

RMRU NEWSLETTER

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A VOLUNTEER NON-PROFIT CORPORATION
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MEMBER OF THE MOUNTAIN RESCUE ASSOCIATION

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COMING EVENTS ---

1 December, Board Meeting, 1900, at
9 December, Regular Meeting, County Hall of Records, 1930.
12 December, Training Session. A mock mission is being planned that will require tracking, first aid, technical evacuation, and other undisclosed features. Following the problems we'll have a thorough look and discussion with unit and individual equipment. More details at the meeting, but be prepared for a call-out....

Note: Our original plan for Helitac on 12 December was replaced as above. We now plan the Helitac for 9 January 1971. This will not replace the regularly scheduled January training, but will be an extra, and very urgent and beneficial training opportunity.

SEARCH AND RESCUE ACTIVITY ---

Through the years and especially of late we have had call-outs where we rolled and gathered at the roadhead, even got deployed far into the search area. Then, about 9:00 to 10:00, the subjects of our search walked out, either to where they were supposed to or many miles away. The usual format is for them to be reported overdue on the day they are due back, we roll that night and search into the morning, then hear of their safe return. This makes us wonder if we might be wise to wait until noon for the older teenagers or adults. But then, if they had a severe injury, we would kick ourselves for delaying. Maybe there's no satisfactory answer.

7 November - Tahquitz Canyon Evacuation - # 7035



RMRU members examine Denny Williams injured hiker, who was in deep shock from his serious injuries.

Ken Crowder phoned me at 11:00 P.M. Saturday night after having received a call from the Indio Sheriff's Station asking for assistance in the evacuation of an injured youth in Tahquitz Canyon (south end of Palm Springs). It was reported that the injured youth had two broken legs and was badly in need of help.

Ken and I had much to do in that all R.M.R.U. call captains were out of town for the week-end. Between Bill Speck, Ken Crowder and myself, we alerted the remaining team members.

We arrived at the roadhead (La Mirada & Sunny Dunes Road) at 1:00 A.M. with a total of nine members, but no Sheriff's Deputy. After a couple of brief radio transmissions on our

Sheriff's frequency, a deputy was dispatched to the area. An informant, and friend, of the injured victim had been interrogated by Tom Dadson confirming that the accident was in fact true, and the victim's name was Denny Williams, seventeen years old from Lynwood, and the accident had happened at approximately 9:30 P.M. It was reported that Denny fell approximately fifty to seventy-five feet, breaking both legs and inflicting a head injury.

With the personnel on hand it was decided we would take six people in as soon as possible, two would stay back for support, and one to run base camp. Tahquitz Canyon being so treacherous, we hate to hike in after dark, but with Denny's injuries we had no choice but to go, and as fast as possible. After an hour and ten minutes of hard climbing we were much welcomed by the "hippie type" young people sitting up with the injured Denny! After a brief examination of Denny's injuries we radioed base that Denny had a compound fracture of the left ankle and a simple fracture of the femur just above the knee of the right leg. A small puncture wound on the forehead was dwarfed by the magnitude of the leg injuries. Denny was in extreme shock from pain and the trauma of the accident. Denny was conscious, but was not aware of his broken legs. I might add at this point, I am very proud of the five other R.M.R.U. people who administered the first aid. During the cutting away of the shoe of the compounded ankle, and splinting; and the straightening and splinting of the right leg, the victim never was aware of the extent of his injuries in spite of much discussion that takes place during such a difficult job. We also radioed to base to prepare for a helicopter evacuation at the break of dawn. At this

