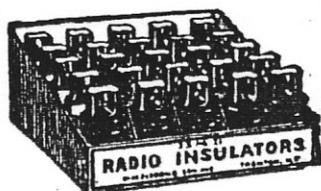


Old Familiar Strains

a newsletter for collectors of radio strain insulators and related items

Volume 6 No. 3

June 1999



*Porcelain
Insulator*

NO. 21 PORCELAIN INSULATORS

A high grade insulator made of Fleron Blue Porcelain in a new package. 25 insulators in a Counter Display Stand.

<i>Catalog Number</i>	<i>Size</i>	<i>Carton</i>	<i>List Price Each</i>
21	3 x 1 $\frac{3}{8}$	100	\$0.10
75	2 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 1 $\frac{1}{8}$	100	.05

Special Bulk Quantity Prices on Application

RADIO Fleron PRODUCTS

2016 PDF edition

Editorial

The cover is a lead-in for this month's follow up to the 10/96 story of M.M. Fleron. I've added a number of insulator and lightning arrester listings since that time. And we have several previously unpublished illustrations.

The cover picture serves another purpose as well. Ever wonder why so few strains are found in the original box? Perhaps this counter display unit holds the answer. Apparently the insulators were sold loose, without boxes. Now, can anyone come up with one of these display units?

I have gotten more than one request recently for some "lighter" articles. So here is one that is just for fun. Although the names of the insulators are all real, the mythological names article is entirely tongue-in-cheek. If you think of other historical tie-ins to add, please drop me a line.

You are Invited

This summer I am excited to be participating in insulator shows in late August (Portland) and early September (Lima, NY). Hopefully, I'll see you at one or both.

August 14th, Portland, OR

On August 14th, I'm cohosting the third annual Filling the Void show here in Portland, OR. The show runs from noon until early evening. Once again my folks are allowing us to set up in their back yard.

If you can make it, please come. I have maps - call me and I'll send you one.

September 4th, Lima, NY

A short three weeks after the Portland show, I'll be at a Capital District Insulator Club show in western New York.

We've chosen the date of September 4th (Saturday of Labor Day weekend). For me, this coincides with the Antique Wireless Association's annual convention in nearby Rochester.

Ken Willick, the National Insulator Association's Eastern V.P., has agreed to host the event in Lima, NY. *OFS* reader and NIA President, **Kevin Lawless**, will be there and has arranged for the Capital District Insulator Club to sanction the event.

I'm really excited about this event! I hope that many of the *OFS* readers in the central and eastern regions will consider making the trip to Lima, NY, for this get together.

In addition to these shows, I understand that at least three other readers are also hosting August shows this year.

- August 7th, Auburn, CA
contact **Shirley Patocka**
- August 8th, Wyoming, OH
contact **Alan Hohnhorst**
- August 28th East Hampton, CT
contact **Larry Emmons**.

What's in a Name: The Role of Mythology in the Naming of Insulators and Arresters by Dan Howard

Did you ever wonder where they came up with some of those crazy-sounding insulator brand names? A few years ago, a book about lightning theory and myths caused me to realize that many of the familiar brand names had their roots in Greek and Roman mythology. A study of brand names and myths lead me to create the following listings. (If you were lucky enough to find a bunch of these pieces, it might even make a fun contest entry some time). I hope that you enjoy the trip as much as I have.

If you think of others, please let me know and I'll do a follow up.

Aeolus insulators Aeolus Corp. New York, NY.

Mythological name: Aeolus - the Greek god of the winds.

At one time, Aeolus had confined all of Earth's winds in a cave on Mount Haemus in Thrace. These included:

- Boreas - the North Wind
- Notus - the South Wind
- Eurus - the East Wind
- Zephyrus - the West Wind

Aeolus tied up all the winds in a bag and presented them to Ulysses so that he might use them to fill his sails. Unwittingly, one of the crew gave the winds their irrevocable freedom and mankind has not been able to control them to this day.

