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John Dew, Editor — Kevin Walker, Publisher — Dona Towell, Artist

Search and Rescue



RESCUE

Mission No. 8336M

**6 November, Sun.
Tahquitz Canyon,
San Jacinto Mountains**

By Walt Walker



As members were hiking out from filming a new slide show, and at base we were starting to put some of the gear used in the show away, a hiker from the canyon stopped and stated that a youth was stranded at the first falls. We immediately radioed the team in the field to hike down as fast as possible, and then John Dew and I started from the bottom. Upon reaching the falls we found that a friend had helped the boy off of the small ledge he was stuck on. We called members, to slow down their pace, and in turn hiked on out ourselves. • RMRU

ABORT

Mission No. 8337A

**8 November, Tues.
Mountain Center,
San Jacinto Mountains**

We received a call early in the evening from the Hemet office of the Riverside County Sheriff's Department for two overdue 18 year olds. The pair had left a relative's trailer at the Bald Mountain Trailer Park the day before to hike to the South Fork of the San Jacinto River. After failing to return by the agreed upon time, the sheriff was notified. As members were driving to the roadhead, the two

youths returned unharmed, and members were turned around by pagers.

• RMRU

SEARCH

Mission No. 8338M

**13-14 November, Sun.-Mon.
Skyline Ridge,
San Jacinto Mountains**

By Kevin Walker

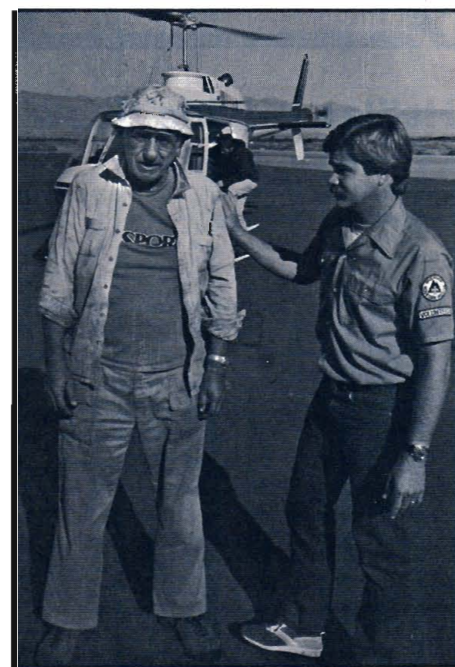


Sometimes it is truly difficult to write a newsletter article, and this is one of those times. I will not dwell or spend a lot of time talking about all the particulars. I will just tell the story. I would like to mention though, that it was a difficult mission, and also a costly mission.

The team was called out at 0730 Sunday morning. We met at the Palm Springs Tram. There we learned that we would be looking for Herbert Hone, 56, of Hemet. Saturday morning he had set out from Palm Springs to hike the Skyline trail to the upper Station of the tram. When he did not return home, his wife notified the rangers who in turn called the Sheriff. Jim Fairchild, Bill Blaschko, Joe Erickson and Cameron Robbins rode the tram and started down the trail from Long Valley. Joel Rothschild, Dave Ezell, Rob Gardner, and I started from the bottom. Mary Bowman manned the radios at base.

After about an hour of hiking, and getting above the majority of short distance foot prints, we came across a set of Nike Approach prints that were the exact size in question. Not long after that the teams above cut the same print leaving the badly grown over trail, and starting down a small stream bed. And of course the stream bed was heading towards Tahquitz Canyon. At base, Ops. Leader Walt Walker and Asst. Ops. Rick Pohlers decided to ask for air support. The OK was quickly given and Brian from Landells Aviation responded. Walt and Rick were picked up and let out on a ridge near the main search area. As they were being flown in, Joe and Cam came across gear

that had been left behind that belonged to Mr. Hone. As the search intensified, Brian was asked to come down to our low elevation and move us into the search area several thousand feet above in elevation. On the first load Dave and Rob were picked up from our one runner boulder. Joel and I waited for the helicopter to return. But that did not happen. Because we were so low, we could not hear what was happening higher on the mountain. Apparently as the two were being let out the tail rotor struck a large bush, damaging the tail enough that Brian quickly flew to the Grapevine heli-spot where he could land and inspect the damage. Luckily it was minor in the respect that the chopper could be flown back to Landells Aviation in Desert Hot Springs. But it was serious enough that the tail rotor had to be replaced, which amounted to a lot of money. After some time Don Landells returned with helicopter 40MC and picked Joel and I up from our rock. Before putting us off we did some air search with no results. But as we made



