

## **Editorial**

Welcome to issue 90 of AMERC News - which doubles as **Circular 311** and, as such, must be circulated to all GMDSS instructors / examiners by their AMERC centre coordinator.

Hard to believe we're already at the final newsletter edition for 2023! Now we're into the new academic year, this is often the busiest time for a lot of our centres, and I hope everybody has had a strong start with GMDSS courses and exams.

On page 2, our regular feature: Updates from the most recent **MCG open session meeting**, and the quarterly **NAC Statistics Report** for GMDSS examinations.

You'll find our new feature **Ask AMERC** on page 4, where we answer some of the questions submitted via our website since the last newsletter.

If you'd like to throw any tricky GMDSS queries at us, here's the link :  
[www.amerc.ac.uk/ask\\_a\\_question.php](http://www.amerc.ac.uk/ask_a_question.php)

On page 3 please find a notice from Paul Martin on the recent sad passing of Willie Williamson, longtime friend of AMERC.

**GMDSS Criss-Cross** has made a return and is on page 5. Answers will be given in the next edition.

*As always, your submissions are very welcome for **Explanation Please?** **Member Profile, Maritime Misc.'** and **Tales from the Key-Side.** We're always very grateful when people send through any other items that are likely to be of interest to our readers.*

Thanks for reading!

*Prue*

Mail: [amercsecretary@gmail.com](mailto:amercsecretary@gmail.com)

The **Maritime Consultation Group** (MCG) meets regularly - 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 person on August 31<sup>st</sup> 2023. The following items reflect discussions at MCG and/or associated items that may be of interest to Members and training centres.

## Summary of MCG open session, held on 31<sup>st</sup> August 2023

### Invited Observers

We welcomed some new faces to the open session; Rhys Newnes and Paolo Quaranta who have expressed interest in joining the EC in future. As per the rules imposed on us by the Charity Commission, they were invited to observe proceedings only, and not take part in discussion.

At the next quarterly meeting meeting in December, we will hopefully be joined in the Open session by some more new faces: Anindya Banerjee (Blackpool & Fylde), Matt Tucker (Tyne Coast College), and Robbie Robertson (RNLI)

### New ECC application

The UKSA has submitted their application in order to become an ECC (they gained approval last year as an AEV.) The Chief Examiner conducted a successful audit visit very recently, and confirmed everything is in order as per the ECC application process.

### New Examiner approvals

Applications were received from the following:

- Doug Innes (full) – Chieftain Training
- Alan Rackett (probationary) – Chieftain Training
- Pete Mason (probationary) – Warsash Maritime School
- Michael Kein (probationary) – Bluewater Florida

All applications were approved, congratulations to them!

### Chief Examiner Reports

Unusually, Keith had no audit reports to deliver as none of our centres have been due for their audits since our last meeting. He reported that his schedule is due to return to business as usual soon, with six centres requiring audits in the next few weeks.

### NAC Statistics Report (all stats compared to same period last year)

**GOC** - UK exam numbers have decreased by 12%, while overseas exams have increased by 33%. Both UK and overseas first-time pass rates have remained largely the same.

**ROC** - exam numbers have decreased by 11% for the UK and overseas have increased by 15%. UK first-time pass rate has increased by 9%, while overseas has remained the same.

**LRC** - UK exams have increased by 4%, while overseas exams have decreased by 67%

There have been 1660 GMDSS certificates issued for this year against 1591 last year.

**GMDSS Examination Statistics – rolling annual report:** National Administration Centre (NAC) examination statistics for the period **1<sup>st</sup> Apr 2022 – 31<sup>st</sup> Mar 2023** are shown below:

EXAMINATION	ENTERED (1 <sup>st</sup> time)	PASSED (1 <sup>st</sup> attempt)	% PASSED 1 <sup>ST</sup> ATTEMPT
UK GOC	703 (653)	637 (596)	596/653 (91.27%)
ALL GOC	1550 (1456)	1430 (1347)	1347/1456 (92.51%)
UK ROC	94 (88)	87 (82)	82/88 (93.18%)
ALL ROC	156 (147)	146 (138)	138/147 (93.88%)
LRC	75 (71)	71 (68)	68/71 (95.77%)
ALL LRC	91 (85)	82 (80)	80/85 (94.12%)

**To all AMERC members:**

I am very sorry to advise you that our long-standing friend and colleague, Willie Williamson, passed away on August 13<sup>th</sup> 2023 after a short stay in hospital.

Those of you that knew him will remember his enthusiasm and commitment to AMERC over the years.

He was very much a larger-than-life character, and had been an active part of our organisation for many decades.

Along with Graham Lees, he edited many textbooks on the GMDSS, and he will be sorely missed.

His funeral was held on September 5<sup>th</sup> at the Landican Chapel in Birkenhead, Wirral.

Our sincere condolences go out to his family.

- *Paul Martin*  
*AMERC Chair*

## Ask AMERC

After the introduction of this new website feature, several questions have landed in the Ask AMERC inbox. Whilst we will endeavour to put all GMDSS-related questions to the wealth of collective knowledge within AMERC, I do need to take this opportunity to remind everyone that this ask feature is completely anonymous; to that end, please do not send in any questions specific to your centre, or your personal GMDSS certificate queries...and please try and keep the questions GMDSS-related!

