

Search and Rescue

RESCUE

Mission No. 8034M

8-9 July, Tues.-Wed.
Little Round Valley,
San Jacinto Mountains

By Brian Hixson

Just as my brother-in-law and I were completing an evening of working on a Honda Odyssey, my mother called and said there was a rescue and that I should go over to Walt Walker's house for information. Five minutes later I was standing in the Walker dining room listening to Walt go over information with Bernie McIlvoy on the phone. After the conversation was over, Walt told me that there was a possible injured YMCA youth in Little Round Valley. Being that it was now 11:00 p.m. and we had been having good weather, it was decided that it would be best to send in only two members that night to access the situation. And then the following morning a helicopter could fly in and pick up the injured youth. Bernie said he would hike in that night. With that, I said I would be able to hike in with Bernie.

Shortly after midnight I met Bernie at the Fuller Ridge Trail roadhead. Before leaving Riverside, Bernie picked up a team radio out of the #2 van. With the radio along we would have communication with Walt back in San Jacinto, via the SAR base radio located in the Hemet Police Department. There was no moon as we hiked up the Fuller Ridge, which made it necessary to use flashlights all the way in. It was not exactly a scenic hike. After several hours of hard hiking, we reached Little Round Valley. As we hiked into the valley we called out, but got no answer. After about a half hour of that we decided to get a little rest, before daybreak.

A little was correct, in that we slept for about one hour and then the first slivers of morning light could be seen on the

ridge tops above us. We left our packs in the upper end of the valley and then split up to see if we could locate the Y group. After about 15 minutes of searching and calling, Bernie spotted someone in a sleeping bag. After waking the groggy camper, we learned that the group in question was camped just out of the valley. As Bernie and I approached the group, it looked as though a bomb had went off. There were clothes and food items laying all around where a group of sleeping bags with warm bodies had spent the night. When we awakened the group, we found what we were looking for.

As Bernie examined the youth, he told us of how he and his friend had been playing the day previous on a snow drift (what was left from a very big winter), and how he had slipped and fell off of it backwards, landing on his back. There was indeed quite a bit of tenderness in the lower back region. With that I radioed out we needed a chopper for an air evacuation. We did not have to wait very long before we heard the familiar sound of a Bell Jet Ranger. Piloting the chopper was veteran mountain pilot Don Landells. After Don was down in the valley, we carefully loaded the boy into the bird for a quick ride out to Camp Maranatha in Idyllwild. • RMRU

SEARCH

Mission No. 8035A

12 July, Sat.
Martinez Canyon,
Santa Rosa Mountains

While on July training, RMRU received a call from the Indio office of the Riverside County Sheriff's Department that a solo hiker was overdue in hiking out from Martinez Canyon in the Santa Rosa Mountains. The team hiked out from the Red Tahquitz area to Humber Park at approximately 11:00 pm. After discussing the problem of supplying water to ground teams by helicopter in the heat of the day, it was decided that the Sheriff would use their fixed wing aircraft to try and locate the hiker, and that RMRU would be used if the hiker needed aid after he was found. The airplane started searching Sunday morning and spotted the hiker just as he neared the end of the hike to Valerie Jeans. • RMRU

TRAINING



12-13 July, Sat.-Sun.
Upper Tahquitz Drainage,
San Jacinto Mountains

By Kevin Walker

Fellow team member Hal Fulkman has been the training chairman since the beginning of the year. In that time he has had some pretty interesting trainings planned, but training for July had to be one of the most complex. We met at Humber Park at 6:00 am Saturday morning. We knew nothing about this particular training other than it would be some sort of a mock mission. Hal asked for everyone to gather around. Quote, "We have a father and a daughter overdue in returning from a two day camp out in Skunk Cabbage Meadow. Jim Garvey, you are the operation leader, handle the mission." Jim muttered something back to Hal as he tried to get his socks on his feet. Anyway, Jim got things going by assigning team leaders and putting teams together. The idea of this training was to let non veteran members handle the operation, so that when the day came that they would have to run a mission, they would be able to do a good job.

With all the information given out, we started up the Devil Slide Trail for Skunk Cabbage. Hal stayed behind, saying he would catch up later (ha ha). John Dew also remained, as he was recovering from a foot injury, so he was assigned to be base camp operator. We hadn't been on the trail 15 minutes when Walt Walker who had straggled back about 100 feet yelled up that he had been struck by a rattlesnake. We ran back down to him to find that this was part of Hal's plan. We went through the motions of applying first aid to the bite. Once that was done, Walt said that we could go on up the trail to our first assignment and he would join Hal back at base.

