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Kevin Walker, Editor — Walt Walker, Publisher — Carolyn Parsons, Artist

Training



WINTER FAMILIARIZATION

5-7 Feb., Fri.-Sun.
Upper Tahquitz Drainage,
San Jacinto Mountains

RMRU members met at Humber Park Friday evening, for a night ascent to Saddle Junction, and then back up to the South on the Palisades where the group spent the night.

Newly assigned training chairman Joe Erickson had the group up early on Saturday. After a quick breakfast the team loaded up packs and snowshoed over to Tahquitz Valley then over to Little Tahquitz. The group spent a good portion of the day familiarizing themselves with the Tahquitz Drainage.

After Lunch the group headed up towards the Red Tahquitz Ridge. Once, near the ridge, members set up camp, and then day hiked the surrounding area. The ridge proved beneficial in that members could look back down on what they had hiked earlier in the day. Everyone traveled fairly light, so after dinner, the group climbed in to their sleeping bags for a cold winter night.

Snow conditions were such that, after breakfast the group went out to a nearby slope and practiced setting up self equalizing anchors (SEA), mechanical advantages (MA), and making bolards (a type of anchor) in the snow. The practicing of the operations by each member was well spent.

After lunch the team snowshoed on down to the valley and then over to the saddle, and down to Humber Park. Joe Erickson seems to be off to a good start.

• RMRU

Ding BaT

of the month

by Kevin Walker



Who is that masked man?
Why it's that famous mountain climber, Jim 'the truss' Garvey. This mighty specimen of manhood was caught by the photographer demonstrating his superior mountaineering skills.

Search and Rescue



ABORT

Mission No. 8204A

2 Feb., Tues.
Garner Valley,
San Jacinto Mountains

At 1230 hours Tuesday, we received a call from the Hemet Office of the Riverside County Sheriffs' department that two mentally retarded teenagers had been missing from the Pathfinder Ranch since early morning. RMRU was activated, and members started for Garner Valley. While enroute one of the subjects walked out, and was able to give directions back to where the second subject was resting. Both were okay and RMRU was turned around. • RMRU

CALL

Mission No. 8205C

11 Feb., Thurs.
Santo Ana River,
Riverside County

Early Thursday morning RMRU coordinator Al Andrews received a call from the Riverside County Sheriff's Department that there was a small group of people stranded out on a sand bar in the Santa Ana River, and that our assistance was needed because the R.P.D. helicopter would be unavailable for several hours. But, after discussing the situation, it was decided that since it was a clear warm day, the safest thing to do would be to wait for the R.P.D. Helicopter and then just airlift the subjects out. • RMRU

CALL

Mission No. 8206C

**14 Feb., Sun.
Martinez Canyon,
Santa Rosa Mountains**

At a little after 2100 hours Sunday, we received a call from the Indio office of the Riverside County Sherrifs' Department that two male hikers were overdue in completing a planned descent of Martinez Canyon. There was one problem though, the sheriff was unable to locate a vehicle, so it was unknown where the pair started from. It was then decided to wait until morning and see if the sheriff could get any further information.

At 1030 hours Monday the Sheriffs' office called and said that the hikers had just walked out and both were in good shape. • RMRU

RESCUE

Mission No. 8207M

**16-17 Feb., Tues.-Wed.
Tahquitz Canyon,
San Jacinto Mountains**

By Kevin Walker

It was a little after 2:30 in the afternoon when the phone rang at work, with news of a rescue in Tahquitz Canyon. Super! Warm weather and a known location. Fly in, effect a rescue and fly out. Well at least that is what we thought.

The team met at our standard rendezvous point, Ann Dolley's. Also arriving at our location was Mike Donovan with one of Landells Aviation Bell Jet Rangers. As we were preparing our packs, fellow member Walt Walker filled us in on what transpired. On Saturday (Feb. 13) David Foster and Brian Vengrin started from Palm Springs up Tahquitz Canyon. As they planned to hike up the canyon and ultimately reach the tramway. On (Feb. 15) Monday, while attempting to climb out of the canyon to bypass a waterfall David lost his footing on the near 40 degree slope. Davids companion Brian watched in terror as David tumbled and rolled down the hillside, and out of sight. Brian descended as quickly as he could back to the canyon floor. Upon reaching David, Brian found him in a semi-conscious state, with a large amount of bleeding from his head, there was also a large red area staining his upper right leg of his levis. Brian helped David to a flat area near the creek. There he got David into a sleeping bag after seeing to Davids injuries as best he could. Then came a tough decision. To go for help or not. Brian decided on the first. Once David

was resting, Brian started up the canyon. After lipping up onto the mountain near Caramba, Brian headed in a direction he thought would lead him to the tram but instead was going towards the saddle. Sometime after noon on Tuesday (Feb 16) Brian made it to Idyllwild and called for help.

