# AMERC News

## Editorial

Welcome to issue 54 of AMERC News - *which doubles as* **Circular 270** *and, as such, must be circulated to all GMDSS instructors/examiners by their AMERC centre contact.*

In this issue we have a brief on the most recent **Maritime Consultation Group** (MCG - Page 2) - reflecting relevant items covered in the AMERC Executive Committee (EC) meeting earlier that day and at **Annual General Meeting** and **Examiner's Panel** - including: details of an **Inmarsat presentation** - giving an update on Inmarsat services, including future delivery of MSI; changes to the AMERC Administration Handbook to reflect new and updated information on **approved simulators for GMDSS training;** a reminder from the Chief Examiner regarding **publication requirements for training and examinations;** updates to the **MNTB Short Course Criteria for GMDSS GOC/ROC training**; the issue of **MSN 1864 (M)** to replace MGN 214 and covering **'Training and Certification Guidance: UK Requirements for Radio Operators'**; a note on **Chief Examiner and Secretary appointments**; and **date of next AGM**.

The **quarterly statistics for GMDSS examinations** from the NAC are also included here.

**Explanation Please?** (Page 3) Has a question about **sending messages to-ship using telex or email.**

We have another **'GMDSS Criss-Crossword'** (Page 4) to help stretch delegates' knowledge of **international geography** and the use of **Admiralty List of Radio Signals** (ALRS) publications. The answers to puzzle 53 are also included – **again with hyperlinks** for those interested in learning more about the featured locations/stations.

And we have a contribution (Page 5) to **Tales from the Key-Side,** plus some feedback from previous News' - but **Member Profile(s)** and **Maritime Miscellaneous** are again 'resting', in the absence of any submissions from Members or other readers.

Your submissions are always welcome for **Explanation Please?, Member Profile, Maritime Misc'** and **Tales from the Key-Side** - and/or anything else you think would be of interest to readers. Further suggestions to help delegates with their knowledge of international geography – a continuing issue – will also be welcome.

As usual – my sincere thanks to those of you who've provided feedback, questions and other information for your newsletter.

*Sláinte!*                    *Ian W*

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AMERC Member Petrofac Training is once again sponsoring the Challenge Cup – open to Scottish Professional Football League clubs below the Premier Division. Click HERE for more information.

The **Maritime Consultation Group** *(MCG)* meets regularly - currently four times each year – for the AMERC Executive Committee 'Open Meeting'. MCG membership consists of AMERC Executive Committee (EC) representatives; the AMERC Chief Examiner; the MCA Chief Examiner and/or the MCA Deck & GMDSS Team Leader; the NAC and other AMERC/industry specialists.

The latest meeting was held in Liverpool in conjunction with the Annual General Meeting (AGM) and Examiner's Panel, in June 2015. The following items reflect discussions at MCG (full minutes will be circulated appropriately), AGM and Examiner's Panel - and/or associated items that are of interest to Members and training centres. The items are placed according to size - not in any 'priority' order.

*Inmarsat Presentation:* John Dodd of Inmarsat gave a presentation on the future of Inmarsat services, with the emphasis on how delivery of Maritime Safety Information and other Distress and Safety services are being developed. Of particular interest was the ongoing development of a future system that will perform various Distress and Safety functions required by the GMDSS - whether using Inmarsat-C, Fleet Broadband or the Global Express (GX) service.

*Approved Simulator Changes:* The AMERC Administration Handbook has been updated to include additional approved GMDSS simulators. This update also clarifies where networked and/or stand-alone 'tutor' simulation is allowed. The revised handbook can be downloaded by Members and approved centres. Non-members can apply online for a copy of the Handbook (for a small administration fee).

*Classroom and Examination Centres – Publications Requirement:* The Chief Examiner emphasised the different requirement for course delivery - where more than one set of publications are required; and examinations - where a single set is required. The different requirements are clearly listed in the AMERC Administration Handbook.

*Chief Examiner and Secretary Appointments:* Keith Mitchell was appointed for a further 3-year period as Chief Examiner; Terry Slack was appointed for a further 3-year term as Secretary.

*MNTB Short Course Criteria – GOC and ROC:* The MNTB Short Course Criteria for GMDSS GOC and ROC have now been updated and approved. They will be available from the MNTB in the near future. Noted that the *normal Instructor:Student ratio is 1:8.* It has been agreed that this may be extended on a case by case basis up to a maximum of 12-per-instructor - where supported by additional equipment fit and appropriate course structure. The course structure must ensure that all trainees are fully engaged in meaningful learning activity throughout the course.

