



CHINA LAKE MOUNTAIN RESCUE GROUP
P.O. BOX 5773
RIDGECREST, CA 93555

PLEASE NOTE NEW P.O. BOX:

P.O. BOX 2037

Editor: Dianne Lucas

FEBRUARY 1976 #32

CALENDAR

- February 9 Meeting - Carl Heller, 700-B Nimitz, C/L, 7:30 p.m.
- February 14-16 Snowshoe or ski trip to Bradley Hut (Tahoe area). Plans are being made by Janet Westbrook (375-8371).
- February 21 ELT practice--meet at 0645 at the NWC main gate.
- February 29 Desert peak--Randsburg Wash area. Dennis Burge (375-7967) will have details.
- March 7 Search/Tracking exercise--nearby area. Harry Garner (446-2168).
- March 8 Meeting - Rockwell's, 607 Randall, R/C, 7:30 p.m.
- March 20-21 Mt. Morrison area "double feature": Snow techniques practice on Saturday, followed by a climb on Sunday. Ron Atkins (375-5437).
- April 3-4 Tinemaha area climb. Hank Snell (446-6265) is the organizer.
- April 10-11 Avalanche training at Mammoth
- April 12 Meeting - Burge's, 624 Randall, R/C, 7:30 p.m.
- April 24-25 Search/Tracking Workshop--California Region MRA, at Santa Barbara

ELECTION RESULTS: 1976 Officers

President	Bob Westbrook	Treasurer	Jim Dixon
Vice President	Ron Atkins	Member-at-Large	Don Harris
Secretary	Fred Camphausen		

Bob Westbrook continues as president after having finished 1975 as acting president. We congratulate past president Don Peterson, who was married in October. After a month in Hawaii, Don and his wife Shirley are taking a year to tour Mexico and ???

#7512 Search, Kern Plateau Motorcyclists, 3 July Al Green

My July 4th duty weekend started earlier than expected. Heller called me at about 1030 Thursday and said we had an operation on the Kern Plateau. A group of four motorcyclists with three small children (7 and 8 years old) were missing. They had left for a two-hour ride before noon Tuesday from the vicinity of Troy Meadows. The wife of one of the riders (and mother of two of the youngsters) was not at all sure where the group was headed. Just out for a ride!

The NAF helo with Lt. Ian Refo as pilot would be ready to leave at 1130. Ground teams would be needed for radio relays, coordination and searching. The Sand Blasters motorcycle club volunteered to send some experienced riders. I would stay at the CLMRG hut and coordinate locally.

Heller, Lucas and Brown left with the helicopter, while Jones, Joy, Moore, Bohanan and Stogsdill went by car. Westbrook and Atkins took the second helicopter sortie to the plateau. Al Benton, Bill Faith, Ken Seaman and Ken Seaman Jr. from the Sandblasters left shortly after noon to assist in the search. The errant group was finally located at about 1800 near the Casa Vieja Meadow. The operation closed and all searchers returned to China Lake by 2200.

Comments: 1. Searching the Kern Plateau with its myriad trails for motorcyclists is best done by motorcycle. Even the helicopter is handicapped because of double ground cover. Unless the victims get to an open area, they are very difficult to see.

2. (Lucas): CLMRG's main contribution to this operation was to set up a base camp at Black Rock Ranger Station. The major part of the ground search was conducted by motorcyclists and about 6 Forest Service and about 4 BLM people in 4WD vehicles. There wasn't much for foot troops to do unless and until the missing motorcycles were found abandoned. Our normally good communications were hampered by a temporary shortage of radios, so the search depended primarily on Forest Service communications.

#7513 Transit, Alamo Lake, Arizona, 8 July Bill Stronge

The Sierra Madre team requested our help in searching for a prospector who was two days overdue. His vehicle had been located near Alamo Lake. A long drive on red dirt roads through the prickly green Arizona desert got us there at 0730. The prospector's body had been sighted from a helo 1/2 hour earlier. He apparently had injured his head in a fall from rocks.

