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MUGELNOOS

FEBRUARY 19, 1991 - No. 683

AN EIGHT PAGE ISSUE

A newsheet published by and for the Ski Mountaineers and Rock Climbing Sections of the Sierra Club's Angeles Chapter since 1938. Issues are currently published Nov, Jan, Feb, Mar, Apr, May. Send subscriptions and address changes to Pat Holleman, 1638 6th St., Manhattan Beach, CA 90266. \$7 per year due in October. Subscription payments are not tax deductible as charitable contributions.

SKI THE DROUGHT * A TRAINING EXERCISE

January 26, 1991

In what is fast becoming the driest year on record, technology has provided Southern Californians with the "best" skiing conditions in the state. "Best" of course can mean many things, but in view of what little we have, let's just say it's white, slippery, and the rocks are covered.

Everything else depends on how badly you need a skiing fix, if your edges are sharp, and your tolerance for crowded slopes. Into this local scene, the SMS did again step with our annual Ski Mountaineers Training Camp at Keller Hut and on nearby slopes of Snow Valley.

Even in this bleakest of dry years, 21 still turned out to hone their skiing skills. (Skiers are forever optimistic...the drought could break tomorrow, better be ready; the next set of clouds may bring the big dump.) As always, the students were greeted by the usual enthusiastic SMS staff. Those good folks included Anna Zordan, reservations; Rose Lynch, chef and supply officer; Nancy Gordon, hut manager; and Paul Harris, Marcia Male, Howard Schultz and Mark Goebel, instruction.

This year's stay at Keller was actually much closer to camping...desert camping, that is. The creek has gone dry, so all water must be transported from home. Although we only learned of this late, enough water arrived to float us through the weekend. Also, it should be noted that in spots around the Hut, there was actually "real" snow on the ground. Although not planned as such, it did tend to add a touch of realism to the event. Folks sort of had to watch their first step when exiting the rear door to the porta-john out back (no water in the pipes, remember?) but then we didn't have to worry about the pipes freezing either; so it was a good trade-off.

The big technological payoff, or payup, depending on your point of view on lift ticket prices, came on Saturday. Although Snow Valley's slopes were not all white, what they had going served our purposes well. With wider runs, we have found this area to be a little more conducive to teaching than the Big Bear City areas. Also, Snow Valley doesn't attract as many of the go-fast-out-of control type skiers. They are there, but not yet as fast.

Again we tried to divide the group by common abilities, and then addressed obvious needs. Balance is of course the name of the game, with independent leg weight transfers of particular importance for learning the telemark turn. Since local check-out tours are a non-event this season, we were able to identify a number of candidates of 4th class ability and present them with signed-off cards.

Eventually, everyone straggled back over to the Hut after a hard day on the slopes, or a day on the hard slopes depending upon their number of close encounters, etc. After lots of relaxation, we all enjoyed hot bean soup, rice, cajon chicken, and the usual excessive array of sweets. On Sunday, the forces scattered, but a small party toured their vehicles over to Bear Mtn, for more high tech, high fun skiing. It all works, as long as it's white and slippery. Still, let's pray for real snow.

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MUGELNOOS STAFF

EDITOR.....Pat Holleman
 MUGELPRINTER.....LeRoy Russ
 MUGELNOOS CHAIR.....Rosemary Lynch
 MUGELMAILER.....Pat Holleman
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 Jordan, Norman Kingsley, Don Pies, Bob and
 Anne Wright.

NEXT EDITOR

Kathy Crandall
 1864 Foothill Blvd., La Canada, CA 91011

DEADLINE: March 8, 1991.

FUTURE EDITORS

April Editor: Marcia Male
 May Editor: Rose Lynch

NEXT MEETING

March 19, 1991
 Griffith Park Ranger Station Auditorium
 4730 Crystal Springs Drive
 Los Angeles, California

Program: R.J. Secor "1990 American Changtse
 Expedition"

THINK SNOW!!!

SCHEDULED TRIPS

Mar 2-3: Nordic Holiday Races
 Mar 9-10: Jump Turn Clinic
 Mar 9-10: San Gorgonio Wilderness
 Mar 16-17: Mt. Gould, Onion Valley
 Mar 23-24: Duck Pass, Mammoth Lakes

TRIP NOTICE

San Gorgonio Mar 30-31

If there's snow, we'll go. I will be out of town most of March so send your SASE and questions to Mark Goebel....when you can't ski, go sea kayaking. Marcia Male

NOMINATIONS FOR NEW CENTRAL COMMITTEE

Nominations are currently being accepted for the 1991-1992 Ski Mountaineers Central Committee by Paul Harris, Nominating Committee Chairman.

