

Volume XXIV, January — December 1988

## SEARCH & RESCUE

### RESCUE

Mission No. 8815M

7-8 July, Thurs.-Fri.  
Tahquitz Rock

By Rob Gardner

RMRU was called out at about 9:00 pm. A rock-climber was stranded at about three hundred feet up the White Maiden route on Tahquitz Rock in Mt. San Jacinto.

Friends of the fallen climber had hiked out to call for help. They reported that the stranded young man had no injuries, but had gotten off route and was unable to climb up or down.

RMRU assembled at Camp Maranatha in Idyllwild. The problem was further assessed and the Search and Rescue (SAR) helicopter from El Toro Marine Base was called in to assist. Using a helicopter for rescue considerably reduced the number of hours the man would be stranded on the rock, as well as the discomfort of many hours on the rock wall. The night temperatures were cold.

The El Toro 212 helicopter arrived, equipped with its powerful "night-sun" lamp, and winch lowering/raising system. A RMRU team member boarded the chopper at Camp Maranatha, and the 212 proceeded to the Rock.

It was with some effort that the climber was located, being a speck on the huge mass of granite. The El Toro crew medic rappelled from the helicopter to the climber; hooked the climber onto the cable from the helicopter winch; and the crew chief onboard the helicopter raised the climber, and then the medic, to the helicopter as it hovered in the air.

The climber was then whisked over to Camp Maranatha, where his friends awaited him. RMRU members cleaned up gear and went to Dr. Norm Mellor's and Dr. Bill Blaschko's Idyllwild cabins where, as the sun was rising, RMRU retired for a few hours of sleep before July technical training began. • RMRU



Members of the California Region of the Mountain Rescue Association, including eight RMRU members, after arriving at Buckley Field in Denver to assist the Rocky Mountain Region.

### SEARCH

Mission No. 8820M

18 July, Mon.  
Toro Peak

By Jay Pion

When I joined RMRU, I envisioned dozens of searchers on bright, sunny days, supported by helicopters and search dogs. Several weeks ago, my bubble burst as I responded, just before midnight, to the Pinyon Flats CDF Fire Station to search for missing 11 and 13 year old boys.

We were greeted by a Sergeant of the Riverside Sheriff's office and by a hospitable engineer from CDF. The boys' father described what was supposed to be a pleasant afternoon of pellet gun shooting near the transmitters on Toro Peak. He was quite surprised, he told me, when his sons took off immediately down the trail instead of waiting to unpack the guns. He was worried when he hadn't heard a thing from them in about forty-five minutes. Six hours later, after scouring the area himself and with the help of his nine year

old daughter, he decided to make the long drive back down the windy dirt road, to call for help.

While Dona Halcrow remained at base camp to await members from San Diego Mountain Rescue, Sierra Madre SAR, China Lake Search and Rescue, and the California Rescue Dog Association (CARDA), Ray Hussey and I loaded our gear into a patrol car for the ride to the "point last seen".

It was very early in the morning when Ray and I began to look for tracks around the trailhead. We spent several hours covering about a quarter mile of trail and calling out to the boys through the RMRU loudhailer. Unable to get a description of the boys' shoes, we proceeded to explore an area which had been thoroughly trampled.

After much puzzling and scratching of heads we returned to the roadhead. Ray accompanied the deputy back to base, where he planned strategy with Dick Sales of the Sierra Madre team.

First light found the radio abuzz with transmission from CARDA. They were

exploring the numerous unmarked dirt roads near the PLS. There were four CARDA members and three dogs. They had interviewed the family, and acquired "scent articles" collected by **RMRU**. Having never worked with CARDA before, I was impressed by their professionalism as they began searching. Soon, they reported following an "air scent", and a handler explained to me that scent is like water, flowing downhill in the morning when it is cold.

While CARDA worked, I took my portable radio and the loudhailer out on a prominent rock. Lo and behold, after several shouts, we had faint voice contact, and at 0745 hours CARDA member Susan Williams bounded downhill after the voices.

Scratched, cold and thirsty, our subjects reported that they'd just gotten disoriented and spent the previous afternoon trying to sort things out. (Although they found water, they didn't drink for fear it was contaminated.)

After reuniting the boys with their families, all the searchers enjoyed a nice breakfast, and then headed home for some sleep. • **RMRU**

## SEARCH

12-15 Aug., Fri.-Mon.

