

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 ---

- 8 July, Board Meeting, 1900, Bill Speck's.
- 18 July, Testing at Riverside YMCA. Details have been sent in letters to members.
- 22 July, Regular Meeting, 1930.
- 24-25 July, Testing and Training.
- 12 August, Board Meeting
- 15 September, First Aid Course. Details below.

Because RMRU has grown in number of members we will be looking for a more spacious meeting place, hence, no listed place to meet on 22 July. We most sincerely thank Highland Outfitters for permitting us to meet at the store these past years. We might be there in July if another place is not secured in time.

THE FIRST AID COURSE is what we're calling the training that begins Sept. 15, 1970, at the Southern California Gas Company auditorium, 3700 Central Ave., Riverside. It is reached by taking the Riverside Freeway to the Central Ave. off ramp, thence west toward Magnolia Center, it's between Barker Bros. Furniture and Provident Savings. Park on the west side, enter the door where a red cross appears. Wear clothing you don't mind getting soiled, cut, or ripped. Bring an assortment of practice dressings, four triangular bandages, and notebook. Instruction will be intense and realistic with plenty of indoor and outdoor practice by all. Preliminary registration is not necessary, but helpful. You must attend all hours of all sessions in order to be certified as an advanced first aider. We make no distinction between standard and advanced -- we provide a minimum of 27 hrs. instruction, 7-10pm., be ready to start before the hour. Instructors will be Jim Fairchild, Walt Walker and Art Bridge. Please pass the word around about the course before it starts, so many people show up a week or two too late. Oh yes, this course is designed to be especially useful to outdoor people of all kinds, and even more so for SAR personnel. Each year some housewives take the training and invariably report how they've saved lives by what they learned -- anyone interested in first aid is welcome.

TESTING AND TRAINING. Here's an extraordinary opportunity of RMRU members to receive a really thorough physical and psychological testing in our environment, the mountains, and to assist a doctor in his research regarding types of personalities.

SEARCH AND RESCUE ACTIVITY ---

In June we rolled on the 13th (Elsinore, 2 boys), 17th (Anza, missing man), and 29th (Idyllwild, 10 yr. old boy). All of these calls would have been searches but were aborted as we drove to the locations.

21 June. Boulder Basin Camp Ground - Search.

In the middle of the afternoon, during the day of the year with the longest daylight, we were called to search for four girls missing from the camp ground. By 5 pm. we were setting up base at the campsite that overlooks

Twin Pines Creek, down which they were last seen. Ron Harris and Leon Barris soon were over the side looking for tracks. Fifteen minutes later Walt Walker and Don Ricker were out looking for tracks a bit to the west. Numerous hikers and impromptu searchers had previously been down there and tracking was confusing, and even farther down neither party could find anything definite.

Twin Pines Creek drains the north slope of the massif just east of Black Mtn. (7900' el.) and the west end of Fuller Ridge that runs west from Mt. San Jacinto. The first two thousand feet of elevation drop is steep (30-45 deg.) and characterized by cliffy sections, loose rock, timber higher up then thick brush below. Following the stream bed on down is tricky going, but that's what the girls did. They had left camp to "find a place to swim." No chance, only frogs and insects can swim in the tiny pools of this creek.

Before long Lee Mickelson arrived and was dispatched with radio to cover the Cincos Poses Trail down to a certain point. He reported the tracks of many hikers. All units returned to base to regroup. We felt that the area a bit east of the original search might be where the girls went. Just then Sgt. Ben Brandon of the Riverside County Sheriff's Dept. was called on his radio and told the girls had arrived at the Twin Pines Boys' Ranch. This was two hours after Ron and Leon first began to look for tracks, and about two quarts of perspiration later for those in the field -- it was quite warm and a bit smoggy up there.

