



Editorial

Welcome to issue 57 of AMERC News - *which doubles as **Circular 274** 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 most recent AMERC Executive Committee (EC) meeting - including: a reminder of **the minimum age for gaining a UK GMDSS certificate**; requirements regarding representation at Examiners' Panel in June 2016; and an update on progress/changes expected in the **Next Examination Series**; a reminders that **AGM Papers must be with the Secretary by the end of April**; and a request for all Members to **check their contact information on the AMERC website**.

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

Explanation Please? is taking a rest for this issue.

Page 3 hosts another '**GMDSS Criss-Crossword**' to help stretch delegates' knowledge of **international geography** and the use of **Admiralty List of Radio Signals** (ALRS) publications. The answers to puzzle 56 are also included – **again with hyperlinks** for those interested in learning more about the featured locations/stations.

We have no contributions for **Tales from the Key-Side** – neither from personal experience of contributors, nor from classroom or seagoing experience.

There's no **Member Profile(s)** feature in this issue; but **Maritime Miscellaneous** is again here, with a summary of the meeting of the **Sub-Committee on Navigation, Communications, Search and Rescue (NCSR), 3rd session, 29 February-4 March**; an item on **Inmarsat-C's 25 years (and continuing) service**; and a publisher's press release on the latest edition of **Graham Lees' and Willie Williamson's 'Handbook for Marine Radio Communication'**.

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 would also be welcome.

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

Sláinte!

Ian W

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Annual general Meeting – Final reminder
Any items for discussion at AGM –
papers, proposals, questions etc, from
Members, must be sent to the Secretary
amerc.secretary@gmail.com
by end-April 2016.

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 London in March 2016. The following items reflect discussions at MCG (full minutes will be circulated appropriately) - 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.

Minimum age requirement for GMDSS certificates:

Centres are reminded that, in order to qualify for a UK GMDSS certificate, the applicant must be at least 18 years old. This requirement is clearly stated in [MSN 1864 ‘Training & Certification Guidance: UK Requirements for Radio Operators’](#) – which also lists the other requirements. Although this MSN is directed at Merchant Shipping/STCW certificates, the MCA has confirmed that this age requirement should also be applied to LRC and SRC candidates.

Requirement to attend Examiners’ Panel:

Examination Coordination Centres (ECCs) are reminded that they are expected to send (at least) one of their examiners’ to attend the bi-annual Examiner’s Panel at which new examination papers are presented/discussed. It is preferred, but not a requirement, that an examiner also attends the intermediate Panel. The upcoming (June 2016) Panel is one of those where attendance is required.

Annual General Meeting – Papers: A reminder from the Secretary that any papers for AGM need to be with him by the end of April.

Examination Papers update: The new series of examination papers are at an advanced stage of production and will be ready for presentation to the Examiners’ Panel in June. As part of the change, an additional Satcom Module General Knowledge paper has been produced (bring the total to three papers).