Insulator tie in: Is this a commentary on some of the "windbags" that we hear on the radio? I don't know - maybe there is some other less obvious reason for using the name "Aeolus."

Ajax insulators and lightning arresters Ajax Electric Specialty Co. St. Louis, MO.

Mythological name: Ajax - a Greek hero from Troy - and the second fastest runner after Achilles. Actually a rather randy fellow according to some of the commentaries.

Insulator tie in: two in this case – (pick the one that you like best).

1. In one story, Zeus's daughter, the goddess Pallas Athene, borrowed some of his lightning to transfix Ajax.
2. In another version, Ajax is stranded upon a rock after causing the wreck of the Greek fleet. The unrepentant Ajax is drowned after an angry Poseidon split the rock with a thunderbolt.

In either version, I think that Ajax could have benefited by practicing a little common sense - and perhaps some humility.

Ser. No. 234,427. (CLASS 21. ELECTRICAL APPARATUS, MACHINES, AND SUPPLIES.) AJAX ELECTRIC SPECIALTY COMPANY, St. Louis, Mo. Filed July 12, 1926.



Particular description of goods.—Radio Receiving Sets and Parts and Accessories, Comprising Plugs, Connectors, Jacks, Rheostats, Lightning Arresters, Head Phones, Ear Phones, Loud Speakers, Audiotubes, Condensers, Receiver Cords, Audio and Radio Frequency Transformers, Spaghetti Tubing, Crystal Detectors, Assembled Detector Units, Tube Receptacles, Switch Levers, Switch-Lever Sets, Contact Points, Switch Stops, Binding Posts, Antennas, Antenna Sockets, Insulators, and Dials.

Claims use since January, 1922.

Electrad
Electrose Manufacturing Co.
Freeman Electric Co.
General Electric.

Mythological name: Electra - Three ladies by the name of Electra are mentioned in my sources, The first is the daughter of the Greek figures Agamemnon and Clytemnestra. Another is the daughter of Atlas.

Insulator tie-in: none is apparent right off except for the obvious similarity in the names. Perhaps dear Electra had a "high voltage" reputation?

ELECTRAD

Don't Fool With Lightning!

It doesn't pay to economize on a lightning arrester, or to use one you aren't sure of. You can't collect insurance unless you have an arrester capable of passing the National Board of Fire Underwriters. Put in an Electrad Certified Lightning Arrester—then you're sure.

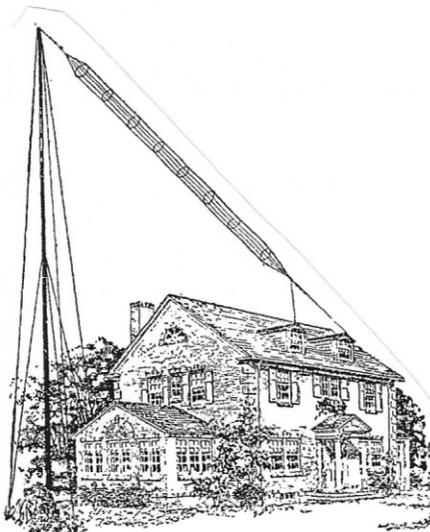


Air-gap type, exterior moulded porcelain, attractive finish. Completely sealed and moisture proof. Cost little, simple and easy to attach. At all good radio stores, 50c; in Canada 75c. Outdoor type \$1.50; in Canada \$2.10

Hercules composition insulators and antenna masts
S.W. Hull & Company
Cleveland, OH

Mythological name: Hercules (Heracles) - The son of Zeus and Alcmene. He was one strong, long suffering, dude.

Insulator tie-in: I think that S.W. Hull was making a point about the strength and quality of its products. Or perhaps they were implying that a Hercules mast would "labor" a long, long time. What do you think?



HERCULES AERIAL MAST

The above illustration shows how an efficient and good looking mast may be erected for your antenna. S. W. Hull and Company, 2048 East 79th St. Cleveland, Ohio, make these masts in three standard lengths—20 ft., 40 ft., and 60 ft., all steel construction. They are of a special angle construction that gives great strength and light weight, each of which is a decided advantage. When erected these masts will stand a five hundred-pound pull at the top

Tantalum lightning arresters
Fansteel Products Co., Inc.
North Chicago, IL.

