

RMRU NEWSLETTER

PUBLISHED MONTHLY BY THE RIVERSIDE MOUNTAIN RESCUE UNIT, INC.
A VOLUNTEER NON-PROFIT CORPORATION
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MEMBER OF THE MOUNTAIN RESCUE ASSOCIATION

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Editor and Publisher, Walt Walker

Photographs by the members

Coming Events - - -

- 8 March, Board Meeting at Walker's, 1900.
- 14 March, Rubidoux on-the-rocks training, 1900 on top.
- 22 March, Regular Meeting at County Hall of Records, 1930.
- 25-26 March, Training at Tahquitz Notches.
- 12 April, Board Meeting at Schmel's.
- 21-23 April, CR-MRA Seminar at Buckhorn Camp, Idyllwild.
- 26 April, Regular Meeting.
- 28-30 April, Training on the North Face of Mt. San Jacinto.



The Road

Runner sez-

An especially warm feeling is generated when we think of the way the general public and those close to Search and Rescue Units support us financially. By "us" we mean the other units we are familiar with as well as RMRU. We have been able to build our material layout into a nearly complete inventory of gear we need and use. Why? Because people believe in our operation and volunteer their money to back up the men who volunteer their time and efforts. No governmental appropriations, subsidies and the like, just a do-it-yourself operation as it should be.

Look at page 10, Vol. VII, Issue 12 (Dec. '71 RMRU Newsletter). The frame holding the wheel on the litter is model one. Bernie McIlvoy has completed model two and it has been tested. There's much less frame protruding below the axle, thus much less chance of crunching on rocks. Bernie built in more strength, eliminating two parts. Congratulations, Bernie!!!

War surplus packs, Eiger 110, Vagabond, Millet 370, Joe Brown, cut-down frame packs—these are a number of pack models we've gone through in search of the "ideal." Now we have designed our own call-out pack, the "RMRU PACK." See pictures and description elsewhere in the newsletter. -- Pres. Jim

Search and Rescue

Last month we stated that we would record all calls to RMRU and denote whether they were a mission (M) or an abort (A). We now have added another category, (C) meaning we received a telephone call for a mission but that it did not progress past being only a telephone call.

1 FEB., TUE. - SEARCH - #7206M
North Face of Mt. San Jacinto

The day had hardly begun, at work, when Al Andrews telephoned with the bad news. He related that Lt. Ed Brown, of the Riverside County Sheriff's Department, had called and

reported that three young men were overdue from a climb of the North Face. He said that the other two call captains, Jim Fairchild and Mike Daugherty, couldn't be reached at the moment by telephone and that if I could roll, he would pick up my calls.

After talking to my partner and father, Roy Walker, about the mission and pending work, I hurried home and loaded my gear. About 30 minutes later I was in Lt. Brown's office, changing into my rescue clothes while he discussed the situation with me. It was decided to call Western Helicopters, Inc. of Rialto, and ask for a helicopter and a mountain pilot. During this time other team members began to arrive at the Banning sub-station. We all then drove to the Snow Creek road east of Cabazon. About three miles up the road we turned off into a clearing in the brush. While some members were repacking for the expected snow and ice, others set up the wind sock in the 25 mph wind. The conditions on the face did not look good. Snow was blowing off the top and cascading down the chutes.

The always welcome sound of a Bell super charged helicopter was heard and quickly one of the members spotted the machine. As the bird landed we saw that the pilot was an old friend, Darrel "Ely" Elenberg. The situation was described to Ely, the team's helicopter radio was installed, and Ely and I were on our way.

As we flew towards the face, the really bad news, began to be apparent. The flying conditions were very bad. We were being tossed in all directions and continually losing altitude whenever we entered the downward burble of air near the ridge. After quite a long struggle Ely had worked his way up to about 6,000 feet when he spotted three figures climbing downward in the Snow Creek chute. I quickly wrote a note and put it in a message drop container. Ely worked his way up above the people and started down, going as slow and low, as safely as possible. Trying to gauge the wind drift, I tossed the message container out. The long streamer unfolded and we watched it drift down canyon, landing about 100 feet below the climbers. The note had asked if they were all o. k. and they signaled that they were (the note

had described the way to signal.)

