

Volume XXII, Issue V, May 1986

Rob Gardner, Editor — Kevin Walker, Publisher — Dona Halcrow, Artist

Search and Rescue

SEARCH

Mission No. 8616M

4 May, Sun.

Cottonwood Springs
Joshua Tree National Monument

By Bill Blaschko, M.D.



When I got the call at 9:30 on Sunday morning, I immediately had a sinking feeling. I was told that a 9 year old girl was missing at Joshua Tree National Monument (JTNM) after she had gone to the bath-

room near where her family was camping. The situation sounded much too similar to the case of Laura Bradbury, a little girl who has never been found after being reported as missing at JTNM and possibly being abducted. As I was driving to JTNM I thought about my own 9 year old daughter. It seemed unlikely to me that she would get lost under these circumstances. My sense of foreboding was relieved somewhat when I entered JTNM. Roadblocks has been set up to check all traffic for the missing girl.

After arriving at base camp I discovered that the search for Marla Woods, our subject, was already well organized and underway. In addition to the roadblocks, the child's camp site had been roped off to preserve tracks and we had an excellent description of Marla's clothing and footprints. A National Park volunteer, Robin Patterson, had already found a set of Marla's footprints leading out into the open desert. I had the good fortune of being teamed up with Joe Erickson and Robin with the assignment of following these tracks. As we meticulously followed Marla's trail, helicopters from Landells Aviation and El Toro Marine Base buzzed

overhead. Also several other teams were put into the field by both RMRU and Joshua Tree Search and Rescue (JOSAR). Enroute to the scene were members of the California Rescue Dog Association (CAR-DA) and Mountain Rescue Association teams from Sierra Madre, San Diego and Altadena.

Joe, Robin and I quickly settled into a smooth tracking routine. We were making slow but steady progress as we did not want to take any chance of inadvertently obliterating the prints. Kevin Walker, at base, radioed our group that a JOSAR team had come across tracks about a mile ahead of our location. Joe was flown ahead and verified that these were the subject's prints. Robin and I were then flown up to continue tracking with Joe. This process of "leap-frogging" saved hours of searching, and is a strategy our team commonly employs. Dale and Diane Smolenyak were the JOSAR members who found the prints

while searching a dirt road. They joined us as we continued tracking.

By this time it appeared to be clear that Marla was lost in the desert, not kidnaped. The various ground teams and helicopters were directed to new assignments in the vicinity the tracks were leading towards. Tracking was intense work. I was bent over carefully studying a rock that had been turned over when I heard Diane yell out, "Marla!" As I continued to look at the ground, I remember thinking that it was a good idea to be calling out in hopes of making voice contact. A moment later I glanced up and saw Marla running into Diane's arms. When Joe asked Marla if she was all right she said, "I'm fine but I have one big problem, my parents are lost!" Don Landells flew in with Rob Gardner, picked up Marla and took her back to Cottonwood Camp. Back at base Marla explained that she had gone to a different bathroom than the one she had



RMRU PHOTO BY KEVIN WALKER

SMILES FROM EVERYONE — There is nothing better than finding a child and reuniting her with her family, as seen here with RMRU member Joe Erickson and an unidentified JOSAR member leading nine year old Marla Woods away from the helicopter towards her parents.

gone to the day before and got mixed up on the way back to her family's tent. While wandering in the desert she prayed to bolster her spirits.

