

HOW THE ZENITH TRANS-OCEANIC PORTABLE CAME INTO BEING

by Howard O. Lorenzen, W3BLC

About the author:

Howard Lorenzen, W3BLC, ex-9BLC started as design engineer for Colonial Radio Corp. [Buffalo]. He then joined Zenith Radio where he worked on the famous TRANS-OCEANIC receiver described in this article. At the outbreak of the war he joined the Naval Research Laboratories where he made a name for himself in UHF work and other fields. In 1971 he was named to head the newly created Space Systems Division where he was responsible for the Navy's entire satellite program. Howard retired from N.R.L. in 1973. He is the recipient of numerous awards and Citations.

Most old timers remember Zenith Radio as the brain child of "Matty" R. H. G. Mathews, 9ZN, and Karl Hassel. In 1939 the President of Zenith was Commander Eugene F. MacDonald who had been one of the officers on the famous MacMillan Arctic expedition as skipper of the Neptune.

Commander MacDonald owned the largest yacht on the Great Lakes, the Mizpah. He liked to take his ship north on Lake Michigan to Mackinac Island and spend a week or so aboard ship at that location. When he returned from one of these trips he came into the laboratory and complained loudly that the Zenith standard broadcast band portables could not get a single station for him while he was at Mackinac Island.

These were the pre-World War II days when Hilter was busy changing the map of Europe almost daily. MacDonald was one who wanted to be abreast of the latest news and world developments, so this lack of daily news was very irksome to him.

During one of the sessions where the Commander was berating the performance of the regular Zenith broadcast band portables, I suggested that what he needed was a short wave portable. At first he was skeptical: "Were there

enough news broadcasts on short waves?" "Would the short wave circuits be open enough of the time to provide coverage at Mackinac Island?" etc., etc. Everyone in the lab assured him that he should get adequate short wave coverage easily. As a bonus he could get English language news direct from London, Paris and Berlin. Finally MacDonald said, "O K, Lorenzen, it's your idea so you build me a short wave portable."

I went down to production and purloined one of the regular portables off the line ostensibly to check the performance of production receivers in the laboratory. Removing the regular RF coil I replaced it with a one turn loop mounted inside the cabinet. Fortunately the loop nicely covered the short wave broadcast bands. Now all I had to do was track the oscillator with the RF section of the set. In spite of the marginal electrical performance of the 1-1/2 volt tubes at higher frequencies, the set performed well.

Chief Engineer Gustafson and I delivered the set to MacDonald's office where he gave it a quick try-out with no major complaints. He announced he would give it the "acid test" as he planned to go to Mackinac Island the next weekend for an extended stay aboard the Mizpah.

Things were normal for the next couple of weeks when suddenly I was summoned to the Commander's office. He was obviously in good spirits and started talking in glowing terms about his experiences with the new set: "I never missed a news broadcast!" "Every night I got the London news direct." "It was interesting to hear what the German news said of Hilter's exploits." etc., etc. Finally he turned to me, "We are going into production on a short wave portable immediately. We are going to call it the Zenith Super Deluxe Trans-Oceanic portable. Of course, it will also have a standard

(Cont. on next page)

broadcast band in it, but it will be primarily a short wave portable."

At that moment the birth of an idea was consummated! It resulted in a line of receivers that continues to date and which brought in a new concept of short

wave radio entertainment. There probably were other short wave portables before Zenith's, but it is safe to say that none caught the public's fancy like the Zenith Super Deluxe Trans-Oceanic portable.

