



ARRL Periodicals Archive – Search Results

A membership benefit of ARRL and the ARRL Technical Information Service

ARRL Members: You may print a copy for personal use. Any other use of the information requires permission (see Copyright/Reprint Notice below).

Need a higher quality reprint or scan? Some of the scans contained within the periodical archive were produced with older imaging technology. If you require a higher quality reprint or scan, please contact the ARRL Technical Information Service for assistance. Photocopies are \$3 for ARRL members, \$5 for nonmembers. For members, TIS can send the photocopies immediately and include an invoice. Nonmembers must prepay. Details are available at www.arrl.org/tis or email photocopy@arrl.org.

QST on CD-ROM: Annual CD-ROMs are available for recent publication years. For details and ordering information, visit www.arrl.org/qst.

Non-Members: Get access to the ARRL Periodicals Archive when you join ARRL today at www.arrl.org/join. For a complete list of membership benefits, visit www.arrl.org/benefits.

Copyright/Reprint Notice

In general, all ARRL content is copyrighted. ARRL articles, pages, or documents--printed and online--are not in the public domain. Therefore, they may not be freely distributed or copied. Additionally, no part of this document may be copied, sold to third parties, or otherwise commercially exploited without the explicit prior written consent of ARRL. You cannot post this document to a Web site or otherwise distribute it to others through any electronic medium.

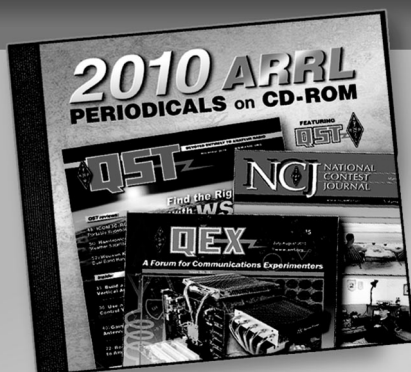
For permission to quote or reprint material from ARRL, send a request including the issue date, a description of the material requested, and a description of where you intend to use the reprinted material to the ARRL Editorial & Production Department: permission@arrl.org.

QST Issue: Apr 1985

Title: Quarter-Kilowatt 23-cm Amplifier, A--Part 2

Author: E.R. "Chip" Angle, N6CA

[Click Here to Report a Problem with this File](#)



2010 ARRL Periodicals on CD-ROM

ARRL's popular journals are available on a compact, fully-searchable CD-ROM. Every word and photo published throughout 2010 is included!

- **QST** The official membership journal of ARRL
- **NCJ** National Contest Journal
- **QEX** Forum for Communications Experimenters

SEARCH the full text of every article by entering titles, call signs, names—almost any word. **SEE** every word, photo (including color images), drawing and table in technical and general-interest features, columns and product reviews, plus all advertisements. **PRINT** what you see, or copy it into other applications.

System Requirements: Microsoft Windows™ and Macintosh systems, using the industry standard Adobe® Acrobat® Reader® software. The Acrobat Reader is a free download at www.adobe.com.

2010 ARRL Periodicals on CD-ROM

ARRL Order No. 2001

Only \$24.95*

*plus shipping and handling

Additional sets available:

2009 Ed., ARRL Order No. 1486, \$24.95
 2008 Ed., ARRL Order No. 9406, \$24.95
 2007 Ed., ARRL Order No. 1204, \$19.95
 2006 Ed., ARRL Order No. 9841, \$19.95
 2005 Ed., ARRL Order No. 9574, \$19.95
 2004 Ed., ARRL Order No. 9396, \$19.95
 2003 Ed., ARRL Order No. 9124, \$19.95
 2002 Ed., ARRL Order No. 8802, \$19.95
 2001 Ed., ARRL Order No. 8632, \$19.95



ARRL The national association for AMATEUR RADIO™

SHOP DIRECT or call for a dealer near you.
 ONLINE WWW.ARRL.ORG/SHOP
 ORDER TOLL-FREE 888/277-5289 (US)

A Quarter-Kilowatt 23-cm Amplifier

Part 2: Last month, we described the design and construction of a 23-cm cavity amplifier. This installment describes the rest of the components needed to put it on the air

By E. R. "Chip" Angle,* N6CA

After you complete construction of the cavity amplifier described in March *QST*, you are ready to assemble the rest of the components needed to put it on the air. This month, I will discuss the filament, bias and high-voltage supplies; a whisper-quiet, high-efficiency water-cooling system; testing and hookup; and, finally, tune-up and operation.

Power Supplies

The filament and bias supplies for the cavity amplifier are shown schematically in Fig. 1. The manufacturer's specification for the 7289/2C39 filament is 6.0-V ac at 1 A. I have found that the use of a standard

6.3-V ac, 1-A transformer only slightly increases the tube emission without much loss of tube life. The filament should be allowed to warm up before operating the amplifier, so the filament, bias and high-voltage supplies incorporate separate primary switches.

Biasing

Many biasing schemes have been published for grounded-grid amplifiers. Fig. 1 shows a bias network that satisfies all of the following operating requirements:

- 1) external bias supply referenced to ground
- 2) low-power components
- 3) variable bias to accommodate tube-to-tube variations
- 4) TR switchable with relay contact or transistor to ground
- 5) bias-supply protection in case of a

defective or shorted tube.

U2 provides a variable bias-voltage source, adjustable by R1. The output of U2 drives the base of Q1, which is used to increase the current-handling capability of the bias supply. Q1 must be mounted on a heat sink. J1 is connected to the station TR switching system so that R1 is grounded on transmit and disconnected on receive. The approximate range of the bias supply is 6 to 20 V. Z1 and Z2 provide protection for Q1 in case of a shorted tube. The amplifier can be run without Z1 and Z2 if you keep the anode voltage below 1100 V.

