

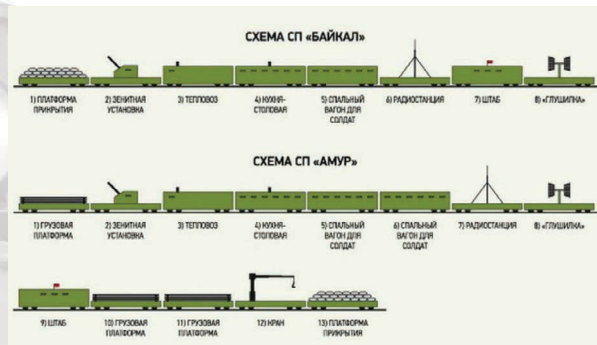
MILITARY RAIL

newsletter

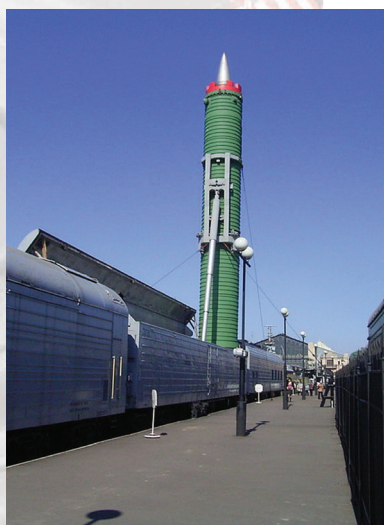
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★ RED STORM RISING ★

By Brett Goertmoeller
Contact: brettcog2000@yahoo.com



For 165 years Russian Railway Troops (RRTs) have helped protect Russia. Considered the most powerful military rail Army in the world rivaled only by China's military, it's estimated that the RRT has over 28,000 active duty rail Soldiers within its ranks comprised of Brakemen, Conductors, Locomotive Engineers, Bridge Engineers, Track maintainers, Signal maintainers, Car Mechanics, Locomotive Mechanics, Welders, Yard Masters, Train Masters, and Chief Train Dispatchers. Their capabilities range from steam locomotive shops and operations to state of the art fully armored trains. While the United States disbanded and scrapped the majority of its CONUS and all of its OCONUS organic operational rail equipment at the end of the Korean War, the Russians simply put most of their equipment in storage where it remained dormant for decades. But in August of 2015, the Russian military went public with the news that four fully armored military rail trains were returning to service by 2017.



Originally used during WWII, these trains were comprised of armored locomotives, gun cars with anti-aircraft guns, freight cars, dining cars, kitchens cars, sleeper cars, computer/radio station cars, and jammer cars. The four armored trains chosen to be brought back out of "retirement" are the Biakal, Terek, Amur, and Don. The Baikal and Amur armored trains were reportedly seen recently participating in major Russian military exercises in the annexed Ukrainian province of Crimea. Perhaps this display of rail force was to send a message to the world who may be considering challenging Russia's dominance to think twice. After all, what will take an opposing military force several days and/or weeks to move by truck, the Russians can do in a matter of hours by rail, a strategic option the Russians employed recently to quell unrest in places like Georgia and the annexed Ukrainian Province of Crimea. It's the same strategy they used to defeat the Germans during WWII. History it seems, is repeating itself in our present day.

RRT Soldiers can repair multiple severed rail lines from bombing runs in minutes, they have pre-built bridges that can forge streams and rivers over a destroyed crossing in a matter of hours and can transport thousands of troops hundreds of miles quickly outnumbering any opposing foe. State of the art floating rail bridges will float trains up, across, or down a river and rail ships can move these formidable titans across oceans as well. Russia even retains a fleet of operational steam locomotives in the event of a man made EMP (Electro-Magnetic Pulse) via a nuclear weapon or a natural EMP like the Carrington event of 1859 which by today's standards could damage or completely wipe out large portions of the electrical infrastructure in the United States. Steam locomotives are not affected by electromagnetic pulses and would remain operational in the events of an EMP attack. Perhaps that's why the Russian military today is training their Soldiers on how to operate both steam and diesel locomotives.

