



Possible plane crash

May 27, 1978
Desert Divide
1978-025

By Kevin Walker

Just as my dad and I were finishing loading the jeep with rescue gear for a rescue mission in the Cedar Springs area, the phone rang with news of a second mission. A light aircraft had been spotted down below a ridge in the Desert Divide area from another aircraft. Since this mission was in the same area as the first call, base camp for the plane crash would be at the same location. Base was set up in Garner Valley. Shortly after arriving, we were joined by John Dew, and Hal Fulkman. Jim Fairchild was spending the weekend in the Idyllwild area, so he was already gathering the necessary info on both missions.

It was decided we would fly in and drop Walt and Jim off on the ridge so they could see to the injured girl, and I would remain with the chopper and search for the downed aircraft. Just as the battle plan was being completed, we heard the familiar sound of the Hughes 500C from Western Helicopters. We were joined by long time friend and pilot Bill Barrett of Western. We quickly climbed into the bird and were off. After leaving Jim and Walt off on the ridge, Bill and I went on our way to search. After about 20 minutes of searching with no results we returned to base.

After talking to the informant, we decided it would be best to have the informant and a Civil Air Patrol officer join us in the chopper. After the informant directed us into the general area it was only about another 10 minutes before the crash site was located. As soon as I saw the wreckage, I could tell (being a pilot myself) that this was an old site. And just to add more icing to the cake, we had been called the previous Wednesday for a downed aircraft, which turned out to be the same one as what we had just located.

With both the C.A.P. officer and the informant satisfied, we flew them back to base camp. Enroute Bill dropped me off back on the ridge to assist with the REAL mission of the day.

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.

