



CHINA LAKE MOUNTAIN RESCUE GROUP

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CHINA LAKE, CA 93555

EDITOR: DIANNE LUCAS

JUNE 1973 #23

CALENDAR

- June 21-24 National MRA Spring Meeting, in Boulder. Talk to Lee Lucas (446-2387) if interested in attending.
- June 23-24 Olancho Peak (Class 1,2), 12,123'. Terry Moore (446-6271) is the organizer.
- June 30-July 1 Summer class overnight, location to be announced.
- July 9 Meeting at Green's, 67-B Rowe, 7:30.
- July 14-15 Abbott (Class 3, 13,715'), and Dade (Class 2, 13,600+). Call Dianne Lucas for further information, at 446-2387.
- July 21-22 Lone Pine Peak (Class 2, 12,944'), and Irvine (Class 13,770'). Peter Woodman will handle the arrangements (446-7356).
- July 28-29 Ritter-Banner (Class 2-3), in the Minarets area. Mount Ritter is 13,157', Banner Peak is 12,945'. Be prepared for possible snow and ice climbing! Al Jones (375-8991) will arrange cook pools and transportation.
- Aug 4-5 Climbing in the Palisades area, going in the North Fork of Big Pine Creek. Snow and ice again. Talk to Bill Sweatt for details (446-2891).
- Aug 11 Mt. Morrison (Class 2-3), 12,268'. Call George Craig (446-6005) about this one.
- Aug 12 Joint Rescue Practice with Inyo Posse Red Team, Bill Sweatt is the organizer.
- Aug 13 Meeting at Heller's, 700-B Nimitz, 7:30.
- Aug 18-19 We have been asked to teach some of the older Girl Scouts about rock climbing safety at their camp in the Greenhorns (because they have some rocks in the middle of the camp and climb on them anyway!) Be thinking about it...
- Also on this weekend: a climb of Independence Peak (Class 2-3) 11,744. Dave Matthews is the organizer (375-4932).

OPERATIONS

#7308 Search, Ontario Peak, May 8-12 Dennis Burge

James MacKay, 19, of Upland, left a note at home on May 3 saying he was going to climb Ontario Peak and would return the next day. When he didn't return the San Bernardino County Sheriff was called. No search was possible on May 5 because of bad weather. San Bernardino County units searched for any trace of the lost hiker on May 6-7, and the California MRA teams joined the search the morning of May 8. Our first group consisted of Burge, Heller, Joy, Camphausen, Woodman, Warschauer, Atkins and Harris.

The area is very rugged with many branching canyons and steep, rotten rock. There is dense brush at lower elevations and deep, firm snow higher up. It was very difficult to say we had covered our assigned areas with much thoroughness because of these problems and the large areas to be covered. But this first group spent two days doing their best to check out all possibilities.

A second group from CLMRG--Lucas, Craig, Jones and Moore--went down to aid the continuing search on the 11th and 12th. On Saturday afternoon, May 12, members of the San Diego team found MacKay's body in Delker Canyon, which is about 1 mile east of the area CLMRG had covered. It is believed MacKay was killed while skirting some falls in the canyon on a shortcut back to Ice House Canyon. He apparently slid headfirst down a steep icy chute for about 30 ft., struck his head on a rock and broke his neck, killing him instantly. He had no ice axe.

It is interesting to speculate as to why the victim was not found until the third sweep of Delker Canyon. Certainly melting snow and moving water may have led to changed conditions. However it is also a reminder that searchers should go slowly enough to make a thorough search of critical areas.

This was a big search with over 100 personnel from many agencies and teams. In spite of this, cooperation was excellent, and there were no injuries to the searchers themselves despite the treacherous terrain. Sheriff's Lt. Tom Wickum did a good job of coordinating the efforts in this lengthy and difficult search.

#7309 Rescues Lone Pine Peak, 14 May Al Green

We were called at about 1300 May 14 by Ernie DeGraff of the USFS. A climber had been injured while descending the south side of Lone Pine Peak. In negotiating a difficult section, Ken Horwitz had suffered a back injury which immobilized him. His partner (Dan McHale) went out for help.