In December of 2014, Russian President Vladimir Putin announced the reintroduction of Ballistic Missile Trains (BMT's). Early tests were conducted in November of 2016 at the Plesetsk Cosmodrome in Northwestern Russia. Flight tests are likely to begin in 2017, with roll out of the 12 trains of six missiles each projected to be in 2019. The new name of the modified BMTs is the Barguzin system. BMT's will house the Russian RS-24 (YARS) Thermonuclear Intercontinental Ballistic Missile. Each missile reportedly carries four 250 Kiloton warheads with a range of 6,800 miles. The rail cars, including the locomotives are also possibly equipped to be able to move through any chemical, biological, or nuclear contaminated area safely as long as the rail lines are intact.



Thankfully this article isn't all doom and gloom. Russia also possesses medical trains that care for thousands of people in need of medical care each year. Similar to the grander hospital trains America once possessed, Russian medical trains contain waiting rooms, service rooms, and offices. Services include ultrasounds, x-rays, blood tests, and a pharmacy. Over two dozen Medical Technicians, Nurses, Physician Assistants, Urologists, Cardiologists, Eye Doctors, Endocrinologists, and other medical personnel staff these trains. The medical services are free, paid for by the Russian Railway company RZD who impressively own five such rolling mini-hospitals within its fleet caring for those who would otherwise be too poor to travel to or get the medical care needed. In a world of uncertainty one thing is certain, Russia understands the power of rail.

"Combat Railway Operations and the role that military rail has played in the history of our country have always been a passion of mine."

Brett Goertmoeller is the President of BMG Railroad Contractors LLC, a railroad repair and consultation company. As a graduate of the prestigious National Academy of Railroad Sciences, Brett's railroad accomplishments include serving as a brakeman, conductor, car mechanic, and locomotive mechanic certified to repair and operate both steam and diesel locomotives. He's also worked as a Trainmaster for the Ringling Bros. Barnum & Bailey Circus, and a Railroad Instructor. He has nearly 20 years of railroading experience across both North America and South America.

THE RIGHT LOCOMOTIVE FOR THE RIGHT JOB

By Andrew Koenig Jr.

You've probably heard of the B&O, Reading, Short Line, and Pennsylvania Railroads at least once in your life if you've played the board game Monopoly, but another railroad that's been around just as long is "Uncle Sam's Railroad". The U.S. military operates a very large and extensive rail network comprised of over 1,500 miles of track across nearly 50 locations in the United States. These military rail lines connect various U.S. bases with the commercial rail industry. Some military railroads in the U.S. work around the clock with multiple crews operating while other military railroads only come to life weekly or monthly as needed. Every military railroad is unique to its installation with respect to the types of freight, rail cars, and locomotives used to help move the millions of tons of equipment, vehicles, munitions and supplies across our great country annually.

America's military has owned and operated its own locomotives since the Civil War. Three of the most common forms of railroad motive power used in the military today are yard locomotives, road locomotives, and railcar movers. Yard locomotives are the ideal choice to use in railroad yards to move rail cars onto different tracks and build various trains because they can start and stop much faster than their big brothers, the road locomotives. Yard locomotives are also usually smaller in size providing a 360 degree view of the ground around them while the locomotive engineer is operating the engine in contrast to road locomotives which have a partially obscured view and are larger in size. Typically more powerful, road locomotives are capable of pulling longer and heavier trains too. They're a good choice to use for long distance movements and known for being more fuel efficient for long distance travel as well. Finally, a railcar mover is the smallest of the three and although not technically considered a locomotive it's the best suited to move a handful of rail cars a few hundred feet around servicing or industrial facilities.

America's military today continues to be focused on finding the most efficient way of operating stateside military railroads but how do you determine what type of locomotive you need? What factors are considered when trying to choose a locomotive for a particular job? Here's what the U.S. Military currently has in its fleet to help you make an informed decision if you're ever faced with having to choose the right locomotive for the right job.

