

The Shoran Radiopositioning System - The shoran system is a radar transponder type of radiopositioning system. The Shoran mobile station equipment measures the distance from its location to those of two fixed ground beacon stations. The position of the mobile unit is thus fixed at the intersection of the two circular distance or range arcs so determined. The position of the ground beacon stations or base stations is normally accurately known, so that the corresponding position of the mobile station can be accurately computed or determined by graphical methods. Should the position coordinates of the base stations not be accurately known, the mobile station may still be positioned relative to the baseline determined by the base station locations.

The Shoran mobile unit measures the distances of the two base stations by measuring the time required for pulses of radio signals to travel from the mobile station to each base station and return. The time intervals so measured are related to the corresponding distances by using the highly constant velocity characteristic of radio waves in air through the simple relationship.

Total distance covered = Elapsed time x velocity.

Because of this relationship, it is possible to graduate the indicating dials in the mobile unit in terms of distance rather than elapsed time. The Shoran dials are graduated in terms of statute miles rather than nautical miles.

The basic equipment units used to create the round-trip signal paths originating and terminating at the mobile station are shown in figure D(b)-1. This equipment consists of a signal source (labeled pulse generator in figure D(b)-1), a transmitter, receiver and indicator unit comprising the mobile station, and a receiver coupled to a transmitter at each base station.

Pulse signals originating at the mobile station are radiated from the mobile transmitter and received by one of the base stations. At this base station, the pulse is sent from the output of the receiver to the input of the transmitter, and is then retransmitted back to the mobile station. After passing through the mobile receiver, the pulse is routed to an indicating circuit where its time lag, or lapse, with respect to the original outgoing pulse is determined, and indicated in terms of distance rather than units of time.

Other pulses are transmitted to the second base station, using a different radio frequency to permit their discrimination from those intended for the first base station. These pulses are received and retransmitted by the second base station, and on their return to the mobile station are similarly sent though the indicating circuits for measurement of the time required for their round trip and the indication of corresponding distance. Thus the equipment provides continuous, essentially simultaneous, indications of the distances to both base stations.

The Shoran system operates in the VHF/UHF portion of the radio spectrum. Normally, three separate frequencies are used. Two of these are transmitted alternately by the mobile station to interrogate each base station in turn, as previously described. The third frequency is utilized by the base stations to retransmit the received pulses back to the mobile station. Both base stations transmit on the single frequency in order to utilize a single receiver at the mobile station.

The propagation characteristics of VHF/UHF radio signals is such that they tend to travel in straight lines. While they are refracted in the atmosphere to some small extent, they do not tend to follow the earth's curvature as do radio signals of considerable lower frequency. They lack the ability to "see" beyond the radio horizon. Thus the Shoran system is essentially a "line of sight" system, with the maximum range being limited, to a large extent, by the heights of the mobile and base station antennas.

The instrumental accuracy of the Shoran equipment, when properly calibrated, is \pm 50-75 feet on a single range. The overall position accuracy is related