

RIMRU

RIVERSIDE MOUNTAIN RESCUE UNIT

NEWSLETTER

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Search and Rescue

RESCUE

Mission No. 8701M

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

By Kevin Walker



The holiday prediction came true. A four day holiday starting on New Years, with clear, mild weather. It just had to happen. It was around 4:00 p.m., I clearly remember that half-time

festivities were under way at the Rose Bowl. The call was for an injured climber on Tahquitz Rock. By voice contact with the subject, injuries were confirmed, so a helicopter was requested. The call out was initiated, and members were soon enroute to Camp Maranatha in Idyllwild.

Upon arrival at Camp Maranatha we learned that Michael Kleinschmidt was at the base of the third pitch of the "Long Climb" on Tahquitz Rock, and that three rock climbers were enroute to Michael climbing up from the base of the rock. They were Bob Czarnowski, Dave Albritton, and Bob Harvey. While we were getting gear ready, Steve DeJesus from Landells Aviation arrived in helicopter 16U. With only minutes of daylight left, Walt Walker and Mike Daugherty climbed aboard and Steve flew them up to the rock to get a look at things from the air. Indeed, Michael was on the Long Climb, and the three rock climbers had reached him and were lowering him down the face of the rock in his sit harness. The helicopter returned to base, and as Steve attached a directional light to the underside

of the helicopter, Mike Daugherty, Walt, and I discussed the rescue plan. We decided that it would be best to have the men and gear needed to effect the rescue flown into Lunch Rock. It was now dark, and with the light hooked up, Steve started the turbine powered helicopter up, and, with Walt and I in the back seat, Steve lifted off, and we were enroute to Tahquitz Rock. The wind was not bad in close, but there was an occasional gust, so Steve flew around for about five minutes getting the feel of the wind currents. Then, when all felt right Steve maneuvered the machine in closer and closer, until we were just a few feet above Lunch Rock. Skillfully, he placed the skid down on the 100 foot tall boulder, and with the pilot's nod to exit, Walt and I carefully climbed out. Once out, I counter signed the nod with a thumbs up. Steve then pulled the powerful Jet Ranger away and returned to base.

Past team member Woody Stark had



RMURU PHOTO BY JIM FAIRCHILD

OUTFITTED — Mountain pilot Steve DeJesus stands ready after installing the night surveillance light to the underside of helicopter 16 Uniform. This light allowed Steve to fly RMURU members in to the base of Tahquitz Rock to effect the rescue of Michael Kleinschmidt.

earlier hiked in to the rock with a radio and was monitoring the progress of the climbers and Michael. As they got lower on the rock communications became easier. Woody learned and then relayed to base that Michael had injured his pelvic area on the left side, and also had injured his ribs to some extent. The pain was increasing, and the group felt it would be better to stop on a ledge approximately 130 feet above the ground.

Meanwhile, the second load, consisting of Mike Daugherty and Glenn Henderson, was flown in by Steve who skillfully brought the ship in, but this time we were able to help a little. Using our aircraft flashlights with red tips, Walt created an artificial horizon for Steve, and I took hold of a skid and helped to guide the ship into position and then hold it there while Glenn and Mike exited. Walt and Mike headed across the base of the rock to where the Long Climb route begins. Glenn took over with the red lights and we helped Steve bring in the rest of the team, in groups of two. Ray Hussey and Rick Pohlers were flown in with the litter. Jim Fairchild and Bud White came in with the litter wheel, Rob Gardner and Steve Bryant brought the remainder of the technical gear. Praise also needs to go to fellow member Henry Negrete who was the load master. Henry did a top notch job assigning members and gear for the flights in. By the way, Henry sacrificed his chances to go in and help by staying and completing his task at base.

