



Teak Publishing
P.O. Box 297
Brasstown
NC 28902
USA



Publisher: Teak Publishing, P.O.Box 297, Brasstown, NC 28902, USA.

E-mail: teakpub@brmemc.net

ISBN: 978-0-9796311-1-5.

Retail price: US\$19.95 plus shipping and handling

Table of contents:

- Chapter 1** Introduction. Information about the origin and use of callsigns; identification of utility stations; how callsigns are formed.
- Chapter 2** Resource Guide. Classification of U.S. Navy ships classifications; U.S. Navy/Marine Corps Aviation Squadron abbreviations, U.S.C.G. cutter designators; ship symbol designators; book abbreviations and acronyms; country abbreviations; international callsign series.
- Chapter 3** ACARS.
- Chapter 4** International Callsign List.
- Chapter 5** Worldwide Aeronautical Callsigns and Codes.
- Chapter 6** ICAO24 Aircraft Codes.
- Chapter 7** Aircraft Selcal List.
- Chapter 8** International Ship Callsigns.
- Chapter 9** GMDSS info. MMSI and MID lists; MMSI public coastal stations list; MMSI vessel list.
- Chapter 10** Automatic Link Establishment (ALE).
- Chapter 11** Tactical calls and code words.
- Chapter 12** Daily changing voice tactical callsigns.
- Separate document** Quick Guide to the Short Wave spectrum

The second edition of the *International Callsign Handbook* (ICH) was written by Monitoring Times columnists Gayle and Larry Van Horn. The ICH is a CD-ROM e-book published in Adobe Acrobat (PDF) format and is fully searchable and printable.

When browsing through the chapters my first reaction is that the ICH is a useful book. It hosts quite an impressive list of tactical and official callsigns of fixed service stations, aeronautical, maritime, civilian, military and government stations, and amateur propagation beacons. The book covers utility stations from all over the world, but the majority of the callsigns in the book, both tactical and official, belong to stations in North & South America which makes the ICH especially interesting for dxers with a focus on the America's.

Although the number of callsigns included is impressive, the book is not the ultimate book of callsigns. Non-Directional Beacons, for example, are not included. The authors realize that it is impossible to nail down every callsign in the world and have mentioned that in the intro of the book. It would be nice though if such a book would exist. ☺

Automatic Link Establishment (ALE) is a very popular worldwide system that is used for initiating and sustaining HF radio links. You will find a short introduction and callsign list in chapter 10. Hundreds of new ALE callsigns have been heard during the past few years and I see new ones every week. Keep an eye on these stations!

In chapters 8 and 9 you can find list of international ship callsigns and the MMSI vessel list. Both are quite long, but they still give you only a fraction of the massive online callsign list that is issued by the ITU. People without internet however benefit from the list in the ICH as it is a good alternative for the expensive ITU Ship List.

The book is more than just a list of callsigns and identifiers. The 1st chapter also includes a number of pages with resource information about several types of transmissions and stations, amongst others an introduction to callsigns, their origin, how the callsigns are formed and some information about the ITU. The 2nd chapter shows a list of ship symbol designators and the book abbreviations and acronyms, including the official codes as used by the NATO and the ITU.

An interesting part of the book is the 11th chapter that describes US Tactical Calls and Code Words. The callsigns are not documented by the ITU or official organizations other than the military. The list has been compiled from unofficial sources and from many, many hours of listening. In the past I have tried to compile a list from all the logs that were posted to radio mailing lists and in hobby magazines. Believe me, it's a hell of a job to compile 700+ pages of tactical callsigns.

Especially interesting are the introductions and lists of abbreviations in chapters 3 (ACARS), 6 (ICAO24) and 9 (GMDSS). The list of selcal codes in chapter 7 is also very handy. Selcal is a selective calling system that is used in international aviation. Ground stations can alert an aircraft simply by entering a 4-letter code into the selcal decoder and transmit that code on HF. The ICH includes a sample list of military and civil selcal codes. Chapters like these make the book a valuable asset to the hobby. I am sure that many dxers will enjoy it.

Reviewed by Ary Boender
for the Utility DXers Forum
27 October 2008