

CHINA LAKE MOUNTAIN RESCUE GROUP

*P.O. Box 5773,
China Lake, California 93555*

Editor, E. Anderson

October 1970 #8

CALENDAR

- Oct 17-18 Yosemite Valley, trip being planned by Tim Pearia (446-6606)
Nov 7-8 Bill Sweatt is planning the trip to climb Morrison and/or Baldwin
Nov 9 Meeting at Russ Huse', 529 Kevin Court, Ridgecrest
Nov 26-29 Thanksgiving weekend trip into southwest Arizona, with climbs scheduled for Kofa and Castle Dome. Call Bob Joy (446-2248)
November 17 and 18 (Tuesday and Wednesday) is the new date for the annual slide show at the Richmond School. CLIMBING MEXICO'S SNOW-CAPPED VOLCANOES
(Talk it up)

OPERATIONS

Search for Craig Lunt . .

Bill Stronge

A 19 year old explorer scout, Craig Lunt, was hiking between Thousand Island Lake and Lake Catherine on Friday, August 28, with a scoutmaster and 18 other scouts. He went ahead of the group and missed the lake. When the group did not find Craig at Lake Catherine Friday afternoon, they began a search. On Saturday, two scouts were sent to Red's Meadows (near Mammoth Lakes) to alert authorities.

The sheriff's substation at Mammoth (Mono County) took the information and relayed it to the Madera County sheriff. The latter sent 2 deputies who were packed into Lake Catherine on Sunday afternoon with additional supplies for the scouts. They were going to check on the situation and radio back at noon on Monday, via, the Mono County deputies, for whatever assistance they might require. The Mono County sheriff alerted the Eastern Sierra Rescue Team, and the CLMRG on Sunday evening.

The CLMRG responded by sending 8 men to Mammoth early Monday morning. Our group met at the Mammoth substation at 7 a.m. for a briefing, then continued on to the pack station at Red's Meadows. There, we found that the Madera deputies had returned with the packer at 11 p.m. the previous night. When they had gotten to the scouts, about 6 p.m., the victim had already been found and was in good condition. Apparently, he retraced his steps for some distance after he realized that he was lost. Then he sat down and waited, for almost 2 days, until the other scouts found him. When the deputies left camp, Craig was in his sleeping bag, cheerful, and planning to continue to Yosemite with the group.

Palisade Incidents August 29, 30 . .

Al Green

The summits of Thunderbolt and Winchell were uppermost in the minds of the climbers who participated in the Palisade trip on the weekend of August 29-30. However as it turned out we were an on-site rescue team for two separate incidents. Saturday evening just as it was turning dark we noticed two climbers descending a steep snow patch below Sam Mack Lake. They obviously felt that they had done the wrong thing, remaining in one spot long enough for us to become worried about them. As it was getting dark very fast we (Al Green, Carl Heller, and Chuck Ringrose) didn't wait for them to solve their problem by themselves. They were about halfway down the south side of the snow patch. Their next move was either to traverse across and down or to retreat because the South side just wouldn't go. They elected to wait for us. Carl climbed up the North side and provided an ice axe belay for me to cross the snow patch. With an upper belay the men had no trouble traversing to the easy side. The climbers were Bill Jeter and Mike Lee from Palo Alto.

The second incident was more time-consuming and precluded any thought of peak bagging. One man (Marvin Douglas) from a party of four who had intended to climb Sill on Saturday had not returned to their camp below the glacial moraine. We had actually heard about this earlier in the afternoon from one of the Sylmar Mountain Rescue Unit members who was also in the area for a recreational trip. Initially we thought, well he'll show up so let's just wait and see. However, after the first incident of the evening and darkness had settled we got word from one of Marvin's friends that he was still missing. We decided then to search the next morning at first light. Marvin's friend went on down to the Ranger at Third Lake (who turned out to be Bob Thayer of the Eastern Sierra Group, requesting additional assistance. Bob radioed for the Eastern Sierra team to come in and had a call placed for CLMRG members in China Lake to go on standby.

The next morning we started a pattern search from the area in which Marvin was last seen. Marvin was found at 10:00 o'clock. He had dropped too low in returning to camp and actually had gotten nearly to Third Lake. Marvin had spent a cold night and was trying to climb back up to find his camp when our pattern search found him. Our search line consisted of: Al Green, Carl Heller, John Wick, Dave Reed, Byron Richardson, Scott Hamel, Erika (a willing volunteer), Marvin's 3 friends and the two men, Jeter and Lee who were recruited at a weak moment. Barbara O'Drobinak and Joan Busch helped out by watching the trail and maintaining contact with Bob Thayer.

