

CHINA LAKE MOUNTAIN RESCUE GROUP
P.O. BOX 2037 RIDGECREST,
CALIFORNIA 93555

JULY 1976

#34

VANCE YOST

Carl Heller

This man worked so quietly that many of us didn't know just how much he was doing. Anyone who wanted to advance the work of Mountain Rescue- had help from Vance who did not insist upon his share of the credit. I would give him many important credits.

Vance got our Mountain Rescue seminars going in California. He was involved in the organization of the California Region with its mutual aid arrangements. He donated much time and effort to keeping that organization intact - doing the necessary paperwork which none of the rest of us wanted to do.

The organizations Vance was involved with will undoubtedly keep going. But the other members will miss his steady influence and regular assistance.

Vance's death leaves a big gap in my personal list of valuable people.



CALENDAR

July	24-25 Summer Class Overnighter	Lone Pine Peak
July 30,31 -		
August 1	3-day (you supply 8-hours of Annual Leave)	Arrow Peak
August 7, 8	Family Outing	Tuolumne Meadows
	9 Meeting	246 Sierra Vista
	14,15 Climb (Sierra Emblem Peak)	Humphries
	16 Sponsor et al APPRECIATION GATHERING	
	21,22 Snow and Ice practice	Mt Sill
September		
	4,5,6 Labor Day Weekend	Kaweahs
	18,19 Rock climbing	Tahquitz

CLMRG 76-09 Plane Crash, Mt Bradley (Center Basin) 26-28 April
RCC 8-436

Carl Heller

At base camp there was some misinformation circulating about this operation. I have since been given a corrected sequence of events by the Rescue Coordination Center, Sequoia Park, and Lt. Bob Vaulet. The plane crashed about 1400 Monday, but since no flight plans had been filed, it was 0348 Tuesday before CAP LtCol Goodale became SMC at Bishop. The pilot had told friends he was flying from Oakland to Death Valley.

Air searches Tuesday were unsuccessful until private pilot Dennis Osborne sighted the wreck at 1830. He notified the CAP about 1950, giving a location well inside the Park. The Park and the Inyo Sheriff's Department were notified at 2115 and 2245. The Park contacted Dennis Osborne and prepared for a dawn flight to pinpoint the wreck and put in a rescue team.

Meanwhile, at the wreck site: one passenger had moved about 50' before collapsing. The pilot climbed into the broke tail section where he died during the night, of hypothermia complicated by internal bleeding. The 3rd, Lauren Elder, survived the night and noting the pilot's death decided to make a try for Independence, visible from the ridge 15' above the wreck. This was a brave decision since the first part of the descent was on steep snow. She may have been helped psychologically by the deceptively close appearance one gets when looking down into the valley. She descended about 6000' of the rough Symmes Creek canyon to the trail, several miles of trail, and then the long dirt road out to the highway. She made this descent in approximately 16 hours - and in sandals.

Lt. Vaulet says Lauren was hard to question, being exhausted and needing rest and medical attention. Her story came through that the wreck was near Kearsarge Pass and that one other person might be alive.

When Rush Kittle got this information at midnight on Tuesday, he collected his team, sent for CLMRG and headed south for Independence. Our eight man team, headed by Al Green, stopped first at Independence and then reached Onion Valley about 0430. There was no search director there, but radio contact with the advance team suggested that Miss Elder had not come down the Kearsarge Pass trail. Teams cut the perimeter above Onion Valley, below Golden Trout and Brainard canyons. About 0700 someone remembered that Miss Elder had talked about walking down a dirt road, and a team was sent to Symmes Creek where they picked up definite tracks about 0830.

