



April 1997

ONE DOZEN YEARS

(from the March 1997 issue of the Lancaster Dispatcher, Lancaster Chapter, Inc., NRHS)

Introduction

February 20, 1997, marked the twelve year anniversary of the date that Lancaster Chapter took delivery of Reading FP7902. The following article is intended to serve as a historical review of not only the most recent dozen years of this unit and her sister's existence, but also as a comprehensive overview for those not acquainted with these historic units.

Historical Overview

Among the thousands of "covered wagons" built by EMD (the ElectroMotive Division of General Motors) between 1939 and 1957, only 301 were FP7's. (FP7 designation meaning Freight/Passenger 1,500 Hp.) Contemporaries to the F7's, these particular units were produced between 1949 and 1953. Like the F7's they were powered by 567B, 16 cylinder diesel engines. However, the FP7's were four feet longer than the F7's. This additional length was used to accommodate an 820 gallon water tank which was used for additional steam heating capacity.

The original order, as placed by the Reading Railroad, listed four FP7A units, Class DP-1 (Diesel Passenger, first locomotive type) numbers 900-903 and two FP7B units 900B and 901B. Specifications for these booster units called for a still larger water carrying capacity. However, during the third week in March of 1950, the order was changed to six FP7A's at a cost of

\$172,990 each.

During May and June of 1950, the Reading Company took delivery of six FP7's, numbers 900-905; with sister units 902 and 903 being placed into service on the same day - June 2, 1950. The total number of these units was brought to eight when Numbers 906 and 907 were delivered in September 1952.

In an interesting Mechanical Department sidelight, the additional length of these locomotives caused consternation to Motive Power Superintendent Hill. The Reading had recently enlarged the turntable at Green Street to 90' to enable the turning of two-unit diesels, but it quickly became apparent that it was four feet short of what was required to turn two FP7's.

Geared for a top speed of 89 miles per hour, these locomotives were purchased to replace steam on Reading's name passenger trains the "Crusader" and the "Wall Street"; and later the "Schuylkill", and the "King Coal" in service between Philadelphia and Jersey City or Philadelphia to Reading, Pottsville and Shamokin.

May 28, 1967, saw [the] last run of the FP7's between Philadelphia and Jersey City. With the decline in passenger revenues, the Reading was replacing diesel powered passenger trains with RDC's (Rail Diesel Cars).

One-by-one, all but three (Numbers 900, 902 and 903) were traded in on newer, higher horsepower, second generation freight diesels which were needed for the Reading to remain competitive in an ever-tightening freight market.

•Numbers 904 and 905 were traded to Alco in 1965-66 for two C430's.

•Number 906 was traded to EMD in 1967 for a SD45.

•Numbers 901 and 907 were traded to EMD in 1970 for two unknown units.

The three remaining units spent their later years on a daily push-pull run between Reading and Philadelphia (trains 4 & 7) which was operated by the Reading and later SEPTA. With the formation of Conrail in 1976, the 900, 902, and 903 were renumbered 4371, 4372, and 4373 to be included into the new numbering system. (SEPTA owned the units, but Conrail maintained them.) Eventually all three units were painted into SEPTA's red, white, and blue color scheme referred to unaffectionately by some as the "Circus Train".

Due to both SEPTA's cost cutting move to end rail commuter service beyond its electrified territory and the opening of the Center City Commuter Connection, into which only electrified trains would be allowed, the push-pull service ended on July 26, 1981, with the locomotives being retired shortly thereafter.

In addition to regular service, these units were also used on many special excursions. Including a July 1959, circle rip from Philadelphia to Pottsville, Lykens, and return rough Lebanon. In 1963, two of the units were used on a Catawissa Iron Horse Ramble, rather than the usual T1 due

(see FP7's on page 4)

The TRAINMASTER

is the official newsletter of the Pacific Northwest Chapter of the National Railway Historical Society, published monthly for the benefit of its members. Articles which appear in *The Trainmaster* do not express the official National Railway Historical Society position on any subject unless specifically noted as such. Material from *The Trainmaster* may be reprinted in other publications provided credit is given as to the source. Please address contributions, correspondence, and exchange copies of newsletters to:

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For more information, contact the Membership Chairperson at the above address.

