

Editorial

Welcome to issue 74 of AMERC News - which doubles as **Circular 294** and, as such, must be circulated to all GMDSS instructors / examiners by their AMERC centre contact.

I think everyone is finding current times challenging. Hopefully everyone is keeping safe and well?

Most of the GMDSS family members are working from home. But please think of our colleagues still working away in these difficult times, not able to be with their families.

When we will all be back to operating in normal times - no one knows. But we are still here for all.

In this issue we have a report from the latest Executive committee meeting held in March. Also have our usual brief on the most recent **Maritime Consultation Group** (MCG – Page 2), and the **NAC Statistics Report** for GMDSS examinations.

GMDSS Criss-Cross has made a return and is on page 4. Answers will be given in the next edition.

‘Maritime Miscellaneous’ (page 3) We have an article on the modernisation of the GMDSS system submitted by Graham Lees. We will be running it over a couple of issues and keep you informed of the latest. Thank you Graham for your news.

‘Tales from the Key-Side, ‘Member Profile(s)’ is again taking a break for this edition. If anyone wishes for a feature please let us know. This is open to anyone – whether a new member, a member/centre not previously featured, or anyone with any notable changes. If you 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 other items that were likely to be of interest to others.*

Barrie

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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 online in March 2020. 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.

This was a very unusual meeting, being held by conference call and not in person.

Various items were discussed including the upcoming AGM. Since this meeting, it has been decided given the situation with COVID-19 that AMERC will not hold an AGM this year. Options were talked over at length, and the final decision was not made lightly. But the wellbeing and safety of everyone involved is the most important aspect to consider.

Please see page 3 with a copy of issue number 73 and is posted in the newsletter section of the AMERC website.

Chief Examiner Reports

All visits by the Chief Examiner are currently on hold. Centres will be advised of approval visits once the current situation changes.

Examiner Status Approvals

The following probationary examiners were granted full examiner status -*Mohammad Kamrul Hasan, Alan Denham, Phil Somerville*

Andrew Edwards was granted probationary examiner status.

Congratulations and welcome.

NAC Statistics Report

GOC – UK exam numbers have decreased by 12% from the same period last year and overseas exams have increased by 7%.

The UK and overseas first-time pass rate has also remained mostly the same.

ROC – exam numbers have decreased by 29% for the UK but overseas have increased by 24% compared to last year.

The first-time pass rate for UK exams have decreased by almost 5% but has remained about the same for overseas exams.

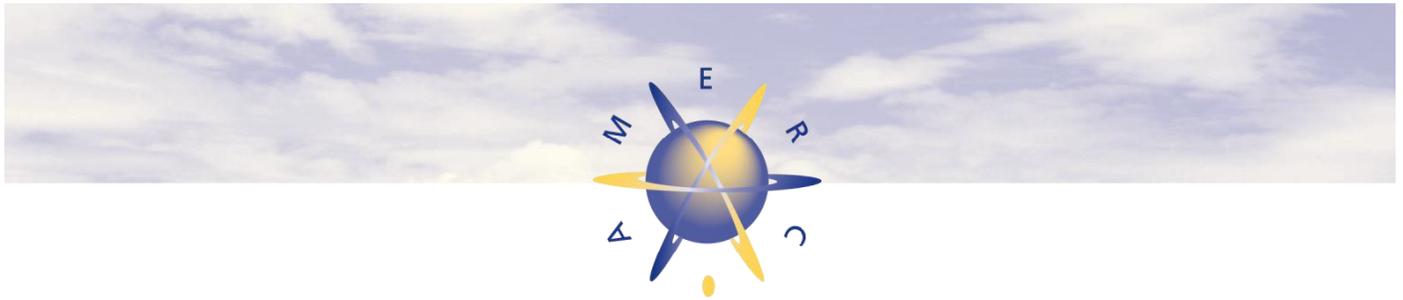
LRC – UK exams have increased by 11% and overseas LRC exams have decreased by 41% since last year.

Chairman’s Report

Reported that all MCA audits and visits were currently cancelled for 3 months, to be reviewed in due course.

