

AMERC News

Issue 80 – Incorporates Circular 300

July 2021

Editorial

Welcome to issue 80 of AMERC News - which doubles as **Circular 300** and, as such, must be circulated to all GMDSS instructors / examiners by their AMERC centre contact.

Summer is well and truly underway in the UK! Hopefully this newsletter finds everyone healthy and well, and able to enjoy the weather safely.

In this issue we have the **AMERC AGM 2021 Report** on page 2, held online last month. Overall, this was a great success, and thank you to everyone who made the effort to attend virtually.

'Tales from the Key-Side, 'Member Profile(s)' on page 4 includes some short profiles on our new AMERC members, approved at the AGM.

On page 5, you'll find updates from the latest **MCG open session meeting**.

Additionally, the **NAC Statistics Report** for GMDSS examinations is on page 5

'Maritime Miscellaneous' (page 6) this edition features a piece from EC member Jonathan West on IMO SMCP, highlighting the importance of 'Message Markers'. You'll also find an important announcement about an amendment to a resource on our website: 'Transas – Live Tuning Modification.'

GMDSS Criss-Cross is back on page 8. Answers will be given in the next edition.

Thanks for reading! Please get in touch if you have anything to add to next quarter's newsletter.

Prue

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AMERC AGM 2021 Report

This year, our AGM was held online, a first for AMERC! In 2020, the Covid-19 outbreak necessitated that we cancel our AGM entirely. This was a disappointment for everyone involved, but it meant we were all adamant that we'd find a way to avoid cancellation again.

The 9am GMT kickoff time did require some participants across the world to have a very early or very late start, and we at AMERC appreciate the inconvenience! However, one person did feedback to me that the lack of travel requirements more than made up for the time zone discrepancies.

The improvements in remote video conferencing certainly made this year's event not just possible as a last-resort, but in fact we were able to streamline certain aspects of the AGM by conducting it online. The voting, for example, was actually much easier to manage via Zoom's secure 'polling' feature. The count was completely anonymous, and the results were calculated instantly, the data analysed and automatically turned into a report. One member still managed to allocate a proxy voter with no issues whatsoever.

All motions were approved, results as follows:

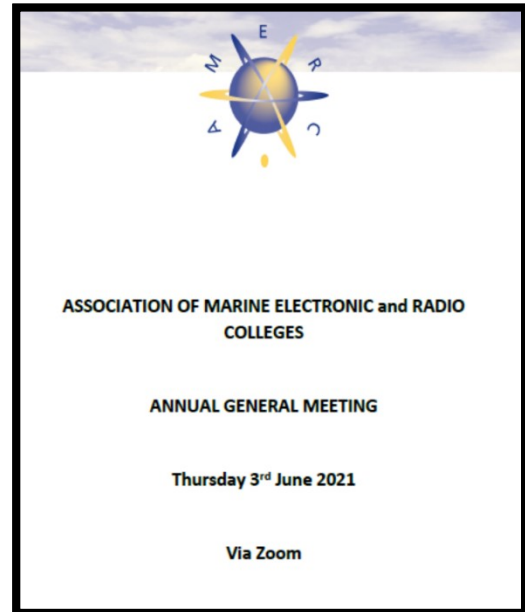
Financial Matters

- **Motion 1 – APPROVED (14 For, 0 Against, 0 Abstain)**
Accountants Moore and Smalley are approved as the accountants for the year 2021
- **Motion 2 - APPROVED (13 For, 0 Against, 1 Abstain)**
Financial accounts for the year 2020 are approved
- **Motion 3 - APPROVED (13 For, 0 Against, 1 Abstain)**
The 2021 annual membership fee is £270 for full members
- **Motion 4 - APPROVED (12 For, 0 Against, 2 Abstain)**
The 2021 annual membership fee is £150 for associate members
- **Motion 5 - APPROVED (13 For, 1 Against, 0 Abstain)**
To further our charitable activities, proposal for AMERC to waive LRC fees for the RNLI

