



## Overdue climbers on North Face

**May 7, 1989**  
**Snow Creek to San Jacinto Peak**  
**1989-016**

By Victor Caro

The pager was activated at 1645 hrs. informing all RMRU members to call Rick Pohlers concerning a search. A quick phone call to Rick and the following information was given: three overdue climbers on the North face of Mt. San Jacinto. The meeting place was Snowcreek. At Snowcreek, the helicopter and I arrived simultaneously. In the helicopter was Rob Gardner, Kevin Walker and the pilot Steve DeJesus. Dona Halcrow and John Drew were also on the scene.

Once airborne, I knew this was going to be a great ride. At the 4500 ft. level we spotted tracks left by the climbers leading towards Miller Peak, and not to the North face route up to Mt. San Jacinto Peak. Carefully following the tracks, we spotted the climbers at the 7100 ft. level. Kevin quickly established contact with the climbers, and they indicated that everything was alright.

It was decided not to leave the climbers alone, so I was dropped off above the climbers at Miller Peak. The landing was with only one skid on a big boulder. My assignment was to make contact with the climbers, and to wait for further assistance. As I was making my way down to contact the climbers, I tried to establish radio communications with the helicopter and I was unsuccessful.

After a few more steps I was able to communicate with base, but still no communication with the helicopter. However, there was no problem in contacting the climbers; they were approximately 200 yards below my location. About 20 minutes later, Kevin joined up, and we both waited for the climbers. Upon further examination of the radio, Kevin discovered that the PL (private line) switch had been accidentally activated; and it was turned down in wattage from 5 to 2 watts. Consequently, the PL mode coupled with the decrease in wattage mad communication impossible with the helicopter.

About 15 minutes after Kevin's arrival, the climbers made their way to our location. After a short rest, the entire group proceeded over the ridge to a relatively flat and snowless area. The climbers were given plenty of time to change into dry clothes, eat raisins, and drink plenty of water.

At the Round Valley ranger station, Joe Erickson and Walt Walker were waiting with hot fluids ready for the group. Within 2 hours, the group reached Round Valley. The

climbers replenished their tired bodies with hot soup and chocolate. After 15-20 minutes, the group, now with Joe and Walt, were ready to hike the final leg to the tramway. As the tram approached the lower station, the excited faces from the family members really boosted everyone's morale. Time out was 0145 hrs.

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.