



Here is the *Overland* about 1948 with the 3401 series baggage dorm in *Overland* two tone grey displaying the train name in the letter-board. To the left is a *Daylight* chair car and two 72-C-Harriman chairs. The 60-foot baggage car is rare, too, with its window between the doors. -Donald M. Munger collection

The Army Cars

SP Baggage Dormitory Cars 3401 - 3405

By Donald M. Munger & Robert J. Macdonald

On the eve of its entry into the Second World War, the United States Army, having invented the military hospital train during the Civil War, possessed little more than a couple of floor plan sketches for military hospital cars. By the end of the conflict four years later the Transportation Corps owned 380 hospital cars in the United States alone, 200 of them purpose built as Army Hospital Unit Cars

to serve as the nucleus of hospital trains comprised of converted Pullman cars, leased Pullman cars and chair coaches. During the last two years of the war, the 200 unit cars were widely used to evacuate sick and wounded patients from ports of debarkation hospitals to military and Veteran's Administration hospitals throughout the United States, frequently attached in small groups or single cars to regu-

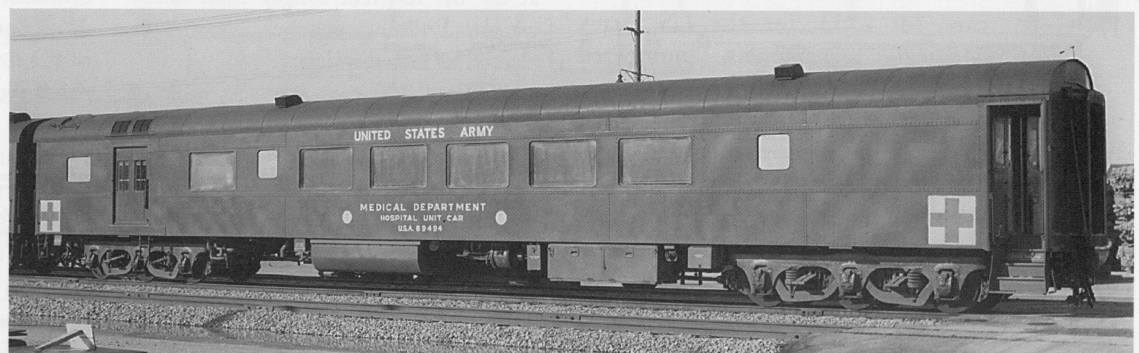
larly scheduled trains.

Each unit car contained:

- a ward with triple tiered berths for 30 to 36 patients;
- two Pullman sections for crew or sequestered patients;
- toilets, showers and sanitary disposal facilities;
- roomettes for a doctor and a nurse;
- a receiving room with wide doors on both sides for loading patients on litters; and

Although this is not an SP car, this view at Lathrop in 1951 shows how the cars appeared when they arrived in 1947.

-Guy Dunscomb





S.P. 1677 leads a train of eight Army Hospital cars, and a troop sleeper, down Broadway in Pasadena in 1945. Later the train is seen crossing the Pacific Electric Railway, right, on Huntington Drive at Marengo Avenue in South Pasadena. The first order of Army Hospital cars, delivered in late 1944 and early 1945, logged over 13 million revenue miles in 1945 but were quickly sold off in 1946 at the end of hostilities.

-Two photos Craig A. Rasmussen collection



- a small but efficient kitchen capable of feeding up to 200 meals a day.

Designed by Pullman, which produced a single prototype, Army 89300, the remaining cars were produced by American Car and Foundry. In 1944, ACF constructed 100 hospital unit cars, lot 2733, for the US Army Medical Department, numbered USAX 89300-89399. The cars were equipped with General Steel Casting commonwealth drop equalizer, integral pedestal, 6-wheel trucks. They were air-conditioned using two ice bunkers mounted from the floor in the center of the right side of the car. The unit cars were designed to so called

“streamliner” standards with round roofs, smooth sides and sealed windows. They were constructed from riveted steel with aluminum sides and round roofs. Riding on specially modified three axle passenger trucks, and at 84'-6," ten feet longer than heavy weight Pullman coaches, they were classed as heavy weights.

