

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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Jim Fairchild, Editor
Walt Walker, Publisher

Coming Events

Note change →
8 October Board Meeting
15 October Regular Meeting
25 October Training
12 November Board Meeting
19 November Regular Meeting
22-23 November Training

Thank you!

ISAAC WALTON LEAGUE SPONSORS RMRU BREAKFAST

Each year during the month of August, the Isaac Walton League, Idyllwild Chapter, aids RMRU by putting on a pancake breakfast and donating the profits to the Rescue Unit.

This year the graciousness and liberality of this wonderful group was demonstrated on Sunday morning, August 17, at Town Hall, Idyllwild.

The first team member to arrive at 5:30 a.m. didn't lose much time in finding a heavy wool sweater from his gear. In previous years, there was no indication that the weather would be anything but hot, but this year it was downright cold! Soon after other members began to arrive and the heartiest ones managed to brave the cold in shirt sleeves, but generally speaking, sweaters were the dress code for the early hours. Before too long, the sun came up and the friendly visiting with our friends and the hustle and bustle of getting ready to serve breakfast caused those of us who were the weaker ones to discard our extra clothing and the orange shirts were quite a striking contrast to the foliage of the mountains.

People began to arrive for breakfast about 7:50 and breakfast was served from then until 10. The menu consisted of fried eggs, unless someone deliberately chose scrambled (Bud White was the manager of the torture chamber to torture those delicious eggs to perfection), sausage, and, of course, pancakes and coffee.

All in all, we served 372 people and the benefit to the team was over \$300.00.

While some team members were serving breakfast and cleaning

tables and doing other odd jobs, others found their place near the van explaining to the interested persons gathering near how various pieces of rescue equipment are used. There was much interest shown in the van, its operation and the other equipment which had been laid out on display. Many questions were asked and the team members were delighted to answer them regarding the use of the equipment.

The most popular of our rescue gear seemed to be the wheel litter. Possibly this was because free rides in it were given by team members to children and adults alike.

All in all, it was a very successful breakfast and again RMRU wishes to publicly thank the Isaac Walton League for their continued support of our work!

Search and Rescue

1 AUG., FRI. — RESCUE — NO. 7519M Tahquitz Rock, San Jacinto Mtns. By Walt Walker

Some weeks before Friday, August 1st, long time Sustaining Member Earl Cannon had contacted me about giving a RMRU program to residents of the Soboba Springs Mobile Estates. Right in the middle of unloading equipment, slide projector, etc. my 'beeper' sounded and stated there was a rescue mission.

As I was reloading the equipment, my wife Sondra, drove up very hurriedly. She related that during the RMRU conference telephone call, she had been requested to contact me, and have me leave for the mission immediately because a 16 year old boy had fallen and was injured badly.

Hurrying home, I thought about what gear I needed to pick up besides what I already had in my Jeep wagon. With the extra gear loaded I sped towards Idyllwild.

Arriving at Humber Park, above Idyllwild, I was met by a Riverside County Deputy Sheriff. He filled me in on the details and introduced me to the injured boy's hiking companion. It was decided that the friend would lead Frank Smith of the Forest Service and I back

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in to where the accident occurred.

After donning my hiking boots, I loaded my pack, also checking to see that I had my large first aid belt pack and RMRU handietalkie type radio. We were on the trail quickly heading towards the north side of Tahquitz Rock.

The friend was not exactly sure of the spot where he had left his fallen friend, so we yelled every couple of minutes. Our call was answered and we hurried to the boy. The sight we first saw did not look too good.

The injured boy was covered with blood, his right eye was swollen shut and he had a laceration on his forehead. The first thing done was to put clothing on the very cold lad. I then began a complete examination, looking for other injuries. The only thing discovered was a probable fractured left wrist. Just as I was bandaging the forehead, the RMRU radio came to life. The big orange van had arrived at Humber Park. Radioing back, I described the situation and what equipment was needed.

In no time at all RMRU members began arriving at the scene with the requested equipment. We splinted the boy's wrist with one of our air splints. Put the bottom half of the rescue sleeping bag in the litter, carefully picked the injured boy up and placed him in the litter, added the top to the sleeping bag, we zipped it up. Tying a rope to the head of the litter, for belaying, we started downwards in the darkness.

The wheeled litter once again was very effective in transporting an injured person. Radioing to base our expected time of arrival, they coordinated the arrival of the Idyllwild Fire Department ambulance. When we arrived at the base the boy was loaded into the ambulance and was quickly on his way to the Hemet Hospital.