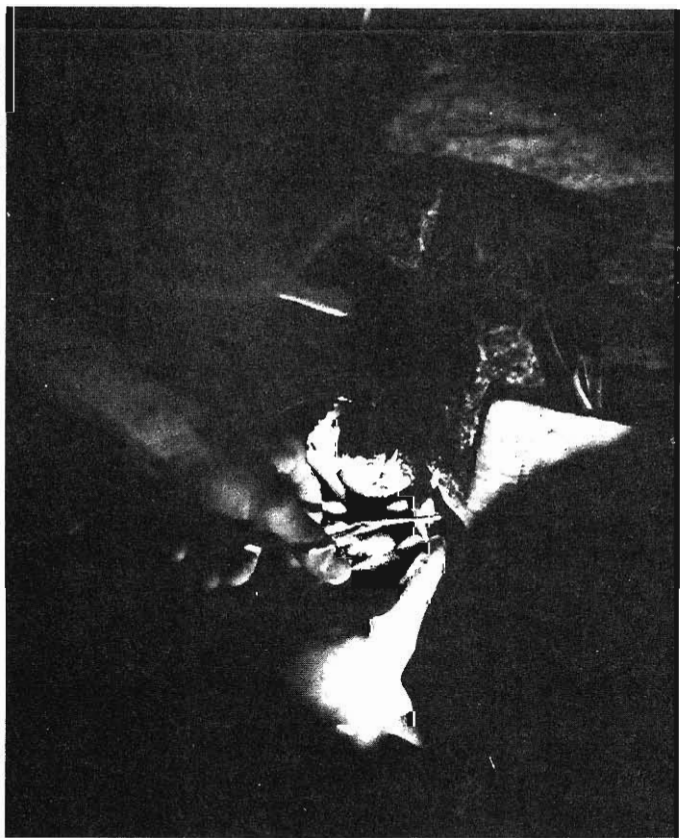
point it was 4:00 A.M. Much work had to be done. Denny had to be removed from the clump of rocks he was lying upon and placed into our rescue bag and litter. A helispot had to be scouted out and the two hundred fifty pound Denny had to be carried to this helispot. The six R.M.R.U. People were busy indeed.

At the time we reached Denny, torture, pain, anxiety, and fear were apparent in him. After placing him in the rescue bag and litter with both air splints in place the words that came from his mouth were pure pleasure to my ears, "this feels so good I could spend all night here."

We were in luck in that the best available helispot was not much farther than one hundred fifty feet away. The pilot would not be able to set his machine completely down, but could place both skids on the dome of a large boulder for a semi-hover pick up.

By flashlight, Denny's pantsleg, is cut away so first aid can start on his compound fractured tibia and fibula.

Just before dawn the familiar crack of the rotor blades pounding against the air and the smooth roar of the turbocharged bell could be heard as



the powerful machine came charging up canyon, just clearing the tree tops in the canyon bottom. Don Landell, piloting his own craft, circled twice, checking our chosen helispot. Approving, he hovered close enough to have Ken lower a brush hook we requested to cut some brush the huge rotor blades of the helicopter had already started chopping. Ken was flown back to base and Landell returned empty finding six R.M.R.U. members with their victim ready to complete their job. Thinking we were about to finish our mission, one major problem arose. The basket which we nest our litter in was attached too far to the rear of the craft, and the heat of the engine's exhaust was blowing exactly upon the victim's right foot, melting the air splint enough to lose its pressure and burning a small hole in our sleeping bag! Denny was removed as quickly as possible and the chopper was sent back to base camp alone. During this episode no vocal communications could be heard over the roar of the chopper's powerful engine. The team members tying in the head of the litter sensed our problem at the foot and began untying what was already tied, knowing what had to be done.



Sooner than we realized possible the chopper returned, this time with no basket at all, just a cargo rack! Panic again set in, since our nylon webbing ties were too short to encircle the entire rack. Last minute modifications were made in longer elapsed time than we like. None the less, our victim was flown from the canyon at 6:15 A.M. and reached the Hospital's green lawn without any further incidents.

After our hike out of the Canyon we drove to the hospital to retrieve our gear flown out on the victim. The attending physician's statement was, "you did right, everything is just fine." However, Denny may not walk again unless he is willing to spend many months in therapy.

Thanks fellows for a tough job well done! - Ron Harris

In the early dawn light, Don Landells, of Palm Springs Aviation, lifts off with Denny for the quick trip to the Desert Hospital front lawn.

8 November - Tahquitz Canyon Evacuation - # 7036

For the second time within a 24 hour period we were called for a mission to Tahquitz Canyon. R.M.R.U. received the call at 1715 Sunday evening. Jim Fairchild, Steve Bryant and Pete Carlson were setting up the truck when I arrived at base. Within a few minutes Ron Harris, John Murdock and Dick Webster arrived. Pete was the base operator while the rest of us, with litter in tow, headed up the canyon. The time was 1930. It was understood that Dave Freeman, the victim, had a broken ankle or leg, a broken arm and a severe cut on the head. After a beautiful hike up the canyon

