

February 1985
#59

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

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

FEBRUARY 9, 10	Cross Country Skiing	Daryl Hinman
FEBRUARY 11	Meeting	Bob Joy
FEBRUARY 23, 24	Mt. Gould	Bob Huey
MARCH 2-4	Mt. Williamson	Bob Rockwell
MARCH 9, 10	Desert Peak	Dan Sherman
MARCH 11	Meeting	Bart Hine
MARCH 16, 17'	Joshua Tree	Daryl Hinman
MARCH 23, 24	Bear Creek Spire	Bob Huey
MARCH 30, 31	Winter Bivvy	Mike Mason
APRIL 6, 7	White Mountains	Bob Rockwell
APRIL 8	Meeting	Dennis Burge
APRIL ?	Minaret Summit to Tioga Pass	Bob Adams

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CLMRG 1985 OFFICERS

President	Bob Huey
Vice President	Bart Hine
Secretary	Andrew Mitchell
Treasurer	Tom Sakai
MRA Representative	Bob Adams

QUALIFICATION COMMITTEE

Al Green
Daryl Hinman
Bob Rockwell

OPERATION REPORTS

84-20 9/24/84 Transit Hunter Mountain Renta

At 0900 hours on September 24 the Inyo Sheriff notified CLMRG requesting assistance in a search for a missing hunter. He was lost on Hunter Mountain towards the south end of the Saline Valley. A CLMRG team consisting of Renta, Mason, Mitchell, and Amster left the hut at 1045. We arrived at the Lone Pine Airport at 1215 to learn that the victim had been found safe at 1100. A backup team of D. Hinman, Stogsdill, Geyer was taken off alert at that time. We returned to China Lake at 1500. Coordinator was Nancy Hinman.

84-21 9/25/84 Alert Rand Mountains Hinman

At 1500 hours on 25 September the Ridgecrest Substation of the Kern County Sheriff's office called to request CLMRG assistance in a search for a missing motorcyclist. The 27 year old man had not completed a long cross country race through the Rand Mountains west of Randsburg the previous day. The search, involving the Indian Wells Valley Search and Rescue, the BLM and a Sheriff's helicopter had been in progress most of the day by the time CLMRG was called. We were requested to report to the Randsburg Fire Station the following morning with as many personnel prepared to ground search as possible. Sixteen CLMRG members with six 4-wheel drive vehicles responded to the alert. The alert was cancelled at 1800 on 25 September when the victim was located in good condition by the search personnel present.

CLMRG responding: D. Hinman, Stogsdill, Renta, Huey, Don Harris, Mason, Finco, Derrickson, Amster, Seibold, Bonbright, Dan Harris, Castro, Geyer, Howell and TerHeun. Coordinators were Nancy Hinman and Mary Wyatt.

84-22 10/15/84 Rescue Mt. Gilbert Rockwell

Richard Harris, age 24 of Ontario, CA, was climbing the north couloir of Mt. Gilbert (13,103 feet, west of Bishop) with his friend Jim Jacobs. This is a 900 foot-long ice climb reaching 50 to 60 degrees in steepness. Harris was receiving instruction from the more experienced Jacobs. They were unroped.

At 1230 hours on Sunday, 14 October, approximately 50 feet from the top of the couloir, Harris slipped. He fell 800 feet to the glacier below. Fortunately, Peter Chopelas and Julius Jodale of Hermosa Beach had also planned to climb the same route and rushed to the fallen Harris. When they reached him he was unconscious, but later revived complaining of back pain and broken ankles. Chopelas and Jodale moved the victim off the glacier and stomped out a large SOS message in the snow. The elevation was 12,000 feet. Chopelas then left to inform the Inyo County Sheriff's office.

On the way out, Chopelas encountered Mark Himmerich (Irvine) and Woody Compton (Los Angeles). Advising them of the situation, he asked if they could assist Jim Jacobs who was still stranded at the top of the couloir. (As it eventually turned out, they ascended the couloir, using headlamps in the darkness, and brought some warm clothing to Jacobs. Thus, another potentially life threatening situation was converted into merely an uncomfortable bivouac situation for the three men. They would descend the following day.)

At 2200 hours the request for assistance reached LCDR Buz Massengale, NWC SAR officer and helicopter pilot. He asked for two CLMRG personnel to accompany the helo at 0530 the next morning. I accepted and my first phone call for a companion was successful: Daryl Hinman could go, too.

