

CHINA LAKE MOUNTAIN RESCUE GROUP  
PO BOX 2037  
RIDGECREST, CA 93555

JULY 1979

#43

### CALENDAR

|            |                                  |              |
|------------|----------------------------------|--------------|
| July 28-29 | Norman Clyde                     | Joy          |
| Aug 4-12   | Tetons                           | Rockwell     |
| Aug 20     | Annual Backyard Party            | Rockwell's   |
| Sep 1-3    | Minarets                         | Walters      |
| Sep 10     | Meeting - 236 E. Church          | Westbrook's  |
| Sep 17     | Stretcher Rigging Practice       | B. Westbrook |
| Sep 23     | Stretcher Practice - Owens Ridge | Heller       |

### DONORS

CLMRG extends warm thanks to the following contributors:

Mr. and Mrs. Richard L. Walters                      The Girl Scouts Mojave Primitive Encampment Frank  
and Mary Riseley

Janet Hammond

### MILESTONES

August, 1979 marks the tenth year since the first Talus Pile was published. Elizabeth Anderson had the idea that we should have a newsletter -to share information and ideas among ourselves, with other rescue groups and with our donors, and to provide a permanent record of our search and rescue operations. Liz created the first newsletter, which must certainly have been the most difficult one, and continued to be the editor for more than half of the past 10 years, with a couple of breaks, while Dianne Lucas and I tried our hands at it. During the years when Liz isn't editor, she is always available to advise, to provide news-items and, sometimes, to prod the current editor.

Congratulations Elizabeth - your baby has survived!



OPERATION REPORTS

#7901                      Transit, 12 April                      San Rafael Wilderness Carl Heller

Robert Flores, 16, was lost on Tuesday and searchers from Lompoc and Las Padres couldn't find him Wednesday. On Thursday, we were called at 0330, as part of a general MRA callout. At 0500, a team, (Heller, Camphausen, Jones and Landau) had assembled at the hut. We were ready to postpone our trip until evening, but a call to Santa Barbara indicated a poor MRA response from closer teams, so we started. At 1010 in Santa Barbara, the sheriff's department informed us that the 16 year old from Van Nuys had just been found and was in a helo. We went wading in the ocean, had a seafood lunch and got back to the NWC gate at 1615.

Operation leader: Heller                      Coordinator: C. Burge

Note: Carol told the Daily Independent about our team and they phoned Santa Barbara to put together a reasonably complete account of the operation.

#7902                      Mobilization, 20 April                      Near Olancha      Carl Heller

West of the town of Olancha, Fall and Walker Creeks join, in an area known as The Oaks. Richard Peake, 40, told his friends of his plans to visit and hike, somewhere above this area, for a short trip on Wednesday. He was due back for work at midnight Friday, so on Friday morning his friends became worried and located his car parked at The Oaks.

The Inyo County sheriff's deputy phoned me at 2122. Deputy Nixon and I decided on the basis of the information we had, to send an advance team in Friday night to locate tracks. A second team would fly up in the morning unless the advance team was lucky. As it turned out, we were all lucky, as Peake walked out just as we were mobilizing at 2300 in the hut.

Advance team: Heller, Jones, D. Lucas, Blanchard and Brown

Coordinators: J. Westbrook and L. Lucas

Second team: Rockwell, Mason, Renta and Fletcher

Helo pilot: Haan

Comment: When someone walks out like this, saying he had no problem, one feels a little silly about all the plans and activity. However, people who go out should realize that they have some obligation to their friends to state definite plans, or none at all, rather than vague ideas. Of course, we really aren't hurt by an occasional practice at mobilization as long as the annual number remains reasonable.

#7903                      Mobilization, 20 May                      Near Kennedy Meadows Carl Heller

Deputy Montgomery called us indirectly via Mike Thomas of the Kern Sheriff's Dept. at 0946 on Sunday morning. He said that ~~six~~ Boy Scouts were lost near Kennedy Meadows. We mobilized ten people and notified Dale Haan, who got the NWC helo ready. We were ready to roll and fly at 1115 when a call from Ridgecrest announced the youngsters were safe.

Comment: 1. We were a little slow and I should have had an advance team enroute before 1100.

