

SURPLUS sidelights

BY GORDON ELIOT WHITE

SURPLUS is alive and well in Ohio. While urban decay and redevelopment has displaced radio row in New York and other big cities, the business seems to be flourishing in smaller towns such as Dayton. The Dayton Hamvention, last spring, had a flea market that covered two acres. Most of the wares were surplus and business was flourishing.

It is not only during a one-day hamfest that surplus sales do well in Dayton. That medium-sized city supports four surplus dealers, three of them full-time, and apparently growing, and another operating part-time.

We were welcomed particularly warmly by Dayton Electronic Surplus, 1001 East 2nd Street. Chubby, the proprietor, helped me locate some surplus items he didn't have in stock at the time, and showed me some interesting parts for my Command Set collection. Like most of the new breed of surplus houses, the retail end of the business is heavily in components, rather than complete receivers, transmitters, etc. Dayton Surplus had a good supply, at low prices, of the Korean war-vintage gray Command Sets.

Mendelson's Electronics, a few blocks away, also specializes heavily in components, spread out in bins in a large warehouse.

I did not find anyone in at Research Equipment Co., 1731 Springfield St., and Mr. Littell, of Engineering Associates, was out of town.

Dayton is fueled of course by the big Wright-Patterson Air Force Base complex. With shipping becoming ever more costly, I am finding the best surplus sources are close to the military bases which generate the material, rather than in downtown, crime-ridden cities. I visited Tallen Electronics, 300 Seventh St., Brooklyn, N.Y., and found that the proprietor, Tom Allen, was getting ready to sell out and retire. One of his problems was his location, in a New York slum where small children extort quarters in "protection money" or toss rocks at the employees.

The change in the surplus market involves the urban problem, redevelopment, such as the World Trade Center which displaced Radio Row in New York, and the simple problem of age. The proprietors who went into surplus in its heyday in 1946, are a quarter-century older now, and are thinking of retiring. At the same time surplus has moved into a class of over-specialized equipment such as computers and radar,

*1502 Stonewall Rd., Alexandria, Va. 22302.

which are not usable in their original configuration.

The result is a new crop of surplus dealers, specializing in components, new or pull-outs, or in aircraft parts, test gear, or military equipment, used by U.S. Military allies. The World War II surplus is going fast—better grab the last dregs while you can. There are no more Command Sets being made!

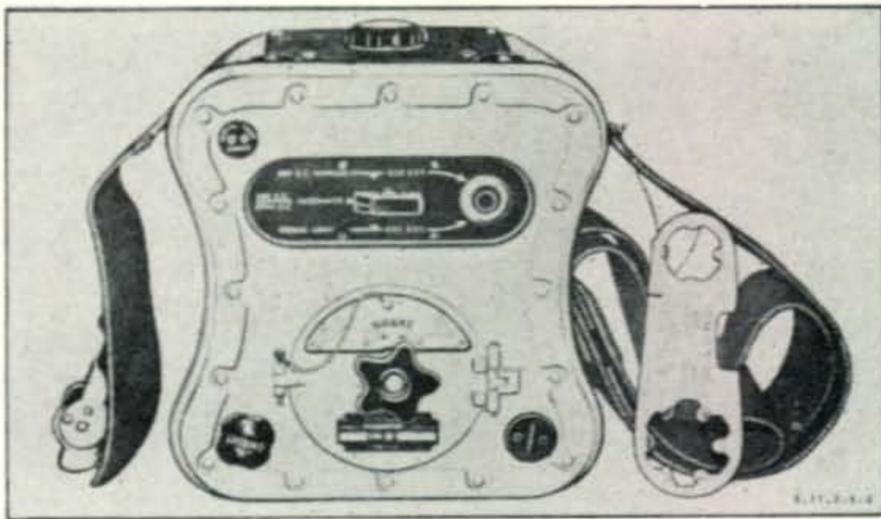
One of the left-overs from 1944 that is being disposed of by the military now is the AN/CRT-3, the familiar "Gibson Girl" emergency liferaft transmitter. This set has been standard equipment in emergency gear for nearly 30 years, but has been superseded recently by solid-state transceivers of greater range and less weight, so batches of the Gibson Girl (from the shape) are being sold now. I make no suggestions as to the usefulness of this set, but it has attracted some interest.

