CHAPTER 3

MESSAGES

A message can be defined simply as a communication sent from one person to another. The Navy defines a message as "Any thought or idea briefly expressed in plain or cryptic language, prepared in a form suitable for transmission by established means of rapid communication." The visual message, with which you are most concerned, is prepared for transmission by means of flashing light, flaghoist, or semaphore. Incidentally, a message that contains the names of signal flags in its text, regardless of the method by which it is transmitted, is a signal.

ORIGINATING MESSAGES

LEARNING OBJECTIVES: Explain the procedure for originating, drafting, and releasing messages. List the types of messages transmitted by communications means.

ORIGINATOR

The originator of a message is the authority in whose name a message is sent, or agency under direct control of the authority approving a message for transmission. The originator is responsible for the function of the drafter and releasing officer. Other responsibilities of the originator include determining whether the message is necessary (a message is not to be used when a letter or other form of communication will suffice), determining the addressees and type of message, and determining the security classification and precedence. The originator must make sure that the prescribed message form is properly used, that the text is drafted according to procedure, and that the message is signed by the releasing officer. The originator is also responsible for forwarding the message to the appropriate agency for transmission.

DRAFTER

The drafter is a person who actually composes a message for release.

RELEASING OFFICER

The releasing officer is a person who authorizes the transmission of a message for and in the name of the originator.

TYPES OF MESSAGES

The types of messages transmitted by communication means are the following:

Single address

Multiple address

Book

General

Single Address

A single-address message is one destined for only one addressee.

Multiple Address

A multiple-address message is one that is destined for two or more addressees, each of whom must be informed of the other addressees. Each addressee must be indicated as ACTION or INFORMATION. The number of multiple-address messages must be reduced to the essential minimum, since processing them is one of the major factors contributing to delay in message handling. In addition, originators should always consider specifically whether all addressees must be informed of the other addressees of each message, and if not, a BOOK message should be used.

Book

A book message is one that is destined for two or more addressees and is of such a nature that the originator considers that no addressee need be informed of any other addressee. Each addressee must be indicated as action or information.

General

General messages are messages that have a wide standard distribution. They are assigned an identifying title and usually a sequential serial number; example, ALCONCEN 50.

Book and general messages are normally received by radio.

ADDRESS OF MESSAGE

Most messages have at least one addressee responsible for taking action on the contents and for originating any necessary reply. Other addressees with an official concern in the subject of the message but who do not have the primary responsibility for acting on it receive the message for information. Do not be confused by the term *information addressee*. Even though an information addressee usually is concerned only indirectly with a message, frequently action of some nature must be taken within the command. Some messages have only information addressees. Exempt addressees are used when the originator desires to exclude one or more authorities from a collective title.

PROSIGNS

LEARNING OBJECTIVES: Define *prosign.* Match prosigns with their meanings.

Procedure signs, or prosigns, consist of one or more letters or characters or combination thereof, used to aid communication by conveying, in a condensed form, certain frequently used orders, instructions, requests, and information relating to communication. Figure 3-1 is a list of prosigns, and their meanings, that are authorized for use in visual signaling. No others may be used. An overscore (a line over two or more letters) indicates that the letters overscored are to be transmitted as a single character (no pause between letters). ACP 13°, *Communications Instruction, Visual Signaling Procedures,* contains the procedures for the use of prosigns.

Prosign	Meaning
$\overline{AA}$	Unknown station (flashing light only)
AA	All after
AB	All before
$\overline{AR}$	End of transmission
$\overline{AS}$	Wait
B	More to follow
$\overline{BT}$	Long break (separates text from other parts of message)
C	Correct
C	Answer sign (semaphore only)
D	Reduce briliancy or use smaller light
DE	From
EEEEEEEE	Error
F	Do not answer
G	Repeat back
GR (numeral)	Group count
GRNC	Groups not counted
$\overline{HM}$ $\overline{HM}$ $\overline{HM}$	Emergency silence sign
II	Separative sign
$\overline{IMI}$	Repeat
INFO	Information addressee sign
$\overline{INT}$	Interrogatory
$\overline{IX}$	Execute to follow
$\overline{IX}$ (5-second flash)	Executive signal
J	Verify with originator and repeat
K	Invitation to transmit
L	Relay or relayed (Flashing light and semaphore only)
NEGAT	Exempted addressee sign (flaghoist only; equivalent of XMT
NR	Number
$\overline{OL}$	Show steady dim light (Flashing light only)
$\overline{PT}$	Call sign follows (flashing light and semaphore only)
R	Received
T	Transmit to
TO	Action addressee sign
W	Information addressee sign (flaghoist only
W	Your light is unreadable (flashing light only)
WA	Word after
WB	Word before
XMT	Exempted addressee sign
Z	FLASH precedence
O	IMMEDIATE precedence
P	PRIORITY precedence
R	ROUTINE precedence

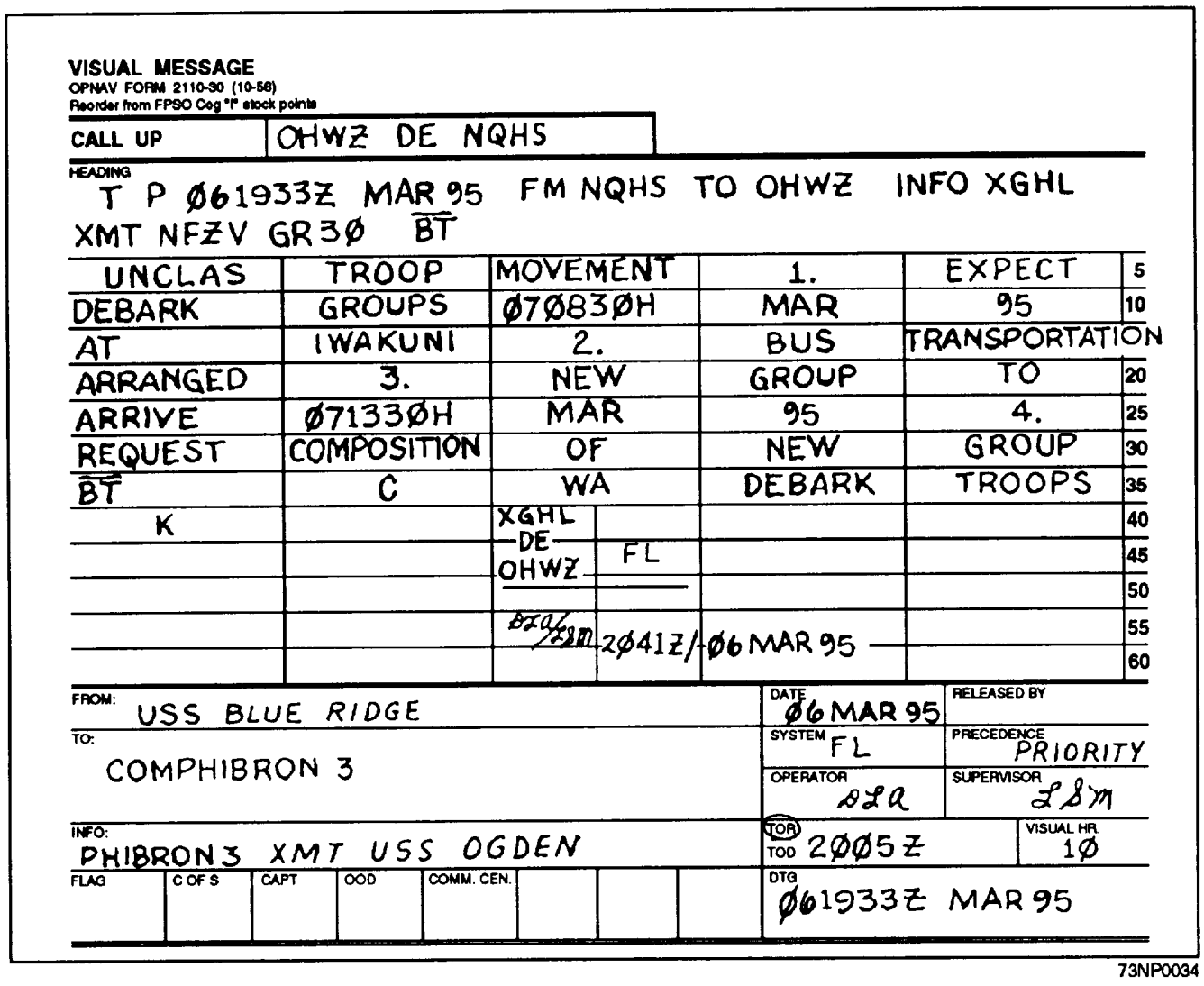
Figure 3-1.—Authorized prosigns and their meanings.