We then flew back to base and picked up a container of canned goods that I had radioed be packed. As we flew back up canyon we flew into a downward thrust of wind that was to great for us to sustain altitude. Ely quickly began to bleed off turns of the main rotor, preparing for a hard landing. Since I had all ready crashed once in a helicopter while on a mission, I was not looking forward to a hard landing. (Later, during the critique, I was told the seat where I had been sitting was deformed from the hold my 'Abalone' had on the seat.) Ely was able to fly out of the problem and once again worked at the problem of gaining altitude. After some great flying we were once again over the climbers. I dropped the food container and then began to worry as it looked like it was going to land on the climbers. It didn't, but 25 feet is preeeety close. The climbers, Steve Duke, John Robinson and Richard Villa, quickly were around the package. They were still there as I looked back as we descended towards base.

A note had been left on the missing climbers car to telephone the Banning sub-station when they got out. Late that afternoon we received word that they were safely out.

-- Walt Walker

2 FEB., WED. - SEARCH - #7207C
Tahquitz Valley, San Jacinto Mountains

At noon time Lt. Ed Brown of the Riverside County Sheriff's Department called us and said two 19 year old young men were reported overdue by their parents. They were reported to be in good health and have good equipment. They were about 18 hours overdue when we received the call. While Jim Fairchild was talking to the parents of one of the young men via telephone, they called to say they were out and that they had stayed an extra night because of poor weather on the afternoon they had planned to hike out.



4 FEB., FRI. - SEARCH - #7208M
Soboba Hills - North of San Jacinto

1030 hours, leaving work again, on the way to Soboba Hot Springs. Paul Case and David Seipp, both 12, had run away from home for parts unknown ---- maybe San Francisco, maybe the hills. Deputy Jim Reick, Mike Daugherty, Bernie McIlvoy, Hank Schmel, Rich Morris and I head up a small creek looking at tracks, a grapefruit juice can (old? new? theirs?), peering into cavelets. At 1155 hours Mike and Rich head down, sending Bernie and me up the creek to the ridge. Five minutes later the boys are reported found in Riverside by the California Highway Patrol. A quick drive for lunch with Lt. Bill Park in Hemet, of the Riverside County Sheriff's Department, then back to work. -- Dennis Simpson

8 FEB., TUE. - SEARCH - #7209A
Good Hope area, Riverside County

At about 1:45 p. m. Al Andrews received a telephone call from the Elsinore sub-station, of the Riverside County Sheriff's Department, that a 2 1/2 year old child was missing in the Good Hope area west of Perris. Al started the call procedure and team members rolled as soon as they could. While we were driving to the scene the child was located.

12 FEB., SAT. - RESCUE - #7210A
Ortega Mountains - West of Elsinore

A busy week with late hours made the middle of Saturday afternoon look great for a nap. Three minutes after easing onto the patio couch my wife said Al was on the phone with a rescue call. A glider had crashed in the mountains a few miles east of the Ortega Highway south of Elsinore. Dave Cook and I were soon in the rescue van heading out through the maddeningly slow traffic. As we drove we monitored a number of conversations regarding the crash on the Sheriff's frequency. Western Helicopter's bird was on the way, someone wanted a saw to work

on the cockpit to free the pilot, several times a voice said to wait for the search and rescue group. We kept the Elsinore Sub-station aware of our location. Nearly at the top of the pass the bird flew over our heads toward the crash site. Even slower traffic now -- Sunday drivers a day early. Finally onto the dirt road, ate dust until we saw the cluster of cars 300 yards from the crash. Got out and found the deputy in charge, he pointed to the bird now coming up from a hover. Just the pilot in the cockpit, the glider pilot in the litter on the other side, they slowly went out of sight toward the hospital. People arrived back from the scene, said the glider pilot had talked to them at first, then turned white, they got him out of the glider, he turned blue as they loaded him onto the bird. He was DOA at the hospital.

