

RMRU

RIVERSIDE MOUNTAIN RESCUE UNIT

NEWSLETTER

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Bill Blaschko, Editor — Kevin Walker, Publisher — Barbara Darling, Typesetter

TRAINING

2-3 May, Sat. - Sun.

Lost Arrow Spire
Yosemite, California

By Ray Hussey



After the long drive from Riverside, we camped at the lower river campground - it seemed we slept a few minutes only to be roused out of our sleeping bags by chairman, Steve Bryant.

After a hearty breakfast at the Yosemite Valley Cafeteria, we proceeded up the four mile trail to Upper Yosemite Falls bluff. We lugged an enormous amount of team gear, personal gear, video gear, and placed most of it in the Stokes litter for ballast and horsed it up the hill. Once camp was set up, Bernie McIlvoy, Ray Hussey and Ron Pierson fixed rappel ropes from the bluff to the notches and Ron seconded Bernie who set up the route to just above Salathe' ledge — by this time it was quite dark and we made our way back to camp via flashlight. Early next morning, Ray seconded Bernie up the Aid route. It was quite an exciting climb — 3,000 feet above the valley floor. A more than genteel breeze, and the constant distraction of the roaring Upper Yosemite Falls made a hard climb quite focused. Near the top of the spire, just below the friction pitch, Bernie had to place an RP-O for protection — that is the smallest piece of protection made today but it held magnificently — in fact, three of us tried extracting it to no avail. Off-duty climbing rangers from YOSAR (Yosemite Search and Rescue) who happened to also be climbing in their own group retrieved the RP-O with a special cleaning tool.

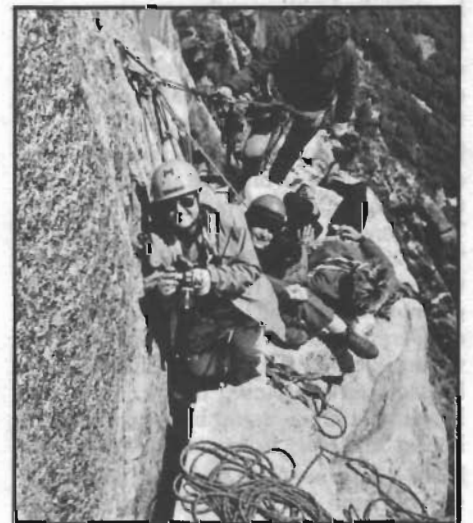
Once on the top, Bernie secured the ropes we both had been trailing to the



RMRU PHOTO BY GLENN HENDERSON

TOM...WE HAVE TO CARRY ALL THIS - Actually this is just a portion of the gear taken by RMRU members on their trip to climb the Lost Arrow Spire. In the foreground is the video equipment brought by Joshua Tree National Monument Ranger, JOSAR member, Executive Producer of Patterson Productions, Mr. Danger Ranger himself - Tom Patterson (center). Thanks to Tom, RMRU was able to have excellent documentation of the memorable trip.

existing top anchor and the remaining team members jumared up the route Ray had just cleaned. Tom Patterson from JOSAR (Joshua Search and Rescue) meanwhile was patiently videotaping the entire climb and Jim Fairchild was taking multiple 35mm. telephoto pictures from the adjacent bluff near the falls. At one time, there were 16 people atop the spire. The record apparently is 21 but we were quite crowded as it was. Then the tyrolean was tensioned to the bluff some 150 feet away and, one by one, RMRU members made the exciting tyrolean traverse from the top of Lost Arrow Spire to the bluff some 150 feet away, then jumared up the bluff. The system was taken down, ropes and gear sorted and packed and we then rested and enjoyed friendships around the campfire telling "lies", etc. The highlight of the evening was the "helicopter" demonstration by Bill Blaschko and Kevin Walker — only, come to think of it, I don't think we brought a helicopter — it sure seemed real at the time — I guess you had to be there.



RMRU PHOTO BY JIM FAIRCHILD

HOME SWEET LEDGE - RMRU members Walt Walker and Jay Pion (partially obscured) are seen here resting and enjoying the view from Salathe Ledge some 150 feet above the valley floor.