NAVAL MESSAGE FORMAT

LEARNING OBJECTIVE: Identify the parts, components, and elements of the basic naval message format.

Figure 3-2 shows a message copied as received by flashing light. Figure 3-3 represents the standard format of naval messages. Study the figure and compare it with the message.

Each message prepared in either plaindress, abbreviated codress, or codress will have three parts: heading, text, and ending. Each message part has certain components, which are broken down into elements and contents. Format lines 2, 3, 4, 14, 15, and 16 (fig. 3-3) identify the procedural portions of the



VISUAL MESSAGE
OPNAV FORM 2110-30 (10-56)
Reorder from FPSO Cog "I" stock points

CALL UP: OHWZ DE NQHS

HEADING
T P Ø61933Z MAR 95 FM NQHS TO OHWZ INFO XGHL
XMT NFZV GR3Ø BT

UNCLAS	TROOP	MOVEMENT	1.	EXPECT	5
DEBARK	GROUPS	Ø7Ø83ØH	MAR	95	10
AT	IWAKUNI	2.	BUS	TRANSPORTATION	
ARRANGED	3.	NEW	GROUP	TO	20
ARRIVE	Ø7133ØH	MAR	95	4.	25
REQUEST	COMPOSITION	OF	NEW	GROUP	30
BT	C	WA	DEBARK	TROOPS	35
K		XGHL DE OHWZ FL			40
					45
					50
		2Ø41Z/Ø6 MAR 95			55
					60

FROM: USS BLUE RIDGE
TO: COMPHIBRON 3
INFO: PHIBRON 3 XMT USS OGDEN

DATE Ø6 MAR 95 | RELEASED BY
SYSTEM FL | PRECEDENCE PRIORITY
OPERATOR | SUPERVISOR
TOR TOD 2ØØ5Z | VISUAL HR. 1Ø
DTG Ø61933Z MAR 95

FLAG	C OF S	CAPT	OOD	COMM. CEN.			

73NP0034

Figure 3-2.—Plaindress visual message.

basic message format as designed for visual communications. Lines 5 through 13 are the nonchangeable elements of the basic message format. All format lines do not necessarily appear in every message; however, when used, they will be in the order indicated.

Of the three parts of a message, the most complex (as fig. 3-3 indicates) is the heading. Based on heading content, messages may be drawn up in one of three forms: plaindress, as in figure 3-2; abbreviated plaindress, featuring a shortened heading; and codress, used for encrypted messages. We will point out the differences following the discussion of the plaindress message.

PLAINDRESS MESSAGES

The heading of a plaindress message is made up of four components: procedure, preamble, address, and prefix. These components provide operating personnel with necessary information for transmitting, identifying, delivering, and accounting for each message.

Procedure Component

In visual messages, the procedure component consists of three elements: call, transmission identification, and transmission instructions. The call contains call signs of the station(s) called and the calling station. Transmission identification is not normally used in visual communications except in messages being relayed. Transmission instructions are concerned with routing, relaying, and delivering a message.

The beginning procedure component of the message in figure 3-2 is OHWZ DE NQHS T. Of this

PARTS	COMPONENTS	ELEMENTS	FORMAT LINE	CONTENTS
			1	Not used.
H E A D I N G	Procedure (Note 1)	Call	2	Prosign F (see paragraph 315, ACP 129), stations called (prosign XMT, exempted calls) prosign DE and station calling.
		Transmission Identification	3	Station serial number.
		Transmission Instructions	4	Prosigns F, G, T, L; operating signals; call signs, address groups, plain language address designators.
	Preamble	Precedence	5	Precedence prosigns.
		Date-time group		Date and time expressed in digits, and zone suffix followed by month indicated by the first three letters, and if required by national authorities, the year indicated by the last two digits.
		Message Instructions		Operating signals; prosign $\overline{IX}$.
H E A D I N G	Address (Note 2)	Originator's sign	6	Prosign FM.
		Orginator		Originator's designation (call sign, address group, plain language address designator).
		Action addressee sign	7	Prosign TO.
		Action addressees		Action addressees' designations (call signs, address groups, plain language address designators).
		Information addressee sign	8	Prosign INFO.
		Information addressees		Information addressees' designations (call signs, address groups, plain language address designators).
		Exempted addressee sign	9	Prosign XMT.
		Exempted addressees		Exempted addressees' designations (call signs, address groups, plain language address designators).
H E A D I N G	Prefix	Accounting information	10	Accounting symbol.
		Group count		Prosign GR (numerals) or GRNC.
	SEPARATION		11	Prosign $\overline{BT}$.
T E X T	Text	Subject matter	12	Security classification or UNCLAS as appropriate when required; the abbreviation SVC; internal instructions; thought or idea as expressed by the originator.
	SEPARATION		13	Prosign $\overline{BT}$.
E N D I N G	Procedure	Time group	14	Hours and minutes expressed in digits, and zone suffix.
		Final instructions	15	Prosigns $\overline{AS}$, B, C, G, $\overline{IMI}$, GR (numerals), $\overline{IX}$ (5 second flash), operation signals.
		Ending sign	16	Prosign K or $\overline{AR}$.

NOTE 1: Plain language address designators shall not be used in any component of codress messages.
NOTE 2: The address component is prohibited with codress procedure.

Figure 3-3.—Parts of a naval message.

portion, OHWZ DE NQHS constitutes the entire call element.

The call sign of the station called is OHWZ. For illustrative purposes, OHWZ is assumed to be the call sign for Commander Amphibious Squadron Three. Call signs in Navy messages reduce the length of transmission. Each ship, station, and command of the Navy (and of the other services) has one or more call signs, that are listed in various communication publications. Call signs are discussed in more detail later in this chapter.

The prosign DE in the message stands for "from." It is used only in the call. Its complete meaning is "This transmission is from the station whose designation follows." It indicates the station actually transmitting the message or signal and only indicates the originator when the call is serving as the address.

