

AMERC NEWS

Incorporates Circular 224

February 2006

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AMERC NEWS is the Journal of the Association of Marine Electronics and Radio Colleges.
It is distributed to all Members, Associates and Affiliates of the Association.
AMERC Ltd encourages the copying and wider distribution of AMERC NEWS.

EDITORIAL

Did you notice? The earliest AMERC NEWS has been published in the calendar year since it started in 1999. The reasons for a revised schedule, primarily the disbanding of formal meetings of the Electronics and Communications Board, were explained out in our last Issue.

This gives us the opportunity to give earlier advice of AGM. It so happens that AMERC and the Radio Officers' Association, which I chair, are both to have their AGMs at the same location, just weeks apart. I have been to the RNLi Poole Centre where they will be held and I can tell you that the accommodation and facilities are outstanding and the transport links are good. It should give us a good ambience for the debates and discussions. At the same time as Eric has advised us of the dates, he gets in early with a request for items for the agendas of the Examiners Panel and its sub groups and we hope you will comply. It is good of Eric to go this trouble to keep in touch when he has been so occupied attending STW37 assisting the UK delegation, but more of that later.

Sometimes it is hard work pouring over the MCA's M-Notices. While their importance would be acknowledged by us all, the sifting of the ones relevant to this Association can be time-consuming. But reading through them in the Warsash Library in the past few days, it came home to me how many this time were directly relevant to our work, especially in examining for the GMDSS. I pondered as I looked whether our non-UK Members look at them. Examining for a UK qualification the M-Notices have a relevance to them too and we would recommend all to have a look at the MCA website where the Notices are published.

While in hectoring mode, but acting as the mouthpiece of the Association, we repeat in this Issue Circular 223 which the Hon. Secretary sent out in December last and recently adopted procedures for dealing with Examination candidates who suffer from dyslexia. The procedures have been sent out by the NAC as a supplement to the Handbook.

Again I have to record the Association's thanks for contributions. Kim Fisher provides us with a briefing on the preparations for WRC 2007 and Steve Brett has sent in three useful Technical Updates. The latter are best seen on the Website where they can be seen in colour. Both these contributions are unsolicited and we are grateful to Steve and Kim for that. Does that stir *you* to write in to *your* Newsletter?

Brian Cotton

CIRCULAR 223

A Reminder

The Hon. Secretary has the duty to publish information, directives and legal notices from time to time. These appear in what are known as 'AMERC Circulars.' For convenience, such matters often appear in AMERC NEWS which is why each Issue is also numbered as a Circular. Where the AMERC NEWS publication dates do not fit the timings of the Hon Secretary's Circulars, a direct mailing results.

There was recently one such. You should by now have received **CIRCULAR 223**, dated **21st December 2005**. It read as follows:

GMDSS GOC and ROC

Centres are reminded that AMERC Ltd has responsibility for all GMDSS course approvals *and* for the QA for the examinations in the UK and abroad.

Any changes of location or changes to equipment fit or any other changes which might impact on the delivery of a course or examination **MUST** be notified to myself, in the first instance.

It is confirmed that responsibility for ALL ROC/GOC Course approvals passed to AMERC Ltd on the 1st June 2004.

Keith Mitchell
Honorary Secretary
AMERC Ltd
21st December 2005

EXAMINATION PROCEDURES FOR CANDIDATES WITH DYSLEXIA

The Association has adopted a policy for dealing with GMDSS Examinations candidates who suffer from dyslexia. The following Procedures have been circulated by the NAC and are to act as an official supplement to the GMDSS Examiners' Handbooks.

The Maritime Board, in consultation with the MCA, have agreed the following procedure for GMDSS (GOC, ROC and LRC) candidates who suffer from Dyslexia:

- The candidate should provide documentary evidence to support their dyslexia claim.
- The Chief Examiner should be advised, prior to the examination, of the candidate's disability. In the event that the Chief Examiner cannot be contacted, the NAC should be advised.
- Where it will assist the candidate, the examination papers may be printed on coloured paper. Alternatively, the candidate may use coloured acetate to cover the examination paper.
- The OPT and (where applicable) Regulations examinations should be carried out following standard procedures and timings.
- The SOLAS examination should be carried out following standard procedures and timings. When marking the candidate's script, the examiner should make allowances for mis-spelling and jumbled wording, but must adhere to the marking scheme particularly in the spelling of signals e.g. Mayday, Pan Pan etc. In the LRC and ROC, the SOLAS can be conducted as an Oral examination.
- The R/T exercise should be carried out following standard procedures. At the end of the exercise, the candidate may be allowed additional time to read through and check their logbook. Any alterations made at this time should, as is customary, be accompanied by the candidate's signature. The candidate's logbook should be marked following the standard marking scheme. With the exception of words which were spelled phonetically, e.g. callsigns, ships' names, the examiner should make allowances for mis-spelling and jumbled wording.
- Where the candidate's marks fall within the re-mark boundaries, a re-mark should be carried out.
- If after the examination, any concerns remain over the result for the candidate, the candidate's scripts should be referred to the Chief Examiner.

