

Not Your Grandpa's Rescue Flare

The Greatland Rescue Laser Flare brings safety at sea into the 21st Century

By Capt. Gerard Sperry

FLARES HAVE SAVED MANY A BOATER; they're critical when you need them but a pain in the storage bin and the wallet when you don't. To start with, the handheld variety come in sets of four and cost about \$40. You can't buy them via the internet because they are too volatile to ship through the mail. So, you can pick up a freshly made set (flares lose 25% of their firepower in the first year) at your local chandlery and tuck them away in a safe, dry spot that's reasonably accessible. Hopefully, there they'll just sit for three seasons when it will be time for new ones. Expired flares need to be disposed of safely, not out with the trash.

But when you need 'em, you need 'em. The handhelds burn for about three minutes and the aerials for just six seconds. Let's hope someone is looking.

Enter the laser—a technology that's over 50 years old comes to the rescue of boaters who are in distress or just need a bit of help finding the next mark. The Rescue Laser Flare Magnum is just six inches long and blasts out as much distress signal as over 4,300 one-minute flares on two AA batteries. This little gem can be seen up to 20 miles away at night and somewhere between one and three miles in daylight. It is waterproof up to 80 feet, so there's no problem keeping one in a wet dinghy or attached to a life jacket. It will bounce back off reflective surfaces, illuminating the mark as though it was electrified.

In open waters, one can signal help without concern for the limited light time. Maybe that's a rescue boat in the distance. Perhaps it's not. You won't worry about "wasting" a flare. With

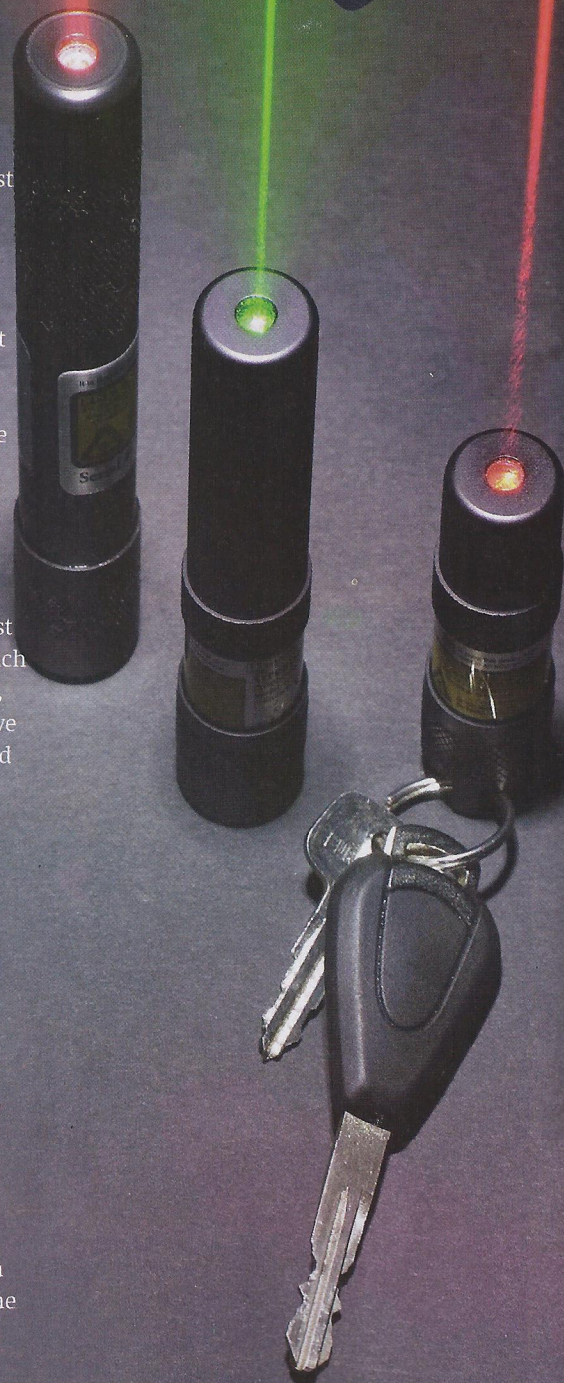
72 hours of "run time" you can aim at anything that might mean rescue. Just twist the laser on and use the aiming ring to hit your target. At 16 miles, it will throw a 6,000-foot spray of light, making it hard to miss. That is the innovation that separates this product from the typical laser pointer. A laser pointer would have to make a direct hit to the eye to be seen. Regarding eye safety, once you are more than 13 feet away, the rescue laser flare will do no harm, just get attention.

We run our dogs on an uninhabited island about a mile from our dock. Last night we lit up the entrance to the beach even before we got aboard. Once there, we let the dogs run free. Their reflective collars made them easy to spot on land and in the water. On the way back, we took aim on the boats anchored at Christmas Cove, about 2 miles away. We picked up everything that had reflectivity, including mooring balls.

The only disappointment—and it is minor and hopefully temporary—the US Coast Guard has not yet approved the Laser Flare. The company is currently working with the committee on electronic visual distress signal devices to get this ten-year old product included in the new regs. expected out later this year. But that won't stop me from tucking my "fireworks" away in a dry spot and keeping a Laser Flare at the ready. The Magnum Rescue Laser Flare retails for \$109.99.

Capt. Gerard Sperry has a 100-ton USCG ticket with towing and aux. sail endorsements, living and sailing in the beautiful waters of the U.S. and British Virgin Islands.

TEXT
GREATLAND
TO 90210
FOR A CHANCE
TO WIN



Scan the QR
Code for more
information
about winning!

