AMERC News

Issue 50 – Incorporates Circular 265 **July 2014**

Editorial

Welcome to issue 50 of AMERC News - *which doubles as* **Circular 265** *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) and ***Annual General Meeting/Examiner's Panel*** (Page 2-3) - reflecting relevant items covered in the AMERC Executive Committee (EC) meeting earlier that day and including: updated information on ***revalidation of the STCW Endorsement in GMDSS Certificates;*** forecast changes requiring ***refresher training*** for the four ***STCW Basic Training*** modules; an update on AMERC-approved ***GMDSS Simulators – networked and tutor packs***; a reminder about the conduct of ***examination resits***; a further reminder about the requirement to have ***multiple copies of ALRS Vol 5 for training –*** depending on the number of candidates***;*** an item on ***GOC/ROC Course length and resource requirements***; a ***change to the email address for the Association Secretary***; an update on the ***next series GMDSS Examination Papers*** – and an offer of guidance on ***formulating mock exams*** in the new format; information of ***forecast changes to GOC/ROC Course Criteria***; are covered; as is ***guidance on becoming an Electro-Techincal Officer***; changes to ***Membership fees*** are stated; as are the latest ***quarterly and annual examination statistics*** from the National Administration Centre (NAC).

Explanation Please? (Page 4) Has a question on ***using a CEPT LRC issued in another country, onboard a UK craft*** and another on the ***validity of an Australian MROCP*** in the UK; a question about ***GOC tasks for manually-entering Position and Time*** in DSC and Sat-C equipment; and a question about an item in a trade journal.

*We have another '**GMDSS Criss-Crossword'** (Page 5) to help stretch candidates' knowledge of **international geography** and the use of **Admiralty List of Radio Signals** (ALRS) publications. The answers to puzzle 49 are also included – **again with hyperlinks** for those interested in learning more about the featured locations/stations.*

Maritime Miscellaneous has a press release on Inmarsat's forthcoming ***Maritime Safety Data Service (MSDS) for FleetBroadband;*** and another from from ***Iridium Communications Inc.***

Your submissions will be welcome for ***Member Profile*** and ***Tales from the Key-Side*** - and/or anything else you think would be of interest to readers. Further suggestions to help students 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*

Mail: ian.waugh@btinternet.com

Late News: AMERC Member **Petrofac Training Services** sponsors Scottish Challenge Cup 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 Manchester, in June 2014 – along with our Annual General Meeting and Examiner's Panel. The following items reflect discussions at MCG (full minutes will be circulated appropriately) and at AGM/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!

GMDSS GOC/ROC – STCW revalidation: The MCA has confirmed that earlier advice stating that anyone without the requisite one-year in five sea-time would have to re-take their GMDSS examination, was in error. The GMDSS certificate itself does not expire. Certificate holders serving on board SOLAS craft must have the *STCW endorsement* revalidated, which can be done by sending evidence of relevant sea-time, or up-to-date STCW basic training as listed on MCA form MSF4354.

STCW Basic Safety Training: The four elements of STCW Basic Safety Training that are required for initial endorsement and revalidation in the GMDSS GOC/ROC certificates do not currently expire. However, starting January 2017, the Manila Amendments to STCW Convention and Code which entered into force on 1st January 2012 will require refresher training for some elements to be taken at least every five years. More information can be found in Marine Information Note - MIN 469 (M) - from the MCA.

Approved GMDSS Simulator update: The AMERC Administration Handbook. has been revised to include the latest list of approved simulators, both networked and stand-alone 'tutor' versions. Centres using approved simulators with touch-screen technology in lieu of hard-panels, for examination purposes, must have separate units installed for each piece of equipment being simulated. If there is no live receiver, simulators must have the ability to demonstrate 'live signal' reception (e.g. as provided by Steve Howard for use with TRANSAS TGS simulator packages).

Resit arrangements: Candidates taking a resit at a centre other than the one where they took the original examination; or who do not take their resit within seven working days at the same centre - must undertake the full examination.