We had four very experienced and capable trackers over the side and they probably (undoubtedly) were on the girls' route or at least crossed it, but the many other footprints and disturbances, along with the nature of the stream bed, made definitive identification of their tracks less than probable. At the time of regrouping we planned to send two men all the way down Twin Pines Creek. They would have found sign farther down. It was hard to believe the four girls (ages 14, 12, 12, & 12) would not turn back or at least stop. Of the many past missions in this area, this is the first instance of the victim's having kept going.

How we wish we could admonish all parents and others responsible for lost people to notify the appropriate agency within a few minutes of the disappearance. Giving them several hours of head start can lead to a tragedy. Anyway, we waited until Kathy, Mickie, Becky and Heather had been driven back to camp. They were all fine, just tired and had some sore feet. Their little black dog looked like it would sleep for a week. --Jim Fairchild, the sore-footed Roadrunner who was Base Camp Operator.

22 June - Falls Creek - Evacuation

It was a beautiful day in Banning and the wind was out of the East and no smog. At 4:45 PM the phone rang and Walt's wife informed me that a hiker was down in the area of Snow Creek, in the Palm Springs Water District, and the team was to meet at the Banning Substation. After arriving at the Substation, I was informed that the hiker was a 16 year old girl with a possible broken leg. Walt arrived a few minutes later and he and I proceeded to Snow Creek Canyon with the rest of the team right behind us. When we reached Palm Springs Water District we were informed by the Caretaker that four teenagers, two boys and two girls had hiked up Falls Creek Canyon and one of the girls, Terrie Hyatt, had fallen from one of the falls about a mile up the Canyon at 1:00 PM and broken her leg. After reaching the end of the road, we proceeded to hike about 200 yards up the Canyon where we met Terrie and her friends. They had helped most of the

way down from where she had fallen. Walt checked her for a possible broken leg and as there was some soreness, we put on the air splint and put her in the litter and brought her back to the car. Then Walt and I took her home to her Mother. -Leon Barris.



Leon Barris and Walt Walker secure Terrie into the litter for a trip out to the roadhead.

