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Search and Rescue

ABORT

Mission No. 8237A

7 Nov., Sun.
Cottonwood Canyon,
West of Whitewater

While the majority of the team was still hiking out the South Fork of the San Jacinto River on training in the late afternoon, we received a call from the Banning station of the Riverside County Sheriff's Department that a woman was stranded in Cottonwood Canyon. As the team continued hiking out, members that did not attend training and the associates were contacted. As members were enroute to the roadhead off of Interstate 10, the mission was aborted by the Sheriff. • RMRU

RESCUE

Mission No. 8238M

13-14 Nov., Sat.-Sun.
Horse Canyon,
near Coyote Canyon

By Bruce Gahagan

At 9:30 the phone rang, and at the other end was Walt Walker. I was told of an injured man in the Anza Borrego area. With that, I called fellow member Glenn Henderson, to car pool to the roadhead in Anza.

We met at the CDF station and then drove to the gate where the dirt road starts down Coyote Canyon. Information was as follows, William Marsden and several companions had been deer hunting up Horse Canyon which is a tributary to Coyote Canyon. While ascending a knife edge ridge, William slipped in the

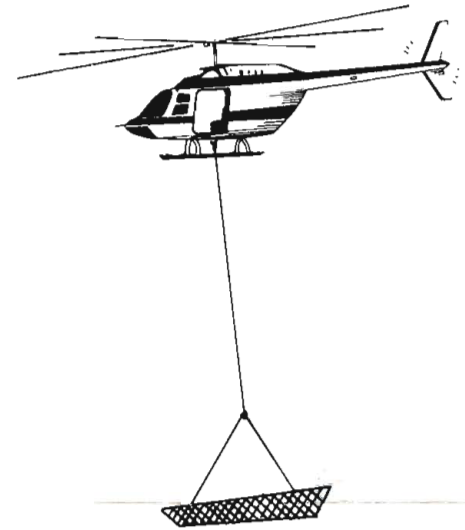
loose gravel and tumbled down nearly 200 feet. In doing so fractured his leg.

To get to the base of the ridge, a two hour drive in with four wheel drives was required. Assisting RMRU was the Hemet team with several of their people in jeeps. Glenn had his Bronco, so with every one loaded we started out. It was a long and rough trip in. And not without casualties The Anza four wheel drive ambulance had started in before we arrived, and along the way had bent a rim which caused the tire to go flat. The CDF gave us a spare to take in to the ambulance. Also along the way one of the Hemet jeeps lost a tire. Never the less we made it to the hunters base camp. Talk about being ready to hike. After such a difficult trip in, it was good to get out.

With packs on we headed up the steep ridge. It was about a half hour hike/climb to where William had fallen. Field leader Bernie McIlvoy descended to the side of where William had tumbled earlier as the rock fall danger was extreme. After surveying the situation Bernie came to the conclusion that a technical raise was out of the question because of the danger to William and rescue members. We radioed out the info to Walt at base. The plan was to use a helicopter and sling load William out in a litter. It was only a short time and the word came back. Landells Aviation would be enroute at first light. We went ahead and splinted Williams injury and made him more comfortable in a sleeping bag.

After spending a long night standing around a small fire to keep warm, it was indeed a nice sight to see the helicopter approach. On board was Walt, and late comers John Muratet, Joe Erickson and Kevin Walker who I think was late because he was afraid to scratch his jeep or get it stuck.

At this point things moved right along. Several of us loaded William into the litter and secured him and hooked up the horizontal rigging system. On the top the helicopter sling was readied, and in no time we were ready to go. Don lifted up and lipped over and maneuvered down the chute and above the litter to where we were waiting. Once in position Bernie hooked the litter to the sling. Don then slowly raised the helicopter up. Carefully, Don then moved back up to the ridge, and set the litter back down with a little help



from the ground personnel.

We then loaded William into the back of the bird, and Don flew him out to Anza and the waiting ambulance. Don then returned and flew us and all the technical equipment back to the vehicles below. As Don headed for home we could not help but be envious of him as his ride home would be faster and alot smoother than what lie ahead of us. • RMRU

Editor's Note: Words can not tell of the skill and expertise needed to air lift a subject out, under neath the helicopter. This was only the second time in the teams history that this has been required.

RESCUE

Mission No. 8239M

30 Nov., Tues.
Whitewater

By Kevin Walker

Some years ago RMRU member Pete Carlson researched the team records to find what day the most missions occurred. That day was Tuesday. On this particular Tuesday I was pretty sure we would be called. To be honest, it was not because of statistics, it just happened to be storming everywhere in the county. The call came

at 1:30 p.m. for two stranded teenagers up the Whitewater. Rendezvous point: The Whitewater Fish Hatchery.

