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INTERNATIONAL

VOIE LIBRE

THE MAGAZINE THAT CAMPAIGNS FOR A DIFFERENT KIND OF RAILWAY MODELLING

Editorial #85

VOIE LIBRE GETS A FACE-LIFT

Voie Libre turns 20! For two decades, we have been promoting a different approach to railway modelling, another way of building layouts, an offbeat look at things! From the outset, *Voie Libre* campaigned for a shackle-free kind of modelling. Voie Libre fights for creative modelling!

To better emphasize our dynamics and originality, we have given our graphic design a facelift, and spruced up the editorial line. More than ever, we take responsibility and claim our active commitment to "practicing railway modeling differently". And as we are in the field of activism, *Voie Libre*, with full support from the LR Presse group, has boldly stepped into the production of rolling stock. The P'Tits Kits Voie Libre are born! New and original models, produced using the latest technologies, which, we hope, will meet your expectations. The first release is a sugar beet consist.

Enjoy your reading and happy modelling.

François Fontana

→ Follow us on Keep in touch all the year round with VOIE LIBRE on blog.voielibre.com

Military 60cm gauge, THREE, FOUR OR FIVE AXLES

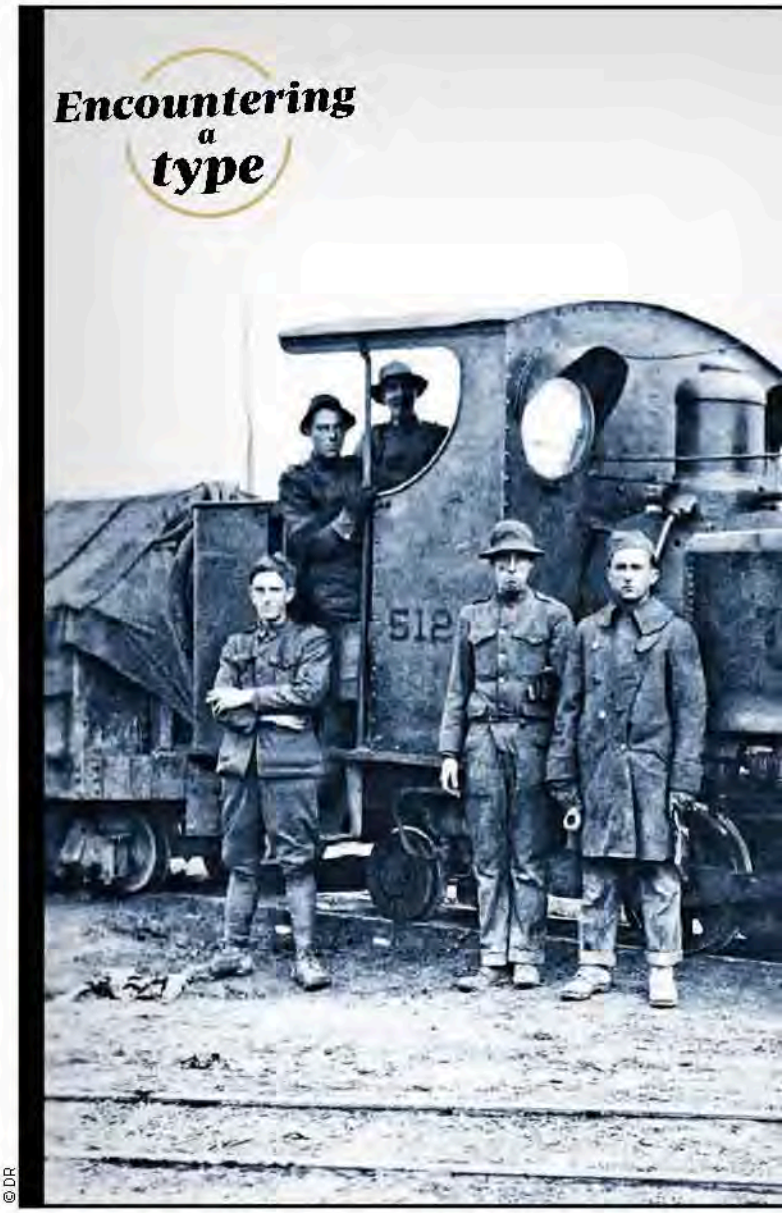
What can have led all the Allied armies to adopt five-axle engines for their 60cm gauge military railways and to order them from the United States? The answer lies possibly in France and is due to a trivial incident...