High-Voltage Power Supply

A safe, reliable high-voltage power supply is described here. Of course, you can use any readily available HV supply; keep in mind, however, that the 7289/2C39

*25309 Andreo Ave., Lomita, CA 90717

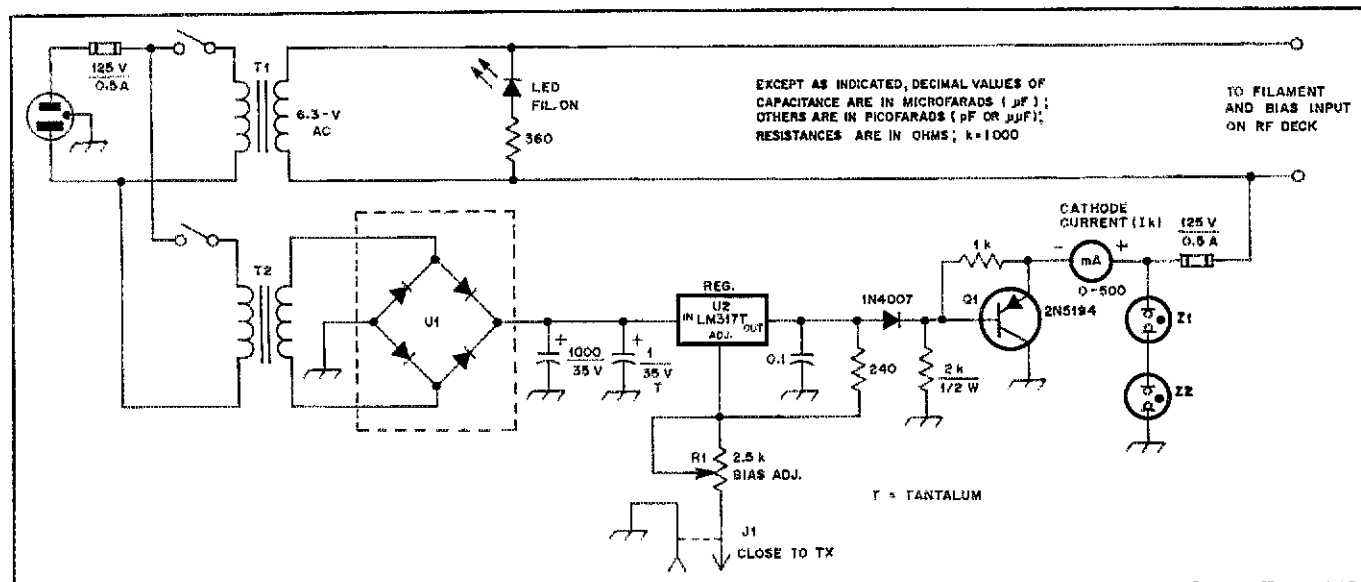


Fig. 1 — Schematic diagram of the cavity-amplifier filament and bias supplies. All resistors are 1/4-W carbon types unless otherwise noted.

J1 — Female chassis-mount phono connector.
T1 — Filament transformer. Primary, 117 V;
secondary, 6.3 V at 1 A.
T2 — Power transformer. Primary, 117 V;

secondary, 24 to 28 V at 50 mA or greater.
U1 — Bridge rectifier, 50 PIV, 1 A.
U2 — Adjustable 3-terminal regulator (LM317T
or equiv.).

Z1, Z2 — 20-V unipolar metal-oxide varistor
(General Semiconductor SA20 or equiv.)
or two 20-V, 1-W Zener diodes.

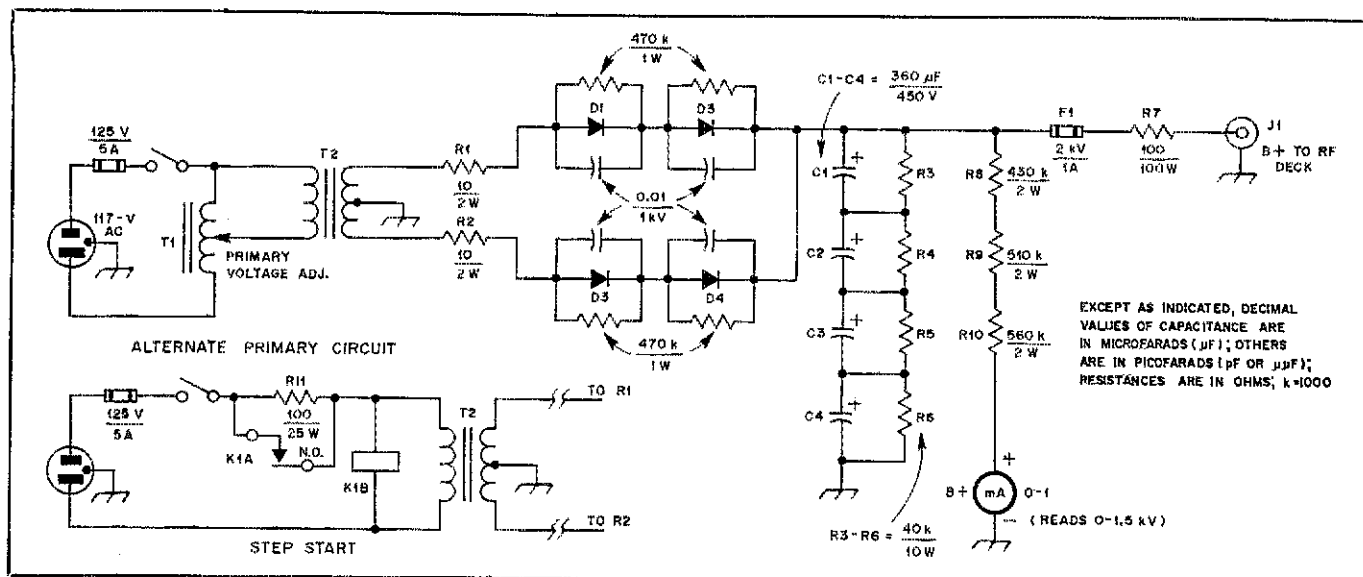


Fig. 2 — Schematic diagram of the amplifier high-voltage supply.

