

RMRU

RIVERSIDE MOUNTAIN RESCUE UNIT

NEWSLETTER

12 ISSUES PER YEAR DISTRIBUTED BY THE RIVERSIDE MOUNTAIN RESCUE UNIT, INC. — POST OFFICE BOX 5444, RIVERSIDE, CALIFORNIA 92517
A VOLUNTEER NON-PROFIT TAX DEDUCTIBLE CORPORATION — MEMBER OF THE MOUNTAIN RESCUE ASSOCIATION

Volume XXIII, Issue V, June 1987

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Search and Rescue

RESCUE

Mission No. 8720M

13 June, Sat.
San Jacinto Mountains

By Eric Townsend



Calls for help from 400 feet up on the side of Lilly Rock brought the Sheriff to investigate and soon after, a call to RMRU.

A climber, Tony Twete had fallen on the "Whodunit" route and had sustained a broken leg and elbow. It's bad enough being 400 feet up the side of a sheer cliff, but with a broken leg and arm, that's serious!

Even with the aid of the Landells' Aviation helicopter, we expected a lengthy, perhaps even all night mission to get the climber safely lowered without further injury. Fortunately for Tony, a very sturdy climber who simply told us his name was Tom, hoisted Tony on his back and rappelled the 400 feet down the base of the rock. A few minutes later, RMRU members arrived by helicopter to administer first aid and load Tony into the helicopter in the last few minutes of daylight.

Responding team members — Larry Carter, Kevin Walker, Joe Erickson, Jim Fairchild, Glenn Henderson, Bernie McIlvoy, Henry Negrete, Ron Pierson, Eric Townsend, Rick Pohlers, Bud White, and Walt Walker.



RMRU PHOTO BY JIM FAIRCHILD

NEW HELISPOT - In this pair of photos, Mountain pilot Pete Gillies from Western Helicopters brings his Hughes 500C helicopter into position near the base of Tahquitz Rock. With the toes of the runners stuck in the mountainside, RMRU members then carried the litter over and passed injured climber Tony Twete into the back, where Joe Erickson secured the litter down, and then all were flown out to Idyllwild.

SEARCH

Mission No. 8721M

15 June,
North Slope,
Mt. San Jacinto

By Jim Fairchild



Lawrence Maira, and a friend were backpacking in the vicinity of the Fuller Ridge and Deer Springs. About their second evening, some confusion as to location occurred. They camped on the west side of the

Middle Fork of Snowcreek, where there is as spectacular a view over, down, and up that can be seen. Folly Peak loomed high above to the southeast with San Gorgonio Pass 5000 feet below.

The next morning they packed, then headed down north westerly. Soon they

saw Camp Lackey, owned by Riverside's YMCA. For some reason they left their packs high on the mountain, and split-up to find the camp, having lost sight of it because of gullies and thick trees. The friend made it to a point where he could see camp, then returned to the packs. Mr. Maira was not there. So, he went to report Lawrence's disappearance.

Following organization and deployment, Henry Negrete, Ron Pierson, and the writer, accompanied by the informant, hiked together up the mountain from Camp Lackey to find the packs. If Mr. Maira was not there, we'd track him from either the packs or the last campsite. After some wondering and watching searchers in Western's Helicopter driving about in the sky, we found the packs, but no lost subject.

We found good tracks scuffing downhill, but the informant said the tracks were his. We then searched uphill after checking the area carefully.

Our search pattern led up a ridge featuring huge tall pine trees, enormous boulders, and views of Mt. San Jacinto's Northface. Tracks led to our backpackers' last campsite, but no tracks led elsewhere except for those leading down to camp.

Other RMRU teams were searching above and below our area. We took a different route back to the packs. Ron went far below and found the lost hiker's prints. The informant was becoming quite concerned and agitated about his friend's absence, so we called for pilot Pete Gillies to pick him up at a helispot 300 yards from the pack's location.

