

RMRU NEWSLETTER

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RMRU RESCUES LAMB IN TAHQUITZ CANYON!



TRAINING



**24-26 June, Fri.-Sun.
Tahquitz Canyon**

By Jim Fairchild

Most years we find ourselves facing a descent of Tahquitz Canyon late in June. This gives us a superb opportunity for gaining more familiarity with the canyon, more prowess at canyoneering, and some hot weather exposure. The usual fringe benefits of great camaraderie, closeness with wildlife (animals, that is), fine scen-

ery, swimming, and contact with the "residents" keep us alert and interested. The terrain is just difficult enough to demand unrelenting care.

A chore of particular importance this time was to locate, name, and mark on the topographic map all the helispots we could that are in or very close to the canyon bottom. Past missions have provided us with many, and we found a few more.

Tahquitz Canyon! The thought of it conjures up many thoughts of past excursions there. My first contact was in the early fifties when I tried to lead my Boy Scout Troop up from Palm Springs to Idyllwild. What an education that was: an enormous amount of water (in May); dense vegetation with log jams, drift wood dams; many rattlesnakes; and continuous difficulty with waterfalls and detours. I guess we got up to the 2600 foot el. before climbing the south ridge and hiking down. The next year

we descended the south ridge from Caramba (6400' el.) to Palm Springs. A great deal of RMRU's search and rescue activity has occurred there; many lost, stranded, and injured hikers, many truly dangerous epics with helicopter hoverings and landings. We even had a seriously injured member to evacuate from there. We have gotten to know the refugees from society (temporary) who have resided within the canyon from months to years. One July, on a radio retrieval hike, Walt and I peeked over a ridge and saw thirteen bighorn sheep close below. On other occasions I've watched fellow members go into the first stage of dehydration during quick hikes up from the desert to aid others. Anyway, the area means a lot to me, each training there is eagerly anticipated.

Dinner at the Chart House is a great preliminary to anything, and Friday evening some of us gathered there to start the training. Ron Barry and John Muratet had gone ahead to meet us at Saddle Junction. Long before sunset Pete Carlson, Ed Hill, Tom Aldrich, and myself were sweating up the trail. Before long we crossed Willow Creek at Law's Camp (7600' el.) and found our usual campsite with a view.

Seems like almost immediately the sun got around to the east and dawn was upon us. After a succulent breakfast we "saddled up" and headed down the trail to Caramba. There we found the water in the stream was encouragingly high. We were now descending along the canyon bottom, trailless, finding the now familiar route with crossings and detours. The high temperature belied the altitude. We stopped frequently to cool down and drink great quantities of water, continuing our habit of "resting" our way to wherever it is we're going, on training, that is. During real missions the pace is something else! The first two thousand vertical feet of descent feature steep canyon sides and plenty of waterfalls. We did find a number of usable and developable helispots. Below 4000' el. the an-

gle eases, the canyon turns a bit northward, and we passed the confluence of Hidden Creek. Came upon a new campsite of yet another, higher resident. By higher I mean in elevation. By mid-afternoon we came to Adam's Place, a fine campsite below Tower Helispot. I had been plotting to influence the others to camp here instead of continuing down a ways to our traditional campsite. There was wood and good camping. We had been swimming and soaking our shirts frequently, so the 98 degree temperature wasn't too bad. Elevation is about 3300' with thick cottonwoods, grapevine, and white alders in the canyon bottom. Brush and cactus on the hillsides. Many birds, insects, and reptiles. Most thankfully, no poison oak!

Only two months before I'd spent a couple of nights here during the course of the search for Derick Bouma. He was found in the pool near our traditional campsite, a couple hundred feet down.

Following the usual scrumptuous RMRU-type supper we crawled into our bivvy covers - sleeping bags were just ballast at this stage of the hike. Again the sun made quick work of night and we were soon descending. A north-side detour brought us to the Bouma pool where we found Bernie McIlvoy. He had hiked in from Palm Springs on Saturday and expected to find us camped there. We continued down the valley past Spirit's camp, past Jim and Sonny's, thence to the horseshoe bend above which is Grapevine Helispot. More bends, waterfalls, "ouch bushes" (thorny), and we came to Pack Rat's place. Another great swim, soak the shirts, fill canteens, and begin a long ascent, traverse, descent. It wouldn't be bad now because we'd encounter good swimming pools after quite a number of detours. But . . .

