



*IrwinsJournal.com Presents:*

## **The Unofficial Micro-Trains® Release Report**

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Hello again everyone, and let's get right to the news and views...

### **N SCALE NEW RELEASES:**



**021 00 591 and 021 00 592, \$30.90 each**

**Reporting Marks: SSW 30032 and 30038.**

**40 Foot Steel Boxcars, Plug Door, Cotton Belt (St. Louis Southwestern).**

Red and gray sides and ends, red roof. White lettering including "Hydra-Cushion For Fragile Freight" and reporting marks on left, Cotton Belt roadname on right. Approximate Time Period: 1959 through at least 1964 (probably later). Technically a new release but has also been a Special Run for the N Scale Collector in 2006 with road numbers 30040 and 30042 (NSC 06-59 and -59A).

So I guess if you want to buy my copy of the N Scale Collector's "Author Car" for the year 2006, which isn't for sale, I'd want at least \$31 for it. This is a sharp paint scheme and I've certainly been tempted to run it... but so far I haven't. This release will mitigate my need to let out the "factory air" from the Author Car's box. This is a joke, folks: the actual MTL boxes have small holes in them, so there's really no such thing as factory air. But I digress...

The **Southern Pacific Color Guide to Freight and Passenger Equipment Volume Two**, Page 97, includes a 1964 photo of the 30040. At five years of age, the car's looking pretty dirty so maybe it wasn't a bad idea when SP management decided not to go with this red and gray paint scheme. As noted by MTL, the cars were constructed in 1959. The builder was Pacific Car and Foundry. The cars had riveted sides and straight bottom sills, differences versus the MTL 021 body style. A side note: In the **Color Guide Volume One**, Tony Thompson relates that this experimental scheme as applied to SP fifty foot boxcars actually pre-dated the use of red and gray on diesel locomotives by a year.

The Official Railway Equipment Register (ORER) for July 1963 has these cars class as RBL or Refrigerator Cars; as we know this is typical for plug door boxcars. The description was "Refrigerator, Steel, Insulated, Compartmentizer, Hydra-Cushion Underframe" and an end note specified that the Compartmentizers came from Pullman-Standard. The inside length

was 40 feet 6 inches, inside width 9 feet 2 inches, inside height 9 feet 1 inch, outside length 41 feet 10 inches, extreme height 15 feet, door opening 8 feet, and capacity 3372 cubic feet or 94,000 pounds.

By the April 1976 ORER there were only two cars left on the Cotton Belt's roster, and that's where I stopped looking. In addition, it appears that at some point, these cars were repainted into the more typical brown with white lettering and yellow "Hydra-Cushion" slogan. We know this from a photo of the 30042 taken in 1976 and posted on Lee Gautreaux's "Railgoat" page. In fact, that car's off the SSW roster and was sloppily restenciled "TCX" – which is Texaco's reporting marks. Quick relettering jobs are obviously not restricted to the current century!



030 00 280, \$27.95

**Reporting Marks: MR 2196.**

**50 Foot Steel Exterior Post Boxcar, Double Door, McCloud River Railroad.**

#10 in the MTL N Scale Per Diem Boxcar Series. White sides, aluminum roof, brown

ends, doors and bottom sill. Brown and black lettering including roadname and reporting marks on left. "Bear with fish" herald on right. White end markings. Approximate Time Period: 1977 (build date) to mid-decade of the 2000s.

There's a railfan site for this Northern California Fallen Flag, and not surprisingly, the URL is [mcclouddriverrailroad.com](http://mcclouddriverrailroad.com). On this site there's a thumbnail history; a more comprehensive one through 1992 cited is the book **Pine Across the Mountain** by Robert Hanft. The line was built to serve the timber industry in several phases beginning in 1897. At its peak, the line reached from Mount Shasta, where it connected with the Southern Pacific, to Hambone, thence over trackage rights on the Great Northern to Lookout Junction on the "Inside Gateway" line. In 1954 and 1955 – and yes, that's relatively late for North American railroads! – new trackage was built down to Burney to serve a wooden fruit box manufacturer. For much of its history, the line was owned by United States Plywood. In 1977 it was sold to ITEL Corporation, far better known as a lessor of Incentive Per Diem boxcars... and now it's easy to see why the McCloud River had a bunch of that rolling stock. Between the switch to trucking and the general decline of the lumbering industry, the McCloud River gradually faded out. In 1992 it was sold to an ITEL employee, renamed the McCloud Railway, and eked out a living until 2005 when all but the section from Mount Shasta to McCloud was abandoned. That last section was gone by 2009.

The ORER for January 1978 shows this series making up the majority of the 504 cars on the roster at that time. The description was "Box, Steel, Nailable Steel Floor, Cushioning, Double 8 Foot Sliding Doors" with these key dimensions: inside length 50 feet 6 inches, inside width 9 feet 6 inches, inside height 10 feet 7 inches, outside length 57 feet 3 inches, extreme height 14 feet 10 inches, door opening 16 feet, and capacity 5077 cubic feet or 154,000 pounds. Among the other equipment on the roster were two sand cars, necessary given the steepness of the grades on the line and the fact that it included two switchbacks.

Jumping all the way to the January 2000 Equipment Register, the McCloud Railway kept the MR reporting marks and had 816 cars on the roster, including 72 from the series in which we're interested. The same number was in place in the January 2006 ORER but that was down to just six cars in the October 2007 Register as the end of the line neared.

While not a bingo, a 1980 photo of sister car 2083 on RailcarPhotos.com provides some useful information in the accompanying text: It's part of the series of 400 cars numbered 2000 to 2399 by FMC in May and June 1977. The cars were 5077 cubic feet which matches the MTL 030 body style, although with centered double doors which does not match the MTL 030 body style. (The centered double doors were a less typical prototype.) Also on RailcarPhotos is a shot of a very beat up looking 2180, still in the original paint with some, ahem, additions, as of September 2006. At the other end of the spectrum is a nearly new MR 2196 as of January 1978. Finally, a shot of MR 2056 on home rails in McCloud in 1980, which confirms the aluminum roof, can be found on RRPictureArchives.net. Other images are there as well.



077 00 270, \$26.90

**Reporting Marks: NP 31500.**

**50 Foot Steel Boxcars, Single Door, No Running Board (Roofwalk), Northern Pacific.**

Brown with white lettering including reporting marks on left. Large white with

black shadow "NP" above reporting marks on left. Large red, black and white monad herald on right. White "hide loading only" advisory to left of door. Approximate Time Period: around 1968 to early 1980s.

This is an easy one: I get to mostly reprint myself from the coverage of last month's Z Scale release of this car. As I noted last month, the first thing I would do with this car is remove the "Hide Loading Only" wording. Hide loading, or worse, "tankage" loading (you don't want to know), was usually the final assignment for boxcars near the end of their service life – and as such, they certainly didn't look new and pristine as these releases do.

The **Northern Pacific Color Guide to Freight and Passenger Equipment**, Page 50, has the bingo for the 31500. The photo, taken in 1977, shows the car without a running board – unlike in 1:220, MTL has this particular body style in 1:160. (Obviously, George...) The side sills are straight as well, a relatively easy modification to undertake if desired. The prototype had riveted sides, but it would be hard to tell at a 1:220 proportion. The car copy from the Z Scale release noted that these cars were pulled from the 31000 to 31499 series, some but not all of which were painted in the "Share in Freedom" red, white and blue scheme. The **Color Guide** gives a repaint date in 1968 or 1969; we'll go with the earlier year for the ATP.