The *contact-hours* requirement remains as previously and across all MNTB approved programmes - and is for not-more than 8-hours over a period of 10 in any one working day. Centres may exceed the 8 (e.g. to provide additional, supervised, equipment time) – but cannot count that additional time towards the required (contact hours) total (e.g. GOC – total minimum course length is 60 hours, with 2.5 hours allowed for exam time, giving a minimum contact time of 57.5 hours).

*MSN 1864 (M):* The MCA has replaced MGN 214 with [MSN 1864 (M) 'Training and Certification Guidance: UK Requirements for Radio Operators'](). A notable change appears to be the requirement of all Bridge Watch-keepers operating outside of Sea Area A1 to hold a GOC (MGN 214 required that a GOC-holder had to be onboard - allowing other Bridge Watch-keepers to hold a ROC).

*AGM 2016:* The next AGM & Examiner's Panel date is 15th-16th June 2016 - venue to be advised.

*GMDSS Examination Statistics – quarterly report:* National Administration Centre (NAC) examination statistics for the period *1 January 2015 – 27 March 2015* are shown below:

| EXAMINATION | ENTERED (1st time) | | PASSED (1st attempt) | | % PASSED 1ST ATTEMPT | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| UK GOC | 295 | (251) | 241 | (202) | 202/251 | (>80%) |
| ALL GOC | 591 | (508) | 495 | (417) | 417/508 | (>82%) |
| UK ROC | 47 | (46) | 46 | (45) | 45/46 | (>97%) |
| ALL ROC | 52 | (51) | 51 | (50) | 50/51 | (>98%) |
| LRC | 35 | (32) | 33 | (30) | 30/32 | (>93%) |

*Question:*  One of our delegates has asked a question regarding sending messages from an office ashore, to a vessel at sea, when using Inmarsat.  Can you send me info on how this can be done by using TLX or by email?  Would the shore-based office have to register for the service with a Land Earth Station Operator (LESO)?

*Answer:*  Registering is required to send email messages shore-to-ship - but not for TLX (telex). To send telex (TLX) messages to an Inmarsat-C or –B terminal, the message is sent (from a telex terminal in the office) to the Inmarsat mobile number – using the Inmarsat telex 'country code' followed by the Sat-C/Sat-B ID number, e.g.

AORE  +581 (then the Sat-C/B vessel ID)
POR    +582 (then the Sat-C/B vessel ID)
IOR     +583 (then the Sat-C/B vessel ID)
AORW +584 (then the Sat-C/B vessel ID)

There is no 'telex' service on Fleet services.

For Sat-C email, someone who holds an Inmarsat account (or who is prepared to open an account) can register for the 'C-email' service. The registration form allows you to list the email addresses that you are prepared to accept charges for – or to use 'username and password' authentication. This C-Email service is provided by STRATOS LESs.

A similar to-ship (Inmarsat-C) service is provided by the Airbus Defence & Space 'MARLINK' gateway, using a network of LESs to give full Inmarsat Ocean Region coverage. Information about this service – including how to register – is available by email from asbc.customercare@astrium.eads.net

Other LESOs may offer Inmarsat-C email services – use the 'Land Earth Station Operators, Contacts and Services' section of ALRS Volume 5 for customer services points of contact.

For messaging to Fleet 77, the terminal has a data ID (in addition to its telephone number) and can be effectively 'connected' to the office Local Area Network.

To use email over Fleet Broadband, download the guide from Inmarsat and/or contact your preferred LESO - who may be able to advise on messaging software like 'SkyFile Mail' - designed to optimise throughput using satellite links.

