



Woman fell down steep slope

May 27, 1986

Stone Creek - San Jacinto Mtns

1986-021

By Kevin Walker

During the previous mission (8620M) we heard talk on the Sheriff's frequency of an auto accident on Highway 243 near Stone Creek, and that there may have been a walk away. There was a lot of confusion about that incident, as we completed our search at Mountain Center. We drove to Idyllwild and had a much needed breakfast after completing an all night search.

Just as we were leaving the Idyllwild restaurant to head for home the Riverside Sheriff's Office (RSO) called by radio and requested that we respond to Stone Creek to assist with the rescue of an injured woman. In about ten minutes we were at the Stone Creek turnout where we met volunteers (Mr. & Mrs. Muir) from the Pine Cove Fire Department and their ambulance. We were told that at about 8:00 pm. the previous evening a man and woman had driven their car down the eroded dirt road that runs parallel to the Stone Creek drainage. They got their car stuck, and following that the man some-how took a tumble and injured himself. The man got back to the car where he stayed while the woman went to seek help. The night passed. In the morning the man was found in the car by a jogger who notified authorities initiating a fire department rescue of the man. He was taken to Hemet Valley Hospital Emergency Room for treatment. That's what we heard going on over the radio earlier.

The woman was located about two hours later when her calls for help were heard. She was calling up from the bottom of the drainage - Apparently, when she left to find help for the man she fell from the dirt road, tumbled down four hundred feet of steep, slidy slope that was covered with loose dirt, fallen leaves, and standing trees. Near the bottom of the slope she bounced off of about forty feet of jagged rock, falling to the edge of the creek. She lay at that point overnight, nearly fourteen hours, before being discovered.

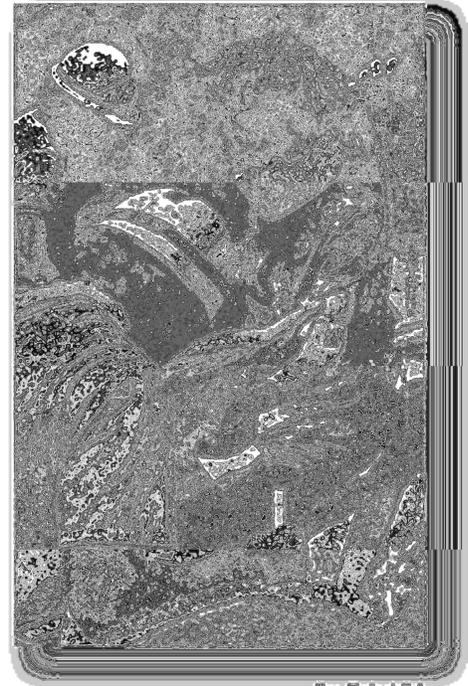
Gear was loaded into the four-wheel drive ambulance and we hiked down the dirt road a short distance. We hiked just past the stuck passenger car to where we would stage the rescue. Operations Leader Rick Pohlers sent Bernie McIlvoy, Rob Gardner and Jim Fairchild down the steep dirt slope to Stone Creek. They were able to go most of the distance without ropes, though one would not have wanted to slip. The last seventy feet required a rope rappel. Once at the bottom an assessment was made for what would be needed to move the fifty-seven year old injured woman up from the creek. Two rangers from the State Park and U.S. Forest Service were already with the injured woman when RMRU arrived.

Rick Pohlers and Jay Pion set up a lowering line and then Randy Morris, a paramedic from the Idyllwild Fire Department, was lowered to the creek bed. Randy continued medical assessment and aid. The subject appeared to have suffered many large abrasions, lacerations to the extremities and face, a possible compound fracture to the lower right leg, general pains, stiffness, swelling, and mild dehydration. A C-Collar was put in place, limbs were splinted, an I.V.

was started, and she was placed on a back-board.

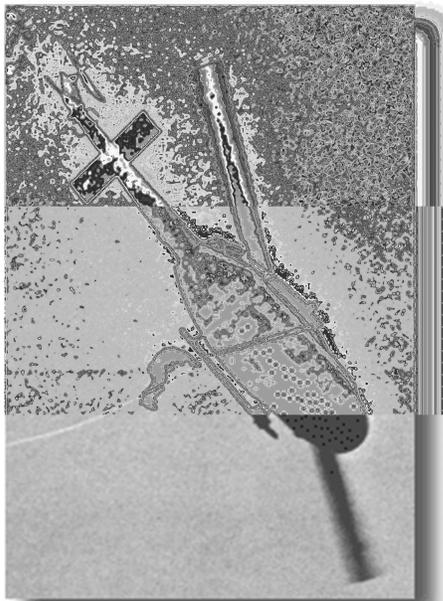
Bernie, Rick, and I discussed the alternatives for extrication. We could do a raise back to the road, but this would risk rock-fall and a rough ride for our subject. We could carry or wheel the litter up the creek bed, which would mean more of the same problem, as there are numerous small cascades and waterfalls. The other alternative was to air lift her out of the canyon. No question . . . for the safety of our patient a winch out would be the best way. Therefore, I requested that the Sheriff contact El Toro Marine Base in Orange County and ask for one of the SAR (Search and Rescue) helicopters. The re-quest was approved and El Toro was contacted. Meanwhile, Rick lowered Glenn Henderson and me down to the creek with a litter and the rest of the first aid equipment.

In only 35 minutes the sound of the powerful Bell 212 helicopter could be heard in the distance. Radio



Jim Fairchild

MEDICAL CARE - Rescue
personnel give aid to Patricia Hill in the bottom of Stone Creek. During the previous night Mrs. Hill fell and moderately injured herself.



Jim Fairchild

ON RAPPEL - Navy medical technician Ron Orent rappels out of the Marine Bell 212 down into Stone Creek to help in the rescue of Patricia Hill.

communications were established and she soon was circling overhead. A smoke signal was ignited to show wind direction and shortly after that U.S. Navy Medical Technician Ron Orent rappelled out of the bird as the Pilot, Capt. Putnam, USMC, and Crew Chief Sgt. Meuli, USMC, held the helicopter steady. The only drawback to the operation was the 100 mile an hour (helicopter created) winds, that we experienced in the canyon while the helicopter hovered overhead. Once down Medic Orent had a litter lowered from the helicopter. The subject was secured into the litter and made ready for her exciting ride out of the canyon. Paramedic Randy Morris was winched out first as he would go with the subject to the hospital. The cable was then lowered back to us and the subject and litter were hooked up and then raised nearly 150 feet to the helicopter. Because the helicopter was getting low on fuel, Medic Orent was left with us and would be picked up later. With the subject safely on board, the helicopter flew her directly to the Loma Linda University Medical Center Trauma Unit for further medical treatment.

The excitement was over. All that was left was to get the remaining personnel and equipment out of the canyon. Medic Orent was surprised at what Jumaring was really like, but enjoyed the experience. By late afternoon all personnel were out and enroute home. Some of us had been out for nearly 36 hours, and it was indeed nice to get home and be able to relax knowing that we had done well. USFS, CDF, RSO, Idyllwild F.D., State Park Service, and El Toro Marine Base SAR were there for the same reason as us ... to help others.



Jim Fairchild

RAISE TO SAFETY - Mrs. Patricia Hill is raised better than 100 feet out of Stone Creek up to the helicopter by winch. Mrs. Hill was then flown to Loma Linda Medical Center.

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.