

CHINA LAKE MOUNTAIN RESCUE GROUP

TALUS PILE #100 February 1997

SCHEDULE

Feb 15 Sat Rock Skills TC (Hinman)
Feb 18-21 Tue-Fri Osterander Hut Money penny
Feb 21-23 Fri-Sun Whitney Rockwell
Mar 1-2 Sat-Sun CRMRA Search Recertification MRA Rep
Mar 9-11 Sun-Tue Pear Lake Hueber
Mar 10 Mon Meeting/Stove Maintenance Huey/Jain/Davis
Mar 12 Wed Snow Skills Hut Night TC
Mar 15 Sat Snow Stretcher/Winter Skills TC
Mar 21-23 Fri-Sun Cedric Wright/Colosseum Rockwell
Late March Easter Week Girl Scout Encampment Schmierer
Mar 29-30 Sat-Sun Owens Gorge Hueber
Apr 1/8/15/22/29 Tue First Aid Topic A First Aid Committee
Apr 4-6 Fri-Sun Mountaineering/Climbing TBD Myers
Apr 12-13 Sat-Sun Lamarck Hueber
Apr 14 Mon Meeting/Ready Packs Ferguson/C. Burge/Lambert
Apr 18-20 Fri-Sun Tahquitz Hueber
Apr 26 Sat Paiute Monument Finco
May 1-5 Thu-Mon Mt. Shasta Hinman
May 7 Wed Stretcher Hut Night Green
May 10 Sat Stretcher Practice Green
May 12 Mon Meeting/First Aid Kits Rockwell/Mitchell/Dorey
May 13-15 Tue-Thu CPR A. Mitchell
May 16-18 Fri-Sun Peak 12960 Rockwell
May 17 Sat CRMRA meeting (West Valley) Finco
May 24-26 St-Mon Climbing (Needles) Davis
May 30-Jun 1 Fri-Sun Climbing (Domelands) Lambert
Jun 7-8 Open
Jun 9 Mon Meeting/Knots Breitenstein/Jain/Roseman

CLMRG is funded by United Way of Indian Wells Valley.

OPERATION REPORTS

Tom Roseman

96-11 3 Sep 96 Search Pacific Crest Trail Mitchell

On 3 September, I received a phone call from Sgt. Marty Williamson of the Kern County Sheriff's Office requesting that we go on alert for two overdue hikers who were walking the Pacific Crest Trail from Walker Pass to Kennedy Meadows. The hikers had left Walker Pass with two dogs on 30 August and had planned to be in Kennedy Meadows by 2 September. When they had not arrived by 3 September, the wife of one of the hikers called her husband's commanding officer. The China Lake helicopter crew spotted the missing hikers, who by this time were out of water. The crew was able to pick them up and fly directly to China Lake.

Participating CLMRG members: Andrew Mitchell (leader), Al Green, Steve Florian, Mike Dorey, Werner Hueber, Randy Barker, and Sheila Rockwell (coordinator).

96-13 15 Sep 96 Alert Mt. Whitney Hinman

At 1400 on Sunday, 15 September, Pat Elliot of the Inyo County Sheriff's Posse called to alert CLMRG for an overdue climber in the North Fork of Lone Pine Creek on the approach to the east face of Mt. Whitney. The man had become separated from his companions late Saturday while hiking to their intended base camp at East Face Lake. After waiting overnight at their camp, the companions hiked down to Whitney Portal and reported the missing man. Pat was sending Inyo personnel up by helicopter for a quick search of the area below East Face Lake, and he wanted CLMRG on alert in case the man was not located. At 1630, Pat called back to report that the missing man had been located and was in good condition.

Participating CLMRG members: Daryl Hinman (leader), Linda Finco, Tom Sakai, Mike Myers, Dennis Burge, Mike Renta, Steve Florian, Ellen Schafhauser, Larry Seibold, Carol Burge (coordinator), and Annette Fournier (telephoner).

96-14 20 Oct 96 Incident College Heights Ferguson

[Editor's note: In this report, Dr. William W. Ferguson describes an incident that occurred after members of CLMRG provided first aid support to the Ridgcrest Desert Classic Mountain Bike Race.]

