

Volume XVIII, Issue VII, July 1982

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

Search and Rescue

RESCUE

Mission No. 8224M

**1-2 July, Thurs.-Fri.
Tahquitz Rock
San Jacinto Mountains**

By Kevin Walker

Time... How important time is. On this particular Thursday afternoon time would play a major factor. To begin with, **RMRU** was contacted at 1555 hours (3:55 p.m.) for a technical rescue on Tahquitz Rock, a climber had fallen and was reported to have a fractured leg.

First to arrive at Humber Park were **RMRU** members Glenn Henderson, Walt Walker and myself, closely followed by Mary Bowman, now 1630 hours. After speaking with Allen Brandt, an informant, we learned that a man in his early twenties had fallen and injured his left leg on 'Dave's Deviation' (a climbing route) sometime after 1300 hours. Glenn and I loaded up our packs with first aid equipment, and some of the technical gear necessary for the mission, and then started out up the steep climbers path to the rock. Upon reaching the base of the climbing route (1836 hrs.) we were met by several climbers who had heard the calls for help earlier and had stayed at the base in the event they could assist (which they were able to do for the slow roll out later). There were two ropes dangling from above, both were fixed lines for jumaring on, both placed there by sport climber and friend of **RMRU**, Ralph Glenn. On one I tied my pack, which was hauled up the face, and on the other I clipped my Jumars in and started the 150 foot ascent up the near vertical rock face. At 1850 hours I reached the injured subject, Mark Vader. Along with Mark on the small ledge was his climbing partner William Volz and Ralph Glenn.

As the rest of the team hiked in with the rest of the necessary gear, I did a survey of Marks injuries. Marks only injury was a fracture of the left femur. It was a closed fracture, but the bone ends could be seen pressing just underneath the skin. Mark was sitting in an upright position with his legs dangling over the edge of the rock. The weight of his own leg was helping to apply a little traction to the injury. As I monitored Mark's vital signs Ralph helped out by locating and placing anchors for a lowering and belaying system. With members at the base (1915 hrs.) work was started in readying the litter to be pulled up the face. As that went on Bernie jumared up to the ledge with the Hare traction splint. With the help of Ralph, Bernie and I placed the splint on Mark. The operation was quite hard, as Bernie had to go out onto the face to be able to slip the splint up Mark's leg. Nevertheless we got it applied, and traction was applied to the leg. Next we got Mark up completely on the ledge. Ralph and William pulled the empty litter up the face and onto the ledge. At 2021 hours we had Mark in the litter. And then as Bernie finished setting up the lowering system I tied Mark into the litter and hooked the horizontal lowering rigging to the litter. The sun had been down for some time now, and the reason for being concerned over time now came into play. We now had a night time technical lower to perform. At 2053 hours I was stepping out onto the face with the litter as Bernie manned the lower and Ralph maintained the belay. To make things more difficult than they already were, when I was about 10 feet down, the rigging on the litter caught on a tree limb sticking out of the rock. I was unable to do anything about the problem because I had to keep the litter and Mark's injured leg away from the face of the rock. So, that left Bernie. After tying off the lower, Bernie came down on a tail of another rope to where the litter rigging was stuck, and then with some effort, was able to free the litter. Luckily for the subject, and my arms, that was the only problem we would face. With Bernie back at his station we were off and lowering. Within a couple of minutes I was down to where a second lowering station had been set up. The members at the second ledge changed the system over, and under the new guidance of Rick Pohlers and Pete Carlson, Mark

and I were lowered to the base (2120 hrs.). As we took the systems apart and coiled ropes, **RMRU** member and paramedic Jack Schnurr surveyed Mark's injuries. At 2215 hours we started down from Lunch Rock with the **RMRU** wheel attached to the litter. At 2335 hours we reached Humber Park and the waiting ambulance. With that a tired group of members put gear back into the vans and then headed down to Hemet for a quick breakfast and then to help the Hemet team with a search in the North Fork (see Mission No. 8225C). It is missions like this that make all the practice on trainings worth while. I say this because this was the first mission I was left to tie the subject in, attach the lowering ropes and double check that it was right. Thank you **RMRU** veterans, it is a real good feeling. • **RMRU**

CALL

Mission No. 8225C

**2 July, Fri.
Lower North Fork,
San Jacinto Mountains**

As **RMRU** members were completing a technical on Tahquitz Rock (see 8224M) we received a call from the Hemet team that they needed assistance on a search in the North Fork. After completing the technical, members drove to Hemet for a meal and a little sleep before driving back to help in the search. As members rested in the early morning hours, the missing subjects were located, and our assistance was no longer required. • **RMRU**

SEARCH

Mission No. 8226M

**6-7 July, Tues.-Wed.
High Sierra, Inyo County**

By Mark Rhoads

A pager call went out looking for people to participate in a search out of Bishop. A woman had been missing since the previous Saturday and was last seen near the Hutchinson Meadow area on that day.

