

# **OTIS S-71 GOLF CART**

## **TECHNICAL INFORMATION**



**Jim Kaness**

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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## AUTHOR'S NOTE

This manual was written without the knowledge, consent, or participation of the Otis Elevator Company, and it does NOT have their endorsement. This manual is my own work on my own initiative and the responsibility for its content is mine alone.

No official Otis S-71 technical or maintenance manual has been located. Except for the sales brochure excerpt on page 3, the text, drawings, and photographs in this document are my own work from my own reverse engineering done on my own S-71, and comparison with other S-71's available for inspection. Despite 40-odd years of electronics engineering and construction, technical writing, and "jack of all trades" it is still possible for me to err. I reserve the right to update and correct this document as new information becomes available. Comments, suggestions, and corrections are welcomed.

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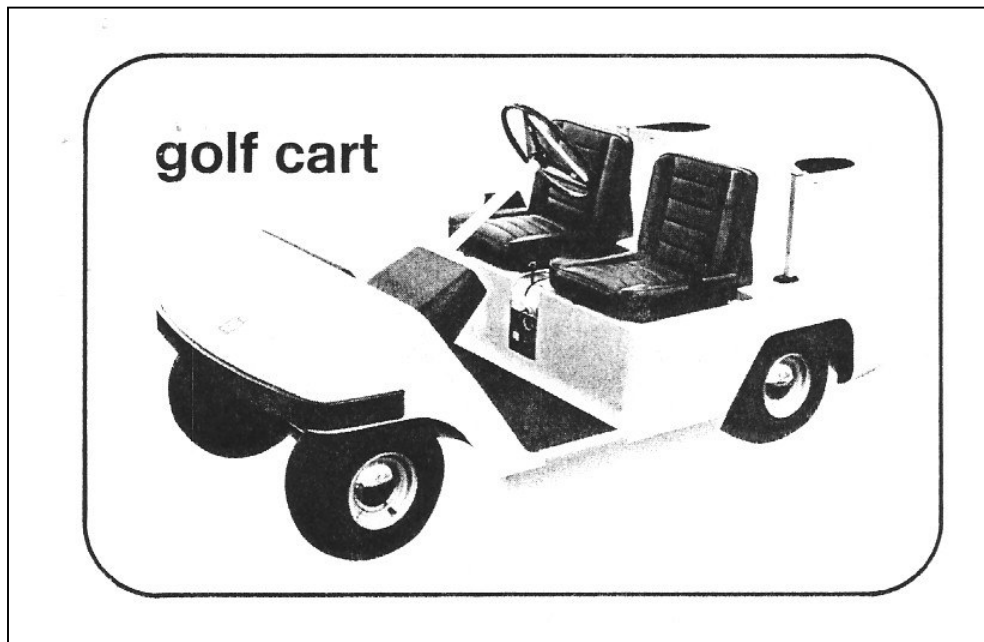
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## OTIS S-71 HISTORY

The Otis S-71 golf cart was produced between 1970 and 1976 by Westcoaster, a subsidiary of Otis Elevator Company, and may be branded either “Otis” or “Westcoaster”. In 1970 Otis Elevator Company acquired West Coast Machinery Company of Stockton, CA (renamed Westcoaster Company) who manufactured a full line of electric and gasoline powered vehicles for use off the public roads- on airports, factories, farms, ranches and golf courses. In 1976 Otis sold the Westcoaster / Otis product line to EVA-Chloride, who was then engaged in development of electric vehicles for highway use. In 2005 many of these S-71 golf carts are still in use.

### EXCERPT FROM WESTCOASTER BROCHURE “full line” [1]

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### **model S-71**

**The most modern, sophisticated Golf Cart ever! Four wheel stability, automotive steering, hypoid rear axle, heavy duty vinyl seats, an exceptionally low profile and contemporary fiberglass body all make the new S-71 the epitome of the industry. A vacuum formed plastic canopy is optional.**

## OTIS S-71 GENERAL INFORMATION

### INTRODUCTION

The Otis S-71 Golf Cart has a fiberglass body on a tubular steel frame, and uses six 6-volt batteries to power a GE 36-volt series (the field and armature are connected in series) DC motor. Speed is controlled by adding or removing resistance in series with the motor voltage. The S-71 provides four speeds forward and reverse. The S-71 weighs 740 pounds without batteries [1] and about 1100 pounds with batteries. Top speed is 12 miles per hour [1].

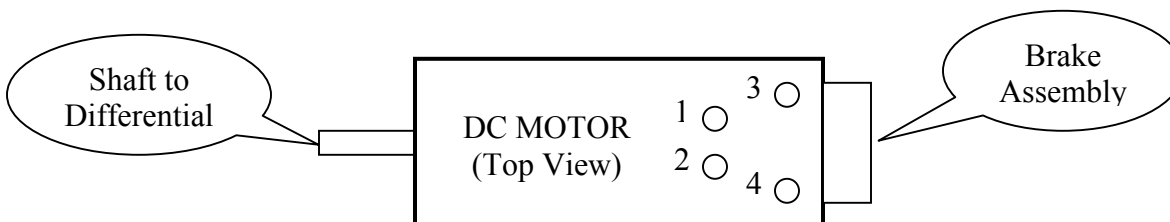
### SERIAL NUMBER

One Westcoaster S-71 reported to me has an adhesive serial number label on the lower dash between the steering wheel and the glove box.

## OTIS S-71 ELECTRICAL

### MOTOR

The motor is a General Electric DC Motor, Model 5BC48JB517B rated on the nameplate for 55-amperes at 36-volts DC. The nominal shaft horsepower rating is 2.0. The field and armature are connected in series. The motor terminals are not labeled- I have arbitrarily labeled them 1 through 4 for correspondence with the diagrams on the following pages. Terminals 1 and 2 go to the field winding. Terminals 3 and 4 go through brushes to the armature. Brushes are accessible by removing the rubber plugs next to the terminals.