Heller received the initial call and elected to coordinate the operation at China Lake. He arranged for a helo and asked Barbara Slates to get a team. Four of us (Green, Burge, Lucas and Peterson) were at NAF at 1345. The pilot, Lt. Jack Macidull, could take only two people. Burge and I got the ride. Lucas and Peterson went back to the hut and with Buffum, Camphausen, Jones, Joy, Stronge and Sweatt formed a back-up team. This team drove, through hail and **zero**-visibility rain at times, to the Tuttle Creek roadhead south of Lone Pine, while our advance team flew north into doubtful weather.

Macidull landed at Lone Pine and picked up McHale to guide us to the scene. A nice piece of flying put us on an avalanche remnant about 500 feet below the victim. Burge and I, with McHale's help, put Horwitz in the stretcher and lowered him down the snow chute to the helo. At 1610 Horwitz was on the x-ray table at the Lone

continued . . .

Lone Pine Peak Rescue, continued . .

Pine hospital. A potentially very dangerous situation for the victim and very arduous job for the rescue team had been made easy by a helicopter and pilot. Ken Horwitz had suffered a compression fracture, and with the deteriorating weather was very fortunate to arrive at the hospital so quickly.

A comment: We should always take our own stretcher. It is properly equipped with slings, pads and a canvas bottom. The standard Stokes without these specialized mountain rescue features can present problems when lowering on snow. In this instance the crew had already put a stretcher in the helo, and with the rotor turning we were reluctant to switch stretchers.

#7310 Search, Stony Creek, near Sequoia, 26 May Bob Westbrook

Memorial Day weekend was a busy one for CLMRG. Friday night ended abruptly at 0030 with a call from Carl Heller. "I just remembered it's your weekend", he says. A 5-year-old boy is lost near Sequoia National Park. So you wake some telephoners to roust out the troops, pack your gear with eyes still closed, and drive all night, arriving at base camp by 0800. We check in--our team consists of Heller, Burge, Bottka, Lucas, Westbrook, Joy, Buffum, Huse, Moore and Dinger--and get our assignments. In the field, we're all thinking optimistic thoughts: weather good, cool and dry, and we're getting an early start. And at 1000 we all breathe easier as the radio blares, "He's been found. He's OK" Now thoughts turn to the long drive home. But we can relax, a successful search over.

#7311 Search, Cedar Slope, 27 May Bob Westbrook

Early to bed, early to rise makes a man extremely tired--if it's only 2330 when the call comes. Again it's from Tulare County. A 6-year-old girl lost near Cedar Slope above Camp Nelson. Ask the telephoners to pick on the same troops--they should still be packed from yesterday's operation. At 0130 we gather at the hut, the same faces mostly--Heller, Lucas, Westbrook, Peterson, Buffum, Brown, Huse, Moore and Dinger. The new faces get to drive--this is the second sleepless night for the rest of us. We arrive before first light, about 0500. We eat breakfast "on the house" at the Cedar Slope Lodge. A base camp is organized with some help from our team.

Even though we seem to be organized, it's almost 0630 before we climb into the van and head off toward Quaking Aspen. Being among the first out, CLMRG gets to search an area already covered last night, but a likely area to find the girl, we think. It's steep and brush-covered, with several fast moving streams. There are not enough of us to do a thorough search. We call the girl's name, hoping she will "find" us. Then over the radio we hear that Border Patrol trackers working with San Diego have picked up tracks. Some tracks are near the campsite where the girl was last seen, and there are others about two miles above, along the highway. Both sets are followed. We finish our first assignment and are setting out for a new area when the girl is found. Near the highway Sierra Madre, following the tracks, has found her--cold, tired, no shoes, but alive and well. Perhaps being called early means a successful operation--these two searches seem to say that.

For more information about operations #7310-11, see Carl Heller's comments, "A View from Base Camp, beginning on page 4.

#7312 Alert, Taboose Pass, 28 May Bob Westbrook

At 1432 on Monday Herb Rickert called. A member of his hiking party had broken her ankle. Could we get a helicopter to pick her up from Taboose Pass, 11360'? I called the NAF 00D, LCDR Barton, and he agreed to the use of the helicopter and said he would try to find a pilot at home (this being a holiday). Col. Pipa responded. After talking to the Inyo County Sheriff and Herb Rickert, and taking into account the heat (almost 100 at China Lake) and the landing altitude, they decided to take off without CLMRG aboard. We remained on alert. At 1900 LCDR Barton called to report that the girl was now at Lone Pine Hospital and the helicopter was back. A long weekend is over at last!