Election of new Members

Four applications for membership have been received as follows:

- **Motion 6 - APPROVED (9 For, 4 Against, 1 Abstain)**
Aqaba Maritime Education and Training Centre (AMETC), Jordan
Full membership application



- **Motion 7 - APPROVED (11 For, 2 Against, 1 Abstain)**
Capt. Tamim Bachar Al Imam (of AMETC)
Associate membership application
- **Motion 8 - APPROVED (10 For, 3 Against, 1 Abstain)**
Geographica Expeditions, Poland
Full membership application
- **Motion 9 - APPROVED (12 For, 2 Against, 0 Abstain)**
Stream Marine Training Safety and Survival Ltd, Glasgow
Full membership application
- **Motion 10 - APPROVED (13 For, 1 Against, 0 Abstain)**
Francis Rodriguez, India
Associate membership application

Election of Executive Committee Officers

Four vacancies exist on the AMERC Executive Committee. Nominations for these posts have been received from the following three applicants:

- **Motion 11 - APPROVED (12 For, 1 Against, 1 Abstain)**
That an application to join the EC from Gregor McGowan (UKSA, proposed by Paul Martin, seconded by Terry Slack) be approved
- **Motion 12: - APPROVED (13 For, 0 Against, 1 Abstain)**
That an application to join the EC from Jonathan West (Existing EC member, Tyne Coast College, seconded by Terry Slack) be approved
- **Motion 13: - APPROVED (12 For, 0 Against, 2 Abstain)**
That an application to join the EC from Steve Howard (Existing EC member, GMDSS Consultant, seconded by Terry Slack) be approved

From all of us at AMERC, a very warm welcome to our new members; congratulations to Gregor McGowan for his new place on the EC; and congratulations to Steve Howard and Jonathan West for their re-election to the EC. Some brief information on new members can be found on the next page.

For your information, next year's AGM is scheduled for **18th-19th May 2022**. All being well, this will be held at the Union Jack Club, Waterloo, London. More details will follow next year. Look forward to seeing you all there.

Tales from the Key-Side: New Member Profiles

Captain Tamim Al Imam/AMETC

Captain Tamim Al Imam is an approved marine instructor and examiner by the Jordan Maritime Commission with more than ten years working at sea, and more than six years in the maritime training and education field. He applied for full membership for his centre, Aqaba Maritime Education and Training, and associate membership for himself personally. He hopes membership will help him and his centre keep up to date and share industry experiences.



مركز العقبة للتعليم والتدريب البحري
Aqaba Maritime Education & Training Center

Geographica Expeditions

Michał (Mike) Brennek applied for full membership for his centre, Geographica Expeditions. He is based in Warsaw, the most popular location for maritime education in Poland. He works with the Gdynia Maritime University Watersports Training Centre, and also Sail Training Poland. He has a strong interest in GMDSS Radio techniques, Morse keys and is also a keen ham radio enthusiast. Mike has been an SRC instructor and assessor under the RYA since 2014. He's been teaching LRC since 2017, and has won several Polish awards for his training programmes.



Stream Marine Training

An application for full membership was made by John Goulden for this Glasgow-based centre. One of the centre's central projects is a modern apprenticeship scheme, coming later this year. SMT prides themselves as a world-class training facility for the maritime industry, helping people achieve and maintain employment, while maintaining the safety of maritime industries. They hope AMERC membership will help them maintain industry knowledge and familiarity, and keep their materials up to date.



Francis Rodrigues

Francis applied for associate membership for himself, following a long-standing relationship with AMERC. He worked as GMDSS Course Coordinator for the centre 'TS Rahaman' in Mumbai from 1997 to 2009, then at Derek Bibby/Aqua Marine until their last GOC exam in 2020. Francis has trained more than 3000 students in his time. For 6 years, he was appointed by AMERC as Assistant Chief Examiner in 2007, covering overseas centres. As such, he has extensive knowledge of AMERC's standards and procedures. In total Francis has worked in maritime industry education for 23 years, and wishes to keep himself updated with the industry and AMERC business.