As the rest of us hiked over to the site, Steve flew back to base and shut down to wait and see if he would be needed to fly the subject out. Mike Daugherty climbed up the 130 plus feet to where Michael and the rock climbers were waiting. Because of the small size of the ledge, the first thing to do was to get the three climbers down. As they descended, Mike Daugherty set up anchors for the lower. Once the climbers were down, Ray jumared up, followed by Glenn. Ray quickly ascertained that Michael's injuries did not require the helicopter, therefore, Steve was released to head for Desert Hot Springs. Michael did appear to have some sort of a fracture to the hip area and his ribs were quite tender. As the men toiled above, the rest of us waited below. Steve wished us well as he flew past the rock on his way home,

and we thanked him for a job well done. After a while we heard moans from above as they loaded Michael, as carefully as possible, into the litter. Once all was ready, the lower was started. Ray clipped in and was the attendant, and Mike and Glenn did the lowering. Ray and Michael were lowered down the face slowly but smoothly and soon were at the base. Steve Bryant was the cook for the evening and had hot soup waiting for Michael.

Michael was in very good spirits considering the ordeal he had been through. Once the gear was packed up and the wheel attached to the litter, we started down the large talus slope towards Humber Park. This part, as has been in the past, went very slowly as we made our way down through the loose rock. It is hard to describe the work that it takes to do this but I can tell you that it is treacherous enough that a belay rope is needed to help keep control of the litter even though there are six team members with the litter at all times. Never the less, we did our job and at a little after 2:00 a.m. we were at Humber Park loading Michael into the Idyllwild ambulance for a ride down to the Hemet Valley hospital.

I want to take this opportunity to thank the Riverside County Sheriff's Department for assisting as always with helicopter operations at Camp Maranatha. Dick Beggs, manager of the Camp for allowing us to use his facility for base camp. The



WHEEL OUT — Like so many times before, by utilizing the RMRU wheel, members were able to move injured climber Michael Kleinschmidt down the steep boulder field below Tahquitz Rock after he had been lowered off the climbing face back to Humber Park.

three rock climbers, one of which is an Idyllwild resident, for their great help in getting Michael down to the ledge where we took over. My fellow team members for just being who they are. And, of course, Steve DeJesus of Landells Aviation, for doing an excellent job of getting us into the rock safely with his skill as a mountain pilot. To everyone, **job well done!** • RMRU

Volunteer Man Hours — 169

Editors Note: Michael Kleinschmidt indeed was admitted to the hospital with a fractured hip and fractured ribs. He was released several days later, and stopped by Walt Walker's business to say thanks to RMRU and to let everyone know that he would stay in touch.

SEARCH

Mission No. 8702M

**3-4 Jan., Sat.-Sun.
Thomas Mountain,
Santa Rosa Mountain Range**

By Henry Negrete



The New Year continued with its exciting start for the RMRU. Having just completed a very successful rock rescue two days earlier (Mission 8701M) we were just starting to settle down and get ready for

the first major storm of the season, when our second call-out came. The call was concerning two overdue hunters, David Mosley of Bakersfield and Lyle Smith of Chino.

They had set off on a quail hunting trip around the backside of Lake Hemet and when they failed to show up by nightfall Lyle's wife asked the Lake Hemet Rangers for assistance in locating them. After numerous trips to both ends of the trail, and calls into the darkness with a portable loud speaker, the Rangers decided to contact the Sheriff's Office for a more thorough search.

At 8:00 pm we were called out to meet at the entrance of Lake Hemet. Once there we were greeted by Ranger John Salsbury, who graciously opened up his residence for our use while interviewing the reporting party and forming plans of the search.

The information we were given was that David and Lyle had intended to return well before dark and had only minimal clothing and water with them.

It is not rare that hunters stay out longer than they plan, but, given the circumstances of their preparedness, the forecast for freezing night temperatures, and the impending storm, we thought it more prudent to go in after them as soon as possible.

Initially, we sent out a tracking team consisting of the remarkable Bud White, Joe "the Sniffer" Erickson, and myself, to go in on the Willow Valley Trail, where the subjects had started, and see if we could pick up their tracks. Another team was sent to the trail end to look for signs of exit.

