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Model radio room is maintained by top newspaper and supervised by one of the nation's earliest amateurs

By MIKE BIENSTOCK
Associate Editor

TIME WAS when the carrier pigeon provided the fastest link between a newspaper reporter and his editor. But while the use of birds had the advantage of speed, it suffered from a major drawback. Rival papers hired marksmen to wing the birds in flight. Result—no story.

Today the press has grown with the times—and the *New York Times* has grown even faster. There are those who complain that the *Times* is somewhat antique, but there is nothing old-fashioned about its newsgathering system.

An outstanding example of its pioneering may be found in the radio room, a setup which would be the envy of radiomen everywhere for its completeness and convenience of operation. As far as can be learned, no other newspaper has an operation approaching this in size or thoroughness.

Major equipment in the radio room includes: three transmitters; nine receivers; six disc recorders (for voice); two Morse-tape recorders; one Hellschreiber recorder (which can

receive teletypewriter transmission under adverse conditions); and two television receivers.

Finger on the Pulse. The radio room serves a dual purpose: it takes the pulse of the news by monitoring the transmissions of the official radio stations in many of the important world capitals—especially Moscow—and it transmits news summaries to outposts and out-of-the-way areas such as ships at sea, remote air strips, lighthouses, and the like.

The room is under the supervision of Reginald J. Iverson, who has been associated with the *Times* for 36 years.

(Mr. Iverson has been a radio amateur since 1910, and owned one of the first licenses in Chicago. His call at that time was 9AU; he now operates as W2LDR.) Under Mr. Iverson are three other first-class operators, as well as two transcribers, who record and transcribe the millions of words received by the station yearly.

Here's how the news-gathering system works. A battery of

Walter Sullivan.
Times correspondent, when he was with Operation Deepfreeze.



nine short-wave receivers—mostly Collins 51J4's and National HRO's—are used to listen to the radio transmissions of such cities as Moscow, London, Paris and other vital news centers. This material is summarized and serves as a check on the regular news stories filed by the paper's own correspondents and the news services.

From time to time such information

complete texts of important speeches. For instance, when Nikita Khrushchev, Soviet "boss," makes an important declaration, a *Times* man will take it off the air on one of the disc recorders, and it will be translated and run complete in the next day's paper. Other newspapers must be satisfied with the frequently incomplete texts transmitted by the news services.

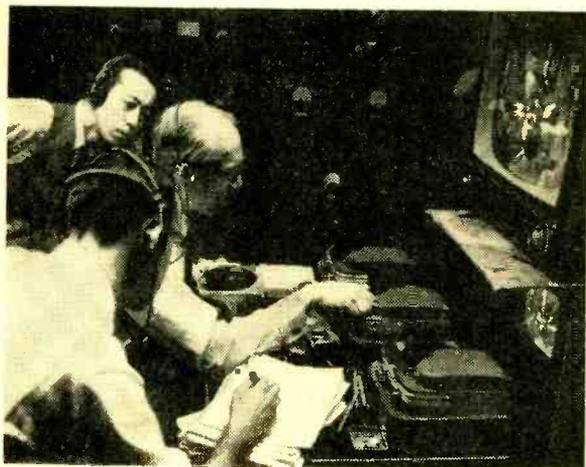
In this country, when President Eisenhower, for instance, speaks to the nation, his address is recorded from the audio circuit of one of the two *Times* TV sets. It is then transcribed and run complete. This is in contrast to many other papers which run the official release distributed in advance. Such releases sometimes differ from the addresses delivered.

The radio room also maintains direct radio contact with some of its correspondents. For instance, when one of its top-flight men, Walter Sullivan, was with the Navy in the Antarctic, he set up a regular daily transmission schedule from the icebreaker "Atka." He filed stories daily over 14,000 miles of land, sea and ice. The *Times* radio room maintained contact with him by using one of the battery of three 1-kw. transmitters built by Mr. Iverson. They operate on 4, 6, 8, 13, 16 and 22 mc., and use the call WHD.

