

RMRU NEWSLETTER

PUBLISHED MONTHLY BY THE RIVERSIDE MOUNTAIN RESCUE UNIT, INC.
A VOLUNTEER NON-PROFIT CORPORATION
P. O. BOX 5444, RIVERSIDE, CALIFORNIA 92507
MEMBER OF THE MOUNTAIN RESCUE ASSOCIATION

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Ten years is a long time when you stop and think about it. That's just what RMRU has done, we thought about it. A lot of events have occurred during that time. We have come from a beginning of five men who had an idea to a group of organized and trained volunteers with equipment to do the job. Along with these achievements we have gained many friends. We want you, our Friends, to join with us on October 23rd to celebrate RMRU's Tenth Anniversary. The place, the Riverside Holiday Inn, the time, 7 p. m., the price, \$5.00 per person. Please send your money and reservations to the following address by October 15th:

Hank Schmel, Reservations
Riverside Mountain Rescue Unit
4386 Newby Drive
Riverside, Calif. 92505

THANKS! Walt Walker

Coming Events ---

13 October, Board Meeting, 1900 at Jack Schnurrs'.
16 October, CR-MRA Meeting, 1000 at the Gas Company, hosted by RMRU.
23 October, Tenth Anniversary Dinner, 1900 at the Holiday Inn, Riverside.
29-31 October, Training Session, limited details at the meeting.
10 November, Board Meeting.
17 November, Regular Meeting.
20-21 November, Training Session. Note earlier dates during Nov. and Dec.
26 November, MRA Meeting at Disneyland.
1 December, Board Meeting.
8 December, Regular Meeting.
11 December, Training Session.
4 January 1972, Begin "The First Aid Course", probably a 10 week course.

Sustaining Members

This month we welcome:

Dr. & Mrs. E. K. Woods

to our Sustaining Membership. Again it is the sincere hope of the RMRU members that every Sustaining Member can be present at the Tenth Anniversary Dinner. See you there!

-- Al Andrews



The Road

Runner sez-

We must warn our readers of a curious phenomenon that occasionally comes to our attention. The impostor -- one who pretends to be connected with SAR or with a particular SAR unit. We have become aware of these pretend-ers in three ways. First, the fellow who shows up at the Base Camp of a multi-day search. He is capable of and more than willing to regale the people responsible for directing the search with tales of splendid deeds when he performed heroic feats of endurance, bravery, and intelligence. He waxes vague when questioned on specific grounds. We remember one young fel-

low who had kept everyone he could corner spellbound for two days at base. We sort of thought he belonged to one unit because he hinted as much. Then came time for him to go into the field and search. He was quite vague on what he should carry, but finally shouldered his Kelty and marched up the trail. Just short of one hundred yards, his faltering steps and pained facial expression preceded by about five seconds his announcement, "My old war wound" and he hobbled back to camp, placed Kelty in vehicle, and disappeared into the morning sun. Second, a person may show up at a place of business and let on he's entitled to a discount because he belongs to RMRU. Again, his knowledge of other members and things connected with SAR are vague, but he can persist in the face of obvious discovery, shifting his claims to being a part of SAR to suit the line of questioning. But, in the end, he too sort of disappears and is not seen again. Third, and really insidious, is the guy who calls and tries to pump information from the wife of a bona fide member. Most wives are pretty sharp and his deceit soon comes to light. But, a wife who is new (either to SAR lore or the SAR member) may be successfully plied for information, only to find that the person calling was an impostor. Just thought we'd mention this situation so you could think of such things as asking for a membership card and/or asking a few revealing questions. (SAR = Search and Rescue) -- Jim

Search and Rescue

6 & 7 SEPTEMBER - RESCUE - #7120
East Face Mount Whitney

Monday evening China Lake Mountain Rescue Group asked for help in rescuing two climbers on the East Face of Mt. Whitney. Four members of RMRU, Art Bridge, Bernie McIlvoy, Dr. Joe Bell and I responded at 2000. We drove to Lone Pine, 200 miles from Riverside, to join the other rescue teams.

At 0100 Tuesday Morning we reached Lone Pine and talking to China Lake members found out what had happened. Two 20 year old climbers were attempting the East face route on Mt. Whitney and became stuck. They spent Sunday on a ledge as it rained and snowed. The next morning, Monday, they were too tired to continue climbing. The father of one of the boys was at East Face Lake where the climb starts. He notified a party coming down of the situation.

