

Volume XXI, Issue IV, April 1985

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

## Search and Rescue

### CALL

Mission No. 8516C

NO INFORMATION AVAILABLE

### RESCUE

Mission No. 8517M

13 April, Sat.  
Above Tahquitz Canyon,  
San Jacinto Mountains

By Kevin Walker



The team was at Joshua Tree for training, but for different work-related problems several of us were back in town when the call came for a hiker stranded because of exhaustion. As news of the call was transferred to the rest of the team in J.T., Walt Walker, Glenn Henderson, John Dew and I responded to Ann Dolley's in Palm Springs. Enroute, Capt. Ray Canova contacted us by radio and asked us to stop at the Banning station. There we met the captain and not long after, informant Obert Kingston. Obert told us that he and his companion, Howard Small, both from England and here in the U.S. to do the Pacific Crest Trail from Mexico to Canada (sound familiar?) had become lost in the area of Red Tahquitz. They wandered down hill out of the snow and ultimately became exhausted in dense brush. After resting Obert was able to continue, and made it to Palm Springs. Howard, though, was unable to continue.

We went on to Palm Springs, and arriving with us was Don Landells in one of his Bell Jet Rangers. Walt assigned Glenn and I to fly search, and try and locate the



RMRU PHOTO BY KEVIN WALKER

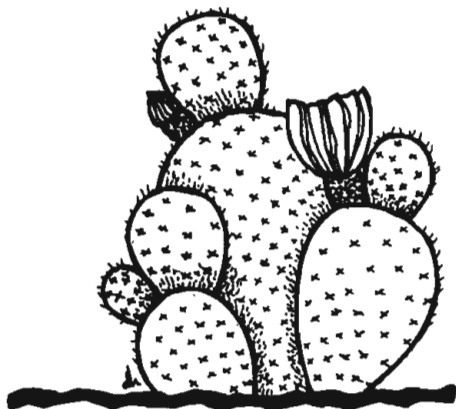
FLOATING ON AIR — RMRU member Glenn Henderson helps guide the right skid of helicopter 40MC, into position on a boulder above Tahquitz Canyon. Some credit however, must go to pilot Don Landells for getting the skid there.



RMRU PHOTO BY KEVIN WALKER

BUCKLE UP — With exhausted hiker Howard Small on board, RMRU member Glenn Henderson (the right hand in the photo) moves in to assist Howard in buckling up before leaving the one runner helispot and flying back to Palm Springs.

subject. Once on board we flew to Red Tahquitz where we quickly picked up their prints in the snow leaving the trail and heading in the general direction of Caramba. When we got below snow level, we started sweeping across the escarpment. We flew below Caramba, and as we neared the 7,000 foot level, I spotted smoke in the distance. Sure enough, on the ridge that separates Tahquitz Canyon from the Long Valley drainage, was Howard. Don put us out on a boulder by his camp and then flew off to a nearby helispot where he could land and wait. Howard was feeling better, but was quite glad to have us there. We helped Howard gather his things up, then called Don back in. Once in position we helped Howard in and fastened the seat belts. Don flew Howard out and then returned for us. As we landed we were met by a disgruntled Mel Krug who just didn't get there fast enough to help. Sorry, Mel. Anyway, Howard and Obert were already talking about moving on. They were sad though to hear that Lisa Carlson had had to be rescued a month earlier. They had been keeping track of her by registers along the way. With everything secure, I headed for home, and the rest of the gang went back to Joshua Tree. • RMRU



## RESCUE

**Mission No. 8518M**

**14 April, Sun.**

**Joshua Tree National Monument**

*By Kevin Walker*



The first thing I want to do is apologize to team members present and to Ranger Tom Patterson of Joshua Tree National Monument for any errors I might have in this article as I was not present. Due to an error on the editor's part (yours truly) no write up assignment was made for this mission.

To the best of my knowledge, Sunday late morning, a climber in the Joshua Tree National Monument took a fall and was moderately injured. It was a ground fall, and a technical rescue was not needed. What was needed was medical assistance. Knowing that RMRU had a doctor present, that being Ray Hussey, Ranger Tom Patterson came over to where RMRU was training and asked for assistance. Members present followed Tom back to where the climber was located. Dr. Ray attended to the patient while arrangements for helicopter transportation was made. At first a helicopter from the Highway Patrol was going to respond, but apparently they got tied up in something else. Ultimately, a chopper from the San Bernardino Sheriff's Department responded and flew the injured subject to one of the desert hospitals. • RMRU

## SEARCH

**Mission No. 8519M**

**19 April, Fri.**

**Pacific Crest Trail,  
San Jacinto Mountains**

*By Rob Gardner*



The call came in at 1:00 PM on April 19, 1985 that a family of five people traveling the Pacific Crest Trail (PCT) with ten Arabian horses was three days overdue to meet with their supplier at the Whitewater junction.

