

# AMERC NEWS

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Incorporates Circular 231

November 2007

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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

Time and tide – another ripple in the AMERC sands. It was a surprise to hear Sue Jones announce at the Maritime Consultancy Group that she would be retiring from Wray Castle Ltd., at the end of this year. She has been one of the recognisable ‘faces’ of AMERC and has had an influence on the Association’s affairs in so many respects – including putting your Editor straight when need be! We are going to miss her.

You may remember Keith Mitchell at this year’s AGM asking me to verify that members were queuing up to be voted onto the Executive Committee twenty-five years ago. That was certainly so and I well remember the intense and ingenious lobbying. It was also the case that centres desperately wanted to host the AGM and I suppose the thrust to be better and better reached its apogee when Singapore Polytechnic offered to hire a Boeing 707 to get us all out to their campus!!

I know the demands on professional time differ these days but Sue is right when she says ‘AMERC moves with the times.’ What I have observed in my recent eight years with the Association compared with my earlier eight, is how profound that moving with the times has been. AMERC is no longer a pressure group struggling to acquire curriculum change and enhance educational standards. It is now a highly respected educational business and anyone associated with the Association takes some of that shine. What has not changed is that to have a central role is a good career move. Keith was correct when he said that by rights there should be a number of aspirants knocking on the door. Half way through the year towards AGM, it is time to think about this, perhaps. Over to you.

Back to Sue. We shall look forward to welcoming Jackie King in her place and leave Keith Mitchell to pay tribute to Sue on behalf of us all in the Association and beyond:

*It has been my pleasure to work with Sue for over 10 years. When she took over from Carol in 1997 she served on the Maritime Board which I Chaired at the time. She ran the National Administration Centre most efficiently during those years but it was her huge contribution to AMERC’s Examination QA procedure that I, the Chief Examiner and AMERC Ltd EC will be most grateful to her for. Because of her diligence, she was able to highlight areas of concern which, when subsequently investigated, proved to be correct.*

*I know that I speak on behalf of the Chairman, Maritime Consultation Group (MCG), the Chief Examiner and AMERC Executive members when I thank Sue for her contribution to AMERC Ltd. We will miss her attendance at meetings and Examiners Panel/AGM and we hope that she will have a well deserved retirement that is long, fruitful and enjoyable.*

*Keith Mitchell  
Hon Secretary*

## SUE'S AU REVOIR

*We have had the following farewell letter from Sue Jones which we hope will just be an 'au revoir.' Keith Mitchell, our Honorary Secretary has responded at the foot of the Editorial.*

Dear Colleagues:

I will shortly be achieving a significant age milestone and it is with mixed emotions that I have decided to retire from my position at the NAC. I have now been doing the job for 12 years. Firstly I took over from Joan Hobbs and joined Carol Keeling as her assistant and then took over from Carol 10 years ago. It was a sharp learning curve! Just as I am about to leave, I feel as though I am coming to grips with the job, but as you will all know – AMERC moves with the times and the job is constantly evolving.

Jackie King will be taking over the position at the NAC and I am sure that you will give her the support that has been shown to me.

I hope to enjoy lots of walking in this beautiful environment of the Lake District in which I live; travelling; giving more time to my counselling work and support my daughter, who will be giving birth to my first grandchild in February.

I would like to thank you all – members of the Executive and Maritime Consultative Group, MCA Colleagues, REC Coordinators, Examiners and Administrators for the respect, support (both personal and professional) and for the friendships made within the UK and Overseas. The experience has greatly enhanced my life and I will carry treasured memories with me on my future adventures.

With very best wishes

*Sue*

## MARITIME CONSULTANCY GROUP (1)

*The MCG met in Kendal in late September and considered its usual mix of operational matters. Here is a report of some of those discussed at the meeting which may merit your attention or action*

### EXAMINERS' HANDBOOK

There is some hope that the Examiners' Handbook will be ready by the beginning of 2008.

There is still time to advise Phil Davies of any changes you believe should be incorporated.