-- Jim Fairchild

12 FEB., SAT. - SEARCH - #7211C
Ortega Mountains - Elsinore area

Shortly before 11 p. m. the Elsinore sub-station of the Riverside County Sheriff's Department called for RMRU's assistance. Two young men on motorcycles were about six hours overdue on an outing. There was an extra, one of the fellows was a diabetic. While the call-out was in progress the missing men turned up. We were able to call everyone back before they had rolled.

18 FEB., FRI. - SEARCH - #7212A
West of Beaumont

"Would you like to go on a rescue?" I was going to go to the show tonight, but there is always tomorrow night, so I roll. Time, 1700 Friday of a three day weekend. Jim and I reach the truck at 1710. We get out of Riverside at 1735. (NOTE to RMRU members: On a Friday night with lots of traffic, take Central Avenue to Alessandro Avenue, we didn't). Just as we got to the area of the search, the boy was found, cold and tired, but safe. Youngsters, like the two year old who was missing, always bring RMRU members in a hurry, and this night was

no different than usual. Many members arrived just after Jim and I. Reaching home at 1930, dinner was already gone, so it was hamburgers for me before going to the show.

-- Pete Carlson

21 FEB., MON. - SEARCH - #7213A
Fern Basin Campground - San Jacinto Mtns.

At 1745 hours the Banning sub-station dispatcher of the Riverside County Sheriff's Department called me. She said that she had not been able to reach either Al or Jim. (I knew that Mike was out of town, so I could see the problem ahead in calling out the unit members.) She reported that three girls, ages 11 to 14, were missing from the Fern Basin Campground and that Deputy Dodson was enroute to the area. The call-out had just finished when word was received that the girls had been found. The call-off was started and some members were stopped, but others were not so fortunate.

-- Walt Walker

21 FEB., MON. - SEARCH - #7214A
Soboba Hills North of San Jacinto

Just as things began to settle down after the call earlier, (since it was a holiday I didn't have night school and I had just built a fire in the den), you guessed it, another call from the Riverside County Sheriff's Department. Deputy Hanson of the Hemet sub-station called and reported a 20 year old man missing from near the 'S' on the Soboba hills. Once again I called the Call Captains, reaching Al and Jim, but not Mike. Since the terrain is very steep and rotten we decided to roll and meet at my house.

My wife, Sondra, put on the coffee and popped several batches of Popcorn. Son, Kevin, delighted at the prospect of having base in our front yard, put more wood on the fire.

Within 45 minutes almost everyone on the team was in our kitchen having coffee, eating Popcorn and listening to the details leading up to the search. Just as we were to go into act-

ion Deputy Hanson called and reported that the missing hiker had telephoned from a gas station in Banning. A few war stories were told and everyone headed for home but me, I was home. -- Walt Walker

26 FEB., SAT. - RESCUE - #7215M
Tahquitz Canyon - Palm Springs.

Saturday had not exactly been one of my best days. Having been unable to go on the winter training, problems with projects and the finale, a telephone call from Al Andrews. Al explained that the Indio station of the Riverside County Sheriff's Department had called to ask for RMRU's assistance in helping a young man stranded on a cliff in Tahquitz Canyon.

As I loaded gear into my Jeep wagon, many things ran through my mind. My wife and I had planned to go out to dinner and a show. It was going to be very warm hiking up the canyon and manpower was going to be a problem with most of the team members up on the slopes of Mt. San Gorgonio. My son, Kevin, asked if he could ride along. After a brief thought of saying no, I said yes. He was familiar with the rescue van and how to operate the radios. With the manpower shortage he could be the base camp operator.

As we neared the northwest end of Palm Springs we ran into the afternoon traffic. After ten minutes of stop and go traffic we turned onto Ramon Road and headed up towards our usual meeting spot on La Mirada. A deputy was waiting and described the situation with the usual third hand information, not to definite as to the location of the victim. Shortly the van rounded the corner and I could see Hank Schmel was by himself. Hank and I discussed the problem and I drove three blocks back into town to phone Al for a manpower report. The news was not to good, on the first call only Al Korber, Hank and I had responded. We decided to call the San Diego Mountain Rescue Team and ask for a technical team to assist us.

