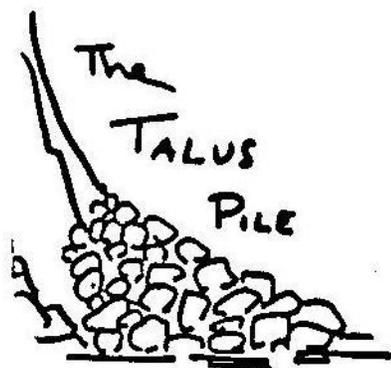


NUMBER 149

May 2011



CHINA LAKE MOUNTAIN RESCUE GROUP

P. O. BOX 2037
RIDGECREST CA 93556

TRAINING SCHEDULE

| | | | |
|-----------|---------|-------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| May 14 | Sat | Spanish Needle - from Lamont Meadow | Huey |
| May 17 | Tue | Head-to-Toe Exams & SOAP notes | Niesen |
| May 21 | Sat | MRA Regional Meeting in Ridgecrest | Bishop |
| May 27-30 | Fri-Mon | Memorial Day Weekend - Open | |
| Jun 4 | Sat | Telescope Peak | Loughran |
| Jun 12 | Sun | Kearsarge Pass – Search Practice | B. Rockwell |
| Jun 13 | Mon | Meeting | C. Burge, DeRuiter, C. Burge |
| Jun 14 | Tue | Summer Class Starts | Doerr |
| Jun 16-19 | Thu-Sun | MRA Spring Conference - Eagle, CO | Huey |
| Jun 18-19 | Sat-Sun | Open | |
| Jun 24-26 | Fri-Sun | Chamberlin, Newcomb, Pickering | Hinman |
| Jul 2-4 | Sat-Mon | July 4 th Weekend - Open | |
| Jul 8-10 | Fri-Sun | Open | |
| Jul 11 | Mon | Meeting | Gates, Finco, Miles |
| Jul 16-17 | Sat-Sun | Summer Class Day Hikes | Leaders |
| Jul 23-24 | Sat-Sun | Summer Class Overnight Hikes | Leaders |
| Jul 30-31 | Sat-Sun | Wallace, Haekel, Picture | Hinman |
| Aug 5-7 | Fri-Sun | Gambler's Special - Search Practice | Rockwell |
| Aug 13 | Sat | Tehachapi Technical Rock Evaluation | Bishop |
| Aug 17-27 | Wed-Sat | Wyoming – Gannet | Huey |
| Aug 19-21 | Fri-Sun | East Face Mt Whitney | Myers |

Check our web page at clmrg.org.

Check the California Region's web page at crmra.org.

Newsletters from other MRA groups, gear catalogs, etc. are available in the Hut.

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



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

OPERATION REPORTS

Operation 2011-01 (OES# 2011 LAW 0051) Search and Rescue

21 Feb 2011

Palm Springs Tram (Riverside County)

By David Miles, Operation Leader

Summary

The search was for Brian Carrico, 57, a skier in the San Jacinto area. A recent storm dumped a lot of new snow in the area. Mr. Carrico was found waiting out the storm and was rescued.

Narrative

On Sunday February 20, 2011 at 1630 I got a call from Sgt. Dan Edgerle for a search on San Jacinto. A skier had been reported missing Saturday night and RMRU had sent a team in that night and more teams on Sunday. They wanted us be there for the last tram to the top at 1900. I told Dan that we could not make it in time since the drive alone is almost 3.5 hours. I got Sheila Rockwell to be the Coordinator and told her that would meet at 0230 at the hut. Janet Westbrook helped with the telephoning. Sgt. Edgerle called back at 1640 and said that RMRU would like us there for a 0600 brief in the morning. I told him that we had a team of 6 plus a driver that would head down in the morning. Field team members were Dave Miles, Tom Sakai, Bob Huey, Dave Doerr, Bill Stratton, and Mike Derkey. Eileen Loughran drove one of the vehicles and assisted at the command post. I also called Dave Douglas and the Riverside Command Post (CP) with our headcount and confirmed that we would be there by 0600.

