

# Southern Arizona Search & Rescue and First Responder History: 1901–2000

Charles R. “Butch” Farabee, Jr.

assisted by  
David Lovelock



2<sup>nd</sup> Edition, 2<sup>nd</sup> Printing

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Tucson, Arizona, USA

### Identifying the Emblems in the Collage on the Title Page

Southern Arizona Rescue Association	Pima County Sheriff's Department	Mountain Rescue Association	Arizona Wing: Civil Air Patrol	Arizona Department of Public Safety: Air Rescue
US Border Patrol: BORSTAR	Civil Defense	911 Emergency: Police, Fire, Medical	Cochise County Sheriff: Search and Rescue	Santa Cruz County Sheriff's Office
Southwest Rescue Dogs	Southern Arizona Mounted Search and Rescue	Pima County Search and Recovery Divers	Air Rescue Service	Neotoma Civil Air Patrol: Ground Search and Rescue

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Printed in the United States of America

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# Dedication

The following is, at best, a partial list of the numerous agencies, departments, offices, squadrons, teams, and units, which have contributed to the success of Southern Arizona Search and Rescue from 1901 to 2000. Many no longer exist, but they all must be recognized and remembered. But, behind the anonymity of these administrative titles there are the countless men and women who have, are, and will, dedicate their lives helping their fellow man.

911 Dispatch Centers	Graham County SAR
Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadrons	Green Valley Auxiliary Volunteers
Air Force Detachment "Det" 1	Green Valley Rural Fire Department
Air Force Detachment "Det" 17	Luke Air Force Base
Air Force National Guard	Marine Corps Air Station, Yuma
Air Force Rescue and Coordination Center	Military Aid for Safety and Traffic
Air Force Reserve, 305 <sup>th</sup> Rescue Squad	Mountain Rescue Association
Air Force, Second SAR Group	National Cave Rescue Commission
Amateur Radio Emergency Corps	Nogales Police Department
Arizona Air National Guard	Northwest Fire Department
Arizona Army National Guard	Pearce/Sunsites Fire Department
Arizona Department of Emergency and Military Affairs	Pima County Air Patrol
Arizona Department of Public Safety	Pima County Air Posse
Arizona Department of Public Safety Air Rescue	Pima County Communications Center
Arizona Division of Emergency Services	Pima County Emergency Radio Network
Army 4 <sup>th</sup> Rescue Section	Pima County Flying Squadron
Army National Guard	Pima County Four-Wheel Drive
Bisbee Police Department	Pima County Jeep Posse
Border Patrol	Pima County Mounted Posse
Border Patrol, Search, Trauma and Rescue	Pima County Office of Emergency Services
Boy Scouts of America	Pima County Rescue Patrol
Catalina Ham Radio Club	Pima County Search and Recovery Divers
Central Arizona Mountain Rescue Association	Pima County Sheriff's Department
Civil Air Patrol (numerous Squadrons)	Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Service
Civil Air Patrol Neotoma Composite	Rock Pounders
Civil Defense Commission Unit	Rural Metro Fire Department
Civil Defense SAR	Santa Cruz County Sheriff's Office
Civilian Conservation Corps	Sierra Vista Fire Department
Cochise County SAR	Southern Arizona Rescue Association
Cochise County Sheriff's Office	Southern Arizona Mounted SAR
Davis-Monthan Air Force Base	Southwest Rescue Dogs, Incorporated
Davis-Monthan Army Air Base	State of Sonora, Mexico
Douglas Army Air Base	Tucson Fire Department
Douglas Police Department	Tucson-Pima County Civil Defense SAR
Drexel Heights Fire Department	Tucson Police Department
Emergency Services SAR	U.S. Coast Guard
Flowing Wells Fire Department	U.S. Customs Service
Fort Huachuca Army Base	U.S. FEMA
Fry Fire Department	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Gila Bend Police Department	U.S. Forest Service
	U.S. National Park Service

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# Preface

## Background

I went on my first search as a 16-year-old Eagle Scout in 1958, for a classmate of mine, although I did not know it at the time. My “crowd” was fellow Eagles in a Boy Scout Troop with a Scoutmaster that knew how to climb and was showing us the ropes, . . .so to speak. Twenty months previous, they’d been officially deputized as a “Junior Mountain Rescue Team,” by the actual Sheriff of Pima County. That illustrates the “state of the art” in Search and Rescue then—it was in its awkward infancy. By today’s standards, the Sheriff would arrest my parents for child endangerment, given I was in thigh-deep snow in cotton Levi’s and sweatshirt. . .

David Lovelock, an honorary member of the Southern Arizona Rescue Association (SARA), and I started out to specifically tell the story of SARA. We wanted to feature many of its thousands of emergency responses, while paying homage to its people and their contributions and amassed noble record. But then, the larger picture of the region’s SAR began unfolding and before we knew it, a much broader narrative needed remembering and telling: “Southern Arizona Search and Rescue History: 1901–2000,” later renamed “Southern Arizona Search & Rescue and First Responder History: 1901–2000.”

David and I chose to abridge our citations after each incident in an unorthodox but clear manner to shorten this document while retaining its usefulness. “Star” refers to *The “Arizona Daily Star,”* and “Citizen” refers to the *“Tucson Daily Citizen”* or one of the other four variations of this newspaper title used during the one-hundred years we document. Did these articles make some mistakes? Yes, I am sure they did but probably I did, as well. Was there journalistic hyperbole? Again, yes, particularly in the writings for those from days in the past. These embellishments honestly reflected the way people communicated back then.

Today, I feel they add color and livelier, tabloid-like trappings to the story. And with no recorders, emails, and the Internet, some of the early reporters might actually have needed to speculate on facts to aid telling a clearer, more accurate story.

Our “Bottom-Line” here is to pay homage to all the men and women, past, present, and future, paid or volunteer (and their families), who subscribe to the Universal Search and Rescue Creed: “So That Others May Live.”

We hope you like it. . .

## Navigating this Document when Read Electronically

This document uses “hot” links allowing the reader to navigate easily. For example, if the text states that the Table of Contents starts on page 9, then clicking on that page number (9) takes the reader to the Table of Contents. (Try it!) In the Table of Contents, which starts on page 9, clicking on a Topic title (not the page number) immediately opens the associated topic. Web links, such as <http://sarci.org/sara/>, open the associated web page in the default browser. Typically the color or shape of the cursor changes when over a hot link, which can be seen by hovering the mouse over the previous web link.

Most PDF readers have the facility to return to the previously viewed page, allowing the reader to follow a hot link and then return to the original page containing that hot link. For example, Adobe Reader®, Foxit Reader, and Sumatra PDF, all use the keyboard combination **Alt** **←** to return to the previously viewed page. In Preview (the default PDF reader on Macs), the equivalent keyboard combination is **⌘** **⌕**.

At the bottom of most pages in this book, following the copyright notice, are the buttons **TOC**, **Locations Index**, **People Index**, and **Main Index**. Clicking on the appropriate hot link opens either the Table of Contents, or one of the indexes described in the following section.

## Book Overview

### Chapter 2—Highlights 1901–2000

This chapter contains two tables that summarize the highlights of SAR events between 1901 and 2000. The first, The Big Picture on page 14, contains the dates of important SAR incidents, while the second, Key Organization Dates on page 17, includes the time-frames of the creation of key SAR organizations.

### Part A—Incidents 1901–2000

This contains ten chapters, each covering a decade of SAR incidents in chronological order. There are about one-thousand entries—ranging in length from a few lines to a number of pages, and varying in gravity from humorous to heartbreaking.

### Part B—The Rest of the Story...

This area contains chapters on different aspects of SAR in Southern Arizona.

- **Chapter 13—Arizona.** This describes Arizona and Southern Arizona.
- **Chapter 14—Collections of Important SAR Events in Southern Arizona 1901–2000.** This contains the following sections, each devoted to a specific SAR topic.
  - Helicopter Milestones.

- First Aid and Emergency Medical Service Comes to Southern Arizona.
- Two-Way Radios for Emergencies in Southern Arizona.
- Computers and SAR in Southern Arizona
- Regional Fire Departments
- Davis-Monthan Ground Rescue “Units”
- **Chapter 15—Significant Awards and Recognitions for SAR in Southern Arizona.** These recognitions are divided into pre- and post-2000.
- **Chapter 16—Tanque Verde Falls Area Deaths.** A description of Tanque Verde Falls starts this chapter, followed by a table of the deaths in the area.
- **Chapter 17—Southern Arizona SAR Coordinators.** The first part of this chapter shows a timeline of the SAR coordinators while the second contains their mini-biographies.
- **Chapter 18—Southern Arizona Rescue Association.** This chapter contains three sections: SARA Milestones, a Brief History of SARA, and a list of the SARA Presidents.
- **Chapter 19—SAR Acronyms.** Here is a list of all acronyms used in this book.

## Part C—Indexes

At the end of this book are three indexes:

- The **Locations Index**. It contains page references to most of the locations mentioned. It starts on page 572.
- The **People Index**. It contains page numbers to all the people referenced in this book, sorted by last name. It starts on page 590.
- The **Main Index**. It contains page references to important items contained in this book, that are not included in the Locations and People Indexes. It starts on page 603.

## Typeset

This document was typeset by David Lovelock using MiKTeX, available from <http://miktex.org/>, and T<sub>E</sub>Xstudio as the front end, available from <http://texstudio.sourceforge.net/>.

## Acknowledgments

To dare paraphrase an old African proverb about a village and a child: It takes a bunch of people to write a book. David Lovelock and I have been working on this history for nearly four years; it has been involved and often challenging but also an honor and privilege. And, it has been mostly fun for us. We recount recent sacrifices and long-forgotten tragedies. Our story details heroics and heartbreaks; some are greater than others, but all involve lives of people. We hope we have done justice in our tribute to the First Responders in the Southern Arizona Search and Rescue Community, who willingly will drop everything to rush to the aid of others.

Foremost, we thank those who have given heavily of their time, ideas, contributions, and support.

*Paul Anderson Dave Brown Mike Ebersole Fran Kunz Richard Kunz Chuck McHugh  
David Noland Tom “TJ” Price Mykle Raymond Denise Sutherland Frances Walker*

There are also others we called upon for help and . . . you readily stepped up to the plate.

*Dan Abbate Bill Ahrens Dave Baker Joe Barr Steve Basilar Dave Bernheim  
Viola Brown Louie Chaboya Mike Cusick Dan Davis Aaron Dick Bob Douglas  
Barb Faulkner Tom Faulkner Hunter French Steve Gardner Dave Garrison  
Manny Gomez Chris Hecht Harry Hicks Eric Johnson Bill Kalt Susie Lakosky  
Andy Lamb James Langston Dale Mann Doug Marcoux Robert McCord David Meyers  
Oscar Miranda Don Morris Doug Myrvold Karen Paquette Mark Paquette  
John Perchorowicz Adam Pershing Jeremy Ramirez Ursula Ritchie Dave Ruhlman  
Mark Savage Larry Seligman Mike G. Shook Jerry Simmons George Simons  
Rick Sturgeon Rick Van Skiver Dan Vance Lou Trammell Doug Witte Joe Woolridge*

## Donating

To make a donation to one of the five volunteer organizations that comprise the Search and Rescue Council, Inc, namely,

- CAP/NCS—Civil Air Patrol, Neotoma Composite Squadron
- Pima County Search & Recovery Divers
- SAMSAR—Southern Arizona Mounted Search & Rescue
- SARA—Southern Arizona Rescue Association
- SRDI—Southwest Rescue Dogs, Inc.

please go to <https://sarci.org/donations/>.

## Contact Author

Please email any comments, corrections, or suggestions, to Butch Farabee at the email address [butchfarabee@gmail.com](mailto:butchfarabee@gmail.com). Thank you.

*Butch Farabee*

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# CHAPTER 1

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## Introduction

*“Too many to count, too many to remember.”* That was Dave Brown’s short but sweet answer when asked how many Call-Outs he had been on in his over five-decades as a volunteer with the Southern Arizona Rescue Association. *“I have lots of memories, some good, some bad, but I always enjoyed the effort and the reward of helping someone or bringing closure to a family.”*

The now-retired Brown is both the epitome and “the tip of the iceberg” of dedicated men and women who look for a lost child or a drowning victim, an overdue hunter or crashed plane, rescue a person off a cliff, rappel into a rotting mine shaft for a murder victim or squirm far underground for an amateur caver with a broken back. There are 101 other scenarios to be painted where the skills, services, and dedication of these Unsung Heroes are needed and to which they always generously respond—day and night, rain or shine. And that does not include their untold hours of planning and training in preparation for these varied situations.

Those in search and rescue (SAR)—urban, rural, building, desert, mountain, river—are a singular breed of public servant. They are contractors, police, military, engineers, students, doctors, professors, salesmen, musicians, nurses, plumbers, housewives, and retirees. Some are paid, such as sheriff’s deputies, US Border Patrol, and the pilots and crews of the Arizona Department of Public Safety. And then there is the citizen army of volunteers—the backbone of SAR—like the Southern Arizona Rescue Association, Pima County Search and Recovery Divers, and the talented teams of the Civil Air Patrol. They all share a dedication of purpose and commitment to the highest of ideals.

We do not know how many lives they have saved...but a lot. Nor do we know how many lives they have helped...but a lot more. Sadly, they also deal with death and ugliness, much more often than they would like; they grieve but cope, yet still readily respond.

These incidents and emergencies are both commonplace as well as “life-and-death.” They are often complicated and intense, combining drama, trauma, heroics, and a whole lot of sacrifice. People get hurt and are saved, others get hurt and die, many become lost and are found and a few are lost and are still “out there.” Dave Brown and the untold thousands of other search and rescue First Responders like him across the country have routinely faced pain, fear, sadness, happiness, and reward over the years. These men and women never take the challenges lightly nor their responsibilities for granted.

This book chronicles over one-thousand events, some large and involved, such as when two Army Air Servicemen flying between San Diego and Tucson went missing over the remote desert on December 7, 1922. The search for them lasted five months. Or the abduction of little 8-year-old Vicki Lynne Hoskinson on September 17, 1984. The kidnapping of the third-grader was high-profile, her tiny skeletal remains were finally found seven months later. And sadly, there are even greater tragedies, such as in 1981 when eight people died in a flash flood at Tanque Verde Falls or the mid-air collision over Tucson of two B-24 bombers in 1944, killing all 18 airmen onboard.

Others are not so complex, like the two men forced high into a tree by dangerous floodwaters near the Mexican Border in 1902. Hours later, their wives finally threw them ropes and helped them carefully to shore. Or the two bicyclists overdue in the Rincon Mountains in 1999, they were located by a Department of Public Safety helicopter crew long after dark and then safely walked out by SARA volunteers. Additionally, we also document Southern Arizona SAR milestones, awards and recognitions, history of organizations, and associated specifics.

Almost by definition, the men and women (and even a few children) involved in SAR are heroes. Admittedly, there are varying degrees and measures of this broad term, which is often over used. But there was little 4-year-old Dorothy who rushed to the aid of a wealthy Oregon cattleman who fell over a cliff in 1916 near Globe; the man wishing to remain anonymous who jumped fully clothed into Sabino Creek, saving a young boy in 1934; or the detachment of men from Davis-Monthan Army Air Field who cleaned up the gruesome aftermath of the twin-engine C-47 which crashed headlong into a peak in 1951, claiming the 28 soldiers onboard. All are heroes in their own way and all are worthy of recognition.

The term hero is especially proper for those who died while aiding someone else. The first we have recorded here for Southern Arizona was 21-year-old Frank Brawley who saved his friend from drowning in Sabino Canyon in 1923 and then drowned himself. Soon followed by the four men who all were killed in a plane wreck near Oracle while searching for a young hunter, four years later. One was 40-year-old Pima County Deputy, Clifford Nelson.

How do we loosely define Southern Arizona? In this book, we define Southern Arizona as Pima, Cochise, and Santa Cruz Counties, but include many incidents in parts of the neighboring counties: Gila, Graham, Greenlee, and Pinal Counties. It does not include Yuma County, although there is an exception, the young couple who landed their little Cessna in the hostile desert of eastern Yuma County in 1951. They walked away from the undamaged aircraft and despite being followed for some distance by dedicated searchers enduring the brutal July heat, they were never heard from again. Also, there are at least a dozen incidents here where the expertise of our local First Responders was urgently requested by authorities in Mexico or it became necessary for the Southern Arizonans to cross the border. See Figure 1.1, which was downloaded from <https://ontheworldmap.com/usa/state/arizona/arizona-county-map.html>, and then shaded to identify Southern Arizona.



Figure 1.1: Southern Arizona

The author made every effort to be accurate and my principal sources of information were the two local newspapers, *The Arizona Daily Star* and the *Tucson Daily Citizen*. I estimate viewing nearly three-thousand articles, using over one-half of them as actual citations. Most of these pieces did not have by-lines, although the author recognized one, John Rawlinson, a long-time reporter and feature writer for *The Arizona Daily Star*. John and I went through the Tucson Police Academy

together in 1966, then serving closely as patrolmen until he decided journalism was more to his liking. Knowing John's integrity and tenacity, I believe these many hundreds of mostly nameless, unheralded men and women of the local press deserve far more credit than they ever likely received.

*"So Butch, why rely on newspapers and not actual records of the individual SAR outfits?"* I would have liked to have done so but there are about eighty separate SAR agencies and groups, including at least eight military units, referred to in this book, encompassing a century of regional search and rescue history. Accessing all those records for all of those individual, mostly governmental groups for that long, was impossible. This is even assuming both the unit and/or their records still existed, which some do not.

I did, however, utilize the archives of the Search and Rescue Council, Incorporated, (SARCI), which integrated the Call-Out records of SARA into a single Excel database, expertly maintained by senior SARA volunteer, Mykle Raymond. This SARCI database begins in 1958 and I utilized it through 2000, the year our document history ends. It has over 2,500 individual entries for that four-decade period; remember, this book begins nearly sixty years earlier. *"So, the best I could do was look for incidents significant enough to have made the local newspapers!"*

The reader will certainly notice there are entries which are criminal in nature, such as child abductions, drug-related events, looking for evidence, and homicides. Our history here is definitely not a focus on "True Crime" nor intended as sensationalist. The only reason for these high-profile, unpleasant crimes to be included here is for their direct link to searches, particularly the kidnapping of children; sadly, there are all too many. But each of these emergencies produced a quick response by law enforcement, which in the early years almost always then entailed the aid of the general public. And for later years, these responses required agencies with planes, helicopters, search and cadaver dogs as well as volunteers like the Southern Arizona Rescue Association and Pima County Search and Recovery Divers.

According to Humane Borders, a local humanitarian organization interested in the well-being of undocumented migrants crossing into this area from Mexico, between the years 2000 and 2023, nearly 3,900 men, women, and children were discovered deceased in the remoteness of Southern Arizona. Often, just skeletons. Many others were never found and are still out there, now largely forgotten. Probably several times this number were injured and/or stranded and/or called for help and needed rescuing, mostly by the US Border Patrol. I greatly admire this indispensable contribution to regional SAR, but I have only included a few of its noteworthy "life and death" saves. For doing otherwise, would leave little space for the telling of "the rest of the story." Afterall, SAR in Southern Arizona has a long, rich, colorful history.

Lastly, David Lovelock and I spent the past three years on "Southern Arizona Search & Rescue and First Responder History: 1901–2000." In writing this, we say Thank You to our SAR First Responders. Early on, we agreed this would be our gift to the annals of this somewhat unnoticed public service. There is no charge for the On-Line version of our efforts and if by chance, a hardcopy of this is ever published and there are any kind of royalties, the Southern Arizona Rescue Association will reap all the benefits. And, if the reader or researcher using this history is so inclined, there are several volunteer SAR groups identified at the beginning of this book in the *Preface* chapter under *Donating*. Feel free to contribute. We encourage it. They need it.

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# CHAPTER 2

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## Highlights 1901–2000

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### Section 2.1

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#### The Big Picture and Key Organizations

This chapter is “One Stop Shopping” and “Cliff Notes” combined; now, go ahead and couple it with Key Organizations and, in one place you will have, “Everything You Ever Wanted to Know” about Southern Arizona Search and Rescue. That is hyperbole of course and maybe more than a slight stretch along with a little boasting, but it will also be our honest attempt to provide a meaningful overview/summary of what’s inside the greater text.

*The Big Picture* section contains noteworthy milestones in the evolution of Regional Search and Rescue. Obviously, some are more important and recognizable, like the World Wars. In this case, these are mentioned because they had tragic impacts on the world. Luckily they also contributed to SAR, including innovations in weather forecasting, cryptography with its contributions to computers, and certainly the advent of helicopters. It also helps put our SAR record into some historical context, with chronological and linear perspective; adding much-needed scale, time, pattern, and proportion to the narrative. It was challenging to construct *The Big Picture*. What is important? What’s been omitted? What would you like? Relevant? Helpful?

*Key Organizations* is just what you think it means. It contains just that, a timetable using groups, units, agencies, squadrons, and all the various other entities and alliances that when merged, render an account of the SAR past. You will recognize an overlap in *Key Organizations* with the markers in *The Big Picture*. And frankly, all those in *Key Organizations* could also be in *The Big Picture*. We had a few, “Solomon-like Decisions,” what best fit where. Many of those identified in *Key Organizations* don’t even exist anymore, maybe just being in the SAR narrative for a short while. But they did have an impact on rescuers, maybe even for years.

You probably will have differing thoughts on what we’ve included and, you have every right to challenge our lists. So, we would like to hear from you if feeling strongly enough about some milestone we missed or put in and should not have. So ready or not, *The Big Picture* is listed first, followed by *Key Organizations*. We hope they prove helpful to you...

## Section 2.2

## The Big Picture: 1901–2000

## The Big Picture

1864 .....	• Arizona's Pima County established, along with first Sheriff.
1881 .....	• Arizona's Cochise County established, along with first Sheriff.
1899 .....	• Arizona's Santa Cruz County established, along with first Sheriff.
Mar 21, 1901 .....	• The Arizona Rangers are formed by the Territorial Legislature.
Apr 15, 1904 .....	• Carnegie Hero Awards are established by philanthropist Andrew Carnegie.
May 8, 1906 .....	• "Stokes" splint stretcher is issued US Patent #820,026.
Oct 1, 1906 .....	• A credentialed Instructor in First Aid begins a class for miners in Bisbee.
1908 .....	• The inaugural Red Cross First Aid Manual is issued.
May 16, 1910 .....	• Organized Mine Rescue comes to Southern Arizona.
Aug 27, 1911 .....	• First drowning recorded in Sabino Canyon.
Feb 14, 1912 .....	• Arizona becomes a State.
1913 .....	• Water-oriented lifesaving program begins in Arizona by American Red Cross.
July 28, 1914 .....	• Start of World War I.
Apr 6, 1917 .....	• The United States enters World War I.
Nov 11, 1918 .....	• End of World War I.
Jan 11, 1920 .....	• First fatal plane crash in Southern Arizona.
Mar 1921 .....	• Department of the Interior's Bureau of Mines begins organizing first-aid and rescue-trained miners into rescue teams.
Jun 15, 1921 .....	• The first/early use of aircraft on a Southern Arizona search.
1921 & 1924 .....	• Namesakes of Davis (1921) Monthan (1924) Air Force Base, are killed.
Aug 11, 1923 .....	• Earliest report of a Southern Arizona rescuer dying, helping someone.
Nov 1, 1925 .....	• Davis-Monthan Airport in Tucson dedicated by Charles Lindbergh.
Nov 4, 1927 .....	• An "air ambulance" is flown into Tucson, probably a first.
Oct 21, 1928 .....	• Pima County Sheriff's Department (PCSD) Deputy Clifford Nelson, along with three others, dies on a SAR.
Apr 25, 1934 .....	• June Cecilia Robles abducted in Tucson, the region's first major kidnapping, involving a significant search.
Sep 1, 1937 .....	• Pima County Air Patrol is formed, the county's first volunteer SAR group.
Feb 16, 1937 .....	• Nylon (Fiber 66) is awarded US Patent #2,071,250. Nylon ropes.
Jul 16, 1937 .....	• Arizona Highway Patrol begins "ambulance division." Two patrol cars are retrofitted as ambulances, at Jacobs Lake and Holbrook.
Apr 26, 1938 .....	• US Forest Service installs two-way "radio phone" on nearby mountains.

### The Big Picture (Contd.)

Sep 1, 1939 .....	Start of World War II.
Apr 1940 .....	Tucson Police and Pima County Sheriff's Departments get two-way radios.
Dec 1, 1941 .....	The national Civil Air Patrol is formed, followed in a week by a local wing (unit).
Dec 11, 1941 .....	The United States enters World War II.
Dec 1944 .....	SAR primer, Army Field Manual 70-10: Mountain Operations, is published.
Sep 2, 1945 .....	End of World War II.
Nov 20, 1946 .....	Arizona gets its first civilian helicopter.
Aug 16, 1946 .....	First death at Tanque Verde Falls.
Jun 16, 1947 .....	First helicopter used on Arizona search.
Aug 16, 1947 .....	New, Mt. Lemmon Catalina Highway has first fatality, involved SAR.
Aug 9, 1948 .....	PCSD Investigator John Anderson dies on a rescue in Sabino Canyon.
Sep 12–17, 1948 .....	First Mountain Rescue School Training Course takes place, Mount Rainier.
Nov 15, 1949 .....	Pima County Rescue Patrol is formed, a volunteer SAR group.
Jun 27, 1951 .....	The local CAP restructures, forming the current organization.
Jul 6, 1951 .....	Tucson Fire Department accepts its first rescue truck.
Jul 15, 1951 .....	Two CAP pilots, Wilson and Schmidt, die searching for a downed aircraft.
Dec 30, 1951 .....	28 Service personnel die in Air Force transport plane NE of Phoenix.
Nov 23, 1953 .....	PCSD gets its first SAR truck.
May 23, 1954 .....	Likely first use of artificial air for local drowning takes place.
Jul 1, 1956 .....	The National Search and Rescue Plan is implemented.
Aug 1957 .....	SCUBA first taught in Southern Arizona at the Tucson YMCA.
Apr 27, 1958 .....	SARA formally goes on its first search.
Nov 16, 1958 .....	Three Boy Scouts die on Mount Baldy in the Santa Rita Mountains.
Jan 20, 1959 .....	Pima County Search and Rescue is founded.
Feb 1, 1959 .....	Mexico requests divers from Pima County for three drownings in Sonora.
Feb 18, 1959 .....	SARA graduates its first class of SAR volunteers.
Jun 15, 1959 .....	SARA performs its first rescue.
Jun 29, 1959 .....	Volunteer divers make first body recovery in local lake on Mount Lemmon.
Mar 7, 1960 .....	Bud Simons first physician to volunteer for a local SAR group, SARA.
Apr 26, 1960 .....	Two bloodhounds given to Pima County SAR by State Prison Warden.
Sep 20, 1961 .....	SARA leaves Pima County Search and Rescue, returning ten months later.

The Big Picture (Contd.)	
Oct 1961 .....	Detachment “Det” 17 Helo Unit activates at Davis-Monthan Air Force Base (DMAFB). Deactivated July 9, 1963.
Jun 20, 1968 .....	The Air Force Rescue and Coordination Center (AFRCC) is re-located to Scott AFB, Illinois.
Feb 14, 1969 .....	Air Medical Evacuation System, (AMES), begins 6-month trial for helicopter evacuations mostly for highways, becomes permanent.
Sep 9, 1969 .....	President Johnson signs the National Highway Safety Act, creating MAST, Military Aid to Safety and Traffic.
1970 .....	Emergency Locator Transmitters (ELT) mandated by US Congress for civilian aircraft.
1970 .....	The Incident Command System (ICS) is first conceived in Southern California.
Sep 7, 1970 .....	Arizona’s deadliest (23 lives lost) weather-related storm.
Early 1971 .....	Textbook, “Emergency Care and Transportation of the Sick and Injured,” by the American Academy of Orthopedic Surgeons, is released.
Apr 17, 1971 .....	AZ House Bill 10 formalizes the role of SAR for County Sheriffs, in Arizona Revised Statutes, 11-441 C.
Fall 1971 .....	EMT courses begin at local Pima Community College.
Aug 12, 1971 .....	Governor signs law for State to absorb SAR costs for the Sheriff.
Jan 15, 1972 .....	The television series Emergency! begins airing.
May 14, 1972 .....	AZ House Bill 2003 creates Arizona Division of Emergency Services.
May 14, 1972 .....	AZ House Bill 2003 secures two Air Rescue helicopters for DPS.
Oct 1, 1972 .....	DPS has its first two Air Ambulance helicopters, Mesa’s Falcon Field.
Mar 15, 1974 .....	Arizona certifies its first Paramedics.
May 6, 1974 .....	The first “Managing the Search Function” course is held at Grand Canyon. Later called “Managing the Lost Person Incident.”
Sep 29, 1974 .....	Tucson Fire Department’s first Mobile Intensive Care Unit begins.
Jun 1976 .....	First National Cave Rescue Symposium (NCRC) takes place, in San Antonio, TX.
Oct 1, 1976 .....	All of Pima County now has the “911” System.
Feb 18, 1978 .....	DPS Air Rescue helo assigned to Southern Arizona, stationed in Tucson.
Early Dec 1978 .....	PCSD and SARA respond to a major cave rescue in Mexico, the first time NCRC activates.
Early 1980’s .....	Pima County SAR adopts Swift Water Rescue Techniques taught by Ohio Division of Natural Resources.
May 1981 .....	“Desert Searches: Effectiveness of Helicopters,” is published.
Sep 9, 1982 .....	SARSAT (Satellite-Assisted Tracking) satellite is launched.
Nov 19, 1982 .....	John Bownds used CASIE—Computer Aided Search Information Exchange—on a TI-59 calculator during the Balsharaf Search at Grand Canyon NP.
Sep 30, 1983 .....	Tropical Storm Octave, arguably worst weather-related storm in Arizona history, kills 13, including DPS Air Rescue Pilot and Paramedic.



### The Big Picture (Contd.)

1984 .....	National Interagency Management System (NIMS) adopted by Pima County Sheriff's Department.
Sep 1984 .....	CASIE programmed for a computer and used on a child's abduction case.
Mar 29, 1987 .....	SARA & Recovery Divers bring up 12 murder victims in Agua Prieta, Mexico.
Oct 2, 1989 .....	University Medical Center Southern Arizona's first hospital-based Air Ambulance.
Feb 1991 .....	"Mountain Searches: Effectiveness of Helicopters," is published.
Mar 4, 1992 .....	Pilot Dale Mathews and Flight Nurse Susan Ben-Asher Newton with Medevac I Air Ambulance, are killed on SAR.
Apr 13, 1994 .....	ARS 28-910, "Stupid Motorist Law," is signed by Governor.

### Section 2.3

## Key Organization Dates

### Key Organization Dates

Aug 30, 1926 .....	The first mountain rescue team in the US is formed, the "Crag Rats," in Oregon..
Sep 1, 1937 .....	Pima County Air Patrol forms, it fades out in several years..
1939 .....	Arizona Sheriff's Association appeared in the Phoenix Republic as early as 1939, but the badge-logo on their website reads 1968..
1940 .....	Davis-Monthan Airport became Tucson Army Air Base..
Nov 15, 1941 .....	Predecessor of the famed 10 <sup>th</sup> Mountain Troops, forms..
Dec 1, 1941 .....	Civil Air Patrol (CAP) formed a week before Pearl Harbor was bombed..
Mar 13, 1946 .....	Headquarters Air Rescue Service (HQ ARS) established at Andrews AFB..
1948 .....	Border Patrol program, "Man Tracking," begins..
Nov 15, 1948 .....	Pima County Rescue Patrol, springs from the Sheriff's [Mounted] Posse as well as PCSD Special Deputies, is formed..
Jan 1949 .....	Pima County Sheriff's Mounted Posse is formed..
Jun 15, 1950 .....	Pima County Sheriff's Flying Squadron is formed..
Nov 1950 .....	National Civil Defense is formed..
1951 .....	Auxiliary Deputy Sheriff Program begins under Sheriff Frank Eyman..
Jan 1951 .....	Pima County Civil Defense Aviation Division is formed..
Jun 27, 1951 .....	Southern Arizona Group of the CAP is formed..

### Key Organization Dates (Contd.)

<b>May 1952</b> .....	Tucson-Pima County Civil Defense Rescue Squad is formed..
<b>Oct 23, 1953</b> .....	Beginning on April 11, 1902, 14 different government forest land shifts end with the creation of the Coronado National Forest in Southern Arizona..
<b>1954</b> .....	CAP Santa Rita Land Rescue Squadron forms, it lasted about two years..
<b>Jul 23, 1954</b> .....	Boy Scout Emergency Service's Explorer Post 74, is formally recognized. This may be the only such Explorer Post in Southern Arizona..
<b>Jun 24, 1955</b> .....	Tucson-Pima County Civil Defense SAR is formed..
<b>1957</b> .....	The Arizona Rangers form..
<b>Mar 1957</b> .....	Eagle Scouts of Tucson's Boy Scout Troop 8 become an official Junior Mountain Rescue Team for PCSD..
<b>Aug 1957</b> .....	The first SCUBA-diving club in Southern Arizona, the Bottom Dwellers, forms and is used for drownings..
<b>Apr 20, 1958</b> .....	Pima County Sheriff's Aero Squadron is formed..
<b>Jan 20, 1959</b> .....	Pima County SAR is founded, governed by advisory SAR Council..
<b>Jun 6, 1959</b> .....	The Mountain Rescue Association (MRA) forms at Oregon's Mount Hood..
<b>Feb 29, 1960</b> .....	SARA is Incorporated..
<b>1961</b> .....	The Western Air Rescue Center, within the Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Service, was created in February, along with the Central and Eastern Rescue Centers..
<b>Oct 1961</b> .....	Detachment "Det" 17 helicopter unit is activated at DMAFB..
<b>Early 1962</b> .....	A Crash and Rescue Team, dubbed "Code C," forms at DMAFB Hospital..
<b>Jun 1962</b> .....	Gila County Sheriff's Rescue Squad, formed..
<b>Jul 9, 1963</b> .....	Detachment "Det" 17 helicopter unit is deactivated at DMAFB..
<b>Jan 8, 1966</b> .....	The Air Rescue Service (ARS) re-designated the Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Service. The Air Rescue Centers (ARC) become Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Centers (ARRC). The Air Rescue Squadrons (ARR) become the Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadrons (ARRS).
<b>Apr 13, 1967</b> .....	Pima County Sheriff's Search and Rescue, formed..
<b>1968</b> .....	The Arizona Sheriff's Association, formed..
<b>Feb 14, 1969</b> .....	Air Medical Evacuation System (AMES) begins as a trial helo evacuation..
<b>Dec 1969</b> .....	Central Arizona Mountain Rescue Association (CAMRA) in Phoenix is Incorporated..
<b>Sep 1, 1970</b> .....	Military Assistance for Safety and Traffic (MAST), is established..

## Key Organization Dates (Contd.)

<b>Nov 30, 1970</b> .....	The National Association of Search and Rescue Coordinators forms in Salt Lake City, becoming National Association for Search and Rescue, (NASAR)..
<b>Apr 14, 1971</b> .....	Tucson-Pima County Civil Defense Search and Rescue and Emergency Services formed, but for only one year..
<b>Apr 16, 1971</b> .....	The Arizona Division of Emergency Services, is formed..
<b>Fall 1971</b> .....	Medical Emergency Dispatching System (MEDS) instituted in Pima County..
<b>Winter 1972</b> .....	The American Rescue Dog Association (ARDA) is created in Washington State..
<b>Pre-1975</b> .....	Arizona's Pinal (County) Copper Basin SAR, formed..
<b>Apr 1975</b> .....	San Carlos (Apache Reservation) SAR, formed..
<b>Jan 9, 1976</b> .....	Pima County Sheriff's SAR Unit Volunteers, formed..
<b>Jan 14, 1977</b> .....	Search and Rescue Council, Incorporated, (SARCI), formed..
<b>Mar 1980</b> .....	Santa Cruz County SAR Unit begins..
<b>May 14, 1981</b> .....	Pima County Search and Recovery Divers is Incorporated..
<b>Early 1982</b> .....	Hug-A-Tree organization begins teaching in grade schools..
<b>Jun 2, 1984</b> .....	The first North American Rescue Symposium takes place at South Lake Tahoe..
<b>Oct 1985</b> .....	Arizona's first Heli-Rappel Team forms with the Apache Junction SAR Team..
<b>Dec 1985</b> .....	Arizona SAR Coordinators Association (ASARCA) is formed..
<b>Spring 1986</b> .....	Border Patrol's Desert Area Rescue Team (DART) is formed in Yuma..
<b>Apr 1986</b> .....	Tucson Fire Department's Technical Rescue Team is formed..
<b>Jun 1986</b> .....	Border Patrol's Special Tracking and Rescue (STAR) formed, within year it morphed into DART..
<b>Jul 1, 1986</b> .....	DART comes to Border Patrol Tucson Sector..
<b>Nov 7, 1987</b> .....	Air Force Reserve's 71 <sup>st</sup> Special Operations Squadron activated, hoist-equipped "Jolly Green Giants."
<b>Apr 1992</b> .....	The 305 <sup>th</sup> Rescue Squadron is activated at DMAFB..
<b>1993</b> .....	Southwest Rescue Dogs is Incorporated.
<b>Apr 1993</b> .....	Pinal County Search and Rescue is reconstituted..
<b>Jun 1996</b> .....	SARA inaugurates its Heli-Rappel Team..
<b>1998</b> .....	Border Patrol Search, Trauma and Rescue (BORSTAR) is formed..
<b>2007</b> .....	Southern Arizona Technical Rescue Group (SAETRG) is formed..
<b>2010</b> .....	Southern Arizona Mounted Search and Rescue (SAMSAR) Incorporated..

PART A:

INCIDENTS 1901–2000

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# CHAPTER 3

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1901–1909

## Dangerous Piece of Work

**Jun 12, 1901**

“A Mexican named Ismael Morales went down into a well in Florence...to clean it out and had nearly finished his work when the bucket struck the curbing and the well caved in burying the unfortunate man under about fifteen feet of rotten timber and loose sand. He was an industrious worker and was highly esteemed by all who knew him.”

It was sometime before a rescue party could try and save Morales. Charles Douglas volunteered to undertake it and after four hours, he was able to send the mortally injured man up to the surface. He had broken his right arm and had received a severe blow to the head. If not killed by the falling timber, it was reported he must have suffocated as he had been dead for some time. “Charles Douglas deserves great credit for undertaking this rescue as it was a dangerous piece of work, and no one else seemed willing to try it.” (Citizen 6/18/1901)

## A Thrilling Tale

**Aug 1901**

“Francis M. Hartman, Thomas Selby and Jack Gordon, all of Tucson, made a journey into the Galiuro Mountains a short time ago...They tell a thrilling tale of mishap and adventure...” Actually, Gordon is the hero of the story but he says nothing of his many risks. Along with six other men not in their party, these three took a four-horse stage to Mammoth.

“The gentlemen joined in genial conversations to while away the hours. No thought of the tribulations of this sin-cursed world entered in to mar the pleasure of the morning ride. When they reached the Rillito, the river was on a rampage and was looking for trouble. The men in the stage were game and accepted the challenge of the turbulent stream. The driver urged his horses into the water until it reached the horses side and got into the stage.”

Some of the men climbed on top of their vehicle to escape the water. When one of the horses mired down, they abandoned the now almost-floating stagecoach and waded and swam to shore. “Then came brave Jack Gordon to the rescue. Gordon climbed out into the cold muddy stream and

dragged the struggling frightened horses safely to the shore from which they started. The men stood about and shivered in their dripping clothes until the waters receded when they crossed easily.”

After spending the night in Mammoth, Hartman, Selby and “brave old Jack,” took another, smaller rig and headed north to their claims in the Galiuro Mountains. The Princess Gold Mines were on the other side of the San Pedro River, which they still had to cross.

“It rolls and tumbles and surges like angry, muddy surf. It takes great slices out of the shores and washes away whole counties in a night. It sweeps ranch houses, hay stacks, fences and farms into its capricious maw and devours them. Numerous horses and cattle are seized and drawn down in its treacherous sand, never to reappear. The San Pedro seems to get off its head when it imbibes too freely—off its entire course in fact for it sometimes covers the whole valley...”

Hartman, Selby, and, “brave old Jack,” needed to cross the river. The three travelers were dauntless, however, and drove in. The water rolled enough that it covered the horses’ backs and washed the team downstream, where one of the animals laid down. “Mr. Hartman and Mr. Selby said their prayers and determined to sell their lives dearly.” But not “brave old Jack.” He plunged in and held the beast’s head above the water to prevent it from drowning. The other two men had already “jumped ship” but Gordon struggled to save the team, finally succeeding in getting them loose from the wagon and dragged them to shore. He then turned around and swam back to try and save the wagon.

“Fated? No, brave Jack was equal to the situation. He tied a rope to the wagon tongue and together they hauled the wagon to shore.” Forced to return to Mammoth again, they waited four more days until the floods had passed “and continued on their interrupted pilgrimage. ‘I’d rather go up against anything than that daredevil old stream’ declared Colonel Hartman and Mr. Selby nodded in acquiescence. Jack Gordon, hero, ain’t sayin’ nothin’.” (Citizen 8/22/1901)

## Wanders for Four Days

### Aug 10, 1901

Along with five friends, Malcolm Gillette, who worked for the Surveyor General’s Office, was high in the Catalina Mountains spending his vacation, “which nearly ended fatally.” That Saturday morning, the young man left camp to go deer hunting farther up Mt. Lemmon. “It appears that after a long and fruitless search for game, he started on his return to camp. After walking in the direction of camp long enough to have reached it and failing to locate it, he became aware of the fact that he had lost his way. He began retracing his steps and the farther he walked the more confused he became.”

Soon alarmed, his friends formed a search party, but no luck. Fortunately, however, Gillette discovered water the first three days he wandered about but did have to resort to eating grasses. On the fourth day, he was found by a rancher who was out looking for his strayed cattle. “When [no first name] Jones found him, he was walking around aimlessly... given some brandy... placed on a horse and taken to Oracle, where he was [put] under the care of a physician. In his nervousness and anxiety, he had bitten his finger nails off almost to the roots.” (Star 8/14/1901)

## Fell 50 Feet into Well

**Oct 25, 1901**

Charles P. Vedder, a 35-year-old Santa Cruz Valley rancher and former Section Foreman for the Southern Pacific Railroad, was contracted to dig a well,

“near the new residence being erected by Dr. Rodgers [also spelled Rogers in article] out near the University. . . afternoon he put in a blast and went down in the well before the smoke and powder fumes had disappeared. He began to suffocate and signaled to the Mexican, Antonio Bravo who was helping him, to pull him up. When almost to the top, he became unconscious and fell back into the well, a distance of 50 feet, fracturing his skull.”

Bravo immediately called for help and then went down after Vedder. He was still alive when first reached and was quickly lifted out of the hole and rushed to Saint Mary’s Hospital. Somewhat ironically, Dr. Rodgers was the one who operated on Vedder, “but medical aid was of no avail and he died. . . Bravo, the Mexican who went down the well in a heroic effort to rescue Vedder from death, is complimented on all sides for his bravery and fidelity.” (Citizen 10/26/1901)

## Trapped in Cottonwood Tree

**Sep 7, 1902**

Future Pima County Supervisor, Ed L. Vail, and a friend, Mr. F. B. Close, and Mrs. Close and a Mr. Seager, traveled by Oldsmobile automobiles along the dirt road to La Osa Ranch, 85 miles south of Tucson. Vail was going there on business. Half-way to their night’s planned destination, they stopped at the Palo Alto Ranch for lunch. Afterwards, they walked to the next sandy wash the foursome had to drive across, to check it out for problems. They chose not to drive to the crossing, which quickly proved a very judicious decision:

“Messers. Vail and Close had no sooner crossed and cleared the dry bed of the river than down came the flood of water eight feet deep. They realized it was impossible to recross the river and hurried to higher ground. . . reached a barbed wire fence, with which they wrestled in order to obtain security from drowning. In working toward a tree, the waters meanwhile. . . immersed the men up to their chins. They finally reached the tree, which they climbed. . .”

In struggling to get to the safety of the tall Cottonwood tree, Close “lacerated his hands terribly, also his lower limbs. . . waiting in the tree added to the pain endured by numbing scratches from which the blood ran in streams. . .” The pair was forced to remain high among the limbs for five hours before they could climb down. Descending, they made their way to a small island in the still fast-flowing river. Mrs. Close and Mr. Seager were able to throw them a rope, “and after this was made fast. . . Close and Vail made a hand over hand journey to the high ground where Mrs. Close and Mr. Seager received them.”

The trip to La Osa was abandoned and the four stayed the night at the Palo Alto Ranch. “Messers. Vail and Close were in a sorry plight following their experience with a barbed wire fence in a raging flood and an enforced sojourn in a cottonwood tree.” (Star 9/10/1902)

## How Many Died?

**Jun 9, 1903**

Clifton was settled in Eastern Arizona at the confluence of the normally dry Chase Creek which comes in from the west and the San Francisco River, draining from the north. Founded about 1873, it was probably named for the surrounding cliffs, or “Cliff Town.” At the time of this flood, the town sat between the fairly narrow walls of the river bottom.

The headlines in the June 11, 1903, *The Copper Era and Morenci Leader* [Clifton, Arizona], claimed the flood hammering Clifton two days before, was an “UNPRECEDENTED DISASTER.” And up to this time, it probably was. Clifton and to a lesser degree, nearby Morenci, were no doubt prone to periodic flooding since they were built where the two drainages joined.

That Tuesday, ominous, early Monsoon-like gray clouds appeared and rain began to fall. Telephone messages from Morenci, higher on the hills, began warning those below to ready for flooding for it was now raining heavily. One man, J. A. McWilliams, was delivering groceries at the upper end of Chase Creek when he saw an eight-foot wall of brown water racing toward him. “The dam used by the Arizona Copper Company to impound their tailings had broken.” Surely whipping his horse team for all he was worth, McWilliams sped down Chase Creek, sounding the alarm, much as we imagine Paul Revere did, yelling to people to save themselves. Few heeded his warning. Rain fell in sheets and golf-ball-sized hailstones peppered those racing to shelter. The storm was over in an hour but it took months to repair the damage.

To cloud the situation, one of the largest labor strikes in Arizona history, was also just organizing in Morenci. Many hundreds of mostly Mexican and Italian miners were calling for improved working conditions, better pay, and improved health benefits. The mine executives had the ear of the Acting Governor, Isaac T. Stoddard, and he was quick to get two-hundred Arizona National Guardsmen, as well as several-hundred soldiers from both Fort Huachuca and Fort Bliss in El Paso, the entire troop of Arizona Rangers, and a great many Sheriff’s Deputies from the region. In all, there were over six-hundred armed men to help quell the disturbance. A Colonel from one of these groups, “was busy all day placing men on the high hills surrounding the camp armed with Krag Jørgenson rifles [repeating, bolt-action]. He can command all of the works and the company property.” Strategic arrests were made of a handful of ringleaders, and the strike ended very quickly and men went back to work. Most of these men were affected when the storm hit.

Houses and buildings made of sticks and adobe washed away, people and animals died, as well. Railroad tracks, train locomotives, and freight cars fell into the two, now rampaging rivers. One train full of passengers stopped a short distance from plunging into the river when a bridge washed out; miraculously, boulders had rolled onto the tracks, blocking its way. The bodies of 13 citizens were found and it was known that several others had drowned but had not been recovered. (Copper Era and Morenci Leader [Clifton], 6/11/1903; Arizona Republican 6/12/1903; History of Clifton, James M. Patton)

## The Nimrods

**Jul 14, 1903**

A nimrod in more formal usage is a skilled hunter, which these four “prominent men” were. Informally, it is an inept person, which might also fit—it is hard to say which definition the newspaper had in mind. Regardless, they were very lucky nimrods.



All were “ardent sports and dead shots,” and had gone to the Peña Blanca mines west of Nogales to hunt for “blue rock pigeons [sic: pigeons],” there “were more than you could shake a stick at in a week.” Three of the men “started out to slaughter birds and Mr. Hamelmann, who is too kind hearted to kill even a bird, remained with the horses and the eatables.” About 2 p.m., there was a cloudburst in the hills above their camp,

“and without any warning a great body of water came rushing down the Canyon, carrying big trees and immense boulders with it. Mr. Hamelmann saw it coming in time to give the alarm to the huntsmen—who were coming up the Canyon, and then he made a break for tall timber. The rest of the party lost no time in climbing the side of the mountain out of harm’s way, thus escaping what would certainly have been death, for no man could have come out of that terrible flood alive.” (The Border Vidette [Nogales] 7/18/1903)

### Narrow Escape in Flood

**Aug 12, 1903**

Dr. E. W. Baum, one of the four physicians on the hospital staff of the Copper Queen Mining Company in Bisbee, was on a hunting trip in the Huachuca Mountains, along with Joe Parmelee, general manager of the Huachuca Consolidated Mines. At the crossing of the San Pedro River,

“...the vehicle in which Mr. Parmelee and Dr. Baum were riding stuck fast in the quicksand, and the passengers had to be taken from the buggy on the shoulders of Pat O’Donnell, who happened along at the time...were in a precarious situation when they became stuck in the sands of the stream and had it not been for the heroic work of O’Donnell, they might have fared badly. Dr. Baum is loud in the praises of O’Donnell’s bravery for the part he played in the rescue.” (Bisbee Daily Review 8/13/1903)

### Narrowly Escaped Death

**Oct 16, 1903**

Of the over 566,000 miners known to be working in the United States in 1903, 1,926 were killed; O. M. King and Bob Bowdish narrowly escaped being among them. While finishing up for the day, the pair miraculously avoided death, because of the heroics of a coworker who was already on the surface.

It was 3 p.m. and the two had one last task and then they too, would also be on their way up. It was routine for them to load their already-drilled holes with dynamite, detonate them and leave, letting the gases clear out. Something went dreadfully wrong, however.

“As soon as the blast occurred water, which rapidly filled the shaft where the injured men lay, partially covered them, and both were in immediate danger of drowning, when rescued by Bert Warner, one of the miners who worked in the shaft. Warner proved himself a hero for in the face of impending danger to himself he went to the bottom of the shaft and afterwards supervised the raising of the unfortunate men to the surface.”

Warner was on top waiting for the signal of four rings announcing the scheduled detonation from below, in accordance with standard blasting procedures.

“ ‘All at once I heard the first shot, and knew something was wrong. I slid down the cable to the pump station, about 150 feet from the top, and yelled to King and Bob, but got no response. I then slid down the rest of the way and found King and Bowdish both conscious. King asked me to move a boulder off him. . . I turned to Bowdish. He was lying on his chin. . . but seemed to be clear in his mind, while King was alternately conscious and bewildered. I fixed them so the water could not cover them. . . fastened myself to the cable to be hoisted on top.’ ”

The bucket used to raise the men from the bottom of the shaft had been blown to pieces, only the bale on top of the bucket was left, so Warner carefully tied himself to it and was raised to the surface to report what he had seen. Upon reaching the “collar of the shaft” he fainted, now overcome by the gas inhaled down below. Coming to, he helped get another bucket connected to the cable and along with several others, was lowered back down to again help save both injured men from the rising water and poisonous gases. Bert Warner, without any safety gear while just using his body, had slid down the open shaft on a single cable, a drop of over two-hundred feet.

Later that night and after several operations, King lost his right eye besides having his left cheek bone broken, along with both legs. He also “had a peculiar fracture of the ankle. . . .” Bowdish suffered a cracked skull, both bones in one leg were broken and “the two bones of the forearm are driven up above the elbow four inches. . . .” (Bisbee Daily Review 10/17/1903)

## Caught in Raging San Pedro

**Jul 22, 1904**

The trio of men from Bisbee had been camping in Ramsey Canyon in the Huachuca Mountains and were on their way home. “When they reached the ford in the San Pedro they drove into the water, thinking it about two feet deep. The recent high water had cut the channel out at this place, and the occupants of the carriage found themselves in deep water. . . the horses were unable to pull the wagon out and it began to settle into the mud.” One of the men swam to shore and made his way to a nearby ranch. He returned with both a rope and some cowboys and their horses. “The rope was fastened to the wagon, and the cow ponies pulled the stranded campers out of the San Pedro and out of danger of drowning.” (Bisbee Daily Review 7/23/1904)

## Flood in Bisbee

**Aug 5, 1904**

“The goods in the wagon, consisting principally of bottled beer and soda, was washed through the subway, and will no doubt later contribute to the gaiety of the Mexicans on the flats.” According to the *Bisbee Daily Review*, it was one of the worst storms of the season, striking an area of narrow streets and hilly terrain routinely used to flooding, but not this bad. The heaviest downpour lasted for an hour and water fell in sheets, but the rain continued to come for two hours longer. So fairly predictable were summer floods in the steep roads of Bisbee, the agreed upon signal for such a dangerous event was to “fire five shots from a gun.” Those downstream and along the torrents’ path would pick up the alarm and continue the same, with loud reports of guns sounding all down the threatened streets. “The saloons and business houses were vacated in a jiffy.”

When the heaviest of the rain struck the hill sides it collected in rivulets that quickly grew into rivers and poured off the mountain sides into the canyon. Tons of dirt and huge boulders were carried downhill like feathers. Then, “there came near being a fatal accident in Brewery Gulch.” A

two-horse delivery wagon was caught in the raging water up the gulch but the driver managed to get wagon and team down to a spot he thought safe.

“But the stability of the outfit was not proof against the flood, and in a few moments wagon and team were mixed up in an inextricable mass, the former being overturned. The driver managed to escape. It looked as if the horses would be drowned, but Frank Wright was standing near, rushed to the rescue. He began cutting the harness, when the torrent swept him off his feet. He was carried down some 100 feet and would likely have been drowned had it not been for a bystander who threw him a rope. Wright returned to the rescue of the animals, and was washed under the wagon but managed to extricate himself. He managed at last to cut the struggling animals loose, which swam ashore.” (Bisbee Daily Review 8/6/1904)

### Fell Into Well

**Aug 13, 1904**

“A Mexican employed at cleaning a well on Fifteenth street [in Douglas] fell thirty feet into the water at the bottom. . . Both of his legs were broken by the fall.” The very brief article gave neither name nor age, but said that, “He was saved from drowning only by the prompt action of others employed on the job, who descended by means of a rope and rescued the man. The accident was the result of the victim slipping at the top of the well as he was lowering a bucket into it.” (Bisbee Daily Review 8/16/1904)

### Death and Destruction in Globe, Arizona

**Aug 17, 1904**

Globe, first settled in 1876 when gold was discovered there, is seventy miles east of Phoenix. Started as a mining camp, that’s still its main livelihood although now it is copper. The 2020 Census lists 7,249 residents while the Census in 1910, reports 7,083, which is the nearest Census the author could find for this 1904 flood.

“Globe has suffered many times from flood and fire, but yesterday’s deluge proved to be the greatest disaster that the camp has ever sustained, especially by reason of the appalling loss of life.” It was estimated over two inches of rain fell in less than an hour, targeting the center of town, along the main drainage of Pinal Creek. It was so sudden and so focused on just a few square miles, people in the far outskirts of the city, did not even know it had happened.

But eight people did die and very rapidly, not having much opportunity to escape. Several were lost in a multi-story boarding house, last seen trying to scramble through an open window. The building was pushed free of its footings. “Uncle John,” 81, a colorful local character, was swept away in his small wooden cabin along the railroad tracks. He was not seen again until his body was recovered days later, several miles downstream. “Mrs. Ella Hurd watched as a neighboring house broke off its foundations and she attempted to jump into the water, but her foot became entangled in a wire and she was carried under and drowned.” She was also found a day later, at least a mile farther down the river.

“An attempt was made to save Josie, who was a cripple, by setting her on a cot, which carried her safely afloat on the swift current until reaching the low railroad bridge below the slag dump, against which she was dashed and, in all probability, instantly killed. Charles Syme is

believed to have lost his life in the same manner. He jumped into the seething torrent when the house began to move, and managed to keep afloat until he reached the railroad bridge above mentioned, where he was lost sight of.”

Following the disaster, the population pitched in to search for their neighbors who remained missing, which were still most of them. Their effort was compounded as it is in every flood, by the tangle of wood and debris that came down with the rush of water. Then of course there was the great amount of mud which had been carried along in the torrent. A few bodies were found encased in the hardening muck. Some of the greatest impacts to the area were actually the railroad tracks which were washed away, at least 1,500 feet of them as well as their embankments. The trains were affiliated with the mines and of serious economic importance to the miners who made their living there.

Down through the decades, the mining communities of Globe, Miami, Superior, Clifton, Bisbee, and probably a few that are smaller, have suffered more than their fair share of these calamities. These cities generally started out as small mining claims discovered on the sides of steep canyons, places prone to disaster. And their mineral claims grew from there. This one in Globe was one of the more deadly and impactful of the floods to hit these mining towns. (Arizona Silver Belt [Globe] 8/18/1904, 8/19/1904, 8/20/1904; Arizona Republican 8/20/1904)

## Tiburón Island, or Bust

### June 1, 1905

The epic search for Thomas F. Grindell by his brother Edward, was worthy of a serial, silent-movie melodrama. On June 1, 1905, Thomas left for Mexico to explore Tiburón Island in the Gulf of California; at the time, he was the Superintendent of Schools in Douglas. Prior, he oversaw the schools in Nogales, was a clerk for the Territorial Supreme Court, a Deputy US Marshal, and a Rough Rider in the Spanish-American War.

Edward was a graduate of the University of Wisconsin, a captain in the same Arizona Rough Riders, Territorial Representative for Pima County as well as a candidate for Sheriff (he lost), ranched the abandoned military post of Fort Lowell, and was an oil-exploration entrepreneur. Both men were successful self-starters, capable of taking care of themselves.

Thomas and his small group were venturing into the eastern edge of the Sea of Cortez. Hot, inhospitable, and largely uninhabited, it was filled with far-reaching mountains and extensive sand dunes; mostly waterless, at best, it was punishing to traverse. Yaqui Indians who frequented the area were still feared from their occasional marauding of isolated ranches. Just barely into the Twentieth Century in 1905, the region in many ways was still the “Wild West,” and Thomas Grindell and company needed to risk it to reach Tiburón Island.

Tiburón (shark in Spanish) Island is 165 miles south of Nogales, a few miles off the mainland, and traditional home of the Seri Indians, whom Thomas wanted to study. They were reputed to be cannibals, (never validated). The summer before, Thomas “was on the island...became interested in the study of the formation of the country and its inhabitants.” On this second trip, he was accompanied by three other men from Bisbee and was to be back by August 15<sup>th</sup> for his responsibilities with the school district. By September 1, however, Thomas Grindell and party had not been heard from and concern for their well-being grew.

On September 14, Edward traveled by train to the little village of Altar, sixty miles below the Border where he “would follow out the trail of the missing party so far as is possible.” He also

presented a letter to the Prefect (Mayor) there from the Governor of Sonora for his aid in this search for his brother. Right before leaving Altar to begin working his way south, Edward met a man who had a ranch on the coast whose vaqueros had found a deserted camp with a sheet-iron stove. And, “in the ground near the stove were nailed four human hands.”

This grisly report only energized Edward. Six days later in Caborca, he confirmed Thomas did not have a sheet-iron stove and so likely the hands were not from anyone he was looking for. All the while, Edward was making plans with only the basic of maps and knowledge of the land. He intended tracing Thomas from Caborca to the fishing site of Puerto Libertad, 65 miles from Caborca. There he’d hire boats to reach Tiburón Island, fifty more miles. Right before leaving, Edward heard Puerto Libertad was abandoned—both brothers had to go overland.

He learned Thomas had secured two horses, five burros, and six weeks of supplies, along with a Papago (Tohono O’odham) guide. Edward was informed that when the missing party found no boats on the coast, they sent the guide back, who supposedly told others that the four Americans returned to Santa Ana to prospect for gold. Edward did not believe this, although there was significant mining excitement in the area. He traveled to a remote ranch to find the guide, but was not able to do so. All of this back and forth investigating and running down actual leads and false rumors by Edward consumed nearly two weeks of valuable time.

Once again, Edward secured the Governor’s aid. He reached out and located the missing guide who claimed the party had water and were returning to the railroad. On October 5, Edward and a companion were to leave at first light with the guide, retracing Thomas’s route. But the guide failed to show up, after stealing one of their fresh horses in the dark. Edward now suspected either the guide had killed Thomas or the region had. “The country has been very hot this summer, especially June and July, and I am of the opinion the boys have perished in the desert. In any case, we will follow their trail unless it goes straight up.”

The Governor of Sonora was again involved, this time to find the thief and have him interrogated. The administrator was successful and on October 17, Edward Grindell left, this time with the guide and a company of twenty soldiers and volunteers. About the same day, the Territorial Governor of Arizona, who had led the Grindells in the Spanish-American War and was their friends, authorized Captain Thomas Rynning of the Arizona Rangers to organize a second search party. Two groups now hunted the four: Thomas Grindell, Olin “Doc” Ralls, David Ingram, and Lieutenant Jack E. Hoffman, also a former Arizona Rough Rider.

A week later, Hoffman, “more dead than alive, with his mind affected by his awful experiences on the desert,” dragged himself into Guaymas, Mexico, on October 24. When able, Hoffman related the tortuous tale of Thomas Grindell and the party’s two remaining men.

Hoffman said that a day from the coast, they got twenty gallons of water at Coyote Springs and as already arranged, the guide left the four men, “with the best of feeling.” They arrived at the Gulf north of Tiburón Island, where they quickly faced troublesome coastline, consuming time and more importantly, precious water. Upon reaching a spot across from the island, Grindell and two others tried to wade out to it, several miles away. Soon up to their armpits, they decided it was impossible and turned their immediate attention to finding a ranch believed somewhere nearby.

“The party becoming in bad shape, Doc Ralls took two of the best burros and started out to hunt [for] this ranch. The others waited two days for his return, and then Grindell, with Hoffman and Ingram, started out to hunt for this ranch also. After traveling twenty miles, [they] became played out, and Grindell went on. This was the last seen of Grindell—June 28<sup>th</sup> or 29<sup>th</sup> . . . After lying in the shade all day, they could hardly move. They remained here four days, keeping up on chewing chollas. . . then started on their hunt for water. Ingram lost his mind and tried to

kill Hoffman, and finally got so he could not march. After staying with him... a day, Hoffman left; he probably died shortly after.”

In his wandering, Hoffman came upon Ralls’ camp, their best burro was dead there but, no body. “Hoffman thinks without a doubt Doc Ralls perished from thirst.” He then continued down the coast, “chewing cactus for water and shooting pelicans and a rabbit now and then, and eating snails, anything to get along, suffering great hardship.” After five days he finally fell in with some Mexican fishermen, who treated him kindly and took care of him.

Hoffman agreed to take Rynning, 39, back up the coast to locate both Ingram and Ralls and help find Grindell. Rynning wired the Mayor of Douglas seeking \$500 (nearly \$16,000 today) to launch a search from Guaymas. He declined, assuming all were dead. But then Walter Douglas, the General Manager for the Copper Queen Mining Company, stepped in and wired Rynning the money. They did find the deserted camps, saddles, dead horses and burros, but no human bodies. He also detected where Edward had been searching. Since there was no fresh water nearby, Rynning firmly believed Edward and party would not survive. After a week, Rynning, his two fellow Rangers, Hoffman, the sailors and soldiers, gave up. While returning to Guaymas, they ran into a violent storm; the engine broke and mast snapped, they almost sank.

Edward Grindell did survive, however, finding only a live burro and gun of Ralls; he had likely missed Ralls by two days and Rynning by only one. Just before Christmas 1905, after a collective four months of scouring 100 miles of coastline and the wilds of that region, Edward Grindell finally gave up actively looking for his brother and the other two men. He offered a reward to anyone, including the dozen Papago Indians he had hired, \$200 for finding “each and every body.” The day after Christmas 1906, there was a news story that Thomas had been found by prospectors, but this was quickly declared bogus by Edward.

On December 3, 1907, the Elks Lodge in Douglas had a Memorial Service and paid a final tribute to Thomas F. Grindell. (Bisbee Daily Review 9/1/1905, 9/15/1905, 9/20/1905, 9/28/1905, 10/1/1905, 10/5/1905, 10/11/1905, 10/28/1905, 11/12/1905, 6/17/1906, 12/27/1906, 1/31/1907, 12/4/1907)

## 18 People Probably Died

### Dec 3, 1906

“One of the worst floods in the history of Clifton [one historian claims it was the worst] came down the San Francisco River and Chase Creek...the principal business section of town was almost completely ruined. Many frame houses were carried into the narrow streets and impeded the force of the water...loss of life is reported at from seven to twenty...” A Phoenix newspaper reported sixty people were missing in the mining community and “many narrow escapes from drowning and a party of rescuers did effective work in saving lives when the flood was at its highest.”

Founded in 1873, named for the surrounding cliffs, Clifton grew at the confluence of the normally dry Chase Creek which comes in from the west and the San Francisco River, draining from the north. At the time of this flood, the town sat in “the gulch,” the river bottom between the steep walls of this, the largest tributary of the Gila River. Clifton was in Graham County until 1909, when Greenlee County was formed.

“Fully half of the city is reported destroyed; many of the finest buildings...swept away. One saloon building was washed away. There were several men in the building at the time, and they



were all lost. A woman, a man and a child were lost in a small restaurant which was carried away and smashed to pieces in the flood. A number of small frame buildings were destroyed in which people were known to be living and it is feared that they were lost. . . railway from Clifton to Longfellow is destroyed. . . several weeks before business can be resumed. . . .”

The tragedy began with three hours of a steady, heavy winter rain over Southern Arizona, including Clifton and nearby Morenci and their 8,000 citizens. The slow-moving storm ultimately lasted four days, melting snow in the high country. However, the totally unexpected flood did not come directly from the storm. Rather, “it came from the collapse of the dam of the Detroit Copper Company, six miles above Clifton, which turned loose millions of tons of tailings which swept down the narrow canyon [Chase Creek] and into the town with a breast of seven feet, carrying death and destruction as it went.” The wall of debris-filled water hit so quickly, word did not reach those downstream. Hundreds of people fled to the mountainside for safety and makeshift shelters. Power was out, the only light came from their campfires. The many reports of heroism and rescue efforts were by neighbors helping neighbors.

With the new day, a sense of calm but disbelief settled in. It was learned that “three Mexican looters were shot and killed by officers.” Mud and mine tailings literally cemented boulders and wreckage inside of homes and businesses, making body recoveries of those totally engulfed almost impossible, in some instances. One article said, “The Clifton flood was the most disastrous ever known here, over half of the town being damaged. . . and between fifteen and twenty people drowned, mostly Mexicans. . . the high-water mark was over two feet higher than ever before. . . No bodies have been recovered and the complete death list can never be ascertained.” This list of people dying was ultimately 18 names long. (Bisbee Daily Review 12/5/1906, 12/6/1906, 12/7/1906, 12/8/1906, 12/15/1906)

### Preacher Drowns

**Jan 31, 1907**

T. W. Bodwell was a 42-year-old minister in the Seventh-Day Adventist Church out of Tucson. However, he was now on foot in San Jose, about seven miles east of Safford to visit some of his congregation immediately across the swollen Gila River, in the little settlement of Sanchez. He had been waiting two days to see if the water would go down, but it never relented. In San Jose, he finally induced a boy to take him across the river on horseback and the two started, each upon their own mount.

“In mid-stream, the horse of the guide began floundering in quick sand and for a few minutes his attention was closely confined to his own affairs. When he had brought himself out of his perilous position, he looked about to see what had become of Mr. Bodwell. There was nothing in sight but a hat dancing on the raging current.”

Searchers found the body of the horse the next day, some distance downstream. It was lodged against a sandbar, but Bodwell could not be found. After locals searched the flooded area for several more days, they finally gave up. One article described Bodwell with “the life of a promising and useful man, sacrificed for the lack of ordinary caution.” There was never a follow up article indicating if T. W. Bodwell was ever found. (Arizona Republican 2/9/1907; Bisbee Daily Review 2/13/1907)

## Shot in Head

**Apr 6, 1907**

Lester Wright Holladay, whose age was never given but was “young,” was rabbit hunting with another young man in Sabino Canyon that Saturday afternoon. Holladay left his friend holding the horse-drawn rig and he began to climb into the hills. “He had gone about five minutes and was about 200 yards from the rig when a shot was heard.” A party of visitors to the area heard the shotgun blast and saw “the Holladay youth evidently in distress. He staggered, waved his hand as if beckoning for help and then fell to the ground. He repeated this several times until he was so weak from the loss of blood that he could not rise again.”

Among these visitors from Virginia were some trained nurses who quickly went to the young man’s aid and did what they could to alleviate the suffering of the youth. A makeshift ambulance was made in which the boy was driven into the city. He suffered a serious head wound and was unconscious from just after the accident to being admitted into Saint Mary’s Hospital. The sheriffs’ deputies and youth’s father went to the site of the mishap the next day to try and determine what happened. They theorized the boy had put the barrel of the shotgun into a rabbit hole to scare out the animal believed in there. The gun went off accidentally and a double-recoil took place, “it struck the boy on the head crushing his skull.” Lester Wright Holladay died in the hospital soon after being admitted. (Citizen 4/8/1907, 4/12/1907)

## Fell 100 Feet in Mine

**Jun 12, 1907**

“Probably the saddest accident which has occurred in the history of the district happened... when Charles Huber, 17 years of age and one of the most popular young men in the district... fell to his death...” So wrote the *Bisbee Daily Review*.

A senior at Bisbee High School in the coming September, Charles was Captain of the Track Team and Manager of the Athletic Association. He was described as “always having a happy disposition and proficiency in school and on the athletic field.” Earlier that month he had asked his father if he could go to work in the mines for the summer. His father, who was a blacksmith for this mine, relented and Charles “went to work in order to save up some spending money for himself.”

At 9 a.m. that Wednesday morning, about a week after the young man became employed there, Charles was working near a vertical shaft that was uncovered. “Before walking out on the plank which was already across the opening the boy did not look at it, and when he stooped to place the second plank in place, the one on which he was standing curled and moved so that he dropped through the opening. He fell 100 feet to the next level, striking his head on one of the sides of the ore car.” Some miners who were nearby rushed to his aid and were able to get him up to the top where a stretcher was available. He was in the Copper Queen Hospital within twenty minutes, two hours later the Bisbee High School Honor Student died, never regaining consciousness. See “Shotgun Blast to the Head,” January 23, 1910 on page 40 and “Third Tragic Death in Family,” May 26, 1912 on page 47. (Bisbee Daily Review 6/13/1907)



## Stage Overturns

**Jul 31, 1907**

The driver of a stage returning from a funeral in Lowell in a heavy rain, attempted to cross a creek in Bisbee. He got too close to one edge of the ford and struck some large boulders obscured by the muddy water. The coach overturned, throwing its several occupants into the rushing, waist-deep flood.

“Mrs. Metcalf, one of the passengers, fainted and Chas. Glover, who went to her rescue was himself overcome and came near drowning but for the timely arrival of ex-Deputy Sheriff Harvey Hughes and Harry Reynolds, who after great difficulty, succeeded in rescuing both parties from a watery grave. In attempting to assist Mrs. Metcalf, Mr. Glover’s feet became entangled in the wheel of the stage, from which position he was extricated by Mr. Hughes and Mr. Reynolds. Although Mr. Glover swallowed considerable water he was soon revived, as was Mrs. Metcalf.” (Bisbee Daily Review 8/2/1907)

## A Mother’s Worst Nightmare

**Aug 13, 1907**

Earlier in the evening, Mrs. E. H. Sheldon from near Bisbee, had allowed her three oldest children, ages 8, 6, and 4, to go to a neighbor’s for a visit. “In their absence, a storm of much severity came up, lasting from 7 to 9 o’clock. As it abated, Mrs. Sheldon becoming alarmed for the safety of her little ones and fearing they might start for home alone, gathered her four-months’ babe in her arms and taking a three-year-old child by the hand, set out for her neighbor’s. She arrived in safety, and getting the three children, started home with all five.”

On the way back, the storm renewed in strength. Soon blinded by torrential rain and lightning flashes, she wandered from the path she had taken over and strayed into a gully “in which a sudden rush of water had come.” As she struggled to keep on her feet the surge rose up to her waist. “The babe at her breast and the next oldest child she managed to cling to, but the four-year-old child, a little boy, was swept from her grasp as she was carried struggling to the opposite side of the gully.” The two oldest children were now stranded on the other side of the rushing torrent, while the cloudburst raged all around them.

“There her despair and fear that the other two children would attempt to come through the water alone, together with the cries of terror which reached her from them above the storm, drove all fear of the torrent from her mind, and running with the two little ones she had saved to higher ground she dashed back and struggled back through the water safely to the side of her other children.”

She now had two children on each side of the roaring flood waters. “Her frail strength, already superhumanly taxed, the greater weight of the older children would probably have made their fate that of the drowned child...” Then, an “unknown Mexican” passing along the road heard the screaming over the storm. He went into the torrent and pulled the two older children through the water, while also helping their mother, as well. “This man, in a strange land,” assisted Mrs. Sheldon home with her four surviving children, “and departed unknown and unsung as he had come.” He stopped at a neighbor’s and related what had happened, “and passed on without a word on his part.” He then disappeared anonymously into the storm.

A search party was organized and worked through the night, finally finding the little boy near daylight after the water had receded. “The body lay in plain view when found.” (Bisbee Daily Review 8/14/1907)

### Near-Drowning of Tot

**Sep 13, 1907**

Little Elsie Egolf of Wood Canyon in Bisbee, narrowly escaped death while playing with a number of her friends. The children were near an abandoned well not far from her home, “and approaching too close to the edge the earth caved in and she was thrown down and into the water below.” The pit was quite deep enough to drown the girl. Her young companions went screaming for help and quickly found a man who rushed to the girl’s rescue.

“...as he approached the edge of the well the earth again crumbled and caved falling down upon the struggling child and bruising her badly and forcing her beneath the water. With added caution, but with all possible speed, the rescuer managed to let himself down into the well by a rope and finally succeeded in bringing up the five-year-old tot badly frightened, not a little bruised, but entirely conscious.”

It seems that the girl’s clothing filled with air and kept her afloat for ten minutes or more until the second cave-in of the earth around the well. After recovering from her fright, shock and bruises, “she will be none the worse for her experience.” (Bisbee Daily Review 9/14/1907)

### Despondent, Takes Own Life

**Nov 30, 1907**

“The bullet tore a gaping wound in his breast, and he died a short while later.” James W. Mitchell, 45, along with two civil engineers, was “walking along the lonely mountain trail that was through the Tanque Verde Canyon near the junction of the Rincon and Santa Catalina ranges... pulled out a six-shooter and pressing the muzzle against his breast, snapped the trigger.” Mitchell was engaged in negotiations on some mining claims in the area and was being accompanied to them by the professionals. The two men were in front and the first thing they knew of the suicide was upon hearing the shot ring out.

“Great difficulty was experienced in getting Mitchell’s body back to a ranch. It was necessary to tie the remains on the back of a pack burro and finally after much trouble (Jesse H.) Wright and (Leon) Moore arrived at the Carrillo ranch about 11 o’clock Saturday night with the body. The remains were brought from there to this city in a wagon... The case was turned over to Coroner Richey who viewed the remains with a jury today at Reilly’s morgue.” (Citizen 12/2/1907)

### Soldier Receives Award

**Mar 1, 1908**

An unnamed Mexican farmer was crossing the usually safe ford in the Gila River at Florence when he and his team were washed downstream. “He became tangled in the harness and could not extricate himself.” Private William C. Pitts, of Company F, Twenty-First Infantry was in a war

department topographical mapping detachment out of Prescott but was working in the area. “At the risk of losing his own life,” Pitts jumped into the swollen river, and “swam 75 yards through the raging torrent and after extracting the then unconscious man, swam to shore where the victim of the accident was resuscitated.” There were numerous witnesses to this act of heroism and it was acknowledged by the United States Army.

Pitts was soon promoted to Corporal. Then at the command of Brigadier General Thomas, the following General Order was issued:

“The department commander takes pleasure in publishing to the troops of the department the fact that...Pitts...serving as private at the time, performed a conspicuously brave act, when...at the imminent risk of his own life he rescued from drowning...a citizen of that town who had been overcome with the current and was being rapidly carried downstream. Corporal Pitts has been recommended for certificate of merit.” (Bisbee Daily Review 3/21/1908; Iowa County [Wisconsin] Democrat 5/14/1908)

### Young Girls Saved From Runaway Horses

**Mar 6, 1908**

Norma Higdon and Anna Wendleborn, both 7-years old, had just left school. While passing a wagon and team of horses, the girls climbed up on the seat to watch some men shoveling coal into the wagon. A stray lump of coal struck one of the animals, instantly frightening the team into a “terrific pace” down the steep main streets of Globe.

“The runaways gathered speed...the big wagon swaying from one side of the street to the other. It was a sight that froze the blood of every spectator and it looked as though there was no possible chance to save the lives of the screaming children.” As the two girls clung to each other and to the sides of the wagon, “there was a score of men in the middle of the street trying to head off the team...” One man tried to dive onto the backs of the horses but was quickly “thrown aside.” Edward W. Hargett, “the Tamale Man,” ran out in front of the animals and was able to grab a bridle and run alongside for a dozen feet. But the team was going too fast and he was pulled underneath the wagon and it rolled over him, seriously bruising his legs.

Will Parks, a young proprietor of a local meat shop, was riding his horse up the street as the runaway team “with the swaying wagon behind,” raced toward him. “He broke loose the rope which hung from the horn of his saddle...coolly adjust the loop and swing it about his head as the horses dashed past and as the rope whirled through the air, more than one heart ceased to beat for a few seconds, but his eye was true and his hand steady, for the loop settled over the head of the off horse.”

Experience now told Parks what to then expect; he feared the children would either be thrown out of the wagon or the rope would snap, or both. After giving the rapidly tightening rope some slack, he took his feet out of the stirrups.

“When the rope drew taut the impetus of the runaway, yanked his horse from under him and he landed on his feet in the street. Trained to the rope, Parks’ horse stood back but the team was almost too much for him. But there was a score of hands at the bridles of the runaways in an instant and as many reaching for the children, who had stuck to their perilous perch throughout...when the horses were brought to a halt, they were a few feet from a telephone pole, into which they would have crashed within a moment.”

Both Norma and Anna were frightened but not hurt. As “ex-cowpuncher Parks” mounted his horse, “the crowd of several hundred that had gathered cheered him... Justly entitled to share the hero’s honors with Parks, is Ed Hargett, the tamale man.” Hargett, a former Shift Supervisor in a local mine, but who had become seriously ill while working, returned to pedaling his tamales. But he had to go home soon since he was sufficiently injured and in too much pain to continue trying to make ends meet for his family of seven.

On March 12, 1904, philanthropist and steel tycoon Andrew Carnegie established the Carnegie Hero Fund Commission.

“We live in a heroic age. Not seldom are we thrilled by deeds of heroism where men or women are injured or lose their lives in attempting to preserve or rescue their fellows. . . I have long felt that the heroes and those dependent upon them should be freed from pecuniary cares resulting from their heroism. . . I have transferred to the Commission five million dollars. . . Bonds of the United States Steel Corporation, the proceeds to be used. . . .”

The Carnegie Medal is generally considered North America’s [United States and Canada] highest civilian honor for heroism. The first award (#1) bestowed by the Pittsburgh-based Commission was for a save of a drowning person in Pennsylvania, July 17, 1904. Between that date and 2022, there have been 10,273 Carnegie Hero Fund Commission Awards for heroic acts, with seventy in Arizona. The first was on November 1, 1912, to the humble tamale vendor, Edward W. Hargett, Sr., who received a Silver Medal and \$1,000. In 2022, that would be over \$29,300. The Fund originally issued Gold, Silver, and Bronze Medals, but soon did away with Gold. The Silver Medal was stopped in 1981 and since then, only Bronze Medals are granted. (Daily [Globe] Arizona Silver Belt 3/7/1908; Star 11/1/1912; <https://www.carnegiehero.org>)

## Bad Air in Well

**Jun 17, 1908**

Charles A. Hill was a 35-year-old farmer and miner who was working at the bottom of a 168-foot-deep well in Naco, Arizona. Lance H. Mardiss was a 25-year-old nearby farmhand. Hill was overcome by bad air and suffocating in the pit. Lance guessed the air was bad but still chose to be lowered into the hole to rescue Hill, anyway. There was “but one man and one woman, both greatly excited, left to operate the windlass” for lowering Mardiss to Hill. Once down, “He fastened around Hill the rope by which he had been lowered, and Hill was drawn to the surface. The rope was then let down, and Mardiss was drawn to the surface. He had difficulty in keeping himself from becoming unconscious as he was being drawn up, and when he reached the surface, he was nauseated. Hill could not be revived.”

On November 1, 1912, Lance H. Mardiss became a recipient of a Carnegie Hero Fund Award, the second in Arizona. He received a Bronze Medal and \$1,000. In 2022, that would be about \$29,300. (Star 11/2/1912; Carnegie Hero Fund Awards #3063-684)

## Rope Breaks, Miner Falls

**Jun 30, 1908**

Charles J. Cunningham, a 46-year-old prominent businessman in the area, was inspecting one of his mineral claims near Twin Buttes, 25 miles southwest of Tucson. While being lowered into the 125-foot-deep mine shaft, the rope on the windlass broke 25 feet from the end. “When the heavy iron bucket struck the bottom, it rebounded, throwing Cunningham violently against one side of the shaft.” He lay unconscious for twenty minutes while two men went down to his aid. “It was with difficulty that he could be taken out of the shaft.” Initially, the physician that first responded to the accident site, believed Cunningham had a broken shoulder blade and a fractured skull. “This is an injury which makes the physicians doubtful of his recovery.” But recover he did, not coming to his end until a fatal fall in the very same mine shaft, in 1935. See “Timber Breaks, Miner Dies,” February 18, 1935, on page 73. (Star 7/1/1908, 2/19/1935; Citizen 7/1/1908)

## “I Had No Fear of Death”

**Sep 6, 1908**

Harry Earp of Tombstone, the Arizona agent for *Collier’s Weekly* [a general interest magazine beginning in 1888], was enjoying Sabino Canyon on the warm Sunday afternoon with others. Wading out into the cool stream, “he stepped into sixteen feet of water and sank to the bottom twice, remaining down the third time until being rescued.”

Seeing Earp go down three times, a fully-dressed “young man” on the bank dove in and tried to reach him, but could not get quite deep enough. Earp would later recall, “When I went down for the first time... I realized I was about to die unless rescued. When I went down the second time, I gave up hope... Somehow after I went down the last time, I did not seem to care what happened, and I had no fear of death.”

George Brady who had been swimming fifty yards downstream of Earp, heard the commotion and scrambled over the boulders, rushing up stream. He was able to dive twice, finally grabbing Earp by the hair on his second attempt and pulled him to the surface. After being resuscitated, Earp said, “Being brought to life was much more painful than dying.” (Tombstone Weekly Epitaph 9/13/1908)

## Four-Year-Old Wanders 18 Miles

**Jan 30, 1909**

Richard Knagge, 4, son of William Knagge, wandered off his parent’s ranch on Tanque Verde Road. “Not in a longtime has there been so much excitement in Tucson as was caused by the disappearance of the Knagge boy. Late Saturday afternoon the fire bell was rung to give a general alarm that a child was lost. Several automobile parties started for the Knagge ranch and the search for the child was continued until late Saturday night.”

Sheriff Nelson and Frank Cole, “both of whom are expert frontiersmen,” followed the boy’s tracks by lantern light through the desert until they lost the trail in the dark of the early morning. The boy crossed a road, buggy tracks, a railroad and crawled under a fence. In all, it was believed he traveled 18 miles, ending up some 12 miles from home. By this time there were a great many searchers in buggies, on horseback and on foot. Sheriff Nelson even tried to get a bloodhound from

the Yuma Prison but they were busy elsewhere. Ultimately the boy was found safe, curled up asleep on a dirt, public road. (Citizen 2/1/1909)

### **“Drove His Head into the Sand”**

**Aug 7, 1909**

The deep hole where the accident occurred was near Bisbee’s Copper Queen Hospital in a pool filled by rains two days before. Jesus Fimbres, 13, was playing about the water’s edge with a party of boys that hot Saturday morning. They finally decided to go swimming, and “it is said that Fimbres attempted to dive. When he did not make his re-appearance, his companions became frightened and ran all the way to their homes for aid. By the time aid came the body had been under water for fully half an hour.”

Both the mother and brother of Jesus hurried to the accident scene and while the “mother stood screaming,” the brother “did his best to recover the drowned boy. Just then Mexican Foreman Dodge, of the Copper Queen company, was attracted to the scene, and he and the elder Fimbres recovered the boy from nine feet of water, but too late for any hope of resuscitation.” A Coroner’s Jury was convened right there.

“The theory is that Fimbres dived too deeply and drove his head into the sand at the bottom of the pool so that he was held firmly in its grip and unable to extricate himself.” (Bisbee Daily Review 8/9/1909)

### **Drowning At Bisbee Ice Plant**

**Aug 30, 1909**

For some years, excess water from the ice-making plant in Bisbee drained under the nearby train tracks and collected in a deep hole close by. “Notwithstanding the fact that the water in this pool is very cold it has still been the custom of the boys to use it as a swimming hole of which there are not many in the vicinity of Bisbee.” Just before noon, 15-year-old Arnold York was one of four teenagers swimming there, which in places reaches a depth of 15 feet. They were all enjoying the temporary respite from the August heat when Arnold was seen to go down. Not reappearing after a reasonable time, his friends became alarmed. They repeatedly tried diving down for him but none were strong enough swimmers to get to him. The alarm was soon raised at the ice plant.

“A rescuing party was formed and a Mexican first attempted to reach the body, but he also failed and was almost overcome by the coldness of the water. Just at this time the switch engine came along...and before the rescuing party with ropes had gotten to work, Brakeman Dixon partially undressed and went in for the boy. He was successful and brought up the body, being helped out by the ropes of the party from the ice plant.”

Attempts to resuscitate the drowned boy were made but eventually proved futile. “The body had gone down in one of the deepest parts of the pool and had been under water so long that life was extinct.” The Justice of the Peace for Lowell (near Bisbee) was notified and he empaneled a Coroner’s Jury. They viewed the boy at the scene of the accident. Although a final determination was not made at that time, the consensus was he probably suffered a debilitating cramp due to the cold water, causing him to drown. (Bisbee Daily Review 8/31/1909)

## 16 Hours in Tree

**Sep 6, 1909**

Arthur Lovejoy, a collector for the telephone company, was on one side of narrow Sabino Creek but when it began to rain so he thought it best to get to the other side. The sudden summer downpour, however, caused the stream to rise too rapidly and now swollen, was no longer narrow. At 1 p.m., Lovejoy finally decided to dare the rushing water anyway and the moment he stepped into the stream, he was swept off his feet. In his struggle to reach the opposite shore while also trying not to drown, Lovejoy, who was only identified as young, “encountered a tree and with an effort he climbed it and settled down in its forks to await help or subsidence of the swollen creek. He removed his outer clothing and laid the articles on the branches to dry.”

Later that afternoon, his two companions who were where Lovejoy was trying to get to, threw him a thin rope. They were able to “trolley line” some coffee and bread to him.

“Lovejoy held his place in the tree overnight and at daylight...those who had furnished him sustenance threw a life line which he caught and tied around his shoulders. He then cleared the tree and was pulled ashore, after having been in the tree 16 hours. He was chilled to the bone through the night and did not during the lonely vigil, secure a wink of sleep. He expresses no desire to repeat the performance and is thankful to be able to tell his experience of nearly a day, the worst of it passed through the night.” (Star 9/10/1909)

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# CHAPTER 4

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1910–1919

## ‘Narrow Escape from Watery Grave’

**Jan 1, 1910**

Five local women teachers and their two male friends, were enjoying an all-day excursion into Sabino Canyon on New Year’s Day, when it began to rain. Despite this annoyance, the young adventurers were still determined to see the canyon and pushed on. They would soon have a “most thrilling experience and the closest call for their lives they are likely to have in many a day. It was only by climbing the jagged sides of the rugged canyon that they managed to escape death by drowning.”

“[W]ithin the heart of the canyon, [they] heard the flood waters coming several minutes before they were visible. Realizing their danger, [the men] assisted the women in climbing the almost perpendicular walls... to a place of safety. Scarcely were they out of danger before the surging, foaming flood waters came down the canyon with a deafening noise that deadened even their own voices.”

At this point in time, there was a road ending two miles from the mouth of Sabino Canyon, which was still about 18 miles northeast of Tucson. Narrowly dodging tragedy, many others over the next century will not be so lucky. (Star 1/4/1910)

## Shotgun Blast to the Head

**Jan 23, 1910**

“Lying upon the shotgun which had caused his death, presumably by an accidental discharge, the body of Joe Huber was found yesterday [Tuesday] morning by a posse of local officers who went in search of him, lying near the top of the divide...” Huber, age not given, was a “well and favorably known” blacksmith in Bisbee and had gone hunting by himself near there. At the time he was employed by the Copper Queen Mine. When last seen on Sunday morning, he had “his gun on his shoulder and nothing apparently wrong with him.”

He did not come home that night, and his son, accompanied by a number of friends, went looking for him the next morning, but did not find him. “His family are nearly frantic over his disappearance... It is feared by his family and friends that he met with some accident... such as



the explosion of his gun while the weapon was being carried in a position to cause the shot to enter his body.” According to the Deputy Sheriff, that is exactly what happened. “He had evidently leaned upon the gun, which was known to have been his habit and the weapon somehow exploded. The shot took effect in his head. . . .” See “Fell 100 Feet in Mine,” June 12, 1907 on page 32 and “Third Tragic Death in Family,” May 26, 1912 on page 47. (Bisbee Daily Review 1/25/1910, 1/26/1910)

## Rescue Training Comes to Southern Arizona

### May 16, 1910

“On the surface the miners laugh at death and drop down the shafts to rescue the entombed. Fifty per cent of these volunteer rescuers themselves meet death from the noxious gases. Fifteen men [sic: 18] were entombed at the Hanna, Wyoming mine disaster. Yet, one after another, 40 rescuers went down. . . and never came back.”<sup>1</sup>

According to the US Department of Labor, for the ten years immediately prior to May 16, 1910 when the Bureau of Mines was created, 22,739 miners directly died in mine accidents, with 3,242 dying in just 1907, alone. In 1910, there were over 725,000 miners employed in the US, most worked in coal mines in Mid-Atlantic and Appalachian states. All major accidents in these mines were from explosion, fire, cave-in, and/or flooding. (In 2020, nationally, there were only 63,612 miners and now just five deaths.)

The Bureau of Mines was established in the Department of the Interior, to deal with a tidal wave of catastrophic mine disasters. The initial mandate for its first director, Dr. Joseph Holmes, was to create a nationwide, mine lifesaving service and save lives underground. This would eventually result in a “Sea Change” in priorities for the large mining companies; previously, their efforts were in saving property first, lives second.

“Between 5,000 and 8,000 miners are injured each year in the United States, some so seriously that they die, perhaps months afterward, and others so maimed that they are crippled for life. The work of the first-aid-to-the-injured [program] is to give the proper emergency treatment so that injuries will be lessened in seriousness and some of the fatalities perhaps avoided.”

On October 30, just five months after Holmes was named Director, two of the six Mine Rescue Train Cars donated to the Bureau by the Pullman Sleeping Car Company, were now retrofitted and left Pittsburgh on a “tour of education.” Each was staffed with an experienced mining engineer, surgeon, and several assistant trainers and was to make the rounds of mining communities. They were “to instruct miners in the use of mine rescue apparatus and first aid to the injured.” Three of these six train cars would soon be stationed out West.

One of these important “appliances” was the Draeger Oxygen Helmet, invented in 1903 in Germany and now regularly used in Europe. It was similar to an underwater hard-hat diver with a glass window on a helmet with two leather-covered oxygen packs on the chest. It became so critical early on, First Responders on mine rescues became known as *Dragermen*.

On October 30 and 31, 1911, Holmes had orchestrated the first National Mine Rescue and First Aid Conference in Pittsburgh. Assisting were the American Red Cross and the United Mine Workers

<sup>1</sup> On March 28, 1908, 18 miners were trapped by an explosion in a Hanna, Wyoming coal mine; 40 rescuers and a mine inspector went in to aid. A second explosion then took place and all 59 men were killed. Only 27 were ever recovered, with 32 left in the mountain. Five years earlier, June 30, 1903, a methane explosion killed 169 men in the same mine, the greatest loss of life in a Wyoming mine. Many are still entombed there.

of America. In the two-day program were sessions on rescue and first aid as well as demonstrations and competitions between “home-grown” rescue teams. At least one-thousand mine owners from thirty states and several foreign countries were reportedly there, as well as an estimated thirty-thousand miners. The guest of honor on the second day was President William Howard Taft, greeted in the streets by a guesstimate of 150,000 people.

In September 1912, the second National Mine Rescue and First Aid Conference again took place in Pittsburgh, now home of the Bureau of Mines. It was well attended and from it came the American Mine Safety Association,<sup>2</sup> with 250 members, “its purpose is to serve the lives and health of miners and to reduce property loss.” By now, instruction in mine rescue and first aid was being given around the country and it was claimed that at least one-thousand miners had received this instruction. A national “Safety First” movement for miners sprang up.

One year later, the third conference took place in Pittsburgh, along with the second meeting of the American Mine Safety Association. For the first time, Southern Arizona was represented at the three days of gatherings: the Safety Inspector from Bisbee’s Copper Queen Mines’ Safety First organization. Rescue crews and trained first aid squads began springing up throughout the country. There had been such teams in Arizona before this but they had little or no training, structure, or organizational support from the mine owners. In early 1914, it was claimed that over 31,000 miners had been trained and that to date, the Bureau of Mines had saved at least 85 miners, mostly with the Draeger Oxygen Helmet.

A feature article in the November 18, 1914 *Bisbee Daily Review*, is sub-titled, “More than 1,000 Miners in Arizona Were Instructed in Rescue Work. . . .” A Mine Rescue Car had spent three months in Southern Arizona, instructing rescue and first aid. Nationwide, there were now eight Mine Rescue Train Cars, two of which were assigned to the Rocky Mountain states. Additionally, these cars were now outfitted with an array of rescue equipment, including Draeger helmets, stretchers, ropes, and fire extinguishers and were being readily dispatched to aid in actual mine rescues. Influential mine managers began having other employees within their companies trained as well as creating quick-response vehicles dedicated solely to rescue and first aid. Some states with significant mine safety concerns began doing the same.

In Bisbee, in preparation for the well-publicized competitions of first aid and rescue work at the upcoming Arizona State Fairs in Phoenix in 1914 and 1915, a number of teams from local mines had contests of elimination to see which of them would represent their city. These matches were accompanied by musicians for entertaining the sizeable audiences. At the Fairs themselves, rescue and first aid squads from Bisbee, Morenci, Tombstone, and Globe, competed in front of large groups of spectators for trophies, money, and bragging rights.

The national “Safety First” movement from 1912 took on a life of its own and spread throughout much of the country. In Southern Arizona it even crept into advertisements of baking powder, Studebakers, meat, cough syrup, and auto clubs. First aid and mine rescue training became commonplace, now paramount in industry today. Southern Arizona saw a noticeable reduction in loss of life and a significant decline in mishaps. (Pittsburgh Press 11/13/1910; Pittsburgh Daily Post 9/24/1912; Pittsburgh Post-Gazette 10/31/1910, 5/28/1913; Bisbee Daily Review 7/6/1911, 8/16/1911, 1/16/1913, 8/3/1913, 9/23/1913, 3/6/1914, 10/28/1914, 11/18/1914, 1/20/1915, 9/7/1915, 11/21/1915, 4/4/1919, 5/18/1919, 8/13/1919, 11/30/1919)

<sup>2</sup> In 1916, the American Mining Safety Association changed its name to the Joseph A. Holmes Safety Association, in honor of the Bureau of Mines’ first Director, who died the year before, on July 12, 1915. It is still a viable organization in 2023.

## Fell Off Log

**Aug 2, 1910**

Eppino Ganez was one of the “two Mexican children. . . riding on logs in a deep pool formed by the recent floods in the gulch near the old hospital site,” in Bisbee. The lad of “six or seven,” fell off. His little friend was able to get to the bank, and “in his fright ran to the home of the drowned boy to tell his mother.” Had the boy called for help from near the accident, there were adults nearby who could have more quickly responded. By the time the mother and the young friend had returned, Eppino had “sunk to the bottom of the pool.”

The mother’s frantic cries attracted the attention of two men, who also hurried to the scene. A rope was fastened to one of the men and he was lowered into the pool, and after several attempts, he brought up the body of the drowned child. “The mother was almost frantic with grief and had to be restrained from doing herself bodily harm.” Authorities would soon say that this deep hole would be filled in as soon as possible. It had been overlooked on account of repair costs. This may have been the same hole reported in August 7, 1909, see “Drove His Head into the Sand,” on page 38. (Bisbee Daily Review 8/3/1910)

## Cries for Help “Heartlessly Ignored”

**Sep 6, 1910**

W. A. White, a farmer from Hereford had an experience “that was enough to turn his hair gray.” White was on his way in to Bisbee in the morning with a wagon load of vegetables from his farm. About 14 miles from town, he noticed a light buggy—minus a horse—some distance from the road in a rather strange spot. Transacting his business, he was now on his way back home in the dark. About where he had seen the buggy earlier that day, he thought he heard someone yell for help. So alighting from his rig, he headed toward where he believed he’d seen the horseless carriage earlier that day.

“He had walked a short distance from the road when he felt himself dropping straight down. He fell what seemed to him a great distance when he struck the water and went down several feet. Rising to the surface of the water White felt something big floating and drew himself up on it. After he had recovered himself, he discovered he was sitting on a dead horse which had bloated sufficiently to float and hold up his weight.”

Mr. White had wrenched his back in the fall as well as being stunned; it took a while to regain his composure and it was so black in the well, how far he had fallen was only a guess. But he believed the well was forty feet deep and four-feet across. And he also understood getting out of this trap would be totally up to him; luckily, like many men of that era, he had a large knife on him. He estimated it was at least 8 p.m. when he began climbing out. “He would dig a step on one side of the well and then reach across and dig one on the opposite side. Drawing himself up a step at a time he reached a place twelve feet from the top shortly before daylight, where he found a change in the ground and the walls had partly caved in.”

He had been carving these holds for his feet and hands steadily for an estimated nine hours and now, with this different structure and texture of the walls, he was stuck. Throughout, this step-cutting effort was exhausting and a strain on both his back and legs; periodically, he needed to climb back down and rest for a few minutes, floating on the dead animal.

“Shortly after the day began to break, he climbed back up to where the well had caved in and while examining the situation he heard the sound of wheels on the road. He listened and said he could tell by the sound it was a buggy passing with one horse. He called for help and heard the man in the buggy drive up to his and say ‘Whoa, stand still’ and then drive on. White continued to call for help, but the man in the buggy did not answer although White is sure that his cries for assistance were heard.”

White’s pleas for help were seemingly, “Heartlessly ignored.” He could not believe the man did not at least stop to learn where the calls were coming from, before going on. But, in addition to making him very angry, it also provided “a tonic,” spurring him to keep going. “He dragged himself up to the place where the well widened out and with his knife and piece of rock cut out a hole big enough to sit in. From this place he started to dig an upraise with his crude tools. When he had dug for about four feet, he heard sounds of someone coming towards the well.” He called out and Guy Welch, a neighbor of his from Hereford, answered. He had a rope with him and along with two passing hunters, was able to pull White out.

Rescuer Welch said the man White heard earlier had stopped to tell him that someone “was in trouble up the road,” but was not clear on location. Rushing back along the road, Welch spotted White’s horse and buggy. While White had been cutting the steps in the cold well, his arms and hands cramped up, and he dropped the knife, his only real tool to escape. Somehow, it landed on the horse. “He stated he would have been killed had it not been for the horse that had the misfortune to drown in the well.” And the horse, it belonged to some people from nearby Naco who had been out there the day before. It fell in and was impossible to save. White was very bitter with the man who heard the yells but had not even acknowledged them. (Bisbee Daily Review 9/10/1910)

### Nearly Impaled in a Fall

**Nov 13, 1910**

Charles Melgreen had a narrow escape from death when the collar of the old abandoned mine shaft suddenly caved in. He was reconnoitering his newly leased mining property at Bunker Hill in Tombstone. When the ground gave away beneath him, he fell fifty feet, landing in the ragged timbers and debris at the bottom. “[I]n the descent he was nearly impaled on a projecting timber. A splinter several inches long was imbedded in his shoulder, which was extracted with difficulty by Dr. Hughart.”

Miraculously, he did not break any bones or suffer any great injury. Equally amazing, two boys who were hunting in the neighborhood were watching as Melgreen suddenly disappeared into the mine opening. After yelling down into the shaft and determining he was even still alive, they were able to quickly get help from a nearby mine. “Mr. Melgreen was rescued from his perilous position and medical relief promptly administered by Dr. Hughart.” (Tombstone Weekly Epitaph 11/13/1910)

### The First Drowning Recorded in Sabino Canyon

**Aug 27, 1911**

Henry Doss Hidy, the new time keeper in the Tucson office of the Southern Pacific Railroad, was in Sabino Canyon with four other men and their five lady friends. While the young women began setting up the picnic luncheon that warm Sunday morning, the 25-year-old Hidy and his companions

walked about three-quarters of a mile upstream to a small, deep pool. “The water was cool and tempting and a bath was an invitation not to be resisted and the party disrobed and went in. Hidy was the best swimmer and dove from a high rock coming up and striking out, but soon after going down again, [was] blue in the face and evidently in pain.”

His buddies had more gingerly entered the water but quickly found it too cold and were scrambling out when they noticed their friend, now doubled up with cramps. “After he had gone down a second time, the others formed a living chain and sought to rescue him. As he rose a third time, he grasped the man at the end and in the struggle which followed all of the others were drawn into the deep hole and were soon struggling for their own lives.” Using the current the four were able to fight their way back to shore and scramble out, glad to have made it, but they emerged without Hidy.

Only two of these men could swim and both dived in and repeatedly tried to reach Hidy in the deep pool. They could see him but not get to him. Becoming even more desperate, they formed a human chain once again and with the use of poles found nearby, finally brought the body to the surface some 15 to 20 minutes after their friend had sunk the third time. They still could not get him onto shore until several of the women in the party arrived to help and then every effort was made to resuscitate him. Such attempts were all in vain.

Amidst the chaos, one of the women left and had managed to drive several miles to a telephone and call Dr. C. A. Schrader, who started for the canyon. He was held up by high water at the Rillito River. There, local department store owner Harold Steinfeld found the doctor and the woman, “having started for the canyon also as soon as he heard of the drowning. In his machine the rest of the journey was made, but medical aid was too late for life [and] had been extinct when the body was drawn from the pool.” They worked on Hidy for two hours before the doctor finally declared the man dead. The autopsy revealed his lungs were full of water and he had drowned. (Citizen 8/28/1911; Star 8/29/1911)

## Drowning in Douglas

**Sep 6, 1911**

Eight-year-old Isabelle Pixley, along with two other girls, “started to bathe in a pool where it has been customary for the children of the neighborhood to go in bathing. Ordinarily there is little water in the pool and it is perfectly safe, but recent rains and consequent overflow of streams had raised the water in this pool far beyond the ordinary level and the child...stepped into water that was far over her head and she sank from sight.”

Her frightened little friends began screaming and ran for help, finding some workmen in the area. When they arrived, “she was not to be seen and it took some time of persistent diving and searching before the small body was brought to the surface. Usual methods for resuscitating the drowning were employed so far as possible.” The local doctor was summoned, “but medical aid was then in vain for life was extinct.” (Bisbee Daily Review 9/6/1911)

## Buried for 100 Hours

**Feb 4, 1912**

Underground hard rock mining in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> Centuries was not for the “faint of heart;” it was demanding, unforgiving, and dangerous. Readers of newspapers for mining commu-

nities like Bisbee and Globe were all too familiar with accidents where a neighbor or loved one was killed. If lucky, sometimes they did not die.

Early that Sunday morning, Henry Peryam was in Bisbee at the mouth of a tunnel at the bottom of a shaft when he heard the rumbling of a coming cave-in. He rushed back into the 6-foot-high, 15-foot-deep tunnel, narrowly escaping death from the falling rock and debris.

He had three candles, several matches and a candlestick. He would strike the matches, light the candle and look at his watch the first day until his matches gave out, and then he lit the candle. . . until his candles burned out. The water in the meantime kept rising and he was compelled to seek safety on a ledge, crowding himself against the roof of the tunnel to avoid drowning.

Rescuers first established communication with the “imprisoned” man through a small pipe and he told them of the threatening water. To prevent it from rising any farther, bailing was resorted to and had it not been for this, he certainly would have drowned. The tunnel he luckily sheltered in prevented him from being hit by falling rocks, but with the horror of being trapped and nearly dying, he became confused and delirious and ended up fighting with his rescuers.

“Cold, half-starved and incoherent as a result of thirst, hunger, and no sleep, Henry Peryam, a native of Red Ruth [sic: Redruth], Cornwall, England was rescued from the Five Points mine. . . He had been entombed at the bottom of a hundred and thirty-five foot-shaft for just fifteen minutes short of one hundred hours, his escape blocked by over twenty feet of rock and timbers. His rescue was the result of hard work. . . of fellow miners who labored day and night to get him out.”

Once rational and back safe in his bed at the boarding house, he told a local reporter, in the near future “he was looking for a job where he could wear a white collar and stay on the surface the rest of his days.” (Bisbee Daily Review 4/11/1912)

## Trapper Disappears

**Feb 16, 1912**

“From Carr Canyon in the Huachucas comes the report of an unexplained disappearance, which may spell a tragic death. It is more than three weeks since L. C. York has been seen. . . his friends fear that he has died in the mountains, it being suggested that possibly he became caught in a trap while setting one, since he was a trapper, and has perished miserably and alone.” L. C. was married, lived in Carr Canyon, and was last seen leaving Fort Huachuca after selling his furs there.

“While his friends express uneasiness, according to accounts from those who were at the Canyon last week, no one has made any effort to search for him. The Huachucas are a wide field for such a hunt as would be necessary and it was in connection with the possibility of his having gone from the fort to his traps. . . he might have become caught in one and unable to free himself. . . the disappearance remains an unexplained mystery.”

Nothing further could be found about L. C. York in the Tucson, Bisbee, or Nogales newspapers, even though he had been missing for three weeks. (Bisbee Daily Review 2/14/1912; Star 2/16/1912)



### Third Tragic Death in Family

**May 26, 1912**

One of the young witnesses at the Coroner's Inquest into the drowning of 13-year-old Frank Gilbert Huber of Bisbee testified, "they had not been given permission and had been warned against going into the [storage] tank."

Since Frank could not swim, he was mostly tagging along with 15 other boys, ages 12 to 16, who were now swimming in the 14-foot-deep tank. Getting into the water was awkward, requiring some maneuvering; the last time any of the others remember seeing Frank, was while he was hanging onto a water pipe which hung over the pond. When cautioned to be careful, he replied, " 'I know what I am doing.' " None of the boys attested they saw their friend slip into the water. In fact, he was not missed until they were all dressed and saw that his clothes still remained behind on the ground. They called for him but got no answer.

Several of the older boys quickly went back into the tank and repeatedly dived, searching for him. The water was not very clear and they were unsuccessful. The boy's body was finally found by miners from the nearby Spray Shaft. This was the third tragic death to strike the Huber family in five years. Frank's 13-year-old brother Charles fell to his death. See June 12, 1907, "Fell 100 Feet in Mine," on page 32. And Frank's father died from a shotgun blast. See January 23, 1910, "Shotgun Blast to the Head," on page 40. (Bisbee Daily Review 5/28/1912)

### Wandered Away in Sabino Canyon

**Feb 23, 1913**

James Gardiner, an "elderly machinist" was on a Sunday afternoon outing of five in Sabino Canyon. The others left for a walk along the stream and up the canyon but Gardiner chose, however, to remain in camp and sleep, he was recovering from a recent operation. The group went farther and took longer than expected and didn't return until 7 p.m.; now dark and chilly, Gardiner was not where the others had left him. They had reason to believe Mr. Gardiner might have just wandered off—"He was apt to be irrational at times, it is said." The quartet searched for him for four hours, and then left Sabino Canyon, hoping he had gotten home on his own. He had not.

First thing the next morning, a posse of volunteers gathered by Pima County Sheriff John Nelson and led by two deputies, entered Sabino Canyon and proceeded to hunt for the older man. A second posse of civic-minded citizens from the Tucson area then joined Nelson later. "They too, had failed to report success..." Indian trailers were sent for and were to report Tuesday morning. Later Monday night, however, James Gardiner was found at a ranch near Sabino Canyon. "He was brought to the city and while exhausted by his long wanderings in the hills without food or shelter, will recover, it is believed. He appears to have been out of his head when he wandered away from the picnickers' camp." (Star 2/25/1913; Citizen 2/25/1913, 2/26/1913)

### Great Flood of 1914

**Dec 18, 1914**

The flooding suffered by Southern Arizona beginning the week before Christmas 1914, is arguably among the top five most impactful storms during the Twentieth Century. Precipitation throughout the state at that point was well above average, particularly from Phoenix south. On Monday, December 21, a front-page headline in the *Tucson Citizen*, read: "Unprecedented rains have raised

the Rillito to flood stage and wrought havoc to property along its banks. The roads throughout southern Arizona are quagmires.” There seems to have been only two bridges across the Rillito River at that time, one for vehicles on Oracle and one for trains near where the Rillito meets the Santa Cruz River. The bridge on Oracle Road was washed away and the train bridge was damaged but quickly repaired.

And it kept steadily raining, with six inches in four days in Oracle, five inches in Douglas during this same time and for Florence, “The Gila River is...in the greatest stage of flood that has occurred in many years.” Adding to growing concerns in Tucson and the surrounding towns and ranches of the region, the relatively warm winter rains melted all of the snow in the higher mountains. In Naco, south of Bisbee, “A trooper is reported drowned,” although no further details were ever given about this soldier stationed on the border with Mexico.

Perhaps the first real news of the flood impacting the sparsely-settled Santa Cruz Valley, was when the northbound Southern Pacific train, nicknamed the “Burro,” was marooned about fifty miles south of Tucson. It was caught between two washouts. That Wednesday, the headlines for the *Tucson Citizen*, read: “River, Mile and a Half Wide at Amado, Destroys Stores, Hotel and Houses; Congress St. Bridge Endangered.” Dozens of dwellings along the unusually swollen Santa Cruz River were swept away. People were now trapped on building tops and windmills. Wells that Tucson relied on for drinking water were ruined, but the Congress Street Bridge withstood its battering, although closed by the police. And, “two Mexicans were drowned,” but virtually no further details were ever given for this loss of life, either.

In learning of the stranded train, fifty enthusiastic but amateur rescuers gathered at the Southern Pacific Depot. There was no leadership nor recognizable organization. They thought they were there to board a relief train going to save the trapped “Burro.” Some carried a sandwich or extra rubber boots to change into, if necessary. A collapsible canvas boat was reportedly brought by Captain Mashbir of Company K, Arizona National Guard. Other members of the Guard, “arrayed in uniforms,” anxiously awaited their orders to board this rescue train.

They and others at the depot were to soon learn the so-called relief train was merely fiction, there was none. Discovering this, a convoy of cars sprang into action and headed down the road toward those they believed stuck along the Santa Cruz River. Before long, they understood everyone needing rescuing there were already evacuated. But some of these vehicles then became mired down and needed to be pulled free of the rain-swollen washes. In fact, during that period, only two vehicles were reported to have gotten through the multitude of flooded arroyos anywhere down there. Fortunately, it does not seem anyone was injured in either of these well-intentioned but still ragtag rescue attempts of their fellow citizens.

One man who did lose his life and which was reported more completely than the soldier or “two Mexicans,” was Walter C. Fortune. Santa Cruz County Supervisor Fortune, age not given, was enroute home in Patagonia on Christmas Eve. Two miles from town he drowned in Harshaw Wash. He had been in a wagon pulled by two horses and he and the team were swept away in the stream which was wide and about four feet deep. “Watchers on the bridge of the railroad above town saw a buggy pass down the stream at about 5:00 p.m.” Searchers and a Sheriff’s Deputy, found “The horses, two strong animals...not far from the scene of the accident with the tangled harness and neck yoke upon them.” There was never a follow up report if searchers ever found Walter C. Fortune. (Citizen 12/21/1914, 12/23/1914, 12/24/1914; Star 12/24/1914, 12/25/1914)



## All Night in a Tree

**Dec 22, 1914**

Right at dusk, Juan Arias and Pedro Miranda attempted to cross the Santa Cruz River north of Nogales and were swept from their horses. Arias could not swim while Miranda was an “expert swimmer,” and the two ended up in a tree, holding on until near-midnight. Miranda would later say, “he (Miranda) could have saved himself (Miranda) and his friend (Arias), but Arias was terrified at the angry waters, and refused to leave the willow tree, which later carried him to his death.”

Remaining in the small tree all night, “Miranda was rescued more dead than alive,” by two men who rode out searching for the pair, thinking both to be dead. “The body of poor Arias was found Thursday forenoon a hundred yards below the place where he was last seen alive by Miranda.” (The Border [Nogales] Vidette 12/26/1914)

## Four-Year-Old Saves Man

**Jul 30, 1916**

O. H. Morton, a wealthy Oregon cattleman, owed his life to a quick-thinking 4-year-old from Phoenix, Dorothy Georgeson. While sightseeing south of Globe in his Cadillac touring car, “he saw some desert plants on a cliff” he wanted to look at more closely. Despite pleas from his family, he “walked to the top of the cliff and by stepping on protruding rocks attempting to climb down the rugged side of the bluff. He successfully descended about twenty feet, when he slipped and in falling caught a small tree.” His party tried to rescue him but could not so they sped off, help was at least eight miles away.

Fortuitously, a young family of picnickers was also nearby in this isolated spot. Dorothy was running up the roadway ahead of her father’s car when she saw Morton hanging to the small tree, above a seventy-foot drop. “She frantically dashed back to her father and told him. The machine immediately rushed to Mr. Morton’s assistance, and by the aid of a stout rope dropped from the top of the cliff, effected his rescue. Mr. Morton presented Dorothy with his check for \$100.” That is about \$2,500 in 2021. (Citizen 7/31/1916)

## Soldier Jumps into Cesspool

**Sep 7, 1916**

Private Michael McDonough, Company I, Fourteenth Infantry of Camp Harry J. Jones in Douglas, was passing by on the street when he heard calls for help. Responding, he jumped into a partially full cesspool trying to rescue three drowning Mexican laborers. These men had been digging a new cesspool several feet from an old one, which had unexpectedly broken through the separating earth barrier. McDonough was overcome by the noxious gases and was taken to the Camp’s hospital, where he was reported to be in critical condition. “McDonough will probably receive a certificate of merit from the war department for his bravery...” The fire department was also summoned and brought out the three laborers, who had suffocated. (Star 9/8/1916)

## Largest Search in Southern Arizona

**Feb 10, 1918**

Probably the largest search in Southern Arizona history began in the middle of the very rugged Galiuro Mountains, fifty miles east of Tucson. It is often referred to as the “Powers’ Cabin Shootout,” or the “Power Brothers Shootout.” It was also a manhunt. As such, it doesn’t conform with the more altruistic parameters of the term search found throughout this document. But, due to its intensity and massive scale and wide-spread, national hype, and that strictly speaking, it was indeed a “search,” its basics are included here.

In 1917, the United States had entered World War I and all able-bodied men were to register for the Military Draft. Tom Power, 25, and his 27-year-old brother, John, had not done so and the reasons they did not, are lost to differing and conflicting histories. Along with their father, Jeff, they lived in very isolated Keilberg Canyon, in the middle of the Galiuro Mountains. Their nearest neighbors were a dozen, rugged miles away in Klondyke, itself a mere collection of isolated ranchers and miners. In this remote corner of rural Arizona, they were without direct communications with others and thus, were well-insulated from national politics. It is believed the two brothers knew about the Draft, however. Also living with them was 40-year-old Tom Sisson. These four men were eking out a marginal living mining for gold, from a mine they had recently purchased and were now slowly building up.

A posse of four lawmen, possessing arrest warrants for several things, including Draft evasion, rode in by horseback to take the three Powers into custody. What happened next is ambiguous at best but, before the gun smoke cleared from the 25 shots fired early that morning, three men lay dead: Graham County Sheriff Robert F. McBride, Undersheriff Martin Kempton, and Deputy T. K. “Kane” Wootan. Jeff Power would die later that night. Among the uncertainties of this shootout are questions, such as: Who shot first? For what reasons? Did the posse properly identify itself? Did the brothers fully grasp their obligation to register?

Tom Sisson and the Power brothers carried Jeff inside and made him comfortable. They then took the weapons and horses left by the posse and started down the canyon, heading to Redington, on the San Pedro River. For the next 27 days, these three fugitives were “searched for” by numerous groups made up of officers from several counties as well as officials of the Federal Government, and the good citizens and local ranchers and cowboys from throughout Southern Arizona. Soon, the US Army also joined in, with hundreds of soldiers pursuing the three all over the rural area. The outlaws were ultimately captured by the US Cavalry in Mexico, eight miles south of the International Boundary near Hachita, New Mexico, on March 8, 1918. They were found guilty of first-degree murder on May 17, 1918 and sent to the State Penitentiary at Florence.

After serving 42 years in prison, Thomas Jefferson Power, 68, and his 70-year-old brother, John Grant Power, were paroled on April 21, 1960. Tom Sisson, also incarcerated with them, died on January 23, 1958 at age 86, while also in the Arizona State Penitentiary. Governor Jack Williams gave the Power brothers full pardons on January 25, 1969. Aged 76, Tom Power died on September 11, 1970 and John Power at age 85, on April 5, 1976. Capital punishment was abolished in Arizona in 1916, but largely because of the emotion this crime precipitated, it was re-instated on January 1, 1919. Hanging was the only form of execution at that time. (Citizen 2/12/1918, 5/17/1918, 1/24/1957, 4/27/1960, 9/12/1970; Star 2/12/1918, 3/9/1918, 3/10/1918; Phoenix Republic 11/22/1918, 1/26/1969, 9/12/1970, 5/10/1976)

## Lost Quail Hunter

**Oct 20, 1918**

While quail hunting in the foothills of the Catalina Mountains near Oracle, 46-year-old Frank L. DeWolf of Tucson separated from his companions about 10 a.m. and became lost. He was missing for at least two days while his friends looked for him. There was never a follow up story about what happened to him and the author assumed he was found safe. Then exactly six years later, October 26, 1924, DeWolf was in the news once again, this time for getting lost while deer hunting in the Santa Rita Mountains. See “Lost Twice in Six Years,” October 26, 1924, on page 59. (Star 10/22/1918)

## 3-Year-Old Lost in Gale

**Nov 27, 1919**

High winds greeted Thanksgiving Day and tore through Tucson. The tempest increased until a “gale raged over the city, blowing weak limbs from trees and swinging signs throughout the business section. As evening approached. . . drizzling rain. . . hail and then snow. . .” In the midst of the worst of the storm, about 6:00 p.m., the 3-year-old son of Mrs. Gillies [his name was not given] was with his mother hurrying through the rain when he ran ahead of her as darkness closed in. She soon reached home, hoping he had already arrived at the isolated “old Sloan ranch, on East Broadway, beyond the Country Club. . .”

Not finding him, she immediately called the deputies, who “hurried to the scene through the pelting rain, realizing that the arroyos in the district were running high and the child might be in danger of drowning.” Getting to the scene where the child was last seen, they spread out in a circle and searched the neighborhood without coming upon the child. They kept searching until “the little one, struggling through the storm, reached his home wet and chilled, and the deputies returned to their own homes.” (Star 11/28/1919; Citizen 11/29/1919)

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# CHAPTER 5

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1920–1929

## First Fatal Plane Crash in Southern Arizona

**Jan 11, 1920**

Army Lieutenants Bruce Struthers, 24, and Charles J. Evans, age not given, were members of the Army's 104<sup>th</sup> Aero Squadron at Fort Bliss, in El Paso, Texas. The two were assigned to patrolling the Border, with Evans as observer and Struthers piloting the two-seat De Havilland DH-4 biplane. He was experienced and well-respected, having recently served 18 months in France, "during which time he took part in numerous bombing raids over enemy territory." Struthers, a graduate of Bisbee High School, had been approved to spend that weekend after their patrol, with his parents who lived there.

The pair, now already delayed a day by bad weather, needed to return to El Paso and resume their duties along the Border; Struthers finally lifted off, despite low-lying clouds. Just minutes after departing from the Douglas Airport, they crashed. As the January 13, 1920 *Bisbee Daily Review* reads, "Aviator Dies in Collision with Mountain." Somehow surviving, Evans would report they needed to make a forced landing; diving through the clouds, they hit the fog-shrouded 6,391-foot College Peak, just ten miles northeast of Douglas, near Bernardino.

"Lieut. Evans' belt held and took up some of the shock. The machine caught fire immediately after the crash and he was extricated by a rancher who happened to be in the vicinity. [Evans] walked two miles to the Olson ranch." Bruce Struthers was killed upon impact. (El Paso Herald 1/12/1920; Bisbee Daily Review 1/13/1920)

## Drowning in Sabino Canyon

**Jul 5, 1920**

"William Jackson, a negro, was drowned at Sabino Canyon while swimming there during a Fourth of July picnic. . . After eating a hearty luncheon, he went swimming and it is believed he was attacked with cramps. No signs of bruises were found on his body eliminating chances of having struck his head or suffering other injuries in diving." (Star 7/6/1920)

## First (?) Use of Aircraft in a Southern Arizona Search

Jun 15, 1921

Pima County Sheriff Benjamin Daniels put out the call, “any who are proficient in mountain topography and would be capable of keeping their bearings through the dense timber and deep ravines without themselves becoming lost, are asked to help find the girls.” The call for help was for Edna Scott, 18, and Mollie Dolores, 16, who were both domestics employed by two households on Mt. Lemmon. The young women were given:

“the afternoon off by their mistresses, and with lunch prepared in a basket, left Soldier Camp for an afternoon outing. They were warned against leaving the plain trail that leads from Soldier Camp to Bear Wallow, where they were to have their lunch and spend the afternoon. The only other trail leaving Bear Wallow is one that comes directly to Tucson, emerging into Sabino Canyon.”

When neither woman returned by dark, the employers became uneasy and instituted a preliminary search of the trail to Bear Wallow. Nothing was found, not even evidence they had reached Bear Wallow. Now, the concern was they had taken the wrong trail. There were very few men in Soldier Camp during the week and the forest rangers were away fighting a fire on Green Mountain, so a couple of carpenters volunteered to look. The ground was packed hard from a rain the week before and no footprints could be found.

Realizing the necessity of securing “expert mountain trailers, Mr. Hofmeister [employer] came to Tucson...and secured the services of four experienced Yaqui Indians who were secured from Chief Juan Pistola, at the Barrio Anita.” The next morning three of the trackers “started out at the first peep of day...” The spot where Edna and Mollie had lunched was eventually found but nothing else was discovered that day. Learning of this failure, Pima County Sheriff Benjamin Daniels, “commissioned Deputies J. L. Tremaine and Sheehy to head two posses into the Catalina Mountains to begin searching for the women. The air patrols<sup>1</sup> have also been notified to deviate from their usual course and institute search for the two girls.”

The men fighting the forest fire returned to the Soldier Camp Ranger Station that evening and then led by Forest Ranger Hugh Calkins, they immediately “left the station...on horses to join the search for the missing girls.” On the third day of being lost, the two Indian girls “who have been straying through the almost impenetrable fastnesses of the Catalina mountains...were found by Forest Supervisor Hugh Calkins. While utterly worn out, their shoes and clothing almost in tatters both girls were in surprisingly good condition when found.”

About the same time that Calkins rode up on the lost young women, two of the Yaqui trailers arrived, as well. In the interim, Deputies Tremaine and Sheehy were leading the two posses of additional searchers they had gathered and were enroute into the deeper recesses of Sabino Canyon, when word reached them that the girls had been found. (Citizen 3/29/1920; Star 6/18/1921, 6/19/1921)

<sup>1</sup> The air patrols were an agreement between Major Ralph Royce of the air service, and District Forester Frank C. W. Pooler, of the forest service. Under the agreement signed in March 1920, “army aviators will be permitted to leave their border patrol in order to ascertain the exact location of forest fires...[and it] marked the beginning of aerial forest fire patrol in the southwestern national forests...”

## Four-Year-Old Lost in Dragoon Mountains

**May 21, 1922**

Four-year-old Bobbie Eckerman wandered “away from a picnic party in the hills” of the Dragoon Mountains. Searchers from Tombstone, 15 miles away, found him tired “but none the worse for wear.” He had

“walked over the rugged mountains until he became tired and then fell asleep... More than a hundred persons joined in the search... business was suspended in Tombstone while every man and boy were called out to relieve those who had been in the hills throughout the night... Two troops from the 10<sup>th</sup> cavalry at Fort Huachuca were preparing to join in the search when the boy was found. An army airplane had also been called into service and was preparing to take off from El Paso.” (Star 5/23/1922)

## Fisherman Wanders for a Week on Coast

**Jul 13, 1922**

A search party out of Ajo found H. Gordon Glore, a Nogales contractor, “wandering aimlessly along the barren Sonora coast about 75 miles west of here [Nogales, AZ] ... clad only in pajamas and had not tasted food in seven days.” Glore’s fishing vessel had sunk on the night of July 4 about nine miles north of St. Georges’ Bay. They swam ashore and Ramon Portales, an employee, “ran more than 20 miles to Caborca, Sonora...” (Star 7/14/1922)

## Life Saving Corps Commission Sought by Scout Official

**Aug 1922**

Catalina Council Boy Scout Executive H. E. Ogle, applied to the American Red Cross to become an examiner for the “life-saving corps. On receipt of a certificate, he will be authorized to give examinations to the Boy Scouts so they may qualify for ‘junior order of the Red Cross life-saving corps.’ ” (Star 8/20/1922)

## Driver Trapped in Flash Flood

**Aug 9, 1922**

“Autoist Is Nearly Drowned in Flood Car Wrecked by Swift Rillito Waters.” At 7:00 p.m., S. L. Balopula, manager of the Farmers Produce Company, was caught by “a tidal wave of water,” hitting his car which had become stuck in the mud on the bank of the Rillito. As he was waiting for help, “suddenly a vast wall of water, sweeping down from the mountains, struck the car in which he was sitting, toppled it over, and washed it down with the current.” Balopula was found clinging to a tree, “three-quarters of a mile from where the car had been stuck in the mud... A rope was flung... and his life was saved. A moment later the tree was caught by the tide and washed away.” (Star 8/11/1922)

## Lost in Tortolita Mountains

**Oct 8, 1922**

Arthur L. Sterns was a well-known chiropractor in Tucson. Taking his wife and 15-month-old baby along on his weekend of deer hunting, he drove the family car into the “Tortulita [sic] Mountains from the east, on a lonely mountain road” as far as he could go and then pitched camp. Early the next morning he left, hoping to soon be back with his quarry. “He was encountered several hours later by [two hunters] wandering in the wrong direction from where he had left his family with the car. He told the two men he was trying to find his way back to the car. He was shown the right direction. . . This was the last seen of him until he staggered into the Mexican’s place two days later, on the verge of exhaustion.”

When he did not return to his family that first evening, she raised the alarm and the next morning a posse of men and several Sheriff’s Deputies began searching for him. Dr. Sterns spent two nights wandering in the little mountain range on the northern edge of Tucson and searchers spent two days looking for him. When he finally found some help at the woodcutters’ camp, “his clothing and shoes [were] torn to shreds by the rocks and brush. . .” (Star 10/11/1922; Citizen 10/11/1922)

## Youth Found Twenty Months Later

**Nov 29, 1922**

The morning before Thanksgiving, Douglas Pascoe, with two others, went hunting in the hills along Mule Creek, a shallow drainage about 12 miles east of Clifton, Arizona. It was just off State Highway 87, which one-hundred years ago was also known as the Mule Creek Link. It was cold and drizzling rain, ideal for deer hunting, but not for survival. At the end of the day, the three young men were to meet back at the car but Pascoe did not show up. The remaining two were not overly concerned as their 22-year-old companion was skilled, even being the first from the Clifton mining camp to volunteer for World War I.

Several times during the night they fired their rifles and believed they heard answering reports from Pascoe. They also built strategically placed signal fires. When he still had not shown up the following morning, one went “to town for help and a posse was immediately organized and put in the field. For two days they searched, assisted by bloodhounds from Tucson, but their efforts seemed of no avail.” At the end of the second day, word was received that a friend of Pascoe who was in Douglas, Arizona, swore up and down she had seen him in town, even spending an hour with him in her car driving around the small city. Deemed creditable by the Chief of Police after she was interviewed, the search in the hills was halted for a couple of days while officials scoured Douglas for the missing man. He was known there, having been stationed in the US Army for a while in Douglas as well as also working as an undertaker there. But no further evidence was found of him.

The search then partially shifted back to the area where he had been hunting although the sighting by the young woman could not be disregarded. On day six, Monday, December 4, Douglas Pascoe’s father “attempted to take a short cut to a ranch and, being half crazed by worry over the loss of the boy, became lost himself in the mountains. After wandering for two days, he finally arrived at Clifton in an exhausted and starving condition.” Two days later, upwards of sixty men, including a contingent from nearby New Mexico, were again in the hills searching. There were several bloodhounds and one followed a trail for 28 miles northward. The scent for the dogs was questionable, however, since during this week, snow and sleet fell, greatly hampering their efforts.



One headline read, “Douglas Pascoe...fell into some canyon and was injured in the opinion of the posse hunting for him in the vicinity of Mule Creek.”

Clues were followed, questions asked, and logic was applied to the search for Douglas Pascoe and efforts by friends and volunteers from the region continued intermittently in the area’s hills and drainages. Sixteen days after he disappeared, his parents put an announcement in the newspaper, “Mr. and Mrs. Pascoe desire to express their heartfelt thanks to the many men and women of the district who aided and assisted them in every way by their kindness and untiring efforts in an endeavor to locate their missing son.” The parents never really gave up. Some four months after he went missing, they asked the Mexican consul in Juarez for aid in the search for their son.

Twenty months later, July 31, 1924, the remains of Douglas Pascoe were stumbled upon in the hills, pretty much where he was last known to be. “When found, the body was lying with the head up the canyon. Alongside of the body was found the rifle which the young man had taken with him and it was leaning upright against the canyon wall. One empty shell was found in the gun chamber and four loaded shells in his pockets. The body was positively identified by the gun and keys which he carried.” The role his female friend in Douglas played in this search was never fully explained in the press, although they severely chastised her in print.

“Had it not been for the misleading information furnished by this young lady, the young man would undoubtedly have been located on that day either dead or alive, as the searchers were not very far distant from the spot where the remains were found when the search was given up.” (El Paso Herald 12/5/1922, 3/9/1923; Star 12/7/1922; Copper Era and Morenci Leader 12/15/1922, 3/9/1923; Albuquerque Journal 12/19/1922, 12/23/1922; Phoenix Republican 8/1/1924)

## Deputy Assists Search in Greenlee County

**Dec 1922**

“Bloodhounds to Assist in Search For Missing Man,” read the headlines. The unnamed hunter was “said to be very wealthy...[and] well known in Greenlee County.” David Wilson, deputy sheriff, left for Willcox, “taking his two bloodhounds for the purpose of assisting in the search for the man who has been lost for four days in the mountains near that town.” It is assumed that since there was no follow up story, the man was found alive, without further complications. (Star 12/3/1922)

## Army Plane Disappears, One of Largest Searches in Arizona History

**Dec 7, 1922**

Soon after Army Air Service Lieutenant Charles L. Webber, with his passenger, Colonel Francis P. Marshall, left San Diego in route to Tucson, one of the largest searches in Arizona history began. Marshall was to inspect the R.O.T.C. program at the University of Arizona and Webber was to then fly him to Fort Huachuca. They were in a De Havilland DH-4. Flying of any kind back then, even flights considered routine, often made the local news. Aircraft breakdowns were the norm and communications were mostly poor. Marshall and Webber never arrived nor was it believed they safely landed anywhere along the way.

But accounts of their being spotted, however, trickled in. A plane was seen over Ruby, west of Nogales, near the Mexican Border. Four aircraft, with the permission of the Governor of Sonora, “penetrated Mexico to a depth of 30 miles...” After two more days, nothing was found although it was believed the two still might have wandered south of the border. Colonel E. B. Winans, Com-



manding Officer at Fort Huachuca, assumed control of the escalating search. Within four days, 200 soldiers on foot and horseback, were committed, as were some 25 planes from San Francisco, San Diego, San Antonio and El Paso. By day six, forty planes were obligated.

When a mail carrier near Sahuarita had noticed a plane “with a badly missing motor” over Helvetia on the day the airmen went missing, the Whetstone and Santa Rita Mountains, became important. Planes crisscrossed these mountains and foothills, hoping to sight the missing men or their flimsy aircraft. Papago Indians searched the remote parts of their reservation way west of there and a reward of \$600 was put up by the Army.

By day ten, nearly sixty aircraft and 450 mounted soldiers from Fort Huachuca were searching. Colonel Winans asserted that every village and town along the way and all those south of Tucson, had been searched and residents interviewed. This even included tiny, two and three-family haciendas on the Papago Reservation, as well as in Northern Sonora. Then the search shifted to Yuma and areas nearer San Diego. The headlines for the December 17, 1922 *The Arizona Daily Star* finally said, “Col. Winans Fears 2 Lost Airmen May Never Be found.” The following day, General E. I. Lewis, the commander of the Eighth Air Corps out of Fort Sam Houston in San Antonio, ordered all aircraft to return to their home bases.

Nearly a month later, January 13, the military announced a new but limited search, headed by “Major Theodore McAuley, a famous transcontinental flier,” would begin. Using a couple of aircraft, the searchers would spend up to two months and “will go, if necessary, to various points in Arizona, looking through every ravine and pass which they can reach. Some of the places which may be visited in Sonora have been visited by no white man in years...” McAuley said he still hoped the two officers were alive. “His theory is that they may have been injured and have been cared for by Indians in some desolate stretch of country.”

On February 9, the “search for the bodies of Colonel Francis C. Marshall and Lieutenant Charles L. Webber, aviators lost on a trip from San Diego to [Tucson] was formally concluded when the men were dropped from the rolls of the navy . . . the names were dropped at the direction of the secretary of war.” A thorough “investigation by a board of officers. . . found the men met their death in an airplane accident on or about December 7 between Rockwell Field [San Diego] and Tucson.”

“Skeletons of 2 Airmen Found,” read the front-page headline of the May 13, 1923, *The Arizona Daily Star*. Finally, after missing for over five months, the aircraft and its two occupants were stumbled upon by a local rancher the day before. Located at the 6,000-foot elevation in the Cuyamaca Mountains just east of San Diego, the downed plane had been covered by four and five feet of snow. It was surmised the craft crashed due to bad weather. There is now a marker at this spot and the site is a California State Monument. (Star 12/12/1922–5/13/1923)

## Cowboy Killed Riding in Catalina Mountains

**Jan 4, 1923**

Antonio Romero, a well-known Mexican cattleman living in Piedras Canyon in the Catalina Mountains was instantly killed when the horse he was riding slipped and fell over a cliff near his home, landing on top of him. The Sheriff’s department retrieved his body. (Star 1/5/1923)

## Teenager Dies in Chiricahua Mountains

**Apr 18, 1923**

Lawrence Jones of Rodeo, New Mexico, traveled into the Chiricahua Mountains by horseback, to apply for a job with the Forest Service. Soon after arriving, the 17-year-old began helping officials fight a forest fire in nearby Rucker Canyon. He eventually left his horse, removing the saddle and the bridle and continued on foot. Two bloodhounds were brought in from Tucson, loaned out by local lion hunters, as were “100 negro soldiers from Camp Jones [Douglas, AZ]”, as well as soldiers from Fort Huachuca. In addition to a \$500 reward being offered, a total of 200 men were employed in the effort. The manager of the Tucson office of Western Union remained on duty until late into the night “to ensure that all messages regarding the search . . . were properly forwarded.” The body of the youth was found in Price Canyon but no further details were given as to the exact cause of death. (Star 4/22/1923, 4/23/1923, 4/24/1923, 4/25/1923, 4/26/1923)

## Missing Man Stumbles Into Manning Camp

**May 24, 1923**

Ed Dupree, exhausted “through his strenuous efforts in making his way cross-country,” stumbled into the Manning Camp Ranger Station in the Rincon Mountains. Pima County Deputy Sheriff Tom Burts had been searching for Dupree “through the hills” for “the past three days.” “It appears that at no time did Mr. Dupree consider himself lost, but he had wandered around the country in search of work, stopping at various ranches. . . .” Forest Ranger Olsen, stationed at Manning Camp, notified officials in Tucson. The significance of this news clipping is the fact that there was now a telephone line from Manning Camp to Tucson. (Star 5/25/1923)

## Boy Lost on Mount Lemmon

**Jul 13, 1923**

Early Friday morning, Edgar Locker told his adopted mother he was going to walk to Tucson from the cottage they were renting for the summer in Summerhaven. The well-maintained trail was down through Sabino Canyon, a distance of about twenty miles. The 14-year-old was last seen part way on it at 3:00 p.m.; it was believed, however, he had not arrived at his home, since his father did not pick him up and so he was still “out there.”

“Reports obtained from the Soldier Camp ranger station in the Catalina Mountains, after midnight last night [Saturday], said that the search for the lost boy was still in progress and that men were out with lanterns and flashlights looking into every possible crevice and canyon into which the boy might have stumbled. It is estimated that more than 100 persons will be engaged in the search today. . . . Posses from the Sheriff’s Department [sic] and bands of Tucson citizens will leave the city today for the Catalina range. . . . Local Boy Scouts will leave for the Catalinas this morning to join the search for the missing boy. . . . will comb all remote canyons and will aid in searching streams in which the lost lad may have fallen. Heavy rains. . . caused. . . mountain streams to fill with water. . . .”

After all of this excitement and effort by the good people of Tucson to find what they believed was a lost teenager, it was discovered he had actually arrived home, unbeknownst to his father who had joined in the search or to his mother who was still on Mount Lemmon. Edgar had apparently

had a disagreement with her about his walking to Tucson. After changing his shirt at home, he had caught a West-bound freight train Monday morning. A conductor recognized him and he was taken off the train in Casa Grande. “ ‘I’ve talked to mother and everything is all right now. I am ready to go home.’ ” (Star 7/15/1923, 7/17/1923)

### He Drowns Rescuing Friend

**Aug 11, 1923**

Frank Brawley, 21 and considered an expert swimmer, “was swept to death in the whirling waters of Sabino Canyon,” while saving his friend, Norinne Wright. “We were swimming in the still water...suddenly we were all caught in an eddy and drawn towards the whirlpool [at the end of the pool]...The others saw their danger and swam for the shore. I could not make any progress against the current and was going down when Frank came to help me. He managed to shove me from the swift current nearer the still water and then his hold on me relaxed. I looked around and he had disappeared—that was the last I saw of him.” The three survivors, aided by others, searched downstream for an hour before returning to Tucson and reporting the disappearance. Sheriff Walter Italley and Deputies Frank Murphey and Bob Neuse, used nets and drug the pools, retrieving the body at 8:30 p.m. (Star 8/12/1923)

### Boy Life Saver Gets Medal

**May 4, 1924**

Joe Johnson saved the life of Max Maynard by pulling him out of a deep hole at Sabino Canyon. For this he was awarded one of the four medals offered by the A. R. Myed Jewelry Company of Los Angeles for life saving acts through the YMCA. Johnson and Max were picnicking with the Maynard family when the young Max accidentally slipped into a deep hole in the creek. Johnson jumped into the pool and grabbed Maynard by the back and managed to pull him out of the water. The medal was prestigious enough that it was put on display at the local Grunewald and Adams Jewelry Store. (Star 5/27/1924)

### Mine Shaft Fall Fatal

**Aug 23, 1924**

Jose Figueroa died in a local hospital after falling into an abandoned mine shaft near Twin Buttes several days before. “He had been imprisoned in the mine shaft for many hours before he was rescued...because of his advanced age caused the fall to prove fatal.” (Star 8/28/1924)

### Lost Twice in Six Years

**Oct 26, 1924**

Sunday morning, Frank L. DeWolf, the 52-year-old Chief Clerk for the Arizona Eastern Railway, went deer hunting with a fellow worker and two others on the southwestern side of the Santa Rita Mountains. Soon they each went their separate ways, out looking for game. But when it got dark and with no light from a new moon, rather than try and make it back to camp, DeWolf hunkered down for the night. He had no coat, no food nor water, and only three matches. He had to burn

his hunting license with his third match and luckily, got a fire started near a small pool of water. Before dawn, he started out again and due to missing one hand from an accident of years before, he lost his balance, slipped and hurt his side enough so as to make him now limp. Walking was painful and slow.

Not heard from by Monday morning, a search began. This was the second time a search party was needed for Frank DeWolf. See “Lost Quail Hunter,” October 20, 1918, on page 51. A small posse of local cowboys and ranchers, along with his hunting companions, including “Black” Jack Gardener who lived near where the hunt began, joined together to hunt for him. Gardener had a bloodhound, which he pressed into service. By later that day, the word had spread around Tucson. Men that DeWolf worked with and other civic-minded volunteers, formed up in two larger posses to look for him. Strangely, while pursuing the man all over the rough countryside, Gardener’s bloodhound keeled over and the posse left it for dead.

According to friends, “While an ardent deer hunter. . . DeWolf has not frequented the mountain country sufficiently to find his way about.” Thirsty and unable to carry any water, he began backtracking to where he had spent the previous night. Enroute, he reached a high point, but he saw nothing helpful and the effort was wasted. With no matches, it was bitterly cold that night. Coatless, he spent much of the time waving his arms about for some semblance of warmth. It was 45 degrees in Tucson overnight. With upwards of fifty men, the posses had now split up and were searching the area from different directions.

Tuesday morning, DeWolf’s shoes gave out from the rocks and he resorted to tearing his wallet in half to make soles for them, and he started out again. This time he stumbled onto an empty bottle and was able to fill it, staving off his thirst. After walking for a while, he reached a house he had spied in the distance. Ironically, it belonged to “Black” Jack Gardener, his hunting companion, who also just happened to be there. So was Gardener’s bloodhound which was very much alive, it had been merely exhausted. (Citizen 10/28/1924; Star 10/29/1924)

## Woman Wanders 36 Hours

**Jul 6, 1926**

On Tuesday, Mrs. A. E. Lewis decided to take a short, early-morning walk from her home in Benson. At 5 a.m., the 58-year-old woman began following the nearby railroad tracks. “When but a short distance from Benson, she lost her sense of directions, and leaving the tracks thought to make a short cut back to her home, instead heading for the desert hills, where she became hopelessly lost.” She was last seen by a Southern Pacific Railroad trackwalker about five miles from town and heading away from it, toward Pima County. This is “the point last seen” and where the search began.

A posse of a dozen or so desert-wise deputies and cowboys, including Ed Echols, World Champion Calf-Roper in 1912 and eventual five-time Pima County Sheriff, trailed her across the hardened, sunbaked hills. “When within one mile of the woman, the searchers found her shoes which she had evidently discarded to walk in the sands of the canyon wash.” When located, “Mrs. Lewis was barefoot and sitting under the shade of a mesquite tree, utterly at a loss where to turn to retrace her steps to Benson. Although suffering from the lack of water and food, the wanderer was apparently not seriously injured from her long and aimless wanderings. . . .” Two of the men found a heavy board, put it on their shoulders, and carried the woman a mile over the hills to a waiting car in the southern part of the Rincon Mountains. (Star 7/8/1926)

## Soldier Dies in Oracle

**Dec 22, 1926**

F. J. Wilkinson was one of four men who went hunting for quail near the Carlink Ranch, five miles north of Oracle—it was blustery, raining and intermittently spitting snow. He had been a US Army Captain during the World War and had twenty years of military service when he retired. He then re-enlisted and was now a Sergeant with the Arizona National Guard and living in Tucson. He failed to rendezvous with the other three at about noon and after waiting a period of time, they alerted the Pinal Sheriff's Deputy in Oracle, who in turn organized a search party for Wilkinson. At 10:00 p.m., he was found dead beneath a mesquite tree.

“Mortis rigor [sic: rigor mortis] had not set in when the body was found, nor was it covered with snow although snow had been falling steadily. It is believed that Wilkinson's body was found about 30 minutes after he had died. Efforts to revive him proved of no avail.” Searchers were walking down the road and swinging their flashlights from side to side, luckily someone spotted him. He was on top of a foot of new snow and was only twenty yards from the Carlink Ranch Road. It was ruled an accidental death and that he died of exhaustion. (Star 12/23/1926, 12/24/1926; Citizen 12/24/1926)

## Tucson's First Air Ambulance?

**Nov 4, 1927**

At least by early-1916, “a Red Cross aerial ambulance” had been designed. “Slung underneath the body of the aero plane will be a small cot, securely fastened and so constructed that it will be impossible for the occupant to fall out or even to be shaken up when the aero plane is volplaned to earth. A small hole cut in the bottom of the observer's apartment of the ambulance will enable a hospital attendant to give first aid while the pilot is making his way to the hospital.” Then in 1920, the Army ordered four DH-4 aircraft converted into air ambulances and Italy and the British had planes for similar use by 1925. The following year, a commercial air ambulance was unveiled in Germany, capable of carrying seven patients.

The first “air ambulance” reported by the local newspapers in Southern Arizona may have been flown into Tucson on November 4, 1927. Richard J. Burke, a wealthy man from San Francisco, was nearly disabled by tuberculosis. At that time, Tucson was already a mecca for those suffering from the deadly disease—sun and the warm climate were recommended for Burke. He was originally coming by train but had a serious relapse, so was advised by his doctor to fly over, in a reclining position.

Burke chartered a five-place Fairchild monoplane from San Diego, the seats were let down and a mattress installed. The headline for one article reads, “Patient Views Landscape From Plane Window While Being Brought to Tucson.” The trip took just over four hours but could have been faster except the conscientious pilot did not want “to annoy the patient with the roar and vibration that would have resulted....” In addition to the pilot, Burke, and his wife, there was a mechanic, just in case. Burke was to be a patient at the 120-bed Desert Sanitorium, which had opened the previous November. It became Tucson Medical Center on June 14, 1944. (The Kansas City Times 3/4/1916; The Austin American 3/13/1919; The New York Times 3/5/1920; Star 12/2/1926, 11/4/1927, 6/15/1944; Citizen 11/4/1927, 11/6/1927)

## Seven Die in Disastrous Mine Fire

**Nov 24, 1927**

In the early morning hours of Thursday, Thanksgiving Day, a devastating fire swept through Shaft Number 2 of the Magma Copper Company Mine in Superior, Arizona, endangering 49 miners. It was nearing 4 a.m., and their day on the “graveyard shift” was ending. The mine had four shafts to the surface, the Number 1 and 4 Shafts were for air and 2 and 3 for taking out ore and, entry and exits for the miners. The fire was first discovered by nine men working at the bottom of Number 2, or at the 2,500-foot level. Bits of charred and burning cinders began raining down on them, coming through the mine’s air filtering systems.

It was learned later the flames quickly roared up Number 2 Shaft like a tall chimney, consuming all timbering from the 2,250-foot to the 1,600-foot levels. Those 650 feet were described as gutted. Above that point to the surface, the shaft was concrete. Fortunately, only nine of the 49 men were working below the fire.

By the end of that Thanksgiving Day, 42 of the men were accounted for and safely on top, having by various desperate means worked into and up the Number 3 Shaft, all by ladders. But that still left the fate of seven men, unknown. Pretty quickly, two were found dead at the 500-foot level of Number 2, burned. One had only been employed there for ten days. Mine rescue crews from nearby Globe and Miami had rushed to the scene, and began searching for the remaining five, now believed to be at the 500-foot level. Eighteen rescuers were “helmet men” [Drager Helmets], assisted by some eighty others; they all were also forced to use the ladders in the shafts, since the hoists and cages were not operable. Magma Company Managers were able to finally bring the 12-hour fire under control that night by completely flooding the Number 2 Shaft. But the damage had been done and it was overwhelming.

Late Friday night, an additional miner was found, “grotesquely distorted and swollen to twice its size” in Shaft Number 4. A second body could be seen one-hundred feet below at the 1,000-foot level, also deceased. It was determined these two had made their way through lateral drifts to the air shaft but were probably soon overcome by fumes and heat. This brought the total of those missing down to three. “Mine officials held to a hope. . . these men might be found alive but veteran miners versed through long years of experience, were skeptical. . . and declared their belief that the three remaining men were dead.” On Saturday, body number five of the original seven was found and removed.

Sunday, a second fire in three days broke out in that mine. It endangered the lives of fifty miners and rescuers and interrupted the search for the two men still to be located. It occurred in Number 1 Shaft, some distance from Number 2 and the site of the first deadly incident. “All available fire apparatus at the mine and in Superior was rushed to shaft No. 1 when flames leaped more than 50 feet from its mouth to light the entrance brilliantly. . . A few minutes after the alarm was sounded, however, 50 miners reached the surface and safety. All men working below ground were accounted for while the blaze was being extinguished.”

This left two still entombed, including “R. Rodriguez, a Mexican.” Never found, it was believed he had crawled into some obscure cleft before dying. And also, Zeno Lightfoot Dili, “an Apache Indian,” the singular hero of the Magma Copper Mine Thanksgiving Day Fire.

Dili, a miner from San Carlos, Arizona, was a “cager” or cage operator, a precise skill needing specific experience. He had originally made it out safely, but upon learning many others were still below and in jeopardy, turned around and heroically went back down Number 2. This was despite intense smoke, gases, and incredible heat. It was later deduced that while taking his cage



back down to the 500-foot-level to rescue others, the inch-and-a-half steel cable burned partially through, snapping under the weight of its heavy cargo. He plunged to the bottom of the Number 2 Shaft, which would soon be flooded. This is his grave today.

The incident's inquest called more than 15 witnesses and the six-man jury heard it on December 1. It ruled, "The six victims whose bodies have been recovered from the depths of the Magma mine following a conflagration Thanksgiving Day, came to their deaths as the 'result of a fire in the Magma mine, the cause of which is unknown to this jury.' " In April 1929, Zeno Lightfoot Dili, was posthumously awarded a Gold Medal for his supreme sacrifice by the Joseph A. Holmes Safety Association, at their annual conference. See "Rescue Training Comes to Southern Arizona," May 16, 1910, on page 41 . (Arizona Republican 11/25/1927, 11/26/1927, 11/27/1927, 11/28/1927, 11/29/1927, 11/30/1927; Evening Star [Washington, DC] 4/21/1929; Stephanie Brown, WestLand Resources, 1/27/2023)

### Roadster Plunges 150 Feet into Ravine

**Dec 4, 1927**

"One man was killed and seven persons were injured [of the nine in the vehicle], one of whom might die, when the automobile in which they were riding plunged off a curve on the mountainous highway three miles east of here [Superior] and crashed 150 feet to the bottom of Spring Canyon." Mike McCarty, 30, of Phoenix, was crushed instantly when after the car landed, it rolled over on him. The remaining six injuries included a Mrs. Gross, a mother with her five children onboard, four of whom were injured, with her 3-year-old, expected later to die. Although seriously injured, McCarty managed to claw her way up the nearly vertical rocky and shrub-covered embankment and flag down a passing Auto Stage going to Phoenix.

The Stage driver and his passengers scrambled down to the wreck and, after assessing the scene, carried the wounded up to the road. "Several trips were necessary to bring the injured up to the highway, where they were placed in the stage and rushed to the Magma hospital here [Superior]." (Phoenix Republican 12/5/1927)

### Teenager Lost in Cochise Stronghold

**Mar 31, 1928**

Jack Jones, a 13-year-old from San Antonio, was going to high school in Willcox, passing the winter there with his aunt, a local rancher. Along with classmates, he was enjoying a Saturday picnic in Cochise Stronghold. He had never been in the mountains before, certainly not where the noted Apache leader was reportedly buried a little over a half-century before. Exploring among the oak and rugged granite cliffs and boulders deep in the Dragoon Mountains, he became disoriented and then ultimately lost. The pupils and teachers all returned to town late that afternoon; after it got dark, it was discovered he had not come back with them from the day's outing.

School Superintendent Negele immediately went back to the picnic spot in the Stronghold. Word soon spread and men attending the American Legion card party that evening left to form a search, as did many from the town's bustling movie theater. By the next morning, there were searchers from Willcox, Dragoon, Bisbee, Tombstone, and numerous ranches in between; one article says, "About two hundred men and high school boys..." Doctors Briscoe and Wilson joined in, bringing their emergency medical kits. Bloodhounds from nearby Fort Grant, then a state industrial school for "wayward boys," responded.

On Sunday evening, the Willcox Postmaster, who was also Commander of the local American Legion, called Fort Huachuca, asking for “Indian Scouts and all available troops. The message was received about 7:00 and by 9:00, the troops were on their way with orders to ‘find the boy.’ There were twenty black soldiers and seventeen Indian trailers under the command of a first lieutenant.” About 3 a.m. Monday morning, the bloodhounds were on the trail of Jack and their baying awakened him. Mistaking them for bears, he began running and climbing in the darkness; by daylight, though, he saw the men and the dogs and called to them.

During the 36 hours or so Jack was lost, he had wandered several miles but had gone in a big circle, ending up almost where he started. He had not eaten since the picnic lunch, had no water because he was afraid to drink from the potholes but, according to both doctors who examined him, he was in good shape. At mid-morning, when word was received of the boy being found safe, fire whistles in Willcox sounded “and high school students made a general exodus from classes. A half-day holiday was declared... and a special assembly held for praise and thanksgiving.” He said he followed his training as a Boy Scout to remain calm. (Star 4/2/1928, 4/3/1928; Phoenix Republic 4/3/1928; SSVEC Currents 5 & 6/2022)

## Indian Hero of Big Mine Blaze

**May 6 1928**

Late in the day, a fire broke out at the Dijon Copper Mine in Gleeson, Arizona,<sup>2</sup> involving several surface structures, resulting in about \$10,000 [\$172,000 in 2023] damage. No one was injured, thanks to the bravery of Michael Marchello and E. J. Bellah, an “heroic Indian worker.”

“Bellah had the highly important post of hoistman. It is not every man who can turn a lever who can also run a hoist. It is a job that calls for much precision, when the need arises, that the operator drop his cage like a bullet to the bottom of the shaft, yet ease off the speed without damage to the cage or injury to the occupants, and bring it safely to a halt just at the bottom of the shaft. Similarly, he must bring it to the surface like a rocket, but a rocket that comes easily to a stop just at the top of the shaft. It is a ticklish job. It takes courage to speed a human cargo that way, knowing that a mishap may mean disaster. You must know your stuff when you run a mine hoist.”

That day, all of the men down in the mine had left but four who were still at work at the two-hundred-foot level. Suddenly Bellah discovered a fire had broken out in the hoist house, on top. Hurriedly he summoned Marchello who was nearby, and quickly appraised him of the danger threatening the four men below. “Bellah could not go and warn them. His duty was at the hoist. On him depended the rescue.” Marchello, sizing up the situation and not hesitating a moment, rushed into the cage and Bellah,

“...dropped him 200 feet in a wink of an eye. Then Marchello showed the stuff of which he was made. Knowing the only means of escape was up the shaft and aware of the fact that the hoist house was burning, he rushed through 1,000 feet of tunnel to carry the warning to the four at work, all mindful of the menace to their lives eating its way hungrily above toward the hoisting engine and its master. While Marchello hurried through the mine gallery, a great line of fire was gradually encircling Bellah.”

<sup>2</sup> Gleeson, now a ghost town in Cochise County, lies 16 miles east of Tombstone. Its Post Office was established in October 1900 and closed in March 1939. At its peak, the community supported five-hundred residents.



An air compressor blew up near Bellah, while a hundred gallons of lubricating oil were burning ten feet away. The heat from the blaze that quickly surrounded him and the small wooden building he was in, was terrific. The fire was now also overhead with the hoist's headframe engulfed. Under Bellah's hand, the lever that controlled the hoisting engine scorched the skin and his arm and shoulder were terribly burned, "yet he stayed by his post, nearly suffocated and on the verge of collapse. He never faltered, with precious lives that hung on his courage and with the stoicism of the Indian of old, he went through the fire torture and came out a hero." As he suffered, Bellah must have wondered why the five below did not give the signal to raise the cage. As the dry, desert-seasoned, wooden headframe fiercely burned, "it seemed that the end was almost at hand."

At nearly the very last moment came the signal to raise the cage and, with almost a final effort, he threw the lever and brought the cage from its waiting place two-hundred feet below, "up into the hell of fire on the surface. The rescued men dashed out and, with Bellah, made their way to safety just before the headframe, with a roar and a great cloud of smoke, collapsed and fell down into the shaft."

In April 1929, E. J. Bellah (no first name nor age) and Michael Marchello (no age), were honored with Gold Medals for Bravery at a well-attended national conference of the Joseph A. Holmes Safety Association. Dr. Holmes was the first Director of the Bureau of Mines, Department of the Interior, who died July 12, 1915. See "Rescue Training Comes to Southern Arizona," May 16, 1910, on page 41 . (Star 5/14/1928; Evening Star [Washington, DC] 4/21/1929)

### Lost In Rincon Mountains

**Oct 16, 1928**

Leonard Davis had been hunting with his father on the slopes of the Rincon Mountains. One had shot a deer and Leonard, whose age was never given, left at 11 a.m. to secure a pack horse to carry out the slain animal. The son never returned and after "the elder Davis waited some time. . . fearing that he had fallen and injured himself or become lost, gathered a posse of ranchers, who searched until after dark for the missing man. The search proving unavailing, Davis, Sr., returned to Tucson to enlist the aid of the sheriff." Early the next morning a search party of two Deputy Sheriffs [sic] and 19 ranchers left to hunt for Leonard. Upon reaching the mountains, word was received that he was located safely. It seems Leonard had become confused and "following a 13-hour tramp over the rugged western slopes of the Rincons," had stumbled into an isolated ranch, who took him in for the night. (Citizen 10/17/1928)

### Deputy and Three Others Killed in Search

**Oct 23, 1928**

The mother of William Hyatt, 18, reported her son missing when he did not return from a weekend hunting trip near Cañada del Oro. He had ridden his motorcycle to the area on the north side of the Catalina Mountains, taking a 16-gauge shotgun to hunt rabbits. Pima County Sheriff James McDonald sent a posse of deputies and volunteers to search the area but they found nothing that first day. The newspaper delivery boy "was found after hundreds of people and officers had searched the desert and foothills near Oracle and the surrounding country." Late in the afternoon of the second day of searching:

"Hyatt's body was lying near a mesquite tree in an arroyo and the mute evidence showed plainly that the lad had evidently shot at a rabbit and had rushed up to where he thought the animal

was and there re-loaded his gun before attempting to poke the animal with the butt of his gun. It was then that the gun was discharged the full load striking the boy in the left shoulder, passing through and penetrated the back of the neck.”

Aiding in this search for Hyatt, were two high-wing, 225 horse-power Ryan Brougham aircraft, each capable of seating five persons. One was piloted by George Peck. With him were three passengers, including Pima County Deputy Sheriff, Clifford Nelson. The other was piloted by Charles Mayes. “Lacking specific information about the exact place where the boy was believed to have been lost, the two planes circled over a large territory.” Witnesses said that at 8:20 a.m., Peck’s plane suddenly just fell from the sky, crashing into the desert. Although not actually seen, it burst into flames. It would take two deputies nearly four hours on horseback to reach the gruesome scene. “Sitting in the framework of steel of the fuselage of the plane, was the four charred bodies which had been burned beyond recognition.”

In the other plane, Mayes quickly flew low over the burning wreckage. With him was “Ted O. Penney, parachute jumper, who planned to jump from the plane and render aid if possible. Mayes saw that human aid would be of no avail and flew back to Tucson and rushed back by automobile.”

Between 1883 and 2023, Clifford Nelson was the fifth of 14 Pima County Sheriff’s Deputies to die in the line of duty. The first four were by gunshot. (Citizen 10/23/1928; Star 10/23/1928, 10/24/1928; PCSD Website: In Memoriam)

## Man Wanders Two Nights

**Nov 29, 1929**

Tucson plumber, Otho L. Davis, was let out of a car that afternoon on the north side of “A Mountain,” saying he had always wanted to scramble to the top of it. He soon “became confused in his directions.” That first night he built a large fire to keep warm. “For water, he cut upon cactus plants and chewed their pulp but he had no food.” The second day he again tried to climb a mountain but could not orient himself and returned to his campsite. “If I had only known there was only one mountain between me and town. . . .” Utilizing his own bloodhounds that second day, Sheriff Jim McDonald and two deputies organized a search for Davis, incorporating some of the man’s friends. That third afternoon, he heard gun shots and quickly discovered he was near the local rifle range (Star 12/2/1929)

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# CHAPTER 6

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1930–1939

## Miner Rescued

**Jan 28, 1930**

“Dave Armstrong was found lying unconscious at an abandoned mine shaft a few miles from Tombstone after a long search by local residents.” The Tucson prospector was exploring the mine and had descended by means of a rope fastened on the surface. On nearing the end of the rope, he somehow lost his grip, slipped and fell, lodging on a ledge approximately 300 feet from the bottom of the shaft. He fell ten feet and suffered a fractured skull, being admitted to the Bisbee Hospital in “grave condition.” (Star 2/3/1930)

## Boy Lost in Huachuca Mountains

**Mar 14, 1930**

“It was his sobbing that attracted the attention of the searchers.” The 4-year-old son of a Santa Cruz rancher had wandered away from his home in the Huachuca Mountains. “They found him cuddled against a rock crying... Over 100 people joined in the search for the boy including United States soldiers, trappers, Deputy Sheriffs and ranchers.” The boy was missing for twelve hours and had walked over four miles from his home. (Star 3/15/1930)

## Mongrel Saves Her Life

**Feb 24, 1931**

Two posses of searchers left Miami and Globe, Arizona, during a snowstorm that night to look for Mrs. Will Ashby. The 50-year-old had wandered away from her husband’s cabin earlier that afternoon, when the weather was nicer. Tagging along on her walk on Pinal Mountain was “Bob,” her mongrel dog. This would soon prove life-saving since the thinly dressed woman became disoriented and the weather had suddenly changed for the worse. She was lost and could now easily die from exposure and hypothermia.

Leading the two search teams in the dark were the Pinal County Sheriff, a US Forest Ranger, a game warden, and several deputies. They hunted for the missing woman all night; the next day, they found her.

“Shots fired by the searchers were answered...by a dog which accompanied Mrs. Ashby. In the clear air, at 7,000 feet...the dog’s answering bark carried for more than two miles, leading rescuers to the almost exhausted woman. ‘Good old fellow,’ said Mrs. Ashby, petting the dog’s head, ‘He kept me alive. I huddled up to him during the night. I am sure I would have died in the cold had it not been for the warmth of his body.’ ” (Star 3/1/1931)

## Man Drowns in Sabino Canyon

**May 6, 1931**

James Clay, 22, along with three companions, was swimming in one of the pools in Sabino Canyon. “Mr. Clay dove into the water and apparently was stunned when he hit his head on a rock. His companions, believing that he was playing a joke by staying under water for a time paid little attention when he did not come up immediately.” When finally alarmed, he was pulled to the surface. “But efforts to resuscitate him were unsuccessful. He was rushed to the city where a physician was summoned but he was pronounced dead.” An examination at the funeral home revealed that he probably drowned rather than from the blow to his head. (Star 5/7/1931)

## Search, Rescue, and Recovery in Upper Sabino Canyon

**Aug 5, 1932**

If Tucson were ever to have the classic, true-life, “page-turning melodrama,” ... this would be it. “Norris Killed Outright, Grout Given Chance To Recover If Workers Can Bring Him Over Mountains Into City,” and “...Stretcher 18 Miles Over Pathless Mountains and Winding Burro Trail.” These were just two of the five-days’ front-page headlines. Numerous accompanying secondary articles further hyped the incident, such as: “Lives Risked To Rescue Grout,” and “Aviators Fight Death In Hills.” Here are but a few of the twists and turns, of this life and death drama.

At dawn on Friday, August 5, Tucson High School Principal, O. W. Patterson and local Boy Scout Executive Hazen Shower, left Soldier Camp and began a fishing trip down into the rugged upper reaches of Sabino Canyon. They planned to spend just one night part way through the narrow drainage and would then meet Mrs. Patterson at the bottom. Due to a misunderstanding that first afternoon, Patterson and Shower became separated but both continued to fish, neither overly concerned about the mix-up. Rain had fallen upstream and at dusk, Patterson witnessed a two-foot wall of water rushing by him, although he remained safe. More vigilant now about not walking by his fishing partner as well as being exhausted, Patterson spent a second night in the canyon. The next morning, he slowly continued looking for Shower as he descended. Meanwhile, Shower had already returned unscathed back up to Soldier Camp, soon resulting in Patterson being considered lost.

That Sunday morning, August 7, a search was begun for Principal Patterson. Several forest rangers on horseback began looking, coming down from the top. Starting up from the bottom were a handful of friends of Patterson. Realizing a search had probably already begun, Patterson kept picking his way down the canyon. Just before noon, he ran into four fishermen, one a former student of his. After pleasantries, the four men continued up the canyon to try their luck in the deep pools.

An hour later, however, Frank Dawson, a local Buick dealership owner, found Patterson, who is quickly told there is a search on for him. Of course, he is not really lost, just overdue, but nobody else knows this yet.

These six men are now somewhere near where Sabino and Lemmon Creeks join. The two canyons are deep and rugged. Needless to say, this area is also extremely demanding and full of hazards for a pre-helicopter search and rescue mission. Even today, it would be both tricky and punishing.

At that same noon hour, James E. Norris, a Tucson aviator and Archie Grout, a radio operator at the Tucson Municipal Airport, took to the air in a “tiny red bi-plane” and headed for the search area. Norris had Patterson as his school principal and also, is now “the head of his own flying school.” As the plane is over Patterson and Dawson, Dawson remarks, “ ‘They’re looking for you, I’ll bet.’ ” Patterson then says, “ ‘Why, they seem to be going right down into the canyon...I’m afraid they’ll crash.’ ” Dawson looked at his watch and it was 1:01 p.m.

The four fishermen had heard the plane crash nearby. “Coming upon the wrecked plane they dragged the two men from it, bleeding and battered but still alive.” Norris, newly married, seemed the most serious with a broken leg, broken arm, and ugly head injuries. Grout had a broken leg and was bleeding, necessitating a tourniquet. The youngest of the four fishermen was then able to quickly get back five miles to the horses his group had used and ultimately alerted authorities. Monday, August 8, the front-page headlines, read, “Tucson Aviators Victims of Accident In Searching For Missing School Man... Rain and Towering Rocks Hampering Parties Which Carry Aid to Lonely Canyon 14 Miles Above Upper Sabino.”

There are soon three separate groups responding, including sheriffs’ deputies, aviators, cowboys, forest rangers, ranchers, and two doctors; “between 20 and 30 men,” all now working their way up to the two injured fliers. There are no communications and little organization. One of Tuesday’s headlines, reads, “Lives Risked To Rescue Grout... Workers Bring Body Inch at a Time, Half Mile in Entire Day.” Meanwhile, Norris has since died and remains at the plane. Those at the scene focus on saving Grout, but only seven men are left to actually carry the stretcher that first day, with the one carrying all of the water, himself getting lost for several hours. If that is not enough, it has been intermittently raining hard on the stretcher team, making the granite and rocky drop offs dangerously slippery.

