

China Lake Mountain Rescue Group

Talus Pile April 2002, #123

TRAINING SCHEDULE

Apr 8 Mon Meeting Westbrook, DeRuiter, Hinman
Apr 10 Wed Girl Scout Encampment Sakai
Apr 12-14 Fri-Sun Peak 13259 & Pinchot Rockwell
Apr 17 Wed Standard First Aid (6:00-10:00) Schafhauser
Apr 20-21 Sat-Sun Tracking seminar Breitenstein
Apr 24 Wed CPR First Aid Committee
Apr 26-28 Fri-Sun Polemonium & North Palisade Huey
May 1 Wed Stretcher Hut night Training Committee
May 4 Sat Ridge climbing
May 5 Sun Stretcher practice Training Committee
May 9/12 Thu/Sun Williamson Huey
May 13 Mon Meeting Rockwell, Myers, Runkle
May 18-19 Sat-Sun Hitchcock
May 24-27 Fri-Mon Shepherd Pass peaks Rockwell
Jun 1-2 Sat-Sun Ritter & Banner Roseman
Jun 6-9 Thu-Sun Jepson/Palisade Crest Rockwell
Jun/Jul 8-14 days in the Alps Huey
Jun 10 Mon Meeting Furgeson, D. Burge, Breitenstein
Jun 11-12 Tue-Wed Summer class
Jun 15-16 Sat-Sun Open
Jun 18-19 Tue-Wed Summer class
Jun 21-23 Fri-Sun Boundary & Montgomery Doerr
Jun 25-26 Tue-Wed Summer class
*Either or both days
SUNDAY ROCK CLIMBING coordinated by Werner Hueber

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

IN MEMORY OF

On 27 March 2002, Lieutenant Commander Arthur Jason "Pooh" Bayer, 34, and Aviation Machinist Mate Second Class Charles Clint King Chaco, 22, lost their lives in the crash of their Navy HH-1N Huey helicopter near Split Mountain during a routine search and rescue (SAR) practice.

LCDR Bayer was a member of the China Lake SAR team and an F/A-18 pilot who loved to fly. He was transferring to Point Mugu and wanted a last flight at China Lake before his traditional "wetting down" ceremony. There was space on the helicopter, so he went along for the ride that turned out to be his last. He leaves his wife Anne and daughter Gabriella.

AD2 Chaco reported to the "Dust Devils" of the Naval Weapons Test Squadron, China Lake in July 1998. He received the Navy Commendation Medal, the Good Conduct Medal, and the Meritorious Unit Commendation. He leaves his wife Maria and unborn son.

A memorial service on 3 April 2002 at the All Faith Chapel, Naval Air Weapons Station, China Lake honored the two Navy men.

Taps

*Day is done, gone the sun
From the lake, from the hill, from the sky.
All is well, safely rest.
God is nigh.*

*Thanks and praise for our days
'neath the sun, 'neath the stars, 'neath the sky.
As we go, this we know.
God is nigh.*

KILIMANJARO

A short report by Loren Castro

The early days of February 2002 found Bob Rockwell, Dennis Burge, and me on a guided climb of Mt. Kilimanjaro in Tanzania, Africa. We left Ridgcrest on 2 February and returned on 19 February.

Kilimanjaro, the highest free-standing mountain in the world, comprises three volcano cones: Shira, Mawenzi, and Kibo-the youngest of the three. Uhuru Peak on Kibo, at 19,340 feet (5895 meters), is the highest point in Africa. Kili is a popular destination because it is the easiest climb of the Seven Summits-the highest points in the seven continents.

The expedition consisted of conditioning climbs of Little Meru (12,470 feet) and

Meru (14,950 feet), the climb of Kili itself, and a three-day safari, which included a spectacular day in Ngorongoro Crater.

Bob, Dennis, and I all climbed Little Meru. Up at midnight, our team of 13 started for Meru the next morning. Bob and I had contracted some form of food poisoning and had to turn back early. We spent the rest of the day in our bunks. The rest of the team reached the summit.