On Monday February 21, we met at the hut at 0230. We had a quick brief, packed gear and left. We arrived at the CP just before 0600 and checked in. I got briefed on our assignment and briefed our team. All six of us would make up one team (Team 14) for the search. Our subject was Brian Carrico, 57, who had gone up the tram Saturday to ski to San Jacinto and return. The weather on Saturday turned into a blizzard and had dumped 3 to 5 feet of fresh snow. He had spent some time as a ski patroller and had been in the area before. Our search assignment was to hike to Round Valley and head south to the Willow Creek Crossing and then make our way back via the Hidden Lake Divide.

We took the 0730 tram to the top and got started at 0800. We got to Round Valley and then reached the ridge to the south at 0945. Over 3 feet of fresh powder made it impossible to find any tracks from before the storm. We started making our way down the slope towards the Willow Creek Crossing and near the bottom we came across fresh tracks at 1115. They were made by one person after the storm wearing cross country ski boots and no skis. This was obviously our guy! We called CP with the track info and then set out to find the direction of travel. There were several paths all around the small area. A few minutes later we found a very small snow cave. From this spot we could now see that the various paths were to make an "SOS" and "XXX" in the snow. We called CP and told them to send the helicopter to the west following the tracks leaving the snow cave. We sent Tom, Bob and Mike to follow the tracks. About 5 to 10 minutes later the helicopter spotted Brian in a small clearing waving at them. We all started on what would be a 1 hour sprint to make it to Brian. The helicopter had dropped off a search team from Malibu at Wellman Divide a little earlier. The pilot directed them to come down the hill to Brian's location since they were closer. We continued up the hill towards Brian to assist. When we reached Brian at 1245, the Malibu team (Erik Franco, John Thompson) had heated up some water and were giving him hot cocoa. We also had a thermos of hot water which was used to continue giving Brian hot cocoa. We opened heat packets and placed them inside his clothing to help warm him. We used an emergency bivy to shelter him and had three of us crowd around him to transfer body heat. This protected him from further exposure until the helicopter (STAR-9) came to drop off the Screamer Vest. STAR-9 left for a few minutes to get fuel and we put GoreTex pants, gloves, and goggles on Brian to protect him from the rotor down wash during the raising and then rigged him in the Screamer Vest. At 1315 STAR-9 returned and hoisted Brian up. We relocated about 100 yards away and were hoisted up by AIR-5 at 1400.

When we landed in Palm Springs we went to the hospital and visited Brian and his family and collected the clothes that we had put on him. We then sent a few to the top of the tram to collect the overnight gear that we left there. Afterwards we went to the CP and checked out and went to dinner. We returned to the hut at 2030 and debriefed the operation.



SC: Snow Cave, V: Victim found, LZ: Landing zone for the helo

Operation MRA Reaccreditation in Technical Rock

5 March 2011

Alabama Hills (Inyo County)

By Mike Franklin, Operation Leader

Summary

The California MRA reaccreditation test was in technical rock this year. CLMRG participated along with all the other California MRA teams. CLMRG was successful in passing the test.

Narrative

Thirteen members attended the test, but it should be noted these same members spent many hours over the preceding weekends in preparation for the test. The members were Mike Franklin, Dave Miles, Tom Sakai, Bud Gates, Mike Myers, Jeff Green, Bill Stratton, Daryl Hinman, Paul DeRuiter, Mike Derkey, Eileen Loughran, Dan Bishop and Tom Roseman. The thirteen members left the hut 0630. After breakfast at McDonalds, we checked in at the south end of movie road in the Alabama Hills and then found a place to park in Tuttle Creek campground to await the start of the test.

