

GPS, MAPS, AND RELIC HUNTING II

By Chuck Marcum

It has been two and a half years since I wrote the first article on this subject. New technology in equipment and software warrant a long needed update. GPS and digital maps is as much a part of Relic Hunting to me as a shovel and metal detector. We covered most of the basics in the previous article. In fact looking back on it, it was pretty basic and just the beginning of what was to come and what will come. In just two short years it has already progressed to map calibration. This means that we can take any scanned map with three or more known points, import it into a GPS or map software. Then match three or more spots

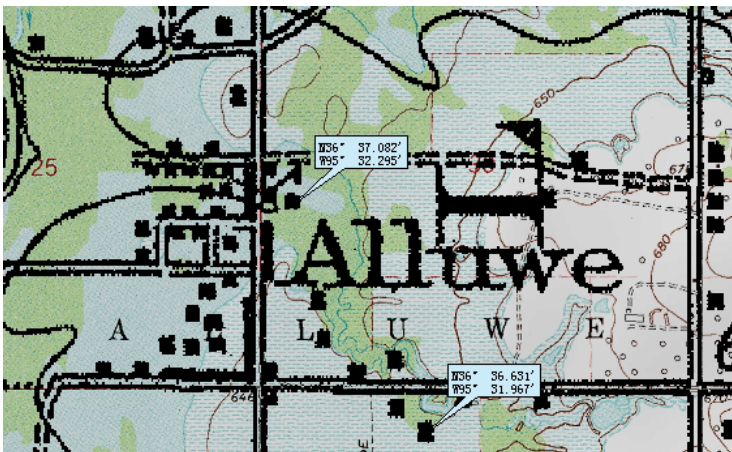
site.

Not only can we now calibrate old maps we can overlay as many of them as we want on top of newer topo maps and get the now and then total picture of a researched area. With this map software we can also get our coordinates anywhere on the map. These softwares are at their infant stage and they will continue to get better and better.

Today life is just a continual learning experience, especially for me. I'm now using GPS, computers, and software for work and play. At work we are using GPS, two different handheld computers for data collecting, Transits with onboard com-

same is true with our computers, software, GPS, and the way we are doing things in our everyday life today. It has gotten to the point where I feel if I don't learn something everyday the day was wasted. If you are not continually learning and upgrading you will get left behind in today's high tech world. We all need to realize that a big part of relic hunting research today is learning and using all of the tools that modern technology has to offer to give us that edge to find that big civil war camp, ghost town, or old house site. I'm going to break this up into three parts, GPS, GPS and map software, and Map Overlay Software.

GPS— The first article was about the Lowrance Global Map 100. Still it is an excellent GPS receiver and is still being sold. You can get one with the map CD and computer cord for



An older map layered on a newer map with two coordinate boxes.

on the scanned map to the same spots on a newer topo map. After we get it calibrated we can then travel on the map with our mouse getting latitudes and longitudes to any spot we want, upload the coordinates into our GPS and go right to our hunt

puters and laser distance readers, one software to download our handheld computers into our PCs, and another software to draw all of the data. Usually once we learn how to use all of this it gets upgraded and we start learning it all over again. The



New Lowrance iFinder GPS Receiver

around \$250.00. As of the spring of 2002 Lowrance came out with their new top of the line handheld receiver, the iFinder and I got mine in May. The biggest difference between the receivers is that the iFinder uses a multimedia card for memory with a capability of up to 128mb. The Global Map 100 has a two partition memory of 1mb apiece. Which means the map details are a whole lot better with the iFinder and the capabilities with all of that memory is really going to be interesting in the near future. The Global Map has three map screens and two navigational



Map screen zoomed out to 60 miles

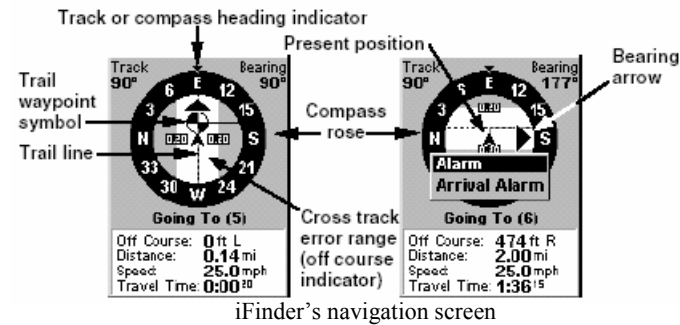
screens, the iFinder only has one of each. At first I missed that, but I don't anymore. The Global Map hooks directly to the computer via serial cable where as the iFinder has a card reader that hooks up with a usb connection or serial if you need it. Both the iFinder Plus and the Global Map Deluxe comes with Map



Locating a point of interest in the iFinder

Create CDs. These will add more map details to your background map already in your receiver. When you up-

load map details from the map you'll also be uploading points of interests within your custom map area. Points of interests includes addresses, coordinates, phone numbers, and map positions to places such as restau-



iFinder's navigation screen

rants, motels, stores, hospitals, etc. Have you ever been far from home, out in the middle of nowhere heading to your hunt site and suddenly realized you didn't bring any batteries? Instead of wasting a lot of time trying to find a store you could push the find button on your iFinder, choose shopping, enter nearest and all of the stores in the area will show on the screen beginning with the nearest. You can view the store's address and phone number, locate it on the map, and even navigate to it using your

a corridor map along your route, say a mile or so each side of I-40 with all of the map details, exit info, and points of interests. When you want to get a motel a few hours down the road. You can go to the find button, spot a motel you want, get the phone

number, call to make reservations, then navigate to it.

Another new

feature of the iFinder is the use of WASS short for Wide Area Augmentation System. This is a position accuracy enhancement system being tested now for full deployment by the FAA for aircraft navigational systems using GPS. This makes the +/- 30 feet accuracy even closer. I have wrote about the Lowrance receivers because that is what I'm most familiar with after have using them for years. Garmin and Magellan top of the line receivers are also good. I would however recommend a receiver that has plenty of memory, one that is capable of adding more map detail, and be able to hook up to your computer for uploading and downloading data. The rest of this article will deal with GPS software, map overlaying, and using your GPS receiver along with them. These combinations will make finding that hunt site a no brainer, where all you have to do is follow your GPS there and start digging.

GPS. The points of interest is also very handy when you are traveling. With the map CD you can create