Use [P.B.Davies@ljmu.ac.uk](mailto:P.B.Davies@ljmu.ac.uk) as Phil's contact email for Handbook comments and for enquiries in respect of ETO – see MCG (2) page 5.

### ASSISTANT CHIEF EXAMINER

Francis Rodrigues of TS Rahaman has been appointed as the Association's Assistant Chief Examiner (Overseas), having specific responsibility for the Indian sub-continent and Sri Lanka.

We welcome Francis to his new role with and wish him every success in carrying it out.

### TRANSAS SIMULATOR

Returning to discussions on the Transas TS4100 the MCG decided that a centre fitted with such an installation would be required to fit a live receiver. A work station for each student is the preferred arrangement and where R/T simulation is used it will be essential.

### EXAMINERS' ACTIVE LISTS

REC Coordinators are reminded that they have the responsibility to maintain an 'Active List' of GMDSS Examiners for their Centres.

Individual Examiners who no longer qualify for inclusion on the Active List are to be notified by the REC Coordinator and not the Hon. Secretary.

*AMERC NEWS 19, October 2005, page 6 refers.*

## GMDSS EXAMINATION STATISTICS

The GMDSS Examination Statistics for the period 01 April 2007 to 30 June 2007:

EXAMINATION	ENTERED	PASSED
UK GOC	262	214
ALL GOC	566	454
UK ROC	64	62
ALL ROC	73	71
LRC	141	132

## MARITIME CONSULTANCY GROUP (2)

### MNTB TECHNICAL COMMITTEE

Continuing a long AMERC tradition, the Association is represented on the Merchant Navy Training Board (MNTB) Technical Committee. This is an important role currently occupied by Phil Davies of the Lairdsie Maritime Centre. Phil provides each MCG with an update on events at the Committee and we hear that the Committee is currently engaged in discussing educational and training requirements for Electro-technical Officers, ETO. This must be an opportune time, given the number of advertisements for that rank in the Nautilus UK Telegraph.

### SCENARIO BASED OPT

A trial has been conducted at TS Rahaman and another is expected at South Tyneside College. AMERC NEWS will bring you details of the outcomes when they are available.

### RESULTS SHEETS

Sue has requested that examiners (including second markers) clearly identify themselves on the Results Sheets by putting their initials in upper case letters and not in script.

This will make for easier checking, an important part of the QA process.

### AMERC WEBSITE

Kevin Walsh gave the MCG a progress report on the design of the new website. The pages now have a pleasing and professional look to them which will be to the credit of the Association.

We will give details at a later date but one feature worth noting is that there is an intention to make the website useful for enquiries from candidates and prospective students.

## OPT EXAMINATIONS SAT-A WITHDRAWAL

Centres are reminded: the INMARSAT-A system will be switched off at one minute before midnight on 31 December this year. GMDSS compliant INMARSAT-B will replace SAT-A in the OPT Examinations from 01 January 2008.

In the last Issue (24) we said that Fleet 77 installations could be used for the OPT from the beginning of 2008. ***This is incorrect.*** Its introduction awaits further work by the Examiners' Panel.

History buffs will remember that SAT-A was introduced in February 1982, the first service to be delivered by INMARSAT. At its peak there were more than 18 000 terminals in use. It has had a good innings.

## M-NOTICES (1)

*The following M-Notices appear to have some relevance to Members. The full list of the current M-notices appear on the MCA website ([www.mcga.gov.uk](http://www.mcga.gov.uk)) to which reference should be made from time to time. Seemingly a number of these are of significance to national and international Members of AMERC.*

### MSN 1816 (M+F)

#### EPIRB REGISTRATION

This Notice gives a reminder of the provisions in the Merchant Shipping (EPIRB Registration) Regulations 2000. In particular it advises users that 406 MHz beacons must be registered and that any changes to are to be notified. Homilies about jeopardising SAR are given and the legal penalties spelled out.

The registration and quarterly monitoring processes by the authorities are explained.

Although much of this Notice may be stating the obvious to AMERC members, it provides course material.

