



# REPORT

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# Seasons Greetings

## 'MacARTHUR' COMES TO SAN DIEGO

by Larry Rose & Dick Pennick

"General MacArthur" returned last month, not to the Philippines as he promised in 1942, but to the Santa Fe/Amtrak depot in San Diego, and PSRMA was there in grand style. Universal Studios (MCA Universal) film crews set up in front of the depot to shoot a segment of their upcoming World War II epic about the exploits of General Douglas MacArthur. Three restored items of PSRMA rolling stock, rented by the studio, got starring roles.

Sitting on the baggage track between the depot and the Santa Fe mainline was our Coos Bay Lumber Co. 2-8-2T No. 11 followed by ex-Santa Fe Cafe Observation 1509 and Pullman Observation "VICTORIA". A handsome consist indeed, but with an Australian accent! The movie company painted No. 11's beautiful silver smokebox green and the pilot red, relettering "Victorian Railways" on the depot side of the saddletank. A plate with the initials "AR" was placed over the front number plate. The sequence re-produced MacArthur's arrival and speech at the Melbourne



— Staff Photo

Gregory Peck as Gen. Douglas MacArthur in film biography now being made, partly in San Diego. (San Diego Union photo)

(cont'd from P. 1) Australia depot in 1943, and the San Diego station was re-decorated accordingly by Universal's prop department.

Gregory Peck strolls in front of the depot in his "MacArthur" uniform (Larry Rose).

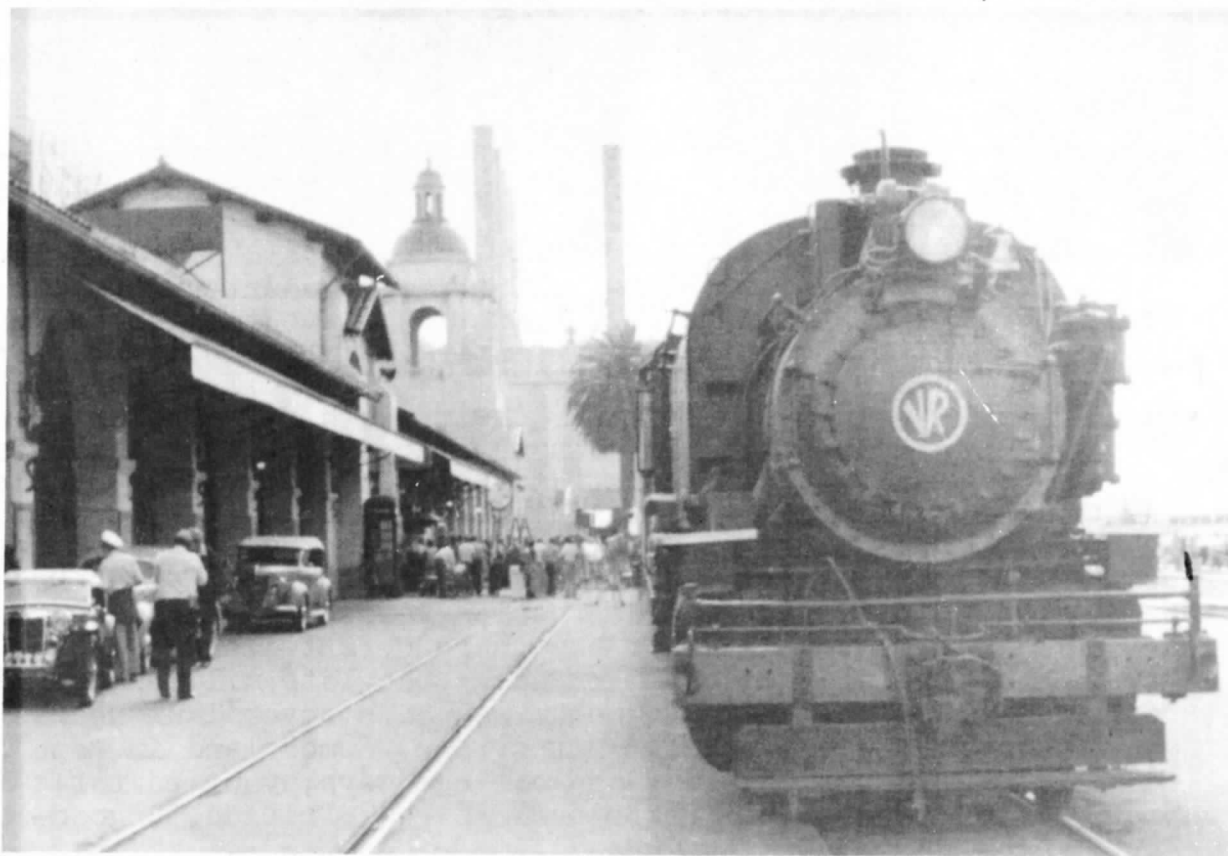


The "Vic" and No. 11 had been moved to the depot early on the morning of October 17th from their display berth on Harbor Drive. The 1509 followed soon after. The unusual train caused considerable interest among Amtrak passengers and passersby, many of whom had never seen a steam locomotive at the downtown station.

Universal had earlier filmed landing sequences at the Navy's Amphibious base on Coronado's Silver Strand. Gregory Peck, who is cast in the part of the celebrated Army General, waded ashore with his "aides" from a landing vessel, recreating the first landing of American troops at Leyte Gulf on Oct. 20, 1944. An interesting sidelight: Roger Wrenn, 29-year veteran of the San Diego Union's photographic staff, was given V.I.P. treatment at the beach set during the filming. Seems he was the same Roger Wrenn who, in 1945, took the historic photograph of MacArthur's landing on the island of Luzon in the Philippines to make good his promise to recapture Manila. The photo, taken for Yank Magazine, was picked up by the wire services and distributed worldwide. Arrangements were made with the film's director to stage a landing sequence especially for Wrenn and his camera.