Bernie was ahead of me when he suddenly stopped, pointed ahead on the trail, and said, "Jim, look at that!!!" I expected a bunch of rattlesnakes coiled and mad. It was hard to believe the cute, smiling, calm, five-month-old ewe Bighorn Sheep only five feet beyond. She stood up, came for us, and frantically tried to find a place on us to suckle. No fear, just thirst and hunger. An instant pet. We broke out water, celery, and sunflower seeds which were gobbled up. Well, now

what to do? Evidence indicated an abandoned lamb. Let's try to hike her out. But she also looks sick. We have radios but no base out there to call and John Dew isn't due to pick us up for six hours. Hmm, send two men out to try to get a helicopter pick-up. John and Bernie take off. We stay with the lamb in the shade of a ridge, 200' above the stream. Time passes, the shade is shrinking, heat rising. A trip to the stream for water. Our pet stays with us taking food and water. Ed, about twelve-thirty, comes down from his relay point and tells us Don Landells is on his way! We have a quarter-mile to cover to a helispot. It was push, drag, carry, cajole, pull with the sling leash to get the lamb over there. Don arrives and we tie the lamb, then into the machine, and suddenly we're landed at Chester and Ann Dolley's home in Palm Springs. Bob Claybrook is there to examine and take charge of the lamb. He works at the Deep Canyon Desert Bighorn Preserve south of Palm Desert. He's had a lot of experience with Bighorns. The lamb was taken to a veterinarian in Palm Springs and thence to the Los Angeles Zoo because Bob was leaving for a month on vacation.

It turned out that Bernie spent over an hour-and-a-half on the phone at the Dolley's trying to get permission from the California Fish & Game Commission to evacuate the little critter. These endangered species are not to be molested in any way - no sneaking up on 'em, no pursuing them, no hunting them, and certainly no handling them! After contacting several agencies and getting help from quite a number of interested people, permission came. Then, the Palm Springs Mounted Police, the local search and rescue group, offered to pay for the helicopter time. I sure had been hoping that the decision to bring the lamb out was the right one.

Called Bob last night (9 Aug.) to ask about progress. It seems the lamb had pneumonia, but not badly. She almost died from shock a short time after the evacuation, but then got better and is now still at the zoo doing well. Bob is to bring her out to the preserve shortly. The zoo people were happy to have a chance to help a sick Bighorn, and Bob tells me about six of them came in from Death Val-

ley, so their experience will increase. It also happens that Bighorns are rather poor parents and will leave their young when any sign of weakness is shown.

Interest in the animal continues and it will be satisfying if she remains well and is eventually returned to the wild, or leads a useful life at the preserve. •RMRU

COMING EVENTS

JULY

- 6 - Board Meeting
- 13 - Regular Meeting
- 16 - Training
- 27 - Board Meeting

AUGUST

- 14 - Breakfast
- 17 - Regular Meeting
- 20-21 - Training
- 24 - Board Meeting

Search and Rescue

RESCUE

Mission No. 7717M
7 June, Tues.
Tahquitz Rock,
San Jacinto Mountains

By Walt Walker

Four o'clock in the afternoon on a warm pre-summer day with two hours of work yet to do, the phone rings and you are asked if you can roll on a mission, you guessed it, - I said "Yes!"

After phoning the RMRU members that were my responsibility, I drove home, changed clothes and started loading gear, with my son Kevin who would be going on the mission also.

We jumped in our Jeep Wagoneer

and hurried across the Hemet-San Jacinto Valley to pick up fellow team member John Dew. When we turned the corner onto John's street we could see him waiting at the curb. We stopped, loaded his gear, and were on our way up the hill towards Idyllwild.

When we arrived at the Humber Park roadhead we were met by Capt. Ray Canova of the Riverside County Sheriff's Department. He told us that a young man had fallen while climbing, was not hurt, but was stranded. We checked our packs, handed Capt. Canova one of our radios, swung on our packs and started hiking.