Publications requirements: Course providers are again reminded that**,** to ensure adequate access to required publications for OPT practice, ***for training purposes,*** centres must have a minimum of ***one copy of ALRS Volume 5 for every two delegates***.
A centre with course approvals for 8 delegates must, therefore, have four copies of ALRS Vol. 5. The full requirement ***for course approval*** and ***for examination*** purposes is detailed in the AMERC Administration Handbook.

GOC and ROC Course Length and Resources: Training centres are reminded of the following:

The minimum duration for a UK GOC course is 60 'contact' hours (57.5 in class; 2.5 per candidate for the examination). This assumes a single set of resources (equipment and instructor) and maximum of 8 delegates.

For ROC - courses are limited to 4 delegates per single set of resources, where the course length is limited to the minimum requirement of 20 contact hours. Centres delivering ROC to 5 or 6 delegates must increase resources (equipment/personnel) and/or programmed hours – the timetable to reflect delegate access to instructor and equipment.

For both GOC and ROC the training day must not exceed 10 hours in total - of which there are no more than 8 'contact' hours.

Breaks for lunch, and for morning/afternoon refreshment, do not count towards contact hours – but do count towards the overall total of 10.

AMERC Secretary – change of email address: The new email address for the Secretary of the Association is amerc.secretary@gmail.com (the system will also recognise amercsecretary@gmail.com)

MCG, AGM and Examiner's Panel items (continued)

New Series Examination Papers: Examiner's attending AGM/Examiner's Panel took the opportunity to sit the draft General Knowledge examination papers for GOC, ROC and LRC - under examination conditions. The papers were positively received and generated constructive feedback. Questions raised will be incorporated into the final papers and/or will be answered/explained by the Chief Examiner in a follow-up communication to attendees. The revised RT and OPT examinations, which also now follow the same approach to style and content for all three examinations, were also presented and comments taken.

Mock Exam Papers: Centres are encouraged to formulate their own mock exam papers, rather than use past papers. Any centre requiring a MS Word 'template' in the new GK-paper format should contact Ian Waugh/Editor AMERC News, using the contact link on the AMERC website. A reminder that you should not be using current exam questions/vessels etc for Part A (SOLAS), but should make-up your own vessel details and emergency situations. For Part B, you may use your own selection of multi-choice questions from the AMERC Quiz.

GOC and ROC Course Criteria: Revised course criteria for UK GOC and ROC training have been drafted, taking account of proposed changes to the CEPT Syllabus and new IMO Model Course criteria. The revised criteria is with the Merchant Navy Training Board (MNTB) for approval. There are no fundamental changes to course content and structure, but the process for in-course assessments and AMERC examinations will, ultimately, have to be mapped against the identified 'learning outcomes'. More information will be published in AMERC news when available.

Electro-Technical Officer (ETO): Interim arrangements for acquiring an ETO Certificate of Competence (CoC) – for new entrants and for those already carrying-out ETO duties but without holding the ETO CoC - are available from the **MCA website, using this link**. Additionally: funding of up to £17k per person has been made available through the **JW Slater Fund** to assist eligible serving ratings, ETOs and yacht crew to become certified as an ETO. The AMERC website now has a dedicated ETO page.

AMERC Membership Fees: Members agreed at AGM to an increase in annual membership fees for the year commencing 1st January 2015. The fee for new and existing Full Members will become £270; and for Associate Members £150.

GMDSS Examination Statistics – quarterly report: National Administration Centre (NAC) examination statistics for the period ***1 January 2014 – 28 March 2014*** are shown below:

EXAMINATION	ENTERED (1st time)		PASSED (1st attempt)		% PASSED 1ST ATTEMPT	
UK GOC	339	(283)	268	(223)	223/283	(>78%)
ALL GOC	616	(521)	504	(424)	424/521	(>81%)
UK ROC	78	(76)	73	(72)	72/76	(>94%)
ALL ROC	91	(89)	86	(85)	85/89	(>95%)
LRC	44	(43)	43	(42)	42/43	(>97%)

GMDSS Examination Statistics – annual report: A summary of National Administration Centre (NAC) examination statistics for 2013 is shown below:

EXAMINATION	ENTERED (1st time)		PASSED (1st attempt)		% PASSED 1ST ATTEMPT	
GOC	2691	(2309)	2258	(1922)	1922/2309	(>83%)
ROC	360	(352)	351	(343)	352/343	(>97%)
LRC	155	(153)	153	(151)	151/153	(>98%)

Explanation Please?

