

# First Maxim Medal Awarded to Reinartz

IT IS OUR SAD DUTY to record the death of another radio pioneer, John L. Reinartz, K6BJ, inventor of the Reinartz Tuner, the standard amateur receiving circuit of the early twenties, and one of the men most responsible for the opening of the vast short-wave territory below 200 meters. The end came on October 5, 1964, after a long illness.

Just three weeks earlier, ARRL President Hoover, Pacific Director Engwicht and several other long-time friends and associates gathered around his hospital bed to present the first Hiram Percy Maxim Gold Medal, established by the ARRL Board of Directors at its meeting in May, and awarded by the Board to John as a result of his short-wave accomplishments beginning in the twenties.

We borrow heavily from a biography which appeared on souvenir programs of a testimonial dinner for K6BJ when he retired from Eimac, February 1, 1960:

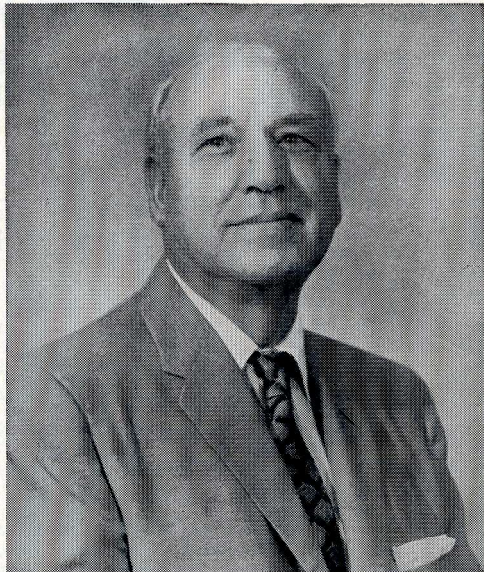
John L. Reinartz was born in Krefeld, Rhine Province, Germany, March 6, 1894, the oldest of seven children. In 1904, the family settled in South Manchester, Connecticut, where Reinartz' father was a farmer.

Reinartz first became interested in radio in 1908, while browsing through the magazine racks at a small candy store near school. He read of wireless and its fundamental equipment and practices in *The Electrical Experimenter*. Saving the 10 cents a day he earned working for a blacksmith, he bought the secondary of a one-inch spark coil which he saw advertised. He used iron wire for the core and bell wire for the primary. The electrolytic interruptor for the spark coil was home-made. He made a coherer from a quarter-inch glass tube, filled with nickel filings. Using his own initials, he went on the air as "JL" via the spark transmitter and a 600-foot antenna tacked to the tops of trees.

In 1916, he trained at Camp Upton, L.I., and then taught code to military operators.

By 1921, Reinartz developed his famous tuner. It was given wide publicity and thousands were built. In 1921, Reinartz also published a magazine, distributed free, on "How to Build Receivers and Transmitters at Low Cost." His writings on the tuner and its improvements were published in *QST* in June, 1921, March, 1922 and October, 1922. He was the ARRL assistant division manager for Connecticut in 1923.

A major achievement of Reinartz' early radio work was participation in the first successful two-way trans-Atlantic communication. Three men took part in the attempt — Reinartz, F. H. Schnell, Hartford, Conn., traffic manager for the ARRL and M. Leon Deloy, at SAB, Nice, France. All used a transmitter circuit developed around a Westinghouse 50-watt tube. Reinartz had developed a single tuner able to sweep from 200 meters down to 28 or 29 meters.



**John L. Reinartz, K6BJ**

Reinartz had given SAB the circuit when Deloy came to the States for the 1923 ARRL National Convention at Chicago. The men then made arrangements for trans-Atlantic tests on 100 meters. *Two Hundred Meters and Down* records the event:

*The night of November 27, 1923. Both Schnell and Reinartz were on the air. Schnell had secured special permission from the Supervisor of Radio at Boston to use the 100-meter wavelength, and everything was in readiness. At the stroke of 9:30 the strangely-stirring 25-cycle gargle from SAB came on the air. For an hour he called America, then sent two more messages. At 10:30 he signed off, asking for an acknowledgment. Long calls from 1MO and 1XAM and then . . . there he was, asking Reinartz to stand by, and saying to Schnell, "R RQRK UR SIGS QSA VY ONE FOOT FROM PHONES ON GREBE FB OM HEARTY CONGRATULATIONS THIS IS FINE DAY MIM PSE QSL NR 1 2" . . . American and European amateurs were working for the first time, with strong signals, and to Deloy, after a year's constant and unremitting effort, it was a fine day!*

*He then called Reinartz, 1XAM, whose transmitting circuit was in use at all three stations, and they also worked with similar ease. A message was sent via 1MO to the renowned General Ferrie, France's grand old man of radio. Further schedules were arranged. Signals were coming through on loudspeakers. A key and buzzer, actuated by the neighbor lad next door, would have been no louder; yet a mighty ocean, four thousand miles of trackless distance, separated these pleasantly-chatting friends, separating innumerable friends to chat in countless days to come.*

*It was, indeed, a fine day.*