

TRAINING



CANCELLED
DUE TO MISSIONS!

*Search
and
Rescue*

SEARCH

Mission No. 8008C

**1 March, Sat.
North Face
Mt. San Jacinto**

We received a call from the Riverside County Sheriff's Department that a group of climbers were overdue in completing a climb on the North Face of Mt. San Jacinto. Just as the team was being activated, the group walked out to the tramway, and all were in good condition.

• RMRU

SEARCH

Mission No. 8009C

**3 March, Mon.
Badger Pass Area
Yosemite National Park**

We received a call for an out of county mission in the Badger Pass area of Yosemite National Park. The call was for a

cross country skier who was overdue. No members were sent because of flood related problems in our own county. • RMRU

ASSIST

Mission No. 8010M

**5-6 Mar., Wed.-Thurs.
Lake Hemet,
San Jacinto Mountains**

By Brian Hixson

At approximately 12:30 Wednesday afternoon I received a call from veteran team member Walt Walker, asking if I could help in watching the Lake Hemet Spillway. Saying yes, I started getting my gear together. I could not help but wonder why we were needed to help watch the dam when all the newspapers had said that all was stable at the dam. Never the less I drove to Walt Walker's house and transferred gear into the teams rescue van, which was being kept in the San Jacinto area. After meeting Hal Fulkman to pick up a special light that he had put together so that the spillway could be watched at night, Walt, Kevin and I headed for Lake Hemet. Once there we were briefed on the situation. The Lake Hemet Municipal Water District provided us with a motor boat so that we could transfer all the gear and ourselves to the other end of the lake. It was an eerie sound that we heard as we approached the lower end of the lake. It was the sound of rushing water flowing over the main dam. Even though the rains had slackened off, there was still a good eighteen inches of water going over the dam. We finally reached our destination, the spillway. The three of us then carried the equipment up onto a little knoll that looked down to the spillway. After the team's Bishop tent was set up and the newly acquired compact generator (actually meant for base camp operations) and the light was put in position, we went down to the base of the spillway. At first all seemed to be in order, but as we reached the base, we found a chunk of bedrock the size of two greyhound busses missing. Now I realized why the concern. With a storm expected to be in that evening, I could see why we were asked to watch the spillway, the reason being, if the water level were to rise again, and water were to start flowing over the top

of the spillway, erosion of the spillway would occur.

To make the story short, Walt, Kevin and I monitored the spillway until eight in the evening. At that time fellow team members Bernie McIlvoy and John Muratet relieved us and they then kept an eye on the spillway during the night.

Footnote:

Thursday morning the water district personnel took over the watch at 6:00 A. M. Luckily there was no heavy rain during the night and the water level did not rise to be a critical factor. • RMRU

SEARCH

Mission No. 8011M

**5-6 Mar., Wed.-Thur.
San Jacinto Mountains**

By Hal Fulkman

As Lloyd Allen stopped his ascent just short of Powder Box Spring the disappointing fact was all too clear, "This snow just isn't going to get any better." Disappointing because all the way up the Devil's Slide Lloyd was hoping that once on top the snow might be good enough for some cross country skiing.

Earlier that morning as Lloyd started out he mentioned to his wife his plans to ski over Saddle Junction and around Skunk Cabbage Meadow and be back home by dusk. The weather outlook was not good, and he was going alone, but the fact that he was experienced and was not going too far seemed to outweigh any problems that might come up.

And now as Lloyd is standing just a few switch backs from the saddle, he decides that the snow is just too hard to ski safely. At this point that uncalculated thing happens that causes a chain of events that will bring Lloyd to the brink of his very survival. As Lloyd was turning around he lost his footing and slipped off the trail. In seconds his body is building up incredible speed over the hard snow. After about 250 feet, Lloyd crashed into a partially buried tree limb and came to a sudden halt. The feeling of "glad to be alive" was short lived by the intense pain coming from his badly fractured ankle.

Many problems faced Lloyd at this time. Problems that very easily could seem insurmountable. A fractured ankle,

lying on a narrow ledge with several hundred more feet to fall, no way back up, at least nine hours before his wife would even begin to worry, and bad weather on the way. Enough problems to have caused a deep depression and hopelessness that has brought a tragic end to many victims of mountaineering accidents. Lloyd had an immediate choice to make, a choice I feel is a key note in survival, and that choice is attitude. A choice of succumbing to the hopelessness or a choice of confidence in ability, experience, intestinal fortitude, and spiritual fortitude, a "survivist." A choice of positive mountaineering attitude.