80-Ton GE 0-4-4-0

Between 1951-54, GE (General Electric) built the 80-ton diesel electric switcher for stateside use. The 80-Ton features a cab in the center of the locomotive and a diesel engine on either side of the cab. The engine's quick start/stop capability and the ease of being able to see in all directions from an operator's perspective in rail yards quickly gained popularity among railroaders. GE is the largest producer of diesel electric locomotives in the United States today manufacturing the most powerful locomotives presently used in the U.S. commercial rail industry. When GE first started manufacturing locomotives back in the 1940's they produced small yard "Switch" engines and during World War II the Army purchased several of these diesel locomotives from GE to be used in Europe. GE manufactured the 25-ton diesel and the 45-ton diesel locomotives equipped with low-profile cabs for European tunnel clearances with European couplings and buffers.

The fleet of "80-tonners" are still in operation today after being upgraded by the Rail Equipment Center at Hill AFB from 1987 to 1992 to include replacing all locomotives with Cummins Diesel engines and 26L airbrake systems. When a train load is too heavy for one 80-ton, they are capable of operating in MU



(Multiple Unit) configuration. So for example, when you put two 80-Ton locomotives together, they can pull twice the amount of weight with only one operator. Many railroaders consider this locomotive the ideal engine for daily rail yard work. Many 80-Ton engines however are being retired and replaced with the new GENSET locomotives which has raised safety concerns we will explain later in this article.

(Note: The thirty DoD 80-Ton Locomotives number in the range of USAX 1636-1692. USAF 1650, 1663, 1668, 1644, 1671, & 1679.)

120-Ton EMD GP9 (Pictured below is a rebuilt GP9 – Now a GP16)

The GP9 Diesel Electric, was manufactured by GM's Electro-Motive Division from 1954-1968. It was possibly the most successful locomotive of its time, with 3,436 units being built for the commercial railroad market. Classified as a "Road-Switcher"



it contains a switch allowing it to be used either as a yard locomotive (With faster start/stop capability) or a road locomotive. Commercial railroads bought hundreds of these engines brand new. From 1978-1981 the commercial railroads started overhaul programs on these locomotive engines and once an engine had been rebuilt (some by several different railroad companies) they were re-classed as GP9R, GP10, or GP16 locomotives.

By May of 1980 a report of the DoD locomotive fleet determined that the aging fleet of vintage diesels needed to be replaced. Many of the locomotives in this report had been manufactured during WWII by companies like Alco, Baldwin, and Davenport; all of which have since gone out of business. In 1987, the DoD started purchasing the remanufactured GP9 locomotives from the commercial railroads. During the early 1990's the military purchased more of these models which were heavily relied upon to move materials and supplies between various DoD facilities and Military Ocean Terminals. These reliable work horses are the back bone of today's DoD locomotive fleet.

(Note: The fifty-five DoD 120-Ton Locomotives number in the range of: USAX 1400, 1868-1881, 4600-4630, 4633-4645, 4650, 4651)

140-Ton EMD GP40

When introduced to the market in 1965, the GP40 was the "Cadillac" of the railroad. Manufactured by General Motor's Electro Motive Division (EMD) the GP40 was produced from 1965-1971 and the GP40-2 was produced from 1972-1986 complete with a 3,000 horsepower and a turbo charged 16-645 diesel engine. Presently,



both the Army and Air Force use these engines on their installations frequently to haul large trainloads of coal, ammunition, or other commodities to both military bases and nearby commercial customers. This model of locomotive has proven very reliable in extremely cold temperatures and as the heaviest locomotive in the DoD fleet the locations which use a GP40 have seen upgrades to their railroad tracks and associated infrastructure. GP40's have been used to haul the heavy M1 Abram Tanks through the hilly Ozark Mountains, Bradley fighting vehicles over high altitudes of the Colorado Rockies, and long coal trains through the frozen Alaskan frontier. Time and time again the GP40 had proven it's a valuable asset to the DoD railroad fleet.