We quickly loaded equipment used, back into the rescue van, put our own gear away and headed towards Hemet for a dinner that we had missed. During dinner we held a critique of the mission.

After dinner we drove to the Hemet Hospital to check on the injured boy and pick up our litter and rescue sleeping bag. We spoke to the injured boy's mother and she stated that the boy did have a fractured wrist but no other serious injuries.

15 AUG., FRI. — RESCUE — NO. 7520M

Tahquitz Peak, San Jacinto Mtns.

By Rich Morris

On Friday, August 15, 1975 at 4:00 P.M. I was winding up a week's work in the laboratory when I heard the unmistakably shrill note of my pager being set off by the dispatcher of the Riverside County Sheriff's Office. I called Al Andrews who told me that a helicopter had crashed in the San Jacinto Mountains near Idyllwild. Fortunately I had my car at work (I usually walk) so I was soon hurtling down the Ramona Expressway towards the town of San Jacinto. During the drive my pager went off twice more: the first time being the usual call which follows the first and the second time to tell all of the members to assemble at the Keenwild U.S. Forest Service Ranger Station near Mountain Center.

This last call illustrates the tremendous value which our pager system serves. Some of the team members had been instructed to go to another location. However, with the aid of the pagers, we were able to switch base camps without the frustrating experience of having to needlessly transport team members from one location to another.

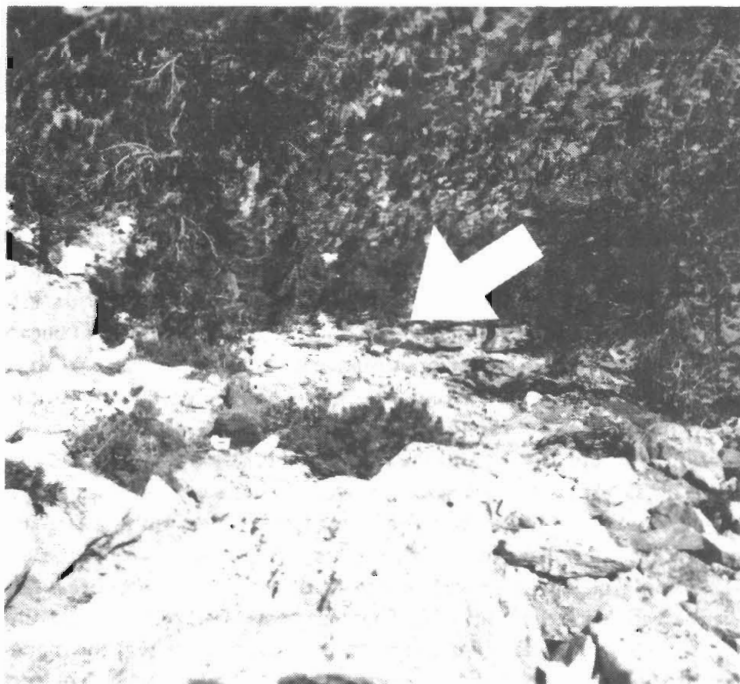
When I arrived at the Keen Wild Helispot I found Jim Fairchild, John Dew, his son Richard, and personnel from both the Riverside County Sheriff's Office and the U.S. Forest Service. We were told that earlier in the afternoon a helicopter from the Anaheim Police Department had crashed north of Tahquitz Peak (elevation 8826'), above Idyllwild. Two officers, Gary Nelson and Robert Departee, were in the craft. A team of men from the Forest Service, who were working in the area, had flown into the crash site along with a paramedic. In addition, the giant medical helicopter from Loma Linda University Medical Center was brought in to evacuate the injured.

Just after our arrival the Loma Linda bird, with a Forest Service machine flying "chase," flew over us en route to Hemet Hospital with one of the victims. The condition and whereabouts of the second victim was still unknown.

Sergeant Pete Kiyasu of the Riverside County S.O. made arrangements for Don Landells to bring in his supercharged Bell helicopter for our use. In the meantime, team members Pete Carlson and Larry Roland arrived. By the time Don landed (6:10 P.M.) it was decided that Jim and Sergeant George Conroy would make the first run in to evaluate the situation. The unusual act of Sheriff's personnel flying into a scene with us was prompted by the possibility of foul play and the expected emotional feelings associated with the fact that the victims were peace officers.