The Air Force helo reached Independence airfield about this time, and we decided to fly up Symmes Creek. While airborne we heard that the wreck had been found near Kearsarge Pass. When we flew over that pass, we spotted the planes over Center Basin and were soon flying over the wreck. The AF pilot had orders to land only if a live victim were seen. After much airborne reconnaissance only one body and one set of tracks were definite, so we flew to Bishop. The pilot, Lt Smith, obtained permission to insert a team. As we flew to Independence I radioed to Al Green to pack bivouac gear, a PT 400 (20 pound, 10 watt) radio and prepare to go in with the paramedic.

In Center Basin our team met a Park Service team and they climbed to the site. Doug Morris of the NPS was at our Base Camp and we offered a team to help, but the rangers at the site decided to do the job with their own team. Al did help extricate the pilot's body from the tail section, and then descended to Center Basin for a helo pickup.

continued..Mt Bradley..

The Park Service helo was able to hover at 12,200' and pick up the two bodies by winch. Our six-man team was out that evening.

CLMRG team members: Heller, Green, Stronge, Jones, Camphausen, Harris, Atkins, Moore, Snell, Mason. In-town: D.Lucas, S.Rockwell, Turner. Manhours: 206

Comments: a number of changes might have led to fewer lives lost and a less strenuous trip for Miss Elder. However the search and rescue people undoubtedly did the best possible under somewhat difficult circumstances.

1. The pilot should have filed a flight plan and had an operational ELT, as well as some warm garments and blankets.

2. If the original sighting had been made by an experienced search crew and a correct location made, then a ground team could have helped Miss Elder before she walked all the way to Independence. A lone pilot understandably had trouble making a proper location.

3. There seems to have been some unexplained delays before Osborne's information was disseminated. Basically there appears to have been enough daylight for a return flight by him and a trained observer. However I cannot claim enough knowledge of the situation at Bishop to be certain.

4. The ground operation from Independence was first treated as a rescue rather than a search. A search director at base camp might have put clues together and gotten a team into Symmes Creek sooner. Eventually, and somewhat reluctantly, our team set up a base camp to coordinate the various teams' efforts.

5. Since there was really no hope of helping the victims on this operation, our main hope is that several SAR units learned a little more about working together. Units involved were the CAP, Air Force, Park Service, Forest Service, the Inyo Sheriff's Department and Inyo Posse, and CLMRG. The pilot's flying club did some searching, and Dennis Osborne played an important role.

Inflation strikes again! The USGS is raising the price of topographic maps from 75c to \$1.25 each, effective 15 July. Or so the rumor goes....

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76-10 Alert Lost 10-year-old, Wolverton Ski Area 10 May

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76-11 Search, near Jordan Peak, Kern River Plateau 24 May Lee Lucas

Mary "Katy" Manning (26) of Porterville became separated from her three companions while backpacking in rugged country north of Jordan Peak. She was last seen at dusk on Saturday, 22 May. She had left the trail at the saddle and become disoriented. Her friends searched for her that evening; then notified the Tulare County Sheriff. Members of the Camp Nelson Volunteer Fire Department searched Sunday afternoon and evening, also without success.

Deputy Allen Montgomery called Sunday evening to request CLMRG assistance for Monday. Eight of us left the hut shortly after 0300 Monday, met Deputy Montgomery in Kernville and convoyed to base camp at the trailhead north of Jordan Peak.

.. continued..

continued..Jordan Peak..

Deputy Frank Whittick was in charge for the Tulare County Sheriff's Office. Ben Ray of the Camp Nelson VFD was Operation Leader. Also on the scene were personnel from Camp Nelson VFD, of Visalia SRU, and Porterville SRU. The search on Sunday had concentrated on the saddle where Katy had last been seen and in the south Mountaineer Creek drainage to the east. Ben wanted 17 of us to hike the 2 miles into the saddle (2.1 miles due north of Jordan Peak) and to search for tracks along the upper part of the Alder Creek drainage to the southwest.

Katy was spotted by a search plane shortly after we got to the saddle. After 20 minutes spent trying to determine her location, part of our ground team reached her at 0905. She was in the meadow at the head of S. Mountaineer creek, .4 of a mile south of the saddle. Though cold and weak from lack of food, Katy began hiking out with us. Later she accepted a ride in our wheeled littler.