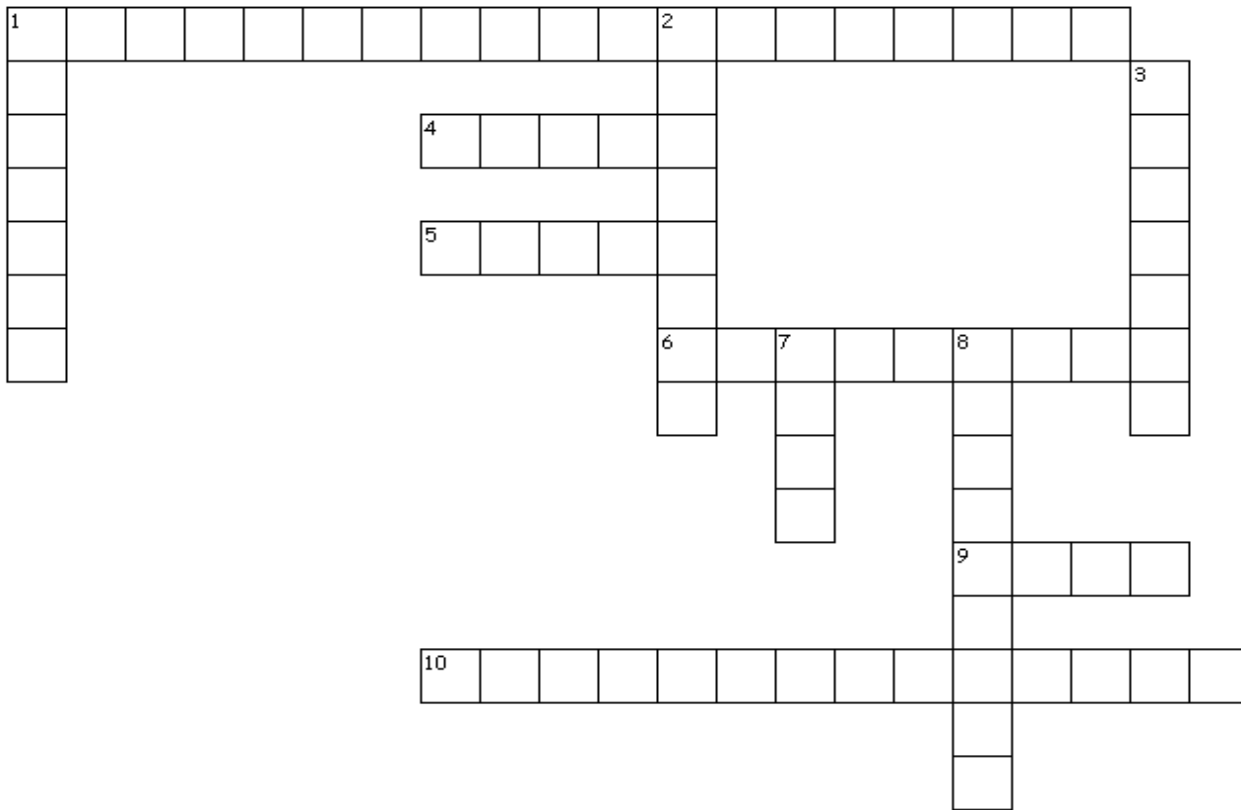
A significant change has been made to the Operational Performance Tests (OPT) in that, although the ‘task list’ remains broadly unchanged, a ‘pre-sailing checklist’ approach has been developed with the view to making the examination more ‘real life’ centred – and to encourage candidates to go away from their course with that ‘good practice’ idea to apply onboard their own vessel.

AMERC Website – Member List: It appears that the members list on the AMERC website is frequently out of date – all Member organisations are asked to check their own information as currently presented and to make any necessary amendments. Should there be a change of contact name, telephone number or address – please make sure that the new information is provided for inclusion on the website.

GMDSS Examination Statistics – quarterly report: National Administration Centre (NAC) examination statistics for the period **1st October 2015 – 31st December 2015** are shown below:

EXAMINATION	ENTERED (1 st time)		PASSED (1 st attempt)		% PASSED 1 ST ATTEMPT
UK GOC	376	(329)	323	(285)	285/329 (>86%)
ALL GOC	641	(567)	557	(495)	495/567 (>87%)
UK ROC	76	(72)	71	(68)	68/72 (>94%)
ALL ROC	80	(76)	75	(72)	72/76 (>94%)
LRC	57	(57)	57	(57)	57/57 (100%)

GMDSS Criss-Crossword Number 57 - all answers should be researched and/or confirmed by reference to ALRS, *where appropriate*



Down

1. NAVTEX station on Iranian coast, south of 10-across
2. (4,4 Channel) - waterway at the North West of the Persian Gulf, on which 10-across is located
3. River on which 6-across sits
7. Malaysian port city on the island of Borneo, close to the border with Brunei
8. Country which shares the island mass of Borneo with Malaysia and Brunei

Across

1. (6,1,4,8) DSC station serving 10-across
4. NAVTEX ID letter for station situated at 7-down
5. River on which the port of 7-down is situated
6. Port and capital city of East Kalimantan
9. NAV/METAREA covering the Persian Gulf
10. (6,8) Iranian port city at the head of the 2-down Channel

Issue 56 answers – with hyperlinks:

DOWN: 1. [Mandapam](#) ('CG Regions/Eastern Region'); 2. [Vardo](#); 5. [SriLanka](#); 8. Charlie; 9. [Resolute](#);
ACROSS: 3. [Chennai](#); 4. [Kirkenes](#); 6. Papa; 7. [V.O.Chidambaranar](#); 10. Twelve.

