

SECRET.

C.S.

1938

No. 5/8/38

Secret Circular from S. of S.

SUBJECT.

1938

17th May.

Previous Paper.

ARRANGEMENTS WHEREBY BRITISH MERCHANT SHIPS ARE PROVIDED IN TIME OF WAR WITH SECRET WIRELESS TELEGRAPHY CALL SIGNS.

MINUTES.

- 1. Secret Circular from S. of S. of 11/4/38
- 2. Minute to Registrar of Shipping of 4. 8. 38.
- 3. Minute to Registrar of Shipping of 1. 10. 38.
- 4-5. Minute from Registrar of Shipping of 3. 10. 38.

H. We are unable to state the names of the masters and W/T operators of most of the vessels registered here since they never come to this Port.

WCH
ed
 6. 2. 38

Please send list of those registered here and fitted with wireless telegraph indicating by separate list those to which you refer

WCH
 6/4/38

Subsequent Paper.

J.R.

Draw despatch Submitted.
Sevillian lists have been
prepared.

MCH
ed.
19. X. 38

11111 20/X

Secret Despatch to S. of S. of 20. 10. 38.

6-8.

J.R.

Despatch Submitted.

MCH
ed.
21. X. 38

11111 21/X

Telegram from Cbag. S. G. No. 10 of 29. 1. 40.

(9)

to " " " " 9 of 31. 1. 40.

10-11.

Telegrams from Magistrate S. Genova. 12.

Naval Office in Charge.

I spoke with you about
this matter which commenced with
red 9. The Master of "Sevilla"
has the codes. Would you
grant authority to him to
open them.

MCH
ed.
7. 2. 40

- 13. c/Minute from S.M.O., of 7. 2. 40.
- 14. Telegram No. 12 to c/bag. S.G. of 8. 2. 40.
- 15. Secret Air Despatch 7. 6. 49

16

Registrar of Shipping
Office B.T.

Will you please furnish the information requested at (15)

R. Jones
9/8/49

Ag. S.

17

Para 4 to 15.

1	WILLIAM SCORESBY	I LEN	JOHN BISCOE	FITZROY
2	GWTF	TBCQ	GFLF	LHKW
3	Yes.		Yes	Yes
4	Yes		Yes	Yes
5	research	motor sail	research	passenger/cargo
6	325.82	27.56	870.48	853.03
7	Port STANLEY F.I.	Port Stanley F.I.	Port Stanley F.I.	Port Stanley F.I.
8	unknown	unknown	Cmdr Kirkwood R.N.	Capt F. White
9	unknown	unknown.	unknown unknown	unknown
10	H.M. represented by the Government of the F.I.	F.I.C.	H.M. represented by the Government of the F.I.	F.I.C.

Above are all the ships reported in Stanley to which Signal letters have been issued. This office has no records of the nationalities of Cmdr Kirkwood or Capt F. White.

of Call Sign or

E. J.
10. Aug. 49.

Hon

18

The following is a list of call signs
(wireless telegraph) of ships registered in the
Falkland Islands

Fitzroy	MDAS
John Biscoe	VPNE VPNE
Discovery II	VPST
William Scoresby	VPNM
Philomel	VPNG
Penelope	VPNF

HES

10-8-49

19

Y.A.

59. ~~Handwritten scribble~~

Kh.
17/8

20

C.S.

T.7. R issue. 18/8.

Secret having telegram from L. of L of 19.8.49

21.

Handwritten signature and date: 22/8/49

Secret air despatch from S. of S of 8.2.51

22.

Handwritten note: 23
Handwritten note: 23 pl.

Handwritten signature and date: 16/8/51

Handwritten note: 24
Handwritten note: 16/iii

~~Handwritten text: ... of 1.1/52 25
transf to 0796~~

Handwritten signature and date: 17/8/51

Handwritten signature and date: 17/8/51

CIRCULAR

SECRET

Downing Street,

17th May, 1938.