C1-C4 — Electrolytic capacitor, 360 μ F, 450 V.
D1-D4 — Silicon rectifier, 1000 PIV, 3 A.
F1 — High-voltage fuse, 2 kV, 1 A.

J1 — Chassis-mount female BNC or MHV connector.
R3-R6 — Wirewound resistor, 40 k Ω , 11 W.

T1 — Variable autotransformer, 500 VA.
T2 — High-voltage transformer. Primary, 117 V; secondary, 900 to 1050 V at 500 mA.

anode potential should never exceed 1400-V dc at full load and that the amplifier will withstand 1900-V dc at low cathode current and cut-off-bias conditions. For maximum power output, assuming adequate drive power is available, anode voltage under full load should be about 1200- to 1400-V dc.

Fig. 2 is a schematic diagram of the high-voltage supply. A power transformer (T2) that delivers 900- to 1050-V ac is ideal. The type of rectifier circuit used will depend on the type of transformer chosen. Each leg of the rectifier is made from two 1000-PIV, 3-A silicon diodes connected in series. Each diode is shunted with a 0.01- μ F capacitor to suppress transient voltage spikes, and a 470-k Ω equalizing resistor.

Filtering is accomplished with a string of four 360- μ F, 450-V electrolytic capacitors connected in series. R3-R6 equalize the voltage across each capacitor in the string and serve as bleeder resistors. Of course, a single oil-filled capacitor may be used here if available. Whatever type of filter you use, the total capacitance should be about 80 μ F at a voltage rating of at least 1500-V dc. This value allows adequate "droop" of the anode voltage under high-current loads to protect the amplifier in case of RF overdrive or a defective tube.

Protective Circuitry

Some type of start-up protection should be incorporated in the primary. Fully discharged filter capacitors look like a dead short at supply turn-on. Initial surge current (until the capacitors charge) may be high enough to destroy the rectifiers. R1 and R2 provide some surge-current limiting, but either of the two primary configurations shown in Fig. 2 should be used. T1, a variable autotransformer (Variac and

Powerstat are two common trade names), is ideal. In addition to allowing you to bring the primary up slowly (and charging the capacitors gradually), it also allows full control of amplifier output power by varying anode voltage.

The second method, a "step-start" system, uses a resistor in the T2 primary to limit the turn-on surge current. When the capacitors have charged, K1 is energized, shorting out R11 and applying full voltage to the T2 primary.

F1 and R7 protect against high-voltage arc-overs or short circuits. If sustained overcurrent is drawn, F1 will open and remove B+ from the RF deck. Use a high-voltage fuse here; standard fuses may arc when blown and not interrupt the B+. R7 provides current limiting to protect the amplifier and power supply in case of a high-voltage arc.

Safety

An HV meter should always be used to monitor the status of the power supply. The values for R8-R10 shown in Fig. 2 will give a 1500-V dc full-scale reading on a 0-1 mA meter. RG-58 or -59 coaxial cable should be used for the high-voltage interconnection between the power supply and the RF deck. Ground the shield at both ends for safety and a good dc return.

Safety must be observed when working with all power supplies. These voltages are lethal! Always disconnect ac power and then discharge the filter capacitors before working on the power supply. Never guess or make assumptions about the status of a power supply. Assume it is hot.

Metering

Cathode-current monitoring is all that's really necessary for observing amplifier dc

performance. Cathode current (I_K) is the sum of the plate (I_P) and grid (I_G) currents. Normally, when this amplifier is driven to 300- or 400-mA I_K , the grid current will be around 40 to 50 mA. The inclusion of a grid-current meter is not really necessary and only makes biasing and TR switching complicated.

Cooling

Desired output power and the level of drive power available will dictate what type of cooling to use. For intermittent duty (SSB, CW) at output levels less than 50 W, air cooling is satisfactory. Any small blower may be easily mounted to the aluminum box surrounding the tube anode. For high-duty-cycle modes and/or output levels greater than 50 W, water cooling is highly recommended. Greater than twice the normal air-cooled output power can be obtained from a water-cooled tube, and water cooling is quiet.

Tube Modification and Water Jacket

The first step is to remove the air radiator from the tube. The air radiator screws on, so it may simply be unscrewed without damage to the tube.

First, place a hose clamp around the tube anode. Secure the radiator fins in a vise and grip the hose clamp with a pair of large pliers. Gently unscrew the tube from the radiator. If the hose clamp slips slightly, tighten it.

Some 7289/2C39 tubes use an air radiator that is attached with setscrews. To remove the radiator, simply remove the setscrews and pull the radiator off.

