M274 Mule Boot Replacement
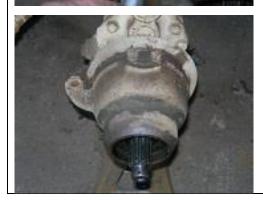
By Chuck Watford

PART TWO Removing the knuckles.

Remove the cotter pin from the nut and then remove the nut.

Use a pickle fork to remove the tie rod from the housing. This is where the right tools will pay off. If you damage the tie rod end, they are very expensive!

Use a screwdriver to remove the screw and nut from the retaining band on the outer end of the dust boot.

Remove the band completely. Don't forget to put the nut back on the screw for safekeeping!

Use a screwdriver to pry the outer end of the rubber boot out of the slot in the knuckle housing. Make sure you have a catch pan, there should be oil here.

Now remove the nuts holding the top and bottom kingpins in the knuckle housing. There should be sheet metal locks under the nuts, but they were missing on this mule.

As you remove the kingpins, the knuckle will probably fall off, watch it and keep everything together. Make sure you know which kingpin is top and bottom, and keep the shims with each kingpin.

Keep the top and bottom roller bearing with the correct top and bottom kingpin.

Where did that bottom bearing go? There it is, in the catch pan!

Now you can slip the axle out. Don't loose the spacer on the inner axle, and be careful, sometimes worn axle joints will come apart when you pull them out.

When you roll back the rubber dust boot, you will see the retaining wire that holds the boot into the groove in the axle housing, cut the wire and remove it completely.

Use a screwdriver to pry the rubber boot out of the groove in the axle housing and simply pull the old dust boot over the axle housing.

Clean, clean, clean; get everything clean and inspect all the bearings and cups. These axles were not too bad, but sometimes you find them full of grease instead of gear oil and they are a mess to clean up. By the way, if you are doing more than one wheel at a time, make sure to keep everything labelled so that the right parts go back on the correct axle. If you get the knuckle housings on the wrong side, you'll have a problem!