



Editorial

Welcome to issue 43 of AMERC News - *which doubles as Circular 256 and, as such, must be circulated to all GMDSS instructors/examiners by their AMERC centre contact.*

In this issue we have the report on the most recent **Maritime Consultancy Group** (MCG) (Page 2) - reflecting relevant items covered in the AMERC Executive Committee (EC) earlier the same day, including: **AMERC Membership** – with guidance on the application process and the cut-off date for new applications; followed by a related item covering **New Training Centre application process**. An update on the **2013/14 examination question series progress** includes a reminder that the new series questions will be circulated electronically – **REC Co-ordinators need to check their security key** using the guidance in Appendix I (page 6); there's an item on the new **TRANSAS 5000 V8.2 GMDSS Simulator** and its approval status; and an update of **publication requirements** for running GMDSS courses.

The **Member Profile** section is taking a rest for this issue – anyone wishing to have their centre profile included in future editions – please contact the Editor ☺

We've another '**GMDSS Criss-Crossword**' (Page 3) to help stretch candidates knowledge of **international geography** and the use of **Admiralty List of Radio Signals** (ALRS) publications. The answers to puzzle 42 are also included.

Explanation Please? (page 4) has an item on the use of copyright material from AMERC News; an explanation of revised terminology being applied to DSC questions; and a question without an answer at this stage! **Tales from the Key-Side** (Page 5) includes a link to make it easy for you to submit tales, questions, letters or other feedback.

Replacing **Maritime Miscellaneous** in this issue (page 6) is **Appendix I – for the attention of all REC co-ordinators – explaining the process for future access to examination materials using your security key – and the need to test that key NOW to ensure that you will not find yourself locked-out of the new series questions when they come into force on the projected date of 1st January 2013.**

Meanwhile – a big thank you to those of you who've provided feedback and questions for the News — with apologies to the questioner who asked where the official (international) list of 2MHz RT inter-ship frequencies can be found – I can't find a definitive answer as yet. – but still looking!

Sláinte

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AMERC Membership criteria are covered on Page 2, along with the reminder that **all new membership applications must be received before 31 January each year.**

This is to enable the Executive Committee to validate applications before circulating new applications, to the existing membership, for voting at AGM.

This will be the last Newsletter before applications close – anyone wishing to apply for membership should act now – following the guidance on page 2!

The **Maritime Consultancy 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; and AMERC/industry specialists.

The open meeting can (occasionally) be attended by other invited persons.

The following items reflect discussions at MCG that are of immediate interest to Members and training centres (full minutes will be circulated appropriately).

AMERC Membership: The Association currently offers either Full or Associate membership. Full membership of the Association is open to establishments providing courses of instruction/training leading to operator and/or engineering qualifications in one or more of the fields of:-

- marine radio and electronics
- electronics and communication
- radar and electronic navigational aids

Associate membership is open to any company, organisation or individual with an interest in the general objectives of AMERC Ltd and on promoting those aspects of education and training which are relevant to the Association.

New member applications must be submitted to the Secretary before 31st January each year, to allow time for applications to be validated by the Executive Committee before being forwarded to the existing (full) members for voting at AGM.

[The application process starts with a request for membership information using the AMERC Website - accessible through this link.](#)

Applicants should understand that being accepted as a member – Full or Associate – does not infer approval to run GMDSS training courses (see opposite page).

New (2013/14) Series Examination materials: The new series questions are progressing well and are expected to be implemented on 1st January 2013. *Centres should consult Appendix I of this newsletter to ensure that they are ready to access the new material, when available.*

GMDSS Training Centre application process: AMERC – on behalf of the MCA - acts as the approvals body for centres wishing to run UK GMDSS GOC, ROC and LRC training courses - in the UK or overseas. The new centres' approval process follows four key steps, briefly described as:

