

CHINA LAKE MOUNTAIN RESCUE GROUP

P.O. BOX 5773

CHINA LAKE, CALIFORNIA 93555

August 1971 #13

CALENDAR

- August 14-15 Young, Hale, Hitchcock or Over Trail Crest & Points West
Consult with Nick Bottka (446-2655)
- August 28-29 LeConte-Corcoran, organized by Lee Lucas (446-2310)
Ask them later if they found the True Summit?
- September 4-6 Taboose Pass, possibly followed by Arrow, Cardinal, although
some climbers consider the Pass the equal of many summits. Ask Jim Nichols for
particulars
(446-2042)
- September 13 Meeting at Bill Stronge's, 555 South Fairview, Ridgecrest,

OPERATIONS :

The afternoon of 16 July turned out to be devoted to mobilizing teams to assist in two widely separated searches for small children. The calls came nearly simultaneously, one from Sequoia National Park and the other from New York State (via Sierra Madre).

Sequoia Search Al Green

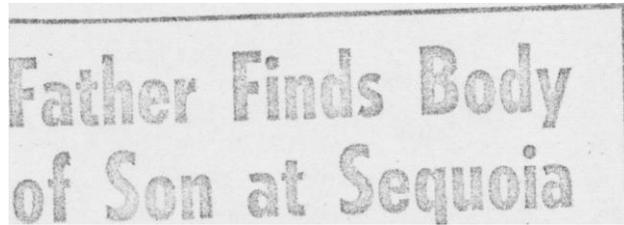
A team of four (Green, Westbrook, Peterson and Van Aken) left at 0100 from China Lake for Dorst Campground. We were to arrive at 0600 but a VW bus just can't make it that fast and we rolled in at 0630. The 9-year-old boy (David Holtz) had been missing since Tuesday, and nothing had been found. A well organized and what should have been an effective search was being run. Search areas were marked on map overlays and high probability areas were saturated. We were assigned a specific area with Don Colbert (Mel Foundation, with the tracking dogs) and Ron Lee (Park Service) and spent Saturday bushwhacking, fighting off mosquitoes, and trying to keep a good tight line. With 6 good people you can do it. We covered a lot of ground. Sunday our team of 4 spent the day going down Dorst Creek. We very carefully searched both sides and probed each pool. Don Peterson couldn't resist getting wet. So he was allowed to check all the difficult holes. Again, nothing was found.

It was clear that the Park Service was doing a very good job in handling the search. MRA teams had covered all the technical terrain within a reasonable distance from where the child was last seen. A large contingent of military were coming in Monday for a man-to-man line search. Because of the physical capability of the boy it was nearly certain that he would not have gotten very

continued, Sequoia search....

far. For these reasons and ever—present job commitments we decided to go home Sunday night.

CLMRG searched for two days, July 17-18. This news item appeared in the BAKERS FIELD CALIFORNIAN on August 2, 1971,



SEQUOIA NATIONAL PARK. - The body of a 9-year-old mentally retarded boy missing since mid-July has been found at the north end of the park, rangers reported Sunday.

Army Lt. Col. Edward S. Holtz of Harbor City found his son David's body Saturday in a wooded glen in Colony 'Meadow. The site was about two miles from the Dorst Creek area where the boy was last seen, rangers said.

"He apparently died of natural causes," said Assistant Banger Jim Hartzell, "probably exposure and exhaustion." An autopsy has not yet been performed.

David had been fishing with a brother near his family's park campsite when he wandered off. More than 100 searchers combed the park for over two weeks. After the search was suspended last week, the father continued looking.

Bangers delayed release of the discovery so Holtz, commander of a military induction center in Los Angeles, could inform other family members.

New York State Search

Stronge

Five members of the CLMRG (Joy, Wick, Lucas, Johnson, Stronge) responded to Sierra Madre's request for help on a search in the Adirondacks, New York.

Dougie, the lost child, was 8. His parents paid the plane fare for 29 searchers who committed themselves for a week. The day we arrived turned out to be the 7th day of the search, We joined hundreds of local volunteers in searching during the following week. No sign of Dougie was found in the densely wooded hills and isolated lakes.

