



Artifact Showcase

RCA Model AR-88LF

The Radio Corporation of America (RCA) employed a stable of expert radio engineers, and designed some particularly fine communications receivers, like this 1941 AR-88LF. It featured fourteen vacuum tubes and weighed roughly 100 lbs. Heavy radios are often called “boat anchors” by radio collectors, and this one certainly fits that category

The AR-88LF was intended for the military. (The LF in the model number indicated that it included the low frequency coverage still used by some ships at sea.) Its wide band coverage included the low frequency range from 70 to 550 kHz, as well as high-frequency coverage from 1.5 to 30 MHz.

All AR-88LF receivers were built at RCA’s Montreal factory, and nearly all were shipped to our WW II Allies, mainly Great Britain and Russia. In England, banks of them were used as intercept receivers at what were called Y stations, whose mission was to capture German communications. The other American radios often used at Y stations were the National Company’s type HRO radios.



Under the provisions of the Lend-Lease Program, once these receivers were no longer needed, they were either to be shipped back to the U.S. or destroyed. Because they were so heavy to ship, many were destroyed, so they are rare today.

Some argue that the AR-88 series represented RCA’s best receivers ever. After the War, as newer, more compact models replaced the AR-88s, ham operators in Britain were able to purchase them as surplus government property and praised their performance.

We appreciate your support of the Museum so that historical artifacts like this one and the stories that go with them can be preserved for future generations.
THANKS!

Donated by Michael Munroe