Ron and Steve and I prepared to charge down the mountain following tracks, into the rugged, precipitous Westfork of Snowcreek and catch up to the elusive lost subject. But wait! That last garbled radio transmission hinted that our subject was located. Sure enough, he had hiked down to Cabazon and was OK.

Pete rounded up the search parties and flew us to Vista Grande Ranger Station. Hence, another great exploration of beautiful terrain was over. • RMRU

CALL

Mission No. 8722C

21 June, Sun.

San Jacinto Mountains

We received a call from the Hemet Station of the Riverside County Sheriff's Department that a hiker was overdue in returning from a day hike in the San Jacinto Mountains. As the callout procedure was being initiated the mission was cancelled. The subject had walked out and was in good condition. • RMRU

CALL

Mission No. 8723C

25 June, Thurs.

Yosemite National Park

As the middle of the day neared we received a call through the California Region of the Mountain Rescue Association asking for searchers to be ready to be flown from the L.A. area to Fresno and then bussed into Yosemite National Park to search for a missing hiker. Four members were available to search through the upcoming weekend. Before the RMRU members made the drive to L.A. the mission was cancelled as the subject had been located. • RMRU

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

SEARCH

Mission No. 8724M

28 June, Sun.

The High Country, San Jacinto Mountains

By Henry Negrete



Summer is never complete for RMRU without the multiple calls for help to find lost or injured hikers in our wilderness.

This mission was concerning one Jim Cox, a 27 year old from Upland.

He was a member of a party of five, who had come up to the high country via the Palm Springs Aerial Tramway to enjoy a few days of backpacking. On the evening of the 27th of June the group was day hiking from their base camp near Caramba to explore other outlying areas. After a short while Mr. Cox decided that he did not wish to proceed with the others and would return to base camp.

The rest of the group was not happy with Jim's decision to curtail the group's exploring activities and reluctantly followed suit in order to keep the group together. Upon arriving back in camp, Jim was nowhere in sight. At first they thought he had stopped to do his duties in the bushes, but after a while they became concerned enough to back track and start searching for him. They ended up searching all night and the next morning to no avail.

The group decided to split-up and send two hikers out to alert the authorities while the other two waited around camp just in case he found his way back.

RMRU was notified in the afternoon and we met with the reporting party in Idyllwild to be briefed personally on all the incidentals that had transpired.

We were advised that Jim was still experiencing some side effects from a traffic accident in which he suffered head injuries and could possibly have become disoriented in his direction towards camp.

With the better part of daylight behind us already, we jumped into high gear for action. We secured a helicopter from Landell's Aviation, and were soon sending in teams for the search.

This particular area was of grave concern to us, because from the area at which they were camped one can see the alluring lights of Palm Springs. At night it appears that one can easily reach the security of the city within an hour or two. In fact the canyon known as Tahquitz is one of the most treacherous routes out of the mountain for any novice hiker.

One plan was to do a quick over flight of the canyon to see if we could spot him, and then drop a "bash" team to bomb down

the canyon. Other teams were placed at optimal view points in order to seal off the canyon and possibly expedite Jim's recovery.

I drew a "Lucky" straw. My assignment was to be an member of the bash team. "Lucky" on three accounts, one that it was probably the "hottest" assignment, two, that my search partner was the "Incredible" Bernie McIlvoy, who blazes down trails faster than a loose carabiner wrap on rappel. (it's kind of hard to enjoy the scenic route with this guy) and the third is yet to be revealed.

After being dropped at one of the many landing zones (LZs) that RMRU has adopted to expedite team deployment, Bernie and I picked our way down the weaved wild grape vine which covered the floor of the subdrainage leading to the infamous "Tahquitz Canyon." We survived our swimming lesson in the grape vines quite well, still very pumped about the possibility of making the "find."

We got into the main drainage and began an intense search for shoe prints along the creek bed, looking for any unusual sign of someone having come down this far. As our search continued, alas we found something strange. We discovered a green vinyl water hose coming down the water course of the creek.

We were relatively sure that this was not any "sign" left by our subject, and proceeded with a little more caution and a lot more awareness.

