

Volume XV, Issue VI, June 1979 — Kevin Walker, Editor — Walt Walker, Publisher — Lisa Walker, Artist

## TRAINING



### First Aid & Familiarization

6-8 June, Fri.-Sun.  
San Jacinto Mountains

By Ed Hill

June's training was a combination of first aid problems and familiarization. The team met at Dr. Mellor's Sky Yacht on Friday night and reviewed the oxygen system and the Hare splint. The Hare splint is used to provide traction when a person breaks his femur. It took a bit of playing around with it before we got all the straps on right. We soon learned that we had to apply the ankle strap exactly right or the patient would wiggle out of it before traction was applied.

While we were working with the splint, two large fat raccoons came up to the window to beg for peanuts. We found the peanut bag and fed them. Primo and Kody, Jim Fairchild's dogs, showed great interest in the raccoons, while the raccoons made sure that the glass door to the porch remained closed. When we barely opened it to give them more peanuts, the raccoons climbed up on the railing preparing to take to the trees.

Saturday morning, we started on the first aid problems. Kevin Walker and Rick Pohlers set up a fallen climber scenario. Bernie McIlvoy and Hal Fulkman did an excellent job as first aiders. We used the cervical collar and full length back board on Kevin and found that we could really keep him rigid. Kevin was evacuated across Strawberry Creek and back to the Sky Yacht.

The next problem involved 'yours truly' as a hapless tree climber who broke his femur landing on top of a large boulder. I had hoped to include a technical evacuation, but the team found a way to pass the litter down to the ground and avoid it.



RMRU PHOTO BY JIM FAIRCHILD

FIRST AID TRAINING — After staging a mock climbing accident, RMRU members apply first aid to injured climber.

After siesta, the team started to repack to go hiking. Pete Carlson, Ron Berry, Joe Ericson, and Bernie McIlvoy finished packing ahead of the rest of the group and departed for the trailhead. While the rest of us were getting organized, Norm and Maggie Mellor drove up. Rick Pohlers, Dave Ezell, Jim Fairchild, Hal Fulkman, Avery Powers, and I cornered Norm and got the answers to a number of first aid questions that had arisen during our sessions. The second group finally started up the Devil's Slide trail about two hours behind the first group.

The first group picked a campsite over on the ridge leading to Red Tahquitz Peak. The second group arrived just at dark and cooked dinner while the first group did a moonlight ascent of Red Tahquitz. The next day both groups dropped down to Laws Camp and climbed back up the Willow Creek drainage to the trail at Willow Creek crossing. From there we hiked out to the Sky Yacht where we had left our cars. • RMRU

## Coming Events-

### AUGUST

- 1 — Regular Meeting
- 3-5 — Training
- 22 — Board Meeting

### SEPTEMBER

- 5 — Regular Meeting
- 7-9 — Training
- 19 — Board Meeting

### OCTOBER

- 3 — Regular Meeting
- 5-7 — Training
- 24 — Board Meeting

# Search and Rescue

## RESCUE

**Mission No. 7920A**

**10-11 June, Sun.-Mon.  
Tahquitz Rock,  
San Jacinto Mountains**

We received a call from the Riverside County Sheriff's Department that a climbing class from Orange County was overdue from a day of climbing on the rock. While we were preparing to start hiking to the rock, the group returned to Humber Park with the aide of a local resident. • RMRU

## RESCUE

**Mission No. 7921M**

**14 June, Thur.  
Willow Creek drainage,  
San Jacinto Mountains**

*By John Dew*

It was the last day of school and we who are teachers, as well as the children, were looking forward to the end of the day so we could be on our way home for the summer vacation.

We were to get out early that day, and this too, was a happy thought.

The last thing to cross my mind as the end of the year party was drawing to a close and grade cards were being handed out was a rescue mission.... But, **Sure Enough**.... the pager came alive to tell us there was work to do.

The call was to the Banning airport where we would be met by Don Landells, our good friend and respected helicopter pilot, flying his Jet Ranger.