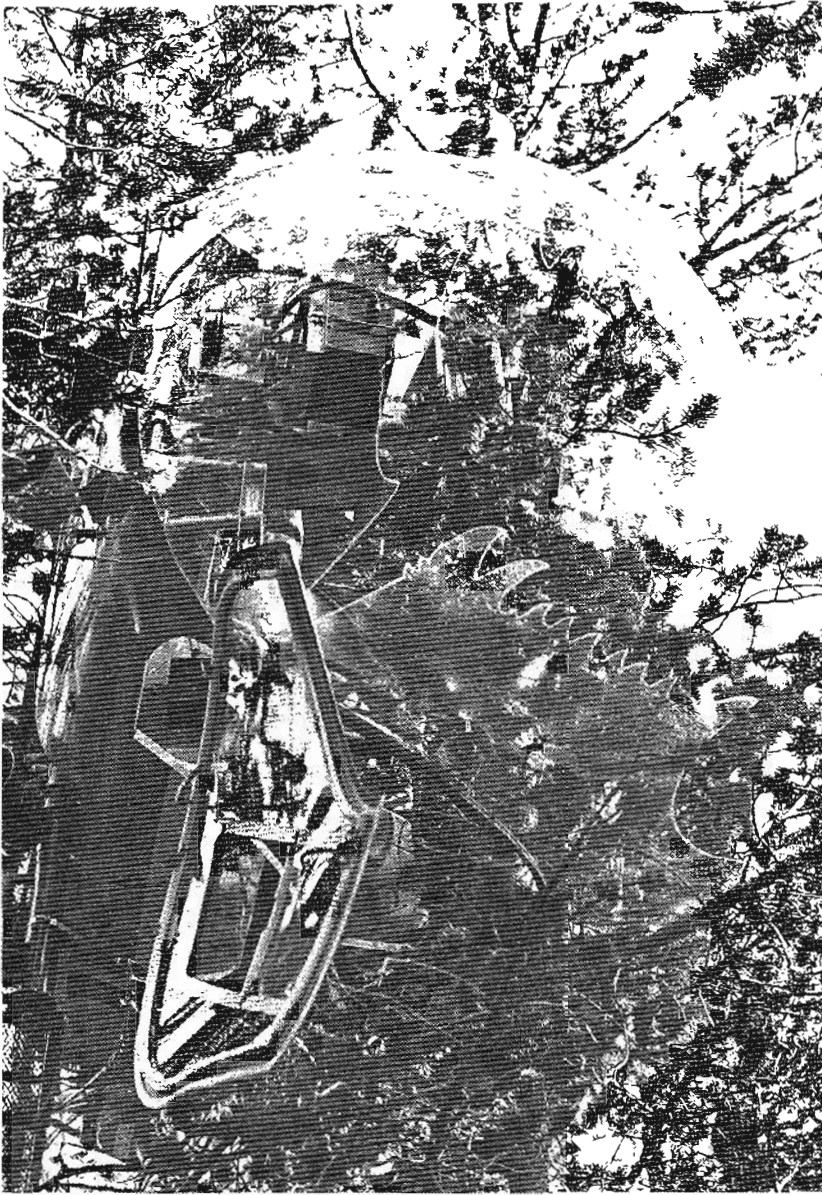


Pictured is part of the team who participated in the carry out thru the boulders and poison oak.

25 June - S. J. Mtns. - Evacuation

Thursday morning started as a normal workday for me, but that was quickly changed when I received a phone call from Lt. Park of the Riverside Co. Sheriff's Dept. He stated that a Scoutmaster from Escondido had hiked out of the San Jacinto Mountains to report that one of his Scouts had broken his ankle the evening before and was in great pain. We discussed the situation and decided that a helicopter would quickly solve the problem. While he contacted Western Helicopters in Rialto I phoned the fire station in Idyllwild, where the Scoutmaster was waiting, to obtain more information and tell him that the injured boy would be airlifted out of Little Round Valley. The valley is located on the West slope of Mt. San Jacinto at about the 9500 foot level.

Since I had been airlifted out of the valley on a previous mission I thought there would be no problem to do it again. After phoning Al Andrews about what was to take place I phoned Leon Barris and asked him to bring me an air splint. When Leon arrived he drove me to the Hemet Airport where I was to meet the helicopter. When we arrived at the airport



A wounded 'Bird' stuck in the trees.

the helicopter had already arrived and we introduced ourselves to Reed Jaroch, the pilot. After installing a radio and loading my call out pack we were on our way.

As we neared Idyllwild I directed Reed towards Little Round Valley and in a few minutes we were circling over the 150' x 250' opening in the trees. The Scouts had made a large triangle out of ponchos and groundcloths (the ground to air signal for safe to land here). As we settled into the opening the great blast from the main rotor blades blew the signal in many directions. As soon as we came to rest I quickly grabbed my pack and ran over to where the injured boy lay. After a quick examination I put the air splint on and inflated it so that it would support the injured ankle. The Scouts then carried the boy over to the waiting bird. While all this was being done the scattered ponchos were being retrieved.

We loaded the boy into the helicopter, I put my pack on the cargo rack and as I climbed in I noticed that it was just before noon and thought that I would be back to work by 1:30 P.M. We lifted up and circled around the meadow to

gain forward airspeed. As we passed the northeast corner we lost the air cushion and settled down rather hard into the edge of a small stream. The pilot said the load was just to great for the altitude and the hot day, about 80 degrees. So, we unloaded the boy, and I climbed back aboard. Since Reed was new to the area, the plan was to fly me to Idyllwild and I could show him where to land and let me out. He then would return for the boy and then pick me up and we would fly on to the Hemet Hospital. We lifted up and moved over to the center of the meadow. We sat down and Reed said we were still to heavy.