After Marla was reunited with her family all the searchers met to discuss how various aspects of the search went. I was impressed with the rapid manner in which manpower was mobilized. Searchers coming from all over Southern California received updates on the progress of the search every half hour over the Bureau of Land Management repeater radio network. Searchers from Northern California were alerted and on standby if needed. Dog teams were in the process of being flown in when Marla was found. These were just some of the multi-agency efforts that were mobilized within the first two hours after Marla was reported missing. This kind of team effort was no accident. It came out of analyzing previous searches for good and bad points. I felt that as painful as the Laura Bradbury search had been, the lessons learned there led to the rapid and successful recovery of Marla Woods. • RMRU

Volunteer Man Hours — 84

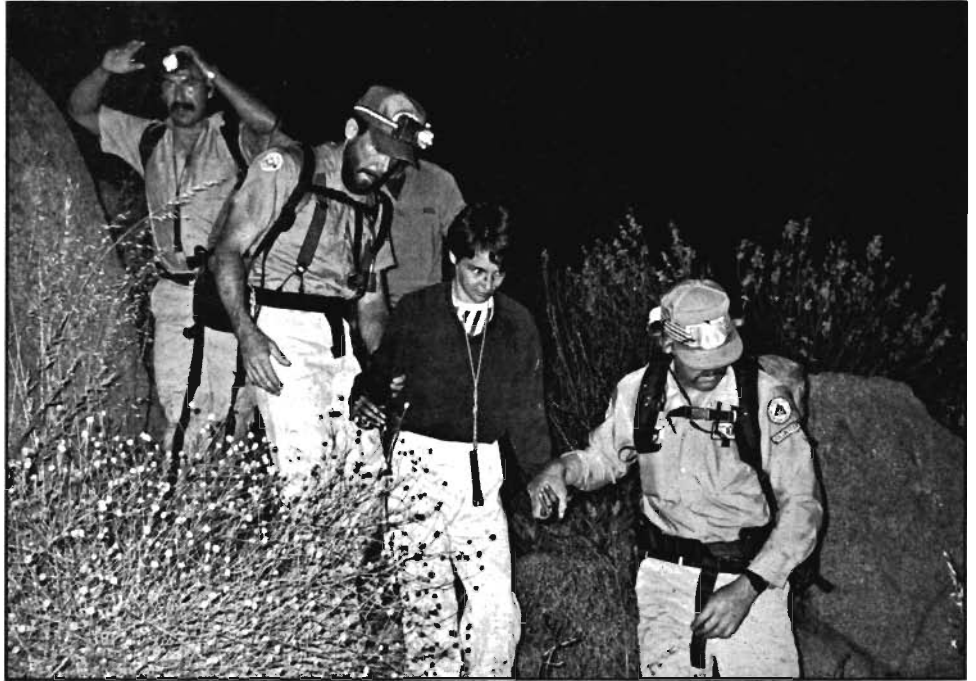
ABORT

Mission No. 8617A

**15 May, Thurs.
Saddle Junction
San Jacinto Mountains**

Sgt. Jim Walsh of the Riverside County Sheriff's Department, Hemet Station, contacted RMRU member Walt Walker by telephone at 1935 hrs. on May 15, 1986. Sgt. Walsh asked that RMRU be assembled to search for two missing females, 13 and 18 years of age. The two subjects were participants in a hiking group from the Beverly Hills area that was staying at the Idyllwild School of Music and Arts. The group, along with two other groups were day hiking from Humber Park to Saddle Junction, Skunk Cabbage Meadow and Tahquitz Peak. The two subjects were slow hikers and were transferred from the Tahquitz Peak group to the Skunk Cabbage group. That occurred at approximately noon at Saddle Junction. That was the last time anybody remembered seeing the subjects. They were not missed until the groups had returned to ISOMATA. The RMRU paging system was activated and members were on their way to Idyllwild when the missing pair were located. The paging system was then used to abort the mission. Once again, the paging system that was purchased by funds supplied by the Sustaining Members was put to very good use twice in one evening. • RMRU

Volunteer Man Hours — 18



RMRU PHOTO BY KEVIN WALKER

BACK TO SAFETY — RMRU members Mel Krug and Glenn Henderson guide Anita McCarty down the steep hillside above Snow Creek near the Palm Springs Water District caretakers residence.