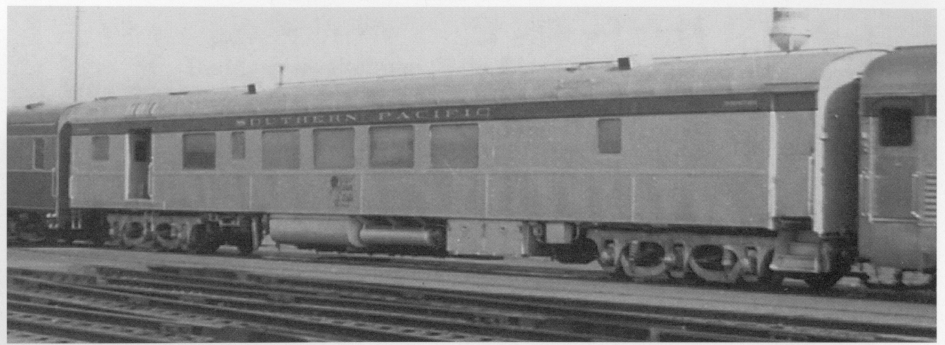
These 100 cars saw the bulk of WWII service in the United States between delivery in November 1944 and late 1945. In 1944, they logged more than four million revenue miles and in 1945 over 13 million. A second order for 100 cars went to ACF early in January 1945 and were delivered

between May and August of that year. This second order was retained by the Army, and many of these cars saw service in Korea, but the first series was sold off in 1946.

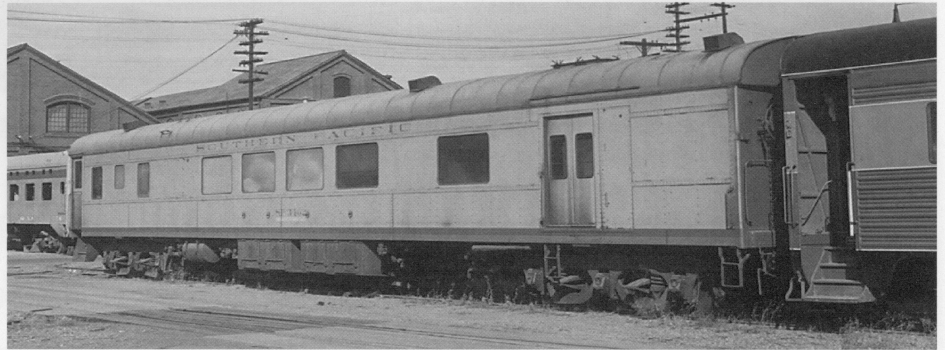
At the end of hostilities the government moved quickly to divest itself of all converted Pullman cars and 100 of the unit cars by mid 1946. The railroads were quick to purchase the unit cars to supplant their thoroughly worn-out passenger fleets while the railcar industry, diverted to many other tasks during the war, retooled to reduce a backlog of civilian rolling stock orders. The Monon, for example, bought 28 cars, eleven of which it

totally rebuilt as the *Hoosier* streamliner set in 1947. Ringling Brothers Barnum and Bailey purchased 25 for use as dormitory cars. The Alaska Railroad acquired 32 cars, most of which it converted to passenger cars, and the Atlantic Coast Line purchased 10 which it converted to baggage, baggage-dorms and business cars. The Southern Pacific purchased a modest five cars, Nos. USAX 89357, 89383, 89385, 89387 and 89389.

The cars were shopped at Sacramento where they were rebuilt for baggage dormitory service for use on the *Overland*. They were renumbered SP 3401 - 3405. The receiving room of each car was converted into a 24 ft. baggage area, and all the cars' windows were frosted over. The remainder of the car already contained bunks and two roomettes adjacent to the vestibule end and received only minor modifications. SP 3403 and SP 3405 received news agent lockers in 1950. Just in front of the baggage area on the brake end of the car was a small kitchen which was not utilized on SP 3402-3405. On SP 3401, assigned to the *Golden State*, it was used as a news agent stand. Until about 1950, this car



