

'Ol' Blue' Then & Now

Ol' Blue has appeared in more than 150 publications throughout the world since 1969.

This photo of *Ol' Blue* appeared on the cover of *Overdrive Magazine* back in March of 1971. There has been little change in her appearance since.

Ol' Blue, a 1951 Kenworth, was acquired by her owner, RJ Taylor, in 1964. Someone owed RJ money, and, instead of cash, gave RJ a rusty old heap of junk. RJ fixed up the old tractor enough to make it road legal and started working her. At the same time, RJ tried selling the tractor but had no luck because it was too old and ugly.

After three years, RJ, now resigned to being stuck with the tractor, hired an eccentric custom sign painter, Fred Lamont, to paint the truck blue. When Fred finished his masterful spray-painting job, he scrolled the words "*Ol' Blue*" on the tractor's big aluminum front bumper. RJ didn't like the name, but Fred convinced RJ that it would grow on him. It did. The name *Ol' Blue* has been a registered trademark since 1977. The name has been cut through the bumper and is backlit using a blue screen.

In 1964, *Ol' Blue* had a Cummins 220 engine, twin sticks (five-speed main box and three-speed brownie), and old, twin screw rear ends. Today, she has an unloaded weight of 14,600 pounds with new frame rails and a 276-inch wheelbase, a still-like-new, 10-year-old DuPont IMRON paint job, Alcoa

Poster was put together with the help of *Ol' Blue*, USA Sponsors; Pam Hagen; David Kolman, President of TWNA; rpm Magazine; and Truckers USA. Photo by Overdrive. COMPLIMENTARY-NOT FOR SALE.

'Ol' Blue' is a Registered Trademark. Copyright © 1996 by *Ol' Blue*, USA.

Wheels, Michelin 11 x 24.5 tires, Gabriel shocks, Webb hubs and drums, Anchorlok spring brakes, Cummins 440 BC III engine, Valeo clutch, 18-speed transmission and is supported by a Neway air-ride suspension with a spring lift tag axle. *Ol' Blue* has been with Wiltshire Insurance Co. for 14 years and has used Shell Lubricants for more than 20 years.

Ol' Blue hauls structural steel, long and wide loads, heavy equipment and machinery. She has grossed up to 52 tons and has hauled everything from 165-foot-long steel girders to the Apollo XIV Space Craft in 1973. *Ol' Blue* was the first commercial carrier allowed to haul the Apollo Space Craft.

Three months of the year, *Ol' Blue* leaves her California base and travels cross-country, accompanying RJ and team members on a *National Safety Tour* for *Ol' Blue*, USA.

How 'Ol' Blue, NSA Started

Ol' Blue first appeared at the Mid-America Trucking Show and the International Trucking Show as a special attraction in 1986. Drivers were so impressed with this beautifully restored and maintained working rig that they started asking questions about safety and equipment maintenance. RJ, never at a loss for words, was happy to respond and encourage other drivers to drive safely and maintain their equipment.

Thus started *Ol' Blue*, USA (United Safety Alliance, Inc.) and a campaign to make our highways safer through education, to instill pride in

our nation's truck drivers and to encourage a better rapport between drivers and law enforcement. *Ol' Blue* and RJ had already been appearing at local elementary and junior high schools for approximately 15 years teaching kids how to be safe around large vehicles. This program, Big Wheels Little Kids, was incorporated into the *Ol' Blue*, USA agenda.

Over the years, *Ol' Blue*, USA has grown from a handful of team members and sponsors to a Non-Profit 501 (c) (3) Organization made up of truckers, retired law enforcement personnel and the many sponsors whose logos appear on this poster. *Ol' Blue*, USA has the endorsement of Federal and numerous state law enforcement agencies.

In 1995, *Ol' Blue*, USA conducted its first cross-country National Safety Tour with much success. That tour was the first of its kind in this country. This year will mark *Ol' Blue*, USA's 10th anniversary, and its sponsors have won national recognition in the form of proclamations from various state officials.

Safety Tips

Always drive with your headlights on. It's safer for you and others.

Check the oil in your axle hubs before you move your rig. After driving, stop every 150 to 200 miles and put your hand on the hubs to see how hot they are. Don't cover them with hub caps. By doing so, you cannot feel how hot they are getting.