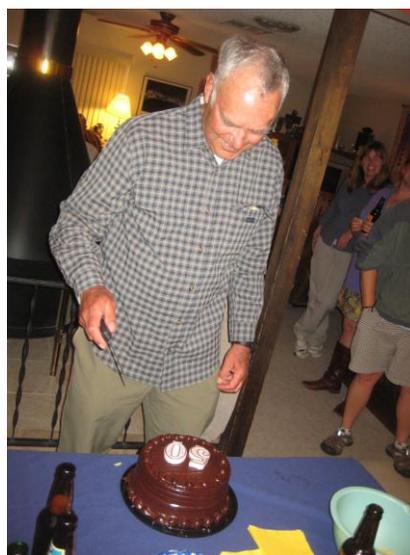
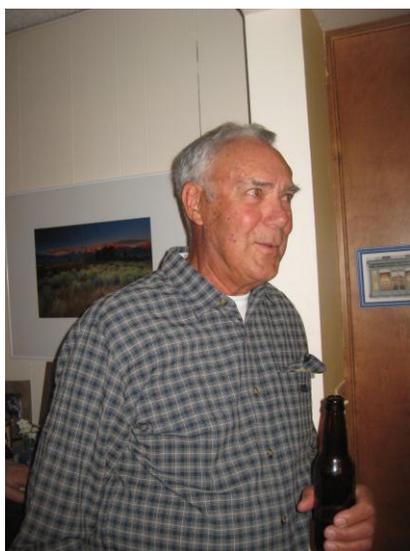
Each team needed to provide one victim and two proctors for other teams. Bill Stratton was the victim, and Paul DeRuiter and Tom Roseman were the proctors. These three left the group to begin their assignments before 0900. After we received our two proctors, we transported them and ourselves to the start of our problem. The parking situation was a bit tricky but manageable.

We exited the vehicles and the hasty team, comprised of Bud Gates (first aid), Daryl Hinman (safety officer), and Mike Derkey (lackey) left within 5 minutes. The rest of the team followed closely with the bulk of the gear. The exceptions were Dan Bishop, who remained behind in reserve, and Eileen Loughran who was coordinating first aid over the radio and taking soap notes. The victim was located after about thirty minutes of

2nd and 3rd class scrambling, thanks to having her GPS coordinates. Bud assessed the victim and determined she had a broken ankle. Every field member was on site shortly except for Dan, who was told to come on up with the rescue seat. The rescue itself was accomplished in two phases. The first phase consisted of transporting the victim in the stretcher a short distance to get her out of the hole we found her in. It was necessary to raise the stretcher about 6 feet, which was accomplished simply by unassisted lifting. The stretcher was belayed at this point through the use of a Petzel ID. After a short break, the second phase began. The victim was transferred to the rescue seat and was piggy backed down the hill by Dave Miles, who controlled the descent by rappelling on a fixed line with the Scarab belay/lowering device. Our only deduction occurred at this point. After fixing both the main line and a belay to Dave's harness, it was discovered upon weighting the lines that the way everything was rigged, it was interfering with the proper use of the Scarab. Both lines were removed to facilitate fixing this problem, and we were dinged for having the victim in an unsafe situation. I do not feel that anything unsafe actually occurred, as Dave and the victim were roughly 8 feet from the edge, and the situation occurred before they were officially "on-belay." Dave proceeded to belay himself down the gentle slope over somewhat rough terrain, being assisted by several members, particularly Mike Derkey, Mike Franklin, and Bud. About 50 feet down the first pitch, the proctor, had us switch to a raising. We had not anticipated this, however it was accomplished with minimal difficulty. Dave rappelled an entire pitch and tied into anchors that Tom Sakai and Dan had set in anticipation of his arrival. The ropes were hauled and fastened to this second set of anchors, and Dave rappelled about another half pitch. Due to the ease of the terrain, Dave was able to complete the second pitch without the use of the Scarab, and simply relied on the belay line as a backup. A third pitch was unnecessary as the proctor ended the test. The victim made a miraculous recovery and we all returned to Tuttle Creek campground. Members who were not staying overnight in the campground, left and arrived at the hut by 2200. Overall, our team performed very well and we passed the reaccreditation test.