In the party was a member of the Bay Area Rescue Team. He got three other climbers and started up to the top of Mt. Whitney to come down to the stranded climbers. Other people went out to call China Lake. By the time the rescue group had reached the top and was starting down the weather had changed for the worst. It was now windy and snow was beginning to fall. The three climbers helping the rescue man did not like the bad weather and so they all came out and back to Lone Pine to talk to China Lake.

China Lake got the word about noon on Monday and sent a team in who reached East Face Lake at 2230 Monday night. We of RMRU were tired from the long drive and decided to sleep till 0600 before starting up. A team from San Diego started up at 0500, while a second team from San Diego waited with a second China Lake team at the airport in case a helicopter could be used. Also Dr. Bell of RMRU stayed at the airport in case he was needed anywhere.

Up at 0500 in the dark we began to pack, sleeping bags, ensolite, 3-man tent, radio 458,

stove, fuel, dinners and pots, (60, 100, 165 foot ropes), 50 carabiners, two piton hammers, a selection of pins, 100 feet of short pieces of sling, 3 sets of jumars, big first aid belt, down jackets, wind pants, wool hats, gloves, and other equipment. Finally putting on our boots and then our packs at 60 pounds, we started up the trail to East Face Lake at 0600.

It is a six hour hike from the road head, (Whitney Portal) 8,400 elevation to East Face Lake (Iceberg Lake) 12,500 feet. By 0730 we were reaching Lower Boy Scout Lake and we heard over the radio that a helicopter had just landed a man at East Face Lake and was coming back down. Art Bridge used a little persuasion and got the helicopter to come and pick us up at Boy Scout Lake and take us to East Face Lake. The helicopter had no problem landing, but when Art, Bernie and two packs got in, it was a close take off. Coming back for me was easy and at 0900 we were all at East Face Lake.

At East Face Lake Art and Bernie formed a climbing team. I joined with Steve Williams of Sierra Madre who had been on the East Face Sunday before the boys got in trouble. Bill Stronge and another China Lake man were already on the face and climbing towards the victims. They could be seen as tiny dots on the face. Art and Bernie left ahead of Steve and I as they were to climb to the victims and put fixed lines on the upper part of the face. Steve and I were to fix lines on the lower part of the face.

By 1300 Bernie and Art had reached the China Lake team which had reached the victims about half an hour early. They were in good shape just tired and hungry. After food and water, they felt they could come down the fixed lines with an upper belay. When Steve and I reached the start of the roped climbing we took a break to rest and get ready to climb. Carl Heller and Bob Westbrook of China Lake arrived at our point and it was decided that I would stay at the base while the other three set up four fixed lines. These four lines reached the two Bernie and Art had set up. So after two hours of down climbing everyone was off the face and by 1630 the last ropes were coiled

and down to East Face Lake we went. A helicopter was at East Face Lake taking people and equipment down to Lone Pine. This was fine with everyone and we all enjoyed looking down on the trail as we flew out.

This was a great rescue in all respects. The victims after spending two nights cold and wet in sub-freezing temperatures at 13,400 feet were safe and in good shape. The four rescue teams, China Lake, Riverside, San Diego and Sierra Madre all worked together as professionals and everyone did his job without being told more than once. I hope when the next rescue comes, it will be as easy. -- Pete Carlson

25 SEPTEMBER - ABORT Hills South of Sage

Saturday afternoon a call was received from the Riverside County Sheriff's Department requesting the aid of RMRU to assist in the locating of a shooting victim.

Upon arriving at the scene, about 20 miles south of Hemet, we were informed that Norman Katz and Ive Ridgel had been riding their motorcycles and target shooting in the area, when Katz's pistol had gone off, discharging a bullet in his chest.

Mr. Ridgel went for aid and upon returning with the deputies they found Mr. Katz had disappeared from the area.

We were advised that a helicopter from the Riverside Police Department was in route and as we were preparing to initiate a sweep of the area the bird arrived.

The helicopter manned by officers Tom Crompton and Bob Hathway immediately started a search and within about 15 minutes we watched as the bird slowly settled on a ridge and heard a short blast from their siren.

It was with considerable apprehension as we slowly converged on the ridge and saw Katz about 30 feet down from the top. It was apparent that he was beyond any help and our mission was over before it had started.

The team then gathered at our truck and some members started the long drive home while others returned to the Idyllwild area, where they had been when the call came, to rescue their training mission. -- Dick Caffroy

(Ed. note: Dick Caffroy was the first RMRU member on the scene and he immediately went into the field to search. Walt Walker arrived as the helicopter found the victim and was the first RMRU man to the victim and he could not find any life signs. The Riverside Police helicopter did a great job and saved many man-hours in the field and possibly could have saved a life.)