#7313 Search, Kern River fatalities, 1 June Al Green

The Kern River is a very treacherous place. Apparently, this is especially true on Memorial Day weekend, during which seven people drowned this year. Two victims were found immediately, but as of Friday morning (June 1) the other five had not been located.

We were asked to meet at the Sheriff's Substation in Isabella at 0500 Friday. Fourteen of us (Green, Burge, Peterson, Sweatt, Woodman, Jones, Garner, Warschauer, O'Handley, Atkins, Charlton, Hirschy, Moore and Johnson) left the hut at 0345 and easily arrived at the appointed hour. Our assignment was the gorge below Miracle Springs. It turned out that the river had not responded as expected to shutting down the dam. There was still a very healthy flow, causing a few delays and discussions. By noon we had covered both sides of the river, going down and back up, for approximately one mile. Discussions at base camp led to the conclusion that our help was no longer needed. It was believed that the divers would be successful in one of the pools just below Miracle Springs. Relieved of our unpleasant task, we had lunch and returned home.

Comments:

1. It is always frustrating and demoralizing to arrive early and start late. However, it has happened before and will undoubtedly happen again. Sometimes circumstances beyond the control of base camp make delays unavoidable.
2. The point was well taken that we could have covered more distance by splitting teams and spacing the starting points.



A View from Base Camp

Carl Heller

Recently I have been in base camp on one practice and two real searches. Perhaps some observations about these operations will be of interest and will provoke discussions to improve future operations.

Base camp is the scene of alternate frantic activity and boring interludes. During these interludes one can plan future activities, although the plans usually become unusable as the situation changes. Enough people are needed to take care of the peak activity.

For any large search, base camp needs at least two people--three is better. One division of duties would be a coordinator, a mapman and a radioman. The coordinator would take the main responsibility for directing the teams in the field. The mapman would be deputy coordinator, but would mainly try to keep track of where each

Basecamp, continued . .

team is and has been. The radioman would log all messages from the various radio nets. Naturally the three must work as a team.

This group of three should be augmented at the early stages of an operation. There are a number of jobs which should be done quickly in order to get teams into the field. Some one or two people should be collecting all information possible about the subject. They should talk to everyone possible to get this information, then write it up carefully and perhaps make briefing sheets for each team.

Some other person or persons should log in all units and any unaffiliated volunteers. For all these some capability information should be gathered. In the case of a single volunteer, they should find out his knowledge of local terrain and in what capacity he can help. Perhaps he can give information or drive teams to search areas.

Organized SAR teams should be logged in as a group if possible. Again some idea of their capabilities should be obtained. In particular, their leaders and radio communications should be noted.

Another pair of people should be organizing a base communications center. This should include the various base radios for each group. Actually only one or two radios can be monitored by a two- or three-man base camp group. Others should be out of hearing with a separate radioman to log traffic **in** and out.

Once the initial work is done and teams are searching, the three-man base camp team can take over. The others can join one of the field teams or otherwise occupy themselves.

Cedar Slope Search: Perhaps the closest example to the ideal above was the search for Sheila Daughy on Sunday, May 27. Aiding the coordination was the fact that many of the same people were involved in Saturday's search for Johnny Paone.

Capt. Barnes of the Tulare County Sheriff's Department was in charge. Deputy Landers was taking names when China Lake arrived at about 0515. We were briefed. Some of our team set up our 100 watt base radio. Others got victim info, which we wrote down for later teams to copy.

I found that Ben Ray from Camp Nelson had already laid out some plans. We began to coordinate the MRA and Calveras team efforts with the Tulare teams. Three radio nets were necessary: one MRA, one Tulare (CB 7) and one Calveras. The latter was handled by Mike X, who kept us informed. Tulare had the Rescue 90 teams, which were Ben Ray's Fire and SAR team, and a Porterville Posse with radios 255 and 268. Rescue 90 moved out at 0635 and began searching south of the Tule River. These teams had searched until 2300 Saturday night. China Lake teams began descending three creeks into the girl's campground at 0648. The Calveras team started about the same time. We did not log Mike's communications to us, which was an error, so I can't give that team's movements precisely.