(The eleven DoD 140-Ton GP40 Locomotives number in the range of: USAX 4632, 4646, 4647, 4652-4655, 4670-4672, USAF 4902, 4903)

GG20B “Green Goat”

Often confused with the GENSET, the “Green Goat” was introduced in 2005 with some models painted green because the locomotive was touted as the environmentally



friendly locomotive using sets of battery packs connected together to power the locomotive versus the more traditional larger 16-cylinder diesel engine other locomotives use. The Green Goat's advantages included a large reduction of diesel fuel emissions and a much quieter and smaller hybrid diesel engine to recharge the batteries. The locomotive's engine was so quiet in fact that people promoted the engine saying you didn't even need to wear ear protection around it. The military made an initial purchase of five of these locomotives. Sadly however, it was soon discovered that the batteries encountered challenges in cold and hot weather with reports of the Green Goat ultimately becoming the Combustible Goat because the locomotive's batteries were frequently catching on fire. The DoD decided not to pursue purchasing any more of this model, instead turning its attention to another innovative locomotive, the GENSET.

(The five DoD 140-Ton GG20B Locomotives number in the range of: 6000 – 6004)

137-Ton NRE 3GS21B “GENSET”

The company National Rail Equipment (NRE) learned from the mistakes made by Green Goat's manufacturer Railpower and focused instead on making a low emission, fuel saving locomotive with generator set technology. The “GENSET” locomotive is comprised of a smaller diesel engine with three



motors and three generators within a single locomotive body. When first starting a GENSET, only one of the engines turn on but as the locomotive begins to move and starts to draw more amperage it triggers the other two engines to turn on and run when needed. Supporters of the GENSET proudly proclaim that this locomotive is more fuel efficient, producing less emissions, and is more maintenance friendly than other locomotives on the market. Railroaders however complain that GENSET's are less safe than the older locomotives because of the lethargic way the three engines are synced together when the operator is trying to acquire more power to pull a heavier load of cars.

Individually, the three GENSET engines are smaller and less powerful than a traditional locomotive's engine. Operators have to rev the first engine up just to get the second and third engines to turn on at needed times to give the locomotive enough power to pull rail cars in tow. This revving up of the engine is done by advancing a locomotive's throttle handle. While revving up older locomotives only takes a couple of seconds it can take a GENSET up to nearly a minute or more which frustrates many locomotive operators. The term “Spinning his wheels” literally comes from the railroad in this exact scenario because the locomotive is spinning its wheels in place but not going anywhere because it doesn't have the power to pull a heavy consist in tow.

This can be dangerous because a locomotive lacking the necessary power to pull a consist in tow can cause the locomotive's traction motors to burn while it's wheels are spinning in place commonly referred to as “wheel slip” in railroad terminology. Often operators will become frustrated because the 2nd or 3rd engines don't turn on to provide the necessary power when needed. Operators have to rapidly “throttle up” in order to turn on the additional engines to acquire the needed power which can cause a whip lash effect in a train due to the sudden surge in power creating a jerking force in the trailing cars and potentially breaking connecting couplers. There have also been reports of shoving derailments at some military bases because the locomotives didn't have enough power to push cars together against an end abutment and suddenly have a surge of power causing cars to derail.

It's a catch-22, either you slowly throttle up the GENSET over the course of a minute which causes wheel slip if the locomotive is pulling a heavy load or you

throttle up quickly (aka “rapid throttle”) to get the power you need to pull a heavy load in tow but cause a whip lash effect potentially breaking a knuckle in tow. The same holds true when you have to push and compress cars together at a loading ramp, you either have to throttle up to get the power necessary to push a heavy train together against an abutment but throttle too slow can cause wheel slip and throttle too fast can cause a derailment.

(The twenty five DoD 137-Ton GENSET Locomotives number in the range of: 6500-6524)

Rail Car Movers

(Writer's Note: In railroad terminology the slang word “Switching” refers to moving railroad cars back and forth on various tracks to build a train. “Shoving” on the other hand, refers to moving a car or a group of cars in one direction from point A to point B with the motive power pushing at the rear.)

