

Portable Hotel

By **RALPH WALLACE**

IN A CAVERNOUS New York warehouse, a bustling little man snapped orders at a squad of helpers. Down from acres of shelves cascaded 1200 freshly laundered sheets, 2400 pillowcases, tan wool blankets by the hundreds. Hour after hour, hand trucks clanged out with their cargo, while motor trucks lumbered up to an unloading platform with additional bedding by the ton. Occasionally the little man frowned thoughtfully at a new order slip in his hand, deciphering it, then his voice would rise to a bellow, "Gimme a hundred more linen bags—and don't stop to sleep on 'em!"

Now he had worked his way into another section of the warehouse. "Roll out forty drums of liquid soap!" he rasped. "And we'll need three thousand tidies." He chewed at his pencil for a moment and then scuttled on, tireless, insatiable. Behind him, his men piled a fantastic array of equipment on their trucks, ranging from paper towels to starched white uniform jackets.

"Heavy day," panted one new helper.

"Just average," his companion grunted.

At scores of similar warehouses, strategically spotted across the nation, there was similar activity. The world's greatest traveling hotel—The Pullman Company—had begun another week.

That week is a startling measure of wartime transportation in America. At a minimum, it involves bedding down some 210,000 soldiers on regular and special

A man leaves \$14,000 in his shoe or a woman has a baby in Lower 7, but it's all in a day's work to George, major-domo of the Pullman.

troop trains, plus 300,000 civilian customers. During those seven days, soldiers and civilians will use 1,000,000 sheets and 5,000,000 towels, and they will travel around 380,000,000 miles. That, remember, represents a mere week; in 1942, Pullman hauled 26,000,000 passengers more than 19,000,000,000 miles, or nearly double the number of the last peacetime year. And these passengers did their traveling on practically every railroad line in the United States, often without having to change cars at all, no matter how far they journeyed. This is important; it is the key to the ability of our sleeping-car system to meet the most staggering traffic rush in history.

The present unified operation of such cars didn't always exist. In the middle of the last century, a young workman named George M. Pullman left his home in Chautauqua County, New York, to travel to the booming little Midwestern city of Chicago. Between Buffalo and Chicago the separate railroad ownerships of the day forced him to change trains every few hundred miles. Worse still, the sleeping cars maintained by each individual railroad boasted only fuzzy blankets for bedding, while iron-hard bunks, swung in cars without springs, left passengers sleepless and swearing.

Young Pullman's ordeal contributed both aches and a revolutionary idea. He had been a cabinetmaker and knew woodworking. He had also had contracting experience and knew something about large-scale construction. Why not build a luxurious, entirely new-type car which would sleep passengers by night and house them by day, and contract for the car's services, complete with attendants, with the railroads? Such cars could then be transferred from road to road without disturbing through passengers at all.

Pullman designed the Pioneer, his first de-luxe sleeping car, in 1863. With solid blocks of rubber under the frame to cushion shocks, folding berths, washrooms at either end, and even two private bedrooms, the Pioneer was one of the wonders of that era. Because of its extra width and height, however, railroads balked at adopting it until Mrs. Abraham Lincoln requested use of the Pioneer to carry the President's funeral party from Chicago to Springfield. Soon Pullman was building and supplying such cars by the score. Later, seasonal traffic peaks—which meant idle equipment through much of the year for any individual railroad—made it far cheaper for the roads to have Pullman furnish sleeping cars than to buy or build them. When George Pullman died in 1897, his vision and enterprise had made him one of America's richest men.