Craig Beasley, John Muratet and I responded to the call and drove all Tuesday night to Bishop. About 30 minutes after reaching the sheriff's station in

Bishop we drove up to the road head above North Lake and were the third team assigned and in the air. Our assignment was to search the trail up French Canyon from Hutchinson Meadow until we met up with the Mammoth Lake team.

Not long after starting, we ran into the Mammoth Lake Team — so much for our assignment. After some confusion and time, we were re-assigned to search up from our current position to a lake whose name escapes my memory now. Even though it was July, after climbing for a while, it became necessary to use snowshoes to avoid breaking through the crust of the four foot deep snow! By early afternoon we reached the lake with no sign of the subject. Despite calling in by radio that we had finished our assignment, we were not re-assigned and towards late afternoon we were flown out to the roadhead. Just a few minutes after getting back, the subject was found hungry and cold, but in good condition by another field team. The Inyo Sheriff treated us to a chicken dinner and we spent Wednesday night driving back home. • RMRU

CALL

Mission No. 8227C

July
High Sierra

No information was attained by the newsletter staff, other than the out of county call was for a missing hiker and no RMRU members were able to respond.

• RMRU

SEARCH

Mission No. 8228M

26 July, Mon.
Long Valley Drainage,
San Jacinto Mountains

By Walt Walker

It was shortly after 1230 hours that RMRU was notified by the Banning station of the Riverside County Sheriff's Department a man and two boys were overdue from a day hike. In fact, they were 24 hours overdue from a planned short hike out of the upper terminal of the Palm Springs Aerial Tramway.

Shortly before 1400 hours (2 p.m.) RMRU members began arriving at the lower terminal of the tram. We were met by Capt. Ray Canova and Sgt. Dave Weakly of the sheriff's department. After reviewing the information, the veteran members decided that Tahquitz Canyon and the Long Valley drainage were prime areas to be searched. The only way to quickly, and effectively, search this vast area is by helicopter. Capt. Canova

contacted Landells Aviation Helicopter Service and requested them to fly that afternoon. We then moved basecamp to the intersection in front of Ann Dolley's house, which is near the mouth of Tahquitz Canyon.

The plan of action was to have Bernie McIlvay and Kevin Walker fly, in the helicopter, as observers. The bird arrived at 1528 piloted by Mike Donovan. Bernie and Kevin climbed in and the powerful machine departed at 1530. The bird reported being at the 4600 foot level in Tahquitz Canyon at 1537. The aerial search continued to the top of the canyon, Caramba Camp. The bird then flew over to the Long Valley Drainage and at 1545 reported finding the missing trio just above the double overhanging waterfalls in the lower end of the Long Valley Drainage.

Mike maneuvered the helicopter into a tight one-runner helispot and Bernie and Kevin climbed out onto the ridge above the canyon. They started down the side of the canyon and shortly found the going very tough, due to the steepness, loose dirt and wet rocks. Bernie stayed where he was and Kevin started climbing back up. Mike picked him up with another one-runner on the steep slope. The helicopter returned to base so that Kevin could better describe what was going to be needed.

Kevin related that we would need to drop Bernie a 150 foot rope so he could rappel down to the located subjects. He also said that it would be close to a 300 foot raise to get the man and the two boys up to the top of the ridge. The canyon bottom was not wide enough for the helicopter to descend into the canyon and land by the subjects. We loaded a number of ropes and hardware into the bird and Kevin and I climbed in and we were quickly on our way up the canyon.

Mike flew into the area by the falls and hovered over Bernie and Kevin dropped the 150 foot rope to Bernie. We then flew up to the ridge and Kevin and I climbed out while Mike held the bird in a one-runner touchdown. While we started looking the situation over Mike returned to base. In succeeding trips he flew in Joe Erickson, Craig Beasley, Bruce Gahagan and five members of the Palm Springs Mounted Police.

