



9-year-old boy still missing

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Palomar State Park
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By Randy Iwasuik

My gear was still scattered about the house drying after our training weekend on 'San Jacinto' when Larry Roland called Monday evening February 9th. He informed me that RMRU had been placed on standby to assist in the search of a missing boy in the Mt. Palomar area of San Diego County.

The next morning nine year old Jimmy Beveridge still had not been found and RMRU was activated to assist in the search. When Larry and I arrived at the search coordination center at 10:00 we found that the search had ballooned into a major project with SAR teams from San Diego, Sierra Madre, Saddleback and Riverside. We checked in with Mary Bowman at the RMRU vans and proceeded to adhere strictly to that timeless axiom of large organized efforts - hurry up and wait. After briefly examining what was thought to be a footprint of the boy and learning that the boys uncle, who set off in search of him, was also missing, we returned to base to await a new assignment.

By that afternoon we learned that the missing boy's jacket had been found on a steep slope less than a mile and a half from where he was last seen. Larry and I were teamed up with six members of Sierra Madre and dispatched by Jeep to the rugged area west of the campground where Jimmy's family was staying. Pauma Creek ran through a rugged canyon choked with brush and moss covered rocks made slick by the recent rain storms and swirling mists that obscured the clattering helicopters overhead. With less than an hour of light left we arrived at the jacket site. We split up into groups of two and continued searching several small drainages uphill with the intention of bivouacking at the top of the ridge. Larry and I moved slowly through the tangled brush and dense fog reaching the top of the ridge just as the sun set into a sea of fog. A pale sliver of moon added little illumination to the ghostly woods and the lingering mist as they receded into the hollows and valleys below us. It got cold fast with a damp chill that struck to the core. We regrouped with six of our Sierra Madre friends and after considerable effort had a fire going to warm those who did not have sleeping bags.

The next morning was bright and clear as we split up and continued searching the brushy gullies upstream and down hill to the small creek below the jacket site. Staying in voice contact we formed a line from the creekbed to just below the ridge and began

sweeping south towards Pauma Creek. I was at the top of the line nearest the ridge with Larry about 40 yards below me. As we swept around the end of the ridge I heard a voice call out for help. I scrambled up and saw a figure sitting on a rock on the ridge. Thinking I had found the boy's uncle I yelled to Larry and ran over to investigate. The man, Bill Thompson told me he had found a body to the north. Larry and I accompanied him to the site which was about 45 minutes from where we met him. Jimmy's body was on a steep rocky slope in a dry gully obscured from the air by dense tree cover. A litter was dropped and a landing site secured. The litter was evacuated along with ourselves one by one back to base. Back in camp we were amazed to find 150 Marines and a crack Navy survival team had joined the search along with several helicopters including two from San Diego TV stations. After a debriefing and an informal interview with the media Larry and I headed home while the search continued for the boy's missing uncle. He was found that Friday after five nights in the open, in fair condition. By this time I had come down with an impressive case of Poison Oak.

Editors Note: The San Diego Search and Rescue team developed the Hug-a-Tree program in memory of Jimmy Beveridge. It was developed in hopes that children could learn to avoid the mistakes that Jimmy made.

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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.