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 June 2021. The following items reflect discussions at MCG and/or associated items that may be of interest to Members and training centres.

The MCG met via Zoom on 2nd June 2021 for both open and closed sessions.

Chief Examiner Reports

The Chief Examiner conducted an interim audit for ASET, where the new ECC coordinator has successfully corrected an outstanding issue regarding timetable findings.

A full remote audit was conducted for Tyne Coast College, where again their new ECC coordinator presented a very good standard throughout. As per MCA regulations, their CAC has been extended by one year, until a full standard in-person audit can be conducted.

Congratulations to both centres!

Additionally, Keith Mitchell presented an excellent report outlining the use of online examinations. The necessity of these came about from Covid travel restrictions, but have proved very effective, and could be kept on in future to combat issues with examiner shortages. Keith’s recommendations for continued use were approved by the meeting members. This authority will be reviewed at the end of the year.

New examiners

One application was presented, Matt Gately from MPT Florida. This application was approved, congratulations Matt!

NAC Statistics Report

(Editor’s note: As with all NAC statistics at the moment, Covid-19 must be taken into consideration when looking at these numbers.)

GOC - exam numbers are down 56% from the same period last year and overseas exams have decreased by 59%. First time pass rates have increased by 5%, while overseas first time pass rate has remained mostly the same.

ROC - exam numbers have decreased by 67% for the UK and 57% for overseas. There has been a 100% first time pass rate for the UK this year; overseas rate has remained largely the same.

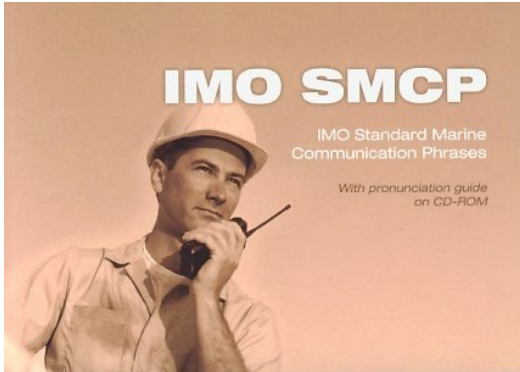
LRC - exams have decreased by 93% in the UK, but overseas, there has been an increase of 11% since last year.

There have been 768 GMDSS certificates issued for this year against 1783 last year.

GMDSS Examination Statistics – rolling annual report: National Administration Centre (NAC) examination statistics for the period **1st Apr 2020 – 31st Mar 2021** are shown below:

EXAMINATION	ENTERED (1 st time)	PASSED (1 st attempt)	% PASSED 1 ST attempt
UK GOC	378 (356)	356 (335)	335/356 (94.1%)
ALL GOC	722 (684)	683 (646)	646/683 (94.44%)
UK ROC	39 (39)	39 (39)	39/39 (100%)
ALL ROC	62 (61)	59 (59)	59/61 (96.72%)
LRC	26 (24)	22 (22)	22/24 (91.67%)

Maritime Miscellaneous – IMO SMCP and GMDSS



The IMO Standard Marine Communication Phrases (SMCP) includes phrases which have been developed to cover the most important safety-related fields of verbal shore-to-ship (and vice-versa), ship-to-ship and on-board communications. The aim is to get round the problem of language barriers at sea and avoid misunderstandings, which can cause accidents.

SMCP includes phrases for use in routine situations such as berthing as well as standard phrases and responses for use in emergencies.

GMDSS students should be aware of SMCP as per AMERC handbook 5.2.4 and 8.2.4 'Use of the IMO Standard Marine Communication Phrases (SMCP) and the International Code of Signals'.

'Negative' or 'No'?

The use of the words affirmative or negative should be avoided, especially during radio communications. It is easy to miss the start of a word, hear the ending and make an assumption as to what was sent. Instead, IMO recommend the use of the words yes or no in place of affirmative or negative.