Wednesday, August 10, the second day of carrying Grout, Principal Patterson, the person being sought by Norris and Grout, joins in the rescue, as does Scout Executive Hazen Shower. Shower, knowing there are no communications, “organized a signal corps of boy scouts and made plans to station them along the trail in order to establish communications between the camp and the foot of the trail.” It took two full days to finally get Grout to a hospital. There, in describing the accident, Grout ventured, “...they swooped around a bend in the canyon and saw a sheer wall of rock looming up only a few hundred feet from them.”

Knowing Norris is beyond help, and appreciating how terrible the terrain is and the incredible effort it took to get Grout down, it is twelve more hours, Thursday, August 11, before anyone volunteers to go back up for the dead pilot. Initially, it was only three willing to go, and none of them knew exactly where Norris was. Moreover, “a belief was expressed...that Norris’s body would never be found where it had been left, pointing out it lay only about six feet from the Sabino canyon creek... and it was raining hard... If sufficient rain falls it is highly possible the body will be washed on downstream...” There had been serious consideration within the group of cremating Norris and/or burying him in place, under a huge pile of rocks. The aviators now involved in the search, have been thinking ‘outside the box,’ say, “All attempts to secure a balloon or blimp from the Pacific coast, were abandoned...”

Others do finally join in climbing back to the wreck. Maybe a little unexpectedly for all of Tucson, that Thursday, August 11, “the body of Jimmy Norris came home. Down out of the rocky wilderness of the Santa Catalina Mountains his body was carried and dragged by men and packed on mule back. . . .” (Star 8/8/1932, 8/9/1932, 8/10/1932, 8/11/1932, 8/12/1932)

## Two Men Gassed in Mine

**Aug 4, 1933**

Tucson residents, Fenwick Hamilton and Herman Mann, employees of a local bank, went into the Helmet Mine south of Tucson to gather ore samples, intending to sell the property. They entered the top of the six-hundred-foot-deep shaft while their companion, A. J. Schultz, remained outside. When after two hours Schultz had not heard from either of the other two, he twice tried to climb down into the mine. On both attempts, he was blocked by dangerous gas, only twenty feet down. Schultz soon contacted Pima County Sheriff John F. Belton, who tried to locate the proper kind of gas mask in Tucson, but none could be found. The sheriff finally contacted Jim Malley, the Deputy State Mine Inspector, who was able to arrange for a mine-rescue team from Bisbee.

When Sheriff Belton arrived at the accident scene, “By the aid of a light lowered into the shaft, Belton discovered Hamilton’s body, hanging downward with one foot caught in the ladder, about 30 feet from the surface. Further investigation by the aid of a carbide lamp was blocked when the lowered lamp was extinguished at 22 feet.” Trained mine rescuers from Bisbee, V. C. Pomeroy and Frank Sandry, arrived later that evening with proper safety equipment, “after a hard drive.” The two were able to quickly reach the victims, “but the men had been dead for some time.” They were able to get the two bodies out by 1:30 that morning. Herbert Mann’s body was discovered 125 feet down. (Citizen 8/5/1933)

## Kidnapped First-Grader

**Apr 25, 1934**

On January 23, 1934, notorious bank robber John Dillinger and his gang were captured without a shot being fired by local police in downtown Tucson—now one of the city’s annually celebrated “claims to fame.” Three months later, the 19-day search for June Cecilia Robles made up a great many more front-page headlines than did those of the infamous gunman’s arrest. But few now know of the kidnapping of this little 6-year-old, reportedly the favorite granddaughter of Bernabe Robles, a wealthy rancher and well-respected Tucson real estate developer. The first-grader was lured into an older, dark automobile at 3 p.m., as she was walking to her aunt and uncle’s from Roskrue School on East Fifth Street. Two hours later, a ransom demand of \$15,000 was made, \$310,000 in 2022 value. The note clearly described where and how to deliver the money.

Within hours, “Hundreds of men, officers, cattlemen friends of the rancher and real estate owner joined in the search for the child and her kidnappers,” to be followed by three-hundred fully armed American Legionnaires the next morning. “Undersheriff Colby S. Farrar issued a statement. . . that he wanted every available man, who might lend aid, to report to the sheriff’s at 5 o’clock this morning [April 26]. . . In real southwestern style. . . Cattlemen with hands hovering near guns, were detailed to accompany experienced officers.” That first night, Tucson Mayor Henry O. Josted “authorized [Police] Chief C. A. Wollard to hire all extra men needed. . . .” Many leads were fielded, “no tip was too trivial.” Several university students were arrested that evening for a cruel practical prank involving a false ransom demand note.

A local camp of about two-hundred Civilian Conservation Corpsmen volunteered. The police departments of both Nogales, Arizona and Nogales, Sonora, in conjunction with customs and immigration officers on the border in the area, joined in. The Pima County Board of Supervisors and the American Legionnaires, each put up rewards of \$500, or nearly \$21,000 in 2022 value. The State of Texas “promised that its 118 state patrolmen would be held in readiness, while the Arizona highway patrol sent eight men to Tucson to help.” A plane was put into the air to hunt for her. A house-to-house search began. If someone refused permission to enter, the home was to be guarded and the police department notified for further action; fortuitously, June’s uncle, Carlos Robles, was the Deputy Pima County Attorney.

“Wollard, who engineered the capture of John Dillinger and his gang and Farrar, veteran of many years’ service along the Mexican border, combined their talents in making dispositions of the men that are conducting the search. Officers trained in city work led the details which blanketed the town, but it was the bronze faced cowmen and border officers, schooled in the lore of the hill trails, headed the parties that visited every canyon, trail and mountain ranch. Legionnaires, reviving their one-time knowledge of military police duty, handled the stationary patrols on the highways while...state highway patrol, two officers of that organization swept their copper-colored cars back and forth over the main highways of Pima county and little escaped their notice.”

On day four, a report from Fort Huachuca sounded so credible, that several Apache Scouts and a large number of soldiers, along with “deputies from three counties, customs officers, rushed to the secluded spot. The Huachuca mountains are hide-out country.” This proved too good to be true. The grandfather went into Mexico twice on wild goose chases. This kidnapping was now national news, with the famed Lindberg baby kidnapping having taken place just over two years before and fresh in the national memory. Tips came in from all over the country, as well as sightings—New York, San Francisco, Sacramento. A Nogales man confessed to the kidnapping, but soon was discredited. Crackpots and visionaries came out of the woodwork. The mood of the city turned ugly.

The day after the abduction, the Bureau of Investigation, today’s Federal Bureau of Investigation, got involved but quickly took a semi-hand’s off approach, especially after June’s attorney uncle soon placed a statement in the newspapers asking that all volunteer search efforts be stopped. The family wanted to directly control communications with the kidnappers without having to deal with outside distractions. Law enforcement still had a responsibility but also claimed they were not getting much cooperation from the family; after the first week, they largely stayed out of the way. The family could not raise the \$15,000 but made it known they could come up with \$10,000. No one came forward and over two weeks passed, with no June.

On May 14, *The Arizona Daily Star* put out an Extra Front Page Edition, heralding June Robles was alive. She was found buried in a six by three by three-foot crudely-built cage, slightly hidden by dirt and cactus. She was shackled by her ankles inside the coffin-sized pen. An anonymous letter had been sent from Chicago to Arizona Governor Benjamin B. Moeur in Phoenix, telling where she was. The hand-scrawled note, rushed by highway patrol to Carlos Robles in Tucson, read, “ ‘Go out Broadway to Wilmot Road. Turn south to Rincon Way, go east one mile, then walk north 150 steps into the desert.’ ” The County Attorney, along with June’s uncle, spent four hours trying to locate what they believed was surely a grave for the little girl. Frustrated and almost giving up, the County Attorney then literally stumbled across the spot.

Given the bizarre but dire circumstances, June was in amazingly good condition; there were a few items of water and food still in the cage. The Bureau of Investigation tried to find fingerprints on everything possible, including her enclosure, but discovered nothing. After several promising



leads, those responsible for the kidnapping were never brought to justice. There were questions and lingering suspicions about the role the family may have played in this abduction, but nothing further ever came to light.

June Cecilia Robles went on to live a quiet life in Tucson. She married Dancey Birt in 1950, became a mother of four, and died at age 87 of complications from Parkinson's Disease on September 2, 2014. (Star 4/26/1934, 4/27/1934, 4/29/1934, 5/9/1934, 5/11/1934, 5/14/1934, 5/15/1934, 5/18/1934; Honolulu Star-Advertiser 11/2/2017)

## Plane Crash, False Alarm

**May 20, 1934**

“‘We are being forced down, advise Tucson.’ ” That distress message was heard by several passengers on their short-wave radio while on the Southern Pacific passenger train nearing Vail, east of Tucson. It set into motion a very strange but fruitless search. Almost simultaneous of this strange radio message being reported to the Sheriff's Department,

“cowboys in the region east and south of the Rincons reported seeing a tower of intense black smoke rise suddenly from the mountains at approximately the Manning Camp station... The cowboys said the fire burned intensely and black smoke rose for a time and then the smoke's color changed to the gray-brown typical of forest fires. They believed the first fire might have been caused from oil and gas in the airplane and subsequent smoke from the burning of the trees.”

A pilot quickly lifted off the Tucson Air Field and flew over 8,800-foot Mica Mountain, the high point in the Rincon Mountains. “I saw nothing but a fire. There was no sign of a plane but then I was flying 1,000 feet above the fire, due to the intense heat, and could not have seen a plane, for at that time it would have been completely destroyed had there been one there.” An officer at the sheriff's department, said “he had two telephone calls from individuals who stated they saw the plane go over Tucson and to the Rincon mountains.” The Undersheriff and a deputy left to go up there but soon realized they were too far away to be of much immediate help. Men from the Civilian Conservation Corps camp in Vail, however, actually went up the trail to Manning Camp on Mica Mountain, a nearly four-hour hike for them.

The fire kept growing. There were two Forest Service rangers at Manning Camp and they were on the blaze. The anxious wife of one of them who was also living up there, telephoned down to the forest office, saying she was actually very concerned for her own safety, since the fire was only one-fourth mile from their cabin. “ ‘Don't think I'm not sitting in a pretty pickle... I'm alone and those two men are out there trying to control that fire by themselves... I hope the CCC camp men arrive. If the wind should shift there is no telling what will happen. I'm on the edge of the fire now and the cabin is thick with smoke.’ ”

All airports in Southern Arizona and New Mexico, and as far west as El Paso were checked and none reported any plane not accounted for. The source of the mysterious radio transmission was never discovered. The fire was brought under control by 53 ranchers and CCC men. It was soon learned it was caused, not by a crashed plane, but by a smoldering cigarette thrown carelessly from a horseman observed in the area not too long before the fire began. (Citizen 5/21/1934; Star 5/21/1934)



### Anonymous Rescuer

**Jul 25, 1934**

Attracted by the screams of the two young cousins of 9-year-old Donald Cottrell, “an unsung hero plunged into the water fully clad and swam around until he located the child on the sandy bottom of the pool. He recovered the unconscious lad and brought him to shore. The frantic mother... and aunt... stood by helplessly while the stranger applied artificial respiration until Donald was fully revived. He then left in an automobile, declining to identify himself.”

According to the 7- and 8-year-old cousins, Donald had just sunk for the third time when their screams brought the stranger to the scene. “Not even a ripple was on the surface of the pool when he got there, and the water was too deep to see Donald on the bottom. It was believed the child already had been under water several minutes.” By the time the screaming brought the mother and aunt to the water’s edge in Sabino Canyon, the man had already rescued the boy and was applying artificial respiration. (Citizen 7/26/1934; Star 7/26/1934)

### Timber Breaks, Miner Dies

**Feb 18, 1935**

“Sheriff Belton and deputies sped to the mouth of the mine shaft, but could see only a floating mass of wreckage on the surface of the water, which is believed to be about 200 feet deep.” The Pima County Sheriff was looking for 73-year-old Charles J. Cunningham, presumed killed when scaffolding in his mine suddenly collapsed, plunging him 55 feet to the bottom of the pit that Monday afternoon. Cunningham, a veteran prospector and Tucson saloon and café owner, had a 27-year-old wife and an 8-month-old baby. Charles B. Marcus, 31, and he, were in the old Port Arthur mine, four miles west of Twin Buttes and some 25 miles southwest of Tucson. Cunningham still owned this claim, as well as quite a few others in the area and was considered a pioneer in mining in the state.

“Marcus owes his own miraculous escape to the fact that he broke his fall by clutching a stringer, momentarily interrupting his fall. After floating in the icy water for some time, badly bruised, he climbed to the surface and was driven... in search of aid...” Marcus had not seen any further sign of his companion, once the two dropped into the water. Sheriff Belton would not let any of his deputies descend into the shaft due to the rotting timbers and unstable walls. Seeking counsel, Belton sent to Bisbee for Jim Malley, the Deputy State Mine Inspector for assistance. He showed up several hours later with more specialized mine rescue equipment. It was also then learned that on June 30, 1908, Cunningham had taken a near-fatal, 25-foot fall in this very same shaft. See “Rope Breaks, Miner Falls,” June 30, 1908, on page 37.

Malley, now along with State Mine Inspector, Tom Foster, gave orders to re-timber the mine shaft from the surface down to the water level, more than seventy feet below, before they would allow any further efforts to recover Cunningham. For six days there was continuous work while trying to locate him. Finally, on Saturday, July 23, Foster went before the Pima County Board of Supervisors and asked for some funding toward this effort. He said that “with pumping equipment donated by friends of Cunningham, he could pump water from the flooded mine shaft with good expectations of recovering the body with little expense to the county.” Alexander Murry, the County Attorney, “held that in such an emergency the supervisors could appropriate sums of money for rescue work.” A donation of \$100 was made (over \$1,900 in 2021), as were other gifts from various mining companies in the area.

But the next day, “Recovery of the body was accomplished without pumping the water from the shaft as it was first believed would be necessary. It was located through the use of grappling hooks where it had been caught two sets below the surface of the water in the shaft. The body had become wedged in the manway and it was found possible to pull it to the surface... where it was wrapped in a tarpaulin and hoisted out of the shaft... Because of its condition... none of the friends of the dead man will be permitted to see it.” (Star 7/1/1908, 2/19/1935, 2/20/1935, 2/24/1935, 2/25/1935)

## Brothers Drown

**Jun 9, 1935**

Alfonso Ariza, 14, and his 16-year-old brother Hector, were swimming in an irrigation reservoir on the Robles Ranch, 16 miles east of Tucson. The two boys lived on the nearby Jake Meyer Palo Verde Ranch. As related by a companion who witnessed this drama unfolding, Alfonso apparently hit his face and mouth on a submerged rock, probably becoming unconscious or at least, stunning himself. Hector realized what was happening and he jumped in to aid his younger brother. In trying to save Alfonso, Hector became fatigued himself and began struggling. Summoned by the cries of Hector, their companion,

“... made repeated efforts to pull Hector from the water, and then ran for help to a point at some distance where several ranch hands were at work. The men found Hector floating unconscious in the water and removed him at once, but Alfonso’s body had sunk and 15 or 20 minutes were consumed in a search which finally located it on the reservoir’s bottom near the bank.”

Although almost certainly dead by this time, the two boys were put into a car and rushed to Tucson’s Central Fire Station where firemen tried to revive them with a pulmotor. (Star 6/10/1935)

## Three Lost in Catalinas

**Aug 23, 1935**

Lloyd C. Barr and his two sons, Lloyd 14, and 12-year-old James, had gone hiking from the Palisades Ranger Station up to the fire lookout on Mount Bigelow in the Santa Catalina Mountains. In returning to their cabin in Soldier Camp Friday afternoon, they lost some groceries from “the running board of their car,” somewhere along the way. In retracing their path, the Tucson dairyman and his boys walked back down the newly-constructed dirt road to where they had parked. Assistant Forest Supervisor, Gilbert Sykes, said, “ ‘We saw them pass the ranger station about 1:30 pm and that was the last anybody saw of them...’ ” Sykes, in later retelling how the three Barrs got lost, said,

“ ‘The party left the trail on what they thought was a short-cut to their cabin, became completely lost, and wandered down into Palisade Canyon, where they attempted unsuccessfully to build a fire Friday night. They had been rained on, a few paper matches which Barr had in his pocket were damp, and they never got a blaze started. Palisade canyon is one of the uppermost of the Santa Catalina mountain fastness. It is eight to ten miles long and runs into Pine Canyon, which in turn empties into Sabino Canyon.’ ”

The next morning, “ ‘they kept climbing downward... reaching the Sabino Canyon Basin that night. They had an orange apiece when they started out, but no other food during the three and

a half days. Fortunately, it was the rainy season and there was plenty of water.’ ” Along the way, Mr. Barr left a note in a conspicuous place to any would-be searchers who might find it, detailing they were continuing to drop down with the hopes they could find a trail and ultimately walk out. This note was found and read by Gilbert Sykes.

For two days, “they wandered back and forth in the basin, traversing an area of rough terrain about four miles long and two [miles] broad. Under the strain of the ordeal, Barr had become confused and said that he thought the lights of Tucson, which he saw Saturday and Sunday nights, were those of Summerhaven, high in the mountains.’ ” At this point there were now over fifty searchers, including forest officials, deputies, ranchers and cowboys, “members of the federal prison camp,” and thirty men from the nearby Civilian Conservation Corps camp, hunting for Barr and his sons. Then, in an emergency meeting that Sunday night, C. E. Goyette, the Pima County Welfare Administrator, re-directed 25 local Yaqui Indians who were to begin work on the new road up Mount Lemmon the next day to instead, get involved in this search.

At dusk on the fourth night several CCC boys, along with Forest Ranger Gilbert Sykes, spotted Barr and his two sons in the Sabino Canyon basin. The trio was unhurt but so weak they had to spend the night with their finders before being brought out on Tuesday morning. (Star 8/26/1935, 8/27/1935, 8/28/1935)

## Five Die in Flash Flood

**Aug 28, 1935**

On Thursday morning, Tucson woke up to these extra-large, front-page headlines: “4 DROWN AS FLOOD HITS BUS.” For the next three days, both the morning and evening newspapers were filled with story after story about this tragedy. Each article related heartbreak and heroism.

With 26 passengers and a driver and porter, the large transcontinental Golden Eagle bus was westbound, going from El Paso to Lordsburg and on to California through Tucson, following where Interstate-10 is today. In 1935, however, the southern paved road went from Road Forks, New Mexico, down to Douglas, through Bisbee, back up to Tombstone and then to Benson. The northern unpaved road went through Road Forks to Willcox and continued straight on to Benson. It was becoming increasingly more popular although still dirt with washboard, sand traps and potholes. Called the Sunset Highway, it was not yet even part of the Arizona State Highway System. In fact, there was so much contention from many in Southern Arizona about upgrading and promoting this northern road, an acrimonious political movement sprang up to separate Cochise County into two counties, north and south.

Lee Gilmore, the bus driver with 11 years of experience, was three hours late, largely due to the two inches of rain that had deluged the area that evening. To be safe, he had previously stopped at three dips in the road, getting out of the bus and then scouting them to insure it was prudent to cross. He was now cautiously stopped “100 yards” from the next low spot of concern, the Southern Pacific Railroad underpass, just over three miles east of the small community of Dagoon. Gilmore was patiently waiting for the water to recede, although it was now beginning to flow down the road, hubcap deep.

“Rain beat down on the desert and the blackness was rent by shafts of lightning. Gilmore calmed his passengers, men, women, and children, and told them to sit tight.” They waited for 15 minutes, and passenger Jacob Chernin later recounted what then took place:

“ ‘...and the rain beat harder and harder. Then we heard an awful roar, as loud as Niagara Falls. We could just see it when it hit us—a great wall of water which hit us from behind. You couldn’t hear. The women and children were screaming. The water seemed as high as the roof of the bus. It lifted the back end up and turned the bus over on its left side. The huge wall of water pushed us to the left ditch, but a telephone pole saved us all from drowning. I looked at my watch and it was 10:20 in the night.’ ”

All became very black as the bus was being pushed and floated down the road, Gilmore yelled as loudly as he could to not open the windows yet, “ ‘This is what saved us.’ ” Quickly swamped, the bus, full of people and water, was chaotic, the doors were jammed shut. Some passengers still underwater, were pulled up and saved by seatmates. Gilmore and the “Negro porter,” Gilman Roberts, were able to crawl through a window and, along with several other men, break out windows. They got almost everyone out and safely onto the side of the water-filled bus. Then a second strong surge hit the vehicle and threw an injured man on top into the swirling brown darkness. He luckily managed to scramble to shore two miles downstream.

Three hours later, a train inspecting for track damage crossed over the 25-foot-high underpass and spotted the partially submerged bus lying below. Rescuers came from Willcox, 13 miles away, which in those days was so small and remote it only had one telephone. Ranchers, cowboys, and townspeople responded first, with Cochise County deputies and a couple of highway patrolmen from Tucson and Bisbee, following.

A 63-year-old man from Chicago died of a heart attack before he could get out of the bus. Two sisters from Tucson, one 11 years old, drowned inside it. The body of a fourth person was found three miles downstream by men on horseback the next day. And after an involved search, a 28-year-old man from Dallas was discovered by a highway patrolman three days later, five miles downstream of the wreck.

A Coroner’s Inquest was held the day after the accident, even before the last victim was found. It ruled, “death by drowning,” although it was later determined one man had died from a heart attack. Gilmore was immediately absolved of any wrong doing, although he and the bus company were sued for negligence several months later. So heroic did survivors view the actions of both Gilmore and Roberts, one highway patrolman suggested those two get medals. (Citizen 8/29/1935, 8/31/1935; Star 8/30/1935, 8/31/1935)

## 4-Year-Old Freezes

**Jan 15, 1936**

Roy Alder Rogers was found frozen to death two miles from his grandfather’s home, on his Fourth Birthday. The three-day search for the lad was on the very isolated ranch of S. L. McDonald, in the foothills of the Guadalupe Mountains, 35 miles east of Douglas. “The disappearance of the child...called into action 100 soldiers from Fort Huachuca, CCC [Civilian Conservation Corps] boys from a camp at Animas, N.M., Boy Scouts, a detachment of Apache Indian scouts from Fort Huachuca, three army aviators from March Field, Calif. and highway employees, peace officers and hundreds of civilians.”

The two state highway employees first spotted the boy’s discarded little boot, then saw some tracks indicating he had walked back and forth on the hillside as if lost and did not know where to go, and then soon, saw Roy’s tiny body. “In exactly the position he would have occupied had he lain down to rest and fallen asleep...” An agreement had been made midway into the search that “when the body was found three fires would be lighted.” As the aviators returned from refueling

their “three speedy pursuit planes” in Douglas, they “saw the three fires and, knowing the boy or his body had been found, returned. . . to Douglas, they sent out the first news. . . by radio telephone to the international airport there.”

Searchers revealed that “numerous times the tot’s voice had been heard crying in the night, only to be drowned out in a chorus of yip-yii-yiee calls of coyotes, coming from all directions. Attempts to follow the voice were repeatedly prevented by the coyote mimics, it was said, and the tot’s habit of refusing to respond to calls combined to prevent a rescue.” Several days after the search ended, the Douglas Arizona Chamber of Commerce paid the expenses of the three Army aviators from California. (Star 1/18/1936, 1/19/1936, 1/22/1936, 1/24/1936; Citizen 1/21/1936)

## Four Die in Galiuros

### Mar 25, 1936

The four business men from Phoenix were in Douglas for the installation of a new chapter of the Junior Chamber of Commerce. But why an experienced pilot like Paul Odneal, with ten years’ flying time, made the fatal mistakes that he did, was never determined. The 30-year-old owner of Copper Cloud Airways, had originally elected to fly the little, four-place “Cessna cabin plane,” back from Douglas to Phoenix by way of Tucson. The weather was iffy at best, with low-hanging clouds and rain and snow flurries throughout the region. It was almost midnight and the aircraft’s instruments were not suitable for night flying. The 150-horsepower craft was only marginally capable of carrying that much weight over the 7,700-foot-high Galiuro Mountains, with Odneal going over thirty miles directly out of his way.

When Odneal had not put down in Tucson to get fuel as planned, authorities became anxious. They knew that he and his three passengers had likely either been forced to land somewhere in the rugged, mountainous area, or even much worse, had crashed. With daylight came a search and a dozen planes from Tucson and Phoenix took to the air, intent on combing the standard flight path between Douglas and Tucson. The searchers worried, however, that with three hours of fuel onboard, Paul Odneal could be almost anywhere in Southern Arizona.

No trace was found that first day and then, a Civilian Conservation Corpsman near Naco, reported a small plane had passed over in the night, part of the search shifted to Mexico. “The Mexican consul here [Douglas] announced the commanding general in Sonora has ordered all troops into the field to hunt for the plane and has instructed Army planes in Hermosillo to join them. The Mexican soldiers and aviators are scheduled to take up their search at dawn.”

Additionally, nine Army planes from March Air Field in Riverside, California, were dispatched to Tucson to join in the effort. Officers with the Arizona Highway Patrol were readying to coordinate a ground search from Benson but Pima County Sheriff John Belton and Tucson Police Chief Christopher A. Wollard, decided not to let their men join in since they recognized searching the demanding, ill-defined area on the ground was not reasonable.

Friday morning, March 27, Tom Rhodes, a young cowboy from Oracle who knew nothing of the missing plane, accidentally stumbled on ragged pieces of fresh wreckage while herding a bunch of steers. Looking up on the steep mountainside, he spotted the “sprawling, crimson ruin scattered down the 200-yard slope of a canyon at an altitude of 5,000 feet in the Galiuro mountains, [with] the remnants of the missing red Cessna plane and its four passengers. . . .” Investigating further, he saw the gruesome scattering of human remains. Rhodes then spent the next five hours riding to Oracle to notify authorities.

It took several more hours for the awkward, hastily organized procession of low-slung cars from Oracle, Tucson and Phoenix, to bounce and scrape their way over faint wood cutter trails and up narrow, rocky arroyos to get within two miles of the wreck. There was the Pima County Sheriff and his deputies, the Tucson Police Chief and several of his officers, the Tucson City Manager, highway patrolmen, newspaper reporters from Tucson and Phoenix, several airmen who had just been searching from overhead, members of the Phoenix Junior Chamber of Commerce, a Justice of the Peace, a Coroner, and miscellaneous others all now scrambling up to the crash site. Coroner Jamieson impaneled an impromptu jury, which delivered a quick ruling of “accidental death by plane crash.” The next grisly task was to gather and identify the bodies. This could not be completed that day, however, so some men spent that night at the scene, with the four victims finally being packed out by horseback not long after daybreak.

The plane had hit a nearly vertical cliff and the four men had little warning. It was surmised by the many who were able to get to the scene, that Paul Odneal had been taking an unplanned shortcut back to Phoenix and, confused by weather and darkness, ended up flying into a deep box canyon and could not get out. (Star 3/27/1936, 3/28/1936, 3/29/1936)

### Oscar Declared a Hero

**May 17, 1936**

Mrs. R. J. Morrissey wandered away from a Sunday afternoon picnic in upper Sabino Canyon and, several hours later, was still missing. This was reported to both the Forest Service work camp in Sabino Canyon and the sheriff’s department, and an all-night search began. By daylight, the woman, whose age was not given, had not been found.

Deputies and forest workers were going out to look for the woman again that morning, accompanied by Oscar. Oscar was a “little pooch” belonging to the whole work camp. “As if knowing what it was all about, the little dog joined up with the searching party. . . and, shortly after seven o’clock [a.m.], located Mrs. Morrissey, exhausted and near prostration from fright, at no great distance from the camp. She was rushed to Southern Methodist hospital by the Sheriff’s Deputies and Oscar got a double portion of breakfast for his good work.” (Star 5/19/1936)

### “1000 Searching Mt. Graham”

**Jul 5, 1936**

Front-page headlines of the Tuesday, July 7, 1936, *The Arizona Daily Star*, read, “1000 Searching Mt. Graham For Safford Boy Lost Since Saturday.” He went missing on Sunday, not Saturday though and one-thousand searchers seems a lot. Maybe journalistic hyperbole, maybe not. No doubt, however, there were a great many people involved in looking for 5-year-old Gordon Jensen, missing on the steep, heavily-wooded mountainside of 10,724-foot-high Mount Graham. The 1930s, in particular, seems to be an era of a wide, community-based, “help-your-neighbor” culture of coming together on search and rescue efforts; in this case, for a barefoot little boy from a Safford, Arizona ranching family. Seemingly, people turned out in droves then to help with children, women, and the elderly in these circumstances.

Gordon was found safe and unharmed some five miles away from the picnic ground located at the 9,000-foot level where his family had been spending a quiet Sunday, fishing. But in the short, two days he was gone, it was incredible how much energy was generated and resources involved in



looking for him. When Graham County Sheriff Hugh Talley was notified that Sunday afternoon, he wasted no time in setting things in motion. Here's a recap.

With ready assistance of the local Boy Scout Council, Talley quickly made their nearby summer camp into search headquarters. He assigned senior deputies to key leadership roles, and almost immediately, enlisted the aid of the Crook National Forest Supervisor and his “head ranger,” who in turn, had numerous men working on projects close-by, made available. There were three-hundred local CCC boys with leaders already on Mount Graham, as well as an additional one-hundred more being rushed down from Coolidge Dam, three hours away. Additionally, “five-hundred ordinary citizens from the Safford district reportedly joined them.”

“Talley called out all his deputies, made Special Deputies [sic] of Safford citizens, and... issued bulletin appeals posted throughout the town, asking all available men and women to take up the search.” Bloodhounds from the State Prison in Florence were brought in twice, on the first day clothing as scent items from Gordon could not be located. That very first night, Talley tried contacting Arizona Governor, Benjamin Baker Moeur, in an effort to have Safford's Company G of the Arizona National Guard, deployed. He did not talk with him at first but then he soon did and the Governor ordered the troops out. “Residents of Turkey Flat... were assisting in caring for those who were aiding in the search. More than 600 civilians worked until late tonight, and expected to continue tomorrow, unless young Jensen is found.”

“All afternoon CCC trucks hauled volunteers and food and lanterns to the Shannon Flats area [and that night] lights dotted the sides of the pine-covered canyon walls, over a wide area, estimated at more than five-square miles. Talley warned the volunteers to work together in twos and threes and where possible, to work so that the individuals could see the entire distance between searchers, so as to cover the area thoroughly.”

Somehow, it all worked; the efforts of maybe one-thousand men and women, and probably some younger people like Boy Scouts, were successful. “Reports to Sheriff Hugh Talley said the child apparently had suffered little from the two days and nights of wandering through the heavy underbrush of the rugged mountain slopes, barefooted and lightly clad.” (Arizona Republic 7/6/1936, 7/9/1936; Star 7/7/1936; Citizen 7/7/1936)

### 3,000 Searchers

**Mar 24, 1937**

A Boy Scout is Trustworthy. That is the first of the twelve-part Scout Law. “A Scout's honor is to be trusted. If he were to violate his honor by telling a lie...”

Robert M. Miller was from Tucson but two months before had been assigned to Safford as the Boy Scout Executive, responsible for all scout activities in Graham, Greenlee, and Gila counties. The 23-year-old had just concluded an intense, five-day course in scoutmaster-ship at Thatcher's Gila Junior College. Wednesday, March 24, Miller was to meet his brother George, also a Scout Executive, in Globe, but did not show up. His car was found abandoned the next day in Duncan, forty miles east of Safford and in the opposite direction from Globe. The keys were in it, the radio playing, the tank had fuel, and there was no sign of a struggle.

When he went missing, Robert was believed carrying a sizeable sum of money due to this recent scoutmaster training he conducted and so Graham County Sheriff Ernest Kempton thought it likely Miller “met with foul play at the hands of a hitch-hiker or robber.” On the Sunday before, a convicted murderer had escaped from the Arizona State Penitentiary in Florence, last seen heading

toward Eastern Arizona, not far from where Miller was thought to be. Kempton quickly had a posse of fifty volunteers searching highway roadsides in and out of Duncan, in the event Miller had been robbed and tossed aside. To help with this coverage, the Arizona Highway Patrol joined in the effort.

Friday, the national office of the Boy Scouts of America in New York City posted a \$500 reward [\$9,600 in 2022] for finding Miller, “‘dead or alive,’ and fresh clues spurred hundreds of searchers. . . as the hunt for the missing man extended into New Mexico and west Texas. At the end of the third day of searching. . . sheriffs of two counties and federal department of justice agents expressed the belief the Scout official was dead.” As often happens, there were numerous false starts and mis-leads, including one requiring a deputy sheriff to check every service station between Safford and El Paso, looking for a specific make vehicle with a California license plate.

“Searchers for the missing Scout leader included scores of Scouts who received their training from him, sheriff’s deputies, state highway patrolmen, forest and soil conservation service workers, CCC enrollees and private citizens. . . The desert and hills surrounding scores of miles of highway on each side of Safford have been scoured by searchers. . . Water will be drained from irrigation canals in the Gila valley. . . on the possibility his body might have been thrown into the water. . . Mayor. . . of Globe used a public address system to broadcast through the streets of that city an appeal to men to join the search.”

On Saturday, scouts from Graham, Greenlee, and Maricopa counties met in Thatcher to organize for a search under the guidance of the Superior Court Judge of Globe. That day it was said, “Leaders of perhaps the greatest manhunt organized in Arizona in recent years announced [they] had covered ‘every foot of ground’ in an area 35 miles long and 2 1/2 miles wide without finding a single clue. . . .” Since the sheriff believed the area had been searched with a “‘fine tooth comb,’ ” the ever-escalating effort shifted eastward of Duncan. A group of seventy men scoured this area for ten miles but came away with nothing.

“Four hundred Boy Scouts inspected several miles of irrigation canals in the Safford valley that were drained of their water. . . but nothing found. More than 1,300 Boy Scouts and their Scoutmasters joined in the search, and there were perhaps 1,000 others in the various searching parties scattered throughout southwestern [sic: southeastern] Arizona and western New Mexico.”

A second escaped convict became linked with the hunt for Miller, fears by law enforcement officials influenced where and how to look. It ended up, however, neither of these fleeing felons ever played a direct role in this incident. All through this ordeal, Miller’s two brothers, including one coming in from Los Angeles, believed their younger brother “was still alive although possibly affected by a stroke.” A unit of the Arizona National Guard arrived and began searching “vacant houses and other possible places where a body might be hidden. . . .”

Searchers floated the Gila River and scouts put nets across it, hoping to catch a body. Students from Gila Junior College joined in. Business almost came to a standstill in Safford. A tent city of Boy Scouts sprang up in the city park. Nearing the end of the effort, a newspaper reported—perhaps journalistic hyperbole—3,000 searchers were involved. And throughout, all those who knew the man steadfastly insisted he did not disappear voluntarily. But he had.

Robert M. Miller turned himself in at a natural gas pumping station in El Paso on March 31, one week after he vanished. Initially, the 23-year-old said he had been kidnapped and held for ransom and finally released on a nearby lonely road. Under questioning by the local Texas county sheriff, however, he soon broke down and admitted the kidnapping was a hoax. “Miller told the sheriff he



had been in ill health, and his need for rest, he said, had caused him to go away for a spell.” The kidnapping was to cover his embarrassment for disappearing in the first place. That and he just had a fight with a “beautiful girlfriend” the night before he disappeared. Aided by his brothers, he was temporarily placed in a private sanitarium in Los Angeles.

For the next week, there was a serious backlash and huge protest by local “taxpayers” who said they had ignored their own interests and job and family responsibilities to hunt for Miller. The Graham County Attorney claimed his intention to sue Miller for all of the expenses associated with the hoax. But there was never a follow up article in the Tucson or Phoenix newspapers indicating Miller was ever charged with anything or ever sued. His employer in Phoenix, the Boy Scouts of America, was waiting for the final report before a decision on what to do. After a period in the sanitarium, Miller was moved from Safford to Phoenix but remained with the Boy Scouts as an executive. (Citizen 3/25/1937, 4/2/1937; Star 3/27/1937, 3/28/1937, 3/30/1937, 4/1/1937; Phoenix Republic 5/9/1937)

### Three Drownings in Ruby, Arizona

**Apr 11, 1937**

“This saddened mining town [Ruby<sup>1</sup>] prepared today to bury three of its school children. While the bodies of Danuaso Reyes, 13, Manuel Gonzalez, 13, and Ramon Otero, 12, lay side by side in a tiny tent, drowned yesterday afternoon in a storage lake near here, their parents made ready for services late today to be conducted on the playground of the community school.” The kids were buried that Sunday in Arivaca, the nearest cemetery.

Four boys were paddling near the north shore of the lake when their flimsy boat became water-logged, turned over, and sank. “Clinging desperately to each other, the three were drowned before their cries for help could summon workers nearby.” Two mine employees, Fred Gardner and Jesus Peralta, however, heard the screams and reached the lake in time to plunge into the icy water and pull one boy to safety. “Clutching to the bodies of his friends, he was on the verge of drowning when hauled out. Time and time again, Gardner and Peralta dove from a bluff before they could reach the bodies of the three boys. They were near exhaustion when additional help arrived.”

Santa Cruz County Sheriff Harold J. Brown got there shortly before sundown, along with local officers after having walked several miles into the isolated mining town. The Coroner determined that no inquest was necessary into the cause of death for the three boys. (Citizen 4/12/1937; Star 4/13/1937)

### Arizona Highway Patrol Institutes Ambulance Division

**Jul 16, 1937**

Arizona Senate-House Bill 83 created the Arizona Highway Patrol and Governor George W. P. Hunt signed it into law on March 19, 1931. Six years later, July 16, 1937, the Patrol began an “ambulance division.” It consisted of two patrol cars which were rebuilt to provide ambulance capabilities. One would be stationed at remote Jacob Lake, north of the Grand Canyon, near the Utah line, and the other went to Holbrook. They were designed to be convertible, when not in use

<sup>1</sup> Ruby is a well-preserved ghost town in Santa Cruz County 12 miles south of Arivaca. Mining started there in 1877, a Post Office opened in 1912, and then it was named Ruby after the Postmaster’s wife. At the time of this tragedy, Ruby was the largest producer of lead and zinc in Arizona. And at its height in the 1930s, its population was about 1,200; not long after the mine closed in 1940, Ruby was largely abandoned.

as an ambulance, it would revert to patrol purposes. “ ‘They can be converted into ambulances in one minute,’ Superintendent [Thomas] Rumans said. He stressed the ambulances would not be used ‘to interfere or compete with private ambulance companies. The men who will operate the ambulances will be well trained in first aid,’ he said.” In 1937, there were thirty men in the AHP, and at that time they were subject to the whims of Administration changes in Governors. (Arizona Republic 7/16/1937)

## Drowning in Nogales

**Jul 16, 1937**

After a heavy Monsoon rainstorm hit the area, “a score of volunteers joined with city and county officers in a search” for 10-year-old Ernest Pina of Nogales, Sonora. According to the Police Chief, the parents believed the boy tumbled into the swift-moving flood control canal that went through the sister-towns of Nogales, on both sides of the border. The boy fell into the canal while playing not too far from his home. First reported missing at 6:30 p.m., he was found on a sandbar on the north edge of Nogales, Arizona. (Citizen 7/17/1937)

## Sheriff’s Air Patrol, Flying Squadron, and Aero Squadron

**Sep 1, 1937**

On September 1, Pima County swore in the first six volunteers for its “Air Patrol;” Sheriff Ed F. Echols was the official to originally champion its formation and there would be at least two more iterations of this unit in the next two decades. It was a “group of local licensed pilots who will offer their services without charge to the Pima County Sheriff, the police, the border patrol, the state prison and state highway patrol, for all emergency work. . . Of particular value in the search for lost or distressed persons in desert or mountains, the patrol also stands ready for emergency calls in connection with the hunt for wanted persons.”

This inaugural Air Patrol was limited to ten members and Allen Stephens was their leader. Two weeks after being sworn in, its first assignment on September 16, was to “Seek Death Truck,” a hit-and-run vehicle which killed a 14-year-old boy bicycling on the Nogales Highway, two nights before. Officials believed it stolen and because of damage, may be abandoned and possibly spotted from the air. They never found this truck but that morning they did find a stripped car, a few miles away. The following month, Sheriff Echols volunteered his Air Patrol to the sheriff of Maricopa County to look for a lost hunter, but she walked in to civilization before they could fly up to Phoenix. Almost ten years later, July 7, 1948, the Sheriff of Maricopa County announced the formation of his own Air Posse.

The Pima County Sheriff’s Air Patrol was used for several high-profile manhunts and a few searches but it was suspended when the United States entered into World War II. From December 1941 on, the Civil Air Patrol (CAP) performed much of the aerial search and rescue for the region with the county’s Air Patrol remaining dormant for most of the coming decade. See “Civil Air Patrol and Southern Arizona SAR,” December 1, 1941, on page 90. In February 1946, there was one reference in *The Arizona Daily Star*, that the Sheriff’s Air Posse would “become active again,” but it did not at that time. However, on June 15, 1950, the Air Patrol was re-constituted, with a new name.

That was the date when Sheriff Jerome P. Martin, announced the creation of a “sheriff’s flying squadron,” to be used in “rescue work and desert manhunts.” It would be limited to thirty members,

would serve without pay, and be subject to 24-hour call. “Members must be 21 years of age or over and have at least 150 hours of flying time to their credit... David Kim, manager of the Mission Flying School, has been named commander of the new unit. Members would be equipped with tan uniforms with a special insignia and be given training in various phases of rescue work. Later in 1950, however, Sheriff Martin lost his re-election and left office at the end of the year. Frank A. Eyman took his place, having run on a “clean-up” campaign; that March, former Sheriff Martin was the subject of a Grand Jury investigation.

Sheriff Eyman met with the Aero Squadron January 14, 1951, “and they unanimously agreed to offer their services... to the civil defense program.” On April 3, they met with Eyman again, this time to discuss disbanding the squadron after a dispute about the deputizing of its members. The group seems to have faded away at that point. On July 11, 1951, Sheriff Eyman was named Commander of the newly created Tucson Cadet Program of the Civil Air Patrol, so Eyman may now have been relying heavily on the CAP to help on any SAR incidents.

On April 20, 1958, an Aero Squadron in the Pima County Sheriff James W. Clark administration, was activated again, for a third time, with 12 local businessmen and Harold Shoemaker serving as its Commander.

“...Deputy Bradd Hultquist, chief pilot for the Sheriff’s Department [sic]... planes... range from light \$7,000 craft through a \$100,000 twin-engine Lockheed... minimum requirement for membership in the squadron is 300 hours solo air time... [it] receives no financial support from the sheriff’s office. Members must buy their own equipment and fuel... pay dues and initiation fees... [used] for search-and-rescue missions... members are commissioned Auxiliary Deputies [sic]...” (Star 8/28/1937, 9/16/1937, 2/26/1946, 7/8/1948, 7/9/1948, 6/16/1950, 4/1/1951; Citizen 3/1/1951, 7/11/1951, 4/25/1958)

## Killed Her Cat, Then Herself

**Dec 14, 1937**

Recently widowed Flossie Oliver, a 41-year-old Tucsonan, was a house guest on a friend’s ranch in the Black Mountains, near San Xavier Mission, south of Tucson. Mrs. Oliver “left the ranch about 2 p.m. Tuesday to hunt rabbits... She carried a .410-gauge shotgun.” Her friend raised the alarm when Oliver had been gone for twenty hours. That afternoon, the Undersheriff, three Deputies, and two Indians tracked her footprints for four hours for nearly a mile until it got dark and they lost the trail. At dawn, searchers continued following her footprints through the thick brush. Before long, “a posse of cowboys and sheriff’s officers found the cat Bluey, tied to a mesquite bush, its head shot off. Mrs. Oliver, sprawled on the ground, a fatal, self-inflicted shotgun wound in her mouth.” She had left three suicide notes in her coat which she had thrown over her dead cat. They said she was despondent over her husband’s death earlier that year and also indicating she did not want her pet to be a burden to her friend. (Star 12/16/1937; Citizen 12/16/1937)

## Forest Service Installs Two-Way Radios

**Apr 26, 1938**

On August 22, 1937, officials with the US Forest Service’s Tucson office tested their new two-way radios, intended principally for wildland fire emergencies, but available for other serious incidents, as well. They set up a large, “Model T Forest Service phone” at the Prison Camp in the Santa

Catalina Mountains and transmitted and also received test messages with a Model T as well as a smaller, Model S transmitter-receiver, both placed in Madera Canyon in the Santa Rita Mountains. There was also a Model S radio located in Tucson to determine if Forest Service headquarters could be connected, as well. It could.

Then, eight months later, April 26, 1938, one of these “Model T radio phones” was installed at the fire lookout on Mount Bigelow (8,552 feet) in the Santa Catalina Mountains and tested with the antenna on the Tucson Post Office Building, where the Forest Service headquarters were located. Two days later, an additional Model T radio phone was carried to the top of Mount Wrightson (9,456 feet) in the Santa Rita Mountains, and mounted in the lookout there. Now, fire guards in the Catalinas and Santa Ritas, could talk between themselves, an airline distance of 37 miles, as well as with their main office in downtown Tucson. In May 1939, this two-way radio system was further expanded to include similar installations at the Canelo Ranger Station in the Huachuca Mountains, the lookout on Fly Peak in the Chiricahuas, and the one in the Animas Mountains in the “Boothel” of New Mexico. The greatest distance successfully covered for this system was approximately 130 miles. (Citizen 8/23/1937; Star 4/29/1938, 5/2/1939)

### Woman Dies at Sabino Canyon “Dam Site”

**Jul 11, 1938**

Monday afternoon, two laborers working for the US Forest Service watched Mrs. Lucille Randall walk by them just a short distance above where the road ends in Sabino Canyon. She was wearing a light blue dress, sneakers and was carrying a towel and her car keys. Shortly after noon the next day, her car was still there and the transient camp office in Sabino notified the sheriff. A short time later, Mr. Randall reported to the Sheriff’s Department that his 35-year-old wife had left at 2 p.m. to visit friends, and had not come home afterwards. It had rained in Sabino Canyon the evening she went walking.

That Tuesday, “About 50 men participated in the search that began about 3 p.m. Most of them transient camp and CCC enrollees provided by the Coronado national forest.” They hunted the area immediately above the road for six hours without finding a trace of the woman and the search was ended due to darkness. Undersheriff John C. Devine issued a call for volunteers for the next day, saying the search would begin at 9 a.m. “He requested that all persons willing to assist in the hunt report at the transient camp in the canyon before that time equipped with canteens and lunches. . . warned that the rough country will be hard going and advised that only persons of considerable stamina offer their services.” Nearly forty men volunteered for Wednesday’s search.

Several Forest Service men and local cowboys rode horseback on the trails in Sabino Canyon, including riding down from the Palisades Ranger Station. Others on foot had spread throughout the canyon, looking in likely spots. Wednesday evening, Devine was convinced the area looked in that day, aided by an airplane scanning from above, had been thoroughly examined and no clues were found. But “Devine said that two pools in which they could not see to the bottom would be dragged and that the forest service planned to drain lower Sabino dam lake. . .” Mr. Randall looked and could not find his wife’s bathing suit, suggesting she may have had it on under her dress.

By the end of the day on Thursday, the “Canyon pools and the small lake behind the lower Sabino dam were dragged and drained but with no success.” The exception in their search was the big pool a couple of miles beyond the end of the road where the canyon narrows to thirty feet. Known as the Dam Site, around 1910 a large irrigation reservoir was proposed for there. See “Deputy Falls 500 Feet in Sabino Canyon,” August 9, 1948, on page 117. It was to be looked at on

Friday. But the search on land was also expanded. Mr. Randall said his wife visited Sabino Canyon “almost weekly for some time and often went out there for recreation.”

The four-day-long search for Lucille Randall came to an end Friday morning when her body was found floating in this “Dam Site” pool. Two men were enroute there with grappling hooks when a third man, hired by Mr. Randall, got there a little earlier and upon looking down, spotted her from higher up on a ledge. She was in a swimming suit and due to decomposition, it was impossible to determine if she had fallen on the rocks or not. “Searchers were scattered throughout the canyon when a plane flew over conveying a previously arranged signal that Mrs. Randall had been found.” (Star 7/13/1938, 7/14/1938, 7/15/1938, 7/16/1938)

## Little Girls Die

**Jul 30, 1938**

Along with three siblings and their parents, Cupid Hall, 14, and 8-year-old Betty Faye Hall, were camping in Carr Canyon on the east slope of the Huachuca Mountains. The family of seven had traveled from Lowell near Bisbee, for this summer weekend adventure. The two girls were on the mountains’ Reef Road when little Faye wandered,

“off a short distance from the parents and was standing on the edge of the precipice...she swayed and began tottering. Her older sister who was nearby at the time, attempted to reach out and haul her back to safety but the weight of the younger child was believed to have pulled both off the cliff. The parents were attracted by their screams and rushed to the scene to discover the tragedy.”

The two had fallen from a three-hundred-foot-high cliff. “A party was organized at a guest ranch in the vicinity operated by Capt. John Healy, and led by Healy, ascended the rugged face of the mountain and retrieved the bodies.” Funeral services were held three days later in Bisbee with 12 young girl friends of Cupid and Betty Faye acting as bearers. (Star 7/31/1938; Citizen 8/2/1938)

## 1,000 Search for 5-Year-Old in Rucker Canyon

**Nov 11, 1938**

When Jerry Hays was last seen by his mother, he was playing with other children within one-hundred yards of their camp in Rucker Canyon, in the southern end of the Chiricahua Mountains. The 5-year-old lived with his parents and three siblings in Bisbee; his father, a miner, was out deer hunting nearby. Along with another woman in the group, Mrs. Hays had gone for water at 9:30 that Friday morning. When they returned about noon, Jerry was missing and a search was immediately started—it froze that first night. By the end of the second day, “400 men scoured the rugged and hilly recesses of north Rucker canyon...”

Referring to the search efforts of that Sunday, *The Arizona Daily Star* said, “...a posse of more than 650 CCC enrollees, American Legionnaires and civilians concluded...an unsuccessful search...” The US Forest Service in Tucson loaned two portable radio sets to assist. One placed at the Rucker Canyon CCC camp and the other was used by the searching party. Two bloodhounds from the State Prison at Florence were brought in. When the Douglas Boy Scout Council offered assistance, Cochise County Sheriff I. V. Pruitt believed the search party was large enough already. However, Pruitt did consult with Fort Huachuca on possible use of troops. This was to give relief to the 350 CCC men, “many of whom have worked 36-hour stretches.”

The fort's commander, though, wanted "Bathtub Basin<sup>2</sup>" drained before he would authorize his troops to participate. This was a fifty-foot by ninety-foot by eight-foot-deep cattle watering hole possibly built by the CCC in Rucker Canyon, one-mile from the Hays' camp. Some searchers thought the tot may have fallen in. Monday, Captain H. H. Barrick arrived with 222 enlisted soldiers and six officers of the 25<sup>th</sup> Infantry out of Fort Huachuca. And Sheriff Pruitt assigned "a force of men to the 'bathtub'...the task of draining the basin...Inadequate equipment made the job of drainage slow, however, and Pruitt said he would dynamite the dam tomorrow if the boy was not found by then." Searchers reportedly covered a 25-mile area that Monday, deployed at twenty-foot intervals. They did not dynamite the rock dam.

Tuesday, Jerry's tiny footprints were confirmed two miles from where he disappeared. "It was the first tangible clue found since the search in which 800 men are engaged...and came shortly after drainage of a reservoir exploded a theory he had fallen into the tank and drowned. Pruitt said the tracks indicated the lad had wandered some distance from his parents' hunting camp, and ordered the search extended throughout the entire Rucker Canyon." There were fears he had been snatched by either a mountain lion or a bear, but these were soon dispelled.

The search for 5-year-old Jerry Hays went on for another three days, still with an estimated eight-hundred people involved in the massive effort. On the eighth day of hunting for the boy, his little body was found three miles from where he vanished. Two Forest Service employees discovered him and notified the rest of the searchers by firing three shots. Jerry had pulled off his shoes and socks and discarded his jacket, none of which were found. "The lost boy had climbed a steep, rock-studded and brush-covered hillside to reach the place where he collapsed." The concluding news article said that "Nearly 1,000 men engaged in the weeklong search for the boy." (Star 11/13/1938, 11/14/1938, 11/15/1938, 11/16/1938, 11/17/1938, 7/16/1995; Citizen 11/19/1938)

## Hike to "The Window" Proves Fatal

**Feb 4, 1939**

"The Window," is a popular destination for hikers in the Santa Catalina Mountains, six miles one way. "Window Rock," as it is also known, is a 15-foot-high by 25-foot-wide opening in a granite rock fin at the upper end of Ventana [window in Spanish] Canyon. Gaining over four thousand feet in elevation, it is a strenuous, but highly rewarding trip. With certain conditions, The Window can be seen from parts of Tucson.

Two University of Arizona students, Ernest A. Taft, Jr., of Globe, age unknown and 19-year-old William D. Burney from Winslow, began the hike at 11 Saturday morning. They wore cotton Levi's and sweaters and had leather coats and took no supplies. First reports that the two boys had not returned was 24 hours later when the University's Dean of Men, Arthur H. Otis, notified the Sheriff's Department at 11 a.m. And, other than believing they were in the Catalina Mountains, no one could say where they went and which trail, if any, they were using. So, the Sheriff's Department checked trailheads in the lower part of the mountains but could not determine a possibility. And, recent rain and snow wiped out any traces of fresh footprints.

Taft and Burney recognized they could not make their goal that day so turned around and started back down. Unfortunately, however, "They took a different canyon from the one which they had followed while climbing...and ran into a 300-foot drop, forcing them to turn back and find another way out." They retraced their steps but darkness began to fall and with a long way still to

<sup>2</sup> Bathtub Basin would evolve into three-acre Rucker Lake when its rock dam was augmented in 1949 by the Cochise County Protective Association. The lake no longer exists, silting in as a result of the devastating Rattlesnake Fire of July 1994.



go, wisely decided to hole up for the night. They gathered wood and about 7 p.m., built a fire under a ledge which they believed would provide protection. Four hours later it began to snow and two hours after that, “the fire went out and they were unable to find more wood in the darkness.” They remained under the ledge battling winds, as a foot of snow fell around them. In Summerhaven, at the same elevation on Mount Lemmon, it had gone down to well-below freezing.

At daylight, they climbed over a ridge, spending six hours on rocky mountainsides to get into the correct canyon. “Frequently they had to slap themselves to keep warm, and walking through the snow was difficult as they often could not see where they were going.” At 2 p.m., they were out of the worst part of the snow, and Burney began to complain of feeling dizzy. Three hours later they finally stumbled onto the trail and were now among cottonwood trees. Burney said he could go no farther and every time he tried to stand up, he would fall and before long, was not able to get back to his feet. Taft ended up carrying his companion for a mile and a half down the trail; now, by this time, “Burney was talking incoherently.”

Weary himself, Taft knew he had to get help for his friend and so at 11:30 that night, he left Burney and started down the trail. He had cautioned Burney to keep moving to help keep warm. Two hours later Taft was able to reach a guest ranch and a telephone. In short order, three deputies met him and the owner of the guest ranch at the end of Campbell Avenue; Taft guided this team of four, back up the trail. A deputy eventually heard Burney moan and they were able to locate him in the dark. “ ‘His heart was beating a little but very weakly.’ ” This rescue team started back to their vehicle, alternating in carrying the now unconscious man out. An improvised stretcher gave out and “Deputy Louis Figueroa packed the youth for much of the four-mile trek. . . .” They reached the hospital about 3:30 a.m., but William T. Burney never regained consciousness. (Star 2/6/1939, 2/7/1939)

## Trapped in Sabino Canyon

**May 30, 1939**

A Memorial Day outing in Sabino Canyon for J. Celcia (first name and age unavailable) almost ended in disaster. Celcia spent the afternoon climbing on the steep walls of the canyon when at 6 p.m., he “found himself clinging to a ledge, unable to go up or down.” He was trapped on a steep cliff face with a 250-foot drop below him. In order to get better footing, he took his boots off, promptly stepping on a cactus. It took two hours before deputies and workers from a nearby US Forest Service camp, responded. One of the camp workers, Benjamin Ruelas, was able to scale the cliff and reach Celcia. A rope was tied around his waist and he was lowered down to the ground. (Star 5/31/1939)

## Confused Prospector

**Jul 20, 1939**

Cyrus Farwell, an 82-year-old prospector, was the “object of an intensive hunt in which 100 youths from the Rucker Canyon CCC camp, forest service officials, Sheriff I. V. Pruitt and his deputies and scores of neighboring ranchers and others participated, the aged man was sitting on a rock with his shirt and shoes removed when first sighted by a member of the posse.” After being missing for two days, he was found confused within two miles of his cabin in the little Swisshelm Mountains about 15 miles north of Douglas, Arizona. (Star 7/23/1939)

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# CHAPTER 7

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1940–1949

## Drowns Stuck in Quicksand

**Mar 19, 1940**

Along with a friend, Jose Mendoza was hunting at the gravel pit east of Picacho, three miles from Eloy, when one of them shot a mud hen. The 15-year-old Mendoza jumped into the water to get the bird, when probably taken suddenly with a cramp. He was submerged upwards of thirty minutes before he could be pulled out; it was later determined he had been stuck in quicksand. First aid was given and a pulmotor from the Casa Grande Fire Department was rushed to the scene. “But the victim had been under the water so long that life was extinct and the use of the pulmotor proved of no avail.” Immediately afterward, an inquest was convened at the scene and several witnesses testified. “It was determined that the death was purely accidental drowning and there was no need of a Coroner’s Jury [sic].” (Star 3/21/1940; Arizona Republic 3/21/1940)

## Police and Sheriff’s Departments Get Two-Way Radios

**Apr 1940**

Before the Tucson Police Department had two-way radios, they operated under a system of call boxes containing telephones on strategic corner electrical poles where patrolmen reported periodically. In the event an officer was needed, red lights blinked on at certain street intersections, alerting them to contact headquarters.

In April 1940, the Police Department “petitioned the federal communications system for a two-way radio station license. . . .” A twenty-watt, portable emergency radio was soon installed in one of the “scout cars,” mostly as a test, using a repeater of the US Forest Service on Catback Mountain in the Tucson Mountains. Tucson Police Department, call letters “KQEP,” had its main radio station built by Patrolman Oliver White for \$1,000 and was on the same radio frequency as the county stations, 2430 kilocycles. They soon had five cars and a three-wheel motorcycle equipped with two-way radios, as well as “three privately-owned detectives’ cars with one-way sets.”

In February 1941, under the supervision of William Ewing, a technician with the Arizona Highway Patrol, Pima County had two sheriff’s vehicles installed with two-way radios and six cars with just the receivers placed in them. Ewing then had a “large repeater receiver and transmitter” built



atop “A Mountain,” along with a tower on top of the County Court House. “Sheriff Echols’ entire staff has passed the examination of the Federal Communications Commission and been certified as a third-class radio operator.” The sheriff’s radio station, “KQPW,” was operated by two desk sergeants, one for day and one for night. Through radio relays, they were able to talk with Florence, Phoenix, Yuma, Flagstaff, Prescott, Safford, Nogales, and Bisbee, but the latter three stations only had receiving sets and could not directly reply.

One article went on to say, “Another advantage in having radio equipped cars is when the Sheriff’s Deputies are scattered through distant hills or mountains in search of someone who is lost. If and when the lost person is found, the sheriff’s office can immediately call in the deputies or quickly direct the search from the point in which the latest information comes.” (Citizen 4/11/1940; Star 4/27/1940, 7/9/1940, 2/21/1941, 4/4/1941)

## Lost Woman

**Jul 17, 1941**

Mrs. Inocenta Castillo became lost on Thursday after she went with a group of relatives to the hills in the rugged Whetstone Mountains, five miles south of Benson, Arizona. The 68-year-old woman remained in the car while the others went to search for acorns. She was gone when they returned. Before the two-day search ended, there were “Posses of sheriff’s deputies, ranchers, and CCC enrollees... and four officers and 45 soldiers from the 25<sup>th</sup> Infantry at Fort Huachuca.” The search party caught its first break when soldiers found a hole dug into a sandy wash some distance from the dirt road. It was surmised she had made a vain attempt to find water. Nearby were a sack of acorns, a tobacco can, and cigarette papers, all belonging to her. On Saturday morning she “was found by a detachment of soldiers alive, but gasping for water...” (Citizen 7/14/1941)

## Bomber Found After 13 Months

**Nov 12, 1941**

“Searching pilots said the bomber probably would be difficult to spot from the air because it already had been camouflaged for war service.” They were correct. This brand-new, twin-engine DB-7 (DB stood for Douglas Bomber) medium-attack and reconnaissance aircraft was being flown by Army Lieutenant Lawrence A. Barrett, Jr. when it went missing that night in a rainstorm.

Barrett, a recent graduate of the University of Notre Dame and newlywed, was on temporary loan to the recently established Army Air Corps Ferrying Command. He was flying this bomber on its first leg to England and was enroute from Long Beach to Tucson for the night in a group of four similar new aircraft. Soon after they all crossed over into Arizona near Yuma, a second bomber in that quartet also went missing in that same rain storm. This plane was found crashed the next morning near Mohawk, fifty miles east of there and the pilot killed.

The search for Barrett and his craft now became focused around Mohawk, “most of the area is a desert wasteland. The Papago [Tohono O’odham] Indian Reservation sprawls over many hundreds of miles and were Barrett to reach a village it might be several days until news of his safety reached the outside world.” The day after he went missing and now with a break in the storm, 22 US Army planes circled over “several thousand miles of southwestern Arizona...” This included seven planes from Tucson which got permission to cover an area extending 75 miles south of the Mexican border. Pursuit planes from Luke Field near Phoenix and bombers from Davis-Monthan also flew at night, hoping to spot a signal flare.

For the next several days, searchers chased down numerous vague reports which still had to be pursued, all while dodging rain squalls and snowstorms. These included a rumor of fresh aircraft wreckage spotted in the mountains just south of the border in Nogales. Planes and salvage crews looked into this one, but nothing came of it. Searchers became reinvigorated after a retired Colonel of the US Army Medical Corps now living in Tucson, recalled specifics of the first search in Mexico for a missing US airplane and its two-man crew, in 1917. After nine days, they were found alive.<sup>1</sup> This greatly re-energized the searchers for Barrett.

On November 24, 11 days after Barrett went missing, looking for him was reportedly discontinued. “‘We have abandoned our systematic search, and all we can do from now on is follow up in the air and on the ground every clue that might lead to the whereabouts of Lt. Barrett,’ ” announced the public relations director at the Tucson Air Base. However, six days later, “The continued, unrelenting search for Lt. Lawrence A. Barrett, Jr., lost US Army ferry command, will go in central-southern Arizona and in northern Mexico. This was agreed upon here yesterday by officials of the Mexican army, civil officials of Mexico, the US Army Air Force and the Papago Indian tribal council.” Finally, after the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor on December 7, it really did disappear from the news. At least until December 19, 1942.

The wreckage of the bomber with the body of Lieutenant Lawrence A. Barrett, Jr., was discovered by two war department engineers who were surveying. “The pilot’s body had been identified and that Army authorities had notified the pilot’s mother, Mrs. L. C. Barrett of Beverly Hills.” The plane was found east of Yuma and 22 miles south of Wellton. (Citizen 1/31/1917, 11/14/1941, 11/18/1941, 12/21/1942; Star 1/21/1917, 11/22/1941, 11/24/1941, 11/30/1941; Yuma Examiner 12/25/1942)

## Civil Air Patrol and Southern Arizona SAR

### Dec 1, 1941

The Civil Air Patrol (CAP) has a long and distinguished history in this country, including wide-open, mountainous Southern Arizona. Officially, the CAP cites the signing of Administrative Order 9 on December 1, 1941, as its “birthdate.” It does trace its heritage, however, back several years earlier when influential citizens recognized an increasing threat from Axis powers and the real possibility of a war. By December 1, Army Air Corps Major General John F. Curry had been appointed national commander of the CAP, intending it would provide “maximum value for auxiliary service to the defense of the United States.” At the time, one source claimed 90,000 licensed pilots, including 3,000 women, in the United States. A second source would later say, “There are 637 certificated pilots in the state [of Arizona].”

On November 18, 1941, Carl Charles Knier was recommended to Washington’s Office of Civilian Defense to lead Arizona’s civilian aeronautical defense by Arizona Governor Sidney P. Osborn and on December 11, Knier was named Commander for Arizona’s CAP Wing 85. He was manager of Sky Harbor Airport in Phoenix, had flown for Apache Air Lines, and garnered five-thousand hours of flight time. On Christmas Eve Day, nine Vice-Wing Commanders for the state were named

<sup>1</sup> January 10, 1917, a faulty compass, coupled with being low on fuel forced Lieutenant Colonel Harry G. Bishop and Lieutenant W. A. Robertson to land on the deserted beach at the mouth of the Gulf of California, forty miles south of Calexico, California. This began a huge search by land and air by both the United States and Mexico. The two pilots mistakenly thought they were on the shore of California’s inland Salton Sea, which was far to the north. On day eight, they were found alive but barely, Bishop had to be carried by hand in a stretcher 15 miles. The plane was abandoned but the US Navy Cruiser New Orleans was coincidentally in Guaymas, Mexico and was ordered to try and dismantle the plane and get it back into this country. The author could not confirm if this was done or not.

and for Southern Arizona they included “Jack Foster, Safford-Willcox-San Simon-Bowie-Clifton; William M. Wharton, Tucson and vicinity; and Charles Mayse, Douglas.” Knier and the others were managing the Civil Air Patrol, as well as having “day jobs.” And, by that date, national recruitment for pilots and ground crews to join the CAP, had begun. In January, one CAP squadron had already formed in Phoenix, composed of the four flying clubs there.

William Wharton orchestrated an organizational meeting forming a Tucson Squadron on January 13, 1942. He flew for Gilpin Airlines and the meeting was at Gilpin Airport; that night, he went from Vice-Wing Commander to Squadron Commander. During the 1940s and 1950s, Squadrons and Flights (next level down) of the Civil Air Patrol came and went in Southern Arizona; each consisted of one to several private planes. It all depended on who volunteered their time and aircraft; on actual missions, the Federal Government would pay for fuel, per diem, and incidentals. For Southern Arizona, planes with the CAP were in Ajo, Benson, Bowie, Casa Grande, Clifton, Douglas, Florence, Gila Bend, Globe, Miami, Nogales, Safford, San Simon, Sells, Sierra Vista, Tucson, Willcox, and Yuma, at varying times down through the years.

For those pilots in Southern Arizona, the CAP was tasked over time with forest fire patrol, towing targets for anti-aircraft training, monitoring the Mexican border, courier missions, and search and rescue. The “first official assignment” for the Southern Arizona Civil Air Patrol reportedly finally came in September 1942. See “First Southern Arizona CAP Assignment,” December 11, 1942, on page 94 .

As highlighted by this SAR effort, a key operational assignment for the Tucson Squadron and other CAP units in Southern Arizona was search and rescue. In late 1943, the local groups were officially incorporated into the Second Air Force Search and Rescue Mission.

“In fourteen months, second air force search and rescue already has to its credit rescues of 114 men and 78 searches conducted. Set up and coordinated so closely that 90,000 square miles of area can have initial coverage in one day...on call day or night...are 1,100 civil air patrol planes...Each key station [Davis-Monthan] has a ‘jumping doctor’ who can bail out with a complete field hospital to administer necessary medical aid, even to performing major surgery.”

At its establishment, leaders in the CAP made no provision for the participation of youth, so ten months later, October 1, 1942, the organization created the Cadet Program for both boys and girls, ages 15 to 18. With a war taking place, it imparted skills and helped prepare these young people for possible military and other wartime service. Additionally, it had three training phases: pre-flight, cadet, and flight proficiency for senior members. Not only was the CAP addressing its war-time responsibilities, but was also looking forward to postwar activities and expansion. In Tucson, they met twice a week at Tucson High School until April 21, 1945, when provided two buildings at West Campus near Davis-Monthan and then finally, moving onto the Army Air Base in January 1946.

One of the more routine assignments for the “approximately 100 active members” of the Arizona CAP, was carrying messages, materials, and personnel. On December 15, 1942,

“...they inaugurated service over courier routes...into New Mexico and Nevada with co-operation with the Army’s second air force. Frank Beer, Phoenix...and Roy Wilson, Globe cattle rancher, were designated to make the first flight from Tucson to Las Vegas, Nev. Meanwhile, Ross Overson, St. Johns, received the first assignment to fly from Tucson to Columbus, N. M., to meet a CAP courier from El Paso enroute to Alamogordo, N. M.”

Just over two months later, February 20, 1943, Carl Knier resigned as Commander of the Arizona Wing due to professional workload, succeeded by Frank Beer. Beer was a former State Represen-

tative and Assistant Attorney General with five-hundred hours as a pilot. Since its inception, the Civil Air Patrol was in the United States' Office of Civilian Defense but on April 29, 1943, it was transferred to the US Army by order of President Franklin Roosevelt. At the time, "There are approximately 60,000 civilian-owned planes operating in the service now under control of James M. Landis, OCD [Office of Civilian Defense] director."

Commander of the Tucson Squadron from its start was William M. Wharton, until July 1943, when he was inducted into the US Army. He was followed by Edward S. Hussey who took charge until the following spring. At the time, in addition to Tucson, there were Flights in Nogales, Safford, Globe, and Douglas. When Hussey left, Stephen A. Bone took over, retiring on June 30, 1945. "More than 250 Tucson youths of high school age have received CAP training under Bone's direction." Finally, Richard S. Griffith, a Deputy US Marshal, was Squadron Commander in Tucson when Japan surrendered on September 2, 1945, ending the war in Asia.

The Civil Air Patrol's wartime record ensured its postwar success. On July 1, 1946, President Harry S. Truman signed Public Law 79-476, incorporating the organization. With the creation of the US Air Force, Truman also signed Public Law 80-557, establishing the Civil Air Patrol as the Air Force's civilian auxiliary on May 26, 1948. (Arizona Republic 12/1/1941, 2/1/1942, 9/14/1942, 9/17/1942, 5/27/1948; Citizen 12/16/1941, 12/24/1941, 1/5/1942, 1/13/1942, 9/14/1942, 2/20/1943, 4/29/1943, 6/29/1943, 7/23/1943, 1/8/1945, 3/22/1945, 12/1/1947; Star 6/30/1945)

## First Fatal Plane Crash at Davis-Monthan Air Base

**Apr 6, 1942**

"Ten thousand Tucsonans got their first glimpse of Uncle Sam's 'new army' at an exhibition and drill staged last night at the University of Arizona stadium in observance of the United States entry into World War II... There was not a person who left the stadium without a feeling of pride in his army and a better understanding of the job it has to do." Nine B-17 Flying Fortresses out of Davis-Monthan Air Base spent at least two hours demonstrating several different precision flying formations for the spectators. What they were seeing far above was being explained by a Lieutenant from Base Public Affairs. Near the end of his presentation, he said, "Army flying is serious business. One of the officers who was to have flown one of the planes in the exhibition... 'gallantly went down with his ship' that afternoon on a practice mission." Instead of nine big bombers for the show, there were to have been ten!

Earlier that afternoon, the missing tenth four-engine aircraft with its seven-man crew developed an "engine failure and fire in the air," and crashed two miles east of Vail, on the Charles C. Day Ranch. This was reportedly the first instance of a fatal accident in thousands of flying hours among planes based at Davis-Monthan. Witnesses on the ground heard two explosions and then, "the plane sideslipped and then went into a tail spin, spiraling three times before crashing into the ground." Five of the crew were trapped, dying on impact. Two crewmen were able to parachute from the plane, jumping free at about seven-hundred feet. Both "only suffered minor bruises and shock, while firemen on two Davis-Monthan Field fire trucks, fought the stubborn flames of the burning wreckage for more than an hour..." (Star 4/7/1942; Citizen 4/7/1942)

## Injured in Finger Rock Canyon

**May 9, 1942**

Frank Sharmon, Jr., and his buddy Bill Puelle, also 14 years of age, started out that Saturday morning with lunches and a .22-caliber rifle. Their adventure would lead them up Finger Rock Canyon, which gets steeper and narrower the farther up you go. “Things apparently went well until their accidental fall from an over-hanging cliff...” Puelle was skinned, cut, and bruised but was able to “make his way out of the mountain wilderness,” reporting the plight of his friend. By that time, it was dark but deputies organized a search which would last all night. But getting back to him was not all that easy.

“Not a single clue leading to the whereabouts of Sharmon was discovered. Puelle was unable to give any particular assistance. Suffering from shock and injury, his account of where the accident occurred was hazy.” At first light, Deputy Robertson, skilled in tracking, found the tracks Puelle had made on his way down out of the canyon; “step by step on foot, Robertson back-trailed until he found Sharmon. The exact location was a quarter mile above Finger Rock Canyon Springs.” They found the lad, nursing his cuts and bruises but he had built a fire.

“Getting the boy out, according to Robertson, was a real task. Packing him on his back was the only way for a quarter mile or more. Sharmon’s feet were raw, he was weak and still slightly bleeding from his cuts.” After Deputy Robertson bandaged the lad’s feet, Sharmon then gladly rode a horse that two Forest Rangers brought up to the mouth of the canyon. It was still two miles down to a waiting car. (Citizen 5/11/1942)

## One Killed, Seven Injured

**Jul 8, 1942**

Second Lieutenant Robert Barton, Jr., (age not given) from Charleston, West Virginia, died when the B-24 in which he was Co-Pilot, crashed in the desert eight miles southeast of Tucson. (Today, that would be at Wilmoth and I-10.) The other seven onboard were injured. “Air base officials said eye-witnesses, reported the plane... was flying low as it turned to return to the field from a routine training flight. One wing tip hit the desert and the plane overturned. It was demolished.”

“Credit for saving the lives of some of the injured was given to a Bisbee couple and their daughter, whose names were not immediately ascertained. The Bisbee family, driving toward Tucson, saw the crash and administered first aid.” (Citizen 7/8/1942)

## Bomber Falls, Eight Dead

**Jul 20, 1942**

Occurring at 4:40 a.m., eight men onboard a four-engine B-24 “Liberator” died instantly just before dawn, as they winged their way back from a long, night-training mission. On final approach, they crashed about three miles southeast of the Davis-Monthan Army Air Base. Emergency equipment from the Base as well as the City of Tucson responded, but to no avail. Authorities speculated that the cause of the accident might never be known although fatigue may have played a role. The normal crew complement for WW II’s most-produced bomber (18,500 units), was 11. (Star 7/21/1942; Citizen 7/21/1942)

## First Southern Arizona CAP Assignment

**Sep 11, 1942**

An Army Air Corps four-engine B-24 heavy bomber, known as the “Liberator,” went missing very early that Friday morning in 1942. Eight officers and two sergeants were returning on a night navigation training flight from Omaha, Nebraska, to their home base at Davis-Monthan. They left just minutes before midnight of the 10<sup>th</sup>. Reacting to a sketchy report from a tourist-camp operator, the first effort to find the plane was among the 12,000- to 14,000-foot-high peaks of the Sangre de Cristo Mountains of southern Colorado and northern New Mexico. The search for these ten men and their large war machine was coordinated out of Lowry Army Air Base in Denver.

On that Sunday, “10 civil air patrol craft on their first official assignment in the southwest,” joined in the search—they were from Phoenix and Safford. On the following day, the search turned to eastern Arizona and the White Mountains. “A State highway patrolman received reports from several ranchers that a plane had been heard in the vicinity Friday morning. . . .” Two days later, “a dozen Civil Air Patrol planes from Phoenix flew over the area and the wreckage was sighted by [CAP’s] Jesse Anderson and Bernice Larson.”

It had plowed into the south side of 11,409-foot-high Mount Baldy in eastern Apache County, leaving a seven-hundred-foot swath through the trees, one-thousand feet below the summit. Not only did Anderson spot the downed plane from the air, but then by horseback somehow, was the first person to get to the accident site. He began to coordinate the recovery of “the victims’ seared and broken bodies,” by airmen from Davis-Monthan. Practicing night navigation, the crew of the ill-fated bomber, including the 23-year-old co-pilot, a 1937 graduate of Tucson High School, was thirty miles off course. (Star 9/16/1942, 9/17/1942)

## B-24 Crash Kills Seven

**Dec 4, 1942**

The “Liberator,” a powerful, four-engine B-24 Bomber, crashed and burned on the desert about eight miles west of Florence. Its seven-man crew on a routine training flight, “was seen crashing and bursting into flames by a farmer’s wife, who notified Williams field [22 miles southeast of Phoenix Sky Harbor Airport] officials.” It was stationed in Davis-Monthan. (Citizen 12/7/1942)

## B-24 Missing for 43 Days

**Jan 18, 1943**

A B-24, a four-engine bomber with an 11-man crew, was found on March 8, crashed on a rugged peak in the remote Galiuro Mountains, fifty miles east of Tucson. Taking off just after midnight on January 18, the aircraft had been on a routine flight from Davis-Monthan AAB to the Sahuarita bombing range 25 miles south. The big plane was the object of a search stretching far down into Mexico and across the desert and mountains of Southern Arizona. Finally found purely by accident over six weeks later, it was not even close to where it should be. After this much time, the intense search for the plane had tapered off, becoming secondary. Don Cross, a Civil Air Patrol pilot from Phoenix, spotted the bomber while actually searching for another downed aircraft, a B-17, which disappeared on March 3 on a flight from Portland, Oregon to Las Vegas, Nevada.

A ground party of 21 men from Davis-Monthan took four days to work their way to the B-24 crash site at the 7,650-foot elevation on Bassett Peak; at first, they were wrongly directed by pilot



Cross to Kennedy Peak, 12 miles to the north. The recovery team had to spend several days at the wreck to locate all of the bodies, a couple which were on a ridge three-hundred yards away from the main part of the debris. It appeared the plane had gone straight into a sheer cliff, “at least at its normal cruising speed of over two-hundred miles an hour.”

The B-17 Flying Fortress that Don Cross was originally looking for had a range of two-thousand miles and could be almost anywhere. On March 3, it was headed for Las Vegas, but because of poor visibility, it diverted to Phoenix. Just before midnight, the pilot last reported his position as about 50 miles east of Phoenix. This message was heard both there and in Tucson but apparently the plane could not receive and the crew was unable to locate a landing field. Like many planes during that war, it and its eight-man crew then vanished, at least for a while.

On July 13, more than 23 weeks after it was last heard from, the Flying Fortress with the 104-foot wingspan was found in the White Mountains, southwest of Springerville. All eight of its crew had perished upon impact. Ironically, however, if it had not been for a ninth person on that plane, a “hitchhiker” who actually survived the crash, the plane would not have been found when it was. Private Geronimo Medina was catching a ride.

“Medina’s body, lying beside crude crutches fashioned from airplane wood and parachute shrouds, was found by a group of range-riding cowboys last week under a tree in an open draw about five airline miles from where the plane was found.” Authorities could not understand how this lone airman could be found in the middle of nowhere. So, “Airmen from Luke Field near Phoenix organized a systematic aerial search of the district and the wreckage was sighted.” (Star 3/11/1943, 3/13/1943, 7/15/1943)

## Airmen Carried Out on Horseback

### Feb 13, 1943

A single-engine, two-person training plane out of Marana Air Field crashed “near the summit of the” Galiuro Mountains at 6:00 p.m., Saturday evening. Onboard was the pilot and a doctor with the Army’s Medical Corps.

“The plane burst into flames immediately. The billowing smoke was seen by Martin E. Tew of Copper Creek,<sup>2</sup> who climbed a mountain to get one of his saddle horses there... The terrain over which he traveled is as rough and rugged as any in Arizona, but after crossing deep canyons and climbing steep and rock mountain sides he finally reached the... crash about 9 o’clock in the evening.”

With embers still glowing, Tew found the crumpled plane scattered over the steep mountainside. He fully expected to find charred bodies. Hearing a slight cough, however, he yelled out, and to his amazement, found both men alive. Their faces and hands were badly burned but nothing seemed broken. They were able to stand with assistance and the part-time miner somehow managed to lift the injured men up on his horse, with one riding behind the other. Someway, they negotiated their way down the steep, crumbling canyon sides in the dark, reaching Copper Creek at 11:00 p.m., where they rested. At 5:00 a.m., Tew was able to drive the two victims of this plane crash to Mammoth, where they could notify the Marana Air Field.

<sup>2</sup> Copper Creek was a small mining settlement, about ten miles east of Mammoth in Pinal County, with the Post Office opening in 1906. At one time, it had a population of 500 but in 1942 the Post Office was disestablished and the village was now mostly a ghost town.

In early September, Martin E. Tew received a letter of commendation from the War Department, signed by J. J. Cloy, the Acting Secretary of War.

*“Your actions on the night of the rescue are an inspiration. The fact that you unhesitatingly set out to rescue the men; that you overcame every disheartening obstacle to get to them and finally brought them back to a hospital constitutes proof of your great spirit. . . . The War Department has no authority to award a decoration to fit your case and your kind deed. However, I feel I can extend to you the gratitude of the nation for your remarkable achievement.”* (Star 2/17/1943, 9/5/1943)

## B-24 Crash Kills Eight

**Mar 11, 1943**

The eighth and last young man to die in the ill-fated B-24 “Liberator” that Thursday afternoon, “was Walter T. Chase, the bombardier, a Second Lieutenant from Pennsylvania.” He had been in the Base Hospital in critical condition for three days. The four-engine bomber, with its ten-man crew, crashed at 5:50 p.m., two miles south of Davis-Monthan. The plane was making a routine flight and was approaching the field for a landing when it hit. Chase’s parents had arrived the night before and were just in time, as he passed away. They were able to accompany their hero son back to home for burial. The other seven died upon impact. (Star 3/15/1943; Citizen 3/15/1943)

## Ten Fliers Are B-24 Victims

**Apr 12, 1943**

A B-24, while on a routine training flight, crashed at 6 a.m. that Monday morning. It hit just over three miles southeast of Davis-Monthan Army Air Base, and ten young fliers died. The newspapers during World War II, were so full of accidents and deaths, from around the country and overseas, this one in which ten aviators lost their lives, did not even make the Front Page, rather landing on Page Three. It did, however, list the deceased’s names, addresses, and what position they held on the plane. “. . . no further information has been given as to the cause or details of the crash.” (Citizen 4/13/1943)

## Parachuting Doctors

**Nov 1943**

“Parachuting doctors will be the Army’s answer to the problem of getting medical aid to fliers who crash in remote places. A contingent of Army medical officers has started parachute training at the forest service [Smokejumper] school at Seeley Lake, near [Missoula, Montana], under the command of Colonel Earl Vance of the second air force search and rescue section.” Vance went on to say, “‘this activity, if its usefulness is demonstrated, may be continued as the coast guard of the air.’”

In that August of 1943, twenty men were forced to bail out of a stricken C-46 over the jungles of Burma. Those having to jump included famed CBS news journalist, Eric Sevareid. In responding to this incident, a flight surgeon and two combat surgical technicians parachuted from search planes to assist and care for the injured. Although parachute rescues were not officially authorized at the time, this is often considered one of the beginnings of the Air Force Pararescue, or “PJs.” These



men and now some women, make up a small cadre in SAR in several branches of the military including the Coast Guard, Air Force and National Guards.

The Army's parachuting doctors made a major impact on search and rescue. In 1945, one of them, Captain Amos Little, stationed in Great Falls, Montana, and a graduate of Johns Hopkins Medical School, believed, " '...soon there'll be doctors who specialize in parachute work scattered someday throughout the world. They'll be ready at a moment's notice to leap to the aid of the injured or sick, hours—even days—before they can be reached by conventional means.' " Each of these doctors can bail out with a "complete field hospital to administer complete medical aid, even to performing surgery." This high level of skill and dedication would be found at Davis-Monthan Air Force Base in the next couple of years. (Citizen 11/17/1943, 1/8/1945, 11/22/1945)

### On Confidential Wartime Mission

**Nov 23, 1943**

"Civil Air Patrol pilots were searching the Mexico border...for signs of a private plane in which Edward M. Stanton, Douglas mine operator, and Lt. Frank McGinnis, on leave from Washington, D.C., have been missing..." Aircraft from the Douglas Army Air Base also aided in the search for several days, but it is unclear, however, if any of these planes actually crossed into Mexico to look. The two men went to inspect a mine in the "Esquila Mountain area" in northern Sonora but failed to reach their first stop on the trip into Mexico, Casa Grandes. "The Esquila Mountain area is described as extremely rough and wild with few places in which a forced landing might be made."

It appears, though, Dr. Stanton, a highly-respected geologist, was actually on a "confidential," wartime mission searching for rock crystal, a mineral used in radio transmitters. And Lieutenant McGinnis was on "official" absence from the US Army since the two were going into Mexico to clandestinely inspect "mining property." On December 30, their plane was found at the bottom of a "187-foot ravine" by farmers. They were identified by "numerous samples of the stone found in the plane... [and a] diary discovered nearby."

Strangely, however, Mrs. Stanton was not officially notified of them being found until August 8, 1944, seven full months after they went missing, despite several prominent news articles in the Arizona papers on December 31, saying they had been located. (Star 12/5/1943, 12/31/1943, 8/9/1944; Arizona Republic 12/31/1943)

### Missing for 15 Months

**Dec 22, 1943**

Ralph J. Heil, an 18-year-old Aviation Cadet, took off into the lonely Southern Arizona desert darkness with a new moon above or little light below to assist. He was leaving the Gila Bend Army Airfield enroute back to home base at Luke Army Air Base in Phoenix on a night navigation exercise. He did not arrive as scheduled and the whereabouts of he and his plane were unknown, until the wreckage of his single-seat trainer was finally spotted by two Civil Air Patrol pilots, sisters Carrol and Janet Benton. He was found on March 28, 1945, ending the 15-month-long disappearance of the teenager from Los Angeles.

The Benton ladies were flying a private CAP plane for the Second Air Force Search and Rescue Group, and were actually looking for two other pilots, Cadets Dalton B. Tarver and Paul D. Summers, who went missing on a simulated instrument training exercise two weeks earlier, March 15.

Heil was discovered in a remote part of the Maricopa Mountains, 25 miles south of Phoenix. Tarver and Summers were found on May 6 when a cattleman discovered the debris of their aircraft near Crown King, east of Wickenburg. (Arizona Republic 12/31/1943, 3/29/1945, 5/7/1945)

### **Boy Scout Executive Commissioned as Captain in Arizona Highway Patrol**

**Dec 24, 1943**

Catalina Council Boy Scout Executive E. G. Stowell was commissioned as a Captain in the Arizona Highway Patrol by E. H. Braatellen, Superintendent. “We are pleased to know of your willingness to cooperate with this organization and appreciate knowing that one thousand six hundred Boy Scouts and leaders...stand ready to lend their aid...” Over the next several years, the Scouts “search the Santa Cruz River bed after a flood had drowned two women—another group to search the Santa Rita Mountains for a lost hunter, etc.” (Otis Chidester Scout Museum, Records of E. G. Stowell, 1950)

### **Three Army Trainers Crash, Same Day, Same Canyon**

**Dec 28, 1943**

Douglas (Arizona) Army Air Field was vital to training pilots, along with its auxiliary field in Hereford, a small community forty miles to the west. That December, nearly five-hundred cadets in Class 44-A were entering the final week of their eight weeks of advanced training. With just a few more hours of hands-on flight time, they’d be officers in the Army Air Corps. And more importantly, they would get their coveted pilot’s wings in an upcoming January 7 graduation. So far, they had shown to be capable, safe aviators as proven by the Air Base recently being awarded a commendation for six months without a fatality.

That Tuesday afternoon, three twin-engine Cessna AT-17 “Bobcat” trainers took off, students alongside instructors; in many cases, these mentors didn’t have a great deal more experience and often weren’t even much older than their trainees. One after the other, the planes were in the air and on the same training route, a plan just agreed upon that morning by their instructors. The “Bobcat” was an advanced trainer, used to bridge the gap between single-engine planes which they all began learning in and the multi-engine, heavy combat warships they might end up flying. This taildragger retractable gear, and two 225-horsepower engines. With a 42-foot wingspan, it had a range of 750 miles with a hearty cruise speed of 175 mph.

By late that afternoon, however, each trainer with its two young men, had not returned to the airfield. Then additionally, at 8 p.m. that night a fourth went missing while on a cross-country flight originating at the Hereford Field. At first light, at least thirty planes were in the air, some to retrace the probable routes of the missing aircraft. Others fanned out and began scouring nearly ten-thousand square miles of inhospitable terrain, with rugged mountain ranges like the Chiricahuas, reaching 9,759 feet. It was a daunting but a sadly, essential task. Moreover, when the Army began notifying families of what was happening, they failed to tell each about the other. In a couple of cases, wives and girlfriends were neighbors of one another there in Douglas, although unacquainted. So, there could have been much-welcomed support and comfort between them; they all, however, would wait and wonder alone.

A break came on the third day. A US Forest Service foreman and his employee were driving near the Rucker Canyon Ranger Station in the southern end of the Chiricahua Mountains, when a man in a leather flight jacket came stumbling down the road. He was bloodied and seriously limping.

The wounded aviator was Lieutenant John T. Holland, a 27-year-old instructor. Two days earlier, with him at the controls, their “Bobcat” had stalled out and crashed into the trees; they were but a few hundred feet short of a safe crossing of the ridge. Surviving the accident, their two parachutes were opened and the insulating cloth matting pulled free of the wreckage to help them face the long night of freezing temperatures. His student was alive but had suffered massive injuries. “The next morning, the lieutenant [Holland] set out on a labored climb down five miles of snow-covered canyon trail...”

The Forest Service supervisor alerted military authorities. And he then directed his companion and Richard “Dick” Langford, a work leader who had just joined them, to begin following the deep tracks before the snow could melt; “high-lighted here and there with bloodstains from his injured foot.” The two labored upwards, following the meandering trail among the red cliffs and junipers and into the towering Ponderosa Pines. The going steepened and one man fell behind; at 39, however, Dick Langford was still powerfully built and agile. “But the sight of him laboring steadily up the slopes might have given pause to an outsider, for Langford was a one-legged man. A sliver of ocotillo had brought blood poisoning at age seven, forcing the amputation of his left leg at the hip... Now on two sturdy crutches, he matched himself against any man’s work and against these mountains...”

As Langford neared the top of Rucker Canyon, he grew confident he would find the wreckage but feared seeing a young man, dead from injuries or exposure. The acrid smell of black smoke began reaching him, he soon would learn 23-year-old Aviation Cadet William Buford Lewellen from Clinton, Tennessee, had wanted to help effect his own rescue. So, despite a shattered knee cap and a broken ankle on his other leg and unable to stand, he had dragged himself up the snowy slope to the crumpled wreckage. Tearing pages from his valued Flight Log Book, he used a cigarette lighter to ignite the oil coming from a ruptured fuel tank.

After a seemingly interminable time that day, a flight surgeon and a military rescue party arrived, having followed the tracks of the three that came before them. The doctor found Lewellen in remarkably good shape given the near-total destruction of his plane. There had not been a fire upon crashing since the electrical power had been cut right before hitting the mountain. He now faced being carried down the mountain, but couldn’t be transported on a folding canvas stretcher, not with him experiencing so much pain. So, he was put on a horse which a nearby rancher had loaned the rescuers. Someone rode with Lewellen, steadying him in the saddle; but the way back was so steep and precarious, Lewellen was transferred to a more sure-footed mule. And, the morphine which was now just kicking in, didn’t hurt, either! As they were dropping down, they encountered another rescue party coming up.

“Together, they discovered something that had heretofore escaped notice. Away from the trail and laced in shadows lay the fire-scarred wreckage of another airplane. To some observers it seemed to be pointed downslope, as if it had stopped while making a turn. Search team members who struggled across the snowy mountainside confirmed the deaths of the craft’s two occupants, [20-year-old] Cadet Alfred P. Kelley, Jr., and flight instructor, [27-year-old] Lt. Francis William ‘Pete’ Theis.”

Marching off the parade ground in Douglas that January 7th, were nearly five-hundred newly-commissioned Second Lieutenants, proudly also now US Army Air Corps Pilots. Sadly, there were three cadets missing from their ranks; one was in the hospital, now fighting a seriously infected knee cap, one was known dead, and a third was still to be found, along with his instructor. Since two of the planes were discovered near each other in a narrow flight path, the aerial hunt was scaled back and an intensive ground effort began in that part of the terribly rugged Chiricahuas.

In subsequent reports to Army superiors, Colonel Harvey F. Dyer, Base Commander, “would describe an intensive search covering twenty square miles and involving forty men, including ranch hands and Forest Service workers; the task fell mainly to squads of enlisted men, a handful of non-coms, and three commissioned officers from the Douglas Army Air Field.” For more than a week, searchers labored mostly on foot scouring the,

“...craggy turns and timbered reaches of Red Rock Canyon [sic: Rucker Canyon], looking for signs of a burned or crumpled wing or tail section or one of the tumbled engines of an AT-17B ‘Bobcat.’ The soldiers bedded down near the mouth of the canyon, where each evening trucks from the field brought supplies and their single hot meal of the day. A wrangler from one of the nearby ranches kept fires going, so that the searchers could dry their snow-soaked clothing before settling into sleeping bags for the night.”

On Saturday, January 8, the tenth day of the rescue effort, Colonel Dyer notified his commanders that he was ending the pursuit, which had consumed 10,000 man-hours. “Further search believed impracticable since plane may have been far off supposed course and haphazard search is inadvisable. That day, services were being held in Kentucky for Lt. Pete Theis, the flight instructor on board the second downed Red Rock Canyon [sic: Rucker Canyon], airplane.”

After Flight Instructor Holland stumbled into his rescuers and the search became more narrowly focused, he told investigators that prior to the emergency he had seen the other two “Bobcats” in single file behind both he and Cadet Lewellen. But then as they entered Rucker Canyon, Holland fell victim to circumstances which have haunted literally thousands of pilots since the earliest days of aviation. If flying into a canyon and the terrain in front rises faster than the plane can climb and the walls narrow—as they almost inevitably do—an unsuspecting pilot may soon not be able to safely turn around. This trap has snared many hundreds if not thousands of even experienced aviators, over the years.

“He believed he could climb sufficiently to maintain this altitude above the crest. By the time he realized that his aircraft was not rising fast enough, the way had narrowed to where there was no turning back. From 100 mph at the start of the climb, the plane’s airspeed fell to 60 mph, then 40. ‘When I saw that we would finally crash, I cut the switches and just mushed along... the mountain seemed to come up to meet us and we went into the trees.’ ”

Early on at least, pilots at the Douglas Army Air Field were instructed to keep a lookout for undiscovered wrecks in the wilderness. But slowly, months and years passed and countless pilots, navigators, bombardiers, mechanics, gunners, radiomen, instructors, and various other youthful aviators, graduated from their assorted trainings and went off to war; sadly, all too many never returning. World War II in Europe officially ended for the United States, on May 8, 1945. And, the War in the Pacific formally halted for us on September 2, 1945. Yet, the two AT-17 “Bobcat” trainers with the four hopeful young aviators from Class 44-A, were still out there. On occasion, these wrecks and the young men inside them, would be scanned for, far below in the mountains of Southern Arizona.

Herman Wicke was a civilian fireman at the Douglas Army Air Field and had been assigned to one of the field’s crash trucks during the War. He grew up in the Chiricahuas, having gone to school in Rucker Canyon, the same canyon where the other two wrecks were found. In the last week of September of 1945, he and two companions were deer hunting in Price Canyon, just over the ridge from Rucker Canyon, when he saw a shimmer of reflection, catching the morning sun. “‘You know,’ he exclaimed, ‘that could be that aircraft that I have been looking for so long.’ ” But because of harsh terrain, it would be the following day before they could confirm it was the third

AT-17B Bobcat. “Almost twenty-one months to the day of the crashes the Red Rock Canyon [sic: Rucker Canyon], episode was closed.”

But it would be almost thirty years more before the fate of the fourth plane was revealed. On April 28, 1974, two Arizona State University students were toiling to the top of 10,724-foot-high Mount Graham immediately west of Safford, that the future of #AF43-7873, the fourth plane that disappeared three days after Christmas of 1943, was revealed.

“ ‘Here! Hey! Come look at this!’ It wasn’t in the clear...It was right in the trees, flipped upside down. The cockpit was still buried in a pretty good drift of snow. [But] the tail section was sticking out of the snow and was pretty well-preserved, the fabric gone, but the metal in excellent condition. The rubber on the tires looked good.”

The UC-78 (a slightly different model of the AT-17B) was at the “10,500-foot level of the mountain, the altitude assigned for the night training flight, but about fifteen miles south of the aircraft’s presumed course.” Second Lieutenant Douglas McDow, at 30 and divorced with a 6-year-old son, was only four years older than his trainee, Cadet Clarence Albert Thompson. On September 12, 1974, with members of both families present and full military honors, the comingled remains of these two men were finally laid to rest in the Presidio in San Francisco.

The details about this December 28, 1943 heartbreak, were paraphrased and often quoted from an extensive, well-written article by George R. Herman in the Winter, 1995, “The Journal of Arizona History,” Volume 36, Number 4. Mr. Herman would conclude his essay: “The cost of conflict is often tallied in battle casualties. But the enormity of mobilization for WW II can be seen in the observation that four years of war claimed the lives of 14,900 airmen in 6,000 fatal crashes of military aircraft *within the continental United States* [his emphasis]. These tragedies and their subsequent searches never appeared in either *The Arizona Daily Star* or the *Tucson Daily Citizen*, the two regional newspapers of the time, although they did in the local Douglas newspaper.

## B-24 Crashes in Sabino Canyon

**Mar 18, 1944**

Ten airmen from Hamilton Army Airfield near Sacramento, California, were instantly killed when their four-engine Consolidated B-24 “Liberator” heavy bomber crashed in “an almost inaccessible location near Sabino Canyon. The mountainous terrain hampered rescue efforts and made the return of the bodies difficult.” Lieutenant Bell of the federal prison camp provided assistance in reaching the wreckage of the large aircraft. The dead airmen were recovered by medical officers the next day. And, despite the fact that ten men were killed in the nearby Santa Catalina Mountains, the cause of the accident nor other follow up articles, were reported in the newspapers. (Citizen 3/20/1944; Star 3/20/1944)

## B-24 Crash Kills Four

**Mar 20, 1944**

A B-24 “Liberator” bomber crashed about 22 miles southeast of Willcox early that Monday morning. Four of the Army aviators were killed, “five other members of the crew were not injured in the crash.” These four-engine aircraft were generally considered difficult to fly and had poor low-speed performance. Despite these drawbacks, the “Liberator” was used extensively in World War II and, along with the B-17, was considered the mainstay of the US bombing campaign in Western Europe.

This plane from Davis-Monthan Air Field, was on a training flight and had crashed while making an emergency landing. First responders from Willcox rushed to the aid of the injured crewmen. This was the second fatal crash of a B-24 in Southern Arizona within two days. It would not be the last. See “B-24 Crash in Sabino Canyon,” March 18, 1944, on page 101, and “18 Airmen Killed,” November 30, 1944, on page 103. (Citizen 4/21/1944)

### **Drowning in Sabino Canyon**

**Apr 26, 1944**

William Wilson, a 24-year-old Private First Class, stationed at the Army Airbase in Marana, drowned in the Lower Sabino Canyon Lake. He was “in shallow water and suddenly stepped into a deep part of the lake. Persons in the party caught his hands but were unable to hold on. He could not swim.” Two lads from the Southern Arizona School for Boys reported the man’s disappearance to the Sheriff’s Department. “Deputy Allan Carroll of the office was dispatched with the fire department pulmotor equipment about 1:30 p.m. Authorities were unable to locate the body in the canyon lake and repeated diving efforts failed to discover it.” His body was recovered several hours later by Firemen John Steger and Ben Frans with the aid of grappling hooks and a rubber boat provided by Davis-Monthan Field. (Citizen 4/26/1944; Star 4/27/1944)

### **3 Die in Davis-Monthan B-24 Crash**

**Sep 14, 1944**

On a combat training flight, this B-24 bomber only had a crew of four, down from the normal 11. About 7:30 p.m., that Thursday evening, a four-engine “Liberator” crashed six miles southeast of Davis-Monthan Army Air Base. It was lining up on “Final,” preparing to land. Weighing 55,000 pounds and with a wingspan of 110 feet, this 67-foot-long war plane could carry 8,000 pounds of bombs and defend itself with ten, .50 caliber machine guns. And, the 20-year-old pilot and the 21-year-old co-pilot, along with the 30-year-old aerial engineer, “were killed instantly.” Although “damaged extensively,” it did not catch fire or explode and the rescuers from both the Base and the City, were able to quickly gain access to them. (Citizen 9/15/1944)

### **9-Year-Old Drowns**

**Sep 16, 1944**

After an all-night search, the body of 9-year-old Wayne Murphy was found drowned in an arroyo across the street from Wakefield School, not far from the lad’s home on the south side of Tucson. He had been missing since the afternoon. Neighbors and family members, along with deputies from the Pima County Sheriff’s Department, spent hours looking for him. He apparently died while playing near the fast-running arroyo. (Star 9/18/1944)

### **B-24 Fell into Davis-Monthan Salvage Yard**

**Oct 22, 1944**

On that Sunday, a B-24 crashed on take-off, killing six young aviators, including the 22-year-old pilot, 20-year-old co-pilot, 25-year-old navigator and three more, who all were only 18. The following



day, the 21-year-old bombardier and a 19-year-old aerial gunner then succumbed to their injuries. The “Liberator” fell into the salvage yard adjoining the field. Both the Base and Tucson Fire Departments rushed to the aid of the 11-man crew. “[A city bus] was a city bound machine which the driver halted when he noticed the four-engine “Liberator” out of control. One of the propellers was hurled 350 feet into a ground-school building, injuring an instructor who was cut by flying glass.” (Citizen 10/23/1944)

### Airmen Killed near Spud Rock

**Nov 24, 1944**

After four days of intensive air search, the fabric-covered wreckage of a small, twin-engine Cessna UC-78 plane, was finally spotted on November 28, high in the Rincon Mountains. All three occupants had been killed outright. The advanced, multi-engine trainer was enroute from Yuma to Deming, New Mexico, when it crashed during a rain storm on the eastern slope of 8,600-foot-high Spud Rock, a mile from the highest point in the mountain range. The downed plane, nicknamed the “Bamboo Bomber” because its wings and tail were made of spruce wood, was discovered by a craft of the Civil Air Patrol, piloted by Miss Rosie Terzian of Phoenix. Ironically, a passenger onboard the missing plane was T. B. Hawthorne, a Second Lieutenant in the CAP, who had been picked up in Yuma.

“Bodies of the victims could not be returned, however, due to the very difficult steep terrain which forced members of the party to climb and crawl several miles. A special pack train composed of forestry service personnel and a party from Davis-Monthan is expected to reach the wreckage today to return the bodies.” And, according to *The Arizona Daily Star* the next morning, “Members of the original rescue party were forced to crawl several hundred feet up the peak before reaching the plane.” (Citizen 11/30/1944; Star 12/1/1944)

### 18 Airmen Killed

**Nov 30, 1944**

Less than a week after three airmen died in a plane wreck in the Rincon Mountains, two large B-24 “Liberator” bombers from Davis-Monthan collided in mid-air seven miles east of Tucson,<sup>3</sup> killing all 18 crewmen onboard. “The accident was the most disastrous that has occurred since heavy bombardment combat training was instituted at Davis-Monthan Field in 1940.” It happened at about 7:30 a.m., as the formation of five of the four-engine heavy bombers was swinging into a pattern preparatory to a routine training flight. One eye witness saw the two bombers brush each other, at between 1,000 and 2,000 feet of altitude.

Both planes crashed about three-hundred yards apart. It took very little time and there were Tucson Policemen, Pima County Sheriff’s Deputies, crash trucks and Air Police from Davis-Monthan Army Air Field, ambulances, city fire trucks, wreckers and all manner of other rescue vehicles there within minutes. But as each got near the crash scene, it became apparent that there were no survivors and little potential damage to any surrounding developments. (Star 12/1/1944)

<sup>3</sup> The planes ended up on each side of the Pantano Wash, on what is now Sabino Canyon Road at the Kolb Road Intersection. “Airmen Memorial Bridge” has a plaque commemorating that largely, now forgotten tragedy.



## B-25 Down in Rincons

**Jan 20, 1945**

Ten days after the B-25 Mitchell bomber disappeared en route to Tucson from Kelly Field in Texas, it was found at the 7,000-foot level on the eastern slopes of the Rincon Mountains. “The ground party, encountering some of the most rugged and difficult terrain in Arizona, was expected back with the [five] bodies late yesterday.” Spotted by members of the Phoenix Civil Air Patrol Squadron with the Second Air Force search and rescue unit at Davis-Monthan, the plane was found almost completely buried in snow. A small piece of the tail assembly sticking out of the snow is about all that was seen. The plane had been burned and “completely demolished.” The twin-engine medium bomber was generally known as a safe and forgiving ship to fly. (Star 2/1/1945, 2/2/1945)

## Alone, 23-Year-Old Pilot Heroically Saves B-29

**Jun 23, 1945**

First Lieutenant, Morgan G. Higham, “ ‘became the first pilot in the air force to solo a B-29, when he dramatically and courageously brought his plane into Davis-Monthan Field with flames streaking from his engine and minus his crew who were ordered to bail out,’ ” emphatically declared Colonel Downs E. Ingram, Commanding Officer at Davis-Monthan. “ ‘Lt. Morgan Higham, today, performed one of the most courageous feats in aviation history. . . he undoubtedly saved many lives.’ ”

At 99-feet long, a B-29 was 27 feet high and a wingspan of 141 feet. It was one of the largest aircraft in World War II. Its development was 150 percent more costly than the Manhattan Project, which created the Atomic Bomb.<sup>4</sup>

From Salt Lake City, the 23-year-old Higham, had flown for ten months in the European Theater, just recently returning stateside, with VE-Day only six weeks earlier. Over there, he earned the Distinguished Flying Cross (DFC), the Air Medal with three Oak Leaf Clusters, among other commendations. The DFC is for “Heroism or extraordinary achievement while participating in an aerial flight.” It is the fourth highest award a military aviator can earn, with the Medal of Honor being the most significant, and Higham, would be in some very elite company, including George H. Bush, John Glenn, John McCain, Amelia Earhart, and Charles Lindberg, being the first, in 1927. The reason for this background, is now to tell you what Higham did that Saturday morning. The following quotes are from the Front Page, June 23, 1945, *Tucson Daily Citizen*, written by Bernie Roth.

Higham and his 11 crewmen, developed engine trouble while on a routine training flight over the high desert near Oracle Junction, north of Tucson. One of the four massive, four-bladed motors caught fire and Higham ordered the four airmen in the tail section to bail out. Which they did and then moments later, the fire was brought under control and he and the seven remaining men started back to base. Higham alerted D-M Tower about those who had jumped; search and rescue mobilized, with several scout planes quickly launching to find the four parachutists. Their status and location were unknown. After a few more minutes and now with a dramatically reduced speed, once again the fire broke out,

“and, it looked as though the plane was losing its fight to get back to the base. It was then that the aircraft commander [Higham] gave the order for the rest of the crew to bail out. When Lt. Higham prepared to jump, he noticed that he had already reached the city limits of Tucson.

<sup>4</sup> Two B-29's, made infamous on August 6 and August 9, 1945, for dropping Atomic Bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Japan.

Realizing the damage that could be caused by the B-29, with its full load of gasoline striking the middle of the town, Lt. Higham once again resumed his fight to get the big ship back to base alone. He accomplished that mission.”

Now, there were 11 airmen scattered somewhere along a narrow, twenty-mile flight path. Searchers with the Sheriff’s Department, headed by Detective Manny Herrera, and military personnel soon rounded up the first four to land, they were either uninjured or slightly so. “The other seven men were picked up after an extensive search by scout planes in touch with the searching party on the ground.” In the end, all 11 were found within 15 miles of where they had bailed out. None were seriously injured, three had suffered cuts and burns received when they hit the hard, Southern Arizona Desert. For one Sergeant, however, this was not the first time he “had hit the silk.” Forced to bail out over the English Channel, “He declined to say which was the softer landing.” (Citizen 6/23/1945)

### Lost, Walked 18 Miles

**Jul 8, 1945**

Bill Sears, on a photographic assignment for Western Way Pictures, got lost for about 24 hours after wandering away from the Summerhaven Hotel in Upper Sabino Canyon. “A posse of seven men was sent to look for Sears. . . after the Palisades Ranger Station had been notified.” The search party consisted of four Forest Service employees, led by John H. Hunts, Catalina District Ranger. Sears walked around for much of the day, “and after attempts to find his bearings, tried to go to sleep. He started walking again around two o’clock in the morning because of the intense cold, and wandered in the direction of the Upper Sabino basin. . . .” Ranger Bill Hughes found Sears, who had suffered a bruised side after falling off a bluff. He was taken by horse all the way to the mouth of Sabino Canyon to the Lowell Ranger Station. (Star 7/10/1945)

### B-29 Explodes Near Oracle Junction

**Jul 24, 1945**

“The bodies of six Davis-Monthan airmen, charred beyond recognition, were removed from the wreckage of a B-29 Superfortress. . . after it crashed in the Black Mountain area. . . 14 [sic: 4] miles north of Oracle Junction.” Five others of the 11-man crew escaped by parachute in the split-second between the plane exploding several thousand feet in the air and the time it crashed at 5:30 p.m. It had just taken off from Davis-Monthan and was going on a training flight. It was believed the tragedy was caused by the Number 3 engine exploding. The five men who barely made it out alive, were found dazed and scattered in the desert, with wreckage of their plane strewn over a two-mile area. Rescuers rushed to the scene of the burning debris in ranch vehicles, and military crash trucks and ambulances from both Davis-Monthan and Marana Airfields. Several of the Army vehicles became lost and stuck and ranchers had to then assist them out of the area.

With an airspeed of 400 miles-per-hour, a wingspan of 141 feet, 99 feet long, 23 feet high, and a weight of 140,000 pounds, the B-29 was one of the largest, most powerful warplanes ever built. Between June 24, 1945 and March 26, 1952, there were five crashes of B-29s in the Southern Arizona area, with 36 airmen perishing. (Star 6/25/1945, 7/25/1945, 3/27/1952; Citizen 7/25/1945)

## Medium Bomber Crashes in Rincons

**Aug 9, 1945**

With a crew of two, the twin-engine, Douglas A-20 Havoc medium bomber was on a cross-country training flight to Tucson from Hobbs, New Mexico. With a wingspan of 48 feet, the plane reported in near Willcox at 8:30 p.m., while a heavy thunder storm was rumbling in the area. It failed to make it to Davis-Monthan AAB. A day after it disappeared, “The burned-out wreckage...with no signs of life nearby, was spotted [on the southwest slopes at about 4,000 feet] in the Rincon Mountains, 25 miles east of Tucson...” Major K. P. Kelley, commander of the base’s Second Air Force Key Station No. 4 search and rescue unit, flew over the scene “with intentions of parachuting a doctor to the aid of the crew had there been any indications of life or injured personnel.” Because of the rugged terrain, ground rescuers were forced to make two attempts to reach the downed aircraft. (Citizen 8/11/1945)

## Last Body Found 8 Months Later

**Aug 9, 1945**

Creating one of the single greatest tragedies (now mostly forgotten), in Tucson’ history, a cloudburst five miles upstream took out one complete span of the two-span Three-Mile Bridge on Highway 80 (Old Benson Highway, near where Kino Parkway intersects Ajo Way), four miles south of Tucson. One car just barely stopped in time, its two front wheels hanging over the edge of the deep arroyo. The driver would say that, “a moment later, a car sped by him and dove into the stream.” In the inky blackness, three other vehicles failed to see the gaping hole, they too plunged into the swollen torrent, “25 feet deep and speeding by at the rate of about 30 miles per hour... causing the floor and one railing to fall into the ordinarily dry stream bed.”

Captain Waldon V. Burr of the Arizona Highway Patrol was among the first to arrive and would end up coordinating the search and rescue and soon, the recovery efforts. The first vehicle, he said, “slid into the water and washed about one-half mile downstream, coming to rest on a sandbar.” The second “hurtled down the stream, turning over and over, about three-fourths of a mile.” That driver described how he lost his wife and baby girl as “the car turned over in the churning stream. ‘I had hold of them both but when the car turned over, they were pulled away from me.’ ” A victim that survived from the third auto, said, “ ‘Five of us were hanging on top of the car at one time... I saw my wife disappear as the car was turning over.’ ”

Twenty airmen from Davis-Monthan arrived, along with huge flood lights from the base and later search lights from the Marana Airfield. “With these lights, along with parachute flares, the soldiers, highway patrol, sheriff’s deputies, and a detachment of city policemen searched the rushing waters.” Just before dawn, two women were found drowned, still in a vehicle, a mile downstream. A third victim had floated into someone’s nearby backyard, another was found at 7:00 a.m., up against a post in a field. At noon, a six-month-old boy and an unrelated 7-year-old boy were found dead, close together in the Santa Cruz River near Congress Street, now four miles from the accident scene. At dusk that same day, searching airmen discovered another two men, near where Sunset Road crosses the river. At this point, nine victims had been recovered, the furthest was 25 miles away from the scene at Three-Mile Bridge. But Mrs. Euell Edell, just passing through Tucson from Texas, was still missing.

For the next two weeks, searchers, organized by Highway Patrol Captain Waldon V. Burr, combed and examined wherever it seemed logical. The water had long receded but jumbled logs and debris, mucky ponds and suspiciously fresh mounds of mud and sand, made finding her very

difficult. On August 24, dogs were brought in to search for the 53-year-old grandmother. Locating the woman, however, tapered off over time and groups would look as an opportunity presented itself. Some believed she was buried, maybe never to be found.

On May 1, 1946, over eight months after the calamity at the Three-Mile Bridge collapse on the Benson Highway, two cowboys near Red Rock, forty miles down stream of the accident, stumbled upon a skeleton in the bed of the Santa Cruz River. It only had a bobby pin and bits of clothing for identification, although dental charts might be successful. Mrs. Edell's husband came from his home in Mt. Vernon, Texas, to try and identify his wife. The remains, now in Pinal County jurisdiction, were ultimately assumed to be the missing woman. (Citizen 8/10/1945; Star 8/12/1945, 5/3/1946)

### First (?) Helicopter Crash in Southern Arizona

**Sep 26, 1945**

Possibly the first helicopter to crash in Southern Arizona, or at least first to be reported in the local newspapers took place about 45 miles northwest of Tucson, near Red Rock. Piloted by First Lieutenant Homer D. Hoatson of the Air Transport Command, it was one of two being ferried from Douglas Army Air Base to Santa Rosa, California, with that night to be spent in Coolidge, Arizona. According to the newspaper, Hoatson was not injured but nothing further could be determined about the cause of the accident or the extent of damage done to the aircraft. (Citizen 9/27/1945)

### Forest Service Considers Helicopters

**Jan 1946**

Helicopters were used just a very few times for search and rescue during the latter months of World War II, such as by the Coast Guard on January 3, 1944 and in Burma on April 23–24, 1944. In January, 1946, helicopters were first tested by the US Forest Service to fight forest fires. Flown by the Fourth Air Force search and rescue unit in the Angeles National Forest, they “will fly the craft and try discharging and picking up firefighters by rope ladders. The helicopters will be tested also for fire detection and patrol, game and cattle counts, sowing grass seed in burned over areas, photographing, mapping, and stocking remote mountain waters with game fish.” The very first time a helicopter was used for a civilian search and rescue was on August 5, 1946, in the Angeles National Forest. A Bell-47B removed an injured radio operator trapped on a mountain in the path of the Bryant Fire. (Star 12/10/1945; Farabee, *Death, Daring, and Disaster*)

### The Ramblers Hiking Club

**Feb 1946**

During the week of February 4–8, 1946, “The Ramblers,” the UA student hiking club, received official recognition from the Associated Students of the University of Arizona (ASUA), after a year of the group's informal activity. The president was Paul Vandiver. Over the following decade, it was also known as “Desert Ramblers” and “Arizona Ramblers,” and was a popular club on campus. In the mid-1950s, the “Roma Ramblers” evolved from The Ramblers through the interests of several of the group's stronger hikers, including Tom Harlan, Don Morris, Anita Schmutz, and particularly Eber Glendening, among others. This club had no official status with the University. The name came from their custom of taking a bottle of Roma Wine, a popular wine at that time, on their hikes and peak-bagging trips. They would celebrate the outing and then leave the empty bottle

with a piece of paper with their names inside, stuffed under a rock on top of the peak. Several of the Roma Ramblers soon became very important in Southern Arizona Search and Rescue. (Citizen 2/9/1946; The origin of the name Roma Ramblers seems to be common knowledge among older members of the Southern Arizona hiking community.)

### 55-Year-Old Woman Lost

**Apr 23, 1946**

Suffering from memory issues, it was anybody's guess as to just how 55-year-old Edith McDonald successfully managed to safely wander 12 miles from her home in just three hours, "in the blazing sun." She lived on the far east side of Tucson, near where the desert began at Glenn and Swan Road. Somehow, she ended up inside the caretaker's vacant stone house in Sabino Canyon. The four deputies assigned to look for the woman, began tracking her footprints through the open spaces near her home. They also appealed to Davis-Monthan Air Field for help; the military dispatched two planes to comb the desert from above. The deputies were able to track Mrs. McDonald to the entrance of Sabino Canyon; soon they found the woman semi-conscious inside the temporarily empty building erected by the Civilian Conservation Corps in August 1934. She was taken to the Pima County Hospital for first aid. (Star 4/24/1946; Bill Gillespie 8/30/2021)

### First Accidental Death at Tanque Verde Falls

**Aug 16, 1946**

Enjoying his afternoon cooling off, 16-year-old John Carpenter was spending it with four young friends in Tanque Verde Creek. While swimming directly above the Jim Converse Falls,<sup>5</sup> he slipped climbing out of the lower end of the upper pool, falling one-hundred feet to his death. Two buddies were able to scramble down to Carpenter and move him to a dry spot and then "attempted artificial respiration, without success." Two others, "drove to Tucson Medical Center and phoned the Reilly Mortuary and the Sheriff's Department [sic]."

An Arizona Highway Patrolman soon arrived to confirm the boy's death and a Coroner later authorized removal of his body. "The ambulance crew from the Reilly Mortuary and two of the youths carried the body on a stretcher during falling rain over three waterfalls, through waist deep water, and over rough terrain five miles west to Redington Road. The Sheriff's Department dispatched three men from their maintenance shops who assisted in lowering the body over the series of waterfalls." (Star 8/17/1946)

### 89-Year-Old Woman Lost

**Oct 27, 1946**

"How 89-year-old Mary E. Underwood, wearing only a sweater over her house dress, could survive 19 hours of wandering in the desert in brisk winds and temperatures that fell below freezing most of the time, was puzzling a corps of relieved and chilly searchers..." Last seen at 4:00 p.m. by

<sup>5</sup> Jim Converse was a respected, long-time cattle and horse rancher as well as owner of the Tanque Verde Guest Ranch. His property was near Tanque Verde Creek, on the west edge of Redington Pass. This was the only reference to Jim Converse Falls the author ever saw; more officially, they are called Tanque Verde Falls. On September 29, 1945, Converse shot and killed Francisco Romero, both had been drinking. The following February, Converse was convicted of Manslaughter and sentenced to two to four years in prison. However, he only spent three months there.

her grandson, a hasty search was conducted in the open desert around her home near Swan and Broadway for an hour before authorities were called.

“Several men from the Sheriff’s Department [sic], 20 MPs from D-M field, and about 30 friends and neighbors started an intensive search of the desert, crisscrossing the densely-vegetated area with rays from their flashlights. Fruitless search continued throughout the night, and over an area greater than was thought Mrs. Underwood could have gone.” When it dawned, efforts to find the older woman intensified. “Six horsemen, several cars and men on foot... while two airplanes from the civil air patrol circled overhead.”

At 11:00 a.m., Mrs. Underwood was found, having strayed three miles from home. She was semi-conscious and taken to Tucson Medical Center. The Pima County Undersheriff said, “ ‘You would have to pass within 40 or 50 yards of her to see her in that area. How she survived, I can’t understand... Sunday night we were dressed for the search and still about frozen after two hours in the desert.’ ” (Citizen 11/4/1946)

### Arizona’s First Civilian Helicopter

**Nov 20, 1946**

Edwin J. Montgomery, president of Southern Arizona Airlines, headquartered at Gilpin Airport in Tucson, as well as president of its new subsidiary there, Arizona Helicopter Service, recognized that “Air rescue work in inaccessible places will save lives.” He took possession of a two-place, Bell-47B helicopter in Buffalo, New York on November 20, 1946. Only six weeks before, on October 5, Montgomery and Charles E. Marthens, chief pilot for the airlines, had traveled to Buffalo to take helicopter flying instructions. At this point, neither could fly a helicopter although both were experienced fixed-wing pilots. This was the first commercial helicopter in Arizona and reportedly, might have also been the first in the country. Montgomery trailered his new purchase back to Arizona.

His helicopter arrived just in time so that on November 30, Marthens inaugurated commercial helicopter service in Arizona by air taxiing 62-year-old Arizona Governor Sidney P. Osborn from his home to the Statehouse, a distance of 1 1/2 miles. “In the parking area of the capitol, the governor stepped out, smiling and unruffled, while an estimated 2,000 persons watched.” That same day, Marthens also piloted “Secretary of State Dan E. Garvey from his home to the capital, Corporation Commissioner Yale McFate to the state office building and Joseph T. Melzer, chairman of the citizen’s committee of transportation, to the city hall.”

Montgomery, thoroughly sold on the future of helicopters, convinced the Arizona Corporation Commission of the worth of the machines and in his application with the nation’s Civil Aeronautics Board, he listed some uses of the helicopter. In addition to search and rescue, they were mail delivery, charter work “to small mines, transporting fire fighters for the forest service, and checking irrigation systems.” Both Montgomery and Marthens likely became the first non-military helicopter pilots in Arizona and among the very first in the United States.

The helicopter Montgomery bought had a six-cylinder, air-cooled engine with 175 horsepower, a gross weight of 2,100 pounds and a useful load of 607 pounds at sea level. A 1947 model went to 18,500 feet, but its practical ceiling in Arizona was far less. (Citizen 10/4/1946; Star 11/18/1946, 11/30/1946)



## Miner Trapped

**Dec 7, 1946**

After twenty hours of being trapped by a cave-in Saturday, Elijah M. York, 36, was rescued safely from the Buckeye Copper Mine near Globe. Miners were brought in to help and worked round-the-clock shifts to get to him; that still, however, left his partner, 40-year-old John Orekor, to be saved. “A crew of four men—all that could work in the cramped space—was timbering the chute where the slide occurred to make it safe for rescuers to scale the 30 feet to the stope [an open space] where Orekor was last known to be.”

The State Mine Inspector expressed optimism Orekor could be reached within a few hours and that there was a chance “the entombed man” had been afforded some protection by a bulkhead of rock. By Wednesday, the “few hours” had turned to several days—optimism was replaced by realism.

“The mine inspector said there were still 500 tons of loose material in the stope where Orekor was believed to be and that there was fear it might come thundering down the chute at any minute.” Now on hand to direct the rescuers to the exact spot Orekor was thought to be, was his partner, Elijah M. York. “Meantime, earth, rock and ore that [roared] down the chute where Orekor and York were trapped was being hauled out a ton at a time by a mine team in hope of reaching the imprisoned man from below.” Volunteer crews of fellow miners eagerly rotated through the area’s tight confines, they each realized this could be one of them trapped this far underground.

On day five, “the lessee of the Buckeye Copper Mine... reported earlier that he was in communication with Orekor... but rescue leaders [were] inclined to discount [this] as probably caused by falling rocks. Officials said... Orekor’s condition might not enable him to respond at all times to the frequent efforts to contact him.” There were many setbacks throughout this effort to save Orekor, including loose rock and cave-ins, not to mention the sheer exhaustion and dangerous conditions the miners faced in the cramped, narrow tunnels. “The task is hard and perilous.”

The following Saturday, a full week since the accident, the rescue continued, “with uncertain prospects. Nine hundred tons of muck have been removed from the mine during the search. Slides have undone much of the work of the rescuers, however.” News articles were no longer suggesting he was still alive. “All hope for Orekor’s life has been abandoned by miners and relatives. Whether the body will be located soon was considered a matter of luck. ‘It may be in the next 15 minutes or it may be 15 days,’ said one official.”

Finally, over three weeks after John Orekor and Elijah York were trapped, Orekor was located and removed on the last day of 1946. It was determined he had been killed instantly in the initial cave-in. Rescue crews said “the body apparently had tumbled down the chute along with the ore loosened in the accident. It was found about 375 feet from the mouth of the tunnel... was in fairly good condition, considering how long it had been entombed.”

State Mine Inspector Clifford J. Murdock, “paid tribute to the workers who had [labored] three shifts daily, continually throughout the 24 days since the man was buried.” (Star 12/10/1946, 12/11/1946, 12/12/1946; Citizen 12/11/1946, 12/14/1946, 12/20/1946, 1/1/1947)



## Plane Found Eight Months Later

**Apr 2, 1947**

After refueling that Wednesday morning, the silver, twin-engine Beechcraft Army AT-11, lifted off of Davis-Monthan Army Air Field, enroute to Roswell, New Mexico. During World War II, these twin-tailed “Twin Beech” aircraft were used extensively as bombing, gunnery, and navigation trainers. Departing at 9 a.m., the three crewmen were to arrive four hours later, after reporting in by radio to Biggs Field at Fort Bliss as they passed over it in El Paso. They never arrived. That evening, “twenty planes from four Army air fields were scouring the Southwest territory. . . Five Biggs Field Air Rescue planes were engaged in the search, joined by 15 others from Davis-Monthan, Roswell and March [Air] Field, Calif.” The hunt for the missing craft expanded during the week.

By the following Tuesday, “More than 40 Army Air Force planes. . . [had] covered over 100,000 square miles of southwestern territory in the search for the Army AT-11. . .” And, the search was being conducted from Davis-Monthan. That same morning, the “Wreckage of an airplane which might be the missing AT-11 for which eighth air force search planes have been hunting the past few days was spotted from the air. . . near Mammoth, according to [Pima County] Sheriff Jerry Martin. . . Davis-Monthan field officers left Tucson immediately to investigate, said to be approximately on the Graham-Pinal county line between Copper Creek and Sombrero Butte.” The plane turned out to be a single-engine, two-place AT-6 from Marana which had crashed over four years before. See “Airmen Carried Out on Horseback,” February 13, 1943, on page 95.

It was announced on April 11, Davis-Monthan was no longer coordinating the search; management of rescue efforts was transferred to Biggs Field. With no further clues, an active search for the three missing airmen was trimmed back over time and soon fell out of the news cycle. Over three months passed and the “Parents of the three men offered a \$500 reward [\$6,000 in 2022] for information leading to the discovery of the craft or its occupants.” Prompted into renewing the search, the Army sent two C-47’s from Biggs to Chihuahua City in Mexico, with permission of Mexican military officials. Another four months passed and finally on November 12, a Captain in the Army “on leave from March [sic: Air] Field, Calif., was deer hunting in the Organ Mountains [Soledad Canyon, ten miles east of Las Cruces, New Mexico] when he came across the scattered wreckage of the plane.” (El Paso Times 4/3/1947, 4/8/1947, 7/16/1947, 11/13/1947; Citizen 4/8/1947, 4/9/1947, 4/11/1947)

## Fisherman Lost on Mount Lemmon

**May 24, 1947**

R. E. Gephart, 64, and fellow fisherman, Robert Nordman, were trying their luck in Soldier Lake. Gephart was an assistant manager at Tucson’s Steinfeld’s Department Store. On the way back to their vehicle from the lake, the two men became separated and that evening, the alarm was sounded for the missing Gephart. “A forest ranger described the area as heavily wooded and rocky with one rock ledge succeeding another, making the search laborious.”

On the first day, the rescue party only consisted of five men, three civilians and two Sheriff’s Deputies. They found nothing and Undersheriff M. T. Guiney called Davis-Monthan Air Field for more manpower. The next day, about twenty soldiers joined in and the following day, an additional twenty became involved. On the third day, Gephart was found in the rugged Sabino Canyon, three miles below Soldier Camp.

“The discovery ended a tense three-day search in which the party had been built up, from a handful of searchers, to over 50, on the final day. The Sheriff’s Department [sic] reported that 40 Davis-Monthan field soldiers, six civilians, two Sheriff’s Deputies and several forest rangers were in the search party.” (Star 5/26/1947; Citizen 5/27/1947)

## First Helicopter on Arizona Search

**Jun 21, 1947**

People have been looking for the Lost Dutchman Mine since at least the 1880’s. It is a well-accepted story that it is in the Superstition Mountains northeast of Apache Junction and to this point in time, at least 19 people had died searching for its famed treasure. James A. Cravey, 62, a retired Phoenix photographer with partially crippled legs, became the legend’s twentieth. He told a friend that the mine’s location came to him from a dream he had.

On June 21, at the height of an Arizona summer and in the middle of Phoenix’s Valley of the Sun, Tucson helicopter pilot Charles E. Marthens dropped Cravey off in the Superstition Mountains. He told Marthens he would walk out. He took prospecting equipment and food and water sufficient for eight days. Cravey was never seen alive again.

Marthens was one of only two civilian helicopter pilots (there were few if any military pilots) in Southern Arizona and possibly, even all of Arizona. He was approved to commercially fly a helicopter the previous November and one article stated he had about two-hundred hours at the controls when first involved with Cravey. He was flying a two-person “whirlybird” belonging to Arizona Helicopter Services, based in Tucson.

When the prospector failed to appear on the appointed day, a friend reported this to Maricopa County Sheriff Luther C. “Cal” Boies. Cravey was actually missing in neighboring Pinal County, so Boies contacted Sheriff Lynn Early in Florence. At the request of Sheriff Boies, Early sent in several deputies on July 3 but declared that until they could get Marthens to pinpoint where he had landed Cravey, “It was worse than searching in a haystack...” Marthens was in California and would be able to help on July 5. Cowboys, posse members on horseback, search dogs, and a national guard plane were now involved in the mission. All the while, the temperature in nearby Phoenix was brutal, near 110 degrees every day.

On July 8, Marthens and helicopter owner Edwin J. Montgomery, located Cravey’s camp spot and landed. They found a five-gallon container of water, most of his provisions, and his bedroll. They did not find his gun, canteen, or prospecting tools. Lifting off from the site in La Barge Canyon, the two pilots combed nearby water holes as well looking for signs of Craven, but they discovered nothing. Marthens then flew search dogs and at least one handler into the campsite, but again, they came up blank. And the search effort soon tapered off.

While on a day hike over seven months later, on February 22, 1948, two winter visitors to Phoenix stumbled across the skeleton of James A. Cravey, minus his head. The body was partially screened in a thicket of brush but they did find a wallet with definite identification and brought it back to authorities. Deputies were able to locate the skull the next day. Given the temperatures and frailty of the victim, it was ruled Cravey had died an accidental death. (Star 7/4/1947, 7/7/1947; Citizen 7/4/1947, 11/18/1947, 2/23/1948; Arizona Republic 7/4/1947, 7/9/1947, 2/22/1948)

## Lost Toddler

**Jul 14, 1947**

Dean Lindsay, 2 1/2, and his family lived nine miles south of Tucson. The little boy was last seen playing in the yard about 5:00 p.m. When the lad was finally missed, the parents made a cursory search for their son and his dog, without success, they called the Pima County Sheriff's Department for help.

Under the coordination of Sheriff Jerome P. Martin, "Soldiers from Davis-Monthan, equipped with a large searchlight; nearly all of the members of the sheriff's staff; the 4:00 p.m. to midnight police shift; members of the state highway patrol under Captain Waldon V. Burr; bloodhounds from the Arizona state prison at Florence; and scores of civilians took part in the hunt. In all, more than 300 participated." At 7:10 a.m., little Dean was found unharmed. "Searchers declared they passed within 30 feet of the sleeping boy...but because of the intense darkness failed to see him. Neither did their passing...[by] his canine companion." (Star 7/16/1947)

## First Fatality off Catalina Highway?

**Aug 16, 1947**

Mrs. Earl A. Hoffman, "Evidently uncertain about her ability to negotiate treacherous Mt. Lemmon road curves...died as her 1941 Plymouth sedan tumbled...down a 75-degree slope into a rock strewn canyon creek bed more than 500 feet below the road." The 45-year-old woman might well be the first person to be killed by accidentally going off the new Catalina Highway. At this point in construction of the narrow dirt road, few if any safety guardrails had been installed; driving down it was not for the faint-of-heart, it definitely required confidence, caution, and skill.

The local Coroner, living in the area for 12 years, recalled only one other vehicle having crashed to the bottom of any of the deep canyons along the unpaved road into the Catalina Mountains. He was referring to a Lincoln from two summers earlier, "No trace of any occupants or any evidence of injuries were ever found."

An inmate of the federal prison road gang first spotted the fresh wreck while working. Initially, the foreman believed it to be the rusting hulk of the Lincoln but upon finally looking down, "Sure enough it was one that hadn't been there. So, we went down...and found Mrs. Hoffman's body...at a distance from the mangled Plymouth sedan." They checked for other occupants possibly thrown free; finding none, deputies and a Coroner were summoned.

It took two long afternoon hours in the August heat and Monsoon humidity to wrestle the victim up the brush-covered, steep mountainside. Twenty inmates, four deputies, two ambulance drivers and one Coroner used the so-called Johnson Litter, a full-length wire basket made popular during World War II. It had been borrowed from the Prison Camp. After this challenge was all over, Deputy Richard Blair succinctly summed the brutal effort up, "It was mighty easy going down—but I'd thought I'd never be able make it back up."

With further investigation, deputies discovered Mrs. Hoffman had been afraid to drive the car down from her cabin in Summerhaven. In modest health, she was described as frail. Someone advised her that in coming down, to spare the brakes on her six-year-old car by using the lower gears. Ultimately, however, she hired a Zimmerman Store employee from up there. He drove her down to where she indicated she could handle the last three miles. Her tracks showed she was driving slowly but that her front left tire had gone into the narrow, soft shoulder, pulling her uncontrollably off the unpaved roadway. (Citizen 8/18/1947)

## Missing Mica Hunter

**Aug 23, 1947**

The eccentric, 76-year-old Albert Benedict had not been seen in the Summerhaven area for about a week. Benedict, a colorful but near-penniless character barely making ends-meet around Mount Lemmon was sadly, also now suffering ever-increasing hints of dementia. And he was the focus of a search by “15 to 20 Davis-Monthan soldiers and an undisclosed number of federal prisoners... Undersheriff M. T. Guiney said that, because of Benedict’s age and feebleness, he decided... an organized search should be conducted, since earlier individual efforts had proved futile.”

Albert Benedict had grown up in Tucson and in that August in 1947, he was in search of an elusive rich ledge of mica he remembered discovering while prowling the Santa Catalina Mountains, 23 years earlier. To this end, he’d find an occasional temporary job around Summerhaven, get just enough for a small grub stake, and then wander off. Generally, he would go into the Cañada del Oro—the CDO—on the north side of Mount Lemmon looking for the valuable mineral. Concerned, his neighbors in Summerhaven seemed to regularly look out for him, mostly believing they were protecting him from himself.

A week after he was last seen, Pima County Sheriff Jerome P. Martin, “broadcast a meager description he [had] of the lost man, asking mountain travelers to keep an eye out for him.” Deputies found his footprints near a forest ranger’s riding station in the CDO, providing evidence that he had obtained food and was still likely alive. The search for Benedict, mostly centering on the north side of Mount Lemmon, went on for a full week after he disappeared. But then, almost stealthily, he showed up at the Last Chance Café on North Oracle Road in Tucson. How he got there and where he had been for the previous week, was never quite determined by the Deputy Sheriff who responded to the café owner’s phone call.

After eating a breakfast paid for by the deputy, Benedict would assert, “ ‘I don’t get lost in mountains! I ain’t a green horn... I punch cows around here 20 years. Hell, I’m born in Tucson. I don’t get lost.’ ” However, Undersheriff M. T. Guiney, did not trust this declaration. He “ordered that rangers, highway patrol officers and deputies return Benedict to the sheriff’s office... if they see him roaming the mountain again.” (Citizen 8/28/1947, 8/29/1947, 9/1/1947, 9/5/1947)

## Drownings in Well and Cesspool

**Sep 21, 1947**

Along with a friend, Jesus Chaimea went to visit his uncle in Pascua Village, near where Pueblo High School is today. The 19-year-old Chaimea was sitting on the edge of a low wall around an open, deep well, while his uncle and friend conversed a few feet away. Suddenly, these two men heard unintelligible cries just as Jesus slipped from view, falling into the ninety-foot-deep well. It is very likely the young man was at least knocked unconscious before hitting the water, if not killed outright in the fall. “A wrecker from the S and S Body Shop was hurried to the scene to remove Chaimea’s body.”

A curious point for the author is that neither article cited here mentions exactly how the boy’s body was actually snagged by the metal hook of the wrecker, unless someone went down with it. However, it also seems probable that if someone had actually been lowered by cable down into the well, the newspapers would find that very newsworthy. One of the investigating deputies on this body recovery was Harry Brannon, who 14 months later would be involved with the newly formed Rescue Patrol. See “Rescue Patrol Organized,” November 15, 1948 on page 118.

On the same day that Chaimea died in the well, a 21-month-old boy fell through the flimsy, decayed covering of a cesspool at the home of his grandparents. Donald Taylor was playing near the lightly covered corrugated metal roof over the polluted water when the rotted beams supporting the covering gave way and the boy dropped in. The Tucson Fire Department fire-rescue squad worked at reviving him for over an hour. This cesspool was soon deemed to be of illegal construction.

These two youths died the same day and in a somewhat related manner. Coroner C. W. Gardner and Dr. Lewis A. Howard, the City-County Health Officer, joined forces that day and together, administratively cracked down on the safety of these local residential wells and cesspools. Dr. Howard would state, that where “a helpless child floundered in five feet of filthy water, it appeared that construction had never come to health department attention.” (Citizen 9/22/1947; Star 9/22/1947)

### **“B-29 Makes Funeral Pyre For 12 Airmen”**

**Dec 16, 1947**

The title above pretty well summarizes it up. A B-29 “Superfortress” with twenty airmen from Davis-Monthan aboard had just taken off with a full load of fuel for its non-stop, navigational training flight to the British Island of Jamaica, a 2,300-mile trip. At a cruising speed of 220 mph, it had a range of 3,250 miles. Moments after the 99-foot-long plane lumbered heavily off the western end of the 13,600-foot runway, it crashed in an open stretch of desert, narrowly missing a large cluster of homes. The normal complement of the bomber’s crew was 11, but the nine extra airmen aboard were maintenance personnel for problems fixable while in flight.

“Firefighting and rescue units, responding to the call of tower operators who observed the plane fall and burn, worked long and frantically to bring the blaze under control. Equipment was taken over roadless portions of the desert to the point about two miles southwest of the field where the crash occurred.” It was suspected that one or maybe even two of the aircraft’s four engines had failed. Surprisingly, the fuel did not explode on impact, however, it was 15 minutes for the first explosion and then another 15 minutes for the second. Before the first blast remarkably, eight men staggered out of the wreckage, with only one being seriously injured. Their location in the aircraft could be the only explanation for this miracle. Arizona Highway Patrolmen and fire and rescue equipment from Tucson also responded, but it was quickly destroyed, although smoldering for 12 hours. Mercifully, at least, the eight who died were instantly killed. (Citizen 12/17/1947; Star 12/17/1947)

### **Local Plane Disappeared Returning from Grand Canyon**

**Feb 28, 1948**

About 3:30 p.m., Saturday, two very experienced pilots left Gilpin’s Grand Canyon Airport and were believed to be nonstop to Tucson. NC-67363, the green and silver, single-engine, 450-horsepower Vultee BT-13 [Basic Trainer] was piloted by William H. S. Jacobs, 43, in the tandem rear seat was 25-year-old James W. Shields. Jacobs was manager of the Gilpin Airport in Tucson [Walter Douglas owned both airports and founded Grand Canyon Airlines] for six years and Shields was a Flight Instructor for Douglas, and also based and lived in Tucson. He had been wounded in France while serving for 3 1/2 years as a Sergeant in the Army’s mechanized cavalry. The plane, a tail-dragger [small rear wheel], was a trainer for both the Army Air Corps and Navy; the same model aircraft used by Army student aviators at Tucson’s Ryan Airfield. They were available cheaply after the War. And, this flight would have been about two hours, that is, if a snowstorm hadn’t interfered.

Tuesday morning, after the storm dissipated, more than a dozen planes from the Tucson area and at least that many from several other cities around the State would begin investigating thousands of square miles between the Grand Canyon and Tucson. The search would be coordinated by the Tucson Squadron of the Civil Air Patrol, commanded by Lieutenant J. S. Kipnis, based at Gilpin Airport, home to both Jacobs and Shields. Gilpin Airport later changed names to Freeway Airport and was located near Prince Road and I-10.

“The air search got under way from Tucson just as the sun rose, with pilots and observers carefully briefed on the areas they were assigned to cover along the Verde Valley route. At the same time, it was reported from Gilpin that identical missions left Phoenix’s Sky Harbor, (7 planes) the Prescott municipal airport, and the Gilpin airport at Grand Canyon. Associated Press dispatches from other Northern Arizona cities said that the search was also undertaken from the field at Williams and the Flagstaff municipal airport (6 or 7 planes).”

Wednesday, fresh snow was falling in wide areas in Northern Arizona, discouraging to volunteer fliers eager to begin a second, weary day. Pilots of the four CAP planes which had been waiting around since 5 a.m. for the “go-ahead from the weatherman,” left Tucson’s Gilpin Airport three hours later, heading for Prescott. Six inches of snow fell there overnight and would be plowed by the airport. Flagstaff reported 11 inches and Winslow, 12. The fresh snow would prevent as an extensive search as the day before.

There were now 11 planes from Tucson on this mission. Additionally, “Davis-Monthan airfield officials announced several B-29’s and AT-6’s were joining the search.” And in the area the plane was believe downed, a B-29 pilot reported, “ground winds are reaching velocities of 60–70 miles per hour over an 8,500-foot-high terrain, making coverage by small planes almost impossible.” Later in the day, two C-47’s and one B-25 from Davis-Monthan, were joining the mission. “Planes from all of Tucson’s air schools and fields joined with private planes in the search. Walter Douglas, president of Gilpin Air Lines, Ltd. . . expressed appreciation to all participants for their aid.”

In Phoenix, the Executive Officer for the CAP’s Arizona Wing, said, “five planes from the fighter school at Williams field, three from Phoenix, and five from Tucson had been assigned to search an area south of Payson.” This was in response to several reports from there of a small plane “coughing,” as it passed over between 8 and 9 p.m., Saturday. During the next two days, several wrecks were spotted partially hidden by snow in the now extensive search area; they turned out to be remains of “wartime training crashes.” But, also near Payson, two fires had reportedly been seen on a mountain about ten miles southwest of Payson. This proved false. Now, with no concrete leads, after a week of searching and with over a score of planes involved every day, the search would wind down. This had been, “all-hands-on-deck.”

On March 9, ten days after Jacobs and Shields went missing, the CAP announced they were stopping their efforts. But then, the CAP did not totally stop searching; this was a high-visibility search and, also had political input.

“The Tucson squadron of the Civil Air Patrol has lessened but not abandoned its activities in search operations, Squadron Commander J. S. Kipnis stated. . . he would put full squadron strength into the air at any time a lead on the missing plane was reported. Approximately the same number of planes that have been used daily since the search began March 2 will continue operations as weather conditions will permit, and many of the fliers will be C.A.P. members. . . .”

Finally, after all these many hours and sacrifices, facing days of dangerous snowstorms and high winds, the two men and their crashed plane were found. On Sunday, March 14, nearly two weeks after William H. S. Jacobs and James W. Shields, left the Grand Canyon, they and their aircraft



were found on the side of a small knoll ten miles northeast of Williams, Arizona. The Gilpin Airport at the Grand Canyon is actually located near Red Butte, south of the park and forty miles north of Williams.

“The rancher who found them, about 4:30 p.m. and rescue workers reported it appeared they had attempted to return to Grand Canyon, because of bad weather, when they ran into the knoll. Although the rise was not a prominent one, Douglas said, strong winds and storm-reduced visibility combined to drive them into it.” Jacobs was married with three sons and Shields was also married with a baby son. (Star 3/4/1948, 3/8/1948, 3/10/1948, 3/16/1948; Citizen 3/2/1948, 3/3/1948, 3/4/1948, 3/6/1948, 3/9/1948, 3/15/1948)

## Deputy Falls 500 Feet in Sabino Canyon

**Aug 9, 1948**

John D. Anderson, 33, an investigator for the Pima County Sheriff’s Department, “plunged 500 feet to his death in Upper Sabino Canyon,” while assisting on the technical rescue of Guy L. Rockefeller, Jr., of Tucson. The 15-year-old youth had become trapped on a ledge the day before, while trying to avoid swimming across a pool in the stream. Anderson, who had a wooden right leg from a motorcycle accident during high school, had worked his way down to the lad from above, using a rope. The deputy reached the boy and tied the three-hundred-foot-long rope around his waist. The deputy was ascending some 25 feet to the other rescuers when he miscalculated and pulled on the rope, without himself being tied in. When the rope jerked, he lost his grip and fell, striking several ledges and landing in a pool at the base of the cliff. This fatal fall—showing Anderson in mid-air—was caught in a photograph by *The Arizona Daily Star* photographer, who actually witnessed the tragedy.

The recovery of Anderson’s body took seven more hours, complicated because he landed in the “deepest pool in the whole canyon, known as the ‘old dam site pool.’ ” In addition to “all the deputies that were not on duty [brought in] ... a group of 73 soldiers from Davis-Monthan plus officers and military police were added to the group. A Red Cross unit ... took over the feeding of the workers ... As the [party of four] divers would tire, the men with grappling hooks ... would go to work ... At 4:30, Dunn, a merchant patrolman, on his third cast succeeded in finding the body under the overhanging rocks on the western side of the pool.”

“At this point the D-M soldiers arrived and were instrumental in carrying the body to the road on the canyon rim. A helicopter had been on deck to bring the body out but the canyon thermals made it impossible to put the ‘copter down into the canyon, so that pilot, Charles Marthens, used his craft only to bring water up to the workers over a trail that took over an hour in walk, but only five or six minutes to fly.”<sup>6</sup> Deputy Anderson was survived by his wife Suzanne, his parents and two brothers.

On the day that Anderson died, *The Arizona Daily Star* photographer Sam Levitz was taking several photos of the rescue, capturing Deputy Anderson falling to his death. For this series of photos, Levitz was rewarded with a two-page spread in the August 20, 1948, *Life Magazine*. The photo was also covered “by more than 600 newspapers throughout the country.” In four more years, Levitz would resign from the newspaper and begin selling appliances and household furniture, resulting in a national chain of outlets. (Star 8/10/1948, 8/20/1948)

<sup>6</sup> This may be the first time a helicopter was employed in a Southern Arizona SAR.



## 70-Year-Old Disappears

**Nov 3, 1948**

Mrs. Carrie Gates disappeared from her home in the 5800 block of East Fairmount; on the far southeastern edge of Tucson, but yet in the county. Her disappearance entailed an eight-day search by the Sheriff's Special Deputies, led by Sam Sloan, Chief Special Deputy. Originally, they searched east of Country Club Road to Wilmot Road, near Speedway. This was the first time the Special Deputies had been used by the Sheriff's Department and they had an airplane aiding them.

“ ‘We have done all that is in our power to do to find Mrs. Gates,’ said Jerome P. Martin, sheriff. ‘We have checked every rooming house and hotel in Tucson. Deputies on horseback have searched the desert as far as Sabino canyon. A house-to-house check was made by deputies for ten blocks on either side of her home. . . All railroad and bus ticket agents have been questioned. No cab driver remembers Mrs. Gates. If she is in Tucson, she must be staying with friends not known by her family.’ ”

On January 31, 1949, the decomposed body of Mrs. Gates was found “about 10 miles southeast of municipal airport. . . [a rancher] found the body scattered over a 100-yard radius while gathering wood. . . ‘It is my opinion that she just wandered out there and perished,’ ” according to Coroner Clark H. Johnson. (Star 11/11/1948, 2/1/1949)

## Rescue Patrol Organized

**Nov 15, 1948**

An organizational meeting was held at Musicians Hall to create the Rescue Patrol for Pima County. It evolved from what was formerly known as the Sheriff's Posse, although previously also referred to as Special Deputies. They discussed plans for equipping the group more completely. Among the intended purchases were an army-type ambulance equipped with two-way radios, stretchers, block and tackle, asbestos suit, and mountain climbing and resuscitating equipment. “The members will be specially trained in firefighting, first aid and other tasks needed in rescue work. Funds for activities of the patrol will be raised by dues paid by the 50 to 60 members as well as by sponsoring rodeos, dances and social functions. Sam Sloan is now chief of the patrol and Sheriff Jerome Martin is honorary chief.” Sloan was a civic-minded, private South Tucson small businessman, serving as a volunteer and not as a paid deputy with the Pima County Sheriff's Department. (Citizen 11/16/1948)

## Deputy Carries Man on His Back

**Nov 23, 1948**

Late afternoon, Frederick DeChanz was seriously injured when he fell from a thirty-foot-high ledge in Upper Sabino Canyon. Hiking by himself, he was finally located at midnight by a friend, who went looking for him. Deputy R. G. Vance led the initial response, soon followed by Harry Brannon, leading the newly formed Rescue Patrol. “The deputies broke through the brush into the canyon.” Sergeant Brannon stationed his men at two-hundred-yard intervals over the freshly broken trail to facilitate the return. “Because the trail was so rocky and narrow, Vance decided it would be impossible to carry DeChanz out on a stretcher. He picked up the 190-pound DeChanz and carried him ‘piggy-back’ for one-half mile. . . .” (Star 11/25/1948)

## Coed Rescued After Four Days

**Nov 23, 1948**

A 22-year-old University of Arizona coed went for a hike to Window Rock by way of Sabino Canyon. Phyllis Jo Farrand was camping in Upper Sabino and was on her way back to her campsite when she developed a cramp and was stuck. She spent the night out without anything and then it began to rain and she grew weaker. “She tried to crawl a mile, realizing she would be hard to find at such a distance from the trail. . . managed to light a small fire, but wet from the rain and suffering from exposure and pain, she could do no more for herself.”

She was discovered by a trio of teenage boys, when they found her and her small dog, “She was in a damp sleeping bag and was shivering with cold.” Two sheriffs went out at midnight to get to her, carrying a stretcher. They were able to carry her part way before the rest of the rescue squad arrived. She was admitted to Tucson Medical Center in serious but not critical condition. (Citizen 11/27/1948)

## Sheriff’s Mounted Posse Is Formed

**Jan 1949**

There is hardly an early-day Big Screen Western Movie that did not have a posse by the Sheriff or the townspeople, to chase after bad guys or bank robbers. And in real-life, the newspapers in the region were awash with those same kinds of posses, performing the same civic function, even way into the early-half of the Twentieth Century. See “Largest Search in Southern Arizona,” February 18, 1918, on page 50.

On December 23, 1948, Pima County Sheriff Jerome P. Martin received a registered Palomino horse along with a hand-tooled and silver-mounted saddle, bridle, and martingale. It was a gift “from a group of friends.” In receiving it Martin said he was going to organize a Palomino mounted posse for Tucson’s Rodeo Parades. And in January, Sheriff Martin did just that. The uniformed riding group had expanded to 25 men, all with Palominos and silver-studded saddles, and they looked good and won awards. At the time, it was just ceremonial, such as parades. After that first Parade, the longest non-motorized parade in the country, they began participating around the state, such as in Douglas on April 2.

It does not seem Sheriff Martin used his mounted posse for SAR, at least nothing that made the local newspapers. But in 1950, he lost the election to Frank Eyman, a more pragmatic, practical administrator, who would soon use “his” posse on searches. See “11-Year-Old Wanders Away from Mount Lemmon Church Camp,” August 1, 1951, on page 135. (Citizen 12/24/1948; Star 2/1/1949, 3/24/1949)

## Rescue Patrol Rescues “Pooch”

**Apr 6, 1949**

“Pooch” was the adored pet of Lee and Lorna Farnell, two children living on Tucson’s south side. When the little dog was not there when they came home from school and then missed dinner that evening, the kids became worried. The next afternoon the two set out to find their canine friend. “About a quarter of a mile south of their home, near an old abandoned shack they heard the muffled whimpers of Pooch coming from the old open well.”

Sam Sloan, chief of the Pima County Rescue Patrol, was contacted and along with three other members, went to the aid of both the children and the dog. One of the patrol was a “lasso expert,” which was good since Pooch was in a one-hundred-foot-deep hole. The bottom of the pit was covered with trash, probably preventing the animal from becoming seriously hurt. At first, the four men tried to use a spotlight to penetrate the gloom of the shaft, but this did not work very well so they waited until dark. “Now they could see the dog crawling about amid the debris. But seeing him was one thing. Maneuvering a looped rope about his mid-section was another.” But after five hours of work, the ex-marine lasso expert succeeded “and the dog was brought to the surface squirming, and yelping until freed to meet his masters.” The Rescue Patrol later covered the five-foot-wide opening to the well. (Star 4/8/1949)

## Boy From Ajo Gets Lost

**May 15, 1949**

“Only a few drops of water remained in the canteen when a search party found him about daybreak this morning [May 17], 12 miles south of the camp from which he had wandered.” Him refers to 9-year-old Albert Merle, Jr., of Ajo. His father was a hard rock miner and he and two younger siblings and Albert’s mother were out prospecting and camping over the weekend, halfway between Gila Bend and Ajo. Albert had been the subject of a widespread search by land and air after he became lost. “...the boy started prospecting, then suddenly found himself in strange terrain. He apparently began walking in circles and members of the posse [that found him] said he must have covered many miles in his wanderings.”

Albert luckily paid attention to the desert survival tips that his father had been teaching him recently.

“The first thing he did was to save his water. He drank the water a sip at a time from the canteen. He ate hardened sap, the ‘desert candy’ that exudes from the mesquite trees. He broke open a barrel cactus to supplement his meagre water supply. He told of hiding from ferocious javelinas... and of how he had taken what little rest he had during midday. He kept traveling at night both to avoid the sun and to keep wild animals from finding him asleep.”

The boy had seen two airplanes flying low over the desert and was waving, even spelling out the word “HELP” with rocks in the hope that they would return. The Maricopa County Sheriff’s Air Posse had sent six planes and another two had come from Gila Bend and Ajo. His mother also kept vigil by keeping bonfires burning on a hilltop all the night before. Total, there were at least sixty searchers in the field when finally found by a mounted posse after 42 hours of being gone. He was taken to Gila Bend and examined by a local doctor, “who advised the boy be kept in bed on a liquid diet for a few days. ‘He seemed sort of dirty and sunburned around the eyes, but that was the only ill effect I could find,’ the doctor said.” (Phoenix Republic 5/17/1949, 5/18/1949, 5/19/1949; Star 5/18/1949)

## Deputy Made Head of Rescue Squad

**Jun 15, 1949**

Sheriff Jerome P. Martin appointed one of his full-time deputies, Harry “Bud” Brannon, as head of the Pima County Rescue Squad; evolving first from “Special Deputies,” then “Special Posse,” and “Rescue Patrol.” These titles seemed to have been used interchangeably with the press. Unlike Sam

Sloan, the then private-citizen leader of the group, Brannon was a paid employee of the county. According to Sheriff Martin:

“Brannon will be in charge of all operations. . . and will supervise a training program now being prepared. . . this was the first step in the reorganization of the squad. . . Our rescue squad needs men of various abilities. . . we need mountain climbers, men experienced in water rescue and men experienced in tracking. Lon E. Walters, state prison warden, is prepared to make available two trained bloodhounds.

“... the present squad has some equipment available but it is not sufficient for the work that he plans. . . a radio equipped car is being readied for the squad and in the future, he will have walkie-talkies, flare equipment and other items necessary in this type of work. Due to present and possibly future shortages of deputies, the rescue squad will be vital to law enforcement in Pima County. . . we hope to develop these volunteer workers into a trained and efficient organization that will be able to handle any emergency.”

Sheriff Martin added that the group will be provided blue denim uniforms with special shoulder patches and badges. (Citizen 6/15/1949)

## Helicopter Destroyed by Flames

**Jun 20, 1949**

A gas line onboard broke when the small helicopter crashed that Monday morning, bursting into flames within a foot of Hugh O. Walker’s head. Narrowly escaping a fiery death, the 26-year-old Texas oil representative was directing a survey for a pipe line near Silverbell, west of Tucson. Richard Murthart, the pilot of N8109H, was thrown clear when the two-seat craft hit the ground. The 23-year-old escaped with bruises, but Walker would be admitted to Saint Mary’s Hospital with a skull fracture.

Edwin Montgomery, the president of Arizona Helicopter Service, “was the hero of the occasion, dragging Walker from his seat in the aircraft an instant before the gasoline tank exploded. Walker was unconscious when carried to safety.” Montgomery and another oil company employee were in a Jeep 450 yards away observing and had sprinted up the hill to rescue Walker. “Working feverishly, the Tucsonan released the safety belt holding Walker and dragged him to safety seconds before the gasoline exploded. The helicopter, valued at \$22,000, was completely destroyed by the flames.”

Witnesses said, “Murthart was flying straight and level when he lost his directional control. Turning off the rotor power he started to let the plane settle to a landing. Then a portion of one of the rotors was lost and it began to drop. The pilot was forced to turn on the rotor power, swinging the plane in circles, but easing the fall.” The plot thickens, however.

That afternoon, the *Tucson Daily Citizen* newspaper sent Reggie Russell, a staff photographer out to take several “photographic exposures of the wreckage. He was told he would be shot, if he came on the property.” He wisely backed off and the next morning, he returned, this time accompanied by Pima County Sheriff, Jerry Martin, newspaper publisher William H. Johnson, and George Rosenberg, a writer for the paper. The photos were taken but the group was told by another man that he would “ ‘spoil the pictures.’ ” When first seen this security guy was wearing a revolver in a holster but when approached by the Sheriff, he had taken it off and quietly stowed it behind the seat of his vehicle.

It was then learned that day, the reason for prohibiting pictures was there were “secret instruments that had been mounted on the helicopter. He [the guard] said the instruments were scattered through the scene of the crash and would have been certain to be in the picture.” Which they were when the photos of the crash were published the next day. “The equipment was related to geo-physicists and geologists doing exploration work. . . .”

On the following June 12, a \$50,000 suit was filed in Superior Court by Mr. Walker, against the helicopter company. “Walker claimed that he was injured when the helicopter fell from an altitude of 150 feet and crashed.” On June 15, 1951, “Hugh O. Walker vs. Arizona Helicopter Service complaint for damages was ‘dismissed with prejudice.’” (Star 6/21/1949, 6/15/1951; Citizen 6/21/1949; Arizona Republic 6/13/1950)

## **Rescue Patrol Mans First Aid Station in Sabino Canyon**

**Sep 12, 1949**

Members of the Pima County Rescue Patrol graduated from a “12-hour advanced” Red Cross First Aid program and would begin staffing a first aid station in Sabino Canyon that coming weekend and would do so throughout the remainder of the year. The class was the largest since the war with 39 graduates, most belonging to the Patrol. Harry Brannon, head of the Patrol indicated they’d be located at the Rock House at the end of the paved road at the mouth of Sabino Canyon. “A radio-equipped car will be on hand Saturday and Sunday.” (Star 9/13/1949)

## **Rescuer Lowered 500 Feet**

**Oct 30, 1949**

Wally Lundholm, a 20-year-old hunting deer on Mt. Kimball, “was trapped for 13 hours on an outcropping ledge 500 feet down the side of a sheer cliff, with a drop of 1,500 feet below him to the canyon floor.” At 10:00 a.m., the young man fell after, “‘A rock went out from underneath me. . . I slid down about 12 feet and could not get back up. I then tried to get to the canyon bottom. After an hour of skidding, slipping and clawing for holds I reached that ledge and couldn’t get further. I was hung up.’” Three long hours passed before he finally got the attention of two other hunters. At first, they thought he was joking around until they spotted “his tiny speck” far above them.

Pima County Rescue Patrol Chief Harry Brannon was actually at the Pima County Fair, manning the Patrol’s Information Booth when notified about the accident. Within three hours, Brannon and three other rescuers were standing on the spot Lundholm had slid from. It was almost dark and, after determining the lad was safe, Brannon decided to wait until morning. However, when one-thousand feet of rope arrived, shortly followed by a two-million-candle power searchlight mounted in a vehicle far below, Brannon decided to go for it. A 23-year-old University of Arizona Junior, Jim Leader, “let himself down on a rope. . . 450 feet, tossed the rope on down to Lundholm, and told him how to tie the double-bowline knots about his body.” With eight men on the upper end, they were able to pull Lundholm to safety and then were able to repeat the process for Leader. There were forty men involved in the rescue. (Citizen 10/31/1949)

## Student Rescued from Catalinas

**Nov 26, 1949**

The wife of Eldon Dean Prichard, 22 and a senior at the University of Arizona, raised the alarm when her husband did not return on schedule. Saying he was an “Expert woodsman and mountaineer...can’t possibly be lost...he is always taking chances and he might have fallen off something.” Two of his friends and three members of the Sheriff’s Rescue Patrol soon went into Upper Sabino Canyon to search for the man, now missing for two days. The two women friends suspected he might have taken refuge in a shallow cave they had all been to before and so the two were able to find it quickly. He had come down with a severe case of gastritis and was unable to travel very far, so took shelter in the cave. The stricken Prichard was placed on a horse of the Rescue Patrol and carried out. (Citizen 11/28/1949)

## Rescue Patrol Seeks “Angel”

**Dec 1949**

“The rescue patrol of the Pima County Sheriff’s Department [sic] is industriously hunting a fairy godmother—or godfather.” Deputy Sheriff Harry Brannon, head of the group, was asking for support from the general public to get “walkie-talkies.” “‘The patrol has borrowed this equipment in its last two rescue efforts,’ according to Sheriff Jerome P. Martin.” At the time there were reportedly one-hundred members of the unit. “All members have taken advanced courses in life saving, artificial respiration and the like...Some are expert mountaineers and trained in rescue work. Others are skilled in riding through rugged country. Still others are expert swimmers...Members come from all ranks of life and include professional men, University of Arizona students, ex-service men and cowboys.” (Star 12/7/1949)

## 100 UA Students Trapped

**Dec 10, 1949**

In bold, wartime-sized letters, the front-page headline of the *Tucson Daily Citizen*, read, “Snow Traps 100 UA Students.” The Delta Delta Delta Sorority hosted their second annual dinner and dance, a Saturday afternoon and evening gala, at the lodge in Summerhaven. Ninety-two young women and their escorts, along with four chaperones, traveled into the Catalinas by twenty vehicles. Someone in charge, however, was “asleep at the wheel,” when it came to the very basics of planning and situational awareness.

The night before the event, the evening newspaper read, “Snow was reported falling on Mount Lemmon last night. Starting at 5:45 p.m., it quickly blanketed the mountain top with two to four inches of snow.” The morning newspaper then said, the “lowest barometric pressure in Tucson’s history, 26.83 inches of mercury, was measured yesterday as a heavy wind and rain storm swept the city.” But up they drove anyway. Sometime between dinner and dancing, not too surprisingly, they became trapped by the ensuing blizzard. And of course, communications with the city from up there failed when the telephone lines went down. It was not until frantic parents began calling the Sheriff’s Department late that night did officials even learn of the scene unfolding on Mount Lemmon.

After chaining up, Deputies Harry Brannon and Richard T. Tripp of the Sheriff’s Patrol finally reached the stranded revelers by mid-afternoon of the next day. The two had spent many hours

dodging fallen trees and sliding along treacherous icy roads, ultimately following the first snowplow into Summerhaven. Of course, the young people were just fine, having all slept on the floor of the lodge with a large fire roaring to keep everyone warm. “Chaperones firmly segregated the students—boys one place, girls in another with a [line] between.” It was quite an adventure for all involved.

The important part of this entry, however, is that in a follow up article ten days later, Deputies Brannon and Tripp used this specific incident to again tout the critical need for equipment for the sixty volunteers of the Pima County Sheriff’s Patrol. This incident gave them “a taste of winter-type rescues their group may be called upon to perform later this season. Some later call for rescue might spell disaster, however. That’s the time the patrol will need the equipment it now lacks—the shortage could prove fatal for some skiing party, tourists or casual week-end driver caught unprepared on the surrounding mountain ranges.”

Patrol Chief William “Bud” Brannon went on, “If we could raise about \$2,000, we’d be off to a flying start... some of the stuff we need—is just like hospitalization insurance. You never need it until an emergency, and then you need it... They [Brannon and Tripp] serve without pay or reward. That doesn’t bother them—but the lack of equipment does.” Brannon would go on, adding, they required:

“a four-wheel drive weapons carrier of about two-ton capacity; walkie-talkie FM radios; six portable spotlights; 2,000 feet of climbing rope; a high-pressure pump and fog-type fire hose nozzle; a cutting torch and cylinders; camping equipment; a resuscitator; first aid kits; and large canteen. The radios we have now are on loan from the manufacturer and our other equipment has been either loaned or donated.” (Citizen 12/12/1949, 12/22/1949)



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# CHAPTER 8

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1950–1959

## SARA Evolves from Civil Defense

### 1950–1958

From 1950 to 1958, SARA gradually evolves from the Civil Defense and gained its own identity. See Section 18.2, titled “A Brief History of SARA”, on page 539.

## Father Holds Sleeping Boy on Ledge

### Jan 8, 1950

“A frantic father desperately climbed about on the face of a crumbling stone cliff in the Catalina mountains. . . to save his 14-year-old son, trapped on a ledge 350 feet above a canyon floor.” Edwin Stone and his family were spending Sunday afternoon at the Pontatoc Picnic Grounds, at the end of Swan Boulevard. Edwin, Jr., along with several other young friends were scrambling on the ridge above them, when the teenager yelled for help. The boy’s father responded. Then, even after he told his son to take off his shoes for better gripping, there was still nothing but smooth rock above and below the boy. Telling the other youngsters to go for help, the senior Stone “lowered himself to his son’s ledge, clawing and scrambling for foot and handholds in the rock as he went down without a rope.”

Mrs. Stone quickly reached the nearby Pontatoc Ranch, where the owner, Link Wilson, grabbed a 130-foot rope and went back to the cliff to help while a friend of his notified the sheriff’s department. It was now 9:00 p.m. and long after dark. Wilson was able to get one end of the rope down to the father who then tied the boy to it. Father Stone went hand over hand up the rope to a more secure ledge, “and pulled his son 50 feet up to it.” When the Sheriff’s Department finally arrived at midnight, they discovered there was very little room on which to work and raise the boy and his father. “By then the father was holding his shocked and sleepy son in his arms.” It took two more hours of trial and error to finally get both father and son up to safety. Mr. Stone, speaking to the deputies that responded, told them, “The whole purpose of this hike was to teach the kids how to handle themselves in the mountains.” (Citizen 1/9/1950)

## Barbecue to Aid Rescue Patrol

**Feb 5, 1950**

The Pima County Sheriff's Rescue Patrol held a benefit barbecue picnic and dance at the County Fair Grounds. "Six whole steers will roast into succulent barbecue...for the benefit of the...equipment fund. 'We're going to take time out from climbing mountains after people and throw a real whing-ding,' Patrol Chief Harry Brannon said." He went on to say, "All money from the sale of tickets will be used for new ropes, lights, a walkie-talkie radio and other gear. 'The walkie-talkie we're using now is on loan to us—and we sure need one.' " Although some two-thousand people were expected to attend, there was no follow up article saying how much money was raised from this benefit. (Citizen 1/31/1950)

## First Aid Station for Pets

**Feb 10, 1950**

Charles L. McPherson, Regional Director of the Phoenix-Rocky Mountain Humane Association, conceived a rescue center for missing pets, principally dogs, somewhere in the Arizona desert. Joining with McPherson was "an oil company that operates a service station at [Oracle Junction]." Owner Ralph Staughton, a dog fancier, loved the idea.