Lloyd, after putting together everything that had happened to him, made all his decisions in the next five minutes. Every one was positive and aimed at surviving. He made his ledge wider and secured himself. He positioned his body so he could look back in the directions of the trail, put as much gear between him and the snow as he could, and made a makeshift splint for his ankle. He knew that after his wife reported him overdue that RMRU would be activated and out searching for him and for that reason trying to move was out of the question. Lloyd also realized that hypothermia would soon render him unable to make rational decisions so he programmed himself not to change his mind on those things he had already decided to do. The next thing was to wait.

2015 hours Wednesday evening at our regular rescue meeting, members of RMRU were discussing the many rescues we had from the San Jacinto flood earlier

that week. Our discussion was interrupted by the Sheriff dispatcher's voice over our pagers. It was a search for an overdue cross country skier. A type of operation that was becoming more and more frequent with the popularity the sport was generating mixed with a season of hard snow and ice our mountains were experiencing. The rendezvous was the Sheriff's office in Idyllwild and by 2215 most of the team had assembled, and were receiving assignments while the operations leader was questioning the missing person's wife, Mrs. Lloyd Allen, as to the itinerary of Lloyd's outing. She informed us that Lloyd was supposed to hike up the Devil's Slide Trail and ski the back country. She said he was supposed to ski the Skunk Cabbage area but he might get as far as Tahquitz Valley. She also said that he sometimes liked to do the scenic trail because it was closer. This description of where Lloyd might have gone was a little disturbing because from the trail head at Humber Park the two routes were in opposite directions. The rescue van was moved to Humber Park and by 2300 two teams were moving up the Devil's Slide while one team was sent down the scenic trail. The first team up the Devil's Slide was a two man team and was about 15 minutes ahead of the second four man team. The weather had closed in to the high country earlier that evening and it had been raining already for about three hours. The conditions couldn't have been worse. An icy cold rain with gusty winds made the going miserable and caused great concern for Lloyd's safety. At 0145 Pete Carlson and Dave Ezell, the men in the first team, radioed back to base that

they had made voice contact with Lloyd and were trying to locate his position. Ten minutes later they were with him. Pete reported Lloyd was about 250 feet off the trail and was injured. I was team leader of the second group; and as soon as we heard the message, I sent Chris Noon and Joe Erickson back down the trail to assist in bringing up the litter and the technical gear. Craig Beasley and myself proceeded to Lloyd's position.

When we got to them Pete had gotten Lloyd into a sleeping bag and had some soup on the stove. After several cups, Lloyd told us about his almost getting to the top and then deciding to turn around and in the process losing his footing and falling. The tree limb that finally stopped him formed an arch as it protruded out of the snow.

The rain had turned to icy snow and everything was soaking wet. The wind was still blowing hard and all of us were beginning to suffer from the cold.

After what always seems a lifetime the men above had gotten the haul line ready and with Lloyd in the litter, we started the 250 foot raise to the trail. Even with four men on the litter and several on the haul line, the raise was very strenuous, but steady. By the time we reached the trail it was light enough to see well, and even though it was still storming the fact that the long cold night was over brought a degree of renewal to all of us.

It was now a matter of bringing Lloyd down the mountain as comfortably as possible when we met by fire department personnel about a mile down the mountain with fresh man power. We were able to move faster to the waiting ambulance at Humber Park. Altogether, Lloyd had been from the time of his accident, 26 hours in the back country with serious injuries and in bad weather. A tribute to Lloyd's attitude about survival and RMRU's rescue expertise. • RMRU



RMRU PHOTO BY JIM FAIRCHILD

VOLUNTEERS AT WORK — RMRU members and volunteers from Idyllwild, guide the wheeled litter containing Lloyd Allen back to Humber Park, after RMRU members had spent the entire night out in rain and snow rescuing Lloyd.

SEARCH

Mission No. 8012M

6-7 Mar., Thur.-Fri.

