

Company B Armored Train Design Philosophy and Fact Sheet

Up to this point in time Company B has had a very simple design philosophy, build neat stuff in 1/56 to game with. The armored train project required many more decisions than a normal AFV project and it has been suggested that we share them with our customers.

Choosing the general period was quite simple. The years surrounding 1920 find the modern armored train still in its infancy. They were rarely purpose built from the ground up but rather converted from existing rolling stock at local rail yards and industrial centers. They were built with materials on hand and armament was scrounged from wherever it could be found. At first field artillery or tanks were simply placed on the railcars. Very quickly naval guns stripped from their vessels or artillery taken from fortifications was added. These required special mounts and additional modifications to the cars. Artillery crews found themselves exposed to enemy small arms fire and so protective measures such as raising and covering the sides with steel plate were added. For us this was the time period that would provide the most interesting trains both in usage and variation.

Many of these trains survived in use for decades. They were captured and recaptured then returned to service by the present owners. Even with the advent of the larger more powerful trains these early units were still found useful and rarely scrapped. Several made their way into China others ended up with the smaller states of Western Europe.

What we have built is a train for this period that is playable right out of the box. The

gamer can assemble paint and play. Just as important to us was the goal of making it fully customizable. The cars for the train are built as modules. The base module is the flat car. All of the other bodies in the line are built on top of that. This means that the selection of the types of cars that makeup the train is up to the individual gamer. Additionally, it takes only moderate modeling skills to convert and customize existing cars or to build your own variants from the flatcar up.

The train comes set up to run on S gauge track. The overriding concern was to build the models to run on commercially available track to keep costs as low as possible. Track sections from resin would cost at least three to four times more than commercial track. From there the choice was rather simple. HO gauge was far too narrow and O gauge a little too big. Also, my HLBSA train runs on S gauge and I didn't want to have to mothball that. In the US we buy American Models Universal Track. It is scale track that has lowered rail height when compared to toy track and realistic ties. We've had no problems purchasing various pieces from <http://www.americanmodels.com/misc/track.html> but there are multiple suppliers. We have no connections with any of them. Nine feet of track costs less than \$30.

The wheel mounting, while preset for S gauge, can be varied by the modeler if they wish to use another gauge. Company B has acquired stock of 12" track sections. These are invaluable in building the models with proper gauge and alignment. ***It is highly recommended that the customer include one of these in their purchase.*** Larger amounts should be purchased from retail suppliers.

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The engine/tender combination was normally two separate units but on armored trains it was often connected with steel plate to protect the crew. The two units were hinged to allow negotiation of smaller radius curves.



This engine/tender combination that was one of the units we used to help design our model. The actual engine resides in a Russian museum.



Flatcars not only serve as the base module for our other cars but were useful as the first car of the train. They would be the first to discover broken rail sections or detonate mines saving the rest of the train from destruction. Various supplies needed to rebuild

destroyed track and roadbed were often carried on flatcars. Note the armored caps covering the wheels. Wheels were one of the most vulnerable parts of the trains.



The original gondola with low sides provided little protection for the gun crews. Sides were raised to shoulder height. Then angled ends allowed the artillery a larger

radius of fire. When mounting naval or fortress artillery the sides would sometimes cover only half the car allowing full traverse of these pedestals guns.

Two more cars are currently being mastered.

The first is heavy machine gun car. Basically, a freight car or goods van was modified by building an interior wall eight to ten inches from the exterior wall. The empty space was filled with poured concrete. Three to five firing ports per side were left open for Maxim MGs. Cars such as these prevented armored trains from being swarmed by enemy infantry.

The second is a turreted artillery car. This is the obvious next step from the simple emplacement of field artillery. Somewhat of a heavy tank on railroad wheels, they had good armor protection and excellent field of fire. This armament would greatly improve both the tactical usefulness and fear factor of the armored train.