

AMERC NEWS

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February 2009

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AMERC NEWS is the Journal of the Association of Marine Electronics and Radio Colleges.
It is distributed to all Members, Associates and Affiliates of the Association.
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EDITORIAL

You have to have something to look forward to in the bleakness of a North European mid-winter. How about the AMERC AGM?! In this Issue we give early advice that our annual business meeting will be held at the Marriott Hotel in Glasgow. Glasgow was my home port for much of my time at sea and I was there many times in my tenure as Hon Secretary of AMERC. I always found it a warm-hearted place with a generous welcome for the seafarer and I am sure it will be the same for you and the Association in May. The organisers are hoping for a Scottish theme to the event and with the international nature of AMERC this is to be welcomed. You will remember we had a local theme last year which finished the AGM with something of a zing.

On the business side, too, the AGM often takes on a theme based on the issues of the day. These can continue over several years as I think will be the case with 2009 pushing forward the new examination structures. The early part of this year has propelled changes down to grass roots level as the training sessions spread ever wider across centres. It will be interesting for me to hear the feedback at AGM and measure that against what I encounter as an observer of the Warsash training session in March. It needs to be stressed that it is Association policy to have all examiners trained for the new arrangements and a 'mop-up' session will be provided at AGM for any who have missed out in the round. We urge you to note and communicate within your circle what is said on Page 4 of this Issue.

And don't forget the organising of an AGM such as AMERC's is a very large undertaking, especially, for those working at it part time. I make this plea every year on behalf of Eric Lamb (and the Hon Secretary) that you must respond to mailings within the timescales specified – keep up your good record!

If the matter has progressed sufficiently by AGM there might be room in the agenda to discuss the making of some kinds of 'charitable investments' by AMERC. Apart from any intrinsic worth, this could raise the profiles of the Association and the maritime community. At its most basic this could mean financing an AMERC prize or award – beyond that perhaps the sponsoring of GMDSS related projects might be appropriate. Give this some reflection in case it comes up.

It has been pleasing to see more engagement by individuals since our last Issue. The clever idea of the Executive Committee to allow for the attendance of observers at its meetings paid off when three colleagues took advantage of the invitation. Sometimes observers at (non-AMERC) meetings are just that, sitting there owl-like watching events and discouraged from speaking. That was far from the case in September last and there was substantial engagement with and by the observers much to the benefit I felt (an observer myself!) of the organisation. I am pleased that in this Issue we have had spontaneous contributions from members and friends. We are grateful, as always that Kim Fisher should think of us and give a briefing on the 2011 WRC. The contributions from members in Austria are welcome. And of course we are proud that our 'lost and found' column produced the power supply for Ian Waugh! More please.

Best Wishes
Brian Cotton

MARITIME CONSULTANCY GROUP (MCG)

The MCG met in Kendal in October and December and gave attention to the usual mix of operational matters. Here is a report of some of those considered at the meetings, some of which require your attention or action.

DYSLEXIA

The Association has a policy for dealing with GMDSS Examination candidates who suffer from dyslexia. It was published in February 2006 and you can find it detailed on Page 4 of AMERC NEWS 20.

The Executive Committee has approved some small but significant changes to the policy and these will be published shortly.

2009 AGM

The Annual General Meeting of the Association will be held on Thursday 28 May 2009 in Glasgow. The venue will be the Marriott Hotel and the organisers hope to provide us with a Scottish 'theme' at the dinner.

The Hon Secretary will provide formal advice as a separate circular in due course. As always, delegates are asked to look out for the mailings from Eric and respond promptly.

EC OBSERVERS

The Executive Committee and MCG were joined by observers Terry Slack, Paul Martin and Tony Browne. Permanent members and observers alike felt that this had been a successful experiment. If you would like to attend in the future, contact the Hon Secretary who will be happy to advise you.

MNTB GUIDELINES

The MNTB has had all its short course guidelines under review. Phil Davies has been taking stock of the Board's current documentation relating to GOC and ROC courses. He has correlated them against AMERC's Examiners' Administration Handbook and the MNTB has readily accepted his proposals. The guidelines when published will show those cross references.