MUGELNOOS INPUT NEEDED!

If you have done any ski trips this year, write them up and send them to the Mugelnoos editor! The Mugelnoos is also suffering a drought because of the lack of precipitation.

NOTICE TO SUBSCRIBERS

Since the RCS has essentially become dormant, the Mugelnoos is publishing only in Nov, Jan, Feb, Mar, Apr, and May. There have been several inquiries about missing issues because of this.

SMS COMMITTEE ACTION

Not many SMS members are aware of the work involved in producing an edition of the Mugelnoos. The Mugel Editor spends considerable time and talent collecting articles each month and lays out each issue. LeRoy Russ does the actual printing at a very low cost to the SMS, even though his only connection to the section is through the former Rock Climbing Section. Consequently, the SMS Central Committee unanimously approved the purchase of a \$75.00 Sport Chalet gift certificate for LeRoy in sincere appreciation of his continued support to the section.

Thank you, LeRoy.

G.W.J.

PAID PRIVATE TRIP ADVERTISEMENT

Rich Henke will be leading a trek to Nepal in October 1991. The 34 day trip will include a 24 day trek to the base camp of Makalu, the 5th highest mountain in the world. Five days will be spent in Kathmandu and another five days will be spent at high camp so that energetic people will have ample opportunity to explore the area around Makalu with views of Mt. Everest. However, the overall trip will not require climbing or athletic skills and is suitable for anyone who exercises regularly and enjoys hiking. Dates are 26 Sept. - 29 Oct. 1991. The total of the trip, including airfare, is \$3150. For information, call 213 453-8827.

Ostrander Hut, Yosemite National Park

Dec 29, 1990 to January 1, 1991

Saturday morning, we met at Badger Pass a little later than planned due to that dreaded occurrence: a car didn't start under the extremely cold conditions at Wawona Campground. However, the dead car riders, Millie Bloombaum and Don Button, were able to hitch a ride with David Cutter to meet us at the trailhead. Tom and Debra Duryea (Happy 1st Anniversary!) had obtained their own reservations, and I had obtained another 13. Imagine my dismay when I learned that 4 people cancelled. Nevertheless, we finally set out a little after 9:30AM on an excellent snow-covered, machine-tracked Glacier Point Road. We skied the Horizon Ridge Trail in to the hut and noted the excellent snow coverage on the ridge and on Heart Attack Hill. Enroute, we met Howard, the hut keeper, and his wife Lynn skiing out because of a medical emergency. Lynn needed surgery. We stopped to chat and verified what our eyes had already seen. The snow had been blasted off Horse Ridge and any skiing above the hut was sure to be rocky. The hut was exclusively ours Friday night, a rare and wonderful occasion!

Sunday, the hardier ski mountaineers (that was only 4 of us!) headed for Heart Attack Hill and whooped for joy at the wonderful skiable powder we found there. We shredded the hill with a vengeance that was a mixture of disbelief and ecstasy, the revenge of the telemarkers! The "hut potatoes" would lament when they saw the radiant glow on our faces from a day well skied! That evening as the sun eased beneath the horizon, three damsels skiing did appear: Marsha Male, Rose Lynch, and Fran Spector arrived bearing all sorts of good cheer and stories of being swept off their skis by a couple of Northern California dudes offering them chocolate kisses. Didn't their moms ever tell them not to take candy from strangers? Things did liven up from then on . . . spirits soared.

Monday, we decided to start the day with our community breakfast. The sausage was supreme and the eggs were deliciously seasoned with dill, onions, and brie cheese. There were fewer "hut potatoes" as we headed to shred Horizon Ridge. And what a wonderful choice that proved to be--- real powder, guys! Again, for the second day, we tracked with wild abandon the hill before us. There could be no better place to be than where we were: Half Dome, Starr King, and the Clark Range to view as we schussed the slope. This was serious fun. Legs don't fail me now! The Tote Neiges, the Karhu Supremes, and the Tua Expressos left glorious signatures on that slope. And it was all so special because no one had anticipated that the skiing would be so great! I was so weary from doing as many runs as I could that the Sierra shuffle I got into on the way back to the hut that afternoon put me into a dreamlike state: the skis went into the tracks and somehow got me "home."