Aug 2007

### MIN 301 (M)

#### LRIT REQUIREMENTS

A new addition to SOLAS Chapter V requiring Long-Range Identification and Tracking of Ships (LRIT) comes progressively into force from 01 January 2008. A ship will be required to transmit its identity, position, date and time at regular intervals. This is intended to assist SAR, safety and environmental protection. Exceptions include AIS fitted ships solely trading in A1 Areas and cargo ships of less than 300 gt.

October 2007.

### MGN 349 (M+F)

#### RADAR REFLECTORS

This Guidance Note summarises some of the environmental and physical factors that can degrade radar detection. It refers to the provision in SOLAS Chapter V which requires vessels of less than 150 gt to have X and S Band reflectors – if practicable.

The Note recommends yachtsmen to have a permanent installation of a reflector device of the best possible type (examples are given).

It also refers to the MAIB Report in respect of the loss of the yacht 'Ouzo' and gives links to the Report.

September 2007.

### MGN 350 (M+F)

#### SHORE-BASED

#### MAINTENANCE

This Note gives details of a set of requirements that must be met by any company offering shore based maintenance (SBM) of GMDSS equipment.

Four annexes to the Note specify the requirements to be met by SBM companies including the qualifications of service staff. Details of registration processes are included.

October 2007.

## M-NOTICES (2)

### MGN 345 (M) 'ALTERNATIVE COMPLIANCE'

This Guidance Note describes the Alternative Compliance Scheme (ACS). The Scheme aims to streamline processes of survey and certification while maintaining standards. It is also intended to minimise potential duplications of effort with classification societies. The Note advises on ACS requirements for relevant organisations.

The Note makes the point that the MCGA will still exercise control and employ its powers to deny or revoke certification where this proves necessary.

May 2007

### MIN 298 (M+F) SAFETY OF NAVIGATION (AIS)

MCA monitoring has revealed that some AIS systems have been found to transmit 1193046 as an incorrect MMSI. These may be accounted for by incorrect set-up or system default where mains and battery failure coincide.

This Information Note specifies how remedial action can be taken. It lists the equipments likely to transmit error signals in default mode.

January 2007

### MIN 290 (M+F) AIS ACCURACY

This Information Note is addressed to manufacturers and operators, warning that the MCGA has 'continued to receive reports of vessels transmitting incorrect AIS data.'

The Note warns of consequent dangers to navigation and the potential to destroy trust in the AIS system. It gives details of the types of errors and their probable causes.

MRCC will attempt to contact vessels by VHF DSC or voice where they suspect data is incorrect or missing and other authorities are encouraged to do so. Other AIS users are urged to report detected deficiencies to the local MRCC.

If the identified problems are not corrected, reports will be made to the appropriate Port State Control Authority.

July 2007

*NB: An article in Issue 15 of CHIRP (Confidential Hazard Information Reporting Procedures) Feedback has comments under the heading 'AIS Data Irregularity.' It says a number of reports have been received and gives details of one of them. It ends with a comment from a master who specifies that the AIS should be reset at the beginning of each watch. You can read more on: [www.chirp.co.uk](http://www.chirp.co.uk).*

## MARITIME MISCELLANY

### IMO GMDSS MANUAL

The IMO has issued a completely revised comprehensive handbook on the GMDSS system – The GMDSS Manual 4th Edition. It is intended to replace the existing GMDSS Handbook. Details may be had on the IMO website:

[www.imo.org](http://www.imo.org)

### CADETS BOOST

The highest number of trainees in years has enrolled in maritime courses at Fleetwood, Glasgow, South Tyneside and Warsash. This accounts for the large number of posts for maritime specialists being advertised in the educational and technical press.

### GLA RADIO NAVAIDS PLAN

The General Lighthouse Authorities of the UK and Ireland (GLA) have published a report on radio aids to navigation. Entitled '2020 The Vision' it sets out GLA plans in respect of the radio navigation aids: GPS, Galileo, DGNSS, AIS, eLoran and racons.