LRC

SYLLABUS REVISION

The LRC Group set up by the Association and chaired by Kevin Walsh met with Peter Blackhurst at Southampton in December. The intention was to brief Peter before the EU meeting in Helsinki but in the event, the LRC agenda item was not reached. The item was deferred to a future meeting and Peter Blackhurst will alert the Association when the matter returns for discussion.

EXAMINATIONS 2009/2010 SERIES

It should be noted that due to changes introduced to the 2009/10 papers and the examiner training required, there may be a delay in introducing new papers. In this case the current papers will continue to be used for a short time in 2009.

MARITIME CONSULTANCY GROUP (MCG)

GMDSS EXAMINATION STATISTICS

The NAC has provided the following GMDSS Examination Statistics for the period April 2008 to June 2008.

EXAMINATION	ENTERED	PASSED
UK GOC	169	126
ALL GOC	489	386
UK ROC	47	42
ALL ROC	117	109
LRC	95	92

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**IMPORTANT
MAKE SURE YOU READ THIS!**

**NEW EXAMINATION FORMATS
TRAINING COURSES**

Since the beginning of the calendar year, staff in Centres have been receiving training in the new examination arrangements and an additional session will be held at the AMERC AGM in May 2009.

The planning provides for sessions in Scotland, Northern and Southern England, USA, India, Italy and Sri Lanka. The Chief Examiner and the Deputy Chief Examiner will provide the training at UK and Italian Centres. The Assistant Chief Examiner will provide the training in India and Sri Lanka and the Chief Examiner at two US centres.

It is essential that all examiners receive training in the new systems. The authority to examine held by any current examiner who does not receive training in this series will be suspended. Such a suspension will be lifted once the training has been satisfactorily completed – with such later training sessions the examiner will have to bear the costs.

M-NOTICES

The following M-Notices appear to have some relevance to Members. The full list of the current M-notices appear on the MCA website (www.mcga.gov.uk) to which reference should be made from time to time. The site has been revised once more.

MGN 380 (M+F) MIN 343 (M+F) SOLAS CHAPTER V AMENDMENTS - LRIT

Amendments to SOLAS Chapter V came into force on 31 December 2008. These relate to the provision and testing of Long Range Identification and Tracking (LRIT). These Notes provide information in respect of servicing, certification and compliance for vessels required to transmit LRIT information. MIN 343 makes reference to Automatic Testing Application Service Providers (ATASP) and their functions. The Appendices have especially important reviews of the requirements.

December 2008
February 2009

MGN 384 (M+F) RMC TRAINING ENEM TRAINING

This Guidance Note, replacing MSN 1623, summarises the outline syllabus elements in the GMDSS Radio Maintenance Certificate and ENEM Certificate courses. It also refers to links to HND and Foundation Degree qualifications.

It makes reference to AMERC Accreditation and gives contact details.

February 2009

MIN 340 (M+F) CEC PROCEDURES AMENDED

This Note restates the requirements and gives guidance for the granting of Certificates of Equivalent Competency to officers serving aboard UK registered vessels.

The Note includes descriptions of measures taken by the MCA to prevent fraudulent and unlawful practices. It gives details of how candidates are required to demonstrate knowledge of the UK legal and administrative procedures, proficiency in the English language, medical fitness and more.

November 2008.

IMO MANDATORY REQUIREMENTS

The MCA website has a table listing amendments published by the IMO that have an impact on internationally agreed mandatory regulations and codes. The table lists the amendments in alphabetical order. This is a very large document and has some references to radiocommunications and GMDSS provision.

It is a useful guide for those who need to know such things. It is referred to in MIN 338 published in October last.

THE 2011 WORLD RADIOCOMMUNICATION CONFERENCE

Kim Fisher's Update

AMERC NEWS is, as ever, grateful that Kim Fisher continues to think of us and sends articles that keep us abreast of what is happening at the ITU. Here is his latest article.

The changes to the Radio Regulations prepared by the 2007 World Radiocommunication Conference (WRC-07) have now been published by the ITU-R and the new Radio Regulations came into force, in the main, in January 2009.