We had heard that Patrick Conners, a horseback rider who had been riding in high country with several others including his eleven year old son, had fallen from his horse and injured his back. They were riding on the trail where it had been built up by some rocks. The rocks started to relocate themselves as the weight of the horse was introduced and Patrick felt that the horse was going to bolt and he had better get off. As he was making his un-ceremonious departure the animal did indeed take a spill, rolled a time or two and got up and ran away. The worst part was

it left Patrick in an immobile condition, thus RMRU was called in.

The bird landed in Banning and Walt Walker, Tony Loro and John Dew were flown in first. The subject was soon spotted and the problem of finding a place to land and let us out presented itself. After surveying the area for several minutes it was decided to let Tony and John out on a big rock up at Hiddin Lake saddle and they could hike down to the subject. Walt was flown closer to the subject as there was a place **one** person could be let out but three made too much weight for that particular spot. By Walt being taken closer it insured faster first aid attention.

A quick examination of the subject told us he had a fractured pelvic area and probably some fractured ribs.

Jim Fairchild and Kevin Walker came in and brought additional equipment on the next load. The injured man was placed on a back board and into a Stokes litter and secured for his flight out.

We needed all the help we could get to move the litter to the spot where it could be picked up by the helicopter so we used two State Park rangers who were there, Rick Brown and Ken Gray, and also two other hikers, a Marine, Dan Shupe from Oceanside and his brother, Mark, from Frostburgh, Md.

With this extra help we soon had Patrick to the spot of the pickup. Kevin was sent out to the hospital with him as this helispot called for the lightest person available.

The park rangers and Dan and Mark Shupe then continued on to their destina-

tion of Round Valley and those of us from RMRU hiked over to Skunk Cabbage Meadow to be flown back to Banning where Ed Hill, Don Chambers, Jim Garvey, and Steve Zappe were manning base for us.

This ended another successful mission for RMRU and another grateful person that we were able to help. • RMRU



RMRU PHOTO BY JIM FAIRCHILD

**TEAM BACKBOARD** — Injured Patrick Conners is moved to the teams Stokes litter.



RMRU PHOTO BY JIM FAIRCHILD

**TIGHT HELESPOT** — RMRU members aided by State Park Rangers and hikers, place the litter with injured Patrick Conners into Dons Jet Ranger.



## RESCUE

### Mission No. 7922A

**16 June, Sat.  
Tahquitz Rock,  
San Jacinto Mountains**

We received a call from the Banning office of the Riverside County Sheriff's Department that a man had been injured while climbing on Tahquitz Rock. While enroute to Idyllwild, the mission was aborted because of a series of misunderstandings between the climbers and the people in Humber Park. • RMRU

## RESCUE

### Mission No. 7923M

**16 June, Sat.  
Tahquitz Rock,  
San Jacinto Mountains**

*By Rick Pohlers*

It was late afternoon when the pager went off signaling the start of another epic rescue. A climber was stranded (again) on Tahquitz (Lily) rock. Less than an hour later, the trusty pager informed us the mission was over. Other climbers must have helped the poor, dumb guy off; so back to mowing the lawn.

A few grass clippings later, another call came in for the mission. This time the climber was injured. Well, at least, he'd stay put until we got there.

At the roadhead in Humber Park, we learned that our services might not be appreciated by the climbers. So we hung around much longer than is normal for us before sending up a team disguised as a Brownie troop to find out what was going on.

Not too long after that, the troop radioed back that the victim was, indeed, injured (broken ankle) and that he was extremely grateful and appreciative of our services. It was the usual communications SNAFU.

So off went Walt, Jim, John, and Rick with the wheeled litter to join the now identifiable rescuers in the field: Larry, Joe, Hal, and Bernie.

We made it up to the base of the rock in record time due to the superior age and strength of the veteran team members. We quickly but carefully tied in the poor victim. The victim was a person of some medical knowledge and praised our efforts in careful handling in a rough environment.

Back at the parking lot, the victim was carefully put in his friend's car and whisked back home to a hospital, while we whisked off to another sumptuous meal at Denny's. • RMRU



RMRU PHOTO BY JIM FAIRCHILD

**RMRU AT WORK? —** Members Larry Roland, Walt Walker and John Dew secure the litter, while mad Dr. Rick Pohlers and his doubtful assistant, Joe Erickson look on.

