SECTION IV
THEORY OF OPERATION

4-1. INTRODUCTION.

4-2. This section contains the theory of operation of the Model 3400A RMS Voltmeter. Included is a general and detailed description of the theory of operation.

4-3. GENERAL DESCRIPTION.

4-4. The Model 3400A comprises two attenuators, an impedance converter, a video amplifier, a photoconductor chopper (modulator/demodulator), a chopper amplifier, an emitter follower, a thermocouple pair, and a direct reading meter. (See Figure 4-1.)

4-5. A signal being measured with the Model 3400A is applied to input attenuator A1 through the INPUT jack, located on the Model 3400A front panel. The input attenuator has an input impedance of over 10 megohms and provides two ranges of attenuation. The output of the input attenuator is applied to impedance converter A2. The impedance converter is a non-inverting unity voltage gain amplifier. It presents a high impedance to the input signal and provides a low impedance output to drive the second attenuator A3. The second attenuator provides 6 ranges in a 1, 3, 10 sequence. The two attenuators are switched to provide 12 ranges of attenuation.

4-6. The output of the second attenuator is amplified by video amplifier A4. The video amplifier is a wideband, five stage amplifier. The overall gain of the video amplifier is controlled by an ac feedback loop. The ac output of the amplifier is applied to TC401; one of the thermocouples of the thermocouple pair.

4-7. The dc output of TC401 is modulated by modulator A5. The modulator comprises two photocells which are alternately illuminated by two neon lamps which in turn are controlled by the oscillator located on power supply assembly A7. The output of the modulator is a square wave whose amplitude is proportional to the dc input level.

4-8. The square wave output of the modulator is amplified by chopper amplifier A6. The chopper amplifier is a high gain ac amplifier. Its output is applied to demodulator A5. The demodulator output is a dc level whose magnitude is proportional to the amplitude of the ac input. The demodulator output is applied to two direct coupled emitter followers. The emitter follower is used to make the impedance transformation from the high impedance output of the demodulator to the low impedance of the direct reading meter M1 and TC402; the second thermocouple of the thermocouple pair.

4-9. The thermocouple pair TC401 and TC402 acts as a summing point for the ac output of the video amplifier A4 and the dc output of the emitter followers. The difference in the heating effect of these voltages is felt as a dc input to modulator A5. This difference input is amplified and is fed to TC402 and to meter M1. This amplified dc voltage represents the rms value of the ac signal applied at the INPUT jack. By using two "matched" thermocouples and measuring the difference, the output to the modulator will be linear. Using two thermocouples also provides temperature stability.

4-10. The dc voltage driving meter M1 is also available at the DC OUT jack, located at the rear of the Model 3400A.

4-11. DETAILED DESCRIPTION.

4-12. INPUT ATTENUATOR ASSEMBLY A1.

4-13. The input attenuator assembly is a capacitive-compensated attenuator which provides two ranges of attenuation for the 12 positions of the RANGE switch. See input attenuator schematic diagram illustrated on Figure 6-1.

4-14. When the RANGE switch is positioned to one of the six most sensitive ranges (.001 to .3 VOLTS), the attenuator output voltage is equal to the input voltage. When the RANGE switch is positioned to one of six highest ranges (1 to 300 VOLTS), the input signal is attenuated 60 dB (1000: 1 voltage division) by the resistive voltage divider consisting of R101, R103, and R104. Trimmer C102 is adjusted at 100 kHz, and R104 is adjusted at 400 Hz to provide constant attenuation over the input frequency range.

4-15. IMPEDANCE CONVERTER ASSEMBLY A2.

4-16. The impedance converter assembly utilizes a nuvistor tube cathode follower circuit to match the high output impedance of the input attenuator to the low input impedance of the second attenuator. The cathode follower circuit preserves the phase relationship of the input and output signals while maintaining a gain of unity. See impedance converter assembly schematic diagram illustrated on Figure 6-1.

4-17. The ac signal input to the impedance converter is RC coupled to the grid of cathode follower V201 through C201 and R203. The output signal is developed by Q201 which acts as a variable resistance in the cathode circuit of V201. The bootstrap feedback from the cathode of V201 to R203 increases the effective resistance of R203 to the input signal. This prevents R203 from loading the input signal and preserves the high input impedance of the Model 3400A. The gain compensating feedback from the plate of V201 to the base of Q201 compensates for any varying gain in V201 due to age or replacement.