26 SEPTEMBER - RESCUE ? and/or SEARCH ? Deep Canyon, above Palm Desert #7121

Late Sunday afternoon as I was painting my son's bedroom, with the usual paint running down my elbow, the phone rang. You guessed it, the conference operator with a call from Jim Fairchild. While I waited for the call to be completed, I started wiping paint. Even though I shouldn't go, I knew we were going to be short of men because a number of the team members were climbing on Tahquitz Rock. The call was connected, and Jim related that 4 boys and 2 adults were stranded in Deep Canyon and that we were to meet at the Sambo's in Palm Desert with the deputy from the Riverside County Sheriff's Department.

After a hurried change of clothes, and a good luck to my wife and son, on painting, I rushed out the door with gear in hand. Driving up the Pines to Palms Highway, I was to try and catch any of the climbers coming down, I strained at the wheel each time I came upon another car with a Sunday driver. As I was descending the grade into Palm Desert I heard Jim radio that he had arrived at Sambo's with the rescue van. Within a few minutes I pulled in beside the van. Jim was talking to the sergeant about the mission.

A helicopter from the C.H.P. had flown the canyon and located the missing group. The information from them was, that the group did not have their gear and that they were stuck in

the canyon bottom between two dry waterfalls. He also said that we could drive part way up and take a dirt road to the left and drive to some houses and descend into the canyon from there.

About this time John Murdock and Bob Nelson arrived. The four of us started up, after putting out the new RMRU reflective arrows, for late arriving members. When we got to the turnoff we put out more arrows.

While we were doing our final packing, Jim discovered that he did not have his hiking boots. What shall we do, send three men, or have Jim try it in his running shoes and leave no one at base. The problem was solved as Joe Bell arrived in his tiny blue Honda. Joe quickly packed and the four of us, John, Bob, Joe and I, started down into the canyon in the darkness.

As we hiked along in the moonlight the angle of the slope began to increase. Once again we were on 5.9 dirt, hard to say the least, but that wasn't our only problem. We had now arrived at a sheer drop off of about 30 feet. The natural anchors didn't look too good to use for rappeling. We hiked down canyon a little further and found a spot where we could walk into the canyon bottom. Tracks were found almost immediately going down canyon, however, in another few feet others were found heading up. We spread out and shortly found many different sets of tracks going up canyon. We radioed this information to Jim and discussed what we should do. The decision was, 'up'. Not exactly music to the ears of rescue personnel.

As we hiked along, we tracked, and it soon became apparent that we did have six different tracks, two of them small. We passed by the crumpled wreckage of an old airplane, and thought of other missions in the past. The radio came to life, "452, base." We answered, and Jim told us that Art Bridge and Al Corbett had arrived and that he was sending them up to Sugarloaf with radio 455 to start down Deep Canyon towards us. Not long after that Jim radioed again that Pete Carlson and Mike Daugherty had arrived at base. They would stand by and wait for further developments. Soon, Art radioed to base that they were hiking down

the canyon.

As we rounded a bend in the canyon two orange packs could be seen leaning against the canyon wall. The light from our flashlights soon brought six sleeping bags into view. We had found the six hikers all asleep. The two men awakened and related their day. They were all right, just a little tired and short of food and water. They had a small radio and said that they had made contact that afternoon with a party in the valley below and instructed them to call the sheriff and say that they were o.k. and would hike out to Sugarloaf in the morning. We gave them most of our water and all our food and began the hike out. It was decided that Art and Al would wait for us to come up canyon to them.

As we hiked along I kept watching for small side canyons, so that we would not be led astray. However, I forgot about Horsethief Creek being larger than Deep Canyon. After awhile Art radioed and wanted to know where we were, as he and Al were with the six hikers. We all turned around and started back while Art and Al hiked back up to the junction of the two canyons. We met and hiked up Deep Canyon a short ways and then started up the steep canyon wall towards the highway. After a rather brisk climb up, we were met at the road by Jim in the van. He returned us to our cars and we drove down to Indio for dinner at 2 a.m. and then home for a short nights sleep. -- Walt Walker