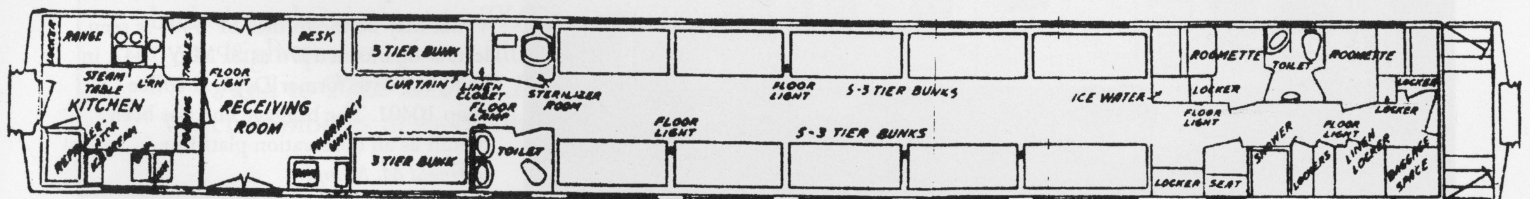
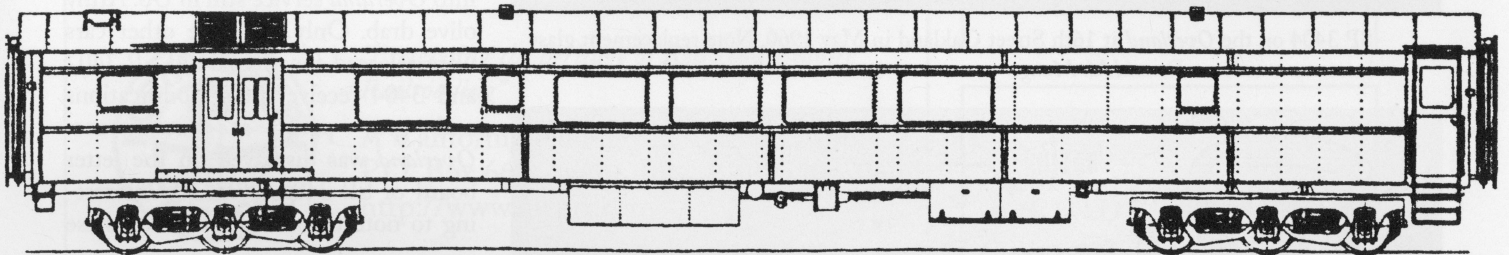
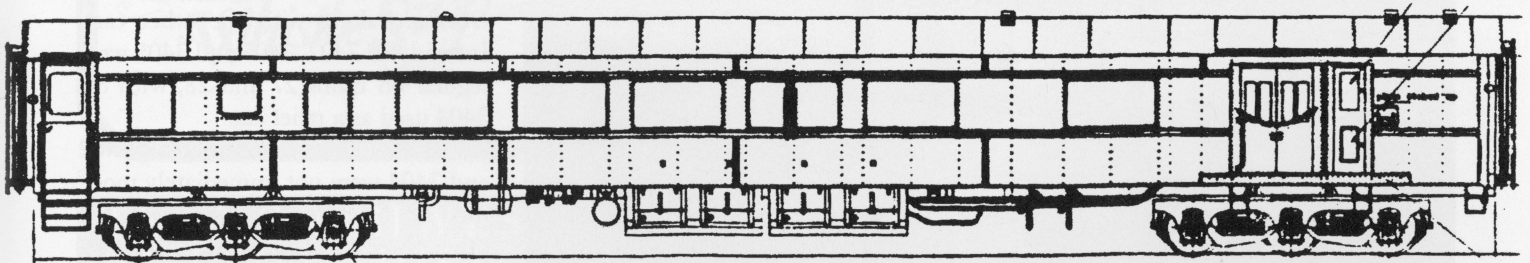
SP 3401 as assigned to the *Golden State* at Los Angeles, April 1957. The vestibule door is plated over. Note roller bearing trucks and additional air tank. -Donald M. Munger