DEADLINES

The deadline for each issue of *The Trainmaster* is the 20th of the previous month. Submissions may be made on floppy disk, in Wordperfect, MS Word, or ASCII formats. *The Editor reserves the right to edit or hold material at his/her discretion.*

CHAPTER TIME TABLE No. 415

REGULAR RUNS

BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING Thursday, April 10 & Thursday, May 8, 7:00 P.M., at Room 208, Union Station. Enter through the main entrance, turn right two times, past the magazine stand, first door on left at hallway to Wilfs.

MONTHLY MEMBERSHIP MEETING Friday, April 18 & Friday, May 16, 7:30 P.M., at St. David's Episcopal Church, 2800 S.E. Harrison. The business meeting will start promptly at 7:30, with the newsreel and program following a short break. Refreshments will be available; please bring some money to feed the "kitty," so it can continue to feed us!

WEEKLY NO-HOST LUNCHEON every Saturday, 12:00 Noon, at the Semaphore Restaurant at S.E. 17th & S.E. Holgate Blvd. Our group is in the back. Come on down!

ROLLING STOCK WORK SESSIONS are planned to prepare cars for transport to storage. Contact Richard Gray (657-8250), or Peter Rodabaugh (771-8545) for an update.

LIBRARY/ARCHIVES WORK SESSION: Thursday, April 10 & Thursday, May 8, 1:00 P.M. to 4:00 P.M. at Room 1 & 1A, Union Station. Help is needed to get things organized and catalogued. Contact Bob Weaver (654-4274) for more information.

CHAPTER LIBRARY OPEN HOURS Saturday, April 19 & 26, & Saturday, May 17 & 24, 1:00 to 4:00 P.M. at Room 1, Union Station. Call Jim Loomis (253-3926) for appointments, if this is a difficult day and/or time for you.

EXTRA BOARD

NRHS SPRING 1997 BOARD MEETING: April 4, 5 & 6, 1997, in Portland, OR. Contact Gerald Schuler, Chapter National Director at (503) 285-7941 for schedule of events.

NRHS 1997 NATIONAL CONVENTION; hosted by the Promontory Chapter, June 24 through June 28, 1997 in Salt Lake City, UT. Contact Gerald Schuler, National Director at (503) 285-7941 for further information.

PNWC ANNUAL CHAPTER PICNIC: Saturday, August 16, 1997 at Antique Powerland, Brooks, OR. Contact Darel Mack, Activities chair, at (503) 654-5017 for more information.

APRIL 18 MEETING PROGRAM

Program begins after business meeting

Los Angeles Transit Lines

To be presented by:

Bob Terkelsen

MAY 16 MEETING PROGRAM

Camas Prairie

To be presented by:

Rocky Regula

NOTICE: Programs are needed for future meetings. Anyone who is willing to present a program (slides, film, etc.) at a Chapter meeting, please contact the Vice-President.

NOIBN - *

by Walt Grande, Chapter Historian

Rumors persist that the Portland & Western Railroad, and its affiliated companies, are trying to acquire the BNSF Astoria Line. If they did so, they would have to rebuild one or two wooden trestles on the old United Railway line to connect with the Astoria Line at United Junction.

Steve Lee and the steam crew of the Union Pacific Railroad were reported clearing BN lines in North Dakota behind a leased UP rotary snow plow in the subzero temperatures that prevailed earlier this year.

Some years ago a trailer load of coins was being shipped from the mint in Denver via CB&Q to an eastern destination. The door of the trailer came open and coins were scattered along the right-of-way for hundreds of miles. No record of how many were recovered.

A report indicates that the Mt. Hood Railroad has acquired the Dinner Train that operated from Roy, Oregon, on portions of the Tillamook branch. The Mt. Hood Railway plans to operate four cars, with special service on Fridays, regular dinner train service on Saturday and a brunch on Sunday. Regular service will remain the same.

Jack Pfeifer has written an account of his many year's service as a freight claim agent for the Union Pacific Railroad, that appears in the latest issue of the Colorado Rail Museum's Colorado Rail Annual Number 22. Jack was a former member of the chapter.

Working on the railroad: While working in the Union Pacific's dispatchers office in Albina as a relief clerk on the night shift it was always interesting to hear the UP switcher going up Interstate Avenue to service the industrial area near Tillamook St. At that time there were a number of industries in that area and the train could only operate during certain hours at night because Interstate Avenue was Highway 99W, one of the busiest streets in Portland before I-5 freeway was completed. Sometimes they couldn't make it up the hill and had to try it again. Most of those industries are no longer in the area, and the tracks in the street have been paved over.

