

Two Marines overdue

March 4, 1984

North Face, San Jacinto Mtns
1984-005

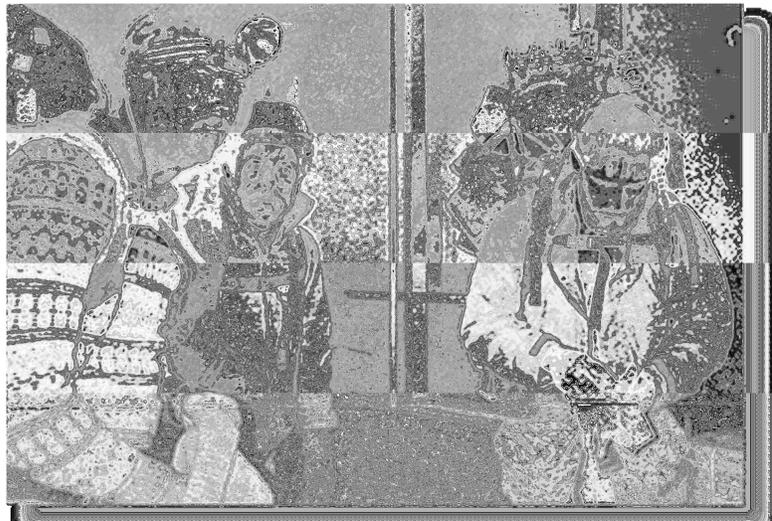
By Mel Krug

It was just about 4:30 when the phone seemed to have a familiar ring to it. The call, two marines overdue in an attempt of the North Face of Mt. San Jacinto. When I arrived at the Snow Creek roadhead, I found members preparing gear and waiting as Kevin was up in the helicopter. They were searching the North Face as quickly as possible as the sun was now down and daylight fading quickly. They stayed up until it was quite dark, in the hopes that a campfire would be spotted.

When Kevin and Brian returned, Kevin unloaded his gear and Brian left for Landells heliport. It was decided that since the pair was supposed to have been out Saturday evening, we would make our main attack from the top. Everyone moved around to the lower tram station, prepared for a winter search, loaded onto the tram car and were off (to our friends at the tram, thanks for staying open).

Occasionally we are short handed, this was one of those times. Our search team to the summit consisted of Glenn Henderson, Rob Gardner, Cameron Robbins and myself. With packs on we went down the concrete walk to Long Valley and then started out for Mt. San Jacinto. We left behind in the tram station, Ops. Leader Jim Fairchild, Base Camp Ops. Mary Bowman, and two spare field members, Kevin and Joe Erickson.

It was a long night as we searched our way up through Tamarack Valley, up to Frank Miller Peak, and then on to the summit itself. To make things even more difficult, there were patches of ice that forced us to use crampons, and then on top of the



Jim Fairchild

PREPARING FOR THE COLD - RMRU members Glenn Henderson, Rob Gardner and Mel Krug prepare to go out into the near zero temperature to search for two missing marines.

near zero temp a wind of extreme proportion was blowing out of the north. We arrived at the summit close to 3:00 a.m. not finding a clue. We looked around on top for some time and finally decided to go inside the summit cabin and get a couple of hours of sleep. When morning arrived we awoke to Rob making an unusually large amount of strange sounds as he attempted to get out of his sleeping bag on the top bunk. And soon after we heard the welcome sound of air support making its way up the North Face. Brian was back with one of Landells jet Rangers.

We were just ready to start searching again when the radio came on with news that the pair had wandered into the Long Valley ranger station. After flying all members out, which was exciting in itself as the winds on the top were still quite strong, but Brian handled it in style, we went back to the tram and met the two men we had looked for. Because of their lack of gear, they had been much slower than they had planned, and also were unable to start a fire to signal the helicopter the night before. I could go on and on about what they should have done, but I won't. just a word of advice, if you want to do the North Face, be sure you know exactly what you are doing, as our little mountain can get very big at certain times.



Jim Fairchild
DOWN SAFE - Devron Anderson is interviewed as Kyle Kinglesmith talks with his wife Judy after they had spent two nights out in the cold on Mt. San Jacinto.

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.