"His employees will care for animals brought to the station until they can be turned over to the Tucson humane society... Nucleus of the rescue unit, provided by the humane association, is an animal aid kit containing food, pans for food and water, a leash, collars of various sizes, medical supplies, bandages, tape, towels and a letter of instruction telling motorists where sick or injured animals can receive care. W. A. VanTuyle, manager of the station, will give emergency aid to any animal found in his territory." (Citizen 2/10/1950)

## First Aid Station in Sabino Canyon

**Jun 4, 1950**

The Pima County Sheriff's Patrol set up a first aid station in Upper Sabino Canyon, located in the ranger's home. Under the leadership of Bud Brannon, the patrol was to maintain four members at the canyon during the weekends for the rest of the summer. "Complete first-aid facilities and mountain and water rescue equipment will be available." (Citizen 6/3/1950)

## Superfortress Burns Over Galiuro Mountains

**Jul 13, 1950**

Only twenty minutes from landing at Davis-Monthan, a B-50 Bomber caught fire, fifty miles east of Tucson. One of the four engines on the huge aircraft exploded, forcing the ten-man crew to bail out over the nearly inaccessible Galiuro Mountains. The accident took place just after midnight but it was not until daybreak that the first rescue party was able to finally reach the remote area. Guided by two local ranchers and assisted by Arizona Highway Patrolmen, rescuers in jeeps, ambulances, and a weapon carrier were only able to get to within four miles before they had to hike in. Several horses were also brought in. There were so few identifiable pieces of the wreckage, it was hard to identify what it was.

With first light, three airmen were seen on a ridge, a mile away from the blackened area on Bassett Peak, all seemingly in good condition. By that mid-afternoon, all of the crew had been accounted for. Five were able to walk out under their own power, one had a broken leg and was carried out by hand, three men were injured but could ride horseback, and one crewman was killed. (Citizen 7/13/1950)

**“...walked and stumbled 32 miles...”**

**Aug 20, 1950**

The father of 8-year-old Gary McCarthy had taken his family on a Sunday outing in the desert near the village of Oracle, north of Tucson. There were a great many mines in the area and the father, Timothy, was interested in seeing one on the property of a friend. They were making a day of it, despite the 100 degrees registering in nearby Tucson. Shortly before the noon meal, father and son went hunting, Gary carried his trusty BB gun. Tim got a rabbit and Gary took it back to camp. The boy’s mother said, “ ‘Don’t go away.’ ” But, hearing his father’s voice, strolled off. “He walked and walked, but no dad. Puzzled, he walked some more. Hours later—‘I guess it was when I got on Honeydew Mountain’—he decided he was lost.” His parents, however, had sounded the alarm long before that.

“By evening more than 100 Sheriff’s Deputies [sic] and volunteer searchers, headed by Pinal County Sheriff Lynn Early, had started raking the desert in a widespread search for the boy.” After dark, they were sticking mostly to the sandy washes in hopes of seeing his small tracks or the smaller prints of his canine companion, a three-month-old springer spaniel puppy named “Lady.” “The ground party worked through the night using spotlights from sheriffs’ patrol cars to illuminate the desert. Headquarters for the effort was in Oracle,” which is in Pinal County.

On Monday, the first full day of the search, bloodhounds joined in, loaned from Arizona State Prison in Florence, the County Seat. In addition to the great many men on foot, there were now posses on horseback, in cars, and several search planes from the Pima County Sheriff’s Flying Squadron. Only nine weeks before, Sheriff Jerome P. Martin reconstituted the air patrol, previously disbanded at the beginning of the Second World War. See “Sheriff’s Air Patrol, Flying Squadron, and Aero Squadron,” September 1, 1938, on page 82. One small plane crashed, caught in a downdraft while landing for lunch near Oracle Junction. “Two men in the plane were injured and were carried by ambulance to the Tucson medical center.” Later in the day, two planes from the Civil Air Patrol, now joined the search.

It turns out, however, the youngster was found that afternoon about 2:30 p.m., curled up in the shade of a Palo Verde Tree, about nine miles northwest of Oracle Junction.

“T. C. Kinsey, an experienced desert tracker and a deputy sheriff at Mammoth... and Jimmy Van Winkle, a guard at the Arizona state penitentiary, had been trailing the boy’s footprints in the sand since 6:00 p.m. the evening before. Bloodhounds from the prison were used to track the boy over the rough heat-ridden desert. Pinal County sheriffs’ deputies estimated he had walked and stumbled 32 miles, traveling in a wide, aimless circle until he collapsed under the tree.”

Gary was under the impression he had been in the desert 2 1/2 days and told of attempts to kill a bird with a pocket knife to get some food. Later, he lost the knife and about five of his 65 pounds and was described as “half-delirious, thirsty and hungry,” although, was coherent and happy to see the searchers. He was taken to a nearby ranch to be reunited with his overjoyed parents. “...one

of the deputies who had aided in the hunt, a big gruff weather-beaten man, looked at Gary lying on the bed. Wordlessly he handed the boy his own pocket knife and walked out, packed his weary horse in a trailer and drove off.” (Citizen 8/21/1950, 8/22/1950)

## Death in Catalina Foothills

**Oct 21, 1950**

Reportedly despondent due to ill health, 52-year-old Leslie Faulkner was reported missing by his wife. Taking his vehicle that Saturday, the Tucsonan had left at 8:00 that morning. Two days after he disappeared, his vehicle was found abandoned at the north end of Campbell Avenue by a sheriff’s patrol. “The sheriff’s rescue patrol headed by Deputy Richard Tripp, set out at daybreak yesterday to search for the missing man. Some of the searchers were on horseback, several rode in a jeep and others were on foot. Two hours later the body was found seated beneath a Palo Verde tree a mile and a half north of the end of Campbell avenue.” Faulkner had been dead several days and an empty bottle which had contained 36 sleeping tablets was found beside the body. The Coroner ruled the death a suicide. (Star 10/25/1950)

## 13 Die

**Nov 16, 1950**

When a B-50 bomber and a B-29 refueling tanker “bumped” at noon, high over the Papago (Tohono O’odham) Reservation, one of the deadliest tragedies in Southern Arizona history happened. A crew of 13 was on the B-50 and 10 others manned the B-29. “The two giant planes were on a training flight when they collided about noon. . . plunged to the earth burning and exploding.” This refueling technique was only a few years old and was to lengthen the range of the bombers as the “Cold War” began heating up. Between 1950 and 1953, Davis-Monthan was one of two air bases with a training detachment for refueling.

With wingspans of 141 feet each, the two huge, four-engine planes, were almost identical in specifications. Striking the earth about 150 yards apart, “scooping out holes in the desert. The force of the impact and flames left only bits of wreckage. Some of the eight engines of the two planes were missing.” The tanker fell first and burst into flames, and the B-50 followed, after going into a stall with control locked.

Word quickly reached Davis-Monthan, which soon had planes in the air to locate the crash area and look for survivors. Sheriff’s deputies, highway patrolmen, a town marshal, local residents, and several ambulances all rushed toward the scene. Deputy Sheriff Brannon and his Rescue Patrol, responded. “The task of identifying the broken and burned bodies of victims was still to be completed. Some had apparently landed safely and been consumed by burning gasoline. Others had smashed into the ground before their parachutes opened.”

Ultimately, six of the 13 on the bomber escaped alive and four of the ten aboard the tanker survived the horrendous mid-air collision. The search and rescue mission lasted for two days, until the last two bodies were finally located. “All were brought to Reilly Funeral home for burial arrangements.”

In December of 1950, Harry Brannon resigned from the Sheriff’s Department, taking a position with a trucking company. (Citizen 11/17/1950, 12/15/1950)

## Pima County Civil Defense Aviation Division

**Jan 29, 1951**

In late December 1950, Karl Barfield, Tucson-Pima County Civil Defense chief, announced the forthcoming formation of a special air branch for Pima County's Civil Defense program. The urgency of this effort was probably the intensification of the Korean War, which had begun the previous June.

"Tucson pilots and plane owners will play a vital part in the coming civil defense program in this area. Tucson flyers who are willing to sacrifice their time and the use of their plane will be used in transportation, supplies, medical assistance and emergency communications... we have 50 private planes and 70 ready pilots to participate in any emergency activity... The air branch would provide emergency communication, supply and personnel transport in the event of a local catastrophe, Barfield added."

Barfield then gave an example of the value of this resource. He was referring to the April 16, 1947, waterfront and ship explosion in Texas City, Texas, where over five-hundred people were killed, with many of them never identified. But also, "where more than five-hundred lives were saved when the only transportation to and from the wrecked city was by air."

On January 29, 1951, R. W. F. "Bob" Schmidt, then manager of Tucson's Municipal Airport, recently named head of the county civil defense aviation division by Barfield, held an organizational meeting at his home. He explained the air division would be divided into three components—pilots, aircraft, and airports.

"Ray Schock, a pilot and head of the sheriff's aviation posse (see "Sheriff's Air Patrol, Flying Squadron, and Aero Squadron," September 1, 1937, on page 82) is to list available fliers; Buck Jones, plane owner, will gather all information on available aircraft, and Earl Taylor, of the municipal airport, will tabulate information and master maps of all available landing spaces in the county... Taylor reported that he has already started a collection of aerial photographs of the county's landing strips. In event of emergency the division would know which landing spot was closest and the type of operation it could accommodate..."

"Jones asked all private plane owners to send him information on their planes. Color, type, number of registration, condition, equipment, where they are located and who would the owner allow fly the aircraft..."

In October 1951, the National Association of Aviation Officials had a three-day conference in Tucson. The 125 members present represented forty states of the organization, which included Bob Schmidt. The focus was on the relationship between Washington's CAA [Civil Aeronautics Authority] and CAB [Civil Aeronautics Board],<sup>1</sup> the military, and Civil Defense. The military side of the discussion was very pessimistic: "In the event of an enemy air attack upon the United States, a large portion of the enemy planes would penetrate our defenses. If we brought down a third of the invading planes, we would be shooting par for the course."

After this point, the author was unable to follow the Tucson-Pima County Civil Defense Aviation Division in the newspapers. It does not seem this local air force was ever needed, at least on a regional level. There were hundreds of references to Civil Defense every month as the "Cold War" with Russia heated up. Mr. Schmidt was soon being strongly "hyped" to lead the federal CAB, which he did not get. (Star 12/10/1950, 10/25/1951; Citizen 12/21/1950, 1/30/1951)

<sup>1</sup> Both the CAA and CAB morphed somewhat into the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) that currently exists in 2023.

## Two Boys Overdue on Horseback

**Mar 14, 1951**

Joe Kranhold, 14, and 13-year-old John Link, an out-of-town visitor, left a guest ranch on Tucson's northeast side and rode their horses into Sabino Canyon on a day trip. They told their parents they would return by sundown, which they did not. At 8 p.m., Joe's father mounted up and went looking for them while Joe's mother went to the Sabino Canyon Ranger Station to seek further information. In turn, the Forest Ranger there called the Sheriff's Department which then alerted the Pima County Rescue Patrol. Early Thursday morning the Rescue Patrol put six of its members into looking for the two teenagers.

"The sheriff's rescue patrol had launched a full-scale search for the boys by land and air after they were reported missing Wednesday night." The boys showed good sense, though. They knew they had explored a little too long and were caught by darkness. They tied their horses up, built a fire and tried to sleep a little before making the trip out the next morning. "During the night they worried about their mothers' concern for them but realized it would be better to camp out than to attempt to travel in the dark." (Star 3/15/1951, 3/16/1951)

## Texas Canyon Plane Crash

**Mar 26, 1951**

A motorist reported seeing a small plane "spin out of a cloud and fall into the mountains Monday afternoon." Ground and aerial searchers almost immediately began hunting what turned out to be, a four-place Navion with two occupants, in the Dragoon Mountains. Only an hour before, the two men from Oregon had left Tucson, their next stop was to be El Paso, on their way to Chicago. It was not, however, until the fourth day that the "crumpled remnants of the silver-colored plane were spotted" in rugged Texas Canyon, east of Benson. Tucson Civil Air Patrol pilot Lee Yocum, was assigned to search this particular section that morning and spotted the debris, almost "before the last of a dozen CAP planes from Douglas and Tucson had taken off." An airspeed indicator in the ship had "stopped at 195 miles-per-hour indicating the plane had struck the ground with terrific speed and had probably been spinning out-of-control when the crash occurred." (Star 3/30/1951)

## Youth Lost for 24 Hours

**Mar 26, 1951**

Eighteen-year-old LeRoy Landis was found unharmed by Pima County Sheriff's Deputies after being lost for 24 hours in the foothills of the Santa Rita Mountains. The young man from Pennsylvania was unfamiliar with the desert and the area surrounding the W. F. Connolly Ranch. "He said he had lost his way after dark and bedded down on the desert floor... traveled an estimated 30 miles before he was found..." He had been the subject of the day-long search by "deputies, Pima rescue squad men and ranchers..." (Star 3/29/1951)

## Local CAP Reorganized

**Jun 27, 1951**

To this date, the Civil Air Patrol in Southern Arizona had remained organized much as it had in its beginnings and all through World War II. But then in mid-1951,

“Formation of the Southern Arizona group of the Civil Air Patrol, USAF, was announced. . . by Col. J. Michael Morris, Commanding Officer of the Arizona Wing at Phoenix. The new group will have administrative authority over all C.A.P. squadrons in Tucson and the Southern Arizona area. . . Assuming command of the group will be Dines Nelson with the rank of lieutenant colonel. . . The present Tucson Civil Air Patrol is being dissolved. Three new units have been established under the new group set up. These are the Tucson Training Squadron. . . Tucson Search and Rescue Squadron, commanded by Lee O. Yocum. . . Tucson Communications Flight.”

Nationally, by 1952 there were 52 wings [48 states, Alaska, Hawaii, Puerto Rico, and District of Columbia], 210 groups, and over 29,000 senior members, made up of men and women in all walks of life. By the end of 1953, the Arizona Wing of the Civil Air Patrol had about eight-hundred senior members and seven-hundred cadets. In early February 1954, Colonel Dines Nelson, Arizona Wing Commander with headquarters now in Tucson, announced his retirement due to health issues. In that announcement, he also spoke about the Wing’s Communications Flight, which had organized in 1951. “The communications network so vital to the CAP, has increased about 10 times in the past three years and the wing now has more than 100 licensed mobile and fixed radio stations operating in the state. The number of units has more than doubled and there are now more than 40 in various Arizona towns and cities.”

He also claimed that the Wing “had grown into an active organization rating second or third in the nation in search and rescue activity.” And, it was now receiving an annual appropriation as a department of the state of Arizona, as well as being an auxiliary unit of the US Air Force. The now re-named Air Rescue Squadron “are the ones who can be routed from beds or day-time mercy mission or look for lost planes. . . have developed ‘Dawn Patrols,’ for spotting fires and ‘Blood Runs’ for the Red Cross when blood supplies are needed in emergencies.” In November 1954, the Santa Rita Land Rescue Squadron was formed. “It stands ready to make ground searches for lost prospectors, children or downed planes. It coordinates its work with air units in a search and will spend many long hours checking out possible crash sites in rugged mountain terrain, spotted from the air.” See “Santa Rita Land Rescue Squadron,” November 23, 1954, on page 151.

Lastly, on its 15<sup>th</sup> Birthday, December 1, 1956, the CAP boasted 90,000 members, with 51,000 of them teenage cadets. It operated 5,300 light planes and 11,000 radio stations organized into a nationwide network. Its members received no pay, per diem, or allowances for the work. As of March 2020, there were 19 Squadrons, 581 cadets, and 690 senior members of the Arizona Wing of the Civil Air Patrol. (Star 6/28/1951, 12/20/1953, 12/1/1955, 11/28/1956; Citizen 2/8/1954; Arizona Wing Civil Air Patrol, Wikipedia 5/23/2022)

## Two CAP Searchers Die

**Jun 30, 1951**

Eleven days after her husband and his brother left Tucson for Kansas in her husband’s small plane, Mrs. Dale Sexton notified the Civil Air Patrol the two had not been heard from since. “No record has been found so far that the Sexton brothers landed anywhere to refuel, and their plane carried only enough gas for two and one-half hours of flying or about 250 to 300 miles. . . .” They were on their way to visit a third brother in Dale’s maroon, two-seat Luscombe, NC-71783. They did not file a flight plan and per Dale’s wife, they “would return to Tucson in about four days. . . .”

Searchers concentrated first on the area between Tucson and Albuquerque. Captain Harold A. Frazer, commander of search operations, dispatched a rescue ship out of March AFB in California. This amphibious SA-10-A (Army designation for the PBY-5), began combing east to Silver City,



New Mexico. Known as a Catalina, the twin-engine search craft was from the Fourth Air Rescue Section. That first day, the seven-man crew covered some seven-hundred miles of Southeastern Arizona's mountainous country, but found nothing. The local Civil Air Patrol soon joined the effort, led by Captain Lee Yocum. At the beginning, three planes from Tucson went north and east to the San Pedro River. Hampered by weather and poor flying conditions, they searched over the Winchester and Galiuro Mountains, as well as the Sulphur Springs Valley.

Over the next five days, fighters from Williams AFB, Davis-Monthan AFB planes and CAP aircraft from Tucson, Phoenix, Casa Grande, Safford, Bisbee, and El Paso aided in the search. Three Air Force Catalinas were involved and the hunt was now over five states. Even a report from sixty miles south of the Mexican border near Cananea, Sonora, was checked out. Finally, on July 15, the missing aircraft was located on the west slope of the Peloncillo Mountains on the Arizona-New Mexico border. Dale, 32, and Carl, 25, had been killed upon impact, and were still inside the demolished little plane. After several hours, the recovery team was able to remove the brothers to San Simon and flown to Tucson.

At 9:00 p.m., July 15, within mere minutes of the Sexton brothers being flown out of San Simon, Civil Air Patrol searchers, Roscoe E. Wilson, 35, and Ernest W. Schmidt, 35, both from Phoenix, were suddenly killed right after taking off. They were only three-hundred yards from the San Simon Airport. It was believed Schmidt was piloting his BT-13 Army trainer, when it crashed just after dusk. The cause of the accident was never reported in the newspapers.

Within a day of the second accident, an inquiry by the Civil Aeronautics Administration (CAA, precursor to FAA) was begun. Investigators of the CAA arrived in Tucson on July 17, quickly going to the accident scenes. Additionally, a board was convened to "evaluate all matters pertaining to flying safety in Southern Arizona. 'The two tragedies...emphasize the need for a board that can work to promote not only private flying itself, but the many safety factors that the public and pilots, themselves, must be informed of.'" The author was unable to learn any results of these two inquiries. (Star 7/12/1951; Citizen 7/16/1951)

## Body Found Near Mouth of Sabino Canyon

**Jul 5, 1951**

Otho L. Davis was a 58-year-old retired supervisor for a plumbing company in Tucson, but had not done any plumbing work in the previous few years. He did have a history of going missing in nearby mountains, however, the first time in 1929 and again in 1948, when he was lost for approximately two weeks. See "Man Wanders Two Nights," November 29, 1929, page 66. The author could not find any further reference to the disappearance in 1948.

The last time he was seen, Davis had asked his former boss for a Geiger Counter, "as he planned to do some prospecting in the mountains the following day [July 4 and the shop was closed]. However, on July 5 he opened the [shop] in the morning and disappeared before [the owner] arrived." In determining his whereabouts, his associates spoke with the roommate, another plumber, and it was even considered he had gone elsewhere for work. Finally, the Sheriff's Department was notified; but without any leads and with little place to start, there was no effort to hunt for him at this time. A month passed.

On August 3, at the same time searchers were actively looking for 11-year-old Joe Martinez in Upper Sabino Canyon in the Santa Catalina Mountains, a University of Arizona Graduate Student collecting geological materials on the Flying V Ranch, stumbled across Davis near the bottom of Sabino Canyon. See "11-Year-Old Missing from Mount Lemmon Church Camp," August 1, 1951,

on page 135 . “A Coroner’s Jury [sic] investigating the death of Otho L. Davis, 58-year-old Tucson plumber, held today [August 8] that Davis came to his death by natural causes. The jury, called by Coroner Clark H. Johnson ruled that death came to Davis between July 5 and Aug. 3.” (Citizen 8/4/1951, 8/8/1951)

## Fire Department’s First Rescue Truck

**Jul 6, 1951**

Tucson Fire Department’s first emergency rescue truck was accepted by Fire Chief John C. Sievert, donated to the city of \$86,000 by the Tucson Oil Information Committee and the Tucson Racing Association. Rescue Truck 66 worked out of the 43-year-old Central Fire Station, 142 S. 6th Avenue. (There were four stations at the time.) The idea for such a vehicle originated in September during Oil Information Week. Frank O’Neill, the local Phillips Petroleum Company representative, pointed out that Tucson Fire Department responded to 12 to 15 rescue calls each month and that other cities had such an apparatus.

When the thought for such a response capability first aired in the local press, Chief Sievert stated, “ ‘There is a real need for a rescue car to enable the Tucson fire department to better serve our community. Our city is growing so fast...all funds for equipment must go into fire-fighting apparatus. It will be some time before the department can buy a separate truck.’ ” In acknowledging the donation, Tucson Mayor J. O. Nieman pointed out that, “Under present conditions... the fire department must load its respirator, oxygen tanks, and other pieces of rescue paraphernalia into any car that happens to be available.” However, since it was being entirely gifted by two totally private groups, their one caveat was this vehicle would be permitted to legally respond to anywhere in the Tucson area, including outside the city limits.

The two-ton white panel truck with a large red cross painted on each side, had about \$3,500 in emergency equipment, also largely bought through donations and fund raisers, such as “benefit jalopy races.” In addition to a five-man life raft and “simple surgical instruments... portable spotlights... spotless white coats for the rescue firemen to wear,” it had a “siren, red light, and a public address system. It carries two resuscitators, gas mask, compressed air-pack that will permit the wearer to walk under water, gas-operated generator, and two powerful spotlights. It has two stretchers, blankets, steel splints, crowbars, hammers, axes, water and carbon-dioxide fire extinguishers, 500 feet of rope and a three-way walkie-talkie radio.” (At the time, fire, police, and public works, shared one radio frequency. This did not change until 1955, when each got its own frequency.)

Every man in the fire department was qualified to operate the truck, although it was usually manned by a team of two. There were two Captains assigned to the vehicle during their own 24-hour shift but they could also be commanding another piece of equipment, such as a ladder truck. Both firemen on that shift were trained in first aid. “Wherever there is trouble and a person is in danger of dying if expert help is not obtained immediately, at any hour of day or night, that is where Rescue Truck 66 aims its blinking red light.” (Star 4/8/1951, 7/6/1951, 2/13/1952; Citizen 4/11/1951)

## A True Search Mystery

**Jul 15, 1951**

Although somewhat farther west from the incidents included in this document, the author believes the search for a man and a woman that began some fifty miles southeast of Yuma, warrants inclusion

here. In Southern Arizona Search and Rescue history, it still remains truly a mystery, seven decades after the man and woman vanished. Klaus Martens, 28, an auto salesman, and Mary Jean Walker, 26, a student nurse, left Los Angeles on July 15, flying to Blythe, California. No flight plan was filed and the aerial search for the rented, light Cessna aircraft and the missing couple, was called off after a week of no clues.

A week later, about two weeks after the couple left Los Angeles, their abandoned, completely undamaged airplane was found by a fish and game inspector on July 30. It was way out of the original search area, which had centered on the blistering summer desert west of Blythe. Investigators would eventually discern the craft had no fuel but also had nothing mechanically wrong with it. In fact, when it was removed, it was flown out. When the cockpit of the plane was looked into, there was a handwritten note saying, “the couple left at 5:45 a.m., ‘Monday,’ and was thought to have been written the day after the aircraft landed. A large arrow was scratched in the sandy desert soil. It pointed due west.” Having safely landed, surprisingly, there had been other airfields very near where the craft set down.

In addition to two large PBY Catalinas out of Southern California, there were two sheriff’s planes, and eight Civil Air Patrol aircraft. On the ground, enduring daily 120-degree air temperatures, several trackers on foot and a number of men in jeeps, followed the couple’s faint marks. Large letters, “F” and a “W” were found scratched into the desert floor. In air-search code, F meant “need food and water” and W indicates “need oil and fuel.” Before their faint trail disappeared due to wind and rain, it had crossed a “well-marked road which would have led them to Wellton, Ariz., 33 miles east of Yuma.” One deputy said, “ ‘They couldn’t have picked a worse direction to go. That country is bad.’ The tracks led toward the foothills of the Cabeza Prieta mountains, running parallel to and north of the Camino del Diablo—the Devil’s Highway, where many prospectors met death from heat and thirst in the gold rush days.’ ”

A final major effort to locate Martens and Walker was begun on August 6. Yuma Sheriff Jim Washum “said 100 soldiers from the Yuma test branch, a mounted sheriff’s posse [20 horsemen], and 12 to 15 Civil Air Patrol planes will participate in the hunt...” He continued, “We’re going out equipped to stay two days and determine once and for all if they are still in the area... the search will continue until the bodies are found, or until satisfied his men have covered more ground than the pair could have and still remain alive.” He concluded, “ ‘a few men could search forever and never find them.’ ”

Three days after this major push to find the missing couple, the Air Force called off the search. At this point, they were “missing for three weeks in the blazing and trackless Arizona desert.” Sheriff Washum said that “the couple, in wandering over the desert, may have lain down under a tree in one of the many washes marking the area and been swept away by a desert cloudburst. ‘It’s a big desert and they may never be found.’ ” On the one-year anniversary of their disappearance, there was a follow-up article. Then, almost two years later, there was a final story about their disappearance. After that their story faded out of the news.

The El Camino del Diablo—The Devil’s Highway—is legendary for its 400 to 2,000 deaths over the years, mostly in the mid to late-1800s and into 1951 when Klaus Martens and Mary Walker vanished. It was even put on the National Register of Historic Places in 1978 for its value in our region’s history. (Citizen 8/1/1951, 8/2/1951, 8/9/1951; Star 8/5/1951)

## 11-Year-Old Missing from Mount Lemmon Church Camp

**Aug 1, 1951**

The Gila Valley Baptist Association was in a week’s church retreat on Mount Lemmon at the Boy Scouts’ Camp Lawton. Joe Martinez, 11, was last seen there about 11 a.m., Wednesday morning. At that time, he had been disciplined so as to keep him in the camp area and in defiance, was thought to have walked off. By 6:15 p.m., officials with the Camp finally became alarmed and notified the Sheriff’s Department. Two deputies left to investigate the next morning and to initiate a search for the boy, if warranted.

By Friday morning, there were at least seventy people “slogging through the wet Coronado national forest in the Catalina mountains” in an effort to find five-foot tall Joe. Since no one saw the boy leave, searchers had to work in all directions. There was not even the beginning of a trail.

“Participating in the search were 50 Davis-Monthan air policemen, as well as forest rangers, sheriff’s deputies, highway patrolmen and residents of the area. Leading the search was Deputy Sheriff Ed Hendricks of Tucson. Working up from the southern base of the mountains was the Pima County sheriff’s mounted posse. Searching on foot were members of the sheriff’s rescue patrol. Three cars of the state highway patrol were covering the entire area accessible by roads. Meanwhile camp officials expressed hope the boy had hitchhiked out of the mountains and had gone to the home of some friends or relative. A check in Casa Grande, however, disclosed he was not there.”

Late that same afternoon, after two days of intensive searching in the rugged mountains, Joe was found and “appeared to be in better shape than his rescuers...” He had wandered about 15 miles from Camp Lawton. “He had eaten wild berries and found all the water he needed in the mountain’s canyons. For the two nights he had been out, he had slept in mountain caves. His only annoyance was the leakiness of one of the caves, which caused him to get wet.” Joe actually stumbled onto one of the searchers who was sitting in a truck, and identified himself. The reason he left the camp? Well, the answer seemed to be confusing. “At one time he said he was chasing an arrow and got lost. Another time he referred to difficulties with other boys in the camp.” (Citizen 8/2/1951, 8/3/1951, 8/4/1951)

## F-51 Jet Crash

**Dec 30, 1951**

The last time Lt. Bob Westlund was ever heard from, he was low on oxygen and requesting emergency landing instructions into Davis-Monthan AFB. The 34-year-old World War II veteran was piloting the F-51 “Mustang” fighter to El Paso from Merced, California, when he went missing over Southern Arizona. He was a member of the 3625<sup>th</sup> pilot training group, “an outfit organized to give flying mission support.”

More than three dozen planes were involved in the week-long search, including Air Force bombers and Navy jet fighters, a Coast Guard PBY search plane from San Diego, and at least 12 Civil Air Patrol aircraft from Arizona and New Mexico. Major Bill Thomas, commander of the Tucson CAP Squadron, said “his men have covered about 30,000 square miles...” One article stated it was “One of the state’s biggest air searches in history...” It proved very frustrating for searchers since it involved numerous false alarms. As one CAP pilot put it, “ ‘the whole [region] is full of wrecked [military] airplanes.’ ”

The main part of the wreckage was finally spotted on January 5, fifty miles east of Tucson in the Galiuro Mountains. It was on the highest point in the mountain range, Bassett Peak at 7,652 feet. The overcast cloud ceiling was 7,000 feet in the region at the time Westlund disappeared. Scattered over a large area, the wreckage suggested it probably came apart while in the air. It took two more days for three CAP pilots to climb to the scene on foot and another day before a local recovery unit made it to the deceased pilot. (Star 1/4/1952, 1/5/1952, 1/6/1952, 1/7/1952)

## 28 People Killed

**Dec 30, 1951**

At the same time Lt. Bob Westlund was needing to land his F-51 fighter jet at Davis-Monthan AFB, a second Air Force plane was also requesting to drop down through the overcast and get out of the same intense storm. Buffeting winds aloft were recorded near 120 miles-per-hour and the cold front cut ceiling visibility down to two-thousand feet above Phoenix. “The transport, a twin-engine C-47 was last heard from some twenty miles west of Phoenix at 3:34 p.m. The pilot, groping his way through rain and mist, asked for landing instructions at that time but failed to come in. There was no further contact with the plane.” This model of aircraft, the C-47, was tough, long recognized as a workhorse since it began flying ten years earlier.

The aircraft was enroute from Hamilton AFB, north of San Francisco to Goodfellow Field, in San Angelo, Texas, with 28 people onboard. This included 19 cadets from the US Military Academy, who were hitchhiking back to West Point from their holiday break on the West Coast. Additionally, there were five other military passengers, as well as a crew of four, including the pilot, Major Lester Carlson. A veteran pilot, ironically Carlson was also the Flying Safety Officer for the Fourth Air Force.

“Tucson planes participating in the search included 12 Civil Air Patrol craft and five Davis-Monthan airbase transports and bombers. In their day-long search, C.A.P planes covered an estimated 13,000 square miles.”

On January 2, three days after the airplane went missing, a fleeting observation through a break in the clouds from one of the more than sixty aircraft on the mission, proved to be spot-on. The C-47 with 28 souls onboard had crashed in the Sierra Ancha Mountains, 65 miles northeast of Phoenix. It struck Armer Peak, a bare 150 feet below the crest of the 7,310-foot-high point. Arnold Johnson, a cowboy from the ranch on which the accident took place, was somehow able to ride his horse up to the wreckage. “Only the tail section of the burned twin-engine plane was intact. I have never seen anything like it, it was awful.” Up to this point, this crash was perhaps the single largest accidental loss of life in Arizona. (Star 12/31/1951, 1/1/1952, 1/2/1952, 1/3/1952, 1/4/1952)

## 28 People Trapped in Sabino Canyon

**Jan 13, 1952**

A dangerous flash flood, accompanied by a cold, hard rain, roared unexpectedly through Sabino Canyon. It marooned dozens of picnickers, shoved youngsters off their feet and into the violent current, overturned a truck filled with people, and forced “a gigantic rescue operation that lasted far into the night.” In places, the normally placid creek in Sabino Canyon now measured at over ten feet deep and all nine of the low-water bridges were covered by upwards of three to five feet of swiftly flowing turbulence. Officials at Palisades Ranger Station blamed the sudden surge on a

cloudburst that dropped two inches of rain there in the span of a few hours. In total, Forest Rangers estimated a downpour upwards of four inches at the headwaters of Sabino Canyon.

The truck's four occupants said what hit them seemed like a wall of water that appeared without warning. Their truck had stalled and was abruptly swept downstream, eventually hammered shapeless by the pounding flood. The young people had saved themselves by leaping free, with two of them able to wade to dry ground and two dragged into the uncontrolled river. Nearby picnickers formed human chains to get to them.

The rescue team was headed by Sheriff Frank Eyman and Colonel Thomas G. Netcher of Davis-Monthan Air Force Base. "Harpoon guns, ropes, improvised bosun's chairs, courage and the reliable old army six-by-six trucks brought to safety about 28 persons stranded in flood-ridden Sabino Canyon..." All the while, it was raining and blowing steadily.

"Two high school boys, swept into the canyon's raging torrents, were saved from almost certain death when rescue teams forded [eight] flooded bridges and brought them to safety with ropes." They found one 18-year-old "clinging to a dead tree in the middle of the rocketing current." Nearly unconscious, he was suffering from exposure and cold. "He had been clinging to the tree for seven hours," his feet in the near-freezing water. Two ropes were thrown to him, and coached by "Under-sheriff Fred Nirschel and Captain Lewis Dayton, head of the survival training at Davis-Monthan, rigged a rope walkway... [for him] to cross" a twenty-foot-wide branch of the roaring river.

Many of the picnickers trapped between the now-flooded bridges, refused to leave the security of their high and dry positions, wanting to stay until the waters went down. Johnny Martin, 18, "climbed the rock-studded canyon wall for more than two miles to bring food and milk for the infant child," whose parents were trapped at the upper end of the road. "On the return trip, he carried the names of persons trapped by the raging waters and guided rescuers to the ninth canyon bridge" to aid the boy who had been clinging to a tree for seven hours.

Two would-be rescuers, a Marine and a college student, found themselves trapped by cliffs while coming to the aid of others, only to spend the night on an island. They were removed early the next morning by a highline and a bosun's chair, rigged by the Deputy Sheriffs.

When everyone had been accounted for and the rescuers were returning home, a seemingly very mad Sheriff Frank Eyman, said frustratingly, " 'I know where there is a fire truck standing idle and I intend to ask for it... We need some type of rescue vehicle, big and strong enough to do the work that was needed tonight. If it hadn't been for Colonel Netcher's help with the truck from the air force, [the boy in the tree for seven hours] would have died before we were able to reach him.' " (Star 1/14/1952, 1/15/1952; Citizen 1/15/1952, 1/16/1952)

## Pilot, Subject of A Search Is Censured

**Mar 5, 1952**

J. W. Smith, an airline pilot flying his family in a small, private plane from California to El Paso, filed a flight plan for his two-day trip. It directed that when over Gila Bend and then Casa Grande, he was to contact each station, before landing for the night in Tucson. He did so and reported in by radio over Gila Bend but not over Casa Grande, as he promised. Most importantly, however, he did not close-out his flight plan in Tucson, as required. If filed, a flight plan is a formal agreement between the pilot and aviation officials.

"Fearing he had been forced down in the desert east of Gila Bend, the all-out search was organized..." Seven Civil Air Patrol planes from Tucson and a number from Casa Grande, as well



as the Air Rescue Unit out of March Air Force Base near Riverside, California, began searching for Smith. Additionally, units from the Arizona Highway Patrol and Pima County Sheriff's Department got involved in checking strategic places on the ground. A significant number of search and rescue resources were now looking for Smith and his family.

Unbeknownst to the searchers, however, Smith actually had safely landed his four-place Piper in Tucson, when and where he had planned to. The commercial airline pilot had failed to close-out his flight plan, as he said he would. His plane was discovered safely tied down at Gilpin Airport later in the day and the search was immediately called off. However, the Civil Aeronautics Administration [today's Federal Aviation Administration] took a dim view of Smith's oversight. Colonel Nelson of the Civil Air Patrol, pointed out that the federal government, through the CAP, gives "pilots the security of an automatic search and rescue organization at no cost."

Because of the significant and largely volunteer efforts of the searchers, a Civil Aeronautics Administration chief involved in this search in Tucson, "said he would report the incident to headquarters in Los Angeles where CAA attorneys may file a violation report... numerous penalties exist for failure to close out flight plans and the outcome would depend upon how well the pilot could justify his action." (Citizen 3/7/1952, 3/8/1952)

## Eight Die in B-29 Crash

**Mar 26, 1952**

Minutes after one of the largest aircraft of World War II took off from Davis-Monthan AFB on a routine training flight, the pilot of the B-29 radioed: " 'I'm returning with No. 3 engine out.' " There were three officers and five crewmen aboard the giant Superfortress, which normally had four, perfectly functioning 2,200-horsepower engines. This plane had also been retrofitted with extra-large aviation fuel tanks for refueling other aircraft mid-air and, these tanks had just been filled themselves.

The B-29's wheels were locked in place ten minutes later and it was now at four-hundred feet on a long, safe final approach into Davis-Monthan. It was five miles from touching down, when, "Suddenly the ship appeared to stall... nosed toward the ground... motors roared to regain air speed... right wing dipped and sheared off a mesquite tree. Then it dug into the soft sand." A blinding explosion followed when the many extra tons of fuel "roared into flame and smoke."

Crash crews from the base and local ambulances, police and firemen raced to the spot with the two-thousand-foot-high column of black smoke guiding them in. Seeing the plane had disintegrated and was still burning, responders knew there would be no survivors. Before long the grisly task of recovering the bodies began at the creosote-covered scene. Initially, it was believed there were nine men in the craft but, only eight could be accounted for. Brigadier General W. P. Fisher, commander of the 36<sup>th</sup> Air Division, ordered the surrounding desert to be searched "in the chance that one of the men might have been thrown clear."

"Pima County Sheriff's Deputies [sic] and highway patrolmen raced their motorcycles through the desert area in the vain attempt to locate the airman believed missing." It was sometime before it was determined there were just eight on the doomed Superfortress. Air Force officials "thanked their lucky stars" the ill-fated plane had not been on final approach over the city from the west. "They would not hazard a guess as to what might have happened." (Star 3/27/1952)



## Boy Drowns in Irrigation Tank

**Jun 22, 1952**

“ ‘He laughed and told me he could swim...and then he slipped and went under the water,’ one of the dead boys friends...told sheriff’s deputies.” Manuel Federico, 15, a Wakefield Junior High School student in Tucson, along with two other youths had ridden their bicycles out to San Xavier Mission and were returning home. As they passed an inviting water tank on the Indian Valley Farms on Mission Road north of the Indian Reservation, Federico decided to climb through the barbed-wire fence and cool off. This was in despite of the posted “No Swimming” sign. It was 101 degrees the day before and would be the same that day, the region was suffering under a three-week heat wave. “ ‘He was just wading when he stepped into deep water.’ ”

Both friends jumped into the earthen tank but were stumbling to reach the deep section where Federico had disappeared. That probably was a good thing since none of the three boys could swim. Manuel Andrade, the 18-year-old friend, told investigators, “ ‘I had my arm around him, but he clawed and started to pull me under. I just couldn’t hold on any longer.’ ” At that time, the wife of the farm’s owner was passing by and saw the boys crying and pointing to the center of the pond. She called the Sheriff’s Department. A passerby was the first adult to learn of the drowning. “He plunged into the tank and searched alone until help arrived, deputies said.” A neighboring farmer, Dan Clarke also responded, arriving just as three deputies did.

Sergeant Arthur “Art” Grande, along with two other deputies quickly stripped down and began searching the murky water. After 45 minutes Federico was brought to the surface and turned over to the Tucson Fire Department’s “Resuscitator Squad.” This proved futile. Manuel Federico would be the first drowning in the Tucson area in nearly two years. An 8-year-old boy died on July 14, 1950, in one of the city’s five public swimming pools. Muddy and wet, Grande would immediately leave this tragedy and rush to another emergency now unfolding on Mount Lemmon that day. See “Two Children Lost on Mount Lemmon,” June 22, 1952, on page 139. (Star 6/22/1952, 6/23/1952; Citizen 6/23/1952)

## Two Children Lost on Mount Lemmon

**Jun 22, 1952**

Six-year-old Sally Galvan and her 9-year-old cousin, Conception Ramirez, spent the night sleeping under a bush after getting lost in the woods on Mount Lemmon. Sally’s 11-year-old sister had taken them on a walk shortly before 1:30 p.m. When Irma stopped to talk with other picnickers, her younger charges disappeared. The children wandered away during a family picnic at a shady spot between Bear Wallow and Soldier Camp, along the fairly-new Catalina Highway.

Directing the search was Pima County Sheriff Frank Eyman, assisted by Undersheriff Fred Nirschel, and Deputies Arthur Grande and A. W. Roberts. Earlier that day, Grande had been diving in a muddy pond southwest of Tucson for 15-year-old Manuel Federico, who had drowned while swimming. The boy was recovered by Grande and two other deputies.

At first there were fears Sally and Conception had fallen off a nearby cliff. Deputies and several airmen descended the steep wall on ropes and fortunately, did not find the young pair. In the meantime, a few more deputies and at least ten airmen from the Mount Lemmon Radar Station, joined in with the two families to search, as did a handful of other volunteers. Searchers walked and yelled until daybreak, aided by lantern light. Several times during the night, the children said they heard a deputy on a public address system tell them to stay put until they could be reached the

next day. Temperatures that night dropped to about 45 degrees and the youngsters were scantily attired.

First thing the next morning, two bloodhounds from the Arizona State Prison at Florence arrived, but no followable track could be found. An additional ten airmen were sent into the area. By mid-morning, the Tucson Red Cross began bringing up food, blankets, and first aid supplies to assist the rescue party. Calls went out for more volunteers and horses to intensify the search effort for the missing children. “Spectators, however, were asked to stay away.”

“The 24-hour search mushroomed into one of the most extensive ever conducted in the Catalina mountains, according to Sheriff Frank Eyman. Twelve miles of plotted search area of 50 square miles had been covered by sheriff’s deputies, air police, prisoners from the Mt. Lemmon prison camp, forest rangers, and trackers with bloodhounds from the state prison at Florence.” Before it was over, an estimated 125 men were in the search party.

At 1:00 p.m., nearly a full day after leaving the care of Irma, the two children were spotted “in a hollow just east of the road leading to Oracle, Ariz.” They were carried out on horseback: “ ‘Weren’t scared’ both boast; in good shape but ‘Awful Hungry.’ ” (Citizen 6/23/1952, 6/25/1952; Star 6/24/1952)

## Two Lost in Peppersauce Cave

**Jul 10, 1952**

Carl Bushnell, 18, and 17-year-old Arthur Van Coillie, Jr., were lost in Peppersauce Cave on the north slope of Mount Lemmon, when discovered by several students from the University of Arizona. “ ‘We explained we had been there since Thursday afternoon. Then they said it was Sunday afternoon and we thought they were kidding... We thought it was Friday afternoon.’ ”

The two teenagers began their overnight hike from the small campground in Peppersauce Canyon and had climbed several ridges and crossed a couple of canyons and were now working their way back to the Mount Lemmon Control Road. Nearing the road,

“...they saw a slit in the mountainside that is the entrance to the cave. Going inside looking for water to drink, they soon were lost. Every time the boys tried to grope their way to the entrance of the cave, they missed the route and ended up in another room. ‘There were strings along the cave, but they led deeper into the mountain... The floor was full of holes and we had to crawl around. We decided it was safer just to sit and wait.’ ”

When Carl and Arthur had not returned from their hike by Saturday evening, the Pima County Sheriff’s Department was notified and a search began. The Civil Air Patrol put airplanes up to look for them early the next morning while deputies and forest officials began hunting for the young men on the ground. The boys had been missing for almost three full days when the picnickers from the university stumbled across them, asleep, deep in the cave. Surprisingly, the youths were not hungry nor particularly thirsty, just tired and chilled from the dampness. (Citizen 7/14/1952; Star 7/14/1952)

## First Fatal Fall At Windy Point?

Sep 7, 1952

“Michael Stone’s first conversation as he lay in a mountainside crevice on Mt. Lemmon with his body broken... was a question, ‘Do you think I will be able to play football when I get well?’ ”

Michael was a 15-year-old boy who, accompanied by a second youth, had climbed about 75 feet to the top of a rock pillar along the General Hitchcock Highway. He lost his balance and fell, then “bounced off a series of three ledges before ending up in a crevice about 200 feet below the road.” One news article described the location: “It’s the first big boulder to be seen, going up the mountain when you reach the area from which you can look out to see Tucson and down to see the lake in Sabino Canyon.” (The author believes this might be near Windy Point, although admittedly, the description is vague.)

Charles Bowles had been watching with dread as the boys climbed, but did not see the fall. The second lad, however, ran and got the attention of the 36-year-old Tucson truck driver, who then rushed to reach Michael. “ ‘I climbed into the top of a tree and slid down the trunk to the next ledge and from there I could see the injured boy in a crevice.’ ” Bowles then worked his way down another one-hundred feet where Michael saw him and shouted. Bowles now knew the victim was conscious and told him not to move. According to Bowles, the boy then tried to roll over, “ ‘his legs were like jelly—they were broken all to pieces.’ ” Joining Bowles around this point was Davis-Monthan airman, Robert McNeil, who quickly pitched in.

About ninety minutes after the accident, Deputy Sheriff Sidney Talin passed by on routine patrol and was immediately flagged down. Talin radioed for help at 3:25 p.m. Also now helping, [the timeline is unclear] were three more off-duty airmen from Davis-Monthan. Bowles remained in place to relay messages to the top as well as down to McNeil and the other airmen, all now cautiously scrambling their way toward Michael. Michael could not stay still, however, and rolled from the crevice, tumbling into a tree about 15 feet below.

At 4:00 p.m., Sheriff Frank Eyman arrived on-scene, along with the superintendent of the nearby Federal Prison Camp, who had luckily brought some ropes. It was now two hours since Michael fell, and he remained conscious, often communicating with Bowles or one of the other rescuers not far away. The ropes were lowered down to the men at the bottom, quickly followed by a stretcher, which Michael was tied into. All four men now working with Michael, pooled their handkerchiefs to tie the young man’s head to the stretcher. “About this time the boy appeared to pass out. He seemed in awful pain. The doctor [from the prison camp] said it was all right to swing him on up to the ledge. Bowles said the last words from the injured boy were, ‘I just can’t stand it any longer.’ On the ledge the doctor pronounced Michael dead.”

The next day, a Coroner’s Jury ruled Michael Stone died an “accidental death due to a fall resulting in internal injuries, multiple fractures and loss of blood while being lifted to safety.” At that hearing, Air Force Technical Sergeant Robert McNeil testified, urging “county officials to provide safety equipment for similar disasters in the future. He pointed out the two-hour time lag in locating ropes and rescue equipment...” Also under oath was Sheriff Eyman, “ ‘We could have brought the boy out in 30 minutes if we’d had our own equipment....’ ” (Citizen 9/8/1952; Star 9/9/1952, 9/10/1952)

## Two Lost, Searching for Lost Hunter

**Oct 27, 1952**

Conrad Colvin had gone hunting in the upper reaches of Sabino Canyon in the Catalina Mountains and failed to return as scheduled. Conrad's 27-year-old brother Ben and a friend, Denver Ace Roy, 28, went looking for him. They in turn, became lost. "Deputy Sheriffs...launched a search at 5:30 a.m.... in the Sabino Canyon area, and were joined by nine members of the 803<sup>rd</sup> operations squadron... and five air police from Davis-Monthan air base." Additionally, "guards and prisoners at the federal camp on Mount Lemmon and forest rangers also joined in the search." In the interim, Conrad found his way to the entrance of Sabino Canyon and out of the mountains but Ben and Roy, were still missing. On the morning of the second day, Davis-Monthan sent an additional "10 men with camping equipment to the Mt. Lemmon area to assist in the hunt." That afternoon, several of the airmen found Ben and Denver wandering in the upper fork of Sabino Canyon. "Roy and Colvin were not in need of medical attention but were hungry after walking many miles..." (Citizen 10/29/1952; Star 10/30/1952)

## Deer Hunter Dies

**Oct 28, 1952**

Raymond Clabaugh, 38, was the night manager at the Central Dryv-Inn restaurant on Stone Avenue in Tucson. He and the night chef had gone deer hunting in the foothills "seven or eight miles east of Patagonia." When he did not rejoin his partner at the end of the day, a search lasting 24 hours, began for him. He was found dead. "Sheriff J. J. Lowe of Santa Cruz County said the body was being brought out by Deputy Sheriff Bob Haverty. He was unable to report whether Clabaugh was shot, fell off a cliff or died of exposure." However, a follow up article two days later indicated Mr. Clabaugh had died of a heart attack. (Citizen 10/29/1952; Star 10/31/1952)

## Airmen "Hit the Silk"

**Nov 7, 1952**

The pilot of the burning B-50 Superfortress ordered his 11-man crew to bail out, only minutes after lifting off from Davis-Monthan AFB. A very large aircraft, it was a vital part of the Strategic Air Command's 65<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Squadron; leveling off at 8:30 a.m., it now headed west on a training mission. Passing over the Tucson Mountains, one of its powerful four engines burst into flames; when at first the fire could not be extinguished, Captain Marvin E. Williams gave the command and seven men in the rear, "hit the silk." But then, Williams and members of his remaining crew were able to extinguish the fire and nurse the monster machine back to a safe landing at Davis-Monthan.

The seven crewmen who had parachuted out landed in the desert not too far from where the Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum currently is. "A search immediately was organized...the Pima County Sheriff's Department [sic], state highway patrol and air police sent cars into the area. Three search planes were sent out from Davis-Monthan, and ambulances were sent from the Tucson base and Marana air force base." Six of the seven were quickly found uninjured; the last airman, a radio operator, only suffered a broken ankle. (Citizen 11/7/1952)

## Father and Two Children Lost

**Sep 5, 1953**

A couple of hours before it would turn dark, Herman J. Dirks, a Phoenix father rented three horses from a Mt. Lemmon stables for he, his son John, age 8, and his 7-year-old daughter, Catherine, for a half-hour sightseeing ride. The mountain trails were well traveled and well-marked—what could go wrong? When darkness set in and Mrs. Dirks' two children and husband had not returned, she summoned help. Captain Walter Clago, Acting Undersheriff, organized a search party of 12 deputies, a 7-man rescue team from the radar station, and volunteer mounted riders, who all began combing the trails for the overdue riders. "About daybreak, the horses staggered in, one by one, and a fresh search party, led by Lee Reid, operator of the stables started out to back-track the trails made by the horses in their return to their quarters."

Searchers found the trio, "huddled in a deeply wooded section, some two miles from the stables." The father told the searchers, "he had released the horses, one by one, in the belief they would find their way back to the stables after he had given up hope of finding his way through the night-shrouded woods." Despite exposure to the damp night air, they were all fine. (Citizen 9/7/1953)

## Tenderfoot Scout Lost on Tracking Test

**Oct 11, 1953**

Eleven-year-old Tenderfoot Scout, Augie Acuna, became separated from a group of scouts while on a "tracking test hike" out of Camp Lawton, the Boy Scout Camp located in the Catalina Mountains. "Search parties totaling more than 100 sheriff's deputies, forest rangers, federal prisoners and volunteers," including a twenty-man Davis-Monthan AFB search and rescue unit, fifty volunteers from the Hughes Aircraft Company, twenty men recruited by the Boy Scout Council, and members of the Sheriff's Mounted Posse. The seventh grader from Safford Junior High School was found after 25 hours by searchers on horseback, doing quite well in Upper Sabino Canyon. Sheriff Frank Eyman led the search effort. (Star 10/12/1953, 10/13/1953)

## Dies on Little Fishing Trip

**Nov 5, 1953**

Located near Wilmot and Grant Roads, the unfenced one-hundred-foot-square, rainwater filled pit was "a favorite playground for youngsters in the area. 'Boys are always playing around it,' said a gravel company employee. 'We chase them away as often as we can, but it doesn't do much good. They always come back.' " About 10:30 a.m., 7-year-old Gary Duane Noel, along with his brother, age 9, and their neighborhood friend, age 8, did just that. " 'The boys just wanted to take a fishing trip' before their afternoon classes started..." The three kids improvised a raft from a wooden packing crate and set sail.

But the makeshift boat sank halfway into the cold pool; two youngsters made it to the bank of the gravel pit ten feet away, but young Noel, did not. The two could not see Gary and now terror stricken, ran a mile to the Noel home. A neighbor lady intercepted them and hurried back to the pool; as she arrived, she summoned help of two Wilmot Sand and Gravel workmen, including Joe Machado. The truck drivers, along with the owner who used the water to irrigate his nearby fields, plunged in. Machado pretty quickly stumbled across the still form of the boy, already submerged for thirty minutes under five-feet of brown murky water. He did artificial respiration until the Tucson

Fire Department Rescue Squad arrived. They worked almost an hour over the boy's quiet form, until a doctor from Tucson Medical Center pronounced him dead, at just after noon. Two days later, November 7, "a six-man Coroner's Jury [sic] rendered a verdict that 7-year-old Gary Duane Noel's death was due to 'accidental drowning.'" (Star 11/6/1953; Citizen 11/7/1953)

## Stranded Infant Dies

**Nov 10, 1953**

Three-month-old Irvin Harvey—stranded with his family on the desert southwest of Ajo—died of exposure and thirst an hour before rescuers arrived. A second child, his cousin of three years of age, was rescued by a helicopter pilot who saw her walking across the desert sand a mile from Irvin's little body. This tragic incident all began when the two sisters, Nora Harvey, 20, and Nina Harvey, 24, had accepted a ride from Sam Godfreed, 63. "He met them Tuesday night and offered them a drink. . . Godfreed became abusive. . . insisted they get out of the car when they resisted his advances. . ." He then drove off but soon became stuck in the wash, however, and according to deputies, "he could not have been driven out."

Nina Harvey touched off the widespread hunt for the lost family when she was found stumbling down a ranch road. In search of help, it took her three days to walk the thirty miles, before being found. Her sister, Nora Harvey, "told searchers she abandoned the children. . . and started walking toward civilization after despairing that help would ever arrive. She was found more than 20 miles from the children, exhausted and half-delirious from thirst."

A search quickly ramped up and included two helicopters and an observation plane from Luke AFB, a Civil Air Patrol plane, Pima County Sheriff's Deputies, and air police and officers from the Gila Bend Police Department. "A Papago Indian tracker [Chico Grey] assisted. . . and followed footprints in the sand until he located the clerk a mile away. Godfreed was delirious from thirst and was on his knees praying when he was found. The driver had written his last will and testament on a scrap of paper." Apparently, the man had walked in a thirty-mile circle around the car during the two days and nights he spent on the desert. "About every 50 feet during his long walk, he would stop and scratch 'Sam' in the sand."

Dr. Frederick Hirsch, a pathologist from Tucson, along with Pima County Attorney Morris K. Udall flew to Ajo to perform an autopsy on the infant Harvey. Hirsch determined the little boy had died of starvation and thirst. Future Congressman Udall would be looking into whether criminal charges might be filed against Godfreed. At least through 1955, the author could find no reference to Sam Godfreed being so charged, by the Pima County Attorney's Office. (Star 11/14/1953)

## Pima County's First Rescue Truck

**Nov 23, 1953**

Frank Eyman became Sheriff of Pima County in 1951, remaining the county's chief law enforcement officer until January, 1955. He had been the senior captain on the Tucson Police Department; in 1934, he was one of the policemen capturing notorious gangster, John Dillinger. Eyman was progressive and conscientious and was very dutiful to the people of the county; he was considered a "take-charge" leader. And, he was also the prime mover behind Pima County finally receiving its rescue truck in November, 1953.



Exactly five years earlier, the Pima County Rescue Patrol was formed and, from its beginning in November, 1948, was literally begging for almost anything to effectively respond to the increasing SAR needs of the 16<sup>th</sup> largest county in the country. A heavy-duty vehicle, two-way radios, and ropes, would all be a great start, but it never happened. Sheriff Eyman undertook this challenge. And, it was surely not lost on him that the Tucson Fire Department was already using a two-ton panel rescue truck, donated in June, 1951. The following year, Eyman faced three demanding, highly publicized search and rescues; collectively, these all seemed to particularly try his patience with the bureaucracy of acquiring a rescue truck.

On January 13, four inches of rain fell in the Catalina Mountains, trapping nearly thirty people in Sabino Canyon. If not for a large truck loaned to Eyman by Davis-Monthan AFB, someone could have died. Then, two small children were lost on Mount Lemmon on June 22, necessitating a massive, 24-hour-long search. Lastly, on September 7, Michael Stone fell while rock climbing, dying in a crevice on Mount Lemmon. Ropes were borrowed from the Air Force to reach him. Per Eyman, “‘We could have brought the boy out in 30 minutes if we’d had our own equipment.’” This death, finally pushed Sheriff Eyman to assertively seek what he needed.

“His first effort was to obtain an old fire truck, but that attempt failed. Now a plan is under way to buy a new fire truck and modify it for rescue work. . . The county has two ways to obtain the equipment. One is to buy it outright. Another is to enter into partnership with the local US civil defense unit, with the county and the federal government each paying half the cost.”

Eyman and David V. Sprunt, Assistant Director of the local Civil Defense Office appeared before the Postwar Planning Board on September 10, 1952. The application they presented was granted, but then it needed the approval of the local, state, regional and Washington Civil Defense authorities. Ultimately, the total cost for the truck and the equipment, was \$10,321.

On November 23, 1953, the first vehicle in Pima County dedicated solely to SAR, was unveiled. The truck had a Seagraves body on a GMC chassis and was designed and outfitted by the Thunderbird Sales Company in Phoenix—it was the only one of its kind in Arizona. The rig carried three-hundred gallons of water, high-pressure hose, litters and stretchers, six-hundred feet of “stout rope,” chains, ladders, hooks, and a twelve-thousand-pound boom and winch. It had an air pack, resuscitator, generator, and a “portable light powerful enough to cast a beam one mile.” Responders were able to communicate by two-way radio to the sheriff’s radio system.

Bill Dossett, from San Xavier Rock and Sand and a Navy Seabee, oversaw the training on the new vehicle. Dossett was also chief of rescue for the county CD organization. “Seabees in the naval reserve will be trained. . . and several of Sheriff Frank A. Eyman’s Deputies [sic] will also receive training as part of their regular duties. It is anticipated that most of the calls for the truck will come through the Sheriff’s Department [sic], which will then request assistance from Dossett. . . A basic crew for the truck will probably consist of eight specially trained rescue workers. . .” (Star 1/15/1952, 6/24/1952, 9/9/1952, 11/24/1953; Citizen 9/10/1952, 9/12/1952)

## B-47 Explodes Over Rincons

**Dec 3, 1953**

Three Davis-Monthan officers and an enlisted man were killed when their Stratojet exploded at 10,000 feet in mid-air over Redington Pass. Reports indicated that only minutes before, it had just completed a refueling operation with a KC-97 tanker plane. The explosion was witnessed by hundreds of Tucsonans, including several private and military aircraft already in the air. Nearly



immediate reports by these several aircraft, indicated there were dozens of small fires and that there were no survivors.

Authorities from Davis-Monthan dispatched “medics with a 200-man rescue party from the base... and Sheriff Frank Eyman directed a party of 30 deputies... two ambulances and put the county’s new rescue truck into operation for the first time.” Per the article, this was the first fatal accident involving a B-47 in the Tucson area. “Hundreds of Tucsonans, drawn to the area by radio news reports of the disaster, clogged the narrow dirt road through the pass... Military police were finally forced to set up road blocks and turned back long lines of curious, intent on reaching the crash scene.” (Star 12/4/1953)

## Scuba for SAR Comes to Arizona

**Dec 16, 1953**

With several large lakes in the area and upwards of 15 miles of water-filled canals within city limits, Phoenix would grow slightly faster than Southern Arizona in developing an underwater scuba diving community, including for search and recovery.

Possibly the earliest use of non-military divers for any purpose, including for search related to either of the two Arizona areas, might be when two volunteer divers from Phoenix went into “the icy cold water of Clear Creek” on December 16, 1953, for a safe from a burglary in Winslow. For a body recovery, it is likely for the unfortunate pilot who crashed into the Salt River below Roosevelt Dam while performing a waterfowl survey for the Arizona Game and Fish Department on January 4, 1954. By at least mid-1955, two Phoenix dive clubs, the San Dabs and Desert Divers, were now in existence and would be increasingly called upon for body recoveries, although grappling hooks and dynamite were occasionally still being used.

On May 12, 1956, the City-County Civil Defense of Phoenix formed a water rescue unit composed of “experienced skin and lung divers... available for any water emergency including drownings, recovery of property, and flood disasters.” By mid-April 1957, Maricopa County had a Water Safety Posse, with at least five divers. Finally, on August 29, 1957, two boys rode their bicycles into a ten-foot-deep Phoenix canal. For amusement, they pedaled along the bottom for several seconds before surfacing and safely swimming to shore. However, they were underwater long enough a witness reported them drowned. Fifteen policemen answered the call, which resulted “in a full-scale dragging operation.” In response to this incident, one week later, Phoenix Police Chief Charles Thomas, “asked that a squad of skin divers be added to the Phoenix police department... There’s always a need to search under water. It’s time we were organized to do it systematically.”

While Phoenix diving was slowly evolving, Southern Arizona still had but a handful of divers, with little or no organized diving community yet. Tucson’s scuba diving (often then called skin-diving) began largely around the sport of underwater spear fishing, with the Gulf of California, including Rocky Point, Cholla Bay, and Guaymas, nearby. To support this area’s burgeoning sport, Sturges Sporting Goods on Tucson’s South Sixth Avenue, was now selling dive equipment. Then on June 20, 1956, Sturges also initiated the region’s first commercial “air-filling station” for scuba tanks. Prior to this, Southern Arizona’s nearest comparable tank-filling station was in Phoenix.

Six weeks later, early-August 1957, the local YMCA started sponsoring a three-week, 12-hour-long dive course. National accreditations were just beginning. It was instructed by John Smith, “a long-time skindiving enthusiast from the West Coast...” A few days after the beginning of this course, the YMCA also advertised forming Tucson’s first dive club, the “Bottom Dwellers,”

meeting at the home of Franklin E. Foote, the group's first president. It was touted to "extend your activities into the realm of the blue continent."

In 1958, Tucson's second dive club, "Desert Neptunes," began at Davis-Monthan Air Force Base, but was open only to those affiliated with the Base. This was followed on August 21, 1958 by the formation of the "Desert Dolphins" at the Country Club Pool on the Benson Highway. The dive club still exists in 2023. By the end of 1961, these two clubs were joined by the "Tucson Tiger Sharks," and "Mirage Skin Diving Club" at Fort Huachuca. Also, by this time, dive gear was being sold at Handy Andy and Tucson Service Station Supply. (Phoenix Republic 12/17/1953, 1/5/1954, 5/25/1955, 5/13/1956, 8/30/1957; Star 6/20/1956, 7/17/1956, 8/14/1956, 9/23/1956, 6/10/1960)

### Carried from Finger Rock Canyon

**Apr 20, 1954**

"Exhausted rescue squads this morning ended a grueling 20-hour trek through craggy mountain terrain to carry an injured student from a steep walled canyon hidden deep within the Catalinas." Michael Bingham, 22, was that student and he was now injured in Finger Rock Canyon.

While trying to retrieve a climbing rope, Bingham jumped down a 14-foot cliff, twisting his ankle so severely he could not walk. His two companions tried to help, but this became impossible. Beginning at 1:00 a.m., "at least 30 deputies and two large teams of Davis-Monthan rescue men struggled to carry the youth by litter, rope, and back through mountain country described as being 'too rough for a pack mule to climb.' "

At least one deputy was injured and a "second sorely battered from repeated trips in and out of the canyon during the treacherous, single file trek over slippery shale and stabbing cactus." Often, only two men at a time could carry the stretcher due to the terrain's restrictions. " 'Sometimes we had to lower Bingham with ropes, or help him hop along on one foot when the going was too rough for a litter.' " Deputies brought in food once and water, several times, to the rescue teams, which were now faced with 90-degree temperatures.

" 'I've been in all kinds of rescue jobs,' said Deputy Marvin Morrisett, 'but I've never been on a tougher one than this—you can't imagine how rugged that country was. I hope we never have another like it.' " (Star 4/21/1954, 4/22/1954)

### Sheriff's Auxiliary Deputy Program

**May 10, 1954**

In mid-November of 1938, the Tucson Junior Chamber of Commerce formed "The Vigilantes." These local businessmen served for decades as a largely ceremonial, civic arm of the Jaycees. They are/were most active in spreading the "Go Western" theme while promoting Tucson's Fiesta de los Vaqueros Parade and Rodeo, generally in February. Among other things they did, was to good-naturedly put those not complying with this "Old West" dress code, into a portable "hoosegow." They pulled it around downtown raising money for charities by levying fines for those "arrested." Also, this group of about 25 men, would serve as western-dressed escorts for dignitaries and guests in "The Old Pueblo."

Ten years later, on November 15, 1948, the Pima County Rescue Patrol began. It was created out of what was formerly known as the Sheriff's Posse. It grew to over fifty members who were quasi-trained in mountain rescue, climbing and first aid. Under the leadership of Deputy Harry

Brannon, and with the support of Sheriff Jerome Martin, they became very active in the area's search and rescue efforts. In mid-December of 1950, however, Brannon left the Pima County Sheriff's Department for a new career. This ardent group of SAR supporters soon faded from the scene. Local search and rescue was now without a core group of volunteer enthusiasts willing to be routinely called for assistance.

Frank A. Eyman became Pima County Sheriff in 1951, bringing progressive ideas to the area, one being an Auxiliary Deputy Program. He did this by converting a cadre of willing and able members from The Vigilantes. "At the conclusion of two years' law enforcement and civil defense training, 15 Tucsonans were sworn. . . as auxiliary deputies. . . Trained especially for duty on rescue missions and in event of unforeseen emergencies, the group is composed of mostly local businessmen who have devoted off hours and their own funds to the program." They received no pay, wore the same blue uniform as a deputy, had a badge and shoulder patch, and were provided a standard-issue sidearm. (Star 11/22/1938, 3/14/1954, 9/25/1955; Citizen 5/11/1954, 6/20/1955)

## Diver Recovers Teenager

**May 23, 1954**

"A small army of men bravely waded and swam out into the water in a desperate effort to locate the youth, but this plan of search was ordered stopped by Sheriff Eyman when huge pockets of treacherous quicksand hidden by dirty water were discovered."

About 4:30 p.m., Bill Taylor, a 15-year-old Tucson High School sophomore, was swimming in an abandoned San Xavier Rock and Sand gravel pit on Tucson's south side, near the Santa Cruz River. Two teenagers were passing by and heard Taylor yelling for help, fifty feet from shore. They scrambled down to the water's edge and Robert Smith, 15, quickly undressing, dove in. Just as he reached Taylor, the boy shouted, " 'I can't make it,' " and went under. Fifteen minutes later, the Sheriff's Department was alerted and "the full-scale search started."

At least a dozen Sheriff's Deputies and highway patrolmen responded directly and quickly, as did several Tucson firemen who manned the city's rescue truck. The county's brand new Civil Defense rescue truck, operated by volunteers, also showed up. Two life rafts from Davis-Monthan AFB were brought in, as were some portable pumps to lower the pit's water level. Huge moveable searchlights were set up high on the bank surrounding the lake and then, while throwing out grappling hooks, "crews of men worked through the night back and forth across the pond in an effort to find the body."

About ten members of the local navy and marine reserve unit were called, believing their expertise might be used. That evening, Sheriff Frank Eyman, who was coordinating the search effort, got permission from the boy's mother to use dynamite with the hopes the underwater explosions would release the boy from the weeds and debris in the twenty feet of water. None of this worked and at 3:00 a.m., the grim effort was temporarily halted so the "shivering and exhausted" responders could warm up and get a little rest.

A few hours later, the search with grappling hooks began again. This time, however, what might have been the boy's body was likely found but then dropped, twice. With this promising spot located, August E. Weddle, a member of the Tucson naval reserve, volunteered to dive to the bottom and search through the grass. "Wearing a diver's [hardhat] helmet—and fins...dove beneath the grappling hooks. He found the body and attached a rope to it." (Citizen 5/24/1954, 5/25/1954)

## Lost 5-Year-Old

**Jun 10, 1954**

Ranger Brinkley was giving an injection to a horse and the little boy asked, “ ‘What’s the matter with that horse? Is he sick?’ ” Bobby watched Brinkley for a while and then along with his honey-colored pet spaniel, seemingly went back to Camp Lawton, only a couple of hundred yards away. Five-year-old Charles Robert “Bobby” McCord was last seen at the Palisades Ranger Station Corral at 9:15 a.m. by John Brinkley. The boy’s father was Scoutmaster of Boy Scout Troop 117 and had taken his family up to Camp Lawton for a few days to dodge the Tucson heat. An hour after Bobby was last seen at the corral, his father noticed he was missing.

Once alerted, Brinkley and fellow ranger Allan Geyer soon followed the boy’s small cowboy boot prints down the dirt road past the LDS Church Camp, a thousand yards distance, before the tracks were lost in the soft pine needles. Scout Camp Director, Lyle Bull, gathered 16 of his older scouts and they scattered out through the Ponderosa Pines, calling the lad’s name. The Sheriff’s Department was notified and deputies arrived. Now with several forest officials on horseback, along with the scouts and a handful of deputies, a two-mile radius was initially covered. Sheriff Frank Eyman then arrived and the search expanded.

Eyman reached Lee Kartchner, “in charge of bloodhounds at the state prison at Florence. Kartchner brought three dogs and at 5:00 p.m., they picked up the boy’s scent from a pair of shoes he had left behind at the camp.” They had the trail for a while but when they came across too many conflicting scents from searchers a few hours earlier, the animals lost the track. The dogs were called off and Eyman then stationed searchers on top of several prominent, logical spots and everyone quieted down and listened. The idea was to hopefully hear the little boy either yelling or crying once it got dark. Earlier in the day a Civil Air Patrol plane scoured the mountainside and Davis-Monthan Air Force Base readied 15 airmen to join the effort the next morning. A helicopter was to be deployed up there, as well.

“The boy was discovered at 7:50 a.m. about four and one-half miles from Camp Lawton... by one of the airmen. He said he was walking a little apart from the others in his party in Sycamore Canyon and calling out the child’s name when ‘all of a sudden out of the clear blue’ the boy answered him.” When talking with his parents, Bobby said, “ ‘I was only scared once because I couldn’t find my home.’ ” (Star 6/11/1954; Citizen 6/11/1954)

## Emergency Service Scouts

**Jul 23, 1954**

Explorer Scouts, Don Zachan, George Howe, Dick Koziel, James Pagel, Bill Marlin, Bill Whittlesea, Ralph O’Connell, Frank Mallett and Fred Roof, of Explorer Post 74, were honored for “activities in emergency service to which the post is dedicated.” To the author’s knowledge, Explorer Post 74 was the only Explorer Scout unit in Tucson recognized this way.

Beginning in 1939, a series of Emergency Service programs were implemented for older Boy Scouts, which 15 years later, was the basis for the 1954 recognition cited here for Tucson’s Explorer Post 74. The earliest such program in the Boy Scouts of America was called the Emergency Services Corps. These young men were prepared to assist in emergencies by being certified in various emergency-related skills. Insignia, principally in a high-visibility red was created for both the uniforms and as armbands, and if an Explorer Post had a certain number of Scouts endorsed in Emergency Service, then the unit was considered an Emergency Service Unit, such as Post 74 was.

In this country, the program began as preparedness for World War II. Afterwards, it continued with the Cold War and a heightened need for Civil Defense and emergency preparedness. In the 1960s, this program began being supplanted by the increasing emergency medical response systems in most communities and in the early 1990s, the program was dropped. In part, however, this program lives on through the Search and Rescue and Fire Rescue Explorer Posts and Venturing Crews. <http://www.seniorscoutinghistory.org/seniorscoutsite/emergency.html>. (Star 7/24/1954)

## Navy Jet Hits Chiricahuas

**Oct 7, 1954**

Search and rescue teams of the Civil Air Patrol found the wreckage of a Navy Corsair fighter jet on a peak at the 8,100-foot level near Cochise Head, in the Chiricahua Mountains. “Smoke was still spiraling from the wreckage when it was sighted...followed the radio signal across the rugged mountain area north of Douglas. . . If he had flown 25 feet higher, he would have cleared the mountain. . .” The plane was being taken from El Paso to Phoenix by Lieutenant James Albert Patterson of New York, where it was going to be stored. “Throughout the day as rescuers converged at the crash site, a flying boat SA-16 circled the area.” (Citizen 10/9/1954; Star 10/9/1954)

## Two Hunters Need Rescuing

**Nov 7, 1954**

Two separate “mountain rescue squads, spearheaded by Davis-Monthan airmen, toiled...high in the Catalina mountains to bring out two disabled hunters—one accidentally shot in the shoulder, the other with a broken heel.” Harold Elder, 27, was “shot in the right shoulder when his .30-.30 caliber rifle fell against a rock in the upper reaches of Sabino Canyon.” He had stopped momentarily to remove a thorn from his hand, leaving his Winchester rifle propped up against some rocks. Of course, it fell, sending a slug through his shoulder. Elder’s nephew was able to scramble down and contact the Sabino Canyon Caretaker, Pierre Early. He in turn, summoned deputies, airmen, and an ambulance from Tucson Mortuary.

Once underway, it took this rescue team of about ten, ninety minutes to find the injured man, but another three hours “to bring Elder back through the bushy and rocky area on a stretcher. Half way back they were met by Lt. Haskell Proper, who brought a special *wire litter* [emphasis added] which is easier to use in the rough area than the stretcher.”

Several miles away from Elder, 33-year-old Calvin Smith, “fell off a cliff...breaking two bones in his heel. The ‘lucky’ hunter’s tumble was halted by a ledge after a 10-foot fall.” Fortunately, Smith was with his wife at the time and it was 9:30 in the morning. “He told deputies that he had worked his way about 150 yards down the sheer face of the cliff when he lost his footing and tumbled down onto the ledge breaking bones in his heel. His wife helped him to reach a safer place before she started out for help.”

A second rescue squad from Davis-Monthan met up with Mrs. Smith and she was able to show them where he was, although she was too exhausted to go back up all the way with them. Mr. Smith, very appreciative for the airmen’s assistance said, “that due to crumbly rocks in the area and the terrain, the trek out was dangerous for the men carrying him on a stretcher.” The five airmen on this rescue completed the two-way trip in less than four hours. (Star 11/8/1954, 11/9/1954)

## Santa Rita Land Rescue Squadron

**Nov 23, 1954**

A group within the local Civil Air Patrol met in Madera Canyon in the Santa Rita Mountains and formed what soon became the Santa Rita Land Rescue Squadron. “It stands ready to make ground searches for lost prospectors, children or downed planes. It coordinates its work with air units in a search and will spend many long hours checking out possible crash sites in rugged mountain terrain, spotted from the air.”

It quickly deployed on a significant search for an aircraft disappearing in early January 1955. “Some of the members of the land rescue team were driving across the countryside in jeeps following up leads and seeking others. Every clue was investigated, nothing was left undone. The mission, however was unsuccessful.” See “Plane Lost For Four Months,” January 6, 1955, on page 152. Their only other noteworthy mention was assisting on a short documentary made for the Civil Air Patrol. See “Walt Disney Films Tucson Civil Air Patrol,” July 30, 1955, on page 156. Their last, of only a few mentions in the Tucson newspapers during the two years they seemed to exist, was November 28, 1956, two years after they formed. That was in a retrospective article celebrating the 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the CAP.

In 1979, the Neotoma Composite Squadron of the Arizona Wing of the Civil Air Patrol, was formed, performing much the same mission as the Santa Rita Land Rescue Squadron. The name was suggested then, by now Colonel Robert McCord, a veteran member. As he told the author in an August 1, 2022 Email, “As to the name, while various Sqn names were being kicked around by the membership, someone suggested ‘Desert Rats’... I suggested Neotoma, as it was more or less equivalent to Desert Rats, but likely to be unquestioned, and/or assumed to be a place name.” Neotoma is the scientific name for Arizona’s half-dozen common Woodrats. (Citizen 12/1/1955; Robert McCord, 8/1/2022)

## Overdue Aircraft

**Dec 12, 1954**

Pilot Harry Marsh and passenger Rodney Dingle were returning to Tucson from a fly-in breakfast in Gila Bend, when the 65-horsepower engine on their converted L-6 Interstate “tail dragger” aircraft, failed. Designed in 1940, the tandem, two-seat plane was capable of maneuvering in and out of small, rough areas. When the pair had not made it home that afternoon, an alarm for them was sounded. The Civil Aeronautics Administration [precursor to the FAA] “contacted all fields with radio in the flight area. The Sheriff’s Office and the Arizona Highway Patrol dispatched cars to check on the plane... the Civil Air Patrol search and rescue squadron alerted its pilots by radio, television, and telephone.”

Earle Comer, a pilot since 1918 with thousands of hours of flight time, and a member of the Civil Air Patrol was in the air, along with others, by sunrise the next morning. He flew directly to his assigned search zone, east of Gila Bend. Soon spotting smoke, he was able to locate the downed aircraft, which appeared undamaged, but inoperable. Comer put his small tricycle-gear Ercoupe, “Early Comer,” safely down, close to the other plane. Tired and cold, Marsh and Dingle were unhurt. Just then, an Air Force search and rescue Albatross out of March AFB in Riverside, California, flew over and buzzed the two airplanes. After a mechanic was flown in later that day, all ended well, thanks largely to the efforts of the local Civil Air Patrol. (Star 12/19/1954)



## Plane Lost for Four Months

**Jan 6, 1955**

The four men aboard the Cessna 170 left Phoenix at 8:10 a.m. Thursday, bound for the Bisbee-Douglas Airport, a less than two-hour flight. They were attending a meeting about a construction project in Bisbee with the local School Board at 10:00 a.m. the next morning. Two were architects with the Edward L. Varney architectural firm in Phoenix, including the pilot, 51-year-old Jack Price of Flagstaff. The two others were engineers consulting for Varney. His company was also the owner of the four-place aircraft. Three of the four men were very experienced pilots, each had many hundreds of hours of flying time. When the foursome failed to arrive by noon, a hurried air search for them began. More than a dozen planes, including 11 from the Civil Air Patrol, took to the skies and “bucked threatening weather” to look for the missing silver, blue-trimmed plane that afternoon.

On Friday, 32 airplanes and two ground parties “vainly searched the rugged Dragoon Mountain area 65 miles southeast of Tucson...” There were aircraft from the CAP, Air National Guard, Army National Guard, Naval Air Station in Litchfield, Marana Air Field, and six were flown by unattached volunteers. Also, two Civil Air Patrol ground rescue teams—a jeep, a truck and six men—had been dispatched to investigate a report of a loud explosion heard by a rabbit hunter in the area near Elfrida and Pearce. March Air Force Base in Riverside, California, appointed Captain Byrd Ryland as the commander of the search and rescue mission.

Weather and low hanging clouds left mountains in Southern Arizona blanketed in deep snow, hampering the air search on Saturday. Most of the forty-odd aircraft now involved, including several additional military planes from Riverside, California, were grounded and unable to fly. Since the missing plane had only four hours’ worth of fuel, this down-time permitted officials to strategize where their efforts should be concentrated. New Mexico and old Mexico were brought into the area of interest. Ground teams were not hindered by bad weather, however, and they determined the loud explosion that was reported had come from a mining operation in the vicinity.

Sunday saw an even greater search effort. “More than 45 planes and seven ground crews participated in the third day of search... Planes flew 137 separate sorties... The C.P.A. [sic: CAP] estimated that the search had cost at least \$60,000...” This same article of Monday, January 10, went on to contradict itself by saying at least 62 planes and two helicopters were now participating in the search for the missing four men. “One plane flew into old Mexico... members of the missing craft might have thought smoke coming from the Cananea, Sonora, Mex., smelter might have been mistaken for smoke from a Bisbee [sic: Douglas] smelter, used by pilots as a landmark for the Bisbee-Douglas airport.”

Finally, at Wednesday noon, January 12, the official search for the missing aircraft was suspended. “One of Arizona’s biggest searches was called off... More than 260 aircraft—both civil and military—augmented by 200 ground volunteers under the direction of the Civil Air Patrol searched rugged mountain areas in Arizona and New Mexico... But it was fruitless.” Of course, they indicated that if any future leads developed, they would be investigated; there were a couple, but they proved unproductive. The CAP documented 420 individual sorties, with 1,048 hours of flight time recorded. Some of the higher elevations, such as on Mount Lemmon, could not be adequately checked due to six to eight feet of new snow.

When asked how low some of the search planes were going, the mission commander would say, “‘close enough to bring back brush with them... and I don’t mean they are hot shots, endangering anyone else.’”



However, the search was not yet over. On January 27, Barry M. Goldwater, in his first term as the US Senator from Arizona, asked the Sixth Army to dispatch men and equipment from Fort Huachuca to conduct a new search between the Santa Catalina Mountains and the San Pedro River, from San Manuel to Benson. This fresh effort was requested by influential businessman Edward L. Varney. Goldwater founded the Arizona Air National Guard and was now a Major General in the organization, not to mention sitting on a couple of influential Congressional Committees involving the military. Politics aside, nothing was found.

On May 4, four months after the plane disappeared, Gerry Brinkley was riding a horse through the evergreens and aspens on Mount Lemmon with her Forest Ranger husband, John R. Brinkley. She spotted the shiny silver metal of the crashed plane peeking out of five feet of snow. John was off-duty but was checking a spring and its creek at the 8,500-foot level on the shaded, northern side of the Catalinas. The plane was mostly still buried, but the four bodies which were beginning to thaw out, were there.

Led by Undersheriff Waldon V. Burr, volunteers of the Pima County Auxiliary Deputy Sheriff's Association, along with men from 803<sup>rd</sup> Air Police Squadron from Davis-Monthan AFB and Arizona National Guard, recovered the bodies. The four men had left ten children fatherless. Carburetor-icing was the likely cause of the accident. Mrs. Brinkley received the \$1,000 reward offered by Edward Varney back on January 16; in 2021, now worth \$10,000. (Star 1/7/1955, 1/8/1955, 1/9/1955, 1/10/1955, 1/11/1955, 5/5/1955, 5/6/1955; Citizen 1/7/1955, 1/17/1955, 1/27/1955)

## Car Plunges 1,600 Feet into Bear Canyon

**Jan 22, 1955**

Six teenage boys, skipping the camping trip they had told their parents they were going on, decided they just “wanted to see some snow” on Mt. Lemmon. Living in Ajo, 16-year-old James Wilson said this was the first time he had ever driven on ice. Of course, they did not have chains. James was one of the lucky three that survived the car's quarter-mile cart-wheeling down off the Catalina Highway. The other boys, ages, 15, 16, and 17, died either directly, or in one tragic case, “30 feet from the top as he was being hauled to the ambulance.”

Going 25 mph when suddenly hitting ice, witnesses said the 1947 Nash skidded and then punched through the 18-inch berm of plowed snow edging the roadway. As it rolled and then tumbled ever faster, it began chopping off the tops of pine trees as it sometimes now seemingly flew through the air. When it suddenly stopped, the car's momentum was so great that its engine completely tore loose and ended up seventy feet farther down. Beer cans were strewn up and down the manzanita and boulder-studded mountainside.

More than one-hundred passersby, sheriffs' deputies, Prison Camp officials, and a rescue team from Davis-Monthan AFB, all aided in the four-hour-long rescue. “At least 10 to 15 men, mostly volunteers, were needed to bring each of the injured or dead to the road.” Captain A. W. Roberts, chief of the Pima County Sheriff's Department traffic division, said “The county's specially equipped rescue truck, operated by the civil defense, ‘paid for itself. We'll never know the names of all the people who helped so courageously, but two volunteers were outstanding... Bill Sawyer, Parker-Kerr ambulance driver, who went down into that canyon three times until he reached exhaustion, and Dr. Robert Thomas... who went down the rope and saved those three boys' lives.’ ” Several times that afternoon and evening, the winch on the rescue truck was used to haul stretchers up to the roadway.

Also mentioned in the front-page news articles were traffic patrolmen, Sgt. Kenneth Sturgeon, “the last man to come up,” and Deputy Owen Hepler. Hepler would later drown in the Ray Reservoir on a body recovery on June 29, 1969. See “Two Rescuers Drown,” June 29, 1969, on page 259. (Star 1/23/1955; Citizen 1/24/1955)

## Two Missing Toddlers

**Mar 21, 1955**

“Two three-year-old children were back in their mothers’ arms. . . after straying away for a four-hour adventure that prompted a full-fledged rescue search.” Oliva was three and her playmate, David, was six months older. At 11 a.m., David’s mother called the Sheriff’s Department, asking for help. The two families were neighbors and lived just over a mile west of Davis-Monthan AFB, bordering a desert area two miles square in which there were no homes. Sheriff’s deputies soon responded and it became quickly apparent there was great urgency in this incident. They notified the police and also asked radio stations to alert the city to the missing youngsters. Wasting no time, a search plane went up from Davis-Monthan and two more from the Civil Air Patrol were readied for lift off. A rescue squad of Boy Scouts was gathered and prison bloodhounds from Florence summoned. This was a true emergency.

The second plane was about to take off when a report came in that an unidentified man found the two toddlers playing on railroad property, in between two train tracks. They were four blocks from their homes and although safe, were oblivious to the danger they were in, the angst they created for their parents, and the commotion begun in searching for them. (Star 3/22/1955)

## Missing Over Eight Months

**May 12, 1955**

On Friday, the first full day of searching, “Horsemen looked to the sky for bird signs that might indicate a man down, but found none.” John James Eastman, 82, a retired carpenter living in Tucson for four years, left the day before on his usual morning walk, which his wife said generally lasted for only ten minutes. He did not return. But on occasion, however, the older man had walked up to five miles away; when he went that far, his son would bring him home. This particular mid-day, Eastman’s son trailed his overdue father for a mile before he lost his tracks and the Sheriff’s Department was called. The Eastmans, including the son, lived in the open desert near Ajo Way where it passes through the Tucson Mountains.

“‘It is a heartbreaking thing,’ [Mrs. Eastman] said. ‘He is in good health, but has gotten forgetful because of his age.’ ” It was a little more serious than that. Two months before he disappeared, a psychiatrist had examined Mr. Eastman for three days, “and found him senile and likely to wander into the desert. She said Eastman’s family had removed him from County Hospital against her advice.”

On Friday morning, horses rented from Ben Ward’s Stables on East 29th Street for the deputies arrived and, in the afternoon, private citizens on horseback also took part in the search. They were joined by two jeep loads of men on foot. Even a prospecting geophysicist with an electronic divining rod got involved. “On his statement that he could perhaps find the man, officers obtained a piece of the missing man’s clothing with which to activate the apparatus and the search was continued, guided by a vibrating metal pole. When this scientific approach. . . failed to produce results, it was abandoned. . . ,” and the scientist went back to work.

In addition to all those both mounted and on foot, a “deputy scanned the dry country from a low-flying plane...” on Saturday. The following day, which turned out to be the last day of the effort, the search extended as far north as Marana and several miles south of Tucson, but no new leads were uncovered. There was some possibility Mr. Eastman may have hitchhiked somewhere, like he did on an earlier occasion and so other police departments in Southern Arizona were alerted to this possibility. The May 18, 1955, *The Arizona Daily Star*, ran an article, “Missing Person List Growing.” It said, “The Sheriff’s Department [sic] has a list of more than 100 persons sought by worried friends and relatives, men, women and children some of whom have never been heard of again.” John James Eastman was one of them.

Finally, a front-page story in *The Arizona Daily Star* on Sunday, January 22, 1956, said, “Desert sands unfolded the final chapter to one of the most baffling manhunts in 1955 with the discovery yesterday of the skeletal remains of John James Eastman. Three Boy Scouts stumbled onto the tragic scene in the rocky Tucson Mountains where the 82-year-old nature lover succumbed to the forces of the desert.” The kids, confused by what they saw, carried the skull and pelvis to the nearest house, a mile away, from where the Sheriff’s Department was summoned. Deputies, a coroner, and noted University Anthropologist Bertram S. Kraus went to the site of scattered bones and clothing. Two months later, March 19, a Coroner’s Jury ruled John Eastman died from “exposure or injuries,” classifying his death as accidental.

Seven months after the search ended but before Eastman was found, Undersheriff Waldon V. Burr asked the Pima County Board of Supervisors on December 16, 1955, to approve payment of \$125 to Ben Ward, whose horses were used in the three-day search. “Three horses were used one day, 12 another and 10 on the third day. Burr said the man’s son had said he would pay the expenses of the search and had also offered a reward. Later he refused to pay, and has now left town...” The author assumes the bill was paid by the County but the reward offered of \$300, was probably not given to the Scouts. In 2022, \$125 would be approximately \$1,400 and \$300 would be about \$3,300. (Star 5/14/1955, 5/15/1955, 5/16/1955, 5/18/1955, 12/17/1955, 1/22/1956; Citizen 2/2/1956, 3/19/1956)

## Overdue on Mt. Lemmon Hike

**Jun 17, 1955**

The trio of young men knew where they were at all times but also that “everyone would be worried about us.” Eagle Scouts, Hank Holland, 17, and his brother Sam, 15, and a friend, Bob Martin, 17, had started in Sabino Canyon in the afternoon, planning to be at the Mt. Lemmon Lodge the next evening at supper time—an energetic trip by anyone’s standards. Because “the trail leading through Rattlesnake canyon had been erased by the fire there this spring,” they soon noticed they were west of the peak. They “decided it was easier to walk around it following the stream, and come over the top rather than going back and starting over.” They pulled out their compasses, dug into their Scouting lore, and “they stretched what would have been a 10-mile hike into a 30-mile trek.” They were overdue by a full day.

Now at midnight on the planned second day, Bob Martin’s father, “alerted forest rangers and a rescue party of Sheriff’s Deputies [sic] and auxiliaries was formed...several planes joined in the search.” Sgt. Kenneth Sturgeon of the Sheriff’s Department, was in charge of looking for the “lost” youths. Of course, the boys were fine, albeit thirsty when they came walking into Summerhaven. “The fathers of the youths said, ‘We were the only ones that were excited, the boys knew what they were doing.’ ” (Star 6/20/1955)

## Walt Disney Films Tucson Civil Air Patrol

**Jul 30, 1955**

Twenty members of the Santa Rita Land Rescue Squadron of the local Civil Air Patrol, including two of their pilots, along with two Para-rescue men from the 42<sup>nd</sup> Air Rescue Squadron out of March AFB, aided Disney Film cinematographers in making a short television documentary. It focused on painting an orange international crash symbol on an airplane wreck. It was titled, “Old Crash Marking Mission.” Photographers Al Runkel and W. J. McInnis journeyed into the Chiricahua Mountains with two dozen others to where a Navy Corsair crashed the previous fall, killing the pilot. They hiked seven miles to and from the spot that Lieutenant James Albert Patterson of New York, died. See “Navy Jet Hits Chiricahuas,” October 7, 1954, on page 150.

The plane was scattered out through the rocks and trees more than one-hundred feet on the steep mountainside and the CAP cadets had to pull it together to paint the symbol on the debris as well as on a prominent, nearby rock ledge. The following week, “scenes showing how a C.A.P. member locates the wreckage from the air will be shot by Runkel.” (Star 8/7/1955)

## Brother and Sister Swept Away

**Aug 3, 1955**

About sundown, four children and their parents, James and Lupe Lewis, were in the family vehicle when caught in a flashflood in Rippey’s Wash. They were on the Kelvin-Florence Highway, 15 miles west of Ray, Arizona, and “the waters which engulfed the Lewis family... apparently came surging down the slopes of the Tortilla Mountains.” Nearby, the little community of Kelvin reported a torrential downpour of 1.72 inches of rain that night.

James, a cowboy on the A-Diamond Ranch on the Gila River, “swam away from the car with his two youngest children, aged 4, and 6.” Lupe also got free, managing to struggle to shore. The last time Lupe saw her 14-year-old daughter, Juanita, “she was hanging from a tree above the rushing water. Pinal County Sheriff’s Deputies and about fifty residents of the Ray area were participating in the search for the missing children.”

Juanita was found the next day floating in a wash about five miles from where the family auto was struck. “Her brother, Eddie, 12, who was trapped in the car, still was missing. After an all-day search, it was reported that only the fender of the Lewis car had been found.” The author was never able to determine if Eddie was ever recovered.

The little mining town of Ray, Arizona, no longer exists. Within three years of this tragedy, residents there were moved to the planned community of Kearny, nearby. Purposely abandoned to corporate progress, Ray was soon enveloped by the Ray Open Pit Copper Mine. (Arizona Republic 8/5/1955; Star 8/5/1955; Wikipedia)

## Boy Drowns in Gravel Pit

**Aug 4, 1955**

As Pima County Sheriff’s Deputies slowly dragged the thirty-foot-deep abandoned gravel pit with the four-pronged grappling hook, the grief-stricken mother of Cruz Dominguez kept vigil nearby. Her 14-year-old son had been hunting wild onions along the steep bank; slipping unseen into the water, he could not swim. When two of his brothers, 16 and 10, spotted his “new straw hat bobbing

on the murky water,” they yelled for their older brother, 27. He repeatedly dove, trying to find Cruz, but could never quite get to the bottom.

Deputies, led by Earl Gudd, were using a 14-foot rowboat and grappling hooks from the Pima County Rescue Truck; after two hours, they snared Cruz and brought him to the surface. The two-hundred-yard long by fifty-yard-wide quarry, then full of recent rainwater, was one-mile east of Sahuarita, twenty miles south of Tucson. Mrs. Dominguez, along with Cruz and the three other sons, were living on a nearby ranch, eking out a living as cotton pickers. See “CD’s First Rescue Truck,” November 23, 1953, on page 144 . (Citizen 8/4/1955, 8/5/1955; Star 8/5/1955)

### Boy Lost in Baboquivaris

**Nov 11, 1955**

Steven Stewart II of Tucson, along with his 2-year-old Cocker Spaniel, was found unhurt after being lost for 16 hours north of Sasabe in the foothills of the Baboquivari Mountains. A. D. Browning, owner of Rancho Seco, brought the 11-year-old boy in after searching all night. Sheriff’s Sergeant Ken Sturgeon led the operations. “While cowboys, Sheriff’s Deputies [sic] and civil defense volunteers entered the area, the county’s big rescue truck played powerful search lights into the sky and across the high plateaus . . . The boy spotted a search plane at mid-morning but was not seen by the pilot.” (Star 11/13/1955)

### Hunter Dies of Seizure

**Nov 16, 1955**

Friedrich Gustav Adam was hunting deer with two friends in Goldfish Canyon near Greaterville, despite being an “asthmatic sufferer.” He and a companion were both successful on their second day; 66-year-old Friedrich had shot a three-point buck and both hunters were now at the 6,000-foot level. Adam’s friend, carrying his own deer down off the Santa Rita Mountains, looked back. Not seeing his hunting companion, he “returned to see if Adam was all right, and ‘I found him unconscious.’ ” He performed artificial respiration for two hours, while the second man went for help.

After several more hours, “Sgt. Kenneth Sturgeon led a party of deputies and an ambulance to the scene. Adam was dead when they arrived.” Deputies carried the body four miles down the canyon to the closest place a vehicle could get, and then placed the body on a jeep borrowed from a nearby ranch, eventually getting the deceased to the waiting ambulance. “The Sheriff’s Office [sic] released the 60-pound deer to a close friend of Adam. . . .” (Citizen 11/17/1955)

### Young Pilot Lost

**Dec 12, 1955**

John DeCastro, a 19-year-old student pilot with thirty hours of flight time began his first cross-country solo flight from Phoenix to Tucson at 9:45 a.m. When the tall blond, described as an excellent student, did not show up at Gilpin Airport as expected, five Civil Air Patrol planes were soon in the air looking for him. By sundown, no sign of the service station attendant or the red, two-place high-wing Aeronca aircraft, had been found. On the second day, 17 CAP planes with an estimated fifty people from Tucson, Phoenix, Prescott, and Willcox were involved, as

were ten aircraft from the Air Force, Army and Air National Guard. That day, they made 56 sorties and logged 125 flying hours searching. Additionally, a seven-man team, including parachuting paramedics, arrived in a large, twin-engine amphibious SA16 Albatross search and rescue plane from March Air Force Base near Riverside, California.

Major Kurt Steinbach, Civil Air Patrol search coordinator, said that “pilots returning last night were tired and hungry with sore eyes from staring at the ground and squinting at reflections and the sun. Others sat at radios all day maintaining communications. Flights were even made to Prescott, Flagstaff and Winslow to search for the lost pilot. ‘Some of our pilots even went as far as 50 miles into Mexico,’ working with authorities there. . . .”

The third day, a search of the Santa Catalina Mountains began after a miner near Oracle reported a small red plane had passed overhead about the time DeCastro would have been in the area. This was near where three men lost their lives in a plane crash 11 months before. See “Plane Lost for Four Months,” January 6, 1955, on page 152. Wreckage was seen. “Air observers, who first spotted it thought it could possibly be a new wreck. Ground crews that walked to the site found only the old wreck.” Twenty aircraft, including three Army and six Air Force planes, made 35 sorties that day.

“Early in the morning one plane picked up a Mexican official and searched for the second day in a row below the border on the chance that DeCastro might have bypassed Tucson and flown across the border.” Additionally, “Searchers had to fly in and out of the gunnery range near Ajo hurriedly so that they would not be in the way of the Air Force planes taking rocketry practice. A report that a bright flash and loud explosion occurred near Black Mountain, 10 miles west of Ajo, resulted in the check of the area.”

Late on December 16, the fourth day of hunting for DeCastro, the Air Force officially called off the search. “A Civil Air Patrol official explained that the decision means that the Air Force has canceled financial and personnel assistance ‘until such time as sufficient leads are obtained to make it possible to reopen the search. This does not mean that our planes will stop looking while flying on their own.’ ” Two days later, John DeCastro, 15 pounds lighter, walked into a restaurant in Tacna, forty miles east of Yuma. “ ‘How about a tall glass of water?’ ” He could not be understood because his mouth was so dry, not having had a drink for five days.

DeCastro, terribly confused by the terrain and lack of landmarks, finally made a power-off, “dead-stick landing” in the Luke Air Force Range, south of what is now Interstate 8. The bombing and gunnery range, created in 1941, is currently renamed the Barry M. Goldwater Air Force Range. The resourceful young man correctly stayed with his undamaged red plane for three days, trying to find water or even a barrel cactus for liquids. He found none. He cleverly took fuel from the plane and used its battery to start a fire for warmth. He saw jets far overhead practicing their tactical missions but nobody saw him. Finally, knowing he could not last another two days without water, he followed some prominent jeep tracks and walked 35 miles out to the Gila Bend-Yuma Highway. (Star 12/13/1955, 12/14/1955, 12/15/1955, 12/16/1955, 12/17/1955, 12/19/1955)

## Helicopter Considered for Local Civil Defense

**Dec 18, 1955**

The City of Tucson and Pima County announced they were considering purchasing a helicopter for emergency uses. At the time, the nearest available helicopters for such incidents were some distance away, either in Phoenix or Fort Huachuca.



“The Federal Civil Defense Administration through the matching federal grant-in-aid is ready to pay half the cost of CD helicopters purchased by state, cities, or counties. After months of study, actual use, and hard figuring CD officials are convinced that the helicopter is ideally suited to meet many of the unconventional problems facing Civil Defense personnel in a super-weapon era demanding super-defense for survival.”

Authorities discussed the various pros and cons of purchasing the aircraft. “The whirlybirds can get up and over the problem to better pick out the best evacuation routes. . . communications. . . damage assessment. . . keeping people well informed. . . avoiding panic. . . measuring levels of radioactivity. Estimated cost of a three-place helicopter meeting the design specifications. . . is about \$35,000.” A helicopter was not purchased at this time. (Star 12/18/1955)

### Spends Christmas Night on Ledge

**Dec 25, 1955**

Don Ellison, along with his wife and two holiday house guests, spent Christmas afternoon scrambling around on the rugged slopes of the Santa Catalina Mountains, north of Campbell Avenue. On their way back down about 4:30 p.m., they all skirted a steep ravine with sheer cliffs. That is, except for the 28-year-old Marana airman, who chose to take a “short cut,” over the mountaintop. “At 5 p.m., Ellison’s cries of ‘Help, help,’ echoed down the canyon. A group of unidentified hikers later came out of the canyon, reporting a man stranded high up, unable to go up or down.” Trapped, Ellison was not hurt, but had no food, water, or matches and was only wearing thin tee-shirt and slacks. The others went for help.

Just after dark, men tried to climb up to him from below. The Pima County Rescue Truck, “swept the lower reaches with powerful searchlights as a half-dozen deputies pressed into the treacherous heights with two walkie-talkies.” They had gotten to within 175 feet of Ellison. Although they could not see him but could communicate by yelling. “Near midnight, sheriff’s rescuers radioed by walkie-talkie: ‘We’re coming out. Can’t get to him from below. We’re worn practically down to our bare feet. Send fresh crews and a guide to work up over the top of the mountain. We’ll have to get him from above, by ropes.’ ” The effort was called off until dawn. Ellison fought the cold and fatigue, trying not to fall off his fragile little ledge, 175 feet from the bottom of the overhanging cliff.

Unbeknownst to anyone, however, Jack Sheaffer, an award-winning newspaper photographer and reporter Dean Prichard, both with *The Arizona Daily Star*, had worked their way up to within 150 feet of Ellison. But they came up the back side of the ridge, spending most of the night doing so by starlight. In fact, using gunshots from a revolver, they were able to guide others in at first light to where Ellison could be reached from above. Sheaffer and Prichard, along with two more rescuers, including one from Davis-Monthan AFB, then lowered Ellison down 150 feet to the bottom in stages, using a 150-foot hemp rope. They did this again four more times, to get four other rescuers safely down. Luckily for her husband, Mrs. Ellison had saved her Christmas meal of turkey for him. (Citizen 12/26/1955, 12/27/1955; Star 12/26/1955, 12/27/1955)

### Grandmother, Granddaughter, Lost

**Feb 18, 1956**

Mrs. Delores R. Maldonado, 76, and 6-year-old Anita, her granddaughter, wandered into an abandoned bombing range, east of the Nogales Highway, near Sahuarita. They were in search of scrap



metal to sell. Not returning home by 5 p.m., their family reported them missing. “A Sheriff’s Department [sic] rescue party—Capt. James Williams, Sgt. Ken Sturgeon, Deputies Fred Milne and Del Benton—worked with Davis-Monthan AFB searchers throughout the night.” At 8 a.m., one of the searchers found the pair wandering in the desert; a mile east of the highway, four miles north of the old gunnery range. They were in good condition, despite hunger and weariness and being chilled. (Star 2/20/1956)

## Boy Scouts Answer Disaster Drill

**Mar 2, 1956**

Some two-hundred Boy Scouts of the San Xavier District of the local Catalina Council were called out for a practice emergency alert by the Chairman of the District, Art Mahaney. On hand were representatives from Civil Defense, county and municipal police, Catalina Radio Club of Hughes Aircraft as well as Boy Scout officials. The group met at Himmel Park and were given several hours of training in emergency measures they would be expected to perform should a major disaster strike the area. Instruction included use of the stretcher, first aid, and emergency communications. Since this was the height of the Cold War with Russia, the young men were also exposed to what to do in case of an atomic attack. (Citizen 3/3/1956)

## Youthful Hero

**Mar 18, 1956**

Tucson Mayor Don Hummel, in presenting the engraved copper plaque from the City Council to 13-year-old Arthur Felix, said: “If you conduct your life as you indicate you intend to by your act, all of Tucson will be proud of you forevermore. Yours was as fine an example as we will ever see of a boy willing to risk his own life.” The young Mission View student had run three blocks, answering screams for help when Jose Otero, 9, was drowning in a quarry. Although Felix was able to drag the boy out, efforts to revive him failed. (Star 4/3/1956)

## Plane Lost for Nine Years

**Apr 2, 1956**

A. C. Slatter, 40, and his passenger, Hampton “Camp” Hanley, approximately 35, left Tucson at 8:32 a.m., enroute to El Paso and then on farther east. The small, two-person Globe-Swift aircraft they were in, N-78212, disappeared. The two engineers with North American Aviation Corporation in Los Angeles were combining a work project in Louisiana, with seeing friends and family along the way. The silver and blue, 125-hp plane only had 4 1/2 hours of fuel on board. “Weather conditions along the route were described as highly unfavorable, with dust storms, high winds, and some snow and rain.”

On the first day they were overdue, 15 planes of the Civil Air Patrol in Arizona, began retracing the pair’s intended route. The only lead at this early point was a vague report of a small silver plane being seen by a Ground Observer Corps member, twenty miles northeast of Nogales. No further information could be determined. On the second day, a pair of twin-engine Albatross amphibian search planes from US Air Force Rescue out of March AFB in California, joined in with the CAP. They completed 31 sorties and there were now 75 persons participating.

Late that afternoon, “A report from a New Mexico rancher... of a roaring plane and later an explosion and flash of flame about 10 miles south of Stein, N.M. . . .” Stein, on the Arizona and New Mexico border, was directly on the pair’s path to El Paso. CAP planes from New Mexico were now involved in the hunt, which had become more difficult because snow covered the region’s higher elevations, making spotting a downed plane that much harder.

By day four, the company the engineers worked for, sent two, twin-engine Piper Apaches to assist. With permission of the Mexican government, they could also hunt for their co-workers fifty miles south of the border. Additionally, eight planes from Holloman AFB near Alamogordo and a C-47 from Kirtland AFB, also in New Mexico, were now flying numerous sorties each day, along with a great many flights by the Civil Air Patrol.

Search coordinator, Major Hardcastle of the Civil Air Patrol out of Eloy, “said the weather was such Monday that Slatter would have been forced to fly around the southern end of the Chiricahuas. The peaks were overcast and it was snowing at the north end, he said.” A rancher who lived near the mountains, “ ‘saw a plane fitting the description of the Swift at 9:10 or 9:15 a.m., the same time they would have reached that area. The plane was heading east-southeast and flying fairly low. It was 10 miles south of the airway, probably skirting the weather,’ Hardcastle stated.”

Fresh footprints had also been seen in the snow in the Chiricahuas from the air and they were checked out by two para-rescue sergeants from March AFB. Word came back the tracks were those of a forest ranger. But a larger ground team went back in again the next day to take a second look, still comprised of the same two para-rescue airmen, as well as two ranchers and six other Air Force rescue specialists. It was determined to be the same forest ranger trail. At noon on April 9, a full week after Slatter and Hanley went missing, the Air Force officially suspended the operation. “The Air Force will reopen the search if a good lead turns up. . . .”

However, North American Aviation, for which the two men worked, indicated it would reimburse Civil Air Patrol pilots in the same manner the Air Force was committed to doing. They would provide funds for gas, oil, and telephone expenses for the CAP pilots, and this gesture was approved by the Air Force. So, for the next several days, the CAP concentrated their efforts on the southern end of the Chiricahuas, in the area the rancher believed he saw a similar-looking craft. On that Saturday alone, CAP units from Arizona, New Mexico and now Texas, bolstered by Army and Air Force planes, “logged 236 flying hours in the hunt.” But at the end of the day, the search was formally suspended.

That September, about five months after the search officially ended, CAP parties on the ground in the Chiricahuas, spotted wreckage with the same color markings and configuration of the missing plane. The Cochise County Sheriff was skeptical, however, “ ‘We have some old wrecks up there and those people saw this wreck from across a canyon.’ ” Parties on foot took half a day to travel just half a mile to reach the debris site; reportedly it had the same registration number—N-78212—as the lost plane. It proved to be a known, old wreck and the numbers did not match. The hunt for A. C. Slatter, a father of two, and Hampton Hanley, the father of eight with one on the way, was finally terminated on September 9, 1956.

Just under nine years later, on June 6, 1965, US Forest Ranger Pete Rowden was on routine patrol and found N-78212 on a brush-covered slope in the Chiricahua Mountains. “A human skull, other bones and a suitcase were near the wreckage.” Cochise County Sheriff Jim Wilson said, “ ‘There’s no doubt at all that it’s the plane and the remains of the two aboard.’ ” Wilson also said, “none of the remains or the wreckage will be removed from the site because there was not enough left to make it worthwhile.” The location of the plane crash was conspicuously never clearly identified in the newspapers, probably to protect it from curiosity seekers and relic hunters. (Cit-

izen 4/3/1956, 4/9/1956, 4/10/1956, 9/10/1956, 9/12/1956; Star 4/4/1956, 4/5/1956, 4/7/1956, 4/10/1956, 6/8/1965)

## Fort Huachuca Aviators Fly into the Grand Canyon

**Jun 30,1956**

The world's worst civilian aircraft accident up to that time, took place over Grand Canyon National Park when two large planes collided in midair. Onboard the Trans World Airlines' four-engine "Super Connie," were seventy people. United's Chicago-bound DC-7, carried 58 passengers and crew. No one survived the collision or the fall from 20,000 feet. In a split moment, 128 people died. The TWA slammed into the shoulder of Temple Butte and burned. The United airliner plunged onto the sheer face of 6,400-foot-high Chuar Butte, two-thousand feet above the Colorado River; both craft fell deep in the remote eastern end of the Grand Canyon. See "Tucson CAP Involved with Greatest Air Disaster," June 30, 1956, on page 163.

As the reader can well imagine, the SAR response to this tragedy in 1956 was complex, to say the least, with multiple facets. Initially, it was cumbersome and slow, with "too many chiefs and not enough Indians." By the third day, however, it began to function more smoothly after the Grand Canyon Park Superintendent got all of the agency representatives into one room and somehow orchestrated chaos into calm. One of these "multiple facets," was the helicopter response from Fort Huachuca. Playing a pivotal role, they were able to fly below the Inner Rim and land and assist those on the ground. And, bring out the bodies.

Four Sikorsky H-21 "Flying Bananas," of the US Army's 93<sup>rd</sup> Transport Company, assigned to Fort Huachuca, responded. "Flying the 'Whirly-Birds' into the gorge are some of the Army's most seasoned helicopter pilots, headed by Capt. Walter E. Spriggs, 36...Earlier this year the 93<sup>rd</sup> Transport Co. landed three helicopters on the top of Pike's Peak, Colo., in mountain troop maneuvers." For the week or so they were deployed to the horrific scene, they bucked "treacherous wind turbulence in the canyon to bring out 26 rubber sacks filled with body remains and to ferry in ground personnel and civilians probing the pulverized wreckage..."

Once a helicopter was above the rim and on top with its prized cargo, it landed at the little Grand Canyon Airport [dirt runways at Red Butte, ten miles south of the current airport], where three large, single-engine DeHaviland UA-1 fixed-wing "Otters," would then transport the body bags to the Flagstaff Airport. Burials took place in both Flagstaff and the Grand Canyon. The "Otters" were attached to the 14<sup>th</sup> Army Aviation Company. Collectively, the aircraft flew 31 missions with thirty hours air time. Inner Canyon flying was tricky and risky and the pilots and crew were recognized for all their skills.

There were 24 aviators on this incident who were specifically flown to the White House in Washington, D.C., on August 2, 1956, for a formal medal ceremony in the Rose Garden. The President was not there but among the dignitaries in attendance, were the Secretary of the Army, the Army Chief of Staff, and the Army Aide to the President. Major Jerome B. Feldt, who was in charge of the canyon recovery operations and Captain Walter D. Spriggs, Jr., were singled out to receive both the Soldier's Medal and Army Commendation Ribbon.

The Soldier's Medal was created in 1926. It is "awarded to any person of the Armed Forces of the United States...while serving in any capacity...at the time of the heroic act, distinguished...by heroism not involving conflict with an enemy." The Commendation Ribbon is a "mid-level United States military decoration for sustained acts of heroism or meritorious service." To learn more

about this incident, which was front-page news around the world for days, Google: “Grand Canyon Aircraft Crash, 1956.” (Star 7/5/1956, 7/31/1956; Wikipedia)

## **Tucson CAP Involved with Greatest Air Disaster**

**Jun 30, 1956**

Until 136 people died in a midair crash over New York City on December 16, 1960, the world’s worst civilian airliner disaster took place over the remote eastern end of the Grand Canyon. With seventy people aboard Flight 2, the Trans World Airline four-engine “Super Connie” departed Los Angeles three minutes before United’s Flight 718, a DC-7, with 58 souls aboard. One was headed for Kansas City, the other, Chicago. The two large aircraft met over the Grand Canyon and both quickly fell to the rugged cliffs, far below.

“Marilyn Pardridge, a captain with the [Tucson Civil Air Patrol] wing, described the calamity as unbelievable. ‘We flew over the desolate crash scene in an Air Force C45. . . Because of the severe turbulence we couldn’t get down in the canyon itself for a closer look. But I shall never forget the feeling of complete disbelief that the two burned spots, tiny fragments of metal gleaming in the sunlight, and a piece of tail section, were the only visible remains of what had once been two beautiful flying birds and 128 well, happy and confident people.’ ”

Six Civil Air Patrol aircraft and 16 members of the Tucson wing participated in the search mission. They would never forget it. (Citizen 7/2/1956, Star 7/3/1956)

## **Fumes Kill Miner**

**Jul 18, 1956**

“Stagnant gas fumes, caused by a dynamite blast, killed one miner and overcame a rescuer. . . in the depths of the King Mine in the Helvetia Mining District, about 25 miles southeast of Tucson.” Louis Villa, 29, was part of a crew of five who went five-hundred feet into the tunnel to work. After 35 minutes, however, “they noticed there was an unusual amount of fumes in the mine” and they all returned to the surface, except for Villa.

James A. Chilson, a 39-year-old coworker then “had a narrow brush with death when he went to Villa’s aid;” he too, was then overcome by the fumes. B. H. Martin, the mine owner, rushed in and “loaded both Chilson and Villa into an ore-hauling car and had them hoisted to the surface.” Artificial respiration was given to both men but Louis Villa had been in the mine too long. Martin would later say the dynamite blasts had been set off at midnight the evening before and normally it takes eight hours for the dangerous gases to dissipate. (Star 7/19/1956)

## **2-Year Old Swept Away in Flooded Arroyo**

**Aug 11, 1956**

Nearly an inch of rain had ceased from a passing thunderstorm when 2-year-old Rex Wayne Saufley, joined in with his two brothers, 4 and 6, in playing in the puddles. “They were told to stay away from the arroyo.” The caution was for a fork of Arroyo Chico, running east to west through mid-town Tucson. At 5:30 p.m., “Wayne was swept away in a current running between 10 and 15 miles

per hour. The water averaged three feet deep, but pools and treacherous drop-offs eight feet deep were encountered by search parties.”

“Police Captain Frank Keefe directed twenty police trainees and city employees in a bank-to-bank, foot-by-foot search of the arroyo, underground flood tunnels, and sewers between the boy’s home and the Santa Cruz.” Captain Ken Sturgeon led a party of Sheriff’s Special Deputies, in scouring the flooded river between Saint Mary’s Road and Marana, on foot and horseback. Walkie-talkies and flood lights were borrowed from the Tucson Fire Department to help pick through the debris and refuse-littered mud. Nearly eighty persons took part in the hunt for the little boy. After an 18-hour search, the lad was found on a sandbar in the Santa Cruz River, near where Rillito Creek joins it. The front-page article of *The Arizona Daily Star*, states, “Body Of Boy, 2, Carried 14 Miles From Tucson.” (Star 8/13/1956; Citizen 8/13/1956)

## Comedy of Errors

**Oct 3, 1956**

At 9:10 a.m., a report was received by Davis-Monthan Air Force Base about a jet plane that had gone down somewhere near the Baboquivari Mountains, not far from the International Border with Mexico. But officials at the air base checked their records and no plane was missing. Later that day, the person making this original account called from a ranch in that area and reported in again, saying, “the jet looked as if it was going to crash approximately 40 miles south of Three Points, which would have put it in the Baboquivari area.” The Sheriff’s Department then received several additional reports, with one being a plane reportedly crashing between the Santa Marguerita Ranch in that same area and the nearby village of Sasabe. Another account indicated it was a four-engine craft “‘smoking,’ ” as if it was about to crash into the mountains.

The Border Patrol dispatched a patrol plane after a cowboy who lived on a ranch north of Sasabe, “told deputies that a large plane passed low over his house...and disappeared, headed south. He said the plane was ‘wobbling about 50 feet high’ at the time and appeared to be a swept-back four engine type.” A maintenance employee with the county road department, “told officers that he saw such a plane flying low and that it appeared to go on into Mexico.” There was just enough truth to these various reports to not ignore them.

As deputies arrived, they talked to a couple of other ranch hands who gave statements of a plane going down although they admitted, no one ever actually saw a crash or even smoke from one. The Civil Air Patrol launched to scour the area in a light plane and Davis-Monthan sent a T-33 jet trainer to do the same. “In the middle of the afternoon, the CAP office reported a pilot had positively sighted the wreck five miles southwest of Baboquivari Peak and 12 miles north-northwest of Sasabe.” It would later be learned that the pilot of the T-33 had “located” the wreck but then flying at a couple of hundred miles an hour, this pilot was now unsure of what he had actually seen or where he had seen it. No one else could find the wreckage.

A reporter and his photographer, alerted to all of the commotion on the radio airwaves, took to the sky in a plane piloted by the owner of a local, small aviation company. After an hour, they could not find anything, but upon seeing a long line of rescue units staging on a dirt road on the Santa Marguerita Ranch, they landed on the road a mile away. The leader of the responding convoy, a Lieutenant Colonel [unknown if CAP or D-M AFB], told the reporter they were waiting for the wreck to be spotted before his group would move in.

“There were now five deputies, men from the game and fish department, a doctor, ambulance attendants, medics, flying safety and aircraft accident investigators, all assembled at the ranch.” A

helicopter from Fort Huachuca started searching again, as did the reporter and his rented airplane and the Civil Air Patrol pilot, in his craft. Nothing was found and after the search ended, it was analyzed and described by officials, as a “Comedy of Errors.” (Citizen 10/4/1956; Star 10/4/1956)

## Douglas Aircraft Company Air Rescue Squadron

**Nov 1956**

A Douglas Aircraft Company Civil Air Patrol Squadron must have formed for a short time. In the Arizona newspapers, there were but two references to its existence. Both were in regard to some of their members serving as judges for a CAP cross-country proficiency competition held at Ryan Airfield on November 11, 1956. (Star 11/12/1956; Citizen 11/14/1956)

## “X” Marks the Spot

**Nov 15, 1956**

Something needed to be done about the mounting number of car hulks off the Mount Lemmon Highway, so Pima County Sheriff’s Captain, Ken Sturgeon, did it. “ ‘There are so many wrecks down in canyons off the road that it is difficult to find the scene of an accident when one is reported,’ Sturgeon said.” In charge of the sheriff’s auxiliaries, he equipped them with paint and brushes so they could mark each old wreck with a large yellow cross. To make them reflect with light at night, they added sparkles to the paint. (Citizen 11/15/1956)

## Kids Lost in Sub-Freezing Cold

**Dec 16, 1956**

All six of the children who went hiking through the knee-high snow that morning were between the ages of 6 and 12. They left their homes on Carter Canyon Road in Summerhaven, intending on following the rough, US Forest Service road up to the Mount Lemmon Fire Lookout. Not surprisingly, they did not reach their goal and mid-afternoon, all turned back from their trek with four of them soon taking a short cut and safely reaching their homes. But, 8-year-old Claudia Wenk began complaining of sore feet and her big brother Dermot, 9, tried to carry her on his back. This slowed them down, they lost sight of the others, missed the shortcut and kept on going, quickly losing the others’ trail.

At 5 p.m., an hour after the other kids had returned home safely, the worried father of the overdue children began looking for them, retracing their path. Only two months before, the Wenks had moved into the Tucson area from New York state. He was unable to find his son and daughter and the sun was now setting. In fact, it would drop to twenty degrees that night, having dipped to six degrees on the mountain the night before. Wenk notified US Forest Ranger John Brinkley, an expert on the area, of the looming crisis. Brinkley then alerted the Air Force of the 684<sup>th</sup> AC & W Squadron, [Aircraft Control and Warning Squadron, a unit of the Air Defense Command] at the nearby radar station on the top of Mount Lemmon. Brinkley and Wenk led search parties until 3 a.m., and “then built big fires, hoping the children could spot them. An hour earlier, the ranger had led the overwrought Wenk out of the Lemmon Creek area when the father got lost.”

“At daybreak, Brinkley drew a map of the area and, with Captain Sturgeon of the Sheriff’s Department [sic], started searching the area. The corps of searchers included 40 men from the



radar station, 26 from Davis-Monthan AFB, seven deputies, six forest rangers, two cars from the Pinal County Sheriff's office, state game officials, seven D-M airmen who happened to be on the mountain, and practically every civilian in the area. The telephone company furnished 35 walkie-talkies. Bloodhounds were rushed from the State Prison at Florence."

As several searchers were working a horse path, one of them exclaimed, "'We've lost the trail.'" From thirty yards away, little Claudia heard them and yelled, "'Hello, who is it?'" The kids were not much worse for wear, having huddled together beneath her small jacket under a bush for the long, freezing night. Dermot had lost his coat and sweater earlier the day before when he got hot and shed it while trudging through the snow. (Citizen 12/17/1956, 12/18/1956)

### Three Killed in Santa Rita Foothills

**Dec 23, 1956**

Saturday, December 22, William Chickey filed a flight plan from Eloy, Arizona to Cananea, Sonora, 45 miles southeast of Nogales, to visit friends. The 43-year-old private pilot was accompanied by two companions, both from Eloy. He crossed into Mexico in the four-place maroon and cream colored Navion, but soon turned the small, single-engine plane around due to bad weather in front of him. He landed in Nogales at 4 p.m. and closed out his flight plan to Cananea. Then, some nine hours later, just after midnight on Sunday morning, people near the airport heard him take off, although it would later be learned no one had any idea about the trio's plans. And, unlike the day before, Chickey did not file a flight plan. His wife notified authorities that she had not heard from him when she should have.

Early Christmas-Eve Day, three Civil Air Patrol aircraft from Eloy, began looking for the missing Navion and its three occupants. With little to go on, search leaders first began looking from Eloy toward Nogales, a distance of one-hundred miles. But on Christmas, there were 23 CAP planes in the air, covering a total of 6,700 miles in an area grid. They were now focusing nearer the Mexican Border. It had subsequently been learned Chickey had little night-flying experience and officials also knew the Santa Rita Mountains just north of the Nogales Airport, had two very high peaks. Mount Wrightson, at 9,456 feet, is the tallest mountain in the area.

Wednesday, despite strong, buffeting winds in the search zone, 11 planes were up in Arizona and seven were now flying in Mexico, with aircraft from Tucson, Eloy, Bagdad, Phoenix, Casa Grande, and Willcox. As an official arm of the US Air Force, the CAP cannot enter Mexico without special waivers. So, some of the pilots "took off their CAP hats," and became private citizens, joining up with several volunteering Mexican pilots. To also help with this border issue, one of the missing passengers, Joseph Robles, 32, had very well-connected family in Mexico who also sponsored the pilots from the United States. All were now concentrating in a sixty-mile radius of both Nogales and Eloy.

The intensive, three-day search finally came to an end on Thursday when the small plane was found in a twisted heap in the Santa Rita Foothills, five miles north of the Nogales International Airport. At 1:20 p.m., a veteran Civil Air Patrol pilot from Casa Grande:

"saw a buzzard circling an area and swept down to 100 feet to investigate. He sighted one wing of the plane, and his observer...of Tucson...read the telltale license number, 4909-K. 'We'd been working the east side of the mountain down from Tucson, following washes and canyons...I always look for buzzards in searches and saw one circling. We peeled off and the second time



we circled we saw it lying against the side of the little foothill. The wing was the only thing left in one part but the plane did not burn.’ ”

Immediately after the plane was spotted a helicopter from Fort Huachuca was summoned and along with an additional twenty people on the ground, picked up the bodies. Chickey was still in the plane but the two passengers had been thrown free, with one coming to rest 140 feet away. The plane was seemingly heading back to the airport and investigators with the Civil Aeronautics Board concluded the aircraft had crashed due to carburetor icing. (Citizen 12/25/1956, 12/26/1956, 12/27/1956; Star 12/25/1956, 12/27/1956, 12/28/1956)

## SAR Leadership Begins With Deputy Ken Sturgeon

### 1957 and 1958

James Clark served as Pima County Sheriff during these two years and news accounts reflect that Sergeant Ken Sturgeon very often served as the Officer-In-Charge of a SAR. But the records are unclear as to whether Ken Sturgeon was made officially responsible for all of these missions or whether he just happened to be the “go-to-guy,” based on previous experience, personal interests, and just being in the right place at the right time. Sturgeon, although reported numerous times in the newspapers for his early law enforcement prowess, is first mentioned in a SAR-related incident occurring on January 22, 1955. See “Car Plunges 1,600 Feet into Bear Canyon,” January 22, 1955, on page 153. The Department had probably less than three-dozen full-time Sworn Officers at this point.

In November 1958, three Boy Scouts were lost in the Santa Rita Mountains, quickly becoming national news. See “Three Boy Scouts Missing on Mount Baldy,” November 16, 1958, on page 176. Although technically in Santa Cruz County, Pima County officials generally took the lead for the ensuing search. By some accounts, the resulting effort was disorganized and not all that effective. In fairness, the size and gravity of this tragedy was large and complex by all standards. Sturgeon, however, was not the Officer-In-Charge for this incident. And about this same time in November, Clark was voted out of office and replaced.

In January 1959, Waldon V. Burr became Pima County Sheriff. Burr also had some experience with searches and rescues of this nature. On page 256 of “Death Clouds on Mt Baldy,” author Cathy Hufault says that “once taking office in January, the new Sheriff Burr sprang into action, and within days scheduled a meeting to organize a much better trained and focused outdoors search group with enhanced emergency protocol and procedures.”

The son of Captain Ken Sturgeon, now-retired Deputy Rick Sturgeon, and who himself was also a Pima County SAR Deputy, believes that his father was soon directed by the incumbent Burr to take the lead on SAR missions as a direct result of the search for the lost Boy Scouts. Leadership and responsibility of Pima County Search and Rescue—going from just another public safety function—now became institutionalized into a formal SAR Coordinator.

## Arizona Rangers Formed

### 1957

On March 21, 1901, an Arizona Territorial legislative act to form a company of Rangers, modeled after the Texas Rangers, went into effect. It was initially made up of 14 men, led by a Captain, hired at \$120 per month; a Sergeant, at \$75 per month; and 12 privates at \$55 each per month. Before

they were disbanded in 1909, their mission was to deal with cattle rustlers and other outlaws in the sparsely populated Territory of Arizona, especially along the Mexican border. They were quite successful. They had no specific ties to search and rescue. However, after being disbanded, many of the former rangers stayed in law enforcement, such as Harry Wheeler who became the Sheriff of Cochise County.

In 1957, they were re-constituted and are currently considered one of the over 140 separate law enforcement entities in the State of Arizona. They are an unpaid, all-volunteer non-profit 501(c)(3) organization, principally for law enforcement support as a civilian auxiliary. They work cooperatively at the request of and under the direction, control, and supervision of established federal, state, or local law enforcement officials. They also provide support to civic and community organizations, including in search and rescue. In a *Tucson Daily Citizen* newspaper article of March 21, 1964:

“All members of the Tucson Company are trained in light and heavy rescue work and are active in the Pima County Search and Rescue Unit under the direction of Sheriff’s Capt. Kenneth Sturgeon. In 1963, they took part in most of Southern Arizona’s major rescue operations. . . The Tucson company maintained its average of 35 search and rescue operations in 1963. . . Of the other Arizona companies, Bisbee-Huachuca is noted for its search and rescue maneuvers, Yuma for its water safety and patrol operations. . . .”

Although historically, the Arizona Rangers undoubtedly play a role in SAR in Southern Arizona, it was not very visible and was almost never mentioned in news articles involving an actual search and rescue incident. (Arizona Rangers Website; Citizen 3/21/1964)

## Jet Trainer Crashes

**Jan 5, 1957**

After being temporarily knocked unconscious upon ejecting, Lieutenant Colonel Leonard Stockus, 38, spent the night in the desert after the canopy of the T-33 jet trainer he was catching a ride in, blew off. Stockus, a ground officer, was found by Cochise County deputies about thirty miles south of Willcox. (Star 1/7/1957)

## Jet Crashes in Santa Ritas

**Jan 30, 1957**

An F-86 jet from Davis-Monthan’s 15th Fighter-Interceptor Squadron crashed in the Santa Rita Mountains, just east of Canoa. The exact location was originally unknown. Captain Donald McKaig bailed out of the crippled aircraft. Sheriff’s deputies and airmen from D-M AFB were brought in to search. The crash site and the dead pilot, were quickly found. (Star 2/1/1957)

## Tucson Gets Air Raid Sirens

**Feb 18, 1957**

Near the beginning of the Cold War with the Soviet Union, Tucson was one of three nuclear targets in Arizona. Tucson because of Davis-Monthan AFB and Hughes Aircraft Company, Phoenix

with both Luke and Williams AFBs, and Hoover Dam, because much of California’s war-critical electricity is generated there.

In preparation for an ever-increasing, honest threat of a nuclear strike on this country by Russia, and to a far lesser degree, suffering severe weather-related emergencies, Pima County Civil Defense awarded a contract for 15 air raid sirens for Tucson. It was for \$28,000 to locally-owned Complete Industrial Supply Company. This cost was shared by the city, county and federal government. Eleven sirens were to be scattered around the city, four were kept for parts and reserve. Nine of these were 115-decibel sirens and six were 125 decibels. Finally, on December 28, and with much fanfare, the button to activate this new system of sirens was placed into operation at the office of the Pima County Sheriff’s Department.

By December 2, 1963, Tucson had 18 Titan II Intercontinental Ballistic Missiles surrounding it. “The nation had 54 Titan II’s. One third are located in a ring around Pima County. Little Rock, Ark., and Wichita, Kan, have eighteen each. . . The aggressor’s tactic, it is generally agreed, would be to knock out our retaliatory capability. They would do this by dropping one or two five-megaton H-bombs on each of the sites.” (Star 12/28/1957, 12/3/1963, 11/28/1965)

### Explorer Scout Mountain Rescue Team

**Mar 1957**

Members of Troop 8, formed in 1921<sup>2</sup> and sponsored by the First Congregational Church, had eight Explorer Eagle Scouts of Tucson, sworn in by Sheriff James Clark as “junior Pima County sheriff’s deputies, to be used for emergency work in the mountains.” Under the leadership of Scoutmaster Nelson (legally, his only name), they were considered a ‘mountain rescue team’ by the Pima County Sheriff. “They will be called upon to aid in rescue operations whenever persons are stranded, hurt or lost in local mountains, according to Clark.” For several years they had been refining their mountaineering and emergency first aid skills, climbing a great many peaks and exploring several caves, in the area. Members included Dan Clarke, Marvin Stafford, Lee Case, Fred Baker, Dick Apperson, Jim Frannea, and Ward Stevens. Nelson was a local architect who had grown up in Montana where he had become interested in rock climbing and mountaineering. They would be utilized for the three Boy Scouts lost in the Santa Rita Mountains the first weekend they were missing. See “Three Boy Scouts Missing on Mount Baldy,” November 16, 1958, on page 176. (Citizen 3/19/1957; Personal knowledge of the author)

### Detained in El Centro

**Mar 3, 1957**

When they failed to return from a hike Sunday afternoon, Tommy Dandurando, 13, and his 14-year-old friend, Donald Critchell, were reported missing by their parents and presumed lost in Sabino Canyon. US Forest Ranger John Brinkley from Palisades Ranger Station on Mount Lemmon, made a search of the canyon area late that afternoon. And then, “Approximately 40 persons were thrown into the search Sunday night including sheriff’s deputies, forest rangers, civilians, 22 members of the Pima County Civil Defense Unit and 8 members of the sheriff’s posse, who donated horses and off-duty time. . . .” The hunt for the boys was called off at 2:30 a.m. by Sheriff James Clark to prevent injury to the searchers in the early-morning darkness.

<sup>2</sup> When Troop 8 was formed in 1921, it was composed entirely of newspaper carriers, beginning with 17 boys. (Star 3/9/1921)

Searching resumed the next morning, this time involving 45 searchers from the same units, as well as two L-19 “Bird Dog,” two-seat Cessna observation planes from Fort Huachuca. Later that day, four persons called the Sheriff’s Department to report two boys matching the descriptions of the lost youths, were seen hitchhiking out of town. Tommy’s mother then gave permission to call off the search, “saying she had reason to believe the boys had run away.” Which they had. Wednesday, they were detained in El Centro, California, probably having hopped a freight train in Benson, from where there was a sighting of the lads, as well. There was no reason given for the boys to leave Tucson and create such a turmoil for all involved. (Citizen 3/4/1957, 3/7/1957; Star 3/5/1957)

## Fighter Jets Collide

**Jul 8, 1957**

Two Saber Jets out of Davis-Monthan AFB collided over the Catalina Mountains about 6:00 p.m. and both Lieutenants, parachuted safely down. The crash touched off a several-acre fire, quickly brought under control. One slightly injured airman was first contacted by “rescue units” by 10:00 p.m. but due to a thunderstorm in the area, the second pilot was not reached until the next morning, although reportedly one-hundred yards below the first pilot.

Initiating the search almost immediately, 14 airmen from the Radar Station were guided into the area by a “passerby” who had seen the parachutes and believed he knew the location where they landed. Also participating in the rescue operation “high in the Santa Catalina Mountains . . . Sgt. Merle Toomey . . . of the Pima County Sheriff’s Office . . . taking part . . . are Civil Defense personnel, deputies and D-M air police and medical corpsmen.” Also participating were two wardens from the Arizona Fish and Game Department. The article says the first pilot “was eight miles northwest of Mt. Bigelow. . . .” (Star 7/9/1957)

## “Skindiving Squad” Formed in Phoenix

**Sep 1957**

A first for Arizona (?), “Phoenix Police Chief Charles P. Thomas said. . . he plans to form a volunteer skindiving squad for use in searching for bodies and lost articles in the city’s canals.” The water search and rescue squad would be called upon in the event of a drowning in the 10 to 15 miles of canals within the city, or in Encanto Park Lagoon. (Citizen 9/16/1957)

## Rescue Organization Accepts SARA

**1958**

The International Rescue and First Aid Association<sup>3</sup> accepted SARA into its organization for the year 1958. There was no month or day listed, and “File 275” was typed in where month and day should be. (loose in SARA scrapbook)

<sup>3</sup> The International Rescue and First Aid Association was founded on September 20, 1948 in Atlantic City. “The attendance included persons interested in first aid and rescue work from the United States, Canada, Mexico and Newfoundland.” It is now known as the International Rescue and Emergency Care Association and according to the Internet, it claims 20,000 members. (Internet)

## Trapped in Frigid Mud

**Jan 1, 1958**

Kenneth Turner, 48, went duck hunting in Picacho Reservoir. Late that afternoon, while wading out to retrieve a wounded duck, he became mired in the muck. He spent the night in the frigid water and when Pinal County Deputies arrived the following mid-morning, they could not safely get to him. Finally, a transiting US Marine Corps helicopter was able to hover 15 feet above him and lift him out with a rescue harness. (Star 1/3/1958)

## Ray Neal, “Father of SARA”

**1958**

The name “Southern Arizona Rescue Association” is first used by Ray Neal. See Section 18.2, titled “A Brief History of SARA”, on page 539.

## Controversy Between Sheriff and Civil Defense

**Jan 8, 1958**

A letter from volunteer Edgar Kress, (worked at Tucson Blueprint) chief of heavy rescue for the county Civil Defense organization, was sent to Tucson Mayor Don Hummel and the Chairman of the Pima County Board of Supervisors, alleging misuse of the CD’s truck by the Pima County Sheriff’s Department. At least nine points of misuse were cited by Kress, including equipment not being put back by deputies, the gas tank being left less than half-full, disappearance of two hand radios, and the inappropriate use of the truck while being driven, and it having been taken on vacations. Sgt. Wilbur Grammar and Under Sheriff Art Grande refuted the allegations and had explanations for the accusations. It was decided, however, that the Civil Defense would man the truck if it was required for a search or rescue mission. The truck could also be used by the city fire department in emergencies. (Citizen 1/7/1958)

## Desert Survival Training for Volunteers

**Jan 18, 1958**

Thirty-five Civil Defense volunteers from Tucson were to attend a four-hour course in desert survival at Fort Huachuca. The group was composed of ham radio operators, Ground Observer Corps, Air Defense Filter Center, and the Civil Defense Warden Service. Lt. Jack V. O’Keefe, of Fort Huachuca, was the instructor. (Star 1/10/1958)

## Founders of SARA

**Apr (?) 1958**

The 17 founders of SARA are listed (alphabetically), as: Bob Ambrose, Ed Clemens, Carl Congas, Earl Ducheney, Don Henderson, Dan Herron, Lennie Hines, Dick Keena, Ed Kress, Peg Kress, John Martin, Anita Meade, Phil Meade, Ray Neal, Ruth Neal, Don Sterner, and Bill Waggoner. (loose in SARA scrapbook)

## Explorer Scouts and Desert Survival Course

**Apr 11, 1958**

The Catalina Council of the Boy Scouts of America was putting on its fourth annual desert survival training course for one-hundred Explorer Scouts and leaders at the Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum. Co-operating with the Council was Davis-Monthan AFB. “An Air Force helicopter will make a simulated rescue in the desert during the training course...” (Citizen 4/11/1958)

## Illegal Jumps from 10,000 feet

**Apr 24, 1958**

“Federal officials today discounted the possibility of foul play in the death of Jaime R. Chapa, 25, a wetback [sic] from Mexico, who apparently leaped from a plane 10,000 feet to his death near Silverbell yesterday.” Chapa was in a group of eight Mexican nationals picked up in Tucson and being flown to El Centro, California, for processing before being returned to Mexico. None of the others in the C-46 Border Patrol plane said they saw him jump and he was too far from the door for it to be an accident. The first anyone claims of knowing of the incident was when the plane’s door banged open at 2:15 p.m.; heads were counted, Chapa was not there. No one was restrained as they were only immigration violators.

An air and ground search was quickly begun by Border Patrol, aided over the next week by Pima and Pinal County Deputies. There were several-dozen square miles involved in very rugged and remote parts of the Silverbell area. It is not surprising the author was unable to locate any further reports in the newspapers, through 1963, about this man’s remains being found. (Citizen 4/25/1958, 4/29/1958; Star 4/29/1958)

## Toddler Lost: First SARA Search

**Apr 27, 1958**

Two-year-old Jennifer Ann Baker had been playing directly behind her home, not far from the then Pima County flood control reservoir, close to the Benson Highway. Last seen at 6:30 p.m. by her 3-year-old cousin, Randy Campbell, she was clad in a light sunsuit. When asked, her cousin said that “Jenny fell in a big, black hole.” Not surprisingly, however, he could not lead responders to where he had last seen the little girl.

At first, it was feared she had fallen into a nearby, twenty-foot-deep drainage canal, with 18 inches of water in the brush-filled bottom. Officials were able to quickly obtain a pump and drain the ditch; but fortunately, she was not in it. Also adding to their early concern, was an abandoned well in the area. Again, fortunately, she proved not to be there, either. Searchers shortly involved both on-duty officers as well as “all off-duty police and sheriff’s deputies.”

They were aided in their efforts by Civil Defense workers, as well as an estimated additional two hundred civilians, including SARA, who volunteered when the word went out. Three bloodhounds from the State Prison at Florence were brought in, along with teams on horseback and in jeeps. After a 12-hour-long, all-night search, the little girl was found the next morning about a mile east of her home. She was curled up in a narrow crevice. “It was barely big enough for the tiny child to crawl into.” She was found unharmed and in very good spirits by “two Sheriff’s Deputies [sic] and an Auxiliary Deputy.” Undersheriff Arthur Grande was directing the search.



Ms. Frances Walker served as President of the Southern Arizona Rescue Association for ten years. She remembers this as her first search and rescue mission with the newly formed volunteer SARA group. Interviewed on April 2, 2021, her memory about this incident was very clear. (Citizen 4/28/1958)

### I Felt Like 30 Cents

**May 20, 1958**

While investigating a suicide in the General Hitchcock Picnic Area, the Mount Lemmon resident Sheriff's Deputy, Bob Smith, found some valuable camping and dark room equipment, in a seemingly abandoned campsite. These were quickly traced back to 25-year-old Lewis Neil Bell and David Butterfield, 21. The two had interacted with the deputy the previous month and the Postmistress on Mount Lemmon, had been holding a registered letter for one of them for a week. They had not been seen in the area for at least two weeks.

Hearing this, Sheriff James W. Clark feared "the two men from Florida were lost in the hot, rugged canyons on the south face of the Catalinas." He launched three planes from the Sheriff's Aero Squadron to scour the Catalina Highway, just "to see if their 1955 or 1956 Ford had plunged off the road into a canyon." After reading the story in the newspaper, Bell got hold of the Sheriff's Department the next day, saying all was okay. They had left a note on a nearby tree, which apparently Deputy Smith had not seen. Bell said the two were almost out of money so Butterfield returned home to Florida and Bell was now a used car salesman in Tucson. They felt their equipment was safe. Bell apologized profusely to Sheriff Clark. " 'I felt like 30 cents when I heard you were looking for me.' " (Star 5/21/1958, 5/22/1958)

### Youngster Found by Explorer Scouts

**Jun 27, 1958**

While playing hide and seek with his brother and sister, Jimmie Oberholtzer wandered away from his family in Rose Canyon in the Catalina Mountains. The blonde 4-year-old had gone down a dirt road and then, hid off it. Coming back out, he turned the wrong way and shortly became disoriented in the evening shadows. Fortunately for Jimmie, the temperature up there that night only got down to 55 degrees.

Soon out looking for the crewcut youngster were ten Sheriff's Deputies, three Forest Rangers, and two Game Wardens, along with Jimmie's father, an employee of Hughes Aircraft. Mr. Oberholtzer anxiously spent all night shouting his son's name through a megaphone while walking the area. Several of the other searchers were on horseback. Sheriff James W. Clark, however, also realized he needed additional manpower and reached out to Boy Scout Troop 8, deputized by him only the year before as a Mountain Rescue Team. See "Explorer Scout Mountain Rescue Team," March 1957, on page 169 .

By 7 a.m., Eagle Scouts Dan Clarke, Dick Apperson, Ward Stevens, Fred Baker, and Life Scouts Marvin Stafford, John Stevens, and Bob Erdely, along with their Scoutmaster Nelson (his only name), showed up at the Forest Service's Palisades Ranger Station, pumped and ready to go. According to Marvin Stafford in an email to the author in August 2022:

"We did a 'line-search' with Nelson in the Sycamore drainage and the rest of us spread out to his left. We intended to make a big 'wheel turn' at the bottom of our search area and come



back up on the other side of the canyon. When Jimmie heard us calling, he answered with his version of an ‘Indian Call’ (the palm of his hand alternately over his lips). Dan and Bob were the two on that end of the line and got to him first, but we all figured it was a team effort.”

Jimmie was huddled up on the side of a ravine, almost four miles from where he had been playing with his siblings. He was unharmed, merely scratched from falling down, “ ‘lots of times.’ ” Dan Clarke, a rugged young football player at Pueblo High School, put the boy on his shoulders and carried him all the way back to the search headquarters. At one time, Jimmie indicated he “wandered to within a half mile of the Palisades Ranger Station. However, he retraced his steps so many times deputies could not track him.”

The January 1959 issue of the nationally popular *Boys’ Life Magazine*, carried in its monthly section, “A True Story of Scouts in Action,” a one-page color spread in “comic-strip form,” the account of the successful search for 4-year-old Jimmie and Troop 8’s contribution. (Citizen 6/27/1958, 12/18/1958; Star 6/28/1958; Boys’ Life Magazine 1/19/1959; Marvin Stafford email 8/15/2022)

## Two Men Rescued from Flash Flood

**Aug 12, 1958**

Just after midnight, a powerful thunderstorm hit the far east side of Tucson, primarily in the Vail and Colossal Cave area. There were no rainfall measurements given but the effects were impressive. “Eye-witnesses said coffee-colored water was rushing at a rate of 40 miles per hour under the Tanque Verde Bridge over Pantano Wash near Tucson Country Club, sometimes splashing waves across the road. Occasionally, they said, trees uprooted along the banks crashed, thunderously against the bridge. ‘It sounded just like cannon fire,’ one passerby said.” Two men were rescued from the flash flood.

Fred Crow, 21, and Larry Kelter, 19, were in a vehicle “which was carried down the Pantano Wash from 22nd St. to Broadway,” a distance of over a mile. They were able to climb out of the car, when the water hit.

“Kelter said he escaped from the car at that point, and that Crow disappeared into the darkness riding atop the car. Crow swam for a while until he reached a piece of high ground in the middle of the wash about a quarter mile north of the 22nd Street crossing. Kelter remained on top of the car until a second wall of water hit near Broadway. He was washed off then and rescued from the raging floodwaters at E. Broadway shortly after by Deputy Petrucci who heard cries for help while on patrol nearby.

“Crow was rescued by Sheriff’s Deputies [sic] at about 2 a.m. from . . . the center of the water swollen wash. Bright spotlights guided officers to Crow who apparently had suffered no ill effects from his experience.”

Several bridges in Tucson were dangerously affected by the flood. “The Sheriff’s Department [sic] . . . reported bridges across Pantano Wash were weakened by the raging flood waters, but are still passable. The bridge across Rillito Creek on North Dodge Boulevard near Ft. Lowell Road was reported to be safe for passenger cars only.” (Star 8/12/1958; Citizen 8/12/1958)

## Ham Radio Assistance on Mount Baldy Search

**Nov 16, 1958**

With their contributions largely unsung, the first, First Responders to the tragedy of the three Boy Scouts on Mount Wrightson, were actually local ham radio operators.

That Sunday morning of November 16, Val Hanson woke up in his home in Madera Canyon to discover two feet of unexpected snow; safe, he was also snowbound. Hanson was an amateur radio ham operator, W7FWP. At 11:20 A.M., he called Orville Blair, W7SMZ, by two-way radio. “ ‘Apparently there are some people lost in the Santa Ritas...I understand they’ve been out overnight.’ ” Hanson knew all too well just how bad the storm had been and that the only telephone into the whole area was out. Blair in turn, phoned Dale Adams, W7BVA, and relayed Hanson’s appeal for assistance from the Catalina Radio Club. Also, he said, “ ‘Val has requested that you alert the Catalina Emergency Net and standby...’ ” Adams, knowing Hanson had no access to a telephone due to the unprecedented snowstorm, contacted the Pima County Sheriff’s Department, alerting them of the unfolding emergency.

Dale Adams then called Ralph Kimball, radio sign W7TFQ, who was head of the group’s telephone alerting system. Ralph would call two people each and they would then call two more until all of the Catalina Emergency Net had been notified of the “Red Alert. This was the first real emergency for the Catalina Radio Club, it had practiced and drilled for just such a situation for the past two years.” In the interim, Val Hanson was able to hike through the nearly two feet of snow down a mile to the Santa Rita Lodge, accessing his parked vehicle there which had a low-power, five-watt mobile radio in it.

Member stations of the Catalina Radio Club began checking in with Dale Adams, now the emergency’s “radio net control.” His first instruction was for everyone to standby until further word was received from Val Hanson, isolated up in Madera Canyon. Because Hanson was now using his vehicle’s lesser powered ham radio, he could not transmit nearly as strongly as before. Somewhat frustrated, he finally resorted to broadcasting the international distress call of “MAYDAY.” A ham hobbyist in Kansas City responded and quickly began acting as a vital message relay link for several hours until contact was finally lost with Val Hanson.

Before this happened, however, George Whitney, W7GFQ, the emergency ham radio coordinator for the region had driven up to the mouth of Madera Canyon and with his two-way radio, parked alongside a Sheriff’s Department vehicle. Although four miles away, the two men were in almost line-of-sight of Val Hanson. This now provided a complete radio tie-in between Hanson in Madera Canyon and the Sheriff’s headquarters in Tucson. Quality of transmissions were somewhat marginal but even so, valuable information began flowing back and forth between groups in the city, as well as to Davis-Monthan Air Force Base, the Civil Air Patrol, and “frantic mothers of the lost boys.”

But the temporary radio relay in Kansas City was soon to fade away and Hanson’s contact with George Whitney was not optimal. It was recognized that a much stronger radio needed to be in Madera Canyon. Several experts of the Catalina Radio Club gathered enough equipment and spent several hours building a complete, high-powered mobile radio station. Beginning at midnight, with one of them using his four-wheel-drive Jeep, a couple of the men reached the Santa Rita Lodge, despite Sheriff’s Deputies saying they could not get there, and would probably even become stuck. Defying expectations, by 2:30 a.m. they were now up and running and serving as the “Field Net Control” for the Catalina Emergency Net. Communications between the crisis in Madera Canyon and various emergency groups in Southern Arizona, was intact and solid.

By Wednesday, day four after Mike Early, 16, Michael LaNoue, 13, and 12-year-old David Greenberg became trapped on Mount Wrightson, the local military units were using their own, more powerful communications and were effectively supporting the many hundreds of searchers and authorities. For those first, First Responders, it turned out to be a three-day, round-the-clock operation before their amateur broadcasting assistance was no longer vital. (CQ Magazine, May 1959)

### Three Boy Scouts Missing on Mount Baldy

**Nov 16, 1958**

After a warm, mild morning, an arctic-like blizzard roared into Southern Arizona that Sunday afternoon without warning. It put an unprecedented five inches of snow into Tucson and over three feet into the local mountains, with drifts up higher to five feet. Earlier that day, six Boy Scouts on a sanctioned camping trip [This determination, however, was still in debate for at least another fifty years.], began hiking up 9,453-foot-high Mount Wrightson (Mount Baldy), in the Santa Rita Mountains, south of Tucson. It is the highest peak in the region and it got the full brunt of the storm. Their goal was reportedly the abandoned, one-room ranger cabin at Baldy Saddle, 8,780 feet. If so, that roundtrip is about nine miles with a gain in elevation of 3,500 feet. Even though the trail was periodically maintained, it was still a steep, challenging hike.

The six boys were Mike Early (15), Lou Burgess (16), Michael LaNoue (13), David Greenberg (12), Ralph Coltrin (12), and Ronnie Sepulveda (11). The next day was to be Early's 16<sup>th</sup> birthday and this was his way of celebrating. Some distance below the top, one boy became tired and stopped. Two more also turned around, leaving the remaining three youths still hiking upwards into the now menacing clouds. The three that turned around luckily made it back to their campsite, near the picnic tables in the upper parking lot of Madera Canyon.

At some point, the remaining three also started back down. But they became confused at the three-way trail junction at Josephine Saddle (7,050 feet) and headed down the wrong path. Several hundred yards from this fateful interchange, the boys took refuge from the rain and snow under a small tree which provided them scant protection, they had not brought any shelter or food themselves. They did, however, have matches and were able to build a small fire. Either right before or soon after they stopped, Mike Early suffered a broken leg. Early, David Greenberg and Michael LaNoue died on the southern side of Josephine Saddle. When found, all three were scattered some yards away from each other, possibly looking for fuel.

The next morning, one of the three young survivors, after slogging for a mile down the road from his camp through knee-high snow, was able to sound the alarm; one of the largest searches in Southern Arizona history, then began. Heavily involved in this unparalleled effort were the Pima, Santa Cruz, and Pinal County Sheriffs' Offices, hundreds of soldiers from Fort Huachuca and airmen from Davis-Monthan AFB, Catalina Ham Radio Operators, Air National Guard, US Forest Rangers, Border Patrol, Boy Scouts from Troop 8's Mountain Rescue Team, the Southern Arizona Rescue Association, miscellaneous citizen volunteers including local ranchers and several military helicopters and civilian fixed-wing aircraft. At least initially, Pima County Range Deputy Guy Hill, was in charge of the operation. Ultimately, a guesstimated 750 searchers were on this effort, which lasted for 19 days.

"MORE COULD NOT HAVE BEEN DONE," read *The Arizona Daily Star's* December 1, 1958 Letter to the Editor. It was posted three days before the boys were found. The parents of young David Greenberg thanked the Sheriff, his deputies, the military, Red Cross, the owners of the Santa

Rita Lodge, and the ranchers and their riders. “To all of you in our time of grief, may the Lord be with you always. From the grateful parents, Mr. and Mrs. David Greenberg.”

At 10:20 a.m. on December 4, scheduled to be the last day of the search, Mike Knagge, a Patagonia, Arizona rancher on horseback fired two shots into the air, signaling the others still out there looking, he had stumbled onto the first boy. Soon, he found the other two.

Tom Harlan, president of SARA in 1974, is both quoted and paraphrased throughout an extensive *The Arizona Daily Star* article of January 20, 1974 about SARA by Outdoor Editor Pete Cowgill. In it, Harlan contends, “As a unit SARA was not there...” Cathy Coltrin Hufault asserts the same in her excellent book on this incident: “Death Clouds on Mt Baldy: Tucson’s Lost Tragedy,” 2011, Arizona Mountain Publications. (Ms. Hufault is the sister of Ralph Coltrin, one of the three boys that survived.)

However, SARA was there, according to Frances Walker in interviews with her by the author in 2021. “A number of us, representing SARA, were controlling traffic and searchers at the entry road into Madera Canyon, but as a group we never went onto the mountain.” And, in *The Arizona Daily Star*, November 18, 1958, the second day of the search, the very last paragraph in the main story on the search, says: “Standing by in case needed are units of the Arizona National Guard and the Southern Arizona Rescue Assn.” In the many dozens of contemporary newspaper articles written about this incident, this is the only reference mentioning SARA.

However, four members of the Roma Ramblers Hiking Club, three of whom were very soon to become early mainstays of SARA, were also there: Tom Harlan, Don Morris, and Anita Schumtz. Eber Glendening, the fourth member of the Roma Ramblers was heavily involved in this search although never a very active member of SARA. See “The Ramblers Hiking Club,” February 1946, on page 107. Harlan, Glendening, and Morris were among the initial “backbone” of this incident. That first night, officials ordered everyone off the mountain, except for Tom, Eber, and Don. “Three University of Arizona students who left the Santa Rita Lodge—rescue headquarters—to camp overnight on the mountain. They hope to save time today [November 18] by getting as close to the search scene as possible.” There is a common misconception this tragedy was the impetus for the creation of the Southern Arizona Rescue Association, and this was its first mission. This is incorrect. See “Toddler Lost: First SARA Search,” April 27, 1958, on page 172.

The years of 1958 and 1959 saw the beginning of the Southern Arizona Rescue Association, along with its often-contentious separation from local Civil Defense Rescue. See “Ray Neal, ‘Father of SARA,’ ” on page 545. In checking for Civil Defense participation in this particular search, the author could not find any relevant news clippings. (Star 11/18/1958, 1/18/1959, 1/20/1974; Hufault 2011)

## Sheriff Burr and SAR

### Jan 1959

Waldon V. Burr became Pima County Sheriff and had some experience with searches and rescues. On page 256 of “Death Clouds on Mt Baldy,” author Cathy Hufault says that “once taking office in January, the new Sheriff Burr sprang into action, and within days scheduled a meeting to organize a much better trained and focused outdoors search group with enhanced emergency protocol and procedures.” (Hufault 2011)

## First Training Classes for Recruits to SARA

**Jan 16, 1959**

SARA began holding classes each Friday night for five weeks, from 7:30 to 10:00 p.m. The scheduled courses call for five, two and one-half-hour classes in theory followed by 15 classes in practice and simulated problems. They “will deal with basic rescue search and casualty handling...successful completion of the course will enable participants to join the association.” The training was in Room 216, Liberal Arts Building on the U of A Campus. (Citizen 1/15/1959; Star 1/15/1959)

## Pima County Search and Rescue Is Born

**Jan 20, 1959**

SARA hosted a general, public meeting of representatives of different organizations interested in search and rescue. It took place at the Liberal Arts Building on the UA Campus on January 19. President of SARA, Don Henderson, indicated the meeting could be termed an “inventory of manpower and equipment.” Such an accounting, according to Henderson, was to “permit persons in charge of search or rescue operations to know what is available for immediate use if there is a need.” This *Tucson Daily Citizen* article said this was the third general meeting of this kind, although the author could not locate the first two.

“Approximately 40 persons attended... Represented were organizations ranging from skin divers to the Amateur Radio Emergency Corps to the hiking groups.” Unaffiliated individuals also attended the gathering, including John Early, David Greenberg, and Bruce LaNoue, fathers of the three young men who died tragically in the Santa Rita Mountains the previous November. See “Three Boy Scouts Missing on Mount Baldy,” November 16, 1958, on page 176.

Captain Ken Sturgeon, the sheriff’s liaison officer for search and rescue, and the “go-to man” for local SAR missions the previous few years, addressed the gathering. He explained how the Sheriff’s Department fits into the larger picture and how it will operate. He also then appointed a five-person advisory council on SAR, with Ray Neal named Chairman. “There are several trained groups in the Tucson area... we have their names and equipment on file for possible use when needed.” Named to the council, were:

“Carlos Ronstadt, a director of the Southern Arizona Bank and Trust Co.; the Rev George Whitney, of the Unitarian Church; Ray Neal, construction superintendent for American Homes Assn.; Norman Brazeau, who operates a landscape company; and William Mitchel... The council will collect lists of equipment and manpower from all organizations that might aid on search and rescue... It is also expected that the group will develop procedures during such assignments.”

The Sheriff’s Captain then went on to say that such lists have been submitted by the Southern Arizona Rescue Association, the Amateur Radio Emergency Corps., Tucson Divers, Roma Ramblers mountaineering group, and the Rainbow Masonry Construction Company. “Sturgeon said that 20 other organizations are being contacted asking for their participation and lists of their available equipment.”

Just one night later, January 20, the concept and framework of the new organization came to be. The Advisory Council met at 8 p.m. at Ken Sturgeon’s home with, surprisingly his address being printed in the newspaper, 2657 N. Walnut. Over the next few decades, the organization—Pima County Search and Rescue—would often have the term squad, team, and occasionally, group,

tacked onto it by the media, as missions were performed. It did not start out with any of these labels, however.

Woven into the several articles quoted and covering these events referred to here was some information about the Southern Arizona Rescue Association, which was originally spearheading this new organization. Among which are, “Each member pays an insurance assessment to cover injuries which might be sustained during any activity.” Other officers for SARA, in addition to Don Henderson as president, were Don Sterner, vice president; Peg Kress, secretary; Robert Ambrose and Raymond Neal, directors. (Star 1/11/1959, 1/18/1959, 1/20/1959, 1/21/1959, 6/13/1961; Citizen 1/16/1959, 1/21/1959)

## Stranded on Table Mountain

**Jan 26, 1959**

The mother of Dodge Alexander, 14, reported her son and his friend, Dave Rawlins, 19, overdue from their hike into the Catalina Mountains; they left at 10 a.m., reportedly heading for one-hundred-foot-high Finger Rock. People were also now calling the Sheriff’s Department reporting a small fire above Pima Canyon on Table Mountain, the likely spot where the two boys were located. Mrs. Dodge said the two “youths carried half a dozen sandwiches, two canteens and a rope; they had no jackets with them.” The US Forest Service at Palisades Ranger Station believed the temperature would drop to about 25 degrees.

For help, the Sheriff’s Department turned to three of the region’s most accomplished mountaineers, Tom Harlan 23, and Don Morris, 22, graduate students at the University of Arizona, and Eber Glendenning, a 24-year-old engineer with the highway department. They volunteered to climb to where the fire was, assuming the teenagers were stranded there and needed help. The fire was over an airline mile distant from Finger Rock itself with a deep canyon in between. There was nothing in the articles to indicate how the teenagers, along with their two German Shepherd dogs, ended up that far from their original goal.

“The search party started the long climb about 10:10 p.m. Monday and brought the boys down at 1:45 a.m.” A second rescue was narrowly averted that next night in the same area, Table Mountain. “A number of Papago Hall [University of Arizona] students decided to hike up in the mountain yesterday. They all got back down except [Bill] Erlenmeyer [21] who had split off from the group and tried to climb nearby Finger Rock. When he didn’t return by dark, four other students with flashlights went up to look for him. Fortunately, they found him; tired, hungry, thirsty and full of cactus spines. He was not injured.” (Star 1/28/1959, 1/29/1959; Citizen 1/27/1959)

## Request for Divers—A First?

**Feb 1, 1959**

Up to this time, there was little open water in Southern Arizona and the need for scuba divers for body recoveries was rare. But this was changing with the creation of several lakes in the area. The author was unable to definitively identify either the first SAR incident requiring scuba divers or the first to volunteer for these onerous tasks.

The first such incident the author could find came when a boat with three men, ages 20, 22, and names unknown, capsized on February 1, 1959 in Rodriguez Dam Lake, near Hermosillo, Mexico. Local volunteer firemen (maybe divers) searched but gave up four days later. Hermosillo



Mayor, Cesar Gandara, then requested assistance of Arizona, and aided by the Tucson Chamber of Commerce, Pima County Sheriff, Waldon V. Burr dispatched three divers from Tucson: Deputy John Haney, Bill Mitchell, and William Bell. They were flown to the scene on February 6 by Walt Carter of the Sheriff's Aero Squadron. "The water was so muddy you could barely see your hand in front of your face." It is unclear how long these divers remained.

A few days later, however, a second team [possibly five] of Pima County divers [names unknown, although led by Sergeant Edward C. Allen] were also flown down by the Sheriff's Aero Squadron to assist. Mexican authorities were asked to supply buoys, grappling hooks, and nets, which the divers were unable to bring with them. "Sheriff's Captain Kenneth Sturgeon said the heavy silt limited visibility underwater to only a few inches and the large number of trees and logs collected at the base of the dam made it impossible to use hooks effectively. He described the conditions as the 'worst possible.' " The third drowning victim was removed on February 13, while the other two had been recovered earlier.

In a January 1960 newspaper article, Sheriff Burr would say of this public-spirited mission to Mexico, " 'We probably did more good in strengthening relationships between our two towns in those... days than the politicians have done in 30 years.' " (Citizen 2/6/1959, 2/16/1959; Star 2/7/1959, 6/12/1959, 1/11/1960)

## Radio "Hams" for SAR Work

**Feb 12, 1959**

A Pima County Civilian Defense communications truck, fully equipped with radio sending and receiving equipment, was temporarily loaned to local "hams" for use in search and rescue work. The truck, purchased and maintained by funds from Pima County and the federal government, was turned over to both the Old Pueblo and Catalina Radio Clubs as an emergency mobile communications unit. Fred Mayhugh, deputy Civil Defense Director presented Harry Phillips of the Old Pueblo Amateur Radio Club with the vehicle. (Star 2/12/1959)

## SARA Graduates First SAR Class

**Feb 18, 1959**

The Southern Arizona Search and Rescue Association graduated 21 volunteers from its first basic rescue class.

"The basic rescue course consisted of classes in ropes and knots, stretchers and stretcher lashing, casualty handling, care and use of ladders, rescue from limited heights, reconnaissance, and the stages of rescue. Organized in May, 1958, SARA has already doubled its membership. Members of this volunteer, non-profit group have participated in every major search and rescue emergency in the area.

"Members of the graduating class were: Robert Aker, Norman Brazeau, Francis B. Champlin, James A. Collins, Robert D. Ewald Jr., William Gimple, Eber Glendening, Tom Harlan, Roger Hartrup, Joseph H. Hersey, A. C. Kiser, Bruce LaNoue, David B. Lawrence, Don Morris, Charles Mensch, Jim Pall, Clarence Phetteplace, Jay Savera, Ed Sorensen, William Szerlip and John W. Waite."



Members purchased or built their own personal equipment to enable them to provide better emergency and rescue service to the community. And then on May 22, it began its second SAR class. (Citizen 2/19/1959; Star 5/21/1959)

## SAR Triangle

### Mar 1959

Bob Stirling of the *Tucson Daily Citizen*, in highlighting the developing search and rescue capability and expertise in Tucson and Southern Arizona, wrote it was a “new triangle...” He identified Davis-Monthan’s Search and Rescue Mission Control Center as one part of the triangle; the Sheriff’s Department search and rescue organization as the second; and the community’s other volunteer organizations as being the third.

The D-M Control Center was under the overall command of Major William S. Hodge, base operations officer, but Captain Robert G. Johnson was officer in charge of the center, aided by Master Sergeant Floyd Sandlin. In addition to resources of the Air Force at Davis-Monthan, there was cooperation of Fort Huachuca, the Civil Air Patrol, the Arizona Highway Patrol, the Arizona National Guard, the US Border Patrol, and “all sheriffs’ offices.”

In the second leg of the SAR triangle, was the Pima County Sheriff’s Department with Captain Kenneth Sturgeon in charge. These resources were a “reserve of planes, boats, skin divers, amateur radio men, searchers and horse groups.” The article finished, saying these organizations formed the third leg of the SAR triangle. “There are also mountain climbers, skiers and sandhogs.” These were all part of a new group of volunteers, “now organizing as the Southern Arizona Rescue Association—SARA. ”

Sergeant Sandlin said that “as part of the National Search and Rescue Plan, his office has prepared grid maps for all Southern Arizona. The area is divided into 15-square-mile pieces and positive control of ground and air rescue units can be had at all times... headquarters for Air Force search in the Southwest are at Hamilton Air Force Base in California.”

In ending, Captain Sturgeon was quoted, “ ‘We can really do a good job now—fast, efficient and with safety... I don’t see how it could be much better.’ ”

Three days later, Don Carson of *The Arizona Daily Star* followed his fellow journalist, Stirling, in a similar article about the same issue: the rapidly emerging competence of SAR in the area. He talked about the three-way cooperation—“law enforcement, public, and military.” He then quoted Sturgeon, “The situation is the best I have seen in my 10 years of rescue work.” For the good results that recently materialized since the first of the year, Sturgeon credits, sadly, “the death of three youngsters in the Santa Rita Mountains last November with spurring it to fruition.” Sturgeon continued in the article:

“ ‘SARA, an organization of 33 persons, has been the key to the success of the effort. Its members can scale cliffs, survive in the desert, administer first aid and almost anything required of a search and rescue. I don’t know how to describe that group... about the only thing I can say is they are invaluable... It’s an all-purpose group and I have been using it immediately—like a shock troop.’ ”

Don Carson also continued in the article, summarizing the advent of SARA:

“But for an insurance problem SARA might never have been organized. Its original members, some 16 of them, were interested in search and rescue work, but found without an official organization they could not be insured. . . So, in order to obtain that coverage, SARA was formed and with it came further impetus for citywide [sic] cooperation with the sheriff’s department. . . With the cooperation of public and military groups, Sturgeon now feels he is equipped to tackle any obstacle, whether it requires search and rescue from the air, the ground, underground or underwater.” (Citizen 3/31/1959, Star 4/2/1959)

## B-47 Crashed Into Mt. Fagan

**Apr 4, 1959**

Three Davis-Monthan airmen died when their B-47 Stratojet bomber smashed into the 4,200-foot level of 6,715-foot-high Mt. Fagan, in the Santa Rita Mountains. The trio were lining up and making their final turns for landing. Killed were Airplane Commander, Major Kermit Wagner, 38; First Lieutenant Thomas Wilkie, 31, co-pilot; and the aircraft’s 26-year-old navigator, First Lieutenant Richard Anderson. Numerous calls came in right after 1:00 a.m. from around the area, as well as from a Pima County Sheriff’s Deputy on patrol. David Monreal did not hear an explosion, but saw “a mushrooming cloud of orange-colored flame. The fire was quite bright for at least five minutes.” The “aircraft was demolished. . . nothing left of it.” It ricocheted and bounced off several ridges, finally coming to rest. “The biggest piece was just a few feet in diameter.” Officials from Davis-Monthan as well as members of the Sheriff’s Department Search and Rescue Team, including the Southern Arizona Rescue Association, were dispatched.