The first radio contact with Porterville's 255 and 268 was at 0741. They were working upstream from Camp Nelson, probing the river. They reported 100% negative results, and this encouraged our search for a live subject.

At 0754 team 491, the Border Patrol trackers, reported a track leading uphill and north from the subject's riverside camp. We asked other teams to clear the area but search its borders--not an easy decision. In particular 404 and 414 from Sierra Madre were asked to climb uphill and search below the road toward which

Basecamp, continued . .

the subject's tracks led. San Diego teams were asked to search for tracks above the same road. Some other tracks were reported by other teams, but seemed to be improbable. The Porterville teams split and probed the two main streams above the last contact site and bordering the track area.

Team 404 (at 0859) reported tracks along the road leading north and west and said they would follow. Teams 404 and 491 tried to determine whether they had the same tracks, but this proved difficult by radio. Twedell undertook to get tracings of 404's tracks to show to the 491 team.

At 0950 the China Lake teams, which had rendezvoused at the campsite, were asked to search the west side of Boulder Creek, moving up and north toward 404's tracks on the road.

At 1000 team 404 reported finding the subject in good condition. She was about 100 yards below the road, northwest of Boulder Creek. They had heard her weeping. They carried her to the road and were in base camp at 1015.

This operation looked good from base camp. Until 491 found tracks we were trying to surround the entire area with searchers. Once 491 seemed positive, we tried to surround the most likely area, but we let the 491 trackers have some free space to point out the likely route. We kept some teams searching elsewhere for insurance.

I don't know whether the tracks followed by 404 were really the girl's. If so, she came up to the road and then went back down 100 yards. This again suggests the probable value of placing beacon teams throughout an area at night. A beacon team with 1 or 2 men and a bright (but silent) light might have attracted the girl during the night.

Base camp had the occasional, and welcome, advice of Twedell, Tapp, and others as is common in MRA operations.

Stony Creek Search: The base camp here (on May 26) was hardly set up before Johnny Paone (5 years) was found. Larry Twedell of Sierra Madre had arrived and set his own team's plans. They were out searching before 0900. Abbe Keith had done a good job getting information about the child and was still working to get more. The Sheriff's Department had other people out, including the Calveras group and horsemen. I began to try to set up an MRA radio net with Larry Twedell and to coordinate the MRA teams with the others. Bay area and China Lake teams **were** starting and San Diego had been assigned a sector when one of the Sierra Madre teams found the boy.

He had wandered uphill and slept within a mile of camp. The teams in his area had found no tracks. It would be interesting to know if the Border Patrol could have detected tracks. At 1000 he was moving and answered shouts of the team as it passed by on the trail. They said he was in thick manzanita, which had hidden him until he called out.

Much credit in both of these searches must go to Capt. Barnes, who didn't wait to allow the subjects a day to return. Maybe they would have, but they might also have wandered further away and have been injured. None of us was happy to start the second drive across the Sierra, but one professional and three volunteer teams were back Sunday.

Indian Wells Practice SAR (19 May): There was much less frantic activity here since it was a pre-planned practice. All of the teams were accounted for Friday night.

Basecamp, continued . .

We did start early with teams out by 0600. I had drawn four areas on the map and the Search leader, Sgt. Dennis, assigned teams. These were combined teams except for the cliff area, which China Lake took. To a considerable extent each sub-area had its own base camp run by a team captain or active duty deputy. Main base camp personnel included Sgt. Dennis, myself, Janet Westbrook and Marlene Green. We did not have representatives from different teams as in MRA operations.

Perhaps the major usefulness of base camp was to locate the positions of the first two subjects found. This helped a third team find theirs along the presumed path of the damaged airplane.

Resume: In general, base camp suggests areas and tries to keep teams within these areas so they won't interfere with one another. Clues can help redefine the "best" search areas, and base camp should keep teams informed. Only occasionally should base order teams to move against their desires.

