

Trains and Troops
Strasburg, PA

On 3 4 November 2018, the Army Ground Forces Association (AGFA) supported the Pennsylvania Railroad Museum during the annual "Trains and Troops" event. This unique event chronicles the use of railroads throughout American military history from the Civil War to the present day.

The members of AGFA who participated in the event were Donna Cusano, Paul Cusano, Chris Egan, Daniel Fortak, Doug and Lynda Houck, Anne Lutkenhouse, Gary and Deanna Weaver, Steve Rossi, John Uhler, Shawn Welch and our guest Melanie Cusmano. The educational objective was to provide interpretation of the oft forgotten and overlooked missions of the U.S. Army's Coast Artillery mobile railway guns; railroad based medical operations, general railroad support during the World War Two era, and the World War One period.

The Pennsylvania RR Museum features a wonderful collection of excellently preserved locomotives and rolling stock within its main building. Interpreters for the Trains and Troops event set up shop in the museum proper, and use the rail cars and engines as a historic back drop. The photo below shows many of our participating membership and friends on Saturday, 3 November. Member Gary Weaver provided WWII Coast Artillery Railway artillery on Saturday and on Civil War era interpretation Sunday 4 November 2018.



The location for our exhibits grew this year and took the majority of the corner wall area in the back of the museum. The photo below shows the major AGFA railroad displays on left and Coast Artillery equipment displays on the right.



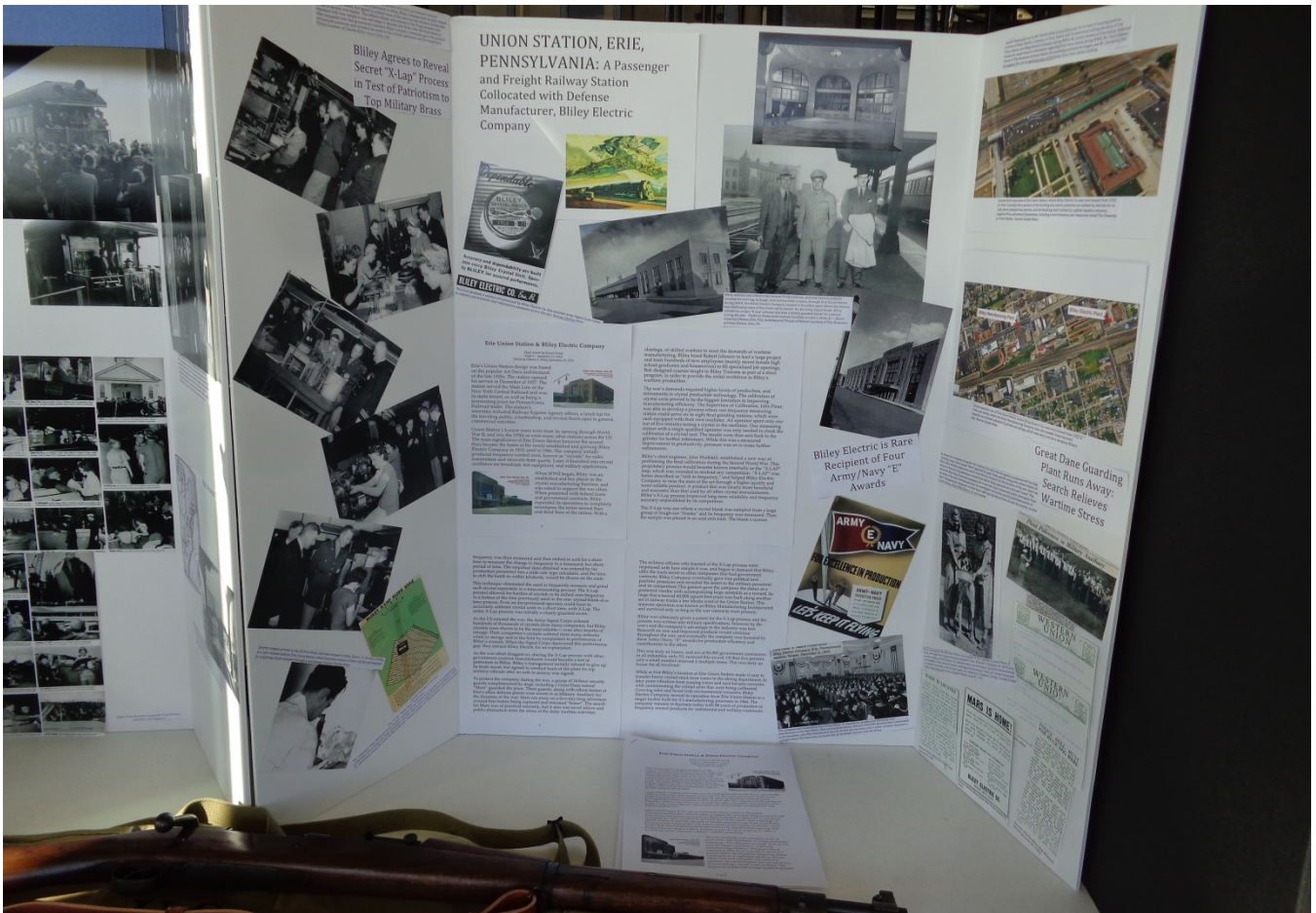
AGFA member Dan Fortak and guest Melanie Cusmano built an extensive set of photos and narrative outlining American railroad operations in support of our WWII effort.