Bob, not recovered from his illness, turned back from the climb of Kili. I had recovered sufficiently to press on. Summit day was brutal. It was a 3600-foot climb up the difficult Umbwe Route starting at midnight, but the worst part for me was the 9000-foot descent of the new variation of the Mweka Route to our campsite. The remainder of our team made it to the summit. Bob was represented well by his son, Bruce, who was first to the summit.

I apologize for the brevity of this report. I hope that the next issue of *The Talus Pile* can provide more information.

OPERATIONS REDUX

Follow-up search for "the Germans"

Death Valley

4-6 January 2002

By Debbie Breitenstein

I was a member of the original search party in October 1996 (refer to Operation 96-16 in *Talus Pile* Number 100 dated February 1997). The case has been bugging me ever since.

I finally decided to do a little more about it, so . . .

Linda Finco, Al Green, Tom Roseman, and I left Ridgecrest at noon on January 4 to search some areas of Anvil Canyon in Southern Death Valley. (So that you don't have to skip to the end, we were not fortunate enough to solve this puzzle, so it still beckons.)

I had contacted the park the day before and spoken to two rangers to let them know what we were doing and to see whether we might be able to review information on the search. No one had information at the time, but one woman I spoke with did comment that theories are many and varied and we need only say the key words "the four Germans" and everyone would know who and what we were talking about. We stopped at the Visitor's Center in Furnace Creek to fill out permits and talk with the rangers. No one with any history was in attendance, but we were given a point of contact in case we did locate any evidence. From there, we proceeded to Warm

Springs Canyon to set up camp.

Warm Springs is a wonderful camp, which I very highly recommend for any future visits. It is sheltered, has the only legal fire pit in the valley outside of the north campgrounds, has tables, has warm, natural pools to bathe in, and is smack in the middle of the canyon. Beautiful spot.

Now to the search: After a solitary Friday night, we headed out Saturday morning at a decent hour. We decided that we would search the lower sections of Anvil Canyon in hopes of finding evidence that has been washed into the brush over the intervening years.

We found a mining road that cuts across the ridges towards Anvil Canyon. From there, we searched the canyon floor up to and including Mesquite Springs. The springs were the lowest point our own team searched back in 1996. The canyon is amazingly clean--no bottles, 1 OLD can, and 1 mylar balloon. I found a tiny birdpoint and one burro bone. Tom found a recently deceased bobcat, a beautiful creature with a plush winter coat. It appeared undamaged and likely died of rabies or a feline distemper or a similar bad sort of thing. We kept a distance to be safe.

That night, there were new cars at Warm Springs. The first person we met happened to be Randy Walker's father, Cliff. He was there helping three other men who were there searching (you guessed it!) for the Germans. (And then I understood why the rangers seemed mildly amused by my interest.) These men have been searching the area regularly for a few years as private citizens. They are NOT members of any search group but rather people who have found the case suspicious and have decided to solve it. As citizens, they have had limited information on the details around the search, so we did manage to provide them some information to think about.

Meanwhile, they have been consulting psychics, 5 at least, 3 of which had told them that Manson's old gang had been in the canyon (on cars and motorcycles) and had shot the family and buried their bodies in various areas. They had not seen the area until after El Nino had altered the wash so we provided them with a few details that altered their speculations. In particular, there had been no tracks other than the van, so no one had transported the bodies back out as the psychics were claiming. Also, they assumed that we had not looked for graves or searched several of the areas our team spent three days covering.

A second theory (also proposed by a psychic) was that the Germans had found a metal object that had been lost from the China Lake ranges. It was something they weren't supposed to see. This theory was presented before they knew who we were and where we were from. We refrained from telling them that we'd have to make them disappear now.

Other theories were ventured. Currently, some of their group is convinced that there was foul play and are focusing efforts on locating evidence, circumstantial and other, that supports this. See the article I got from E. C. Harder (off the web site listed below) for other thoughts.

We spent about an hour beside Al's fire (he's a great pyromaniac, and we never got cold) discussing the original search and the various speculations that abound.