RESCUE

Mission No. 8618M

**18 May, Sun.
Snow Creek,
San Jacinto Mountains**

By Glenn Henderson



Michael McCarty, Anita McCarty, Susan Gallagher, and James Ballenberg planned to hike the Pacific Crest Trail from Black Mountain road to Snow Creek Village on Sunday May 18. This is a long and tiring trail that is about sixteen miles long. Anita became extremely tired as the day wore on. When the group got above Snow Creek Village they decided to take a short cut from the trail. This shorter route led them into steep terrain just as darkness fell. Because Anita was exhausted, and the group had not carried flashlights, she and her husband, Michael, decided to stop hiking rather than risk injury by hiking in the dark. Their two hiking partners, Susan and James, hiked on and eventually got to the water company caretaker's house. James telephoned the Riverside Sheriff's Office (RSO) in Banning and notified them of the situation regarding Anita. The RSO then called RMRU into service.

When the RMRU arrived at Snow Creek the Deputy Sheriff on the scene had his spotlights on the rocky ledge where the couple was stranded. It didn't look too far

away but not knowing what to expect the RMRU men loaded their packs with an assortment of technical gear before hiking to the couple. After twenty minutes of hiking, Anita and Michael were reached. Michael was fine but Anita was extremely tired and sore. However, Anita was able to walk with assistance. With help and the light of RMRU headlamps guiding the way Anita and Michael slowly hiked to the rescue van. The RSO deputy drove the hikers back to their vehicle. The RMRU men had a quick meal and then headed home about 2:00 am, in time for a few hours of sleep before going to work. • RMRU

Volunteer Man Hours — 44

SEARCH

Mission No. 8619M

**26 May, Mon.
Wonderland of Rocks
Joshua Tree National Monument**

By Rob Gardner



At about 2:30 pm on Monday May 26, 1986 the RMRU was called out by the National Park Service (NPS) at Joshua Tree National Monument (JTNM). A search was in progress for overdue hiker Sgt. Juan Badillo of 29 Palms Marine Base.

Juan and his friend, Lonnie Rasch, had entered JTNM via Fortynine Palms Can-

yon, at the north side of JTNM, at about 7:00 am on Sunday for a day hike. They had planned to hike through the desolate Wonderland of Rocks and exit at Park Route 12. They had an alternate plan of heading due south.

At about 6:00 pm Sunday the two hikers became separated but had voice contact. Reportedly, voice contact was lost at 1:30 am Monday.

Lonnie found his way out of Wonderland of Rocks at about 7:00 am and reported the circumstances to NPS rangers. Lonnie reported that Juan was in good physical condition and that although he was not familiar with the desert he had

the experience of overnight military operations and jungle training. Lonnie advised that in preparation for the near 100°F temperatures Juan was carrying six quarts of water, two quarts of Gatorade, and a bag of oranges. Interestingly, Juan reportedly was not carrying a compass, knife, matches, flashlight or map.

At about 12:00 noon a missing person report was filed at JTNM Headquarters and a search was started. Initially, the JTNM Volunteer Search and Rescue Team, JOSAR, was called out and a Landells Aviation helicopter was contracted. At about 2:30 pm the RMRU and El Toro Marine Base SAR helicopter were called

out.

At about 4:30 pm Don Landells found Juan Badillo by air search. Juan was located in Wonderland of Rocks about one mile northeast of Keys Ranch. He was signaling for help. The El Toro SAR helio team flew Juan to the Base Hospital at nearby 29 Palms Marine Base, where Juan was found to be in okay condition except for dehydration. The El Toro team was Capt. McDonald, USMC (Pilot), Sgt. Meuli, USMC (Crew Chief), and HM2 Mike Anjola, USN (In-Flight Medical Technician). • RMRU

Volunteer Man Hours — 108

SEARCH

Mission No. 8620M

26-27 May, Mon.-Tues.
May Valley,
San Jacinto Mountains

By Rick Pohlers



We got the call at the usual time, just when we're starting to fall asleep. This being a holiday weekend the probability was high that somebody would get lost or hurt. Sure enough, a little twelve year old girl

was missing out of Mountain Center, along with her horse. She had probably been thrown by her steed and lay hurt and helpless, in the dark, surrounded by blood thirsty coyotes and venomous reptiles! This sounds like a job for the Riverside Rural Rescue Unit (RRRU). Hi Hi and away!