After an uneventful day at checkpoint #1, I was heading down to the college to check out and leave. As I approached the crest of College Heights Blvd., I saw a three-wheeler with two riders disappear over the crest. On reaching the crest, I could see the

three-wheeler swerve left, then right, and then off the steep section of the road, through the ditch, and into the sagebrush about 200 or more feet below the crest. It then rolled and stopped with the two riders trapped underneath. As I got out of my car, the riders were crying and pushing the three-wheeler off of themselves. Both got up. The approximately 17-year-old boy was jumping around and crying hysterically. The approximately 12-year-old boy stood slowly and said that his back hurt. I had him lie down and instructed him not to move. He continued to complain of his back hurting and didn't seem to want to move, so I called 911 on my cellular phone and asked for an ambulance via a mobile connection to Barstow 911. After the two boys calmed down a bit, it became obvious that neither was badly hurt. The youngster stated that his back had quit hurting and that he wanted to get up, so I let him. After a quick survey showed only a minor red area on his posterior thorax, I called 911 to cancel the ambulance. Two other CLMRG members drove up shortly after the younger boy had stood up. We helped the boys get the three-wheeler back into the road. When we left, the two boys were having a rather intense discussion about not getting the older boy in trouble. The younger boy's name was Joey, and I believe that the older boy was Clifford.

The instability of three-wheelers was once again demonstrated to me as I watched them swerve out of control. The rollover was rather dramatic to witness, so I guess I assumed that one of them must be significantly injured. I should have given them a little more time to settle down but was worried about the ambulance at the college leaving, and I wasn't too sure that I wanted to risk letting the younger boy move around immediately after the accident. In the future, I will wait a little longer before calling an ambulance.

97-15 21 Oct 96 Search Mt. Muir area Mitchell

Around noon on 21 October, I received a phone call from Arnie Peterson of the Inyo County Sheriff's Posse reporting three overdue climbers in the Mt. Muir area. Tony Padilla and two young friends were due home by Sunday evening on 20 October. Tony's mother called the Inyo Sheriff Monday morning at 1000. Even before the callout could be made, the three overdue climbers walked out. This turned out to be a cheap commitment for Carol Burge and me.

Participating CLMRG members: Andrew Mitchell (leader) and Carol Burge (coordinator).

96-16 22 Oct 96 Search Death Valley Myers

Sgt. Marty Williamson called at 1130 on Tuesday, 22 October to tell us that the Park Service needed assistance with a search for four touring German nationals who were missing in the Anvil Springs area in the southwest corner of Death Valley National Monument. The missing persons were Egbert Rimkus (34), his son Georg Weber (10),

Cornelia Meyer (28), and her son Max Meyer (4). They were last seen in Las Vegas on or about 21 July.

I called Park Ranger Dan Dellings, the incident commander in base camp at Furnace Creek Airport, to get as many details as possible. Based on my conversations with Sgt. Williamson and Ranger Dellings, I decided to let everyone finish the workday and meet at the Hut at 0400 on 23 October.

The subjects' vehicle, a rental mini-van, had been spotted on Monday, 21 October by Death Valley Park Rangers on an aerial reconnaissance flight. It was found about two miles into Anvil Springs Canyon heading east. It had three flat tires, and all the doors were locked. Further investigation showed that the subjects had signed the visitor's log at the Warm Springs Canyon mine site on 23 July. They almost certainly had visited the Anvil Springs geologist's cabin at the eastern base of Manly Peak because items were found in the van that were missing from the cabin. The most notable, an American flag clearly labeled "Butte Valley Stone Cabin," was found under the rear seat of the van.

CLMRG members were given assignments and flown into the field from a remote landing zone south of Furnace Creek. CLMRG was to search down canyon (east). Burros had wiped out all signs of human foot prints, and burro prints look almost exactly like human prints. Roseman's team found some soiled toilet paper about 1/2 mile southeast of the van and an empty beer bottle about one mile east of the van. The bottle was retrieved by the helicopter crew, and investigators matched the lot numbers with other bottles found in the van. These were the first and last positive clues found during the entire search.