On day two, we started our search at the road crossing of Anvil Wash a few miles below the Canyon opening and worked up west to where we had started the day before. We found a corkscrew (which still works fine), a whole burro skeleton, two ancient (need a church key to open) beer cans, and lots of rocks and flotsam.

On returning to work Monday, Tom found a number of messages on his office phone from two park rangers. Dave Brenner, the ranger who originally found the car and who works that area of the park, attempted to give us information on areas where the park service is still focusing search efforts. Apparently, he is still actively pursuing this case. Additionally, Kyle Nelson, a park law enforcement ranger, called to make sure we had been contacted in response to my initial contacts with the park service. Dave B. is planning to search an area to the north of Anvil Canyon. (At the time of this writing, I have no information on what evidence might be driving the search in this direction.) It is likely that we may be invited to assist if anyone else is still interested. I will keep you updated if there is any new information.

Al received a business card from E. C. Harder and went to his web site to get the current report on their search efforts. The report, which was the attachment in his last e-mail message to the Group, may be obtained from

<http://www.wemweb.com/RealAdventure>. Al has requested to be notified of any newer reports. Tom has a business card and e-mail address from D. Hasselman of Virginia, who is very interested in the psychic part of the search.

For photos of our "expedition," see Al's pictures on the web:

<http://photos.yahoo.com/arold999>. Open "Death Valley 010502."

I believe every human has a finite number of heartbeats. I don't intend to waste any of mine running around doing exercises.

--Astronaut Neil Armstrong

GROUP BUSINESS

2001 Equipment Committee Report

Members: Dave Doerr (Chair), Werner Hueber, Eric Toler (Quartermaster), Paul DeRuitter, and Mike Renta.

On May 10, Al Green, Tom Roseman, Linda Finco, Terry Mitchell, and Werner Hueber met to discuss major purchases for 2001, primarily to evaluate whether to purchase the Paillardet rescue hoist or the Arizona Vortex tripod. The group recommended purchasing the rescue hoist (winch) with the crank option (no motor). The advantages are that the winch would be used more than the tripod; that only two people are required to raise a rescue load; that it can be used where very limited space

is available, such as in a raise on a high-angle face; that the edge problem is less severe with a vertical stretcher position; that most of our high angle rescues will have many edges, not just one (e.g., Whitney); that it allows for precise positioning and adjustments for a wall pick-off; and that it provides a unique capability to our group for performing high-angle rescues. Werner ordered the winch at a total cost of \$3475.44. The winch arrived with one of the skids broken during shipment and a helicoil missing. It was repaired.

We updated the "Equipment Use Policy" to add newly purchased gadgets:

Battery for laptop computer

One roll of 6-mm cord

Three 30-foot, 8-mm ropes for each rope bag

Two blue rope bags

Two TalkAbouts (We now have four)

We also purchased three bear-proof food containers, one chest harness, one full body harness (for stretcher attendant), two "540" belay devices (for rescue systems), and a kevlar stretcher.

We had a successful hut night on May 21. We pulled weeds, swept the floor, and put up new shelves. Each shelf has a 1500 lb. load capability. Eleven members attended. A sign that identifies its use by the CLMRG is now on the front of the hut. Thanks to Werner for taking care of this.

2001 Public Education Committee Report

Activities

Date Activity Number of Participants Members

12 Apr 01 Mojave Primitive Encampment 66 girls

3 adults Linda Finco

Terry Mitchell

Debbie Breitenstein

Dennis Burge

Tom Sakai

Tom Roseman

Al Green

15 Nov 01 Kiwanis Meeting Local community

Approximately 20 adults Bob Rockwell

Combined Federal Campaign Donors

Arthur J. Bayer Marjorie Vargus Elaine M. S. Riendeau

Peter J. Lesniak Denise R. Ritchie Lorraine Randolph

Renee L. Lesniak George Wiederhold Lloyd Crabtree

Robyn J. Anders Goro Fujiwara Tamara Tucker

William Deemer Carey Schwartz Susan Haynes

SHERIFF'S APPRECIATION DINNER

Sheriff Carl Sparks hosted his annual appreciation dinner for his search and rescue volunteers on 1 March 2002 at Hodel's Restaurant in Bakersfield. Nineteen CLMRG members and their guests enjoyed the sheriff's hospitality.

