

How do I?

An occasional series

This week: Chameleon MPAS 2.0 update



Two Years Later -- A fresh look at the Chameleon MPAS 2.0 portable antenna system.

<https://www.radioclub-carc.com/resources/> for more articles.

<https://chameleonantenna.com/> manufacturer web site

<https://www.dxengineering.com> vendor web site

The Chameleon line of portable antennas is manufactured in the United States. They are used by the US Military and government organizations as well as by amateur radio operators. They review well on third party sites such as <https://www.eham.net>. If they were a restaurant, they would have ~~\$\$\$\$~~ after the name.

I had previously purchased a **CHA F Loop 2.0**. My mileage varied from other users and I was looking for something different. It has since been replaced by the 3.0 version, and just looking at the website, it looks very interesting.

The **MPAS 2.0** was introduced in (I think) 2018. It was a significant upgrade from the original. The antenna handles 160 to 6 meters at 100 watts. The military uses it for HF communication, using ground wave, NVIS and Sky-wave.

The antenna comes with a military style backpack so you can put all the pieces in one place.

Table 2 from the CHA MPAS 2.0 User Guides (manual) pretty much says it all.

Configuration	Ground	Short	Medium	Long	Directionality
Manpack Vertical	↕				Omnidirectional
Portable Vertical	↕		↑		Omnidirectional
Horizontal NVIS		↓	↑		Omnidirectional
Sloping Wire	↓		↕		Unidirectional
Inverted "L"		↓	↕		Bidirectional
End-Fed Inverted "V"	↕		↓	↑	Bidirectional

Table 2. Antenna Configuration Selection.

I shopped a long time. Read many reviews and watched many YouTube videos before I bought one. All the reviews spoke of the high quality. Two years in, I am not sure. The support tubes use a clever rope system to keep them together. On mine, on the military extension, it broke after maybe eight installations. I am not sure what type of rope. It is not exactly like Para-cord, and I am not sure where to find some, or what it is called. I am also not sure how they fastened it at the top. I emailed them and never heard back. I found a replacement was not only much cheaper than I expected, but also back in stock at one of my favorite vendors, so I bought one. While I was at it, I bought a second MPAS 2.0 system. The second one came with a warning label to fold the Mil 2.0 extension from the top, so I may not be the only one with that issue.

The MPAS 2.0 as shipped comes with a 25 foot counterpoise. It works, but they now sell a 4 piece radial set. I have one of those. I think I prefer the counterpoise. I also have a Capacity Hat assembly, but have not used it. I also carry a plastic mallet and a 3/8 x24 Fine Thread tap and die in the backpack. The brass threads are pretty soft and it is easy to accidentally cross-thread the metal tubes together. I also purchased one of the Jaw Mount antenna mounts Chameleon sells so, if I want to, I can clamp the antenna onto a railing or similar if I am unable to drive the spike mount into the ground. I believe I have some Para-cord and a couple tent stakes in the backpack as well.

I use the antenna as a portable vertical. It takes maybe 10 minutes for one person to set up.

I have not made a lot of QSOs on it. A good wire antenna seems to outperform it, but is not as portable and takes a lot more time to erect. But on a good day, it receives well and gets 59 signal reports. Band changes are easy: Simply tune the rig to a new frequency. Some bands require a tuner, but for most, the SWR is 2.0 or less without an antenna tuner.

If you are looking for a portable, multi-band, multi-configuration, easy to erect and tear down antenna system, take a look at the **MPAS 2.0** from Chameleon.

If I didn't have one, I would take a look at the **Buddipole** <https://www.buddipole.com/>. For me, the main difference between them is the **MPAS 2.0** will get on 80 and 160 meters. The **Buddipole** stops at 40 meters. The **Buddipole** also seems to require guy wires.

I own an **EagleOne** portable vertical from S&G Engineering out of Proctorville, Ohio, but they seem to have gone out of business in the last 9 months or so. If you find an EagleOne on Ebay, or from a private seller, for around \$140-ish, they are a good antenna, and a lot cheaper than any of the options discussed here.

MFJ <https://mfjenterprises.com/products/mfj-2982> sells a clone of the **EagleOne** as the **MFJ-2982** for \$200 without a tripod.

Catch 'ya on the air!