Next AM saw another rude awakening by our esteemed training chairman. Then an anticlimactic hike out and the long ride home.

A vote of thanks to lead climber, Bernie McIlvoy who planned the entire exercise and, without his expertise, we couldn't have enjoyed such a rewarding technical exercise. Also, hats off to Jim Fairchild and ranger, Tom Patterson of JOSAR who gave up the climbing opportunity to record the exciting event on both videotape and film. • RMRU

50th Anniversary



By Bud White

On Saturday, May 30th **RMRU** was invited to participate in this anniversary celebration program. Our own Dr. Norm Mellor spoke about his being one of the Boy Scouts that raised the flag 50 years ago.

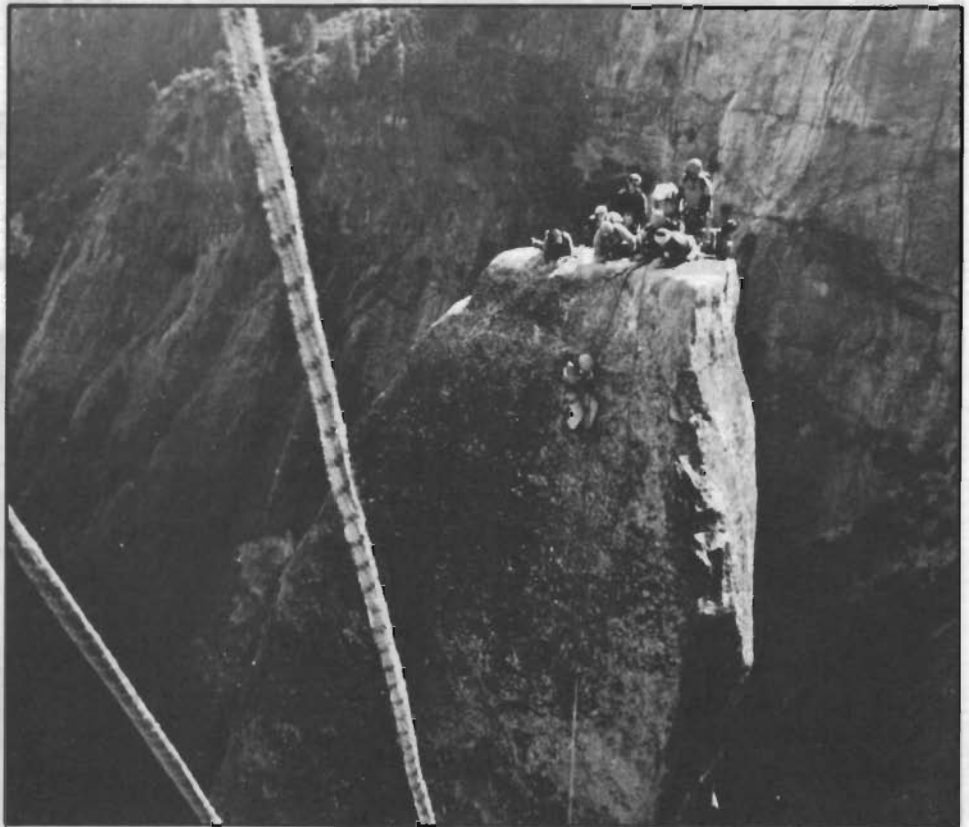
It was great to see so many of the former employees of the State Park that many of us have worked with over the years.

RMRU put on a spectacular demonstration of recovering an injured person from a deep canyon. We had to improvise by using two tall trees as the sides of the canyon.

Ron Pierson, our steeple jack, shot an arrow over a tree limb on one side and after pulling up the ropes jumared (ascended) with Eric Townsend to rig the ropes. On the other "side" of the canyon Bernie McIlvoy climbed a tall ladder to rig the hauling end. Everybody got into the act. Walt Walker was the Master of Ceremonies, Dona Halcrow was the victim; Kevin Walker, Rob Gardner, Ray Hussey got the victim ready and Henry Negrete, Bernie, some bystanders, and I hauled and Mary Bowman did some P-R.

