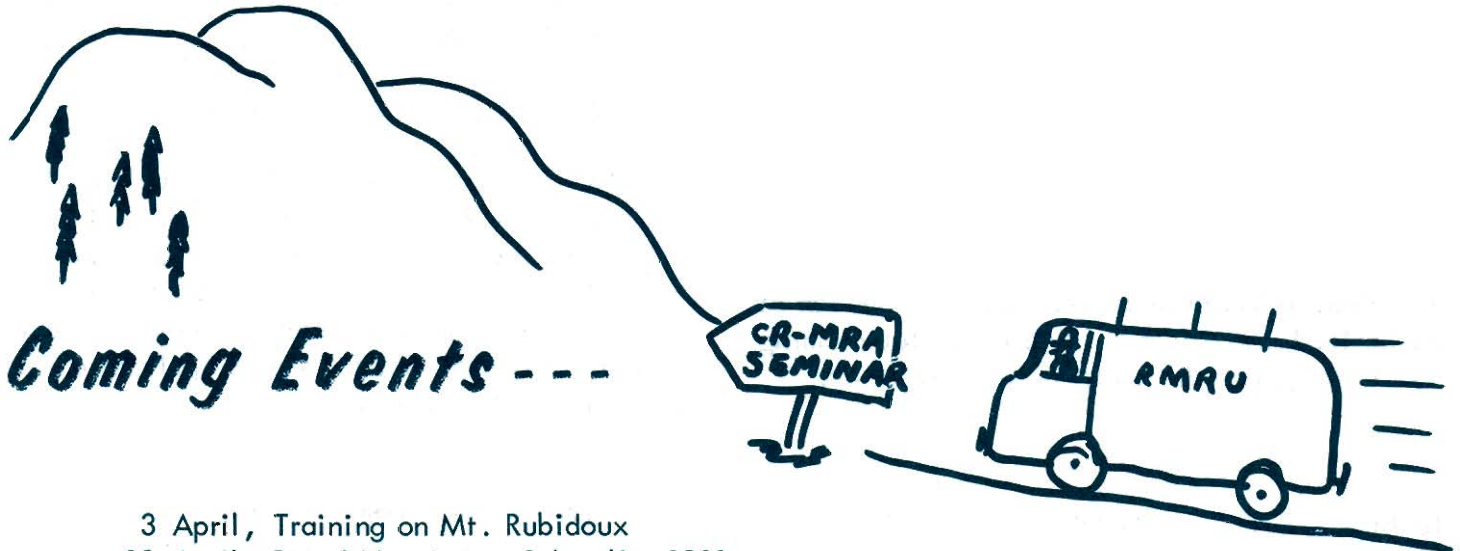


RMRU NEWSLETTER

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

Volume VIII, Issue 4, April 1972

Editor & Publisher, Walt Walker
Photographs by the members



Coming Events ---

- 3 April, Training on Mt. Rubidoux
- 12 April, Board Meeting at Schmel's, 1900.
- 21-23 April, California Region, Mountain Rescue Association Seminar, Buckhorn Camp.
- 26 April, Annual Meeting, Riverside County Hall of Records, 1930.
- 28-30 April, Training climb on North Face of Mt. San Jacinto.
- 10 May, Board Meeting



The Road

Runner sez-

You may note that our volume of calls has attained a high level of frequency. It is higher, at least, than it has ever been for RMRU. At this writing (March 24th) we've had ten actual field operations, thirteen aborts, and three call-offs. We persist in thinking, "this can't last," but it can. More people are going into the wilderness and more problems are occurring, hence, we get more calls. In conversation with representatives of the Riverside County Sheriff's Office we hear of situations that arise daily, almost reach the point where we must be called, but not quite. When we think of Southern California as a whole, we can almost conjure up a continuous picture of people in trouble

in the wilderness. It used to be a bad dream, now it's becoming a frightening reality. So far, we've been able to handle the frequent calls. We are even gaining good new members. We look forward to performing SAR for our area (with an occasional assist from our "friends") and a reduction in frequency of problems.

For the second winter now Southern California has had a one-storm season. Since early January we've been enjoying (plagued by...?) warm sunshine. This indicates a horrible future of drought and fire danger. Perhaps most of the wilderness will be closed to entry and result in fewer SAR operations. Pure conjecture.

