

Missing Nurse Hiker

June 20-21, 1976
Cabazon
1976-032

Bob Claybrook

As usual I was just going to bed when the phone rang. It was A1 Andrews informing me we had a 63 year old nurse overdue out of Black Mountain walking to Cabazon. I loaded my gear and proceeded to the Banning sub station where I met Bernie McIlvoy, Ron Barry, Ed Hill, Rich Quackenbush and Jim Fairchild.

We were informed by the Sheriff's Dept. that we were looking for Mrs. Ruth Boyle of La Mesa. She is trying to do the Pacific Crest Trail in sections. She is also a strong hiker.

We decided to send two teams down from Black Mountain - Bernie, Ron, Barry, Rich Quackenbush and Ed Hill. I would go check the YMCA camp at Black Mountain. The teams started down at 3 A.M. I went to the camp and found nothing. I also checked the Black Mountain campground where I met Mrs. Boyle's son, Mike. He gave me further information on his mother - she carries a walking stick at all times. Checking the road, I found footprints of hers and followed them to the trailhead. At this time we moved to Banning so we could work from the bottom up. We put out a call for more man power. This included the Palm Springs Mounted Police, Sierra Madre Mountain Rescue, and Para-Rescue from March Air Force Base.

By this time it was after 6 A.M. and the Para-Rescue arrived. We were informed by the Sheriff's Office that Landell's helicopter would arrive and that due to other commitments, Don could only give us one hour of flight time.

At this time it was quite warm in Cabazon and the winds were very strong in the pass when the helicopter arrived. I loaded my pack and my little fat self into the helicopter. Don proceeded to take off and because of the hot air was having trouble climbing the hill. After several minutes he got the altitude he needed. We flew up the mountain and found the two teams working down. Don decided the best bet was to go high on Black Mountain and work our way back and forth between there and Snow Creek so that everything would be checked. We did this and after 40 minutes of flight time I spotted a single set of tracks on a ridge with a small indentation next to them. Don and I argued whether or not they could be Mrs. Boyle's. After the debate, he decided to land to take a look. Once we landed we could tell they were definitely her tracks because of the shoe size and the walking stick mark.

We notified base we had a definite set of prints down canyon and at the same time Bernie found prints up above. Don flew down the canyon and at the edge of a large cliff we found Mrs. Boyle waving a white flag at us. We notified base and landed, finding Mrs. Boyle in very good condition and very glad to see us.

Total time for the helicopter was only 45 minutes, which we were very happy about. Other members participating were Jim Garvey, John Gabbert and Larry Roland.

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.