This was probably our longest transit. Since the terrain and situation (other than a little rain the previous night) were well suited for tracking, we probably should have used this opportunity to practice. However, the news was depressing, so we turned around and began the hot eight hour drive home. Participants were Stronge, Heller, Jones, Harris, Moore, Walters, Mason and B. Stogsdill, with J. Westbrook and C. Burge telephoning.

#7514 Search and Recovery, N. Kern River, 14-16 July Bob Rockwell

At noon on Sunday, 13 July, William Johnson, age 20, from Rowland Heights (near Pomona) and his two friends Michael Goodrich and Parry Brown left Peppermint Creek on the upper Kern River. Their plan was to fish the river down to its intersection with the road to Johnsondale, a distance of some 6 miles. The walls of the canyon are steep and often precipitous and the men were forced to cross the river several times to make progress.

Continued...

Kern River Recovery, continued...

With darkness approaching, they reached a point where it seemed safe to swim around some rock outcroppings rather than to climb above them or cross the river again. Fully clothed including footgear, and fishing tackle in hand, they proceeded into the water. Mike and Parry made it with some difficulty against the unexpected countercurrent. As they watched, William struggled unsuccessfully against the current, reversed direction, went under once and surfaced, then went under again as he disappeared from view back around the outcropping. Now out of sight of his friends, William drowned in approximately 20 feet of water.

Mike and Parry called and searched as best they could in the waning light, to no avail. Hoping that William had made it to safety upstream, they spent an uncomfortable bivouac and on the morning of the 14th proceeded downstream to report the incident.

At the request of Tulare County Deputy Sheriff Allen Montgomery, a China Lake Naval Air Facility helicopter made several sweeps of the river that day. The results negative, Deputy Montgomery called Carl Heller at 1549 to request our aid. Carl quickly put the CLMRG mechanism into gear and sent the advance team (Dennis Burge, Don Harris, Mike Walters and me) to NAF for helo transit. As we left he mentioned that he could not go on the operation and asked me to take over. We departed NAF at 1715 on the helicopter piloted by LCDR Rij, with ADJ2 Cass as crewchief.

Landing at Fairview, we got more details plus a grappling hook from Deputy Montgomery and persuaded Mike Goodrich to come with us on the helo. Dennis stayed behind to provide a communications link. We again took off and with Mike's direction, located the accident site from the air. Landing near the river was impossible so a helispot on the ridge, approximately 1000 ft above, was selected. At 2015 we reached the site.

The next morning (15 July) the effort began in full swing. Base camp was set up at Needlerock Creek (Anderson, Bohanan). We had a team coming down the river from above (Westbrook, Dixon, Robbins), and teams sweeping the trails on either side of the river from below (Burge and Davis; Mason and Snell). The advance team examined the banks of the river below and above the site for William's tracks, and found only those made before his disappearance. The possibility of finding him alive was rapidly decreasing, so Burge's team was requested to descend to the river and approach us from the downstream side, searching now more in the river itself than on its banks. Shortly after 9 am we began to drag the river bottom.

After several trial throws with the grappling hook, we were finally able to place a toss at the location in a large, relatively calm pool where the currents indicated the highest probability of a body to be. This time a new resistance was felt as the hook was retrieved. At 0915 on 15 July, the search was over.

With no possibility of helicopter assistance in the canyon, we waited until the other teams arrived. Deputy Montgomery hiked the Rincon trail with a Stokes' litter and was also able to pick up two fire fighters on the way. By 1530, we began the extremely difficult task of carrying the litter up 1100 vertical feet to the eastern rim where a helicopter pickup had been arranged. The steep terrain consisted of heavy brush, loose rock and dirty and granite slabs. The next three hours were the most exhausting many of us have ever experienced.

Kern River Recovery, continued...

At 1840 we loaded the litter onto the waiting helicopter. The helo was able to make return trips and ferry out all but two of the rescuers; Dennis and I volunteered to walk out. With the most appreciated generosity of the Tulare County Sheriff's Office, the operation was critiqued over beer and steaks at McNalley's. We arrived home at 0130 on the 16th.

