



OSCILLATOR

The Official Newsletter of the DVHRC

Vol. 8. No. 7, July, 2000

July 2000

The next DVHRC meeting will be held at 7:30PM, July 11, at the Telford Community Center. This month's program will deal with clandestine radios of the vacuum-tube era. Al Klase will exhibit several pieces from his collection. The usual auction will follow the meeting.

Oscillator Status

I have been serving as editor of the *Oscillator* for more than two years now. It has been, shall we say, a character building experience. Unfortunately, due to changes in my personal situation, I cannot fill this post in perpetuity. It's time for major changes to the oscillator staff.

I'm finding it's about a full day's work just to execute

the mechanics of getting an issue into the mail. This does not include any creative efforts, that's additional time.

About half this time is involved in producing "camera-ready artwork." I'm doing this entirely on the computer using a cheap scanner and printer and Microsoft Publisher. It could also be done the old fashioned way with a pair of scissors and rubber cement.

The other half of the time is taken up by: A trip to Staples and the Post Office and, possibly, a return trip to Staples. Printing of mailing labels with possible adjustments to the mailing list. Folding and stapling. Application of labels and stamps. And, finally, an additional stop at the post office.

So anyway, **I can not and will not do this job beyond the end of Y2K.** It's time for one of you guys to take a turn at the helm. I will be happy to help the new editor get started and to contribute material at regular intervals.

Don't trip over each other stepping forward to volunteer!

COMING EVENTS	
11 July	DVHRC Meeting, Telford, Pa.
14 July	NJARC Meeting, Freehold, NJ
15 July	Hamfest, Berwick, Pa.
16 July	Hamfest, Kimberton, Pa.
16 July	Hamfest, Sussex County, NJ
30 July	Hamfest, Timonium, MD
5 August	Hamfest, Decature, Pa.
8 August	DVHRC Meeting, Telford Pa.
11 August	NJARC Meeting, Freehold, NJ
13 August	Hamfest, York, Pa.
19 August	Hamfest, Oakland, NJ
20 August	Hamfest, Mullica Hill, NJ
6-9 September	AWA Conference, Rochester, NY

WWII Prison Camp Radio

By Al Klase

There are a considerable number of accounts of radios being built or smuggled into prison camps. The following comes from *United States Army in WWII, The Technical Services, The Signal Corps: The Outcome*, U.S. Government Print Office, 1966:

"Nor was concealed radio activity by Signal Corps men in the Philippines confined to the guerrillas. There was at least one incident of it in prison, involving a radioman, William D. Gibson, who had received his commission as a lieutenant in the Signal Corps only a few hours before the fall of Corregidor. A former U.S. "ham" working in Manila as a civilian radio technician, he had offered his services to the Army on Corregidor after the enemy invasion began. But his commission had been delayed till the last hours of his freedom because the medical officers, busily treating wounded men, had not given him the required physical examination. Subsequently, a prisoner in the Cabanatuan concentration camp, he came into the possession of a 1-tube regenerative radio receiver improvised by an officer of the Engineer Corps, Capt. Russell J. Hutchin-

(Continued on page 2)

THE OSCILLATOR

Newsletter of the
Delaware Valley Historic Radio Club
P.O. Box 847
Havertown, Pa. 19083

The *Oscillator* is published monthly by members of the non-profit DVHRC. Its purpose is to provide a forum to educate, inform, entertain, and communicate with collectors and preservers of vintage radio technology.

We welcome and solicit information relating to radio history or collecting. Submissions should be carefully researched, typed and accompanied with clear photographs or diagrams. Material on-disc (3-1/2" DOS/Win95) is particularly welcome.

Unless copyrighted by the author, material in this publication is available for attributed reproduction for nonprofit purposes. (For convenience, the editor can supply copy on-disc.)

Personal views, opinions and technical advice offered in this newsletter do not necessarily reflect those of the members, officers or Board of Directors of the DVHRC, nor is the organization responsible for any buying or selling transaction incurred.

To join: DVHRC dues are \$15 per year. The membership year runs January-through-December. Please mail to the club PO box above.