A Major Milestone in 2011!

Al Green - 50 years with the China Lake Mountain Rescue Group



Arold "Al" Green first joined the China Lake Mountain Rescue Group in 1961. It was on a climb of Mt. Shasta in 1958 that Al met the founder of the CLMRG, Carl Heller. Al was attending UC Davis at the time, and working at Mather AFB. Carl encouraged Al to consider China Lake after finishing school and that he ought to consider joining CLMRG if he decided to work at China Lake. In 1960 Al had finished his Masters Degree at

UCD and did take a job at China Lake where he worked as a research physicist in the Physics Division for the next 30 years.

Al took the 1961 class offered by CLMRG on Mountaineering and soon joined the CLMRG. A dedicated SAR volunteer and also an accomplished mountaineer and rock climber, Al has climbed many of the classic Sierra and Yosemite routes (including the NW Face of Half Dome and The Nose of El Cap) and with his climbing partner Bill Stronge, they made many first ascents.

Al was the 30th person to join the CLMRG and has been on over 500 operations. Al is a past President of the group; was an Operations Leader for many years; and was a member of the Qualification committee for 28 years. In the last 10 years Al has helped to update and modernize our annual Basic Mountaineering and Mountaineering Safety class which we offer to the community each summer. Al is still an active field member. His knowledge and experience make him an invaluable asset on any operation.

Congratulations Al on this major milestone.

Sheriff's SAR Appreciation Dinner

CLMRG members attended the annual Kern County Sheriff's Volunteer Services SAR Appreciation Dinner on March 26, 2011. After the dinner the Sheriff gave special recognition to team members achieving major milestones in 2010. CLMRG members receiving recognition were Eileen Loughran, 5 years, and Paul DeRuiter and Tom Roseman for 25 years each. Linda Finco received recognition for CLMRG's 2010 top contributor for her efforts in revamping the team's first aid trainings to focus more on improving first aid skills for the wilderness and practicing those skills in hands on training sessions. The results of our revamped first aid curriculum were demonstrated during our MRA Technical Rock reaccreditation test in March, where our team scored 3 out of 3 on the first aid aspects of the test. Everyone in attendance had a great time and a great meal.

A 2011 Kilimanjaro Trek

by Bill Stratton



Last October (2010) Dan Bishop initiated the Kilimanjaro expedition by suggesting it to Bob Rockwell. Bob was definitely interested and mentioned it to others and I jumped at the chance. Jay du Nesme, a hiking friend joined us and the planning went into overdrive. We signed on with Jagged Globe (JG) for a guided expedition. Tanzania visas were ordered and flight arrangements were made. On January 30, 2011, we flew out of LAX for Kilimanjaro International Airport (JRO), Tanzania, Africa, by way of Detroit and Amsterdam. It is a long 30 hour trip across 11 time zones, nearly half way around the world. We were met at the airport and taken to the Keys Hotel in Moshi, 25 miles away. Mark Campbell, our JG guide, briefed us on the trek, we had a beer, and finally headed off to bed shortly before midnight, Tanzania time. In addition to the four of us, our group consisted of a Canadian, two Brits, and two South Africans.

The overall plan was to first climb Mt. Meru (14,968 feet), 45 miles west of Kilimanjaro. This 4 day climb would serve as acclimatization in preparation for Kilimanjaro. Following this climb we would return to Moshi for one night before starting the 6 day Kili climb from the Umbwe Gate and using the Western Breach route (class 3 in a few places) and returning by a different route to Mweka Gate. A 2 ½ hour bus ride took us to the Mt. Meru trailhead at the Momella Gate. Here we joined our Tanzanian crew of 20 - including two guides, porters, cooks, plus a ranger from Arusha National Park. Our trek included 3 nights spent in comfortable huts, and camp meals served in dining halls. We had quite basic accommodations with 4 people to a room with 2 sets of bunk beds. Breakfasts and dinners were in camp and lunches were bagged up for us to carry on the day's hike. The trek was mostly on a trail except for the last 500 feet of elevation which turned into a rock scramble. We all summited on the third day and retreated to our previous camp. Only one of the group, a South African that lived at sea level, showed signs of altitude distress. We returned to the trailhead on the fourth day where our bus met us and took us back to the Keys Hotel. There we celebrated with showers, a buffet dinner, and beer.

