

FORUM

'The Dover Strait Information Service'

Captain R. H. Parry

CAPTAIN R. K. Emden in his paper in the April 1975 issue of this *Journal* notes on page 135 that 'the chief problem' is 'to identify by name and port of registry the radar "blip" deemed to be a contravening ship', and that 'the problem will be exacerbated as the Service expands'. In the discussion which followed Commander R. B. Richardson mentioned the m.f./d.f. receivers being used to assist ships to keep in lanes, and Captain Lusted mentioned investigations into the use of shore based v.h.f./d.f. for identifying ships.

In a paper which I read in March to the Hong Kong Branch of the Institute, I mentioned a paper by H. J. Haase—'Possibilities of using the v.h.f. transceiver in traffic surveillance systems' in the *Bulletin de L'A.I.S.M.*, Paris, No. 59-1974-2. In my opinion this latter paper contains observations of such far-reaching importance to navigation as a controlled group activity that I consider their general promulgation to those directly concerned with that activity to be essential. Mr. Haase points out that with the provision of direction-finders of sufficient accuracy in the v.h.f.-band, and some modifications to the shipborne v.h.f.-transceiver, a system can be implemented whereby the shipborne v.h.f.-set becomes a transponder and *the position* as well as identification of the ship can be ascertained. Experiments show that this can be successfully achieved. He goes on to consider the introduction of selective calling techniques under the Radio Regulations and the benefits of this facility, insofar as by selectively calling a vessel the shore base will be able to locate it as soon as the person on board operates the 'press to talk' button. He also draws attention to a supplementary application of selective calling which could be achieved by the introduction of an additional signal to key the transmitter of the selectively called vessel, thus enabling the shore base to *locate and identify* that vessel *without* active response on the part of any personnel on board that vessel. From another (commercial) source of information I learn that such an application could be achieved with 'only minor modifications of the selective call device as planned today'.

The beneficial effect that the widespread introduction of such facilities in busy waters, such as the English Channel, could have is so evident that surely steps should be taken to develop and establish such facilities as quickly as possible, so that Captain Emden's 'paramount aim' of safety can become that much more a reality.

Patterns in Encounters Between Ships

G. J. P. Lang

As one of the perhaps 'younger personnel' mentioned by P. R. J. Rawlinson in his note (this *Journal*, 28, 243) I would like to make a few points. First and