New Year's Eve: Rose had planned an elegant dinner: cabbage salad, salmon linguini, french style green beans, hot sourdough bread, and chocolate or pistachio pie. It turned out of be a four-star gourmet delight. Several people commented that they don't eat as well at home. What makes it really unique is that everyone pitched in and helped, and we did it all together. It was a very special event. Thank you, Rose, for making it all possible! You have turned us into bon vivants!

Having agreed once again to celebrate New Year's on Eastern Standard Time, a group of us skied to one of the lovely viewpoints looking over the Clark Range about 8:30 PM. Flashlights were not necessary; the full moon illuminated the way. We joined hands, chanted "Om," and sought some awareness in the amazing universe. A full moon ski quest.

New Year's Day, David Cutter left early because he had a piano playing engagement in Beverly Hills that night. After a leisurely breakfast and a little hut cleaning, the rest of us packed up and skied out, once more taking advantage of the terrific snow on Heart Attack Hill and Horizon Ridge. We were dismayed when we arrived at Badger Pass to hear of David Cutter's accident; miraculously, he was okay, but he had rolled his truck on the Badger Pass Road. The truck was totalled and had been towed to the Valley. After shuffling gear and passengers, we left the area to regroup for dinner at the Pizza Factory in Oakhurst. Eddie's dream came true: to ski Ostrander at New Year's and be able to see the Rose Bowl game. The large screen TV in the pizza place had the game on.

Awards: The largest, heaviest pack award goes to Eddie Nunez who carried 10 pounds of camera equipment and the community breakfast consisting of 36 whole in-the-shell eggs, sausage, and a frying pan. The smallest, lightest, most enviable pack award goes to Laurie Shkolnik, who coincidentally arrived with Eddie. The wild-man skier award goes to Steve Thaw who finally put down his ever present pack for those last 2 rambunctious runs down Horizon Ridge on the way out. The iron man award continues to go to Tom Duryea, who must have hauled 8 huge buckets of icy water from Ostrander Lake to the hut and who, on our first day in, took water and climbing skins to one of our party struggling up Heart Attack Hill after the sun had set. The ice skating award goes to David Cutter for the many hours he spent gliding on Ostrander Lake. The "hut potato" award goes to Debra Duryea who plowed through a Tom Clancy book and wished her back would be without pain for a while. The trooper/good sport award goes to Millie Bloombaum and Don Button. They were marvelous good sports about all our antics and craziness. They both skied well and hard, but ended up "killed" when we played Peak Experience. Don gets special merit since this was his first trip with the SMS; he skied Glacier Point Road using track skis, carrying his new Karhu Supremes (imagine such folly!). Marsha, Rose, and Fran get the babe award. Who were those dudes who skied to the hut about 11:30 PM New Year's Eve looking for the party you girls promised them?

Hope to see you next year!

-N.G.

FAR NORTH UPDATE--ALASKA MTNSKIING

Better skiing, both xc and ski mountaineering were high on the list for Kris and I when considering a "Quality of Life" change to the North. Well, the Anchorage area has lots of xc and great places to mtn ski. The local active group is the Mountaineering Club of Alaska (MCA). There are now 5 back country A-frame ski huts within 70 miles of the city. One is accessible by air or a multi-day ski approach. The closest huts access starts 7 miles down the road from where our new house is being built, at the Eagle River visitor's center Chugach State Park. Roped skiing up the Eagle River Glacier (with some places navigating through rock/ice similar to going up Arc Pass from the Whitney side) about 11 miles brings you to south most of the three huts on the glacier. The north most hut is accessed from the Eklutna Glacier. With only 12 miles between all the huts they can be skied end-end in a day or as an MCA member said "a week can be needed in whiteout/storms". For the far flung skimtn types we can head you in the right direction. Ski Heil!

SB/KH

Christmas Vacation with Bob and Anne Wright

January 2, 1990

To our friends in search of true wilderness experiences.

We have just returned from Christmas vacation at Tioga Pass Lodge, where some of the most beautiful backcountry skiing imaginable is accessible. With the lodge as base camp one can explore the varied environs of forest, meadow and mountain and still return to a hot shower, warm fire and the hospitality of the Agard family who staff the lodge in the winter and prepare some of the best down home cooking a hungry skier could desire.

This year's minimal snow fall provided advantages along with disadvantages for us. We were unable to ski Mts. Dana and Gibbs but we were able to get a ride from the gate closing Hwy. 120 to the lodge. We even had room for extra clothes and different pairs of skis, although we didn't always choose the right equipment for the right conditions. In a normal season one must be prepared to ski six miles up the road to the lodge. Luggage is ferried by snowmobile and sled.

