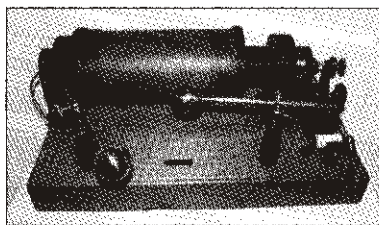


# IEEE Region 8 News

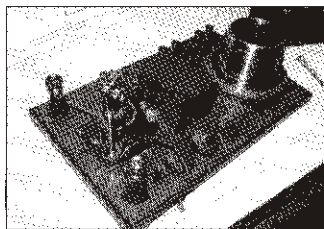
## IEEE HISTORICAL MILESTONE FOR SOUTH AFRICA

### FIRST OPERATIONAL USE OF WIRELESS TELEGRAPHY

It is not generally appreciated that, as far as can be established, the first operational use of wireless telegraphy was in South Africa during the Anglo-Boer War of 1899-1902. This aspect of the early history of radio communications has been carefully researched and documented. On the strength of these findings, the South Africa Section of the IEEE, supported by the South African Institute for Electrical Engineers in terms of a Cooperation Agreement with the IEEE, nominated this event as an Historical Milestone. The IEEE History Committee supported the proposal, and the IEEE Executive Committee during its August 1998 meeting approved the nomination. The citation reads:

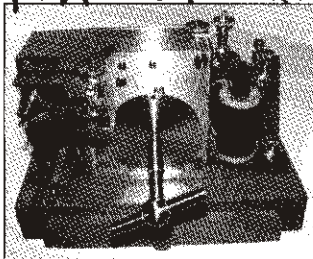


The Ruhmkorff coil spark transmitter



Receiver

Nov 1998  
Ed: Prof. N.C. Baker



Morse code tape inker

### FIRST OPERATIONAL USE OF WIRELESS TELEGRAPHY

*The first use of wireless telegraphy in the field occurred during the Anglo-Boer War (1899-1902). The British Army experimented with Marconi's system and the British Navy successfully used it for communication among naval vessels in Delagoa Bay, prompting further development of Marconi's wireless telegraph system for practical uses.*

The Boer forces of the old Transvaal Republic ordered several wireless telegraph sets from Siemens in Germany. These arrived after the outbreak of hostilities, and were confiscated by the British on arrival in Cape Town. A refurbished Siemens set consisting of a Ruhmkorff coil for the transmitter, a receiver with coherer and Morse code relay, an inker for printing the Morse symbols on tape, and a battery are exhibited at the War Museum of the Boer Republics in Bloemfontein, South Africa. ♦

*Photos courtesy of The War Museum of the Boer Republics, Bloemfontein, South Africa.*