

SIGNAL MESSAGE DISTRIBUTION — THE DELIVERY INDICATOR SYSTEM

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The User Requirements and Trials Section (X Section) HMS *Mercury* is currently working on, among other projects, the preparation of Standard Signal Distribution Lists (SSDLs) for use in ships of frigate classes and above. We have been much helped in this problem by the valuable assistance given by CCY Cooper, CCY Hulse and CY Hartley — who had the task of breaking down the results of trials by HM ships *Blake*, *Bulwark*, *Naiad*, *Fife*, *London*, *Rothesay* and *Galatea*.

The object of the exercise is of course to ease ship problems by placing the responsibility for deciding the internal ship distribution upon the originator of the message (who must in any case nominate the DIG). That this should be done is very obvious, reducing the training time, cutting down errors in distribution and, of great importance, preparing the way for future automation of signal distribution methods.

The trial ships prepared their own distribution lists for internal usage (ie, signals were allocated a standard distribution by DIG). Without doubt ships found some difficulty in carrying out these trials, but from the subsequent comparisons it is considered that the results were very worth while. These comparisons showed strong similarity between ship distribution lists, and where differences existed they arose from (as might be expected):

- a. allocation of duties to officers varying ship by ship;
- b. ships having different methods of applying the Internal Distribution Indicators despite the usage, fairly widely, of a common indicator system, ie, SIDIS.

Results were so encouraging however that it has been decided that it *is* possible to prepare Standard Distribution Lists to ensure conformity as far as possible between ships of different classes. Ultimately, of course, this will ensure compatibilities between originators and addressees both ashore and afloat. This standard system must be based on the SIDIS — with the reservation that SIDIS requires expansion to cover all ship requirements. In this manner, the system is based upon *Departments and Offices* (which are unchanging), rather than on *Officers and Allocation of Duties* (which differ from ship to ship).

If therefore we apply the SIDIS there is no reason why distributions should vary from ship to ship. The problems now are of course:

- c. SIDIS requires to be amplified to include all major offices in ships.
- d. A 'central' authority is required to state the distribution, to departments and/or offices for each DIG.

c. Once these Standard Distribution Lists have been completed, ships will require to produce the interface (Ships Distribution Guide) between SIDIS, and a list of ships' officers.

X Section is therefore doing c and d above now — in your ship all you will have to do (in due course) is e above, following which we hope that many of our present knotty distribution problems will disappear. At any rate we must all become used to the idea of distribution to departments/offices — and of course making these the *Action* authority.

Any Constructive Ideas?

We are in the meantime pressing on with the preparation of these Standard Lists. If anyone has any constructive ideas on this subject we shall be very pleased to have them at any time. A note to me addressed to User Requirements and Trials Section, HMS *Mercury*, East Meon, Petersfield, Hants will suffice.