Labor Day Operations . .

Dennis Burge and Russ Huse

The Group conducted two concurrent rescue operations in the Mt. Whitney area on Labor Day, September 7. They began when a call was received from Sgt. Walizer of the Inyo County Sheriff's Office on Sunday night requesting assistance in evacuating a man who had been badly injured by a falling rock on the Mountaineer's Route of Mt. Whitney. He also mentioned that there was a man stranded on a ledge somewhere on the 2000' wall between Mt. Muir and Mt. Whitney who was heard calling for help; he hoped to have more details on this soon.

Eight members of the group mobilized and reported to the Forest Service Office in Lone Pine by 10 p.m. At this point, we were informed by a climbing partner that Gerald Priebe, 28, who had been injured by the falling rock, had been assisted back to the vicinity of East Face (or Iceberg) Lake, and, though in need of evacuation and medical attention for an injured hip, was not in critical condition.

Palisade Incidents (continued)

The second victim, we learned, had been heard calling for help (and firing 3 shots on two occasions) by numerous persons at Trail Camp and on the switchbacks below Trail Crest. We listened to several people's version of where they thought they had seen him, ranging from the vicinity of the Third Needle to as far as Mt. Russell. We concluded he could not be as far away as Mt. Whitney or Mt. Russell and still be heard clearly. Since it was not possible to determine the exact location of this victim, it was decided that the Forest Service chartered helicopter would be used, first, to locate the stranded man, and secondly, to evacuate the injured man from East Face Lake.

Six of the eight CLMRG members got a couple of hours sleep and then started up the Whitney Trail at 1:40 a.m., arriving at Trail Camp at the 12,000' level at 5:30 a.m., ready to rescue the stranded climber when he could be located. Helicopter sweeps along the pinnacled face were made beginning at 7 a.m. The victim, Robert Runyard, 21, a Ft. Ord soldier, was spotted trapped on a ledge on the South face of Third Needle at what was estimated to be 200 feet above the talus and scree pile sloping away at it's base. He appeared to be in good condition for having spent a cold night in this exposed located at 13,300'. The members at Trail Camp began to proceed to his location across the rubble piles at the base of the wall.

Meanwhile, the helicopter took the observer, Carl Heller, to East Face Lake (12,600') and left him to begin moving Priebe to an area where the helicopter could pick him up. The helicopter then returned to Lone Pine, picked up Bill Stronge and flew him to a site about 500' below Runyard's location. The helicopter then returned to East Face Lake where Carl, with the assistance of volunteer climbers in the area, had placed Priebe in our litter and moved him a couple of hundred feet back up to the lake. Priebe was then flown to the Lone Pine hospital and Carl was flown to the site of the Runyard operation.

By a combination of aid and free climbing up the near vertical pitch, Bill reached Runyard at 11:50 a.m. (The pitch was 110 feet by actual measure.) The young man, assisted by a safety belay, rappelled to the base of the cliff and was assisted over the talus piles to Trail Camp, where he ate and rested before hiking out. He was not much the worse for his ordeal, his only injury being a badly bruised heel that he had incurred in a 15 foot fall on the lower part of his descent down the chute leading off the Whitney Trail to his perch. He told us he had been trying to take a shortcut back to Trail Camp using a chute he had been led down by a friend on a previous Whitney ascent, but he had obviously not found the same chute. The 15 foot pitch he had fallen down prevented him from going back up.

As a sidelight to these operations, the helicopter which was used is a private one under contract to the Forest Service. The Forest Service pays only for the time they use it, and so our two victims are obligated to pay for the time used in searching for or evacuating them. The pilot is giving them a slight break and charging only \$125/hour. Potential victims take note!

The members who took part in addition to Stronge and Heller were: Al Green, Dennis Burge, Russ Huse, Joe McIntire, Tim Pearia, John Wick, Ray Van Aken, Dave Matthews, Tom Boggs, and Janet Westbrook.

Mobilization for Isabella . .

Al Green

Don Glennon called me Thursday, September 10, at about 1345 and said that a boy and a dog had been missing from Boulder Gulch near Lake Isabella since about 0900.

I had telephoners working the roster from both ends and we could only get 3 positive answers from members who could leave immediately (Al Green, Dennis Burge, and Bill Stronge), and 4 who could go later (Fred Camphausen, John Wick, Stan Johnson, and Byron Richardson). Fortunately the boy was found and we were called off before our first team left the equipment hut.

None of us can go all the time, but all of us should go some of the time.

Dogwood Campground . .