TRAINING

25 SEPTEMBER - FIRST AID & TECHNICAL
Idyllwild, Strawberry Creek Area

It was a beautifully clear morning, the temperature in the 50's at Isomata, where eleven hearty souls of the rescue team gathered for the monthly training. The silence of the morning was suddenly broken with a radio transmission from Sheriff "Big Dome" Schnurr. He was informing the team of a simulated aircraft crash near Strawberry Creek below Isomata. He told us to sit tight and he would meet

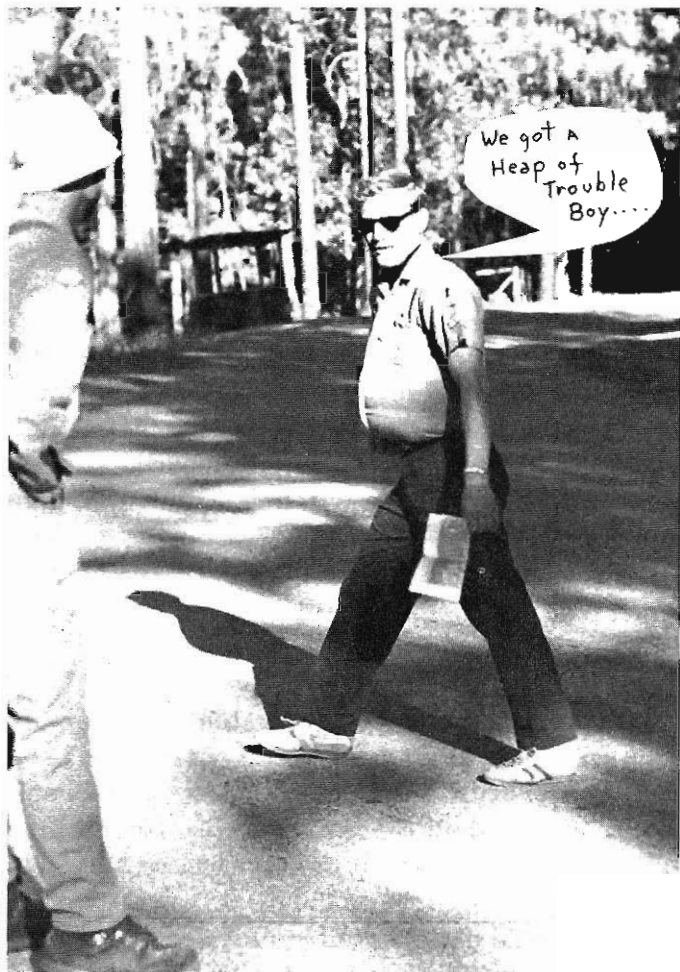


PHOTO BY HANK SCHMEL

us and give us the details. When he arrived at the road head the team was shocked at the size of "Big Dome's" pot. (see photo) Jack added a little humor to the seriousness of the mock mission by adding a few inches to the midriff section and a huge star for full effect. Members of the Idyllwild Fire Department were

playing the parts of the victims. The "Sheriff" told us to walk about a half mile down the road where we would meet Nick Dobler of the fire department. We followed the sheriff's instructions and Nick filled us in on the details of the crash. He said that a plane took off about 0730 from Mt. Center and crashed near Isomata a few minutes later. He had the names of three of the five victims, Mark Martinack, Bobby Fichera and Jim Snell. It was now 0900 and by 0940 we had located and began first aid to all five victims. The whole affair went off quite well. Practice such as this does help to establish a routine for the real thing. We did have a shortage of personnel for the morning session. Nine members for five victims made carry outs a bit of a sticky-wicket. Many thanks to Nick Dobler and his crew for their assistance. Just so you have an idea of the first aid problems we encountered, we'll list a few, dis-embowelment, amputations, broken back, compounded femur, depressed skull fracture, 2nd and 3rd degree burns and of course the ever present shock.

After an hours relaxation with food thrown in for kicks, we started our p.m. session of first-aid. We were informed that we had an injury on technical terrain. Pete Carlson was the operations leader with Bob Nelson and I as team leaders. We arrived at the point where we had to set up for rappels and litter lower. Bernie McIlvoy was safety officer and everything came off fine except for the fact that I



'Victim' Mark Martinack.



One of the carry outs.

