

AMERC News

Issue 92 – Incorporates Circular 314

July 2024

Editorial

Welcome to issue 92 of AMERC News - which doubles as **Circular 314** and, as such, must be circulated to all GMDSS instructors / examiners by their AMERC centre coordinator.

Welcome to a hefty edition of the newsletter...there's a lot to cover! For those of you who made the journey to attend our AGM in Newcastle-upon-Tyne, once again huge thanks for your involvement. If you couldn't be there this time around, you'll find the **AMERC AGM 2024 Report** on page 3.

On page 2, as usual, you'll find updates from the most recent **MCG open session meeting**, and the quarterly **NAC Statistics Report** for GMDSS examinations.

Maritime Miscellaneous is on page 7, featuring an update from the FM58 group regarding the new GMDSS syllabi changes

Our **Ask AMERC** feature returns on page 8, where we answer two questions, submitted anonymously 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

GMDSS Criss-Cross is back on page 9. 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...***

Thanks for reading!

Prue

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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 May 15th, 2024. The following items reflect discussions at MCG that may be of interest to Members and training centres.

New MCA Contact

The MCG welcomed Josh Dearing to the meeting in his capacity as AMERC's new contact within the MCA. Reza Nosrati was also present, and the MCG thanked him sincerely for his years of hard work. The Chairman reported that AMERC's GMDSS contract has been extended again until August 2024, due to the contract tender not yet being ready for release by the MCA.

New proposed format for GMDSS Exams

The Chief Examiner reiterated that during the Examiners' Panel meeting the following day, he will be explaining in full the proposed changes in format to the assembled group of examiners. There will then be a vote as to whether the examiners are in favour of the changes.

AMERC Chief Examiner Support visits – cost

The Chief Examiner suggested AMERC policy should be changed and simplified, so that the only time a centre would be charged for an in-person visit would be if the visit was required due to non-conformance. This means any "support visits" by the Chief Examiner (or a member of the EC) would no longer be chargeable to the centre. In the interests of working towards our charitable aims and objectives, the MCG voted unanimously in favour of this policy change.

Handbook Change

It was agreed that a statement is to be added to the AMERC Handbook, to clarify that any reference to "Inmarsat" refers to *all* approved RMSS simulators. At present, Inmarsat is the only approved simulator of that type, but this statement can be easily revised in future.

New Examiner approvals

The following examiner applications were considered, and approved by the MCG:
 - Rizwan Mammoo (full) – Glasgow City College
 - Matthew Blanchard (full) – RNLI
 - Nick Graham (probationary) – UKSA
 Congratulations to them!

Chief Examiner Reports

Keith recently conducted full audits for ASET, and interim audits for City of Glasgow, WMT, and the UKSA. All performed well with only a few corrective requirements to be implemented. Keith also conducted the ETO audit for Tyne Coast College, who have implemented the required corrective actions and were issued with their new 5-year AMERC ETO Course Approval Certificate. Congratulations to all these centres and thanks for the hard work.

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

GOC - UK exam numbers have increased by 10% while overseas exams have increased by 13%. UK first-time pass rate has increased by 3%, while the overseas rate remains largely the same.

ROC - exam numbers have remained the same for the UK, while overseas have decreased by 41%. UK first-time pass rate has increased by 9%, while overseas has increased by 7%.

LRC - UK exams have increased by 22%, while overseas exams have decreased by 50%.

GMDSS Examination Statistics – rolling annual report: National Administration Centre (NAC) examination statistics for the period **1st April 2023 – 31st March 2024** are shown below:

EXAMINATION	ENTERED (1st time)		PASSED (1st attempt)		% PASSED 1ST ATTEMPT	
UK GOC	778	(735)	729	(690)	690/735	(93.9%)
ALL GOC	1698	(1604)	1592	(1508)	1508/1604	(94.0%)
UK ROC	98	(94)	94	(90)	90/94	(95.7%)
ALL ROC	145	(141)	141	(137)	137/141	(97.2%)
LRC	88	(85)	83	(80)	80/85	(94.1%)
ALL LRC	106	(103)	101	(98)	98/103	(95.1%)

AMERC AGM 2024 Report

AMERC was delighted to host this event; it was wonderful to see so many familiar faces, and to meet some newcomers too.



As with the previous year, the Executive Committee and the Maritime Consultation Group met for their quarterly meetings the day prior to the AGM (Wednesday 15th May). During the closed meeting, the EC conducted their votes to appoint the following AMERC officers, the results of which were unanimously in favour:

- Company Secretary: *Prue Langfield*
- Company Treasurer: *Julie Cartwright*
- Chief Examiner: *Claire Gaskin***

**Subject to a probationary period of six months, where Claire will “shadow” Keith Mitchell for all Chief Examiner duties.

(All the above appointments are subject to three-year terms.)