## SEARCH

### Mission No. 7924M

**17-18 June, Sun.-Mon.  
Upper San Juan Campground,  
Cleveland National Forest**

*By Hal Fulkman*

At 10:00 Sunday morning I received a phone call from Al Andrews informing me that there was a search on the Ortega Highway above Lake Elsinore. Putting my gear in the car, I soon began the better than an hours drive to the rendezvous. The day was slightly overcast and by the time I reached the summit overlooking Lake Elsinore, it had begun to drizzle.

Upon arriving at the upper San Juan Campground, I noticed there was an unusual amount of Riverside County Sheriff's vehicles which gave me a suspicious undertone to this mission. After signing in, I discussed the details of the search with Jim Fairchild who had arrived about 20 minutes before I had. Jim told me that a 35 year old mother, Peggy Hunter, and her 12 year old daughter, Jennifer Hunter had vanished sometime between 9:30 Saturday night and early Sunday morning when the rest of the 14 people they were camped with awoke.

After Mr. Hunter and the other members of the group had searched the campground, they decided to call for help. Jim went on to say that the tent in which Peg-

gy and Jennifer were sleeping had been ripped open in the back. Upon examining the ripped portion of the tent, it seemed a rather small hole. When we talked to Mr. Hunter about the hole, he couldn't remember if it had been torn before Saturday night or not.

Further questioning of Mr. Hunter revealed that his wife and daughter could only be wearing the clothes they went to bed in, which were only night gowns. Mr. Hunter said every other article of clothing and personal possession was accounted for. Close examination of the campsite turned up only one set of footprints that were quickly obscured under a multitude of other footprints. Obviously, the rest of the party did not at first consider the disappearance serious because they had broken camp and cleaned up the site thoroughly.

So, individual teams were formed with the assignment to cut wider and wider perimeters around the campsite in hopes of discovering tracks. John Dew and his son Richard's assignment was to search through the surrounding campsite checking for tracks and inquiring of other campers. Steve Zappe and I made up one team and our assignment ultimately brought us around to shouting distance of John and Richard.

When John spotted us, he yelled for me to come over, for he'd found something. As I got to him, John said that Richard had discovered a track and he wanted me to look at it to see what I thought. Richard had definitely turned up a print of a bare foot that looked just the right size for the mother. The ground was very hard and even our lugged sole boots were not leaving prints. The footprints soon disappeared.

So, we once again started in the same direction as the last clear track we found hoping to turn up another print. Within 30 minutes John discovered a night gown that looked to be that of a young girl's discarded in a bush. We immediately radioed base camp for the sheriff. After the sheriff had examined the article he returned with it to base camp where Mr. Hunter identified it as being his daughter's. We intensified our search in that area and put in a call to Sierra Madre Search & Rescue and Hemet Search & Rescue for assistance. Also, Don Landells' helicopter was summoned.

The brush soon became so thick that it was almost impenetrable. So Don Landells and a RMRU observation team flew the area in the helicopter very slowly, searching every possible place they could. In some cases the helicopter was hovering on top of the brush. The ground crews and the helicopter, after many hours of intense searching, turned up no tracks or clues as to the two females whereabouts. So, the helicopter was sent away and the



RMRU PHOTO BY JIM FAIRCHILD

**POSSIBLE CLUE** — RMRU member John Dew and a Sheriff's Deputy look at a night gown found by John that appeared to be tucked under a bush.

ground crews were sent back into base camp.

At this time Sierra Madre's Bloodhounds were given scent articles and directed to find the two females. The dogs picked up their trail and in a short time arrived at the place where we had found the night gown. The dogs went from there through some heavy brush, down a steep hill, and up to a turnout along the highway. The dogs were brought back several times and restarted and each time the story was the same.

The search continued through Sunday night with some of the members and the dogs searching the highway both above and below the campground.

Monday morning the search and rescue teams were given the task of searching the more remote canyons in the neighboring area. At the same time about 25 U.S. Forestry fire fighters were brought into the campground to do a bush to bush type search. Both groups turned up no new clues except to eliminate one more aspect of the search.

Monday afternoon the teams were divided up and the edge of the highway and the river that parallels the highway were searched simultaneously for 8 miles below the campground and 5 miles above. This also proved fruitless. We were summoned back to base camp, and together

with the Sheriff's Department, the entire operation was critiqued step by step. It was the consensus of the Sheriff's Department and all the search and rescue teams involved that the area had been searched thoroughly and we could be of no further use. The Sheriff's Department thanked us for our help and they proceeded with the possibility that the mother and daughter had met with foul play.