We met Buz at the airfield at 0500, loaded the gear, and eventually lifted off at 0555. Others aboard were Lt. Greg Friedrichsen (copilot), AEAN Mark Keenan, ATAN Richard Johnston and HM3 Jana Davis. It was very cold and windy.

Hoping it would be a routine pickup not needing mountaineering skills, Daryl and I were left at the Bishop airport. However, the Sierra Nevada range west of Bishop can look very similar from place to place, and after two flights the helo had not sighted the victim and his party. I suggested that maybe my familiarity with the area might help and we took off again.

Because of high winds and air turbulence, we could not fly too close to ground level, but were finally able to spot the SOS signal. Landing was not possible and Davis (the corpsman) and I exited the helo from a 3 foot hover, approximately 100 yards away. We took the stretcher and Miller body splint to the victim. The helo could not land, and returned to Bishop for fuel.

When we reached Harris he was in good spirits but "ached all over", highly understandable given his experience. We splinted him, placed him in the stretcher, and with assistance from Jacobs, Jodale, Himmerich and Compton carried him back to the hover site. The helo returned just as we got there.

We loaded Harris aboard, but unfortunately for those climbers who had forfeited their plans in order to help a person in distress, we could do no more for them. Leaving all of Harris' gear behind, together with Chopelas' equipment, at 1100 hours we flew to Northern Inyo Hospital in Bishop. In addition to giving up their climbing weekend, those Good Samaritan climbers would be stressed even further: they would now have to walk out with an extra 100 pounds of gear divided between them. My hope was that the realization that they had helped to **save** one - possibly two - lives would ease their burdens.

After breakfast/lunch (?) courtesy of Inyo County, we left at 1400 hours for China Lake. A telephone call to the hospital the next day confirmed Harris' injuries: concussion, compression fracture of the spine (C-6) and severe ankle sprains. A remarkable outcome from an 800 foot fall.

84-23 10/19-21/84 Search Joshua Tree Renta

Laura Bradbury. 3 years old of Huntington Beach, became separated from her family at about 1600 hrs. on 19 October. They were staying at **Indian** Cove Campground in Joshua Tree National Monument. We were asked to participate in the search by Peter Frickland of the Sierra Madre Search and Rescue Team at 0600 the following morning. A team consisting of myself, Hine, Finco, Martin, Dan Harris, Castro, Geyer and Hyde were on our way by 0720.

We arrived at Joshua Tree at about 1130. We were put in the field at about 1300 and asked to search the hills just south of the campground along with three other MRA teams. While we were in the hills several mountain posses were searching the flatter area to the north including the campground. The search was terminated for the day at 1700 and all the teams were brought into basecamp for dinner. The day's search had not turned up any clues.

At about 2200, more members of CLMRG joined us at the group campground. They were Hinman, Joy, Mitchell, Amster, Jones, Seibold, Bonbright, VanVerst, Sherman and Sinclair.

The following day, the 20th, we searched the hills that formed the eastern boundary of the search area. Other teams were searching a major drainage just to the west of the hills and again mounted posses were searching west of our line of search. Again, after an all day search by over 200 people, no sign of Laura was found.

By the beginning of the third day of the search we had covered 90% of the search area. We were asked to re-search the area around hill 3177'. Other MRA teams re-examined the western boundary of the search area. Late in the afternoon we picked up some tracks which, however, did not prove fruitful. The day ended at 1500 with no sign of Laura found. The search was terminated with the possibility of a kidnapping appearing very significant.

Comments:

1. The search was well run. The responsibility for the search was shared by the Park Service under whom the MRA teams operated and the San Bernardino Sheriff who directed the mounted posse.

2. The basic search technique used was the line search. This was difficult along the hills due to the size of rocks in the area. Travel was difficult and there were numerous places which could conceal an unresponsive victim.

84-24 10/24/84 Search El Paso Mountains Stogsdill

I was called at 0830 October 24, 1984 by coordinator Barbara Slates to assist the Kern County Sheriff's office in conducting a search for missing chukkar hunter, William Siener III. William was lost during his hunting trip in the Black Mountain area of the El Pasos south of Ridgecrest. He had been hunting with a companion, Dana Wickliffe, on the day before and had not returned to their camp at nightfall. Dana reported the man missing at 1800 hours on October 23, then proceeded to Bakersfield to see if maybe by chance William had walked out and caught a ride back to their hometown. The report came back that William had not returned and was still somewhere in the mountains. The Ridgecrest Sheriff's substation, under Deputy Sheriff Gil Cooper, asked that the Indian Wells Valley Search and Rescue (IWVSAR) and China Lake Mountain Rescue Group (CLMRG) assist in the search.