GMDSS Examination Statistics – rolling annual report: National Administration Centre (NAC) examination statistics for the period **1st October 2018 – 30th September 2019** are shown below:

EXAMINATION	ENTERED (1st time)		PASSED (1st attempt)		% PASSED 1ST ATTEMPT	
UK GOC	841	(769)	765	(698)	698/841	(90.77%)
ALL GOC	1735	(1591)	1576	(1444)	1444/1735	(90.76%)
UK ROC	102	(91)	91	(79)	79/102	(86.81%)
ALL ROC	164	(147)	147	(129)	129/164	(87.76%)
LRC	107	(106)	103	(102)	102/107	(96.23%)



9th April 2020

Please be aware that AMERC have made the difficult decision to cancel our planned AGM for 2020. This was scheduled to take place on June 3rd-5th in London.

The Executive Committee has held several online meetings in order to discuss this issue, and how to proceed during the COVID-19 pandemic. These meetings have been minuted and recorded. Due to the disruption of international travel, and the UK government restrictions on meetings and social distancing, it would be impossible and irresponsible to continue with our AGM event as planned.

We have discussed online alternatives and the idea of postponing the event until later this year. However, we felt that these alternatives would cause more problems than they'd solve, would be poorly attended and would impact negatively upon operations for next year's AGM.

Therefore, in these unprecedented circumstances and in line with the advice issued on <https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus> - there will be no AMERC AGM in 2020. We appreciate your patience and co-operation during these difficult times, and sincerely hope that everyone is staying safe and well.

I would be grateful if you could please inform any out-of-office colleagues who might be affected by this change of plans.

Best regards

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Prue Langfield'.

Prue Langfield
AMERC Company Secretary

Maritime Miscellaneous

Modernisation of GMDSS: A brief overview by GDL

Following WRC-15 and Resolution 359 (REV.WRC-15) it was recognised that there is a need to support the modernisation of GMDSS. It will involve modification of the ITU Radio Regulations and the introduction of new satellite systems (which of course has already happened with the acceptance of Iridium from 2020 and Beidou currently being assessed).

Items to be considered include:

- Redefinition of Sea Area A3
- VHF Data Exchange System (VDES)
- NAVDAT
- Routing of distress alerts and related information
- Search and rescue technologies
- HF communications
- GMDSS carriage requirements
- Perceived number of False distress alerts
- Training, and
- Obsolete provisions in current GMDSS system

SOLAS regulations need to be amended as follows – first draft 2018, 2nd 2019, final draft 2020

NAVDAT draft performance standards 2020, approval 2021

2022 Adopt SOLAS amendments, 2024 SOLAS revisions in force.

It was stressed that GMDSS modernisation would need to support the needs of the e-navigation strategy.

The following items were recognised:

- NBDP can be removed as a required system, although existing devices can be used to receive MSI and displayed on other bridge equipment such as INS.
- VHF EPIRB should be removed from SOLAS chapter IV.

Modernisation aspects include:

VDES: VHF Data Exchange which was developed by IALA to address emerging indications of overloading the AIS VHF Data Link (VDL) and was an agenda item of WRC-19 held in November last year.

NAVDAT: To be used on MF (500 kHz) and various HF frequencies from 4-22 MHz to supplement the current NAVTEX system.

Consider whether lifeboats and maybe some life-rafts should be equipped with SARTs.

Consider if certain category of ships should carry a 121.5 MHz direction finder.

Review testing of EPIRBs.