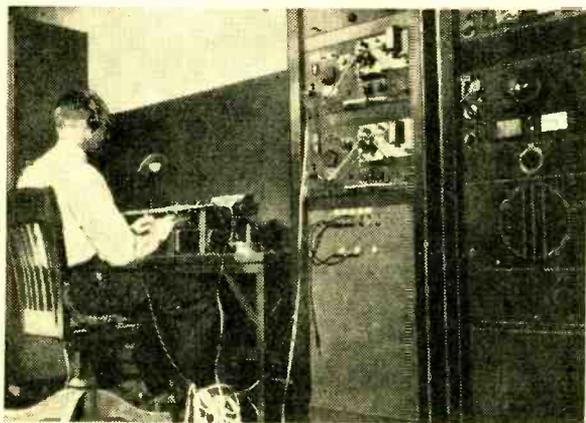
Most of the major expeditions of this century have been followed by the *Times* in the same manner, including the Byrd Antarctic expedition in 1928, and Operation Deepfreeze currently. It is the only newspaper which gives such coverage.

The transmitters are also used to transmit news summaries in code twice daily, as a public service. Reports are sent at 1900 Greenwich Mean Time on 13.02 and 16.96 mc., and at 0500 GMT on 6.51 and 13.02 mc. Letters have been received from outposts in all parts of the world thanking the *Times* for this service, since in many areas it is impossible to receive directly news broadcasts by radio from cities involved.

"Doria" Signal Heard. One of the nine receivers constantly monitors the 500-kc. distress band. In 1956, a *Times* operator picked up the distress call of the "Andrea Doria" when the big liner was struck and sunk by the "Stockholm." The operator remained on duty for the full time the ship
(Continued on page 109)



The Army-McCarthy hearings were recorded on disc machines and printed the following day. Here, Reginald J. Iverson, head of *Times* radio room (center), checks the recording.



Mr. Iverson cuts a Morsetape news summary which is fed directly to one of three 1-kw. transmitters. Such summaries are sent to outposts all over the world as a public service.

serves as a tip on an important story before the local man gets it, and he will be apprised of the "break." At other times, if the information is considered reliable, it is used to fill in the background of the news.

Printing Complete Speeches. The *Times*, of course, is noted for printing the

Getting the News—Fast!

(Continued from page 62)

kept up transmissions, and his paper was the only one to print the full log of messages.

The roof of the *Times* Building on West 43rd Street is a maze of antennas, all installed under the direction of Mr. Iverson. They are 380 feet above ground.

Although he admits that Midtown New York is not the best site in the world for a radio station, Mr. Iverson finds that cutting his half-wave dipole antennas for the frequency to be monitored gives satisfactory reception. He has installed a large four-element beam antenna for working a specific area—such as the South Pole. For most news transmissions, doublets are used. To increase efficiency, antennas are fed through coaxial cable from the third floor, where the radio room is located, to the 13th floor roof.

The *Times* has come a long way from the carrier pigeon in its striving to gather "All the News That's Fit to Print." Its radio room is one important link in making certain that this newspaper gets "all the news."

—30—

The Lady Is a Ham

(Continued from page 49)

and their families attend all-day "ham-fests" held at picnic areas across the country. There are games for the children and prizes for all, but the chief attraction is the opportunity to meet face-to-face the people *with whom* you've talked. Rarely does one's mental picture match up with the real thing: you find that the deep, resonant voice which thrilled you so much came from a little, dried-up man, while the fellow you have been more or less passing over on the air because his voice sounded monotonous and uninteresting may turn out to be a real dreamboat.

But that just makes hamfests all the more interesting. In fact, it is this business of never knowing whom you are going to meet next on the air that makes the hobby so stimulating.

One experience of a friend of mine, a radio operator on an oil tanker, illustrates what romantic surprises the ham bands can hold. He was chatting with an amateur in Saudi Arabia who mentioned that he was the Minister of Communication in that country and who extended an invitation to my friend to visit the capital city the next time the tanker was in port. It was not until my friend received a handsomely engraved card verifying the contact that he

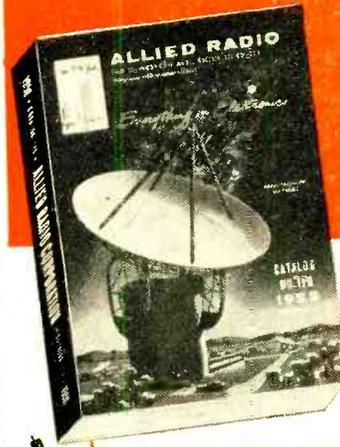
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