By 0930 twelve members of CLMRG and eight members of IWVSAR met at the substation for a briefing and then proceeded to the area where William was last seen. Base camp was immediately established, teams assigned, reporting party interviewed, and teams fielded. The first team, consisting of two members of IWVSAR, had cut tracks believed to be those of the missing hunter. Flanking teams were deployed to cut and jump track in the most likely areas based on inputs from **William's** hunting partner. Throughout the day, numerous tracks were found and followed. Tracking was difficult at best and the many sets of Vibram type tracks from other hunters in the area added to the task. At 1730 hours all teams were called back for debrief and to assist the evacuation of one member of the IWVSAR team who had apparently suffered a mild heart attack. This incident added some excitement to the otherwise uneventful day and our support helicopters responded with an emergency dash with oxygen, and evacuation to the Ridgecrest Hospital. Helicopters from the Sheriff's Dept. and from Edwards AFB had been assisting throughout the day searching from the air.

Upon arrival at the substation we were informed that William Seiner had arrived just moments before, safe and sound, after having spent a cold night on the mountain, then walking out to a place where he was picked up by other hunters and given a ride to Ridgecrest. All's well that ends well.

Other CLMRG personnel responding to the call were: D. Burge, Sakai, Derrickson, Amster, Hyde, Gleason, Maddox, Mitchell, Sinclair, Dan Harris and Wisecarver. Coordinators were Slates and Janet Westbrook. Additional support during the call out was supplied by Al Green. A backup team for the next day consisted of: Renta, Finco, Atkins and Adams, with D. Hinman acting as intown coordinator. Our radio communication link was David Brainerd.

84-25 12/2/84 Search Mt. Mary Austin Huey

Sheila Rockwell received a call from the NWC OOD at approximately 1120 hours on Saturday 2 December asking for support of the NWC helo on a reconnaissance of an aircraft crash site. The plane had been missing for 10 days after departing from Palm Springs to San Jose. Passengers included a man in his fifties, his wife, their son in his twenties, and the son's friend. Apparently no flight plan had been filed, but the general location was known from radar reports, and a search of the Mt. Mary Austin area had been in progress for several days by the Civil Air Patrol. The tail section of a plane had been spotted in a snow bank on the northeast ridge at approximately 12,000 feet on Sunday. Helo and ground crews were needed to verify that it was the missing plane, and to determine if there were any survivors.

Ken Amster and I responded in time for a 1300 hours takeoff by the NWC helo piloted by Lt. Greg Friedrichsen.

We were met at the Big Pine airport by the CAP pilot who had spotted the plane and Pat Elliott from the Inyo County Sheriff's Posse. It was determined that the helo with its crew would reconnoiter that area for possible landing sites or approaches for ground personnel, and to determine the possibilities of landing at the crash site. The CAP pilot, Pat Elliott and I joined the crew for the task. After climbing to the 12,000 ft. level and flying into a valley on the north side of the mountain we experienced great wind turbulence. We made a sweep over the ridge and Pat thought that he had spotted the tail section. However, the helo developed mechanical problems and an immediate return to Big Pine was deemed necessary.

The helo could not make another pass. Personnel would need at least a day to reach the location of the plane on foot. A storm was expected, so it was decided that the mission would be delayed until later.

The Inyo team drove us to Olancho where we were met by Allen Jones. We were back in Ridgecrest by 2130 hours.

84-26 12/17-18/84 Search Garlock Stogsdill

Al Green called me around 0830 on 17 December 1984. He had been contacted by Sgt. Gil Cooper of the Ridgecrest substation: Would CLMRG help in a 4 wheel drive search of the Garlock/Red Mountain/El Paso Mts. area for a missing man? I accepted the mission and started a call out for 4x4 vehicles with other members as observers. We met at the hut at 1000 to be briefed on the day's mission.

Mr. Tovarsky, a 45 year old resident of Granada Hills, had been missing since Friday, Dec. 14 (he was last seen in Mojave at noon). His vehicle was left abandoned in a parking lot that afternoon at about 3:30 p.m. by several strangers. This situation indicated the possibility of foul play, especially since Mr. Tovarsky had poor eyesight and both pair of his eye glasses were found in the vehicle.