The ORER for October 1969 shows the series 31500 to 31788 with just 74 cars. The inside length was 50 feet 6 inches, inside width 8 feet 2 inches, inside height 10 feet 6 inches, outside length 54 feet 5 inches, extreme height 14 feet 11 inches, door opening 8 feet, and capacity 3890 cubic feet or 110,000 pounds. There's no reference to "hide loading only" in that listing. We know

that at least the 31500 remained into 1977, so I jumped to the Burlington Northern listing for July 1980. The main series had been folded in with the previous one to yield the group 31000 to 31574, which had only 16 cars in it. However, there were 15 more with the "Hide Loading Only" reference, which did not include the 31500 even though there is a photo of it with that lettering! (An ORER 'oops'?) One more car in the group was for battery loading only and four for the dreaded tankage loading. The whole assemblage was down to a single car in the April 1985 Equipment Register, which is where I stopped looking.



**098 00 031 and 098 00 032, \$27.95 each**  
**Reporting Marks: CSXT 203420 and 203437.**  
**50 Foot Airslide Covered Hopper, CSX Transportation.**

Tan with mostly black lettering including reporting marks on left and herald on right. White on black consolidated stencils at bottom right of center. Approximate Time Period: no earlier than 1989 to no later than 2006.

We'll go right to a bingo on the 203437, an image taken in 2006 and posted to RRPictureArchives. Photos of other cars in the series are tagged as ex-Chessie System cars and going farther back, belonging to the Chesapeake and Ohio class HC-26 which was also the Chessie System class HC-26. According to the **Chessie System Guide to Freight and Passenger Equipment**, five C&O groups of cars and two additional sets of cars from the Baltimore and Ohio were pulled together to form that HC-26 class. Though there were differences among some of these groups, they all had low brake platforms which aligns with the MTL 098 body style. These were all built by General American between 1968 and 1977.

So why is it that I can't remember that July 1987 is the first ORER I own chronologically in which a listing for CSX Transportation appears? I don't know... perhaps my memory is full. Well, maybe July 1989 is a better answer anyway, since it's the first one chronologically in which cars with CSXT reporting marks appear. And there's already a group numbered 203402 to 203448, into which the MTL-selected road numbers fit. The cars are described as "Covered Hopper, Steel, Epoxy Lining, Airslide," have an outside length of 54 feet 1 inch, extreme height of 14 feet 6 inches, and capacity of 4180 cubic feet or 193,000 pounds. There were 12 cars in the group at the time. The closest Equipment Register I have to the 2006 photo of the 203437 is from July 2007, and, guess what... the series is gone. And so much for your Approximate Time Period.

As usual with CSXT, restenciled Chessie System cars existed right along with true CSXT repaints for quite a while, so getting an exact handle on when these Airslides began to appear in tan and black isn't terribly easy. Thus we're stuck with the "no earlier than... no later than" ATP here.





**111 00 200, \$44.95**

**Reporting Marks: WRWK 300148 (Warwick Railway).**

**89 Foot Tri-Level Enclosed Auto Rack, Kansas City Southern.**

Flat car is white with black lettering including reporting marks on left for

Warwick Railway. Yellow conspicuity stripes across car. Racking is white with aluminum roof and aluminum panels on side, one of which on left has the “Kansas City Southern 125<sup>th</sup> Anniversary” heralds. Approximate Time Period: 2012 (build date given by MTL) to present.

Oh, heck, why not just copy a Fair Use amount from the November 27, 2012 press release announcing a key milestone in the history of the smallest of the major North American railroads, the Kansas City Southern: “The company known today as KCS was founded by Arthur E. Stilwell in 1887. Stilwell envisioned a single-line railroad from the heartland of the United States to the Gulf of Mexico. Building off of this vision to develop a north-south railroad, KCS extended its network into Mexico in 1997 by joining with Transportación Ferroviaria Mexicana, S.A. de C.V. (TFM) to operate the Northeast Railway, Mexico’s premier rail line. In 2005, KCS acquired full ownership of TFM and renamed its Mexico operations Kansas City Southern de México, S.A. de C.V. This acquisition resulted in the first and only coordinated rail network between the United States and Mexico.” On that day, company officials rang the bell to open the trading day on the New York Stock Exchange, and prominent in photos was the 125<sup>th</sup> Anniversary logo along with the herald of the three components of KCS.

That same arrangement of heralds appears on this autorack, and also provides yet another illustration of how flat cars and autoracks upon which they sit do not have to be from the same corporate entity. Usually, it’s a TTX (formerly Trailer Train) flat car underneath and a rack from one of the Class One Railroads on top. This time, the flat car is registered to the Warwick Railway, which is affiliated with the Providence and Worcester, which has a tight connection to GATX, although it was just announced that the P&W will be acquired by Genesee and Wyoming Industries for \$126 million.

There are three bingos for this car on RRPictureArchives.net, one each from 2012, 2013 and 2014. It looks like we’ve got a good match to the MTL model here. In the “is nothing sacred” department, there’s spray paint over a non-trivial portion of the car in the 2014 shot. Well, at least it stayed clean for a couple of years.

I’ll do one ORER check for completeness from the October 2014 edition. There are 340 cars in the series WRWK 300010 to 301000, under the Providence and Worcester registration. The inside length (such as it is) is 89 feet 4 inches, outside length 93 feet 10 inches, extreme height 19 feet, and gross rail weight 185,000 pounds. If those 340 aren’t enough, there are another two thousand autoracks numbered in the 302000s and 303000s, many more than would have fit on the Warwick Railway’s original trackage!



140 00 100, \$29.95

Road Number: 3270 (will be "NH 3270" in website listings).

Heavyweight Railway Post Office, New Haven.

Pullman Green with black roof, ends, underframe and trucks. White lettering including roadname in center of letterboard and "United States Mail / Railway Post Office" with road number at bottom center. Approximate Time Period: 1950s and 1960s at least.

Having no Incremental Information received or found with regard to New Haven paint schemes, I'll need to carry forward my previous guess on the Approximate Time Period for this release. So, repeating myself from the August UMTRR, I know that the black and orange of the McGuiness era co-existed with the Pullman Green that this car sported. The **NH Color Guide To Freight and Passenger Equipment** points out that the NH's famous Osgood-Bradley "American Flyer" coaches were repainted Pullman Green if necessary between May 1950 and May 1954, and Forest Green after that. Photos of other passenger equipment in the **Color Guide** show cars with the roadname in the same lettering style as this MTL release, all dated starting in the 1950s.

No **Color Guide** photo to help this time; the only RPO in the entire volume is number 2785, which, while in the same paint scheme received in 1950, doesn't have the same configuration. But we can still piece something together. The first data point is New Haven's entry in the January 1953 Official Register of Passenger Train Equipment, which contains the series of "Postal, Steel" cars numbered 3263 to 3284. These cars had an inside length of 60 feet 6 inches and length over the buffers of 64 feet 5 inches. We'll couple (pun intended) that with images of cars NH and 3278, 3279 and 3281, all in the McGuiness scheme, on the North East Rails site. As I would have expected, the window arrangements differ from the MTL 140 body style, which represents the original look of RPOs before the Post Office required fewer windows in the mail compartment.