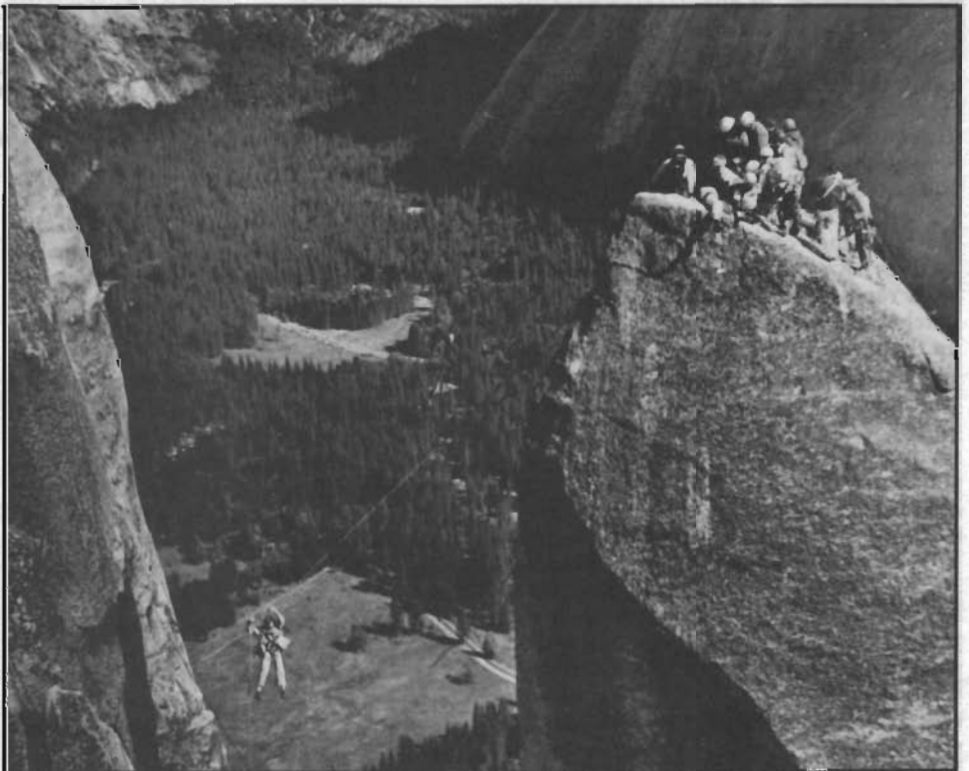
It was good to see Gary Anderson, an ex-team member who has been teaching out-door education in Sitka, Alaska. He was state-park wilderness ranger while in Idyllwild.

All in all, it was a fun afternoon. It was too bad more people didn't turn out for the program and presentations. It turned out to be more like old home week and that was a lot of fun.



RMRU PHOTO BY JIM FAIRCHILD

A VIEW FROM THE WALL - This was the view RMRU members had of the Lost Arrow Spire after they had come across the notch between the spire and the valley wall. RMRU member Walt Walker is just starting out from the spire.



RMRU PHOTO BY JIM FAIRCHILD

HIGH LINE - RMRU member Joe Erickson gets a birds eye view of nearby Upper Yosemite Falls, as he is lowered diagonally away from the Lost Arrow to the valley wall. Even though the falls are several hundred feet away, noise of the water falling was quite loud.

Search and Rescue

ASSIST

**2 May, Sat.
Lost Arrow Spire,
Yosemite National Park**

By Walt Walker



The training for this month was to be both educational and fun, but due to both the tremendous exposure (long way to the ground) and that many team members were new to this type of exposure, safety was one of our greatest concerns. Being one of the veteran members and experienced with high angle exposure I was asked to be one of the safety officers. My assignment was Salathe' ledge. This small ledge sits out on the face of the spire about 80 feet from the top and about 1700 to the ground at the base. It affords a tremendous view of a great portion of the valley and especially Yosemite Falls.

After a number of hours of having RMRU members pass over me on their way to the top, it finally became my turn to Jumar up to RMRU bunch gathering atop the spire. There was another team of three climbers climbing the spire also. As I was Jumar up the face I was slowly overtaking the lead climber from the other group. He was about 15 feet to my left and in the midst of the most difficult part of the pitch. Just as I was reaching the same elevation of the lead climber he called to me, Have you got an extra carabiner? I have run out and need one real bad!"

