

October 16, 2007

This is the Eleventh Section of the manuscript "Radio Stations Common? Not This Kind"

by Spurgeon G. Roscoe

Radioman Special Royal Canadian Navy 1956-1961

Graduate Radio College of Canada, Toronto

Graduate National Radio Institute, Washington

First Class Certificate of Proficiency in Radio # 6-108

Coast Guard Radiotelegraph Operators Certificate # 054

Amateur Radio Station VE1BC

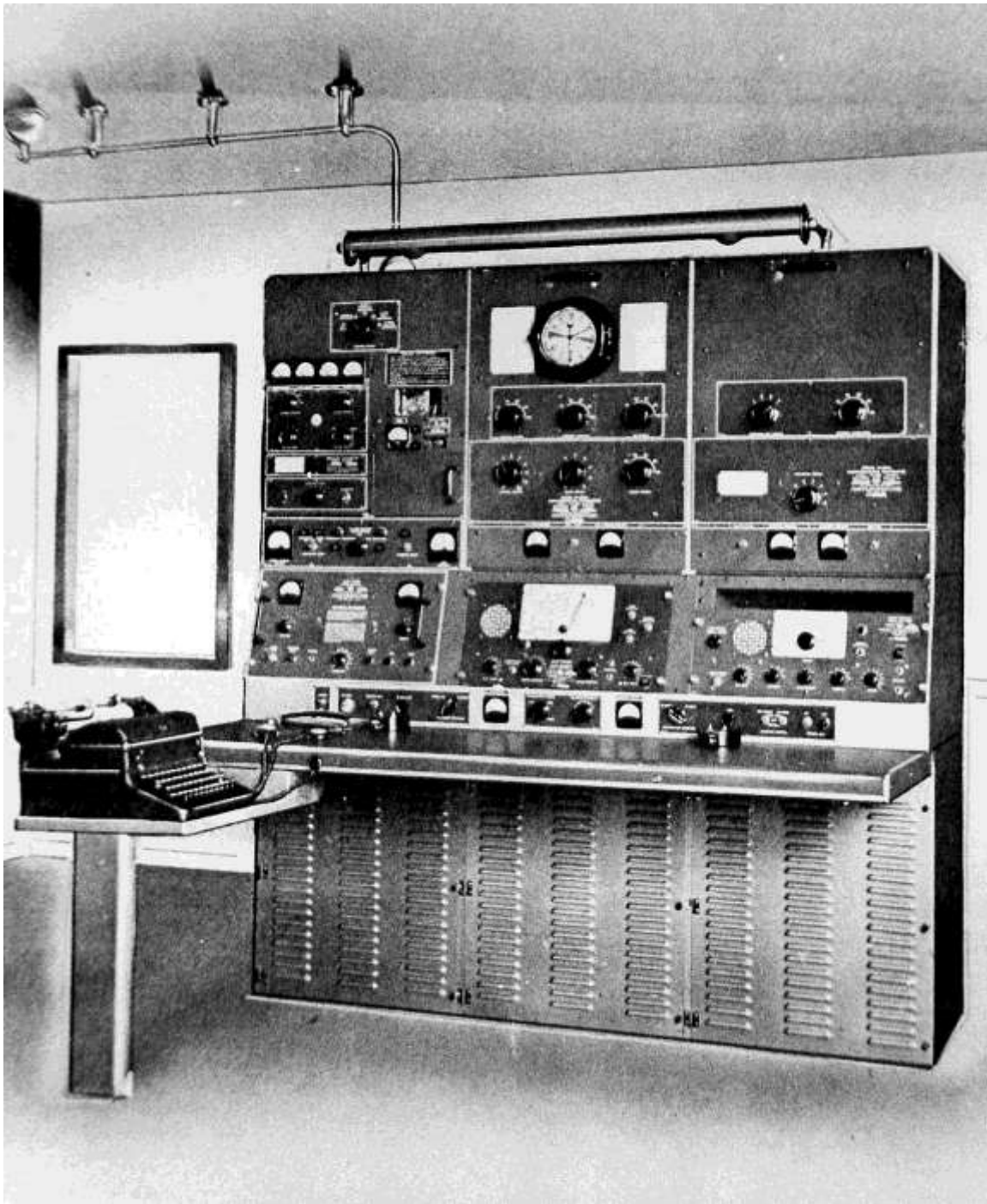
A FEW OPERATING EXPERIENCES

From my work on the BOUNTY I learned a great deal. Much of this I should have known when I went on board. I received excellent instruction from the Radio College of Canada, Toronto. I had three of the finest instructors I have ever had. But without the six-month experience with an experienced operator, that so many foreign radio operators received, I had plenty to learn the hard way – via trial and error.

To say the late Captain Ellsworth T. Coggins was the finest Captain under whom I ever sailed would be an insult to so many who were just as good, but his patience made my learning process much easier, while I learned a trick or two from the BOUNTY. Since we sailed together I have often wished I could make another trip with him. I was most disappointed that BLUENOSE II was not fitted with a radio room. BLUENOSE II with call sign CYJZ is a replica of our famous schooner BLUENOSE that won so much fame from the international fishing schooner races during the 1920's. She is depicted on the back of the Canadian ten-cent piece.

BLUENOSE II was launched early in 1963 right after we paid off from BOUNTY. She was fitted with radiotelephone only. Captain Coggins commanded BLUENOSE II. He was in command until Oland's Brewery, who had built her to advertise their brand of schooner beer sold her to the Nova Scotia government. Some of the crew from BOUNTY made up part of the first crew in BLUENOSE II.

The efficient operation of radio equipment requires a good electrical connection with the earth's surface and BOUNTY's wooden hull made this very clear. All of her electronic equipment was leased from the Radio Corporation of America. If I remember correctly, this rental was four hundred fifty dollars per month. The electronic equipment was the latest tube type; the transistor was just starting to make an appearance. BOUNTY had a main medium frequency transmitter, a high frequency transmitter, and two general coverage receivers, from the RCA 5U Console. A small two megahertz radiotelephone of around fifty watts output, and all of this equipment was installed in my cabin with my bunk, locker, desk or shelf for operating, bookcase, and shelf with this equipment secured to same; one of the most convenient stations I have ever operated.



Radio Corporation of America

Main Transmitter
350-515 KCS
A1 or A2 Emission
250 watts output
Mains Operated

Main Receiver
85-560 KCS

1.9-25 MCS
Superheterodyne
Mains Operated

High Frequency Transmitter
2-24 MCS (Xtal Controlled)
A1 Emission
300 watts Output
Mains Operated

Emergency Transmitter
410-500 KCS
A2 Emission
40 watts output
12 volt battery power supply

Emergency Receiver
14-650 KCS
Regenerative
Mains or battery operation

The chart room had a Loran receiver, small ten-inch radar, and a small Bendix direction finder. The radar antenna was mounted up on the foremast with plug-in connectors so that it could be removed easily. This was required so that the radar antenna would not appear in any of the film while making the movie Mutiny on the Bounty. For the same reason the loop antenna of the direction finder was mounted on top of this unit in the chart room. Therefore, the direction finder never worked as designed, but made an excellent broadcast receiver.

One of the RCA technicians and I tried to lessen the electrical grounding problem. BOUNTY had a sheet of copper attached to the outside of her bottom for this purpose, with a bolt running through her bottom to the bilge. We replaced the copper strapping running to the radio equipment from this bolt with some much larger. This would decrease the electrical resistance to electrical ground, and was all we could accomplish in that area. The company officials insisted that her main aerial had to be cap-tarred in order to protect the seamen working aloft on her sails. BOUNTY's first antenna was a long piece of electrical welding cable, the stuff that runs from the welder out to the clamp holding the welding rod. This of course is cap-tarred, but horrible stuff for an aerial because the actual wire inside is multiple-strands of fine copper resembling horsehair. It worked, but salt water did awesome things to it. When salt water struck those fine wires, they turned the many shades of the rainbow, and many more shades of their own. In other words, this was corrosion and a high resistance to electricity. This main aerial entered the radio room via a large feed-through insulator. The inside connection was above the operating desk. The outside connection was up above the after-channel on her starboard side. The channel is the proper term for the large piece of wood on the side of a sailing ship's hull. These channels give the shrouds a wider spread. Naturally to keep my relationship with BOUNTY's Chief Officer, Captain Ralph Hemphill in proper perspective I insisted on calling these the running boards. And he of course insisted I use the proper term. I never think of Captain Hemphill but my big toes ache. As BOUNTY's Chief Officer he naturally had the four to eight watches. And the BOUNTY had air-conditioning but such a small unit it was of little use. Especially in the tropics and warmer weather sleeping with anything over you was a bit warm. When it was time to get up in the morning my feet were normally out at the foot of my bunk and Ralph would tie a small piece of line to the radio room door with a slipknot in the other end and drop this over my big toes. He would then grab me and yell "Sparks". Naturally I would jump nearly out of my bunk and own hide for that matter. It is a wonder I did not pull one of those toes out at the roots, but all in fun and a pleasure at this date to remember his laughing so hard.



London News Agency Photos Limited

This is the Canadian replica of HMS BOUNTY entering the Tower of London Bridge September 1962.

For Captain Hemphill's benefit I will use the proper term. Every so often I had to climb over the bulwarks and get down on this channel. I then removed a foot or so of the main aerial to get rid of this corrosion. Captain Coggins got a new aerial for the station just prior to crossing the Atlantic. Where he found it, I never dared to ask. It was proper ship's antenna wire, the seven strand heavy copper, but cap-tarred. This further improved the efficiency of the station. Now all possible had been done in the way of improvements so I had no reason to complain. BOUNTY's main aerial was the standard inverted L or Marconi configuration. It ran from the insulator above the channel to the top of the mizzenmast then over to the top of the main mast. I can see it in the movie a number of times, and in every photograph I have ever seen of the BOUNTY. In addition to the main aerial, there were two more. A long vertical wire of welding cable ran from a small feed-through insulator on the opposite or port side of the ship to the top of the mizzenmast. This we called the receiving aerial. I had a small knife-switch for this on the bulkhead separating the radio room from the chart room next door in order to use this on the main receivers. I rarely used this and left it connected to the Loran receiver in the chart room. The third aerial we called the radiotelephone antenna, mainly because this is where we found the radiotelephone worked best. I could use this as the main station's emergency antenna via the large main knife switch mounted on the radio room deck head just above the main feed-through insulator. This was another Marconi or inverted L arrangement that ran up and across from the mizzen to the main mast, crossing at the main yard.



C. E. Young

This is the Canadian replica of HMS BOUNTY off Lunenburg, Nova Scotia on sea trials from her builder's yard; Smith and Rhuland, Lunenburg.



Radio Officer S. G. Roscoe
This is the Medium Frequency or Main Transmitter in BOUNTY.



Joan Roscoe

This is Radio Officer Spud Roscoe in the Radio Room HMS BOUNTY adjusting the lower of the two main receivers. The unit on top of the two receivers is the 2-mHz radiotelephone. The medium frequency CW transmitter is to the left and the high frequency CW transmitter was to the right out of this photograph.



Joan Roscoe

This is Radio Officer Spud Roscoe in the Radio Room HMS BOUNTY transmitting a message. The main or medium frequency CW transmitter is to his right.



Joan Roscoe

This is Radio Officer Spud Roscoe operating the Collins KWM-1 Amateur Radio Station VE0MO in the Radio Room of HMS BOUNTY. This was just to the left of the main operating position. Note the main power supply to the RCA main station down on the left in this photograph.



S. G. "Spud" Roscoe VE1AGN

These are some of the many QSL Cards received from the many Amateur Radio Operators contacted with station VE0MO in BOUNTY. These are posted around the head of the Radio Officer's bunk in the Radio Room of HMS BOUNTY.

To give some indication of just how my signal behaved, I made up an ordinary pig tail lamp, an ordinary household light socket with the two pieces of wire hanging from it for a short distance. In this I placed a regular one hundred-watt bulb. Then I hooked this in series with the main antenna, actually using it as a short piece of transmission line. When I keyed the transmitter while BOUNTY was on an even keel you could hardly see in the radio room, this light was so bright. The copper plate on BOUNTY's bottom would be down in the water as far as she could place it. As BOUNTY rolled over in a sea and brought this copper plate towards the surface of the water, this lamp would get progressively dim, and would reach a point where no sign of light showed on the bulb filament. Therefore, my signal varied in strength in direct relation to BOUNTY's hull lifting and lowering through the water. I can visualize the signal I was transmitting, but would dearly like to hear a recording of it, especially one made while we were in a fairly heavy sea or swell.

Knowing this I became rather intrigued with exactly what was being loaded, absorbed, or reflected, from topside. I had with me a small homemade RF – radio frequency – meter. This was better than most such meters. Most are nothing more than a tin can with a neon bulb and the degree of brightness of the light or bulb will indicate the strength of the RF field the meter is measuring. This one was a deluxe model in that it contained an actual RF meter that I could adjust for the level or reading I wanted, thanks to Frank Milton, W6BZN Supervisor of the Sound Department of Metro Goldwyn Mayer at Culver City, California. Frank's name appears on the sub-titles of most MGM movies filmed at the time, shortly after the Lion has finished growling.

With the help of two off-duty seamen, one to key the transmitter and the other to relay my instructions, I went for a look. With this R.F. meter held about six inches from the main antenna, I adjusted it for a reading of sixty on the scale and then went about the ship taking care not to move this setting. The stays and shrouds supporting the masts were steel cables coated in hemp rope to look like the lines on the original BOUNTY. I was loading everything on the ship even the forward stay coming down to the bowsprit gave the identical reading to the main antenna.

What was it my superb basic electronics instructor, Mr. Spence G. Smith, at R.C.C. said? "There are no good conductors or insulators. The difference is in the degree of permeability." What he said, and what I am trying to describe, is that when I keyed my transmitter on BOUNTY, the material that resembled a conductor became an antenna, and the rest of it was a fairly poor insulator.

Only once did this fact scare me. Over a meal one day, Captain Coggins stated that the radar was likely not working well, because some of the seamen had complained of an electric shock while working aloft. For once I kept my big mouth shut and let the radar take the blame for what was most certainly my keying one of the transmitters. Therefore, I kept things down to a minimum. If this persisted and the real fault became known, that would definitely terminate my Amateur Radio Station VE0MO, and would limit my transmitting to a short daily position message of ten or fifteen words while the seamen stayed clear of the rigging. I heard nothing more of this and went back to a full routine a few days later.

The only operating problem I had in BOUNTY was trying to get rid of our daily position reports while off the West Coast of Mexico. As stated, the static is the highest level in that area of anywhere around the world. It is so strong on 500 kHz one has the feeling one could get out and walk on it. The cause of this static is the natural heat lightning over the various hills on land. Therefore, this is the bad portion of the good – the colourful flashes of lightning at night, especially over the hills along the West Coast of Mexico. This meant 500 kHz was out of the question. In order to contact an American station I had to use a high frequency. Mr. Stroud, our excellent code and operating instructor at R.C.C. Toronto, had given each of us a copy of the British publication "Handbook for Radio Operators". We used this for our operating instruction, and I naturally carried mine aboard BOUNTY. Not wanting an infraction report and I have yet to receive one, I operated via this book to the letter. If I remember correctly the procedure for calling on the high frequencies in this manual stated we could send the call sign of the calling station as many as thirteen times. Then we had to identify with our call sign three times, send the last three digits of our working frequency and the letter K, the invitation to transmit. We were allowed to do this twice and then had to wait for two minutes before repeating. We were permitted three repetitions of this and if no answer, were to terminate. Since I did not catch one of these stations on so few calls, needless to say I was getting nowhere. After a few days of not being able to report our position, I decided something had to be done to improve this performance or else it would be to everyone's benefit for me to report to Louis Belliveau, BOUNTY's excellent cook, and have him put me to work washing dishes. My transmitter was putting out maximum smoke, such as it was, so the only thing left for me to do was to get a receiver on the calling frequencies and find out how the old timers made contact. It was quite a lesson. As near as I could tell they kept tapping the calling station's call sign until that station lifted his calling tape or marker transmission, and gave them a DE – who are you or from? Then they were in business. I closed my handbook, threw it up on a shelf in the bookcase, grabbed that old RCA telegraph hand key in earnest, and have never looked back.

If you let plain old common sense be your guide, all will go well. When radio operators got together in one way or another, infraction reports were a topic of discussion on occasion. Rod Sheppherd, a British operator told me he got caught in a political incident over them one time. I believe he said it was the Portuguese who, at the time, were out to get British operators and were picking them up on any infraction they could. Bill Kerwin claims he got one for transmitting KPH (San Francisco) eighty-five times while in the South Pacific. When I asked him what he did about it, he said he framed it, because anyone with nothing more to do than count the number of times he called KPH deserved some respect. So a routine breach of regulations is not as serious as I had feared during my first months in BOUNTY. Naturally the fraudulent transmission of a distress signal would have gotten you shot on sight, and so it should, but the infraction reports were based on common sense.

No one, especially a former student at Radio College of Canada, can record any of the history of communications in this country without a brief description of the late Ted Stroud, the operating and telegraph instructor at this institution. He was truly a legend in his own time, and about the only thing he can be compared with is one of these modern automatic code transmitting machines. He seemed to be programmed for various speeds, and transmitted perfect code at any speed desired. One of the first questions former students of his ask each other is whether or not they ever heard him make a mistake. No one to my knowledge ever did and this goes way back to the earliest portion of his career, because the oldest former student of his I have met was a student during World War II.

The only complaint I could find with my instruction at Radio College of Canada was the fact we were not given a weekly transmitting test. We did have a weekly receiving test and I made one hundred percent on everyone we had. Al Johnson, a former naval operator who was in the Navy with me, would have done as well except we were kicking each other under the table one time and that caused him to miss a few letters. He got ninety-eight on that test, but a perfect score on all the others. I have always found receiving code very easy, to the point the Navy moved me ahead one class during the first weeks of our training. I knew nothing of the code when I joined the Navy, but in our branch we did no transmitting. One of the few times I ever touched a key was when I wrote my second-class certificate exams and I had been told by several I felt should know that anyone who could receive code could also transmit code. The Navy had measured my receiving speed at forty-five words per minute in five letter groups just previous to this, so the twenty words per minute on the second-class certificate exam was so easy it bordered on boredom. The Radio Inspector who examined me was so impressed with the neat printing I gave him on the receiving he paid little attention to the transmitting. Any transmitting I had done in the Navy, both on their equipment and the Amateur Radio Club Stations had been via radiotelephone. The first telegraph contact I made was the first message I sent from BOUNTY. Whoever gave me the QSL – acknowledgement for receipt – for that message deserves a medal of the highest order. Adding to everything else, I was not in the best shape from a rip roaring bon voyage party just before we departed. Since then I have been trying to improve my transmitting, but am convinced until the very end I will be trying to figure out why I can copy so well, and send so poorly. Over the years I have found that in many cases the poorest senders can receive better than the good senders and for sometime I felt that those who sent good code were so impressed with themselves, they had no time for copying anything but the best code. This could be true in some cases, but no one has the magic formula for the making of a good telegraphist. Copying code from one of those automatic machines bores me to the point of falling asleep. Give me a swing or signature in the code any day, something to keep my interest up, and this is likely the reason I send so poorly. I like a swing so try and send one. I am very nervous and no doubt the average rock has more rhythm in it than there is in me. I have never had any trouble in sending messages so it is not that serious, and the best claim they are not happy with their code. But a good swing in the code from the twang of one of those old RCA transmitters will move me to homesickness every time.

The most stupid mistake I ever made was when we were bound for Tenerife in the Canary Islands. Captain Coggins was the only officer who had been there, and if I understood him correctly, he was not certain we would get ashore. Apparently there had been a political incident taking place while he was there. They could not go ashore to the point they could not get their own lines in. There was also some question as to whether the Spanish Flag would be the proper flag to fly while there. From my naval experience I felt that if you had a message you chose the proper frequency and sent it to the station nearest to the addressee. I still operate this way and could fill these pages with experiences on that subject. At the time, Radio Station EAT on Tenerife had medium frequency only. After many calls, including assistance from a British ship near EAT, I had no contact. Whatever prompted me to try and ascertain whether or not Madrid Radio EAD had telegraph service to the island is beyond me. But the circumstances surrounding our arrival, as we then knew them must have influenced me. I should have sent the message to EAD and let them figure out how it went from there. So, I went through the Q Code trying to find the code that would supply this answer. I compounded this mistake by not using QSO? – Can you communicate with? For some reason I chose QSP? – Can you relay free of charge? I had no sooner sent QSP? Then it hit me like a ton of bricks that the operator receiving would think I wanted free service between him and Tenerife. As these things go, I had contacted an operator as stupid as I was. Instead of acknowledging my request and giving me QSJ – the charges for – to send this message on to our office at Tenerife, he threw the switches on me and went back to sleep.

I gave some thought to Cadiz Radio EAC, but went back to EAT in the end. It took close to fourteen hours to see that message over the side. When we docked at Tennerife we received the royal treatment. A fantastic island that I would like to see again, but this experience taught me that it is possible to contact station EAD Madrid, something I have not been able to do since. I have not put much effort in that direction, because on my next attempt in contacting this station I learned something that became my route from then on.

Several years after this many of the crewmembers I was sailing with were living all over the place. Chief Engineer Joe Mano, mentioned on these pages, was living in Florida. 2nd Officer Bruce Stirrat was living in Jamaica, and so on. Bruce joined the Canadian Coast Guard a few years after this and was Commanding Officer of at least two of their vessels. Back then we were at sea a lot so our families lived wherever they chose. Because of the speed of the modern aircraft, it would not take long to reach them when we were on leave.

At the time I again tried to contact EAD Madrid I was relieving Ian Dodd in the GYPSUM QUEEN. A ship's radio room should have been operated the way the British operated them. They were fitted with all the books, catalogues, parts, etc. necessary to obtain nothing but the best with the station. Ian's station was in top shape, including a lengthy letter describing the past history of each piece of equipment and what I could expect from each. Little notes were pinned up giving the frequencies, times of traffic lists, and so on, of the majority of the stations contacted during the various voyages. It was a real pleasure to operate such a station.



Captain O.K. Langdon

SS GYPSUM QUEEN with international call sign GHYY

The late Captain J. A. Blinn, VE1SZ was master of GYPSUM QUEEN, and the late Jan Starkel was Chief Engineer. Jan was living at the tourist Mecca of Mallorca, Spain, and one morning he gave me the usual birthday or anniversary greeting for his wife. One of the few pieces of paper-war we did not have to fight in the Gypsum fleet was the Portage Bill, which included the crew's wages. The Captains did this. The normal procedure in handling a message for the crew was to transmit same, type up the necessary copies including one for the Captain's file and indicate the charges for same. This had to be done in British Sterling then converted to American Dollars, the currency we were using in the ship. I also gave the Captain a small receipt in order for him to place same with the Portage Bill to remind him to deduct the charges from the crewmembers wage on his next pay day. In other words, all I had to do was send the message and the Captain collected the money involved.

I no longer remember our exact position at the time, and the only point I could give to describe our general position with any degree of accuracy would be Florida. We were likely just north of Florida. After I cleaned up my routine work in the radio room, I decided to transmit Jan's message and tried to do so via EAD Madrid. After a number of calls my common sense, such as it is, told me I was wasting my time. It

must be siesta time in Madrid. I had worked out the charges via EAD Madrid and decided to compare it with Portishead, England, GKB. Just as I finished this Captain Blinn walked into the radio room with nothing better to do at the moment, and asked me what I was doing besides creating interference. I replied that I was creating interference and trying to wish the Chief's wife a happy birthday, or whatever it was and was having no luck shaking Madrid's operator awake. He would have to sail past the Madrid station in order for me to throw a rock through the window and wake him up. But since that was impossible I decided to see what it would cost to go through Portishead and showed him my figures for the difference in charges that were very little. If I remember correctly something less than ten cents American, which is the reason I used mainly Portishead after that. My transmitter was idling away in the corner, and I swung down or up from EAD Madrid to Portishead GKB while I was telling him this. GKB was the same signal strength, on the same band, likely twelve-megahertz, as EAD. In a few seconds I was listening to GKB answer ships. I noted a few of the calls so that I would know when my turn was coming up after we had established communications.

Many operators did not like working the larger stations, but I looked forward to some message traffic with them for the challenge if nothing else. For this reason I said to Captain Blinn that I would bet him twenty-five cents I could have an acknowledgement for my call, not the message, in less than three minutes. He said, "Make that twenty-five dollars and I'll have the Bosun chop down your antenna and we'll see how well you do". And with that he went away laughing.

I started my call at thirty minutes after the hour, whatever it was, and by thirty-three minutes after was sitting on the working frequency with the high voltage switched off on the transmitter, and a QRY36 – your turn is number thirty-six – in hand. At six minutes past the next hour I had a QSL – acknowledgement for receipt for Jan's telegram. Not a bad piece of work for thirty-six minutes and I likely had a friendly little comment on the weather or something to go with it. No matter how busy they were at that station, I always came away thinking they really cared about how we were doing at sea.

At the next mealtime I walked into the officer's dining saloon to find Chief Starkel and Captain Blinn the only officers at the table. When I sat down at the table and was glancing over the menu to make my choice of "marinated gainesburger" or whatever "the blacksmiths in the galley" were preparing for that meal, the Chief terminated whatever it was he and the Captain were discussing. He glanced over to me and said, "Did you send my message, Sparks"? I replied, "Yes, no problem Chief, it went out about an hour ago", or whatever the time factor was. At that he said, "Thank you very much" and carried on eating.

No matter how hard he tried, Captain Blinn could never pass up the opportunity for a little good-natured fun, and he spoke up and said, "He sent it okay, Chief, but sent it to England and said you should be living there". At that the Chief quit eating and said, "Is that right"? I said, "Yes it is, Chief, because the Captain refused to sail past Madrid in order for me to wake up their operator". At that the Chief asked the inevitable question, "Does it cost very much that way?" Naturally, to keep things going I replied, "Oh yes, it costs a bundle". That did it the Chief dropped his eating tools and just stared at me. Captain Blinn, laughing at the other end of the table, wasn't any help.

The Chief's wife would have been keeping a close watch of every penny that came in and went out. Money would be the only excuse for tolerating such an existence. We were away from home so much of the time. It would be in order to blow a dollar or two on such a telegram, but anything in excess would mean a portion of the next leave would be spent in explaining such extravagance. In other words, the fun and games were over. So I explained my reason for sending his telegram as I had, stressing the little cost difference and that the Portishead operators were the worlds finest and would give his telegram the best of care. I probably overdid my excuse to the point that from that day the Chief insisted all his telegrams were to go the same route. Since then I made a quick comparison with the charges involved. If I remember correctly all of my messages for Europe went via Portishead Radio. After my explanation and the Chief knew the facts we had a good laugh and dug into our "gainesburgers".

Captain Coggins came into Charlottetown while I was sailing in the Coast Guard Ship TUPPER and we had him up to our home for a meal. This gave us time to swap a few yarns although any connected to my experiences are definitely no competition for the poorest of his. He had some fantastic experiences after

leaving BLUENOSE II alone. He came away from World War II a Lieutenant Commander in the Royal Canadian Navy. Via our conversation during this meal he related a story that is well worth repeating here.

During the first years of his command in BLUENOSE II one of his engineers was Ted Weeks who was Amateur Radio Operator VE1AGM. While Ted was with him, he operated Amateur Station VE0MY in BLUENOSE II. Marsh Pysar and I were operating at Yellowknife Aeradio, Yellowknife, North West Territories, at the time. Marsh had made contact with Ted several times via his station VE8BB.



Nova Scotia Government

BLUENOSE II with international call sign CYJZ



Nova Scotia Government

BLUENOSE II



John Rae VE1AGN

This is the CFAV FIREBIRD with international call sign CGVX leading BLUENOSE II with international call sign CYJZ out Halifax Harbour as the lead in the Parade of Sail held at Halifax, Nova Scotia in 1984.

Ted Weeks operated a Collins KWM-2 in BLUENOSE II, the more modern version of the Collins KWM-1 I operated in the BOUNTY. At one point Ted's antenna dropped down over the foresail of BLUENOSE II, and when he keyed his transmitter this burned the foresail. The interesting part of this fact is that it only burned and cut the vertical threads. It would be most interesting to learn the polarity of the antenna at the time, and which of the two components that make up a radio wave, the electro-magnetic or the electro-static, caused the damage to this sail.

THE LONGEVITY TWINS AND THE B.I.O. SHIPS

To include a description of all the vessels and organizations that owned them, who used the services of station VCS over the years would make for a large set of encyclopedia. I have tried to give a brief description of the major Canadian fleets. The Canadian ships were just a small portion of those communicating through the station over the years. There were many Canadian ships that I have not mentioned. LADY LAURIER was the grand old lady of the fleet. She was owned by the Canadian Government and could be found puttering around the coast of Nova Scotia tending buoys, re-supplying lighthouses, looking after the needs of Sable Island, and all such mundane jobs that lasted for a period of fifty-five years. She was the fourth Canadian vessel to be fitted with wireless. CANADA, MINTO, and STANELY were the first fitted in 1904 and LADY LAURIER was fitted the following year, 1905, when she entered service. Her first call sign was LR and that became MLR when the Marconi calls were given the M prefix. After the Radiotelegraph Convention in London in 1912, she was assigned the call sign VDF. When all ships were given four letter call signs, she was issued CGSL – Canadian Government Ship Laurier – and this remained her call sign until she was decommissioned and went to the ship breaker's yard on March 31st, 1960. During her lengthy career the LADY LAURIER was in the charge of sixteen Masters and four Chief Engineers, of whom the last were Captain M. C. Lever and Mr. R. B. Collings. One of her

former Radio Officers, Leo Irwin, was on the staff of station VCS for many years. Leo enjoyed his tour of duty in her very much. From so many years of faithful service she is still fondly remembered around the coast of Nova Scotia. Captain M.C. "Mel" Lever became a very active amateur radio operator when he retired with call sign VE1VX.



Ernie O'Hara VE1AG

3rd Mate Donald J. Williams in the Radio Room of CGS LADY LAURIER August 1940. Don was Regional Manager Search and Rescue Coast Guard Base Dartmouth, Nova Scotia.