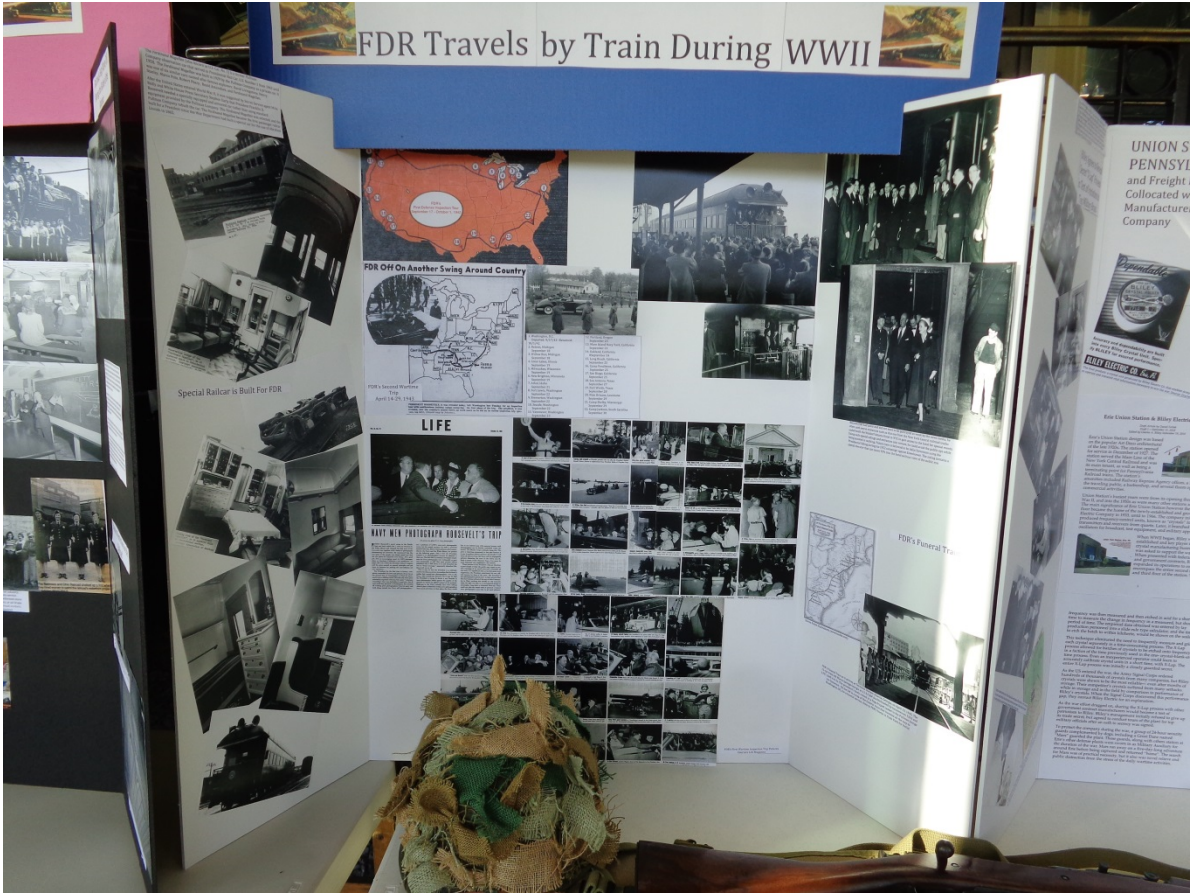
Much of the nation's logistics moved on railroad during WWII. In the photo collections below the sense of the enormity of these operations becomes apparent.