We soon picked up their tracks, and as we followed them down trail our dilemma increased somewhat by the fact that the area was heavily traversed by range cattle. Good clean tracks became fewer and farther between. Tracking became increasingly painstaking and midway the main trail broke into a complete maze of cattle trails.

RMRU PHOTO BY JIM FAIRCHILD

Unable to positively determine the subjects' direction of travel we called for reinforcements to assist in finding tracks in the ever widening margin.

We were soon joined by the infamous Steve Bryant, and the incredible J.R. Muratet. They brought with them renewed vigor and continued to scour the area, to no avail. It was now a couple of hours before dawn, so we chose to bivouac and wait until first light for a fresh start.

When morning broke we headed for high ground for visibility and to locate a main drainage which we thought they may have mistakenly gone down. Just as we were about to tackle our new areas we were stopped dead in our tracks at the sound of three consecutive gun shots. We responded with a shout of their names and they answered back from a considerable distance. We told them to stay put and we would work our way to them. Easier said than done.



RMRU PHOTO BY JIM FAIRCHILD

NOW IF I WERE YOU — RMRU member Rob Gardner (pointing) seems to be reading the president (Kevin Walker) the proverbial riot act, as fellow members look on.

We fought our way through some of the most dense brush any of us could remember and continued to make voice contact for direction.

When we finally broke through the rambling brush I was greeted by a smiling David Mosley, who cordially invited us into their makeshift campsite to enjoy the warmth of their campfire. The fire undoubtedly saved them from the jaws of hypothermia through the night. David and Lyle were in good shape, but graciously accepted our offering of water and warm coats.

On our hike back out David and Lyle recounted their story of losing the main

trail at the cattle maze and then being lured down the main drainage because it was clear, until they came upon some impassible falls.

Back at base we took some time to assess our gains and losses, and were quite pleased that David and Lyle had weathered their ordeal so well, but never the less we did suffer one loss. That of an old warm friend of Steve Bryant's. It seems that in Steve's vigorous, unselfish, attempt to reach our long lost subjects, the unforgiving, ravenous brush all but devoured his army green wool sweater. It had served him through "thick" and "thin" for over fifteen years and now had to be put to rest. Undoubtedly it had served him well, so I will close with "Good Luck" to those that survived, and I tip my hat to a good friend worn out. • RMRU

Volunteer Man Hours — 260

EVACUATION

Mission No. 8703M

**18 Jan., Sun.
Highway 243,
San Jacinto Mountains**

By Kevin Walker



Quiet evening at home with family, yes? Well, I am sure you know the answer. The phone rang at a little after six in the evening. At the other end of the line was Walt Walker with news of the request for our services

in evacuating a body out of an automobile over the edge of Highway 243. The body had been found by two hikers.

When we arrived at the turn-out along the highway, between Lawler Lodge and Alandale, we were met by Riverside County Deputy Coroner Ken Nugent and officer R. D. Holton from the California Highway Patrol. They described to us that the wreckage was approximately 250 feet down from the highway laying upside down with the body mostly out of the vehicle. The person we were going to evacuate had been reported missing in July of 1986. Because of the dangerous terrain it had been wise to activate RMRU. Jim Fairchild and Walt set up a lowering system using a large tree as an anchor. Henry Negrete and I readied the litter and extrication equipment. Once ready, Henry and I, with our harnesses on and clipped onto the litter, began our descent to the wreckage. Jim managed the lowering rack. The snow was not too icy but the slope was steep. Progress downward went fine. Our only obstacle was a fallen tree that we had to go underneath. We soon got to the car. Everything went smoothly, considering what we were doing. Henry and I

removed the snow that partially covered the body. We opened the body bag, placed the body into it, secured the bag into the plastic litter, radioed up that we were ready, and then were pulled up by Mary Bowman, Walt, Jim, Steve Bryant and Bud White. Once back up to the highway, gear was sorted, and placed back in the van. Then we adjourned to a great dinner at Michelli's Italian Restaurant in Idyllwild. Our thanks to Jade Michaels and his staff for staying open past closing hours for us. With our stomachs full, we headed for home. • RMRU

Volunteer Man Hours — 36



RMRU PHOTO BY JIM FAIRCHILD

EVAC COMPLETE — After completing a simple raise up a steep snow covered slope along highway 243, RMRU members untie the litter from the hauling system so that the body could be turned over to the coroner.