### Silver Plume, Colorado

By Walt Walker

It was mid-morning Wednesday when I received a call from my good friend Tim Cochrane, of Vail, Colorado. He is a member of the Vail Mountain Rescue Team and is also a state mission coordinator for the Colorado Search and Rescue Board. It was in his capacity of CSRB co-ordinator that he was calling. Tim described that a 49 year old sportswriter from Chicago was missing and that the Alpine Rescue Team was requesting assistance. He asked me to find out how many SAR people from California would be available for the search. He said that Scott Air Force Base (Rescue Co-ordination Center for North America) was working on finding air transportation for Thursday.

The California Region of the Mountain Rescue Association has a regionwise call-out procedure that is run by the Sierra Madre Search and Rescue Team. I contacted Sierra Madre and they started the callout. By mid-afternoon I was advised by Sierra Madre that 42 CRMRA members would be available. I called Tim and told him the count and he related that so far no aircraft were available for Thursday.

After numerous telephone calls back and forth, between Tim and I, the good news came Thursday afternoon that a Colorado Air National Guard plane would be available for Friday morning. The teams sending members were advised that they should be at Norton Air Force Base in San Bernardino at 0600.

The men and women from the CRMRA teams were early arriving Friday morning at Norton. You guessed it, not so fast, the usual government paper work had to be filled out and as the spokesperson for the CRMRA I had to sign a form that I guaranteed our group would not hijack the airplane. I never did figure out where we would want to go, besides Hawaii, and that would mean we weren't packed for the beach. It was mid-morning when the C130 airplane showed up and by that time the troops were more than eager to get going. We were airlifted to Denver and bused to the small town of Silver Plume (altitude 9150') on the eastern slope of the Rockies.

During the briefing we learned that Alpine and nine Colorado MRA teams, along with another seven CSRB teams had been searching for four days. It was also sadly reported that a CAP pilot was killed and his observer critically injured in the crash of their search plane the day before we arrived. During our stay in Colorado we were housed in the Clear Creek County building located in Georgetown and wonderfully fed by the Salvation Army out of their portable kitchen vehicle. The Alpine Rescue Team was putting the Incident Command System to good use in managing such a large group. **RMRU** member, Bob Sairs, and I were assigned to Plans and stayed up well past midnight working with the group that was planning search assignments for Saturday.

Saturday morning dawned clear and warm for August in the Rockies. After an early morning breakfast the teams were given their assignments. Some of the teams were assigned to a steep slope of dense Aspen trees. They fanned out in a long line and using compass bearings, radios and plain old shouting worked their way up slope. Upon reaching the ridge line they continued over the top and down the other side. On the way down a member of the San Diego team slipped and injured a hand, putting her out of action. When the different teams completed their assignments they were airlifted off the mountain by large H46 Army helicopters. These same helicopters had earlier airlifted other teams into the backcountry for assignments to cover areas on the north side of the valley. One of the San Dimas teams, who had been flown in, were covering their assignment when one of the team members was stricken with a significant case of Altitude Mountain Sick-

ness. This malady can happen to anyone and it can be debilitating. The host team, Alpine, was ready for just such an occurrence. They quickly fielded a team who climbed up, administered oxygen and an IV. This was followed by an evacuation by litter down a scree slope. With lots of rest and descending to a lower altitude the sick man was none the worse for wear.

On Sunday morning the teams were back out in the field covering more Aspen slopes and steep rocky ledges. The entire week of searching had not produced one single clue and to date the man is still missing. Monday morning we were served breakfast, climbed aboard the buses and headed down the hill for Denver. We loaded up all our gear and climbed aboard another C130 for the flight back to Norton in San Bernardino. Even though the mission was not successful in locating the missing man, it did prove to be an excellent exercise in moving a large group of MRA personnel to a distant location. It could well be the next time we could save many lives if called upon to do so.

The following groups from the California Region participated: Altadena Mountain Rescue Team, China Lake Mountain Rescue Group, Los Padres Search and Rescue Team, Malibu Mountain Rescue Team, Montrose Search and Rescue Team, San Diego Mountain Rescue Team, San Dimas Mountain Rescue Team and **RMRU**. Members from **RMRU** who participated were: Cliff Benton, Rob Gardner, Dona Halcrow, Bernie McIlvoy, Rick Pohlers, Bob Sairs, Kevin Walker and Walt Walker. • **RMRU**

## SEARCH

**Mission No. 8821M**

**4-5 Sept., Sun.-Mon.  
Boulder Basin Campground,  
Black Mountain**

*By Steve Bryant*

Searches are not fun to go on, but they are great excuses to go hiking. It was a warm summer evening, the moon was bright, and as if it were planned the pager went off. It was a search on Black Mountain out of Boulder Basin for a twenty-five year old male who had wandered away from camp. As always my heart rate picked up, the adrenaline pumped through my veins and my mind went to rescue mode.