While I was checking my technical gear Al Korber drove up and I gave him the bad news.

He quickly sorted his gear and added a 150 foot climbing rope, from the van, to his pack. Hank had done the same minutes before. We then discussed what we were going to do with Lt. Campbell. Kevin would be manning base and Deputy Dye would be our co-ordinator with the sheriff's department.

We swung on our packs and off we went, Hank with a knee still bothering him from a previous injury, Al, just out of bed from a bout with the flu bug and myself loaded down with technical gear. (Hank's and Al's packs weren't too light.) It wasn't very long before we found out that it indeed was warm. As we approached the mouth of the canyon and the end of the rough dirt road, there sat a trash can, heaping over. Al asked, his first time in the canyon, "Is this Camp I"? Nearing the first falls we met two young men hiking out and asked them if they knew of the stranded young man. They said yes, and in fact were going to notify the authorities of the problem. We crossed the creek and hiked up to the base of the first falls and climbed up past them and got onto the trail that goes along the canyon wall. Kevin radioed us that Tom Dadson, Dave Cook and Jack Schnurr were at base. Al, carrying one of the two radios we were taking in, advised Kevin to have them start hiking in as soon as possible.

We came to the end of the trail and climbed down the canyon wall and wound our way through the mammoth boulders in the bottom. Reaching the other side we began our ascent to the second falls area. The sun had disappeared sometime ago in the canyon, the darkness was closing in on us. Coming over a small ridge I spotted the young man and the ledge he was trapped on. I dropped into the canyon bottom and headed for a nearby campfire. Two couples, seated around the fire, said they had tossed food to the stranded hiker about an hour earlier.

Scrambling up the other side of the canyon I was soon slightly above and only twenty or so feet from a very strange sight. The young man standing on the ledge was clad in a surfers wet suit and barefooted. Hank and Al quickly joined me and we viewed the problem together. The main problem was a nearly vertical wall with almost a smooth surface on one side of the led-

ge, where the stranded surfer stood, and a fairly large waterfall on the other side. While I looked for a possible route across, Hank continued on up the slope looking for a possible way to attack the problem from above. He did not have any success and I was not doing much better.

Being the senior member and climber, a rather dubious honor, it was my job to get to the ledge. After, tying on my swami belt and slinging my hardware over my shoulder, I reluctantly tied into the climbing rope. While all this was being done, Hank had found a good spot to belay me. Over the edge and down the open book I climbed. Reaching a small ledge, I began edging out on it and under a rather large flake of rock. I drove an angle piton up under it and clipped in two carabiners and a sling. The pin sounded good but was not in at a very good angle, in fact poorly, because it pointed downward. Inching out again I wished I had brought my climbing boots as the large hiking boots did not allow for a very good purchase on the small niches. Standing on one foot, on about a two inch square of ledge, I drove what is called a knife blade piton for aid. The piton would 'aid' me, as the next four feet was smooth and very steep, straight up and down. Carefully, I put my weight on the pin and swung over and grabbed a small hold and pulled myself over to the ledge. Before starting the climb I had tied an extra rope to my swami belt and I now removed it and tied it around the waist of the surfer. While doing this I found out he had hiked into the canyon solo on Thursday. Friday while climbing down to swim, the wetsuit was for warmth, he fell into the water. He couldn't climb back up and saw a rope going down the side. He started down it, and it broke, once again he fell into the water. He was now in a large pool of water with vertical sides and only a small ledge off to one side, the one we were standing upon. He had finally attracted someones attention around noon on Saturday, having spent Friday night on the ledge.