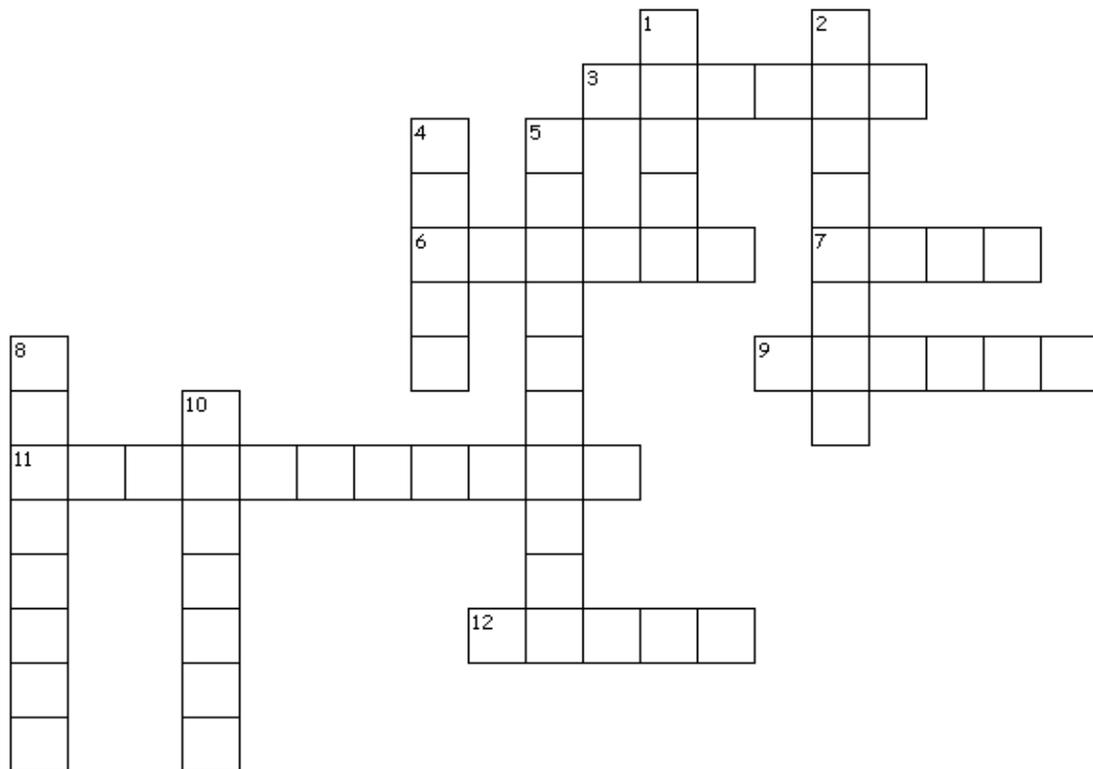
- application from the centre ([based on the requirements in the AMERC Examination Administration Handbook](#));
- Preliminary visit by an AMERC representative;
- Pilot course(s) (assisted) leading to provisional approvals;
- Assisted course(s) and examination(s) to the level considered necessary to reach full approval status.

New centres wishing to apply to run UK GMDSS training courses should, in the first instance, contact the Secretary.

TRANSAS 5000 V8.2 GMDSS Simulator approvals: This new version of TRANSAS GMDSS simulator uses touch-screen technology. The (5000 V8.2) simulator software has been approved by AMERC - provided that it is interfaced with the 4000 series hard-panel (on which the examination must be conducted).

Publications requirements for examination centres: Publication requirements for examination centres have been revised and will shortly be updated in the Examination Handbook. Briefly – those centres using ALRS for GOC training must have ALRS Volume 1 (Parts 1 and 2); ALRS Volume 6 (all seven parts); and ALRS Volume 5 – one book per two students. In addition, centres must have a copy of the ITU List of Ship Stations & Numerical Identities.

GMDSS Criss-Crossword Number 43 - all answers should be researched and/or confirmed by reference to ALRS, *where appropriate*



Down

1. Peruvian NAVTEX; VHF, MF and HF DSC station; and leading seaport for that region of Peru.
2. Second largest, and easternmost, island in the Philippines.
4. Morocco's MRCC.
5. Moroccan port considered to be one of the largest artificial ports in the world; and RT (HF) radio station.
8. Russian port city, and Inmarsat-C LES, situated on the Bay of the same name in the Sea of Japan
10. NAVAREA/METAREA covering 1-down.