While driving to base and listening to the radio traffic of the people already on scene I began to ponder where this person might be. Was he down and injured, or did he merely lose his bearings and then the night set in? Thinking the worst, I sped up thinking how terrible it would be to lay injured and alone.

Upon arriving on scene at base, things were in full swing. Teams had been deployed and the mountain was well covered with searchers yelling the name of the lost hiker.

Two other members were also available for an assignment and Operations Leader Glenn Henderson put the three of us together and sent us out to search the southwestern face of Black Mountain. Well, thankfully we hadn't gotten more than three hundred yards from base when over the radio we heard that the subject had just walked in to Vista Grande Ranger Station. I gave a sigh of relief and knew now that I could really enjoy being in the mountains on a beautiful summer evening. • RMRU

## SEARCH

**Mission No. 8822M**

**5 Sept., Mon.  
Chino Canyon**

*By Ray Hussey*

We had just finished our third cup of coffee about 0800 after an all night search on Black Mountain when the Banning Sheriff's office asked us to stand by for a possible search in Chino Canyon. Eric Foramen and Patrick Axt were twelve hours overdue from their hike from the lower Palm Springs Aerial tramway station to the Long Valley station, 8,500 feet above. Patrick had attempted Chino Canyon previously but was turned back because of deep snow.

Sergeant Jernagan from Banning Sheriff's office requested our assistance at

0900 and we set up base camp at a parking lot below the lower tramway station. Operations Leader Rob Gardner requested helicopter assist and, after consulting topo maps, determined that not only Chino Canyon but North Chino Canyon and the East Ridge and the Skyline Trail should be covered with a hasty air search. Steve DeJesus from Landell's Aviation was the pilot and Kevin Walker and Ray Hussey flew the first hasty search, followed by Walt Walker and Joe Erickson. No sign or activity was noted. Meanwhile, Steve Bryant, Jay Pion and J.R. Muratet covered lower Chino Canyon to the first tower, with no sign.

The OPS leader, Rob Gardner, then was about to change and intensify tactics and strategy when Eric and Patrick walked into the upper tram station, safe and sound, although a bit tired, sunburnt and weary from their ordeal. As it turns out, they took the North Chino Canyon route which is considerably less technical than the Chino Canyon itself. Everyone was quite relieved — the temperature was hovering around 120 degrees and we were all badly in need of a hot shower and a good night's rest. • RMRU

## MRA SPRING SEMINAR

**3-5 June, Fri.-Sun.  
Camp Sugar Pine**

On June 3rd, 4th and 5th the California Region of the Mountain Rescue Association (MRA) held it's Spring Seminar at Camp Sugar Pine (five miles south of Yosemite National Park). The seventeen MRA teams of the Region were invited and there was representation from most of the teams.

There were forty educational lectures or demonstrations to select from and the guest speaker on the second night was Lou Whitaker. Sessions included subjects such as Interagency coordination, tracking, search management, infrared detection devices, use of helicopters, first-aid for rescue and much more.

There was a great deal of sharing of ideas and stories between members of different teams. A rope ascending contest brought about some sporty competition and a lot of good spirit.

Attending the seminar from RMRU were: Bob Sairs, Walt Walker, Rob Gardner, Kevin Walker, Bill Blaschko, Bob Wentz, Dona Halcrow and Ray Hussey. • RMRU



PHOTO BY DONA HALCROW

Left to right: Kevin Walker, Rob Gardner, Bob Sairs, Bob Wentz, Ray Hussey and Walt Walker haul Bill Blaschko to breakfast in an improved rope litter at the MRA Spring Seminar.

# ● TRAINING

## TRAINING

### Familiarization

**6-7 Aug., Sat.-Sun.  
West Side Trail System,  
Mt. San Jacinto**

*By Bud White*

RMRU should have known that getting me involved with planning training again would mean "let's go hiking". We repeated one of my favorite trainings.

Dividing into four groups, the plan was to hike in on Saturday via the Fuller Ridge Trail, Seven Pines Trail, Marion Mountain Trail and the Deer Springs Trail. As luck would have it, the team had a call out all day Friday in the Elsinore area so our four trails turned into two trails.

