



Injured Climber

December 30, 1976
Mount Whitney
1976-047

Ed Hill

The call interrupted a busy Thursday at work. We were asked to supply a team of experienced snow and ice men for a technical rescue on Mount Whitney. We agreed to meet at Pete Carlson's house, and I drove home in the rain to organize my gear.

While packing, A1 Andrews, our rescue coordinator, called and said that there was a big accident on highway 60 in Riverside. He recommended that I take back roads to Pete's. The driving conditions were as bad as I have ever seen them with driving rain and fog all the way to Riverside. Once in Riverside, I found that the city had torn up a number of roads for storm drains which added to the difficulties.

At Pete's house, I found the rest of our team: Pete Carlson, Larry Brown, Larry Roland, and Jim Fairchild. We decided to drive up in two cars since we had a lot of gear with us.

As we drove North, we found ourselves driving out of the storm. The sun was shining in the Owens Valley even though it looked cold and windy. There were heavy clouds on the Sierra crest, but it looked like a helicopter could operate below the crest. When we were about twenty minutes from the Lone Pine airport, we started hearing radio traffic from the mission. We learned that a team was with the injured climber and his companion and that a helicopter was landing at Trail Camp to fly the injured man to the hospital.

Arriving at Lone Pine Airport, we, talked to the base camp operator and learned that one of the climbers had been hurt on the slabs just above Trail Camp. He had been flown out and his companion would be walked out along with the rescue teams. He also told us about a second storm that would arrive the next day. Since the operation was nearly over, we went into town to eat before the long drive home.

The lull in the storms was fortunate for both the injured man and ourselves. He was able to be evacuated quickly, and we were spared a long, cold litter evacuation.

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.