Ernie O'Hara VEIAG

Cleaning snow from the deck of CGS LADY LAURIER March 1941



Ernie O'Hara VELAG

Left: Buster Creighton 2nd Steward and Ernie O'Hara Radio Officer CGS LADY LAURIER August 1940

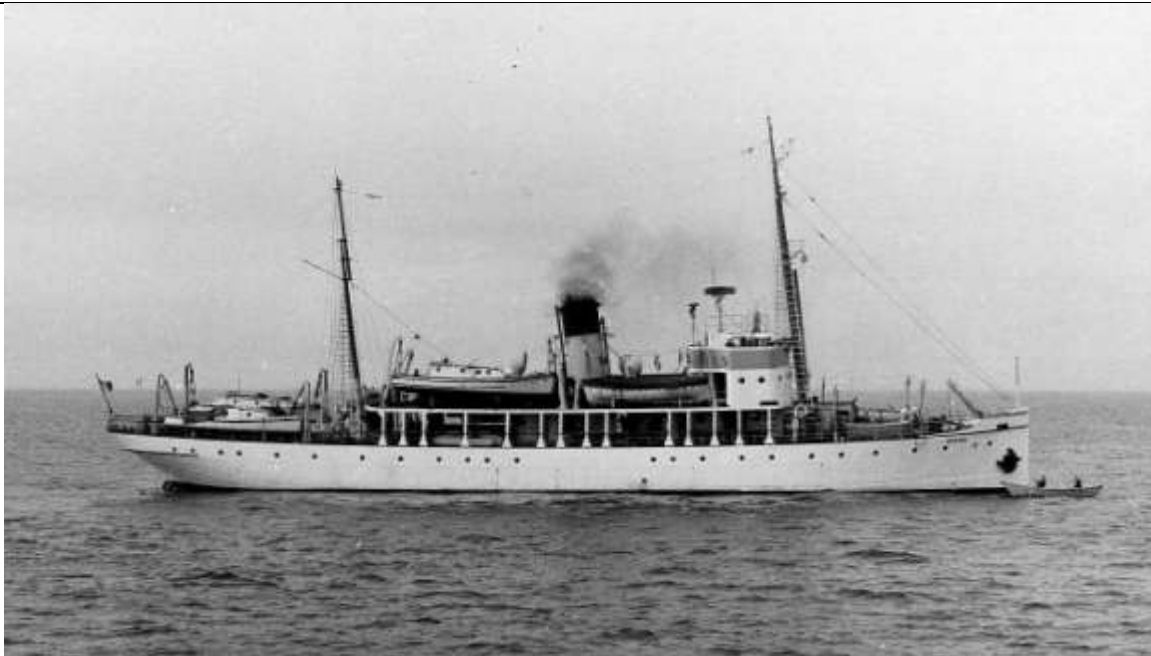
The ACADIA is another vessel that put in many years of faithful service. Like LADY LAURIER, although the two ships were not alike in design or appearance, she was built in the United Kingdom and first entered service in 1914. She was built for hydrographic service and was therefore assigned to the Department of Fisheries, a service that has remained with the same branch of the government for years. Fisheries is now a branch of the Department of the Environment, or vice versa, and the majority of the hydrographic work is done by the Bedford Institute of Oceanography (B.I.O.), a branch of the Department of the Environment. While I was with the Canadian Coast Guard ships there was a rumour floating around that the Coast Guard personnel were going to take over the operation of these ships. Nothing ever came of this rumour and I do not know whether or not this reached any farther than our mess decks. Most of the Coast Guard members were most excited about the idea because it would at least give them a break in the form of a nice cruise somewhere other than our fog and ice infested coasts. These B.I.O. vessels spent a lot of time in these same waters. The Department of Fisheries and the Coast Guard Ships became one and the same about 1996 and the ships retained the Coast Guard colours – red hulls and white superstructures. The B.I.O. and Fisheries vessels were painted accordingly. The B.I.O. ships were all white and Fisheries all gray. It looks different to see these old familiar ships in Coast Guard colours.

When ACADIA came over and entered service, her wireless station was issued call code VDT. When she received her four letter call sign it was CGFS – Canadian Government Fisheries Service, later changed to CGCB. She terminated her many years of faithful service with this call sign. Unlike LADY LAURIER she has been saved from the ship breaker's yard and is retained at the Maritime Museum of the Atlantic at Halifax, Nova Scotia. We are very fortunate to have ACADIA and it is a pity that LADY LAURIER could not have been saved. Both vessels certainly earned any upkeep that would be necessary to keep them.

The B.I.O. ships, with the exception of CSS MAXWELL, based at their research centre in Dartmouth were all fitted with radiotelegraph and carried a Radio Officer.

CGDG	HUDSON
CGBV	DAWSON
CGCL	BAFFIN
CG2200	MAXWELL

CSS HUDSON is the only ship that has circumnavigated both the North and South American continents. She did this in a single voyage about 1969, from Halifax down to Cape Horn, up the West Coast around both continents and back to Halifax. For some unknown reason the MAXWELL's call sign was changed to CG2802 in 1980.



R. Belanger, Bedford Institute of Oceanography

CSS ACADIA with international call sign CGCB



R. Belanger, Bedford Institute of Oceanography

CSS MAXWELL



R. Belanger Institute of Oceanography

This is Radio Officer George Wilson operating his mostly Marconi Station on board CSS DAWSON. One can see the top Atalanta receiver has been replaced with a Racal and the Globespan transmitter has been replaced.



R. Belanger, Bedford Institute of Oceanography

CSS DAWSON



R. Belanger, Bedford Institute of Oceanography

CSS BAFFIN



R. Belanger Institute of Oceanography

This is CSS HUDSON in Scott Inlet, Baffin Island, North West Territories (now Nunavut), September 1978.



R. Belanger, Bedford Institute of Oceanography

This is Radio Officer Neville Best operating his Marconi Globespan Station on board CSS HUDSON. This station was removed and replaced with a newer station while in refit December 1978. Neville was like so many of the Canadian ship Radio Officers and had one beautiful transmitting fist. It would be a real pleasure to spend an afternoon taking traffic from him today. Note that his lower Atalanta receiver has been replaced with the newer Marconi Apollo receiver.

THE CABLE SHIPS

The first of the wireless-equipped Cable Ships in this area was the MACKAY-BENNETT that was based at Halifax from 1884 to about 1924 when she retired from sea service. The MACKAY-BENNETT's first call code was MB. When the Marconi calls were given the M prefix this call became MMB and remained such until she retired. Britain received the complete block of calls from MAA to MZZ at the 1912 International Radiotelegraph Convention in London and still holds this block of calls.

There have been many Cable Ships that have communicated through the coastal radio stations of this area. Canada owned one of the finest. This ship was the world's largest icebreaker cable ship and was jointly owned by the Canadian Government and the Northern Electric Company Limited. It was manned by personnel from the Canadian Coast Guard and made its home port at St. John's, Newfoundland and came under the authority of the District Manager of the Canadian Coast Guard at that port. In 1993 this ship was taken over by Teleglobe Canada and severed her connection with the Canadian Coast Guard. This ship, JOHN CABOT carried two Radio Officers for the first part of her career with the Coast Guard.

The Cable Ships that have more or less made this area their home base and have carried many Canadian crewmembers including Canadian Radio Officers are:

MMB MACKAY-BENNETT
GFXK JOHN W. MACKAY
GKQC CYRUS FIELD
GDMN LORD KELVIN
CGDJ JOHN CABOT
VCGM JOHN CABOT (after her 1993 refit)

Frank Burns who retired as a radio operator at station VCS and Wilfred Fontaine both served in these ships. Wilfred was Radio Officer in CCGS WOLFE for many years then moved into the office at the Charlottetown Coast Guard Base. Skid O'Sullivan retired as Radio Officer in IRVING GLEN and was another of the many Radio Officers in the area to serve in these Cable Ships. Their main job was the installation and maintenance of the many under-water telegraph cables stretching between North America and Europe.



Canadian Coast Guard

This is the cable ship CCGS JOHN CABOT with international call sign CGDJ. She is flying the Canadian flag from her mizzen gaff that is a common place to fly her flag of registry while at sea. She is flying code flag H from the starboard (right) side of her main mast. That indicates that she has a pilot on board. I cannot see the flags she is flying from the port (left) side of her main mast but since the top flag is letter C this would indicate that she is “making her number” CGDJ.

A FEW MORE DISTRESS INCIDENTS

There were many Distress Calls handled through the VCS station over the years. You would be quite correct in assuming that each and every contact the station made with a ship was a form of assistance in one way or another. But a direct form of assistance involving an emergency of one form or another was

performed at least three times every week. The actual or major distress calls handled over the years fell into a category of your personal interest. Looking back, many come to mind.

F/V ANGELA B. MILLS

The loss of the fishing vessel ANGELA B. MILLS in August of 1956 is one of the more prominent for the residents of the local area of the station because her Captain and crew live here. On August 10th, 1956, she loaded ice, fuel, and stores, at Sambro for a swordfishing trip to the Grand Banks. Her Captain was Harold Henneberry who is still sailing out of this port. He and six crewmembers from the area were set adrift in their dories three days later when the ANGELA B. MILLS sprang a leak and sank. Their distress call was not heard because of static from a storm approaching the area. The majority of the other fishing vessels had gone for shelter, and because the batteries that supplied the operating voltage for the lights and radio were immersed in water shortly after the crew realized the vessel was sinking. All aboard managed to row in to Tripassey, Newfoundland, on August 25th and survive the incident, although they had been over ten days in open boats without food. The St. James United Church in Sambro, Nova Scotia put on a re-enactment of this incident in their annual Fisherman's Service in November 2006.

S.S. SUERTE

Another incident that comes to mind is the loss of the Lebanese vessel SUERTE in January 1962. She somehow became confused while entering the approaches to Halifax and struck Shut-In Island, going hard aground. One Air Force and two Navy Helicopters lifted the twenty-eight crewmembers to safety. HMCS LOON, one of the Bird Class Patrol Vessels, was the first on the scene but could do nothing because of the high seas. This SUERTE incident brings back a number of memories to me. The vessel lay where she grounded until the local fishermen raised a ruccas and the government decided to have the wreck towed out into the Atlantic and sunk.



Canadian Armed Forces (DNS28550)

HMCS LOON with international call sign CGLO was assigned to keep an eye on the SUERTE and this shows her coming in from one of these checks in February 1962.

In December 2006 I received the following information from Hart Watt an ABTD1 rating in LOON at the time:

“The background is that we received the call to recall our crew to go out and help this ship. We got our men on board sometime within an hour or so of the call and set sail immediately approx. 2130hrs or 9:30PM. We approached the ship and were signaled by light (I think). Art Cipryk can tell you, he was the radioman on board. Anyway we were told to come straight in by the freighter. Luckily we had a Newfoundlander, P2 Eric Meuse, for a boatswain. He was on the bridge as we approached. Without warning he ordered both engines full astern. We were about to hit a shoal. We stopped about 50 feet from it. The charts were then checked and sure enough the freighter had come in and went behind the shoal. We approached the ship from the stern, taking her same route in but the water was too rough for us to come alongside. The men on the freighter felt fairly safe at that time and we waited until light to make another attempt at getting them off. We spent a rather cold night. At dawn, the winds picked up again and we couldn't get close enough again. Then the choppers came and picked up the crew. The choppers got lots of press and we never even got thanked. It's a good thing a sailor can take a joke.”

And I received this from Jim Sidey right after hearing from Hart Watt: “I remember that night very well. I was on the wheel when we began our approach, and Eric Muise heard waves breaking but we could not see a thing. Anyway, Eric rammed the throttles full astern and it's a good thing he did or we would have been in real trouble as you all know the LOON was made of wood. I do remember we did manage to get alongside next morning but the seas were so bad that one moment we were 20' above her and the next 20' below looking up. We had to pull out as it was impossible to even attempt to get anyone off. I was an LSWU (Leading Seaman Weapons Underwater) rate at the time.”



Canadian Armed Forces (28390)

This is the Lebanese vessel SUERTE aground off Halifax January 1962

SUERTE was the 337th Liberty Ship out of a total of 385 built by Bethlehem Fairfield in the United States. She was launched in 1944 as the SAMLISTAR one of the many Sam Boats built by the United States and

sent to Britain under lend-lease. During her eighteen years of service she had three names, flew four flags, and had five international call signs.

GWDK	SAMLSTAR	1944	British
GCLX	HURWORTH	1947	British
TIVR	SUERTE	1954	Costa Rica
HOEN	SUERTE	1958	Panama
ODEZ	SUERTE	1960	Lebanon

SUERTE was declared a total loss on April 5th, 1962, and was towed off the rocks of Shut-In Island the next day. One of the tugs used for this was the old steam tug IRVING BIRCH with call sign GBHH. At this time I had just received my second-class certificate and was trying to find a ship in order to get my six-month endorsement that was most difficult because there were very few ships that carried radio operators, and hardly any less than 1600 gross tons. This was the maximum size I was allowed to sail in alone without this endorsement. The IRVING BIRCH was in Saint John, New Brunswick, and I received a telephone call in Weymouth, Nova Scotia, wanting to know if I could join her the next day. She would leave Saint John and swing in to Yarmouth and collect me there. No definite plans were made and I was left with the understanding Saint John would get back to me.

This SUERTE incident was on all the local radio stations and in all the local newspapers and my father at Kentville had heard on a news broadcast that IRVING BIRCH had left Saint John but had not been heard from since. Dad became rather concerned and phoned Weymouth to see if they had heard anything from me. He was surprised to find I was still there. After talking with him, I phoned Saint John thinking the reason they had not heard from their tug was because they had failed to pick me up. This was not the case. Apparently one of their permanent operators had arrived on the scene sooner than expected and had gone in the tug. The IRVING BIRCH was scrapped shortly after this.

Joan and I had been married a few months then, and when it looked as though I would be leaving in the tug, she knit me a toque from pieces of heavy yarn left over from a dozen projects. The old toque is as good as new after many sea voyages and six years at arctic stations. Every time I see it I think of the old SUERTE. A few of the seamen who sailed in the tugs that towed her out and sank her told some good yarns about the experience. After the crew had been lifted off she was open to anyone and first aboard helped themselves to the booze, then went to see what was there for the taking. One of these characters took a fire axe to the radio room, for the hell of it, ruining anything of value there. Another rolled a good-sized coil of line over the side and let it drop into his fishing vessel. The coil went straight through the boat and the whole thing, coil and boat are still lying on the bottom. These seamen did tell me that they managed to save quite a bit of paint and sold it. In some ways I am sorry I was unable to make the trip in the tug. Station VCS was kept busy with this incident when it happened and for three months until she was towed away and sunk. There have been many such incidents in this area and one could go on forever collecting the detail.

M/V CHRISTMAS SEAL

Another distress call handled or connected to station VCS was during the spring of 1976 on May 13th, 1976 to be exact. The efficiency with which those calls were handled then was such that it was possible for one to be terminated before many on duty at the station were aware of its having taken place.



Wamboldt-Waterfield, Halifax, Nova Scotia

CHRISTMAS SEAL off Halifax, Nova Scotia 1976

I mention this incident because of the history of this vessel. Many Newfoundlanders knew her personally. For years she was used as a mobile X-ray unit, going to the outports of Newfoundland, assisting in the detection and cure of tuberculosis, thereby obtaining her name from the popular TB seals. According to Downhomer, a Newfoundland publication, volume 17, number 06, November 2004, a group of school children named the vessel, which was funded by public donations and the sale of Christmas-themed envelope seals. This publication stated the United States Navy had sold the vessel to the colony for one dollar. She had been stationed at their Argentia, Newfoundland naval base.

According to a former Newfoundlander, Doug Reid, he sailed on this vessel during WWII from 1943 to 1945. He stated that at that time it was known as FP102. The Newfoundland government decommissioned the vessel in 1970 and sold her in 1971. She retained her name. M/V CHRISTMAS SEAL with international call sign VOVQ and was outbound from Halifax on May 13th, 1976, and experienced an explosion in her engine room that caused her to burn and sink within a short while. Halifax Traffic received the distress call and relayed it to the Supervisor at VCS so that all ships in the area could be notified. In the meantime Coast Guard Regional Office was notified and several helicopters in the area were diverted to the scene.

Station VCS was in communication with CCGS ALERT a search and rescue vessel with the CGDQ call sign and notified her. A scheduled container ship ATLANTIC STAR with call sign PCVK was also in the area and diverted. All of this equipment was on course for the distress in a matter of seconds and all eight crewmembers were rescued without incident. Two elected to proceed to East Jeddore with a whaler containing two outboard motors rather than take the prearranged lift. The only injury was a slight burn to one crewmember in the engine room at the time of the explosion. ATLANTIC STAR picked up four men in a rubber raft and two men from a Boston Whaler. After all eight men had been accounted for CCGS DARING tried unsuccessfully to create a wake in order to sink the burning CHRISTMAS SEAL and stood by until the wreck eventually sank.

M/V MAURICE DESGAGNES

Had lady luck not played such an active part in this incident, no one today would know the whereabouts of the M/V MAURICE DESGAGNES, which sank seventy-five miles southeast of Halifax, or what became of her twenty-one man crew.



John Rae and Paul Britton

This is Bill Hall operating the Medium Frequency Radiotelephone position at Station VCS on May 24th, 1980. We made a mistake in staging this one. Bill did not smoke and that is my pipe on the far left rack of the console.

On Wednesday, March 12th, 1980, Bill Hall went to work at station VCS and took over the medium frequency radiotelephone position for the first four hours of his eight-hour day shift. For all intents and purposes this was to be another routine day and no one at the station expected any different. As things often happen for no reason, Bill put a little more effort into the job than was necessary. There are two things he did which are worthy of note. One was that he took a time check from Radio Station CHU, Ottawa, and checked the setting of the clocks when he went on duty. This is normally done at 1000 GMT, nearly two hours before Bill went on duty, and again at 1800 GMT, later in the afternoon. The other thing Bill did was to turn the volume up full on one of the 2182 kHz receivers, which is the distress and calling frequency for the two megahertz radiotelephone band of frequencies. Because of this latter move, about three-quarters of an hour after the day shift operators had taken over duty, the MAYDAY or distress call received from the M/V MAURICE DESGAGNES reverberated off the walls of the operations room and off the nerves of every operator on duty. Captain Gabriel Cote, Master of the MAURICE DESGAGNES, was making this transmission and was very excited. He had a right to be and it took awhile for him to calm down.

M/V MAURICE DESGAGNES was a small freighter of 2467 gross tons. She had been purchased by a Company in Quebec that intended to use her in a scheduled service between eastern Canada and the West Indies. She had been in this service for about one year and had made many contacts with station VCS during this time. On this, her last voyage, she carried a Radio Officer while in the West Indies, but this operator must have been paid off in New Orleans, Louisiana. We had messages for her that we were unable to deliver.

OGJH	VAASA PROVIDER	1963	Finland
OGJH	LAURI-RAGNAR	1966	Finland
OGJH	FINNRUNNER	1971	Finland
VCFP	MAURICE DESGAGNES	1972	Canada

The MAURICE DESGAGNES had departed New Orleans bound for Seven Islands, Quebec, with a cargo of railroad ties. When she approached the area south of Nova Scotia she ran into heavy weather and high seas. A number of storms had passed the area in the last few days, a typical March for this area, and the Atlantic was churned up to its normal state for that time of the year. At about six-thirty on the morning of March 12th, a huge sea struck MAURICE DESGAGNES that caused some of her cargo of railroad ties to break loose in her hold. This loose cargo broke some of her bulkheads and caused a crack in the deck that in turn permitted water to enter the ship.



Canadian Forces Base Shearwater, Nova Scotia

The crew of MAURICE DESGAGNES being lifted off by Helicopter



Canadian Forces Base Shearwater, Nova Scotia

The MAURICE DESGAGNES sinking

Fortunately for the crew of MAURICE DESGAGNES the destroyer HMCS HURON, a new turbo-powered destroyer, was carrying out an exercise only forty miles away. When HURON learned of the distress call she raced over to assist and in so doing caused some superficial damage from the high speed in the heavy seas. HURON lost a few life rafts and tore off some of her guardrail on the quarterdeck. Once the HURON was alongside Captain Cote felt he might be able to limp into Halifax for repairs and requested she escort him in.

After Bill Hall received the distress call from MAURICE DESGAGNES, he shut down the remainder of the medium frequency position and did nothing but communicate with this distress incident. This meant that the lighthouse schedules, any duplex phone calls, any routine message traffic with ships fitted with radiotelephone only, and so on, terminated for the duration.

At 11:45 AM, the normal time we rotated from position to position, Jim Best moved up from the sixteen-megahertz radiotelegraph position and took over from Bill. Bill then moved over to the twelve-megahertz radiotelegraph position. All of these distress calls came under the control of the Rescue Coordination Centre in Halifax, RCC Halifax, and this meant that there were many messages to be handled from this organization and the various vessels in the area. HMCS MARGAREE, one of the older destroyer escorts, went to the scene to assist along with HMCS HURON. The Canadian Coast Guard Ship DARING, the former RCMP WOOD, was sent to the scene, and a helicopter based at Shearwater Naval Air Station asked if it could assist. Commander J. D. Spalding of HMCS HURON asked the helicopter to come out which meant there were now three helicopters to assist in the evacuation if this became necessary. Each of the two destroyers was carrying a helicopter. Therefore, the various messages from RCC and the numerous verbal requests meant that Bill had been kept busy, and that Jim was kept just as busy when he took over.

At about two in the afternoon it became apparent that the M/V MARUICE DESGAGNES would not remain afloat long enough to get into Halifax and it was decided to remove the crew by helicopter. When I first learned of this distress I was at home. I heard it on the local broadcast stations, and the first thing that crossed my mind was that I hoped it would be over before I went in to work, because I had the medium frequency radiotelephone position for the first four hours of my evening shift. When I took over from Jim Best, at about three forty, he said, "You'll be sorry". That I knew, but there was no way of avoiding this since I had worked the six and four megahertz radiotelegraph positions the evening before. No one liked the radiotelephone positions and that was the reason for the rotation system, so that no one would be stuck on these time and again. If the static did not drive you insane, trying to communicate with the various foreign languages would. At times you would have liked to connect a few of them through to Dial-a-prayer, but this would do no good because much of their English was so poor they would never have understood what was taking place. Jim said that the last he had heard they were lifting the crew off with the helicopters, and brought me up to date on the various details. From experience I knew no one out there wanted to hear from me, so I sat back and waited. Shortly after four, HMCS HURON called and said they had evacuated all twenty-one men from the MAURICE DESGAGNES, and that all twenty-one were now in HMCS HURON. Shortly after that she again called and said that MAURICE DESGAGNES had sunk at four thirty-six, just twenty minutes after the last man had been removed. They cut that one rather fine with only twenty minutes to spare. It took me awhile to get permission to put the medium frequency radiotelephone position back in normal operation. I received this permission at five thirteen and made the five ten weather broadcast first, three minutes late.

HMCS HURON landed the crew of the MAURICE DESGAGNES in Halifax, and the Coast Guard officials made their routine investigation of the distress, we were to learn of the luck that made their rescue possible. The first and foremost is the fact that Captain Cote had been trying to transmit his distress call for over an hour. Since we did not have facilities for recording any communications, our officials contacted the United States Coast Guard who did. On their recordings they had two bursts of something that could very well have been Captain Cote trying to make this transmission. Therefore, this means one of two things. Captain Cote in his excitement was not operating the radiotelephone properly, or this radiotelephone did have a fault in its electronic circuits that cleared itself. Had the ship's Radio Officer been on board he would have been able to clear this fault, or would have had several pieces of equipment in order to execute this distress call. This equipment was on board but not available to the Captain because he was not qualified or capable of operating it.

They were very fortunate that this radiotelephone commenced operating when it did, whether the fault disappeared as an intermittent fault so often does, or whether Captain Cote realized his error in the operation of the equipment and got it going. We were told Captain Cote had the mode switch on the radiotelephone stuck between the AM and SSB position and admitted this after he tried to blame Bill for not answering his call. This was a very poor situation for these Canadian seamen. We were told that Bill Hall did not answer Captain Cote's distress call because he was busy communicating with a lighthouse. This is ridiculous. Bill had handled everything perfectly and if anyone was foolish enough to be out in such weather without a Radio Officer, he should have been prepared to accept the full responsibility for the end result. When Vern Hillier, who was operating the 500 kHz position, relayed the MAURICE DESGAGNES distress call he naturally got many replies. There was so little chatter from the operators on 500 kHz it was hard to get the required ten to fifteen minute log entries during periods of poor weather. But on transmitting a distress relay most ships including a number who had been on our traffic lists for several days would reply. I often wondered whether these latter Radio Officers ever realized they were out there for something besides the ride. Twice I told HMCS HURON that we had routine message traffic for the MAURICE DESGAGNES and asked if they would accept these messages. My questions were ignored so we cancelled and stated the ship had sunk and we were unable to deliver. When you look back on the many incidents like this all one can think of is – thank God it is over. The computers now in use can create all the incidents and take all the blame.

The second item we learned after this incident was that HMCS HURON was supposed to be down south on an exercise but had developed equipment problems and had returned to Halifax for repairs. At the time she and HMCS MARGAREE were out testing these repairs and that is the only reason they were in the area. If

it had not been for that, it is highly unlikely the crew in MAURICE DESGAGNES would have been rescued. CCGS DARING was twenty-two miles away when the MARUICE DESGAGNES sank. She would have been of little use had she been on the scene. These same high seas killed the crew in the RAIFUKU MARU fifty-five years previous in the same area. They were unable to get clear in their lifeboats and it is unlikely that the crew of MAURICE DESGAGNES could have done any better. In order for a helicopter to go that far off the coast, she needs a ship in the area in order to land if necessary. DARING was not equipped for helicopters and the helicopters in the Coast Guard were not powerful enough to execute such a mission. Therefore, it had to be the Navy or not at all.

The Coast Station nearest a distress took charge of the communications and did all possible to assist years ago. The person in charge of the station lived nearby and he was called out to take charge of the communications. At this time RCC was in charge of these incidents and at the time was receiving some severe criticism especially on the West Coast. Our illustrious leaders did not appear to know what they were doing. Like so many Canadian Captains involved in accidents at that time, Captain Gabriel Cote was put in a position that no one should have found himself. Whose fault was it? If those Canadian Captains and Mates had refused to sail those ships without good Radio Officers the ships would have been equipped with them. Those who demand respect get respect.

After this accident the Desgagnes Shipping Company purchased the ESKIMO from Canada Steamships. They renamed her MATHILDE DESGAGNES and she retained her VYJN call sign. The MATHILDE DESGAGNES replaced the MAURICE DESGAGNES and she carried a Radio Officer while sailing past Nova Scotia on her first few voyages. Apparently a lesson was not learned from the MAURICE DESGAGNES because MATHILDE DESGAGNES sailed past Nova Scotia without a Radio Officer on board during January 1982. She was in ballast at the time and was coming from Venezuela direct to Newcastle, New Brunswick, arriving there on January 17th, 1982.

CAPE BEAVER AND MARGARET JANE

On July 31st, 1980, the Canadian fishing vessel CAPE BEAVER was outbound from Lunenburg, Nova Scotia, in thick fog. Fog is no stranger to this coast especially during the summer. Inbound to Lunenburg was the Canadian fishing vessel MARGARET JANE, a wooden scallop dragger coming in from a routine fishing trip. These two vessels collided and MARGARET JANE sank within minutes of the collision. Less than three minutes to be exact. When one realizes that CAPE BEAVER has a bulbous bow and is ice strengthened, MARGARET JANE did well to last a few minutes. The MARGARET JANE had eighteen men on board and of these, four were injured and four more were never found. One of these four missing was a sixteen year old high school student who had been spending his summer holiday working in MARGARET JANE.

After the investigation and court of inquiry, the owner of MARGARET JANE and the owner of CAPE BEAVER were both fined. Captain Robert Mayo of MARGARET JANE and Captain Morris Nowe of CAPE BEAVER received a few months' suspension and a fine. I do not know either Captain but I certainly hope their employers paid their personal fines. Both held fishing master certificates that had been given to them because they had years of experience when Canada created these certificates about 1975. In other words, if these companies are not going to pay for proper education they should be fined, if for no other reason than to pay for the high cost of these investigations and inquiries.



Gerrie Grevatt

FV CAPE BEAVER



Gerrie Grevatt

Looking aft from the wheelhouse in FV CAPE BEAVER



Gerrie Grevatt

Captain Morris Nowe at the main steering position in the wheelhouse of FV CAPE BEAVER



Gerrie Grevatt

The main control panel for the winches located in the wheelhouse of FV CAPE BEAVER

I do not agree with the suspensions handed each Captain. I am firmly convinced they were victims of the system, especially Captain Morris Nowe. Fate was against Captain Nowe on July 31st, 1980, as much as it was for Captain Smith of the TITANIC on April 15th, 1912. From research for this project I have found articles written of Captain Nowe's expertise in foreign publications. If he was not the best fishing master on the East Coast of Canada, he was definitely one of the best. The awful experience both captains had to live with should be plenty. There is no need to add insult to injury.

CAPE BEAVER was the first of six new wet fish stern trawlers built for this company. Three were built in Japan (CAPE BEAVER was the first) and three more were built at Halifax, Nova Scotia. These large fishing vessels were no longer boats but were ships in every sense of the terminology. They were sailing with all the fleets of the world through some of the poorest weather found anywhere. They should have been operated accordingly. As far as I was concerned CAPE BEAVER was nothing more than an accident looking for a place to happen. She had no provision for a good Radio Officer or a Navigating Officer. With my limited knowledge of the duties of a navigating officer I find it difficult that within the operation of CAPE BEAVER and her sisters there was a definite need for the Captain to have someone of the caliber of the Second Mate Foreign Going Certificate to rely on. Possibly the holder of this certificate should be the Mate of the vessel, one who is on the ladder of elevation to the Captain's berth. If one ever runs into a super tanker, cruise ship, or vessels of similar design, it will be causing a lot of grief to holders of certificates of a much higher caliber.