RMRU PHOTO BY JIM FAIRCHILD

ERRANT HIKER — Hebert Hone and RMRU member Joe Erickson pause for the photographer, after Mr. Hone has been located in the Tahquitz Canyon and then flown back to Palm Springs.

one last pass up Tahquitz Canyon I spotted two women hikers just below the Grapevine in the canyon. Don landed (remember this part, it plays an important part in my story later), and then left as I hiked down to question the pair. Neither had seen or heard anyone as they hiked up the canyon. I thanked them and asked that they keep their eyes open for anyone fitting the description. Don returned and picked me up and then let us out on a small ridge, where we spent the remainder of the day searching. At dusk, Don flew the teams back to base at the Palm Springs Airport.

Over dinner that night we discussed what had been done, and what we could do the following morning. That night a friend of Mary Bowman graciously invited us into her home so we could get a good night's sleep, and be able to start very early in the morning.

Monday morning we met at the lower tram station and also joining us again was Don. Bill Blaschko and I were the first two in. Jim Fairchild took over as Ops. because Walt was unable to return until the afternoon. Don let Bill and I out on

the Skyline Ridge after some air search so that I could have an overview of the search area during the day. Second in was Dave and Cam. They were dropped down below the ridge where the prints had last been seen. As each team had come in, we had Don fly a different search pattern to take advantage of air time. On the third flight in with Rob and Mel, Don stated on the radio that all of the normal areas had been looked at so all he could do was widen the search area again and look over some of the same spots one more time. Not long after that Don came back on the air and stated that they had just spotted a smoldering campfire above the Grapevine helispot, and there were the two women I had seen the day before but along with them, was a man. They landed, and after hiking the short distance up it was confirmed that it indeed was Herbert Hone.

Mr. Hone was quickly helped into the helicopter, and flown out along with one of the two women, who was not feeling well herself. Back at base, as Don flew the remainder of us out, Mr. Hone told the personnel in a rather outspoken manner

of how he had lost the trail, and being separated from his equipment in a manner that did not quite jive with the way we found it. He also said that he saw the helicopter land and let a person out the day before (that person being myself), and that the person did not see him, got back in and left. He did make it hard on us, in that Mr. Hone was wearing almost all tan colored clothing, and because he thought we had landed to pick him up he did not make any attempt to be seen or heard. Luckily for Mr. Hone, he did link up with the two women who convinced him to stay with him until we returned again. The two took excellent care of Mr. Hone, and to them we say thank you.

I truly do enjoy being on this team. My closest friends are also members. And I do receive great satisfaction knowing that we do provide a special service to those in need. But it is somewhat difficult to be enthused when you have spent two days out, away from family and work, find a person who indeed needed our help, and then barely even receive a thank you. Well, at least Mr. Herbert Hone will be able to go out another day and enjoy the wilderness. • RMRU



Helitac & Slide Show

5-6 November, Sat.-Sun.
Landells Aviation
Desert Hot Springs

By Kevin Walker



"Hey, it's not December yet!" That is what was heard at the regular meeting when it was announced that training for November would be Helitac. Due to the fact that Don Landells would be in Oregon in mid

December, training was moved up a month. Then on tap for Sunday would be filming a new slide show in Tahquitz Canyon, utilizing the helicopter.

As per years in the past, we met at Landells Aviation early Saturday morning, spending time visiting with Don and his staff. There that day was Don, his wife Elaine, son Jim, and pilot Steve DeJesus. After some outrageous war stories (that always happen when Walt

and Don get together), we adjourned to the helipad outside of the hanger. There Don went over general information about the helicopter, its abilities and limitations. Also talked about was the ever present need for safety, approaching, entering, exiting and conduct inside the

machine. Next new members, and old alike practiced entering and exiting while the bird sat silent on the pad.

Soon we were out in the field next to the heliport working with the helicopter in flight. Everyone took their turn entering the machine while at a one runner



RMRU PHOTO BY JIM FAIRCHILD

ONE RUNNER PRACTICE — RMRU members at full reach, practice loading the litter containing Mary Bowman into the helicopter while on a runner boulder pick up

pick-up. A quick spin around the field and then stepping off the skid while in a hover. It is more commonly known as a jump, though the term is a bad definition. Along with those obvious skills, members practiced guiding the helicopter into position using hand signals. After everyone had received a good amount of practice at the personal skills, we loaded Mary Bowman into a litter, and then practiced placing the litter in the helicopter while on a one runner, as we would be doing the same thing the following day. As it has been for some time now, the morning was extremely well spent. For that alone we owe Don a great deal of thanks.