4-18. Breakdown diode CR201 controls the grid bias voltage on V201 thereby establishing the operating point of this stage. CR202 and R211 across the base-emitter junction of Q201 protects Q201 in the event of a failure in the +75 volt power supply. Regulated dc is supplied to V201 filaments to avoid inducing ac hum in the signal path. This also prevents the gain of V201 changing with line voltage variations.

4-19. SECOND ATTENUATOR ASSEMBLY A3.

4-20. The second attenuator is a resistive divider which attenuates the ac input signal while maintaining a low impedance output for the following amplification stages. See second attenuator assembly schematic diagram illustrated in Figure 6-1.

4-21. The ac input signal is applied to a precision resistance voltage divider consisting of R302 through R312. These resistors are arranged to give six ranges of attenuation at 10 dB per range. The six ranges of the second attenuator combined with the two ranges of the input attenuator make up the 12 ranges of attenuation (0.001 to 300V). Trimmer capacitor C303 (10 MHz 0.3V ADJ) provides an adjustment for frequency response at the higher frequencies.

4-22. VIDEO AMPLIFIER ASSEMBLY A4.

4-23. The video amplifier functions to provide constant gain to the ac signal being measured over the entire frequency range of Model 3400A. See video amplifier assembly schematic diagram illustrated on Figure 6-2.

4-24. The ac input signal from the second attenuator is coupled through C402 to the base of input amplifier Q401. Q401, a class A amplifier, amplifies and inverts the signal which is then direct coupled to the base of bootstrap amplifier Q402. The output, taken from Q402 emitter is applied to the base of Q403 and fed back to the top of R406 as a bootstrap feedback. This positive ac feedback increases the effective ac resistance of R406 allowing a greater portion of the signal to be felt at the base of Q402. In this manner, the effective ac gain of Q401 is increased for the mid-band frequencies without disturbing the static operating voltages of Q401.

4-25. Driver amplifier Q403 further amplifies the ac signal and the output at Q403 collector is fed to the base circuit emitter follower Q404. The feedback path from the collector of Q403 to the base of Q402 through C405 (10 MHz ADJ) prevents spurious oscillations at high input frequencies. A dc feedback loop exists from the emitter circuit of Q403, to the base of Q401 through R425. This feedback stabilizes the Q401 bias voltage. Emitter follower Q404 acts as a driver for the output amplifier consisting of Q405 and Q406; a complimentary pair operating as a push-pull amplifier. The video amplifier output is taken from the collectors of the output amplifiers and applied to thermocouples TC401. A gain stabilizing feedback is developed in the emitter circuits of the output amplifiers. This negative feedback is applied to the emitter of input amplifier Q401 and establishes the overall gain of the video amplifier.

4-26. Trimmer capacitor C405 is adjusted at 10 MHz for frequency response of the video amplifier. Diodes CR402 and CR406 are protection diodes which prevent voltage surges from damaging transistors in the video amplifier. CR401, CR407, and CR408 are temperature compensating diodes to maintain the zero signal balance condition in the output amplifier over the operating temperature range. CR403, a breakdown diode, establishes the operating potentials for the output amplifier.

4-27. PHOTOCHOPPER ASSEMBLY A5, CHOPPER AMPLIFIER ASSEMBLY A6, AND THERMOCOUPLE PAIR (PART OF A4).

4-28. The modulator/demodulator, chopper amplifier, and thermocouple pair form a servo loop which functions to position the direct reading meter M1 to the rms value of the ac input signal. See modulator/demodulator, chopper amplifier, and thermocouple pair schematic diagram illustrated in Figure 6-3.

4-29. The video amplifier output signal is applied to the heater of thermocouple TC401. This ac voltage causes a dc voltage to be generated in the resistive portion of TC401 which is proportional to the heating effect (rms value) of the ac input. The dc voltage is applied to photocell V501.

4-30. Photocells V501 and V502 in conjunction with neon lamps DS501 and DS502 form a modulator circuit. The neon lamps are lighted alternately between 90 and 100 Hz. Each lamp illuminates one of the photocells. DS501 illuminates V501;DS502 illuminates V502. When a photocell is illuminated it has a low resistance compared to its resistance when dark. Therefore, when V501 is illuminated, the output of thermocouple TC401 is applied to the input of the chopper amplifier through V501. When V502 is illuminated, a ground signal is applied to the chopper amplifier. The alternate illumination of V501 and V502 modulates the dc input at a frequency between 90 and 100 Hz. The modulator output is a square wave whose amplitude is proportional to the dc input level.

4-31. The chopper amplifier, consisting of Q601 through Q603, is a high gain amplifier which amplifies the square wave developed by the modulator. Power supply voltage variations are reduced by diodes CR601 thru CR603. The amplified output is taken from the collector of Q603 and applied to the demodulator through emitter follower Q604.