In these three operations we tried to act as *if* the search would go into another day. However, once the subject is found no one wants to debrief. Hopefully, we would have had a satisfactory debriefing and critique if nothing turned up the first day. I certainly intended to send at least the China Lake teams out on beacon spots overnight if no *find* were made.

Search Trends

Lee Lucas

Although the primary expertise of MRA teams *is* mountain rescue, we answer almost any call for assistance. Many operations, especially the "big" ones, are searches for persons lost or missing in wilderness areas. For this reason California MRA teams work to improve their search capabilities as well as their rescue skills. The *success* of two recent searches (#7310 and #7311, in this issue) is significant **in** the following respects:

1. The recent searches were for children lost overnight in rugged terrain. In both cases MRA teams were in the field early (after all-night drives) and the subjects were found by midmorning. The Crestline search last winter followed a similar pattern. California MRA teams seem to be developing a "quick reaction" capability for searches. We are finding lost persons faster and in better condition. We are avoiding tedious grid sweeps through the hinterlands that go on for days.
2. On the Cedar Slope search, the operation leader pulled MRA searchers out of an area where tracks were discovered by a Border Patrol team. Ab Taylor later remarked to me that this was the first time the Border Patrol felt like they had the full cooperation of base camp. Expert tracking may save us a lot of brush beating on future searches.
3. Searches that are over by midmorning of the first day need rapid planning and organization. I feel that California MRA teams did quite well in this regard on these two searches. But there is always room for improvement. MRA teams should establish a dialog with the non-MRA teams with which we work on searches. We need to agree on base camp structure and procedures, and to acquaint ourselves with each other's capabilities.

A Note on Filling Out Operation Report Forms

Al Green

Please use dark pencil, preferably ink, in filling out the forms so that they will copy clearly. Also, a reminder to include a list of drivers and round trip miles so they will get reimbursed for gas. Anyone who has not been reimbursed should contact Doug Warschauer.

Joint Mexican- American SAROC Practice, 11-13 May

Doug Warschauer

Don Peterson, Kent Johnson, and myself represented China Lake. The practice narrowed down to one all-day vehicle search, near torrid Pozo Cenizo, 30 miles south of Mexicali. The problem involved looking for four occupants of two vehicles lost in the vicinity of Guadalupe Canyon. Some of the conclusions of the critique:

1) For desert searches, dehydration is a severe problem, and jump tracking, or cutting the tracks, may be a necessity even though not as desirable as staying with the tracks. 2) Fixed-wing aircraft are particularly valuable for spotting, but air search alone is not enough. 3) If aircraft are involved, base should have a separate aircraft operations leader with his own aircraft radio. Air search is costly so air time should be used efficiently--a shuttle from landing strip to base may be needed. 4) Search vehicles should have conspicuously colored tops, preferably with a number on top, so they can be distinguished from lost or casual vehicles, and so communications can be facilitated. 5) A person standing up is much harder to spot from the air than one stretched out on the ground. If you want to be found, lie down! 6) Mirrors are invaluable to bring planes and vehicles to base or a search area. Pilots say they can see a flash for 30 miles. (See below.) 7) A big piece of crumpled aluminum foil might be an excellent location marker. Pilots had trouble seeing orange vans and sheets in the desert despite the bright color. (Dust maybe?) 8) MRA radios should be supplemented with at least one radio which receives aircraft and hopefully Sheriff frequencies. (Ed. note: We will have the Kern Co. Sheriff's frequency, in addition to the MRA frequency, on the HT-220 radio).

Tips on using *signal* mirrors:

Use of a mirror is not obvious and cannot be easily thought out in the field. Practice is needed, particularly for different angles and sun heights. The heavier mirror with a viewing screen is easiest to use but heavy to pack. The two-sided light metal mirror with a central hole is better for backpacking but harder to use. The central principle for this type is, "Always look at the mirror shadow and the desired object simultaneously." In the simplest case this means lining up the transmitted light spot with the central hole, but there are other ways needed, particularly near sunrise and sunset. China Lake should have a mirror practice sometime soon.