On July 31st, 1980, the CAPE BEAVER was on her maiden voyage out of Lunenburg with an assortment of people on board savoring the publicity surrounding this new addition to the fleet. The most fault-prone vessel is the new one. The old girl wallowing along to the ship breaker's yard will not cause near the

problems a new one will. With the old one the crew can recognize the worn bits and pieces and more or less know where the faults will occur. With a new vessel these faults occur with maddening frequency until all the components settle in and mesh together. The crews are strangers in their own environment in a new vessel. Often the multitude of new gadgets have never been seen or operated before. The old familiar ones need time to inform the crew of their own peculiarities. The crew of any new vessel can tell many stories of these problems. The main radio station quit on leaving the shipyard and the Radio Officer could not get it operating during her maiden voyage, therefore no communication from one ship I sailed in. The galley deck head fell down making it most inconvenient for the cooks in another. All new ships are subject to these malfunctions.

The CAPE BEAVER had a multitude of new electronics on board and Captain Nowe, whether he knew this particular make and model or not, had no idea how it would perform until he had the opportunity of living with it for a time. On top of this, his vessel was literally louzy with the Chiefs from the main office, the ones who have an endless list of questions to be answered and of course Captain Nowe did not have time to answer them. Because they were his masters, he had no way of getting rid of them while he figured out the answers. He had no Radio Officer hovering over these new pieces of “fang dangled” equipment to make sure the statements they were making were the truth or even near the truth. He had no Navigating Officer to help him determine his exact position at any given time. Only one who has been in similar situations can appreciate the full meaning of the word “alone” at a time like this.

I handled all the communications at the VCS station involved with this incident. My superiors asked for a written brief shortly afterwards. I did this brief with a stack of legal size paper and my old typewriter at home. I was so mad and frustrated when I reached page fifty-six, I signed off and passed it in. There has been no indication that any of my suggestions were considered.

Captain Nowe had the receivers turned off by turning the volume control down. This was the most obvious fault surrounding the initial call. He was certainly correct in that move. The last thing he needed in CAPE BEAVER that day was the routine chatter and noise from his radio equipment. Captain Nowe’s first move was for his ship and those in the water right after the accident happened. It was over forty minutes after the accident before he had time to alert help. His transmitter was working fine but it was not until his third call to me that he realized that his volume control was down and he could not hear my answering his calls. Fortunately at the time I had nothing to do. I had just finished my lunch at noon when I received his calls. He stated it was an emergency call so this did nothing to move me at a faster pace. It did bring back many memories of the false emergency calls I have handled over the years. Some of them have been quite humorous since it is human nature to try and speed the routine of life up a bit for one’s personal gain. Had he used the proper radio terminology of MAYDAY, the gears would have jumped into high in a hurry. Actually we shifted to the working channel bearing Canadian channel designation fifty-nine, at Captain Nowe’s suggestion, and it was there he stated there had been an accident and that the MARGARET JANE had sunk. My first impression on learning this was that I wanted him to tell me that MARGARET JANE was a small inland fishing vessel with only one or two on board. I had no knowledge of the MARGARET JANE although I tried to know all the vessels I worked. We had never made contact with this one because she worked to the west of us and was in the habit of using station VAU Yarmouth. Captain Nowe, although slightly nervous which is understandable certainly knew what he was doing. He had the number of men who were in MARGARET JANE the number he had rescued, the number still missing, and gave this to me during our first contact. As soon as I realized the seriousness of the situation, I contacted the Rescue Coordination Centre on the Hot Line to their office. Because of the many empires, I managed to dial the wrong number, the one written on the phone. I got the military duty officer whereas I should have had the civilian coast guard officer. This military officer handled everything and did not make me aware of this petty detail until some time later. When he did the VCS station was fortunate they kept that phone. It would have been with great pleasure to watch that phone sail out among our antennas. I feel I could have managed the feat with one good swing that would include driving it through the double panes of glass in the window. There were so many petty empires that you did not know at times whether you were coming or going.

Naturally my superiors wanted a description and the colours of both vessels. As far as I was concerned they could describe the MARGARET JANE any way they wanted and paint her any colour they desired. At a time like that I was not going to trouble the Captain for any such detail. I described the CAPE BEAVER

from her drawings I had managed to locate and memorize. I painted her company colours accordingly, including the design or crest she should be wearing on her funnels. The detail on file at the VCS station for a CAPE BEAVER was the old namesake of the new one that had call sign VDTs. It occurred to me that this might be the old one so I asked Captain Nowe for the call sign of the vessel. He did not know it and could not find it. So then I asked him to confirm that this was the new vessel built recently in Japan. He stated it was. When the special delivery crew brought this vessel from Japan, we had routine message traffic for her and were told her call sign was VY2505. We never made contact with her. From calling her so many times I had this call sign memorized and recorded it as such. Since this incident the CAPE BEAVER was assigned call sign VCSV. It was something so simple, yet so confusing at a time like that.

Time stops for nothing. Captain Nowe needs medical help for the four injured men and he needs as many vessels as possible to search the scene through the fog to make certain those four missing men are not hanging on to some wreckage. The clock has ticked on and over forty minutes has elapsed before Captain Nowe could alert us. Forty minutes the other vessels could have used to steam towards him. A short time before this accident two Japanese fishing vessels collided and one sank not so far from this very position. The Japanese Radio Officers not only alerted us the moment it happened but kept us well informed until they knew they had rescued all on board the sinking vessel. No lives were lost. Their English was on a par with our Japanese – they knew no English and we knew no Japanese. Because they were able to use radiotelegraph we had perfect communications. Compare this accident with any of ours.

As soon as I realized the seriousness of the accident involving the CAPE BEAVER I asked Captain Nowe to switch his radio back to frequency 2182 kHz and then asked every vessel to remain on that frequency. When one vessel spoke to another, we all knew what they were saying and did not have to ask for any unnecessary repetition. There were so many radios then that you could have a couple communicating on General Radio Service (Citizens Band), a couple more on the very high frequency radios, until you reached a point where no one knew what the hell was happening. Within a few minutes we had any number of vessels steaming at full speed towards the area. You could almost feel the main engines being pushed to their limits of endurance. To name a few; we had Captain Gordon Reyno coming out of Liverpool with the Patrol Boat CRATENA call sign VC2457, Captain Murray Garrison coming out of Sambro with Lifeboat 117. The CAPE JOHN call sign VC6178, a sister of CAPE BEAVER out of Lunenburg. The other I remember was a new fishing vessel alongside Riverport, the L. R. MACDONALD. Those at the fish plant realized they had enough talent to get this vessel moving. This make-shift crew jumped aboard her and lit out. No one aboard her was a regular member of her crew. The Captain did not know her call sign, could not find it, and was not sure she even had one. What the heck! She was help, and help was needed. Since Murray Garrison was senior rescue vessel he could take charge when he got there, and sort it out accordingly as he ran to the scene. If I remember correctly CAPE JOHN was first at the scene which permitted CAPE BEAVER to run for port. Some of those four injured men were suffering from shock by the time CAPE JOHN arrived. In the meantime there was sufficient confusion to literally drive one up the wall. At the time CCGS TUPPER was alongside Dartmouth and had recently been fitted with a new radio for 2182 kHz. One of the Mates had to play with this new toy that was apparently not working. She wanted a radio test on 2182 kHz and all I could get out of her was the statement that she could not hear me very well. The CRATENA was a small wooden vessel and I was having no trouble communicating with her so there was definitely nothing wrong with my equipment. Trying to get the TUPPER to terminate this interference was a problem. She stopped as I reached for the phone to call the Dartmouth base and have someone put an end to it. If one had been in American waters and asked for a test on 2182 kHz, the duty U. S. Coast Guard Radioman would have virtually climbed out of your speaker and thumped you. It was illegal to do this on 2182 kHz in their waters and it was a law well founded for the very reason I am trying to describe here. Why we had to tolerate that foolishness is beyond me.

There was another choice piece of inefficiency and the most frustrating of all during this accident. This inefficiency was the military helicopters that were forever flip flopping around this coast. Apparently there were two or three of these machines in the air most of the time. We could not communicate with them. The American machines not only communicated on 2182 kHz, they could take bearings of the signals they heard on that frequency. I have described this via a personal experience off Cuba and have recorded it on these pages. The only way we at the VCS station could communicate with those military machines was through a fixed wing aircraft, normally a DeHavilland Buffalo that would switch over to us on 2182 kHz

then relay our communication via their military frequencies. When this accident happened, the Buffalo aircraft flying with these helicopters was getting low on fuel and had to return to Shearwater. They must have been unable to locate their credit card, broke the handle on their wobble pump, or noticed a chip in the paint and stopped for repairs. At least I never made contact with it again. But the helicopters remained in the area. At least one of them switched her sensing devices from Russian A-bombs to fishing vessels and managed to locate the CAPE BEAVER. At least three times she went right over the CAPE BEAVER and Captain Nowe became very excited. She represented a very fast means of getting these four injured men to medical attention. Captain Nowe yelled at me to tell her that she was directly overhead. How? I would have gladly fired a shot into her engine and dropped her on the CAPE BEAVER's Monkey Island had this been possible and the duty military officer at the Rescue Coordination Centre told me he had communication with this helicopter via the Shearwater Air Base. I not only relayed Captain Nowe's requests but made up a few questions of my own just to see how much communication we had. The answer was rather obvious – none. We did not receive a reply of any description. These helicopters could have been a welcome addition to this rescue and they are possibly the most important piece of machinery during such incidents. Without direct communication and especially during this accident, they were nothing more than added frustration. Had the pilot of this machine been able to tell us what he was doing it would have been a relief to all concerned. This pilot was probably cursing everything in general for want of this communication. If he had communication with CAPE BEAVER he would have made an attempt at picking up these injured men or else he was of a different caliber than any helicopter pilot I have known.

Another aggravation worthy of mention during this incident is that the Canadian vessel POLARIS 5 was in no position to assist with this incident because of her distance from the scene. She had problems of her own and needed a conversation with those who manufactured this defective equipment. We were unable to make a duplex call because our equipment was tied up with this distress. This was a pet beef of mine for years. The telephone companies should have been providing this service. The Coast Guard Radio Stations should not have had anything to do with it. There were many reasons for this. The telephone companies could have made this into an efficient user pay system and all concerned would have found it much more efficient. Once in operation I would suspect that the telephone traffic would have tripled.

My first trip on salt water was spent in a small fishing vessel while on holiday from school and this was a fantastic experience for any kid so fortunate and an excellent means for them to earn money. If any kid is willing to put in the hard work involved, they will be well paid for the experience. MARGARET JANE had several students within her crew that day.

When the court suspended Captain Nowe and Captain Mayo, they probably did this to tell all fishing masters that it is about time they improved their overall performance. As long as these Captains are willing to do it alone, that is the way it will be. They would soon get help if they refused to sail these vessels without assistance in education and without help in these larger vessels. Those who demand respect get respect and these Fishing Masters certainly deserved much more than they received at that time.

PRINSENDAM

One of the best examples of all that was available to the merchant ship in the form of communications, and exactly how it all worked during a distress situation occurred during October 1980. The Dutch passenger ship PRINSENDAM with call sign PJTA was sailing in the Gulf of Alaska on October 3rd when a fire broke out. This fire destroyed the ship and the 533 passengers and crew had to abandon ship through poor sea conditions.

All marine communication systems available at the time were tried during this distress, but 500 kHz performed so well and effectively that one wondered if there would ever be anything capable of performing as efficiently. Shortly after the Radio Officers in PRINSENDAM sent their auto alarm signal and distress call on 500 kHz, forty or fifty ships checked in immediately, and more kept checking in as the distress communications continued. One ship was more than 2,800 miles from the distress scene.

The American tanker WILLIAMSBURGH with call sign WGOA was one of the first ships to answer PRINSENDAM's distress. Jim Pfister was Chief Radio Officer in WILLIAMSBURGH and on duty at the time. He alerted his bridge and called his Second Radio Officer David Ring on hearing the auto alarm signal only. WILLIAMSBURGH was the ship nearest the PRINSENDAM and was the first at the scene. The passengers and crew were lifted off PRINSENDAM to the WILLIAMSBURGH.

The PRINSENDAM made an attempt at using her Satellite Communications equipment for this distress but her Captain found himself talking to a medical orderly in a Kodiak hospital. This error was credited to the Radio Officer in PRINSENDAM. Apparently he did not understand the proper procedure for using this equipment to alert help in such a situation. The Canadian government at that time had recently eliminated the Radio Officer in two Canadian ships and replaced them with this same Satellite Communications system. When a Radio Officer who was trained in electronics and distress procedures was unable to properly alert help with one of those units, one wondered how a Canadian Captain or Mate would be able to do any better. Besides when one is in such a situation, he wants communications with the nearest ship. If this were the only means of alerting help and if someone ashore missed one's position by simply one digit, you would not likely ever be found.

The PRINSENDAM insisted on using 500 kHz. That was a smart move on her part. She did not send a distress call on the radiotelephone frequency of 2182 kHz. The WILLIAMSBURGH did go up on this frequency and relay a distress call for her but received only one reply, that from a 65 foot fishing vessel PACIFIC HARVEST. PACIFIC HARVEST was unable to reach PRINSENDAM in time to be of any use because of the high seas. The fishing vessels in that area did not use 2182 kHz. They listened continually to their own company frequency, quite often on the four-megahertz radiotelephone band of frequencies. This was quite common with fishing vessels everywhere to the point it was impossible for them to contact each other when separate companies owned the two vessels that wanted to communicate with each other. We heard complaints of this nature at the VCS station as though we would be able to do something about it.

When a vessel is in distress she wants to communicate with the nearest vessel to her in case evacuation is necessary. She wants to do this on a frequency that can be heard by all including the nearest coast stations. She wants to do this so that anything that is transmitted can be understood. There were many languages involved with the ships answering the PRINSENDAM's distress including Japanese and Russian. But all knew exactly what was taking place because the Radio Officers were using radiotelegraph and the service abbreviations known as the Q Code. Another asset during a distress situation was to be able to home in on the communications at the distress scene via radio direction finders. A ship or an aircraft could home in on these signals and make certain they were traveling towards the scene, in case an error had been made in the position of the scene. The nature of 500 kHz made this facet more efficient than any other frequency available.

PRINSENDAM's satellite communications equipment failed shortly after the fire proved to warrant a distress situation – about one hour into the distress communications. This was caused from a loss of electric power to the equipment. Many who had sailed with this equipment at that time claimed that it was highly unlikely this equipment would have been of much use had there been a source of emergency power for that equipment. The most difficult problem the engineers had to overcome in designing this equipment for shipboard use was the mechanism that kept the antenna pointed at the satellite in use. Apparently the unit would track the satellite from the roll of the ship with little trouble, but would not work from the pitch of the ship. It was not until 1975 that they felt this problem had been rectified to the point that it was feasible to install these units in ships. Those who had sailed with this equipment at that time claimed it was still a problem and that they were fair weather units only. In any ship fitted at the time, those units had the habit of losing contact with the satellite when the ship was experiencing heavy motion. It was a rather poor excuse for distress communications because a distress did not normally happen when the ship was experiencing smooth sailing. Often a distress incident is the result of poor weather.

The last two to three hours of PRINSENDAM's communications was conducted via one very high frequency "walkie-talkie" radiotelephone and emergency equipment on 500 kHz. The electric power cables to all the other communications equipment had been burned off. When I was at sea I often used the battery powered emergency equipment on 500 kHz as routine communications equipment. I did this to ensure that

the equipment was in good working condition. I found the range and reliability of those low powered units amazing. A very high frequency radiotelephone “walkie-talkie” was a very handy piece of equipment. The Mates were beginning to rely on those units for communications with the Captain or bridge for routine shipboard activities.

Any communications system has to be well used in order to be reliable as a system for distress communications. The equipment has to be used often during routine communications to ensure the operators are very familiar with the equipment. It has to be used on a frequency that most operators are listening when a distress transmission is made. 500 kHz was by far the most efficient frequency for distress because so many were monitoring at any given time in any given area. It also eliminated any language problem, provided a very good range and was most suitable for radio direction finders. The list of items in favour of this frequency appeared unlimited. I found the most serious fault with the Aeradio main distress frequency of 121.5 megahertz was the fact it was used for distress communications only. This was from years of experience with these stations. On occasion the equipment on this frequency would not work from a simple lack of use. I know of one case where this was a serious fault.

The loss of PRINSENDAM certainly provided a very good first hand experience for any administration that desired some basic guideline for making any decision concerning marine communications. How many Canadian ships were within range and capable of providing some assistance to PRINSENDAM but did not know of her distress mainly because it was impossible to make them aware of her predicament? Any ship that did not carry a proper radio officer and the equipment for 500 kHz radiotelegraph at that time was unsafe.



United States Coast Guard

The PRINSENDAM wreck prior to sinking



Radio Officer David Ring, Marshfield, Massachusetts

Left to right: Radio Officers, Jack Van Der Zee, PRINSENDAM, Jim Pfister N6CF and David Ring N1EA, WILLIAMSBURG. This photograph was taken aboard TT WILLIAMSBURG after taking aboard the passengers and crew of PRINSENDAM.



Dynacolor Graphics Inc., Miami, Florida

This is the T/T WILLIAMSBURG off San Francisco October 12th, 1981, bound for the East Coast of the United States via Cape Horn. (225,090 DWT)



Dynacolor Graphics Inc., Miami, Florida

A stern view of TT WILLIAMSBURG

JFBX



Mitchell S. Roscoe

The crews in the Japanese fishing fleet were well trained and well equipped but they still had to tolerate the human factor. May 4th, 2003 was a beautiful day when JFBX departed Halifax, Nova Scotia for the fishing grounds. After the pilot departed the vessel the duty mate set the vessels main engines for normal cruising and went below for a cup of tea, thinking the automatic pilot was on and working properly. The automatic pilot had not been turned on and one can just picture the ring of tea on the deckhead when JFBX 'fetched up'. We were unable to learn if the captain and this mate had to report to the nearest hospital so the captain could get his boot removed and the mate get his butt repaired.



Canadian Coast Guard

THE CANADIAN CERTIFICATE AND A COMPARISON WITH OTHER NATIONS

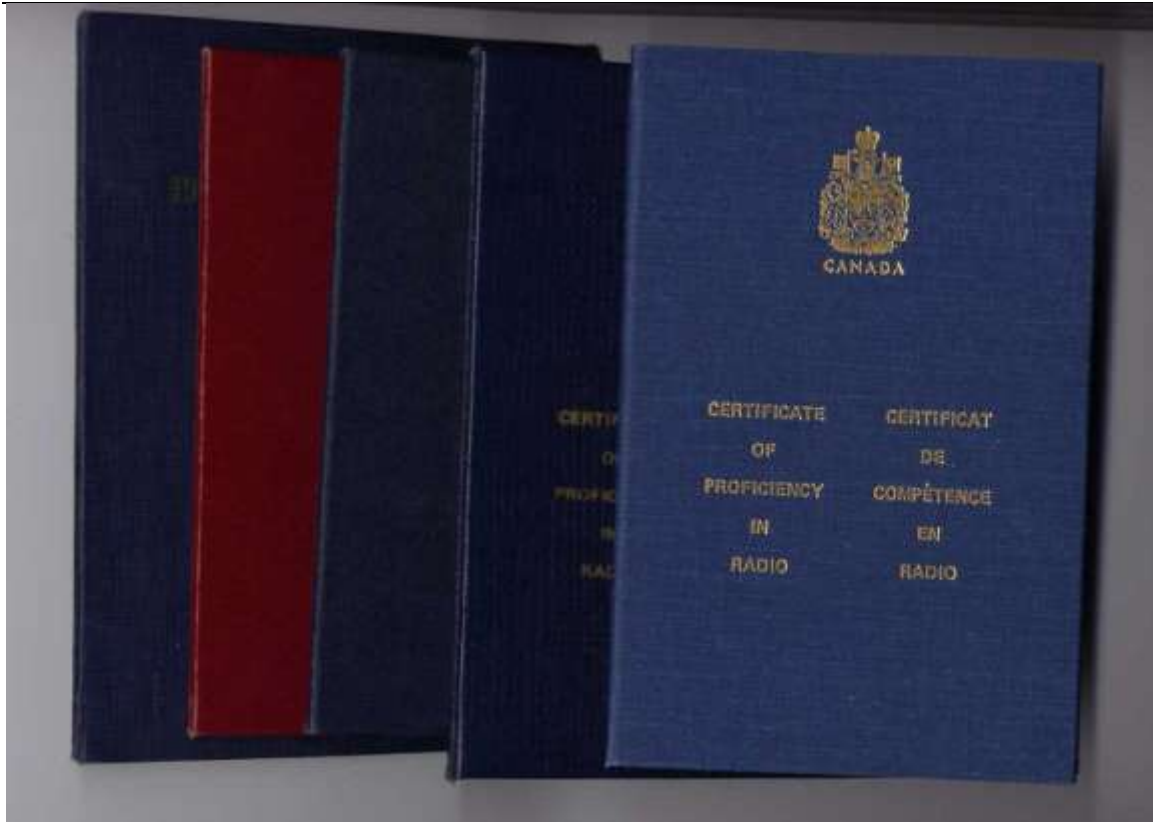
When you spend some time looking back through the history of this communications in Canada, at least most of these peculiarities you encounter become better understood. The termination of our certificates in 1966 had the adverse effect of lowering this trade to one of semi-skilled labour. You have to compare what we had with that of the rest of the world. This will give one some idea of where we stood in comparison to the rest of the world. To begin with the creation of the certificates in 1912 was done of necessity.

Something had to be done in order to police and regulate this trade. There were no rules of any description so no one knew what was operating these stations. Many of the operators were reaching the point of pure frustration in trying to communicate with their equipment, and if for any reason some operator was bored or just plain rude, it was not unusual for him to tune his transmitter and leave it on creating as much interference as possible. The language over the air was getting out of hand. Therefore, the certificates were created to give some indication that the holder knew what he was doing. Also it was an added advantage to know that he could lose this certificate if he failed to abide by the rules and regulations. These certificates were broken up into various grades, or classes, in order to indicate the level of the holder's competency.

The last spark certificates were issued in 1928 and all Canadian operators had to report to a radio inspector in 1929 in order to be examined for the new continuous wave certificates. For example, Cec Foster passed his examinations and received his certificate in 1928, a spark certificate and had to be re-examined in 1929 for a new certificate, the c/w certificate.

After World War II the prospective operator had a choice of equipment, either the British Marconi or the American Radio Corporation of America stations that were fitted in ships during the period of his examinations. The reason for this was twofold. The first was that there had not been a Canadian company

that produced these stations since the Canadian Marconi Company terminated production of these stations around World War II. The second is that there were two types available for instruction in the various schools across Canada. Some of these schools used Marconi equipment and some used the American RCA equipment. For many years the exact type or model of equipment you could use were listed in the syllabus of examinations. But the one printed in June 1969 stated marine radio equipment of an approved type.



These are the certificates I have accumulated over the years. Left to right: my Continuous Certificate of Discharge for Seamen, my second class Certificate of Proficiency in Radio, my original First Class Certificate of Proficiency in Radio, my second First Class Certificate of Proficiency in Radio and my Coast Guard Radiotelegraph Operator's Certificate. Our certificates were the reverse of the British Certificates. Our second class was red in colour and our first class was blue in colour. The British second class was blue and the first class was red.

CERTIFICATE Of Crew and Official Log Book Report of Character				68761	
No.	Name of Ship and Official Number and Tonnage	Date and Place of		Rating	Signature (1) Officer
		Engagement	Discharge		
1	M-9 BOUNTY 312725 G.T. 415.52 N.T. 110.98	May 15 1962	Dec 5 1962	Radio Officer	(1) [Signature]
2	S/S GYPSUM COUNTES LONDON O. N. 302825 N.T. 4020 H.P. 3000	Sept. 25 1970	Oct. 9 1970	Do	(1) [Signature]
3	Gypsum Queen Off. No. 302829 - London Net 4223 Gross 7883 H.P. 2700	Oct 9 1970	Nov 27 1970	Do	(1) [Signature]
4	Gypsum Prince Off. No. 302828 - London Net 4223 Gross 7883 H.P. 2700	Dec. 1 70	Dec. 12 70	Do	(1) [Signature]
5	Gypsum Empress Off. No. 302827 - London Net 4223 Gross 8180 H.P. 3000	Jan 5 1971	Jan 15 1971	Do	(1) [Signature]
6	Gypsum Queen Off. No. 302829 - London Net 4223 Gross 7883 H.P. 2700	Jan 23 1971	Feb 9 1971	Do	(1) [Signature]

* These columns are to be filled in at time of engagement.
† Particular waters visited trading on and to be stated.

When a member of the crew of an island or minor vessel (as defined in the Regulations) is engaged on a voyage other than to the port of a Shipping Master, or to a port of call, the holder of the certificate shall state his name and occupation in the space marked (2) in the right hand column above.

These are some of the entries in my Continuous Certificate of Discharge for Seamen.

Canada

This Certificate, unless previously withdrawn by the Minister of Transport, will continue to be valid so long as the Radio Regulations annexed to the International Telecommunication Convention (Montreux, 1965) shall remain in force.

No. 4-18

CERTIFICATE OF PROFICIENCY IN RADIO
Granted by the Minister of Transport under the provisions of the Radio Act.
SECOND CLASS

This is to certify that Spurgeon George Roscoe
has been examined in accordance with the Radio Regulations annexed to the International Telecommunication Convention (Geneva, 1959), and has qualified in:

- Knowledge of the general principles of electricity and of the theory of radiotelegraphy and radiotelephony;
- The adjustment, care and operation of equipment;
- Transmitting and sound reading in the International Morse Code at a speed of not less than 20 words a minute in plain language and 16 words a minute in code groups;
- Transmitting and receiving correctly messages by telephone;
- Knowledge of national and international regulations governing radiocommunication.

The holder of this certificate is bound by the provisions of the Radio Act to preserve the secrecy of correspondence.


[Signature]
Examining Officer

9th February, 1962.

The holder of this certificate may act, subject to complying with medical fitness requirements if necessary, as a radiotelegraph or radiotelephone operator on any class of radio station indicated on the inside of the cover hereof.

[Signature]
Minister of Transport

This is inside my Second Class Certificate of Proficiency in Radio.

	
The holder of this Certificate may act:	
(1) As a radio operator on any class of radio station, except as a radiotelegraph operator on an aircraft engaged in international flights;	
(2) In charge of a Canadian ship radio station of the third category.	
The holder may also act in charge of a ship station of the Second category provided this Certificate is countersigned by a Canadian Government Radio Inspector who thereby certifies that the holder has been employed for six months as radio operator on a radio station in the International Maritime Mobile Service and has submitted documentary proof to this effect.	
Countersigned	<i>C. C. Foster</i> Radio Inspector
Date	<i>20th Dec 1962</i>
	Official Stamp
NOTICE	
This Certificate shall be signed by the holder in the presence of either—a Justice of the Peace, a Notary Public or a Canadian or other British Radio Inspector, who will check the photograph and description, and sign his name.	
In case of misconduct or breach of the regulations on the part of the holder, the Minister may, at his discretion, endorse or withdraw this Certificate. Unless so withdrawn, it will continue to be valid as long as the Radio Regulations annexed to the International Telecommunication Convention (Geneva, 1959) shall remain in force.	
This Certificate should be carefully preserved. In case of loss the Minister may issue a duplicate certificate, upon production of satisfactory evidence under oath that the original has been lost or destroyed, upon payment of the sum of \$1.00.	
In the event of loss of this Certificate, by its owner, any person coming into possession thereof should transmit it forthwith to the Director, Telecommunications and Electronics Branch, Department of Transport, Ottawa, Canada.	
DESCRIPTION OF HOLDER	
Place of Birth <i>Kentville, Kings County,</i> <i>Nova Scotia, Canada.</i>	
Date of Birth <i>2nd May, 1939.</i>	
Height <i>6</i> feet <i>4½</i> inches	
Colour of (a) Eyes <i>Hazel</i> (b) Hair <i>Brown</i>	
Complexion <i>Fair</i>	
Special Peculiarities <i>None.</i>	
Signature of holder <i>Cecil C. Foster</i>	
Witness <i>Albert S. Jones J.P.</i>	

This is the inside of my old Second Class Certificate of Proficiency in Radio and shows where Mr. Cecil C. Foster countersigned this for ships of the second category. Cec Foster served during the "hay day" of this trade. His first certificate in 1928 was a spark certificate. In 1929 all radio operators had to report to a Radio Inspector and write a continuous wave certificate. Cec joined the Department of Transport in 1930 and retired 38 years later as a Radio Inspector in 1968. Cec had operated the stations in rum-running vessels from 1928 until 1930. On retirement he operated amateur radio station VE1AMF.

DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATIONS

In recognition of the holder's competency, the
validity of this certificate is hereby extended for
a period of five years from JULY 4, 1977



C. E. Doherty
Radio Inspector



CANADA

No. 6-89

CERTIFICATE OF PROFICIENCY IN RADIO

Granted by the Minister of Communications under the provisions of the Radio Act.

FIRST CLASS

This is to certify that, Spurgeon George Roscoe
has been examined in accordance with the Radio Regulations annexed to the International Telecommunication Convention (Montreux, 1965), and has qualified in:

- (a) Knowledge of the general principles of electricity and of the theory of radiotelegraphy and radiotelephony;
- (b) The adjustment, care and operation of equipment;
- (c) Transmitting and sound reading in the International Morse Code at a speed of not less than 25 words a minute in plain language and 20 words a minute in code groups;
- (d) Transmitting and receiving correctly messages by telephone;
- (e) Knowledge of national and international regulations governing radiocommunication.

The holder of this certificate is bound by the provisions of the Radio Act to preserve the secrecy of correspondence.

O. R. Mosher
O.R. Mosher
Examining Officer

22 July 1975

The holder of this certificate may act, subject to complying with medical fitness requirements if necessary, as a radiotelegraph or radiotelephone operator on any class of radio station (except as a radiotelegraph operator on an aircraft engaged in international flights) or in charge of a coast, land or ship station of any class or category.

[Signature]
for Minister of Communications

This is inside my original First Class Certificate of Proficiency in Radio.