The air radiator will be replaced with a water jacket that allows water to be circulated past the tube anode and through a radiator, where it is cooled and circulated

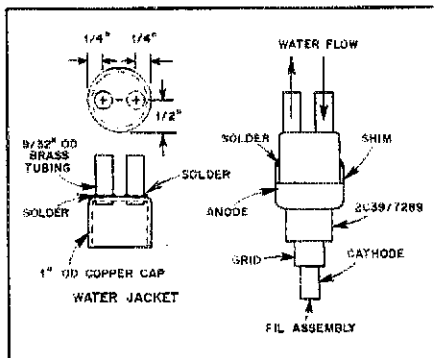


Fig. 3 — Details of the solder-on water jacket.

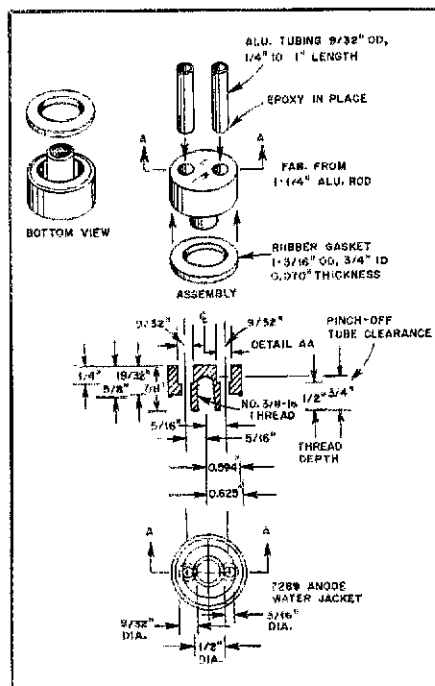


Fig. 4 — Details of the screw-on water jacket.

past the tube anode again. I have successfully used two different types of water jackets; both are described here.

The water jacket shown in Fig. 3 will work with any type of 7289/2C39. It is fabricated from a 1-inch-OD copper tubing cap and two short pieces of 9/32-inch-OD brass tubing. The copper tubing cap should be available from a local hardware store or plumbing supply house. Brass tubing is available from many hobby stores and metal supply houses.

Mark and drill the copper cap so that the brass tubing is a snug fit. Thoroughly clean the parts until they shine. Push the tubing into the holes in the end cap and degrease the assembly with alcohol. Using plenty of flux, solder the seam around each section of tubing. Allow the jacket assembly to cool.

Meanwhile, thoroughly clean the 7289/2C39 anode to a bright finish. Check the water jacket for fit. In some cases,

you'll have to use a 0.005- to 0.010-inch-thick copper shim to fill the gap between the copper cap and the tube anode. This shim helps eliminate pin holes in the solder.

Using plenty of flux, solder the water jacket to the tube anode. Solder it quickly with a hot, high-wattage iron. Allow the tube to cool in the air after soldering to avoid thermal shock and possible breakage. After the tube has cooled, use plenty of alcohol to remove all traces of flux from the tube and water jacket.

The second type of water jacket is shown in Fig. 4. This jacket will work only with 7289/2C39 tubes that have a screw-on air radiator. It is designed to thread onto the tube anode just like the air radiator did. This jacket is machined from a piece of 1 1/4-inch aluminum rod. The water inlet and outlet tubes are made from 9/32-inch-OD, 1/4-inch-ID aluminum tubing that is epoxied in place. A rubber gasket seals the jacket against leaks.

If you have access to a lathe, you should have no trouble duplicating the jacket. You could have one made up at a local machine shop. Complete screw-on water jackets are also available from the author.*

After you unscrew the air radiator from

*The price is \$17 plus \$2 shipping. The ARRL and QST do not warrant this offer.

the 7289/2C39, check for and remove any burrs from the tube anode. The anode surface must be flat if the rubber gasket is to be effective. Screw the water jacket onto the tube. Tighten by hand only. Do not use any tools, or you could damage the tube or jacket! Do not use the water inlet and outlet tubes for leverage—they have thin walls and break easily.

Water System

Fig. 5 depicts the complete water-cooling system. Recommended pumps and accessories that have proven reliable and effective are listed in the caption.

Any small pump, such as a fountain pump, that can deliver 160 to 200 gallons per hour can be used here. Most inexpensive pumps are not self-priming, which means that they won't pump water if they have air in the rotor. Although water can be forced through the pump for the initial prime, my system uses gravity priming. The water reservoir is a 2-foot length of 3-inch-OD plastic pipe that is available from hardware or plumbing stores. The outlet is at the bottom, and the inlet about halfway up the column. The inlet is located here to eliminate aeration that ionizes the water and reduces its effectiveness. The outlet directly feeds the pump. The pump and the reservoir outlet port should be mounted in the same plane. The pump should be

