



The Personal Locator Beacon - It Locates You!

by VINCENT T. PICA, II

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When the perfectly calm day sneaks up on you while you are day-dreaming and turns into a snarly, life-stealing beast, all your training rushes to the front of the "screen." But sometimes, all your skill isn't going to get you home. And sometimes the boat itself is what betrays you as she threatens to slip away beneath you. You are going to be hard to find - unless you are sending a personal signal to the satellite who will call the USCG for you. This column is about that.

Trained in Saving Yourself

Back in the day, we wrote about the various locator devices (see SSP, "EPIRBs, PPIRBs and GPIRBs - What's That?", 11/29/06) and how they were evolving. One of those devices, the "PPIRB" (pea-purr-b) is a Personal EPIRB. This is what we now call a "PLB" or Personal Locator Beacon. You wear it on your person. It also has the built-in GPS. When you attain a coxswain rating in the USCG Auxiliary (the person responsible for the boat, the crew and the mission), the USCG gives you a PLB. "Even if you go hiking, take this with you. If you get lost, we've got too much invested in you not to come get you!" Be aware that there are private companies now that offer devices that can locate you while you are underway and offer rescue notification services. I have no fully formed opinion of them, pro or con, but if I am not registering myself and my device with NOAA (<http://www.beacon-registration.noaa.gov/>), then I have to figure that my call for help has to pass through at least one additional set of hands...

Back in the day...

The old model EPIRBs transmitted on dual frequencies of 121.5 and 243 megahertz (MHZ). This was hopefully picked up by passing planes and satellites. It could take 4-6 hours for someone or something to pass overhead before it reached the USCG. Also, the footprint that you were within could be as much as 12 square nautical miles. That is a square that is 12nm long and 12nm miles wide. That is a lot of water to cover. On the USCG website (www.navcen.uscg.gov/marcomms/gmdss), it says that the 121.5/243MHZ devices are "no longer recommended."

The State of the Art...

Interestingly, the 121.5MHZ frequency is favored for radio direction finding (RDF). So the newest EPIRBs now transmit simultaneously on 406MHZ and 121.5MHZ. The 406 reduces the footprint to 1 square nautical mile. And the 406MHZ is heard by satellites all over the world and, within an hour, the USCG RCC will have commenced coming to your aid. And the rescuers will also be looking for your EPIRB's 121.5MHZ signal with their RDF gear. In heavy seas, that may very well be the difference between passing right by you while you are in the trough - or knowing that you are just over the next wave...

But My Boat Has An EPIRB

Good! I just hope you don't fall off the boat... Or, as the tale below details, your

EPIRB battery, which you dutifully replaced (as I just did!) by shipping it to the lowest-cost provider of battery replacement services that could be found on the internet, doesn't fail at the time that it is most needed - as you grab it in an abandon ship scenario...

From Ocean Navigator, 3/16/2010

I read everything about the sea that I can get my hands on - hard copy, electronic, notes in bottles... Back in March, Ocean Navigator magazine published a story by Fredrick Gary Hareland about this same subject and Mr Hareland recounted in his story the following about the crew of a 57' vessel making way from Hong Kong to Phuket when disaster struck:

"In closing, I must inform you that our crew and passengers on board that 57 footer were all rescued thanks to the master's back-up PLB. Turns out the EPIRB failed to deploy, but that little handheld PLB got the alert through and the victims are toasting it and each other while retelling their recent adventure."

Redundancy will look very cheap and very smart, if/as/when... and they fit in your pocket.

BTW, if you are interested in being part of USCG Forces, email me at JoinUSCGAux2010@aol.com or go direct to John Blevins, who is in charge of new members matters, at FSO-PS@emcg.us and we will help you "get in this thing..."



by TONY SALERNO

FISHING WITH TONY CAN'T TAKE THE HEAT? GO FISHING

To say it's been a hot summer would be an understatement. Quite frankly it has been a summer scorcher. However, one of the best ways to beat the heat is to hit the water with a rod in your hand and let the refreshing late morning southwest breeze be your reviver. Just make sure to have hats and plenty of sunscreen lotion on hand as well as plenty of cool water and you'll be set to go. And go you will want to do, as the fishing is top rate considering what the calendar and outside temperatures are saying.

Along the north shore, Candy Caraftis of Caraftis Fishing Station on Main Street in Port Jeff Village reports there are still plenty of fluke around in the 40 to 60 foot depths off Cedar Beach, Buoy 11 and Cranes Neck. Basic fluke rigs and fluke bullets tipped with sand eels or spearing are doing the trick with fish to 8-pounds.

If porgies are more of your forte, Candy says you won't be disappointed as they are plentiful at Old Field and Crane's Neck, and the Middle Grounds. Caraftis also adds you have to chum, so don't be cheap, a few extra dollars will get you all the big porgies you want. In addition, the sea bass are mixed in with the porgies with some nice keeper in the batch.

Bluefish are everywhere and striped bass are at the Middle Grounds with bunker chunks working the best. Keep in mind that Caraftis has fresh bunker, live eels, fresh clams, salted clams, and shiners, cut and whole squid, and Peruvian spearing. Therefore if plan on visiting the area, make sure to stop on into Caraftis for all your bait and tackle needs.

Along the south shore, fluke continue to keep rods bending and faces smiling as there seems to be no let up on the action both in and out of Shinnecock and Moriches Bays. Most of the action in both bays is confined to the last two hours of high tide into the first two hours of the outgoing. In Shinnecock just west of the Ponquoque Bridge and the East Cut have been best, while in Moriches, the fish are spread from buoy 14, eastward to buoy 26. Bucktails and teasers tipped with spearing are doing a fine job with one out of 15 fluke being a keeper.



DJ Russo with a 9-pound fluke caught aboard the Center Moriches based open boat the Rosie

VOTE NO VILLAGE TO HELP THE POOR!

The Incorporation Of Mastic Beach, NY will make the Poor and the Middle Class HOMELESS and their PETS WILL BE PUT TO DEATH so if the MBPOA and YOU, really want to stop it, visit HonestFrank.com or call 1-631-395-3522 and bring many Poor people to Brookhaven Town Hall at One Independence Hill, Farmingville, NY on August 17, 2010 at 5pm to fill out the 3 Comment cards after me, who didn't Register To Vote yet at the MBFD on August 31, 2010 so that I can speak longer on Channel 18 to prove we need more time to get these residents Registered and more and visit

PaulBreschard.com,

MasticBeachVillageExploratoryCommittee.com, FrankFugarino.com,

MasticBeachPropertyOwnersAssociation.com, VictorZeleny.com,

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