

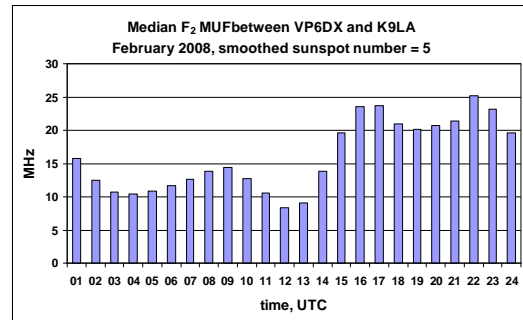
## VP6DX to K9LA on 12m and 10m

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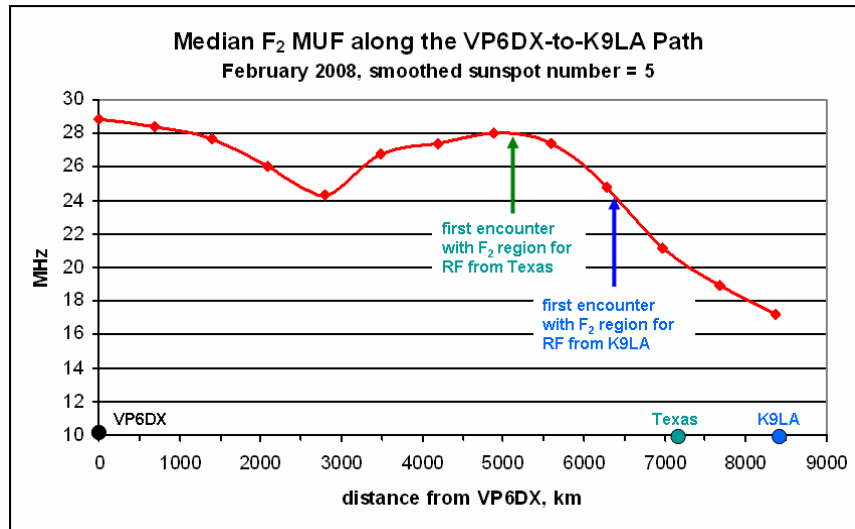
I was excited about the February 2008 VP6DX DXpedition to Ducie Island, as I needed that entity on 160m. I was hoping the higher bands would come through, too, as I could fill in some band-modes.

I worked VP6DX on 160m pretty early on in the DXpedition, so I thus turned my focus to the higher bands. Being at solar minimum certainly didn't help matters, but I was hoping the generally north-south path would offer a day or two of good propagation to those of us up north.

VOACAP said the most likely time to work them on the higher bands would be from 1600-1700 UTC and from 2200-2300 UTC (with the latter having a bit higher  $F_2$  region MUF). The figure to the right shows the VOACAP prediction. The 1600-1700 UTC period time was too early for me due to work, so I concentrated on the 2200-2300 UTC period by listening to 12m and 10m and by checking PacketCluster for 12m and 10m spots of VP6DX from other W9 stations.



As the DXpedition was nearing completion, I was frustrated and almost to the point of writing this one off on the higher bands. The frustration came from seeing spots from the more southerly stations. They were working VP6DX with ease. That's understandable when you look at the  $F_2$  region MUF along my path.



My RF would first encounter the  $F_2$  region just too far north to take advantage of the robust equatorial ionosphere. On the other hand, RF from a more southerly QTH along the same path (for example, from Texas) would first encounter the  $F_2$  region with nice high MUFs.

I'm happy to report that on one of the final days of the DXpedition 12m and 10m opened up to many of us up north, and VP6DX went in the log on both 12m and 10m. I'm not sure if it was all  $F_2$  region propagation simply due to the day-to-day variation of the  $F_2$  region, or if it may have been enabled by sporadic E on my end. I did check the Eglin, Dyess, and Boulder ionosondes to see if any Es was showing up, but they didn't show anything. That doesn't necessarily say there wasn't any sporadic E, though, as they are not in the right location. Regardless of how it happened, I was happy to put VP6DX in the log on the higher bands.