This search, so far from our home territory, brought out several problems.

- 1) The various California Region MRA teams have quite different philosophies regarding public news releases. This resulted in competition between some teams and resentment by others.
- 2) There was some lack of consultation between our leader and the overall MRA leader. It should be understood on MRA searches that the team leaders will meet each evening for a critique and planning session.
- 3) Our team felt that we were wasting our time after Thursday, but our

continued, New York search...

promise to stay a week kept us there one more day. Actually we suggest that in future cases such as this one (long distance and a late call), that the MRA send 4-5 leaders first, as consultants and to learn whether more people are needed.

A Successful Search!

Carl Heller

Mike Pickering got lost on Friday, 30 July, and was found on Tuesday, 3 August. China Lake had 3 men (Bottka, Heller and Zenor) while CALMRA had 14, and Los Padres, 2. A day-by-day description detailing the boys action, the searchers plans and-action could be interesting to the reader.

FRIDAY: A group from Pyles Boys Camp descended Freeman Creek to swim in the Kern River. They returned a different route along a trail upstream which climbed out of the canyon at its junction with the Little Kern River canyon, The trail zigs North and zags South before topping the canyon wall and going 2 miles West to Camp. Mike was left behind below the zig, at 7:00 p.m. and was supposed to be picked up by the last man. He was missed when the group reached camp.

Mike climbed North below the trail until he got tired and lay down to sleep.

The camp director, Bob "Smokey" McAdams, organized a search group which returned to the river at night, lit a fire and shouted for Mike.

SATURDAY: Mike woke early and started up to the North where the canyon wall is highest. With no water he became very thirsty and descended for a drink. Unfortunately he climbed down to the North so he reached the Little Kern River, about 1-1 1/2 miles North of the trail and North of bluffs which made a box canyon. Enroute he dropped a towel and pants. Once on the river he was apparently completely lost and afraid to travel in the forbidding-looking territory. He slept during the day under a ledge and shivered each night for 3 more nights. He waved at helicopters, to no avail.

Smokey arranged a search for Saturday which started rather late - after Mike had moved North. They searched the trails and had a helo fly the canyons.

SUNDAY: Sheriff's deputies, USFS men, volunteers, and camp staff searched North from the trail actually in the area where Mike had walked. They thought he was wearing sneakers and for this or other reasons no one found any tracks or clothing.

That night the Tulare County Sheriff's Department called Sierra Madre and teams were told to meet at Pyles camp at 0600.

MONDAY: China Lake arrived at 0600 and received a briefing from Smokey. He had marked a map showing searched areas. A few volunteers planned some searching on the plateau. It appeared that the MRA could profitably search South of the trail. When we had 9 people we started with Smokey, with Ray Smith at the Base Camp radio. San Diego later joined us and we satisfied ourselves that Mike had not climbed South out of the canyon.

continued, Successful search.....

After lunch we decided to go up and search the canyon rim to determine whether Mike had climbed out. Tracking proved bad along the rim and was complicated by searchers' tracks for nearly a mile North. An afternoon rain then wiped out all tracks.

That night we talked to the Sheriff's Sergeant who asked us to plan for Tuesday. There would be the CALMRA, volunteers, 40 Navy men, horsemen, 4-wheel vehicles, and a Navy helicopter. We planned for patrols by horse far back on the plateau, a line search along the plateau trail end MRA Teams North. from the trail. This effort was to push above the bluffs forming the box canyon. Will Tapp was needed for the line search so we had only 3 MRA teams for this search. The helo was to fly the river canyon slowly in both directions.

TUESDAY: Ray Smith and I stayed in Base Camp. The MRA teams got off before 0700. The Navy arrived at 0900, ate and were in line by 0940. Two horse patrols went North. The helo had 1 1/2 hours flight time and searched only down river with Smokey and Deputy Johnny McNally.

The line search reached the plateau edge and got started back by 1303. The MRA teams reached the river for lunch. Only Nick and his companion from San Diego, Bill Hurtz, felt like continuing the search above the bluffs. At 1300 they found the boy. Nick was so happy that he announced the news over the radio in Hungarian (Spanish? German?) which confused Tom Fairchild somewhat. However we in Base Camp soon understood and started preparations to get the boy. The USFS was willing to loan a helicopter for this purpose and soon Mike was united with his mother in camp. The weary searchers had to walk out of the canyon.

