

Volume XXIII, Issue X, October 1987

Search and Rescue

CALL

Mission No. 8733C

**4 Oct., Sat.
Millard Canyon,
San Gorgonio Mountains**

We received a call from the Banning Station of the Riverside County Sheriff's Department to respond to Millard Canyon for a search. As information was being gathered, the missing party walked out. • RMRU

SEARCH

Mission No. 8734M

**8-9 Oct., Wed.-Thurs.
San Jacinto Mountains**

By Kevin Walker



Indian Summer...the only way to describe fall in Southern California. Fortunately my work load was not too heavy (fortunate for mountain rescue, not work), so when the pager went off I did not have to talk myself into responding to Idyllwild for a search. Nine members from RMRU initially responded to Humber Park. I was first to arrive followed closely behind by Ron Pierson and Eric Townsend. There we met with a deputy and Rick Poschman the son of the missing hiker. It seemed that Robert Poschman, age 70 from San Diego had left a suicide note at his home. The vehicle was located at Humber Park in Idyllwild. With limited information, we started the search.

Giving what we already knew about possible suicides, the first thing to do was

look close in, namely areas with views. A helicopter was requested, and the Marines at El Toro were able to respond with a ship (Angel 8). The balance of the day was spent looking within a two mile radius, with one team going on up to the saddle and adjoining areas. With no clues as to Robert's location, at nightfall I made the decision to call for additional help from the California Region of the Mountain Rescue Association.

Thursday morning saw nine members for RMRU, five from China Lake, three from San Dimas, three from Sierra Madre and two from San Diego. Also with us again was Angel 8 and her crew. As missions grow in size, so does the need for additional support in base. Dona Halcrow would be radio operator, Bob Sairs, chief base camp operator, Rob Gardner assistant operations leader/air ops, and myself at the helm. Rob and I had spent several hours the night before preparing assignments, and with the aid of the helicopter, teams were soon out in the field. Teams were looking mainly in what we call the Tahquitz Plateau, Skunk Cabbage, Tahquitz Valley, Little Tahquitz, Reeds, Laws, Willow Creek and Caramba. Again the day progressed with no leads. As the noon hour approached, Rob and I continued making plans for more assignments.

Henry Negrete's team had been assigned to look up the Angel's Glide from Saddle Junction to the Strawberry Cienega. They completed their sweep up and back and were ready for another assignment.

Just as Henry and Ron returned to the saddle, a couple drove up to base and stated that they heard someone calling for help near the top of the Devil's Slide trail. I immediately had Dona contact all teams to stand by and had Henry and Ron scream down the trail. As they did so, we had the two China Lake field teams head back to the saddle. It did not take long for Henry and Ron to get down to the Powderbox Spring area, and sure enough made contact with the voice above the trail. It was Rick Poschman and he had located his father in a tent above the main trail on a portion of the old trail from the 1930's. It seemed that Mr. Poschman had been a member of the California Conser-

vation Corps, and remembered the old trail. Our subject was despondent, but otherwise in good condition. Teams were airlifted back to base, while RMRU and China Lake personnel assisted Mr. Poschman down to Humber Park.

A critique was held during dinner at the Chef in the Forest, and overall it was agreed that the mission went well. Only thing was that we would need to keep the old Devil's Slide in mind on future missions. Our thanks to fellow region teams for their support, to the Marines from El Toro, and special thanks to the Idyllwild Fire Department for the use of their station for base camp. • RMRU

ABORT

Mission No. 8735A

**24 Oct., Fri.
Dripping Springs,
Ortega Mountains**

We received a call from the Elsinore station of the Riverside County Sheriff's Department to respond to assist in the rescue of some injured subjects as a result of a car over on a road off of the Ortega Highway. As we responded a cancellation page was put out because the El Toro Rescue helicopter was able to effect the rescue by winch. • RMRU





heavily forested areas, and even the side of a rock. We are now looking forward to our next training with El Toro Helicopter SAR. **RMRU** members participating in this training were Mary Bowman, Jim Fairchild, Rob Gardner, Glenn Henderson, Ray Hussey, Bernie McIlvoy, Henry Negrete, Ronnie Pierson, Rick Pohlers, Bob Sairs, Walt Walker, Kevin Walker, Eric Townsend, Bob Wintz, Cliff Benton. • **RMRU**