While we were hiking up towards Lunch Rock we radioed the rescue van and told Jim Fairchild that we were on the trail and would relay information as it became available.

Arriving at Lunch Rock, we stopped for a minute and had a drink of water. We started around to the south side of the rock as the climber was reported to be on a climb called the Ski Tracks. Just as we rounded the corner we met two climbers and they said the climber was still stranded. Going a little further up we met a young man and he told us he had been the lead climber when the incident happened. He was almost to the top of the climb and belaying the second climber when he slipped and fell. This had been the fallen climber's first try at rock climbing and he was understandably uptight after the fall. The informant had tried to do everything he could. Then he tied off the climbing rope and free-climbed upwards. He descended via another route and ran down the trail for help.

Just a little further and we saw the stranded climber, about half-way up the climb. It was decided that Kevin would stay at the base of the rock, while John and I continued on. We quickly were on the Friction Route and then up on to the main rib. We down climbed the rib until we could look down on Kevin. He yelled up to us that we were almost right above the stricken climber.

Just before we had reached Lunch Rock, Jim had arrived at Humber Park with the rescue van. Jim asked via the radio what equipment would be needed. I radioed back for two 300 ft. ropes, four 150 ft. ropes, all the hardware slings, runners and the small 5-watt radio used on technical

missions. As Jim readied this equipment other RMRU members were arriving.

The equipment requested was loaded into and onto packs and the heavy loads began their journeys to the top. As the equipment was being carried up, John and I started looking for anchors for the best route down to the climber and generally how the mission would be carried out.

As the members reached the staging area they were given assignments. Anchors were set, I was already into my swami belt and ready to rappel. I attached a rope to the back of my swami, clipped into the rappel rope and started down the side. About 175 ft. down I reached the stranded climber. I stopped, tied my rope off, and told the young man what we were going to do to get him down to the bottom. I then secured the second rope to him and untied his climbing rope. He was now on belay which was being handled by Bernie McIlvoy. As Bernie lowered the climber I rappelled along side of him and gave instructions and encouragement. In a very short time we were at the base of the rock.

The rest of the mission was the usual packing of gear, coiling of ropes and the long hike back to the roadhead, which was completed by flashlight. •RMRU

SEARCH

Mission No. 7718M

22, 23 June, Wed., Thurs.
Jurupa Hills,
Rubidoux, Calif.

By John Muratet

On Wednesday night, 22 June, RMRU was gathered in their regular monthly meeting in Riverside. At about 2130 hours, (9:30) the pagers went off and Al Andrews went to a pay phone in the building to investigate the nature of this call. He was told that a 2 year old boy, Joshua Garvey, was missing from home in the Rubidoux area close to the gravel pits. He had been missing approximately 2 hours. The sheriff had been notified. Volunteers from the community, fire department, and other

sources had been helping search during these 2 hours. Not having found the child in that length of time, they decided, "let's get mountain rescue unit". This was the reason for the pager call. Needless to say, the meeting broke up immediately, and everyone started rolling toward the search area.

When I arrived at the scene there was an army of people just milling over the area. The Riverside police helicopter, which was also assisting that night because he was equipped with high intensity lights and a loud speaker, was kind enough to ask the people in the field to please leave the area and they all complied.

Now it was time for RMRU to go to work. John Dew, Tom Aldrich, and Ed Hill were dispatched to go with the tracking dogs that had been sent from March Air Field. Pete Carlson and Bernie McIlvoy were sent to check the hillside of Jurupa Mt. to see if they could pick up any tracks. Rick Pohlrs and I were sent to check the road that leads up into the mountain and into the quarry. Larry Brown went with a deputy to check the road just north of the freeway. At 2340 hours (11:40 p.m.) all reported negative results.

So it was time to develop new assignments. Larry Brown was sent to check any pools in the area. Tom Aldrich was sent with Larry Roland to the child's home to see if any more information could be obtained from the parents. Rick Pohlrs and I were sent to check behind the houses.