As we sat down the tail boom was extended over some large ferns. The bird began to vibrate and I mentioned this to Reed. He was already checking the pitch of the main rotor blades which sometimes causes a vibration. He then climbed out of the bird and looked back at the tail rotor. After he climbed in we discussed the situation and I suggested that we remove my pack as it weighed about 30 pounds. He said fine, so I quickly removed it and took it over to the Scouts and told them to send it out with the boy. After I

had climbed back in, Reed ran up the engine, checked the mags and instruments and lifted off. We rose up and started forward, north, out of the meadow. The trees in that direction are all shorter and we cleared the first ones by about 20 feet. As we headed forward there loomed two trees much taller than the others and we were no longer gaining altitude. I thought to myself that we could probably bust through the tops and then we would be in the open.

That thought, then became immaterial, as we began to settle down toward the thick stand of Lodgepole pines. The helicopter was slightly nose high when a tremendous vibration went through the ship. All I could think of was 'fire'. Although I had on a seat belt and a single shoulder harness I could feel myself twisting forward. The next feeling I had was that of hanging somewhat upside down. All I could still think of was 'fire', and this became stronger as I could smell gasoline. I was vainly reaching for the main switches when Reed shut them off. Now I began to take stock of the situation. I didn't hurt anywhere and asked Reed if he was all right. He said that he was o.k.. As I looked around I could see that we were up in the trees, in fact a rather large limb was protruding into the cabin from the front where the bubble was split open. The bird had come to a stop just slightly upside down.

As I began to move I could feel blood running down my back. The thought then came to mind, will I be too weak to get the pilot and myself out of the bird. I leaned down and asked Reed if the blood was spurting or running fast. He said that it was just barely running. After bracing myself I released the seat belt and climbed up and looked out the open door. It looked like it would be better to try and go down through the pilot's door except that there weren't any trees close enough to get a hold of. About this time the Scouts and the Assistant Scoutmaster showed up. I yelled down to them that I needed the pack so that we could get down. As I moved about I touched the edge of the shattered bubble and quickly cut a thumb. Have to remember that, I thought, and keep the rope away from the sharp edges.

When the Scouts returned with my pack I instructed them to get my 60 foot emergency rope and carabiners out. After a number of throws I was able to grab the rope. Cutting off about 10 feet of the rope I secured it to the nearest tree for an anchor. Then I took my rappel sling and tied it around the pilot and also tied foot loops for him to stand in. Taking the remainder of the rope I secured it to the sling and put it into a brake bar system. After pulling up all the slack in the rope, Reed released his seat belt, and I lowered him the 25 feet to the ground. He untied himself and tied the sling to the end of the rope and I raised it up so that I could use it for a rappel seat. It was my turn now and I rappelled out of the broken bird very carefully.

When I left work that morning I had left word with my Dad and suggested that he tell my wife to drive the kids over to the hospital parking lot and watch the helicopter come in. So now I wanted to carefully word my message that I would radio out. Down at the hospital parking lot, the Hemet Police had cleared the area. Lt. Park was waiting along with a small gathering of bystanders and my family. When I radioed to the Hemet sub-station that we had crashed I was careful to state that both the pilot and I were o.k. With people standing near Lt. Park's patrol car they overheard the message and word went through the crowd. However, my wife only got the word that the helicopter had crashed. It wasn't until she got home that she found out that I was o.k. The Sheriff's Department had phoned my Dad.

Many things began to happen now, the members of RMRU were called, Western Helicopters was notified and many people in the Sheriff's Department were also advised. We still had the problem of evacuating the injured boy.



Walt describes to fellow team member Art Bridge how he got out of the crashed bird.

While we were waiting for the team to drive to the Marion Mountain campground and hike in I walked around the meadow and found small pieces of a ground cloth at the edge of the ferns. The material was so light I didn't think too much about it.

As the afternoon wore on, my shoulder began to hurt, and I had the Assistant Scoutmaster put a sling on my right arm. This helped but didn't stop the pain. Each time as I walked out to the bird I marveled at how lucky Reed and I had been, just to be alive.

As we were sitting around an elderly couple came hiking into camp and asked how to get to the Palm Springs Aerial Tram. They had climbed Mt. San Jacinto and when they had started down they had taken the wrong trail and were on the west side of the mountain instead of the east side. I suggested that they stay and hike out with the team when the team started out with the boy. They stated that they had left a relative at the tram. So I radioed out to have the Sheriff's Department phone the tram and advise her of the situation.