The Procedures are effective forthwith.

AMERC AGM 2006 EARLY ADVICE

The 2006 AGM will be held between Friday 26th and Sunday 28th May at the RNLI Centre, Poole in Dorset. Eric Lamb has provided us with the following early advice.

The format will be as in previous years with delegates expected to arrive on the Friday and leaving after breakfast the following Sunday. The AGM and the Examiners' Panel meetings will be held on the Saturday in the RNLI Centre.

The AGM Dinner and overnight accommodation will be provided at the Centre. Accommodation for two nights will be provided by the Association and a longer stay may be arranged on a personal basis for those who wish so to do.

Poole is well served by rail links and is no more than two hours from London Waterloo. There are two airports within easy travel, one being the Bournemouth Hurn Airport and the other at Southampton, which links to the direct rail connection. The RNLI complex is quite distinctive and a short walk from Poole Railway Station. There are also national coach services to Poole, including one from London Heathrow. You can find details of the Centre on:

www.rnli.org.uk

The Hon. Secretary will be sending out formal advice by Circular in due course. The Chief Examiner has asked that he be sent questions and answers for the SOLAS and Regulations papers together with comments on proposed changes to the OPT and R/T Exercise. Eric has asked that this be done as soon as possible to allow them to be considered by the relevant Group Leaders. The submissions should in any case be with Eric no later than 28th April, 2006.

MARITIME BOARD

The Maritime Board had its most recent meeting in December. As is usual it considered the Chief Examiner's Reports and other matters in progress. The following will be of interest to Members.

GMDSS DOCUMENTATION

The MCA has advised that GMDSS examination scripts should be retained for one year, unless there has been a query. In such cases, they should be retained for five years. Other records, such as Course Completion Certificate reference numbers, should be kept for twenty-five years.

REVALIDATION

The Board approved the Chief Examiner accompanying the MCA party to the STW37 meeting in January 2006. At that meeting, the revalidation of GMDSS was to be considered. We hope to have a report on the discussions and outcomes in our next Issue.

ETO

The MNTB Technical Committee is developing a training record book for graduate entry ETOs.

ITALIAN CENTRES

The Board has approved the entries of THESI and TST Taranto to their probationary periods. Both Centres will be allowed to offer the ROC.

INMARASAT-E

Centres are reminded that Inmarsat-E ceases operation at the end of this calendar year, 31st December 2006. See the M-Notices review on Page 8 for further information on this.

CECIL CLARK

We understand that Cecil Clark retired from the RNLI on 31st December 2005. The Association offers its best wishes to Cecil for a long and healthy retirement. It also thanks him for the contributions he has made to the Association's affairs, especially the business of the Maritime Board.

GMDSS EXAMINATION STATISTICS

EXAMINATION	ENTERED	PASSED
UK GOC	188	148
ALL GOC	313	265
UK ROC	53	50
ALL ROC	59	56
LRC	96	91

M-NOTICES (1)

The following M-Notices, relevant to the work of the Association have been published since the last Issue. Full details can be found on the MCA Website:

www.mcga.gov.uk

Overseas Centres are advised that the provisions in UK M-Notices can bear upon GMDSS Examinations and Coordinators should see that staff members are aware of their contents. Although relevant M-Notices are reviewed in AMERC NEWS, it is good practice to conduct searches in between Issues.

We have not been able to find any further items on the US Coastguard site but you are recommended to check that out also.

MGN 298 (M) Anti-Piracy Measures

This important Guidance Note advises on the latest trends in piracy. It identifies high-risk areas and usefully recommends anti-piracy techniques. It is an important summary of some twenty-eight pages and includes the radiocommunication and GMDSS procedures recommended in the case of piracy attack.

There has been a lot on this subject in the nautical press and journals. They all make interesting reading and from one such we note that the International Maritime Bureau (IMB) Piracy Reporting Centre issues daily reports on Inmarsat C SafetyNET. Further information can be found on:

<http://safety.inmarsat.com>
www.icc.ccs.org/prc/piracyreport.php

MGN 299 (M) Mobile Phones

This Guidance Note warns that the use of mobile telephones on the bridge of a ship is inappropriate in certain situations. It deals exclusively with problems arising from telephone calls conducted whilst undertaking procedures. It does not deal with possible electronic interference to radar which has been referred to elsewhere.

CORRI GENDUM MGN 286 (M+F) Radio Surveys

This Guidance Note amends the email address to be used to request radio surveys from Selenia. Note that this is a corrigendum to MGN286. Apart from this amendment, the original MGN286 remains in force.

