

PoW radio # 4

'Shackleton'

Country of origin: England

Remarks

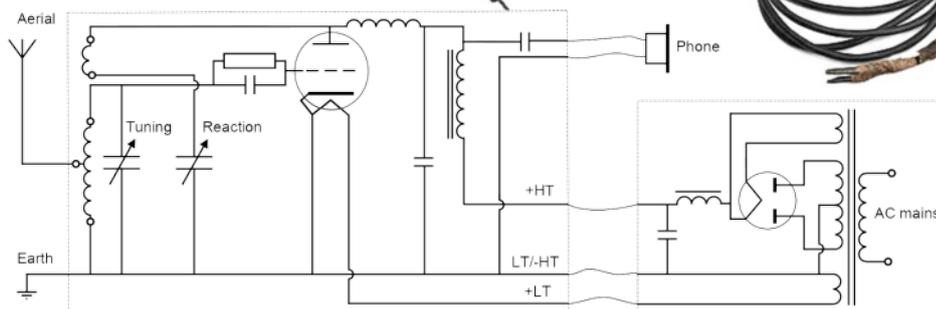
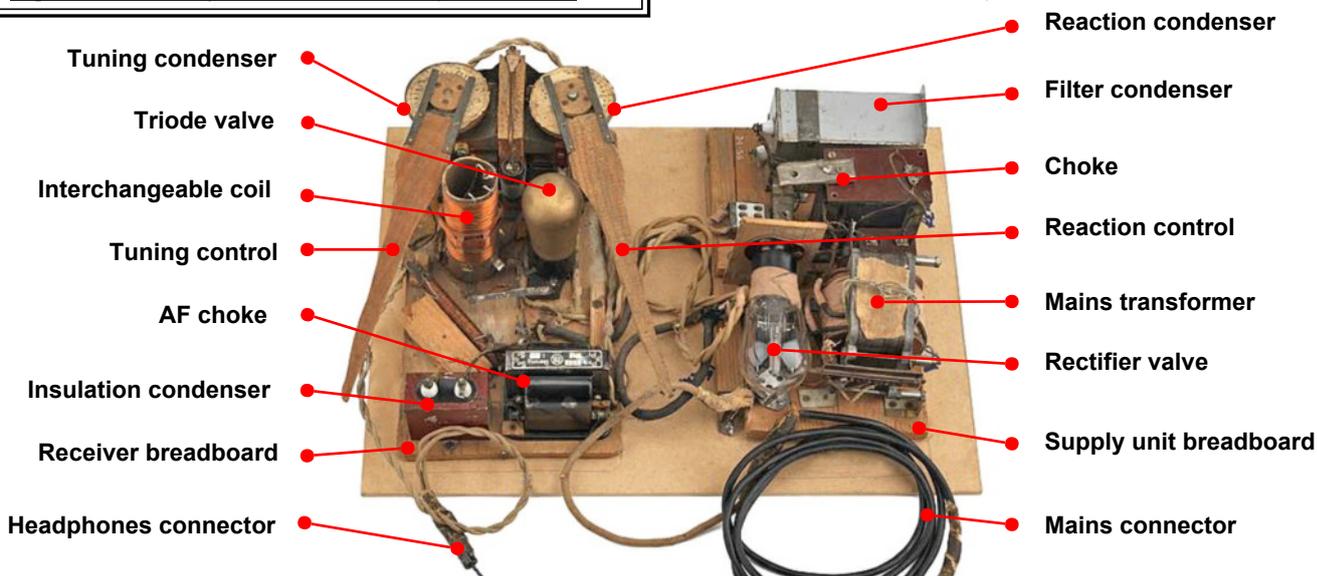
Captain Ernest Shackleton was an officer in the Royal Corps of Signals who was wounded and made prisoner of war on 12 June 1940, in Saint Valorie-en-Caux, Northern France. Whilst interned in a German PoW camp (one of four) he designed and constructed a secret radio receiver in 1941/42. Use was made of material salvaged in the Lager (camp) and parts from a German film-projector. The receiver comprised two units for convenience of construction and ease of concealment. Each unit was mounted on a separate wooden breadboard: the actual receiver and AC mains power supply unit. Powered from the hut lighting, it was hidden under the floorboards, operated by two knitting needles through cracks in the floor. The receiver was a simple regenerative TRF with a triode valve. It could receive a number of bands by using interchangeable coils constructed from toilet roll tubes, impregnated with candle wax fitted on a cotton reel holder with tin contacts. The plates for the tuning and reaction variable capacitors were made from Rowntree cocoa tins rolled flat by a bottle and cut with a scissor. Spindles were made from clinical thermometer cases, and two toothbrush handles were used as insulation supports. Valve holders were constructed from a Bakelite ash tray, with contacts made from Rowntree's cocoa rub tins. Shortly after his liberation in April 1945 Capt Shackleton returned to Oflag IX-A/Z, Rotenburg-am-Fulda, Hessen, his last PoW camp, to retrieve the radio as a donation to the Imperial war Museum where it is in the collection under catalogue number COM 504.

DATA SUMMARY

- Organisation:** Prisoners of war.
- Year of Introduction:** 1942.
- Purpose:** Receiving Allied news on the progress of war.
- Receiver:** Regenerative TRF.
- Frequency coverage:** Interchangeable coils.
- Power supply:** AC mains.
- Size (cm):** Height 13, width 41.5, length 31.5 (whole).

References:

- Many thanks to Richard Maddox for his kind permission to use material and photographs from his blog.
- <https://iwmvolunteerlondon.wordpress.com/2017/07/27/captain-ernest-shackletons-gift-to-the-imperial-war-museum/>
- <https://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/30005281>



Reconstructed circuit diagram of Capt. E. Shackleton's secret 1 valve TRF radio which was used for receiving the news during his captivity in four PoW camps of which Oflag IX-A/Z, Rotenburg, Hessen was the last.