Signature of holder *S. L. Ross*
Witness *A. J. Bryant*

DESCRIPTION OF HOLDER

Date of Birth 02 May 1939
Place of Birth Kentville, Nova Scotia
Height 6 feet 4 1/2 inches
Colour of (a) Eyes Hazel (b) Hair Brown
Complexion Medium
Special Peculiarities None

NOTICE

This Certificate shall be signed by the holder in the presence of either:—a Justice of the Peace, a Notary Public or a Canadian or other British Radio Inspector, who will check the photograph and description, and sign his name.

In case of misconduct or breach of the regulations on the part of the holder, the Minister may, at his discretion, endorse or withdraw this Certificate. Unless so withdrawn, it will continue to be valid so long as the Radio Regulations annexed to the International Telecommunication Convention (Montreux, 1965) shall remain in force.

This Certificate should be carefully preserved. In case of loss the Minister may issue a duplicate certificate, upon production of satisfactory evidence under oath that the original has been lost or destroyed, upon payment of the sum of \$1.00.

In the event of loss of this Certificate, by its owner, any person coming into possession thereof should transmit it forthwith to the Director, Telecommunications and Electronics Branch, Department of Transport, Ottawa, Canada.

41-2092
6-66

In the back of all of these certificates it contained a recent photograph and description of the holder of the certificate. This is inside the back of my original First Class Certificate. I show this in black and white to make it easier for one to read because everything around here is getting rather ancient. To be truthful about it this certificate fell apart when I went to scan it and I had to re glue it.



Government of Canada
Département des Communications

Gouvernement du Canada
Ministère des Communications

Replaces First Class Certificate

no. 6-89 issued July 22, 1975

validated July 4, 1977

No. 6-108

**CERTIFICATE OF PROFICIENCY IN RADIO
FIRST CLASS**

SPURGEON GEORGE ROSCOE

under the provisions of the Radio Act, has been examined in accordance with the Radio Regulations annexed to the International Telecommunication Convention and is qualified to act as a radiotelegraph or radiotelephone operator

- (a) on any class of radio station;
(b) in charge of a coast, land or ship station of any class or category.

This certificate is valid for a period of five years from the date of issue.

Date of issue
Date de délivrance **Sept. 7, 1982**

In recognition of the holder's competency, the validity of this certificate is hereby extended for a period of five years

from
à compter de

The holder is bound to preserve the secrecy of correspondence.

The Minister of Communications may revoke or suspend this certificate if the holder has been guilty of misconduct, or has wilfully or negligently failed to comply with the Regulations.

**CERTIFICAT DE COMPÉTENCE EN RADIO
PREMIÈRE CLASSE**

en vertu des dispositions de la Loi sur la radio, a subi avec succès les épreuves prévues par le Règlement des radiocommunications annexé à la Convention internationale des télécommunications et il est apte à exercer les fonctions d'opérateur radiotélégraphiste ou radiotéléphoniste

- a) d'une station radio de n'importe quelle catégorie;
b) chef de poste de n'importe quelle station côtière, terrestre ou de navire de n'importe quelle classe ou catégorie.

Le présent certificat est valide pour une période de cinq ans à compter de la date de délivrance.

Issued by
Agent délivreur

En reconnaissance de la compétence du titulaire du présent certificat, la validité de ce dernier est prolongée pour une période de cinq années.

Radio Inspector
Inspecteur de la Radio

Le titulaire du présent certificat est tenu de garder le secret de la correspondance.

Le Ministre des Communications peut révoquer ou suspendre le présent certificat si le titulaire est trouvé coupable d'inconduite ou s'il a enfreint le règlement volontairement ou par négligence.

This is my second First Class Certificate and the one that replaced my original First Class Certificate of Proficiency in Radio. One can now see that we are in both official languages in Canada. Things are getting rather sloppy because the Radio Inspector that issued this certificate did not sign it.

CLASS I. Ships carrying more than 250 passengers or in respect of which there is in force a certificate issued by the Department of Trade and Industry, or by any authority empowered in that behalf by the laws of any country other than the United Kingdom, to the effect that they are fit to carry more than 250 passengers, and which:

- (a) in the case of British ships registered in the United Kingdom are at sea for more than sixteen hours between two consecutive ports;
- (b) in the case of ships other than British ships registered in the United Kingdom, arrive at a port in the United Kingdom having been at sea for more than sixteen hours since last leaving port, or in respect of which clearance or transire is sought from a port in the United Kingdom for a voyage requiring more than sixteen hours at sea before reaching port.

CLASS II. (a) Passenger ships other than those of Class I.

(b) Cargo ships of 1,600 gross tons and upwards.

CLASS III. Cargo ships of 500 gross tons and upwards but of less than 1,600 gross tons.

CLASS IV. Cargo ships of 300 gross tons and upwards but of less than 500 gross tons.

FISHING BOATS. Seagoing fishing boats of more than 140 feet in length registered in the United Kingdom.


Class I and Class II ships are required to be equipped with radiotelegraphy; Class III ships, Class IV ships and fishing boats of more than 140 feet are required to be equipped with either radiotelegraphy or radiotelephony.

(3) It is necessary that first and second class radiotelegraph operators' certificates of competence issued by the Ministry of Posts and Telecommunications should show when the holder has completed six months', twelve months' and two years' service as operator on board ship. Operators should therefore present their certificates to a Radio Surveyor for endorsement as and when the foregoing service qualifications have been obtained.

This is page 17 from the "Handbook for Radio Operators" a book published by the British Post Office and the book we used in Canada as a text book at the various radio schools. One can see that the various categories as listed in our certificates are called a class in this document. The handbook I scanned for this illustration was the 1968 Edition. This was the thirteenth edition and included the second impression incorporating Amendment No. 1, September, 1971 so was actually printed by Her Majesty's Stationery Office in 1971. Most of us carried this handbook and had it well worn.

 Government of Canada Gouvernement du Canada		No. 054	
COAST GUARD RADIOTELEGRAPH OPERATOR'S CERTIFICATE		CERTIFICAT DE RADIOTÉLÉGRAPHISTE DE LA GARDE CÔTIÈRE	
(Holder) <i>Spurgeon G. Roscoe</i> under the provisions of the Radiocommunication Act has been examined in accordance with the Radio Operator Certificate Regulations (ROCR) and is qualified to act as a radiotelegraph and radiotelephone operator on any class of Coast Guard land or ship radio station.		(Titulaire) en vertu des dispositions de la Loi sur la Radiocommunication, a subi avec succès les épreuves prévues par le Règlement sur les certificats d'opérateur radio (RCOR) et il est apte à exercer les fonctions de radiotélégraphiste et de radiotéléphoniste d'une station côtière ou d'une station de navire de n'importe quelle catégorie.	
This certificate is valid for a period of five years from the date of issue:		Le présent certificat est valide pour une période de cinq ans à compter de la date de délivrance.	
Date of issue 93/12/01 Date de délivrance		Issued by <i>[Signature]</i> Agent délivreur Director General Telecommunications and Electronics Directeur Général Télécommunications et Électronique	
In recognition of the holder's competency, the validity of this certificate is hereby extended for a period of five years.		En reconnaissance de la compétence du titulaire du présent certificat, la validité de ce dernier est prolongée pour une période de cinq années.	
From à compter de		Issuing Officer Agent délivreur	
The holder is bound to preserve the secrecy of correspondence.		Le titulaire du présent certificat est tenu de garder le secret de la correspondance.	
The Minister may revoke or suspend this certificate if the holder has been guilty of misconduct, or has wilfully or negligently failed to comply with the Regulations.		Le Ministre peut révoquer ou suspendre le présent certificat si le titulaire est trouvé coupable d'inconduite ou s'il a enfreint le Règlement volontairement ou par négligence.	

This is my Coast Guard Radiotelegraph Operator's Certificate.

	McGraw-Hill Continuing Education Center 3939 Wisconsin Avenue, Washington, D. C.
THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT Spurgeon G. Roscoe HC110-J3 MH HAS SUCCESSFULLY COMPLETED OUR COURSE COMPLETE COMMUNICATIONS ELECTRONICS WITH FCC LICENSE AND HAS THIS DAY BEEN AWARDED A DIPLOMA	
July 24, 1975 Date	<i>[Signature]</i> President

Of the few Canadian radio operators who bothered to take additional electronic training most seem to have taken the same course. This is my graduation card but unfortunately we did not receive the FCC License. I managed to pass my First Class Certificate from this course.

New first class certificates were not issued after April 1st, 1976, and were replaced by the Radiocommunication Operator's General Certificate (Maritime), abbreviated to RGMC. The first students

for instruction in the RGMC commenced classes in our only radio school left in September 1979. The only radio school left in Canada teaching this subject was Institut Maritime du Quebec, Rimouski, Quebec, in French language only.

The RGMC came about from changes made within the regulations of the International Telecommunication Union during the late 1960's. Naturally the first nations to get this new certificate issued to their radio operators were the large seafaring nations. The British RGMC or General Certificate as they called it was first issued in the spring of 1971. Australia brought about her General Certificate at the same time as Canada and their first students were receiving instruction in 1979. Germany was to follow with their General Certificate shortly after that date.

The Canadian second class certificate was still available to anyone who wanted to sit for examination for a few years after the introduction of the RGMC certificate. The equipment for use for the last of the first and second class certificates was at least thirty years old. The American equipment was that making up the RCA 5U console and the various lifeboat radios and direction finders that came with that station. RCA terminated production of marine radio stations around 1960. The British equipment was that produced by the Marconi Company. This was their equipment given the names:

Mercury and Electra Receivers

Seaguard Auto-alarm

Reliance main transmitter

Auto-key automatic keyer

Lodestone direction finder

Salvita lifeboat radio

The first class certificate had the same equipment as for the second-class certificate with addition of:

Oceanspan high frequency transmitter

Salvare motor lifeboat radio

The equipment for these examinations certainly needed upgrading at the time of the introduction of the RGMC certificate. I studied the Marconi equipment at Radio College of Canada, Toronto, and because of this I used this equipment for both my second and first class certificates. I did not sail with any of the equipment I had for both examinations with the exception of the direction finder. Two of the ships I sailed in had the Lodestone direction finder but no one knew when they had been calibrated last. Both were installed in the chart room and were never turned on to my knowledge. Therefore, I did not use much of the advanced theory instruction I received from Mr. George Willby. Much of what he taught us pertained to the relative mess I found myself in on occasion. I often wished I could have recalled his exact words on various subjects.



The Marconi International Marine Communications Company Limited

This is the Wireless Room on the British General Cargo MV PORT NEW PLYMOUTH, Port Line Limited, London, United Kingdom. This vessel was built in 1960. Her station contains the equipment required for the Canadian 1st Class Certificate. Oceanspan Main Transmitter, Reliance Emergency Transmitter, Mercury and Electra Receivers, Alert Reserve Receiver, Battery Charging and Aerial Switching units. The name of the Radio Officer is unknown.



World Ship Photo Library

PORT NEW PLYMOUTH with international call sign GFXH

The syllabus for the RGMC certificate was most impressive. The RGMC certificate was to be all that was contained in the old first and second-class certificates. The International Telecommunication Union stated that the RGMC certificate was to be equal to or better than the old certificates. The RGMC fit the description better than to the letter. The examination for the RGMC certificate was much the same as for the old second class. The code requirement was the same, twenty words per minute. The theory was more modern with single side band, transistors, and so on. The big difference was the endorsements. The RGMC had two endorsements that required a total of twelve months sea experience. The RGMC certificate ignored coast stations because an international certificate was not required in Canada for these stations after 1966. The first endorsement for the RGMC brought one up to the level of the old second-class certificate countersigned for ships of the second category. The second endorsement in the RGMC brought one up to the level of the old first class certificate. That meant one could be in charge of a ship station of the first category. Canada did not own a ship of the first category when this certificate was created.

The second class certificate was mandatory in order to operate most stations for a period of fifty-four years but that is as far as it went. I know of one case where an operator was told that his certificate was void if he terminated working for the Department of Transport. Therefore, one has to assume that these certificates were more or less handed out in some instances. On the other hand I know of no one who received any disciplinary action taken towards his certificate for a misdemeanor. Therefore, the whole subject of the certificate takes on a rather sour aspect when looked upon realistically. I know of many that received their first second class certificate already countersigned for ships of the second category. In other words it all appears to have been based on politics and a case of who you knew, who you were, and where you were at any given time. So it did not change with the RGMC certificate for the few that wasted the time in getting it.

In order to try to understand this subject better I looked at it from different angles. One thing I wanted to find was a native born Canadian who had made a name in this trade in one way or another. I found no one although many were elevated to the higher positions involved. The two most noteworthy in the country, I would consider, were Mr. C. P. Edwards and Mr. D. V. Carroll. Mr. Edwards came from Wales and Mr. Carroll from England. So many of our illustrious leaders came from the United Kingdom that at times one was tempted to believe their promotion within our ranks was their birthright. Many made an attempt to explain this. I honestly believe the more accurate explanation is that the average Canadian was not about to spend any time in the isolated areas for the little remuneration offered. Therefore, many of these fellows came over and elevated themselves within the ranks and then dragged the others up. I also believe that many of our better operators were among the many that have immigrated to the United States over the years. One older operator went out of his way to state that after World War I so many Canadian operators went to the United States that there were only eighteen left to operate the stations in this country. Not likely a record of this has survived. The question that came to my mind on learning this was not what was wrong with those that left, but what was wrong with those who stayed



Mrs. H. H. MacLean

This is technician H. H. MacLean on a northern run in the late 1930's.



H. H. Brennan

This is some of the crew heading north in CCGS N. B. MCLEAN, 1948 for annual re-staffing and supply of northern radio stations.

Left to right:

1st row: Radio Operator George Sheppard, Cook Dacey

2nd row: Radio Operators Pat Short and Don Stocker, Radio Inspector Harris Brennan, Cooks Cecil Seymour and Les Cooney

3rd row: Radio Operators Art Girroir and Joe Morris, Technician Ernie Pike, Radio Operators Stan Braisill and Pete Melonvitch and Technician Bill Horton

In my estimation the late Mr. H. H. MacLean, a Canadian born and reared on the Magdalene Islands, was a hero, a man of special achievements. Mr. MacLean was known by the rather ambiguous title of Regional Technician for many years and that he was, and a very good one, but not in the sense that we interpret this term. It was normal for him to make a trip north along with the annual re-staffing and supply run for the northern stations. This was conducted by ship for many years, including some years after regular air service was inaugurated to the many isolated Arctic communities. This ship was often the N. B. MACLEAN. She would drop Mr. Maclean off at some isolated spot to install a new radio beacon. This meant that Mr. MacLean would be alone at this site for some weeks until picked up by the same ship. During this time he would clear a site and construct the building, and install the radio equipment, and would have it officially in service. Quite a feat! Today this would involve many men and many departments.

So much of this country is considered arctic wilderness that I felt there should be a story connected with a ship in that area. The most famous of these ships one would have to agree, was the RCMP ST ROCH. The operator in this ship should have been capable of a most interesting yarn when you consider the feat he had to accomplish in carrying out his day to day duties. From a former crewmember I learned this operator's name, and the fact he became an American citizen and an American radio operator. This tells something about the system in general. I have sailed on both the East and West Coasts of the United States in the BOUNTY. During that time I met a number of these former Canadian operators. The publicity surrounding the BOUNTY and her Canadian call sign, VYFM, naturally brought forth a number of these operators.

I tried further, the Canadian merchant vessel that holds the distinction of having gone the farthest north, not an icebreaker for that is designed for that purpose. The merchant ship that has gone farther north in Canada

than any other merchant ship was the Canadian vessel CHESLEY A. CROSBIE with call sign VGQB. She managed to reach Eureka, Ellsmere Island, in the summer of 1972. Who was her Radio Officer on this most adventuresome voyage? She had none. Like so many of the Canadian flag fleet, such as it is, she wandered around wherever she pleased not fitted with radiotelegraph, and she was three hundred tons larger than the international requirements for Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS) regulations. She undoubtedly made this voyage leaving messages at a number of the stations she passed. The most difficult ship we had to deliver a message was the Canadian flag vessel without the Radio Officer. The only contact we had with them was when the Mate or Master turned on the radio and called us for one reason or another.



Chimo Shipping Limited

MV CHESLEY A. CROSBIE with international call sign VGQB

Learning all these facts, I then made an attempt to try to compare Canadian Radio Operators with those of another country to see if we were running true to form, so to speak. I had had the pleasure of sailing with only two other operators in a merchant ship. I spent about one week with Thomas E. Potts in the GYPSUM COUNTESS and some time later another week with Ian R. Dodd in the GYPSUM QUEEN. Both operators were British and I learned much from the excellent training they had received, which included the six-month period sailing with another operator in order to qualify for the proper endorsement in their certificates. Although most of us made good use of the excellent publication "Handbook for Radio Operators" published by the British government, trying to compare our marine communications with theirs was impossible. They had one of the largest fleets of merchant ships in the world, even though many of them were nothing more than a form of flag of convenience for other nations. Their coastal radio stations were not only literally saturated in communications with their own ships, but the operators on these stations had to have the highest certificates available and several months experience in these ships, prior to their ever being considered for employment at these stations. Practically all the ships in this fleet were more than willing to accommodate junior operators for their six-month experience on first leaving radio school. Everyone needed and should have had this experience, preferably with a senior operator who was willing to spend some time in helping the newer operator. Few Canadian operators were ever so fortunate. As can be seen, there was no way to compare our system of marine communications.

The United States coast stations and ships were operated by private enterprise. The various unions involved appeared to have everything under control. The United Kingdom had an excellent union for their radio operators only as well. When you went through the various lists of countries around the world that might be compared to Canada in some way about as close as one could get to a reasonable comparison was Australia.

Australia is a British Commonwealth country. Their Coastal Stations were spread over a wide expanse and many of them were as isolated as some of ours, and their merchant fleet ranked within a position similar to ours. But, as soon as you tried to compare their marine communications with ours, you realized that they had things well in hand to the point the average Canadian radio operator should have become rather embarrassed, if nothing else. One of the most interesting aspects to us was that they did away with the requirement for a first and second class certificate for their coastal stations in 1976. They down graded the requirements considerably to a certificate known as a Coast Station Certificate. After three years they found this was not practicable and reverted to the first and second class certificates in 1979. The big difference between the Australian system and ours was that they made a point of keeping close tabs on their merchant fleet. The ship owner, government, and many others could care less whether or not a ship carried a radio operator. Ships sailed for centuries, without any form of communication and none were anywhere near as well constructed and safe as the ships of the 1970's. For the safety of a ship and her crew she should have had someone on board capable of operating and maintaining her electronic equipment. The days of a ship groping around in the fog without radar were long gone. There should have been someone on board capable of maintaining that equipment alone. Many ship owners with Canadian radio operators paid a number of bills for an electronic technician to go aboard and repair the equipment in their ship to find nothing more wrong with it than a blown fuse. Why the S.I.U. (Seaman's International Union), the Canadian Merchant Service Guild, and the few other unions involved with our merchant fleet, were not more concerned about this facet was a mystery.

The Canadian Merchant Service Guild did such a fine job for Canadian marine communications that one would think it should be renamed. One of the best choices would have been the Traitor Merchant Service Guild. This Canadian organization went to the United Kingdom in 1981 and complained that there were no Canadian Radio Officers, and wanted to make some arrangement with the British Radio and Electronic Officers' Union in order to recruit some British Radio Officers, to operate the stations fitted in Canadian ships. There were Canadian Radio Officers but no one knows why there were any because few Canadian ships bothered to carry one whether or not the law required them to do so. This of course was a fault of this very organization the Canadian Merchant Service Guild.

A Canadian ship should not have been permitted to sail outside of the Gulf of St. Lawrence, on the East Coast, and the coastal waters of British Columbia on the West Coast, without a Canadian Radio Officer on board, if it was 1600 gross tons or larger (SOLAS rules). The Australian government gave permission for a ship registered in their country to sail along their north coast without a Radio Officer in 1979. The Australian Radio Officers did not agree with this decision and took it to court through their union. There had to be a lot in our favour, the worlds radio operators, when the Australian Supreme Court ruled in the operators' favour. In other words, what was the point in having coastal radio stations when your own ships were permitted to run hither and yon without a Radio Officer? We had a number of ships doing just that and for the safety of the ship and crew there should have been a properly trained and licensed operator in each of these ships. One should be able to come up with as many reasons as I can. I could go on forever but would like to make only one further comparison. The Japanese, as we all know, are very good at designing, improving, and constructing in the field of electronics. We had nearly fifty of their fishing vessels off our coast during 1981 – 1982. Each one carried a proper radio operator. Some of these Japanese vessels were as follow listing their call sign, name, and gross tonnage. Note the size.

JMCJ	OTORI MARU NO.38	404
JERF	YUKO MARU NO.18	344
JNZR	MATSUEI MARU NO.11	344
JMTE	FUKU MARU NO.38	404
JJUN	SEISHO MARU NO.33	299
JCYU	DAITO MARU NO.2	284
JRVS	MATSUEI MARU NO.8	299
JGOI	KOSHEN MARU NO.8	284
JCDG	KAISEI MARU NO.18	284



Kyokuyo Company Limited, Tokyo, Japan

This is the MV SATSUKI MARU built by Hashihama Shipbuilding in 1973. She had international call sign JGWF and was a refrigerated cargo vessel built for transporting fruit and fish. She called station VCS on occasion while taking on a cargo of frozen fish from the Japanese vessels fishing in this area.



Japan Radio Company, Tokyo, Japan

This is the Radio Station in SATSUKI MARU call sign JGWF.

The Equipment:

JRC's JSS-15 (1.2 KW SSB radio console) including NRD-10 and NRD-15R Receivers

JRC's JHV-202 International Harbor Radiotelephone
JRC's JAX-21 Facsimile Receiver
JRC's JSB-25 27MHZ SSB
Koden's KS-530 Direction Finder

Realizing this simple fact I took a look at all the fishing vessels and tried to compare them with our fleet. I had seen a number of photographs of European fishing vessels and I came up with a number of questions. The British fleet carried so many operators that their radio operators' union was divided into a section for them alone. Why did these vessels carry a radio operator? Did they travel farther from home than our vessels? I think not. Iceland is no farther from Scotland than Halifax is from the Grand Banks. It appeared to be based on a time factor, the time spent at sea. Their vessels were no larger than the Canadian fishing vessels and the following are a few examples, listing their call sign, name and gross tonnage.

GDSU	WILLIAM WILBERFORCE	698
GPKA	BOSTON CONCORD	758
GOWC	GAVINA	532
GPHY	IRVANA	533
GOWU	BOSTON BEVERLY	517
GOZJ	LUNEDA	532
GQHH	JACINTA	599
GYBE	BOSTON LINCOLN	994
GPHH	FARNELLA	1207
GRLH	BOSTON EXPLORER	425
GRPH	BOSTON KESTREL	431
MWTR	BLACK WATCH	697
GIAF	ST. GERONTIUS	659
GOMV	INVINCIBLE	1085
MZUR	SOUTHELLA	1144
GTHL	PRINCESS ANNE	1476
GSDE	SIR FRED PARKES	1033
GOYB	BOSTON BLENHEIM	517



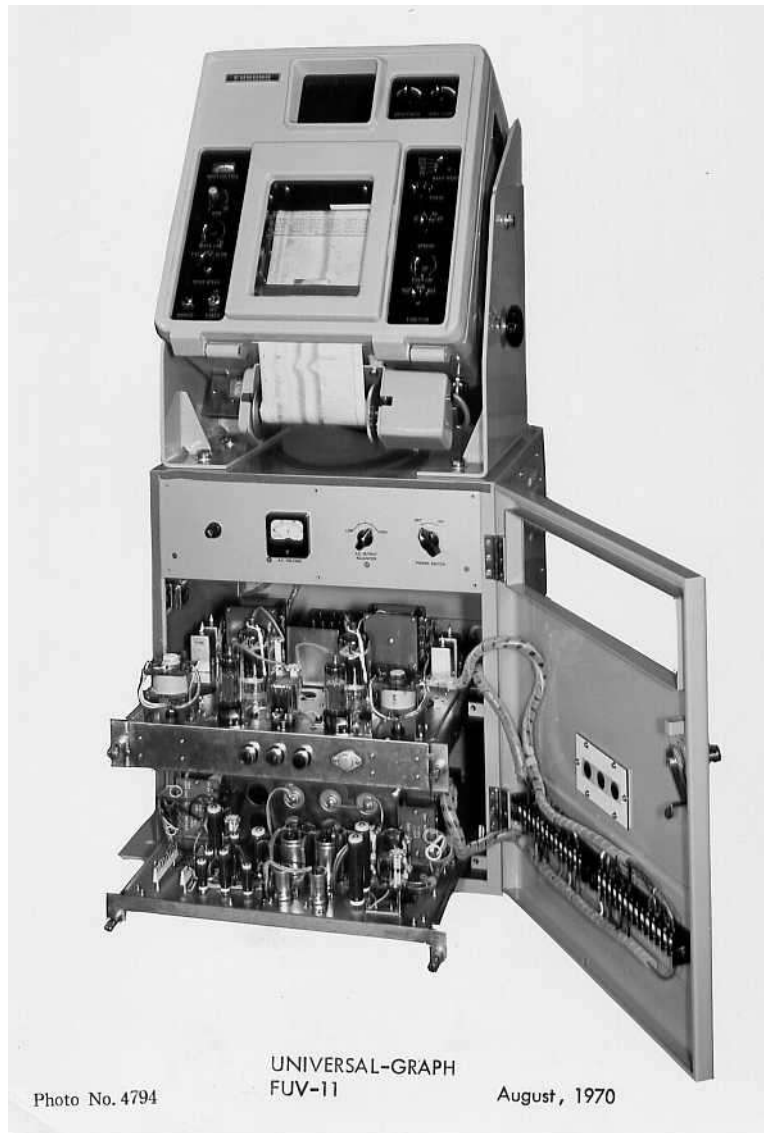
Geoffrey Pass F.I.L.P., Grimsby, via British Radio and Electronics Officers' Union

This is Skipper Alan Redpath operating the Furuno Universal-Graph aboard FV ROSS JAGUAR.

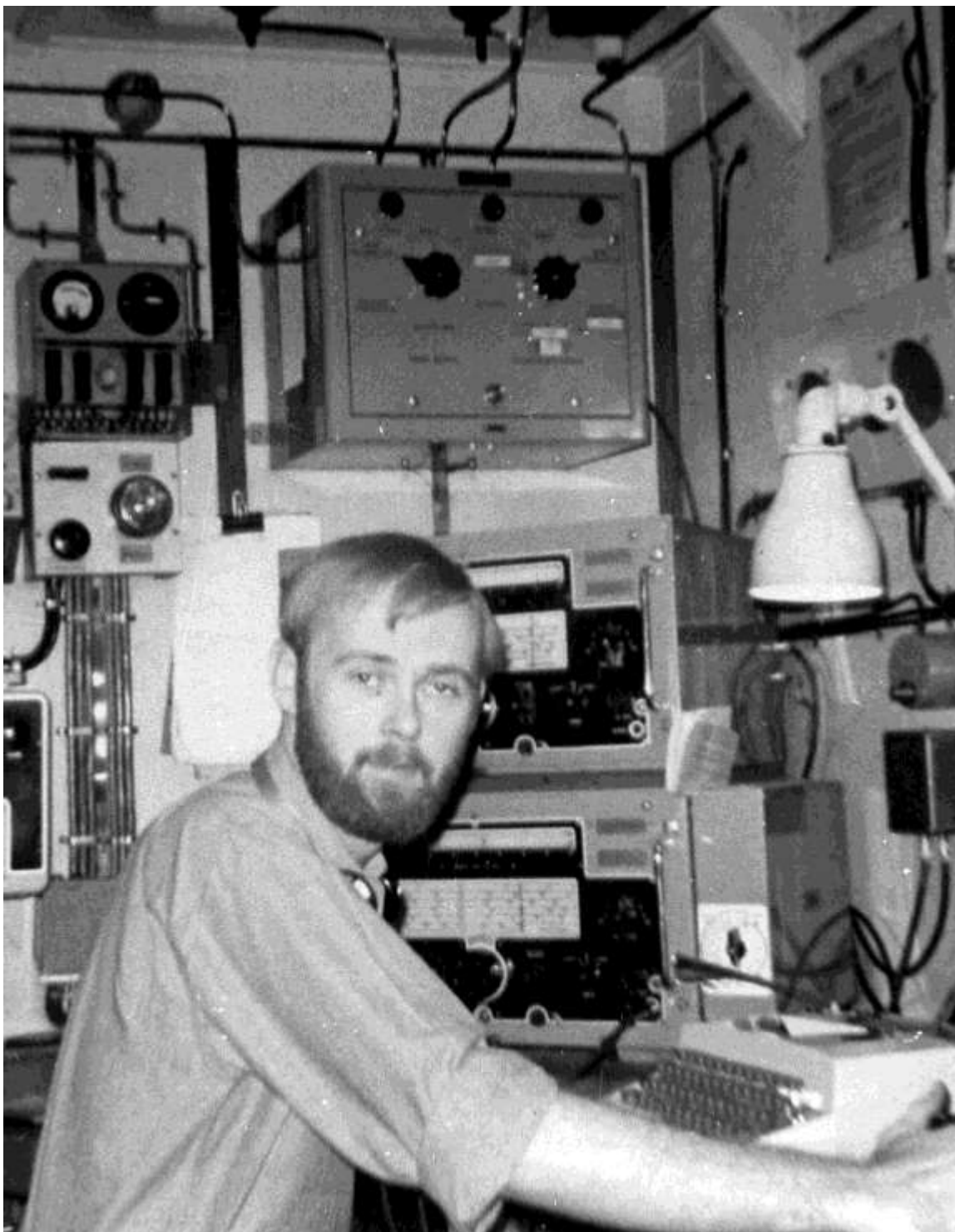


Geoffrey Pass F.I.L.P., Grimsby, via British Radio and Electronics Officers' Union

This is another view of Skipper Alan Redpath operating the Furuno Universal-Graph aboard FV ROSS JAGUAR.