Al Green

Just before leaving my house to attend the Group's September business meeting (Monday, September 14) I received a call from Larry Twedell of Sierra Madre. The San Bernardino County Sheriff's office was requesting MRA assistance in a search for a 10-year-old boy in the San Bernardino mountains. Marcel Strong had been missing from Dogwood campground since Saturday afternoon. A team of 4 men (Al Green, Stan Johnson, Dave Reed, and Byron Richardson) left China Lake at 0100 on September 15. Tuesday and Wednesday were spent in a series of sweeps in the vicinity of Dogwood Campground and down various drainages. Thursday morning the CL team was about to start down the Buck Brush again when a call came in that Marcel had been found. Our drop vehicle luckily was still there and transported us immediately to the road above the site. We assisted the San Diego Team and Sheriff's Department personnel in a tension-building stretcher lowering, semi-Tyrolean traverse and carry over terrain that refused to stay together. An inspiring amount of teamwork and concern for the victim put Marcel in an ambulance about 2 hours after being found.

This operation is worthy of some comment. Hopeless as it seemed this boy was not only alive after 5 nights out but was in good shape. He would have been alive even after the inevitable big weekend push that probably would have essentially ended the search whether he had been found or not. We like to get called early in a search like this because the probability of getting a live victim is much higher...but let's remember Marcel!

Deerhunter on Burning Breckenridge Mountain ..28 September

Al Green

A lunch hour call is difficult as our telephoners (Carol Burge and Liz Anderson) have found out. 1150 hours and an in-county request from Don Glennon: A 16-year old deer hunter was lost on Breckenridge Mountain, near the fire area. We managed to roll 6 men in an hour and twenty minutes (Al Green, Carl Heller, Frank Buffum, Dennis Burge, Nick Bottka and Don Peterson). When we arrived at the Isabella substation, the news was just coming in that the boy (Michael McMasters of Bakersfield) had been sighted by the NAF HH-1K chopper. A few minutes later the radio reported that the boy was in a jeep and okay. As we started to leave, we watched the chopper heading for China Lake; no one dreamed that within 2 hours 4 of us would be in that very bird and headed for one of our most interesting operations!

Happy Canyon . Carl Heller

Rescue of Mr. Larry Schaeffer from ledge above Happy Canyon 28 September 1970.

Larry was vacationing at Ballarat and had gone walking and prospecting above the town on Saturday, 26 September. He took a shortcut down the steep, loose wail South of Happy

Happy Canyon (continued)

Canyon and fell, hurting both ankles, chest and back with abrasions on his face. Friends from Ballarat missed him Sunday and began to worry. On Monday they asked for help from the Southern Inyo S&R Squad which, of course, brought in the Inyo County Sheriff's Department. The victim was heard about 1100 and members of the Southern Inyo group climbed up the box canyon to a position 160 feet below the victim's ledge. They could talk to him but realized they needed help and had the Sheriff's Department contact China Lake.

The call came to China Lake after 1600 asking for a helicopter and mountain rescuers. Chief Cummings thought everyone was out (on the Breckenridge search) but checked with NAF Operations. Nan Hulsey reached Carol Burge at 1620 (to readers off the Center, 1630 is quitting time, and the time of day when most rescue members evaporate into thin air for 2 hours..as any telephoner can testify..Ed.) and Carol started phoning. Meanwhile the Sheriff reached Dennis Burge direct who then phone Al. A lot of lines were therefore busy but four people were reached and the operation started.

I was in the Lab wearing my boots and shirt from the earlier operation and I left NAF via the hut, at 1640. At Operations the information about the situation made it seem necessary to have mountaineers and the chopper could take 2 to h. A sailor helped me get the stretcher, radios, etc. out to the line and into the HH-1K. The copilot, Major George O'Grady USA, was warming the engines and soon the pilot, Major Jack Pipa USMC, and Dennis appeared. Pipa said he could take 4 besides his crewman, so we waited briefly. Al Green and Frank Buffum arrived about 1703 and we took off at 1705.

Base Camp was a Sheriff's car at Happy Canyon, which we reached about 1730. Deputy Dennis Cox pointed out the victims location and Al and I took off (in the chopper). Unfortunately we approached the mountain so rapidly that we lost our perspective. By backing off, we relocated ourselves and Al suggested a landing spot which Pipa had already noted. Al and I jumped 3 feet from a hover, and started traversing toward the victim. Using the GE radio, we talked to Cox who lined us up above the victim. The rock was rotten and the "scree" was cemented with clay - a most unenjoyable descent.

