



South African Radio League

Amateur Radio Hall of Fame

Alistair Campbell, ZS5MU

Inducted in 2017



Alistair was born in 1933 and died in 2011, aged 78.

In the late Seventies, Alistair helped a friend to build a yacht. Alistair would keep in touch with him using amateur radio, providing him with weather reports and other useful information. Soon, other vessels started checking in and the South African Maritime Mobile Net was born around 1979.

Alistair obtained his information from Durban Radio. Unlike today's Internet channels, information had to be laboriously copied down by hand. He also liaised with other nets, particularly the Travellers' Net in Australia, (Arthur Oliver, VK6ART, and Roy Chamberlain, VK6BO); and a net run by the late Tony Britchford, 5Z4FZ, from Kilifi, Kenya.

Having built a relationship of trust with the Marine Rescue Co-ordinating Centre in Cape Town meant that when there was a distress call from a yacht, MRCC knew that the information passed was current and accurate.

1982 was the start of the BOC "Around Alone" solo yacht race. Alistair assisted with communications and was hosted by the sponsors while the yachts were in Cape Town. The Cruising Association of South Africa and The Royal Cape Yacht Club presented Alistair with an award for his part in the first leg of the race.

In 1983, at a ceremony at the Point Yacht Club in Durban, Alistair was awarded the prestigious CIG communication prize, an Aboriginal Message Stick, for assisting the BOC Around Alone yachts and the rescue of Tony Lush from his severely damaged vessel, *Lady Pepperell*. Three yachts were lost during that event. In November, between Cape Town and Sydney, *Lady Pepperell* was knocked down and rolled by a rogue wave. Weather and location positions were monitored and relayed between Alistair and radio amateurs in Portsmouth and New Zealand. Such incidents throw into relief the value of the Maritime Mobile Network.

Other operators assisted and ran the Net during periods when Alistair and Davina were away; as in 2005 while Alistair recuperated from a stroke.

On 6 December 2009, Alistair and Davina hosted their 30th annual World Cruiser's BBQ at their home in Umzumbe, south of Durban. The yachting fraternity presented Alistair with a 30 year certificate as well as an engraved miniature ship steering wheel. The SARL awarded a certificate in recognition and appreciation of this achievement.

At his death, the Net continued operating at the hands of Sam Maree, ZS1SAM, and Graham Griggs, ZS2ABK.

The SARL Icom Excellence Award for 2000 was presented to Alistair and his wife Davina, ZS5GC. This award is bestowed annually by SARL Council on the amateur who through his/her activity in the Amateur Service has brought international recognition to South Africa.

In 2005, New Zealand's Amateur Radio Community Service Award was presented to net controllers Alistair and Davina. Also in 2005, Alistair was awarded the Nokia Siemens Community Service Award by the South African Amateur Radio Development Trust, on the 25th anniversary of the net. SARL awarded him a special certificate which formed part of SARL's 80th anniversary celebrations.