Sir,

I have the honour to inform you that the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty have had under consideration the arrangements whereby British merchant ships are provided in time of war with secret wireless telegraphy call signs, for use when such ships are rendering certain reports or when confidential official messages are addressed to particular merchant ships. Under present arrangements these secret call signs would not be issued to individual merchant ships until after an emergency arose, but Their Lordships now consider that it is preferable for them to be issued in time of peace in order to obviate the delay which would occur before each ship became aware of her secret call sign. It is accordingly proposed to arrange for the issue as soon as practicable to British merchant ships, through their owners, of secret call signs for use in the event of war.

2. Particulars of each call sign, together with general instructions as to their use, will be contained in a sealed cover marked "Secret Envelope Z" which the Lords Commissioners propose shall be issued to all British ships (including those registered in the Colonies), except yachts,

The Officer Administering

the Government of

which are fitted with wireless telegraphy and in which a wireless telegraphy operator is borne, so long as the master is a British subject. Confidential instructions will not be issued to alien masters or wireless operators serving in British merchant ships in time of war or emergency, and in order to enforce this restriction lists of British merchant ships with alien masters or operators are being maintained at the Admiralty and notified confidentially to the Fleet as necessary.

3. The distribution of the secret call signs will be effected through the shipowners, and the covering letter to individual owners explaining the scheme will contain a request for the return of the envelopes should the international call sign (on which the secret call sign is based) of a ship be changed, a non-British master be appointed, or the ship transferred to a foreign flag. In order to provide a check on the sealed envelopes, the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty intend at stated intervals, i.e., every three years, to make enquiry of the various owners as to whether the secret envelopes supplied to them are still secure and on board their vessels. It is also proposed that should it be necessary at any time for merchant ships to become aware of their secret call signs, the necessary instructions would be broadcast by means of an addition to the message which will promulgate the restrictions to be observed by merchant ships in the use of wireless telegraphy.

4. The distribution of the necessary documents to the owners of vessels registered in the United Kingdom will be made by the Admiralty, and I have been asked to enlist the assistance of the Colonial Governments concerned in effecting the distribution to the owners of British ships registered in the Colonies, etc.

The Board of Trade have commenced the preparation of a list of vessels registered in the United Kingdom, and that list is being based on the information contained in the "List of Coast Stations and Ship Stations" (Berne List) published by the Bureau of the International Telecommunications Union. It is doubtful however whether that list can be relied upon to contain particulars in respect of all ships registered in the Colonies, etc., which carry wireless installations, since particulars of necessary modifications to the Berne List may not in every case have been communicated to the authorities at Berne. In this connection attention is invited to paragraph 7 of Viscount Swinton's circular despatch of the 9th December, 1931. I would suggest that in any case in which the necessary information has not yet been supplied for transmission to the Berne Bureau, steps should be taken to rectify the omission. Such action should, of course, be taken quite separately and not in any connection with or reference to this despatch.

5. In order that a complete list of British ships registered in the Colonies, etc., may be compiled together with the desired particulars regarding such ships, I have to request that the following particulars of all ships registered under the Merchant Shipping Act in the territory with which you are concerned may be forwarded to me as soon as possible:-

1. Name of vessel.
2. Visual and wireless call sign.
3. Whether fitted with wireless telegraphy or not.
4. Description of vessel. (i.e., passenger ship, freighter, launch, yacht, etc.).
5. Port of registration.
6. Name and address of owners.

Recd (22)
w.p.
235/34

7. Name of master.
8. Nationality of master.
9. Nationality of wireless operator.

Similar particulars should be furnished in respect of any vessels which may be registered in future, and I should be kept informed of any changes which may occur to affect the particulars furnished in respect of any ship.

6. It is appreciated that in certain territories where there is a port of British registry no British ships are in fact registered there. In such cases it will be sufficient if a "Nil Return" is furnished in reply to this despatch.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your most obedient, humble servant,

Wolstan Macdonald

No. S/8/38.

(It is requested that, in any reference to this minute, the above Number and the date may be quoted).

MINUTE.

4th August, 19 38.

From The Colonial Secretary,

To The Registrar of Shipping,

STANLEY.

Stanley, Falkland Islands.

S E C R E T.