While working as chief clerk for the CB&Q RR in Portland, an elderly gentleman came in to the office to talk. He was a retired CB&Q dispatcher from Lincoln, Nebraska, who was visiting his daughter in Portland and missed his railroad friends. He told a story of when he was dispatching at Lincoln, he got a call from the train commander of a troop train transporting hospital patients who was very upset about being put in a siding, because they had priority over just above every train on the railroad, except one. Do you know what it is? The highest priority on the railroad is a train carrying the President of the United States, and he was traveling over that line on that date. (This was confirmed by a former SP&S dispatcher).

****Not otherwise indicated by name. A term used in railroad tariffs to indicate that if a commodity is not specifically named it is covered by this item in the tariffs.***

-editor's note: minutes were not received at press time, but will be included in the next issue, if available

FP7's

(continued from page 1)

to a high forest fire risk caused by an unusually dry summer. In addition, Philadelphia Chapter sponsored numerous excursions with these locomotives including a May 21, 1972, trip to Shamokin and a "Farewell to the Reading" salute in late March 1976, just prior to the formation of Conrail.

The In-Between Years

After their retirement, Numbers 900 and 902 were stored at SEPTA's Wayne Junction Electric Car Shop, while the 903 was stored at Reading where it had been taken after its diesel engine had thrown a rod through the crankcase wall.

Locomotive 902 was purchased shortly thereafter by Railway Management Associates who planned to operate passenger service and was stored in a warehouse on Pier 19 along Delaware Avenue in Philadelphia.

Historical Preservation

One of the goals of the National Railway Historical Society is the preservation of rail history through the preservation railroad equipment. Philadelphia Chapter members rank Tatnall and Larry Eastwood wished to pursue that goal to the benefit of saving these remaining Reading PF7's from the fate of the scrapper's torch. To this end, an agreement was negotiated by Philadelphia Chapter, NRHS to secure 900 and 903 from SEPTA during the summer of 1983. They subsequently were moved to the Railroad Museum of Pennsylvania where plans were being laid out for their cosmetic and possible mechanical restoration.

As a beginning point for the restoration process, Interim Museum Director Bill Withuhn contacted rail consultant Charlie Pollock to conduct a mechanical and electrical inspection of the locomotives which was performed on October 15, 1983. The report of his findings listed major work on or replacement of the diesel engine in 903, due to its engine failure; and extensive rewiring required on 900 to replace what vandals had removed during its time at Wayne Junction. It was deemed necessary to give both locomotives a

temporary coat of black paint to cover up the now graffiti decorated red, white, and blue SEPTA colors, while all interested parties considered possible restoration alternatives.

During 1984, Nelson Bowers and Frank Tatnall negotiated the purchase of the remaining FP7 No. 902 from Railway Management Associates. During its December 17, 1984, Membership Meeting, Lancaster Chapter voted to purchase the unit, for \$42,000.

When 902 arrived at the Railroad Museum of Pennsylvania on February 20, 1985, she was in much better mechanical condition than her sisters, having been rebuilt in 1978, at the Illinois Central Gulf shop at Paducah, Ky. A preliminary mechanical inspection performed by Amtrak mechanic Jim Grace revealed a very rusty top deck of the diesel engine, and a slightly bent stabilizer bar on the rear truck, but otherwise the locomotive appeared fit to return to service. Stabilization work was begun immediately by the newly formed FP7 ad hoc Restoration Committee to prevent further deterioration to the diesel engine, which was test run for the first time on July 7, 1985.

Since Cab Units were designed to run in pairs (in other words, two units make one locomotive) either the 900 or 903 would also have to be restored to operating condition. But each needed a staggering amount of work to bring them up to that status. The turning point for the decision to be made was reached in February 1986 when Rick Gladulick, from MetroNorth's MofE department helped to negotiate a trade of RDC wheels and other miscellaneous parts, which Philadelphia Chapter owned, to Chrome Locomotive in Silvis, Ill., for a qualified diesel engine and main generator for unit 903.

On April 2, 1986, all three locomotives left the Railroad Museum of Pennsylvania. The 902 and 903 crossed the road to a siding on the Strasburg Rail Road, from which the 903 would depart on June 24, on its way to Chrome Locomotive for the replacement of its diesel engine. The 900 was stored on Strasburg's back-off pending long-term loan to the Reading Company Technical and Historical Society who planned

to cosmetically restore the unit. Meanwhile, 902 moved under her own power for the first time on the siding at Strasburg on October 4, 1987.

