

United Federation of Planets Rail Cars Mitae Hobin (340) - Series 870 and 900

by Jack Hess

I have been looking for ways to combine sci-fi modeling with trains and decided that whatever I did it, the result would have to be something credible.

The best approach would be to tie into a known science fiction system. The railroad could supply food, machinery, etc.



Star Trek seemed to be the best way to tie in as there has been a lot more detail about various planets and their interdependencies than on other sci-fi programs. Since Starfleet is the space fleet and not the planet side, I thought the more generic United Federation of Planets (UFP) would be appropriate.

All railcars are leased or purchased from local railroads. Even with transporter technology, hauling railcars around the galaxy would be a massive undertaking.

Plus, any railcars transported would have to comply with the regulations of the railroads they would run on. Since rail systems are not identical, this would not be practical.



"quadrotriticale"

The words "Ditriticum" and "Ditritica" are derivatives of the name of the grain in the Star Trek TOS episode, The Trouble with Tribbles.

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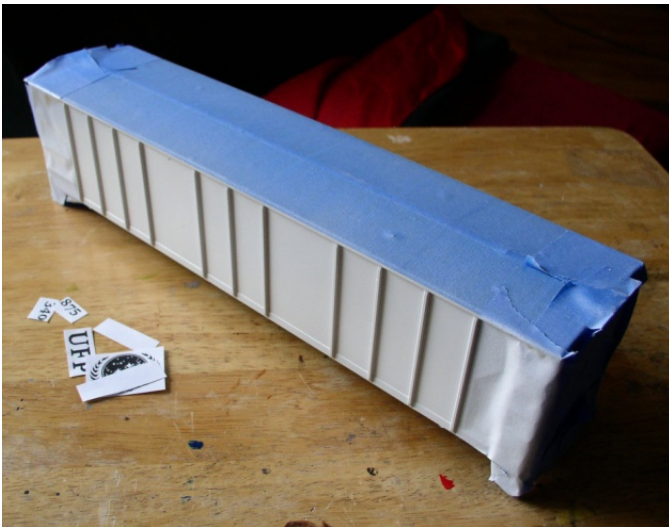


#340876

My first attempt is this repainted MTH cylindrical hopper. I wanted the colors to be light and clean so I chose gloss white and silver.



I made the decals in Microsoft Word and had a local Fed Ex/Kinkos print them out on sticky decal paper. I knew it would have a filmy look. The worse thing about the decal is that I was charged \$16. Both decals were only one quarter of one sheet.



#340875

I found I had an Atlas PS4000 triple bay hopper body in C&O scheme (yellow body, dark blue lettering). A soak in the 94% IPA quickly removed these to two colors. The roof and ends have been painted silver and this is masked in order to paint the sides white.

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Decals

I liked the colors of the decal on #340876, but I didn't like the font style, so I redesigned the lettering for #874 and 875.

I wanted the classic blue UFP logo that was produced at the time of the original Star Trek series.

I chose Sitka Small for the font style as I wanted something with serifs that had an almost square look to it. I chose a blue color to be close to the blue on the Federation symbol.

The "Ditritica Rail Service" was done in a brown/orange color just to give the blue and white colors some warmth. They were italicized for emphasis.



Using my black laser printer, I made the decals and tested them on the side to see how they would fit. Due to the two areas that do not have braces, there was enough room for the decals to fit.



#340874

This an undecorated Atlas Airslide hopper with a b&w version of the decals. Due to the vertical braces causing interference with the lettering, I decided to add letter boards to the sides.



I went online and found a Brother HL-3170CDW refurbished color laser printer from Wal-Mart for \$170.

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The decals were printed on an 8 1/2 x 11 sheet of clear TrimFilm from Microscale. They were sprayed with a thick coat of Testor's Glosscote.

Airslide hopper painted

The airslide hopper has been painted.



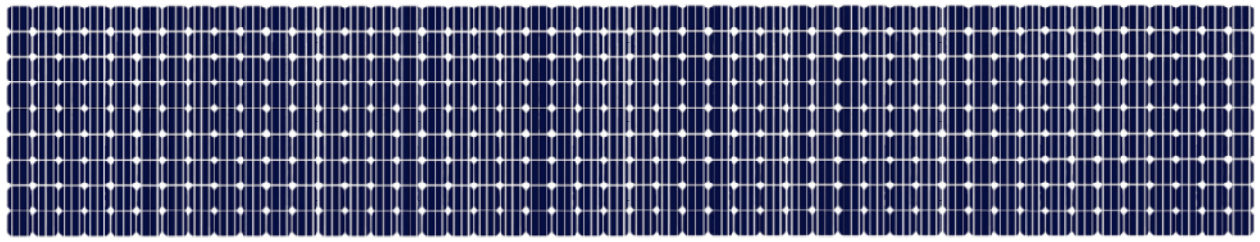
#340900 Quality Control Car

This is a quality control car which is a mobile laboratory used to verify the quality of bulk shipments.

Two halves of an MTH CSX bay window caboose have been joined and glued to a boxcar chassis. Styrene was used to create the deep sides and the boxy roof.



The chassis is painted gloss orange and the body ivory. Trucks are silver.



I enlarged and used this pattern for solar panels on the roof.