The AN/CRT-3 is the latest version of the SCR-278, which was a British copy of the German N.S. 2 Notsender, captured in the English Channel in 1941. Bendix Radio built the U.S. copy about the time of Pearl Harbor, so that downed airmen could crank out an automatic distress signal.

The CRT-3 puts out either a 500 kHz signal, that being one of the international distress frequencies, or on the 8364 kHz emergency channel, (others include 121.5 and 243 MHz). Earlier models of the Gibson Girl had a frequency of 8220 kHz.

The mechanism of the set switches automatically from the 500 kHz signal to 8364 kHz every 45 seconds. The lower frequency is 1000 Hz tone-modulated; the higher frequency is c.w. Both are keyed with "S O S" plus a long dash.

Cranking the set is something of a chore. I always wondered how long a downed airman could keep it going as he became weaker and weaker with hunger or thirst. Must be desper-



The AN/CRT-3 "Gibson Girl" emergency transmitter. Adapted from the German N.S. 2 "Notsender," in 1941, it gets its name from the curvaceous shape, designed to be easily held between the knees of a downed airman who is furiously cranking the power generator.

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tion gives strength. The voltages used are 28 at 175 ma and 300 at 40 ma. In the T-74/CRT version, the two windings are in series, to give 330 volts at 40 ma for transmitting that last 1/2 watt of power. Rated power is 2½ watts on 500 kHz and 2 watts on 8364 kHz.

The manual—T.O. 12R5-2CRT-3-2 is full of helpful advice on how to set up the antenna in the jungle or the arctic, and how a search plane should home on the signals, considering the short ground-wave and the 36 meter skip zone. One warning that should be taken to heart by anyone tinkering with the CRT-3 is care in handling the hydrogen generators for the antenna balloon. Known as gas generator M-315-A or -B, this little canister can be dangerous if treated roughly. If gotten wet, it makes hydrogen, a highly explosive, but odorless gas. Remember the Hindenburg disaster? That Zeppelin was filled with hydrogen, which exploded, probably from static electricity sparks. Handle it carefully.

In addition, the lithium or calcium hydride in the generator is quite caustic, and can burn the skin if the canister is broken open.

Really, the best use for this set is as a present for your uncle who flies his own plane. If he is ever forced down, it could save his life, particularly if he flies over uninhabited areas. Otherwise, it could make a QRP set, if you replace the hand-cranked dynamotor with a simple diode power supply similar to the a.c. units built to power Command Sets. The meager current requirements should be easy to provide with battery power for field day work, transmitter hunts, etc.

Warning number two: **Those emergency frequencies must not be used**, even for QRP. Change the crystals to amateur bands first thing. Even if you don't get in trouble with the law for transmitting on international distress frequencies, you can cause a lot of grief to search and rescue people if you inadvertently crank up on their bands. You might even block out some poor soul who was trying to send a real distress message.

Another caution: without a proper antenna connected, the 500 kHz transmitter puts out power on its second harmonic, 1,000 kHz, which would not be appreciated by your local Broadcast station.

The Air Force has long had much smaller, battery-powered emergency transmitters, such as the AN/URC-4, AN/URC-11, etc. on 121.5 and 243 mHz, but these are too short-ranged to be useful over long distances, such as at sea, so the Gibson Girl survived these many years. Today, transistors and better batteries have finally outmoded it, and hundreds have shown up in surplus sales.

Surplus Dealers' Directory

The following is a continuation of my Surplus Dealers' directory, which I plan to run each

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month as long as new addresses continue to come in:

California:

Mountain View, 94040, Haltek Electronics, 1690 Plymouth Ave.

El Cerrito, 94530, R.T.T.Y. Electronics, Box 655, phone 527-4847, mainly Teletype.

