

**CHINA LAKE MOUNTAIN RESCUE GROUP
P. O. BOX 2037
RIDGECREST CA 93556**

OCTOBER 2001....NUMBER 121

TRAINING SCHEDULE

Oct 15 Mon Meeting Rockwell/Myers/Mitchell
Oct 16 Tue Stretcher Hut night Training Committee
Oct 17 Wed First Aid Topic A (6-10 p.m.) Schafhauser
Oct 20 Sat Stretcher practice Training Committee
Oct 24 Wed First Aid Topic A (6-10 p.m.) Schafhauser
Oct 26-28 Fri-Sun Desert peaks Schafhauser
Nov 3-4 Sat-Sun Peak 13502 & Thumb Rockwell
Nov 6 Tue Night tracking Breitenstein
Nov 8-12 Fri-Mon Red Rock & Charleston Roseman & Huey
Nov 17 Sat Spanish Needle Huey
Nov 18 Sun Rock skills Hinman
Nov 19 Mon Meeting Ferguson, -----, -----
Nov 22-25 Thu-Sun Open
Dec 12 Sat-Sun Open
Dec 7-9 Fri-Sun Joshua Tree Roseman
Dec 10 Mon Meeting -----, Breitenstein,-----
Dec 15-16* Sat-Sun Owens Ridge climbing -----
Dec 19 Wed Christmas party Westbrook
Dec 21-22 Fri-Sat Harold & Nichols Runkle
Dec 29Jan 1 Sat-Tue Thunderbolt Rockwell
*One or two days

Note: The schedule beyond October is preliminary.
SUNDAY ROCK CLIMBING coordinated by Werner Hueber

CLMRG is funded in part by United Way of Indian Wells Valley.

OPERATIONS

01-03 **29 Jul 01 Transit Death Valley** Walter Runkle

On the afternoon of Sunday, 29 July 2001, I was watching a documentary on Napoleon when I heard the pager go off. It was a call from the China Lake Police Department (CLPD), and my first thought was that someone had left the Hut unlocked, but I soon realized it was a callout for a stranded hiker. The call came about 1550 in the afternoon. I assumed I was probably the only leader in town because three of our leaders were out on overnight summer class trips and the other three were either out of town or incapacitated. I called Sheila Rockwell to find out if she heard the page and told her I would take the operation. She agreed to be my coordinator. I called the CLPD (939-3323) and talked to Sgt. Sgroi. He told me there was a stranded hiker over in Death Valley and the China Lake SAR helicopter was unable to extract him. He said the helicopter was on its way in for refueling and wondered how soon we could be out to the air field to assist in the rescue. I told him it would probably take about two hours for a mobilization and we would try to be at the airfield by 1800. He sounded somewhat disappointed but said he would pass the word on to the helicopter crew. I asked him if he had an OES number, but he was unfamiliar with our procedure requiring one.

I called Sheila and told her to do a callout and that we didn't have an OES number. Sheila said she would call the duty sheriff in Bakersfield and advise him of the situation. Sheila reached Deputy Don "Dusty" Rhodes, and he said we could get ready and go to the airfield, but we were NOT to leave on the helicopter until we had a valid OES number. Sheila went ahead and did a callout and told me Bud Gates, Curtis Davis, Andrew Mitchell, Ellen Schafhauser, and Bob Rockwell were able to commit. I gave Sheila my cell phone number and told her I was going to the Hut.

I arrived at the Hut at 1630 and started to get stuff together. I figured the rescue harness would be good to take because it sounded like we had a hiker stranded on a ledge and would have to be lowered down to him. The other members soon arrived, and we were ready to leave the Hut by 1710. At this point, Bob Rockwell saw I had enough help and went home for health reasons.

Mitch and I drove out to the Airfield with the other three members and got there about 1730. We started to get ready when I got a call on my cell phone from Sgt. Sgroi

saying the helicopter had been able to extract the hikers and was flying them to Ridgecrest hospital. We drove back to the Hut, and on the way, Deputy Rhodes called me and reconfirmed that the hikers had been retrieved.

We put back our equipment, secured at the Hut by 1800, and went home in time for Sunday dinner.

Participants: Walter Runkle (Leader), Sheila Rockwell (Coordinator), Bud Gates, Curtis Davis, Andrew Mitchell, Ellen Schafhauser, and Bob Rockwell.