149 00 150, \$29.95

Road Number: 8900 (will be "CN 8900" in website listings).

Heavyweight Horse Car, Canadian National.

Pullman green with black roof, underframe and trucks. Gold lettering including roadname and "Express" left of the center door and road number right of the center door. Approximate Time Period: about 1924 to late 1960s, but see text.

Although it doesn't align with the fancier paint scheme that was present on the other CN passenger cars released thus far, I believe that MTL has this utilitarian scheme correct and that the black and green with maple leaf heralds did not make it to horse cars.

Considering that in 1943 the CN owned only ten horse cars, which was down to a mere three by 1967, it's rather remarkable that two of them, the 8904 and 8906, would have images in the **Canadian National Color Guide to Freight and Passenger Equipment Volume One**. But they are there, and there is an immediate "see text" apparent: the cars have wood sheathed sides. Also, the center door is wider than the left and right doors. Micro-Trains' car copy crediting Osgood-Bradley as the builder aligns with the Color Guide caption for these cars, but they came from the Grand Trunk, one of the immediate predecessors of the CN, not the Grand Trunk Western. That transfer came in 1924, when the cars received road numbers from 8900 to 8911. Ten of the "Horse Express" cars were listed in the January 1943 Official Register of Passenger Train Equipment. There, they are described as just "70 feet and over" but the **Color Guide** provides an overall length of 79 feet 9 inches.



**468 00 010, \$14.95**

**Reporting Marks: APLU 432689.**

**48 Foot Exterior Post (Ribside) Container, APC (American President Lines).**

Aluminum (including roof) with red band at one end. Red stylized eagle device in center of side. Blue and black lettering on ends. Approximate Time Period: 1990s to present (a guess). Note: MTL has announced that this item is not on Dealer Standing Orders.

Although it was a pioneer in containerization—you might recall from last month that it originated the Stacktrain which it sold off to Pacer-- the heritage of American President Lines goes back into the 1800s. The Pacific Mail Steamship Company was formed to transport, well, mail, via, well, steamship, in 1847. Its founding almost exactly coincided with the California Gold Rush of 1848 and it profited significantly from that event as well. Pacific Mail added trans-Pacific routes by 1867, helped by Government mail contracts. I'll skip the transactions in between, but the trans-Pacific fleet was purchased by the Dollar Shipping Company in 1925. That company was founded by Robert Dollar in 1893. Dollar's practice was to name its vessels after United States Presidents. However, the company didn't survive the Great Depression and was taken over by the United States Maritime Commission. At that time it was renamed American President Lines.

APL's first experiments with containerization were earlier than I would have guessed: 1958. While it stuck with combination break-bulk and container ships for a while, in the 1970s the company moved heavily into container-only service. In 1979 it started the LinerTrain, "land bridge" rail service from Los Angeles to New York. I've already mentioned the StackTrain which was started in 1984. APL flourished in the 1980s and 1990s. It was purchased by Singapore-based Neptune Orient Lines in 1997. Both companies were bought by the French company CMA-CGM in June 2016.

There are examples of the "Red Eagle" container paint scheme online but I did not come across an exact match for the 432689. I know less about containers than just about any other type of modern freight equipment so the ATP this time is purely a guess. APL itself introduced this size "hi-cube" container in 1986; the "102" on the side is a reference to the 9 foot 6 inch height.



**985 00 910, \$28.95**

**Reporting Marks: MHAX 1174.**

**Helium Car, NASA Railway (but see below).**

#3 in the NASA Series. Aluminum with black lettering; red reporting marks on left.

Black and white consolidated stencil on

right. Light to moderate weathering. Approximate Time Period: 1961 (build date) to no later than 2012.

While it's part of the NASA Series, technically, the reporting marks MHAX were registered to the United States Department of the Interior, Bureau of Mines Helium Field Operations. And while it's a Micro-Trains release, technically, it's a Roco car with Micro-Trains decoration and a body style that reaches all the way back to one of my other interests: the Atlas "First Generation" of N Scale Rolling Stock. Atlas first imported this body style from Roco in the late 1960s in all possible prototypical roadnames (US Army Air Service, US Navy, Atomic Energy Commission, and Bureau of Mines). E-R Models imported the same model in three of the same roadnames during the 1980s (skipping the Bureau of Mines). I get a chance for a crossover to my Atlas First Generation section of the website, where I have posted photos of each of those previously run cars. Look for the 3030 series in the pulldown in the A1G area, over at [www.irwinsjournal.com/a1g](http://www.irwinsjournal.com/a1g).

More than you'd probably ever want to know about helium cars was compiled as a handout for the 2007 convention of the Santa Fe Railway Historical and Modeling Society. It's available here: [atsfrr.org/Reviews/HO/Freight/Helium/HeliumHandout.pdf](http://atsfrr.org/Reviews/HO/Freight/Helium/HeliumHandout.pdf). Why would Santa Fe fans be interested in this car? Because these cars were based in Amarillo, Texas with helium production taking place there and at two plants in Oklahoma. NASA was a customer for helium until at least 1963. Yes, that's probably not going to be in timeline alignment with the rest of the NASA Series, but I'm not sure many will quibble about this. Helium car MHAX 1242, formerly ATMX 1021 lettered for the Atomic Energy Commission, is preserved in Amarillo. Imagine my surprise when I came across it while traveling along Old Route 66 back in the year 2002! What I found most interesting about the car is that it was fitted with double-shelf couplers.

MHAX 1174 corresponds to the "Seventh Generation" of this type of car, built by American Car and Foundry in 1961 and numbered 1174 to 1196. These were thirty-tube cars weighing 235,000 pounds empty (and not much more with helium in them!) While the NASA Railway operated until 2015, the car itself, minus its trucks and couplers, was seen with sister car 1165 mounted on a 24 wheel heavy duty flat car in June 2012. That image, taken in Florida, is on [RRPictureArchives.net](http://RRPictureArchives.net).





In addition to the above, the **Royal American Shows Three-Pack (993 01 450, \$99.95)** is scheduled to be available mid-month and should be at dealers as you read this. UMTRR coverage was in the June 2016 issue. MTL's copy for this release describes these cars as "used... to highlight their Tampa, Florida show in 1970" which aligns closely with the 1966 date of an image I found of the coach back in June.

We have the images and catalog numbers of the individual items now:

- 145 51 029, Road Number 56, Heavyweight Paired Window Coach
- 148 52 019, Road Number 69, and 148 53 029, Road Number 70, Heavyweight Mail/Baggage Cars.



Also, the **Pennsylvania Heavyweight Five-Pack (993 01 460, \$129.95)** is also scheduled to be available mid-month. UMTRR coverage was in the July 2016 issue.

These are the catalog numbers of the individual items:

- 140 51 050, Road Number 6519, Heavyweight Railway Post Office.
- 145 52 050, Road Number 1637 and 145 53 050, Road Number 1672, Heavyweight Paired Window Coaches.
- 143 54 050, Road Number 7065, Car Name "Burgner," Heavyweight 28-1 Parlor Car. Note: At first glance of the image, the car name looks like "Buroner," but according to a compilation of PRR Parlor Cars on

"Rob's Pennsy Page" ([URL.prr.railfan.net](http://URL.prr.railfan.net)) it is "Burgner." The "Pullman Project" database also has "Burgner."

- 144 55 050, Road Number 7515, Car Name "Buckeye," Heavyweight 3-2 Observation Car.