The gang on top watched as I worked my way across the face and handed the lead climber the extra carabiner that he needed to complete his last point of protection before he went for the top. When I reached the top the RMRU gang decided we had just completed a mini-mission. • RMRU



ASSIST

Mission No. 8713M

**3 May, Sun.
Bridalveil Falls
Yosemite National Park**

By Kevin Walker



After having completed a most memorable training, that being the team ascent of the Lost Arrow Spire in Yosemite National Park, several members remained in the park with their families to just be tourists for a

few days and enjoy all that Yosemite has to offer. Rescue members will be rescue members and sure enough we ended up at what is called the Rescue Cache. That is the headquarters of Yosemite Search and Rescue or YOSAR as known by rescue personnel. In charge is ranger John Dill, now famous for his inovative thinking towards search and rescue. Ranger Tom Patterson had also stayed behind with us and was in the middle of giving us a tour of the cache when we heard a call come over the radio stating that two men were stranded next to Bridalveil Falls. Well, here was our chance to respond directly with the YOSAR personnel.

To keep the story short, fellow members Joe Erickson, Bob Wintz, Walt Walker, Henry Negrete, Ron Pierson, Jim Fairchild and myself responded and were on hand to assist. John Dills personnel handled the technical, and once down we helped the two hikers back to the parking lot and a waiting ranger with his citation book, or was it just a log sheet. At any rate we did help, and for that a mission number was given. • RMRU

SEARCH

Mission No. 8714M

**11 May, Mon.
Tahquitz Canyon
Mt. San Jacinto**

By George Crampon



It was a warm clear morning. The Riverside Sheriff's Office called RMRU out to search for a missing adult male hiker, Raymond (Ray) Ramero had become seperated from his three companions the previous day. When Ray did not return to the campsite, near Laws Camp, by morning, the companions summoned help.

A base camp for the RMRU operation was set-up at Camp Maranatha in Idyllwild. Landells Aviation provided helicopter service. Kevin Walker, Rob Gardner, and pilot Steve DeJesus departed for an aerial assessment, to be followed with a ground search strategy. After the general assessment at the PLS (point last seen) and vicinity, it was decided to fly down Tahquitz Canyon a short distance. In the past, lost people in the vicinity inadvertently hiked down difficult Tahquitz Canyon. Tahquitz Canyon is generally overgrown, without trails, and has many waterfalls.

As Steve was in a left turn to head back to base camp to pick-up and disperse ground search teams, Kevin spotted a man at the canyon bottom, sitting on a large boulder. The man was not moving. His clothing matched the description of our missing subject, Ray Ramero. The canyon has been closed to the public for over a decade and nobody else had been seen in the canyon this day. Therefore, it appeared to be a good chance that this was the man RMRU was searching for.

Steve circled the man to let him know he had been seen, and then looked for a helispot. No helispot was to be found and eventually Steve touched six inches of the right helicopter runner to a pyramid shaped boulder. Rob exited the ship to learn there was not any place to stand and proceeded into an immediate down climb of about ten feet, finally getting his feet onto the loose rock of the steep, north side of the canyon. The helicopter had already left and Steve flew down canyon to our old helispot where Kevin could get out from the front seat and move to the right rear seat. The helicopter then returned to the pyramid like boulder and the exit process was repeated by Kevin.

From this point Rob and Kevin hiked for fifteen minutes before they could see Ray. However, from that point they needed to get to the bottom of a sixty foot waterfall and then fifty feet down canyon, to reach Ray. They called to him, but Ray continued to sit on a large boulder, facing down canyon. Ray did not move or try to turnaround. He called-out, but could not be understood as he faced away from Rob and Kevin. With continued calling and shouting it could finally be discerned that Ray was saying, "Are you coming down? Hurry!"

It took another ten minutes to prepare to climb down. There were not any easy routes on the slick waterfall wall, but at least the water was at a slow flow. Rob pulled-out the call-out rope and put on his sit-harness. Kevin looked for a safe anchor, without success. Finally, it was decided Rob would climb down with Kevin belaying, as he set in a depression of the rock and used his body for an anchor.