Although it seems that we have barely finished with WRC-07, the radio world is in fact well on the way to preparing for the next World Radio Communication Conference which is scheduled to be held in 2011. It has been decided to re-instate the IMO/ITU Joint Experts Group and they have had one meeting. There have also been two meetings of Working Party 5B in Geneva (WP5B is a new name of WP8B following a reorganisation of the ITU-R Study Groups).

This next World Radiocommunication Conference does not have as much maritime content as WRC-07 but there are some agenda items of interest:

Agenda item 1.9 deals with a revision of the frequencies and channelling arrangements of Appendix 17 (the maritime HF bands). There was a similar agenda item at WRC-07 (then agenda item 1.13) but the Conference did not accept the proposals as they had become linked with a bid for more spectrum for HF broadcasting which was included in the same agenda item. This time the agenda item deals solely with the maritime use. So far no new proposals have emerged and the current proposals are those developed for the last Conference of converting the old 500 Hz Morse and radiotelex channels into 3 kHz channels.

Agenda item 1.10 deals with a new topic of examining the frequency allocation requirements with regard to operation of safety systems for ships and ports. It is not clear at the moment what is intended of this agenda item. Work so far has concentrated on possible future satellite reception of AIS, on harmonisation of RF tags for tracking containers and on possible new higher bit rate NAVTEX type systems.

Other agenda items which, whilst not maritime items, might have an impact on maritime spectrum include 1.14 which is looking at requirements for HF radars for oceanographic purposes, 1.15 which is considering allocations for VHF radars for detecting space debris and 1.23 which is considering a possible allocation of 15 kHz for the amateur service around 500 kHz.

NEWS FROM AUSTRIA

AMERC NEWS is always pleased to have articles from members and interested parties. Ranging from news to the exchange of good practice, they are always of interest to other members. We are especially pleased to have this time two items originating in Austria. First to an article provided for us by Thomas Gantolier:

OFFSHORE COMMUNICATIONS

The Swiss Office for Communications (BAKOM) organises an annual meeting for maritime radio trainers in Biel, Switzerland, each November. It is an excellent event for exchanging news between the authority, examiners and trainers. In his presentation, BAKOM's Chief Examiner, Mr. Peter Kumli, discussed up-to-date standards of GMDSS examinations and also discussed changes made during the ITU World Radio Conference (WRC-07) held in Geneva.

Mr. Niels Frederiksen from FREDERIKSEN Media Productions Ltd., invited Mr. Thomas Gantolier from Maritime Radio School Koblmiller in Austria to give a presentation on 'Comunications Offshore.' Thomas installed a live GMDSS radio station for voluntary fitted yachts for this event. The Sat-C antenna was mounted between parked cars to give a good 'line of sight' to the AOR-E satellite that provided a good demonstration of mobile SMS and email communications with his SAT-C equipment. The tuner of the MF/HF transceiver was placed in the inner courtyard and the wire antenna strung between two trees that gave excellent results. For the live demonstration of HF PACTOR email communications the Swiss authorities gave permission for Thomas to use a Swiss amateur call sign for this event. This call sign was issued for us during all courses within Swiss territory.

Thomas tells AMERC NEWS that his presentation was well received and his practical demonstrations were successful and found to be very popular.

CONGRATULATIONS, HERA!

The second article we have has been provided by Willie Williamson. He writes:

I was asked by AMERC to oversee a GMDSS Long Range Certificate examination in Ebreichdorf near Vienna. My Austrian colleague Herbert Koblmiller told me his daughter Hera aged eleven had just made a bit of radio history. She was the youngest person ever to sit and pass an Austrian radio amateur examination. She will not be able to get her actual certificate until she is 14.

She is thrilled to bits about this as she has been interviewed by her local newspaper and appeared on Austrian television talking about her hobby. It is encouraging that at least some of the younger generation are taking an interest in radiocommunications.

We very much agree with Willie's remarks and send our congratulations to Hera and hope she has as much fun out of radiocommunications as we all have had.

