





myth is more interesting than what actually happened.

The first mention of Iran may have appeared in the January 1951 *Trains Magazine* article by F.L. Jaques where he describes them as "190 class Mikados originally built for the Iranian meter gauge railways". It shows up again in David P. Morgan's February 1963 article in *Trains* where he states: "The newest of the newcomers were War Department-design meter gauge 2-8-2's, diverted from Iran (where the military opted for diesels) and modified for 3-foot track."

Then, in the 1966 *Colorado Rail Annual* the article on the All Steam Roster of the WP&YR states, "a whole group of "Government" 2-8-2's was diverted from duty in Iran" and in the WP&YR roster notes Carl E. Mulvihill states: "Built for United States Army Corps of Engineers as meter gauge for Iran; diverted and converted to 3-foot gauge." This description seems to be copied by many subsequent authors. For example, Cy Martin's 1969 first edition of *Gold Rush Narrow Gauge* states: "Built Feb., 1943, for U.S. Army Corps of Engineers as meter gauge for use in Iran; diverted to White Pass, and converted to 3-foot gauge."

Later, when Omer Lavallee published his *Narrow Gauge Railways of Canada* in 1972 he included both myths, and stated in the roster notes "Locomotives built to 1-meter gauge for service in Iran: diverted to W.P.&Y. and regauged to 3'0". The 1980 first edition of Stan Cohen's *The White Pass and Yukon Route* states "In 1943 10 steam engines consigned to Iran were diverted to Skagway, converted from meter gauge to the three-foot gauge and used for the rest of the war." The myths are perpetuated in every new edition of this popular book, including his recent 2002 revised edition.

In his 1981 first edition of *Rails North*, Howard Clifford stated, regarding the USA 190s: "As spring [1943] approached the military received help in the form of five narrow gauge locomotives from the United Nations,

which the soldiers called "Gypsy Rose Lees" as they were "stripped for action", and in the Roster Notes he states "Built for United States Army Corps of Engineers as meter gauge for Iran; diverted and converted to 3 ft gauge."

His 1999 revision of *Rails North*, published with the new title *Alaska/Yukon Railroads*, he

correctly states: "As spring approached the military received help in the form of five narrow gauge locomotives diverted from foreign delivery," However in the Roster notes he repeats the myth: "ordered as meter gauge for Iran; were regauged to (or possibly built as) to 36" and diverted to WP&Y."

Interestingly, the one White Pass author to get the story of these MacArthurs correct was retired WP&YR engineer J.D. True. Of all the authors writing about White Pass history during WW2, he was the only one who was actually there during and after the war. He makes no mention of "Iran" in his 1994 book *It Happened on the White Pass* and states: "Built for USATC meter gauge, converted to 3-foot gauge and shipped to Skagway."

When one examines the facts, it's possible to see how the Iran myth might have started.

The MacArthur locomotive design was identified by the USATC as "2-8-2 Dual Gauge - African Theatre - 42" and 39 3/8" Meter Gauge". ALCO's design was influenced in part by British War Department specifications. ALCO started building the initial order for thirty in late 1942. The first twenty loco-

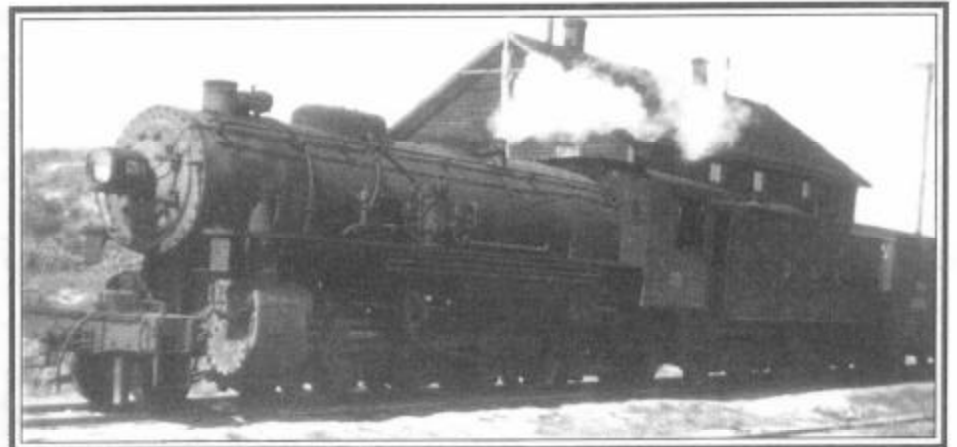
motives went to Nigeria as 42" gauge and started arriving in December 1942. The next ten were built as meter gauge for India, and arrived in early 1943. Locomotives from the second ALCO order for thirty MacArthurs went to the Gold Coast [11] and the Philippines [3] as 42", and to North Africa [11] and India [5] as meter gauge.

The MacArthurs for North Africa went



to the Port of Oran, Algeria, with the first arriving in March 1943. They were shipped knocked down in crates to Oran, shipped on flatcars hundreds of miles to the east, assembled near Constantine then transported on specially built well cars for the short distance to where the meter gauge railway into Tunisia began. By July 1943, 25 MacArthurs were assembled, and by October a total of 32 were operating, and with the need met, the rest were shipped to India. There was a total of twelve ALCO orders for a total of 338 MacArthurs from 1942-45. Most went to the Mideast, India, and Southeast Asia.