Although not a locomotive, a rail car mover can drive over to a railroad track, put its rail wheels down and move onto the rails. Similar to a Hi-Rail pick-up truck, a rail car mover has the capability to shove a half dozen rail cars (And sometimes more) a short distance in an industry or car maintenance track. Produced by both Shuttle Wagon and Track Mobile Companies, it typically has a 175 to 300 horsepower engine and provides a 360 degree view for the operator while offering the diverse ability to pull loads either on roads or railways. It's also a cheaper initial purchase. However, it's not a locomotive and doesn't have the power to switch rail cars effectively which could hurt an owner financially later on due to excessive switching and shoving times needed to complete a job.



Rail car movers can shove cuts of cars (Usually around 6-8 on average) on a flat grade from point A to point B at 5 MPH but don't look for this machine to be able to quickly switch out cars. It will also lethargically struggle to move cars up an incline. Ideally this machine was built to move a handful of cars a few hundred feet but not to switch out dozens of cars or to shove cars up or down hills efficiently. Think of this analogy, if you had to build a 25 car train in a rail yard do you want to do the job in an hour or several hours? With the right locomotive you can build your train in an hour, with a rail car mover it could take several hours to build that same train. But if you're only going to shove a few rail cars on a track then the rail car mover is the ideal choice for you.



Conclusion

As mentioned previously, the GENSET is known to be lethargic like the rail car mover when moving heavy consists. Railroad Engineers report that the GENSET has a greater tendency to lurch and create wheel burn into the rails due to its three engines not turning on when needed. GENSETs may appear to be the all-purpose locomotive but they're also one of the heaviest locomotives weighing in at 137 tons. The railroad infrastructures at many military depots run the increased risk of catastrophic structural failure if the GENSETs are used on older installations which have railroad tracks over 70 years old made in an age when locomotives were much lighter. Larger locomotives only offer partial views for engineers vs. the smaller 80-ton or rail car movers which offer 360 degree views. Rail car movers are economically friendly versus more traditional locomotives but they cannot pull many cars and are slower. Care and safety awareness must be maintained at all military installations to ensure that the right locomotive is used for the right job. By choosing the right locomotive both railroaders and military installations benefit in greater efficiency, safer switching practices, and mission accomplishment in a timely manner.

HONORING THOSE WHO HAVE SERVED



Moving forward, our Military Rail newsletter would like to give tribute to those who have served and made a positive difference in the military rail community. For this issue, we'd like to honor retired Major General Fred Elam, who was the Commandant of the Transportation School and concurrently the Chief of Transportation from 1985-1988. He was also the first Commander of the Transportation Corps Regiment beginning with the activation of the Regiment back in 1986. MG Elam was instrumental in transferring AIT rail training from Utah back to Ft. Eustis, Virginia in the 1980's. His active duty experience for planning and using rail for military movements spanned several decades. Here is a bio on his numerous contributions to the military rail community.

1966-1967: Transportation Officers Advanced Course - Fort Eustis

"The curriculum included rail planning as well as practical exercises involving loading and securing tracked and wheeled vehicle equipment on rail cars." -MG Elam

1967-1968: Third Infantry Division- Federal Republic of Germany

As the Division Transportation Officer, he planned and coordinated the movement of units, individual personnel and supplies for the division. Movement of tracked and wheeled vehicles to and from maneuver areas was on rail operated by the Deutsche Bahn. (Note: "This was 21 years prior to the Berlin Wall coming down in 1989. It was a time of high tension between NATO and the USSR").

1974-1976 Commander, 29th Transportation Battalion, Fort Campbell, Kentucky

The battalion's mission responsibilities (carried out by the 372 Terminal Transfer Company) included providing rail training to all 101st Division elements. This training was to enable division units to rapidly deploy by air, highway and rail to surface ports of debarkation. This training was exercised in 1976 with the deployment of the division to the Federal Republic of Germany on a REFORGER exercise.

1977-1979 Commander, US Army Materiel Support Center- Republic of Korea

He utilized the Republic of Korea's rail assets to move vehicles and supplies to US Army, Air Force and Marine Corps units throughout the South Korean peninsula.

