

Mt. Whitney (continued)

When we arrived I learned that the White Mountain helicopter was at the accident site with a doctor. I talked to Jock DeSwart from Sierra Madre who had been climbing with Janet Carlson from Tacoma, Washington. They had just started the Mountaineers Route when Janet was struck by a rock. Jock put her in a sleeping bag and started for help.

We waited until 8 o'clock, when the White Mountain helicopter landed, and learned that the victim was deceased. (21 manhours)

#7206 Recovery, Drowned fisherman, Devils Postpile Jim Nichols

We received a call from the Madera County Sheriff's office at 1600 Friday, 23 June, for five men to assist in a possibly technical body recovery. Bill Sweatt and I met Nick Bottka, Bob Rockwell, and Bill Stronge at Reds Meadows early Saturday morning. Sgt. Conway, of the Madera County Sheriff's Department, told us that at 1340 Thursday, the victim was seen by his partner, stuck on rocks above Fish Creek, attempting to retrieve a fishing lure. The partner left to get a rope, but when he returned, the victim was gone. Both fishermen were 16 years old and had hitchhiked to Mammoth from the Bay Area.

Madera County Deputies and Mounted Posse personnel had located the body Friday about 1.5 miles downstream from the scene of the accident, but needed assistance raising the victim to the trail. Saturday, we hiked south 6 miles to Pond Lily Lake, then dropped 1000 ft. to Fish Creek. Here, the victim was placed in our stretcher, with the wheel attached. A hauling rope was tied to the stretcher; and with five men hauling and four supporting the stretcher, we gained the trail through class 2 brush and talus in about two hours. Only two rattlesnakes were encountered during the ascent, but they were not hostile and were avoided by slight route variations. However, the discovery of rattlesnakes in the middle of the hauling party in an operation such as this must be considered disruptive.

We met the packer at Pond Lily Lake. He had five horses for us, courtesy of the Madera County Sheriff. The trip back to Reds Meadows was rapid, mostly due to the tendency of the fresh horses to trot or gallop through the thick brush and along the precipitous canyon walls. Only a slight delay was caused by Bill Stronge's attempt to see Rainbow Falls, which resulted in a great crashing about in the forest and loud expletives from both horse and rider. It seems that the horse had already been to the falls and wasn't interested in sightseeing on the way back to the stables.

Comment: The wheel worked well and was not damaged. It made the recovery much easier and should always be taken when the loaded stretcher must be moved any significant distance.

(114 manhours, 0 excused)

#7207 Transit, Mid-air collision, NWC Coso Range Al Green

At 1005 Monday, 26 June, Chief Boyd from NAF called and reported a mid-air collision in the Cosos. He wanted us to come to NAF Operations as soon as possible, to be immediately available if needed. I called Marlene and told her to get 7 men and have them go to NAF with day packs and minimum technical gear. Dennis and Nick work in the same area as I do, so I notified them before going home to get my equipment. At 1025 Dennis, with Nick and me right behind him, arrived at the hut. We left for NAF at 1030 with radios and first aid gear.

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Mid-air collision (continued)

Two F-4's with a crew of 2 in each had collided; and three parachutes had been sighted. When we got to NAF, the three men who had parachuted were enroute by helo back to NAF. We stood by for approximately 30 minutes until notified that the fourth crewmember had been located. Unfortunately, he had been fatally injured.

Our team consisted of Green, Stronge, Burge, Bottka, Nichols, Lucas, Camphausen, Sweatt, Woodman and Brown. (21 manhours, 9 NWC excused)

Comments: 1. An immediate call in an emergency situation like this enables us to be in a position of saving a life if our capabilities are required. We appreciate this.

2. It's been a while since we've had a real emergency mobilization and I feel that we performed very well. All ten in the right place within 45 minutes of the first call.

3. It was partly fortuitous, but having most of the team go directly to NAF rather than stop by the hut worked OK. By the way, when the telephoner says NAF, the place to go is the north end of Hangar 3 (Operations).