This is the area for questions that may puzzle you – whether you're a trainer without a specific 'radio' background; a seagoing operator who's finding that the 'real world' doesn't seem to be fully in tune with what you learned in the classroom (or with what you've read in publications – official or otherwise); or because it's not particularly clear why a specific answer to an examination question is necessary when it appears that other answers may also appear appropriate.

The exchanges below include questions about mutual recognition of radio operator certificates issued by one country aboard a craft registered in another; one about the OPT tasks for setting Position & Time in DSC and Inmarsat-C equipment; and an observation on an item in a trade journal.

Question: I am a German national, now resident in the UK, and wish to use my Germany-issued Long Range Certificate (LRC) when aboard UK leisure craft. Do I need a new UK LRC; or do I need to get my German LRC endorsed with a UK Authority to Operate (ATO)?

Answer: You need take no action whatever for your particular certificate, which I understand was issued under CEPT/ERC/RECOMMENDATION 31-05 E (Bonn 1994) – the relevant paragraph is item d on page 2 of the above-linked document. The UK and Germany are two of sixteen countries who agreed to mutually recognise operator certificates issued, by each other, under that recommendation – the full list being available from this link

Question: Please find attached a scanned copy of my Australian qualification Marine Radio Operators Certificate of Proficiency (MROCP). The course and qualification cover VHF (with or without DSC) and MF/HF (with or without DSC). I am trying to establish the validity of this qualification for use within the UK

Answer: see this link which clearly states that an Australian GMDSS certificate is accepted by the UK. However – I understand from a contact in Australia that the MROCP is not one of their GMDSS certificates and, although the Australian authorities accept it as the 'minimum qualification to operate a VHF or SSB radio with or without DSC' – it would not be accepted by the UK when using a radio with DSC.

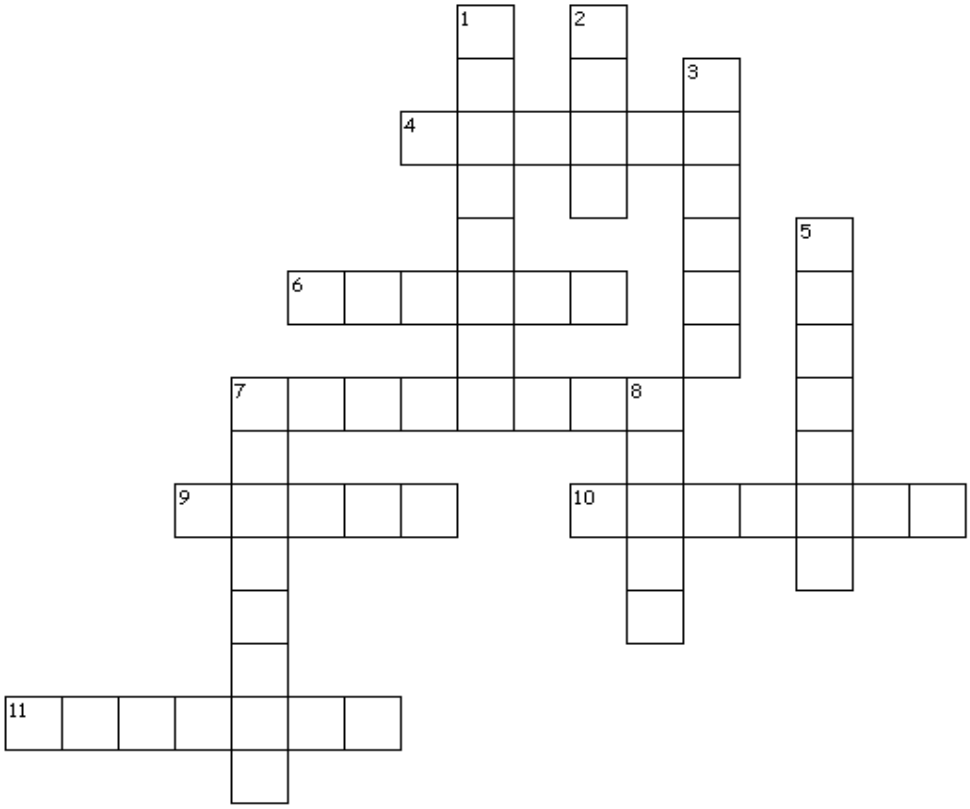
GOC OPT Tasks 37/38: OPT task 37 (DSC) and task 38 (Sat-C) in the current GOC examination series asks the candidate to manually enter Position and Time. We have been interpreting 'time', during training, as the time that the position was updated – but a recent visiting examiner also required the candidates to set the date and time for the system clock. Is 'Date and Time' part of this task, or should it only be Position, and time the position was updated?