**North Face,
Mt. San Jacinto**

By Dave Ezell

We had just pulled off an extensive all night evacuation of Loyd Allen in the wilderness near Powder Box Spring. The troops were arriving home when we got another callout. The story was a man missing on the North Face. Having just come off the mountain we knew he was to await his ordeal through the pending storm that had seized the mountain the previous evening. Little did we know that we were about engage ourselves in only

Part I of "the Missing Person Syndrome." (See other article - North Face Search).

As the tired troops moved their way back toward the mountain late in the day, Landell's Aviation was being dispatched to the summit to take a glance through the storm blanket to locate the missing person Winfred Blevins. A team comprised of RMRU members and Hemet Search and Rescue Team members were deployed to the mountain tramway station to begin their search at first light. Because of heavy cloud cover, strong winds and darkness Don Landells had to call off his search. The remaining available members met at 5:30 A.M. the following morning at the Snow Creek helispot for airlift to the peak. By this time the weather had cleared and I felt it would be the typical helicopter search and recover operation.



The search and recovery was as expected but the circumstances of the search turned out to be atypical. As it turns out our lost person was left by his climbing team to trek the last 1,000 feet to the summit solo. (He was traveling at a slower rate than his companions, Hooman Aprin and Vickie Mayfield.)

There were some forcing circumstances that added up to a near miss tragedy though. Blevins claimed later that during his approach he became very fatigued and extremely sleepy; a storm was approaching; his climbing partners left him behind; and the wind speed was estimated to be well over 40 m.p.h. To add device to misery Blevins sleeping bag was swept away in a strong gust just as he was preparing to bivouac in the wake of the approaching twilight holocaust - this began his first night without a bag.

In the meantime his climbing partners atop the mountain climbed into their bags out of the wind and fell fast asleep. Upon awakening early in the morning and discovering that Blevins wasn't there they concluded that he must have passed them and blitzed to the tramway ahead of them. So, being cold, they decided to be on the first "down car," but to their "astonishment" Blevins was not to be found at the parking lot. Thus they began a day long wait for his imminent return. As the day lengthened the couple began to won-

der if indeed their lone partner was to be imminent prior to dusk. A call to the Long Valley Ranger Station was all that was necessary to activate a rescue call through the Banning Sheriff's Station. What, you left who behind? How many hours ago?

The next morning six RMRU members were air lifted to the peak. Jim Fairchild, Pete Carlson, Walt Walker and Kevin Walker were on top and Brian Hixson and myself were the last team to board. Hal Fulkman rode as observer. As Don Landells moved us slowly up the desert ridges we all hoped that Blevins had indeed reached the summit before the storm had peaked because the fresh flocking showed those portentous signs of that incessant phenomena that snow crystals relinquish to gravity.

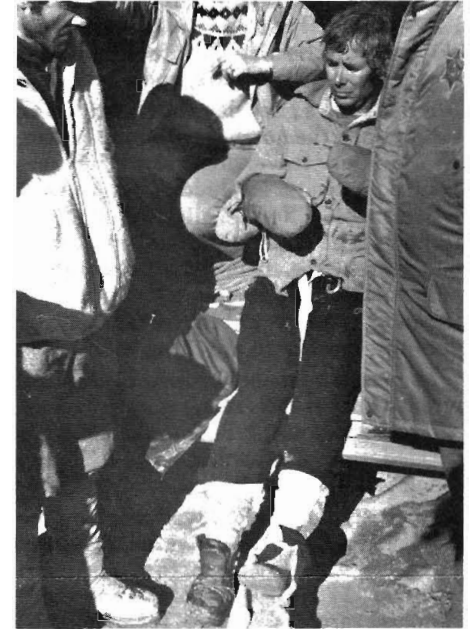
Don flew this flight in slower as we scanned the slopes. As we reached the top the bird was getting hit with severe blasts of wind. Snow crystals blown off the peak in large plumes were striking against the cleared blue sky. Because of the strong winds near the peak Don decided to swing out further than before and we banked out over Little Round Valley. As we passed over I caught a glimpse of fresh tracks crossing the meadow and exclaimed, "There's his tracks - down there in the meadow." Hixson and I were dropped off on the peak and Don and Hal flew back for a closer look. Sure enough, Blevins hobbled out of a grove of trees and waved to the ship.