The following is the report I got from Keith Becker of the Public Affairs Office on base. It turned out there were two stranded hikers, not one. The location was a canyon with no name about 1200 feet elevation, 3 miles south of Dante's view, and 3.5 miles southeast of Badwater in the Black Mountains. (*Editor: The report appears here exactly as written.*)

The crew consisted of LT Smart, LCDR Lewis, AME2 Rocha, HM3 Flowers, and AD3 Gooding. We got the call via Inyo county SAR. There were two hikers reported lost in Death Valley on Saturday, the 28th, when they didn't meet up with friends. The Inyo county sheriffs' helo went in search of them Sunday morning, the 29th. The local authorities were able to locate the hikers but unable to retrieve them because they did not have hoist capabilities. They threw them water and a radio, then called us, and we launched within an hour. We went to the GPS point that we were given and it took several passes for us to locate them due to the rugged terrain and the narrow canyon. The temperature was around 120 degrees and these guys had been without water since 2pm the day before, except for the water the sheriff threw them. We threw a smoke marker and they were able to tell us where they were in reference to the smoke. As luck would have it, we threw the smoke right on top of them and were able to locate them shortly after that. The canyon was extremely steep and narrow, so we had to fly out the top to turn around and approach the spot where they were. The winds swirling up the canyon made the approach sort of tricky and we weren't entirely sure we would be able to get them out that day, with those winds. On our first approach, we lowered HM3 Flowers on the hoist. When he finally got his feet on the ground he was on a ledge above them and 250 feet below the helo. We released him and waited to establish communications with him. By the time he was ready for pick up we had to return to base to refuel. It was a 30 minute transit back to China Lake for fuel. Since we weren't sure we would be able to get them out due to the winds and terrain, we alerted China Lake Mountain Rescue Group that we might need their services. We were told they wouldn't be ready for a couple of hours. We went back to try to get everyone out. We made two approaches down the canyon picking up one guy the first pass, setting him on the valley floor, then went back to pick up the second guy and HM3 Flowers. We went back to the valley floor to pick up the first guy and took everyone to Ridgecrest regional hospital. Hopefully, they will live happily ever after

and remember how lucky they were. AME 2 Rocha did an outstanding job as the crewchief, keeping the entire situation under control and safely making the pick-ups. Something to note: These guys were from the East Coast. They took off for the day in July, in Death Valley, with one camel back, no gloves (hot rocks) no climbing gear, no radios, no GPS, and no idea what kind of terrain they would experience. The canyon they were in was probably 6 horizontal miles and 6000 vertical feet. They ended up at the bottom of a 120-foot shear face unable to climb up or down. It was some of the roughest terrain I have ever seen. They were unable to sleep through the previous night due to their tongues being so swollen from dehydration. They thought they would die there, and in another 24 hours, they most likely would have.

He who can no longer pause to wonder and stand rapt in awe is as good as dead.
--Albert Einstein

01-04 (OES 01-0963) 9 Aug 01 Search Mt. San Gorgonio Walter Runkle

Since Sunday, August 5, I had been watching news on the TV about a search for a missing 16-year-old boy on Mt. San Gorgonio. By Wednesday, it was going into the third day, and I thought we might be getting a call since they still hadn't found him. When I got home Wednesday night, I realized I had left my pager at work, so I called Tom Roseman and asked him to let me know if he heard anything since I didn't have my pager. Ironically, Tom called me back about 45 minutes later saying he got a call from Commander Moe requesting us for the San Gorgonio search. I told Tom I would take the operation and called Mary Schmierer to be my coordinator. Mary used Sheila Rockwell to help her and soon called back saying Linda Finco, Bob Rockwell, and Ellen Schafhauser were willing to commit to a two-day search.

I decided to have everyone meet at the hut at 2100 and drive down that night so we could grab some sleep and be fresh for a search the next day. I called Sgt. Marnati at the command post (909-389-2356) and got directions to the command post for the search. We took some half and full 9mm ropes for rappelling, the GPS units, and the radios. I brought my personal stove and water filter for a possible overnigher in the field. We also grabbed the flight suits for any helicopter flights. Since we didn't have any large, bulky gear, we all piled into my Bravada and left the hut about 2140.