The usual gang of hombres, such as, Jim "Admiral Horn Blower" Fairchild, Glenn "Snake-gets-in-your-eyes" Henderson, Joe "Lt. Ludicrous" Erickson, Ray "Dr. Ghoul" Hussey, Rob "Sgt. Squeaker" Gardner, FNG's Jay Pion and Henry Negrete, gathered at the Keenwild Fire Station. They were quickly organized into teams by the head honcho, Kevin "Col. Klutz" Walker. Teams were assigned to cover some of the uncountable horse trails that criss-cross the search area, to look for tracks or fresh road apples. The teams soon found plenty of each but it was hard to tell if the signs belonged to the missing horsey.

Seems this little filly had gone riding that afternoon after her Ma had mentioned selling the beloved little pony. Our "Den Mother," Mary Bowman, having two daughters of her own, figured the girl probably was hiding out at a friend's house. That sounded like a possibility, so after searching and yelling our lungs out calling for the girl all night we put Mary

and the trusted Sheriff on pursuing Mary's theory, come sun up.

Sun up came after Rob "Sgt. Squeaker" Gardner got twenty minutes of shut eye. That's plenty. With the sun came the new fangled flying machine, piloted by Don Landells in person, to aid in the search. It sounded like an eagle in the clear mountain air. A couple of hours of this soaring found nothing but millions of tracks going in all directions and tons of road apples.

Meanwhile, back at the ranch, the Sheriff confronted one of the little girl's friends at school. Sure enough, the friend spilled the beans and our subject was quickly rounded up at the girlfriend's house, along with the wayward pony. She was in a heap of trouble with her Ma.

So ended another thrilling adventure for the RRRU, as they rode off to the chuck wagon for breakfast. Hi Ho and away! • RMRU

Volunteer Man Hours — 128



RMRU PHOTO BY JIM FAIRCHILD

REUNITED — Twelve year old Carolina Steinberg steps out of the patrol car and is reunited with her mother Maria after she was returned to base by Sheriff's personnel.

RESCUE

Mission No. 8621M

27 May, Mon.
Stone Creek
San Jacinto Mountains

By Kevin Walker



During the previous mission (8620M) we heard talk on the Sheriff's frequency of an auto accident on Highway 243 near Stone Creek, and that there may have been a walk away. There was a lot of confusion about

that incident, as we completed our search at Mountain Center. We drove to Idyllwild and had a much needed breakfast after completing an all night search.

Just as we were leaving the Idyllwild restaurant to head for home the Riverside Sheriff's Office (RSO) called by radio and requested that we respond to Stone Creek to assist with the rescue of an injured woman. In about ten minutes we were at the Stone Creek turnout where we met volunteers (Mr. & Mrs. Muir) from the Pine Cove Fire Department and their ambulance. We were told that at about 8:00 p.m. the previous evening a man and woman had driven their car down the eroded dirt road that runs parallel to the Stone Creek drainage. They got their car stuck, and following that the man somehow took a tumble and injured himself. The man got back to the car where he stayed while the woman went to seek help. The night passed. In the morning the man was found in the car by a jogger who notified authorities initiating a fire department rescue of the man. He was taken to Hemet Valley Hospital Emergency Room for treatment. That's what we heard going on over the radio earlier.

The woman was located about two hours later when her calls for help were heard. She was calling up from the bottom

of the drainage. Apparently, when she left to find help for the man she fell from the dirt road, tumbled down four hundred feet of steep, slidy slope that was covered with loose dirt, fallen leaves, and standing trees. Near the bottom of the slope she bounced off of about forty feet of jagged rock, falling to the edge of the creek. She lay at that point overnight, nearly fourteen hours, before being discovered.