Jim radioed back shortly after that he could see the second victim from the air and that he was fairly certain that he was deceased. This turned out to be Gary Nelson, the pilot of the craft. When Don returned to base Pete and I were flown to the helispot 40 yds. east of Tahquitz Peak, ironically the same spot where the doomed craft had been attempting to land when something went wrong. As we were rounding the mountain approaching the scene Don commented to me that he was unable to see any evidence of the crash except for what was left of the battered engine; and this was just a small, black

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(PHOTO COURTESY OF THE RIVERSIDE CO. SHERIFF'S DEPT.)

The above photograph was taken from approximately where the accident started near the top of Tahquitz Peak. The white arrow points to the wreckage site.

spot barely visible on the slope of the rugged mountainside.

By the time Pete and I had arrived on the ridge, Jim reached the victim and confirmed his earlier suspicions. He told us to descend to him with the body bag but to leave our packs behind. The crash site was strewn out over several hundred yards of extremely steep terrain. The victim was about 400 vertical feet below the ridge with the engine just below. The descent was littered with pieces of machine and personal effects. Despite the unusual quiet and tranquility of the whole area, the ferocity of what had occurred several hours earlier was apparent. There were very few pieces left that were larger than a piece of flooring tile. The smell of aviation fuel comingling with the mountain air gave me a surrealistic sensation.

We placed the victim, who was undoubtedly killed more by the long cascade down the mountainside than by the initial crash, into the body bag and awaited Don's return. In the meantime, Larry Roland and Gary Gillespie were unloaded at the helispot. Gary stayed to act as radio relay while Larry came down to help us. Despite the steepness of the terrain we were able to raise the victim to an outcropping of rock which allowed Don to bring the ship close enough to load the litter. After a practice run Don came in *sideways* from 100 feet out and hovered while we loaded the victim. I have never seen a craft piloted as skillfully as Don did that evening; we are very fortunate to have him around.

After the bird departed we ascended to the ridge where in the gathering gloom Don made three trips to evacuate us. By the time the last of us were out it was well past sunset. When I returned to base I found Art Bridge, Steve Stephans, and Larry Brown, all of whom had arrived shortly after the mission began. Also, Phil Blank from the Riverside Amateur Radio Club was present. He had set up a mobile phone patch via short-wave radio to Riverside to facilitate our communications.

As of this writing Robert Departee is still in critical condition in Loma Linda Hospital where he was transferred to after being taken to Hemet Hospital. It is still not known why the craft, which was not suited to high altitude flying, was in the area. We do know that before the crash it had just refueled at the Palm Springs Airport, and was on an undisclosed mission in the area. Perhaps we'll never learn.



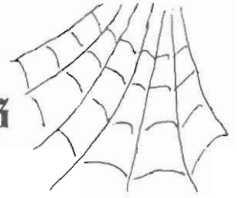
The Road Runner

sez— by Jim Fairchild

While this may strike you as strange, the roadrunner has run out of something to say. At least out of something un-controversial. However, in a conversation with Walt we came up with this idea . . .

Have you ever wanted to ask us questions about any of our missions, trainings, or other activities? Have you ever wanted to know more about how the unit operates or even about the characters who operate it? We are now giving you the opportunity to ask. Further, we solicit your questions, comments, and criticisms—something we can get our teeth into and perhaps print interesting and informative material. If you wish to get into a subject that should not go into print, fine, just write our P.O. Box or call one of us. We'll keep it private. While we are mostly super-sensitive and highly opinionated, we do occasionally consider objective points of view and do allow as how there might be another good way to do things. Seriously, we are all happy to discuss any phase of Search and Rescue with anyone who is interested.

from Old'en Days



One mission from ten years ago that has stuck in our memory quite well involved finding two very young girls who went riding in brushland east of Sunnymead. Their ponies got tired, the girls got lost, and darkness came along. Naturally, the parents alerted the Sheriff Office, who in turn called us. We tramped the dirt roads and brushy canyons all night. Just before dawn, we were re-grouped and not too sure of our own whereabouts. We felt another strong, group shout would be in order—it got a faint answer from the girls. We charged through punishing brush across another canyon and were soon giving food and drink to the chattering children. Just then the light of approaching sun-up showed us a chicken ranch far to the southeast. We led the young equestrians back to the road and a happy father. Don't ask why we did not follow the ponies' tracks—we did not know where the children started into the brush country and found no tracks at all. From five years ago we read about a man who mistakenly headed east instead of west after a hike to San Jacinto Peak, thus entering Tahquitz Canyon. We deployed men into the canyon who tracked him far down into the hot cauldron, only to get the message that the subject, a marathon runner, had made it out to Palm Springs.

Ding Bat

of the month

by HANK SCHMEL



"THIS IS TRAINING, BERNIE?"