I am directed to request that you will furnish me with the following particulars of all ships registered under the Merchant Shipping Act in the Falkland Islands :

1. Name of vessel.
2. Visual and wireless call sign.
3. Whether fitted with wireless telegraphy or not.
4. Description of vessel (i.e. passenger ship, freighter, launch yacht, etc.)
5. Port of registration.
6. Name and address of owners.
7. Name of master.
8. Nationality of master.
9. Nationality of wireless operator.

met
Colonial Secretary.

S/8/38.

No. _____

(It is requested that, in any reference to this minute, the above Number and the date may be quoted).

MINUTE.

1st October, 19 38.

From The Colonial Secretary,

To The Registrar of Shipping,

STANLEY.

Stanley, Falkland Islands.

Red 2.

I am directed to refer to my minute, No. S/8/38 of the 4th of August, 1938, and to request that you will cause the information required to be furnished as early as possible.

incl

Colonial Secretary.

NAME OF VESSEL.	VISUAL CALL - SIGN.	WIRELESS CALL - SIGN.	WHETHER FITTED WITH WIRELESS TELEGRAPHY OR NOT.	DESCRIPTION OF VESSEL	PORT OF REGISTRATION.	NAME AND ADDRESS OF OWNERS.	NAME OF MASTER.	NATIONALITY OF MASTER AND WIRELESS OPERATOR.
5 SACRA B. KELP H	KHGJ	VQTB ✓	YES	WHALER.	STANLEY.	MESSRS. SALVESEN, LEITH.	<i>U. Petersen</i>	<i>Swedish</i>
6 SEVILLA B.		VPNF ✓	YES	TUG.	STANLEY.	FALKLAND IS CO. LTD.		
7 CORONDA B. WEDDELL H		VPNL ✓	YES	WHALER.	STANLEY.	MESSRS. SALVESEN, LEITH.	<i>Mc Gill</i>	<i>British</i>
PERFECTO GARCIA F			NO	CUTTER.	STANLEY.	DO		
8 SOUSA B.		VPNK ✓	YES	WHALER.	STANLEY.	JOHN HAMILTON, WEDDELL IS.		
9 SAIMA B. WILLIAM SCORESBY. F		VPSW ✓ VPNM ✓	YES YES	WHALER. RESEARCH VESSEL.	STANLEY. STANLEY.	DO H.M.GOV'T.	<i>John Davis</i>	<i>British</i>
10 SOUTHERN CHIEF. B		VPRQ ✓	YES	WHALER.	STANLEY.	JOHN DAVIS STANLEY.		
11 SOUTHERN FOAM. B		VPRW ✓	YES	WHALER	STANLEY.	SOUTH GEORGIA CO. LTD. LEITH.	DO	
12 SOUTHERN SPRAY. B		VFRY ✓	YES	WHALER	STANLEY.	DO		
14 ILEN ?	TBCQ	VQTK	YES	KETCH	STANLEY.	FALKLAND IS CO. LTD.	<i>G. Lonsden</i>	<i>British</i>
13 SOUTHERN EMPRESS. B		VPRS ✓	YES	WHALER	STANLEY.	SOUTHERN WHALING CO. LIVERPOOL.	DO	
14 SOUTHERN SHORE. B		VPRX ✓	YES	WHALER	STANLEY.	DO		
15 SOUTHERN FLOWER. B		VPRT ✓	YES	WHALER	STANLEY.	DO	<i>(In Chile)</i>	
PENELOPE H.			NO	KETCH	STANLEY	JOHN HAMILTON, WEDDELL IS.		
SOUTHERN FIELD B				WHALER	STANLEY	SOUTHERN WHALING CO.	<i>Lieut. L. Hill</i> <i>R.N.R. O.B.E.</i>	
2 DISCOVERY II F		VPSJ ✓	YES	RESEARCH VESSEL.	STANLEY	H.M.GOV'T.		
SOUTHERN STAR. B				WHALER	STANLEY.	SOUTHERN WHALING CO	<i>(In Chile)</i> <i>Law up</i>	
WEST FALKLAND. F.				SCHOONER	STANLEY.	HAMILTON & SAUNDERS, LTD. LONDON.		
PORT RICHARD. H			NO	DRIFTER.	STANLEY.	FALKLAND IS SEALING CO.	<i>not in commission</i>	
3 FITZROY. H.		VPRZ ✓	YES	PASSENGER SHIP.	STANLEY.	FALKLAND IS CO. LTD.	- do -	
SHOVA. B				WHALER	STANLEY.	SOUTH GEORGIA CO.	<i>not in commission</i> <i>(G. Osborne)</i>	<i>British</i>
ROYDUR. H			NO.	WHALER.	STANLEY.	FALKLAND IS CO. LTD.		