The last time a B-47 crashed in the Tucson area was on October 18, 1954, killing one of the three crewmen. Seven months earlier, March 5, four airmen died upon takeoff, landing two miles off the runway of Davis-Monthan. “Probably the most spectacular air tragedy occurred December 3, 1953, when a B-47 burst into flame and broke in two while hundreds of Tucsonans watched in horror. The plane was about 10,000 feet up and its two parts plummeted to earth in the Rincon Mountains.” Four airmen were killed in that accident. (Citizen 4/4/1959)

## Two Killed Searching for Downed Plane

**May 14, 1959**

While searching for a missing, light aircraft, two Tucson Civil Air Patrol volunteers were killed landing near Ray, a mining town 75 miles north of Tucson. The pilot, William Rogers, 36, and George Shuler, 34, both died when the two-place Piper Super Cub they were in hit unseen powerlines and crashed. Rogers and Shuler were killed less than an hour after beginning their search.

Both men were World War II veterans with Rogers a Captain in the CAP and Shuler with the organization for only a few months. They were in one of 17 CAP planes out that day from five different airports, including eight out of Tucson, three from Willcox, three from Casa Grande, two from Phoenix, and one out of Eloy. Construction workers were there on the airstrip, near the crash site when the little plane came over head and dropped them a note, asking,

“‘Which way is the wind blowing?’ Before we could signal to them. . . they were circling and disappeared behind a hill. We didn’t hear the explosion but the plane seemed to be in trouble before it disappeared. We ran over to the scene and then called for an ambulance. . . I am certain the men were killed instantly. Seconds later some flares started exploding in the blazing plane.”

Rogers and Shuler, along with the other CAP search craft, were hunting Lonnie Davison, 44, and 33-year-old R. V. Powell, the pilot of the missing single-engine Taylorcraft. The pair had taken off from Ray late in the afternoon the day before, heading to Tucson, only 45 minutes away. Overdue for three hours, Powell's wife reported the pair missing—unknown at the time, they had crashed into a remote mountainside, 14 miles southwest of Kearny. Both Davison and Powell survived, but began a four-day nightmare, each trying to survive in their own way.

From his hospital bed after the pair's ordeal had ended, Powell said, a “‘downdraft gripped the plane, sucked it down, and tossed it against the mountainside....’” He suffered a broken arm in three places, a broken leg, the ribs on his right side were crushed and an ankle was fractured. Davison, with a broken ankle and a badly wrenched back was able to slowly claw and drag his way out from the crash scene.

With eight-hundred hours of flying time, Powell was described as a, “‘cool, rugged man who knows the out-of-doors.’” He later would say, “‘I was bleeding badly and a pack of wolves or coyotes came up, growling and squabbling. I took a big stick and beat the wing of the plane and they'd retreat... That kept up all night.’” The next morning Powell set the badly damaged plane afire as a signal. “‘Nobody saw it.’” “Powell had pulled a blanket and a seat from the wreckage and dragged them with him as he painfully crawled about the rugged, rocky crash area. Using strips of the blanket, he attempted—unsuccessfully—to splint his broken legs.”

Powell, suffering without water in the over-100-degree days, opened a barrel cactus with a two-inch pocket knife and chewed the pulpy flesh for moisture. “His hands became pocked with sores he received from the barbed cactus spines that were between him and the refreshing pith.” Unsure at first that anyone was looking for them, Powell finally could see planes far above him. “‘I saw all that help... the planes, the cars and I signaled to them. I talked to them, I prayed to them and everything else.’” All to no avail.

Meanwhile, Davison, crawling through the rocky desert on his hands and knees, could see car lights far below him on the Hayden road. Also without life-saving water, he spent four long days dragging himself away from the crash site. He used a wobbly stick as a crutch, laid in the shade of bushes during the heat of the day and then scooped out shallow holes to keep warm at night. Finally, just as he reached a dirt road, he was picked up by searchers luckily passing by in a jeep. He was in the hospital in Tucson in less than two hours and Powell was lifted from his refuge by a helicopter out of Davis-Monthan, soon after. (Star 5/15/1959, 5/16/1959, 5/17/1959, 5/18/1959, 5/19/1959; Citizen 5/26/1959)

## Light Plane Crash in Tortilla Mountains

**May 17, 1959**

“‘She's a fine ship, that egg-beater,’ ” Davis-Monthan AFB Captain Robert G. Johnson, said pointing over his shoulder to the silver, 700-horsepower H-19B “Chickasaw” Sikorsky helicopter behind him. He and his two crewmen, had just rescued a private pilot from a plane wreck earlier in the day. Lonnie Davison, 44, and R. V. Powell, 33, crashed and burned at about the 3,000-foot level in the 4,500-foot-high Tortilla Mountains, near Hayden, about sixty miles north of Tucson. “The airmen said the charred wreckage of the blue and white Taylorcraft blended into the shadowy mountain landscape, making aerial sighting difficult.”

“Davison had crawled eight miles for help. His partner, Powell, too badly injured to leave the crash scene had sought protection in a nearby arroyo. Powell was in a crouched position when found in the dry wash. Though conscious and coherent, he remained hunched over, lying on his

side on the litter. ‘I tried to check him over for broken bones, skull or internal injuries,’ medic [Technical Sergeant Richard F. Butler, of the flight surgeon’s office] said, ‘Wasn’t much I could do then, so I just tried to make him as comfortable as possible.’ ”

Earlier that day, the Civil Air Patrol, along with 27 members of the Pima County Civil Defense Search and Rescue Unit, “had toiled 21 straight hours.” In fact, for their efforts, they received a “special letter of appreciation from Pima County Sheriff Waldon Burr, according to CD rescue chief, Phil Meade. Burr said deputies ‘would have had a difficult search without the manpower your group furnished.’ ” The helicopter had to land on a narrow, tricky rocky ridge while those on the ground reached the scene and stabilized the victim. Lifting off just at dark, the Air Force crew was going straight to Saint Mary’s Hospital in Tucson, but because of the windy conditions, ended up landing back at Davis-Monthan. (Citizen 5/18/1959)

### SARA’s First Rescue?

**Jun 15, 1959**

In January 20, 1974, “In Case Of A Search And Rescue, Call SARA,” a feature article in the Outdoors section of *The Arizona Daily Star* by outdoor writer Pete Cowgill, says: “SARA’s first rescue occurred on June 17, [sic] 1959. It had been called out on a forest fire and basket had its first real victim to be carried about one mile from the fire line on Coyote Peak west of Tucson.” This was a five-acre fire, about thirty miles southwest of Tucson.

“The Coyote Peak fire was extinguished by Sheriff’s Deputies [sic] and 15 members of the Southern Arizona Search and Rescue Group. The men [and women] had the small fire out by 4:00 a.m. after a difficult climb to the scene in the pitch darkness. Ed Sorensen, 44, . . . suffered an injury to his right ankle [broken] when he caught his foot between two rocks on the way down the mountain. He was carried out of the rugged area on a stretcher and taken to St. Mary’s Hospital.

“Participating . . . were Sorensen, Ruth and Ray Neal, Bob Ewald, Norman Breazeau, Bill Sterlip, Francis Champlin, Joe Hersey, Phil and Bob Acker, Clarence Phetteplace, Eber Glendenning, Ray and Lucille Andrews, Charles Griffin, Sheriff’s Capt. Kenneth Sturgeon and Deputy John Gammons.”

Tom Harlan, then president of SARA, is both quoted and paraphrased throughout the 1974 Cowgill article. In addition to the Coyote Peak incident of June 15, 1959, he also refers to the November 1958 search in the Santa Ritas for the Boy Scouts. (See “Three Boy Scouts Missing in Santa Rita Mountains,” November 16, 1958 on page 176.) (Star 6/17/1959)

### Divers Recover Body from Rose Canyon Lake

**Jun 29, 1959**

David Ruehlen, 16, a Catalina High School senior, drowned in Rose Canyon Lake in the Santa Catalina Mountains. He tried to swim across it, despite being warned not to. At about noon he went down some 45 feet from shore before 17-year-old Anne Bowden could reach him. Members of the Southern Arizona Rescue Association who rescued [recovered] the body were Leland Vought, Bill Mitchell, Dr. Donald Schmitz, and Dr. Wright Cortner, under the direction of Sheriff’s Captain Kenneth Sturgeon. Rose Canyon Lake opened the year before and swimming and fishing were still prohibited. (Star 6/29/1959; Citizen 6/29/1959)

## Two Drown Rescuing Girl

**Jul 4, 1959**

One after another, “scores of people” quickly jumped into a nine-foot-deep, twenty-foot by thirty-foot pool in Sabino Canyon, in an effort to rescue 14-year-old Betty Jo Lanfort. In the ensuing panic, her father Raymond, 35, and a 15-year-old friend, Jeanette Govan, drowned. When Betty Jo and four other children accidentally fell into the normally shallow stream, Jeanette jumped in after them. “Both girls went under the brown, swirling water.” Then Jeanette’s parents went in, followed by Lanfort and his wife as did then numerous other children. All were part of a large, four-family July Fourth picnic.

“Panic started and men and women and children fought each other in a screaming, confused tangle of arms, legs, and bodies. ‘It was terrible,’ A. J. Govan, father of Jeanette said. ‘I got Mrs. Lanfort out and I went in and got hold of Betty Jo. The stream had carried her downstream and she was going under. She grabbed me by the arm and then by my shirt and dunked me under and almost drowned me. I finally managed to get her to the shore and I turned around to help the rest. They were still fighting each other in the water. I can swim... but it didn’t help much in there.’ ”

Albert Hall, 32, was another adult that could swim, and he ended up rescuing several people. “ ‘We didn’t know what was happening at first. We were just sitting around after the barbeque when everybody began screaming and jumping into the water after each other.’ ”

After everyone seemed to be safely out of the water, including the original victim, Betty Jo Lanfort, noses were counted. Two people were still missing. Two teenage boys passing by and now attracted to the commotion, quickly went into the pool and brought Jeanette off the bottom and out of the water. An Auxiliary Deputy who had just entered the canyon, began administering artificial respiration after radioing for help. Then four more passersby went in and these men were able to find Mr. Lanfort’s body, about the time the Tucson Fire Department Rescue Squad arrived.

Despite the efforts by the rescue squad, Raymond Lanfort and Jeanette Govan were pronounced dead at the scene of the accident. According to the US Forest Service, “an estimated 6,000 to 8,000 persons in 1,800 cars visited the canyon during the holiday...” (Star 7/5/1959; Citizen 7/6/1959)

## Lost Woman

**Jul 4, 1959**

Mrs. Maria Juana, a “65-year-old Papago Indian woman,” was reported lost from where she was camped in Tucson Mountain Park. Along with two other women, Mrs. Juana was scouting the desert, looking for cactus wood. About 24 hours after reported missing, she “wandered back to her companions... drank lots of water and had nothing to say about how or where she got lost.” She was reported safe and sound, “only about 30 minutes after a 150-man force from the Pima Search and Rescue squad arrived in the park to hunt for the woman.” (Star 7/6/1959)

## County Searchers Go Into Mexico

**Jul 4, 1959**

Two Arizona prospectors, W. J. Bush, 65, from Casa Grande and Ole M. Bendickson, 50, of Phoenix, were investigating mining property near Imuris, Sonora, Mexico, when they got lost. The pair was climbing a mountain en route to a potential mine site when they became tired and sat for a short time, while their two local guides gathered ore samples. When a sudden storm came up, the two miners sought shelter and became lost. Until found by a Mexican rancher, for the three days they wandered about, they lived on peach seeds and rain water. Meanwhile, at the invitation of the Sonoran government, Pima County Sheriff's Department Captain Ken Sturgeon led a team of 21 men from Pima County Search and Rescue down to Imuris, to search. The two men from Arizona unknowingly passed Sturgeon and his group, going the opposite direction, midway between Imuris and the border.

This was the third search operation for the Tucson area that Fourth of July Weekend. The first was a short, four-hour effort by forest rangers on Mt. Lemmon for two boys. The second was for the cactus picking Native American woman in the Tucson Mountains, already described. (Citizen 7/6/1959)

## SARA Members Attend Convention

**Aug 13–15, 1959**

Ray Neal, Ruth Neal and M/Sgt. Floyd Sandlin, Search and Rescue Mission Controller for Davis-Monthan AFB, attended the 12<sup>th</sup> annual convention of the International Rescue and First Aid Association in Minneapolis. SARA was the state's only affiliate of the IRFAA and Ray Neal was the state director for it. Ray Neal and Sandlin were on two panels on desert survival. (Star 8/5/1959)

## “What Is Your Outdoor Safety I. Q.?”

**Sep 1959**

In response to a visitor from back East who ended up getting her lips sunburned out in the Arizona sun, the Southern Arizona Rescue Association ended up designing and then having printed a safety brochure. The lady met one of the “Welcome Wagon hostesses,” who also knew Ray Neal, then the President of SARA. This was suggested to him and he said, “ ‘I’d been thinking about something like this anyway. This just made me get to work,’ ” Neal said. The brochure was printed free by Standard Business Service and distributed not only by the Welcome Wagons, but also the Boy Scouts and SARA, as well. (Citizen 9/16/1959)

## First Aid Classes Begin

**Sep 21, 1959**

Two Basic and Advanced First Aid classes began, one for seven weeks and the other for nine. The one for nine weeks was just once a week and was at Drexel Heights Club. “It was organized by the Mission View Saddle Club to prepare members for service with the Southern Arizona Rescue Association.” (Star 9/17/1959)



## Search for Missing Hunter

**Oct 29, 1959**

While deer hunting, Air Force Lieutenant Benjamin Hilton, accidentally shot himself with his 30.06 rifle, 15 miles southeast of Sonoita. Hilton, a co-pilot on a B-47 jet bomber, was found dead with a bullet to his head four days later. Pima County Sheriff's Captain, Ken Sturgeon, coordinated the search, calling for

“complete mobilization of Pima County Search and Rescue, an organization of over 40 rescue groups. More than 60 men in 35 cars responded. Included were members of Civil Defense, Catalina Emergency Net, a civilian ‘ham radio’ outfit, and the Southern Arizona Rescue Assn. Military authorities sent 32 airmen from D-M and at least 50 men from Ft. Huachuca. ”

Ultimately, “Nearly 200 persons joined in the search... before his body was found...” A helicopter crew that was assisting from Ft. Huachuca, flew the body to Davis-Monthan Air Force Base.

In a follow up Letter to the Editor in the December 2, 1959, *Tucson Daily Citizen*, the writer complains that the newspapers seemed biased towards the Southern Arizona Rescue Association, compared to the local Civil Defense.

“[SARA] for instance, in the Canelo mountains in the search for Lt. Hilton, there were 5 or 6, at the most, of [SARA] men there. There were 20 or more men from Civil Defense. The paper came out with just [SARA] having 50 men on the search; on the Greenlee County search [November 1, 1959] there were 8 men from [SARA] and 10 from Civil Defense. They claimed there were 30 from [SARA] and there was no mention of Civil Defense.

“I’m not looking for glory, but for just a little recognition for the Civil Defense, as we volunteer our services to the Pima County Search and Rescue. We would appreciate it if you would keep Civil Defense in mind. Charles J Meadmore.” (Citizen 11/2/1959)

## Search for Two Missing Deer Hunters

**Nov 1, 1959**

Two Tucson deer hunters became stranded and believed lost in the White Mountains after their Ford pickup truck became stalled ten miles southwest of Alpine. Several small, largely unorganized groups began searching the area Wayne Vose and Virgil Baker were believed to be in, which included parts of both Apache and Greenlee Counties. Two days into the effort, Pima County Sheriff's Captain, Ken Sturgeon, along with Apache County Undersheriff Dennis Burke, finally brought some order to the endeavor. “Included are 26 men from Pima County—members of the sheriff's search and rescue unit, the Southern Arizona Rescue Assn., and auxiliary deputies. A helicopter and 12 Civil Air patrol planes were searching...” Wayne A. Vose and Virgil C. Baker, the two missing hunters, were found hiking out on a logging road. (Star 11/5/1959)

## Search for Missing Indian Boy

**Dec 6, 1959**

At 8 a.m. that Sunday morning, a 3-year-old Tohono O’odham boy—Celestine Valisto—and his little black dog, wandered away from home in San Simon, 45 miles west of Sells. Not missed until noon, 15 searchers from the village soon spread out, looking for the toddler. Celestine was clad only in a sweater and Levi’s, and would now spend his first of two nights alone out in the cold desert. About 24 hours after he was last seen, the Pima County Sheriff’s Department was asked for assistance.

“Nearly 200 volunteers responded to the call from the search unit’s chief, Capt. Kenneth Sturgeon. Men from Civil Defense, SARA, Catalina Emergency Net, regular Sheriff’s Deputies [sic] and auxiliaries, Aero Squadron members, bloodhounds from the Federal Prison Camp, horses and riders from different clubs and ranches, airmen from Davis-Monthan, plus helicopters and 500 more men from Ft. Huachuca participated in the search.”

All that day and night searchers scoured the area for the lad and his pet without success. Shortly after dawn four choppers from Fort Huachuca arrived and began combing the nearly one-hundred-square-mile area where the boy might be. Sturgeon, Randy Aros, criminal investigator for the Bureau of Indian Affairs, and two helicopter crew members were flying over a large flat mesquite-choked wasteland about 16 miles north of San Simon. “ ‘If the helicopter crew hadn’t seen the dog, we probably never would have found the boy,’ said Aros. ‘We simply could not get into that area to look for him.’ ” Aros said that where Celestine was found was covered so thickly by mesquite that a search by horseback or foot was almost impossible. He was found nearly 16 miles away from his home. (Star 12/9/1959, 12/23/1959, 1/22/60)

## 9 Die, 31 Injured

**Dec 20, 1959**

Arizona’s fourth most deadly vehicular accident to date, occurred “seven miles out of Tucson,” just 13 minutes after 4 a. m., it was, however, Pima County’s worst. Today, that would put the accident about Wilmot and I-10.

A Greyhound Double Decker “Scenic-Cruiser,” with forty people on board slammed head-on into a long-haul cattle truck with 67, four-hundred-pound calves in the two-floored freighter. Each heavily-loaded vehicle was going at least forty-miles-per hour. Seven people on the bus died on impact, with thirty injured, all requiring medical treatment. Only one passenger, a girl of 5, escaped injury. The truck driver, a 32-year-old man from Del Rio, Texas, and his passenger, as well as the 44-year-old bus driver from El Paso, died immediately upon colliding. At least 45 cows were killed directly or had to be destroyed at the scene due to their injuries.

Ironically, the worst vehicle accident to that time was also with holiday travelers, on January 6, 1944, in a bus-train collision east of Kingman, killing 27 servicemen returning from their liberty time with families and friends.

Fifteen years later, this bus full of passengers headed home for Christmas early that Sunday morning, was going from Los Angeles to New Orleans; the drivers switched at Tucson’s downtown Greyhound Bus Station, only 15 minutes earlier. The cattle truck was bound from Louisiana to Phoenix; it was later determined the driver may have slept only a little since starting his trip. Additionally, Benzedrine pills, a stimulant, were found in the truck’s mangled cab, and so fatigue

was declared a major factor. Complicating the scene, however, was construction. That stretch of a new, four-lane highway (two going each way) was still under construction, with the westbound two lanes closed, although reportedly well-signed. So, the road was narrowed down to just one-lane each way; the truck was over the line and in the wrong lane, directly hitting the bus head-on. Several witnesses indicated the truck may not even have had its lights on.

As you can well-imagine, this pre-dawn nightmare was bizarre and gruesome; grossly wounded animals and fatally injured people, were seemingly scattered everywhere in the mangled wreckage. Cows and parts of cows were on top as well as inside the bus. They were also on and under people, who themselves were wedged tightly down between seats, most of which had broken free of their floor mounts. There was the bellowing of dying animals and the screaming of wounded people. “Dead and injured calves were lying everywhere. . . others escaped from the broken truck and trotted wildly about the wreckage.”

“ ‘If there could be any heroes in a thing like this,’ a highway patrolman said, ‘they’re the ones.’ ” He was referring to Army Private First Class, Grady L. Fowler, 24, from Corpus Christi, Texas; Airman Second Class, Joe Garza, 21 of Port Lavaca, Texas; and Marine Private Robert A. Dudley, 19, of League City, Texas. Fortunately, all three were seated near the rear of the bus and, somehow able to brace for impact, were only slightly hurt themselves. They then climbed out broken windows and immediately provided much-needed calm leadership in an otherwise chaotically, horrendous disaster.

They stopped the first cars at the wreck and commanded them to go get help, “Send all you got.” The servicemen then returned to the wreckage. Working quickly, “they helped other passengers from the tangle of steel and glass and fabric that had been the bus. . . They laid the still bodies of the dead beside the highway. The injured, they comforted as best they could. Pillows were placed beneath heads—coats covered broken bodies.” They worked tirelessly and seemed to be everywhere, soon directing the crowd of arriving First Responders to where rescue and help were desperately needed. “ ‘Looking back across the handful of hours to the accident,’ Fowler said the whole thing was like a horrible dream. ‘It still doesn’t seem real,’ he said. ‘There was so much going on at once that it’s like one big blur.’ ”

When Reilly’s Funeral Home was told to send all of their ambulances, they in turn alerted a priest, Father McArdle; for 11 years, a chaplain at the Pima County Hospital. He started the trip in his own vehicle but quickly transferred to a South Tucson Police Car. “ ‘I thought I better go straight to the scene,’ he said. ‘The first thing I saw was the body of a little boy dead beside the bus and I anointed him.’ After the little boy the priest anointed the bus driver. ‘I asked no questions,’ the priest said, ‘and gave the rites to everybody whether I knew they were Catholic or not. I gave them the benefit of the doubt.’ ”

Nine highway patrolmen and an equal number of deputies were dispatched along with nine ambulances, three fire trucks and several other rescue units. Among the first of these to arrive and the last to leave was the Pima County Civil Defense Search and Rescue Unit, headed by Phil Meade.

“Members of the group were alerted at 5 a.m. By 5:30 all 17 volunteers were at the scene, participating in rescue operations. After helping remove the last bodies from the tangled wreckage, they worked with Sheriff’s Deputies [sic] in clearing dead and injured cattle from the highway. Some of the calves were shot. Members assisted in cleanup operations while others stood by with fire extinguishers while acetylene torches cut up the wreckage. Eight hours after the collision the wreckage had been towed away and the highway washed clean. Then the Civil Defense rescue unit went home—with memories of a horrible accident.”

The following day, Arizona Governor Paul Fannin launched a full-scale investigation into the Greyhound Bus-cattle truck collision. He conferred with officials of his Interstate Commerce Commission, the State Highway Patrol, and the State Highway Department. “Meanwhile the Texas Highway Department of Public Safety said James R. Stewart, Del Rio, Tex., driver of the cattle truck, had been cited on previous occasions for speeding, twice for minor vehicle accidents, twice for no operator’s license, once for failure to appear in a case and once for a motor vehicle accident in Oklahoma.” (Citizen 12/21/1959, 12/22/1959; Star 12/21/1959, 12/22/1959)

### **Hunter Rescued by Eagle Scout Brothers**

**Dec 26, 1959**

An airman on a holiday-leave from Texas was found by two Eagle Scouts, Mike Hayhurst, 18, and his brother Pat Hayhurst, 16, above the third bridge in Sabino Canyon. Glenn W. McGlaughlin, 21, had been stranded due to flash flooding in the canyon on December 19. His supplies, including a rifle, food, and camping equipment had been swept away. He was weak and dehydrated but was in satisfactory condition. The Hayhurst brothers were joining three other scouts who were hiking up to Camp Lawton. (Star 12/28/1959)

### **Man Rescued from Agua Caliente Cave**

**Dec 27, 1959**

A 23-year-old student from the University of Arizona was rescued from Agua Caliente Cave. Walt Stein was “brought 700 feet out of the cave on a litter basket after he collapsed nine hours earlier of exhaustion. He was in a party of five when he collapsed at 1:00 p.m.” Although the cave is in Santa Cruz County, members of Pima County SAR, including SARA, evacuated him “from the depths of a gigantic cave near Amado...” Seen at Pima County Hospital, he was released. (Star 12/28/1959)

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# CHAPTER 9

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1960–1969

## Second SARA SAR Training

**Jan 22, 1960**

A seven-week training course began on Friday nights (@2.5 hours) in Room 206, Liberal Arts Building, UA. The program consisted of six parts: “SARA organization and history; Ropes and knot tying; Casualty handling; Ladders and lifting devices; Control of damaged devices; Simple mountain practices.” (Star 1/14/1960)

## SARA Articles of Incorporation

**Feb 29, 1960**

The Articles of Incorporation for the Southern Arizona Rescue Association were filed with Frances J. Byrnes, Secretary of the Arizona Corporation Commission. Named as the incorporators were: Robert J. Ambrose, Earl Ducheney, Eber Glendening, Marguerite I. Kress, Raymond R. Neal, and Ruth Neal. The general nature and purpose of the corporation is:

1. To promote safety through public education.
2. To train its members in the science and art of search and rescue work and to carry on a program of education in all fields of such work for the benefit of individuals or groups of individuals during such education.
3. To provide search and rescue personnel upon immediate notice for the benefit of those in need regardless of race, creed, color, or station in life.
4. To further through research and experimentation the development of improved search and rescue techniques.
5. To assist in time of emergency or catastrophe all of any civil or military authorities in search and rescue work and to establish with one or more of such authorities a plan of mutual action in the event of such emergency or catastrophes.
6. To develop and maintain a code of high ethical standards among search and rescue personnel.
7. To disseminate information concerning its own operations and general procedures in the conduct of searches and rescues and in connection therewith to publish, republish and circulate

books, pamphlets, bulletins, newspapers and magazines, including the printing, publication and circulation of the same.

8. To purchase insurance for the benefit of the members of the association as a group and individually.
9. To participate in joint meetings, conferences, conventions, exercises and operations with other organizations or groups in other parts of the State of Arizona or the United States or foreign countries.
10. To purchase or otherwise acquire, hold or sell, lease, mortgage, pledge or otherwise dispose of or deal in real or personal property of every class and description and all rights included thereto in connection with the conduct of its program and the achievement of its purposes.
11. To solicit and accept gifts and donations of money or property for the use in the furtherance of its purposes.
12. To do and perform all and everything necessary, suitable, proper or convenient for the accomplishment of any of the purposes or the attainment of any of the objects or the furtherance of any of the powers herein before set forth and to do every other act or acts, thing or things, incident or pertinent to or growing out of or connected with the aforesaid objects and purposes or any part of parts thereof the same a natural person could do providing the same be not inconsistent with the laws under which this corporation is organized. (The Daily Reporter, 4/5/1960)

## SARA's First Doctors

**Mar 7, 1960**

Rushing into the Emergency Room at Tucson Medical Center, Ray Neal excitedly bellowed, to no one in particular, “WE NEED A DOCTOR AND SOME BLOOD!” Neal was responding to a SAR Call-Out three miles deep into Sabino Canyon; 18-year-old James McNaughton had fallen, suffering a life-threatening compound fracture of his right leg as well as serious head injuries. Bernard Simons, in suit and tie, stepped forward and asked, “Can I help you?” That is how 34-year-old general surgeon Dr. “Bud” Simons, became the first physician to be a volunteer for the Southern Arizona Rescue Association.

Still in dress pants and shoes, but minus coat and tie, Simons followed Neal and others up the trail to McNaughton, who had fallen fifty feet into boulders while climbing above the stream. “Thirteen men fought cacti, sliding rocks and the darkness during the climb while they guided the ropes of the stretcher basket carrying the injured lad. Among these was Dr. Bernard W. Simons, Jr. . . During the entire trip up the treacherous slope, Simons administered blood plasma which probably kept the boy alive. . . .” See, “Teenager Rescued from Sabino Canyon,” March 17, 1960, on page 193. Frances Walker, former President of SARA and a good friend of Dr. Simons, said,

“he was way ahead of his time with regard to training lay people. At this point in EMS, local doctors thought that lay people should not administer shots or start IVs. So, he decided to change that. For several weeks he instructed rescuers in how to start IVs. From the beginning, Dr. Simons was willing to teach first aid beyond Red Cross Advanced First Aid. He showed advanced medical films and if Dr. Simons was in his office or not, he was always willing to respond.”

Dr. Simons, Tucson High School Class of 1944 and a graduate of the University of Arizona in Zoology three years later, received his M.D. from Stanford University School of Medicine in 1952.



He had to soon interrupt his surgical training for the Korean War, during which he served stateside as a First Lieutenant. He practiced in Tucson from 1958 to 1987 and had numerous professional affiliations there, including being the Chief of Staff at Saint Joseph's Hospital. Born July 17, 1926, Dr. Bernard Witten "Bud" Simons, Jr., died March 1, 2006 at age 81.

The Southern Arizona Rescue Association has been blessed with dedicated physicians as volunteer members. The second to assist was Dr. William "Bill" Scott, an OB/GYN who got involved with SARA after his daughter was injured in Onyx Cave on August 18, 1963. See "Girl Hurt in Onyx Cave," August 18, 1963, on page 222. Simons and Scott overlapped in their time with SARA. Following Scott was Dr. Robert "Bob" Hastings, a surgeon. He joined SARA not long after assisting on a body recovery in Onyx Cave on October 4, 1968. See "Young Man Killed in Onyx Cave," October 4, 1968, on page 255. Then there was Dr. Charles Pullen, a pediatrician, who also taught various aspects of advanced first aid, starting IVs, and giving shots. (Citizen 3/10/1960; Frances Walker interview 4/1/2022; son, George B. Simons email 4/26/2022)

## Teenager Rescued from Sabino Canyon

**Mar 7, 1960**

About 3:30 p.m., 18-year-old James McNaughton fell some fifty feet while hiking in a difficult part of Sabino Canyon, three miles up-stream of the end of the road. He landed in between two large boulders, partially submerged in the near-freezing water, and suffered a life-threatening compound fracture of the right leg, as well as serious head injuries. He was with three friends and his brother. One of them soon notified Forest Ranger Pierre Early.

Deputy Sheriff John A. Gammons, Jr., responded, as did several dozen persons from the local SAR groups, including SARA. Also heeding the call was 34-year-old Dr. Bernard W. Simons, Jr., a General Practice Physician, who was able to administer much-needed life-saving "blood plasma." The doctor, along with several others, was able to scramble back up the cacti and brushy slope alongside the stretcher, all the time maintaining an ongoing emergency medical treatment. Deputy Gammons called it "one of the roughest" rescues he had encountered in a decade of that kind of work. (Citizen 3/10/60)

## 13-Day Search

**Mar 21, 1960**

Luis C. Gonzales was last seen walking west on Tucson's West Speedway at 11 a.m. The 65-year-old retired tradesman in construction was reported missing to the Tucson Police when he did not return home that night. His wife and family of ten adult children originally believed Gonzales, who did not speak English, might have gone for a walk in the nearby hills. He had lived in his home on the west side for 21 years and knew the area extremely well. For the first several days the search by the police was fairly limited in scope. By the ninth day of his being gone, however,

"a full-scale search was under way in the Tucson Mountain foothills. . . While horsemen and jeeps combed through the brush, helicopters were being brought in to hunt from the skies. . . Capt. Kenneth Sturgeon of the sheriff's department. . . immediately threw the forces of the Pima County Search and Rescue unit into service. Within minutes, authority had come from Hamilton AFB, San Francisco, for the use of Air Force helicopters, based at Davis Monthan."

Sturgeon directed the horsemen and jeeps who gathered to cover a grid one-mile wide and to head west up Speedway. “ ‘I think we’ll go over the Tucson Mountains past Gates Pass and down the other side to around Old Tucson,’ he said.” Gonzales had recently undergone an operation for a hernia which was still somewhat painful and his family believed he was depressed, possibly because of the recent surgery.

“Planes, Jeeps, horsemen and residents of the area on foot, joined in the intensive search. . . Sturgeon said the equipment used included a private plane, a Davis-Monthan AFB helicopter, four Jeeps, 22 horses and seven radio communication units. ‘We worked in a grid pattern. . . crisscrossed the area twice on the ground. The planes worked in a similar pattern overhead. We’re satisfied he isn’t out there, anyway.’ ” On day 13, Elizar Gamez, who knew Gonzales by sight and who also lived in the neighborhood, decided to go looking for the missing man in the desert and,

“found the body lying face up, hidden by shrubbery. A .45-caliber Colt revolver was underneath the dead man’s left hip. Dr. Ralph Fuller, who examined the body, said the gun apparently was fired inside the mouth. The bullet passed completely through the skull. Marks in the ground in the immediate area and scuffs on the tops of the dead man’s shoes indicated he might have crawled to the gully, either weak from exposure or in pain from the operation. . . .” (Citizen 3/26/1960, 3/30/1960, 3/31/1960; Star 4/4/1960)

## Onyx Cave Rescue

**Apr 3, 1960**

“ ‘No more cave exploring for me,’ Edward B. Rodriguez said today from his hospital bed.” While exploring Onyx Cave in the Santa Rita Mountains, the Rincon High School senior fell 45 feet from a rope ladder. Described in fair condition, the 18-year-old suffered a head injury and multiple bruises and contusions. “ ‘It was my first try at Cave exploring and I’m not interested in it anymore.’ ” The teenager was knocked unconscious temporarily. His three companions carried him up the ladder which they brought with them. The foursome had been in the cave about three hours and were on their way back to the entrance when the accident took place. “He was able to crawl most of the way out on his hands and knees but needed some help from his friends.” Rodriguez reached the hospital nearly six hours after falling. (Citizen 4/4/1960)

## Bloodhounds Given to Local SAR

**Apr 26, 1960**

Frank Eyman, former Sheriff of Pima County and then warden for the State Prison at Florence, presented the Pima County Search and Rescue Group, two bloodhounds—Blackie and Wag. According to Captain Ken Sturgeon, this was a “long desired dream come true” for the SAR unit. Sturgeon said 15-year-old “Blackie is famous in law enforcement circles and has figured in many a manhunt.” (Star 4/27/1960)

## Psychological Experiment in Agua Caliente Cave

**May 7, 1960**

Four members of the Southwestern Speleological Association (SSA), became subjects of an experiment by Dr. Lewis Hertz, an assistant professor of psychology at the University of Arizona. Kirby

Smith, 19, and the President of the newly-formed SSA, along with Sylvia Cunningham, 18, Gerhard Hans, 21, and Bill Gimple, 19, entered Agua Caliente Cave, on the western edge of the Santa Rita Mountains, where they remained for twenty hours. They were totally isolated from each other as well as did not have lights or other comforts. Before entering, the four spelunkers answered a four-hundred-word questionnaire as well as did so after they exited the cave. SARA, with Eber Glendening leading, went in at the appointed time, and “found” each of the human guinea pigs. (Star 5/17/1960)

### **“Round-the-Clock” First Aid Given to Firefighters**

**Jun 2, 1960**

June is the hottest, driest month of the year which generally means wildfires. Early that month, about thirty fires were torched off in two days’ time by lighting, but without rain. In two more days, the two fires that were the largest, in the Santa Rita Mountains south of Tucson, had already joined and were covering two-thousand acres. By the following day, the one fire had swept over 5,300 acres when finally brought under control. In just those few days, the fires burned more than ten-thousand acres and involved seven-hundred firefighters. Some of these men came in from California and, together with soldiers from Fort Huachuca, fought a large blaze in the mountains neighboring them. Over three-hundred Hopis arrived down from Northern Arizona, while air tankers flew in from all over the West. In addition to fires in the Santa Rita and Huachuca Mountains, there were fires in the Whetstones, Tumacacoris, Rincons, and on Mount Graham. It was a busy and dangerous time; it seems no one was seriously hurt, however. But there were lots of injuries, none the less.

“Eighteen Red Cross volunteers have given round-the-clock first aid to fire fighters in the Coronado National Forest. Following a 9:15 a.m. telephone call Tuesday from the U.S. Forest Service, an emergency first aid trailer left Tucson for the Santa Rita Mountains. . . By Tuesday night, over 40 firefighters had been treated for burns, cuts, and blisters. . . By 9 p.m., emergency treatment had been given 150 firefighters. Injuries were mainly in the feet and eyes. The volunteer crew, including men and women, was headed by Phil Lieberman [Civil Defense SAR]. . . and Phil Meade [Civil Defense SAR].” (Star 6/9/1960; Citizen 6/6/1960, 6/7/1960)

### **Desert Survival Test**

**Jun 10–12, 1960**

Fifteen members of the Pima County Search and Rescue Unit spent two nights and most of three days, participating in a desert survival test. During this time, they traveled 14 miles along the base of the Rincon Mountains. They had one blanket, one canteen with water, no food and no matches. They had been training for this exercise for some time. (Citizen 6/13/1960)

### **Young Trio Rescued**

**Jun 12, 1960**

Three youngsters from the Green family, Tommy, 12, Greg, 6, and their eight-year-old sister, Joan, wandered away from the end of the road in Marshall Gulch. Joan had fallen eight feet off a rock, some two miles from where they had been picnicking with their family. According to the boys, after the fall, Joan kept wanting to go to sleep. The boys made a “bed” for her in the shade of a cliff

and Tommy took his tee shirt, dunked it in the cold stream and applied it to his sister's "hurting head." "

"Eighty-four members of Pima County Search and Rescue responded to a call from the children's father... and John Brinkley, chief US forestry ranger." Brinkley was the one who spotted the children but was only able to yell to them, giving them directions due to rough terrain in between them. Four rescuers came out with the kids. In addition to the forest rangers, Southern Arizona Rescue Association and the Civil Defense, responded. (Star 6/13/1960)

## July Fourth Weekend

### Jul 1, 1960

The Fourth of July Weekend is always considered extremely busy for law enforcement and search and rescue. "Rangers are policing campsites to guard against forest fires... skindivers are standing by at Rose Canyon Lake in Mt. Lemmon for water rescue work, and the Sheriff's Rescue and Survival Unit is ready to go hunt lost children—and their parents. More than 7,000 campers are expected to converge on the Santa Catalina Mountains..."

Nationwide, 435 people died in traffic accidents, the largest on record to that date. That included 12 people who died in the State of Arizona. Surprisingly, however, no one drowned nor needed a search and/or rescue in Southern Arizona. (Citizen 7/1/1960, 7/5/1960)

## SARA Fights Wild Fire

### Jul 20, 1960

About forty men from the Southern Arizona Rescue Association, Pima County SAR, and Civil Defense SAR, assisted by the Sheriff's auxiliary radio units, fought a wild fire burning out of control in the foothills of the Baboquivari Mountains. Captain Ken Sturgeon led the effort. The fire started on the Papago Reservation and per Sturgeon, ultimately scorched some 8-to-10-square miles of brush and grass. (Citizen 7/22/1960)

## Gunshot Victim Carried Out of Romero Canyon

### Jul 24, 1960

Billy Diamontopoulos, 16, accidentally shot himself in the foot while hiking in the middle reaches of Romero Canyon with two other teenage boys, as well as an adult, Miles S. Vaughn, a local scoutmaster. "About noon, the victim said he was sitting with his .22 pistol in his hand while the others went ahead on the hike... he became startled by a rock falling from a ledge and the gun went off..." Hearing the shot, Vaughn hurried back to the injured boy, administering first aid. One of the other boys went for help. Captain Kenneth Sturgeon, the Pima County Rescue Unit and members of the Arizona Game and Fish Department responded and brought the boy out. (Star 7/25/1960)

## Dies After Dismounting from His Horse

**Aug 2, 1960**

A cowboy for the Andrada Ranch ten miles west of the Sonoita Road, Charles H. Minderman, 52, was last seen at 5 a.m. The Sheriff's Department was notified of his being absent at 11:20 p.m. Searchers with Pima County Search and Rescue, a helicopter from Davis-Monthan Air Force Base, and the Mission View Saddle Club found him about 24 hours after he went missing. His body was discovered by backtracking his horse three miles. He was where he had dismounted, possibly to rest. It looked like he tried to get up and keeled over. His grandfather, James Lee built the first flour mill in Tucson and Lee Street is named for him. (Star 8/4/1960)

## Boy Lost Out of Summerhaven

**Aug 11, 1960**

Kurt Weinzapfel, 9, wandering away from his parents' cabin in Mt. Lemmon's Carter Canyon at about 8:00 a.m., became lost for 36 hours. After a primary search party combed the likely, nearby areas and found no trace, Mt. Lemmon resident Deputy Sheriff Dick Williams went to the Air Force's Radar Station at 4:30 p.m. and sought help, 35 airmen volunteered. Soon members of SARA were searching, as well. Another forty airmen from Davis-Monthan AFB joined in at 10:00 p.m. and everyone spent the night looking. Later, 235 soldiers from Ft. Huachuca arrived. Shortly before 5:00 p.m., the boy was found several miles below the picnic area in Marshall's Gulch, by a search party of six, led by Summerhaven resident, Randolph Jenks. The boy had taken his dog, Bottomly, on an early-morning walk when the two became separated and Kurt became lost. The dog was found later in the week, safe and sound.

During the latter stages of the search for Kurt, three soldiers from Ft. Huachuca also became disoriented and the Sheriff's Department launched a full-scale search for them. The following day, the trio walked into the Romero Ranch at the bottom of Romero Canyon on the north side of the Catalinas. They were no worse for wear. (Star 8/13/1960, 8/14/1960)

## SARA Has 47 Members

**Sep 15, 1960**

In an address to the Tucson Kiwanis Club, Ray Neal is identified as the "Immediate Past President" of SARA, and he indicates in the article there are 47 members in SARA. (Star 9/15/1960)

## SARA SAR Training

**Sep 23, 1960**

A nine-week training course began. "They will participate in two, night exercises in simulated rescue problems and one overnight trek of 16 miles carrying full mountain, camping and rescue equipment. Those who satisfactorily complete the nine-week course will then take first aid courses for 11 weeks." (Star 9/23/1960)

## Five-Year-Old Drowns in Santa Cruz River

**Oct 9, 1960**

Debra Nancy Schlottman was pronounced dead at St. Mary's Hospital at about 12:30 p.m. after drowning in the "Raging Santa Cruz." At 10:40 a.m. her mother notified the South Tucson Police Department that her five-year-old daughter was missing. Patrolman Walter Jacobs was first on the scene near the tot's home on South Santa Cruz Lane. Southern Arizona Search and Rescue, along with deputies and South Tucson Policemen—about one-hundred men—began scouring the area, almost immediately. At 12:05 p.m. she was found by four searchers and immediately driven to the hospital. (Star 10/10/1960)

## Man Dies of Exposure

**Nov 14, 1960**

James W. Glenn, 74, wandering away on foot from his Tucson home on West 23rd, was the subject of an intensive search by upwards of "200 volunteers and members of the Pima County Search and Rescue Units." Captain Ken Sturgeon led the effort. Glenn was found five days later in a rock-strewn ravine covered by underbrush in the Tucson Mountains, some five miles from where he was last known to be. Dr. George Hartman, a pathologist for the Pima County Coroner's Office, labeled James W. Glenn's death as due to exposure. (Citizen 11/21/1960; Star 11/21/1960)

## Article by Outdoor Writer Pete Cowgill on SARA

**Nov 22, 1960**

In a four-column summary article, *The Arizona Daily Star* writer Pete Cowgill, cites information provided by Sheriff Waldon V. Burr. "In its first full year of operations the Pima County Search and Rescue Unit found 36 lost persons and brought them to safety." Burr went on to say, "in addition to these full-scale operations, 11 other persons were rescued from flood waters; 9 major fires were fought successfully and 7 bodies were recovered." (Star 11/22/1960)

## Rock Pounders

**1961**

One of the 11 units in Pima County Sheriff Waldon V. Burr's formal SAR organization at the time was at least one motor/trail bike group. Dictated by exacting, often torturous terrain they were asked to search on, these machines would have been trail-bikes rather than bigger highway machines. There was one reference to "sandhogs" in 1959, which which the author believed referred to the smaller dirt or trail bikes. See "SAR Triangle," March 1959, page 181. Then in March 1961, Burr identified these 11 by name or specialty. In his list, along with the Pima County Jeep Posse and Southern Arizona Rescue Association, was "Motorcycle Search and Rescue." There may have been more than one of these trail-bike search groups but the only one the author has identified is the "Rock Pounders."

There was only one reference, however, specifically naming "Rock Pounders" in the local newspapers, March 26, 1967. Deputy Ted Brandes, in a Letter to the Editor and identifying himself as "Assistant Officer in Charge, Pima County Sheriff's Department Search and Rescue," publicly



thanked the many units responding for a huge search, which ended happily for the parents of 2-year-old Rachael Williams. He writes, "...cycle riders known as 'Rock Pounders'..." See "200 Search for Child," May 19, 1967, on page 244.

Now, fast forward some 55 years. On March 15, 2023, with the fortuitous assistance of David Brown, a SARA member of over five decades, the author was able to spend an hour with 91-year-old Stan Douglass, one of the original "Rock Pounders." With obvious fond memories and aided by his family, he could recall the following.

He, along with a "half-dozen pals," all with similar adventuresome outdoor interests, formed a trail-bike club in the early 1960's, the "Rock Pounders." They socialized together with their young families and often met at a member's home in the Catalina Foothills. Douglass remembered owning a Honda 70 cc. bike and believed the others, much the same. In addition to touring the back-byways of Southern Arizona, they also volunteered their focused services to the Pima County SAR organization. And then sporadically as needed, Sheriff's Captain Ken Sturgeon would call the leader of each SAR unit and request assistance by name or specialty.

Barbara, Stan's daughter: " 'I remember how they would put all their trail bikes in the back of our homemade camper—it was a white milk truck converted to have beds and seats for riding. The van had room between the Army beds for the trail bikes. It also had a 'Rock Pounders' emblem on the side of the driver's door.' "

All these groups, including the one Stan Douglass belonged to, had pre-determined staging areas and would have "one hour to get there." One of theirs was at a Titan Missile Silo on the edge of Tucson. Stan recalled the "colors" they sported, a tan dungaree jacket with an artfully painted logo on the back: "Rock Pounders," along with a stylized caveman on a motorbike. As a 14-year-old, his daughter Teresa said she had hand-painted this logo on these jackets. He knew that Leo Andrews, Clete Gundy, and Norm Brazeau, were also part of this group. But with not many searches actually needed and/or could even accommodate trail bikes and as the families grew, the "Rock Pounders" faded from the scene. (Stan Douglass interview, 3/15/2023; Barbara Faulkner email 3/30/2023)

## Carryout from Seven Falls

**Feb 18, 1961**

Forty members of the Pima County SAR Squad, including SARA members Eber Glendening, Clarence Phetteplace, Jim McClymont, Ed Schultz, and Ray and Ruth Neal, carried 15-year-old Peter Bidleman out from the Seven Falls area of Bear Canyon. He had fallen and broken an ankle near the waterfalls. (Star 2/19/1961)

## Units of Pima County SAR

**Mar 19, 1961**

Members of the 11 groups that composed the Pima County Search and Rescue Squad at the time, held a Sunday afternoon barbeque in Randolph Park. "It was the first time the combined search and rescue forces, a total of 265 members, met as a single group." Sheriff's Captain Kenneth Sturgeon was head of the squad.

"Groups represented were the Pima County Sheriff's Office, Civil Defense Heavy Rescue Service, Civil Defense Communications Unit, Southern Arizona Rescue Assn., Motorcycle Search and Rescue, Mission View Search and Rescue, Horse and Fiddle Square Dance Club, Pima County

Jeep Posse, Pima County Sheriff's Posse, Sheriff's Criminal Auxiliary and the Sheriff's Uniformed Auxiliary." (Star 3/20/1961)

## Ray Neal Speaks to SAR Workload

**Mar 22, 1961**

Ray Neal, in the article, "Arizona Hunters Cause Most Rescue Operations," in the *Tucson Daily Citizen* written by Bill Davidson, had an analysis about the SAR work load hunters presented to Arizona authorities. Neal, Arizona Director for the International Rescue and First Aid Association as well as a leader in SARA, chastised this group by saying, "Hunters who fancy themselves a rugged and self-reliant breed better do a little soul-searching."

Most importantly, however, Neal went on to discuss a survey he had recently completed about search and rescue missions in the State. This may be the first time such an evaluation had been conducted in Arizona, although unfortunately, Maricopa, Yavapai and Gila Counties did not respond, nor did the military or Fish and Game. However, he said, there were "138 searches, 37 rescues... in 1960, and 153 searches and 66 rescues the year before. In 1960, there were 24 fatalities... compared to 11 in 1959... Coconino County, a hunting hot-spot, produced 47 searches and 3 rescues last year, while Pima County ranked second with 34 and 5. Eleven of Pima County's searches were flood related in 1960." Neal added there were "11 agencies cooperating in the framework of the Pima County Search and Rescue Unit." (Citizen 3/22/1961)

## Missing Eight-Year-Old Girl

**Mar 24, 1961**

Marguerita A. Bejarano left for her third grade at 8:30 a.m. Nicknamed "Huera, because of her light complexion," the pretty little 8-year-old, wearing a navy-blue sweater, a light lavender dress, and white and black saddle shoes, never arrived. After not coming home from Roosevelt Elementary School in Tucson that Friday afternoon, more than twenty policemen and sheriff's deputies, as well as volunteers from the neighborhood, combed "junk yards, trash piles and vacant lots along North 9th avenue." Police cars with loud speakers patrolled the streets and called her name and others were making door-to-door inquiries.

By Sunday, however, at least 150 persons had joined in the search. "Among those participating [were] jeep and motorcycle posses, Southern Arizona Rescue Assn, Civil Defense Communications, C. D. Search and Rescue, sheriff's uniform auxiliary deputies, sheriff's auxiliary radio units and two private pilots." Tucson Police Chief, Bernard L. Garmire said, " 'It is inconceivable that the child has remained away from home this long without help. If she is alive and well, it is logical that she is being secreted by someone.' "

Mid-afternoon Monday, Police Captain Thomas Rickel, head of the Uniform Division, called off the mass search and put upwards of twenty men and detectives to follow up on leads, of which there were a great many. " 'We'll resume a mass search if its needed,' he said." Sadly, it was not needed. About 2:30 p.m., a 34-year-old transient discovered her lifeless body when he hopped off the stopped freight train he was riding, to get a drink of water from a stream. He did not report his findings though, until he arrived in downtown Tucson two hours later.

She was found in a desolate clump of tumbleweed and brush under a bridge carrying the Casa Grande Highway over the Cañada del Oro Wash. Dr. Louis Hirsch, Pima County Pathologist,

examined her at the scene and said she had been dead for at least 48 hours, shot twice in the head with a .22-caliber, and had not been sexually assaulted. “The abduction and murder of Marguerita was believed unprecedented in Tucson.”

After a Requiem Mass Wednesday, seven of Marguerita’s young classmates, all dressed in their white Communion clothes, carried her little white casket to a waiting hearse. The procession that followed it to Babyland in Holy Hope Cemetery was over a mile long. In the interim, a task force of hand-picked investigators from the Police and Sheriff’s Departments and County Attorney’s Office had joined together, in what Chief Garmire said was the “‘first formal, full-blown’ meeting between the three departments he could remember.” Forensic evidence was processed, and ballistic tests conducted on hundreds of .22-caliber guns. Detectives revealed there were nearly eight-thousand such guns sold in the area within the past few years. A great many investigative tips were chased down but nothing came of them.

Finally, on December 12, 1962, nearly 21 months after the 8-year-old was found under a highway bridge, Cozzie M. Jones, a 44-year-old escaped killer, confessed to her death. The occasional piano player said he’d picked Marguerita up as she neared school. He had been in the Pinal County Jail at Florence for several days in connection with two other murders when investigators questioned him about Marguerita. The clincher for them was ballistics tying his .22-caliber handgun to the one used on the Tucson girl. On September 5, 1959, he had escaped from Indiana where he was serving a life sentence for killing a 12-year-old Indiana girl; they had a permanent hold order on him, if he should ever be set free in Arizona.

A few days later, Jones recanted his confession but did plead guilty to slaying a rancher in Tempe on December 7. He also admitted killing a hitchhiker in Missouri in October. On January 21, 1963, he was found guilty of murdering the rancher and sentenced to death on April 5, 1963. Two days before “his Friday date with the gas chamber in Florence,” he won a stay of execution. In late 1965, a reversal was announced by the US Court of Appeals and Cozzie Jones could be released from prison for the Tempe murder. He was not freed on that count but in October 1966, was declared “hopelessly insane” and ordered committed to a state hospital. After another review soon after, he was confirmed sane and put back into the State Prison at Florence. Pleading guilty to a third murder, he was now serving three life sentences, to be served consecutively.

On August 17, 1973, Cozzie Merrill Jones died in the Maricopa County Hospital while undergoing surgery for a ruptured aorta. He never was tried for killing Marguerita Bejarano. (Citizen 3/25/1961, 3/27/1961, 3/28/1961, 3/29/1961, 12/21/1962, 4/2/1963, 10/17/1966, 8/23/1973; Star 12/13/1962, 3/20/1968)

## Boy Criminally Charged in Drowning

**Apr 9, 1961**

After taking about “three swallows from the fifth of Mexican gin,” 17-year-old Frank Mills, waded into Sabino Creek near the dam, with his clothes on. He was there with three friends. Mills, a sophomore from Pueblo High School “stepped off into a deep pool, about 12 to 15 feet deep. He came up three times, but was struggling and too heavy for his companions to pull out. They screamed for help...but claimed bystanders did nothing.” Two of the boys rushed to the nearby Ranger Station and told John Brinkley their friend was drowning. While Mrs. Brinkley called the Sheriff’s Department, Ranger Brinkley went to the scene.

Along with Deputy Glenn Draper and members of Pima County Search and Rescue, three volunteer divers [possibly with Desert Neptunes] from Davis-Monthan AFB, responded. Within

ninety minutes of going down, the teenager was recovered by the trio of divers. The following day, an agent with State Liquor Control charged Lorenzo Ortiz, 18, with “party to a crime for knowing the juveniles had the liquor.” Two of the other 17-year-olds were turned over to juvenile authorities. Lorenzo was tried in Justice Court on May 4, and found innocent. (Star 4/10/1961; Citizen 4/11/1961, 5/5/1961)

### First Drowning in Gene Reid Lake

**Apr 30, 1961**

A pleasant Sunday evening outing at Gene Reid Lake for three youths and their dates ended tragically when 16-year-old Henry B. Figueroa, Jr., drowned. A freshman at Tucson High School, Henry left their picnic table and at first waded in to the water but quickly came back, saying it was too cold. Then, all of a sudden, he turned around and started swimming toward the north end of the three-acre lake. When about thirty yards from the far shore, he raised his arms, thrashed about, and then yelled. “ ‘It didn’t sound like he was in trouble, just fooling around.’ ”

Henry’s 18 and 23-year-old male companions, the older being a fireman from Los Angeles, dove in and repeatedly tried to find Henry in the dark, but couldn’t. In the interim, one of the young women ran to a phone to call for help. At 9:55 p.m., the Tucson Fire Rescue Squad was dispatched and two additional fire units also responded. For forty minutes, David L. McAdams, from the Rescue Squad of Fire Station 3, continually dove to the bottom in the frigid 12 to 14-foot-deep lake. Finally, “ ‘throw me a line! I got him!’ ” It was too late, however, and resuscitation efforts enroute to Tucson Medical Center proved fruitless.

Gene Reid Lake in Randolph Park [now Reid Park] was opened in May 1960. Between then and 2000, the author could find only two drownings there, the second was a 3-year-old boy on February 12, 1977. Eugene Reid was the long-time Superintendent of Parks for the City of Tucson. While at the Arizona State Fireman’s Convention on May 17, 1962, Fireman McAdams, along with Fire Captain Russell Sprung, were cited for trying to save Henry Figueroa. See “Three Drowned in Flashflood,” August 22, 1961 on page 204. (Citizen 5/1/1961, 2/14/1977; Star 5/18/1962)

### First Drownings in Pena Blanca Lake

**May 28, 1961**

Pena Blanca Lake opened on June 1, 1959, created by the Arizona Game and Fish Department. It is a popular playground for Southern Arizona and Northern Mexico, 18 miles northwest of Nogales. It experienced its first drownings two years after opening.

The day before Memorial Day, Juan Manuel Garcia, 17, of Nogales, Arizona, and Jorge Orozco, 17, of Nogales, Mexico, were “walking along the lakeshore when Orozco lost his balance, tumbled down a steep incline and into the deep water. Garcia scrambled down the bank and attempted to rescue his companion [who] disappeared below the water.” Santa Cruz County Sheriff Robert Connor said the teenagers were recovered and that “skin divers from the Pima County Sheriff’s Rescue Unit were hampered by trees and brush under the 50-foot-deep water.” The divers were from the Desert Dolphins Dive Club. (Citizen 5/29/1961)

## Surplus Ambulance Bought for SAR

**Jun 9, 1961**

A military surplus ambulance was converted into a SAR vehicle for the Pima County Search and Rescue Team. The truck, along with a small cargo trailer, is for carrying food, water, first aid equipment, stretchers, ropes, and other rescue equipment, stored in specially constructed bins. Parts and labor were donated by 21 different organizations to make the newly acquired vehicle useful to SAR units. (Citizen 6/9/1961)

## Boy Scout Lost in Santa Ritas

**Jun 10, 1961**

A 15-year-old Boy Scout of Troop 125, Richard Hart, became separated from his group while hiking in the upper reaches of Madera Canyon in the Santa Rita Mountains. Santa Cruz County deputies were notified and quickly asked Pima County for assistance. Captain Kenneth Sturgeon with his 65-man group, including 18 vehicles and 11 horses, began the search at dawn. Shortly afterward, an Air Force helicopter from Davis-Monthan AFB spotted the boy at the 8500-foot-level of the canyon. The crew dropped supplies and radioed Richard's location to the rescue party, which arrived four hours later. The article went on to say, "the youngster spent a brave 14 hours while waiting to be found and showed great presence of mind." (Citizen 6/1/1961)

## Sheriff Burr Lauds Volunteers

**Jun 12, 1961**

Sheriff Waldon V. Burr lauded the volunteers of the Pima County Search and Rescue Squad at an evening appreciation gathering at the County Courthouse. He presented 84 new membership certificates and said a total of 325 would be awarded to active members. Burr complimented the unit for its good record and expressed his appreciation for the donation of their time and resources for SAR. Overseeing the operations was Captain Kenneth Sturgeon, who had worked with the unit for about eight years and said they are credited with saving 12 lives in the last two years. It is "Made up of between 25 and 30 separate clubs and organizations, the squad has on call motorcycles, jeeps, foot troops, horses, skin-divers, medical doctors, surgeons, airplanes, a bloodhound and mobile radio units. Burr commented that the Air Force rates the Pima County Search and Rescue unit tops in the United States." (Star 6/13/1961)

## Second Drowning in Rose Canyon Lake

**Jun 14, 1961**

Vance Reid Ferguson had walked half way around the seven-acre lake when he decided to swim back to the opposite bank, about one-hundred yards away. "The youth plunged in, swam over two-thirds the distance, got in trouble and went under," shortly after 1:00 p.m. A witness to the accident went in to the aid of the teenager, "but the victim disappeared below the surface." The body of the 17-year-old student from Amphitheater High School was recovered from a depth of thirty feet, "a little more than two and a half hours later after a 10-minute search by six skin divers of Pima County Search and Rescue..." This was the second drowning in Rose Canyon Lake since it opened in 1958. (Citizen 6/15/1961)

## Possible Television Documentary

**Jun 21, 1961**

Sheriff Burr announced that the Pima County Search and Rescue Unit “may be the subject of a television series depicting the organization’s personnel and methods of operation. ‘This won’t be an ordinary cops and robbers, shoot-em-up type of series,’ Sheriff Waldon V. Burr, under whose direction the TV scripts are being prepared, commented. ‘We will show the actual scenes where searches and rescues have been conducted and, in most instances, we will use actual members recreating what they did. Hollywood Publicist Bill Chalkin is handling the promotion of the series and the sale of it to a TV producer. Deputy Bill Tarsha, who has been working on the shows for nearly a year, said that five scripts have been prepared. The writer for the series is John Osenider.’ ” It is unknown if the documentary was actually made. (Star 6/21/1961)

## Nurse Lost from Girl Scout Camp

**Jul 2, 1961**

A 58-year-old nurse from Girl Scout Camp Whispering Pines on Mt. Lemmon, took an afternoon stroll. When Mrs. Olivia Matzke did not show up for dinner, the note she left saying she was taking a walk, was found. Not long after leaving the camp, the canyon she was hiking in was hit by a severe thunderstorm. She soon became soaking wet and disoriented. A preliminary search was conducted and the next morning, approximately fifty searchers headed down Sycamore Canyon, the area she was believed in. She was found shortly after noon the next day. She was wet, cold, and tired, but was good enough to refuse further medical treatment, once back at the Girl Scout Camp. (Star 7/4/1961)

## Three Drowned in Flashflood

**Aug 22, 1961**

Three Tucsonans drowned when caught unexpectedly in their vehicles, during a city-wide cloudburst right at dark. Nearly two and one-half inches of rain fell in parts of the city in less than a four-hour period. The thunderstorm caused too many rescues for the police to keep track of, or the Fire Department to handle. It was an “All Hands-on Deck Response,” with the Sheriff’s Department rushing in to assist. Numerous cars were completely swamped and swept down the flood-swollen arroyos.

Tucson Policeman, Boye Clark, swam out to one vehicle which was floating upside down. On top was 58-year-old-Peter Wondergem. Clark was able to reach the victim and get him in his grasp. But the swift waters ripped Wondergem from Clark’s hold—the policeman was barely able to save himself. Elsewhere, patrolman Larry Bunting was able to save fellow policeman, Kendall Bedient, “after he was swept into flood waters from his stalled patrol car.”

On Arroyo Chico where it crosses Tucson Boulevard in mid-town, six people were caught in a totally submerged vehicle, and in dire threat of being swept away that night. Tucson fireman David L. McAdams, a Navy veteran and a strong swimmer, dived into the turbulent arroyo with a lifeline and rescued five. “ ‘He had to bring them in one at a time. . . He was the only man who went into the water.’ ” Captain Russell Sprung, McAdams’ fire station commander would later say, “ ‘It took a lot of courage because the water was sweeping cars down the arroyo at a pretty good clip at that



time.’ ” McAdams was sad and very upset, however, that he had not been able to save Marian Sanderson, the sixth person in the car.

The next morning Carolyn A. Grubb, 19, another victim of the deluge was found dead beneath her overturned car, many blocks from where she had been trapped by the flood. For most of the next nine days, volunteers from the Southern Arizona Rescue Association and other SAR groups scoured the deadly arroyos—now largely drained of water—looking for the remaining two victims. After six days of searching in the scorching Arizona sun, Wondergem was found more than ten miles from where he disappeared. He was downstream in a cotton field, flooded by the Santa Cruz River. Mrs. Guy Sanderson, the 55-year-old woman Fireman McAdams could not save, was discovered on August 30, snagged on a bush in the Santa Cruz River, 26 miles north of Tucson. A rancher on horseback finally saw buzzards overhead in an area he was searching nine days after she disappeared.

On September 5, Patrolmen Boye Clark and Larry Bunting were formally cited for bravery on that day by the Tucson City Council. Clark “ ‘dove fearlessly into swirling flood waters in an attempt to save a drowning man.’ ” Then on May 17, 1962, David L. McAdams was named Arizona Fireman of the Year for his daring rescue of the five people the previous August 22. Also credited in this citation, were both Captain Sprung and McAdams for their efforts in trying to rescue a 16-year-old boy from Gene Reid Lake in Randolph Park [now Reid Park] the previous April 30. Sadly, the two firemen were unsuccessful in getting to the teenager quick enough. See “First Drowning in Gene Reid Lake,” April 30, 1961 on page 202. (Star 5/1/1961, 8/23/1961, 8/24/1961, 8/27/1961, 8/31/1961, 9/6/1961, 5/18/1962)

## High School Seniors Lost in Sabino Canyon

### Sep 2, 1961

“ ‘We knew where we were,’ one of them said, ‘but we didn’t know how to get out.’ ” Rincon Senior Class President, Larry Wooster, 17, and classmate, Daniel Feldman, also 17, left on a hike that Saturday morning with two other older boys. All four were experienced hikers in the Catalina Mountains, and were supposed to come out on Monday afternoon, having spent two nights on the mountain. They started at the end of the road in Summerhaven and were planning on following ridgelines and a deep canyon down along Lemmon Creek, before joining the trail into Sabino Canyon. That is an advanced hike with many cliffs and ledges going nowhere. Sunday afternoon, the two other boys became separated from Larry and Daniel.

“ ‘When they [Larry and Daniel] didn’t show up, we looked for them. We had a terrible time climbing out of there. There were waterfalls above and below us and a cliff on one side. We were exhausted, and slept on the edge of a cliff Sunday night. We woke up at dawn Monday, and finally found some washes and trails that came out....’ ”

Larry and Daniel, on the other hand, found themselves cliffed out, with no way to get off, although the two “other older boys,” eventually made the road on Monday, on time.

The search began on Tuesday morning, with Sheriff’s Captain, Ken Sturgeon, coordinating. About twenty men started from Upper Sabino Canyon, working upwards, now aided by a Davis-Monthan helicopter. That afternoon, “some 100 men launched an all-night search. . . .” The decision to continue at night in such treacherous terrain, “was prompted by the hope that rescue members may sight a fire, since both boys are familiar with survival procedures.” Larry was an Eagle Scout and also the son of Lieutenant-Colonel Oliver Wooster, head of the 31<sup>st</sup> Munitions Maintenance

Squadron at DMAFB. Some fifty of the men now on the mountain were Air Force volunteers under Wooster's command.

During the height of the search effort, Captain Sturgeon sent out a 23-person party, most of them airmen from Davis-Monthan, who all subsequently became lost while looking for the overdue young men. They left out of Marshall Gulch late in the evening with instructions to search through to Sabino Canyon. This was against the adamant advice of two Forest Rangers who knew the area and said the area was too hazardous for moving about at night. SARA members were recalled from their own assignments, to now help guide the 23-person party back out.

One of this group, Airman Second Class, William M. Stone, 21, became even more separated during the night. He was there because his Commanding Officer was the father of Larry. He walked out the next day. Ralph Stoll, 31, and a member of Pima County SAR, also spent three days lost in the area. An Air Force helicopter finally found him but had to land "two miles away" in order to get to him. He "wandered in a maze of treacherous cliffs and canyons. He was very weak and suffered bruises and blisters."

Wednesday morning, US Forest Rangers John Brinkley and Ki Porter sighted the boys, while shouting their names. "They were stranded at the bottom of a canyon more than four hiking miles above Upper Sabino Canyon where the road ends. They were just west of the Old Tucson Trail near the Box Camp Trail." It took the rangers another four hours to reach the kids who were relatively healthy, albeit thirsty and hungry. " 'Last night we continued to yell and use flashlights to signal. We could hear searchers but they didn't hear us. We had gotten rid of our food and packs to make traveling easier.' " Logistics on this search were so involved, the last of the searchers were not brought out until Friday morning. Despite some major snafus in the mission, all ended well with Larry and Daniel and the lost airmen. But it did not end there.

There were very hard feelings generated between SARA, Sheriff Waldon V. Burr and specifically, Captain Ken Sturgeon. See "SARA Separates from Pima County SAR," September 10, 1961, on page 206 (Citizen 9/5/1961; Star 9/6/1961, 9/7/1961)

## SARA Separates from Pima County SAR

### Sep 10, 1961

On September 2, 1961, four boys began a hike into the Santa Catalina Mountains. Two became stranded temporarily and found their way out, but the other two also became stranded, as well as lost, necessitating both a search and rescue for them. The ensuing mission, coordinated by Captain Ken Sturgeon, involved a reported one-hundred men and at least two helicopters from Davis-Monthan. See "High School Seniors Lost in Sabino Canyon," September 2, 1961, on page 205. It was successful but not without significant controversy and hard feelings, which quickly played out openly in the newspapers.

On Sunday, September 16<sup>th</sup>, Bob Ambrose, a SARA Board of Director and now acting as a spokesman for the group, said, "The board of directors of SARA has registered a complaint with Sheriff Burr as to the administrative conduct of past searches and 'we are awaiting his answer which we hope will culminate in a meeting of PCSR heads. We hope the situation will improve in the future.' " The grievance was directed at Sturgeon and his alleged questionable leadership during some recent missions, including this most recent one. The search at night was the "straw that broke the camel's back." The written statement by Ambrose requested a replacement of Captain Sturgeon as Pima County Search and Rescue liaison officer. Burr said he would first check with other member units of the PCSR to see whether there "is any foundation for the accusation before

taking action. There are more than 25 other clubs and organizations besides SARA associated with the county rescue unit.”

Sturgeon, after being informed of the complaint, rebutted by saying, “the canyon area had been worked many times in the past at night.” On Wednesday, September 20<sup>th</sup>, a meeting with 32 representatives of the PCSR community “crowded into Burr’s office,” which culminated in members expressing confidence in Sturgeon. “A spokesman for the Southern Arizona Rescue Assn. on learning that Sturgeon had read a letter of charges against him, announced that SARA would withdraw from the County rescue group, Burr said.” The spokesman for SARA was unidentified but it was not Ambrose and the announcement was probably premature; the damage was done, however, and the price SARA paid was high.

“Burr, after calling SARA’s letter a ‘publicity stunt,’ sent letters of his own to various heads of the organizations making up PCSR, asking ‘How do you feel about the way the Sheriff’s Department [sic] is running Search and Rescue?’ Burr said that all the groups expressed confidence in Sturgeon except SARA, and on that basis, he was keeping Sturgeon as coordinator. ‘SARA asked for an investigation and they got it.’ Later, Ambrose told reporters that SARA had taken no official action. . . He said the organization was not prepared to make a statement until a board meeting was held. Ambrose said the group would release a statement for publication in a ‘couple of days.’ ”

The letter of complaint about Sturgeon sent to Burr was also released to the press at the same time. Burr would say, “ ‘They [SARA] have 30 persons on their roster, and that includes women. . . There are more than 1,000 persons connected with Pima County Search and Rescue. . . this is a case of the tail wagging the dog.’ ”<sup>1</sup> It seems that on the search for the two Rincon High School seniors, there were only four SARA members involved. And, they refused to guide the airmen out at night, heeding the sound advice of the seasoned Forest Rangers, of not moving about in that dangerous area after dark.

SARA Board of Director member, Bob Ambrose, in softening the harm that had been done, was quoted as saying they would still help search for anyone needing their assistance, even for the Sheriff. The separation became contentious and ugly. A two-column article on page two in the Thursday, September 21, 1961, *The Arizona Daily Star*, was headed: “Sturgeon Stays, SARA Pulls Out: Sheriff Says Volunteer Group Leaves Rescue Unit After Others OK Captain.” It appears the SARA-Sturgeon-Burr flareup had real implications, all were negative for SARA. Between Sheriff Burr’s meeting on September 20, until the following July 30—almost ten months—SARA was never called out on a SAR!

On September 22, Dr. Bud Simons, who was a member of SARA but far more importantly, a medical doctor with valuable expertise and a willingness to help, responded when deputies asked for a physician to come to the scene of a near-fatal falling victim in Pima Canyon. See “Serious Fall in Pima Canyon,” September 25, 1962, on page 208. This ten-month-long hiatus from the Sheriff is despite there being several missions on which the Pima County Search and Rescue Squad/Unit (minus SARA) was utilized, at least three of which are included in this history. The author additionally verified this glaringly-long interval with the records kept by SARCI historian/archivist, Mykle Raymond. (Star 9/11/1961, 9/21/1961; Citizen 9/22/1961, 9/23/1961)

<sup>1</sup> Burr’s size of the Sheriff’s Rescue Group varies considerably, as do the number of organizations involved. In one article, he claims two-thousand people and thirty independent groups. Never were most of these organizations ever identified. The author believes the number of persons involved might be less than four-hundred, unless the soldiers and airmen at Fort Huachuca and Davis-Monthan, are counted as part of the larger number.

## Two Teenage Girls Missing in Madera Canyon

**Sep 24, 1961**

Two Tucson girls, Charl Hansel, 15, and Martha Hensla, were hiking in the Santa Rita Mountains with their parents, in and around Madera Canyon. When last seen by Mrs. Hansel about 1 p.m., “they said they were going to walk to the mine area, about four miles away.” At 5 p.m., two Forest Rangers and a Fish and Game man began searching the trail areas. The Sheriff’s Department was notified at 7:30 p.m. “Deputy Sheriff John Gammons said a party of about 50 deputies, volunteers, Game and Fish Commission personnel and forest rangers searched for the girls for about eight hours before finding them unharmed in Bog Spring Canyon, northeast of the Santa Rita Lodge.” (Citizen 9/25/1961)

## Serious Fall in Pima Canyon

**Sep 24, 1961**

Nineteen-year-old Eric Nyce dropped his mother off at her friend’s home at 5:00 p.m., telling her he was only going on an hour hike into Pima Canyon. When Eric, described as “very punctual,” did not return to pick her up, Mrs. Nyce became understandably alarmed. After her son’s car was found at the Pima Canyon Trail Head, she alerted the sheriff’s department.

Led by Captain Ken Sturgeon, “75 deputies and volunteers searched the area from 6 p.m. until 3 a.m., when Sgt. Fred Milne and Auxiliary Deputy Arthur Lawson found the youth lying unconscious under a bush at the base of a cliff.” The young man was seriously injured, having sustained internal injuries, a possible concussion, a broken ankle, in addition to numerous cuts and bruises. “Rescuers carried Nyce about four miles on a stretcher to the beginning of Magee Road, where he was examined by Dr. Bernard Simons,” of SARA.

A member since May of 1960, Dr. Simons was a surgeon and the first medical doctor formally associated with the Southern Arizona Rescue Association. (Citizen 9/25/1961; Star 9/26/1961)

## Rescue Helicopters Activated

**Late-Oct 1961**

Because of the great many bombers of the Strategic Air Command now being assigned to Davis-Monthan Air Force Base, there was also an increased need for aircraft crash firefighting and rescue capability. So, two, twin-bladed Kaman HH-43B jet-powered helicopters, nicknamed the “Huskie,” were activated there. Detachment 17 of the Military Air Transport Service had four officers and 11 airmen. The “Huskie,” with its two intermeshing, contra-rotating twin rotors, was capable of hovering over a blaze “and their blades beat flames down so rescue crews can enter the wreckage.” Each had space for ten men, two stretchers and could carry more than two tons of personnel or cargo up to 33,000 feet, “a record for this type of aircraft.” The Detachment’s commander was Air Force Captain William T. Hayes.

Detachment 17 was deactivated on July 9, 1963. Before then, it would be involved in more civilian search and rescue missions than in ever responding to crashed military aircraft. (Author’s research observation and conclusion.) (Citizen 11/17/1961)

## Hunter Prayed a Lot

**Nov 5, 1961**

Henry Drum suffered from dizzy spells, which may be why he became lost for four days, precipitating one of the larger searches in Southern Arizona. The 41-year-old was hunting deer in the hills south of Arivaca with two companions, also from Tucson. Now dusk, he still went ahead and bagged a five-point buck, knowing he was already late in returning to their truck. “ ‘But before I could drag it 35 feet in the semi-darkness, a pack of coyotes was nipping at it. I fired three shots at them, killing three, then cut a foot-long strip of meat from the carcass. Before I had gotten 30 feet away from the deer, the coyotes were back, I counted 16. They stripped that deer in less than 10 minutes.’ ”

Completely dark, it now began raining and Drum knew he was in trouble. “ ‘Every time I would light a fire, it would rain and put it out.’ ” Water was not a problem and he also had the strip of deer meat to eat. “ ‘All of those hills look alike when you lose your bearings.’ ” On the second or third day of his wandering—he could not remember which—Drum said he saw a mountain lion, “ ‘it didn’t bother me and I didn’t bother it. My training in the infantry in World War II in Germany taught me how to keep going and live off the land.’ ” He also prayed a lot, making a promise to the Lord that if he lived through this, he would not go deer hunting again and that he would light not one, but two candles in church.

About twenty members of the Pima County Search and Rescue Squad headed by Captain Kenneth L. Sturgeon began the search the next day. By the third day, soldiers from Fort Huachuca and volunteers from the Santa Cruz County Sheriff’s Office had joined in, as did planes from the Civil Air Patrol. After two flights, however, they were grounded because of bad weather. Finally, four days after he went missing, Henry Drum was found alive and in surprisingly good shape about one-half mile north of the Mexican border. Two members of a Fort Huachuca search team came upon the man near the base of Bartlett Mountain in the rugged terrain south of Arivaca. “[T]hus ended a long search which was comprised of more than 700 men and numerous jeeps, horses, [helicopters] and planes.” (Star 11/10/1961, Citizen 11/10/1961)

## Needed Rescuing After “Weight Reducing” Excursion

**Nov 11, 1961**

Perched on a ledge some one-hundred feet above the base of a sheer cliff in Upper Sabino Canyon, 37-year-old Eileen Johnson became hysterical and “had to be plucked from the ledge by members of a search and rescue squad.” She and her adult daughter started a “weight reduction” excursion up the face of an eighty-degree incline. After making their way up the cliff, Mrs. Johnson became panic stricken and “ ‘could not be reasoned with and would not help herself.’ ”

The daughter scrambled down and notified Pierre Early, the US Forest Ranger in the area, and he sent two men up to check on Mrs. Johnson. They encouraged her but gave no physical aid. “Phil Meade, head of the Pima County Civil Defense Search and Rescue Group, sent five men with the necessary equipment to the stricken woman’s aid. Three hours later, Mrs. Johnson was safely off her perch and was on her way home unhurt.” (Star 11/12/1961)

## Fund-Raising Dinner-Dance for SARA

**Dec 2, 1961**

A benefit “Cocktails and dinner 6:30 – 8:30 P.M. Dancing 9:00 – 1:00” for the Southern Arizona Rescue Association was hosted by Welcome Wagons of Tucson and given at the Pioneer Hotel Terrace Ballroom. The cost was \$5 and featured live music. (Citizen 11/9/1961)

## Major Snowstorm in Catalina Mountains

**Dec 10, 1961**

For more than a week, beginning roughly December 10, Southern Arizona was hit by a major storm. On December 18, the *Tucson Daily Citizen* said,

“Mt. Lemmon is still isolated with 15-foot snowdrifts in upper areas and the Catalina Highway will be barricaded indefinitely... it’s possible that some persons are marooned in remote cabins, ‘but we won’t know what happened to them until we can get through’... An 82-year-old man was reported rescued unharmed by Sheriff’s deputies and other members of the Pima County Search and Rescue Squad yesterday from a cabin near Willow Canyon after being snowbound for almost 9 days... rations were dropped to the isolated 684<sup>th</sup> Radar Squadron atop the mountain yesterday by a Davis-Monthan Air Force Base jet helicopter ....” (Star 12/18/1961)

## Civil Defense Council Light Rescue Training

**Feb 16, 1962**

The Tucson-Pima County Civil Defense Rescue Council began a “basic light duty rescue course for the public...” It was open to volunteers and Phil Meade, chairman of the group said “the course included casualty handling, stretcher lashing, building rescue procedure, desert and mountain search methods, fire rescue techniques, mob handling and panic control, among other subjects. Instructors were from the Pima County Search and Rescue organization [SARA], city police and fire departments and others who have completed specialized civil defense courses.” The mention of “mob handling and panic control,” certainly mirrored the effects the mushrooming “Cold War” were having on the United States. And as has been mentioned earlier, Tucson loomed large as a prime target for “The Bomb.” (Citizen 2/14/1962)

## Overdue Plane

**Feb 17, 1962**

Walter Neil Wray (no age given) of Las Vegas, left Tucson Friday night without filing a flight plan for a four-seated Cessna 172 he rented locally from Sprung Aviation. He had about five hours of fuel and was reportedly going to Nogales and then on to Imperial Valley, California; he would return the craft either Saturday night or Sunday, at the latest. When questioned by authorities, Nogales officials said they had not seen the aircraft, although the airport there is not staffed at night. “Sheriff’s officers checked landing strips at Sells and Marana and the Federal Aviation agency sent an alert last night [Monday] to the federal search and rescue unit at San Rafael, Calif., and said the unit would probably get a search organized this morning [Tuesday] if the aircraft has not been found.”



Major Fred Travis of the Civil Air Patrol “said the planes for the local search were withdrawn from a 17-plane search for a private plane that has been missing from Phoenix since Feb. 11.” After the new search was underway, Wray called Sprung Aviation after he reported being “ ‘weathered in’ ” at Los Angeles. The plane missing out of Phoenix was owned and flown by Bill Eedes of Cullen, Louisiana. The *Phoenix Republic* reported on the search, which did not have any results. Strangely, despite a fairly significant scouring of newspapers in Arizona and Louisiana, the author never learned if Eedes or his plane, had ever been found. It was assumed he had since there was a dearth of future articles. (Star 2/20/1962; Citizen 2/21/1962; Phoenix Republic 2/13/1962, 2/17/1962)

### Airman Lost in Ajo Mountains

**Apr 15, 1962**

Eight airmen from Luke Air Force Base in Phoenix, left their car at the foot of 4,373-foot-high Table Top (just Table Top, not Mountain). It is twenty miles northeast of Ajo, and borders the northern edge of the Barry M. Goldwater Bombing Range. The hikers climbed the four-mile trail with its 2,400-foot gain in elevation, to the summit. The first two miles meander through an impressive display of Sonoran Desert and then the next two are rugged and steep. On their way down, the group paused for a break in the 100-degree temperature and Airman Second Class, John J. LaVallee, of the 612<sup>th</sup> Aircraft Control & Warning Wing, said he would wait and catch up with them later. All returned to the car at the agreed time, except for the 23-year-old from Ontario, Canada. He was not seen again until being found.

Volunteers from Pima County Search and Rescue arrived in Ajo at just after midnight and proceeded to begin hunting for the missing man. A helicopter from Williams AFB, also near Phoenix, would arrive in the morning, as well. The rescue team found LaVallee not long after sunrise, thirsty and tired but otherwise unhurt. (Star 4/16/1962; Citizen 4/16/1962)

### Airman Shot Himself in the Thigh

**Apr 27, 1962**

While hiking the Hohokam Trail in the Catalina Mountains, a 25-year-old scout leader accidentally shot himself in the thigh while making camp with nine Boy Scouts. Leon H. “Bud” Beach, the wounded man, was also an Air Force telephone operator, Airman Second Class, at the Mount Lemmon Radar Station. All were members of Davis-Monthan AFB Scout Troop 48. When Beach sat on his bedroll, the .22 caliber pistol rolled out of his poncho and discharged. The mishap took place on Lemmon Creek in the Wilderness of Rocks, about seven miles from the end of the road in Summerhaven.

Acting as guide on this Boy Scout-sanctioned trip was 18-year-old Eagle Scout, Pat Hayhurst, from Tucson. The 32-mile Hohokam Trail, conceived in the mid-1950s by the Order of the Arrow, an honorary camping society for the Scouts, is generally at least a three-day, two-night loop hike, beginning and ending in Summerhaven. There is an attractive award for successfully completing the moderately difficult trek.

Hayhurst administered first aid and treated Beach for shock, assisted by some of the other boys. He did not seem to be bleeding too badly when Pat and 15-year-old Bill Simmons started out for help about 7:40 p.m. With the new moon, there was absolutely no light that night to help them see their way. However, the Hayhurst family had a cabin up there since before Pat was born and he

was very familiar with the trails and terrain. The two reached the Mount Lemmon Inn about 10:00 p.m.

With Sheriff's Captain Ken Sturgeon leading, "About 55 men—the Pima County Search and Rescue Unit, a medical team from Davis-Monthan, and nine men from the Air Force radar site, and a US Forest Ranger [John Brinkley]," gathered in Summerhaven and did not begin their trudge back in until after 2 a.m. They reached the wounded airman three hours later, just before dawn, with the return trip taking five hours. He was carried out on a stretcher, while Pat Hayhurst remained with the scouts the rest of the night. (Star 4/28/1962, 4/29/1962; Citizen 4/28/1962; Pat Hayhurst interview 1/21/2023)

### **Crash on Mount San Jacinto**

#### **May 2, 1962**

The wreckage of a Cessna-195 airplane carrying four passengers from El Monte, California, to Tucson, was spotted the next day, May 3<sup>rd</sup>, near the summit of Mount San Jacinto. The 10,834-foot peak towers over Palm Springs and is the highest in Riverside County. A pilot from Hamilton AFB identified the craft from its tail number and radioed "that there was no sign of life and that the wreckage was only 150 feet from the summit of the snowcapped mountain overlooking the California desert."

Five Tucson Civil Air Patrol planes, refueling in Gila Bend, took part in the early stages of the search for the missing craft. They were commanded by CAP officers of both the Wings out of Tucson and Phoenix, as well as being overall directed by the Air Force's Western Search and Rescue Unit from Hamilton Air Force Base. A 25-man rescue party from the Riverside County Sheriff's Office, worked their way up to the scene, which in this case was a recovery party. The pilot from Hamilton AFB that had first discovered the wreck had been correct, there were no survivors. (Citizen 5/3/1962; Star 5/4/1962)

### **Found Asleep at Home On His Couch**

#### **May 9, 1962**

Early Thursday morning, Sheriffs' Deputies discovered William N. Hall's car abandoned in the desert near Tucson's Golf Links and Kolb Roads. His wife had not seen her 44-year-old husband for two days and owners of a neighborhood café said he had not come in for two days, as well, so concern grew. Thursday night, "About 25 members of the Search and Rescue Squad were taking part in the search for the University of Arizona farms' employee." Their efforts lasted about eight hours until Mr. Hall was found asleep on his couch at his home. He was in a "confused" condition and his feet were cut and bleeding, deputies said. "Deputies theorized that Hall had walked the nearly 15 miles from where his car was found and had somehow lost his shoes while walking. Hall was otherwise unhurt, deputies said." (Star 5/11/1962, 5/12/1962)

### **High School Shot Putter Lost in Catalinas**

#### **May 19, 1962**

Roy Gabusi, a 17-year-old Tucson High School student, was picnicking with a group from the Church of Latter-Day Saints (LDS), when he wandered away to take photos. As the sun went

down, he lost his direction. They were on an overnight trip to the LDS Camp near the Palisades Ranger Station, not far from Summerhaven in the Santa Catalina Mountains. Within two hours of the alarm sounding, Sheriff's Captain Ken Sturgeon and the first thirty men of Pima County Search and Rescue, were on the scene. "They said they feared the youth might have fallen and hurt himself. Some 40 more men joined in the search after daylight [Sunday]. Many were on horseback, but most were on foot." A total of seventy persons were involved, but the high school shot putter was found by US Forest Ranger, John Brinkley. At noon Sunday, Brinkley spotted the young man deep in Sycamore Canyon, west of the Mount Lemmon Highway. It took the ranger three hours to work his way down to Roy. He was tired, hungry but unhurt. "Sturgeon said the boy told him he slept in a cave Saturday night and kept the camera tripod handy to use for a weapon against wild animals. The weapon was not needed, Sturgeon said. He was supplied with water from a small stream during the night and he ate some leaves to keep the hunger pangs away." He traveled nearly five miles "as the crow flies," but if the crow had to walk it could easily be twice that. (Citizen 5/21/1962; Star 5/21/1962)

### **SARA Inducted Into Mountain Rescue Association**

#### **Jun 1962**

The Southern Arizona Rescue Association was accepted as a member of the Mountain Rescue Association, a national group of wilderness SAR groups. SARA was proposed for membership by the Altadena Mountain Rescue Team, Altadena, California. SARA needed to be inspected by this group, demonstrating rescue proficiency by performing rigorous practical exercises. Edgar L. Kress was the President of the Altadena Team. (Star 6/23/1962)

### **Teenager Drowns in Lake of the Desert**

#### **Jun 3, 1962**

"Skindivers from the Pima County Sheriff's office [sic] Search and Rescue Team were searching late last night [Sunday] for the body of a 15-year-old Casa Grande youth reported drowned in Lake of the Desert halfway between Casa Grande and Coolidge." George Decker was last seen swimming in the waist-deep water in the manmade pond about 5:20 p.m. "Twenty-nine men from the Pinal County office were taking part in the search along with the eight Pima County skindivers under the direction of Capt. Ken Sturgeon." (Star 6/4/1962)

### **Accidentally Shot Himself in the Leg**

#### **Jun 11, 1962**

A. Bruce Breyfogle, was on an amateur archaeology expedition [read "Pot Hunting"] in the foothills of the Tortolita Mountains several miles northwest of Tucson, with his son and a friend. The 35-year-old was "entering a passageway into a cave when the hammer on the .45 caliber revolver he was wearing apparently scraped against the cave's wall. The hammer fell, discharging the gun and sending a bullet into his right thigh." He was carried out by members of the "Pima County Search and Rescue Squad." Undergoing surgery at St. Joseph's Hospital, he was listed in satisfactory condition in the newspaper the following day. Breyfogle was a manager at Bob's Big Boy Restaurant on Tucson's East Broadway. (Citizen 6/12/1962)

## Park Ranger Safe

**Jul 30, 1962**

James Olson, District Park Ranger in charge of the Rincon Mountains' section of Saguaro National Monument, walked in to the Park Visitor Center, ending an all-night search for him. "He was near exhaustion. . . ." Olson had been at Manning Camp up on the mountain by himself since June 1, locating heli-spots and marking an old trail. According to Superintendent Monte Fitch, "He was not the kind of ranger who gets lost, but he got sick along the way and between heat exhaustion and stomach cramps he didn't make it down" until the next morning, 25 hours after his normal four-hour hike down. When Olson walked in, Fitch was at the "Rescue Control Center, where he was directing rescue operations," after the all-night search. (Star 8/1/1962)

## Drowning in Pena Blanca Lake

**Aug 10, 1962**

Twenty-year-old Bobby E. Adams of rural Douglas, became the third person to drown in Pena Blanca Lake, northwest of Nogales. The young man "was swimming behind a boat occupied by his sister and brother-in-law, Ray Miller. . . The youth yelled once and slipped under the water about 175 feet from shore. . . ." Miller jumped in to try and pull Adams out, but couldn't locate him in the darkness. According to the Santa Cruz Sheriff's Office, Adams "either suffered cramps or was pulled down by an undercurrent. . . ."

Captain Kenneth Sturgeon of the Pima County Search and Rescue Unit was called for assistance at 11:00 p.m. After searching late that night, six "skin divers aided by members of the Pima County Search and Rescue unit. . . recovered the body at 7:30 a.m., the next morning. . . from 40 feet of water." (Citizen 8/13/1962)

## Carryout of Scoutmaster from Upper Sabino Canyon

**Aug 19, 1962**

Slipping on wet rocks, Scoutmaster Kenneth Spaulding, 45, fell 15 feet, seriously injuring his ankle. He was leading four scouts of Troop 6 around the Hohokam Trail, a 33-mile loop trip which incorporates skirting the rugged upper parts of Sabino Canyon. He said the fall gave him a "bad case of nerves." Two of the boys, Erik Eckholm, 13, and Michael Melton, also 13, went for help when they noticed their Scoutmaster was "pale, feverish, weak and vomiting." The rescue began at 7:00 p.m. after the boys made their way to the Sabino Canyon Ranger Station. The 75-man Pima County Search and Rescue Unit reached the injured Spaulding at 8:00 a.m., the next morning. Using both a stretcher and then a horse for the last two miles, they were able to get the ailing man to St. Mary's Hospital. He hadn't suffered a fracture but was "exhausted." (Citizen 8/20/1962)

## Large Group of Boy Scouts Needing Rescue

**Aug 26, 1962**

Boy Scouts from Kearny, Arizona, traveling in two separate groups, had to be rescued after being reported overdue late on their third day out. Originally a group of ten, including two adult leaders, split up to hike two different trails on top of Lemmon Creek, below the radar station. The first

group to be helped were six who were led back up to Marshall's Gulch, at the end of the Mt. Lemmon Road.

The second group of four were at an "impasse of cliffs and very rugged terrain." Early on the morning of August 29, Sheriff's Captain, Ken Sturgeon summoned a "jet helicopter" from Davis-Monthan AFB and the party of four stranded hikers were lifted from the mountain. Three searchers were also flown out. One searcher said "the scouts 'were not exactly lost, but were using one of the many inaccurate trail maps of the Mt. Lemmon area.' He added, 'I don't know of one map—including those given out by the federal government—that is an accurate survey of the Mt. Lemmon trails.' " Some 65 searchers were involved from the Pima County SAR Team, as well as a helicopter and crew. On the first day, four motorcycles and two motorized Tote Goats were utilized to cover the Upper Sabino Canyon Trail. (Citizen 8/29/1962)

### SARA Training Course

**Sep 21, 1962**

SARA sponsored a nine-week training course on "Search and Rescue Work," consisting of six classroom periods and three field training exercises. "You also must be interested in helping your fellow man when he is lost, stranded in dangerous terrain, or injured in the mountains or desert area." (South Tucson Gazette 9/21/1962)

### Over Five Inches in Twelve Hours

**Sep 26, 1962**

The local US Weather Bureau called the lingering, 12-hour remnants of Hurricane Claudia, " 'a genuine sneaky storm.' " Just under three inches of rain from the freak occurrence fell at the Palisades Ranger Station in the Catalina Mountains, with double that in the Tucson Mountains. The brunt of the storm was west of Tucson. Heroism, rescues, and narrow escapes, were widespread.

"A jeep driver waded into chest deep water and personally carried seven passengers and the driver to safety from a Tucson Rapid Transit bus that had washed down an arroyo. A human chain of Indians rescued a blind, aged Indian who had ridden his horse into the 10-foot-deep waters of Sells Wash. The horse drowned." Directing traffic, an Auxiliary Deputy Sheriff was swept through a culvert. A helicopter from Fort Huachuca snatched four members of a family and their dog from near their flooded home, west of Marana. The helo then "raced to Avra Valley to save a man stranded for several hours atop his auto amid high water. He'd made his way to dry ground, but the Army craft picked up would-be rescue workers bogged down by high water."

All of the buildings at the Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum flooded, as did some of the exhibits—5.75 inches of rain fell there. The Santa Cruz River in Marana was rampaging, a deputy said, " 'It's as bad as I've ever seen it, And it's getting worse.' " He estimated it was rising a foot an hour. "Numerous motorists in Tucson stalled their cars in dips and arroyos and had to be rescued. About 30 persons were pulled from their homes on the outskirts of Sells..." The village was cut off, isolated except by telephone when all three highways into the area were flooded.

"Five helicopters from Fort Huachuca and two light planes of the 416<sup>th</sup> Signal Company (Aviation)...flew search patterns over the reservation." One of the helicopters was forced down, driven to sit out the storm for ninety minutes. A Search and Rescue Command Center was established at Ryan Field, west of Tucson. Soon, however, all of the choppers were told to go to Sells and pick up

Indian interpreters. “More than 8,000 Indians live in 70 villages on the 3-million-acre reservation. The conditions at some of the more isolated places could not be known. . . .” They then branched out across the area to pick up stranded persons and survey how well the scattered dams were holding back the water.

Almost miraculously, and despite numerous “near misses,” there was only one death that was attributed to the storm. A 60-year-old Tohono O’odham woman died of natural causes when doctors could not reach her in time. (Star 9/27/1962)

## Plane Missing for 24 Days

**Nov 17, 1962**

A twin-engine Piper Apache contracted from a Santa Ana, California aircraft charter company, went missing somewhere in Southern Arizona. R. H. Brown, a former Marine pilot with thirty years of experience, was taking Mr. and Mrs. C. C. Rodenbaugh, also of Santa Ana, to her father’s funeral in Portales, New Mexico. Contact with the plane was lost just after 2:00 p.m. when Brown indicated to Regional Air Traffic Control, he was returning to Tucson to avoid extreme turbulence in a storm east of Willcox. The trio never made it back to Tucson.

As with all missing civilian aircraft, the CAP quickly began searching and, as the days passed futilely, more aircraft were launched. Search patterns and locations logically centered on the remote mountains and rugged canyons between the San Simon Valley and Tucson. As far south as Mt. Baldy in the Santa Rita Mountains and the Galiuro and Winchester Mountains, north and west of Willcox, were scoured. Then they focused on the Chiricahua, Dos Cabezas, and the Mt. Graham areas with nothing found. Planes with their volunteer crews came from Tucson, Willcox, Tubac, Phoenix, Coolidge, and Casa Grande. All of this was “closely coordinated with more than 100 volunteers of the Pima County Search & Rescue organization.”

After 1,600 hours “of fruitless probing of desert and mountain areas since November 17,” Lt. Colonel Robert Luger, Civil Air Patrol director in Tucson, terminated the search. Luger went on to say, “‘Not one solid lead developed during the entire operation. What probably will happen is that a hunter will come on the wreckage some time. That’s about all we can hope for.’” Colonel Luger was not too far wrong.

At 1:30 p.m. on December 8, a Naylor Junior High School teacher and three of his students stumbled across the disintegrated wreckage of the missing plane and its three occupants. Lee Barker, a social studies teacher, had led his eighth-grade students on a long, one-day hike to the highest point in the Rincons. They sighted the charred debris 1.5 miles from 8,668-foot Mica Mountain. The next afternoon, a Davis-Monthan AFB jet helicopter, making eight round trips, ferried 45 officials and county SAR personnel to an NPS helipad only three-hundred yards from the site.

Captain Kenneth Sturgeon, head of the Pima County Search and Rescue Unit, said it appeared the plane came “straight down” into a steep canyon. The missing craft had been covered by snow most of the time. An investigator believed, “‘Taking into consideration that everything from 4,000 feet up was soupy, and that the plane crashed at about 8,200 feet, I would say the craft either iced up, hit a downdraft, or [pilot] Brown misread his altimeter.’” (Citizen 11/22/1962, 11/26/1962, 12/10/1962)



## Overdue Hikers on Mt. Lemmon

**Nov 27, 1962**

Three adults, including a father and son visiting from Kentucky, overestimated their own strength and stamina as well as “also the distance of the planned hike.” The wife of the Tucson man, drove the trio to the end of the Mt. Lemmon Highway on November 29, with the expectation they would reach the Sabino Canyon Road two days later. “Members of the Pima County Search and Rescue Unit (including SARA) said they found...them at 3:15 a.m., near Romero Pass.” They were unharmed but were very weary. (Star 12/1/1962)

## Search for Elderly Man in Catalina Foothills

**Dec 6, 1962**

William Morley, a 92-year-old resident of a nursing home in the Catalina Foothills, wandered away at 1:30 p.m., becoming the subject of an eight-hour-search. Captain Sturgeon deployed “about 15 motorcyclists, 70 ground searchers 30 men in jeeps and cars,” and an airplane was standing by. He was found safe by one of the motorcyclists, lying under a bush about three-quarters of a mile from his home. (Citizen 12/7/1962)

## Funeral Hearses Served As Ambulances

**Jan 18, 1963**

SARA, in conjunction with the American Red Cross, began a thirty-hour first aid course at the Adair Funeral Home, 1050 N. Dodge Boulevard. “The classes conducted for SARA members and Adair ambulance drivers and attendants . . .” The reason for adding this information was to document the state of ambulance service at that time. An ambulance then was principally a funeral home hearse. (Citizen 1/14/1963)

## Divers To Mexico

**Feb 10, 1963**

“Nine members of the Pima County Search and Rescue team are expected to begin skin diving operations. . . in search of three drowning victims in a lake 65 miles south of Douglas.” Ford Tirey, 42, of Newport Beach, California, Paulino Prieto, 40, and 27-year-old Arturo Banuet, both of Agua Prieta, Mexico, were fishing on Lake Angostura [Spanish for narrow, narrowness] that Sunday, when their boat was capsized by a squall. A fourth member of the ill-fated trip was Jesus Barrios, who clung desperately to the overturned craft for three hours in the frigid water before being rescued.

Mexican authorities tried dragging the lake but soon failing this, requested the assistance of Pima County Search and Rescue. Authorized by Sheriff Waldon V. Burr and coordinated by Captain Ken Sturgeon, the recovery team arrived at the twenty-mile-long man-made reservoir Tuesday evening. They brought 15 dive tanks and according to Sturgeon, the group was “trained to go to depths of 120 feet, and the bottom of the lake ranges from 20 to 60 feet.”

Almost from the beginning, the divers held out little real hope of success. It was not known where the three men disappeared. The water was icy cold making underwater time much more limited. And with the lake surface stirred by the wind and murky, visibility at thirty feet was

almost zero. And, on the bottom, it was pitch black. Unable to see their hands in front of their face masks, the best the divers could do was just grope around, hoping to be lucky.

After three days there, the search and recovery divers decided it was fruitless to continue, and left. John Lowe, president of the Tucson-based Desert Dolphins Dive Club, had asked for more divers, “But because of hazardous diving conditions, Mexican authorities said the search will be confined to dragging the waters.” The body of Tiery was recovered on February 27; March 8, the third victim to be found was Banuet. Prieto had been located in between the two. In addition to Lowe, there were Dick Case, John Baker, and Bob Paukner, all of the Desert Dolphins.

Since at least the spring of 1961, the Desert Dolphins were the “go to” recovery divers, with Case being the main facilitator between the club and the Pima County Sheriff’s Department. There was also a reference to Case in the September 11, 1968 Minutes of the Desert Dolphins, of Case making a dive (recovery?) in a local mine at its 900-foot level. The author could not find this incident in the local newspapers. (Star 2/13/1963, 2/16/1963, 2/27/1963; Citizen 3/11/1963; John Lowe interview 2/4/2022)

## Deaf Mute Man Rescued in Catalinas

**Feb 23, 1963**

Robert Schultz, a drafting student at the University of Arizona, was seriously injured after suffering a fifty-foot fall in Pima Canyon. Unable to hear or speak, the 22-year-old had grabbed for a rock which turned out to be loose. His brother William, also deaf and mute, cared for Robert until nearly dark and then went for help, finally able to locate the small motorcycle they had ridden to the mouth of Pima Canyon. William had only been on the motorcycle once or twice and actually did not know how to drive it.

Robert’s accident finally came to light when a Tucson Policeman stopped William for driving without lights—William did not know how to turn on the lights. In not learning how to operate the motorcycle, William wrote out the emergency, “police notified the Pima County Search and Rescue organization, which quickly mustered about 40 men for a ground search. . . Sometime during the night searchers passed near the injured Robert, who was unable to hear them.” An HH-43B “Huskie” helicopter from Davis-Monthan was in the air at first light, soon landing five ground searchers atop “the ridge that had a 2,000-foot drop on each side.” At 1100, “hovering nearer, they saw the still form of the missing young man. . . Wood [medical technician] was lowered by cable to the injured hiker and found that Schultz had a broken bone in his right foot . . .” (Citizen 2/25/1963)

## Rescue from Mine Shaft

**Feb 27, 1963**

Jack Daniels was checking out an abandoned mine tunnel he had once worked in, when he tumbled thirty feet into a shaft unseen in the darkness. He narrowly avoided falling another two-hundred feet after landing on a rotten wooden platform. The retired cowboy fractured ribs, a left ankle, and suffered numerous lacerations. This took place not too far from the town of Sonoita. The first attempt to rescue the 67-year-old man was made by employees of the nearby Martinez Ranch but this failed. The Pima County SAR Squad, arriving at nearly the same time, soon lowered Ray Neal, along with a rescue basket. Daniels was hauled up with the aid of a winch. (Star 2/28/1963)

## Search for Boy in Tortolitas

**Mar 2, 1963**

Traveling barefoot, 5-year-old John Zellar, walked nearly five miles through the prickly desert, after wandering away from his rocky campsite. The tyke had been playing with some other children in a sandy wash while he and the boy's mother waited for their father, out javelina hunting near the southern side of the Tortolita Mountains. Mom said that John ran into the desert and hid while playing with other kids. She saw him run off and went to look for him, but could not find him.

A Pima County SAR group, consisting of three planes, ten motorcycles and about two-hundred men, searched for 18 hours along the foothills, under the direction of Captain Sturgeon. When found, he was heading toward both a road and lights he could see in the distance, presumably Marana. Other than some cactus in his feet, the boy was no worse for wear. (Citizen 3/4/1963)

## Supreme Cleaners Blows Up

**Mar 29, 1963**

Forty-two people, mostly employees, were inside or near the Supreme Cleaners on the corner of Grant Road and Stone Avenue, when it exploded. It quickly caught fire and was soon leveled. All available police, firemen, and ambulances responded. "The entire force of recruits from the Police Academy was rushed to the scene." So, did the Southern Arizona Rescue Association. Ordinary citizens jumped in to help move rubble and aid the victims and before long, an estimated crowd of 2,500 gathered. Five women and one man were killed outright in the explosion. A seventh, part owner of Supreme Cleaners, Harris Slonic, would die three days later.

Before he died, however, Slonic gave fire and industrial investigators a key piece of information. He said "he was in the fur vault in the basement and was about to leave it. He flipped off the light switch, it threw a spark, a flash flame ignited his hair and arms and a big explosion followed immediately." That would soon prove to be the ignition source.

A neighboring grocery store clerk, said, " 'We watched three women blown out into the street from the entrance of the cleaning plant. They were in the middle of Stone Avenue, in great shock and bleeding.' " An assistant manager of the grocery store said, " 'I crawled on my hands and knees through the entrance and someone helped me pull out a man partly buried in the debris. He was hurt bad.' "

Ventura Urquidez, a washing machine operator for the cleaners made five trips into the building, soon credited with rescuing seven people. Urquidez was awarded the Carnegie Hero Award in November. See "Two Tucsonans Get Carnegie Hero Awards," September 26, 1963, on page 223. A manager of the nearby drug store rushed to the scene and ultimately helped 12 people out. "The explosion was so severe it hurled a 220-pound slab of reinforced concrete through the corrugated steel roof...200 yards away. It blew an occupied automobile 50 feet across the street from its position at the plant."

"Firemen and rescue workers armed with acetylene torches worked frantically on into the afternoon, with smoke continuing to billow from the wreckage. One witness described the building had collapsed 'like a toy house.' Another said, 'It seemed to shatter into splinters.' Bystanders watched a Catholic priest administer last rites to a dead or dying woman. At least four other priests were on the scene."

“A male customer who was never identified reportedly was at the counter to pick up his cleaning when the accident occurred. Bystanders said they saw him blown out of the building, scramble up, go back in, pick up the trousers he had come for and leave.”

But it would not be until September 29, 1967, that the cause for one of the worst tragedies in Southern Arizona history was firmly established. After a lengthy trial, Superior Court Judge Robert O. Royston ruled from the Bench that Tucson Gas and Electric Company, was at fault. “The leakage had existed for a substantial period of time. . . TG&E, through the exercise of due care, should have discovered the leak. . .” (Citizen 3/29/1963, 3/30/1963, 4/2/1963, 4/13/1963, 1/13/1964, 12/23/1964, 3/17/1965, 4/13/1965; Star 1/9/1965, 5/24/1967, 9/30/1967)

## Mention of SARA in Magazine

### Apr 1963

The April issue of International Rescuer, a bi-monthly publication of the International Rescue and First Aid Association (IRFAA), featured SARA, said to have fifty members. One of the photos included Ray Neal, who was the State Director of the IRFAA, and a second showed his wife, Ruth Neal, also a member of SARA. SARA was “one of 23 organizations forming the Pima County Search and Rescue Association.” (Star 6/1/1963)

## Teenager Hoisted Into Helicopter

### Apr 14, 1963

Chester Camp was injured when a large rock dislodged and rolled over the 18-year-old’s leg. One of the two hiking companions he was with went for help, descending from near Table Mountain in the Catalina Mountains. Forty-five members of the Pima County SAR Unit quickly mobilized, with 12 of them soon reaching the injured teenager.

Captain Ken Sturgeon asked for assistance from Detachment “Det” 17 of the Western Air Rescue Center, Davis-Monthan AFB. In principle, Det 17 could not launch without authorization of the Western Air Rescue Center, Hamilton AFB in Sacramento. In practice, however, they very often sat on their landing pad with rotors in motion, just waiting for the go-ahead. A jet turbine helicopter, piloted by Lieutenant Gayl Bernhardt and Captain Jack Peak, responded. “ ‘That was the hardest mission I ever flew,’ ” Bernhardt said later. “ ‘I must have lost 10 pounds trying to jockey that chopper over the boy because the wind . . . We made at least six or seven passes over the area where he was lying [on a ledge] before the wind was calm enough for us to stay in one position.’ ” (Citizen 4/15/1963)

## Award for County Search and Rescue

### May 6–10, 1963

During the second week of May, the Pima County Search and Rescue Unit received a well-deserved special Air Force award “for distinguished accomplishment in providing aid and assistance to those in distress.” It was presented by Colonel Robert A. Stribling, Commanding Officer of the Western Air Rescue Center at Hamilton Air Force Base, California. Sheriff’s Captain Kenneth Sturgeon, on behalf of the local SAR group which he oversaw for Pima County, received this recognition for the unit’s “outstanding participation in the national Search and Rescue Program.” (Citizen 5/11/1963)

## Vail Award

**Jun 7, 1963**

If not for Wanda K. McKain, 8-year-old Foster Piver likely would not be alive today. She was sitting on the grass-covered bank of Gene Reid Lake in Randolph Park when she glanced up and saw “ ‘a white object bobbing up and down in the water.’ ” Wanda jumped in and rescued the boy, who had slipped off some rocks reaching for a toy boat floating in front of him. Foster was at the lake by himself. The boy “was revived after being pulled from the water, rode home on his bike to tell his mother of the incident. . . ‘If it wasn’t for that lady, I wouldn’t be here.’ ” Meanwhile, McKain suffered a large cut on her foot, which required six stitches to close.

Ms. McKain, a 19-year-old telephone operator and recent graduate of Tucson High School, was given the Vail Award, the Bell Telephone System recognition for action “ ‘beyond the call of duty.’ ” She was the first Tucsonan and the sixth Arizonan to be honored by the Vail Memorial Fund, created in 1920 by the former president of American Telephone and Telegraph Company, Theodore N. Vail. (Citizen 6/7/1963, 1/9/1964)

## Woman Found on Backside of Mt. Lemmon

**Jun 24, 1963**

A 50-year-old Coolidge woman, Vera Snelson, was found dead five-hundred yards off the Control Road, about five miles down from Summerhaven. Last seen in Coolidge, she had been missing since June 18. She had a history of blackouts and a heart condition. The search for her, which ended when she was found minutes before midnight, did not focus on the Catalina Mountains until her vehicle was reported spotted on the backroad to Mt. Lemmon. An autopsy stated she died of natural causes and there was no written speculation on why she was so far from her home near Phoenix. About fifty volunteers searched for her once her vehicle was reported. (Citizen 6/26/1963)

## Deactivation of Davis-Monthan Air Rescue Unit

**Jul 9, 1963**

Air Rescue Detachment 17 at Davis-Monthan AFB, a unit of the Air Force Rescue Coordination Center, was deactivated. Headed by Captain Robert H. Busch, five helicopter pilots and a maintenance crew were affected. The unit consisted of two HH-43B “Huskie” Helicopters and had been at Davis-Monthan since October of 1961. One ship will go to Luke AFB in Phoenix and a decision about the other had not been determined. The article did say that some of the crew could possibly go to Vietnam. “The detachment worked with the Pima County Search and Rescue unit and the Southern Arizona Rescue Association on local rescue operations.”

However, Air Rescue Detachment 17 was reactivated in mid-October, 1964, 15 months after it was deactivated. See “Davis-Monthan Air Rescue Unit Reactivated,” October 1964, on page 229. The two, HH-43 “Huskie” Helicopter Unit and its 11 officers and men, flew back to Tucson from Westover AFB, again to be stationed at Davis-Monthan AFB. “It was the longest flight for this type of helicopter—Husky[sic] H43 jet-powered ‘copter—and took eight days and 35 hours of flying time . . . the two helicopters had to land every two hours at places where jet fuel was available.” (Citizen 5/30/1963; Star 10/15/1964)

## Truck Donated to Search and Rescue

**Jul 20, 1963**

Bob Burns Motor Company donated a truck to Captain Ken Sturgeon for use in search and rescue missions. Bob Burns was a member of SARA at the time. “The truck will be equipped with storage space for food supplies, first aid, and oxygen and sleeping quarters for two men . . .” (Star 7/21/1963)

## Mouth-to-Mouth Resuscitation Saves a Life

**Jul 28, 1963**

While swimming in Pena Blanca Lake with some companions, 17-year-old Ester Borquez of Tucson was about one-hundred yards from shore when she had an asthma attack, making swimming nearly impossible for her. She struggled and went under a few times. Carson Gresham, 21, along with his father happened to be trolling for fish near the young swimmer. They were able to grab her but could not get her into their boat so they pulled her to shore where they began mouth-to-mouth resuscitation. “ ‘Gresham worked on the girl for an hour and a half to two hours,’ ” according to John Shults, the owner of the resort at the lake. “ ‘He even accompanied her on the trip to the hospital. She quit breathing lots of times, but he forced her to breathe again...I think the girl might have died if he hadn’t happened along. . . .’ ”

Ester survived her near-drowning incident, being released from the hospital the following day. Carson Gresham was honored for his life-saving with a Good Citizenship Award by the Tucson Civitan Club at a luncheon at the El Conquistador Hotel on November 27, 1963 “ ‘I thought she was gone. . . but then she started breathing again.’ ” (Citizen 7/29/1963, 11/28/1963)

## Girl Hurt in Onyx Cave

**Aug 18, 1963**

As 17-year-old Kathy Scott inched across a “slippery rock ledge she lost her balance and tumbled about 25 feet to a rock surface that slowed her fall somewhat because it was on a 45-degree incline.” She was the daughter of a Tucson physician, Dr. William Scott, who luckily, was with her and six others, including her 12-year-old brother. She landed on her left arm but ended up receiving only a sprained elbow and a sprained wrist. One of the group, an 18-year-old Tucson High School track star, was able to safely exit the cave and drive to nearby Sonoita, where he called the Santa Cruz County Sheriff’s Office. “Eight members of the Pima County Search and Rescue Unit were en route to the cave when word came that she had been rescued.” In the cave at the time was a group of more experienced cavers from Phoenix, who were able to assist with her getting out of the cave. As a result, Dr. Bill Scott soon became a member of SARA. (Citizen 8/19/1963)

## Carryout from Seven Falls

**Aug 29, 1963**

A 17-year-old Catalina High School student, Carol Hartley, fell about thirty feet over a waterfall in the Seven Falls cataract system of Lower Bear Canyon. She was with a larger group of students, all on an early morning hike in anticipation of returning to school the next week. A fifty-person Pima County SAR Group responded, carrying her out by stretcher. Two boys following closely behind



her who tried to save her also fell but were not hurt very seriously. One walked out under his own power and the other was seen at the hospital and released. Hartley suffered a possible concussion as well as numerous bruises and lacerations and was listed in fair condition at Tucson Medical Center. In the early morning response, a SAR truck and trailer fell onto their sides, resulting in \$3,000 worth of damage when its wheels went off the unpaved road. No one was hurt. (Citizen 8/30/1963)

### **Another Carryout of a Teenager from Seven Falls**

**Sep 3, 1963**

Four days after 17-year-old Carol Hartley fell thirty feet on the slippery rocks of Seven Falls, another 17-year-old fell there, as well. Salpointe High School senior Jack B. Michela, III, broke both ankles and incurred head injuries. While climbing over the fourth waterfall with a school friend, the boy slipped, landing in the pool at the bottom. He was admitted in fair condition to Tucson Medical Center. Ninety members of the Pima County Sheriff's SAR Unit hiked through heavy rains to bring the injured youth out of the area. Taking three hours, the stretcher carry-out faced additional urgency with the possibility of flash flooding in Bear Canyon. (Citizen 9/4/1963)

### **Man “Just Took” Walk**

**Sep 17, 1963**

Clay Handley, 52, was a handyman who lived in a broken-down car on Mt. Lemmon, earning money doing odd jobs for businesses in Summerhaven. He was known to enjoy taking long, unaccompanied walks on the mountain's trails. When he did, “He habitually left a note at his junked-car home explaining any long absences but had not done so on Sept. 17.” When he had not been seen for five days and had not left a note, concerned residents began a “widespread search of the back trails of Mt. Lemmon... by the Pima County Search and Rescue Unit and fears for his safety were expressed.” Searchers really had no definitive place to look and basically made rapid hiking sweeps on the various trails, with nothing to show for their labors. Nine days after he was last seen on Mt. Lemmon, he was located in Avondale, west of Phoenix. “He told Avondale police he was unaware of any concern for his safety until a fellow rancher told him... he had heard a radio announcement about his being missing.” He said he “ ‘just took a walk to find a job...’ ” (Citizen 9/26/1963)

### **“Two Tucsonans Get Carnegie Awards”**

**Sep 26, 1963**

Since 1904, the Carnegie Hero Commission has been rewarding those who risked their lives to save others. Ventura Urquidez, 22, was credited with rescuing seven women during the Supreme Cleaners explosion and fire in Tucson on March 29, 1963. Despite being injured himself, he first led two women to safety, and then he ran back into the building three more times to bring out a total of seven women. “He had to be restrained going back again although the building was by then a roaring inferno.” He was given \$1000 and a Silver Medal, the Commission's highest recognition.

Wilbur D. Nelson, 48, was injured himself by the premature explosion of six sticks of dynamite “but went back into a copper mine near Oracle and took a fellow miner out on his shoulders minutes before other dynamite charges exploded.” Nelson got Merley C. Farless, 40, out of the mine but Farless died 32 hours later. “Nelson was disabled for five weeks.” He was given \$500 and a Silver Medal, the Commission's second highest recognition. (Citizen 9/26/1963)

## Three Lost Hikers Rescued

**Nov 1, 1963**

John Choiniere, Jr., was on a picnic at Rose Canyon Lake with four other young people, when he “vanished.” The 17-year-old was sitting at a picnic table when he walked away and was going to lay down on a blanket. The group went to tell Choiniere they were getting ready to soon leave when they discovered the blanket was there, but their friend was not. “The teenagers reportedly looked for the missing lad for some time, honking the horn on the truck and calling his name, but to no avail.” They then notified the Forest Service Rangers. Of major concern was that John was a diabetic.

“Captain Kenneth Sturgeon, head of the Pima County Search and Rescue unit, organized his men at 6:00 p.m. and called for jeeps and motorcycles to insure a thorough search effort. Dogs and horses were also being used. About 50 volunteers and deputies were participating in the search. They were hampered by rain in the mountains.”

Volunteers trudged through rain and sleet for nearly eight hours that night without knowing that the boy had been joined by two University of Arizona students who were also lost. The couple, 19-year-old Patrick M. Forester and 20-year-old Ardith Moss, saw the fire that John had started, right when the pair also discovered they were lost, about 7:30 p.m. The trio, all lightly clothed and ill-prepared for the storm, were spotted huddled around their fire in Rose Canyon at 3:30 a.m. They were found by a 15-man patrol headed by Arizona Ranger Russ E. Wheeler. They had to be guided toward the top of the mountain because of the rugged terrain before they could then make their way back down to safety. It was estimated that the three lost people had traveled about six miles.

Sturgeon said “it was a miracle the hikers weren’t injured in the rough country. They were cold and hungry when found but only suffered scratches.” (Star 11/2/1963, 11/3/1963)

## Sheriff Waldon V. Burr and Baby Show Coronation

**Nov 26, 1963**

In order to raise money for equipment, specifically a truck, the Southern Arizona Rescue Association held a Baby Show Coronation Pageant at the University of Arizona Auditorium. This had been advertised for several months. Pima County Sheriff Waldon V. Burr served as the Master of Ceremonies, presiding over this event. Per Frances Walker who was overseeing this event, SARA only raised about \$150 and there were about forty baby entries. (Citizen 11/26/1963; Frances Walker interview 12/28/2020)

## Certificate of Appreciation by Representative Morris K. Udall

**Dec 15, 1963**

“ ‘The Pima County Search and Rescue Unit will receive a certificate of appreciation from the Department of Defense early next year,’ Rep. Morris K. Udall said last night in Washington. Dr. Samuel Grauman, a Tucson physician, without knowing it, was primarily instrumental in getting the... unit recognized at a national level.” Grauman’s son was part of the Unit when the doctor wrote to Senators Carl Hayden and Barry Goldwater, along with Representative Udall, “asking for their help in gaining unit members more recognition in the public eye.” In his letters, Dr. Grauman

had asked that members be able to “place unit emblems on their cars or carry red lights or sirens to get them through traffic when the call might be urgent.” (Star 12/15/1963)

### Three Killed in Plane Crash in Whetstone Mountains

**Jan 23, 1964**

Three prominent Cochise County men took off from Tombstone at 8:00 a.m. in a single-engine Piper Tri-Pacer, heading to Luke AFB in Phoenix—Clayton Smith, 51, editor and publisher of the *Tombstone Epitaph*; Thadeus Johnston, 45, president of the Cochise County Junior College; and Donald Ensign, 49, superintendent of schools in Sierra Vista. Piloted by Smith, the plane crashed three miles south of Benson near the Whetstone Mountains when they apparently encountered bad weather, including rain and low clouds. The Civil Air Patrol found the crumpled remains of the small plane the next day, with all three occupants deceased. (Star 1/25/1964)

### Teenager Injured on Baboquivari Peak

**Mar 15, 1964**

A 15-year-old Rincon High School student, Philip Beisel, fell and seriously gashed his knee some one-thousand feet below the summit of Baboquivari Peak. The teenager was forced to spend the freezing night while his climbing companion went for help. A rescue team, including a helicopter out of Fort Huachuca responded. However, the boy was able to limp out the next morning, making it all the way to the Ajo Highway at Three Points. Included in the responders from SARA were Eber Glendening, Tom Harlan and Mike Pestalozzi. The helicopter picked the boy up at Three Points, flying him to the Davis-Monthan AFB Hospital. (Citizen 3/17/1964)

### Pima SAR Attends Mountain Rescue Association Seminar

**May 9, 1964**

Seven local SAR representatives attended the two-day, second annual seminar of the Mountain Rescue Association (MRA). This took place in mile-high Idyllwild, California, where there was a foot of snow on the ground. Captain Ken Sturgeon, along with Ray Neal participated in sessions on such subjects as air support techniques, communications and victim evacuation. (Citizen 5/9/1964)

### Boy Scout Lost on Mt. Lemmon

**Jul 22, 1964**

Tenderfoot Boy Scout Tommy Green, 17, wandered away from Camp Lawton, in the Santa Catalina Mountains. Belonging to Troop 88 from the Arizona Children’s Colony south of Coolidge, the intellectually disabled youth was last seen on the archery range with over twenty other scouts. He had no food or water when he left the group. Some two hundred searchers and four planes participated in the search effort, including one-hundred airmen from Davis-Monthan and the Mount Lemmon Radar Station as well as fifty soldiers from Ft. Huachuca and at least 35 members of the Pima County SAR Unit. After being lost for two days and two nights, the boy was able to intercept a motorist and ask for help. (Star 7/24/1964)

## Ray Neal Gets Complaint

**Aug 1964**

In the 1960s, Ray Neal's home in the 4800 block of East Helen Street served as an early SARA gathering spot as well as a place for them to store various items used in search and rescue. And, the *Tucson Daily Citizen* used to run a reoccurring ombudsman column. In the August 3, 1964, issue, they responded to a concern from a local reader.

QUESTION—I would like very much to see a house...cleaned up. This place has been an eyesore in the neighborhood for several years. There are parts of town that, with a license, may be operated as a junkyard. I am sure this party has no such license, since it is a residential area. Surely, this place is no attraction for an otherwise well-kept subdivision. Name withheld by request.

ANSWER—City inspectors are convinced there is no violation of the city code. This property owner is a member of a rescue association. He is not conducting a business of any kind. The equipment—consisting of litters, acetylene and oxygen bottles, stretchers, mechanic and carpenter's tools, angle iron and sheet metal for building rescue items, ropes, block and tackles—is all used in rescue operations and thereby on the ready. It's legal as far as the city is concerned. (Citizen 8/3/1964)

## Youth Killed in Baboquivaris

**Aug 19, 1964**

Franklyn Miller, 11, died after falling and tumbling some three-hundred feet while hiking in a rugged part of the Baboquivari Mountains, 45 miles southwest of Tucson. The boy and his family were spending a week-long religious retreat in the area. He was with a group that had been hiking for an hour when they stopped to go swimming in Gu Kui Chuchg Canyon. It was at that point the leader noticed the youngster was missing, along with a second boy. The second boy soon rushed back to the group and told the leader that Franklyn had fallen. The boy did not die immediately, but suffered two broken legs and severe head wounds. It took several hours before the Sells Police could get to the boy, who had died at about noon. A helicopter from Ft. Huachuca flew the boy's body back to Tucson. (Star 8/20/1964)

## Another Hiker Rescued

**Aug 20, 1964**

"Sierra Vista welder Joe Burge, 45, has become an old hand at saving stranded hikers in the Huachuca Mountains. Five times during the past few years people have become stuck on the lip of a 200-foot precipice near a waterfall in Carr Canyon. Five times Burge has been called into action, succeeding each time."

The latest rescue occurred when 14-year-old Johnny Pierson of Sierra Vista, slipped and rolled and tumbled down a steep sloping cliff, coming to rest at the edge of another drop. Had he gone over, it was almost certain death. By some miracle, he only broke an ankle and sustained some bad bruises. Now shaken up, he then had to remain motionless because of the slippery granite and the cliff he was beside. "A companion ran for help and a helicopter was sent from Fort Huachuca. Winds forced the copter to land on a ridge above the boy."

Burge must have been one of the responding “Cochise deputies, Sierra Vista police and volunteers [who] gathered quickly at the scene.” He climbed down the side of the near-vertical drop with ropes tied around his own leg and shoulder and was able to somehow get the boy onto his back. Pierson then rode Burge piggyback to the top, while about six persons hauled them both up by rope. A Sierra Vista photographer, Cleo Goodner, said “the start-to-finish distance of the fall was about 300 feet. He said the boy took most of it in rolls and tumbles but 40 feet of it was a clean fall through the air.” (Citizen 8/21/1964; Star 8/22/1964)

## **Tornado Strikes Near San Xavier del Bac**

**Aug 27, 1964**

Southern Arizona and Tucson in particular, are often regarded as tornado-free. Before this twister, however, there were four authenticated in the area; possibly, the first verified account was on June 29, 1957. These were all short-lived and without injuries or wide-spread damage. It was finally on August 27, 1964, that people were both killed and seriously injured in the area by one.

Just before noon, a violent tornado touched down in San Xavier, immediately west of the Mission, killing two people and injuring eight others in this one family. Mrs. Lucy Norris, 31, and her 9-month-old son, Marcian, were dead on arrival at San Xavier Indian Hospital “after a futile attempt by rescue workers to administer artificial respiration. They were pulled from beneath a pile of adobe bricks by several, while others armed with picks and shovels, removed the debris under which seven or eight members of the Norris family had been buried alive. Close to 200 volunteers. . . helped. . .” (Star 8/28/1964)

## **Freak Thunderstorm**

**Sep 6, 1964**

Described by the newspapers as a “freak thunderstorm,” nearly four inches of rain, coupled with marble-sized hail, fell in Tucson’s northwest side, in a fairly short time. Particularly hard hit was the area near Oracle Road and Ina. “Four men were trapped in a car that was overturned by floodwaters on Orange Grove Road and La Canada Drive. The men, all race drivers, were bruised and cut, but escaped serious injury and possible drowning by swimming out the windows. . . attempted to cross a flooded wash. . . after [the driver] and three passengers discussed the attempt for about ten minutes.” Deputies helped at least six other people out of their cars.

The most involved rescue of the day, however, was for a man who became stranded on an island in the middle of the Santa Cruz River in Marana. He had been Dove hunting when caught out and unprepared in the rain storm. After four hours of being trapped, “Eight to ten men from the Pima County Search and Rescue Squad pulled him off the island with ropes.” (Star 9/7/1964)

## **River Rescues**

**Sep 10, 1964**

The US Weather Bureau measured 3.05 inches of rain at the Tucson International Airport during the three-day, near-record storm. The Santa Cruz River “went on a rampage,” flooding significant areas and necessitating a number of rescues, including several with an HH-43B helicopter from Luke Air Force Base, in Phoenix. Most notable were the evacuations of at least 18 people from near

Marana. While responding to one rescue, the crew spotted five adults and six children, all waving from a dike that was being inundated. This evacuation required deviating from their intended first rescue.

Also of note, 14-year-old Richard Kunz responded to a rescue of a family from a house along the Pima Mine Road south of Tucson. He was part of the Civil Defense Rescue Team which laid out one-half-mile of rope to a flooded home. The line was attached to a skiff and was pulled from a point of safety to the house and then back. Although Richard was part of a Boy Scout Explorer Post at the time, he had volunteered to assist with the Civil Defense. Richard Kunz would go on to become a valuable, long-time member of the Southern Arizona Rescue Association. (Citizen 9/11/1964; Star 9/12/1964; Richard Kunz email 10/3/2022)

### **Flash Flood Strands Many Overnight in Sabino Canyon**

**Sep 13, 1964**

An unexpected rain storm in the Catalina Mountains produced heavy flash flooding in Sabino Canyon. Eighteen carloads of visitors were stranded in the Canyon overnight. With the exception of one boy who fell in, was rescued and taken to a local hospital and soon released, no one else was hurt. (Star 9/14/1964)

### **Civil Defense Rescue Course**

**Sep 25, 1964**

The Tucson-Pima County Civil Defense Agency started a 16-week, combined light and heavy-duty rescue course. The classes were being held at the Rescue Building behind the Pima County Hospital on South Eighth Avenue. “The Civil Defense Rescue Group is equipped and accredited by the city and county. Members are trained in all phases of search and rescue operations, from locating lost children to rescuing injured from mountain accidents and collapsed buildings. The group has its own rescue trucks, jeeps, and communications systems.” Then on October 2, the agency began an 11-week course in light-duty rescue in the same place. (Citizen 9/2/1964, 10/1/1964)

### **Two Nogales Boys Drown**

**Sep 27, 1964**

Roberto, 16, and his 14-year-old brother, Cesar Garcia, were swimming with some other boys in a muddy pond on the Buena Vista Ranch, about eight miles north of Nogales. For unknown reasons, Cesar called for help and his older brother attempted to rescue him, but both sank. Santa Cruz Sheriff’s Deputies responded, too late to help; in turn, they asked for help from Pima County. Captain Ken Sturgeon led a team of Desert Dolphins, a Tucson dive club, including Dick Case, Bob Paukner, Cletus Gundy, Leo Andrews, Chuck Stems, and Neal Krug. The boys were recovered, however, before these divers could arrive. (Citizen 9/28/1964)



## Davis-Monthan Air Rescue Unit Reactivated

**Oct 1964**

Detachment 17, the helicopter rescue unit stationed at Davis-Monthan AFB, was reactivated, a little over a year after it was deactivated. The two-helicopter unit and its 11 officers and men, flew back to Tucson from Westover AFB. “It was the longest flight for this type of helicopter—Huskie HH-43B jet-powered ‘copter—and took eight days and 35 hours of flying time . . . the two helicopters had to land every two hours at places where jet fuel was available.” (Star 10/15/1964)

## Fatal Gunshot at Tanque Verde Falls

**Oct 8, 1964**

Gary Buck, an 18-year-old senior from Rincon High School was on an after-school, small-game hunting trip with fellow classmate Bill Dohrmann, also 18. At 3:30 p.m., the two young men were scrambling their way up the social trail into Tanque Verde Falls. As the pair headed for the Redington Road, Dohrmann was up close behind his friend. While climbing over a small ledge, he stumbled and the .22-caliber rifle he was carrying accidentally discharged, with a single hollow-point bullet striking Buck in his stomach. After making his friend as comfortable as possible, Dohrmann drove to a nearby ranch and notified authorities.

At about 4:45, Sheriff’s Deputy Michael Devine arrived, saying Buck was near death at this point. Also, one of the earliest on-scene was Deputy C. W. Nichols, who suffered a serious heart attack while working his way down to the accident site. About that same time, “some 40 volunteers from the Pima County Search and Rescue unit” arrived, under the leadership of Captain Ken Sturgeon. Also responding were Doctors Bernard “Bud” Simons and William “Bill” Scott, both members of the unit, as well as Ray Neal. Neal had quickly swung through Tucson Medical Center and picked up the pre-packaged “go-pack,” which had Type-O blood for transfusions and got it to the scene. It is unclear if either of the doctors gave blood to Buck.

Gary Buck died not long after the first of the rescuers reached him. The Pima County SAR Unit worked until nearly 10 p.m. to bring the teenager out of the canyon. “His body was removed on a one-wheel stretcher which was pulled up the canyon wall with the aid of a portable hand winch anchored to rocks nearly 500 feet above the scene.” While all this took place, Deputy Nichols was being attended to and would soon also be carried from the canyon. He was admitted to Saint Joseph’s Hospital in serious condition. (Star 10/9/1964; Citizen 10/9/1964; Frances Walker interview 3/22/2022)

## Teenager Falls 500 Feet Near Top of Finger Rock

**Nov 21, 1964**

A 14-year-old was on a hike to the base of Finger Rock with two friends. At about 2:00 p.m., he lost his footing near the 6,300-foot-level of the prominent landmark, plunging five-hundred feet to instant death. Bruce Driggs, an eighth grader from Doolen Junior High School, was on the north face of the cliffs when he fell. Deputies Sam Ligon and Pete Frank, along with Ed Kress of SARA, and Dr. Ralph Fuller, led the recovery operations. Racing darkness and recognizing treacherous terrain, Ligon requested assistance from Detachment 17 from Davis-Monthan. Deputy Ligon was lowered while in the stretcher (maybe even unsecured) to the small ledge, a tricky target. Single-handedly, he hastily retrieved the body before losing all light; secured in the stretcher, the dead boy

was hoisted into the hovering helicopter. Then Ligon, now wearing a safety harness, was brought up separately. A 13-year-old friend said he almost went over the edge too when he tried to help Bruce. “I tried to grab and help him ... I missed, almost went over myself.” (Star 11/22/1964; Citizen 11/23/1964)

## 100 Volunteers Respond

**Jan 31, 1965**

Eleven-year-old Neil Martin, son of noted University of Arizona Professor Paul Martin, slipped and tumbled down a steep grade while hiking on the Sweetwater Trail, near the highest point in the Tucson Mountains. Dr. Martin left Neil’s 12-year-old brother with the injured boy and then hurried down the mountainside to get help.

Sheriff’s Captain Ken Sturgeon led the 16-hour-long mission. “More than 100 men of the Pima County Search and Rescue unit hiked late into the night trying to get to the scene.” In the group was Dr. William C. Scott, a physician volunteering with the Southern Arizona Rescue Association. He climbed up to Neil and stabilized him, determined later to have suffered a skull fracture and concussion, along with deep lacerations and abrasions on his face, ear, leg and back. Initially, Sturgeon asked for assistance of a Detachment 17 helicopter from Davis-Monthan AFB and had responders out looking for a spot to land the rescue ship.

Long after dark, one man returned, saying “ ‘Captain, there’s not a flat spot within a hundred yards of this place.’ ” So Sturgeon canceled the helicopter and requested a stretcher team start up the 3 1/2-mile trail. SARA volunteer Eber Glendening led this group of 12 rescuers. Before Dr. Scott hiked back out, he ordered that the boy not be moved by hand during the night. At first light, Dr. Scott boarded the helicopter out of Davis-Monthan and flew back to the accident site. During the night, a small platform had been dug out of the cleared hillside so that the rescue helicopter piloted by Captain Jerome Luttinger, could land.

Mrs. Martin, Neil’s mother, met the helicopter at Tucson Medical Center. “ ‘These men are absolutely wonderful... It was a serious accident, but it would have been tragic had it not been for SARA.’ ” Although not specifically recognized in this newspaper article by Mrs. Martin, in addition to the Detachment 17 helicopter from Davis-Monthan, a significant part of the response was also by the Civil Defense Rescue Squad under the leadership of Phil Meade. (Star 2/1/1965, 2/2/1965; Citizen 2/1/1965)

## Soldier Dies in Carr Canyon

**Mar 3, 1965**

While climbing in the snow-covered Huachuca Mountains with three Army buddies, Specialist 4 Daniel Fleming fell more than three-hundred feet over a dry waterfall in Carr Canyon. Mid-afternoon, the 25-year-old soldier from nearby Fort Huachuca, “slipped on ice at the top of the cliff and fell to the jagged rocks far below.” His companions saw their friend slide over the brink and disappear, from their vantage point, they could not tell if he was alive or dead. They “ran nearly five miles to the nearest telephone to call for help.”

A 15-man rescue team from the Fort, along with Cochise County Sheriff’s Deputies and a Sierra Vista Policeman, “struggled through deep snow to reach the body and carry it to the nearest road.”

Fleming was attached to the Army's 459<sup>th</sup> Signal Battalion and was scheduled to be discharged within the month. (Star 3/4/1965; Citizen 3/4/1965)

## Two Drown in Ruby Lake

**Jun 6, 1965**

According to Santa Cruz County Sheriff Zeke Bejarano, “ ‘Horseplay’ ” caused the two Tucsonans to drown in Ruby Lake. Dennis Minier, 20, and 18-year-old Earl C. Cravenor, Jr., died in the remote ghost town of Ruby, thirty miles northwest of Nogales. Minier had just graduated from Amphitheater High School a few days before and Cravenor was recently discharged from the US Navy. The third person on the water that day was Don Hutchins, 28, Cravenor's brother-in-law.

Sheriff Bejarano said that about 4 p.m., “the three men had taken two rowboats from the shore, both of which had holes in their hulls, and were racing and trying to knock each other out of the boats when the accident occurred near the center of the 30-foot-deep lake.” The craft Minier was in began rocking and he toppled overboard; not able to swim, he shouted for help. “Hutchins dived in, but found Minier too heavy to handle. He called on Cravenor for assistance, he too, dived in. Cravenor also began going under and soon both men disappeared.”

Because of thick weeds in the half-mile-long by two-hundred-yard-wide lake, Hutchins was barely able to reach safety himself. While he was swimming for shore, his wife drove for help and luckily soon found a local rancher, who notified authorities.

The Pima County Search and Rescue Unit, with forty volunteers and six divers, responded. Along with Santa Cruz deputies the two young men were recovered the next morning, after an all-night search. Cravenor's body was found by a diver at 2:25 a.m. and Minier's was recovered at 7:45 a.m. (Citizen 6/7/1965; Star 6/8/1965)

## Two Lost on Mt. Lemmon in Separate Incidents

**Jun 26, 1965**

A 14-year-old Boy Scout, Robert J. Olson, and a 20-year-old airman from Davis-Monthan AFB, Ronald Hofer, got lost on Mt. Lemmon, each were on separate hikes. Olson was hiking the Scout-designated Hohokam Trail when he became separated from his troop where the trail crosses Lemmon Creek. Airman Hofer became detached from his two hiking companions at Hutch's Pool in Upper Sabino Canyon. Coincidentally, they ran into each other in the dry creek bottom of Sabino Canyon. After conferring a while, Olson chose to hike down canyon and Hofer chose to go up canyon. Olson was spotted early the next morning and was airlifted out by a Davis-Monthan helicopter. Hofer was able to walk out the next day. Captain Ken Sturgeon oversaw a group of 25 searchers from the Pima County SAR Unit. (Star 6/27/1965)

## Ray Neal Elected Officer of Mountain Rescue Association

**Jul 1965**

Ray Neal, a board member of SARA was elected the secretary-treasurer of the national Mountain Rescue Association, of which SARA is part of. (Citizen 7/16/1965)

## 18-Month-Old in Gila River

**Jul 25, 1965**

Kathy Figgins of Tucson was lost in the Gila River while her parents were fishing. She disappeared, probably falling into the turbulent water, eight miles north of Winkelman. It was feared the 18-month-old toddler, who was known to be unafraid of the water, wandered away while her parents were briefly distracted. The search effort, coordinated by the Sheriff of Gila County, was initially composed of several Sheriff's Deputies, twenty Youth Corps members, and a number of local volunteers from Winkelman. The river was dragged and the surrounding area "thoroughly covered" for several days.

One week after the little girl went missing, the Pima County Search and Rescue Team (including SARA), was finally called in to assist the Gila County Sheriff search for her. On August 1, Pima County Sheriff's Captain, Ken Sturgeon, along with 25 members of this team arrived and joined the effort. On August 3, Kathy was still missing and SARA and Pima County assistance ended after three days. During that search, 2 1/2-year-old Gaylene Beck, also of Tucson, fell into the river. Luckily, she was rescued by 9-year-old Charles Bohrn of Winkelman. They and their families had been watching volunteers search for Kathy. Sadly, little Kathy Figgins was never found. (Star 7/28/1965, 8/3/1965; Phoenix Republic 9/4/1965)

## Lost Teenager, "Saved By Pima County Civil Defense Search Unit"

**Jul 28, 1965**

On Thursday morning, Paul Cangiolosi and a friend, also 18, began hiking down from the end of the road in Summerhaven on Mount Lemmon. Both intended to reach the Sabino Canyon Ranger Station on Friday morning. For some reason, they split up and decided to hike separately, their separation was between Marshall Gulch and Upper Sabino Canyon. When Paul missed his rendezvous at the appointed time, he was reported overdue.

"Cangiolosi was found by the Pima County [sic: Civil Defense] Search and Rescue Unit. Phil Meade, who headed the 40-man rescue unit, spotted Cangiolosi near Hutch's Pool at about 6 a.m...." Hutch's Pool is very popular, perhaps the largest natural rock basin in the Catalina Mountains. It is in Upper Sabino Canyon, just over four miles from the end of the paved road. (Star 8/1/1965)

## Firefighter Killed

**Aug 7, 1965**

An inmate firefighter from the Safford Federal Prison work camp, died volunteering to quell a fire threatening the Mt. Lemmon Radar Station. A guard identified the 53-year-old victim as Vincente Gomez-Ambriz, imprisoned for illegal entry into this country. The blaze, which covered one-hundred acres and required 275 men for more than a day, was almost extinguished when the fatality occurred. Struck by a falling rock, the victim was one of several inmates fighting the fire, which had been threatening to overtake the Air Force facility on top of the mountain.

In response to the accident, a Tucson physician was quickly airlifted to the rocky area where the victim lay, but efforts to save the man were ineffective. He died about an hour after being struck. Efforts to move the body by helicopter needed to be aborted. "Pima County Search and Rescue Unit [including SARA] removed the body the next morning." (Star 8/8/1965)

### Three Lost in Rose Canyon

**Aug 8, 1965**

Thirty members of the Pima County Search and Rescue Team (including SARA) spent all night looking for a 20-year-old woman, a 15-year-old friend and her 10-year-old brother. The trio had been camping in Rose Canyon when they became lost. (Star 8/10/1965)

### Trio Lost On Mt. Lemmon

**Sep 7, 1965**

Pima County Search and Rescue Team (including SARA) spent the night looking for three hikers. “The hikers followed several foot trails after entering Marshall Gulch area south of Summerhaven... but became confused about which path to follow.” A fourth member of the hiking party sounded the alarm after they did not show up at the appointed time. She had trouble with her shoes and did not complete the trip. The trio had been missing for over ten hours and all night when they found their way to Soldier Camp, approximately four miles from where they began. (Star 9/9/1965)

### Fatal Deer Hunt

**Nov 13, 1965**

According to the father of the 16-year-old victim from Ajo, “ ‘...he yelled, we looked back, and he was falling.’ ” Samuel Charles Rasmussen was deer hunting in the Baboquivari Mountains, southwest of Tucson, with his father and a friend. According to the father, his son had seen a buck and was sighting in on it at the time that he fell. It appeared that young Rasmussen suffered a broken back, neck and internal injuries in the one-hundred-foot fall. SARA was called out for the recovery. (Star 11/14/1965)

### Mountain Rescue Association Conference in Tucson

**Nov 26–28, 1965**

The Annual Mountain Rescue Association (MRA) Conference took place in Tucson, hosted by SARA. Held at the Tidelands Motor Inn, there were one-hundred attendees and was presided over by MRA President Vance Yost. One of the bigger issues raised, was “When does the government pay and when should the person pay?” Assistant Chief Ranger at the Grand Canyon, Frank Betts asked this question and of course, there was considerable discussion on the issue. Coconino County Sheriff Cecil Richards weighed in and wanted to know, “What about moral responsibility?” Captain Ken Sturgeon, of Pima County, said the sheriff legally must respond to a call for help regardless of whether the victim risked his own life.

Insurance for rescuers was discussed and Captain Peter Kerrigan of Davis-Monthan AFB’s Western Air Search and Rescue Service voiced, “You are going to have to train our people in law as well as first aid. If you are going to prosecute a person for going out and risking his life.” Kerrigan also mentioned that a helicopter from Davis-Monthan cost \$750 per hour. At the time, the MRA was seven years old and had 28 qualified teams. (Star 11/27/1965; Citizen 11/27/1965)

## Fell 20 Feet

**Jan 22, 1966**

Simon P. Richards, 18, had just enlisted in the Navy and was spending time with his church group on an afternoon outing, before leaving for training. Along with three companions, he was scrambling up a particularly steep, rugged section of the Tucson Mountains, north of Gates Pass. Simon lost his footing and fell about twenty feet to a lower ledge, suffering a broken left leg and multiple cuts and bruises. This was at 4:30 p.m.

It was after dark and getting colder when the first of 35 members of Pima County Search and Rescue, reached the young man. With these First Responders, was Dr. William C. Scott of SARA. He treated and splinted Richards' leg before he was transported down off the crumbly, broken brown slopes. To lower him down off that first narrow ledge, rescuers "had to circle above the spot where the injured youth lay to reach him with the basket stretcher." Simon P. Richards reached St. Mary's Hospital at 9:30 p.m. (Star 1/23/1966)

## Local TV Commentator Rescued Twice

**Feb 26, 1966**

While hunting javelina in the hills near Sonoita, Evans Thornton, a prominent business news analyst on Tucson television's KVOA, became separated from his group. Thornton said he "followed tracks too far into a canyon at dusk and couldn't return when darkness fell." He strained his back after slipping on a patch of snow, aggravating two slipped discs he injured while jumping as a paratrooper in World War II. To stay warm in the freezing weather, he walked for six hours until located by a member of the Pima County Search and Rescue Squad. Captain Kenneth Sturgeon, who headed the rescue effort, said "some 40 volunteers aided in the search, which was hampered by intermittent rain, hail and snow."

Then on July 10, just over four months later, Thornton needed to be rescued once again, this time while hiking in the Sabino Basin. Climbing a hill, he wrenched his back. "He asked for help because he couldn't hobble out of the Catalina Mountains before dark. . . Fifty members of the Pima County Search and Rescue Unit and the Tucson-Pima County Civil Defense Search and Rescue Unit, plus a team of medics from Davis-Monthan AFB, were called. . . by the Sheriff's Department [sic]." (Citizen 2/28/1966, 7/11/1966)

## SARA Begins Training Class

**Mar 9, 1966**

SARA started a nine-class training course for new members. Twice-weekly classes were being held in Mammoth for Pinal County. The goal for SARA at this time was to have "one competent MRA group in each of the Arizona 14 counties." (Sun News 3/10/1966)

## Drowns While Surfing

**Mar 10, 1966**

Francisco Chapetti, a 15-year-old youth, slipped from a home-made surf board in a cattle pond, one mile west of his home in Nogales. "Underwater specialists of the local rescue squad found the



body in 15 feet of water. . . .” He “was recovered last night by members of the Pima County Search and Rescue Squad. Underwater specialists of the local rescue squad found the body in 15 feet of water about 8 p.m., they reported.” (Citizen 3/11/1966)

## Massive Search in Mexico

**Mar 20, 1966**

Tom Needham, a standout freshman football player at the University of Arizona, was camping on the beach near Rocky Point, then still a sleepy little fishing village in Sonora. He was with some fraternity brothers and, although they were all up late, witnesses said it was neither a loud nor rowdy party. In the morning, 19-year-old Needham was gone.

Two days after the young man went missing, Pima County Sheriff Waldon V. Burr ordered Captain Kenneth Sturgeon to proceed into Mexico. Burr also “dispatched 50 men with 2 search planes, 5 skin divers, boats, land vehicles, and radio equipment. . . .” Thus, began perhaps the most intense effort involving the Southern Arizona search and rescue “machine,” since three Boy Scouts went missing in the Santa Rita Mountains in 1958.

When Burr lost contact with the team that first day, he stationed a squad car halfway between the border and Rocky Point. “Search and rescue radio was operating, however, through a Kitt Peak relay.” No real clues surfaced until a ROTC coat, similar to Needham’s was found floating close to where the students were camping. At the end of day two, “Sturgeon said his men covered 40 miles south. . . and 30 miles north. They also canvassed 35 miles inland. The search is being conducted on foot, in four-wheel-drive ‘sand buggies,’ by horseback and by airplane.” He estimated that the above area received at least seventy percent coverage.

“Skindivers of the Desert Dolphin Club. . . and the Tiger Shark Club of Tucson” were searching the ocean on both sides of where the ROTC coat was discovered. “Mystery tinged with fear gripped this tiny fishing and resort town as the search. . . entered the sixth day without a single trace of the youth.” Overnight, “search forces were bolstered. . . by arrival of a squadron of five private airplanes from the youth’s home town. . . .” A local fisherman claimed, “There has never been a drowning here where the body didn’t show up in a few days.” And Kenneth Sturgeon, head of Pima County Search and Rescue, declared, “This is the most mysterious disappearance I have ever investigated.”

Governor Sam Goddard contacted Mexico to allow the Arizona National Guard aircraft into the search area. Joe Ahee, Arizona Adjutant General, obtained permission from the US State Department for a reconnaissance plane. Also, the US Coast Guard was sending an amphibious aircraft to Rocky Point. At least thirty more of Needham’s fraternity brothers showed up to augment manpower. The search then shifted one-hundred miles to the northeast to Caborca when a potential sighting seemed reliable. The effort there, “. . . included more than one-hundred Pima County Search and Rescue Deputies, volunteers, Mexican officials, and university students.” There were now two main search areas, with a great many resources in both places.

On March 29, nine days after the popular young man went missing, a woman surf fishing snagged his body, less than fifty feet from where he had disappeared. (Citizen 3/22/1966, 3/25/1966; Star 3/23/1966, 3/24/1966, 3/29/1966, 3/30/1966, 4/1/1966)

## Lost Teenagers in Sabino Canyon

**May 16, 1966**

Daniel McCarthy, 17, and James Hopkins, 15, were “long overdue” in returning from their 24-mile overnight hike in the Upper Sabino Canyon area. They said “their hike took a little longer than planned.” Thirty-five volunteers of the Pima County Search and Rescue Unit, as well as range deputies on horseback, combed the area. An Air Force HH-43B helicopter from Davis-Monthan AFB’s Detachment 17, and a smaller Forest Service helicopter, joined the search effort. A spokesman at the “Pima County Search and Rescue town control section,” said the boys walked out near Marshall’s Gulch. (Citizen 5/17/1966; Star 5/18/1966)

## Scout Lost in Catalinas

**Jun 4, 1966**

Seventeen-year-old David Woodruff tagged along with a group of 15 scouts who were taking an overnight trip to Hutch’s Pool in Sabino Canyon. His good friend, Roger, invited him along on his father’s scout troop’s hike. At noon that Saturday he sprained his ankle and Roger went ahead to check on the trail. At that point, the pair became separated. Roger’s father sent two scouts back to check on David, only to discover that the 17-year-old was not where he was last seen. The next morning the scout troop returned to the parking lot in Sabino Canyon, minus David. The teenager was reported missing to the Sheriff’s Department. Soon, Captain Ken Sturgeon organized about fifty searchers of the Pima County Search and Rescue Unit, to begin looking for the young man. David said that “after losing the trail he decided to hike out over Romero Pass to the west, but his blistered feet and sprained ankle proved a detriment.” Thirty-six hours after becoming separated from his friend and the other Scouts, David was found at the head of Romero Canyon, twenty miles from where he had hurt himself. (Citizen 6/6/1966)

## Search for Kidnap Victim

**Jun 18, 1966**

Everett L. Milsap was a 55-year-old salesman for Williams Auto Sales on Tucson’s East Speedway. Ronald J. Jurado was a 23-year-old unemployed laborer posing as a used-car buyer. “Milsap was last seen alive about 6:45 p.m. . . . when he left the car lot to demonstrate a 1965 Mustang convertible for a young man. . . .” Jurado never returned to the auto dealership and Milsap just never returned.

At 3:30 a.m. the next morning, the abandoned car was recovered in a bank parking lot, only blocks from the car dealership. A loaded .38 caliber pistol was on the back floorboard. The license plates now on the car belonged to a neighbor of Jurado’s. A young man driving a car similar to this, had held up a Hudson Service Station on 22nd Street, several hours before, escaping with \$150. Tucson Police soon discovered traces of blood in the Mustang and within another day, Ron Jurado was arrested for armed robbery and auto theft. More importantly, however, he was now being questioned as to the whereabouts of Everett Milsap.

Outwardly cooperative, Jurado claimed he had let Milsap out of the car somewhere along the Mt. Lemmon Highway. He took investigators to the spot, then indicated he had told Milsap to walk down the canyon toward the city and safety. Tucson Police Department Chief of Detectives, Tom Rickel, was not convinced nor was he optimistic. Captain Rickel asked Sheriff Waldon V. Burr for assistance and an intensive search of the area was begun. “Sheriff’s Captain Kenneth Sturgeon,

who directs the hunt by the Pima County Search and Rescue Unit, the Tucson-Pima County Civil Defense Search and Rescue, and the Civil Defense Radio Network, concurred with Captain Rickel that there is seemingly little chance of finding Milsap safe.” Upwards of forty searchers were involved for the better part of two days and two nights.

At dusk on June 21, Jurado finally guided detectives back to the lower end of Molino Basin, where Milsap lay dead, 1,500 yards off the Mt. Lemmon Highway. He had been shot and brush pulled over him to conceal the body. Five months later, November 16, 1966, Superior Court Judge John P. Collins, “sentenced Jurado to life imprisonment with the recommendation that he not be released from the state prison at least until he is 45.” On October 12, 1990, Ron Jurado attended his Tucson High School Class of 1960 Thirtieth Class Reunion. (Star 6/21/1966, 6/22/1966, 11/17/1966; author’s personal knowledge)

### Saved From Fiery Crash

**Jul 1, 1966**

Jacque L. Day, 16, and her friend, 15-year-old Pamela K. Haught, were in Globe, Arizona, riding in a small convertible coupe when it veered off the road, went over a small cliff and landed upside down in a dry creek bed. Injured and unable to get out of the overturned auto, they were still conscious. Eugene L. Parsons, 15, and J. Richard Dalmolin, 13, along with several other youths, witnessed the accident, raced down the embankment to the wreck, and then saw gasoline dripping from the ruptured gas tank. The teenagers started to lift the side of the car to get to the girls “when flames issued from beneath the vehicle.” The other youths left for safety but Parsons and Dalmolin remained.

Both the school boys dropped to their knees and hurriedly clawed gravel and sand from around the driver’s door until they were able to force it open. While Dalmolin pushed upward on the door frame, Parsons reached into the coupe and freed Ms. Day’s trapped hand from beneath the steering wheel. A muffled explosion was heard and flames erupted at the rear of the wreck, enveloping that area and igniting the fuel now on the ground. Tongues of fire issued into the coupe. Flames were also within three feet of Eugene and Richard as the two boys pulled the panicked girl from the burning car. They got her away from danger.

Parsons then ran back to the burning wreckage. He lay flat on the rocky creek bottom and squirmed his head inside the crumpled door opening and reached farther into the vehicle, “where there was dense smoke laced with flames.” Probing around mostly in the blind, he somehow got hold of Pamela. Struggling, Parsons was able to pull her from the trap and then beat out the flames on her as the two ran to safety. The girls were hospitalized for injuries and burns and the young men, Parsons and Dalmolin, sustained superficial burns. All four young people recovered.

In January 1968, both Eugene L. Parsons and J. Richard Dalmolin received Carnegie Hero Awards for saving the lives of the two young women. (Phoenix Republic 2/1/1968; Carnegie Hero Fund Awards #49024-5361, #49329-5362)

### Teenager Drowns in Pena Blanca Lake

**Aug 22, 1966**

John Morgan, Jr., of Tucson, was taking turns with three others in rowing a small boat across 45-acre Pena Blanca Lake, twenty miles northwest of Nogales. He and five friends were on a camping

trip at the lake, created in 1957 by the Arizona Game and Fish Department. While changing rowers and shifting positions, the boat overturned, throwing the four into the water. Bobby Thomas, a well-conditioned Pueblo High School football player, “started for shore. . . looked back, saw Morgan in trouble, started back for him but couldn’t make it. Thomas reached shore safely.”

Santa Cruz Sheriff Zeke Bejarano said the area where the boy went down was about 20–25 feet deep, had a strong current, and was full of weeds. “The body was found at 8:40 p.m., although Nogales Search and Rescue personnel, the Pima County Search and Rescue Squad and the Tucson Diving Club had dragged the waters since approximately 3:00 p.m.” (Star 8/23/1966)

### **Two Rescued from Agua Caliente Cave**

**Aug 28, 1966**

Two Tucson teenagers were trapped in Agua Caliente Cave on the western side of the Santa Rita Mountains. Charlotte Carter, 17, and Robert Brehaut, 18, along with three other explorers, were stuck for four hours. The couple were unable to maneuver up to and then through the 16-inch-wide mouth of the cave due to the slippery conditions from heavy rains of the previous few days. Others in the group were able to go for help and members of both the Santa Cruz and Pima County Sheriffs’ Departments responded. (Star 8/29/1966)

### **Man Rescued from Onyx Cave in Santa Ritas**

**Aug 31, 1966**

Exhausted and suffering arm cramps, Sydney Carr, 45, became trapped in Onyx Cave on the eastern side of the Santa Rita Mountains. A seven-man rescue party from Nogales responded. “Sheriff [Esequiel] Zeke Bejarano and several deputies hauled the man from a 100-foot-deep ledge in the cave shortly after midnight. . . Bejarano issued a warning . . . to potential explorers, saying they should be aware of the dangers they face when entering caves. They could plunge hundreds of feet into darkness, get killed by a cave-in or die of lack of oxygen.” This was the second cave rescue in the Santa Rita’s within three days (Star 9/1/1966)

### **Young Girl Lost in Santa Ritas**

**Sep 1, 1966**

Gina Panizzon, 10, successfully hiked to the top of Mt. Wrightson, along with her father and a second male. On their way down, Gina, who wears bifocals, was ahead of her father, became separated and ended up going east down into Gardner Canyon, rather than back into Madera Canyon. Both men searched for her but quickly notified Forest Ranger Jack Anderson in Madera Canyon. A major search ensued, lasting 15 hours. Gina and her Chihuahua dog spent the night lost and ended up about ten miles away from where she was last seen. Without any water, along the way she lost her shoes. A Santa Cruz Sheriff’s Deputy found her on a little-used trail on the eastern slopes of the Santa Rita Mountains. Captain Ken Sturgeon coordinated the search. (Star 9/2/1966)

## Strapped to the Hood of a Jeep

**Oct 9, 1966**

A Sunday hiker in a small canyon about two miles north of Tucson, stumbled upon a nearly unconscious, badly sunburned young man. After providing first aid, the hiker rushed to a phone, calling the Sheriff's Department. When Sergeant Leo Petrucci and Deputy Hugh Scott reached 19-year-old Bruce Campbell, they had a victim, seemingly of an overdose of drugs; based on the degree of his sunburn, he had been there for a couple of days. The deputies found a bottle, the kind used for prescription drugs, in the nearby area.

Recognizing that time was very critical, and unable to get their vehicles close to where Campbell lay, they commandeered a jeep from a Good Samaritan in the area. "The deputies strapped the youth to the hood of the jeep and took him to a waiting ambulance. Campbell was rushed to the Tucson Medical Center, where his condition was termed critical." Campbell was a University of Arizona dormitory student who had not been seen there for "a long time." There were no further follow-up articles the author could find. (Star 10/10/1966, 10/12/1966)

## Boy Lost on Mt. Graham

**Oct 29, 1966**

While deer hunting for the first time, 14-year-old Robert Maness became separated from his father and two others. The party was on the northwest side of Mt. Graham, just west of Safford. The boy had no food but was able to find plenty of water in a canyon stream. He did have one match, however, "but it went out when he tried to make a fire." Fortunately, the temperature only went down to about 40 degrees the night he was forced to sleep in a clearing. After thirty hours of being lost, his shouts for help attracted the attention of a pair of other hunters. Young Maness confessed he was scared a little bit, and "he barely escaped being bitten by a rattlesnake." Officials of the Arizona Game and Fish Department were joined in the search by the Graham County Search and Rescue Unit, under the leadership of Dick Berryhill. Additionally, one plane from the newly formed wing of the Civil Air Patrol at Safford joined in the search effort. (Star 10/31/1966)

## Old Tucson Security Guard Goes Missing

**Nov 18, 1966**

Don Riddle, a 29-year-old Security Guard at the Old Tucson movie and television location had only been with the company for about two weeks. He had the night shift; the device he used to clock-in with on his all-night rounds, was last stamped at just after midnight. The word "help" had been scribbled in red ink on the top of a roll of tickets in the main office. About \$300 was also missing and the cigarette vending machine in the set's General Store had been broken into. There was no sign of a struggle but the responding deputies did suspect possible foul play.

But not discounting anything, a search was begun on Saturday morning, including for Riddle's missing 1958 gray Buick, last seen driven by Everett Riddle, Don's 36-year-old brother. "Sgt. Leo Petrucci and about 20 men combed the rugged mountain area near Old Tucson most of yesterday, temporarily calling off the search when darkness caught them. 'We didn't find a trace,' Petrucci said. He said eight horsemen, plus men in five jeeps and four other motor vehicles, took part in the hunt for a sign of the missing guard yesterday." Their efforts expanded somewhat the next day, Sunday, with a small plane being added. It was being used to scour the desert areas between the

Mexican Border and Eloy, an awfully large area with no results. The riddle of their disappearance deepened, until Tuesday.

“Donald Ray Riddle, an Old Tucson security guard who disappeared under mysterious circumstances on Nov. 18, was arrested with his brother Everett, by El Paso, Tex., police. Both men were armed at the time...The two were arrested on suspicion of armed robbery minutes after they tried to escape across the border into Juarez, Mexico.” (Citizen 11/19/1966, 11/20/1966; Star 11/23/1966)

### **Sheriff Sgt. Leo Petrucci Named SAR Leader for Lost Boys**

**Dec 26, 1966**

Sheriff's Sgt. Leo Petrucci—“head of the Pima County Search and Rescue Unit”—led the search for two young men who were lost on Mt. Lemmon. John Eck, 22, and Paul Leschak, 19, both U of A students, were hiking from the road in Upper Sabino Canyon to the Radar Station when they became confused. Recognizing the lateness of the hour, they found a sheltered spot, gathered a lot of wood and were able to keep a fire going for 14 hours to ward off the below-freezing night. There was snow on the ground and a small storm dumped an inch of snow on them. The next morning, they began hiking and stumbled into members of the Pima County Sheriff SAR, including volunteers with SARA and Civil Defense Search and Rescue. Although cold and hungry they were fine. (Citizen 12/28/1966)

### **Trail Guide to Catalina Mountains**

**1967**

Published by the Southern Arizona Hiking Club (SAHC), Pete Cowgill and Eber Glendening produced a hiking map with clearly marked trails with mileages marked on it. The initial printing was ten-thousand copies, which all quickly sold out. It is possible that John and Joanna McComb began working on this even before Glendening and Cowgill. In 1976, they put out a new, revised edition of the “Trail Guide to the Santa Catalina Mountains.” SARA worked on this map and the SAHC was willing to let SARA take any profits for the maps. (Citizen 1/16/1976)

### **Truck Rolled 200 Feet Down Mountain**

**Feb 13, 1967**

Henry H. Wheeler, 57, was cautiously driving the truck with Albert M. Douglas as passenger, when the crude dirt road caved in. The two were on a “mining claim trip to an area known as Pittsburgh Camp, about three miles north of the Mexican border and about 17 miles southwest of Arivaca, when the accident happened.” They missed a curve and their four-wheel-drive rolled about 150 feet down the steep mountainside, coming to rest on its top. Using a seat belt, Wheeler managed to stay in the truck and then escape out a broken window. Douglas was thrown out, suffering extensive injuries. He broke his right ankle and leg, and sustained a possible fracture of the pelvis, back, and hip, and was quickly into shock. Wheeler was far less seriously hurt, with bruises and multiple cuts and a sprained knee. The pair was in a desperate situation, in an extremely remote, desolate spot.

Rendering basic first aid, Wheeler managed to then walk three miles to their mining camp the pair had originally been headed to. There, a 77-year-old friend tried to start his own truck but



without success. So, the two hiked back to Wheeler, each carrying an armful of blankets, medicine, food, and water. They set up a protective barrier around the seriously injured man since the temperature would shortly be falling below freezing.

Now, after Wheeler had already walked some six miles with a bum knee, he started for Arivaca, 17 miles away at 9 p.m. Nearly eight hours later, upon reaching the intersection of the Arivaca and Ruby Roads, he had to stop, unable to go farther. Building a bonfire, he waited for help to pass on the isolated, infrequently traveled road. It was another four hours before someone came along, taking him into Arivaca and a phone. It was 9 a.m., when he was finally connected with the Pima County Sheriff's Department, even though the accident had taken place in Santa Cruz County.

Sergeant Leo Petrucci, Acting Commander of Pima County Search and Rescue, assembled a team, including SARA and the Santa Cruz Sheriff's Office, and started into the area about 11 a.m. It took the two rescue trucks and an ambulance about three hours to travel the 17 miles from Arivaca to the miserable accident site just north of the Mexican Border. Douglas received advanced medical care by Dr. Bud Simons, Jr., a member of SARA and they carried him up the rocky, thorn-covered slope to a waiting ambulance. See "SARA's First Doctors," March 7, 1960, page 192. From his bed in Tucson Medical Center that evening, Douglas would later say, " 'Wasn't my time to die.' "

In the *Tucson Daily Citizen*, February 22, 1967, Letters to the Editor, Albert Douglas and Henry Wheeler, publicly thanked, "Sgt. Leo Petrucci, Dr. B. W. Simons, Jr. and all the other members of the Pima County Search and Rescue Team. . . ." (Star 2/14/1967; Citizen 2/14/1967, 2/22/1967)

### Man Dies in Catalina Foothills

**Feb 17, 1967**

John Eric Robson, a 21-year-old who enjoyed reading, was found dead by two teenagers who had gone into the area to hunt, about two hours after he fell twenty feet to his death. He was alone when he "was standing on the edge of a small cliff or was attempting to jump from the cliff when the ground under him gave away. It appeared that Robson struck his head on a rock in the steep ravine." The young man had a copy of "A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court," an 1889 novel by Mark Twain. "The Southern Arizona Rescue Association and the Pima County Search and Rescue Unit used ropes to recover the body from the rugged area." (Star 2/18/1967; Citizen 2/18/1967)

### SARA Begins Basic Training Course

**Feb 24, 1967**

SARA began its regular Basic Training Course. The article does not spell out the length but it does say in promoting itself, that in "SARA's existence members have assisted over 300 persons, including 121 late or lost, 44 stranded or injured and almost 200 flood victims. The majority of these calls have been in Southern Arizona, but team members have traveled as far north as Springfield [Springerville ?] (250 miles from Tucson) and 135 miles into Mexico." (Citizen 2/17/1967)

## Sheriff Reorganizes SAR, Changes Name

**Apr 13, 1967**

At a meeting called that night by Sheriff Waldon Burr, the many groups that volunteered their time and expertise for the Pima County Sheriff's Department decided to give the unit a new name: Pima County Sheriff's Search and Rescue, formerly known as Pima County Search and Rescue since January 1959. See "Pima County Search and Rescue is Born," January 20, 1959, on page 178. It also was re-organized and now would be governed by an 11-person board. Burr called the group together because of increasing dissatisfaction with a number of things, among the complaints were: "too many people were showing up for rescues; ...there were so many different persons from different outfits with different ideas that confusion resulted; the unit was a 'one-man show,' led and ruled by Sheriff's Captain Kenneth Sturgeon (Sturgeon no longer is connected with the unit.)."