The conditions by this time (approx. 7 A.M.) were extreme in exposed areas. The temperature was exactly 9° F. and the wind was as high as 60 m.p.h. It was time to draw the storm hoods closed and peep through glacier goggles for the remainder of our stay - wind chill being nearly 40 below.

Don landed the ship in eloquent fashion in the squirrely winds on a nearby knoll and Hal motioned Blevins to the bird, got him in, and they flew back to base. Hal began an immediate verbal survey and detected a lot of ambiguity in Blevins responses. Blevins felt extremely confident about his condition, his abilities as a mountaineer, and expressed disconcert about the need for rescue. He claimed that he knew right where he was and that he was headed for the Tramway. He was confident that he was nearing Long Valley because of the increased number of foot prints he was crossing. Fulkman quickly pointed out that the prints he was crossing were indeed his own and that he had been walking in circles and in addition he was walking away from the Tram (180° - west). Blevins admitted later that he firmly believed in following his own sense of direction without the aid of map or compass.

Hal began having doubts about the true

condition that Blevins was in even though Blevins kept assuring him that he was fine. Hal began probing deeper and when he asked Blevins about his fingers and toes the response came back "I can wiggle my toes fine." After arriving at base camp Hal insisted that Blevins toes be examined. Blevins consented with, "OK, if it'll ease your mind." After a lengthy struggle to remove a boot with the help of Captain



Canova's biceps it was a medi-evac to the hospital Code 3. Blevins had solidly frozen feet as well as frozen finger tips.

This was another excellent example of intuitive examining demonstrated by a conscientious member. If Hal had only listened to Blevins' constant assurance, definitive treatment and prevention of true tissue loss would not have been realized. More importantly from all of this was a great lesson for me as an observer. As the saying goes, "Believe the signs and the symptoms, not the person," cannot be overemphasized. How often do we read of accounts of mountaineering tragedies where the apologetic person becomes the victim because of masquerading symptoms. In the words of Jim Fairchild, "Blevins is a classic example of the victim who claims he's OK and then dies an hour after you've turned your back!" It was speculated by some of the veteran members that Blevins indeed was a lucky man and that he probably did not have much life left in him at the time of his rescue even though he appeared to be alert. Blevins was admitted to the Desert Hospital in Palm Springs for treatment of frostbite by 9:00 A.M. that morning and released nearly two weeks later. According to Hal Fulkman the miraculous saving of tissue in Blevins recovery was due to a fast and effective rescue and immediate transportation to the hospital without delay or subsequent trauma to the frozen feet.

RESCUE

**Mission No. 8013M
22-23 Mar., Sat.-Sun.
San Jacinto Mountains**

By Walt Walker

Mother Nature has been good to the mountains this winter, a heavy blanket of snow covers them. Three young men, Doug Andrews, Mark Dupont and Rick Kierstead decided a one day cross country ski tour in the San Jacinto Mountains would be a great way to spend a Saturday.

It had been a good day and the trio were skiing along the northeast Tahquitz ridge. As Mark was traversing a slope, he came upon some water ice, hidden by a layer of loose snow. Then . . . slipping, sliding, tumbling, he finally crashed into a tree 300 feet below. Doug started down to help and . . . he also slides and tumbles, traveling 800 feet, but fortunately he does not crash into anything solid.

Mark has probably broken his leg and wrist. Doug is luckier, he is only bruised scratched. Shouting back and forth, it is decided that Rick will go for help and Doug will do what he can for Mark.

About 6 p.m. RMRU was called by the Hemet station of the Riverside County Sheriff's Department. Before the night was over 17 RMRU members and three Hemet Search & Rescue Team (HSAR) members were involved.

As rescue team members arrived at the Idyllwild sheriff's office a plan of action was drawn up. (After talking to the informant, Rick Kierstead.) Part 1 — Kevin and Walt Walker (RMRU), Chuck Benson and Steve Vaughn (HSAR) became the "bash team", (first responders who give first aid, access the situation and radio out for needed equipment). Part 2 — The balance of the unit members became the "sherpas", (members who carry heavy packs and in this mission, they were to also pull in the rescue toboggan).

At 8 p.m. Chuck, Steve, Kevin and I left Humber Park and started hiking. We quickly left the Devil's Slide Trail and turned towards Tahquitz Ridge. In 10 more minutes we were in the western drainage below Chinquapin Flat. Climbing up and away from the stream, the snow became very hard and we stopped and strapped crampons to our boots.

