

= Troop sleeper =

In United States railroad terminology , a troop sleeper was a railroad passenger car which had been constructed to serve as something of a mobile barracks ( essentially , a sleeping car ) for transporting troops over distances sufficient to require overnight accommodations . This method allowed part of the trip to be made overnight , reducing the amount of transit time required and increasing travel efficiency .

= = History = =

= = = Background and development = = =

Between December , 1941 and June , 1945 U.S. railroads carried almost 44 million armed services personnel . As there were not enough cars and coaches available to meet the massive need for troop transit created by World War II , in late 1943 the U.S. Office of Defense Transportation contracted with the Pullman Company to build 2 @, @ 400 troop sleepers , and with American Car and Foundry ( ACF ) to build 440 troop kitchen cars .

This new rolling stock was either converted from existing boxcars or built from scratch based on Association of American Railroads ( AAR ) standard 50 ' -6 " single @-@ sheathed steel boxcar designs , and were constructed entirely out of steel with heavily reinforced ends . In some instances baggage cars were converted into temporary kitchen cars before ACF could complete its order . The cars were painted the standard Pullman Green and affixed with gold lettering . Along the Atchison , Topeka and Santa Fe Railway 's ( ATSF ) " Surf Line , " trains consisting of 10 @-@ 12 former Southern Pacific interurban trailer cars , owned by the U.S. Maritime Commission but bearing ATSF markings , were fitted with conventional knuckle couplers at each end of the trainset and pressed into service to handle the additional passenger loads .

Equipped with special Allied Full Cushion high @-@ speed swing @-@ motion trucks , Pullman troop sleepers were designed to be fully interchangeable with all other passenger equipment . The units came equipped with end doors similar to those found on standard railway cars , but had no vestibules . Loading and unloading of passengers was accomplished via wide doors positioned on each side at the center of the cars with built @-@ in trap doors and steps . Light and ventilation was provided by ten window units mounted on each side , each equipped with rolling black out shades and wire mesh screens .

Troop sleepers , generally intended for use by enlisted personnel , were equipped with bunks stacked 3 @-@ high , and slept 29 servicemen plus the Pullman porter . Every passenger was provided with a separate Pullman bed , complete with sheets and pillowcases that were changed daily . The berths were laid out in a cross @-@ wise arrangement that placed the aisle along one side of the car , as opposed to down the center . Though the upper berths were fixed , the middle and lower sections could be reconfigured into seating during the daytime . Weapon racks were provided for each group of berths . Four washstands ( two mounted at each end of the car ) delivered hot and cold running water . The cars also came outfitted with two enclosed toilets and a drinking water cooler .

= = = Troop kitchens = = =

Troop kitchens , rolling galleys , also joined the trains to provide meal service en route ( the troops took their meals in their seats or bunks ) . As the cooking was performed by regular U.S. Army cooks , the cars were outfitted with two Army @-@ standard coal ranges . The cars were also equipped with a pair of 200 @-@ gallon cold water tanks and a 40 @-@ gallon hot water tank ; supplies were stocked on open shelves with marine @-@ type railings , a bread locker , a large refrigerator , and a series of built @-@ in cabinets and drawers . The cars served approximately 250 men each , and were typically placed in the middle of the train so that food could be served from

both ends .

Troop hospital cars , also based on the troop sleeper carbody , transported wounded servicemen and typically travelled in solid strings on special trains averaging fifteen cars each . Each had 38 berths for patients , 30 of which were arranged in the central section of the car in three tiers on each side . There was also a section with six berths which could be used for isolation cases as well as private compartments for special cases . Each unit was ice air @-@ conditioned and came fitted with a shower room along with a modern kitchen with the latest equipment .

= = = Afterlife and preservation = = =

Troop cars saw service through 1947 , after which many were sold by the U.S. Army Transportation Corps to the railroads and subsequently converted into mail cars , express service boxcars , or refrigerator cars , while others remained in sleeper configuration for use in maintenance of way ( MOW ) service as bunk cars for the maintenance workers . Subsequent conflicts have not created the need for such an arrangement , partially due to the much smaller level of manpower involved but primarily due to the wider use of aircraft for long @-@ distance transportation of troops .

Today , preserved troop sleepers can be seen in several railroad museums across the United States .

Troop sleeper # 7437 is on display at the B & O Railroad Museum in Baltimore , MD . It was purchased as surplus by the Western Maryland Railroad and used on work trains as crew quarters . The museum has restored it to its original outside appearance . The inside has half the beds put back and the other half has displays about the B & O RR during the war .