



Editorial

Welcome to issue 63 of AMERC News - *which doubles as **Circular 281** 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) which includes an item on **the availability of a £10,000 donation from AMERC** to charitable cause(s) which meet the requirements of the Association's charitable aim; news on the **updated Examiner Forum**, including easier access on a range of devices; and information on **downloading the instructional videos** in the Resources area of the website.

The latest **quarterly statistics for GMDSS examinations** are also included here.

Page 3 hosts our usual '**GMDSS Criss-Crossword**' to help stretch delegates' knowledge of **international geography** and the use of **Admiralty Digital Radio Signals (ADRS)** and **Admiralty List of Radio Signals (ALRS)** publications; and a reminder about the '**Triviaplaza world geography quiz**' identified by Chris Harrison and first introduced in News number 59.

Explanation Please? (Page 4) has a question on the requirement (or otherwise) of conducting the **Inmarsat-C PVT** onboard vessels; and another on a recent announcement regarding **changes to VHF (and MF/HF) frequencies/channelization.**

We have no '**Tales from the Key-Side**' nor '**Member Profile(s)**' in this issue – but **Maritime Miscellaneous** returns (Page 5) with an item from our MNTB Representative on a new **Cyber Security Video** directed specifically at seafarers and shipping companies; and another on the release of the '**Careers at Sea**' video from the Chamber of Shipping. Also included (Page 6) is a press release about a **hybrid 3G/HF radio system** designed to provide situational awareness information including up-to-date weather-, ice-, ship tracking and sensor data for vessels operating in the polar regions, outwith geo-stationary satellite coverage. A second press release – this one from OFCOM (Page 7) – informs us about the **granting of a licence to Inmarsat** to form part of its European Aviation Network (EAN).

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 develop 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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AMERC AGM/Examiners' Panel 2018

The dates for AGM and associated Examiners Panel for 2018 are

Wednesday-Friday June 13th-15th.

Location/venue to be confirmed.

Reminder that this Examiners' Panel will include a review of the updated General Knowledge and associated examination material for the 2019-20 series, and that all centres are expected to have an examiner in attendance to take part in that review.

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 September 2017. The following items reflect discussions at MCG (full minutes will be circulated appropriately) - and/or associated items that may be of interest to Members and training centres. The items are placed according to size - not in any ‘priority’ order.

AMERC CHARITABLE STATUS: An opportunity has arisen for AMERC to donate a sum of £10,000 to charitable causes that meet the requirements of the Association’s charitable aim, which is;

“the advancement of public education and training in the fields of marine radio, electronics, telecommunications, radar, and electronic navigational systems and to hold and conduct such examinations as should be necessary to test or determine the skill and efficiency of persons presenting themselves for such examinations.”

The EC has agreed to consult the membership and call for interested parties to submit suggestions on how the sum may be distributed. The EC will review all suggestions and may require those short-listed to give a short presentation to the membership at the next AGM outlining their proposal. Full members will be given the opportunity to vote for the most appropriate proposal.

Depending upon the outcome of the vote, the EC will have the final decision on allocation of the sum which may be split depending upon the proposals received and the result of the vote.

All proposals should be sent to the Secretary by Jan 31st 2018.

GMDSS Examiner Forum: The (AMERC) GMDSS Examiner Forum has recently been updated:

- * it now works much better on mobile devices.
- * it uses the latest version of the popular phpBB forum software, so is more user friendly and secure; and
- * new examiners no longer need to register to use the forum.

