ELECRAFT Operating Note
Using a Straight Key with the KX3

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Background

The KX3's attached keyer paddle, the KXPD3, is very flexible. However, the KX3 can actually handle 2 keys connected at the same time. Further, you can independently set up CW KEY1 and CW KEY2 to operate in any combination of Iambic or Straight key arrangements as you wish.   This gives you maximum flexibility whether you are operating at home or mobile.

Discussion

There are 2 ways to use straight (also known as a 'hand') key with the KX3:

- ☇ You can set up the Elecraft KXPD3 Precision Paddle key so that both of the paddles respond as a straight key.
    - ☇ This connection is known as KEY2 in the Menu options.

- ☇ You can attach a straight key to the KEY port on the left side of the KX3.
    - ☇ This connection is known as KEY1 in the Menu options.

Setting up the KXPD3 Precision key as a Straight Key

 Normally it is configured for right-handed use (MENU:CW KEY2 set to LEFT=DOT). You can reverse it by setting the parameter to LEFT=DASH.

In addition, you can set the CW KEY2 parameter to HAND. In this case both the left and right paddles will function like a hand key.

Note that this arrangement is similar to the well-known Sideswiper or Cootie keying technique for sending.

Setting up the KEY port on the side of the KX3 for a Straight Key

The KEY jack on the left side panel has the same feature, controlled by the CW KEY1 menu entry. So, for example, you could use an external hand key at KEY while using the KXPD3 as a keyer paddle, or vice-versa.

Reminder: Use a Stereo Plug!

Remember that your straight key must use a 1/8" stereo plug. When you prepare your plug for use, you can choose between Tip or Ring for your key contacts. Attempting to use a Mono 1/8" plug will result in the rig going into "Key Down" mode with the transmitter being engaged if VOX is turned on.

Try some of these features today!