• RMRU

## RESCUE

**Mission No. 7925M**

**27 June, Wed.  
Falls Creek,  
San Jacinto Mountains**

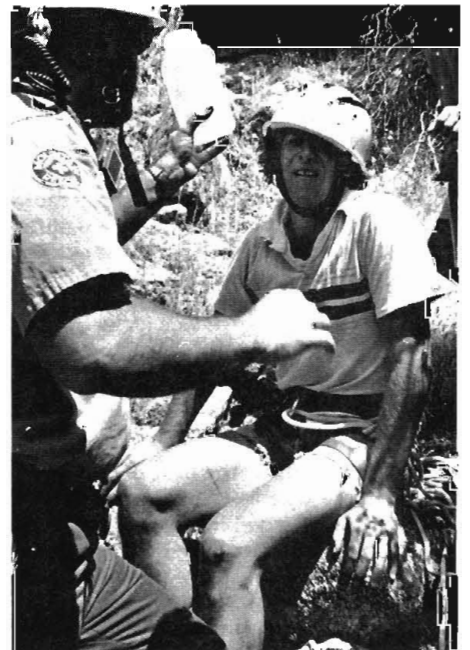
*By Kevin Walker*

Just as I was finishing my lunch hour (that was a first) my dad, Walt Walker, came in with news of a rescue in the Snow Creek area. While we were driving to the roadhead, located near the Snow Creek community, Walt told me that two men in their early twenties were hiking up Falls Creek, when one of the men fell off a lower portion of the large water fall and injured his lower back area, needless to say he was unable to make it out on his own.

Walt and I were the first to arrive at the roadhead. Shortly after that Capt. Ray Canova arrived with the informant. With all information and gear packed, Walt and I climbed into Don Landells' waiting Jet Ranger and headed towards Falls Creek. With the temperature climbing into the 112-115° range combined with rough air, Don was unable to make the ol' chopper fly slow in the canyon, so making tight orbits over the falls we proceeded to look for a place to set down. While doing so, Walt spotted the man on a boulder near the edge of one of the many cascades that make up Falls Creek. Don was unable to find a place near the hiker, so ... up to the ridge. There was just too much turbulence in the area to set down in the canyon.

As Don headed for base, Walt and I made our way down a (correction: the only) chute leading to the canyon floor. It didn't take long in descending the narrow chute, but we knew if we had to indeed transport the man back up, it would take a long time because everything from gravel to fifty pound boulders were loose, and with our help, on the move. As we neared the bottom of the chute we came across what would be our only problem of the day. It was a pair of boulders (automobile-size) lodged in our way. I then set up a belay, and Walt climbed down past the boulders. Just as Walt said, "off belay" a large rock cut loose from above and tumbled down past me and over the edge where Walt had just descended.

After all of the debris stopped sliding, I yelled down to try and get a response. Walt called back up in *Chinese* to



RMRU PHOTO BY JIM FAIRCHILD

**WATER BREAK** — It was quite painful for the young hiker to sit down to rest, after falling earlier in a sitting position.



RMRU PHOTO BY JIM FAIRCHILD

**SAFE TRIP OUT** — Bob Savage (background) mans the belay as the bruised up hiker makes his way up the hillside with Walt Walker following.

find out what was going on. Luckily he had ducked under an overhang and the rock went on past him. Walt told me to stand by while he went down to check on the young hiker. Jim Fairchild had just called from base camp asking for men and equipment assignments, when to my surprise, Walt and the hiker had returned to the base of the boulder and were ready to be helped back up. Walt said that we would need four more men and call-out ropes.