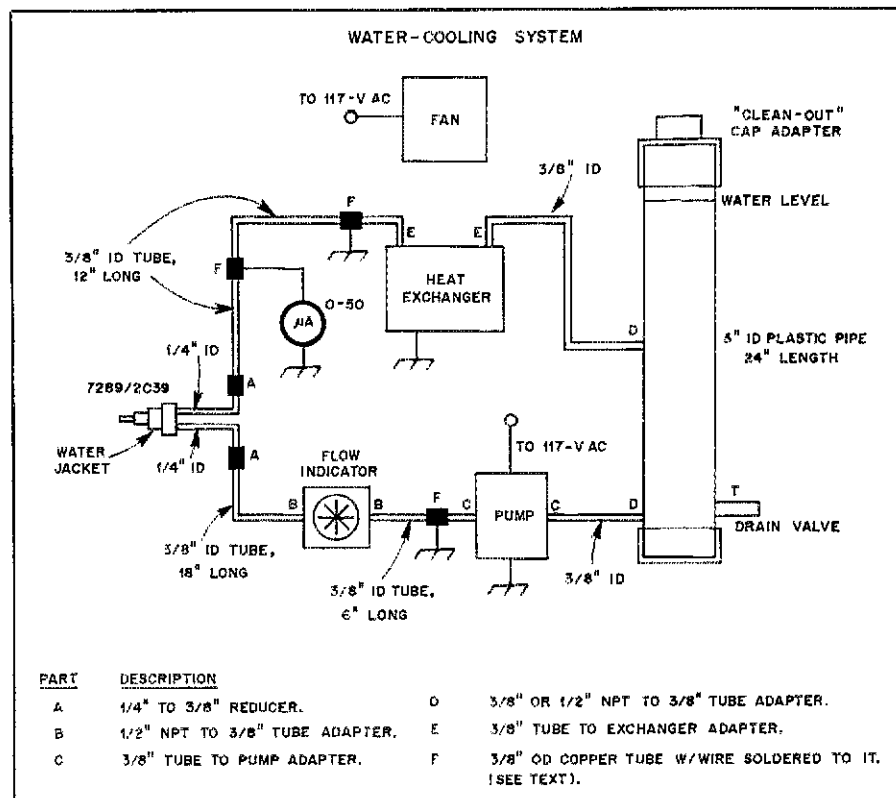


Fig. 5 — Details of the water-cooling system. Recommended pumps are: (1) Little Giant Pump Co. Model 1-42A or larger, available from most hardware stores; or (2) Calvert Engineering, Cal Pump Model 875S (160 gal/h), available from Calvert, 7051 Hayvenhurst Ave., Van Nuys, CA 91406, tel. 213-781-6029. The flow indicator (Model 15C; requires two 1/2-inch NPT adapters) is available from Proteus Industries, 240 Polaris Ave., Mountain View, CA 94043 tel. 415-964-4163.

Microwave Radiation Safety

Intense RF radiation concentrated on body tissues can produce heat damage; the extent and penetration will depend on the radio frequency in use and on exposure duration. You should be aware of the approximate intensity of RF radiation of the transmitting equipment and antennas you come in contact with.

RF intensity is commonly expressed in milliwatts per square centimeter (mW/cm²), which is the power flowing away from a source through a unit sampling or interception area at some specified distance. Although the United States as yet has no federal RF protection standard, a useful interim guide is the 1982 standard of the American National Standards Institute (ANSI '82). The most stringent level in this standard is 1 mW/cm² for frequencies between 30 and 300 MHz. Above 300 MHz, the protection level rises until it reaches 5 mW/cm² at 1500 MHz. Beyond 1500 MHz, the recommended level remains at 5 mW/cm². These levels represent the average power density allowed over any six-minute period and are for the sum of all polarizations from a given source.

At 1296 MHz, where one wavelength (λ) equals 23 cm, a thick resonant dipole feeding a calibrated power meter with matched coaxial cable (itself free of pickup) may be used to obtain an indication of power density. A reasonably lossless resonant dipole has an effective aperture of $\lambda^2/8$; at 23 cm this is 66 cm². The power meter reading in milliwatts, divided by 66, is the indicated power density. For this to be a reliable indication, the dipole must be positioned far enough from the RF source to be in its far field. For a small source, the distance should be at least $\lambda/2$, and here that would be about 12 cm (4.5 inches). The dipole should be oriented for alignment with the dominant polarization. Note that the power meter must be capable of readings well below 1 mW.

This arrangement would be useful for checking leaks along the coaxial route that the high power (here 250 W) takes to a load, be it dummy load or antenna. Cable connectors may not be tightly secured, or they may be faulty. For equipment operating in the SHF region, waveguide flanges may not be clamped properly.

Direct measurement of electric field strength near an antenna (with a calibrated instrument, preferably one with the indicating meter shielded and possibly positioned at the center of the sampling dipole) is another way to check for adequate protection. A field strength of 60 V per meter (V/m) corresponds to 1 mW/cm²; 134 V/m corresponds to 5 mW/cm². At a distance 60 cm (2 feet) from an isolated dipole fed with 26 watts, the field strength would be about 60 V/m. This is a far-field field strength for all frequencies where the half wavelength is less than 60 cm, or for frequencies above 250 MHz. For full 250 watts applied to the dipole, the 60 V/m level occurs at a distance of 1.8 meters (6 feet), and at this distance this holds for all frequencies above 80 MHz.

With SSB or CW keying, the fields during Amateur Radio operation are highly intermittent, and usually include considerable pauses or intervals for listening. These factors reduce the average power density over the six-minute averaging period.

Further information on RF safety and protection estimates can be found in Chapter 7 of *The Satellite Experimenter's Handbook*, published by the ARRL. The following rules of good practice for RF protection are recommended:

- Never operate an RF amplifier with equipment shielding removed.
- Never handle antennas with RF power applied.
- Never guess that RF levels are safe. Take the time to consult a reliable reference for an estimate, or measure levels carefully. Allow a "cushion" of about 6 dB (factor of four in power density). If possible, borrow an RF radiation monitor (after learning how to use it), or consult with a ham who is well informed on RF protection.
- Never look into an open end of a power waveguide; never point a powered directive antenna (a beam or a paraboloid, for example) toward people. Keep all VHF and UHF transmitting antennas as high as possible, distant from humans.
- Use good-quality, well-constructed coaxial cable and connectors to avoid RF leaks.
- Think RF and electrical safety first; test later!
- Watch QST for news on RF measurement techniques and progression, protection standards and proposed federal and state RF regulations. — David Davidson, W1GKM

cycle modes such as ATV or FM, or for long, slow-speed CW transmissions (EME, for example), you should use a small axial whisper fan to increase the effectiveness of the heat exchanger. A fan isn't necessary during normal operation, or even for sustained operation at moderate power levels, but I highly recommend one if you plan prolonged operation at maximum power. Locate the fan so the warm exhaust air won't heat up other equipment.