It was great to have long time members and now associates Ed Hill and Mike Daugherty with us as well as Rick Campbell, the State Park Superintendent.

We met Saturday night at "Bud Springs" on the west flank of Marion Mountain and had a great meal and sea story session. Sunday, we hiked to Marion and performed an innovative rescue from a big crack on top with call-out gear. Later we met at Bill and Melody Blaschko's for hamburgers and hot dogs. It was great.

This seems to be as good a place as any to say good-bye to RMRU. Sue and I are selling our geodesic dome home in Idyllwild and moving to the central Oregon coast at Waldport. Our son, Jim, has a lovely home on the ocean and will be transferring this next year with the Forest Service, and since Sue has always wanted to live by water, I decided it was her turn after following me around for forty years.

I have loved RMRU and all the wonderful people in Mountain Rescue. I hate to give up my excuse to go hiking but really, it's best to quit when you're still able to out hike most of them. • RMRU

## TRAINING

### Joint Technical

**10-11 Sept., Sat.-Sun.  
Malibu Creek State Park**

*By Bill Blaschko*

One of the requirements for being a Mountain Rescue Association team in good standing is regular recertification in the areas of search, technical rescue and snow and ice rescue. In September, RMRU met with 80 other members of search and rescue teams to recertify in the areas of

search and technical rescue. Teams from all over California were represented.

On Saturday the Malibu team set up an excellent search simulation. A mid air collision of two airplanes was reported in to the command post. Teams were sent out to search on foot and also using directional finders to home in on emergency locator transmitters (ELT's) that are activated in the event of an airplane crash. Realism was added to the exercise by the use of actual airplane parts to simulate the crash sites. There were survivors of the crashes and rescue team members had to use their tracking skills to find the victims after the airplane crash sites had been located.

Sunday was the day for technical rescue practice. The location of these exercises was Malibu Creek State Park. This park has been used extensively in the production of movies and television shows. The television series M.A.S.H. was filmed by some of our search area, and the Planet of the Apes movies were largely set around the rock formations where we did our technical practice. Several different subjects were placed on steep rock faces and then successfully evacuated using lowering techniques.

The search simulation was a great opportunity for exchanging ideas on search technique and strategy. Also the interaction laid the foundation for better coordination on multi team searches in the future. The technical training gave our team a chance to work on a type of rock

very different from what we find in our own mountains. Thanks to the Malibu team for hosting a great joint training. • RMRU



PHOTOS BY JOHN HALCROW

MEMBERS of three different MRA teams make up a group in charge of lowering a victim in a litter in this mock mission.

## TESTIMONY

**Before the United States Senate  
Committee on the Judiciary  
20 May, 1988  
Washington D.C.**

By Kevin Walker

It was indeed an adventure that I would have never dreamed of doing. Imagine sitting in a large room with high ceilings, old paintings lining the walls, green linen covered tables of immense size before a bench looking something like that of the supreme court, with your own name printed on a placard before you. Well it happened.

My name reached the office of Gordon P. MacDougall of Capital Associates, a lobbying firm in Washington D.C. Mr. MacDougall or Gordon as he asked me to call him, contacted me on a Tuesday. He told me that he had heard of the law suit that **RMRU** was involved in several years ago and asked if I would be available to testify before the Senate Committee on the Judiciary in support of Senate Bill S.929 entitled, "The Volunteer Protection Act of 1987." This was incredible, and further more he wanted me there in two days. After quickly checking both with the **RMRU** board of directors and the Sierra Madre Search and Rescue Team, \$500 for immediate travel expenses were provided, and I was given the OK to go.

One day later a new suit was purchased, and the following day I was off from Ontario Airport enroute to the capital. I arrived at 11:30 PM Eastern time. There I caught a cab to my hotel four blocks from the capital building. At the front desk, just as promised was my waiting reservation for a very nice room on the twelfth floor. I was still pretty keyed up, but did manage to get some sleep before daylight.

At 7:00 AM, I was down in the lobby where I met Gordon who took me to a little cafe near the capital building. There we went over my testimony that I had prepared. I would be testifying along with other volunteers such as a little league coach and a museum volunteer, both who had been involved in high dollar law suits like me.

At the Hart Building, Gordon introduced me to Rep. John Porter who had revived S.929 originally written by Senator John Melcher of Montana. Simply put the volunteer protection act would protect individual volunteers who are acting in good faith and within the scope of their duties as a volunteer. It would not reduce the rights of those harmed, and individuals who have abused their positions as volunteers could still be sued.