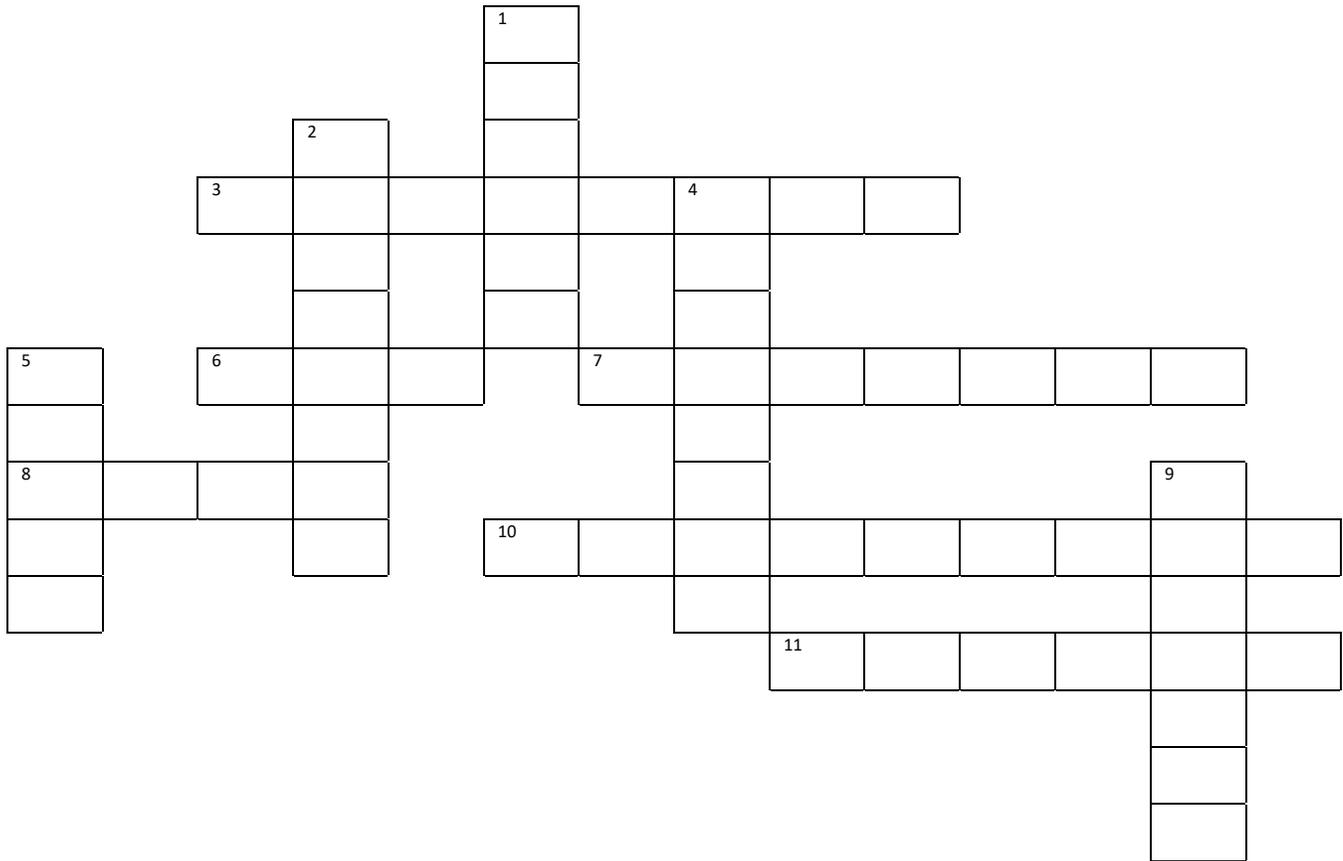
Review distribution of HF GMDSS stations and look at those stations being capable of responding to test calls.

Consider future role of HF data exchange.

Consider making HF equipment easier to use utilising Automatic Link Establishment (ALE) which automatically selects a frequency and establishes a link without operator assistance.

I appreciate that some of the above items such as VDES, NAVDAT, e-navigation etc. may be new to you and I am willing to do further bulletins in forthcoming AMERC News to explain some of these things.

GMDSS Criss-Cross Edition 74 - 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'](http://www.triviaplaza.com/geoquizzes/) website (where you might also find one or more of the answers required below).



Across

- 3 - Japanese Cruise port and gateway to southern Kyushu
- 6 – Former Capital City of Morocco (1727-1912)
- 7 – Day situated on the south-eastern coast of Vietnam
- 8 – Message complete and reply expected
- 10 - Navtex 'X' – Greenland
- 11 – Saudi Arabian port on the Red Sea

Down

- 1 – Capital City of the province of Bioko, Equatorial Guinea
- 2 – Which international river flows through Brazil, Colombia and Venezuela?
- 4 - The Island group of Isla Grande de Tierra del Fuego is in what body of water?
- 5 – HF DSC Station 007354757
- 9 – Vessel that could never sink?

Issue 72 answers

Across 2 - Canada 4 – Wiluna 6 – Phnom Penh 7 – Lyngby 8 – Ushaia 9 - Amazon Down 1 – South Africa
3 – Antwerp 5 - Scheldt