

Search and Rescue

RESCUE

Mission No. 7901C

15 Jan., Mon.

Joshua Tree National Monument

We received a call from the Indio station of the Riverside County Sheriff's Department, that a plane had crashed in Joshua Tree National Monument. While still in the phoning stage we were notified that our services would not be needed.

• RMRU

SEARCH

Mission No. 7902M & 7903M

29 Jan., Mon.

San Jacinto Mountains

By Kevin Walker

It seems that every time there is a weekday mission, the call comes just before lunch. Today was no different. At 11:45 the pagers went off with news of a search in the San Jacinto Mountains. After checking with the team coordinator I was told that we were to meet at Camp Maranatha, and that a helicopter had been ordered. Even though it was a warm day down in the low lands, it was quite cold up on the mountain. While enroute to Idyllwild we came across two auto accidents apparently related to icy road conditions, since the highway patrol and the ambulance were on the scene we were able to continue on.

Upon reaching Camp Maranatha, Walt and I were met by Don Landells and his Jet Ranger, Cpt. Canova and Sgt. Weakly from the Banning Station of the Riverside County Sheriff's Department. Cpt. Canova

informed us that a second call for a missing hiker had just been phoned in. It was decided that Walt and I would fly with Don and see what we could see while the rest of the team was enroute.

After loading our packs and snow shoes into the bird, we lifted off for the big mountain (the high country in the San Jacintos'.) Both hikers (hiking separately) told their wives that they were going to snow shoe cross-country to Mt. San Jacinto via Marion Mountain. Sure enough, there were two sets of tracks heading towards Mt. San Jacinto. Only one set made it to the peak though. Don let Walt and I off on the peak with our snow shoes. We then snow-shoe-skied in knee deep powder snow down to the summit shelter. After checking the shelter register Walt found that one of the hikers spent the night at the cabin and had stated that he was fine and having a fantastic time.

Just after that Don flew by and radioed to us that the one hiker who had spent the night in the cabin had just hiked out to Humber Park.

One down and one to go. After making our way back to the summit, Don picked us up and we were off to Marion Mountain where the tracks seemed to split. After checking closer we found that the tracks were heading down the Wellman Ridge. As we moved further down the ridge the tracks started drifting towards the Tahquitz drainage. Making an educated guess Walt and Don decided to fly over Caramba and just see if the hiker had made it that far. Just as we flew over the narrows at Caramba, I spotted a lone set of tracks going through the ice covered rocks. With that we flew back towards Saddle Junction so that we could notify base that we were going to search our



way down Tahquitz Canyon, and that we would be out of radio contact. Once back at Caramba, we started to fly slowly down the canyon. We were approximately 1000 feet below Caramba when Walt spotted the hiker waving at us from the canyon bottom. It now seemed that finding him was the easy part, the hard part would be to find somewhere to let us out. After looking for a few minutes Don found a spot where he said he was willing to try. That wasn't encouraging, but it did seem to be the best. Don carefully maneuvered the bird into position over a very small clearing on the side of the canyon. Once in position, I dropped the packs out into the snow. Now came the exciting part. Since I was on the pilot's side in the back I was to make the first jump. Speaking of first jumps, this would be my first jump on an actual mission, instead of Don's soft grass at his heliport where the team practices. Oh well, with Don's nod it was out on the runner, and one more nod jump . . . luckily instead of rock underneath the snow it was only a scrub oak. After Walt joined me on the ground, Don left for Palm Springs and jet fuel. We slowly made our way down to the canyon floor. Soon we were in voice contact, and soon after that we had visual contact. Our missing hiker was quite wet and very cold. I took his pack, and Walt assisted him back up the side of the canyon with the use of a call out rope. It was slow going working our way back up through the snow covered brush. Normally there would be no problem about time, but darkness was beginning to set in, needless to say we moved just as fast as possible. Once back at the helispot the hiker told us how he could see Palm Springs, and how close it seemed to be. He thought that it would be a quick way off the mountain when he became lost. After asking how he got wet, he explained that he was trying to make it past an ice covered water fall when he slipped and fell into a pool of water covered by ice. With his pack still on and under the ice, he poked a hole in the ice and was able to get his head out to breathe. He had just climbed out when we flew over. **Lucky man!**

After a short wait, Don returned. Since daylight was a factor, there was no time to have Don go back for brush cutting tools. So . . . Don rested his right runner in the crotch of an old scrub oak tree. I climbed up onto the runner, and then Walt handed me all the gear, and then I climbed into the bird and Don flew me down to the old Doggy helispot. While I waited there, Don flew back up the canyon and picked up the hiker and Walt. It took a little time to help the hiker into the chopper, but Walt finally got him in and then a quick flight back to get me, and then back over the mountain to Idyllwild.

• RMRU

From the Editor's desk—

Besides having a new editor, you will notice a few changes in the RMRU newsletter. First of which is the three color printing of the "RMRU" logo on the front page of the newsletter. This was made possible by Mr. Donald Lovelee, printing instructor at Mt. San Jacinto Junior College. I am one of Mr. Lovelee's students, and as a class project, Mr. Lovelee allowed me to use the college's Heidelberg Kord offset press. By using that type and size of press, I was able to run the front page, four up (4 pages on one sheet - 17 x 22), with exceptional quality. Also, I would like to thank Arrow Printing for donating the ink needed to run the job.