It is a quite interesting range through the various systems, spelling out their likely future impacts on the navigation of vessels and the GLA intentions.

The plan can be inspected on the Trinity House site.

[www.trinityhouse.co.uk](http://www.trinityhouse.co.uk).

## SEAWAYS ARTICLES

'Seaways' is the Journal of the Nautical Institute and your centre library should have a subscription. There were two interesting articles in the September 2007 Edition.

The first was by Professor David Last, President of the Royal Institute of Navigation. Professor Last points up the weaknesses in global navigation systems, including interference by tv harmonics. In summary he suggests a combination of GPS and enhanced Loran.

Professor Last points out that it is not surprising that a GNSS signal is subject to interference if it is no more powerful than a car headlight and is shared over half the earth's surface.

In the same Issue, Dr. J. Januszewski of the University of Gdynia compares different satellite systems, GLONASS, GALILEO, COMPASS GPS and regional systems such as those in India and Japan. He comments on attempts to search for compatibility between various systems.

*Both articles are an interesting read - Ed*



**AMERC NEWS**  
**SELECTED INDEX**  
 (Updated each Issue)

January 2005 – July 2007

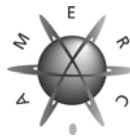
TOPIC	DETAIL	A N	DATE	Pp
Admiralty	Charts to common datum (MIN 272)	24	Jul 07	13
ADRS	Admiralty Digital Radio Signals Vol 6	23	Mar 7	9
Aerials	Dangers from lead-ins (MGN 330)	22	Nov 06	8
	Ditto (MGN 303)	20	Feb 06	8
African Centres	MRCC & MRSC established	22	Nov 06	8
	Capetown MRCC operational	24	Jul 07	12
AIS	Accuracy of transmission (MIN 231)	21	Jun 06	8
	Carriage requirements (MSN 1795)	21	Jun 06	8
	Class B UK trails (MIN 268)	23	Mar 07	6
	Double ended ferries (MGN 321)	21	Jun 06	8
	Monitoring coastal shipping – UK	22	Nov 06	13
	Navigation aids systems	21	Jun 06	10
	Operational guidance (MGN 277)	17	Feb 05	9
	Performance Standards	23	Mar 07	8
	RCC Network – UK	19	Oct 05	9
	Small craft Class B (MIN 199)	19	Oct 05	7
	UK chain operational	22	Nov 06	8
	USCG space based AIS	24	Jul 07	13
	VHF use & ITU Regulations (MGN 324)	22	Nov 06	8
AMERC Address	Registered Office in Kendal	21	Jun 06	4
	Hon. Secretary address change	24	Jul 07	4
Committees	New Committee & Board structures	22	Nov 06	3
Course Audit	Chief Examiner to inspect timetable & notes	23	Mar 07	5
Course Approvals	AMERC provides certificates	22	Nov 06	4
CSOC	Discussions with HMCG	21	Jun 06	7
DSC	Test call auto response from USCG	24	Jul 07	13
Examinations	Appeals on termination flow chart	24	Jul07	5
	Application Forms – completing	21	Jun 06	5
	Application Forms – Re-examination	23	Mar 07	4
	Digital Photography allowed	23	Mar 07	4
	Dyslexic Candidates	20	Feb 06	4
	Earlier attempts	21	Jun 06	7
	Payment Methods	21	Jun 06	5
	Payments to NAC – correction	19	Oct 06	6
	Retention of Scripts	20	Feb 06	6