## N SCALE REPRINTS:



**116 00 011 and 116 00 012, \$24.95 each**  
**Road Numbers: 9026 and 9334.**

### **Troop Sleeper Cars.**

Pullman green with black roof. Gold lettering including "Pullman" across top, "Troop Sleeper" across bottom, and road number on bottom left and bottom right. Comes with simulated windows, diaphragms and interiors. Approximate Time Period: 1943 through about 1950. Previous Releases (as catalog 116 00 010 or 11600010.x): Road Numbers 9010, 9153 and

9426, May 2003; Road Numbers 9082 and 9340, July 2003; 9536 and 9027, May 2005; Road Number 9148, May 2007. Also, road numbers 9975 and 9809 were included as part of the 993 01 020 "US Army Set #1" Special Edition release of September 2005. Runner Pack #27 (993 00 027, announced October 2008 and released May 2009) included road numbers 9149, 9257, 9316, and 9488. Runner Pack #58 (993 00 059, announced June 2011 and released December 2011) included road numbers 9015, 9120, 9276, and 9304. Finally, there was Weathered Release 116 44 010, Road Number 9972, August 2016. Note: Micro-Trains has announced that these cars are not included with Dealer Standing Orders.

We're up to twenty-two road numbers for the Troop Sleeper with this paired release, and that's a pretty good-sized train for most N Scale pikes. As has always been the case with this body style, there's not much I can do other than reprint myself here. There were 2400 troop sleepers constructed for the United States Government by Pullman between October 1943 and May 1946. Micro-Trains had plenty of source information including articles and drawings in the December 2001 and February 2002 issues of **Model Railroader**, and eight pages of coverage of troop sleepers and troop kitchen cars in the Winter 2001 issue of **Classic Trains**. Reviews of this car at the time were overwhelmingly if not unanimously positive.



**118 00 010, \$24.95**

**Road Number: K-115.**

### **Troop Kitchen Car.**

Pullman green with black roof. Gold lettering including "Troop Kitchen Car" across top, and road number at bottom left

and bottom right. Comes with simulated windows, diaphragms and interiors. Approximate Time Period: 1943 through about 1950. Previous Releases: As catalog number 118010, Road Number K-100, May 2003 and Road Number K-125, October 2003. Also, Road Number K-670, Catalog 118 50 010, was included as part of the 993 01 020 "US Army Set #1" Special Edition release of September 2005. Note: Micro-Trains has announced that this car is not included with Dealer Standing Orders.

While Pullman-Standard was busy building troop sleepers, the 800 kitchen cars were built by American Car and Foundry from October 1943 to March 1944. They were numbered K-100 to K-499 and K-600 to K-999. Yes, that means that troop sleepers didn't exist for much of World War II. That explains why there were so many "military surplus" available to be sold to railroads after hostilities ceased. Although thoroughly deployed while in service, they still were hardly "well used" especially compared to the old, tired equipment that the railroads had to hang onto from before the war. There were all sorts of jobs given to this second hand equipment.

With the book **American Car and Foundry Company 1899-1999** now part of the Research Accumulation, I thought I'd check for a reference photo. Sure enough, there is one on Page 333 of that volume. It's of the K-100, the first number released by MTL and the first road number in sequence. "During World War II, ACF received several orders for similar troop kitchen cars from the U.S. War Department."



**118 00 050, \$28.90.**

**Road Number: 8731.**

**Troop Kitchen Car, United States Army Medical Department.**

Pullman green with white lettering including "United States Army" at top

center, reporting marks and left and right. Red cross on white square at far left, far right and near center of roof. Approximate Time Period: early to mid-1940s (1942 build date likely). Previous Release: Road Number 8708, December 2011. Note: Micro-Trains has announced that this car is not included with Dealer Standing Orders.

While this car is reprinted for the first time, there's also Catalog Number 118030 released in September 2003, nearly the same except for there not being a red cross on the roof. I suppose I'm still not sure whether with or without is correct, or perhaps both are. Back in 2003 I noted that the Pacific Southwest Railroad Museum had a guard car which was originally a Hospital Kitchen Car (see [www.psrn.org/trains/](http://www.psrn.org/trains/)). I had to poke around to find something closer to a bingo, and I did in the depths of the PSRM site. The only way I could access it was through the direct URL : [sdrm.info/roster/passenger/guard-10/kitchen-10.jpg](http://sdrm.info/roster/passenger/guard-10/kitchen-10.jpg) .

What I also found was an article on Hospital Cars in general on the site of the World War II US Medical Research Centre (Direct URL [www.med-dept.com/articles/ww2-hospital-trains/](http://www.med-dept.com/articles/ww2-hospital-trains/)). What looks to me like plans for the interior of the Hospital Cars modeled by MTL are included there, dated 1941. However, most of the discussion centers on the use of Hospital Cars and Hospital Trains overseas – and as you might expect, that equipment doesn't look anything like this body style. It's noted on the webpage that "At the beginning of 1939 the Medical Department had NO Hospital Trains on hand and only indefinite plans for procuring them in the event of war! Although without definite plans, the US Army would acquire 320 Hospital Cars for operation in the Zone of Interior – of these, 120 were former Pullman sleepers and lounge cars that would be converted to Hospital Cars with 32 berths arranged in 2 tiers – the remaining 200 would be specially designed and built as Hospital Cars with accommodations



for 36 patients in 3-tier berths.” According to the site, forty kitchen cars were delivered between March and September 1944, but we don’t know what they looked like or whether they were deployed here or in War Theatres. We already know from past coverage that the initial use of Hospital Cars in the USA goes back to the American Civil War.

One more data point: The U.S. National Library of Medicine has in its digital collection a “view of the kitchen of the army’s new hospital car” dated 1941. They believe that this image is in the public domain, and I’ll take their word for it, so here it is. For a larger view, go to [collections.nlm.nih.gov/catalog/nlm:nlmuid-101442794-img](https://collections.nlm.nih.gov/catalog/nlm:nlmuid-101442794-img) .



**N SCALE WEATHERED RELEASES:** *The following was announced mid-month via the Micro-Trains website, the MTL Facebook page, and via the e-mail “Micro-Trains E-Line,” all on or about November 14.*



**094 44 450, \$33.90**

**Reporting Marks: BNSF 478931.**

**Three Bay Center Flow Covered Hoppers with Trough Hatches, Burlington Northern Santa Fe.**

Base car is mineral red with white lettering including reporting marks on left and BNSF circle cross herald on right. White on black double-panel consolidated stencils on right. Yellow horizontal conspicuity stripes at several points along side. One side of car has large multicolor graffiti with a snowman in center. Other side of car also

has multicolor graffiti which obscures reporting marks. Approximate Time Period: the present (based on prototype photo dates). Previous Releases: Technically none, but Weathered Release 094 44 440 (“Monster #2”) in September 2016 used the same base car.

Our own UMTRR Gang Member David Grothe has a presence on Flickr and he has the bingo to the “snowman” side of this car posted there. The citation which MTL provided is without the photo date, but I was able to back into it – namely, August 2016 which is about as close to “the present” as we might ever get – via a web search on the reporting marks.

BNSF 478931 is part of the series 478000 to 479999, which had 1907 cars as of the October 2014 ORER. These are 5161 cubic foot capacity covered hoppers, a fair bit larger than the MTL 094 body style. According to notes on RailcarPhotos.com, these cars were built by Trinity Industries between August 2004 and January 2005. A nice clean BNSF 478930, one road number down from this release, was found in June 2011; that image is on [RRPictureArchives.net](http://RRPictureArchives.net).