The search was started at 1200 with the fielding of six teams of two each from CLMRG covering all roads from Inyokern to Garlock road on the east side of Highway 14, while the same number of teams from IWVSAR covered the west side of the highway for the same distance. The twelve teams worked all the roads in the area until past dark without finding anything that could be considered as evidence. The most excitement was when the IWV team found an overturned Bronco on Bird Spring Canyon Road. The vehicle belonged to a hunter who turned out to be uninjured and had walked out.

The search was terminated for the day with a debrief in the hut at 2100 and a renewal call out was planned for the next day.

The 0800 brief the next morning at the hut had a turnout of the same numbers of teams ready to start the new assignment in worsening weather. By 0830 we had snow sticking on the ground about 1 inch thick with our relay station reporting 3 inches of snow on the highway at 395 and the turnoff to T.V. Mountain (Laurel Peak). Radioman Bob Fletcher's assignment was to drive to the top as he had done the day before. The snow was coming down in sheets and by the time the teams had gotten to the prospective base at the town of Garlock, the visibility was about zero and snow depth of 5 to 6 inches on the highway. Off-road searching was impossible since the snow covered all possible tracks. The search was called off at 0930 and we all headed toward home, pulling cars out of ditches along the way and helping stranded motorists back to Ridgecrest..

Participating in the search: Stogsdill, Adams, Hine, Sakai, Martin, Mitchell, Derrickson, Don Harris, Wisecarver, Sinclair, Castro, Rogers and Dan Harris. Phelps TerHeun worked base with me and Bob Fletcher provided the high radio relay for the operation. Mary Wyatt and Carol Burge were coordinators. Carol was also a search member on the first day.

84-27 12/20/84 Search Mt. Waterman Renta

CLMRG was asked to help in the search for Steve Contalene, 23, at 0700 hours on December 20. Steve had been missing since he became separated from his skiing partner during a white out in the Mt. Waterman ski area at 1500 hours the previous day. We (Renta, Dan Harris, Castro and Derrickson) met at the hut and were on our way by 0915. Fog and snow on the roads made travel slow and we didn't reach Mt. Waterman until 1300 hours. At this time teams which had been sent out in the morning began coming back in for lunch after completing their assignments. At 1345 Steve walked into base camp, hungry, but none the worst for his night out. We started back to Ridgecrest at 1415 and arrived home at 1730 hours.

We have here another case where the victim was not within the search area, and essentially rescued himself. Had the victim actually needed our assistance, the limited search area would not have turned him up. The lesson is that a great deal of care should be used in defining sufficiently broad search areas. Small, high probability zones within the entire search area should be identified and searched thoroughly, but the area needs to be large enough to virtually guarantee that the victim is within it.

OATH AS SPECIAL DEPUTIES ADMINISTERED TO MEMBERS OF MT. CLIMBING, GROUND RESCUE UNITS



THE OATH OF OFFICE as special deputies was administered Monday night to 11 members of the China Lake Mountain Rescue Group and the Ridgecrest Ground Rescue Team. The oath was given by Helen Spomer, at left, secretary to Leroy Galyen, Kern County Sheriff, to (from left) Per Busch, Arnold Yukelson, Jay Witcher, Larry Boyer, Frederick Bien, Arold Green, Robert Westbrook, Gary Babcock, Thomas Jones, Richard Slates and Charles

Ringrose. Eight of the special deputies (Green, Witcher, Slates, Westbrook, Bien, Babcock, Ringrose and Jones) are members of the mountain climbing group, while Yukelson, Boyer and Busch are with the local ground rescue team. Sgt. Curtis Bell, sergeant-in-charge of Kern County Sheriff's Sub-stations, traveled here from Bakersfield with Mrs. Spomer for the Monday night ceremony, which was held at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Jack Christy.

Valley Independent 14 October 1965

It looks like the start of a very interesting year!

At 0845 hours I received a call from Sgt. Dave Rich of the Air Rescue Coordination Center, Scott Air Force Base, Illinois. The missing Eastern Airlines jetliner in Bolivia, subject of all the news reports for the last two days, had been spotted at the 19,600 foot level of Mt. Illimani (elev. 21,201 ft.). There were apparently no survivors. No official request from the Bolivian government had yet been made, but if it were forthcoming, could CLMRG field a team to assist in the recovery operation?

