

Elderly Woman Missing From Home

March 17th, 1970
Sedco Hills
1970-002

by Unknown

Our Riverside County Sheriff's Dept. called at 1815 requesting that we meet at the Elsinore substation. Mrs. Cheryl Reichert, age 74, had wandered away from her home in the rolling hills about five miles southeast of Elsinore. Following a lengthy search by her husband and friends she was reported missing. Detective Clark Kane went out to ascertain the problem and do some tracking. RMRU was soon called, we rolled, we soon were in the field. A scent article was used to fire Sugar, our veteran bloodhound, and the search was on. Sugar went along a dirt road while several parties of searchers deployed at logical points. Some visual tracking was done in connection with tracks said to be hers, but turned out to only be very similar after we saw the shoes she was wearing. After a few hours of scaring up deer, owls, and quail, we regrouped for new assignments. Just then a report came via radio that Cheryl was seen at the intersection of Cottonwood Canyon Road and Bundy Canyon Road. We were soon there (about three airline miles southeast of the original search area) scanning for tracks. Nothing at first, then Bill Briggs and Jake Johnson found faint sign on the southerly road. It was a bit humorous to see four orange-shirted RMRU men and Lt. Russ Hawk huddled close, shining lights on the track, slowly disappearing over the hill in moonlight, with a Sheriff's patrol car close behind. They continued for a couple miles until entering a canyon where the tracks disappeared in the leaves of a trail. They bivouacked for an hour until dawn. Another party of us were searching a bit west of them. At dawn Sugar was re-fired and really pulled down the trail with most of us in pursuit, spread out to detect tracks, or, "There she is!" Ed Hill was with Walk Walker as he was following Sugar, looked back past a bluff above the small creek, and spotted Cheryl lying in the water. She was on her back, her skin pale white. "Is she alive," Jack Schnurr asked. In the few seconds it took us to gather we all wondered. Then Jack jumped down to her level and saw her staring back at him. We quickly and gently lifted her out of the water, Phil Moedt and I stripped to "T" shirts and provided body heat while Jack and Ed massaged hands and feet, Walt and others piled on parkas. Leon Barris ran down to a bulldozed road to find the shortest point of pickup for the ambulance. Bill, Art and Jake ran back to the truck for the rescue sleeping bag and litter. Cheryl's color came back into her face as she warmed. We had slipped off her soggy slacks (she had already removed her other clothes, as people of any age so often do in their final moments of life), then placed her in the bag, and began the carry to the road. During the litter carry Cheryl began to lose color and stopped breathing twice. Each time Walt tilted her head back and opened her jaw to restore breathing. Just as Leon had approached Bundy Can. Road, a patrol car passed, he radioed on the MRA frequency that this happened, Ron Harris radioed the patrol car via Sheriff's frequency to "turn around and get back down there." We heard the ambulance would be quite a

while, but John Merrifield, an old Boy Scouting friend, got there very quickly. Cheryl was immediately on her way to the hospital with Walt in attendance.

Critique. Cheryl is alive today because we have a willing bloodhound, a lot of skillful human trackers, an effective radio system, and a most cooperative Sheriff's Dept. Lt. Hawk, with whom we've worked many times in the past, hiked, tracked and bivouacked with us. Capt. Crowell brought us hamburgers in the middle of the night. And then there was the exceedingly crucial informant, whom, I understand, is Lt. Hawk's wife. We figure Cheryl was in the 53 deg. water about two hours maximum, and would have perished within the next hour. If only she could have answered our calls earlier -- she suffers from deterioration (senility). Anyway, that afternoon she was able to talk to relatives.

RMRU is a volunteer search and rescue team that covers Riverside County and assists other teams with search and rescue efforts in other counties. Each member purchases their own equipment and takes time off work, without compensation, to participate in search and rescue missions. Team equipment is purchased from contributions from the community. We are a non-profit organization and are funded by [donations](#) from people like you.