Across

3. The West African country almost completely surrounded by Senegal.
6. Republic of Guinea West African country immediately North of Guinea; south of Senegal.
7. Inmarsat Ocean Region providing coverage for 10-down
9. Capital city and major port in 3-across.
11. VHF/MF DSC and RT (HF) radio station and port city in the Russian exclave between Poland and Lithuania.
12. MRSC and port in the Gulf of the same name, on the island of 2-down.

Issue 42 answers: *DOWN:* 1. Akureyri; 2. Alqusayr; 3. Constanta; 4. Churchill; 5. Salerno; 6. Midia; 7. France; 11. Spain; 12. Saudanes.
ACROSS: 8. Dusseldorf; 9. Aqaba; 10. Miquelon; 12. Sevastapol; 13. Greece.

Explanation Please?

This is the area for questions that may puzzle you – whether related to procedural questions; international regulations; or because it isn't clear why a specific answer is necessary when it seems that other answers may also appear to be appropriate – or: even if you as an instructor are satisfied with the question, you may want to know why the candidate should have to produce the level of detail being asked.

One question below covers the use of material published in AMERC News; another is in response to a question regarding DSC terminology changes to some 'multi-choice' questions included in the 'GMDSS Quiz' section of the AMERC website. I need reader's help with the third question!

Question: In AMERC News issue 40 you published [an] explanation (with diagram) of the arrangement for setting-up geographical area calls. I would like to incorporate this (especially the diagram) into our college GMDSS course notes. Please can you clarify the position regarding copyright, and whether or not permission can be given for us to use this material?

Reply: Copyright for articles submitted to the News, as with other publications, normally remains with the contributor. Much of AMERC News copyright is with the association itself. In this particular case the copyright remains with myself as the contributor - and both me and the AMERC EC are happy for training centres to use the material in your course notes with a note stating '*Written by Ian Waugh and first published in AMERC News. Reproduced here with permission*'.

Question: I see that a number of the 'DSC' questions on the AMERC Quiz have been altered slightly – in particular the word 'announcement' seems to have replaced 'alert' in many cases. Can you explain the reasoning behind this change?

Reply: When formulating the new series exam questions – both 'SOLAS' and 'multi-choice' – it was noted that some of the wording previously used could lead to our being accused of 'trick questioning'. In the particular case you mention, when consulting the latest 'red book' *Radio Regulations* – which are reprinted in the *ITU Manual for Use by Maritime Mobile and Maritime Mobile Satellite Services* – it is clear that the term 'DSC Alert' should only be used when referring to either a Distress Alert, or a Distress Alert Relay. When referring to an Urgency/Safety DSC call the correct term is 'Announcement' and not 'Alert'. So: we can't have a question that asks '*what category of DSC alert ...?*' - when the correct answer is either Urgency or Safety.

Question: Does an international channel plan for the 2MHz band exist anywhere? We all know that 2187.5, 2182 and 2177kHz have specific uses, internationally, but is there a band of frequencies set aside only for routine ship-to-ship communications? Here in the U.S., the use of 2MHz [RT] frequencies in U.S. waters is spelled out in the rules of our F.C.C. Does the U.K. have regulations for the use of 2MHz [RT] channels in its waters? Is the band channelized?

Answer: *I can't put my hand on the answer to this and so - over to you, readers!*

GMDSS Examination Statistics – quarterly report: National Administration Centre (NAC) examination statistics for the period **1 April 2012 – 30 June 2012** are shown below:

EXAMINATION	ENTERED (1 st time)	PASSED (1 st attempt)	% PASSED 1 ST ATTEMPT
UK GOC	310 (261)	251 (215)	215/261 (>82%)
ALL GOC	637 (536)	518 (443)	433/536 (>80%)
UK ROC	55	50 (48)	
ALL ROC	110	104 (101)	
LRC	44 (44)	43 (43)	43/44 (>97%)

Tales from the Key-Side - by AnonyMouse ...