In certain ways it seems just like yesterday that RMRU was founded (September 1961). But when you do the plain old arithmetic it's been 14 years. A lot of things have happened in that time and only Jim Fairchild and I have watched it from the beginning.

RMRU wasn't very old when it was donated a used panel truck. The small group of members at that time spent a good deal of time fixing it up. As the panel began to suffer from old age we launched a drive to raise money for a new truck in 1969. By mid 1970 friends of RMRU had donated enough money to purchase the big orange van we have today. At that time we spoke of it lasting for 10 years.

The 'super pumpkin' as we lovingly call the van, is 5 years old and far from being worn out, with only 20,000 miles and lots of tender loving care. But there is still a problem. We have run out of room inside the van to carry equipment and the engine just does not have enough horsepower to get all that gear up the mountain in a hurry.

When we purchased the van the RMRU board of directors planned on a life of 10 years and each year set aside money in the budget for the purchase of a new vehicle. That money has been deposited each year in a savings account.

The board of directors at its September meeting decided it was time to try and obtain a new vehicle. By selling the present van, and with the money in the savings we are not too short of being able to buy a new vehicle. Once again, just like 5 years ago, RMRU is appealing to its friends for help. With your help I know RMRU will shortly have a bigger, more powerful vehicle to more effectively carry out our life saving missions. — Pres. Walt

Sustaining Members

by Mike Daugherty

Our thanks to the following New and Renewing members:

NEW:

American Business Women's Assoc.

RENEWING:

Mr. & Mrs. H. H. Wentland

Mr. Melvin Parker

Mr. Ray Adair

Mr. Jim Whitener

Mr. Russel Gauslin

Rotary Club of Rubidoux

Mr. Howard Loy

Mrs. J. L. Chapman

Mr. Jack Nelson

Mr. Philip Modica

Mr. & Mrs. Dale Rosenkraus

Riverside Co. Pomona Grange No. 31

Mr. Lee Hornibrook

(Gift of Mr. & Mrs. Bert Leithold)

TRAINING

22-24 AUG., FRI.-SUN.

Temple Crag, High Sierra

By Ed Hill

Temple Crag (12,999' el.) is one of the most beautiful mountains in the Sierra. The northern face of the mountain consists of couloirs, towers and precipices of dark granite rising 3000 feet above lower Big Pine Lakes. Since many new members were out of town, the team decided to take a busman's holiday and climb the crag.

Eight members of the unit met at the new hiker's parking lot on Big Pine Creek (8000' el.). Packs, ropes and climbing gear were organized since our routes up Temple Crag would require roped climbing. The group hiked in to a small bench above Third Lake right under the spectacular north face. Saturday afternoon, Ed Hill, Larry Roland and Bud White hiked toward Contact Pass to look over the routes. Pete Carlson and Bernie McIlvoy stayed in camp and studied a possible route on the north face.

That evening, Rich Quackenbush and Ken Wyatt cooked a fantastic dinner of fresh salad, steaks, and fried potatoes. For a weekend trip, fresh food sure is good and not that heavy. The evening seminar around the fire was a political discussion concerning large corporations and the little man.

Early Sunday morning, Pete and Bernie left for the north face while the rest of us started up Contact Pass. At the top of the pass, we saw an obvious crack running up to a large ledge and easy rock above that. Larry Brown and Bud White's son, Mike, checked it out. Mike climbed it carrying a rope to belay the rest of us. From the ridge we could see the nivated slope that led to the summit ridge.

Peaking over the summit ridge we saw the whole north face and our camp about 3000 feet below us. The route led toward the summit along a very airy arete. We moved very carefully along the thin, knifeblade ridge to the summit, where we relaxed and looked at the rest of the magnificent peaks in the Palisade region. While we were eating lunch, we started to hear climbing calls below a notch a thousand feet below us. Soon we could see Pete and Bernie climbing up toward the summit ridge.

We started down before they made the summit, but they caught up to us on the ledge where we had to rapell down into Contact Pass. Back in camp, we talked about how enjoyable the climb had been, and started the hike out so to begin the long drive back to Riverside. On this hike out, I learned that this had been Larry Roland's first Sierra peak; So Congratulations, Larry, and I hope to see you on a few more.

The *RMRU Newsletter* is published monthly by the Riverside Mountain Rescue Unit, Inc. It is intended primarily to inform the regular and sustaining members.

If you would like to receive the newsletter on a regular basis, and at the same time become a sustaining member, send your tax deductible donation of \$10 or more to:

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