Al Green was recognized as our member of the year. President Tom Roseman read the following statement:

The top contributor for the China Lake Mountain Rescue Group is Arold (Al) Green. Amazingly close to the date of this dinner, Al has now been a member of CLMRG for 40 years! That fact alone would be enough to honor Al as our Contributor of the Year, as well as a contributor for all those years. What is more impressive is that Al is still an active field member, going on the toughest operations that we have. On those tough days when I am tired of the volunteer rescue business and think about quitting, I only have to think of Al and 40 years of dedication. To myself, I think making 20 years would be a major feat, and Al has doubled that! Al, I don't know how you do it year after year, but thanks!

The following members received longevity awards for their years of service:

40 years Al Green

35 years Janet Westbrook

30 years Sheila Rockwell

25 years Daryl Hinman and Mike Renta

20 years Bob Huey

10 years Debbie Breitenstein, Mike Myers, and Terry Mitchell

5 years Barry Niesen, Gina Najera-Niesen, and Mark Lambert

CLMRG'S HONORARY MEMBERS

By Bob Rockwell

CLMRG created the Honorary Member category in 1977. Originally called Life Membership, the intent was to recognize past members or non-members whose contributions to CLMRG were exceptional. We selected 10 people that first time and 12 more since.

Anyone can propose a new honoree by submitting a nomination to the CLMRG Board of Directors (BOD). If approved by the BOD, it goes to the membership. Voting is by secret ballot, and a simple majority is required.

The Honorary Member receives a certificate, a classic picture of Mt. Whitney, and a life subscription to *The Talus Pile*.

Here are the Honorary Members, the year they were selected, and a brief statement about each:

George Barnes (1977) George was a strong CLMRG member in the early years and very active on field operations. After leaving CLMRG, he formed the Bay Area Mountain Rescue Unit (BAMRU).

Tom Chapman* (1977) Tom was instrumental in procuring group equipment for CLMRG and did a lot to publicize the team. He also supported us financially for many years.

Russ Huse (1977) A charter member of CLMRG, Russ was active for 18 years until he retired and moved away. He was chairman of the Publications Committee (now called the Public Relations Committee) for many years.

Jim Nichols (1977) A longtime CLMRG member from the very early years, Jim was president for two years and very active in First Aid training.

George O'Grady (1977) An Army helicopter pilot, George flew many missions for us while stationed at the Naval Weapons Center (NWC). He helped get helicopter practices started.

John Ohl (1977) John was a charter member of CLMRG and was instrumental in forming the California Region of the Mountain Rescue Association (CRMRA). He was an active First Aid instructor and also did considerable work in maintaining our equipment.

Jack Pipa (1977) Jack was a Marine Corps helicopter pilot and flew with us on many missions--some very difficult. He helped us in many ways to hone our helicopter skills.

Bernie Sword (1977) Bernie was instrumental in getting us our rescue hut and specialized equipment. He brought us into Civil Defense so that we would be covered by workmen's compensation on search and rescue (SAR) missions and training.

Ray van Aken* (1977) A charter member of CLMRG, Ray taught other early members their first rock climbing skills. He was instrumental in getting us United Way support.

Bryson van Gundy (1977) A former Operations Officer at the airfield, Bryson did much to establish good relations between the Naval Ordnance Training Station

(NOTS)--the predecessor to NWC--and local SAR groups. He helped develop the Navy's willingness to call us on their mountain SAR missions.

Nick Bottka (1978) Nick was a long time CLMRG member and leader, very active on operations, and an excellent climber. He set an example for high qualification standards and served as president.

Roland Robbins (1979) Robbie was instrumental in indoctrinating CLMRG in mantracking and was one of our first member trainers. He wrote the book *Mantracking, Introduction to the Step-by-Step Method* and donated all profits from its sale to CLMRG.