The drive down was uneventful except for trying to find a place to stay. We thought we would get a room in Mentone but couldn't find anything except a small motel operated by a lady who spoke little English. When she wouldn't take our credit cards (cash only!), we decided to drive on to the command post and sleep in the parking lot there. I checked in with Sgt. Marnati, and he told me breakfast would be at the road's end at 0600 the following morning with a brief to follow. We drove on up to the road's end and finally got bedded down about 0100 Thursday morning.

The next morning was a little confusing for me as the Op Leader. I had understood the sergeant to say that I should drive back down to the command post after breakfast for

our assignments. So I drove down there, but they told me to go back up to the road's end for the brief and assignments. Then, when I got back up to the road's end, I found the brief was over (Linda covered for me), and I was supposed to go back down to the command post to get our assignment! I didn't know whether I was coming or going! Finally at the command post, I got our assignments and a description of the missing young man. He was William John Parven, a white, 16-year-old male, who had been on a hike with his father and 13-year-old sister. He had gone on alone to the summit when his sister lagged behind and had not been seen since. John was 5'7" tall and weighed about 150 pounds. He had last been seen on the Vivian Creek Trail at 1530 Sunday afternoon heading towards the summit of Mt. San Gorgonio. John had brown hair and eyes and was wearing a black Raiders cap, dark shirt, blue shorts, and brown boots and was carrying a brown daypack.

Linda, Ellen, and I were put in one team, and Bob Rockwell was put with the Altadena team. I went back up to the road's end to give the group our assignments and await transportation to the Redlands airport. Linda, Ellen, and I were going to be flown to the top of Mt. San Gorgonio, and then we were to come down the southeast side searching for sign. We were given a special radio to use, and I was told that Arnold Gaffery of Sierra Madre was manning the command post radio. Bob and the Altadena team were to be flown to the north side of the summit to search there. By now, it was about 0930, and Bob and the Altadena team hadn't been gone long when we saw them drive back up again. We asked them what they forgot, and they replied that John had been found. It turned out he had walked out to a fish hatchery about 20 miles or so south-east of the summit.

We changed our clothes, and I returned the radio and topo maps to the command post. Everyone there was greatly relieved after searching for so many days.

We got gasoline and ate the sandwiches we had been given that morning for our lunch in the field. We returned the gear to the hut and secured from the operation at 1300. Participants: Walter Runkle (Leader), Mary Schmierer (Coordinator) assisted by Sheila Rockwell, Bob Rockwell, Linda Finco, and Ellen Schafhauser.

01-05 (OES 01-1014) 5 Sep 01 Alert Death Valley/Panamint Valley Mike Myers

I received a call at 2130 last night (4 September) from Cheryl Longwith from the Kern County Sheriff's Office Communication Center notifying us that the China Lake Mountain Rescue Group was being requested by OES to assist the Inyo County Sheriff in the search for a missing man in the Death Valley area. Sgt. Randy Nixon contacted OES and ask for CLMRG to assist in a search in Death Valley for David McMullin, 43, a resident of Berkeley, California. McMullin was known to be an experienced hiker. He'd been missing (I don't know whether that means overdue) for four days, and his car was located near a canyon near Ballarat that had a flash flood two days ago. Death Valley Park Rangers went up and found that David had signed the summit register of Porter Peak on 1 September, so they suspected the search area

was going to be in a very rugged area north west of Porter Peak.

I made several attempts to reach Sgt. Nixon via his cell phone, but he was not in a cellular zone. I then contacted Carol Burge and asked that she do a callout so that people could get their gear together before it got too late. I finally contacted the Inyo Sheriff Office Dispatch Center, who told me the base camp would be located at Ballarat. Sgt. Nixon requested 10 team members from CLMRG, and we had seven members commit, which isn't too bad.

Sgt. Nixon requested us to be on site and ready to go at 0700 this morning. He was working on getting a couple of helicopters to support the search today, but he had a FLIR-equipped ship from Vandenberg AFB that was scheduled to arrive at Ballarat at midnight last night. At 0300 this morning, McMullin heard the helicopter and was able to get into a clearing so the Air Force SAR helicopter could see him with the FLIR. The helicopter then landed and picked him up. He had sprained his ankle on his descent and had sat down to wait for a SAR team to locate him. The Inyo Sheriff's Office called at 0335 to let us know that McMullin had been found and to suspend our operation.