Walt and I would be the first load in. We would try and locate David. According to Brian, somewhere above the Long Valley confluence. With packs and ourselves loaded we were off for the canyon. As Mike flew the powerful machine up the canyon, we could not help but notice the dramatic changes in the canyon floor because of flooding from last Fall. Soon we were passing the Long Valley confluence, Mike slowed the chopper down to a search speed. We slowly made tight circles up the canyon, until we had reached Caramba. So back down to the confluence and then back up again, with no results. The searching did not reveal anything, so we decided to try some calling. Mike let me off on a ridge that required helitac (stepping out off the ground). Once out, Mike and Walt left so that I could shout. Again, nothing, so I was picked up and moved down to Tower to try shouting. No, response, just the sound of running water below. The light of day was fading fast, so we decided to get field teams into the canyon for a night ground search. Mike moved Walt and I up to the ridge where I had been let off before. Rick Pohlers, Jim Fairchild and Glenn Henderson were let off at Tower. Bernie McIlvoy and Craig Beasley were let off at Grapevine. And finally just as

the light was getting dim Mike brought the last load of Joe Erickson and Craig Britton in to our location.

Upon reaching the canyon floor, we stopped to get flashlights out and then started searching. Almost immediately, we found a set of vibram soles and a smooth soled shoe both going up the canyon, but found that the smooth soled shoe prints went down canyon also. Since we knew that Brian had went up for help we began to wonder if David might have recovered some from his accident and decided to try and hike down. Rick's team who was in the middle and found the same as we did. Bernie's team though, only found the prints going up. Because of the evidence, it was decided to have Rick's team follow the prints down the canyon and for Bernie and Craig to search up. Since our team was much higher we decided to search in our area some more and then go back to the ridge for a morning pick-up.

Since the information was quite sketchy, Walt instructed John Dew back in base camp to try and get better information from Brian. John came back on the radio shortly after, and stated that Brian was at his home in La Mirada. Walt said to call Brian and talk to him, and to also have him in Palm Springs first thing in the morning.

Meanwhile, the tracks that Rick's team were following left the canyon and went up towards the ridge. Along the way Glenn found a new coffee can that had been dropped quite recently. This was then radioed out to base to check on.



PHOTO BY JIM FAIRCHILD

NOT EXACTLY THE PALM SPRINGS HILTON — RMRU members Craig Beasley, Rick Pohlers and Bernie McIlvoy sit around the Peak 1 stove, and wait for soup and noodles to finish heating for dinner

Shortly thereafter Rick and Bernie's teams met up. They decided to spend the night where they were and then try and continue tracking in the morning.

Just as we were starting to doze off John came on the air. He told us that Brian and David were both wearing vibram lug soled boots, and that they had met up with a canyon local who was wearing smooth soled shoes. As for the coffee can, it was not theirs. What had happened was that Brian and David met up with the local, and he hiked with them for some distance and then went back down canyon. Brian told John that because of David's injuries he was sure that David would not attempt to hike out on his own. As for his location, Brian said that David was half way up between the confluence and Caramba, and that he was lying in his sleeping bag near a very tall tree. With that, everyone went ahead and climbed into their sleeping bags for the remainder of the night.

Just as the first glimmers of light started to touch the ridge tops, Mary Bowman's happy voice could be heard over the radio saying, "Good morning everyone, Mike is leaving Desert Hot Springs now and will be in the canyon in ten minutes." Quickly we loaded our packs as Mike approached our new ridge top helispot. The air was calm, and Mike was able to set right down because of

improvements in the brush. Walt and I climbed in and once again we were off and searching. Since we now had light and no wind, Mike was able to fly low and slow in the canyon. We had searched around one bend in the canyon, and then as we went around a sharp left bend Mike said there is the first tall tree, and just as he finished saying that, we all saw a man in a sleeping bag below, waving frantically. Mike found a helispot quickly, and maneuvered the helicopter onto a large boulder with brush above it. The tips of the main rotors were just beginning to clip the brush as the right skid came to rest on the boulder. Mike gave me the nod to unload the packs. After that, another nod and I was off on the boulder. Walt was in front, so he had to climb out and go into the back and across to the right side to unload. As he was doing that, I put my pack on and started down approximately 200 feet to the canyon floor. Soon I was down and across the creek to where David was laying. I was greeted with a very large smile and a healthy thank you for coming. David had taken good care of himself while he waited for help to arrive. He had stopped the bleeding in his upper right leg and had apparently only had a mild concussion. He had stayed in his sleeping bag and had been able to eat a little and also drink water. Walt arrived as I was finishing a survey of David's injuries. After

looking him over, I found that there was no apparent fractures, just numerous bruises, cuts and abrasions that had formed scabs. Mike went back and picked up Joe and Craig and flew them up to our location to help get David up to the chopper. Mike let them off at a large boulder that had better rotor clearance.