CLMRG field personnel: Harris, Brown, Moore, Davis, Hirschy, Landau, Hunt, Lucas. In-town coordinators: Atkins, S. Rockwell, Slates.

Manhours: 113 Vehicle miles: 720

Comments:

1. Our search plan was perhaps too "track oriented" considering the terrain. Teams should have hasty searched both "prongs" of S. Mountaineer Creek above the trail, and the area north of a saddle, while a single sign-cutting team checked the Alder Creek drainage (Harris did this last task while we were trying to talk to the airplane).

2. Katy might have heard us if we had whistled and called on our way to the saddle. Moral: consider searching on your way to the place where you plan to begin searching!

3. Two teams went into unfamiliar country without topo maps.** The Group should stock multiple copies of quads for our primary area.

4. Note: Camp Nelson VFD has 4 field radios and a mobile base on 155.160.

5. Gas is available at B&F Liquor, Ridgecrest, late on Sunday nights.

6. If Katy's companions had camped at the saddle the evening she was lost, and had kept a fire going, she might have spotted them.

7. Several of the "10 Essentials" Katy might have used (but did not have): flashlight, map,** compass, whistle, food, matches. She had, however, used a roll of toilet paper to make a large ground-to-air signal.

8. Katy's friend "Doc" (who guided us to the LKL [Last Known Location]) was at first insistent that Katy should walk out. Marty Landau's concern over Katy's shivering got us to monitor her pulse and temperature. Eventually we convinced "Doc" that a carryout was a sensible precaution.

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Plagiarized from the BAMRU Callout Procedure, Item 6 (of some portion):

THE TIME YOU WASTE BELONGS TO THE VICTIM

** Every hiker, even members of search teams, should own a map of the area. Right?

76-12 Plane Wreck, Echo Pass (south of Lake Sabrina) 27 May Carl Heller

An Army Beechcraft Baron with three aboard crashed at 12,400', above Echo Lake on the evening of 26 May. At 0910 we were called by Capt. Cary Bailey who was Search Mission Coordinator. The NAF Huey flown by LTCOL Don Miller and LTCOL Dick Boyd had spotted the wreck, but called for an Army Chinook CH43 because of the elevation. I got a four-man team out to NAF at 0940.

Bailey briefed us at the NAF Cold Line hut. It appeared that the people were all dead and that the wreck was on a 60° slope near Mt Darwin in Sequoia Park. I suggested contacting the Fresno County Coroner, and asked whether the Hueys from Bishop were planning to fly-in the Inyo Posse members.

Enroute we were detoured to Bishop rather than flying directly to the site. Also we heard that two paramedics (called PJ's) had reached the wreck, and that a storm was moving south. At Bishop the On Scene Commander, LTCOL Todd, decided to go in himself - taking a physician, mortician, photographer, and three mountaineers. I chose myself, Dave Brown and Bob Pfeil to go aboard.

We were airborne at 1122 and soon on the icefield at 12,000'. The PJ's had already left, after examining the wreck which had come to rest at 12,200' on 20° snow. At Todd's request, Dave and I climbed the class-4 rock to the ridge and examined the crash site and some ledges below. The plane had come to within 15' of the top but had hit an 85° wall.

We returned to the wreck and assisted the physician and mortician remove the three bodies. The Chinook had left to refuel at Bishop before I remembered the body bags. Luckily, our PT400 radio worked well when the Chinook returned, and we could ask them to throw out the bags from a hover. The helo backed off and returned when we were ready for the pickup. We were airborne for Bishop at 1430.

At Bishop we had a long critique with Lt Bob Vaulet, the Inyo Posse, and LtCol Dodd. We started home in an Army Huey which made an emergency landing near Olancho. The Chinook picked us up there, and we were home at 1800.