Shortly after arriving we set out for a short ski to the ghost town of Bennetville. A return route through the trees brought us back to the lodge in time for eggnog and an evening around the stove stringing pop corn for the Christmas tree. Day two took us over Tioga Pass into Yosemite Park where we checked out various approaches to Mt. Dana - not enough snow. 80 mile per hour winds had blown the mountains bare. The next day we decided to ski around Saddleback Lake and save the mountains for another trip. We broke trail around the east side of the lake and returned along the frozen west shore in the early shade of evening. It was 20 below and we pushed for a speedy return to the lodge and Christmas dinner with the other seven guests.

On December 26th Anne realized her dream of skiing in Tuolumne Meadows. Some of the other guests had done the twenty mile round trip as a day ski, but with short days and the prevailing cold Bob opted for an alternative - to stay in the stone hut at Tuolumne village. A phone call to the rangers determined that the hut was available with eight bunks on a first come first serve basis. We were assured of having the hut to ourselves because the sparse snow cover made access from the west impossible. And so with day packs, sleeping bags, one pot and a "Mountain House" dinner we cruised down from the pass to have lunch at Lumbert Dome. We checked out the hut, turned on the electric heater and headed out again to deliver the ranger's mail. Yosemite is designated a wilderness area in the winter so no motorized vehicles are permitted. We were the only humans in the whole meadow besides the two resident rangers. We toured from one end to the other until the shadows of Unicorn and Cathedral peaks enveloped the valley. There were lots of animal tracks but we saw nothing directly. Either poor eyesight or Anne's squeaky binding, maybe both.

After dinner Bob busied himself chopping wood for the next guests and Anne unearthed the guest register in a barrel with some toilet paper. The register made interesting reading, especially the entry by a Search and Rescue person who was buried in an avalanche in Lee Vining canyon and had to dig himself out with one arm. Fortunately the entries were short because the stone hut was colder inside than out, and our sleeping bags the only refuge from the cold.

In the morning we awoke to brilliant sunshine. We lighted the wood stove and melted a pot of snow for drinking water. It's important to read the bulletin board. Snow to the east is for water, snow to the west is designated yellow. The use of the latrine proved to be the only danger of the whole trip. A plastic outhouse sits ten feet in the air (in anticipation of several feet of snow) at the top of a step ladder. Because the ladder is set facing forward it's necessary to lean out and reach for the top step. The weather was warm, a tee shirt day, - delightful except for the failure of "Green", "Blue", and "Red" (waxes). After lunch with a view, we cleaned the waxes off our skis and put skins on for a slow slog up to the pass.

Days six and seven were spent exploring cross country. We headed toward the Carnegie Weather and Agricultural Research Station in the Harvey Monroe Hall Wilderness, north east of the lodge. We broke trail from Saddlebag campground and spent a long time looking for a stable snow bridge across a stream that is the outlet from Saddleback Lake. The next day we retraced our tracks and continued on in search of Alpine Lake. Alternating rocky patches and thigh deep drifts made the going slow, but it was a glorious adventure in navigating. Again we were alone in the backcountry, immersed in the silence and beauty of wilderness.

The end of an outstanding vacation finds us reviewing topos and making plans to return to this beautiful area to explore more valleys and climb a few peaks.

For information call or write:
TIOGA PASS LODGE
P.O. BOX 307
LEE VINING, CA. 93541
(209) 372-4471

Attention World War II Mountaineering Veterans & Historians

Co-worker Wil Nystrom served in the 86th Regiment of the 10th Mountain Division in WW II. Wil was part of a key offensive campaign that weakened the southern German front in 1944. His group pushed a heroic night time technical ascent in mountainous northern Italy that caught the Nazis completely by surprise. Wil has collected rare documents over the years with detail combat strategies and personal diaries of the mountain war campaign (including an incorrect account listing him as dead when shell fire knocked him unconscious).

Early SMS members participated in the 10th Mountain Division. Wil is happy to correspond with individuals seeking records from the past. He is retiring and moving out of state February 1st. Contact: Wil Nystrom, 603 Dutchmans Dr., Rogers, Arkansas 72756. Ph (501) 925-3048 or FAX (501) 253-7513. D.P.

Cold spell spells early start to whining and whimpering about winter

I don't care if it's not Thanksgiving yet, I'm ready for winter to be over.