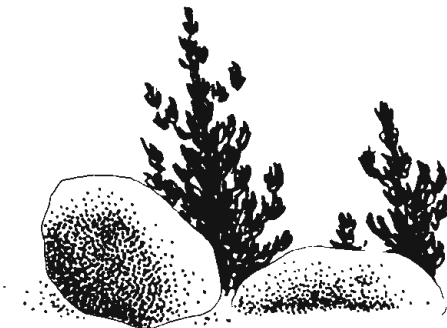
Bernie had by now descended into the canyon and was with the man and the two boys. The group on the top was busy setting up anchors for a mechanical advantage system to haul everyone up with. Joe, Craig and Kevin rappelled down to assist in the evacuation and clear the route of brush and loose rocks. With the M.A. ready for the lift, at 1900 we started hauling the first boy up. The race with darkness was now on! The first boy was quickly followed by the other boy and the man. Each of the three were accompanied

up by Bernie. (He rappelled back down each time.)

The light was fading fast as we radioed out to Basecamp Operator, Mary Bowman, that we were ready for the trio to be flown out, it was now 1925. Don Landells had now relieved Mike Donovan as pilot for the mission. Don arrived at our helispot, on the slope at 1940, and we quickly loaded the man and the boys into the bird. When Don departed we immediately started hauling Joe up out of the canyon. Don returned and started flying out three of the Palm Springs team members.

It was decided to haul Kevin and Craig up on one raise to speed things up. When they were about half way up the 275 foot lift the main anchor rope slipped off the boulder it was around. With a sickening hissing noise it snapped past the members who were pulling on the M.A. rope. It was a tense micro-second, as we feared the worst, only to have the Gibbs that was securing the bite of our M.A. hold the rope and prevent Kevin and Craig from being dropped. There was also a belay rope that was there for their protection, but it was not needed. We set up another anchor and started hauling again. The delay had cost us all the daylight and it was almost dark. At 2040 Don flew out the rest of the Palm Springs team members. (Many thanks to all the members of the Palm Springs Mounted Police for all their help!) The bird returned for Kevin, Joe and Craig and also a lot of technical gear and ropes. When Don flew away with them Bernie and I briefly talked about flying in a helicopter at night, in canyons and making one-runner landings, it is probably one of the more dangerous things that we get involved in. It seemed especially dark as Don returned to pick us up. Bernie climbed aboard as soon as Don had the tips of the runners touching the steep slope. I quickly handed Bernie the remaining equipment and climbed in and tapped Don on the shoulder. Don lifted the bird off and flew back towards the lights of Palm Springs. We landed at 2058! • RMRU

(Editor's Note: Due to the race with darkness, there was no time to get a camera out and take any photographs.)



Training

Technical & Potluck Dinner

10 July, Sat.
Suicide Rock/Sky Yacht

By "The Dusty Bushman"

YOU COULDN'T ASK FOR MORE OUT OF A TRAINING!

How do you get superb fellowship, great conversation, the best food, home-made entertainment and oh yes, top of the line cliff training, within a linear half-mile?

Most of you, if you've got your thinking apparatus in tune, are right — at the annual July training. Oh, your a new-comer to **RMRU**. Well, next July come along and join us at Norm and Maggie Mellor's Sky Yacht for the time of your life! What, you can't imagine it? Well, for instance, this summer pre-training began at the Chart House in Fern Valley with full bellies, good conversation and a good nights sleep under the Ponderosa Pines in the Mellor's front yard — one of the nicest little niches in the transitional zone of the San Jacinto Mountains.

Saturday morning after a continental breakfast, served by the Mellor's (Thank God), we broke "camp" and gathered up our lightweight rock gear and, of course, the teams "Vertical Evacuation Rigging" — Stokes Litter, ropes, anchors, ascenders, radios, (lunch), and etc., etc.

Next there was some "Learnen to be got", on multi-pitch lowering. The veterans took over after everyone reached the top of Suicide Rock, a linear half-mile by bird flight from the Mellors'. Bernie and Walt gave some prefacing and a quick review of things to keep in mind and the order of the day as we gazed off into the blue expanse of the Strawberry drainage with Biotic and rock features as clear as the air was crisp. Next, Bernie laced through our minds the theory and framework of our lowering structure and some trigometric coefficients of strength for self-equalizing anchor strains. After some personnel grouping for station points Bernie sent us on our way with the following admonition, "These bolts are solid men, I've climbed on them for 15 years, you've got two if one should fail... Just test them before given'em your weight and let's move; don't be polishing your hardware out there on that face, in other words let's get off