Mitchell and Green arrived late Wednesday night, and Mitchell relieved me in base camp. Green and I were teamed with three members of the Inyo County team Thursday morning and flown into Mesquite Springs several miles down canyon from our other CLMRG teams. We were to search up canyon until we met D. Burge's team. This was done without any success in finding additional clues.

All the teams then moved to a bivouac location about two miles up canyon. The Inyo team was extracted by helicopter that evening, and all CLMRG members were grouped together as one team of eight.

The assignment for the third day was to clear an enormous alluvial fan, an area of about four square miles. We spread out and did a line search of the entire inner perimeter of the alluvial fan. We discovered one possible clue during this search—a bunch of cotton stuck in a cactus. An investigator flew in and picked up a sample to compare with the stuffing of a sleeping bag found in the van. The cotton turned out to be from a cottontop cactus.

It was after 1500 by the time we finished this assignment. Base thought about giving us an additional assignment but instead decided to extract us from the field. A helicopter came in almost immediately and flew everyone out to the Warm Springs

landing zone and staging area. We returned to base by about 1800, debriefed, ate some dinner, and headed home. We arrived at the Hut at 2300, did our own debrief, and secured at 2330.

No sign of any of the four people was discovered. The Park Service secured the organized search the following day. The search will continue on a less formal basis, and an investigation is ongoing into possibilities other than that the subjects are lost in the desert.

Participating CLMRG members: Mike Myers (leader), Dennis Burge, Tom Roseman, Mike Dorey, Steve Florian, Debbie Breitenstein, Cindy Goettig, Al Green, Andrew Mitchell, and Carol Burge (coordinator).

96-17 9 Dec 96 Search Kern River Hueber

Sgt. Fesler of the Kern County Sheriff's Office called Mitchell on 22 November and asked CLMRG to participate in the Kern River search on 7 December. I accepted the leadership.

We left the hut at 0630 on 6 December and arrived at the park in Bodfish at 0730. Our assignment was to search the river banks downstream from the highway bridge south of Delanegha Canyon to China Garden for a 38-year-old male who drowned near Delanegha Springs on 8 June 1996. We formed two teams. One started at the bridge and searched down the river to Horseshoe Falls. The other searched from there to China Garden. The first team searched with a diving team, which worked really well and provided a high probability of detection. The second team was unable to cross the river and searched only the left bank of the river between Horseshoe Falls and China Garden. The outflow at the Lake Isabella dam was reduced drastically for this search, but the river was still too high to cross safely at Horseshoe Falls. A diving team searched the section of the river between Horseshoe Falls and China Garden and covered the right bank, which our second team was unable to search. No team found any signs of the subject.

After a three-hour search, we had completed our assignments, and the entire team was released at 1330. We were back at the hut at 1515.

Lessons learned:

1. The probability of detection can be made very high if a search team at the banks of the river is combined with a diving team that can search the pools.
2. It is very helpful to have a member on each team who is familiar with this section of the river from rafting or kayaking, such as Mike Dorey and Ellen Schafhauser.
3. Technical climbing gear is not necessary on the section of the river between the highway bridge and China Garden.

Participating CLMRG members: Werner Hueber (leader), Bob Rockwell, Tom Sakai, Chris Antonsen, Frank Buffum, Debbie Breitenstein, Jerry Kong, Ellen Schafhauser, Mike Dorey, Walter Runkle, Charlie Cattel, Mark Lambert, and Betty Meng (coordinator)

96-18 27 Dec 96 Rescue Mt. Baldy Roseman

My pager went off Friday about 0930. Sgt. Diederich had a request from the Office of Emergency Services (OES) to assist in rescuing four 18-year-old males at the 7,500 foot level of Mt. Baldy. After I called the Operations Center for details, S. Rockwell, with help from B. Meng and C. Burge, made the callout. Six members left Ridgecrest just after 1130. We arrived at the Mt. Baldy fire station at 1440. A number of rescue personnel were already with the subjects in the field, and three of the four could likely walk out. We were quickly given an assignment and were hiking in by 1530. Our assignment was to help carry out equipment because many of the people in the field had been out in the rain and cold for a number of hours. On the hike in, we passed the rescuers and all of the subjects already walking out. At the juncture of the trail and the snow and ice slope below where the subjects had been found, we loaded up equipment and headed out. Back at the station, cold and damp, we had warm stew (good!) and were quickly debriefed. We arrived back at the hut at 2130.