Team members began to arrive at the campground and they radioed up to me and asked what was needed. I advised them to come light and bring the aluminum litter. Team doctor, Norm Mellor, had also drove up the roadhead. After waiting at the roadhead, at first it was thought that he would not be needed, he began to hike in also. The 'Roadrunner', Jim Fairchild, came hiking into view carrying the aluminum litter in one hand and a portable team radio in the other. Very shortly other RMRU members arrived and it was nice to see the large turnout. The Scouts had been fixing dinner for the whole team and after everyone had walked out and taken a look at the bird they grabbed a bite to eat.

The injured boy was loaded onto the litter and secured with slings. The long steep descent via Deer Springs now began. The young fellow in the litter was doing fine, but the downhill walk began to bother my shoulder. About this time we met up with Dr. Mellor and he put on some more triangular bandages to hold my arm tight to my body to stop movement that was being transmitted to the shoulder. Sometime after sunset I told Jim that he had better put a belay rope on me as my legs were starting to get rubbery. After 3½ hours on the trail we arrived at the campground at about 10 P.M. Waiting at the roadhead were, Lt. Bill Parks, Lt. Ed Brown, Capt. Gib Crowell and Chief John McCoy, all of the Riverside County Sheriff's Department. It was comforting to know that people had cared and had been concerned when they learned of the crash. The Idyllwild Fire Dept. Ambulance was waiting and the injured boy was put into it and sent to the Hemet Hospital. He was x-rayed and found to have sustained a fractured ankle. Al

Andrews drove me to the hospital and I was also x-rayed. However, I had not broken any bones. My injuries were limited to the joint and the surrounding muscles.

Days after the crash when the bird had been retrieved, an investigation into the crash revealed a bearing that holds the tail rotor shaft had almost welded itself together. The investigation also found that the Scouts had seen a poncho sucked into the tail rotor and chopped to pieces. It is a possibility that the poncho caused the bearing to fail and that the bearing seizing up caused the bird to crash. At the present the investigation is not completed. -Walt Walker

27 June - Chino Canyon - Rescue

On the morning of Friday the 26th two hikers started down the skyline trail from Long Valley (8,500') on Mt. San Jacinto towards Palm Springs. Having looked at Chino Canyon from the tram car, they decided it would be a good idea to drop off the ridge and proceed down what looked to them like an easy canyon leading to the valley station (2,400') of the tramway. So, carrying only a canteen of water apiece and some dried apricots they began the descent. It soon developed that the canyon was a good deal more than they had bargained for and by late afternoon their legs felt like rubber and their canteens were empty.

At this point they managed to establish 'voice contact' with the operator of one of the tram cars high overhead and he directed them downstream to a point where they found water. He asked if they needed help and they indicated that they did not. After spending the night next to the stream under a large overhanging rock, they started down again the first thing Saturday morning. By now, however, it had been 24 hours since they had last eaten and both felt extremely weak. To make matters worse, one of the pair sprained his ankle and after that it was all they could do to regain the shelter of the rock under which they had spent the night.

Once again they called up to the tram car and this time they asked that help be sent. Most of us were just stretching ourselves awake when the call came, but soon we were hurrying through the oppressive heat towards Palm Springs. Arriving at the Valley Station, we were confronted by a puzzling situation. The stranded hikers were located in the bottom of the main canyon between towers #2 and #3 of the tramway. It was already in the eighties and would soon be over 100° F on the floor of the canyon. If we choose to hike from the Valley Station it would mean several hours of travel at top speed before we reached them and, if it then proved necessary to carry one of them out in a litter, we would probably be very late getting them back to the Valley Station. On the other hand, the high temperature in the narrow confines of the canyon (and our recent experiences in Little Round Valley) militated against the use of a helicopter.