Mythological name: Tantalus - In Greek mythology, Tantalus was condemned to remain chin-deep in water with fruit laden branches over his head. Whenever, he tried to eat or drink, the branches lifted out of reach and the water receded.

Insulator tie-in: Tantalum lightning arresters supposedly incorporate the metallic element tantalum. Tantalum may have been so-named because of its inability to absorb acids.

Thor lightning arresters
Swan-Haverstick Inc.
Trenton, NJ

Mythological name: Thor - The Norse god of war. Lightning bolts were said to emanate from Thor's famous hammer.

Insulator tie-in: Kind of makes sense to let Thor brand lightning arresters take care of "Thor brand" lightning.

Titan insulators
manufacturer unknown

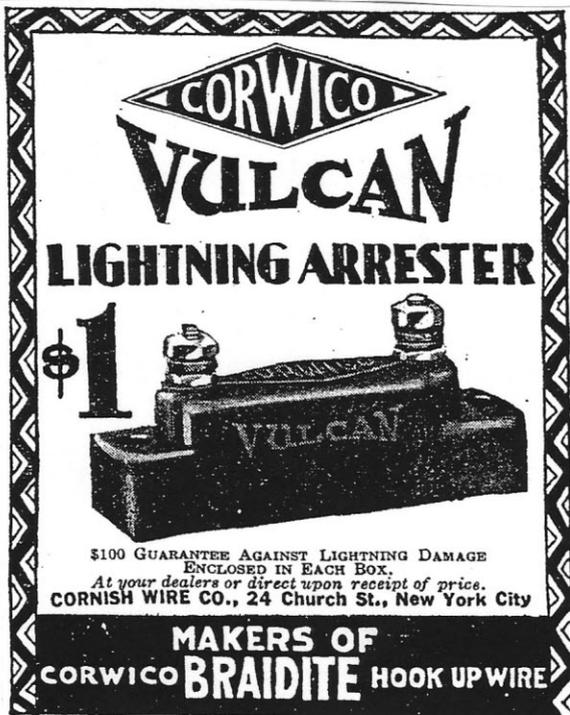
Mythological name: Titan - a general reference to the children of the Greek gods Uranus and Gaea.

Insulator tie-in: Some folks figure that it's the gods that you forget to honor that will get you in the end. Why not honor pay tribute to all of the gods at once by calling your product "Titan?"

Vulcan lightning arresters
Cornish Wire Co. (Corwico)
New York, NY

Mythological name: Vulcan - The Roman god of fire and metalworking. In spite of a hot reputation, he was the god of smiths and other workers who used fire for the good of all. Cool, huh?

Insulator tie-in: sparks from an anvil?



Sources:

Breniman, William A., "The Golden Age of Wireless," *Sparks Journal* 9/20/85 pg. 9.

Mackiewicz, Dick, Correspondence 12/28/94.

McCaughrean, Geraldine, *Greek Gods and Goddesses* (1997: Orchard Books, London).

McCaughrean, Geraldine, *Greek Myths* (1993: Orchard Books, London).

Osborne, Mary Pope, *Favorite Norse Myths* (1996: Scholastic Books, Singapore).

Random House Webster's College Dictionary, (1991: Random House Inc, New York).

Schonland, B.F.J., *The flight of Thunderbolts*, (1950: Oxford University Press, London).

Tripp, Edward, *The Meridian Handbook of Classical Mythology* (1970: Meridian Printing, New York).

Photo Credits:

Ajax patent *U.S. Patent Gazette* June 7, 1927 pg. 11.