The next day the bus took us to the Umbwe Gate to start the ultimate part of the trek, Kilimanjaro itself. At the trailhead we joined the crew of 37, including 4 native guides. This was also a trail hike for the first 4 days. The journey for the first two days was through interesting and beautiful forest, quite dense with tall trees at first, then more open forest with shorter trees. The second camp was under the Great Barranco Wall, a spectacular volcanic rock outcropping. This large camp is where our little used trail crosses the popular Machame Route trail. Bob estimated there were 500 people camped here. This was surprising because we saw very few other groups on the trail. The third day we were in a strange forest of short, frilly trees, and beyond that we were above tree line and finally above all vegetation. The fourth day was short with less than two hours hiking which left plenty of rest time and allowed for an early dinner and early to bed to try to sleep as much as possible before a 1:30 AM wake up.

Summit day started with the early rise and breakfast. We were on the trail by headlamp just before 3 AM. The trail climbed steeply and there was a very small section of class 3. We were in the upper part of the Western Breach climbing the remainder of the class 3 by sunrise. Two hours later we crested the crater rim and moved into the summit crater. We still had 300' to climb to reach the highest point, Uhuru, 19,340 feet. All of our group arrived at Uhuru by 10:30 AM. We celebrated the peak with tons of picture taking. After an hour we started down by a route which was the top segment of the most popular ascent routes. Shortly we turned off and down a steeper scree-filled route to speed our downward progress. Soon we encountered a party, stopped, where one of the members seemed comatose. We learned that he was a blind climber, doing the Kilimanjaro ascent to raise money for charity. Apparently he had started up from Barafu Hut at midnight, summited successfully, and descended to around 18,000 ft where he collapsed. His companions said he had nothing to eat or drink since leaving camp. We offered assistance but some rescue team members were ascending to him, and before long, at least 20 people were carrying him down on their shoulders in a cloud of dust. It was an otherworldly scene. We continued down to our final camp making this almost a 14-hour day. Before dinner for about half an hour, we were treated to a heavy snow and hailstorm, with thunder and lightning. Our final day of trekking brought us to the trailhead at Mweka Gate. Before loading onto our bus there was opportunity for a couple of beers and then we went back to the Keys Hotel. Celebrations of lunch (hamburger with fried egg on top) and beer followed later by a buffet dinner concluded our trekking in grand style.

After the trek, most of the group headed for home. Dan had pressing business at home, but Bob, Jay and I signed up for a three day safari starting the day after our Kili trek. It included touring in Lake Manyara National Park, the Ngorongoro Crater, and Tarangire National Park. This superb add on was led by Arnold, who served both as driver and guide, and he did a great job finding and identifying the animals for us. There were Cape buffalo, wildebeests, zebras, gazelles, elephants, lions, hippos, warthogs, wild dogs, hyenas, elands, monkeys, rhinos, ostriches, and flamingoes, and that is not an exhaustive list. The first night we stayed at the very nice Ngorongoro Crater Lodge and the second at a lodge in Tarangire National Park in individual canvas sided and grass-roofed 2-person "cabins". Breakfasts and dinners were at the lodges and picnic lunches were our noontime fare. Having traveled so far from home, the safari was a very nice addition to the treks and gave us a different set of memories of Africa. It was well worth the extra time and money. After returning one last time to the Keys Hotel we spent our last night there and part of the next day exploring Moshi and just relaxing. Our return flight left JRO at 9 PM and proceeded via Dar Es Salaam, Tanzania, before proceeding to Amsterdam and then directly to LAX.