Hoses and Fittings

Most hardware stores carry a complete line of brass fittings and adapters that can be used for this project. Brass, however, will eventually corrode and pollute the water supply. Plastic fittings are cheaper and don't corrode, but they are harder to find. Recreational vehicle suppliers are my main source for these parts. They are used extensively in drinking water systems for mobile homes and travel trailers. Procure the fittings when you have the rest of the parts in hand, as there are many variables to consider.

You can use any relatively soft, thin-wall vinyl tubing for all water lines. The main runs are made from 3/8-inch-ID hose, while 1/4-inch-ID stock is used to connect to the 7289/2C39 water jacket. The 1/4-inch-ID tubing fits snugly over the 9/32-inch-OD inlet and outlet tubes on the water jacket, so no clamps are required. All other hose connections should be secured with stainless-steel clamps to prevent leaks. Any leaks mean air in the system and deterioration of cooling performance.

Safety

The tube anode, and hence the water jacket and water, are in direct contact with the high-voltage supply, so some safety precautions must be observed. Approximately 12 to 18 inches of tubing should run between the 7289/2C39 jacket and any other component in the cooling system. This will allow enough resistance in the water to provide adequate current limiting, should the water contact any components that are grounded.

It is best to ground the water supply at the pump. Do this by replacing a short section of the tubing that runs to the flow indicator with a piece of brass or copper tubing. Solder a wire to this metal tubing and connect the other end of the wire to your station ground. Use at least 24 inches of vinyl tubing between the anode cooling jacket and the ground point.

On the warm-water side of the 7289/2C39, run 12 inches of vinyl tubing to a small metal fitting or short section of metal tubing, and then another 12 inches of vinyl tubing to a grounded point (this can be at the heat exchanger). You can measure the water leakage current to ground by placing a microammeter between the metal fitting that connects the two vinyl hoses and ground. Leakage cur-

oriented so that air bubbles will rise into the impeller output port and can be blown out once the pump starts running.

Flow Indicator and Heat Exchanger

Water cooling is best described as "super quiet." There is no noisy fan to reassure you that the tube is receiving adequate cooling. If water flow is reduced or cut off during amplifier operation, tube damage is virtually assured.

Flow interlocks and switches to shut down the amplifier if water flow is reduced are hard to find and expensive. Flow indicators, however, are inexpensive and reliable. A flow indicator has a spoked rotor that turns as water passes through the unit. If the wheel is turning, there is water flow; if not, you have a problem. Changes in flow rate can be observed by watching

for speed changes in the rotor. A small lamp illuminates the flow indicator, making it easy to see rotation. The flow indicator should be mounted where it can be seen from the operating position and monitored during operation.

Heat exchangers, or radiators, remove the heat from water as it passes through. For this application, a small automobile transmission-oil cooler works great. Most auto-parts stores and speed shops have a good selection. Pick one that is similar in size and aspect ratio to a whisper fan (approximately 4 × 4 × 1 inches). Some come with mounting brackets. Look for a cooler with the input and output ports on the top so air bubbles will rise to the top and move on without becoming trapped. Trapped air degrades cooler performance.

If you use the amplifier for high-duty-

rent should be less than 10 μ A with clean water and an anode potential of 1 kV. As the water ages, the leakage current will rise; when this happens, replace the water.

Grocery stores carry distilled water for use in steam irons. It may be deionized and not truly distilled, but it works fine for about four to six months in this application. Filters can be purchased from scientific supply houses, but they're not really worth buying because deionized water is so cheap.

Do not use tap water under any circumstances! When you turn on the water system for the first time, run a gallon of water through it for half an hour to wash out fabrication impurities. Replace with clean water before using the system to cool the amplifier.

Water was chosen because it's inexpensive, nontoxic, nonflammable and easy to clean up if you have a leak. Better liquid coolants are available, but they are toxic. Don't use them!

Cooling Performance

I have used water-cooling systems for several years with no problems whatsoever. Fig. 6 is a graph of several transmit/receive cycles on a water-cooled, 500-W output, 23-cm power amplifier. For this test, I used two of the amplifiers described in this article coupled with a pair of hybrid combiners. This particular cooling system used 1 gallon of water. Experiments indicate that, during extended operation, the water temperature rises only 30° to 35°F above ambient room temperature. Typically, the tube anode and water average 10° to 15°F above ambient during casual operating.

Flow rates in this system are typically 1/3 gallon per minute per tube, which is more than adequate. At this rate, more than 300 W of dissipation from a single inefficient 7289/2C39 were required to boil the water in the water jacket. The water should not be allowed to boil because this will heat the rubber gasket.

Tubes

It is not really necessary to buy a new 7289/2C39. Used tubes can be found surplus for around \$1 to \$5 and, in many cases, will perform as well as a new tube. Most used tubes have been sitting around for several years, so it's a good idea to run them through the dishwasher to clean them up and then run the filaments for about 24 hours. This will restore operation in many cases.

If you buy a new tube, you should be aware that the 7289/2C39 is being run far in excess of its ratings in this amplifier. The manufacturer's warranty will not cover tubes run in this application.

