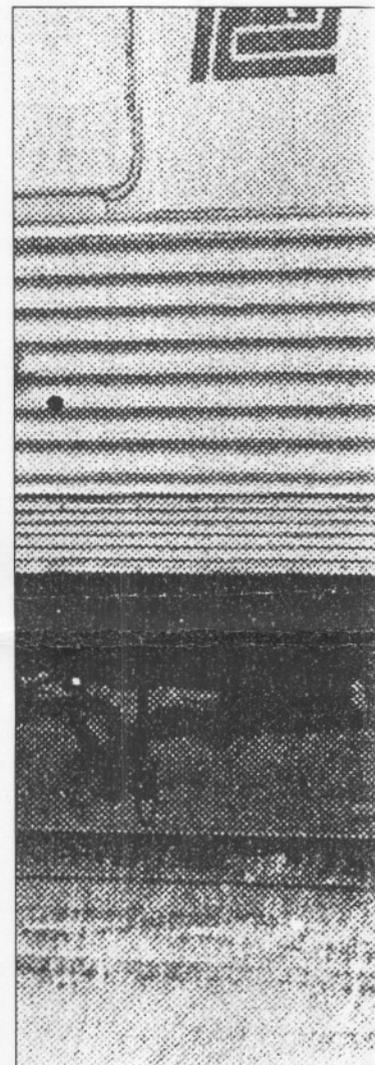
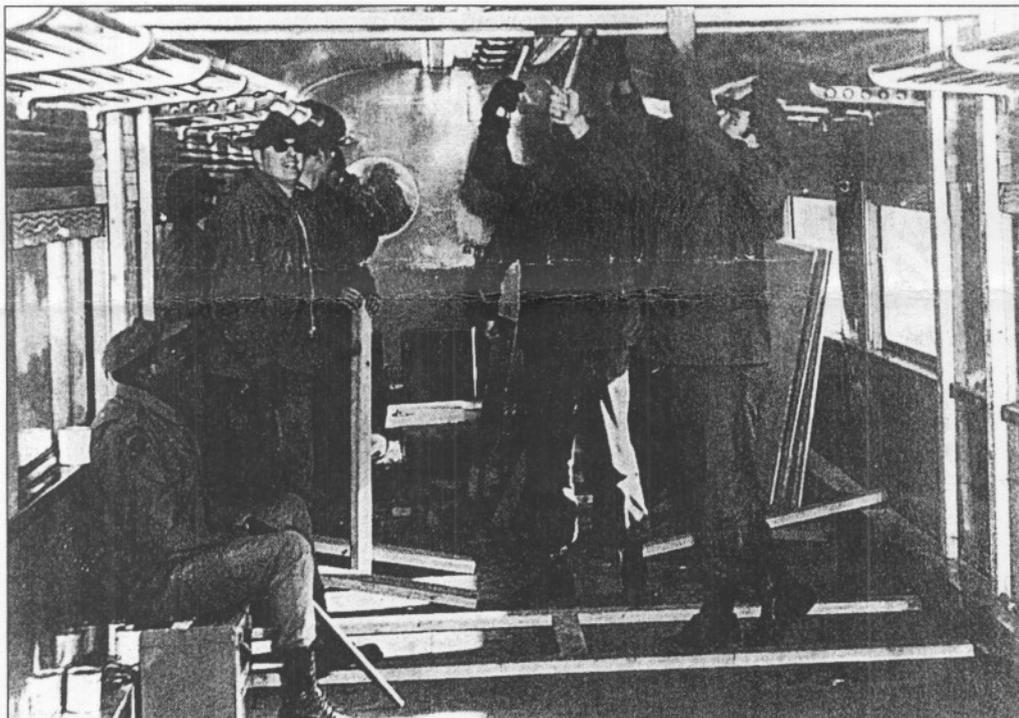


OLD DOMINION MEMBER DOUG LOOMER DID THE ECONOMIC ANALYSIS FOR THIS PROJECT - BUT NO IDEA OF WHAT HAPPENED LATER AND WHAT REMAINS



50  
Years Old

In keeping with its 50th anniversary theme, *SOLDIERS* magazine presents the sixth in a series of reprints from earlier years. This month's offering is from the March 1972 issue of *SOLDIERS*.