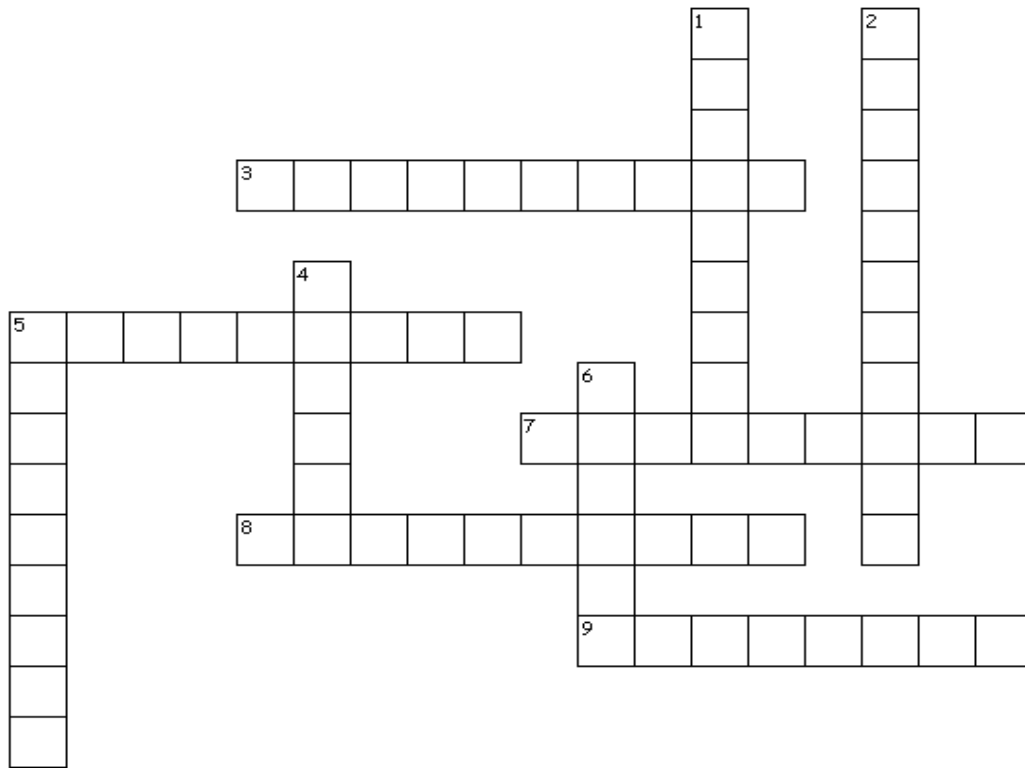
The forum is accessible by all AMERC GMDSS Examiners. To get there, first login to the AMERC website and then click on the Forum menu button.

AMERC Website ‘RESOURCES’ – equipment training videos: The various equipment training videos provided on the examiner resources section by Kevin Walsh have been enabled for download – Kevin asks that any centre downloading the videos for local use keep the Warsash Maritime Academy branding on them, as they were developed by Kevin specifically for his Warsash delegates. Our thanks go to Kevin for this very generous action, in keeping with the spirit of sharing personally-developed resources with our wider teaching community.

GMDSS Examination Statistics – quarterly report: National Administration Centre (NAC) examination statistics for the period **1st April 2017 – 30th June 2017** are shown below:

EXAMINATION	ENTERED	(1 st time)	PASSED	(1 st attempt)	% PASSED	1 ST ATTEMPT
UK GOC	239	(222)	219	(202)	202/222	(>90%)
ALL GOC	412	(385)	384	(357)	357/385	(>92%)
UK ROC	38	(33)	33	(29)	29/33	(>87%)
ALL ROC	51	(46)	46	(42)	42/46	(>91%)
LRC	34	(33)	32	(32)	32/33	(>96%)

GMDSS Criss-Crossword Number 63 - all answers should be researched and/or confirmed by reference to ALRS/ADRS, *where appropriate*. Readers might also like to test their knowledge of international geography by using the [‘Triviaplaza geography quizzes’](#) website (where you might also find one or more of the answers required below).



Down

1. Liverpool or Edinburgh - which is furthest west?
2. NAVTEX station providing coastal coverage off (1-down and 9-across).
4. Second busiest seaport in (8-across).
5. MMSI for DSC station at (6-down).
6. Port city; and MF DSC station giving A2 area coverage of much of the coast of (8-across).

Across

3. Busiest seaport on the coast of the Bay of Bengal
5. MMSI for DSC station located at (9-across)
7. River forming part of the Bengal Delta on on which (4-down) is located
8. Coastal country between India and Myanmar
9. Coastguard Operations Centre (COG/MRCC) to the north of (1-down)

Issue 61 answers – with hyperlinks:

DOWN: 1. [Queensland](#); 3 [Gladstone](#); 4. [Davao](#); 8. [Eleven](#).

ACROSS: 2. [Japan](#); 5. [Pacific](#) 6. [AlfaBravo](#); 7. [GreenPort](#); 9. [CoralSea](#) 10. [China](#) –

and see ADRS1345/ALRS Vol 5 map!

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 a question on the ['AMERC Quiz'](#) is necessary when it appears that one of the other answers may also appear appropriate. *Note that those of you who have access to our 'GMDSS EXAMINER FORUM' on the AMERC website can open-up and discuss any subject/question that you feel you have an issue with ☺*

Question: I know that the PVT (Performance Verification Test) has been part of the practical 'OPT' examination for some time now and that it was introduced because PVT is now in the syllabus. What I don't know is whether conducting a Sat-C PVT and Distress button test is a requirement for ships? Will a surveyor look for evidence that these have been done?

Answer: (with thanks to Michael Moir – practicing Radio Surveyor) – 'When I carry out radio surveys on A3 vessels (and Non Directive fishing boats which can claim Sat C instead of MF-DSC) the standard test is to do a PVT (sometimes called a PV test or Link test depending on the equipment manufacturer). This checks the functionality of the Sat C and the Distress buttons, as opposed to a simple test call to another Sat-C.