2. Montgomery hadn't asked for a helo, so I had to phone Porterville to authorize its use.

#7904 Transit, 10-11 June Whitney Trail Lee Lucas

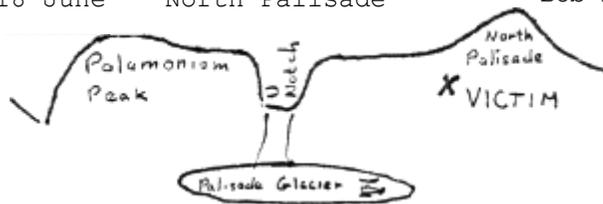
Petri Laurikainen, 35, of Batavia, Ill., started up the Whitney Trail about 4 pm Sunday, 10 June, for a "short hike". He made good progress. As he approached Trail Camp, the lure of Trail Crest was too much. He just had to see what was on the other side. Petri made Trail Crest about 8 pm - 5000' in four hours - not bad for a lowlander in shorts and running shoes. At Trail Crest, Petri turned around, realizing his wife would be concerned when he didn't return by dark. He lost the trail somewhere near Trail Camp and again in Outpost Meadow which further delayed his return.

Petri's wife, Bogumila, did become concerned and contacted Jerry Kisker at the Whitney Portals store. Jerry relayed the problem to the Inyo County Sheriff's office. Dep. Boyer at Independence, called the China Lake police, who contacted me at about 10:15 pm. After talking to pep. Boyer, I got Carol to coordinate the callout and went to the hut. The advance team of Heller, Joy and Snell left the hut about 11:05. A second car with Hinman, Osterman and me, plus a lot of gear, was a half hour behind Heller. A six person team was about right for an initial response. If it turned out that we really had a search on our hands, more could have joined us the next morning.

In the meantime, Jerry Kisker started up the Whitney Trail about 10:30 to look for Petri, and met him above Lone Pine Lake. They walked out just as our advance team was starting up the trail.

Comment: The new magnetic mount whip antennas work well. I could talk to Heller at the Portals as we drove up from Lone Pine.

#7905 Rescue, 17-18 June North Palisade Bob Rockwell



From the way the winds had been blowing in our valley with storm clouds over the Sierra, I was not too surprised when the phone rang at 10:30 pm Sunday night (6/17). The Inyo County Sheriff's Posse (Pat Elliott in charge, Jean Saylor and Bud Clayton, coordinators) had received the report of two persons 24 hours overdue in the Palisades, out of Big Pine. One was 16 year old Scott Jackson from Chicago, the other his grand uncle, Dr. Reed Boswell, 61, from Los Angeles. The Forest Service helicopter was to overfly the area after dawn and back-up from our team was expected to be necessary.

On the overflight early Monday morning, one victim- alive - was spotted on the summit snow slopes on North Palisade, at 14,200 ft. While the chopper was carrying Bob McCoy and Brian Norris from the ICSP to Polemonium Peak, where there was a flat spot for landing, we were called again (0830). Although eleven of us were ready, only two would be needed. Al Green and I left immediately for the airfield to board the China Lake Huey, piloted by LtCol Ben Adams and LCDR Larry Crume. Crewmen were Miller and Hall. First stop (0950) was Sage Flat, at 7000 ft on the Big Pine Creek road, which would serve as Base Camp and heliport.

Our day's efforts were to be concentrated on the victim who had been sighted. Night time temperatures had dropped to around 0 F and after two nights in the open it seemed remarkable that even one of the two was still alive.

While McCoy and Norris were doing the difficult traverse from Polemonium, dropping to the U-Notch and ascending the North Palisade side, Rick Ackermann of ICSP, Green and I would be flown to the Palisade Glacier at 12,500 ft to begin ascending the 45° snow **of** the U-Notch. Some times:

- 1225 Ackermann, Green and I land on the Palisade Glacier.
- 1300 We reach the bergschrund (13,200') to begin the climb up to the U-Notch (14,000').
- 1355 At the U-Notch. We make visual contact with McCoy and Norris above, who now have the victim, Scott, with them.
- 1500 We wait below as Scott is being lowered down a 200' vertical cliff to us.
- 1510 Scott reaches us. He seems in reasonably good physical shape considering iris ordeal, but is somewhat confused and dazed. He takes some food and drink. His pulse is 120.
- 1530 Green and I begin belaying Scott down to the Glacier. I have him on a 10' tether for stability and travel with him, while Al supplies a good succession of belays using one of our 200 ft ropes.
- 1710 We reach the helispot on the Glacier. Scott's condition has deteriorated markedly and he can no longer walk without support. He is now more confused and is hallucinating.
- 1720 The Huey comes in to pick up Scott (and Al) for the trip to the Bishop hospital.
- 1855 By now the rest of the rescuers have joined my location on the Palisade Glacier. The Huey returns for us and we transit to Sage Flat.