Electrad ad *Radio Broadcast* 7/26 pg. 269

Hercules ad *Radio Broadcast* 7/25 pg. 420

Vulcan ad *Radio News* 6/30 pg. 1157

Bendix Update

One of my "finds" at the NW Collector's show was a new version of the Bendix MT-48C strain (see *OFS* 12/98). It's not an earth-shaking variation, but I believe that it is significant none the less. Here's a side by side comparison of the two styles:

	style 1	style 2
color of porcelain	white	buff
max diameter	5/8"	5/8"
spacing between the holes	2-3/4"	2-3/4"
length overall	3-13/16"	3-7/8"
length of exposed porcelain	2-5/16"	2-1/4"
length of metal ends	3/4"	13/16"

Both insulators are marked with ink under glaze. However, the style 2 marking is in a significantly larger font and could possibly be hand-applied. The style 1 markings are consistently smaller and more uniform.

Show Reports

Northwest Collectors Show and Sale
Enumclaw, WA, May 1st and 2nd, 1999
reported by Dan Howard

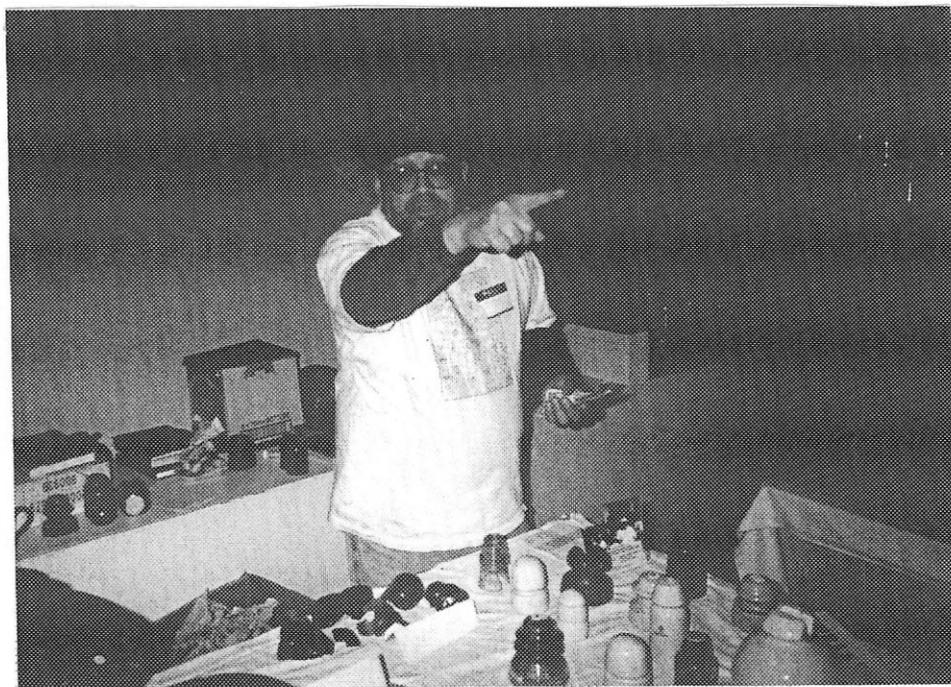
Violet Brown did her usual fine job with the 22nd Annual Northwest Collectors Show and Sale. This was my second visit to the show. The last time was a lot of fun (see 6/95 issue) but other commitments had kept me away for a couple of years. What a pleasure to see so many friends there. A real surprise was seeing **George and Helen Hanson** who drove over from Columbia Falls, Montana. I had been looking forward to meeting George and was truly surprised when he just walked up, stuck out his hand, and said "Hi." **Tim and Joanne Wood** were there with tons of beautiful glass pin insulators for sale. **Don Hardesty** was making the rounds on Saturday.

OFS readers **Robin Harrison** and **Gil Hedges-Blanquez** (pictured below) are regulars at the show and both had tables again this year. Gil's display of Mexican glass pin insulators was

awarded the *Crown Jewels* magazine award by the show judges. I spent a fair amount of time taking in the unusual embossings and colors that he had displayed.

