

Review of the IC-30A

The growth of amateur FM repeaters on 450, as a new field of endeavor and communications, has been boosted to a great extent by the availability of rigs once used in commercial services. Commercial equipment of many types has been in the foreground almost from the start of this growth. Many repeater sites are inhabited by machines built around units that once saw duty in commercial services.

Numerous mobile hams can trace their rigs to a similar lineage, but now 450 has come of age. If you have been in the market for a 450 transceiver, you are by now aware that there are few units on the market, but a new unit has been announced: the ICOM IC-30A!

The ICOM IC-30A could very well be the unit that will take the field! The transceiver is all solid state. It comes with five sets of crystals, and has 22 channel capability. It has a socket on the side where the mic, audio, push-to-talk and touchtone can be wired. It features a 10 Watt/1 Watt position power choice. With all these features it makes one wonder, "Where has 450 been all my life?"

The transceiver is modularly con-

structed. The receiver oscillator uses 24 MHz. There are Overtone crystals to provide output in the 433-435 MHz range. The signal is mixed with the incoming signal to provide an i-f output in the 10.69 MHz range. The 10.69 MHz is used deliberately to enable the IC-30A to be used in conjunction with two meter and other 10.7 MHz i-f rigs. The transmitter uses crystals in the 18 MHz range of the usual "AT" cut. The transceiver uses a T-R relay instead of diode switching. Reverse polarity protection is employed in the unit by means of a diode. If accidental reversal happens, the supply will see a short circuit, thus protecting the unit by blowing the fuse.

The IC-30A comes with crystals for 449.0, .1, and .2 high-in/low-out repeater or simplex on 446.0 or 446.5. The unit has individual trimmers for transmit and receive oscillators.

Typical of most low cost radios is the intermod caused by local ham repeaters and front-end overload by commercial frequencies. After finally getting up enough courage to drive through downtown Dallas during peak communication hours (not to mention

the downtown drivers), I decided to see if the IC-30A would perform typically and be paralyzed by the rf field. Much to my surprise I carried on a QSO on a direct frequency, without a gurble of intermod or overload. The unit even has a transmit light and a COR light. Only two notes of dislike, but minor ones: The 9 pin socket only comes wired for discriminator (and you have a 5 minute job to search through the maze of wires to hook it up) and the IC-30A comes equipped with a metric thread, S0239, so it must be changed out.

In conclusion, I found the ICOM IC-30A to be a very pleasant and easy to operate unit. There are not too many knobs and switches to confuse you, and with 22 channel capability you will not be limited to 6 or a dozen channels. 450 is not like two meters was just a few years ago, when you had to scan the band looking for a QSO. 450 has come of age with the growth of UHF activity, and you will find it a new frontier to conquer. I'm sure you will enjoy every minute of it just as I have!

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