CLAIMS

1. A tracking system for ships at sea, said system comprising:

terminals mounted on a predetermined number of collecting ships, each of a terminal including:

means for detecting identification signals emitted by surrounding ships located in a collecting area around the corresponding collecting ship;

means for determining the current position of the corresponding collecting ship;

means for recording identification information comprising the identification signals being detected and the current position of the collecting ship upon such detection; and

means for coding the recorded identification information according to a coding specific to said terminal;

a satellite data transmission system, allowing data to be transmitted between said terminals which are mounted on the collecting ships and at least one monitoring center; and

said monitoring center comprising at least:

means for generating requests which are transmitted by said data transmission system to said terminals so as to request the terminals to provide the recorded identification information;

means for receiving identification information provided by said terminals, via said data transmission system, in response to a request; and

means for analyzing the identification information being received.

2. The system according to claim 1, characterized in that each terminal comprises a secure housing and alarm means being formed so as to send an alarm signal at a destination of said monitoring

center via said data transmission system, upon an opening of said secure housing.

3. The system according to claim 1, wherein each terminal comprises in addition:

electrical power means;

at least one reception antenna for the identification signals;

at least one reception antenna for positioning data; and

at least one transmission antenna cooperating with satellites of the data transmission system.

4. The system according to claim 1, wherein each terminal also comprises reception means for signals specific to a ship.

5. The system according to claim 1, wherein said monitoring center comprises means for sequentially sending requests at a destination of the terminals located in a determined area.

6. The system according to claim 1, wherein said monitoring center comprises in addition means for storing the identification information and making the identification information accessible to users.

7. The system according to claim 1, wherein the system comprises in addition means for remotely activating and inactivating a data transmission from the terminals.

CLAIMS

1. A tracking system for ships at sea, said system (1) comprising:

- terminals (2) mounted on a predetermined number of so-called collecting ships, each of said collecting ships comprising a terminal (2) including:
  - means (6, 7) for detecting identification signals emitted by surrounding ships located in a collecting area around the corresponding collecting ship;
  - means (8, 9) for determining the current position of the corresponding collecting ship; and
  - means (10, 13) for recording identification information comprising the identification signals being detected and the current position of the collecting ship upon such detection;
- a satellite (4) data transmission system (3), allowing data to be transmitted between said terminals (2) which are mounted on the collecting ships and at least one monitoring centre (5); and
- said monitoring centre (5) comprising at least:
  - means (21) for generating requests which are transmitted by said data transmission system (3) to said terminals (2) so as to ask them to provide the recorded identification information;
  - means (18, 20) for receiving identification information provided by said terminals (2), via said data transmission system (3), in response to a request; and

- means (23) for analyzing the identification information being received.

2. The system according to claim 1, characterized in that each terminal (2) comprises a secure housing (29) and alarm means being formed so as to send an alarm signal at destination of said monitoring centre (5) via said data transmission system (3), upon an opening of said secure housing.

3. The system according to any of claims 1 and 2, characterized in that each terminal (2) comprises in addition:

- electrical power means;
- at least one reception antenna (7) for the identification signals;
- at least one reception antenna (9) for positioning data; and
- at least one transmission antenna (18) cooperating with satellites (4) of the data transmission system (3).

4. The system according to any of claims 1 to 3, characterized in that each terminal (2) comprises in addition means (10) for coding the recorded identification information according to a coding being specific to said terminal (2).

5. The system according to any of claims 1 to 4, characterized in that each terminal (2) also comprises reception means for signals being specific to a ship.

6. The system according to any of claims 1 to 5, characterized in that said monitoring centre (5) comprises means (20, 21, 18) for sequentially

sending requests at destination of the terminals (2) located in a determined area.

7. The system according to any of claims 1 to 6, characterized in that said monitoring centre (5) comprises in addition means (25, 27) for storing the identification information and making them accessible to users.

8. The system according to any of claims 1 to 7, characterized in that it comprises in addition means for remotely activating and inactivating a data transmission from the terminals (2).