1985-1988 Commandant, Transportation School Fort Eustis, Virginia

He terminated the commercial contract for AIT Rail training conducted in Utah and relocated the training to Fort Eustis.

1990-1993 Assistant Deputy Chief for Logistics (now called the Deputy G4). HQDA.

Originated, coordinated and obtained Chief of Staff, Army approval for the Army Strategic Mobility Program that provided funding for the upgrade and maintenance of rail facilities located where deploying units, AMC depots and arsenals were located.

Readers-If you would like to contact MG Elam with questions or comments he can be reached at elamjf@msn.com

Military Rail

An informational newsletter for military & civilian personnel

Fort Eustis, Virginia
Editor & Publisher: William Armstrong

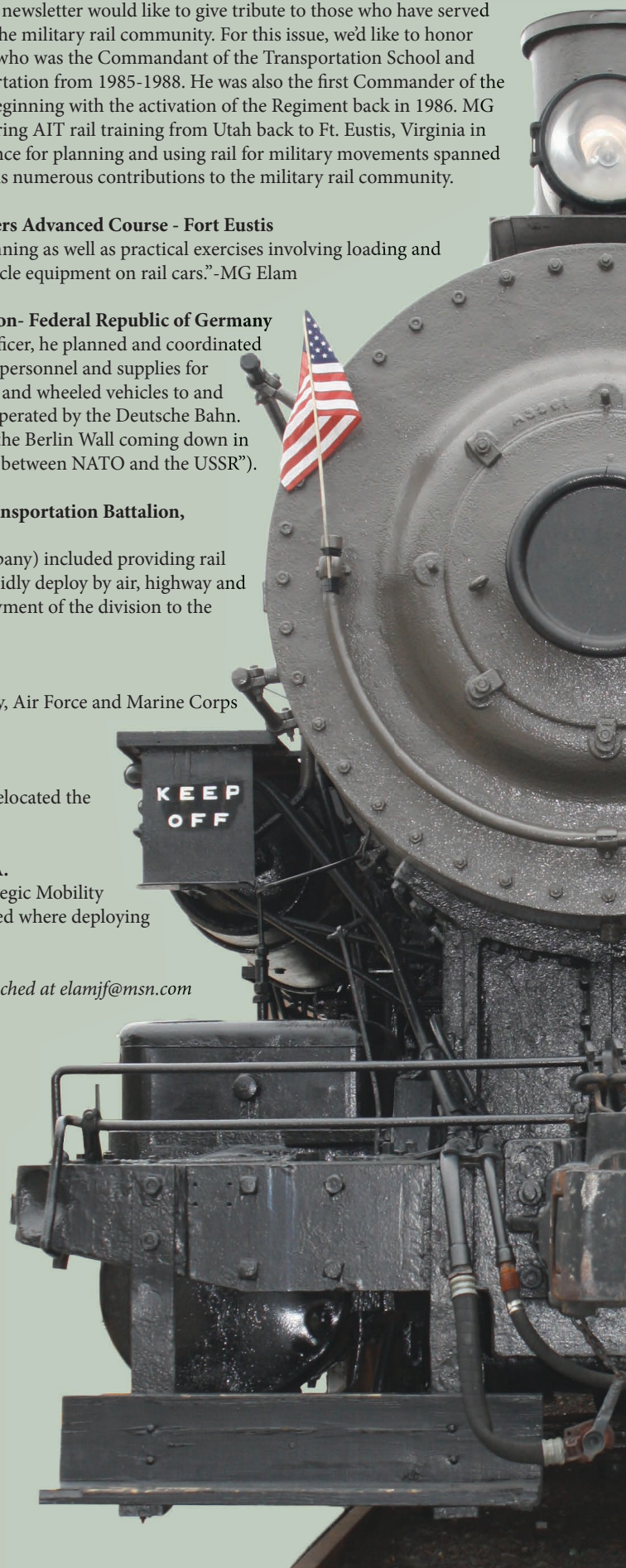
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RAILHEAD OPERATIONS GROUP TRAINING COURSES



Home to one of the busiest railheads within the Department of Defense (DoD), Marine Corps Logistics Base (MCLB) Barstow is comprised of two bases more commonly known as annexes. The MCLB has the ability to receive over 1,000 railcars in a single day and load or unload hundreds of railcars simultaneously as well. The larger of the two, the

Yermo Annex railyard is comprised of 33 miles of rail with 16 tracks ending at loading ramps. The smaller Nebo Annex railyard consists of 10 miles of rail with 4 tracks ending at loading ramps. All five branches of the U.S. Military and foreign militaries utilize MCLB rail facilities.