Within an hour we were at Skunk Cabbage Meadow. The first thing to do was to find the camp site where the two had camped. We spread out around the meadow and started looking. Within 10 minutes Jerry Niswonger's team found the camp complete with a note. It read something like this, "My dad says that the way back to our car is down hill from here, I told him we had to go up to a saddle first, but he won't listen, he is leaving now, I have to stay with him, please help us. Signed, Carol." Well, now isn't that a fine kettle of fish. "Quick men, let's fan out and cut tracks." A fine line from Jim Garvey. Larry Roland soon found two sets of tracks going down the drainage out of the meadow, so we all converged and started tracking. To make this chapter short, for about two hours we followed the tracks down the drainages and slopes that lead to Tahquitz Creek. The tracks crossed the trail just above Laws Camp and continued down and across Tahquitz Creek. Just as we neared the creek, we heard a girl's voice calling out, "Help us . . . help us." It was Jim Fairchild's daughter Carol. She told us that her dad was hurt and needed help. We quickly followed the tracks up to where a man with rather large boots could be seen. Upon reaching Jim he said that we had completed phase two of the training operation. So, we then adjourned to lunch back at the creek. Shortly after finishing lunch, Walt's voice came on the radio, "We have a report of a group of injured hikers in the Red Tahquitz area, we need your help. With that, we were back on the trail to Tahquitz Valley. Since the afternoon was getting along, Walt gave us a more specific location of the group. Within an hour of leaving Tahquitz Valley we reached the group at their location on the ridge between Tahquitz Peak and Red Tahquitz. I was the first one to lip over the ridge and look down a **very** steep chute complete with loose debris. And for some reason the moans and cries for help were familiar. Anyway, Jim Garvey told me to go down and assess the situation. With a rope and a first aid belt, Ed Hill lowered me down to where the girls were. As I reached the second girl I knew why the voice was familiar, it was Bud White's Senior Girl Scout Troop, and familiar **loud** voice was that of Melind Thiessen. I continued on down checking the girls injuries. All total there were six girls injured and also their leader Bud White. By this time everyone was busy applying first aid. As I asked one girl how it all happened (a group climbing accident), she made a comment on how all eight of them had been so lucky that we found them. Something did not click right. There was only seven total. She then made the comment that Terri was watching when the accident happened. With that I radioed up to Jim to look for another girl by the name of Terri. Shortly

there after Ed Hill found Terri McCawley hiding under a boulder. All went well except for Melinda, her mock injuries were so serious that we could not save her. This was more of Hals plan. We now had to break the news to Terri her make believe sister. Ed Hill had the task of doing that while we finished the operation. All in all it was an excellent training.

Buds girls were preparing their dinner as was RMRU when John Dew came on the air with news of a rescue mission in the Desert. So, we quickly finished dinner and packed up our gear. Just as we were about to leave, Buds girls brought us over a strawberry shortcake complete with fresh strawberries. Let me tell you, it was great (girls, Dave Ezell would have flipped over that dandy cake). With that we started off the mountain.

I think I speak for all of us that were on training, when I say thank you very much for making training a complete success. Many thanks to Jim Fairchild's daughter Carol, and Bud White's Girl Scouts: Melinda and Ann Thiessen, Chris Gonzales, Kristen and Karen Carlson, Tanya Thomason and Terri McCawley. • RMRU

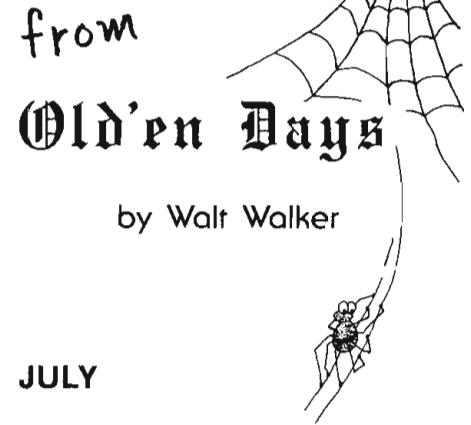
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From the June 1975 Issue

RMRU-toons

by RICK POHLERS



Walt "Kamikaze" Walker practiced air dropping needed supplies to fellow RMRU members in the backcountry during a recent training weekend. Walt decided animal crackers were the most needed and dropped a whole box full of them.



JULY

Fifteen years ago—

Two one paragraph articles of general information and three short paragraphs describing **Search & Rescue** — A successful search for a boy missing from the YMCA camp near Black Mountain. The next was for a missing 80 year old man near Elsinore. He was found walking along a road by RSO Capt. Gib Crowell. The third was a dune buggy accident in the Badlands north of Moreno. We evacuated the injured driver.

Ten years ago—

The July 1970 issue was 10 pages long. Under **Search & Rescue** there were three aborts for searches. Then a call for four girls missing from the Boulder Basin Campground. They all walked downhill to the Twin Pines Boys Ranch while were searching. Next came a call that there was a girl in the Falls Creek drainage with a possible broken leg. We responded to the area, splinted her leg and carried her out to the roadhead. Five days later we were called to Chino Canyon to rescue two men stranded. We rode the tram up to tower #2, jumped over to the tower and climbed down. We clambered up canyon to the two men. They were given food and water and helped back to the tower. They were belayed up the tower and into the tram car.

Five years ago—

The July 1975 issue was very short as there were no **Search & Rescue** missions for the month. • RMRU

\$USTAINING MEMBERS

See the September Issue