Last month we said to look elsewhere in the Newsletter for a description of our new pack. We just did not get it done in time. Try again this month. -- Pres. Jim

Search and Rescue

6 MARCH, MON. - SEARCH - #7218C
Santa Barbara County



Very early in the morning (it was dark) we received a call from the Sierra Madre Search and Rescue Team to assist them in a search in Santa Barbara County. While the telephoning was in progress the mission was cancelled.

10 MARCH, FRI., - SEARCH - #7220A
Good Hope Area

During lunch the Elsinore sub-station of the Riverside County Sheriff's Department called and requested our help in searching for a missing 2 1/2 year old. While we were driving to the area the missing toddler was found.

8 MARCH, WED. - SEARCH - #7219M
Soboba Hills

RMRU received a phone call from the Hemet sub-station, of the Riverside County Sheriff's Dept., that two 17 year old boys were missing. The information was that they could be in the hills or on their way to San Francisco.

We started searching the hills just after 0900 and about 1100 the news was relayed to us that the C. H. P. had located the boys in Riverside.

Everyone hurried over to Hemet and had lunch with Lt. Bill Park and then headed back to the 'salt mines'. -- As told to the Editor.

12 MARCH, SUN. - SEARCH - #7221M
Elsinore Mountains

"Sounds like another weirdy*," said Jim Fairchild as I walked into the Riverside County Sheriff's Elsinore sub-station.

"What do you mean?" I asked.

"Well, a young boy - Chuck Tucker - has been missing since yesterday at four. He ran out of camp and down a rocky canyon as fast as he could go - barefoot. Only had pants on. His friends chased him and caught him but he fought them off and kept going." Jim's apologetic grin summarized the way he felt.

Jack Schnurr drove in, slammed his car door as he got out cussed (I definitely heard him say "damn") and fumed as he stomped across the parking lot.

"I'll never, never roll again on an Elsinore call on a Sunday. The traffic! Twenty five miles an hour for... etc."

When we told him the details his disposition didn't improve. But he got in the van with Jim and I followed them along the twisting road to the peaks of the Elsinore mountains.

At a wide spot in the road we set up base camp. After sorting gear, Jack and I followed two of Chuck's friends down a dusty trail to a canyon along the road. Walking downstream among the stagnant pools, we searched for a barefoot track among the many boot marks that covered the sand. We also looked behind boulders and under brush in case Chuck had stumbled into the boulder piles on his crazy race from camp.

We had only been gone a half hour when Jack got a radio message that made him sit down on a rock with disgust.

"They think he's been located at a store down the road," he said. We climbed silently up a trail to the road and back to base camp. "The Sheriff's gone to check it out," said Jim.

His apologetic grin appeared again for an instant.

Jack and I slumped in the shade and guzzled water while waiting for the confirmation. When it came, I packed and headed for home. Jim and Jack drove to the store to talk with the victim.

You've got to agree, it was a weirdy.

-- Bob Nelson

*Weirdy - groups in the field battling brush, bluffs, cliffs, etc., get a radio call that the victim has been found: at home, in a local bar, asleep in his car or in hiding with a paramour.



12 MARCH, TUE. - SEARCH - #7222A
Snow Creek, Banning Pass

The RMRU members that had rolled on the Elsinore mission had just returned home when we received a call from the Banning sub-station of the Riverside County Sheriff's Department. A 17 year old boy was missing in the Snow Creek area below Mt. San Jacinto. While we were rolling to the roadhead the young man was located and we returned home again.

12 MARCH, SUN. - RESCUE - #7223M
Tahquitz Canyon

I was enjoying a quiet evening at my girl friends' home when the phone rang. It was her brother, Steve Bryant, calling to tell me we had three stranded people in Tahquitz Canyon. I hurried home, got my gear together and was shortly picked up by Steve. He had already located Dennis Simpson and Rich Morris. The four of us drove out through Palm Springs and met the rest of the team at the road head. After

