

Season's Greetings

from

RMRU



RMRU PHOTO BY JIM FAIRCHILD

RMRU 1979 — (L to R front) Brian Hixson, John Dew, Avery Powers, Tom Aldrich, Pete Carlson, Joe Erickson, John Muratet, Ed Hill, Bernie McIlvoy and Jim Garvey, (L to R back) Dave Ezell, Rick Pohlers, Ron Barry, Bob Wagner, Chris Noon, Don Chambers, Jim Fairchild, Tony Loro, Hal Fulkman, Craig Beasley, Larry Roland, Jerry Niswonger, Don Landells and Walt Walker. The only active member missing for the team photograph was Kevin Walker, who was home sick with the flu. The sitting was set up by Jim Fairchild and the camera was tripped by a built in timer on the camera. The above photograph is only the third photo of the entire team in 18 years of RMRU history.

Thank you Don



TRAINING



Helitac

**8 Dec., Sat.
Desert Hot Springs**

By Walt Walker

For the 14th or 15th year (my memory is starting to go) RMRU has had a Helitac training session. In early years, when there were fewer and easier missions, we only used the helicopter a few times each year. Due to many more missions and injury type rescues we now use the 'bird' many times each year.

During lunch, and after the training session, some of the veterans were discussing previous trainings. Everyone agreed that the session just completed had to rank very high as one of the best Helitac training sessions that RMRU has ever had.

A very large part of the credit, for a most successful training, has to go to Don Landells. He provided, one of his Bell Jet Ranger helicopters, his heliport and hanger and his very fine piloting skill at no cost to RMRU.

The first time I flew with Don was before RMRU had been formed (RMRU is in its 18th year) and he was chief pilot for



RMRU PHOTO BY JIM FAIRCHILD

STATIC DEMONSTRATION — Veteran mountain pilot (left) Don Landells shows RMRU members a new method of securing the litter in the back of his Bell Jet Ranger.

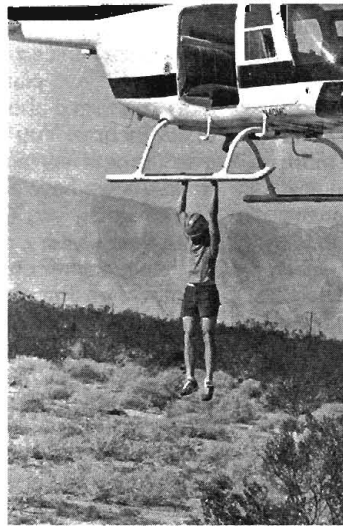
the company that was building the Palm Springs Aerial Tramway. A small group of mountaineers were removing the bodies from a plane wreck on the Fuller Ridge in the San Jacinto Mountains.

This years training was held at Don's heliport in Desert Hot Springs. We spent the first part of the morning talking about general information and safety procedures concerning helicopters. Then it was time to practice getting into, and out of, the helicopter smoothly. This was done with the helicopter parked on the heliport

without the engine running. When we were satisfied that everyone had been in and out a number of times, we walked out into a nearby open field.

In just a few minutes Don was airborne in the Ranger and flying towards us. We had previously put a 300 lb. rock into a sling. Don brought his bird into a hover and we attached the sling to the rope hanging below his powerful machine. He lifted it up and moved the rock into a clearing where we had our training.

The training consisted of everyone:



RMRU PHOTO BY JIM FAIRCHILD

TEAM MEMBER BERNIE McILVOY DEMONSTRATES THE NEW RMRU HANG JUMP!

giving hand signals to Don, as he approached the rock; entering the helicopter while one runner was down on the rock and also while it was in a hover; then a short flight to another area where each member jumped out while the helicopter was in a hover. We also tried two new things. The first was to push down on the runner of the helicopter while it was touching only one runner down on the rock. It would be very difficult to explain, but simply it helps the pilot, particularly when the helicopter is empty. The other

was to get aboard the helicopter by pulling yourself up onto the runner and then getting into the back seat. The reverse, getting out onto the runner, letting yourself hang below and dropping off. (See photographs.) This type of procedure would be used when obstructions would not allow the pilot to hover the helicopter close to the ground.

On behalf of RMRU, I want to thank Don for helping us stay proficient in a very important part of our ongoing training program. • RMRU

\$USTAINING MEMBERS

BY MIKE DAUGHERTY

Well now, it appears that our calls for help have not gone unanswered. There is below a magnificent list, something like 50 names, many of them new. It is, I believe, the most impressive outpouring we have seen in a single month in the twelve years of the Sustaining Membership program. It is probably superfluous to say so, but we are deeply gratified by this response. Thank you all!

I am almost reluctant to point out any particular name among those below as I obviously cannot comment on them all. Instead, let me point out some of the categories into which they fall, in the hope that, if we can understand this phenomenon, perhaps we can sustain it.

Many of those listed as "renewing" members are long-time friends who have ridden to our rescue once again. Some of them have given to RMRU so many times that we've long since run out of different ways to say thank you. In a number of cases this has reached the point of actual embarrassment. I sometimes feel that we really ought to be dedicating a wing instead of sending yet another thank you letter. Unfortunately, rescue teams don't have wings, although they certainly could use them.