The extreme altitude and winter conditions at the crash site dictated a call out of our most capable mountaineers. I gave Mary Wyatt a list of names to call; the response was gratifying, with eight people besides myself able to go (Hinman, Stogsdill, Huey, Burge, Hine, Joy, Gleason and Buffum). All are fully winter qualified; five of us have been to that altitude or higher.

We began the considerable job of packing our gear for an obviously difficult and unpleasant task, and prepared to be gone for a week or more. Our past experiences in out-of-country expeditionary climbing would be invaluable.

A little later, Arnold Gaffrey of the Sierra Madre SRT and currently the national MRA president, called. He also had been in contact with Scott AFB and projected that perhaps 30 to 50 additional personnel from other teams across the country could be assembled. In the event that only CLMRG would be going, Arnold offered us the use of Sierra Madre's high-altitude personal oxygen equipment.

At about 1115 I called Sgt. Rich for an update. He said that it looked at that time that we would not be needed. We chatted for a few minutes about the response from CLMRG and the MRA, and he seemed quite impressed with both the capability and organization that can be provided even for mountain SAR operations thousands of miles away from home, and at elevations thousands of feet higher than any in the contiguous United States.

I told Mary to advise everyone to relax but don't unpack yet. If no word was forthcoming by 1800 hours, the alert was to be considered cancelled. This of course turned out to be the case, and it was with mixed feelings that we unpacked. No one would argue that, had the operation occurred, we would have been subjected to most stressful physical and emotional conditions. Yet it certainly would have been an epic exercise for CLMRG, and a rewarding one to have participated in.

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News from the Internal Revenue Service (Publication 17, for 1984):

For 1984, the deduction for use of a car in performing service for a charitable organization is 9 cents a mile. Beginning in 1985, the deduction will be 12 cents a mile. See Chapter 30.

DONOR'S CORNER

We have received donations from the following long-time supporters of CIMRG: Russ and Edith Huse, F. A. Bode, Terry and Virginia Stirling and John and Ruth Gerhart. Andrew and Manuela Mitchell have joined our list of donors. We appreciate the support given by you. Thank you!



LOOK

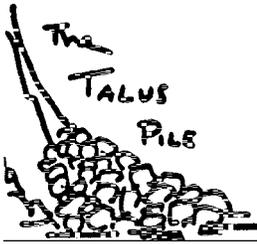
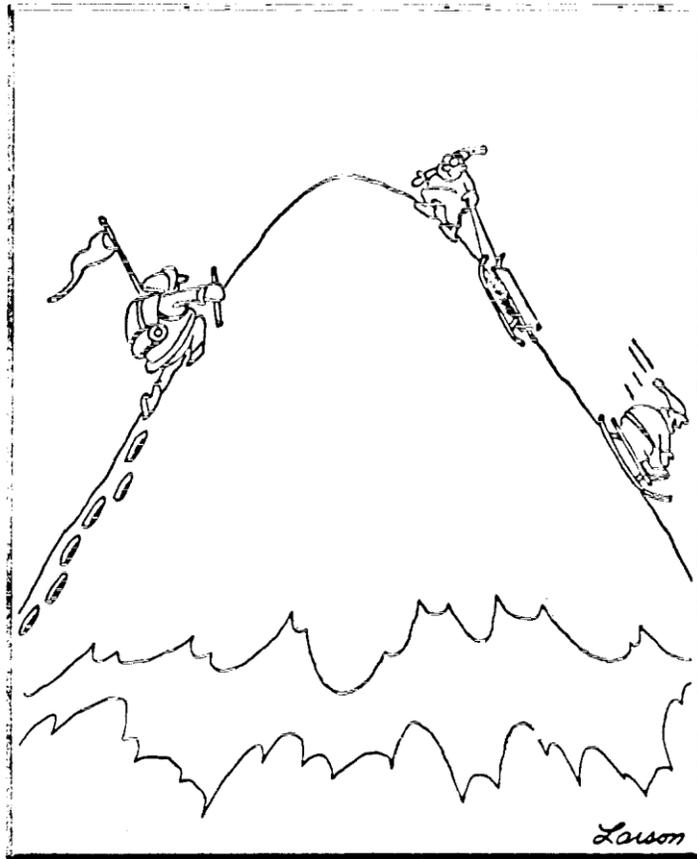
CHON DAY

EDITOR'S CORNER

"What a challenge it offers to man's ingenuity and ability to withstand hardship and danger! I'm going back."

Coming in the next issue of the Talus Pile will be those exciting year end reports!

Sheila



From the China Lake
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