That snowman looks a lot like the Rankin-Bass version of “Frosty the Snowman.” I’m sure at least some of us remember the 1969 animated film which featured Jackie Vernon as the voice of Frosty. Jimmy Durante made his last film appearance as the narrator of “Frosty the Snowman” ... I should know that since I share his birthday (just month and day, not year!).

**993 05 350, \$94.95**

**“Ichabod” Graffiti Three-Pack**

Consists of the following items:



**025 44 010, Reporting Marks: RBOX 34807.**

**50 Foot Steel Exterior Post Boxcar, Single Door, Railbox.**

Base Car is yellow with black door, black lettering including large “RailBox” and reporting marks on right and black, red and blue “Next Load / Any Load” logo on right. Moderate to heavy weathering. One side of car is covered with “Ichabod” graffiti. Other side of car is heavily faded and has multicolor graffiti across bottom of side. Approximate Time Period: at least 2009.

Previous Releases (all unweathered): Six-Pack 25012 with Road Numbers 17715, 17723, 17771, 17783, 17792, and 17834, February 1981; Road Number 17787, December 2004; and Runner Pack #15 (993 00 015) with Road Numbers 17728, 17746, 17785, and 17818, July 2008.

The Previous Release list is a bit out of scope here since the Road Number for this car, 34807, not only isn’t part of the same prototype series but it’s also not the same builder. The 34807 is part of Railbox’s XFC20 Class, built by Pacific Car & Foundry in early 1979, series RBOX 34100 to 34899. These 5290 cubic foot cars are a bit larger than the FMC 5077 cubic foot cars that are the basis for the 025 body style, but the two are pretty close in design otherwise.

The reference photo for the car provided by Micro-Trains is undated, but I did find a blog post discussing “Ichabod” (obviously not his real name!) that is dated October 2009 and includes another image of this same car. So it’s 2009 as the start of the ATP for this one, and it wouldn’t completely surprise me to know that it’s not been repainted since then.



**025 44 980, Reporting Marks BM 3375.**

**50 Foot Steel Exterior Post Boxcar, Single Door, Boston and Maine / Pan Am Railways.**

Base car: Blue with yellow conspicuity stripes along bottom of sides. Mostly white lettering which differs on each side of the

car. One side has reporting marks and large “PAN AM” name on left and large “Pan Am” globe trademark on right. Other side has reporting marks on left and “Pan Am” globe on right. The side with the Pan Am globe has multicolor graffiti along bottom of side including “ICH”

with a skull on left and on the door. Approximate Time Period: At least 2015. Previous Releases: Road Number 3316, July 2016. Also, Catalog Number 025 00 470 released in April 2007 was in the same paint scheme with Maine Central reporting marks (MEC).

As noted in the July coverage of the unweathered version of this car, the Boston and Maine listing simply isn't present in the two most recent ORERs I have. The January 2011 Register has 94 cars in the series 3200 to 3399, then... poof. But the bingo for this car, an image on RRPictureArchives.net, is dated April 2015. The same site has the car as of 2006 in the original B&M paint scheme. And let's not forget the white Guilford look that decorated some of these cars. All three paint schemes existed concurrently. Also as noted in July, the prototype car is an eight-panel flat roof boxcar built by Pacific Car and Foundry in 1979 which doesn't match the 025 body style.



**094 44 460, Reporting Marks: TEIX 247124. Three Bay Center Flow Covered Hopper with Trough Hatches, Transportation Equipment, Incorporated.**

Base car is beige with black lettering including reporting marks on left. One side of car has large "ICHABOD" multicolor graffiti across entire car. Other side of car also has multicolor graffiti along bottom of side. Approximate Time Period: at least 2012, but see text. Previous Releases: None.

Well, with TEIX reporting marks, I would know not to bother to check ORERs. Transportation Equipment, Incorporated does not and has not ever listed its rolling stock in the Equipment Register, so in terms of research, this would be a dead end.

However, the prototype car is **not** lettered TEIX, but CSXT with the same road number. The image from 2012 is on RRPictureArchives. Of course, I have my usual question, which is how does an entire side of a car get covered without anyone noticing, especially with a design as intricate as this one. But I also wonder whether CSX Transportation, like Union Pacific, has also decided to disallow graffiti on any model trains carrying its roadnames. I've read that when Maisto released to the toy mass market some die-cast C&O freight cars with, ahem, extra paint, that some people at CSXT HQ were, let us say, irked. I am not aware of any specific requests or mandates from that railroad to skip the graffiti, but that doesn't mean it didn't happen.

So we'll instead briefly check out **CSXT 247124**. The 4600 cubic foot hopper is a product of American Car and Foundry and was built for the Louisville and Nashville. From there it went to the Family Lines, then the Seaboard System and finally to CSXT, all through mergers and renamings. Some of the cars in this group remained in the original L&N blue paint and received new reporting marks. I didn't try to trace the road number lineage — call me lazy...

**N SCALE RUNNER PACKS:** In addition to the below announcement, **Runner Pack #122** (993 00 122, \$89.95), four Chesapeake and Ohio fifty foot double door boxcars with end door, is now available. UMTRR coverage was in the June 2016 issue. The individual catalog numbers and road numbers for these items are as follows: 078 51 070, 272150; 078 52 070, 272164; 078 00 070, 272176; 078 54 070, 272188. These are the third through sixth road numbers for this car.



*The following is in pre-order at present and is NOT currently available. Scheduled delivery is as noted below. UMTRR coverage is being provided ahead of the actual release in order to facilitate pre-order decisions; pre-orders close November 30.*



**Scheduled Delivery April 2017:**

**993 00 127, \$99.95.**

**Reporting Marks: TTYX 156723, 157215, 157480.**

**Quantity three of 89 Foot Flat Car, TTX (Trailer Train).**

Current "TTX" (Trailer Train) scheme of yellow with white reporting marks on black panel on left and red "TTX" on right. White on black double panel consolidated stencils on far right. Approximate Time Period: The present. Previous Releases: Road Numbers 156656, 156970, 157213, 157635, and 157697 in the TTX Turbine Set, September 2015; then Road Numbers 157713, 157762 and 157787 in the TTX Turbine Three-Pack, October 2015; then Weathered Three-Pack with Road Numbers 157639, 157563, 157786, Catalog Numbers 071 5x 815. Individual catalog numbers should be 071 5x 810 but that will be confirmed upon release.

I corrected an Oops in the 2015 Release Table when I checked on when these cars had been released before. The release months for the sets were right but the individual cars erroneously had an August release month – which has been fixed.

When both the Turbine Set and the Add-On Three-Pack were announced in May and June 2015 respectively, I couldn't discern the road numbers on the preliminary artwork, and besides, the load was the draw for those sets. This time, it's just the flat cars in the Runner Pack so a certain



byte-slinger has no excuses... as I didn't when the Weathered Three-Pack was released in April.

Speaking of Weathered, though, I remarked in the November 2015 pre-release coverage of that set that I didn't quite get the "squarish" pattern of the rusting and patches on these cars. And thus I set up another Oops, as a photo of TTYX 165406 over on RRPictureArchives.net shows precisely that kind of weathering. Do I dare speculate again here? Sure, why not. It looks like the patches are actually yellow paint for refreshed lettering, over what would be a completely weathered flat car otherwise. Meanwhile, there's a very clean and bright looking TTYX 157213 as of August 2010 on that same site.