### Question (received 28/06/23)

*"Hi just asking a question regarding the GMDSS maintainer course?*

*Once obtained does it need to be refreshed, I understand the operators' certs do (GOC, ROC) but can't find info on the maintainers course.*

*As a secondary question completing the maintainers course, does this equate to a restricted operators or just to maintain?"*

### Answer:

No GMDSS qualification (GOC, ROC and LRC) requires any maintainer or refresher courses in order to stay valid. Once the courses have been completed successfully, the qualification remains valid indefinitely.

The only "maintainer" courses AMERC are involved with are the "GMDSS Radio Maintenance" and "Electronic Navigational Equipment Maintenance (ENEM)" Certificates - details available in MGN384. These Certificates are incorporated within the Merchant Navy Training Board ETO scheme (Electro-Technical Officer) The "Radio Principles" Examination is also part of this scheme.

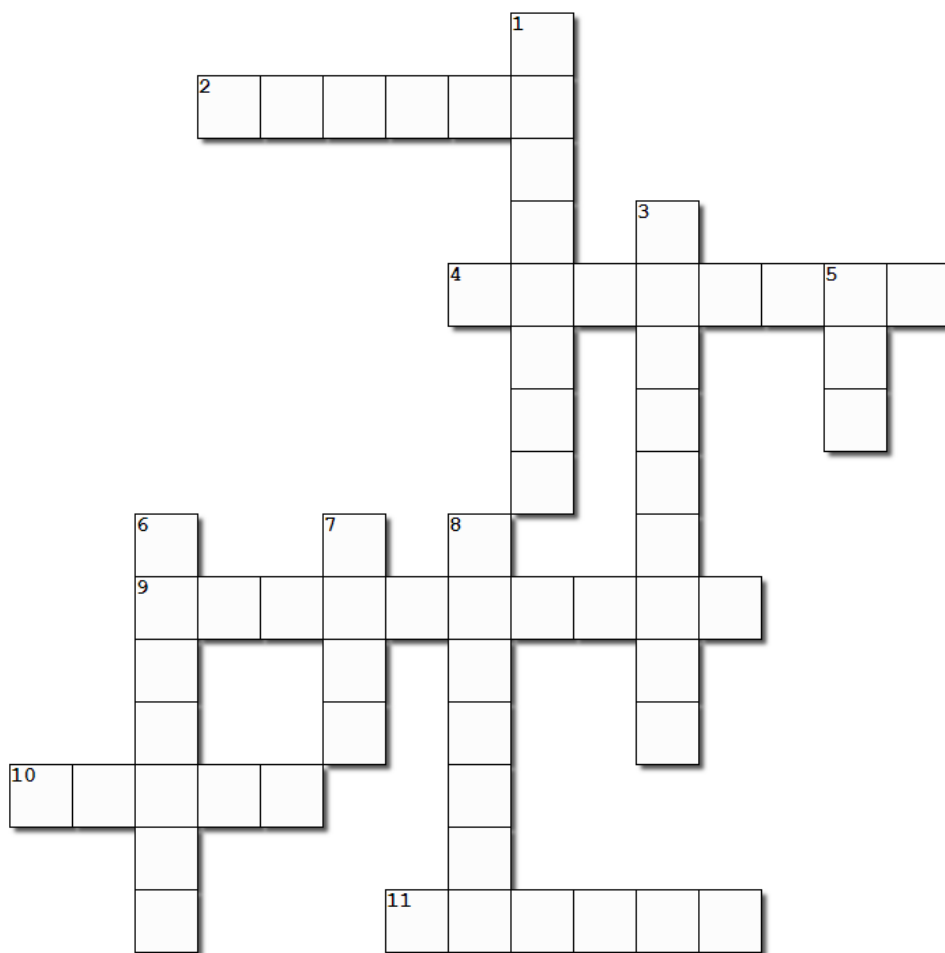
However, in the same way as the GOC, ROC and LRC, once obtained, these qualifications do not need to be updated or refreshed at any point.

The only item on a GMDSS certificate which will have an expiry date is any MCA STCW endorsement/revalidation (which lasts for a five year period). This process is separate to AMERC and handled entirely by the MCA. Any questions regarding MCA STCW endorsements/revalidations should be directed to [deck@mcga.gov.uk](mailto:deck@mcga.gov.uk)



**If you have any GMDSS queries you would like to throw at us (no matter how tricky or simple!) here's the link: [www.amerc.ac.uk/ask\\_a\\_question.php](http://www.amerc.ac.uk/ask_a_question.php)**

**GMDSS Criss-Cross Edition 90** - answers should be researched and/or confirmed by reference to ALRS / ADRS, *where appropriate*.



**Across**

- 2: Small country situated on north coast of Borneo (6)
- 4: Sea between Greenland and Canada (8)
- 9: The “I” in EPIRB (10)
- 10: NAVAREA XV (5)
- 11: “M\_\_\_\_\_ Island”; term for highest deck above navigating bridge on ship (6)

**Down:**

- 1: Sea to NE of Papua New Guinea (8)
- 3: “F” in “LUF” (9)
- 5: Procedure word for when communication is finished (3)
- 6: Battery type, L\_\_\_\_\_ manganese dioxide (7)
- 7: “H\_\_\_\_\_ Seas Conservation Treaty”; name of international agreement adopted in June to protect oceans (4)
- 10: Port city on north coast of Sicily (7)

**Issue 89 answers**

Across: 2= Simplex 6= Zanzibar 8= Menai 9= Greenwich 11= Zonguldak 12= Titan  
 Down: 1= Derrick 3= Navigational 4= CALMAC 5= Drilling 7= Aden 10= Spain