3

No.

(It is requested that, in any reference to this minute, the above Number and the date may be quoted).

MINUTE.

3rd October. 1938.

From

Ag Registrar of Shipping.

Stanley, Falkland Islands.

To The Honourable,

Colonial Secretary.

With reference to C.S. S/8/38 of 4th August, 1938, I beg to submit particulars of ships registered in the Falkland Islands.

2. It is not possible to furnish names of masters and nationality of masters and wireless operators.



Ag Registrar of Shipping.

(8)

GOVERNMENT HOUSE,

STANTON,

20th October, 1938.

FALKLAND ISLANDS.

SECRET.

Sir,

With reference to your Secret Circular despatch of the 17th of May, 1938, I have the honour to transmit herewith lists "A" and "B" of vessels registered in this Colony which are fitted with wireless telegraphy.

2. I would add that it is not possible to give particulars with regard to the names of the masters and wireless operators of the vessels named in list "B" since these ships do not call at any port in the Colony.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your most obedient,
humble servant,

(SIGNED) MALCOLM MACDONALD

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE
MALCOLM MACDONALD, M.P.,
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES.

Redl.

In duplicate.

LIST "A".

NAME OF VESSEL.	VISUAL CALL-SIGN.	WIRELESS CALL-SIGN.	WHETHER FITTED WITH WIRELESS TELEGRAPHY OR NOT.	DESCRIPTION OF VESSEL.	PORT OF REGISTRATION.	NAME AND ADDRESS OF OWNERS.	NAME OF MASTER.	NATIONALITY OF MASTER AND WIRELESS OPERATOR.
WILLIAM SCORESBY	-	VPMH	YES	RESEARCH VESSEL.	STANLEY	H. M. GOVT.	-	-
DISCOVERY II.	-	VPSJ	YES	RESEARCH VESSEL.	STANLEY	H. M. GOVT.	LIEUT. J. HILL, R.N.R., O.B.E.	-
FITZROY	-	VPRZ	YES	PASSENGER SHIP.	STANLEY	FALKLAND IS. CO., LTD.	NOT IN COMMISSION.	-

L I S T "B".

NAME OF VESSEL.	VISUAL CALL- SIGN.	WIRELESS CALL- SIGN.	WHETHER EQUIPPED WITH WIRELESS TELEGRAPHY OR NOT.	DESCRIPTION OF VESSEL.	PORT OF REGISTRATION.	NAME AND ADDRESS OF OWNERS.	NAME OF MASTER.	NATIONALITY OF MASTER AND WIRELESS OPERATOR.
SACRA	KHGF	VQTB	YES	WHALER	STANLEY	MESSRS SALVESSEN, LEITH.	-	-
SEVILLA *	-	VPNF	YES	WHALER	STANLEY	- do -	-	-
CORONDA *	-	VPNL	YES	WHALER	STANLEY	- do -	-	-
SOUSA	-	VMRK	YES	WHALER	STANLEY	SOUTH GEORGIA, CO., LTD., LEITH.	-	-
SAIMA	-	VPBW	YES	WHALER	STANLEY	- do -	-	-
SOUTHERN CHIEF	-	VPRQ	YES	WHALER	STANLEY	SOUTHERN WHALING CO.	-	-
SOUTHERN FOAM	-	VPRW	YES	WHALER	STANLEY	- do -	-	-
SOUTHERN SPRAY	-	VPRY	YES	WHALER	STANLEY	- do -	-	-
SOUTHERN EMPRESS *	-	VPRS	YES	WHALER	STANLEY	SOUTHERN WHALING CO. LIVERPOOL.	-	-
SOUTHERN SHORN	-	VPRX	YES	WHALER	STANLEY	- do -	-	-
SOUTHERN FLOWER	-	VPRT	YES	WHALER	STANLEY	- do -	-	-

🐦 DECODE.

TELEGRAM.