Most electric motors have the field and armature connected in parallel. When motors are used for propulsion the field and armature are usually connected in series as this provides maximum torque at low speed. However a series-connected motor MUST always have a load on it or its speed may rise to an unsafe value [2]. This will not be a problem unless the motor is removed from the S-71 for bench testing.

### DIRECTION CONTROL AND INTERLOCK

The Forward - Reverse lever on the control panel directly operates the high-current DC polarity reversing switch. To prevent arcing, a normally-open microswitch closes when the lever is in the full "Forward" or full "Reverse" position, allowing the solenoids to apply power to the motor.

## SPEED CONTROL

The accelerator pedal operates a pushrod connected to a series of switches inside the enclosed box (under the seat) on which the solenoids are mounted. As the accelerator is pressed down, power is applied to the motor through two solenoids, and through resistors (they look like coils of heavy wire) mounted under the motor. As the accelerator pedal is pressed further other solenoids reduce the amount of resistance in the circuit. Five solenoids and two resistors (one with a tap) offer four speeds. This approach has been used in electric street railways for over a century [3].

Solenoids LT and LB are both used to apply or remove power from the motor. The S-71 uses these two solenoids with their contacts in series, apparently to guarantee that power can be removed from the motor in the event the contacts on one of these solenoids should weld closed. The other three solenoids (RT, RM, and RB) are used to short out various parts of the resistance for speed control.

Solenoid ON	Accelerator Position
LT, Left Top	A, B, C, D
LB, Left Bottom	A, B, C, D
RT, Right Top	B, C, D
RM, Right Middle	C, D
RB, Right Bottom	D

The accelerator, as it is pressed, offers OFF and positions sequentially labeled (by me) A (slowest), B, C, and D (fastest). With any one of the motor wires disconnected, and key ON, you can hear the solenoids turn ON as the accelerator is depressed through its range.

The pushrod between the accelerator pedal and the switches can be adjusted in length so that, at rest, NO switches are engaged, and so just before the accelerator bottoms on the floorboard ALL switches are engaged.

The five solenoids are basically automotive starter solenoids with all four terminals isolated from the metal case and from each other. The solenoid coils are rated at 12 VDC and show a measured DC resistance of 12 to 14 ohms. In my S-71 they are each operated on 18 VDC. The solenoids are bolted to the metal box holding the accelerator switches but **the nuts inside the box are not captive** and will fall down inside the box if the bolts are removed. Sheet metal screws may be used to re-mount a solenoid.

NOTE: THE S-71 MOTOR USES UP TO 55 AMPERES. FOR SATISFACTORY OPERATION IT IS VERY IMPORTANT THAT ALL CONNECTIONS TO THE MOTOR, BATTERIES, RESISTORS, AND REVERSING SWITCH BE CLEAN AND TIGHT.

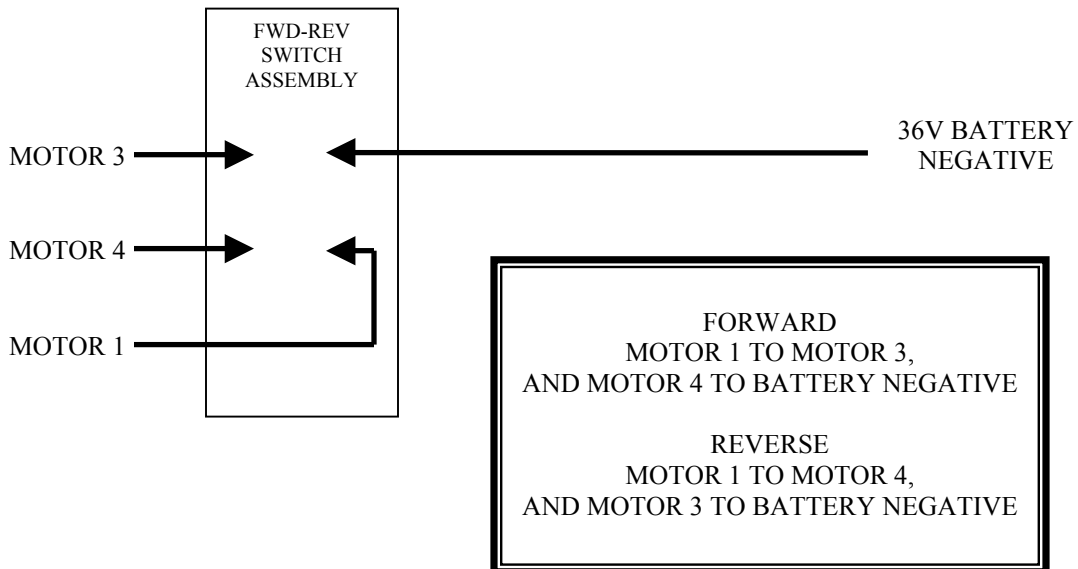
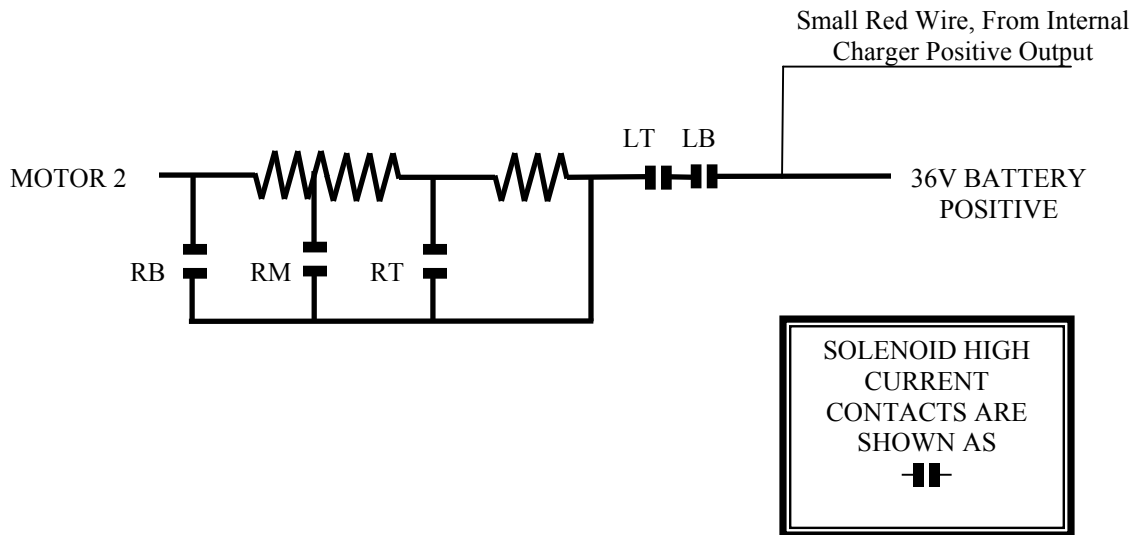
**An alternate version** has been reported to me that uses a single solenoid where mine has LB and LT, and a high-current switch directly operated by the accelerator pedal, in lieu of RB, RM, and RT. No further details are available at this writing.