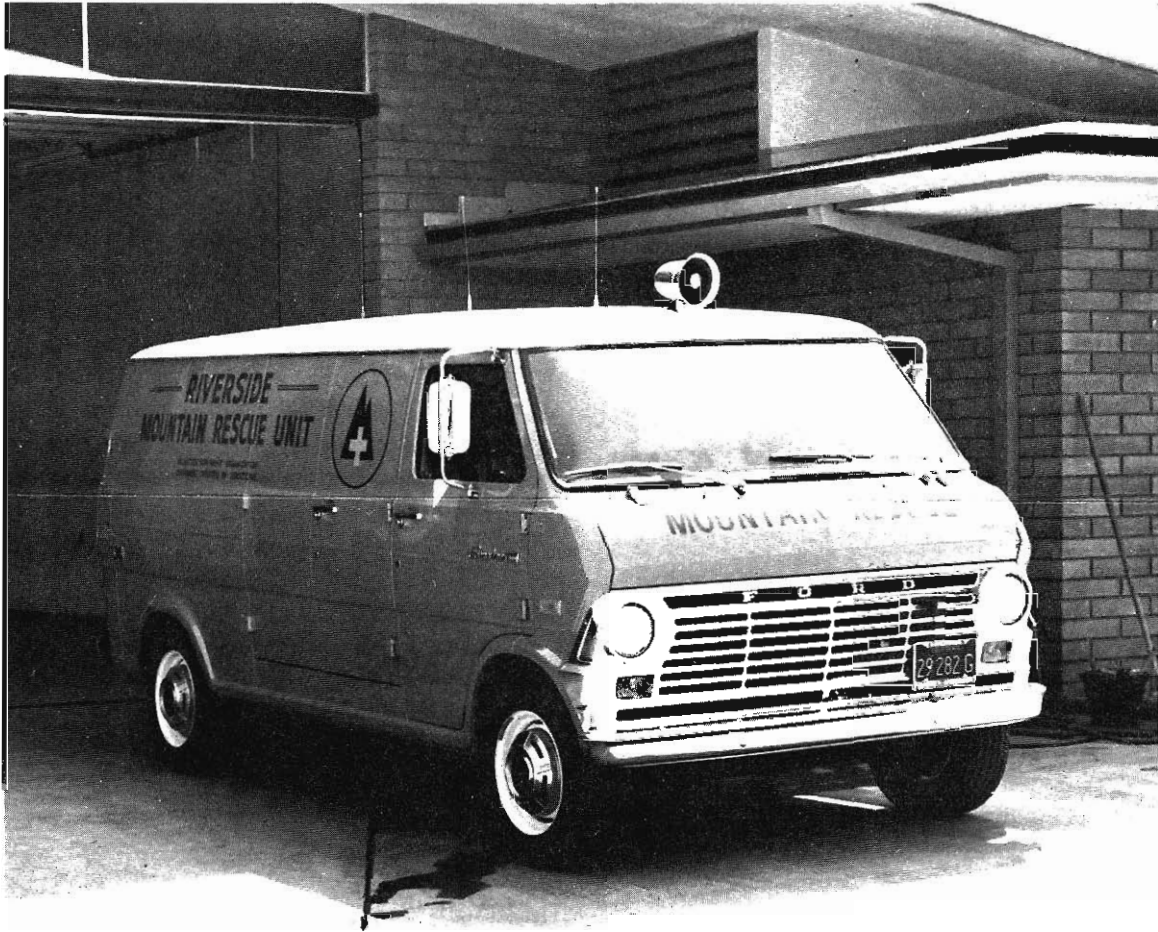


PHOTOS BY JACK SCHNURR

Hank Schmel, "on rappel".

took too long in getting to the victim. In reality Jack or Bernie would have been the first ones over the side. This is the reason we have training.....to get everyone familiarized with all facets of a mission. Jim Fairchild, John Murdock, Ed Hill and Rich Morris were the crew in charge of the litter lower. Art Bridge, the orange grower, was our lovable and compassionate victim.

After training, everyone went their merry way we thought. I was taking the truck back to Riverside when I was flagged down by Norm Mellor who informed me of a man who had been shot and was lost 17 miles south of Hemet. That story you have already read earlier in the newsletter. -- Hank Schmel



RMRU's big orange van, lovingly called the 'Super Pumpkin', was photographed by Hank Schmel in front of Riverside City Fire Department engine house number three. The fire house is the new home for the van. We are very grateful to the Riverside City Fire Department for their very fine hospitality.

As we were waiting for information on the mission in Deep Canyon, which was the day after the last training and the abort south of Sage, we noticed a sign finger painted into the dust on the rear windows of the van. It stated, "Keep me clean and I will last longer." We suspect our friend and fireman, Jerry Stewart, who of course is probably right. Have you ever seen a fire engine with dust or dirt on it. Thanks again to the Riverside City Fire Department.