

Body recovery

September 4, 1987
Badlands
1987-026

By Jim Fairchild

The initial information from the pager call was that we were to search for a man with suicidal tendencies. During the drive to the scene, I was contemplating the extensive maze of steep dirt hills and gullies and how to search through them. By helicopter, of course!

The scene featured many emergency vehicles parked at the edge of the highway between Moreno Valley and San Timeteo Canyon, a pick-up truck perched on a perilously narrow ridge above a drop-off and a Sheriff's Sergeant who wondered why I showed up! Seems I turned my pager off after the call, instead of resetting it on stand-by. Therefore, the cancellation reached all the other members.

A bit of low-key fact-finding revealed that Mr. Peterson had consummated the suicidal tendency two days earlier, his body lay about 70 yds. down a gully, just below his truck. It also appeared that my full complement of ropes and hardware could be useful for recovering the body.

Following waits for officials and investigations, the writer took the cue to setup anchors and rigging for a raise. Mr. Peterson's truck and a heavy-duty fire truck served as anchors.

The double pulley system to effect the raise was really tested as the fire department huskies pulled hard to bring the litter with Mr. Peterson and three also husky litter attendants up the sandy, brushy slope.

The writer then disassembled the many rigging components, coiled ropes, packed, and walked down to base. There were no teammates to go out with for a meal, so it was back home for supper.

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.