## HIGH CURRENT SCHEMATIC

This schematic shows the high-current connections between the batteries and the motor. MOTOR 1 and MOTOR 2 are the field winding. MOTOR 3 and MOTOR 4 are the armature winding. Except as noted, all wiring in this diagram is heavy-gauge stranded copper wire (AWG-6 or larger) or copper strap rated for not less than 55 amperes.

The Forward – Reverse switch swaps connections to the armature winding.

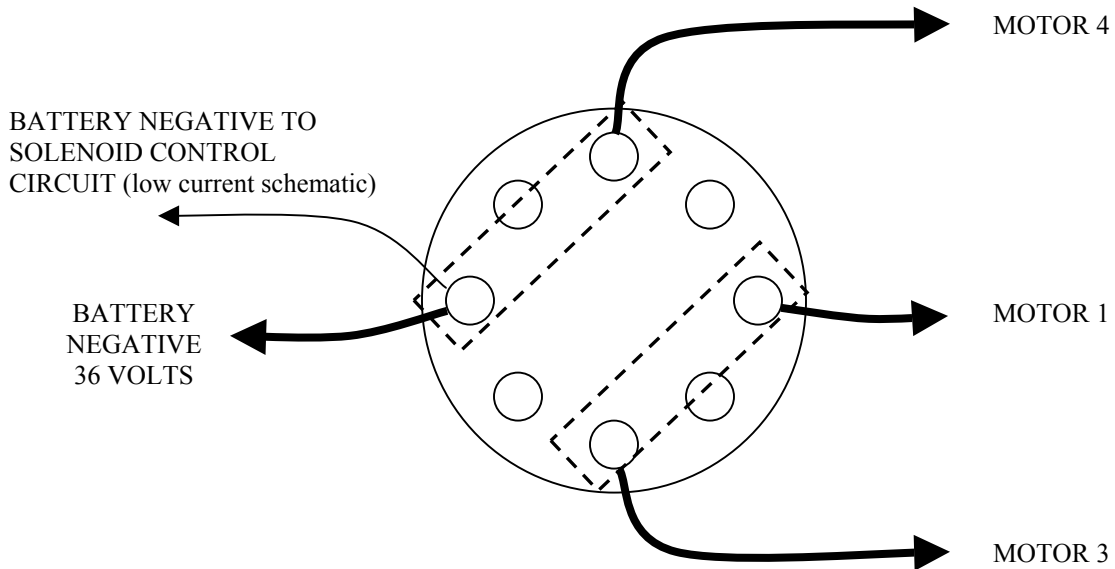
NOTE: The resistors shown are a fraction of an Ohm each and will measure zero Ohms with the usual bench multimeter.



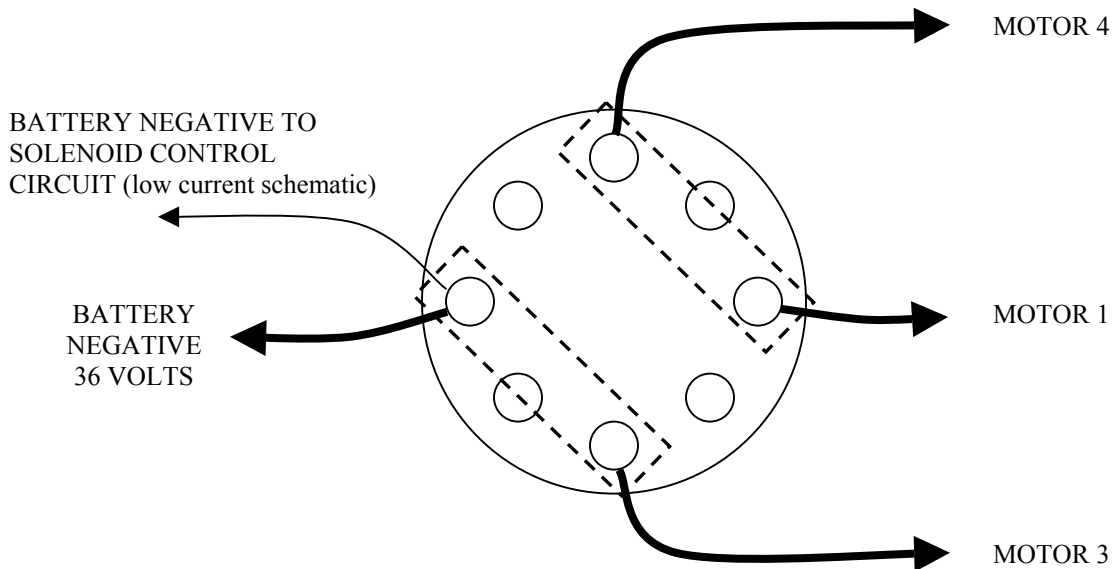
## REVERSING SWITCH CONNECTIONS

Viewed from passenger side with control panel pulled forward. The MOTOR 4 connection is at the top. The dashed rectangles are the shorting bars on the reverse side of the switch assembly. The four unused bolt connections are only there to help the shorting bars slide smoothly over them to the intended connections.