TRAINING

Helicopter Practice (April 15) Bill Stronge

In the last few years, frequent availability of helicopters for rescue operations has greatly increased our speed in getting to a victim and getting him evacuated. Fifteen members of CLMRG met to review helicopter safety and loading procedures with Maj. Ben Rinehart of NAF. We flew in the Huey to "B" mountain for practice in selecting landing sites and quickly loading or unloading our gear. Later, stretchers were hoisted into the Huey hovering at 50 feet. A horizontal stretcher orientation was far easier to handle than a vertical one that we had previously tried. Our thanks to Maj. Rinehart, crewchief Parker and NAF for this valuable experience.

Stretcher Practice (May 15) Bill Stronge

A turnout of 13 assembled at the hut at 5:30 p.m. for a confusing description of a possible victim at Robber's Roost. We left prepared (hopefully) for any possible situation and arrived at the big rock about 6:00. A short time later an unconscious "victim" was spotted 200 feet up the West face. At dusk we completed setting up for a 50 foot stretcher raising and then a lowering down the east face. Poor natural anchors, loose rock and steep faces characterized this practice operation. It was 10 o'clock when we got the victim off the rock and ready for the short carry back to the parking area. Refreshments provided by the training committee concluded the evening. Members participating were Heller, Stronge, Lucas, Peterson, Joy, Pearia, Rockwell, Sweatt, Brown, Craig, McGinnis, Waugh, Warschauer.

"Hut Nite" Lee Lucas

Twenty-one members turned out for this equipment demonstration on the evening of June 5. Participants reviewed the location of rescue gear in the hut and the operation of the oxygen equipment. Set-up and operation of the base camp radio antennas and the new Kaar DT-37 radio was also practiced.

FINANCES Barbara Slates

We are grateful to the Xi Omicron Mu Chapter of Beta Sigma Phi sorority for another generous donation. We also want to thank the friends of Janet Palmer in Code 7511 who contributed to our equipment fund. Two more donations to the Wally Henry Memorial Fund have been received, from Rob Roy McDonald and the Secor family. The total amount in the fund is now \$432.

MEMBERSHIP

A few changes in telephone numbers to keep your roster up to date...

Don Peterson's work phone is now 939-3978. Liz Anderson can be reached during working hours at 939-3391...she's on detail to Code 752. And Bill Sweatt says his alternate work number should be 939-3132.

PRESIDENT'S ANCHOR POINT Lee Lucas

Here we are midway through 1972 and no major search yet! (I just hope that statement is still true by the time people read it! Ed.) Is it possible that MRA wilderness safety education is paying off? Let's hope so. So far this year we have had 8 calls (+ 1 alert). This compares with 12 (+4 alerts) at this time last year, and 8 (+3 alerts) in 1970. Then we read where Rocky Mountain Rescue in Boulder is averaging 1 operation per day and wonder if the climbing craze will move westward from the Rockies to the Sierras.

Parking is a problem at most eastern Sierra roadheads. You know it and I know it. And now the Forest Service has admitted it. Regulations limiting backpacker parking in campgrounds and roadhead lots are now in force on the north fork of Big Pine Creek and all three forks of Bishop Creek. This may distress some of us backpackers. But why should day-users and roadhead campers have to squeeze between our abandoned autos? Present regulations are only a stop-gap measure. We should all be thinking about the problem and sharing any constructive comments we may have with the Forest Service.

MRA is interested in your search and rescue experiences. The Operations Statistics Committee is gearing up for a special project on searches for persons lost in wilderness areas. Which way do lost people go? How far? How long do they survive? Answers to these questions - which of course depend on victim's age, physical and mental condition, terrain, density of vegetation, weather, etc., may help you plan a better search. The Seattle-MRC newsletter mentions only CLMRG in connection with this project. Actually, it is an undertaking of the entire California Region. Members of the Operations Statistics Committee include:
yours truly - CLMRG, chairman
Minor Harkness - Sierra Madre
Dennis Kelley - Montrose
John Wehbring - San Diego

We also read in the Seattle-MRC newsletter that a standard MRA parka -- orange with a 3 inch blue arm band on each sleeve -- was proposed at the Portland meeting. The matter was tabled until the Phoenix meeting to give member units time to consider the proposal. What do you think?