Union Station, Erie PA provides another great look at Railroad support to the Nation's war effort.



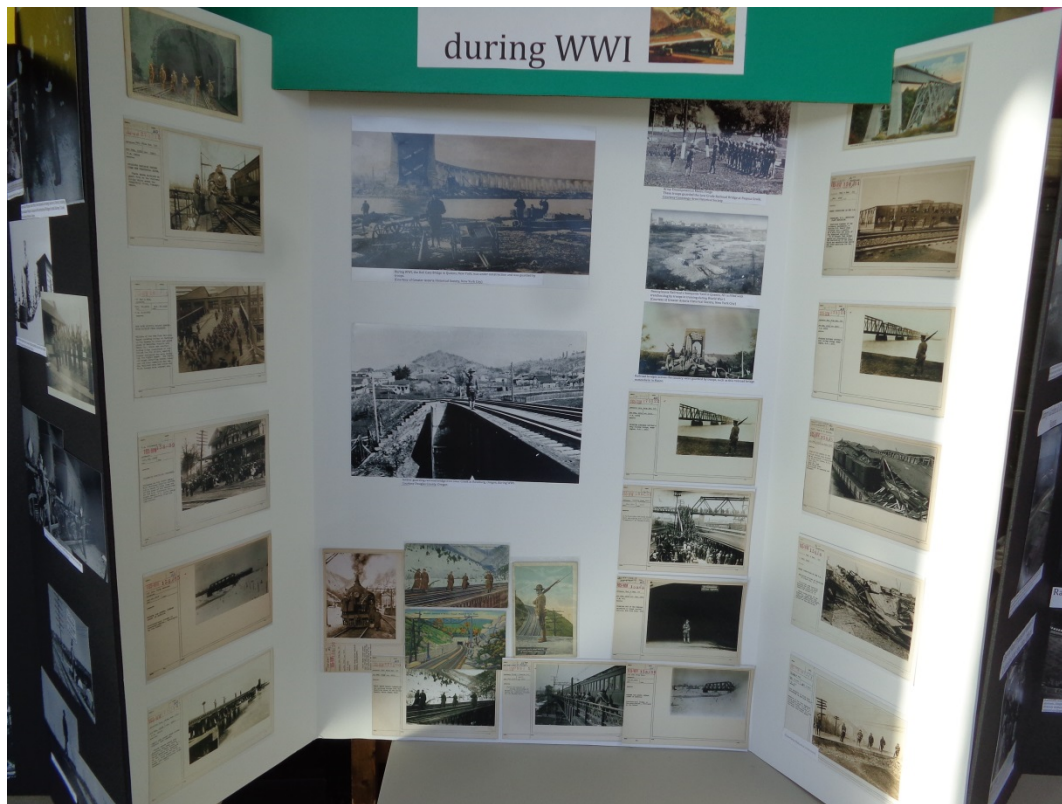
President Franklin Delano Roosevelt (FDR) traveled extensively by train during WWII as it provided easily secured transportation.



More photographs of the movement of our troops via railroad.