In the example, the calling station is NQHS, the international call sign of USS *Blue Ridge* (LCC 19). International call signs for U.S. Navy and U.S. Coast Guard ships begin with the letter *N*.

In figure 3-2, transmission instructions consist of prosign T, meaning “Station called transmit this message to all addressees appearing in the address component.” OHWZ, therefore, is responsible for delivering the message to XGHL. If the T were immediately followed by call signs or address designations, it would assume the meaning of “‘Station called transmit this message to the addressees whose address designations follow.” Similarly, if the T were preceded and followed by call signs, it would mean ‘Station preceding T transmit this message to those addressees whose address designations follow T.”

Other prosigns that may appear in transmission instructions are G (“Repeat back”), F (“Do not answer”), and L (“Relay”). Prosign G is used by a transmitting station to ensure that the receiving station has received the message as transmitted, particularly if the message is of great importance or of a type difficult to send or receive. If G appears alone in the transmission instructions, all stations called repeat back the message; if G is preceded by call signs, it means that stations whose call signs precede G repeat back the message. Prosign F means “Do not answer.” It is used in a method of visual signaling that will be discussed in chapter 4. Prosign L is the relay sign. Its meaning is similar to T, but is not as specific. In transmission instructions, L means “Relay to those addressees for whom you are responsible.” Its use also requires that the station called report to you that the message has been relayed. The elements of the procedure component are assigned by communications personnel to effectively deliver the message or signal. The elements of the preamble, address, and prefix component, which follow, are released by the originator and are not altered by communications personnel.

Preamble

The preamble of a plaindress message shows its relative importance; contains the date-time group, by which most messages are identified; and provides information relating to the message. The preamble in figure 3-2 is P 061933Z MAR 95. P is a precedence prosign, and the remainder is the date-time group, including month and year, of transmission.

The precedence assigned by an originator reflects a judgment as to the speed required to deliver the message to the addressee. By misusing the precedence system, you defeat its purpose, which is to assure rapid handling of message traffic over available facilities with a minimum of backlog and delay resulting from competing messages. The importance of a message does not necessarily imply urgency. Figure 3-4 shows the precedence categories, their speed-of-service objectives, and examples of their assignments.

Messages having both action and information addressees may be assigned a single or dual precedence. If a single precedence is assigned to a multiple-address message, the precedence indicates the relative importance to all addressees. If assigned two precedences, one for action addressees and a lower precedence for information addressees, the message is of greater importance to the action addressees.

If the message in figure 3-2 were assigned dual precedence, the preamble would read P R 061933Z MAR 95. This would show that the message should be treated as a priority message for delivery to OHWZ and as a routine message when delivered to XGHL. Dual-precedence messages, in visual signaling, normally are handled as single-precedence messages because of the proximity of ships and signaling stations. If, however, the action addressee of a dual-precedence (for example, P R) message were in company but one or more information addressees were not, relay would be required. In that instance, the message would be sent immediately to the action addressee, but might be transmitted to a different station for relay to the information addressees, using

PROSIGN	DESIGNATION	DEFINITION AND USE	HANDLING REQUIREMENTS
Z	FLASH	FLASH precedence is reserved for initial enemy contact messages or operational combat messages of extreme urgency. Brevity is mandatory. Examples: (1) Initial enemy contact reports. (2) Messages recalling or diverting friendly aircraft about to bomb targets unexpectedly occupied by friendly forces; or messages taking emergency action to prevent conflict between friendly forces. (3) Warnings of imminent large-scale attacks. (4) Extremely urgent intelligence messages. (5) Messages containing major strategic decisions of great urgency.	FLASH messages are hand-carried, processed, transmitted, and delivered in the order received and ahead of all other messages. Messages of lower precedence will be interrupted on all circuits involved until handling of the FLASH message is completed. Time Standard: As fast as possible with an objective of less than 10 minutes.
O	IMMEDIATE	IMMEDIATE is the precedence reserved for messages relating to situations that gravely affect the national forces or populace, and require immediate delivery to the addressee(s). Examples: (1) Amplifying reports of initial enemy contact. (2) Reports of unusual major movements of military forces of foreign powers in time of peace or strained relations. (3) Messages that report enemy counterattack or request or cancel additional support. (4) Attack orders to commit a force in reserve without delay. (5) Messages concerning logistical support of special weapons when essential to sustain operations; messages concerning death or serious illness. (6) Reports of widespread civil disturbance. (7) Reports or warnings of grave natural disaster (earthquake, flood, storm, etc.) (8) Requests for or directions concerning distress assistance. (9) Urgent intelligence messages. (10) Requests for news of aircraft in flight, flight plans, or cancellation messages to prevent unnecessary search/rescue action. (11) Messages concerning immediate movement of naval, air, and ground forces.	IMMEDIATE messages are processed, transmitted, and delivered in the order received and ahead of all messages of lower precedence. If possible, messages of lower precedence will be interrupted on all circuits involved until the handling of the IMMEDIATE message is completed. Time Standard: 30 minutes.
P	PRIORITY	PRIORITY is the precedence reserved for messages that furnish essential information for the conduct of operations in progress. This is normally the highest precedence for administrative messages. Examples: (1) Situation repports on position of front where attack is impending or where fire or air support will be soon placed. (2) Orders to aircraft formations or units to coincide with ground or naval operations.	PRIORITY messages are processed, transmitted, and delivered in the order received and ahead of all messages of ROUTINE precedence. ROUTINE messages being transmitted should not be interrupted unless they are extra long and a very substantial portion remains to be transmitted. PRIORITY messages should be delivered immediately upon receipt at the adddressee destination. When commerical refile is required, the commerical precedence that most nearly corresponds to PRIORITY is used. Time Standard: 3 hours.
R	ROUTINE	ROUTINE is the precedence to use for all types of messages that justify transmission by rapid means unless of sufficient urgency to require a higher precedence. Examples: (1) Messages concerning normal peacetime military operations, programs, and projects. (2) Messages concerning stabilized tactical operations. (3) Operational plans concerning projected operations. (4) Periodic or consolidated intelligence reports. (5) Ship movement messages, except when time factors dictate use of a higher precedence. (6) Supply and equipment requisition except when time factors dictate use of a higher precedence. (7) Administrative, logistic, and personnel matters.	ROUTINE messages are processed, transmitted, and delivered in the order received and after all messages of a higher precedence. When commerical refile is required, the lowest commerical precedence is used. ROUTINE messages received during nonduty hours at the addressee destination may be held for morning delivery unless specifically prohibited by the command concerned. Time Standard: 6 hours.

Figure 3-4.—The precedence of a message indicates its relative importance. Note time standards for handling.

Routine precedence. Transmission for relay, of course, would be delayed until all higher precedence traffic is cleared.

The date-time group (DTG) indicates the approximate time a message was readied for transmission. Normally, the DTG is assigned by the communications watch officer or signal officer. The DTG in figure 3-2 indicates the message was ready for transmission at about 1933 Greenwich mean time (is the zone suffix) on the 6th day of March.

Because the DTG serves as a positive means of identification, no DTG should be assigned by any station to more than one outgoing message. If for some reason you have to assign a DTG, be sure to inform the communications center of the DTG you used.

Figure 3-2 has no message instruction element. The use of operating signals and the prosign IX will be discussed in chapter 4.