Maritime Miscellaneous 1: Sub-Committee on Navigation, Communications, Search and Rescue (NCSR), 3rd session, 29 February-4 March 2016

The summary of the meeting of the Sub-Committee of on NCSR session issued on 4th March 2016 covers the following items:

- Galileo GNSS could be accepted as a future component of World Wide Radionavigation System;
- Approval of New and amended Ships routing systems including Traffic Separation Schemes;
- Endorsement of draft amendments on recommendations to Governments regarding Safety of Navigation around offshore multiple structures;
- Revised and Updated texts of the International SafetyNet and NAVTEX Manuals to the MSC for approval;
- GMDSS review completed, modernization plan to be developed by a correspondence group;
- Agreement that the Iridium mobile satellite system could be incorporated into the GMDSS subject to compliance with outstanding issues, and endorsement of a comprehensive list of conditions which need to be fulfilled before Iridium could be recommended for recognition;
- Continued development of draft Performance Standards for ship-borne GMDSS equipment to accommodate additional providers of GMDSS satellite services, and agreement to further work on the text at the next session;
- continuation of work on matters related to e-navigation, under the e-navigation Strategy Implementation Plan (SIP) - including revision of Performance Standards for Integrated Navigation Systems (INS); development of Guidelines for the harmonized display of navigation information received via communications equipment; and development of Revised Guidelines and criteria for ship reporting systems; and
- Consideration of matters related to the harmonisation of aeronautical and maritime SAR, including agreement on work required for regular updating of the IAMSAR Manual

The full text of the report – expanding on all of the above bullet points - can be accessed through [this link](#).
[with thanks to Michael Moir for pointing me in the direction of this report]

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Maritime Miscellaneous 2: [Inmarsat-C celebrates 25 years saving lives at sea \(source Inmarsat\):](#)

Inmarsat has marked the 25th anniversary of Inmarsat C by revealing that more than 600 distress alerts from vessels in urgent need were broadcast over the service in 2015.

The disclosure demonstrates how the decision made by IMO administrations requiring all ships of more than 300 gross tons to be fitted with a Global Maritime Distress and Safety System (GMDSS) remains pivotal in protecting lives at sea. Inmarsat is the only safety services provider in the world approved to deliver GMDSS under the rigorous International Convention for the Safety of Life At Sea requirements.

Ronald Spithout, Inmarsat Maritime President, commented: "Over its lifetime, GMDSS has made the biggest single contribution to maritime safety since the advent of radio in 1899. We are immensely proud of Inmarsat C's unparalleled contribution to GMDSS in the last 25 years. Thousands of lives have been saved and countless ships rescued as a result." Since its inception by the International Maritime Organization (IMO) in 1979, Inmarsat's stated mission has been to protect the lives of seafarers globally by providing them and their vessels with an essential, free of charge communication lifeline in case of collision, grounding, fire, bad weather and piracy.

The Inmarsat C service provides a critical link between vessels in distress and Maritime Rescue Coordination Centres (MRCCs) around the world. With proven availability of 99.9%, Inmarsat C always prioritises seafarer distress alerts to MRCCs and to nearby ships. Today, approximately 100,000 vessels rely on Inmarsat C to provide vital communications, at the press of a button.

Inmarsat continues to invest, innovate and develop vital safety services. Inmarsat C and Mini C terminals also support SafetyNET, the satellite-based global maritime broadcast service providing meteorological and navigation warnings, plus search and rescue broadcasts; the imminent launch of SafetyNET II will also provide enhanced functionality available to maritime safety information providers to broadcast safety messages.