Post-report note: I just talked to David McMullin on the phone. He's going to stay with his mother here in Ridgecrest for a few days while his ankle gets a little better. Some of you probably remember this guy!! Remember when we climbed Owens Peak last year for Rockwell's celebration? Well, he's the guy we ran into up there on the summit who ended up taking our group picture.

He said that he had parked his car up in Pleasant Canyon at about 7300 feet, just below Cooper Mine. He had made his way to the summit, then began his descent down Johnson Canyon toward Hungry Bills Ranch, just east of Sentinel Peak. On his way to Hungry Bills, he slipped and fell about 20 feet and injured his ankle. He made his way to Hungry Bills, where there are some shade trees. That's where he stayed until the helicopter located him.

Participants: Mike Myers (Leader), Carol Burge (Coordinator) assisted by Janet Westbrook, Tom Sakai, Tom Roseman, Linda Finco, Al Green, Dennis Burge, and Curtis Davis

01-06 15 Sep 01 Rescue Red Rock Canyon Walter Runkle

On Saturday, September 15, I was at home watching news programs about the recent terrorist attacks on America and the recovery efforts going on in New York City. At about 1310, Sgt. Diederich put out a page requesting assistance for three stranded Boy Scouts down at Red Rock Canyon. I answered the page and told Sgt. Diederich I would take the operation. He informed me we had three male teenagers stuck on a ridge above campsite 33. They were in no immediate danger and had plenty of water. Sgt. Diederich gave me the phone number for the dispatcher at Red Rock and said he would meet me there.

I called down the list of coordinators and finally got Andrew "Mitch" Mitchell at

home. Mitch told me that Terry Mitchell was at work but that he would be willing to serve as my coordinator since I had not been able to get anyone else. In a few minutes, I got a call from Terry and was able to have her as my coordinator. Terry used Mitch as a telephoner. I requested everyone to meet at the Hut by 1400. In light of the increased security to get on the base, Terry suggested I call the China Lake Police Department (CLPD) to "smooth" the way for our members to get on the base. I called the CLPD, and they forwarded my call to the watch captain. I told him of our on-going operation, and he assured me he would let the front gate know we would be coming on the base for the next hour.

Members responding were Tom Sakai, Tom Roseman, Linda Finco, Bob Huey, Al Green, Debbie Breitenstein, Bud Gates, Elaine Riendeau, David Doerr, Andrew Mitchell, Mike Renta, Mark Lambert, and Mike Franklin. We gathered up ropes, gear bags, and the rescue seat for a technical rescue. We also took six radios and the four talk-about's. I called the dispatcher and let them know we were on our way.

Tom Sakai and Bob Huey left the hut first, shortly after 1400, and two more vehicles left a few minutes later. The fourth and last vehicle was on the road by 1415. The first three vehicles arrived at Red Rock at about 1440 and stopped at the trailhead of a trail leading up to the top of the sandstone ridge. The fourth vehicle arrived soon after and stopped at campsite 33 about 0.5 mile away.

Tom Sakai, Bob Huey, Tom Roseman, Mark Lambert, and Mike Renta left for the ridge with the ropes and some gear.

The three stranded scouts were Gary James Thomas (17) from Sylmar, Frank Victor Varnuska (13) from Northridge, and Kenneth Allen Chadwich (11) from Sylmar. All three were stuck on a thin knife edge ridge above campsite 33. The ridge was composed of slippery sandstone and was only a few inches wide in places with a sheer drop-off of 100 feet or so on both sides. A fall would most likely be fatal. The three had gone out on the ridge in the morning. Gary, the oldest, had been across the narrowest part several times but could not convince Kenny, the youngest, to budge. Gary had lowered a rope so the other scouts they were with could send water up to them.

Tom Sakai walked across on belay and, with help from Bob Huey, Mark Lambert, and Tom Roseman, belayed the three scouts back across. The scouts were belayed from both front and back to minimize a fall should one occur. Mike Renta assisted as a belay anchor. Bud Gates, Mike Franklin, and Andrew Mitchell set up a second belay and assisted belaying the scouts across another narrow part of the ridge. Al Green helped with the belay and took some wonderful pictures of the rescue. The rest of us (Linda, Debbie, Elaine, David, and I) stood by below at Camp 33.

While we were waiting, Sgt. Diederich pulled up to campsite 33 about 1530 or so. He showed us where the right front tire of his SUV had completely failed on the drive over from Bakersfield. The steel belts had done some significant damage to the wheel

well and other parts of the vehicle. It was only with his experience and good power steering that he managed to keep control.