Baldwin constructed USA 190-200 in February 1943, shipped them to Skagway fully assembled, and the first two, nos. 190 and 191, went into service on the WP&YR in late May. It is likely that some GI learned through the military grapevine that locomotives just like these were going to Oran in



North Africa at the same time they were coming to Skagway. If one didn't know the different Baldwin and ALCO production histories, it might be easy to infer that the Alaskan MacArthurs were diverted from Oran.

Someone in Alaska could easily consider India, Oran, and Iran, as all somewhere "over there". Therefore it's possible to see how the confusion might have occurred. Since ALCO was supplying more than enough MacArthurs for North Africa it takes a stretch of the imagination to assume that the locomotives built by Baldwin for India were somehow diverted from North Africa.

Another possible source of the Iran myth could come from the fact that thirty meter gauge MacArthurs were delivered to Iraq between October 1943 and January 1944. Twenty four of them were still operating in 1965. Even today some people confuse Iraq and Iran so the myth might have come from this source too.

After the war USA 198, 199, and 200 were withdrawn from service on the WP&YR and by December 1945 they were moved to Auburn TC Depot south of Seattle for storage. They were subsequently sold to the Hacienda Casa Grande Railway at Chicama Peru in January 1948. USA 198 became their No. 32, and USA 199, 200 became their No.18 and 19. There were reports of these three locomotives until the early 70s.

In 1946 the WP&YR purchased USA 192 and 196, and the remaining five were left in Skagway by the Army. Nos. 191, 193, 194, and 197 were scrapped in 1951. The WP&YR continued to operate 190, 192, and 196 into the late 50s. In 1960 No.190 was sold to Tweetsie RR at Blowing Rock, North Carolina, named "Yukon Queen", and is now preserved and operating on the Tweetsie Railroad. In 1961 No.192 was purchased by Rebel RR (now Dollywood Park) at Pigeon Forge, Tennessee, named "Klondike Kate", and is now preserved at Dollywood. In 1967 No.196 was buried in the Skagway River for rip rap to stabilize the right of way. No.195 is displayed in Skagway.

A few of the nearly 800 MacArthurs built have survived as well as the myths about them. According to James Hefner's *Surviving World Steam* Project, there are about 30 known surviving MacArthur class locomotives located around the world:

- \* Four in North America (190, 192, 195, 196)
- \* Nine in Europe (8 in Greece, 1 in Portugal)
- \* Two in Australia (AC16 #221A and #218A)
- \* 14 in Asia (7 in India, 2 in Cambodia (Kampuchea), 5 in Myanmar (Burma))
- \* 2 in Africa (both in Ethiopia)



Of these, six are operational or were until recently: USA #190 at Tweetsie, Blowing Rock, North Carolina, USA #192 at Dollywood, Pigeon Forge Tennessee, USA MAWD #1798 at the diesel depot, Guwahati, N.E. India MAWD #1019 at the Meiktila Traffik School, Meiktila, Myanmar (Burma) MAWD #1062 at Pyuntaza-Madauk, Myanmar (Burma) AC16 #221A at the Queensland Railway Heritage Division, QLD, Australia.

In addition, another in Australia is said to be under restoration/repair: AC16 #218 at the Zig Zag Railway, Lithgow, NSW, Australia.

The condition of the remainder vary, from excellent display condition for #22907 in the New Delhi Railway Museum, New Delhi, N. India; to just an empty hulk for the two in Cambodia, and only a pair of frames and wheels for the two in Ethiopia.

The two in Cambodia were discovered in 2003 by an individual with the Army who visited a depot in Cambodia that had not been reported on since the Vietnam war and the Khmer Rouge takeover. There may be other undiscovered survivors in Iraq, parts of North Africa, and possibly South America.

Since the WP&YR has been digging up other locomotives they buried in the river a few decades ago, perhaps some day they will resurrect 196 and consider restoring 195 or 196 to run on the White Pass again.

Another WP&YR Myth: Many of the books and articles with the Iran story of the 190s also perpetuated another White Pass and Yukon myth about the construction of the railway at the turn of the century. William C. Moore is the one author to get the construction sequence correct before Roy Minter published his thorough history of building the railroad in 1987. In his September 1942 article in *Trains*, Moore stated "the White Pass & Yukon Railway started in April 1898 and it reached Whitehorse June 8, 1900. The intervening section along Lake Bennett was com-

pleted a few months later." David P. Morgan's February 1963 article in *Trains* states that the railway was built North from Skagway and South from Whitehorse at the same time and meeting in Carcross. He apparently missed the correct history published in the same magazine 21 years earlier. Cy Martin's 1969 edition of *Gold Rush Narrow Gauge* has the two construction crews building south from Whitehorse and north from

Skagway. When Omer Lavallee published his *Narrow Gauge Railways of Canada* in 1972 he included both the "Iran" and "South from Whitehorse" myths. In Stan Cohen's 1980 edition of *The White Pass and Yukon Route* he states "Other crews started working south from Whitehorse in the summer of 1899" Both myths are perpetuated in his recent 2002 revised edition. As recently as the summer of 2003, tour guides at the Carcross Depot were sharing the incorrect story of the railroad's construction with visiting tourists and railfans.

As one of my history profs once said: "It's only history if it's accurate; otherwise, at best it's just a good story" As the WP&YR moves into its second century of operation as the world's most northerly operating narrow gauge railroad, let's hope that its history is told, and not just good stories. **I**

#### References:

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