On June 7, 1988, the 900 and 903 found themselves passing in their home town of Reading. The 903 was on its way back to Strasburg from Chrome Locomotive and the 900 was on its way to the Reading Company Technical and Historical Society museum at Leesport, Pa. where it resides at the time of the writing of this article.

Restoration

In August 1989, units 902 and 903 were moved from Strasburg to Amherst Industries at Landisville, Pa. for cosmetic restoration. This effort began in earnest on Memorial Day weekend of 1990, when a joint committee of more than a dozen dripping wet Lancaster and Philadelphia Chapter volunteers worked in the pouring rain (It took the author's hat three days to dry!) to begin removing the old ply-metal side panels.

After an entire Summer of removing old panels plus many layers of crud and corruption, the units entered the Amherst Industries Shop in September for sandblasting, metal work, and the application of rear ladders. They emerged in October painted in pink primer.

After a delay caused by engineering difficulties, the first of the new all metal side panels were installed in late November 1990. For the next one and one-half years the committee worked at installing the replacement panels. The last of the side panels were installed on a warm spring day in May 1991, with the locomotives immensely resembling a diesel version of Lionel's famed, pink "girls train."

Over the next year more metal work was renewed around the door frames, the cab floors and sub-floor structure were replaced, and Amherst employees donated the time needed to fabricate completely new rear doors to replace the rapidly disintegrating original ones.

(see FP7's on page 5)

FP7's

(continued from page 4)

Finally, on November 11, 1992, locomotives 902 and 903 entered the paint shop where they remained during a ten day marathon work session. During this time Philadelphia Chapter member Mike Burshtin oversaw a crew of Lancaster and Philadelphia Chapter volunteers who applied the stencils for the Reading Lines logos, as well as all of the other lettering and striping. Amherst Industry personnel applied the Intron paint. On a rainy Sunday, November 22, the stenciling was removed to reveal two Reading locomotives resplendent in their renewed livery.

The restoration of the locomotives to operation was severely delayed by mechanical vandalism. In the Spring of 1991, a few of the volunteers noticed fresh oil on the engine room floors. Subsequent investigation by the committee, police, and insurance company consultants revealed that someone had entered the locomotives while they were unsecured during the side panel and door frame replacement, reconnected wires and replaced fuses which had been disconnected to prevent anyone from starting them, and had run the diesel engines without properly pre-lubricating them. So, in May 1993, the locomotives left Pocopson, Pa., only one month after having been moved there, for the Morrison Knudsen shop at Mountain Top, Pa. to have their bearings replaced.

Everyone involved with the restoration breathed a sigh of relief in October 1993, when the diesel engines passed their operational tests following the replacement of all main and connecting rod basket bearings. While the locomotives were at the Mountain Top facility, Lancaster Chapter made the decision to replace the damaged rear truck on unit 902.

The locomotives finally returned to Pocopson in the Summer of 1994, and preparation for their operation during Lancaster Chapter's 1995 NRHS Convention began.

Rededication and operation

The flurry of activity which escalated into an effort unprecedented, except for that of the ten day painting marathon, culminated on May 20, 1995, when the Reading FP7 locomotives 902 and 903 were rededicated and christened by Ann Hoffman, widow of Richard B. Hoffman the last General Manager of the Reading Railroad; during Rail America's National Transportation Week celebration on the Delaware Valley Railway. After the ceremonies attendees were treated to a ride behind the locomotives as Brandywine Scenic Railway donated the use of their coaches.

Thursday, June 29, 1995, saw the locomotives return to their home rails as they operated on a special Reading Blue Mountain & Northern train for the 1995 NRHS Convention over the former Reading Railroad line to Mount Carmel.

In the two years since the convention the locomotives have operated numerous trips over the Delaware Valley Railway and Brandywine Valley Railway in cooperation with the Brandywine Scenic Railway. Last May they operated for the first time over Amtrak's Northeast Corridor between West Yard and Wilmington Station where they were on display along with other equipment for Del DOT's National Transportation Week festivities.

As the 1997 operational season approaches, we look forward to once again participating in the National Transportation Week display at Wilmington on Saturday, May 17; a special excursion over the entire Delaware Valley Railway in Pennsylvania, including rare mileage to Cossart and West Grove on Memorial Day Monday; and other possible outings that will be announced as plans are finalized.

