it end up in a "breaker's yard". Who knows, it may even be in a Finnish museum half a century after this historic photo was taken.

INSIDE BACK COVER: The principal feature in this issue is a capsule history of the National Body Manufacturing Company of Knightstown, Indiana. National built a comprehensive line of funeral cars and ambulances from about 1948 through the 1960 s, when it left the funeral car field to concentrate on ambulances. This ad from the April, 1958 issue of Fire Engineering Magazine illustrates the diversity of the company's ambulance line, which ranges from bare-bones Chevrolets on up to hightop Chrysler Imperials. Complementing the National story in this issue is a gallery of photos of National-built ambulances on various chassis.

BACK COVER PHOTO: Ooops! Exactly where this photo was taken isn't known, but it was found in Superior Coach Corporation's files. This "accident-after-an-accident" involved a 1965 Superior Cadillac Hightop Ambulance, which apparently overturned while on an emergency run -- an occupational hazard in this business. The fiberglass roof seems to have taken the load fairly well.