

terrific increase in readability especially when the interference is very strong, with the unit completely killing the Woodpecker pulses, except with very weak signals, where readability does suffer somewhat.

On CW, things are rather worse. Depending on the width setting, the unit can have a disastrous effect on Morse signals, to the point of making them completely unreadable most of the time. The problem is of course that the unit makes no attempt at distinguishing between the Woodpecker pulses and CW, with the result that if the blanking width is at all high, the dots start to become blanked as well! At faster CW speeds, or wider settings, both dots and dashes become blanked. Of course, you have a choice — try to copy the whole signal with the Woodpecker blasting away, or try to copy less of the signal but with no Woodpecker.

It should be emphasised that most of the time, the blanking width can be reduced to its theoretical minimum, and under these conditions there is just a slight 10Hz 'pinging' effect on the signal which most people could cope with. If the

incoming pulses are long and distorted, then the width has to be increased.

The other point is that you cannot really have the unit turned on while there is no interference present, unless you are prepared to listen to the 10Hz pulses modulating both the background noise and the wanted signal. The unit is of course running continuously, and this is the disadvantage of the *Moscow Muffler* over those blankers which use the incoming received pulses to generate the blanking pulse. The ear will respond much more favourably to periods of missing signal, than high intensity Woodpecker pulses, but this is only a practical advantage as long as the gaps are limited to the periods when the Woodpecker pulses would have been present.

Once the SYNC and WIDTH settings have been established at any point in time, the blanking is maintained over longish periods — as long as the Woodpecker signal doesn't change. Occasionally slight readjustment of the sync control is needed. During the period of the review, there were a fair number of transmissions at 16Hz as well as

10Hz.

The unit is well screened, and none of the digital signals present inside the unit got into the receiver. The COR system only needs a few watts of RF to switch correctly.

Summary

The *Moscow Muffler* is certainly a very effective unit and works as claimed by the manufacturer. If your existing transceiver or receiver has no effective facility for dealing specifically with the Woodpecker (it won't handle random type interference), then this AEA unit can be highly recommended, especially as it does not entail any adjustments or modifications to your existing rig.

It will eliminate the interfering pulses under nearly all conditions, but inevitably it has some blanking effect on the wanted signal as well. Unless the received pulses are very wide, this effect is tolerable — the overall result is usually a vast improvement in copy. Some care in adjusting the controls is needed for optimum results.

Thanks to ICS for loan of the unit. It costs £126 including VAT. ●

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