

Super-Wasp Short-Wave Set

by ROBERT HERTZBERG

Bring up the subject of kits today and most radio men automatically think of Heath. The story of how the late Howard Anthony parlayed some World War II surplus tubes into an international business is now well known, but what is not generally recognized is the much earlier work in the same field by the old Pilot Radio & Tube Corporation with its "SUPER-WASP".

This four-tube, tuned-RF regenerative receiver was definitely the first commercial radio kit. The circuitry was designed largely by Robert S. Kruse, an early technical editor of QST, and the packaging was done by John Geloso, the firm's chief engineer, an Italian born in Argentina. I did the "field testing" ... on a kitchen table in a Bronx apartment .. and I also wrote the instruction manual. This cooperative effort took place over the winter of 1928-29. The kit hit the market in the spring of 1929 and was an immediate success because it was virtually fool-proof from both electrical and mechanical standpoints. Contributing factors were favorable sun-spot conditions and the many programs of G5SW, the British Broadcasting Company short-wave station in Chelmsford, England, and PCJ, the Phillips Company station in Eindhoven, Holland.

The announcer at PCJ was an affable young man named Edward Startz who had a remarkable command of seven or eight languages. He attracted a large following of faithful short-wave listeners, and indirectly did more to sell Super-Wasps and other receivers than the manufacturers themselves. He retired in 1969 after a long career with Phillips.

Pilot was one of the very few real fabricators of the radio industry. In a crowded factory in Brooklyn, N.Y., it made its own tools and dies and manufactured all the bits and pieces of its components and assemblies. It did all its own turning, stamping, winding, plating, forming, etc. Automatic screw machines and power presses competed for floor space with Bakelite molders, spray booths, etc.

The Pilot plug-in coils were famous for their ribbed forms, removable base pins, external soldering lugs and the colored ring handles. With complete in-house quality control of all parts, the Super-Wasp quickly developed a reputation for reliability. Even today, more than 40 years after its introduction, the set is still in use in some parts of the world and often appears in pictures of ham shacks and SWL posts in the hobby magazines.

The Super-Wasp was sold in the United States not only through radio dealers but also in the S.S. Kresge chain store. It was also popular abroad, and whole shiploads went to importers everywhere. To meet the demand, the Brooklyn factory ran almost non-stop, and the money poured in as the merchandise went out.

All this added up to the arch-typical story of the poor immigrant orphan making good in a big way: Isidor Goldberg, founder and sole owner of the company, was well on the way to his first million by the summer of 1929. Then came the stock market crash of October and the Depression with a capital D. Did the Pilot boom crash too? Astonishingly, no. Sales just kept right on

Editor's note: Author Bob Hertzberg, W2DJJ, has been writing radio articles for well over 40 years. He is former Editor of RADIO NEWS and RADIO DESIGN (see below). OM Hertzberg has been an A.W.A. member for several years and provided the unusual pictures of old Cortland Street at the 1970 Conference.

