the sound of marching feet and the uniformed figure of Ben Nock G4BXD clearly indicates that there’s a ‘military flavour’ to the vintage column this month. So, pay attention because Ben’s looking towards Scandinavia and Europe on this ‘parade’!

I’m starting off this month with two rather attractive sets from the Scandinavian countries. The RA-190 is a very nice ‘special forces’ type set, separate receiver and transmitter, very much like the WS No. 128 found in the UK.

The receiver, or ‘Mottagare’, uses eight one and a half volt heater valves. These, an 1L4, 1R5, 3V4, etc., are in a standard single conversion role employing r.f. amplifier, mixer, separate oscillator, and two i.f. stages, audio detector/a.f. amplifier, audio output and b.f.o. stages.

The heaters, or ‘Glod’, are wired in series-parallel and fed from a 3V supply. The h.t. voltage of 67.5V is also obtained from batteries, two of these being used.

The Transmitter

The transmitter, or ‘Sandare’, uses two valves, a 3A4 type as crystal oscillator and another 3A4 valve as the p.a. stage. A switch on the transmitter selects either full power transmit using the two 6.75V batteries in series to give 135V, receive, low power transmit with the batteries in parallel, or ‘off’.

A grounded parallel tuned circuit is used in the p.a. with taps for the antenna connection. Here a portion of the r.f. is rectified and used to give an indication on a small meter that can also be used to check on the state of the batteries.

The RA-190 receiver covers 1.1 to 1.7MHz, and then 2.5 to 16MHz in another four bands. The transmitter covers 1.6 to 16MHz in four bands (c.w.) only with an output of 800mW up to 8mHz and 400mW up to 16MHz.

The complete station comes with a ‘wrap around’ bag which holds a selection of crystals, the headphones, key, antenna and ground wires (and a little ‘dangly thing’ to throw a wire over trees!) and a few bits of connecting wire.

The batteries to power the set are held in small pouches attached to a belt arrangement which can be worn by the operator. The whole kit is finished in a nice shade of green.

Despite the low power (though of course there’s nothing wrong with QRP!), I made several contacts on 3.5MHz, using my long wire antenna. The transmitter has a very nice note and the receiver and b.f.o. are stable enough for a long QSO without re-tuning.

The ‘big brother’ to the RA-190, is the RA-200. This is a back-pack set, covering 2 to 8MHz and providing c.w. or a.m. modes. Power output is 500mW from batteries and up to 8W with an external h.t. supply from a hand-cranked generator.

I have limited information on the RA-200 at the moment. However, I have tried the RA-200 out on the air, using it on 3.5MHz running just the 500mW with the battery supply. I managed several nice contacts on c.w. including Peter G3ZRP in Swindon at 569, Ralph G0JZY in Portishead at 579, Sam G3HVI in Stoke at 519 and even a QRP-to-QRP with Chas G3AJW (he was using 3W) giving me a 569. All QSOs were carried out using my 41 metre long wire.

Made In Brussels

Next in line is the RST 101, an interesting set made by the MBLE company in Bruxelles (Brussels). The package consists of the set, a transmitter-receiver, a hand-cranked generator, antenna wire, poles and guys, leads, headphones and canvas bags in which to carry everything. A manual I received from Peter ON6PW (see later) is dated 1955.

Six crystal controlled channels are available on the transmitter, which can operate between 3 and 12MHz. The crystals are housed inside the set so changing them requires the case to be opened up (very inconvenient!).

The receiver is a fully tuneable set covering the same frequencies as the transmitter in three switched bands. A small push button (which can be used as the Morse key) is fitted to the set but an external key, which is much easier to use, can be connected via a standard jack socket, as can a set of headphones.

Two valves are used in the receiver and both are 6AG5 types. The first valve is used as a regenerative detector and the second valve as a straight audio amplifier.

In the transmitter, three valves are used one, a 6AG5, as a crystal oscillator then a further two 6AG5s in parallel as the p.a. stage. Two small lamps, covered with long rubber sleeves, enable the oscillator and p.a. stage trimmers to be adjusted (they are tuned for maximum brightness on the bulbs).

As well as the hand cranked generator, batteries can be used to power the RST 101 (on receive only).