At this writing (Tues noon) the operation is still ongoing, with seven from CLMRG (Lee Lucas, our leader) now with the ICSP to concentrate on the second victim. Scott was of limited help in describing his experiences, his routes and locations, and the area where his uncle might be. But we do not hold out much hope for the uncle at this point.

#7906      Recovery, 19 June      North Palisade      Lee Lucas

CLMRG had been on alert since Sunday evening, for two climbers missing on North Palisade. Two CLMRG members (Green and Rockwell) had helped the Inyo Sheriff's posse rescue one of them on Monday. The other was still missing. It didn't look hopeful, but the Inyo Sheriff's Office wanted to search again on Tuesday. We were to meet Inyo Posse members in Big Pine at 7 am. Eight of us, (Westbrook, A. Jones, Brown, Mason, Hinman, Lloyd, Osterman and me) met at our equipment hut at 4:30 am. About 5:15, we headed north. The night before I had talked to Al Green and Bob Rockwell and to Pat Elliot (Inyo's leader on Monday's rescue) about the situation. The consensus was that the missing climber, Dr. Reed Boswell, was at 13,800' on or near the snowfield on the northeast face of North Palisade. We met Inyo Posse members Greg Elliot and Jim MacIndoo in Big Pine, meshed plans, and headed for Sage Flat up the Big Pine Creek read, to meet with the helo crew. Our plan was to fly to the peak and, if that failed, climb the U-Notch and traverse the snow field to the head of Clyde Couloir. The Forest Service contract helo (Western Helicopters- Allouette) was waiting. Ordinarily, the Allouette would be off fighting a forest fire somewhere. We were lucky! The helo crew consisted of helitac foreman, Harold Brown, pilot Dorcey Wingo, and ground crew members Lance Heaster, Sam Watts, Bob Joseph and Mike Jones.

The first team of Westbrook and Hinman was off at 9 am. Dr Boswell was sighted immediately at the corner of the snow field above Clyde Couloir, apparently deceased. Westbrook and Hinman were put down on Polemonium Peak and traversed across the U-Notch to reach the body at 12:50 pm. Brown and Mason were flown up 90 minutes later (see comment below) and assisted in the recovery. The body of Dr. Boswell was airlifted out at 3:30pm and transferred to the Inyo County coroner at Sage Flat. The four CLMRG rescuers descended the U-Notch to the Palisade glacier and were airlifted out just before dusk.

The rest of us milled around base camp for the day except for Osterman and Greg Elliot who rode the helo to Sam Mack meadow to retrieve the belongings of the victim and his climbing partner. We ate supper in Big Pine (sheriff's treat) and arrived home at midnight.

Comments:

1. Pilot Wingo impressed our field crews with his flying skill, especially the use of the static long line cable. Without that, we would have faced a two day lowering operation. The helo has the MRA frequency- and 600 others.
2. We used Sage Flat as a helispot and the end of the dirt road on the North Fork as a relay spot. Although it is not line-of-sight, the relay could talk with field crews anywhere on North Pal, in the U-Notch and on the glacier (except the lower end).
3. With Jones at Sage Flat, handling helitac and liaison with the sheriff, and me at the relay, able to talk directly to Westbrook, we had good base coordination.
4. I sent the second field crew up much too late. The helo crew thought that Westbrook and Hinman could handle it. so we waited to see. ( It hadn't occurred to me yet to go up to the relay, so I didn't talk this over with Westbrook until the critique) Two climbing teams should be flown in right away. Our people can survive and get out by themselves, if the helo is not available. That seemed to be a major concern of the helo crew; the more people on the peak, the more people that need to be brought down and would be at risk if the helo got called elsewhere or developed trouble.
5. Inyo Posse Captain Marv Babylon joined us at mid-morning. His radio telephone allowed us to talk to the sheriff's office about the need for the coroner and to get clearance to move the body, without worrying that scanners on the sheriff's FM frequency might pick it up. Also, we could call our home coordinator directly.

#7907 Alert, 24 June Mulkey Meadow Dennis Burge

#7908 Search, 6 July Scodie Mountains Bob Westbrook and his Ghostwriter

Barbara Gorrell, 39, of Berkeley failed to return on schedule while investigating Indian sites along the Pacific Crest Trail. The Kern County Sheriff's Department asked CLMRG and Indian Wells Valley Search and Rescue to start searching for her on Friday night. We concentrated our efforts in the Skinner Peak area and searched throughout the night. Because of the proliferation of tracks, it was impossible to track the missing woman.