During the AGM dinner, the Chairman thanked Keith Mitchell for his longstanding and invaluable services to AMERC, the impact of which cannot be overstated. Keith has kindly

offered to continue as Chief Examiner for another twelve months to ensure Claire's training is as thorough as possible, for which we are very grateful. The Chairman welcomed Claire as our new Chief Examiner (in-training!) and thanked her for stepping up to the plate.

To reiterate those comments: from all of us at AMERC are very happy to have Claire on board, and we wish her the best of luck as she learns the ropes. We would kindly request that all our centre coordinators and examiners offer her your cooperation, assistance, and patience during this handover period.

The AGM itself commenced bright and early at nine AM on Thursday 16th May. The votes were counted by the Company Secretary and verified by the Treasurer, results as follows:

Financial Matters:

Motion	Details	Outcome
1	Moore and Smalley are approved as accountants for 2024	<i>Approved</i>
2	The AMERC Accounts for 2023 are approved	<i>Approved</i>
3	The 2024 annual full membership fee is £270	<i>Approved</i>
4	The 2024 annual associate membership fee is £150	<i>Approved</i>
5	That a proposal for AMERC to donate £15,000 to the Slater Fund be approved	<i>Approved</i>

Election of New Members and Officers:

Motion	Details	Outcome
6	That an application for full membership from 3T Training Services be approved	<i>Approved</i>
7	That an application for associate membership from SSTG be approved	<i>Not approved</i>

Election of New Executive Committee Officers:

**NB: There were three vacancies available for application by full AMERC members*

Motion	Details	Outcome
8	That an application from Anindya Banerjee (seconded by Paul Martin) be approved	<i>Approved</i>
9	That an application from Doug Innes (seconded by Gregor McGowan) be approved	<i>Not approved</i>
10	That an application from Robbie Robertson (seconded by Steve Howard) be approved	<i>Approved</i>
11	That an application from Jonathan West (seconded by Paul Martin) be approved	<i>Approved</i>

Congratulations to 3T for their full membership approval; to Jon West for his continuing post on the Executive Committee; and a very warm welcome to Anindya and Robbie, both joining the Executive for the first time.

After the results were shared, there was a brief conversation about whether another in-person event should be considered for the AGM next year. This will be discussed in greater detail in due course. Some potential dates were discussed; May 16th was suggested but has since been discounted. Therefore, please can we ask that everyone keep **Wednesday 21st - Friday 23rd May 2025** in their diaries, if a three-day event is decided upon. If it is to be a one-day online event, this will be held on **Thursday 22nd May, 2025**.

We were very lucky to have two guest speakers give us their time and expertise this year. Parag Agnihotri and Ashutosh Apankar from TS Rahaman delivered a detailed and informative presentation on the new ARI Simulator being installed at the centre. Parag's videos allowed everyone to watch demonstrations of how the system works in a variety of training scenarios. A little later, Robbie Robertson gave a talk on Iridium and its use in GMDSS. He very kindly brought along a working Iridium terminal, which he set up in order to give delegates an opportunity to see some of its capabilities in action.

Guest speakers are always a welcome addition to the event, and all of us at AMERC once again extend our heartfelt thanks to Parag, Ashutosh and Robbie. If any of our members (or the extended AMERC family) would like to lead a presentation or discussion at an AGM, please do get in touch and let us know. Equally, if there's a particular company/organisation you'd like us to try and invite, your suggestions are always welcome.

If you would like to give AMERC some feedback on the event, please use [this link](#) to do so. It's always useful for us to hear positives and negatives so that we can improve things. Anything sent via that link is anonymous, but of course you're welcome to include your name if you wish.

Once again, big thanks to everybody who made the effort to attend this year. We hope as many of our membership as possible can attend in 2025, whatever form the AGM might take!

*- Prue Langfield,
AMERC Company Secretary*

Maritime Miscellaneous:

Our Vice Chairman Terry Slack has been attending various meetings with related maritime groups, including the FM58. We have been asked for updates on the modernisation of GMDSS, and the ensuing revisions to IMO guidelines. Terry has received the following confirmation from the CEPT ECC FM58 secretariat:

“The Rec(10)03 revision (LRC) was published by the WG FM on 16th February. The Dec(99)01 revision (GOC & ROC) was approved for publication by the ECC on 8th March, and is now available. The updated Syllabi complies in all respects with SOLAS Chapter IV implemented on 1st January 2024.”

These documents are publicly available here:

- [DEC\(99\)01](#)
- [REC\(10\)03](#)
- [REC\(31\)04](#)

Ask AMERC:

(Reminder: this ask feature is completely anonymous. Therefore, 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! – Ed.)

Question (received 22/03/24):

“Is there any pre-course reading material for the ROC course?”

Answer:

There are no “official” pre-course reading materials published by AMERC, but the EC recommended the following for beginners who wish to learn more about GMDSS prior to taking their course/exam:

- “RYA VHF Handbook: The RYA’s Complete Guide to SRC” by the Royal Yachting Association
- “GMDSS: A User Handbook” by Denise Brehaut

While neither of these could be used as comprehensive study guides, they contain useful supporting information.