Meetings are held the second Tuesday of the month at 7:30 PM

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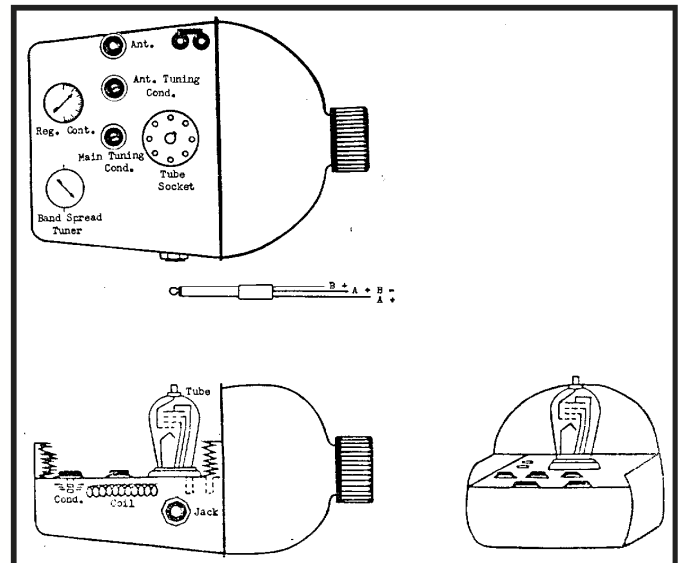
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COPY DEADLINE: The 20th of each month.

(Continued from page 1)

son, who had built it of scrap parts and placed it inside a GI canteen. Hutchinson, on being shifted out of the prison, left it with Gibson. But the set no longer worked. Its single amplifying tube, a 12SK7, had burned out. Obtaining a different type of amplifier tube, a 6J7, stolen by an American sailor who had a prison job in a Japanese shop, Gibson, re-wired the set to accommodate the tube; a cauterizing iron from the prison hospital served as a soldering iron. Looking like any ordinary canteen, the radio was kept hanging at the lieutenant's bed. Japanese inspectors passed it by, suspecting nothing. Its antenna was a No. 22 wire woven inconspicuously into a rope clothesline. Only the headphones had to be secreted separately. The prisoners furtively operated the receiver in the evening, using battery power, which was available in the prison hospital. The little set brought in radio programs emanating from Siagon, Tokyo, and San Francisco. Best of all was the Voice of Freedom broadcast from the *Apache* after the Leyte Campaign began. This treasured radio receiver was left behind when the lieutenant, suddenly freed with other prisoners departed in the pell-mell of the daring Cabanatuan raid, 30 January 1945. "

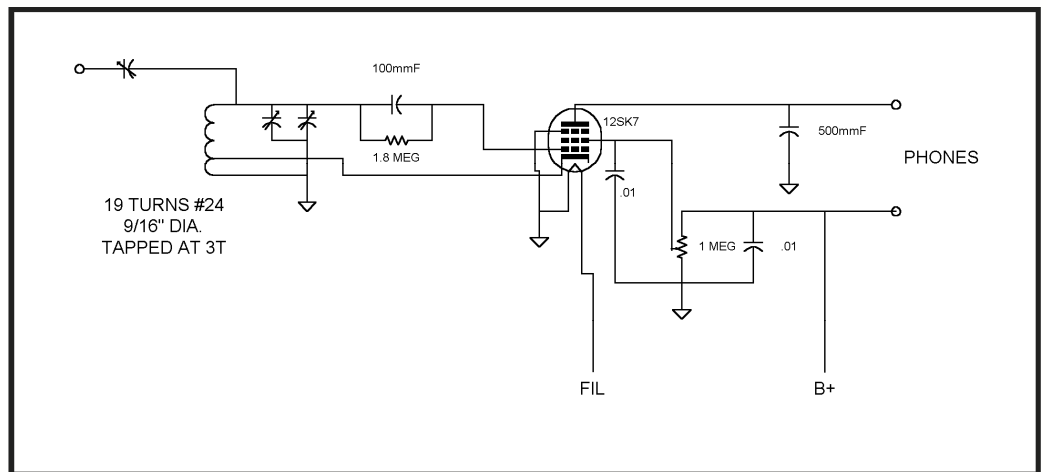


I decided that a reproduction of this historic set would not be too difficult to build. I was surprised that the 12SK7 fit across the narrow dimension of the canteen. I used a straight-forward regen circuit with a tapped coil and antenna coupling via a trimmer cap. It tunes about 5 to 12 MHz. A circuit of this sort will work with as little as 12 volts on the plate. The standard canteen cup covers the opening when it's in the cover. When you pick it up it just feels like a canteen.

A few of the components are of post-WWII manufacture, but they're not too far off from what would have been

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available. The front panel layout from the drawing pretty much forced the internal construction and circuit. Any "radio bug" from the thirties would have had a similar hookup memorized. I suspect the original was built during the siege before they were captured.