Geoffrey Pass F.I.L.P., Grimsby, via British Radio and Electronics Officers' Union
A Furuno Universal-Graph that was used as both a Fishfinder and Fathometer



John Matterface

This is Radio Officer John Matterface on duty in the Radio Room of the British FV WILLIAM WILBERFORCE with international call sign GDSU in May 1968



Boston Deep Sea Fisheries Limited via the Radio and Electronic Officers' Union
FV BOSTON BLENHEIM



Boston Deep Sea Fisheries Limited via the Radio and Electronic Officers' Union

FV PRINCESS ANNE

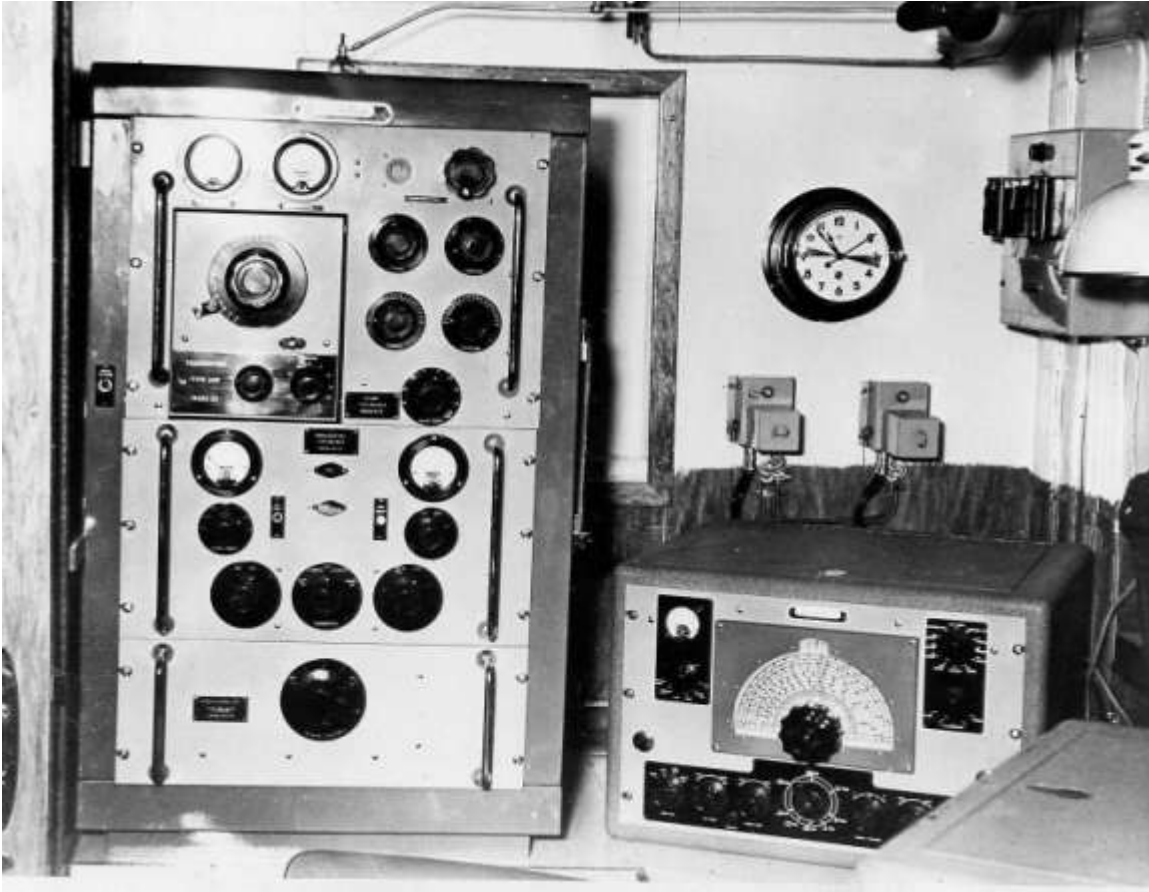


Boston Deep Sea Fisheries Limited via the Radio and Electronic Officers' Union

FV SIR FRED PARKES



Boston Deep Sea Fisheries Limited via the Radio and Electronic Officers' Union
FV BOSTON BEVERLEY



British Radio and Electronic Officers' Union

This is one of the Transmitters and Receivers in the British FV BLACK WATCH with call sign MWTR.



World Ship Society

FV BLACK WATCH



British Radio and Electronic Officers' Union

The Redifon GR377 SSB 2-mHz Radiotelephone



British Radio and Electronic Officers' Union
The Redifon G341 Transmitter



British Radio and Electronic Officers' Union

The Redifon R408 Receiver



Donald I. Innes, Hesse, via the British Radio and Electronic Officers' Union

This is a portion of the Radio Room of the British FV SOUTHELLA with call sign MZUR taken in 1969. The equipment from left to right: Redifon Radiotelephone Transceiver, Redifon Broadcast Receiver and Recorder that could be played throughout the vessel for the crew's entertainment, Loran Receiver, and a Kodon Automatic Radio Direction Finder.



Donald I. Innes, Hesse, via the British Radio and Electronic Officers' Union

This is part of the Bridge of the British FV SOUTHELLA showing the Chart Table, Lighting Panel (Switches), Intercom Telephones, etc.



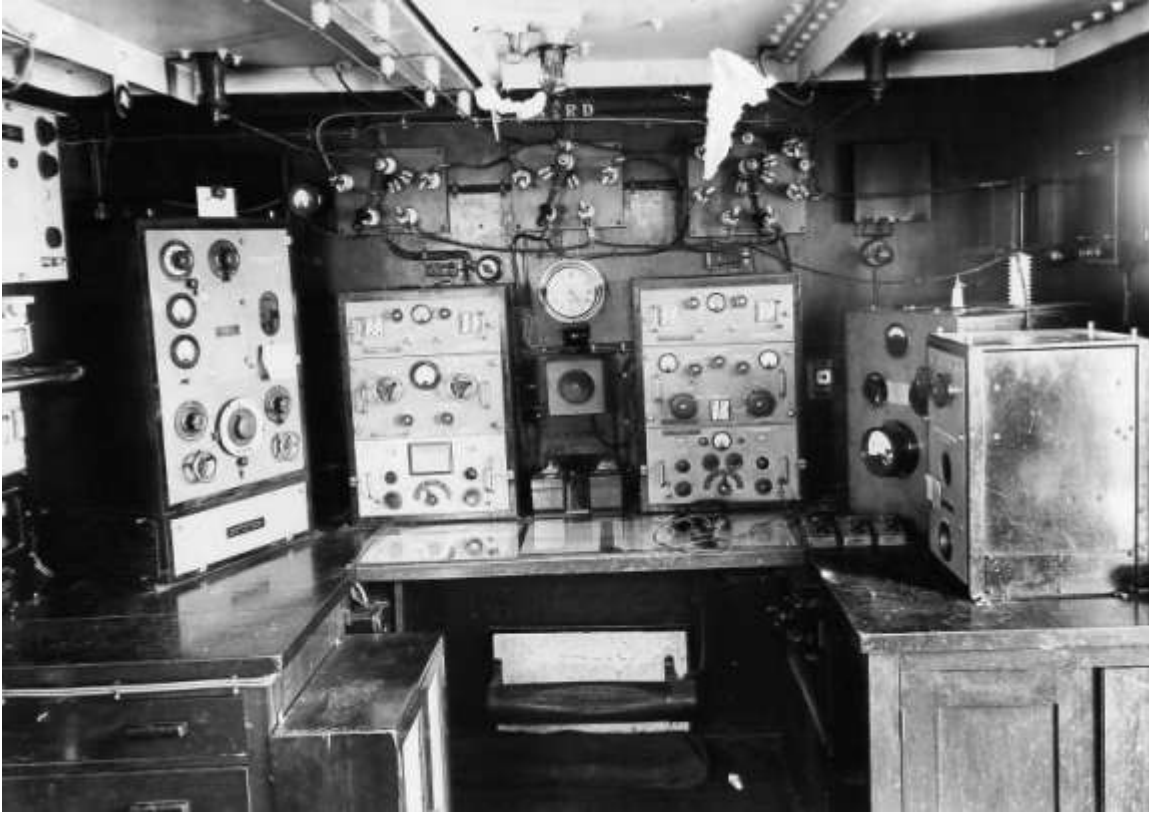
Walter Fussey and Son, Hessle, via the British Radio and Electronic Officers' Union

This is a small portion of the Electronics fitted in the British FV INVINCIBLE with call sign GOMV. The two-tone panel is a Redifon Entertainment panel that was used for listening to Broadcast Radio Stations, Records, Tape Recorder, etc., or as a general intercom throughout the vessel.



Donald I. Innes, Hesse, via the British Radio and Electronics Officers' Union

This is routine maintenance taking place in the Radio Room of the British FV ST. GERONTIUS with call sign GIAF. This was a Redifon Station.



The British Radio and Electronics Officers' Union

This is a typical Radio Room fitted in a British Fishing Vessel of the 1950's. This one could have been the FV EMBERCON if there was such a vessel, but that is as close as I can come to locating the identity of the station. Can you either identify the equipment or the vessel? Sorry about the poor quality of the photograph.



John Matterface

The British FV BOSTON CONCORDE with call sign GPKA

British fishing vessels of 400 gross tons or larger carried certificated operators. The following two did not carry an operator and this is the reason I have based my assumption on a time factor rather than the distance factor.

GUUL	BOSTON HALIFAX	387
GUSU	BOSTON STIRLING	387

These are random examples that I chose for no particular reason. I have seen photographs of the radio rooms in a few of the above. I must admit that I saw radio rooms in merchant ships that were fitted with much less equipment than these. Actually from all the electronics that was fitted in these fishing vessels, a warship would be the only other type of ship that I can think of that might carry more electronic equipment because the wheelhouse in these fishing vessels were literally louzy with every gadget one could imagine. Each Canadian fishing vessel had just as much electronic equipment as any other fishing vessel within the worlds fishing fleet. They did not carry an operator and therefore did not have the maintenance and communication capabilities of the others. From correspondence with Mr. Harold Connor, Chairman, National Sea Products Limited, one of the largest fishing concerns in Canada, January 1976, he states: "At the moment we have about fifty fishing vessels, some thirty-three of these are side or stern trawlers, and the balance of them are scallopers, herring fishing vessels, and so forth."

The following is a list of the Canadian fishing vessels of 400 gross tons or larger from the 1979 List of Canadian Fishing Vessels. Those with CANADA or CAPE as the prefix of the name belong to National Sea Products. If nothing else this adds further proof that our Department of Communications had no actual ruling on who got a four letter call sign or who got one of those other things some call a call sign. Many vessels smaller than these, registered in Canada, had a four letter call sign. These fishing vessels are listed in the manner I listed the British and Japanese fishing vessels, call sign, name, and gross tonnage.

CG2683	ALFRED NEEDLER	1200
VC8335	A. W. HENRIKSEN	789
VC7185	ARCTIC HARVESTER	696
CGGB	ARCTICA	702
VGWS	ARLENE E. MELLON	651
VGGN	ATLANTIC BEATRICE	624
VC8910	ATLANTIC CAROL	624
VC8218	ATLANTIC CLAIRE	661
VC8732	ATLANTIC DOROTHY	661
VC8544	ATLANTIC ELIZABETH	661
VGKV	ATLANTIC ELLEN	624
CYPG	ATLANTIC GAIRDNER	1444
VGVQ	ATLANTIC HAWKE	1445
VGGL	ATLANTIC JAG	1441
VOZQ	ATLANTIC JANE	624
VC4959	ATLANTIC LINDSEY	661
VC8952	ATLANTIC MARGARET	624
VOGQ	ATLANTIC MARIE	624
VDYS	ATLANTIC NORMA	624
VGfV	ATLANTIC OCEAN MAID	1440
VC8940	ATLANTIC OLGA	661
VGGV	ATLANTIC PATON	1441
VGKP	ATLANTIC PEGGY	625
VGGY	ATLANTIC RUTHANN	624
VXMZ	ATLANTIC TONI	624
VC8346	BARBARA N	796
VGKT	BEDEQUE	511
VC6721	CANADA CLUB	477
VC6720	CANADA PARK	477
VC6155	CANSO CONDOR	684
VC6157	CANSO DART	684
----	CANSO LIGHT	661
VC6158	CANSO MARINER	685 Sank April 1 st , 1982
VYNS	CAPE ALERT	618
VXLS	CAPE ARGUS	628
VGJZ	CAPE BAULD	629
VCXB	CAPE BALLARD	984
VCSV	CAPE BEAVER	984
VCTF	CAPE BRIER	984
VXKW	CAPE CHARLES	628
VCSX	CAPE FAME	984
VC8596	CAPE FAREWELL	748
VY3823	CAPE FOURCHU	984
VC8057	CAPE FOX	750
VGJW	CAPE HOWE	628
VC9122	CAPE HUNTER	748
VC6178	CAPE JOHN	629
VC8927	CAPE LA HAVE	750
VCSW	CAPE LANCE	984
VC5640	CAPE MORROW	617
VC8065	CAPE NEDDICK	749
CYBP	CAPE NELSON	618
VC5639	CAPE NOVA	617
VYZM	CAPE PICTOU	616
VC9606	CAPE SAMBRO	750
VC5713	CAPE SCOTIA	618

VC8067	CAPE SMOKY	750
VC8594	CAPE VERDE	750
VC8942	CAPE WRATH 2	750
VGMG	CAPE YORK	628
VGRD	DOLORES T. JANDA	683 Sank February 1982
VC6467	EGMONT	511
VC8350	ESTHER BOYD	792
VC8558	FORTUNE ENDEAVOUR	480
----	FUMI	476
VC8423	G. C. BASSIN	446
VC7381	G. C. CAP AUX MEULES	441
VC8424	G. C. FATIMA	446
VC8438	G. C. GRANDE ENTRÉE	438
VC7380	G. C. HAVRE AUBERT	440
VC9450	GADUS ATLANTICA	2351
VCJG	GADUS PETREL	878
VGFK	GRAND BARON	539
VGGX	GRAND COUNT	540
VGVP	GRAND KNIGHT	539
VOPQ	GRAND PRINCE	535
VC6136	GULF GEORGETOWN	518
VXSG	GULF GERD	520
VC5453	GULF GRENADIER	513
VGQM	GULF GUNN	504
VC6156	H. M. KAISER	683
VC6137	HILLSBOROUGH	510
VGVI	J. B. NICKERSON	652
VC8922	KLOSTER	544
VC9616	LADY HAMMOND	897
VC7000	LADY JANICE	434
VC8257	LADY JOHNSON 2	591
----	LADY MARIA	433
VCQG	LUMAAQ	433
VODP	MAI	982
VY2577	MERSEY VIKING	600
VA6784	NADINE	493
VOQP	NATHAN CUMMINGS	684
VOLQ	NEWFOUNDLAND EAGLE	835
VGGZ	NEWFOUNDLAND FALCON	836
VCLL	NEWFOUNDLAND HAWK	835
VGFT	NEWFOUNDLAND KESTREL	835
----	NORANDO	453
VC9071	OLD ROCK	2379
VC8509	PENNYHOPE	748
VA7126	RALI 2	489
VGVM	SANDRA L. GAGE	514
CZ3155	SOUTHWARD HO	421
VGWL	THORFINN	599
VC8334	UNIMARFISH	472
VC8345	W. R. RITCEY	791
CYMP	WESTWHALE 8	581
----	WILFRED TEMPLEMAN	1200
VGMI	ZAGREB	652
VC8928	ZAMBESI	650
VC8750	ZAMBIA	650
VC8730	ZAMORA	650

VC8943	ZARAGOZA	846
VGPN	ZEBULON	650
VOQF	ZEELAND	667
VC8560	ZEILA	672
VC8245	ZENICA	672
VC8990	ZERMATT	652
VC8991	ZEVEN	650
VC8504	ZIDANI	672
VGGK	ZINDER	652
VC5988	ZOGI	672
VOQL	ZONNEMAIRE	667
VGPR	ZORY	651
VOWW	ZURICH	667
VGGJ	ZWEELOO	649



John Rae

This is a close-up of some of the electronics fitted on the Bridge of the FV CAPE CHARLES



John Rae

This is the Fishing Master's Command Position on the Bridge of the FV CAPE CHARLES



John Rae

This is the Canadian FV CAPE CHARLES alongside at Halifax 1980. This vessel received severe damage from a storm on January 16th, 1982, and had to be escorted into St. John's, Newfoundland, with her wheelhouse windows smashed out. The buoy vessel CCGS BARTLETT with call sign CGDR escorted her into St. John's.

I was unable to locate the call sign of some of these vessels, which is further proof that all our ships should have been properly entered in the International Telecommunication Union List of Ship Stations. It is a good indication that these vessels without a call sign have never had a proper licence for their radio stations. From the difficulty I had in locating some of these call signs, a number of these radio station licences needed renewing. There were nearly fifteen thousand smaller fishing vessels in Canada. One can imagine the nightmare in trying to locate the call signs of all that are fitted with radio stations. We often had a telephone call or a message at the VCS station for one of these vessels, but very rare was communications established. Actually, seldom was any contact made with these or any of the other Canadian fishing vessels because they communicated on their own company frequencies, and they used to complain of that to us as though we had a magic wand to wave in order to contact the vessel they wanted.

It is interesting to note that those listed with CANSO as the prefix of the name are some of those built for Acadia Fisheries Limited. For example: ACADIA TERN became CANSO MARINER when this vessel was turned over to Marine Trawlers Limited. Acadia Fisheries was a branch of the large British fishing interests, Boston Deep Sea Trawlers. They copied the design, equipment, fishing ability, whatever the terminology, of these Acadia vessels into their vessels BOSTON BLENHEIM and BOSTON BEVERLY. Needless to say they were not impressed with the Canadian navigation or communication features and did not copy that detail. There was no known law that stipulated these foreign fishing vessels must carry a Radio Officer. It was a simple case where these foreign owners wanted good communication and maintenance for their vessels.

The fishing community of Australia purchased a fleet of these large fishing vessels. Apparently the fishing in that area would not support this fleet and I heard that it folded with the loss of seventeen million Australian dollars. The Australian Radio Officers would have made a point of making the radio rooms in this fleet efficient maintenance and communication centers. We in Canada had the fish that could support this fishing fleet and the fleets from many countries. It is a shame the Canadian Radio Officer was not a part of this fleet.

There were some Canadian fishing vessels that disappeared over the years. One cannot help but wonder if there had been a Radio Officer in these vessels if they could have alerted someone on 500 kHz and saved all on board. These fishing vessels were using 2182 kHz only and VHF FM when it came out during the 1960's. Radiotelegraph on 500 kHz was so much more reliable as a distress frequency that you can hardly find any reason for comparison between it and 2182 kHz. When VAR Saint John had 500 kHz I sent a weather observation to him with no trouble via a twenty-five watt emergency transmitter. At the time I was in Cape Cod Bay and this same twenty-five watts on 2182 kHz radiotelephone would have done well to reach Boston, a very short distance to the west of us.

One voyage of which I learned through this research on the fishing vessel is especially noteworthy. The radar became unserviceable in one of these Canadian fishing vessels and the Captain of the vessel decided to repair it. He had seen the radar technician adjust the components in the case on the wheelhouse bulkhead with a screwdriver. So the Captain found a screwdriver, took the cover off this unit that happened to be the high voltage power supply, and was not long getting the screwdriver across the output of the high voltage. This understandably, burned the end off the screwdriver and threw said Captain to the other side of the wheelhouse, in that order. You have to give this guy credit he wasn't about to give up for getting knocked down the once. He got up and decided to tackle the problem from another angle. In looking around he noticed the thing on the mast, the scanner, wasn't turning around like it normally did. That had to be it. So he called the Mate out and told him to get up the mast and lash himself to the mast, and then spin that thing around so he could see if there was anything on the radar. You can imagine the cursing the Mate was directing towards his Captain while carrying out his orders, but this was not so. This Mate apologized to his Captain stating the reason it failed to operate was because he could not turn the thing fast enough. Luckily the scanner did not decide to operate while the Mate was up there or it would have probably killed him or thrown him off into the water. This of course is but one of many isolated similar incidents. It was amazing these vessels fished so well because with the training they had it is hard to believe they were getting all that was available to them from the electronics they carried. The way they operated their radio communications equipment was a good indication of the way they operated the rest of their equipment.

There was any amount of lack of foresight back then. When I consider this subject I cannot help but remember the incident where we wasted time in making a rendezvous with a small fishing vessel while I was Radio Officer in CCGS TUPPER. We were searching a given area for a vessel that had disappeared and during this search a fishing vessel called us and said that it had just found a small dinghy. We wanted this dinghy to see if it had been carried on the missing vessel.



Kenneth C. Roscoe

This is Radio Officer S. G. "Spud" Roscoe CCGS TUPPER holding son Mitchell at the Charlottetown Yacht Club, Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island. CCGS TUPPER in the background is at her berth at the Coast Guard Base Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island in 1974. One can see a bit of the bow of CCGS WOLFE at her home berth in the background. The open door just below the maple leaf on the funnel is the emergency generator room. The two windows just forward of this door are in the radio room. One can just make out the DF antenna at the masthead just above her two radar antennae.

The fishing vessel that called gave his position and when we got there, we found nearly thirty vessels in the area. This fishing vessel claimed he could see us but we had no idea which vessel was in communication with us. Luckily this vessel had no nets down and could maneuver over to us. That was one of my most frustrating experiences at sea. If a good direction finder had been in the radio room, I could have brought us right alongside that vessel steaming full speed. The TUPPER had one of the best direction finders in the chart room of any ship in which I sailed. Her direction finder loop antenna was mounted on top of the main mast and we often calibrated it when passing a radio beacon on the New Brunswick coast. It was very accurate but the damn thing was only good for the navigational radio beacons and the radiotelegraph distress and calling frequency of 500 kHz. It would not tune in the radiotelephone distress and calling frequency of 2182 kHz or the inter-ship communication frequency 2134 kHz that we were communicating with this vessel. This very Captain got mad as hell when I tried to explain to him that any radio transmission was quite capable of being used for direction finding purposes. He claimed that if it was not a radio navigational beacon for marine use, it was of no use. This attitude was the reason a Coast Guard Ship was not fitted with a proper direction finder capable of using the radiotelephone frequencies.

While I was researching the fishing fleets I wanted to find a foreign vessel that would compare with our CCGS ALERT with call sign CGDQ. Our ALERT carried three Radio Officers at this time and one was home on leave each trip. All three had a cabin on the ship, but just two were sailing in her on any patrol. All three were radiotelegraph operators and did no maintenance. Any repairs were carried out at the Dartmouth base or a technician would be flown out to the vessel if required. The only vessel I could locate that could be compared with our ALERT was the British vessel MIRANDA with call sign GULL, believe it or not. MIRANDA was less than half the size of our ALERT. She was just over eight hundred gross registered tons and ALERT was over seventeen hundred gross registered tons.



Rick Falvey VE1HA

This is Radio operator Rick Falvey at the Shift Supervisor/Routing Position, Halifax Marine Radio VCS, Ketch Harbour, Nova Scotia, in 1972. When I wrote this article comparing ALERT with MIRANDA Rick was Radio Officer in ALERT.



Canadian Coast Guard

The Canadian Coast Guard Ship ALERT with call sign CGDQ. We referred to her as the “Dairy Queen” from the DQ in her call sign.

A quick look into MIRANDA’s radio room left one sick with envy. She carried three radio officers and an electronics officer. If her equipment became defective her electronics officer got it going and he could fill in as one of the operators permitting one of the three operators to get some maintenance experience. It was a much more realistic system than ALERT and MIRANDA was fitted with much the same equipment as our ALERT. MIRANDA did much the same job as ALERT and her sick bay carried a medical doctor whereas ALERT carried a registered nurse. MIRANDA often did weather broadcasts for the fishing vessels in her area and it was a real eye opener to make this comparison. I guess as close as one can come to understand this is simply to realize the foreign fishing vessel carried radio operators for some reason and the Canadian vessel did not.

CANADIAN SHIPS

The following were the Canadian ships that were either fitted with radiotelegraph or should have been fitted with radiotelegraph in order to meet the Safety of Life at Sea Conventions if they ventured outside Canadian territorial waters. This is the 1979 List of Canadian Ships and I have also included those ships that were fitted voluntarily and those that were fitted and had their stations removed. Some of these ships were engaged in voyages on the Great Lakes and rarely came as far East as Anticosti Island, Quebec, and some ventured as far as Halifax, Nova Scotia. Others were government ferries running from one port to another within Canada. Several of the others ran hither and yon without a Radio Officer.

I will use the following symbols where known:

F – Fitted with a radiotelegraph station and carried a Radio Officer or is capable of carrying one.

NF – This ship has never been fitted with a radiotelegraph station but is in excess of 1600 gross tons.

FR – The radiotelegraph station was removed by the owner of this ship.

We often received a message at station VCS from a Canadian ship in the high arctic that was relayed by a U.S. Coast Guard Icebreaker because the Canadian ship was up there without a radio officer. I received one from a foreign ship one time as though he were the Canadian ship. He was not using proper procedures but was relaying a message for a Canadian ship he met that was not equipped with a radio officer. This is the reason I wanted to learn this history and to see if I could make some sense out of our trade. When I started this project I felt we were the “funny farm of the nautical neighbourhood” and I found little to change my mind.

Some of the finest and most historic ships in the world made up this fleet and some of the best seamen the world had seen sailed them. For that reason I feel an otherwise boring list of detail will be a bit easier to read if I make a few notes on those that I knew personally. I have two complaints only: (1) each ship should have had a four letter call sign issued randomly and permanently from our international allotments. (2) The ones that traveled some distance should have been fitted and carried a proper radio officer so that they would have had communications and maintenance equal to or better than their foreign sisters.

F VYBL A. C. CROSBIE

Built 1972

Chimo Shipping, St. John's, Newfoundland

Deep Sea Cargo

Marconi Station

Former:

GPUD IDA LUNDRIGAN

IDA LUNDRIGAN was Keith Bennett's last ship. Keith came to the VCS station from her back in 1975 and was promoted shift supervisor in 1980.

NF VDJB A. S. GLOSSBRENNER

Built 1966

Algoma Central Railway

Great Lakes Cargo

F CGBD A. T. CAMERON

Built 1958

Fisheries Canada

Fisheries Research

Home Port – St. John's, Newfoundland

NF VGWC ABEGWEIT

Built 1947

Canadian National

Icebreaker Car Ferry

Cape Tormentine, New Brunswick, to Borden, Prince Edward Island

When new she was the largest ice breaking car ferry in the world. She had four propellers, two aft and two foreward and all four worked well in ice. This feature was tried on some other ships but for some reason did not work very well.

F CGCB ACADIA

Built 1913

Bedford Institute

Mentioned in text

Now part of the Maritime Museum, Halifax, Nova Scotia

NF VDRC AGAWA CANYON

Built 1970

Algoma Central Railway

Great Lakes Cargo

NF VGMD AIME GAUDREAU

Built 1964

Kent Line Limited

Coastal tanker serving eastern Canada and is mentioned in the text under Irving Tankers

F CGDQ ALERT

Built 1969

Coast Guard

Rescue vessel

Marconi Station

Chief Radio Officer Rick Falvey

Radio Officer James Walker

Radio Officer Joseph Morris

NF CGBF ALEXANDER HENRY

Built 1959

Coast Guard

Great Lakes Icebreaker Buoy Tender

NF VCPK ALGOBAY

Built 1978

Algoma Central Railway

Great Lakes and Gulf of St. Lawrence

NF VGKM ALGOCEN

Built 1968

Algoma Central Railway

Great Lakes

NF VCPX ALGOLAKE

Built 1977

Algoma Central Railway

Great Lakes

NF VCDT ALGOPORT

Built 1979

Algoma Central Railway

Great Lakes and Gulf of St. Lawrence

NF VYNG ALGORAIL

Built 1968

Algoma Central Railway

Great Lakes

FR VODB ALGOSEA

Built 1970

Algoma Central Railway

Ocean Class

Former:

DIPL BROOKNES

The Algoma Central Railway vessels are listed per the class terminology as used by this company.

ALGOSEA ventured as far as New Orleans without a radio officer on board.

NF VGJD ALGOSOO

Built 1974

Algoma Central Railway

Great Lakes

NF VDFP ALGOWAY

Built 1972

Algoma Central Railway

Great Lakes

NF ---- ALGOWOOD

Built 1980

Algoma Central Railway

Great Lakes

NF VC7167 ALPHONSE DESJARDINS

Built 1971

La Societe des Traversiers du Quebec

Probably a Quebec Ferry

F VGDD AMBROSE SHEA

Built 1967

Canadian National

Ferry

Nova Scotia, Newfoundland and Labrador

Radio station and radio officer unknown

F VCLM ARCTIC

Built 1978

Canada Steamships

Experimental bulk ore carrier that hauled ore out of the Arctic to Europe

Redifon Station

Radio Officer Dermot Cruise



Radio Officer Michel Audet

This is MV ARCTIC loading at Narvik, Norway, February 1979. Michel Audet was her Radio Officer at the time and I believe Dermot Cruise was her last Radio Officer.

NF VXMM ARCTIC TRADER

Built 1958

Shell Canadian Tankers

Small tanker registered at Saint John, New Brunswick

Former:
VXMM TYEE SHELL

F VGDK ARTHUR SIMARD

Built 1973

Les Chantiers Davie

Small Tanker

Eastern Canada and Arctic

Became:

VGDK LE CEDRE NO 1 (French for Cedar Tree)

Marconi Globespan Station

Radio Officer on northern voyages only

Jack Campbell and Gerry Graham sailed in her last.

Most of the vessels in this fleet were coastal tankers of similar design. They had radio rooms and Marconi Globespan stations.

NF VA2685 AVONDALE

Built 1908

Marine Salvage

Great Lakes

Former:

ZFDO AVONDALE

WB5639 GEORGE F. RAND

WB5639 DETROIT EDISON

KDVF ADAM E. CORNELIUS

This is one of the many vessels on the Great Lakes that appear to last forever. These old vessels have seen the history of marine communications, flags, spark, continuous wave, radiotelephone, and now the era of satellite communications.