stowing a unit radio in one of our packs, we spotted a lone flashlight high up on the northern canyon wall, west of the first falls. Loud, long calls ascertained that the light was held by our three stranded hikers. It was clear that the best way to reach the hikers was from above, so back down the trail to the mouth of the canyon and up the shoulder of the ridge. After a little uphill meander we were high on the ridge above them. At this point it appeared that only a few members would be needed. Pete Carlson, Bernie McIlvoy, Rich Morris, Bob Nelson, Dennis Simpson and myself traversed the ridge and dropped down to the victims. We were a bit puzzled as to why they were stranded since we had been able to walk down to them. After talking with them the cause for their predicament became obvious. They had been making the long trip down the canyon - Idyllwild to Palm Springs. Realizing they were falling behind schedule and in order to "save time", they neglected eating. The result was a good case of exhaustion and even slower progress. Their next mistake was trying to come off the ridge too soon. They descended the canyon walls until the increasing slope forced them to stop. Exhausted, dehydrated and unsure they sat down to wait. After feeding them we all climbed back to join Jim Fairchild, Dave Cook and Doug Yott. The entire group then descended the ridge and walked out. By 3:00 a.m. we were all back at the truck. After an enjoyable breakfast of steak and eggs we drove back to our homes. -- Dave Hadley

19 MARCH, MON. - SEARCH - #7224M
South Fork of the San Jacinto River

I had just finished eating dinner after an exhausting day of work and was getting ready for bed when Mike Daugherty called to tell me that the Riverside County Sheriff's Department had had a report of two overdue fishermen on the South Fork of the San Jacinto River below the Lake Hemet dam. I wearily loaded my equipment into the car and drove to the rendezvous, a turnout at the 4000 foot level on Highway 74. I arrived at 0030 to find Bernie McIlvoy and our good friend Sgt. Bill Herring already at the scene. Within a few minutes Jim Fairchild ar-

rived with the unit's van.

The situation was that two fishermen, Vincent Contreras and Frank Heinsius, had left the turnout early Saturday morning and descended into the canyon to try their luck. They told their companions that they would climb down to the stream, work their way upstream where they would climb out, and then walk down a fire-break along the ridge to their truck. When they failed to return as agreed, their companions called the sheriff's department for help.

Bernie and I climbed the ridge overlooking the canyon and examined the subject's boot prints which the informants pointed out to us. At this point we were joined by Art Bridge and proceeded to descend the steep, brush-covered slopes of the canyon. The terrain was so rough that it became impossible to find any tracks. As we descended we lost radio contact with Jim but this was remedied when Ed Hill and Dave Cook, who arrived shortly after we left, set up a relay on the ridge.

Once at the bottom we were able to locate Frank and Vince's footprints. The problem that we had was to try and decide which way they were going; either up or down the canyon. We were proceeding upstream when Art found a clue which exemplified why somebody of his experience is so valuable to SAR. He noticed that the top of a rock was wet, hence, somebody had been by recently. It was now 0400 so we decided to wait until after daybreak to figure out which way to go, as there were prints in both directions.

After a short nap and a little food we decided to move downstream as there were many prints going in that direction. We passed the wet rock which was now dry and hiked downstream. At this point Sgt. Herring began making preparations to call a helicopter while we began to ascend the canyon wall back to the road. After a short ride to base we had breakfast while waiting for the chopper to arrive. Joe Bell and Pete Carlson arrived while we were waiting.

At 1030 a Western Helicopter piloted by Jack Smith arrived. Art went up and searched the area between us and Lake Hemet. Having

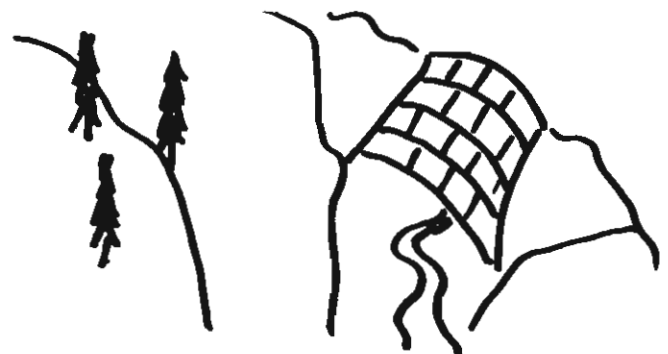
found nothing of interest the chopper returned and took Jim up for a second look. Jim 'heli-tac' jumped into a campsite where he found the men's footprints heading upstream. Returning to the bird and searching the upper canyon, Jim spotted the fisherman on a dirt road at 1215. In retrospect, the men were hidden in deep brush when Art originally searched the area and were thus not visible. As soon as the chopper passed over they realized that they were being looked for and found a area where they could easily be seen. The men were picked up and returned to base for a happy reunion with their families and friends.