I was honored to receive a first place ribbon and the National Insulator Associations Best of Show award for a strain insulator display that I call "The Crystal Chandelier." I replaced 40 of the glass prisms on a brass chandelier with clear and colored glass radio strains to create the display. The "educational" part of the display included a diagram about how strains were used and an explanation of the different styles that were displayed. Some of the comments and questions that I got lead me to believe that there must be lots of "closet" strain collectors out there.

A couple of new insulators followed me home from the show. I know that Gil, Robin, and Tim also found a few. Like always, I can't wait until next year.





Fleron Update

Thanks to the recent generosity of a friend, I now have a copy of a 1933 Fleron catalog. Here is some information that wasn't available when the 10/96 OFS feature on Fleron was presented.

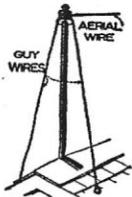
[all illustrations are from Fleron price circular no. 653 (September 1, 1933).]

New Fleron Items

Aerial masts

- #166 (6')
- #1610 (10')
- #3016 (30")

note: each mast is fitted with "a porcelain insulator." If you have one of these masts or come across a close up, it would be interesting to find out what the mast top insulator looked like.



Aerial Mast

AERIAL MAST

Fleron Tubular Steel Aerial Masts meet the requirement for a simplified line of Radio Masts at a low price. Made of high quality welded steel, they make a quick effective and rigid installation for both new and replacement work.

Made in three sizes, each size having a Porcelain Insulator and Guy Wire Disc at top, with disc at each section on longer lengths. Guy wires or Anchors are not furnished. Masts are finished in Gray Enamel.

Catalog Number	Length	Carton	List Price Each
166	6 ft.	10	\$1.50
1610	10 ft.	10	2.25
3016 Screw Type	30 "	20	.75

Antenna kits (previously unlisted)

- #200
- #225 COMPLETE AERIAL OUTFITS
- #250



Fleron Aerial Outfits are assembled of the best materials and contain the necessary items for the erection of a radio aerial of high efficiency.

No. 120 75 ft. 7-24 Hard Drawn Copper Aerial Wire. 40 ft.

No. 566 New Code Rubber Covered Lead-in Wire. 1 No. 80 Approved Lightning Arrester. 1 No. 2 Ground Clamp. 2 3" Porcelain Insulators. 1 No. 126 Weatherproofed Window Lead-in Strip. 2 Nail-it Knobs. 2 Galvanized Screw Eyes. 6 Insulated Staples. 2 Wood Screws. Diagram and Directions.

No. 150 100 ft. No. 14 7-strand Hard Drawn Copper Aerial Wire. 40 ft. No. 566 New Code Rubber Covered Lead-in Wire. 1 No. 80 Approved Lightning Arrester. 2 3" Porcelain Insulators. 1 No. 6 Ground Clamp. 1 No. 126 Weatherproofed Window Lead-in Strip. 2 Nail-it Knobs. 2 Galvanized Screw Eyes. 6 Insulated Staples. 2 Wood Screws. Diagram and Directions.

No. 200 Contains No. 20 Home Guard Approved Lightning Arrester with \$50 Protection Bond. 1 No. 4 Sure Contact Ground Clamp. Otherwise same as No. 150.

No. 225 100 ft. No. 14 7-strand Hard Drawn Copper Aerial Wire. 50 ft. No. 506 New Code Rubber Covered Lead-in Wire. 15 ft. No. 1864 Hook-up Wire. 1 No. 20 Home Guard Lightning Arrester with \$50.00 Protection Bond. 1 No. 4 Sure Contact Ground Clamp. 1 No. 12 Weatherproofed and Soldered Window Lead-in Strip. 2 Glass Insulators. 3 Nail-it Knobs. 2 No. 618 Screw Eye Insulators. 6 Insulated Staples. 2 Galvanized Screw Eyes. Diagram and Directions.

No. 250 Contains 100 ft. 7-22 Hard Drawn Copper Aerial wire. 50 ft. No. 576 Stranded Rubber Covered Lead-in Wire. 20 ft. No. 1864 Hook-up Wire. 1 No. 17 Sentinel Lightning Arrester with \$100 Protection Bond. Otherwise same as No. 225.