4-32. The demodulator comprises two photocells, V503 and V504, which operate in conjunction with DS501 and DS502; the same neon lamps used to illuminate the photocells in the modulator. Photocells V503 and V504 are illuminated by DS501 and DS502, respectively.

4-33. The demodulation process is the reverse of the modulation process discussed in Paragraph 4-30. The output of the demodulator is a dc level which is proportional to the demodulator input. The magnitude and phase of the input square wave determines the magnitude and polarity of the dc output level. This dc output level is applied to two emitter follower output stages.

4-34. The emitter follower is needed to match the high output impedance of the demodulator to the low input impedance of the meter and thermocouple circuits. The voltage drop across CR604 in the collector circuit of Q605 is the operating bias for Q604. This fixed bias prevents Q605 failure when the base voltage is zero with respect to ground.

4-35. The dc level output, taken from the emitter of Q606, is applied to meter M1 and to the heating element of thermocouple TC402. The dc voltage developed in the resistive portion of TC402 is effectively subtracted from the voltage developed by TC401. The input signal to the modulator then becomes the difference in the dc outputs of the two thermocouples. When the difference between the two thermocouples becomes zero the dc from the emitter followers (driving the meter) will be equal to the ac from the video amplifier.

4-36. Noise on the modulated square wave is suppressed by feedback from emitter of Q606 through C607 and C608 to the resistive element of TC402.

4-37. POWER SUPPLY ASSEMBLY A7.

4-38. The power supply assembly provides dc operating voltages for the tube and transistors used in the Model 3400A. See power supply assembly schematic diagram illustrated on Figure 6-4.

4-39. Either 115 or 230 volts ac is connected to the primary of power transformer T1 through fuse F1 and the POWER switch S1. Switch S2 (slide switch on rear panel) connects T1 primary windings in series for 230-volt operation or in parallel for 115-volt operation. Neon lamp DS1 lights to indicate LINE power ON when ac power is applied and S1 is closed.

4-40. REGULATOR OPERATION.

4-41. The series regulator acts as a dynamic variable resistor in series with the power supply output. A control amplifier senses changes in the output voltage by comparing the output with a fixed reference voltage. The control amplifier then supplies any output voltage changes to the driver transistor, which in turn changes the resistance of the series regulator to oppose the change in output voltage. Diodes CR704, CR713 and CR706 across the base emitter junction of the series regulator provide overload current protection.

4-42. +75 VOLT SUPPLY.

4-43. The +75 volt supply consists of a full-wave rectifier (CR701 and CR702) whose output is filtered by C1A and C1B and regulated by series regulator Q1. The +75 volt supply provides regulated +75 volts which is used as the plate supply voltage for V201. Voltage variation from the output is felt at Q702 base circuit through C704, R715, and R716. The C703 and R709 network provides phase correction for power supply stability. The regulation circuitry is in the negative leg of the +75 volt supply, and uses the -17.5 volt supply as a reference.

4-44. -17.5 VOLT SUPPLY.

4-45. The regulated -17.5 volt supply consists of a full-wave rectifier (CR711, and CR712) whose output is filtered by C706 and C707 and regulated by Q2. Breakdown diode CR715 provides reference voltage at the base of Q704. Regulation operation is the same described in Paragraph 4-41.

4-46. -6.3 VOLT SUPPLY.

4-47. The regulated -6.3 volt supply consists of a full-wave rectifier (CR716 and CR717) whose output is filtered by C2 and regulated by Q3. Emitter follower Q705 is connected to the -17.5 volt supply which provides a reference for the -6.3 volt supply. Series regulator Q3 acts as a dynamic variable resistor in series with the output to oppose changes in output voltage.

4-48. NEON LAMP DRIVE OSCILLATOR.

4-49. The neon lamp drive oscillator consists of transistor Q706, diode CR718, resistors R701, R702, R712, R713, and capacitor C711. Transistor Q706 is held on (conducting) by the base bias developed at the junction of R712 and CR718. The collector current of Q706 charges up capacitor C711 through R701 or R702 depending upon the illuminated neon lamp on the Chopper Amplifier Assembly A6. When the capacitor reaches a sufficient charge to fire the dark neon lamp, the illumination of the neon lamps alternate and the capacitor discharges through the previously dark neon lamp. With the previously dark neon lamp illuminated, the capacitor charges up in the opposite direction until firing the previously illuminated neon lamp. The cycle described above repeats at a frequency of 90 to 100 Hz as determined by the RC time constants of R701 and C711, and R702 and C711.