The RMRU gathered at Camp Maranatha in Idyllwild. The Riverside County Sheriff's Office had a Landells Aviation Jet Ranger helicopter dispatched to meet with the RMRU.

It had been storming in the Mt. San Jacinto range for the past three days and the clouds were building up again as another storm was entering over the range from the coast side. The planned route of the family covered over fifty trail miles in Mt. San Jacinto. The Northwest side of the mountain range still had snow and ice hiding much of the trail.

The family of five, Thomas Stewart, Lynda Stewart, and three of their children, Sean (aged 15 years), Aaron (age 13 years), and Stacy (age 10 years) had departed on their planned expedition from the Mexican border to the Canadian border via the Pacific Crest Trail (PCT) on April 1, 1985. They were on the first leg of a 2,600 trail mile journey. They initially had fourteen Arabian horses with them. However, due to unfortunate incidents on the first few days of their expedition they had only ten of their horses with them when they

entered Mt. San Jacinto. Five of the horses were packing feed, grain and camping gear. The family members rode the other five horses.

As RMRU team volunteers gathered and prepared for search, the helicopter went airborne with team members Rob Gardner (the writer) and Walt Walker. The helicopter was piloted by Mike Donovan. From familiarity with conditions in the mountain observed on other recent missions it was decided that the initial air search would begin at the Desert Divide vicinity. There was a lot of area to search and it was evident that the satisfactory weather conditions could be lost at any time, as head winds of the upcoming storm began to build up.

After about fifteen minutes of flying, some hikers were spotted on the PCT. Mike hovered the helicopter across the trail as Walt jumped out and spoke with the two hikers. Upon return to the aircraft, Walt put his headset on and advised Mike and the writer that the hikers had seen some people on horseback to the South-Southeast. We flew over the trail eventually finding tracks of one horse. We didn't know what to make of this as we were looking for ten horses. We flew sections of trail which remained snow covered. Eventually tracks of several horses appeared.

Fifteen trail miles later the helicopter came over the PCT trail just above Morris Ranch. The Stewart family was immediately spotted. They were riding south on the PCT, having turned back.

The helicopter landed in a nearby open area near a creek. Walt and I quickly hiked over to the family. They all appeared tired and depressed. They hardly spoke. Mr. Stewart finally offered that the family had suffered several crises while in the San Jacinto range.

On one day two horses had gone off of the trail down a steep slope and Mr. Stewart was unable to get the horses back up. In another incident Mrs. Stewart had suffered injuries to her ribs when a horse stumbled. A third horse was lost on another day when trail broke away and the horse tumbled three hundred feet down the steep mountain side. Mr. Stewart had to hike down and shoot this horse.

The family was riding out with seven horses. They lost three horses in the Mt. San Jacinto range (and had left four others behind at Anza-Borrego).

Mrs. Stewart was flown out in the helicopter due to her injuries. Mr. Stewart, Sean, Aaron and Stacy rode on to Morris Ranch (about two miles) to get water and food for the horses. Mr. Stewart said the horses had gone three days without any food or water. The family had lost a lot of their supplies and camping equipment when the third Arabian pack horse fell down the slope.

Mr. Stewart contracted Landells to enter the mountain the next day to recover equipment but high winds and clouds of the new storm (which lasted three days) prevented reaching the areas where the equipment was left.

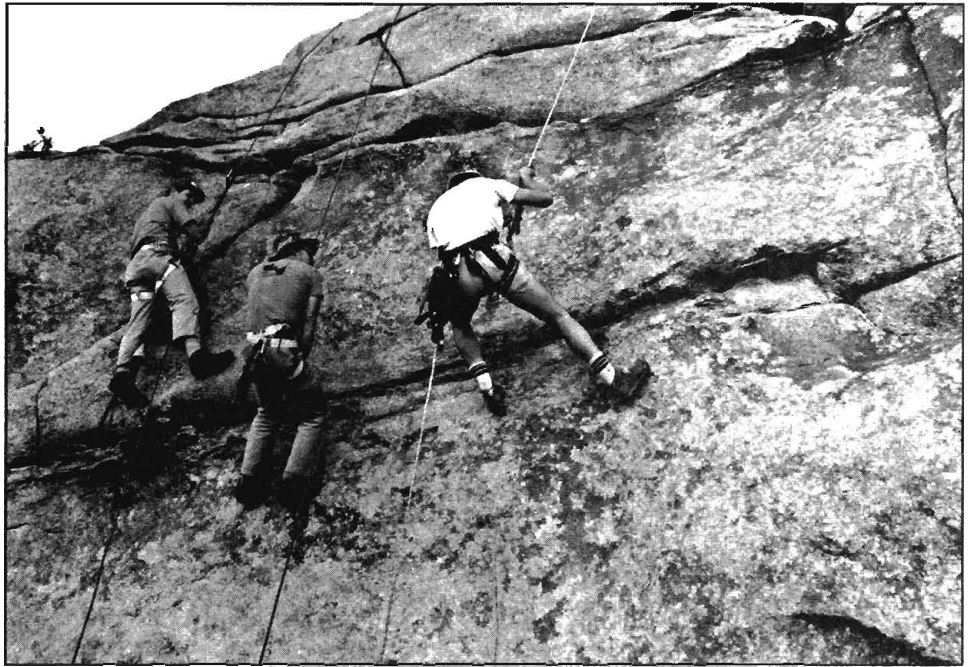
It was later learned that two of the horses died on the steep slopes near South Peak. The third horse fell on the steep slope just south of Antsell Rock, causing a broken leg, and had to be shot.