After a brief "snack" and critique we all returned home for rest and myself a deep, long sleep. -- Richard Morris



(RMRU PHOTO BY PETE CARLSON)

Art Bridge checks a loose strap on the litter, while the two missing men disembark out of the Western Helicopter piloted by Jack Smith.



20 MARCH, MON. - RESCUE - #7225M
Tahquitz Canyon

Just as I finished lunch the dispatcher from the Hemet sub-station of the Riverside County Sheriff's Department called and asked me to stand by for a call from the Indio sub-station. Once again the phone rang and the dispatcher from Indio related that a man had fallen in Tahquitz Canyon near Palm Springs. I called Al Andrews and he said he would do all of the calling except for my people. After completing my calling I loaded my gear into the station wagon and started on my way.

Upon arrival at the infamous 'roadhead' I checked in with the deputy and spoke with the informant about the situation. He said that he and some others had come across Dr. Thomas Gillen while hiking in the canyon. He said that the victim had a broken leg and cuts on his head. Discussing this with the deputy we decided that a helicopter was needed. He radioed the sub-station and shortly word came that Don Landell would arrive in about 20 minutes.

While waiting Pete Carlson arrived with the big orange van. Shortly, Art Bridge, Jack Schnurr, Al Korber, Dave Cook, Steve Bryant, Bernie McIlvoy, John Murdock, Joe Bell, Ed Hill, Dennis Simpson, Rich Morris and Jim Fairchild arrived almost one after another. While the above members had been arriving so had Don Landell with his supercharged helicopter.

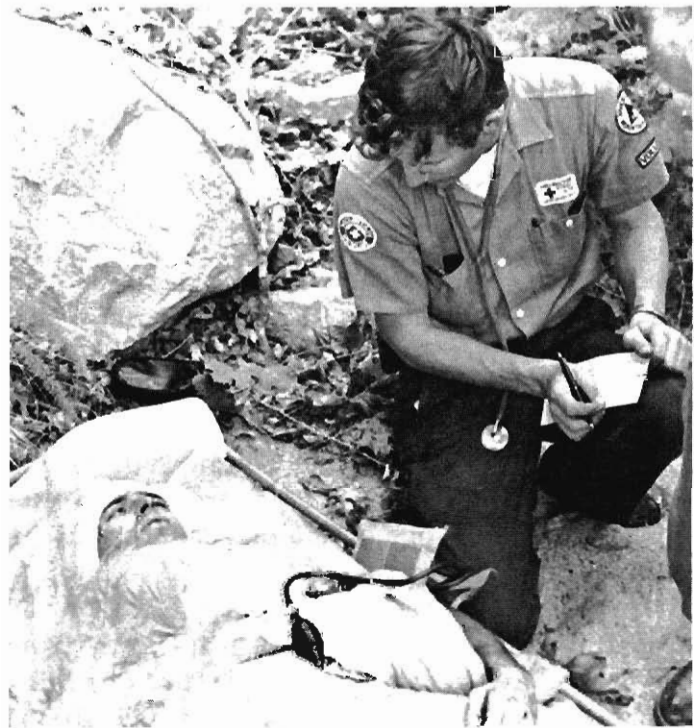
Don and I flew up the canyon and just above the first falls spotted the victim surrounded by waving people. Once again Don accomplished the impossible by doing a one runner landing within twenty feet of the victim. I quickly stepped out and grabbed my pack off the litter that had previously been installed. Don lifted off and went back for another load, as I started the examination of the injured man.

Dr. Gillen had hiked up into the canyon, not knowing it had been closed about a month earlier. He met some young people who told him of the closure and he had started out. While climbing he fell about fifty feet, landing almost

in the canyon bottom. Although he couldn't remember for sure, he thought he had fallen about 10:30 a. m.

The examination revealed two large lacerations on the superior and posterior parts of the scalp, tenderness along the spinal column and probable fracture of the distal end of the fibula along with swelling and poor circulation. Surprisingly, shock was very minor. Bandaging the scalp wounds was nearly completed when the sound of the 'bird' could be heard coming up the canyon.

Don flew in again for a one runner touchdown and Pete Carlson and Dave Cook climbed out as I unloaded their packs from the litter. Right in the middle of this, loud snapping and popping sounds erupted from above us. The main rotor blades were sucking tree limbs down and chopping them off. Having had problems before with helicopters and keeping my normal cool, I just about dove off the twenty foot boulder into the rocks below. Don just moved his machine back a little and nodded towards the



(RMRU PHOTO BY PETE CARLSON)

Jack Schnurr, already having completed taking life signs, talks with Dr. Gillen who is ready to be flown out.