(my first trip in this location), coincidence placed us only 200 feet from the spot where Saturday's victim was found. The victim had been moved from the area of his fall and placed in a well sheltered recess (cave) by the local residents. The squalor of the area left nothing to the imagination. Ron immediately started a digital exam while Jim checked life signs. The air splints made easy work of the leg and arm which got careful attention from John, Dick and Steve. It appeared that both the arm and leg had simple fractures. Ron and I dressed the head wound. After completion of the treatment we discussed the evacuation and decided that we would stay at the site till morning, airlifting the victim out at that time. Ron and John had been on the Saturday night ordeal and were a little tired, although they'll never admit it, so they figured on a little sleep. Steve and I sat up with the victim till 0030. Dave, the victim, and I had an interesting discussion concerning the hourly wages of RMRU volunteers. He was very surprised to learn that our concern was one of solicitude and security for those who have been injured or lost and our personal remuneration may be a "Thank You." I further explained that on many occasions RMRU had received monetary donations from the families of the rescued victims. Jim came up to relieve me and I went down and caught 40 winks in the litter. Now there's good sleeping....Really, it was a precaution I took, because I heard that one must be very careful where he steps, sits and sleeps in this canyon. The clock finally hit 0530 and found us tying the victim in the litter. We had a carry of about 200 feet to a helispot and didn't have too much of a problem transporting except at the stream crossing. Jim had decided that since the victim felt pretty good he would let him ride inside the helicopter. Don Landells was the pilot and put on a good exhibition of contour flying as he came up the canyon. John Murdock flew with them to the hospital missing out on the beautiful hike back to base. The local residents thanked us for our services and with that we headed home....and steak and eggs. - Hank Schmel

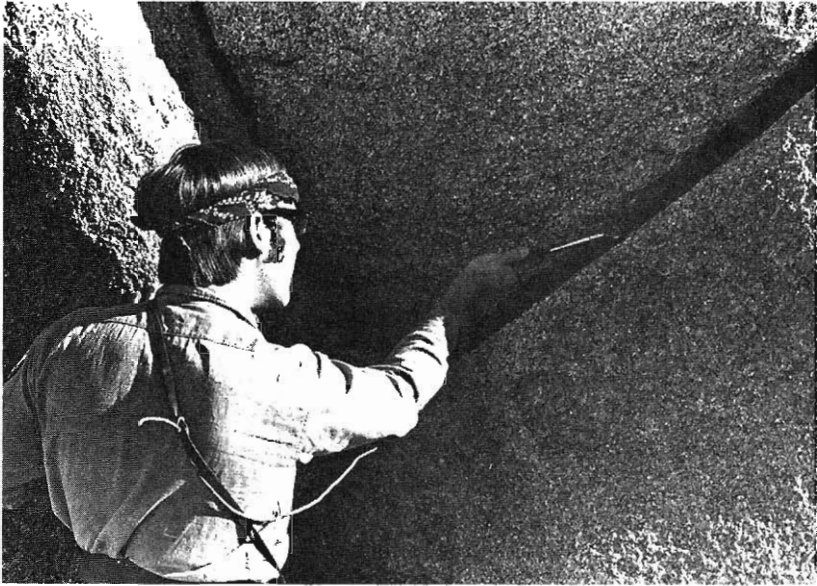
PAST TRAINING ---

A fine turn out of members, wives and children for the technical training at Jumbo Rocks Campground in Joshua Tree National Monument enjoyed a wonderful week-end of training, fresh air, and scenery. We had intensive seminars in litter lore, anchor and belay, and piton placement. Discussion surrounding these skills was most beneficial. Then we practiced lowering and raising litters in various modes. Several hours of bouldering, at dawn, dusk, and in between were very enjoyable and enlightening. We are now nursing many minor abrasions, we are rushing out to buy "P.A.'s" for friction climbing. Jim Lynch and Bob Mocilac of the National Park Service trained with us Saturday. Especially noteworthy is the number of families that came for the week-end. They had a fine time and were even participants as victims and did some bouldering.