The October 2014 ORER listing for TTX has a relatively large series TTYX 156656 to 157967, into which would fit the three cars in this set. However, there are only 25 total cars in the group as of that date. Based on the 2010 image I backed up to the January 2011 Register, where that same group had just twenty cars. I hasten to add that the TTYX reporting marks aren't listed at all in the October 2007 ORER, so we have a recent start to the ATP here.

### **N SCALE SPECIAL EDITION RELEASES:**



**101 00 818, \$23.95**

**Modified 40 Foot Hy-Cube Boxcar, "Rooftop Delivery."**

**Car #8 in the Postcard Series.**

Ends, roof, side sill and edges of sides are green. End ladders are red. Side A has a multicolor rendition of a picture postcard with off-yellow and green graphics at left and right.

Side B has a "Postcard Message" from Micro-Trains. No reporting marks or road number appear on this car.

I don't know about you but I think Santa looks a bit annoyed in this image. Perhaps it's because it doesn't seem that the doll being gifted by Father Christmas isn't going to fit in the slot in the chimney. Or maybe it's because the reindeer went Absent Without Leave again and Old Saint Nick has to resort to balloon for his deliveries. No way is that mode of transportation going to get him around the world in twenty-four hours... not without a Tardis, anyway. (Yes, I know just enough about Doctor Who to slip in that reference.)

On the other hand, a quick search on the phrase "Santa Balloon Postcard" did reveal a number of images of vintage postal cards featuring The Big Guy riding in various types of inflated aircraft, including mini versions of zeppelins. So far, I'm zero for two this year in locating the exact postcard Micro-Trains utilized for the artwork. Oh, well, better luck next month for the final release in the series.





Before getting to the pre-orders, allow me to add the image of the N Scale **White Christmas Delivery Train Set (993 21 280, \$239.95)**. That image wasn't available last month. I'm still working to get the catalog numbers for the website tables.

Also, the **Custom Christmas Car** for 2016 (101 00 803) is expected to be shipped mid-month to those who ordered it directly from MTL. It might be in your snail mail boxes by now. Check below for information on "blanks."

*In addition to the above, the following is in pre-order at present and is NOT currently available. Scheduled delivery is as noted below. UMTRR coverage is being provided ahead of the actual release in order to facilitate pre-order decisions; pre-orders close November 30.*



**Scheduled February 2017 Release:**

**074 00 145, \$23.95.**

**40 Foot Boxcar, Plug Door, Without Roofwalk, Full Ladders, Presidential Series #45: Donald Trump.**

Cream sides and ends with green roof and black lettering. Multicolor rendition of the Seal of the

President of the United States and dates in office on left. Name of Vice President, home state of president and party affiliation at bottom left. Multicolor portrait of president in front of red, white and blue rendition of American flag in service during presidency on right. Micro-Trains has announced that there will not be a presidential button included with this car (unlike the previous 44 releases).

In May 2012 when the last of the Presidential Series cars was released (Dwight D. Eisenhower), I wondered in these pages whether the series would be continued upon the election of the next Chief Executive. Now we know, and we also know whose portrait will be on the car. You might also recall that I found it premature to discuss at any length the legacy of recent presidents ("Current politics makes my trains nervous," I remarked privately to a reader when I was asked about this), so I trust that you'll forgive me if I don't say anything about the incoming President. And yes, I'd do this regardless of who won. The UMTRR is decidedly, and officially, non-partisan.



*Scheduled April 2017 Release:*

**470 00 279, \$34.95.**

**Moving Van Wagon Two-Pack.**

Consists of two 15 foot wagons of different design. First wagon is principally blue and yellow with advertising for "B. G. Costich and Sons Carting." Second wagon is principally yellow, black and orange with advertising for "Gallagher's Furniture Transfer." Preliminary artwork shown and is subject to change.

Well, how about this... there **was** an actual B.G. Costich and Sons. It became a rigging company after being a carting company, its actual location was, in fact, on Hayward Avenue... in Rochester, New York, a very short drive from UMTRR HQ!

And I even found a near-bingo image for this horse-drawn van, courtesy of the New York Museum of Transportation, which is also in the Rochester area. (I've been there several times.) "Pin striping and gold leaf lettering on this 1911 Costich horse drawn van were typical for commercial vehicles of the period," according to the NYMT. An article about the company was prepared for the museum's Winter 2003 issue of their "Headend" newsletter (online at <http://www.nymtmuseum.org/headends/03winter/CostichWinter03.html> ). The company was founded by Bernard G. Costich in 1902. Three generations of Costiches were involved until the firm closed down around the year 2000.

If Rochester is part of the "North Coast" of the United States (a little slice of the city proper does touch Lake Ontario), then New Orleans would be close to the "South Coast" of the country. And that's where Gallagher's Furniture Transfer was located, according to an image on the site "Moving Company Guide." The paint scheme on a circa 1912 (!) GMC Electric Van comes very close to what Micro-Trains depicts on its artwork. There's just a few too many words on the 1:1 size van to squeeze onto the 1:160 van. Unlike Costich, it appears that Gallagher Transfer and Storage still exists, although relocated to the NOLA suburb of Slidell.

**NARROW GAUGE (Nn3) RELEASES:** No releases this month.

## Z SCALE NEW RELEASES:



507 00 651 and 507 00 652, \$26.90 each

**Reporting Marks: SFRB 6160 and 6172.**

**50 Foot Steel Boxcars, Plug Door, Santa Fe (AT&SF).**

Brown with orange door. White lettering including large circle cross and reporting marks on left, and "Ship and Travel Santa Fe All The Way" slogan on right. Black "DF / Insulated" on door. Four small white and black simulated reflective circle crosses along bottom of side. Approximate Time Period: 1959 to mid-1970s.

My coverage of N Scale Runner Pack #71, released in December 2012, will help with this commentary. As you might have already guessed, these are technically not boxcars at all. The SFRB reporting marks are a riff on the old SFRD initials that denoted the Santa Fe Refrigerator Department. The class RR-57 cars were the first RBL designation cars built for the Santa Fe by Pullman-Standard, and the RBL designation is the reason for the reporting marks being what they were. ("SFRBL" doesn't work, of course.) They arrived in 1955 but wouldn't have been painted the way MTL depicts them until at least 1959 when the large circle cross with "Ship and Travel" slogan was adopted by the Santa Fe. In 1972, the "Ship and Travel" slogan was retired, since with the coming of Amtrak the year before, you could no longer travel on Santa Fe trains, and was replaced with the large Cooper Black roadname. Another reason to call the Approximate Time Period in the 1970s is roofwalk removal. Your ATP may vary on that point.

Morning Sun's **Santa Fe Color Guide to Passenger and Freight Equipment** provides a 1972 photo of SFRB 6157 from the series in the paint scheme MTL used. Though we have a nominally good match to the MTL body style, the prototype had riveted not welded sides and there were also diagonal rivet rows sloping toward the door at its left and right. The 6157 also had its roofwalk pulled and ladders shortened by the time of the photo.