Roster Changes

Al Green

Bob Dinger and Kent Johnson have been added to our Search team. Bill Sweatt has qualified for Technical team, and Al Jones has moved up to Support. Tom Waugh is going back to school and has asked to be removed from the call roster.

Kent Johnson has moved to 104 Lauritsen, and his home phone is now 446-2328. John Zenor has a second number at work: 939-3888.

FINANCES

Doug Warschauer

We thank member Carl Heller for his recent donation. We have also received our quarterly allotment from the United Fund.

EQUIPMENT NOTE

Bob Joy

The HT-220 radio is ready to go-- as soon as it can be certified.

California Region MRA Meeting, 19 May Lee Lucas

(This was a long meeting, hence the long report.) The CRMRA Board appointed Vance Yost as Executive Secretary-Treasurer of the Region. He will maintain the Region's books and accounts and generally assist the Region Secretary-Treasurer. The Board voted to accept the Examining Committee's report on the San Dimas snow test (they passed) and to schedule the rock test for 9-10 June. (subsequently postponed). San Diego and Sierra Madre need more radio numbers. Ray Smith will check this out with national MRA. Perhaps this is a problem for the National Association of SAR Coordinators, since 155.16 is a SAR (and emergency) frequency. One possible solution: use two letters (e.g. CL for China Lake, SD for San Diego, etc.) followed by two digits. Thus, our new HT220, instead of being 480, might be CL20.

It was agreed that SB229 providing state funds for volunteer SAR units should contain a \$20 K appropriation for administration of the program. Also, Miner Harkness will check into a state-wide coverage for SAR volunteers under workman's compensation. CRMRA teams have obtained conflicting interpretations of present coverage under county Civil Defense.

Alex Kerkaldy exhibited the Montrose team's first aid pack. **It is** organized by trauma packets: respiratory, hemorrhage, orthopedic, toxin, burn, hypothermia, etc. Of particular interest was their new Oxy system. MRA can now obtain first aid supplies and equipment at discount. Contact Vance. A form for recording medical data was also distributed.

Critique of search for Jim Mackay. Generally went well. Teams are cautioned to go slow and search drainages thoroughly. Victim was found on third sweep down Delker canyon.

Vance supplied updated copies of the Region brochure for team distribution. Associate membership was discussed (at length). Board **voted (3-2) to** recommend approval of proposed amendment. Region by-laws changes were discussed. Proposed changes will be rewritten and distributed in time for consideration at fall CRMRA meeting. Next meeting: 13 October in San Diego.

First Aid Committee Report

Janet Westbrook

Highly recommended for purchase--Mountaineering First Aid, by Dick Mitchell of the Seattle Mountaineers. Cost is \$1.95 retail (less to CLMRG when we **order in** bulk). See Doug if you don't have a copy yet! The book has everything that the Red Cross green book has (and more), but it *is* all oriented toward mountain-type problems. A must!

A lot of us need an Advanced Review class - 8 hours - probable starting dates either August 1, or maybe August 6. Will keep you posted. We will go over the Mountaineering First Aid book and work in the hut with the oxygen and first aid kits. The Peru expedition is updating the meager supply of drugs we do have, and these will be added to the kits when they get back (lots of Lomatil!).

As promised, the Red Cross people have finally come through with the new program. Books will be available in August (or later) and all instructors will have to be requalified this winter. Basically what has happened is that the new standard course will cover what is in both the standard and advanced courses now, and there is a new advanced course which will be aimed at ambulance drivers and paramedics, something like 65 hours! We don't know yet whether we MRG people should try to take the new advanced course. I'll let you know more as soon as the Red Cross people put out some more information.

First Aid, continued . . .

Meanwhile, if you have not had an opportunity to take it, consider going to the new "Multimedia" standard course when it is given again here. **It covers** most of the standard material and some skills from the advanced part of the green book; involves movie segments, practice, and programmed-learning workbooks. A total of 8 hours and costs about \$5 for books and supplies. Jim Nichols and myself are qualified instructors. Perhaps a class could be organized for late August--it can be done in 2 1+-hour nights or 4 2-hour nights. Call me if interested.

Summer is here--load up your first aid kit with lots of moleskin, salt tablets, sunburn lotion, and oodles of "jungle juice"--this will be a peak mosquito year!