#7523 Search, Lost Hunter near Sawmill Pass, 14-15 October Bill Stronge
Bailey McRoberts (19) left Bishop on Saturday night to hunt by himself in Sawmill Canyon. He had shot a deer there last year and was going back for a big buck. He told everyone that he would be at his job in Newhall Sunday afternoon but left the car that morning prepared for several days in the mountains. By Tuesday morning he had crossed a ridge and was near Division Creek when he shot a deer. However, he fell and injured an arm as he started to haul it down 4500 feet of rugged, trailless canyon. Meanwhile, worried relatives had found his car at the Sawmill Canyon roadhead, and the Inyo County Sheriff had initiated a search. Bailey's hunting style was described by his brother as "scramblin' up the steepest manageable rocks"; his family's ability to recognize items missing from his car was very helpful in identifying what he might be carrying.

The Inyo County Posse started searching Tuesday afternoon, 6 from China Lake arrived about dusk, and by Wednesday morning 25 MRA people were on the scene. In addition to the Posse (3-5), China Lake (12), Sierra Madre (6), San Dimas (2) and Montrose (1) were represented. While a team of 4 had hiked up the canyon Tuesday night, most of the searchers were awaiting helicopter transport to the surrounding ridges. The Navy chopper was delayed in the morning by confusion, since Air Rescue Center was sending them first to Tahoe to pick up dogs for this search. We managed to intercept them with mirror flashes from the ground as they flew north over base camp. This fortuitous communication saved several hours, since the helo was our primary transport for placing search teams as well as useful for air searching. The dogs were an unknown factor which we hoped might prove useful in searching some parts of the canyons.

On the first lift in, Dennis Kelley caught a glimpse of a blue tent in Division Canyon. This was a possible, fitting some of our information, but since a later team was scheduled to search that canyon, I decided not to divert the helo. A couple of hours later the subject was found by the tent and quickly evacuated by the chopper. By that time McRoberts had a large signal fire burning that was beyond the capability of the search teams to put out. The Forest Service extinguished the fire and all search personnel were out of the mountains by 5 p.m., bringing this operation to a successful conclusion. CLMRG participants in addition to myself were Heller, Lucas, Jones, Camphausen, Harris, Walters, Fletcher, Hirschy, Snell, Davis and T. Stogsdill.

Comment (Lucas): McRoberts fired three shots Tuesday morning shortly after he was injured. These were heard by people at a hunting camp at the mouth of Division Canyon. They told an interview team that shots were from Division Creek drainage. This fact extended the search area that had been centered on Sawmill Creek and significantly shortened the search.



#7524 Rescue (Incident), Owens Ridge, 19 October

CLMRG member Ron Atkins added a little first aid practice to this day of Owens Ridge climbing when he took a 20' pendulum fall while attempting a lyback traverse. His shoulder was injured and elbow cut, but Ron was able to finish the climb on tension. He was assisted back to the base of the rock and transported to the nearest anesthetic (spelled b-e-e-r!).

#7525 Rescue, Stranded Hikers, Great Falls Basin, 4 November . . . Carl Heller

Claudia Grandjean (20) and Vicky Paul (20) had gone hiking in Great Falls Basin and became stranded. When they didn't return as planned at 1700, Mr. Grandjean went to look for them. He asked for help from some CB radio operator friends. They responded after phoning the Southern Inyo SAR group; they in turn phoned the Sheriff's office at 1900. They called us immediately. Nineteen people responded (since our first information indicated injured victims, we took a large team). However, Claudia and Vicky were already being helped to safety by the CB'ers as the first CLMRG team reached the scene. We walked out with them, and everyone was home by 2300. CLMRG members responding were Stronge, Heller, Green, Rockwell, Lucas, Burge, Westbrook, Camphausen, Harris, Moore, Dixon, Walters, Hirschey, Mason, Tom and Brent Stogsdill, Snell and Davis. George Gerhart, Janet Westbrook's brother, also came.