We had no sooner done this when we heard voices. We first thought, somehow Doug and Mark had worked their way down. Hiking a little further on, we met three young men. (See the following write-up.)

The four of us continued hiking up the canyon. As the angle of the slope increased, we were no longer hiking, we had begun to climb. Just about 10 p.m. we received a response to one of our shouts. It was Doug and Mark and we saw the

dim glow of a flashlight, far above us. It appeared to be about 300 feet below the ridge line.

With the pair only a short distance below the ridge and the fact that the group bringing up the rescue toboggan was not very far up, it was decided to have them descend. They turned around and left the toboggan at base and started up the Devil's Slide Trail to hike the Tahquitz Peak Trail over to Chinquapin Flats.

The angle of the slope was now about 30° and we had begun to find water ice under about three inches of loose snow. At about 10:30 p.m. I was leading our group when . . . the world turned upside down. I had lost my footing, tumbled downslope, crashed through a small Pine tree, dropped off a three foot ledge, struck my head and elbow, slid 50 feet in the ice axe arrest position on water ice, and finally came to a stop. In the process I had torn a pocket open on my pack, broken the radio antenna and my headlight and found that I had abraded my forehead and elbow enough to bleed.

After I had assured everyone I was o.k., the four of us continued upward. We stopped and I roped up to lead up a steep icy chute. Belayed, I started up and in a short time I was chopping steps in the ice. Then the world began to turn around and a wave of nausea swept over me. I fought back the urge to vomit and forced myself up another six feet and swung my leg over a rock. I slumped down onto it. I yelled down that I was not feeling well and I would go up ten more feet to a tree

and tie the rope to it. Slowly and carefully I chopped steps up to the tree and secured the rope to it.

(Editor's note: Walt's condition continued to deteriorate. His conscious level dropped, he didn't know where he was or what was going on, etc. He began to shiver and complained of a severe headache. It began to appear that he might have suffered a head injury during the fall. At about 3 a.m. he was placed into a sleeping bag. At base, Jim Fairchild began to call for more manpower and requested a helicopter for use in the morning.)

A little after 5 a.m. I woke up, found myself in a sleeping bag and had a headache. Although I couldn't remember getting into the sleeping bag, I sure could recall why I had a headache. I radioed base and was advised that a Hughes 500D from Western Helicopters, in Rialto, was due in at 6:30 a.m.

When the helicopter arrived it was put to use hauling two loads of RMRU members and equipment to Chinquapin Flats. They immediately started working there way down towards Doug and Mark. The bird then put one runner down, picked up Chuck and I, then Steve and Kevin in a second load. The helispot was one of the more interesting ones on the mountain.

Chuck and I started down slope and watched as John Muratet and Larry Roland set up a hand line over to the victims. We clipped onto the rope and followed over to the accident site.



RMRU PHOTO BY JIM FAIRCHILD

DOWN BUT NOT OUT — RMRU members Don Chambers and Kevin Walker console Doug Andrews after he just fell back in the snow to rest. Doug deserved a rest considering he had spent the entire night protecting his companion Mark Dupont from falling ice on the slopes above them.

While this was going on the group that had gone up the Devil's Slide arrived along with more helicopter loads of men and equipment. They began to set up a rope system that would be used to lower and then lift the rescue toboggan.

As Chuck and I splinted Mark, the toboggan was lowered, along with Joe Erickson guiding it, 600 feet down to us. A platform for the toboggan, just above Mark, had previously been chopped out of the slope. A stove had been started and warm liquids were given to Mark and Doug.

Larry and Joe helped Doug into a sit harness and then clipped him onto the rope that had been used to lower the toboggan. Using Jumars (mechanical ascenders) the three of them went up the rope. (Doug was flown out shortly after arriving at the top.)

With splinting completed, Mark was lifted into the toboggan and carefully secured into it. As Joe, Chuck and I moved the toboggan into a vertical position, what had been an irritating problem, turned into a life threatening situation. Earlier, as the sun rose, it had begun to melt the ice clinging to the trees above us. At first small pieces tumbled down, then larger chunks and now, huge blocks of ice came hurtling down at us.

