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Title: The National NC-183D
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The National NC-183D

Just after the war, in early 1947, the National Company introduced the NC-173 receiver with a price lower than their popular HRO-5A1 and NC-2-40D models. It was considered a better receiver by many and had a new look with its smooth painted gray finish. This radio had one stage of RF and a single 6V6 tube producing 3.5 W of audio.

In December 1947 National introduced the NC-183 with an additional RF-stage, circuit and shielding improvements and a greatly improved 8-W audio output stage using a pair of 6V6 tubes in push-pull.

National announced an all-new design in 1952, the NC-183D. It had the appearance of the earlier models, NC-173 and NC-183, but it was a significant improvement. It's said the "D" was to denote "Dual Conversion."

The description from the National manual really explains why hams bought these radios:

> The new NC-183D is a deluxe radio receiver featuring performance and versatility 'plus'. Two R.F. stages, three I.F. Amplifier stages and two frequency conversion stages give this new series that extra measure of sensitivity and image rejection so often needed to insure uninterrupted reception at the high frequencies. A double diode noise limiter reduces interference caused by external noise pulses and a voltage regulated converter and C.W. oscillator circuits assure a minimum of frequency drift for both phone and code reception. The selectivity characteristic of the NC-183D is adjustable over a wide range from broadcast requirements to sharp amateur single signal reception. The push-pull audio system delivers the utmost in audio frequency response and undistorted power output from the built-in output transformer.
>
> Fifteen tubes, plus a voltage regulator and a rectifier, are utilized by the NC-183D in a superheterodyne circuit for the reception of phone and code signals throughout its frequency range of 540 khz. to 31 mhz. and 47 to 55 mhz. Calibrated bandspread tuning is furnished for the main amateur bands i.e., 6, 10-11, 15, 20, 40 and 80 meters. Separate directly-calibrated dial scales and associated controls are used for general coverage and bandspread tuning, respectively. An S meter, with a semi-permanent sensitivity adjustment at the back of the receiver, is mounted on the front panel for signal strength readings of both phone and code signals.
>
> An accessory socket is mounted on the receiver chassis to accommodate such accessories as a National Type SOJ-3 Select-O-Ject, a National Type NFM-83-50 FM adaptor, etc. At the rear of the receiver a socket is available for external use of a battery power supply. Other highlights include a six-position crystal filter, maximum bandspreading of the amateur bands, a quick-action band switch, a phonograph input jack and a terminal panel to permit series or parallel remote standby-receive switch connections.
>
> The NC-183D features a push-pull output amplifier using inverse feed-back. The matching transformer located inside, the receiver provides two audio output circuits as follows:
>
> (1) The transformer secondary leads are brought out to a three-terminal output board located at the rear of the receiver, having both 8 and 500-ohm terminals and a common ground terminal. The 8-ohm terminal provides output for the speaker voice coil and the 500-ohm terminal is available for connection to a 500-ohm line. Approximately 8 watts of undistorted audio output power is available while the maximum power is 11 watts. The audio output terminal board is located on the back of the receiver cabinet and is shielded by a metal cover, which must be removed to gain access to the screw-type terminals.
>
> (2) A headphone jack is mounted on the front panel and is wired so as to silence the loudspeaker on the insertion of a phone plug. The headphone load impedance is not critical allowing a wide range of headphone types to be used.

The NC-183D is one of the finest general coverage and ham band receivers made by National. It was impressive to see and easy to use. This is one radio that many hams held on to as they moved up into SSB and bought transceivers during the 1960s and 1970s. They continued to use this for shortwave listening because it really sounded good. And many of the early SSB transceivers were ham band only; they didn't cover the shortwave bands.

Profile W2LS

My first Elmer was Bill Savell, W2LS. He purchased a NC-183D new in 1952. He had some television interference issues with it and National had him return it to the factory for troubleshooting. Unable to locate the exact problem, in 1953 National offered him another new one with some upgraded circuits in exchange, which Bill gladly accepted. He talked about this for years, about how professionally National had treated him. He treasured this radio until last year when he gave it to me.

Bill is almost 95 years old now and is in fairly good health. Except during WW II, he has been licensed continuously since September 8, 1923—that's almost 80 years in ham radio. He was awarded a nice 75-year plaque by the QCWA in 1998.

He was introduced to ham radio while listening on a crystal set and heard his Sunday School teacher's voice. The next

QCWA "75th Year in Ham Radio" plaque presented by Robert Buus, W2OD.

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