While we loaded David's gear into our packs and prepared to move him up to the helispot, Mike started ferrying the rest of the teams back to base. Soon we were loaded and moving. Walt tied David into a sling and then hooked him up to a call out rope so that we could belay him across the stream. Craig went across with one end and Joe stayed back with the other, while Walt and I helped David across. It was slow, but then who would move fast if they had fallen the distance that David had. The move went smoothly and we were soon up and ready to be picked up. Mike arrived and put a skid down, and Walt climbed in. Then Mike moved the ship around so that David could climb in easily followed by Craig. All that was left now was for Joe and I to load the packs into the cargo net and wait for the return of the chopper. Mike returned and positioned the helicopter over me so that I could clip the line into the cargo hook. Mike applied more power and was again enroute to base with the packs. One more



PHOTO BY JIM FAIRCHILD

LIVED TO TELL ABOUT IT — David Foster talks with base camp personnel about his day and a half wait for help. Luckily, for David, his injuries were not as serious as first thought.



PHOTO BY JIM FAIRCHILD

MOUNTAIN PILOT — Mike Donovan of Landells Aviation waits for the cargo net (used for flying out packs) to be removed, before flying back into Tahquitz Canyon to pick up RMRU members Joe Erickson and Kevin Walker. Mike's excellent flying was greatly appreciated on this particular mission.

trip back for Joe and I, and then back to the warm streets of Palm Springs.

Before I end this article, I would like to thank Mike Donovan of Landells aviation for some super flying in the canyon. Because of Mike's expertise, we were able to be let off near David and were able to get him out of the canyon quickly with less pain to him. Mike, thanks for a great job. And to David, we all hope you recover quickly. • RMRU



PHOTO BY JIM FAIRCHILD

BEATS CARRYING'EM — Pilot Mike Donovan flies a sling load of packs out of Tahquitz Canyon. Actually this technique saves helicopter trips and is a safety measure, as it eliminates many tight one runner loadings.

\$USTAINING MEMBERS

BY KEVIN WALKER

We are well into Winter now, cool days and very cold nights, but it can be safely said that RMRU's **Sustaining Members** are anything but cold. It has been very good to see that inspite of what our economy may look like, you have still been there to give support to RMRU. Because of the continuing help, the team was able to purchase two major pieces of equipment.

Just after the first of December (see Mission No. 8142M) we were called out to search for a 2½ year old in the Anza area. Also involved in the search was the Sheriff's fixed wing aircraft. Like many times before we were unable to talk directly to the plane. Using other agencies and volunteers has always been a problem, so at the last meeting of the board of directors it was decided to purchase a 720 channel ground to aircraft radio, which will be fitted into the van as soon as it arrives. The second item purchased was a new lightweight plastic litter which will be used when the rescue toboggan cannot be easily transported to the accident scene, and it will also be used as much as possible around the helicopter, as it will be faster, easier, and cause less damage to the chopper itself.

As you can see by the missions over the past few months the need is still there. And when the call goes out that a 2 year old is missing somewhere, we will also still be there.

NOVEMBER

New—

George & Marjorie Shipway
*Dr. Bob Mac Pherson

Renewing—

Fred Camphausen
Jane & John Wiefels
Lloyd Allen & Ann Ahern
*Circle City Hospital
*Hemet Noontimers Lions Club
*John & Nancy McCoy
Karin Allen
Ron & Jo Anne Bottorff

DECEMBER

Renewing—

*Canyon Lake Lions Club
*Circle City Auxiliary
*GYSGT Keith A. Borges
Jane and John Wiefels
*Theodore Luther Young
Francis & Patricia Johnston
El Camino Real Student Body

David & Diane Harris
*Circle City Hospital
*Bud Nelson
Evans Tire Company
Riverside Blueprint

JANUARY

New—

Judy Kronman
David & Edith Weir
*M/M John Tyler
†M/M Heckert
M/M Rhind

Renewing—

M/M V. Stone
Lawrence & Audrey Kick
M/M J. Leroy Dooly
M/M Charles Ricker
John & Gill Bouma
*Norm & Maggie Mellor
*Circle City Hospital
*M/M Kenneth Andrews
Jay & Jeanne Wallis
*George & Norma Ruptier
*M/M Forrest Dupont
*Mrs. Francis L. Gray
*Avis M. Anderson
Robert & Edna Kowell
†Al Korber
*Dr. & Mrs. Thomas Gillen
Lloyd Allen & Ann Ahern

FEBRUARY

New—

*M/M John Pohlers
*M/M Charles H. Carpenter

Renewing—

*Rubidoux Grange No. 611
*Circle City Hospital
Weston & Joanne Robinson
Karin Allen
M/M Donald Lovelee
*Corona Breakfast Lions Club
John Boyd
Jane & John Wiefels

***Century Club**, donation of \$100 or more
†**Summit Club**, donation of \$500 or more

Coming Events-

APRIL

7 — Annual Meeting
10-11 — Training
21 — Board Meeting

MAY

5 — Regular Meeting
8-9 — Training
19 — Board Meeting

JUNE

2 — Regular Meeting
5-6 — Training
16 — Board Meeting

Notice!

The **RMRU Newsletter** is published 12 times per year by the Riverside Mountain Rescue Unit, Inc. It is intended primarily to inform the Regular and Sustaining Members.

If you would like to receive the newsletter on a regular basis, and at the same time become a Sustaining member, send your tax deductible donation of \$25 or more to:

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