While I had been doing the tying and talking, Al had found a belay spot, for he was to belay the surfer back. We started climbing, with me leading the way, just in front so that I could direct and assist. Shortly we were at the

open book. With help from Al above and me below, the surfer was soon up and over. Now I had to climb back out on the face again and retrieve my hardware and slings. Back to the open book and using ascenders, I was quickly up the vertical wall. Al radioed to the other group hiking in that we had the problem solved. Using tape and elastic bandages we wrapped the surfers bare feet and started out. When we met the other group we found that they had not been loafing. They had bandaged, a burned hand and a badly swollen ankle and picked up a young man who was lost and did not have a flashlight. The group, six RMRU members, a misplaced hiker and a barefooted surfer, started the hike out in the light of beautiful full moon.

About two hours later we arrived at the van, tired, thirsty and hungry. When Mrs. Chester Dolley, who owns a large house on the corner where we always set up base, brought out some freshly baked sweet rolls and soft drinks, I realized that somehow I had not eaten a meal that day. The sweet rolls and soft drinks were quickly consumed. THANKS to you Mrs. Dolley from all of us of RMRU.

-- Walt Walker

26 FEB., SAT. - SEARCH - #7216A
Ortega Mountains west of Elsinore

While we were in Tahquitz canyon, right in the middle of the problem, we received word that a man was missing in the Ortegas'. Al Andrews wisely sent the San Diego Mountain Rescue Team, who already were alerted, to do the job. Sargeant Myers, of the Elsinore substation of the Riverside County Sheriff's Department, met the San Diego unit and while setting up base the missing man was found in his sleeping bag about fifty feet from the road.

Not wanting our friends from the south to think we were loafing, we had left for the Ortegas' after finishing the Tahquitz Canyon mission. As we drove up into the mountains we tried to radio the base. It wasn't until we were up and over the main ridge that we made radio contact, finding out that the man had been found.

At four in the morning we turned around and headed for home, wearily.

27 FEB., SAT. - RESCUE - #7217A
Tahquitz Rock - Idyllwild area

During mid-afternoon we received a call from the Riverside County Sheriff's Department that two climbers were injured on Tahquitz and that our help was needed. When we arrived at the roadhead, we found out that fellow climbers in the area had removed the injured climbers from the rock. They together, with members of the Idyllwild Fire Department, had carried both of the climbers out to the road where they were sent to the hospital via the fire department's ambulance.

RMRU - GRAM

NOTICE TO REGULAR MEMBERS:

As stated in the by-laws, you are hereby given notice, of the Annual Meeting and Election of Officers. The meeting will be held in the County Hall of Records, Riverside, California on 26 April 1972 at 1930 hours.

Sustaining Members

We want to thank every one of the 80 Sustaining Members who renewed their memberships during 1971. Also a big thanks to the 38 new members. We hope that each member finds it possible to continue their support of RMRU during 1972.

This month we want to welcome aboard:

*Kelty Mountaineering & Backpacking, Inc.
Mr. R. H. Schuppe
Mr. David E. Melendez

and thanks again to the following for renewing their memberships:

Mr. & Mrs. Wynlow L. Swick
Mr. & Mrs. R. O. Ridenour
Mr. & Mrs. Albin Merzals
Mr. & Mrs. Harold E. Carlson

*Century Club Member

-- Al Andrews

TRAINING

25-27 FEB. - WINTER TRIP
San Geronio Wild Area

Hastily I weighed my gear -- 97 pounds. Too much! Jim picked me up, at the office, and we had an enjoyable ride to Poop out Hill. (7600' elevation) Rich Morris and a reporter from Focus (Greg Johnson and Stacey Dobson) were there. While waiting for Art Bridge, Jim made suggestions as to what to take out of my pack--down to about 76 pounds. Still too much, but no Sherpas around so.....