SHORTING BARS SHOWN BELOW IN 'FORWARD' POSITION.

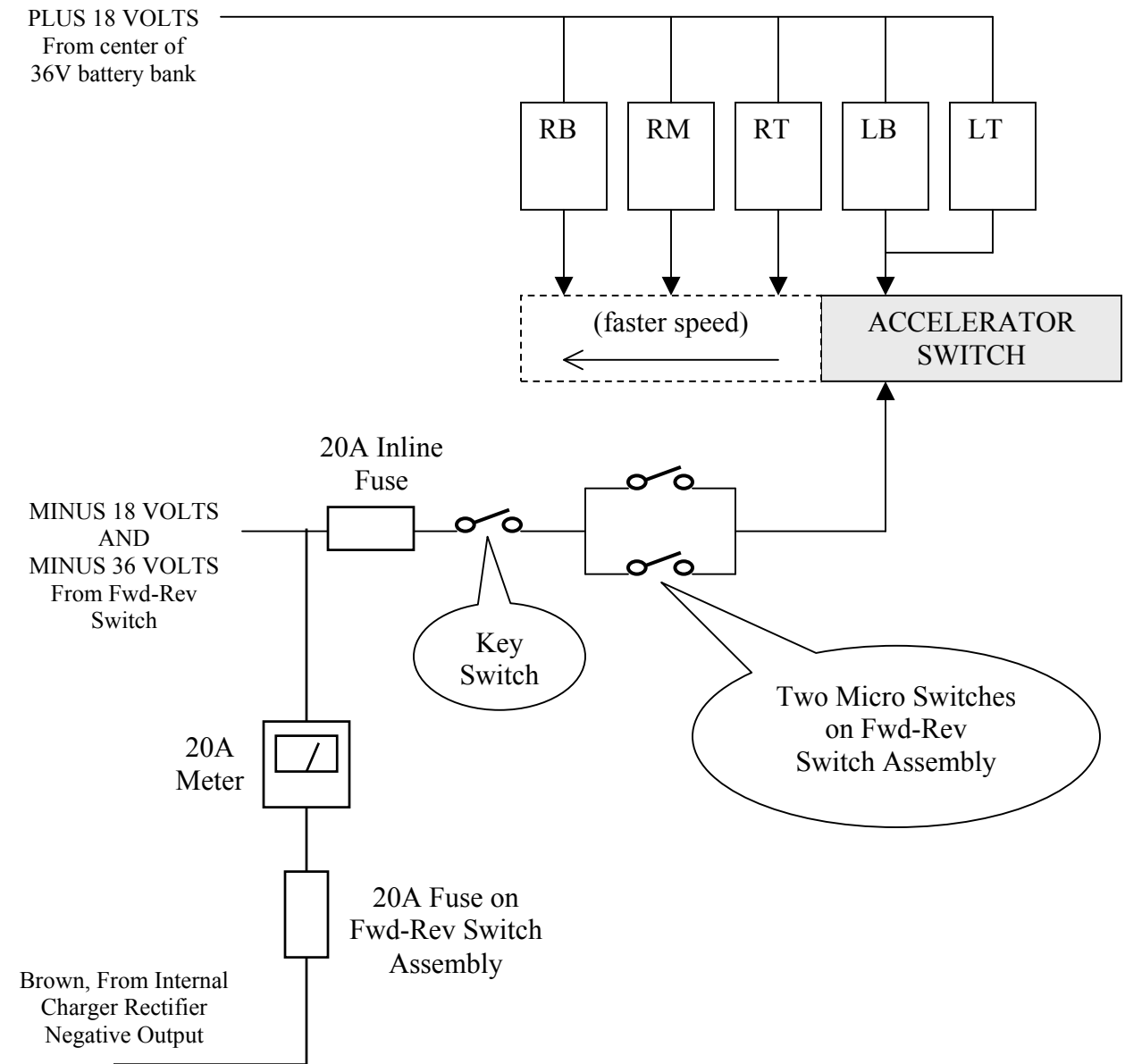


SHORTING BARS SHOWN BELOW IN 'REVERSE' POSITION.



## LOW CURRENT SCHEMATIC

This schematic is for the low-current wiring, showing the solenoid coils, switches, and fuses. The accelerator switch progressively connects more solenoids as the pedal is pressed down. With the accelerator resting, none of the solenoids is energized. The drawing shows the switch having energized LB and LT, for the slowest of the four speeds.





## OTIS S-71 BATTERIES

### BATTERY SPECIFICATIONS

My S-71 uses six 6-volt Trojan batteries, model T-105, rated at 185 ampere-hours for 5 hours. Each measures 7 1/8" wide by 10 3/8" long by 10 7/8" high. The two 5/16 -18 threaded post connections are at diagonal corners. Other high-quality deep-cycle Golf Cart batteries may be used.

Each T-105 weighs 62 pounds. Use a battery-lifting strap rated for this weight when removing or installing batteries.

### TROJAN BATTERY DATE CODES

The Trojan date code is a letter-number combination stamped on the negative post. The code is MY, with the Month being A = January, B = February, etc. The Year is a single digit such that 3 = 2003, 4 = 2004, etc. Thus A3 indicates January 2003.