Answer: Both tasks are only asking for the Position, and the time that the position was updated. There is a separate task on the ROC OPT that additionally requires the Date and Time to be updated (where this is available on the kit) - but this task was dropped from the GOC series some time ago. The upcoming series of exam papers for GOC and ROC have been aligned to ask for Position and Time only; the Date and Time task being removed from the ROC paper to align it with the GOC task list.

Comment: The following was reported in TradeWinds Daily News Update - 24 June 2014*:*
Korean company Pan Ocean says it is ready to invest $112m in the two capsize carriers it still has on order.
Question: Is that what happens when top-heavy carriers round the Cape too fast?
Answer: My sympathies have to be with the Editor ☺

.oO0Oo.

GMDSS Criss-Crossword Number 50 - all answers should be researched and/or confirmed by reference to ALRS, ***where appropriate***



Down

1. Became the world's busiest container port in 2010, when it overtook Singapore
2. NAVTEX ID letter for station serving 4-across
3. Port and VHF/MF DSC station immediately south of 7-down
5. NAVTEX station located at Long Beach
7. Bay to the south of 1-down
8. Fleet 77 LES location with station ID 555

Across

4. Port on northern Taiwan, lying south of the Tamsui River and facing west onto Taiwan Strait.
6. Port and NAVTEX station on mainland China, latitude just north of Taiwan
7. MRSC on Finland's south coast
9. Island DSC station remotely controlled by 10-across
10. Estonian JRCC; NAVTEX station; VHF/MF DSC station; and VHF/MF/HF RT station
11. Californian harbour, situated between Long Beach and San Diego

Issue 49 answers – *with hyperlinks*:
DOWN: 1. Miyazaki; 4. Qingdao; 5. Nha Trang; 6. Pensacola; 8. Adelaide.
ACROSS: 2. Sinop; 3. Cam Rhan; 7. Chesapeake; 9. Annapolis; 10. Stockton; 11. Livorno.

Maritime Miscellaneous 1 - Inmarsat unveils MSDS

Inmarsat has announced details of its forthcoming Maritime Safety Data Service (MSDS) for FleetBroadband.

MSDS will continue to offer all the Inmarsat-C safety services such as distress alerting, priority messaging and SafetyNET safety information broadcasts, with the addition of: content-rich applications; chart updates; the ability to co-ordinate rescue operations by e-mail as well as voice calls; telemedicine; distress chat, an instantaneous chatroom function between multiple vessels and maritime rescue coordination centres; and a new style maritime safety terminal (MST).

MSDS will be operational over the Inmarsat-4 network, used by FleetBroadband, and also including the Alphasat satellite launched in 2013.

"We are currently working closely with the IMO to bring our new service to market with the aim of eventually gaining SOLAS approval for both FleetBroadband data and voice Global Maritime Distress and Safety System (GMDSS) services," said Peter Blackhurst, head of Maritime Safety Services at Inmarsat.

