

Overdue Boy Scout Troop

May 3-4, 1970
Grape Canyon
1970-005

by Jim Fairchild

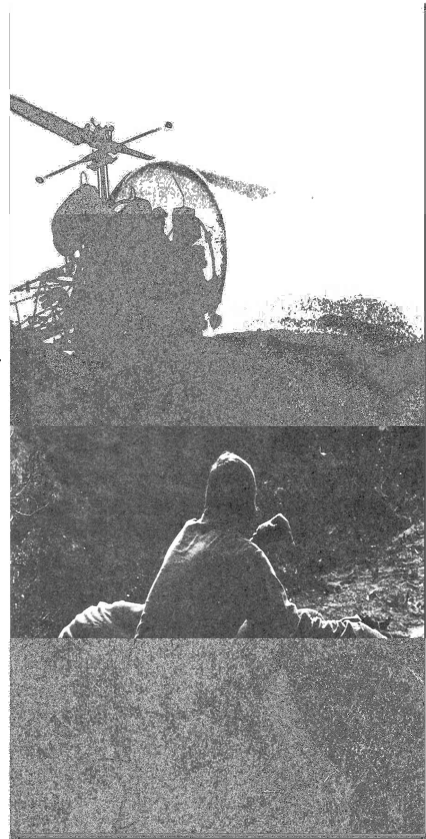
At about 2130 the Riverside County Sheriff's Dept. called to report a Boy Scout Troop overdue. Ten young Tenderfeet, led by Scoutmaster Bill Braden, had hiked into the area Saturday morning to camp overnight in the Sink or Grape Canyon.

When they had not returned by 1330 Sunday, a man who was to help transport them waited until 2030 to tell the Banning Substation. RMRU rendezvoused at the substation and planned the search. Bud White led a party up the E. FK. of Millard Canyon to check the Sink and Grape Canyon area. Jim Fairchild led a party up Whitewater Canyon to see if they had come out that way. It was a beautiful, dark evening. Everyone had been advised to watch for rattlesnakes, none were seen. But Fairchild's party found tracks of rabbit, coyote, bobcat, raccoon, lizards, quail, and a particularly large bear.

The only human tracks were two adults going up canyon and returning. White's party was on the Scouts' tracks all the way up to and over the pass and below the Sink. By radio conversation we encouraged them by not having any Scout tracks in the Whitewater. Just prior to dawn we bivouacked near an extensive rockslide where we lost the faint trail.

This trail had led up Grape Canyon from Still's Landing, an old fisherman's cabin in a thicket of sycamores and brush. Only a great horned owl was present now. At dawn we quickly hiked upward and found the trail to join White's party which, of course, had come across the Troop. Scoutmaster Braden had done the right thing by keeping the boys together and in a nice camping spot -- one of the boys had sprained an ankle, hence, the delay.

When we came in sight of RMRU and BSA we were providentially near a fine helispot that



only needed some brush removed. Walt and tools were soon on hand, having been flown in by Darrell Ellenberg of Western Helicopters. After recalling my summer with the USFS (1943) by cutting brush, we were all lifted up to the Sink, while Walt and the injured Scout were flown out to the roadhead. We had a most enjoyable hike out with Scoutmaster Braden and nine of his Scouts. Have you any idea what nine hungry Scouts can do to our meager two-day iron ration? Spectacular.'

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.