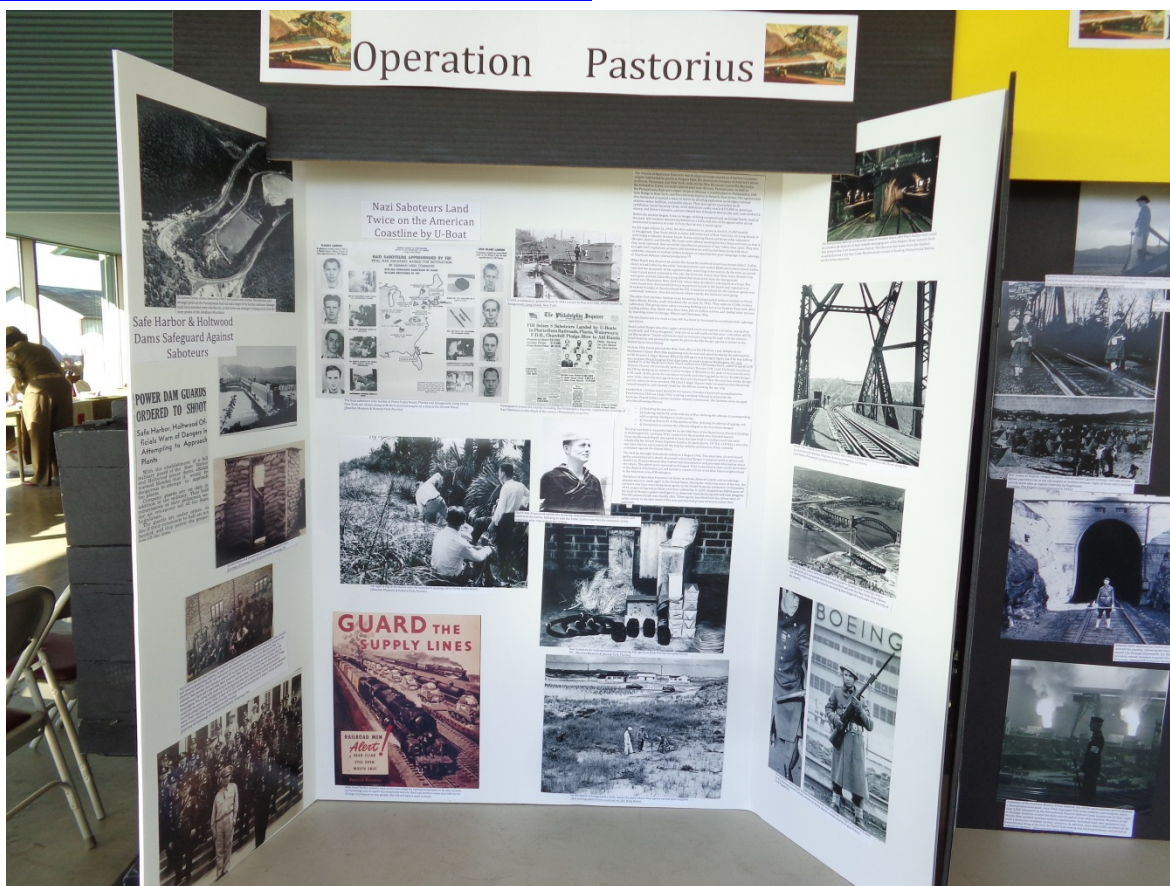
The set of photographs below addressed military railroad operations during WWI.



Railroad security was a critical aspect of national infrastructure protection during WWII. The Germans were seen as a serious sabotage threat.



In 1942, the Germans launched "Operation Pastorius" which was a sabotage and espionage operation aimed at American war infrastructure. Eight German operatives landed via submarine in June 1942 in Long Island, NY and Ponte Verde Beach, FL. Learn more at https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Operation_Pastorius.



The Coast Artillery focus was upon Railway Artillery. Below are various pictorial displays of 8 inch M1918 railway rifles, 12 inch M1918 railway mortars and M1 8 inch railway rifles.



