

about the “Iron Jaws’ thing and had a great visit. At one point he told me (Quote) “When we get to Roper, you stick close to me and I will take good care of you. When the Taxi comes to pick us up, you get into the Taxi with us”.

On our arrival at Roper Yard April 27, 1980, the Taxi came out for the crew and took us to the office. I waited until Bob came out of the office and we then “went for Beans” and exchanged our names and addresses. We returned to the office area and he told me to wait while he was making arrangements for my return trip to Oroville.

When he came out he said: I have some good news for you – You’re going back on the “Ford Fast”. I replied are you kidding me? He said no, the “Ford Fast” was next out. I thanked him for his many courtesies and friendship before he left and I waited there until “train time” and joined the crew as we headed out to the bright and shiny set of four UP SD-40’s heading up the “Ford Fast” and climbed up and into the last unit.

After leaving Salt Lake City I began thinking that THIS was Western Pacific railroading at it’s best – a high priority train, a WP crew, nice comfortable cab, beautiful music from an EMD 16 cylinder unit, and sailing on WP rails. The only thing different was the sound of the “Bull Horns” rather than the WP’s melodious Nathan M-5 chimes. Also, I was sure we were running on time because there were no delays whenever we changed crews.

As we neared Reno Junction I closed the windows at the moment we entered the Chilcoot Tunnel. After we passed Chilcoot I knew I was soon coming to the end of my adventure. I left my cab and walked up to the lead unit and had a brief visit with the crew and thanked them for a great trip. We had no time to exchange names as we arrived at Oroville in the last afternoon of April 28, 1980, and I promptly got off with the crew.

I walked to my friend’s home, apologized for my absence, and told them of my enjoyable visits with the engine crews and exciting experience, enjoyed a fine Italian dinner, thanked them for

their hospitality and left for home.

On following trips to Portola, I visited Bill and Jan Reed in their home. One time he said he needed to purchase a new Railroad Approved Watch and if I was interested, he would buy one for me too.

I was more than happy to pay for mine and proud of still wearing it every day in remembrance of all those truly “Willing People”: Mel Graham, Al Hill, Norman Holmes, Bob Larson, Bill Reed and Bob Smith and the pleasure of their friendship, although Mel Graham, Al Hill and Bob Smith have since passed away.

Yes, I remember Western Pacific and it’s Willing People!

WPRM Steam Dept News

– Roger Stabler, Steam Dept CMO

The Spring work week was very successful with many of the outstanding tasks getting completed and some of the more technical work getting closer to completion. The week culminated with the Light the Fire dinner.

I arrived at the museum a week early to get some prep work completed on the WP165 before the rest of the team showed up. The week did not go as planned as there were several items at the museum that needed attention so the museum could be up and running during the steam work week.

I did manage to get the lower cab floor installed in the 165 as well as some prep on the rear tube sheet. Hank Stiles showed up to help for the full two weeks, Hank put all the brake rigging back on the tender, made up some new air brake hoses for the tender and spent most of the steam week re-conditioning the steam valves in the cab.

Bob Sims and Kirk Bair worked on the oil tank for the 165 as well as the sand box. Kirk and Bob also moved a lot of the material from various storage spots at the museum to the shop to get them ready for installation.

I painted the primer on the oil tank and had planned to paint with a finish coat the next day but the spring weather changed and painting will have to wait for better weather.

Mike Giarritta showed up during the steam week and spent most of the time lapping the throttle joint ring to finish it for installation to the dry pipe.

Don Nelson helped out as needed moving material for the steam crew.

Erik Olson and Channing Walker came in on Thursday and Friday and worked to complete the welding of the 24 crown stays in the fire box.

I had to wait to work in the firebox until Channing was done so I did not get started on the tubes with the roller until Friday afternoon. I was able to roll about half of the rear tube sheet, so the flue time clock has now started on

the 165.

David Elems was able to machine the last staybolt needed to complete all the staybolt work on the engine.

We will have to modify the dome lid standpipes for the safety valves and have an adapter ring machined to mount one of the safety valves.

I wish to thank Steve Lee and Doyle McCormick for a most enjoyable evening in support of the WP165.

Though we now have the funding on hand to get the engine back together and steaming, we can always use more funding for the finish work of lagging and jacketing the locomotive, as well as all of the material needed to keep the engine running. Thank you for your support of this project.



David "Fritz" Elems and Bob Sims discuss the finer points of reinstalling the wooden floor in the cab of the 165.

—Greg Elems Photo.