

WP EMD F7's 913-924

By Frank Brehm

Beginning on January 31 and continuing until February 7, 1950 EMD delivered F7 locomotive sets 913 through 921. These were delivered at a cost to the railroad of \$653,408 per set. Ordered and delivered in A-B-B-A sets, B-suffix units came equipped with steam generators and were the only unit in the set so equipped. 'A' suffix units had a 700 gallon water tank, 'B' suffix units had a 1200 gallon water tank and 'C' suffix units had two tanks of 500 and 1200 gallons each. 'D' suffix units carried no extra water capacity. The water from the 'A' and 'C' suffix units was trainlined to the 'B' suffix unit. Numbers 922 through 924 were ordered in November 1950 with delivery taking place in June 1951. By this time the price had risen to \$675,533.00 for an A-B-B-A set. EMD had also changed the design somewhat with

all doors now having rounded corners. Gearing on all units was the same as the FT's at 62:15. Unfortunately the F7's were not electrically compatible with the earlier FT's so never ran in multiple with them. Electrical connections and dimmer controls, as requested, were supplied on the rear of all units for backup



lights to be installed by the year this is the last season this locomotive will be in the railroad. Only the B units ever received them with the lights coming from retired steam locomotives.

Rated at 1,375 tons per unit in the canyon and 2,275 tons on the first subdivision all of WP's F7s were Phase 1 early, that is, with the extended roof overhang at the rear and a regular 36" dynamic brake fan. EMD constructed F7 Phase 1 units from November 1948 through November 1951. All were delivered with a single headlight, which remained unchanged throughout their life on the WP. When delivered they all wore a variant of the famous "Zephyr" paint scheme. The orange (side) stripes "wrapped" around the ends (approximately) 6 inches. The cutoff point was the edge of the side wrap – the joining of the side sheet to the end sheet. The ends were painted silver and the entire roof black including the front of the cab around the front windows and window posts. The pilots received multiple black strips and the lettering was small "Zephyr Gothic".

Always looking for ways to increase locomotive reliability

and availability shop forces were kept busy installing upgrades, as they became available. Beginning in November 1951 and continuing through April 1953 retrofit fuel tanks from EMD were installed increasing fuel capacity from 1200 to 1500 gallons. February 1963 saw A units receiving MU connectors on the left side of the nose next to the headlight. This allowed the units to be MUed without regard to location within the consist. Not all of the A units received this modification as they were traded before the upgrade could be installed. One modification was limited to one unit only when the 921A received a surplus SP type plow pilot in 1968. When retired in 1971 the plow pilot was transferred to the 920A, which would later be, renumbered the 913.

More visible changes took place starting in 1955 when large 15" Claredon lettering began replacing the as delivered small lettering. 1965 progressed with some units being repainted

into the solid orange "Pumpkin II" scheme to eliminate the silver paint, which was prone to oxidation.

916A and 924D where the first to vacate the roster after being involved in an accident at Beowawe, Nevada on September 21, 1963.

916A was traded to EMD against GP35 3021 while the 924D was credited against the 3022. It was not until July 1967 that another Covered Wagon would leave the WP when the 922D found itself on

the way to GE as traded in for the 755.

917A and 923A followed in September when sold to Mt. Newman Mining in Australia through Bechtel Engineering. This was followed closely by the 913C being traded to GE as credit for U30B 754 in November. Early 1969 found many units being vacated and traded to GE as credit towards more new U30Bs. The early to mid 1970's found the purging of the F units from the roster in full swing with most going to EMD for new GP40's. Late 1972 found all B units off the roster with the 914C and 918C the last of their type to go as trade in to GE on September 13th.

By 1979 only five units remained of a once proud stable of F unit locomotives. In April that number was reduced with the scrapping of the 915 by Associated Metals in Sacramento, CA. The railfan community would come to know what was left as the "Fabulous Four" receiving nationwide press coverage as well as a loyal following. With the Union Pacific takeover in 1983 all four were vacated from the roster and donated to various museums where they reside today.