It is clear that the Stewart family had a difficult ordeal in their days on the PCT of Mt. San Jacinto. Everybody is happy the members of the Stewart family were not hurt to any greater extent. I'll always remember the sad face of young Stacy Stewart, which I saw as Walt and I approached the family, that late afternoon of April 19, 1985. • RMRU

## CALL

Mission No. 8520C

NO INFORMATION AVAILABLE



RMRU PHOTO BY JIM FAIRCHILD

INSTRUCTION — Veteran member Rick Pohlers (center) instructs fellow members Ray Hussey and Bill Blaschko on jumaring and rappelling techniques at Joshua Tree.



## Technical & Family Camp

12-14 April, Fri.-Sun.  
Lost Horse Camp,  
Joshua Tree National Monument

By Mel Krug



Joshua Tree training is one that we all look forward to. Families come out and we camp and work on our technical skills — raises, lowers, and all that good stuff. It also gives us a chance to talk around the camp-

fire in the evening — good fellowship with good friends.

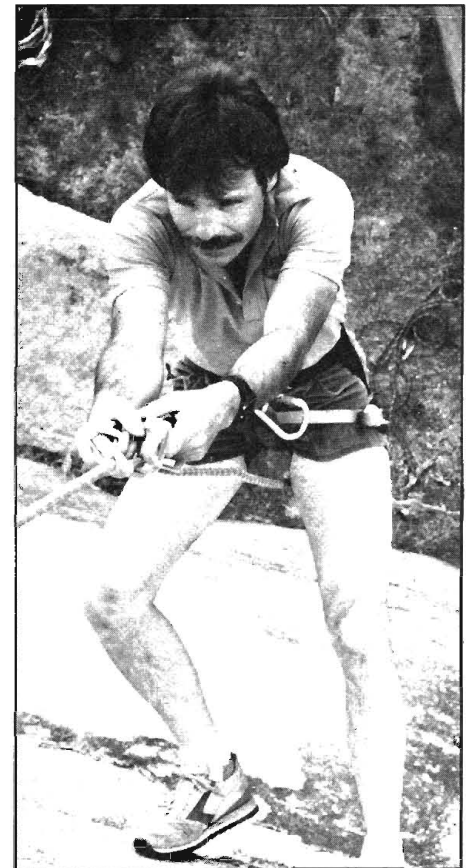
Well, things didn't start out too well. Friday afternoon just as I was getting ready to leave Kevin Walker called me and asked me to drive the van to Joshua Tree. "I can't go" he said. It seems that Kevin and Walt had to stay and work on a printing job Walt thought was due a week later than it was.

Team members started arriving Friday night and some early Saturday morning

and training got off to an early start. We had set up our systems for raises and lowers at a site near our campground at the Lost Horse Ranger Station. Some members were working on rigging a lower and some were working on personal skills such as rappelling and passing knots when we got a call that two hikers were stuck on the Pacific Crest Trail (PCT). Walt, Kevin and Glenn Henderson were rolling and asked a few of us to help out. Suffice it to say that Mary Bowman, Bill George, Ray Hussey, Jim Fairchild and myself drove to Palm Springs to help on that rescue while Rick Pohlers took charge of training for those who stayed in Joshua Tree. We got back from Palm Springs in time for dinner and a video tape presentation by Tom Patterson, Joshua Tree's rescue ranger, of their tyrolean decent of Devil's Tower.

Sunday morning arrived and we thought we might get in a good days training. Again, just as we were getting things set up we got a call from Tom Patterson that a climber had taken a long ground fall. (see 8518M). He asked that Ray Hussey, one of our doctors and three or four of us assist with the injured climber. We got to him and Ray tended to his medical needs while several of us and some other climbers held a tarp over him for shade and brought the Highway Patrol helicopter in to transport him to the hospital.

By the time we got back to our campground it was time to pack up and head back for home. Those rescues mentioned here will be written up in more detail by others who participated. • RMRU



RMRU PHOTO BY JIM FAIRCHILD

TECHNICAL EXPERT — Even veteran RMRU members like Bernie McIlvoy get out and practice personal technical skills, such as jumaring as seen here.