F CGCL BAFFIN

Built 1956

Bedford Institute

World Research

Marconi Station

Radio Officer Phil Rafuse

F VCBD BAIE COMEAU 2

Built 1973

Quebec and Ontario Transport

Deep Sea Cargo

Marconi Commander Station

No radio officer carried

Former:

EEEEY MONTE ALMANZOR

F VGWP BAIE JAMES

Built 1959

Boreal Navigation Inc

Ice reinforced General Cargo

Danish radio station

No radio officer

Former:

VGWP PERCY M. CROSBY

OWQI PERLA DAN

Became:

3FPX MOTHI

The BAIE JAMES was a most interesting vessel. She became the MOTH and was registered in Panama after serving as the BAIE JAMES. She was built in Norway as one of the ice-reinforced freighters designed and built for the Lauritzen Company of Copenhagen, Denmark. Several of these former Danish vessels have been sold to Canadian interests and registered in Canada. The first of these ice reinforced general cargo ships designed and built for this company was the KISTA DAN with call sign OYJR. She was built in Denmark in 1952. She proved that it was economical for a private company to own and operate these expensive vessels. For some years this was the only merchant fleet capable of providing a regular service in and out of the St. Lawrence River during the ice season. This fleet became a familiar sight in both the Arctic and Antarctic Oceans. When KISTA DAN terminated her service with the Lauritzen Company she became the Canadian ship MARTIN KARLSEN with call sign VOLK. During 1979 she again changed flag and name to the British ship BENJAMIN BOWRING with call sign GYOH. In this latter capacity she was providing a support service to the expedition that circled the world via the north and south poles. BENJAMIN BOWRING visited the West Coast of Canada during the early part of 1981. Another of these famous ships that became Canadian was the RITVA DAN with call sign OZBM. She was the Canadian ship KAKAWI with call sign VGDP for a few years. Vincent Ouellet was her radio officer while named the KAKAWI. KAKAWI had a beautiful radio room. So large there were three positions for operating the station. The equipment was laid out on a long shelf above a long operating desk that had the three operating positions. This radio station had the largest transmitter I saw fitted in a merchant ship and was located at one end of this long desk.

NF CYJW BAIE ST PAUL
Built 1963
Canada Steamships
Great Lakes

NF VDYK BAY TRANSPORT
Built 1950
Lothar Loeb
Tanker
Former: COASTAL CARRIER with call sign VDYK

? CZ5893 BEAVER MACKENZIE
Built 1939
Westminster Dredging
West Coast Dredge
Former:
---- W. D. THAMES
---- BATAVUS

NF VGKB BEAVERCLIFFE HALL
Built 1965
Halco
Great Lakes

NF CYKF BLACK BAY
Built 1962
Canada Steamships
Great Lakes

? CYDP BLACK RIVER
Built 1896
Quebec and Ontario Transport
Great Lakes
Former:
---- BLANCHE H

---- SIR ISAAC LOTHIANBELL

F VDND BLUENOSE

Built 1955

Canadian National

Ferry from Yarmouth, Nova Scotia, to Bar Harbor, Maine

R.C.A. 5U radio station

David Vail and Henry Whitehead were the Radio Officers for many years.



Canadian National Marine Corporation

MV BLUENOSE



Radio Officer David Vail VE1GM

This is the late Henry Whitehead VE1AUM and David Vail VE1GM Radio Officer's MV BLUENOSE. Hank has his arm in the way of the date on the calendar so I am unable to make out the date.

F CZDW BLUETHROAT
 Armed Forces Auxiliary
 Military Station
 Radio Officer Phillip J. Lewis

FR VOSY BONAVIDA
 Built 1956
 Canadian National
 Coastal passenger and freight vessel that sailed around Newfoundland and Labrador and the radio officer was a purser that had not used radiotelegraph for years.
 Sister:

VGVV NONIA

FR VYFM BOUNTY

Built 1960

Metro Goldwyn Mayer, Toronto, Ontario

Full rigged ship

First vessel built solely to make a motion picture.

Parts of the R.C.A. 5U radio station when fitted.

In 2005 this vessel was owned by:

HMS Bounty Organization LLC

P.O. Box 141

Oakdale, NY 11769

The vessel was registered at:

GREENPORT NEW YORK

Radio Call Sign:

WCP4944



S. G. Roscoe VE1BC

This is the Amateur Radio QSL card of BOUNTY in 1962. The photograph was taken by Metro Goldwyn Mayer while the vessel was in the South Pacific.

F VYKF CABOT

Built 1965

Canada Steamships

Radio station Marconi Reliance, Oceanspan, Mercury, Electra, etc.

NF VGLZ CAMILLE MARCOUX
Built 1974
La Societe des Traversiers du Quebec
Ferry

F CGCW CAMSELL
Built 1959
Coast Guard
Based on the West Coast
Northern supply and buoy tender
Western Arctic during the summer
Radio station and radio officer unknown
Similar:
CGGN SIR HUMPHREY GILBERT

NF VCWJ CANADA MARQUIS
Built 1983
Misener Transportation Limited
21,548 GRT Great Lakes Bulk Carrier
Became:
VOTT BIRCHGLEN (owned by Canada Steamship Lines)
See:
VCWG SELKIRK SETTLER

NF VGWM CANADIAN CENTURY
Built 1967
Upper Lakes Shipping
Great Lakes Bulk Carrier

F VGLV CANADIAN HIGHLANDER
Built 1967
Upper Lakes Shipping
Bulk Carrier
Norwegian Nera radio station
Radio officer Roy Cassidy
Former:
VGLV CAPE BRETON HIGHLANDER
LMAZ THORS DRAKE



Radio Officer Dermot Cruise

This was the Radio Room in CANADIAN HIGHLANDER with call sign VGLV

NF VDDF CANADIAN HUNTER

Built 1962

Upper Lakes Shipping

Great Lakes Bulk Carrier

Former:

VDDF PETITE HERMINE

VDDF HAMILTONIAN

NF VCTK CANADIAN LEADER

Built 1967

Upper Lakes Shipping

Great Lakes Bulk Carrier

Former:

VCTK FEUX FOLLETS

NF CYMD CANADIAN MARINER

Built 1963

Upper Lakes Shipping

Great Lakes Bulk Carrier

Former:

CYMD GRANDE HERMINE

CYMD NEWBRUNSWICKER

F VGMV CANADIAN NAVIGATOR

Built 1967

Upper Lakes Shipping

General Cargo

Radio station unknown

No radio officer carried

Former:

VGMV ST LAWRENCE NAVIGATOR

GWGU DEMETERTON

NF VOPM CANADIAN OLYMPIC

Built 1976

Upper Lakes Shipping

Great Lakes Bulk Carrier

NF VCWZ CANADIAN PIONEER

Built 1981

Upper Lakes Shipping

Great Lakes Bulk Carrier

NF VDRV CANADIAN PROGRESS

Built 1968

Upper Lakes Shipping

Great Lakes Bulk Carrier

F VGNW CANADIAN PROSPECTOR

Built 1964

Upper Lakes Shipping

General Cargo

Radio station unknown

No radio officer carried

Former:

VGNW ST LAWRENCE PROSPECTOR

---- FEDERAL WEAR

GMMU CARLTON

NF VOTM CANADOC

Built 1961

N. M. Paterson and Sons

Great Lakes

CANADOC was a Great Lakes bulk carrier similar to RED WING and so many other ships designed and operated on the lakes. Several ships in the N. M. Paterson and Sons fleet are small general cargo vessels that on occasion made foreign going voyages. These vessels were fitted with radiotelegraph and carried a radio officer on these foreign voyages. The suffix "DOC" is used on most ships of this fleet and meant Dominion of Canada.

NF CZ9740 CANMAR BARGE 1

Built 1975

Dome Petroleum

Small Tanker

F VODC CANMAR CARRIER

Built 1963

Dome Petroleum

Drillship

Former:

ICXT TRANSOCEANICA GIOVANNA

F VGXQ CANMAR EXPLORER

Built 1945

Dome Petroleum

Drillship

Former:

---- MARY J

ANWH SNAKEHEAD (American)

F VOCD CANMAR EXPLORER 2

Built 1945

Dome Petroleum

Drillship

Former:

---- KATHLEEN M

AOBB MOORING HITCH (American)



Radio Officer Joe Burgoyne

This is the drillship CANMAR EXPLORER II with call sign VOCD



Radio Officer Joe Burgoyne



Radio Officer Joe Burgoyne

This is the radio room in CANMAR EXPLORER II with call sign VOCD

F VGXS CANMAR EXPLORER 3
 Built 1973
 Dome Petroleum
 Drillship
 Former:
 LKBY HAVDRILL

F VCFN CANMAR KIGIORIAK
 Built 1979

Dome Petroleum

Icebreaker supply ship

Most ships owned by Dome Petroleum were based in the Beaufort Sea off the mouth of the Mackenzie River in the Arctic. All had Marconi radio stations. There were several radio officers, Joe Burgoyne and Bob McWilliams were two of them.

? ---- CANORA

Built 1918

V and L logging

West Coast Ferry

F CYNL CAPE BRETON MINER

Built 1964

Upper Lakes Shipping

Bulk Carrier

Marconi Globespan radio station

Former:

5LGT CONVEYOR

CYNL CAPE BRETON MINER

This is believed to be the first vessel fitted with a bulbous bow but I had no way of proving this theory.

This was one of the first vessels given permission by the Canadian government to sail without a radio officer providing it was fitted with satellite communications. It was sailing the Pacific during the summer of 1981 without a radio officer and was sailing in and out of San Diego, California. It would be interesting to learn how they police the communications without the radio officer. One of the more humorous "emergency calls" I handled was from the drunken wife who stated she was "hot to trot" and wanted her old man home. Yet I handled identical calls that involved the loss of several lives. Several of the VHF inter-ship radio channels were nothing but cesspools of foul language and there appeared to be nothing done about it. Over Christmas 1980 one channel of the satellite communications system was out of service for a period of about four days. This was caused from an unknown signal blocking the system. None of the officials was able to locate the source of this signal and had no idea where it originated. If one channel could be terminated this easy it is understandable that all channels could be terminated in the same way.

The overriding emergency feature of the satellite communications must be more efficient than the distress tone generator on 2182 kHz. The overriding emergency feature is one that permits a ship in distress to override routine communications and attract attention. The distress tone generator for 2182 kHz transmitted an alternating tone to attract attention when a vessel was in distress. The best way I can describe it is that it was an electronic reproduction of a donkey braying. At least anyone who is familiar with the sound a donkey makes should find it easier to understand the racket this thing made. The lower tone was in the form of an audible oscillation of about 200 cycles. The upper tone was in the form of an audible oscillation of about 1200 cycles. When these two were flip flopped back and forth from one to the other the 200 cycles becomes the HEE and the 1200 cycles becomes the HAW of the donkey. Because of a defect, probably insufficient voltage operating one of these units, it would sound as though a pail of oats would shut it up. For the most part they flipped and flopped back and forth faster than the average donkey. They made a good racket and the VCS station heard a lot of them. These distress tone generators seemed to fascinate so many one wonders at times if some people had any toys when they were kids. So many seemed to enjoy playing with every gadget they saw. For a three-month period, May, June, and July 1979, British coast stations identified 471 of these transmissions and not one was followed up with a distress message. For a nine-month period, January up to October 1979, forty Japanese coast stations recorded 395. Four were used correctly. Six were located and proved to be someone playing. The other 385 are still unidentified. This is interesting, especially when this radiotelephone distress alarm system was designed for safety of life. There was a big decrease in the number of accidents involving ships when the radio officer first went in ships. There should be some indication of the increase or decrease now that the radio officer has been removed. The TITANIC and the other accidents at that time gave us this radiotelegraph marine communications system we enjoyed for so many years. It is impossible to reproduce the TITANIC accident because it is impossible to get so many of the world's upper class in the same vehicle as there was in the TITANIC. Therefore, it would be impossible to improve the marine communications world if improvement is necessary.

F VCBT CAPE ROGER

Built 1977

Fisheries Canada

Home port St. John's, Newfoundland

Marconi Commander D radio station

The Radio Officer was removed from CAPE ROGER because of budget restrictions. I believe Bob Smith was radio officer for the short time one was carried.

NF VYSZ CAROL LAKE

Built 1960

Carryore Limited

Great Lakes Ore Carrier

NF CA3582 CARRIER PRINCESS

Built 1973

Canadian Pacific

West Coast

FR VCKD CARTIERCLIFFE HALL

Built 1959

Halco

Great Lakes Ore Carrier

Former:

5MDV RUHR ORE

F VCSZ CAVALLO

Built 1979

Federal Navigation

Containership

Newfoundland to Nova Scotia

Marconi radio station

No radio officer carried

Paul du Mesnil was radio officer from the United Kingdom to Nova Scotia

Former:

GXOL CAVALLO

NF VDCW CEMENTKARRIER

Built 1930

Three Rivers Boatman

Quebec

NF CYDG CHARLES DICK

Built 1922

National Sand and Material

Great Lakes

Unable further detail

NF VDCX CHARLES R. HUNTLEY

Built 1926

Dredge

CHARLES R. HUNTLEY was dredging the harbour for the daily ferries at Caribou, Nova Scotia, during August 1981.

NF VYRF CHEMICAL TRANSPORT

Built 1969

Halco
Coastal Tanker

NF VGQB CHESLEY A. CROSBIE
Built 1964
Chimo Shipping
General Cargo

CHESLEY A. CROSBIE held the record for the Canadian merchant ship that went farther north than any other merchant ship and is mentioned elsewhere on these pages. She visited Eureka, Ellesmere Island during 1972. Other notable contenders for this title are THERON call sign VGWW, and IRVING ARCTIC call sign VGLN. Karlsen Shipping claim THERON would not qualify because she was a survey vessel on her voyage and not a merchant ship. Captain Harold L. Maro, Master of THERON for that voyage advised that they did not carry a radio officer. At the time it was the further most penetration of the north for a seismic survey at position 812130 North on August 31st, 1971. THERON was the first vessel to circumnavigate Devon Island and accomplished this during that voyage. IRVING ARCTIC delivered 100,000 barrels of petroleum products to Rae Point, Melville Island in August 1980. She carried a British radio officer on this voyage.

NF VGKK CHI-CHEEMAUN
Built 1974
The Owen Sound Transportation
Great Lakes Ferry

NF VGDR CHICAGO TRIBUNE
Built 1930
Quebec and Ontario Transport
Great Lakes Cargo
Former:
---- THOROLD

NF VGKD CHIMO
Built 1967
Canada Steamships
General Cargo

NF VCGQ COMEAUDOC
Built 1960
N. M. Paterson and Sons
Great Lakes Cargo
Former:
VCGQ MURRAY BAY
Sister:
VOTM CANADOC

NF VDTG CONFEDERATION
Built 1961
Northumberland Ferries
Ferry from Caribou, Nova Scotia, to Wood Island, Prince Edward Island

FR VGDC CONGAR
Built 1946
Affiliated Marine Metal and Salvage
Coastal Tanker
Former:
VGDC IMPERIAL HALIFAX

? ---- D. B. WELDON
Built 1896
The Goderich Elevator and Transit
Great Lakes Cargo
Former:
VCXD ALTADOC

NF CYFF D. C. EVEREST
Built 1952
American Can of Canada
Great Lakes

FR CGMW DARING
Built 1958
Coast Guard
East Coast Rescue Vessel
Former:
CGMW RCMP WOOD
Former radio station:
R. C. A. 5U

F CGBV DAWSON
Built 1967
Bedford Institute
World Research Vessel
Marconi Globespan radio station
Radio Officer George Wilson

F CGDX DES GROSEILLIERS
Built 1982
Coast Guard
Heavy Icebreaker
Radio station unknown
Radio officer unknown

F CGSM d'IBERVILLE
Built 1952
Coast Guard
Heavy Icebreaker
Home port Quebec City
Radio Officer Claude Gervais
This was the world's largest icebreaker when new.
Radio station:
R. C. A. 5U
Retired and scrapped in 1982

F VGKG DOAN TRANSPORT
Built 1972
Halco
Tanker
Radio station unknown
Seldom carried a radio officer
Former:
---- JON RAMSOY

F CZJF DUNDALK

Armed Forces Auxiliary
Military Station
Civilian radio officer Bob Calnen

NF VCJL E. B. BARBER
Built 1953
Algoma Central Railway
Great Lakes

FR VOTQ E. J. NEWBERRY
Built 1925
Robert Pierson Steamships
Great Lakes Cargo
Former:
WA4543 THOMAS E MILLSOP
---- BEN MOREELL
WDDL E. J. KULAS
WDDL WILLIAM C. ATWATER running a ½ kilowatt spark station.

NF VCDC EASTERN SHELL
Built 1962
Shell Canadian Tankers
Coastal Tanker
Former:
VCDC W. HAROLD REA

F CYCJ EDOUARD SIMARD
Built 1961
Les Chantiers Davis
Coastal Tanker
Marconi Globespan radio station
Her radio officer removed about 1978
Sister:
VGDK ARTHUR SIMARD
EDOUARD SIMARD had an extension added to her for the purpose of carrying gasoline from Halifax,
Nova Scotia, to ports on the Great Lakes.
Became:
CYCJ LE CHENE NO.1 (French for Oak Tree)

FR CGSW EDWARD CORNWALLIS
Built 1949
Coast Guard
East Coast Buoy Tender
Former radio station: McKay Radio U.S.A. Carried three radio officers when new.

NF CYLX ENGLISH RIVER
Built 1961
Canada Steamships
Great Lakes Cargo

NF VOKZ ERINDALE
Built 1915
Reoch Transports
Great Lakes
Former:
WBDM W. F. WHITE running a ½ kilowatt spark station.

F CGSZ ERNEST LAPOINTE

Built 1940

Coast Guard

Quebec Region Supply Vessel

Radio station unknown

ERNEST LAPOINTE was the only ship constructed for the Department of Transport during World War II. Her main radio station had medium frequency radiotelegraph only. Mr. Laxson is believed to have served as her last radio officer. He was one of several telegraphists who enjoyed carrying on a conversation, would also roll a cigarette, while copying the weather forecast via radiotelegraph.

F VCPG FEDERAL PIONEER

Built 1971

Federal Navigation

General Cargo

Radio station unknown

Both radio officers were named Smith but they were not relatives and took turns sailing as radio officer.

Former:

SGVN CARL GORTON

F VCPZ FERBEC

Built 1966

Canada Steamships

General Cargo

Japanese station

Radio Officer Paul du Mesnil for the short time she carried one.

Former:

JFFM FUGAKU MARU

FERBEC was the largest ship registered in Canada around 1980.

FR VA2684 FERNDAL

Built 1912

Dale Transports

Great Lakes Cargo

Former:

KDUH DOW CHEMICAL

KDUH DIAMOND ALKALI with a ¼ kilowatt spark station.

---- LOUIS R. DAVIDSON

FR VDDM FIRBRANCH

Built 1944

Socodena Ltee Quebec

Coastal Tanker

Former:

VDDM MILLICAN PARK

FIRBRANCH was one of the last Park ships that were constructed during World War II.

F VCLV FORT CHAMBLEY

Built 1961

Canada Steamships

General Cargo

Marconi radio station

Former:

VCLV CHAMBLEY ERA

NF VXXN FORT GASPE

Built 1943
Agence Maritime Inc., Quebec
Great Lakes Cargo
Former:
VXNX ROBERT MCMICHAEL

NF VDKV FORT HENRY
Built 1955
Canada Steamships
Great Lakes Cargo

NF VXNW FORT KENT
Built 1943
Agence Maritime Inc., Quebec
Great Lakes Cargo
Former:
VXNW GUY BARTHOLOMEW

NF CG2048 FORT LANGLEY
Built 1961
Department of Public Works, Ottawa
West Coast Dredge

NF VDZW FORT LENNOX
Built 1944
Agence Maritime Inc., Quebec
Great Lakes Cargo
Former:
VDZW R. A. MCINNIS
This vessel was turned over to the Seafarers Training Institute at Morrisburg, Ontario, to be used as a training ship.

FR CYMS FORT ST LOUIS
Built 1963
Canada Steamships
Great Lakes East Coast
This vessel was sold to Atlantic Freight Lines, renamed BELLAVENTURE 2 and became an East Coast Container Ship.

NF VDJL FORT WILLIAM
Built 1965
Canada Steamships
General Cargo

FR VC8558 FORTUNE ENDEAVOUR
Built 1973
Fortune Fisheries Limited
Fishing Trawler
Former:
GROS GRAMPIAN MONARCH

NF VGZT FRANK A. SHERMAN
Built 1958
Upper Lakes Shipping
Great Lakes Bulk Carrier

? VCYG FRANK BRODERICK

Built 1965

Northern Transportation

West Coast Northern Supply Vessel

? VGTQ FRANK H. BROWN

Built 1965

British Yukon Ocean Services

West Coast Northern Supply Vessel

These two vessels listed above should have been fitted with radiotelegraph and carried a radio officer. I was unable to find any further detail.

NF VCTM FRANKCLIFFE HALL

Built 1963

Halco

Great Lakes Cargo Vessel

NF VDPQ FRANQUELIN

Built 1955

Quebec and Ontario Transportation

Great Lakes Cargo

Former:

VDPQ GRIFFON

F VCQQ FREDERICK CARTER

Built 1967

Canadian National

Ferry from Nova Scotia to Newfoundland

Unable further detail

NF VGNB FRONTENAC

Built 1968

Canada Steamships

General Cargo

FR VDDT FUEL MARKETER

Built 1944

Ship Repairs and Supplies

Coastal Tanker

Former:

VDDT WHITE ROSE

VDDT WHTIE ROSE 2

VDDT JOHN IRWIN

VDDT EGLINTON PARK and kept the VDDT call sign as first assigned in 1944. This vessel was one of the Park ships and one of the few that remained under the Canadian flag.

FR ---- FUMI

Built 1952

J. W. Stephens Iron and Metal Ltd

Whaler

Former:

JATJ FUMI MARU NO.15

FR VC9450 GADUS ATLANTICA

Built 1969

Karlsen Shipping

Factory Trawler

Former:

LJPH GADUS 2

GADUS ATLANTICA did fisheries research, at least that is what I assumed from the large Research Canada sign painted on her superstructure. This vessel was built at Trondheim, Norway, and was to be a sister of GADUS with call sign LMML. I remember reading some time ago that Norway did not consider herself a sea-faring nation. I found this rather odd at the time but believe there is some truth to the statement. About the time GADUS 2 was built Norway was trying to convince the various international telecommunication conferences that radiotelephone frequency 2182 kHz was a more reliable distress frequency than radiotelegraph frequency 500 kHz. On learning this I felt Norway was saturated in "tanglefoot" or whatever is the national alcoholic beverage of the country. The various delegates at these conferences must have more or less felt the same. They politely heard all Norway had to put forward on the subject. Then politely ignored them with the attitude that to be convinced they would need more evidence than Norway could produce. These two ships were fitted with radiotelegraph and carried a radio officer while this was taking place. When GADUS 2 was new her catch was cleaned, soaked, filleted, skinned, packaged, and stored in her freezers all within four hours. For someone who knew so little about the operation of these vessels, I found this interesting because those huge nets made for huge catches. This is the reason the fish soon disappeared and with monsters like those it did not take long.

FR VCJG GADUS PETREL

Built 1973

Comeau Seafoods

Refrigerator Trawler

Former:

LFUD GADUS PETREL

GRUV SEAFRIDGE PETREL

This vessel was one of three built at the A. M. Liaaen Shipyard, Norway. All three were identical and when launched were SEAFRIDGE PETREL call sign GRUV, SEAFRIDGE OSPREY call sign GPOG, and SEAFRIDGE SKOU call sign MVDE. Seafridge Limited was a company with interests in both Norway and the United Kingdom. Newington Trawlers, Hull, England, operated these vessels. All three were fitted with radio rooms and carried radio officers. These vessels could freeze their catch and for that reason could remain at sea for a long period. SEAFRIDGE SKOU was at sea for a total of one hundred days on her maiden voyage. At the time Comeau Seafoods took delivery of this one, the premier of Nova Scotia promised a fleet of these large trawlers for Nova Scotia. SEAFRIDGE SKOU became the Norwegian RAMOEN with call sign LDCE, and SEAFRIDGE OSPREY became the Norwegian SVALBARD with call sign JXYU. Both carried a radio officer under the Norwegian flag. The large American tuna vessels around southern California and the large Canadian fishing vessels were the only large fishing vessels I could find that did not carry a radio officer.

F VCGZ GASPE TRANSPORT

Built 1972

Halco

Coastal Tanker

Former:

VCGZ ARSENE SIMARD

Sister:

VGDK ARTHUR SIMARD

FR VXRJ GEORGE M. CARL

Built 1923

Misener Transportation

Great Lakes Cargo

Former:

WA5167 MATHEW ANDREWS

KFKJ FRED G. HARTWELL with a ¼ kilowatt spark station.

NF CZ5771 GEORGES ALEXANDRE LEBEL
Built 1975
Canadian National
Quebec Ferry
Launched:
CZ5771 INCAN ST LAURENT

NF VOGB GEORGIAN BAY
Built 1954
Canadian Shipping and Engineering
Great Lakes Cargo

FR VGMB GODERICH
Built 1906
Upper Lakes Shipping
Great Lakes Cargo
Former:
---- PATHFINDER
WPBG SAMUEL MATHER with a $\frac{3}{4}$ kilowatt spark station.

NF VDLJ GOLDEN HIND
Built 1952
Trico Enterprises
Coastal Tanker
Former:
VDLJ IMPERIAL WOODBEND

NF VCVC GOLDEN SABLE
Built 1930
Steel Factors Limited
Coastal Tanker
Former:
VCVC IMPERIAL CORNWALL
---- ACADIALITE

Imperial Oil is the Canadian division of the international Esso or Exxon Oil conglomerate. All the tankers in that fleet had the suffix LITE in their name until 1947 when these ships were renamed with an IMPERIAL prefix. ACADIALITE was not fitted with radio. IMPERIAL CORNWALL had radiotelephone only.

NF CYCT GORDON C. LEITCH
Built 1952
Upper Lakes Shipping
Great Lakes Bulk Carrier
Sister:
VDLC JAMES MORRIS

NF CGDS GRIFFON
Built 1970
Coast Guard
Great Lakes Buoy Tender

? VGKY GROVEDALE
Built 1905
The Steel Company of Canada
Great Lakes Cargo
Former:

KDXU DONALD B. GILLIES

Unable further detail

F CYCM GULF CANADA

Built 1952

Gulf Oil Limited

Tanker

Marconi Globespan radio station

Former radio officers: Bob McWilliams and Cyril R. "Sprack" Spracklin

Former:

CYCM B A PEERLESS

Became:

CYCM COASTAL CANADA

NF VOPL GULF GATINEAU

Built 1976

Gulf Oil Limited

Coastal Tanker

NF VOXG GULF MACKENZIE

Built 1976

Gulf Oil Limited

Coastal Tanker

F VCJQ H1060

Built 1964

Kent Line Limited

Tanker

Marconi Globespan radio station

Radio Officer: British unknown

Former:

ZCEK H1060

VGWT M. J. BOYLEN

F VCKW H1070

Built 1966

Kent Line Limited

Tanker

Marconi Globespan radio station

Radio Officer: British unknown

Former:

ZCEJ H1070

VXZR H1070

? VGKR H. C. HEINBECKER

Built 1905

Robert S. Pierson

Great Lakes Cargo

Former:

VGKR WESTDALE

WGVA GEORGE W. PERKINS

NF VGFJ H. M. GRIFFITH

Built 1973

Great Lakes Bulk Carrier

NF VXLG HAIDA BRAVE
Built 1978
Kingcome Navigation
West Coast Cargo Vessel

FR VCQS HAIDA CHIEFTAN
Built 1944
Kingcome Navigation
Tug
Former:
VCQS N. R. LANG
VCQS ESCORT
VCQS FOUNDATION LILLIAN

NF CZ5562 HAIDA MONARCH
Built 1974
Kingcome Navigation
West Coast Cargo Vessel

NF VXYK HAIDA TRANSPORTER
Built 1968
Kingcome Navigation
West Coast Ferry

NF VYMZ HALLFAX
Built 1962
Halco
Great Lakes Cargo
Became:
H9YV COALER 1

? VGTG HERON B
Built 1906
Trico Enterprises
Great Lakes Cargo
Former:
WEVG J PIERPONT MORGAN

FR VGGR HILDA MARJANNE
Built 1943
Upper Lakes Shipping
Great Lakes Bulk Carrier
Former:
SWEH KATE N L
KVMJ GRANDE RONDE

NF VDLX HOCHELAGA
Built 1949
Canada Steamships
Great Lakes Cargo

NF VGCY HOLIDAY ISLAND
Built 1971
Canadian National
Ferry from Cape Tormentine, New Brunswick, to Borden, Prince Edward Island
Launched:

VGCY WILLIAM POPE

Sister:

VGCZ VACATIONLAND

I was never certain these were a ship or a floating parking garage for automobiles. They looked like large boxes but did the job during the summer.

F CGDG HUDSON

Built 1963

Bedford Institute

World Research Vessel

Marconi radio station

Radio Officer: Neville Best

CSS HUDSON was the only vessel that has circumnavigated both the North and South American continents.

NF VCFY HUDSON TRANSPORT

Built 1962

Halco

Great Lakes Tanker

The Hall Corporation Shipping Limited changed its name to Halco Limited. Halco had been this organization's registered telegraph address. Halco owned a fleet of bulk carriers and tankers. The bulk carriers were named with CLIFFE HALL as the suffix of each name and the tankers had the suffix TRANSPORT in each name. Most ships in the fleet were registered in Canada. One that comes to mind that was not registered in Canada was COASTAL TRANSPORT. She was registered in Liberia with call sign D5XD. Bill Ellis from Dartmouth, Nova Scotia, was her radio officer. The ships registered in Canada can be found in this list and none carried a radio officer.

On Christmas day, 1981, fire broke out in the crew's accommodation causing severe damage to the HUDSON TRANSPORT off Matane, Quebec, on the St. Lawrence River. She was on a voyage from Trois-Rivieres to the Magdalen Islands, Quebec, with a full cargo of bunker C fuel oil and diesel oil. Seven lives were lost in this incident. One was the brother of a crewmember lost when a sister ship CARTIERCLIFFE HALL experienced a similar fire on June 4th, 1979. One of the officers rescued from HUDSON TRANSPORT had been in CARTIERCLIFFE HALL at the time of the fire in her. Six lives were lost in the CARTIERCLIFFE HALL fire off Copper Harbour, Lake Superior, during a voyage from Duluth, Minnesota, to Port Cartier, Quebec.