Once in awhile one of our photos shows the action so well we feel that it shouldn't be reduced. Don Landell had returned from the hospital to pick up the four remaining members. This is one of the best shots we have seen showing a one runner type of pick up. Thanks to RMRU team member Pete Carlson for being alert and catching the action. Note the right runner, nothing but clear air underneath.



tree. We knew what he wanted and radioed out for a brush hook to cut the limbs with. Jack Schnurr and Art Bridge arrived along with the brush hook. While Dave was surveying the tree, Art, Jack, Pete and I put an air splint on the injured ankle. Putting the bottom half of our rescue sleeping bag into the litter, we then lifted the victim and one of the bystanders slid the litter under. Lowering him back down into the litter we placed the top half of the bag on and zipped it up. After moving the litter away from the tree, Dave began chopping the two offending limbs. When the area was cleared and all the gear secured, we radioed for the bird to return.

Don once again put the one runner down and we loaded the victim onto the outside of the bird and I climbed in. We were quickly off and on

our way to the front lawn of the Palm Springs hospital and the waiting gurney and nurses, almost blowing them away as we landed. Our job was almost done as we loaded Dr. Gillen on the gurney and wheeled him into the emergency room. While waiting to be picked up, Mrs. Gillen arrived and was naturally quite upset. She said she was a nurse and I was able to calm her by actually describing what had happened and in what condition her husband was.

Jim Fairchild and Dennis Simpson arrived and we loaded our litter and sleeping bag into Jim's pick-up. Dennis had drove my wagon over. The three of us then met the rest of the team and we all had dinner and headed for home.

-- Walt Walker

21 MARCH, TUE., - SEARCH - #7226C
San Diego County

Just before daybreak we received a phone call from the Sierra Madre Search and Rescue Team relaying the message that the San Diego Mountain Rescue Team needed help in searching for a missing child in the Ramona area of San Diego County. While our telephoning was in the final stages we received a call that the child had been found.



31 MARCH, FRI. - SEARCH - #7227M
San Jacinto Mountains

Just before lunch RMRU received a call from the Riverside County Sheriff's Department that a 28 year old man was missing from a day hike.

Base was set up at the Sky Yacht near Humber Park. Three teams were sent up the Devil Slide, plus one man who would be the radio relay from the Tahquitz Palisades. One team was to take the trail to Willow Creek, another check the campgrounds and the last to go all the way to Caramba.

Just after the teams had completed their assignments we received word that the missing man had walked out into Palm Springs. About 10:30 p.m. we all got together for dinner and then headed home. -- As told to the editor

THE RMRU PACK ---

Last spring we decided that in order to obtain a call-out pack that embodied all the features we wanted, we would have to design our own. Jim, working with John Boyd as engineer and manufacturer, used his ideas and those of fellow RMRU members to come up with the pack illustrated and described as follows: the bag measures roughly 24x16x7 flaring a bit in width and thickness at the top; there is a drawstring closure at the top, and a big feature is the entire front may be unzipped by means of two zippers--the pack may be loaded from the top with zippers closed, then quickly opened with two fast "zips;" a flat envelope pocket covers the entire inside back of the pack, enabling one to place a folded ensolite pad and bivvy cover in an insulating position next to one's back; suede leather covers the pack's bottom, thus eliminating most abrasion; the spacious side pockets (12x6x3) may be quickly detached for going through brush, rock climbing, and helitac; two back pockets of narrow or flat profile hold appropriate items; the extendable top flap has a compartment with double zippers that holds a uniform and more; the frame consists of two flat uprights that may



(RMRU PHOTO BY HANK SCHMEL)

Although somewhat out of place - no snow - the photo does show the RMRU Pack loaded in excess of 70 pounds, with room for more if you can afford that luxury.