Comments:

1. The initial information was that two of the four victims had severe hypothermia and frostbite. My experience is that early information is often wrong for a variety of reasons. Always be prepared to be surprised.

2. We were able to be fielded and useful (albeit only as "mules") only by being aggressive in forcing decisions. This involved changing our initial status from "Alert/Standby" to "Go" and our on-site status from "Reserve" to "Field." Sgt. Diederich was very helpful by coordinating with OES.

Participating CLMRG members: Tom Roseman (leader), Debbie Breitenstein, Frank Buffum, Arun Jain, Bob Rockwell, Walter Runkle, Sheila Rockwell (coordinator), Betty Meng (telephoner), and Carol Burge (telephoner).

97-01 10 Jan 97 Incident Mt. Mary Austin Finco

Sheila Rockwell called my house around 1515 on Friday, 10 January. Sheila stated that she had received a cellular phone call from Mike Myers. Mike reported that Walter Runkle had dislocated his shoulder while on the Mt. Mary Austin weekend trip. Mike was looking for assistance to help Walter down the mountain. Mike requested the stretcher, the wheel, and some ropes. Sheila was looking for a leader to organize people to go and assist Mike and the other members on the trip. (The CLMRG members on the trip were Walter Runkle, Tom Sakai, Mike Myers, Bob Rockwell, Mike Renta, Curtis Davis, and Mark Lambert.)

I told Sheila that I could lead the effort and gave her some additional names to call. Sheila also stated that she would tell Mike (when he called her back) to call me at home so that I could get any additional information from him directly. Mike called me around 1540 and said that they were located at approximately 9500 feet. Mike was concerned about a steep icy descent they would have to make with Walter. Mike said that the weather was cold, so they were going to attempt to descend to the mining

road. I told Mike that we would try to get up there as soon as possible to assist. Tom Roseman, Steve Florian, and I met at the hut at 1615. Tom and Steve loaded up the equipment and headed for the trailhead around 1640. I picked up Daryl Hinman at his house to give him a little more time to get his gear together. Dr. Bill Ferguson was called to see if he would be available to assist, especially since the members with Walter were unable to reduce the dislocated shoulder. Dr. Ferguson had planned to drive to Mammoth that evening, so he just threw in some additional gear and left for the trailhead around 1700. Daryl and I left Ridgecrest around 1715.

At Lone Pine, we checked in with Mike on his cellular phone and found out that they had descended the snow safely and were on the mining road. They estimated that they had a mile to go to the trailhead. Mike thought that the worst was over and that our assistance would not be needed. We said we would continue to the trailhead just in case. Tom, Steve, and Bill arrived just about the time Walter and the others made it back to the trailhead. Daryl and I arrived about 15 minutes later.

Bill tried but was unable to reduce the dislocation. We rigged up a bed in the back seat of one of the vehicles so Walter could lie with his dislocated shoulder hanging (the most comfortable position for him). We loaded up all the gear, and everyone headed back to Ridgecrest. We arrived back at the hut around 2100.

Participating CLMRG members: Linda Finco (leader), Daryl Hinman, Tom Roseman, Steve Florian, Dr. Bill Ferguson, and Sheila Rockwell (coordinator).