CALL

Mission No. 8704C

**27 Jan., Tues.
Pinyon Flats,
San Rosa Mountains**

The unit received a call at 1900 hours from the Indio station of the Riverside County Sheriff's Department that an 11 year old boy was missing. The youth had last been seen as he got off the school bus. It was learned that he was facing some discipline at home and that this might be the reason for his being overdue. The sheriff's department was checking with friends and if our services were needed we would be re-contacted. • RMRU

SEARCH

Mission No. 8705M

31 Jan., 1 Feb., Sat.-Sun.
Lawler Lodge,
San Jacinto Mountains

By Bob Sairs



The call came from Rob Gardner at about 9:30 PM Saturday evening. He informed me we had a mission for a lost 22 year old female. The girl left Lawler Lodge about 4:30 in the afternoon, and had not returned.

I changed clothes, put my equipment, etc., into the truck and left Indio, headed for Lawler Lodge by way of Banning and Route 243, arriving about 11:30 PM.

When I arrived, Walt and Kevin Walker along with Mary Bowman were in base camp. There were two search teams already in the field, consisting of Jim Fairchild with Bud White, and Henry Negrete with Ron Pierson.

Not long after I arrived, Joe Erickson came into base and Kevin assigned him as

Ops Leader. Walt and Kevin, who were both fighting the "flu bug," headed for home and hearth.

Shortly after they left Mary Bowman decided to go into the lodge and call the subject's father. While she was doing so, I stayed in the van and stood radio watch. About 1:25 AM there was a tapping on the window of the van, and lo and behold a young lady was standing out there. She said, "I think I have been lost since late afternoon." My reply was, "Well you aren't anymore, but I'll bet you're cold, so let's go into the lodge and get you warm." We did just that and I turned the young lady, Alicia Dawn Clark, over to Mary Bowman's expert care.

I returned to the van and radioed the search teams to return to base. They did so — Walt and Kevin, who had heard of the subject's return via their radio, also came back to base.

There was a critique of the mission that ended at about 3:30 AM. Everyone then headed for home. I arrived home about 5:00 AM pleased that I had a part in "finding" the young lady. •RMRU

Volunteer Man Hours — 50

\$USTAINING MEMBERS

BY PETE CARLSON

We would like to welcome two new sustaining members and to thank four renewing members for their support. Contributions for January have been used to repair some electrical problems in the No. 1 rescue van and to purchase some chargers to charge the batteries for our big spot lights. From the body of this newsletter you can see that all of our equipment has been utilized in missions this month.

Thank you again for your support of RMRU.

JANUARY

New —

Donald A. Stull
Robert & Frances Pratte

Renewing —

Dr. & Ms. Robert Robinson
Idyllwild Firemans Association
*M/M A.P. Crist
*Dr. M.R. MacPherson

*Century Club, donation of \$100 or more

The Eagle's Nest

By
Cliff D.
Weller

A few days ago, as I was soaring about, I overheard a small voice. I made a right turn and flew towards the sound. It was a little girl pointing up and saying, "Look at the birdie." The Mom said, "Oh, it's an eagle!" The Dad said, "Come on, let's go, I want to get to a camp site." I kept my distance, but followed, and observed. It wasn't long and the little girl was complaining, "I'm tired, I can't walk anymore." "Gosh, we'll never get there," said Dad. "Relax, Dad," said Mom. Dad said, "Okay, let's take a rest."

The family sat down and within less than a minute the little girl was running around chasing a butterfly. "I thought you were tired," said Dad.

