



### Slide Program - Shooting Session

9 & 10 Feb., Fri.-Sat.  
San Jacinto Mountains

By Ed Hill

The team has needed a slide show depicting a typical winter rescue for a number of years. The storms in early February had left seven feet of soft snow in the mountains, so we decided to film a mock mission and do ice axe training in March. The team would locate and evacuate two cross country skiers; one suffering from a broken leg; and one hypothermic. The skier with the broken ankle would be evacuated that night. The hypothermia victim would be evacuated the next day.

We met at the Desert Station of the Palm Springs Aerial Tramway. Most of us were late because of the holiday traffic. We set up Base Camp in the parking lot and filmed getting ready. We rode up to the Mountain Station on one of the garbage runs. Linda Rohrbacher and Steve Zappe, our cross country skiers, started off for a small hanging valley called Shangri La. The rest of us assembled our Akia, the sled that we use to transport people in the snow. We held a final filmed briefing



RMRU PHOTO BY JIM FAIRCHILD

'VICTIMS' — RMRU member Steve Zappe and his fiancée Linda Rohrbacher posed as the 'victims' during the nighttime slide program shooting session. Other RMRU members had started giving first aid when this picture was taken.

at the Long Valley Ranger Station where Ed Hill, the operations leader, told the fairy tale, Goldilocks and the Three Bears. From the team's response, something else would have been better.

We broke up into Search Teams and were filmed looking at ski tracks. Once that chore was done, we hiked off toward Shangri La.

We decided to have a search team on skis find the victims. Then they would call the "sherpas" on showshoes, who would bring all the equipment to the site. While the ski team was finding the victims, the rest of us set up tents and stoves and started melting snow. The ski team called the snowshoe team, and we hauled our Akia and other equipment up to the victims. We rigged a lower from the accident site down to camp. Linda, the hypothermia victim, was placed in a sleeping bag and lowered down to camp. Once in camp, she was stuffed into the Bishop where Bud White took good care of her. She actually was a bit cold from lying in the snow.

We went back up the hill to treat Steve. We splinted his leg with a piece of ensolite and lowered him down to camp. We re-

rigged the Akia so we could haul him back to the tram. Jim Fairchild and Hank Schmel shot the action while we hauled Steve about fifty yards from camp. Then it was back to the tents for some hot soup before turning in for the night.

We slept late the next morning and had a leisurely breakfast. Walt Walker remembered that we had forgotten to shoot a scene with our hot oxygen system. This enables a hypothermia victim to breathe hot air, speeding up the rewarming process. Pete Carlson and Bud White enjoyed the roles of rescuers rewarming Linda by crawling into a double sleeping bag with her. Linda was loaded into the Akia, and we hauled her back to the Long Valley Ranger Station. Many of the skiers who were up for the day were relieved to find that we were only on a mock mission.

The rangers loaned us a litter, and we carried Linda up to the Mountain Station. Hank Schmel had persuaded a couple to act as Linda's parents. They did a good job of looking worried as Linda was carried out to the tram platform.

Many of the people who had just come up and seen the whole performance, were surprised when Linda had a miraculous

recovery and went back through the tram station to get her boots. She and Steve spent the rest of the day cross country

skiing. The rest of us cleaned and stored our winter rescue gear and went home, hoping that we had shot a good show.

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RMRU PHOTO BY JIM FAIRCHILD

**REVERSING HYPOTHERMIA** — Make-believe victim Linda Rohrbacher was warmed by using RMRU's zip together sleeping bags, the warm bodies of members Pete Carlson and Bud White, and oxygen warmed by the team's Thermo-gen unit was administered by Walt Walker who was the EMT in charge of her care.

California's recent floods. Don and Dennis were drowned in the same accident, January 19. They were members of the Los Padres Search and Rescue Team. Charles, of the Montrose Search and Rescue Team, was drowned a week later, January 26. We of RMRU extend our heartfelt sympathy to the relatives and team members of these men."

RMRU had its share of missions during the storms and flooding. We searched for and found two doctors who were 20 hours overdue from a hike up Mt. San Jacinto. We had the sad task of removing three bodies from a plane crash that had occurred in the hills west of the Banning - Idyllwild highway. One of the most dangerous missions RMRU has ever worked occurred during the height of the flooding. We set up a Tyrolean traverse across a raging river of water and evacuated an entire family, mother, father, 11 children (including a baby) and the family dog.

**Five years ago—**

The first page, column one, **Search and Rescue**, began with the search for George Longenger. He was overdue from a day hike of Mt. San Jacinto. It was not a good night to be out, wind 25 mph, temperature 25°, and it was snowing. The next day while we were searching the missing young man walked out.

The next mission came at the end of the month. This time a hiker was missing in the Santa Rosa Mountains. He had last been seen on Saturday and it was late Sunday afternoon when he was found by a RMRU team led by Rick Pohlers.

The rest of the newsletter had all the usual columns, but one in particular was noteworthy. The **Sustaining Members** column had a long list of new and renewing members.

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# Search and Rescue

## from Old'en Days

by Walt Walker



### SEARCH

Mission No. 7804A

26 Feb., Mon.  
Rabbit Peak,  
Santa Rosa Mountains

Our only mission for February came when the Indio station of the Riverside County Sheriff's Department called requesting our services in locating two people who had apparently walked away from their airplane after it had crashed somewhere below Rabbit Peak. We were asked to meet at the Thermal Airport, and then be flown into the crash site to start searching. While enroute to Indio, the pagers went off, and the mission was aborted. After checking with the Indio station we were informed that the two missing people had walked out, and were not seriously injured. • RMRU

### FEBRUARY

**Ten years ago—**

Those of you who lived in Southern California in 1969 will remember that it was an unusual winter, heavy snows and even heavier rainfall. It was because of the weather that the newsletter's first page started with:

**IN MEMORIAM**

Don Buck  
Dennis Huestis  
Charles Raye

"These men gave their lives while directly involved with helping people during Southern