On Saturday morning, Ms. Gorrell found the Kelso Road and walked out of the area at about 9:30 am.

CLMRG members participating in the search were Chris Blanchard, Dave Brown, Don Harris, Allen Jones, Bob Rockwell and Bob Westbrook. Sheila Rockwell was the coordinator.

#7909 Recovery, 8 July Mt. Whitney

Bob Westbrook

At approximately 1030, a call came from Inyo County Deputy Williams in Independence. He asked if we could be on "stand by" for a fallen climber, alive, but in serious condition, on Whitney. About 15 minutes later, he called back to say we were needed, as Inyo Posse had been out all night and could not respond. He had asked China Lake for a helo, but had been told that both were not flying. I suggested that he call Scott AFB and ask for a chopper from Lemoore. He did, and shortly after 1100, Lemoore called and I asked for a pick-up at NAF.

The victim, a 19 year-old Marine from Twenty-nine Palms, was supposed to be just above Trail Camp. The pilot, Lt. Don Swain, USMC, felt that the helo would be able to make the pick-up, but he needed a guide to the area and the victim. Terry Moore and I went. We approached the Whitney region from the west, after entering the Sierra north of Olancha Peak. We spotted the victim about 100' above Trail Camp. The pilot decided that we were too heavy, (density altitude=16000'), to put down near the victim so he left Terry, me and AT2 Reg Barnes at a turnout on the Portals road. Within 35 minutes, the helo passed over on the way to Southern Inyo Hospital. Later we were driven to 'the hospital by the Forest Service. We were back at China Lake by 1630. An excellent job by the Lemoore SAR helicopter crew: Pilot Lt. Don Swain, Lt Randy Stejskal, Chief Barry Widell, Hm3 Bill Bird and AT2 Reg Barnes.

The victim was deceased, probably killed in the fall or died shortly after. He was an inexperienced climber/hiker on , perhaps, his first trip into the mountains. He had slipped and fallen down the snow chute north of the Whitney switchbacks.

CLMRG coordinators were Barbara Slates and Janet Westbrook.

Notes:

1. It is definitely faster to drive to Lone Pine airport to meet the helo from Lemoore. It also allows us to have more personnel in the area in case we need a backup or have to move a victim any distance for a pick-up.
2. We made use of the Inyo County repeater with the Pace radio. It operated very well. I recommend we outfit the Wilson radio with the same capability.

#7910 Rescue, 19 July Mt. Whitney

Bill Stronge

A summer storm was bringing snow and freezing temperatures to the Sierras. Still Rollie Averitt (58) and Mark Smith (20), two inexperienced climbers, decided to go ahead with their ascent of Whitney via the Mountaineer's Route. Nearing the top of the chute about 9 am, Rollie left the tedious scree and started up the steep wall that guards the summit. He only climbed 20' (off route) before he fell from the wet rock. Later, his injuries were diagnosed as a severe concussion, skull fracture, fractured neck vertebrae and lacerations. He couldn't move and Mark only waited a few minutes before continuing up the route to the summit where he alerted hikers coming up the trail. They got word of the accident to the sheriff in Lone Pine by 12:30. Meanwhile, Mark descended past Rollie to their camp at Iceberg Lake, then brought up a sleeping bag, Goretex bivvy sac and a stove to his injured partner.

We were alerted by the sheriff via the China Lake police before 1 pm. With the help of Cdr Haan and the Navy Helo, Carl and I were at Iceberg Lake in a snowstorm before 3:30. Later Dennis Burge, Lee Lucas, Mike Renta and Dianne Lucas were ferried up to assist with the lowering. There wasn't much

we could do for Rollie, but put him in the Stokes litter and lower him 1000' to the helo landing site, before dark. He later remembered the rough ride, over deeply sun-cupped snow, in the lower part of the chute. The helo came in at sunset to carry Rollie to the Lone Pine Hospital. It made a return trip an hour later to carry out the last rescuers. A remarkable performance.

With the help of the Navy helo, this modern classic operation was rapidly completed. Survival of the seriously injured climber was also due to good bivvy gear and his clear thinking partner, Mark Smith.