That observation brings me to the name Landell's Aviation in the list below. Regular readers of this newsletter will recognize this as Don Landells, the helicopter pilot who has borne RMRU in (and out) of tight spots with incredible skill for about as long as there has been an RMRU (Thanks Don).

Four of those below are those of team members. This is quite common, although I



RMRU PHOTO BY JIM FAIRCHILD

ONE RUNNER PICK-UP — RMRU member Jerry Niswonger applies pressure to the skid of the helicopter on a practice boulder, while Hal Fulkman climbs aboard and Helitac instructor Walt Walker looks on

don't usually comment on it. As one who no longer leaves a warm bed at midnight to do the work of RMRU, I would observe that the fact that those who actually do the rescues also contribute money to the team is a more convincing argument for supporting RMRU than any I could possibly make. Even more significant is the fact that many of the new members listed below have become aware of RMRU through personal contacts made by RMRU members and, I'm sure, by Sustaining Members. This is an enormous help. Anything you can do to introduce new people to the team will help us widen the base of our support. In this connection, this newsletter is our principal tool; it is our only direct means for showing the community what we do. Quite a few Sustaining Members have provided "gift subscriptions" to friends in the hope that they will be convinced thereby to support our venture.

I don't really look forward to trying to top this act in January 1980. In fact, I'm sure we can't. Yet, the basic task of the Sustaining Membership is to provide a reliable source of **continuing** income for the operation of the unit. Basically, we are not confronted by a one-time, crisis situation, but rather with an ongoing, year-in, year-out **obligation**.

Finally, over 30% of those listed are Riverside County physicians whose support has been obtained through the efforts of team physician Dr. Norman Mellor (Thanks Norm).

After all, RMRU has been functioning continuously for over eighteen years. We are here to stay and so, lamentably, are our expenses. So, we plan to become a wee bit more organized about maintaining the level of our income. You will be seeing this effort over the next few months in several different ways. As we have already mentioned, we'll be reminding you (gently) when it's been more than a year since we heard from you. By maintaining only "active" Sustaining Members on the newsletter mailing list, we will be able to reduce costs and thereby increase the efficiency of our operation. Like all other aspects of RMRU's operation, the Sustaining Membership operation is accomplished entirely by volunteer efforts and facilities. Hence, the only direct cost which it generates is the small amount for envelopes and postage. However, we are now considering changes which will streamline this operation. This may reduce somewhat the traditional personal touch in our efforts but it will also liberate time and energy which can be directed at new fund raising efforts. We must all bear in mind that our objective is to support a maximum effort in the field.

Thanks to our Sustaining Membership, RMRU can look forward to the 80s with confidence that we will be able to continue and improve the service we have provided in the 70s. That is something about which every one of us can be proud.

New—

John Dew
Larry Roland
Jim Garvey
Betty Jones
*Dr./Mrs. E. D. Quick
Dr. Richard Huffer
Dr. Shirish C. Patel
Sierra Club, San Geronio Chapter
James & Sharon Sherlock
*Dr. A. R. Silva
Dr. J. DeMola
Dr. Morton P. Israel
Altrusa Club of Riverside
Dr. D. Michael Crile
*Landell's Aviation
Dr. Exuperio L. Tioseco
*Dr./Mrs. Nile I. Reeves
*Chevron Employee
Involvement Fund Grant
Carl Tanner

Renewing—

Ed Hill
Barbara Brickman
Karolyn Stanovich
Dr. Donald Browning
Dr./Mrs. Roger Ridley
*Drs. Clyde A. Pitchford
J. Burdette Nelson, Jr.
James H. Mullen
Robert & Edna Kowell
*Dr./Mrs. Thomas E. Gillen
Douglas & Joan Pinnow
Kelley R. Harrison

***Century Club**, donation of \$100 or more.

Search and Rescue

He explained his need. There was a brush fire up in Tahquitz Canyon and his men didn't know the trail. It was dark and he wanted us to lead them in to assess the situation to know how many men to have there the next morning to fight the fire.

I immediately called Walt Walker. He wasn't home. I called Hal Fulkman. He wasn't home. I called Bernie McIlvoy in Riverside. He was at home. He said he would get someone else from there and go to Palm Springs to meet the Forest Service. I left Hemet to meet them there.

Bernie contacted Joe Ericson who was also able to go. We met at the familiar roadhead at the mouth of Tahquitz Canyon. Bernie and Joe led three Forest Service men in. I remained at base so these men would have a link with the outside world via handitalkie radio.

The assessment was made. The men returned to the roadhead at about midnight and we each returned to our homes.

RMRU felt it was another service we are able to supply in the realm of volunteer public service in mountaineering.

• RMRU

Assist

Mission No. 7936M

**2 Dec., Sun.
Tahquitz Canyon,
San Jacinto Mountains**

By John Dew

It was Sunday evening about 6:30 when my phone rang. A voice on the other end explained that he was from the U. S. Forest Service and had a need for assistance. He had talked with Al Andrews and been advised to call out here to Hemet, as there were several RMRU members living here, only a few would be needed and this was much closer than Riverside.