"Well, it's just one of our cold spells," forecaster George Bancroft said Monday. "Our climate is basically an average of extremes."



**mike
doogan**

Bancroft spoke slowly and quietly, the way they must have taught him in weatherman school to talk to near-hysterics. I had the feeling that if we'd been in the same room, instead of on opposite ends of the telephone, he might have slapped me and told me to pull myself together.

Instead, he said, in a tone most people reserve for dogs and small children, "The cold air is retreating. There's milder weather coming tomorrow."

That's today to you. If you were able to bring your newspaper in without having your eyebrows freeze up, Bancroft's forecast was correct.

How warm is it supposed to get, George?

"Back up to near normal."

And how warm is that?

"The upper 20s."

Ah, the balmy upper 20s. Alaska has got to be the only place in the world where you hear ukulele music when a weatherman predicts temperatures in the upper 20s.

Why, if it shoots up into the 30s, we can all go to the beach!

Yeah, I know, it's not whining season yet. We're supposed to wait until maybe mid-February to start complaining about the cold, the dark, the fact that the only two ways to dress are too warm for indoors and not warm enough for outdoors. But there's got to be an exception made for a winter that starts by setting two record lows.



FRAN DURNER / Anchorage Daily News

Waterfalls along the Seward Highway have turned to ice. *Good ice climbing. Belanger was to water for Cars!*

The first, Bancroft said, was Nov. 8, when the warmest it got was 5 degrees. Monday, we tied the record for low at minus 9 degrees.

You think this has anything to do with the elections? After all, it didn't get really cold until after Wally Hickey won.

Anyway, it's been cold enough this past week to cause some strange behavior, not even counting the election. Just the other morning I saw a teen-ager at the bus stop in front of my house actually wearing boots. Of course, like several other kids at that stop she was also wearing shorts, but it's a start.

Growing up in Anchorage these days seems to be a matter of shedding clothes. You start out on your way to first

grade looking like a laundry basket with feet, and by the time you graduate from high school you're wearing about as much as a dancer in a Madonna video.

I don't understand this, and chalk it up as evidence the younger generation is going to hell in a handbasket. What else am I supposed to think as I stand at the window drinking scalding hot coffee and trying to decide if two pairs of longjohns will be enough, and some kid wearing sneakers, neon jams and a Hard Rock Cafe T-shirt saunters by with his winter coat slung over his shoulder?

This sort of behavior makes me shiver, but it really cheeses my dog off. She barks at anything, but gets right after these scantily dressed kids. I think she thinks they're undermining her attempt to convince me it's too cold to put the dog out.

So far, her routine has been limited to coming to a complete stop at the door, whining and refusing to budge. So I've been starting my day by slinging 70 pounds of whimpering dog into the cold.

No wonder I'm whimpering myself. Maybe I'll move to a warmer part of Alaska.

Where is that, George?

"The western Aleutians perhaps have had the mildest weather," Bancroft said. "They've been in the 40s every day."

So much for that idea.

At least it turns out we're not the only ones who are having the sort of weather that makes the inside of your car an excellent place to hang meat.

"It's affecting much of the Interior as well," Bancroft said.

Serves them right.

Hey, they voted for Wally, too.

Mike Doogan is a Daily News columnist.

**Preview: Ramer AVALRT
Avalanche Locator/Rescue Transceiver**

The remarkable dual-frequency RAMER AVALRT avalanche beacon is nearly ready for release. It may be an odd thing to devote so much catalog space to a product that you can't buy yet, but this new product is so unique that we felt you would be interested. The AVALRT truly offers a breakthrough in the technology of avalanche beacons.

Dual Frequency

To begin with, the European frequency of 457 kHz will be the world standard by 1995. All low frequency (2275 Hz) beacons will become obsolete. We fought long and hard against this change but the Europeans won. Because of this we feel it is irresponsible to offer anything other than dual frequency beacons to our American customers. The AVALRT is compatible with all beacons that transmit at 2275 Hz or 457 kHz.

