

#22 The Red Ball Express



A Red Ball Express truck has a face off with a pig and her brood.

The Red Ball Express was a famed truck convoy system that supplied Allied forces moving quickly through Europe after breaking out from the D-Day beaches in Normandy in 1944. To expedite



cargo shipment to the front, trucks emblazoned with red balls followed a similarly marked route that was closed to civilian traffic. The trucks also had priority on regular roads.

Conceived in an urgent 36-hour meeting, the convoy system began operating on August 25, 1944. Staffed primarily with African-American soldiers, the Express at its peak operated 5,958 vehicles that carried about 12,500 tons of supplies a day. It ran for 83 days until November 16, when the port facilities at Antwerp, Belgium, were opened, enough French rail lines were repaired, and portable gasoline pipelines were deployed.