

Flush Mount VHF Panel for the T34C

Article and photos by Jack Waddell, 1972 T34C #215 *Vixen*

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Flush Mount VHF Panel



The original Horizon VHF



The original cubby holes at the Nav Station



Shelves with the fiddles removed



The new panel installed

This was a pretty simple project that I think made for a neat installation and better use of some awkward space in the T34C's nav station.

When we got *Vixen*, she came equipped with the same Horizon VHF I'd had 12 years ago on my last boat. Crudely hung from a rough batten over the quarterberth shelf, it was framed by a small rat's nest of naked antenna and power wires - all in all, pretty sloppy.

One of the great features about the new generation of VHF radios is that some of them are very small and can be flush mounted. After picking up an ICOM M-402 and a matching remote unit, I started to think about how to install this. After some quick measurements, I was happy to see it could fit in the lower shelf space over the nav table.

Materials

A trip to Home Depot yielded a 2'x4' piece of 1/4" plywood and a 4'x4' piece of white plastic laminate. I very much like the white/teak trim Herreshoff-look in the T34C, but the panel itself could be made of almost anything - solid teak, for instance.

From the same outfit where I bought the radio, I picked up a flush mount kit. This was an outrageous \$20 for two simple metal brackets and some screws although it did yield a useful template for the radio cut out. At West Marine I found a 4' length of 3/4"x1/2" or so batten molding and something they label as "bulkhead" molding - basically a cap molding with a 1/2" channel cut in it.

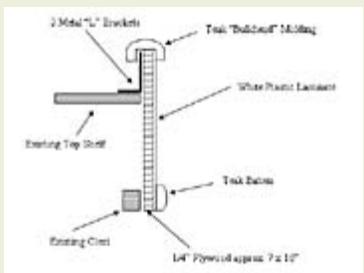
The local hardware store (much my preference to Home Depot) provided some contact cement, #6 brass Phillips head screws, waterproof poly glue and some brass angle brackets.

Making the Panel

I cut (with square corners) a rough piece of the plywood and the plastic laminate, and then glued them together with contact cement. After taping the surface to prevent scratches, I cut the wood to size on my table saw. I also



Another view showing the extra 12VDC and autopilot remote sockets



A sketch showing the dimensions and materials used

[Print Version](#)
of full Sketch
(6kb pdf)

cut the two teak trim pieces to length. I glued the top piece on with waterproof glue flush with the face of the panel. This leaves a gap on the back of the panel that the angle brackets will fit under (see drawing) to hold the top of the shelf firmly, but allow it to be easily lifted up and off.

The bottom teak batten I did not glue - just pre-drilled and countersunk for three #6 wood screws.

Cutting the openings for the radio, the 12-volt socket and the connector for the autopilot remote were done with a jigsaw and hole saws.

Installation

At the boat it was simple matter to remove the existing teak fiddles and drill two holes in the "floor" of the shelf to run the wires - one hole for the antenna and electronic lines, another hole for the 12-volt wires. I'm not sure why I did this, exactly - it just seemed like a good idea to me to keep those wires separate.

Trial fitting the panel to the site, I located where on the top shelf the angle brackets would go, then drilled and screwed them into place. Depending on your measurements you may have to trim the height of the angle brackets to get the fit just right.

After running and hooking up all the wires, I put the panel in place and then drilled three holes into the existing cleat on the lower shelf and screwed the panel to it.

Voila!

As the photos show, in addition to the radio and mic clip, the panel also is home to a 12-volt socket and the connector for a remote autopilot control. I left some space in the layout for a future battery meter or even some instrument repeaters. Because the radio has DSC capabilities, the FCC or somebody like that requires a warning label to be placed near the radio cautioning that for this feature to work, you have to be close to somebody with a radio. Duh. Anyway, to be fully compliant, I stuck the stupid sticker on my pretty panel. I just tried to hide it behind the mic cord.

Jack Waddell

Making a Flush-Mount VHF Panel

By Jack Waddell, Vixen, T34C #215

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The project was very straightforward. Just took some time and, in my case, buying more material than I really needed for something so small.