According to Sheriff Burr, "The new board will handle all grievances through me and this office's liaison men, Sgt. Leo Petrucci and Deputy Ted Brandes. We will curb the number of men in the field during any one rescue—in the past we've had as many as five-hundred persons looking for one man. And the responders will all have comprehensive insurance.

The 11 board members and their organizations were: "Mrs. Frances Walker, Southern Arizona Rescue Association; William Earle, Pima County Civil Defense; Dr. W. F. McCaughey of Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Service; John Buchanan, Amateur Radio Communications; J. L. Booker, Civil Air Patrol; Mrs. Lynda Tuck, Horseback Search and Rescue; Dr. Alex Doberenz of Underwater Recovery; Norman Brazeau, Rockpounders (an organization of motorcycle trail riders); Jack Gallagher of Four Wheel Drive; Glen O. Thomas, Pima County Emergency Radio Network, Inc.; and Stanley Douglass of 2-58AX Radio." The chairman was Glen Thomas, secretary was Frances Walker, and treasurer was Lynda Tuck. (Citizen 4/14/1967)

## Helo Crash Kills Five

**Apr 26, 1967**

That Wednesday morning, the UH-1 "Huey" helicopter was part of the five-month-long "Operation Cloud Gap 1" exercise being conducted from Fort Huachuca. On loan from Fort Carson, Colorado, it had ten men onboard, representing three separate branches of the military and each man was from a different base. Their mission was "to locate mock underground nuclear testing sites in the upper reaches of the Santa Rita Mountains. It was flying low over Apache Pass...when its rotor appeared to stop and the craft dropped to the earth, according to an eye-witness. It plunged down the slopes...." It occurred at 9:30 a.m.

Three men were killed outright and were burned beyond recognition. Two more were in serious condition and the five others who were able to scramble free of the aircraft before it burst into flame were later listed as satisfactory. Pima County Sheriff's Deputy Sid Wade was several miles away in Gardner Canyon and horrified, witnessed the accident. He saw other Huey helicopters engaged in the same training exercise, converge on the crash scene. " 'It was the smoothest, fastest rescue operation I've ever seen.' " Well, maybe not quite! That night, the Army thought all onboard were accounted for and it was not until early the next morning they discovered the tenth man was still out there in the desert someplace!

Thursday, "One hundred Ft. Huachuca soldiers combed the craggy face of Apache Pass for 12 hours...without finding the body of the tenth man aboard an ill-fated 'Huey' helicopter...." On Friday, "More than a hundred men and numerous helicopters searched the crash scene from dawn

until dusk...without finding a trace of the missing man.” Saturday, the search was into its third day when the last of the ten men aboard was finally found. Five men ultimately were killed in that crash near Apache Pass. The fifth to die from that accident on May 1, was a Navy Lieutenant, suffering from massive burns. (Star 4/27/1967, 4/28/1967, 4/29/1967, 5/2/1967, 5/17/1967; Citizen 4/28/1967, 5/1/1967)

## 7-Year-Old Girl Lost

**Apr 30, 1967**

Cindy Clelland of Sierra Vista, was called “the prettiest little girl in town.” After returning from church that Sunday, the pig-tailed 7-year-old blonde went out to play about 1 p.m. She was reported missing six hours later and a preliminary search began that night. But then, the second-grader’s panties were found on a mesquite tree in a deserted lover’s lane on the outskirts of town the next day. “ ‘We are just hoping against hope that we’ll find her alive,’ Police Chief Reed Vance said... ‘But it doesn’t look good at this point,’ he said.”

Her father was a Sergeant in the Army and had been stationed at Fort Huachuca, although he was now in a hospital in Japan for an injury suffered in Vietnam. That first day there was a ground and air search for her, totaling more than one-hundred men. “An Army helicopter and airplane from Ft. Huachuca joined forces with 18 Jeeps, horse and foot posses...to search the desert area east of the city. A door-to-door hunt also was under way in-town. More than 50 soldiers from the Fort, and equal number of civilians and a dozen mounted men from the Cochise County Sheriff’s Posse [and Arizona Rangers] were involved in the search.”

Officials had absolutely no clues. However, several of her playmates claimed they saw “her get into an old model car driven by an elderly grey-haired man.” The little friends said they warned Cindy not to get in but she did anyway. While the search was taking place on Tuesday, known local sex offenders were questioned but they all had established alibis. In addition to the Army helicopter and plane, there were now upwards of 150 men in the field, along with private airplanes. That night, her father was able to get back to Sierra Vista from Japan. By Wednesday afternoon, “more than 400 men had searched a 1,200-square-mile area.”

On Wednesday evening, Cindi’s body was found about five-hundred yards away from where searchers had found her clothing on Monday. After her father identified her, she was taken to Tucson Medical Center for an autopsy. Earlier in the day, the FBI had entered the investigation but there was some question as to whether she had been found on the Army Base, or not. If on the military reservation, then it was a federal crime and the FBI would have primary jurisdiction. But the FBI, along with the Criminal Investigation Department of the Army, the Cochise County Sheriff’s Department and Sierra Vista Police continued a joint investigation. This search, lasting less than four days, would be one of the largest in Cochise County history.

On June 22, a second young girl, 6-year-old Janelle Haines, was found dead on the Fort Huachuca military reservation, definitely within federal jurisdiction. The FBI had been led indirectly to William Louis Huff, 16, by an anonymous note sent to the Cochise County Sheriff’s Office, signed “The Phantom.” It warned, “You have found my first victim...I will strike again!” They found Huff by handwriting analysis of the high school students as well as that an older sibling of Janelle recognized Huff as having been seen with Janelle earlier on the day she disappeared. Huff was charged with second-degree murder and the Buena Vista High School student pled guilty before his trial began.

The reference, “I will strike again,” however, was about his having also murdered little Cindy, only the month before Janelle. After confessing for Cindy Clelland, Huff was tried in State Court when it was finally determined the crime had not taken place on the Fort—he received forty years-to-life for killing her. Huff also then received Life Imprisonment in Federal Court for killing Janelle Haines. The last mention in the local newspapers the author could find of William Louis Huff, was when the Arizona Board of Paroles and Pardons denied a pardon request by him on January 6, 1986. (Star 10/2/1967, 10/3/1967, 10/4/1967, 10/17/1967, 10/25/1967, 1/7/1986; Citizen 5/2/1967, 5/3/1967)

## 200 Search for Child

### May 19, 1967

On February 6, 1967, Frank Harold Clawson, 9, was found strangled on Tucson’s south side. On April 30, 7-year-old Cindy Clelland of Sierra Vista was abducted, molested, and discovered choked on May 3. So May 19, when 2-year-old Rachelle Williams went missing on Tucson’s far east side at 1:30 p.m., authorities were praying she would not be the third child murdered in Southern Arizona in just over three months.

Little Rachelle, dressed in a white dress with pink polka dots, white nylon ruffle panties, white stockings with lace trim, and white patent leather shoes, was last seen by her mother playing in front of her home on the far east side of Tucson. Just minutes before, Mrs. Williams “heard a car door slam near her home and the sound of a speeding auto in the street.” She said her daughter was still being bottle fed and that she only knew a few words and would not be able to tell anyone she was lost. City police were called minutes after she was discovered missing and using spotlights and public address systems, they searched all night for her.

Page 1 of the *Tucson Daily Citizen* of May 20, 1967, read, “More than 200 persons were engaged in a massive search today for a missing 2-year-old girl in a desert area. . . .” That morning, the Pima County Sheriff’s Search and Rescue, including the Southern Arizona Rescue Association, along with a US Border Patrol plane, were called in. The girl’s father was an airman currently stationed in Washington, D.C., having just been reassigned from Davis-Monthan AFB. Airmen from the base volunteered, increasing the numbers of searchers significantly.

Almost sixty hours after she vanished, Rachelle Williams was inexplicably found uninjured and seemingly unharmed at Marisol Park, 29th Street and Highland Avenue. “Police said she was clean and well-fed. They had no details on what had happened to her or how she was found.” (Citizen 5/20/1967; Star 5/22/1967)

## Boy Drowns in Well on Reservation

### May 30, 1967

Dwayne Johnson, 5, along with his 11-year-old brother Menford, were watering horses several miles from the family’s ranch near Sells on the Papago [Tohono O’odham] Reservation. Menford said Dwayne tripped while pulling up a bucket of water, falling into the open, sixty-foot-deep well. It later appeared the boy had struck his head against the side of the well during the fall and probably was unconscious when he hit the water. Menford ran home and Dwayne’s mother walked to the highway to get help, but she could not get passing cars to stop. At 9:30 p.m., two hours after the accident, authorities were notified.

“Efforts to recover the body with grappling hooks failed and it was later discovered the boy’s body had drifted under a ledge at the bottom of the [40-foot-deep] well. Divers from Pima County Sheriff’s Search and Rescue removed the body about 1:30 a.m. today.” Responding were divers Clete Gundy and Alex Doberenz, diver’s helper Bill Schact, along with Sheriff’s Deputies Neil King and Sgt. Ted Brandes, in charge. (Citizen 5/31/1967, 6/6/1967)

## SARA and River Rafts

### Jul 5, 1967

It is not often searches in Southern Arizona involve river rafts. However, when the five members of a rafting party on the Gila River did not show up from their Fourth of July adventure, Gila County responders asked Pima County for help. The missing boaters had launched from near Coolidge Dam and deputies from Gila County, along with a private plane from Globe, filled their day looking for the group. SARA members spent all night rounding up four rafts to begin looking that morning. Fifteen minutes before the Pima County searchers were to depart, the overdue raft party turned up, safe and sound. (Star 7/6/1967)

## Tucson Fire Department Trains in SCUBA

### Aug 1967

Sixteen members of the Tucson Fire Department were taking instruction in “Skin-Diving” or SCUBA, most of it at Himmel Pool on North Tucson Boulevard. “ ‘They are learning to become accomplished skin-divers so they can battle Tucson’s yearly flash-flood season—when cars may be swamped in arroyos. We seem to have an awful lot of drownings for a state with so little water,’ said Richard Case, who is in charge of instructor certification for Arizona.” The firemen—eight instructors-in-training and eight students—were volunteers, taking the lessons on their own time and expense. It was believed by Case that no other fire department in Arizona was carrying out such a program.

“To finish their training, the firemen will be required to swim a mile in open water, pass a written exam, submit a resume for a course outline as if they planned to teach the subject, and then the Diving Council in Phoenix must also pass them—just for diving.”

Captain Ellis Franklin, training officer for the Tucson Fire Department, went on to say, “ ‘We get a great number of calls for help during the flood season. . . and now we feel we will really be able to handle anything.’ ” The first thing they managed the author could find was the May 9, 1968, drowning of Myrle Farkas in the two-acre lake near the 18<sup>th</sup> hole at Tucson National Golf Course. Ms. Farkas and husband were using “compressed air” to look for stray golf balls. Reportedly, she ran out of air and could not release her weight belt. “A team of six fire rescue scuba divers found the body in about 12 feet of water after a 40-minute search.” See “Drowning of Scuba Diver,” May 9, 1968, on page 252.

These firemen probably soon learned using scuba tanks in fast-moving, very muddy flash floods is generally impractical, although the wetsuits, fins and masks they trained with, would prove valuable. Author’s editorial. (Star 8/19/1967, 5/10/1968)

## Survivor Becomes Crusader After Rescue

**Aug 6, 1967**

Susan J. Davis, 16, “slipped and fell 45 feet down Redington Falls... and suffered severe head and facial injuries... Nearly 20 members of Pima County Sheriff Volunteer Search and Rescue aided in getting the girl out of the canyon.” Tucson Medical Center admitted her in guarded condition; luckily, she survived. Redington Falls is more accurately known as Tanque Verde Falls; at least 38 people died there between 1946 and 2020. Susan’s accident was reported in the local newspapers only one time, August 7, 1967, *The Arizona Daily Star*.

However, Ms. Davis, graduating from Palo Verde High School one-year after her near-death experience at Tanque Verde Falls, would go on to become a one-woman crusader for increasing safety there. Beginning in 1992, Mrs. Harry (Susan) Kressler was intermittently interviewed about her mishap, generally after a fatality. These articles about the hazards and problems there, provided a generous public platform to express her suggestions for protecting people. Over the years, she advocated for better signage as well as closing the Redington Road during periods of heavy rain (1992) and placing orange cones with barricades in strategic spots (1998), among other things.

Because of her survival in 1967, for over two decades she had a unique voice with officials from the US Forest Service and Pima County. On April 6, 2004, Russell “Rusty” Faulkner IV, was killed trying to rescue a friend at Tanque Verde Falls. This was also exactly when two other men went over the falls, as well; somehow, they survived. With this triple accident in the news, Ms. Kressler was able to make her last public plea for safety with the agencies involved. (Star 8/7/1967, 12/17/1977, 4/5/1992, 4/8/2004; Citizen 2/17/1998)

## Hiking Club Member Breaks Leg in Bear Canyon

**Oct 1, 1967**

Katie Stackhouse, 60, a member of the Southern Arizona Hiking Club fell and suffered a broken leg while hiking from Bear Canyon to Molino Basin in the Catalina Mountains. Members of SARA carried her by stretcher back to the Bear Canyon Picnic Area. (Citizen 10/1/1967)

## Jeep Broke Down

**Nov 25, 1967**

A father and his two sons were out rock hunting for the day on the northern side of the Catalina Mountains when their Jeep broke down. Wesley Williams, Jimmy, 12, and his 14-year-old brother John, were reported overdue by Mrs. Williams. The Pima County Sheriff’s Department Volunteer Search and Rescue Team was called out, led by Deputy Ted Brandes. “About 25 men... participated in the search. They included members of the Southern Arizona Rescue Assn., Radio Amateur Communications Emergency Service, Civil Defense Radio Equipment, and the jeep unit of the Sheriff’s Dept. Search and Rescue Squad.” The brothers were soon found as they were walking out for help. Mr. Williams was located at the disabled vehicle. (Star 11/27/1967)



## Record Snowfalls Prompt Region-Wide Rescues

**Dec 14, 1967**

Snow fell on the beaches in San Diego for only the second time in Weather Bureau history. When the storm front moved into Southern Arizona the next day, seventy-mph winds buffeted Kitt Peak and the extra wet, white stuff dropped to 3,000 feet in Tucson. “What weathermen termed ‘a storm that is turning into the worst in Arizona history’... continued to ravage the state spiraling the Papago [Tohono O’odham] Indian Reservation into a disaster area, producing road conditions patrolmen said ‘make hell seem like Paradise.’ ” One Weather Bureau official said flatly, “ ‘There is a good chance if precipitation continues, this will be the state’s worst storm ever.’ ” It was widespread: Las Vegas to Nogales, El Paso to Yuma; no part of the region was spared.

Two inches of rain had already fallen at the Tucson Airport and the ground was fully saturated. “ ‘Everything that falls from now on, is pure runoff. Continued rain will produce much flooding.’ ” Flagstaff had its third consecutive 24 hours of snow, with four feet on the ground at that point. “ ‘They’ve given up measuring just how much snow they’ve had,’ said a spokesman for the Arizona Highway Patrol.” Before it was all said and done, Summerhaven on Mount Lemmon had eight feet on the level and drifts up to 17 feet. “There’s nothing moving up there... Not even snowplows...” Although safe and comfortable, upwards of 150 men were trapped, totally snowbound at the Radar Station on top of Mount Lemmon, at 9,157 feet.

Snow even made rare appearances in Gila Bend and Phoenix. Willcox had over 11 inches on the ground and Nogales, three. Douglas closed its school for the first time in 21 years. Thousands were stranded on the state’s highways, some for up to 36 hours. And Flagstaff would be totally isolated except for the railroad, with an eventual snow depth of seven feet. And then amid the weather disaster, a jet fighter crashed into Tucson’s Cactus Shopping Center off the west end of the Davis-Monthan Air Force Base, instantly killing four people. See “Air Force Jet Crashes into Tucson Supermarket,” December 18, 1967, on page 248.

But as front-page newspaper headlines would repeatedly declare over the week-long calamity, the second largest Reservation in the United States was hardest hit. “Flood waters made the Papago Indian Reservation [Tohono O’odham], southwest of Tucson an emergency area... rain gauges in Sells had measured 4.5 inches of rain. Papago Police are searching the three-million-acre Arizona reservation for families whose adobe and thatched roofs have collapsed.” Raging waters and up to eight inches of extra-heavy, water-laden snow on many of the isolated villages, necessitated dozens of families be evacuated into Sells or housed at other shelters now being set up by the Red Cross. “An emergency shipment of cots, blankets and food arrived in Sells from the Tucson Red Cross... Pima County Civil Defense was standing by.”

When Army and Air Force helicopters would bring in much-needed supplies to the Indians now cut off in their inaccessible homes, this aerial rescue force would turn right around and fly out those that were sick and injured. “The reservation was declared a disaster zone by the American Red Cross, whose volunteers worked endless shifts during the weekend to supply Indians with food, clothing and shelter.”

And the Papago weren’t alone. Hopi and Navajos in the northern part of the state were freezing to death, running out of propane and fuel in their isolated hogans and pueblos. “Meanwhile, Air Force C-119 ‘Flying Boxcars’ continued to airlift hay to some 10,000 cattle and sheep on the Hopi Indian Reservation... after dropping 60 tons [the day before]...” Twelve helicopters from Edwards Air Force Base in Southern California joined forces with the Army and Air Force units already in Arizona, bringing relief throughout the state, as best they could. Roofs of businesses in Flagstaff,

Winslow, Globe, Pinetop, Show Low, and Nogales, among others, collapsed under the weight of the water-filled snow.

Rescues were taking place in almost every corner of the state and dozens of places in-between. Several people were found frozen to death right outside their front doors in Prescott and Show Low. “A team of men from the Pima County Sheriff’s Search and Rescue today were using a weasel snow vehicle to try to reach a snowbound ranch 12 miles southeast of Oracle. The rescuers were trying to locate a 54-year-old woman who lives there alone, without telephone communication.” See “Flood Victim Found Four Months Later,” December 20, 1967, on page 249.

Governor Jack Williams asked President Johnson for immediate help for Arizona to begin recovering from its severe storm. The same was true for governors of the three adjoining states. The appeal was funneled into the US Office of Emergency Planning, the predecessor of FEMA, the Federal Emergency Management Agency. (Citizen 12/15/1967, 12/16/1967, 12/18/1967, 12/19/1967, 12/20/1967; Star 12/14/1967, 12/16/1967, 12/17/1967, 12/19/1967, 12/21/1967)

## Air Force Jet Crashes into Tucson Supermarket

**Dec 18, 1967**

Four persons were killed when a US Air Force F4D jet crashed into the rear of the Food Giant Store at the Cactus Shopping Center, E. 29th Street and S. Alvernon Way. Additionally, at least two houses to the rear of the market were destroyed. Lt. Jack R. Hamilton of the Royal Canadian Air Force, the pilot, and US Captain Gary L. Hughes, the navigator, were able to parachute from the aircraft moments before it crashed. The plane, which had just taken on 16,000 pounds of jet fuel at Davis-Monthan AFB, was returning to its home base at Nellis AFB in Las Vegas, Nevada.

Approximately 120 firemen, both on-duty and off-duty, from Tucson, South Tucson, and Davis-Monthan, responded, as did “Deputy Sheriffs [sic], members of the Arizona Highway Patrol... the Sheriff’s Search and Rescue Unit, Southern Arizona Rescue Association, as well as ambulance crews. Philip W. Meade, director of the Tucson-Pima County Civil Defense Search and Rescue Unit, arrived at the disaster scene only minutes after police officers. Within half an hour, about 50 members of his organization had reported to man roadblocks, and help comb the hot wreckage for victims.”

Per Frances Walker, SARA responded as part of the Sheriff’s callout. She remembers locating Bob Ambrose, a SARA member, to respond since he was an architect and the authorities needed someone of his expertise to assist them in analyzing the damage and safety of the structures involved. (Citizen 12/19/1967; Star 12/19/1967, 12/20/1967; Frances Walker interview 1/25/2021)

## Tucson’s Summit Hut Opens

**Dec 20, 1967**

Volunteers with the Southern Arizona Rescue Association, as well as other SAR groups in the region, did not have a local outlet for ropes, carabiners, pitons, crampons and related equipment vital for mountain rescue until The Summit Hut opened in 1967. According to Dave Baker, one of its two founders, Southern Arizona Rescue Association President, Frances Walker, “was generous and kind enough to allow me to attend a few SARA meetings and essentially promote our little business to the group.”

In early-1967, Baker and Jeff Conn, another local 16-year-old high school sophomore, started a small Tucson business called The Summit Hut. Jeff had the idea and provided the name, and it was in support of their new-found passion for hiking, rock climbing, and mountaineering. The young entrepreneurs designed a letterhead, rented a post office box, and “wrote dozens of letters to the outdoor firms we were able to learn about in the magazines of the time. Incredibly, half a dozen firms opened to us as retail dealers and extended credit terms for purchasing products as well.” Dave and Jeff created a catalog of their “offerings on home typewriters and a school mimeograph machine.”

Operating from their homes with modest inventories stashed under their respective beds, they advertised by word of mouth, even going so far as to leave business cards in registers on mountain summits, such as on Mount Kimball and Rincon Peak. Often, they relied on their parents for transportation to the Post Office and other outings for their new firm. Then on December 20, they secured a business license for The Summit Hut, the area’s only true outlet for serious climbing and caving equipment.

The two teenagers had agreements to market the specialized products of five out-of-state manufacturers: Eiger Mountain Sports, Donner Mountaineering, Dolt Mountaineering, Alp Sport, and Chouinard Equipment. The teenagers in most instances could, “promise delivery within two weeks with prices cheaper than those quoted in the catalogues” of the companies they represented. Before long Jeff, with a creative mind, “requested a buyout of his half of the inventory so that he could invest in a new-fangled Super-8 movie camera.” Baker borrowed the money from his brother and “became the sole proprietor of The Summit Hut with the entire inventory now tucked under my bed.”

In 1969, The Summit Hut opened across from Catalina High School. Within two years, Dave moved to a small space on Speedway Boulevard. In Tucson at the time, were several other sporting goods and military surplus outlets which had various items related to the outdoors, skiing, and diving. Among them were the Backpacker, Ski Haus, Bob’s Bargain Barn, and Miller’s Surplus. None of them, however, focused specifically on rock climbing and mountaineering.

Jeff Conn found his way to Fairbanks, Alaska, enjoyed a rewarding career as a wildlife biologist and breeding elite sled racing dogs. (Star 11/3/1967, 12/8/1967; Dave Baker email 3/6/2022)

## Flood Victim Found Four Months Later

**Dec 20, 1967**

Officially, only 1.5 inches of rain fell at the airport that first day, December 17, although there were many places around the region that had much more. Over the next couple of days, the storm progressed into a deadly fury. Reportedly, there were drifts of snow in Summerhaven up to 17 feet with upwards of eight feet on the level. Hundreds of people were stranded and isolated throughout Northern Mexico, not to mention that many on the Navajo Reservation. Three military helicopters were plucking people off roofs south of Tucson and Tubac. The Southern Pacific Railroad lost three bridges to flooding and major portions of the highway to Nogales disappeared. Tragically, there were at least four people killed in Mexico and, closer to home, one man was washed away in Tucson, prompting a major search effort.

After crossing the Cañada del Oro at Magee Road, Benjamin Lopez, 43, was feared drowned when he became trapped in his car. Sergeant Ted Brandes called out the Pima County Sheriff’s Department Search and Rescue Squad. Since Lopez, the father of nine, disappeared in the floodwaters, searchers spent a great many hours combing the wash. His car was found the next day,

mostly buried, nearly a half-mile downstream. “Bulldozers are now being used in an attempt to find Lopez’ body.” They also found some of his personal effects, including his wallet, a shirt, and a sweater.

On January 3, 1968, “The search for 43-year-old Benjamin G. Lopez—missing since Dec. 20—has been abandoned by members of the Pima County Sheriff’s Dept. Search and Rescue.” Deputy Brandes said “members of the rescue unit have searched the Santa Cruz river bed from the mouth of Cañada del Oro all the way to Marana, twenty miles north of Tucson, with no further trace of Lopez.” On April 28, the remains of Lopez were found in the Santa Cruz river bed twenty miles north of Tucson. (Star 1/4/1968, 4/30/1968)

### **Professor and His Four Children Lost**

**Jan 14, 1968**

A professor from the U of A Medical School and his three sons and one daughter became lost on a hike from Sabino Canyon to Mt. Lemmon. Along the way they become confused and ended up heading toward Romero Pass and ran out of daylight. Dr. William A. Sibley and his children, ages 5 to 12, spent a very cold night, covered with leaves. The search by Pima County Sheriff’s SAR, along with two helicopters from Davis-Monthan began in earnest the next morning. A bright orange sweat shirt hanging from a yucca, was eventually seen by Frances Walker in one of the helicopter crews. Two of the children were hoisted out first. The hoist then failed and the remaining three people were flown out by the helicopter that had made the find. (Citizen 1/16/1968)

### **Man Winched Out from Tanque Verde Falls Area**

**Jan 28, 1968**

A U of A education research analyst, Arthur Grant, 47, slipped and broke his ankle in the Redington Pass area. The newspaper article heading is, “Rescuers Pull Injured Man Up 1,000-Ft. Cliff.” He was on an outing with his 12-year-old son and a visitor from Brazil. Authorities were alerted at 1:30 p.m. and the rescuers worked for four hours to bring the victim out of the canyon in a Stokes Basket. He was pulled by winch and cable up the side of the cliff. SARA, Pima County Civil Defense, and the Jeep Patrol and Communications Network were part of the Pima County Sheriff SAR that assisted. (Citizen 1/29/1968)

### **Carried on Her Father’s Back**

**Feb 3, 1968**

While hiking with her father in Lower Bear Canyon, 18-year-old Sunny Vincent, slipped and fell, injuring her ankle. Deputy Ted Brandes was alerted just after noon and “called out were members of the Southern Arizona Search and Rescue Unit, Pima County-Civil Defense Search and Rescue and the Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Services (RACES).” The young woman’s father, Dick Ragland, was a member of the Civil Defense group. Ragland carried the injured girl part way out on his back. The rescue trip was finished by Park [sic: Forest] Ranger John Brinkley on horseback. (Citizen 2/5/1968)

## Rescued from Picacho Peak

**Feb 18, 1968**

On his way back to Davis-Monthan AFB, William Hohenschult was passing Picacho Peak when he decided to take a short, side trip. Hiding his motorcycle, the 19-year-old airman tried scrambling up the 3,382-foot peak. The mountain is crumbly, volcanic rock and if not on the trail, it is very dangerous—the young man soon found this out. Trapped by a rockslide, Hohenschult spent 12 hours on a two-foot ledge, a considerable distance below the top. Passersby heard him, and the Pima County Sheriff's Department Volunteer Search and Rescue team was dispatched. It took climbers from the Southern Arizona Rescue Association, six hours to reach the young man, all after dark.

Frances Walker recalls that Merle Wheeler, who was the principal climber on this rescue, dropped his flashlight while on the cliff face. With poor communications with Merle, rescuers at the base of the peak thought Merle had fallen. (Star 2/20/1968; Frances Walker interview 1/25/2021)

## Airman Falls 100 Feet

**Feb 19, 1968**

A Davis-Monthan Staff Sergeant, Audest C. Allen, was hiking in Sabino Canyon with his younger brother when he fell from a cliff. The two were near the Old Dam Site, at that time less than a mile upstream of the end of the paved road, when the 22-year-old Allen lost his footing. Deputy Ted Brandes said, “the brothers, unable to cross a stream, had tried hiking along the bank searching for a place to get across. . . the bank appeared to cave in under the injured man's feet, sending him downward.”

Responding first to the scene were “Members of the Pima County Sheriff's Department Volunteer Search and Rescue Team and Southern Arizona Rescue Association and Civil Defense personnel.” They were able to provide first aid to the critically injured man until a helicopter and its crew from Davis-Monthan were able to make a very dangerous hoist of the victim from the narrow canyon. Doctors at Tucson Medical Center said Allen had suffered severe head injuries and possible internal injuries. (Citizen 2/20/1968)

## Bad Week for Hunters

**Feb 26, 1968**

Victor Villegas, 38, was in guarded condition after accidentally shooting himself while hunting javelina in the Madera Canyon area. He was struck in the abdomen by a .308 caliber bullet when he stumbled and fell. SARA was called out but he was eventually airlifted to Tucson Medical Center by a helicopter from Davis-Monthan AFB.

The very next day, 17-year-old Lyle Ruckman also accidentally shot himself while hunting javelina. He was with four companions in the Tortolita Mountains, north of Tucson. In guarded condition, the teenager “had a cocked revolver strapped on his waist. . . and was shot in the base of his spine when he sat on a rock.” Again, SARA was called in for assistance but again, a helicopter from Davis-Monthan flew the youth to Tucson Medical Center. (Citizen 2/27/1968; Star 2/28/1968)

## Boy Falls 150 Feet Down Mine Shaft

**Feb 27, 1968**

Curiosity almost killed a 13-year-old boy on a school field trip when he tumbled 150 feet in an abandoned copper mine, “but Lady Luck went along with him and he suffered only cuts and bruises.” Leonard Corvelli, a student of the Villa Santa Cruz boarding school at Toltec, dropped through a narrow opening in the Silver Reef Mine on the Papago [Tohono O’odham] Indian Reservation. Indian police, Pinal County Sheriff’s Deputies and miners aided in his rescue.

Of particular note were Papago Policeman Daniel N. Martinez and Sergeant Alex Cordova, a member of the Arizona State Prison Search and Rescue Team, who both spent “more than four hours astraddle planks about 100 feet down” the mine shaft. “They coaxed the boy into a swing that they had rigged and pulled him—10 feet at a time—up to the platform. The youth was put on a stretcher and, with directions from Martinez and Cordova was pulled out of the shaft by men at the top.”

On March 19, 1969, the Bureau of Indian Affairs presented Martinez a Special Act Award and \$300 for his part in this rescue. Apparently, this was the second rescue to Martinez’s credit within the same year. He was being nominated for a Carnegie Hero Fund Award, although a records search indicates he did not receive one for these rescues. (Citizen 2/27/1968, 3/20/1969)

## A Missing Family

**Apr 27, 1968**

Dr. Peyton Reavis, 51, and his 15-year-old son Robert, and a 14-year-old friend, Scott Green, spent the night in rugged Pima Canyon, near the western end of the Catalina Mountains. When the trio failed to return from their “jaunt in the canyon,” Sheriff’s deputies were called about 4:00 p.m. “Some 20 members of the Pima County Sheriff’s Search and Rescue Squad arrived at the mountain late in the afternoon to begin looking. Officials at Davis-Monthan Air Force Base . . . were alerted to the possible need for a helicopter.” While preparations were being made to bring in a helicopter, the trio wandered into the path of rescuers on their way into the primary search area. “The hikers explained they had simply climbed farther into the canyon than they had planned when darkness overtook them. They decided, rather than chance being lost, to wait out the night and set out down the mountain with daylight. . . .” (Citizen 4/28/1968)

## Drowning of Scuba Diver

**May 9, 1968**

After a forty-minute search underwater, six Tucson Firemen located the body of 24-year-old Myrle Farkas of Phoenix. She and her husband had been gathering golf balls from the bottom of the two-acre lake at the 18<sup>th</sup> hole of Tucson National Golf Course, when she drowned. The two were not close to each other under the water and her husband did not see what was happening. At the time, she was using a double-set of scuba tanks, which ran out of air. For some reason, she was unable to release her weight belt, possibly because there was a ten-pound bag of golf balls strapped to her waist. According to her husband, the couple made a living by retrieving golf balls at courses all over Arizona and New Mexico, then selling the used balls back to the clubs. (Star 5/10/1968)



## Underwater Search for Leg

**May 9, 1968**

Eight “skin divers” of the Pima County Sheriff’s Department’s “underwater recovery team,” spent five hours in recovering 13-year-old Orrin Davenport’s artificial leg. The Boy Scout from Sells was on an outing at Pena Blanca Lake when he lost it in 35 feet of water. (Citizen 5/9/1968)

## Two Eight-Year-Old Boys Lost

**May 18, 1968**

While with several older boys, two 8-year-old boys turned around when the hiking in the Santa Catalina Mountains, became too rough for them. Soon confused, Brent Larson and Robert Warren quickly became hopelessly lost. They now faced a cold, 40-degree night out, although they did have jackets. They were found at 2:00 p.m. the next afternoon by two rescue volunteers, Mr. and Mrs. Vincent E. Dionne, who described the boys as tired, sunburned and scared. The Dionnes found Brent and Robert below deep cliffs in Sycamore Canyon at the base of Pine Canyon, about five miles from the camp the boys could not return to the previous day. They were attending a camp at the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, on Organization Ridge.

Sergeant Brandes was told by the kids, that they had “ ‘roosted in a pine tree for the night because the rocks were too hard to lie on.’ ” Warren told his father a bear had tried to climb up the tree, but slipped on a dead limb. “ ‘It sounds exaggerated to me, but my son lost his glasses.’ ”

The search, which Brandes said would have cost about \$30,000 if somehow done privately, “involved 85 persons affiliated with the county’s 10 rescue units, 35 vehicles, a Davis-Monthan Air Force Base helicopter and two Civil Air Patrol planes,” not to mention the able assistance of Forest Rangers John Brinkley and Carl Snellers who helped coordinate the search. (Citizen 5/20/1968)

## Three Lost Near Pena Blanca Lake

**May 25, 1968**

“More than 40 rescue workers and five light planes searched nearly all night for the trio...” The three from Tucson, father, 43, his daughter, 19, and a male friend, 30, were on a “picture-taking outing” near Pena Blanca Lake and were to be out only for the day on that Saturday. When spotted on Monday morning they were four miles from the lake. They were airlifted by a Davis-Monthan AFB helicopter back to base rescue camp.

In addition to the Air Force out of Davis-Monthan, “Participating in the search were members of the Pima County Sheriff’s Dept. Volunteer Search & Rescue, including Civil Air Patrol (CAP), Southern Arizona Rescue Assn. (SARA), Pima County Emergency Radio Network (PCERN), Radio Amateur Community Emergency Service (RACES), Civil Defense workers and several four-wheel drive and motorcycle units.” (Star 5/28/1968)

## Saved Five from Drowning

**Aug 3, 1968**

According to the US Weather Bureau, three inches of rain fell in Globe in thirty minutes. The intense but localized flooding caused a deep drainage ditch to clog and overflow, reaching a nearby

building. Fearing for their safety, the occupants decided to leave. Lesa L. Boyd, 16, was carrying her 5-year-old half-brother; Joyce J. Stephens, 19, carried 3-month-old Kimberli, and Mrs. Nancy J. Nancarrow, was carrying Jeffrey H. Stephens. The three women were trying to get themselves and their three charges to safety through an opening in a nearby wire fence, which was backed by a thick hedge. On reaching the sidewalk, however, the three women were knocked off their feet by a three-foot-deep surge of swift water.

The rampaging current pulled the 5-year-old from Lesa's grip; he was swept away and drowned. Now needing to save herself, she succeeded in grasping the fence, as did Mrs. Stephens. Nancarrow, holding Jeffrey, was carried down to a truck at a dairy building. Paul S. Dore, a 31-year-old newspaper circulation manager, saw all of this and instinctively went into action, despite not knowing how to swim. He made his way to the fence, where he also was knocked down and pushed into a telephone pole, to which he now clung. Boyd and Mrs. Stephens were still holding on to the fence and could not get their feet underneath them.

Dore made a leap of nearly five feet over the water to the fence and alongside the two teenage women. First, he aided Lesa to get over the fence and wedge into a position between it and the hedge and then handed Kimberli to Boyd. He then did the same for Mrs. Stephens and then he climbed over and waited with them.

Meanwhile, Ben S. Guerrero, 15, who was safe on the other side of the street, recognized that Nancarrow, still holding Jeffrey, was both in danger and unable to get her footing alongside the truck. He waded the street in the three-foot-deep water, now increasing in both depth and swiftness. Holding to the truck while fighting the current, he worked his way around the vehicle to get to Nancarrow and her little boy. He helped them move over the vehicle's hood and into the dairy building, where the three of them waited until help arrived.

Dore and Guerrero were credited with saving five lives, although sadly, Lesa Boyd's 5-year-old half-brother was drowned and not found until the next day. In June of 1969, Dore was honored with a Bronze Carnegie Hero Medal and \$750 and Guerrero a Bronze Carnegie Hero Medal and \$500. (Arizona Republic 8/4/1968; Citizen 6/30/1969; Carnegie Hero Fund Awards #50381-5536, #50382-5537)

## **“1,200-Foot Hoist”**

**Aug 4, 1968**

Sixteen-year-old Gari Crowley fell in “Upper Sabino Canyon,” suffering a broken leg. According to his brother, he fell while they were hiking. “A Pima County Sheriff's Dept. Volunteer Search and Rescue team was able to pull the boy to safety up a 1,200-foot cliff about four hours after the accident.” SARA was called out for the rescue. [There is no 1,200-foot cliff in Sabino Canyon. Author] (Star 8/6/1968)

## **Hoisted to Safety**

**Aug 12, 1968**

After slipping at the top of the Tanque Verde Falls, a 19-year-old fell about 65 feet onto a rocky ledge, then slid into a shallow pool of water. John Surina sustained a broken pelvis and wrist, a possible broken leg and lots of abrasions and bruises. In fact, he was very lucky to have survived.

He was somehow able to drag himself from the water while his companions hurried to the nearest telephone to summon help.

Deputy Ted Brandes, with other members of the Sheriff's Search and Rescue Unit, called for a helicopter evacuation due to the seriousness of the injuries and because the teenager was deep in the canyon. Major Elmer O'Banion, "gingerly maneuvered near a sheer canyon wall in order to reach the injured youth. A Davis-Monthan base hospital surgeon, not identified, was lowered from the hovering helicopter and administered first aid treatment to the youth before he was strapped into the stretcher." The boy was reported in fair condition. (Citizen 8/13/1968)

### Lost Youths Rescued

#### Aug 14, 1968

Three young people wandered away from the Presbyterian Church Camp on Organization Ridge in the Santa Catalina Mountains about 4:00 p.m. Steven Green, 6, his sister Debbie who was 10, were from Seattle and Rex Baldwin, age 11, was from Tucson. The kids had gone exploring and became confused. "Members of the Pima County Sheriff's Dept. Volunteer Search and Rescue, Southern Arizona Rescue Assn., Civil Defense, and Radio Amateur Communications Emergency Service participated in the search." Also included were two light planes from the Civil Air Patrol, a military helicopter from Davis-Monthan AFB, and nearly fifty men, including forest rangers and military personnel. The response was quick and organized.

Rex was found first, about 3:00 a.m., nearly two miles from the camp. The other two children were located five hours later, approximately four miles from the camp. The kids had become separated during the night when the older boy climbed a high point to see if he could spot the camp. All had weathered their night out without any harm. (Star 8/16/1968)

### Boy Lost at Rose Canyon Lake

#### Aug 23, 1968

While fishing at Rose Canyon Lake, 12-year-old Julian Lumm of Willcox, separated from his party, unable to find his way back. About 45 members of the Pima County Sheriff SAR as well as a helicopter from Davis-Monthan were eventually used. The boy was found the next day not far from the old youth camp in Sycamore Canyon. (Star 8/25/1968)

### Young Man Killed in Onyx Cave

#### Oct 4, 1968

While exploring Onyx Cave in the Santa Rita Mountains, 21-year-old Truman Kellem of Yuma fell one-hundred feet and was killed. Along with his two companions, Kellem was a student at the University of Arizona. Sgt. Ted Brandes of Pima County Sheriff's SAR was notified by one of the victim's companions of the accident at 11:30 p.m. Rescuers, lowering Gary Stiles, reached the victim at 7:30 a.m., who was pronounced dead at the scene. By 5:00 p.m., the young man had been removed from the cave. Some of the rescuers included Tom Harlan and Dr. Hastings. (Star 10/6/1968)

## Two Killed in Plane Crash in Santa Ritas

**Oct 5, 1968**

The burned wreckage of a small, single-engine, two seat Piper Super Cub with two men onboard was spotted on October 8, about five miles southeast of Madera Canyon in the Santa Rita Mountains. The Civil Air Patrol searcher flew up and down the canyon at least eight times verifying what he was seeing below. The deceased pilot, Robert B. Spencer, 49, was a retired Air Force Colonel and had been hired to fly a charter for Tucson-based Hudgin Air Service. His 31-year-old passenger, Glen C. Turner, was an apprentice powerline serviceman and trouble shooter for Tucson Gas and Electric Company. Both men were from Tucson and were surveying powerlines from Winkelman to Fort Huachuca and then on to Silverbell.

CAP pilots flew nearly three-hundred hours during the three-day search. Once found, a medical attendant from Davis-Monthan Air Force Base was lowered by cable to the downed aircraft and confirmed the two men were dead. In addition to the Civil Air Patrol and a helicopter crew out of Davis-Monthan, were more than thirty persons, including members of the Southern Arizona Rescue Association, Civil Defense, Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Service, and two Civil Aeronautics investigators. (Star 10/8/1968, 10/9/1968, 10/10/1968)

## One Killed in Plane Crash in Santa Ritas

**Dec 26, 1968**

A yellow and cream-colored four-place Cessna 182 Skylane, piloted by George Braunston, 55, owner of a produce-growing and trucking firm in Nogales and Los Angeles, was reported overdue. He was flying from Fullerton, California to Nogales, stopping in Tucson to discharge a passenger. He was now alone, it was at 9:00 p.m., and the weather was becoming worse on his route south. The Civil Air Patrol led the search, which focused on the slopes and foothills of the snow-covered Santa Rita Mountains. Pilots logged a total of 583 hours and flew 255 sorties in 41 aircraft. Half of them were CAP from Coolidge, Phoenix, Willcox, Safford, Yuma, Ajo, Nogales, and Tucson. Ten planes were flown in the search south of the border and were piloted by their Mexican owners. Two employees of Braunston's eventually discovered the wreckage four miles south of Mt. Wrightson on February 2. The wings had been clipped off by the crash and his body was still strapped to the pilot's seat, found 12 feet from the plane. The body was brought out on February 4. (Star 1/12/1969; Citizen 2/4/1969)

## Dog Rescued from Mine

**Jan 15, 1969**

Jeff Ware, 71, and his son, were hunting quail in the Sierrita Mountains, 15 miles southwest of Tucson, along with their dog Ginger. While chasing a wounded bird, Ginger plunged down an open, eighty-foot-deep, abandoned mineshaft. At first, the two men thought their American Pointer had died in the fall, until they heard the retriever whine. Six members of the Pima County Sheriff's Search and Rescue Team responded; "a flashlight picked up the glint of her eyes and the group knew she was still alive." Scott Clemans and Merle Wheeler, "two cave divers [?] of the rescue team, descended down the shaft and brought the dog out in a knapsack. A small ledge about 30 feet down had apparently broken her fall and saved her life." One story said "she still had the quail in her mouth when brought up." (Citizen 1/17/1969)

## Two Firemen Die

**Jan 31, 1969**

Off-duty that morning, Captain Harlow Hollinger, 37, and firefighter Wendall J. Wells, no age given, of the Tucson Fire Department, left Freeway Airport for a pleasure flight down toward the Chiricahua Mountains. Wells, pilot and owner of the two-place 1948 Swift, indicated returning by 1:00 p.m., although he did not file a flight plan. About 12 hours later, two fellow firemen and a rental pilot, flew over the area, using the clear night and the light of a full moon to search. Once above the northern end of the range, they heard a faint radio signal on an aviation emergency frequency and then spotted what they believed was the silver and blue aircraft. Running low on fuel, these three searchers returned to Tucson.

Soon after, eight Tucson firemen, equipped with blankets, first aid kits, and other emergency provisions left by trucks for the area at 3:30 a.m. Then at dawn, the operating officer for the Tucson Civil Air Patrol, left to pinpoint the wreckage possibly seen earlier that morning. At the same time, a twenty-man party with eight emergency vehicles struck out from Willcox. Once the CAP verified the wreck site, the two ground forces joined together. “It appeared the doomed aircraft had struck a metal fence post on a 6,500-foot-high peak at the head of Woods [sic: Wood] Canyon and plummeted about 500 feet down into the canyon.” (Citizen 2/1/1969; Star 2/2/1969)

## Lost Boy Turns Good Samaritan

**May 12, 1969**

At 4:30 p.m., 17-year-old Scott Spencer, a junior at Bisbee High School was headed into the Mule Mountains on his motorized trail bike, when he took a bad spill. He became dazed and proceeded toward home, but in the wrong direction. Reported overdue at dark, his father, an engineer at Fort Huachuca, said, “ ‘I wasn’t afraid of his being out overnight in the mountains. He has camped out alone many times and wants to make a career of the Forest Service. . . But I did worry that he was hurt. We examined all the washes and tracks. After a while all the tracks looked alike.’ ”

Headed by Cochise County Sheriff T. J. “Jim” Wilson, a search and rescue posse of 25 men, including a Willcox doctor flying low overhead, began hunting for the lad. Also aiding was a newly formed REACT search and rescue radio group, with members from Sierra Vista, Huachuca City, and the Mule Mountain area near Bisbee. One of the things they did was to station a vehicle at the mouth of a particular canyon with its lights on in the hopes the young man would see it, which he did. In fact, he could hear his father calling his name but he could not be heard.

As Scott was ending his three-mile trek across the mountains, he was climbing a barb-wire fence bordering the highway just as an “elderly couple had a blowout on their automobile. Scott, still having two good arms and hands, offered to fix the flat. As he jacked up the car, the woman reportedly threw the vehicle into gear, the jack slipped, and Scott received an injured right hand.” He was able to catch a ride home in another car and the deputies took him to the Copper Queen Hospital where his sore leg and right hand were examined. (The Dispatch, Douglas, Arizona, 5/13/1969)

## Air Medical Evacuation System

**May 30, 1969**

West Point graduate, Lieutenant Colonel Bob Sears was on educational leave from the Army and now a graduate student in engineering at Arizona State University(ASU) in 1967 when he wrote

a master's thesis, "Air Medical Evacuation System." Two years earlier, Sears was wounded in Vietnam, evacuated by helicopter and, as a recipient of the military's Purple Heart, was familiar with the subject. He was convinced to write this thesis by Dr. James L. Schamadan,<sup>2</sup> Associate Professor of Engineering at ASU. On February 8, 1968, Sears presented this study at the third annual All-Arizona Safety Congress, where former Arizona Governor Howard Pyle, President of the National Safety Council, gave the Keynote Address.

One year later, February 14, 1969, the federal government's Department of Transportation announced a six-month-long test to try and cut casualties on Arizona highways based on quick response by helicopters. Sears' Air Medical Evacuation System—AMES—began that Memorial Day and it concluded six months later, January 31, 1970. The grant for the program was for \$304,000 and was split between ASU, with Schamadan as the author for the funding, and the Arizona Highway Patrol (AHP),<sup>3</sup> serving as a sub-contractor. The first mission of AMES was on May 30, for a 2-year-old girl and two 24-year-old women flown from a traffic accident on the Black Canyon Highway, north of Phoenix.

AMES was a copy of techniques being successfully proven every day in Vietnam, by which helicopter interventions significantly cut deaths. The trial called for two Fairchild-Hiller 1100 helicopters to be available to respond in a 150-mile radius of the Scottsdale Municipal Airport, their home base. Each chopper was designed to hold two internal litters, oxygen bottles, crash entry kits, and IV equipment. Arizona Helicopters, Inc., provided and maintained the helicopters, as well as three pilots and fuel, while the AHP assigned six veteran patrolmen as "medical specialists," to serve as flight medics. All were "already qualified in advanced first aid... and will take an intensive seven-day course in emergency medicine..."

"A total of 824 missions was flown, including 213 medical evacuation missions involving 225 persons. More than 51 percent of the persons were highway accident victims. The program is basically aimed at reducing traffic fatalities, but victims of other types of accidents such as hunting, boating and mountain climbing have been rescued."

As a result of the AMES project, the Arizona Department of Public Safety began asking the state legislators for funds to start such a full-time program in the state.

In anticipation of both AMES arriving as well as the coming "wave of the future," Tucson's Saint Joseph's Hospital opened a brand-new heliport on June 1, 1969. The only other hospital in the area with a spot specifically designated for helicopters was Tucson Medical Center. It was the first in Arizona and was inaugurated on October 11, 1959. "This will enable helicopters to fly accident victims from remote areas to within 20 feet of the emergency entrance." It would be more than five months, however, before it was actually used—a gravely ill Army officer from Fort Huachuca was flown into TMC on March 29, 1960. (Arizona Republic 2/7/1968, 2/15/1969, 5/31/1969, 9/2/1970, 10/23/1970, 11/12/1972, 7/19/1973; Citizen 3/30/1960, 5/16/1969, 9/20/1969)

<sup>2</sup> James L. Schamadan, in addition to being a Professor of Engineering, was a medical doctor. He had been a physician-paratrooper in the Korean War, served in Vietnam with Special Forces and was a pilot. He would go on to be the first Director of the Arizona Division of Emergency Services, first permanent Director of the State Department of Health Services, Vice President of Samaritan Health Services, President of Scottsdale Memorial Hospital, and the Director of the Arizona State Department of Economic Services.

<sup>3</sup> On July 1, 1969, one month after AMES was begun, the Arizona Department of Public Safety was established at which time it replaced and absorbed, the Arizona Highway Patrol.



## Needing Rescued, Woman Starts Forest Fire

**Jun 18, 1969**

“ ‘Your helicopter passed over me three times and I jumped up and down on a high rock and you didn’t even see me,’ ” grumbled 27-year-old Miriam Fortias, a UA part-time student from Chicago. A guest at the Tanque Verde Ranch, Ms. Fortias had been on a hike with others from there when she drifted away from them. “After about six hours of confusion, thirst and being unable to find her way out of the canyon... the lost young woman got the idea to start a fire when a plane flew over, she started what she thought would be a safe fire with Kleenex and sticks and that it got out of control.” Yes, it definitely did that.

Started in Sabino Basin, the now way-out-of-control signal fire was finally contained, forty hours later; it had consumed about 210 acres. At the time, it was the costliest fire in the Catalina Mountains in recent history. “ ‘It was a real threat to the top of the mountain,’ according to Noel Pyers, Coronado National Forest fire dispatcher.” Four tanker planes from Marana, Douglas and the Grand Canyon, dropped 30,000 gallons of retardant while upwards of 325 men fought the flames. Firefighters came from the Papago and Navajo Reservations, the federal prison at Safford as well as northern New Mexico. In addition to the tanker show and manpower, three helicopters and two bulldozers were pressed into service.

“The Pima County Sheriff’s Dept. Volunteer Search and Rescue Squad had been called in to search for her but couldn’t get into the area where she was found.” Some of these responders also remained and helped with the final mop-up of the fire on the third day.

In reaction to Ms. Fortias’s complaint of not being seen from the helicopter after she “jumped up and down,” Dennis Donnelly, the crewman who ended up rescuing her, countered, “I didn’t even know there was anyone down there needing help until I saw her after we set down.” According to local Assistant US Attorney, JoAnn Diamos, no criminal charges would be filed against Ms. Fortias because of what had led her to start the blaze. However, according to the Forest Service, she might need to reimburse the government for the cost of the fire-fighting effort. The author was unable to learn if Ms. Fortias was billed for any of these costs. (Citizen 6/17/1969; Star 6/20/1969, 6/21/1969)

## Two Rescuers Drown

**Jun 29, 1969**

David Gonzales, 18, traveling from his home in Ajo, was to report for work the next day in the Superior area. With two companions, he was walking along the steep banks of the twenty-foot-deep Ray Reservoir, when he tumbled in. The fully-clothed teenager quickly sank, becoming hopelessly tangled in the plants choking the surface. The small lake, north of the old town of Ray, was posted by the Kennecott Mining Company, since it was actively being used in their daily mining operations.

“The Pinal County Search and Rescue headed by Sheriff Coy DeArman sent two Coots—six wheeled road and water vehicles—to search the lake for the youth’s body. Both Coots were trapped in the seaweed-like water plant and the eight men... were thrown into the water,” when both their vehicles overturned. Two men—Owen James Hepler, 42, and Clyde Augustine, 22—drowned. The “ ‘weeds almost trapped all of us,’ ” one deputy said. The Pinal County Search and Rescue Team obtained some boats and plastic rafts and recovered the bodies of Hepler and Augustine the next day. Owen Hepler, recently the Police Chief of Kearny, had also been both a Tucson Police Officer and a Pima County Sheriff’s Deputy earlier in his career.

“After a three-day search for a drowned youth, Pinal County Sheriff’s Deputies [sic] and volunteers from Maricopa County yesterday [Wednesday, July 3] located the body in 18 feet of moss-tangled lake water near Kearny.” (Citizen 7/3/1969; Star 7/1/1969)

## Two Rescued in Marshall Gulch

**Jul 13, 1969**

Dr. Charles J. Gauntt, 31, an Assistant Professor of Microbiology at the University of Arizona, and 24-year-old David Stoker, a UA medical student, were described “as being hungry and tired but in good shape when they were found by a Pima County Search and Rescue team.” The two hikers became confused, spending the night, not too far from the Air Force Radar Station. Two hours after beginning their search, members of the forty-person rescue team found the two overdue hikers in Marshall Gulch, near Lemmon Creek. (Citizen 7/14/1969)

## Airline Official Lost

**Jul 26, 1969**

James Richard Eighmey left his home on the far east side of Tucson that Saturday afternoon to go rock hunting. Twenty-four hours later, the 53-year-old American Airlines official’s Volkswagen was found in a ten-foot ditch, just off the Redington Road, 11 miles east of the end of the pavement on Tanque Verde Road. Deputy Ted Brandes said, “the car had run off the road and rolled twice. A small amount of blood found inside the car led Brandes to surmise the driver was not seriously injured.” Eighmey was dressed in Bermuda shorts and a sports shirt but had no water or other gear for the 95-degree temperature forecast for the day.

A search was begun on Monday afternoon, by “members of the Pima County Sheriff’s Department Volunteer Search and Rescue Unit,” including SARA. For two days these volunteers combed the area, mostly believing Eighmey had been hurt and wandered off. This proved to be true. That Wednesday, in addition to the others in the unit, Brandes “had 40 men on horses ready to begin a search,” when he was notified that Eighmey had been found. At 5:00 a.m. that morning, “Eighmey wandered out of the Redington Pass area...dazed after his car rolled over and attempted to walk home out of the Catalina Mountains but ended up heading north instead. He said he followed a newly constructed gas line road for most of the trip until he spotted the spire of the Mormon Church in San Manuel...” (Star 7/29/1969, 7/30/1969)

## Drowning in Parker Lake

**Aug 2, 1969**

William Howard Foreman’s boat was found partly submerged and overturned on the southern side of Parker Canyon Lake. The 46-year-old fisherman was missing and presumed drowned. It was believed he was trying to start the motor of the small craft when it capsized. The 132-acre lake, located 28 miles southwest of Sierra Vista in Cochise County, is managed by the Forest Service. Created in 1965, it has an average depth of forty feet and a maximum of around sixty feet. Along with five divers from the Pima County Sheriff’s Search and Recovery team, Deputy Sergeant Ted Brandes had been helping to look for Foreman since the day after his boat was found. On August 14, 12 days after he drowned, Foreman’s body was found by members of the Cochise County

Sheriff's Office. This is the first drowning in Parker Canyon Lake the author was able to learn of. (Citizen 8/5/1969; Star 8/15/1969)

### Brothers Lost in Catalinas

**Aug 24, 1969**

Charles Overpeck, 11, and his 9-year-old brother, Herman, left their parents and a party of family friends, "on what was supposed to be a short hike." The group was at the "Old Hotel" campground, about a mile and a half north of Palisades Ranger Station. The pair was soon missed and officials at the Ranger Station were quickly contacted; Sgt. Ted Brandes of the Sheriff's Department Search and Rescue team was alerted at about 8:30 p.m. and he put together a party of 31 rescuers. When the brothers were found early the next morning, they were, "about two to three miles from where they were last seen."

Charles had twisted his ankle and needed to be carried out on a stretcher. One of the searchers, Cathy Rose, had also slipped and wrenched her knee, needing to be transported out by stretcher, as well. (Citizen 8/25/1969)

### Two Believed Lost in Sabino Canyon

**Sep 6, 1969**

Two teenage boys told their parents they were going to hitchhike to Sabino Canyon that Saturday morning. When they did not return late that night, Sgt. Ted Brandes alerted the Pima County Sheriff's Department Volunteer Search and Rescue Team, forty of whom "searched Sabino Canyon for them all day Sunday." The two were discovered that night, barefoot and with "little over a dollar between them." In reality, they hopped a freight train to California to see a friend. "The boys were in custody of juvenile authorities," the next day. The article did not indicate how far they had gotten. (Star 9/9/1969)

### Fighter Pilot Killed

**Oct 29, 1969**

The student pilot from West Germany landed unharmed, having safely ejected from the crippled F-104 Starfighter. But Major Richard E. Doucette, 36, an instructor-pilot out of Luke AFB, plunged to his death when his parachute did not open. The plane crashed 34 miles southeast of Gila Bend. "Volunteers from the Pima County Search and Rescue Unit aided aircraft from Davis-Monthan AFB and Luke AFB in the search." Doucette's body was found the next day in the Pozo Redondo Mountains ten miles east of Ajo, five miles from the wreckage of the F-104 Starfighter. (Citizen 10/30/1969)

### Boy Lost on Mt. Lemmon

**Nov 9, 1969**

Donald Curtis, 18, was reported lost on Mt. Lemmon near Box Camp Canyon by his hiking companion, Brian McNamara. McNamara, 20, spent a week disoriented and without any food or heavy clothing up there before he was able to find his way out and sound the alarm. Both young men

were from New York City and had been staying at the downtown YMCA; they were exploring for gold and had a metal detector. During the first week of the search, it rained and snowed in the area, with temperatures reaching down to 14 degrees at the Palisades Ranger Station. McNamara told officials that his friend had developed severe leg cramps and was unable to walk. McNamara took a lie-detector test, helicopters were employed, bloodhounds from Florence were brought in, as were many Pima County SAR volunteers.

On November 29, Sgt. Ted Brandes said the “search for Curtis is two weeks old today, the longest active search for a missing person that the sheriff’s rescue unit has conducted.” Over the next few months, there were several additional search efforts without any clues or success.

Sixteen months after Curtis disappeared, *The Arizona Daily Star* outdoor writer Wade Cavanaugh, did a follow up review of the search for Curtis. Sgt. Brandes recounted several minor leads provided by two psychics and a leader of a “hippie commune.” Although these leads were almost tangential, they were checked out by the Sheriff’s Department, without providing any discernible addition to the mystery of the disappearance of 18-year-old Donald Curtis. (Star 11/18/1969, 11/19/1969, 11/20/1969, 11/21/1969, 11/22/1969, 11/23/1969, 11/24/1969, 11/25/1969, 11/26/1969, 11/27/1969, 11/28/1969, 11/29/1969, 3/12/1971)

## Eighth Hunter Rescued Since Season Began

**Nov 9, 1969**

In Arizona, deer hunting season is in the fall of the year and for some, mostly males, it is a near-obsession. And, every SAR group plying their “craft” in the mountains of the West will bemoan the need to repeatedly respond to lost or hurt hunters. But, grumbling aside, they willingly volunteer their time and personal resources to “tomp around in the sticks,” often in terribly dangerous terrain, circumstances, and winter weather.

Tucsonan, Douglas Drew, 21, was the eighth deer hunter that Pima County Sheriff’s Sergeant Ted Brandes had to go find that year; and, it was still early in the season. Drew had gone into a particularly rugged, steep part of the Catalina Mountains; the north side of Mount Lemmon and Summerhaven, along the old Control Road or “Back Road.” It was heavily forested and full of brush, waterless for six months of the year. The fact that there is a decent dirt road nearby will lull the unsuspecting to venture just a little too far and get turned around, often trapped by the steepness. But it is good deer habitat.

That Sunday night, the father of Douglas asked for help in finding his son. Sergeant Brandes led 35 volunteers of the SAR team into that area. And they were successful, locating the young man after a 12-hour effort. “Drew was found in a deep canyon between Crystal Springs and Green Springs. Located unharmed, but tired, hungry and ‘mad at not getting a deer,’ Brandes said.” But while manning the communication’s truck, a vital link in any search, Sergeant Robert Cummings, 34, a SAR volunteer from Davis-Monthan AFB, had a bullet whiz dangerously by his head. See “Sniper Shoots At SAR Volunteer,” November 9, 1969, on page 262. (Star 11/11/1969; Citizen 11/11/1969)

## Sniper Shoots at SAR Volunteer

**Nov 9, 1969**

“A sniper escaped after exchanging gunfire with a member of a search party looking for a lost hunter in a rugged portion of the Catalina Mountains . . .” Sgt. Robert Cummings, 34, of Davis-

Monthan AFB was narrowly missed by the sniper's bullet. Sheriff Sgt. Ted Brandes, head of the county SAR group, said, "Cummings dropped to the ground, shouted, 'Knock it off,' and fired two shotgun blasts after the sniper yelled an obscenity." From the bushes was heard, " 'My God, he shot me.' " Other than what was said by the mystery sniper, there was no evidence the sniper was hurt and local hospitals revealed no shotgun injuries. Brandes and Cummings were part of a 35-man team searching for ex-Marine Douglas Drew, who later was found unhurt nearby. See "Eighth Hunter Rescued Since Season Began," November 9, 1969, on page 262. (Citizen 11/11/1969; Star 11/11/1969)

### Ray Neal Named President of Mountain Rescue Association

Nov 29–30, 1969

SARA veteran, Ray Neal, was installed as the sixth president of the national Mountain Rescue Association at their conference in Seattle. The guest speaker at the conference was internationally acclaimed mountaineer, Willie Unsoeld. (Star 11/28/1969)

### Central Arizona Mountain Rescue Association

Dec 1969

The Central Arizona Mountain Rescue Association (CAMRA) is a vital, well-respected member of Arizona's SAR community, tracing its rich history back to at least 1946. CAMRA is being included here because down through the years it/they often readily respond to Southern Arizona SAR emergencies, generally long-lasting searches. In mid-1940s, a group of eight or so high-school-aged Boy Scouts were in Phoenix's Troop 1, nicknamed the Kachinas. They would soon earn a well-deserved reputation over the next few years.

Already Eagle Scouts or rapidly on their way to earning Scouting's highest award, they were progressive and forward-thinking. Names prominent in the Kachinas then were Winthrop "Win" Akin, Ralph Pateman, Ed George, Bill McMorris, Ben and Lee Pedrick. The young Scoutmaster was Ray Garner, a recent military pilot. One article has him flying a hospital plane out of Guam in 1946. He was assisted by Dick Hart, who was but a couple of years older than the rest of the young men.

Somehow, they became focused on mountain climbing and quickly made such a name for themselves, they were often featured at Scout Camporees and related large functions. One article in the July 27, 1947, *The Arizona Republic*, says, "A demonstration of mountain climbing technique will be given by Scout Outfit No. 1, the Kachinas. . . ." Another in March, 1948, "A feature of yesterday's program was a climbing demonstration by Troop 1, Kachina Scouts, who scaled perpendicular cliffs back of the pueblo [Heard Scout Pueblo, South Mountain] and then proceeded to lower an 'injured' comrade in a stretcher to safety below. The demonstration was supervised by Ray Garner, senior adviser of the troop."

On at least one occasion, the Kachinas also performed an actual rescue on Camelback Mountain. On January 25, 1948, an 18-year-old Phoenix Union High School student was stuck when his foot caught in a crack on the side of the cliff. The Sheriff's Office was summoned. "Meantime, Ben Pedrick, Ed George, Win Akin and Dick Hart, members of the Kachinas, experienced Boy Scout mountain climbers, were able to extricate [the victim] from the cliffside and he had been taken to safety by the time the deputies arrived." Six weeks later, they started training with the Red Cross;

upon graduating, “The group will qualify as a Red Cross mobile emergency unit and be part of the Red Cross disaster rescue service.”

That following July 5, Win Akin died when he fell nearing the top of Nez Perce Peak, in Grand Teton National Park. At 11,906 feet, it is a dramatic, demanding climb. As this tight-knit group moved into adulthood, others with like interests followed. A photo with caption in the August 20, 1950, *The Arizona Republic*, pictures six of the Kachina troop on a climbing expedition to the Sierra de San Pedro Mártir, 150 miles south of the border in Baja. It is an older-model delivery van, on its side is “Kachinas” and a logo patterned after the famed Tenth Mountain Division of World War II, still an elite military unit. Nationwide, as rock climbing and mountaineering drew an expanding audience, the Arizona Mountaineering Club (AMC) was a natural result.

By March of 1963, the AMC was organized. Originally, it had 14 members with Doug Black of Scottsdale, its first president. Doug would be one of the founders of the forthcoming Central Arizona Mountain Rescue Association. At 23, Bill Forrest would be secretary and soon an early Yosemite “Big Wall” climber. On March 10, Forrest and another member of the AMC used their talents to assist two young men who had been stuck five-hundred feet up on Camelback Mountain for eight hours to get down. The AMC also announced, “they plan to be of community service by continuing to respond to emergency calls.” From this talented cadre of rock climbers, would come the Central Arizona Mountain Rescue Association, Incorporated, in December 1969. The official website of CAMRA says:

“The signing CAMRA Founders were: Dick Aleith (authored one of the first books on basic rock climbing); Doug Black (a second generation Kachina and a great welder), Doug helped develop and build early litter wheels and two-piece litters; Marilyn Black (became the first ever female Operations Leader in the U.S.); Floyd Theobald; Ed Helein (developed original equipment and systems); Cathy Helein (sewed harnesses for team members, adopting climbing harnesses to rescue work); and Bill Forrest (formed one of the rare early climbing equipment manufacturing companies).” (Arizona Republic 5/9/1946, 6/2/1946, 3/30/1947, 5/13/1947, 7/27/1947, 1/26/1948, 3/5/1948, 3/14/1948, 3/19/1948, 7/6/1948, 7/8/1948, 7/11/1948, 7/31/1948, 4/20/1949, 4/15/1950, 8/20/1950, 3/11/1963, 5/6/1963, 5/26/1963, 5/13/1964, 9/28/1967; Central Arizona Mountain Rescue Association Website)



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# CHAPTER 10

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1970–1979

## Man Drowns in Sabino Canyon

**Feb 16, 1970**

A 30-year-old man who had a fear of swimming ended up drowning while trying to overcome this fear. Max D. Smith, undetermined address, was living with a small hippie colony one and one-half miles north of the end of the Sabino Canyon Road. Others in the colony did not hear any screams and began to look for him when he was noticed missing. The colony of hippies had been established for about a year and the number was generally about a dozen individuals. Coordinated by Sergeant Ted Brandes, members of SARA located the man and carried him out. As it turns out, Smith did not drown but rather, died of malnutrition, according to the Pima County Pathologist, Dr. Louis Hirsch. Smith, at six feet tall, only weighed 110 pounds. According to a man who was camped near where Smith was found, he had offered him some food, the night before. But he said that Max, “was on a journey of some sort and only living on warm water and honey.” (Citizen 2/17/1970; Star 2/17/1970)

## Two Scouts Rescued from Picacho Peak

**Mar 14, 1970**

Two Boy Scouts from the Phoenix area became trapped on 3,374-foot Picacho Peak, some 450 feet above the ground level. It took thirty members of SARA some five hours to pluck Robert Kaufman, 14, and Michael White, also 14, from the ledge they were stuck on. They had waved a white t-shirt to get the attention of the supervisor in the Picacho Peak State Park. (Star 3/16/1970; Citizen 3/16/1970)

## Hiker Falls to His Death in Catalinas

**May 1, 1970**

A University of Arizona graduate from Indiana was killed while hiking when he fell 450 feet off a cliff on Pontatoc Ridge, east of Alvernon Way. Sgt. Ted Brandes, went into the area and located the man but the Pima County Search and Rescue Team was unable to bring Arthur Alan Swalls

out because of darkness. Tom Harlan spent much of the night with the victim. The next morning a helicopter was unable to retrieve the body of the 31-year-old Swalls, due to high, unpredictable winds. Allegedly a gust of wind dislodged him from his perch. “Brandes said 93 rescuers worked from early yesterday morning [May 2] until noon bringing the body through rugged country to a road.” Swalls had just received a Doctorate in Biochemistry from the University of Arizona. (Star 5/2/1970, 5/3/1970; Citizen 5/2/1970)

### Teenage Boy Falls Scrambling in Tanque Verde Canyon

**May 1, 1970**

A 19-year-old hiker sustained severe head injuries and a broken arm after he fell approximately 140 feet while scrambling in the Tanque Verde Falls area of Redington Pass. Gene Skyler was hiking with his brother and a friend when he fell. The trio was at the top of one of the falls when Skyler lost his footing and slid nearly one hundred feet down a ledge. His momentum carried him over the cliff another forty feet to the canyon floor. A companion hiked out and “called the Sheriff’s Department who contacted the Tucson Fire Department. A Fire Rescue Squad brought Skyler out of the rugged terrain in a basket stretcher, after giving first aid.” (Citizen 5/2/1970)

### Kalish Award Winners

**May 17, 1970**

The Volunteer Search and Rescue Association of the Pima County Sheriff’s Department was the co-recipient of the 1970 Abram A. and Beatrice F. Kalish Award. The award began in 1963 and is for charitable, public benefit; in addition to a plaque, the recipient receives \$250. It was presented at the 16<sup>th</sup> Annual Community Service Awards Dinner in the auditorium of the Congregation Anshei Israel. The president of the Tucson Jewish Community Council, Jack Sarver, said, “the search and rescue unit has saved more than 400 lost or injured persons during the past 12 years.” Co-recipient of the Kalish Award was the Helpmobile Project of the Tucson Section of the National Council of Jewish Women.

About 15 months after the 1970 ceremony, there was a Letter to the Editor in the *Tucson Daily Citizen* on August 5, 1971. It was from Richard Casanova, Operations Officer of the Tucson-Pima County Civil Defense Agency. He was responding to two Letters to the Editor, July 20 and July 21, one for each local newspaper, from John Harlow, a long-time nursery owner. Harlow obviously struck a nerve with Casanova.

Casanova was recognizing that SARA had been singled out by Harlow. In this letter of response, Casanova was suggesting that Harlow was insinuating the Southern Arizona Rescue Association (and only them) was doing “ ‘the dangerous and arduous job of locating and bringing out a victim.’ ” Harlow, however, never mentioned the Kalish Award and was merely only recognizing SARA for its contributions. In his Letter to the Editor, Richard Casanova said:

“Here is a partial list of the groups that participate in various search and rescue missions and should be given equal recognition:

“Civil Defense Rescue, Southern Arizona Rescue Association, Civil Defense RACES (communications), Scuba Divers, Horse Riders, PCERN (communications), Inc., Four Wheelers and Mt. Lemmon Ski Patrol.

“The Kalish Award, which was so generously given to the Sheriff’s Volunteer Search and Rescue Council [and not the Southern Arizona Rescue Association] benefits all the groups, not just one.

“The ‘paid’ Sheriff’s Deputies, Rural Firemen, US Forest Service, US Park Service, Davis-Monthan Helicopter Personnel, Davis-Monthan Dog Handlers, and many other persons assist in locating and rescuing victims in the mountainous areas. These men should also be commended for volunteering their time and effort made beyond the call of regular duty.”

Before Casanova even sent in his Letter to the Editor, even Mr. and Mrs. A. A. Kalish, namesake for the award, got into the minor skirmish. In their July 27, 1971, Letter to the Editor, they thanked John Harlow for his very warm Letter to the Editor, commending the Southern Arizona Rescue Association. (Star 5/8/1970, 7/27/1971; Citizen 8/5/1971)

### Civil Air Patrol Receives Emergency Funding

May 18, 1970

On August 9, 1966, Raymond R. Neal, considered the “Father of SARA” but not representing it at this point, filed suit against the Arizona Civil Air Patrol attempting to recover for the state more than \$283,000 that he alleged was “unconstitutionally appropriated by the Legislature. Named defendants in the Superior Court action [were] the Arizona Wing of the CAP; F. S. Travis, former Commanding Officer; William O. Moore, former Commanding Officer; Kenneth Allison, present Commanding Officer; the State of Arizona; and John Doe, one through five.” Neal’s attorney, Herbert H. Williams, said the state was named as a defendant for procedural purposes and that the suit was on behalf of the citizens of Arizona. The state’s Attorney General, Gary Nelson, denied the charges and would represent the CAP.

Neal contended the CAP was a private corporation and had no right to have state funds legislatively appropriated to it nor to spend these funds, regardless of its altruistic mission. Neal went back 14 years in his documentation and requested for the state to be reimbursed. Additionally, Neal claimed the CAP had been appropriated \$45,000 specifically to purchase 15 airplanes, none of which were ever bought. There were other allegations of impropriety; the suit basically wanted to eliminate state support for the Civil Air Patrol corporation. Superior Court Judge Jack G. Marks set a trial date for November 19, 1968. A trial took place.

On September 4, 1969, Judge Marks ruled the CAP is a “ ‘private, non-profit benevolent corporation,’ ” and must repay state funds illegally appropriated to it over the past decade or so. He also specifically said the “CAP must repay the \$38,582 appropriated in 1964 to purchase 15 used T-34 airplanes along with taxes, titles, and registration fees for the previous 11 years for all its aircraft and 110 vehicles.” Lastly, he ordered that the “CAP Administrative Officer, William O. Moore, repay his approximately \$6,000 annual salary to the state.” Potentially this ruling might have had far-reaching implications since “at least 29 other states have laws similar to an Arizona statute which provided for the funding.” The suit was contentious and complicated, with numerous legal twists and turns and back and forth, to it.

In the spring of 1970, to help take care of the emergency search and rescue aspects of the Civil Air Patrol, state politicians addressed the issue. The 29<sup>th</sup> Arizona State Legislature passed House Bill 132 on May 15, which would allow the governor to provide funds for emergency air and ground searches by the Arizona CAP. Under the Bill, the governor would be allowed to contract with the CAP for emergency searches and related activities. On May 18, 1970, Governor Jack Williams signed H. B. 132 into law. (Star 8/10/1966, 3/27/1970; Citizen 9/13/1968, 9/4/1969, 11/19/1969, 5/15/1970)

## Soldier Lost in Huachuca Mountains

**Jun 1, 1970**

A 21-year-old soldier from Ft. Huachuca was lost in the mountains near the Fort. Army Specialist 5 Bruce Konigsfeld of Brookfield, Illinois was last seen in hiking clothes near Black Tail Canyon in the Huachuca Mountains. There was a 13-day search effort for the young soldier before it was called off on June 15. The 11<sup>th</sup> Signal group spent more than 23,000 hours in the hunt. The search effort included dogs, helicopters and horses, as well as members of SARA. In addition, some twenty caves and mine shafts were investigated. The continuing investigation was turned over to Lt. Col. Thomas Gorman, Provost Marshal for the Fort. As of the end of 1970, there was no further word on the status of the young soldier. (Citizen 6/13/1970, 6/16/1970)

## Girl Scout Hurt in Catalinas

**Aug 5, 1970**

A 12-year-old Tucson Girl Scout slid 150 feet down an incline in an area known as Turkey Track. The accident occurred shortly before noon, but it took 34 rescuers from the Southern Arizona Rescue Association, Civil Defense, and Forest Service, five hours to get her out. Suzanne Roof was on an overnight campout in Spencer Canyon, just over a mile up the Mount Lemmon Highway from the Palisades Ranger Station, with her troop when she lost her footing. Rescuers at first thought she had injured her back and were fearful to move her until Dr. William Scott, a SARA volunteer, hiked into the area to examine her injuries. She sustained a hairline fracture of her pelvic bone, a broken wrist and abrasions. (Citizen 8/5/1970)

## Two Boys Steal Airplane from Davis-Monthan AFB

**Aug 5, 1970**

What started off as an “aerial joy ride” by two teenage boys, resulted in a significant, costly search in both the United States and Mexico. At 4:45 p.m., Bradford F. Gushing, 16, and Daniel L. Plowman, 15, stole a yellow, two-place Cessna 150 from the Davis-Monthan AFB Aero Club. Both teenagers belonged to the Aero Club but neither had a pilot’s license although Plowman did have 42 hours of flying experience. “Flying is Danny’s life,” according to his father. They took off without authorization from Davis-Monthan, after filing a fake flight plan with the control tower. They had a maximum of four hours of fuel, giving them a range of no more than four-hundred miles.

A search soon began and it was anyone’s guess where they were headed. (Any use of flight-following by radar was not reported in the newspapers.) It quickly escalated, as the Arizona, New Mexico, California and Texas wings of the Civil Air Patrol were activated. In addition to the CAP and flying clubs in Mexico, the search involved Davis-Monthan, Fort Huachuca’s Libby Airfield, the 42<sup>nd</sup> Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadron out of Hamilton AFB, north of San Francisco, the US Department of State, as well as the governments of Sonora and Chihuahua, in Mexico. Further complicating efforts, there were numerous severe thunderstorms in the region, making it particularly dangerous for flight crews.

The young thieves, described in the newspapers as “flying Huckleberry Finns” and “Young Fly-Boys,” bought \$3 worth of fuel on a small ranch south of the border in Caborca, (near Rocky Point). They were then reportedly spotted in Agua Prieta, adjoining Douglas, Arizona, and then to have finally crash-landed in Mexico, south of El Paso. Neither narrative was true. Right after

buying a little fuel in Caborca, the boys either tried to land or were forced to land on a deserted beach on the Gulf of California, about forty miles south of Rocky Point.

They flipped over when the small front nosewheel of the \$7,000 Cessna got caught in the sand, fortunately, neither lad was hurt. Since the aircraft belonged to the US Air Force, reclaiming the largely undamaged plane off the makeshift landing strip would prove a diplomatic challenge for the state departments of both Mexico and the United States.

But their odyssey did not end there. Abandoning the plane on the beach, they made it up to Norton Air Force Base near San Bernadino, California, “on foot, by car and by train. . . .” Plowman’s older brother was stationed there. On August 13, after being returned to Tucson, the two teenagers were charged by the FBI with theft of a US aircraft, filing a fraudulent flight plan, and joy-riding in a government plane. They admitted their guilt. If tried as adults, the several felonies they each faced had stiff monetary penalties and potentially, even prison time. Ultimately the youths were sentenced as juveniles and placed on five years’ probation. A report indicated that 726 hours of flying time was spent in searching for these two boys. (Citizen 8/7/1970, 8/13/1970, 8/14/1970; Star 8/12/1970, 8/14/1970, 9/15/1970)

### Family Tragedy Generates New Laws for SAR

**Aug 5, 1970**

A vehicle driven by Bud Gibbs, 53, became stuck in Camp Creek Wash, a remote spot, some forty miles northeast of the Phoenix metro area. He, along with Mrs. Ann Gibbs, 51, and three of their grandchildren and a neighbor child, were going on a camping trip near Bartlett Lake. Mr. Gibbs became bogged down in the sand. He tried to dig the dreadfully stuck car out in the 110-degree heat. Soon proving unsuccessful, he began walking to the town of Carefree to get help. In the interim, the grandmother and the four children, ages 12, 10, 10, and 8, attempted to hike to the Lake, about five miles distance. Mr. Gibbs reached Carefree that evening. Of the six people in the ill-fated vehicle, he would be the only survivor. After a massive search had ensued, the last of the deceased children, Michelle Ong, 10, was found nearly eight weeks later, on October 1.

As a result of this heartbreak, the State Legislature formalized the role of the Sheriff in search and rescue in Arizona Revised Statute 11-441-C. “The Sheriff shall conduct and coordinate SAR missions. . . .” This language was added to the Sheriff’s statutory responsibilities on April 17, 1971, when Governor Jack Williams signed House Bill 10 into law. The issue of Sheriff’s SAR mission cost recovery was also formulated into state law by this same 1971 House Bill 10. By statute, the Arizona Department of Emergency and Military Affairs (DEMA) was designated to support SAR mission cost reimbursement and resource coordination support of Arizona Sheriffs. Like most Western States, DEMA has a State SAR Coordinator, which also takes the lead in missing aircraft missions, ELTs and 406 PLB coordination.<sup>1</sup> (Star 8/8/1970; Citizen 10/2/1970)

### Military Assistance for Safety and Traffic

**Sep 1, 1970**

Immediately following AMES—Air Medical Evacuation System into the State of Arizona was MAST—Military Assistance for Safety and Traffic. See “Air Medical Evacuation System,” May 30, 1969, on page 257. MAST began as a helicopter emergency medical evacuation collaboration between the federal government’s Departments of Defense, Transportation, and Health, Education

<sup>1</sup> See “House Bill 10,” January 11, 1971 on page 272 for information on the formulation and wording of House Bill 10.

and Welfare. The trial program, at first involving five military bases around the West, was introduced in San Antonio, Texas, on July 15, 1970. It was followed in August and September with a base in Washington, Colorado, and Idaho. On September 1, Luke Air Force Base in Glendale, Arizona, was the fifth and last tested and like the other four bases, it was forecast to conclude on December 31, 1970. It did not end then, however.

MAST began as an experiment with helicopters to airlift victims of traffic accidents from remote areas to hospitals but soon included other emergencies such as transporting premature babies and heart attack victims. These rescue missions mostly for civilians, were great training for military flight crews and military medics. The costs were absorbed by the military with the program providing “24/7” coverage. Local Sheriffs or Highway Patrolmen could summon the airborne teams when believed needed. The helicopters could also be used for flying medical doctors to critically injured or ill patients in remote rural areas. It was a “Win-Win.”

The MAST program at Luke AFB had two Kaman HH-43B “Huskie” helicopters, call sign “Pedro 21.” It began with five officer pilots, eleven enlisted men and seven medical technicians, all attached to Detachment 15, 42<sup>nd</sup> Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadron (42<sup>nd</sup> ARRS). Their response distance was limited to a 75-mile radius but had Para-jumpers. At Luke also at this time, was the 302<sup>nd</sup> Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadron (302<sup>nd</sup> ARRS), an Air Force Reserve Unit whose 23 pilots principally flew antiquated twin-engine, large fixed-wing amphibians, the HU-16 “Albatross,” since 1956. They were one of three similar units on call for worldwide air-sea rescue; over the years, however, it had flown on many missions, very often assisting the Civil Air Patrol in looking for downed and missing airplanes in Arizona.

That April 1, 1971, the 302<sup>nd</sup> ARRS transferred its operational capability from the fixed-wing “Albatross” to the HH-34 Sikorsky “Choctaw,” a hoist-equipped piston-driven helicopter, used for rescue work in Vietnam and now available for MAST in Arizona. On April 1, 1974, Luke AFB’s MAST Detachment 15 of the 42<sup>nd</sup> ARRS, was deactivated and reorganized into a new unit with a totally different mission. MAST responses were transferred to two helicopter crews in the 58<sup>th</sup> Tactical Fighter Wing, with primary responsibility for their own military aircraft. (Citizen 9/2/1970; Star 12/15/1970; Arizona Republic 10/23/1970, 11/26/1970, 2/26/1971, 7/2/1971, 10/12/1973)

## County Sheriffs Accept Help

**Sep 16, 1970**

An offer by the State of Arizona to help in search and rescue missions was generally accepted by County Sheriffs during a meeting in the statehouse. Arizona State Senator Sandra Day O’Connor, who would be the first woman to serve as an Associate Justice on the United States Supreme Court, and Arizona Congressman Burton Barr, convened the hearing to get law enforcement officers’ opinions on proposed state legislation to aid search projects.

“The legislators said they would be willing to give statutory authorization for conducting search and rescue missions across state lines and agreed to explore the chances of extending workman’s compensation and liability insurance to volunteer searchers.” Lawmakers indicated they favored relaxing statutory restrictions on emergency spending by counties. Local officials indicated state spending was necessary to help provide search facilities. There was also mention of a State Search Coordinator. (Citizen 9/17/1970)



## Busy Weekend of October 3–4, 1970 on Mt. Lemmon

### Oct 3–4, 1970

Roland Miller, 49, died of a heart attack in the Marshall Gulch Area while hiking and was carried out to the road by 23 members of SARA. Also that weekend, 16-year-old Vincent Beretta shot himself in the foot with a .357 magnum revolver on Mt. Lemmon. The next day, October 4, 27-year-old Theodore W. Sammis was rock climbing on the mountain when the “pins on his safety rope gave way.” He suffered bruises and an ankle injury. The fall occurred about three miles southwest of the radar installation. (Citizen 10/5/1970)

## Helicopter Demonstrated for Sheriff Burr

### Nov 19, 1970

“It’s a patrol car in disguise—we’ve just put it 500 feet up in the air.” Pilot Phil De Salvo was showing one of the two helicopters brought over from Long Beach to Sheriff Waldon V. Burr and other city and county officials. The ships belonged to the Hughes Tool Company, but these models were for sale. Burr was particularly enthusiastic about the five-place, Hughes-500. “It could cruise at 150 miles an hour and cost, with complete radio gear and stretchers, \$120,000. In addition, it would cost \$100 to \$200 an hour to operate. For each hour in the air, the copters would require four hours maintenance.” (Citizen 11/20/1970)

## 45 SAR Volunteers Respond

### Jan 3, 1971

Paul Hayes 17, and his younger brother, John, 16, were camping near the end of the road at Marshall Gulch when the storm with heavy snow buried the Catalina Mountains. The teenagers had been camping for four nights and were unaware of the approaching blizzard. Sgt. Brandes and rescuers were called to the mountain for assistance by the boys’ father, who found them missing from their camp. “As rescue personnel were stopped on the road halfway up the mountain to put snow chains on their vehicles, the Hayes boys came walking down the road...” (Star 1/5/1971)

## Stranded on Backroad to Mt. Lemmon

### Jan 4, 1971

After 68-year-old Olen Clark struggled for ten hours through the snow, the long, two-day ordeal of he and his house guest, ended. Clark was showing his friend from Cleveland, Ohio, Kathryn Wertenberger, 62, the backroad up to Mt. Lemmon, when he backed into a ditch turning around, becoming stuck. The two were at the 6,200-foot level of the steep, unpaved road. The Citizens Band Radio he had in his vehicle for such emergencies was disabled with the accident. That first night, with temperatures in Tucson plummeting to just 17 degrees (tying the all-time record for Tucson), the two stranded seniors, “huddled by the Jeep’s heater which was turned on at half-hour intervals.”

Knowing they were in real trouble, Clark went for help, choosing to break trail through the frozen snow the remaining seven miles to Summerhaven. It took him ten hours to struggle his way up. He said, “ ‘Sometimes when I leaned up against a tree or a rock to rest I fell asleep for a while.’ ” At times, he only made twenty steps before he would have to stop and rest. He did see the plane his

wife had chartered “less than 200 feet above and frantically waved to attract attention—but went unseen. . . Rescuers from the Pima County Sheriff’s Search and Rescue Unit moved up the mountain road after being alerted by Clark. . .” Both Clark and Wertenberger were cold and exhausted but in good condition, given the circumstances. (Citizen 1/6/1971)

## House Bill 10

**Jan 11, 1971**

The Thirtieth Session of the Arizona Legislature convened on January 11, with Governor Jack Williams addressing both chambers. Important to GOP House Majority Leader Burton Barr’s agenda were some aspects of reorganization of state government. This included the “creation of a state search and rescue agency with money and power to coordinate local agency searches for lost persons, including the authorization for the use of state equipment and the Arizona National Guard.” Two days later, such a bill was introduced in the Arizona House. In further defining this provision, Barr would say, “the emergency services division is vitally important as a major step in re-organizing state government and it also will get prompt attention.” This was House Bill 10, and it said, in part:

“Key provisions. . . would abolish the current civil defense department and arm county sheriffs with authority and money to conduct search and rescue missions. ‘Up to now no one has had any real authority to order or finance these missions,’ said Barr. ‘This bill puts the responsibility directly on the sheriffs and provides the funds. Search and rescue operations would be financed under a \$250,000 budget for 12 months.’

“The bill also would replace the current State Disaster Board with a state emergency council composed of the same membership. ‘The governor currently heads the disaster board with the secretary of state, attorney general, civil defense chief, and three other members. . . a big step forward in giving state direction to previously volunteer and un-supported search and rescue efforts by the counties,’ Barr said. The bill also gives the governor full authority over all state personnel to deal with any emergency threatening life or property.”

Of course, H.B. 10 was reviewed, probed, and dissected by search and rescue and related emergency operations’ groups throughout the state. Less than a week after the bill was introduced, blowback began. “The Apache Junction Sheriff’s Posse, Inc. has disbanded and similar action was reportedly planned for rescue units in Superior, Kearny and San Manuel because of opposition to House Bill 10.” It was understood by them that, “The bill created state-supervised search and rescue operations and would ‘no longer make it possible for our members to volunteer in search and rescue activities,’ said Leo Frazier, 46, captain of the Apache Junction unit.” With Frazier’s interpretation, “refusal to participate when the governor or his director mobilizes ‘all organized’ search and rescue units could mean a \$300 fine or one year in jail, or both for any member.”

Representative Burton Barr was seemingly totally surprised by the reaction and hurriedly clarified it. “Under the terms of H.B. 10, the governor has nothing to do with the operation of search and rescue missions. They are fully in control of the sheriff, who may request additional help if they so desire.” Some feared they could be pressed into duty against their will. On February 25, the House Judiciary Committee reported out the bill<sup>2</sup> after amending it substantially to appease local search and rescue teams.

<sup>2</sup> Definition of report out: “to return after consideration and often with revisions to a legislative body for action.” See <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/report%20out>.

House Bill 10 also authorized state financial aid for search and rescue operations conducted by County Sheriffs. Private groups would be reimbursed for their expenses. The Governor would also have broad powers in certain emergencies and County Sheriffs would be authorized to recruit civilian help in search and rescue operations. Additionally, the Civil Defense Department was to be renamed the Division of Emergency Services and headed by the Governor. The concerns of Captain Frazier of Apache Junction seemed to have been resolved.

On March 9, House Bill 10 was sent to the Senate, after passing the House by a vote of 57 to 2. Search and rescue “still would be under the direction of local officials, but they could call on the state to provide heavy equipment, including aircraft, and money.” With the Senate’s committee focusing on such things, the State, County and Municipal Affairs Committee began hearing testimony regarding the provisions of this bill. This included a very emotional plea for its passage from Mrs. Eileen Ong. She was the woman who tragically lost four members of her immediate family, as well as their young friend, in the desert of Phoenix the previous August 5<sup>th</sup>, described in “Family Tragedy Generates New Laws for SAR” on page 269. While on a family outing, their car became hopelessly stuck in the sand. The last of the four children who went missing that fateful day was finally found on October 2.

Governor Jack Williams signed House Bill 10 on April 16, 1971. Williams said the “search and rescue portion of the measure merely legalizes what county sheriffs have been doing as acts of mercy for many years. He said the law also allows state agencies to provide back-up in men and money when lives are at stake.” After a record-breaking 124 days in regular assembly, the 30<sup>th</sup> Session of the Arizona Legislature came to an end on May 15. Among the many laws passed was House Bill 10, which established a Division of Emergency Services and which also provided funding for search and rescue operations. (Star 1/10/1971, 3/30/1971, 4/17/1971; Citizen 1/13/1971, 2/17/1971, 2/26/1971, 3/10/1971, 5/15/1971)

### Carried Out from Finger Rock Canyon

**Jan 27, 1971**

Pima County Sheriff’s Search and Rescue Unit members (including SARA) responded to 17-year-old Anthony Terry, who broke his leg after falling fifty feet in Finger Rock Canyon. The teenager was scrambling up the canyon when he fell about 3:30 p.m. and was in an ambulance at the end of Campbell by approximately 10:00 p.m. (Star 1/28/1971)

### Woman Still Missing in Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument

**Feb 3, 1971**

Carol Turner, a 32-year-old graduate student at New Mexico University, was reported missing in the park after she had gone on a day hike into the Dripping Springs area. In this news article, Pima County Sheriff’s Lieutenant, Carlton Oglesby, voiced some skepticism that she was actually still in the park. He said, “There is a slim chance” she was still there; this was seemingly based on her not being found earlier. The Sheriff’s Department issued a region-wide alert for her, although the car she had been driving was located in the park. Park Rangers were still looking, having been inserted into the area a second time by helicopter.

Then, in a follow up article in *The Arizona Daily Star* of March 7, 1971, outdoor writer Pete Cowgill wrote of her still not being found. Cowgill also indicated that based on other investigation, it was believed she was still probably in the park. “At least 134 people have spent 3,600 hours”

trying to locate her, as well as including time of both fixed wing and helicopter assistance. Members of SARA spent a great deal of time on several occasions, searching for her. Hal Coss, an Organ Pipe Cactus Park Ranger, at one time did identify the odor of decay, strongly believing it to be a dead person, an odor he had smelled before on other incidents. Even with significant follow up there, nothing was located although this is a rugged area with a great many cliffs and depressions. On that search, Frances Walker of SARA believes she was abducted, “No woman would leave her purse in plain view in her car.” As of 2023, she still remains missing. (Arizona Republic 2/10/1971; Star 3/7/1971; Frances Walker interviews 2022)

## Helicopter Practice

**Mar 13, 1971**

Sixty members of the Pima County Sheriff’s Department Search and Rescue Unit gathered to learn about the helicopter capability provided by Davis-Monthan AFB. The Air Force equipment consists of two HH-43B “Huskie” ships with a four-man crew: pilot, co-pilot, crew chief hoist operator, and medic. The aircraft had a flying time of about 150 minutes, cruising at 70–80 knots. One of their most important attributes, however, is their capability to perform hoist missions. Sgt. Ted Brandes said, “ ‘We thought it would be a good idea for the people to get used to the jet blast, learn safety and learn how to really work with the Air Force people and their equipment.’ ” He went on to say, we “ ‘learned how to handle the hook up lines for the winch and sling [and] where to put the stretcher, all the things that save time in the field when a few minutes can really make a difference.’ ” (Star 3/18/1971)

## Horse Falls On Cowboy

**Mar 25, 1971**

Daniel Smith, while rounding up cattle in the Baboquivari Mountains forty miles southwest of Tucson, had his horse rear and fall backward on him at 2:30 p.m. The 29-year-old cowboy suffered a broken pelvis and other internal injuries. Earle D. Stuber soon found Smith in Brown Canyon, after the two had become separated. He then led Smith “five or six miles on horseback to a line shack where he left him and went for help. Thirty-four Search and Rescue [SARA] personnel, including two ambulance attendants and a nurse [Sue Clemans], carried Smith a quarter of a mile on a stretcher to a waiting ambulance.”

Also responding on this emergency was a member of the MARS radio network. To get medical advice for Smith, he was able to contact a fellow radio enthusiast in Tucson who in turn contacted Dr. Bob Hastings, a volunteer with SARA but who had not gone out on this accident. According to SARA’s Past President Frances Walker in interviews by the author in 2022, Dr. Hastings did not approve of laymen, such as SARA members, starting IVs. However, Bud Simons and Bill Scott, both medical doctors and both also volunteers with SARA, did approve and in fact had been teaching SARA responders to safely administer an IV. This training included Frances Walker and Sue Clemans, a nursing student at the time and luckily for Smith, both women were now at his side on this incident. Hastings agreed for an IV to be started and Sue did the job very nicely. She then accompanied Smith in the ambulance to Saint Mary’s Hospital where he was admitted in serious condition. (Star 3/26/1971; Frances Walker interview 2022)

### 3-Year-Old Missing for 19 Hours

**Apr 5, 1971**

When his mother went to answer the phone, 3-year-old Philip Coyle made his escape over the back patio wall. At 2:00 p.m., he was off “to see the fire in the mountains.” Along with his dog, Lady, the toddler spent the next 19 hours working his way through the desert toward the Catalina Mountains, starting near Broadway and Wilmot. Because of his size and age, a search ramped up quickly and by its end, 12 square miles were checked. “Monday night more than 100 searchers, including 44 policemen, 36 members of the Pima County Sheriff’s Search and Rescue Unit, and 35 to 40 volunteers, combed the area.” The next morning, the search effort included an additional twenty firemen and a number of searchers on horseback. He was found at 8:40 a.m., the next morning, by a searcher in a dune buggy. Wandering two miles from home, he was safe but chilled and with cactus thorns stuck in him. The fire Phillip was off to see, was a man-caused, 75-acre brush fire at the 5,500-foot level near Finger Rock Canyon. It was very noticeable from all over Tucson; for several days, it was sending up a big plume of black smoke. (Star 4/7/1971, 5/5/71)

### Arizona Emergency Services Association

**Apr 8, 1971**

“The Arizona Civil Defense and Disaster Association has changed its name. The group will now be known as the Arizona Emergency Services Association. In its ninth year at this point, the organization’s membership includes 11 federal agencies, 11 state agencies, and 12 of the 14 counties.” Then at its semi-annual conference held at the end of September in Nogales, which more than one-hundred persons attended, Governor Jack Williams conducted a panel discussion on search and rescue in Arizona. Awards were presented to several people, including Sgt. Ted Brandes of the Pima County Sheriff’s Department. (Citizen 4/13/1971; Arizona Republic 10/2/1971)

### Teacher Dies in Pima Canyon

**May 1, 1971**

Gerald Haluck, 36, a Palo Verde High School math teacher was fatally injured in a fall while hiking with a young boy in Pima Canyon. According to Sgt. Ted Brandes, Pima County SAR Coordinator, Haluck fell about one-hundred feet. He was “pronounced dead at the scene by physicians.” (Citizen 5/3/1971)

### First State SAR Coordinator

**May 17, 1971**

A former Air Force rescue unit commander, Troy Rhodes, was appointed the State Coordinator of Search and Rescue Operations in Arizona’s Division of Emergency Services. From Glendale, the 43-year-old Rhodes was named to the post by Colonel Carl N. Smith, director of the division. Rhodes had been Operations Officer and Interim Commander of the 302<sup>nd</sup> Air Rescue Squadron at Luke AFB. “Under state law, the division’s first task will be writing regulations to cover its assistance to local peace officers in rescue operations. The division also must guide county sheriffs in seeking remuneration from the state for expenditures.” (Citizen 5/18/1971)

## Man Rescued from Mine Shaft

**Jun 2, 1971**

A 46-year-old man narrowly escaped death after plunging forty feet into a mine shaft he was exploring. Tucsonan James Huggitt was hiking on Iron Mountain, two miles southeast of Old Tucson when he chose to look into the old mine. An eight-inch-wide plank spanned the shaft. “My husband went across the board to see what was on the other side,” Mrs. Huggitt told reporters. “But on the second step he took the board tipped and he went down.” Within 45 minutes rescuers were working to reach the unconscious man. Dr. William Scott and Ron Neilson, both of the Civil Defense rescue team were lowered to the now conscious man. Once Huggitt was hoisted out, it took another two hours for Scott and Neilson to get back to the surface. (Citizen 6/3/1971)

## Struck by Rattlesnake, Teenager Falls

**Jun 8, 1971**

An 18-year-old hiker/scrambler was startled by a striking rattlesnake and fell 15 feet. Fracturing his leg when he landed, Richard Murphy was climbing in Finger Rock Canyon when he was hurt. A helicopter from Davis-Monthan AFB was brought in and flew the teenager out to a hospital, where he was listed in satisfactory condition. (Citizen 6/9/1971)

## Teenager Drowns in Patagonia Lake

**Jun 20, 1971**

The first day that Tony Borquez disappeared, two volunteers from the Pima County Sheriff’s Search and Recovery Divers tried to locate the Tucsonan, who drowned while swimming in the fifty to ninety-foot-deep lake. The 18-year-old was trying to swim about 350 yards from a floating platform to the shore. After five days, the search was ended and finally after nine days, the young man’s body floated to the surface of the lake. (Star 6/30/1971)

## Girl Drowned in Sabino Canyon

**Aug 10, 1971**

A Palo Verde High School student, 15-year-old Terri O’Connor, drowned while trying to cross flooded Sabino Creek. She and several other students were trapped on the wrong side, being surprised by the sudden rise in the water. Two girls, including Terri, attempted to ford the stream at a submerged bridge by forming a human chain, but they were quickly knocked off their feet. One of the girls was able to grab a tree branch and be assisted to safety but Terri was swept downstream. Her body was discovered the next day, having lodged against a boulder in the stream, which had now subsided. (Star 8/12/1971)

## Governor Approves SAR Pay

**Aug 12, 1971**

Arizona Governor Jack Williams approved a new law which permitted compensation of county search and rescue operations by the state. “...agencies may seek reimbursement when ordered by



him to provide services not covered by regular appropriations. Under the law enacted by the last legislature, such agencies, usually Sheriff's Offices, will be reimbursed not to exceed 50 percent of the first \$1,000 or less spent in a fiscal year." The law is being administered by the former civil defense chief Colonel Carl N. Smith, the original director of the new State Division of Emergency Services.

Search and rescue missions would be given an identifying number and the sheriff would be the mission coordinator in each county except on federal reservations where no agreement existed. When necessary, the new division was authorized to provide state personnel, including military, and equipment to deal with emergencies. (Citizen 8/12/1971)

### **Boy Hurt in Fall in Bear Canyon**

**Aug 15, 1971**

Seventeen-year-old Michael Olivares slipped while trying to cross above the first waterfall in Bear Canyon. He had just successfully thrown a puppy to the waiting arms of friends. Falling headfirst, Olivares fell 15 feet knocking himself unconscious and lying in the stream. Sheriff's volunteers were able to reach the teenager and mouth-to-mouth was administered. A helicopter from Davis-Monthan lifted the lad from the pool and got him to Tucson Medical Center where he was reported in guarded condition. (Citizen 8/16/1971)

### **Emergency Medical Technician Program**

**Fall 1971**

Pima College began teaching an Emergency Medical Technician course, "designed to upgrade skills of ambulance drivers, search and rescue personnel, first aid personnel and firemen and police officers." This was one of 150 evening courses offered by the school that year for the Fall Semester.

Courses at the EMT level were just beginning to be taught around the country. One driving force behind this increased emphasis on emergency care was the publication that year of "Emergency Care and Transportation of the Sick and Injured," put out by the Committee on Injuries, American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons. This nearly three-hundred-page manual had 16 participating, oversight organizations, such as the American College of Surgeons, American Heart Association, American Medical Association, and American Red Cross. It also had 88 professional contributors, mostly doctors well-respected in their particular fields. This book very likely was the textbook for the EMT course at Pima Community College.

A likely second major influence was the advent of the paramedic. The Los Angeles County Fire Department's first six firefighter-paramedics graduated on December 9, 1969. By 1971, there were three paramedic squads in Los Angeles. This dramatic new medical field did not escape the notice of Hollywood; the television drama *Emergency!*, championed by Jack Webb of *Dragnet* fame, had its premiere on January 15, 1972. Between then and September 1977, 124 one-hour episodes were filmed, always with high ratings. After that initial six-episode season, the rest of the country now knew what Los Angeles had already learned. Advanced emergency pre-hospital care was saving lives. See "Arizona's First Paramedics," March 15, 1974, on page 293. (Citizen 8/27/1971; Personal knowledge of the author)

## Father and Son Stranded in Catalinas

**Oct 20, 1971**

John Jamack, 28, and his 5-year-old son, John. Jr., became stranded while hiking on the north side of Mt. Lemmon. Leaving before noon, they were on the Oracle Ridge Trail, intending to spend two hours hiking. It was a steep trail, made slippery by recent snows. Several hours later, they were unable to retrace their steps. When her family did not return by 5:00 p.m., Mrs. Jamack sounded the alarm. Mr. Jamack recognized their dilemma and prepared to spend the night at Catalina Camp. Sgt. Ted Brandes led a search with his volunteers, including 11 from SARA. Jamack and his son were reached about midnight. “Brandes credited Mrs. Jamack with making the search a lot easier.” Interestingly, the week before, Air Traffic Controller John Jamack had been instrumental in aiding a woman land a small plane after her husband-pilot suffered a heart attack. (Citizen 10/21/1971)

## Plane Lost for a Week

**Oct 21, 1971**

Refueling in Albuquerque, 29-year-old Bruce R. Borchardt of Boulder, Colorado, was enroute to Tucson to see his brother. He took off Thursday mid-afternoon and was flying a small yellow and blue, two-place Luscombe, with a possible range of five-hundred miles. A pilot for just two years, the real estate salesman did not file a flight plan, possibly because he had flown the route before. His brother did not know when to expect him and so he was not reported missing until early Sunday. He was never heard from again.

That Monday, the first day they could search, a storm rolled in and Civil Air Patrol planes were not able to get into the air; snow and rain now blanketed the area. But they persisted and on Tuesday, CAP planes from Phoenix, Tucson and Safford focused their efforts in the Willcox area, thinking he might have been following Interstate 10, a common practice. CAP planes in New Mexico were also hunting east of there, as well. And, on that day, “volunteers flying over the Dragoon Mountains southeast of Tucson found the wreckage of a small plane five minutes after it was reported missing on a flight from Dallas to Tucson. Killed in that crash was William Stewart, a businessman from Mesquite, Texas.” It was fortuitous and a testimony to the Civil Air Patrol, but it was not Bruce Borchardt.

On day six of his leaving Albuquerque, search officials decided Borchardt probably needed to refuel before crossing into Arizona, so the CAP planes in Arizona were called off and New Mexico would take over. On day seven, one week after he went missing, Borchardt and his small plane were found on the side of the New Mexico’s 7,000-foot-high Sierra Lucero Peak. Once spotted, state police and ground units reached the wreckage and the victim less than three hours later. (Citizen 10/25/1971, 10/29/1971; Star 10/27/1971)

## Rescue from Onyx Cave

**Nov 24, 1971**

Fred Spaeth, a sophomore at Sahuaro High School was rescued from Onyx Cave, in Gardner Canyon on the east side of the Santa Rita Mountains. Although not seriously hurt, he fell and injured his leg. The 17-year-old spent about 12 hours trapped until members of SARA arrived. The young man

was planning on joining SARA when he was old enough and had been practicing climbing before the accident. (Citizen 11/26/1971)

### **Frigid Hiker Found After 5 Days**

**Dec 10, 1971**

A 25-year-old U of A graduate student in Chemistry, Brian John Plankey, went hiking by himself in the Mt. Lemmon area. He started on an overnight hike on Saturday but it was not until the next day that he realized he was in trouble. He was using an old map which was full of errors. In trying to get his bearings from the outdated 1957 map, he ended up getting lost. He was supposed to be out on Sunday and his girlfriend notified authorities that he was missing and overdue.

On Monday, about eight inches of snow fell on him, with accumulations of up to two feet in some areas. “ ‘My gloves froze, my boots froze, my matches got wet,’ ” recounted the young man. “ ‘I couldn’t sleep and my legs wouldn’t stop shaking from the cold.’ ” His frozen boots and near-frostbitten feet kept him from moving too far. Search parties from the Sheriff’s Department SAR groups went out on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday. They were aided by a helicopter from Davis-Monthan AFB. He was found shortly after noon on Wednesday at the junction of Lemmon Creek and Sabino Canyon, where the snow was about 28 inches deep. The search team walked him out, taking four hours to go the six miles out. (Star 12/16/1971)

### **Mt. Lemmon Plane Crash Fatal**

**Dec 19, 1971**

Trudging through a foot of snow and freezing Mt. Lemmon weather for more than four hours, a 25-year-old woman sought help for her boyfriend, who lay dying in the wreckage of a light plane. Thirty-seven minutes after lifting off from Tucson’s Freeway Airport at 1:00 a.m., a confused pilot, Darrell Jack Burdick, 29, crashed into a ridge one-half mile northeast of the Geology Vista above Bear Canyon in the Catalina Mountains. The pair was en route to Palm Beach, Florida, from Pomona, California. Hours after she made the trapped Burdick comfortable in the small craft, Karen McQuiddy finally reached assistance at the Palisades Ranger Station at 11:00 a.m. Pima County Sheriff’s Sgt. Ted Brandes said the left wing struck a tree and the wheels hit a rock. Burdick’s body was reached at 6:00 p.m. and removed from the wreckage. Temperatures on the mountain dipped to about 20 degrees that morning. Ms. McQuiddy was listed in fair condition at Tucson Medical Center. (Star 12/20/1971)

### **SARA Call Outs for 1972**

**1972**

The Call Out records for Southern Arizona Rescue Association for 1972, list 29 separate incidents, including five deaths. They involve several overdue hikers, a carry-out of a teenager with a broken leg, at least two individuals injured separately in caves, groups of people trapped by flash floods, removing a man who died driving over a cliff, an unsuccessful search in a mine shaft, and a drowning in Sabino Canyon. (SARA Records)

## U of A Student Rescued

**Jan 8, 1972**

Twenty-year-old Charles Morse was rescued after falling eighty feet to a ledge on 4,200-foot Tower Peak in the Tucson Mountains. The University student was hiking with two friends when he fell. The rescue operation took five hours and was completed by a 42-man rescue team. Most of the operation took place after dark, precluding the use of a helicopter. Morse was taken to the University Hospital with possible broken ribs. (Star 1/9/1972)

## Man Falls to His Death in Catalinas

**Feb 19, 1972**

A 23-year-old fell about seventy feet and hit his head on a rock. Tucsonan Steven Sanson was “pulling camping gear onto a ledge” in Hollin Canyon in the Santa Catalina Mountains, when he lost his footing. He was found by members of the County SAR Squad about 8:00 p.m. The young man was with four companions and had been preparing a campsite, when the accident took place. (Citizen 2/21/1972)

## Searcher Killed in Air Crash

**Feb 20, 1972**

Michael Gayles wandered away from his family’s javelina-hunting camping trip in Cottonwood Wash ten miles west of Safford and was missed right before dark. The Graham County Search and Rescue Squad conducted an all-night search for the 6-year-old Phoenix boy. After spending the night out in the near-freezing temperatures, the boy was spotted from the air the next morning by Joe Rogers and Robert Holliday. Rogers, 46, was piloting a small, single-engine Aeronca Champ and Holliday, a 21-year-old U of A student, was flying as observer. Rogers “was reportedly flying low and circling a group of searchers on horseback to tell them that he and Holliday had spotted the boy.” Witnesses said the “plane apparently was caught in a downdraft and was forced to the ground.” Rogers was killed instantly and Holliday was seriously injured, being flown to Tucson Medical Center for treatment. (Star 2/21/1972)

## Teenager Found Dead in Foothills

**Apr 13, 1972**

Gino Saba went missing on April 13. The Tucson High School sophomore had been reported as despondent. After a ten-hour search, the youth was found hanging from a tree on Rosewood Peak off the end of North Campbell Avenue in the Catalina Mountains. The parents hired a private helicopter to look for their son, on a hunch he would be in the area where he was ultimately found. The helicopter crew found his bicycle and spotted school books right at dark. More than a dozen deputies searched for the boy after nightfall. (Star 4/21/1972)

## First DPS Helicopters and Division of Emergency Medical Services

**May 14, 1972**

The Thirtieth Session of the Arizona Legislature adjourned after a record-breaking 126 days. From it, House Bill 2003 was approved, creating the Division of Emergency Medical Services in the Department of Public Safety. It was “to provide speedy medical care to remote areas of the state. It provides for state subsidization of rural ambulance services. There were 187 ambulances in Arizona... more than 100 of them will not be permitted to operate after January 1, 1973... [they needed] to be more fully equipped after that date.” Many of these ambulances were provided by mortuaries in the rural areas and lacked appropriate equipment.

Additionally, House Bill 2003 also “provides funds for one helicopter ambulance that would be used for police work during nonemergency situations.” When HB 2003 originally came out of Committee, “the bill carries appropriations totaling \$2.2 million, \$588,000 of which was earmarked for the purchase of three helicopters.” When the machines were first being proposed, discussion began with a fleet of four. Budget reconciliation and the legislators ultimately compromised down with two helicopters.

The *Arizona Republic* ran a photo on September 6, 1972, of the Arizona Department of Public Safety’s first helicopter being outfitted with avionics. The caption noted the agency would place two Bell jet helicopters “into operation by Oct. 1.” Both would be based at Falcon Field in Mesa, with one “stationed there continuously and the other to be used about the state as needed. The air ambulances are not to compete with present services.” Each helicopter could carry two patients on stretchers, a paramedic and a pilot. Neither had a hoist. (Arizona Republic 4/30/1972, 5/2/1972, 5/15/1972, 9/6/1972; Citizen 2/10/1972, 5/19/1972)

## Girl Lost in Peppersauce Cave

**May 15, 1972**

A Pinal County Search and Rescue Team found Cruz R. Morales safe and in good condition in Peppersauce Cave, on the north side of Mt. Lemmon. The 19-year-old “wandered into the cave... Searchers began looking in the cavern after finding her car in the area.” (Citizen 5/16/1972)

## Drowning on Reservation

**May 29, 1972**

A 17-year-old Papago [Tohono O’odham] youth drowned in a livestock watering hole ten miles east of Sells. Larry Garcia had gone swimming during a wedding party. “Sheriff’s deputies said that some of the 10 persons in the party attempted to rescue the youth but were unsuccessful. Witnesses said Garcia swam out about 50 feet into the pond then sank about 1:00 p.m. The sheriff’s search and rescue squad recovered his body about 9:00 p.m.” (Citizen 5/30/1972)

## Two Men Stranded in Catalinas

**Jul 5, 1972**

Alan D. Spriggs, 28, and his 31-year-old brother, Thomas, became stranded in the steeper confines of Finger Rock Canyon when Alan sprained an ankle while hiking. He was there in street shoes. When

they did not return as planned, their mother reported them overdue to the Sheriff's Department. Sgt. Ted Brandes, along with 22 volunteers, began searching at 7:00 a.m. the next morning. Within two hours the two men were contacted and escorted out. Apparently, they missed a switchback and became confused in a rugged section of the canyon. (Star 7/7/1972)

### **Drowning in Arivaca Lake**

**Jul 22, 1972**

A 30-year-old Tucson man drowned while swimming during a fishing trip with friends. Rainier B. Wiseman presumably developed cramps after getting twenty feet from shore. He yelled for help but then struggled with his two would-be rescuers who were ultimately unable to safely calm him, forcing them to return to shore. Then, when Wiseman sank, they tried to bring him to the surface, but were unsuccessful. Sgt. Ted Brandes of the Pima County SAR Team, said "his divers recovered the body from seven feet of water five minutes after they arrived." Arivaca Lake is ninety acres in size and sixty miles south of Tucson. (Citizen 7/24/1972)

### **Three Lost in Onyx Cave**

**Sep 9, 1972**

Three teenagers from the Tempe area wandered for three days, lost in Onyx Cave, on the eastern flank of the Santa Rita Mountains. Peter Jensen, 19, the leader of the trio, his brother Jesse, and 14-year-old Ted Janssen were well-equipped but became confused and soon became lost within hours of entering the cave. Upon being rescued by SARA, their principal, take-away theme from their experience, was not being lost, but rather the vandalism they saw in the cave. (Star 9/16/1972)

### **Teenager Drowns in Parker Canyon Lake**

**Sep 17, 1972**

A 15-year-old youth from Fort Huachuca drowned while attempting to swim two-hundred feet from a small island in the Parker Canyon Lake to the shore. Cochise County Sheriff's officials were aided in their three-day search by eight divers from Tucson. Apparently, John Newton became entangled in underwater plant growth. (Citizen 9/20/1972)

### **Department of Public Safety Helicopter Call Signs**

**Oct 1972**

All Arizona Department of Public Safety Air Rescue helicopters use a distinctive radio call sign. The first two activated in 1972 were Bell Model B Jet Rangers and fittingly, adopted the name "Ranger." This radio tag was then followed by the last two digits of the designated FAA tail numbers, which were "28" and "30." So, they became "Ranger 28" and "Ranger 30." When the third ship, a Bell Long Ranger, was activated in Tucson in 1978, the Department requested the FAA end the tail number with "29," thus "Ranger 29." The fourth, a second Bell Long Ranger, went on-line in 1979 in Flagstaff and it became "Ranger 31," with the "31" specifically requested of the FAA.



The information below was furnished by now retired Arizona Department of Public Safety Air Rescue Pilot, Dave Ruhlman. See “First DPS Helicopters and Division of Emergency Medical Services,” May 14, 1972, on page 281.

“Sometime in the 1990s we were swapping aircraft around so much between units that we started using the call signs ‘Tucson Ranger,’ or ‘Flagstaff Ranger,’ as the tail numbers meant nothing in regards to which base it was operating out of that particular day. We had several additional helos mixed in several times over the years such as a Bell 212 and a Bell 222 and a water-injected Long Ranger that we all hated but I can’t remember their tail numbers as they weren’t in service more than a year, if that long. They were tried and proved not economical and or practical for our mission.

“Yes, I was one of the first 3 pilots hired by DPS, 2 were already officers and ex-military pilots and 3 of us were hired off the street so to speak. All 5 of us were ex-military, myself and 2 others were still in the National Guard after our Army tour. I wasn’t aware that DPS was hiring pilots until my Guard Commander sent me up from summer camp in Douglas, AZ, to Papago Park [base for AZ National Guard] to pick up the first UH-1 delivered to the AZ National Guard. At the time I was recently back from Vietnam and was the only Guard pilot currently rated on the Huey!

“I got to Phoenix and that night was called at home to meet/pick up 2 DPS officers at first light in north Scottsdale and conduct surveillance and rescues as needed in the central AZ area as a result of severe monsoon flooding. We flew all day and rescued numerous people off the tops of 3–4 cars being swept up in flooded streams and right at dark I spotted someone waving a blanket from the top of a small pinnacle near Bartlett Dam. It turned out to be six persons whose 4 by 4 had been washed down the Verde River and had climbed up on this pinnacle. I did a one skid hover as the two officers pulled them aboard. Needless to say, everyone was tickled!

“Upon landing everyone back in north Scottsdale, the officer who was a Commander with DPS and in charge of the hiring process for pilots came to my cockpit door and hollered over the aircraft noise ‘are you looking for a job’? If so, come down to DPS headquarters in the morning and see the lieutenant...when I got home, I contacted my Commander in Douglas and explained the offer, he had already been contacted by DPS and knew all about the events of the day and told me ‘Dave don’t you worry about that damn Huey, you go down to DPS in the morning!’ I was in the right place at the right time and after taking the hiring exam and passing a polygraph I was hired by the next afternoon and was given a slot in the police academy starting in 2 weeks!” (Dave Ruhlman email 10/12/2022)

## Student Drowns in Sabino Canyon

**Oct 20, 1972**

While wading with friends across the seventh low-water crossing in Sabino Canyon, 22-year-old Steven L. Konzen slipped and was swept to his death in the turbulent waters. When the three young men crossed, there was “about two-and-a-half to three feet of water on it...” Pushed down stream and knocked off his feet, Konzen became entangled in rebar and construction wire from a project of the US Forest Service. Neither of his friends, one a diver on the school’s swim team, were able to reach Steven. Thirty members of the Sheriff’s SAR team responded and the boy was finally retrieved by using grappling hooks. This was the second storm-related, local drowning in two days. A four-year-old boy died in a water-filled construction ditch on South Pantano Road two days earlier. (Citizen 10/21/1972)

## Man Missing for Three Days

**Nov 7, 1972**

A 60-year-old man, John P. Manning, disappeared from his home for three days and was believed to have wandered away. Members of the Pima County Sheriff's Search and Rescue Unit, aided by volunteers from the county Four-Wheel Drive Search and Rescue Squad and an Air Force helicopter out of Davis-Monthan AFB, found Manning in the desert 3/4-mile east of North Swan Road in the Catalina Foothills. He was in a coma when he was found and admitted to Tucson Medical Center in guarded condition. (Citizen 11/11/1972)

## Survives Icy Night

**Nov 25, 1972**

Clad only in jeans and a sweater, 15-year-old David Roberts fortunately managed to only suffer through the frigid, 27-degree night in the Catalina Mountains. At dusk, he and two companions were sliding down a steep, ice and snow-covered hill at the San Pedro Vista when things got out of hand. He discovered he could not make it back up. The Sheriff's Substation on Mt. Lemmon was notified and soon, Sgt. Ted Brandes and 35 members of the Sheriff's Search and Rescue Team were on scene. But the teenager had wandered off. At 10:00 p.m. the search was called off until morning. The boy was finally found at 3:00 p.m. the next day at the Forest Service helipad, about two miles from San Pedro Vista. "More than 70 persons had been called into the search. . . ." (Citizen 11/27/1972)

## Sabino Canyon Rescues

**Dec 28, 1972**

The exact amount of rain that fell in Sabino Canyon just after noon that Thursday is unknown. What is known, however, is that the low-water bridge crossings in the canyon were quickly under two to four feet of water, trapping at least forty people. Visitors were driving and hiking the road when many were caught totally off guard by the unexpected and dangerous flood waters. Some managed to get out before being trapped, some did not.

While trying to walk across one of the single-lane bridges at the canyon's upper end, 15-year-old Peter Wright was swept off his feet and pulled downstream by the swift current. He luckily grabbed a tree in the streambed and was soon rescued by members of the Southern Arizona Rescue Association. The creek's current was estimated at 25-30 miles per hour and the teenager was lucky. In fact, everyone else was lucky, as well. The only other misfortune was a brand-new, 1973 car pushed off the edge of a bridge when the driver also mistakenly tried his luck in crossing. A number of people were also brought out by a large firetruck. In addition to sheriff's deputies, the fire department and SARA, there were volunteers from the Pima County Four-Wheel Drive Association. (Star 12/29/1972)

## Found Dead Near Redington Pass

**Dec 28, 1972**

When Lambert W. Young, 68, failed to return from having his car serviced, his son became worried and soon notified authorities that his father might be missing. Pima County Sheriff's SAR started

combing the area after the vehicle was found in the foothills about a mile from where the body was eventually located. Searchers discovered Mr. Young's body at the base of a cliff in Jojoba Canyon, two miles east of the end of East Speedway and a mile south of Redington Road. He was reported missing on a Thursday (Dec 28) but was not located until that Saturday afternoon. He suffered head injuries, although Sgt. Brandes believed the victim may have died from exposure, "as he wore no heavy clothing." (Citizen 1/1/1973)

### **Rescue from Agua Caliente Cave**

**Dec 31, 1972**

Samuel Redman, 18, fell some seventy feet while exploring Agua Caliente Cave, on the west edge of the Santa Rita Mountains. The young man apparently slid and bounced down along the wall which actually prevented him from being more seriously injured. He fell after his rope slipped while rappelling. He received only a minor hip injury and was released after four hours in St. Mary's Hospital. Sgt. Ted Brandes led the effort. (Citizen 1/1/1973)

### **Man Survives Fall in Dragoons**

**Jan 19, 1973**

Tombstone residents, Dave Gonzales, 22, and George Mock, 28, went on a "mountain-climbing expedition." A rancher had seen them start and warned them it was dangerous; upon returning the next morning, he only saw Mock, with Gonzales having fallen into a crevice. An Army helicopter from Fort Huachuca responded, first removing Mock, with the aid of SARA climbers, including Don Morris. Returning for Gonzales, the pilot gave instructions to Morris as to the maximum length the rope could dangle below the helicopter. With a "practiced climber's eye," Morris made an "eyeball guesstimate," which proved very successful. When they failed to return from their trip, an intensive search began. The two had become stranded on a ledge. When officers found them, Mock was soon rescued by a helicopter but Gonzales became stuck in a crevice. The responders yelled for Gonzales to remain where he was but he ignored the advice and tried to free himself. In doing so, he plunged seventy feet from the ledge he was safe on. But he survived. (Star 1/20/1973; Frances Walker interview 5/1/2023)

### **Cat Mountain Claims Hiker**

**Feb 4, 1973**

A 27-year-old hiker fell more than 150 feet while scrambling in the Tucson Mountains. William Horton was one of four trying to scale the 3,400-foot peak when the accident took place. Sgt. Ted Brandes, head of the county search and rescue team, said Horton died after slipping on some loose rocks. "The Southern Arizona Rescue Association and the Pima County rescue services removed the body from the rugged area..." (Citizen 2/5/1973)

### **Fell at Tanque Verde Falls**

**Feb 25, 1973**

Although the accident did not seem to be witnessed, Richard E. Valentine, 23, apparently slipped, crossing the top of the 75-foot-waterfall at Tanque Verde Falls. He fell into the pool at the bottom.

With Sgt. Ted Brandes providing oversight, his body was recovered by the “Pima County Search and Rescue Association” about 5:30 p.m. (Citizen 2/26/73)

### **Helicopter Rescue of Young Man**

**Mar 16, 1973**

Three young men were boulder hopping above the flood waters of Tanque Verde Falls in Redington Canyon when one of them, David Kelley, 15, tripped. Falling forty feet, he suffered serious injuries. Two hours later, Sgt. Ted Brandes was called, and he quickly notified Frances Walker of SARA and Harry Finner of the Civil Defense. Soon, 25 volunteers were on their way. Among the first to arrive, Don Morris and Tom Harlan requested a helicopter from Davis-Monthan. Piloting a single-engine “Huey,” Major William Hickerson of the 100<sup>th</sup> Recon Squadron, was able to work his way to a flat rock and cautiously land where the youth was now resting in a stokes basket. A small tree had to be chopped out of the way of the helicopter, using sharp rocks, a piton hammer and a lot of muscle. Within 12 minutes of Kelly being quickly shoved into an open door of the helicopter, he was at Tucson Medical Center. (Star 3/25/1973)

### **Fall in Finger Rock Canyon**

**Mar 30, 1973**

Falling in Finger Rock Canyon, a rugged area of the Catalina Mountains, 26-year-old Wayne Slattery spent a cold night alone. He was discovered the next day by a second hiker, who notified authorities. Volunteer search and rescue teams reached him at 9:30 p.m. that night but they could not extract him until a helicopter from Davis-Monthan AFB was brought in the next morning. He had fractured an ankle. (Citizen 4/2/1973)

### **Airman With Broken Ankle**

**Apr 18, 1973**

A 19-year-old airman, Phillip Coffey, from Davis-Monthan AFB, was carried down from the Seven Falls area of the Santa Catalina Mountains by members of the Pima County Sheriff’s Volunteer Search and Rescue Squad. He had broken his ankle in a fall on the slippery rocks. (Star 4/16/1973)

### **Mass Evacuation After Flash Flood in Sabino Canyon**

**May 5, 1973**

Although there was but a trace of precipitation at Tucson International Airport, enough rain fell in the Catalina Mountains to trap 36 people in Sabino Canyon. The flood covered two lower-level bridges with up to a foot of water. “About 30 members of the Four-Wheel Drive rescue group, Southern Arizona Rescue Assn. and Pima County Emergency Services ferried the stranded persons across the flooded bridges.” (Star 5/6/1973)

### Body in Month-Old Car Wreck

**May 26, 1973**

More than a month after the car had been stolen from her estranged husband, the wreckage of the vehicle and Dixie Jo Basle, 29, were discovered below the Mount Lemmon Highway. Seen by two hitchhikers beneath Windy Point, it had plunged through the guardrail. Although only speculation, given the design of the vista point, this may have been a suicide. SARA and the Pima County SAR group, performed the body recovery. (Star 6/29/1973)

### Three Boys Located in Sabino Canyon

**Jun 10, 1973**

A 15-year-old, a 14-year-old, and a 9-year-old boy were found in the upper reaches of Sabino Canyon after the boys failed to return home from an outing. A total of more than sixty searchers were looking for the lads but they were located by a Davis-Monthan helicopter crew at dusk. The boys were reached at midnight and brought out safely. (Citizen 6/12/1973)

### Pair Found After Search on Mountain

**Jun 17, 1973**

Tom Attaway, 21, and Mary C. Troisi, 18, “hiked farther down the mountain than planned and decided to camp out overnight rather than trek up the mountain.” Both were residents of Summerhaven and had gone for a hike. After a daylong search they were discovered at Hutch’s Pool in Upper Sabino Canyon. (Citizen 6/19/1973)

### “Decided to Take a Shortcut”

**Jul 27, 1973**

Kenny McRae, a 13-year-old Boy Scout from Stanfield, was on an overnight camping trip in the Santa Catalina Mountains near the Scout Camp and while hiking in, “decided to take a shortcut.” He soon separated from his troop, after only just arriving in the area, getting lost before noon that Friday.

A search and rescue party headed by Tom Harlan of the Southern Arizona Rescue Association and Bob Cunningham and Bruce Davenport, both of Pima County Emergency Services, found the boy nearly 24 hours after he went missing. “He had wandered about four miles off the trail. He was found near Sycamore Canyon, said Sgt. Ted Brandes, head of the Sheriff Department’s search and rescue unit.” When located, he was in good condition, but said he was “‘terribly hungry.’” Sergeant Brandes retired the next day but would remain the PCSD point person with the SAR community until at least the beginning of the year. (Star 7/29/1973; Citizen 7/30/1973)

### Woman Kicked By a Horse

**Jul 28, 1973**

A 23-year-old woman from Sasabe, was rescued twenty miles southwest of Tucson after being kicked by her horse while dismounting, breaking her leg. Mrs. Terry Nolen was accompanied by her three

stepchildren, Tammy, 15, Tanya, 11, and Timmy, 7, as well as Corrine, a 14-year-old companion. They were riding in a remote area of the McGee Ranch, more than a dozen miles from the nearest access road when they stopped to rest and she was injured.

“Timmy and Corrine stayed with the injured woman, while Tammy and Tanya crossed several miles of arroyos to reach the ranch house... [who] called for the Department of Public Safety (DPS) rescue helicopter, but the Phoenix-based craft was out of service... DPS notified Sgt. Ted Brandes, head of the Pima County Department’s volunteer search and rescue unit, who organized an overland rescue party and also requested help from a Davis-Monthan AFB rescue helicopter.”

She lay in a deep, rocky gulch for two hours before help arrived. The ground party quickly reached the isolated spot and found Mrs. Nolen in too much pain to be moved by hand across the rough terrain. The rescue helicopter arrived at 4:15 p.m., guided by a signal sheet spread on the ground, and evacuated Mrs. Nolen to Tucson Medical Center. She was reported to be in satisfactory condition. (Star 7/29/1973; Citizen 7/30/1973)

### Serious Rescue in Agua Caliente Cave

**Aug 17, 1973**

It took 35 rescuers to get 25-year-old Marvin (one articles says Myron) Zielinski out of Agua Caliente Cave on the western edge of the Santa Rita Mountains. A medical corpsman in Vietnam, the avid caver of seven years “was about 700 feet underground... when he lost his footing on a ledge about a third of the way up a sheer wall a hundred feet high.” Marvin was leading his uncle and his cousin, both first-time cavers, on a tour of the cavern. The young man lay in the dark for nine hours while his two companions went for help. He broke a wrist and a leg, the same leg he took a bullet through in Vietnam. “He has the highest praise possible for the search and rescue volunteers. He singles out Dr. Charles Heller who, although he had never been in a cave in his life, worked the perilous way down to Zielinski...” Marvin allegedly promised to join the Pima County SAR group that came in for him. He ended up having several surgeries on the leg which was put into at least five casts. Zielinski does not appear on any SARA Roster. (Star 8/18/1973, 12/2/1973; Mykle Raymond email 3/1/2023)

### Dies At Carr Canyon Waterfall

**Sep 23, 1973**

Several-hundred feet high, the Carr Canyon Waterfall can be easily seen from nearby Sierra Vista after a good rainstorm. It is attractive and certainly worth further scrutiny. A group of six youths drove to the top of Carr Canyon, intending “to lower themselves to the waterfall.” They told investigating deputies, “they had secured a rope to a rock about 75 to 80 feet above the waterfall and two had climbed down and the other four were lowering themselves” when they saw 16-year-old Patrick Williams slide across a sloped ledge and fall to his death. Responders were able to locate the teenager’s body at 4 p.m., but it took until midnight before it could be recovered. (Arizona Republic 9/25/1973; Citizen 9/26/1973)



## Plane Lost in Mexico

**Sep 29, 1973**

Telling officials at Tucson's Freeway Airport they would return late that same day, Alvin Turner and his wife Linda, left in a rented, single-engine plane to fly to near Novillo Reservoir, ninety miles east of Hermosillo to look at a mining claim. When the couple failed to return as indicated, both the Federal Aviation Administration and Civil Air Patrol launched a search into Mexico for them. On October 5, authorities called off the effort when it was reported the couple had spent the night in San Carlos, Mexico, leaving in the morning.

As it turned out, however, that report was in error and the couple had never landed there. Three or four other reports also reached authorities, claiming the pair had landed in Guaymas, Hermosillo, and Mazatlan. "After the search was canceled, an American miner working a claim near the reservoir... [said] Turner circled the plane over the mine, which he intended to photograph from the air, and dropped a message saying he was returning to Tucson..." Then, for some reason never made clear, the FBI became involved at the end of October. It being reported, "the FBI is cooperating in the investigation, which is centered at the American Consulate in Hermosillo, agents said."

Regardless, about six weeks after disappearing, their bodies were found on November 10, 1973, in the charred, smashed wreckage of a plane on a mountainside not far from the Reservoir and their mining claim. A Mexican Army unit on bivouac, found their burned aircraft in a tree, with debris scattered about. (Citizen 10/6/1973, 11/13/1973; Star 10/30/1973)

## Hunter Dies Near Patagonia

**Nov 21, 1973**

Missing for 35 hours, 55-year-old John S. McFarling was found by searchers, including the Southern Arizona Rescue Association, in the rugged mountains south of Patagonia. McFarling was deer hunting and had collapsed in an arroyo after dragging his game to within one mile of his pickup truck, parked off Highway 82. A Department of Public Safety helicopter aided in the search, as well. Ted Brandes, still involved with Pima County Sheriff's Search and Rescue, said the temperatures that night were 10 to 20 degrees. According to McFarling's wife, who had gone camping with him, he suffered from emphysema, asthma, and heart trouble. (Citizen 11/23/1973)

## "Det" 1 Helicopters Activated

**Dec 1973**

On November 27, 1962, the first of the 18 Titan II Inter-Continental Ballistic Missiles (ICBM) to eventually ring Tucson, arrived; 369 days later, they were fully operational. This became the 390<sup>th</sup> Strategic Missile Wing, 12<sup>th</sup> Aerospace Division, Fifteenth Air Force. Helicopter support for this unit was initiated the first week of May 1966, when three Bell UH-1F ("Huey") helicopters landed at Davis-Monthan AFB; assigned to the 100<sup>th</sup> Strategic Reconnaissance Wing, two more arrived a few days later. Able to carry 12 people, these very substantial aircraft joined with Davis-Monthan AFB's Det 17 "Huskie" helicopters, as well as military aircraft at both Luke AFB and Fort Huachuca, in supporting search and rescue and related emergencies in Southern Arizona.

In December 1973, the 37<sup>th</sup> Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadron (ARRS), Military Airlift Command took control of this unit and Detachment 1 (Det 1) was activated. In the following

August, this unit converted to rescue-equipped HH-1H helicopters. On July 31, 1984, Det 1 was de-activated. At its Inactivation Ceremony, it is stated this unit was:

“...responsible for saving the lives of 196 persons and relieving the pain and suffering of countless others. In 1980 [sic: 1979], a rescue crew received the coveted Air Force Cheney Award for valor while participating in a very dangerous and demanding night rescue...other crew members were recently awarded Air Medals for saving 20 lives during flooding in the Tucson area in October 1983.” (Star 5/7/1966; Arizona Republic, 4/29/1979; 390<sup>th</sup> Strategic Missile Wing Inactivation Ceremony Program, 7/31/1984)

### **Rescued from Mine Shaft**

**Dec 2, 1973**

When 27-year-old Weston Wilson ducked into the small, dark opening on 4,687-foot-high Wasson Peak in the Tucson Mountains, he thought it was a cave. Unable to adjust his eyes quickly enough, the University of Arizona graduate student walked a few feet and then dropped forty feet into the abandoned mine shaft, breaking two legs and dislocating a hip. If things were not bad enough, there may have also been a rattlesnake near where he landed, although this was not confirmed. The good news was his wife and four friends were hiking with him when he fell and were soon able to summon help. Sergeant Ted Brandes and 36 volunteers from Pima County Sheriff's Search and Rescue, responded quickly.

As the intricate rope system was being set up by the rescuers, the sun was setting and the temperature was already nearing freezing. “Dr. Christopher J. Heller and two members of the rescue squad, Jim Harsha and Dave Furrey, were lowered into the shaft. Heller applied splints to Wilson who was then put on a stretcher and hoisted to the surface.” Even after dark, the helicopter from Davis-Monthan AFB was able to land on the side of the hill. Wilson, rescued five hours after he fell, was then flown to Tucson Medical Center, where he was listed in satisfactory condition. (Star 12/3/1973)

### **Killed on Safford Peak**

**Jan 1, 1974**

Ernest Wade Clark, 21, was trying to scale a vertical cliff near the top of Safford Peak, also known as Sombrero Peak, in the northern end of the Tucson Mountains, when he lost his footing and fell 150 feet to his death. Sheriff's deputies and volunteers from the Southern Arizona Rescue Association responded. (Citizen 1/2/1974; Star 1/2/1974)

### **Killed at Chivo Falls**

**Jan 13, 1974**

While hiking in the Chivo Falls area in the northern end of the Rincon Mountains, 20-year-old Philip E. Seidel slipped on loose rocks and fell about seventy feet. A person in his photography group hiked several miles out to a convenience store where they were able to summon help. About 15 members of Pima County Sheriff's Search and Rescue, including volunteers from the Southern Arizona Rescue Association, were able to carry the young man to a waiting Arizona Department

of Public Safety helicopter. Seidel was pronounced dead at 6:20 p.m. at Tucson Medical Center, about three hours after the accident took place. (Citizen 1/14/1974; Star 1/14/1974))

### Article: “In Case Of A Search And Rescue, Call SARA”

**Jan 20, 1974**

There is a lengthy, feature article in the Outdoors section of *The Arizona Daily Star* by outdoor writer Pete Cowgill, titled: “In Case Of A Search And Rescue, Call SARA.” It says, along with two Sheriffs’ Deputies, 15 members of SARA were called out on a five-acre forest fire on Coyote Peak, thirty miles southwest of Tucson.

“The Coyote Peak fire was extinguished by Sheriff’s Deputies [sic] and 15 members of the Southern Arizona Search and Rescue Group. The men [and women] had the small fire out by 4:00 a.m. after a difficult climb to the scene in the pitch darkness. Ed Sorensen, 44, . . . suffered an injury to his right ankle [broke] when he caught his foot between two rocks on the way down the mountain. He was carried out of the rugged area on a stretcher and taken to St. Mary’s Hospital.”

Participating on this mission were Ed Sorensen, Ruth and Ray Neal, Bob Ewald, Norman Brazeau, Bill Sterlip, Francis Champlin, Joe Hersey, Phil and Bob Acker, Clarence Phetteplace, Eber Glendening, Ray and Lucille Andrews, Charles Griffin, Sheriff’s Capt. Kenneth Sturgeon and Deputy John Gammons.

In this article, Cowgill also says: “SARA’s first rescue occurred on June 17, [sic: June 15] 1959,” directly quoting then SARA President, Tom Harlan. See “SARA’s First Rescue?,” June 15, 1959 on page 184. (Star 6/17/1959, 1/20/1974)

### “911” Comes to Southern Arizona

**Jan 14, 1974**

President Lyndon B. Johnson created a Commission on Law Enforcement and Administrative Justice on July 26, 1965, with Attorney General Nicholas D. Katzenbach heading the 19-member “Blue Ribbon” President’s Commission. It was to report within 18 months (the final one was submitted on June 24, 1967), “with a mandate to seek daring, revolutionary ideas for a campaign against crime.” In one of the nine volumes of findings, “Challenge of Crime in a Free Society,” it stated “there should be a single police telephone number in each city—and eventually, over the entire United States.”

This specific conclusion, overseen by the Federal Communications Commission, was developed by The American Telephone and Telegraph Company. And, you can probably thank Indiana Congressman J. Edward Roush for the now, highly-recognized emergency telephone number, 911. On July 1, 1968, New York became the first city to implement a single emergency reporting system; in the first 13 hours, over forty-thousand calls were handled, mostly from those curious of the novelty. But it quickly proved successful and several other municipalities, including little Kodiak, Alaska, initiated the plan.

That mid-December, involved citizen Nancy Howland, a production assistant at the University of Arizona’s KUAT radio and television station had personally received promises from Tucson Mayor, James N. Corbett, and Thomas Jay, Chairman of the Pima County Board of Supervisors,

along with others, to discuss the emergency, three-digit telephone plan in the near future. Not surprisingly, nothing came of these assurances. It took over four more years before a 911 System for Tucson gained any real steam. But even then, when finally voted on by the City Council on March 27, 1973, it failed: “cost would out-distance any public benefit.”

Pima County, however, made the first concrete commitment and on January 14, 1974, the Board of Supervisors agreed to begin a 911 System by June and voted to coordinate efforts with the City Council. The first areas to secure 911 were Coronado, Catalina, Robles, Three Points, Sahuarita, Green Valley, and Continental. By the middle of July, all of Pima County was covered by 911, except for Sasabe and Tucson. On May 14, Tucson City Council “approved an emergency medical services system that includes a ‘911’ emergency telephone number, a central dispatcher for emergency vehicles and two city-operated mobile intensive care units.”

The 911 aspect of the Council’s approval fell apart, though, when the city and the county got into a muddled and contentious “turf war.” Who could service the area better? Who would dispatch ambulances? Both groups had Communications Centers, Tucson’s was in Randolph Park and the county’s, on Ajo Way. Tucson Police Chief William Gilkinson thought the agency that receives the most emergency calls should have responsibility for this and Pima County’s Chief Deputy, Michael Barr, said their new dispatching center was already set up for this function. This all played out very publicly in the area’s two major daily newspapers. If not for this back and forth involving “life and death,” it would have been comical.

Finally, on October 1, 1976, more than two years after the Tucson City Council promised its citizens they would have a 911 emergency reporting system, it became operational. (Citizen 7/26/1965, 2/19/1967, 12/20/1968, 2/3/1969, 3/24/1973, 5/14/1974, 6/12/1974, 10/1/1976; Star 11/26/1967, 1/15/1974, 6/12/1974; New York Daily News 7/3/1968)

## Climber Killed in Pontatoc Canyon

**Feb 10, 1974**

A doctor [Charles Pullen?] volunteering with the Southern Arizona Rescue Association pronounced David Winters dead at the base of the cliff the climber fell from. According to his three companions, the 27-year-old “was over halfway down a 250-foot cliff when a rope gave away and he dropped approximately 100 feet.” A rescue crew of 42 responders with the Pima County Emergency Services carried the body out of Pontatoc Canyon. (Star 2/11/1974; Citizen 2/11/1974)

## One Lives, One Dies

**Mar 3, 1974**

While hiking in the Tanque Verde Falls area, Loretta Jeanne Romberg, 21, along with her companion, John J. Bullock, also 21, apparently stumbled at the same time and “fell 30 to 50 feet down the mountainside.” She landed on top of him, partially cushioning her fall. Another hiker in the area heard a woman scream and so he called for help at 6:30 p.m., right at dark. “The Pima County Search and Rescue Team,” including SARA, responded, able to luckily get the injured pair onto a helicopter from Davis-Monthan AFB at 10:00 p.m. She was in guarded condition when admitted to Tucson Medical Center with multiple fractures and a concussion. He was dead on arrival. The crew of this helicopter as well as the volunteers on the ground, managed a very daring rescue, and sadly, a recovery as well, all after dark. The helicopter was piloted by Captain Henry Morrissey

and Lieutenant Charles Linn, aided by their Crew Chief, Sergeant Bailey, with Air Force Doctor Miller, providing life-saving assistance. (Citizen 3/5/1974; Star 3/12/1974))

## Arizona's First Paramedics

**Mar 15, 1974**

The excitement and true-life drama of lives being saved by specially trained Los Angeles County Firemen in 1970–1971, quickly caught the attention of Hollywood-based MCA/Universal Television. It was these real firemen—now functioning as paramedics—that television producer Jack Webb (of *Dragnet* fame) based his new TV show *Emergency!* on. Nothing changed the course of field medical response in this country more profoundly than did this highly-rated, 1970s television show. Beginning with the production's two-hour, debut TV movie pilot on January 15, 1972, and its final, 124<sup>th</sup>, one-hour weekly episode in September 1977, *Emergency!* dramatized how quickly and professionally paramedics could handle victims of trauma and medical misfortune, before arriving at the hospital.

This fictional television capability—but based on factual, true-life paramedic competence—was now being seen by a broad viewing audience; soon, there was a ground-swell demand for this level of expertise for where average citizens lived. But it took several years just to reach this point and then another half-century to get to where we are today.

President Lyndon B. Johnson signed into law the National Highway Safety Act of 1966 (P.L. 89-564, 80 Stat. 731) on September 9. These 13 pages established a coordinated safety program to reduce the death toll on the nation's roads. The Act authorized states to use federal funds to develop and strengthen their highway traffic safety programs in accordance with uniform standards promulgated by the Secretary of Transportation. This also addressed a dearth of emergency medical services for this country's ever-increasing vehicle accidents.

In the fall of 1967, Miami firemen, now trained as paramedics, began responding to medical incidents “in the streets,” of Florida. In the next couple of years, other cities followed suit, including Denver, Newark, Seattle, and Columbus, Ohio. Although receiving instruction in other health emergencies, the focus of these early programs was sudden cardiac arrests. But these teams generally needed a nurse riding with them, providing assistance and oversight.

Pima County, prior to 1967 and the Highway Safety Act, had two ambulance companies, A & A and Kord's. The area also had a rotating “mortuary of the month,” with a “throw and go,” ambulance response, which generally sub-contracted with the two main services. Smaller communities, such as Bisbee and Nogales, had to rely on hearses from local funeral homes for medical transport. Drivers mostly had minimal first aid training. Now under the Act, the State of Arizona proposed these businesses have both a driver and attendant, with one having Advanced First Aid. The ambulance was to be equipped with a two-way radio, oxygen, and splints and bandages. The added expense became burdensome and some smaller undertaker firms, such as the two in Bisbee, bowed out of this service. In May 1968, Arizona's 14 counties rebelled on this General Order; Arizona Highway Patrol Superintendent, James J. Hegarty, saved the day, however, when he ruled the Act “ ‘offers latitude for local variances.’ ”

In September 1969, eleven Los Angeles County and six Los Angeles City Firemen began paramedic training at Harbor-UCLA Medical Center, first venturing into the field in December, always with a nurse. On July 14, 1970, California Governor Ronald Reagan signed the Wedworth-Townsend Paramedic Act, named for State Senator James Q. Wedworth and Assemblyman Larry Townsend. This Act allowed these Los Angeles paramedics to administer drugs, electric counter-

shock treatment, and other life-saving measures. Most importantly, they no longer needed a nurse or doctor with them, although they did have medical control from a hospital. This independence from oversight, however, was not legally possible until these men had fully graduated from their program on September 28, 1970. It was these 16 (one dropped out) firemen-paramedics that the television drama *Emergency!* was based upon.

Addressing rural Arizona's iffy emergency medical capability, volunteers in these isolated parts of Arizona saw a need and began taking twenty-hour modules of advanced instruction in first aid, initially taught by two former military corpsmen, Sam Reed and Gary Trimble. Beginning on April 17, 1970, they began "traveling around the state to train police, firemen and rescue personnel in intensive first aid. Sister Mary Ralph, emergency room supervisor at St. Joseph's Hospital in Phoenix, heads the program." Within ten months, "there was a volunteer group of 80 doctors, law enforcement officers, firemen, and others who work with medical emergencies," helping to provide this training.

On December 6, 1970, Arizona Governor Jack Williams opened a three-hour seminar in Phoenix of doctors, legislators, educators and others interested in bolstering the state's pitiful Emergency Medical Services, saying it was, "a project handicapped by lack of funds and coordination between affected agencies." Perhaps the first hint of certifying paramedics by the State of Arizona was when State Majority Leader Burton Barr addressed the Legislature on January 12, 1971. "Use of so-called 'paramedics' would be especially valuable to rural communities where doctors are reluctant to locate," said Barr. A bill to this end was passed by the Arizona House but failed to win Senate approval in April 1972, however.

In the fall of 1971, Pima County instituted a two-way radio system called the Medical Emergency Dispatching System, or MEDS. This allowed ambulance drivers to communicate with hospitals and doctors and it was integrated into the new Pima County Communications Center, which opened in October. The following June, the Tucson City Council approved a \$179,000 program to establish a mobile cardiac care unit, to be run by the City Fire Department. The Southern Arizona Heart Association and the University of Arizona Medical School and other groups were also going to provide some money and equipment for it. There were still no paramedics, though, and in 1973, "some 3,400 persons died in Pima County..."

On March 15, 1974, 14 men began training as paramedics, six were Tucson Firemen and eight worked for Kord's and A & A ambulance companies. This involved about six months of classroom instruction at Saint Mary's Hospital as well as additional hands-on field training. They graduated the last of September and were able to work independently "on the streets." The city had one Mobile Intensive Care Unit (MICU) staffed by paramedics of the Fire Department and it went into service on September 29. It cost \$39,000 with donated funds (\$250,500 in 2023), solicited by ads on television. Its services were free, but the two MICUs that Kord's and A & A had, were not; in less than two weeks, this became a very major issue.

Paramedic responses were abruptly halted on October 11, when it was discovered none of these men were officially sanctioned by the State of Arizona due to an unseen glaring snafu by the agency overseeing this program. "The paramedics... couldn't be certified when they completed training in September because, no regulations giving certification had been adopted by the State Department of Health Services." This was quickly rectified and the Department adopted relevant emergency rules on November 18, 1974. These first Arizona paramedics were now in compliance with the Mobile Emergency Paramedics Act signed into law by Governor Jack Williams on June 27, 1974. All paramedic-level calls went to Saint Mary's, which was the only hospital in Tucson originally agreeing to provide needed remote medical oversight.



One final issue to be resolved was the lawsuit filed by the two ambulance companies; Tucson Fire Department was transporting patients free, resulting in a conflict of interest. The two firms claimed the City of Tucson had an unfair advantage by not charging, putting them out of business. After several months of negotiation, agreements were reached and Arizona now had its first paramedics. This much-needed improvement to the emergency medical capability of Southern Arizona was long overdue, but at last it had arrived. (Star 5/17/1966, 2/14/1967, 5/18/1968, 4/11/1970, 12/7/1970, 2/27/1971, 3/19/1972, 9/30/1974, 10/23/1974; Citizen 1/12/1971, 6/27/1974, 9/23/1974, 11/16/1974, 11/20/1974; Arizona Republic 4/30/1972)

### Another Fatal Tornado at San Xavier

**Jun 23, 1974**

Almost ten years after a tornado set down in San Xavier, south of Tucson, killing a mother and child, a second twister struck almost within the same neighborhood, this time tragically killing one man and injuring 31. It demolished 19 mobile homes and seriously damaged close to fifty more. Three other tornadoes were also reported during the storm-filled hour that afternoon. “Only one of the other three, a long, thin funnel cloud that was sighted by two employees at the National Weather Service [at the airport] at 4:03 p.m., was officially confirmed as a tornado, however.”

This was an “all-hands-on-deck” response. “Bill Kordsiemon of Kord’s Ambulance said he received about 60 calls for emergency service.” Carl Fehr, 78, was discovered in the debris of a demolished trailer home and was pronounced dead on arrival at Pima County Hospital.

“As soon as the disaster was reported... Rural Metropolitan Fire Department and the Tucson Fire Department converged on the area to aid the injured. Red Cross workers, Sheriff’s Deputies [sic] and firemen, boosted by a call [up] of 50 sheriff’s reservists and an unspecified number of off-duty deputies and search and rescue volunteers, [including SARA] continued through the night.” (Star 6/24/1974)

### Little Leaguer Drowns

**Jul 4, 1974**

Richard Francisco, a 12-year-old member of a Little League baseball team from Marana, was on a holiday outing at Pena Blanca Lake, 15 miles northwest of Nogales. Shortly before noon, he was discovered missing after diving off a rock. Five hours later his body was recovered by Pima County Search and Recovery Divers in 18 feet of water, about thirty feet from the bank. (Star 7/5/1974; Citizen 7/5/1974)

### Two Drown in Tanque Verde Falls

**Aug 2, 1974**

Two young Tucsonans drowned in a flash flood in Redington Pass at Tanque Verde Falls. More than an inch of rain deluged the area in less than an hour. Reed L. Miens, 20, and Jesse Teague, were the victims. Witnesses said that Teague, a student at Rincon High School, was swimming in the rapids below one of the falls and “was suddenly pulled under by a flash flood.” Miens, who was in a separate group, saw that Jesse “was in trouble and jumped in to save him.” Apparently, Reed “struck his head on some submerged rocks and was also swept downstream.” Ironically, the official

rain gauge at the airport only registered 0.02 inches of rain during this storm, although there was widespread damage on the east side of Tucson. (Star 8/3/1974)

### **Car Plunges 250 Feet Off Mt. Lemmon Highway**

**Aug 11, 1974**

While responding to a rescue of an injured teenager on “Rappel Rock,” several members of Pima County Sheriff’s Search and Rescue happened upon a serious vehicle accident which had occurred only moments before. A 23-year-old woman, Ivy Hendrickson, “escaped serious injury... when her car went over a cliff... and vaulted 250 feet through the air before it came to rest on the hillside.” The accident happened at 4:00 p.m., only a short distance above the bottom of the Mt. Lemmon Highway. Luckily for the young woman, she was wearing both a seat belt and a shoulder harness, suffering minor injuries although she did have possible internal injuries. She had to be carried in a Stokes Litter up to a waiting ambulance. (Star 8/12/1974)

### **Coeds Rescued from Palisade Trail**

**Aug 16, 1974**

Two Pima College students, Bonnie Sipiora, 21, and Candy Bloch, 23, became stranded and spent the night, trapped on a ledge along the Palisade Trail. A companion was able to go for help and the duo was removed from their predicament at daybreak the next morning. (Citizen 8/19/1974)

### **Skinny Dipper Rescued from Sabino Canyon**

**Aug 17, 1974**

A Michigan 19-year-old, Woody Dunn, went swimming where Sabino and Lemmon Creeks intersect. His companions went for a short hike and Woody went skinny dipping, alone. He misplaced his clothes, and while looking for them, he also lost his bearings. When his friends returned, they could not find Woody. He spent the night out and was found by a Sheriff’s search party, walking barefoot and nude on the Sabino Canyon Trail. (Citizen 8/19/1974)

### **Rescue From Cliff in Sabino Canyon**

**Aug 18, 1974**

While hiking Woody Dunn out that Sunday morning, the search party discovered Jeff Gano, 25, boxed in on a ledge of a one-hundred-foot cliff, unable to go up or down. Two of the rescue party were able to tie a rope around the man and lower him to safety. (Citizen 8/19/1974)

### **Toddler Wanders for 26 Hours**

**Sep 25, 1974**

The search for missing 3-year-old Andrew G. Stewart ended happily when the naked, barefoot child was spotted from the air, some four miles southwest of his home, which is seven miles south of Green Valley. The boy was last seen by his mother at 7:00 a.m., playing with his three dogs in his

backyard, which is in the middle of his parents thirty-acre homestead. The search began in some confusion as small footprints were first spotted in a wash, going the opposite direction from where he was eventually found. It seems the boy had wandered down an arroyo after his dogs, crossed several small ridges and then became lost. The boy was spotted about the same time by the US Border Patrol and a helicopter from Davis-Monthan AFB. Sgts. Joe Woolridge and Ted Brandes, along with a number of the Sheriff's volunteer searchers, managed the search for the boy. (Star 9/27/1974)

### **Climber Dangles in Air for Four Hours**

**Sep 30, 1974**

Donald S. Shinkle, 21, realized all too late, that his 180-foot rope would not reach the bottom of the 350-foot drop he was trying to rappel down. The young man was descending "Rappel Rock" on Mt. Lemmon, below the Radar Station. Two-hundred feet above the bottom, and with only 15 feet of line remaining, Shinkle wrapped the remaining rope around his legs and hung suspended for four hours. A companion left for help as his stranded friend dangled 15 to 20 feet away from the face of the cliff. Thirty members of the Sheriff's SAR Squad responded and one of them was lowered with enough rope to bring Shinkle down. His legs were numb, but he was unhurt. (Star 9/30/1974)

### **Two Students Lost in Santa Ritas**

**Sep 30, 1974**

While Shinkle was "hanging around" (see previous entry), Ronald Kujawa, 21, and Stephen Fossen, also 21, separated at McBeth Springs, south of Josephine Saddle on the Temporal Gulch Trail, that Saturday afternoon to look for an overnight camping spot. The two U of A roommates became further separated. Kujawa was able to return to the parking lot in Madera Canyon and call Sgt. Brandes, who dispatched ten searchers. They looked for Fossen until 1:00 a.m., with some of the men walking all the way to Patagonia, a distance of over ten miles. The search resumed at 7:00 a.m. and they shortly spotted the missing man walking up the trail. Ultimately, there were upwards of 25 searchers involved. (Star 9/30/1974)

### **Student Injured Rappelling**

**Dec 7, 1974**

A Sabino High School student, 17-year-old James Andrews, was injured while rappelling off of Rappel Rock, Windy Point on Mt. Lemmon. (This is another Rappel Rock on Mt. Lemmon.) At about 5:00 p.m. the boy was descending when his "climbing gear broke." He fell 75 feet, hit a ledge, and then fell another 25 feet, suffering a wrist and knee fracture, along with possible breaks of one leg and the lower back. It took nearly three hours before rescuers could remove the teenager and get him to medical care. (Citizen 12/9/1974)

### **SARA Receives \$1,000 Check for New Response Vehicle**

**Dec 12, 1974**

SARA President, Tom Harlan, received a \$1,000 check from International Business Machines for the purchase of a new truck. At this time, SARA had a 1956 government-surplus Dodge carryall with

two-wheel drive and a four-speed transmission. The article says, “For six years she has been called out on nearly every operation for which the Southern Arizona Rescue Assn. has participated—and that’s at least 40 a year plus some 2,000 annual miles.” An employee of the company, Charlie Gawlik, was a member of SARA and is credited with the company choosing to donate the money. “SARA is a wonderful organization and I’ve been with it five years. . . . I knew we needed a new truck so I made a request for money to buy one. . . .” According to Harlan, “We can get a new truck at dealer cost for about \$3,500. . . . This is our next big project.” The article has a photo with Harlan, Gawlik and two other officials of IBM. (Star 12/15/1974)

### **Student Falls Saving Dog**

**Dec 30, 1974**

Colleen M. Soulliard, a senior from Palo Verde High School, fell to her death while aiding in the rescue of a stranded dog. It had gotten too close to the edge of the high cliff at Chivo Falls. “Sheriff’s deputies said another student had climbed out on a ledge to rescue his dog. When he asked the girl to stretch her arm out to help him up the hill, she lost her footing and fell.” The 17-year-old was hiking with seven school mates, all members of the Palo Verde Hiking Club, when about 11:30 a.m., she lost her footing on a smooth, sloping rock and fell 150 feet. Members of the Pima County Sheriff’s Search and Rescue Squad retrieved the girl’s body from the bottom of Chivo Falls in the Redington Pass area. After arriving, “Deputy Peter J. Pershing said it took 10 men less than an hour to retrieve the body.” (Star 12/31/1974; Citizen 12/31/1974)

### **Missing Bowhunter**

**Jan 1, 1975**

Hampered by heavy fog, about 25 members of the Southern Arizona Rescue Association spent much of the night combing the Redington Pass area, looking for 26-year-old Dale Buck. From Mesa, the man was bow hunting with two friends when he became separated from them. To keep warm, he wandered all night over the rugged hills and through the oak-studded desert, somehow avoiding getting hurt. His wandering, however, made locating him even more difficult. But they did not find him, rather he found them, stumbling into the camp they had set up. Sgt. Joseph Woolridge, a leader of Pima County Search and Rescue, provided assistance. (Citizen 1/2/1975)

### **Ten Airlifted from Santa Ritas**

**Mar 26, 1975**

Members of a youth group of the First Evangelical Free Church—trapped on a cold slope in the Santa Rita Mountains by blowing snow and sub-freezing temperatures—were airlifted to safety by a rescue helicopter. Ranging in ages from 12 to 28, the ten had planned on cresting 9,456-foot-high Mt. Wrightson while spending two nights camping out while hiking to Greaterville. They were making a dry run for a hike in the Grand Canyon in the coming summer. The group was unexpectedly caught by the storm which made following the trails impossible for them. They did have sleeping bags and a large tent in which to take shelter. Two hours after they were to arrive at the meeting spot, concerned parents notified Pima County SAR. An Arizona Department of Public Safety helicopter was pressed into service the next morning. The group was quickly located, but the ship could not land due to some trees. DPS helicopter crew secured several axes and dropped

them with handwritten notes attached, saying, “Cut wood away so we can land.” In making four short round trips, the stranded hikers were rescued. (Star 3/28/1975)

### Other Storm Victims

#### Mar 26, 1975

Also, “eight other campers and hikers—including one who nearly froze to death on Mt. Lemmon—were rescued during the past two days of blustery weather.” Thomas Morgan, 26, was found, “His hands and feet were frozen and he was incoherent—the medical experts tell us [Robert Cunningham, of the county Emergency Services Department] he had only half an hour to live.” Morgan was hiking with a companion when he became too cold to walk. His friend was able to get to a telephone and notify the Sheriff’s Department. Using a stretcher and a “steel-clad sled,” rescuers brought Morgan out to the icy Mt. Lemmon Highway, getting him to Windy Point and a waiting ambulance.

Near Romero Pass in the Catalinas, Douglas Burton, 17, fell forty feet from a ridge after he and his three friends lost the trail in the blizzard. He suffered a sprained ankle. A second member of the group, Wayne Marshall, 18, also suffered a minor head wound. Both injured teenagers were placed in a sleeping bag and a tarp and the remaining two climbed out to Summerhaven. At dark that night, the DPS helicopter crew was able to bring them out.

Four Santa Rita High School students and the mother of one of them, went horseback riding into the Rincon Mountains, heading for Douglas Springs. They were also caught by the storm and needed rescuing. “We were so cold we couldn’t stop shaking. Two of our horses were down, and all of them were in danger of freezing their feet,” said 15-year-old Linda Adair. “I decided we had to get help, or we would die, so I started down the trail. . . There was no point in staying up there.” Four hours later she reached the ranger station in Saguaro National Monument. They had taken turns walking the horses so their hooves wouldn’t freeze in the six-inch-deep snow, but then huddled under a makeshift tarp fashioned from sleeping bags. (Star 3/28/1975)

### “I Was Never So Relieved To Get Back In the Air”

#### Apr 11, 1975

While crossing the Bear Canyon Stream at Seven Falls in the Santa Catalina Mountains, 15-year-old Kathleen Enfinger slipped and tumbled 15 feet into a pool. In falling, she also pulled her companion, 17-year-old Michael Helak in, as well. She hit her head on the rocks below, suffering a possible concussion and facial cuts. Only shook up, Michael escaped any injury of note. The two Catalina High School students were helped out of the frigid water by other hikers.

“The Pima County Sheriff’s Search and Rescue Unit called out 23 volunteers. The rescuers moved Miss Enfinger to a suitable [sic: marginal] landing spot, and a Davis-Monthan helicopter airlifted her to Tucson Medical Center, where she was in guarded condition. . . .” But, here is the rest of the story!

On May 31, 2022, SARA Archivist, Mykle Raymond forwarded an Email request to the author from former Air Force pilot Mike Randolph who had flown a particularly tricky rescue of a teenage girl at Seven Falls. He was seeking information on “his” SAR from 47 years earlier. Using the Database of SARCI events compiled by Raymond, the incident in question was narrowed down to April 11, 1975—this turned out to be Randolph’s mission.

“Back in 1975–1976 I was piloting an HH-1H helicopter in support of a [SARA] rescue at Bear Canyon. The patient was a young girl who had fallen while hiking with friends and sustained a severe head injury. SARA had requested a medevac from our unit at Davis-Monthan AFB. That mission has always stood out in my mind because we couldn’t actually land the aircraft but had to balance the front end on the waterfall in that canyon and your team had the difficult and tricky job of inching the girl into the helicopter with just the front of our skids on the edge of the falls, with water going over.

“We never heard anything more of that rescue and am wondering if you have any records of what happened to the girl... Thanks for all the good work that you do. I did several such missions with you and was always impressed with your professionalism and courage. Glad to see that you’re still in action there”

Additionally, David Lovelock did some great detective/computer work, and traced a Michael “Mike” Helak through the University of Arizona and into a career in finance. This Helak matched age and hometown with the one in the incident. Lovelock also determined the young Enfinger woman had recovered from her head injury, graduating in the Class of 1977 from Catalina High School. Mike Randolph, with a second Email to the SARA researchers, then adds further to this story, particularly in describing just how tricky the landing spot was for the girl. The author had sent Randolph two relevant news articles of his mission.

“The only error in the first article is the last sentence —‘Members of the sheriff’s search and rescue team cut a landing spot for the aircraft.’ Don’t know where that came from but it’s totally false. I had no place to land except on edge of the falls itself and I could only get a part of the helicopter’s fuselage on it as there were boulders in the way, so I had to balance the aircraft on the edge during the whole operation. I flew and [Co-Pilot] Bill Gideon had his eyes glued to our engine and transmission gauges for any abnormal indications—had there been, I would have aborted and departed immediately. As memory serves it was windy that day which made the balancing act difficult—teetering back and forth as the wind alternately picked up and set down the aircraft. I was also concerned with the clearance of the rotor to a sheer rock wall on my (right) side—it just seemed way too close.

“We were very relieved to see the stokes litter with the girl coming down the stream and there were some concerning moments trying to get her into the aircraft since the cargo door was only partly over the edge of the falls; I was never so relieved to get back in the air. I never found out what happened to her although I did stop by TMC later that evening to check on her and was told she was doing OK. In addition to myself and Bill Gideon, was Flight Surgeon, Dr. Nash, from the Air Base.” (Citizen 4/12/1975; Star 4/12/1975; Mike Randolph emails 5/31/2022; Mykle Raymond emails 5/31/2022)

## Boy Eludes Searchers

**Apr 19, 1975**

Danny Petko’s parents had not seen their 9-year-old son since 8 a.m. and almost 12 hours later, they began searching for him. They lived in Drexel Heights, in Tucson’s southwest side, with a lot of open space nearby. After two hours, his stepfather called for help. For almost 18 hours, the boy eluded “45 members of the Pima County Search and Rescue Unit, 22 Sheriff’s Department reserve members and a patrol plane...” The boy had been playing in the desert and when interviewed



afterwards, said he “had heard people calling his name...had become afraid and hid near an old house in a desert area about one-half mile from his home...” (Citizen 4/21/1975)

### Hiker Hurt near Tanque Verde Falls

**Apr 20, 1975**

It took a “45-man rescue team more than two hours” to get Keith Mardis and his fractured ankle, out of the rocks at Tanque Verde Falls. Discovered by passing hikers, they tried to get him out but were unsuccessful. One of them reached a convenience store and called for help. Pima County Sheriff’s Deputies and members of the Southern Arizona Rescue Association, responded to the call and were able to lower the 39-year-old hiker out of the rocks by stretcher and rope pulley. (Citizen 4/21/1975)

### Rescued Bighorn Sheep

**Apr 21, 1975**

A bighorn sheep had become trapped on a ledge in the Galiuro Mountains, nearly seven-hundred feet above Aravaipa Canyon, where Virgus and Horsecamp Canyons intersect it. It appeared the ram had been there for up to one year but its plight had not been discovered. Five Arizona Game and Fish Department employees, a Bureau of Land Management employee and two members of SARA, including Tom Harlan, rescued the animal. The sheep was darted with a Cap-Chur rifle loaded with M-99 Tranquilizer. He was raised approximately eighty feet. The seven-year-old animal had eaten all of the vegetation on the ledge but it was believed he would not survive any further dry weather. The ram was one of 23 sheep released in 1973 from a herd raised in the nearby Santa Teresa Mountains. Although this was historically a bighorn area, no sheep had been seen there for over fifty years until these had been released. (Citizen 5/2/1975)

### Fell 20 Feet at Tanque Verde Falls

**Apr 26, 1975**

Losing his balance, 17-year-old Matthew Cox fell about twenty feet while hiking in the Tanque Verde Falls area. He was with a friend near the top of one of the lower falls when the accident took place, about 3:00 p.m. His companion hiked out for help and thirty members of the Pima County Sheriff’s Search and Rescue Unit, along with a medical crew, responded. He was carried out by litter and taken to the hospital by ambulance.