1996 OPERATIONS SUMMARY

Tom Roseman

Summary of operations Operations by month

Total Operations: 18 Jan: 0, Feb: 1, Mar: 1, Apr: 1, May: 2, Jun: 1,

Rescues: 3 Jul: 2, Aug: 2, Sep: 3, Oct: 3, Nov: 0, Dec: 2

Searches: 4

Alerts: 3 **Subjects**

Recoveries: 0 OK: 15

Transits: 2 Injured: 5

Incidents: 6 Not found: 7

Mobilizations: 0 Dead: 2

Total: 29

Requesting agencies

Inyo County: 5 **CLMRG Data**

Kern County: 2 Total person hours: 1,903

Riverside County: 1 NAWC excused hours: 184

San Bernardino County: 1 Total vehicle miles: 6,068
Mono County: 1 Average number of members per operation: 5.83
Kings Canyon NP: 1
Death Valley NP: 1
(Incidents: 6)

1996 EQUIPMENT COMMITTEE REPORT

Werner Hueber

1996 Equipment Committee Members

Chairman: Werner Hueber

Quartermaster: Steve Florian

Members: Debbie Breitenstein, Paul DeRuiter, Jerry Kong, Mike Renta,
Bob Huey, Mike Dorey, Randy Barker, Tom Sakai

Accomplishments

We conducted an extensive search for a light-weight stretcher but could not find one that met our weight requirements. The Yosemite SAR Group gave us an aluminum stretcher that we had modified by a local welding shop so that we can transport it in two pieces. After we saw how well it turned out, we had another previously acquired one piece aluminum stretcher modified. Now we have two nearly new light-weight stretchers that we can separate into two pieces.

We purchased a small copier for use in the hut and if necessary in base camp.

A major new rescue equipment acquisition was a rescue seat that Tom Roseman saw demonstrated at the Rescue Symposium in Canada. We can use this seat for high angle rescues of victims with minor injuries, such as a broken ankle.

We purchased a portable directional antenna that we can use with the higher power, car-battery-operated radio.

When we experienced problems with our present GPS receivers in low temperatures during a winter search, we purchased a Garmin 45. It works at temperatures as low as 5 degrees F.

Other purchases:

Three dynamic ropes and two static ropes.

One cellular phone for use in the car and in the field.

Avalanche probes and snow shovels.

Seat covers for the Jeep.

The Kern County Sheriff's Office was very supportive in maintaining the Jeep. Several major repairs were required.

The fabrication of the technical backpack for two oxygen bottles is complete, and we now can provide oxygen to victims in the field.

Completed maintenance tasks:

Hut and yard cleaned.

Door thresholds replaced.

Maps sorted and filed.

1996 FIRST AID REPORT

Diane Rindt

First Aid Training

All active field team members are required to maintain certification in standard-level first aid and in cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR). In addition, CLMRG conducts twice-yearly Wilderness First Aid training modules of approximately 16 hours each. In 1996, 13 members completed the spring module, and 18 members completed the fall module. Technical and Rescue members are required to complete one of these modules each year as a review. Although not required, 12 of 19 Support members also completed one or both modules in 1996.

CLMRG member-instructors also offered four American Red Cross CPR courses at the professional rescuer level during the year, and 32 members took advantage of this more comprehensive CPR training.

Equipment

We purchased a new special-purpose "victim bag" to replace our aging down bag for cold-weather packaging of search and rescue subjects. Like the down bag, this sturdier synthetic bag has a special zipper arrangement that allows convenient access to any body part so that injuries can be monitored while minimizing the loss of body heat from inside the bag. Tom Roseman saw this bag demonstrated while attending a rescue workshop in British Columbia, Canada.

The Equipment Committee saw a need for and engineered an improved version of our oxygen pack (see Equipment Report).

We purchased two additional sets of cervical collars for training and to ensure that adequate spinal injury stabilization equipment was available at every Desert Classic first aid station.

Community Support

CLMRG again manned first aid stations for the Ridgecrest Desert Classic Mountain

Bike Race. This event attracts competitors from a wide area and contributes proceeds to local charities.

1996 PUBLIC EDUCATION REPORT

Mary Schmierer

Activities:

Two "Hug a Tree" presentations to local schools, day care centers, and scouts.

Girl Scout Mojave Primitive Encampment (Tyrolean traverse and mountain safety).

One rappelling demonstration for the Boy Scouts.

Mountain and hiking safety presentations to Pathfinders (Seventh Day Adventist Church) and James Monroe Junior High School.