RADIO DESIGN

OFFICIAL ORGAN OF THE RADIO INTERNATIONAL GUILD

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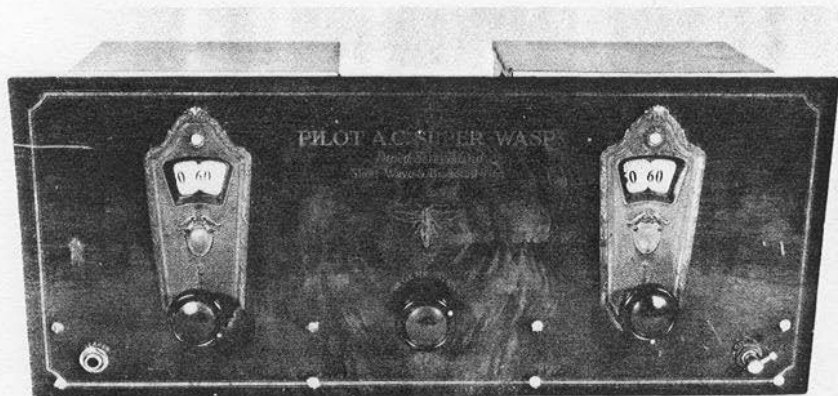
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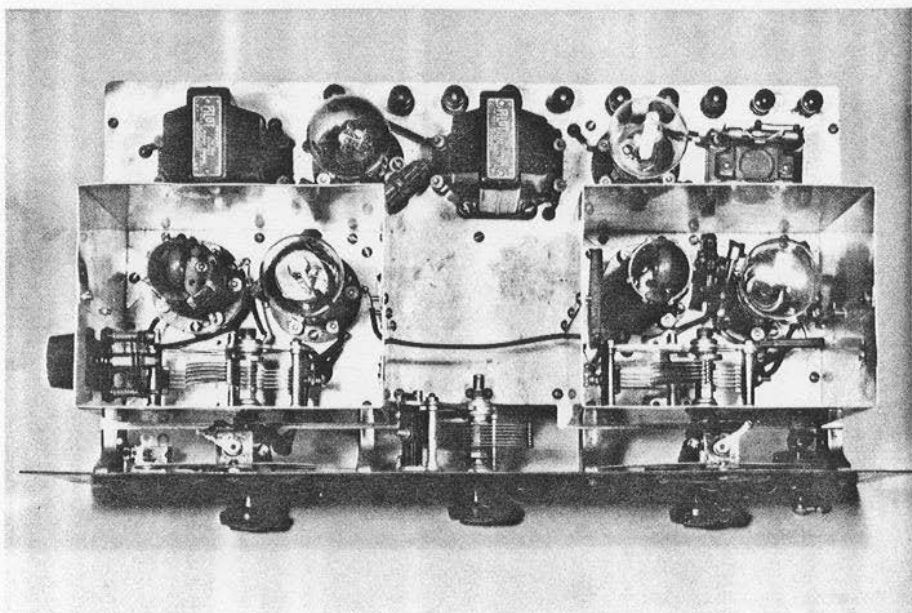
climbing ! While people had less money than before, they had something infinitely more valuable... time. They didn't need much money to enjoy short-wave listening, but they certainly needed lots of time for twiddling the dials. A curious corollary to this situation was the parallel upsurge of the photography hobby through-out the depression. Today, many ham and camera clubs have a large percentage of common members.

Probably our prize customer was the King of Siam, a rabid hobbyist if there

ever was one. On a visit to the United States in either 1930 or 1931, he and a large entourage were ensconced in the Westchester N.Y., estate of a newspaper publisher. One day a phone call came into the factory from one of the royal secretaries. He said that his Royal Majesty was interested in radio, and could a Pilot representative bring over a Pilot-Wasp and show it to him ? I don't recall why I was elected for the job, but elected I was. I pressed my good suit, shined my shoes, washed my 1929 Ford, and presented myself at



Super-Wasp in A.W.A. Museum. The tuned R.F. stage is at left, regeneration control center and detector at right. AC and DC models were similar except for tubes.



GOOD NEWS FOR SHORT-WAVE FANS!

	The manufacture of the	
	K-110 and K-115 Models of	
	the famous original	



SUPER-WASP



will be continued



THE advent of the new Universal Super-Wasp does not mean the end of the K-110 and K-115 models of the original Super-Wasp. This world famous receiver will be continued without change, as it fills a definite need in the short-wave field. Of course it does not have the features of the brand-new Universal, but it still is a fine set and is particularly suitable for use in amateur stations because of its flexible construction. The Super-Wasp was the receiver that really opened the short waves to the home listener, and in the minds of many people its very name is synonymous with short waves.

THE K-110 is the battery model, using one 222 screen-grid tube and three 201A's. The K-115 is the A. C. model, using one 224 and three 227's and operating entirely off a K-111 power pack (furnished separately). Both sets use a

stage of tuned R. F. amplification, regenerative detector and two stages of A. F., with double shielding. A wave length range of 15 to 500 meters is obtained with five pairs of plug-in coils. The two models are alike in general appearance and dimensions, being 18 inches long, 7½ inches high and 9½ inches deep when assembled. They are supplied only in kit form, with front panels but without cabinets.

THE K-110 is described in detail in a 12-page folder, identified as Data Sheet No. 7. The K-115 is described in a 16-page booklet, known as Data Sheet No. 115. These contain much interesting technical data on short-wave receiver design. You can obtain copies from the main Pilot office at Lawrence, Mass., by merely sending a two-cent stamp to cover mailing. The receivers themselves may be examined at radio stores throughout the country.

K-115 Kit — \$34.50

K-110 Kit — \$29.50

K-111 power pack — \$16.50 tubes extra.



TRADE MARK



The A. C. Super-Wasp



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