

12 ISSUES PER YEAR DISTRIBUTED BY THE RIVERSIDE MOUNTAIN RESCUE UNIT, INC. — POST OFFICE BOX 5444, RIVERSIDE, CALIFORNIA 92517
A VOLUNTEER NON-PROFIT TAX DEDUCTIBLE CORPORATION — MEMBER OF THE MOUNTAIN RESCUE ASSOCIATION

Volume XXII, Issue XII, December 1986

Rob Gardner, Editor — Kevin Walker, Publisher — Dona Halcrow, Artist



Helitac

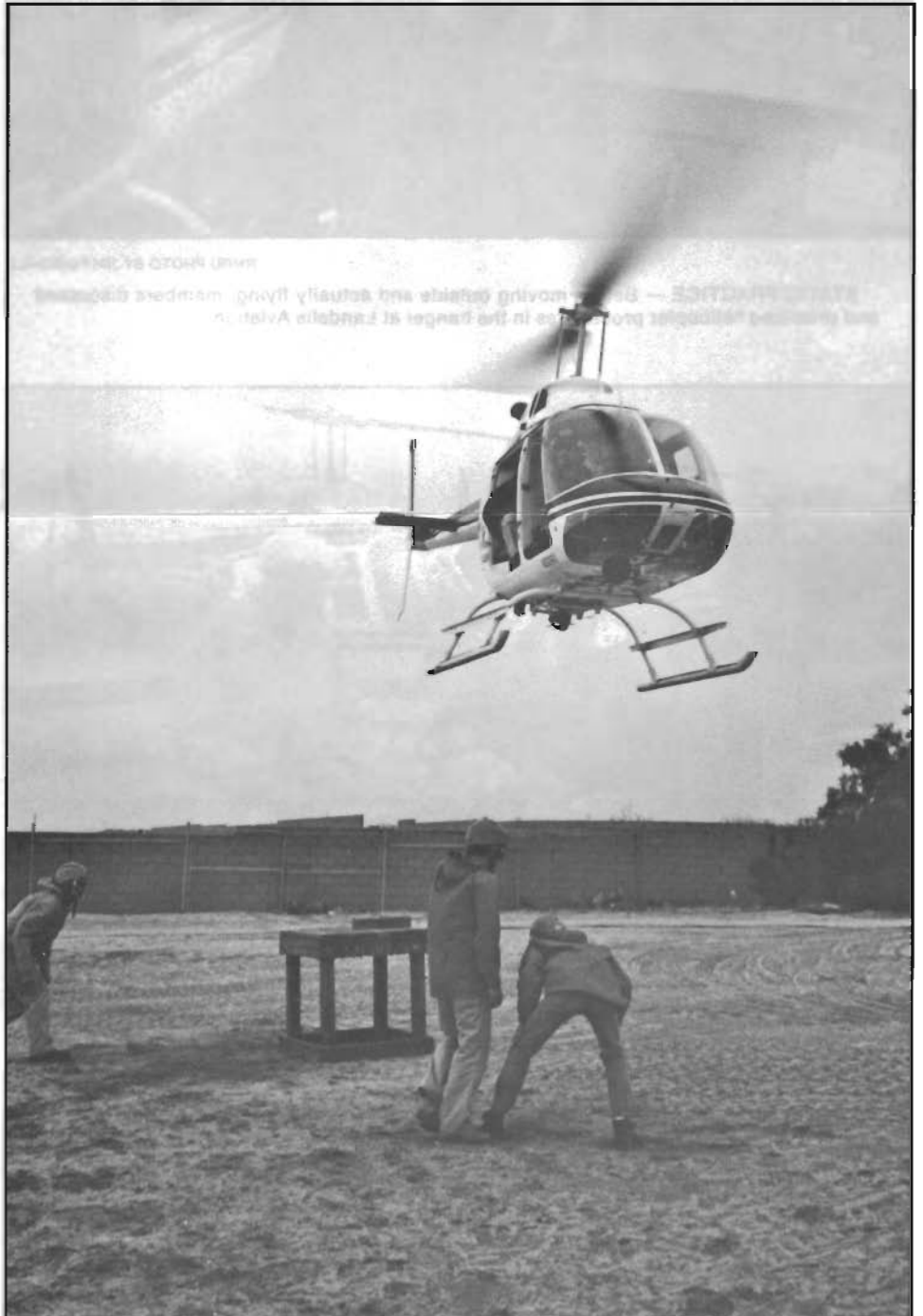
6 Dec., Sat.
Landells Aviation,
Desert Hot Springs