Observations:

- 1) The MRA teams were called too late and then via Sierra Madre Evidently we need more publicity. I think it is a good idea to channel all out publicity to one team – probably Sierra Madre- even if this occasionally hurts peoples feelings. It is very valuable for people in general to know about a group they associate with Mountain Search and Rescue.
- 2) We only had 3 people rather than the 4 or 5 we tried to get. I hope this was only a statistical variation, not a trend.

MRA teams involved included China Lake, Riverside, Sierra Madre, San Diego, Los Padres and the Bay Area. Captain Max Foster, Tulare County Sheriff's Department (who remembered Al Green's Balch Park operation, in 1969), Mel Neese of the USFS who knew the area well, Smokey McAdams of the Boys Camp (this was his first seriously lost boy in 23 years operation of a wilderness camp.).

Detailed minutes will be distributed to each club, so I will report only on highlights. The meeting was held in Bremerton, Washington on July 26, with 20 voting delegates present. Most of the meeting was devoted to reports from the various Regions and committees.

News: The Colorado Region is influential in a new state SAR coordinating board. The Edelweiss team in Colorado *is* defunct. A new "Climbers' Guide to the Olympics" is out, and a workable, cheap DART system is being developed (John Simac). Gene Fear is advising the federal "lifetime sports" office concerning survival and first aid training. (This is a federally funded high school program.) The July 26 issue of Sports Illustrated contains an MRA safety article. Mountain rescue "paramedics" are being trained in a 2-year course in Seattle (Jerry Sabel). And CLMRG's slide show "It All Depends on You" *was* shown at the evening MRA banquet.

Actions: Probationary membershi^P of Central Arizona was chanced to full membership. MRA has endorsed the final report of the Cable System Committee. A resolution was passed calling for 5 hours each of body survival and basic first aid to accompany instruction in any "lifetime sport" which carries the participant away from civilization. MRA president Dave Moore has appointed a seven-man committee to develop uniform procedures for testing mountaineering and rescue equipment; however, MRA endorsement of this approach to equipment testing was withheld pending study by legal experts. The nominating committee's slate of officers was elected. New MRA officers are: Dave Moore, president; Paul Williams, vice-president; John Wehbring, secretary-treasurer. MRA accepted the invitation of the Oregon Region to host the

1972 Spring Meeting at Cloud Cap on the north slope of Mt. Hood. It will be a camp-out.

Recommendations: (1) We should consider obtaining a cable system with hand winch--maybe the California Region can swing a hydraulic winch, (2) We should contact Jerry Sable concerning his "paramedic" training program, (3) We should review our recommendations to MRA for a standard incident report form and for compilation of operations statistics--some decision by MRA *is* likely at the fall meeting at Disneyland, (4) We should determine our position on ^Possible expansion of MRA to include SAR personnel other than mountaineers--this question was brought up in Bremerton and is certain to be debated at the fall meeting, (5) I think we have a good stretcher system which should be exhibited at the fall meeting.

BONUS DEPARTMENT:

On the following page are copies of two official Department of the Navy letters.

Because of the times we have had calls directly from NAF, and because of the help with transportation, and because of the excused-time we get for operation-time ...we have felt that we were recognized as an efficient mountain rescue team.

But here we can see it in black and white.

Thank you.



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY
 NAVAL WEAPONS CENTER
 CHINA LAKE, CALIFORNIA 93555in

In reply refer
 to

35014/DAI:mab

1 June 1971

MEMORANDUM

From: LCDR D. A. Iverson, Code 35014

To: CAPT A. E. May, Code 02

Subj: Search and Rescue effort on 30 May 1971

1. At approximately 1615, Petty Officer First Class Ben Olver (AQ-1) telephoned the NWC duty desk and informed Chief Jarvis (JOOD) that a small girl was lost in the Rockhouse Basin area. I returned a call to POI. Olver and directed him to remain at the telephone until he had passed directions and instructions to the mountain rescue team. I then contacted Dr. Heller and informed him of Olver's request for search and rescue and asked him to telephone Olver for further details. While the JOOD informed security and the Sheriff's departments (Tulare and Kern) I advised NAF, Major George O'Crady and CDR William Haff of a possible SAR effort. The SAR effort was later initiated and at 1815, departed NAF in company with Dr. Heller and three additional mountain rescue team volunteers. In the short time from first notification, Dr. Heller had recruited two additional teams (8 men). These men were enroute to the assigned area before 1830.

