

8. Bernard Kempinski's Conductor Car

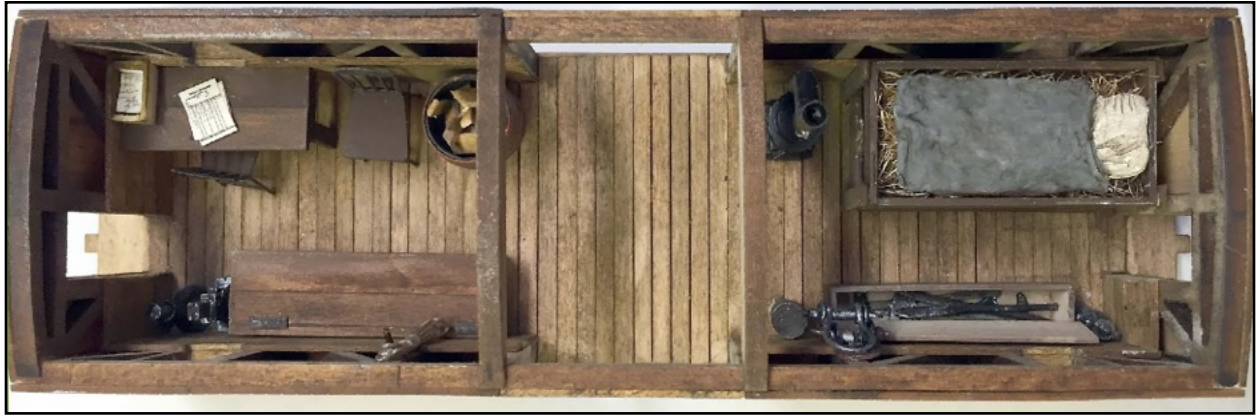


During the Civil War, conductor's cars, also known as cabooses, way cars, cabin cars, and on some odd-ball railroads, vans, were not that common. According to John H. White, noted railroad historian, there were just a few railroads with conductor cars prior to the war. During the war, the U.S. Military Railroad (USMRR) started using them more regularly. When the railroaders returned home after the war, they helped spread the idea.

I have no written record of conductor cars on the Aquia Line, however, there is a photo of a conductor car off the rails and being used as a telegraph shed at Stoneman's. So, there was at least one!

There are no plans available. There are a few photos of USMRR conductor cars. I decided to make my conductor's car as if it was a converted box car using the photos as guides.

I laser cut the frame and then planked the deck and sides with scale lumber.



I decided to add a full interior. Most everything is scratchbuilt except the stove casting, the barrel and the tools. The chairs and marker lights are laser cut.

The car sides are laser scribed, but engraved on two sides so the joint lines show inside and out. Making the roof removable to allow people to see the interior complicated the task considerably. The doors slide and the hand brakes work.

All in all, it was a fun car to build. Being a "non-revenue" car, it will help complicate the conductor's operations. At least they have a nice desk and chair to sit on inside the car while they plan their moves. **Bernard Kempinski, MMR**