Text: Éric Fresné

The first railways to call on 60cm gauge track found themselves facing a serious problem. While meter gauge railways had found in the 0-6-0 T type the engine design that combined power and lightness, on 60cm gauge, this equation did not work out. A three-axle engine was too light and unable to provide acceptable commercial service.

3 + 2 OR 2 + 3 MAKE 5!

Despite their Decauville Mallets, the Chemins de Fer du Calvados found themselves facing such a problem around 1900, on their line from Caen to Luc-sur-Mer. By calling on the Weidknecht company, they obtained a suitable type. The addition of a bogie at the front meant that a sufficiently large boiler could be fitted to the engine, producing a powerful and fast 4-6-0 type. This type was so successful that the Weidknecht order book quickly filled up. The Calvados system wanted more of the same. Tarn bought some. Consecration occurred when the Moroccan military railways adopted the type as their "express engine"!

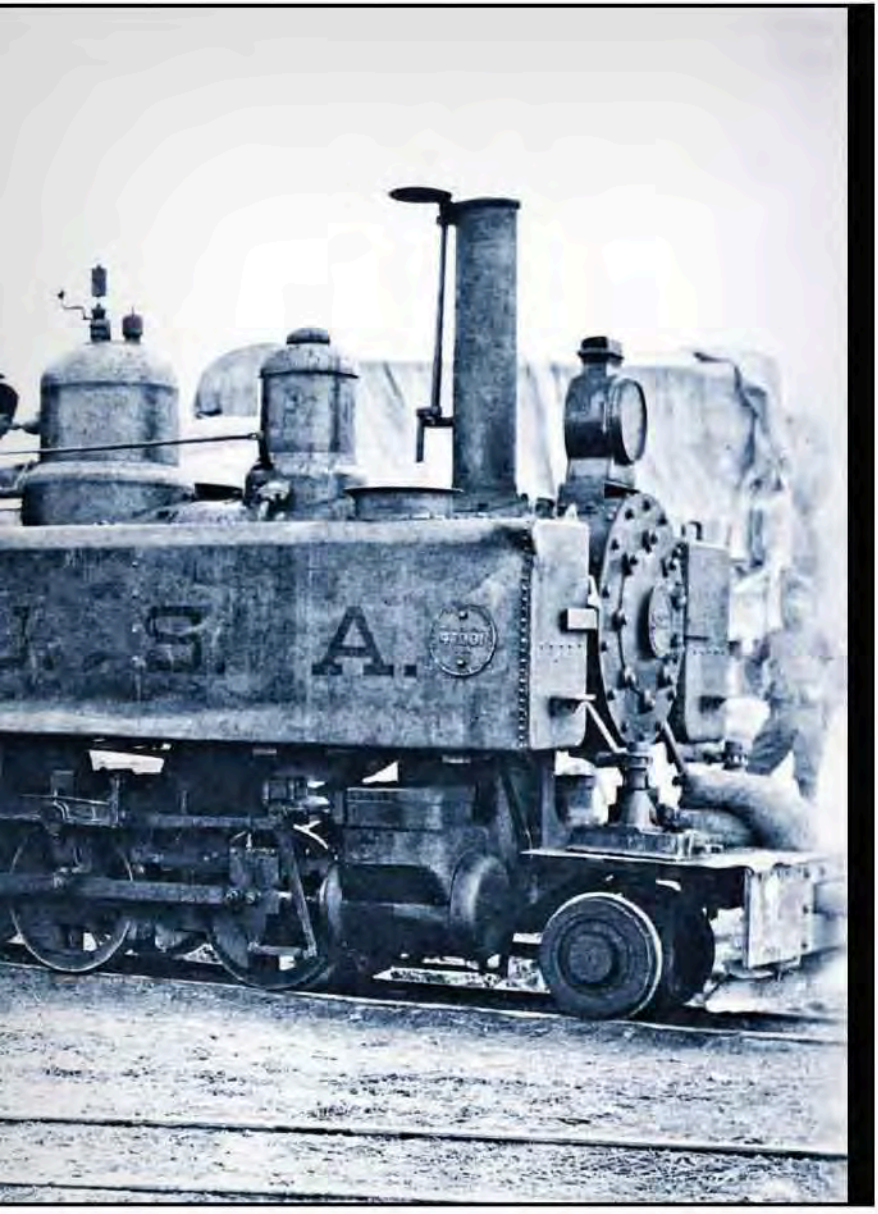


© DR

A group of sappers from the 14th US Regiment of Engineers proudly pose in front of a 2-6-2 T that cannot conceal its American heritage. However, if its ancestry is explored, it can be seen as the descendent of a French 4-6-0 T.

© Knoepflin

They can be considered as the prototypes of all the following classes. In 1902, the Chemins de Fer du Calvados (CFC) modified a Weidknecht 0-6-2 T to convert into a 0-6-4 T while also increasing its mass by the addition of a coal bunker.



GONE UP IN SMOKE?

A mystery looms over Weidknecht. Why did sales suddenly stop around 1912? The answer can be found in the newspapers of the time: on 22 July 1911, *Le Gaulois* reported that the Weidknecht factory was completely destroyed by fire. Judging by the story, it is likely that construction work never resumed.

INCENDIE A LA VILLETTE

Une usine entièrement détruite — Cent cinquante ouvriers réduits au chômage