MCLB Barstow frequently support units in the Southern California, Arizona, and Nevada areas more commonly referred to as the South-Western Region. Students are exposed to a wide variety of equipment that can be shipped through Barstow on rail such as Abraham's Tanks, MRAPS and Howitzers. Unique shipments like engine parts, ammunition, ship, helicopter, or even plane components are also railed through Barstow on a variety of rail cars and provides an ideal location for railhead operations training giving military service members a rare firsthand exposure at how to plan, load and ship/receive equipment by rail. Courses provide in-depth, hands-on training and it's the only intermediate/advanced rail load out school of its kind west of the Mississippi offered to Soldiers, Sailors, Marines, Reservists, National Guard and DoD Civilians.



MCLB Barstow's course expands on the basic skills learned in a service member's primary school. The course is offered to both Officers and enlisted personnel with specific training able to be tailored to the students' needs and career field. From the inception of the load plan, to requesting railcar

support and solicitations, loading and securing of equipment, and coordination with both civilian and DOD agencies, students are engaged in all aspects of rail load out training. The course is built around real world missions such as units heading to the National Training Center (NTC) at Ft Irwin, California. Working hand in hand with MCLB Barstow rail personnel, students receive detailed training. Other courses also teach more senior level students how to order rail cars, coordinate with servicing railroads, and supervise rail loadout operations. Students are inserted into real world missions occurring for both CONUS and OCONUS rail movements. This exposure and experience dealing with a wide variety of equipment has made MCLB Barstow a one of a kind location for railhead operations training.

Rail shipment training is primarily designed around the Marine Corps 04XX MOS and the U.S. Army 88 MOS series. The overall responsibility of the training



rests upon Chad C. Hildebrandt, the Rail Operations Supervisor for MCLB Barstow. In 2014, Mr. Hildebrandt created the Railhead Operations Group Training Course (RHOGT) and working with various government and civilian agencies, the curriculum for the course was developed from several military and civilian publications.

Working regularly with agencies such as the American Association for Railroaders Open Top Loading Rules Committee and the Surface Deployment Distribution Command TEA, the MCLB Barstow updates the curriculum for the courses on a monthly basis, ensuring the students attending the course are receiving the most current, up-to-date material and guidance. MCLB Barstow also operates Mobil Training Teams (MTT's) that can travel to conduct training at your home unit's location. This personalized training assists units in identifying and maximizing the utilization of railheads near their home base and within the scope of their current policies and directives. By training as realistically as possible in the present day, MCLB Barstow prepares service members to successfully answer and know how to accomplish tomorrow's emergencies should our nation call upon them.



For additional information, please contact Mr. Chad Hildebrandt at 760-577-7781 or chad.hildebrandt@usmc.mill. The course website is <http://www.mclbbarstow.marines.mil/Agencies/Operations-and-Training/Rail/RHOGT> Course as listed below:

AVAILABLE COURSES

- Fourteen Day Railhead Operations Group Training Course (Certificate Issued / MCTIMS Course)
- 2-4 Day Rail Operations Familiarization Course (Unit Home Station)
- One Day Rail Operations PME (Unit Home Station)

COURSE MATERIAL COVERED

- History of Rail Operations
- Why the Military Conducts Rail Operations
- Cost Savings
- Safety Rules and Policies
- Railcar Characteristics
- Rail Spur Operations
- Loading / Unloading
- Load Securement
- Planning, Processing and Execution of Rail Movements

AUTO TRAINS

by Jonathan Sims

A special train exists in the United States that most people have never heard of. Nicknamed "The Luxury Train," AMTRAK's Auto Train is capable of moving both you and your personally owned vehicle across the U.S. in a matter of hours whether it's a car, truck, motorcycle or even a small boat. Why struggle in heavy traffic driving long distances accumulating additional wear and tear on your vehicle? The Auto Train will free you from this and allow you to take in breathtaking views of our country comfortably with peace of mind and giving you a happy railroad memory that will last a lifetime.