Eventually, the County's Air Pollution Control District came to object to the methods by which Universal simulated the smoke of a battle zone. A permit had been obtained to utilize "smoke pots" and diesel oil for one day between Oct. 18th and 23rd. However, this method apparently created inadequate "battle smoke", so rubber tires were added, an APCD "no-no". Also, repeated takes were necessary before the scene was "canned", all to the accompaniment of dense black smoke. Universal was cited for three violations, each carrying a \$500 fine, but the case is so far unresolved.

The filming at the depot was quite interesting with some super special effects. Using a long steel cable, a hired Santa Fe diesel locomotive pulled the PS-RMA train for



Filming gets under way on a foggy morning in San Diego. (Larry Rose foto)



Mr. Peck and troupe rehearse a scene from the platform of PSRMA's elegant VICTORIA (Larry Rose foto).

(cont'd from P. 7) the depot arrival sequence. A camera was mounted on No. 11's smokebox, facing toward the rear of the train. With dry ice "steam" blowing out from old No. 11 and from between the cars, the effect was very convincing. Some "travelling" shots were also filmed on board the VICTORIA with a prop man outside waving an occasional "passing tree" in front of the window to complete the illusion.

Looking out for PSRMA interests during the week-long filming were Barbarann Parker and Bert Straw. Bert was on the set at 6 o'clock every morning and was the last to leave every evening, making sure the equipment was locked up for the night. Also on the scene almost every day was our youngest member, John Pattison.

Museum people had the run of the set and by the end of the week were on a first name basis with the film crew and most of the actors. Mr. Peck also found time to chat with Museum members. "He sure is a nice man", said starstruck Barbarann admiringly. Bert Straw was given a copy of the day's script which Peck graciously autographed for him with a personal note.

La Jolla-born (April 5, 1916), Eldred Gregory Peck left San Diego about 1935, transferring from San Diego State College to attend UC-Berkeley. It is doubtful that he said "I shall return" as his film counterpart did when President Roosevelt ordered MacArthur to leave the Philippines after the outbreak of WW II. Peck's father and mother con-

tinued to reside in La Jolla until their death five or six years ago.

Peck, who went by his first name Eldred in those days, was affiliated with Epsilon Eta fraternity at State, and was active in inter-fraternity athletics. Jack Thompson, married to a cousin of Dick Pennick's wife Karen, was a student at State at the time. He knew Peck's father, Gregory, Sr., quite well. The senior Peck had worked as a pharmacist at the old Ferris & Ferris Drug store at 5th & Market for years. Those were depression years and few students owned cars. Many carpoled with those that did, but there were two students who could afford to drive alone. One of these was Irv Kahn, the late millionaire San Diego developer and land tycoon. The Railway Museum had made several unsuccessful attempts to obtain a portion of Kahn's Penasquitos, Inc.-owned land in Rose Canyon for a public museum. During those long-ago college days, your editor's mother-in-law occasionally dated one of the future actor's good friends, a good-looking fellow by the name of Wilfred Hudson. Hudson and Peck used to do a lot of swimming around



Memories of days gone by. The Spanish-style arches of the 1914 Amtrak depot frame Coos Bay 11 and 1509. Overhanging awning was a studio prop. (Dick Pennick)

sites, a drunken driver being chased by the San Diego Police roared down the tracks in front of the depot, lost control and crashed into car 1509. The rear steps on the left side of the observation platform were completely destroyed. The drunk didn't know how lucky he was to be in custody of the police instead of the enraged PSRMA restoration crew! The Museum is waiting word from our insurance company before starting any repair work. Also, number of windows in the "Vic" were cracked by the hot Klieg lights, but this and other movie damage was repaired by Universal.

Our "Golden Age of Railroading" exhibit is again back in business with the now-immortal movie stars VICTORIA and the Coos Bay steamer sharing the limelight with the Star of India sailing ship. Car 1509 is back at the Main base temporarily until it can be moved to Miramar NAS.

"MacArthur" is being produced by Frank McCarthy with direction by Joseph Sargent, and is due to be released next summer. Dan O'Hirlihy plays the part of President Harry Truman. Be sure to see the film, regardless of your personal opinion of the late General. It is very likely that PSRMA will arrange a special movie party for members. Watch REPORT for further developments. kzformv, tlmv4yfg2mlg5ulitlggvm.gsrmpmt6lu7blf4lm2lfi3zmmrevihzib.

Special thanks are due Bert Straw for looking after the Museum's equipment during the filming, and to Wally Barber and the Walter H. Barber & Son company for the use of the winch truck again to handle the Coos Bay main rods before and after the move to the depot.

### PENNICK GIVES TALKS

Board Chairman Dick Pennick, an authority on San Diego area railroad history, recently addressed meetings of the Ramona Pioneer Historical Society and Native Daughters of the Golden West.



A handsome consist indeed! (Dick Pennick foto)

La Jolla when they weren't attending school or working.

Also on the depot location set part of the time (long enough to bum a free lunch with the movie extras) were PSRMAers Larry & Tanya Rose, Ken Helm, Jim Lundquist, and Ron Milot. All Museum members present had a great time and wouldn't have missed the fun for anything. Young John Pattison even played hookey from school to be there. William B. Fletcher, chairman of the Southern California Chapter, Railway & Locomotive Historical Society, was a visitor during the shooting. Turns out Fletcher attended the same school in Missouri years ago that was also the alma mater of our President Chop Kerr's late father, H. C. Kerr, Sr.

One sad note: several nights after the movie people pulled out, but before our equipment could be returned to their regular storage