# Home on the Rails

SSG Don Mallicoat

**S**TAINLESS steel railroad cars may be the answer to one of the Army's more serious problems - housing.

For soldiers sometimes required to live in World War II-vintage barracks, Major General Hugh F. Foster Jr., commanding general of U.S. Army Electronics Command at Fort Monmouth, NJ, thinks he has a solution.

"Two young Spec 5s bought a railroad car of their own," the general explained. "They moved it on post, renovated it and invited me to take a look. When I saw how nice it was I figured we could use this idea to get comparable

quarters for our senior noncoms."

Since then General Foster has authorized \$25,000 for a pilot program and has requested additional funds from Department of the Army.

"I checked with more than a dozen railroads before we came to an agreement to buy six passenger cars. We could select the ones we wanted and the railroad would furnish any missing fixtures," the general added.

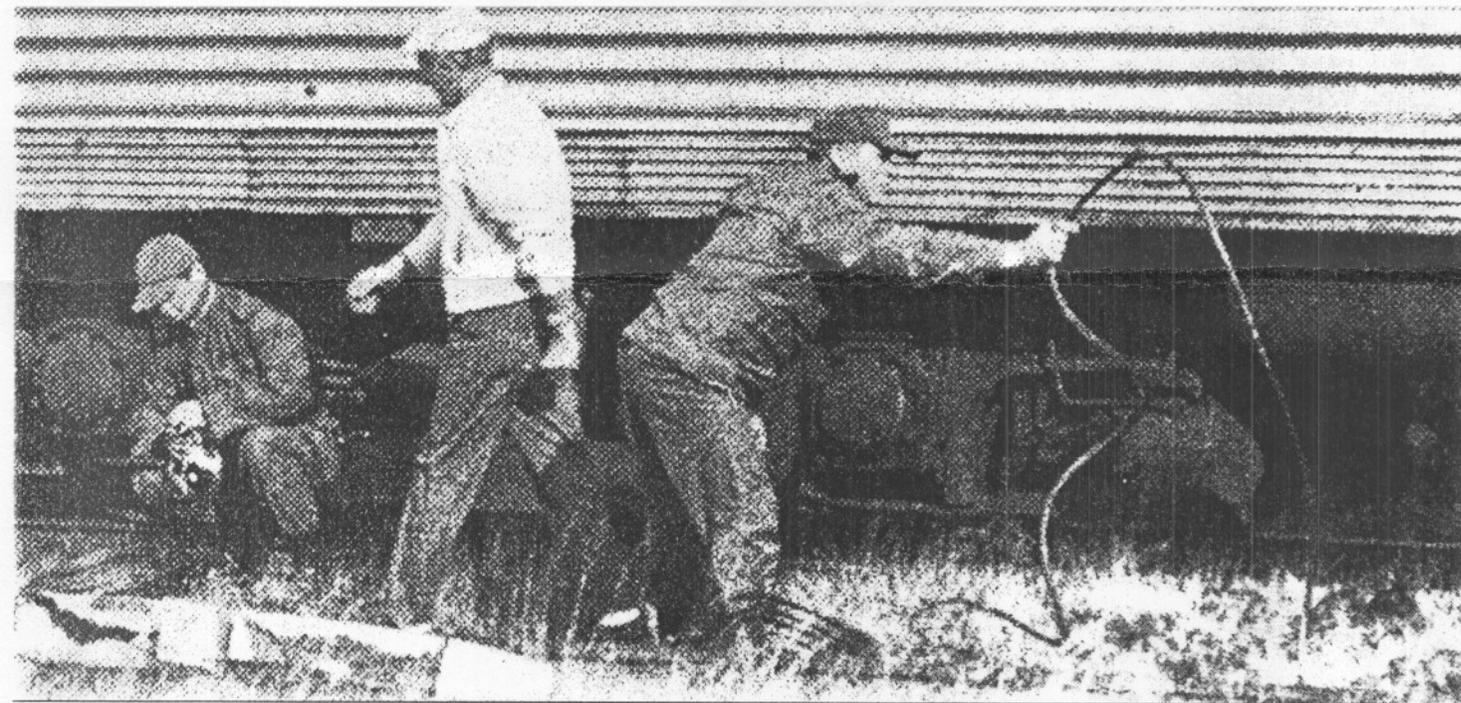
The idea was simple enough. Strip out the seats leaving an open area some 54 by 9 1/2 feet. Convert the lounges at each end of the car into private shower and toilet facilities, drop a partition down the center and there you have two air-

