

# The Collins KW-1 Transmitter - "Star" of *Hawaii Five-O* TV Series

By Rod Blocksome

Recently the AACLA was donated KW-1 Transmitter serial 139 and is currently undergoing restoration for display at the Collins Aerospace Museum in Cedar Rapids, Iowa.



The Collins KW-1 Amateur Radio Transmitter

The Collins KW-1 Transmitter is quite rare and highly prized by collectors. Only 150 plus 2 prototypes were ever produced. All but 16 are known to exist today. The KW-1 is a plate-modulated 1-kilowatt AM transmitter for the radio amateur. It covers the 10 through 160 meter ham bands and sold for \$3,850 when introduced in 1952. In 1952 you could purchase a new Ford sedan for about half that amount! The design engineer for the KW-1 was John Foster, W0YDX, a design engineer in the group led by Ernie Pappenfus, W0SYF.

Clyde Hendrix, W0HBG, Division President of Pillsbury Mills, bought the first KW-1 off the line according to an article in the *Collins Column* of Jan. 1951. Hendrix had previously bought the first 75A, 30K, and 75A-2 equipments. The HQ MARS station, located in the Pentagon, also bought an early KW-1 according to a photo article in the *Collins Signal*, Summer 1952.



Arthur Collins, W0CXX, put KW-1 serial 137 into his personal ham station.

KW-1 serial 139 has a unique and colorful history adding to the lore of this unique amateur transmitter from the 1950's. Current information indicates it began service in a communications facility located inside Diamond Head Crater, Honolulu, Hawaii - perhaps used in a Civil Defense or Emergency Communications

role. Later it was "retired" as more modern communications, such as SSB, upgrades were made.

It next appeared in the popular TV series "Hawaii Five-0" shot entirely in Hawaii and aired between September 1968 and April 1980. It can be seen in scenes where the action takes place in the "Five-0" radio communications set.

Serial 139 was owned by Peter Brown, KH6IRT, who passed away in \_\_??\_\_. It was then inherited by Robin Liu, AH6CP who had no room for it so began looking for a new home for it. My friend, Kimo Chun, KH7U, suggested it should go back to its origins. Robin agreed and Kimo orchestrated interim storage for 3-years, then the packing and shipping. Those folks assisting Kimo during this period were: Doug Morgan, KH6U, Mitch Pinkerton, KH6MP, and Barney Cagle, WH6K.

Now, as we proceed into restoration and display planning, we would like to identify the Hawaii Five-0 episodes in which the KW-1 appears. But there were a total of 282 episodes of Hawaii Five-0. We need your help.

We propose to post a “Leader Board” on this web site showing the season number and episode for each person spotting the KW-1 in a scene. The leader board will look something like this:

| “KW-1 Spotter ID” | Season No. | Episode No. or Title | Brief Description |
|-------------------|------------|----------------------|-------------------|
|                   |            |                      |                   |
|                   |            |                      |                   |
|                   |            |                      |                   |
|                   |            |                      |                   |

The episodes are available on streaming services as well as DVD’s. The following table should assist those who wish to join this effort.

| Season | Episodes | First Aired   | Last Aired    |
|--------|----------|---------------|---------------|
| 1      | 24       | Sep. 20, 1968 | Mar. 19, 1969 |
| 2      | 25       | Sep. 24, 1969 | Mar. 11, 1970 |
| 3      | 24       | Sep. 16, 1970 | Mar. 10, 1971 |
| 4      | 24       | Sep. 14, 1971 | Mar. 7, 1972  |
| 5      | 24       | Sep. 12, 1972 | Mar. 13, 1973 |
| 6      | 24       | Sep. 11, 1973 | Feb. 26, 1974 |
| 7      | 24       | Sep. 10, 1974 | Mar. 25, 1975 |
| 8      | 24       | Sep. 12, 1975 | Mar. 4, 1976  |
| 9      | 24       | Sep. 30, 1976 | May 5, 1977   |
| 10     | 24       | Sep. 15, 1977 | May 4, 1978   |
| 11     | 22       | Sep. 28, 1978 | Apr. 5, 1979  |
| 12     | 19       | Oct. 4, 1979  | Apr. 5, 1980  |

Please submit your Hawaii Five-0 KW-1 spots to our web master at:

[kw-1\\_spotters@collinsaerospacemuseum.org](mailto:kw-1_spotters@collinsaerospacemuseum.org).