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PRESIDENTIAL TRAIN (Ferdinand Magellan" the private Pullman car)

The Ferdinand Magellan, the private Pullman railroad car which the railroads cooperatively built and assigned in 1942 to the late Pres. Roosevelt, has been purchased by the Govt from the Asso of American Railroads for the nominal sum of \$10.00, according to Mr. Chas. G. Ross, Secy to the P., at his press conf. on Oct. 26, 1946.

Mr. Truman used the car on his trip back from NY Wed. Oct. 23, '46, for the 1st time as Govt property. Previously he had used it on a fare-paying basis, as had his predecessor. The car was acquired by the Govt last June with all its equipment.

According to the Asso. Press, the car is like a rolling fortress with armor plate and 3-inch-thick windows of bullet-proof glass. It weighs 286,520 pounds. An ordinary steel passenger car weighs around 160,000 lbs.

Early in the war Michael F. Reilly, then head of the WH Secret Serv. detail, decided more protection was needed in the car used for the P. Members of the Asso. of Amer. Railroads chipped in on the cost and the Pullman Standard Car Manufacturing Co. made over the old Ferdinand Magellan.

The armor and other safeguards were added under supervision of the Secret Serv. and Army ordnance experts. Elevators were installed on the rear platform for Pres. Roosevelt. (From a story in the NY Times, with a Wash. date line Oct. 27, '46)

Presidential Railroad Car

FILE COPY

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January 5, 1960

FOR YOUR INFORMATION:

Thank you for your letter to the President. I am sorry to have to disappoint you regarding your desire to visit the Presidential Railroad Car, Ferdinand Magellan. However, the car is no longer maintained for the President's use.

You may be interested in knowing that the car is presently located at the University of Miami, Miami, Florida, where it is available for public viewing. For any further information or details you desire, you may wish to contact the Public Relations Office at that institution.

With best wishes,

(WBP)

A brief history of the Presidential Railroad Car, Ferdinand Magellan:

The Ferdinand Magellan was rebuilt by the Pullman Standard Car Manufacturing Company for the Association of American Railroads for the use of the Presidents of the United States. The car was armour-plated and equipped with bullet-proof glass windows; the weight of the car was approximately 140 tons. The car contained four bedrooms, an observation lounge and a dining room that could seat 12 people, and a complete galley for preparing meals.

The car was first used by President Franklin D. Roosevelt early in 1943, and continued in service during all the war-time travel by President Roosevelt. The car at one time or another has been over all the rail systems in the United States, Canada and Mexico. It was used by Winston Churchill, Queen Wilhelmina, and Juliana of the Netherlands, and numerous heads of State during the war years.

The car was used by President Truman, and it was on board the Ferdinand Magellan that he made his "whistle stop" campaign in 1948.

The car was used by President Eisenhower on two occasions -- one trip to Canada and one to State College, Pennsylvania.

In 1958 the car was declared surplus property and came up for disposal. It was turned over to the University of Miami, Miami, Florida, where it is available for public viewing.

May 6, 1966

Dear Mr. Blake:

I have made several inquiries concerning your request of April 7, and learn that there is presently no special railroad car set aside or otherwise designated for use by the President.

The Ferdinand Magellan is now in the custody of the Museum at Miami University, Coral Gables, Florida. I suggest you contact the Curator of the Museum for further information on this car.

Sincerely,

Bill Meyers
Special Assistant
to the President

Mr. Howard Blake
4919 Rosewood Avenue
Hollywood, California 90004

BM:DT:ltd