The fire in HUDSON TRANSPORT prompted the news media to use some very colourful terminology in describing various union official's and the crewmember's descriptions of two items in particular. The two items were the delay in the time that it took the coast guard to get rescue equipment on the scene. The other was a complaint directed towards two foreign vessels that took the time to stop near HUDSON TRANSPORT but did nothing to assist in the removal of her crew. It is rather obvious that the fault for both complaints was a lack of communication. Had HUDSON TRANSPORT carried a radio officer he could have activated his auto alarm on 500 kHz and made it clear to these two foreign ships in the international language of radiotelegraph that she was in distress and needed assistance. This should have eliminated any confusion. There were still many steam ships sailing at this time that carried out a procedure the engineers called "blew the tubes" daily. This was a process of cleaning the tubes of the engine and the smoke it produced made a ship appear as though she were on fire. Had the HUDSON TRANSPORT carried a radio officer he could have used his lifeboat radio to communicate with these two ships via radiotelegraph as soon as he had evacuated the radio room. The accommodation had to be evacuated shortly after the fire was discovered. HUDSON TRANSPORT had the one superstructure aft only.

There were many statements made at the time of the accident to the effect that many changes would be made to improve the safety of all the Canadian ships.

F VCRT HUDSON VENTURE

Built 1964

Jourdain Navigation Limited
General Cargo
Radio station unknown
No radio officer

Former:

SFBX SILVA

SFBX GONDUL

Became:

---- KANGUK (Hudson Bay Company but I was unable to locate any further detail)

HUDSON VENTURE violated the international laws as laid down by the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS) conventions regularly. We asked the crew via radiotelephone if she had a radio officer on board while she was leaving Halifax harbour bound for Europe in 1980. We did this in order to assist us in delivering any messages for her. The crew stated they had a radio officer on board and gave us a fictitious name for the radio officer. We of course cancelled several messages addressed to HUDSON VENTURE during this voyage because we made no contact with her. HUDSON VENTURE visited Vera Cruz, Mexico, without a radio officer. There appeared to be no way of stopping her to the point one wondered why Canada wasted the expense for the various agencies that were supposed to police these laws.

NF VCNQ ILE AUX COUDRES

Built 1954

Sceptre Dredging Limited

West Coast Cargo Vessel

Former:

VCNQ HUTCHCLIFFE HALL

FR VDYF ILE DE MONTREAL

Built 1910

Nittolo Metal

Tanker

Former:

VDYF CREEK TRANSPORT

VDYF COASTAL CREEK

---- BASINGCREEK

GBQP EMPIRE TADPOLE

---- WILLOWBRANCH

---- ROSEMONT

---- SASKATOON

NF VGFP IMPERIAL ACADIA

Built 1966

Imperial Oil Limited

Coastal Tanker

NF VYQY IMPERIAL BEDFORD

Built 1969

Imperial Oil Limited

Coastal Tanker

This is another vessel that made some fairly long voyages without a radio officer.

NF VGYS IMPERIAL QUEBEC

Built 1957

Imperial Oil Limited

Coastal Tanker

NF VGFQ IMPERIAL ST CLAIR

Built 1974

Imperial Oil Limited
Coastal Tanker

NF VCVS IMPERIAL SARNIA
Built 1948
Imperial Oil Limited
Coastal Tanker

NF VCDD IMPERIAL SKEENA
Built 1970
Imperial Oil Limited
Coastal Tanker

These small Imperial Oil tankers belonged to the Canadian subsidiary of the Esso or Exxon Oil interests. They normally sailed around the Great Lakes and the East Coast area with the exception of IMPERIAL SKEENA, which was based on the West Coast. None was fitted with a radio room or radiotelegraph. Fortunately for Imperial Oil and the IMPERIAL ST CLAIR in particular what transpires in the heads of certain radio operators will not sink a ship. She made a run to Europe and the radio operators over there were not the least bit impressed with her. IMPERIAL BEDFORD made several runs to South America around the same time. I witnessed one of the most unorthodox pieces of ingenuity I have ever seen involving shipboard communications on one of these tankers. This tanker was using a centre fed dipole antenna complete with balun. I certainly would not want to sail with it, but my natural curiosity left me most interested in exactly how this would perform alongside the old reliable Marconi or L antenna. This is over and above the very narrow bandwidth of this dipole.

NF CZ4348 INCAN SUPERIOR
Built 1974
Incan Ships
Great Lakes Ferry

This vessel was built on the West Coast and is the reason she has the West Coast call sign with the CZ prefix. I predicted that this would change to one with a VA prefix when she renewed her licence. She is not listed in later editions of List of Radio Stations.

NF VXMS INDUSTRIAL TRANSPORT
Built 1969
Halco
Coastal Tanker

FR VDYL INLAND TRANSPORT
Built 1926
Tara Corporation
Great Lakes Tanker
Former:
VDYL TRANSINLAND
KFZW THE INLAND
KFZW STEEL CHEMIST

F VGLN IRVING ARCTIC
Built 1974
Kent Line Limited
Tanker
Marconi radio station
Radio Officer: British unknown

F VDYT IRVING BIRCH
Built 1967

Atlantic Towing
Deep Sea Tug
Marconi Oceanspan radio station
The last radio officer to sail in this vessel was Aime Charest

F VCWX IRVING CANADA
Built 1981
Kent Line Limited
Tanker
Marconi radio station
Radio Officer: British unknown

F VCRJ IRVING ESKIMO
Built 1980
Kent Line Limited
Tanker
Marconi radio station
Radio Officer: Bill Kerwin

F VCRZ IRVING NORDIC
Built 1980
Kent Line Limited
Tanker
Marconi radio station
A radio officer was carried on northern voyages only

F VCTG IRVING OCEAN
Built 1981
Kent Line Limited
Tanker
Marconi radio station
Radio Officer: British unknown

F CYML IRVING OURS POLAIRE
Built 1963
Kent Line Limited
Tanker
The IRVING OURS POLAIRE (which is French for IRVING POLAR BEAR) was fitted with a Marconi Globespan radio station. It was never used to my knowledge but at least it was there if it was ever required.

The Irving fleet is described at the beginning of Section 10.

NF VXXX ISLAND TRANSPORT
Built 1958
Halco
Great Lakes Tanker
Former:
VXXX ROCKCLIFFE HALL
That call sign would certainly get attention to the point it would probably be a pain in the butt in radiotelegraph. The emergency signal that was right up there next to the distress signal was XXX.

NF VXFR ISLE ROYALE
Built 1947
McNamara Corporation
Great Lakes Cargo
Former:

VXFR OREFAX
VXFR SOUTHCLIFFE HALL

F CGBT J. E. BERNIER
Built 1967
Coast Guard
Heavy Icebreaker
Marconi radio station
Chief radio officer was French and the second radio officer was English but I was unable to learn their names

NF VXRT J. N. MCWATERS
Built 1961
Misener Transportation
Great Lakes Cargo

NF VCGJ J. W. MCGIFFIN
Built 1972
Canada Steamships
Great Lakes Cargo

NF VDLC JAMES NORRIS
Built 1952
Upper Lakes Shipping
Great Lakes Bulk Carrier
Sister:
CYCT GORDON C. LEITCH

NF VGGB JAMES TRANSPORT
Built 1967
Halco
Coastal Tanker

NF VCKQ JEAN PARISIEN
Built 1977
Canada Steamships
Great Lakes Cargo

F VYYY JENSEN STAR
Built 1961
Jensen Shipping Limited
General Cargo Vessel
Radio station unknown
Radio Officer: Michel Audet
Former:
VYYY FRENCH RIVER

Canada Steamships had the FRENCH RIVER built at Collingwood, Ontario, as an addition to their Great Lakes fleet. After 1974 she sailed for about three months only as a reserve vessel in this fleet. Jensen Shipping Limited, Montreal, purchased the FRENCH RIVER in 1981, renamed her, and refitted the vessel for unrestricted international trading. This vessel made her first voyage in salt water as the JENSEN STAR. In August 1981, she made a supply run to various Arctic settlements and returned to Montreal in September. January 1982 saw JENSEN STAR make a run to Algeria and back. During this voyage Michel Audet was her radio officer. He operated from a temporary station screened off on the bridge with a curtain. Jensen Shipping planned to fit JENSEN STAR with a proper radio room and accommodation for a

radio officer but I do not know if this was carried out. This was the only vessel owned by this company at that time.

? ---- JOHN M. MCCULLOUGH
Built 1927
Pierson Steamships
Great Lakes Cargo
Former:
WB2452 SAMUEL MATHER
WPBB WILLIAM MCLAUGHLAN

NF VYGB JOHN A. FRANCE
Built 1960
Misener Transportation
Great Lakes Cargo

F CGBK JOHN A. MACDONALD
Built 1960
Coast Guard
Heavy Icebreaker
Home port Dartmouth, Nova Scotia
Radio station: Marconi Globespan was the main station for years with the addition of further equipment
Radio Officers: There were many over the years. She carried three when new but most of the time only the one. N. T. Kristensen, Wilf Fontaine, Bill Baxter, Alex Murray, were some of those. Bill Baxter was her last permanent radio officer.
We used to say that the only good ships we had in the Coast Guard fleet were mistakes and this was the biggest mistake of them all. She was a very good icebreaker and well liked by all that sailed in her.
JOHN A. MACDONALD was the first Canadian ship fitted with satellite communications.



Canadian Coast Guard

This is the CCGS JOHN A. MACDONALD assisting shipping and one can get a chill just looking at the photograph.



National Film Board 96997

This is First Officer M.C. Lever and Radio Officer the late Art Sledmere in the Radio Room on CCGS JOHN A. MACDONALD in 1961. When Mel Lever retired he was quite active with amateur station VE1VX and with the Halifax Amateur Radio Club.



Radio Officer N. T. Kristensen

This is Radio Officer N. T. "Kris" Kristensen in the radio room of CCGS JOHN A. MACDONALD in 1979. Kris is sitting at the Satellite Communications Console fitted in JOHN A. MACDONALD.

F CGDJ JOHN CABOT

Built 1964

Coast Guard and Northern Electric

Coast Guard Crew

The world's largest icebreaking cable ship

Home port St. John's, Newfoundland

Marconi Globespan radio station

Became:

VCGM JOHN CABOT

Gerry Power was Chief Radio Officer in her for some time. She carried many radio officers over the years and is mentioned elsewhere with the cable ships.



John Rae

This is the MV JOHN CABOT call sign VCGM off Sambro, Nova Scotia, 1994

NF VDSK JOHN E. F. MISENER

Built 1970

Misener Transportation

Great Lakes Cargo

Former:

VGLR SCOTT MISENER I have no idea why the call sign was changed!

F VGVS JOHN HAMILTON GRAY

Built 1968

Canadian National

Ferry

This vessel sailed from Nova Scotia to Newfoundland during the summer and New Brunswick to Prince Edward Island during the winter.

Radio station; unknown and was never used to my knowledge.

NF CYBM JOHN O. MCKELLAR

Built 1952

Misener Transportation

Great Lakes Cargo

F VGZX JOS SIMARD

Built 1964

Les Chantiers Davie

Coastal Tanker

Marconi Globespan radio station

Sister:

VGDK ARTHUR SIMARD

Became:

VGZX LA FRENE 1 (French for Ash Tree)

? VA2846 JUDITH M. PIERSON

Built 1917

Pierson Steamships

Great Lakes Cargo

Former:

WA2137 SILVER BAY

WNXW ALBERT E. HEEKIN

---- WILLIAM A. AMBERG

FR VGSQ K. A. POWELL

Built 1909

Goderich Elevator and Transit

Great Lakes Cargo

Former:

VGSQ ELMDALE

KDWA STANDARD PORTLAND CEMENT

---- CLIFFORD F. MOLL

? VCFZ KINGDOC

Built 1963

N. M. Paterson and Sons

Cargo

Sister:

VOTM CANADOC

? VCGW KLONDIKE

Built 1969

The British Yukon Navigation Company

West Coast Cargo Vessel

Similar:

VCYG FRANK BRODERICK

? VC8922 KLOSTER

Built 1960

Dorman Roberts Limited

Fishing Vessel

Former:

---- BRIGITE FRIESEN

FR VDZF LABRADOC

Built 1966

N. M. Paterson and Sons

General Cargo

LABRADOC's Marconi Globespan radio station was removed and fitted
in SOODOC with call sign VOPG

Similar Sister:

VOTM CANADOC



Graetz Bros., Limited, Montreal for N. M. Paterson and Sons Limited

This is the MV LABRADOR that was a twin sister of MV PRINDOC

F CGGM LABRADOR
Built 1953
Coast Guard
Heavy Icebreaker

Home port Dartmouth, Nova Scotia

Marconi Globespan radio station

Radio Officer: she had many over the years, Paul Cooper, Rick Falvey and I believe Rollie Lutwick was the last.

Former:

CGVM HMCS LABRADOR



National Film Board 68-4350

This is Radio Officer the late Paul Cooper on duty in the Radio Room on the heavy icebreaker CCGS LABRADOR in 1968.

FR VGPD LAC STE ANNE

Built 1924

Quebec and Ontario Transportation

Great Lakes

Former:

VGPD BLANCHE HINDMAN

WA4505 MATHEW ANDREWS

KFTY EDWARD J. BERWIND

F VOCP LADY FRANKLIN

Built 1970

Chimo Shipping

General Cargo

Radio station: She was fitted with a Marconi Oceanspan VII when built and a Danish Sailor transceiver that arrived at the Montreal airport just five hours prior to her sailing for the Antarctic. These were her two main transmitters and Paul used the Sailor most of the time. She had a Marconi Atalanta receiver, the Monitor emergency receiver, Autokey automatic distress keyer, Salvor II lifeboat radio, Lifeguard emergency transmitter, Yaesu FRG7000 receiver and an Epsco fax.

Radio Officer: Paul du Mesnil

Former:

GZSC BALTIC VALIANT

LADY FRANKLIN was to be used as a container ship on a run from Montreal to St. John's, Newfoundland. She received a contract to supply the Antarctic French base and Paul made both trips from France to the Antarctic base. These trips were made between 1982 and 1985. Paul had daily contacts with most of the world via radiotelegraph. He had thirty-five passengers and was kept very busy. He had a daily contact with France and a daily contact with the VCS station when at sea. He worked VCS on 8 megahertz around 4 AM which was around 7 PM at his location the opposite side of the world. This should give some indication of the results one could have with radiotelegraph with a good operator and that the VCS station was capable of contacting a ship anywhere around the world.



M.V. "Lady Franklin" G.R.T. 2125
 St. John's, Nfld. N.R.T. 1018
 Official No. 338951 B.H.P. 4050

Courrier des marins
 Seamen's Mail

«LYNACOLOR»

At sea - 4 Feb 1984

Hi Spud,

I thought you might
 like a post-card
 like this. Note the
 stamp. Hang on to
 it: you never know
 it might be worth
 something one day.
 73 Paul.

Terres Australes et Antarctiques Françaises
 Terre Adélie

Le «M/V Lady Franklin» opérant
 dans l'Archipel de Pointe Géologie.

Photo Robert Guillard

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TERRES AUSTRALES ET
 ANTARCTIQUES FRANÇAISES
 UNES FRANCHES



RF 500

Spurgeon "Spud" Roscoe
 Box 1, Site 5

R.R. #5

Armdale, N.S.

B3L 4J5

CANADA

FR VC9616 LADY HAMMOND
 Built 1972
 Christensen Enterprises Limited
 Stern Trawler - Research Vessel with Bedford Institute
 Former:
 GQHV HAMMOND INNES

LADY HAMMOND was built as a wet fish stern trawler by the firm of Charles D. Holmes and Company Limited, for the fishing company Newington Trawlers Limited, both at Hull, England. She was built as a slightly larger (897 GRT) sister of Newington Trawlers' fishing vessel C. S. FORESTER with call sign GZMA (768 GRT). Both Hammond Innes and C. S. Forester were noted authors of sea stories. There was some question regarding the decision to build such a vessel when HAMMOND INNES was launched. She lasted five years at her intended job and was then sold to Christensen Enterprises, Halifax. Apparently she was considered to be a bit big to fish with the smaller vessels, and a bit small to fish with the larger vessels for which she was intended to fish. HAMMOND INNES came with not only a radio room, but with an electronics room to compliment the radio room. As LADY HAMMOND she made little use of either. LADY HAMMOND did the same work as ARCTIC EXPLORER with call sign VGFD. They both worked for the Bedford Institute of Oceanography doing research work. ARCTIC EXPLORER sank on July 3rd, 1981, within about fifty miles of radio station VCM St. Anthony, Newfoundland. This ship took twenty minutes to sink, had thirty-two people on board, only eighteen were found after the owners reported her missing twenty-four hours after she sank because no distress call was ever received. She failed to make contact with her company at the scheduled time and that is the only thing that alerted those that something might be wrong. It is hard to believe that something like that could happen with all the communications equipment in use at that time. When the crew left ARCTIC EXPLORER the eighteen who survived departed in two life rafts. One of these began to leak immediately and all eighteen managed to climb into the one good raft. If anyone can find anything that resembles efficiency surrounding this loss, I wish they would point it out to me. There was a lack of or deficiency in the communications of nearly every accident involving Canadian vessels. No one seemed to give a damn.

FR VC8257 LADY JOHNSON 2

Built 1932

Johnson Enterprises Limited

Fishing Vessel

Former:

LAYA POLARBJORN

LCOE JOPETER

LCOE BRATEGG

One wonders what type of chicken would lay a Brat Egg and why Norway changed the call sign.

FR VOBQ LADY M. A. CROSBIE

Built 1966

Chimo Shipping

Cargo Vessel

Former:

---- CORTES

GRWA BALTIC VANGUARD

NF VGJV LAKE MANITOBA

Built 1968

Nipigon Transport

Cargo Vessel

FR VOXZ LAKE NIPIGON

Built 1971

Nipigon Transport

Cargo Vessel

Former:

GORV TEMPLE BAR

The vessels owned by Nipigon Transport are registered at Edmonton, Alberta.

I believe their voyages were restricted to the Great Lakes.

FR VGMX LAKE TRANSPORT

Built 1930

Steel Factors

Coastal Tanker

Former:

VGMX TEXACO WARRIER

VGMX CYCLO WARRIER

The tankers that were owned by what was the Texaco oil interest in Canada had the prefix CYCLO in the name during the years prior to World War II and a few years after.

NF VCTV LAKE WABUSH

Built 1981

Nipigon Transport

Cargo Vessel registered at Edmonton

FR VCKN LAKE WINNIPEG

Built 1943

Nipigon Transport

Cargo Vessel registered at Edmonton

Former:

FPZA NIVOSE

---- TABLE ROCK

NF VCPN LAKESHELL
Built 1969
Shell Canadian Tankers
Tanker

? VCKK LANGDALE QUEEN
Built 1903
West Coast Ferry
Former:
---- KAHLOKE
---- CITY OF SACRAMENTO
---- ASBURY PARK

NF VCQC LAWRENCECLIFFE HALL
Built 1965
Halco
Great Lakes Cargo

? VGDG LAWRENDON
Built 1962
N. M. Paterson and Sons
Cargo
Sister:
VOTM CANADOC

FR VXRS LEADALE
Built 1910
Strathearne Terminals
Great Lakes Cargo
Former:
WB5602 FRED A. MANSKE
KDUB CONSUMERS POWER
KDUB HARRY YATES with a ¼ kilowatt spark station

F VGKL LEON SIMARD
Built 1974
Les Chantiers Davie
Coastal Tanker
Radio station: Marconi Globespan
Sister:
VGDK ARTHUR SIMARD
Became:
VGKL L'ORME 1 (French for Elm Tree)

? ---- LIONEL PARSONS
Built 1908
Goderich Elevator and Transit
Great Lakes Cargo
Former:
VGQZ AGAWA

FR CYJP LIQUILASSIE
Built 1943
L. B. Tanker
Great Lakes Tanker

Former:
HPLD TEMBLADOR

NF VC7168 LOMER GOUIN
Built 1971
Societe des Traversiers du Quebec
Quebec Ferry

NF VGZJ LORD SELKIRK
Built 1958
Northumberland Ferries
Ferry that ran from Caribou, Nova Scotia, to Wood Island, Prince Edward Island

NF VCJW LOUIS R. DESMARAIS
Built 1977
Canada Steamships
Cargo Vessel

F CGBN LOUIS S. ST. LAURENT
Built 1968
Coast Guard
Heavy Icebreaker
Home port Dartmouth, Nova Scotia
Radio station: Marconi when new
Radio Officer: she had several over the years. Alex Murray was radio officer for many years. Gordon Stoodley was her last radio officer and the one who went to the North Pole in her.

LOUIS S. ST. LAURENT was the first Canadian vessel to reach the North Pole and she accomplished this in August 1994. This fact is never brought up but it is pointed out that the electronics technician in her disabled the main receivers on Gordie so that he could not use the main station. This electronics technician then made like the big hero and passed a lot of messages via his amateur radio station. Letting electronic technicians serve in the Coast Guard fleet was not only foolish, it was one of the most stupid things the Coast Guard did. Those in charge of Radio College of Canada told us on graduation that we had the basics and it was up to us to go where we could with it. There should have been two radio officers rather than a radio officer and technician, and the radio officers should have had the necessary courses to keep the equipment in these ships in top shape. The way it was, was the way it was and a wonder it worked at all. Canada could not get Canadian Mates and Captains to up grade to the Foreign Going Certificates, so simply extended the Canadian Home Trade Waters way down off South America in order to permit these characters to sail with Home Trade Certificates. Etc.

F VYSM LUCY MAUD MONTGOMERY
Built 1965
Canadian National
Ferry: This vessel provided a ferry service from Souris, Prince Edward Island, to the Magdalen Islands, Quebec, for many years.
Radio station: Unknown
This vessel had a radio station but never used it under the Canadian flag
Former:
SDFG STENA DANICA

F VYZJ LUDGER SIMARD
Built 1970
Les Chantiers Davie
Radio station: Marconi Globespan
Sister:
VGDK ARTHUR SIMARD

Became:
VYZJ LE SAULE NO 1 (French for Weeping Willow)

NF VGQS MANITOULIN
Built 1966
Canada Steamships Limited
Great Lakes Cargo

? VGGF MANTADOC
Built 1967
N. M. Paterson and Sons
Great Lakes Cargo
Sister:
VOTM CANADOC

NF VGCD MAPLEBRANCH
Built 1958
Les Chantiers Davie
Coastal Tanker
Became:
VGCD L'ERABLE 1 (French for Maple Tree)

NF VCTX MAPLECLIFFE HALL
Built 1966
Halco
Great Lakes Cargo

F VCQK MARINE EVANGELINE
Built 1974
Canadian National
Ferry: This vessel ran between Yarmouth, Nova Scotia, and Portland, Maine
Redifon radio station
Chief Radio Officer: David Vail
Second Radio Officer: Dan Keating
Former:
C6CA MARINE EVANGELINE
LNZU DUKE OF YORKSHIRE

F VYJN MATHILDE DESGAGNES
Built 1959
Desgagnes Shipping
General Cargo
Radio station unknown
Radio officer unknown
Former:
VYJN ESKIMO

ESKIMO was built at Lauzon, Quebec, for Canada Steamship Lines and made at least two foreign going or deep sea voyages for them. Two trips that I know were to Brazil. One was made in November 1973 and the other in January 1974. At the same time a sister ship the FORT CHAMBLY with call sign VCLV made one voyage in November 1973 to Brazil. Neither vessel carried a radio officer. Apparently permission was granted for these voyages providing they did not travel more than 100 miles from land. Both vessels ignored this stipulation and made a direct run to Brazil and back. This meant that at one point Barbados was the land nearest to them and about 800 miles from them. FORT CHAMBLY was sold and does not appear in this list. Another vessel that was sold and does not appear in this list and made at least one foreign going voyage without a radio officer was the TUNDRALAND with call sign VGDB.

TUNDRALAND went to Chile in November 1979. One wonders if the crew at times knew which flag to fly, call sign to use, or what port of registry to paint on the stern. TUNDRALAND flip-flopped back and forth between Canada and the United Kingdom. During the summer months she was registered in Halifax and used the VGDB call sign. During the winter months she was registered in the United Kingdom and used GUDN as her call sign. TUNDRALAND was renamed ARCTIC TIDE and was registered in the Cayman Islands with call sign ZGQG.

NF VOTR MELDRUM BAY
Built 1950
Quebec and Ontario Transportation
Great Lakes Cargo
Former:
VOTR GEORGE HINDMAN
VOTR COVERDALE

NF VCVW MENIER CONSOL
Built 1962
Navigation Consolidated-Bathurst
Cargo Vessel

NF VYTN MENIHEK LAKE
Built 1959
Carryore Limited
Great Lakes Bulk Carrier

NF VGXV METIS
Built 1956
Canada Steamships
Great Lakes Cargo Vessel

FR CGBG MIKULA
Built 1959
Coast Guard
Officer Cadet Training Vessel
Based at the Coast Guard College, Sydney, Nova Scotia
Former:
VGA LURCHER LIGHTSHIP NO 4
All Canadian lightships were treated as coast stations and assigned three letter call signs.

? VGDL MONDOC
Built 1962
N. M. Paterson and Sons
Cargo Vessel
Sister:
VOTM CANADOC

F CGBB MONTCALM
Built 1957
Coast Guard
Medium Icebreaker
Home port Quebec City
Marconi radio station
Radio Officer: Charles Clouthier
Similar:
CGCT WOLFE

FR VCLN MONTCLIFFE HALL
Built 1959
Halco
Bulk Carrier
Former:
5MCO EMS ORE

NF VDWC MONTREALAIS
Built 1962
Upper Lakes Shipping
Great Lakes Bulk Carrier
Twin sister:
CYGR QUEBECOIS

NF VCFW MURRAY BAY
Built 1963
Canada Steamships
Great Lakes Cargo

F CGSN N. B. MCLEAN
Built 1930
Coast Guard
Heavy Icebreaker
Home port Quebec City
Radio officers unknown

F CGBP NARWHAL
Built 1963
Coast Guard
Buoy tender – built as an accommodation for stevedores during the northern supply voyages.
Marconi and Collins radio station
Radio Officer: Bill Lenahan was probably the longest serving radio officer.

NARWHAL went to the West Coast around 1981 or 1982. There was a big shift in the Coast Guard vessels at that time. Most of the new vessels went to the Quebec Region at Quebec City and the older vessels were distributed out to the West Coast, Saint John, Dartmouth and Charlottetown.

NF VGQP NEW YORK NEWS
Built 1955
Quebec and Ontario Transportation
Great Lakes Cargo Vessel
Former:
VGQP TECUMSEH

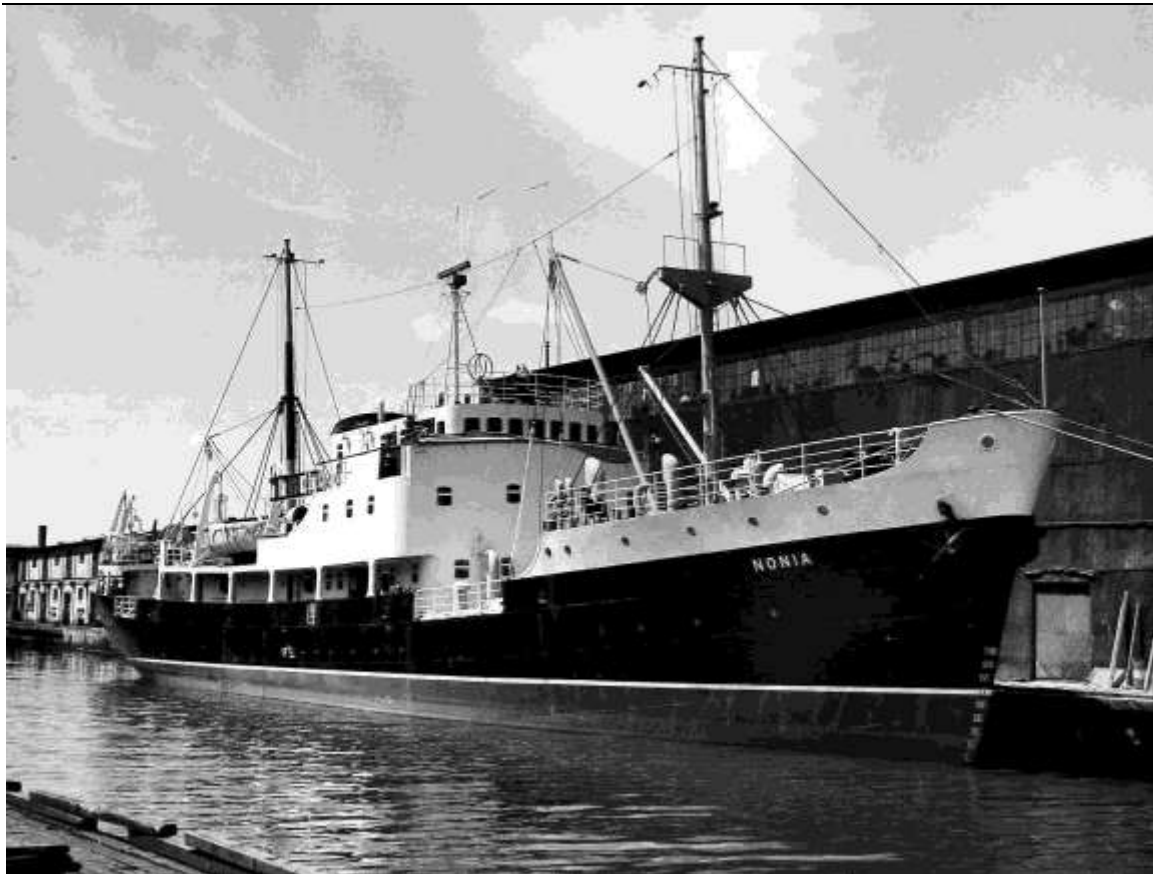
? VDZQ NIPIGON BAY
Built 1951
Canada Steamships
Tanker
Former:
VDZQ IMPERIAL LEDUC

FR VGVV NONIA
Built 1956
Canada Caribbean Navigation Limited
General Cargo
No radio officer or station

Sister:

VOSY BONAVISTA

The NONIA and her twin sister the BONAVISTA with call sign VOSY were built at Aberdeen, Scotland, as passenger and general cargo vessels for Canadian National. Both were 1174 gross tons and entered the Newfoundland and Labrador coastal service in 1956. When the fisheries patrol vessel CAPE FREELS with call sign CGGG sank while patrolling the Grand Banks off the south coast of Newfoundland in 1978, the NONIA was transferred to the Department of Fisheries as a temporary replacement. NONIA was turned over to the Crown Assets Disposal Corporation and sold to Canada Caribbean Navigation Limited in 1981. This was the only ship owned by this company and received a contract from the Department of National Defense to supply munitions to the Canadian Armed Forces bases in Europe. When the NONIA arrived at Montreal from a run to Lahr, West Germany, during the last week of October, 1981, she was arrested because the crew was owed at least fifty-six days back wages. The BONAVISTA was still on the Newfoundland and Labrador coastal runs with Canadian National at that time. Many have fond memories of voyages in these vessels, especially the tourists, mainly the American tourists during the summer months. Both vessels were apparently fitted with Marconi medium frequency stations when new. I have no knowledge of one of these ships using radiotelegraph but have been told the Purser had to hold a second class certificate of proficiency in radio.