RMRU PHOTO BY JIM FAIRCHILD

UP AND OVER - RMRU members Ray Hussey, Rob Gardner, Walt Walker and Cameron Robbins bring injured Ray Romero up and over the edge of the 80 foot cliff in Tahquitz Canyon.

Keeping the rope taut Rob climbed down to about fifteen feet above the pool of water and then began a traverse. He unroped for the last two moves and once again his feet were on Grade 3 terrain. He hiked over to Ray who first said, "I'm sure glad to see you guys!"

It became apparent that Ray was too stiff and sore to move and that he therefore had been unable to wave to the helicopter or turnaround earlier to call up canyon to Rob and Kevin. Ray was alert, but he had lumps all over his head, abrasions on his back and shoulders, and generally ached. Rob measured Ray's vital signs and did a head to toe assessment, reporting findings by radio.

Ray Ramero reported that when he was climbing down the waterfall wall he slipped and fell, tumbling head over heels several times. He said he hit his head on the rock wall as he tumbled. He landed in the pool of water at the bottom. He then swam to the side and crawled a few feet to the boulder he was sitting on. He was unable to start a fire to keep warm, he did not have any gear, and he was too stiff and sore to reach the water that ran past him a few feet away.

Kevin radioed-out for the rest of the team to prepare to fly to the rescue site with the ropes, hardware, etc., necessary for a technical rescue using a mechanical advantage (M.A.) system. They also were to bring in a stokes litter and immobilization apparatus for neck/back injury. Kevin had already found a site he could make into a helispot and was working hard to clear enough area for the small Jet Ranger

Helicopter to touch two skids down.

The helispot ready, RMRU men and gear were flown to the site. Dr. Ray Hussey was on the first load, and as soon as anchors were set, he rappelled down to Rob and Ray Ramero. Dr. Hussey did

another medical evaluation, started to hydrate Ray and called for the Oregon spine splint (which had recently been donated to RMRU by doctors Mellor, Hussey, and Blaschko).

While Rob and Dr. Hussey packaged Ray, into the stokes litter, and set the litter rigging, the other team members were flown to the site and set-up the M.A. system in preparation for the raise. The raise was to be about seventy feet, to the new helispot. Ray would be flown out of the canyon and then transported to the hospital.

There was so little space where Dr. Hussey and Rob worked that no others could come down to help, in fact, the foot of the stokes litter had to hang over the waterfall below them.