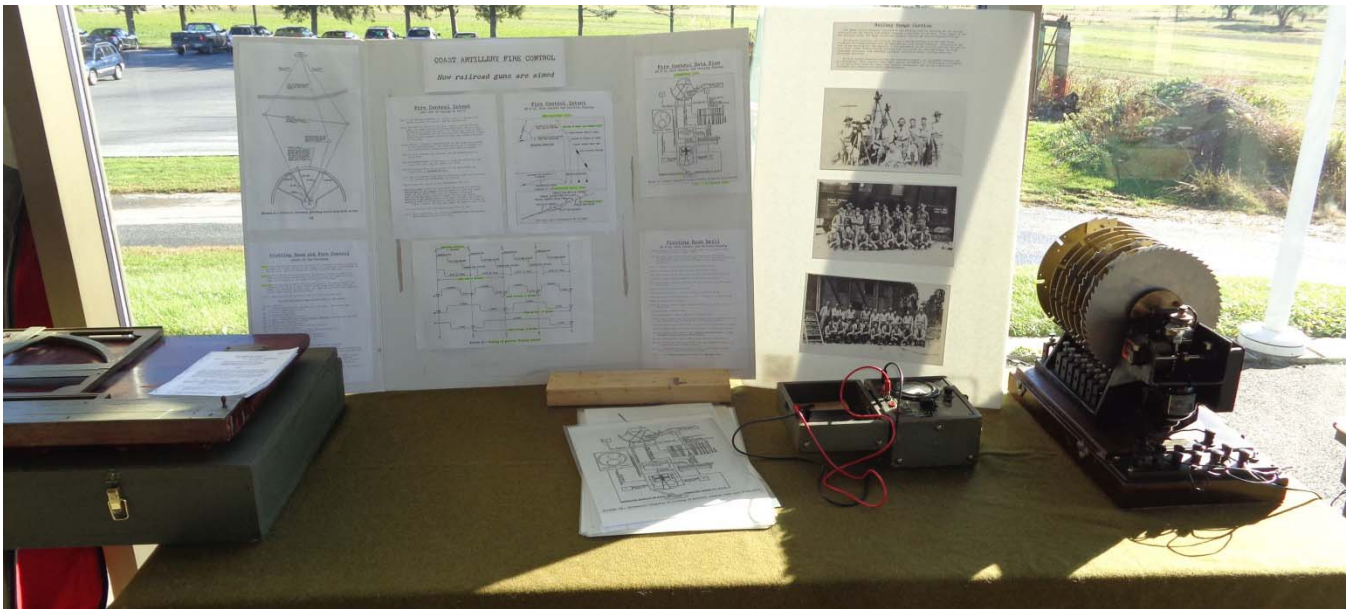
Below a key component of Coast Artillery communications is a BD 71 six line field switchboard (left), a field desk full of manuals, a 1940s Fort Hancock Coast Artillery baseball team uniform, and a "Wind Component Indicator" - a fire control instrument.



The photo below shows a better view of the Wind Component Indicator (left) and an M1905 Deflection Board a very rare piece of Fire Control equipment.



The photo below has a series of charts on fire control (aiming heavy artillery). Also below is part of the deflection board (left), an I 166 volt ohm meter from 1943 and a EE 86 Time Interval Apparatus from 1943. It is operating and ringing a timing bell every 15 seconds.



In the corner of the museum we set up a "fire control station" with one M1910A1 azimuth instrument, two EE 91 telephones (left) and the time interval bell (right).



On the table below is the electric controls and time interval bell (left) and ammunition display charts.



The medical display simulated what you might see in a railroad medical train car. The chart at the left explains how one of those cars would be configured. The table to the right simulates a "bed" on a train.



Two additional medical display tables completed the contiguous AGFA displays.



The photo below shows a number of key medical items from an IV solution bottle on an IV Pole to a vaporizer, various dishes, syringes, towels, plates and a EE 5 field telephone on the right behind the plates.



Several photographs and periodicals about military medicine on rails are shown below.



Towards the end of the day on Saturday, 1LT Lutkenhouse and 2LT Cusano discuss the evening's upcoming activities.