I conclude with a few words about our trekking group, Jagged Globe. Bob had trekked with JG before and found it to be a good experience. On this trip we also found them to be very good. They had done all the planning and everything went smoothly with the equipment they provided, the local people they hired, including bus and driver, guides, porters, cooks and camp helpers. This carried over to the safari that the 3 of us took. In addition, JG provided a guide to provide a direct interface between the trekkers and the locals. Mark Campbell did very well at this. There were occasions on both Meru and Kili where Mark took into consideration all of the particular capabilities of our group and modified the preset itinerary to match our needs and desires. Overall we liked the service provided by JG.

Pictures of the trek and safari can be found at:

Mt. Meru trek <http://www.flickr.com/photos/rockwellb/sets/72157626070254590/>

Mt. Kilimanjaro trek <http://www.flickr.com/photos/rockwellb/sets/72157626073754396/>

Safari <http://www.flickr.com/photos/rockwellb/sets/72157626081548646/>

A Climbing Fall on the Spur in the Alabama Hills

by Bill Stratton

Editor's Note: Bill thought there might be some lessons learned in this write up for other new climbers beginning to lead, so he submitted it for print in the Talus Pile.

On Thursday, April 14, 2011 I suffered a leader fall of about 20 feet. I was climbing with Werner Hueber and Tom Sakai at the Tall Wall in the Alabama Hills. The route I was on was "Spur" rated 5.7***. Tom climbed the route first and left his quick-draws. I climbed next and had clipped into 3 or 4 draws. I was at a place where the route is mostly on the arête but I had worked my way into the crack to the right. The next draw was 6" to the left of the edge of the arête and perhaps 10 feet above the next lower protection. From there the route moves up another few feet and then left out onto the face where there is an inch wide ledge to step onto. I was not sure just when to go onto the face so I was looking for the ledge. I thought I saw something of a ledge at my level below the hanger and draw but was not sure. In any case my next move needed to be to clip into the draw. I moved more directly onto the arête with footing that was minimal and I remember feeling less than real solid. From that position I could reach the biner of the draw. I pulled one arm length of rope, put the bight in my teeth and pulled a second length. Then I stretched to reach the biner, and as I tried to clip it my foot slipped (probably due to the changing angles of force). Suddenly I was falling. I don't remember much if anything about the fall itself. I was surprised. I thought it took a long time before Tom caught me. Tom said it seemed to him like a long time before he felt my weight on the rope. I banged the wall some during the fall.

Once I stopped falling, the first thing I felt was a lot of pain in my left ankle. I was breathing really hard. My chin hurt and as I rubbed it I noticed blood on my hand. My right shoe was pulled off the heel but still there. I was held by the rope (of course) with my right side against the wall. I was not feeling too good. I don't remember what Tom or Werner said, nor what I replied. At some point I tried to pull my shoe back on but soon figured out that that was not going to happen without unlacing it. I eventually asked Tom to lower me. I tried to turn to face the wall but realized that my left foot was not going to be useful in bracing my descent so Tom just slowly lowered me and I scraped along on my right side occasionally able to push out with my right hand.

On the ground, still breathing hard, I could stand, putting most of my weight on my right foot. I was able to untie and then hobble over to my water bottle for a needed drink. Tom and Werner assisted in examining me, with the only severe injury being the left ankle. I slowly made my way around a corner to where my pack was, about 30 feet away. There I got out my Ibuprofen and took two. I was definitely having an "Acute Stress Reaction" (that thing we sometimes incorrectly call "shock"). I was neither dizzy nor nauseous but I was light headed and breathing way too fast (but I didn't hyperventilate).

We drove to Ridgecrest and I checked in to the ER at the hospital. The doctor and nurses attended me very well. They said that the x-rays showed nothing broken. That was a huge relief! They washed each of the scrapes and bandaged them all, chin, both arms, hip (it was bruised and scraped), and both knees. I began to look like the "Invisible Man" or a mummy. They put a removable (Velcro and zipper) splint/brace on the ankle and sent me home and told me to keep it elevated, put ice on it periodically, and see my doctor in 3 days.