Gear was loaded into the four-wheel drive ambulance and we hiked down the dirt road a short distance. We hiked just past the stuck passenger car to where we would stage the rescue. Operations Leader Rick Pohlers sent Bernie McIlvoy, Rob Gardner and Jim Fairchild down the steep dirt slope to Stone Creek. They were able to go most of the distance without ropes, though one would not have wanted to slip. The last seventy feet required a rope rappel. Once at the bottom an assessment was made for what would be needed to move the fifty-seven year old injured woman up from the creek. Two rangers from the State Park and U.S. Forest Service were already with the injured woman when RMRU arrived.

Rick Pohlers and Jay Pion set up a lowering line and then Randy Morris, a paramedic from the Idyllwild Fire Department, was lowered to the creek bed. Randy continued medical assessment and aid. The subject appeared to have suffered many large abrasions, lacerations to the extremities and face, a possible compound fracture to the lower right leg, general

pains, stiffness, swelling, and mild dehydration. A C-Collar was put in place, limbs were splinted, an I.V. was started, and she was placed on a back-board.

Bernie, Rick, and I discussed the alternatives for extrication. We could do a raise back to the road, but this would risk rock-fall and a rough ride for our subject. We could carry or wheel the litter up the creek bed, which would mean more of the same problem, as there are numerous small cascades and waterfalls. The other alternative was to air lift her out of the canyon. No question . . . for the safety of our patient a winch out would be the best way. Therefore, I requested that the Sheriff contact El Toro Marine Base in Orange County and ask for one of the SAR (Search and Rescue) helicopters. The request was approved and El Toro was contacted. Meanwhile, Rick lowered Glenn Henderson and me down to the creek with a litter and the rest of the first aid equipment.

litter lowered from the helicopter. The subject was secured into the litter and made ready for her exciting ride out of the canyon. Paramedic Randy Morris was winched out first as he would go with the subject to the hospital. The cable was then lowered back to us and the subject and litter were hooked up and then raised nearly 150 feet to the helicopter. Because the helicopter was getting low on fuel, Medic Orent was left with us and would be picked up later. With the subject safely on board, the helicopter flew her directly to the Loma Linda University Medical Center Trauma Unit for further medical treatment.

The excitement was over. All that was left was to get the remaining personnel and equipment out of the canyon. Medic Orent was surprised at what Jumaring was really like, but enjoyed the experience. By late afternoon all personnel were out and enroute home. Some of us had been out for nearly 36 hours, and it was indeed nice to get home and be able to relax knowing that we had done well. USFS, CDF, RSO, Idyllwild F.D., State Park Service, and El Toro Marine Base SAR were there for the same reason as us . . . to help others. • RMRU

Volunteer Man Hours — 72



RMRU PHOTO BY JIM FAIRCHILD

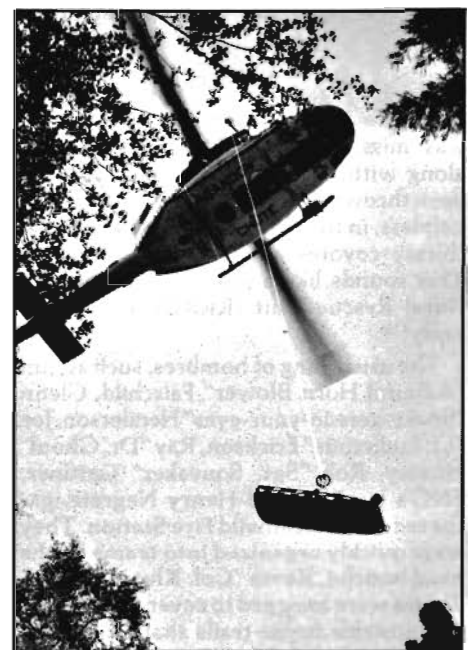
MEDICAL CARE — Rescue personnel give aid to Patricia Hill in the bottom of Stone Creek. During the previous night Mrs. Hill fell and moderately injured herself



RMRU PHOTO BY JIM FAIRCHILD

ON RAPPEL — Navy medical technician Ron Orent rappels out of the Marine Bell 212 down into Stone Creek to help in the rescue of Patricia Hill.