Un incendie d'une extrême violence s'est déclaré, hier, vers huit heures du soir, 1, boulevard Macdonald, dans les ateliers de constructions mécaniques de M. Weidknecht. Le feu, qui avait pris naissance dans un hangar situé en bordure du chemin de fer de Ceinture, gagna rapidement les autres bâtiments, et l'usine entière ne fut bientôt plus qu'un immense brasier. Activées par le vent, les flammes, en s'étendant, atteignirent trois wagons chargés de paille, placés sur une voie de garage, qui furent complètement détruits.

Il fallut plus d'une heure de travail pour circonscrire le foyer de l'incendie. A dix heures, tout danger était conjuré.

Il n'y a eu, au cours des opérations de sauvetage, aucun accident à déplorer ; les dégâts sont importants. L'usine occupait cent cinquante ouvriers, qui vont être réduits au chômage.

Frédéric Weidknecht

© G. Mangin/Coll. D. Oberlin

In actual fact, this bogie was created by the Weidknecht company for the new model it was preparing to sell to the CFC. Six units were delivered between 1902 and 1908.

© DR

© Coll. D. Oberlin

Combining power and speed, the "Intrepid" type expanded beyond Calvados, in particular on the Tarn steam tramways network, which bought some of these engines for the opening of the Lavaur line. This one is seen crossing the very freshly painted viaduct over the Dadou.

© Coll. C. Menier

MOROCCO

The Ministry of War was Weidknecht's best customer, with ten 4-6-0 T engines delivered to the Moroccan military railways. This railway looks more civilian than military, if one judges by the engineer, the two civilian workers and the many "native workers" that can be seen posing on the picture.

With the Weidknecht company unable to build any locomotives after 1911, the Army called on the American manufacturer Baldwin to complete its supply of 4-6-0 T engines. The cab and domes reveal its U.S. ancestry...