Speakers and Earphones

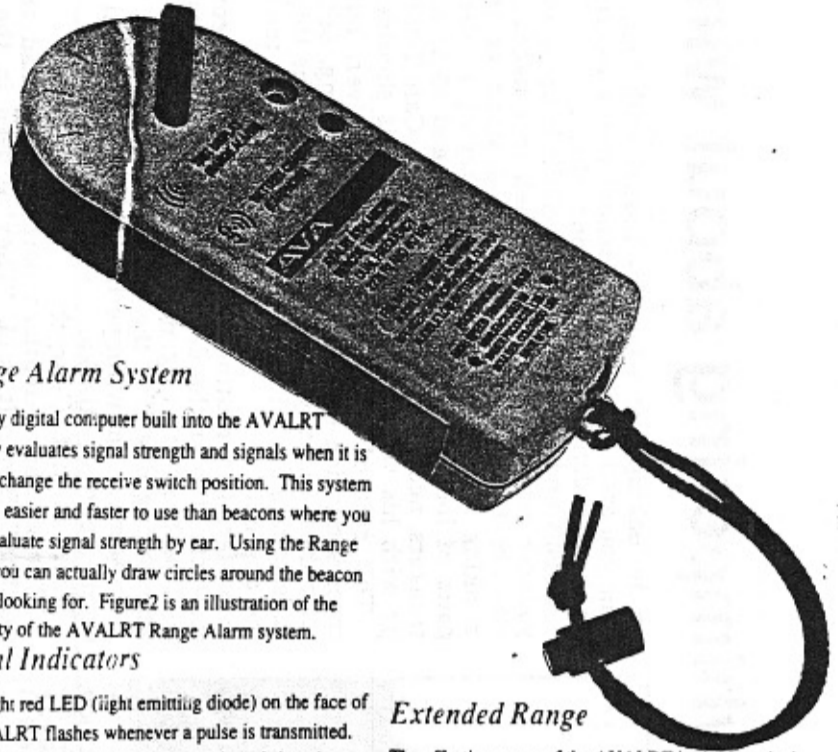
The AVALRT uses a powerful piezoelectric speaker as the primary user interface. Speakers are much easier to use than earphones, are faster to deploy, and are indestructible. About 95% of beacon failures are actually earphone failures. The AVALRT does include an auxillary earphone for high background noise conditions or for the hearing impaired.

Fail Safe Return-To-Transmit

This exclusive feature of the AVALRT protects rescuers from the risk of secondary avalanches, from loss by dropping the beacon in deep snow, and from forgetting to switch back to transmit when the search is complete. The AVALRT will automatically return to transmit from any receive position after two minutes. A special warning tone gives the rescuer a chance to override the fail safe mode and stay in receive. This feature will save lots of batteries and possibly your life.

Controls

The AVALRT uses a single 7-position quadrant switch for all functions. There are no mechanical switch contacts to get dirty or wear out - the AVALRT switch uses non-contact magnetic reed relays.



Range Alarm System

The tiny digital computer built into the AVALRT actually evaluates signal strength and signals when it is time to change the receive switch position. This system is much easier and faster to use than beacons where you must evaluate signal strength by ear. Using the Range Alarm you can actually draw circles around the beacon you are looking for. Figure 2 is an illustration of the simplicity of the AVALRT Range Alarm system.

Visual Indicators

The bright red LED (light emitting diode) on the face of the AVALRT flashes whenever a pulse is transmitted. It also flashes whenever the Range Alarm is heard. This provides visual backup to confirm what you are hearing. This combination of audio and visual output is far more effective than audio alone or meter displays.

Extended Range

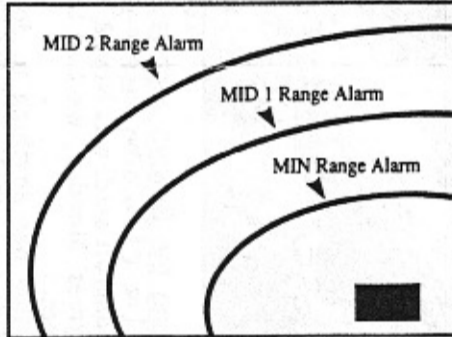
The effective range of the AVALRT in the four dual-frequency receive positions is 100 feet, equal to the best of our competitors. There is an additional high-frequency only receive position that provides over 150 feet of range. This can be used to advantage if you know the buried beacon is transmitting on 457 kHz. It will also be very useful with the RAMER SKILRT.

Automatic Battery Test

When the AVALRT detects a weak battery condition it generates a special multiple "beep" tone every two minutes. The AVALRT is still functional as long as the tone is heard. Weak batteries cannot be ignored as they can with other beacons.

Two Year Warranty

Although the AVALRT is electronically far more complex than any other beacon, it uses state-of-the-art hybrid technology that makes it almost indestructible. Since we are the actual manufacturer of the AVALRT we can provide prompt service if it is ever needed.



THE MUGELNOOS
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