

The Canned Ham

By Bill Albert AD5TD

After sending the article about my Field Day experience to the South Texas ARES @ Yahoo Group, I had a request to publish some information and photos of my portable rig. Something I call “The Canned Ham”. What I wanted was to be able to throw a couple of boxes in my car and set up in a minimum of time. This is what evolved over several months. I take a push up pole along with a dual band VHF/UHF vertical and a multi band trap di-pole for 10 through 80 meters.



The Canned Ham started life as a metal “Chuck” box from www.Cabelas.com. (Cabela’s Item number is: IG-514231) It came with a paper towel holder (removed), two plastic bins (handy!) and the drawer and shelving already inside. I looked a long time for just the right size.

After a little work, this is what you get:



I had some stickers, so I thought I would decorate a little.



Here is a picture of the back showing some of the connections.



Here is the left side with the VHF out connection.



A close up showing the ground, AC, and Solar power connections.



Here is the HF connector on the back.



This is a view showing the top open and you can see that I have posted a copy of my License, AARECC card, timer/clock, and my call letters. Also stored on top are my vest, a roll-up J pole, power cords, weather radio, clip boards, impulse suppressor, ARRL Field Resources Manual, Mini Log Book, and Emergency Response Guidebook. There is an also a work light, and the ground plane radial for my VHF/UHF vertical antenna.



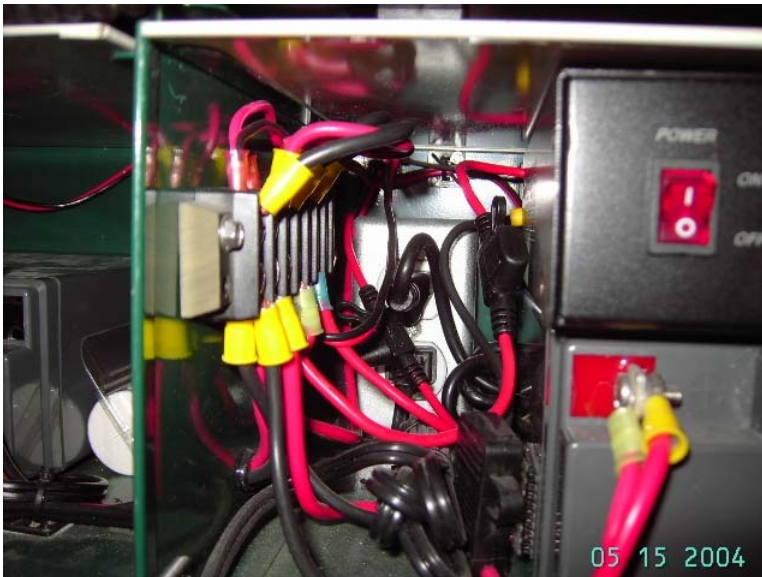
This is a look at the gear inside. I will cover it all below.



That's a Radio Shack 25 amp "Switching" power supply. I had to install a 40 amp [Schottky diode](#) as the batteries (two 12V, 18 ah AGM batteries) would feed back and run the cooling fan in the power supply.



This is the “Float” charger I use when the unit is in the house to keep the batteries from calcifying. It keeps them at a perfect 13.8V all the time. When the light turns green, all is well. It even has enough power to run one of the rigs on receive. The other battery can be seen behind it. By the way, yes that’s a roll of TP on the right! Be Prepared!



Here you see the 12 V wiring looms. In the back is a 120VAC socket for the float charger and the power supply. It is tied into the three prong socket on the back. All connections are fused.



A 10 watt solar panel sitting on an old camera tripod serves to keep the batteries charged in the field. I am looking for a larger one, at least 50 watts.



The heart of the Canned Ham is a YAESU FT-100D and an FT-1500M. I chose the FT-100D because it fits and it turns out, it's a great rig. This one has had the "fan mod" done, among others, and works quite well. The only thing I will add to this is a headset.



The LDG Electronics (<http://www.ldgelectronics.com/>) AT-11MP Tuner (not made any more sad to say) is one of the best. It will, as they say, tune a wet noodle.



This is what makes it easy to tune. One push of a button and tuning is done in less than five seconds.



Here is the speaker, a Kenwood, stuck with its magnet to the metal shelf of the box. Beside it to the left is a headphone jack. A simple “Y” on the speaker output allows both to function at the same time.



This is the “Possibles” drawer. I keep office supplies, a 2M manual tuner, ground cable, and some tools in there. It was the silverware drawer that came with the box.



This is my “Quick” VHF antenna. I can screw this on and talk to any local repeater quickly. It is a Diamond SG-7000 dual band. It fits in the top of the box.

After using it this last Field Day (June 24, 2006), I need to make a few adjustments. First, I need a head set. It is hard to use a computer and a microphone at the same time. I have a Heil “Traveler” head set, I just need to get the adapter for it. I think this will work fine. I also am thinking about removing the batteries. This thing weighs 85 pounds! If the batteries were external, it would be much easier to move it around. The only other problem I have is that the box is not water tight. However, it is metal and that makes it easy to wire and ground it.

I hope this gives others a few ideas for their own “Canned Ham”.

73 de AD5TD

By the way, yes my camera date is not set correctly! ☺