

CHAPTER FOUR

COMMUNICATIONS AND ELECTRONICS

1. Communications

A. EN ROUTE ALASKA. Upon departure from San Francisco, BURTON ISLAND established communications with COMSTA San Francisco (NMC). Radio contact was made on 13145.4 KHZ (USB), the communications coordination circuit, for coordination of the ship/shore circuit. Upon arrival Juneau on 14 July a one-operator schedule was set up with COMSTA San Francisco during the in-port period. Periods of excessive down time were the result of necessary work being accomplished aloft. Upon departure Juneau, a regular watch was resumed. Phone patch quality, when required, was considered excellent and communications in general were good during passage to Nome, Alaska.

B. LOCAL OPERATIONS CHUKCHI SEA AND BEAUFORT SEA. After passage of the Bering Straits, propagation difficulties and COMSTA San Francisco's other guard responsibilities hampered communications. The situation did not justify origination of (COMMSTAT) messages. However, communication checks were made with COMSTA Kodiak (NOJ) and USCGC GLACIER should the situation have required a rapid shift of communications guard.

On 29 July after a period of almost twelve hours the communication guard was shifted to COMSTA Kodiak via the Barrow remote link. USCGC GLACIER, operating in the same area, established guard ship in order to facilitate traffic relay with Kodiak. BURTON ISLAND, able to serve as guard ship only during periods when Barrow link was operational due to equipment inconsistent to COMSTA Kodiak capabilities. Present on-line equipment allows wide shift transmissions only and when the Barrow link is down, COMSTA Kodiak is unable to copy us on-line due to other ships being guarded. As a result, USCGC GLACIER maintained the majority of the on-line guard ship. Attempts were made to rectify the situation. However, all appearances are that no action can be completed until arrival San Francisco for equipment modification. Reception of on-line traffic was considered excellent with both COMSTA Kodiak (NOJ) and USCGC GLACIER. As in the past, press message traffic from Kodiak was minimal as compared to that received from San Francisco. Air to ground communications were conducted on 123.1 MHZ and 381.8 MHZ as primary frequencies and 5696 KHZ as secondary frequency. Only one piece of equipment was inoperative during this period, URT-32 VHF-AM transmitter.