



Man ran off and disappeared

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Badlands, Highway 60
1984-011

By John Dew

It was right at noon on Wednesday when the pagers were activated. Having been laid up for SEVEN MONTHS recuperating from shoulder surgery without even being able to go to Base, and having been just released from the doctor "to go to Base camp ONLY," (NO pack, NO use of the arm, NO anything) I was ready for any kind of mission. I just wanted to get back to doing something. I was willing to go to Base and run the radios. (This is a job most try to get out of. We all want to get on into the field.) Anyway, I grabbed the phone even before the pager stopped to see what exciting adventure lay ahead.

The information was that a man D"4 years old with the mental capability of approximately a 6 year old was lost in the "Badlands" area just off highway 60. Our instructions were to start driving highway 60 about eight miles east of Beaumont until we saw the Sheriff's car. This would be the meeting place.

Upon arrival we were told that this man was being taken to a "home" and he didn't want to go there. He had thrown something in the way of clothing out the window. When the driver stopped to pick it up he jumped out, ran up one drainage, over a ridge and had disappeared. Knowing this man was unable to care for himself and afraid he might get lost in those hills and be there into the night, the Sheriff was called. The Sheriff, sensing the need this person had to be found quickly, called RMRU and then called Don Landells and his helicopter.

RMRU arrived shortly after the pager call and within minutes Don called down to ask where we wanted him to land. Jim Fairchild and I were chosen to fly search. (Surely that couldn't hurt my shoulder.) We were less than two minutes in the air when Don asked me, "Was the guy you want wearing a red shirt?" He was and he was found just that quickly.

We might have called this, "The Two Minute Mission." It took less time to complete than it has taken me to write this article, but it is good it went so smoothly and the fellow was safe.

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.