	Scenario based OPT trial agreed	21	Jun 06	6
	Scenario-based OPT working party	24	Jul 07	8
Examiners	Active Lists	21	Jun 06	7
	Active Lists	19	Oct 05	6
	Active Lists	17	Feb 05	3
	Access to Chief examiner via REC only	24	Jul 07	7
	Deputy & Assistant Chief Examiners	23	Mar 07	3
	Handbook 6th Edition	17	Feb 05	3
	Taxation & Insurance	19	Oct 05	10
EPIRB	Registration required (MGN 302)	20	Feb 06	8
	Non SOLAS vessels (MSN 1810)	24	Jul 07	13
Expenses	New Claim Form	20	Feb 06	11
GOC	Proposed revision – Willie Williamson	23	Mar 07	15
	Critique of structure – Willie Williamson	24	Jul 07	9
HMCG	AMERC recognition of CSOC	23	Mar 07	4
	CSOC & RCSOC recognition finalised	24	Jul 07	4
ITU WARC	Preparations for 2007 – Kim Fisher	20	Feb 06	11
	Ditto	22	Nov 06	11
	Ditto	24	Jul 07	11
INMARSAT	Barring & Safetynet (MGN 305)	20	Feb 06	8
Licences	Ofcom reforms to ship radio licences	23	Mar 07	7
LRC	Class E DSC controllers - examinations	22	Nov 06	5
LRIT	Identities for SAR & security	22	Nov 06	13
Loran C	Trial transmissions from Rugby	19	Oct 05	8
	USCG Consultation	23	Mar 07	9
Membership	(Full) Red Ensign, RNLI, (Ass) Kim Holt	21	Jun 06	4
	(Full) THESI, CERNET, Starcenter, UKSA	24	Jul 07	3
	(Full) Western Training Association	24	Jul 07	3
	(Ass) Shetland School of Nautical Studies	24	Jul 07	3
	(Ass) TST, Australian Maritime College	24	Jul 07	3
	City College Plymouth (resigned)	24	Jul 07	3
MNTB	GOC approval documentation revisions	22	Nov 06	4
	GMDSS Guideline Revised	21	Jun 06	7
Mobile Phones	Radar interference (MIN 290)	19	Oct 05	7
	Warnings against misuse (MSN 299)	20	Feb 06	7
MSI	Change to UK transmissions	23	Mar 07	9
Navtex	Standard Abbreviations (MIN 265)	23	Mar 07	6
NAVRAS(M)	Use of GMDSS procedures	24	Jul 07	10
OPT	Sat B or F77 replace Sat A January 2008	24	Jul 07	9

Perth LES	Close down	23	Mar 07	9
Pirate Broadcasts	Forbidden (MGN 320)	21	Jun 06	5
Piracy	Alerting by DSC	22	Nov 06	5
	Modern Piracy - W. Williamson	17	Feb 05	7
	Anti-piracy Measures (MGN 298)	20	Feb 06	7
Revalidation	Sea-time requirement	22	Nov 06	4
	Ditto	19	Oct 05	6
Revalidation	Surveyors and pilots	24	Jul 07	10
	STW 37	21	Jun 06	7
Radar	Performance standards(MIN 246)	21	Jun 06	7
	Corrigendum (MGN 298)	20	Feb 06	7
	Mobiles' Interference (MIN 290)	19	Oct 05	7
SAR	Signals in distress & SAR (MGN 304)	20	Feb 06	8
Safe Practices	MS Regulations 1998 (MIN 235)	22	Nov 06	8
Security	Ship Security - Phil Davies	22	Nov 06	9
Shore Maintenance	Selenia Contract (MGN 292)	19	Oct 05	7
SOLAS	Chapter V amendments (MSN 1812)	23	Mar 07	6
	Radiocommunications (MSN 1810)	23	Mar 07	6
Surveys	Selenia Contacts (MGN 286)	20	Feb 06	7
Training Schemes	Using the VQ route (MGN 8)	22	Nov 06	8
Transas	GMDSS Simulator	22	Nov 06	6
	Hard panel needed for Version 4000	24	Jul 07	4
Use of Equipment	Maintenance records (MGN 331)	22	Nov 06	8
VDR	Performance Testing (MGN 272)	17	Feb 05	9
Website	Ideas needed	24	Jul 07	12
W/T Act 2006	Consolidation of Acts post-1949	23	Mar 07	10
Yacht Officers	Deck Officer CoC (MSN 1892)	23	Mar 07	6

