**11/28/18 Training – The Story of the “Wouff Hong”**

OK – So, you might be wondering what the story of the “**Wouff Hong**” has to do with Emergency Communications, hmmmm? Well there is an indirect but distinct connection as the Wouff Hong represented a strong incentive for ham radio operators to engage in good operating practices at all times!

The Wouff Hong, also spelled as “Woulf Houng”, was a brutal device constructed with a handle and a spring loaded spanker element, that was used to inflict physical punishment on ham radio operators who didn’t follow the guidelines of good operating practice!

The Wouff-Hong is not so much a gadget, but it has been a part of Ham Radio lore since at least the 1930’s… and – via legend – long before that as well. According to the 1930 edition of The Radio Amateur’s Handbook, “The Wouff Hong is amateur radio’s most sacred symbol and stands for the enforcement of law and order in amateur operation”.

The story goes that T.O.M. (The Old Man) wrote stories on the American Radio Relay League’s magazine, QST, titled “Rotten Radio”. It excoriated bad operating practices by using caustic humor and satire. It was in one of these stories that the Wouff Hong was born. It wasn’t until after his death that it was revealed that T.O.M. was none other than Hiram Percy Maxim, otherwise known as W1AW. Hiram served the ARRL as president for 22 years after which the ARRL built a new memorial station that has been known from that day forward as W1AW.

As The Old Man heard it, the Wouff Hong was being used on some hapless offender so effectively that he investigated. After further effort, T.O.M. was able to locate and identify a Wouff Hong! HE wrote a number of articles about contemporary rotten operating practices and the use of the Wouff Hong to discipline the offenders.

The Wouff Hong was also given away as swag at the 1938 ARRL National Convention in Chicago. Occasionally these show up on e-Bay and is something I would love to have in my station, even though it really has no function in radio. It’s just a great piece from the very beginning of amateur radio. One of the most interesting and unique artifacts from the early days of radio was not powered by batteries nor did it have any electronic components. As far as I can tell, Radio Shack never stocked it on their shelves and you can’t order it from Ham Radio Outlet.

Every amateur should know and tremble at the history and origins of this fearsome instrument from punishment of amateurs who cultivate bad operating habits and who nourish and culture their meaner instincts on the air. The Old Man never prescribed the exact manner in which the Wouff Hong was to be used, but amateurs need only a little look and imagination to surmise how painful punishments were inflicted on those who stoop to liddish behavior on the air.

There is a secret society called “The Royal Order of the Wouff Hong” who bestows the Royal Order of Wouff Hong Certificate on those who consistently do follow good operating practices on the air. I’m currently looking into what it will take to establish a local chapter in this area.

Finally, the Wouff Hong is not the only instrument of punishment bad behavior on the amateur Radio Bands! Another one is the sinister looking Rettysnitch, which was used to enforce decency in amateur radio operating work… but that’s another story for another time.

By the way, one of the original Wouff Hongs is currently on display at ARRL HQ, hung in the office of the Secretary of the League… a must-see if you visit HQ.