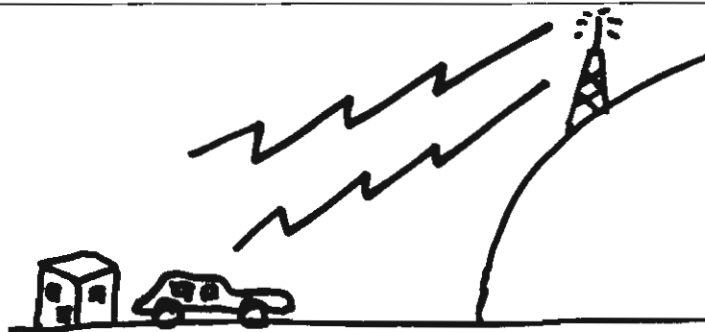
Close up of suspension system - The one inch straps leading to the padded shoulder straps may be slipped through the space inboard from their present location to accommodate men with narrower shoulders. Note attachments for the side pockets.



(RMRU PHOTOS BY HANK SCHMEL)

Pack with five watt radio strapped inside; the antenna is inserted through hole in top of pack cover (see arrow). Also a good view of front and side pockets

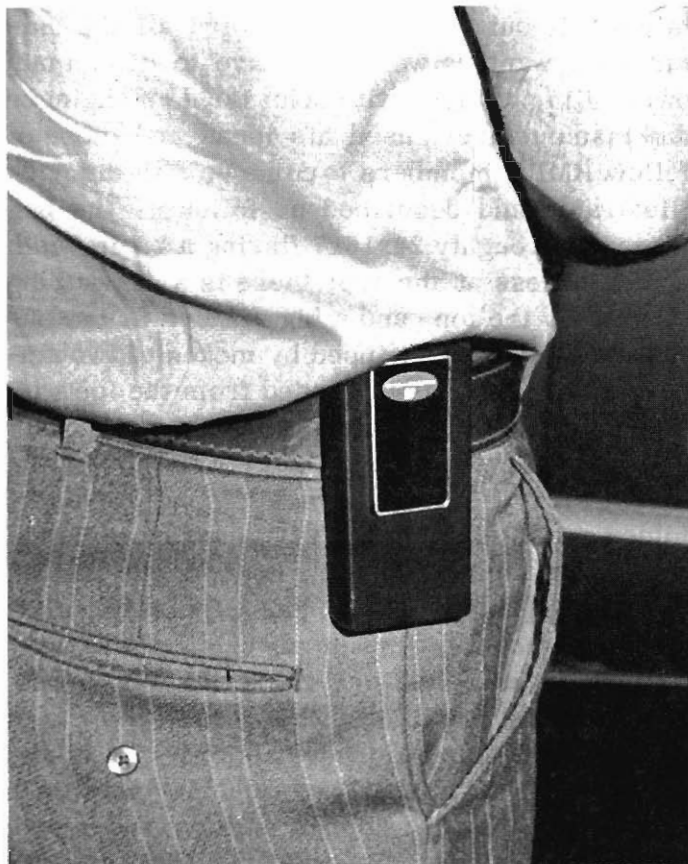
be bent to fit one's back, a tubular top cross-piece is bowed and fitted with a padded belt that comes in front to a quick-release buckle; the suspension system is John's answer to the need for flexibility and to keep the load close to one's back all the way from top to bottom; the shoulder straps are loaded with firm ensolite and covered with nylon; fittings for tying on ice axe and snowshoes are provided. Having carried the pack on five training and real missions, I can attest that the pack is completely comfortable up to about fifty pounds, and the shoulders feel some weight at sixty-five pounds. It is well balanced and sneaks through brush and rock with pockets off. It is a joy to "live out of." It looks squat and bulky, but that is deceptive. John has made models with both canvas and nylon pack bag, quite stiff and not so stiff uprights in the frame--no problems so far. -- Jim



Once again RMRU is trying to up grade our service, mountain search and rescue, by launching a drive to raise money for electronic pagers.

Now what in the world is a pager and why do we need them? The pager is actually a very small radio receiver similar to a regular transistor radio that you listen to the ball game or your favorite music program with. The big difference is that it only receives one channel, and it is quiet most of the time, even though it is on. It only comes on when the master station sends a special signal that activates it so the message can be heard. The message for us of course, would be, respond to a mission.

(RMRU PHOTO BY HANK SCHMEL)



There are many times when RMRU members are away from telephones and it is very hard to reach them, in fact, sometimes impossible. There have been missions when we needed every man possible and came up short. This means that the men who do respond have a much harder task to perform or we have to call in other teams to assist. With each member carrying a pager on his belt (note the photo) he would be contacted every mission no matter where he was, at work or home or even at the movies, etc.