So that is pretty much my story, except for these 20-20 hindsight observations I want to share:

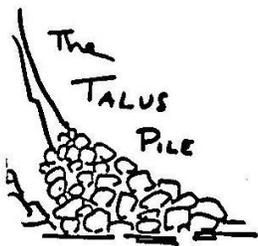
1. Listen to your body both physically and mentally. This was my first "leader fall". For the last two years I have been leading 5.6, 5.7 and a few 5.8 almost all in the Alabama Hills, but several at Great Falls Basin. I'm still new enough at it that I'm pretty cautious (my opinion). In February a group of us had climbed in the Hills and that day I climbed 8 pitches (actually 9 but Tom and Werner won't let me count one of them). Then March 15th I climbed 4 pitches and thought that was enough. On the day of this fateful fall I had climbed Rotten Bananas 5.7**** and Bananarama 5.8**** also at Tall Wall leading both in the same fashion, using draws left by Tom. I had thought both were tough climbs, particularly Bananarama where I had gotten stuck at the crux move for maybe 10 minutes before gutting it out and moving on to finally get past it. Obviously I was not at my top form that day.
2. Listen to your friends. When Tom had descended Spur he asked me if I wanted a top rope. I did not give it much thought and said I would lead it. I think Tom was saying, "Given the problems you just had, do you really think you should lead this?" I really should have thought about what Tom was saying more seriously.
3. Keep focused on the right things. I was distracted by thinking about the next moves, out onto the face. I should have only been thinking about getting ready to clip into the biner. Since I remember that I was not comfortable with my foot placement, I should not have been reaching for the hanger. First get stable, and then clip in.
4. I always wear a helmet when leading. I'm really glad I did. It did not get dinged, but it sure could have.
5. I was very lucky.
6. It's really nice to have a great belayer!

PASSAGES



Bob Fletcher joined CLMRG in September 1975 and remained on the team until June 1993. Bob assisted in communications and his skill as a HAM operator helped in many operations over the years. Below is the obituary provided by the family for the local newspapers.

Robert (Bob) Fletcher passed away at Ridgecrest Regional Hospital of complications from pneumonia on Jan. 3, 2011, with his family at his side. He was born November 4, 1922, the second of two children to Raymond Nelson Fletcher and Lucille Carr Fletcher. His family moved to Bloomington, Illinois in the mid 1920's and later settled in Spokane, Washington where Bob was raised. His summers were spent at Camp Reed, a YMCA camp that his father ran during the Great Depression. In 1942, following the outbreak of WWII, he joined the Navy. After training in electronics in Logan, Utah, Corpus Christy, Texas, and Jacksonville, Florida, he eventually served in Okinawa as part of the Bat Missile Squadron. While stationed in Washington, D.C., in 1944, he met and married the love of his life, Frances Ann Yocom. After the war, Bob and Fran settled in Seattle, Wash., while Bob earned an EE degree at the University of Washington on the GI Bill. In 1950, Bob went to work for the National Bureau of Standards and moved to Riverside, CA. While in Riverside, Bob and Fran produced two children, and Bob worked for the Naval Ordnance Lab in Corona, and for Motorola's Riverside Research Laboratory beginning in 1954. The family moved to Scottsdale, Arizona in 1963 following Bob's transfer to the Motorola Aerospace Center. In 1968 Bob returned to government service taking a civil service job with the Navy in Norco, CA. He was transferred to China Lake in 1970 and after living in base housing for a few years, Bob and Fran purchased a house in Ridgecrest where they lived for over 35 years. They retired in 1982, but both remained active. Bob was very involved in Navy MARS for several decades and also served on the hospital board, the China Lake council, and the China Lake Mountain Rescue Group.



China Lake Mountain Rescue Group
P. O. Box 2037
Ridgecrest CA 93556

Address Correction Requested