“The mishap was the third injury to a hiker in the Redington Pass area since February 16. Three other hikers...injured in Bear Canyon in the Seven Falls area during the same period. There has been at least one hiking injury reported during each of the last four weekends.” (Citizen 4/28/1975)

### 500-Foot Cliff, 200-Foot Rope

**May 3, 1975**

“Thirteen mountaineering students learned...that to rappel a 500-foot cliff it is necessary to use more than a 200-foot rope.” Charles Sylber, 37, was demonstrating the way to safely descend a cliff by rope to his pupils when he discovered his line was way too short. Fortunately for the instructor,

he landed on a ledge and wisely asked for a little assistance. Pima County Deputy Pete Pershing and seven members of the Southern Arizona Rescue Association reached the cliff in Sabino Canyon at just after 5:00 p.m., where Silver was stranded. The rescue team had an embarrassed Mr. Silver safely out by 8:00 p.m. (Star 5/4/1975)

### **Injured Below Cathedral Rock**

**Jun 1, 1975**

Falling forty feet from a rocky cliff, Gerald Schuster suffered a broken right arm, a possible broken ankle, and serious lacerations. He had scrambled onto the crumbly outcropping to orient himself. The 20-year-old hiker was in upper Esperero Canyon in the Catalina Mountains when he became separated from his partner, 20-year-old Bruce Minkus, also of Tucson. The pair had intentionally split up at Bridalveil Falls, lower down in the canyon and were to rejoin at 1:00 p.m. at Mormon Springs, a couple of miles farther up the trail. After waiting for over nine hours, Minkus finally hiked out and contacted officials. Some 22 members of the Southern Arizona Rescue Association spent parts of two days looking for Schuster. They finally located him above the Esperero Canyon and Cathedral Rock Junction. Somehow, Schuster had not seen the trail junction and was missing for a day-and-a-half. Rescuers spent the night with their lost man and waited for a helicopter from Davis-Monthan AFB to pick him up. (Citizen 6/3/1975)

### **Toddler Rescued After Night Out**

**Jun 16, 1975**

Wandering barefoot, two-year-old Alan Black went missing from his home in the Safford Peak-Picture Rocks area, west of Tucson at 9:00 p.m. The boy was found sleeping peacefully under a bush two miles from his home the next morning. He was located by SAR men and Border Patrol trackers, with the aid of a Sheriff's Department plane and the DPS helicopter assisting. (Citizen 6/17/1975)

### **Drowning in Pena Blanca Lake**

**Jun 28, 1975**

Larry Rachal, 23, was vacationing in Tucson and was on a weekend outing at Pena Blanca Lake, not too far north of the Mexican border. Rachal, whose relatives said could not swim, was wading along the edge of the lake when he lost his footing and slipped into an area where the water dropped off sharply. "Nine sheriff's search and rescue divers searched the lake for about three hours before the body was found." (Citizen 6/30/1975)

### **Bear Wallow Fall Claims Boy**

**Jul 12, 1975**

"A 14-year-old Tucson boy was killed when he fell off a 600-foot cliff while sight-seeing on Mt. Lemmon near the Bear Wallow area." Allen M. Castillo was with his stepbrother and two others when the accident happened. "He was alive when his companions directed Forest Service rescuers to the bottom of the cliff. However, efforts to save his life failed and Castillo was pronounced dead

upon arrival at Tucson Medical Center....” Hospital officials said the teenager “suffered severe head injuries in the fall.” (Citizen 7/14/1975)

### Hiker Breaks Leg in Sabino Canyon

**Jul 16, 1975**

An off-trail hiker, 26-year-old city employee Eric Maddox, stumbled upon Jim Minick, 22, from Gary, Indiana, near Miner’s Pool [less than a mile upstream of the paved road], in Sabino Canyon. Minick had fallen and broken his leg and then spent that night crawling along the stream. Maddox was hiking up the canyon to the same area when he found Minick half-in and half-out of the stream. “At first, I thought he was drunk or on drugs because he had a real dazed look on his face. . . But when I got up close, he said, ‘Hey buddy, are you heading for Tucson. . . But then he asked for help and showed me his leg. ‘I’ve broken my leg. Do you suppose you can give me a hand?’ ” Maddox hiked back to the Sabino Canyon Road and rode his bicycle to find a Forest Ranger. A 27-man rescue team was able to reach the injured young man and carry him out. (Citizen 7/18/1975)

### Wins Soldier’s Medal for Rescue

**Sep 12, 1975**

“ ‘When I reached them, they were weak and incoherent. They were stranded on a ledge no bigger than a desktop, desperately trying to hang on. It was an 1,800-foot drop.’ ” That is how Sergeant First Class Leslie L. Gaspar of Fort Huachuca described what he found upon reaching the two novice mountain climbers. A 17-year Army veteran, Gaspar had served in Vietnam in Special Forces. He would receive the Soldier’s Medal<sup>3</sup> for what reportedly followed.

The would-be climbers found themselves trapped some 250 feet below the top of 9,229-foot-high Carr Peak, the second highest point in the Huachuca Mountains. Remaining unnamed, the young couple could neither go up nor down. Dehydrated and exhausted, the man and woman were clutching the small ledge as if their life depended upon it, which it did.

“For 10 hours the Southern Arizona Volunteer Emergency Rescue Team [this is the only reference to this group the author has ever seen] tried to reach them. Then Gaspar, the training officer for the rescue team, was roused from sleep at 4:30 a.m.” Within an hour, he was at the trailhead, with a two-thousand-foot gain in elevation and a several-mile hike, in front of him. (The reference articles do not address how he got above these people.)

“Gaspar rappelled 200 feet down from the peak on 3/8-inch manila rope, a line he called ‘frail.’ The danger of a major rock slide became apparent when a large rock knocked off Gaspar’s helmet, causing it to clang down the mountain far below the two victims. When he left the end of the rope, he left it dangling and inched his way down the remaining 50 feet to the pair. ‘The man had his leg wrapped around a century plant while the woman clasped his other leg and had a toe-hold grip on the ledge,’ he said. Gaspar offered them water and emergency aid and then assured them they would be rescued. ‘I am not sure they were convinced, however,’ Gaspar said.”

<sup>3</sup> The Soldier’s Medal is the Army’s highest award for bravery in peacetime, created by Congress in 1922. It is rated above the Bronze Star for its military status.

He then free-climbed back to the dangling rope and called up for five-hundred feet of climbing rope and climber's equipment. Down-climbing, he retrieved his helmet which he ended up giving to one of the victims. He also positioned himself to protect them from more falling rocks and also had a second rescuer come down and join him. He dropped farther down below them and while having the woman and rescuer be lowered to him, they lost their footing sixty feet above him and began falling. "Gasper broke their fall by throwing himself off a small ledge. The act left him dangling in mid-air, but his weight drew the line tight and stopped their fall." With the woman now down safely and treated for shock and exhaustion, he went back up to get the man, who he carefully brought down, as well.

In July 1976, while still stationed at Fort Huachuca, he received the Soldier's Medal, credited with saving the young couple's lives. (Students of mountain rescue will probably have questions about this mission. The author did.) (Racine, Wisconsin Journal Times 7/11/1976; Citizen 7/16/1976)

## Skeleton Found

**Sep 14, 1975**

At 10:30 a.m., a hiker answering a yell for help from several boys on a cliff in Pontatoc Canyon in the Catalina Mountains, went off trail to better talk with the young men. As he moved closer, however, they resolved their dilemma—they found their missing friend. But as the Good Samaritan (who wished to remain anonymous) was still finding his way closer to the youths, he stumbled onto a skeleton below the cliff where the boys had been.

Deputies found no identification, no evidence of foul play, nor obvious broken bones. It did not look as though he had fallen from the rocks above. Southern Arizona Rescue Association volunteers responded and carried the remains down out of the canyon.

"A trail of clothing led to the body. Apparently, the man who died within sight of Tucson, became too hot while hiking and began taking off his clothes—there was no clothing on the skeleton from the waist up. . . The man was wearing winter-type hiking boots and thermal underwear. A calendar watch found 10 to 15 feet from the skeleton had stopped on the 25<sup>th</sup>, but deputies don't know which month."

Identification was made in early October after investigators sent dental charts to law enforcement agencies nationwide; police in Fairview Park, Ohio, replied. The family of 49-year-old Donald K. Williams, had contacted them in April. The optician had a history of depression and suicide attempts and was last seen boarding a bus in Fairview, after paying his ex-wife six months of child support in advance. He had once told his family, " 'If I commit suicide I'll do it in some remote mountain area.' " They believed he intentionally overdosed on drugs. (Star 9/15/1975, 10/10/1975; Citizen 10/9/1975)

## Ate Dog Food

**Dec 20, 1975**

"Tucsonans Robert Mackin and Kathy Kleinman began an overnight outing in the Santa Catalina Mountains by eating a big chicken dinner. Two days later they were still in the mountains, but they were eating dog food in a cold cave." Mackin, 26, and his fiancée, Kleinman, 22, along with his dog, Kary, became lost while hiking in the rough, Windy Point area. The two had been dropped

off by a friend more than a mile above there. They planned on camping for just one night and then hike out the next day. Even though the country is rugged, the hike was to be fairly short. They had enough food for their planned trip and were also carrying two meals for Kary.

The first night was great. The couple ate a large chicken dinner and left enough for a light lunch on their way out. Then the next morning, things went all wrong. “ ‘The markers were terrible on the trail and we got lost. Then the rain caught us without rain gear. It was cold,’ said Mackin.” All that day they tried to find their way out, but couldn’t. They slept in soggy sleeping bags. The following day, they again tried to find their way out and by this time their sleeping bags were beyond soggy. “The bags were left behind as markers for anyone who might be looking for the hikers. Everything that wasn’t food or clothing was left behind.” Food was gone and so were their matches. If it had not been for luckily finding a dry cave to protect them from the cold rain and the body warmth of Kary, their situation could have been even more dire. It was bad enough as it was. They ate half of one of Kary’s dinners that night.

On their third day of stumbling around the scrub oak of Upper Sabino Canyon basin, the Southern Arizona Rescue Association and several deputies found them just before dark. (Citizen 12/23/1975)

## Toddler Survives Sub-Freezing Temperatures

**Jan 1, 1976**

Don Hildebrand, pilot of the Tucson Police Department helicopter, along with his spotter, Dave Miller, may have saved the life of young Shawn Chinn. The three-year-old had spent the night in temperatures that reached 23 degrees at the airport, after wandering away from his home. When taken into the helicopter, the boy was barely conscious and made no sounds while being carried to it. He was in guarded condition at Tucson Medical Center, although he apparently suffered no permanent effects. The boy had walked in circles, covering about 2 1/2 miles, according to the Border Patrol trackers.

This incident initiated a major flareup between the Tucson-Pima County Emergency Services Commission and the Sheriff’s Department. The Commission accused the Department of “endangering the boy’s life by waiting too long to call the volunteer organization into the search.” The boy was last seen in his front yard about 2:00 p.m., discovered missing two hours later, but the Sheriff’s Department was not contacted until 8:30 that evening. Several dozen neighbors of Mrs. Chinn who lived near her in the Three Points area, twenty miles west of Tucson, had joined forces to search for her son, Shawn. The estimated number of those Good Samaritans ranged from thirty up to 75.

When the Pima County Sheriff’s Search and Rescue Unit arrived, “everybody was chased away, and told to leave. The whole thing was kind of a fiasco.” There were even allegations by a couple of these neighbors of being threatened with arrest if they stayed. But these did not seem to be further substantiated. The Commission, which includes SARA, was then not contacted until 3:00 a.m., long after the ground had become frozen and clues became harder to find. When the lad was finally located, there were 75 searchers, along with the helicopter, the Department’s patrol plane, two police dog units and the US Border Patrol trackers.

There were such hard feelings generated by this search, “Members of the Emergency Services Commission and certain invited persons [neighbors] involved in rescue matters, met to discuss the situation between the Sheriff’s Dept. and the commission, said William F. Caldwell, chairman.” Even retired SAR Sergeant, Ted Brandes, weighed in. “Brandes, a member of Four-Wheel Drive

who attended the meeting and was present during rescue efforts...called the search ‘poorly organized’ and said there were not enough people to properly conduct it.” In this article, there were four volunteer units in the Commission: SARA, Four-Wheel Drive search and rescue, Divers, and Emergency Services. These four would constitute SARCI, the Search and Rescue Council, Incorporated, which would be established in a year. See “SARCI Formed,” January 14, 1977, on page 314. (Star 1/3/1976, 1/4/1976)

### **Pima County Sheriff’s Search and Rescue Unit *Volunteers***

**Jan 9, 1976**

On January 9, just over a week after 3-year-old Shawn Chinn had been rescued in Three Points, the Sheriff’s Department announced plans to form a new search and rescue unit made up of the four volunteer SAR organizations then being used. The notice came after a two and a half hour organizational meeting with members of these groups—the Southern Arizona Rescue Association, Four-Wheel Drive Association, Emergency Services, and the Arizona Search and Recovery Divers.

The plan to consolidate the search and rescue units came in the wake of strong, rancorous criticism by some volunteers as well as the general public, of the way the Sheriff’s Department handled the search for the little boy who was lost for 18 hours the previous week. See “Toddler Survives Sub-Freezing Temperatures,” January 1, 1976, on page 305. Major John V. Lyon, Commander of the Sheriff’s Field Operations Bureau, claimed the new consolidation had nothing to do with that incident but had been scheduled two weeks prior. Lyon estimated it would take about a month to get the new organization formed and up and running. Letters of invitation would also go out the following week asking the four teams if they would be interested in joining what would be named, “Pima County Sheriff’s Search and Rescue Unit.”

But after strong, very vocal feedback by the volunteers, including Frances Walker who was then President of SARA, who feared the public would believe this new organization was made up strictly of Sheriff’s Deputies, the word *Volunteers*, was added at the end of this latest title. (Hence the italics, added only here in the title of this entry.) That is the name it stayed for another year. See “SARCI Formed,” January 14, 1977, on page 314.

The incident with Shawn Chinn was being investigated by the region’s Emergency Medical Services Council, Incorporated, at the request of the Sheriff’s Department. Lyon said, “ ‘We see it one way and others see it another way. We want to bring in a third body to tell us what they think to set the record straight.’ ” Major Lyon then went on to identify Deputy Pete Pershing as field operation officer of the unit. This was the first time Pershing’s name was connected to this SAR position, but it would not be the last. (Star 1/10/1976; Citizen 1/10/1976; Frances Walker interview 2/15/2023)

### **Exhibition 100-Foot Rappel from Balloon**

**Jan 23 (?), 1976**

The Southern Arizona and Rescue Association and Emergency Services Volunteer Search and Rescue planned on rappelling one-hundred feet from a large balloon tethered to the ground. This was to celebrate the opening of the Motorless Transit Authority, which specialized in backpacking, mountaineering, and hiking equipment. But unstable air conditions made the organizers abort the planned exhibition. Motorless Transit Authority was located at 990 E. University Boulevard. (Citizen 1/24/1976)



## 12-Year-Old and Survival Book

**Jan 24, 1976**

A Boy Scout survived a 20-degree night and a light snowfall after wandering away from Camp Lawton on Organization Ridge in the Catalina Mountains. His survival is credited to having read a survival book in the fourth grade. “Remembering the book, he found space under rocks for shelter. He climbed in and covered himself with leaves and pine needles... About 37 volunteers from the Southern Arizona Rescue Association and the department of Emergency Services searched for the boy. The operation was coordinated by Pima County deputies.” (Citizen 1/26/1976)

## Skeleton Found Near Kitt Peak

**Feb 8, 1976**

The skeleton of an unidentified young white male was found in a rocky barren area in the Baboquivari Mountains, on the Papago Reservation [Tohono O’Odham], 35 miles southwest of Tucson. While hiking that Sunday, a 24-year-old employee of Kitt Peak National Observatory discovered him at an isolated campsite at about 6,200 feet.

“The skeleton, dressed in a plaid shirt and jeans, was virtually fleshless. Remains of hair were found... deputies said a preliminary investigation showed the man had been dead about a year and apparently did not die from foul play. The body was found in a sleeping bag near a tarpaulin shelter, Deputies found a green backpack containing clothing, unsigned religious poems and books—one titled ‘Survival Made Simple.’ There was also a map of the mountains... herbs and spices wrapped in grocery bags...”

Search and Rescue Deputy Pete Pershing flew to the area by helicopter on February 12. Authorities speculated that the victim may have died during a snowstorm that dumped a foot or more of snow in the mountains the last week of March of the previous year: “Deputies conducted 27 rescues missions for hikers during the three-day storm.” See “Ten Airlifted from Santa Ritas,” and “Other Storm Victims,” March 26, 1975, on page 298. If these remains were identified it was not reported in the newspapers. (Citizen 2/13/1976)

## Death of a Good Ol’ Cowboy

**Feb 9, 1976**

“He was a genuine casting from a mold that vanished a century ago—a 19<sup>th</sup> Century cowboy in a 20<sup>th</sup> Century world, and his life, like his death, was out of time.” Freelance writer Leo Banks, in an excellent, full, two-page article in the February 5, 1977 *Tucson Daily Citizen*, was celebrating Roy “Shorty” Beyleu. “He was a good cowboy. He had been for most of his 44 years. It was all he knew.” Beyleu died the year before, either on Monday or Tuesday, February 9 or 10, while on horseback out looking for a prized bull missing from a recent roundup on the 6-Bar Ranch. Located in Pinal County, the cattle spread is in the ocotillo-studded foothills on the northeastern edge of the Santa Catalina Mountains.

That Monday, Shorty left the 6-Bar Ranch on a favorite horse with his two dogs. He lived alone but was expected back by the next morning, although there was no one there to actually keep track of him. On Thursday morning, Joe Goff, the owner of this and several other cattle properties in the area showed up, only to find “the wood stove in the tack room where ‘Shorty’ lived was cold.

Everything was cold and it was clear nobody had been there.” Goff did not think too much of it at the time since Beyleu was also prone to meeting up with hunters and other cowboy friends and get seriously drunk and occasionally, even leave the area.

Goff would go on to say, “Then Thursday night at about 9:00 p.m. or so... I heard scratching and barking at the door... it was one of the dogs ‘Shorty’ liked to take with him when he went out... An hour later, the other dog returned.” The following morning, Goff saddled up and rode to a neighboring farm he owned, thinking Beyleu had taken shelter there from the recent rainstorms. He found nothing. Saturday morning, he rode up to a pasture at Davis Spring hoping to locate Beyleu’s horse; it was grazing there, but had neither reins nor saddle. At 10:30 that night, Goff notified the Pima County Sheriff’s Department that he had a missing cowboy.

Sunday morning, “About 12 Pinal County volunteers and 20 members of the Pima County Sheriff’s Dept. Search and Rescue Unit were searching... A Dept. of Public Safety helicopter was also being used.” After an intensive hunt by nearly three dozen searchers, Roy Beyleu was found. It was theorized that during a heavy rainstorm, “rider and mount slid down a steep, 200-foot slope... It appeared the horse rolled over the cowboy, crushing him.”

After an autopsy, however, the Pima County pathologist ruled Beyleu died of exposure and suffered a concussion but no other injuries severe enough to have caused death. The doctor further speculated that, “the cowboy would have survived had he been found earlier.” (Citizen 2/16/1976, 2/17/1976, 2/18/1976, 2/5/1977; Star 2/16/1976)

### Teenager Killed at Chivo Falls

**Feb 10, 1976**

Kenneth R. Morales, 18, fell 130 feet into a pool at the base of Chivo Falls in Redington Pass. Hiking in the area with his two cousins and a friend, no one saw him fall. When he was noticed missing, the three companions began searching for him. One of his cousins went for help and the Sheriff’s Search and Rescue Unit started looking for the youth that night. His body was found in six feet of water under a waterfall about 11:00 a.m., the next day. (Star 2/12/1976)

### Mayor Tells Rescue Units to Tackle Working Relationships

**Feb 10, 1976**

Tucson Mayor Lew Murphy, seeking solutions for issues local SAR groups have in working together, called a meeting with representatives of the Sheriff’s Department’s four existing volunteer SAR units: Four-Wheel Drive, Emergency Services, Southern Arizona Rescue Association, and the divers. Representatives of these units agreed to meet further to work on problems threatening the working relationships of the group. “The agreement was described by County Manager Kenneth Schurman as only a ‘foundation’ for other aspects of emergency services, as well...” Sheriff W. Coy Cox, suggesting that to correct common problems on searches, “his office would form a new volunteer group made up of members of the other groups who want to join. They would work and train together as a unit, rather than three units (divers were not facing problems due to their low work load).” See “Pima County Sheriff’s Search and Rescue Unit *Volunteers*,” January 9, 1976, on page 306.

Some of the volunteers did not like Cox’s proposal as they believed “they won’t be called to work on emergencies unless they are members of the sheriff’s group. They criticized Cox, saying he

hadn't asked their help in planning the new organization." The Mayor and other city and county officials ultimately agreed that "volunteers must be allowed to help in devising the structure of any search group the sheriff wants to form..." (Star 2/11/1977)

### Sheriff Cox to Control Rescue Efforts

**Feb 19, 1976**

At a meeting with city and county officials and representatives of several local volunteer SAR groups, Pima County Sheriff William Coy Cox "established a policy under which one organization—his own—will provide manpower for search and rescue operations." His intent in creating the Pima County Sheriff's Search and Rescue, was to reduce "friction and politics between groups and members." See "Pima County Sheriff's Search and Rescue Unit", January 9, 1976, on page 306.

For the past 22 years, volunteers of the Southern Arizona Rescue Association, Pima County Four-Wheel Drive, Search and Recovery Divers, and Emergency Services Search and Rescue were asked to assist on SAR. Calls for assistance were processed through the Sheriff's Department, then referred to leaders in the volunteer groups. Now, per Sheriff Cox's policy, "only persons who join the new sheriff's organization will be allowed to join search teams."

There was blowback from William F. Caldwell, chairman of the City-County Emergency Services Department (an extension of the old Civil Defense program). It was his belief that "many of the volunteers would refuse to join the new group. Some fear their groups will lose their identities in a 'super' organization. Others are angry at Cox for changing what they believe is a successful setup." (Citizen 2/20/1976)

### Rescue of Boy Led By Deputy Pete Pershing

**Apr 4, 1976**

Along with a young friend, Michael Barbare, 12, was on an outing in Pima Canyon in the Santa Catalina Mountains with his father and two others when, at 1 p.m., he took a near-fatal plunge off an over one-hundred foot-high cliff. He was lucky he didn't die, suffering head and internal injuries, a broken leg, and significant loss of blood. Michael's 12-year-old buddy witnessed the accident and ran and told the father. Frank Barbare, then hiked one and one-half miles to a phone where he called the Sheriff's Department.

"In 20 minutes, Deputy Peter Pershing arrived at the accident scene by four-wheel drive vehicle... Seventeen members of the sheriff's search and rescue unit answered the call... Some of the volunteers administered first aid... while the rest cleared a landing area for the Department of Public Safety... Michael was carried one-half mile by stretcher to the landing area, where the helicopter airlifted him to TMC, landing there at 4:15 p.m." (Star 4/5/1976; Citizen 4/5/1976)

### Plunge at Tanque Verde Falls

**Apr 21, 1976**

Russell Knight, 16, broke both legs and his wrist after he slipped over the waterfall at Tanque Verde Falls. In some ways, he was lucky, the fifty-foot drop had killed others, plunging from this exact same spot. He had been hiking with two companions when he fell into the pool at the bottom

of the waterfall. They pulled Knight from the water and one of them stayed while the other went for help. “A rescue unit of about 30 persons, including a doctor and paramedic, set up a hauling system by rope to move Knight.” (Star 4/22/1976)

### Death by Hang Glider

**Apr 30, 1976**

Edward J. Trango suffered two other hang gliding accidents before he crashed and died in the Santa Rita Mountains, not too far from the old mining town site of Helvetia. The 30-year-old electrician was found dead about midnight, eight and a half hours after the Forest Ranger saw him disappear behind a hill. Fearing the worst, he notified other rangers in the area and they looked for a couple of hours before the Sheriff’s Department was notified and about 25 members of the Southern Arizona Rescue Association responded. Two experienced hang glider pilots also assisted, using their expertise to help locate Trango. He was found about five-hundred to six-hundred yards from where he had taken off. “His glider was found in a tree and his body was found in rocks nearby. . . .” The victim was not wearing a helmet, dying of multiple injuries, apparently caused by faulty equipment.

On January 13, 1976, Trango barely escaped death or serious injury when he sailed off “A Mountain” and crashed into high-voltage power lines, at the base of the mountain. One line carried 46,000 volts and the other carried 4,160 volts. He dropped thirty feet to the ground, suffering only minor burns. The first escape was when he “was knocked unconscious last summer when he flew into a car parked on ‘A’ Mountain.” (Star 5/2/1976)

### Two Rescued at Tanque Verde Falls

**May 9, 1976**

Twenty-year-old Kim Hamilton was hiking with friends, including Steven McClain, 16, near Tanque Verde Falls late in the afternoon. Somehow, he stumbled and fell into a pool right above a fifty-foot-high waterfall. Hamilton slipped from the top and as he tumbled, struck the rock walls at least three different times before landing in the water at the bottom. Steven was able to quickly scramble down and went in to rescue his friend, breaking his ankle before successfully pulling Kim out of the water. “About 25 volunteers from the Pima County Search and Rescue unit took Hamilton out of the [Redington] pass.” Amazingly, other than the broken ankle that McClain suffered, neither young men was more seriously injured. (Star 5/10/1976)

### SARA’s Tom Harlan Elected President

**May 15, 1976**

Several months earlier, Pima County Sheriff William Coy Cox initiated a new search and rescue group to be solely led by his office. He believed it was to improve efficiency. The Southern Arizona Rescue Association went along with the proposal although other local volunteer SAR groups, did not. Or at least not initially. Eventually, the Four-Wheel Drive Search and Rescue, Underwater Recovery, and the Emergency Services Search and Rescue teams, did. Tom Harlan, a backbone of SARA was elected President of the new group. Assisting was Dale Regelman, Vice President; Frances Walker, Secretary; Helen Grammont, Treasurer; and William Grimes was elected par-

liamentarian. Other board members were George Simons, Donald Morris, Dale Healy, and Scott Clemans. (Citizen 5/15/1976)

### **Birthday Girl Lost in Catalinas**

**Sep 4, 1976**

Because it was rainy and getting cool, Leslie Joyce Whitmer headed for her cabin to get a sweater; she went the wrong direction, however. She was camping at the Latter-Day Saints camp on Organization Ridge, half way up Mount Lemmon. “After wandering awhile in the cold and the rain, she sought ways to keep warm, and she began to run. She slipped on a wet rock, cut her head, and then used her shirt to bind the wound.” She spent some of the night sleeping and some of the night walking, while always trying to keep the lights of the city in sight. Trying to avoid panicking, “She sang ‘Happy Birthday’ and also ‘Happy Anniversary,’ in honor of her parents. . . who celebrated an anniversary yesterday.”

Camp officials, after checking with her parents in Tucson, called the Sheriff’s Department at 7 p.m., two hours after the young girl went missing. Because of concern for the weather, “search and rescue units were called to the scene immediately.” Helicopters from the Department of Public Safety and the US Forest Service, joined in the search, as did members of the Southern Arizona Rescue Association. At 1 p.m. on her Twelfth Birthday, twenty hours after she went missing, Leslie was found in Sycamore Canyon, south of the Catalina Highway. It was estimated she had hiked six miles before being located. (Citizen 9/6/1976; Star 9/6/1976)

### **Southern Arizona SAR Association Recognized**

**Sep 11, 1976**

The National Association for Search and Rescue (NASAR) presented a Certificate (of Appreciation?) to the Southern Arizona SAR Association, organized under the auspices of the Pima County Sheriff’s Department. The wording of this Certificate is unknown but must be assumed it was for the group’s many contributions to the region’s SAR response since it was formed in 1958. (NASAR Award Database 9/7/2021)

### **Tom P. Harlan Twice Honored**

**Sep 11, 1976**

Tom P. Harlan was honored with the National Association for Search and Rescue (NASAR) State Award-Arizona, for 1976. This recognition was created by NASAR in 1974 and was for “significant contributions to search and rescue at the state and province level.” On this same date, Harlan was also made a Fellow of NASAR. A Fellow was for sustained contributions to SAR over a significant period of time. Harlan was a stalwart volunteer with the Southern Arizona Rescue Association and had been since 1958.

SARA President Frances Walker nominated Tom Harlan for NASAR’s State Award-Arizona. “Harlan has held every position with SARA including being in charge of training old and new members. He is immediate Past President and is on the Board of Directors.” No better tribute could come from long-time SARA member Mrs. Walker. “ ‘If I am ever lost or injured, be sure to call Tom Harlan.’ ” Begun in 1972, NASAR is an umbrella coordinating organization of SAR

groups and agencies in the United States, and provides recognitions to worthy recipients. (Star 10/17/1976; NASAR Award Database 9/7/2021)

### Boy Drowns in Kennedy Lake

**Sep 19, 1976**

Nine-year-old Jesus A. Varga was on a family picnic in Kennedy Park in southwest Tucson. As the park was closing at 10:00 p.m., Petera Garcia, the boy's mother, could not find him and soon reported him missing. A relative told the police who first responded that Jesus was last seen diving off a nearby catwalk and swimming in 15-foot-deep Kennedy Lake.

"Tucson police, park guards and 49 members of the Pima County Sheriff's Department search and rescue team—including four scuba divers—took part in the search." After two hours of looking, the boy's tiny body was found at the base of the walkway. His death was classified as a drowning; the first one in the 12-acre lake since it was opened two years earlier. In May 1978, Mrs. Garcia filed a wrongful-death lawsuit against the City of Tucson for negligence in her son's death. (Star 9/20/1976, 6/1/1978)

### Divers Recover Body on Reservation

**Oct 8, 1976**

A 21-year-old man drowned while swimming in a twenty-foot deep, one-hundred-foot-wide pond on the Papago [Tohono O'odham] Reservation. Sells resident, Samuel Pasquale, "had been drinking and decided to take a dip." The pool was 1/4-mile from the little village of Sikul Himatk. Pima County Search and Recovery Divers responded and recovered his body. (Citizen 10/8/1976)

### The Circus Comes to Town

**Oct 15–16, 1976**

SARA brought the American Continental Circus to Tucson, with the hopes of raising money to replace its 12-year-old van. "High wire, juggling, animal acts and other circus fare will be included in the show, which has a bicentennial theme." There were two shows each day and admission for adults was \$3 and \$1.50 for children. The news article went on to say "the van has been used on 51 missions this year, alone..." In August, a man and a juvenile were detained in Phoenix, selling \$1 raffle tickets, saying "they represented a Phoenix-area search and rescue group," the Desert Search and Rescue Organization. According to Phoenix officials, this was not connected to a police agency there. SARA President, Frances Walker, said this created a problem for them since it confused buyers of SARA's legitimate enterprise.

In an oral interview with Frances Walker on December 28, 2020, she indicated SARA realized very little money from all of this effort. "It was almost more work than it was worth." It was held at the Tucson Rodeo Grounds, with clowns, trapeze acts, and at least one elephant. SARA manned the concessions and directed parking but, the circus owners got most of the money," according to Frances. (Citizen 8/6/1976, 10/15/1976)



## Teenage Writer Falls

**Dec 10, 1976**

James R. Boone hiked into Pima Canyon in the Catalina Mountains to do some writing. While standing on a shelf of rock, it collapsed and the 19-year-old fell and he tumbled 25 feet down a steep embankment. Knowing he was seriously injured, the young man used some common sense, he “crumpled up his writing paper and used it to cushion the agony of a half-dozen broken bones and a 16-hour wait in near-freezing temperatures.”

Not coming home late that night, his father went looking for him; finding his son’s car parked at the trailhead, he alerted the Sheriff’s Department. At 7 a.m., aided by a friend who had hiked with Boone before, 13 volunteer searchers focused on the Rosewood Point area of the canyon. “Mykle Raymond and Tom Harlan heard Boone’s cries for help about 8 a.m., Saturday. Boone was airlifted to TMC by a Davis-Monthan AFB helicopter.” The young man had suffered fractures of the pelvis, foot, arm, finger, and hairline breaks of three vertebrae. (Star 12/12/1976; Citizen 12/13/1976)

## Died Chasing Wine Bota

**Dec 19, 1976**

About 3:30 p.m., Kathleen M. Schultze and three companions, were tossing around a wine bota while on top of the highest fall in Tanque Verde Falls. Someone missed it and the leather container “sailed over the edge and landed on a ledge 15 feet below them.” A young man from New York climbed down to retrieve it but then was having a difficult time getting back up. The 21-year-old Schultze, arriving in Tucson on a semester-break trip from her home in Maryland only the day before, was working her way down to help him. Schultze “lost her footing and fell to the ledge, struck it and fell another 90 feet into a two-foot-deep pool of water” at the bottom.

One friend went for help while the other two scrambled their way down to the bottom of the waterfall, taking twenty minutes to reach her. They were unable to revive her. Southern Arizona Rescue Association volunteer James Harsha would later say, “the climb Miss Schultze was attempting would be ‘very difficult’ for even an experienced rock climber. . . ‘I’d want to be roped. . . I wouldn’t climb there anyway because the rock is rotten and water-polished.’ ” She had no previous rock-climbing experience or training. Sheriff’s deputies said, “She died either from the fall or from drowning. . . .” (Citizen 12/20/1976)

## “Too Much Help Hinders Rescue”

**Jan 1, 1977**

So read the title of the article on page 20 of the January 4, 1977, *Tucson Daily Citizen*. “It was a routine air rescue of a young hiker injured in the Sawtooth Mountains, northwest of Silver Bell. But it turned into a long, confusing night with too many helicopters trying to get into the act. The hiker was rescued, but the fact that four rescue services were involved [actually five] has irritated the Pima County sheriff’s rescue coordinator, Sgt. Joe L. Woolridge.”

The rescue began when 18-year-old Arturo Cervantes of Marana accidentally shot himself in the groin with a .22-caliber pistol. The Sheriff’s Department was called about 4:00 p.m. and a plane was launched to size the incident up. Forty-five minutes later, the Department of Public Safety was notified but could not immediately respond as it was just returning from another mission. DPS said it would take some time to reach the scene. At 6:00 p.m., J. Randall Ogden, a paramedic working

for a private helicopter rescue service, Frontier Aviation, Inc., offered help. With this in mind, the Sheriff's Department then called off the DPS helicopter.

But the Frontier Helicopter developed radio trouble, and the private paramedic then hitched a ride with the Tucson Police Department's helicopter. At this point, facts surrounding the rescue scene, become even more confusing. Ogden claims he was the first paramedic on the scene, but Sgt. Woolridge claims his Sheriff's Department personnel were already with the gunshot victim. In the meantime, the malfunctioning Frontier Aviation helicopter radio had been repaired and they had taken off to assist. It then joined the Tucson Police Department helicopter and the Sheriff's airplane and Woolridge finally got on the radio and told everyone to stop and get out of the way.

The three craft cleared the immediate area and the DPS ship came in to lift the injured Cervantes out. However, it could not lift him up and could only drop medical supplies. Finally, at 11:15 p.m., a Davis-Monthan AFB helicopter was able to hoist Cervantes up and out. Ultimately responding, were the Tucson Police Department helicopter, Frontier Aviation helicopter, Sheriff's Department airplane, Department of Public Safety helicopter, and a hoist-equipped helicopter from Davis-Monthan Air Force Base. (Citizen 1/4/1977)

## SARCI Formed

### Jan 14, 1977

Dick Boykin was sworn in as Sheriff of Pima County only minutes after midnight on January 1, just in time to witness the rescue fiasco of Arturo Cervantes. The 18-year-old had accidentally shot himself in the groin while hiking in the Sawtooth Mountains, near Silverbell, northwest of Tucson.<sup>4</sup>

On January 14, Sheriff Boykin met with “approximately 150 members of eight volunteer rescue groups... a central council composed of a representative from each group will soon control the county's field rescue operations while the Sheriff's Department will handle establishment of base camps, air support and other duties which are non-delegable under state law.” The Pima County Search and Rescue Council, Incorporated—SARCI—was formed.

Boykin told those assembled at the University of Arizona Medical Center, “ ‘Generally the sheriff lacks the manpower to perform field searches,’ ” adding that night that “the volunteer groups possess greater expertise than does the Sheriff's Department.” It was his stated belief that “the past wrangling stems from the fact that ‘these volunteers are really dedicated, gung-ho people who are just naturally competitive. And they need to be that way in this kind of work.’ ”

Tentative plans for SARCI called for a Sheriff's Department liaison officer to notify the Council of the need for a rescue operation, establish a spot to rendezvous, and allow the leaders to direct the field operations. The liaison would coordinate field communications with other government and military agencies. See “Too Much Help Hinders Rescue,” Jan 1, 1977 on page 313. (Citizen 1/8/1977, 1/15/1977, 1/21/1977; Star 1/17/1977)

<sup>4</sup> Boykin inherited the Department SAR from his predecessor, Sheriff W. Coy Cox. Formed the previous February, this was an all-volunteer organization; it was functional but still suffered raw wounds partially created by the clashing of two strong personalities from more than a decade earlier.

## Two Teenagers Rescued from Ledge

**Jan 21, 1977**

SARA members Don Morris and Bill Grimes climbed some 150 feet up a near-vertical cliff on Beehive Mountain in the Tucson Mountains. Doug Baker, 15, and Robert Pate, 16, were trying to climb over the top and down the other side with two other, older teenagers. The younger boys apparently decided to take a different route to the top. According to one of the older boys, “I told them to follow me, but didn’t. They said they were going to beat us to the top, but we were the only ones who made it.” Baker and Pate were trapped on a foot-wide ledge for over four hours before being rescued. Although Doug had climbed the mountain several times, he had never taken this route. (Star 1/22/1977)

## Two Plane Crashes, Four Dead People

**Jan 22, 1977**

Poor weather shrouding the region that Saturday morning contributed to two plane crashes in separate mountain ranges in Southern Arizona, killing two people in each aircraft. The first was in the Dragoon Mountains, between Benson and Willcox. Larry and Ellen Jones, no ages given, were in their light plane enroute from El Paso to the Glendale Airport, near Phoenix. Mrs. Jones was intently following Interstate 10, closely hugging the ground’s hilly contours through Texas Canyon because of poor visibility when the accident took place. Cochise County Sheriff’s deputies on horseback, “reported that the victims had been flung several hundred feet after the wingtip of their plane hit a mountain wall.” They recovered the bodies that morning.

Much more difficult to reach by rescuers was the twin-engine Cessna which possibly exploded on impact within hours of the accident in Texas Canyon. Mario Bonfante, 62, and 32-year-old Ronald John Ohanesian, took off from Nogales and filed a flight plan to Fresno, California. At about 8:30 a.m., only minutes of departing the 2,200-foot-long runway, they crashed into a ridge on the southwest flank of the Santa Rita Mountains. Although unknown, there was a possibility they were flying on instruments, also due to limited visibility. Santa Cruz County deputies could not reach the wreck site that day because of the rough terrain. However, the next day more rescuers finally were able to work their way into the grisly scene and recover the two victims. (Citizen 1/24/1977, 1/26/1977; Star 1/14/1977; Mykle Raymond email 9/22/2021)

## Woman Plunges 90 Feet in Rincons

**Feb 9, 1977**

Jill Thomas, 23, hiking with two friends about three miles east of the Saguaro National Monument Visitor Center, stumbled into a stream and slid down a series of unnamed cascades, landing in a pool ninety feet below. A companion was able to pull her out of the water at about 6:30 p.m. and revive her. A second friend went for help. When this friend seemed to take longer than expected, the first started out, after putting the seriously injured Thomas onto a ledge. At 10:45 p.m., authorities were ultimately alerted and 21 volunteers responded, along with the Tucson Police Department helicopter. Two hours after beginning the rescue effort, paramedics located the young woman, who had now been dead for about three hours. (Star 2/10/1977)

## Hang Glider Plunges 300 Feet

**Mar 5, 1977**

Sierra Vista resident, Robert D. Sage, 22, “a veteran of the sport,” became the first hang glider fatality in the area when he “slipped from his hang glider and fell 300 feet into rocky Carr Canyon.” There was no follow up story about this incident although it seems the recovery was relatively easy. (Star 3/8/1977)

## Boy Fell 50 Feet

**Mar 14, 1977**

Herbert Haynes, a 14-year-old eighth grader at Pistor Middle School just summited 3,852-foot-high Cat Mountain on the southern end of the Tucson Mountains. On his way down, he slipped with his tennis shoes and fell fifty feet and then rolled farther down the extremely rugged and broken slope. He was with his 9-year-old brother and their 12-year-old friend. He fell at about 5:30 p.m. and paramedics reached him 45 minutes later. He suffered multiple fractures of his right leg, possible internal injuries and serious cuts and bruises on his face and arms. They also found his blood pressure awfully low, taking nearly an hour trying to stabilize him with IV fluids before carrying him off the mountain.

A team of some thirty rescue volunteers arrived about 7:00 p.m., and then spent ninety minutes moving him off the steep slope. Nineteen members of the Southern Arizona Rescue Association, as well as responders from the Tucson-Pima County Emergency Services and the Pima County Four-Wheel Drive, participated. They used a stretcher with an oversized wheel that could be lowered by rope to get the boy to a waiting ambulance about 8:45 p.m.

In a follow up article ten days later, Herbert was still in Saint Mary’s Hospital but out of Intensive Care, having undergone a major hip operation to repair his numerous fractures. His right leg, placed in a metal brace from hip to foot, would require wearing it for two years. His mother would say, “Now, he’s hoping to be out of the hospital in a couple of weeks.” Sheriff’s Deputy Doug Marcoux coordinated the rescue. (Star 3/15/1977; Citizen 3/15/1977, 3/25/1977)

## Death at Chivo Falls

**Apr 17, 1977**

An All-Conference U of A football tackle, Brian Murray, 23, was walking on a steep sloping rock at the top of Chivo Falls with a friend. The rock slab was polished smooth by intermittent flooding. The young man lost his footing and began to slide downward, unable to stop. Sliding about 15 feet he then fell an additional sixty feet, hitting a protruding three-foot rock ledge. He bounced outward and fell another twenty feet into a two-foot-deep pool. Murray was the second person to die at Chivo Falls in less than a year and a half.

A May 1, 1977 article in *The Arizona Daily Star* went on to say that, “Since 1975, there have been 16 rescue missions at Tanque Verde Falls. In the same period the Sheriff’s Dept was called out six times to go to Chivo Falls. The Seven Falls area in the Santa Catalina Mountains had 11 rescues in the same period. Nearly all involved people in their teens or early 20’s.” (Star 4/18/1977)

## Airman Drowns

**Jun 12, 1977**

Four young airmen from Davis-Monthan Air Force Base struck out to swim across Pena Blanca Lake before dawn that Sunday morning. Gary L. Dobbins from Indiana failed to reach the other side. In addition to deputies from the Santa Cruz County Sheriff's Office, volunteers from the Southern Arizona Rescue Association, including members of the Pima County Search and Recovery Divers, responded. They located the body of the drowned 20-year-old Dobbins by noon. (Citizen 6/15/1977)

## Emergency Services Search and Rescue Dissolves

**Jul 1977**

“Emergency Services Search and Rescue: At the July meeting, the group voted to dissolve itself due to lack of interest. 4WD, S & R, also affiliated with Emergency Services voted to accept former members of ES into their group, subject to their standards and dues.” (Volunteer Search and Rescue Combined Newsletter-September 1977)

## “Emergency Survival-77”

**Jul 23, 1977**

Taking place at the Avra Valley Airport, “Emergency Survival-77,” was the theme of over 25 military and civilian rescue organizations, and their demonstration of rescue equipment and techniques. The Southern Arizona Rescue Association was a key part of the weekend's displays and attractions. One was their lowering a “victim” down from a high perch in a litter. A highlight of the weekend was an appearance by the US Army Golden Knights Parachute Team. Governor Raul Castro was scheduled, but his appearance was canceled. (Star 7/24/1977; Citizen 7/25/1977)

## A Dangerous Hoax

**Jul 29, 1977**

At 8:00 p.m., a call to authorities on the Citizens Band Radio Emergency channel, claimed a tree had fallen on the cab of his father's pickup truck, pinning his brother and breaking his leg. The accident was reportedly north of the ski lift on Mount Lemmon and it sounded to be from a boy between 10 and 15 years of age. Pima County and the Tucson Radio Emergency Associated Citizens Team (REACT) monitored the search efforts while upwards of forty persons from the Sheriff's Department and the Southern Arizona Rescue Association, spent all night looking for the seriously injured victim.

After further checking with local hospitals throughout the night, it was labeled a hoax the next morning. The supervisor in the Pima County Communications Section said, this “ ‘incident is the only one on record in which many search and rescue unit members were called out... We could not afford to ignore the call...’ ” (Star 7/31/1977)

## Rappelling Accident Off Bridge

**Aug 2, 1977**

The two young men from Sierra Vista were practicing free rappelling, by going off the eighty-foot-high road bridge over the Pantano Wash on the Marsh Station Road, (old Historic Highway 80), five miles east of Vail. Daniel T. Earl, 18, and Hans Bodenhamer, 19, had done the drop already once that day and had also made it other times, as well. Both were experienced, having been rappelling for at least three years. As Earl climbed over the railing for his second rappel that day, he had forgotten to lock his carabiner and it accidentally opened. The teenager fell through the air for forty feet but by frantically grabbing at the passing nylon rope, fell another forty feet but somehow, was able to slow his fall just enough.

A Pima County Maintenance Crew was taking a lunch break nearby and witnessed the accident and using their radio, called their dispatcher. The Pima County Sheriff's Search and Rescue Unit, including the Southern Arizona Rescue Association, was dispatched. In short order, they were followed by a rescue helicopter from Davis-Monthan AFB, who were able to lower a stretcher into the narrow-walled canyon and carefully hoist Earl out. He was in the Tucson Medical Center Emergency Room within two hours of having broken a leg, an ankle, and suffering severe rope burns on his hands as well as a possible back injury. (Star 8/3/1977)

## Second Drowning in Eight Weeks

**Aug 4, 1977**

Kurt Ellis Wells, 17, of Tucson, became the second youth to drown in Pena Blanca Lake in just eight weeks and the eighth since the lake opened on June 1, 1959. A 15-year-old friend of his, who was also swimming across the one-hundred-yard-wide lake, told Santa Cruz County Sheriff's Deputies, "that he had tried to assist Wells when he weakened halfway across, then let go of him when Wells said he could make the last 15 feet on his own." Again, the Southern Arizona Rescue Association and the Pima County Search and Recovery Divers, responded, bringing up the teenager's body that night. (Star 8/6/1977; Arizona Republic 8/6/1977)

## Two Climbers, One Lives

**Sep 17, 1977**

Richard Thompson, 27, would be pronounced dead at the scene, Timothy Kelly, 23, lived to tell what happened. It was mid-afternoon and the two were climbing in the Reef of Rocks, a mile-long granite ridge of exciting outcrops and inviting crags directly north and downhill of the Mount Lemmon Ski Valley. Thompson was working his way up a cliff when "a couple of tons of rock gave way..." Kelly, belaying Thompson who was at the end of the rope above him, was pulled from his anchor position and the two fell to the base of the climb. "Rescue workers said Thompson and Kelly apparently fell between 80 and 100 feet..."

Kelly, out between "five and 55 minutes," had suffered a break in his breastbone and two bones in his foot. Lying beside him, his climbing partner was not conscious but was still breathing with blood coming from his nose and ears, a telling sign of serious head trauma. Knowing his friend was critically injured, a still dazed Kelly tried to move his way along to get help. He only made it,



“40 to 50 feet along the mountain when the lightness in his head told him he wasn’t going anywhere that day. He lay in the remaining sun, then snuggled into what shelter he could find until it was light enough to see his hand in front of his face. Still determined to get his friend off the mountain, he spent a couple of hours covering more than 100 feet across a ‘pretty hairy’ traverse.”

Two companions who had come up the mountain with Kelly and Thompson and had also been climbing in the area, spent the evening looking for them. Because of the dangerous terrain, they quit for the night, but before light, they returned, along with Thompson’s wife. Soon finding the injured pair, two of them remained and one of the men went for help “from the Southern Arizona Rescue Association [“46 members”]...and a Davis-Monthan AFB helicopter crew carried out the rescue operation.” (Star 9/19/1977, 9/25/1977; Citizen 9/19/1977)

## Remnants of Hurricane Heather: The Flood of October 1977

### Oct 8, 1977

It was 100 degrees on Sunday, October 2, a record for Tucson that date, the previous high was 97 set back in 1955. That was according to the little Weather Box found the next day on the front page of *The Arizona Daily Star*. It went on to say, “The forecast called for increasing cloudiness and cooler temperatures with a 30 percent chance of showers.” Then on Wednesday it had been raised to forty percent. Thursday, 1.47 inches fell in one hour, but the full impact of the deep current of moist air now streaming in from Mexico—the remainder of Hurricane Heather—had not yet hit. But it would soon and, with a vengeance.

What remained of Hurricane Heather, now already downgraded to just a Tropical Storm, hit Southern Arizona in a major, personal way. The following week’s headlines regarding this storm and its aftermath, says it all:

FRIDAY: “Roads Flooded, Power Cut by Dry-Season Rain,” and “Dry Season Storm Cuts Power, Floods Roads, Causes Accidents.”

SATURDAY: “It’s Wet, but its no flood,” but then just 12 hours later, “Runaway River Spreads Ruin,” and also, “Rain Turns ‘Dry River’ Into Damaging Torrent.”

MONDAY: “700 Homeless in Flood,” and “Santa Cruz Overflows; 6 Towns Hit.”

TUESDAY: “Santa Cruz Rampage is Biggest in History,” “San Pedro Now Flooding While Santa Cruz Recedes,” “An Upstream Battle for Life Against the Flood,” and “Tireless officers, volunteers keep flood from taking lives.”

WEDNESDAY: “River Swamps Bridges, Roads, Landfills,” and “Flood Woes: Wrecked Bridges, escaped sewage.”

But the impact of this storm was also keenly felt by the First Responders. Nearly two-hundred Pima County Sheriff’s Department personnel and volunteers from the various SAR groups worked at least 24 hours, around the clock.

“They were joined by men and women from the Arizona Highway Patrol, Pima County Highway Dept., Tucson Fire Dept., Tucson Police Dept., Pima County Emergency Services, Rural Metro Fire Dept., Santa Cruz Sheriff’s Dept., Red Cross and others, all of whom some officials credit with the fact that there were no deaths or major injuries during the...flooding. ‘They did an outstanding job. The effort was just superior,’ said Sheriff Richard Boykin. ‘The different

agencies involved recognized the problem early and were out warning people right away,’ he said... Santa Cruz County Sheriff Maj. Raul Parada said the department had all 30 of its deputies working for 22 to 24 hours. . . .

“The bridge-smashing, house-wrecking Santa Cruz River of yesterday and Sunday was the biggest [18,000 cfs] the river had been in 72 years that records of the river’s flow through Tucson have been kept... flooding of the Santa Cruz... has been on the increase since records were first kept in 1915. From then until 1961, no flood ever rushed along the river at more than 12,000 cubic feet per second, but there have been three floods of that magnitude since then.” (Star 10/3/1977, 10/4/1977, 10/5/1977, 10/7/1977, 10/8/1977, 10/10/1977, 10/11/1977; Citizen 10/6/1977, 10/8/1977, 10/11/1977, 10/12/1977)

### **Rescued from Tanque Verde Falls**

**Oct 21, 1977**

Tom Brownell, 24, fell over fifty feet from a ledge into a pool above the main waterfall at Tanque Verde Falls. “A team of 22 search-and-rescue volunteers went to the falls to aid deputies after several sightseers in the area pulled Brownell from the pool.” He received spinal injuries, possible internal injuries and a broken arm and was listed by Tucson Medical Center in serious condition. He was airlifted there by a “Det” 1, 37<sup>th</sup> Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadron helicopter from Davis-Monthan AFB at 5:00 p.m. (Star 10/22/1977)

### **Fell into Unknown Mine Shaft**

**Dec 11, 1977**

At 9:30 p.m., Darryl C. Floyd, 36, exited his friend’s truck to relieve himself only a few feet from the Charleston Road, three miles southwest of Tombstone. He never came back. Along with 32-year-old Edward A. Andre, the two young engineers worked at Fort Huachuca and were returning to Sierra Vista following an afternoon and evening touring the area. Floyd walked only a few yards away and when he did not return after several minutes, his friend searched for him with a flashlight, only to discover the shaft, totally obscured by weeds. It was obvious what had happened and after repeated shouting into the pit, he got on the truck’s short-wave radio, asking for help.

The first to arrive was Sgt. Larry Dever of the Cochise County Sheriff’s Office. Understanding time could be critical and not knowing if Floyd was alive or dead, the Deputy quickly got himself lowered into the mine shaft by using the winch on Andre’s truck. Dever found Darryl C. Floyd dead at the bottom of the 145-foot-deep shaft. No attempt had been made to fence the area or post warning signs and the neighbors did not know the mine, soon learned to be the “Mamie Claim,” was even there. It was eventually fenced off.

According to the State Mine Inspector, there are thousands of abandoned and unmarked mines in Southern Arizona. “...that whole area is pockmarked with holes.” (Star 12/13/1977; Citizen 5/6/1984)

## Drowning at Hutch's Pool

**Dec 21, 1977**

“Chuck McHugh, a member of the Pima County Sheriff’s Department search-and-rescue unit, said that after the youths unpacked bedrolls to spend the night in the [Hutch’s Pool] area, some began consuming hallucinogenic drugs.” Near midnight, 17-year-old Bret Fairchild climbed atop some rocks above the stream and dove into a six-foot-deep pool, striking his head. After looking for his companion, one of the boys who had not taken any of the peyote or jimson weed, hiked the eight miles out to a phone, where he notified deputies about 1:45 a.m. Twenty Sheriff’s Deputies and volunteers with the Southern Arizona Rescue Association responded, arriving at the campsite at 4:00 a.m. Using long poles, they were able to hook the young man’s body and get him out of the frigid water about ninety minutes later. In Upper Sabino Canyon, Hutch’s Pool is a popular destination for hikers. (Citizen 12/22/1977; Star 12/23/1977)

## Pima County SAR Statistics for 1978

**1978**

In an article in the Hughes Aircraft Company News-Tucson, Pima County SAR Deputy Chuck McHugh is quoted: “ ‘In 1978 the Pima County Sheriff’s Department investigated 182 requests for Search and Rescue. The [Southern Arizona Rescue] Council responded on approximately 50% of these cases which included 47 rescues and 33 searches contributing 36,000 man-hours.’ ” In the same set of articles, Tom Harlan, “SARA’s oldest continuous member,” indicates there are eighty members in SARA with about “20 ‘hardcore’... Membership dues (\$7/year), but Hughes GO Club is SARA’s largest source of funding.” (Hughes News 8/1980)

## Plane Missing Out of Sells

**Jan 9, 1978**

Believed to be bound for either Phoenix or Brawley, California, the 1963 four-place Cessna 182 took off out of Sells at 6:45 p.m. Monday evening, with two occupants. Del Bebee, 69, the pilot, did not file a flight plan, which would have been very useful to the Civil Air Patrol. Was the missing single-engine plane going to the north or to the west? With Bebee, was his business associate, 56-year-old Gilbert Vanoy. At the height of the nearly four-day-long search, there were 15 planes hunting the rugged mountains and open deserts for the orange and white plane. At 2:40 p.m. Friday, the CAP spotted the downed, crumpled aircraft 12 miles from where it took off. The crash claimed the lives of both occupants. A helicopter was dispatched from Davis-Monthan AFB to recover Del Bebee and Gilbert Vanoy. (Star 1/11/1978, 1/13/1978; Citizen 1/14/1978)

## Two Drown

**Jan 15, 1978**

The National Weather Service measured .84 inches of rain at Tucson International Airport and about 2.5 inches of mixed rain and snow at Palisades Ranger Station in the Catalina Mountains that afternoon. A not, un-typical Southern Arizona winter storm. Heavy runoff soon prompted officials to close numerous local roads historically prone to flooding; again, a not, un-typical cautionary consequence of these heavy, area rains.

About 3:30 p.m. that Sunday, a vehicle went around the Road Closed barriers and bogged down in the rain-swollen Rillito River at Craycroft Road [before the bridge]. The driver was unable to get across and was now trapped. Right afterwards, Roger M. Remhof drove into the swift-flowing current in his four-wheel drive Toyota Land Cruiser; also disregarding the barriers, he possibly thought he could do what the first man couldn't. But he too, could not cross and needed rescuing. (In fact, it was later learned he had driven around two sets of barriers.) In the interim, the first man jumped free of his rapidly filling vehicle and was swept downstream but soon scrambled from the Rillito River, unharmed.

A surgical technician at Saint Joseph's Hospital, 46-year-old Remhof remained inside his truck for about twenty minutes while emergency responders were arriving. Witnesses claimed he was within a few yards of the bank. "About 20 sheriff's deputies, members of the county search and rescue unit [including SARA] and a Department of Public Safety helicopter had tried to rescue the second man while his car was still upright." Then there were the 46,000-volt power lines above the Remhof vehicle which made the chopper rescue even much trickier.

As he was climbing out the window and clambering to the roof, a surge of water, estimated at 10 mph, hit the Toyota broadside, turning it over as it was being pushed downstream. " 'We were getting our equipment ready to make a rescue effort when the force of the water made the car skid off the roadway and into the river,' " according to DPS paramedic Steve Lump. Remhof, who could not swim, disappeared in the brown water. Later, Deputy Larry Seligman said the man's body was seen floating face down in the debris-filled river a short time later near North Swan Road, some 1 1/2 miles downstream. He was presumed dead.

At 10:30 p.m. that same Sunday night, Joseph F. Thompson, 52, an employee of the Arthur Pack Golf Course near Marana, also disregarded obvious warning signs, and tried to cross the broad Cañada del Oro Wash at Overton Road. There were no witnesses to this accident but his small, empty compact car was found downstream, with no sign of Thompson.

The next morning, "Searchers in four-wheel drive vehicles... tracked the Rillito and the Santa Cruz River, which it enters, more than 20 miles downstream to Marana but failed to find a trace of the body. An air search by plane and helicopter also proved futile." Later that day, Thompson's body was located over four-hundred yards downstream of his car. He "was lodged between tree branches and almost buried in the sand."

Deputies and searchers, still looking for Remhof, including from inside a low-flying light plane, along with the Tucson Police helicopter, continued to scour the still running Rillito River with no luck. That Wednesday afternoon, three days after he was lost, two children playing along the muddy and still puddled Rillito River, spotted his body on the opposite side, about ten miles downstream from where he perished.

The rescue attempt of Remhof, however, was immediately criticized by some of the onlookers at the scene. "There was speculation that Remhof... could have been saved. Several witnesses to the incident said deputies, Department of Public Safety personnel and other rescuers botched the rescue attempt." It was claimed he was so close to the shore and that the emergency responders wasted time. " 'Why didn't they just tie a rope to the skid of the helicopter and pull the guy that short distance to the bank... They didn't have to fool around stripping the equipment and doors.' " This criticism and related blame from several bystanders in the newspaper articles was followed by some angry Letters to the Editors.

"Sheriff's Sgt. Mark Pettit said bystanders at emergencies often view the incidents in 'slow motion' and what seems to be a long time is... only a few minutes. He said he has gotten together with DPS officials and compared radio logs to determine what actually happened. He said these

logs show that rescue personnel were not at fault for the man's death." Sheriff Richard J. Boykin said the helicopter didn't have lifting capabilities and had stopped on an island to clear an area in the cockpit for the struggling man. 'They did everything possible. It just happened so quick,' he said." But the controversy did not go away.

The road was closed from flood damage until May 22, when it was reopened. And then in July, \$50,000 was put into crossing modifications, including installing large metal culverts to allow water to go underneath. In January 1980, the family of Roger Remhof filed a lawsuit, charging Pima County, Rural Metro Fire Department, and the State of Arizona with various aspects of negligence, including challenging operation and competence of the helicopter crew, road and river-crossing design, not having depth markers, among other allegations.

Two days before going into court on October 22, 1981, Rural Metro Fire Department and Pima County settled for an undisclosed amount. However, the State of Arizona went to trial and on November 3, 1981, after only two hours of deliberation, the seven-man, one-woman jury found:

"There was no negligence by a state Department of Public Safety helicopter crew attempting to rescue a man who drowned in the Tanque Verde Wash [sic: Rillito River] during a 1978 flood, a Pima County Superior Court jury decided. . . also found that Roger Remhof. . . negligent in driving his four-wheel-drive vehicle into the wash on January 15, 1978. . . 'The jury verdict will allow us to perform rescue missions as safely as possible,' said DPS helicopter pilot David Ruhlman, moments after the verdict."

On November 1, 1982, a new bridge, raised above the Rillito River was opened to traffic, it cost \$3.28 million and nearly seven months of construction. (Star 1/16/1978, 6/29/1978, 10/22/1981, 11/4/1981, 4/14/1982; Citizen 1/17/1978, 1/19/1978, 5/22/1978, 11/4/1981, 11/1/1982)

### **Southern Arizona's First Full-Time DPS Helicopter**

**Feb 18, 1978**

At this point, the Arizona Department of Public Safety had two emergency medical, air rescue helicopters permanently based in Flagstaff and Phoenix. And they also had a third helicopter, which occasionally worked out of Tucson but covered all of Arizona south of Casa Grande. On February 18, 1978, Tucson got its "first full-time emergency medical helicopter." It was stationed at Tucson International Airport and had several crews, each consisting of a pilot and a paramedic, both DPS officers. See "Department of Public Safety Helicopter Call Signs," October 1972, on page 282.

On September 1, 1985, DPS finally moved the base of operations for its helicopter from the airport to Tucson Medical Center. There were now five pilots, five paramedics, and ten emergency-room nurses that rotated duty as a third member of the crew as a flight nurse. It was also announced that coming in March, a fourth helicopter was being added to the air rescue helicopter fleet and was scheduled to be assigned for Kingman. (Star 2/17/1978, 8/15/1985)

### **Trapped Near Finger Rock**

**Feb 24, 1978**

"Two Sheriff's Deputies [sic] and 27 volunteer rescuers labored about five hours. . . to bring two trapped boys off a steep mountain slope from which they could have walked had it been daylight."

Eric Hegstrom, 13, and 14-year-old Frederick Haskell, began their hike to Finger Rock in the Catalina Mountains about 10:00 a.m. At 7:00 p.m., right at dark, a passing hiker spotted them stuck on the side of a slope, at about the 6,000-foot level. “Rescuers made voice contact with the boys across a canyon by about 8:30 p.m.,” and reached them two hours later. Rescuers from the Southern Arizona Rescue Association described the area as a maze, and added “that the only thing that had trapped the boys was the sinking sun.” (Star 2/25/1978)

### Swept into Rillito River

**Mar 2, 1978**

The statewide storm dumped so much rain that Governor Wesley Bolin flew over the Salt and Verde Rivers for ninety minutes and observed the most flow in forty years. From the air he declared a State Of Emergency, mobilizing three-hundred National Guardsmen. The damage was widespread and sadly James Epps, 42, a Maricopa County Deputy, drowned while trying to rescue a woman in the rushing waters on the streets of Glendale.

Tucson was not hit as hard as Phoenix but Palisades Ranger Station on Mt. Lemmon recorded almost four inches of rain in a short period, melting the snowpack in the Catalina Mountains. This caused the weather bureau to warn that the Rillito and Santa Cruz Rivers, and the Cañada del Oro Wash, could run at near-record levels.

The Sheriff’s Department was first alerted that two teen-age boys may have been caught in the Rillito around 1:00 p.m. A witness told deputies she saw two boys jump into the river from the north bank near Dodge Boulevard. “They swam around and disappeared downstream. At least 18 deputies, a Tucson Police Department helicopter and 20 Pima County Sheriff’s Search and Rescue volunteers worked for nearly three hours” trying to locate the unidentified boys. “The search was called off when rescue volunteers saw two boys on the bank dripping wet. The boys ran away before they could be questioned.” (Star 3/2/1978, 3/3/1978)

### Teenager Seriously Injured at Tanque Verde Falls

**Apr 7, 1978**

Randy Hartje of Tucson had to be hoisted up one-hundred feet into a Davis-Monthan AFB HH-1H “Huey” helicopter. The 17-year-old had been hiking with his brother and two others when he slipped on dangerously loose rock and tumbled twenty feet into the rocks below. Captains Jeff Short and Chuck Trout were at the controls as the boy was lifted out of the rugged terrain. After he fell, his 15-year-old brother thought he had been killed until he noticed Randy gasping for breath. The brother and an older friend then dashed like madmen down the hill to a telephone.

Deputy Chuck McHugh got the call over his pager. Rushing Code-3 to the scene, McHugh radioed several volunteers from SARA as well as alerted the helicopter rescue group at Davis-Monthan. Within the hour, “Beaver Eight,” the helicopter call sign, arrived on scene. Short and Trout were advised that where Randy lay, was too dangerous to be picked up and that he would need to be moved. It took an additional hour to work the injured youth down an elaborate rope system to the canyon floor. The wind was howling at 35 mph and the walls were narrow. The ship had some fifty feet of horizontal air space to work in.

“ ‘Our descent will be steep...it will be short and deliberate and fast.’ In the meantime, the aircraft maneuvered above the canyon to burn off fuel that would weigh them down during its



perilous descent.” The flight surgeon, Captain Eric Wohlrab, one of the four crewmen onboard, “leaned out the door to guide the litter inside the craft. And down below, the rescue party broke into wild applause.” Within ten minutes, Randy Hartje, was being received by the staff at Tucson Medical Center. “The crew knew the boy would be OK.” (Star 5/2/1978)

### Daredevil Dies at Chivo Falls

**May 6, 1978**

Two of his friends tried to stop Lynn McCleskey, 22, from inching out to the cliff’s edge on the slick rocks of Chivo Falls, in Redington Pass, that Saturday afternoon. “ ‘He was the kind of person who would try a stunt if there was a bet on it. . . If he wanted to do something, he’d do it—you couldn’t stop him. . . .’ ” They had called to him to come back, “but as the two watched, he stopped, stood precariously on one foot with arms and legs spread wide—and then fell 80 feet to the rocks below.” Lynn, his mother, another family member and a young friend, had hiked to the falls to spend the afternoon relaxing. McCleskey and his two companions had left the main group and scrambled to the top of the falls. The three were now walking down the granite rocks, made slippery by the day’s rain, when the accident happened. Sheriff’s deputies, assisted by 22 volunteers from the Southern Arizona Rescue Association, recovered his body from a shallow pool three hours later. His neck was broken and his chest was collapsed. (Star 5/8/1978)

### Toddler Missing 32 Months

**Jun 7, 1978**

“ ‘He’s just not out there,’ said a disappointed deputy Charles McHugh, chief search coordinator.” Chuck was referring to 18-month-old Andy Stryker, last seen in his bright, blue sleeper by a neighbor, “walking down a dirt road, apparently running after a dog. . . .” Andy, along with his mother Kais, 21, and 20-year-old father Mark, lived on Tucson’s northwest side, near Cortaro Farms Road and I-10. The Strykers had moved to Tucson only three weeks before little Andy went missing, with both parents still unemployed.

In an email to the author on March 31, 2021, Chuck would write, “According to the father, he and Andy were home together and dad took a nap. While dad was asleep, Andy walked out the front door and disappeared. An extraordinary search effort unfolded with no positive results.” SAR Deputy McHugh continued, “This was the most intensive search I have ever conducted.”

Helicopters from the Department of Public Safety and Davis-Monthan crisscrossed the mostly open terrain around the isolated, modest mobile-home park. Boy Scouts responded as did volunteers from SARA and “hundreds of free-lance rescuers.” A mountain rescue team along with three search dogs and their handlers, were flown in from Albuquerque. At least two psychics with divining rods, led deputies into the desert, “after receiving some strong messages. . . .” The Tucson Marine Corps Reserves drained several sewage ponds in the area. Sheriff’s Department investigators questioned both parents, deciding there was nothing amiss. “Back when we worked the search,” McHugh would later say, “some smart homicide detectives collected Andy’s hair samples from his hair brush at the trailer.”

Two days after Andy went missing, “When searchers concluded that every square foot of desert for 25 miles around the Stryker home had been combed,” the principal search was suspended, but it did not completely end. A C-130 cargo plane out of Davis-Monthan, with highly sophisticated photographic gear, flew a series of sweeps at an altitude of five-hundred feet across the area. The

photos showed no trace of the boy or his blue sleeper. Mark Stryker was given a lie-detector test, he passed. The boy's maternal grandmother in Seattle, who was originally considered a person of interest in possibly kidnapping the boy, was eventually tracked down two years later. She was cleared of suspicion. "More than 50 psychics were questioned about the disappearance... only two of them believed the child was dead."

On July 9, a month after her son vanished, Kais died suddenly after running a stop sign while driving back from the grocery store. A short time later, Mark moved back to Bremerton, Washington, from where the family had come. Finally, over 32 months later, February 13, 1981, two Tucson Electric Power Company employees literally stumbled over silt covered skeletal remains in a faded, weather-worn toddler's jumper, more than two and a half miles from the Stryker home. They were "about 12 feet from the side of an irrigation ditch... [they] could have been washed down the ditch, which passes near ["roughly 100 yards west"] the Stryker home and which had been partially filled with fast-running water at the time of the disappearance..."

Dr. Walter Birkby, a well-respected forensic anthropologist from the University of Arizona, was able to match these tiny bones as well as the hair samples collected from the initial search, with that of little Andy Stryker. (Star 6/9/1978; Citizen 6/17/1978, 3/13/1981)

## Dog Fell 160 Feet

Sep 3, 1978

Professional geologist Perry Durning would often take his two dogs, Amigo and Segunda, along with him on his mineral surveying and mapping excursions. He and a friend from California were sampling some rocks in an abandoned mine about six miles south of Corona de Tucson, and the two dogs went along. They were all about two-hundred feet into the mine when Durning heard a crash followed by a splash. Having been there before, he knew of the deep shaft in that part of the abandoned mine and immediately thought the worst. Shining his light into the pit, he was genuinely surprised and very pleased to see "a pair of eyes glowing out of the darkness." It was his 2-year-old canine companion, Amigo.

The two men had a one-hundred-foot rope with them, but the drop was too deep and "cluttered with pieces of fallen timber and broken railway track. And, despite a rotting wooden ladder that extended about 30 feet into the hole, the two men were unable to rescue the dog."

Calling the Pima County Sheriff's Department for help, Deputies Chuck McHugh and Larry Seligman responded. This is not something the men normally respond to but Seligman said, "there were no other calls so we decided to give it a try."

Chuck and Larry flipped a coin to determine who would rappel down the shaft and retrieve Amigo. Seligman won, or lost, depending on your perspective, so amid the precariously balanced debris and other hazards, Larry went down. Amigo had fallen into the water but had been able to crawl out onto a small ledge, which possibly saved him from drowning. After tying a rope around the middle of Amigo, both man and dog were raised up and out of the shaft. Except for scratches and bruises, Amigo would live to bark another day. (Citizen 9/13/1978)

## Search Management Comes to Southern Arizona

Sep 11–15, 1978

Deputy Chuck McHugh, Pima County Sheriff’s Department Search and Rescue Coordinator, brought to Southern Arizona a more reasoned design for handling organization and tactics for searching for a lost person, especially in a rural setting. In September 1978, he attended the National Park Service’s first, forty-hour, “Managing the Search Function (MSF): Instructor Workshop Course,” held at the Horace M. Albright Training Center (HOAL) at Grand Canyon National Park. Needless to say, this concept of training did not come about overnight; in fact, it would take nearly five years.

In January 1973, an “out-of-the-box-thinking” Park Ranger, Bill Wade, transferred into HOAL as an instructor for National Park Rangers. Wade was soon told by the Superintendent of HOAL to spend \$10,000 (\$63,000 in 2022) on training in search and rescue for parks. Bill knew areas with increasing demands of cliff and vertical rescue such as Rocky Mountain, were already developing procedures for meeting their needs. But he also knew the same was not yet true for searches which many parks were increasingly faced with, given mounting visitation.

That fall, Bill attended the State SAR Coordinators meeting in Carson City, Nevada. There, he met many of this country’s forward thinkers in rural search and rescue. This included Major Bob Mattson, Lois McCoy, Bill Vargas, Rick LaValla, and Washington State SAR Coordinator, Hal Foss, the group’s president. Before he left, he knew them all and had contact information for other potential contributors to his task. Bill fit right in.

He traveled to Seattle—already a bastion of mountain rescue—and met with Bill Syrotuck (whom he’d met in 1969 on a search in Mount Rainier National Park), LaValla, Foss, and Jon Wartes, and Wade shared his vision of an MSF-type program, this received a warm welcome. They and others such as Dennis Kelley, soon became the nucleus of instructors for the first Managing the Search Function Course, held in the Spring of 1974 at HOAL; while they all taught, they all also learned. Many afterhours were spent on developing the program, even as the class actually progressed during the day.

It was so well received, those from Washington put together a second MSF course later that fall, held at Central Washington University in Ellensburg. Now also involved were some other SAR “heavy hitters,” including Ab Taylor, legendary Border Patrol tracker, Skip Stoffel, and Greg McDonald, who along with Vargas, was a former US Air Force Para-Rescueman. Between 1974 and the MSF Instructor Course in 1978 that Deputy Chuck McHugh attended, there were at least two other classes, both further refining course content.

Finally, for nearly five decades since this much-needed addition to the art and science of search was first imagined, it has grown and is now titled, “Managing the Lost Person Incident (MLPI).” Key elements for today’s search management are statistical modeling of lost persons, application of resources, and prioritizing search areas. This is all made useable to those in the field by a computer program initially called CASIE for Computer Assisted Search Information Exchange, but now termed WinCASIE, for its use in the Windows Operating System. (See Section 14.4 on page 502.)

First envisioned by Washington’s Bill Syrotuck, MLPI became a reality in 1997 largely through expertise, insight, and efforts of many, many SAR personnel, including Ken Hill, Dan O’Connor, and University of Arizona professors, John Bownds and David Lovelock. Like Syrotuck, both Bownds and Lovelock were mathematicians as well as personally involved with a local SAR group, in their case, the Southern Arizona Rescue Association. For many years “Managing the Lost Person Incident” was successfully used throughout the United States as well as in other countries. In 2009,

ASARCA decided to produce its own replacement for MLPI, called “Inland Search Management for AZ SAR Coordinators” (ISM), with an associated manual. Unlike the MLPI course with printed manual, ISM is Arizona specific and the manual is a downloadable PDF document that is free and updated before each ISM course, typically once a year. Consequently, the program is always current. As of 2023, ISM is in its 16<sup>th</sup> edition. (Bill Wade interview 2018; Personal information of the author; Personal information of David Lovelock)

### **Intellectually Disabled Boy Missing**

**Sep 12, 1978**

“The boy isn’t capable of finding his way home,” according to Patagonia Town Marshal, Roger Newson. Reed, the 17-year-old boy, was last seen wandering near the grounds of the local, rural high school about 4:30 p.m. At 7:15 p.m., when Reed’s mother told Newson her son had never been away from home after dark, a search was quickly mounted. Soon, some fifty law enforcement officers and volunteers began scouring the few modest neighborhoods and nearby desert. “Pima County Search and Rescue deputies [including SARA], were called in about 10:30 p.m., to take over the night search. Others involved included Santa Cruz sheriff’s deputies, Patagonia volunteer firemen and citizens... The search was to continue until he’s found.” Which was seven hours later, when he was discovered walking just three blocks away from his house. The young man was unharmed, and officials speculated he spent the night just roaming the tiny community. “He cannot talk...” (Star 9/14/1978)

### **Picnicker Drowns in Lake Patagonia**

**Sep 23, 1978**

Friends of 17-year-old Rafael Lopez Ramirez said they were all enjoying themselves that “Saturday afternoon when he suddenly jumped into the lake fully clothed and began swimming. They said he swam about twenty yards before shouting for help.” The Nogales, Sonora youth went down and did not come back up. That night, nine members of the Southern Arizona Rescue Association including volunteers from the Pima County Search and Recovery Divers, found the young man’s body in fifty feet of water. (Arizona Republic 9/26/1978)

### **Rescue in Lemmon Canyon**

**Sep 24, 1978**

University of Arizona student Lucy Lappegaard was hiking in the Wilderness of Rocks near Lemmon Canyon on Mount Lemmon, when the 23-year-old fell and hit her head. She had been climbing down a steep ravine near the base of a waterfall when she lost her footing on a slippery rock. It was 6 p.m. with approaching dusk and her two companions administered first aid; she agreed to wait until morning for them to seek help. Luckily, they had been backpacking and all were prepared to spend the night. The following morning, one of the friends made it down to the Sabino Canyon Visitor Center at 1 p.m.

Twenty-five members of the Southern Arizona Rescue Association responded as did both the Department of Public Safety helicopter and one from Davis-Monthan AFB. The DPS crew could not find a place to land but was able to drop medical supplies and volunteers. This was soon

followed by the hoist-equipped Detachment 1 Air Force “Huey,” flying the young woman to Tucson Medical Center. (Star 9/26/1978)

### Missing Seven-Year-Old Boy

Nov 4, 1978

The best clue the 33-person search crew had for finding the 7-year-old, was a one-mile trail of footprints into the desert. Along with his two dogs, Ruff and Ready, Leon Thompson disappeared from his front yard near Three Points in the early afternoon. When he was last seen, he was wearing his recent Darth Vader Halloween costume, which included a yellow shirt and a black cape. Trackers, responding from their nearby Border Patrol headquarters, quickly found the boy’s footprints. Per Pima County Sheriff’s Department Deputy, Chuck McHugh, “The most effective means of locating the child are those tracks.” Search volunteers walked obvious “choke points,” such as fence lines and dirt roads for a nine-mile radius for other signs and clues. To make his disappearance graver, the boy was prone to asthma attacks, particularly at night and in cool weather.

At one point, there were some seventy searchers in the desert area west of his home, 15 miles west of Tucson. They were aided by helicopters from the Department of Public Safety (DPS) and Davis-Monthan AFB. The youngster was found the next morning by DPS and the US Border Patrol, with his dog Ruff, keeping vigil. Two agents from the Border Patrol spent 16 consecutive hours tracking the boy, who was ultimately located three miles from home. He was found asleep in an arroyo, although he said he woke up several times during the night because he was cold. When asked how he became lost, Leon said, “ ‘I couldn’t remember which way the bus stop was. You see, to find home I had to find the bus stop first.’ ” (Star 11/5/1978, 11/6/1978)

### The “Great” Goat Rescue of ‘78

Nov 10, 1978

Stella Lovelace, 81, raised some thirty goats in the southern end of the Tucson Mountains, off of Bopp Road. A neighbor spotted one of her animals as a white speck on the side of Cat Mountain, behind his home. Through his binoculars and then a telescope, the ewe seemed trapped as well as appeared pregnant. It took another day to locate Stella Lovelace. Once alerted:

“She made calls—to the Pima County Sheriff’s Department. *The Arizona Daily Star*, KCUB Radio, the Tucson Police Department, the Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum, the state Game and Fish Department, several hiking clubs, TV station, the state Livestock Sanitary Board. ‘Everyone,’ she said, ‘had me calling someplace else.’ ”

Everyone was passing the buck, including the Red Cross and the Rural Metro Fire Department. Finally, Mildred Elder, the wife of the neighbor who first spotted the dilemma, called the Sheriff’s Department, again. “I said, ‘Everyone keeps telling me you can do this, now why don’t you come over and get that goat free?’ ” Later that afternoon, a four-man rescue team from SARA (Scott Clemans, Mykle Raymond, Alvin Post, and Nate Schechter), along with County SAR Deputy Chuck McHugh, arrived. Equipped with “ropes and alfalfa, they started climbing the mountain.” Hours after it had gotten dark, they were able to scare the trapped animal off its ledge and onto safer ground. (Star 11/13/1978)

## Toppled 200 Feet

**Nov 18, 1978**

Concentrating on taking photos, the 18-year-old Davis-Monthan airman was being careful and precise as he moved above the cliffs at Windy Point. Richard Strickland had just shifted his feet slowly down to a lower ledge, when the two-inch-thick branch he grabbed to steady himself, broke off and he fell backward. As his two companions watched in dismay, their friend toppled two-hundred feet down a steep ravine in the Santa Catalina Mountains. “Strickland fell 40 feet onto a rock ledge, ‘bounced off it’ . . . and began tumbling down the slope below.” One witness thought it was all over when Richard hit that first rock, “He took a fierce blow.”

When Bret Habeck, 19, and Tom Rivenbrak, 20, reached their buddy, he “was conscious and sitting upright. He told his friends he thought his leg was broken.” Climbing back to the top, Rivenbrak used a Citizens Band Radio in his car to contact the Sheriff’s Department. Soon afterwards, forest rangers arrived. The accident had taken place at 5:15 p.m. and by 8:00 p.m., volunteers from the Southern Arizona Rescue Association had strapped Strickland to a backboard and were now preparing to haul him up to the top. Now, long past dark, he was loaded onto a Department of Public Safety helicopter and flown to a hospital. (Star 11/19/1978)

## Lost off Palisade Trail

**Nov 24, 1978**

That Saturday, there was 1.1 inches of cold, steady rain at the Palisades Ranger Station, near the 7,000-foot level on Mt. Lemmon. Kevin Page, 16, and his friend Steven Stone and Stone’s girlfriend, were hiking up the Palisade Trail toward the Ranger Station, when the heavy rain and fog disoriented them and they lost the trail. “They mistakenly walked . . . into Sycamore Canyon and were stopped by a waterfall, where they pitched a camp.”

Their tent and sleeping bags were now soaked. Cold from the below-freezing temperatures and drenched by the rain and their own sweat, the group knew they were in trouble. After twenty hours of exposure, Kevin Page was ill, weak, and nearly immobile. Somehow, Stone and his girlfriend were able to hike out, soon telling authorities of Page’s plight. Volunteers from the Southern Arizona Rescue Association were able to get to the stricken youth. An Air Force helicopter out of Davis-Monthan AFB with its well-trained crew, was then able to airlift the teenager out of the narrow canyon. (Star 11/26/1978)

## Cave Rescue in Mexico

**Dec 1, 1978**

“El Brinco,” or “The Jump,” is reportedly one of the longest caves in Mexico, about 150 miles south of the Mexican Border at Brownsville, Texas, near Ciudad Victoria. Chris Kerr, 22, a veteran caver from Germantown, Tennessee, suffered a broken femur after falling thirty feet while rappelling. Along with five companions, he was one kilometer into the cavern. Two of them stayed with Kerr while the others went for help, reportedly taking a dozen hours to climb to the surface. These three contacted officials in both Mexico and the United States with the aid of amateur Ham Radio Operators.

There is no easy cave rescue, by their nature they are intense and generally tricky. When the victim is in a foreign country that has little or no cave-rescue expertise, lying far underground



with life-threatening injuries—communications are problematic at best and a safe evacuation is dangerous, grueling, and time consuming.

This country’s National Cave Rescue Commission was quickly activated, coordinated by telephone by Dan Smith, the Director of the NCRC and a fireman in the San Francisco area as well as an experienced caver himself. This was probably the first time the embryonic NCRC was put into motion for an actual SAR. Some thirty rescuers, including three experienced, caving physicians from McAllen, Texas, ultimately responded and within a long day, were in place at El Brinco. Responders came from Georgia, Virginia, Texas, and Tucson.

Led by Pima County SAR Deputy, Chuck McHugh, facilitated by Sheriff Clarence Dupnik himself, the Tucson team included seven SARA rescuers, all veteran cavers: Mike Doe, Dale Healy, Scott Davis, Lane Larson, Bob Buecher, Gary Stiles, and Roland Browne. Early the next morning the group was flown by Air Force C-141 out of Davis-Monthan AFB to Kelly AFB in San Antonio, picked up a Texas cave-rescue team as well as switched to a smaller C-130, capable of landing at more primitive airfields. Recently reflecting back more than four decades, McHugh recalls the pilot commenting, “we were ‘circling Brownsville [Texas] until we got clearance from the State Department to fly into Ciudad Victoria.’ ” Taking along a fully-equipped Pima County Sheriff’s Chevy Blazer, stuffed with cave rescue gear, they were to serve as above-ground backup for rescuers already there. Once on the ground, anxious Mexican officials gratefully assisted the newly arriving teams navigate the remote dirt roads for several hours, heading towards little known El Brinco.

Still reminiscing, Chuck continued, “the second day is non-stop as there is real urgency, at least until on our way in we meet the original team out of Austin with the injured caver stable and in good spirits. His femur was in a Hare Traction Splint and he was in the able care of a doctor. After visiting with the initial responders for 30 minutes, we ‘saddled up,’ turned around and began a long, into-the-wee-hours’ drive back to the border and McAllen, Texas.”

According to NCRC Director Dan Smith, “All the Air Force wanted to know was, ‘is this man a US citizen?’ I said yes. ‘Let’s go,’ they told Smith.” (Star 12/4/1978, 12/5/1978; Chuck McHugh email 4/30/2020)

## Young Woman Breaks Leg in Pima Canyon

**Jan 14, 1979**

A 20-year-old woman narrowly escaped death while hiking alone in the upper end of Pima Canyon in the Catalina Mountains. It was a rainy, blustery day when Beth Gilliland slipped and fell. Val Pugnea and his uncle, Pat Tanno, just happened to be descending off nearby Table Mountain. Hearing her yells, they followed them to where she had fallen. Tanno stayed while his nephew went for help. Pugnea “praised the Pima County Search and Rescue Team for its quick response to his call for help.” After responders worked for several hours to get her to a small landing zone, a helicopter from Davis-Monthan was able to lift her out and fly her to Tucson Medical Center. (Citizen 1/15/1979)

## Civil Defense SAR Leader, Phil Meade, Dies

**Feb 16, 1979**

Philip W. Meade, who for 11 years headed the Pima County Civil Defense Search and Rescue Unit, died at age 66 of cancer. Born in Denver, he graduated from Arizona State University in 1948.

He moved to Tucson in 1952, working for National Distillery Products and Chemical Corporation for 21 years until his retirement in 1975. In 1955, Meade first got involved in volunteering in search and rescue, after graduating from a comprehensive 13-week Civil Defense rescue course. See “SARA Evolves from Civil Defense” and also, “Ray Neal, ‘Father of SARA,’ ” both of which are in Section 18.2, *A Brief History of SARA*. And, as early as May 1959, Phil was also identified as “CD rescue chief.” See “Light Plane Crashes in Tortilla Mountains,” May 17, 1959, on page 183. All through the 1960’s and at least into the very early 1970’s, Meade was both affiliated with or even serving as head of that Civil Defense SAR unit. (Citizen 2/17/1979)

## Waterfall Death in Happy Valley

**Feb 17, 1979**

Jeffrey Hunter and his brother, Richard, were hiking in Happy Valley on the east side of the Rincon Mountains about 3:30 p.m., Sunday afternoon. They were returning to their car three miles away, when they stopped to investigate a waterfall in the canyon, they were in. Jeffrey was a 26-year-old crew chief at Davis-Monthan AFB. The two men were scouting for a way to the bottom of the falls and so Jeffrey tried crossing it at the top, one-hundred feet across. The airman “became frightened about midway and couldn’t move forward or backward through the stream. Richard attempted to reach his brother by lowering a belt to him, which he first held in his hand and later attached to his leg, but Jeffrey was unable to reach it...”

The moderately running stream passes over slick, highly polished granite, gradually sloping into a sheer eighty-foot drop. The airman finally slipped and plunged over the edge. Richard reached the bottom, managing to pull his brother from the water; Jeffrey was unconscious, but alive. Mouth-to-mouth resuscitation was administered and Richard successfully revived him with the help of a doctor and medical student who were close enough to hear his cries for help. Jeffrey’s condition quickly deteriorated, however. Rescuers were notified by a ham radio operator, who coincidentally, was also in the area. By the time volunteers from SARA and Chuck McHugh, Pima County SAR Coordinator, arrived, followed by a Davis-Monthan AFB helicopter, Jeffrey Hunter was dead. (Citizen 2/19/1979)

## Teenager Dies at Tanque Verde Falls

**Feb 24, 1979**

Two hikers were injured, one fatally, in separate weekend plunges off the edge of the same waterfall, only fifty feet apart. The first accident at Tanque Verde Falls involved 15-year-old Donna Clark of Tucson. While standing at the top of a fall at 10:00 a.m., she apparently slipped and fell forty feet into a pool below. One of her four hiking companions pulled the young woman out of the water. Rural Metro Fire Department was notified and, in turn, called the Sheriff’s Search and Rescue Unit. Ms. Clark was pronounced dead at the scene.

The next day, an almost identical mishap took place, at the lip of the same waterfall and within fifty feet from where Ms. Clark slipped to her death the day before. Jeff Noose, 25, “fell about 20 feet down the edge of the same series of waterfalls, landing just a few feet from the edge of another drop off. . . that second drop of about 25 to 30 feet almost certainly would have resulted in the man’s death.” Noose was hiking down along the side of the falls when he skidded on the moist, polished granite and tumbled twenty feet, landing in a basin at the bottom. Rescuers, including a registered nurse, were forced to work at the lip of another thirty-foot fall, to prepare Noose for removal to Tucson Medical Center. After arriving, Noose was listed in stable condition. (Citizen 2/26/1979)

## 17 Airlifted After Snowy Night in Catalinas

**Mar 18, 1979**

The group, three adults and 14 students from Tucson's Emily Gray Junior High School, was on a two-night camping trip in the Santa Catalina Mountains. They spent the first one in Upper Sabino Canyon. On the second day, they would scale 7,952-foot Cathedral Rock, leaving their overnight equipment at a base camp part way up their goal. Which they all summited that afternoon. On the third day, they expected to come all the way down and out. Even for experienced hikers the entire trip, at over twenty miles and a gain of four-thousand feet in elevation, while carrying two nights of food, sleeping bags and cold-weather gear, is an awfully ambitious undertaking. It's not one to be taken lightly, especially with the unpredictable weather possible in March.

Savoring success, just when these young people had started hurriedly back down the steep trail, mainly unprotected from the elements, they got slammed by a surprise snowstorm. At 7,500 feet, they were now at their most vulnerable. The open path winds off a largely exposed mountainside, with only some bluffs and scattered pines to harbor from the gale winds and the now blowing snow. All their gear for weathering the storm and sheltering overnight, sat useless in their base camp, far below them. They were forced to quickly find refuge and huddle together wherever they could and spend a miserable, seemingly unending night.

When the young hikers did not return as expected, several anxious parents contacted the Sheriff's Department, with Deputy Chuck McHugh now coordinating. Helicopter crews from both Davis-Monthan and DPS Air Rescue, were launched. DPS did not yet have hoist-equipped ships, but DMAFB, did. Efficient, Davis-Monthan soon found them and because of the squirrely winds, each of those 17 students and adults, were ably hoisted into the helicopter, one at a time. They were transported to the Sabino Canyon Visitor Center in three round trips. But Davis-Monthan wasn't yet done for the day.

A 19-year-old Tempe man was caught in that snowstorm as well, but on the far south side of the Tucson Basin. He had slipped on a steep trail on Mount Baldy in the Santa Rita's and suffered a broken collar bone and multiple, serious abrasions. He was discovered by two other hikers, one who stayed while the other went out and reported it. He was hoisted into the large helicopter. Meanwhile, a woman hiking with an outdoor club on Brandenburg Mountain near Aravaipa Canyon in the Galiuro Mountains north of Tucson, had fallen and injured her knee. She was also airlifted by that same helicopter crew to Tucson Medical Center for treatment. (Star 3/19/1979; Citizen 3/19/1979)

## Death at Chivo Falls

**Mar 25, 1979**

For the fifth time in less than five years, someone slipped to their death at remote Chivo Falls on the northern side of the Rincon Mountains. Richard Chapman, 25, "was trying to negotiate the slippery rock in slick-soled cowboy boots when he lost his footing and tumbled 80 feet into the water..." Friends saw him strike a rock near the bottom of the falls before reaching the pool. "Chapman's companions carried him to a nearby road and a passing motorist summoned help." A Department of Public Safety helicopter brought paramedics to the scene, but attempts to revive the victim proved futile. (Citizen 3/26/1979)

## Navy Helicopter Crash Kills Five

**Apr 4, 1979**

Lieutenant D. J. Miles, departing Tucson International Airport shortly before 2 p.m. with over four hours of fuel, was piloting the Navy HH-3 helicopter to El Paso, continuing on a flight from San Diego. Onboard were four others, including the co-pilot, Commander Thomas Wagner. Miles and Wagner were to check in by radio as they passed near Willcox, but they did not. The craft did not have any emergency radio beacon to signal a crash, and according to Leon Appel of the CAP in Phoenix, “ ‘if they had to come down for engine trouble, the minute the engine goes off, they have no radio.’ ” They did not file a flight plan but their obvious route would be to follow Interstate 10, which was where the search focused.

Flight centers in Albuquerque and points along the way were checking tapes of radio transmissions to see if the helicopter had contacted them, hoping they had. Eight planes from the Arizona Civil Air Patrol began searching at dawn and CAP planes from New Mexico and a helicopter from Davis-Monthan were also to join in looking for the aircraft. The burned wreckage of the Navy “Jolly Green Giant” and the bodies of its five dead crewmen were found on 6,700-foot-high Johnson Peak in the Dragoon Mountains southwest of Willcox by two searchers. (Star 4/9/1979; Citizen 4/9/1979; Phoenix Republic 4/10/1979)

## Little Boy Has Never Been Found

**Apr 7, 1979**

Nearly six days after 10-year-old Randy Parscale of Tucson vanished, the search for the little boy sadly, was suspended. The youth had been on a family outing near Peppersauce Canyon, in Pinal County, when he went missing. Rescue workers, frustrated “after more than 4,000 manhours of searching . . . on the north side of the Santa Catalina Mountains . . .,” were finally called off by the Pinal County Sheriff’s Office. In a news account at the time, the boy’s father, also named Randy, “said the search was as thorough as it could have been . . . ‘I don’t believe I would have been able to sleep last night if I didn’t really think the area was covered as good as it could be.’ ”

Each day more than fifty trained rescuers and civilian volunteers along with numerous members of both the Pinal and Pima County Sheriffs’ Offices, the Salvation Army, and the Border Patrol, among others, were there. Helicopters from Davis-Monthan AFB, the Air National Guard, as well as the Department of Public Safety, all flew a great many hours. With the many caves and mine shafts in the area, a special, technical rescue team from Phoenix was brought in. Dogs from the Pima County Sheriff’s Department as well as four special tracking canines and their handlers from Albuquerque, were used extensively. A man from Oracle suffered a heart attack and died while searching. An educated estimate of the expense for this search, was \$50,000 [\$205,000 in 2023]. This doesn’t include time and wages lost by the hundreds of volunteers.

One very valid possibility is that young Randy was abducted, since the primitive, dirt Control Road, the “Backroad” up Mt. Lemmon, runs immediately through the area. This idea was quickly considered but, if in fact it had happened, it was over and done before the search could even begin. In the more than four decades since he went missing, it is highly likely some clue would surface “out there!” There has not been one trace of 10-year-old Randy Parscale.

As Pima County Sheriff’s SAR Deputy, Chuck McHugh, so succinctly put it, “What price do you put on the life of a child?” (Star 4/13/1979, 4/14/1979, 4/15/1979; Chuck McHugh email 4/30/2020)

## Drowns in Parker Canyon Lake

**Apr 13, 1979**

About 11 p.m. that Friday night, 26-year-old Morris Reese drowned in Parker Canyon Lake. Discharged from the US Air Force on March 26 with four years of service, he had been in a canoe which capsized. He disappeared while trying to swim to shore. That first day Sheriff's Deputies from Cochise County and US Forest Service employees tried to drag the lake for the body. Six Search and Rescue Council volunteers, which included divers, responded the next day. They found the victim at 2:40 p.m. (Star 4/15/1979; Citizen 4/16/1979)

## Tumbles 100 Feet Over Tanque Verde Falls

**Apr 17, 1979**

Scott Stephens, 18, had to report for duty at the Great Lakes Naval Base in Wisconsin the next day, so on his last day of freedom, he went hiking and swimming with two friends in the Tanque Verde Falls area. While swimming at the base of the first falls, he was swept over the forty-foot drop. His two companions looked for maybe ninety minutes before finally summoning aid of the Sheriff's Department, with Deputy Larry Seligman coordinating.

Searchers began at 7:30 p.m. and went long after dark, till 11 that night. Suspecting the teenager was underwater in one of the several deep pools there, the Pima County Search and Rescue diving unit joined in the search that night. Searching resumed the next morning. After several hours, Stephens was found at the base of the falls, wedged into a crack underwater. In addition to going over the first drop of forty feet, he had then gone over a second drop of about sixty feet. Ultimately, 25 searchers were involved, "it took until 4:00 p.m. for volunteers from the Southern Arizona Rescue Association to haul the boy back up almost 800 feet of steep, cliffy terrain to the top of the hiking area." He either drowned or was killed by the fall.

One near-mishap occurred when "one of the divers had to be pulled out of the water after he was sucked under the falls and lost his mouthpiece. We had to send men over the falls with a rope so they could pull themselves hand-over-hand with the rope in the current." (Citizen 4/19/1979)

## Rescuer Dies Aiding Hikers

**Apr 27, 1979**

David Deary, 22, a member of the Fry [Sierra Vista] Fire Department fell five-hundred feet to his death in the Huachuca Mountains. Bill Eiza and David Edralin, both 17, had slipped while scrambling off the notoriously dangerous Carr Canyon Waterfall, before it got totally dark. They tumbled nearly two-hundred feet down the granite cliff; somehow, both survived. Landing on the same narrow ledge, they barely missed a fatal second drop of over three-hundred feet, merely a foot away. Eiza suffered two broken ankles, a broken finger and assorted bruises and an even luckier Edralin, escaped serious injury. But they were now trapped.

Deary, attempting to assist the two youths not much younger than himself, fell from about the same spot as they had. Tragically, he was not so lucky, further plunging three-hundred feet to his death. In a daring midnight attempt, a helicopter of the Arizona Department of Public Safety responded to rescue the two boys but was unsuccessful. A helicopter and crew from Detachment 1 of Tucson's Davis-Monthan AFB's 37<sup>th</sup> Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadron was then asked

for. Using their hoist-equipped “Huey,” they were able to perform the tricky rescue. Also assisting were members of the Cochise County Sheriff’s Department and US Forest Service.

In 1980, the parents of emergency medical technician David Deary, Reynaldo and Selia Deary of Orange, California, sued the Federal Government for negligence in maintaining warning signs and a fence at the top of the fall. Sometime prior to 1978, in response to the mounting death toll by those venturing too close to the edge of the over five-hundred-foot-high cliff, the US Forest Service installed warning signs and a barb-wire fence across the very top. When the accident took place, allegedly the warning signs were missing and a 16-foot section of the fence had toppled and was never repaired. The parents believed this neglect at least aided in their son’s death. “The fence was built to keep people away from a point where at least four other people had plummeted to their deaths.”

After the four-day trial in US District Court in Tucson, on October 27, 1983, the jury awarded \$160,000 to the parents. And, even though Edralin and Eiza were named in the suit under the “rescue doctrine,” which contends persons can be sued if their negligence results in the death or injury of the plaintiff, the jury did not require them to compensate the parents. That award from 1983 would be about \$654,000 in 2023. (Star 4/29/1979, 5/2/1979, 10/29/1983)

### **Carr Canyon Hiker Rescued by Helicopter**

**Jun 1, 1979**

A Tucson hiker had to be rescued by a Davis-Monthan AFB helicopter after falling off a ledge in Carr Canyon. John Chambers suffered a broken wrist and a compound fracture of the lower leg and ankle. Chambers lost his footing, rolled about thirty feet and fell another forty feet over a cliff. One of his companions hiked out and a Cochise County Sheriff’s Deputy and a Sierra Vista Fireman responded. They determined Chambers could not be carried out and summoned for helicopter assistance. (Star 6/2/1979)

### **Maybe Still Out There?**

**Jun 22, 1979**

The Friday 66-year-old Harrie E. Van Thurmond went missing, Tucson registered 100 degrees; it could have been worse, the year before it was 106, with the record in 1968 of 110. Van Thurmond of Imperial Beach, California, came to hunt semi-precious minerals near the 6,200-foot-high Sierrita Mountains, forty miles southwest of Tucson. He was staying at the Wild Horse Ranch Campground. It was believed the amateur rock hunter was an inexperienced hiker, had no supplies nor even water for the June heat. When not back by the next morning, the ranch owner began looking, although without success. He notified the Pima County Sheriff’s Department and a more formal search began.

On Sunday, there were 35 members of the Search and Rescue Council, Incorporated, involved, including volunteers on foot and in four-wheel drives. Additionally, the next day, the Southern Arizona Mounted Search and Rescue Unit was there, as was at least one dog team. Before it was terminated by the Sheriff’s Department a few days later, helicopters from the Department of Public Safety and Davis-Monthan Air Force Base and a small plane from the Civil Air Patrol, had joined in the effort. Despite all of the manpower and various resources, nothing could be located suggesting Van Thurmond was ever found—he is very likely still out there. To add to the workload for the SAR responders, the same day the search for Van Thurmond began, 13 additional volunteers had



been called out to hunt for three lost teenagers in the Santa Catalina Mountains; the following day, they were all found in good shape.

Sadly, however, there is a second victim in the Harrie E. Van Thurmond search. Dedicated Southern Arizona Rescue Association volunteer John Marvin Bownds, a Professor of Mathematics at the University of Arizona, generously responded to help look for the missing mineral collector as a “ground pounder.” The logistics of the search also involved much-needed vehicular travel on the area’s dusty roads. The Valley Fever fungus thrives in the local Sonoran Desert soil and John’s breathing in of airborne spores may have led to a fatal Cocci-Meningitis infection. After a prolonged illness, the 51-year-old Bownds died on May 24, 1993.

In addition to his volunteering with SARA, John has other significant search and rescue-related contributions highlighted in this document. On June 8, 2013, the Mountain Rescue Association recognized John Marvin Bownds for his, “Search and Rescue Line of Duty Death.” See “John Bownds Received State Award,” September 15, 1983, on page 371; “John Bownds Honored with Hal Foss Award,” 1991, page 428; Section 14.4, “Computer and SAR in Southern Arizona,” and Chapter 15, “Significant Awards and Recognitions for SAR in Southern Arizona.” (Citizen 6/25/1979; Star 6/26/1979, 6/27/1979; Personal knowledge of David Lovelock)

### Killed, Falling 50 Feet

**Jul 3, 1979**

A volunteer from the Southern Arizona Rescue Association found Edward Liebson at the base of a cliff, where La Milagrosa and Agua Caliente Canyons join. The 18-year-old University of Arizona freshman had gone hiking by himself in the foothills of the Rincon Mountains. “The youth’s father, Wilbur, said that when Edward did not return, he, a friend of Edward’s and Edward’s brother George, 21, went out looking for him... George left a bottle of water in the desert where the searchers thought Edward might find it if he was wondering around lost.” A Department of Public Safety helicopter searched for the teenager until it grew dark. Early the next morning, Pima County Deputy Sheriff Larry Seligman organized another search, and the boy’s body was soon found, at 6:30 a.m. Searchers found the water bottle about thirty feet from Edward’s body. (Star 7/5/1979)

### 100<sup>th</sup> Save by Det 1

**Sep 22, 1979**

After falling thirty feet while climbing in the Wilderness of Rocks on Mount Lemmon, University of Arizona junior Tom Corbo, became the 100<sup>th</sup> “save” by Detachment 1 of the acclaimed SAR unit at Davis-Monthan AFB, the 37<sup>th</sup> Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadron. The 23-year-old had been on a granite pinnacle in the area with two friends when he fell and dislocated an ankle and suffered head injuries. Although in significant discomfort, he would later say, “ ‘the pain sort of went away’ ” when he saw the hoist-equipped HH-1H “Huey” helicopter hovering overhead.

Within two hours of his accident, Corbo was in Tucson Medical Center. Onboard that helicopter, in addition to the two pilots and the crew chief, was an Air Force flight doctor, Ron Wicks. Upon returning to Davis-Monthan AFB, the crew was greeted by Brigadier General Robert Reed, the tactical training commander for the Air Force, along with other officials. They were present to recognize this SAR milestone for Det 1. At the time, the Squadron had eight pilots assigned to it. As Pima County Sheriff’s Deputy Chuck McHugh would very soon observe, “ ‘Without their support, we’d lose a lot of lives in the wilderness.’ ” (Citizen 9/24/1979)

## 13-Year-Old Disappears

**Sep 30, 1979**

The family last saw 13-year-old Robert Craig Stevens at 5:30 p.m., as he drove his motorcycle into the desert near their home, not far from I-10. His parents were in the backyard a short time later when they heard their son's machine return to the front yard and "then heard someone get on the youth's bicycle," said Chuck McHugh, head of Pima County Sheriff's Search and Rescue. Believing he was switching from his small motorcycle to his bicycle, they did not give it further thought. Hours later, when the boy was way overdue, they notified the Sheriff's Department.

McHugh was to shortly say, "There's no positive indication he's a runaway and until we have that, we assume he is either hurt or lost or foul play was involved."

The day after his disappearance, a search of the area was begun, using deputies, Border Patrol and a helicopter from Davis-Monthan AFB. Deputy McHugh was in the air that day, "...it's extremely effective... I could even see groundhogs [sic] scurrying around in the desert." It was open terrain and sparse vegetation, "if the youth had been hurt in the area, the rescuers would have found him." By the third day, "close to 100 searchers... 45 volunteers [including SARA] scoured the area... but came up with no clues..." Per an email from retired Sheriff's Detective Steve Gardner on April 26, 2021, "This case will always be near and dear to me... [it]... remained a missing person case for two weeks and until the body was found, I was the only person working it. Homicide detectives did not get involved until the body was found." The department determined the boy had been strangled.

On October 14, Robert Craig Stevens was found under a creosote bush about four-hundred yards from his home, his bicycle was nearby. Both he and his bike had been returned to the scene of the kidnapping, probably "shortly after the search was called off." There has been no final resolution to this ugly crime. Deputy Gardner believes he developed a suspect (now deceased) and that the Pima County Sheriff's Department Cold Case Unit is working on this. (Citizen 10/2/1979, 10/3/1979; Star 10/19/1979)

## Suicide in Finger Rock Canyon

**Oct 6, 1979**

Thomas Sumpter, 29, was killed when he fell thirty to forty feet from a cliff in Finger Rock Canyon, in the Santa Catalina Mountains. He was found by another hiker. It appeared he had "crawled down a slope through cactus and rocks, and then died about 15 miles [sic: probably feet or yards] from the trail." The Southern Arizona Rescue Association responded with 22 volunteers. There was some indication in the SARA records that he had committed suicide and had been there for three weeks. (Star 10/7/1979; Citizen 10/8/1979; Search and Rescue Newsletter – November 1979)

## Drowning in Patagonia Lake

**Oct 19, 1979**

Henry H. Albright, a 51-year-old fisherman from Tucson, was on Patagonia Lake with a friend at 3 a.m. When he stood up the boat capsized, throwing both men into the water. "The two men tried to right the boat... but Albright drifted away from the craft and drowned. Neither man was wearing a life jacket..." The companion managed to swim to a nearby island where he was helped by a couple camping there. A search and rescue team with divers from the Pima County Sheriff's

Department found Albright's body at about 1:30 p.m. in water thirty to forty feet deep. (Star 10/20/1979; Citizen 10/22/1979)

### Girl Falls in Tucson Mountains

**Oct 21, 1979**

Melissa D. Carmony, 14, needed to be airlifted from near Beehive Peak in the Tucson Mountains after falling about fifty feet. The Mesa teenager was hiking with a friend when she apparently lost her footing and slipped over the cliff's edge. Volunteers from SARA, along with responders of the Drexel Heights Fire Department and Associated Ambulance bandaged her head and gave her a blood transfusion. A helicopter from Davis-Monthan AFB airlifted her out. She was listed in stable condition with head and back injuries. (Citizen 10/22/1979)

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# CHAPTER 11

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1980–1989

## Park Ranger... Still Missing

**Jan 13, 1980**

Visitation was light that sunny Sunday afternoon, so Paul Braxton Fugate, still wearing his grey and green uniform with the gold badge, told a co-worker he was off “to do a trail.” The 42-year-old, intelligently eccentric interpretive ranger, walked out of the park’s little visitor center. As a botanist working on a graduate degree, he was always curious about the world that was Chiricahua National Monument. Originally a part of the Forest Service until 1924, the monument is 12,000 acres of deep, rugged canyons and curiously shaped volcanic towers in the Chiricahua Mountains of Southeast Arizona. Paul Fugate never came back.

That first night, the park’s very limited staff made a hurried search of the immediate buildings, campground, and nearby nature trail. By late the next day, twenty people, a search dog from US Customs, a helicopter from the National Guard, and a plane from the Cochise County Sheriff’s Office, had been pressed into the hunt. Restricted by the rugged lay of the land, no more than two dozen people could effectively and safely search at any one time. Plus, there were only so many logical places to look. On day five, volunteers from the Tucson-based Southern Arizona Rescue Association, joined in. A spokesperson for the park said Fugate was now presumed injured and unable to move about.

Don Morris and several other of SARA’s more experienced volunteer climbers, equipped with safety masks and trained to enter abandoned mines, spent days probing the nearby shafts and collapsed tunnels full of questionable air. Obvious hiking hazards and many of the area’s natural traps were checked and rechecked as many as four times. The search slowly morphed into a criminal investigation. Two Monument employees believed they saw Fugate sitting between two men in a pickup truck that Sunday afternoon. A hypnotist was employed and an Arizona Department of Public Safety sketch artist drew pictures of them and bilingual “wanted” posters were distributed throughout the area and into nearby Mexico. None of this was fruitful.

After a month, “authorities leaned more and more toward the theory that if and when Fugate is found it will not be in the confines of Chiricahua National Monument.” Several psychics contacted Mrs. Fugate, who now believed her husband was dead. The psychic leads did not pan out. In October, a \$5,000 reward for information on the whereabouts of Paul was offered. Ultimately, this reward would grow to \$60,000. In 1982, a Wisconsin lowlife boasted of “killing a cop” in Arizona

and hiding the body somewhere in the desert. Polygraph tests were given and failed but this source of information quickly dried up when he grew nervous, evasive, and ultimately uncooperative. Investigators intensified their efforts but nothing further was ever proven.

In December 1985, Park Ranger Paul Braxton Fugate was declared legally dead. However, it would be several more years before the federal bureaucracy would relax and permit Mrs. Fugate to collect survivor benefits of her still missing husband. (Star 1/16/1980, 1/18/1980; Citizen 2/14/1980, 2/22/1980; Arizona Republic 4/27/1980, 10/7/1980)

## Two From Davis-Monthan Earn Cheney Award

**Jan 23, 1980**

The Cheney Award is one of the very highest honors the United States Air Force can bestow. It is an aviation award presented in memory of First Lieutenant William H. Cheney, who was killed in an air collision over Foggia, Italy on January 20, 1918. It was established in 1927 and honors an airman for an act of valor, extreme fortitude, or self-sacrifice in a humanitarian interest, performed in connection with aircraft, but not necessarily of a military nature. In 1980, Captain Ronald W. Summers and First Lieutenant Kim P. Skrinak out of Davis-Monthan AFB were so recognized, only the 40<sup>th</sup> and 41<sup>st</sup> in over five decades.

On January 23, 1980, an Indiana surgeon crashed a sailplane in the Montezuma Peaks, nine miles southwest of Phoenix. He suffered a broken leg, ankle, and ribs and spent nine hours on the almost inaccessible mountainside before being winched into an Air Force helicopter. Prior to this, KPNX radio helicopter pilot Jerry Foster airlifted his cameraman, John Bass, and DPS paramedic Bob Banta, to the crash site. Because Foster could not land, the two passengers jumped out into the scene. Additionally that night, six members of the Central Arizona Mountain Rescue Association (CAMRA), were flown to the mountain and worked their way down five-hundred feet to the injured physician. See “Central Arizona Mountain Rescue Association,” December 1969, on page 263.

Because of information learned from the doctors, time became paramount in saving the victim. A helicopter from Detachment 1, 37<sup>th</sup> Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadron, United States Military Airlift Command at Davis-Monthan AFB, was summoned and under the expert control of Summers and Skrinak, they performed a particularly dangerous hoist in the dark, maybe saving this man’s life. Like all search and rescue, this was a “team effort,” involving the three with KPNX, those with CAMRA, and the helicopter team from Davis-Monthan. Since Summers and Skrinak received the Cheney Award for this mission, no doubt the other crewmen with them were also given special recognition. Unfortunately, the author could not determine who or what these might have been. (Arizona Republic 1/25/1980)

## Hoisted off Pusch Ridge

**Feb 10, 1980**

The objective of their scramble over the lowest gap in Pusch Ridge at the western end of the Catalina Mountains, was to go from Oro Valley to Tucson. The three boys, including 14-year-old Bradley Smith, left Calle Concordia at 1:00 p.m., heading for Magee Road. Two of the boys wisely decided to turn around two hours into their adventure on the mountainside, but Bradley stubbornly continued. Failing to show up at a pre-determined spot, and after sufficient time had passed, a search was begun. “Around 20 ground searchers (including SARA) worked through the night [beginning

at 6:30 p.m.], but failed to find the boy. D-M and Department of Safety [sic] helicopters joined the search at daybreak. . . .”

Smith, clad only in a windbreaker and vest, was spotted by helicopter after an all-night effort by searchers on the ground revealed nothing. He was sitting at the base of a one-hundred-foot cliff when spotted. The young man had fallen, breaking both legs and was also now suffering from shock and lowered body temperature. In a challenging hoist recovery, conducted in tight quarters, the Air Force helicopter lifted the unresponsive Bradley from the ledge. By 9:00 a.m., he was admitted to Tucson Medical Center and listed in poor condition. (Citizen 2/11/1980)

## Volunteer SAR Comes to Cochise County

### Mar 1980

Manny Gomez was a strong, 26-year-old ironworker, when he began his four-decade affair with search and rescue. In 1961, with an interest in helping people and a yet un-tapped flair for SAR, he lived in Lomita, a small city of 15,000 near Long Beach in Los Angeles (LA) County. There are several renowned Mountain Rescue Teams in the LA Basin, including Sierra Madre, Altadena, and Montrose; in California alone, there are at least 34 teams that are MRA, not counting dozens of smaller groups that are not. One was the little Lomita Police Department. He began volunteering in their occasional SAR incidents, while gaining training around the County, and advancing in skill and experience. Over time, he founded the 18-member Lomita Search and Rescue.

In February of 1980, his wife transferred to Fort Huachuca, and he brought his now over 15 years of expertise to Sierra Vista and Cochise County. A man on a mission, within the month “he was knocking on the doors” of the Bisbee, Douglas, and Sierra Vista Police Departments, as well as the Cochise County Sheriff’s Office. “Do you have a search and rescue team?” The answer was always, “No, we do not need one.” Undaunted, he would leave his phone number and then put “little paper notices” under windshield wipers on their cars. At the Sierra Vista Sub-Station, Cochise County Sheriff’s Sergeant, Larry Dever, took notice. Curious, he asked about Manny’s California license plates. Explaining his recent move from Lomita, the talk quickly turned to SAR and Gomez found a receptive ear about such a group in Sierra Vista.

Next, he went to the Sierra Vista High School; now with a promise of a conference room, he put notices in the *Sierra Vista Herald Review* Newspaper about forming a SAR group, with date and time. Nine people showed up. Within days, the Police Department got wind, one Officer soon asking, “Can you train my people?” With a smile, “I can train the barber, if need be.” He submitted copies of his training credentials, identification card issued by the Los Angeles County Sheriff’s Department, and resume of his experience. Things continued to “snowball” and a basic training began at the High School. Then the local Boy Scout Explorer Post 400 joined in, which had both boys and girls. Waivers of liability were signed and someone in Tucson with SARA took notice and a relationship was made with Pima County. Sierra Vista Search and Rescue blossomed.

Dever lived in St. David and had minimal SAR equipment, because as he told Gomez, the “Fire Department does rescues, the Sheriff’s Office does searches.” The recent death of Sierra Vista Volunteer Fireman, 22-year-old David Deary, was still raw memory for Dever, but it may have also been when “real SAR,” would begin in Cochise County. See “Rescuer Dies Aiding Hikers,” April 27, 1979, on page 335. Dever again challenged Manny, “Are you sure you want to form a SAR volunteer group in Cochise County?” Manny had brought some of his own gear from California, including his trusted four-hundred feet of Goldline Rope. Dever took three-hundred feet of questionable rescue rope out of his black Blazer with “bullet holes in the door.” A lasting and important



friendship had developed; Dever would become Sheriff of Cochise County in 1996 and serve four terms until his untimely death at 60, on September 18, 2012.

Gomez met with the Special Forces Unit at Fort Huachuca and with his ID and gift for gab, found interest by some of the young, eager soldiers. In 1983, he gathered “Larry Dever and forty volunteers,” all interested in Search and Rescue, meeting in Gardner Canyon on the east side of the Santa Ritas. Sheriff Jimmy Judd gave the “green light” to Dever and, “Cochise County SAR was born.” Of course, as always, the “Devil is in the details.” It was sort of a “hand to mouth” beginning with meetings in restaurants, parking lots, and the ubiquitous scrounging for equipment at flea markets, bake sales, and asking for donations for much-needed equipment and radios. Cochise County had little budget for any of this.

But it all seemed to soon work and by the late 1980s, Cochise County Search and Rescue was a very well-respected SAR group in the State of Arizona. In addition to the Deputies, it could count fifty members on its roster and on an average call-out, 15 well-trained and fully-equipped people responded. They would even be asked into neighboring Sonora, Mexico, for drownings and missing children. See “Vanished in Mexico,” April 22, 1995, page 460. In crossing the Border, a fast-talking, Spanish-speaking Gomez, would ensure police or military escorts on at least twenty occasions. In 2023, the Cochise County Sheriff no longer will let them cross the Border, due to the violence and uncertainty about their safety there. But Cochise County Search and Rescue was much better for Manny Gomez moving to Sierra Vista back in 1980. (Manny Gomez interview 2/7/2022)

## **Santa Cruz County Search and Rescue Formed**

### **Mar 1980**

“‘There is a real need in this area for a search-and-rescue team. About 60 to 70 percent of the county is wilderness or recreational area, and more and more people are using the area for recreation,’ Jere Brenner said.” Brenner, the administrator for the Santa Cruz County Jail, approached Sheriff Jamie Teyechea about forming a volunteer SAR team for the County. The Sheriff was all for it. Prior to this time, they mostly relied on neighboring Pima and Cochise Counties for assistance on major SAR efforts. On March 29, they had their first training, a mock search for a “missing” 17-year-old girl at Pena Blanca Lake, northwest of Nogales. In the scenario, she was an experienced hiker but had been missing now for 24 hours.

Thomas Rio, a Coronado National Forest Ranger, set up the practice for the ten volunteers and Undersheriff Raul Parada was the coordinator between the office and the group. Those on foot were aided by an airplane and by a four-wheel-drive vehicle. “Almost 50 people already have expressed interest in joining the group. All volunteers will undergo training that will include a basic first-aid course, Brenner said.” Additionally, Davis-Monthan AFB and both Pima and Maricopa counties’ search and rescue organizations agreed to help with future training. As of 2023, the group was still in existence. (Star 4/3/1980)

## **Lost for Four Days**

### **Apr 5, 1980**

This was Joanne Bockmiller’s first camping trip. The 20-year-old, along with her 20-year-old boyfriend, Jeff Faulhaber, was new to the area and both were unfamiliar with the surroundings. Jeff was an experienced camper but they still decided to start out easy and go to Bear Canyon in the Catalinas, where they would hike a little, have a picnic, and spend one night there. About

7:00 p.m., their picnic, the one meal they brought with them, consisted of corn and corned beef, Unbeknownst to them, this would be her last meal for four days.

Her very first night out passed without incident and the next morning, Easter Sunday, they began their short hike. Their confusion on where they were soon turned into just being lost, despite Jeff's knowhow. Their one canteen of water was nearly empty. They kept climbing, heading in the wrong direction. Because they were dressed in shorts and short-sleeved shirts and it was cold, they needed to walk all night to keep warm. They were exhausted and by Monday began losing hope. " 'Every movement we made was a moan.' "

They tried to eat grass. They even tried to eat some cactus. " 'But we're not native Arizonans... We didn't know what to eat.' " Faulhaber was ahead and from on top of a hill, yelled he was going back to a deserted ranch they had stumbled into the day before. She thought he said something else, that he was continuing in the same direction they had both been going. "By the time they realized they had lost each other, it was impossible to go back."

At one point that day, Faulhaber tried to start a fire with glass and wood, which failed. Now really frustrated and becoming even more anxious, he thought he was just hallucinating when he heard a bulldozer coming over the ridge, " 'With a real man inside!' " The two men tried to find Joanne for a while but finally decided it was better to call the Sheriff's Department Search and Rescue Team. That was late Tuesday afternoon. Meanwhile, Ms. Bockmiller had kept moving, despite her exhaustion, heading for an antenna she saw in the distance. She found a slow-moving trickle of a stream, which tasted like algae. And she again tried eating grass. " 'I figured cows ate it, and they were okay, so I chewed on about three handfuls.' "

That night, she said she thought a lot about Easter and compared her ordeal to the Crucifixion. " 'I felt like I was going through the same thing.' " She also thought a lot about God. At daylight on Wednesday, twenty volunteers from the Southern Arizona Rescue Association, assisted by helicopters from Davis-Monthan Air Force Base and the Department of Public Safety, began looking for a very lost Joanne Bockmiller. She was spotted by the Davis-Monthan crew near Lone Hill, about eight miles from Redington. She was still moving along and in surprisingly good condition. (Star 4/10/1980, 4/12/1980)

## Suicide by Vehicle

**Apr 26, 1980**

Michael D. Banick was found dead in his car about one-hundred yards below a cliff off the Mount Lemmon Highway at Mile Post 10. At first it was believed an accident. But upon investigating, however, Deputies learned the 28-year-old man had been very depressed, even threatening suicide and that family members had reported him missing. He had not been seen for a day at this point. There were no skid marks or other indications of an accident, leading officials to speculate that the death was a suicide. "Members of the Pima County Search and Rescue unit retrieved the body from the wrecked automobile." (Citizen 4/28/1980)

## Death at Tanque Verde Falls

**Apr 27, 1980**

A 20-year-old airman from Davis-Monthan AFB was scrambling along the top of Tanque Verde Falls when he slipped and fell eighty feet. Michael Meaney was hiking with a lady friend when

he “fell down a rock face, hitting several times before he landed in a pool of water.” She, along with bystanders, were able to get him out of the pool and he was alive when the rescue helicopter arrived. He died enroute to the hospital. (Citizen 4/28/1980)

## 13 Lived, 13 Died

### Jul 4, 1980

The 26 El Salvadorians who climbed through the sagging wire fence late the previous night, were among the several thousand hopefuls who were sneaking into the United States each year through Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument. Crossing the monument’s thirty-mile border with Mexico, they were eagerly seeking their own Independence Day. The illegal aliens had paid the two smugglers—“Coyotes”—they were following, \$1,200 for this dream. Shortly, this dream would become a nightmare for them all.

Coyote Preciado quietly walked behind the group, guardedly erasing their trail of telltale tracks. An ever-lengthening line of hopeful individuals wound between the jeep roads of the “El Camino del Diablo.” The Devil’s Highway is infamous, even being placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1978, for claiming between 400 and 2,000 lives, largely beginning with the California prospectors of 1849. The area would soon add another 13 people to this infamous list of those who agonizingly perished due to heat, thirst, and being lost.

Coyote Negro set a fast pace. People soon struggled and fell behind; little clusters split off from the two leaders and by noon the next day, some of the 26 were unsure of which way to go. The twenty gallons of water they were sharing between them, quickly disappeared. The 110-degree air and, the superheated ground, started taking their deadly toll. More than one of the men urinated into a bottle, hoping the liquid would be a lifesaver. It only made them vomit. Some of the women drank perfume from their little bottles, others sought what they believed to be lifesaving liquids from aftershave. Most now suffered cactus thorns all over their bodies. Spindly desert brush offered little or no shade from the scorching afternoon sun.

Staggering along State Route 85, one coyote was found first, at 8:00 p.m.; near death, he told the Border Patrol nothing of the others. Now desperately lost, it did not take long for the first person to die. Yolanda begged to be killed and put out of her misery, as did Maria. Finally, the next afternoon, a second man was caught by the Border Patrol and the horrible tragedy was revealed. A rescue force of Customs, National Park Service, Border Patrol, and Pima County Sheriff’s rapidly formed and swooped into the terribly harsh area. Word of the unfolding, nearby disaster spread and trackers, motorcyclists, horsemen, a plane, and a helicopter, widened out, looking for the remainder of the group.

The first eight people were easily located by a low-flying Border Patrol plane, they were found only a half-mile from a main road. Two of the men in this group were already dead. Survivors, barely alive, cried, “Eres Dios! Eres Dios!” and begged for water when discovered. Nine men and one woman were spotted on a sunbaked, rocky ridge. Hoping for moisture, one of the dead had stuffed a small cactus into her mouth. Nearby, Yolanda, who had earlier begged to be killed, was with two other women; somehow, they were all still alive.

In fleeing from the impending conflict of their homeland—trading both their lives and their lifesavings for a dream—13 lived and 13 died. (Arizona Republic 7/6/1980, 7/14/1980; Citizen 7/7/1980, 7/10/1980, 7/11/1980)

## Dies on Mt. Lemmon

**Oct 5, 1980**

A 21-year-old camper died in the “early morning after stumbling over a log and rolling 100 to 150 feet down an embankment near his campsite on Mount Lemmon.” Robert Way Williams had been camping with friends along the Red Ridge Trail near Ski Valley. According to investigating Sheriff’s Deputy Tom Price, apparently, their friend walked about one-hundred feet away from the campfire around 1:00 a.m., where he stumbled. When Williams was reached, “there were no signs of life.” He died of multiple head and internal injuries. It took search and rescue about five hours to remove the body. (Star 10/6/1980)

## Car Plunges into Mine Shaft

**Oct 14, 1980**

“ ‘We’d been drinking quite a bit of beer. For what reason I don’t know...The next thing I remember, I saw this dip...before I knew it, we were crashing.’ ” An understatement, since the 1966 station wagon they had been tearing the desert up in, just nose-dived into a 65-foot-deep shaft. David Aubuchon, 22, and his passenger, 25-year-old Guy Hayton, were now buried up to the front windshield at the bottom of an abandoned mine, 18 miles southwest of Tucson, near Green Valley. “The shaft was so deep.”

Miraculously, neither was killed; Hayton had a broken right leg, bruised ribs and cuts over most of his body. Aubuchon, after crunched into by the steering wheel, broke two ribs and dislocated a shoulder. They were both pinned between the dashboard and the front seat. Their wives reported them missing, but nobody had a clue where they were or where to look.

During the four days they were at the bottom of this hole, “they took turns screaming for help.” In between these and nodding off, they prayed a lot. They had a gallon of water, which they smartly began soon rationing—their old Chevrolet had a bad radiator. Limiting the use of their matches, they burned some sticks and rubber water hoses from the car, which gave off a little black smoke. On the fourth day, experiencing lots of pain, they bordered on giving up. Luckily for David and Guy, some mining students from the University’s nearby teaching mine, saw faint wisps of the black smoke and walked over to investigate.

The first to reach the pair was Kitty Payne from the Green Valley Rural Metro Fire Department. “She tied each man to a harness, and they were lifted out with pullies. It took a team of men from several law enforcement agencies” nearly three hours to get them to the surface. Units from the Department of Public Safety and Pima County Sheriff’s Search and Rescue also took part. “Hayton said he hoped never to have another beer.” (Star 10/19/1980)

## Car Lands 300 Feet Below Catalina Highway

**Nov 13, 1980**

A 24-year-old woman, Sally Ann Sertich, narrowly escaped death when the vehicle she was driving plunged about three-hundred feet off the road to Mount Lemmon. It had come to rest between boulders and saguaros on a rocky slope. “If the car hadn’t come to rest on top of the rock, it probably would have gone down another eight-hundred feet to the canyon floor.” According to Deputy Chuck McHugh, coordinator for the sheriff’s search and rescue team, “The vehicle was in a tricky location. We had to jack the car up to get her out.” She had a broken bone in her neck,

although not a broken neck. She had been there for at least a day when her family found her. Members of the Search and Rescue Council extracted her. (Star 11/14/1980)

### Flees After Traffic Accident

**Nov 17, 1980**

George Connor, involved in a head-on collision on the curvy Picture Rocks Road west of Tucson at 9:30 p.m., “took off running into the desert despite appearing to be seriously hurt.” Responding deputies, not fully understanding the suspicious but worrisome behavior, prudently got search and rescue involved. Did the 31-year-old have a head injury or was suffering some medical disorder? Assisting the Sheriff’s Department were US Border Patrol, National Park Service, DPS Air Rescue, Air National Guard Air Rescue, the Search and Rescue Council, detectives from the Sheriff’s Department’s Major Crimes Unit, and South Tucson Police Department. Counting the invaluable aid of air support, for upwards of twenty hours, some one-hundred searchers assisted in looking for George.

All through the night, Connor stumbled his way for seven miles over the Tucson Mountains, heading for Tucson. Once there, he called his work, saying he did not feel well and would not be in that day. Then he walked another 15 miles to his home, arriving at 5:30 p.m. According to Chuck McHugh, Search and Rescue Coordinator for the Sheriff’s Department, “This [accident and search] had gotten a lot of publicity through the day and we thought someone was playing a hoax.” Twenty hours after his accident, George Connor walked into the Veterans Hospital in good condition, taken there by his brother. With so much media exposure, the staff of the hospital recognized their patient and contacted the Sheriff’s Department. McHugh responded.

It seems that George became scared, knowing he had been driving on a revoked driver’s license and then having the motor vehicle accident. (Star 11/19/1980)

### Death near Pusch Peak

**Dec 13, 1980**

Visiting his parents in Tucson for the Christmas holidays, 20-year-old Mark Carlston was hiking on Pusch Ridge, in upper Pima Canyon. The student was on a steep slope when he either stumbled and lost his footing or unstable rocks broke loose. He fell “40 to 60 feet, coming to rest at the base of a vertical rock.” He was about a quarter-mile southwest of Pusch Peak when the accident happened. His hiking buddy suffered minor face lacerations from falling rocks as Carlston was scrambling above him. Two hours after Mark had fallen, his friend reported the accident to the Sheriff’s Department.

After Mark’s companion was treated at Tucson Medical Center, he returned to the scene to help some forty rescue personnel find the site of the fall; at 1:30 a.m., the body was finally found. It was quickly determined the terrain was far too rugged and dangerous for a ground and litter evacuation and so an Air Force helicopter from Davis-Monthan was used at first light to remove Mark Carlston from where he had fallen. (Star 12/15/1980)

## Hug-A-Tree

**Feb 7, 1981**

When 9-year-old Jimmie Beveridge became lost in Palomar Mountain State Park in California's northern San Diego County, there were at least four-hundred searchers looking for him on the 6,142-foot-high mountain. Two of them were Ab Taylor, 57, famed retired Border Patrol tracker and Tom Jacobs, 27, an avid backpacker and free-lance writer. Neither knew the other but when Jimmie was found dead four days after he went missing, it had a profound impact on them both. Taylor, who had been on many backcountry searches was stunned because, “ ‘it was the first time we had failed to find the victim alive.’ ”

Taylor and Jacobs “found each other;” they pooled \$1,400 of their own money and developed a school-age educational slide program and related text, intended on preventing this kind of accident from happening again. “ ‘We both decided that something good must come out of this.’ ” Assisted by local San Diego SAR teams, on April 1, 1982, “Hug-A-Tree” began being taught to 9 to 12-year-old children in the classrooms and wherever else groups of kids this age could be found. It quickly took off and the program became a non-profit organization, run solely by volunteers and was soon being instructed around the west. By at least the spring of 1984, it was being taught by the Southern Arizona Rescue Association.

Ab Taylor died of complications with Alzheimer's Disease at 88 on September 9, 2013. (Times-Advocate [Escondido, CA] 2/17/1981; Chula Vista [CA] Star News 6/4/1981, 1/19/1984; Star 7/16/1995)

## Crash of Bank Plane

**Mar 3, 1981**

Gerald Harry Capers, 33, was piloting a Valley National Bank twin-engine aircraft when it crashed into an unnamed peak in the 7,000-foot-high Mule Mountains near Bisbee. He was a courier for the company and had seven-thousand hours of flying time, including two years for the bank. He was transporting miscellaneous records when he took off from Douglas International Airport about 5:40 p.m., heading for Sierra Vista in a state-of-the-art, 1980 Beechcraft Baron. This is a flight that would normally take about twenty minutes and was basically a straight line from city to city.

An airport official would later remark, “Heavy rains, wind and some thunderstorm activity were reported over Bisbee and the Mule Mountains about the time Capers reached the area. No radio contact was made with Capers after takeoff.” The supervisor for the local Civil Air Patrol would confirm this account and add, “icing conditions and heavy squalls may have caused the crash. He said weather conditions had been so extreme that Civil Air Patrol search planes were not able to take off until midnight.”

Search parties from the Cochise County Sheriff's Office, the Bisbee Police Department, and the Arizona Department of Public Safety set out at sunrise. They were also assisted by a helicopter from Davis-Monthan AFB and a Civil Air Patrol search plane. All their efforts were made more difficult, however, by fog, near-freezing temperatures, and snow, that had fallen at higher elevations nearby.

The missing aircraft was found strewn along a steep slope near Juniper Flats in the Mule Mountains. It apparently hit and then slid about four-hundred feet up the hillside. Although the wings, engines and cockpit section were ripped away, no fire occurred. Capers was in a plane that



was fully instrumented, including de-icing equipment and he was appropriately certified. (Star 3/5/1981; Citizen 3/5/1981)

## Human Bones Found

**Mar 5, 1981**

While scrambling up a remote, steep part of Finger Rock Canyon, a 43-year-old hiker stumbled across human bones. The three fragments appeared to be from a lower leg, the back of a skull, and possibly a hip bone. There was also some type of identification card found near the bones, possibly a Social Security Card. Pima County Sheriff's Homicide Detective, Sergeant Dan Abbate, said the hiker "had climbed some rocks, found himself in a precarious position and was backing down when he found the bones. Abbate said the bones were in a spot where a climber could have fallen."

Oscar Miranda, another homicide investigator with the Sheriff's Department, returned to the place where the bones were found. Further searching only turned up a broken comb and a cigarette package. Sergeant Abbate said that the identification card, "had not been of any help in identifying the bones. He said tests conducted by the UA's [Forensic Anthropologist] Walter Birkby did not determine the age or sex of the victim. Abbate said the bones most helpful in determining sex are skull and pelvic bones. But he said more testing will be done. He said the facial portion of the skull is needed." Miranda believed his check of the area, along with the opinion of the hiker who found the remains, "strongly indicate that the victim might have fallen from a treacherous ridge."

In April, 2021, assisted by former Pima County Sheriff's Department SAR Deputy, Chuck McHugh, contact was made with retired Homicide Detectives Dan Abbate and Oscar Miranda, about this incident. Despite their willingness to assist, these two were not able to provide any further information about this incident. (Citizen 3/13/1981)

## Missing 5-Year-Old

**Apr 2, 1981**

" 'A 5-year-old, as far as I'm concerned, is not going to run away from home,' " said Pima County Sheriff's Department Search and Rescue Coordinator, Chuck McHugh. " 'I'd like to be optimistic, but I'm not real happy with the situation.' " Deputy McHugh was referring to little Colorada Alan Lewis, last seen at 1:30 p.m. on Thursday. The youngster, after tagging along to a nearby convenience store with a 15-year-old foster child visiting the boy's home, reportedly started back by himself. When he did not return home by 4:00 p.m., the Sheriff's Department was called and an air and ground search began immediately. This "included 15 deputies, more than 35 volunteers, a US Border Patrol tracker, and a Department of Public Safety helicopter." About fifty searchers looked door-to-door late into that first night.

All the next day, "the boy's neighborhood was gone over by about 40 search-and-rescue volunteers, members of the Flowing Wells Fire Department and an Air Force dog team. Helicopters from the Davis-Monthan Air Force Base, the Army National Guard and the Arizona Department of Public Safety joined in the search." McHugh, alarmed by the dimming prospects, knew the boy had not run away from home, so the lad either got lost or something far worse had occurred. " 'We covered very, very thoroughly around the house for at least a mile.' "

Racing against time, search coordinator McHugh had to think both "inside and outside, the box!" Old refrigerators. Abandoned cars. Open septic tanks. Nearby attractions like the Tucson

Electric Generating Plant. The boy returning to where he had lived five months before or walking to Marana where he had relatives with horses. Foul play. Abduction. “ ‘I just hope if somebody’s got him he’s somebody very nice. This is a plea from a mother,’ Mrs. [Virginia] Wesner said with quiet desperation.”

On the third day Colorada was missing, a base camp for managing the search was set up in the parking lot of the Flowing Wells Junior High School. Thirteen members of the Arizona Mountaineering Club came down from Phoenix and joined in; 75 searchers now combed desert and residential areas, all centered on the boy’s home on the city’s northwest side. For much of the day, there were 11 volunteer teams, each consisting of four to six people. One searcher was “slurped in up to the waist” by a muddy bog which appeared merely damp when trying to cross. He needed to be pulled free by rope. Once he was out, the hole oozed back in, suggesting to some that Colorada could easily have fallen in and been swallowed up. The operational aspect of the ground search ended that evening and the criminal investigators took over.

On April 17, just over two weeks after Colorada disappeared, his body was found inside a small, abandoned home only a few doors from where his family lived. An engulfing odor of death gave it away. “Twelve ‘highly reliable’ search and rescue workers combed the house during the search. . . .” They had even cut holes in the floor and removed vents and heating ducts to better look. The boy was in a back room on a shelf six feet off the floor and about ten inches from the ceiling. There were cabinets that would give him access to the shelf. He was lying face up behind a thin stack of loose boards, but nothing there that would have kept him trapped.

Theories were examined and re-examined, including poisonous stings, heat, and exertion. But in the end, officials and medical examiners were at an impasse in determining what happened to Colorada Alan Lewis. “Sheriff’s homicide Lt. Ed Beumler said. . . it cannot be determined whether the boy was murdered or died an accidental death. . . More than 100 people spent 2 1/2 days searching a 25-square-mile area. . . .” (Star 4/3/1981, 4/4/1981, 4/5/1981, 5/6/1981, 5/7/1981; Citizen 4/18/1981)

## Man Disappears from Winchester Mountains

**Apr 18, 1981**

University of Arizona student, David Crowley, 22, was camping in the Winchester Mountains near Willcox with a friend, when he disappeared. Trevor Kludt told officials Crowley had been chewing loco weed and talking to himself when he last saw him. When Kludt woke the next morning, his friend was gone. His tracks were followed down the dirt road they had driven up and then the trail stopped. Between when the disappearance was discovered and then reported to the Cochise County Sheriff’s Office, it rained, destroying the trail. “Searches of the area by the Cochise County Sheriff’s Department [sic] involved a helicopter, ground teams of deputies, dogs, and motorcycle riders.”

Kludt was given a lie detector test but then refused a second one. In a follow-up story approximately 18 months of his son vanishing, the father of David Crowley was still pushing officials for information regarding his son. Cochise County Sheriff Jimmy Judd said, the area is “not that remote. You can get on any hill there and see Interstate 10 or the lights of Willcox. You can follow any dirt road—ranchers drive on them all of the time—and get to a ranch or a house. There’s stock tanks and water holes all over that area.”

As of May 2023, per Sgt. David Noland of the Cochise County Sheriff’s Office, David Crowley has not been found nor heard from. (Citizen 10/22/1981; Star 4/11/1982; David Noland email 10/20/2021)

## Girl Falls into Pit

**Apr 29, 1981**

Sixteen-year-old Leslie Heywood, a student from Amphitheater High School, was hiking near her home in the Catalina Foothills near the north end of Swan Road. She fell into a pit, probably an abandoned mine shaft, and seriously hurt her back and neck. When she did not return from her trek, the Search and Rescue Council, Incorporated, including 26 members of SARA, began looking for her. She was found early the next morning and had to be raised out of the hole. After the paramedics treated her, she was admitted to Tucson Medical Center in guarded condition. (Star 5/1/1981)

## “Desert Searches: Effectiveness of Helicopters”

**May 1981**

Understanding the effectiveness of search resources is easier said than done. Sometimes our assumptions are rough guesses with limited foundation. Early SAR units often relied on the historical memory of “old timers” who had been “stomping around in their wilderness backyards” over the years. To better utilize this treasury of past memory, Deputy Charles P. “Chuck” McHugh, Pima County Sheriff’s Department SAR Coordinator, analyzed the county’s use of helicopter resources for search and rescue missions for January 1978 through February 1981. His main interest in the “Desert Searches” study was to learn more about how valuable the use of a helicopter was in locating a lost person in the desert, which Southern Arizona has plenty of.

Effective emergency response communities are built upon strong relationships. A good example is the partnership of the Pima County Sheriff’s Department, the University of Arizona (UA) Department of Mathematics, SARA, and the USAF Detachment 1 37<sup>th</sup> Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadron, of Davis-Monthan AFB (Det 1 37th ARRS).

John Bownds and David Lovelock were routinely involved with the Southern Arizona Rescue Association and SAR missions. While they were both UA Professors of Mathematics, they developed early versions of a statistically-based computer program to aid in searching for lost persons. After years of refinements, this became known as Computer Aided Search Information Exchange (CASIE) and most recently the Windows version, WinCASIE III. A knowledge of how effective a resource is when searching its assigned area is essential input for these computer programs.

Inspired by Bill Syrotuck’s studies in ground search effectiveness, Bownds, Lovelock, and McHugh, set about to measure the effectiveness of helicopters searching for lost persons in the Sonoran Desert environment. A third UA Professor of Mathematics, A. Larry Wright, collaborated in this study through his expertise in probability theory.

While flying as training missions, the search effectiveness data was captured through the HH-1H “Huey” air rescue crewmen of Det 1 37<sup>th</sup> ARRS. Over the course of several months, five air search experiments were conducted. These experiments uncovered several variables that impact air search effectiveness; among them, sunny vs. overcast weather effects on the ability to spot persons on the ground. The experiments concluded with a greater understanding of air search strengths and limitations.

These results were published<sup>1</sup> in May 1981 by the Pima County Sheriff's Department under the title "Desert Searches: Effectiveness of Helicopters." (Chuck McHugh interview 2/12/2022, Chuck McHugh email 5/8/2023)

## Drowning in Patagonia Lake

**May 4, 1981**

Nogales High School senior, 18-year-old Javier Veloz, tried to swim to an island at the spillway of Lake Patagonia, along with three other youths. They made it, he did not. Apparently, the boys had been drinking. Pima County Search and Recovery Divers, along with both Cochise and Santa Cruz Counties' dive and SAR groups, responded. Aided by at least one State Park Ranger boat, the groups spent several dives each of the three days required to find the teenager. The visibility was one-foot or less in the 67-degree water.

Broken into several dive teams, and making repeated sweeps across the bottom, the fishing lines, submerged trees and vegetation, gullies and rocks and cliffs caused concerns for those below the surface. On the third day, witnesses to the incident returned to the lake and provided an accurate spot to look. It turned out to be a 65-foot-deep hole with no visibility. At just after 3 p.m., May 7, the body of the young man was located.

"It is with admiration, respect, and deep gratitude that we, of the Santa Cruz County Sheriff's Dept., offer our sincere thanks and appreciation for your excellent efforts in the recovery of the body of Javier L. Veloz who drowned at Lake Patagonia. Your courage, discipline, and perseverance has earned you the respect of this entire county. We are forever grateful. Respectfully yours, Jamie C. Teyechea, Sheriff." (Star 5/6/1981; PCSRD records)

## Search and Recovery Divers Incorporated

**May 14, 1981**

On September 22, 1980, the By-Laws of the Pima County Search and Recovery Divers (PCSRD) were finalized. On November 8, 1980, PCSRD President Ron Sikora submitted these By-Laws to the Arizona Corporation Commission (ACC). The stated Purpose is: "To voluntarily assist in all aquatic search and recovery operations within Southern Arizona. To promote water safety throughout Southern Arizona. To assist any other unit or community that needs our assistance. To assist law enforcement groups of any community with group discretion."

The ACC officially incorporated the PCSRD on May 14, 1981. Article IV of the Articles of Incorporation, says, "This corporation is organized for the voluntary search and recovery of drowning victims within Southern Arizona, ad [sic: and] to assist with any other unit or community that has need for our assistance, and to assist with any law enforcement search and recovery missions." Officials on the document were: Ron Sikora, President; Rudy Montenegro, Vice President; Luba Chiliwniak, Secretary; and Jack Redavid, Director. (PCSRD records)

<sup>1</sup> Copies of this document can be downloaded as a PDF file from <http://www.saraz.org/documents/DesertSearchesExperiment1981.pdf>.

## Dies Diving off Cliff

**Jul 26, 1981**

While cliff diving, John Evans, 22, broke his neck on a submerged rock in the Upper Tanque Verde Falls area of Redington Pass. Evans died in the hospital one hour later.

“In most cases, these incidents are either fatal or life-threatening. This area was a routine call for us and we had lots of history at this location. A routine response of this nature involved a first call to Arizona Department of Public Safety Air Rescue because they were usually staged in Tucson and ready for immediate response. This got us a paramedic on scene quickly. We also mobilized SARA volunteers for ground operations, and the USAF Air Rescue Unit (Det 1, 37<sup>th</sup> ARRS) stationed at Davis-Monthan AFB. Arizona DPS hadn’t refined a short-haul capability at this point, so given the terrain, the USAF hoist was routinely useful.” (McHugh email 9/9/2020)

A witness said he dived about 15 feet into a small pool just upstream of the nearby, more popular eighty-foot-high waterfall. The same witness observed the normally shallow pool might have been only six to eight feet deep. Reportedly two medical interns also administered first aid until the Department of Public Safety helicopter arrived and landed at the top of a small waterfall above the victim’s position. DPS Paramedic Denny Welsh climbed down and began treatment of the injury. Since this was an uneven landing site, DPS Pilot Loren Leonberger kept the aircraft under power. While keeping it steady, Loren observed a catastrophic flash flood rushing toward him from upstream. To save the aircraft, Leonberger made a hasty vertical ascent out of the canyon.

Below, while inundated with flood waters, Denny Welsh with the aid of nearby helpers, retreated with the victim to higher ground. “Once the threat had been avoided, about 20 men helped carry the victim to the helicopter, which was now about 120 feet above them.”

Nearly four decades later, former SAR Deputy Chuck McHugh clearly recalls, “I am 50 yards downstream at this point. I remember Loren Leonberger, a Vietnam combat aviator and among the most skilled pilots, abruptly lifted off as the brown waters approached. Loren radioed me and warned of the unfolding flash flood. It was close.”

The helicopter “was almost caught in a wall of water.” Denny Welsh was preparing to get Evans into the helicopter when someone yelled “ ‘flash flood’ and the craft lifted off seconds before water came crashing over the cliff above it... ‘By the time I turned around, the water was up to my waist,’ Welsh said. Welsh had to scale a nearby cliff and scramble onto a ridge to get back into the helicopter.” In 2020, McHugh would reflect back, “Denny was the kind of paramedic you wanted when your life depended upon it.”

The United States Geological Survey (USGS) had a flood gage located a couple of miles downstream in Tanque Verde Creek—about where the creek bed starts to flatten and open up. On the day of this incident, USGS measured 820 cfs at this gage. “On the grand scale of things, this is not a big flood event, unless you’re in the narrow, incised channel above the main 80-foot waterfall. With no warning, this much water is enough to overwhelm anyone in this section of the canyon.” (Chuck McHugh email 9/9/2020)

## Eight Die in Tanque Verde Falls Flash Flood

**Jul 26, 1981**

That Sunday afternoon, there might have been fifty or more picnickers and visitors enjoying the water and polished granite in the canyon. At about 5:00 p.m., just as the DPS helicopter crew began lifting the body of John Evans (above) out, “the flash flood stormed down the wash, fed by rainwaters from upstream.” As that first tragedy was ending, a much greater one was unfolding, four-hundred yards downstream. Within moments, it would be among the greatest losses of life in a natural/environmental accident in Arizona history.<sup>2</sup>

The DPS Air Rescue helicopter responding for John Evans took the youth to Tucson Medical Center and then hurriedly returned to the evolving chaos. SAR Deputy Chuck McHugh was already on scene and members of SARA were also now arriving, expecting to rescue the seriously injured Evans. This quickly changed, however, when all these rescuers confronted the need to extricate at least 26 people “perched on boulders in the middle of the wash,” trapped by flood waters. Additionally, a hoist-equipped helicopter from the Air Force Air Rescue Unit responded, lifting a woman to safety.

All of this transpired before these rescuers discovered that eight people had been swept to an immediate death four-hundred yards downstream. Based on witness reports, a “wave estimated at 10 feet high” rushed through the narrow, incised segment of Tanque Verde Canyon immediately above the eighty-foot main waterfall. Given the restrictive confines of this stretch of the canyon, visitors would have little warning of an impending, deadly flood.

Andrew Hoff, a 16-year-old Sahuaro High School student was swimming in the pools when he saw the scene turn into a horror show. Realizing the water was “getting too deep, too fast, ‘I started yelling, ‘Flash flood,’ get out!’ When he looked down for those he had been swimming with, he could only see a churning froth of brown water. . . ‘A girl went by the rock I was standing on,’ he said, ‘I reached out for her, but she went under the rock. She was looking up when she went by. She looked like she was out of breath. I couldn’t believe it.’ ”

That first day, Sunday, Paul Waid, 33, was found dead more than a mile downstream. On Monday, Jeffrey Feiffer, 28, was discovered a half mile below the falls and the next day, Michele Balser, 18, was found a short distance downstream of the main falls. Per Chuck McHugh, “She was by far our most challenging and hazardous recovery as she was entrapped in a crevice at the top of a flowing 20-foot waterfall. Don Morris was the point man on this.”

Soon, 11-year-old Michael Waid, son of Paul, was retrieved. Per McHugh, “Tom Harlan and I worked on Michael’s recovery. He was just below the base of the main fall, in shallow water close to the edge of the creek. He looked like he had died recently and showed no visible trauma. Like many of the victims, he may have been held in a hydraulic at the base of the fall. Subsequent floods seemed to flush out victims throughout the course of several days.”

Eighteen-year-old Darla Heredia of Amado, was discovered by German Shepherd dog teams about one-mile downstream. “The body was in a small depression between two huge rock slabs.” During the recovery efforts that day, Sheriff’s Deputy Tom Price slipped on an underwater rock and

<sup>2</sup> On July 4, 1980, 13 illegal El Salvadorians were found deceased in Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument, dead from heat, exposure and lack of water. An additional 13 were found alive but also near death. August 12, 1997, 11 slot canyon hikers were killed in a flash flood of Antelope Canyon, near Page, Arizona. The scene was described as “hellish,” and at least two of the victims have never been found. July 16, 2017, 10 picnicker-swimmers were swept away and drowned in Ellison Creek, Cold Springs Swimming Hole north of Payson, Arizona. Most were from just one family.



was swept over a twenty-foot waterfall. He suffered a sprained ankle, but as the scene was proving, it could have been far worse.

McHugh led the search and recovery efforts. In addition to helicopter crews from the Department of Public Safety and Davis-Monthan AFB, searchers included Pima County Sheriff's deputies, two sheriff's dog teams, men and equipment of the 23<sup>rd</sup> Tactical Support Squad at Davis-Monthan, SARA, and about 15 volunteers from the Pima County Search and Recovery Divers. "Fighting the powerful and treacherous current of the sediment-laden waters, the divers searched for bodies under rock overhangs and in pools up to 30 feet deep. At times, they had to be belayed with ropes to keep from being swept away." Compounding these five days of searching, were threats of storms in the nearby mountains.

Finally, on Thursday, July 30, the missing three men were discovered, the first less than an hour after beginning that day. He was two miles downstream, then some thirty minutes later a second man was found about one-mile downstream. In another thirty minutes, at 8:52 a.m., the third and last of the eight victims of that tragedy, was located a quarter mile from where he went over the falls. The three men were Kevin R. Clark, 19, John A. Parker, also 19, and Ralph L. Chatham, 27. Positive identifications were difficult at the time due to complications from deterioration. All three bodies were in "areas that had been carefully searched throughout the week, but may have been dislodged or uncovered by runoff from heavy rains in the area."

As autopsies would soon reveal, most had died of "head and neck trauma, including fractures and cuts. . . the victims were battered against rocks by the force of the water. . . ." In all, nine people perished by being in the canyon that Sunday afternoon: John Evans, 23, from a diving accident. Then dying as the result of the flash flood were Paul Waid, 33; Michael Waid, 11; Jeffrey Feiffer, 28; Michele Balser, 18; John Anthony Parker, 19; Darla Roberson, 18, who stopped using her married name, Heredia; Kevin Clark, 19; and Ralph LeRoy Chatham, 27. (Star 7/28/1981, 7/29/1981, 7/30/1981, 7/31/1981, 8/9/1981; McHugh email 2020)

## 6-Year-Old Swept Away

**Aug 8, 1981**

At 7:00 p.m. that Saturday evening, Jesus Morales' worst nightmare was realized when flood waters ripped his 6-year-old daughter from his grasp and he watched her disappear in the debris rushing by. He, his wife, and little Damaris, were caught in a brown wall of water while driving across a concrete flood canal about two miles south of the International Border. The parents struggled free of their sedan which had been pushed downstream; after two blocks, somehow, they got to safety, but their little girl was not so fortunate. Due to the contours and canyons of the area, these washes, canals, and culverts join and then ultimately, they all drain beneath the city of Nogales, Sonora and under the International Border. These few drainages finally run into the normally dry Santa Cruz River, a few miles north of the much-smaller city of Nogales, Arizona.

Numerous Santa Cruz County Sheriff's deputies and volunteers scoured downstream from where Damaris vanished, as best they could. They encountered fences, cables, brush, logs, obstructions, and all manner of garbage, in addition to the still emptying water, with the pools and eddies this created. They searched for over three days, hoping against hope, that she would be found alive. On Wednesday, the Pima County Sheriff's Search and Rescue Team, with twenty volunteers from the Southern Arizona Rescue Association, was asked to join in with those from the Nogales area. These forty or so people, recurrently assisted by a helicopter team out of Davis-Monthan AFB, were often interrupted with the very real threats of more thunderstorms and flooding. It was a nasty, dangerous operation.

Those veteran rescuers who were involved over the years with similar situations clearly understood tiny Damaris could have been swept along the Santa Cruz River, all the way through Tucson, only to be eternally buried under sand and debris way beyond there. Or, hung up on a tree branch and covered over within a short distance of where she first disappeared. Jesus Morales was in the search since the accident and realized his daughter was dead by now. “ ‘He’s been beating the bushes with them all this time. He just wants to find his little girl,’ ” said Tom Price, Search and Rescue Coordinator for Pima County.

Just past noon on Saturday, August 15, one-week after she was pulled from her father’s vise-like grip, 6-year-old Damaris Morales was found. She was about a half-mile south of the Rio Rico Bridge, more than 15 miles downstream of the canal where floodwaters had doomed them all in the family car. “Her father was among about 30 searchers who were on the scene when the decomposed body was found.” (Star 8/13/1981, 8/14/1981; Citizen 8/13/1981, 8/14/1981, 8/17/1981)

### Teenage Western Movie Maker Drowns

**Aug 17, 1981**

Dressed in western clothes and carrying a rifle over his head, 19-year-old Daniel F. Shull waded into the chest-deep water at 4:30 p.m.; he was followed by his two 16-year-old friends. The trio was being filmed by an 11-year-old brother of one of the boys, who was standing on the bank of the muddy, water-filled landfill on Tucson’s southwest side. Their movie “was to depict three cowboys running from a posse on the other side of the river. . . .”

As a neighborhood friend of the teenagers, would later say, “ ‘As they got farther into the water, they could feel their clothes getting too wet and heavy, and then the boys hit a deep spot and Danny went down and [the two others] just got back to shore in time—it really wore them out’ . . . .” The two boys, “ ‘ripped their clothes off—grabbed a piece of wood—and went back out where Danny, who was weighted down by a poncho was struggling and tried their hardest to save him, but then he had gone under. . . There was nothing they could do.’ ” Shull had come up for air several times, but they were unable to rescue him.

The landfill had a drop-off of about twenty to thirty feet in the middle and the boys didn’t expect that. A construction company had removed soil from that spot earlier and used it to fill-in area roads. One of the boys rushed home and told his father who quickly grabbed a lifejacket and immediately responded, all to no avail. Shull was a busboy and a cook at the Red Dog Saloon in Old Tucson and he and the other two were learning how to be stunt men.

About ten “divers from the Pima County Sheriff’s Department search and rescue unit probed the murky waters for about 45 minutes to an hour before the body was found.” The young man was located in about eight to ten feet of water thirty feet offshore. (Star 8/18/1981; Citizen 8/18/1981)

### SARA Received Award

**Sep 1981**

The Southern Arizona Rescue Association was honored with the National Association for Search and Rescue (NASAR) 1981 State Award for Arizona. It was given for its excellence in being “Arizona’s outstanding search and rescue organization for 1981.” Pima County Sheriff Clarence W. Dupnik, under whose department the volunteer group operates, presented the award at a ceremony with other search and rescue officials. “For professional and administrative organization, has serviced

Southern Arizona for over 20 years, averaging 200 calls per year.” This recognition was created in 1974 and was for “significant contributions to search and rescue at the state and province level.” (Citizen 12/2/1981; NASAR Award Database 9/7/2021)

## Psychic Helps Find Body

**Sep 21, 1981**

When Gregory Finch fired three shots at his former fiancé, 18-year-old Christi Gardner was surely glad their engagement was off. As Finch pulled up alongside her on Interstate 19 south of Tucson, he bumped her with his vehicle and then shot at her out his side window with a rifle. She was run off the freeway and into a palo verde tree, resulting in cuts on her face. She was released from the hospital after the 3:15 p.m. incident. Gregory Finch was last seen the next day at his home in Green Valley; investigators made an effort to locate the 20-year-old man, but could not find him.

Eight days later, the rental car Finch had used when he fired at Gardner was found abandoned along Box Canyon Road, east of Madera Canyon in the Santa Rita Mountains. A two-day air and ground search in the remote area was conducted, including once with members of the Southern Arizona Rescue Association, but there was no trace of him. When deputies reported the vehicle as being found to Finch’s parents, they were told they had hired Joyce Martin, 46, a local psychic, to help locate their son. Law enforcement is generally skeptical of psychics although there are genuine successes with their use.

When Martin told them the missing man was in a “box canyon,” they took more notice. “After a trip to the site where the car was found, she described the hill on which the body lay and the tree that grew nearby, the detective said.” Deputies searched the area described by the psychic twice in the next ten days, including once with a dozen members of SARA. They were ready to give up when they stumbled across the body 2 1/2 miles from where he had left the car. One of the deputies said, “ ‘It was almost exactly where she said it would be—in fact, she pointed to the very spot...If she hadn’t pinpointed that small area, we’d have never found him in all that scrub.’ ” (Star 9/22/1981, 10/20/1981; Citizen 10/19/1981, 5/26/1995)

## Divers Needed in Mexico

**Oct 11, 1981**

Charles R. Reid, 59, and his 58-year-old friend, Alfonso Underwood, were fishing on Lake Angostura [Spanish for narrowness, narrows], sixty miles south of Douglas; the two Tucson postal workers were retired Air Force veterans. The manmade lake is twenty miles long, three miles wide and is isolated in the lower foothills of the Sierra Madre. They were in a small boat when a gust of wind capsized them, only 15 yards from shore and in twenty-foot-deep water. Reid’s 11-year-old grandson and his 15-year-old companion swam to shore safely. Despite knowing how to swim, Reid and Underwood drowned.

Mexican officials of nearby Nacozari, Sonora, asked Douglas City Police Chief Theo Nielson, to facilitate recovering Reid and Underwood. Nielson accompanied divers from the Cochise County Search and Rescue Team, who were able to locate the two men. Names of the members of this dive team reportedly out of Sierra Vista, could not be determined. (Star 10/15/1981; Citizen 10/15/1981)

## Partially Blind Youth Injured on Baboquivari Peak

**Nov 7, 1981**

Rappelling down a fifty-foot section of a five-hundred-foot cliff on a remote pinnacle in Southern Arizona is tense enough when one is able-bodied. But when sight-impaired, like 18-year-old Tom Powell was, it could be nerve-racking. Surprisingly, however, it wasn't for the young man from Lake Havasu City; to this point, he was being energized by his climbing adventure. He was the last of the six students from Tucson's Arizona School for the Deaf and the Blind to finish descending the bottom pitch of the 5.6 Forbes' Route on the granite face of 7,730-foot-high Baboquivari Peak. The group with Wilderness Expeditions and led by Rick Fisher, had hiked in from Riggs Ranch several miles to the east; now at 4:30 p.m., they were returning to their cars. Assisting were two volunteer guides, including Dave Kreamer, a member of the Southern Arizona Rescue Association.

Immediately preceding Powell down the rock face was a partially blind Navajo student, Jerry Charley, 17, who when unhooked from the rope, had wisely gone into a small sheltered overhang at the bottom of the rappel and was waiting for the others to get down. Rick Fisher, an expert climber, was belaying Powell when he heard someone in a separate group above, yell, " 'Rock!' " Both Kreamer and Fisher unsuccessfully grabbed for it as it first clattered and then, whizzed by them. Below, Powell clearly heard the word "rock" and scrambled the few feet toward Charley. The rock struck Powell's helmet, putting a five-inch-long gash into his forehead. Jerry was able to get his friend, dazed but who could talk, into the shelter and laid down. Fisher, an Emergency Medical Technician, was there within seconds, quickly followed by Dave Kreamer. This is when the "stars now become aligned," on this incident.

As luck would have it, Tom Powell was a licensed ham radio operator and had his two-way FM radio in his pack. After Fisher administered first aid to the student, the seriously injured Powell then instructed Fisher on how to operate the radio to call for help. Nearby, SARA member Dave Kreamer knew there was a doctor's medical kit in one of the parked cars at the trailhead and he started off the mountain to retrieve it. He soon met up with the rest of the students on their way down, including one who also had a two-way FM radio, so Kreamer told him to call for help, as well. At almost this same time, six backpackers on their way up to climb the same peak the next day met Kreamer continuing down. In this group were two other members of SARA and an emergency room physician.

" 'We met Kreamer on the way down and he told us what happened,' said Don Morris, a member of SARA for more than 20 years. 'I had a radio and contacted other SARA members who were on a rescue operation in Pima Canyon in the Santa Catalina Mountains. They in turn contacted Davis-Monthan AFB and a helicopter was sent.' " Right at dark, the chopper flew to the scene near the base of the peak on the north side. A flight surgeon and a Stokes rescue basket were dropped off; in the interim, the helicopter then went to refuel and returned for a nighttime hoist of the flight surgeon and the fairly lucky victim. Five days later, Tom Powell, with a bruised spinal column, bad gash on his head, and several missing teeth, was discharged from Tucson Medical Center. (Star 11/13/1981)

## Lost Diabetic Hunter

**Nov 27, 1981**

"Weak from a day and a half in the wilderness without water and his life-giving insulin, Marcel Beaudoin was reduced to crawling on all fours." The 29-year-old from Mesa became separated from his two companions while deer hunting in the Baboquivari Mountains, near Sasabe. Comprehending

he was lost, he tried at first to get water out of a saguaro cactus but that proved impossible. “ ‘I was afraid to eat anything because of my diabetes,’ he said. So he survived for two days on a dozen pieces of barrel cactus fruit, which nonetheless brought his blood sugar level to four times its normal count. . . .”

Alerted about Beaudoin’s need for insulin, Chuck McHugh of the Pima County Sheriff’s Department, began urgently coordinating searchers that first evening. By the next day, there were at least twenty volunteers from the Southern Arizona Rescue Association involved, as was a helicopter. Beaudoin even saw the craft that second afternoon but it was quite some distance away. Lost now for nearly two days, the faint squeaking of a windmill may have finally saved his life. That was the good news, the bad news was he was now well onto the Tohono O’odham Reservation where hunting was forbidden. Searchers were not looking there; they knew Beaudoin had hunted there prior and he understood not to knowingly be on the reservation. In fact, however, Beaudoin had wandered some 12 miles from his original campsite and did not know where he was.

The creaky windmill was pumping fresh water, which Beaudoin very much needed. There was also a ramshackle ocotillo brush hut beside it, which offered some marginal shelter from both the falling rain and temperatures. He tried to keep a fire going that second night, but the storm kept it small and it did not do him much good. He was, however, able to cook some barrel cactus fruit in an old frying pan he found. The fruit, he said, tasted like citrus. By the second night, he was too weak to walk and he said, I “ ‘made my peace with God. I thought of my little son a lot. I even thought about carving a message to him into a piece of wood. But I don’t know what I would have said’ . . . .”

McHugh, knowing time was against them due to Beaudoin’s urgent need for insulin, changed tactics and began looking on the reservation.

“On the last day of the search, I stumbled upon an old rancher’s line shack. There was a cowboy—a real one—inside. He was middle aged and a man of few words. While not expecting any great revelations from our meeting, I explained the details of our search and our lack of success. In just a few words, he replied, ‘you’re looking on the wrong side of the mountain.’ In a little more detail, he explained that the deer know they’re safe on the west side of the mountain. If a hunter spooks deer, they’ll naturally flee onto the west side where they are not hunted. ‘Your hunter probably followed them to the west side, onto the reservation.’ ”

Given those insights McHugh thought, “well nothing to lose, let’s give it a try. To be honest, at this point I felt we were wasting our time with further effort in this area.” Thick, low-lying clouds worked against the searchers in the air. “It was after four flybys past him that the helicopter flew lower and finally spotted him waving his orange hunting cap back and forth.”

On the last morning before Beaudoin was finally spotted, there were “50 to 75 searchers who combed a 30-square-mile area near the campsite.” In addition to those on foot, there were workers from the US Border Patrol, Arizona State Mine Rescue Team, and the Davis-Monthan Air Rescue Team. (Citizen 11/30/1981; Chuck McHugh email 8/22/2021)

## Broken Legs in Baboquivari Mountains

**Nov 28, 1981**

Michael Flood left on a hiking trip in the afternoon and was to be home the next day; the 32-year-old was exploring the rugged Baboquivari Mountains by himself. When he did not show up for work, a supervisor called an acquaintance, who notified the Pima County Sheriff’s Department.

By the time they were called, Michael had been laying at the base of a three-hundred-foot cliff for two days with fractured legs, after falling 75 feet. A major, cold and rain-filled storm had passed over the region while he was lying there.