2. At 1930, word was received, through the NAF Operations Duty Officer, that the child (2 1/2 years) had been found prior to the arrival of the helicopter. Unfortunately the child had drowned.

3. Although P01 Olver, NWC and NAF efforts did not bring about a happy ending, the effort and cooperation were outstanding and highly appreciated by the Kern and Tulare County Sheriff Departments.

Very Respectfully,

D. A. Iverson
 LCDR USN



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY
 NAVAL WEAPONS CENTER
 CHINA LAKE, CALIFORNIA 93555

02/AEM:mjd

1 June 1971

From: Deputy Commander To:
 Distribution List

Subj: Search and Rescue effort on 30 May 1971

Encl: (1) LCDR Iverson memo of 1 June 1971

1. I note with pleasure the team efforts outlined in enclosure (1).
2. While the ultimate death of the baby was tragic, the combined Center efforts that commenced with commendable initiative and judgment displayed by P01 OLVER were noteworthy.
3. I realize that such operations are conducted on request and at a **fairly** routine rate. Nonetheless, the rapid reaction and response of all concerned, once the decision was made to assist, was anything but routine.
4. I am pleased and proud to be associated with a "can do" organization that can produce the kind of effort noted in enclosure (1).
5. Please ensure that this is routed to all participants.

A. E. NAY

Dist. List:
 P01 OLVER (3519)
 CO NAP
 14
 1401
 144
 Dr. Heller (6059)

Info, copy to:
 00
 01

FINANCES

Barb Slates

During June and July, we have received donations from Bob and Jerri Lee (Lees Mountaineer Supply), the China Lake Parent Teacher Association, and from the Sierra Club Foundation (the John Wirt Memorial Fund).

We express our thanks to these donors, for helping us continue to operate.

The treasurer has a new supply of CLMRG arm patches. Members can get these from Barb at home, or at her office. \$1.00 each.

MEMBERSHIP

A new roster will be out very soon, listing as senior members (up from Support), Don Peterson and John Wick.

Also, New Phone Numbers - all official phone numbers (Navy phones, or Office phones – the 4 digit variety) will be prefixed 939-xxxx and can be reached Direct Dial.

MOVIE REPORT (addendum to Finances)

Janet Westbrook

Perhaps because climbing is coming "in vogue" these days, or because of the most extensive advertising campaign ever launched for a CLMRG activity, the attendance at our HARD ROCK FILM FESTIVAL far surpassed any audience we had before - 340 people saw our show! Our 3 movies were varied- Merry's ASCENT showed basic climbing techniques on various Yosemite Valley walls, culminating with a climb of the "Lost Arrow"; Chouinard's 2 films were fantastic, perhaps SENTINEL was the better, because of the clever narrative- and FITZROY had fantastic scenic shots. It was an educational and entertaining group of films. We have ulterior motives to our shows- \$\$\$- and we are pleased with that, this time. Our expenses ran \$256.20 for rent, etc., and our total income (there is some money lurking in corners, as yet uncounted) is over \$488. Beyond the profit, we got to see some of the best films available on climbing!

We hope that everyone enjoyed them (and that next time the Lecture Center will have the new screen and the sound system). Thanks

Thanks to Ray Van Aken for the masterly job of narrating and tying the three movies into one show!

PUBLIC EDUCATION

10 searches so far this year, and 5 of these for children.

Ages: 2,8,9, 11, and 14.

Only the 14-year-old was found alive.

Any one wants to schedule our 10-minute slide show, CHILD LOST? , for a group of 15 or more?

Call any CLMRG member, and we will. arrange to show CHILD LOST?