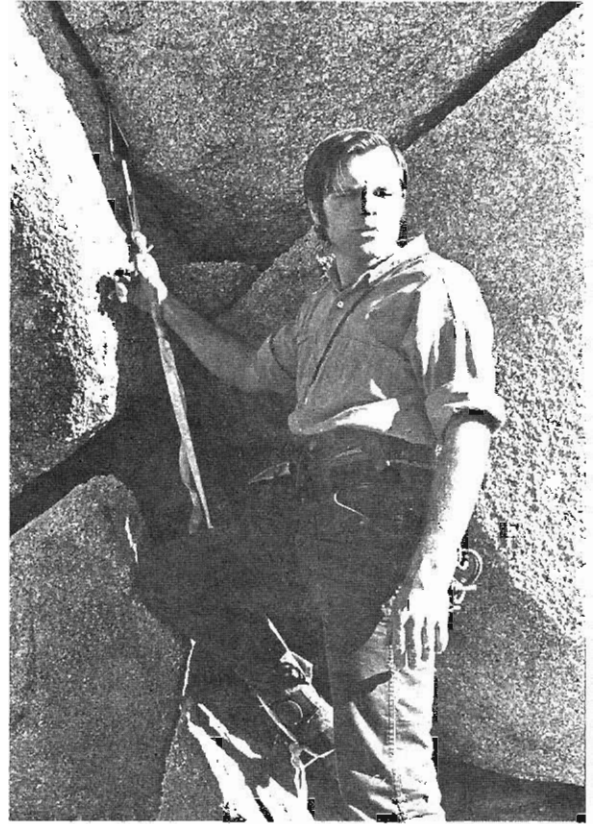
RMRU PEOPLE ---

Bob MacPherson underwent surgery at Circle City Hospital, Corona, for a seriously infected knee. It had been bothering him for some time until he went to Dr. Norm Mellor who took him to surgery very quick.

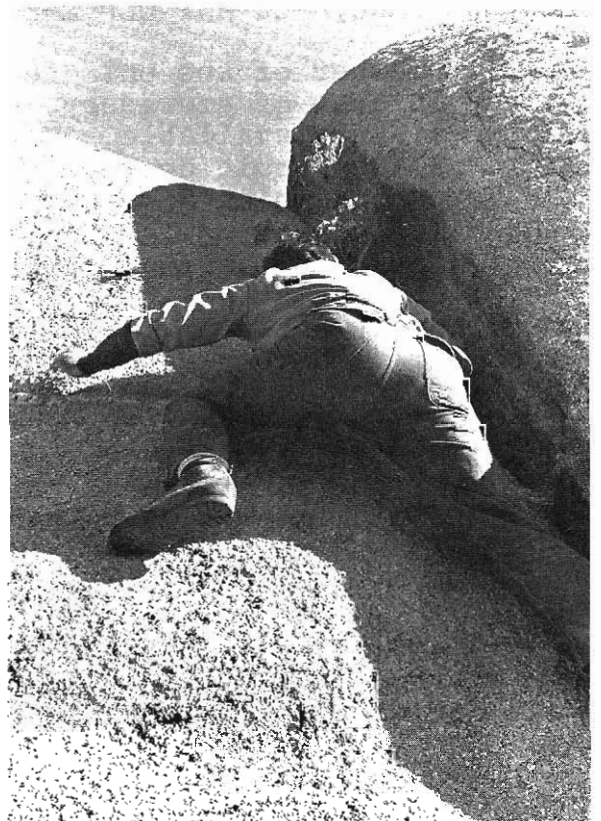
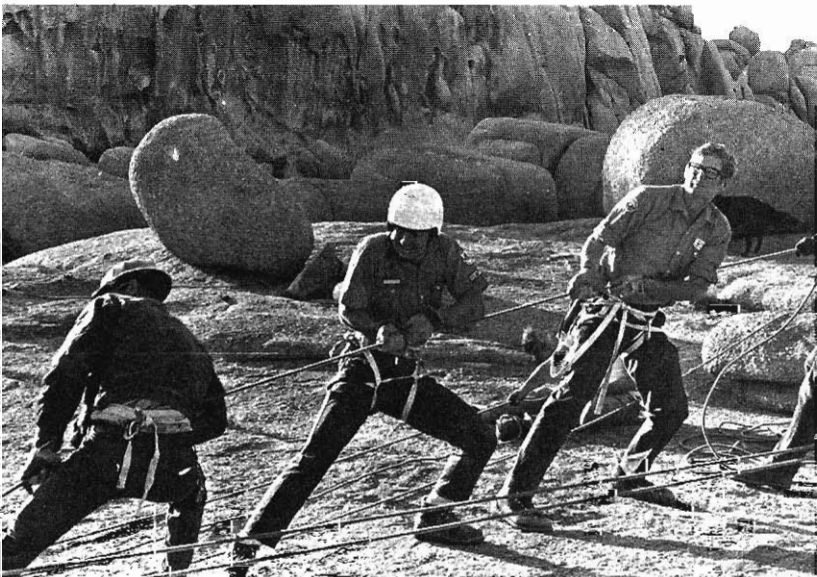
Pete Carlson is off crutches as he recovers from his broken pelvis. His recovery has been speedy and without hitch. He has been Base Camp Operator on several missions and attended training as well as the fall first aid course.