Contrary to popular opinion, glass tubes will work. Physically, they are not as rugged as the ceramic version, but the glass-to-metal seal seems to provide better shelf

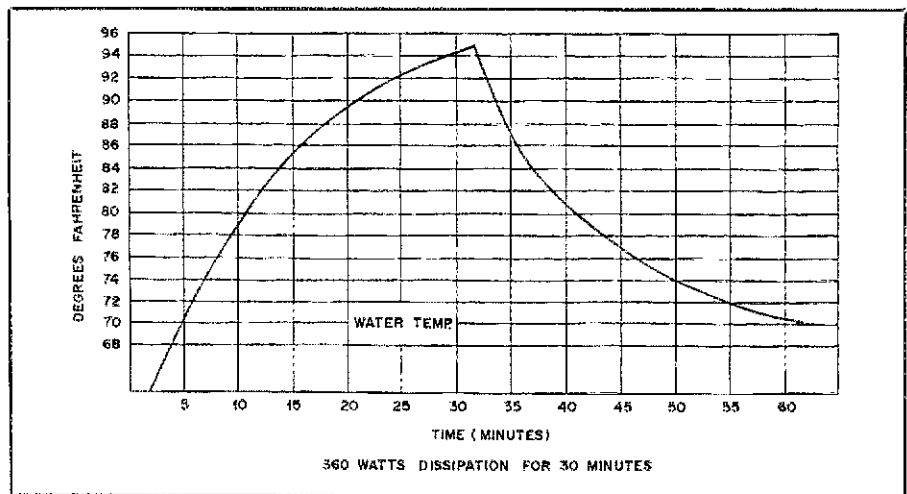


Fig. 6 — Performance graph of the water-cooling system.

life than the ceramic seal. The glass tubes make great driver tubes and will work fine for power levels up to 100-W output. Pulse tubes (7815, 7211) are not recommended because of their poor thermal stability at high power levels. Also, they generally are 30 to 40 MHz lower in resonant frequency in this amplifier compared to the 7289/2C39. Some 7289 tubes can be as much as 30 MHz lower in frequency. Minor length adjustment of the anode-tuning post may be required to accommodate amplifier and tube differences.

Tube Insertion

Extreme care must be exercised when inserting the 7289/2C39 tube. Never force the tube in place, as damage (bending) of the cathode finger stock may result. Observe the layout of the finger stock to get an idea of how the tube inserts. Carefully position the tube so it is straight as you gently push. It should slide in snugly without any solid resistance.

Testing

After you have completed all of the parts for the amplifier, it's time to test everything before hooking it all together. Test the water-cooling system by turning it on and watching for steady water flow as indicated on the flow meter. The tube and water jacket can be removed from the cavity amplifier for this test.

Check all of the power-supply voltages first without connecting them to the RF deck. Then, without the tube in place, hook the bias and filament supplies to the cavity and check the voltages again at the tube finger-stock connections. Connect the high-voltage supply to the RF deck and bring the voltage up slowly with a variable autotransformer. Monitor the high voltage on the anode-bypass-capacitor plate, and look and listen for any possible arcing between the anode-bypass-capacitor plate and ground. Use extreme care when measuring

and testing the high-voltage supply. If everything looks okay with the power supplies, shut them off and disconnect them.

You can make a safe, low-power test of the cavity resonance without applying any voltage. With the tube in place, insert a 2-inch-long coupling loop on the end of a piece of coaxial cable between the spring fingers of the anode down into the cavity. Connect the amplifier output probe/connector to a device capable of detecting low-level RF at 23 cm (for example, a spectrum analyzer or microwattmeter). Feed a signal from an L-band signal generator into cable attached to the wire coupling loop that you inserted into the cavity. Set the signal generator for various frequencies in the 23-cm band and tune the amplifier anode tuner. There will be sharp peak in output at cavity resonance.

This testing method can be used to determine cavity tuning range, anode-bypass-capacitor effectiveness and resonance of various tube types for use in this amplifier. Any cavity amplifier can be tested completely without ever applying high voltage. The better your test equipment, the easier the amplifier is to test. If all dimensions were followed strictly, the amplifier will tune as designed.

Amplifier Hookup

Installation and operation of this amplifier is relatively straightforward, but as with any amplifier, several precautions must be followed. If these are adhered to, the amplifier will provide years of reliable service.

The amplifier is designed to be operated in a 50-ohm system and should never be turned on without a good 50-ohm load connected to the output connector. *Never* operate it into an antenna that has not been tuned to 50 ohms!

Drive power to the amplifier should *never* exceed 15 W. *Never* apply drive power in excess of 1 W unless all operating

voltages are present and the tube is biased on. Otherwise, the tube grid-dissipation rating will be exceeded and you will probably ruin it.

*As in all TR-switched systems, some type of interlock or sequencing of transmit and receive functions should be incorporated. In most systems, the sequence for going into transmit is something like this: First, switch the antenna changeover relay from the receiver to the power amplifier. Next, bias the power amplifier on. Last, key the exciter and apply drive to the amplifier. To go to receive, unkey the exciter, remove operating bias from the amplifier and switch the antenna relay back to the receiver.

If the antenna relays are switched while the power amplifier is operating and putting out power, damage to the relay contacts and/or the amplifier is likely. If there is a momentary removal of the antenna while the power amplifier is biased on, oscillation may occur. This can damage the TR relay, the tube or even the receive preamplifier.