#7526 Rescue, Allen Jones, Upper Kern River, 8 November . . . Bob Rockwell

At 1540 on Saturday, 8 November, Harry Garner called me from Johnsondale. On the scheduled CLMRG training and familiarization exercise along the upper Kern River, Allen Jones had suffered a sliding fall of about 100'. The accident had occurred at 1350, near Durwood Camp. Allen's estimated condition was as follows: 1) Probable fractured cheekbone, 2) Possible other head injuries based upon incoherence after accident and bleeding from nose and mouth, 3) possible fractured clavicle, 4) Possible fractured right tibia and fibula, 5) Several lacerations. When Harry left him, at 1405, Allen was conscious and coherent.

With darkness approaching, it was imperative that a helicopter be dispatched as rapidly as possible. Harry stated that a landing site was probably not available but that the helicopter might get close enough to lower the cable. I called the NAF Duty Officer (Lt. Refo); he assured me that a helo would be ready. I would arrive as soon as possible to help locate the site and provide communications with the MRA radios the ground people had. Dennis Burge's familiarity with the area would be invaluable for locating Durwood Camp rapidly. Dennis was to meet me at the hut. Because of the number of CLMRG people with Allen (approximately 10), a full callout was not initiated.

I arrived at the hut at 1610 to find Dennis already there. In the event the helo could not land or get close enough to use the winch, we would be landed high on a nearby ridge. We needed our breakdown stretcher and cross country wheel. Also, not knowing Allen's current condition, we took major first aid gear and oxygen. It could be as much as 18 hours before he would be at a hospital. We got to NAF and lifted off at 1630. It was almost sunset.

We intersected the river several miles to the north; Dennis' expertise then directed us southward in the waning light. At 1700 we located a set of three large fires on the Kern River, across from Durwood Camp. My efforts to communicate with the ground proved fruitless. Only a few garbled words were heard. We could not land in spite of a prepared helispot on the canyon floor. Lowering the stretcher to the ground personnel, we hovered while they tied Allen in. At approximately 1710 they brought the loaded stretcher over, illuminating the way with headlamps. From a 15' hover, he was raised to the helicopter and we headed for Ridgecrest Hospital.

Upper Kern River Rescue, continued...

The heliport at the hospital was manned and we landed at 1745. Barely 2 hours after Garner's initial call, Allen was on his way to the emergency room. Dennis accompanied him to provide the doctor with information on his experience. I left with the helo to offload our gear at NAF.

Later that night, X-rays showed that Allen's injuries were limited to his fractured cheekbone, possible dislocated shoulder, mild concussion, and numerous lacerations requiring stitches. At 2000 hours, I phoned this information to Tulare Deputy Sheriff Allen Montgomery, as I was sure the CLMRG people on the river would be inquiring tomorrow.

Comments:

NAF with pilot LCDR Mike Rij, and crewmen Revis Reed and Al Ortiz did a terrific job! Time was of the essence on this operation. The extra time to go around through the Lauritsen Road gate to get to our hut were precious minutes lost. The purpose of the CLMRG training trip to the Upper Kern River was for additional familiarization with the area. We have gone there several times on rescues and will undoubtedly go again. The fact that experienced mountaineers can get in trouble here should be sufficient warning of the dangers that exist and the caution that must be employed when in this area of the Kern River Canyon.

A View from the Scene . . . Lee Lucas

This was a scheduled CLMRG training exercise to practice mirror signaling, compass work, and to become more familiar with Kern River from Durwood Camp to the bridge above Fairview. Teams had climbed 4 hills on both sides of the river to flash mirrors and take compass bearings. Hank Snell and I were on Jones' team. We had climbed Peak 5698 west of Durwood Camp and were descending to the river. The last 100' was steep, broken and loose. I went first to see if it would 'go'. After I got down to the river, Hank started down, followed by Al. Al's footing gave way (and perhaps his hand hold too). He slid down about 10-15' and almost arrested his fall, then slid another 30-40', fell free for 15-20' striking a granite shelf, then bounced and slid the remaining 6' to the sand. Al had struck the rock on his face and chest.