CLMRG team: Heller, Lucas, Joy, Brown.

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FAR OUT! (or...It Takes All Kinds to Make a Mountain Rescue Group)

Our Intrepid Rock Climber (Bill Stronge) was not content with an ascent of The Nose at El Cap, over Memorial Day weekend. He climbed El Cap's Salathe Wall one week later with a young lad from Denver. His partner for The Nose (Al Green) was still nursing battle scars two weeks later and showed no interest in anything steeper than a sidewalk.

Next Issue

- Watch for the Social Notes...
- Your Beer-Drinking Reporter may report on the backyard party the El Cap Climbers will have had (held? thrown?)
- to show their slides of the climb



7613 Search, the canyons above Palm Springs, 3-6 June Lee Lucas

Riverside Mountain Rescue Unit called us Thursday evening, 3 June, to assist in the search for an overdue hiker. Ray Blahausz (23) left Humber Park near Idyllwild about 1500 Saturday, 28 May, to hike down one of the rugged canyons (probably either Murray or Andreas) east of Tahquitz peak. He expected to arrive in Palm Springs 2 or 3 days later. When he failed to arrive, RMRU initiated a search on Thursday, 3 June. When a hasty search found no trace of Blahausz, RMRU called other MBA teams for help.

Six of us (Brown, Moore, Snell, B. Stogsdill, Hunt and myself) arrived at the Palm Springs base at 0530 on Friday. After catching 20-1/2 winks, we were briefed on our assignment and sent out.

We split into two teams. One team would go up Andreas canyon from the desert floor. The other would ride the tram up and come down from the top. My team spent all day Friday thrashing our way up Andreas canyon. We spent a luxurious bivouac Friday night, and resumed searching Saturday. Just before noon we met Brown's team coming down. A Huey from George AFB picked us off our 10x40' boulder helispot and saved us the 6-8 hour hike back to base.

We were quite sure that Blahausz had not come down Andreas canyon. Other teams were also reporting negative results. Planning for Sunday had to be done.

Brown and Stogsdill were willing to be helo'd back up for another bivouac, but the rest of us wanted to go home. I talked to Rockwell and Atkins via ham radio and a phone patch set up by Bob Fletcher. Five more from CLMRG (Westbrook, Atkins, Joy, Robbins and Landau) would show up at 0700 Sunday.

The search was suspended late Sunday, 6 June, with no trace of Blahausz having been found. Other units participating were Palm Springs SAR posse, San Diego MRT, Sierra Madre SRT, PJ's from March AFB, and Saddleback SRT.

CLMRG manhours 434, vehicle miles 1140.

Comments:

1. On an unsuccessful search we tend to be overly critical of our performance. But in this case, there is little to criticize. Tracking, though not easy, was used to rule out canyons, one after another.
2. The search was extremely well run by RMRU. The initial callout gave us accurate information on location, map quads, terrain and weather. At base we got maps and a complete description of the subject - which did not change materially in the course of the search. Careful placement of relays kept all teams in radio contact with base. An investigation team continued to gather information during the search. Cooperation between the various units was excellent. Helicopter pickups and placements went smoothly.
3. The one "glitch" was that I left our radios on charge, at the Palm Springs PD Saturday night - for the second team to use on Sunday. But I neglected to tell them that our chargers were being used. So the chargers were left. The Police sent them back to us quickly, so no harm was done.

Moral: Advance team - be sure to tell second team ALL THE EQUIPMENT that you are leaving for them.

76-14 Alert, glider crash 6 June

Lee Lucas

The Inyo Sheriff's office called me at noon on Sunday, 6 June. A glider had gone down on the Racetrack in northern Death Valley. An air search had spotted the glider, but no pilot. They wanted me to alert our team, and also NAF. Fifteen minutes later, they called back to cancel the alert.