**WARNING:** WHILE 6 OR 36 VOLTS WILL NOT PRESENT A SHOCK HAZARD, THE HIGH AMPERAGE AVAILABLE FROM THESE BATTERIES CAN MELT OR WELD JEWELRY AND TOOLS THAT MAY ACCIDENTALLY SHORT ONE OR MORE OF THESE BATTERIES. TO ENSURE YOUR SAFETY WHEN WORKING ON OR NEAR THE BATTERIES, REMOVE RINGS, WATCHES, AND OTHER METAL OBJECTS FROM YOUR HANDS AND ARMS, AND WRAP ALL TOOL HANDLES WITH TAPE.

**WARNING:** THESE BATTERIES CONTAIN SULFURIC ACID. IF THIS ACID CONTACTS SKIN, EYES, OR OTHER BODY PARTS IMMEDIATELY FLUSH WITH LOTS OF WATER.

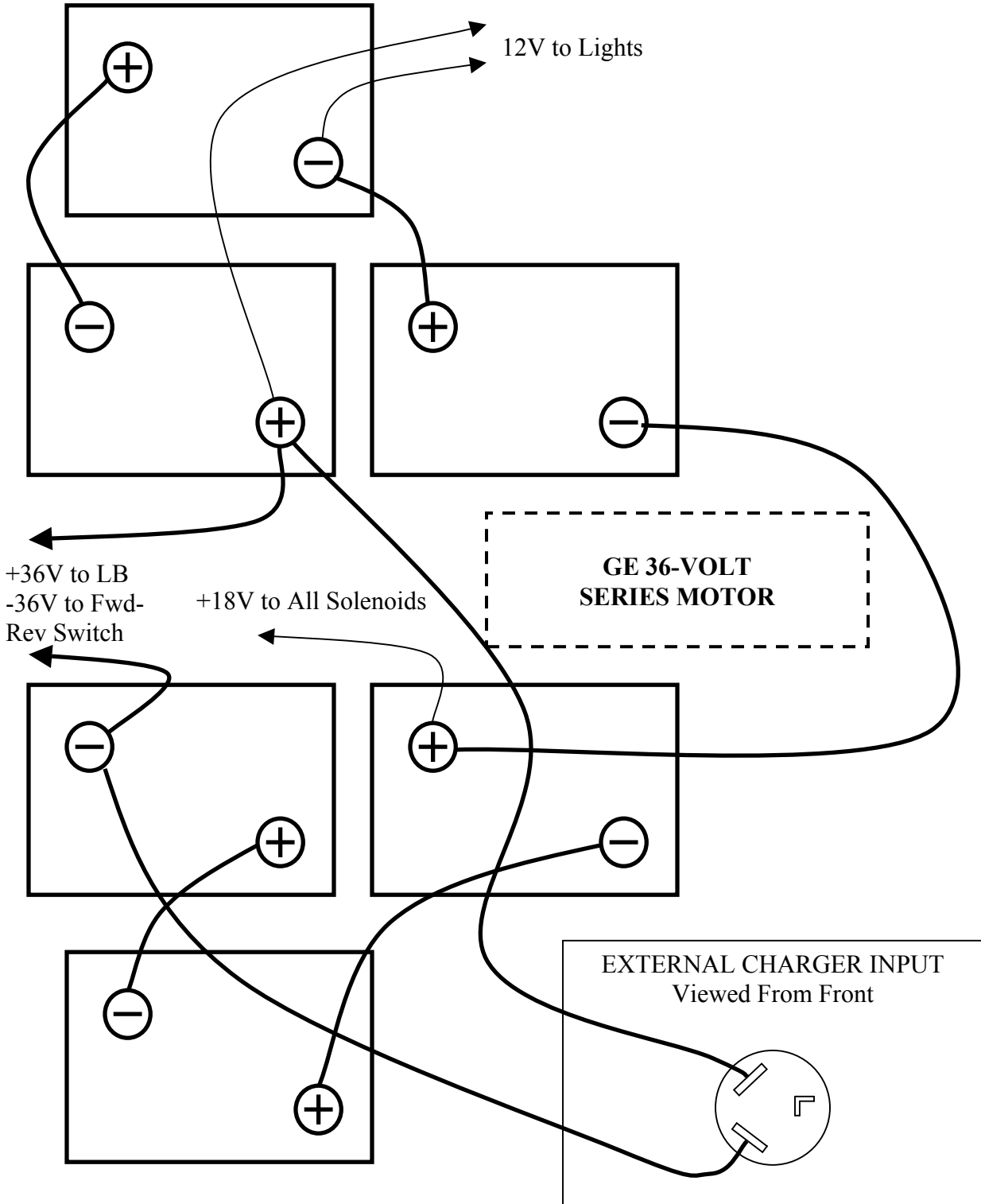
### BATTERY MAINTENANCE

Periodically check the fluid level in the batteries- in all 18 cells. Hot weather and the battery charging process will normally cause the batteries to lose water. Remove the caps and verify that the fluid level is above the lead plates. If it is not, slowly add DISTILLED water until it is over the plates. DO NOT USE TAP WATER, as the impurities in it will shorten the life of the batteries.

Periodically check and, if any corrosion is observed, clean the battery terminals. Corrosion may be neutralized using a solution of baking soda dissolved in tap water. Pour the solution over the corrosion and use an old toothbrush to brush away the corrosion.