RMRU PHOTO BY JIM FAIRCHILD

CLASS IN SESSION — Veteran mountain pilot Don Landells instructs RMRU members on the dos and don'ts around the helicopter.

After lunch, local tough guy, Rick "Major Disaster" Pohlers headed up the van clean-up and polish committee, as some of the more sneaker members worked (still in question) at sorting and doing an inventory on gear. At any rate when the evening approached the work was completed.

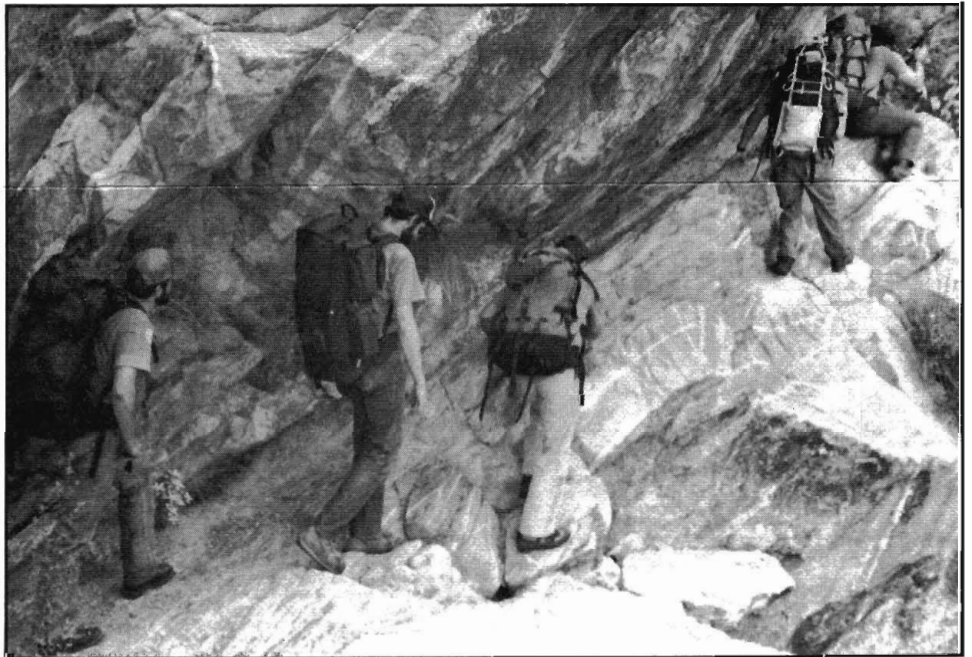
Since we would be going into Tahquitz Canyon the following day, Don and Elaine invited us to spend the night on their lawn by the pool. As a very small token of thanks, members all brought various dishes for a pot luck dinner, and had the Landells to dinner **RMRU** style. It was a very lively evening, all having a great time.

Morning came all too soon, as we had to get an early start for the days filming. After a quick breakfast in Palm Springs, we met at Ann Dolleys and set up base camp. I will be brief. We hiked into the



RMRU PHOTO BY JIM FAIRCHILD

SAFETY FIRST — Once loaded in the back RMRU members Kevin Walker and Mel Krug (partially obscured) secure the litter before pilot Don Landells is given the O.K. to lift off.



RMRU PHOTO BY JIM FAIRCHILD

EXPOSURE — This photo does not show the dramatic 300 plus foot drop below, as RMRU members make their way into Tahquitz Canyon for the filming of a new slide show.

canyon and filmed a slide show in the vicinity of the second falls. There we used Bernie McIlvoy and Mark Rhoads' lovely girl friends as subjects, one being an informant and the other with injuries. Filmed, was first aid, litter rigging, horizontal raise and then a helicopter pick-up at an actual helispot used in previous missions. The day went well, photographers getting the necessary shots, and members getting good practice. After things were picked up and everyone had a snack, we started out. As we were hiking

along Walt came on the air and said that there was a stranded youth at the first falls. With that we picked up speed and headed down canyon. (See Mission No. 8336M).

We have said it many times before, but it still rings true. To Don and everyone at Landells Aviation, thank you so very much for providing us with the opportunity to work with you and maintain our high level of proficiency. Happy Flying in Oregon next month. • **RMRU**

For friends who care . . .



We give thanks.