Message Markers

SMCP contains eight message markers that may be used for communication between vessels and between ship and shore. Correct use of message markers can avoid miscommunication in the marine environment. Vessel Traffic Service (VTS) operators receive training in the use of message markers and are expected to use them when communicating with vessels.

The eight message markers are instruction, advice, warning, Information, question, answer, request, intention.

Instruction This indicates that the following message implies the intention of the sender to influence others by a Regulation. This means that the sender, e.g. a VTS - Station or a naval vessel, **must have the full authority to send such a message**. The recipient **must follow this legally binding message** unless s/he has contradictory safety reasons which then have to be reported to the sender.
Example: "INSTRUCTION. Do not cross the fairway."

Advice This indicates that the following message implies the intention of the sender to influence others by a Recommendation. The decision whether to follow the ADVICE still stays with the recipient. **ADVICE does not necessarily have to be followed** but should be considered very carefully.
Example: "ADVICE. stand by on VHF Channel six nine."

Warning This indicates that the following message implies the intention of the sender to **inform others about danger**. This means that any recipient of a WARNING should pay immediate attention to the danger mentioned. Consequences of a WARNING will be up to the recipient.
Example: "WARNING. Obstruction in the fairway."

- Information** This indicates that the following message is **restricted to observed facts**, situations, etc. This marker is preferably used for navigational and traffic information, etc. Consequences of INFORMATION will be up to the recipient.
Example: "INFORMATION. MV Noname will overtake to the West of you ."
- Question** This indicates that the following message is of interrogative character.
Example: "QUESTION. What is your present maximum draft?"
- Answer** This indicates that the following message is the reply to a previous question.
Example: "ANSWER. My present maximum draft is zero seven metres."
- Request** This indicates that the following message is asking for action from others with respect to the vessel.
Example: "REQUEST. I require two tugs."
- Intention** This indicates that the following message informs others about immediate navigational action intended to be taken.
Example: "INTENTION. I will reduce my speed."

Accidents

The following are links to MAIB reports where poor communication between vessels and VTS contributed to accidents.

<https://www.gov.uk/maib-reports/grounding-of-container-vessel-maersk-kendal-on-monggok-sebarok-reef-in-the-singapore-strait>

<https://www.gov.uk/maib-reports/collision-between-container-vessel-ever-smart-and-oil-tanker-alexandra-1>

Source:

<https://www.imo.org/en/OurWork/Safety/Pages/StandardMarineCommunicationPhrases.aspx>

- Jonathan West

All Centres to Be Aware:

There has been a small amendment made to the 'Transas – Live Tuning Modification' document, found in our 'Resources' section of www.amerc.ac.uk.