## BATTERY LAYOUT AND WIRING

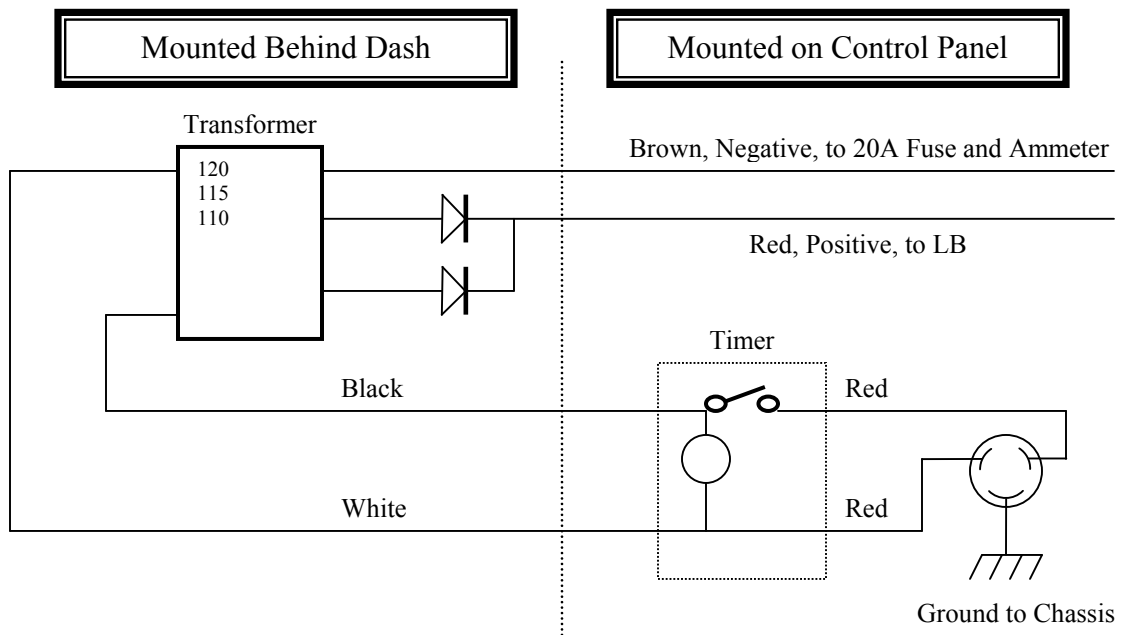
Driver's side view looking down on the batteries with the seat raised. Top of the page is the passenger side of the S-71. Left side of the page is toward the front of the S-71.



## BUILT-IN CHARGER

The Otis S-71 originally came with a built-in battery charger. In 2005 most of these are not functioning and an external charger must be used. In my S-71 the transformer apparently has an internal short. The transformer and rectifiers are under the front “hood” behind the dash. The 20-ampere ammeter, timer, and AC power cord connector are on the operator control panel between the seats. Behind this panel, located on the Fwd-Rev Switch Assembly, is a 20-ampere fuse between the charger output and the batteries.

The built-in charger uses a transformer and two diodes (my S-71 has two silicon diodes) in a standard full-wave rectifier circuit. The transformer has a tapped primary to accommodate varying AC line voltages. The timer operates off the AC input and allows charging for the desired number of hours to prevent overcharging. The ammeter confirms that charging is taking place. The transformer and diodes may be accessed by removing the glove box in the dash. The glove box mounts with two bolts and tapped L-brackets that grip behind the dash. To remove, unscrew the two bolts about 8-turns each. It should then be possible to wiggle the glove box free of the dash. The transformer and diodes are just inside and to the left.



The recessed male AC power connector on the S-71 is a type no longer made in 2005. I made a mating female connector from an L5-15R female connector by sawing the plastic connector body to lengthen the arc of the opening for the ground terminal.

## ADDED ACCESSORIES

The Otis S-71 did not originally come with the following accessories. Various owners have added them to my S-71.

### EXTERNAL CHARGER INPUT (added)

The external-charger input is wired directly to the 36-volt connections to the battery bank. The charger connector is a standard 30-ampere female connector used for 240VAC electric clothes dryers. The ground terminal is not used. Any commercial 36-volt charger may be used for charging the batteries. Mine is a Club-Car model 10470 “Solid State Fully Automatic” charger.

### LIGHTS (added)

The front headlights and rear red taillights are all wired in parallel and use 12-volts from two of the 6-volt batteries as shown on the battery-wiring diagram. This wiring has a 5-ampere fuse for safety. An SPST toggle switch on the dash controls the lights.

### BATTERY STATE OF CHARGE METER (added)

This expanded voltmeter is widely available (in 2005) at golf cart shops for about \$30. This “fuel gauge” is connected to the positive 36-volt battery post. The negative lead goes to the key switch so the meter only works when the key is ON. A 5-ampere fuse in the negative lead protects the wiring.