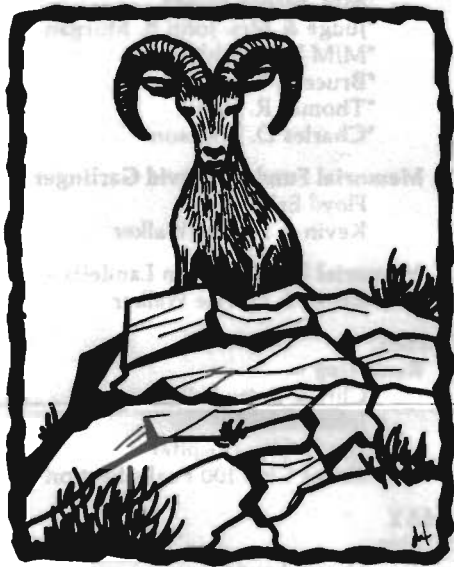
Bernie and I bet among ourselves that we knew exactly what that little green hose was being used for, and lo and behold, not much further down the canyon was the greenest patch of "wildwood weed" you ever did see. Not being gluttons for punishment we were wanting to move away from the area as soon as we could establish that our subject Jim Cox had not also been in this area.

Soon was not soon enough, just as we started to leave we were confronted by a very burly looking character who inquired as to what was going on. As I sized him up I noticed he held by his side an old beat-up 30 cal. carbine rifle. I explained to him about our search for Jim Cox and asked if he had seen any one fitting his description. He responded no, and then expressed disgruntledness about his growing season being disrupted. We advised this character that there would be many other rescue people coming down canyon and he would have ample opportunities to report any thing that he saw. We did this as much for our own protection as any help he might provide. As soon as we were out of earshot from him we reported back to base by radio what we had encountered.

We were given the option to be immediately picked-up by helicopter or proceed with our assignment. We explained that we did not really feel threatened and felt it more important to continue the assignment.

Just as darkness was upon us we received a radio transmission that Jim Cox had somehow found his way off the mountain and returned home. His parents explained that apparently he was quite mixed-up and had actually thought that his group had left without him instead of the other way around. There are appropriate words for people who sit snugly at home while volunteers search desperately to find them, but none good enough for the ears or eyes of our readers.

Never the less **RMRU** was glad he was safe and Bernie and I made the best of all we had been through.



BIGHORN SHEEP GUZZLER

5-7 June, Fri.-Sun.
Clark Mountain Range,
San Bernardino County

*The desert is a difficult and hard lover.
 Her moods both sublime and harsh.
 To love her is to risk all.
 Yet these friends eagerly embraced this desert,
 this harsh sublime lover.
 And she claimed them for her own.
 Each time we think of the desert,
 we will think of them and their love.
 Their memory will live on, as the desert lives on.*

These words by Julie Chrzanowski sum up why 14 members of **RMRU** joined forces with over 100 members of the Society for the Conservation of Bighorn Sheep and other volunteers to build a Big Horn Sheep Guzzler in honor of Don Landells and Jim Bicket. The site of the guzzler was on Clark Mountain just down the slope from where Don Landells and Jim Bicket died in a helicopter crash while surveying for Bighorn sheep.

A sheep guzzler is device for catching and storing water from the infrequent desert rains, and then metering out the



RMRU PHOTO BY KEVIN WALKER

MIXER INBOUND - Pilot Steve DeJesus leaves from the staging area with a Cement mixer at the end of the sling line enroute to the guzzler site. RMRU members Rob Gardner, Bob Sairs, Kevin Walker and Walt Walker went out early on Friday to assist fish and game personnel with the slinging operations.

water for year round use by the Bighorn sheep. The guzzler consisted of a dam across a water drainage and a large slope with a plastic sheet to collect rainfall.

Water from these sources was piped to three large storage tanks and from there metered into a huge covered dish-shaped container with openings for the sheep to get at the water. Construction materials were flown in by helicopter but workers had to hike in about one and a half miles to the site. An electric generator supplied power for a jack hammer and cement mixer. But an old fashioned bucket brigade was needed to transport the buckets of mixed cement from the mixer to the dam site and the platform for the water storage tanks.