#7911      Rescue, 23-24 July      Mt Langley      Bill Stronge

Richard Raines (51) of Mill Valley was camping by himself at Cottonwood Lakes. He climbed Mt. Langley and decided to take a direct route back to his camp - directly down a steep, narrow chute through a 1000' high band of cliffs. The chute was alternately floored with frozen snow and loose rocks that bounded downward at every step. Despite Richard's moderate climbing experience, he slipped, falling over a 20' drop and tumbling another 40'. He was lucky, only breaking an ankle and fracturing a vertebra in his lower back. His fall stopped on a chockstone overhanging a 200' chimney.

Because of the excellent acoustics of his position, Richard's shouts were heard by hikers far below. They alerted the sheriff, but no one could see from where on the cliff the shouts were coming. We hiked in that night, arriving below the cliff at 3:30 am. There was no response to our shouts. At first light, Richard yelled back and we soon located his position. Stronge and Michael Olwery, a climber from the Forest Service, climbed around the cliff and descended the chute to Richard. He questioned our cautious descent and I replied that "We won't do you much good if we fall and break a leg." After we got to him, an airsplint for the leg and a drink brought welcome relief. Richard was lowered 200' to the base of the cliff, then carried down the steep scree to a tiny lake shore landing site. The Forest Service chopper picked him up about noon, after he had signed a rental agreement (\$210/hour). We waited out a heavy afternoon thunderstorm that left boulders all over the Cottonwood Lakes road. Rock-fall in Richard's chute must have been murderous. After hiking out, we enjoyed the sheriff's hospitality at dinner in Lone Pine. It was a long, long day. (Stronge, L. Lucas, Atkins, Brown, Joy, Moore, Snell, Burton and Renta responding)

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COMMUNICATION WITH HELICOPTERS Carl Heller

Recently we read about SAR teams which had trouble communicating with military helicopters. Our group has had good luck recently with our simple system, so it might be worth mentioning for any team which reads this newsletter.

We use a Motorola PT-400, a matching headset and an antenna made for an auto rain gutter. We help the crew mount the antenna outside the door and pointing down, and get them to try it once. The co-pilot or crew chief who uses it, has to switch headsets, or can put on two headsets, with each ear hearing a different radio, and both microphones together, in front of his mouth. This is awkward, but workable if the person really wants it to work.

Other model radios can be used, but a 10 watt output is helpful. The antenna should be capable of being placed below the fuselage. The headset with mike is much superior to the loudspeaker on the usual radio.

We have tried other arrangements, including a connector which mated the usual military headset jack. This required a preamplifier and a battery

which tended to go dead. Details on all these arrangements can be obtained from Bob Joy, 945 W. Upjohn St., Ridgecrest, CA 93555.

SUMMER CLASS

The CLMRG class in "Basic Mountaineering", offered through Cerro Coso College, recently came to a successful conclusion. Twenty-four students completed the rock climbing part of the course and 23 of them also passed the written test on all aspects of basic mountaineering. Head instructor for the course was Carl Heller, with Mike Walters in charge of the rock climbing sessions. Many other CLMRG members assisted Carl and Mike.

PUBLIC RELATIONS (Lemoore's, not ours)



THIS SERVICE IS A COURTESY OF  
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This card was presented to Bob Westbrook by a Lemoore helicopter crew member. How about that?

RED'S MEADOW SHUTTLE

A shuttle bus system between Minaret Summit and the Red's Meadow-Devil's Postpile area was begun this summer. It is hoped that the system will reduce the congestion problems on the low standard road. The road is closed to private vehicles from 7 am to 8 pm during the summer months. Persons with camping permits or overnight resort reservations will be excepted. Vehicles carrying persons who are unable to walk or that are carrying 11 or more persons will also be permitted. The cost of the shuttle is \$1 per person or \$3 for a family.

BACKPACKERS BEWARE

By late June, Inyo and Mono county sheriff's officers were bracing for another summer season of trailhead burglaries.

"Since 1972, we've averaged about 60 reported trailhead burglaries per summer and we figure at least that many go unreported, said Sheriff's Deputy Yancey. "Don't ask me why, but '72 was kind of a turnaround year. Theft had been a minor problem before then . . ." But in the summer of '72, the real pros started showing up. Word got out among the crooks, I guess, that the trailheads were real cherry patches. . . LA Times, July 6, 1979

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The Talus Pile is published approximately every two months ( I said approximately). Articles, classified ads, rebuttals, cartoons, etc. are welcome and may be sent to the editor, Carol Burge, 624 Randall, Ridgecrest, CA, 93555 or NWC Code 3175.