500 KC Part 6: My First SOS at NMO

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In the following true narrative the ship's name and her callsign have been changed.

As mentioned in an earlier part I always sat the 12 hour 500 kc night watch on my duty nights; I loved listening to the steady flow of calls from ships in far off waters. Even though we sat in the Central Pacific I would sometimes even copy a fluttery East Coast US shore station. Throughout the night I would hear ghostly signals, just above the noise level, that would fade in and out from who knows where. We used a Beverage-type long wire that stretched over one mile in length, and NMO sat in a very electrically quiet region. We were able to copy any ship or shore station anywhere in the Pacific.

One evening, feeling a bit drowsy (0200 local!), I thought I was dreaming when I heard a long dash, a pause, another long dash, a pause, another long dash, a pause, Like an electric shock, adrenalin flooded through me at the speed of light - OH MY GOD - SOMEONE IS SENDING AN AUTO ALARM! My eyes shot to the clock to time the dashes: 4 seconds on, 1 second off, 4 seconds on, 1 second off - those 12 long dashes almost froze me. I yelled into the intercom to the chief 'Auto Alarm on 500' knowing at the same time alarm bells were ringing on board every ship scattered around the Pacific within radio range of the distressed ship. Recall that when a shipboard operator goes off watch, ITU rules dictate he leaves a receiver tuned to 500 kc with a decoder attached - if that decoder hears at least four 4-second dashes each with 1-second separation, relays in the decoder will clamp shut triggering alarm bells in the radio room, in the radio officer's sleeping quarters, and up on the bridge, to warn of a distress message about to be sent on 500 kc. Now, the two-tone AA used on the voice SSB MF distress/calling freq of 2182 kc was common: Mexican fishing crews used them when they were drunk. But AA's on 500 kc are *never* sent except when a ship is in distress. This was the first one I'd heard since my radioman school days; I can't put into words the terror I felt while sitting out the ITU-required 2 minute wait (recall that the ITU dictates every step the distressed vessel's radio officer takes: Auto Alarm, then the 2-minute wait [if possible] for off-duty ops on other ships, woken by their Auto Alarm receivers, to race to their radio shacks to copy the distress). 500 kc was now in an extended silent period (see part 2 or 3 [or 4?]). Someone started tuning up and was immediately pounced on by myself: QRT SOS was all I needed to send - dead silence. One of the Australian shore stations was sending a CQ at the same time the AA went out - he must have heard the AA through his CQ for he stopped in mid broadcast. Nothing but an occasional static crash - dead silence. Throughout my brief 500kc career there had never been a silence like this I thought. Then it came:

SOS SOS SOS CQ DE DJNK DJNK DJNK SOS BT MV PANAMA TRADER HULL CRACKED IN HEAVY SEAS
MAJOR FLOODING 42-27N 42-27N 178-51W 178-51W NOW ABANDONING SHIP SOS BT MASTER AR K

Then came the 10 second-long dash (ITU: for direction finding). I was first - in A2 I sent:

SOS DJNK DJND DJNK DE NMO NMO NMO RRR SOS

And after me 500 kc was flooded with ships and shore stations sending sending the ITU response: RRR SOS:

SOS DJNK DJNK DJNK DE NMC NMC NMC RRR SOS (San Francisco)
SOS DJNK DJNK DJNK DE NOJ NOJ NOJ RRR SOS (Alaska)
SOS DJNK DJNK DJNK DE NMQ NMQ NMQ RRR SOS (Long Beach, CA)
SOS DJNK DJNK DJNK DE KPH KPH KPH RRR SOS (San Fran.)

ITU dictates a strict format to follow in distresses - from now on every transmission must be preceded with the SOS prosign> along with KFS in California, NRV in Guam, a couple Japan shore stations; the radio operator aboard DJNK must have breathed a sigh of relief and taken some comfort knowing his message was heard by so many.

Once the RRR SOS replies ceased NMO took control; I asked the standard questions for situations such as this:

SOS DJNK DE NMO BT NEED FOLLOWING INFO
NR OF POB (number of persons on board)
CSE (course)
HULL ES SS COLOR (hull and superstructure colors)
NR OF BOATS (number of lifeboats)

(Continued on page 5)

BOAT RADIO FREQS, EPIRB
WX, WIND SPD ES DIR, SWELL HT ES DIRECTION, CURRENT (weather and sea data)
BT SOS K

And DJNK patiently answered each. After getting these important answers I had the uncomfortable task of asking:

SOS DJNK DE NMO BT OM PSE CL KEY BEFORE U LV OK? K

SOS NMO DE DJNK WILL DO OM

Every shipboard telegraph key has a switch which, when closed, will continuously cause the ship's radio to transmit. This enables rescue aircraft to home in on the distressed vessel using their direction finding equipment. I had asked the op to close his key switch before he leaves the ship.