The third and final phase of the restoration process is scheduled to begin later this Spring as the joint Lancaster and Philadelphia committee once again rolls up their sleeves to renew the low voltage wiring on both locomotives. This phase which will be conducted between operations of the locomotives, is expected to take a minimum of two years but will greatly enhance

the reliability of their electrical circuits. In addition, the committee is currently pursuing the acquisition and installation [of] safety apparatus necessary for main line operation on Class 1 railroads, including removable ditch lights which will be mandated by the FRA as of January 1, 1998, on all locomotives built after January 1, 1950.

If you feel as though you have aged while reading this article, just think how old the FP7's must feel. On June 2, 2000, just three short years from now, they will mark their 50th anniversary of entering service. Do you think we should have a birthday party for them?

CHAPTER MEMBERS GIVEN AWARDS

Our heartiest congratulations go to three Pacific Northwest Chapter members who were awarded 25 year length of Service Pins recently.

The Chapter's Annual Banquet at the Crossing Restaurant in Vancouver on March 15 was the occasion when members Cora Jackson and Noel Nelson were awarded the sterling silver NRHS pins. Presentation was made by Gerald Schuler, Chapter National Director. Both members originally joined this Chapter.

Lloyd Palmer, was also awarded the 25 year pin by mail. He originally had joined the PNWC, but is now living in Waldport and has dual membership with the Yaquina-Pacific chapter in Toledo.

Jack Holst Award Winner!

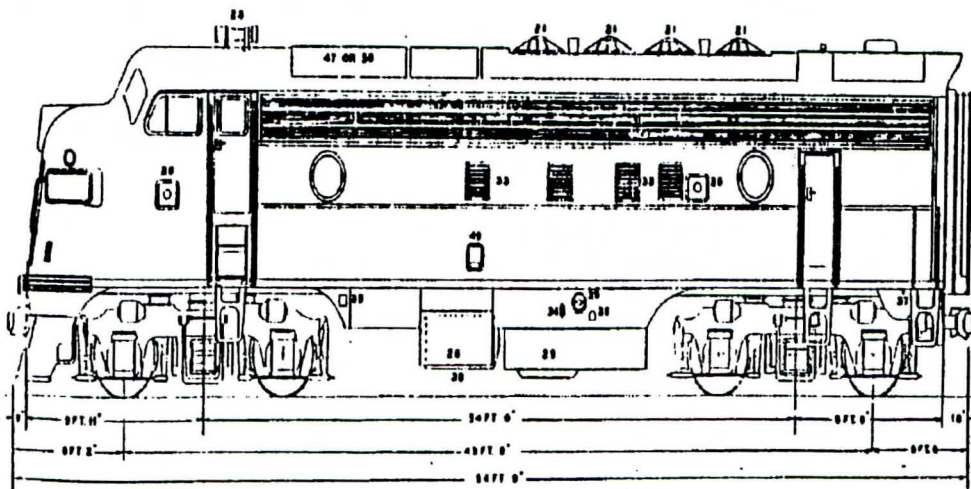
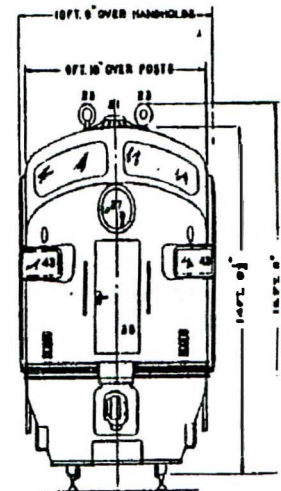
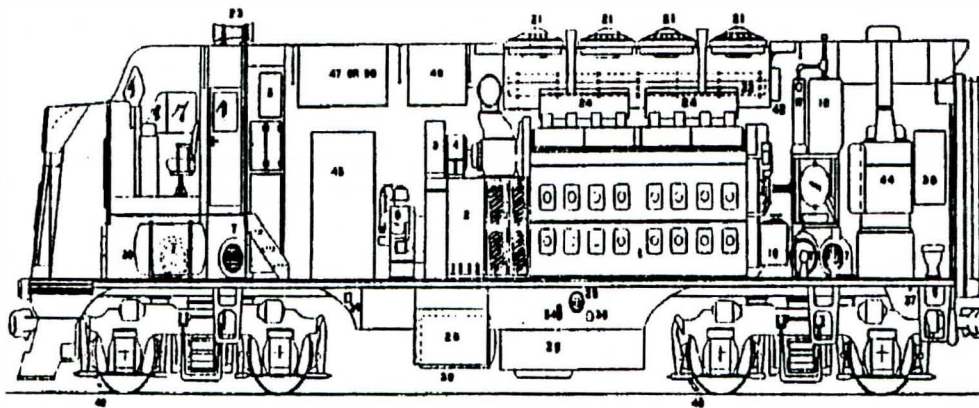
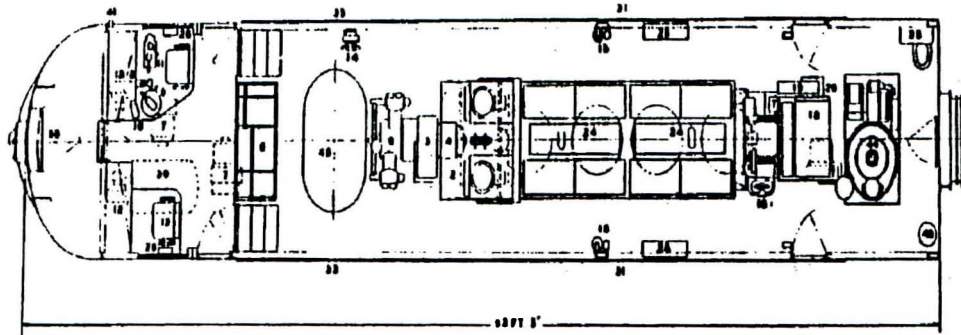
Another item from the annual banquet...