Bill Stronge (1981) Bill was one of our most active members and served two terms as president. He inspired us with his technical climbing achievements and was one of our best leaders. He ascended both the Nose and the Salathe Wall on El Capitan within three weeks in the early 70s.

E. J. "Chip" Lancaster (1983) A superb Navy helicopter pilot, Chip flew on many SAR missions with us. He became a personal friend of several CLMRG members and went with us on many mountaineering trips.

Elizabeth Anderson (1986) Liz was the first woman in the CRMRA. She served as our Mountain Rescue Association (MRA) Representative for several years and was Secretary of CRMRA. She created *The Talus Pile* and was its editor for many years. She retired from CLMRG after 26 years of service.

Barbara Slates* (1986) Barb's husband Rich was killed on an operation on Telescope Peak. She had been a strong supporter of CLMRG while Rich was alive and joined CLMRG after his death. She served as a telephoner and coordinator for 17 years.

Ron Atkins (1993) Ron was an active and valuable member and leader for many years until he moved out of the area. He served as president and chaired our Carl Heller Committee, which made a determined effort to have a mountain named after Carl.

Steve Walker (1994) Steve contributed significantly to CLMRG in his relatively short time with the group until he moved away. He became a Technical member only three years after joining--one of the shortest times of anyone. He is remembered for producing a new edition of the climbing guide to Owens Ridge.

Bart Hine (1995) Bart became a leader three years after joining CLMRG--a remarkably short time. He served two terms as president. He is remembered for going on almost all the SAR operations that we were called for during his tenure.

Tom Stogsdill (1995) Tom was a longtime CLMRG member and leader and served two terms as president and two terms as CRMRA Rep.

Lee Lucas (1996) Lee was a member for 22 years. For the last 18 of those years, he was unquestionably one of our most capable operation leaders and excelled on difficult searches. He was an expert tracker, served as president, and was our MRA representative for many years. Lee served as vice president and president of CRMRA. He received the Landell award in 1990 in recognition of his contributions to MRA.

Frank Buffum (1997) Frank joined CLMRG in 1960 and served for 30 years--most of them as a leader. He was an active mountaineer and expedition climber. He served two terms as president and was the only president we have had whose multiple terms were not consecutive.

*Deceased

ABOUT THE MEMBERSHIP

The Maturango Museum's lecture series presented "Climbing the Jewel of the Tien Shan" by Dr. Robert Rockwell on Wednesday, March 20, at 7:30 p.m. at the museum. Rockwell, a longtime resident and member of the China Lake Mountain Rescue Group, is well known for his interest and experience in mountain climbing. Although he has made many excursions into the Himalayan range, his subject focused on the more northerly range, Tien Shan, which lies within parts of Kurgyzstan and western China and borders southeastern Kazakhstan. Rockwell's expedition took him to Khan Tengri, nearly 23,900 feet in elevation. He discussed this trip, his climbing experiences, and the people he met in this corner of Asia just north of Afghanistan.

Editor: This is an unforgivably late report about a prospective new member.

Benjamin David Niesen was born to Barry and Gina Najera-Niesen on April 30, 2000 at 11:47 p.m. weighing 8 pounds 3 ounces and standing 20.5 inches tall. He is now a very active and curious toddler!

Adventure is the result of poor planning.

--Colonel Blatchford Snell

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The web page Janet Westbrook 375-8371 jwestridgenet.net

DONATIONS

Gina Najera-Niesen

CLMRG gratefully acknowledges recent gifts from the following friends:

Sherri Davis and Stacy Dukes through the Bank of America Campaign.

Mrs. Janet Hammond Bradbury CA

John J. Olley Dunsmuir CA

SCREE

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

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

Editor: My research assistant, Percy Rockwell, found the following in The Talus Pile #78 (December 1988).

And a couple of tidbits from around 1981:

If you don't care where you are, you aren't lost.

The one who snores falls asleep first.