Address Component

The address component of figure 3-2 is FM NQHS TO OHWZ INFO XGHL XMT NFZV. This component shows who originated the message, the addressee for action, the addressee for information, and the exempt addressee. Provision is also made to show which, if any, addressees included in a collective call sign need not receive the message. (A collective call sign represents two or more ships, stations, or commands.)

The address component of the message is determined by the drafter and originator. Communications personnel are authorized to convert the plain-language addressees to call signs or address groups when processing messages for transmission.

All four prosigns that can be included in the address component appear in the example message. The originator's sign, FM, means “The originator of this message is indicated by the designation immediately following.” The prosign for action addressee, TO, means “Addressees indicated by the designation immediately following are addressed for action.” The information addressee sign, INFO, followed by call signs, shows that the message is for information only.

The exempted addressee sign, prosign XMT, means that addressees following XMT are exempted from the collective address. If a collective call is also used, the prosign XMT must also appear in the call element. It appears as the last element in the address component, following the action and information addressees’ designations.

If the call element gives all the addressees, the address component of a message may be omitted. In the example message, if there were no information addressees, the call would serve as the address. The address component could then be omitted.

Prefix

The prefix of a plaindress message contains accounting symbols and the group count.

Accounting symbols are included in Navy messages when a possibility exists that they may be transmitted over commercial facilities. Instructions for the use of accounting symbols are found in JANAP 128.

The group count of a message is the number of groups in the text. In a message, GR followed by numeral(s) means "This message contains the number of groups indicated." In a message containing a text of 26 words, the group count is written GR26. If the message were encrypted, the group count would indicate the number of code groups in the text. The group count normally appears in the message prefix, but in certain cases may appear in the final instructions. When a message is transmitted before the group count is determined, the prosign GRNC may be used in lieu of the group count. The actual group count will then be transmitted in the final instructions and inserted in the message prefix by the receiving operator.

Rules to follow when counting groups are the following:

Count groups in the text only.

Each sequence of characters uninterrupted by a space is counted as one group.

Punctuation is not counted unless abbreviated or spelled out.

Count every word and every continuous combination of letters, figures, and/or symbols as one group.

Hyphenated words and hyphenated names, when transmitted as one word, count as one group.

A numerical group count always must be used in encrypted messages. The group count element may be omitted in messages where the text consists of plain language.

Long Break

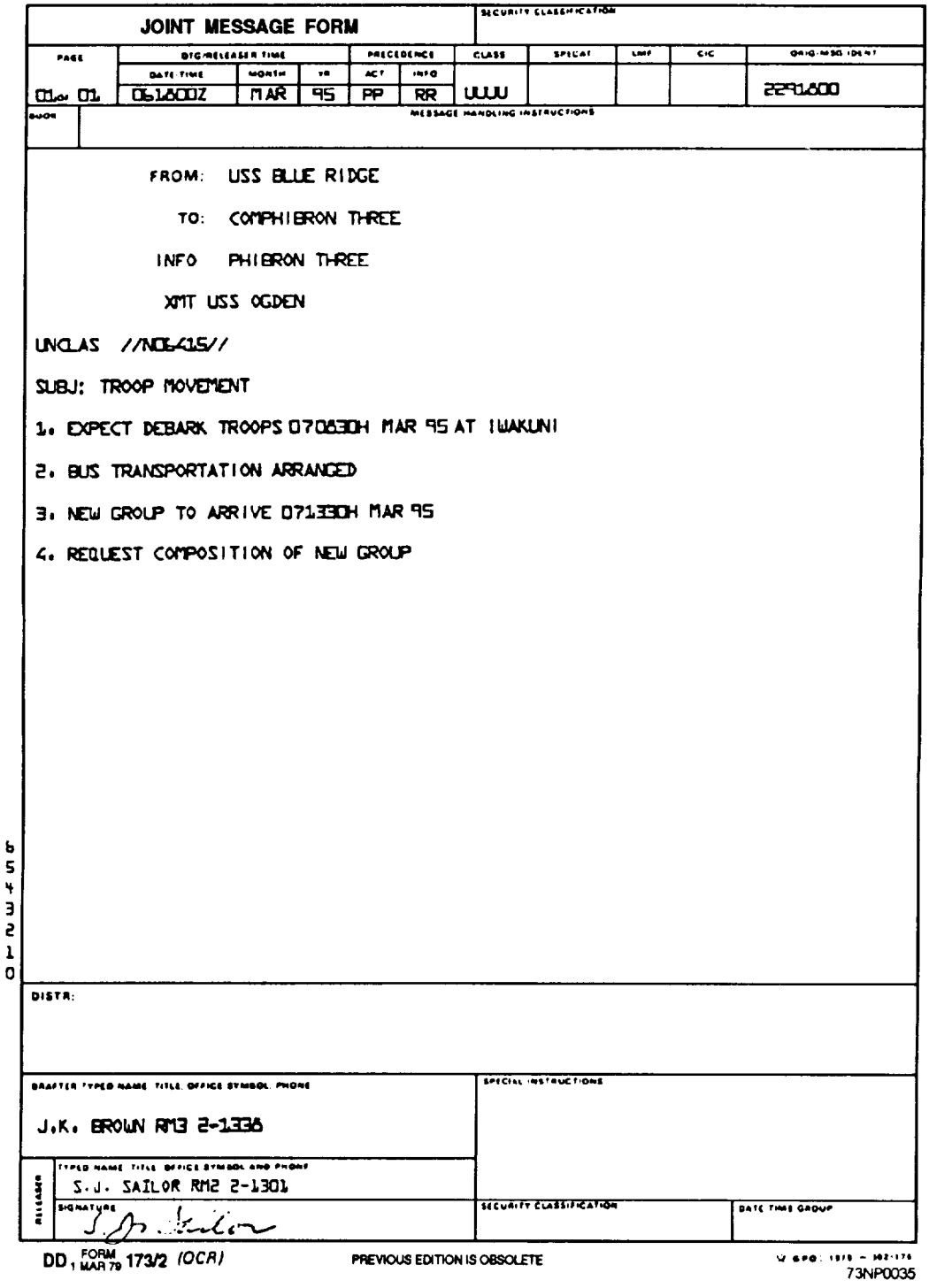
The long-break prosign, $\overline{\text{BT}}$, marks the separation between the text and other parts of a message. It immediately precedes and follows the text. In

abbreviated service messages, the $\overline{BT}$ is not used except when a date-time/time group is employed.

Text

The textual format of Navy messages is designed to make the messages easily readable yet keep them concise to conserve time and facilities so that all necessary messages can be sent. The text of the example message in figure 3-2 conforms to the standard format for plain-language messages. When processed by the communications center, the text is placed in the form shown in figure 3-5.