Frank Weiler was nominated and elected the winner of the 1996 Jack Holst Award for his diligent efforts in restoring Chapter rolling stock. Frank has been a member for many years.

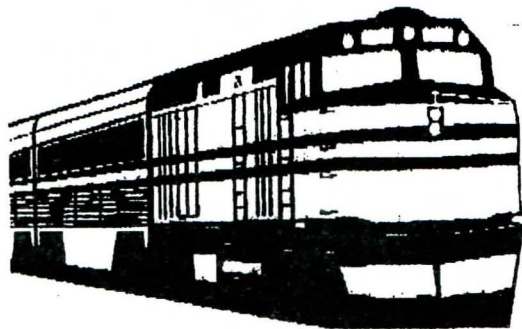
We congratulate Frank on his selection as winner for 1996!

FP7

- | | | |
|---------------------------------------|---|---|
| 1 ENGINE—END MODEL 16-5670 | 19 ENGINE CONTROL AND INSTRUMENT PANEL | 35 DOOR—PLAIN |
| 2 MAIN GENERATOR AND ALTERNATOR | 20 LOAD REGULATOR | 36 EMERGENCY FUEL CUTOFF |
| 3 GENERATOR BLOWER | 21 34" FAN AND MOTOR | 37 ENGINE WATER FILLER—BOTH SIDES |
| 4 AUXILIARY GENERATOR | 22 RADIATOR | 38 TOILET |
| 5 CONTROL CABINET | 23 HORN | 39 BATTERY CHARGING RECEPTACLE—LEFT SIDE ONLY |
| 6 AIR COMPRESSOR | 24 EXHAUST MANIFOLD | 40 BANDING NOZZLES |
| 7 TRACTION MOTOR BLOWER | 25 FUEL FILLER | 41 BLUE FLAG BRACKET |
| 8 INSTRUMENT BOARD | 26 SAND BOX | 42 A.C. CONTACTOR CABINET |
| 9 CONTROL STAND | 27 HEADLIGHT—FIXED BEAM | 43 NUMBER BOX |
| 10 SPEEDOMETER RECORDER | 28 BATTERIES | 44 BOILER |
| 11 AIR-BRAKE VALVE | 29 FUEL TANK—1200 GAL | 45 BOILER WATER TANK—820 GAL |
| 12 CAB HEATER | 30 MAIN AIR RESERVOIR | 46 BOILER WATER TANK—330 GAL |
| 13 SEAT | 31 AIR INTAKE AND SHUTTERS | 47 BOILER WATER TANK—600 GAL |
| 14 HAND BRAKE | 32 COUPLER BETWEEN UNITS | 48 BOILER WATER SOFTENER |
| 15 FUEL TANK VENT WITH FLAME ARRESTOR | 33 AIR INTAKE FOR GRIDS AND ENGINE BOOM | 49 BOILER WATER FILLER—BOTH SIDES |
| 16 LUBE OIL FILLER | 34 FUEL TANK GAUGE | * DYNAMIC BRAKE GRIDS AND BLOWERS MODIFICATIONS |



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May 18, 1997

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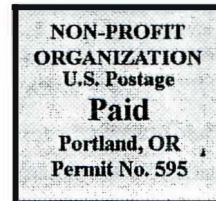
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