RMRU PHOTO BY JOHN MURATET

MULTIPLE STAGE LOWER — RMRU member Pete Carlson and friend Terri Eastman are lowered past station #1 (top photo) from the top of the rock as Walt Walker looks on. After the ropes are transferred to the anchor bolts at the #1 station, the litter is then lowered under the guidance of Walt and Joe Erickson down to station #2 (lower photo), where Kevin Walker and Bernie McIlvoy will repeat the steps again, and then lower the litter to the base of the rock. This multi-staged lower was set up to train members in the event of a mission that required a technical lower that was longer than any of our ropes.

before sundown!" (Ezell paraphrased)

Soon **RMRU** members were like shot from a scatter gun blast, rigging and rappelling at the top and down the face of

the "Weeping Wall" We completed three of these three-stage lowers with the help of our famous "**RMRU Babes**", as beautiful as ever, nesting in our suspended baskets.

Everything went well all-in-all except for rigging our anchors a little high, the first time around, at station one. This cut us a little short of station two when we ran out of rope 15 feet above it. Oh well it can happen to the best of 'em. We quickly secured the lines and readjusted our anchors and added more rope length while Pete (litter attendant) and Pete's girlfriend Terri (beautiful litter attendee), counted the lichens on the east face (grumble, grumble) and soaked up their share of U.V.'s. After breaking for lunch, we worked most everyone through the lowering system. When we completed our third lower, we wrapped up the gear and shoved off for the Sky Yacht while Bernie and Jim Anholm "Vibramed" down the *Sunshine Face* for their evening constitutional.

After showers(!) the sizzle of top sirloin and the effervescent drift of beef esters filled the air along with the high spirited and friendly fellowship that knits us so close together. I think that the best part of RMRU functions is this common bond of fellowship that I look forward to so eagerly everytime we get together. It is a rare kind of bond indeed. It was great to be in the company of my favorite fellows uninhibited in lively and comfortable conversations. Where could you find more wholesome uplifting?

After feasting on desserts, Bud White, in traditional fashion, challenged all the young bucks to physical climbing feats on the balcony of the loft. Like always I watched as Bud again out fancied us in one and two armed climbing movements. As usual I gleaned from the stabbing comments that muffle from the corner of his mouth about fitness at these events.

As the evening moved along good conversation evolved in many small circles. I really enjoyed our hosts the Mellors'. I had the chance to chat with Maggie about mutual friends and hometown history. What a delightful family. The more I'm around the Mellors' the more love I develop for these genuine and giving people.

A great treat for me that I'll always remember was my first close conversation with Don and Alice Ricker, Mike Daugherty and Art Bridge. Being that I'm realitively new and we aren't blessed to see them on a highly frequent basis, now it was a great opportunity of enrichment for me. What beautiful people! The best way for me to describe my feelings is that they truly "filled up my fences".

Thanks Norm and Maggie! - Dave Ezell

• RMRU

Growing Up In RMRU

By Roy Dew

I have been going to RMRU meetings since about fourth grade when I discovered they went to 'Bob's Big Boy' after each meeting. Not knowing anything about RMRU I went to get to know the people my dad, John Dew, had told me about, (and for the sundae afterwards).

My brother Richard, went on a few rescues and then lost interest in it. About sixth grade I went on my first mission. On these first couple of rescues I was the little kid who just watched, listened and kept my hands off things. After a while I was learning how to operate base camp, things like sign-in sheets, radio communications log, etc. The first time I talked on the radio I was mad at myself for a week for saying 'yes' instead of 'affirmative', only to find that everyone says, 'yes' anyway. I've learned a lot since then, and have a long way to go.

In July of 1981 I made my first rappel at our (RMRU's) training site on Suicide Rock (what a name for the rock you make your first rappel on). Last December I made my first jump out of a hovering helicopter. I am now trusted to talk on the radio, in fact, I have run base camp alone several times. I'm really grateful to the people who trust me with such responsibility. RMRU has really been an experience for me. How many 14 year olds do you know who have rappelled 275 feet straight down, jumped out of a helicopter or talked on an emergency frequency. I am one of the lucky ones along with Kevin Walker, who also grew up with RMRU, and is now a member of the team, and has been for five years. I would like to thank my Dad, Walt and Kevin Walker, and the rest of the team for letting me do these things and making me feel like part of the team, so thanks a lot and I'll try to make the best **rescuer** I can.

Editor's Note

Fellow member, John Dew gave me this article saying that I might want to use it in some issue. It reminded me so much of an excited 14 year old some years back that I just had to print it.