**NOTES:**

- (i) **This is a selective index and only records items to which reference is likely to be needed. It is updated with each Issue of AMERC NEWS.**
- (ii) **Issues 22 to 25 are in pdf format and are fully searchable.**
- (iii) **Quarterly GMDSS Statistics provided by the NAC appear in each Issue.**
- (iv) **Technical Update supplements in pdf format together with an index can be found on the AMERC Website, [www.amerc.ac.uk](http://www.amerc.ac.uk).**



## 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 _____		
Executive Open Session <input type="checkbox"/>	Address 4 _____		
Examiner <input type="checkbox"/>	Postcode _____		
Other <input type="checkbox"/>	Tel. No. _____		
<b>3. NATURE OF BUSINESS</b> (Please tick only one)			
Executive Committee (closed session) <input type="checkbox"/>	Date of Business _____		
Executive Meeting (open session) <input type="checkbox"/>	ENEM _____		
GMDSS <input type="checkbox"/>	Government Agencies _____		
Other (please state) <input type="checkbox"/>	_____		
<b>4. CLAIM DETAILS</b>			
Train fare (standard class) _____	£ _____	To _____	
Accommodation _____	£ _____	From _____	
Bus/Tube _____	£ _____		
Car allowance (40p/mile) miles done <input type="text"/>	£ _____		
Meals _____	£ _____		
Other (please state) <input type="text"/>	£ _____		
<b>TOTAL</b> _____		£ _____	
<b><u>PLEASE ENSURE THAT YOU ATTACH RECEIPTS WITH YOUR CLAIM</u></b>			
<b>Claimant's signature</b> _____		<b>Date</b> _____	
<b>5. RETURN TO:</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ AMERC Secretary, c/o Keith Mitchell, Jewel &amp; Esk Valley College, Sector of Technology, Eskbank Campus, Dalkeith, Midlothian, EH22 3AE</li> <li>▪ EC Members ONLY, direct to AMERC Treasurer, c/o Wray Castle Limited, Bridge Mills, Stramongate, Kendal, LA9 4UB, UK</li> <li>▪ Outreach examination expenses direct to AMERC NAC (GMDSS), c/o Wray Castle Limited, Bridge Mills, Stramongate, Kendal, LA9 4UB, UK</li> </ul>			
If you have any queries regarding payments, please contact Julie Oates at Wray Castle on Tel: +44 1539 742717 email: <a href="mailto:joates@wraycastle.com">joates@wraycastle.com</a>			
<b>6. AMERC USE ONLY – Authorised by:</b> _____			Acc. Code _____
Secretary		Treasurer	
Cheque No: _____		Sent _____	

## BACK PAGE

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### NEW EXPENSES FORM

In the last Issue (24) we gave notice of the change of address for the Hon. Secretary, Keith Mitchell. This has given rise to the need to amend the AMERC Expenses Form. You can find one such on page 11 of this Issue and it is to be used for claims forthwith.

### TECHNICAL UPDATE

Steve Brett has been in touch again, providing another Technical Update. TU031 (see Page 12) gives details of the so-called EH antenna which claims 90% efficiency from a small vertical structure. As Steve says it might be helpful in improving NAVTEX reception.

Alert as ever, Steve has commented that Kim Fisher's update on preparation for WRC07 in the last Issue (24) contained information about a proposed introduction of email over H.F. marine radio. Steve points out that TU023, with Issue 20, February 2006, provides background information on this very subject.

It is good of Steve to think of us and send on material. I have seen pictures of his area under water and at its height he could only walk around in fisherman's waders.

### SEASON'S GREETINGS

The next Issue of AMERC NEWS will be early in 2008, so this is the time to send all readers the compliments of the festive season and to wish them a prosperous and contented New Year.

*Best Wishes*  
*Brian Cotton*

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This Newsletter duals as Circular 231. Check you have a full file. All Issues of AMERC NEWS appear on the AMERC Website and are fully searchable from Issue 22 onwards. Copies of the Circulars may be obtained from the Hon. Secretary. ***Do not forget to distribute 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  
Editor: Professor Brian Cotton  
AMERC Website: [www.amerc.ac.uk](http://www.amerc.ac.uk)

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