Rappel anchors were difficult to find and the best was none too firm. Finally we had one and Al went down on the two 200' ropes. Frank and Dennis arrived with the stretcher and ropes so I took two ropes down to Al. The next rappel was from a 1 1/2" "tree" and Al could see the victim below. We pulled the 2nd rappel and used another mud-cemented rock for our 3rd rappel point. Al reached the victim at 1915 as things got dark. Al reported the victim not critical and I climbed the two dry "waterfalls" to help Dennis and Frank. Frank was climbing up the long rappel to free the rope. I reset the short rappel for them and went down with ropes and slings which were dropped to Al. Frank released the upper rope and brought the stretcher to me. I rappelled to the victim's ledge by 1945. Al had an anchor set and the victim somewhat comfortable with drinking water the big item. Frank arrived and we lifted Larry into the padded stretcher. Because of the temperatures in Panamint Valley we had considered the sleeping bag unnecessary and had left it behind. Dennis brought everything down and we tied in Larry, fixed the stretcher harness, set the brake system and tested the anchor. The lower team had reached the wail before Al arrived and we lowered a rope which happily reached bottom. We were in

Happy Canyon (continued)

radio contact with Deputy Cox whenever I could take the radio out of my pack. A CB radio connected Cox and crews below us.

Al started down at 2045 which shows a pretty fast tie-in and stretcher rigging. After a small problem at the edge he went smoothly down the 100' vertical section and was soon being helped by the lower crew. This consisted of Bottka, Wick, Pearia, and Peterson plus four Trona People. Frank soon rappelled down to help them.

The upper canyon had steep spots-and required one anchor and brake system. They then carried the stretcher down the narrow canyon and across the wash to the road and chopper. The victim was airborne to the Ridgecrest Hospital by 2215. The pilots who waited were certainly good sports.

Some comments about this operation are in order:

1. Chief Cummings handled the Sheriff's call. He thought CLMRG and the helicopter were out, but was checking to be sure when Don Glennon walked into his office. Perhaps ten minutes were lost.
2. Nan Hulse and Carl Burge deserve thanks for a fast job.
3. Without the chopper the rescue would have occurred Tuesday morning. Larry possibly would have survived. (Medical opinion he would have survived no longer than 4 hours.)
4. Bob Joy and Jim Nichols have made getting the gear out much easier. Remembering all the radio accessories is still a problem. I got the antennas and batteries but forgot the case for the G.E. Can anyone think of a foolproof set up?
5. The first crew will usually leave one Voice Commander for the second crew who should pick it up at the hut.
6. Everyone should carry one rope and several slings including a couple of large ones from the hut on such operations.
7. Large slings should be coiled for shoulder carry when stored.
8. The G.E. needs headphones for use in choppers. At one stage the chopper was traversing the slope, I was monitoring the pilot in one ear and (?) Frank with the other. The crewman dropped flares when (?) Frank said we were over the victim.
9. The orange stretcher was well equipped but upside down on the pack.
10. Helmets should be fixed to hold headlamps.

In review this was a good operation in which our special training was necessary to save a life. The desirability of regular stretcher practices as well as group climbs to all of us.

Both the callouts on Monday came at inconvenient times, but we mobilized in good time. Our telephoners, quartermaster, and others deserve much credit.

Doodlings with a Stopwatch	Frank Buffum
Gather disordered clothing, equipment, food and water; load pack using checklist; pile stuff in a closet.	16 minutes
Change from work clothes to rescue clothes	5 minutes
Brief stop by the John	1 minute
Load remaining personal gear into car	2 minutes
Drive from junction of Ridgecrest and China Lake Blvds. to the CLMRG hut at speed limit	7 minutes
Total time	31 minutes

MORAL - Prior arrangement of gear means you can (1) be prepared, (2) use only half the total time in picking up your gear, and (3) reduce your pre-call consternation levels by about 90%.

QUALIFICATIONS . . .