Question (received 13/03/24):

“How long does it take for the GMDSS ROC to arrive after completion of the exam?”

Answer:

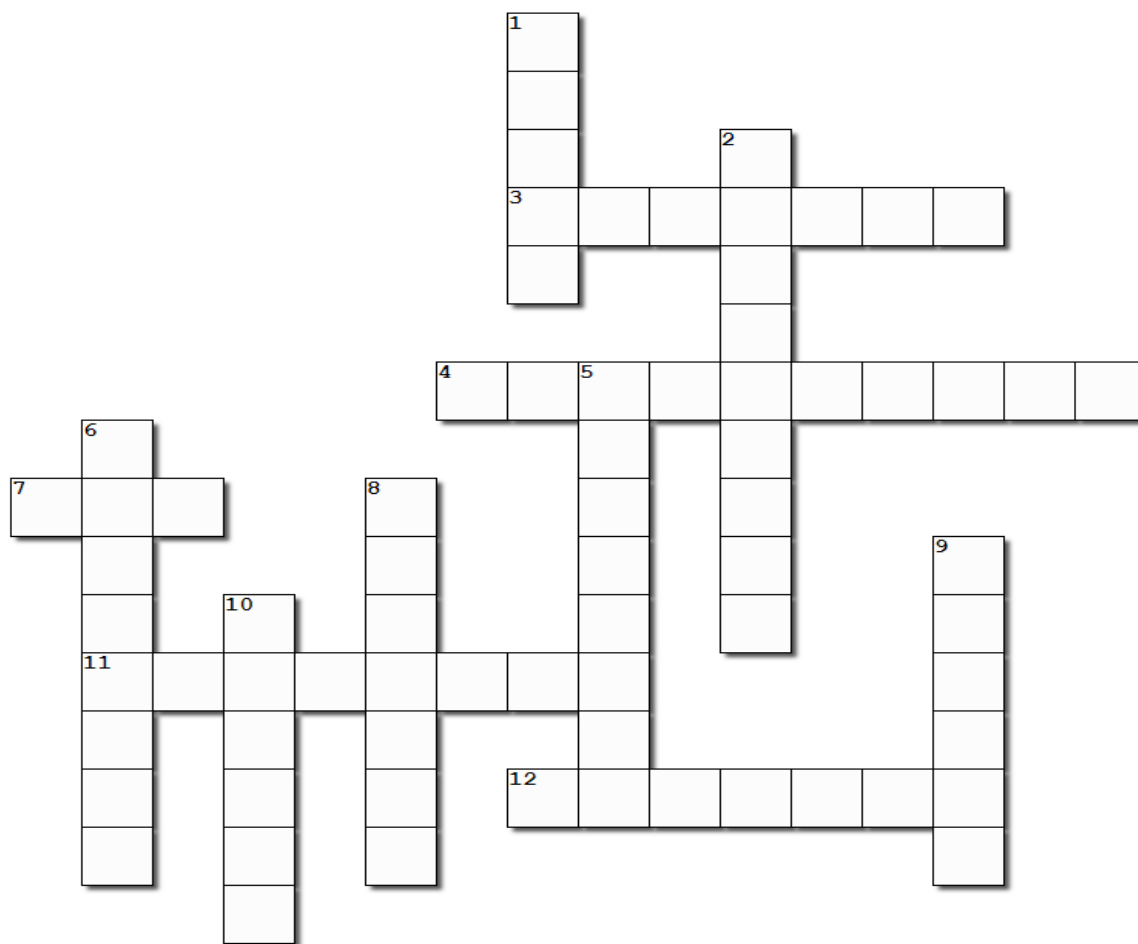
In the first instance, the examination centre must send all completed examinations to the AMERC NAC Manager. Once AMERC has received the paperwork from the centre, candidate certificates are processed, issued and dispatched within twenty-one days. (This does not include any national/international postage times.) The NAC’s turnaround time is often far quicker than twenty-one days, subject to workload.



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

GMDSS Criss-Cross Edition 92

Answers should be researched and/or confirmed by reference to ALRS / ADRS, where appropriate.



Across:

- 3: Angel of the North artist, Antony _____ (7)
 4: _____ Bridge: the newest curved bridge over the Tyne in Newcastle's city centre (10)
 7: Q code for "Are you busy?" (3)
 11: CRS on the Faroe Islands (8)
 12 MMSI MID code 310 (7)

Down:

- 1: Biggest cargo harbour in Estonia (5)
 2: City connected by direct ferry from Newcastle-upon-Tyne (9)
 5: Island east of Alaska, west of Russia, St _____ (8)
 6: ICS code 'DV' means "I am _____" (8)
 8: Gulf of _____, separating Finland and Sweden (7)
 9: Saudi Arabian CRS (6)
 10: NAVAREA II coordinator (6)

Issue 91 answers

Across: 5= Ronaldsway 7= Houthis 9= Salish 10= Navarino 11= Tsezar
 Down: 1= Samuel 2= Atmospheric 3= Malta 4= India 6= Caracas 8= Shikoku