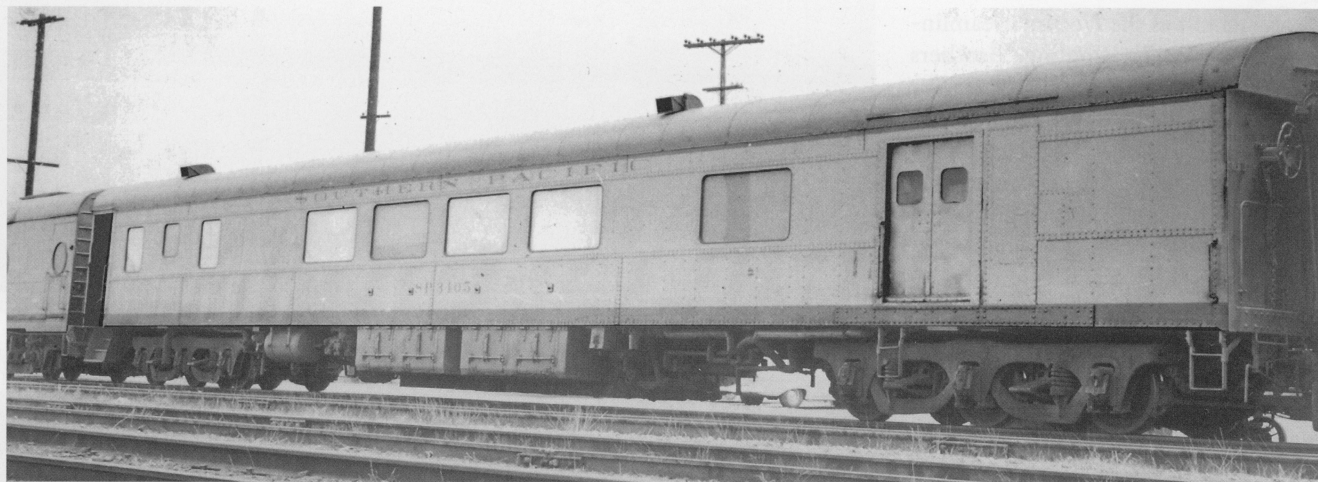


SP 3402 at Sacramento in 1963. It is stenciled for scrap but it will be assigned to MW service. -Donald M. Munger

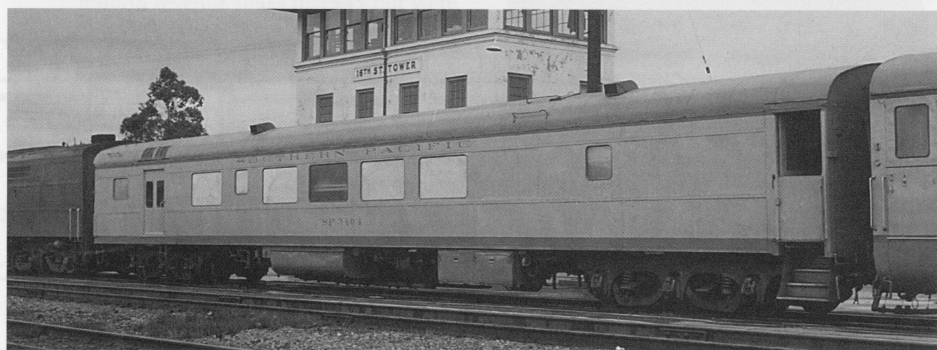
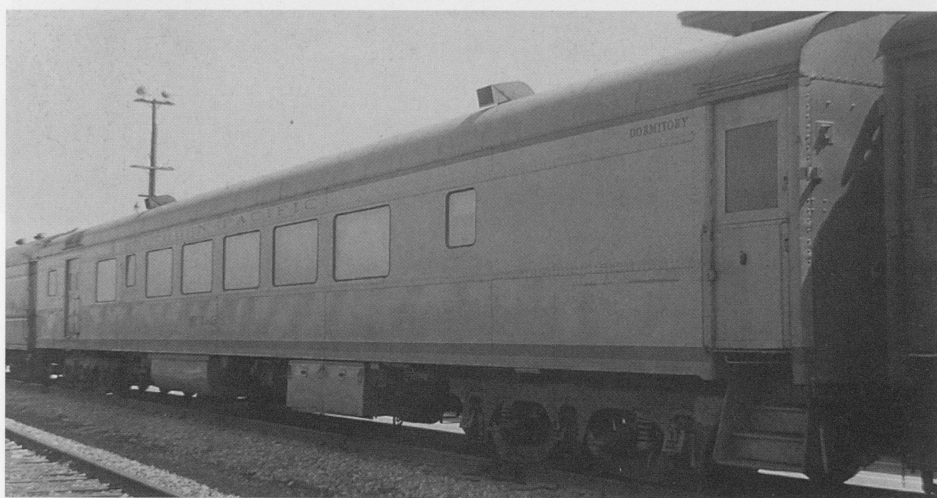
was turned around and operated with this blind end next to the chair cars for easier access of passengers. For assignment to the *Golden State*, SP 3401 was

equipped with tight lock couplers, electric pneumatic brakes, speed governor control and roller bearings wheels. All cars received the SP stan-