So, while the rest of the team arrived at the base of the tramway, I rode the first car up to examine the possibility of getting out of the tramcar at tower #2 or #3 and climbing down the tower and up (or down) the canyon to reach the victims.

We were in luck. By climbing down tower #2 and traversing from its base along the east wall of the canyon we would be able to drop into the canyon bottom about 1000 yards below their location. Accordingly, 11 of us soon found ourselves confronting 4 feet of very empty space between the door of the tram car and the catwalk on the tower, 130 feet from the ground. This proved no problem and while Walt, whose shoulder was still hurting him

from the helicopter crash, waited atop the tower ten of us scurried through the cactus across the loose wall of the canyon into the welcome glade at the canyon's bottom. After dispatching one rattlesnake, struggling through grapevines interlaced with poison oak, up and over two waterfalls and enormous talus blocks, we surprised our two victims, both very hungry and very tired.

As it developed, the ankle was only very slightly sprained and, after an enormous lunch in the shade of the overhanging rock, both of the hikers felt prepared to start slowly downstream. So, we crept, blinking (98° F), from the shelter of our rock and eased ourselves over the big, sunbaked boulders back into the slippery green depths of the stream bed. While a small party went ahead to set up fixed ropes from the canyon bottom to the base of the tower, we freely perspired ourselves downstream, guided by the Roadrunner's shocking pink trailtape.

We clipped the waistloops of the two hikers onto the fixed line and struggled back up the crumbling canyonside to the base (106° F) of the tower. Fortunately, both of them felt capable of climbing the caged ladder which mounts the tower's side and so, securely belayed from above, they climbed up to the catwalk. Then there was the final short jump down into the waiting tram car (securely belayed again, of course) and we were finished. As we rode effortlessly down the cable towards Sat. night dinner, our two "victims" hardly looked the worse for wear. But then, it's amazing what 3 candy bars and 10 guys in tasteless orange shirts can do for someone's morale.

Finally, I want to take this opportunity to quash any rumors you may have heard. Walt is not, usually at least, going to insist on having a 150 foot silver tower from which to direct rescue operations. Although, he did look magnificent, astride the bridge of his command tower in his natty Boy Scout Leader's uniform. I can still hear his voice ringing in my ears - "damn the rattlesnakes, full speed ahead." -Mike Daugherty

WHY TRAIN ---

I would like to thank Jim Fairchild for the magnificent job that he has done as training officer. He has set a very high standard for me to maintain.

Why train? After all, any mountaineer in reasonable shape should be able to carry out a rescue. It's all a matter of common sense. Some of the people that I have climbed with expressed just this opinion. Last Memorial day, I climbed Mount Shasta with just such a group. One of the skiers on the trip fractured his tibia. One of his friends came down to the hut where we were and blurted out that a skier had broken his leg half way down from Helen Lake. All the mountaineers looked at each other until remembered that I was with some rescue team. Then they all looked at me, and with a sinking feeling, I realized that I would have to take charge. There was no one else to pass the onus of responsibility onto. Then the training took over, and I was able to organize and carry out the evacuation. Any RMRU member could find himself in a similar situation, and the amount of training you have absorbed will show in your subsequent actions. We must train until each member can confidently take charge in a situation, carry out the right course of action, and know that he is right.

There are two kinds of training. The first is the kind that each member must do himself; the other the unit as a whole can supply. As a member of

RMRU each one of us has a responsibility to carry out some sort of physical conditioning program; to familiarize ourselves with the country that a majority of our missions are in; and to continue studying first aid. The type of training that we can expect the unit to supply includes practice in technical evacuation, advanced first aid, and familiarization with the unit gear. We cannot wait until a mission to learn how to carry out a particular procedure.

As training officer, I have a twofold responsibility. The first is to train the new members to a point where they can effectively contribute to the team. The second is to keep the older members skills from deteriorating. Skills learned and practiced a long time ago need to be brushed up on. One of the best ways to do this is to teach it. I would like to have each old member help instruct in one or more training missions.