By Kevin Walker



With gentle rain squalls occasionally moving across the desert floor, sixteen **RMRU** members gathered at what is considered by many as the second home of **RMRU**. For me it was a little difficult to walk into the hanger that has held so many memories. But with the help of my fellow team members, Elaine Landells, Bill Landells and mountain pilot Steve DeJesus, tension was almost immediately replaced by memories of fun times and harrowing experiences. So as it has been in the past, coffee, donuts, and many war stories started the morning off. We then adjourned to helicopter 16U for safety training and static practice. Walt Walker went over the do's and don'ts of working around helicopters, and then we slowly went over all of the danger points around the machine. The group was then paired off, one veteran with one newer member. We practiced getting in and out of the helicopter, first in the front seat, then in both sides of the back. Hand signals were also demonstrated.

As we were about ready to move outside for the flying part of training, I kidded Steve about the fact of not wanting to get wet outside. Steve responded by asking if that meant he didn't have to come on a mission that required a bird if the weather was bad . . . GOTCHA! The helicopter was rolled out of its dry home and into the cool moist air. Steve pre-flighted the machine and soon we were out in a field a short distance from the hanger practicing



RMRU PHOTO BY JIM FAIRCHILD
SOMETHING NEW — For new members like Jay Pion (crouching) helitac training was a little overwhelming. Out to assist in giving hand signals was veteran member Kevin Walker, while pilot Steve DeJesus held the chopper near the RMRU rock, ready to be guided into position. Approaching from the left is John Dew.



RMRU PHOTO BY JIM FAIRCHILD

STATIC PRACTICE — Before moving outside and actually flying, members discussed and practiced helicopter procedures in the hangar at Landells Aviation.



RMRU PHOTO BY JIM FAIRCHILD

MOUNTAIN PILOT — Steve DeJesus prepares to lift off for the flying portion of helitac training. In the left seat is our artist Dona Halcrow who attended training and went for her first helicopter ride.



RMRU PHOTO BY JIM FAIRCHILD

EQUIPMENT READIED — RMRU members Rob Gardner, Ray Hussey and Bob Sairs prepare the RMRU rock to be slung over to the training area underneath the helicopter. In the background Kevin Walker holds on to the tip of the main rotor demonstrating just how close it can come to an approaching person.

what we had talked about earlier in the morning. First, working in pairs, we gave hand signals to the pilot, guiding him in to position on the "RMRU rock," then another group would climb up and then into the helicopter as Steve held it in a one-runner configuration. Then flying 100 feet away, the two members would exit the helicopter in a hover approximately five feet up. Everyone had the chance to do this several times. Then we practiced full hover pick ups. This is occasionally necessary when there isn't enough clear-

ance for the pilot to set a ship down or hold a one runner. Along with this, members worked at helping steady the ship by holding the skids and acting like shock absorbers. We also practiced loading the litter into the back of the helicopter with a live patient, and then finished off by doing a sling load. With the rain still falling, the helicopter was put back in the hangar and then we all adjourned to lunch at Naugles. Some stayed at the restaurant to eat and others returned to the hangar to eat, and watched the video of the morning's events



RMRU PHOTO BY JIM FAIRCHILD

DARK SKIES — With rain falling pilot Steve DeJesus slings the RMRU rock over to helitac training area while RMRU members stand ready. In the background part of the hangar at Landells Aviation can be seen.

as recorded on the Landells' video camera by Glenn Henderson.

In years past we have been able to do our annual gear inventory out on the lawn around the heliport, but with it being wet that would not do. So Steve invited us in to sort the gear just inside the hanger doors. With that, the afternoon was spent checking ropes, making sure equipment was properly stored away and marking down items needed or missing. As the light of day faded, the last of the equipment was placed back in the vans.

