

## Tube Of The Month

### 6146 etc etc

In 1952, RCA introduced the 6146. It was an octal base, 20 watt, beam tetrode that would operate up to 175 MHz. It was basically a 2E26 on steroids. The need for more powerful finals in 2-way VHF equipment was filled with the new tube. In military and amateur equipment the new tube became popular with the production of the first HF transceivers like the Collins KWM-1 and 2. Amateur kit transmitters like the DX100 and DX40 from Heathkit and from Johnson the Viking, Valiant, Ranger, Pacemaker and Invader transmitters all used the new tube.

New variants of the 6146 started with the 6146A, which had a “dark heater” for mobile operation. The 6146B was rated at 27 watts and the 6146W or 7212 was ruggedized. It made some sense that the military would want one for aircraft with a 26.5 volt filament, so they made the 6159 followed by the 6883 with a 12.6 volt filament for the new 12 volt cars. The 6293 was made for pulse operation and would stand 3500 volts on the plate. A new “dark heater” version was made with a 13.5 volt filament that was named the 8032. All this numbering madness came to a head with the 6883B/8032A/8552 with a combination of different features. In the period when there was equipment that was part transistor and part tube, they made the 8042 that had a 1.6 volt filament that lighted in 100 msec. The tube would light as soon as you hit the PTT button so it saved batteries. The cheaper 4652 was similar, but it took an entire second to light.

In recent years production ceased in the US, but I they are currently made in China.

Visit the museum at [N6JV.com](http://N6JV.com)

Norm N6JV