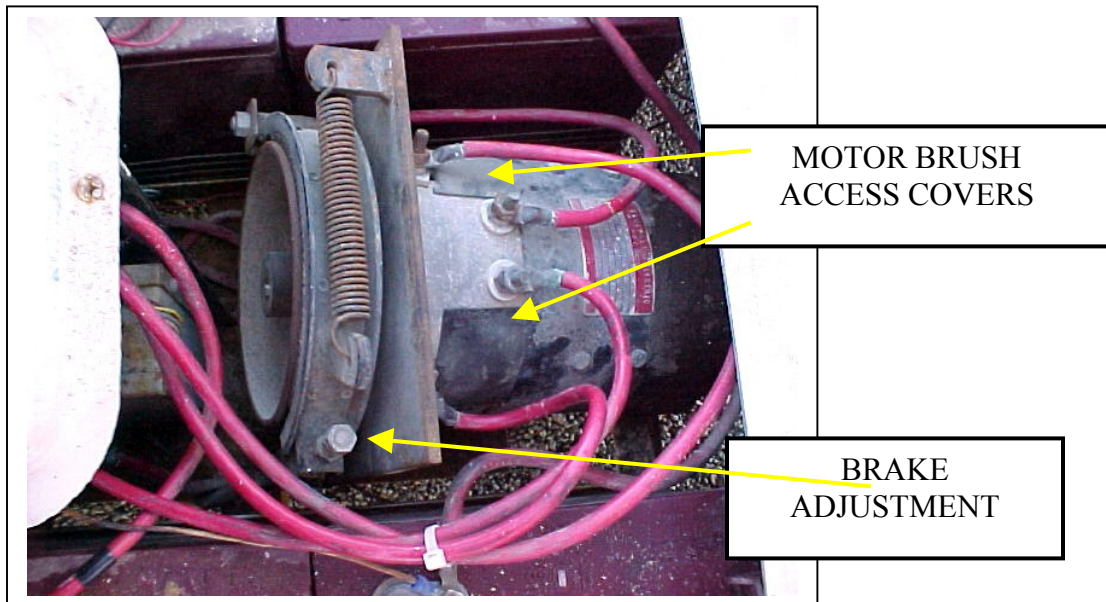
## OTIS S-71 MECHANICAL

### WHEELS AND TIRES

The S-71 has four wheels, which use 18 x 8.50 – 8 standard golf cart tires widely available in many tread designs. I am using 8-PSI tire pressure for a smooth ride on gravel roads. The S-71 is unique in using a five-lug rim. The current standard golf cart rim mounts with only four lugs.

### BRAKING

The brake pedal operates a single brake shoe that is pulled against a drum attached (using a key and an Allen screw) to the forward-end of the motor shaft. The brake pedal is attached to a flexible cable, the other end of which pulls on the shoe through a spring. Pushing the brake pedal further engages a pawl that holds the brake ON as a parking brake. The brake pedal is also interlocked with the accelerator pedal. Simply pushing on the accelerator pedal will release the parking brake. An adjusting nut and locking nut are provided where the brake cable attaches to the shoe. The shoe should be adjusted so that the parking brake functions reliably. The photo below is taken from the driver's side with the seats raised, looking down on the motor.



**An alternate version** has been reported to me that uses a disk brake mounted on the rear of the motor where mine has the drum mounted. No further details are available at this writing.

## REAR SUSPENSION

Rear suspension on each side consists of a coil spring, with a shock absorber inside each spring (like a strut), and a swing-arm that bolts to the rear axle and pivots at the frame attachment.

The two rear swing-arms are of different construction. The right (passenger) side is made of hollow steel pipe. The left arm is of flat steel. The reason for this is unknown to me at this writing.

The rear shock absorbers are stamped “Monro-Matic” with the part number “1034”. The date code is “C10C71”. The rear coil springs are pre-loaded. The spring must be compressed about an inch in order to safely bolt or unbolt the shock. We jacked up the frame and set it on blocks located at the rear of the battery framework, just at the forward edge of the rear trailing arms, and then used a floor-jack under the rear axle to raise the axle until the shocks could be fastened without tension. The rubber bushings for the shocks may be replaced with HELP! part number 31018 or Napa part number 650-1113.

## FRONT SUSPENSION

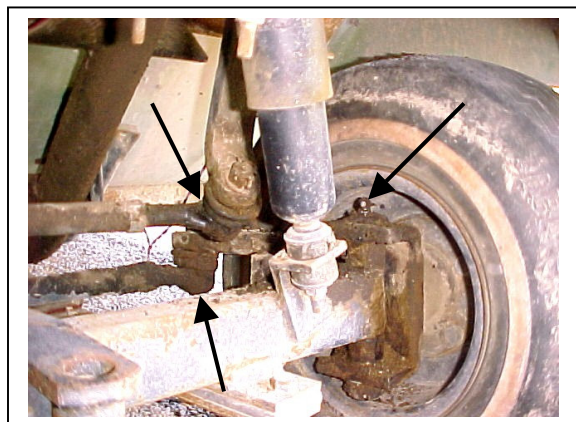
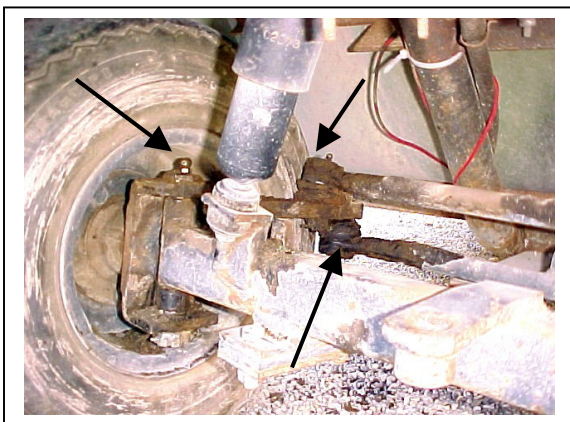
Front suspension on each side consists of a flat single-leaf spring and a flat half-leaf, and shock absorber. The rear end of the leaf spring and half leaf are solidly bolted (no pivot) to the frame. The forward end of the whole leaf spring is solidly bolted to the front axle. The shock absorbers are located between the front axle and the frame.

The front shock absorbers are stamped “MAECO” with the part number “A40099”. The date code is “C2D73”.

## STEERING

Steering is a conventional automotive type. I strongly suspect the S-71 uses the same components as were used for Otis gasoline-powered products of higher power and speed.

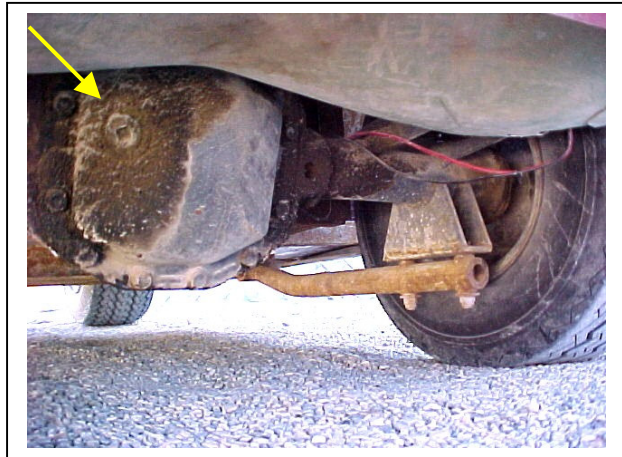
The steering assembly has a total of six grease fittings, three on each side as indicated by the arrows on the photos below.