The second change that I have made, though a subtle one, is a 10% reduction in the type size. This was done so that more copy could be put on a page. This in turn reduces the cost of typesetting and printing. With donations to the team being down, this change was necessary, so that we could still maintain the quality of write-ups of missions and trainings, and still save some money. • RMRU

\$USTAINING MEMBERS

BY MIKE DAUGHERTY

Our *frantic pleas* for financial assistance are apparently starting to bear some fruit, as the list below will attest. But, whatever else you do, don't stop now! We have "**squeaked through**" the past year by postponing all major new equipment purchases and we now need to start thinking about those things again. These major acquisitions, which we have planned for some time, include: a ground to air radio to assist us in combined air and ground operations; a radio scanner for Van No. 1 (also two portable scanners); and additional pagers to help speed members on their way to missions. It is, after all, through such technology that our "*tiny*" band of twenty or so volunteers is able to have the "*strength of many*" on the mountain. We once again **thank you** for your support!

November

New—

Martin Dowd
M/M William Haddox
Dr. Ken Zimmerman
Ruth Wright

Robert & Cecilia Lopez
Robert & Cathy Queros
Nancy Lopez
John & Betty Moore
*Circle City Auxiliary
Magdalena Cruz
R. L. Haglund
Anonymous

Renewing—

Dr. Paul Trotta
*Dr. & Mrs. N. H. Mellor

December

New—

Gene & Barbara Garlinger
Vaughn & Jacqueline Stone
William Micka
Banning Lions Club
Paul & Joyce Matthews
Dr. Jose M. Paleo
Myrtle Moore
Thomas Decker
J. W. McKee
Roland D. Trietsch

Renewing—

M/M Gordon W. Gardner
*Avis Anderson
H. E. "Jeff" Divine
Rosemary Kraft
M/M Philip Modica
Circle City Hospital
*Theodore Young
*David Crimi
*Dr. & Mrs. Thomas Gillen
*Art & Cappy Bridge
Ruth Boyle
*George Ruptier
*M/M Kenneth Andrews
David Harrah
M/M Charles Ricker
Mrs. Ruth Echols

January

New—

*Shirley Albertson
Dr. & Mrs. Robert Robinson
Ebell Club of Irvine

Renewing—

Circle City Auxiliary
Weston Robinson
Riverside County Grange No. 31

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



Thanks Mrs. L!

With the beginning of 1979, RMRU lost the services of a very special person. For the past two years, Mrs. Marty Leithold has been typing the thank you letters to the Sustaining Members, for the team.

Due to health reasons Mrs. Leithold was unable to continue her services for the team. Mrs. "L," we, the members of the Riverside Mountain Rescue Unit wish to thank you very much for the time you gave to us over the past two years. It is help like yours, that makes our task just a little bit easier. Thank you. • RMRU

TRAINING



Winter Shakedown

6 & 7 Jan., Sat.-Sun
San Jacinto Mountains

By Avery Powers

In the flatlands the rain had been heavy during the first week of January. During this time the San Jacinto mountains had been covered with a beautiful deep blanket of snow. I was watching the weather closely that week in order to determine what equipment I would need to take into the training exercise. The plan was to meet at the Palm Springs Tramway and catch the first car to the top. As it turned out the weather was ideal - blue skies, mild temperature and of course lots of deep powder.

We snowshoed from the Tramway to Round Valley with probation members and veterans alike, getting an opportunity to break trail. Once into Round Valley we stopped for lunch and a welcomed rest.

After lunch we proceeded to the Northwest and finally decided to camp in Tamarack Valley at the foot of Cornell Peak. The rest of the afternoon was spent preparing camp. Tent sites were stomped out, the tents were tied down and rain flies secured for added warmth. A few in the group dug out snow caves which would serve for their weekend lodging.

Later in the afternoon, we had a simulated rescue. The word was passed that a hiker was on Cornell Peak and had not returned. Our task was to track him up the

ridge and assist him in whatever way possible. The wind had come up and the temperature dropping when the exercise began. We divided into two groups. Everyone donned snowshoes and we set out to find the "unfortunate" hiker. We followed his prints for about forty five minutes. The subject was sighted up the side of Cornell Peak in an exposed area. It appeared that he had fallen. As the terrain grew steeper we took off the snowshoes and began climbing to the subject.

Upon reaching the person we were told that he had fallen and suffered a dislocated shoulder and badly bruised knee. In addition to the injuries from the fall the "subject" was very cold. We set about the task of immobilizing the injuries and stabilizing his condition for transport down the mountain. A belay was set up, and the team began to assist the "patient" down the Peak. The team returned to camp about dusk.

Although the "rescue" was only an exercise, the experience was valuable. It allowed the new members, like myself, an opportunity to observe the team at work as well as to participate.