I know that I speak for more than just myself, when I say that I left with renewed energy to go out and help others knowing that the support of Elaine and everyone at Landells Aviation was there going just as strong as ever. To our friends in Desert Hot Springs, we say thank you. • RMRU

Volunteer Man Hours — 192



RMRU PHOTO BY JIM FAIRCHILD

EXITING — RMRU member Rob Gardner is seen here after stepping off of the skid of the helicopter. This part of training simulates what it could be like if the chopper could not put a runner down because of poor rotor clearance or strong winds.

Search and Rescue

RESCUE

Mission No. 8646M & 8647M

14 Dec., Sun. & 18 Dec., Thurs.

**Woodchuck Park,
Santa Ana Mountains**

By Jim Fairchild



Abductions are ever greater, disrupting lives, terrorizing the victims, bringing horror and anguish for the relatives and those responsible for the abducted. In addition, abductions often lead to agonizing search time, for those in mountain rescue. The possible abduction of April Cooper, seven years of age, from Woodchuck Park, just south of Vail Lake, was almost completely overshadowed in the news media by the tragic details of the Ho girl's kidnap and murder.

The first report of April's disappearance came on Saturday afternoon (13 Dec.). The Riverside County Sheriff's Office

(RSO), Hemet Search & Rescue, and the RSO Mounted Posse were on the search through Sunday afternoon. When RMRU and the Riverside County Underwater Search and Recovery Team arrived, the first order of business was to search several small to medium sized ponds within the camp. While Walt Walker gathered information for us, we observed what was truly a thorough underwater search, as we tended their measuring lines from the waters edge.

Then, RMRU deployed in small teams into the brush — dense, climax chaparral that is the specialty of low, rolling hills, albeit steep! Joe Erickson and I were to seek tracks uphill from April's trailer home at the edge of the park. We found plenty of tracks, none small. Nevertheless, we saw and smashed through hundreds of yards of brush. The other teams did the same. As the sun went down it became increasingly opined that April was with another family, seen at noon, that was headed for Santa's Village in the San Bernardino Mountains. When all was sufficiently dark, a number of us were assigned to go out to accompany dog handlers. Two of us went with two Bouvier de Flanders canines from San Diego, that were trained as air-scent and scent-article trackers. It appeared that the dogs were competent and enthusiastic. They alerted into a laundry cubicle, and then across a drainage and two hundred yards up a trail, then became un-alert. April may have been in the area on Saturday. We persisted in this up and down the brushy trails searching for a couple of hours, then the "She's with the family that went to Santa's Village" opinion won out, and we went

home. No traces found, no further information of any help.

Six A.M. Thursday, RMRU was back at the park. The family that went to Santa's Village did not have April in their care. Today there were many searchers representing the California Region of the Mountain Rescue Association, a group from Orange County Search and Rescue, and the RSO Mounted Posse, all working together under RMRU's supervision.

The first order of the day was to conduct a sweep search through, you guessed it, the brush! Thus began several hours of smash, crunch, scratch, and check for ticks while searching. About 9:30 A.M. the Western Helicopter Hughes 500D arrived, piloted by an old friend, Pete Gillies. We brush-smashers never saw Pete. We did see the machine darting hither and yon, especially up a major drainage on numerous occasions.

In the afternoon, while other miscellaneous assignments were underway, Joe Erickson, John Dew, and the writer set off in Joe's new Samurai car to check dirt roads. This enterprise turned out to be educational and adventurous, but we found nothing related to the search. Our last hour was spent checking dirt turn-outs along the highway. At one of them I found a freshly turned bit of earth that looked like a covered hole. It was heart-in-the-throat time. The hole had nothing in it. So, we are left with a lot of "Whys" and "What ifs," wondering about April's fate. We can only pray for her well-being and eventual re-union with her family. • RMRU

Volunteer Man Hours — 200

\$USTAINING MEMBERS

BY PETE CARLSON

We had another good month with six new and fourteen renewing sustaining members. The unit has been busy again this month. On our December training we took an inventory of all our equipment in the two rescue vans. Our team doctors went through the medical supplies, the technical people checked our climbing equipment, and others inventoried the rest. From this inventory team members will identify equipment which we are missing or which we need to bring our equipment up to the latest standards. At the board meeting in January we will decide a priority list of what we need first. Then, as donations come in, we will purchase the equipment. We will let you know in future columns of the way your money has helped save lives. Again, thank you to all who have given to RMRU in the past year. From reading this issue you will see we are up to mission number 47 for 1986. That means an average of 4 callouts a month, plus one training every month, which adds up to a lot of volunteer time spent in search and rescue. But were it not for our excellent equipment we would be spending many more hours out in the field. This is the reason the sustaining members are so important. You supply the money that buys all the equipment we use. A Happy New Year to all from RMRU.