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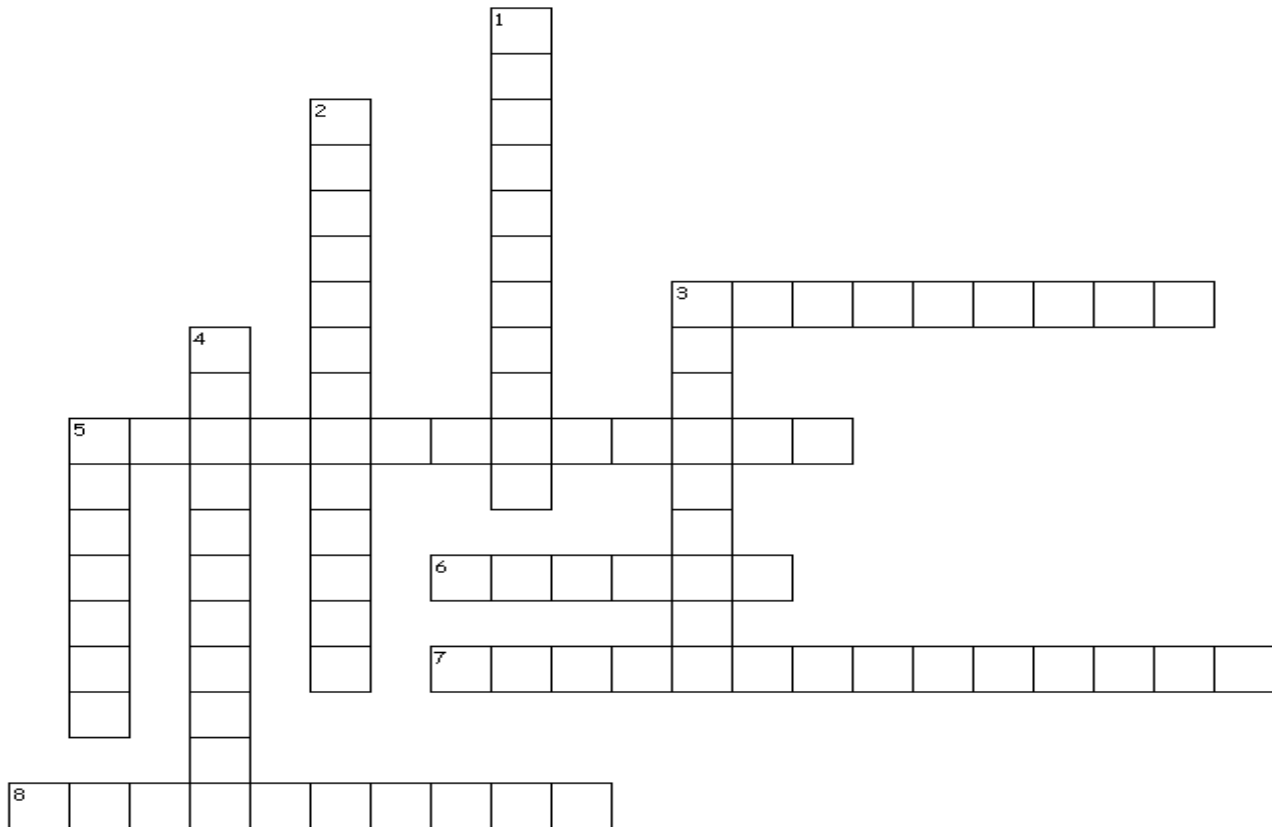
*Down*

1. (6,5) Cruise port-of-entry that's also the capital city and main hub of the province with the same name, on the east coast of (3-across).
2. (5,2,6) Separates Isla Tenglo from (4-down).
3. Sea to the east of (3-across).
4. (6,5) Port city & commune in the Los Lagos region of southern Chile, at the northern end of (7-across).
5. Ocean to the west of (3-across).

*Across*

3. (5,4) Central American country with coasts on two major bodies of water.
5. (6,7) Port on western side of (3-across) also known as Golfo Dulce.
6. Scottish North Sea port that received the UK's first 'UNESCO City of Design' award.
7. (9,5) body of water immediately to the south of (4-down).
8. VHF station maintaining Ch16 distress watch for MRCC (3-across).

**Dateline**:        London Boat Show  - January 1997 – Waterline Books stand
**Time:**            After the lunch-time lull
**Frequency:**    Annual event

*Waterline Editor:*  'It's good to have you here and also that your book was, clearly, not written by another B.O.F'

*Author:*  'What's a B.O.F?'

*Waterline Editor:*   'Boring Old F..t'

*Author:*  'OK ... if ever I ever get the impression that people think I'm a B.O.F  - I'll know it's time to quit!'

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**Feedback:**   following your link to the Portishead Radio/GKA video recently took me also to one for Scheveningen Radio/PCH ... Am I allowed to suggest that the young ladies at PCH were rather more fetching than the guys at Portishead Radio?

**Editor:**  only untruths are strictly verboden.

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**Feedback 2:**   following your link to the Portishead Radio/GKA video also took me to 'The Sea Has Many Voices' – a Post Office information film from way-back when the Post Office ran the UK Coast Radio Stations ... was I mistaken, or was the current AMERC Secretary in that film?

**Editor:**  hmmm ... should we offer some kind of prize to the first entry that accurately defines the colour of his facial hair?

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