EVACUATION

Mission No. 7937M

**17 Dec., Mon.
Ortega Highway,
West of Lake Elsinore**

By Pete Carlson

At about 0900 hours team coordinator Al Andrews received a call from the Elsinore station of the Riverside County Sheriff's Department. Because of the steepness of the terrain, our assistance was needed in bringing a body, of a male in his late teens, back up to the highway. By 1030 hours we had enough members to start the evacuation. The body was about 275 feet below the highway on a 50 degree slope that was densely covered with brush. Walt Walker and I went down with brush hooks to clear the way for the wheeled litter, while Larry Roland saw that all would be in order on top. Once set up, Craig Beasley lowered the litter with Kevin Walker and Jim Garvey along side to guide it down the narrow chute. As they approached I set a sling around a large boulder and attached a pulley because we had to make a 45 degree turn to reach the body. We quickly loaded the

body into the litter and then tied it in. Since the raise was being conducted from a highway turnout we were able to hook the raise rope to Joe Erickson's car. Craig Beasley was the belay and Larry Roland took charge as safety officer on top. With all in order, we started the raise. Jim Fairchild and Avery Powers joined the four of us in guiding the litter as we were pulled back to the highway. With the sad task completed, we headed towards Elsinore for lunch, and then back to work. • RMRU

SEARCH

Mission No. 7938M

**23-24 Dec., Sun.-Mon.
San Jacinto Mountains**

By Jim Garvey

Seems like it never fails, RMRU invariably has a mission during the holidays.

The call came at noon Sunday for a search in Idyllwild for what we initially thought to be a missing hiker. As team members arrived at the Idyllwild office of the Riverside County Sheriff's Department, we learned this mission was not going to be a straight-forward search.

The subject, Gregory Tanner, 20, of Rancho Palos Verdes left home Thursday, December 20th, ostensibly to run a few errands and then return home to leave with his family to spend the holidays in Mammoth.

On Friday, December 21st, the Sheriff noted a car left parked in the County Park visitor center parking lot. When the car was still there on Sunday, the Sheriff ran a computer check on the vehicle and turned up a missing person report Gregory's parents had filed in Los Angeles.

Friday and Saturday had been stormy, leaving a few inches of snow in the parking lot and up to one foot at higher elevations. This added another complication as Gregory was not equipped with any mountain clothing or equipment.

RMRU's search efforts in Sunday's remaining daylight concentrated on searching the area immediately around the parking lot where the car was found. Jim Fairchild and his scent dog also worked this area. Since the parking lot is the roadhead for the Deer Springs Trail, we wanted to sweep the trails on that side of the mountain. Don Landells and his Jet Ranger arrived in time to fly Pete Carlson and Larry Roland into Deer Springs to hike the five or so miles out to the parking lot. Don Chambers, Kevin Walker, Hal Fulkman, myself (RMRU members) and John Foster and Jan Caldwell (Hemet Search & Rescue Team members) were flown to the top of Suicide Rock. We hiked out the Suicide Trail to the Deer Springs Trail (searching both sides) and finished at the parking lot after dark.



RMRU PHOTO BY JIM FAIRCHILD

GRIM BUT NECESSARY — Clockwise from the left, RMRU members Pete Carlson, Jim Garvey, Walt Walker, Kevin Walker and Avery Powers guide the wheeled litter, with the body of an unidentified young man in it, as it raised up to the Ortega Highway

Given the weather conditions and area that needed to be searched, Hemet, San Diego, San Dimas and Sierra Madre teams were called. When all the teams assembled at base camp in the parking lot early Monday morning, we had 40 S.A.R. people to put into the field.

An intensive line search by all personnel around the parking lot perimeter failed to turn up any evidence of Gregory. The next stage was to deploy field units in the drainages below the parking lot and up and down both sides of the trails above the parking lot. Don Landells was called

back. Walt Walker, John Dew and Don spent several hours flying the area at sometimes less than treetop level.

Late Monday afternoon, because we had found no evidence whatsoever that Gregory Tanner was even in the mountains, Captain Bill Park and Operations Leader Walt Walker called off the search.

As the men of RMRU and the other teams prepared for the drive home to a Christmas Eve with their families, their spirits were dampened by the thought that one family would not be together that night. • RMRU

from Old'en Days

by Walt Walker

DECEMBER

Ten years ago—

As might be expected, 'Merry Christmas' started off a four page newsletter that next asked for help with the truck fund. The

Coming Events listed and described almost a half page of activities. The Search & Rescue column was next with the account of helping two young climbers off the top of Tahquitz Rock in the middle of the night.

Five years ago—

'Merry Christmas from RMRU' was printed in red and filled the front page. The Search & Rescue column told of two call out for searches that both were aborted while we were driving to the respective roadheads. The Training write-up by Pete Frickland told of tracking weekend that was held in the Martinez Mountain area. The last article was penned by Pete Carlson and he described how he, Ed Hill and Rich Quackenbush along with nine other people, had made an attempt on the tallest mountain in South America, Aconcagua (23,928 feet).

• RMRU