



Floods

February 20, 1980
North of the City of San Jacinto
1980-004

By Brian Hixson

It was a strange feeling to be told over the school intercom to leave your school room and go home because of the chance that the levee holding the San Jacinto River back might break. Upon reaching my home I was met by my mother who told me to get my rescue gear together and go back to the Cottonwood Trailer park and assist in evacuating the trailers and homes below the levee. When I reached the base camp at the trailer park I found that the evacuation operation was well under way with the trailer park almost completely empty. At base the Sheriff was directing operation, with the Hemet and San Jacinto Police Departments, the Hemet team, and RMRU assisting in notifying the residents of the danger. Fellow team member Kevin Walker and I were assigned to check all the homes along the old Gilman Road and tell the residents that they might have to leave their homes if the erosion of the levee shifted to the north side of the river. After completing that assignment we returned to base and reported on what residents we made contact with. It was about 3:00 in the afternoon when Kevin and I were told to rendezvous with Hemet Valley Ambulance on the North side of the river. The reason being that if the levee breached the north side would be isolated and by having the paramedic ambulance there, medical aid could be given to residents. At 6:00 we were told that we could return to base. Once back, Walt Walker told Kevin and I that work crews were beginning to gain on the erosion and residents would be allowed to return to their homes. It was a secure feeling to know that the danger was over, little did we know what was in store for us the next day.

RMRU is a volunteer search and rescue team that covers Riverside County and assists other teams with search and rescue efforts in other counties. Each member purchases their own equipment and takes time off work, without compensation, to participate in search and rescue missions. Team equipment is purchased from contributions from the community. We are a non-profit organization and are funded by [donations](#) from people like you.