As we tried to protect Mark, Joe was struck in the wrist by a large piece of ice. Shortly a block plowed into my shoulder and knocked me off my feet. I had no sooner gotten to my feet, when another barrage hit us. This time Chuck was struck by a large block, right in the lower

back area just at kidney level. He was also knocked from his feet and lay moaning on the snow. I dropped down to him and asked how he was, obviously in pain, he said he could continue. I shouted into my radio microphone, "get us the hell out of this shooting gallery".

Rick Pohlers radioed back that they were just starting the lifting process. With Joe and I on the front, of the toboggan and Chuck at the rear, the lift began. The team members at the top pulled and struggled on the rope. The toboggan would go up about 25 feet and stop. They would take another bite with the mechanical advantage and 25 more feet would go by. It takes a long time to go up 600 feet, **25 feet at a time!**

It was noon when we completed the raise and everyone was exhausted. However, our job was not done yet. After fighting ice and steep slopes, we now had to struggle through knee deep soft snow, dragging the toboggan about a quarter of a mile over to Chinquapin Flats.

Once there, we loaded the toboggan into the back of the helicopter. Brian Hixson climbed in the back also, to keep an eye on Mark during the flight to Camp Maranatha in Idyllwild. The Loma Linda Hospital helicopter was waiting and Doug and Mark were loaded into it and sent to the hospital.

A very tired and weary group started coiling ropes and collecting up equipment. The gear, along with members, was flown out in a number of trips. Jim and I were the last load out and it was 2 p.m. as we climbed out of the bird.

• RMRU



RMRU PHOTO BY JIM FAIRCHILD

RAISE COMPLETE — With the 600 foot raise complete, RMRU members Craig Beasley, Don Ricker and Joe Erickson steady the team toboggan containing injured Mark Dupont. From this location, RMRU members traversed with the toboggan to the waiting helicopter at Chinquapin Flat.

RESCUE

Mission No. 8014M

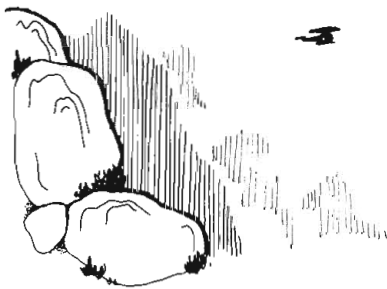
15-16 Mar., Sat.-Sun.

**Below the Palsades,
San Jacinto Mountains**

By Chris Noon

When all heck breaks loose, why not really be busy! With RMRU members Kevin and Walt Walker, and Steve Vaughn and Chuck Benson from the Hemet Search and Rescue Team a mile ahead trying to locate the two stranded skiers below Chinquapin flat, we the remaining RMRU members were slowly (because of an uncooperative sled) dragging the team toboggan up the steep slope to where the injured pair were dug in. We had been pulling the toboggan for about an hour when Walt radioed down to us that his team had come across three young men making their way down the icy slope. He then informed us that they were part of a group of eight that had been cross-country skiing during the day and that they had attempted to make it down the pallsades and had to stop when nightfall overtook them. They did have a fire going though, and no one was injured. The plan then was to continue pulling the toboggan up, and when we reached the altitude of the group several of us would then traverse over to them and help the group back down. Well, we had been pulling the sled for about another hour when Walt radioed down to us that his team was now on water ice, and that it would be too dangerous to attempt pulling the toboggan across the ice. You can imagine how we felt, but there was no choice but to lower the toboggan back to Humber and then drag it up to the saddle and then out the ridge to Chinquapin where it could then be lowered to the stranded skiers. I was held back at base while the rest of the group started for the saddle. The reason being, I would be in the team going back up to where the group of five was held up. As soon as fellow team members Art Bridge and Tom Aldrich arrived at Humber, the three of us started up the slope towards the faint glow of a camp fire. Art was the first one to the group closely followed by Tom and myself. All were in good spirits and very glad to see us. We decided it would be a good idea to wait until morning to attempt a rescue. At first light we decided it would be easier to guide the group down the slope instead of attempting to go back up. Everyone cooperated with us and made the rescue much easier than it could have been. Once back at base we were then ready to help with the main rescue mission. • RMRU





SEARCH

Mission No. 8015M

**18-19 Mar., Tues.-Wed.
Mt. San Jacinto
San Jacinto Mountains**

By Jim Garvey

The feeling that I had been through this before began while Kevin Walker was describing the situation over the phone. Two climbers on the North Face of San Jacinto, one hiking out to the tram, the other spending two nights out with little equipment.