The ORER for January 1959 shows the series SFRB 6000 to 6299 just short of full at 298 cars. It was described as "Refrigerator, DF Loader" and had inside length of 50 feet 1 inch, inside width 9 feet 2 inches, inside height 9 feet 6 inches, outside length 51 feet 11 inches, extreme height 15 feet, door opening 7 feet 7 inches (a minor "door thing" here), and capacity 4398 cubic feet or 96,000 pounds. Jumping right to near the end of my ATP for these cars, we turn to the April 1974 Register, where there were 277 of these RBLs on the Santa Fe's roster.



510 00 390, \$27.95

**Reporting Marks: BH 25105.**

**50 Foot Steel Exterior Post Boxcar, Single Door, Bath and Hammondsport Railroad.**

#10 in the MTL Z Scale Per Diem Boxcar

Series. Maroon with white lettering including "The Champagne Trail" herald and reporting marks on left and roadname on right. White on black double panel consolidated stencil panels on right. Approximate Time Period: 1979 (build date) to no later than 1982. MTL artwork shown; actual release may differ.



Yes, the Z Scale release has just preliminary artwork, but in August 1996, this same car down to the road number was released by MTL in N Scale. Here's an image of that 1:160 model.

The Bath and Hammondsport's location was, by Western New York standards, in my backyard; about 70 miles or so down the Interstate 390 and New York Route 17 expressways. That's in the thick of the famous Wine Country of New York, which runs in the same general area as the famous Finger Lakes. So it's no wonder that the B&H existed as the origination point of carloads of wine and champagne. And that makes it no wonder that the burgundy color, unusual for freight cars, was selected to be worn on this leased fleet.

While the B&H, which really did run only between its two namesake towns, had existed from 1875, the connection at Bath was with a number of different players. Until 1960, it was the Delaware, Lackawanna and Western, a line of which ran straight through Bath on its way to Buffalo. Then it was the Erie Lackawanna, which pulled up the DL&W past Wayland, putting the B&H near the middle of a long branch out of Corning. That was the way it stayed through Conrail. But when that tearer-up of track wanted to do the usual and thus strand the B&H and several shippers on the old Lackawanna line, local government stepped in to pick up the slack.

The B&H is somewhat of a fallen flag. It was saved from total abandonment by the Livonia, Avon and Lakeville Railroad in mid-1996 and renamed B&H Rail Corporation. While the original line to Hammondsport is now out of service, the B&H operates over its former connection to the outside world via a long term lease of Norfolk Southern trackage from Painted Post through Bath to Wayland. The LA&L, itself a product of branch-shedding, was an ex-Erie line bought by local interests in 1965 from the Erie Lackawanna. There are photos of S-1 diesels Number 4 and 5 over on Fallen Flags ( [www.rr-fallenflags.org](http://www.rr-fallenflags.org) ) as well as a 1979 shot of sister car BH 25137. RailcarPhotos.com has just a single boxcar image also, of BH 25123 also as of 1979. It's noted that these cars, numbered 25101 to 25150, were built in May 1979 but were quickly sent off to Transkentucky Transportation Railroad, reporting marks TTIS, around 1981 or 1982. Back over on Fallen Flags, there are shots of 25127 and 25143, in very faded paint with the original roadname removed and the reporting marks restenciled, but the champagne glass still in place. The 25143 has a service date in 1984 in its photo.



The very short ATP for these cars on the B&H explains why I couldn't find these cars in my more limited set of ORERs back in 1998. The Research Accumulation has grown since then. However, neither the July 1980 Equipment Register nor the April 1981 have these cars listed, though they ought to be in at least one of these issues. We do know from RailcarPhotos that these were 5347 cubic foot boxcars built by FMC, which makes them just a bit larger than the 510 body style (and the N Scale 025 body style as well).



**522 00 291 and 522 00 292, \$23.90 each**

**Reporting Marks: UP 30254 and 30296.**

**50 Foot Steel Gondola, Fishbelly Sides, Drop Ends, Union Pacific.**

Brown (the UP's "Synthetic Red") including trucks and couplers. Yellow lettering including reporting marks on left and roadname in center. Approximate Time Period: 1958 (build date) to

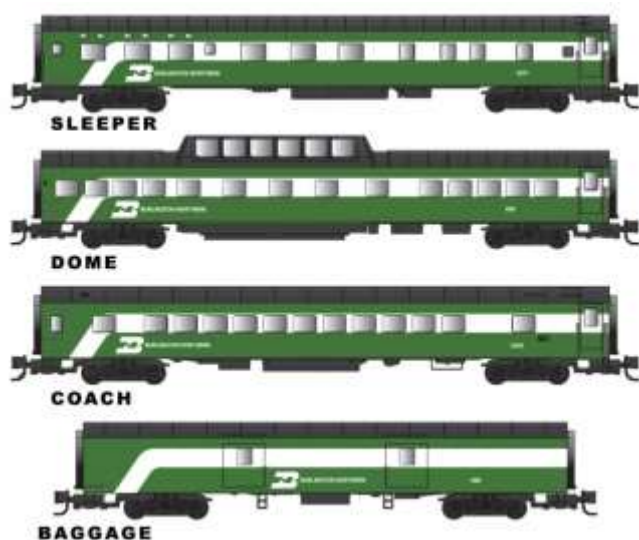
The only N Scale release of this car was back in November 1996 – that would be, officially, UMTRR Issue Number 11 – so this is not a “copy and paste” but a “start from scratch.”

Okay, then... these two cars were in the Union Pacific Class G-70-4, which was built by Bethlehem Steel in 1958. There's an official company photo of the 30294 on Page 80 of the **Union Pacific Color Guide to Freight and Passenger Equipment** (Volume One). While the prototypes were 14 panel fishbelly side cars, they had fixed, not drop, ends, with the brake wheel mounted on the end. Micro-Trains doesn't have a fixed end gondola in Z Scale.

The ORER for January 1959 has a larger series, 30000 to 30699, with 685 out of the possible 700 cars in place. The description was “Gondola, Steel, Fixed Ends” with AAR Designation GB. The inside length was 52 feet 6 inches, inside height 4 feet, outside length 54 feet 9 inches, extreme height 7 feet 7 inches, and capacity 1995 cubic feet or 140,000 pounds.

Online, I see 1983 as the year when the UP adopted its rather plain “Medallion” paint scheme of oxide red with reporting marks on left and the familiar small UP shield herald on right. The April 1984 ORER shows a total of 404 cars remaining across multiple subsets, and there were a total of 198 in the April 1995 Register, and 90 in the January 2002 Register. So it's certainly possible that some were repainted. Union Pacific is relatively efficient at repainting – at least compared to other lines – so I'll call the ATP in the 1980s though you can certainly push that out a bit. The cars would certainly look quite beat up by then, though. To illustrate this point well, the Fallen Flags site has UP 30233 in its original yellow lettering as of 2004, and yes, it is quite beaten up looking. At least the 30620 survived into 2013 and repainting this scheme and even received conspicuity stripes. Its photo is on [RRPictureArchives.net](http://RRPictureArchives.net).

*In addition to the above, the following is in pre-order at present and is NOT currently available. Scheduled delivery is as noted below. UMTRR coverage is being provided ahead of the actual release in order to facilitate pre-order decisions; pre-orders close November 30.*



**Scheduled Delivery March 2017:**

**994 01 170, \$119.95**

**Burlington Northern Passenger Car Four-Pack.** Expected to consist of the following:

- 550 Series Streamlined Sleeper, Road Number 1371.
- 551 Series Streamlined Dome Car, Road Number 555.
- 552 Series Streamlined Coach, Road Number 1230.
- 553 Series Streamlined Baggage Car, Road Number 668.

