

# Book review

By Geoff Arnold

## Wireless for the Warrior, Compendium 1 Spark to Larkspur – Wireless Sets 1910 to 1948 By Louis Meulstee

*Wireless for the Warrior (WftW) Compendium 1 Spark to Larkspur (Wireless Sets 1910-1948) and Compendium 2 Spark to Larkspur (Special Sets, Receivers & Larkspur) (in course of preparation) are the first in a new series of reference and recognition handbooks.*

In the Introduction to this first handbook, Louis Meulstee explains that he found, for various reasons, it would not be feasible to produce the planned new Volumes in the *Wireless for the Warrior* series: 'World War 1 – the Spark and After' and 'Interwar Wireless', on the scale of WftW Volumes 1 to 4. He therefore decided to take a very different approach by producing instead a pocket-sized book with a soft cover, with a working title 'Compendium', containing just a condensed data summary, photographs and notes about each item of equipment.

As it was doubtful if the proposed 'Larkspur' WftW Volume would ever materialise, the principal sets of that era would also be covered. At that time, the title *Wireless for the Warrior Compendium, Spark to Larkspur* was settled upon.

Louis considered taking advantage of modern digital technology by making the contents of the WftW Compendium available on a DVD. However, based on his own experience, he felt that a printed reference book cannot be replaced for practical purposes. The pocket-size format (albeit for a fairly capacious pocket!) and soft cover chosen make it convenient while exploring 'flea markets' or browsing the information at leisure.

Later, he realised that this Compendium would not be complete without data on the WW2 era and Reception Sets (Receivers) described in detail in WftW Volumes 1, 2 and 3. Accordingly, these sections were added, using different and in most cases better-quality pictures, and some additional information which had come to light. Also included were Special Sets and Commonwealth Sets, thus completing the time period 1910 to the late 1950s.

Very soon after work began on the Compendium, Louis realised that the number of pages was rapidly growing out of hand. It was therefore decided to divide the WftW Compendium Spark to Larkspur into two parts: 'Wireless Sets 1910-1948' and 'Special sets, Receivers & Larkspur', the latter incorporating Commonwealth Sets, sets adopted from other Arms, and commercial equipment adopted for use in the Army.

Compendium 1 is organised into three main sections, the first being 'World War 1', further divided into chapters covering Spark sets, CW sets, and Receiver, amplifiers and miscellaneous. The second section, 'Interwar years' covers Standard sets, Experimental communication sets, Experimental tank and AFV sets, Early sets in the numerical series, and

Miscellaneous items. Finally, the section 'World War 2' covers Sets in the numerical series, up to Wireless Set No. 88AFV.

Rounding off the book are three Appendices: 'The early years', a brief description of the evolution of the organisation of design, development and testing facilities for Army wireless from 1906 to the end of WW1, 'Key W/T 8 Amp No. 1', and a fold-out 'Chart of interrelationship of sets', plus a comprehensive Index. There is also an explanation of the technical significance of the various equipment-numbering systems used through the years.

So, what sort of information is included in this book, and what is omitted, compared with the coverage of the original *Wireless for the Warrior* volumes with which we are familiar? There is a data summary for each set: purpose, frequency range, transmitter power, receiver sensitivity, system, range, aerial system, power supply, size, weight, etc., very much in the same format as in those previous volumes, and pictures of the sets and ancillaries.

There is, however, no technical description, no circuit diagram, and no components list. For some sets, though, the differences between various versions are explained in more detail. For example, there are eight separate sections covering the various sets and amplifiers in the Wireless Set No. 19 series.

There are, also, many intriguing tit-bits of additional information, such as the year of introduction of the equipment, how many were made and by what companies. For the various eras, there are notes on the the design processes and organisation. All in all, it fulfils the author's description of a handbook suitable for carrying on visits to flea markets or radio fairs, or for quiet browsing.

Personally, I found this book to be a fascinating compilation of information, obviously researched and compiled to Louis Meulstee's usual meticulous standards.

*Wireless for the Warrior, Compendium 1: Spark to Larkspur (Wireless Sets 1910 to 1948) is published in soft cover by Emaus Uitgeverij, Gasthuisstraat 12, 7141BT Groenlo, The Netherlands, under ISBN/EAN: 978-90-808277-2-1. It comprises 350 pages, 148 × 213mm (5.9 × 8.375in approx.).*

It is available from the *RB Bookshelf* – see page 26.