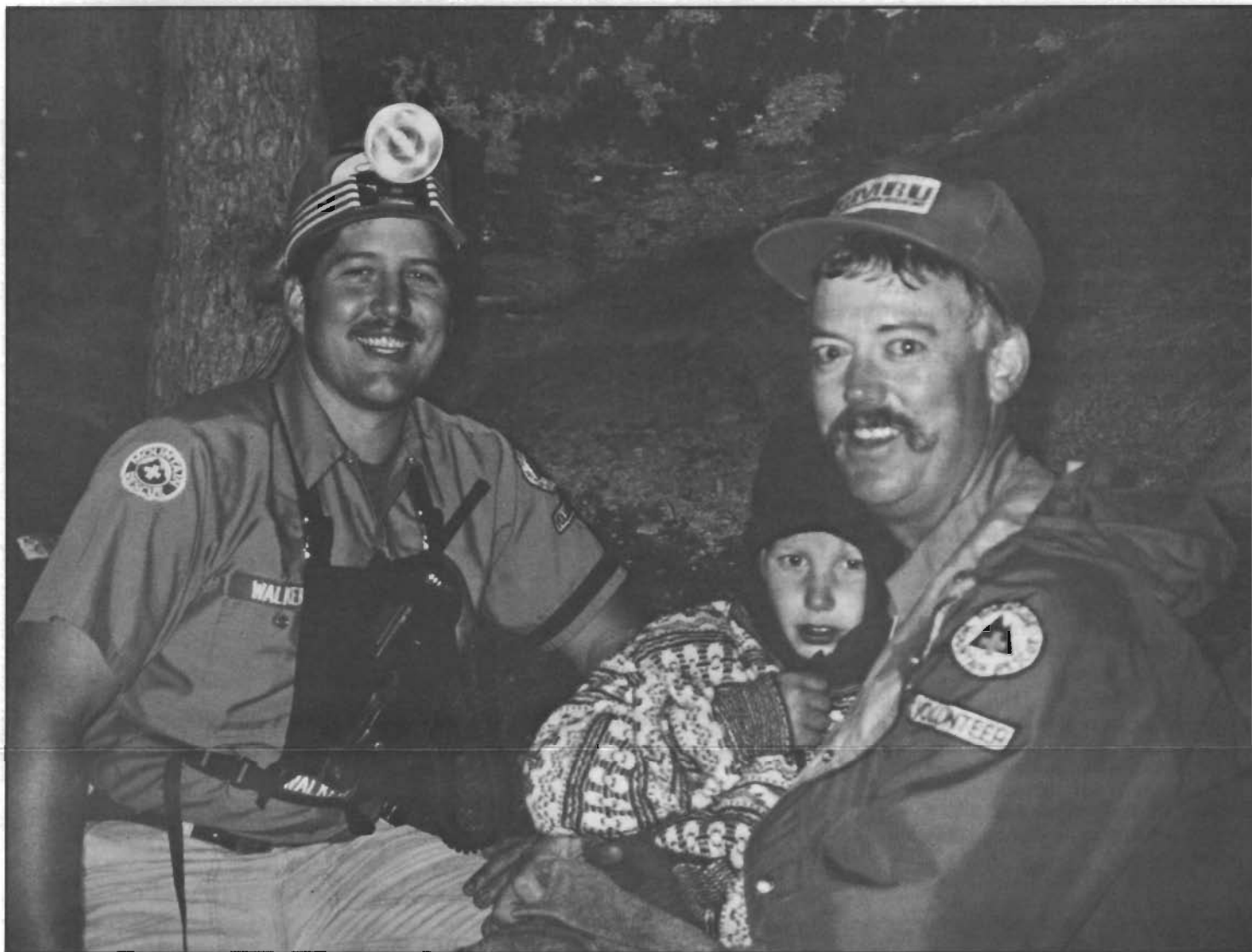
The raise was done with some difficulty, but as soon as Ray was at the top of the raise the helicopter was called back by radio and made perfect timing to fly Ray out of the canyon. A few hours had gone by from mission start to getting Ray out of the mountain. In this instance, use of the helicopter made a great savings of time. Without the helicopter Ray would not have been off the mountain for at least twenty-four hours.

RMRU cleaned up the gear and was flown back to base camp, where they had dinner together and then rode off in different directions each RMRU team member returning to his family. • RMRU



RMRU PHOTO BY WALT WALKER

CLASSIC TAHQUITZ CANYON - RMRU members Cameron Robbins, Eric Townsend, Joe Erickson, Rob Gardner, Ron Pierson, Henry Negrete, and Kevin Walker pass the litter containing injured hiker Ray Romero into the back of helicopter 40MC. Mountain pilot Steve DeJesus of Landells Aviation held the chopper in a one runner position while the transfer was made. With RMRU member Ray Hussey in the back also, Steve then flew them down Tahquitz Canyon to the base of the canyon where members of the Palm Springs Mounties were standing by.



RMRU PHOTO BY ROB GARDNER

Kevin Walker, Dean Peterson and Glenn Henderson

SEARCH

Mission No. 8715M

**15-16 May, Fri. - Sat.
Black Mountain Group Camp,
San Jacinto Mountains**

By Kevin Walker



Every member holds certain missions close at heart. It might be a difficult rescue, a long search, some sort of funny operation, any number of combinations. But the ones that always come to mind quite easily, are the searches for young children. The following is an account of just such a mission.

2300 hours Friday, a call from the Hemet station, of the Riverside County Sheriff's Department, a young child mis-

sing out of the Black Mountain Group Campground. For me, there is nothing more important, this is what search and rescue is all about.

0030 hours Saturday, 12 members respond to the group camp which lies on the Western Slope of the San Jacinto Mountains near the Fuller Ridge. Walt Walker, Operations Leader interviews leaders of the group which is from a LDS church in Hemet. The purpose for being in the mountains: a father son campout. It is learned that after dinner a group of boys were playing in the camp, the group was called to come to the campfire ring for the evening campfire. All the boys except one made it to the fire. A search of the area was initiated for five year old Dean Peterson. With no results, a parent was sent to drive out the long dirt road to call for help. For Co. James Peterson, father to young Dean it would seem like a long wait.