1 + 3 + 1 ALSO MAKE 5!

Because of the outbreak of WWI, a few years passed before the French Protectorate in Morocco could obtain some new 4-6-0 T engines. By 1915, Weidknecht had gone up in smoke and no manufacturer in France was in a position to produce such locomotives. As was the case with the Péchot engines (see VL 81), the solution was provided by Baldwin. The Philadelphia giant dug out of its range a small 2-6-2 T type that had been built for the Hawaiian sugar mills. The 4-6-0 T sought by the French was extrapolated from the Hawaiian type: it was known as type 10-12D, of which 16 were shipped to Morocco.

When the time came for the British army to kit out, it had no trouble finding the powerful locomotive it needed. It ordered no fewer than 450 4-6-0 T engines of the 10-12D type, which Baldwin was very happy to supply! With experience gained on the front, the engines were modified, such alterations being incorporated into the design of later deliveries. The final result was the U.S. Army 2-6-2 T engines of the 10-12D ¼ type, the younger sisters of the Weidknecht Intrepids...

© DR

Through an order given to ALCO, the British Army had the basic type modified. The engine took an a little more weight, but above all it morphed into a 2-6-2 T type. This gave it improved stability when operating in either direction. Baldwin will copy this principle for the 10-12D 1/4 type it will build for the U.S. Army.

© Coll. C. Menier

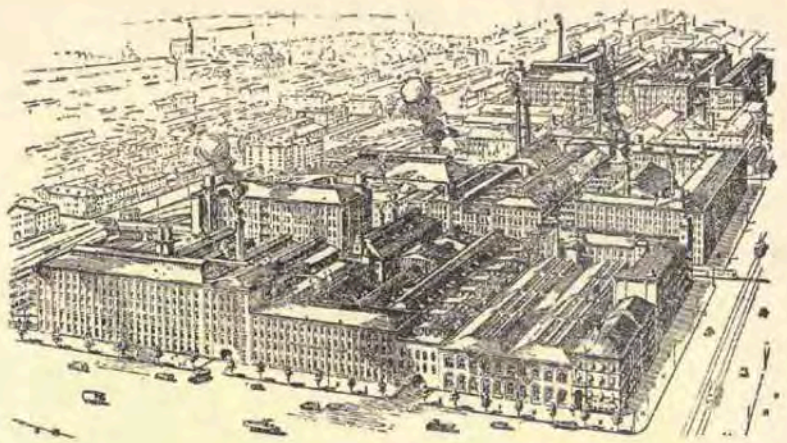
© DR

When it took over part of the front, the British Army quickly needed powerful engines that were able to operate on lightly-laid military track. Hunslet offered a 4-6-0 T type derived from a 0-6-0 T supplied to Rhodesia.

© DR

With Hunslet saturated by its first locomotive orders, the British Army turned to Baldwin for an order of 450 engines. Apart from a few structural differences, the 10-12 D type 4-6-0 T supplied to Morocco is easily recognizable!

The French Ministry of War did not call on Baldwin by chance. A city within the city of Philadelphia, the factory could produce on a scale unknown in France.



The Baldwin Locomotive Works, Usine de Philadelphie.

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Civilian reconversion

How to demob locos!

On 11 November 1918, literally overnight, hundreds of military locomotives found themselves demobbed. But in the huge construction site which the frontline had now become, they didn't remain idle for long.

Text: **Éric Fresné**

This 2-6-2 T is a great globe-trotter. Built in the U.S.A. to serve on the Meuse, it wound up in Wales after the war, before leaving for Australia!