AMERC NEWS SELECTED INDEX (Updated each Issue)

January 2005 - September 2008

NOTES:

- (i) **This is a selective index and only records items to which reference is likely to be needed. It is updated with each Issue of AMERC NEWS.**
- (ii) **Issues 17 to 28 are in pdf format and are fully searchable once loaded.**
- (iii) **Quarterly GMDSS Statistics provided by the NAC appear in AMERC NEWS.**
- (iv) **Technical Update supplements in pdf format together with an index can be found on the AMERC Website: www.amerc.ac.uk.**

TOPIC	DETAIL	AN	DATE	Pp	
Admiralty	Charts to common datum (MIN 272)	24	Jul 07	13	
ADRS	Admiralty Digital Radio Signals Vol 6	23	Mar 7	9	
Aerials	Dangers from lead-ins (MGN 330)	22	Nov 06	8	
	Ditto (MGN 303)	20	Feb 06	8	
African Centres	MRCC & MRSC established	22	Nov 06	8	
	Capetown MRCC operational	24	Jul 07	12	
AIS	Accuracy of Transmission (MIN 290)	25	Nov 07	7	
	Accuracy of transmission (MIN 231)	21	Jun 06	8	
	Carriage requirements (MSN 1795)	21	Jun 06	8	
	Class B UK trails (MIN 268)	23	Mar 07	6	
	Double ended ferries (MGN 321)	21	Jun 06	8	
	Greek coverage	27	Apr 08	8	
	Monitoring coastal shipping – UK	22	Nov 06	13	
	Navigation aids systems	21	Jun 06	10	
	Non-SOLAS transponder coding (MIN 321)	27	Apr 08	5	
	Operational guidance (MGN 277)	17	Feb 05	9	
	Performance Standards	23	Mar 07	8	
	RCC Network – UK	19	Oct 05	9	
	Safety of Navigation (MIN 298)	25	Nov 07	7	
	Small craft Class B (MIN 199)	19	Oct 05	7	
	UK chain operational	22	Nov 06	8	
	UK Third Phase completed	26	Jan 08	7	
	USCG space based AIS	24	Jul 07	13	
	VHF use & ITU Regulations (MGN 324)	22	Nov 06	8	
	AMERC Address	Registered Office in Kendal	21	Jun 06	4
		Hon. Secretary address change	24	Jul 07	4
New NAC Manager: Jackie King		26	Jan 08	6	
Treasurer's email address		27	Apr 08	18	
Committees	New Committee & Board structures	22	Nov 06	3	
Course Audit	Chief Examiner to inspect timetable & notes	23	Mar 07	5	

Course Approvals	AMERC provides certificates	22	Nov 06	4
CSOC	Discussions with HMCG	21	Jun 06	7
DSC	Test call auto response from USCG	24	Jul 07	13
ECDIS	Software maintenance (MIN 316)	27	Apr 08	5
Electronic Charts	Approved standards by UKHO	28	Sep 08	8
EPIRB	Non SOLAS vessels (MSN 1810)	24	Jul 07	13
EPIRB	Registration (MSN 1816)	25	Nov 07	6
	Registration required (MGN 302)	20	Feb 06	8
Examinations	Appeals on termination flow chart	24	Jul07	5
	Application Forms – completing	21	Jun 06	5
	Application Forms – Re-examination	23	Mar 07	4
	Digital Photography allowed	23	Mar 07	4
	Dyslexic Candidates	20	Feb 06	4
	Earlier attempts	21	Jun 06	7
	Fee Schedule Revised	28	Sep 08	5
	GMDSS Knowledge Paper adopted	28	Sep 08	7
	Payment Methods	21	Jun 06	5
	Payments to NAC – correction	19	Oct 06	6
	Retention of Scripts	20	Feb 06	6
	Scenario-based OPT trial agreed	21	Jun 06	6
	Scenario-based OPT working party	24	Jul 07	8
	Scenario-based OPT adopted	28	Sep 08	7
Examiners	Active Lists	25	Nov 07	4
	Active Lists	21	Jun 06	7
	Active Lists	19	Oct 05	6
	Active Lists	17	Feb 05	3
	Access to Chief examiner via REC only	24	Jul 07	7
	Deputy & Assistant Chief Examiners	23	Mar 07	3
	Deputy & assistant Chief Examiner Roles	26	Jan 08	5
	Deputy Chief Examiner appointed	25	Nov 07	4
	Handbook 6th Edition	17	Feb 05	3
	Handbook 7th Edition	27	Apr 08	04
	Taxation & Insurance	19	Oct 05	10
EPIRB	Registration (MSN 1816)	25	Nov 07	6
	Registration required (MGN 302)	20	Feb 06	8
	Non SOLAS vessels (MSN 1810)	24	Jul 07	13
	121.5/243 MHz ceasing Feb 09 (MGN 361)	27	Apr 07	05
Expenses	New Claim Form	25	Nov 07	14
	New Claim Form	20	Feb 06	11
GOC	Proposed revision – Willie Williamson	23	Mar 07	15
	Critique of structure – Willie Williamson	24	Jul 07	9
	Revising the structure – Willie Williamson	27	Apr 08	13
HMCG	AMERC recognition of CSOC	23	Mar 07	4
	CSOC & RCSOC recognition finalised	24	Jul 07	4
IMO	New GMDSS Manual published	25	Nov 07	18
ITU WARC	Preparations for 2007 – Kim Fisher	20	Feb 06	11
	Ditto	22	Nov 06	11
	Ditto	24	Jul 07	11
	Outcomes & Updates – Kim Fisher	26	Jan 08	8
INMARSAT	Barring & Safetynet (MGN 305)	20	Feb 06	8