Exempt from the standard format are messages with very short texts. Examples are tactical messages and pro form messages using a firmly established format, such as standard "reporting-type" messages



JOINT MESSAGE FORM

SECURITY CLASSIFICATION

PAGE	DTG/RELEASER TIME			PRECEDENCE		CLASS	SPECAT	LIMF	CIC	ORIG MSG IDENT
	DATE-TIME	MONTH	YR	ACT	INFO					
01 OF 01	061600Z	MAR	95	PP	RR	UUUU				2291600

BOOK — MESSAGE HANDLING INSTRUCTIONS

FROM: USS BLUE RIDGE

TO: COMPHIBRON THREE

INFO PHIBRON THREE

XMT USS OGDEN

UNCLAS //N06415//

SUBJ: TROOP MOVEMENT

1. EXPECT DEBARK TROOPS 070630H MAR 95 AT IWAKUNI

2. BUS TRANSPORTATION ARRANGED

3. NEW GROUP TO ARRIVE 071330H MAR 95

4. REQUEST COMPOSITION OF NEW GROUP

6 5 4 3 2 1 0

DISTR:

DRAFTER TYPED NAME, TITLE, OFFICE SYMBOL, PHONE

J.K. BROWN RM3 2-1336

SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS

RELEASER

TYPED NAME, TITLE, OFFICE SYMBOL AND PHONE

S.J. SAILOR RM2 2-1301

SIGNATURE

S.J. Sailor

SECURITY CLASSIFICATION

DATE TIME GROUP

DD FORM 1 MAR 79 173/2 (OCR) PREVIOUS EDITION IS OBSOLETE

73NP0035

Figure 3-5.—Plaindress message processed by the communications center.

that use letters of the alphabet to indicate a prearranged subject matter. If all elements are required, they appear in the following order:

1. Classification or the abbreviation UNCLAS. The highest classification authorized for visual means, regardless of method, is Confidential.

2. Special category marking (EXCLUSIVE, COSMIC, and the like).

3. Special handling security markings (NOFORN, RESDAT, and so on).

4. Exercise identification (EXERCISE MAIN BRACE).

5. Code name or nickname of special projects or operations.

6. Flag word (EXPRESS, REDLINE, and so on.)

7. Passing instructions and other indications of message distribution (FOR)

8. Subject line, concise and untitled.

9. References, identified by letter(s).

10. Text:

a. Paragraphs are numbered.

b. Subparagraphs are indented and lettered or numbered as appropriate.

c. In a one-paragraph message, any subparagraphs are lettered.

d. If a message is classified, proper declassification markings are included.

If unclassified paragraphs or subparagraphs appear within a classified message, each number and/or letter will be followed by the abbreviated classification in parentheses; for example, A.(C), l(U).

Following is an example of a message using most of the elements of the standard text format:

UNCLAS//N01430//

COMTWELVE PASS TO VADM SMITH

REVISED CONFERENCE SCHEDULE

A. MY/091700-Z MAR 95

B. COMTHIRTEEN 131530-Z MAR 95

1. REQUEST DESIGNATED COMMITTEE ARRIVE COM TWELVE 24 HOURS PRIOR CNO

2. AGENDA:

A. ADD "LOGISTICS OF PROJECT."

B. DELETE "POSSIBLE LOCATION FACILITIES."

3. CNO ITINERARY, 19 AUG, TIMES UNIFORM:

ETA ETD LOCATION

ORIG 1300 NAS SEATTLE

1515 1800 NAS ALAMEDA

2300 TERM CHICAGO-OHARE

If a message does not require all elements, the format is adjusted accordingly by omitting nonessentials. Certain other exceptions are allowed when using the standard format.

The subject line may be omitted if it requires that an otherwise unclassified message be classified; if it noticeably increases the length of what would be a brief message; or if it increases commercial charges when the message is addressed to activities served by commercial communications facilities.

If a short message consists of only one paragraph, the paragraph is not numbered. When there is only one reference, the reference identification is included in the body of the paragraph. For example:

UNCLAS YOUR 100915Z MAR 95. BUDGET APPROVED SUBJECT TO CNO CONCURRENCE.

The first word of all plain language text messages must be either the abbreviation UNCLAS (unclassified), or the security classification of the message. Each message will be authorized by the commanding officer for transmission by directional visual communications. As a Signalman, you must be alert to prevent the transmission of any classified message not authorized for transmission.

Ending Procedure

The procedure component of the ending of a message contains three elements: time group, final instructions, and ending prosign. Normally a time group is not used in a plaindress message. The elements of the ending procedure are assigned by communications personnel to complete delivery of the message or signal.

In figure 3-2, the ending is C WA DEBARK TROOPS K. The first two prosigns and the two words constitute the final instructions of the message.

Standing alone, prosign C means “Correct.” Because it is followed by other information in our example, it means "This is a correct version of the portion of the message indicated.” Another prosign, WA, meaning “word after,” follows certain prosigns (including C) to identify a portion of the text of a plain language message. In figure 3-2, the portion of the text identified is the word after DEBARK, which appears in the text as GROUPS. Accordingly, the final instructions of the message mean “Correct word after DEBARK to TROOPS.”

Other prosigns may appear in the final instructions. Prosign C may be followed by AB, AA, or WB, instructing the receiving station to correct portions of the text. Prosign B used alone in the final instructions means “More to follow to all stations called." When B is followed by call signs, it means “More to follow to stations indicated.”

Prosign G, for repeat back, may be used in the final instructions if, during transmission, its use is deemed necessary. Used alone, G directs all stations to repeat back the message. When G is preceded by a call sign (or signs), its meaning is “Stations whose call sign (or signs) precede G are to repeat back.” In addition to its use in the transmission instructions and final instructions, G may be used in the text of a flashing light message to indicate the addee is to repeat back the previous group sent by the transmitter.

Visual transmissions are completed by ending prosigns K or AR. The K means "This is the end of my transmission to you, and a response is necessary.”

Ending prosign AR means "This is the end of my transmission to you, and no response is required or expected."

SERVICE MESSAGE

A service message is one between communications personnel and pertaining to any phase of traffic handling, communication facilities, or circuit conditions. It is prepared and transmitted in plaindress, abbreviated plaindress, or codress form.

The abbreviation SVC following any security classification or UNCLAS in the beginning of the text, identifies a plain-language service message.

An encrypted service message will always carry a numerical group and will only be identified as a service message within the encrypted text.

Service messages generally concern messages originated at, destined for, or refiled by that station and normally will be assigned a precedence equal to that of the message to which they refer.

Examples of plain-language service messages:

1. Plaindress format: P 031500Z MAR 95 GR10 BT UNCLAS SVC BRIDGE TO BRIDGE INOP COME UP ON TGO BT K

2. Abbreviated plaindress format: BT UNCLAS SVC BRIDGE TO BRIDGE INOP COME UP ON TGO BT 1500Z

ABBREVIATED SERVICE MESSAGE

The text of an abbreviated service message contains only prosigns, operating signals, address designations, identification of messages, parts of messages, and amplifying data as necessary. It may be originated by operators and may contain any of the components shown in the basic format except that

1. The long break is used only if the date-time group/time group is used; and

2. The date time group/time group is to be employed only when it is necessary to indicate the time at which the message was originated or when it is considered that further reference may be made to the message.

Examples of abbreviated service messages:

1. INT ZDK NKZO 062222Z MAR 95 K

2. Abbreviated plaindress format: BT INT ZDK NKZO 062222Z MAR 95 BT 2300Z K

3. Plaindress format: P 062323Z MAR 95 GR 6 BT INT ZDK NKZO 062222Z MAR 95 BT K

ABBREVIATED PLAINDRESS MESSAGES

Operational requirements for speed of handling—contact reports, for example—may dictate the abbreviation of plaindress message headings. At such times, any or all of the following may be omitted from the heading: precedence, date, DTG, and group count. If the DTG is omitted, a time group must be in the ending procedure components.