The additional capabilities have been developed by data software company, Eixo Digital, which will also be designing a generic maritime safety terminal (MST) in conjunction with GateHouse, a software solutions provider. A prototype is expected to be available later this year and a ready-to-market terminal is planned for Q2 2015.

The MSDS initiative has received funding from the European Space Agency (ESA), which has also awarded a contract to Inmarsat partner Cobham SATCOM to develop an MST delivering MSDS functionality, expected to be available next year.

Inmarsat says that all information accessed over MSDS and Inmarsat C will now be housed on two new maritime safety servers in London, UK, and Burum, the Netherlands.

MSDS will build upon FleetBroadband's two non-SOLAS voice safety services: the free 505 Emergency Calling facility, and Voice Distress.

The launch date for MSDS is subject to the IMO approval process for SOLAS ships but Inmarsat anticipates that non-SOLAS versions will be available well in advance of that.

"Everything comes to its life's end and, whilst the Inmarsat-C service is still very competent and it will continue well into the 2020s and beyond despite being over 20 years old, (we) would ultimately like to see MSDS accepted as the natural successor to deliver SafetyNET," said Mr Blackhurst.

[Editor's note: A number of you will remember Peter Blackhurst's presentation on Inmarsat services and developments at our AGM/Examiner's Panel in Norwich, June 2011 [and summarised in AMERC News No. 38 – August 2011] Peter tells me that he will be retiring from fulltime employment at Inmarsat as of 18th July 2014; and that he intends to make himself available to organisations and industry as a consultant on maritime communications and navigation. Contact details available on request – or connect with him on https://www.linkedin.com]

.oO0Oo.

Maritime Miscellaneous 2 – Press Release from Iridium Communications Inc.

Iridium's Application to Provide Global Maritime Distress and Safety System Services receives Support From International Maritime Organization Sub-Committee.

Iridium Moves One Step Closer to Recognition as a GMDSS Mobile Satellite Service Provider.

MCLEAN, Va., July 7, 2014 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) -- Iridium Communications Inc. (Nasdaq:IRDM) today announced that its application to the International Maritime Organization (IMO) for the provision of mobile satellite communications in the Global Maritime Distress and Safety System (GMDSS) was reviewed by the IMO Sub-Committee on Navigation, Communications and Search and Rescue (NCSR). The application will now proceed to the Maritime Safety Committee (MSC) at its next meeting in November, before advancing to a group of experts for comprehensive technical and operational evaluation.

Overwhelmingly, the delegates stated support for the United States position to advance Iridium's application to the next stage for evaluation. Final approval will be up to the Maritime Safety Committee, following review of the experts' report by NCSR, which is expected by mid-2016.
"This is a victory for Iridium and the maritime industry," said Matt Desch, CEO, Iridium. "The overwhelming support for our application to provide the industry an alternative and equally capable option for GMDSS services is a testament to the value and benefit the Iridium® network can provide to maritime safety." This is particularly important for coverage of Polar regions, where the incumbent GMDSS provider is not able to provide service.

Iridium's constellation of 66 low-Earth orbit, inter-connected satellites operates as a fully-meshed network and provides robust and reliable coverage everywhere on Earth - including Polar regions - where demand for reliable voice and data communications is on the rise as shipping and trade routes continue to expand into these remote waters.

Iridium will begin deploying its second generation constellation (Iridium NEXT), in 2015, offering greater capacity, bandwidth and data speeds, as well as backwards compatibility for existing products and services in the market.

In anticipation of IMO recognition, Iridium is working with established maritime communications equipment manufacturers for the production and certification of GMDSS terminals that use the Iridium network, along with Maritime Rescue Coordination Centers and service providers for the provision of maritime safety communications. Once approved, the shipboard terminals will meet both the GMDSS and operational communications needs of a vessel, giving the industry the option of a single, affordable communications terminal to satisfy both safety and business communications wherever they operate. Expected to be available before the end of 2015, GMDSS terminals using the Iridium network are designed to have an operational longevity of nearly 20 years, eliminating the need for vessel owners and operators to purchase new equipment every few years.

[Editor's note: The press release is reproduced as received – but with the addition of hyperlinks]

.oO0Oo.