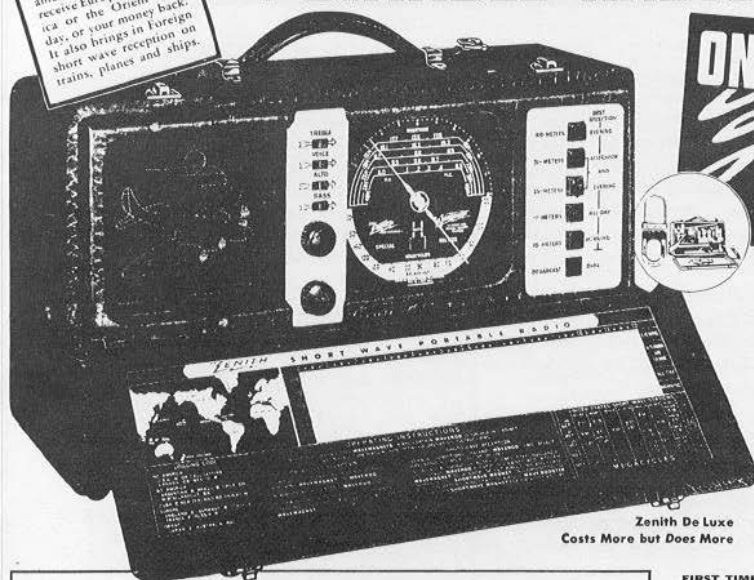
ZENITH

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FAMOUS **WAVEMAGNET**
AMERICA'S LEADING
PORTABLE RADIO

NOW INTRODUCES SENSATIONAL NEW TRANS-OCEANIC PORTABLE RADIO

• The first and only portable radio guaranteed to receive Europe, so America or the Orient every day, or your money back. It also brings in foreign short wave reception on trains, planes and ships.



Zenith De Luxe
Costs More but Does More

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Zenith
HAS THIS!

U. S. PATENT NO. 2164251 AND 2200674
Wavemagnet and Shortwave Magnet
Radio Receivable for standard and short wave reception on trains, planes and ships

In local radio broadcasting blackouts and electric power shutdowns, this new portable radio enables you to listen direct on its own battery power to America's powerful short wave stations which may be your only source of instruction and information during emergencies.

FIRST TIME! Personal short wave radio reception from our own or foreign continents—at home and while you ride in planes, trains or ships!

FIRST TIME! A portable radio that gives domestic short wave reception in locations where broadcast does not penetrate in the daytime.

FIRST TIME! The miraculous time and band buttons. Pre-set the pointer—"Press a button... there's Europe!"

FIRST TIME! On conveyances—on land—sea—air—choice of portable radio reception with built-in movable broadcast Wavemagnet and Shortwave Magnet.

FIRST TIME! Band Spread makes foreign station tuning on a portable radio as easy and simple as ordinary radio broadcast tuning.

FIRST TIME! Logged at the factory on short wave broadcast... A convenient logging chart on inside lid of cover is pre-logged by factory experts. Shows exactly what stations are found on each wave band and at what number on the dial.

FIRST TIME! Zenith Famous Radiogone Tone Device on a portable radio.

RESULTS—in test air flights, train trips and cruises, have amazed even the country's best radio research brains.

TESTS—in far-away vacation, fishing and hunting locations where daytime radio broadcast simply is not heard—showed short wave radio bringing in favorite programs direct from New York, Boston, Schenectady, etc. over the super-distance air waves.

POWER—from self-contained battery and standard lighting current ingeniously interchangeable at a second's notice. Also, Telescope Whip Aerial for use in getting extra distance. Watch your Zenith dealer's window. Don't miss this NEW ONE!

EARPHONES for privacy. Special low impedance earphones for sporting events, traveling and the hard of hearing (extra equipment).

ASK FOR THE TRANS-OCEANIC CLIPPER

THE IDEAL RADIO FOR ALL MEMBERS OF THE ARMED FORCES STATIONED IN REMOTE OUTPOSTS



In lonely remote regions far from standard or short wave transmitters, the Zenith Trans-Oceanic De Luxe Portable has already performed superbly in rigorous field tests. Its ability to provide entertainment for servicemen in far-flung Arctic and sub-Arctic regions and other outposts is definitely established.

Going back to the old short wave testing grounds used since 1923 by the Zenith Radio Corporation for perfection of short wave equipment, two of the De Luxe Portables were sent with our compliments to Commander Donald B. MacMillan, noted lecturer and Arctic explorer in the far north.

After painstaking tests in the Arctic, MacMillan wrote: "The two De Luxe Portables are working beautifully. In my twenty years' experience with radio in the Arctic, this new product of yours surpasses anything I ever heard. We are getting European and American short wave stations day and night and are fully informed of news the world around."

This new portable is invaluable not only in blackouts when it runs on its own battery regardless of electric power shutdowns, but also for our forces in foreign and isolated areas where standard broadcast does not penetrate and the men want to listen to news of home.



AMERICA'S OLDEST MANUFACTURER OF FINE RADIOS, FOR THE HOME . . . AGAIN A YEAR AHEAD!