At 0030 hours (12:30 a.m.) Pete Carlson reported back that they had "good tracks" southwest of the house, but after talking with Larry Roland and Tom Aldrich at the child's house it was determined that the prints were too large. At 1400 hours (2:00 a.m.) the search teams returned to base to begin again at dawn.

The sun came up and there was a thick overcast. The sheriff was briefing the fire department for a house to house search. Don Landells and the San Bernardino helicopters were called in. Landells was the first to arrive and said he had a terrible time flying in through the overcast. Not long after Landells landed we heard the San Bernardino bird fly over and out of sight, but soon returned to find us, and land.

Pete Carlson, Larry Roland, and I

climbed into Landells bird and soon were making sweeps back and forth across the hillside and quarry. After thoroughly checking the area, with no results, it was suggested to try the other side of the mountain.

Ed Hill and John Dew were flying in the Sheriff's bird checking the higher ridges again. We, who were flying with Don Landells, flew over a ridge and spotted a man and child walking down a road. Closer examination proved that it was our boy. Landells brought the bird down and we picked up Joshua Garvey in good condition but very scared.

What Joshua had done was walk around the mountain which was over a mile from his home. The tracks that Pete Carlson and his team had picked up the night before were actually the boy's, but the shoe size that was reported was incorrect therefore abandoned. We soon had Joshua aboard and were back at base and reunited mother with son. •RMRU

RESCUE

Mission No. 7719M

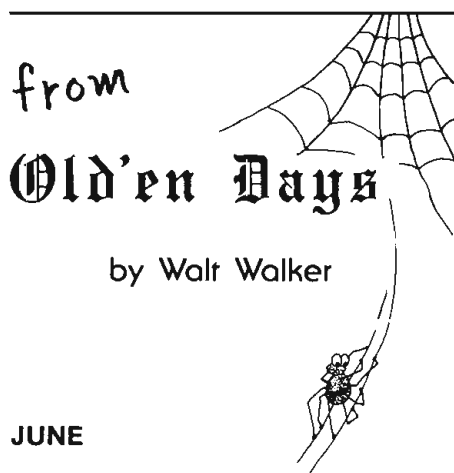
**26 June, Sun.
Tahquitz Canyon,
San Jacinto Mountains**

By Jim Fairchild

There we were, sitting on Chester and Anne Dolley's side porch soaking up cool liquids when a Sargeant from the Palm Springs Police Dept. came over and said, "Did you know there's a person with a busted skull up at the first falls?" Well, no we did not. Four of us put packs back on and headed up, soon learning that the busted skull was probably at Scorpio Pool, somewhat lower than the first falls. Pete soon located the right spot and we headed for the pool. Beer cans, soda pop cans, trash, and live bodies decorated the pool and stream. Blood flowed downstream and colored half the pool. We were soon at the side of Dave Negrette who was babbling away ridiculously, barely heard above the radio blaring modern "music." Dave's head was cradled on the lap of a half-submerged mermaid, his own body cooling in the pool. Blood-soaked towels and T shirts were evidence of first aid. I was finally able to

get near enough to inspect and dress the wound. It was gross - about eight inches long at the top of his head, the outboard side of the skull peeled up nearly an inch with plenty of blood oozing yet. With many bad jokes, epitaphs, invectives, insults, and so on between the injured man's friends and associates, we got him into a litter and down to the roadhead where an ambulance was waiting. Our own role in hauling the litter was minimal because a couple of super-strong Marines and the subject's friends who helped.

The group Dave was with was enjoying the natural scene with at least three types of "consumables" the very smell of which made us dizzy. They all no doubt had hang overs of great dimensions, but we conjectured how Dave felt after what had to be done to his busted skull. I believe he could have been dropped out of a helicopter and never missed a laugh, until the next day! •RMRU



JUNE

Ten years ago —

After the usual information, regular and board meetings, training dates, times and places, the 1967 issue had an article about RMRU's display and demonstration at the Riverside Downtown Mall.

It related that the display was in place from Wednesday through Saturday. Demonstrations were given on Friday and Saturday. The demonstration consisted of: lowering a 155 pound Bloodhound, complete with handler, off the three story Law building; rigging a Tyrolian traverse, with Stokes litter, across the mall to the Singer building; many RMRU members rappelling off the top of the Law building and answering hundreds of questions from interested spectators all day long.