From Magistrate, South Georgia.

To Colonial Secretary.

Despatched: 29th January, 1940. Time: 2359.

Received: 30th January. 1940. Time: 1200.

No. 10. The Master of steamer Sevilla official number 426,549 registered at Stanley enquires whether the Government could obtain for him the Secret call sign of his ship. The Secret call sign was not given him on leaving the United Kingdom.

MAGISTRATE.

REFERENCE SHEET.

10

FROM.....
HIS MAJESTY'S *W/T Station*
AT *Port Stanley*
DATED *31st Jan* 19*40*

To *N.O./c. Falklands.*

Herewith call signs of S.S. Sevilla.

Normal, Peace. VPNF.

Secret, ZDDU.

DECODE.

①

TELEGRAM.

From Colonial Secretary,

To Magistrate, South Georgia.

Despatched : 31st January, 19 40. Time : ...

Received : 19 ... Time : ...

No. 9. Your telegram No. 10 have no means of sending Secret information as Government Telegraph Code cannot be used for such. Ascertain if any British ship at South Georgia has the Merchant Shipping Code for use in War. Where is Seville.

COLONIAL SECRETARY.

DECODE.

5/8/38

(12)

TELEGRAM.

From Magistrate, South Georgia.

To Colonial Secretary.

Despatched : 5th February 19 40. Time : 11.00.

Received : 6th February 19 40. Time : 11.00.

No. 14. Your telegram No. 2 Master of Sevilla has Merchant Shipping recording table number S.I. 02165. He also has 2 envelopes containing Merchant Navy Code, decode and recode which he is not permitted to open without permission from the Admiralty or a Royal Authority. Vessel is at present lying at South Georgia.

MAGISTRATE.

No.
(It is requested that, in any reference to this minute, the above Number and the date may be quoted.)

MINUTE.

7th February 1940.

From

Naval Officer-in-Charge,

Stanley, Falkland Islands.

To The Honourable,

The Colonial Secretary,

Stanley.

Envelopes should be opened as the contents are now in force.

Information asked for will be signalled in this code.

Retain S.P. mentioned for destruction by Naval Authority.

RBMartin

Commander, R.N.

DECODE.

14

TELEGRAM.

From Colonial Secretary,

To Magistrate, South Georgia.

Despatched : 8th February, 19 40. Time : ...

Received : 19 ... Time : ...

Red 12.

No. 12. Your telegram No. 14. Naval Authority states envelopes should be opened as the contents are now in force. Information asked for in your No. 10 will then be telegraphed by the Naval Authority in that code. S.F. 02183 should be retained for destruction by Naval Authority.

COLONIAL SECRETARY.

For 5/8/38

5/8/38

DECODE.

TELEGRAM.

From Magistrate, South Georgia.

To Colonial Secretary.

Despatched: 10th February, 1940. Time: 1250.

Received: 10th February, 1940. Time: 1100.

No. 17. Your telegram No. 12 Master informed accordingly.

MAGISTRATE.

CIRCULAR
22872/1/A/49
SECRET



5/8/38 15
THE CHURCH HOUSE,
GREAT SMITH STREET,
LONDON, S.W.1.
7th June, 1949.

SIR,

Secret War Radio Call Signs for Ships

I have the honour to refer to Mr. Malcolm MacDonald's Secret Circular Despatch of 17th May, 1938, on the subject of secret call signs for ships, and to inform you that the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty have had under consideration the reinstatement of the arrangements made prior to the last war, whereby British merchant ships were provided in peacetime with a Secret War Radio Call Sign for use in an emergency. The Call Signs are employed when ships are rendering certain reports or when confidential official messages are addressed to particular merchant ships. The Lords Commissioners now propose that the necessary documents containing such Call Signs shall be issued to all British ships of over 500 gross tons except yachts (including those registered in the Colonies, etc.), which are fitted with wireless telegraphy, and in which a wireless telegraphy operator is borne. Secret War Radio Call Signs would not however be issued in cases where the master of a ship is not a British subject.

