

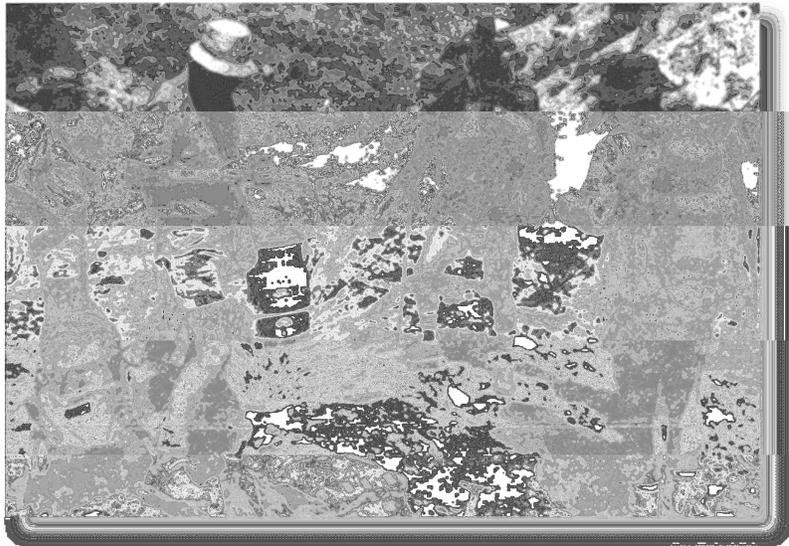
## Flash flood re-search

**Aug 4, 1984**  
**Deep Canyon, Santa Rose Mtns**  
**1984-019**

By Kevin Walker

At the request of the Indio station of the Riverside County Sheriff's Department, RMRU responded back to the Piñon Fire Station. The plan was to carefully re-search the area we had looked in one week previously for a woman that was swept away by flash flood waters on July 27 (see July issue - Mission No. [1984-018](#)).

Members met at 6.00 a.m., and being that we were going out on what would normally be a training weekend, we had a great turnout with the following members present. Walt Walker, John Dew, Bernie McIlvoy, and his brother Dave, Rick Pohlers, Rob Gardner, Mel Krug, Ray Hussey, Jim Fairchild, Bill Blaschko, Bud White, Randy Iwasiuk, Don Ricker, Larry Roland, Jim Garvey and myself. Upon Don Landells arrival, we were flown in groups of four with our packs to a ridge near where the woman was last



WATER BREAK - RMRU members Jim Garvey, Don Ricker, Rob Gardner, Bill Blaschko, Larry Roland, and Kevin Walker stop for a water break in the tributary above Deep Canyon. Water containers such as this one were put out at different locations in the canyon as temperatures soared into the 100's.

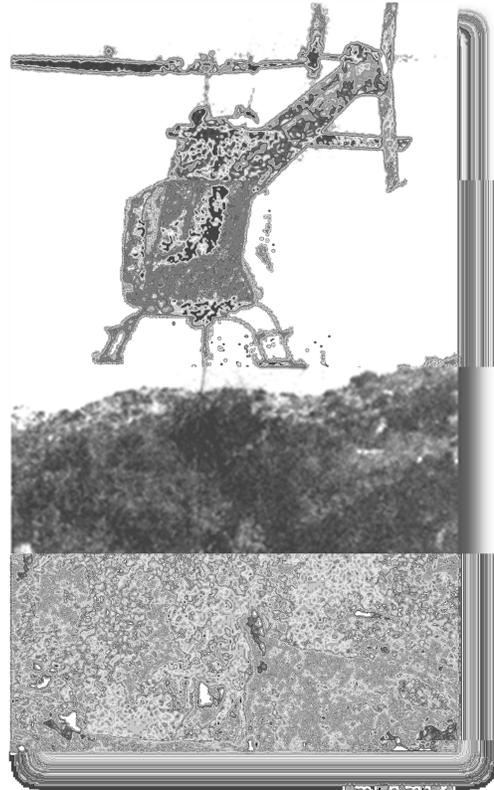
seen. Once all members were in, we set out in two groups, one lead by Rick Pohlers, and a smaller group with me to do a sweep behind the first group. As we started down Walt and Don flew in containers of water to various locations in the tributary and in Deep Canyon. Even though water was running, it was still murky from the previous weeks' rains. Both groups moved along slowly, poking and digging anywhere a body might lodge. Progress was slow as we planned to spend the entire weekend searching.

Much farther down Deep Canyon, Bernie and his brother had been set out to search

the narrow part of Deep Canyon where the largest pools were to be found.

At 11:15 Rick came on the air and notified base that his group had located the body, and that the Coroner should be called. Our group was about a quarter mile behind Rick's, so it did not take long to make it past the few small to medium cascade type waterfalls and walk on down to where the first group waited. As Rob and I rounded a bend in the little canyon just ahead of the rest of our group, we saw the entire first group about 75 feet above the canyon floor. We wondered why they would want to be out in the hot sun instead of down in the shade. We found out as we approached the site. Because of a most unpleasant odor, we quickly joined them.

As we waited, Don Landells was re-contacted and flew back to Piñon. It was about a two hour wait as the coroner was responding from somewhere in the desert area. Once he did arrive, he, Walt and a Piñon fireman were flown in with extrication equipment. To be brief, it was a very distasteful job removing the body out from under several large boulders in the center of the canyon floor. The body would have not been found in the first place if it were not for the odor. Thanks to the expertise of the firefighter and the stamina of several RMRU members, the body was extricated and bagged, then flown out in the cargo net. At 3:00 the last group was flown out. No major casualties were reported other than every member present had literally been eaten alive by some type of insect in the area, some worse than others. With the mission complete, we went down to the desert, had lunch, and then went over to a team member's girl friend's house for a most enjoyable cool swim.



Jim Farwell

**LAST LOAD OF GEAR - RMRU members Kevin Walker and Rob Gardner attach the sling to the cargo net as pilot Don Landells holds the helicopter in a hover, before flying the last load of equipment out of the canyon. The located body was flown out in the same manner.**

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.