Licences	Ofcom reforms to ship radio licences	23	Mar 07	7
LRC	Class E DSC controllers – examinations	22	Nov 06	5
	Conversion from Restricted R/T withdrawn	26	Jan 08	4
LRIT	Identities for SAR and security	22	Nov 06	13
	New SOLAS Regulations January 2008	26	Jan 08	7
	SOLAS Requirements (MIN 302)	25	Nov 07	6
Loran	eLoran UK cover	27	Apr 08	8
	Trial transmissions from Rugby	19	Oct 05	8
	USCG Consultation	23	Mar 07	9
Membership	(Full) Namibian Maritime Institute	28	Sep 08	3
	(Full) Red Ensign, RNLI, (Ass) Kim Holt	21	Jun 06	4
	(Full) Sir Derek Bibby Centre Mumbai	28	Sep 08	3
	(Full) THESI, CERNET, Starcenter, UKSA	24	Jul 07	3
	(Full) Western Training Association	24	Jul 07	3
	(Ass) Shetland School of Nautical Studies	24	Jul 07	3
Membership cont	(Ass) TST, Australian Maritime College	24	Jul 07	3
	City College Plymouth (resigned)	24	Jul 07	3
	Hull College (resigned)	28	Sep 08	3
	St. Xavier Technical Institute (resigned)	28	Sep 08	3
MCA	Certificates of Course Approval	28	Sep 08	14
MNTB	GOC approval documentation revisions	22	Nov 06	4
MNTB	GMDSS Guideline Revised	21	Jun 06	7
Mobile Phones	Radar interference (MIN 290)	19	Oct 05	7
	Warnings against misuse (MSN 299)	20	Feb 06	7
MSI	Change to UK transmissions	23	Mar 07	9
	Summary of UK arrangements (MGN 375)	28	Sep 08	8
Navtex	Standard Abbreviations (MIN 265)	23	Mar 07	6
NAVRAS(M)	Use of GMDSS procedures	24	Jul 07	10
OPT	Erratum: only Sat B approved January 2008	25	Nov 07	5
	Sat B or F77 replace Sat A January 2008	24	Jul 07	9
Perth LES	Close down	23	Mar 07	9
Pirate Broadcasts	Forbidden (MGN 320)	21	Jun 06	5
	Update (MIN 366)	28	Sep 08	8
Piracy	Alerting by DSC	22	Nov 06	5
	Modern Piracy - W. Williamson	17	Feb 05	7
	Anti-piracy Measures (MGN 298)	20	Feb 06	7
Revalidation	Sea-time requirement	22	Nov 06	4
	Ditto	19	Oct 05	6
Revalidation	Surveyors and pilots	24	Jul 07	10
	STW 37	21	Jun 06	7
Radar	Performance standards(MIN 246)	21	Jun 06	7
	Corrigendum (MGN 298)	20	Feb 06	7
	Mobiles' Interference (MIN 290)	19	Oct 05	7
	Radar Reflectors (MGN 349)	25	Nov 07	6
SAR	Signals in distress & SAR (MGN 304)	20	Feb 06	8
Safe Practices	MS Regulations 1998 (MIN 235)	22	Nov 06	8
Security	Ship Security - Phil Davies	22	Nov 06	9
Ship's Manuals	Need for accuracy and lucidity (MIN 312)	27	Apr 08	5
Shore Maintenance	Selenia Contract (MGN 292)	19	Oct 05	7