Well our turn came and soon I was seated at that large table covered with that green linen with my name in front of me. I was the last of five to testify and below is my

testimony:

*Mr. Chairman, members of the committee, my name is Kevin Walker and I am a member of the Riverside Mountain Rescue Unit in Southern California, which is a member of the National Mountain Rescue Association. I have served as a volunteer in this capacity for 11 years. I have been asked to appear before you today to recount an experience which resulted in a lawsuit being filed against myself and about 30 other defendants.*

*The Riverside Mountain Rescue Unit is a volunteer based non-profit organization which has existed for 26½ years. In that time, we conservatively figure we have saved over 475 lives.*

*The following is a summary of:*

## RESCUE

**Mission No. 8334M**

**Box Springs Mountain,  
near the City of Riverside**

On October 23, 1983, Craig Richard Fredborg and two friends hiked up onto the Box Springs Mountain above the City of Riverside. It was later learned by the two friends that the trio had hiked up to celebrate Fredborg's birthday. They admitted to having alcohol with them, and also present was a small caliber rifle. Sometime on the 24th, Fredborg fell off of a 50 foot cliff on the mountain. Fredborg was alone as his friends had went down and home, apparently in a different direction.

On October 25, 1983, Fredborg's girlfriend, Jennifer Hernandez, apparently made contact with the two who had been up on the mountain to ask where Fredborg was. According to the friends, they went back onto the mountain where they found Fredborg laying head down on the hillside below the cliff. They stated that they turned Fredborg around and straightened him out. This of course is something that should never be attempted unless properly trained. They started a small fire and waited.

In the early evening, residents below reported seeing a fire up on the mountain. CDF (California Department of Forestry) responded to the top of the mountain which can be accessed by dirt road. Once on scene it was found that emergency aid would be needed. The Riverside County Sheriff's Department was contacted, as was Goodhew Ambulance service. At 8:00 PM the Riverside Mountain Rescue Unit was contacted and asked to respond.

Ten members initially arrived. Two technical climbers were sent down, approximately 400 feet from the top, to make contact with the subjects. On the initial survey it was obvious that serious injuries were present. Fredborg had no feeling in his legs, and only some in his hands and arms. He had a small piece of wood impaled in his leg with ants crawling in

the wound.

A safety hand line was put out and another member guided a paramedic down to Fredborg. Another **RMRU** member to arrive was a doctor who immediately went down to the subject.

As medical aid was being given, Bernie McIlvoy (down with the subject) and Kevin Walker discussed what form of evacuation would be best for the subject. It was decided that a helicopter evac would indeed be the smoothest way out for Fredborg. Normally the operation would have to hold until daylight, but because of the seriousness of the injuries, the decision was made to do a night pick-up.

Don Landells of Landells Aviation was contacted, and agreed to respond with a Bell Jet Ranger. Fredborg was given emergency aid, immobilized and placed in a stokes litter. When the helicopter arrived, it was rigged for a short haul evacuation. The pilot then lifted off and maneuvered over where the rescuers were with Fredborg. Once in position the litter which was rigged for a horizontal lift, was attached. The helicopter then raised up and was quickly back on the top of the mountain. Rescuers on top received the litter and the pilot set the helicopter down.

The litter containing Fredborg was placed in the rear of the helicopter. Team member Kevin Walker and a second paramedic accompanied Fredborg in the back. The subject was then flown to Loma Linda Medical Center which was a five minute flight from the Box Springs Mountain. Fredborg was transferred to the care of doctors there.

The rescue operation was secured at approximately 1:30 AM on October 26, 1983.

*The following September I was named in an \$11 million dollar lawsuit along with my father, who was not even present, but was president of the unit at that time, other members of our team, the pilot Don Landells and his business, Riverside County, San Bernardino County, the City of Riverside, Loma Linda Medical Center, Riverside Community Hospital, Riverside Police Department, the paramedics present, the California Department of Forestry and more.*

*Senators, I am not a legislator, I am a commercial printer who believes in volunteer search and rescue. The key is VOLUNTEER. Please take time to help those who wish to help others. Thank you for your time, and I would also like to enter the following attached articles for your consideration. Again, thank you.*

After completing my testimony, and being dismissed, I was taken to lunch at the senate dining room, and then cut loose to see some of the sights around Washington before flying out that evening. What an adventure, but most importantly, I hope that in some way I was able to help others continue to help others.