Border Patrol officers launched both a ground and air search and soon found his car in an isolated part of the mountains. Searchers then tracked his footprints away from the vehicle while the Department of Public Safety helicopter joined in. After an hour, DPS spotted the man and hovered above him; they could tell he was alive but seriously hurt. Due to the frightful terrain and no place for DPS to land safely, they requested aid of the Air Rescue helicopter which was already on standby for such an eventuality. Based at Davis-Monthan AFB, they were hoist-equipped and did not need to land. Flood was lifted out and transported to Tucson Medical Center where he was listed in stable condition.

Michael Flood was the second person to be rescued from the Baboquivari Mountains in the previous several days. See “Lost Diabetic Hunter,” November 27, 1981 on page 358. (Star 12/2/1981)

## Rescue Off Safford Peak

**Dec 23, 1981**

“ ‘It would have been safer waiting until daylight, but because of the cold (around 32 degrees) and the precarious position they were in, we decided to go after them,’ said Chuck McHugh, head of Pima County’s Search and Rescue Squad.”

Terry Lane, 22, and his 19-year-old brother Scott, both from Chicago, were staying on the Lazy K Bar Guest Ranch in the northern end of the Tucson Mountains. The family was having a celebration of both Terry’s graduation from college and the parent’s wedding anniversary. The young men set out to scramble up nearby 4,564-foot-high Safford Peak. Nicknamed Sombrero Peak, there is no trail up it and it is in the West Unit of Saguaro National Monument.

On their descent at about 4:00 p.m., they got stuck on separate ledges on the colder, north side of the mountain, each man now fifty feet up a sheer cliff. They could neither go up nor down the treacherous, very crumbly volcanic rock and began yelling for help. After an hour, as it neared sundown and was getting considerably cooler, they finally attracted the attention of a rancher who called the Sheriff’s Department.

“ ‘Terry was in a real bad position, and I was on a ledge maybe 2 1/2 feet wide, lying on my left side with my left arm coming over my head and wrapped around a rock. I was hurting really bad,’ Scott said. ‘I couldn’t move my arm or my leg after a while. It was scary. The worst part was the cold... The breeze was the killer.’ ”

Rescuers arrived just before dark, and it included Sheriff’s Deputies, National Park Rangers, and seven skilled volunteers from the Southern Arizona Rescue Association. Climbers began an extrication from above but quickly backed off this idea, fearing dislodging rocks. Finally, William Grimes, a University of Arizona professor and an experienced rock climber with SARA, was able to use technical equipment and go up from below to reach the brothers just after 1:00 a.m. “Scott was placed in a harness and lowered to safety at 1:38 a.m. His brother was brought down at 2:43 a.m. in a sling held by Grimes.”

On May 10, 1982, William J. “Bill” Grimes, a University of Arizona biochemist and a ten-year member of SARA, received a “city-sponsored People Protector Award for rescuing two men who were stranded on a mountain ledge Dec. 26 [sic: Dec 23].” The recognition was made at a Tucson Toros Minor League Baseball game as part of a People Protection Week. The award consisted of “a



\$50 savings bond, six months of free storage and \$100 worth of protection devices, such as burglar alarms and road flares.” (Star 12/24/1981, 5/12/1982; Citizen 12/24/1981)

### Two on Cat Mountain Rescued

**Dec 29, 1981**

At 11:00 a.m., the three Holte brothers set out to climb 3,854-foot Cat Mountain in the southern end of the Tucson Mountains, near West Ajo and South Kinney Roads. Luckily, Michael, 14, chose not to scramble up the same way James, 16, and 22-year-old John, tried to go. After he reached the top safely, Michael heard his brothers’ yells for help. They had climbed as far as they could go and upon trying to downclimb, they could not see the footholds they had used going up. They were now stranded on the dangerous, crumbly rock.

Search and rescue deputy Chuck McHugh assembled 27 skilled volunteers from the Southern Arizona Rescue Association to aid the two young men. Climbers went to both the top and the base of the near-vertical chute where they were trapped. “At about 5:00 p.m., after two lines were lowered from the top, Elmer Frantz of SARA climbed from the bottom of the chute to help John, the lower of the two victims, get down. Then Don Morris, also of SARA, rappelled from the top, hooked Michael into the safety lines and brought him down. Neither of the Holtes was injured.” (Citizen 12/30/1981)

### Harlan Wins Jefferson Award

**Feb 1, 1982**

*The Arizona Daily Star’s* 1982 Jefferson Award for public service and community leadership was presented to Tom Harlan of the Southern Arizona Rescue Association. He was one of five recipients of this recognition that year. “The main thing they have in common is that they care. Service to the community would be a natural part of their lives even if nobody noticed.” The names of these five local winners were submitted for national competition, sponsored by the American Institute for Public Service. (Star 1/31/1982)

### Ten Students Rescued on Mt. Baldy

**Feb 2, 1982**

A dozen students from Tucson’s Canyon del Oro Alternative School were hiking to the top of Mount Wrightson, the highest point in the Santa Rita Mountains. Part way up, they made a rest stop at Baldy Saddle. Two of the kids were too tired to continue right away, so Rosemary Tyndall, a teacher and their leader, stayed back and specifically told the other ten to continue on the same trail they had talked about earlier. But the ten students took a wrong turn, which sent them around to the opposite side of the mountain.

Tyndall and the two students started about ten minutes behind the larger group. These three made the summit but she quickly realized the rest of her charges had not reached the top. On their way back down, Tyndall, using some binoculars, thought she saw the group at the parking lot at the bottom. So, they continued on down to join them. When the trio reached their school van, the others were not there; with night approaching, Rosemary Tyndall contacted the Santa Cruz Sheriff’s Office. Tim Beitel, president of Santa Cruz County Search and Rescue, responded with his team of volunteers. Also called in to assist, was the Southern Arizona Rescue Association.

The author is unclear as to the specifics, but probably while monitoring local police radio channels, the helicopter from Tucson's KOLD-TV responded, flying into the area after dark. At 1:00 a.m., the crew spotted the ten around a campfire in Baldy Saddle, where it was 18 or so degrees. The pilot then proceeded to daringly land at the Ponderosa Pine Tree-shrouded Saddle at 8,000 feet, and shuttle the ten down off the mountain, doing so two at a time. The moon was in its First Quarter, and ambient light was marginal, certainly not safe enough to be making at least five roundtrips. However, the pilot admittedly did a great job and all reached safely and all were safely shuttled to the parking lot at the Santa Rita Lodge. Once her dozen students were all together in one spot, Rosemary Tyndall then took everyone back to Tucson.

Five days later, Pete Cowgill, the Outdoor Writer for *The Arizona Daily Star*, wrote an opinion scorching, two-column article on KOLD-TV's getting involved in the rescue. Cowgill, a highly-experienced outdoorsman and avid hiker, was also very knowledgeable about that mountain. He asked numerous, pointed questions about the safety, value, and practical involvement of this helicopter, most especially since they were uninvited and it was after dark. Throughout Cowgill's article, there are numerous quotes from SARA member Tom Harlan, a humble "rock star" when it came to common sense on hiking and rescue work. On that incident, Harlan was running the SARA Base Camp in the parking lot at the Mount Wrightson Trailhead, assisting with logistics and participating in various ways with the progress of the search.

" 'Someone in the helicopter asked if there was anybody around who could go with them,' Harlan said. 'The person said they did not know the area. We kept quiet... we did not know the ability of the pilot to fly at night in a mountain range, he was not familiar with.' When helicopters are called upon in search and rescue operations, they come from either the Arizona Department of Public Safety or Davis-Monthan Air Force Base. According to Harlan, the pilots are qualified and experienced, and the helicopters are adequate to do the job. It was a little bubble chopper...." Fortunately, it was calm and cold, a plus for the pilot.

In the article, Harlan was not clear on just who authorized the helicopter into the area and then secondly, how it was decided to make the extraction of the kids at that time. Had those in the helicopter just checked, they would have learned there were two SARA members only an hour away from Baldy Saddle. Additionally, the group of ten were safe and there really was no emergency sufficient to warrant this dangerous procedure, according to Cowgill.

Cowgill was also very critical of the students. He definitely did not like their being recognized as some kind of heroes when they did not follow the teacher's instructions. In fairness, however, he acknowledged that the students did the right thing—staying put, starting a fire, and building a crude shelter of brush to help keep the group warm. (Star 2/4/1982, 2/7/1982)

## Don Morris Honored

**Feb 26, 1982**

Four federal employees in Tucson were honored by the Southern Arizona Federal Executive Association, each was recognized with a distinct, individual award. Don Morris, a veteran archaeologist with the National Park Service, won the Association's "special award for his volunteer search and rescue work." At the time, Don had been with the Southern Arizona Rescue Association for over 22 years. (Star 2/28/1982)

## Dead Desert Bighorn Sheep

**Mar 1982**

Two radio-collared desert bighorn sheep died of natural causes in the Santa Catalina Mountains in 1982. The radios were designed to emit one sound if the animal moved at least once every 24 hours and, it gave off another sound if it did not. The Arizona Game and Fish Department wanted to locate the carcass of the first one [exact date of death was not given in the article], but could not, even after three unsuccessful attempts by their officers. They knew, however, it was in the cliffs near Finger Rock. Finally, one of the game managers asked for help from the Southern Arizona Rescue Association. “About 15 members with extensive rock-climbing experience combed the area and the sheep was found.” The six-year-old ewe apparently had fallen. At the time, there were nine sheep with collars in the mountain range, and the herd was estimated to be at 100 to 125 animals. (Star 10/22/1982)

## Bank Plane Wreck

**Mar 16, 1982**

A Valley National Bank Beechcraft Baron crashed in the Santa Rita Mountains, killing 36-year-old Randall D. Keys, the sole occupant. Keys left Phoenix in the twin-engine aircraft about 12:45 a.m. and was to arrive in Tucson thirty minutes later. As a senior courier, he was experienced carrying intercompany mail and reports, between the two cities. The Tucson Flight Control last heard from him near 1:00 a.m. When Keys, who had 17 years of flying experience, with the last two flying for the bank, was not heard from at about 3:30 a.m., a second plane from the company launched from Phoenix to try and trace his route. This second pilot picked up an emergency signal from the nearly \$400,000 plane, activated by the crash.

A Department of Public Safety helicopter joined the search at 5:15 a.m. and found the wreckage in about 45 minutes. The first of the 19 Southern Arizona Rescue Association team arrived at the crash site among the mixed scrub pine and brush, at 9:45 a.m. It was at the northern end of the Santa Rita Mountains on the 4,000-foot level of Mount Fagan. Weather did not seem to play a role in the accident, with the visibility at least thirty miles and the cloud level at 4,500 feet. Responders said the “nose of the plane was smashed back to the wings, which were partially torn off.” This was the second fatal crash of a Valley National Bank Beechcraft Baron in just over a year. See “Crash of Bank Plane,” March 3, 1981 on page 348. (Citizen 3/16/1982; Star 3/17/1982)

## Death at Tanque Verde Falls

**May 22, 1982**

“Allan Kendrick Paul, 19, of Flushing, Mich., became the 14<sup>th</sup> person to die at the falls since 1975.” At 3:00 p.m., the young man was sitting just below the main waterfall with his 17-year-old sister and 19-year-old girlfriend, when he lost his footing and slipped off a ledge. “Witnesses tried unsuccessfully to revive him after pulling him from the water...but he died at the scene of head and internal injuries.” (Star 5/23/1982)

## Mine Rescue Training

**May 25, 1982**

Those involved in search and rescue spend a great deal of their personal time and energy in training for a variety of actual events, which happen all too often. These specialized trainings are certainly provided for both volunteers and paid professionals in Southern Arizona. One such training worthy of note, was a simulated mine rescue. It was staged at the University of Arizona's San Xavier shaft which is used for mining-related, underground teaching purposes. The fabricated report was a fire burning underground and a "miner" was trapped about a half-mile inside the tunnel.

"Mine inspectors, volunteers, search and rescue personnel, sheriff's officers and others participated in the drill... at the UA's mining lab south of Tucson. Helicopters from Davis-Monthan Air Force Base and the state Department of Public Safety were also on hand for the drill, the first of its kind in the nation." (Star 5/26/1982)

## Fall on Beehive Peak

**Jun 16, 1982**

Beehive Peak is a small hill of sharp rocks and short cliffs, at the southern end of the Tucson Mountains. Over time, the city has grown up around this isolated mount, making for an attractive spot for the neighborhood children to explore—Donna Clark was one of them. Along with two young friends, the 18-year-old woman had made the summit and was on her way down. Luckily for her, a man who lived near the hillside often monitored it from his yard, sometimes with his binoculars.

" 'I see people climb up and down that mountain all the time... but this one caught my attention because I've never seen anyone come down that way. It looked like a very bad, dangerous spot... a couple of minutes later, down she went... dialed 911 and then stood by the phone to give directions to rescuers... I heard her fall. I heard the thud. I'll never forget it.' "

In climbing down a steep slab of rock, Ms. Clark slipped and then slid and tumbled about 35 feet, stopping in some bushes just short of falling over another, possibly fatal, one-hundred-foot drop to the ground. In short time, deputies arrived, soon followed by 22 volunteer members of the Southern Arizona Rescue Association. An elaborate lowering system had to be rigged from the top of the peak to the ground to make it possible for the rescuers to ease her down in a Stokes Basket. Because of the rotten nature of the volcanic rock, it took well-over two hours to secure sturdy rope and webbing anchors for the lowering. These attachments were actually large boulders since the rock proved too inferior for metal pins to be driven into.

While the anchor lines were being tied and assembled, four rescuers had worked their way from the bottom of the hill up the one-hundred feet to where Donna was lying. She was complaining of back pain, although she could sit up. They were able to get her stabilized and when all was ready, move her into the wire basket. Once she and the rescue team were set, it only took eight minutes to lower her to the ground and soon into a waiting ambulance. After arrival at Kino Community Hospital, she was listed in stable condition. (Citizen 6/17/1982)

## Drowning in Kennedy Lake

**Jul 12, 1982**

Andrew Taylor and his 20-year-old friend and their two wives along with Taylor's 2-year-old son, were in Kennedy Park on Tucson's southwest side about 3:00 a.m. The two men decided to go swimming, despite the park having been closed for five hours and disregarding several "No Swimming" signs posted around man-made Kennedy Lake. The 21-year-old Taylor was about 75 feet from shore "when he began splashing and calling for help." His friend swam over to where he last saw Taylor, and after paddling around for several minutes and not finding him, he returned to shore to get assistance.

Eleven volunteers with the Pima County Search and Recovery Divers arrived just before 4:00 a.m. and found Taylor about 9:00 a.m., entangled in weeds. "The divers searched the bottom of the lake for four hours before finding Taylor face down in 12 feet of water on the west side of the lake near where he was last seen." A helicopter with the Department of Public Safety had also been called out to aid in the search. The divers reported trouble locating Taylor's body due to the visibility underwater of only one-foot. This was the third drowning in the 15-foot-deep, 12-acre lake since it was opened in July 1974. (Star 7/13/1982)

## Wind Storm in Ajo

**Aug 10, 1982**

In just thirty minutes, a thunderstorm that hit Ajo at 6:00 p.m., dropped 2.5 inches of rain and over a half-inch of hail. Winds exceeded seventy-miles-per-hour, " '...it was strong enough that it could have generated a tornado,' said one weatherman. 'Police there said it was like a tornado.' " Large trees were toppled, roofs were torn off, cement posts were ripped from the ground and trailer houses were flipped over, but somehow, no one was seriously hurt. Over seventy homes and businesses were damaged. The owner of the Ajo Bowling Lanes, whose roof was entirely pulled off, said it was the worst storm he had ever seen. " 'My wife was hysterical...The only safe place was the walk-in cooler. We hid there.' "

Pima County Sheriff's Deputies, community search and rescue volunteers and Explorer Scouts were called out to help locate those who might be injured. The American Red Cross from Tucson soon arrived, providing food, shelter, and repair assistance. An estimated \$1 million worth of damage was recorded and Bruce Babbitt, the Governor of Arizona, was asked by a State Senator to declare the town a disaster area. He did not. (Citizen 8/11/1982; Star 8/12/1982, 8/13/1982)

## Man Dies While Rappelling

**Sep 18, 1982**

Melvin R. Turley was with thirty others on a church-sponsored outing in the Santa Rita Mountains. That Saturday, the group was climbing Elephant Head, a very prominent geological feature at the western end of the range. At 1:00 p.m., the 40-year-old from Nogales was rappelling "when the rope supporting him snapped and dropped him head first to the canyon floor 150 feet below." Sheriff's deputies and 21 members of the Southern Arizona Rescue Association responded. He had no vital signs but the Department of Public Safety helicopter lifted him from the canyon floor and life-saving procedures were administered enroute to Tucson, but Turley did not respond. (Citizen 9/20/1982)

## Dies of Third-Degree Burns

**Sep 19, 1982**

Somehow, Dr. Allen J. Kolin lost control of his vehicle and ran off the Catalina Highway at Mile Post 1. As the 34-year-old Kolin was bouncing two-hundred feet down into the boulder-strewn canyon, his car caught fire and he was ejected before it exploded. “A Davis-Monthan Air Force Base helicopter hoisted Kolin from the canyon after the sheriff’s search and rescue team [including 17 members of the Southern Arizona Rescue Association] moved him into position. He was then transported to the burn unit at St. Mary’s Hospital,” with third-degree burns over eighty-percent of his body. On September 30, Dr. Kolin died of his injuries. (Citizen 9/20/1982, 10/1/1982)

## Crash Injures Three Teenagers

**Nov 11, 1982**

Three teenage boys were seriously injured when the four-wheel-drive they were in, slid off the Catalina Highway and plunged down a sixty-foot embankment. The Toyota Land Cruiser rolled completely over one time before coming to rest against a tree. The accident took place about noon at an icy curve at Bear Wallow. Anthony Bingham, 17, who was a passenger, suffered head injuries and various fractures and was trapped in the vehicle. The two other young men, including the driver, Anthony’s brother, only received minor injuries.

Deputies and the 14 volunteer responders from the Southern Arizona Rescue Association had to rappel down to the crash site, where it then took about three hours to extract Anthony from the wreckage, raise him to the road and get him transported by ambulance to Tucson Medical Center. (Star 11/12/1982)

## River Rescue near Green Valley

**Dec 10, 1982**

“Witnesses said running water up to four feet deep splashed as high as the windows of the vehicle, stuck about midway across a 50-yard span at La Canoa Road.” Michael Garzero, a 36-year-old disabled Vietnam veteran with brain injuries, was stranded on top of his truck in the rising Santa Cruz River near Green Valley, south of Tucson.

About 9:40 p.m., the Department of Public Safety helicopter arrived on-scene and made an effort to aid the man from the air. However, they were unable to maneuver close enough due to the dangerous live power lines that were above his truck. In the interim, thirty volunteers with the Southern Arizona Rescue Association arrived and began a river rescue, for which they had trained on numerous occasions. About 11:30 p.m., these rescuers attempted to reach Garzero by ropes. That effort finally succeeded two hours later, when they were able to get to the truck, reaching the stranded man. They hauled him by small raft back across the waters; he was suffering from exposure but refused treatment. (Citizen 12/11/1982)



## 24 Hikers Trapped in Sabino Canyon

**Jan 30, 1983**

The 17-hour storm was considered a “big storm, but not awesome,” dropping 1.35 inches of rain at the Tucson International Airport and 14 inches of snow on Mount Lemmon. However, 1.85 inches of rain fell near Sabino Canyon, specifically at Tanque Verde Road and North Soldier Trail. All of this precipitation caused Upper Sabino Canyon to flood, with upwards of two feet of water running over the paved, stream crossings in the canyon. This trapped at least 24 hikers and campers in the area that Sunday.

The first report of problems there was when word reached the Forest Service Visitor Center; two, 15-year-old Girl Scouts in a troop from Phoenix, had been swept off the uppermost of the nine low-water bridges in the canyon. The girls disappeared, bobbing down the turbulent creek, which was now greatly overflowing its banks. Chuck McHugh, Search and Rescue Coordinator for the Pima County Sheriff’s Department, learned of this accident about 2:00 p.m. and responded. Fortunately, the girls were somehow able to scramble free and were taken in by some campers. Ultimately, the Department of Public Safety flew them out and they were soon at University Hospital. Shook up, a little hypothermic, but they were quickly released.

In addition to the DPS helicopter and crew, a larger chopper from Davis-Monthan AFB joined in and quickly flew out eight people who were trapped and then it conducted an air search of the canyon. And, as luck would have it, the Southern Arizona Rescue Association was actually conducting a river-rescue practice near Swan and the Rillito River, when they were alerted to respond. “As Dave Brown drove up the canyon road, four skin divers [sic: men in wetsuits], including Don Morris and Nate Shechter, held onto the front of the six-wheel-drive truck and cleared debris from its path. Brown described the campers and hikers as ‘very cold, very wet, very tired and very glad to get a ride.’ ” The last of the stranded were rescued by the Davis-Monthan helicopter by 5:45 p.m. Fortunately, there were no serious injuries reported. (Star 1/31/1983)

## 18 People Trapped in Aravaipa Canyon

**Jan 30, 1983**

Aravaipa Canyon is a very popular trek 65 miles north of Tucson; narrow in many spots, it requires wading the creek dozens of times in its 12-mile length. Numerous places in the scenic canyon have logs and branches wedged overhead in trees and along cliffs, dramatically reminding travelers of the awesome power of previous floods there. All 18 hikers entered the canyon from the west end on Saturday morning and became trapped there the next day by high waters from the storm. Localized rain raised the normally gentle stream to dangerous levels, making walking very far near impossible. The four separate hiking groups were reported overdue when they did not exit from their overnight trip.

Organized by the Pinal County Sheriff’s Office, searchers included deputies, two Department of Public Safety helicopters, and volunteers. They were able to locate 13 of the 18 people on Monday, all were safe but temporarily stranded by high water. They would successfully work their way out the next day after the flooding subsided. It was the five remaining hikers that had officials more worried, however.

At the end of the first day, a note was found by searchers indicating these five missing people were trying to make their way up a side canyon and onto the tablelands above Aravaipa Canyon. Afterwards, one of the hikers said, “ ‘We knew there was another [storm] front coming in, and we

had no idea how long the rains would continue. . . We could have been trapped in there for days, so we decided to go out.’ ” On their way out, this group spent a third night camping. Just as an air search was to resume for them that morning, they walked into the little town of Dudleyville, eight miles northwest of the canyon. The 18 were now all accounted for.

However, on the day all of the hikers became stranded in the canyon, three bow hunters from the Tempe area had their four-wheel-drive pickup washed away when they tried to cross the west end of Aravaipa Creek in mid-afternoon. Although unharmed, they did spend the night huddled in a rock shelter after abandoning the truck full of camping equipment when it “started to wash down the canyon.” Later located, there was not that much to salvage. (Star 2/1/1983, 2/2/1983; Citizen 2/2/1983)

### “But It Was Youth That Killed Him”

**Mar 20, 1983**

Agile and athletic, the 18-year-old made the four-foot jump easily across the waterfall, despite it being a little slippery. It was simple for him and, other than the thrill and that “it was there,” he had no real reason to get to that side. Now, needing to return, he again leaped across the thirty-foot-high waterfall. This time, however, “he landed short, slid down into the cold water. For an aching moment he tried to swim. He did not cry out.” As R. H. Ring wrote in the March 22, 1983 *The Arizona Daily Star*, “The cause of death for Todd Wright will be listed officially as drowning, or head injuries from being battered against the rocks. But it was youth that killed him.” He tumbled over one of the drops of the Tanque Verde Falls.

Todd disappeared, lodged somewhere in the stream—soon hidden by dark shadows and unreachable recesses of the waterfalls’ plunge pools. Finally sighted, he was 150 yards downstream from where he had fallen in. “According to search-and-rescue deputy Tom Price, Wright’s body was snared by rescue coordinator Chuck McHugh and two rescue volunteers.” Per the newspaper accounts, Todd was the twentieth person to die at Tanque Verde Falls since 1975. (Star 3/22/1983, 3/25/1983; Citizen 3/28/1983)

### Plane Crash in Redington Pass

**Mar 21, 1983**

When a commercial aircraft passing over Southeastern Arizona picked up the Emergency Locator Transmitter (ELT), the Air Force Rescue Coordination Center (AFRCC) at Scott Air Force Base in Illinois was immediately contacted. An ELT can “sound” for different reasons including a private plane making a hard but safe landing. It can also go off when a plane makes a very hard, unplanned landing. The AFRCC coordinates all ELT and downed aircraft incidents and when federal assets might be needed, such as a military helicopter or the Civil Air Patrol. The CAP in Tucson was notified and immediately went into action.

Two CAP planes from Tucson and Willcox were sent out to search, and the emergency signal was pinpointed to the Redington Pass area between the Rincon and Santa Catalina Mountains. Then ground searchers with the CAP, using directional-triangulating equipment designed for locating ELTs, found the plane at 6 a.m. the next morning. It was discovered on a dirt road two miles southeast of Redington by members of the Tucson-based Neotoma Composite [combined senior and cadet members] Squadron of the CAP. The plane, a single-engine Cessna, suffered nosewheel

and propeller damage and the cause was being investigated. Both occupants of the plane were gone, they had called a friend and had been picked up.

In June 1983, Major Robert McCord, Captain Kristine Larsen, First Lieutenant Mike McDonald, and Second-Lieutenant Charles Faas of Neotoma Composite Squadron of the CAP received the patrol's "Find Ribbons," for locating a crashed aircraft. (Citizen 3/21/1983; Star 6/5/1983)

## Six Marines Killed

**Mar 27, 1983**

" 'It was a pitiful sight,' said San Simon rancher Ed Barnes, who was flying his private plane near the crash site and saw the explosion as the helicopter hit the ground at about 4:20 p.m." So hot was the fire, metal melted and some parts had been blown five-hundred feet from the main body of the machine.

The Sikorsky CH-53D "Sea Stallion," a medium-lift helicopter, was on a routine ferry trip along with a similar ship, from North Carolina to the Marine base at California's Twentynine Palms, for a training exercise. It was to first stop in Yuma, however, for the night. Barnes' sister-in-law witnessed the two helicopters as they progressed westward when one of them returned in "unusual" maneuvers, lost altitude and exploded on or near the ground about three miles from her home. Her family arrived at the site twenty minutes afterward. The helicopter went down in a desert area at least one-half mile from the nearest "cow trail" road.

While Ed circled overhead relaying information by radio to the Civil Air Patrol Center in Albuquerque, the second ship dropped down, permitting some men to get one person from the burning wreckage. The survivor was taken to Northern Cochise Community Hospital in Willcox. The other six Marines had been killed upon impact. The author was never able to learn the cause of the accident. (Star 3/28/1983; Citizen 3/28/1983)

## Boy Lost in Chiricahua Mountains

**Apr 2, 1983**

Playing hide-and-seek, 8-year-old Jeffrey Sunderland went missing in the Turkey Creek area of the Chiricahua Mountains about 5:00 p.m. on Saturday. Despite that first, all-night help of the many weekend campers there, the youngster from Willcox was not located. With it snowing, and intermittent rain and near-freezing night-time temperatures, searchers looked for him day and night; "almost fifty square miles were searched systematically."

On the third day of the search, Jeffrey was finally discovered about a mile from the campground. He was "found dead in Ward Creek, a tributary of Turkey Creek, shortly after 1:00 p.m. by one of the people who had come from all over Southeastern Arizona to spend a cold, wet morning looking for a child some of them didn't even know. . . Scrapes on the body indicated that Jeffrey may have fallen while trying to cross the swollen stream."

More than two-hundred volunteers from Willcox and other nearby towns joined in the search along with Cochise County Deputies. There were Explorer Scouts, US Border Patrol agents, about thirty Pima County search and rescue volunteers [from SARA], and helicopter crews from Davis-Monthan Air Force Base and the Arizona Department of Public Safety.

In late April, Lt. Larry Dever of the Cochise County Sheriff's Office, used the interest generated by the search for Jeffrey Sunderland to revitalize its countywide search and rescue operations. Dever was in charge of the County's Special Response Team, which carries out SAR operations as well as SWAT functions. "The boy was found dead, but a positive outcome would be to utilize the impetus to recruit and train volunteers who could effectively work on future searches."

Jerry Sunderland, the boy's stepfather, offered more than \$2,000 [\$6,000 in 2023] for much-needed equipment for such a group. Dever explained that the search and rescue function does not normally receive a county budget allocation—only one for minor equipment purchases. (Star 4/4/1983, 4/5/1983, 4/28/1983)

## Seriously Hurt in Gates Pass

**May 4, 1983**

Along with four friends, Chris S. Paytas was walking a rocky path that was loose and narrow in places, in the Gates Pass area. They probably had been drinking and were now descending off a hilltop an hour after dark. "Paytas lost his footing near a gap between two rocks. He fell about 100 feet before hitting the ground then tumbled another 75 to 100 feet before coming to a stop'... 'The only thing that stopped him was a bush and a large boulder. . . .'" Within thirty minutes, "about 25 deputies and medical personnel from the Rural Metro Fire Department began a rush to the scene. They were followed by 20 to 25 members of the Search and Rescue Council, made up of air and ground rescue groups in Southern Arizona."

Rescuers rappelled into the ravine where the 23-year-old Paytas had fallen, approximately five-hundred feet above the desert floor. Aided by the floodlights of a hovering Department of Public Safety helicopter, they started an IV, splinted him and placed him into a Stokes Litter. They then were able to lower him to a more level, stable area to wait for the Air Force rescue team. The rescue helicopter from Davis-Monthan had to divert for several minutes as an A-10 "Warthog" jet passed overhead. It then "hugged the peaks just above the valley as it dropped a line to rescue workers waiting below."

Paytas was admitted to St. Mary's Hospital in critical condition, having suffered fractures of both legs, severe head injuries, a possible punctured lung and internal bleeding. (Star 5/5/1983)

## 7-Year-Old Lost

**May 26, 1983**

While playing hide-and-seek with two young classmates, 7-year-old Ammiel Rodriguez went missing about noon. The church group he and his parents were with was picnicking near Inspiration Rock on Mt. Lemmon. At least forty rescue workers from the Search and Rescue Council, along with three dog teams trained in search, looked all through the night. An infrared, heat-sensitive device was loaned to the effort by the US Immigration and Naturalization Service. A helicopter from the US Border Patrol as well as a helicopter out of Davis-Monthan AFB, were scanning the area before being shut down due to darkness. The temperature went down to about 45 degrees and the youngster was wearing only a short-sleeved shirt and long pants.

The next morning, Kathy Rodriguez, Ammiel's mother "thought she heard the sound of crying at about 6:30 a.m.... Thinking her imagination might be playing tricks on her, she told searchers, 'It might just be the mother in me making me hear this.' " In fact, it was her son, who was quickly

located. He said he was “just a little cold, a little hungry and thirsty.” He was found about a mile from where he had been playing. (Citizen 5/27/1983; Star 5/28/1983)

### Hiker Hurt By Helicopter Blade

**Jun 12, 1983**

Arizona DPS Air Rescue, with Pilot Pete Sadler, responded to a Sheriff’s request for emergency medical support in Tanque Verde Canyon. Lynn Orhekowski, 30, had fallen thirty feet, sustaining life-threatening injuries. A USAF Det 1 37<sup>th</sup> ARRS helicopter was also enroute in the likely event a hoist was required. Sadler, after landing at 6:00 p.m., spotted two men approaching the aircraft from about 150 feet away. DPS Paramedic Denny Welsh directed the two men not to come any closer. Both acknowledged him, indicating they understood. One was 29-year-old Joe Carroll. Welsh then proceeded to unload the medical equipment.

Within moments, however, Carroll had run into the nearly invisible, spinning rear rotor. He was pitched away from the ship with severe trauma to his left shoulder. Despite being warned, he may have tried ducking under the rear boom, wanting to assist Welsh with removing the medical gear. Sadler executed an emergency shut down, while Carroll lay on the ground with blood pouring out of his severed brachial artery. Through Paramedic Welsh’s quick action, he coolly and skillfully secured the artery and saved Carroll’s life.

Already enroute to the scene, the DMAFB “Huey” hoisted both Carroll and the original fall victim into the helicopter. Both were transported to Tucson Medical Center (TMC). The young woman survived her injuries. Carroll did likewise, but he lost his left arm at the shoulder. The impact destroyed the tail rotor and damaged the helicopter so that it could not be flown out of the canyon for two days. An Army National Guard chopper delivered repair parts and the DPS helicopter was flown to Phoenix for inspection and repairs. (Star 6/13/1983; Citizen 6/13/1983; Chuck McHugh emails 5/7/2023, 6/7/2023)

### Rescue at Seven Falls

**Aug 20, 1983**

Volunteers from the Southern Arizona Rescue Association carried 22-year-old Robert Dalton over three miles to the Sabino Canyon Visitor Center. The man had fallen twenty feet into a pool of water at Seven Falls and broke a bone in his heel. “Deputy Chuck McHugh, rescue manager for the Pima County Sheriff’s Department, said Dalton was at the second-lowest waterfall when he slipped at about 1:30 p.m.” (Star 8/21/1983)

### John Bownds Received State Award

**Sep 15, 1983**

University of Arizona mathematics professor John M. Bownds was honored by the National Association for Search and Rescue (NASAR) with its 1983 State Award for Arizona. This recognition was created in 1974 and was for “significant contributions to search and rescue at the state and province level.” Pima County Sheriff Clarence W. Dupnik presented it to Dr. Bownds on March 23, 1984. Bownds was a volunteer with the Southern Arizona Rescue Association since December 1972.

At the time, he had “participated in more than 200 search and rescue missions in Arizona and Mexico.” He also helped develop a computer-assisted search planning program, using probability theory to figure out the likelihood of lost hikers being found in any given area. The system permits search managers to deploy resources such as helicopters, searchers, and dogs to the best advantage. (Citizen 3/21/1984; NASAR Award Database 9/7/2021)

### 13 Die, Including DPS Pilot and Paramedic<sup>3</sup>

Sep 30–Oct 3, 1983

The legacy of a Tropical Storm such as Octave, is often its relentless rainfall and destructive flooding. Octave is generally considered the worst weather-related disaster in Arizona history. Thirteen people died in the five-day-long storm; nine from flashfloods, four in aircraft crashes. Hundreds were injured, mostly from water-related events. It was not the deadliest in Arizona’s past, however, this painful title may go to the Labor Day Storm of 1970, where 23 perished in Central Arizona. Damages for Octave, adjusted for 2023, neared \$1.5 Billion; President Ronald Reagan declared Cochise, Gila, Graham, Greenlee, Pima, Pinal, Santa Cruz, and Yavapai counties a “Major Disaster Area” on that October 5.

Portions of Tucson received over eight inches of rain and Nogales nearly ten. The mountains in Southern Arizona, with their granite-lined drainages aimed down toward the valleys, also saw near-record precipitation, such as Mount Lemmon with over ten inches and Mount Graham, twelve. Clifton, Duncan, Winkelman, Hayden, and Marana were almost completely flooded, as was some of Tucson. As the Santa Cruz River passed through Marana, it experienced 65,000 cfs, the greatest ever logged there. The Rillito and Gila rivers saw their highest crests recorded, as well. The San Francisco River in Clifton reached 90,900 cfs, the most since the town was founded. And, it was estimated it took four months for floodwaters to recede across southeastern Arizona and New Mexico.

A heading for one of the many articles that filled the newspapers for days, read, “Thousands escape ‘incredible’ floods.” Nearly all of Clifton’s 4,200 residents needed evacuating and over seven-hundred homes were destroyed. Many hundreds of residents were displaced in Sonora, Mexico, the same was true for Nogales, Bisbee, Tombstone, Sierra Vista, and the Tohono O’odham Reservation. The seven-hundred refugees then housed in Marana’s Thornydale Elementary School, “didn’t know Gov. Bruce Babbitt had seen their entire town under water. . . When Babbitt flew over the area, he could hardly tell where the river started or stopped, and. . . Marana ‘literally melted away,’ Babbitt said.”

Thirty-five of the 42 major bridges in Southern Arizona were closed, with many having washed away. Several of the region’s water plants were flooded and sewage treatment facilities overflowed. Power lines were knocked out throughout the area and communications were often impossible. Many roads were submerged and impassable; those people familiar with their own neighborhoods could not tell where the roads were. Low lying areas north of Marana, west of Interstate 10, were nothing but lakes “as far as the eye could see;” in some cases, only rows of telephone poles were visible. Cotton fields waiting to be picked, were ruined; livelihoods from them were destroyed, as well. But tragedy, drama, and heroics were everywhere.

On Friday morning, September 30, not long after the rains began, Jerry Chap, a paraplegic drove his Jeep with his family in it, around the “Do Not Enter When Flooded” sign on a crossing

<sup>3</sup> Chuck McHugh, retired Pima County Sheriff’s Lieutenant and Assistant Director, Operations Section, Arizona Department of Emergency and Military Affairs, Division of Emergency Management, contributed significantly to this entry.



of the now rushing Sonoita Creek in Patagonia. He had been driving over it for years. “The water started pushing the jeep down stream... The rising water reached halfway up the doors, and the Jeep stalled. The driver’s side began to lean toward the water. Chap’s father-in-law and wife swam to shore on their own.” Gary Pundt of Santa Cruz County Search and Rescue responded, and was able to crawl across some cables above the flooded stream trying to help Chap’s mother-in-law and a young son to safety. Pundt lowered himself into the water.

The creek swept Pundt and the woman and boy against a rock retaining wall, but they were able to grab hold of a fence and work their way to safety. Then local Volunteer Fireman John Spitler arrived. “The Jeep had rolled on its side. Jerry Chap was sitting on the window ledge with water up to his chest. After hooking a chain to a car on shore, Spitler swam out to the Jeep and attached the chain to its bumper. He carried [Chap’s] other son to safety, and Chap [climbed] hand-over-hand to shore.” The vehicle soon rolled 150 yards downstream.

Early Saturday morning, October 1, Paul Williams, 25, a maintenance man at Tucson’s Tanque Verde Guest Ranch, along with three companions also from there, were swept from their vehicle while attempting to cross the flooded Monument Wash, a mile west of the ranch. Monument Wash drains much of the northwest slopes of the Rincon Mountains and joins Tanque Verde Wash, two-hundred yards north of Speedway Boulevard.

Monument Wash was flowing heavily when search and rescue resources arrived. Sheriff’s search and rescue deputy Chuck McHugh, two SARA volunteers, Rich and Fran Kunz, and “Ranger 29,” the Arizona DPS Air Rescue helicopter piloted by Tom McNeff, 36, aided by Paramedic Rick Stratman, 27, responded to Monument Wash. The DPS crew had to fly into considerable cloud cover to assist Sheriff’s and SARA personnel with the successful recovery of the three adults. But Williams, a former Marine and practicing “survivalist,” was swept downstream. “ ‘If anybody could figure out a way to survive, he could,’ ” said his stepfather, David James, who rushed to Tucson from Illinois, along with Williams’ mother.

Emergency agencies were so overwhelmed with life-saving responses and commitments that a frustrated James went to KVOA-TV, Channel 4, and *The Arizona Daily Star*, to have them announce his need for searchers. “He said he didn’t care if the volunteers were ‘ghoulish’ and just wanted to find a body. He needed everybody’s help.” Over twenty people responded but it was Williams’ fiancée that found him dead, tangled in some brush on Wednesday afternoon, four days and two miles from where he was last seen.

Mid-afternoon Saturday, a Davis-Monthan Det 1, 37th ARRS helicopter, crewed by five airmen and Sheriff’s Rescue Deputy, Chuck McHugh, flew through broken cloud cover to rescue three women and a partially paralyzed man from a flooded home on the edge of the Santa Cruz River’s main channel. The Santa Cruz was then flowing at 65,000 CFS and the rescue was urgent. Captain David Meyers and Second Lieutenant Jim Cavoto piloted the aircraft into a steady hover while rescue personnel were lowered by hoist to the roof. The stranded occupants were helped onto the home’s flat roof and all were removed by rescue hoist.

As the USAF Air Rescue crew returned to base, Deputy McHugh spotted the Arizona DPS Air Rescue crew of Tom McNeff and Rick Stratman conducting additional rooftop rescues from homes near the Santa Cruz River.

Many Marana residents living in low-lying areas were flooded and hoping to survive until waters receded. Others attempted to drive and became stranded in floodwaters. As Saturday, midnight October 1 approached, rescue emphasis shifted into the massive Marana floodplain. Deputy McHugh was dispatched to a stranded motorist at the Santa Cruz River channel on Sanders Road. Driving his Dodge Ramcharger into the flood waters, McHugh spotted the motorist from a few hundred

yards, sitting on an automobile's rooftop in heavy current under powerlines. McHugh knew this victim couldn't be safely reached. A helicopter rescue was impossible with the overhead wires. Given the breadth and powerful current of the river, ground-based rescue was also impossible. A specialized rescue motorboat would be required—an asset then unavailable in this region. The motorist would have to wait and hope for a little luck. Sadly, he was swept downstream and lost.

In the same time element, McNeff and Stratman responded to a stranded motorist a few miles to the northwest of McHugh on the Santa Cruz River at Trico Road. Prior to their arrival, firemen attempted to drive a heavy firetruck into the river hoping its massive weight would withstand the current. This fire crew may have been deployed out of Pinal Air Park, to the north. When McNeff and Stratman arrived, they found the firetruck, firemen, and the original motorist stranded in turbulent water under low-lying power lines. From a few miles apart, McHugh and McNeff collaborated on rescue alternatives by radio. Before long, a local farmer with a huge tractor was secured and got the firemen and motorist out of the river.

Like many other First Responders during Octave, it had been a long and dangerous day for McNeff and Stratman. But they would put in more than a full day doing what they did best. With the Trico Road rescue successfully completed, McNeff contacted McHugh by radio to advise they were enroute to a premature delivery in Catalina City; this was the last time McHugh heard from McNeff. After half an hour may have passed, Sheriff's dispatch advised McHugh the DPS aircraft was missing. Just short of 1 a.m. on Sunday, October 2, officials received a heart-stopping call from Marana. A man heard a helicopter pass low overhead; "Next, he saw a great flash."

Within minutes of this message, a USAF rescue helicopter, piloted by Captain Dean Partridge, was launched from Davis-Monthan AFB. "At 2:10 a.m., they found the tail of the DPS helicopter in a cotton field in more than five feet of water. A [USAF Flight Surgeon] was lowered by a hoist to the crash site." Soon, the USAF crew made contact with McHugh and reported, "no survivors." At this point weather was intensifying and hazardous for flight operations. Unable to safely return to base, the Air Force Huey landed at nearby Marana Airport, with relatively calm floodwaters flowing over the skids. They shut down and returned to base when conditions improved.

Due to darkness, a buffeting storm, and the awkward location of the partially submerged, crumpled machine, the two men could not be recovered until Sunday mid-morning, October 2nd. Tucson DPS Air Rescue supervisor, Sergeant Ed Sleta and crew members Pete Sadler, Dennis Welch, Ron Baily, Dave Madrid, and Sheriff's Deputy Chuck McHugh, were flown by Arizona DPS Pilot Loren Leonberger into the site, two at a time, to jump into the flooded wreckage. Given the challenges at the scene it took two days to recover Officers McNeff and Stratman. The wreck was lifted out by a National Guard helicopter.

Elsewhere on Sunday, October 2, a 29-year-old man suffered an epileptic seizure and fell into the rushing water in Nogales. One-half mile later, as "his head was bobbing up and down," and being dragged by the current past a local motel, bystanders and policemen were able to save him. They found the motel's garden hose on the lawn, tied a loop into it and threw it to the man. Two policemen were pulled into the rushing water but managed to get out, as well as then tug the man to safety. One said, " 'I don't know what we would have done if that hose had not been there.' "

That night, rescuers plucked a woman from the swiftly flowing Rillito River as she clung to a power pole near Oracle Road at the Tucson Mall. Witnesses said she jumped in, attempting suicide. Tucson Fireman Phil Morgan went in with a lifeline and swam one-hundred feet out to her; he was unable to free the woman from the mass of debris wedged there with her. Then Tucson Police Sergeant John Bonhorst, along with Don Wood, another fireman, leaped in with a second rope; they struggled to reach the two responders farther out, but fell short. The logjam then broke

up, causing her and Morgan to float free but dangerously downstream. Luckily, policemen and bystanders still held fast of Morgan and his lifeline and were able to get all back to safety.

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Arizona Department of Public Safety Officer-Pilot Thomas Patrick “Tom” McNeff, the son of a retired US Air Force General, flew a helicopter gunship during the Vietnam War. He joined the DPS in 1975, serving as a Highway Patrolman for two years before beginning with Air Rescue in 1977. He was married and had a daughter who was only a week shy of turning one-year old when her father was killed. Officer-Paramedic Richard G. “Rick” Stratman started with DPS as a teenager in the agency-sponsored Law Enforcement Explorer Post. He became a fulltime dispatcher for them at 18 and as soon as he could, attended its training academy, becoming a Highway Patrolman in Quartzite. He joined the helicopter rescue service in 1979, after training for a year to become a paramedic. Stratman was not married.

The funeral for McNeff took place in Tucson on October 6 and for Stratman, the following day in Glendale; both received fitting, emotionally-filled tributes. Governor Bruce E. Babbitt, US Representative Jim McNulty, DPS Director Ralph Milstead, Pima County Sheriff Clarence Dupnik, and Tucson Police Chief Peter Ronstadt, all attended one or both funerals. Each officer had up to a three-mile-long funeral procession of law enforcement and emergency vehicles from across the state, all while an Arizona Department of Public Safety helicopter flew slowly above the motorcade. At each of the two graveside rites, the Department’s Air Rescue Service performed the “Missing-Man Formation;” four helicopters flew in a synchronized pattern, leaving a space for a fifth as a final, heart-felt salute to the fallen heroes.

Officials estimate the two could have helped about thirty people who were in danger of being killed during the flood. The crash of Ranger 29 was attributed to fatigue and weather. (Star 10/3/1983, 10/4/1983, 10/5/1983, 10/6/1983, 10/7/1983, 10/11/1983; Arizona Republic 10/8/1983; Citizen 10/3/1983; Chuck McHugh email 9/25/2022)

## Fell Near Lemmon Rock Lookout

**Nov 12, 1983**

About six hours after he fell over a 25-foot cliff, Craig Lee was airlifted out to Tucson Medical Center by a helicopter from Davis-Monthan AFB. The 19-year-old Tucsonan was hiking with four friends “in extremely rough terrain near Lemmon Rock Lookout, about a mile south of the summit of Mount Lemmon. The hikers were not on a trail.” Lee sustained numerous possible fractures, a punctured lung, and possible neck and back injuries, according to a hospital spokesman. Because of the nature of his injuries, the teenager could not be carried out by responders from the Southern Arizona Rescue Association, but rather had to be flown out. (Star 11/13/1983)

## Christmas Day Search

**Dec 25, 1983**

Lyrae Williams made her very first trip up Mount Lemmon on Christmas Day—it would be a very memorable holiday for her. Along with four friends, she was on a hot-dog cookout at the Whitetail Campground, just up the road from the Palisades Ranger Station. They scattered to gather dry firewood for the weenie roast. When Lyrae had not returned to the picnic site after a lengthy time,

they began searching for her. Failing, they were soon luckily able to flag down a passing Sheriff's Deputy.

"At first, Williams said she panicked at the thought of being lost and began running. But the rocky terrain quickly got the best of her, sending the 16-year-old Palo Verde High School junior tumbling down the hill." Regaining her footing first and then her composure, she began walking down the mountain, following a stream because " 'I knew the water went somewhere.' " As the teenager made her way slowly down the mountainside, "teams of search and rescue volunteers began assembling at the nearby Palisades Ranger Station. Eventually, more than 35 searchers were involved in combing the area around the campground." Searching was made difficult by near-freezing temperatures, a thick fog, and a steady rain. It was suspended at dark for safety. Six rescuers in two teams camped on the mountain that first night. Given the urgency of the situation, the SAR Officer from Grand Canyon National Park was brought in to help manage the operation.

The young lady wisely chose not to walk after nightfall. She found a spot under a tree which offered some shelter, gathered together what branches she could for protection and then stayed put. " 'I was afraid to fall asleep—I wasn't sure I would wake up.' " The next morning seven specially trained search dog teams were being flown into Tucson. Shortly after 8:00 a.m., however, [SARA members] Don Morris and Richard Thompson located the girl, about two miles away from where she had wandered off." It was a great reunion between Lyrae and her mother, especially since Mrs. Williams had lost a son in a mountain climbing accident, ten years before.

Her son, 16-year-old Patrick Williams of Sierra Vista, was climbing in Carr Canyon in the Huachuca Mountains on September 23, 1973, along with five other youths. A rope was secured to a rock and they were lowering themselves down about 75 feet to a waterfall. In doing so, Patrick slid across a sloping ledge, and plunged 150 feet to his death. See "Dies At Carr Canyon Waterfall," September 23, 1973, on page 288. (Citizen 9/26/1973, 12/27/1983)

## Hypothermia Death in Galiuro Mountains

**Jan 1, 1984**

That first night of the new year the three went to sleep under the stars but the avid hikers soon woke to an unexpected, very windy storm of mixed rain and snow. Bill Dever, 34, and Craig and Nanette Bohren [ages not given], reportedly had a tent and rain fly but for some reason failed to pitch it. The trio had finished the second of a several-day hike to the remote Powers' Cabin deep in the Galiuro Wilderness, fifty miles northeast of Tucson. According to Craig, " 'We were re-creating a trip my wife and I had with Bill Dever five years ago.' " The two men had worked together back then in the local Coronado National Forest.

They reported Dever " 'was poorly dressed and poorly equipped' for the weather." As the three moved up the canyon, their packs, sleeping bags and clothes were becoming increasingly soaked and all were chilled. They elected to return the way they had come. Dever tried to walk faster to get warm and in so doing, he and the couple became separated. The Bohrens soon found his discarded pack in the foot-deep new snow and then, their friend. He was hypothermic, clearly succumbing to the cold from being wet in the heavy winds. Nanette and Craig were also struggling but still getting by.

" 'We were trying to support Bill and carry him along,' Bohren said. 'He collapsed. His legs wouldn't hold him.' All three hikers were coated with ice and the Bohrens found they couldn't carry Dever and 'break trail through the snow at the same time,' he said. They found a sheltered

spot, wrapped Dever in a tent fly and left him. ‘By that time, he didn’t know us, didn’t know where he was. . . We decided our only hope of surviving was to get to that cabin’. . .”

Fighting deepening snow and the increasing gale, they somehow managed to slog another eight miles, sloshing through a creek several times before they luckily stumbled across the Powers’ Cabin. “‘We were shaking badly by then,’ Bohren said.” Finding sleeping bags, a gas stove and other useful items stored inside, it was still, “four hours before they stopped shivering. . .” Once the couple could think more clearly, the decision was made for Craig to hike 15 miles the next day out to the little ranching crossroads of Klondyke, and get help.

Craig made it out safely and got word to the Graham County Sheriff’s Office about his wife and the dire plight of Bill Dever. “Graham County Deputy Mark Angle hiked almost three miles. . . in hopes of meeting one of the missing pair, but had to turn back because of approaching darkness and snowdrifts as much as 1 1/2 feet deep. . .” An Arizona Department of Public Safety helicopter crew searched the area near sundown but were unable to locate the cabin and discontinued their efforts due to darkness.

“As search and rescue volunteers . . . headed for the area last night, officials expressed no optimism for the safety of Bill Dever. . . left by the side of the trail at about 7,000 feet. . .” The DPS returned first thing the following morning and successfully brought out Mrs. Bohren.

A combined rescue party from Graham and Pima Counties, including a number from the Southern Arizona Rescue Association, responded although most did not need to go farther into the mountains. Three from SARA did, however. George Simons, Bill Grimes, and Don Morris, forced their way through the snow, over a ridge or two and then down into the main canyon, where they found the Bohrens’ companion. These three volunteers then managed to manhandle his totally frozen body onto a flat rock outcropping where DPS made a risky, one-skid landing, removing Bill Dever from the Galiuro Mountains. (Star 1/4/1984, 1/5/1984; Citizen 1/5/1984; George Simons email 9/3/2021)

## Five Missions in One Weekend

### Apr 21–22, 1984

Tucson’s search and rescue “machine” was hectic and in overdrive for the weekend of April 21 and 22, 1984. Pima County SAR Coordinator Chuck McHugh was very busy that Saturday and Sunday.

On Saturday afternoon, James Parker Watts, a 29-year-old local attorney went on an overnight hike by himself, from Catalina State Park into nearby Romero Canyon. He was experienced, had plenty of gear but was not familiar with the area. On his way out the next day he became confused by the canyon system and ended up getting lost. Not returning that evening, his wife reported him overdue. Monday morning, she and two of his friends hiked into the area, ultimately finding him. The four of them were on their way out when they ran into a Southern Arizona Rescue Association search party of 15 volunteers, also beginning to look for him. Both Davis-Monthan and Department of Public Safety helicopters were involved, as well.

At 1:30 p.m. Saturday, Elaine Shugar, 37, was hiking in Montrose Canyon in the northwest part of the Catalina Mountains when she injured herself. She had slid and tumbled thirty feet down a rocky slope into a slippery streambed below. When rescuers, including physicians from University Hospital along with 19 members of the Southern Arizona Rescue Association, first reached her she was going into shock. She had fractured her pelvis and possibly, seriously injured her spine. After being evaluated by the volunteer doctors, it was decided not to lift her directly out by a



helicopter hoist. Rather, rescuers chose to carry her by stokes basket—“in a series of complicated maneuvers—more than 400 feet up the slope then 300 yards down a trail to a clearing where a Davis-Monthan Air Force Base Helicopter was waiting to evacuate her.” She was then airlifted from the canyon at 5:30 p.m.

However, in first getting to Shugar, a DPS helicopter was landing a paramedic at the scene. As Bruce Buckner was exiting the ship, its skid shifted and, in trying to correct a now tilting Ranger Helicopter, pilot Loren Leonberger applied power, saving the machine from greater damage. However, the main rotor blade did graze a rock, scraping the blade. Now out of service, it was flown from the scene and trucked to Scottsdale for further inspection.

At 4:00 p.m. on Sunday, 30-year-old Jerry Lee Van Emicevort was hiking in Finger Rock Canyon and was now at the 4,500-foot level in the Catalinas when he fell twenty feet down a steep slope. He injured his ankle and was unable to walk. In the canyon by himself, he finally got the attention of people down below by yelling and shining his flashlight. Eleven volunteers from the Southern Arizona Rescue Association reached him about 9:30 p.m. It was decided, however, not to evacuate him until early the next morning when he was airlifted out.

Also on Saturday, April 21, a hiker injured a knee and needed assistance in Gates Pass in the Tucson Mountains. At least 18 members of SARA responded. Then on Sunday, a man suffered heatstroke in Charouleau Gap in the northwestern corner of the Catalina Mountains. Again, 15 members from SARA responded. Neither of these two missions were reported in the newspapers but are known from a database of the Southern Arizona Rescue Association. (Citizen 4/23/1984, 4/24/1984; SARA Response Database 9/3/2021)

## 15 Die in Tucson Helicopter Crash

**Mar 12, 1984**

One of the country’s deadliest military aircraft crashes on record took place just west of Tucson. All 15 servicemen on the CH-3E “Jolly Green Giant” helicopter died in the Avra Valley desert that Sunday night. It was attached to the 71<sup>st</sup> Special Operations Squadron, a US Air Force Reserve unit stationed at Davis-Monthan. In addition to the four regular aircrew from DMAFB, there were 11 Army Special Forces troops from Fort Bragg, North Carolina. They were enroute to the Barry M. Goldwater Bombing Range near Gila Bend for extended maneuvers. Witnesses said it exploded while in the air, only seconds before it fell to the ground. It hit on City of Tucson property, several miles west of the Arizona-Sonoran Desert Museum.

Numerous volunteers from two area Fire Departments as well as local medical and rescue personnel immediately responded. But all onboard had died instantly. A temporary morgue was set up on Base and the last of the victims was not recovered from the totally melted craft until 12 hours later. The accident cause was never released by the military although there was belief it was a failed mechanical part replaced two days before. (Star 3/13/1984, 3/14/1984; Citizen 3/14/1984, 3/15/1984)

## Died in Tanque Verde Falls

**May 20, 1984**

While hiking along the canyon wall, Steven M. Schutte, slipped off the slick granite of Tanque Verde Falls and fell. The 27-year-old hit the side of the canyon wall and fell sixty to eighty feet into the



pool at the bottom. “Another hiker pulled him from the water after a couple of minutes and there was an attempt to resuscitate him, but he was pronounced dead at the scene by an officer of the search and rescue unit.” (Star 5/21/1984, 5/22/1984)

### **Tohono O’odham Woman Dead**

**Jun 16, 1984**

Elena Garcia went missing while collecting yucca leaves on the Tohono O’odham San Xavier Indian Reservation. Ms. Garcia, estimated age of 70, had gone out that Saturday morning with another woman to pick plant material for making baskets, which she had done many times in the past. The two women got separated and Garcia began walking back, “she was familiar with the area.” Led by Sheriff’s Deputy Chuck McHugh, 13 volunteers from the Southern Arizona Rescue Association were assisting the Sells Police when the woman was located two days after disappearing. “She was found about 15 miles from where she was reported missing.” (Star 6/19/1984)

### **Deputy Chuck McHugh Honored by Air Force**

**Jun 18, 1984**

Pima County Sheriff’s Department Search and Rescue Coordinator, Chuck McHugh, received the Air Force Scroll of Appreciation in a special ceremony at Davis-Monthan Air Force Base. “Only three people have received the Scroll in the last two years.” McHugh was cited by the Secretary of the Air Force and the Air Force Chief of Staff for, “ ‘heroic efforts... with complete disregard for his own life. McHugh reflected credit on himself and earned the lasting respect of the US Air Force’... the citation read.”

“The honor was based specifically on McHugh’s rescue of five people from a home flooded by fast-flowing water. He carried an invalid man to the roof of the house and got all five aboard a rescue helicopter. ‘He then remained behind as the helicopter evacuated the victims to safety.’ ” See “13 Die, Including DPS Pilot and Paramedic,” September 30–October 3, 1983, on page 372. (Star 6/19/1984)

### **Trapped on Roof of Sports Car**

**Jun 29, 1984**

Shayne Story, 27, and his 31-year-old companion, were driving across the Santa Cruz River at Ina in Tucson (no bridge then) when “a wall of water” hit their sports car. They later told deputies, “there was little or no water” when they first entered, “it seemed like someone opened the floodgates. Their Datsun 280Z was carried about 75 feet from the road down the riverbed...” The two clambered out their respective windows; managing to scramble onto the roof, they clung to it for nearly two hours. The little sports car now seemed settled and stable enough so deputies and “Rural Metro Fire Department and the Pima County Search and Rescue squad,” monitored them. “Rescue teams waited until the water receded and walked the couple to safety, a sheriff’s official said.”

Although only .35 inch of rain fell officially at the National Weather Service at Tucson International Airport, a weather official said unofficial rain gauges around Tucson recorded up to 1.7 inches of rain on the far East Side and the foothills. (Citizen 6/30/1984)

## Boy Lost in Rincon Mountains

**Aug 16, 1984**

Chris, the intellectually challenged 15-year-old and Dan, his in-home counselor, were on a camping trip in Saguaro National Monument in the Rincon Mountains. As they were hiking along the two were playing a game of “go hide and then whistle;” about 5:00 p.m., Chris somehow got confused, becoming separated from Dan. The trails are maintained by the park and well-defined, but the area was, as Superintendent Rob Arnberger said, “‘rugged, rocky with steep cliffs and quite a bit of water running in mountainside washes.’ ”

The two were near a well-marked, four-way trail intersection called Cowhead Saddle; possible help for Dan was at least four miles away and definite help, nearly six miles away. All four directions at this trail juncture, however, lead farther away from Chris, wherever he was. Dan chose to stay near where he last saw the boy and look for his teenage charge until it got dark. He renewed his efforts the next morning and hunted until 2:00 p.m., when he finally was able to report Chris being lost.

Park Service officials notified the Sheriff’s Department and then quickly mobilized a helicopter, search dog, and 24 responders, including park staff, Deputies, Pima County Sheriff’s Search and Rescue, and the Southern Arizona Rescue Association. Most of Chris’s gear was found at 6:15 p.m., about a quarter-mile from where he was last seen. In another 15 minutes, Chris wandered into historic Manning Camp, some four miles from where he and Dan became separated the evening before. Luckily, he had taken the most direct trail to this often seasonally unmanned fire camp at the 8,000-foot level on Mica Mountain. Fortunately for both Chris and the searchers, there was still one research scientist up there. (Star 8/18/1984)

## Drowned While Cave Diving

**Aug 18, 1984**

After dragging their heavy scuba equipment down a one-hundred-foot cave passage, Ralph B. Zepp and his diving partner, John Schweyen, spent over ninety minutes getting the cumbersome gear ready to dive. Zepp, a 34-year-old school custodian in Tucson, had been anticipating exploring this underwater cave for five years. Both men were nationally certified as cave divers, arguably the most hazardous sport routinely undertaken. Schweyen reportedly “had quite a bit of experience,” a little more than Zepp did. The Ash Canyon Cave in the Huachuca Mountains is used by the Bella Vista Water Company in Sierra Vista to supply domestic water to residents in the area.

Once the pair submerged, it took just eight minutes before Zepp was having noticeable difficulty with his breathing regulator and “was thrashing about.” Schweyen swam his dive buddy quickly to the surface, where the now unconscious diver was grabbed by support crew on the pool’s edge. According to one of these cavers, “‘We pulled him out of the water and did CPR for one hour and 45 minutes until the doctor arrived and pronounced him dead.’ ”

The Cochise County Medical Examiner said the cause of death was drowning, and Zepp’s scuba equipment was sent away to be inspected by experts. To this point in time, there was only one recorded death in a cave in Southern Arizona. See “Young Man Killed in Onyx Cave,” October 4, 1968 on page 255. (Citizen 8/20/1984, 8/21/1984)

## Landed 30 Feet from the Water

**Sep 9, 1984**

Travis Lee Holeman was standing with about six friends on a cliff above the main Tanque Verde waterfall, when some loose rocks from above, struck him. The 21-year-old fell about thirty feet to his death. The accident took place about 2:00 p.m. and two men were able to hike to their car and report the accident 45 minutes later. “He lost his footing and fell, landing about thirty feet from the water on some large granite boulders,” according to Pima County Sheriff’s Search and Rescue Deputy, Chuck McHugh. “Holeman ‘probably died immediately of multiple head and internal injuries,’ said Dr. Ken Iserson, medical director for the Southern Arizona Rescue Association. Holeman’s neck was broken.” Thirty volunteers from SARA responded, taking them several hours to bring the body out of the narrow, rugged canyon. (Star 9/10/1984)

## Fell into Silverbell Mine Shaft

**Sep 13, 1984**

Treading water in the darkened mine shaft, Ted Lauerman was performing CPR on his unconscious, maybe even already dead friend, floating beside him. Luther C. Banks, while downclimbing a makeshift ladder 35 feet below the mine opening slipped, striking his head on a rock as he fell into the water 25 feet below. “When Lauerman did not get a response, he pushed Banks until his head rested on a ledge and used a piece of wooden lagging, the material used to support mine shafts, to keep Banks’ legs afloat,” according to Sheriff’s Deputy Allan Sperling, one of the first on scene. Lauerman knew he was not doing any good for his 53-year-old friend and so climbed out and went for help.

Rescuers arrived within an hour of the accident, on the west side of the Silverbell Mountains, forty miles northwest of Tucson. In addition to several Sheriff’s Deputies and the 26 members of the Southern Arizona Rescue Association, there was the Department of Public Safety helicopter crew, including paramedic Dave Madrid. A tripod with ropes and pulleys was quickly constructed to lower both Sperling and Madrid into the 125-foot-deep shaft. These two put Banks into a harness and the rescuers above raised him to the surface, shortly after 7:00 p.m. He was pronounced dead at the scene. (Citizen 9/14/1984; Star 9/14/1984)

## Abduction of Vicki Lynne Hoskinson

**Sep 17, 1984**

Beautiful in her bright red, white and blue dress, the little 8-year-old pedaled her bicycle to the neighborhood Circle K to mail a letter for her mother. Vicki Lynne Hoskinson, a third grader at Homer Davis Elementary School on Tucson’s northwest side, never made it home. When her mother, Debbie Carlson, found the girl’s pink bike abandoned on the dead-end street at 4:00 p.m., it instantly became a parent’s worst nightmare. Nearly four decades later, now retired Lieutenant Chuck McHugh, at that time Pima County Sheriff’s Department Search and Rescue Coordinator, still remembers looking for little Vicki Lynne as his most unforgettable, “high profile” search effort.

That first evening, about fifty law enforcement personnel and volunteers on foot, in cars and with dogs as well as an Arizona Department of Public Safety helicopter, were already hunting for the girl. They covered nearby homes, apartment buildings, trash dumpsters and the open desert

within a one-mile radius of where she was last seen. “ ‘Either she’s real close to this area or totally out of the area,’ ” according to a spokesman for the Sheriff’s Department.

That same evening, sheriff’s investigators also began evaluating two reports of a dark, beat-up old sports car driving slowly by Vicki Lynne’s school, just before she went missing: “the driver was looking from side to side and passed the school four or five times. . . .” A quick-thinking physical education teacher wrote down the California license plate; three days later, 28-year-old Frank Jarvis Atwood was arrested in Kerrville, Texas, and charged with kidnapping. Nine years before, he had been committed to a California State Mental Hospital as a “mentally disabled sex offender.” Atwood would ultimately be proven guilty although he never confessed nor helped officials in any way. Vicki Lynne Hoskinson, however, was still missing.

A command post was set up at Flowing Wells School the morning after she vanished and “at least 30 detectives, 15 agents with the FBI and countless deputies and volunteers are in and out of the center set up to find her.” At the end of that second day, Sheriff Clarence Dupnik “called the search for Vicki the largest in 26 years.”

While investigators followed leads in Tucson and Texas, the hunt for Vicki Lynne continued locally. Based on key eye witness reports, the ground and air search expanded to include open desert areas several miles to the north and west. At least five helicopters were intermittently involved in the search, including the Department of Public Safety, Army and Air National Guards, Tucson Police, and Davis-Monthan Air Rescue.

Working in support of extraordinary detective work, ground search teams also intensified their efforts. On September 21, 27 members of the Southern Arizona Rescue Association came out in force, as they did for the following three days. The Sheriff’s horse-mounted posse, as well as just local horse lovers who volunteered, joined in. In coordinating the effort, McHugh reflected back a little over three years when 5-year-old Colorado Alan Lewis went missing, coincidentally very near where Vicki Lynne had disappeared. See “Missing 5-Year-Old,” April 2, 1981 on page 349.

The next day, “about 200 people, mostly volunteers. . . on foot, with dogs, on horseback and in 4-wheel drive vehicles. . . about 70 members of the Cochise County Search and Rescue Unit. . . [covered] about 10-square miles of greasewood, palo verde, mesquite, and cat’s claw. . . .” CASIE, a recently developed search management software, designed by University of Arizona mathematicians John Bownds and David Lovelock, both SARA members, was employed. The two professors aided search managers in evaluating cumulative search efforts and ultimately suggested where resources might be most effectively deployed. On September 29, the search for Vicki Lynne Hoskinson was scaled back with a limited but continuous effort until additional information was acquired.

Seven months later, April 12, 1985, a small skull was found by a man walking his dog near the western end of Ina Road in the Tucson Mountains. For the next several days, upwards of thirty members of the SARA Team and Sheriff’s Deputies scoured the area for additional parts of the skeleton and other clues. Homicide investigators focused on a relatively small area where Vicki Lynne’s remains were confirmed found. Now, in addition to kidnapping, Atwood could also be charged with first-degree murder.

Due to a change of venue and after a ten-week trial, a Maricopa County Jury in Phoenix took only 11 hours of deliberation to convict Frank Jarvis Atwood on March 26, 1987. On June 8, 2022, Frank Jarvis Atwood was executed by lethal injection at the Arizona State Prison in Florence, Arizona. (Citizen 9/18/1984, 9/21/1984, 9/23/1984, 3/21/1985, 4/12/1985, 4/13/1985; Star 9/20/1984, 9/22/1984, 9/23/1984, 9/30/1984, 4/15/1985, 4/16/1985, 11/12/1986, 1/18/1987, 3/27/1987, 6/9/2022; McHugh email 9/18/2021)

## Dead in Spencer Canyon

**Sep 29, 1984**

The exact date Stephen M. Kreyns died is unknown, although the Sheriff's Deputy first spotted his car in Mount Lemmon's Whitetail Campground that Saturday. But when the same car appeared unmoved the following Saturday, SAR Deputy Chuck McHugh was called. Also soon responding, was the Pima County Sheriff's Search and Rescue team, including 23 members of the Southern Arizona Rescue Association.

After several hours of searching, the 52-year-old Kreyns was found dead sitting upright in a pool of water in Spencer Canyon, about 1 1/2 miles west of the Palisades Ranger Station. There was no evidence of a fall or other sign of trauma or violence. "It appeared Kreyns had gotten lost and died of exposure. . . body had been there 'for a prolonged period of time,' McHugh said." He was not suitably dressed for cold weather and family members said he had a history of wandering alone into the desert to seek solitude. (Citizen 10/8/1984)

## Soldier Dies in Carr Canyon

**Nov 12, 1984**

A 27-year-old soldier from nearby Fort Huachuca plunged to his death, going over Carr Canyon Falls. Russel J. Brown, a military telecommunications operator from Port Barrie, Louisiana, died of massive head injuries. Cochise County Sheriff's Deputies said the death is the 14<sup>th</sup> at the falls in the past five years. (Star 11/13/1984)

## Donated Rescue Helicopter

**Nov 29, 1984**

When the very last of the 18 Titan Missiles ringed Tucson was unceremoniously pulled from its 150-foot-deep silo on June 28, 1984, the helicopter detachment at Davis-Monthan AFB serving them, was no longer needed and soon left. The more profound impact, however, was the substantial loss of these aircraft and staffs to the search and rescue strength of Southern Arizona.

"Huey" helicopters with their mostly Vietnam War-trained crews, could hoist stranded or injured people from the surrounding mountainsides and canyons, as well as transport more victims and resources. They were being used about thirty times a year, with maybe a dozen of these requiring hoisting by cable. This SAR void could not be filled locally by any of the public safety agencies. Up stepped Chapter 106 of the Vietnam Veterans of America.

With a kickoff ceremony at the Tucson Community Center that morning, they announced fund raising for two powerful search and rescue helicopters as living memorials to the 106 lives lost in Vietnam from Pima County. The proposed helicopters were Bell 212s and each listed at \$1.6 million. It would be a lease-purchase agreement and the veterans would need to pay \$400,000 the first year for one machine. Peter McHugh, the spokesman for the group, made it clear the helicopters would be for any local agency that needed them in an emergency. The Sheriff's Department would maintain and pilot the aircraft and Sheriff Clarence Dupnik said, " 'We have a tremendous need for the program.' "

After four months of effort, however, the Vietnam veterans had only raised \$3,000 in the "Spirit of the 106 Helicopter Project." But they did believe they could secure corporate sponsors and were

still hopeful, but realistically understood only one helicopter would be possible. For the previous three months, a used Navy “Huey” helicopter, which would now only cost \$350,000, had actually been sitting idle in a hangar at Tucson International Airport. Chapter 106 had made an obligation on this chopper and were to provide a down payment of \$35,000 and monthly payments of about \$6,000, for at least the first year.

Back and forth controversy played out in the newspapers around the question of Pima County paying \$72,000 a year for various upkeep on this helicopter. According to spokesman Peter McHugh, “ ‘We want the county to take care of their responsibility to pay for it, as agreed to last year.’ ” But this never happened, Pima County made a decision not to allocate the money, citing budget shortfalls. Finally, in February 1987, Chapter 106 of the Vietnam Veterans of America gave up on their dream. They had collected only \$5,000, all of which ended up being paid to the company that still owned the helicopter. They did donate, though, \$750 worth of rescue equipment to the Pima County Sheriff’s Search and Rescue Squad. (Citizen 6/29/1984, 11/29/1984, 4/26/1985, 2/24/1987; Star 8/1/1984, 6/6/1985, 6/7/1985)

## Boy Scout Dies in Fall

**Dec 1, 1984**

Darrel Gene Hoover fell about twenty feet to his death while hiking in the Tucson Mountains. The 15-year-old Boy Scout from Casa Grande suffered chest injuries, a possible broken leg and cuts on his head and face. He and a companion had left the nearby Scout Camp and were scrambling down the western flank of Cat Mountain when the accident happened. According to SAR Deputy Chuck McHugh, “he started down a vertical rock face and lost his footing.” Several scout leaders not far away, heard the cry for help, and scurried over to where the two boys were. They administered CPR for 75 minutes. A Department of Public Safety helicopter was dispatched and was able to make contact but was unable to land due to the rough terrain. McHugh called for a hoist-equipped, Air Force helicopter. One came from the 302<sup>nd</sup> SOS squadron at Luke AFB. The H-3 “Jolly Green Giant,” hovered above the scene, hoisted the boy’s body aboard the aircraft and flew him out.

In mid-November of 1986, the father of the young man sued the Boy Scouts of America, the Catalina Council of the Scouts and several officials. Filed in Pima County Superior Court, the suit was asking for more than \$1 million in damages. It alleged the defendants failed to furnish proper equipment and failed to have a qualified climbing instructor supervise him. It also said that the defendants encouraged the boy to climb in a dangerous area, and that they had been warned that the volcanic rock was unstable. (Star 12/2/1984, 11/25/1986)

## Nine Men Rescued and Hiker Looked For

**Dec 27, 1984**

Between two and four inches of rain had fallen in Southern Arizona from a storm originating in Mexico. It filled Tucson-area rivers and washes with enough water to force closing of several roads. To the east, near the border with New Mexico, the town of Duncan was evacuated in the middle of the night when the dikes surrounding part of it, failed. Even the emergency air raid siren sounded, alerting what few residents remained about how dire their situation was. The damage was widespread although thankfully, short lived. See “Part of His Elbow Was Showing,” December 27, 1984, on page 385.



Near Marana, nine men became stranded by sudden high water in the middle of the Santa Cruz River and West Ina Road. It hit so quickly and violently, the paved, low-water crossing there even lost all its asphalt.

“According to Sgt. Charles McHugh who is in charge of sheriff’s Search and Rescue Unit, the nine stranded Tucson men, who are employees of Hayden Concrete Products, were working in the Santa Cruz riverbed when rushing water reached a level of three feet. These men were working on a sandbar that was higher than the water level and they were never in danger, McHugh said. They were stranded... until a US Customs helicopter that had been summoned by the search and rescue workers arrived, he said.”

The helicopter made quick work of shuttling the men to safe ground, a couple at a time. But, while the rescue services of the US Customs helicopter and the two-man crew were available, Sergeant McHugh decided to check on a person now overdue for one day. Steven Chase, a 41-year-old hiker from Paradise Valley (a suburb of Phoenix) was on a three-day camping trip into either Bear Canyon or Sabino Canyon or both, nobody knew for sure. He and his wife were visiting relatives in Tucson and he left for Hutch’s Pool at 10 a.m., Wednesday morning. This popular destination at 4,000 feet in Upper Sabino Canyon, is a four-mile hike.

For over eight hours, from about 1:30 p.m. until almost 10, but long after dark, they flew both Bear and Sabino Canyons. They did find an orange tent believed to be Chase’s, pitched on the west side of the flooding Sabino Creek. “But rain-swollen... waters and a steep, rocky and cliff-dotted terrain reduced ground access to the tent, McHugh said. ‘We had hoped to pick him up by helicopter,’ he said. If the searchers could not pick Chase up, they had hoped to drop him a note that asked whether he had enough food to camp until morning and whether he was injured, McHugh added.” And because he was dressed in dark clothing, he would not be readily seen, even if he was waving. “It would be easy to miss him.” They returned to base after a very long day.

There was not a follow-up article about Steven Chase in the newspapers the next few days. This would suggest he returned from his adventure, safely. On February 21, 2023, the author asked now-retired Chuck McHugh if he would “dust the cobwebs off his memory and try and recall that mission.” Totally understandably, this was not one he could remember out of the many hundreds he was involved with. And, he did agree with the author, if the mission had gone into a second day or longer, possibly with an injury or even fatality, that would have made the news. (Citizen 12/29/1984; Chuck McHugh email 2/21/2023)

## Part of His Elbow Was Showing

**Dec 27, 1984**

If Richard Kunz had not seen a little bit of Kelly Buttle’s elbow, Buttle would have died. Kunz, a member of the Southern Arizona Rescue Association and the first of SARA to reach the 35-year-old man, said that Buttle had fallen into the rushing water just before the rescue, “and was no longer visible.” Buttle was one of two passengers in a pickup truck driven by a 16-year-old. The boy had naively gone around the “Road Closed” barricades warning of flooding of the Cañada del Oro Wash at Overton Road in Marana. Swift-water experts, including Kunz, put on wetsuits as they were rushed to the scene in speeding vehicles.

At 7:30 p.m., the truck became stranded in the sand in the flooded wash and the three occupants crawled into the bed of the pickup and held on to the vehicle’s roll bar. A passerby was able to get a tow cable to them, hooking it to his car to keep the truck from slipping farther downstream.

Arriving Rural Metro firefighters quickly shot a line to the trio and within five minutes, the two boys were pulled to safety. Per one of the boys, Buttle “‘froze up on us.’ ” Panicking, he did not or could not, reach for the line—his drama was rapidly unfolding.

Quite a few SARA volunteers teamed up to reach Buttle, including Kunz, Richard Thompson, John Lutz, Mike Doe, Mykle Raymond, and Dr. Ken Iserson—all with wetsuits and blue life jackets. Immersed in the 50-degree water, Kelly Buttle was only 12 feet away from this crew, but had been stranded on the pickup’s bed for ninety minutes. Near drowning, he was also approaching hypothermia. Brown pulses of ebb-and-flow rushing water surrounded the truck, one surge might be only six inches high, moments later, another several feet high. These waves, estimated to be going 12 mph, were unpredictable and treacherous.

Dangerously imperiled by the flood waters, Buttle’s legs had also become entangled in the lines and ropes sent out earlier and were perilously hidden from view of the rescuers. Then, Dr. Iserson was alarmingly swept downstream, he scrambled to safety but needed to be treated at the hospital. Thompson and Lutz lost their footing and handholds and had to float free for their own well-being. Aided by Raymond, Kunz managed to reach Buttle just as he disappeared beneath the water. Mike Doe got to Kunz and the two untangled the ropes from around the legs of the nearly drowned Buttle and were able to wriggle him into a life jacket.

Kelly Buttle was admitted to the hospital in critical condition, his core body temperature at a grave 84 degrees. “More than 40 firefighters, sheriff’s deputies, and [27] search and rescue people worked to rescue the three from the wash. . . .” Buttle and Kunz still remain in touch. The storm dumped up to two inches of rain across the state and around Tucson. An official with the local National Weather Service termed, “the deluge and swirling flow in the Santa Cruz River, as a ‘heavy-volume, short duration type of thing,’ caused by heavy rains in Mexico.” (Citizen 12/28/1984; Star 12/29/1984; Richard Kunz email 9/3/2021; Mykle Raymond email 9/3/2021)

## Life and Death

### Feb 17, 1985

April Ledwith, while attempting to jump six feet across the stream which was running fairly well, fell into the cold, three-foot-deep water. Like most of the Tanque Verde Falls area, this spot is full of highly polished, slippery granite. It was just past noon and she and a friend were merely looking for a comfortable place to picnic. The current clutched the 30-year-old woman and pushed her toward the thirty-foot-high waterfall. Her companion, 41-year-old Ralph Grammont, grabbed her leg, and in a seeming “blink-of-an-eye,” both were swept over the drop together.

The couple fell into a plunge pool, at least ten feet deep, where they were held underwater for a time before Grammont finally surfaced and pulled his friend up and over to the side. He was able to later tell Pima County Deputy Chuck McHugh that April “ ‘was conscious for 10 minutes or so before she lost consciousness and he began to perform CPR on her until search and rescue [workers] arrived.’ ” She was pronounced dead at the scene. At the time it was not known if she had drowned or suffered a fatal head injury. Ralph Grammont suffered a broken leg and possible head injuries in the fall.

“Her body was hoisted out of the canyon by a helicopter from Luke Air Force Base. . . . Grammont was evacuated 600 feet up a steep canyon wall by rescue workers to a Department of Public Safety helicopter, which was forced to hover above the canyon. He was taken to University Medical Center.” (Star 2/18/1985)

## Rescue Near Elephant Head Rock

**Mar 22, 1985**

While hiking with a neighbor, Phillip Pratt fell several feet crossing a stream, breaking his hip. The 69-year-old man from Green Valley was with Herbert Holly at the western end of the Santa Rita Mountains, near Elephant Head Rock. Both had been in this area quite a bit. “Holly hiked through rough terrain and into a residential neighborhood and called the sheriff’s department. . . More than 20 Search and Rescue volunteers went into the area and helped carry the injured hiker to a clearing where the [Department of Public Safety] helicopter landed,” according to Tom Price, the Search and Rescue Deputy. (Citizen 3/23/1985)

## Fell in Alamo Canyon

**Mar 23, 1985**

Jeffrey Morehouse, 31, was rock climbing with his brother, Greg, in Alamo Canyon on the northwest side of the Catalina Mountains, when he fell seventy feet. It took Greg about three hours to get down out of the canyon to report the accident. When he left, his brother, a graduate student at the University of Arizona, was unconscious and had suffered obvious head injuries.

“The sheriff’s search and rescue team was notified at about 7:00 p.m., but workers were not able to reach the body until about 7:00 a.m. the next morning. Morehouse was pronounced dead at the scene. His body was lifted out by a Department of Public Safety helicopter.” (Citizen 3/25/1985)

## Wanders Off San Xavier Reservation

**Jun 6, 1985**

Nelson Lopez had been missing from his Tucson-area home near West Los Reales Road on the San Xavier Reservation for four days when he was found in the nearby desert. The 80-year-old man’s disappearance was reported to the Sells Police when he failed to return from a neighborhood convenience store. The Pima County Sheriff’s Department and the Southern Arizona Rescue Association joined in the search, as did a helicopter from the Department of Public Safety. The cause of death was not reported. However, in an unrelated incident, “searchers found a human skull and other bones in the same area as they searched for Lopez, the [Pima County Sheriff’s Department] spokesman said.” (Citizen 6/12/1985)

## Found Four Years Later

**Jul 30, 1985**

A land and air search began for Steven M. Wood on Sunday, August 4, 1985; he should have returned from his hiking trip three days earlier. A machinist from Chicago, the 26-year-old man was visiting his uncle in Tucson, and then went on a two-night camping trip into the Catalina Mountains. His uncle dropped him off at the trailhead for Marshall Gulch on Mount Lemmon and he was to pick him up in Sabino Canyon, two days later. He knew his nephew was going alone but he was experienced, and was also carrying provisions for five days. Wood had gone on seven or eight vacations climbing mountains in the West. However, he had not yet hiked in the Catalina Mountains but had spent some time in the nearby Rincon Mountains.

In addition to the trail Wood was believed to be using, members of the Southern Arizona Rescue Association also covered the very rugged upper sections of the Wilderness of Rocks Trail as well as Lemmon Creek, with two volunteers being stranded temporarily by high water in the steep canyon. If Wood were to hike directly down the well-marked trail to the road in Sabino Canyon, it was a nearly twenty-mile trip. “ ‘[We] are winding down. We’ve saturated all of the trails, gone all over them more than once. There is simply nothing else we can do,’ Major Dennis Douglas [Pima County Sheriff’s Department] said. . . ‘It’s possible the hiker changed his mind and did something he didn’t tell his family about. . . .’ ”

At its height, about one-hundred volunteers and two helicopters joined the Pima County Sheriff’s Department’s week-long search. On October 23, 1989, more than four years after 26-year-old Steven Wood disappeared, “His bones [and camping gear] were found [by a hiker] at the base of a cliff near Cathedral Rock. . . investigators believe Wood fell off the edge to his death.” Identification was made by Walter Birkby, a University of Arizona Forensic Pathologist. (Citizen 8/7/1985, 8/9/1985, 8/12/1985; Star 10/31/1989)

## Senior Disappears in Dragoon Mountains

**Oct 2, 1985**

While on a family outing on Sunday, a Tombstone resident reported finding Bea Hessler’s locked 1983 Chevrolet Monte Carlo stuck on a remote back road several miles off Middlemarch Pass in the Dragoon Mountains. She was last seen driving away from a neighbor’s home after delivering some apples the previous Wednesday morning. The 73-year-old widow ran the Cochise Indian Trading Post in the small town of Sunsites, having lived there for twenty years. Reports were that many in the local retirement community adored Hessler. For four days before the car was found, concerned neighbors drove the Sunsites-Willcox-Pearce area looking for her before the Cochise County Sheriff’s Office began searching.

The Cochise County Search and Rescue Team, along with a dog group brought in from New Mexico, spent the next four days scouring the extremely rugged, boulder-strewn hillsides around where the car was discovered. The search dog alerted on her scent near the abandoned car, using smells on a towel found inside. However, nothing promising was developed and on Friday, October 11, the search was called off, although interest in finding her, still remained.

Afterwards, the local search and rescue community would intermittently use this area for training exercises in searching, all the while looking for Bea. As of May 2023, per David Noland of Cochise County Sheriff’s Search and Rescue, Bea Hessler has not been found. (Star 10/8/1985, 10/12/1985; David Noland email 10/20/2021)

## Arizona’s First Heli-Rappel Rescue Team

**Oct 20, 1985**

Arizona’s first Heli-rappel rescue team, sponsored by the Pinal County Sheriff’s Office, made its maiden practical use of its recently hard-earned skills at the inaugural exhibition. By providence, the Apache Junction Search and Rescue Team was at Lost Dutchman State Park, demonstrating their expertise when notified of the uninjured lads. Two boys, 13 and 14, had become trapped on a 75-foot-high ledge while scrambling nearby.

Two of the 18 volunteers of this local SAR team were soon rappelling from the Department of Public Safety helicopter. Then, with a boy securely harnessed to each rappeler, all four were lifted off the ledge and safely deposited nearby. The rescue took about ninety minutes in what might have normally taken upwards of five hours. And with all things considered, the dramatic procedure was probably also safer for both the rescuers and the young men.

Six months earlier, Pinal County Range Deputy Gene Berry, a twenty-year Marine Corps veteran, received Sheriff Frank Reyes' approval, and with the cooperation of the DPS, he began training weekends to put this group together. This system, however, was not possible until the Arizona Department of Public Safety had acquired two much more powerful helicopters. (Star 7/25/1985, 10/24/1985)

### Baboquivari Peak Claims Climber

**Nov 9, 1985**

John G. Leonard died from head and internal injuries when he fell from 7,730-foot Baboquivari Peak, southwest of Tucson. The 50-year-old writer from Los Angeles fell about eighty feet while rappelling, having climbed within four-hundred feet of the summit. One of the group, which included his wife, hiked six miles out to the nearest road to report the accident. It was after dark when Sheriff's Deputies and volunteers from the Southern Arizona Rescue Association, hiked back in and were able to reach the victim. After it got light, high winds made it impossible for a Department of Public Safety helicopter to get close to the area. The rescue team had to carry Leonard out and, right at dusk, he was flown to Three Points and a waiting ambulance and a Medical Examiner. (Citizen 11/11/1985)

### Death in Carr Canyon

**Nov 18, 1985**

According to records kept by the local search and rescue team for the Sierra Vista area, 19-year-old Michael Hipsley was at least the 19<sup>th</sup> person since 1957 to die by going over the Carr Canyon Falls in the Huachuca Mountains. He slipped on the slick rocks above the five-hundred-foot fall, after ignoring the warning sign and going past the cable running across the top. The sign says: "Dangerous Area: Keep Away. Many lives have been lost by moving too close to the sheer drop behind this sign or sliding down the slick stream and over the falls."

One witness, a friend of the victim, said Michael lost his footing and slid down the rock after ignoring a warning shout from a companion. " 'He had seen some ice a little farther away and I guess he just wanted to go out and see it... He was like that, he was always seeing what was here or what was there.' " (Citizen 11/28/1985)

### Equestrians Lost in Catalinas

**Dec 10, 1985**

" 'Every minute seems like the rest of your life. The minutes pass so slowly and you're so cold and wet, and it continues to snow,' " said 33-year-old Diane Gullette. She and fellow trail rider, Sonny Shoemaker, 46, had just spent the previous two nights lost in the Catalina Mountains. They did have coats but no other gear to speak of. The accomplished equestrians left Catalina State Park

on Tuesday at 9:30 a.m., intending a day ride up the Romero Pass Trail through Romero Pass and back down the Sutherland Trail, approximately a 22-mile roundtrip with a gain of over 4,000 feet in elevation. A robust, but feasible ride for both them and their trail-wise horses, Two Bits, age 15, and Brown Jug, 13.

They made it through Romero Pass, but then “failed to find the Sutherland [Trail], apparently because of a confusing trailside sign,” according to Sgt. Chuck McHugh, Search and Rescue Coordinator for the Pima County Sheriff’s Department. With it getting dark and unsafe to ride by 5:30 p.m., the pair bivouacked their first night in the upper drainage of the Cañada del Oro Wash. The day had been pleasant enough but with the early darkness, it became windy and cold; they spent a very long night, hunkered beneath a little bush used as protection. “ ‘You sleep when you warm up a bit, but not much,’ she said.” They both also knew the weather was changing, and definitely not for the better.

Back in the saddle at 7 the next morning, it began to lightly snow and did so throughout the rest of that day and night. Believing they were still going the correct way, they headed down the Samaniego Ridge Trail for over six miles, where it terminated at the 6,000-foot level. So back up they rode and then worked their way down into the Cañada del Oro drainage itself. On a more heavily traveled track, they guessed they were headed in a good direction, although not necessarily directly back to their vehicle and horse trailer. But they ran out of light and were again forced to spend a long night, huddled on dry patches under the trees. More than a foot of snow had fallen at this point and it dropped to 19 degrees on Mount Lemmon.

When Gullette did not return that first night, worried friends found her trailer at the trail-head and called Catalina State Park officials, a search was begun the next morning. The Pima County Sheriff’s Department coordinated about thirty people in the two-day mission. Following horse tracks, searchers on skis and snowshoes lost them under a foot of snow at a critical, albeit confusing, trail juncture at the 8,000-foot level. As it turned out, the two “ ‘were approximately nine to ten miles off course, off their intended route.’ ”

According to Deputy McHugh, “ ‘The operation was very demanding for ground searchers.’ ” Four experienced rescuers remained out that night while five others had to be evacuated by helicopter, “two after suffering mild cases of hypothermia.” The US Customs Service assisted by bringing out these five people.

This rescue of the searchers took two attempts. According to Chuck McHugh, “On the first, the ridge was totally socked in. The pilot, Vernon Skeen, gave it his best try but there was zero visibility on the ridge. Light was getting low so we started flying back to base. At this point, Richard Thompson radioed a second time and reported there was a brief opening in the clouds at his position. Skeen turned the ship around to give it another try. He was flying a UH-1B Huey.”

“This was an older model and not among the more powerful of the Huey lineup. He maneuvered the aircraft into a small brushy clearing—best he could find. The cargo door was opened and the SARA guys climbed on board. They looked like hell—no smiles and everything about them was soaked. Between backpacks and clothing, they may have added 100 pounds of water to the weight of the aircraft. I’m confident the helicopter was close to a safe power/altitude weight ratio. With the SARA guys safely onboard, it seemed like Skeen slid the machine off the ridge. With a gain in airspeed the team was safely on its way to a warm LZ.”

Gullette and Shoemaker, who actually were doing quite well and were not in need of any medical attention, soon found their way to an isolated cabin near the Little Hill Mine, about three miles southwest of Oracle. Tim Taylor, the 36-year-old miner they met there, was able to drive them to



a telephone. Gullette said, “ ‘We never panicked, basically because. . . we knew we would eventually get out.’ ” (Star 12/13/1985; Citizen 12/13/1985; Chuck McHugh email 5/3/2022)

## Cross Country Runner Disappears

**Jan 21, 1986**

Lorne Karl Landeen ran Cross Country during his four years at Sabino High School. Now a University of Arizona senior, the 23-year-old had again returned to run in the area. He was last seen by his roommate and, responders finally found his car in the high school parking lot, a few days after he went missing. His wallet and keys, except for an ignition key, were locked inside. His family knew he had hoped to become an athletic trainer after graduation, but they also learned soon after he disappeared, that his grades were not good enough to get into a graduate program. And unbeknown to them, he had not registered for his last semester of school. He was serious about a girl friend of two years, but his mother believed he was also dealing with some of life’s emotional pressures.

“The Pima County Sheriff’s Department search and rescue unit, family members and friends of Lorne’s searched a canyon and trails just above the school for two weeks after the young man vanished. They found nothing.” According to one source, “search dogs indicated Landeen’s scent stayed near his vehicle, indicating he may have departed from that location.” From a search and rescue perspective, for responders the young man could have disappeared for both intentional and unintentional reasons.

There was an accompanying article in the January 20, 1987 *Tucson Daily Citizen*, “More than 1,000 reported missing here in ’86.” That year, 1,071 of these reports were taken by Tucson police, Pima County Sheriff’s Department, South Tucson police and University of Arizona officials. The vast majority of “missing adults return within a few days or weeks. They just seem to need to get away and don’t bother to tell anyone.” In many cases, for those reported missing but do in fact, return and become accounted for, officials are not always informed of this. Sometime in the 1990’s, Lorne Karl Landeen was declared legally deceased but his case remains unsolved. (Citizen 1/20/1987; The Charley Project, last updated in 2020)

## Fell from Icy Ledge

**Feb 17, 1986**

The two 17-year-old students did not have to go to school and decided instead, to “throw snowballs” on Mount Lemmon. Frank Martinez, and fellow Salpointe Catholic High School classmate, Christopher Scherf, were at the San Pedro Vista on the Catalina Highway when on a whim, they “decided to go climbing.” The two boys went different ways because Scherf was not sure the route his buddy had taken was safe. He had warned Martinez, “ ‘You might fall; look at that drop-off,’ but he went on.” Reaching the top, Christopher called out to Frank; receiving no answer, he then looked down off the rock for his friend.

Martinez yelled up saying he had fallen and “asked him to get a stretcher because he could not move.” Luckily, Scherf had the car keys and was able to safely scramble down and within minutes get to the Palisades Ranger Station. Martinez was only wearing a windbreaker, claiming he was a “Northerner and was used to cold weather.” He had fallen the thirty feet at 2:30 p.m. and the first “rescuers reached him soon after, covering him with blankets and a down sleeping bag to prevent

hypothermia or loss of body heat.” He was also now complaining of pain in his arm, lower back and right ankle.

With the sun beginning to set, the temperatures dropped and the steep, snow-covered hillside and rocks began to freeze, becoming very slippery for the now many more responders. Placed on a backboard to stabilize his spine and neck, Frank was then put into a stokes basket and raised by ropes to the road. At 7:00 p.m., Rural Metro Fire Department transported Frank Martinez to Tucson Medical Center where he was listed in fair condition. In addition to Rural Metro, 26 volunteers from the Southern Arizona Rescue Association were there, as were the Mount Lemmon Fire Department and the Sheriff’s Department’s Search and Rescue team. (Citizen 2/18/1986)

## **Eight Injured Filming Movie**

**Feb 28, 1986**

A flatbed camera truck with a movie crew filming a sports-car chase scene on the Mount Lemmon Highway, clipped a roadside boulder at Mile Post 3.5 and went out of control on the sharp curve, flipping on to its side. The eight men in the rear of the vehicle were thrown off, one landing 75 feet down the brushy, rock-studded slope. Then immediately, the sports car being filmed struck the overturned truck and the pursuing Corvette, ran into the first car. The “Corvette was inches away from falling off a steep cliff.”

While filming the chase, the road had been closed to traffic by off-duty Sheriffs’ Deputies but with the truck now blocking most of the road, it had to be totally shut down.

Neither driver of the two cars being filmed was hurt but the man who was pitched over the edge, had to be carried by litter back up to the road by the Southern Arizona Rescue Association, 24 of whom responded. Six of the eight injured were transported to Tucson Medical Center by ground ambulance and a Department of Public Safety helicopter, two others went to El Dorado Hospital. One person was in very critical condition with head injuries and two were very serious with chest and abdominal injuries. On March 2, 40-year-old Bruce Ingram, a camera operator thrown from the truck, died from severe head trauma. Surprisingly, Ingram was not the person who was thrown the 75 feet.

Turbo Productions was filming “The Wraith,” a teenage, science-fiction action movie starring Charlie Sheen, Nick Cassavetes, and Randy Quaid, none of whom were present when the accident took place. It was determined the flatbed truck was top heavy and going about 45 when the curve required a more cautious 25 mph. (Citizen 2/28/1986, 3/1/1986; Star 3/3/1986)

## **Search for Slain Marine**

**Mar 2, 1986**

Corporal Thomas Dale Powell, Jr., had been a Marine for seven years and had just bought new uniforms in eagerness of his upcoming assignment to a United States Embassy. Home for a month before being deployed overseas, the 23-year-old borrowed his mother’s 1985 Ford Escort at 10:00 p.m. to go out to a bar. She never saw him alive again.

It was quickly determined Powell was the victim of foul play and within a few days, a 20-year-old man was booked into the Pima County Jail on suspicion of first-degree murder. He disclosed the body was near Gates Pass in the Tucson Mountains and on March 11,

“More than a dozen volunteer members from the Pima County Sheriff’s Department’s Search and Rescue team [15 from SARA] and eight dogs, one which had been trained specifically to hunt for bodies, searched for about an hour... A KOLD-TV, Channel 13 news helicopter photographing the searchers saw the body about 25 feet ahead of the searchers and directed them to it...”

The deceased was just 150 yards from the Gates Pass Road beneath a tree. “ ‘You could have been 10 feet from him and not seen him,’ ” according to a spokesman for the Tucson Police Department. Sadly, it was also determined Powell had only been dead about 24 hours before the searchers found him. He had been shot and after lying there alive for a week, he finally died of his wounds, as well as from dehydration and exposure.

A second man, 21, and his 17-year-old girlfriend, were traced to San Luis Obispo, California, where Powell’s mother’s car was found abandoned. After a failed strong-arm robbery there, these two were arrested on March 13, and were extradited back to Tucson in connection with the robbery, kidnapping and killing of Powell. On December 24, 1986, the two men were convicted of First-Degree Murder and the girl was convicted of related but lesser crimes. As of March 14, 1988, one of the men was on Arizona’s Death Row and the other two were serving lengthy sentences in prison. (Citizen 3/12/1986, 3/14/1986, 3/14/1988; Star 3/10/1986, 5/27/1988)

## Horse Fell on Her

### Mar 23, 1986

Diane Bohannon left at 7:30 a.m. for an all-day Sunday horseback ride by herself out of Catalina State Park. The 42-year-old from Wickenburg was going up Romero Canyon to Romero Pass and then back down the Sutherland Trail. After her 21-mile trip, she was to meet her husband about 5:30 p.m.

Eight miles up the rugged trail and nearing the pass, her horse reared and she was thrown off, the large animal then rolled on top of her. She suffered a serious, compound fracture of the lower right leg while also losing a lot of blood. She had no way of getting help and now faced spending at least one night at the 7,000-foot level. Not returning by dark, a search for her began the next morning. Thirty volunteers from the Southern Arizona Rescue Association, including five on horseback, began scouring the area.

Also on the mission were two Army helicopter teams from Fort Huachuca, one of which found her. The command pilot, Chief Warrant Officer 4, Herbert Toney, a 16-year veteran of flying helicopters, beginning in Vietnam in 1971, said “the site was surrounded by trees and large rocks so that landing the craft was impossible. ‘I had to hover right there and wait for them to get her on board... the other helicopter hovered behind to watch... [my] tail while... crew members made sure the blades avoided tree branches that were 6 feet away.’ ” Rescue volunteers cleared an area for the machine to hover just feet above the ground while she was carefully loaded on board. These volunteers also located Bohannon’s horse in the upper end of Romero Canyon and walked it out. (Citizen 3/25/1986)

## Tucson Fire's Technical Rescue Team

**Apr 1986**

Tucson Fire Department had long conducted technical rescues within their primary mission of firefighting; however, they were increasingly called upon for other rescues, such as swift water and trench. In 1986, their mission formally expanded to provide assistance to both the city and surrounding areas, with rope rescue, confined space rescue, structural collapse rescue, in addition to trench and swift water rescues. In the beginning, crews at Station 10 converted an old beer delivery truck into a heavy rescue vehicle and began specialty training. The team, now with over thirty full-time members, refined its expertise and developed into a highly trained and proficient unit, was located at Station 4. Included in this rope competence are the unique demands of palm tree, tower, and mine shaft rescues.

In 2007, a handful of agencies within Pima County “began discussing a unified technical rescue training and response program. It wasn’t until 2015 that this collaboration gained traction, and the Southern Arizona Regional Technical Rescue Group (SARTRG) was formed. . . The mission of the Group is to provide initial and ongoing technical rescue training and mutual aid, response to agencies within the four southern counties of Arizona.” In addition to Tucson Fire Department, SARTRG had departments from Avra Valley, Corona, Douglas, Drexel Heights, Fry, Golder Ranch, Green Valley, Mt. Lemmon, Nogales, Northwest, Pascua, Rural Metro, Rincon, Rio Rico, and the Southern Arizona Rescue Association. (Technical Rescue Team Official Website of the City of Tucson 2022)

## Bicyclist Abducted

**Apr 27, 1986**

Her Death Certificate reads July 22, 1986, the date her remains were found; her father, however, honestly recognizes April 27, the date she disappeared, as when she really died. That day, Joan M. Archer went on a Sunday-morning, 12-mile bike ride near Mission San Xavier del Bac, southwest of Tucson. Failing to return that evening, her fiancé reported the 25-year-old missing. Had she been hit by a car and was lying seriously injured in the brush along the road? Also, however, in circumstances such as these, there is always an immediate fear by law enforcement of an abduction. And to further complicate matters, unbeknownst to initial responders, her undamaged, 12-speed silver-colored bicycle had been picked up that same day by two men walking along the road to the Mission. They thought it abandoned and did not report it then.

Members of the Pima County Sheriff’s Search and Rescue Team, the Tucson Police Department helicopter, and the Sheriff’s search dogs, began looking for the woman at dawn Monday morning. By Tuesday, the Sheriff’s Mounted Posse and the state Department of Public Safety and its helicopter entered into the hunt for Archer. The two men finding the bike, after hearing about a missing woman who had been riding a bicycle in the area, turned it in to Deputies. Since it was undamaged, investigators surmised she had not been struck by a hit-and-run vehicle. Chuck McHugh, SAR coordinator for the Pima County Sheriff’s Department set up a command post in the area and ultimately, South Mission Road was closed to traffic for part of the day to keep people from disturbing the vacant area where her bicycle had been found.

Between several search dogs, two helicopters, numerous officials and volunteers on foot and horseback, at least sixty people checked and re-checked all the logical places for her to end up. Nothing was found and the immediate ground search for her turned intermittent, contingent on finding new information. On July 22, nearly three months after she vanished, a clue finally surfaced,

1 1/2-mile south of San Xavier Road. A trained cadaver dog was brought in and Ms. Archer was quickly found. It was determined she had died of multiple stab wounds. A suspect was developed and even named publicly by Sheriff's Sergeant Doug Witte.

US Air Force Master Sergeant Stephen Elvis Skaggs, was arrested and confessed to kidnapping, sexual assault, and an attempted homicide of two women on Mount Lemmon, all happening on the same day Joan Archer disappeared. There was significant evidence linking Skaggs to Archer; in the end, however, the County Attorney's Office did not believe it was conclusive enough to go to trial. Stephen Skaggs was put in prison for the crimes against the two women on Mount Lemmon, but never for the murder of the lovely, 25-year-old bicyclist. (Citizen 4/29/1986, 5/1/1986; Star 9/21/1986, 4/26/1987, 5/16/1987; Doug Witte email 7/21/2021)

### Rescue of Very Heavy Man

**May 6, 1986**

"An injured man so heavy that rescuers couldn't carry him waited all night to be hoisted by a helicopter and flown out of a remote area where his vehicle rolled over...." Gary [last name intentionally omitted], the 37-year-old Tucson man reportedly weighing between four-hundred to five-hundred pounds, overturned his four-wheel-drive vehicle at 6:00 p.m. in the China Camp area east of Tombstone. "A team of Sheriff's Deputies, Cochise County search and rescue volunteers and Tombstone paramedics was unable to carry Gary to a vehicle... 'It took six just to move him around,' " said Sgt. Don Kyte of the Cochise County Sheriff's Office.

An Arizona Department of Public Safety helicopter responded to the scene off Middlemarch Road in the Dragoon Mountains but was unable to land due to rough terrain. Officials at nearby Fort Huachuca were then queried about assistance but indicated they did not have a helicopter equipped with a hoist. Darkness settled in and Gary was stabilized and six rescuers remained with him through the night. At 9:30 a.m. the next morning, a hoist-equipped helicopter from Marine Corps Air Station Yuma arrived and airlifted Gary to the hospital. (Star 5/8/1986)

### Two Drown in Pena Blanca Lake

**Jun 8, 1986**

When one of the four men stood up in the small boat, they capsized, throwing them all into Pena Blanca Lake, 15 miles northwest of Nogales. Nearby boaters were able to rescue two of the men, both were soon admitted into Holy Cross Hospital in Nogales for respiratory problems. The two other fishermen, Humberto A. Leal, 35, of Rio Rico, and Francisco Apolnia Lopez Barrera, 44, of Nogales, Sonora, went down in the 35-foot-deep lake and never came up. The accident took place at 7:30 p.m. and both were presumed drowned.

The Santa Cruz County Sheriff's Office asked for help. It was long after dark when recovery divers from Pima and Maricopa counties began looking for the two men. The US Forest Service supplied generators to help provide light for their efforts, which went late into the night. Leal and Barrera were found the next day, at 35 feet. (Star 6/9/1986, 6/10/1986)

## Two More Drown in Pena Blanca Lake

**Jun 14, 1986**

After their boat capsized and two fishermen drowned in Pena Blanca Lake on June 8, two more people died there, only a week later. On Saturday, June 14, Martin Angel Gonzales of Tucson tried to swim across a wide stretch of the 45-acre lake. The 16-year-old was with several others who all tried to cross. According to witnesses, “Gonzales apparently floundered midway, waving his arms, but the other swimmers, who made it across safely, thought he might be joking. He sank in about 30 feet of water.”

Boaters were able to pull the youth out of the water about 15 minutes after he went under but could not revive him. He was pronounced dead at Holy Cross Hospital in Nogales, an hour later. It was believed he had been drinking although it was unknown to what extent.

Late in the afternoon of the next day, Ricard Rosales of Nogales, Sonora, disappeared beneath the lake’s surface. Rosales reportedly jumped from Pete’s Rock, and did not come up; the ledge is a popular diving spot and about forty feet high. It was not known if he hit a submerged object or maybe had brushed the side of the cliff on his way down. Or if perhaps the impact knocked the wind out of him, resulting in his drowning. Nine members of the Southern Arizona Rescue Association, including the Pima County Search and Recovery Divers, responded. The body of Rosales was recovered from about forty feet of water the following day. To this point, at least 12 people have drowned in Pena Blanca Lake, all were males. (Star 6/17/1986)

## Border Patrol Search and Rescue

**Jun 15, 1986**

In the spring of 1986, the Yuma Sector of the US Border Patrol formed the Desert Area Rescue Team, or DART. This included Yuma, La Paz, and Mohave counties and was in response to the escalating numbers of mostly heat-related deaths of illegal immigrants crossing the border from Mexico. Over the next several months, the one team grew to three, with six agents in each team. They received some additional specialized training in rescue work, principally geared toward the hostile desert environment.

On May 6, 1986, it was announced in the two local newspapers, that two similar DART teams were being formed in the Tucson Sector, operational about July 1. One unit would remain in Tucson and the other would be deployed to Ajo. These DARTs would be available to other agencies, as well. At the time, the Border Patrol was facing unheard of numbers of illegal immigrants coming across the border and being arrested, meaning the search and rescue workload for the agency was also increasing dramatically.

Between May 6 and mid-June, however, Border Patrol managers in Tucson then launched STAR—Special Tracking and Rescue, seemingly rechristening DART to STAR. It also slightly reconfigured its manpower makeup; STAR, now a nine-member team, was receiving even more specialized training in tracking, rappelling, rescue, and emergency medicine. This STAR unit would be responding, generally by helicopter, from the New Mexico state line to Yuma County, a 286-mile stretch of some very inhospitable sections of the United States. On June 20, Harold Ezell, Western Regional Commissioner for the Immigration and Naturalization Service came to Tucson to inaugurate that STAR team.

After mid-1987, other than a historical reference in 1999, the author was unable to find relevant mentions of either DART or STAR teams in any regional newspaper along the border with Mexico.



However, in 1998, US Customs and Border Protection, which had now incorporated the US Border Patrol, launched a new unit, BORSTAR–Border Patrol Search, Trauma, and Rescue. According to the Website of BORSTAR, this was “in response to the growing number of injuries to Border Patrol agents and migrant deaths along our nation’s borders.” It was now “strategically located to rapidly deploy along the Southwest Border, Northern Border, Coastal Regions, and throughout the United States.”

A very competitive program was designed for agents to qualify for BORSTAR, called the BORSTAR Selection and Training Course (STC). The “BORSTAR STC is a physically and mentally demanding course in which candidates are evaluated in various search and rescue techniques, tactical medicine, technical rescue, land navigation, communications, swift-water rescue, air operations, and the ability to work in a cohesive unit.” Once through the STC, agents then receive additional training in many related skills but at more advanced levels.

After an alarming 12 heat-related deaths in 1998, the Border Patrol began again to focus on rescue to reduce the toll. The following year, BORSTAR came to Southern Arizona. It was “created with a cadre of 45 agents specially trained in lifesaving techniques.” Between the beginning of 1999, through August, “more than 500 undocumented immigrants have been saved, mostly on the Tohono O’odham Reservation. . . more than double the total in previous years. Last year, the number was 219.” (Star 6/20/1986, 6/21/1986, 5/5/1991, 6/20/1999; Citizen 5/6/1986, 9/29/1986, 6/26/1999, 9/7/1999; Website Page for BORSTAR)

### Is Victim Still There?

**Jul 16, 1986**

Alberto Vega was reported missing on July 16 and his abandoned car was found three days later parked at San Pedro Vista on Mount Lemmon. Inside was a suicide note, along with a change of clothes. “Vega had recently been ‘very upset and distraught’ over family problems,” according to Sheriff’s Department Special Operations supervisor, Chuck McHugh. “Vega had threatened to kill himself in the past, telling family members, ‘If I ever do commit suicide, you’ll never find my body.’ ”

There was a three-day search for the 47-year-old Vega, with many volunteers from the Southern Arizona Rescue Association participating. On the third day, they concentrated “their efforts in the rockier cliff area where he may have fallen or been trapped. ‘Having no idea of direction of travel for Vega, we end up searching a large area and stretching our resources,’ McHugh said.” At the end of the day, “because of lack of evidence that Vega is alive or still in the mountain area, the search was suspended.” There was never a follow up article indicating Alberto Vega had been found, so it is likely he is still out there and that he was spot-on when he said, “you’ll never find my body.” (Star 7/28/1986)

### Drowning in Lake Angostura

**Jul 27, 1986**

Lake Angostura, Spanish for narrow or slender, is manmade and about sixty miles south of Douglas, in Sonora, Mexico; it is some twenty miles long and in places, at least one-hundred feet deep. It is a beautiful but lesser-known destination for campers and sportsmen from both countries. Mike Vasquez, along with his wife and a friend, Vic Daniel, was fishing there when the boat they were in was caught broadside in high winds a half-mile from shore. Now half-filled with water, it soon

capsized in the three-foot waves and threw the three occupants overboard. They all grabbed the now upside-down craft and unable to swim, Mike scrambled on top. The small boat then went under.

Vic Daniel was nearby clinging to a lifejacket when he told Vasquez to grab hold of him. When he did, they both sank and Mrs. Vasquez quickly lost sight of them in the dusk and the waves and assumed they both had drowned. She guessed she then spent two hours dogpaddling to shore, getting there long after dark and was forced to spend a night under a rock overhang. The next morning, she heard a boat coming toward her and then heard voices, followed by someone yelling her name. She thought both men were being returned, but it turned out to be just Daniel. She notified officials in Mexico as well as in Cochise County about the mishap and her husband, the 58-year-old realty agent, would be presumed drowned.

Authorities in Mexico and the State Department arranged special clearance for two military helicopters from Fort Huachuca to fly to the lake, drop off two deputies and scout the area from the air before returning to their base in Sierra Vista. About twenty search and rescue workers and divers from the sheriff's departments of Cochise, Pima, and Maricopa counties, drove down to Lake Angostura the day after Vasquez disappeared. These responders reportedly ran into some "less than cooperative" officials in crossing the border although they ultimately did obtain permission of Mexican customs and immigration officials.

After two days of searching, supervisor on this operation, Pima County Sheriff's Lieutenant, Chuck McHugh, said the personnel from the three counties were leaving. "Poor visibility in the murky, 90-foot-deep lake put the searchers' chances of success 'out of the realm of reality.' " The square-mile target area where Vasquez was last seen would be scanned from the air daily by aircraft for up to two weeks, hoping the body would rise to the surface. It was believed by one of the divers, Fran Kunz, that the body of Mike Vasquez surfaced about a week later. (Star 7/30/1986, 7/31/1986; Arizona Republic 7/30/1986; Fran Kunz email 11/15/2021)

## Died Rescuing an Ice Chest

**Sep 1, 1986**

Dennis R. Cowart and several friends, were crossing near the top of one of the waterfalls comprising Tanque Verde Falls. It was Labor Day and the favorite recreation spot was crowded. When the 16-year-old stumbled on some rocks, the ice chest the group was carrying dropped and Cowart leaned down to get it. While rescuing the chest, he slipped on the polished granite; falling in, he quickly washed over the waterfall. The ice chest tumbled in after him.

The boy fell 15 feet, hitting his head on the cliff face before he landed in the deep plunge pool at the bottom. His companions told Scott Clemans, a volunteer with the Southern Arizona Rescue Association and one of the 24 other volunteers who responded, "the ice chest and other articles that had fallen surfaced, but Cowart did not." His friends searched the pool, but could not find him. The water was very turbulent but they finally discovered the body in a pool farther down the stream. Once found, one of them went for help. Pronounced dead at the scene, Dennis R. Cowart was reportedly number 23 to die at Tanque Verde Falls, since 1975. Ironically, the teenager died at 2:00 p.m., two hours after two Sheriffs' Deputies had left who were patrolling the area to help prevent such an occurrence. (Citizen 9/2/1986)

## Killed Falling into a Mine Shaft

**Sep 14, 1986**

While rock hunting on the southern slopes of the Dragoon Mountains, 15-year-old Neal Severance fell 150 feet down an abandoned mine shaft. From Glendale, the teenager, his uncle, and a younger brother, were near the ghost town of Gleeson, 16 miles east of Tombstone, when the fatal accident happened at about 2:45 p.m. Some twenty members of the Cochise County Sheriff's Office search and rescue unit, along with a Department of Public Safety helicopter, were dispatched. By 5:15 p.m., the boy had been lifted out and was pronounced dead 45 minutes later.

Arizona's chief deputy state mine inspector indicated that state law requires abandoned mine shafts be fenced or otherwise protected and that warning signs be posted. In this case, none of these safeguards were in place. However, failure to take these precautions was a petty offense and there was merely a fine of less than \$1,000 for non-compliance. It does not seem there had been any complaint about this open shaft. Gleeson was an active mining community from 1890 until the copper mining there finally played out during the 1930s. (Arizona Republic 9/17/1986; Star 9/17/1986)

## Injured at Rose Canyon Dam

**Sep 21, 1986**

Why he was in the tree in the first place, the newspapers did not explain. However, just before 6 p.m., 21-year-old Mike Davis reportedly fell out of one, crashing onto the cement spillway of Rose Canyon Lake in the Catalina Mountains. He then tumbled another forty feet down a steep slope, breaking his collar bone and sustaining other serious but non-life-threatening injuries. Because Davis fell on a tricky, nearly vertical slope with loose, crumbly rock, the Southern Arizona Rescue Association was called out and 22 members of its all-volunteer group, responded. (Star 9/22/1986)

## Fifty-Foot Fall

**Oct 17, 1986**

James Miller was in guarded condition at Tucson Medical Center after having fallen at Windy Point on the Catalina Highway. Along with several friends, the 25-year-old Miller had pulled in to overlook the Tucson Basin from the popular tourist stop. Somehow, he stumbled, then tumbled down fifty feet into a rocky area which was steep but fortunately, not totally vertical. Under the leadership of Deputy Tom Price, about twenty volunteers of the Southern Arizona Rescue Association assisted the Sheriff's Department in airlifting Miller out of the area. These rescuers had to traverse about one-hundred feet of this precipitous terrain to carry Miller to a spot where the Department of Public Safety helicopter could reach him and transport him to the hospital. (Citizen 10/18/1986)

## Young Hunter Lost

**Oct 24, 1986**

Robert Torrez and Isaac, his 16-year-old friend, were busy rabbit hunting while the 12-year-old's father was looking for mule deer farther ahead. The two boys were deep into the brush near Arivaca when they became separated but were able to find one another by firing their rifles as signals. "But

then they lost each other again, and this time Robert had only one round of ammunition left. ‘I thought my dad must be back from the hunt, so I fired, but I didn’t hear nothing,’ Robert said.”

Robert followed ranging cattle, hoping to find water tanks. “ ‘I walked and walked, and I would just end up in the same place,’ Robert said. ‘I thought I was pretty close to camp, but I was in the middle of nowhere. . . .’ ” And, as a few lights came on in the distance, he tried to move toward them. As it got darker, however, other than the coat he was fortunately wearing, Robert had nothing to help get him through the cold, long night: no water, no matches, no food and certainly no idea where Isaac and his father were.

The Pima County Sheriff’s Department Search and Rescue units were there in the field early that morning, as was a Department of Public Safety helicopter. “A helicopter ‘flew right over me and still didn’t see me, because I didn’t know they were looking for me, so I didn’t flag them,’ he said.” That morning Robert, unknowingly, had edged closer to camp where he was spotted by both his father and the searchers, at about the same time. Other than being thirsty and tired, the boy was fine. “ ‘I don’t know how many miles I walked. . . just how many hours.’ ” (Star 10/27/1986)

## Trail into Tanque Verde Falls

**Dec 6, 1986**

Historically, Tanque Verde Falls is the single most dangerous recreational spot in Southern Arizona. Between 1946 and 2015, 38 died there and many dozens suffered life-threatening injuries. It has been used by mostly young people since at least the 1920s, when university students, scouts, and church groups began having weekend outings there. Slick granite, running water, great heights, alcohol, and stupidity were the principal factors for most of the serious accidents. As noted *Tucson Citizen* outdoor writer Pete Cowgill summed it up on November 30, 1986, “too much beer and too little common sense.”

Perhaps peaking in 1984, frustration and weariness about these many tragedies ran very high with the US Forest Service, Pima County Sheriff’s Department, and the search and rescue community, particularly the Southern Arizona Rescue Association. Public meetings were held and committees were formed. Considerations for addressing these heartbreaks included more signage, increased patrolling, reconfiguring parking lots, and building new trails. Briefly, even dynamiting parts of the waterfalls, building strategic dams, prohibiting alcohol, and completely closing the area, were considered but promptly rejected. On weekends in August 1985, the Forest Service began patrolling the canyon and waterfalls and intermittently, so did the Sheriff’s Department. Signs about the dangers there were tactically placed and bolted to boulders, but they were generally ignored, vandalized, and soon disappeared.

Officials came to understand the unsafe quandary presented by the social trails leading down from the road and then going to the upstream side of the waterfalls. First responders had long recognized that this was the most dangerous part of the area. If people were channeled to the less hazardous sections of the canyon, particularly downstream of these cliffs, lives could be saved. Frances Walker, Vice President of SARA, said, “ ‘We hope to siphon off a lot of people and get them into the lower canyon. There they are less likely to kill themselves. If they fall, they could still get hurt, but it would probably be something like a twisted ankle.’ ”

In April 1986, with significant input from the Southern Arizona Rescue Association, William Lewis, a US Forest Service planner, spearheaded a new trail and a change to the current parking lots. SARA volunteered to construct this trail and in September 1986, they began spending weekends building it. After 2 1/2 months of work, the project was complete and on December 6, there was a

picnic there hosted by SARA to celebrate finalizing this effort. In the spring of 1987, a helipad was constructed and the Forest Service oversaw building a larger parking lot to support this new trail. Informally, it is called the SARA Trail, but on the sign, it reads, “Lower Tanque Verde Canyon Trail.” (Star 8/17/1946, 7/4/1985, 4/18/1986, 4/20/1986, 9/4/1986, 1/23/1987; Citizen 2/26/1985, 8/15/1985, 11/30/1986, 12/3/1986)

### Rescue on Safford Peak

**Jan 7, 1987**

A student at Flowing Wells High School was hiking on 3,653-foot-high Safford (Sombrero) Peak in the Tucson Mountains with four friends, when he was injured. They were only a half-mile up a somewhat rugged “social trail” when a rock was dislodged from above, striking 17-year-old Ronald Moore in the head. He rolled and fell about twenty feet and was knocked unconscious for approximately ten minutes. One student went for help while the other three remained to aid their friend.

In addition to some 26 members of the Southern Arizona Rescue Association, other responders included the Tucson Police Department helicopter, park rangers from Saguaro National Monument, and the Air National Guard. After two hours, the Guard was able to hoist him out of the “cactus-filled, loose terrain,” and fly him to University Medical Center. (Citizen 1/9/1987)

### Customs Helicopter Pilot Honored

**Jan 13, 1987**

As a US Customs Service pilot, Vernon Skeen was a vital part of the Pima County Sheriff’s Search and Rescue Team, always volunteering to assist. He became the first to be honored by the Tucson Elks Lodge 385 as the “Search and Rescue Volunteer of the Year.” It was for his dedication to the preservation of life. “ ‘Nobody really honors these people. They risk their own lives to save those of others, and we want to honor them and thank them for their efforts,’ said Roy LeBlanc, chaplain of the Elks Lodge.” Skeen had been in the Navy for 15 years before transferring to the Army during the Vietnam War. He flew there for six years and then spent 11 more years flying for the US Customs Service. Skeen and his fellow pilots were always very willing to assist the region’s SAR needs with their expert flying skills. (Star 1/12/1987; Citizen 1/14/1987)

### Two Toddlers Wander Off

**Feb 6, 1987**

Hastily responding, 39 anxious members of the Southern Arizona Rescue Association spent three hours searching for 2-year-old Brenda G. Marsh, and her 3-year-old brother, Michael V. “Buck” Marsh. The young pair had wandered away from home. “They had followed their dog, Greta, into the desert near their home. . . .” At first, family members hunted for the two youngsters by horseback but when that failed, they called for help. Following footprints, rescuers discovered them fast asleep in a wash, four miles away. Searchers heard their dog barking about 9:00 p.m., which led rescuers to the children. “Michael insisted he was not frightened during the trek, but he did admit, ‘I am afraid of alligators.’ ” (Citizen 2/7/1987)

## Search for Probable Suicide

**Feb 23, 1987**

Mark O. Dashner was last seen leaving work at noon from the University of Arizona Lunar and Planetary Laboratory. He was working on a graduate degree in accounting while employed at the Lab. He had apparently gone home, only to find his girlfriend moving out. And reportedly, he then said, “ ‘You’ll never see me again,’ ” and left. Two days after this, she reported him missing.

Several days after her report, deputies found the 26-year-old Dashner’s Honda Civic buried under the four-foot new snowfall in Soldier Camp, at the head of the Butterfly Trail. There was a single, long-stemmed rose on the front seat. This was later learned to be a spot that he and his girlfriend visited and both liked a lot. “ ‘The only way you could tell it was a car was because of the antenna that was sticking out,’ ” according to SARA volunteer, Mykle Raymond. Joelle Moore, who had lived on Mount Lemmon for 12 years, said, “ ‘This is one of the worse dumps of snow at one time I’ve ever seen.’ ” It was serious and needless to say, significantly hindered road clearing.

Dashner was athletic and had hiked the area before but he was not known as an avid hiker. And it was not believed he had any camping gear with him. It was also feared he was merely wearing what he had worn to work the day he went missing, Levi’s and a pullover sweater. Certainly nothing to face the storm with. In fact, there was a developing alarm he may have been despondent enough to commit suicide, although there was really nothing to indicate this as his intention. The day after being reported missing, “Three deputies from the Sheriff’s Department [sic] and five volunteers with the Southern Arizona Rescue Association spent five hours... searching...”

No trace was found of Mark that first day but searchers in the Department of Public Safety helicopter being used, detected a stalled four-wheel-drive vehicle while looking for Dashner and then saw someone walking uphill in the snow. A deputy, using snowshoes, hiked to within shouting distance and made contact. The man had attempted to walk up the mountain after stalling the vehicle with a companion. “When the deputy reached him, he had collapsed. ‘He was real, real lucky we were up there searching and found him’...” He was flown out by the DPS helicopter and the second man walked back down the mountain. Both ended up suffering frostbite.

With so much new snow covering any possible tracks or related clues, SARA volunteers and deputies were forced to check the very few available places where a person might survive, including several nearby cabins. None of them showed any kind of forced entry. Other nearby cabins were inaccessible and would have to wait until the snow compacted and could be reached. Within a week of Dashner going missing, most of the rescuers involved were fairly sure they were now looking for a body, although where to look was the big question. And since he would probably be lying down and under the snow, the search for him became almost impossible. By this point, search effort had tapered off, although it would resume on a limited basis, when the snow had melted significantly.

On April 19, over seven weeks after Mark O. Dashner went missing, two hunters discovered him hanging from a tree, apparently having committed suicide. He was beside the Butterfly Trail. (Citizen 2/27/1987, 2/28/1987, 4/20/1987; Star 2/28/1987, 3/7/1987)

## Decomposed Body

**Feb 27, 1987**

Volunteers from the Southern Arizona Rescue Association went out at night to recover a man’s decomposed body from the remote terrain, “one mile north of the end of Alvernon Way...” Hunters



found it on a ledge, and it was not clear how the man died. The author was unable to find any follow up information on this incident. (Star 2/28/1987)

### **Man with Intellectual Disability Missing**

**Apr 1, 1987**

Gus, a 23-year-old man with an intellectual disability and carrying a .25-caliber handgun, went missing from his home south of the Benson Highway. “Searchers from the Southern Arizona Rescue Association combed the area. . . but found no trace of him.” A dog and two helicopters were brought into the search. Fortunately, it ended after two days when he returned, saying he had just gone into the Catalina Mountains. (Star 4/3/1987)

### **Sheriff’s Posse Officer of the Year**

**Apr 3, 1987**

David A. Lewis became the first person other than a Pima County Sheriff’s Deputy, to be named officer of the year by the Pima County Sheriff’s Department Mounted Posse. The 38-year-old Border Patrolman had been using his unique tracking skills for search and rescue purposes, beginning in California. “ ‘I got involved with it. . . in El Centro. . . and it stuck with me. It’s interesting to me to help people. Too often, civilian contact with law enforcement is bad. I wanted to do something to show people there’s another side.’ ”

Agent Lewis began his search and rescue involvement in Southern Arizona with a missing 7-year-old Leon Thompson, who had wandered away from his home on November 10, 1978. (That incident is described in “Missing Seven-Year-Old Boy,” Nov 4, 1978, on page 329.) “All night Lewis used a light to follow the boy’s small tracks after finding them leading away from the child’s home in the Three Points area west of Tucson.” (Citizen 4/9/1987)

### **Died in Pima Canyon**

**Jun 1, 1987**

Daniel Elandt was alive when the first of the forty volunteers from the Southern Arizona Rescue Association reached him. Along with a companion, the 17-year-old junior at Suffolk Hills Catholic High School in Tucson was scaling a thirty-foot cliff in Pima Canyon, when he fell. “Both youths were climbing the rocks freehand and were using no safety equipment. . . .” Daniel fell into a crevasse “that could not be reached by helicopter,” and he died before rescuers were able to get him out of the canyon.

According to his mother as well as fellow students, “He was everything parents want their kids to be.” He was going to be the captain of the football team in his coming senior year and he also played basketball, baseball and ran track. Before going on this new adventure, he stopped at his girlfriend’s home to tell her he was off to rock climb. “ ‘He was very excited about going. . . It was his first time out. He’d never gone before, but I guess he felt really comfortable.’ ” (Star 6/3/1987; Citizen 6/3/1987)

## Hang Gliding Death

**Jul 25, 1987**

“The hang glider ‘got caught in some turbulent wind and went down,’ said Sgt. Don Kyte,” of the Cochise County Sheriff’s Office. Dudley Warner, 37, was killed in the Huachuca Mountains, dying of massive head injuries after he fell to earth in Carr Canyon. (Star 7/30/1987)

## Died Trying to Save a Friend

**Aug 16, 1987**

It was supposed to be a day of “fun in the sun,” with a little cliff-diving at Tanque Verde Falls thrown in, as well. At 2:15 p.m., “the six friends climbed up the edge of the treacherous falls and were looking for a good spot to dive into a deep pool, about 50 feet below,” according to 22-year-old Tom Walters. Scott LeRud, 21, was peering over the edge of the cliff and looking down for possible deep pools, when he slipped and after ten feet, disappeared from view, due to terrain. A scream was heard, “ ‘and he was gone.’ ” Walters shouting into the small gorge got no response, so the group began scrambling down to look, although no way down was safe.

In looking for his friend, John W. Neubauer, 22, was hurriedly sliding and down climbing to reach LeRud, when he too fell, hitting the water thirty feet down and fatally striking a rock below the surface of the pool. Word was sent to the Pima County Sheriff’s Department and responders were soon on their way. Neubauer was easy to get to and was deceased due to hitting the rock, but LeRud was nowhere to be seen. The responders looked for the young man until dark and then called it off, returning the next morning. About 8:30 a.m., Scott LeRud was found in the twenty-foot-deep pool by divers using scuba tanks. When tested for drugs and alcohol, both were over the legal limit for alcohol. (Star 8/17/1987, 8/18/1987; Citizen 8/21/1987)

## She Wandered For 17 Hours

**Sep 9, 1987**

Volunteers of the Southern Arizona Rescue Association spent all night looking for Brigitte Wong, lost for 17 hours in Upper Sabino Canyon. The 38-year-old woman left for a day hike, telling her husband she would return later that day. When she had not returned by evening, he went looking for her. He found her vehicle at the Sabino Canyon Visitor’s Center and then called the Sheriff’s Department at 8:30 p.m. She was found just before 2:00 p.m., wandering near the lines of the Bear Canyon fire. She was unharmed and they walked her back to the Visitor Center. (Star 9/11/1987)

## Priest Gets Lost

**Sep 14, 1987**

While many of his fellow priests were in Phoenix that Monday trying to get a glimpse of Pope John Paul II, Reverend Roy Conry was in the Santa Catalina Mountains, “hoping to shut himself off from the world,” for a few hours. An avid hiker, the 61-year-old priest and counselor from Tucson’s Salpointe Catholic High School, was simply planning on a four-hour respite from his daily grind. Salpointe students had a holiday because of the Pope’s visit and Conry hoped to enjoy some free time. It was a warm day and the weather coaxed him into wearing the shorts he normally

only donned twice a year. He began his walk in the General Hitchcock Picnic Area on a familiar, pine-shaded trail at 11 a.m. But then, “ ‘Four hours turned into three days,’ he said.”

“ ‘I was looking for a trail I couldn’t find, and I wandered off the main one when I saw something that looked like a trail marker. I’m really kind of vague on what happened after that. I thought I tripped on something and fell headfirst into a canyon, but I don’t know if that’s true. I think I was trying to slide down the canyon when I suddenly fell over face-first.’ ”

While taking the tumble, the wooden hiking stick took most of the impact, breaking. He also suffered a gash over his right eye which, like most injuries to the head, bled quite profusely. For a while, things were a little blurry, making his walking unstable. Then, he fell again. “ ‘I could have really been hurt, I’m really lucky. I knew I couldn’t get back out of the canyon, so I went in further,’ he said.” In the spill down the steep embankment, he lost his canteen but didn’t discover that important detail until he needed a drink, which was all too soon. He resorted to drinking from recent-rain puddles, carefully pushing away the algae. Then, the sun set,

“ ‘the nights were the most difficult part. It was absolutely freezing and I couldn’t have dressed worse. I almost never wear shorts. My legs were freezing, my body was freezing and daylight never came,’ he recalled. ‘It was impossible to sleep because I shivered all night. It really had me worried. I thought I might come down with pneumonia,’ he said.”

The following morning, a priest at the monastery noticed he had not returned and called police. A few hours later, Sheriff’s Deputy Rick Sturgeon, while doing a routine check of the mountain along the Catalina Highway, spotted Conry’s vehicle and ran a license check. He discovered the registered owner was reported as a missing person and Sturgeon, the son of retired Sheriff’s Captain Kenneth Sturgeon, notified SAR officials. This then quickly came to the attention of Sergeant Chuck McHugh, in charge of search and rescue for Pima County; and, the SAR machinery went into high gear.

By the end of that second day, “ground teams, dog teams and the Department of Public Safety helicopter searched [Ranger 32] for Conry...but found no trace of him.” But they did find the broken walking stick and the lost canteen; these clues were at the very top of Burro Creek, on the southeast side of Guthrie Mountain. At about the 6,600-foot level, this is steep, rugged country and not a friendly place to be. Another very long night would again pass for the priest.

“ ‘The abandoned equipment indicated to us that the situation had a high potential of being life-threatening,’ McHugh would report.” Sheriff’s SAR officials were preparing for the worst, beginning to plan on a large-scale search. They had contacted the Marine Corps Air Station in Yuma to borrow a helicopter with hoist capability and dog teams and ground searchers from around Arizona and California were gearing up to come to Tucson, if necessary.

While searchers were making their plans, Father Conry was making his own. He had now been on the move for 1 1/2 days; he decided—now, better late than never—to stay put and near water. “ ‘You can live without food for 30 to 40 days, but not without water. I figured I’d stay there and they’d find me within 30 days,’ he said.” And they did. After being lost for two nights and two days, he was spotted by members of a fifty-man search team, quickly closing in on him. (Citizen 9/17/1987)

## She Fell into Abandoned Mine

**Oct 17, 1987**

David Marshall was the emergency medical services chief for the Drexel Heights Fire Department and Dena Lambert was the 23-year-old hiker that fell into the forty-foot-deep trench between 3 and 4 p.m., that Saturday afternoon. As they often did, Lambert and her boyfriend were hiking on Saginaw Hill just off the Ajo Highway, west of Tucson when, “ ‘All of a sudden I slipped. . . .’ ” After hanging onto the edge as long as she could, she fell, landing on her back and losing consciousness. When rescuers reached her, she was incoherent.

“ ‘We were considering extricating her with our personnel, but that may have been pushing the limits of our rescue knowledge. It was a very technical rescue operation.’ Marshall said. He then wisely called in the Southern Arizona Rescue Association. The volunteers rigged a rope-and-pulley system that lifted Lambert to safety.” Responding for SARA were 19 volunteers trained in this sort of specialized operation.

“ ‘I wasn’t scared, I wasn’t scared at all,’ said Lambert. ‘I just remember it was very dark down there—I wanted to go home.’ ” She was trapped in the bottom of the opening for four hours. Once out of the mine, she was whisked to University Medical Center by a Department of Public Safety helicopter. There were six to eight similar abandoned open trenches in that same area, where copper was once mined. Some openings had previously been fenced off but time and vandals destroyed them. (Star 10/18/1987, 10/19/1987)

## Rescue Helicopters Activated

**Nov 7, 1987**

The Air Force Reserve’s 71<sup>st</sup> Special Operations Squadron was activated at Davis-Monthan AFB. It consisted of three HH-3s and two H-3 helicopters, commonly known as “Jolly Green Giants” for their color and size. It had 27 officers and 117 enlisted personnel. Many in the unit had recently been assigned to the 302<sup>nd</sup> Special Operations Squadron at Luke AFB in Phoenix, which was deactivated when expanding F-16 fighter operations required more space. The Squadron’s value to Southern Arizona’s SAR community was several-fold: the helicopter’s size, hoist capability, 24-hour on-call, and overall professionalism. (Citizen 11/7/1987)

## Four-Day Ordeal

**Dec 12, 1987**

“ ‘We got lost. . . It was cold. It was snowy and it was steep country. . . we had to get out. We worked together and kept our spirits up until we finally made it out.’ ”

Robert Foxall, 36, and Peggy Williams, also 36, intended to hike into Marshall Gulch near Summerhaven for just one night. Foxall was an experienced backpacker but Williams was not. They found a good campsite just over two miles into the steep-sided gulch and set up a small nylon tent. There they enjoyed hamburger patties and corn-on-the-cob, “before nestling into their sleeping bags for the night.”

The five inches of snow that fell on them that night, “covered their tracks, and put a slippery glaze on steep and rocky sections of the trail. . . .” Williams said she could not go back the way they came because it was too steep and there was snow on the now treacherous, slippery ledge they had

come across. They continued on, “and that’s where everything went wrong... We got off the trail and we were very disoriented.” As it continued to snow, they kept moving but by mid-afternoon, Williams could go no farther. Using an 18-foot-length of rope he had in his pack, Foxall was able to safety her to a decent campsite on a sloping ridge.

Earlier that day, a Deputy Sheriff spotted their car sitting by itself at the end of the road, now covered with snow. Authorities soon learned who the owner was, although Williams and Foxall had unintentionally not told anyone of their hiking plans. The next morning, according to Pima County Sheriff’s Search and Rescue Deputy, Tom Price, “We started an air search... but couldn’t see much because of the dense trees up there. The next day [Monday] we rounded up some cold-weather teams, and we were about ready to send people into the trail systems...”

The couple’s food was down to a few ounces of sunflower seeds and a bag of Tootsie Rolls, some Tang mix, a piece of banana bread, a lump of butter, and some salt and pepper. Peggy Williams said, “ ‘I was scared... I thought the bears might show up.’ ” On Monday, their third day out, they set off in search of the trail. “ ‘... we just kept going down one ridge and up another... The scrub oak was very thick, and it all looked the same. We weren’t getting anywhere... It was so steep it made me sick to look down. Some places I was crawling on my hands and knees.’ ” Still lost, they made camp again, ate what trifling food they had, “and settled in for a long night in the now-stunning cold...”

Tuesday, brought more wandering and more fear. They found what they thought was the way out, but were again caught by darkness and forced to spend another long, miserable night. “ ‘That night we had butter with salt and pepper on it.’ ” Now, both freezing cold and nearly exhausted, what they had seen the night before proved correct and by 2:00 p.m., were able to stumble out to their car and up to the lodge in Summerhaven. The second search plane was up and the rescue teams were on their way; although, all were soon turned around. (Star 12/19/1987)

## Helicopter Crashes in Snowstorm

### Jan 18, 1988

Temperatures plunged to 5 degrees below zero and a foot of snow fell during their ordeal, which began Monday afternoon at 1 p.m. Don Redman, 53, along with his wife and two other passengers, was piloting the small helicopter on a business trip to Phoenix from Truth or Consequences, New Mexico. He was trying to turn to get out of the storm when he lost power, making a controlled crash. “ ‘We don’t know what happened to the engine.’ ” Luckily, the four were not injured when they went down in a remote canyon 23 miles north of San Simon; their surrounding protection of plexiglass and metal, cracked open. They kept their heads and each other awake, and “stuffed torn-up seats and maps into cracks in the helicopter cabin and wrapped their feet in newspapers...” They were there for 24 hours in that storm.

The Civil Air Patrol put up 14 planes and found the helicopter’s emergency locator transmitter signal shortly after noon the next day. Once located, a helicopter flown by the president of Southwest Helicopters, Don Hildebrand and also containing both the company’s co-owner and the Redmans’ 33-year-old son, were able to land about half-mile up from the wreckage. Hildebrand said “he had trouble finding the downed helicopter because of the driving snow... they searched about 50 canyons before they saw the helicopter and the survivors, who had been waving at the search craft.” (Star 1/20/1988)

## Murder Victim Dumped into Mine

**Jan 21, 1988**

On January 20, a 41-year-old miner, Byington K. Sims, working near Sonoita at the Gopher Mine, went to the Pima County Sheriff's Department about a vague extortion attempt against him by a co-worker. When detectives began investigating both men, they soon suspected a third miner was involved but that Sims and the other man, had shot and killed him. With further questioning, each miner implicated the other and both were arrested for homicide. One miner led deputies to where they'd thrown the gunshot victim into a deep mineshaft, 16 days before. To remove the body would require experts.

At least seven deputies and 17 members of the Southern Arizona Rescue Association responded, including 52-year-old Tom Harlan. It took about two hours to set up the pulleys and ropes over the shaft. In addition to the fear of rotten mine timbers and dangerous rock fall, there was also the real potential for lethal gas collecting in the deep pit over the years. Harlan and Sheriff's Deputy T. J. Price, receiving technical advice while also borrowing thirty-pound air-packs from the Arizona Department of Mine and Mineral Resources, were lowered through the eight by ten-foot opening that went straight down, with Harlan going first.

"About the same time bail [\$1 million each] was being set for the men, Southern Arizona Rescue Association volunteers and Pima County Sheriff's deputies pulled the victim's body up some 300 feet [sic: 270 feet] from the bottom of the mine shaft in the Empire Mountains, where it had been dumped." Harlan and Price were then removed safely. Joe Barr, a SARA responder and an expert on technical rope rescue, was asked by a *Tucson Daily Citizen* reporter "if the recovery was dangerous," Barr replied, " 'More so than most of what we do. It's hard to keep control, rock-fall, you know.' " (Citizen 1/22/1988; Star 1/22/1988)

## Heart Attack Victim

**Feb 27, 1988**

At mid-morning, Iselin Archer collapsed while hiking with a group in the Sierrita Mountains, six miles southwest of Green Valley. They were on 4,515-foot-high Tinaja Peak, when the 51-year-old man from Green Valley died of a heart attack. Initially, a Department of Public Safety helicopter was dispatched to the scene but officials decided the sheriff's ground team of 16 volunteers from the Southern Arizona Rescue Association should carry the deceased out to Interstate 19. (Star 2/28/1988)

## Rescued from Mount Graham

**Mar 1, 1988**

Failing to return from his hike on Mount Graham, concerned relatives of Allen W. Wittenbraker reported him overdue. "Rescue workers said they found [him] in a steep canyon near a fire that had gone out sometime during the night. His jacket was a few yards away." Located just after 6:00 a.m., the 36-year-old hiker from Safford, was unconscious and suffering from hypothermia because of the below-freezing night-time temperature. "Nine Graham County Search and Rescue workers, four Pinal County rescue workers and a helicopter from a Phoenix TV station took part in the search. He was located just below the snow line in rugged Marijilda Canyon." First taken by helicopter to the Mount Graham Community Hospital he remained unconscious for most of the short time he was



there. Concerned staff, had him flown to Tucson Medical Center where he was admitted in critical condition. While in both of the hospitals, he could only recall that “he fell on the mountain.” (Star 3/3/1988)

### **Rescued from Pontatoc Canyon**

**May 1, 1988**

About five hours after 19 volunteers from the Southern Arizona Rescue Association began looking for the couple, they were spotted by the helicopter crew of the Department of Public Safety. James R. Sellers, 54, and 19-year-old Karen R. Deo, were hiking in the area of Finger Rock and Pontatoc Canyons in the front range of the Catalina Mountains when they wandered off the trail, getting lost. At 1:40 a.m., the campfire they were using to keep warm, was seen from the air. Not hurt, they were flown out by the DPS. (Star 5/3/1988)

### **Injured at Seven Falls**

**May 24, 1988**

Witnesses reported 17-year-old Karl D. Brandenburg, “ ‘fell head first into a pool of water that was 4 or 5 feet deep. He was breaking his fall with his hands and arms, but did hit his head.’ ” The teenager had hiked into Bear Canyon with a group of twenty other young people. Dr. Ken Iserson, Medical Director for the Southern Arizona Rescue Association and one of the 25 SARA members to respond, said, Brandenburg “ ‘was not trying to dive into the water. He just slipped.’ ” The youth was airlifted out ninety minutes after the midday accident by a US Forest Service helicopter and flown to Tucson Medical Center and released. The accident took place on the second level of the stairstep Seven Falls. (Star 5/25/1988)

### **Located with Prodding Poles**

**Aug 2, 1988**

David M. Nash was just swimming with two friends at the time of this accident at Tanque Verde Falls. Deputy Tom Price of the sheriff’s search and rescue unit, said, “ ‘It wasn’t a fall and he didn’t jump into the pool... It looks like he just got caught up in that undertow and couldn’t get out.’ ” The University of Arizona student drowned when he got sucked beneath the upper waterfall in the gorge. In river parlance, a moving-water hydraulic like this is called a “keeper.” Responders began the efforts to locate Nash, but when an afternoon rainstorm threatened the gorge with flash flooding, the search was postponed until the next morning.

The body of the 21-year-old was soon located in the 15-foot-deep pool at Tanque Verde Falls by using prodding poles, largely manned by the twenty members from the Southern Arizona Rescue Association who responded. Deputy Price said:

“ ‘This will be a technical extraction,’ shortly after Nash’s body was located at 11:00 a.m. ‘A technical extraction,’ Price explained, ‘is an evacuation operation in which technical climbing skills and equipment are necessary.’ After rigging the gorge with a system of nylon ropes, climbing hardware, pulleys and a litter for the victim’s body, the team members began the slow task of hauling the body up several hundred feet past rock, cactus, and desert brush.

“A secondary rope system, employing a horse to help with the hauling effort, made it possible for team members to complete the extraction in about an hour. ‘This was actually a little faster than some I’ve been on,’ said Rescue Association Bill Seligman, who has taken part in four body-recovery efforts at Tanque Verde Falls. ‘Other times it has taken two or three days to locate the body and then get it out.’ ” (Star 8/4/1988)

### Fall at Windy Point

**Aug 20, 1988**

Since the 14-year-old had no rock climbing gear with him, it is unknown whether he was an experienced climber or not. Regardless, Jacob North fell seventy feet into a ravine, after slipping on loose gravel scrambling on a cliff at Windy Point, 14 miles up the Mount Lemmon Highway. Eighteen members of the Southern Arizona Rescue Association responded, as did a Department of Public Safety helicopter. Once he was placed into the Stokes Basket, he was hoisted out of the ravine by the DPS and flown to the hospital. He had neck and back injuries, a fractured arm and leg, and lost some teeth. He was admitted to Tucson Medical Center in critical condition. (Star 8/21/1988; Citizen 8/22/1988)

### Two Rescued from Santa Cruz River

**Aug 23, 1988**

At the airport, 1.38 inches of rain fell and at some measuring spots, over two inches were registered that afternoon. When Eddie McCown, 28, eased their four-man life raft into the Monsoon-swollen Santa Cruz River near Grant Road at 6:00 p.m., he probably never dreamed he’d require a rescue. Sharing in this Tom Sawyer-like adventure was McCown’s 13-year-old stepson. They “began to ride the white water to the bridge crossing on West Ruthrauff Road, where they were to be picked up by the boy’s mother. . . .” They ended up, however, becoming stranded on a sandbar in the middle of the roaring, muddy river after they lost their only oar and their small raft, beached. He later also confirmed he carried no safety equipment, such as an extra oar or life jackets and that he had also consumed about a six-pack of beer.

Called out on this rescue was the Department of Public Safety helicopter, which had to make two trips back and forth to pick the two would-be river runners, up. And the Tucson Police Department’s Air-Support helicopter was brought in to fly above the DPS ship to illuminate the scene. Both of these public safety units were there for about thirty minutes each. Between the two, their estimated cost was \$525. And the Tucson Fire Department had a fire-engine company there, at a cost of \$175. Additionally, a dozen volunteers of the Southern Arizona Rescue Association were called there, as was their Pima County Sheriff’s Department supervisor, T. J. Price, whose overtime came to about \$25. Then there was the actual follow-up investigation, which was an additional \$100. All total that rescue was at an expense of over \$825. That is over \$1,800 in 2021.

When interviewed later that night, McCown said, “ ‘he was aware of the imminent danger of death or serious injury into which he placed himself and his stepson.’ ” The results of the Tucson Police Department’s investigation was given to the Pima County Attorney’s Office. Despite public sentiment to prosecute Eddie McCown for acts of endangerment to himself, his stepson and the numerous rescuers, the deputy county attorney reviewed the case and ultimately said “there was no sign of criminal intent.” (Citizen 8/24/1988, 8/27/1988, 9/1/1988; Star 8/24/1988)

## Killed on Beehive Peak

**Sep 4, 1988**

Javier Reyes and a few friends were scrambling up 2,848-foot Beehive Peak in southwest Tucson, when the 20-year-old slipped and fell over one-hundred feet. He suffered extensive head and internal injuries just after 8:00 a.m. “Reyes was treated at the scene by paramedics from the Drexel Heights Fire Department then airlifted by the Department of Public Safety helicopter to University Medical Center, where he was pronounced dead a short time later...” Also responding were 25 volunteers from the Southern Arizona Rescue Association. (Star 9/5/1988; Citizen 9/5/1988)

## Drowning in Irrigation Ditch

**Sep 12, 1988**

The body of Valenta Jesus Soria-Perez was found at the bottom of the irrigation ditch in Marana. The intellectually disabled 37-year-old was last seen walking near the ditch that ran between his home and a small store he often frequented. When Sheriff’s Deputies found his red cap floating in the water, it was feared he had fallen in but, to further complicate matters, “sneaker prints were followed sometimes for miles.” According to Deputies, he might have been drinking.

“The Pima County Sheriff’s Department search and rescue team, assisted by [upwards of 17] volunteers from the Southern Arizona Rescue Association, searched the area late Monday night and early [Tuesday] morning but were unable to find a trace of the man.” The Department of Public Safety also flew low over the surrounding cotton fields, hoping to spot the man from the air. Workers used eight-foot poles to probe the canal, without success. The irrigation company shut off the water in the hopes the level would go down enough to help.

“One searcher noticed that one culvert was catching more debris than the rest. Firefighters, deputies and Marana police gathered to assist, but little could be done to search the culvert. A fire hose blasted water into the culvert, but the debris was not loosened. Finally, the Interstate-10 frontage road was closed as fire trucks pumped water out of the culvert.” Mykle Raymond of SARA, said “searchers removed much of the debris and finally found the man’s body...” (Citizen 9/14/1988)

## Survived 16 Days

**Sep 24, 1988**

After 16 days marooned alone in Buenos Aires National Wildlife Refuge, 13 miles north of the little border town of Sasabe, Shirley Miller was finally rescued. Nobody knew the Tucsonan was missing, however. The 68-year-old woman was driving on one of the back country dirt roads when her car became immovably high centered in a sandy wash, just five miles from the refuge headquarters. “Miller said she drank body fluids and from a water source she had found... It was not known if she had any food... she had extra clothes in the car which she used to stay warm.” She was picked up on October 8 by an unidentified hunter who, luckily for Ms. Miller, was driving down the remote road. (Star 10/9/1988; Citizen 10/10/1988; Mykle Raymond email 2021)

## SAR Chief Kenneth Sturgeon, Dies

**Oct 21, 1988**

Born in Ohio, Kenneth L. Sturgeon came to Tucson in 1941. He was a highly-decorated military veteran, having been a combat intelligence specialist in the US Army from 1945 to 1947 and then with the Marine Corps in the Korean War. He was an active member of the American Legion, Disabled American Veterans, Veterans of Foreign Wars, and an acclaimed volunteer with the Tucson Veterans Administration Medical Center. He was with the Tucson Police Department for a short time and then from 1951 to 1966, Sturgeon served with the Pima County Sheriff's Department, rising from deputy to captain. During his earlier years, particularly as a patrol deputy, he was recognized for his aggressive, successful policing.

On August 1, 1954, Ken Sturgeon was promoted to Sergeant in the Traffic Division which in the beginning, was also responsible for overseeing the Department's Auxiliary Deputy program, begun 11 weeks earlier under Sheriff Frank Eyman. These citizen-volunteers soon became a very visible, well-defined unit of the Sheriff's Department. It had a clear-cut command structure, was trained in basic policing, and was available for emergencies, its relevance here. Sturgeon's well-respected decade-long connection to Southern Arizona search and rescue may have begun because of his day-to-day involvement with Sheriff Eyman's Auxiliary Deputy program, almost from its beginning.

The earliest mention of Sturgeon in the newspaper in connection to a search and rescue event that the author could locate, was for the January 22, 1955, motor vehicle accident<sup>4</sup> where three teenage boys died and three others were seriously injured after going off the Catalina Highway. However, the first incident the author could find naming Sgt. Sturgeon as the Sheriff's Department's search and rescue supervisor,<sup>5</sup> was for three Boy Scouts overdue on Mount Lemmon, on June 17, 1955. After leaving the Sheriff's Department on December 16, 1966, Kenneth L. Sturgeon remained a member of the Civil Air Patrol and the Pima County Sheriff's Search and Rescue Unit. He was 64 years of age when he died. (Star 5/11/1954, 7/31/1954, 10/26/1988; Citizen 10/26/1988)

## Two Dogs Fall into Mine Shaft

**Jan 16, 1989**

In February 8, 1989, Don Sarlens had a Letter to the Editor published in the *Tucson Citizen*. He and two others were hunting quail in the Willow Springs Valley, northwest of Oracle on January 16. They left the area for the night and returned to their vehicle after dark. Three days later while again hunting, a dog suddenly disappeared retrieving a bird. "Before we could get close, another dog dropped out of sight. In the area where we had walked in darkness was a 170-foot-deep shaft."

Sarlens contacted Tom Harlan of the Southern Arizona Rescue Association. "About 15 members of this courageous group spent all day making sure our dogs were dead and not suffering. Sheriff's Deputy T. J. Price was lowered to the bottom to check the dogs and retrieve the collars. Hats off to some and an eternity in hell to the hole diggers." (Citizen 2/8/1989)

<sup>4</sup> See "Car Plunges 1,600 Feet in Bear Canyon," Jan 22, 1955 on page 153.

<sup>5</sup> See "Overdue on Mt. Lemmon Hike," Jun 17, 1955 on page 155.

## Hang Glider Rescue

**Jan 22, 1989**

The 30-year-old airman from Davis-Monthan AFB was lucky to be alive. Right after launching, Allen Paylor's hang glider spun around, hitting the same cliff he had taken off from; happily, he managed to land on a tiny ledge on the rock face. He was now four-hundred feet from the bottom and, still fifty feet from the top. He broke bones and suffered internal injuries. Paylor had two years of experience and was using the Carr Canyon Reef hang glider port atop the Huachuca Mountains, about five miles south of Sierra Vista.

It was also a tricky, four-hour rescue. "About 30 people from the [Cochise County] Sheriff's Department's Special Response Team and Search and Rescue Volunteers, the Fry Fire Department and the US Forest Service were sent to rescue Paylor. Two rescuers had to rappel down the face of the rock cliff to reach the injured man. . . ." Once back on top, Paylor was then flown to Tucson Medical Center by the Department of Public Safety. (Star 1/23/1989)

## Killed on Cat Mountain

**Feb 4, 1989**

Late in the afternoon, the two teenagers rode an all-terrain vehicle to the base of the sheer rock face and began scrambling up 3,852-foot Cat Mountain. Just before 4:15 p.m., Mark Arriola, 14, fell maybe fifty feet, dying at the scene from a head injury. Authorities began the rescue with an Arizona Department of Public Safety helicopter; steep terrain, however, kept the crew from reaching the boy. "A team made up of Drexel Heights firefighters and members of the Sheriff's Department Search and Rescue Unit," including 22 members of SARA, hiked in to reach the body. "It took rescuers five hours to move Arriola's body to the foot of the mountain. . . ." As of November, 1991, there was a white cross in the Tucson Mountains near that spot commemorating the death of Mark Arriola. (Star 2/5/1989; Citizen 2/6/1989)

## Professor Collapses

**Feb 23, 1989**

With about twenty mostly casual hikers, 65-year-old Roger A. Anderson, himself an avid hiker, was challenging the Pontatoc Canyon Trail in the Catalina Foothills. All were enjoying the companionship as well as the sun and gentle weather at 1 p.m., when the retired professor of aerospace and mechanical engineering from the University of Arizona, collapsed. Feeling dizzy and nauseous, he blacked out and became unconscious, although was conscious and talking when the helicopter from Davis-Monthan AFB, arrived and flew him out.

"Assistance came quickly after another hiker called the Pima County Sheriff's Department. The department's search and rescue team was aided by the Southern Arizona Rescue Association [18 responders], a volunteer group." Mrs. Anderson believed her husband was very healthy and she never thought, even while hiking out of the canyon, that this emergency would take his life. But at 5 p.m., minutes before she got to the hospital, it had.

"Despite the ordeal, Mrs. Anderson said she was impressed by the rescue association. 'That rescue squad, the volunteer one, was wonderful,' she said. 'I think that would be a good place for people to send remembrances.' " She then further asked that any tributes be sent to the Southern

Arizona Rescue Association or the Catalina United Methodist Church, with the article providing the addresses. (Citizen 2/25/1989; Star 2/25/1989)

## Trapped in Catalina Mountains

**Mar 25, 1989**

“ ‘We huddled together and prayed all night,’ ” said one of the four teenage boys trapped and lost for two days by a sudden snowstorm in the Catalina Mountains. The local Sabino and Canyon del Oro High School students were 14, 15, 16, and 18 years old. A parent had dropped them off atop Mount Lemmon at mid-morning Friday and they were to be at the parking lot in Bear Canyon by 7:00 p.m., Saturday night.

Sgt. James Kirmse of the Pima County Sheriff’s Department and in charge of this mission, determined that trail distance was about 23 miles, altogether. “ ‘... the trip was much longer than they anticipated...’ ” They did not make the pre-arranged time and so, with the rain and snow making it more urgent, the search for them began at 1:30 a.m., Sunday morning.

Jeff, the 15-year-old, would later say, “ ‘We got lost coming down the trail from Lemmon Rock and then that rainstorm hit us. We tried to wrap ourselves in the tent but it leaked too much and we finally put it up.’ ” Rain turned to heavy snow, with more than 18 inches falling in the mountains Sunday night and temperatures plunging into the 20s. Some 1.5 inches of rain fell in Tucson during that time and enough snow fell so that the ski area on Mount Lemmon, opened. On Saturday, the boys ran across a lone hiker, who gave them information on which way to go. “ ‘They were obviously lost,’ ” he would soon tell searchers.

Initially, about 25 volunteers from the Southern Arizona Rescue Association began combing all along the trails the young men should have been taking. As it would later be learned, once the boys were caught in the storm, they ended up pitching their tent some distance off the trail and could not be seen from it by rescuers passing by. They tried to start a fire with some charcoal blocks but these turned out to be too wet. Up to sixty searchers, some with dogs, were looking for the boys since Saturday. In fact, one of the boys would say, “ ‘Later that night, we heard dogs barking and concluded people were looking for us and we would be rescued in the morning.’ ”

Also involved in the search were four helicopters, including one from the Marine Corps base in Yuma, which is the one that finally located the tent with the boys inside. Other than some minor frostbite and bruises, they were fine. (Citizen 3/27/1989, 3/28/1989; Star 3/27/1989)

## Thirteen Murders

**Mar 29, 1989**

Mexican Federal Police went to the Los Alamos Ranch, two miles west of Agua Prieta, with suspicion of multiple slayings having recently taken place there. (It was later determined these happened on March 24 and 25.) Over the course of two days, they found nine bodies, including three women, one with her fingers cut off in torture-like style and one six-months pregnant. Four of these corpses were discovered in a four-foot-deep earthen septic tank covered in lime, seemingly to hasten decomposition. Five more bodies were retrieved from a 75-foot-deep cement-lined well with eight feet of water in the bottom.

Stunned by what they were finding, the overwhelmed Mexican authorities asked for assistance from the Pima County Sheriff’s Department. Homicide detectives, investigators and crime-scene



technicians as well as at least seven volunteers from the Southern Arizona Rescue Association and Pima County Search and Recovery Divers, responded to the sister-city across the border from Douglas, Arizona.

After search and rescue divers retrieved one body from the well, a second one immediately rose to the top of the water. And then a third man was found; as with the first two victims, his hands were bound behind his back and he'd been shot and strangled. One Pima County sergeant said, "I've seen scenes like this before in grisly movies...it was like a killing field." In all, there were eight bodies pulled out of the well. Authorities knew it was drug related, likely in retaliation for something, although they did not yet know for what. The primary suspect was 45-year-old Hector Fragoso Burgueno, the owner of the property, a deserted feed lot. He was a native of Agua Prieta but had fled to the United States, since he allegedly was a citizen there. He was now wanted in both countries.

These twelve assassinations were also directly tied to five mass-murders found in Tucson on March 27, according to the FBI. Fragosa Burgueno, known as "Tombstone," was captured in Three Points, 25 miles southwest of Tucson on April 20. The next day, a 13<sup>th</sup> body connected to this bizarre case in Mexico was found outside of Agua Prieta. Ultimately, Jesus Ruiz Tapia was sentenced to thirty years in prison for torturing and killing the 12 victims found on the abandoned property. A criminal charge for the 13<sup>th</sup> shooting was not mentioned.

"Ruiz Tapia told police the massacre was a result of a dispute over a shipment of marijuana and was ordered by Hector ("Tombstone") Fragoso Burgueno...the killings were a 'settling of accounts...'" Burgueno was to be deported in April 1992 but only days before being sent back to Mexico to face Mexican justice, Burgueno was arrested on warrants for several major drug charges in the United States and ended up being in a maximum security prison in Colorado. He was waiting to be extradited to Mexico for his part in the killings there. (Star 4/1/1989, 4/2/1989, 4/14/1992, 4/26/1992, 8/20/1992; Citizen 4/11/1989)

## Beulah, the Bloodhound

**Apr 28, 1989**

Beulah was a bloodhound and searched for lost people and bodies. "Since she was 6 weeks old, she has trained in cadaver detection and her skills are impeccable, said Sgt. Richard Kagy, canine specialist for the Kansas State Industrial Reformatory." Kagy had been both raising and working with Beulah since she was a pup. "Her extensive training is worth about \$10,000 but she was a steal, Pima County paid \$700...I didn't feel like she was getting the time and attention she deserved...Her specialty is cadaver detection, mostly shallow graves but she never got a call for that in my area.'"

At the time, Beulah was the only cadaver dog that belonged to a law enforcement agency in the State of Arizona. "She is ready to work cadavers now, and after 90 days of intensive training she'll be ready for tracking..." An expert, known by his peers as the best bloodhound trainer in the nation, believed that this breed can "smell a trail 10 to 12 times over that of a German Shepherd." On June 30, Beulah graduated from her tracking training and within two hours, was being used to look for a woman with memory issues who had wandered away from her home. In addition to Beulah, the Pima County Sheriff's Department had eight other dogs: two for drug-sniffing, one for bomb detection, and five patrol dogs. (Citizen 5/13/1989, 7/13/1989)

## Heat Overcomes County Supervisor

**May 21, 1989**

Pima County Republican Supervisor, Greg Lunn, suffered a serious case of heat exhaustion while hiking in Pima Canyon in the western end of the Santa Catalina Mountains. Lunn was in there with his executive aide, Shannon Davis and was there since Pima County was considering buying some property at the mouth of the canyon. The pair had gone over five miles and had reached the upper end and were now heading back down. The 36-year-old Lunn was an experienced hiker and avid bicyclist. Recognizing the symptoms, he stopped and got into the shade of a tree while Davis went out for help. “Davis said she walked for three hours ‘in the heat of the day’ to get help.” At least 31 volunteers from the Search and Rescue Council, Incorporated, including several posse members on horseback, responded. Lunn was brought out by horse since there were no helicopters readily available. (Star 5/23/1989)

## Lost in Lemmon Creek

**May 27, 1989**

Jack Eutsler, Jr., 37, who suffers from a serious but controllable medical condition, was camping in the Wilderness of Rocks with a group of twenty others. The University of Arizona student was discovered missing at 6:30 p.m. Saturday evening.

The man’s friends searched the immediate area after finding him missing but waited until 7:30 a.m., the next morning, to report the incident. At this point he had been gone for 13 hours. “Nearly 40 deputies and volunteers from the Southern Arizona Rescue Association helped in the search that began at 10:00 a.m. Sunday,” said Pima County Sheriff’s Deputy Tom Price.

Fourteen hours after being reported missing, Eutsler was found on a steep ledge, “‘trying to stay out of the wind.’” And, although not life-threatening, the temperatures up there at the time were in the low 40s, which may have affected his condition. Besides being dehydrated, he had seizures during his ordeal. But this search and rescue mission was not over yet.

It then took another 13 hours to move him from where he had become trapped in the remote, steep canyon of Lemmon Creek, out to a spot where he could be airlifted by a US Forest Service helicopter, in the area to fight a forest fire. After being found, he would say, “‘... he just walked away from the group to see some sights, and became disoriented and lost his way.’” (Star 5/30/1989)

## Teen Drowns in Pena Blanca Lake

**Jun 3, 1989**

Jeffrey Demond Collier, 15, was on a Tucson High School field trip, along with twenty other students in the Black Culture Club. One of the two chaperones had warned them not to leave the group without his permission. Eighteen people had drowned in Pena Blanca Lake since it opened in 1957, according to Forest Service records.

At 9 a.m., not long after they arrived, Collier “jumped off a twenty-foot cliff, hit the water, and yelled for help. He was swimming real fast and he started slowing down and yelling, ‘I can’t make it, I can’t make it.’” This was according to an 18-year-old friend who had just made the same leap right before Jeffrey. A second companion went in to rescue Collier, but later said, “they were both pulled down into the lake.” He struggled to drag him to shore, but Collier went down and did not

resurface. “It was like something pulled him; he just shot down like a rocket.” When he drowned, he was only 15 feet from land.

Eleven members of the Southern Arizona Rescue Association, which included the Pima County Search and Recovery Divers, responded; it took several hours for them to find the body in the murky lake water. They recovered the young man about 2:45 p.m. (Star 6/5/1989)

## A Confused Man Dies

**Jun 12, 1989**

For six days he was missing. It was June with its typical, over 100-degree days and 77-year-old Ralph Lopez, “believed to have been senile and easily confused,” was last seen at 5 p.m. He lived with his son and daughter on Tucson’s far southwest side. “Deputies, search and rescue volunteers, US Border Patrol trackers and state Department of Public Safety officers conducted searches Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday in the desert near where Lopez was last seen. He was never spotted by search crews.” An in-law found Lopez on the morning of June 18 in a remote section of desert, not too far from where he had lived. (Citizen 6/17/1989, 6/19/1989)

## Body in Saguaro National Monument

**Jun 26, 1989**

On Tuesday, a park ranger became suspicious after seeing Raymond Savchuk’s rental car parked in Saguaro National Monument’s picnic area for two days. The 36-year-old steelworker from Ohio was vacationing in Arizona. A preliminary search was conducted late that afternoon and a full-scale effort was begun the next morning. It involved a Department of Public Safety helicopter and members of the Sheriff’s Department’s search and rescue unit, including 15 volunteers from the Southern Arizona Rescue Association. The following morning his body was found about a quarter-mile from the picnic area. It was under some shrubs and there was no water nearby. No evidence of foul play or trauma was located and it was suspected at the time that he had died of exposure. (Star 6/29/1989)

## Missing For A Month

**Aug 31, 1989**

When Annette Barbea did not show up at her sister’s in Phoenix, the family soon reported the 25-year-old woman missing. Two days later they found the pickup truck abandoned (with purse but no keys) in a pullout in Gates Pass in the Tucson Mountains. Relatives would soon tell authorities this was a favorite spot of hers, enjoying the sunsets and the solitude. They would also say she was introspective and “studied her Bible a lot... She wrote philosophically about life in general.” To them, she also seemed increasingly depressed.