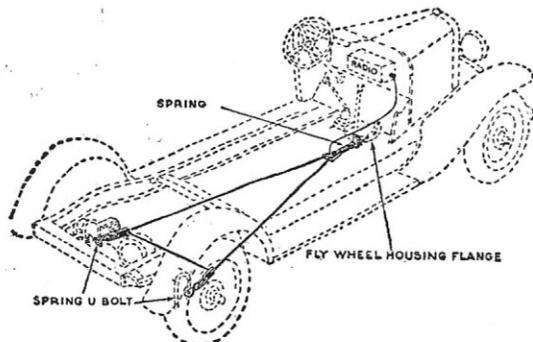
Catalog Number	Carton	Standard Package	List Price Each
120	10	50	\$1.20
150	10	50	1.50
200	10	50	1.85
225	10	50	2.25
250	10	50	2.50

ORDERS FOR SPECIAL AERIAL OUTFIT ASSEMBLIES SOLICITED

Auto antennas

(auto antenna kits seem very hard to find)
#7

AUTOMOBILE RADIO AERIAL OUTFIT



Complete equipment for automobile aerial installation using a special alloy cable and insulated throughout with indestructible Bakelite.

Easily applied to any make car.

Carefully made of the best materials and tested for performance.

Catalog Number	Carton	Standard Package	List Price Each
7	16	48	\$3.50

Lightning Arrester

#80 Blitz lightning arrester (previously unlisted)

Note this is not a marked Fleron item. Bob

Puttre's example is marked "Electrical Equipment Co. Trenton, NJ."

The catalog is the only link we have to Fleron.

Blitz LIGHTNING ARRESTER



Blitz

A high grade Air Gap type approved arrester, at a low price. Packed in individual cartons with two screws for mounting.

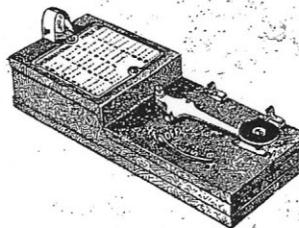
Catalog Number	Standard Package	List Price Each
80	100	\$0.20

Code practice sets

#1200 (single)

#2200 (double)

CODE PRACTICE SET



Code Practice Set

Every year sees a large, new crop of boys interested in Amateur Radio and anxious to learn the code.

Fleron Code Practice Set starts them off with a real instrument at a low price. Consists of Flasher, Sounder and High Pitch Buzzer. Really three sets in one. Equipped with clips for connection to second set. Packed 1 set to a carton with bulb and directions, less batteries.

Important Features:

- 1. Pocket Size—slips right in
- 2. Key in correct practice position.
- 3. Uses 2 Flashlight Cells, obtainable anywhere.

Catalog Number	Carton	List Price Each
1200	10	\$1.30
2200 (pair)	20	2.60 (pair)

Additional Information about Fleron Products

Antenna eliminators

#28 Lamp Socket Aerial (new part #)

#31 Extenna (new part #)

#93 Aerostat (new part #)

Porcelain insulators

#75 The insulator was previously listed in white with a diameter of 1-3/8".

The new ad shows the part with a diameter of 1-1/8" and blue glaze.

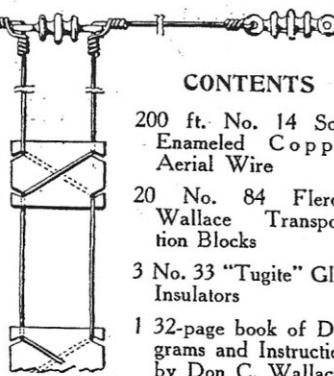
Lightning arresters
 #19 Defender lightning arrester (black porcelain version) (this is a new part #)

Fleron-Wallace transposition blocks
 Fleron-Wallace antenna kit
 Fleron worked with famous radio amateur operator Don Wallace to market these "high-performance" parts. (new part numbers, new pictures)

Standoff insulators
 The catalog allowed us to verify that types 15,82,83,180,181,184 are all available in black or white versions

FLERON-WALLACE SHORT WAVE DOUBLET ANTENNA KIT

Adapted by Don C. Wallace (Hoover Cup winner) after tests on hundreds of types of aerials for S-W work. Most favorable design for amateur frequencies and "All Wave" receivers. Lead-in construction eliminates noise and static. Complete with Fleron Glazed Transposition Blocks and complete diagrams and directions for the best installation.