Sunday A.M. it was decided that we would snowshoe to Mt. San Jacinto. With the weather clear, another beautiful day was before us. After breakfast, the snowshoes were again fitted to boots. The anticipation was high as we began to move toward the summit in small groups of two and three. The visibility was only limited by our eyes. On days like this the awesomeness of the mountains is overwhelming.

The Summit was reached by mid-morning. It sure was worth the effort! After a time of taking in the view, we descended down to Miller Peak directly above our camp site. The rest was easy - just sit down on the tails of those webs and SLIDE. The quiet was pierced with shouts of laughter as we began the steep descent, enjoying the fun of "skishoeing" at its best.

Camp was secured by mid-afternoon and we hiked back to the Tramway. It had been a good training. It was good to be in the mountains again especially in the winter. • RMRU



RMRU PHOTO BY JIM FAIRCHILD

YOU'VE HEARD THE EXPRESSION — 'something up his sleeve', well our illustrious training chairman appears to have 'something up his pantsleg'!



RMRU PHOTO BY JIM FAIRCHILD

MOCK WINTER MISSION — "Injured" member Jim Garvey is evacuated, by fellow team members, off the steep snow covered slope of Cornell Peak. The upper end of Tamarack Valley is in the top right hand corner of the photograph.

from
Old'en Days

by Walt Walker

JANUARY

Ten years ago—

The first page had **Coming Events**, notice of a **First Aid Refresher** course and a notice about "Rubidoux-on-the-Rocks," a special Monday night technical training that is still done today. There were no rescue missions, but **Sustaining Members** Chairman Al Andrews noted that the first year of the Sustaining Membership had just ended. He thanked all those who had contributed. He also noted that the unit had been able to purchase two five watt FM radios at a cost of \$1,510 and that there was almost enough money to purchase a third one.

The **Roadrunner sez**, by Jim Fairchild commented that there had been two heavy snowfalls and that the Forest Service was planning on eliminating all evidence of man from wilderness areas, leaving only trails and small signs.

Five years ago—

The first page of the newsletter was covered by a large "Thank you!" and a photo of Western Helicopters' Hughes 500C. The photo was taken by Kevin Walker, son of veteran RMRU member Walt Walker. There were a total of seven photos, shot by Kevin, of the annual Helitac training.

There was also **Coming Events**, **The Road Runner sez**, **Sustaining Members**, **Old'en Days** and a new feature **Ding Bat of the Month**.

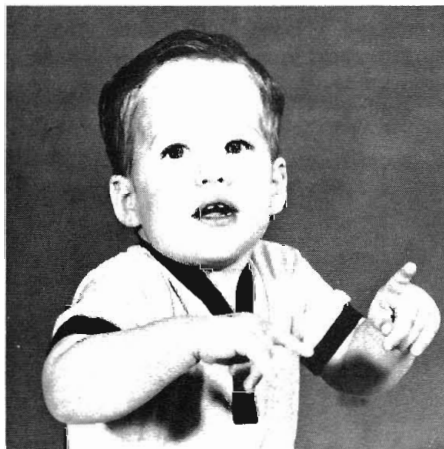
Under **Search and Rescue** there were two missions. The first was a call from the Elsinore station of the Riverside County Sheriff's Department. They had requested our assistance in checking a mine shaft that might have a body in it. We checked it, only to find a stolen motorcycle frame.

Another call from the Elsinore station, this time a 70 year old rabbit hunter had become separated from his two hunting companions. Four hours into the search we were advised he had been located in L.A. with some other friends. • RMRU



RMRU PHOTO BY WALT WALKER

NEW MASTHEAD — RMRU Newsletter Editor, Kevin Walker and Donald Lovelee, Graphic Arts Instructor at Mt. San Jacinto Junior College, check a press sheet from the final run off of the college's Heidelberg Kord offset press.



ship in RMRU. Kevin was the first 18 year old to be accepted under the new policy.

Kevin has grown up with RMRU over the years. Many years ago, when he was only eight, he was our base camp operator (all by himself) while the team was out in the field on tracking exercise for the whole day. Many times, after that, he actually was our BCO during some missions.

Being a son of a founding member, he is starting a tradition, as the first second generation team member. He is also the first second generation newsletter editor. A number of years ago he became our youngest Sustaining Member when, unknown to me and with money he had earned himself, sent a contribution to RMRU.

In an era, when most people do not volunteer for anything, he volunteered his services to President Ed. As you may have read elsewhere, it is through his efforts that we have a fine new masthead, at no cost to the unit.

At times the job of editor is a thankless job, but there are also times when it is a joy to assemble a story and photos of a rescue that has saved a life, like our cover story this month.

Kevin, I wish you the best of luck in this new venture! • RMRU

**Comments,
from the Publisher—**

The photograph above is of the first youngest RMRU accepted for membership. No, we have not enrolled any small children recently. Actually it was shot by me at about the same time we were forming the Riverside Mountain Rescue Unit.

If you have not guessed by now, the photo above, is that of our new editor, Kevin Walker. In 1977 the Board of Directors approved a policy of accepting selected 18 year olds for support member-