I mentioned to Kevin that this seemed just like last week's mission, which was also on the North Face with very similar circumstances. Jokingly I asked if Hooman Aprin was involved; he was the climbing partner of the subject on the last North Face mission. Questions were raised as to Hooman's responsibility and mountaineering judgment in leaving his partner on the North Face because he couldn't keep up the pace of the climb.

Imagine my surprise when Kevin informed me that yes, it appeared that Hooman had again become separated from his partner, Thomas Plyer, on the North Face.

5:30 a.m. came all too soon. RMRU members began arriving in Base Camp at the Snow Creek road before first light. Mary Bowman, RMRU's Base Camp Operator, arranged for hot breakfasts, which were greatly appreciated. A team had been sent hiking to the Isthmus the night before to seal off the lower section of the route.

At 6:30 a.m. a Hughes 500-D from Western Helicopters arrived. After briefing the pilot, Pete Gillies, Kevin, Bernie McIlvov and I took off. Pete is an old friend and experienced mountain pilot. We flew back and forth across the precipitous North Face close enough to the rocks to keep everyone's attention focused on the terrain.

Our plan called for Kevin and I to be dropped out near the summit of Mt. San Jacinto to begin the ground search. Bernie would stay in the helicopter and air search the back of the peak down to Little Round Valley before returning to base for more field teams.

Immediately after the helicopter lifted off, Kevin and I heard someone yelling. Looking east toward Frank Miller Peak about one-half mile down the ridge we spotted a person frantically waving. In our excitement we tried yelling at the helicopter, then used the radio, which worked much better. The helicopter circled back, got visual contact with the subject and landed a little below him. Mr. Plyer was indeed, overjoyed at being rescued. Bernie helped the subject into the helicopter and flew to base.

In a few minutes the helicopter returned for Kevin and I. By 9:00 a.m. we were back in base with the mission secure. The subject was lucky; the weather was relatively mild and he came through his ordeal in good shape.

Footnote:

A more bizarre aspect of this mission was how RMRU and the Sheriff's Office were alerted in the first place.

Hooman was visiting Winfred Blevins, the subject from the first North Face mission in the Palm Springs Hospital. Apparently Hooman mentioned "they" had climbed the North Face in one day and had looked for Winfred's lost sleeping bag. Winfred asked Hooman about "they" and where his climbing partner was. Hooman said that "they" had gotten separated below the summit the day before and he hadn't seen him since. At this point Winfred called the Sheriff to let him know that RMRU had another search on its hands. • RMRU



from Old'en Days

by Walt Walker

MARCH

Ten years ago-

There was a major error in the March 1970 issue, it was listed as February. The Editor, Jim Fairchild, took a lot of kidding about that issue.

There was only one item under Search & Rescue for the month. RMRU had the unhappy task of removing a single body from the wreckage of a plane on the slopes above the Twin Pines Boys Ranch.

The good news was that the Sustaining Members had contributed almost \$2,000 towards the purchase of RMRU's first van.

Five years ago-

After a period of rather quiet, we received two calls on the same Sunday night. The first was for 13 year old boy missing on the Devil's Slide Trail. Most of the team responded to that mission because the snow and approaching storm. It wasn't long into the mission when Pete Carlson and Jim Fairchild found the missing boy. Walt Walker and his son Kevin responded to the second call of a man who had fallen in a canyon above La Quinta. They hiked in and splinted the man and at first light Don Landells flew in two more members and the whole group carried the man over to the bird for evacuation. Later in the month we received a call that a man had fallen in Tahquitz Canyon. We responded and Don flew two man teams into the canyon just before dark. After talking to people in the canyon, we found that the person had been helped out by someone else.

Notice!

The **RMRU Newsletter** is published 12 times per year by the Riverside Mountain Rescue Unit, Inc. It is intended primarily to inform the Regular and Sustaining Members.

If you would like to receive the newsletter on a regular basis, and at the same time become a Sustaining Member, send your tax deductible donation of \$25 or more to:

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