CODRESS MESSAGES

A codress message is one in which the entire address, originator and all addressees except when the address indicating groups are used, is encrypted within the text. The heading of such a message contains only information necessary to enable

communications personnel to handle it properly. It contains all the components shown in figure 3-3.

STATION AND ADDRESS DESIGNATORS

LEARNING OBJECTIVES: Define station and address designators; explain procedures for constructing call signs and address groups. List procedures for establishing and maintaining communications.

Station and address designators are any combinations of characters or pronounceable words designed for use in message headings to identify a command, authority, unit, or communications facility, or to assist in the transmission and delivery of messages. Station and address designators encompass four categories: call signs, address groups, plain language, and routing indicators.

CALL SIGNS

Call signs are letters, letter-number combinations, or one or more pronounceable words used for establishing and maintaining communications. Call signs may also be used as address designators when the call sign indicates the addressee or originator. The following list contains the different types of call signs:

1. International
2. Indefinite
3. Net
4. Tactical
5. Voice
6. Visual
7. Signal letters of ships and signal letters or identification numbers of aircraft when used as international call signs

International Call Signs

International call signs are assigned to radio stations in all countries—civil and military, afloat and ashore—according to international agreement. The first letter or first two letters of a call indicate the nationality of the station. The United States has the first half of the *A* block (through ALZ) and all of the *K, W,* and *N* blocks. The United States reserves *A* calls for the Army and Air Force. The *K* and *W* blocks are assigned to commercial and private stations, merchant ships, and others. The *N* block is for use by the Navy, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard.

Naval shore communication stations have three-letter *N* calls. If necessary, these calls may be expanded by adding numerical suffixes. Thus, additional call signs are provided for facilities located remotely from the parent station. Examples are the following:

NAM. . . . .NAVCOMMSTA, Norfolk

NAM1 . . . . Headquarters, CINCLANTFLT, Norfolk

NAM2 . . . . Naval Shipyard, Norfolk

International call signs assigned to U.S. naval ships are four-letter *N* calls, which are used unencrypted only. They have no security value; hence they are authorized for use with Allied, civil, and merchant stations. An example follows:

NJUL. . . . .USS *BAINBRIDGE* (CG(N) 25)

International call signs for USN, USMC, and USCG aircraft are composed of the service designator N, NM, or NC, respectively, followed by the last four digits of the serial number of the aircraft.

Indefinite Call Signs

Indefinite call signs represent no specific facility, command, authority, or unit, but may represent any one or any group of these. Examples:

NERK
NA through NZ . . . . . (From) any U.S. Navy ship

Indefinite call signs are used in codress message headings to conceal the identity of originators and addressees. In such instances, the address component is placed in the encrypted text.

Net Call Signs

Net call signs represent all stations within a net. (A net is a group of stations in direct communication with each other on a common channel.) Normally, net call signs are not used in visual transmissions. Following is an example of a net call sign:

NQN. . . . All U.S. Navy radio stations in the Pacific guarding the ship-shore high-frequency calling series

Voice Call Signs

Voice call signs are letters, numbers, or a combination of letters and numbers that identify commands and units of commands. These include ships, aircraft squadrons and wings, shore establishments, type commanders, and task organization components. The voice call signs change daily using the system that is in effect at the time of this writing. The Navy continues to strive to improve security and at the same time provide an efficient and workable system of call sign identification.

Also available is JANAP 119, which contains ship and other joint armed forces voice call signs. Although the publication is always kept up to date, normally it is not used. JANAP 119 provides an adequate backup system, but lacks the security needed today.

Visual Call Signs

Visual call signs are primarily used for visual signaling. They are shorter than the other call signs or address groups assigned to an organization. This advantage is highly significant in determining the length of a flaghoist and reducing the transmission time of messages by other visual means.

Visual call signs may be used (1) to establish communication between organizations, (2) in the transmission instructions and address of a message that will be transmitted solely by visual means, and (3) for transmitting groups from authorized signal books, as follows:

1. To *address* ships, units, or commands, in which visual call signs precede the signals

2. To *complete, amplify,* or *vary* the meaning of a signal, in which case visual call signs are used in conjunction with the signal

3. To denote or indicate ships, units, or commands in which case visual call signs follow the signal

Visual call signs will not be used in the transmission instructions or address of a message to be transmitted or relayed by other than visual means. They may be used in the text when the text consists of signal groups. Visual call signs are as follows:

1. Calls for ships
2. Shortened visual calls
3. Unit or command call signs
4. Numeral pennant call signs
5. Special task organization call signs
6. Signal stations
7. Ships' boats
8. Convoys

In constructing visual calls to be transmitted by flaghoist, numerals are expressed by numeral pennants except when numeral flags are specifically indicated. Numerals appearing in visual call signs transmitted by any visual means other than flaghoist represent numeral pennants and are written as pl, p5, p6, and so on, to distinguish them from numeral flags. By any visual means other than flaghoist, call signs are transmitted using the Morse code or semaphore equivalents. All call signs (except radiotelephone) in the text of signals from an authorized signal book are preceded by the special sign PT transmitted as a Morse or semaphore equivalent meaning "call sign to follow." If more than one call sign appears in the text, each will be preceded by PT. Call signs in the text may be spelled out when conditions make this advisable, spelled out call signs will also be preceded by PT.

VISUAL CALLS FOR SHIPS.—Visual call signs for ships are either assigned nationally or constructed using the appropriate single-letter type indicator plus the hull number of the ship. A list of single-letter type indicators follows:

A Auxiliary (oiler, cargo, tender, floating drydock, sloop, and so on.)

B Battleship

C Cruiser

D Destroyer/destroyer escort

F Frigate

G Government station

H Visual signal station (military)

K Shore signal station (commercial) or miscellaneous fleet units (NATO use only)

L Assault vessel (landing craft, amphibious transport dock, tank-landing ships, and so on.)

M Minesweeper

N Minelayer

P Fast motor craft (submarine chaser, patrol escort, motor gunboat, motor torpedo boat, and so on.)

Q Boat

R Aircraft carrier

S Submarine

U Surface organization

W Coast Guard ship

X Submersible craft

Y Support craft

For example, the visual call sign of USS *Fanning* (FF 1076) is Fp1p0p7p6; of USS *Forrestal* (CV 59), Rp5p9; of USS *England* (CG 22), Cp2p2.

If it happens that visual calls are the same for two or more ships in company or in the same port, their international call signs are used.

SHORTENED VISUAL CALLS.—Shortened visual calls are constructed by omitting unnecessary numbers. If the *Alamo* (LSD 33) were the only amphibious-type ship in the vicinity with the final digit of its hull as 3, its visual call would be Lp3.

UNIT INDICATOR CALL SIGNS.—Call signs for organized groups/flotillas, squadrons, divisions, and subdivisions of ships are constructed as follows:

Subdiv-subdivision

Div-this division

Squad-squadron

Group/flot-group/flotilla

Example: Div—this division

By using the appropriate unit pennant with a type indicator preceding the unit pennant and numeral pennants following, you form the following visual call signs:

Examples: R Squad p7—Carrier Squadron 7

D Group/Flot p3—Destroyer Group/Flot 3

In calling commands and ships in the same unit, the unit indicator may be used alone. Thus, DIV alone would be the call for this division.