In only 35 minutes the sound of the powerful Bell 212 helicopter could be heard in the distance. Radio communications were established and she soon was circling overhead. A smoke signal was ignited to show wind direction and shortly after that U.S. Navy Medical Technician Ron Orent rappelled out of the bird as the pilot, Capt. Putnam, USMC, and Crew Chief Sgt. Meuli, USMC, held the helicopter steady. The only drawback to the operation was the 100 mile an hour (helicopter created) winds, that we experienced in the canyon while the helicopter hovered overhead. Once down Medic Orent had a



RMRU PHOTO BY JIM FAIRCHILD

RAISE TO SAFETY — Mrs. Patricia Hill is raised better than 100 feet out of Stone Creek up to the helicopter by winch. Mrs. Hill was then flown to Loma Linda Medical Center

SPRING MEETING

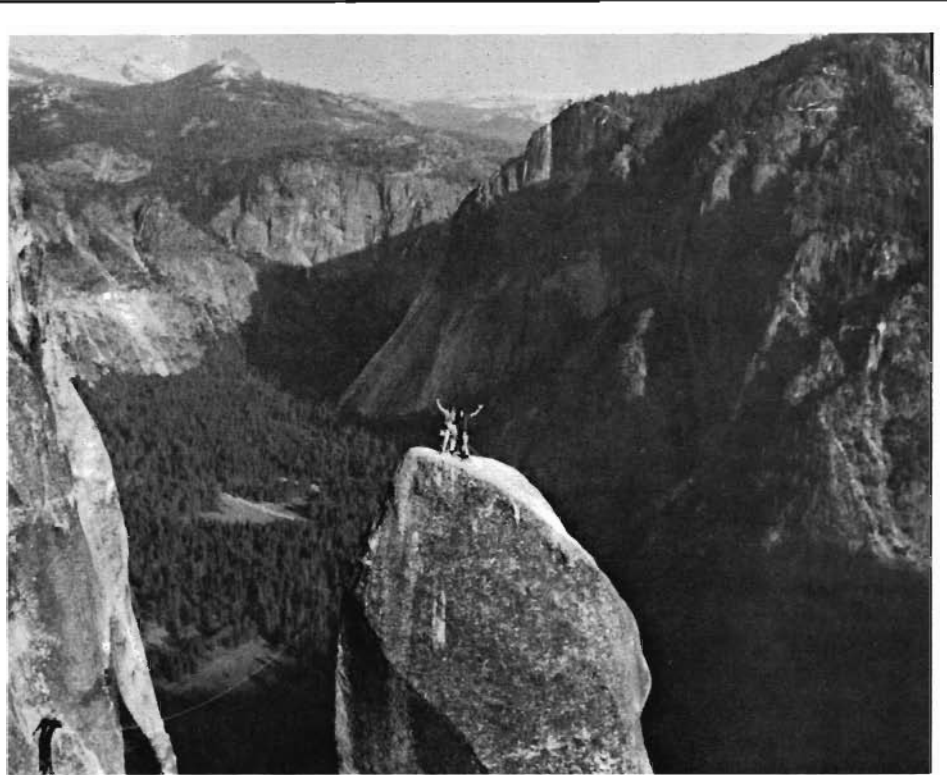
California Region
Mountain Rescue Association

17 May, Sat.

The California Region Mountain Rescue Association held its Spring Meeting on Saturday, May 17, 1986 at the Sierra Madre Search and Rescue Team rescue room. The purpose of the meeting was to review recent missions of the California Mountain Rescue Association (MRA) teams, discuss joint missions, and plan for future events of the region, with emphasis on the upcoming California Region MRA seminar scheduled for June 6, 7, 8 at Camp Sugar Pine, near Yosemite National Park. Other business discussed included the recent tracking seminar at China Lake, National MRA elections, the National MRA conference to be held on June 21, 22 at Seattle, Washington, and a briefing on the Emergency Medical Services Commission.