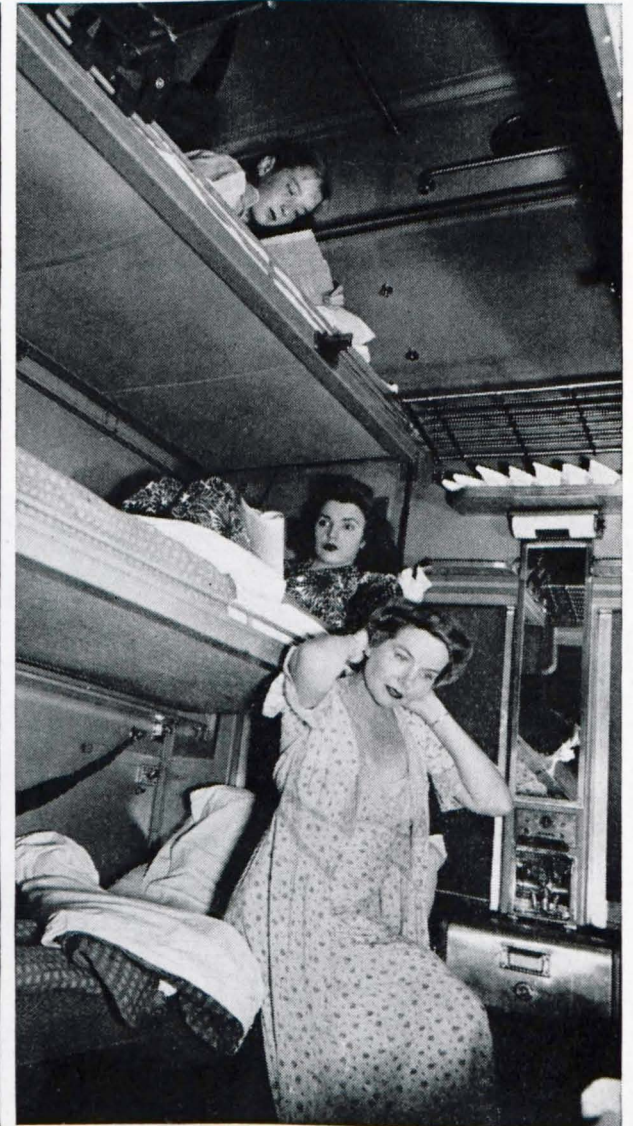
Today, Pullman's original pool of sleeping cars has mushroomed to a fleet of more than 7000 perambulating hotels which last year grossed better than \$113,000,000. It is units of this highly mobile pool, distributed to the different railroads to meet hour-by-hour needs, which make possible the efficient handling of close to 75,000 passengers a day. The cars, of course, don't simply pop out of the ground. Somebody has to know when they are needed, where they are needed, how many are needed, and how best to allocate them to meet wartime emergencies.

The nerve center of this fabulous operation lies in a single room in Chicago, presided over by a white-haired, twinkling-eyed oldster named B. E. Dewey. Dewey—"Admiral" to generations of Pullman men—first began handling sleeping cars for military and civilian use in the Spanish-American War, and recently relinquished retirement to aid his employers with a knowledge of trains and schedules probably unprecedented in United States railroading. As superintendent of car service for The Pullman Company, he talks above the bedlam of a score of telephoning clerks who sound strangely like bookies reciting the names of favorite nags: "Scratch Rolyat and Syringa. . . . We'll take Chickadee and Genevieve. . . . Put us down for Hellespont."

The routing of such cars is handled fairly simply, I discovered. "We divide our (Continued on Page 39)



Every week Pullman porters make up berths for an average total of 210,000 soldiers on special troop trains, and about 300,000 civilians.



Designed as your Pullman of the future, this 3-decker is currently used only for troops.

PORTABLE HOTEL

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operations into seventy-two districts, spanning every section of the country," Dewey explained. "Then, through the district offices, this central office keeps track of where every car is at any given hour. Suppose the War Department wants to move thirty-nine hundred men from Keesler Field, Mississippi, to Bengies, Maryland. With two soldiers in each lower and one in each upper, we know we can accommodate about thirty-eight to a car. That means that slightly more than a hundred cars will be needed."

Immediately, Dewey and his assistants begin getting in touch with district offices along the route between Keesler Field and Bengies. From Montgomery, Alabama, cars Star Bay, Stonewall Jackson and Lake Pontchartrain are ordered to Mississippi; Atlanta provides ten more; Washington, twenty; New Orleans, thirty. Before night, the 100-odd cars are on their way. To men in charge of the routing, this operation is facilitated by the fact that the names of Pullmans, which have puzzled generations of travelers, have largely been selected to permit quick identification: "Point" prefixes—Point Pleasant, Point Lookout—for cars with ten sections and two drawing rooms, for instance; "Mc" prefixes—McEwen, McDermott—for twelve-section, single-drawing-room cars; and Lake, Star and similar prefixes for still other types.