"Safety at sea forms the foundation of our organisation; it's in our DNA. We have been working tirelessly to provide critical always-on, reliable communications infrastructure that seafarers, vessels and nations depend on to help save lives at sea. In 2020 we expect to launch latest generation satellite constellation – Inmarsat-6; continuing our 35+ year commitment to L-band and safety services," confirmed Mr Spithout.

For further information:

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An additional 'blog' entitled "[Inmarsat C 'fundamental' to UK Coastguard Search and Rescue](#)" - also on the Inmarsat website and written by Mark Lawson (the Search and Rescue Communications Manager for HM Coastguard – part of the UK Maritime and Coastguard Agency) supports the Inmarsat press release.

[Handbook for Marine Radio Communication](#)

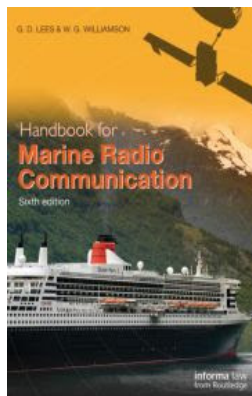
[6th edition](#)

By G.D. Lees & W.G. Williamson

This bestselling book provides an incomparable reference source for all vessels using maritime radio communication systems, which are now a legislative requirement. It includes exhaustive coverage of all UK and international regulations relating to modern maritime communications, such as the crucial GMDSS, all contained within one singular volume.

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[GRAHAM D. LEES](#) B.Ed. (Hons); CGLI Cert. (Marine Electronics); MRGC Cert.; BOT Radar Maintenance Cert.; GMDSS GOC; TC (Manchester University).

Born in Liverpool and raised in Bebington Wirral, he was educated at Calday Grange Grammar School, West Kirby and trained as a radio officer at Riversdale College of Technology, Liverpool. He spent five years serving as a radio officer followed by a further six years as a radio and electronics officer on a wide range of UK registered vessels including passenger ships, general cargo, oil and chemical tankers, gas carriers and car/bulk cargo carriers.

He started teaching marine radio and electronics at Riversdale College in 1976 and became senior lecturer in charge of HND and GMDSS courses. After completing 21 years of teaching, he is now retired but continues his involvement in technical writing and advisory work specialising in the training needs of those involved in the marine radio communications and electronic navigational aids industries. In addition, he continues to teach GMDSS at Liverpool John Moores University on a sessional basis. He retains his appointment as GMDSS examiner on behalf of MCA/AMERC and recently returned to his role on the AMERC GMDSS examiner's panel.

[WILLIAM G. WILLIAMSON](#) B.Sc. (Open); Eng. Tech.; TMIEIE; 1st Class PMG Cert.; BOT Radar Maintenance Cert.; GMDSS GOC; Certificate of Education (Manchester University).

Born in Glasgow in 1943, he joined the Merchant Navy as a radio officer following initial training at the Glasgow Wireless College. He spent seven years at sea, during which time he served on a variety of vessels including general cargo ships, tramps and tankers. He continued his involvement with the marine industry as a marine electronics engineer based at Liverpool, gaining wide servicing experience on UK and foreign flag vessels. During this period he served for some years as an executive member of the Radio Officers' Union.

After 20 years with the Marconi Marine Company, he joined the staff at Riversdale College of Technology in 1980 as a lecturer primarily concerned with radio officer training. Following a reorganisation, he became a senior lecturer at Liverpool Community College with particular responsibilities for all GMDSS courses, GOC, ROC and LRC until he retired in 2001. He currently teaches part-time on GMDSS courses at the Lairdsie Maritime Centre. He remains an approved GMDSS examiner. He was a member of the AMERC's Executive Committee for nine years and chaired the AMERC GMDSS Regulations Examination Panel for fifteen years. He is currently chairman of the Liverpool Marine Radio and Electronics Society.

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