Type indicators may be omitted from call signs if no confusion could result. If cruiser-destroyer group 1 were in port with no other ship group 1 present, the call for CruDesGru 1 could be FLOT/GROUP p1.

To form the visual call sign of the commanders of an organized group/flotilla, squadron, division or subdivision of ships the unit indicator is followed by the type indicator.

Example:

Squad D—Commander this destroyer squadron

Group/Flot CDp2—Commander crusier destroyer group/flotilla 2

Call signs for a group of ships associated with an individual ship that is not organized as a task unit or element is constructed by prefixing Subdiv to the call sign of the identifying ship. The command call is constructed by prefixing the ship's call to Subdiv.

Examples:

Subdiv Rp6p9—USS *Eisenhower* Subdivision

Rp6p9 Subdiv—Commander *Eisenhower* Subdivision

NUMERAL PENNANT CALL SIGNS.—Listed in figure 3-6 are numeral pennant call signs for general use in tactical organizations. To form the call sign for the commander of one of these groups or units, precede the listed call with pennant 0. Thus, “Entering or leaving harbor group No. 2" is p5p2. This call includes all units of the group, as well as the commander and subordinate commanders. To address only the commander of the group, the call sign is p0p5p2.

To call the commander of the unit indicated, pennant 0 may be used preceding the unit indicator call signs.

Similarly, to address subordinate commanders, p0p0 is used. A message to all squadron commanders under a group commander could use the call sign p0p0 SQUAD.

Other numeral pennant call signs may be used with type indicators to designate the type of ships in a unit. The call sign for all destroyers, for instance, is p2D.

SPECIAL TASK ORGANIZATION CALLS.— Visual call signs employing numeral flags and numeral pennants are used only in flaghoist communications within task organizations. These call signs always begin with a numeral flag followed by numeral pennant(s) that indicate the number of the task organization. Type indicator may be used following the call sign.

Call Sign	Meaning	Call Sign	Meaning
pØ	(Singly) My Immediate superior in tactical command	p5p1	Entering/leaving harbor group No. 1
pØ	Commander of (type and/or unit)	p5p2	Entering/leaving harbor group No. 2
pØpØ	Commanders under my command	p5p3	Entering/leaving harbor group No. 3
pØp1	Officer in tactical command	p5p4	
p1	All ships under my tactical command	p5p5	Escort force (group)
p2	All ships	p5p6	Fire support group (unit)
p3	Main body	p5p7	Flank groups (both flanks)
p4	This line	p5p8	Flank group (left)
p5	Screen	p5p9	Flank group (right)
p6	This task force	p6pØ	Fueling units (oilers)
p7	This task group	p6p1	Fueling group (ships fueling)
p8	This task unit	p6p2	Hunter/killer group
p9	This task element	p6p3	Logistic support group
p1pØ	All task force commanders	p6p4	Minelaying group
p1p1	All task group commanders	p6p5	Minesweeping group
p1p2	All task unit commanders	p6p6	
p1p3	All task element commanders	p6p7	
p1p4**		p6p8	Patrol group
p1p5**		p6p9	Pickets
p1p6**		p7pØ	Pouncers
p1p7**		p7p1	Reconnaissance group (unit)
p1p8**		p7p2	Replenishment force (group)
p1p9**		p7p3	Rescue destroyer(s)
p2pØ	Advance force (group)	p7p4	Reserve force (group)
p2p1*	All units on circle 1	p7p5	Reserve replenishment group (unit)
p2p2*	All units on circle 2	p7p6	Retirement group
p2p3*	All units on circle 3	p7p7	Screening group
p2p4*	All units on circle 4	p7p8	Screening units under my command
P2p5*	All units on circle 5	p7p9	Scouting group
p2p6*	All units on circle 6	p8pØ	Search and rescue group
p2p7*	All units on circle 7	p8p1	Service line (first)
p2p8*	All units on circle 8	p8p2	Service line (second)
p2p9*	All units on circle 9	p8p3	Service line (third)
p3pØ	All units in This Exercise	p8p4	Senior officer present afloat (SOPA)
p3p1	All units this column (or column indicated by numeral pennant(s) following)	p8p5	Senior officer present afloat (administrative)
p3p2	Amphibious force	p8p6	Striking force (group)
p3p3	ASW carrier group	p8p7	Support force (group)
p3p4	ASW covering group	p8p8	Surface action force (group)
p3p5	Attack force (group)	p8p9	Search attack unit (SAU)
p3p6	Battle line	p9pØ	Transport group
p3p7	Carrier group	p9p1	Waiting line (first)
p3p8	Carrier support group	p9p2	Waiting line (second)
p3p9	Carrier and rescue destroyers	p9p3	Waiting line (third)
p4pØ	Center group	P9p4**	
p4p1	Close covering group	p9p5**	
p4p2	Convoy (to indicate or denote)	p9p6**	
p4p3	Demonstration force (group)	p9p6**	
p4p4	Detached wing	p9p7**	
p4p5**		p9p8**	
p4p6**		p9p9**	
p4p7**			
p4p8**		*Units on a partial circle may be indicated by a third pennant.	
p4p9**			
p5pØ**		**For local assignment by task force commanders or high authority.	

Figure 3-6.—Numeral pennant call sign for use in tactical organizations.

Following is the table of special task organization visual call signs listed in ACP 129.

Call sign (Numeral flag)	Meaning
Ø	Commander Task Force No. _____
1	*Commander Task Group No. _____
2	*Commander Task Unit No. _____
3	*Commander Task Element No. _____
4	Commander _____ Fleet
5	
6	Task Force No. _____
7	*Task Group No. _____
8	*Task Unit No. _____
9	*Task Element No. _____

* Within own task organization

Examples:

6p4p5 . . . Task Force 45

8p3 . . . . . Task Unit 3 (within own Task Group)

9p2D . . . . Destroyers of Task Element 2 (within own Task Unit)

3p6. . . . . Commander Task Element 6 (within own Task Unit)

The special task organization call signs in the previous list have been extended to intra-USN messages transmitted by flashing light.

Examples:

CTF 50. . . . . Zero p5p0

CTG 50.3 . . . . . One p3

COMSIXTHFLT. . . . . Four p6

TF 50. . . . . Six p5p0

TG 50.3.5 . . . . . Seven p5

CONVOY VISUAL CALL SIGNS.—Convoy visual call signs are contained in ATP 2, volume 2, or appropriate national or regional defense organization publications.

GOVERNMENT SIGNAL STATIONS.—On shore or on lightships, use the letter *G* as the visual call sign to call any or all the senior men-of-war.

SHORE SIGNAL STATION.—In compliance with international procedure, the letter *K* (with complement if desired) is used to call or address shore stations.

MILITARY SIGNAL STATION.—The following assignments are reserved for the signal station indicated:

Call sign	Meaning
Hp0	Commander in chief
Hp1	Harbor entrance control post/port war signal station (HECP/PWSS) (main signal station)
Hp2	HECP/PWSS (secondary auxiliary signal station)
Hp3	Port director
Hp4	Senior officr present afloat (SOPA) (when ashore)
Hp5	SOPA administrative (when ashore)
Hp6	Flag officer, second in command
Hp7	Commander naval district
Hp8	Commander naval base
Hp9	Commander naval operating base
Hp1p0	Commander naval shipyard
Hp1p1	Commander sea frontier
Hp1p2	Commander air station
Hp1p3	Commander amphibious base
Hp1p4	Commander section base
Hp1p5	Commander submarine base
Hp1p6	Degaussing station No. 1
Hp1p7	Degaussing station No. 2
Hp1p8	Degaussing station No. 3
Hp1p9	Degaussing station No. 4
Hp2p0	Deperming station No. 1
Hp2p1	Deperming station No. 2
Hp2p2	
Hp2p3	
Hp2p4	
Hp2p5	
Hp2p6	
Hp2p7	
Hp2p8	
Hp2p9	
Hp3p0))) Hp3p9)	Reserved for local assignment by competent authority to shore signal stations not covered herein.