First started in 1971 by a smaller railroad, the Auto Train was designed for both people and families to save them time and expenses in traveling across country from Lorton, Virginia to Sanford, Florida. As the service of this train

proved to be lucrative, AMTRAK took over the Auto Train in 1983 and for nearly 50 years now this service has given people a chance to see parts of America's scenic beauty that most people never see. Driving the 811 road miles by car could take you as little as 13 hours factoring in having to stop for food, gas and some heavy traffic or it could take you up to several days to drive if you stop for lodging as well. Traveling the 860 rail miles by train takes about 16 hours. For a person driving, if the cost of gasoline is two dollars a gallon it could cost an average of \$20-\$30 to fill up a vehicle (x refilling 2.5 times) = \$75 gas, \$30 food = around \$100 minimum. (Not including lodging, tolls, etc.) Riding AMTRAK first class can cost around \$250 + \$221 to transport your vehicle as well. AMTRAK's amenities included during the trip are free Wi-Fi, room service, a full course dinner, continental breakfast, and access to the first class dining car.

Check in time for vehicles starts at 11:30 a.m. at both stations and last call is at 2:30 p.m. A Valet will take your car and load it onto the train via adjustable buck bi-level loading ramps. Maximum allowable vehicle measurements are: 88 inches high, 84 inches wide, and at least 4 inches ground clearance. The train has 30 spots reserved



for priority loading and guarantees your vehicle will be offloaded within the first 30 cars. The boarding of passengers on the trains will start at 2:30 p.m. with the trains departing both stations at 4 p.m. daily. Train 52 departs from Sanford, Florida northbound and Train 53 departs Lorton, Virginia southbound.

The Auto Train can reach up to just over a mile in length at 5,400 feet and consist of two locomotives pulling up to 50 cars including 17 bi-level superliner cars and 33 bi-level auto rack rail cars. Included in the 17 passenger cars are two dining cars, two lounge cars, seven sleeper cars and the remaining six are a combination of business & coach cars. Each first class sleeper car has 21 rooms including five deluxe rooms (with bathrooms and can open up to connect to other rooms if you're traveling with friends), 13 economy rooms, a large family room capable of housing 5-6 people, a handicapped accessible room and your private attendant's room. The 33 auto cars can carry up to 10 vehicles per car totaling nearly 350 vehicles being moved in a single auto passenger train.

While traveling you will view on one of the most historic and scenic private roads in the country. Farmlands and forests will unfurl into view, rivers and streams flow past you in timeless beauty and historic sites such as Civil War era homes hidden from public view but found on private lands near the rail lines you will travel can still be seen today. A jewel in America's heartland, the Luxury Train has transported passengers into living American paintings most people will never see but it's a canvas that you can enter and become a part of. The scenic galleries of green rolling hills, sunsets, sunrises and wildlife passing you by will be accompanied by AMTRAK's Conductor occasionally pointing out historic landmarks, buildings and places. So the next time you have to drive through traffic on the interstate whether its moving to a different place, traveling on business or just going on vacation, perhaps you'll consider embarking on a road less traveled and try AMTRAK's Luxury Auto Train.



Jonathan Sims is a Locomotive Engineer for AMTRAK's Auto Train and has been with the AMTRAK for eight years. "I enjoy working the Auto Train, and after every trip as I walk down the platform I'm pleased to have successfully fulfilled my duties in getting passengers safely and securely to their final destination in a timely manner." Sims is also a Staff Sergeant in the military's elite Expeditionary Railway Center (ERC) which deploys worldwide helping thousands in need. The ERC is the only remaining railroad entity in the entire U.S. military.