## REAR AXLE AND DIFFERENTIAL

The rear axle and differential are of the automotive type. The differential can provide power to either rear wheel. I strongly suspect the S-71 uses the same components as were used for Otis gasoline-powered products of higher power and speed.

The differential cover (facing rear) has an oil plug for inspecting and adding gear oil (see photo). Standard 90-weight gear oil is suggested.



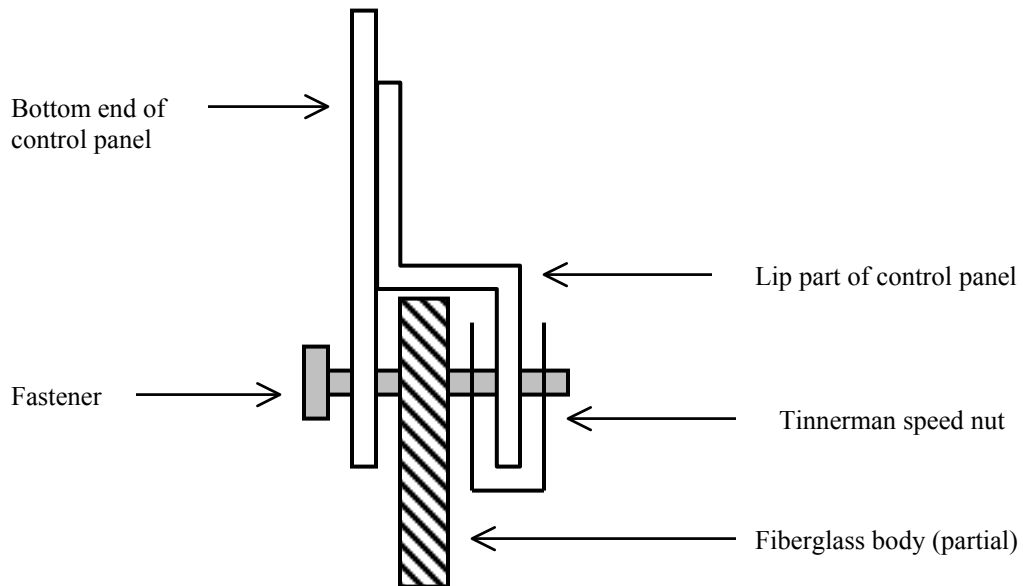
Each rear wheel uses a ball-bearing wheel bearing located in the end of the axle housing. For access, jack up the rear axle and remove the rear wheel. Remove the cotter pin and castle nut holding the hub and pull the hub straight off- it is splined to the axle shaft. The bearing will be visible at the end of the axle. This bearing should be flooded with clean grease. I have not removed one of these so cannot say further the exact procedure for bearing removal. The bearing appears to be retained by a plate that bolts to the end of the axle housing (with a large opening for the axle and through which the bearing may be viewed). To replace the hub align the splines of the hub and rear axle and push on. Replace the castle nut and tighten until it is tight, then back off the nut until the cotter pin can be inserted through the castle nut and axle and locked in place. Then replace the wheel. The wheel lug nut torque is unknown to me but I use a 3/8 hand-ratchet and 3/4-inch deep well socket for this with good results.

## SEATS AND BATTERY ACCESS

The two individual seats are bolted to a piece of 1/2-inch plywood (covered with indoor-outdoor carpet) that is hinged at the front edge for access to the batteries. A rod and rod-holder (for propping up this cover during battery maintenance) are located on the battery side behind the driver's seat. The passenger seat mounts with four bolts from the rear of this cover into tapped nuts in the seat. The driver's seat mounts to adjustable tracks so it can be moved fore and aft to accommodate the driver. The tracks have threaded studs that extend through the cover and are attached with washers and nuts. The left-rear nut also secures the rod and the right-rear nut also secures the rod holder.

## OPERATOR CONTROL PANEL

The operator control panel mounts to the fiberglass body using a bolt, nut, and washer at the top end (between the seats) and using either a bolt or sheet metal screw at the bottom edge near the floor. Remove the upper bolt first. Then remove the bottom fastener- it screws into a captive Tinnerman U-type self-retaining speed nut on the inside lip behind the fiberglass. When the bolts are removed, lift up on the panel about ½-inch so the bottom lip clears the fiberglass. The panel may then be pulled forward a few inches for access to the components mounted on it. The heavy battery cables and the studs on the reversing switch may hang up on the fiberglass but with a little patience and care the panel will come free for inspection and maintenance.





## REFERENCES

[1] Westcoaster sales brochure entitled "full line". Otis Collection Item #2599. © 1971 by Otis Elevator Company. Used by permission.

[2] Circuits and Machines in Electrical Engineering, Volume II Machines  
By John O. Kraehenbuehl and Max A. Fawcett  
Second Edition, ©1947, John Wiley & Sons, Inc., New York  
Page 251.

[3] I.C.S. Reference Library (4 volumes)  
Volume: Electric Railways, Interior Wiring  
©1904, International Textbook Company, Scranton  
Section 24, Page 16.

## INTERESTING WEBSITES

SUBJECT	WEBSITE LINK
Electric Vehicle History	<a href="http://www.econogics.com/ev/evhista.htm">www.econogics.com/ev/evhista.htm</a>
EVA-Chloride	See listing at <a href="http://www.econogics.com/ev/evhiste.htm">www.econogics.com/ev/evhiste.htm</a>
Otis Elevator Company	<a href="http://www.otis.com">www.otis.com</a>
Otis Elevator Company	See listing at <a href="http://www.econogics.com/ev/evhisto.htm">www.econogics.com/ev/evhisto.htm</a>
Trojan Batteries	<a href="http://www.trojanbattery.com">www.trojanbattery.com</a>
Westcoaster	No listing found