(Editor: All residents of Indian Wells Valley..even Kindergarteners.*. know what and where NAF is.. for those other readers, NAF is the Naval Air Facility, and is that portion of the Navy which works out of Armitage Field. NAF flies Navy aircraft and Navy helicopters.)

*(Editor: our Kindergartners MAY not be able to read..but we do have a following at that level. Bob Rockwell has a popular Safety program, and enough requests to make him plaintively ask for volunteers who will talk to pre-schoolers).

76-15 Alert, overdue hikers 8 June

Al Jones

Rush Kittle of the Inyo Posse called us for possible assistance on a search. A mother and her two young children were reported overdue on a hike from Bishop pass to Piute pass. Thirty minutes later the alert was cancelled when they were found safe.

76-16 Search for Grandma Bell, Stony Creek, 18-19 June

Carl Heller

Bertha Bell (80) went walking out of Stony Creek campground in Sequoia National Forest, on Thursday (17 June). About 1300 she was missed by her family. They searched, enlisted help of USFS personnel, and finally notified the Tulare Sheriff's Department.

Friday, some 25 people searched along the creek and north from Hill 8113 to the campground. Tracks were found going north, but disappeared less than a mile out of camp. The line search from the north covered the area of the tracks. That night they called China Lake, and, at my suggestion, authorized an MRA callout. With about 25 promised MRA personnel, our team left at 2130 and reached Stony Creek Lodge at 0330 (Saturday).

At 0530 we were at the campground setting up the radio and getting information about the victim and Friday's search. The tracks seemed most promising, but people present didn't think they could find them. One man said they went uphill a few miles into very rough country and disappeared amongst the rocks. Finally, a USFS man, Buckholtz, showed up, saying he could have a team there in 1/2 hour. Dennis B. took a five-man team out at 0615 and was on the tracks at 0645. Captain Barnes and Sgt McLaughlin came into camp and we arranged for a close-in search by Tulare and Riverside teams. A five-man Sierra Madre team went downstream trying for a good perimeter cut to rule out that sector.

The tracks up north were definitely a person with a 9" track. Dennis thought a cowboy boot, but Buckholtz made a strong argument for a thin-soled slipper. About 0900 we had a Montrose team on the road to go north to Dennis' team's location, to cut east-west for tracks. At 0915 Dennis announced that they had found Mrs. Bell alive, after 2-1/2 hours and 1 mile of zigzag tracks.

continued...

.. Grandma Bell ..

Dennis reported the victim in fair condition, but in need of a stretcher. The Visalia team (just returned to base) was dispatched to the road north of Hill 8113. Since Dennis was uncertain of his exact position on the Hill, I sent a Sierra Madre team with a second stretcher. The nurse on the S.M. team took Mrs. Bell's medication. Meanwhile Buckholtz had called for a USFS helo. The helo arrived first but needed to return for a stretcher. At 1022 the helo's litter was at the victim's side. At 1050, Mrs. Bell was under the nurse's care and had received her medication.

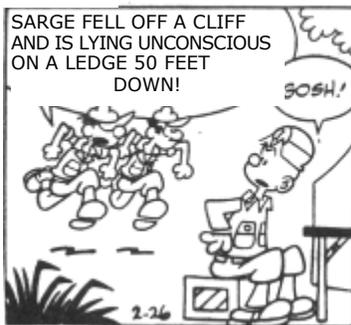
After consideration it was decided a helo ride was not the answer this time. The victim should neither sit up nor ride a litter strapped to the outside. A long carry up-and-over Hill 8113 was accomplished by 1200.

CLMRG personnel: Heller, Burge, Brown, Hirschy, Woodman, Walters, Stogsdill.