Mike Orr demonstrates piton placement, above, and Bernie McIlvoy shows how to use a climbing nut and aid sling, right, at their station of the Saturday morning training.



Jim Lynch (Park Ranger), John Murdock, and Jim Fairchild strain on the business end of a mechanical advantage set up to lift a litter with victim and two climbers. Below right, Mike Daugherty, tries his luck on the 25 foot Sunday morning bouldering problem. He and several others made it. It was much harder than the photograph shows.

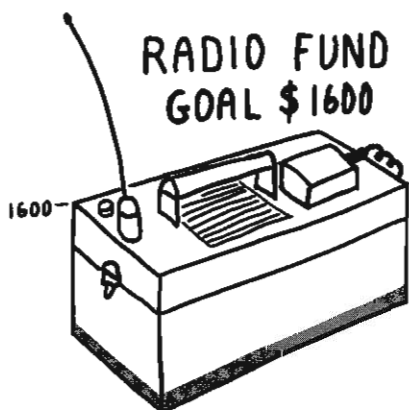


Ron Harris resigned from active membership because of the press of obligations. He plans to remain active in supporting the unit by creating a committee that can improve our financial posture.

Phil Moedt, recently appointed Recording Secretary, has been appointed to the Board of Directors to replace Ron.

P.S. on Bob. We went over to see Dr. Norm on another matter and he took us over to the hospital to see Bob. He is doing well with plumbing and traction, impatient as are all active people when temporarily confined to bed.

SUSTAINING MEMBERSHIP ---



As indicated last month we have started a radio fund drive to acquire two additional handi-talkies. These radios were given highest priority on the list of needed items that was assembled some months ago. As for the remainder of the list, the purchase priority of all items has not been established to this date and therefore we are reluctant to print it.

This month we have six new names to add to our sustaining membership list. They are George Nokes, William Conrad, Jeff King, John Jakway, Mattie E. Dever and BSA Troop #80, Palm Springs.

We also want to thank the following people for renewing their membership this month: Mrs. L. M. Hamman, Mr. & Mrs. Theodore Pruess, Mr. & Mrs. John A. Revie, Mr. & Mrs. R. A. DeWees, Western Helicopters and Riverside Exchange Club. - Al Andrews

CALL US (RMRU) FOR ANY OLD EMERGENCY ---

A fellow member of the unit recently said he has instructed his family to call us in case of emergency, such as serious injury. That is, when he is not immediately available. We would all do well to be sure our wives and older children would do the same. If home, we can respond much sooner and with better training and equipment than any other emergency-type outfit. After all, we have no inhibiting regulations. We wonder further if other agencies are not missing a good bet by not thinking of SAR units during fire, flood, major crashes, and so forth. Maybe it's best they don't, because if they knew our capabilities and willingness we would be called far beyond our volunteer capability to respond.



The Technical training session held at Joshua Tree National Monument proved to be one of the finest this writer has ever participated in. Everyone who attended seemed to have that necessary spirit for a successful weekend. It would appear that the newer members and old timers alike gained from the round robin type demonstrations.

As 1970 draws to a close we of RMRU are hoping that we will not have to roll again. Usually in late September the amount of missions drops to about one a month. But that has not been the case this year, and we could stand not having any more missions for this year. The prospects don't look good though. We rolled on two possible searches at the same time on the 27th of November and was called for a third that same evening. Also,

we were just about to roll on a man who was missing in the mountains because of the snow over the weekend of the 28th and 29th. As we were readying winter gear the call came through that he had walked out in four foot deep snow.

In the January issue we will recap RMRU's most busiest year with words and lots of photographs. So far this year we have participated in 37 active missions with about a dozen aborts on the side. - Pres. Walt

