EAA'S attic

Can You Hear Me Now?

EAA's Attic contains military and general aviation communication devices that span almost an entire century. The headsets and headphones, 175 in all, range from the snaking 1920s Gosport tube and funnel (used in-flight by instructors to communicate with students in noisy open-cockpit craft) to the all-inclusive helmet sets still used today. About 250 radios, a combination of receivers, transmitters, and transceivers, span the World War I era to the 1990s. Some of these devices weigh more than 30 pounds.

If a pilot were looking for a lightweight receiver in the 1940s, he or she might have selected this portable Motorola Airboy. Pacific Airmotive, a West Coast aeronautical supplier, advertised it for $31 in 1948. About the size of a lunchbox, the four-tube receiver weighed 4 pounds; that's with the required small B battery and two flashlight cells. It delivered beacon, weather, and tower information. The headphones, weighing 11 ounces with sponge rubber ear cushions (missing here) and 5-foot cord and plug, were sold separately for $6.50, as was the required antenna.

–Kathleen L. Witman

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