

Search and Rescue



EVACUATION

Mission No. 8125M

7 Aug., Fri.
Foothills South of Corona

By Pete Carlson

After just returning from my evening run, the phone rang with news of an evacuation near Corona. No more info was given out, except that we were to meet at the Riverside S.O. at 6:00 a.m. the following morning.

On my way down Friday morning I picked up fellow member Bernie McIlvoy. We were the first there, soon followed by Mark Rhoads, John Dew and Kevin Walker with the No. 1 van, and lastly Rick Pohlers with the No. 2 van. Kevin told us that only six people were requested for the operation, as it was only going to be an assist. We went on in and met with a sergeant. He introduced us to some of the other S.O. personnel that would be rolling (sorry, I'm terrible with names). We were told that a van (possibly stolen), containing two bodies, was approximately 300 feet below a truck trail in the Corona foothills. And because of the steepness and loose rock our technical skills would be needed to extricate the bodies back up to the road.

We followed the Deputies out and through Corona, and up into the hills. Once at the scene, Bernie looked things over and decided to use one of the vans as an anchor. We tied a 300 ft. goldline to the anchor, and Bernie started down to assess the situation. Soon Bernie radioed back up that another 300 ft. rope would be needed. I pulled another one out and started down, closely followed by new member Mark Rhoads. Once the ropes were tied together on the near 30 degree slope, we radioed up that all was ready for the sheriff's personnel. John, Kevin

and Rick put helmets on everyone, and sent them down the hand line.

After the coroner and criminologist had gathered all the information that was needed, the bodies were placed in the body bags. Bernie told the sergeant that he felt it would be faster and much safer to use a helicopter and airlift the bodies out, instead of setting up a raise at the top. With that, the call went out to El Toro for one of their choppers. After a bit the word came back that none were available. So, the request was then made to the San Bernardino Sheriff. From them came a "yes." Some time later the sound of a chopper could be heard. Soon after that, they arrived with their large 204 (Huey). We told the pilot what was needed, and got an "affirmative" back. The large bird lifted off and flew over to the site. The crew chief lowered a line down into the narrow canyon, the bags were placed in the litter, and soon after were back on top. The rest of us then made the climb back up to the road.

This task is never enjoyable, but necessary. And when it is in a tough or remote location, RMRU gladly responds, because we are trained for it, and do not want to see anyone else become injured during such an operation. • RMRU

to hone tracking and map use skills as well as to familiarize ourselves once again with the western San Jacinto Range. The trail to Deer Springs was very dry and dusty. We had a restful lunch at Deer Springs where we replenished our water. After eating we split into two groups and tracked Kevin Walker and Rick Pohlers cross-country to a campsite near lush springs and meadows, just west and several hundred feet below the summit of Marion Mountain. Late that afternoon most of the group, including Kody, Jim Fairchild's dog, scrambled onto the summit blocks of Marion Mountain to enjoy the vista, such as it was. Even Garner Valley, only a few miles south of nearby Tahquitz peak was virtually obscured by smog. Supper that evening ran the usual gamut from gastronomic orgy, (steaks and wine) to spartan subsistence, (hard rolls, water, and M&M's). The temperature remained rather sultry late into the night.

Sunday morning we all headed over a saddle northwest of Marion where we picked out major landmarks and plotted their exact locations with maps and compass bearings. We followed the ridge over Jean Peak arriving on the summit of San Jacinto by mid-morning. To the north the precursors of the afternoon's thunder shower activity were already forming over San Geronio. Overhead a few small clouds provided welcome spells of shade. After lingering briefly at the summit we scurried on down to Little Round Valley for lunch. After lunch Ed Hill recruited the unsuspecting Randy Iwasiuk and new member Mark Rhodes to accompany him on a cross-country jaunt from Little Round, traversing part of Fuller Ridge and then slicing down to intercept the Seven Pines trail. Little did we know that Ed's affinity for skin shredding terrain was firmly grounded in numerable epic precedents. Glibly we scampered off behind him. From the summit of Thunder Rock we eye-balled a feasible route, and then we were off. Skillfully we wove tracks through the woods carefully avoiding the brush patches. Actually when it was all over astute route finding enabled us to avoid bushwacking for all but maybe 150 yards. We arrived at the prescribed spot on the Seven Pines trail about 45 minutes ahead of the rest of the group. Once united we wearily marched out together, sweat-soaked and grimy.

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Familiarization

8-9 Aug., Sat.-Sun.
Western Slope,
San Jacinto Mountains

By Randy Iwasiuk

Saturday morning, August 8th, found eleven members of RMRU shouldering packs at the Seven Pines trailhead. Even early in the morning the air was stifling and the day promised to be hot and dusty. The objective of our August training was

RMRU Members are Thinking Snow!



The above photograph was taken by RMRU member Jim Fairchild during the rescue of a cross country skier in February of 1978. RMRU members look forward to winter and snow as they enjoy winter mountaineering activities. However, they don't enjoy most winter missions as it usually means being tired, cold and sometimes almost being pushed to their physical limits.