M-NOTICES (2)

MGN 304 (M+F) Signals during SAR

This Guidance Note reminds us that ships in distress or engaged in SAR should terminate all non-emergency communications to prevent 'jamming.' Ships are also advised that they should offer all assistance to RCC in monitoring communications (IMO COMSAR Circular 13 refers). This Guidance Note supersedes MGN113.

MGN 305 (M+F) Inmarsat Barring

Inmarsat has advised IMO of an increasing number of shipowners failing to pay charges and being barred from access. Where Inmarsat has been forced to take such action, there are special measures in place to protect the safety functions. UK Inspectors have been instructed to check the status of the service on a survey with a test call.

When these special measures have been invoked, transmission of a position in SafetyNet is only possible using Priority 3 requests to an MRCC. MSI reception is not affected by barring.

This Guidance Note supersedes MGN39 and IMO Circular MSC/CIRC883 refers.

This is an important Guidance Note and Members are recommended to study it.

EPRI B REPLACEMENT MGN 302 (M+F) EPI RB Registration

This Guidance Note reminds seafarers of their obligations to register all EPIRBs carried on UK registered ships. It also gives details of how to do so. It replaces MGN 150.

A free EPIRB replacement programme has been instituted for users of the Inmarsat-E EPIRB service which is due to close on 1st December 2006. More than one thousand units for this purpose are being provided by ACR Electronics.

MGN 303 (M+F) Radio Aerial Lead-Ins

This Guidance Note draws attention to the risk of injury from exposed antenna lead-ins. It recommends trunking and the use of 'red-lines' beyond which permission to enter must be sought. The Note replaces MGN64.

INMARSAT EMAIL

The M-Notices frequently refer to decisions and changed procedures in Inmarsat services. Of interest will be the fact that Inmarsat has instituted an email newsletter service. To register visit:

www.inmarsat.com/publications.

WORLD RADIO COMMUNICATIONS CONFERENCE 2007

An Update on Preparations

By
Kim Fisher

Kim Fisher contributed to AMERC NEWS several times when he was Head of Navigation and Communications at the MCA. We have always been grateful for the updates he gave us. Kim has now retired from his post at the MCA and is now Secretary of IEC Technical Committee 80. Kim has kindly given us an update based on his new position. You see it below and it gives us an insight into the thinking, which is arising from the preparations for the important WRC to be held in 2007. It should be of substantial interest to our readers. We hope to have further updates as this matter develops.

After the Mobile Radio Conference of 1987, the ITU Radio Regulations were expanded to include two sets of operational procedures for Distress and Safety – those for the GMDSS and those for the pre-GMDSS operation. Initially the procedures were in two chapters, IX and N IX. After the 1997 WRC, when the “simplified” Radio Regulations were introduced, the pre-GMDSS procedures were moved to an Appendix 13 and the GMDSS procedures became chapter VII. A Resolution 331 linked the two, dealing with transition to the GMDSS.

WRC 2007 will be significant as the last conference that plans to have the topic of GMDSS procedures on its agenda. WRC 2007 therefore has to decide what to do with Appendix 13 and Resolution 331.

I have been chairing a joint IMO/ITU experts group that has been studying the issues. The conclusion to date is that there is no further SOLAS use for 500 kHz or 2182 kHz procedures. However, voice calling on VHF channel 16 is still valuable and should be moved from Appendix 13 into the GMDSS procedures of chapter VII. This has been supported by an IMO decision to continue a channel 16 watch when practicable on SOLAS ships.

A draft has been produced of a new chapter VII which has proved to be a more comprehensive revision than anticipated due to a need to better explain the existing GMDSS procedures. Other changes planned include a simplification of the carriage requirements for ITU documents, new MMSI codes for aircraft use and for AIS on Aids to Navigation and a review of the maritime HF allocations.

The exact date of the 2007 Conference has not yet been fixed but the preparation work will need to be largely completed during 2006.

MISCELLANY

COMMUNICATIONS

A £30m Institute of Advanced Telecommunications has been opened at The University of Swansea. The Institute will carry out research in various aspects of telecommunications. It will initially have forty academic staff and this is expected to rise fourfold.

NUMAST

NUMAST and its Dutch partner union FZW are planning to merge. The new union, to be called Nautilus is expected to come into being in 2008.

CHART RADAR

Sperry Marine has introduced a new generation of marine radars incorporating electronic charts. Details can be found on:

www.sperrymarine.com

QUALIFICATIONS VALIDATION

The Engineering Council UK (EC^{uk}) is providing a new service from its Technical Qualifications Validation Ltd. (TQV). This allows employers to check that an individual has the qualifications claimed. This is done by TQV accessing the EC^{uk} database of individuals and accredited courses.