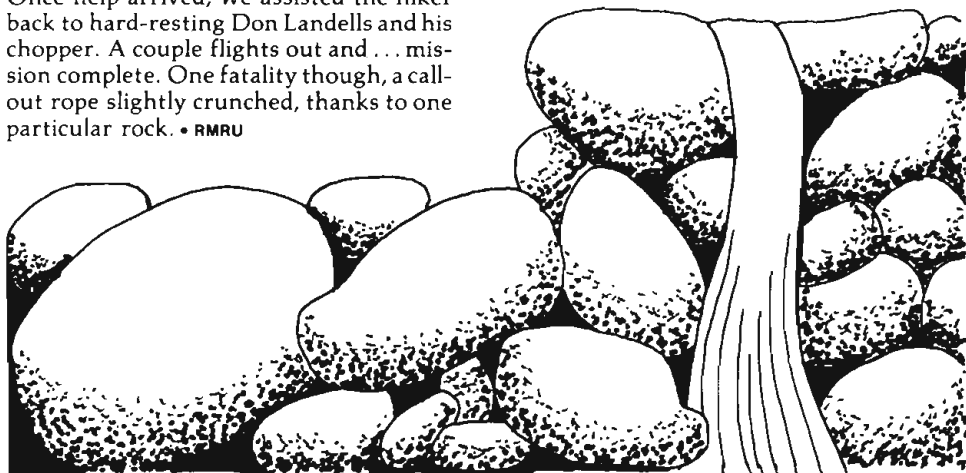
After that, things went real well, the young man was just very, very sore (lucky man considering) and was able to walk. Once help arrived, we assisted the hiker back to hard-resting Don Landells and his chopper. A couple flights out and... mission complete. One fatality though, a call-out rope slightly crunched, thanks to one particular rock. • RMRU

## SEARCH

**Mission No. 7926A**

**29 June, Fri.  
Idyllwild,  
San Jacinto Mountains**

We received a call from the Hemet office of the Riverside County Sheriff's Department that a two year old girl had wandered off from her family in the Idyllwild area. While enroute to Idyllwild the pagers went off with the good news that the girl had been found. • RMRU



## from Old'en Days

by Walt Walker

**JUNE**

### Ten years ago—

In the *Search & Rescue* column there were two missions reported on, one ended sadly and the other joyfully. RMRU participated along with other rescue teams in Imperial County. A seven year old boy was missing near Mt. Signal. The search began Sunday and ended Wednesday afternoon when the boy's body was found.

The other mission started on a Saturday evening when we were called out to help a man who had had a heart attack somewhere below Martinez Mountain. RMRU reached the man shortly before midnight and examined him. It was decided it would be better for the subject if we waited for first light and a helicopter, instead of a long carry out in a litter. Don Landells flew his helicopter in just at first light and transported the man to the hospital in Palm Springs. The man was admitted to the intensive care unit. He was later released and recovered.

The rest of the June newsletter contained the usual items, **Training, Sustaining Membership, President's Box and The Roadrunner Sez.**

### Five years ago—

The **Coming Events and Sustaining Members** columns were on the front page along with the beginning of the **Search & Rescue** column. The first item in the SAR column was an abort. We were called out to search for a young boy missing near Hemet. Before the search had begun it was established that the report was false.

The next write-up started out as the **Training** column penned by Jim Fairchild. He described that the training had started Friday evening with small groups of team members hiking in from the various roadheads on the mountain. The groups had continued hiking all day Saturday and met near Mt. San Jacinto. A storm had started to build earlier in the afternoon and by supper time the wind was blowing. During the night the temperature dropped to 10° F and the wind continued all

night at 50 to 60 MPH. Early the next morning the team was informed via radio that a young man was missing from near Law's Camp. He had last been seen Saturday evening.

A full scale search mission was put into motion, which of course included Tahquitz Canyon. Part of the team searched from Law's Camp towards Caramba Camp, while others searched in the canyon. Don Landells had

been called and the helicopter was used both to move searchers and to search from the air. On the last aerial search pattern of the day a small fire was spotted just below a ridge. Don was able to make a one-runner touch down and Ed Hill went over to the fire. The lone figure at the fire was indeed the young man we were searching for. Ed helped him back to the heli-spot and radioed for Don to return. They were picked up and flown to the RMRU base camp

in Palm Springs.

The next mission was a search for a missing motorcycle rider in Baja, California, Mexico. RMRU and many other groups were involved in the search that continued for many days. The search ended with the discovery of the missing man's body.

There were two additional calls for RMRU's services that month. But on both occasions we did not go into the field. • RMRU

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## **Next month...**



## **...RMRU takes to the rocks**