By 1600, the three scouts were safely back to the trail, and everyone met back at the trailhead. We had one of the rangers take a picture of our group and the two youngest boys. Gary, Frank, and Kenny thanked us for our help.

The operation was secured at Red Rock at 1630. We returned to the Hut and had everything put away by 1810. Sgt. Diederich treated everyone to pizza at Nickoletti's. Participants: Walter Runkle (Leader), Terry Mitchell (Coordinator), Tom Sakai, Tom Roseman, Linda Finco, Bob Huey, Al Green, Debbie Breitenstein, Bud Gates, Elaine Riendeau, David Doerr, Andrew Mitchell, Mike Renta, Mark Lambert, and Mike Franklin

ACTIVITIES

Climbing Mt. McAdie

By Bob Rockwell

Mt. McAdie (13,799') is a striking mountain a few miles south of Mt. Whitney. Despite its prominence, it is not climbed often. On the morning of 6 August 2001, Al Green, Bob Huey, Dennis Burge, and I started out for it.

In the Whitney Portal parking lot shortly before dawn, it was light enough to see the damage done to three vehicles during the night by bears looking for food. Incredibly strong, they pull with their claws between the top of the door and the roof, bending the doorframe and shattering the glass.

After leaving the Whitney Trail at Trailside Meadow, we passed the outlet of Consultation Lake and started across the full mile of sometimes ugly talus and scree stretching up to Arc Pass. The regular route to Arc Pass aims for the left side, turns right to cross a ledge, and angles up toward the low point of the pass. The talus gets dreadfully loose as the route unfolds.

As we progressed, an obvious snow chute that zigzags up the center began to look promising, and we headed for it. Staying to the right of the snow, we found the going very nice. Sometimes we could scramble up rocky ledges; sometimes we were on scree that was a little loose but never as bad as the regular route. The terrain was typical class 2 at an angle of perhaps 25 to 30 degrees.

Zigzag chute below Arc Pass

After reaching Arc Pass, we struck out for McAdie. The easiest way ascends to a notch between the north (highest) and middle summits. There is also a south summit slightly lower than the other two. We would have time for only the north summit.

After negotiating the notch, we found ourselves looking up at the near vertical south face of the north summit. It was a face I had climbed before, and the steep but still

class 3 rock beckoned again. But Dennis had read the latest guidebook, which said that we should turn left and meander up the west side. I had not been that way, and no one else expressed a preference, so we turned left. We eventually found ourselves on top, with the meandering having been on mostly class 2 rock with an easy class 3 move here and there. We were the third party there this year.

The storm clouds that had threatened all day had held off, and even the noises that came from above were thunder only now and then with Navy jets being the culprits the rest of the time. A strange, high-pitched whine, which had initially sounded like electricity building, turned out to be a sailplane in the direction of Mt. Whitney.

To get a good comparison, we decided to descend Arc Pass the regular way and were soon cursing the interminable loose talus. Eventually, though, it was all behind us and we were on the Whitney Trail again.

Reaching the Whitney Portal Store before the kitchen closed, we did justice to some cold beer and the best cheeseburgers and fries on the planet. A nice conclusion to a pleasant day.

Some thoughts:

1. The zigzag route up the middle to Arc Pass seemed much better than the regular way.
2. The guidebook finish on Mt. McAdie is certainly easy, but the direct south face route is the one I'll do again.
3. Al took some great pictures on the trip. View them at <http://photos.yahoo.com/arold999>. Click on McAdie 080601.

Editor: The following is a page from the California Mountaineering Club's newsletter.

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DONATIONS

Gina Najera-Niesen

CLMRG gratefully acknowledges recent gifts from the following friends:

Ms. Paulette H. Williams Ridgecrest, California

SCREE

Check our web page at <http://www.clmrg.org>.

All telephone numbers in *The Talus Pile* are area code 760 unless noted otherwise.

DON'T BUG ME

Forget harsh chemicals to repel mosquitoes and other insects. Entomologists Chris Peterson and Joel Coats say they have found a natural chemical that's 10 times more effective than DEET, the chemical most commonly found in commercial repellents. It's **nepetalactone--the oil from the catnip plant**. Cats love catnip, acting crazy when they eat or roll in it, but no one knows why. (Reuters)