And to meet the skyrocketing military demand for these cars, so-called mobile crews have been set up to clean and service Pullmans at Army posts in order to keep them in action and cut turn-around time to a minimum. In Louisiana, for example, Camps Claiborne, Beauregard and Livingston lie about 125 miles from Shreveport. Ordinarily, Pullmans discharging soldiers at these huge posts would have to return to Shreveport for cleaning and restocking before they could carry troops out again—a round trip which might require as much as twenty-four precious hours. Instead, mobile crews ride into camp on the incoming sleeping cars, clean and repair them, restock them with linen from previously established supply dumps, and have the cars ready to go again in an hour or two.

In September and October of last year, when America's great African invasion force was being assembled, Pullman-troop-train travel soared to nearly 2,000,000,000 passenger miles for those two months alone. This startling figure eclipsed even civilian travel in the same period, and yet not one civilian in a thousand realized such mass troop movements were going on at all. All together, nearly 8,000,000 troops were carried in Pullmans last year; this year, with civilian and military travel running 60 per cent above 1942, the troop count alone will probably soar above the 10,000,000 mark.

They Also Serve —

A few months ago I traveled to an East Coast camp to ride halfway across the continent on a troop train. In the Pullman cars, as I climbed aboard, barracks bags were already being stacked in the women's dressing room to keep the aisles clear. Then, with yelps of joy, nearly half a hundred inductees simultaneously discovered the porter's call bells. For a few minutes the place rang like a five-alarm fire. Grinning porters explained what the berth hammocks were for; how to use the tooth-cleaning basin in the smoking compartment; where to put shoes to be shined. "More'n half these boys never been on a sleeper," one porter confided. "They want to know everything from how to make

down berths to why I carry a whisk-broom."

It didn't take me long to discover that it's the porters who bear the brunt of troop-train work. Although such work makes for overlong hours, hundreds of these smiling Negroes have applied for troop service exclusively. The porters and The Pullman Company see to it that the soldiers get exactly the same comforts as civilians, including freshly laundered sheets and pillowcases every night, plenty of towels, cars kept meticulously clean, berths made down by the porter, and even freshly shined shoes.

Nearly 600 porters have already gone to war themselves, and the ones left behind, I found, go out of their way to try to make lonely rookies feel at home. Many frequently lose several nights' sleep hand-running doing chores for the doughboys; recently, a group of porters chipped in and bought a half dozen cases of soft drinks for thirsty uniformed passengers traveling across the upper reaches of Death Valley.

"When I realize plenty of these boys may never come back," one porter told me, "whatever I can do for them seems mighty little."

Naturally, Johnny Doughboy couldn't move on either wheels or rails without a

Autumn Furrows

By ARTHUR STRINGER

The harvests have been gathered,
The plow's good work is done;
Once more the umber furrows
Drink in the autumn sun.

And dark the earth lies waiting
For newer gifts to yield
Where sleep now turns to service
In every patient field.

So even life lies fallow
When tired hearts rest again
That seeds which sleep with silence
May wave as ripened grain—

That they who found love fleeting
And once too freely gave
May know some greener April
Beyond the winter's grave.

daily ration of horseplay—and the porter's usually the victim. One porter traveling out of Miami not long ago woke quaking in the night to find that his khaki-clad passengers had placed a large monkey on his chest; another found a snarling coyote locked in his linen closet; still another, driven nearly frantic by a croaking voice in an apparently empty smoking room, discovered the speaker, concealed under the leather couch, was a talking crow from Fort Knox.

Such tricks go on day and night. Recently, after a train had picked up a large contingent of troops at a camp near a national park, a couple of soldiers asked the porter to make down the berths in their drawing room. Inside the door the porter started to switch on a light—and suddenly froze. In the gathering dusk a huge, hairy figure rose nightmarishly from the couch. The paralyzed darky noted that the apparition made noises resembling a concrete mixer in low gear, and that its teeth approximated the size of railroad spikes. Then he exploded out of the doorway like an artillery shell.

Hysterical soldiers heard only the screech of his voice in passage: "Lawdy, Lawdy, there's a big bear in that drawing room, and he was trying to make a Little Red Riding Hood outta me!"

Railroad officials took a somewhat jaundiced view of the incident and jerked

the bruin off the train before dawn the next day. It turned out that the bear, bottle-raised as a company mascot, was already three quarters grown when the troops smuggled him into the drawing room, and big enough to make hash out of even a Joe Louis. If soldiers could ride in sleeping cars, his fond owners apparently figured, why couldn't their favorite bear?

