

News Gathered From Around the Museum

NEW EQUIPMENT

Two United States Air Force guard cars have been acquired from government surplus. The two cars were purchased on a sealed bid sale from Hill AFB, Utah by Norman Holmes and donated to the museum. One car is a former WWII Army kitchen car that was converted to a guard car and used to accompany military shipments. Its last use, as far as can be determined, was August 1983 for "Mission Capable."

The second car is a former WWII Army Hospital car. It is an 80 foot car built by American Car and Foundry in 1945. It has 6-wheel roller bearing trucks, and tight-lock couplers. It was built for the U.S. Army Medical Department and was used to transport wounded servicemen from Hospital Ships at seaports to medical centers inland. The vestibule end of the car had two small roomettes for officers - presumably a doctor and a nurse. There was a connecting lavatory, storage space, and a shower across the center aisle. The main body of the car had space for 36 patients and enlisted attendants in three-level racks with lavatories nearby. After the patient section came a receiving room with a small desk, sterilizer and two side doors for loading litter cases. The far end of the car contained a kitchen also. This car was originally painted Olive Drab with the undercarriage painted black. It also had red crosses in white squares on both sides, each end, and on the roof. It had six large and three small sealed windows on each side; it had a 220-volt electrical system, air conditioning and a linoleum floor.

After the War was over, this and the other hospital cars had a varied, and hectic life, which continues even today. The Monon Railroad converted 12 of them into coaches, the Alaska Railroad took some, Ringling Brothers and Barnum and Bailey Circus took some for their circus trains. Some remained in Army service through the Korean War. In 1962 they were conveyed to the U.S. Air Force's Strategic Air Command (SAC) for use as crew

quarter cars on the Minuteman Missile trains.

Ours was involved in a derailment and will require extensive repair before being suitable for any use. Maybe a movie company will want to blow up a passenger car for a price!? Seriously, Ken Roller has taken on the job of repairing the car, so it will be suitable for passenger train service at a later date.

Also from government surplus, we have acquired a 1978 International dump truck from McClellan AFB near Sacramento. This also was a former Air Force truck and is in fairly good condition. Some parts from the engine have been removed, but the 345 gas engine is common and parts have been obtained. Norm Holmes checked over the truck, and arranged for it to be towed to Portola. Bruce Cooper has been replacing the missing engine parts and expects to have it running before you read this column. We have been looking for a tractor loader that we can call our own so we can have something to use to load the truck.

LOST EQUIPMENT

Our small red sand blaster unit has disappeared. If some member has borrowed it, please let us know. If it is not located, we will have to consider it stolen. We also are missing a number of small tools. Please remember to put tools back in their proper place when you've finished using them.

SPECIAL TRAINS

Two Union Pacific special trains recently passed through Portola. On June 30, 1990, A ten-car special "Mike Walsh Silver Anniversary Special" contained a newly-named sleeper -- "PORTOLA." We are honored. Mr. Walsh, U.P.R.R. chairman, brought a number of his passengers over to the museum for a caboose train ride and tour through the facilities.

On July 26, 1990, Union Pacific Corporation's Chairman, Drew Lewis, had a 9-car train come through Portola with Centennial 6936 for power. This is the first time a Centennial has operated through Portola since they were retired. Unfortunately, the train ar-

rived at 10:45PM and all the passengers were in bed.

HIGHWAY SIGNS

After over a year of waiting for permits, etc., we finally were granted a permit to place two highway signs one mile east and west of Portola. Bruce Cooper gained a lot of knowledge on how to deal with government bureaucracy, but finally on August 15, 1990, the 3-foot by 4-foot green scotch lite signs were erected.

NO. 501

WP's first diesel, SW-1 No. 501 returned to service at the museum on July 7, 1990 due to the efforts of Hank Stiles, Mardi Vincent, Bob Lindley and others. Unfortunately, during last winter's freeze, the cooling system did not get thoroughly drained and the air compressor heads still contained water. As you know when water freezes it expands which resulted in two broken heads. New heads were purchased from Southern Pacific's Sacramento Shops, installed and after a fuel filter problem was solved, 501's six cylinders roared to life. The large WP heralds were placed on the cab which gives it the original WP look. We expect to have the lettering finished before railfan day. After one day of operation on July 7, the governor started giving trouble and was worked over by Hank and Mardi, now it will not load -- so back to the books.

WP PICNIC

In an effort to bring back the old Western Pacific picnic, which was an annual event held at all WP terminal areas in years past, the Union Pacific United Employees Club held a picnic in the FRRS picnic area. Hot dogs, hamburgers and salads were available at a reasonable price along with an assortment of soft drinks. A horseshoe pit was available and children's games were staged. Although the turnout was less than hoped for, everyone who attended had a good time. Free train rides were offered from a "flag stop" at the picnic area near Milward switch. Gordon Wolleson's Boy Scout Troop had completed 5 redwood tables which added to the atmosphere there.