

United States Army 1857

Diesel Electric Switching Locomotive

This locomotive was built by the firm of Fairbanks, Morse and Company in Beloit, Wisconsin. F-M was a relative late-comer to the diesel locomotive industry, but tried to break in with an unusual and innovation prime mover design using opposed piston engines. While ultimately unsuccessful in locomotive applications, F-M's prime movers remain in production today and are used for naval vessels and power generators.

The earliest part of the company was founded in 1823 and it became known for building weight scales. By the late 19th century it was a large general manufacturing firm building windmills, pumps, farm equipment and small motors. In 1938, the company introduced its opposed piston prime movers and large numbers were used in World War II naval ships. This success led F-M to build its first locomotives in 1939.

This locomotive is an example of F-M's most popular model, the H12-44 switcher, and was part of a group of 20 built for the United States Army. This engine was used at the Sierra Army Depot in Herlong, California where it switched cars to and from the Western Pacific and Southern Pacific interchanges. It operated into the late 1980s before being acquired for preservation and use in our Run-A-Locomotive program.

Between May 1950 and March 1961, 336 of this model were built. WP neighbors Southern Pacific and Denver & Rio Grande Western both rostered them. However, F-M could not compete with the larger builders. It sold its last domestic locomotive in 1958 and its last locomotive ever left the factory in 1963. Today, only a handful of running F-M locomotives remain, predominantly in museums.

builder

Fairbanks, Morse & Co.

built

January, 1953

type

H12-44

horsepower

1200

serial number

12L681

original cost

\$224,700.00

top speed

60 MPH

operating weight

246,000 lbs

acquisition

purchased by FRRS