Canadian National

MV NONIA with international call sign VGVV

? VGJN NORDALE

Built 1929

Dale Transports

Great Lakes Cargo Vessel

Former:

VGJN STADACONA

? ---- NORANGO

Built 1959

Norango Fishing Limited

West Coast Fishing Vessel

Former:

---- SEA SEARCH

---- AG141

NF VXZZ NORISLE

Built 1946

The Corporation of the Township of Assiginack

Great Lakes Ferry

F CGBZ NORMAN MCLEOD ROGERS

Built 1969

Coast Guard

Home port Quebec City

Medium Icebreaker Gas Turbine Powered

Marconi Station

Radio Officer: Jean-Charles Beaulieu

FR VGBK NORTHERN SHELL

Built 1970

Shell Canadian Tankers

Tanker

Former:

VGBK FROBISHER TRANSPORT

VGBK AXEL HEIBERG

OUKD OLAU SYD

FR VGGP NORTHERN VENTURE

Built 1944

Upper Lakes Shipping

Great Lakes Bulk Carrier

Twin sister:

VGGR HILDA MARJANNE

Former:

GFJF EDENFIELD

WSUS VERENDRYE

FR VC9071 OLD ROCK

Built 1966

Coastal Fisheries Limited

Stern Trawler

Former:

5NCQ OLD ROCK

JGNP YABASE MARU

Communicating with OLD ROCK with call sign 5NCQ was no problem with her Nigerian Radio Officer. OLD ROCK with call sign VC9071 was a different story. We had communications with her when she called us for some reason only. It was impossible to make contact with her unless she called us. So we simply listed her on our traffic lists and called and called and cancelled when the time elapse expired.

? VGQC ONTADOC

Built 1975
N. M. Paterson and Sons
Cargo Vessel
Sister:
VOTM CANADOC

F VGXW ONTARIO POWER

Built 1965
Upper Lakes Shipping
Bulk Carrier

Marconi Globespan radio station

Radio Officer: none was carried during the early 1980's. The U. S. Immigration Officer that cleared our ship while at anchor off Philadelphia one time in the early 1970's said it like it was when he wanted to know why the big difference in our ship and that one anchored behind us, ONTARIO POWER, and I said I did not know except ONTARIO POWER had a union crew. We were in a British ship – a flag of convenience – but both ships had Canadian crews. This Immigration Officer said we came and went with no trouble at all but stated half of ONTARIO POWER's crew would be in jail before morning. I believe it. The Canadian ship did not have a very good name.



Radio Officer George Raine

This is George Raine operating VGXW on board Upper Lakes Shipping's ONTARIO POWER about 1968.
I have also recorded two other photographs when he was a young man operating VCS.

NF VCPT OTTERCLIFFE HALL
Built 1969
Halco
Great Lakes Cargo Vessel

? VOWM OUTARDE
Built 1927
Quebec and Ontario Transportation
Great Lakes Cargo
Former:
WB2105 ROBERT HOBSON

NF VGLC PATERSON
Built 1954
N. M. Paterson and Sons Limited
Great Lakes Cargo Vessel
Sister:
VOTM CANADOC

? CYFY PIC R
Built 1897
Strathearne Terminals Limited
Great Lakes Cargo Vessel
Former:
CYFY PIC RIVER
---- MERLE H
---- JAMES NASMYTH

F CGSB PIERRE RADISSON
Built 1978
Coast Guard
R Class Icebreaker
Home port Quebec City
Mckay Radio Station
Radio Officer: Rejean Thibodeau



Radio Officer Paul du Mesnil

CCGS PIERRE RADISSON

? VGRK PIERSON DAUGHTERS

Built 1923 after portion 1942

Pierson Shipping

Great Lakes Cargo Vessel

Former:

WA3569 forward portion was CHARLES M. SCHWAB

WYEF after portion was GULFPORT

? VGNP POINTE NOIRE

Built 1926

Upper Lakes Shipping

Great Lakes Bulk Carrier

Former:

WPBG SAMUEL MATHER

FR VGWW POLAR EXPLORER

Built 1950

Puddister Trading Company

General Cargo Research

Radio station: unknown

No radio officer carried during the 1970's and 1980's

Made several voyages to the Antarctic and Arctic

Former:

VGWW THERON

FR CGBM PORTE DAUPHINE

Built 1951

Coast Guard

Buoy Supply Vessel

Former:

CGYL HMCS PORTE DAUPHINE

Became:

CZGL HMCS PORTE DAUPHINE

This is another of the many little ships one locates that appears to be a fascinating vessel. PORTE DAUPHINE was one of five small ships of fishing trawler design that the Royal Canadian Navy had built in various Canadian shipyards. All five were identical and on completion were given the designation Gate Vessel. They were a multi-purpose vessel used as fleet auxiliaries, anti-submarine net-layers, operating gates in anti-submarine booms, and could be fitted for minesweeping. The other four vessels were:

CYVR HMCS DE LA RAINE

CYVO HMCS PORTE QUEBEC

CYWJ HMCS PORTE ST JEAN

CYWS HMCS PORTE ST LOUIS

All five were fitted with the Marconi CM11 unit as the main radiotelegraph installation. The other four remained members of the Canadian Armed Forces (Navy) and they were used during the summer months as training vessels for the Reserve Navy. One wonders how many radiotelegraph operators received their first sea experience in one of these little ships. It was a fascinating experience for any high school kid during his school holidays. Apparently the Navy built these vessels with the intention of turning them over to the various fishing companies in Canada with the option that the Navy could use them at any time. When the fishing companies saw these first vessels they wanted no part of the scheme. These five little ships lasted nearly fifty years and were replaced when the Navy received their Maritime Coastal Defense Vessels in the 1990's. When the Coast Guard returned PORTE DAUPHINE to the navy she was assigned the CZGL call sign.



National Film Board 1H79-281 LO39825

This is the HMCS PORTE ST JEAN with international call sign CYWJ. The late Joe Burgoyne spent an interesting summer as radio operator in this one up off Labrador while in the navy.

NF VC8060 PRINCE EDWARD

Built 1972

Northumberland Ferries

Ferry: between Caribou, Nova Scotia, and Wood Island, Prince Edward Island

NF VGJP PRINCE GEORGE

Built 1948

Wong Brothers

West Coast Ferry

Believe it or not Lloyds list this Canadian Passenger vessel as having General Radio Service (Citizens Band) call sign XM11 3424. No one would ever print any comment I could make on this.

NF VCJN PRINCE NOVA

Built 1964

Northumberland Ferries

Ferry

Between Caribou, Nova Scotia, and Wood Island, Prince Edward Island

NF VGWG PRINCESS MARGUERITE

Built 1948

Minister of Transport, Victoria, British Columbia

West Coast Ferry

NF VGDT PRINCESS OF ACADIA

Built 1970
Canadian National
Ferry: between Digby, Nova Scotia, and Saint John, New Brunswick
Launched:
VGDT PRINCESS OF NOVA

NF VGGW PRINCESS OF VANCOUVER
Built 1955
Canadian Pacific
West Coast Ferry

FR VGWQ PRINCESS PATRICIA
Built 1949
Canadian Pacific
West Coast Ferry
Radio station unknown

F VDZG PRINDOC
Built 1966
N. M. Paterson and Sons
General Cargo
Marconi Station
Last Radio Officer unknown

F CGDN QUADRA
Built 1967
Coast Guard
West Coast Ocean Station P
Radio station various pieces of equipment radio call sign on station 4YP
Radio Officers: unknown
Sister:
CGBR VANCOVER

NF CYGR QUEBECOIS
Built 1962
Upper Lakes Shipping
Great Lakes Cargo Vessel
Twin sister:
VDWC MONTREALAIS

? VDQV QUEDOC
Built 1960
N. M. Paterson and Sons
Cargo Vessel
Sister:
VOTM CANADOC

NF CZ8100 QUEEN OF ALBERNI
Built 1976
British Columbia Ferry Corporation
West Coast Ferry

NF VDMG QUEEN OF BURNABY
Built 1965
British Columbia Ferry Corporation
West Coast Ferry

NF CZ8058 QUEEN OF COQUITLAM
Built 1976
British Columbia Ferry Corporation
West Coast Ferry

NF CZ4990 QUEEN OF COWICHAN
Built 1976
British Columbia Ferry Corporation
West Coast Ferry

NF CYJC QUEEN OF ESQUIMALT
Built 1963
British Columbia Ferry Corporation
West Coast Ferry

NF VCNX QUEEN OF NANAIMO
Built 1964
British Columbia Ferry Corporation
West Coast Ferry

NF VDQQ QUEEN OF NEW WESTMINSTER
Built 1964
British Columbia Ferry Corporation
West Coast Ferry

NF VG8234 QUEEN OF OAK BAY
Built 1981
British Columbia Ferry Corporation
West Coast Ferry

F VGPZ QUEEN OF PRINCE RUPERT
Built 1966
British Columbia Ferry Corporation
West Coast Ferry
Radio station and radio officer: unknown
Former:
VGPZ VICTORIA PRINCESS

NF VYKX QUEEN OF SAANICH
Built 1963
British Columbia Ferry Corporation
West Coast Ferry

NF VCNR QUEEN OF SIDNEY
Built 1960
British Columbia Ferry Corporation
West Coast Ferry
Former:
VCNR SIDNEY

FR CZ2957 QUEEN OF SURREY
Built 1969
British Columbia Ferry Corporation
West Coast Ferry
Former:

SLGN STENA DANICA

NF VCGK QUEEN OF THE ISLANDS

Built 1963

British Columbia Ferry Corporation

West Coast Ferry

NF VCMC QUEEN OF TSAWWASSEN

Built 1960

British Columbia Ferry Corporation

West Coast Ferry

Former:

VCMC TSAWWASSEN

NF CYMW QUEEN OF VANCOUVER

Built 1962

British Columbia Ferry Corporation

West Coast Ferry

Former:

CYMW CITY OF VANCOUVER

NF VCVV QUEEN OF VICTORIA

Built 1962

British Columbia Ferry Corporation

West Coast Ferry

Former:

VCVV CITY OF VICTORIA

F CZDO QUEST

Armed Forces Auxiliary

Research Vessel

Military radio station

Garnet Hiltz with amateur radio call sign VE1WQ was a long serving radio officer in this vessel. This was the last vessel to carry a radio officer in Canada. Radio officer Paul du Mesnil sailed as radio officer in her for years after radiotelegraph had been removed from the Canadian coastal radio stations. Paul managed to find the last of the world's radio stations using radiotelegraph and would check in with them once in awhile for a radio signal check. Both Paul and Garnet had beautiful radiotelegraph "fists" – they sent very good Morse code and were a pleasure to work.

CFAV QUEST with call sign CZDO is the last Canadian ship to carry a Canadian civilian Radio Officer; Paul du Mesnil.



HARC Files

Radio Officer Garnet Hiltz

NF CYJJ QUETICO

Built 1961

Canada Steamships

Great Lakes Cargo Vessel

Former:

CYJJ WHITEFISH BAY

? VCJR R. G. SANDERSON

Built 1903

Goderich Elevator and Transit

Great Lakes Cargo

Former:

VCJR MANTADOC

? VDZR R. BRUCE ANGUS

Built 1951

Upper Lakes Shipping

Tanker

Former:

VDZR IMPERIAL REDWATER

NF VCKM RALPH MISENER

Built 1968

Scott Misener Steamships

Great Lakes Cargo Vessel

NF VYFL RED WING

Built 1960

Upper Lakes Shipping

Great Lakes Bulk Carrier

NF VGJC RICHELIEU

Built 1967

Canada Steamships

Great Lakes Cargo Vessel

NF VDTM ROLAND DESGAGNES

Built 1952

Rail and Water Terminal Quebec

Great Lakes Cargo Vessel

Former:

VDTM NORTHCLIFFE HALL

VDTM FRANKCLIFFE HALL

NF VGWZ ROYALTON

Built 1924

Misener Transportation

Great Lakes Cargo Vessel

Apparently this one was never renamed in sixty years of service.

? ---- RUTH HINDMAN

Built 1910

Western Metals

Great Lakes Cargo Vessel

Former:

---- NORWAY

NF VGCW SABLE ISLAND

Built 1929

Richelieu Dredging

Great Lakes Cargo

Former:

VGCW BULKARIER

F CGTJ SACKVILLE

Built 1941

Armed Forces Auxiliary

Research Vessel

Military Station

One of her long serving radio officers was Bill Calnen

This vessel is the last of the famous Canadian Corvettes and is now held as a museum at Halifax, Nova Scotia. She was fitted with various military radio stations over the years. The CGTJ call sign has been her call sign since she was first commissioned on December 30, 1941.

NF VGWX SAGUENAY

Built 1964

Voyager Colonial

Great Lakes Cargo Vessel

? VGVM SANDRA L. GAGE

Built 1960

Fortune Fisheries Limited

Fishing Vessel

Former:

PFFJ JULIE STREIFF

NF VCWK SASKATCHEWAN PIONEER

Built 1983

Misener Transportation Limited

Bulk Carrier

Became:

GNBD SASKATCHEWAN PIONEER
C6KP9 SASKATCHEWAN PIONEER
---- VOYAGEUR PIONEER

See:

VCWG SELKIRK SETTLER

NF VXYZ SCOTIA 2
Built 1915
Minister of Transport Ottawa, Ontario
Ferry

NF VGLR SCOTT MISENER
Built 1954
Misener Transportation
Great Lakes Cargo Vessel

NF VGTD SEASPAN DORIS
Built 1968
Seaspan International
West Coast Cargo Vessel
Former:
VGTD DORIS YORKE

NF CZ6394 SEASPAN FORRESTER
Built 1970
Seaspan International
West Coast Cargo Vessel
Former:
CZ6394 ISLAND FORRESTER

NF VGNK SEASPAN GREG
Built 1964
Seaspan International
West Coast Cargo Vessel
Former:
VGNK GREG YORKE

NF VDDL SEAWAY QUEEN
Built 1959
Upper Lakes Shipping
Great Lakes Bulk Carrier

FR VXFP SEAWAY TRADER
Built 1947
Shediac Bulk Shipping Company
Tanker
Former:
VXFP IMPERIAL COLLINGWOOD

? VXYT SECHELT QUEEN
Built 1947
Minister of Transport Victoria, British Columbia
West Coast Ferry
Former:
WA3616 CHINOOK 2
WA3616 CHINOOK

NF VDPZ SECOLA
Built 1951
Secola Shipping
Tanker
Former:
VDPZ CEDARBRANCH

NF VCWG SELKIRK SETTLER
Built 1983
Misener Transportation Limited
Bulk Carrier
Became:

VOSL SPRUCEGLEN (owned by Canada Steamship Lines)

There were three of these bulk carriers built in Scotland. The three were built in 1983 and all three were sisters of 21,548 Gross Tons. The three were:

VCWJ CANADA MARQUIS
VCWK SASKATCHEWAN PIONEER
VCWG SELKIRK SETTLER

The British Radio and Electronics' Officers Union was going to put up a picket around the shipyard that built these three in an attempt to make them comply with International Law and fit them with a proper radio room, radio station and carry a certified radio officer. When the British union realized there was only Paul du Mesnil and I here in Canada trying to do something about this they said to hell with it and gave up. It is amazing that these three relatively small ships were able to find a cargo that permitted them to sail across the Atlantic Ocean. The whole Atlantic Ocean could hear the "nuts" sailing these three. They were passing chapter and verse from the bible like the Canadian Navy did during World War II. The Navy did it via signal lights and few if any could copy the messages. These clowns did it on the international calling and distress frequency of 2182 kilohertz so the whole Atlantic could hear them.

SELKIRK SETTLER was owned by Canada Steamship Lines and named the SPRUCEGLEN in 2007 with call sign VOSL. SASKATCHEWAN PIONEER had a British international call sign, GNBD for awhile and then a Bahamas international call sign C6KP9 for awhile. The last I heard SASKATCHEWAN PIONEER was registered in Hong Kong as VOYAGEUR PIONEER. CANADA MARQUIS belonged to Canada Steamship Lines and was named the BIRCHGLEN in 2007 with call sign VOTT. One wonders why the two still registered in Canada did not retain their original call signs, but both were probably registered outside Canada at one time.

NF VGZC SENATOR OF CANADA
Built 1957
N. M. Paterson and Sons
Great Lakes Cargo Vessel
Sister:
VOTM CANADOC

NF VGPY SENNEVILLE
Built 1967
Mohawk Navigation
Great Lakes Cargo Vessel

? VOWL SHELTER B
Built 1907
Quebec and Ontario Transportation
Great Lakes Cargo Vessel
Former:

VOWL SHELTER BAY
WDPV JAY C. MORSE

NF VDRX SHIERCLIFFE HALL
Built 1950
Strathmore Terminals
Great Lakes Cargo Vessel

NF VGVR SIEUR D'AMOURS
Built 1966
La Societe des Traversiers du Quebec
Ferry

NF CYBJ SILVER ISLE
Built 1963
Mohawk Navigation
Great Lakes Cargo Vessel

? ---- SILVERDALE
Built 1925
Dale Transports
Great Lakes Cargo Vessel
Former:
ZCVA GLENEAGLES

I was unable to locate any further detail on SILVERDALE. Some of these old lake vessels were registered in Bermuda for a short period for some unknown reason. Did the Great Lakes have flag of convenience at one time or were the vessels purchased from the United States and brought to Canada via Bermuda in order to circumvent some tax law - Your guess is as good as mine.

NF VDDP SIMCOE
Built 1966
Canada Steamships
Great Lakes Cargo Vessel

F CGSJ SIMON FRASER
Built 1959
Coast Guard
Light Icebreaker Buoy Tender
Home port Quebec City
Marconi Globespan radio station
Radio Officer: P. Jobinon during the early 1980's
Sister:
CGCV TUPPER

SIMON FRASER made a circumnavigation of the North American continent with a volunteer crew for the Royal Canadian Mounted Police during the summer of 2000. No radio officer was carried during this voyage.

F CGGN SIR HUMPHREY GILBERT
Built 1959
Coast Guard
Icebreaker Buoy Tender
Home port St. John's, Newfoundland
Norwegian EB-400 MF and Collins HF radio station
Radio Officer: Blair Sanderson during the early 1980's. The late Des Daley had been a long serving radio officer in this vessel.
Similar:

CGCW CAMSELL

NF VDMV SIR JAMES DUNN
Built 1952
Canadian Shipbuilding and Engineering
Great Lakes Cargo Vessel

F CGDT SIR JOHN FRANKLIN
Built 1979
Coast Guard
R Class Icebreaker
Home port St. John's, Newfoundland
Mckay Radio Station
Chief Radio Officer: Malcolm MacNaughton
2nd Radio Officer: Andre Mosasse
Former:
CGDT FRANKLIN

NF VGSS SIR ROBERT BOND
Built 1975
Canadian National
Ferry: mainly from Nova Scotia to Newfoundland but filled in for the PRINCESS OF ACADIA on the
Digby, Nova Scotia, to Saint John, New Brunswick, run.

F CGGF SIR WILLIAM ALEXANDER
Built 1959
Coast Guard
Buoy Tender Light Icebreaker
Home port Dartmouth, Nova Scotia
Marconi Globespan station
Bill Baxter was one of her last radio officers.
This vessel was replaced in the 1980's by another vessel of the same name but does not carry a radio
officer.



Radio Officer Bill Baxter VE1XU

This is the CCGS SIR WILLIAM ALEXANDER at her home berth at the Dartmouth Coast Guard Base.



Radio Officer Bill Baxter VE1XU

This is Radio Officer Bill Baxter on duty in the Radio Room of the CCGS SIR WILLIAM ALEXANDER with call sign CGGF.

F VOPG SOODOC

Built 1976

N. M. Paterson and Sons

General Cargo

This vessel was fitted with a Marconi Globespan radio station removed from the LABRADOC with call sign VDZF.

She carried a radio officer for a short time only.

Sister:

VOTM CANADOC



Graetz Bros. Limited, Montreal for N. M. Paterson and Sons Limited

This is the MV SOODOC with call sign VOPG.

F CZFT ST CHARLES

Armed Forces Auxiliary

Deep Sea Tug

Military Station

Civilian Radio Officer

? ---- ST CLAIR

Built 1927

Canadian National

Great Lakes Ferry

FR VOVY ST LAWRENCE

Built 1962

Canada Steamships

Cargo Vessel

Former:

5MPE GAUCHO TAURA

JXQY SKAUSTRAND

FR VCLP STEELCLIFFE HALL

Built 1959

Halco

Great Lakes Bulk Carrier

Former:

5MAL RHINE ORE

NF VYTD STERNECLIFFE HALL

Built 1947

Halco

Great Lakes Cargo Vessel

F VCWL SUN EMERILLON

Built 1969

Boreal Navigation Inc

General Cargo

Radio station: Receiver Eddystone – Transmitter unknown

Radio Officer: unknown

Former:

SKLN BORELAND

Became:

VCWL MESGAGNES

F VCJC SUN HERMINE

Built 1965

Boreal Navigation Inc

General Cargo

Radio station: unknown

Radio officer: unknown

Former:

GPFE INISHOWEN HEAD

GPFE CAST BEAVER

GPFE INISHOWEN HEAD

Became:

VCJC CATALINA

NF VGCK SUNSHINE COAST QUEEN

Built 1951

British Columbia Ferry Corporation

West Coast Ferry

Former:

---- PERE NOUVEL

---- JACK DALTON

---- VACATIONLAND

F VYBM SWELLMASTER

Built 1950

Saint John Ship Building and Dry Dock

Deep Sea Dredge

Radio station: unknown

Radio officer: unknown

Former:

VYBM SANDPIPER

NF VCTR T. R. MCLAGAN

Built 1954

Canada Steamships

Great Lakes Cargo Vessel

NF VDWB TADOUSSAC

Built 1969

Canada Steamships
Great Lakes Cargo Vessel

NF VOXQ TARANTAU
Built 1964
Canada Steamships
Great Lakes Cargo Vessel

? VXFN TEGUCIAGALPA
Built 1948
Johnstone Shipping Limited
Tanker
Former:
VXFN IMPERIAL LONDON

F VOTF TERRA NOVA
Built 1962
Puddister Trading Company Limited
General Cargo
Radio Station: Marconi Globespan
No radio officer carried
Former:
VOTF SIR JOHN CROSBIE

FR VGLD TEXACO BRAVE
Built 1977
Texaco Canada Inc.
Jack Campbell was the radio officer on the delivery voyage from her Japan builder's shipyard but no radio officer was carried after that.

NF VGXD TEXACO CHIEF
Built 1969
Texaco Canada Inc.
Coastal Tanker

FR VGPK TEXACO WARRIER
Built 1970
Texaco Canada Inc.
Tanker
Former:
GZNV ANTERIORITY
GZNV THUNTANK 6

FR CGBL THOMAS CARLETON
Built 1960
Coast Guard
Buoy Tender
Radio station when fitted believed to be Marconi Globespan
No radio officer carried after her first few years of service
Home port Saint John, New Brunswick

F VOWN THOROLD
Built 1961
Trico Enterprises
General Cargo
Radio station: unknown

No radio officer carried
Former:
GHXA GOSFORTH

FR VGWL THORFINN
Built 1952
Seaward Holdings Limited
Whale Catcher
Former:
VGWL CHESTER
VGWL THORFINN
LEJC THORFINN

THORFINN was converted into a luxury charter yacht for the West Coast area. She had her original steam engines and provided many memorable moments for those so fortunate to sail in her.

NF VYSD TRAILER PRINCESS
Built 1944
Canadian Pacific
West Coast Ferry
Former:
---- ARL 10

NF CYLY TRANS ST. LAURENT
Built 1963
Dingwall Shipping
Quebec Ferry

NF VXZV TROISDOC
Built 1955
N. M. Paterson and Sons
Great Lakes Cargo Vessel
Former:
VXZV IROQUOIS

F CGCV TUPPER
Built 1959
Coast Guard
Light Icebreaker Buoy Tender
Home port Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island
Marconi Globespan radio station
I was radio officer in this vessel from August 1972 until December 1975.
Sister:
CGSJ SIMON FRASER



Radio Officer Paul du Mesnil

This is Radio Officer Paul du Mesnil in the Radio Room of CCGS TUPPER. Paul served in her for a short time shortly after I had served in her. The front panels on her two Atalanta receivers are faded from the sun from the large window on the right. One can just see a corner of the Mufax machine on the right.

FR VGFN UNGAVA TRANSPORT

Built 1959

Halco

Tanker

Former:

JXHA TOMMY WIBORG

JXHA VARANGNES

NF VGCZ VACATIONLAND

Built 1971

Canadian National

Ferry: that ran from Cape Tormentine, New Brunswick, to Borden, Prince Edward Island.

Twin sister:

VGCY HOLIDAY ISLAND

F CGBR VANCOUVER

Built 1965

Coast Guard

West Coast Ocean Station P

Radio Station: various pieces of equipment

Radio Officers: Barry Hastings is the only radio operator that I know who served in these weather ships.

Barry spent many years in several.

Radio Call Sign while on station 4YP

Sister:

CGDN QUADRA

Some of the radio officers serving in QUADRA and VANCOUVER were of the new breed of Canadian coast station operator and did not hold at least the second class certificate of proficiency in radio. I do not know how the Canadian government managed to do this with these operators and the technicians in the coast guard fleet that first went on board in 1962. It was definitely an easy way to keep these people because they had no trade whatsoever when they left this organization. Some company in Texas bought

QUADRA and VANCOUVER in 1982 when they were put up for sale. There was talk of using them as research vessels of some description, but I do not know what became of them.



Barry Hastings VE7BGI

This is the Amateur Radio QSL Card of CCGS VANCOUVER CGBR

NF VCQJ VANDOC

Built 1964

N. M. Paterson and Sons

Great Lakes Cargo Vessel

Sister:

VOTM CANADOC

Former:

VCQJ SIR DENYS LOWSON

? ---- VM/S HERCULES

Built 1962

St. Lawrence Authority

Floating Crane

Former:

---- S L S HERCULES

NF VGRT V. W. SCULLY

Built 1965

Algoma Central Railway

Great Lakes Cargo Vessel

Former:

VGRT DON DE DIEU

FR CGCJ WALTER E. FOSTER

Built 1954

Coast Guard

Buoy Tender
Home port Saint John, New Brunswick
The radio station removed from this vessel was the RCA 5U
The last radio officer to serve in this vessel was Bill Lenahan

FR CYMP WESTWHALE 8
Built 1953
Ronald Wilson, Vancouver, British Columbia
Fishing Vessel
Former:
---- TOSHI MARU NO 22
LDKH KOS 52
LDKH SUDEROY XVII

F VDJS WHEAT KING
Built 1952
Upper Lakes Shipping
Bulk Carrier
Marconi Radio Station
No radio officer carried
Former:
GPDY LLANDAFF

FR VGPS WIARTON
Built 1907
Steel Company of Canada
Great Lakes Cargo Vessel
Former:
WGNP THOMAS LYNCH

F VGfq WM. J. STEWART
Built 1932
Minister Environment Ottawa, Ontario
West Coast Research Vessel
Radio Station: unknown
Radio Officer: unknown

NF VDRL WILLOWBRANCH
Built 1950
Affiliated Marine Metal and Salvage
Tanker

NF ---- WITTRANSPORT 1
Built 1947
West Indies Transport
Great Lakes Cargo Vessel
Former:
---- LEECLIFFE HALL
---- COVE TRANSPORT
---- WITTRANSPORT

F CGCT WOLFE
Built 1959
Coast Guard
Medium Icebreaker
Home port Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island

Marconi Globespan radio station

Radio Officer: The late Wilfred Fontaine VY2CT

Note that Wilf had the CT suffix in his amateur call sign to match the suffix of the WOLFE's call sign.

NF CYJT YANKCANUCK

Built 1963

Chemco Equipment

Great Lakes Cargo Vessel

FR VC8943 ZARAGOZA

Built 1968

I. M. B. Leasing

Fishing Vessel

Former:

GYBH BOSTON YORK

With all the excellent shipyards in the United Kingdom one can only wonder why British companies have their vessels built in foreign yards and the ZARAGOZA was one of these mysteries. Politics, money, or a combination of the two is likely the reason. Boston Deep Sea Trawlers, England, had this vessel built for them in Poland. At the time there were several new British fishing vessels built in Poland. Boston Deep Sea Trawlers named this one with the BOSTON prefix so common with many of their vessels.

This list will give one a description of most of the Canadian ships that were, should have been, or whatever the terminology, at the end of radiotelegraph in Canada. Radiotelegraph ended officially about 15 years after I composed this list and as can be seen some of these ships should have carried a radio officer up until the end. I have also added a few ships since then of interest.

Continued in Section 12