Shore Maintenance	Requirements (MGN 350)	25	Nov 07	6
SOLAS	Chapter V amendments (MSN 1812)	23	Mar 07	6
	Radiocommunications (MSN 1810)	23	Mar 07	6
	Revising SOLAS/Regs – Ian Waugh	27	Apr 07	16
Surveys	Selenia Contacts (MGN 286)	20	Feb 06	7
	Alternative Compliance	25	Nov 07	7
Training Schemes	Using the VQ route (MGN 8)	22	Nov 06	8
Transas	GMDSS Simulator	22	Nov 06	6
	Hard panel needed for Version 4000	24	Jul 07	4
	Live receiver & work station requirements	25	Nov 07	4
Transas	TGS4100 Simulator equipment consistency	27	Apr 08	04
	TGS4100 Simulator training of staff	27	Apr 08	04
Use of Equipment	Maintenance records (MGN 331)	22	Nov 06	8
VDR	Performance Testing (MGN 272)	17	Feb 05	9
Website	Ideas needed	24	Jul 07	12
	Review of new arrangements	27	Apr 08	6
W/T Act 2006	Consolidation of Acts post-1949	23	Mar 07	10
Yacht Officers	Deck Officer CoC (MSN 1892)	23	Mar 07	6

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MISCELLANY

GMDSS INSTALLATIONS INDONESIA & THAILAND

Australian GMDSS specialists Densham & Associates report that they have recently completed two major GMDSS Coast Station development projects in Indonesia and Thailand.

These projects include the design, supply and installation of GMDSS A1 and A2 coast radio stations for the Indonesian Coastguard at Bangka Island, and the design and supply of a GMDSS coastal A1 VHF network for the Thailand Coastguard.

COSPAS-SARSAT

There have been a number of articles in the technical press describing the 'switch-off' of the COSPAS-SARSAT 121.5 MHz system in February, including reports of a flood of last-minute orders for the 406 MHz replacement EPIRB. While pointing out the shortcomings of the 121.5 MHz system, opportunities have been taken in many of these articles to praise COSPAS-SARSAT - in twenty-seven years of operation they played a part in 24,000 rescues worldwide it seems.

BACK PAGE

DON BEE

Members will be sad to hear that Don Bee, who worked at one time with Ted Hackett at the Fleetwood Centre has died. Don will be remembered as one of those who was there at the beginning of AMERC's engagement with GMDSS in 1991. We send our condolences to his family.

CONTACT DETAILS

The Hon Secretary advises that his telephone contact number is **0131 344 7527** and asks that you check your records.

While you are at it, ask yourself whether your own contact details are correctly identified on the AMERC Website. If they are not the procedure for change is very straightforward. I take the opportunity to remind you that each Issue of AMERC NEWS is placed on the Website and is fully searchable. AMERC NEWS is the official mouthpiece of the Association, used by Officers for their communications with examiners and administrators - that is why the Chief Examiners check the full file is readily available on their visits.

POWER SUPPLY FOUND

We reported in the last Issue that Ian Waugh of gmdss4all was looking for a redundant Sailor Power Supply Type N2165 - the one that powers the MF/HF DSC RM2150/2151 Units. Ian tells us that a member came up with an offer of one such item and that it is now working to good effect. It was good to see AMERC NEWS had a hand in this success story.

*Best Wishes
Brian Cotton*

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This Newsletter duals as Circular 236. Check you have a full file. All Issues of AMERC NEWS appear on the AMERC Website and are fully searchable from Issue 17 onwards. Copies of the Circulars may be obtained from the Hon. Secretary. ***Do not forget to distribute copies to your colleagues.***

Articles and suggestions for future issues of AMERC NEWS can be sent at any time.

Brian Cotton, Editor.

AMERC NEWS

Editor: Professor Brian Cotton

AMERC Website: www.amerc.ac.uk