I was first to reach Al and observed bleeding from nose and mouth, incoherence and moaning. Also with me were Camphausen, Garner, Gleeson and Delores Halladay (Los Padres Search and Rescue Team). Across the river were Harris, Stogsdill and Davis. The team of Heller, Moore and Landau had not yet arrived at the river. Camphausen began examination of Al. Since I was ranking team leader on scene, I assumed leadership. I decided: 1) we needed a helo evacuation--fearing brain concussion and unknown internal injuries, and 2) Gleeson's car was closest so he should go for help. Garner knew the way back to the car best, so he should accompany Gleeson.

Al became coherent, we determined he probably had no back injuries and so moved him to a drier, warmer and more comfortable spot. I gave Garner a list of Fred's diagnosis, told him to call Rockwell directly and request helo evac.

Meanwhile, Harris' team had crossed the waist-deep river. Now people bandaged Al's many lacerations, made him as comfortable and warm as possible, built fires, etc. About 1430 Heller's team arrived and crossed the river. Heller examined Al. By the time the helo arrived, we were fairly certain that Al's injuries were not critical. I had chosen a "worse case" scenario when requesting helo evac, causing Rockwell to believe Al was more seriously injured than he was. Fortunately, Al's wife Bonnie was located only a little before the helo arrived at the hospital, so she was spared some undue worry.

#7528 Alert, Woman missing near Shoshone, Inyo Co., 24 December . . Carl Heller

An alert on Christmas Eve to go to the Nevada border is not a high choice operation. Lt. Capello from Inyo County had trouble contacting us but finally got Bob Rockwell, who agreed to be In-Town Coordinator. Dianne Lucas got six CLMRG volunteers, and I found LCDR Mike Rij willing to fly. The subject was a 45-year-old resident of Shoshone who, suffering holiday blues, went into the desert for a final walk. The Inyo Deputy there organized a successful search and our effort was cancelled 45 minutes after the first alert.

1975 PARTICIPATION DATA . .

Lee Lucas

	Hours		Ops	SR
Harris	156	Heller	18	10
Lucas	108	Harris	17	10
Brown	106	Moore	12	8
Moore	105	Green	11	6
Walters	98	Lucas	10	9
Green	92	Dixon	10	7
Dixon	91	Westbrook	10	7
Heller	86	Stogsdill, T.	9	6
Westbrook	84	Garner	9	6
Robbins	75	Walters	9	4
Jones	72	Jones	9	4
Snell	68	Rockwell	8	7
Davis	67	Camphausen	8	6
Bohanan	67	Hirschy	8	6
Stronge	59	Burge	8	5
Rockwell	58	Davis	8	4
Camphausen	57	Stronge	7	5
Mason	55	Bottka	7	2
Burge	52	Brown	6	6
Stogsdill, T.	42	Snell	6	4
Anderson	40	Bohanan	5	5
Hirschy	39	Mason	5	4
Garner	35	Robbins	5	3
Joy	33	Anderson	5	3
Hinman	28	Hinman	5	3
Bottka	27	Gleeson	4	3
Stogsdill, B.	27	Adams	4	3
Peterson	22	Stogsdill, B.	4	1
Buffum	15	Joy	3	3
Atkins	15	Peterson	3	3
Fletcher	15	Buffum	3	3
Gleeson	12	Atkins	2	2
Adams	11	Turner	2	2
Turner	6	Lauer	2	2
Warschauer	6	Fletcher	2	1
Sweatt	4	Woodman	2	0
Landau	3	Warschauer	1	1
Woodman	2	Sweatt	1	1
Lauer	2	Landau	1	1

Hours = Total manhours on all operations

Ops = Number of operations (alerts, mobilizations, transits, SR)

SR = Numbers of field operations (not including alerts, mobilizations, transits)

PLUS 1544 hours of CLMRG rescue training during 1975 (not counting transit time)