We only see two problems to the pagers. The first is, that they cost almost \$200 apiece. The second is, they might not be to popular with wives or girlfriends. However, we still feel that they will help us to do a better job.

Sustaining Members

HAVE YOU RENEWED

YOUR MEMBERSHIP THIS YEAR?

Once again we are asking the sustaining members to help RMRU with a financial problem. We are planning to purchase some additional radio equipment as previously explained and this is going to take the support of every sustaining member. We hope that each of you will be able to assist us with this project.

Welcome to the following new members:

Mr. & Mrs. L. W. Simon, Jr.
Mr. & Mrs. Dan R. Reaser
Mr. Vincent J. Contreras
Mr. Frank Heinsius

and thanks again for renewing your memberships:

Mr. & Mrs. Jack Nelson
*The Rubidoux Grange -
Committee of Women's Activities

*Century Club Members

-- Al Andrews

TRAINING



25 & 26 MARCH - TAHQUITZ PEAK AREA

The training started with the official Bridge and White weight reduction program. Each unit participant opens his pack for inspection by the rest of the team members. Everyone has a say about what belongs in a pack except the pack owner who must stand aside and watch his "extras" be tossed out! (i.e. - his thirty carabiners, twenty-five extra pins, hammock, extra ten pounds of first aid gear, extra 120 feet of perlon rope, his extra gallon of side band oil (usually very high alcohol content), extra climbing boots and other assorted important items).

The next step was the Steve Bryant muscle building exercise. Everyone is called to the Super Pumpkin (rescue van) and given approximately five more pounds then he shed in the previous exercise. This weight takes the form of team ropes, radios, extra radio batteries, etc. As soon as everyone was completely outfitted, we were ready to start the trip.

The Daugherty - McIlvoy tour service provided the guiding hand as we left Humber Park and visited the marvelous Lily Rock. "Welcome to the San Jacinto Wilderness area, my name is Michael Daugherty, and I'll be your guide for the next 24 hours...."

Atop Lily Rock we met with the members of the San Diego Mountain Rescue Team which had approached Lily Rock from the northeast via the notches. After a pleasant lunch watching the approaching storm clouds, we started up the ridge to Tahquitz Peak.

Brilliant pathfinding sprinkled with planned bush and boulder problems led upward many hundreds of feet to the South Ridge trail which we joined just east of a series of rock gendarmes about a quarter of a mile below the summit of Tahquitz Peak. Inspired by Doc Bell's rock serenade we climbed to the summit.

The first half of the training was over; we were now thoroughly familiar with most of the Chinquapin, Manzanita, Scrub Oak and thorn bush patches which dot the South face of Tahquitz peak. Before we were able to retire Saturday night we had two more exciting adventures! In the first, "Fairchild's Water Run", each participant dropped his pack at Chinquapin Flat, carried an empty quart canteen and ran downhill a mile to a mountain spring. (It's just over the hill. . ") On the way back to the packs, Daugherty decided to play Hide and Seek: so we all got to familiarize ourselves with the Chinquapin, Manzanita, Scrub Oak and thorn bush patches on the southeast face of Tahquitz Peak.

Aside from the 25-30 knot gusts of wind which blew dirt, leaves, stuff bags, pots 'n' pans, Art's doggy dish, etc., around the campsite all night, we had a rather uneventful bivouac.

Chased by ominous clouds in our campsite and high overhead we had breakfast and got on the trail rather quickly Sunday morning. We climbed to the Tahquitz Palisades and dropped straight down the north east side of Tahquitz Peak. Here again we found communities of Chinquapin, Manzanita, Scrub Oak and thorn bush. As we descended the steep chute our guide pointed out terrain that was impressive and magnificent. On our descent, we also stopped beneath a large rock face, made some piton placements, tied a rope litter, removed the pitons, untied the rope litter and continued down the slope.

Once to Humber Park the two rescue teams adjourned to the Alpine Pantry for lunch. Afterward San Diego started the long drive home while we practiced some more technical work at the County campground; this ended with our two guides demonstrating the proper technique for climbing boulders. We were released 4:00 p.m. Sunday. -- Jack Schnurr

P.S. - Despite this write-up, the training was well organized and conducted; well worth the time and effort of those that attended. It was good to be on the mountain with our friends from San Diego; hopefully we can train together again sometime soon!!!

HAVE

A

NICE

DAY

