



Heart Attack Victim

October 29, 1976
Round Valley
1976-043

John Dew

On October 29 at 10:45 a.m. the pager activated and the call said, "RMRU member, John Dew, call Banning ASAP!"

A frown crossed my brow and a dread filled me as I made my way to the nearest phone. The reason for the concern was the team had just been talked to by Walt Walker on a Monday night training and by Jim Fairchild the following Wednesday night in regular training about individuals being paged on our pager system. My first thoughts were - who could be calling me? My wife never uses this method of contact. My second thoughts were - what must the rest of the team think after what we had just been told two nights ago.

Upon contact with the sheriff, I learned that Captain Canova had put out the call because a man in Round Valley up on the top of the mountain had suffered what was thought to be a heart attack during the previous night. He had already contacted Western Helicopter and a bird was in the air at the time, but the pilot didn't know where Round Valley was.

Captain Canova called me because I work here in Banning and the bird could just set down at Banning Airport, pick me up and be gone immediately. He wanted to know if I could be ready to fly in twenty minutes. I assured him I could and asked him to call a couple other team members to let them know what was going on.

Immediately, I changed clothes, put on my boots, grabbed all the gear I thought I could possibly need (even though a mission sounds simple, you never know what complications you may run into) and was waiting at Banning Airport when my ride got there.

We lifted off, flew to Round Valley where Jerry Henderson, Park Ranger, was holding a piece of orange material to show us wind direction and velocity. We set down quickly, picked up the subject, George Wehbi, a 46 yr. old man from Culver City, Ca., and flew him out lying down inside the helicopter (a new arrangement in the Western Helicopter capabilities). We delivered him to Desert Hospital in Palm Springs and then I was brought back to Banning.

The whole operation took just 1 hour and 45 minutes and yet we were able to be of service to still another person in need.

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.