'I cannot find any reference to vessels being required to carry out this test at specific times, and often find that the last time a PV (PVT or Link) Test was carried out was the previous year during the last survey.

'SOLAS IV chapter 10,11,12,14 cover Sat C requirements.

'You will be aware that SOLAS is an International Maritime Legal Requirement, but it is interpreted by Flag State who usually devolve responsibility for checking to Classification Societies (Lloyds Register, DNV/GL, ABS, RINA etc) who call on Radio Surveyors to confirm that the GMDSS element is properly fulfilled.

'I have to complete whatever paperwork the relevant Classification Society requires. Most want confirmation that I have 'Checked the Distress Function by means of an Approved Test Procedure' and/or that the equipment conforms to GMDSS requirements. A PVT/PV/Link test is what is normally used to provide that confirmation.'

Question: I spotted this information regarding changes to VHF channels and I don't recall having heard anything about this before http://www.icomuk.co.uk/News_Article/3508/19370/ Was I sleeping when this was announced? Further digging led me to [MGN 562 Amendment 1](#) (which is the official notice of the change).

Answer: I do recall a mention of HMGC changing their MSI broadcast channels; and I've read about proposals regarding presentation of the '1020' type of channel numbering on marine VHF radio equipment. This is a pretty clear summary of the changes for anyone who missed the earlier reports – thanks for pointing us towards it! Noted that the reference in the MGN to how the changes will require software updates in some (VHF/SSB) radio kit - and associated changes in ALRS/ADRS frequency/channel presentation. I guess we'll need to keep an eye on those changes - which may well impact on our practical examination process.

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Maritime Miscellaneous 1: Contributions from MNTB Rep:

Contribution from MNTB Rep (1): If you are looking for something for the next issue of AMERC News, perhaps you could promote this Maritime Cyber Security Video which I heard of via MNTB. My own opinion is that this should be required viewing for anyone going to sea.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DfEiMj7wAi4&feature=youtu.be>

12th July 2017 - Award-winning global maritime cyber security awareness campaign, [Be Cyber Aware at Sea](#), has collaborated with [Fidra Films](#) to launch a new film which aims to highlight the vital and increasing importance of cyber security across the maritime industry. [NSSLGlobal](#), a global maritime satellite communications provider, has co-funded the film in partnership with [Oil Companies International Marine Forum \(OCIMF\)](#), [The Standard Club](#) and [Teekay Shipping](#). Designed not only for seafarers but also across the maritime industry, the freely-available film uses real-life case studies to highlight how easy it is for cybercriminals to target individual employees, who are often the weakest link in the security chain. A shocking 99% of cyber-attacks target people rather than IT infrastructure. The film's content has been deliberately created to be both educational and entertaining and easily shared via social media to help the message spread wider throughout the industry. It features multiple tips to help employees avoid being an easy target for cybercriminals. Andrea Cross, Partnerships Development Executive, at [the Sailors' Society](#) has praised the film's approach, saying: "I really like the film, it's impactful, engaging and easy to understand, great job!" Many people still fail to spot the signs of simple phishing emails and accidentally give away personal and company information to hackers via email or social media postings. Even something as simple as charging a smartphone to the USB socket on the ECDIS terminal could allow hackers to gain access to a vessel's IT network, potentially affecting the vessel's ability to safely navigate. Sally-Anne Ray, CEO, NSSLGlobal commented: "The launch of this film is extremely timely. It follows the recent reports of the global [Petya ransomware cyber-attack](#), which hit global shipping giant [Maersk](#), to cause one of the biggest ever disruptions to global shipping. No-one is immune from the cyber threat and this film is an important initiative to not only raise awareness of the risks, but to help protect the industry from attack." Chris Young, Executive Producer at Fidra Films commented: "It is great to see the maritime industry coming together to tackle cyber security. All the feedback so far has been very positive and it is our hope that the film reaches as wide an audience as possible."

Contribution from MNTB Rep (2): Subject: 'Careers at Sea' film (from [UK Chamber of Shipping](#)).

Following private screenings, we have launched the promotional advert for Careers at Sea. You can find it here - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DLai9EIK5_4. Please do feel free to circulate it on your personal social media channels, or to contacts who you think may be interested.

We would be keen for you to share the video through Twitter and would ask that you use the following link that takes you direct to our Tweet about the film <https://twitter.com/careersatsea/status/907899868454277120> to promulgate its spread to all your Twitter contacts.

There is now an extensive communications strategy under way; the national media, trade media, digital communications media and careers media have all received copies. In the weeks to follow targeted advertising to young people will be purchased across social media platforms, and the film will be shown at the [LISW conference](#). We have secured government support for the film's promotion through their own media channels, and a number of MPs have promised to help us circulate it further.