Walt Walker, John Dew and I were the first to arrive. There we were met by Capt. Ray Canova and Sgt. Pete Kyusa of the Banning station. They told us that Don Landells was enroute with one of his Bell Jet Rangers. As we waited they told us that a father and his two sons and family dog were hiking up in the Whitewater when it began to rain quite hard. In no time the water level rose considerably, and the group found themselves stranded near Stills Landing (app. four miles above the hatchery). While attempting to cross the swiftly moving current, the father lost his balance and was swept down stream. He did manage to get out of the river on the other side. He told the boys to stay put and he would go out for help.

Don arrived with 40MC, we loaded our packs and were airborne heading up the wide flood plane towards Stills Landing. We were only about one mile above the hatchery when Walt spotted the pair walking down stream. Don quickly found a spot to set down in and amongst the rocks. Upon reaching the boys they told us that the water level lowered enough after the heavy rains stopped so that they could make the crossing safely. With that, we loaded the rain soaked pair and their dog (who was quite apprahensive about helicopters) into the bird. Don flew them out, and quickly returned for us. That concluded a quick mission. • RMRU

It seemed that a fellow had been lost and we were to track and assist him. It was quite an experience in tracking because of an abundance of fresh tracks. But soon we were going down Strawberry Creek to the Grotto. Tracking got tough as we descended into the Grotto. The walls were becoming steep and there were many large granite boulders.

We soon came across our subject, who was lying down near the bottom of a wall. We ascertained that the subject had tried to climb out of the canyon and fell. Examining him, we found that he had injured his back and had broken the femur in his thigh. While some members were putting him on a backboard and using the Hare-traction splint on his leg, others were setting up the rigging to raise him out of the canyon. It was

quite difficult. We had to use the trees for anchors and maneuver around many obstacles. This was a tremendous exercise because we were able to use four new pieces of equipment, bought with donations. They were rollers which we have needed for years. We use them when a rope has to go over a sharp edge or over a place where the rope might be abraded by the rock. It is quite a safety feature when you are on the end of the rope. We finished with a raise up a beautiful boulder onto the ridge near Inspiration Point.

The walk back to the cars was a great chance to critique the day. We solved several problems that had been plaguing us, some of us learned a few new tricks, and I know it was quite a rewarding day for all. • RMRU

Training



Team Technical Skills

6 Nov., Sat.
The Grotto area,
San Jacinto Mountains

By John Muratet

The morning was cold, the sky was clear, and breakfast from the Alpine Pantry was sitting well in my stomach. It was a great day for training.

We assembled at Isomata in Idyllwild to practice several different skills. We broke into two groups and an informant was left to explain what was about to happen and what to bring.



RMRU PHOTO BY JIM FAIRCHILD

TECHNICAL SKILLS — RMRU members Craig Britton and Joe Erickson share the duties of being litter attendants, as they and the subject, Roy Dew are raised out of Strawberry Creek by a M.A. (mechanical advantage)

FAMILIARIZATION

7 Nov., Sun.
South Fork,
San Jacinto River

By Kevin Walker

After having spent an enjoyable evening starting with great food at the Chart House and then socializing and a place to sleep at Jack and Mary Bowmans, Sunday

could not help but be good, for the plan was to descend the South Fork of the San Jacinto River from Lake Hemet

Our friends at the Lake Hemet Water District had given us permission to use their parking area at the lake, and also allowed us to start the hike at the dam. Jim Fairchild and Ed Hill took the tributary at the base of the dam, while the rest of us crossed over and hiked to the spillway tributary. Being a resident of San

Jacinto, it was a wonderful sight to see the improvements made to the spillway after the 1980 flood. Shortly after, we re-grouped with Jim and Ed. The only challenges for this trip would be picking places to cross the wide creek, and staying away from the nettle & poison oak.

Lunch was spent by a wide and shallow pool watching some fairly good sized trout lounging in the center. It took some leg-twisting but the group packed up and continued. Late in the afternoon Jack Bowman called on the radio and informed us of a rescue in the Banning Pass. Through Jack and the Ham Radio people we started to coordinate getting air support to get us out. After about 40 minutes of waiting at a suitable helispot Jack came with news that the mission had been aborted. We still had some distance to go and it was getting late, so we poured the steam on and hoofed it on down canyon, and across and up to Highway 74. We made it just as darkness set in. A short wait for Jack and Mary with their trucks, and it was back to our vehicles at Lake Hemet. As J.R. put it on Saturday, a very rewarding day. • RMRU



RMRU PHOTO BY JIM FAIRCHILD

COME ON IN . . . THE WATER'S GREAT — RMRU member Kevin Walker along with John Dew's son, Roy, taunt members on as they approach one of the many creek crossings in the descent of the South Fork of the San Jacinto River, as a group of wet/dry members look on in the background.