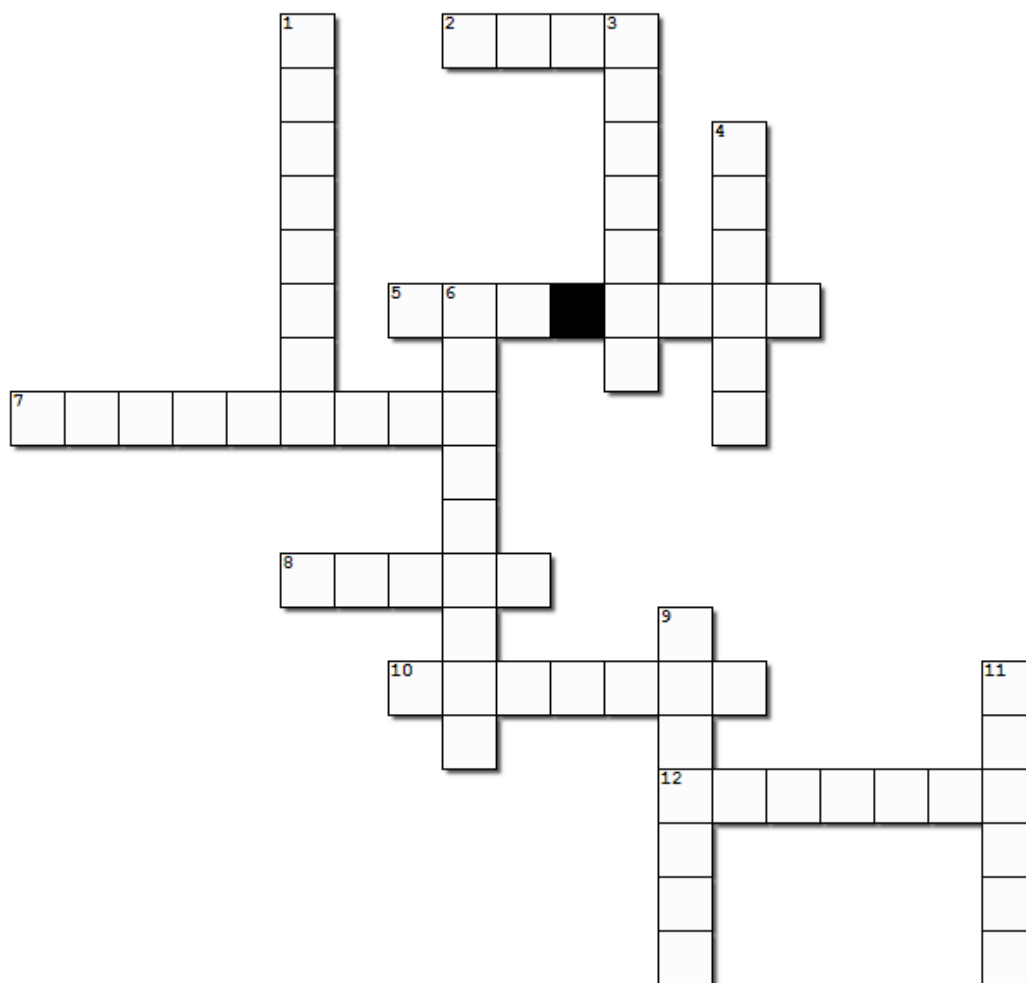
If you have the Live tuning fix installed on your Transas TGS5000 system there has been a problem with reception of a few frequencies in different positions around the world. This problem has been fixed by repairing the attached file (aethfill.dat) and in addition reception of the 5Mhz Fort Collins (WWV) time signal has been added to the practice OPT start positions.

To update this file on your system simply download the zip file from our website, then copy it to the following folder TGS5000/Data on your C: drive on the simulator. The system asks you if you want to replace the original, answer yes. This action will overwrite the current corrupted aetherfill.dat file.

The original downloaded package with the instructions on how to insert the Live tuning fix and this updated file have also been updated on the AMERC website in the resources folder.

- Steve Howard

GMDSS Criss-Cross Edition 80 - answers should be researched and/or confirmed by reference to ALRS / ADRS, *where appropriate*.



Across:

- 2. ID letter for English language NAVTEX service from Cyprus
- 5. Bay situated on the S-E coast of Vietnam
- 7. Name of ship which blocked the Suez Canal earlier this year
- 8. Turkish Black Sea port, site of proposed nuclear power plant
- 10. Nearest NAVTEX station to Kaohsiung
- 12. Belgium's main port

Down:

- 1. Japanese cruise port; gateway to southern Kyushu
- 3. Port of _____; largest harbour in Denmark
- 4. NAVAREA XVIII co-ordinator
- 6. Port city at the mouth of Severn River, Maryland USA
- 9. North Syrian port, VHF/MF/HF RT Station
- 11. Port city capital of Mozambique

Issue 79 answers

Across: 2 = Maputo, 6 = Sicily, 7 = Tauranga, 8 = Pinneberg, 9 = Callao, 10 = Augusta

Down: 1 = Kattegat, 3 = Twelve, 4 = Vladivostok, 5 = Vincent