The film has been produced thanks to funding from the [Maritime Educational Foundation](#).

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Maritime Miscellaneous 2: PRESS RELEASE - 3 October 2017: Finnish maritime innovators [Fleetrance](#) and [KNL Networks](#) have successfully pioneered in providing cost-efficient Arctic situational awareness using a unique combination of Internet of Things (IoT), Cloud and 3G/HF hybrid telecommunications technology. The solution includes up-to-date weather-, ice-, ship tracking and sensor data and sustains critical email communications in areas where satellite communications are expensive, unreliable or non-existent.

Fleetrance Ltd, a rising star of the Finnish maritime startup-scene, and KNL Networks, a revolutionary telecommunications company, have successfully solved Arctic situational awareness and communications challenges with their combined “Fleetrance with KNL” solution. The companies are also allegedly the first in the world to provide Arctic maritime situational awareness, IoT and communications using technology independent of satellites.

The technology trial has successfully been completed onboard [Salén Ship Management's](#) luxury Expedition Cruiser “[Hebridean Sky](#)” during her Arctic season around Svalbard. The trial included the Fleetrance IoT cloud platform which uses KNL's long-range – up to 10 000 km – [3G/HF hybrid communications technology](#) to provide Arctic situational awareness between the ship and shore side office as well as sustaining critical operational email communications for the Captain.

“Fleetrance and KNL has always been a big help on our entire stay in Svalbard, especially on those areas that we don't get any signal at all with the VSAT, by receiving the updated Ice Charts and Weather Forecasts in GRIB files, it truly helped us. I am impressed with how useful the HF email is when nothing else is available to connect and contact from the head office, supports, etc. And it enabled us to send reports despite the loss connection on our VSAT“, says Dindo L. Talon, IT Officer of M/S “Hebridean Sky”

“Ships in the Northern Arctic waters have been relying on non-existent or lower quality and expensive digital satellite communications for a long time. It is truly amazing for us to be able to change this and be the pioneers with KNL in providing high availability digital communications and situational awareness solutions for these harsh waters”, says Henrik Ramm-Schmidt, CEO and Founder of Fleetrance Ltd.

“At KNL our mission is to free the maritime industry from connectivity constraints, and this trial with Hebridean Sky is a great example of fulfilling that vision. Together with Fleetrance, we're proud to have provided the key link of communication and content where satellite is unavailable,” says Toni Lindén, CEO and Founder of KNL Networks.

The trial was conducted during Hebridean Sky's Arctic season 2017, where the ship was fitted with KNL's patented and revolutionary cognitive and software defined radio equipment and Fleetrance IoT units. The Fleetrance cloud-based situational awareness solution was used to deliver up-to-date weather data and ice charts automatically to the ship and receiving IoT sensor data from the ship. The communication and awareness solution was systematically tested and monitored during the trial, which took the ship around Svalbard and all the way to the Arctic ice edge.

The “Fleetrance with KNL” solution is based on a unique combination of cost-efficient IoT and Cloud technology, where the ship sends IoT data, such as location, surrounding AIS-traffic and motion, and receives up-to-date weather and ice data from shore using [KNL's 3G/HF hybrid communications technology](#). KNL's technology, in itself, is based on an automated cognitive mesh-type radio network, where ships within 3G coverage act as base stations for ships further out at sea at distances of up to 10 000 km. KNL technology is completely independent from communication satellites and offers a cost-efficient, global and cyber secure channel for email and IoT data.

Maritime Miscellaneous 3: Ofcom Update regarding the granting of a radio licence to Inmarsat for ground based stations forming part of its European Aviation Network (EAN).



Updates Radio Spectrum

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 Forward

Ofcom has [decided to grant Inmarsat a wireless telegraphy licence authorisation](#) for the ground based stations forming part of its [European Aviation Network \(EAN\)](#).

In 2009 the European Commission selected two operators to provide “mobile satellite services” (“MSS”) in the 2GHz frequency band, across Europe. [Inmarsat Ventures Limited](#) (“Inmarsat”) was one of those operators.

Under EU and UK law, Ofcom must authorise operators to provide MSS in the UK. Ofcom authorised Inmarsat to provide MSS in 2009.

Ofcom is also required to grant the authorisations necessary for operators to provide “complementary ground components” (“CGCs”) of MSS.

Inmarsat intends to provide broadband services to passengers on aircraft flying over Europe. The service consists of a combination of satellite and ground-based communication links to aircraft, to enable passengers to connect to broadband services.

Ofcom has decided to grant Inmarsat a wireless telegraphy licence authorisation for the ground based stations.

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