New —

- Fred & Muriel Kimball
- Corinne Haering Mayhew
- M/M Oliver Blaschko
- Vern Hansen
- *A. P. & Virginia Crist
- *Idyllwild Fireman's Assoc.
- Virginia Gillespie
- Saddleback Search & Rescue
- *Eva Hawkins
- *Mrs. John Kraft
- †Frances L. Gray
- *Landells Aviation

Renewing —

- Robert Kowell
- M/M John Bouma
- Marjorie La Bonde
- Bruce Carlson
- M/M H. E. Carlson
- Sierra Club 100 Peaks Section
- Larry & Nancy Carter
- Circle City Hospital
- *M/M David Harrah
- *Theodore L. Young
- *M/M Jerry A. Whitt
- *M/M Kenneth N. Andrews
- *M/M George Ruptier

*Century Club, donation of \$100 or more

†Summit Club, donation of \$500 or more

■ Don Landells Memorial Fund

1986 RECAP

For many, many years the unit has started the new year off with a mission on New Year's Day. The 1986 year for the RMRU started on the fourth with a winter rescue mission to assist the Mt. San Jacinto State Park rangers. A young man slipped on the ice near Cornell Peak and had slid approximately 300 feet and was injured. The state park rangers had responded to his aid and placed him in a Thompson type litter and were transporting him when we met up with him. We helped them with the carry out back to the Palm Springs Aerial Tramway. We completed January with two searches. We also said good-bye to an old friend when Capt. Ray Canova retired as commander of the Banning station of the Riverside County Sheriff's Department.

The month of February was very quiet with only one search. But the month of March was another story. We started out with a rescue in the Mecca mudhills, which is in the desert area. Then we assisted the Palm Springs Mounted Police in a search. A few days later we were involved in a search that began on the top of Mt. San Jacinto. Then came the last winter mission of the year that involved rescuing a man during a full blown blizzard.

The month of April was rather quiet with one search and one evacuation. We welcomed a new captain to the Banning station of the Riverside County Sheriff's Department, Larry Smith. During the teams annual meeting a young new president was elected, Kevin Walker. May began with a call from Joshua Tree National Monument that a young girl was missing from the Cottonwood Springs Campground. The whole team had thoughts of the still missing Laura Bradbury as the mission progressed. But this search ended happily as the girl was found in good condition. Another search and rescue completed the month.

The month of June saw only one mission, a young woman, who was found hungry and thirsty after spending better than 24 hours in the wilderness. However, RMRU

members were busy as six members attended the national Mountain Rescue Association meeting that was held at Snoqualmie Pass in Washington. During that meeting veteran RMRU member Walt Walker was elected president of MRA.

July was another quiet month with only one search. However, this mission ended up being a two day mission with California Region MRA teams being called to assist. At the end of the month we received word that veteran member of Mountain Rescue Aspen, Greg Mace, had been killed during a training in the Maroon Bells. Walt Walker and Kevin Walker attended the memorial service that was held in the mountains near Aspen, Colorado.

The month of August was another easy month with only two searches. RMRU members and their families turned out to assist the Idyllwild Chapter of the Izaak Walton League put on the benefit breakfast which was blessed with a beautiful day and a very large group of people who came for the breakfast. September was almost a duplicate of July except we had two rescues instead of two searches.

RMRU members had been looking forward to the month of October in anticipation of the 25th Anniversary celebration. The entire team was both shocked and saddened when we were informed of the death of our longtime friend and pilot Don Landells. We dedicated our "25 years of caring for others" to the memory of Don Landells at our 25th Anniversary dinner held in Riverside.

The month of November saw us complete one rescue and December saw us search, unsuccessfully, for seven year old April Cooper. Sadly no trace has been found of the young girl. Each month of 1986 saw RMRU members participating in a training session planned to keep us sharp in our search and rescue skills. We conclude this recap by saying a most grateful thank you to all the Sustaining Members who provide the means for us to do the job, save lives!



Seasons Greetings and Best Wishes for 1987 from RMRU