Is this story known to you? I see this a lot from my vantage point. What is really going on? Is the little girl too tired to hike on? Usually not. After all she runs and plays and rides her bike all the time, and she's light and lean, too. Dad

may be tired, after all, he is carrying the little girl's camping gear, and some of Mom's gear, his own gear, the tent, and an extra twenty pounds of body weight that he didn't have when he stopped being active a few years ago.

More than likely the little girl is the least tired-out of the family, but the most tired of walking in a straight line. Little people get bored quickly when you march them in a straight line for very long at all.

What can a person do about this? Well, here are a few things I've observed as I've buzzed around through the years.

- Involve your children in some of the planning of the trip so they can get excited about the trip and look forward to it.

- Have your children carry some of their own gear, as appropriate for their size, age, and strength. They may carry a small pack with their sweater in it, and maybe a small water container of their own (perhaps a pint of water, which weighs about one pound).

- Be sure they have a whistle, on a safe string, around their neck. This is for them to use in an emergency only!

- Let them carry a piece of fruit or some snack food in their pack that they can eat at their will.

- As you start out look over a simple map with your children and show them where you are, where you are going, and the route you will use.

- Be honest about distances and times, but plan a distance and time of hiking that is reasonable for your children.

- Pay attention to your children and talk with them as you hike. This should be a pleasurable time.

- Stop often! Look at things. Show things. Teach things. Learn things.

- On occasion turn around and look back at where you have been. Look at your footprints on the ground. Look for other prints from animals and other hikers.

- Look at the plants and trees. If you know what kind they are, name them and talk about them. If you don't know the names of the plants, you can still count the different types and look at the different colors.

- Stop for a few minutes (I like this one) and mark off a three foot stretch of the trail. See how many different small things you can find in this short stretch.

- As you hike, have the children seek tracks ahead.

- A guaranteed method of the Blaschko family is to dole out an M & M at every other switchback or turn in the trail.

- Add other ideas of your own.

Make your trip an exciting adventure, not a dreary march!

TRAINING

Helitac/Winter Shakedown

10-11 Jan., Sat.-Sun.
Mt. San Jacinto
San Jacinto Mountains

By Ray Hussey



RMRU members met at 0800 just above the Cranston ranger station in the south fork of the San Jacinto river bottom. Western Helicopter pilots Pete Gillies and Dorcey Wingo arrived shortly and gave us presentations on the characteristics of the Hughes 500-G helicopter. Most of us were unfamiliar with the Hughes except for it's use on the April Cooper search near Vail Lake. The stability of the ship in high winds was emphasized, as well as the unusual skid configuration. It's unusual power lift-off was demonstrated as well as rear seat removal, front and rear seat buckle-up procedures, and the new toe in skid land. RMRU wishes to thank Western for their time and effort. It was greatly appreciated.

RMRU members then proceeded to Arrow Printing for final cleanup of scrap metal preparing for our new vehicle garage.

After completing the cleanup, RMRU members Jim Fairchild, Henry Negrete, Jay Pion, David Kramer, John Muratet and Ron Pierson proceeded to take the Palm Springs Aerial Tramway to Long Valley and then hike to the Shangrila area for winter shakedown. They were joined early the next morning, Sunday, by Kevin Walker and Ray Hussey. The group snowshoed to Little Round Valley, had lunch, and then showshoed back to the Tramway to beat the afternoon crowd. It was a picture perfect day with good familiarization techniques shown by senior members.

• RMRU

Volunteer Man Hours — 474



Left:
Dorcey Wingo
Chief of Operations
Western Helicopter
Right:
Pete Gillies
Chief Pilot
Western Helicopter



RMRU PHOTO BY JIM FAIRCHILD

LOOK OUT — Pilot Pete Gillies warns RMRU members to watch out for the exhaust system of the Hughes 500D helicopter. For many newer RMRU members this was their first time to be around a 500 series helicopter.



RMRU PHOTO BY JIM FAIRCHILD

STATIC — RMRU members practice entering, exiting and just getting familiar with the Hughes 500D from Western Helicopters. This is an important part of training as mistakes can be made even in training when operating under a moving helicopter. It is also a good time for members to get to know the pilots.