

A PADDLE FOR TRIGGERING ELECTRONIC KEYERS

Designed and built by W. R. Smith (1946)



While a student at the University of Tennessee 57 years ago, one of my classes had to do with designing and building something and writing a paper regarding it. At that time, electronic keyers for making automatic dots and dashes used for sending Morse code were beginning to be popular. Thus, I decided to build a paddle with which to key one of these for my ham station located in the 17-foot trailer of our UT trailer village. The paddle shown is the result of my effort.

The paddle is composed of two levers hinged at a common arbor. However, it is unique in the manner in which the two of them are maintained centered without making contact to either the dot or dash post. As can be seen, there is a screw through the nearest lever that passes through a larger clearance hole in the far lever and ends up with a spring and a nut. This holds the two levers together. At the far side of these levers is a spring applying a force to rotate them clockwise. However, in the nearest lever, there is a hole and through this hole is passed the end of a screw that centers the two levers in the neutral position between the dot and dash contacts without touching either. This is the secret of the paddle's design. As the round knob is pressed to the left, the far lever remains stopped against the end of this screw but the right lever moves clockwise and makes the dash contact. However, if the paddle is pressed to the right, both levers rotate counterclockwise at their hinge arbor and the dot contact is made. As will be seen later, this design trick allowed me to design and build vertical speed keys shorter than any ever produced before.

No information for the making of this paddle is available. It is shown only for its interest value.

W. R. Smith
8049 Camberley Drive
Powell, Tennessee, 37849
Phone: 865-947-9671
E-mail WRSmith2@AOL.COM