Actually, troop trains, with or without bears, represent simply one chapter in Pullman's remarkable history. Pullman built the first enclosed vestibule between cars—an innovation which protected passengers from the weather while passing between cars and also eliminated the danger of tumbling from the platform to the right of way while the train was in motion. Before the World War, the same company constructed the first steel sleeping car, which proved of such major importance that during one five-year period Pullmans carried more than 75,000,000 passengers some 40,000,000,000 miles without a fatality.

Railroad Revolution

Antitelescoping construction, vapor-steam-heat systems, improved brakes, lounge cars with shower baths, bedroom cars, all were introduced by Pullman. The latest device is a new-type car spring so adjusted that it will give with only a few pounds of pressure; another new device, through a focusing lens, quadruples the efficiency of berth reading lights. And air conditioning in sleeping cars—a revolutionary advance which necessitated the expenditure by Pullman and the railroads of \$35,000,000 in cash at the bottom of the depression—was likewise developed by Pullman engineers.

Today, Pullman, vitally important in the war effort, is really two closely integrated organizations: The Pullman Company, which owns and operates sleeping cars; and the Pullman-Standard Car Manufacturing Company, which builds all types of railroad cars, including freights. And Pullman-Standard, as a car builder, has done as much to alter traditional travel concepts as Pullman himself—most notably through the construction of the first lightweight, streamlined trains.

Like the first Pullman, the streamliner idea didn't prove easy to sell. As early as the mid 1920's, Pullman-Standard had shaved thousands of pounds from suburban cars by the use of aluminum alloys, and later invested \$165,000 in a lightweight, streamlined, gasoline-powered car with aerodynamic lines.

Then David A. Crawford, president of The Pullman Company since 1929, began to urge that Pullman-Standard carry its researches and plans still further—from single coaches into lightweight trains and Pullman cars. Pullman-Standard did, but the railroads weren't ready to buy.

Experimentation with light metals continued, however, and by 1933, when W. Averell Harriman, of the Union Pacific, began investigating the possibilities of lightweight, low-cost, high-speed transportation, Pullman-Standard was ready. On May 29, 1933, Union Pacific signed a contract with Pullman-Standard for a three-car aluminum train—the first modern streamliner ordered by a railroad in this country. This train, the City of Salina, was delivered on Lincoln's Birthday, 1934. After being exhibited in the nation's capital, it embarked on a nation-wide tour. Since then Pullman-Standard has built and sold nearly 900 lightweight, streamlined cars plus more than 600 lightweight Pullmans. Railroad men believe widespread adoption of such high-speed cars and trains, which can be operated far more cheaply than conventional heavy-weight equipment, will go far toward

meeting air-transport competition in the postwar years.

In addition to such lightweight cars, Pullman, shortly before the war, also developed a car with three tiers of berths. Because of their extra capacity, cars of this type, now extensively used for troop transport, will probably find wide application after the war to provide sleeper service at a cost even lower than present tourist cars.

Another important development is a duplex roomette car which, by placing private rooms on two different levels, utilizes car space so efficiently that twenty-four rooms are fitted into the space formerly occupied by eighteen. Now in experimental operation, the new duplex roomette car offers a private room with complete facilities as a substitute for the lower berth of the open-section car—and at a comparable price.

Right now, however, Pullman has little time to worry about the postwar period. At half a dozen huge Pullman-Standard plants, almost completely converted to war work, little but armaments rolls off the production lines—tanks, military freight cars, major aircraft sub-assemblies, naval patrol vessels, mortars, anti-aircraft weldments and many other items.

The real romance of these moving hostelries, of course, lies in the guests who sweep through their corridors year after year. From Rudyard Kipling to Winston Churchill—not to mention a few assorted kings, Dorothy Lamour and Al Capone—these perambulating caravansaries have served the largest and most diverse group of travelers in the world. One of their most peculiar patrons was probably a blowsy, disheveled private who recently climbed aboard a troop train bound from Southern California to Medford, Oregon. By night, he saw to it that the porter supplied him with such comforts as extra blankets, ice water and brilliantly shined shoes; by day, the soldier kept the same worthy busy setting up card tables, emptying ash trays and furnishing pillows.