AUTO ALARM (12 four second dashes with a one second pauses)

Then with my hand shaking, clenching the key:

DDD SOS SOS SOS DDD CQ DE NMO NMO NMO SOS BT <DJNK's message>
BT ANY SHIPS IN AREA DIVERT AND ASSIST SIGNED US COAST GUARD
AR DDD SOS K

Dead silence reigned for minutes that seemed like hours. An awful, awful feeling of helplessness overcame me as I sat in that chair with the entire NMO crew standing in silence - all of us knowing at that very moment men were perishing in an icy ocean...

Already we had aircraft in the air heading to DJNK's position so I notified him:

SOS DJNK DJNK DE NMO NMO BT USCG AIRCRAFT LAUNCHED TO UR POSN
ETA 3 HRS BT HOWS UR COND? K

SOS NMO DE DJNK HV TO LEAVE SHIP NOW TU OM FER <high pitched whine>

His transmitter had emitted a - a scream - it actually screamed! I turned to the Chief asking "Is that...?" "Yes, the ocean water just flooded his radio room shorting out his transmitter and batteries."

I couldn't accept this - the man at that key couldn't have just perished! I sent:

SOS DJNK DE NMO
<silence>
SOS DJNK DJNK DE NMO
<silence>

At this point the Chief put his hand on my shoulder and only said "He can't answer you - he's gone."

Throughout the night at 15 minute intervals I continued to send the Auto Alarm and the DDD SOS to no avail. At daybreak our aircraft reported seeing only debris: bales of hay, which was the cargo of DJNK; no lifeboats, no bodies, only debris.

Even to this day I sometimes hear, in my sleep, the scream DJNK's transmitter emitted that terrifying and horrible night. I pray the crew of that ship rest in peace.

End of Part 6.

Jeffrey Herman, KH2PZ / KH6
jeffreyh@hawaii.edu

"Six Mitchubishis going over..." for a one-way ride!

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FOR SALE: Hallicrafters "Boat Anchor" communications receivers S-37, S-27, S-36A, SX-24, SX-25, SX-28 (2) and SX-42. Also a RBL-5 14kc to 640kc receiver made by National, with some spare parts. No shipping, pick up at my QTH or will deliver to local radio meets. Call for price and condition. Ray Chase, 1350 Marlborough Ave., Plainfield, NJ 07060, (908) 757-9741, www.enrpnr@erols.com.

WANTED: for RCA TK-11 Camera restoration: oak field tripod (Mitchell?), chrome script "television", chrome 1.1" RCA logos, viewfinder hood, and old network logo panels. Dave Abramson, 610-827-9757 dtatv@worldnet.att.com

WANTED: Information, circuit diagram, and purpose of the following set. 30-50 MC FM monitor Kinight model KG-220 by Allied Radio, Chicago. Service number: 8343111-610003-6N Alton A. Dubois, Jr., 67 Peggy Ann Rd., Queensbury, NY 12804

WANTED: AM-FM-PHONO-AUX selector switch for a Sherwood Model S-7650CP stereo receiver. Fred Saul, 610-481-5034 (days)

FOR SALE: Military WWII RAK-7, CND 46155 low freq. 6 band 15khz to 600khz receiver with matching CND 20131 power supply and cable, all in "like new" condition; made by Andrea. \$100.00 Ray Chase, 1350 Marlborough Ave., Plainfield, NJ 07060 (908) 757-9741 e-mail: enrpnr@erols.com.

FOR SALE:
Radios: Regal 747 4-tube portable, Fisher FM-80 tuner, Philco "Tropic" portable, Zenith 10S549 console, Atwater Kent Model 40, others.
Parts: big-pin tubes, vintage semiconductors, geiger-counter parts.
Paper: Vintage Allied, Lafayette, etc. catalogs. Service notes and vintage manuals. Contact me for a list. John Rohr, 348 Farm Lane, North Wales, Pa., 215-661-1134 FAX: 215-661-2910 jaxrohr@netreach.net

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