This is the page for your stories – whether from personal experience at sea, at work, in the classroom or life generally – recent past or distant past. Or it may be something you've heard. Doesn't matter – we're looking for interesting, funny or informative stories that may make us laugh, cry or look for someone to hit. Submissions may be edited, and the writer's name will, of course, be withheld on request

Dateline: Mobile Ship Channel, Alabama USA – 1st January 1999

Time: 01:30

Frequency: VHF Ch.16

Shrimp boat: *'All ships in the Mobile ship channel, this here's the outbound shrimp boat. I been to a party for New Year, drank a load of Jack Daniels and smoked a load of Dope, and I'm all messed up. Gimme a lot of room'*

USCG: *'This is United States Coastguard Mobile Alabama Group to the vessel calling on Channel 16. Please identify yourself'*

Shrimp boat: *'Holy sh*t lady – I'm not that messed-up!'*

[contributor tells me that this little exchange brightened-up an otherwise boring anchor watch]

Dateline: Castle Green Hotel, Kendal – Oct '12 - GMDSS Exam's sub-panel gathering.

Time: 07.30 – in the restaurant

Panel Member 1: *'This is a cracking breakfast – don't often get one like this at home'*

Panel Member 2: *'Nor me – it's all I can do to get Aileen to bring me a cup of tea in bed in the morning - before she goes off to work!'*

[identities withheld, as usual, in the hope of avoiding marital conflict ☺]

Dateline: Well-known women's magazine – 1960s

Time: during 'elevensies'

Frequency: 'Agony Aunt' column

Letter-writer: 'My husband won't make love to me in any way, even a kiss or a cuddle. His father's the same'

Claire: (!?!)

[Got a Tale to tell? Got a Question? Want to say something?
Click on this link to the AMERC Website to generate a message to the
AMERC News Editor.](#)

Appendix I: Procedure for accessing 2013/14 Series GMDSS examination materials – information provided by Kevin Walsh – AMERC webmaster:

Attention REC Co-ordinators

2013/14 Series GMDSS Examination Materials

There is a change in the way REC Co-ordinators will receive GMDSS examination materials for the upcoming 2013/14 series. In the past, REC Co-ordinators received a CD in the mail from AMERC NAC and printed off local copies of papers, forms etc as required from the CD. From early 2013, the delivery mechanism to REC Co-ordinators will instead be by download from the AMERC website. REC Co-ordinators will not receive an examination paper CD in the mail.

Are you ready?

REC Co-ordinators should already have a CD containing an ‘encryption key’ to be installed on their computer, that allows them to access and print examination materials downloaded from the website. If you are an REC Co-ordinator, you are strongly advised to test your computer systems *now* to ensure you are ready for the change.

To check all is OK, log into the AMERC website, click the *Documents* button on the left menu and then click on “Encryption Test” which is listed under the **General** heading. A single page document should open and you should be able to print it locally. If you can do this, you will be able to download the new 2013/14 examinations materials – once they are posted on the AMERC website.

If however the “Encryption Test” document fails to open, first check that you have installed the encryption key from the CD. If the problem persists, contact admin@amerc.ac.uk

Don't delay, test today!

Lost or Stolen CD

If the AMERC CD containing your encryption key has been lost or stolen, you need to urgently contact admin@amerc.ac.uk so that security changes can be put in place to protect AMERC documents - and arrangements made for a new encryption key to be delivered to you. Delivery of a new key will be by mail (not email) and so may take a little time. ***Avoid the trouble and inconvenience of such a delay by testing your system now.***

At the implementation date, a few further instructions will be emailed out directly to REC Co-ordinators by the NAC telling them they **MUST** download and store securely a local copy (on CD, DVD or USB Flash Drive) of the exam materials. The website (like any other Internet based resource) is neither 100% reliable nor 100% available, hence the need to have a local copy. REC co-ordinators should also be aware that you can (if you wish) install the encryption key on more than one computer, but that ***any computer the key is installed on MUST be physically (locked office) and logically (REC Co-ordinator computer must be password protected) secure.***

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