15-6
2. The administrative arrangements to put this proposal into effect will remain unchanged from those set out in the Secret Circular Despatch under reference. Particulars of each Call Sign, together with general instructions as to their use, will be contained in a sealed cover marked "Secret Envelope Z". The distribution of these documents will be effected through the shipowners, and the covering letter to individual owners explaining the scheme will contain a request for the return of the envelope, should the ship's Signal Letter and Call Sign (on which the Secret War Radio Call Sign is based) be changed, a non-British master be appointed, or the ship transferred to a foreign flag. A copy of the proposed covering letter is attached. In order to provide a check on the sealed envelopes the Lords Commissioners intend at stated intervals of every three years to enquire from the various owners whether the secret envelopes supplied to them are still secure and on board their vessels. It also proposed that if at any time it should be necessary for merchant ships to become aware of their Secret War Radio Call Signs, the necessary instructions would be included in the message which will promulgate the restrictions to be observed by merchant ships in the use of wireless telegraphy in an emergency.

3. So far as ships registered in the United Kingdom are concerned, the distribution of the necessary documents will be made by the Admiralty. In the case of ships registered in the Colonies, etc., I have been asked to invite the co-operation of the Colonial Governments concerned in carrying out the distribution of documents to ships registered in their territories. To this end, it will be necessary to compile a list of all ships of colonial registry which are over 500 gross tons and which are fitted with wireless telegraphy. I would draw your attention in this connexion to the arrangements set out in paragraph 5 of Mr. Malcolm MacDonald's Secret Circular Despatch of 17th May, 1938, and reiterated in Lord Moyne's Circular Despatch of 12th December, 1941. These arrangements provided for the notification of certain particulars regarding ships of colonial registry, with a view to ensuring that reliable information was available in this Office and at the Admiralty about the presence of wireless installation on such ships, the Signal Letters and Call Signs allocated to them, and the nationality of their masters. It appears that of recent years, certain territories have omitted to furnish the required particulars, in cases where fresh allocations of Signal Letters and Call Signs have been made, or where changes have taken place in particulars previously notified.

4. I appreciate that notification of allocations of Signal Letters and Call Signs is normally made direct to the Registrars General of Shipping and Seamen by Registrars of Shipping, in accordance with paragraph 192 of Instructions to Registrars of British Ships, 1929, and such allocations when notified are published in "Signal Letters of British Ships". In addition particulars of ships carrying wireless installations are furnished on Form F of the Annual Return of Naval, Military, and Air Resources, and are also normally notified to the General Post Office for transmission to the Bureau of the International Telecommunications Union, and inclusion in the Berne List. Nevertheless it does not appear that full and reliable information of the type required by the Admiralty is at present available. I have therefore to request that the following particulars may be

The Officer Administering
the Government of
FALKLAND ISLANDS

Reply at 21

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supplied of all ships registered in the territory with which you are concerned, and to which Signal Letters and Call Signs have been allotted:—

1. Name of vessel.
2. Signal Letters and Call Signs.
3. Whether fitted with wireless telegraphy or not.
4. Whether wireless operator carried or not.
5. Type of vessel (e.g. Passenger ship, cargo ship, tug, launch, yacht, etc).
6. Gross Registered Tonnage.
7. Port of Registration.
8. Name of master.
9. Nationality of master.
10. Name and address of owners.

It would be appreciated if particulars of ships belonging to the same owner could be grouped together in this return.

5. In order to ensure that an accurate record is maintained of such ships, I have also to request that similar details may be furnished in respect of all ships to which future allocations of Signal Letters and Call Signs may be made, and that, in all cases, changes in the Signal Letter and Call Sign or name of a ship, or regarding the carriage of wireless installations may be notified, as they occur. In the case of ships over 500 gross tons only, changes in the remaining particulars thus furnished in respect of a ship, for example, in the nationality of the master, in the name and address of the owners, or in the carriage of wireless operators, should also be notified, as they occur.

6. In certain territories it is realized that Government ships, which are not normally registered, except in those territories where an Order in Council has been made under Section 80 of the Merchant Shipping Act, 1906, may have been allotted Signal Letters and Call Signs, and be equipped with wireless telegraphy. It appears desirable that the proposed arrangements for the issue of Secret War Radio Call Signs, should also extend to such ships, where they exceed 500 gross tons. They should therefore be included among those to which the two preceding paragraphs apply.

