

AMERC News

Issue 67 – Incorporates Circular 287

October 2018

Editorial

Welcome to issue 67 of AMERC News - *which doubles as **Circular 287** and, as such, must be circulated to all GMDSS instructors/examiners by their AMERC centre contact.*

In this issue we also have our usual brief on the most recent **Maritime Consultation Group** (MCG – Page 2), and which includes the appointment of the new **Company Secretary**, and a note about the possibility of centres receiving **unannounced visits by the Chief Examiner**, and the circumstances that might generate such a visit.

There's also a note about the availability of a **training video for our RT Exercise (GOC)** on the AMERC 'resources' area of our closed website.

Reporting of NAC **quarterly statistics for GMDSS examinations** has been replaced by an **annual rolling report** on exam statistics – this edition of the News showing the first table using the new format.

The '**GMDSS Criss-Crossword**' – previously included in the News 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, is being suspended for now (reason given at the foot of page 2, along with the answers to Criss-crossword number 65).

'**Tales from the Key-Side** (page 4) features our previous Chief Examiner on his travels to the antipodes – where he found a museum of the former Townville Radio/Vis station – complete with photos.

'**Maritime Miscellaneous**' and '**Member Profile(s)**' are again taking a rest – if any new member, or member/centre not previously featured (or who has had significant changes since any previous entry) would like to feature in future editions – get in touch!

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. When it comes to **Explanation Please?** always remember – if YOU have an issue then someone else probably has that issue too ... **don't be shy!**

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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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 2018. 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.

Company Secretary Change: Following the retirement of Terry Slack as company secretary, three applications for the post were received and interviews held, resulting in the appointment of Prue Langfield to the post. Prue will be located at the AMERC NAC. There is no change to the Secretary’s email address, which can be found on the ‘contacts’ page of the AMERC website.

RT Exercise – GMDSS GOC Examination: Kevin Walsh of Warsash/Southampton has prepared an example RT exercise/log keeping video which can be accessed via the ‘resources’ section of AMERC website (login required to view the ‘resources’ page). Note also that:

- there is now an expanded list of approved abbreviations that may be used in the RT radio log - displayed at the end of the video; and that
- those who may wish to use this with their students but do not have a good classroom Internet connection, should contact Kevin directly at admin@amerc.ac.uk – requesting a copy for offline use.

Chief Examiner – unannounced visits: Centres are reminded that the Executive Committee may authorise unannounced audit visits of centres where concerns have been raised over their ability to function in accordance with AMERC guidelines – e.g. a notable change in results achieved; or adverse feedback from staff or clients. AMERC Administration Handbook (Section 2.6.7.1, Para’s f and h, refer)

New Series (2019-2020) Exam series update: It is expected that the forthcoming 2019-2020 series examination papers will be available to view and download by authorised users, with effect from 1st November 2018. This should allow centres adequate time to prepare for their introduction on 1st January 2019.

AGM 2019 and Examiners’ Panel: Next year’s AGM & Examiner’s Panel will be held on Wednesday May 22nd, – followed by the AGM dinner. More detail on venue will be provided direct to Members in due course.

GMDSS Examination Statistics – rolling annual report: National Administration Centre (NAC) examination statistics for the period **1st July 2017 – 30th June 2018** are shown below:

EXAMINATION	ENTERED (1 st time)		PASSED (1 st attempt)		% PASSED 1 ST ATTEMPT
UK GOC	1031	(910)	902	(799)	799/910 (>87%)
ALL GOC	1891	(1712)	1796	(1541)	1541/1712 (>90%)
UK ROC	109	(106)	106	(103)	103/106 (>97%)
ALL ROC	154	(147)	147	(140)	140/147 (>95%)
LRC	117	(112)	111	(106)	106/112 (>94%)

My previous ‘open’ access to the Discovery Education Criss-crossword maker has been replaced with a registration requirement that, alas, no longer appears to qualify us to use that facility.