WIND FARMS

The MCA is conducting investigations into reports that wind farms can create interference to ships' radars for a distance of 1.5 nm. It seems surprising that little has been made of this potential problem with the arguments about sustainable energy running so hard in the European press.

FOUNDATION DEGREEA

A new Foundation Degree for the UK Merchant Navy will come into operation in September 2006. It has been developed by the MNTB and is likely to become the standard entry method. Non-degree level courses will also be available for graduate entry and for ratings seeking to upgrade their skills. For details of the Foundation Degree, go to:

www.mntb.org

3D SHIP TRACKING

The MCA is pioneering a three dimensional computer based ship tracking system as part of the UK AIS network programme.

SHIPPING TRADE

UNCTAD has said that the volume of trade being carried by sea, already at record levels, grew by 4.3% last year and similar growth is expected this year. The dwt tonnage of the world's fleet was also up by 4.5%.

BACK PAGE

AMERC EXPENSE FORM

In the last Issue of AMERC NEWS, we advised that the mileage allowance for those making claims for travel on Association business would be raised to 40 pence per miles from 1st January 2006. Julie Oates has provided us with a new AMERC Expense Claim Form reflecting that change. This Claim Form, attached to this Issue, is effective forthwith and all earlier copies should be destroyed.

NEW ARRANGEMENTS

A reminder, if you need it that AMERC NEWS has a new publishing schedule. The next Issue (21) will appear in April 2006. The current Issue duals as Circular 224. The Hon Secretary published the one item Circular 223 in December 2005. That Circular is reproduced in this Issue on page 3.

TECHNICAL UPDATES

This Issue sees the return of the popular Technical Updates, prepared for us by Steve Brett. Three Updates are appended, dealing with High Definition TV, Marine Email using HF Radio and the Galileo Satellite Project. The latter has generated a large degree of interest in the specialist press. One of the most readable is that in the January 2006 edition of 'Seaways,' the Journal of the Nautical Institute.

We are most grateful to Steve for his efforts in bringing these Updates to us and are mindful of the large amount of research he carries out on our behalf. To see the Updates at their best, go to the AMERC website.

This Newsletter duals as Circular 224. Check you have a full file. All Issues of AMERC NEWS appear on the AMERC Website and back copies of the Circulars may be obtained from the Hon. Secretary. ***Don't forget to distribute your copies to your colleagues.***

Articles and suggestions for the next Issue of AMERC NEWS can be sent at any time.

Brian Cotton, Editor.

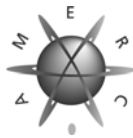
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AMERC NEWS

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ASSOCIATION OF MARINE ELECTRONICS AND RADIO COLLEGES

EXPENSE CLAIM FORM

1. CLAIMANT DETAILS		2. PAYMENT TO BE SENT TO	
Name _____		Address 1 _____	
Status (Please tick only one)		Address 2 _____	
Executive Committee Member	<input type="checkbox"/>	Address 3 _____	
Maritime Board Member	<input type="checkbox"/>	Address 4 _____	
Electronic & Comms. Board Member	<input type="checkbox"/>	Postcode _____	
Examiner	<input type="checkbox"/>	Tel. No. _____	
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>		
3. NATURE OF BUSINESS (Please tick only one)			
Executive Committee	<input type="checkbox"/>	Date of Business	<input type="text"/>
Maritime Board	<input type="checkbox"/>	Electronic & Comms. Board	<input type="text"/>
GMDSS	<input type="checkbox"/>	Government Agencies	<input type="text"/>
Other (please state)	<input type="checkbox"/>	ENEM	<input type="text"/>
4. CLAIM DETAILS			
Train fare (standard class)	£ _____	To	<input type="text"/>
Accommodation	£ _____	From	<input type="text"/>
Bus/Tube	£ _____		
Car allowance (40p/mile) miles done	<input type="text"/>	£ _____	
Meals	<input type="text"/>	£ _____	
Other (please state)	<input type="text"/>	£ _____	
TOTAL	£ _____		
<u>PLEASE ENSURE THAT YOU ATTACH RECEIPTS WITH YOUR CLAIM</u>			
Claimant's signature		Date	
5. RETURN TO:			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ AMERC Secretary, c/o Keith Mitchell, Jewel & Esk Valley College, Sector of Technology, 24 Milton Road East, Edinburgh, EH15 2PP ▪ EC Members ONLY, direct to AMERC Treasurer, c/o Wray Castle Limited, Bridge Mills, Stramongate, Kendal, LA9 4UB, UK ▪ Outreach examination expenses direct to AMERC NAC (GMDSS), c/o Wray Castle Limited, Bridge Mills, Stramongate, Kendal, LA9 4UB, UK 			
If you have any queries regarding payments, please contact Julie Oates at Wray Castle on Tel: +44 1539 742717 email: joates@wraycastle.com			
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Cheque No: _____		Sent _____	