7. I appreciate that in certain territories where there is a port of registry, no ships are in fact registered there, and that in other territories no Signal Letters or Call Signs have so far been allocated to ships. In either case, it will be sufficient if a " Nil Return " is furnished in reply to this despatch.

8. This Circular has not been addressed to addressees Nos. 8, 14, 27, 28, 30, 34, 35, 37, 41, 42 and 52.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your most obedient, humble servant,

A. C. Jones

Enclosure in secret Circular despatch dated 7th June, 1949.

Draft letter to Shipowners

GENTLEMEN,

I am commanded by My Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty to acquaint you that they have had under consideration the reinstatement of the arrangements made prior to the last war whereby British Merchant Ships were provided, in time of peace, with a Secret War Radio Call Sign for use in an emergency, when such ships are rendering certain reports or when confidential official messages are addressed to particular merchant ships.

2. You will be aware that for the purpose of reception of such confidential messages, it is essential that each ship fitted with W/T should be allocated a Secret Call Sign as distinct from her International Call Sign, and in order to avoid the delay in issuing the Secret Call Sign in an emergency, My Lords intend to adopt a procedure similar to that followed prior to the last war of issuing such a Call Sign in time of peace to each British Merchant Ship fitted with W/T, provided that she carries a W/T operator and that her Master is a British subject.

3. To this end sealed envelopes which, for convenience, will hereafter be referred to as "Secret Envelope Z", have been prepared, each of which contains the Secret W/T Call Sign of the vessel for which it is intended, together with instructions for its use. Envelopes for retention on board ships belonging to your Company, as detailed in the accompanying schedule, are forwarded herewith.

4. My Lords desire me, in forwarding these envelopes, to invite your co-operation in the efficient working of this scheme which is, in their opinion, dependent upon strict observance of the following rules, regarding which I am to request that you will issue the necessary instructions to the servants of your Company:—

- (i) "Secret Envelope Z" is not to be opened until specific instruction to do so is received from the Admiralty or other British Naval authority. (This instruction will normally be broadcast in the Admiralty message which will promulgate in time of emergency or war the restrictions to be observed by Merchant Ships in the use of W/T.)
- (ii) The envelopes should be issued strictly in accordance with the accompanying schedule, but not to any ship whose Master is not of British nationality.
- (iii) On receipt on board ship the envelope should be placed in the personal custody of the Master who should deposit it *unopened* in a safe place under secure lock and key.
- (iv) The "Secret Envelope Z" of any ship—
 - (a) whose International Call Sign is changed,
 - (b) to which a non-Britisher Master is appointed,
 or (c) which is transferred to a foreign flag, should be at once withdrawn and returned unopened to the Admiralty.

5. I am further to request that the duplicate copy of the accompanying schedule may be signed and returned to this Department forthwith and that My Lords may subsequently be informed when distribution of "Secret Envelope Z" to the ships enumerated thereon has been completed.

I am, Gentlemen,

Your obedient Servant,

SAVING TELEGRAM

From: The Officer Administering the Government of the Falkland Islands.

To: The Secretary of State for the Colonies.

Date: 19th August, 1949.

No. 19. SECRET COLONY.

15

Your Secret Circular Despatch 22672/1/4/49 of 7th June, 1949.

Secret War Radio Call Signs for Ships.

2. Particulars requested in paragraph 4 are as follows:-

1. "William Scoresby"	"John Biscoe"	"Pitarcy"
2. GWTF VHM	GPWF VHM	BRKW MDGS
3. Yes	Yes	Yes
4. Yes	Yes	Yes
5. Research	Research	Passenger/cargo
6. 325.82	870.48	853.03
7. Port Stanley	Port Stanley	Port Stanley
8. Unknown	Capt. H. Kirkwood, D.S.O., R.N.	Capt. F. White
9. Unknown	British	British
10. Admiralty	Government of the Falkland Islands.	Falkland Islands Company.

3. Particulars of s.s. "William Scoresby" have been included as she is still registered in this Colony although sold to the Admiralty in 1948. The vessel has not been in Colonial waters since 1948 and is now believed to be at Southampton.

OFFICER ADMINISTERING THE GOVERNMENT.