With your help, I think that we can accomplish these goals. - Ed Hill

NEW CALL SHEET ---

Be sure Walt has current and correct information on you: address, phone numbers and extensions if any, zip code. Then let your Call Captains know of any special instructions about contacting you. Further, be considerate enough to let your CC know when you are not available at all, because he has to make calls and then roll on the mission. It takes five to ten minutes of wasted time to determine that a man is either not available or not contactable.

CORRECTION ---

This is Volume VI of the Newsletter, not VII as has been printed at the top of the first sheet the first half of 1970.



The Road

Runner sez-

Thank God for the extraordinary deliverance from tragedy! We refer to the account you've already read about the helicopter crash. To see the "bird" hanging in the lodgepole pines and be told about it in person by Walt and Reed is further

evidence of the Hand of God in our operations.

Ed Hill, already in his short tenure as Training Chairman, has shown an enthusiasm, dedication, ability and zeal that can only benefit RMRU greatly. Let us all cooperate and assist to the best of our ability. The things we have learned during training and real missions have enabled us to save others and stay alive ourselves. It is our most sincere and profound hope that the numerous new members of RMRU will attend all training and roll on all missions in order to all the sooner become effective, capable SAR men.

When thinking of new members, we are sure they are amazed at the number of equipment items listed in the training manual that we are supposed to carry on all call-outs. There is a definite need for all the items. Experience has proven a need and use --future operations will further emphasize the wisdom of being prepared. We cannot always determine at the roadhead just exactly what we will use and what we will not. So, we take what we've needed in the past. If everyone does this, then others will not have to carry extra to make up for those who don't. Of course, we always make mental note of what we might need while we are driving to the roadhead, then the leaders of the operation tell about need for extra rope, hardware, overnight food, etc. What sometimes comes back to haunt us is the instruc-

tion, "let's go real light and make a quick reconnoiter, then we'll come back to base for longer assignments if we don't find...." Invariably we "bomb" over the side for a long operation with our light packs. But we have learned, and won't do it again!?

SUSTAINING MEMBERSHIP ---

There is still no word on the delivery of our new rescue van. Hopefully it will arrive during the last part of June or early July. A decision was made to purchase the much needed 2-watt radio. When Motorola was contacted we were informed that this model was now available in a 5-watt version at little additional cost; so we now have on order an AT-200, which packs 5-watts of power into a 28-ounce package. RMRU's board of directors is carefully considering where it will spend any additional donations. We still need more radios but there are other items that have a higher priority. Hopefully we can report to you next month the board's decision. Once again our sustaining members have made it possible for us to acquire the best equipment available to do our part of the job. A special thanks to Mr. & Mrs. Kenneth L. Andrews, Mr. Howard M. Loy and Mr. & Mrs. Charles W. Ricker for renewing their memberships. Welcome and thank you to the following for their generous donations: Scientific Computing Group of Douglas Aircraft Company, Jean A. Coy, Fred D. Lord, M. D., Orange Empire Dog Club, William Stewart, and San Jacinto Lions Club. - Al



Last month the President's Box did not appear because I was just too busy between work, rescues and trying to finish up the newsletter. We are sorry the June issue was late, but the missions come first. If things continue at the same rate this issue will probably be late also. The last couple of years June and July has been very busy and this year is not going to be any different if it continues at the present rate.

Training is a very fine thing, but as most of the oldtimers will tell you, 'there's nothing like the real thing'. During training sessions we can put into practice all the items in the training manual plus some that the training officer dreams up. By doing this we are ready when the day comes that you are called upon to do it without the training officer's guiding hand.

Have you ever thought about leaving something behind so that your pack's a little lighter? Well, I have, in fact I almost left my whole pack behind before the crash. I thought to myself, all I need is my first aid belt. Then a little voice spoke up and said, "How about all the other times you have been without some item you needed." So, I took my call out pack and ended up using many items out of it. Think about yourself, out there alone, the next time you plan on leaving something behind. - Pres. Walt.

Editor's Note: Photographs of the Helicopter Crash taken by RMRU member Lee Mickelson.