Tune-up and Operation

This is it — the big moment when you will see your project come to life! Connect an accurate UHF power meter and a 50-ohm antenna or load to the amplifier output connector. A Bird Model 43 wattmeter with a 100- or 250-W, 400-1000 MHz slug will give reasonable accuracy, depending on the purity of the drive signal. Apply filament power and tube cooling, and allow 3 to 5 minutes for the filaments to warm up. Turn on bias supply (the amplifier will draw maximum current if the anode voltage is applied without bias). Apply 300 to 400 V to the anode. There should be no current flowing in the tube as indicated on the cathode-current meter. Ground J1 on the bias supply to apply transmit bias and observe cathode current. As R1, the bias control, is turned clockwise, quiescent idling current should increase. Set for about 25 mA.

Apply 1 W of RF drive power. Turn the anode tuner while observing the RF output power meter and tune for maximum output. The output should go through a pronounced peak at cavity resonance. Adjust C2 and C3 on the input tuning network for maximum amplifier output. If possible, use a directional wattmeter between the driver and the amplifier input to check that best input SWR and maximum amplifier output occur at roughly the same setting.

Depending on the amount of drive power available, you may want to tune the amplifier for maximum power output or maximum gain. Fig. 7 shows what you can expect from different drive levels.

Once the amplifier is tuned for best input SWR and maximum output with 1 W of drive, anode voltage and drive power can be increased. Increase both in steps; be sure to keep the anode tuner peaked for

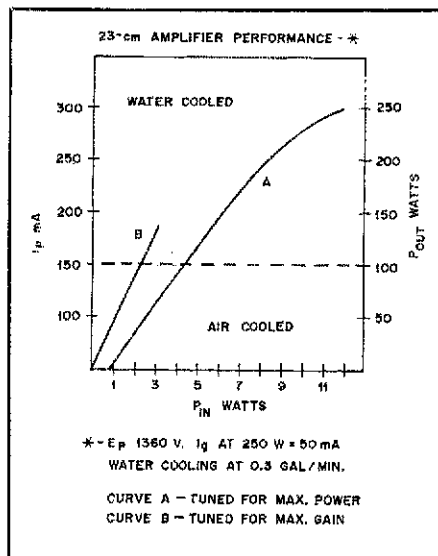


Fig. 7 — Performance of the cavity amplifier under different drive and plate-current conditions.

maximum output power. When you get to the 100-W output level, very carefully readjust the input circuit for maximum output. The input capacitor closest to the cathode is critical and should need to be rotated less than 90 degrees maximum. Maximum output power will be roughly coincident with best input SWR.

Increase the drive power and keep the anode tuner peaked for maximum output. Increase the drive until you reach the desired output level, but *do not exceed 400-mA I_K* ! At 1400-V dc and 350-mA I_K , output power with a good tube should be about 230 to 250 W. At lower anode voltages, I_K will be higher for the same output power. Higher anode voltages result in higher gain, lower drive levels, lower grid current and lower plate current for a given output power.

The anode tuner's tuning rate is approximately 5 MHz per turn. Clockwise rotation of the tuner lowers the resonant frequency of the cavity. This control will require readjustment as you make large frequency excursions within the 23-cm band (for example, if you go from 1296 weak-signal work to the 1269-MHz satellite segment). You should also check the input SWR if you move more than 15 MHz. Generally, amplifier tuning does not change much after initial setup. You should be able to turn it on and use it without retuning as it heats up. Slight adjustments may be necessary, however, depending on cooling, inherent thermal differences from tube to tube and duty cycle of the operating mode. Always keep the anode tuner peaked for maximum output, and check it from time to time, especially while you are first learning how the amplifier operates.

The output loading control is the output connector and probe assembly. Loading is

changed by minor rotational adjustment of the N connector. First loosen the jam-nut (or setscrew) slightly. While observing output power and keeping the anode tuner peaked, rotate the loading control ± 30 degrees maximum for greatest output power. This should be done only once and should not need repeating unless another tube is installed. Even then it may not be required.

Conclusion

This cavity amplifier for the 23-cm band is capable of safe, reliable operation at output powers in excess of 200 W. More than 50 of these amplifiers are in operation, and you can build one, too. I would like to thank Mike Stahl, K6MYC, Bill Troetschel, K6UQH, William Jungwirth, AA6S, Lem Moeschler, W6KGS and Joseph Cadwallader, K6ZMW, for their help and encouragement during the development of this project.

References

- Laakmann, "Cavity Amplifier for 1296 MHz," QST, Jan. 1968, pp. 17-22.
- Laakmann, "Kilowatt Amplifier for 1296 MHz," Ham Radio, Aug. 1968, pp. 8-17.
- "Power Amplifier for 23 cm," VHF Communications, April 1976, p. 222.
- "Power Amplifier for 24 cm," VHF Communications, March 1978, p. 175.
- Stefanski, "1270 MHz ATV Power Amplifier," Ham Radio, June 1977, pp. 67-73.
- Tech Report #6, Crawford Hill VHF Club, July 1971.
- Tech Report #13, Crawford Hill VHF Club, Dec. 1972.

Strays

QEX: THE ARRL EXPERIMENTERS' EXCHANGE

□ Wonder what you've been missing by not subscribing to QEX, the ARRL newsletter for experimenters? Among the features in the March issue were:

- David Arbogast, NV4G, revealed how to eliminate duplicate contest contacts with his "TI 99/4A Contest Dupe Program"
- BITS article on "The Asymmetrical Folded Half-Dipole and Linear Extension Antenna Array" by Bill Conwell, K2PO
- A list of Product Review items, 1976 to 1984.

QEX is edited by Paul Rinaldo, W4RI, and Maureen Thompson, KA1DYZ, and is published monthly. The special subscription rate for ARRL members is \$6 for 12 issues; for nonmembers, \$12. There are additional postage surcharges for mailing outside the U.S.; write to Headquarters for details.