Each car is green with white band mostly across windows but sloping down to bottom

of side on left. White lettering including BN herald and roadname on left (in center on baggage car) and road number on right. Black roof, underframe and trucks. Approximate Time Period: early 1970s. Micro-Trains artwork is preliminary and actual releases may differ.

There's no Runner Pack announcement this month in Z Scale so I guess this will do. The Approximate Time Period for this quartet is perhaps the shortest we'll ever see; the BN was officially in business as of March 2, 1970 and its passenger business was conveyed to Amtrak as of May 1, 1971. Not everything was repainted right away, so I think it's safe to squeeze at least another year or two out of this paint scheme. Some of the BN equipment ended up with New Jersey Transit in the mid to late 1970s. Somewhere in the archives there are photos and slides my late father took of these "Jersey Builder" trains that ran down the former New York and Long Branch to the Jersey Shore.

My first stop is the **Burlington Northern Color Guide to Freight and Passenger Equipment**. On Page 125 is a shot of Sleeper 1371, formerly Great Northern 1371. It was built in 1951 by Pullman and its photo was taken in 1972, illustrating my point that Amtrak didn't repaint everything instantly. Page 123 includes an image of dome car 555, previously Northern Pacific 555 built in 1954 for the North Coast Limited, and later Amtrak's road number 9482. This photo is dated April 18, 1971, just days before the Amtrak takeover of most intercity passenger service. The window arrangement here differs from the 551 body style. Also on Page 123 is a 1971 photo of Baggage Car 668, formerly NP 234, was built in 1963. The prototype had a 70 foot 11 inch baggage compartment and different doors than the 553 body style.

That leaves only the coach for which to locate an exact photo reference. For that we check Jerry Laboda's Passenger Car Photo Index ( [passcarphotos.info](http://passcarphotos.info) ). BN 1230 is a former Great Northern 48 seat leg-rest equipped car built by American Car and Foundry. The window arrangement is close to but not exactly the same as the 552 body style.

**Z SCALE REPRINTS:** No releases this month.

**Z SCALE WEATHERED RELEASES:** *The following was announced mid-month via the Micro-Trains website, the MTL Facebook page, and via the e-mail "Micro-Trains E-Line," all on or about November 14.*



**500 44 870, \$27.25.**

**Reporting Marks: NP ---- (road number obscured).**

**40 Foot Steel Boxcar, Single Youngstown Door, Northern Pacific.**

Base car is brown with white lettering including reporting marks on left and "Route of the Vista Dome North Coast

Limited" slogan right of door. Large "NP" in white with black shadow on left. Large black, white and red monad herald on right. One side of car has large multicolor graffiti with a snowman at left. Other side may also have graffiti, not confirmed at this time. Approximate Time Period: mid-1960s into 1970s, though that's not necessarily relevant. Previous Releases (unweathered): Runner Pack #87, Road Numbers 42998, 43066, 43070, and 43255, January 2016. Note: It's possible but not confirmed any of the cars in the Runner Pack could have been utilized for these Weathered Releases (although I'd expect that in this case).

Take the graffiti from the N Scale release above, rearrange it a bit, and move it to a body style that MTL does have in Z Scale, and you've got your Holiday Graffiti car for this year. I've kept the ATP from the Runner Pack release, though for the Christmas Season, I'm not sure how important that is.



**506 44 330, \$26.40**

**Reporting Marks: B&O 289247.**

**50 Foot Steel Boxcar, Double Youngstown Doors, Baltimore & Ohio.**

Red oxide (the B&O's "Iron Sesqui-Oxide") with mostly white lettering including small capital dome herald and reporting marks

on left and large "B&O" on right. Double panel consolidated stencils and U-1 "yellow dot" wheel inspection stencil on right. Light weathering (my estimate, based on difference between image of previous release) and hobo tagging right of door. Approximate Time Period: mid-1960s or, strictly speaking, 1978, to early 1980s. Previous Releases: Road Numbers 289247 and 289250, May 2016. Note: It's possible but not confirmed that either of the previous two road numbers could have been used for this Weathered Release.

First, let's get to the Hobo Tagging: This month, the two symbols are a bit more serious than usual: "Halt" and "Crime Committed Here-Not Safe." Back in the Hobo Days, this was an important warning since, for the most part, these transients were vulnerable to any number of perils. Besides the hostility they could encounter from others, not all hobos had positive intent.

I had wondered whether the car itself had really been weathered, but this image from the original May 2016 release seems to indicate that the base car has been faded a bit in addition to receiving the Hobo Tagging. A look at the actual car would of course be better!



**Z SCALE RUNNER PACKS:** Runner Pack #97 (994 00 097, \$134.95), five Southern Pacific 70 foot well cars, is now available. UMTRR coverage was in the June 2016 issue. The individual catalog numbers and road numbers for these items are as follows: 540 51 160, 513958A; 540 52 160, 513958B; 540 53 160, 513958C; 540 54 160, 513958D; 540 54 160, 513958E. These are the first through fifth road numbers for this car, which hasn't been previously released.



There was no pre-order announcement for Z Scale Runner Packs this month.

**Z SCALE SPECIAL EDITION RELEASES:** No releases this month.

**MTL ANNOUNCEMENTS:** Besides the decorated N Scale Troop Sleepers and Troop Kitchen Cars, MTL also issued undecorated versions (116 00 000 and 118 00 000 respectively, \$17.30 each). These cars are unassembled, which I think is better than having to unassemble cars prior to working on them...

I mentioned Custom Christmas Car Blanks in the N Scale Special Edition section, and they were only announced on the MTL website, not in the Micro-News, so I almost missed them. Catalog Numbers 101 00 803A to D are priced at \$39.95 each and represent the four possible permutations of front and back of each car.

**INCREMENTAL INFORMATION DEPARTMENT/OOPS PATROL:** No updates from last time.

**FINALLY, IS THE DISCONTINUED ALERT OUTTA HERE?** For the second consecutive month, there is no list of Sold Out and Soon To Be Out items at the back of the Micro-News. I'm hoping that there may be a catch-up list in the December 2016 edition of the M-N, but right now I'm not optimistic. It could very well be that the bye-bye board has left the building.

This has some significant and time-consuming implications for the Release Tables on the UMTRR Website. A standard step in my monthly process is the update of these tables with



the most recent discontinued items — I'm sure those of you that have made use of those tables are familiar with the "D" beside items which have been sold out.

The alternative to having the list in the Micro-News of individual items is similar to what I use for updating the Runner Pack. I "simply" check the list of what's shown as still in stock on the MTL website, and then "cross off" anything that is no longer on that list. Handling that for Runner Packs is relatively simple. Doing the same for hundreds of individual items per year is another matter entirely.

It certainly doesn't help that I'm now three months behind on the update of the tables with new releases. The "day job" has kept me hopping and the priority for this author remains the column itself. Fortunately, I have accrued some "use it or lose it" vacation time and while the next items in queue are the December UMTRR and the writing of my "Micro-Trains: The Year In Review" issue for **The N Scale Enthusiast** magazine, I expect that I will have time to get to the website before the end of the year. As for 2017... well, that's an open question.

For those of you in the United States, have a Happy and Safe Thanksgiving. Do the best you can... we'll see you next time.

Cheers,

George

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