About noon we were refreshed by a rain and hailstorm with bolts of lightning. But the true highlight of the day was the sighting of a white bighorn ram on the slopes near the crashsite just a little above where we were working. Apparently only about 12 people had seen the "white ram" before that day. As we hiked out to the cars the rain and hail returned with a vengeance and continued intermittently throughout the night. By the next morning when a small group returned to the work site to finish up the job there were 200 gallons of water in the storage tanks. **RMRU** members who participated in this training included: Walt and Kevin Walker, Bob Sairs, Rob Gardner, who arrived Friday morning to help with the flying in of equipment. Other members included Bud White, Mary Bowman, Jim Fairchild, Glen Henderson, Donna Halcrow, Larry Rowland, Bernie McIlvoy, Larry Carter, Joe Erickson, and Bill Blascho. For all of us it was a rewarding and unique experience.

• RMRU



RMRU PHOTO BY KEVIN WALKER

RMRU MASONS - Members Joe Erickson, Bernie McIlvoy and Bill Blaschko (2nd from right) work with guzzler volunteers to construct a catch dam in the bottom of the drainage.



RMRU PHOTO BY KEVIN WALKER

TOP TO THE DRINKER - Guzzler volunteers move the cover of the drinker into position. The better than 2,000 gallon drinker has to have this cover on to prevent evaporation. Small openings allow the big horn sheep access to the water.



RMRU PHOTO BY KEVIN WALKER

IN MEMORY - This plaque was placed in the concrete slab for the three water storage tanks. Once in position Jim Landells placed the "N" number placard from his dad's helicopter, N16816, on the plaque. Jim had found the placard earlier and felt it was fitting to leave it at the guzzler site, Jim we agree.

\$USTAINING MEMBERS

BY PETE CARLSON

We wish to thank all the new and renewing

substanting members for their support of RMRU. We are in the process of replacing lost technical gear and adding to our inventory of technical gear. Our goal, having two complete sets of technical gear, one set in each of our two rescue vans. This requires quite a bit of money and your donations this month have enabled us to meet this goal. We

are now setting another goal, to update our medical supplies in both vans. We will keep you informed on our medical goals in the future. Thank you again for your generous support of RMRU.

MARCH

New—

Ethel A. Chapman, MD
Winchester Woman's Club
*M/M Nicholson

Renewing—

M/M Cliff Rose
Mrs. Ramona B. Flinchpaugh
Herwil M. & Genie C. Bryant
John Murdock
*Banning Women's Club
*Mrs. Esther Briggs
*Judge & Mrs. John B. Morgan
*M/M John Pohlers
*Bruce R. Dodd
*Thomas R. Hild
*Charles D. Erickson

Memorial Fund for David Garlinger —

Floyd Erkstrom
Kevin & Patrice Walker

Memorial Fund for Don Landells —

Kevin & Patrice Walker

APRIL

Renewing —

Cliff & Betty Pritchard
John Podolsky
Circle City Hospital
Sierra Club 100 Peaks Section

MAY

New—

Dwain Lewis
Ambassador College Students
*Latter-Day Saints
*James & Mary Jean Petersen

Renewing —

Richard Elliott
Circle City Hospital
*Hemet Noontimers Lions Club

Memorial Fund for Don Landells

Conservation Unlimited/"Alumni Association"

JUNE

Renewing—

Elva Bess Cook
Hazel Berglund
George & Marjorie Shipway
Mission Bell PTA

M/M Rodney Anderson

J. Dee Lansing, MD

John E. Coles, MD

Mrs. Virginia Black

Hemet Lions Club

Ernest & Shirley Edwards

*Franklin R. Collbohm

*Dr. & Mrs. Nile I. Reeves

*David S. Wilshire

*William Stewart

*Sorooptimist Club of Banning

*Rotary Club of Idyllwild

*Orco Block Co., Inc.

*Century Club, donation of \$100 or more.