Comments:

1. The Saturday search went very well, largely because tracks had been found on Friday. An aggressive tracking team would have found Mrs. Bell on Friday, but only Buckholtz had the proper attitude. Searchers' tracks crossed the victim's -as though the searchers may have been close to her, but perhaps tired and not alert.
2. Besides the trackers, we had close-in line searchers and experienced trackers cutting perimeters. This perimeter cutting was being expanded in the direction of travel as more trained teams became available. Some pressure existed to send untrained teams into important perimeter areas where they might only have trampled out existing tracks.
3. The rescue was poorly run - at least in part because three groups were acting independently. Having the helo fly in without needed equipment was the most obvious mistake. The basic situation would have taken time to solve, no matter how well organized we had been.
4. The CALMRA worked together smoothly and China Lake's tracking practices proved worthwhile. I hope all our members will continue to make the weekly practices (at least once each month). It really helps to know there are trained people on each search team.

Beetle



76-17 Search, Smith Canyon 21 June

Dennis Burge

On Saturday, 19 June, Dorene Regis (17) of Canoga Park went for a hike with her father Raymond. Their camp was just off the road to Melters' Spring in the Scodie Mountains south of Walker Pass. After a time, Raymond decided to turn back, while Dorene continued walking. When she did not return by mid-afternoon, others of her party became concerned and drove down to notify the Kern County Sheriff.

Sunday about 25 members from the Indian Wells Valley and Boron SAR teams, assisted by the Sheriff's helicopter, put in a long day of searching. They were able to pick up Dorene's tracks, but tracking was very slow in the soft decomposed granite. The team following the tracks stayed on them all night.

Meanwhile CLMRG was called by Deputy Jerry Greims about 0100 Monday. We mobilized a group of 14, and left the hut shortly after 0400. We joined a group from IWV SAR and convoyed up Horse Canyon to base camp at 0620. Carl Heller, Operation Leader for our team, worked jointly with Jack Williams of the IWV team and Lt Varley of the Sheriff's office, to decide on a plan of operations for the day.

Teams were sent out by helicopter to relieve the team of IWV all-night trackers. Other teams were dispatched to look for the missing girl's tracks farther out. As tracks were followed, it became obvious that she was generally following the Smith Canyon drainage. This leads down the west side of the mountains to Onyx, 4,000' below. The helicopter began making low level passes down the canyon. On one of these passes, about 1025, Dorene was spotted.

The helo returned to base and picked up Carl and Mike Schultz, in case he was unable to land close to Dorene's position. Although the pilot let them off 500' up the slope he succeeded in putting the helo down in a tight spot between the trees, much nearer Miss Regis. She was flown back to base camp where she was given first aid for badly blistered feet. After a helo flight to the Ridgecrest Hospital, Miss Regis was found to be quite dehydrated but with no other problems.

Comment:

This search was concluded successfully because of good cooperation from all concerned. This is difficult terrain for sustained tracking. Because of the trees, brush and gently rolling country with few landmarks, it is quite hard to even locate yourself on the map. Without considerable luck, it is hard to see how the subject could have been found any more quickly.

Other CLMRG members participating: Jones, Harris, Brown, Moore, Snell, Gleeson, Lloyd and Renta. Early morning telephoners were Sheila Rockwell and Janet Westbrook.



76-18 Alert, Desert search, Riverside County

(Editor: The last 3 operation-numbers are MY system...during vacation time, it is sometimes very difficult to locate the CLMRG person who has the official list.

We will use MY listing, and HE can explain HIS system next issue.)

BITS & PIECES

Aerobic Exercise on B Mountain I

Carl Heller

For those who exercise on B Mountain I have worked out a simple system for calculating aerobic training points. (refer to K.H.Cooper, New Aerobics Bantam Books, NY 1970). Going up the mountain is equivalent in training to running a certain distance on the flat. This equivalent distance increases with the weight one carries. With sneakers it is 3.2 miles; with boots, 3.4. It increases 0.2 miles for each 5 kg so that with a 30 kg pack it is equivalent to 4.6 miles. Using these equivalents one can use Cooper's tables to calculate aerobic training points. I have not calculated equivalents for the downhill run.

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