Art Bridge arrived with son Dick. We started out for South Fork ("Slushy") Meadow. After a time I turned around to realize we had lost our Journalists. (They arrived at South Fork Meadow about the time we arrived at the Little Draw). Jim said Christmas Tree Hill would get our attention -- it did. About two-thirds of the way up I had fallen behind by about fifty yards. Art came back to carry my pack. The startled look and the stagger gave me some kind of satisfaction. We drank my Wylers lemonade and proceeded on, for my part with grim determination and sweat blinding me. I looked up to see the snow covered Big and Little Draw in full moon light, something which cannot be described to one who has not himself beheld it. To save us any extra weary steps, Steve Bryant sets off a flare to mark the camp location (10,000' elevation) he and Pete Carlson set up in the afternoon. We straggled in after two and one-half hours of leaving Poop out. John Murdock and Ray Ross rolled in a couple of hours after we did. I slept poorly but finally dropped off around 4 a. m. The night was almost balmy, the breeze gentle and agreeable.



(RMRU PHOTO BY PETE CARLSON)

The morning was brisk, the sun bright. We scurried around, got fed, and dressed in our strange uniforms of wind pants and crampons. Up the hill a little and Jim and Art began to review ice axe arrest fundamentals. Ice axe arrest without crampons is a fun romp in the snow, but with crampons, one must do it exactly right. I was just a little worried. It showed in my embarrassingly lousy arrests. Most people did well as expected, like strong John Murdock, Pete Carlson, etc. Dick Bridge did surprisingly well, but the real eye opener was Ray Ross who turned out to be a superb ice axe handler. Bernie McIlvoy and friend Jerry Fuller hiked in while we were on the hill. Steve slid onto a snow mound, twisting his knee. We saw a chance to practice with our new plastic



(RMRU PHOTO BY PETE CARLSON)

litter. (Photo - The new litter will be described in a future newsletter.) Down for lunch and rest before what was to be the most spectacular lesson of the day. Ed Hill and Dennis Simpson arrived in time to come up the hill for roped team arrests. I was relegated back to the beginners to review fundamentals but managed to do a few mediocre team arrests with Bernie. Greg and Stacey had made it in for an afternoon of pictures and observing. Two really hot teams were practicing, Art and Dick Bridge and Pete Carlson; Ray Ross, John Murdock and Rich Morris. I happen to be watching Art in the middle of the rope preparing to hold a two man fall with his crampons dug in. Wow, I would never have the nerve to do that. The thought no sooner registered when I saw the two end men falling, making a figure of the taught bow string. Zap!! The arrow is released and Art is snapped up in a spectacular back flip. The team arrests 100 feet down slope. There is a sudden hush, wide eyes staring at the still Art Bridge. He got up and walked away without visible effect, thus lending merit to the rumor that he leads a charmed life and/or is really made of steel.

It was pretty hard to top that so everybody decided to go hiking. I was relegated to the kitchen with Steve Bryant and we melted snow, watched the various groups attack different couloirs. Bernie and Pete ascended the far right couloir and gradually the bright colors faded into small specks slowly moving up the couloir and in their presence somehow enhancing the overwhelming grandeur of the scene. Finally, the dots begin to descend. One streams down in a spectacular glissade (with crampons?!), and the dot turns into the resident dare devil, Bernie McIlvoy. Finally everyone was down.

My over weighted pack yielded up its secret steaks an inch and one half thick, gourmet vegetables and Sara Lee Cheese cake and we feasted magnificently by an open fire and told war stories (tales of past missions and exploits). Another warm and gentle night with a magnificent full moon.

The next morning we headed up the S. E. slope of Little Charlton Peak and practiced



(RMRU PHOTO BY PETE CARLSON)

multi-pitch litter lifting and lowering with Dennis as the wary victim. Ray Ross turned his eyes upward and I followed. I justified my truancy because I have done litter problems at least six times in the past year, and besides, had not I missed my peak yesterday? The climbing was marvelous. If I had done nothing else, the trudge up Christmas Tree Hill would have been worth it. We came down invigorated.

After lunch and striking camp Steve was prevailed upon not to carry his pack down and we left in a group down the ski trail where we encountered the Ski Patrol touring group. Older members recognized one another and exchanged stories. Fresh water at Slushy Meadow and then the hike to Poop out Hill. I was behind Pete Carlson, determined to stay with him all the way, hyperventilating to try to rid my legs of pesky lactic acid. We made it. I know that everyone had one of the most spectacular weekends together for sometime.

-- Joe Bell