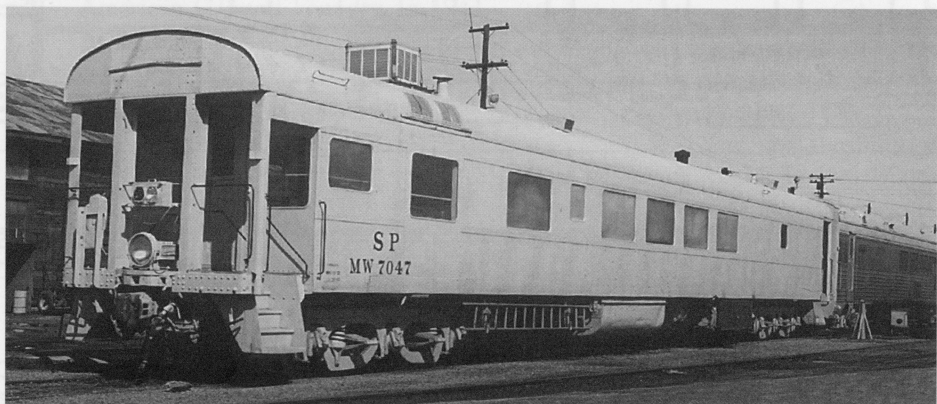




SP 3405 on the *City of San Francisco* at West Oakland, above, in September 1962. This shows the ice AC bunkers as well as the cast integral pedestal six-wheel trucks. The view, left, on the *Overland* in April 1958, shows the other side of SP 3405. No windows were plated over on this side. -Two photos, Donald M. Munger



SP 3404 on the *Overland* at 16th Street Oakland in May 1960. Note replacement glass in center window. -Donald M. Munger



dard two-tone gray paint with the SP 3401 assigned to the *Golden State* and SP 3402-3405 assigned to the *Overland*. There had been some interest in assigning an additional car, SP 3405, to the *Golden State*, too, but it was decided to assign it to the *Overland* along with the other cars. Instead, SP 3402, 3403 and 3405 were regular on trains 27 and 28, with SP 3404 used as a relief car.

It should be noted that SP 3402 and 3404 were not immediately modified at Sacramento along with the other three cars, but were only relettered and renumbered and pressed into *Overland* service still in US. Army olive drab. Only after the other cars were released for service did SP 3402 and 3404 receive their modifications and gray paint at Sacramento. *Overland* was displayed on the letter board of SP 3402-3405. It's interesting to note that although all of these

What may be the former SP 3404 is seen, left, at Sparks in 1976 as SPMW 7047, in company with former *Daylight* coffee shop 10401. The baggage end has been rebuilt as an observation platform. -Donald M. Munger

cars were painted in the same two-tone gray colors, the battery box and ice air-conditioning bunkers on the *Overland* assigned cars were black and the *Golden State* car, SP 3401, was painted gray.

Eventually, when the Union Pacific adopted armor yellow and harbor mist gray for all its equipment, the SP 3402-3405 were repainted into these colors along with the SP's other *Overland* assigned cars. SP 3401 received the new *Golden State* red and silver colors in 1949 to conform with

the new SP Budd and Pullman Standard cars arriving for that train. Again about 1953, it was repainted into SP's new *Golden State/Sunset Limited* colors of all silver with red letter board. The *Golden State* ball and wing logo was displayed on the car sides. Later this car, along with some of the *Overland* cars, would receive the newer SP standard colors of silver body with red letter board and gray underbody.

Most of these cars lasted well into the 1960s, and after the elimination of

the *Overland* they were regularly used on the *City of San Francisco* and at times on the *Cascade* when the triple units were not available. Several cars entered SP MW service with two cars assigned to relief tender duty at Sparks and Odgen. SP MW 7062 at Sparks was the former SP 3403. It is believed that the car assigned at Tucson is the former SP 3401.

Walthers offered HO kits of these cars years ago, and The Coach Yard is offering three HO brass versions. □