- CONTENTS**
- 200 ft. No. 14 Solid Enameled Copper Aerial Wire
 - 20 No. 84 Fleron-Wallace Transposition Blocks
 - 3 No. 33 "Tugite" Glass Insulators
 - 1 32-page book of Diagrams and Instructions by Don C. Wallace

Catalog Number 495

Carton 10

List Price Each \$4.95

FLERON-WALLACE ALL GLAZED TRANSPOSITION BLOCKS



Complete glazing is an important feature of the Fleron-Wallace Block. It eliminates absorption of moisture and reduces the accumulation of soot and dirt. Only F-W Blocks have this important feature. This is the original Block adapted by Don C. Wallace on his now famous Doublet Antenna System, specifying 20 Blocks per Lead-in. White Glaze.

Catalog Number 84 White Glaze

Carton 20

Standard Package 100

List Price Each \$0.20

Military Update

At the NW Collector's show (see show reports) Gil Hedges-Blanquez generously sold a previously-unlisted military strain to me. The new item is one of the style 71 tubular strains described on page 24 of the 10/98 issue. The brown porcelain strain measures 1-5/16" in diameter and is 16" between the centers of the eyes. The metal ends are embossed "NL422B71-128".

The back sides of the ends are embossed "VBI". I still haven't figured out that marking, though I have several insulators that are marked that way.

From the discoloration of the metal ends, this military insulator is a real "veteran."

At another recent show, I made two other military finds.

The first is a small johnny ball strain. The brown glazed unit has two underglaze marks. "CAL" indicates that it was a Locke product. The Navy part number is 61018B. The NL series part number would be NL***B74-010.

The second is another of the non-insulated military aircraft antenna springs. This unit is more elaborate than most in that it incorporates a vinyl plastic streamlining boot. I believe that the part number is MS-25061-1. The body of the unit is marked C 6 12330-1D Patented Dayton Aircraft Products, Inc. Ft. Lauderdale, Florida.

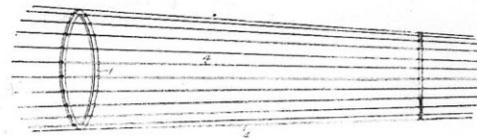
This unit helps solve another mystery for us. The MX-273/AR shown on page 7 of the 12/98 issue is marked DAP. I think that we can now attribute the DAP to Dayton Aircraft Products.

Jacobs Update

In the 12/98 issue (page 16), I printed an ad for the Jacobs antenna spreader. Here's a copy of a patent abstract for it. I had assumed that it was made of hard rubber or some other insulating material. It turns out that it's not intended to be an insulator at all. The spreader is apparently metallic and designed to provide a connection between the different wires in the cage antenna.

Cage antennas are very scarce today. I suspect that many of them were victims of the scrap metal drives during World War II. Once they're taken down and rolled up, they are just about impossible to untangle again (trust me - I know). And, when people realized that they could get a satisfactory signal with just a single outdoor wire, or even an indoor loop, cage style antennas quickly fell out of favor.

1,553,244. ANTENNA SPREADER. CHARLES F. JACOBS, Brooklyn, N. Y. Filed July 10, 1923. Serial No. 650,706. 2 Claims. (Cl. 250-33.)



1. An antenna spreader which comprises a metallic ring having a plurality of peripheral slots formed therein and having an aperture through the body portion of the ring beneath each slot whereby the wires for the antenna wires lying in the slots can be passed therethrough and fastened to the antenna wire.

From U.S. Patent Gazette 9/8/25 pg. 468.