When the train finally arrived at Medford and the troops lined up for roll call, the captain in charge suddenly discovered that his comfort-loving private wasn't a soldier at all. As the MP's closed menacingly in, the frightened intruder tried to explain he'd bought a secondhand uniform and come along just for the trip.

"But why—why?" demanded the captain.

"Boss," quavered the stowaway, "I been riding the rods for nearly thirty years—and I just had to sleep in a Pullman before I died!"

The Case of the Aspiring Hobo can be matched by other Pullman stories equally strange. There was the time, for example, when a porter, returning freshly shined shoes to the berths of his sleeping passengers at three A.M., stood flabbergasted when he saw a trail of \$100 bills blowing along the aisle by the dozens. He was sure no one had either entered or left the car, yet — Next morning he discovered a rich oil man had put into one of his shoes \$14,000 that he was carrying to purchase a lease, and then thoughtlessly stuck his shoes under the berth edge to be polished. When the porter walked up to the smoking compartment loaded down with footwear to be cleaned, he had carried the oil man's shoe upside down and every bill had fluttered to the floor.

It is such carelessness by passengers which most bewilders Pullman personnel. More than 100,000 valuable articles, ranging from rings to wallets, are left in berths and turned into The Pullman Company offices every year; for months on end, such property will average \$2000 a week. Yet, in 95 cases out of 100, the vanished object ultimately finds its way back to its owner.

The methods used to retrieve such belongings are ingenious. Recently, for example, a rich Chicago man reported that one of his daughters had lost a \$750 solid-gold-mesh bag, set with pearls and other jewels, on a trip to New York. At the Chicagoan's residence, a Pullman lost-and-found employee discovered that another daughter owned an exact duplicate of the missing bag. Hanging the duplicate bag against a wall, the Pullman sleuth photographed it, developed a large number of prints, and colored them with oil paint. These prints, distributed to special Pullman agents in New York, resulted in recovery of the missing bag within twenty-four hours. It had been picked up by a station redcap—who failed to report his find until confronted with the bag's picture in the hand of a special agent.

A similar case was solved even more spectacularly. On a recent train rolling into Chicago, two men accidentally

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switched valises of almost identical appearance. One man's valise, however, contained more than \$1500 worth of jewelry and clothing, while the second passenger's held nothing but a few shirts, collars and toilet articles.

The loser of the valuable valise reported its disappearance, but by this time the second man had vanished. His bag held nothing to reveal his identity save his laundry mark, and the mark might have come from any city in the United States. Through laundry associations, however, Pullman found clues to several towns where such marks were used, and ultimately the missing bag was tracked down and recovered with all its contents. It turned out that the man who had the valise didn't report it under the old theory of finders keepers, but he readily gave it up when his identity became known.

In the main, there are few thefts on Pullmans, but when they do occur, Pullman's special agents often display deductive qualities which would delight Doctor Watson and Sherlock Holmes. Several years ago, a woman passenger reported two expensive diamond rings missing. A Pullman agent on the train, puzzling over the theft while enjoying a cigar in the smoking room, noticed a window opened beside him. It was a chilly day, therefore the window shouldn't be open; there wasn't any safe place to hide stolen objects inside a train — Presto! He reached under the outside window

ledge and came up with the rings. The thief had stuck them there with chewing gum.

One of Pullman's greatest problems—particularly in these days of shortages—is that of supplies. For the appetite of these speeding hotels is both voracious and insatiable: 95,000 yards of carpet yearly, 600,000 hand towels, more than 300,000 sheets, 170,000,000 drinking cups, 400,000 light bulbs, \$1,000,000 worth of laundry work, and enough food and drink to make around 100,000,000 servings a year in Pullman's 300 restaurant, lounge and buffet cars. Contrary to common belief, Pullman operates full-fledged dining cars regularly on only one railroad—the Nickel Plate.

It isn't supplies, however, which bothers the average Pullman porter. Apparently, there's something about a hotel on wheels which irresistibly attracts the stork. Babies have been born on sleepers from Maine to California, and the average porter lives in constant dread of the excited call for a doctor who's seldom there.

Recently, one porter, the name of whose car—Gorgeous Rose—had just been immortalized by being conferred on a new infant he had ushered into the world while speeding through Colorado, watched contentedly as a group of soldiers stepped briskly aboard.

"Boss," he murmured complacently, "them boys may do a little roughhousing, but at least none of 'em is gonna become a mamma tonight!"