© M. Schrader

After four years of utter savagery, a new agitation quickly took over from the former one. Everything, absolutely everything, had to be rebuilt: buildings, roads, water supplies, drains... This task was assigned to the Ministry of Liberated Regions (MRL in the French acronym), which carried out its task by calling on 60cm gauge railways. As early as February 1919, the French networks were entrusted to it. A few months later, the Allies sold their own networks to the French government. Over the following five years, the MRL reorganized these railways to adapt them to the requirements of reconstruction and operated them with military stock. This was when a great upheaval began. On the one side, the MRL had huge stockpiles of equipment available. On the other, almost all the railways closed down between 1919 and 1925. Even though the French Army transferred some railway equipment back into its arsenals, a great many engines remained available. So the MRL put 60cm gauge locomotives up for sale, every month and by the dozen. They were a godsend for resellers. Some sugar mills even bought entire railways.

THROUGHOUT THE WORLD

Even though some of our Anglo-Saxon five-axle engines remained part of the picture, it must be said that the Brigadeloks 0-8-0 T locomotives, lighter and available in larger numbers, were preferred in France. The military 4-6-0 and 2-6-2 engines emigrated all over the world. To Réunion, West Africa, India or even Australia.

© Coll. Renaud

The MRL dipped energetically into military stocks. This explains why this Hunslet 4-6-0 T finds itself with "RL" markings in addition to its British number.

© Coll. É. Fresné

Such State property sales were a godsend for resellers, who overhauled and distributed these military locomotives extensively throughout industry. This ALCO 2-6-2 T, for example, found its way into the TPT fleet.

PUBLIC SALE

The Liberated Regions period was short-lived. As early as 1923, the railways began disappearing and official publications became filled with notices of invitation to tender for dozens of engines.

Ministère des régions libérées.

DÉPARTEMENT DE L'AISNE

AVIS DE VENTE

PAR ADJUDICATION PUBLIQUE

Le lundi 9 avril 1923, à quatorze heures trente, il sera procédé, à la préfecture de l'Aisne, en séance publique, par M. le préfet de l'Aisne ou son délégué, à la vente publique, sur surenchères, par soumissions cachetées, du matériel désigné ci-après et réparti en dix-sept lots qui seront adjugés séparément :

12 locomotives « Baldwin », formant douze lots;
5 locotracteurs à essence, formant cinq lots.

Ce matériel est en dépôt en divers points précisés à l'affiche.

Les soumissionnaires pourront visiter le matériel tous les jours, sauf les dimanches et jours fériés; les affiches d'adjudication indiquent la répartition du matériel entre les différents dépôts, ainsi que les personnes auxquelles il faut s'adresser pour les visiter.

Cette adjudication sera faite aux clauses et conditions du cahier des charges approuvé par M. le préfet de l'Aisne à la date du 3 mars 1923 et dont les soumissionnaires pourront prendre connaissance, tous les jours, excepté les dimanches et jours fériés, de dix heures à douze heures et de quatorze heures à dix-sept heures :

1° Dans les bureaux du directeur général des services techniques de reconstitution, 3, rue Clerjot, à Laon (Aisne);

2° Au ministère des régions libérées, 120 *bis*, boulevard du Montparnasse, Paris (14e).

Un exemplaire du cahier des charges et de ses annexes, ainsi que l'affiche d'adjudication, seront, dans les limites des exemplaires disponibles, envoyés aux soumissionnaires sur leur demande, accompagnée d'un timbre-poste de 25 centimes, adressée à M. le directeur général des services techniques de reconstitution, 3, rue Clerjot, à Laon.

© Coll. É. Fresné

Felin Hen pops up again! Having returned to France, she has been restored to her original condition by Patrick Mourot and his team at the *Tacot des Lacs*.

As the centenary commemorations of the Great War draw closer, a growing number of military locomotives have been restored all over Europe. This Baldwin 4-6-0 T is preserved on the Leighton Buzzard Light Railway.

FELIN HEN

In 1964, Felin Hen, our Australian 2-6-2 T, has lost its front bissel. Note how its driver perches on a stool located outside the cab!

© P. Mourot - www.tacot-des-lacs.com

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© F. Stamford