If anyone can suggest a new way to exercise candidate’s international geography and which is suitable for AMERC News, please let me know! Meanwhile – the answers to the latest published puzzle:

Issue 65 answers – with hyperlinks:

DOWN: 1. [Thiruvananthapuram](#); 2. [MuaraAngke](#); 3. [Jakarta](#) 4. [BarentSea](#); 6. [005250000](#).

ACROSS: 5. [Kilo](#); 7. [Valiathura](#); 8. [Eight](#); 9. [Murmansk](#); 10. [Echo](#).

Tales from the Key-Side –byAnonyMouse ...

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 something to hit. Submissions may be edited, and the writer's name will, of course, be withheld on request.

Dateline: Townsville, Queensland, Australia -
Time: When former AMERC Chief. Examiner visited
Frequency: Alas – 'Off the air'



Hi Ian,
When we were in Townsville we came across a small museum where the entire VIT Coast Radio Station was displayed. Those of us who sailed in the area probably remember working it. Attached a few photos which might be of interest for Amerc Newsletter, particularly final message of the service closing down.
Cheers,

```
19990201 Last Morse Transmission.txt
Last Morse Transmission
from Townsvilleradio VIT
19990201 0003UTC
19990201 1003 Local Time
Keyed by hand from Sydneyradio VIS
and sent simultaneously via telecontrol
through Melbournradio VIM and Townsvilleradio VIT
500kHz
-----
. CQ CQ CQ DE VIM/VIS VIM/VIS/VIT VIM/VIS/VIT
THIS IS THE FINAL MORSE TRANSMISSION FROM
THE TELSTRA MARITIME COMMUNICATIONS NETWORK.
WE CONCLUDE OUR FINAL CW WATCHKEEPING AFTER
87 YEARS OF CONTINUOUS SERVICE WITH PRIDE AND SADNESS.
TELSTRA, THE AUSTRALIAN MARITIME SAFETY AUTHORITY AND
THE BUREAU OF METEOROLOGY WISH ALL SEAFARERS FAIR WINDS
AND FOLLOWING SEAS.
ON BEHALF OF THE COUNTLESS SOULS
WHO WOULD HAVE DIED BUT FOR THEM, WE SALUTE ALL WHO HAVE
SERVED OUR PROFESSION WITH SKILL AND DEDICATION THROUGH
THE YEARS. 73S
31ST JANUARY 1999 2359UTC + VA
-----
+ = END OF MESSAGE
VA = END OF WORKING - CLOSING STATION
(RARE FOR A COAST STATION OPENED H24)
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COASTAL RADIO

The huge loss of life on the Titanic shocked the world. As a result of the disaster, the first International Convention for Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS) was called in London in 1913.



Interior c 1945



Townsville Coastal Radio c 1928

This brokered an international agreement which, among other things, introduced uniform radio communications between ships and from ship to shore.

Coastal Radio Stations were set up to monitor ships' radios. In Australia, by 1914, the government had increased its Coastal Radio Stations from three to fifteen. One of these was in Townsville.

The Townsville Coastal Radio Station opened on the edge of Victoria Park in South Townsville on 7 August 1913. It had two broad functions. One was the non-profit SOLAS, or Safety of Life at Sea – a coast watch service for the treacherous waters off Townsville and the Great Barrier Reef. The other was the commercial operation of radio telephone, telegrams and ship to shore 'phone calls.

The federal government sold the Coastal Radio Stations to Amalgamated Wireless (Australasia) Ltd (AWA) in 1920 but bought back a controlling interest.

As time went on the Townsville station acquired other functions. These included receiving weather reports from the Willis Island meteorological station, receiving mail messages transmitted by AWA staff on Willis Island and acting as a relay station for Thursday Island and Cooktown radio stations. After 1931 Townsville replaced Cooktown as the main relay station for messages from New Guinea to Sydney.



CRS at Victoria Park (taken 1945)