Carl Heller

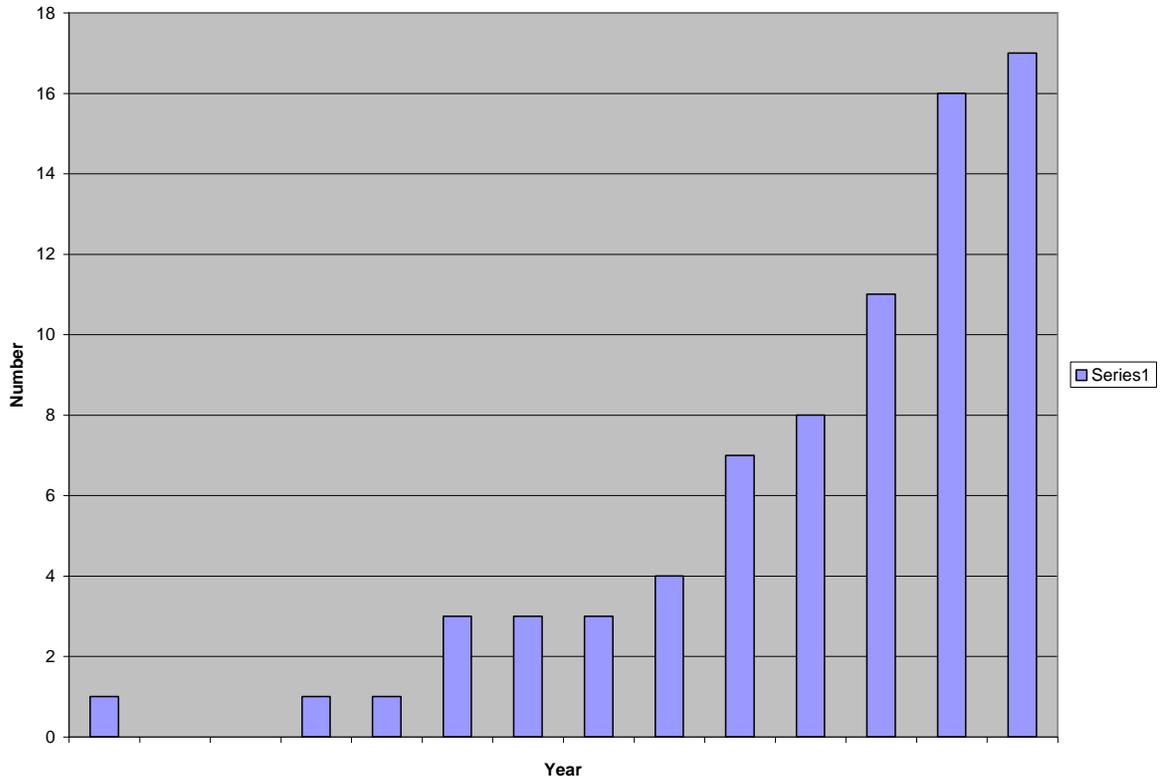
Regarding the new October Call List.

The qualifications committee has added up operations and hours spent away from home on said operations in 1970. John Wick is way ahead with 11 operations and 370 hours. Heller has been on 10 operations but only has 146 hours, while Pearia on 6 operations has contributed 179 hours. Others with over 100 hours are: Green, 9 & 136; Burge 9 & 117; Buffum, 5 & 101; Westbrook, 2 & 100; Peterson, 7 & 115; and Rockwell, 5 & 120 hours. Stronge has been on 7 operations with 75 hours.

This addition of members activities has a practical application. With the October call sheet, we began to order the list with the most active members on top. This should help in getting our teams mobilized more rapidly when time is a factor.

Obviously time spent on operations is only part of an individual's contribution. We don't intend to belittle all the work that goes into fixing equipment, training, safety talks, hosting meetings, attending business meetings and the like. Members who are temporarily on the inactive list as far as operations are concerned can continue to help in these other ways. Only by getting all the jobs done can we maintain a strong group.

Operations & Incidents



The year goes from 1957 to 1970. Illustrates the early operation history of CLMRG

TRAINING COMMITTEE REPORT . .

The summer courses were completed with a "falling-climber-catching" practice, and party, on September 1. At that time certificates* were awarded to those who completed all items on the rock-climbing safety list. Those persons were: Dave Reed, Bruce Hardy, Jim McCoy and Allen Tobey. The first three of these have filled out applications for group membership aid we welcome them to the group.

*(Ed. the certificates were designed and typed by Marilyn Wick, the first year we've had such impressive material.)

From the August RESCUE RUCKSACK:

"From Katmai in Alaska we got the following word from Gil Blinn, "All is well here. We're living at Brooks Camp for the summer where we have a cabin nestled among the spruce trees where we can look across Naknek Lake to the volcanoes of the Aleutian Range; Not much climbing here, but the fishing, wildlife and wilderness hiking opportunities are fantastic."

PRESIDENT'S CORNER . .

Frank Buffum

Since the Equipment Seminar this spring, we have been holding a round robin by mail with Ray Neal of the Southern Arizona Rescue Association and George Barnes of the Bay Area Mountain Rescue Unit. The purpose of this has been to assemble the best practical and theoretical material available on search procedures and techniques for use in MRA-type operations. Some very fruitful results have come of this correspondence - but, more importantly, it has indicated that we could all profitably exchange more of the hard learned experience that is stacked away in the files and training manuals of various MRA teams.



"They're climbing it because it's there, But why are we climbing it?"