Climbing and rappelling demonstration for Sierra View Magazine.

Total CLMRG man hours: 111

Total presentation hours: 27

Total attendees: 150

1997 COMMITTEES

Tom Sakai

PUBLIC EDUCATION SHERIFF'S OFFICE

Schmierer (Chair) Green (Chair)

T. Mitchell Myers

C. Burge Sakai

Parris

ASTM

TRAINING D. Burge (Chair)

Renta (Chair)

Antonsen EMERGENCY SERVICES COUNCIL

Dorey Finco (Chair)

Ganger

Hinman SUMMER CLASS

Breitenstein Hueber (Chair)

A. Mitchell

EQUIPMENT Renta

Huey (Chair) Runkle

Creusere Schafhauser

Florian Dorey

Goettig Breitenstein

Hueber C. Burge

Niesen
Renta TRAINING WALL
DeRuiter Seibold (Chair)

FIRST AID WEB SITE HOME PAGE

Rindt (Chair) Jain (Chair)
Antonsen
Ferguson TALUS PILE
Schafhauser Castro (Editor)
Westbrook

QUALIFICATIONS

Roseman (Chair)
Myers
Mitchell

DONATIONS

Werner Hueber

CLMRG gratefully acknowledges recent gifts from the following friends:

Jim Roberts

Edward Albright Ridgecrest, CA
C. J. and R. J. Simonet Garden Grove, CA

For Dave Dykeman and Lenora Wills

Robert B. Carusi Woodland Hills, CA

David Michels Encino, CA

Roy W. Magnuson Reseda, CA

William Henry Lingle IV Westlake Village, CA

"Enclosed is another donation from friends of Dave Dykeman who hiked together with him on Tuesday nights in the Santa Monicas. Thanks again for your rescue efforts."

David Michels

Mr. and Mrs. Robert Dow Chevy Chase, Maryland

"Enclosed is a gift in memory of Robby Dow. Hope all goes well for the group. We think of you often and remember with warmth and gratitude all you did for Robby and our family in the spring of '95."

Patricia and Jacques Soussan Woodland Hills, CA

Mr. & Mrs. T. M. Stirling Menifee, CA

"In Remembrance: Erich Eichmann"

Elena C. Kirios Long Beach, CA

"In Memory of Dave Dykeman"

High Desert Classic Mountain Bike Race Ridgecrest, CA

Clifton J. Chandler Ridgecrest, CA
LCD Edward and Florence Albright Ridgecrest, CA
James K. Wilson Inyokern, CA
William J. R. and Lois H. Adamsen North Salem, NY
"To all of you, you sure keep going-doing good work. The enclosed [check] is in memory of my brother, Carl Heller."
Henry A. and Nancy Arnebold Glendora, CA
"Thank you for your help two years ago. Keep up the great work. Wishing all of you a great holiday season. Best wishes."
John J. Olley Dunsmuir, CA
Marilyn Y. Wick Gooding, ID
Laura L. Sakamoto Pasadena, CA
"In memory of Robby Dow"
CDR Bryson Van Gundy Jr USN (Ret) and Barbara Ann Van Gundy Sterling, CO
I have always been so proud of my Lifetime Membership in CLMRG-a lot of memories about a Can Do Group. Best ever
Lyal D. and Marilyn J. Viers Ridgecrest, CA
Thanks for your beautiful Christmas card with very fitting verse!

1997 OFFICERS

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MRA Representative Linda Finco 375-7951 linda_finco@imgdw.chinalake.navy.mil

1997 COMMITTEES

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Talus Pile Loren Castro 375-3279 lfc32@ridgecrest.ca.us

SCREE

We are pleased to welcome back Sgt. John Diederich of the Kern County Sheriff's Office to our meetings. Sgt. Diederich is a long-time supporter and administrative leader of search and rescue activities and resumed these duties in November 1996.

Note: All telephone numbers in the Talus Pile are area code 619 unless noted otherwise.

Note: On 22 March 1997, our area code will change to 760. Both 760 and 619 will be valid for six months after that date.

Flee as a bird to your mountain.

-Psalms 11:1