

The Presidential Communications Railroad Car History, 7/9/2022

Les Locklear sent me a document about the Presidential Communications Railroad Car used from 1942 through 1961. A couple points of interest are their use of SP-600's and R-390A's and the antennas on the roof. The picture on page 3 appears to be from the JFK Library Archives dated 5-29-1961. Notice the radio control console contained 2 SP-600's and 2 R-390A's. See the picture on page 8 and notice in 3-17-1961 that there are 4 R-390A's. It's interesting that the QSL card shown from W3WTE is from Oct. 2/3, 1956 and the receiver used was a Collins 390A. I found the original that Les sent me on the web and here's a direct link to it:

[The presidential communications railroad car](#)

I did some further investigation and found a document that has better pictures of the Control Console and the antennas on the roof. Also of interest is the date (from the JFK Library Archives) of the 1st picture in the file, 5-29-61. Where as, the rest of the pictures are dated 3-17-61, and the 8th and 9th were of particular interest to me. I thought it was worthwhile, so here's a link to it:

[Presidential Train Communications Car \(cryptome.org\)](#)

Another document on this subject shows the use of 4 SP-600's and no R-390A's in 1956. Here's a link to it (it's the same link as the second one in the above file):

[Presidential Comm Train Car \(hamgallery.com\)](#)

I'm not sure if the dates on the pictures got mixed up, but it does not make much sense to me that the 4 receivers in the Control Console would be changed from 4 SP-600's in 1956 to 4 R-390A's and then to half and half in 5-29-61.

In that last document above (on 'hamgallery'), the article referred to a document in Ham Radio by Charles Clemens Jr, the 1st CW operator on the Presidential Train from 1942 to 1948. It starts on page 58 and is an interesting account. Here's a link to it:

[Ham Radio March 1975.pdf \(archive.org\)](#)

I found all of this information and pictures to be very interesting to me.

Regards, Larry Haney