North Hollywood, 91609, Columbia Electronics, Box 9266, 7360 Atoll Ave.

Norwalk, 90650, Vern's Electronics Surplus, 12159-61 E. Front St., Mostly new surplus parts, some aircraft, few complete sets.

Sacramento, 95825, Selectronics, 1912 Fulton Ave.

Inglewood, 90301, H & K Sales, 815 W. Arbor Vitae, Box 254. Primarily excess industrial electronic components.

Sacramento, 95276, Sacramento Surplus Sales, 4801 Hedge Ave., general surplus.

Sacramento, 95813, Metro Aero-Tron, Box 15436, airborne equipment, test sets, components.

Culver City, 90230, Airborne Sales Co., 8501 Stellar Dr. Chiefly aircraft parts.

Arcadia, 91006, Aircraft & Component Equipment, Box 134, 25 N. Fourth Ave. Chiefly airborne parts.

Los Angeles, 90024, ARS Electronics, 616

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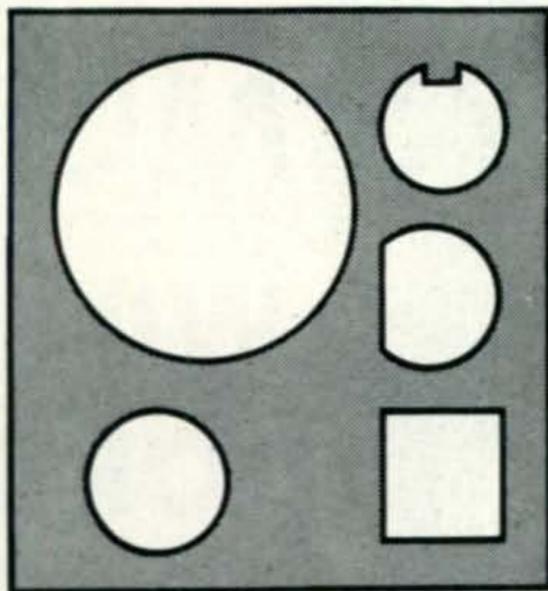
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Wilmington, 01887, Marshall Associates, 121 Main St., machinery and electronics.

Brockton, 02402, Materials Recycling Inc., all sorts of surplus.

Dorchester, 02125, Electro-Craft Inc., 1124 Dorchester Ave., commercial and military surplus, aircraft, and Teletype surplus electronics.

Ohio:

Columbus, 43201, Starr Surplus Sales, 1038 N. High St. Full line of military surplus, old standby units, command sets, and new test gear.

Columbus, Topper Steel & Supply, 2108 High St. Chiefly surplus tools & Hardware.

USA-CA [from page 86]

Casablanca returned. No reply to mail sent to the Anchorage Radio Club, P.O. Box 211, Anchorage regarding their Alaskan DX Club Award. The RSGB Certificate Manager (HF) is Charles R. Emary, G5GH, Westbury End, Finmere, Buckingham, England. RSGB Certificate Manager (VHF) is Jack Hum, G5UM, 27 Ingarsby Lane, Houghton-on-the-Hill, Leicester LE79JJ, England.

I am sure you all had a wonderful time at the ICHN Convention Peoria, Ill., I will gladly pass along data on it for those unable to attend, as soon as I get it.

Remember write, tell me, How was your month?
73, Ed., W2GT.

Adjusting and Cleaning Speed Keys [from page 37]

times. You'd be amazed by the number of hams who use this method. If you're in a hurry, the flip-up cover of a matchbook works equally well instead of the bond.

If the contacts look so badly pitted and burned that they seem beyond repair, try this approach: instead of bond paper, use in order (a) fine emery paper, (b) a fine finishing paper, such as "Wetordry," (c) a crocus cloth, and finally, (d) the bond paper.

For removing any leftover debris from polishing, moisten a swab stick in ordinary rubbing alcohol and clean the areas thoroughly. From this point on, the easiest trick to keep your bug clean is to put a dust cover over it when it's not in use.