HELITAC

17 Oct., Sat
Idyllwild, San Jacinto Mountains

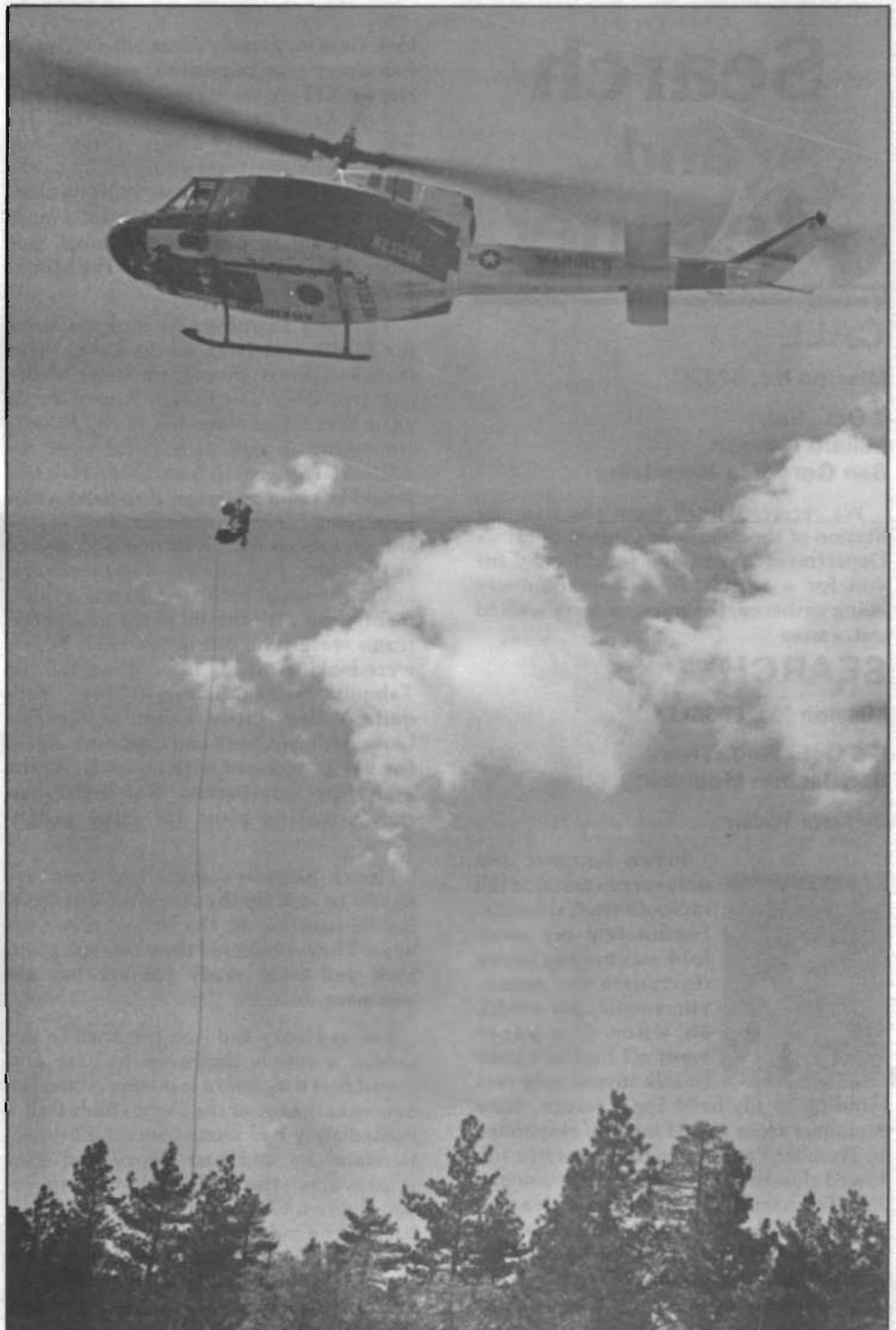


In an effort to increase our helicopter support technology, **RMRU** contacted the El Toro Helicopter Search and Rescue Team. An attachment to the U.S. Marine Base, they have three UH-1N (Huey) helicopters on call 24 hours a day. Their prime function is emergency response for downed military aircraft, but they are also utilized by other agencies such as law enforcement, parks and recreation, and the U.S. Coast Guard.

On the morning of training the El Toro Helicopter landed at Camp Maranatha where our **RMRU** team was waiting. The officer in charge and pilot, Maj. C.B. Holbrook introduced us to co-pilot Cpt. Munson, crewchief Sgt. Meuli and rescue corpsman Mike Anjola. They then gave us a general run-down regarding safety and operating instructions in and around the aircraft. **RMRU** team members practiced boarding and exiting, opening and closing doors, litter loading and unloading, and safety procedures. We were also familiarized with safety zones outside the aircraft.

After a question and answer session, we took part in a litter-raise demonstration. A stokes type litter was raised and taken inside the helicopter by a cable and wench while the craft hovered as much as 250 feet above the ground. Mike Anjola then demonstrated a free rappel out of the helicopter back down to us. As we said our farewells, Mike then hooked up to the lowered wench cable and was hoisted aloft. As he climbed inside, the chopper banked, nosed forward to get a bite on the air and was soon out of sight.

During our critique of training we discussed the advantages of adding this highly experienced helicopter rescue team to our two current private helicopter support services, Western and Landells. Along with high stability, these military helicopters with their winching capabilities would also enable us to literally pluck subjects from the bottom of canyons,



FREE RAPPEL — Corpsman Mike Anjola was captured by the cameraman while demonstrating how he can be inserted into a rescue area when the helicopter can't safely touchdown or land.

RMRU PHOTO BY JIM FAIRCHILD