The following is a direct quote from the article: "The building where we gave the demonstration is now the only building in town with lug sole footprints going up the side of it. The rappel off the top wasn't bad after you got over the three foot overhang at the start, missed the rows of large windows, air conditioners and the sign on the six foot ledge near the bottom. We still hear people talking about the big black Bloodhound that was lowered over the side to the crowds below. RMRU can well be proud of a job very well done."

Five years ago -

The 'Coming Events' information took up the first two inches of the 1972 newsletter. Then began the Search and Rescue section.

Pete Carlson wrote up the only mission in that issue. He began his write-up mentioning Friday night at 1915 (7:15 p.m.) is a hard time to contact RMRU people (pre-pager days). He picked up the rescue van and started rolling to Tahquitz Canyon by himself, the fifth time so far that year that the unit had been called for missions in the canyon.

Arriving at the roadhead he was informed that a boy had fallen and probably broken an ankle. As to where this had occurred, was not entirely clear. Ray Ross was assigned, base camp operator duties, and Pete, Dennis Simpson, Bill Hunt and Bernie McIlvoy loaded up team gear: three 150 foot ropes, two radios, the rescue sleeping bag, and the break down litter. The four of them started up the canyon in the warm evening darkness.

After an extremely frustrating night of calling, searching, hiking up canyon and then back down again, the injured young man was located at 0500 at first light of a new day. They put an air splint on the injured ankle and took a break to eat and drink as the sun rose.

During the night, Steve Bryant, Dave Cook, Ken Crane, Dave Nehan, John Murdock and Walt Walker had arrived at base and were waiting for Don Landells to show up with his helicopter. When Don arrived at base, men and equipment were quickly loaded and flown up the canyon to a helispot located by Pete and Bernie earlier.

The injured young man was placed into the litter for a 200 foot raise up the canyon wall. Pete tied into the line going to the litter, Bill, Bernie, Dennis and John started pulling on the rope, which had been run through pulleys that created a mechanical advantage. The litter (with the injured young man secured inside) and Pete began the trip up the wall, while Walt jumared along side, lending a helping hand when it was needed. After arriving at the top, the litter was carried over to the helispot, and the message was radioed out to

have the chopper come in.

Don flew into the helispot, we loaded the litter on and secured it, Pete climbed inside and they were off to the Palm Springs Hospital at 0900. Don returned, and flew out the rest of the members and all of the equipment.

Pete ended his article by describing what he had for breakfast that morning after the mission: "five glasses of O.J., a chocolate shake, steak, eggs, hash brown potatoes, toast and a side order of French toast to fill any left over space."

On page three, a new feature was started in the RMRU Newsletter. Hank Schmel had shot a series of photos of Walt Walker rappelling at the previous team training and added humorous captions to them. He titled the new

addition 'Ding Bat of the month'.

Ed Hill wrote up the training session that had been changed from a descent of Tahquitz Canyon (cancelled due to a late season storm) to a combination, wheeled litter practice and technical practice.

The latest editon of the RMRU pack was passed from member to member, so they could try it out under field conditions. After heading up the Hall Grade, south of Cabazon, we turned west and descended into a canyon where we had found a lost man a few years before. We shortly encountered our first problem, a waterfall that had to be rappeled down. Everyone down, we continued downward winding our way through the boulders until we came to a even larger drop off!

We then began to set up a litter lowering and raising system that we used over and over having members take different jobs each time. The photograph below was taken by Hank Schmel while we were doing one of the raises.

In the Sustaining Members column Al Andrews noted we were in the process of looking into buying radio pagers that had been "previously owned" but would be sold with full warranty. They would cost approximately one-half the price of new units. The following new members were welcomed: Miss Patricia Higgin, Mr. F. R. Conklin and Mr. W. J. Peters. The following renewing members were also thanked for their support: Mr. & Mrs. Mike Daughtery and the Idyllwild Lions Club. •RMRU



RMRU PHOTO BY HANK SCHMEL

RMRU TECHNICAL TRAINING IN A CANYON SOUTH OF CABAZON, MAY 1972