California Region President Timothy Fives chaired the meeting. Delegates were present from RMRU, Malibu, China Lake, Los Padres, Bay Area, San Diego, and Sierra Madre Mountain Rescue Association teams. The California MRA region includes fourteen Mountain Search and Rescue teams.

Volunteer Man Hours — 32



RMRU members Bernie McIlvoy and Cameron Robbins at the top of Lost Arrow Spire, at Yosemite National Park on May 17, 1986. Bernie and Cameron practiced technical climbing, jumaring, rappelling, and setting up a tyrolean traverse.



Technical Rock Rescue

10 May, Sat.
Big Rock
Lake Perris

By Rick Pohlers



We got aced out of our usual annual technical training at Joshua Tree National Monument (JT-NM) due to the riotous hoards of people camping at JT-NM to see Halley's comet. Therefore, RMRU decided on a one day technical training on Big Rock at the shores of Lake Perris. Our training chairman, Steve Bryant, decided that we needed to be out there at 0600 hrs. This is about two hours earlier than most of our hearts restart in the morning.

The purpose of this training was to familiarize the newer team members, Jay Pion and Henry Negrete, with personal skills such as rappelling and Jumaring (translation — going down the rope and coming up the rope) and for all team members to practice team skills. The team practiced setting up systems to lower a litter, litter rigging, and mechanical advantage systems for raising of a litter up a rock face.

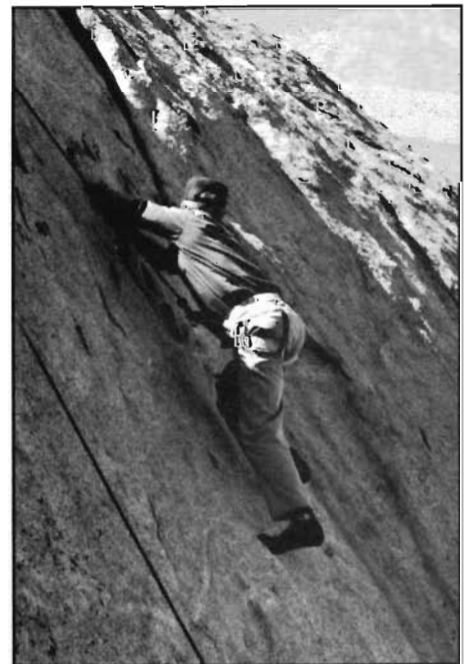
This training day also gave Walt Walker and yours truly, "Major Disaster," a chance to show the troops what we learned at a recent National Search and Rescue (NASAR) seminar in Colorado. Basically, what we showed everyone was how to take a simple raise with ropes and pulleys and make it really complicated! We're not sure that it will work under battle conditions but it is impressive to see one guy pull six people up the cliff face, very slowly.

People trained hard all morning and after lunch things wound down. Bud "O.F." White provided us with comic relief by showing us how well his new climbing shoes worked. Like he said, not too many sixty year olds buy new climbing shoes.

Later in the afternoon, as it got hot and smoggy, people adjourned to Kevin Walker's "H.Q." (house) to straighten up

the team rescue vans and check over the equipment. • RMRU

Volunteer Man Hours — 219



RMRU PHOTO BY DONA HALCROW

BUD "O.F." WHITE — "Climber extraordinaire."



1 9 6 1



1 9 8 6

"25 years of caring for others"