SHIPS' BOATS.—The following visual call signs are assigned for ships' boats.

Qp0	All boats
Qp1	Admiral's barge
Qp2	Chief of staff barge or gig
Qp3	Staff gigs or motorboats
Qp4	Captain's gig
Qp5	Boats under power
Qp6	Boats under sail
Qp7	Boats under oars
Qp8))) Qp5p0)	Reserved for local assignment by commanding officers. Calls are generated according to boat numbers.

Boat calls consist of QUEBEC hoisted above numeral pennant(s). Together, they signify the type of boat(s) called. Numeral flags following the call sign indicates the individual number of the boat. Thus, Qp54 is the call sign a ship would use for its utility boat number 4. To call another ship's boat, the call of the ship is hoisted below the boat call. For example, Qp4Rp1p4 is the captain's gig of carrier 14.

ADDRESS GROUPS

Address groups are four-letter groups assigned to represent a command, activity, or unit. Although address groups are used mainly in the message address, they can be used in military communications to establish and maintain communications in the same manner as call signs. In general, call signs and address groups are used by the Navy in the same way.

Address groups never start with the letter *N*; hence, they are easily distinguishable from naval radio call signs. Unlike international call signs, address groups follow no distinctive pattern. For example, you learned the difference in call signs for naval ships and shore stations. In address groups, however, the arrangement of the four letters is not significant.

All commands afloat (except individual ships) are assigned address groups. Address groups are assigned also to shore-based commands, authorities, or activities not served by their own communication facilities. More specifically, these are (1) senior commands and commanders ashore, such as the Secretaries of Defense and of the Navy, bureaus and offices of the Navy Department, and district commandants; (2) fleet, type, or force commanders ashore; (3) elements of operating forces permanently ashore who are in frequent communication with forces afloat; and (4) elements of the shore establishment (such as weather centrals) having a need for direct addressing and receipt of the messages.

Among other uses, address groups aid in the delivery of messages when a communications center serves so many activities that its own call sign is insufficient to identify the addressee.

Address groups, like call signs, are divided into types. They are individual activity, collective, conjunctive, and geographic address groups, and address indicating groups.

Individual Activity Address Groups

Individual activity address groups are representative of a single command or unit, either afloat or ashore. Examples:

DTCI . . . . . COMPHIBLANT

SSMW . . . . . CNO

Collective Address Groups

Collective address groups represent two or more commands, authorities, activities, units, or combinations of these. Included in the group are the commander and subordinate commanders. Examples:

DSWN.. . . . . DESRON 16

AMGK . . . . . SIXTH FLT Conjunctive Address Groups

Conjunctive Address Groups

You must remember that conjunctive address groups have incomplete meanings. It is always necessary to complete the meaning by the addition of other address groups denoting a specific command or location. For that reason, conjunctive address groups are used only with one or more other address groups. The conjunctive address group XZKW, for example, means "All ships present at_____." This particular group must be followed by a geographic address group to complete the meaning.

Geographical Address Groups

Geographic address groups should be included as a part of an address designator only when necessary to complete the titles of addressees or originators, in

which case they are used in combination with a conjunctive address group. Except where a geographical address group is required to complete the conjunctive address group, geographical address groups should not be used with the name of naval or merchant ships or the title of commands afloat.

Address Indicating Groups

An address indicating group (AIG) is a form of military address designator representing a predetermined list of specific and frequently recurring combinations of action and/or information addressees. The identity of the originator may also be included if the AIG is used frequently by any one originator. Each AIG is numbered so it will be easy to identify. An address group is assigned to each AIG for use as an address designator. AIG numbers may also be used as plain language address designators when appropriate.

The purpose of AIGs is to increase the speed of traffic handling and to reduce the length of the address component. Address indicating groups can be used whenever suitable, regardless of whether the message concerned is unclassified or classified, unencrypted or encrypted, or in plaindress or codress form.

Special Operating Groups

Special operating groups comprised of four letters and identical in appearance with address groups are provided for use in the headings of messages to give special instructions. They are not to be used until a nation or service has promulgated instructions authorizing their use. They must always be encrypted. They may be used singly, or with encrypted or unencrypted call signs or address groups.

PLAIN LANGUAGE STATION AND ADDRESS DESIGNATORS

Plain language address designators are the official abbreviated, or short titles, of commands or activities. They are used in message headings in place of call signs or address groups. Some abbreviated titles are written as single words, such as NAVSEA. Others have conjunctive titles and geographical locations, such as NAVCOMMSTA PUERTO RICO.

Plain language designators normally are confined to the abbreviated title of commands and activities listed in the *Standard Navy Distribution List.* They may be used in communication with the U.S. Army, Air Force, and the armed forces of our Allies. They may not be used when addressing a message to a nonmilitary activity, in the heading of a codress message, or in radiotelegraph messages originated by naval forces afloat.

INCOMING MESSAGE PROCEDURE

LEARNING OBJECTIVE: Discuss the procedure for handling and distributing incoming and outgoing messages.

The manner in which incoming messages are handled and distributed aboard ship is in accordance with stipulated shipboard communication doctrine or as determined otherwise by the OOD. Messages bearing a higher precedence than Routine receive particular attention, whether they are administrative or tactical in nature. There may be special procedures for Flash and Immediate visual traffic.

In general, incoming nontactical messages are recorded on a message blank, shown to and initialed by the OOD, and delivered promptly to the communications center for distribution. In the case of a high-precedence message, however, the OOD usually orders the signal supervisor to have it shown immediately to the captain.

If you are the signal supervisor, relay all tactical signals to both the OOD and CIC (the latter by intercom, usually the 21MC circuit). The OOD or JOOD refers to the appropriate signal book to interpret the signal's meaning. The signal is also interpreted in CIC. The CIC watch officer informs the OOD of its meaning. If both interpretations agree, the OOD will order you to indicate receipt for the message.

There are excellent reasons for requiring two interpretations of each tactical signal. For one thing, the practice keeps CIC informed of the ship's possible movements. For another, there are many signals, particularly for maneuvering, and there must be no error on the part of message addressees, because of the danger of collision. When OOD and CIC agree to the meaning of a signal, the OOD orders the signal acknowledged. On the rare occasion when there is disagreement, the OOD uses his or her judgment as to the better interpretation.

SUMMARY

In this chapter you learned how to originate messages, and you became familiar with the many

types of messages that you will be in contact with while performing your duties as a Signalman. You learned how to prepare messages for transmission using the standard naval message format and how to construct call signs and what type and unit indicators are. You also learned what prosigns are and how to use them. This chapter is very important to the Signalman rating. Learn all you can about messages, and apply the knowledge as necessary. Take the initiative to schedule practice during your spare time.