AGFA member Doug Houck provided a display of WWI field equipment that included examples of many of the WWI period pistol and rifle cartridge belts.



Doug's display of WWI period handguns addressed each of the four principle handguns used by US forces during WWI.



AGFA member John Uhler established a Military Chaplaincy display that focused heavily on the Navy. John is to the right attired as a WWII Navy Chaplain.



John's display shows clearly the various ecclesiastical items including a Navy "church service" pennant.



Additional Navy chaplaincy items are shown below.



Below is a collection of Navy Chaplain uniforms and a US Army field organ.



During the day, the M1910A1 azimuth instrument saw constant use. Below TSGT Weaver shows a visitor how to use the M1910A1.



Below TSGT Weaver discusses ammunition with a visitor as SGT Egan awaits more visitors.



As Saturday's public display period came to a close, SGT Egan, CPL Cusano, 2LT Cusano and 1LT Lutkenhouse prepare to depart.



Prior to attending the swing dance at the Railroad Museum of Pennsylvania, we all had a quick bite to eat at our lodging location - Rayba Farms. Below 2LT Cusano, 1LT Lutkenhouse, SGT Egan and CPL Cusano grab a bite to eat in the common room



The swing dance was a 'swell' event that combined great swing dancing music and a wonderful historic setting.



Around 400 people attended the dance. Early in the evening many people focused on socializing and eating.



As the evening continued, many people hit the dance floor. Below CPT and 2LT Cusano "cut the rug".



There was a very nice catered coffee, beverages, fruit, crackers and cheese station. Below CPT Cusano and SGT Egan prepare to partake of the fare.



Below is a view of the dance from the top balcony inside the museum. This great photo was taken by our friend Becky.



Many people came in various types of historic uniforms and stylized ensembles. Our friend Sharon Krause (2nd left) is in a very historic Navy Nurse uniform from WWII period.



AGFA members and our friends gathered for a group photo towards the evening's end.



The dance ended at about 10pm - and many of us promptly headed to the restaurant in the Clarion Hotel about half a mile from the museum for a night cap.



The next morning (Sunday) was crisp and cool and we were greeted by a bunch of little kittens at the common room door. These are true "farm cats" and while very friendly are outdoor cats.



Before we headed to the Railroad Museum, we gathered at Hersey Inn restaurant for a most wonderful breakfast.



At 1200 the doors of the museum opened to the public. This photo was taken moments before the public arrived at our interpretive area.



As soon as we took the photo, we all headed to our stations to be ready for the public to descend upon us.



The medical display had a lot of visitors through the day. Below 1LT Lutkenhouse explains some of the medical items to our visitors as 2LT Cusano moves to answer a question from a visitor out of the picture to the right.



During an ebb in visitors, our friend Becky and 1LT Lutkenhouse and 2LT Cusano discuss the days happenings.



The Coast Artillery fire control exhibits stayed busy - below SGT Egan explains the Time Interval System EE 86.



Below SGT Egan gives a family a brief explanation on how the M1910A1 azimuth instrument works as T 4 Rossi looks on.



The photo below shows the M1910A1 telescope aimed at a target which in this instance is a large broadcasting antenna.



The photo below shows the antenna tower the instrument is focused upon. This tower is about 15 miles away from the instrument.



The farm homestead below is about 6 miles from the instrument.



A different homestead that is about 10 miles away from the instrument.



As the public began to thin out in the late afternoon, 1LT Lutkenhouse and 2LT Cusano decide to have a little fun ...below they are on the "hospital train beds".



And below they are struggling to get out of the glass enclosure!



The day's end saw everyone start to pack up and load out their equipment. Below SSG Houck and Lynda Houck remove their displays.



Below SGT Egan walks out of the museum to his car...or is he "on patrol"?



We all agreed that this was a wonderful day and took our last picture on the back of a Pullman Passenger car.



We look forward to returning to Strasburg for Troops and Trains in 2019 and we hope to see you there! For more information, visit AGFA Website <http://armygroundforces.org> and the Troops and Trains website at: <http://www.rrmuseumpa.org/>