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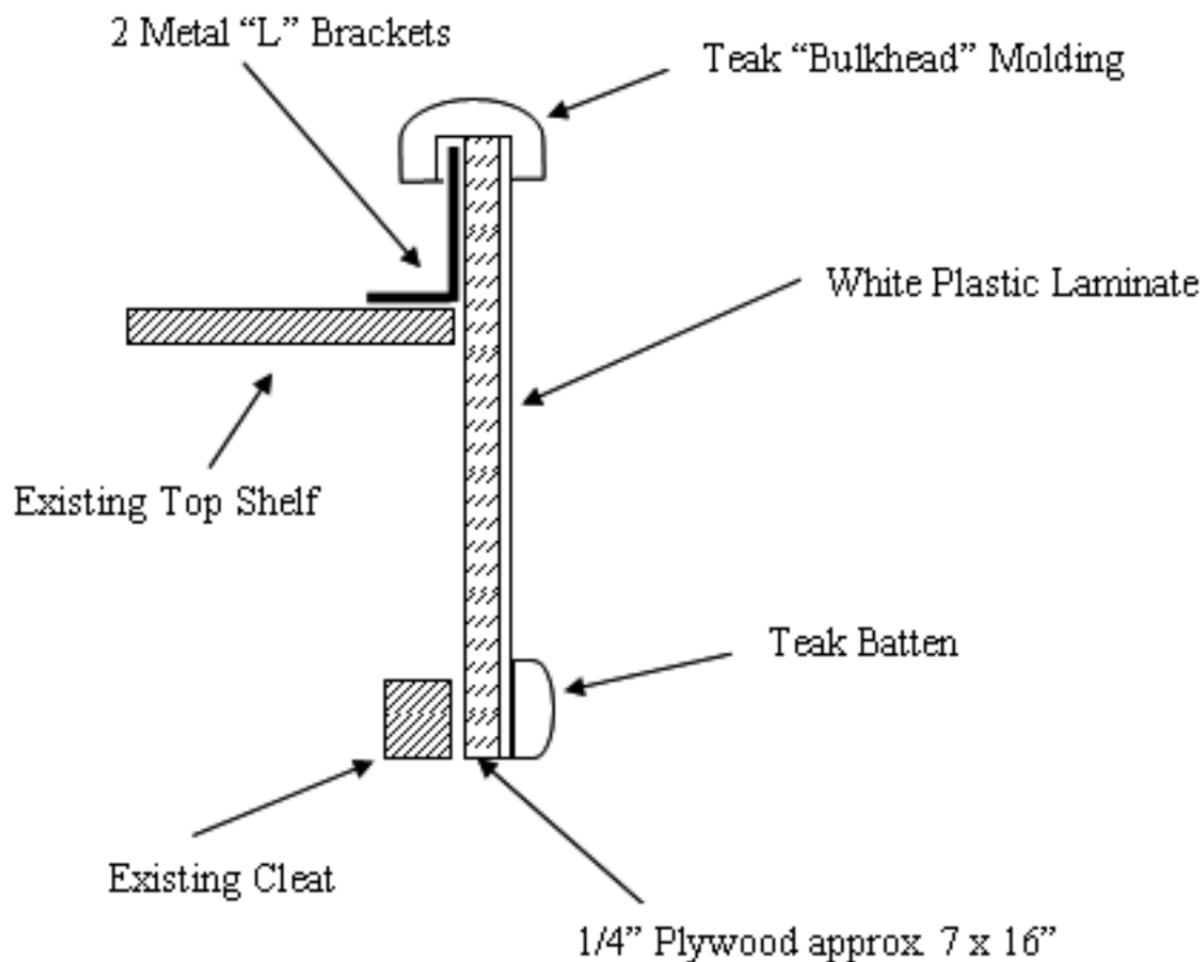
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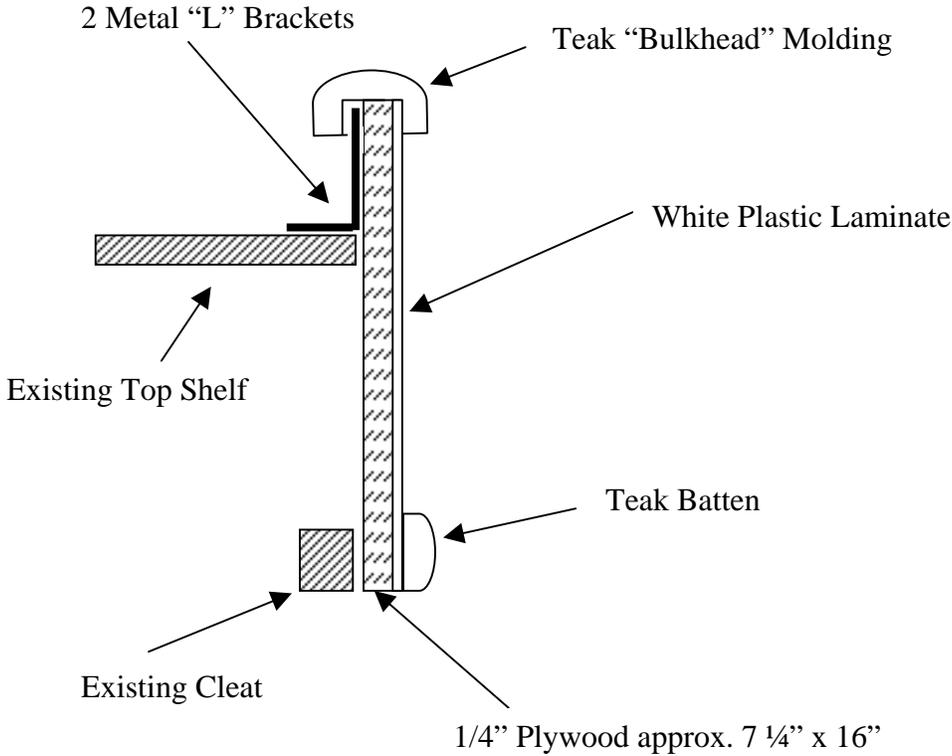
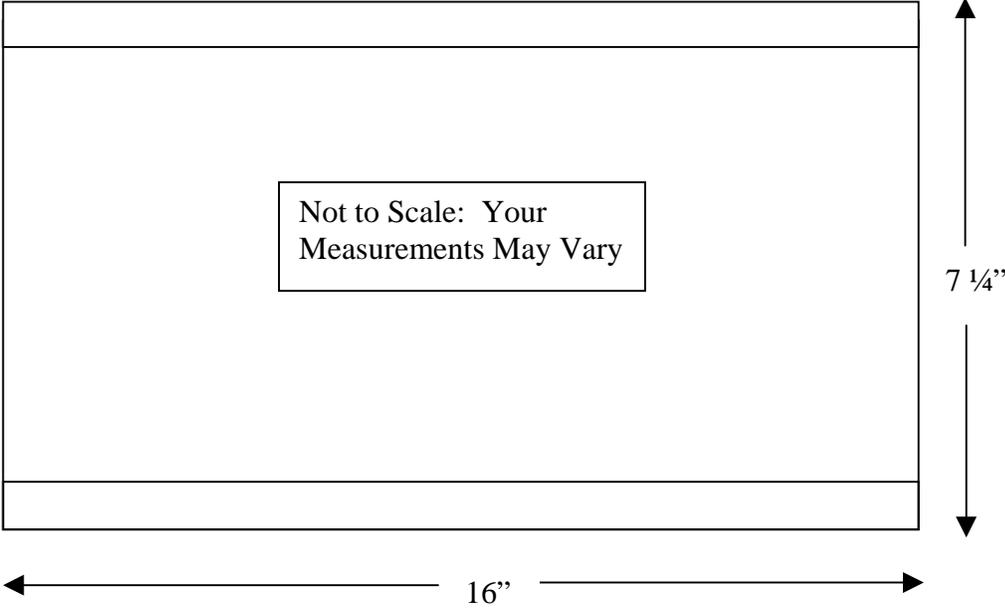
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Materials Used and Dimensions for the VHF Panel





TESLING
Boats for Recreational Fishing

Complete Details











ICOM
VHF MARINE
IC-4A50C