conditioned apartments.

The cars are insulated with thermopane windows and built-in heating systems. The stainless steel exterior needs no maintenance.

If funds can be provided from Department of the Army, the general hopes to add six more cars for housing and two lounge cars which could be turned into dayrooms, complete with soft drink and beer machines, pool and card tables and television.

Railroad cars could also be modified to serve as interim housing for married couples. One lounge would be converted into a kitchenette and partitions would provide dining and living

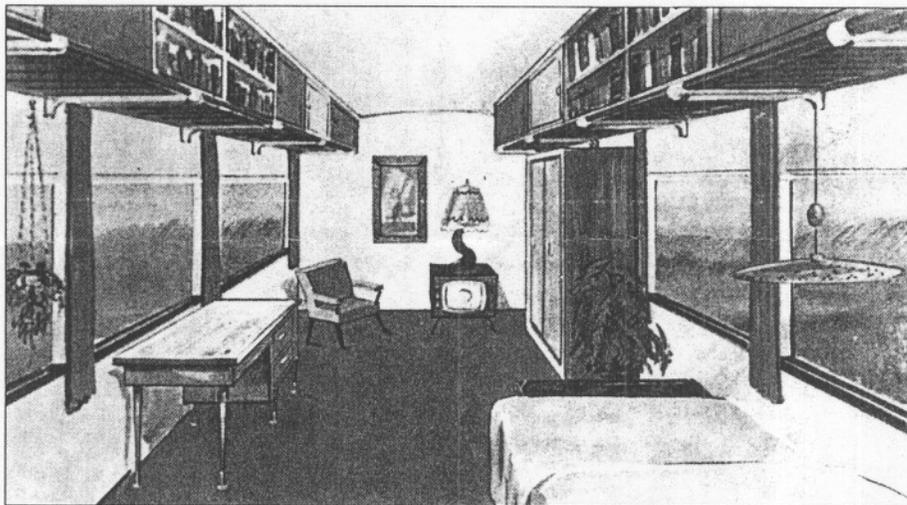


**Before the railroad car can approach the artist's concept (right), considerable work must be done to the inside structure (above left). Work is done outside the rail cars as well. Steam lines are checked and electrical wiring repaired (above).**

areas and a bedroom.

By using surplus materials and self-help the cars, with improvements, could be outfitted at minimal cost. And they would be paid for in about 6 months by the NCOs' quarters allowances. Compared to paying \$25,000 and upward to rehabilitate each World War II-type barracks, the plan is economically sound. Even the purchase of mobile homes can't match it.

Of course there were some problems but those were quickly overcome. Toilets had to be replaced. New sewer lines and electrical outlets were installed, and ways had to be devised to heat and cool each end of the car independently.



"The biggest problem is the paperwork," General Foster concluded. "Getting estimates and documenting every item. But I think we've really got a winner."

Railroad passenger cars are in excess all over the country, ready to be sold

for scrap. With idle tracks and railroad sidings at most major Army installations, converted railroad cars can provide comfortable living conditions quickly, efficiently and at a reasonable cost.

A-I-I-a-b-o-a-r-r-d! Senior NCO quarters next stop!