Teams are formed in two's. Rob Gardner and Bob Sairs to cut sign along the dirt

road heading towards Camp Lackey to the East. Jay Pion and Ray Hussey to take the road to the West. Ron Pierson and Henry Negrete to cut for prints around the upper perimeter of the camp, and Glenn Henderson and Kevin Walker to take the stream bed and follow it out of camp. Packs are loaded and members head out on assignments. No prints are found on the close in search because of the earlier search efforts. Members continue to expand the search area. As the search goes on plans are made for the morning. Because a child is involved, and the nights are still in the low 40's other MRA teams are contacted, and a helicopter is authorized for first light. Still no substantial clues as to which direction young Dean might have taken.

0400 hours while heading down the stream bed, Glenn spots what could be a small foot print in the moist stream bottom, Kevin looks ahead. A definite print is found by Kevin, it is reported to base. The

team continues downstream calling Dean's name. Kevin calls out from the top of a small waterfall. The greatest joy a searcher can have is heard in the distance, a faint reply, "I'm here." The contact is reported to base and the team quickly moves down the now narrow and steep stream several hundred yards. The voice sounds closer. The pair wonder how a little one can still be up and moving with it being so cold. The reason is soon learned as young Dean had climbed out of the bottom of the stream and went up the side several hundred feet and got on top of a boulder, there he stayed. It was considerably warmer, and the air was definitely not as moist. Dean is cold, hungry and scared, but most importantly, uninjured. Glenn's wool sweater is put on the youth, Kevin's balaclava (like a wool cap) is placed over Dean's head, and then zipped up in with Glenn in his 60/40 parka. As teams arrive on scene they find Dean smiling and enjoying Glenn's candy. The Trogsitz (a device for carrying a subject on a rescuers back) is brought in. Dean is secured in it on Kevin's back. The group then hikes back up to the camp and a very anxious father. Breakfast is made for the RMRU members by the elders of the group. All is well...

...For Glenn, myself and the entire group of searchers, the reuniting of a father and son are all the thanks necessary. We are proud of what we do, and for Dean and his family, 1987 would hold another birthday, another summer vacation and all things that make being a five year old something special. • RMRU



DO YOU REMEMBER WHEN? - Mission No. 8114M, April 18, 1981, Willow Creek Crossing.

CALL

Mission No. 8716C

**9, May, Sat.
Desert Hot Springs**

We received a call from the Indio station of the Riverside County Sheriff's Department to respond to Desert Hot Springs and assist in a search for a missing child last seen near her home in a rural area of that community. As team members were being contacted the coordinator received another call that the youth had been located, unfortunately she was found deceased in a refrigerator. No further action was taken.



ABORT

Mission No. 8717A

**23 May, Sat.
San Jacinto Mountains**

We received a call from the Hemet office of the Riverside County Sheriff's Department that a pair of hikers were overdue in completing a hike somewhere in the San Jacinto wilderness. As members responded another call was made from the Sheriff stating that the hikers had returned safely, just overdue. Using our pager system members were contacted and told to return home. • RMRU

CALL

Mission No. 8718C

**24 May, Sat.
Santa Barbara County**

We received a call from the Los Padres Search and Rescue Team asking for assistance in the form of manpower to help with a search in their county. As the callout procedure was being initiated we were contacted and notified that our help was no longer needed for operation.

CALL

Mission No. 8719C

**29 May, Fri.
Big Pine,
Inyo County**

We received a call through the California Region of the Mountains Rescue Association asking for assistance in a search for a missing hiker in the Sierra. Five members were available to respond, but before the team left the mission was cancelled. • RMRU

Notice!

The RMRU Newsletter is published 12 times per year by the Riverside Mountain Rescue Unit, Inc. It is intended primarily to inform the Regular and Sustaining Members.

If you would like to receive the newsletter on a regular basis, and at the same time become a Sustaining member, send your tax deductible donation of \$25 or more to:

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