

## A Suitcase Portable Station for HF operation By Phil Salas – AD5X

### Introduction

I really enjoy this hobby of ours. So since I don't like to let something like a vacation interfere with it, I always carry an HF station with me when on vacation. Over the past few years I've evolved my portable set-up to make it more compact and transportable without sacrificing performance. This article describes my current, very compact portable station that is easily carried on "planes, trains and automobiles" and will provide you a tremendous amount of enjoyment when you reach your final destination.

### The Basic Station

I prefer a full 100-watt rig for portable operation so as not to suffer a power disadvantage. While I use an IC-706MKIIG, you have many compact transceivers to choose from. The accessories I use are an MFJ-4125 switching power supply (smallest and lightest 25 amp peak switcher available), and the MFJ-902 travel tuner. For an antenna, I use the 40-10 meter portable dipole described elsewhere on this web site, along with 15- and 25-foot sections of RG-174 coax and a balun. My portable key of choice is the Palm Paddle. And finally, I've fit the entire station into an MFJ-6404 carrying case.

The MFJ-6404 carrying case is perfect for transporting your portable station. It is externally rugged, has internal foam padding, and has a foam insert that is easily customized for your particular equipment. The foam insert is made up of 5/8 inch serrated pieces and is easily modified by hand (see photo "Foam Insert"). The MFJ-6404 also comes with a carrying strap, and includes keyed latches to secure your equipment. See photos "CutOuts" and "Station".

Photos "PortableStation" and "AD5X&Rig" show my portable station in-use on the 15<sup>th</sup> floor balcony of a condo during our vacation on Mustang Island, Texas (IOTA NA092). Man – what a great portable location that was!

### Conclusion

Portable operation with minimal compromises is extremely easy with the compact equipment available today. I've described a very compact portable station that is hard to justify NOT taking with you on trips. Certainly you can substitute other equipment, but you get the general idea. So get out of the house and have fun operating HF portable!



Foam Insert



Cut-out



Unloaded Case



The complete portable station in the MFJ-6404



AD5X & Station at Mustang Island



Portable Station close-up