For the next three days, deputies and searchers, including at least 21 members of the Southern Arizona Rescue Association, fanned out from the pullout, but found nothing. “Tracking dogs might have picked up the woman’s scent in an area indicating she might have been moving toward the Tohono O’odham Indian Reservation west of Gates Pass, deputies said.” In fact, Barbea lived in that direction on the San Xavier Indian Reservation with her two children. After three days the active ground search wound down and deputies pursued investigative leads, but nothing further was developed.

On Sunday, October 1, a month after Annette Barbea disappeared, two hikers were standing on a boulder on the east side of Golden Gate Mountain. Looking down, they spotted a decomposed body in a crack, partially hidden by a tree. You had to be almost directly above to see her. Nineteen volunteers from SARA responded and removed the young woman. The autopsy and toxicology report indicated nothing unusual. “ ‘We can’t find anything that could indicate foul play,’ ” one homicide detective said. Ruled an accidental death, she apparently died of exposure, possibly from the heat. “It appears she laid down to rest.” (Citizen 9/5/1989, 10/4/1989 10/7/1989; Star 10/4/1989)

### **Dies on Incinerator Ridge**

**Sep 2, 1989**

While hiking on a weekend camping trip with a group of friends, John E. McCord, 25, accidentally stumbled into some bushes and then fell about sixty feet, dying quickly. The accident took place on Incinerator Ridge, not far from the Palisades Ranger Station. He was on a one-mile-long trail leading to a scenic overlook when the accident happened. A 1984 Sahuaro High School graduate, McCord was a bouncer and assistant manager at a local nightclub. Pima County deputies and 13 members of the Southern Arizona Rescue Association responded and recovered the body. At one time, the incinerator, which is no longer there, was used to burn garbage and refuse generated on that part of the Catalina Mountains. (Star 9/3/1989, 9/4/1989)

### **First Hospital-Based Air Ambulance**

**Oct 2, 1989**

University Medical Center’s Air Care helicopter became the first hospital-based air ambulance in Southern Arizona and only the second within the state. The other was at Good Samaritan Hospital in Phoenix. At the time, the region was routinely only being served by one of the state’s four Department of Public Safety helicopters, which was then stationed at Tucson Medical Center. It was exceeding 1,200 flights per year, “twice the industry standard for helicopter transports” and the most of any of the four DPS ships.

The Air Care helicopter was a twin-engine MBB/Kawasaki BK117, which could carry two patients simultaneously. It had a cruising speed of 148 mph and the flight team consisted of four full-time pilots, nurses, paramedics, coordinators, and a mechanic. It was being leased from Rocky Mountain Helicopters, Inc., in Utah and was costing about \$2 million. Oversight was being provided by Dr. Daniel Spaite, the program’s medical director.

At least in the newspapers, it appeared there were no significant “turf wars” between Air Care and the Arizona Department of Public Safety. “If both helicopters are available, the DPS chopper will be sent out on search and rescue missions, while the UMC chopper will handle, for example, the transport of a newborn to an intensive-care nursery.” (Star 10/6/1989, 12/29/1989; Citizen 10/6/1989)

## Richard Casanova Retires

**Mid-Oct, 1989**

On December 2, 1963, the last of the 18 Titan Missiles had just been positioned around Tucson and the “Cold War” with the Soviet Union was now even more unpredictable and perilous.<sup>6</sup> A two-part “CBS Reports,” which aired on national television on November 9, 1961, said, “Tucson is a doomed city in the event of an atomic attack.” Richard Casanova, with all of this nuclear threat as a backdrop, began his career in local civilian defense in 1962.

Louis A. Meager was Director of Civil Defense for both the City of Tucson and Pima County and his budget was split three ways—city and county provided half and the federal government the other half. Dealing with the bomb became their principal job, not search and rescue.

In March 1973, Richard Casanova was the Operations Officer for the Tucson-Pima County Department of Emergency Services when he was named Director, succeeding Raymond J. Downey. Casanova was a professional and dedicated and highly regarded among his emergency service peers around the country. So much so, that in October 1983, he became the Vice President for the US Council of Emergency Managers, formerly the US Civil Defense Council. The following year he rotated into being President of this national group.

On July 1, 1985, Casanova’s unit, once a stand-alone department within the county government was realigned and absorbed into the Sheriff’s Department and he became the Manager of Emergency Services, under the Sheriff. In 1987, two years before he retired, his office had five paid staff, six military reservists and an annual budget of \$160,000 (\$353,600 in 2021). “Emergency services went from primarily war preparedness to disaster preparedness.”

Richard Casanova, beginning in 1962 in the midst of the Cuban Missile Crisis as a training and education officer in emergency services, retired in 1989 as the county’s Director of the Office of Emergency Management, which also included a much-diminished Civil Defense. (Citizen 4/24/1963, 3/8/1973, 10/19/1983; Star 12/3/1963, 7/9/1985, 8/9/1987)

## Missing Deer Hunter

**Nov 18, 1989**

Bill last saw his 72-year-old father, Jack T. Ross, at 6:00 a.m., walking up a ridge going out in search of a Whitetail deer. Jack was a skillful hunter and, according to his son, “knows the area well... [and] is still capable of making long and difficult hikes.” However, also according to his son, “ ‘The last year or two he’s been getting a little disoriented. He could have walked out to the other road...’ ” Jack Ross was one of the founders of the Record Desert Whitetail Club and had been president of the Tucson Rod and Gun Club three times.

Father and son, along with some friends who were also hunting, were in the Las Guijas Mountains, about forty miles southwest of Tucson. A little over four hours after he saw his father leave camp, Bill heard some rifle shots and thinking optimistically, thought, “Dad got his deer.” He soon headed out to help his father bring the animal in. After hours of unsuccessfully scouring the area for the missing man, however, Jack Ross was finally reported overdue that night to a Pima County Sheriff’s Deputy in nearby Arivaca.

At its height, there were about one-hundred searchers in the field. This included “rescue teams from the Pima and Santa Cruz County sheriffs’ departments, Department of Public Safety, Arizona

<sup>6</sup> The last of the 18 Titan Missiles was removed from Tucson on June 28, 1984. (Citizen 6/29/1984)

National Guard, Arivaca Fire Department, helicopters, bloodhounds, horseback riders” and volunteers from the Southern Arizona Rescue Association and the Tucson Rod and Gun Club. According to search leaders, coverage of the area seemed to be very good.

“ ‘One of the guys in my posse lost a halter and the helicopter found it. If they can find something like that, they ought to be able to find a man if he’s still out there,’ said Deputy Pete Alegria, search and rescue chief for the Santa Cruz County Sheriff’s Department.” After more than a week with not even a clue, the focus of searchers turned to the “hundreds of abandoned mine shafts” in the area. “ ‘He could have walked into one in the night,’ [Bill] Ross said.”

On November 28 and 29, the search was reduced considerably although there was still some emphasis on the many mine shafts in the area. On December 2, two weeks after Jack T. Ross disappeared, his body was discovered by a family member who alerted the US Border Patrol. He was found not too far from the base camp then being used by search teams. It appeared he had been “walking in the dark and fell twenty feet into a rocky wash. . . .” He suffered a broken hip and broken ribs and in addition, had possibly experienced some heart ailment as well as serious exposure to the mid-November cold. (Star 11/20/1989, 11/25/1989, 11/26/1989, 11/27/1989, 12/3/1989, 12/6/1989)



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# CHAPTER 12

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1990–2000

## Lost on Sunday Hike

**Mar 18, 1990**

Victor Herwarth, 48, picked up his two sons Sunday morning for a daylong hike on Mount Lemmon. Herwarth was experienced and Todd, 19, and his 9-year-old brother, Luke, had been with their father on previous similar adventures. They parked their vehicle in the General Hitchcock Campground and took off. When not home when due, the boys' mother called authorities. Search and rescue volunteers and deputies, supported by an Air National Guard helicopter, began searching early the next morning.

The three hikers left the camp area, taking a trail that leads to the west. They were still climbing the path late in the day, and “‘when the sun went down, they became lost.’” The trio spent a long night, with temperatures down to near freezing and with snow still on the ground in spots. They were able to huddle around a fire and stay somewhat warm. The following day, “‘Instead of finding their way out of the canyon, they encountered dead ends, box canyons and trails that petered out,’ the father said.”

“Ground crews found tracks in the general area of the Geology Vista...and directed the Air National Guard helicopter to concentrate there...” Then a Department of Public Safety crew spotted the three about 11:00 a.m. near Geology Vista and when searchers on the ground reached them, they were taken to an open area and airlifted to a local hospital for observation. Slightly dehydrated, they were otherwise doing fine. About thirty search and rescue workers took part in the mission. (Citizen 3/20/1990; Star 3/21/1990)

## Trapped in 30-Foot Hole

**Mar 26, 1990**

Forty-year-old Bob Glammeier was now at the bottom of a four-foot wide, thirty-foot-deep hole, with a broken right ankle. He was in this tube working for a drilling company, sub-contracted to build concrete columns for an aircraft hangar at Tucson International Airport. While scooping out dirt, an eight-foot-long, several-hundred-pound section of a metal casing slipped, striking Glammeier's back and ankle.

The airport's fire department arrived at 8:20 a.m., four minutes after the accident was reported and before long, an unnamed fireman was beside Glammeier, administering oxygen in the tight space. He was also assessing the ankle and maybe most importantly, weighing the options on how to get them both out. By today's trenching and confined-space construction and safety standards, Glammeier should not have been down there in the first place, certainly not without a multitude of safeguards.

Also responding to this odd emergency were the Sheriff's Department, Air National Guard, Tucson Police and Fire Departments, and 17 volunteers from the Southern Arizona Rescue Association, including Mykle Raymond. Maybe because he was already wearing a harness, Raymond soon found himself hanging off the large metal hook of a construction crane, being lowered into the pit. Over thirty years later, Raymond was still not sure how he ended up going into that hole, but he and the other two men were down there now. Within a dozen or so minutes of Raymond getting there, the ankle was immobilized and all three were hoisted out. Bob Glammeier was admitted to University Medical Center in guarded condition. (Star 3/27/1990; Mykle Raymond email 6/29/2021)

### Night Hiker Falls 160 Feet

**Apr 9, 1990**

About 10:00 p.m., Joseph Small and three friends hiked with a case of beer into the Seven Cataracts of Bear Canyon, off Mile Post 9 of the Mount Lemmon Highway. By 1:00 a.m., when they began hiking back, all 24 cans had been consumed, six cans each. "They were walking on a trail along the top of a canyon a few minutes later when one of the men heard noises that sounded like falling. No screams or yelling was heard, though. The man walked back to the source of the noise and saw Small lying at the bottom of the canyon." The 26-year-old man had fallen about sixty feet, hit a rock outcropping, and plunged one-hundred feet more.

When Deputies and volunteer responders from the Southern Arizona Rescue Association, reached Joseph Small about 4:00 a.m., he was dead. At dawn, they and the Department of Public Safety helicopter crew, were able to remove Small by helicopter hoist out of the rugged terrain. (Citizen 4/10/1990; Star 4/11/1990)

### 12-Year-Old Rescued

**Apr 15, 1990**

Volunteers from the Southern Arizona Rescue Association far more enjoyed aiding Johann Bass than recovering Joseph Small, only five days before. See "Night Hiker Falls 160 Feet," April 9, 1990, page 422. The 12-year-old boy Johann and his young playmate were scrambling on a small mountain called Mount Milton in the southwest part of Tucson, when Johann became trapped on a cliff. His young friend was able to get word to the Sheriff's Department and SARA responded. There was a nice photo in the newspaper of SARA member Larry Brewster, helping to lower Johann safely to the ground. (Star 4/17/1990)

### Two Drown in Lyman Lake

**May 12, 1990**

Chad Young, a 5-year-old from Eagar, drowned and his father, Thomas, was missing and presumed dead, as well. The lad fell off a raft at 1,500-acre Lyman Lake and his 26-year-old father tried to

rescue him. Chad and his 9-year-old brother, John, were on the inflatable craft near shore when a gust of wind carried it about one-hundred feet out, where the two boys then fell overboard. Thomas and a woman friend of his swam out to get the two boys; she was able to safely bring in John, but the younger son and his father disappeared. Thirty minutes after the accident, a boater pulled Chad's body out of the water and CPR was begun. Within another half-hour, he was in the hospital in Springerville, where sadly, he was pronounced dead.

The search for Thomas Young was hindered by high winds, which among other things, made the water very murky. Two days after the man went under, two dogs trained in locating cadavers were flown into St. Johns from Ogden, Utah. Riding in a boat, they were able to detect suspicious odors rising from the lake near where he went down. The Apache County Sheriff's Department asked for assistance from Pima County and on Wednesday, May 15, six members of the Southern Arizona Rescue Association and the Pima County Search and Recovery Divers, began diving. Over the three days there, the now seven divers spent 183 hours in the search for Thomas. Five days after he went missing, the divers from Pima County found Thomas about 120 feet from shore. (Arizona Republic 5/14/1990, 5/18/1990)

### Rescuer Nearly Drowns

**Jul 15, 1990**

Ron "Kip" Jones of Phoenix, nearly drowned trying to rescue 22-year-old Brian M. Ormsby at Tanque Verde Falls. From Tucson, Ormsby "dove 20 feet into a narrow area at the base of a small waterfall around 6:00 p.m., witnesses said." Two men who saw Ormsby tumbling over and over in the water, and hearing people scream, " 'He's down there. He's down there,' " tried to rescue him. Jones tied a small rope together with a dog leash to extend the length, and leaped in. The rope broke as soon as the 35-year-old jumped in. Jones " 'about landed right on him...I grabbed one of his feet and went to pull him up, but I couldn't get any leverage. And then I tried to get out of there. I came up three or four times. I was pretty scared. I'm a strong swimmer, believe me, and I gave it everything I had to get out of the water... The last time I came up, I got help getting out.' "

The accident happened about 6:00 p.m., and the first deputy arrived at 6:30 p.m., and "Full-scale rescue efforts began by 7:00 p.m." More than twenty rescuers from the Sheriff's Department and the Southern Arizona Rescue Association, worked for nearly three hours to recover the body, "which was held down by the raging stream fed by recent rains." (Star 7/16/1990)

### Sunbather Goes Over Tanque Verde Falls

**Jul 20, 1990**

While sunbathing with friends, 23-year-old Joseph M. Bice was "feared drowned in the Tanque Verde Falls," which "rain water has filled..." In shifting his position while trying to catch a pair of sunglasses thrown to him by a friend, he slipped on the wet rock and fell over the eighty-foot-high [one article says "40 feet"] waterfall. Witnesses did not see him resurface in the pool at the bottom. A Department of Public Safety helicopter scoured the area from above but there was no sign of Bice. About six deputies and "20 search and rescue volunteers from the Southern Arizona Rescue Association searched the grounds around the falls and in the water." About noon the following day, he was found "at the base of Turkey Shoot [sic: Chute] Fall..." Turkey Chute Fall is a name given by the Southern Arizona Rescue Association to a specific waterfall among the many cliffs comprising Tanque Verde Falls. It was coined for their in-house use to help avoid delays in a rescue. (Citizen 7/21/1990, 7/23/1990)

## Man Feared Lost in Santa Cruz River

**Jul 24, 1990**

“The rain was among the heaviest in Tucson’s history. An unofficial rain gauge on the far Southwest Side [Tucson] recorded 2.31 inches between 7:30 and 8:30 a.m. The storm dumped up to 4 1/2 inches of rain on parts of the city in a little more than two hours.” By anyone’s standards, it was a momentous, near-record cloudburst, of which Southern Arizona has seen its fair share. Sudden in onset, it was a deluge with accompanying need for quick, decisive response. There were many dramatic rescues that morning and one extended search. In fact, the SARCI Database entry for that date succinctly notates: “Multiple River Rescue Calls: Westside Waterways.” Tom Price was the Sheriff’s Department SAR Officer on duty, with Deputy Rick Sturgeon backing him up.

People soon gathered along the Santa Cruz River near West Saint Mary’s Road about 9:30 a.m., to watch the raging water in the usually dry riverbed. The softened banks were collapsing into the river and onlookers were foolishly crowding too close to the edge. A man reportedly fell in and quickly disappeared from their view. Police and fire promptly began hunting for him, but calling it off after about 1 1/2 hours. It was conjectured if he had not already crawled out alive somewhere downstream, he was already beyond help and their collective rescue efforts were urgently being needed elsewhere.

Two boys, 9 and 11, were stranded chest-deep in the rushing floodwaters under the South Palo Verde Boulevard overpass. They had slipped in after riding their bikes too near the steeply-banked, cement-lined wash. Rural Metro Fire Department handled that rescue fairly easily. The kids were scared but not hurt. At about the same time, a policeman was injured when he was electrically shocked while helping people evacuate from their flooded mobile home. He was treated and released.

The 71<sup>st</sup> Special Operations Squadron, an Air Force Reserve Unit based at Davis-Monthan, launched one of its HH-3, “Jolly Green Giants,” reacting to a request of the Drexel Heights Fire Department. “ ‘We were told there were two individuals stranded in a wash,’ said John Klemack, Executive Officer for the unit.” But they had been rescued before the helicopter could get there and they then stood down.

The Western Army National Guard Aviation Training Center near Marana, was preparing to launch a UH-60 Blackhawk assisted by two smaller, light operations helicopters, from the Silverbell Heliport. They were just waiting on the “Go Ahead” from the “Emergency services command post.” A man “was pulled from his car on the far Southwest Side by the state Department of Public Safety helicopter [Ranger 32]... when his car was inundated by rising water.” Major highways were flooded and city underpasses were filled. The 911 Call Center was swamped with emergency calls.

“The calls came into 911 as steadily as the rain fell. People were stuck in washes, stranded in vehicles, and some even trapped in homes they feared were about to float away. Sgt. Richard Kastigar, sheriff’s spokesman, said there were more emergency calls than could be handled by police, fire and rescue. ‘We took care of every call regarding a life-threatening situation,’ he said. ‘There were just too many other calls to answer them all.’ Law enforcement officials were busy all morning, most of the afternoon and part of the night rescuing people who drove vehicles into flooded areas despite warnings.

“Kastigar said the Emergency Operations Center, a gathering of public safety organizations from across the valley, was activated for the first time since the destructive flood of 1983. See “13 Die, Including DPS Pilot and Paramedic,” September 30–October 3, 1983, on page 372. A seven-member river rescue team stood by at Grant and Silverbell roads, and helicopters from several agencies swooped around the area in case assistance was needed.”

And the man who allegedly fell in and disappeared? The day following his disappearance, Sergeant Robert Suizbach of the Tucson Police Department said, “ ‘I would imagine if someone fell in and they haven’t found him, he’s probably drowned.’ ” But he had not been fully accounted for; no one reported missing a family member or any sign that he had been washed away. But with all of the homeless living in and near the Santa Cruz, you can’t help but wonder if that man was camping there and was never missed? (Citizen 7/24/1990, 7/25/1990)

### Rescuer Nearly Drowned

**Aug 16, 1990**

Nick Dewey, after pushing an unidentified boy away from the brink of a six-to-eight-foot-high waterfall, almost drowned himself. His leg became lodged and he was pulled face down into the fast-moving water at Tanque Verde Falls. For some ninety minutes, Dewey was held head down over the pool, mostly submerged in the falling water. Three visitors and a friend of Dewey somehow kept him from drowning by pulling his left arm and chest above water until the sheriff’s search and rescue team arrived. “ ‘Search and rescue had to place a harness around his chest as the water was rushing hard. The rescuers had to pull on his left arm to keep his head above the water. He was in agony. As a matter of fact, he passed out a few times,’ ” said Sgt. Richard Kastigar with the Sheriff’s Department. Once the harness was in place, deputies got Dewey out by pulling him back toward the current. He was taken to Tucson Medical Center, where the next day he was listed in satisfactory condition. (Citizen 8/17/1990)

### Graduate Students Killed in Plane Crash

**Sep 9, 1990**

The two University of Arizona graduate students were just going to take a Sunday afternoon ride, so a small plane was rented from Ryan Airfield. Octavian Funariu, 31, was an experienced pilot, and was enrolled in a doctoral program in atmospheric sciences. His passenger was 25-year-old Thomas “Blake” Lilly, in school working on a master’s degree in the same field. When they did not return in a timely fashion, the Sheriff’s Department and Civil Air Patrol were notified. The CAP spent the next day searching for the missing two men and the following day, the Department of Public Safety, joined in.

“A DPS helicopter rescue crew spotted the downed single-engine Cessna 150 shortly after sunrise... The wreckage was about five miles southeast of Ryan Airfield in a small wash... [the two men] appeared to have died instantly.” (Star 9/12/1990)

### Car Careens Off Gates Pass

**Sep 17, 1990**

Somehow, all five young people survived the harrowing 380-foot plunge down the mountainside near Gates Pass, despite four of them being ejected. One, the 18-year-old driver of the 1988 Chevrolet Camaro, Santiago Altamirano, was celebrating Mexican Independence Day in Kennedy Park on Tucson’s southwest side. Reportedly, he had consumed 12 cans of beer and had stopped several times along the way to vomit. He had also picked up the others at the park after all had been drinking.

Passengers told investigators that Altamirano “was driving about 50 mph in a 15-mph zone. The driver did not heed the protests of the passengers to slow down,” reported Sergeant Rick Kastigar. “‘There were no skid marks at all on the road,’ said Chief Ron Ballard, a spokesman for the Pima County Fire Chief’s Association. ‘There was no attempt to stop.’” Luckily, the one teenager who was not thrown free of the car was so frightened by the driver’s behavior he even fastened his seat belt. Deputies said it took twenty firefighters from four agencies an hour to cut the driver free from the vehicle, which was upside down on top of him. (Citizen 9/17/1990; Star 9/18/1990)

## Plane Crash in Chiricahua Mountains

**Nov 4, 1990**

After their small plane crashed, Carl Rowe, 37, and his 52-year-old brother, Robert, hobbled for four days through the rugged Chiricahua Mountains. Down from Phoenix, the two were scouting for deer that Sunday, when Carl carelessly flew into a tight box canyon and did not have enough room to turn around. He chose the lesser of the evils so, going as slow as he could get the Cessna 182, he “pancaked” in, nose and prop up. “‘It was the best landing you could have made between two trees,’ said Robert Rowe.” Robert broke his wrist, nose and ribs and Carl a foot and wrist. As Robert would later declare from his hospital bed, they “were extremely lucky they were alive.”

Their plane was last seen refueling in Douglas, Arizona, and the Civil Air Patrol and the Cochise County Search and Rescue team, began looking for the aircraft later that night. Authorities were hampered, however, by bad weather and were unsure what part of the extensive mountain range to begin looking in. The pair emerged from the mangled wreckage with only what they had on them, and a wool blanket. And luckily—in this case—Carl was a smoker, so he had a cigarette lighter. “At night, they huddled together around heated rocks to keep each other warm. ‘It wasn’t too cold during the day, until [Wednesday], when it was raining,’ Robert Rowe said.” They were now experiencing hallucinations.

Four days after the crash, the brothers stumbled onto a trail. “‘Until we found [it], we just didn’t really have any sense of direction,’ Rowe said.” They were then able to literally limp into Portal, the hamlet on the east side of the Chiricahua Mountains. (Star 11/9/1990)

## Mine Rescue of Teenager

**Nov 9, 1990**

David Keeling of Mesa was deer hunting with six family members, 15 miles northeast of Tombstone. The group had set up a camp in a rugged, wooded canyon across a dry wash from an abandoned silver mine. Along with his two younger cousins, Landon and Trevor, 15-year-old David spotted the mine shaft and curiosity won out and they all decided to investigate it. “‘We were throwing rocks into the hole,’ Landon said. ‘David got up close to the edge. He was trying to push some rocks in with his foot and it just went right down.’” Landon said, “‘I yelled down there. Are you alright? But he didn’t answer.’”

David’s brother-in-law was nearby and rushed to the lip of the pit. “‘I stepped across it—a good stretch step—and I could see his body down there. Then he started moaning. . . He started responding when I called down. He had that injured sound you’d have after a fall like that.’” The boy’s uncle raced to Tombstone and notified the Town Marshall’s Office and asked for help. Rescue units from the Cochise County Sheriff’s Office, Sierra Vista Fire Department, US Forest Service, Pearce/Sunsites Fire Department, and a team from the Tombstone Ambulance Service,



all responded. Sergeant Wally Capas, a SAR Coordinator with the Sheriff's Office, served as the Incident Commander and organized the rescue.

Rolando Gomez, a paramedic with the Sierra Vista Fire Department was the first rescuer to reach Keeling. Gomez was lowered into the thirty-foot-deep hole by rope. Major Larry Dever of the Cochise County Sheriff's Office also descended to assist Gomez in getting David into a special stretcher and back out. When the paramedic reached the teenager, Keeling was " 'conscious, alert, and oriented. . . . ' " It appeared he had a serious cut above his eye with some bleeding and probably a broken leg. Once loaded into an ambulance he was taken from the mountainous accident scene to where two helicopters were standing by. The helicopters were never identified but were probably the Arizona Department of Public Safety and possibly the Air Force out of Davis-Monthan AFB.

Capas described Keeling as being quite lucky. He thought the accident could have been worse if the shaft had not curved just a bit at the bottom, which possibly " 'tended to break his fall a little.' " He said the incident was one of about a half-dozen in which people have fallen into Cochise County mine shafts in the last five years." (Star 11/10/1990)

### Hiker Dies in Pima Canyon

**Nov 23, 1990**

Oscar Rudolph, a 64-year-old retiree living in Oro Valley, was hiking with family members in Pima Canyon. He stumbled and fell down a fifty-foot embankment about 10:00 a.m. The group was close enough to nearby houses so their screams brought authorities to them. "Members of the Southern Arizona Search and Rescue [sic] Association, the Sheriff's Department and the Rural Metro Fire Department hiked into the canyon to get Rudolph and carry him to a helicopter landing zone." The Department of Public Safety helicopter flew the man to University Medical Center, where he was pronounced dead at 1:30 p.m. (Citizen 11/24/1990)

### Rescue in Agua Caliente Cave

**Dec 31, 1990**

Late in the afternoon of New Year's Eve Day, two young men from Arivaca, Kevin P. Sears, 20, and Chad Stack, about 20, were exploring Agua Caliente Cave in the western end of the Santa Rita Mountains for their second time. They were climbing through a small tunnel when Sears fell at least sixty feet, not once, but twice. He needed help at the bottom of the eighty-foot-deep shaft, 150 feet from one of the entrances to the cave. "Stack apparently climbed out of the cave without the aid of a flashlight and then summoned help with his 911 call from Amado." It was believed the two had "only one flashlight and a rope that was unsuitable for the job."

A Santa Cruz Sheriff's Deputy arrived first and within an hour, units from Green Valley Metro, Rio Rico, Tubac-Tumacacori, and 17 volunteers from the Southern Arizona Rescue Association, along with a deputy from Pima County, were on scene. Chris Marion, a firefighter-EMT from the Tubac-Tumacacori Fire Department, along with four others, was the first to reach Sears; soon determining the man had cuts, abrasions, and possible fractures of his left arm, left femur, and pelvis. " 'I've never seen anybody in as much pain as he was in,' said Ms. Marion." Permission was received to administer pain-killing morphine and then placement onto a backboard. There were 42 people in the cave to assist with the rescue and at 1:15 a.m., a helicopter was called to transport the man to a hospital. (Citizen 1/1/1991; Unidentified newspaper clipping, possibly from Green Valley)

## John Bownds Honored With Hal Foss Award

**1991**

University of Arizona mathematics professor John Bownds received the National Association for Search and Rescue Hal Foss Award, its highest: “For many contributions to the advancement of search management, including the research and subsequent publication of papers on several new techniques and skills that will lead to a more effective response to lost person incidents. In addition, many years of dedication and effort with the Pima County Search and Rescue Unit involving SAR missions all over the State of Arizona are noteworthy.”

The Hal Foss Award was established in 1974 and was “to recognize significant contributions to search and rescue at the national level.” Hal Foss could be considered the “Godfather” of inland SAR in the United States. He was the Search and Rescue Coordinator for Washington State Civil Defense and Emergency Services between 1970–1974, the country’s first full-time SAR Coordinator. On November 30, 1970, nine men from five western states formed the National Association of Search and Rescue Coordinators, which would become the National Association for Search and Rescue. Hal Foss was elected the first Chairman of this group. (David Lovelock email 9/3/2021; NASAR Award Website)

## David Lovelock Honored With State Award

**1991**

University of Arizona mathematics professor David Lovelock was honored with the National Association for Search and Rescue 1991 State Award for Arizona. This recognition was created in 1974 and was for “significant contributions to search and rescue at the state and province level.” He is a volunteer with the Southern Arizona Rescue Association since 1979.

He received the award, “For many contributions to the advancement of search management, including the research and subsequent publication of papers on several new techniques and skills that will lead to a more effective response to lost person incidents. In addition, many years of dedication and effort with the Pima County Sheriff’s Search and Rescue Unit involving SAR missions all over the State of Arizona are noteworthy.” (David Lovelock email 9/7/2021)

## “Mountain Searches: Effectiveness of Helicopters”

**Feb 1991**

In May 1981, four men joined forces to examine the effectiveness of helicopters in searching a desert environment. Their results were published in “Desert Searches: Effectiveness of Helicopters.” See “Desert Searches: Effectiveness of Helicopters,” May 1981, on page 351. Almost ten years later, three of these same people, John M. Bownds and David Lovelock, Professors of Mathematics at the University of Arizona, and Sheriff’s Sergeant Charles P. McHugh, came together once again. In this effort, they were joined by Anita Harlan, Professor of Botany with the University of Arizona. She was also a long-time volunteer with the Southern Arizona Rescue Association. This time, the team was investigating the value of helicopters in searching for a lost person in a mountain environment. The helicopters were the same as in 1981, HH-1H “Hueys,” Detachment 1 37<sup>th</sup> Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadron, stationed at Davis-Monthan AFB.

Used for this study was Green Mountain and its eastern drainage basin, Bear Canyon, in the Santa Catalina Mountains. “This area was chosen for the experiment because it is relatively safe

terrain for mountain helicopter flight. It represents typical mountain terrain in which people frequently become lost; and finally, it is not time consuming for capable hikers to reach their assigned position and act as lost persons.” Unlike the previously mentioned desert trial in 1980–1981, ground cover here was a dense mixture of evergreen and deciduous vegetation. This included Ponderosa pines of seventy feet in height. These various blends of plants created interesting scenarios for the searchers, flying above.

Like in 1981, results were analyzed, conclusions were drawn; these products and outcomes were published by the National Association for Search and Rescue, in a 35-page study: “Mountain Searches: Effectiveness of Helicopters.” Helping to illustrate this document was Sergeant Laurence G. Cripe, a traffic reconstructionist with the Pima County Sheriff’s Department.

Similar to the desert study, the mountain experiment exposed the complexities of finding lost persons. Like any search asset, helicopter searches have strengths and limitations. (Chuck McHugh interview 2/12/2022, Chuck McHugh email 5/13/2023)

### Boy Killed on Mount Lemmon Highway

**Mar 31, 1991**

Eric Gallegos, 16, was one of three passengers in a vehicle when it went off the Mount Lemmon Highway around 2 a.m. The 19-year-old driver tried to pass another vehicle on a curve between Mileposts 4 and 5. He lost control and plunged off the road. Both young men were ejected from the car while the other two passengers were not. Gallegos was pronounced dead at the scene of the accident. It took 21 volunteers from the Southern Arizona Rescue Association several hours to bring up all four people. (Star 4/1/1991)

### Car Falls 750 Feet

**Apr 12, 1991**

When his compact car missed a curve early in the morning, an unnamed man veered off the Mount Lemmon Highway at about Milepost 3. He was thrown free of the vehicle one-hundred feet down the steep embankment, with his car then coming to rest about 750 feet below the road. The rescue by Sheriff’s Deputies and at least 16 volunteers from the Search and Rescue Council, Incorporated, took two hours to complete. The man had to be carried up the canyon side to a waiting helicopter. Due to an ongoing construction project on the road, it was covered with gravel. (Citizen 4/12/1991)

### Toddler Wandered Away

**Apr 27, 1991**

Clad only in a diaper, Derreck Clay wandered away from his parents’ mobile home in an undeveloped part of Pinal County, twenty miles southwest of Maricopa, late on Saturday afternoon. He had been playing with his 4-year-old brother and foul play was not suspected. A major search for the 2-year-old quickly ramped up and after being missing for two days, “Two deputies from the Pima County sheriff’s search and rescue squad and about 20 volunteers [from SARA],” traveled north and joined in the search. “As of last night [Monday], more than 100 volunteers had reported to help search for the child.” There were officers from four counties and the Arizona National Guard involved, along with horses and helicopters.

Over three days later, Tuesday night, Derreck was found more than two miles away from where he lived and quickly flown to Good Samaritan Hospital in Phoenix. He was listed in critical condition when found at 10:30 p.m., principally due to dehydration. (Citizen 4/30/1991; Star 5/1/1991)

## Ignored Mine Shaft Barricades

**May 22, 1991**

Joseph Cantenella and three companions were target shooting in the desert, some 35 miles northwest of Tucson. After stumbling onto what at first appeared to him to be a cave entrance, the 30-year-old's curiosity was piqued and he went inside. It quickly proved not to be a cave but rather, a mine tunnel; twenty feet in, he encountered "Keep Out" barricades. "He stepped through an opening in the fence and began walking slowly toward what he thought was a continuance of the cave. What followed was a bumpy fall, darkness and the powerful stench of a dead animal." The 30-year-old Cantenella had fallen into the mine's thirty-foot-deep shaft; somehow, he did not break anything when he fell. State Mine Examiner Doug Martin, would later say, "there are 2,000 abandoned mines in Pima County, many of which are dangerous."

One of his friends who was wise enough not to follow, said he heard, " 'rocks falling and a couple of moans.' After determining what had happened, another friend, Joe Buffo, 27, tried to descend the shaft to rescue Cantenella. Buffo went down about 12 feet before realizing the shaft was too deep." Buffo was now also stuck, some twenty feet above his friend. Sgt. Rick Kastigar, Sheriff's Public Information Officer, said, "The... Sheriff's Department handles about three or four mine rescues a year." And Mine Examiner Martin stated, "law enforcement and emergency services statewide handle an average of one mine rescue a month."

Pima County search and rescue, including 16 members of the Southern Arizona Rescue Association, the Pinal County Sheriff's Office and Marana and Avra Valley fire departments all went to the rescue. The decaying javelina that had plunged into the shaft only a few days before was the two men's putrid companion during the four hours it took for them to be pulled out. (Star 5/23/1991, 5/24/1991)

## Scout Lost in Chiricahua Mountains

**May 25, 1991**

Chris Mullican was enjoying playing hide and seek with the other Scouts from Tucson; when they were all done at 2:00 p.m. that Saturday, however, he failed to come in. This was more than play; it was also part of an outdoor skills exercise. "The game's object was for Scouts in Chris's patrol to make their way back to camp near Rustler Park, about nine miles west of Portal, without any of the nine supervising adults seeing them." Chris had only been a Boy Scout for about a year.

When the 12-year-old was still missing four hours later, the Cochise County Sheriff's Department was finally called, as were the volunteers from nearby Portal (Arizona) Rescue unit. The scout troop of 14 boys and ten adults was camping in the Chiricahua Mountains, and nighttime temperatures were in the mid- to high-30s at this 9,000-foot level. Chris was wearing only a T-shirt, jeans and hiking boots. Where he went missing is very rugged and remote and so the search for the boy began late that first night.

By Monday, upwards of sixty people were looking for Chris, including volunteers and officials from three counties. Two helicopters, one from the US Forest Service and the other from the Arizona

Department of Public Safety were there, as was at least one dog team. On day two of the search, Chris's mother said he didn't have the survival skills for finding food, "But he does know to stay in one spot and get shelter." After Chris was found, he would describe what he did. " 'When it got dark, I found a place where the trees were pretty close together. . . settled down next to a log. . . and covered myself with leaves to stay warm.' " And then as a black bear came close, " 'I just got away from him and hid down farther in some bushes until he went away.' "

At 4:00 p.m. on day three of his being lost, "weary but smiling rescue workers began to emerge from the dense oak and pine" with the news that Chris had been found. He had traveled four miles from where he was last seen, ending up near Anita Spring. Searchers had made voice contact with the boy the night before, but due to the confusing terrain in that part of the mountain range, they were not able to find him until the next afternoon. There were at least eight different agencies involved, including DPS, Forest Service, Portal Rescue, and officials from Cochise, Pima, Graham, Greenlee, and Maricopa counties. Three teams of tracking dogs, three aircraft, and more than one-hundred workers responded to this effort.

This all began when Chris and his fellow Scouts were being trained and tested in outdoor and survival skills. Chris's Scoutmaster, Burt Lazar, would say after the boy was found, " 'You won the game, little man. . . I think we'll have a special meeting and you can tell everyone in the troop how you made it out there.' " (Citizen 5/28/1991, 5/29/1991; Star 5/28/1991, 5/29/1991)

## Divers Recover Two from Mine Shaft

**Jul 8, 1991**

The two 13-year-old girls were seen leaving a community party in the little rural town of Elfrida at 1:00 a.m., Monday morning. Reportedly, they left willingly with the two local men. The teenagers were not seen alive again. Mandy Meyers and Mary Snyder were two of only eight children in their upcoming eighth-grade class at the 45-pupil school in nearby McNeal. About 9:30 a.m., the girls were reported missing, but a search party was unable to find them until 20-year-old Randy Ellis Brazeal turned himself in, six hours later. He led Cochise County deputies to the girls, both strangled, stabbed, sexually assaulted and dumped into an abandoned fifty-foot-deep shaft, about twenty miles northeast of Tombstone. There was ten feet of water from the recent rains in the bottom of the isolated pit. Brazeal also had implicated 38-year-old Richard Dale Stockley, arrested for the slayings later in the day in Benson.

A team from the Pima County Search and Recovery Divers was immediately called in and they found the first girl about 9:00 p.m., but continued to look all night for the second. Six hours later, they brought out the other girl. In November 1991, Brazeal received two, twenty-year consecutive sentences without the chance of parole for his part in the abduction, rape and murder of Mandy and Mary. On July 14, 1992, Stokley received the death sentence for the two murders, as well as an additional 69 years for abduction and rape.

On November 1, 1991, a Sheriff's Commendation was presented to the Pima County Search and Recovery Divers by Pima County Sheriff Clarence Dupnik, for their involvement in this incident. (Star 7/8/1991, 7/9/1991, 7/10/1991, 11/13/1991; Citizen 7/15/1992)

## Drowned After Being Dared

**Jul 16, 1991**

A dare between friends ended in 42-year-old Willie Rogers dying. Two couples along with several children were picnicking in Christopher Columbus Park, formerly Silverbell Park, on the west side of Tucson. The two men in the group had been drinking and at 6 p.m., challenged each other to swim the width of the lake from south to north. The water is treated sewage effluent and swimming is prohibited, which of course, did not keep the competitors from going in.

About half-way across the lake, one of the men decided he could not make it and returned to shore. Rogers kept on going a few more yards and then he too, decided to return to where his friend was. Seconds later, he began flailing and about forty feet from shore, he went under. His party had been calmly watching this competition but when Rogers went down, they began screaming. Some of the witnesses who were fishing and playing nearby went for help and one onlooker went into the water and attempted to rescue the now submerged man. “ ‘That man really did a great job. He didn’t just dive in and start looking for the victim in a panic,’ ” Fire Captain Rick Evans said. “ ‘He methodically started to search and when firefighters got there, he was able to tell them exactly where to look.’ ”

“Nine firefighters with rope tied around them searched the bottom of the lake for Rogers. After about five minutes, the man was found. . . submerged in 6 to 7 feet of water for 25 to 45 minutes.” Quickly brought to shore, paramedics began treatment, ultimately taking Rogers to Saint Mary’s Hospital where he was pronounced dead. (Citizen 7/17/1991)

## Woman Dies in Carr Canyon

**Sep 2, 1991**

Along with four hiking companions, 21-year-old Emily Clark of Sierra Vista was slowly moving along a narrow trail on the granite ledges of the 550-foot-high Carr Canyon Waterfall when “she had a misstep and went down.” It was estimated she fell 250 feet. One of the party was able to climb down to the young woman’s body but the other three waited on a ledge to be rescued. Cochise County Search and Rescue volunteers recovered Clark, who was pronounced dead at the scene. Rescuers also rappelled from the top of the cliffs to reach two of the trapped women. Although not said, the third must have been able to get off without assistance. Using harnesses, the responders were able to “pull them about 200 feet to the top.” The two articles referred to “at least 18 fatalities by 1986” and “the scene of more than 15 similar deaths in as many years. . . .” (Star 9/4/1991; Citizen 9/4/1991)

## Rescue on Cat Mountain

**Nov 11, 1991**

Steven Berninger was narrowly missed by the basketball-sized rock knocked loose by the hovering helicopter. The 18-year-old had just been rescued off a ledge on 3,852-foot-high Cat Mountain. He had been hiking for ninety minutes in the Tucson Mountains with two teenage friends, when he slipped and fell 15 feet. “ ‘I know it was God that saved him. . . I was told that was the only ledge around, and without it to catch him he would have fallen to the bottom,’ ” said Berninger’s mother, watching “as a rescuer dangled on a rope from the helicopter near her son.”



In addition to the helicopter out of Davis-Monthan Air Force Base, at least 16 rescuers from the Drexel Heights Fire Department and the Pima County Sheriff's Search and Rescue Unit, including SARA, worked for four hours, aiding Steven Berninger. (Star 11/12/1991)

## Two Crewmen Killed in Medivac Crash

**Mar 4, 1992**

Helicopter pilot Dale Matthews, 32, radioed his company, Medivac 1, at 7:09 p.m., reporting his position. He and the other two onboard the medical transport, were 14 minutes from landing at the Mount Graham Hospital in Safford, Arizona. They had left their base at Tucson's St. Mary's Hospital and were enroute to bring a heart attack patient back to Tucson Medical Center. Along with Matthews, were Flight Nurse Susan Ben-Asher Newton, 26, and Glenn Velardi, a 34-year-old paramedic. By not arriving at the Safford hospital within thirty more minutes, those tracking the medivac helicopter knew something was terribly wrong.

Matthews was described as, "Very experienced, Mr. Cool and Mr. Safety. He had flown [that] route more than 20 times. He's the person you would want to make this flight if you were on it." He had been flying for Medivac 1 for a year. Newton was a graduate of the University of Arizona College of Nursing, becoming a flight nurse in August 1990, after working in the St. Mary's Intensive Care Unit for two years. Both she and Velardi had been with Medivac 1, for about 18 months. He had seven years as a paramedic and had recently come to Tucson from New York and had been trained to survive in hostile environments. According to a company spokesman, this crew was "among the best of the company's five crews."

Not too long after it went missing, the downed French-made Aerospatiale 350 helicopter, was located near Riggs Flat Lake at the 8,200-foot level on Mount Graham, twenty miles west of Safford. It was found with the help of its emergency locator signal by a US Customs helicopter, in the air at the time. But at first light, neither they nor the Department of Public Safety, could get even close to landing on the rugged mountainside. Incredibly, however, someone was signaling to them from the steep, snow-shrouded slope below—Glenn Velardi.

Graham County Sheriff Richard Mack, had sixty law enforcement and state officers available and ready to go at nearby Fort Grant. However, he said, " '...there was no way anybody was getting in there on foot... That's the most rugged terrain in this entire mountain area.' " At 2:00 p.m., Deputy T. J. Price, a paramedic and head of Pima County Sheriff's Department Search and Rescue and Dr. Richard Carmona, chief of trauma services at Tucson Medical Center and an Auxiliary Sheriff's Deputy, prepared to rappel the sixty feet into the crash site. At this point, Velardi had been lying in the fatal wreckage for 19 hours.

With DPS pilot Loren Leonberger doing incredible precision flying, aided from within the rescue helicopter by DPS flight medic Al Quezada serving as spotter, Price made the first rappel. He began stabilizing Velardi, who had fractured vertebrae and ankle, chemical burns, head wounds and was suffering from hypothermia from the low nighttime temperatures. Price was soon joined by Dr. Carmona, quickly determining Newton and Matthews were both deceased.

Carmona used a special rescue harness and together, he and Velardi were on a 75-foot-long-line lift out<sup>1</sup> and flown to a flat spot a mile away. There he was placed inside the ship and taken to Tucson Medical Center, aided by Dr. Carmona. Deputy Price was soon removed and later that day, both Dale Matthews and Susan Ben-Asher Newton were recovered.

<sup>1</sup> This is a technique using a special harness hooked to a rescuer who is attached to a line dangling beneath the helicopter. If successful, victim and rescuer are then lifted out of the rough terrain to a suitable landing site.

Velardi told investigators he heard the alarm sound from the altimeter which was designed to warn the pilot of being too close to the ground. “ ‘All of a sudden, there was black ahead of us and above us...black all around us...it was a really scary feeling. When the eerie darkness surrounded the helicopter, Matthews tried to turn around—away from the darkness... We kind of got slammed....’ ” Velardi would also soon say that when he was medically cleared to do so, he definitely wanted to go back to work.

That October, the Pima County Sheriff’s Department gave its highest honor, a Medal of Merit, to Dr. Richard Carmona and Deputy Tom Price, “for their daring long-line lift out rescue of the injured Velardi. DPS Pilot Loren Leonberger and crewman Al Quezada, were given Achievement Medals.” Then from 2002 until 2006, Dr. Richard Carmona served President George W. Bush, as the 17<sup>th</sup> Surgeon-General of the United States. As such, he was a Vice Admiral in the Public Health Service Command Corps. (Star 3/6/1992, 3/7/1992, 3/8/1992; Citizen 3/5/1992, 3/10/1992, 6/19/1993, 6/26/1993)

## Two Rescued from Romero Canyon Cliff

**Mar 19, 1992**

Travis Potter, 21, and 18-year-old Matthew Wilhelm, became stuck when climbing a cliff in Romero Canyon in Catalina State Park, on the north side of the Santa Catalina Mountains. They had gone up about 75 feet and, is often the case, were then afraid to climb back down. They were stuck for about three hours until someone noticed their predicament and called the Sheriff’s Department. Quickly responding and in sizing the situation up, SAR Deputy Rick Sturgeon hauled rappelling gear up to the trapped pair and, without further fanfare, helped the two down. No fuss, no muss! (Citizen 3/20/1992)

## Long-Line Lift Out

**Mar 29, 1992**

Geraldine Gulibon-Clay, was hiking with friends at Tanque Verde Falls when she lost her footing near the stream, which was running higher than normal due to recent rains. The 27-year-old was swept downstream and across three water falls, plummeting eighty feet over the last fall. It was estimated the woman was submerged for at least an hour before search and rescue workers reached where she was trapped. “About 12 sheriff’s search-and-rescue workers tried to free Gulibon-Clay with a long-line lift out...” Dr. Ken Iserson and other members of SARA spent at least five to six hours trying to extricate the woman. A long-line lift out was finally performed by Ranger 32, the Department of Public Safety helicopter and crew. She was pronounced dead at Tucson Medical Center. (Star 3/30/1992; Citizen 3/30/1992)

## Drowning in Arivaca Lake

**Mar 29, 1992**

Charles “Randy” Blair of Nogales, was fishing on ninety-acre Arivaca Lake with his 17-year-old brother-in-law, Mike Garner, when their canoe capsized at 8:00 p.m. Garner was able to swim to shore but 33-year-old Blair, could not. Others in the area began circling the lake, looking for Blair, although the lighting was very poor. In less than ninety minutes, rescuers were on-scene, with two deputies rowing the lake in a borrowed boat. They were able to note where Blair was last seen but

were not able to search farther due to darkness. At 7:00 a.m. the next morning, “some 10 to 20 search and rescue volunteers, including about six divers, began to search the murky depths.” At 12:30 p.m., the missing man was brought to the surface. (Star 3/31/1992; Citizen 3/31/1992)

### Sheriff’s Certificate of Appreciation

**Apr 3, 1992**

The Pima County Search and Recovery Divers received a Certificate of Appreciation from the Pima County Sheriff’s Department for “Outstanding Service and Dedication.” (PCSRD records)

### Dies Free-Climbing Pusch Ridge

**Apr 12, 1992**

Tom Bingham, 35, was described as “an avid, experienced hiker, and it was not unusual for him to travel alone.” His best friend, Alan Fischer, however, had a difficult time understanding why Bingham fell 65 feet to his death while “free climbing” [without ropes] a granite face on the western end of Pusch Ridge. “‘He was far too well-versed and smart’ to climb rocks without equipment... the act would be out of character...”

Bingham was experienced with ropes and related climbing hardware, and in fact, had spent five days the week before, teaching climbing, team work, and safety to a local day school. He was co-owner of a hiking tour company, taking people on guided hikes and, improving their rock-climbing skills and was a volunteer with the US Forest Service maintaining trails.

He left for the hike he had planned on for three years at 7:00 a.m.; when he did not return by 9:00 p.m., his girlfriend notified the Pima County Sheriff’s Department. A search was begun late that night; just after first light the next morning, a University Medical Center’s Air Care helicopter crew spotted the man’s body. Volunteers with the Southern Arizona Rescue Association hiked to the scene and determined that Bingham was dead. His climbing gear was found in his backpack at the base of the cliff he was climbing. Put into a metal litter by SARA, he was lifted out by long line, by the Department of Public Safety. An Army National Guard helicopter was a backup, in case the smaller helicopter was unable to complete the mission. (Citizen 4/14/1992)

### Drowning in Patagonia Lake

**Apr 20, 1992**

Martin C. Martinez was swimming in 250-acre Patagonia Lake, 75 miles south of Tucson, when he ventured out of the marked swimming area and began struggling. A fisherman threw him a rope but the 23-year-old man could not catch it. He disappeared and was presumed drowned. Witnesses told authorities that Martinez had been drinking. State Park Rangers and “a Pima County Sheriff’s Department search and rescue team was combing the lake for the body...” After scouring the lake for two days, the body of Martin C. Martinez of Tombstone, was recovered. (Star 4/22/1992; Citizen 4/24/1992)

## Golden Rule Award Finalist

**Apr 29, 1992**

At the time, the Golden Rule Award was an annual, national competition sponsored by the J. C. Penney Company, in cooperation with the local Volunteer Center and the *Tucson Daily Citizen* Newspaper. It recognized volunteerism within the community. A list of five winners was forwarded to the National Golden Rule Award competition in Washington, DC., with one of the names on the Individual Awards list being also named as Tucson Citizen of the Year—this would be a volunteer with the Pima County Victim Witness Program.

Of the several other awards also affiliated with this recognition, one was in a Group Awards category, with a winner and also two finalists, one of which was SARA. “The Southern Arizona Rescue Association has served the area for 31 years, conducting search and rescue operations with the Pima County Sheriff’s Department.” (Citizen 4/29/1992)

## Injury near Windy Point

**Jun 10, 1992**

“‘The fall should have killed him,’ said Sheriff’s Deputy Doug Myrvold. ‘He attempted to jump from one rock to another and fell down a 60-foot crevice. He then rolled and tumbled another 150 feet.’” Sergio Contreras, a 26-year-old from Tucson, was scrambling around the rocks at a pullout just south of Windy Point on the Catalina Highway when he fell. A 23-year-old friend with Contreras flagged down a vehicle who quickly reached the Palisades Ranger Station to report the accident. Rural Metro Fire Department and twenty volunteers from the Southern Arizona Rescue Association hiked down a side trail to get to Contreras. At 5:45 p.m., about two hours after the fall, a Davis-Monthan AFB helicopter was able to hoist him out and fly him to Tucson Medical Center, where he was admitted in guarded condition. (Star 6/11/1992; Citizen 6/11/1992)

## Busy Weekend

**Jun 27–28, 1992**

The Southern Arizona Rescue Association was called out on three separate incidents that weekend.

Early Saturday afternoon, John Childs left for a short hike out of Summerhaven with his dog. When the pet took off chasing a racoon, Childs went after it, becoming lost in the process. Over four hours later, the animal returned home but its 25-year-old owner did not. Pima County Sheriff’s Search and Rescue was notified and an all-night search began. Childs was found over two miles from Summerhaven at dawn the next morning. He was fine.

On Sunday morning, two 16-year-old girls went for a walk from their cabin on Ski Valley Road, near Summerhaven. When Michelle Wells and Rebecca Mosher did not return as expected, authorities were notified. Despite the fairly mild weather, “searchers were still concerned for the girls’ safety because they did not have any food or water with them and were not prepared for an out-doors overnight stay.” They were found in good condition at 1:30 a.m., in a deep ravine on the north slope of Mount Lemmon, over three miles from their cabin. “The girls told authorities they had gotten lost and headed down the ravine, thinking it would intersect a road.”

Sunday afternoon, 33-year-old Howard L. Hammond, was on an outing at Tanque Verde Falls with friends when he slipped on wet rocks, severely injuring his back and feet. “He slid and tum-

bled 20 to 30 feet into the upper falls canyon. Deputy Thomas Price said search and rescue volunteers carried Hammond out of the area. He was taken to Tucson Medical Center, where he was listed in satisfactory condition.” (Citizen 6/29/1992)

## Search for Murder Victim

### Jul 11, 1992

Hector Soto Juarez went to the convenience store to pick up some food and never made it back to his home on Tucson’s East River Road. The 25-year-old Pima Community College student was missing and officials quickly suspected foul play. When his credit card began being suspiciously used, it was feared Juarez had been killed. Police were already conducting a criminal investigation and two suspects were soon identified—search and rescue was not yet involved. That is, not until 12 days later when an anonymous tip came in describing in vague detail, that Juarez’s body was in the desert off the isolated Asarco-Silverbell Mine Road, west of Tucson.

On Thursday, July 23, following up on the nebulous tip, a police helicopter scanned the area for any type of clue. Once that was done and without any results,

“...rescue teams trekked through the washes and bushes for nearly four hours... about 25 miles northwest of Tucson but did not find the body of Hector Soto Juarez. Carrying backpacks, water, food and plenty of sunscreen, the volunteers covered about 5 3/4 miles on both sides of the road, said Scott Clemans, a search and rescue volunteer for 26 years. Volunteers tried to concentrate on odors that should be investigated and might lead to a decomposing body, Clemans said.”

The search was very difficult, with tire tracks or other clues being wiped out by recent rains. And at best, the physical boundaries of the search area were imprecise. Such as, “look for a dirt road in a hilly area that was in good enough shape to be reached in a car without four-wheel-drive,” according to Scott Clemans, one of the 22 volunteers of the Southern Arizona Rescue Association there. Late the next day, Friday, the search was called off as the description for the area was just too ill-defined. As it later was learned, the anonymous tip had been called in from Denver by 23-year-old Jeffrey Merrick Logan, the accomplice of Thomas Arnold Kemp, 44, who had actually killed Juarez.

That same Friday, Logan told a television station in Denver that he was one of the two men sought by investigators in the disappearance of Juarez, as well as a couple in Flagstaff. Saturday, he turned himself in to Tucson Police and the FBI, and on Monday afternoon, he led officials back out to the area of interest, now substantially reduced in size at this point. Also called back in to assist on this new search, was the horse-mounted Sheriff’s Posse, 15 members of the Southern Arizona Rescue Association and homicide detectives, with the Department of Public Safety helicopter and an FBI plane, assisting. It was Tom Harlan of SARA who stumbled upon the body of Juarez.

Harlan, 56, had decided to poke around a little outside the outer edge set by detectives and found the body less than a half-mile north of that perimeter. “Harlan said he spotted two boots on the slope of a small drainage area as he worked his way through some brush.” Coincidentally, only a few hours later, Kemp was arrested at the Gospel Rescue Mission in Tucson. He was charged with first-degree murder, kidnapping, and armed robbery. (Citizen 7/24/1992, 7/29/1992; Star 7/24/1992)

## Yellow Fever Virologist Disappears

**Aug 24, 1992**

In 1937, the vaccine for Yellow Fever was developed and made available to the world. On October 18, 1951, Dr. Max Theiler, received the Nobel Prize in Medicine for his work on this mass killer of the tropics. Theiler often modestly claimed virologist Hugh Hollingsworth Smith should have received the prestigious recognition. A graduate of John Hopkins University School of Medicine, Dr. Smith spent the last ten years of his notable career on the faculty of the University of Arizona, 1958 to 1968. He lived in the Catalina Foothills near Tucson's Ina and First Avenue, which is where he wandered away from that Monday afternoon.

Suffering a memory-affecting stroke several years before, the 89-year-old scientist had increasingly become prone to being disoriented when walking in the desert near his home. A friend reported Smith missing at 3:30 p.m. and because of the summer heat, his age, medical history, and memory loss, an intense search was quickly begun by the Sheriff's Department for the man. Sergeant Chuck McHugh coordinated the efforts, which included deputies and the Southern Arizona Rescue Association, with 18 volunteers showing up to assist. A US Customs helicopter spotted Dr. Smith at 10:40 a.m. the next morning, lying safe but tired in the sand of a large brushy wash not too far from his home on Ina. He was suffering from heat exhaustion. (Citizen 8/25/1992; Star 12/19/1995)

## Rockhound Lost

**Nov 26, 1992**

When Laura Arnold did not return by 4:00 p.m. from her rock hunting trip, friends began looking for the 76-year-old woman. After four hours of fruitless searching by them and now long after dark, she was reported missing to the Cochise County Sheriff's Department. About thirty local fire and ambulance volunteers of the Portal, Arizona Rescue squad scoured area roads but waited for the arrival of a team of tracking dogs before beginning a general search of the hills out of Portal. At daybreak, a Department of Public Safety helicopter joined the hunt, now with about one-hundred law enforcement officers and volunteers, including a dozen trackers on horseback.

At daybreak the next morning, Arnold was spotted from the air, just minutes before the mounted trackers got to her. She was in good condition. " 'She survived the [below-freezing temperatures] by walking most of the night. She'd walked in a big circle and walked too far by the time it got dark. . . She is a real rockhound. She was carrying about 20 pounds of rocks when they found her.' " (Star 11/28/1992)

## Injury at Cochise Stronghold

**Nov 26, 1992**

Falling 15 feet while rock climbing in the Dragoon Mountains, 45-year-old Barbara Calef, suffered head injuries and multiple fractures of her right arm and pelvis. From New Mexico, she was with her husband and two friends when she landed in boulders at the bottom of 6,542-foot-high Rockfellow Dome. It took a Cochise County SAR team about three hours to reach the seriously injured Calef because of the rugged and rocky terrain.

"A specially equipped helicopter from the Yuma Marine Corps Air Station airlifted Calef from the scene at 1:27 a.m., more than nine hours after her friends reported the accident." She was flown



to Davis-Monthan AFB, then transported to Tucson Medical Center, where she was reported in stable condition. (Star 11/28/1992)

## Boys Rescued from Mine Shaft

**Dec 23, 1992**

The teenagers went into the mine in the middle of Beehive Peak in northwest Tucson to practice rappelling. About 11:00 a.m., the three students from Palo Verde High School crawled through its three-foot opening. Scott Brown, 16, had been inside the mine a few times before, but then wisely never went down into the eighty-foot-deep shaft. Jay Trucott, 16, and Larry George, 15, had never been there before. “ ‘We saw down the shaft and wondered what was down there,’ said George.” The teens had rappelled without formal training for a year but never tried something like this. Now at the bottom, they found decaying animals and cold, dank darkness. Going down was the easy half of the boys’ adventure.

Jay tried to scramble back up the pit twice, “but his hands weakened when he got near the entrance.” He failed each time, the rope burning both his hands in the process. After an hour or so, Larry, who was smaller and a little more agile, was finally able to scramble up and out and go for help. Arriving at 2:00 p.m., “The Drexel Heights Fire Department along with the Tucson Estates Fire Department, the Pima County Sheriff’s Department and members of the Southern Arizona Rescue Association, worked for three hours to rescue the youths.” In total, about 25 members of various rescue teams responded.

Lieutenant Dane Crouse of Drexel Heights was the first paramedic on scene, and believed that because he was also the smallest, was chosen to go down into the hole. Fortunately, his hobby was rappelling. With Crouse now down on the bottom and supervising from below, the two boys were safely pulled up and free of their trap. Tom Price of Pima County Sheriff’s Department Search and Rescue indicated the state mine inspector would be notified about the hazard, it needed to be closed off with a fence or marked by warning signs. (Star 12/23/1992; Citizen 12/23/1992)

## Southwest Rescue Dogs, Incorporated

**1993**

Dogs have been used in search for ages, certainly before the first prison had a dangerous escapee. Search dogs, which obviously includes bloodhounds, are mentioned almost one-hundred times in this book, deservedly so. The first one is in 1922 for a 22-year-old deer hunter, lost in the mountains 12 miles east of Clifton. See “Youth Found Twenty Months Later,” November 29, 1922, on page 55. Borrowed from “lion hunters in Tucson,” by the title you can tell these bloodhounds weren’t successful—but they often are.

The average human has about five million olfactory receptors. Dogs are far more highly developed, having 150 to 220 million such odor detectors. That is why some dogs can even detect cancer cells in humans, not to mention exposing people and drugs hidden away in cars.

When people learn of a search for a child ending happily, they likely will believe a search dog was involved. And generally, they will be correct. “[Pima County Sheriff] Eyman reached Lee Kartchner, ‘in charge of bloodhounds at the state prison in Florence.’ Kartchner brought three dogs and at ‘5:00 p.m., they picked up the scent from a pair of shoes he had left behind at the camp.’ ” Little 5-year-old Bobby McCord wandered away from the Boy Scout Camp on Mount

Lemmon, missing for nearly 24 hours. When found, he was over four miles from the point last seen. “ ‘I was only scared once because I couldn’t find my home.’ ” See “Lost 5-Year-Old,” June 10, 1954, on page 149. In fact, that same Frank Eyman, now Warden of the State Prison in Florence, gave two bloodhounds—Blackie and Wag—to his former Department, Pima County in 1960. See “Bloodhounds Given to Local SAR,” April 26, 1960, on page 194.

With noses highly perfected for scenting, dogs are used all over the world: in law enforcement and narcotics, disasters with cities devastated by earthquakes (think Turkey), and even trained to locate human remains, such as drowning victims. In 1998, a 35-year-old fisherman did not come home that night and Pinal County Sheriff’s Office was called. After ten days, and with upwards of fifty people involved including a team of divers, Viola Brown, with her five-year-old Queensland Heeler, “Patches,” responded. He was found that day. See “Drowning in Picacho Reservoir,” March 6, 1998, on page 481. Vi was a thirty-year veteran of SARA, while also an early member of SRDI, Southwest Rescue Dogs, Inc.

SRDI formed and incorporated as a stand-alone K9 Search and Rescue Team in March of 1993, and has provided thirty continuous years of service to the Pima County Sheriff’s Department as well as local, state, and federal agencies across Southern Arizona and the surrounding region. Currently in 2023, SRDI has ten members with 11 trained search dogs. Karen and Mark Paquette have over twenty years with SRDI. They write:

“SRDI is comprised of a diverse group of individuals who come together with a common goal of providing highly trained and certified K9 resources to assist with search and rescue and law enforcement actions. The success and longevity of SRDI is due to ongoing education, training and input from all members—past and future. The building of a reliable search dog truly takes a very strong team. SRDI takes great pride in sharing and imparting the knowledge we have obtained by hosting local working seminars annually, teaching across the country and providing a Lead Instructor and assistants to the Forensic Anthropology Center at Texas State (FACTS, also known as the “Body Farm”) four to six times annually to provide high levels of Human Remains detection training for students across the nation as well as international students.” (Mark Paquette email 4/19/2023)

## Missing For Three Days

### Jan 2, 1993

In preparing that day for a camping trip in the Santa Rita Mountains with his family, John W. Waters packed his favorite music from the 50s, 60s, and 70s, and a small ice chest with two, six-packs of Diet Pepsi and luckily, some extra insulin. In traveling to the rendezvous spot, the 41-year-old man missed the turnoff and ultimately became stuck—twice. Waters of Tucson, was diabetic, insulin dependent, and had heart problems. Due to his diabetes, he was unable to walk very far and stayed with his 1974 Chevrolet pickup. He also took a spray can of paint and wrote the word “HELP!” on the hood of his truck.

The day following New Year’s Day, Waters was reported missing after not meeting up with family members. The Pima County Sheriff’s Department search and rescue team and the Department of Public Safety began searching for him on Monday, January 4. “I stayed with the truck and I anticipated someone would start looking for me. . . I stayed in the cab. . . and was shielded from the wind and moisture. I survived on Pepsi and creek water.”

Two passing cowboys spotted his pickup truck the next day near Gardner Canyon on the east side of the range, not too far from Onyx Cave. His vehicle had slid off the dirt track into a 15-foot-deep gully, where it was stuck. He was finally helped out of the ravine at about 2:00 p.m. by medical personnel from the Department of Public Safety Ranger Helicopter and the Pima County Sheriff's Department search and rescue unit. (Citizen 1/6/1993; Star 1/6/1993)

## Plane Crashes into Winchester Mountains

**Feb 19, 1993**

“Rescuers, battling stormy weather in remote country...A Fort Huachuca helicopter, one of several craft involved in rescue efforts last night, was forced to return back because of rough weather... Heavy rain and 20-mile-per-hour winds were expected to continue... in the Willcox area.” Three men from Louisiana crashed in the 7,600-foot-high Winchester Mountains, 14 miles northwest of Willcox, when their Cessna 206 developed engine trouble. “They landed on a mountain peak and ended up in a ravine,” but somehow escaped with only minor injuries and burns when a fuel tank ruptured. It was raining and cold, and they kept changing clothes. “ ‘One had three pairs of clothes on when he was rescued. They were all soaking wet.’ ” Due to the weather, neither air nor ground rescuers could reach them for 15 hours. (Citizen 2/20/1993; Star 2/21/1993)

## Elderly Man Disappeared

**Apr 19, 1993**

Francisco “Chico” Molina was last seen about 3:00 p.m. at a market near the 902-acre Pascua Yaqui Indian Reservation, on the far southwest side of Tucson. Two men who knew Molina spoke with him at the market and he indicated “he was going to the (San Xavier) Mission.” According to family members, he suffered from memory loss and had left his wallet with identification at home and did not tell anyone where he was going. Despite failing recall, he was previously able to travel around the area by walking and city bus, making the search area somewhat vague.

On Friday, April 23, “in addition to Yaqui community volunteers, the Bureau of Indian Affairs Police Department, the Pascua Yaqui Police Department, the Pima County Sheriff's Department search and rescue unit and the Southern Arizona Rescue Association searched for Molina... Trackers on horseback and the Department of Public Safety helicopters also were used in the search...” On April 27, despite the widespread publicity and the involvement in the search by several of his ten sons and daughters, *The Arizona Daily Star* newspaper reported that he still had not been found. Beyond this date, there are no further records in either of the two local newspapers about Francisco “Chico” Molina. (Star 4/24/1993, 4/27/1993)

## Carried from Tanque Verde Falls

**May 2, 1993**

While making her way up the steep trail from Tanque Verde Falls, Christine J. Calvert dislocated her shoulder and needed to be evacuated by Stokes Litter. The University of Arizona student from Yuma, grabbed hold of a rock and twisted the wrong way. Volunteers of the Southern Arizona Rescue Association responded and, using a litter with a wheel, got her up to the road and a waiting ambulance with paramedics. They tried to reduce the dislocation at the scene but were not able to do so. To complicate the matter, numbing and tingling began in her arm and, fearing serious

neurological problems, she was soon airlifted to Tucson Medical Center by a waiting Department of Public Safety Ranger helicopter. (Star 5/3/1993)

### Heatstroke Death at Tanque Verde Falls

**Jun 2, 1993**

Becoming ill just after 3:00 p.m., the 13-year-old girl collapsed and then tumbled twenty feet down to the bottom of the trail to Tanque Verde Falls. Jamie Young was part of a group of teenagers from a private behavioral treatment facility in Sierra Vista. She was there because of “abuse and abandonment issues.” Ramsey Canyon Ranch staff and a Sheriff’s Deputy attempted resuscitation for about ninety minutes, but she was pronounced dead at 4:45 p.m. by the medical crew of an Air Care helicopter. Within the month, state officials suspended the license of the Cochise County facility, saying the hike was “improperly planned and totally inappropriate.” The state was intending to revoke the license of the facility. (Star 6/4/1993, 7/3/1993)

### Death on Pusch Ridge

**Jun 14, 1993**

Charles A. Thornton, 80, left a note on the kitchen table to his daughter saying he would be back by noon. He never returned. He had undergone heart surgery recently and was possibly depressed, according to his family. His car was found on the west side of Pusch Peak and so his family urged authorities for a search. The Southern Arizona Rescue Association was pressed into service as was the helicopter with the Department of Public Safety. They found his still form from the air, lying at the base of a forty-foot dry waterfall on Pusch Ridge the next day. Sixteen SARA volunteers recovered his body. Despite being a very avid hiker and competent outdoorsman, it could not be determined if Mr. Thornton had fallen or not. He was a well-respected fixture around Tucson and had been recognized many times for his contributions to the deaf and blind in the community. (Citizen 6/16/1993, 6/17/1993)

### Command Post Destroyed

**Jun 17, 1993**

Ironically, the vehicle the Pima County Sheriff’s Department used as a mobile command post, totally burned up after being at three fires earlier that day. It was on its way to a fourth. Robert Schierloh, a member of the Sheriff’s Auxiliary Volunteer Association was driving the 1985 Itasca Motor Home when he heard an explosion. The 24-year-old stopped at an intersection in southwest Tucson and was forced to get out as it began filling with smoke. He tried using an extinguisher but flames soon engulfed it. The 33-foot-long motor home had been seized in a drug case years before. There was an estimated \$75,000 in damage, including \$25,000 for equipment, radios, and mobile telephones. The 18-foot van they were obliged to now use as a temporary replacement was not nearly big enough.

The following March 8, the Pima County Board of Supervisors unanimously approved Sheriff Clarence Dupnik’s request for a “new \$180,500 command post on wheels.” Insurance money from the fire loss, coupled with cash seized in various narcotics cases, made it an easy sell to the Supervisors. On June 1, the 35-foot custom designed diesel-powered, six-wheeler built by Lynch Display Vans in Burlington, Wisconsin was delivered. White, blue- and gold-stripped, it was designed for “searches for

lost hikers in the desert and surrounding mountains, SWAT calls and as a work place for detectives investigating murders in remote areas.” It had room for 15 people, could be separated into three work spaces, and along with other necessary equipment to coordinate large-scale emergencies, it had a state-of-the-art phone and communication’s system, compatible with nearly every fire and police agency in Southern Arizona. (Star 6/18/1993, 5/30/1994; Citizen 3/8/1994, 5/30/1994)

## Missing On Reservation

**Jun 21, 1993**

Cedric Paul Norris left his home on the San Xavier District of the Tohono O’odham Reservation to walk to the home of his girlfriend in the tiny, 15-house village of Queens Creek, fifty miles southwest of Tucson. On June 21, after visiting his girl friend, the 37-year-old security guard reportedly took a short cut across the desert on foot to his home near the San Xavier Mission. He was not seen alive again. It was 109 degrees the day he went missing.

Initially, about thirty friends and members of his family looked for the father of three. “Volunteer searchers followed his footsteps into a rain water cache for cattle. His prints went into the cache, came out and went back in, but they didn’t come out again...” At this time, an investigation and a search were being conducted by the Tohono O’odham Police.

Vice Chairman Daniel Preston of the San Xavier District, voiced his frustration, “ ‘It seems like when it comes to Native Americans and minority people, not much is done for missing people ... It seems our police department doesn’t know what to do right now.’ ” The Sheriff’s Department had not formally been asked to assist, although volunteer divers with the Southern Arizona Rescue Association searched the cattle tank. On July 9, a cowboy on horseback stumbled across the remains of Norris southwest of the village of San Pedro.

As a result of the modest response to the disappearance of Cedric Paul Norris, a search and rescue unit was to be set up on the Tohono O’odham Reservation, with an organizing meeting on July 24, 1993. (Citizen 7/8/1993, 7/13/1993, 7/22/1993)

## Lost on Mount Graham

**Jun 27, 1993**

Riggs Lake is a popular fishing and camping spot at 8,300 feet on Mount Graham, west of Safford. While camping there with his family, Lee Holden wandered away from his campsite at noon. Four hours later, after a cursory search of the area, hunting for the 15-year-old boy ramped up with Graham County Sheriff’s deputies, a Department of Public Safety helicopter and an Arizona Department of Corrections tracking team out of nearby Fort Grant. At the end of the second full day of not finding the young man from Las Cruces, New Mexico, “a dog team from Utah and members of the Earth First environmental group, on the mountain for a week-long rally, joined in...”

The following day, a group from Pima County arrived, as well. By this time, trying to find the teenager was an all-out effort. In addition to responders from Graham and Pima counties, there were also members of SAR groups from Gila, Maricopa, and Cochise counties. Despite the major search, however, the teenager found his rescuers when he stumbled onto the main road going into Riggs Lake and a volunteer spotted him as he walked along. (Star 7/1/1993; Citizen 7/3/1993)

## Divers Recover Body from Mine Shaft

**Jul 1, 1993**

At 12:25 p.m., the Pima County Sheriff's Department was dispatched to Red Rock, about 35 miles northwest of Tucson, for an accident in a water-filled mineshaft. Also responding were 13 members of the Southern Arizona Rescue Association, including several volunteers from the Pima County Search and Recovery Divers who,

“...battled gasoline fumes in a well...to recover the body of a 38-year-old Mexican national who died after falling 40 to 50 feet [after climbing a ladder inside the shaft]. The man, whose name was not released, fell after trying to retrieve a gasoline-powered motor that dropped into a well west of Sawtooth Mountains...divers failed on their first attempt to get the body because gasoline fumes permeated their masks and wetsuits...body was recovered at 5:16 p.m.” (Star 7/1/1993; Citizen 7/1/1993)

## What Happened to the Eight?

**Jul 3, 1993**

Leaving their homeland three weeks before, the 12 Guatemalans had paid their guides—“Coyotes”—\$1,000 each to lead them into the United States and hopefully, to a better life. After arriving in Caborca, Sonora, a hundred or so miles northeast of Rocky Point, their guides abandoned them. Leaderless and now also penniless, their desperate trip into Arizona began Saturday night when they crossed the border about ten miles west of Sasabe. Learned later, their only advice had been to “hike north and keep the Baboquivari Mountains on their right [east] side.” This would lead the despairing illegals through the forbidding heart of the Tohono O’odham Reservation. Which is where July’s wretched 110-degree temperatures would soon claim its toll.

After only three days into the Arizona desert, the 11 men and one woman, split up into two groups; on the third day, neither had any water. The party of four, crossing a forty-mile waterless stretch of the reservation, saw a most welcome, life-saving light in the distance—the Cyprus Casa Grande Mine, south of the city of Casa Grande. “‘We walked and we walked and we kept fainting but when we regained consciousness we kept on going.’” Four miles before they reached the mine, one of the men, in his early 20s, died in the afternoon. His young companions were anguished but, “‘We had to leave him and save our own lives.’” At this point, the survivors had now been without water for three full days.

These three men reached the mine. “‘They gave us water and food and we told them what happened...They asked us what we wanted to do, and we told them to turn us in to authorities because there was nothing for us here anymore.’” According to the men, the other eight were believed to be still out there. It was not known, however, if they had somehow gotten to Casa Grande or Phoenix, been taken in at some isolated ranch, or found water in a cattle tank and were now huddled under a mesquite tree. Or possibly, already dead. Finding these eight people from Guatemala, now became literally, a matter of life and death.

The Pima County Sheriff's Department set up a command operation at Santa Rosa on the reservation. At least six trackers from the Border Patrol were trying to follow footprints. “Search and rescue teams went on foot and were airlifted by helicopters and dropped in various locations throughout the 20-mile radius from the body...teams carried three to four gallons of water per person as they trekked through the desert...” A helicopter with night-vision equipment was in the air after dark and other aircraft were up during the day. At least nine volunteers from the Southern



Arizona Rescue Association donated nearly 260 hours on the search. This Herculean effort was hampered by intermittent, heavy Monsoon rains, which obliterated all traces of what little human passage, existed.

On July 11, day eight of the dozen Guatemalans having crossed the flimsy fence into Arizona, the search for them officially ended at 11:30 a.m. The author could find no further record of this group. Did they survive or are they still out there?

Per the June, 2021, Humane Borders Website, in conjunction with the Pima County Office of the Medical Examiner, since 2001, there have been over 3,000 remains of illegal border crossers found in Pima County. For June of 2021, there were 43 migrants who were known to have died crossing the border in Southern Arizona. A great many of them have not been identified. (Star 7/9/1993, 7/13/1993, 7/31/2021; Citizen 7/9/1993, 7/12/1993)

## **Tohono O’odham Rescue Squad To Be Formed**

**Jul 24, 1993**

“Nobody knows for sure whether Cedric Norris would be alive today if the Tohono O’odham reservation had had its own search and rescue program.” Norris was last seen alive on the reservation on June 21 and was not found until July 9, when a cowboy discovered his remains. See “Missing On Reservation,” June 21, 1993, on page 443. Officials of the Tohono O’odham Nation voiced their annoyance with the region’s ensuing search for Norris, including with its own police department. “Hampering the search for Norris was the fact that the Pima County sheriff’s search and rescue volunteer team couldn’t act unless contacted by the Tohono O’odham Police Department.”

In response to this frustration, Tohono O’odham Supervisory Ranger Daniel Corella took it upon himself to organize a search and rescue unit for the reservation. He announced an organizational meeting for July 24, 1993, “for people interested in joining a new Tohono O’odham Nation Search and Rescue Team.” By mid-August, Corella had about forty volunteers from around Tucson, including all four rangers from the San Xavier District and three of the 11 Tohono O’odham districts.

On August 21, those participating in this organizational effort held their first training exercise, “thanks to the US Border Patrol agents from the Tucson sector and volunteers from the Southern Arizona Rescue Association.” The Border Patrol had two agents training the group in tracking. “Richard Kunz of the [Southern Arizona] rescue association will attend the training in hopes of getting four of Corella’s volunteers to sign up for the Tucson-based association’s basic rescue training class.” However, the good intentions of Ranger Corella were for naught. The unit was never formed, per Lieutenant Delgado of the Tohono O’odham Police Department in communications with the author on November 28, 2022. (Citizen 7/22/1993, 8/20/1993; Delgado interview 11/28/2022)

## **305<sup>th</sup> Rescue Squadron at Davis Monthan AFB**

**Oct 1993**

The 305<sup>th</sup> Rescue Squadron at Davis-Monthan Air Force Base in Tucson, has a long and celebrated history. It was first activated as the 305<sup>th</sup> Air Rescue Squadron at Selfridge Air Force Base, Michigan, in April 1958, but was a Reserve Unit. Four, twin-engine Grumman SA-16A Albatross amphibious (“flying boat”) aircraft and ninety personnel were assigned to the group. It was then under the Air Rescue Service. Seven years later, the amphibians were replaced by larger, four-

engine HC-97 Stratofreighters and was redesignated as the 305<sup>th</sup> Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadron. It would see duty in Southeast Asia as well as North Africa and Europe.

In 1972, it upgraded to C-130's, the four-engine workhorses of Vietnam. Four years later, the Squadron acquired its first helicopters with HH-3 "Jolly Green Giants." The 305<sup>th</sup> continued to operate a combination of C-130s and the "Giants." There were also some pararescue personnel with it. Then, after the Gulf War, with ensuing drawdown of services, the HH-3s were retired and the Squadron was inactivated on September 30, 1992.

As part of the Congressional budgetary process, military units and their various designations and missions were shuffled around like pawns on a chess board. The Air Force and the 305<sup>th</sup> were not immune to this manipulation. Available historical details indicate the 302<sup>th</sup> Special Operations Squadron with HH-3E helicopters, assigned to Luke AFB in Phoenix, converted to F-16 fighter jets in 1987. During the transition, and pending final decisions on assignment status of the helicopters, their personnel were temporarily assigned to DMAFB.

However, the helicopters themselves were positioned at another reserve unit in Portland, Oregon. Their crews quartered at Davis-Monthan, would routinely fly by commercial airline on assigned Temporary Duty (TDY) to Portland for training. Those assets were eventually permanently assigned to Davis-Monthan to the reactivated 71<sup>st</sup> Special Operations Squadron. The 71<sup>st</sup> flew missions and performed overseas deployments until it was converted to the 305<sup>th</sup> Rescue Squadron flying the HH-60G "Blackhawks" in April 1992.

Dennis DeConcini, born in Tucson and graduating from the University of Arizona School of Law, was a dominant US Senator during the 1980s and 1990s. In Congress for two decades, he served on powerful Congressional Committees, including military oversight. It has been speculated he did not want to lose the helicopters from his home state and was largely instrumental in retaining their capability at DM. Those units would become the 71<sup>st</sup> Special Operations Squadron and then eventually the 305<sup>th</sup> Rescue Squadron.

The Vietnam-era HH-3E "Jolly Green Giants," were retired and the 71<sup>st</sup> was deactivated in April of 1992. This as the unit began the lengthy conversion to their new HH-60G helos and its concurrent assignment to the reactivated 305<sup>th</sup> Rescue Squadron. At that time, there were six "Blackhawk" helicopters manned by about 150 personnel and 16 or so pilots. In 2023, it remains at Davis Monthan as the 305<sup>th</sup> Rescue Squadron. (Mike Shook emails 5/23/2023; Various Website sources)

## Arizona SAR Volunteer of the Year

**Oct 19, 1993**

Richard Kunz, a member of the Southern Arizona Rescue Association since 1964, as well as a volunteer for both the Pima County Search and Recovery Divers and the National Ski Patrol, was named the Arizona Search and Rescue Volunteer of the Year. The award was presented at the Pima County Sheriff's Department by Don Hornnecker of the State Office of Emergency Management in Phoenix. "He said he [Kunz] volunteers about 100 hours a month to rescue work." In accepting the long-overdue recognition, Kunz said, he "doesn't see what he is doing as work, so much as a hobby." (Citizen 10/21/1993)

## Couple Killed in Small Plane Crash

**Oct 27, 1993**

William and Claire Wagnor, both American citizens but currently living in Mexico, left El Paso just after 7 a.m. that Thursday morning. Heading to Tucson in their single-engine Comanche PA-24, their last radio transmission was over two hours later. They had not filed a flight plan and they never showed up in Tucson. For the sake of a starting point, the Civil Air Patrol assumed they were following Interstate 10, a standard practice. Early the next morning, the CAP sent out two search planes from Phoenix and a third from Tucson.

A rancher in the area near the base of the Dos Cabezas Mountains south of Willcox spotted the wreckage about the same time it was seen by a CAP search plane. The National Guard and a helicopter from the Arizona Department of Public Safety were directed to the site of the crash, scattered across a hillside. Both Wagnors were found deceased. (Citizen 10/28/1993; Star 10/29/1993)

## Drowning in Patagonia Lake

**Feb 6, 1994**

At 3:45 p.m., a 25-year-old woman from Tucson suffered an epileptic seizure and fell out of the rented canoe being shared with her boyfriend. He and a nearby witness, tried to rescue Colby Allison Marfin from Patagonia Lake but could not. Neither she nor her companion wore a life jacket. Later that evening ten divers from the Santa Cruz County Sheriff's Office and the Pima County Search and Recovery Divers, worked for 2 1/2 hours to locate the woman. The teams of divers rotated being underwater, trying to avoid hypothermia in the 45-degree water. "Her body was found later that night about 30 feet from the dock, in 15 feet of water." (Star 2/7/1994, 2/8/1994)

## Famous Last Words

**Feb 7, 1994**

" 'I've known him for 17 years, and he has always let me know where he's at... and he would not stay away from home without calling...' " Adam Kniveley told his wife he was going on a day hike but when not home that night, she notified officials the next morning at 9:00 a.m. As a local church officer and quite spiritual, he reportedly often visited mountains to find peace and solitude. There was no idea of where he might go for his supposed one-day retreat, although his wife thought Mount Lemmon was a likely place.

Deputies were also dispatched to check other popular recreational places such as Sabino Canyon, Saguaro National Monument, Catalina State Park, and Redington Pass, but did not find his 1979 Toyota Corolla. An Arizona Department of Public Safety helicopter flew up to Mount Lemmon to assist searchers looking there. They were principally checking the roadways and parking lots for his car. In the higher levels of the mountains it barely went above freezing in the daytime and there was a genuine concern for his well-being. He had left home with only a long-sleeved shirt, jeans, and running shoes.

Two days after he was reported missing and an intensive search had begun, he called his mother-in-law and left a message on her phone machine saying he was all right and " 'he just wanted to be left alone.' " (Citizen 2/9/1994, 2/10/1994)

## He Should Have Died

**Mar 4, 1994**

Witnesses stated the victim and other members of his party had been drinking beer and shots of whiskey prior to the accident at Tanque Verde Falls. Which might explain why 39-year-old Matthew Hoff, acting on a dare, “dived from an 80-foot cliff into water that turned out to be only 2 feet deep.” He suffered a broken pelvis, broken back, and internal injuries. He was pulled from the water by members of his group.

A rescue operation was mounted by sheriff’s deputies, 21 volunteers from the Southern Arizona Rescue Association, the Sheriff’s Mounted Posse and Rural Metro Fire Department. The Arizona Department of Public Safety had to make two trips down in to the narrow canyon to ferry rescuers in. He was listed in fair condition when admitted to Tucson Medical Center and luckily, he was expected to recover and would not be paralyzed. (Citizen 3/5/1994)

## Two Missing Women

**Mar 29, 1994**

Julia Ware, 30, and 24-year-old Heather Mosher, planned to hike from Summerhaven on Mount Lemmon to the Sabino Canyon Visitor’s Center; in many places, a steep downhill trip of at least 23 miles, perhaps longer, depending on where they started at the top. They left at 7:30 a.m. and by 4 p.m., expected to be picked up. After their friend had not heard from them by the next morning, however, the authorities were called. This trip in just over eight hours, is certainly possible but still demanding for even experienced hikers, which they would quickly prove not to be.

The search began the next day, and along with a Department of Public Safety helicopter using night-vision goggles when it turned dark, at least 27 volunteers from the Southern Arizona Rescue Association were in the field looking for the two women. There are a couple of trails that might have confused the pair and these were being looked at. Foul play was not suspected, only inexperience. The second day, about twenty members of SARA were already eliminating the areas of highest probability, when Ware and Mosher were located.

The first day the women got lost they endured a cold night, and did not know where they had spent it or gone wrong. The second evening they were overdue, they were now on the correct trail and fortunately, had stumbled into a campsite at Hutch’s Pool, a favorite destination for hikers, still some six miles from the Visitor Center. Taking them in that second night, the campers also told the women that a search was now going on for them. The next morning, these campers directed the confused pair to the Sheriff’s Department’s Mounted Posse, which was already up and on the trail looking for them. (Star 3/31/1994, 4/1/1994; Citizen 3/31/1994)

## Rescued from Agua Caliente Cave

**Apr 6, 1994**

While hiking in the area below Elephant Head in the western end of the Santa Rita Mountains, Olympia Velasco and Laurene Villagrande, both 18, became trapped in Agua Caliente Cave. Dry and dusty, the cave is reportedly the hottest in the United States, and has about a mile of mapped, looping passages. A rescue team of Pima County deputies and 18 members of the Southern Arizona Rescue Association responded. Helped from the cave just after midnight, one of the young women might have suffered a broken ankle. (Star 4/7/1994, 4/8/1994)

## “Stupid Motorist Law”

**Apr 13, 1994**

Arizona Governor John Fife Symington III, in response to drivers going around lawfully placed road barricades and entering flooded washes and placing rescuers at great risk, signed a bill which went into effect on January 1 1995, making it illegal to ignore these warnings. Arizona Revised Statute 28-910 dubbed the “Stupid Motorist Law,” was authored by Matt Salmon and allowed municipalities to assess the cost of a rescue and if necessary fine the driver up to \$2,000. Some cities initially said they would not charge individuals for rescue; since then, it has been used, but sparingly. (Citizen 4/15/1994)

## Rescue of Hilda the Rottweiler

**May 28, 1994**

Hilda, short for Brünnhilde, was a two-year-old Rottweiler, belonging to Eric and Elaine Fast. The couple went on a hike into Agua Caliente Canyon, near the Redington Road on the east side of Tucson. They had taken this trip numerous times before, with Hilda always accompanying them. Half-way into their hike it was obvious Hilda was suffering from the late-May heat. After several hours of being in the shade and getting water for their pet from a nearby stream, they headed back. She was getting worse and the two now recognized this as a real emergency. Mrs. Fast quickly hiked out and finding a phone, called 911.

The 911 dispatcher said that “since it was an animal in distress and not a human, they could not help.” Mrs. Fast was then referred to Rural Metro Fire, which also said they could not help but suggested the Southern Arizona Rescue Association. Within an unexpectedly short time, Mr. Fast was surprised and indeed heartened, to see both a Pima County Sheriff’s Deputy and a member of SARA, arriving with some much-needed IV fluids. (Mr. Fast could not recall any of the First-Responders names.) Before long, at least seven more SARA volunteers arrived, as did a member of the Pima County Sheriff’s Posse. Ice was brought and Hilda began receiving treatment for heatstroke. The team then carried Hilda out on a stretcher and Mr. Fast now felt that perhaps Hilda had at least a chance to survive.

Hilda was treated by an emergency veterinarian and was alive and recovering when Mr. and Mrs. Fast wrote the letter of Thank You to the Southern Arizona Rescue Association. (Letter of June 1, 1994 from Eric and Elaine Fast in the files of SARA.)

## Drowns in Parker Canyon Lake

**Jun 5, 1994**

About 5:00 p.m., Thomas Alan Krzynowek dove off the boat dock at Parker Canyon Lake in an attempt to swim to shore. The 30-year-old Sierra Vista man never came up, apparently becoming entangled in underwater vegetation. “The family saw him go down, and then he didn’t come back up again.” Aided by 14 members from SARA that night, his body was recovered at 7:50 a.m. the following morning, by volunteers from the Pima County Search and Recovery Divers. (Star 6/7/1994)

## SAR Leader Joe Woolridge, Retired

**Jun 11, 1994**

Joe Woolridge was born in 1938 in Baltimore, Maryland, growing up there. In 1956, at 17 he joined the US Air Force (he lied about his age) and served for three years as a Communications' Technician. In early November 1958, his last year in the military, he was stationed at Davis-Monthan AFB. Two weeks later, he found himself in the Santa Rita Mountains. "Our unit set up communications between law enforcement, military and rescue units looking for three Boy Scouts on Mount Baldy, lost during a bad snowstorm."

That was his introduction to search and rescue in Southern Arizona. He would go on to make a great many contributions to SAR, but not before kicking around as a civilian for several years looking for his "niche in life." He would soon find it with the Pima County Sheriff's Department in 1966, as a Reserve Deputy. He worked with Sergeant Ted Brandes on several SAR operations, including when a fighter jet plane crashed into the Food Giant on South Alvernon Way, and four people were killed. See "Air Force Jet Crashes into Tucson Supermarket," December 18, 1967, on page 248.

Joe went full-time on the PCSD in 1968, under Sheriff Waldon V. Burr. After two years in patrol and two more as a detective, he was promoted to Sergeant in 1972. "I was assigned to be Commander for the Voluntary Resource Division, which consisted of Uniformed Reserves, Aero Squadron, Mounted Posse, and Search and Rescue." He was particularly involved with SAR during those four years. He laughingly remembers his first incident. On December 18, 1974, a 21-year-old was rappelling a 300-foot cliff with a 180-foot rope at Rappel Rock and "had to break up a near-fist fight as to who would perform the rescue."

In 1976, he requested being transferred back to Detectives at which time he recommended Deputy Chuck McHugh be his replacement. Chuck had long been his "right-hand man." After nearly 27 years with the Pima County Sheriff's Department, Sergeant Joe Woolridge retired, June 11, 1994. (Joe Woolridge interview 1/10/2023)

## Fell 200 Feet to His Death

**Jun 18, 1994**

The Sheriff's Department learned of the two-hundred-foot fatal fall in the upper end of Pima Canyon when reported to them just before 3:00 p.m. Carl Allen Longsdorf and Adam Harant, both 18 years of age, went hiking "without ropes helmets or water, said Deputy Doug Myrvold." The two young men " 'climbed to the top of a ridge and then free-climbed down several hundred feet. They were climbing down crumbly, unsafe rock, and they got to a spot where they were afraid to climb up or down.' While they were on the ledge, Longsdorf fell. . . ." A nearby hiker heard Harant yelling and hurried out of the canyon for help.

"Thirty-three rescue workers, including members of the Sheriff's Department search and rescue unit, the sheriff's Mounted Posse, and [26 members of] the Southern Arizona Rescue Association began hiking to reach the body of Harant." Rescuers with ropes were able to get Harant and the Department of Public Safety airlifted him out. At about 7:00 p.m., DPS returned and flew Longsdorf out, as well. (Star 6/19/1994; Citizen 6/20/1994)



## “Blackhawk” Chopper Crashes, 7 Helicopters Come to the Rescue

**Jun 26, 1994**

The 2001 Blockbuster Movie, “Black Hawk Down,” comes to mind for this rescue. And, the author hopes he has the writing skills to convey to the reader just how thorny this incident would prove during its 12-hour duration. Dave Garrison, the DPS Air Rescue Officer-Paramedic who was long-lined in for the first victim, said this was one of the two most tricky [read: complicated and difficult] of the one-thousand missions he was on in his 35 years serving the public with DPS.

By the end of these many long hours, there are two Air Force Blackhawk Helicopters from Davis-Monthan involved, three Department of Public Safety Air Rescue Helicopters with their four Paramedics there, along with four hospital air ambulances with their medics now standing by. Even Phoenix Fire Department got involved with its Paramedic, Jack Spear. Lastly, at least one TV News Channel ship, with a cameraman onboard, is covering this. There are about a dozen long-line or short hauls (rescuers dangling off a one-hundred-foot rope), both in and out. Now, you have just read my “Cliff Notes;” a verbal schematic, as this emergency turns chaotic very quickly, with lots of “moving parts.”

“Hell’s Hole,” the aptly-named scene is an attractive, but little-known cliff and pine tree-lined gorge on the Tonto Plateau, north of Roosevelt Lake. It is at about the 5,000-foot elevation. (This will affect helicopter performance. It is called Density Altitude.) To get down to the pretty little stream and pools of water, is a challenging, six-mile hike. With an elevation differential of 2,700 feet, this is not your average, “piece of cake,” adventure.

This all began the day before, when 24-year-old Mark Perticone asked for help, claiming being “without food for 48 hours,” as well as maybe dehydration and a twisted ankle. Gila County Sheriff’s Office initiated a rescue and a local volunteer SAR team started in at 11:30 that night, reaching the victim at 6:30, the next morning. “Ranger 41” DPS Air Rescue out of Phoenix responded, but found they were not properly equipped to handle the required short haul. They requested “Ranger 36,” which launched from Flagstaff at 8:58 a.m. David Craft piloted and Dave Garrison, then an Officer-Paramedic for about 15 years, was short-hauled in. Perticone was extracted, along with Garrison, the same way. The victim was handed to a waiting air ambulance and flown to Scottsdale Memorial Hospital in Phoenix. So far so good.

Next, Gila County Sheriff’s Office asked that one of their rescuers be taken out as well, the Deputy’s son had been thrown from a horse and seriously hurt. Again, Garrison long-lined in and both men were lifted out. Then Gila County at the Command Post (CP), several miles removed from Hell’s Hole, would like to have the remaining rescuers extracted. This request was denied by “Ranger 36,” as there was no legitimate emergency. After “36” was coming out the second time, the Low Fuel Indicator came on and Pilot Craft quickly set down in a parking lot. He radioed “Ranger 41,” which was now in Payson refueling, to bring several five-gallon cans of fuel, which they did. OK, this is where it gets trickier.

When Gila County initially asked for help, they also called the Air Force Rescue and Coordination Center (AFRCC) at Scott AFB, Illinois. They indicated “life or death.” And now the crew of a hoist-equipped HH-60G “Blackhawk” helicopter from the 305<sup>th</sup> Rescue Squadron out of Davis-Monthan AFB, is tasked with this Mission by the AFRCC. “I was spending a leisurely Sunday morning at home with my wife in Tucson,” Major Mike Shook would later write. Aircraft Commander, Major Robert L. Dunn and Shook will pilot and Flight Engineers, Sergeants Michael L. Flake and Robert Mabry, are onboard, as well. “Hell’s Hole” is one-hundred miles and forty minutes flight time from DMAFB. At about “noon-thirty,” the large “Blackhawk” arrives and is

now “On Station.” The aircrew began setting up for extracting the four remaining Gila County SAR volunteers. This is still reported as, “life and death.”

Shook, with many years of helo flight experience in rugged mountain terrain, was at the controls from the left seat. He’d begun his military helo flying in 1975. With the main rotor length at 54 feet, it was critical that their gauge of reference with the vertical walls and trees all around them, be at its best. That assessment was much better from Shook’s side.

The required performance tests for hoisting are double- and triple-checked. All proved well-within the necessary margin of safety. With useable cable of 250 feet, the 65-foot-long machine slowly descended into the two-hundred-foot-deep, rock and tree-lined hole. Their first hoist was safely performed from a hover of one-hundred feet with a Gila County rescuer now onboard. But, a precision maneuver like this is never taken for granted. Calmly, Major Dunn then said, “Low Rotor!” Those two words for helicopter pilots mean an engine malfunction. In layman’s terms, however, it translates into, “Holy Sh—!”

Shook and Dunn, as well as the three in back, had only six seconds to react to the inevitable, life-changing impact. They hit in the house-sized boulder and pine tree-studded gorge in the “only survivable spot in the entire canyon.” So writes Michael G. Shook for *Combat Edge*, the Air Combat Command Safety Magazine. This November 1994 article is titled, “Low Rotor!” The damage was extensive to both crew and ship. Three-hundred gallons of fuel ignited, which the five had to contend with while desperately struggling to escape from the mangled, burning craft. Major Shook would continue to write:

“We impacted with tremendous force on a level platform of rocks between two ponds at the base of the cliff wall. There was just enough room for the helo—not enough for the rotor blades. They exploded into a million pieces as they struck the cliff wall and the trees—it was a tight little place. There was a fire at the right front of the helicopter. . . it turned out, [it] was the only survivable spot in the entire canyon.

“I couldn’t move my legs due to intense pain from what I learned later was a broken back. My door was twisted and buckled from the impact, so I pulled myself hand-over-hand through a small opening of twisted steel. . . pulling myself clear, I fell into the small pond below. I saw the left scanner [Mabry] trapped, his right leg pinned between the left cabin door edge and the Volkswagen-size rock. Although restrained by his gunner’s belt, he had been partially ejected on impact. The number one engine directly above his head was on fire. Unable to move, I directed the Sheriff rescue volunteer, who, at this point was sitting dazed in the middle of the pond, to fight the fire. I tossed him my helmet and he used it as a bucket to extinguish the fire with pond water.”

Circling overhead while this drama is unfolding below, is Jerry Clifton in the Phoenix News Channel KTVK-TV helicopter. His cameraman has been filming this rescue and now suddenly, a crash. Clifton immediately broadcasts the alarm over aviation radio frequencies. Within minutes, a second HH-60G “Blackhawk” helicopter from Davis Monthan, is in the air and enroute. The men of this crew are now racing to help their comrades and neighbors.

When “Ranger 41,” with Phoenix DPS Pilot Hoffman, Paramedic Kevin Wood, and Phoenix Fire Department Paramedic, Jack Spear, hear Clifton’s distress radio dispatch, they were in Payson refueling and would return ASAP. Now also refueled, “36” quickly returns and surveys an unfolding crash scene. They land and prepare again to short-haul. Garrison is inserted, followed by the two Phoenix medics, on the same line. This is a much trickier maneuver for the two underneath and certainly more weight for the pilot to account for. Also configured for short haul, “Ranger 38” arrives

from Tucson with Paramedic John Fink. There are now four Paramedics with various medical crash bags and related gear, at the scene.

Major Shook has a broken back and has been pulled onto half a main-rotor blade. Dave Garrison tends to him as well as helps other medics with Sergeant Mabry. His leg is seriously crushed and still pinned underneath the wreckage. Literally, a real-life, “between a rock and a hard place.” In fact, it seemed so dire to the Gila County SAR team that witnessed the crash, that just prior to Garrison arriving, there had been a radio transmission, “We need an amputation kit!” This was ignored. Shook would be packaged up and soon long-lined out with one of the Paramedics on the same rope. Flown several miles to the CP, he would be transferred to an air ambulance and rushed to Scottsdale Memorial Hospital in Phoenix.

All through this emergency, the communications between many of the players, both in the air and on the ground, scattered between the CP and Hell’s Hole, were frenzied, iffy, and actually maybe in a word, generally “crappy.”

Also, within this time frame, the second 305<sup>th</sup> Rescue Squadron “Blackhawk” has arrived overhead and will soon lower the unmanned hoist. Mabry has already been placed in a stretcher, waiting for a lift out and Garrison is hooked to it in his own rescue harness. After a few long seconds of exaggerated arm signals by Garrison, who is frantically trying to “communicate” with the hoist operator above, there is an eighty-foot lift to the hovering ship. All is smooth with the raise, at least for the first 78 feet. The metal cable on that hoist jammed two feet short of the HH-60G’s open door. After maybe a minute of frantic focus on the stuck device, Garrison yells, finally asking if they can just fly that way, with both he and Mabry still outside and slightly below. And they do, going several miles to the CP. Mabry is also transferred to an air ambulance and whisked to Scottsdale Memorial.

There are at least 12 short-haul insertions and accompanying fly-aways among the three DPS helicopters that were now on-scene. As highlighted earlier, these rescuers and medics would be on the end of a one-hundred-foot, half-inch rope. And all of those flights and hover moves would demand crackerjack DPS pilots that were experts, practiced on this maneuver.

There are possibly four hospital air ambulances at the CP. And catching this all on film, is Clifton in his news helicopter. That is until he and the camera person are requested to land, strip their ship of all extra weight to now carry medical equipment, oxygen bottles (one exploded hitting a rock), and the most vital gear to be dropped in, two Hi-Lift Jacks. These were essential to raise the crashed Blackhawk just enough to free Flight Engineer Bruce Mabry. Over time, there would be maybe a dozen people removed from that crash site, all by long-line, including a couple of them with two people dangling below the helicopter.

Major Mike Shook, 43, would soon have both a lengthy back surgery and recuperative period for a crushed vertebra. But he would return to flying status after rehabbing from his injuries. He’d retire in 12 more years as a Colonel with an illustrious, 31-year career in the USAF Special Operations and rescue business. Technical Sergeant Bruce Mabry, 43, would have his lower leg amputated. He also required three other surgeries to repair his severely fractured left foot, broken ankle, and broken right cheek. But in November, he would also look forward to walking his daughter down the aisle. Major Dunn and Sergeant Flake would suffer only scrapes and bruises and be “back in the saddle,” within days.

Mark Dorman, the 33-year-old Gila County rescue volunteer, who had just been winched up into the “Blackhawk,” escaped with only minor injuries. The three remaining Gila County rescuers, narrowly missed when the six-tons crashed down around them, were admitted to regional hospitals with non-life-threatening head and back injuries. Then also, articles in the *Phoenix Republic* would

say, “Officials said Sunday [June 26] that Perticone may be charged with endangering the rescuers, but no decision had been made...” A second would read, “authorities are analyzing the blood sample of... [Perticone] for traces of drugs...”

Air Force Accident Investigators would officially conclude there was no pilot error, but the cause of the loss of engine power was never disclosed. In an interesting postscript, that crashed HH-60G “Blackhawk,” had been lifted out of Hell’s Hole and repaired to such a state that it was again at Davis-Monthan. Mike Shook was reunited with it, but only as it was towed to the “Bone Yard,” a scrap and parts’ yard for “wounded” and obsolete military aircraft.

Officer-Paramedic Dave Garrison would tell the author: “DPS long-lining was then in its infancy. We copied the techniques and innovations from Grand Canyon National Park, even using its Manual. We learned a whole lot that day about Incident Command and long-lining. That was a long day that went by in thirty minutes. But it was a great team effort.”

For this rescue attempt, Majors Robert L. Dunn and Michael G. Shook and Sergeants Michael L. Flake and Bruce Mabry, received the United States Air Force Air Medal. (Phoenix Republic 6/27/1994, 6/28/1994; Star 6/27/1994, 6/28/1994; Combat Edge Magazine 11/1994; Mike Shook interviews 5/14/2023, 5/15/2023; Dave Garrison interview 5/24/2023)

## Burned in Helicopter Crash

**Jul 1, 1994**

As Jeff C. Carter cautiously maneuvered his helicopter down a ravine, the sling load beneath the ship began swinging uncomfortably back and forth. On one arc, it “ ‘wedged into a rock outcrop, causing the belly hook to shear from the aircraft and the main rotor blade to shear off... the tail boom.’ Now out-of-control, the helicopter struck trees, then rocks, and burst into flames.” The 33-year-old pilot crashed in a steep gorge in the Pusch Ridge Wilderness between Ventana and Finger Rock Canyons. Carter was ferrying supplies into several crews battling the two-hundred-acre Pima Fire when he crashed his Bell Jet Ranger.

Two US Forest Service firefighters who were awaiting to off-load the sling load, witnessed the helicopter hitting the canyon’s ragged granite face. “They rappelled down to help Carter, a former naval flight instructor, from what remained of the incinerated helicopter. They radioed for help around 7:45 a.m....” Residents in the foothills at the end of Craycroft Boulevard also saw the accident and reported it. So destructive was the impact that wreckage was scattered over four-hundred yards. “ ‘The only part of the helicopter that was recognizable was a small section of the tail.’ ” In addition to the Arizona Department of Public Safety helicopter crew which responded, so did 27 members of the Southern Arizona Rescue Association.

Carter remained conscious throughout the entire rescue, receiving second- and third-degree burns to sixty percent of his body. Flown by DPS to Tucson Medical Center, he underwent surgery for a ruptured spleen and then was transported to the burn unit at Maricopa Medical Center in Phoenix. (Citizen 7/2/1994, 7/7/1994; Star 7/2/1994)

## Missing In Avra Valley

**Aug 20, 1994**

Gene Payne, telling his wife he was off to feed his livestock in a nearby pasture, left his mobile home in Avra Valley at 7:00 a.m. The 46-year-old Vietnam veteran said he would be right back.

He could not walk more than several-hundred yards without resting, having broken his back in an industrial mishap eight years before. At one time, he had been quite a cowboy, an accomplished roper, as well as an owner of a stockyard and a rodeo announcer. There did not seem to be anything amiss in his homelife and he had a 14-year-old son with whom he was very close.

Not returning, concerned neighbors scoured the area on horseback, but found nothing. Later that day, the Pima County Sheriff's Department became involved, soon mounting a larger search effort. Members of the Southern Arizona Rescue Association were called in, joining forces with local volunteers, tracking dogs, deputies, and a Department of Public Safety helicopter. Due to his impairment, the search of the immediate grounds was limited and the attempt to find him in the locale, was soon terminated. As of 2023, Gene Payne is still missing. (Citizen 10/19/1994)

### Three Drown in Nogales, Sonora

**Aug 21, 1994**

Since 1991, the US Army Corps of Engineers had attempted to persuade Mexican authorities to approve the installation of water measurement systems in Nogales, Sonora to warn of floods. Despite several meetings over the years, frustrated US officials could not get approval for the system, most of which would have been paid for by the Corps. The plan called for the installation of five rain and stream gauges in Nogales, Sonora and eight similar ones in Nogales, Arizona. Such a system would provide up to an hour's notice of flash floods and might have prevented the tragedy occurring on Sunday, August 21, 1994.

At 3:15 p.m., Leticia Soltero Rosas, 41, was driving a pickup truck while south of the border in Nogales with three of her children when rising waters hit them. The truck had become stuck in the normally dry wash when hit broadside. It was swept over two miles along the wash toward the Arizona side of Nogales. Mexican authorities were able to rescue her 13-year-old son, but she and her two daughters, ages 9 and 10, were lost and presumed drowned.

The Nogales, Arizona police recovered Mrs. Rosas 45 minutes later some two miles north of the border, in the drainage channel along Morley Avenue. All washes south of the border ultimately drain into this channel. The Santa Cruz County Search and Rescue Unit was called out and the bodies of the two children were found the following morning four miles farther north from their mother. (Citizen 8/22/1994, 8/23/1994; Star 8/25/1994)

### Woman Dies, Man Injured at Tanque Verde Falls

**Sep 3, 1994**

Slipping into the fast moving current, witnesses saw 44-year-old Nancy Holder quickly disappear over the eighty-foot waterfall, the longest drop of Tanque Verde Falls. Volunteers of the Southern Arizona Rescue Association recovered her body in the pool at the base of the fall. Two days later, Eric Coppens, 23, dove into a five-foot-deep pool near the same spot and broke his collar bone, and sliced his face. "Paramedics were able to get into the area and rescue Coppens. . . a Department of Public Safety helicopter took Coppens to Tucson Medical Center after paramedics stabilized him." (Star 9/4/1994; Citizen 9/6/1994)

## Scott Clemans Honored

**Sep 19, 1994**

In a half-page *The Arizona Daily Star* pronouncement, accompanied by photos, Hughes Missile Systems recognized 48 of its employees as “Citizen Ambassadors.” Scott Clemans was one of these for: “Volunteer search and rescue instructor for the Southern Arizona Rescue Association.” Others honored included volunteers with the Boy Scouts, United Way, Special Olympics, and various other civic, school, religious, and altruistic related endeavors. (Star 9/19/1994)

## Missing on Tanque Verde Ridge

**Oct 12, 1994**

Her parents asked her not to hike alone, but Shannon Joy Schell felt almost compelled to take on the 32-mile trek that day. She was bound and determined to make the trip up and back to Manning Camp, high atop the Rincon Mountains. The trail on Tanque Verde Ridge in Saguaro National Park is maintained, but with the length of the hike and the mile-high gain in elevation, it was a very industrious undertaking for the 34-year-old. Particularly since she was just getting over the flu and bronchitis. According to her mother, however, “ ‘It was something she wanted to do. No one could talk her out of it.’ ”

“She [Schell] said, ‘I’ve got to do it tomorrow [Wednesday]. The weather’s changing, and I don’t know if I’ll get another chance.’ ” Apparently, she had tried this same trail before, but did not reach her goal of Manning Camp. And, two days later, as she knew would happen, the weather did change, with rain and snow and much colder temperatures.

Schell, a petite 4 feet, 9 inches and 85 pounds, was a University of Arizona graduate, employed at the local Jason’s Deli, and was a smoker. She was described to searchers as a recreational hiker who had gone on long hikes before. “Friends who have hiked with Schell told authorities she has gotten disoriented at times while hiking in the past, and several years ago was lost for two days in Madera Canyon.” She had little clothing for the oncoming cool weather and was wearing thin boots with little ankle support. Her Chevrolet Camaro was still at the Park when her parents reported her long overdue the next day.

Coordinating with Saguaro National Park, the Pima County Sheriff’s Search and Rescue “machine,” quickly went into high gear. At least fifty volunteers, largely from the Southern Arizona Rescue Association, responded that first day; fanning out on the ridge, they initially focused on the trail she planned on taking. They believed they found her footprints, a couple of miles up the trail. Other clues were also spotted, including a cough drop and cigarette butts from her brand. Rescuers, after searching along the over 15-mile trail, finally reached Manning Camp where they spent that night.

The second night a helicopter with an infrared sensor was employed but did not detect any signs of her. The next day, a US Customs helicopter ferried 25 volunteers, including six trackers from the Arizona Department of Corrections, into the steep terrain off Tanque Verde Ridge. All likely—and many, unlikely—places she might be or would be attracted to, were investigated. By day six, searchers were tired, many needing to return to their “day job.” More than 120 searchers worked more than two-thousand hours looking for Schell. “ ‘The search should end before one or more searchers, many who are now very tired, suffer serious injury,’ said monument Superintendent Doug Morris.” Ten separate organizations had been involved: foot searchers, dog teams, human trackers, and helicopters with specialized equipment.



On day nine, after the search had been largely scaled back, Joyce Martin, a psychic “who had aided other missing person cases in Tucson, met with the parents...and told them she believed their 34-year-old daughter was still alive. That led park officials...to fly an eight-member rescue team into the rugged Rincon Mountains to search.” Again, independent of the efforts by Martin, a group of volunteers and four tracking dogs were combing the area.

On July 8, 1995, nine months after she went missing, a Memorial Service for Shannon Joy Emmons Schell was held at St. Andrews Episcopal Church in Tucson. Friends and family gathered, “where they prayed, wept and told stories about their times with Schell.” Shannon’s mother knew it was time to let go. Pima County Sheriff’s homicide detectives continue to investigate the case. (Star 10/15/1994, 10/18/1994, 10/20/1994, 10/22/1994, 7/9/1995)

## Girl Falls 80 Feet

**Nov 2, 1994**

Christine Chaffin was playing hooky from Tucson’s Sahuaro High School and was among at least six spending the morning at Tanque Verde Falls. The 14-year-old was on the edge of the eighty-foot waterfall, made even slicker than normal because of the drizzling rain. “As Chaffin walked near the top of the falls, she slipped and fell down a nearly vertical incline...she bounced off small ledges that helped break her fall before she tumbled into the pool at the falls’ base...” Seemingly with little hesitation, one of the group, 15-year-old Brian Kemp, “dived from the top of the falls into the water and to Chaffin’s rescue...”

The young woman suffered numerous fractures of the bones in her face. Amazingly, her friend Brian, did not suffer any injury. Responding to this mishap was Rural Metro Fire Department paramedics and at least 21 members of the Southern Arizona Rescue Association. After rescuers “carried Chaffin some 100 yards across Tanque Verde Creek near the bottom of the falls, an Air Care helicopter landed and ferried her to Tucson Medical Center where she was listed in guarded condition.” (Citizen 11/3/1994)

## Two Climbers Feel Lucky

**Dec 4, 1994**

“ ‘During the fall, I thought I was going to die and fall off the cliff...I was hoping I’d die soon, I was in so much pain.’ ” Along with three others, Matthew Cloutier, 21, was climbing rocks near Milepost 10 on the Mount Lemmon Highway, when the accident happened. “ ‘I went to grab on to the rock, and then the whole wall came down. The rock landed on my leg and chest, and then I could hear my friends screaming...’ ” When Cloutier saw his foot dangling from his leg he thought he was going to lose it.

Although the weather was clear at this moment, it had been raining earlier and rocks were wet, less stable and more prone to crumble and break. Also caught in the rock fall was Alexandra Limber. The 20-year-old was a photography student at the University of Arizona and was taking photos for a class project when she was also caught in the near-fatal slide. “ ‘I was on top of the rock when it took my feet out from under me...I went flying...then I slid...I just grabbed onto a tree.’ ” At first she believed she had broken an ankle and her wrist, although once in the hospital she learned she did not break either. Cloutier would learn his left leg and ankle were broken, but “feels lucky nothing worse happened to me.”

Because of the rain and darkness, it took rescuers some seven hours to get to the young couple who were injured in the fall. “About 35 people from the Sheriff’s Department, the Southern Arizona Rescue Association and the Rural Metro Fire Department worked to rescue them. Weather conditions prevented the use of a helicopter, so rescuers hiked down last night to reach and care for them. . . .” (Citizen 12/5/1994, 12/6/1994)

### **Mining Trench Caved In**

**Dec 15, 1994**

When the ten-foot-deep trench collapsed, it took four hours for 27-year-old Michael Wytroval of Flagstaff to dig himself out of it. The cave-in had also buried his twin brother, Steven, killing him. They were mining for gold and silver in the Tumacacori Mountains, a remote area of Santa Cruz County. The nearest road and their pickup truck, were a two-hour hike. Michael, now suffering an injured leg, went back in to the pit to dig his brother out. He was able to only partially get to his brother before he finally left, returning to their vehicle.

When the brothers did not return home, their father, Robert Worl, drove to the area and found his son’s pickup. Inside it he discovered Michael, who was understandably distraught. Worl, after sending him to Tubac to get help, hiked into the accident site and was able to finally get to his son’s body. Because of the rugged terrain, distance, and Steven’s weight, Worl was unable to bring the body out. In addition to the Department of Public Safety helicopter, whose crew flew Steven to Tucson the next day, Santa Cruz County Search and Rescue, the Sheriff’s Department, the Tubac Fire Department, and the US Forest Service, all took part in the challenging recovery effort. (Star 12/17/1994)

### **Climber Fell 40 Feet**

**Dec 18, 1994**

It took a Department of Public Safety helicopter and 39 volunteers from the Southern Arizona Rescue Association to get John Chennock to medical care. The 44-year-old rock climber was on Hawkster Agave Spires near Windy Point on the Catalina Highway, when he took a forty-foot fall, suffering a broken ankle. Because of the rough terrain, it was 3:00 a.m. before rescuers could get him to a spot where he could be transported by helicopter to Tucson Medical Center. (Citizen 12/19/1994)

### **Six People Rescued**

**Jan 22, 1995**

“Six people were rescued from a steep, snow-covered slope on Mount Lemmon. . . with some suffering from mild hypothermia. Members from Arizona Search and Rescue [sic], the Mount Lemmon fire district, the Forest Service and Rural Metro helped find the two groups of males. Two men and two teens were found 500 to 1,000 feet down a heavily wooded slope on the mountain, said John Roads, Mount Lemmon’s fire chief.”

Three boys were sledding at the 22.5-mile marker of the Catalina Highway and became stranded at the bottom of the run. The boys were wearing only tennis shoes and sweat shirts and were not dressed properly. Of the three, one managed to struggle back up to the road and alert the father

and uncle of the other two boys. The two adults went down and in turn, they got stuck. As the rescuers responded, they also now stumbled on two other men in their mid-20s who came to play in the snow but soon found themselves stuck, as well. There were now six males at the bottom of a steep, unclimbable mountainside covered in ice and snow. The two teens, apparently, had actually passed by a trail that would return them to the road but they did not recognize it as such. (Citizen 1/23/1995)

## Very Experienced Pilot Dies

**Jan 23, 1995**

American Airlines pilot John R. Fitzgerald left the Avra Valley Airport in his small, two-seat Pitts S2E Special acrobatic biplane, between 2:00 and 4:00 p.m. He was going to practice “touch-and-go” landings and was expected to return shortly. The 32-year-old had served during Operation Desert Shield as an A-10 attack pilot and a coordinator of flight plans and was considered very experienced. Not returning on time that night, “rescue teams from the Sheriff’s Department, the Tucson Police Department’s air squadron and the Arizona National Guard aided in the search.”

On the second day, four pilots with the Civil Air Patrol and ten other volunteers flying their own planes, found no signs of the missing man, according to Deputy Tom Price of Pima County Sheriff’s Search and Rescue. They combed the desert around the busy little airport on Avra Valley Road as well as looked in the Tortolita Mountains and the nearby La Cholla Air Park. Nothing. On day three, the “air search was the most extensive thus far with more than a dozen airplanes and two helicopters looking for Fitzgerald...” There was also a ground search by deputies checking out noteworthy aircraft sightings. And, airports within a fifty-mile radius were ruled out in case he had flown to one of them. Also, nothing.

On January 27, an observer in a Civil Air Patrol search plane spotted the burned wreckage at midday in an isolated spot in the desert, seven miles east of Marana. During the four-day mission, about seventy searchers were involved. (Star 1/24/1995, 1/25/1995, 1/28/1995; Citizen 1/27/1995, 1/28/1995)

## 81-Year-Old Rescued From Cat Mountain

**Mar 21, 1995**

William Bruce McKellar had hiked all his “ ‘life in one way or another and never had an accident. Well, it sure can catch up with you.’ ” The 81-year-old made it to the top of 3,182-foot Cat Mountain in the Tucson Mountains. “ ‘I could see my car down there, and I foolishly decided it was shorter [to go down a different way],’ he said.” Down was steeper and more dangerous than up; stepping on loose gravel, he slipped and fell. In sliding down, he slammed into a boulder, breaking his ankle. “ ‘The darned thing looked like a golf club.’ ” Although he was hiking alone, he luckily had told his wife when he should be back. Knowing it might be a while, he scooted down to a spot where he could be seen more easily.

He spotted a couple bicycling far below and was able to get up on his one good leg and yell for help. Understanding his plight, they sped off and before long, “ ‘all crap broke loose.’ ” Everybody began to come. He could see emergency vehicles from the Drexel Heights and Tucson Estates Fire Departments and then the Sheriff’s Department and then the TV people. He estimated there were eighty or ninety people at the bottom. Fire personnel reached him first and were able to stabilize his ankle. Then at least 12 volunteers from the Southern Arizona Rescue Association arrived. All

of those on the scene agreed the safest way to get him off the abrupt, broken mountain, while protecting themselves, was to secure a helicopter.

Search and rescue had him strapped in tight when the Air Force Reserve's 305<sup>th</sup> Rescue Squadron out of Davis-Monthan AFB, arrived overhead. A crewman from the helicopter was lowered to McKellar to check everything out, and before he knew it, up he went. McKellar healed satisfactorily and would later say, " 'I disobeyed one of the main rules that I've taught the Boy Scouts for years and years. . . I was a hard head and had to go off by myself and hike in a hard place.' " (Citizen 3/22/1995; Star 7/16/1995)

### Gates Pass Car Wreck

**Apr 13, 1995**

Just before 5:00 p.m., Annette L. Chiasson, in her 1994 Ford Escort, plunged off an embankment on the west side of Gates Pass in the Tucson Mountains; she was lucky she was trapped by her air bag, which deployed. Her car was demolished after it tumbled down fifty feet through the trees and boulders. Getting her up to the road were members of teams from the Southern Arizona Rescue Association, Pima County Sheriff's Search and Rescue, Drexel Heights Fire Department, Tucson Estates Fire Department, as well as the Department of Public Safety. After being airlifted to University Medical Center, the 34-year-old woman was in guarded condition. The road had to be closed for over two hours while Chiasson was rescued. (Citizen 4/14/1995)

### Vanished in Mexico

**Apr 22, 1995**

Omar Vargas of Chandler, Arizona, became the subject of an international search when he went missing in Agua Prieta, Sonora, immediately across the border from Douglas. The 3-year-old boy and his family were visiting relatives in the Mexican city of 95,000 people. Initially, there was concern his disappearance that Saturday afternoon might be related to a religious revival held near where the lad was last seen. That did not pan out, however. According to the Agua Prieta Police Chief, " 'The mother isn't sure what happened, whether he wandered away or he was taken. We've searched the city and the surrounding urban areas, but so far he hasn't turned up.' "

The Police Chief would soon say his "Department asked for help after an exhaustive search by his officers, state police, military, and Agua Prieta's civilian search and rescue unit." Monday afternoon, "a seven-member unit from the Cochise County Sheriff's Department Search and Rescue Team arrived," to assist. A spokesperson for them said, "because the search is in Mexico, the department is unable to put its full resources into the effort." The next day, 15 volunteers from the Search and Rescue Council, along with a Blackhawk helicopter from the US Air Force 305<sup>th</sup> Rescue Squadron from Davis-Monthan AFB, joined in the effort. On Thursday, a \$1,000 reward was offered for information leading to the safe return of Omar, posted by the company employing his father. An office manager from there said, " 'When one of us is hurting, we are all hurting.' " The following day, the Vice-Consul with the US Consulate in Hermosillo, Sonora, arrived to offer political support.

By Friday, April 28, the official ground search was called off, although efforts by "hundreds of volunteers," including dog teams from the Arizona Department of Corrections and US Customs, "generated leads Mexican authorities continue to follow." Both dog teams independently trailed the same path to the same place in Agua Prieta and the Vargas family was firmly convinced the

3-year-old “was taken for profit by someone who planned to sell him for adoption in the United States.” Two days later, the popular television show, “America’s Most Wanted,” mentioned the search and a film crew was soon in Agua Prieta filming for a future episode. The Douglas Police Department developed a composite sketch of a suspect.

A special Mexican anti-kidnapping task force was assigned to assist in the hunt for Omar on May 4, appointed to the case by the Governor of Sonora at the request of Arizona Governor, Fife Symington. “ ‘We hope they can help the American effort... and help us in following up any leads that may be out there...’ ” The FBI got involved, as did the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, The Adam Walsh Center, and the KlaasKids Foundation.

Exactly a year to the day after Omar Vargas disappeared, *The Arizona Daily Star* ran a follow up story on the boy. Its headline read, “Parents keep searching for son: Couple is homeless, penniless after looking a year for 3-year-old.” In the previous year, the Sonoran Judicial Police investigators detained at least five different men in the apparent kidnapping. They all alleged being tortured and filed complaints with the Human Rights Commission.

Several days after that April 22, 1996 article, Sonoran police said, Omar “was kidnapped and may have died because his father was mistakenly linked to a 140-pound marijuana rip-off.” Tragedy kept following the Vargas family. On May 25, 1997, over two years after Omar vanished, his mother died in an un-related car crash in Agua Prieta, while pursuing her son’s disappearance there. The father remarried and had another child. As recently as March 30, 2001, two men were arrested in Agua Prieta for Omar’s disappearance, both had been arrested five years earlier on suspicion of taking the boy. They were both released again.

Lastly, there was never a mention in the local newspapers of Omar Vargas after the two arrests in 2001. It is doubtful the boy survived, but if he had, he would be 30 years old in 2022. (Star 4/25/1995, 4/26/1995, 4/28/1995, 5/3/1995, 5/5/1995, 5/31/1995, 4/22/1996, 5/4/1996, 5/27/1997, 3/31/2001)

## Skeleton Found

### May 1, 1995

A ranch hand on the Bellota Ranch near Redington Pass on the northern end of the Rincon Mountains, found a recently abandoned 1990 white Toyota Camry belonging to Ty Taing. Born in Cambodia, Ty and his family moved to the United States in 1981; his parents prospered, owning several businesses in Tucson. The 28-year-old Tucson businessman was last seen by his family the day before, when he came to get money belonging to him. It was about two weeks, however, before they reported him missing. Ty was neither a hiker nor climber and had little or no reason to be driving in or visiting the Redington Pass area, according to family.

There were fears among investigators Taing had gone out there to commit suicide, and the Sheriff’s Department employed cadaver dogs to search the area. They only found his keys, a black wallet, and a towel. The ground was so rocky and the area so large, only a cursory effort was made further to find him. Interestingly, it had been determined his car had been driven to Patagonia Lake, northeast of Nogales on the day he had last seen his family.

On November 8, 1997, thirty months after his car was discovered, a hunter stumbled upon skeletal remains, “ ‘in the general vicinity of this wilderness area where (Taing) was reported missing,’ ” according to Sgt. Brad Foust of the Pima County Sheriff’s Department. About April 17, 1998, nearly three years after Ty Taing went missing, DNA finally proved that the skeleton was

his. Because of the advanced deterioration of the remains, it was never determined how he died. (Star 1/28/1996, 11/11/1997, 4/17/1998; Citizen 11/11/1997)

## Boy Lost near Madera Canyon

**May 13, 1995**

While on a church camp-out near Madera Canyon in the Santa Rita Mountains, 7-year-old Zack Riddle of Tucson, went missing. He had been walking with a second child when he was last seen about 8:30 a.m. At noon, authorities began searching for him, quickly bringing in two helicopters, one from the Department of Public Safety and the other from US Customs. Additionally, there were members of the Sheriff's Search and Rescue Unit, the Southern Arizona Rescue Association, the Sheriff's Mounted Posse, as well as volunteers from the Mormon Church. Before it came to a happy ending twenty hours later, "a team of 200 searchers spent most of Saturday and yesterday morning looking for the boy."

According to authorities, the boy did a lot of things right, mostly, however, just staying put once he realized he had taken a wrong turn. "He was found when one of the search teams spotted the boy's sneaker tracks and followed them until the 7-year-old heard his name being called and crawled out from under some bushes." (Star 5/14/1995, 5/15/1995)

## Fell 50 Feet

**Jun 9, 1995**

While trying to reach the last anchor bolt near the top of Chichuahua Tower Rock off the Mount Lemmon Highway, John Morris fell fifty feet. His safety "rope did not catch him, causing him to fall chest first on rocks below him." The 25-year-old climber was with three companions when the accident happened at 11:30 a.m. "Because of the 'tricky' area Morris was located in, it took rescuers nearly four hours to take him out of the rocky area..." While rescuers, including 14 members of the Southern Arizona Rescue Association, worked to get him to a spot where the Department of Public Safety could hoist him out, he was conscious. He was listed in guarded condition after being admitted to a Tucson hospital. (Citizen 6/10/1995)

## Two Lost on Butterfly Trail

**Jun 25, 1995**

When Southern Arizona Rescue Association searchers found Keri Cavanaugh, 19, and Mark Lanesi-Casanova, 21, the two were safe but dehydrated.

Failing to meet their hiking companions, "22 searchers began looking for the pair at about 8:30 p.m.," said Jim Berry, Pima County Sheriff's Department emergency operations supervisor. And according to Richard Kunz, SARA planned searching through the night. Only three teams were called in to assist since the trail around Mount Bigelow on Mount Lemmon, forks into three paths. If searchers found clues as to which way the pair went, others would join in looking for them. The young couple was found at about 5:00 a.m., the following morning. (Star 6/26/1995, 6/27/1995)



## Plunges off Mount Lemmon Highway

**Jul 21, 1995**

About 6:00 p.m., 20-year-old Rachel Crawford somehow “survived her pickup truck’s 175-foot plunge off a Mount Lemmon cliff...she also survived being ejected from the truck and thrown another 50 feet farther down the mountain after the truck crashed,” said Corey Reed with the Rural Metro Fire Department. “One investigator said he’d never seen anyone survive such an accident. The new Nissan she was driving was destroyed in the crash, which occurred immediately below Windy Point...” Her truck slammed through two guardrails and careened over a steep cliff.

In addition to Rural Metro responding, the Southern Arizona Rescue Association, Pima County Sheriff’s Department Search and Rescue Unit, and the Mount Lemmon Fire Department, did so, as well. All total, about thirty rescuers were involved. “Rescue workers put the woman in a basket and pulled her by ropes up the cliff to the roadway, an operation that took about 90 minutes...She was taken by helicopter to University Medical Center.” (Star 7/22/1995; Citizen 7/22/1995)

## Climber Slides 100 Feet Down Rope

**Jul 26, 1995**

“About 20 people from the Southern Arizona Rescue Association and Rural Metro worked to rescue [Danny] Martinez, who landed on a ledge 400 feet above Mount Lemmon Highway near Milepost 9. That is north of the Sycamore Reservoir Road turnoff. [sic: Gordon Hirabayashi Recreation Area].” The 18-year-old Martinez was injured while rock climbing when he slid one-hundred feet down a rope, breaking an ankle and suffering abrasions in the fall. It took two hours to stabilize the young man in a Stokes rescue basket, rig a lowering system, and then raise him off the ledge he landed on. “After getting tired, Martinez apparently slid down a rope near his own after grabbing onto it...” When admitted to University Medical Center, he was listed in serious condition. (Citizen 7/27/1995)

## Famous Author’s Son Disappears

**Aug 4, 1995**

Alex Dunne, a 38-year-old recent graduate in education from San Francisco, was believed on a bike ride somewhere in the mountains north of Nogales. No one was sure, however, exactly which mountains he was going to. He was in the area visiting his bedridden mother, who lived in Nogales. Credited as an accomplished cyclist, hiker and camper, Alex, however, had been “stranded and forced to camp out 11 days ago after being unable to locate his vehicle following a hike in the Patagonia Mountains,” according to Tony Estrada, Sheriff of Santa Cruz County. This same vehicle, his mother’s 1980 Toyota station wagon, was now missing. Additionally, also gone were his mountain bike and hiking boots.

Alex’s father, best-selling author Dominic Dunne, was covering the O. J. Simpson trial in Los Angeles for *Vanity Fair* magazine and CBS, when his son vanished. At this time, Dominic’s most recent book, “A Season in Purgatory,” was being made into a mini-series by CBS Television and so the father could spawn considerable public attention. The elder Dunne arrived in Nogales on day four of his son’s disappearance. “‘It’s hysterical here, as you can well imagine. The problem is that nobody knows where to look,’ said Dominic Dunne.” Sheriff Estrada would say, “the effort to

find Dunne is like searching for a needle in a 1,200-square mile haystack.” Where to start in this haystack was primarily, to first locate the mother’s station wagon.

Five days after being reported missing, Ellen Griffin Dunne’s vehicle was found properly parked in the upper lot of Madera Canyon, a popular hiking and picnic area in the Santa Rita Mountains. This is also the start of the Super Trail for the summit of 9,453-foot Mount Wrightson. The car was first located by a light plane privately chartered by the television show, “Entertainment Tonight.” It was also spotted at about the same time by Pima County SAR deputies, Doug Myrvold and Tom Price. Dunne’s mountain bike was locked inside but his boots were not there. During this time, there were a dozen searchers from Pima and Santa Cruz Counties covering about thirty miles of trails in and around Madera Canyon.

“ ‘He is kind of a thrill-seeker. If he saw some cliffs, he would go off the trail to go climb them. And it’s not unlike him just to take off and not tell anyone about it. . . It’s still a guessing game as to what he might have been up to,’ ” according to Myrvold. By now, the Border Patrol helicopter had been searching, it was soon joined by both the Department of Public Safety and a Blackhawk helicopter from the US Air Force 305<sup>th</sup> Rescue Squadron at Davis-Monthan AFB. Considerable energy and expense were being put into looking for the missing Alex Dunne.

On August 10, one week after Dunne allegedly went hiking, he stumbled into the Madera Canyon parking lot at 8:30 p.m. “ ‘He was very tired, raggedy, and obviously dehydrated,’ ” said Sheriff Estrada. In referring back to what happened, Dunne said that after hiking for eight miles, he was too tired to continue and chose to spend the night.

“But just after filling up his water bottle [at Baldy Saddle Spring], Alex said his ankle gave out, and he fell down a ravine, reinjuring his back. For three or four days he took refuge under an evergreen tree, unable to move. . . At one point, Alex heard a searcher about 40 or 50 feet away call his name. But he said he was too dehydrated to respond. Then came the downpour Thursday [August 10] afternoon. ‘The rain coming on me just kind of revived me. . . .’ ”

For several reasons, Pima County Sheriff’s Deputy Doug Myrvold, did not think Dunne’s explanation was very plausible. “ ‘All we know is what Alex tells us, he’s the only one [who] knows what really happened.’ ” (Star 8/8/1995, 8/9/1995, 8/10/1995, 8/12/1995)

## Fall at Tanque Verde Falls

**Aug 27, 1995**

While walking with friends, 19-year-old John W. Marquis, lost his footing and tumbled sixty feet down a steep hill about noon at Tanque Verde Falls. “Sheriff’s deputies and members of the Southern Arizona Search and Rescue [sic] responded.” They were able to get him into the Department of Public Safety helicopter, which soon transferred him to a waiting ambulance and, eventually to Tucson Medical Center. Marquis was treated for back, neck, and leg injuries and later released. (Star 8/28/1995)

## Two Go Over Waterfall

**Sep 8, 1995**

Even without it having been raining that evening, the top of the falls in Carr Canyon would be slippery from the stream-polished granite. And then there were the two large redwood signs in

the area clearly warning of the danger, and a six-foot-high chain-link fence to prevent people from going in. Disregarding all of this, Sierra Vista residents Michael David, 21, and Lum Culliton, 26, worked their way off the Carr Canyon Road #368, sometimes called the Carr Reef Road, to the top of the 550-foot-high waterfall and slipped to their deaths. A witness told the Cochise County Sheriff's Department [sic] dispatcher that "one man appeared to be falling, the other man grabbed for him, then both of them tumbled over the edge..."

First responders could not find the two men in the dark that night. Beginning at dawn the next morning, about forty search and rescuers from the Sheriff's Office, Sierra Vista Fire Department and the US Forest Service, spent about six hours recovering them, four-hundred feet below the top. "Some of the responders rappelled down the fall and put the bodies in stretcher baskets. The bodies were then hauled up to the top... Rescuers had to cut the fence... to get the bodies out..." (Star 9/10/1995)

## Climber Killed in Sabino Canyon

**Sep 23, 1995**

The Acropolis, a popular rock climb in Sabino Canyon, had been done by 33-year-old Kelly Moore "dozens of times." The Acropolis is about 1.5 miles up the canyon from the US Forest Service Visitor Center Parking Lot. He had been an Airborne Infantryman, Ranger, and Green Beret, and earned a Purple Heart during his 15 years in the Army. According to his live-in girlfriend, he was "an excellent climber." When he did not return after dark, she got worried, went and found his pickup truck in the lot, and called the Sheriff's Department.

Just before 1:00 a.m., volunteers of the Southern Arizona Rescue Association found Moore's body tangled in his ropes at the base of a climbing route on the Acropolis, called "Medusa." Rated at 5.7, it is moderately difficult but well within Moore's ability, and per his girlfriend, "knew it like the back of his hand." The unknown, however, is that the granite rock there is bad enough, that his girlfriend would not climb on it. " 'It was just fear of the rock's reputation that kept me off it... It's such rotten rock.' " Moore had fallen one-hundred feet. It was more than nine hours before they could retrieve the body, due to hazards in the area. (Star 9/25/1995; Citizen 9/25/1995)

## Winter Visitors Stranded

**Oct 18, 1995**

Martha Shedd, 81, wanted to paint a mountain landscape showcasing Elephant Head Peak on the western end of the Santa Rita Mountains. She and her 84-year-old husband William, could see it from Green Valley, where they were visitors from New Jersey for two months. They had no food and but one quart of water when they headed out at 2:00 p.m. in their 11-year-old Toyota sedan. They intended on staying on the pavement but after missing the correct turn, they opted to return by a dirt road, thinking it would get them to the original paved road. Of course, it didn't and after several miles they became stuck in a wash.

According to Pima County Sheriff's Deputy Doug Myrvold, "the road they followed is intended for four-wheel drive vehicles... it must have been difficult for the compact sedan to get as far as it did." The Shedds waited for help the rest of the day and all that night, until the following morning when the two seniors finally left their vehicle and struck off on foot, looking for aid. The couple was reported missing near midnight the evening before.

“Members of the sheriff’s Search and Rescue team, Sheriff’s Auxiliary volunteers and about 15 members of the Green Valley Auxiliary Volunteers helped in the rescue.” This response also included the sheriff’s crew flying overhead, who spotted them at 4:00 p.m., as well as an unnamed helicopter crew which airlifted them to University Medical Center, where they were treated for sunburn and dehydration. (Citizen 10/20/1995)

### **Pilot Dies near Safford**

**Oct 21, 1995**

Richard Fallbeck, 50, left the Safford Airport about 10:15 a.m., intending a twenty-minute flight. When the visitor from Missouri didn’t return on time, a search and rescue crew began looking for him. Authorities discovered his small delta-winged aircraft crashed about 16 miles southeast of Safford the next morning, according to the Graham County Sheriff’s Office. He was flying alone and was pronounced dead at the scene. (Star 10/23/1995)

### **Climber Dies at Cochise Stronghold**

**Oct 29, 1995**

“John L. Payne, Jr., and two others were rock climbing in Cochise Stronghold, about 35 miles south of Willcox when their rope snapped and Payne fell about 300 feet off a cliff to his death.” His climbing partners were left stranded on the ledge without a rope to rappel down. Forced to spend the night on the cliff, passing hikers finally heard them calling for help the next morning and the Cochise County Search and Rescue Squad, the Fry Fire Department, and the US Forest Service responded, managing to get the two men down safely. They were unhurt except for scratches and dehydration. Later in the day, the Department of Public Safety, along with other rescuers, removed Payne from the dangerous terrain. (Citizen 10/31/1995, 11/1/1995)

### **7-Year-Old Never Found**

**Jan 11, 1996**

About 6:30 p.m., Karen Rosalva Grajeda Lozoya vanished while playing in a dirt lot near her home on Tucson’s West Valencia Road. The little 7-year-old with the missing teeth and wearing the faded purple shirt with writing on it, was also “known to be talkative, even with strangers.” In cases like this, abduction is always a genuine fear and law enforcement immediately began running down investigative leads, such as known sex offenders in the area. But on an off-chance the first-grader had just wandered away, an on-the-ground search of the neighborhood also began.

The first full day of her disappearance, a nine-square mile section of southwestern Tucson was focused on. All those involved tried to remain positive, but it was difficult.

“Police and volunteers paced anxiously... in dirt lot just east of the apartment complex where searchers have set up camp. Bicycle patrols would leave to search, return and... a police helicopter hummed overhead. About 15 detectives, 20 uniformed officers and around 25 volunteers continued their door-to-door search... looking inside and under abandoned cars, in dumpsters, ditches and alleys and anyplace they came upon. Searchers fanned out on foot, in patrol cars, on motorcycles, on horses, bicycles and all-terrain vehicles. Police had talked to every resident of the 410-unit apartment at least once.”

Neighbors got involved in their own way, not knowing how to help nor what else to do. Some were on their horses and looked wherever they could, some walked the area calling out her name. Others distributed homemade flyers to all and then also tacked the flyers to neighborhood telephone poles. Police had six-hundred leads, about 35 having some substance to them. Tohono O’odham officers scoured the desert on the nearby reservation by helicopter and Southern Pacific authorities searched along the railroad tracks. “Officers crawled through broken bottles, old mattresses and other trash inside a 4-foot high, half-mile loop of storm drainage tunnels, looking for anything new. . . .” They used a very small camera to peer into holes too small for an adult but that a child the size of Karen could possibly be stuffed into.

A Tucson Police spokesman said, “ ‘We are relying on the community to be our eyes and ears.’ ” They searched the original area once again, and their efforts went around the clock. Investigative leads grew to over one-thousand, all which had to be pursued. A special ten-man police investigation unit was formed solely to work on this case. Assistant Police Chief Richard Miranda called this effort, “the most extensive [search] in department history.” After four days, the massive ground and air search was terminated.

The nationally televised crime program, “America’s Most Wanted,” aired a segment about Karen on Saturday night, January 27 and about a dozen tips came in. None were productive. Three days later, the CBS “This Morning” show had a piece about missing children, and Karen was among those featured by the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children. And a 12 by 24-foot billboard with a painted likeness of Karen, was erected about then on the Nogales Highway. As of 2023, Karen Rosalva Grajeda Lozoya has not been found. (Citizen 1/13/1996, 1/15/1996, 1/20/1996, 8/30/2004; Star 1/14/1996, 1/31/1996)

## On Bottom of Sabino Canyon Pool

**Jan 15, 1996**

When Stephen C. Charles did not return from his hiking and camping trip “in and around the Sabino Canyon area,” the 24-year-old Fort Huachuca soldier was reported overdue. The Pima County Sheriff’s Department, including over twenty volunteers from the Southern Arizona Rescue Association, conducted several searches after receiving the missing person’s report but found nothing. Roughly three weeks after Charles disappeared, hikers found his campsite, about a mile from the stream where the man was ultimately discovered.

On February 17, the Sheriff’s Department received an anonymous tip from a caller who believed he had seen a body on the bottom of a large pool in Palisade Creek, near Sabino Canyon. It was Stephen C. Charles. (Star 2/21/1996; Citizen 2/21/1996)

## Hiker Lost in Pima Canyon

**Feb 9, 1996**

Steven Raihl, a Pima Community College physics student and a gourmet chef at Café Margritte, left home for a hike mid-afternoon Friday. Two days later, his sister found her 23-year-old brother’s car at the trailhead for Pima Canyon, which was one of his favorite hiking areas. A friend who was also a next-door neighbor, described him as a good hiker. “He’s not one to get lost. He and I have been coming up here hiking since he was 10.”

“Search and rescue teams have searched about 28 square miles of the mountainous area, which includes Pusch Ridge. Ground crews and a helicopter team from the US Air Force Reserve 305<sup>th</sup> Rescue Squadron at Davis-Monthan AFB have joined the effort,” according to Deputy Tom Price of the Pima County Sheriff Department’s Search and Rescue Unit. Also participating were members of the Southern Arizona Rescue Association as well as a dog team with Southwest Rescue Dogs. Tom Fudge, one of the volunteers, who on day four had ventured near the top of a mountain peak, described the dangerous, blustery conditions he found in the area. “He became nervous because of the high winds. He said he crawled on his stomach several times to look over the ledges, because he was afraid of being blown off.”

Right before noon on February 14, the search for Steven Raihl ended when his body was found at the rocky base of a cliff in Pima Canyon. The student “apparently fell eighty feet from a ledge that is southeast of Pusch Ridge and one mile from the trailhead,” said Gary Copus, with SARA. He died on impact. Likely, he was climbing although he did not have the proper equipment and had not told anyone where he was going and what he was doing. Also joining in on the search was the Sheriff’s Department Mounted Posse and the helicopter crew of the Department of Public Safety, which also then lifted the young man out of the canyon. (Star 2/13/1996, 2/14/1996, 2/15/1996)

### “You Are My Heroes.”

**Feb 24, 1996**

On May 28, 1996, the *Tucson Daily Citizen* published a Letter to the Editor from Camille Nicole Savage who had written a public thank you for an incident involving her, from three months earlier. It was titled: Rescuers are her heroes. “As I was sitting by the water, a young boy about 20 feet above me accidentally dislodged a large rock in an attempt to keep from falling. It hit my right thigh, ripping it open and smashing muscles.” For two hours her friends kept her as comfortable as possible until the Sheriff’s Deputies and 17 members of the Southern Arizona Rescue Association, including a doctor, arrived. They were responding to a cell phone call from Seven Falls, in Bear Canyon.

“After assessing my injury, the Search and Rescue Team carried me down out of the canyon. It took them about 2 1/2 hours. They lifted me over large rocks, waded through the water, and pushed through cat-claw. Some of them were bloody by the time we reached the waiting ambulance. After it was all over, I was shocked and amazed to find out that the entire Search and Rescue Team is made up of volunteers. I want to tell them, thank you. You are my heroes.”

The response Ms. Savage is referring to on that Saturday was just one of at least 92 other days volunteers from the Southern Arizona Rescue Association were on in 1996. (Citizen 5/28/1996; SARCI Records)

### Autistic Boy Lost

**Apr 14, 1996**

Dressed only in shorts and tennis shoes, 10-year-old Toby wandered away from his two younger brothers and became lost; the autistic lad lived in a subdivision east of Sierra Vista. His family had just moved from Oregon, intending on building a house on the newly purchased land and Toby was unfamiliar with the area. “ ‘There’s a draw [a wash] on either side of the property and he went down the wrong draw and got lost.’ ”



After spending a harrowing night out, Toby was found near Tombstone after having “walked through more than seven miles of dense mesquite grove as temperatures dipped to 43 degrees in Sierra Vista...” Members of Cochise County Search and Rescue and a dog team from the State Prison in Douglas participated in the search. (Star 4/16/1996)

## SARA and Heli-rappel

**Jun 1, 1996**

A rappel from a helicopter is a Heli-rappel, occasionally written as Helirappel. It is only performed in emergencies: fire, law enforcement, military, or search and rescue. Those involved are specially trained, including pilot(s), crew chief or “rappel master,” and those making the rappel itself. It requires a substantial helicopter, usually a twin-engine. An early, maybe even the first civilian use of Heli-rappels was in 1972 on wildland fires by the Redmond (CA) Smokejumpers of the US Forest Service. They, along with the US Bureau of Land Management, then refined their Heli-rappel firefighting programs over the next decade. In October 1985 and in conjunction with the Arizona Department of Public Safety, the Apache Junction [east of Phoenix] Search and Rescue Team became Arizona’s first Heli-rappel SAR unit. They are volunteers with the Pinal County Sheriff’s Office. See “Arizona’s First Heli-Rappel Rescue Team,” October 20, 1985, on page 388.

In 1994, the Department of Public Safety Air Rescue was in at least 46 missions while supporting SARCI in their approximately one hundred callouts that year, most of which were SARA’s. About the same numbers were also true for 1995, as well. Over these years, many DPS operations required their one crewman/paramedic to be inserted at the scene; to help avoid this awkward commitment, the DPS requested SARA to form a Heli-rappel team. On June 1, 1996, SARA’s Dale Mann completed the required Heli-rappels and associated requirements to be certified by the DPS in its Heli-rappel program. Mann was one of six SARA members to be so certified at that time and this became the first SARA Heli-rappel team. That team still exists in 2022, now with up to ten people, although with different personnel from 1996.

Their certification with the Department of Public Safety is good for four months and according to Mann and SARA’s Mykle Raymond, in 2022:

“It requires two rappels from the aircraft at heights specified by the crew. In addition, we try to arrange a tower session at the Pima Regional Training Center. We rappel several times, including at least one with a ‘tie-off.’ We originally rappelled with a stainless-steel rescue-8, but after a couple of DPS crew members were injured when they lost control of the rappel, DPS switched to an SRT [a specific rappel device] which would automatically lock up in that case. They are trying to keep their semi-technical folks safe, and we’ll use whatever they specify.

“Our team agreed that it was a lot of fun to rappel out of a helicopter, but on an actual mission, we’d prefer to be off-loaded at a hover or one-skid and then hike to the scene, we have more flexibility with equipment. Less chance of the helicopter flying off with your rescue pack if they got a chip light or something... I don’t think there were more than one or two operations when someone rappelled into the scene.” (Mykle Raymond email 9/9/2022; Dale Mann emails 9/9/2022, 9/10/2022)

## Alzheimer Victim Lost

**Jun 18–19, 1996**

An 81-year-old man with Alzheimer's disease disappeared from his home in Oracle, although it was not known he was missing for three more days. Hugh Taylor lived alone, his family was in Phoenix, and the gentleman was not reported missing until then. "The searched for Taylor from June 21 to June 25, using dogs, helicopters and search-and-rescue crews." While surveying for a project on Copper Hill Road about seven miles south of Arizona 77 near Biosphere 2, a worker stumbled upon his body about 9:00 a.m. He was found at the base of a cliff, "and authorities believe he fell 30 to 50 feet while hiking. . . there were no signs of foul play and the death has been classified as an accident. . . ." The authorities thought he died on either June 18 or June 19. (Star 7/9/1996)

## Dead Near Gates Pass

**Jul 1, 1996**

In the afternoon, William Ashley Wood went hiking with his friend, Henry Selton, in the Tucson Mountains. Wood, a 21-year-old Pima Community College student got tired and sat down and soon became separated when his buddy kept on hiking. When Selton returned to his vehicle he waited for an hour and then thought perhaps Wood had walked on to his parents' house near Gates Pass. After not hearing from Wood by the next day, he reported his friend missing. That afternoon, the Sheriff's Department's search and rescue team, including 15 members of the Southern Arizona Rescue Association, spent six hours scouring the area for Wood, with no luck. Early the next morning, they resumed the search and at 7:00 a.m., they found the body of the young man about three-hundred yards north of the Gates Pass parking lot. (Star 7/4/1996; Citizen 7/4/1996)

## Shuttle Bus Trapped

**Jul 27, 1996**

The Sabino Canyon shuttle bus with its twenty passengers had just crossed the ninth and final low-water bridge, near the upper end of its route. At 3:30 p.m., Sabino Creek was not running and had not done so since early spring. "But 10 to 15 minutes later, on the way down shortly after 4:00 p.m., the bus could not cross the bridge because the creek was raging over it. . . ." Tom Quinn, District Ranger for the Forest Service said, " 'We had an unusual event. . . There was an incredibly high-intensity rainstorm cell in the Catalinas. Water in the creek rose very quickly.' "

At an official measuring spot up on the mountain, possibly at Palisades Ranger Station or in Summerhaven, 1.57 inches of rain was reported in a short period of time. And now downhill in Sabino Canyon, the nine narrow, single-lane stream crossings had thigh-high water coursing over them. No one was hurt, but this tram load of people, along with some hikers, were trapped by a serious flash flood and unable to get back down and out of the area.

The Pima County Sheriff's Department Search and Rescue Team, including 27 members of the Southern Arizona Rescue Association, were called out, as was the Department of Public Safety helicopter. For several hours, the helicopter ferried people down to the parking lot at the Canyon's Visitor Center with SARA volunteers carefully loading and unloading these people at the helicopter. Everyone was brought out safely and accounted for. (Star 7/30/1996)

## Father-Daughter Hike

**Aug 19, 1996**

It started as a short day hike out of Marshall Gulch on Mount Lemmon, but ended up as an ordeal involving searchers on foot, horseback, dog teams, all aided by an Air Force rescue helicopter from Davis-Monthan AFB. Edward Osnowitz, 61, from Green Valley and his daughter Julie, 32, of Tucson, “ ‘... were going to hike for a couple of hours and have our lunch. Before we knew it, it was a big loop. ... We didn’t know whether to go right or left. We were just totally lost.’ ” They tried to follow the signs marked “Mount Lemmon,” but ended up just “walking around in circles.” They had no camping equipment and little food and water so, along with Julie’s dog, Bodie, they pressed on. They realized they might be spending a long, uncomfortable night lost somewhere along one of the trails.

At 6:50 p.m., Edward’s wife called the Sheriff’s Department and reported her husband and daughter were now overdue from their mountain trek. That night, at least 14 members of the Southern Arizona Rescue Association were now on Mount Lemmon beginning their search. Edward and Julie made due with what they were handed and cuddled up on the ground, with Bodie helping them keep warm during their crisp night under the stars. The next morning, the couple began moving, now being looked for by 16 searchers on foot and horseback, assisted by teams from the Southwest Rescue Dogs, and a helicopter from the 305<sup>th</sup> Rescue Squadron out of Davis-Monthan Air Force Base. About noon, the two weary hikers stumbled onto the road near Ski Valley in Summerhaven, not too much worse for wear. (Citizen 8/21/1996)

**Student Falls Near San Pedro Vista****Sep 14, 1996**

University of Arizona English major, Chad Lippmeier, was hiking with two Kappa Alpha Fraternity brothers on the Green Mountain Trail near the San Pedro Vista overlook in the Catalina Mountains. About 3:15 p.m., the 20-year-old sophomore told his friends to go on ahead, he was taking a break and enjoying the view from the top of the cliff. “A man and woman hiking the area told deputies they had seen Lippmeier sitting on a rock ledge and that after they passed out of sight, they heard tumbling and a scream.” He fell 100 to 150 feet down a nearly vertical incline, according to Pima County Sheriff’s Deputy, Tom Price.

Lippmeier was found at the bottom of the cliff with two broken legs, serious head and internal injuries and multiple cuts and abrasions over his body. Maybe most concerning, he was not responsive to questions. When the first deputy arrived along with the paramedic from the Mount Lemmon Fire District, a crowd had gathered, although no one could be found who actually saw the young man fall. Eighteen Southern Arizona Rescue Association volunteers also responded. They were able to get Lippmeier to where he could be transferred to a waiting Arizona Department of Public Safety helicopter and flown to Tucson Medical Center.

It was unclear to Deputy Price as to what happened. “ ‘We don’t know if he was trying to climb, [or] if he lost his balance.’ ” (Star 9/15/1996; Citizen 9/16/1996, 9/18/1996)

## Rescued Driver Cited for DUI

**Sep 25, 1996**

“Severe thunderstorms swept through Tucson...socking the city with high winds, hail and heavy rains that stranded motorists and knocked out some electrical power...dumping 1 to 3 inches of rain across the metropolitan area...” John E. Leonard was one of those “stranded motorists,” who every year put rescuers unnecessarily into harm’s way.

When Leonard needed to be rescued from the flooded Rillito River, a total of 17 cars and trucks from various fire agencies and search-and-rescue volunteers responded. The 55-year-old had been drinking before deciding to then go around a traffic barricade and venture into the rushing waters at Camino de la Tierra in northwest Tucson. His car was swept downstream more than one-hundred yards but fortunately he was able to scramble to the top of his vehicle and wait until help arrived. At first, a Department of Public Safety helicopter tried to get to him but power lines proved too dangerous. “It was more than an hour before Rural Metro firefighters could reach him. After waters subsided, rescuers linked arms and formed a 50-foot human chain to save Leonard.”

Leonard was cited for driving under the influence of alcohol and also for failure to obey a traffic control device. The “paperwork has been sent to the County Attorney’s Office, which will decide whether to charge Leonard for the costs of the river rescue... Under Arizona law, Leonard could be charged up to \$2,000,” according to a Sheriff’s Department spokesman. (Star 9/26/1996; Citizen 9/27/1996)

## Injured in Finger Rock Canyon

**Oct 15, 1996**

Hiking off-trail with four companions, 43-year-old David L. Eschhofen was on a ledge in Finger Rock Canyon in the Catalina Mountains when he lost his footing and fell thirty feet and then tumbled twenty more feet. One man hiked about 1 1/2 miles out and summoned assistance. Several members of the Rural Metro Fire Department and 19 volunteers from the Southern Arizona Rescue Association, soon responded. These rescuers were able to get Eschhofen lifted out of the canyon by an Arizona Department of Public Safety helicopter and flown to Tucson Medical Center, where he was listed in satisfactory condition. (Star 10/16/1996; Citizen 10/16/1996)

## Missing Chiropractor

**Nov 21, 1996**

By most appearances, Jeffrey N. Weinstein was a successful chiropractor, living in an upscale Ventana Canyon home in the Catalina Foothills. The 42-year-old was last seen walking along the road near there, leaving his house that Thursday while the family slept. After canceling a tennis game with a friend, he left without his car, house keys, or wallet. His wife would tell responders that her husband of 18 years, had been “ ‘distraught and worried the last two weeks over his business. He’s a real family man, he’s never done this [disappeared] before.’ Her husband has no known enemies, isn’t a drug user and doesn’t drink...”

The Pima County Sheriff’s Department Search and Rescue Unit, including search dogs and volunteers from the Southern Arizona Rescue Association, spent the next two days combing the area for the missing man. A Department of Public Safety helicopter crew also looked down from overhead. At first, the dogs alerted on a scent and followed it out of the gated community but

then lost it. The case was turned over to the missing persons' unit at the Department. The family contacted a psychic and hired a private investigator and also offered a \$20,000 reward for information about his whereabouts. The airlines were queried, but nothing.

On November 31, ten days after Dr. Jeffrey N. Weinstein went missing, two neighborhood children playing in the open desert only 125 yards from his home, found his body. It was lying under a palo verde tree, partially hidden by bushes. According to the Pima County Coroner's Office, he had committed suicide by stabbing himself in the chest. (Star 11/24/1996, 12/1/1996, 12/2/1996)

### **She Signals Rescuers With a Lighter**

**Dec 16, 1996**

Deb Greene, 25, left at 11 a.m. for a day hike on the Butterfly Trail, not too far from the Palisades Ranger Station. This is a 5.7-mile trail with a 1,300-foot loss or gain in elevation, depending on where you start. Much of the way is on the north side of Mount Bigelow, passing through beautiful, thick stands of pines and aspens. It is also cold in the winter. She was wearing only a sweater over a light shirt and jeans and had not anticipated on taking too long in hiking this trail. Which she ended up doing.

Not showing up by 10 p.m., at least four hours after dark, her sister reported her overdue and because she was not really equipped for the bitter, near-freezing temperatures at that elevation, a search for her was begun that night. The woman did have a cigarette lighter, however, which proved extremely useful. When Greene heard a Department of Public Safety helicopter flying fairly low and slow over the area, the woman began flicking her lighter to get the attention of the search crew now overhead. One of them was wearing night-vision goggles and easily spotted the conspicuous greenish-glow of the lighter's small flame. Some of the nine volunteers of the "Southern Arizona Search [sic] and Rescue Association" on the trail very early that morning, were able to join up with the woman at 2:30 a.m., and walk her out to the trailhead. (Citizen 12/17/1996)

### **\$10 Million Drowning at Pena Blanca Lake**

**Dec 17, 1996**

Blake Jackson, 42, and three teenagers whom he had met just the week before, were on Pena Blanca Lake at 1:00 a.m., when the two-person paddle boat the four of them were crammed into, took on water. As the over-loaded craft sank, Jackson, and two of the boys, ages 13 and 16, made it to shore; 15-year-old Ivan Wolfe of Tucson, did not. Jackson had taken the small vessel without permission of his friend, the lakeside concessionaire, whose permit with the Coronado National Forest had expired only ten days before.

In the chilly darkness, the three survivors did not see what happened to Wolfe and in the confusion, were unsure of the spot where the accident had actually taken place. One boy broke into the office seeking a phone and the Santa Cruz Sheriff's Department responded when the alarm was set off. After sunrise, responders from Tucson were on the scene, now assisting Sheriff Tony Estrada. "Richard Kunz, a member of Pima County Search and Recovery, a group of volunteer divers, said the two teens gave two locations where they believe the boat sank. 'Divers are concentrating in those areas, but are having a difficult time because of heavy plant growth [on the bottom],' Kunz said. 'It would be impossible to search the entire lake.' " In places, the 45-acre lake could be fifty feet deep.

For the first three days, about a dozen divers from Pinal, Pima, and Cochise Counties, combed the bottom of the lake, but found nothing. Then the state funding for this emergency ran out and their efforts ended. “The state money paid for on-call ambulances and dive equipment.” In the interim, Jackson was now in the Santa Cruz Jail, on a \$500,000 bail. He was charged with manslaughter, three counts of endangerment, contributing to the delinquency of a minor and possession of marijuana, in connection with both Wolfe’s disappearance as well as the alleged harm to the two surviving boys. And then, two days after the search was halted, additional money came through, and the divers were back in the water. All total, these volunteers searched for Ivan Wolfe for at least four full days and his body was not found.

On December 28, the Santa Cruz County Attorney’s Office dropped the manslaughter charge against Blake Jackson, at least until a body was found. He was, however, still facing the additional criminal charges. On January 15, about a month after Ivan Wolfe drowned, his body was spotted floating on the surface of Pena Blanca Lake by a couple of fishermen. Jackson later pleaded guilty to negligent homicide and soon began serving 2 1/2 years in prison.

In May of 1999, after an eight-day trial, a Superior Court jury in Tucson decided that Pena Blanca Lake, Inc., should pay 65 percent of the \$10 million award to the divorced parents of Ivan Wolfe. And that the company’s former employee, Blake Jackson, was responsible for the remaining 35 percent. According to the attorney for the parents, their claim was:

“Pena Blanca lodge was negligent in shutting down their operation. They pulled paddle boats out of the water, but they left them on the dock for anyone to come along and get into... employees pulled the drain plugs out of the boats before leaving them on the dock. The jury specified an additional \$4 for each parent to signify the cost of a rope that could have been used to tie the boats to prevent their use on the lake.” (Star 12/18/1996, 12/28/1996, 1/16/1997, 5/15/1999; Citizen 12/19/1996, 12/20/1996, 12/21/1996)

## Divers Look for Murder Weapons

**Jan 20, 1997**

On May 30, 1996, two people were violently gunned down and a third was wounded at the Moon Smoke Shop on West Grant Road. Two weeks later, June 13, four more people were killed at the Tucson Firefighters’ Association Union Hall on East Benson Highway. Ultimately, three men were caught for these six homicides: Robert G. Jones, 27, Scott Nordstrom, 29, and his younger brother, 27-year-old David Nordstrom.

On January 20, 1997, “Divers from the Pima County Sheriff’s Department’s Search and Rescue Team [began] searching the pond near Arizona 83. A witness led detectives to the pond... The witness said the guns used in the slayings—a 9 mm handgun and a .380-caliber weapon—were dumped there after the June 13 killings...” There was a search warrant to look in what is called the Fagan Pond, in the foothills of the Santa Rita Mountains. Richard Kunz, one of the Pima County Search and Recovery Divers, believes the weapon(s) was/were never found.

On May 18, 1998, Scott Nordstrom received six death sentences for his convictions on the homicide-robberies. On December 7, 1998, Robert G. Jones received six death sentences for his convictions on the six homicide-robberies. After confessing he was the getaway driver, David Nordstrom received a sentence of four years for his involvement in the six slayings. (Star 6/14/1996, 1/23/1997, 8/26/1998; Citizen 6/14/1996, 1/23/1997, 6/24/1998; Richard Kunz email 9/27/2021)



## Missing Superior Court Clerk

**Mar 28, 1997**

Pima County Superior Court Judge Deborah Bernini reported Melanie Drum missing after failing to report to work on Monday morning. Drum, a 42-year-old courtroom clerk, had talked to co-workers about hiking in either the Dragoon or Chiricahua Mountains over the weekend. Her supervisor described the divorced Drum as very responsible, extremely efficient and very private. She was a recent graduate of the Tucson Police Department's citizens police academy and was well-known in the Tucson criminal justice community. While investigating where to go hiking, Drum asked her brother, a Marine stationed on a ship headed to Zaire, where to go. He had recommended the Cochise Stronghold. But her associates said she said she had been there and wanted some place new.

Believed to be hiking by herself, Drum was described as a petite blond and was thought to be driving her 1995 lavender Saturn. Finally, four days after she was reported missing and possibly a full week since she began her trip, her car was found. Located by officials of the Forest Service, it was on an isolated dirt road and "in a rocky region near the Dragoon Mountains," about twenty miles northeast of Tombstone. This immediately prompted a search effort by the US Forest Service, and "about 15 volunteers, four [Cochise County] deputies and a search dog were mobilized within an hour of the car's discovery." Of course, the length of time since she went missing was of great concern to authorities, compounded by the low temperatures, and the area's recent rain and snow and forty-mph winds.

Her body was discovered at the bottom of a 180-foot embankment about two miles from where her vehicle had been located the day before. "It appeared as if she tumbled down a rocky slope in the China Peak area while... hiking alone... she most likely lost her footing..." Since no one knew where she was hiking, an intensive search of the area did not begin until her car was found. (Star 4/3/1997, 4/5/1997, 4/6/1997)

## Lost Due to Lightning

**Jul 7, 1997**

The three, led by Doug Fritz, 45, intended hiking from the Catalina Highway down the moderately difficult Box Camp Trail to the Visitor Center in Sabino Canyon, a trip of about 14 miles. They were experienced, had maps and food with them but when the trio didn't show up by 10:30 p.m. that night, family members reported them missing.

Tom Price, Search and Rescue Coordinator for the Pima County Sheriff's Department, put several deputies onto the trail that evening, working their way upwards from Sabino Canyon. At first light, about twenty volunteers from the Southern Arizona Rescue Association went into the field, searching the slopes and washes parallel to the main trail. The mission lasted for 36 hours and before it was over, more than one-hundred searchers were involved, as was the helicopter from the Department of Public Safety.

When found, Fritz said, "he has hiked many of the trails in the Catalinas," but his friends from Michigan, were not familiar with the area. The reason for them getting lost was they intentionally got off the trail when a thunderstorm began. This trail is very exposed and lightning is a real issue, as was soon proved. The DPS helicopter now searching for the missing hikers, spotted a fire near where the three were hiking. It would grow to five acres and be fought by an air tanker with retardant and twenty firefighters. If this was not enough complication, a rock climber had fallen

fifty feet at Windy Point Vista, very close to both the fire and the search area. He was “somewhat conscious, but combative and having seizures, which is common after severe head injuries” and needed immediate medical assistance. The helicopter was then diverted from the search to evacuate the 21-year-old injured climber.

After 36 hours of being missing, the three hikers were found safe. They had been skirting the streams to stay close to water. When intercepted by searchers, they were evacuated by helicopter and had not experienced any medical issues. (Star 7/9/1997, 7/10/1997)

## Hang Gliders Bump

**Jul 27, 1997**

There are open spots along Carr Canyon Scenic Road #368, sometimes referred to as the Carr Reef Road, which are popular launching sites with parasailing and hang gliding enthusiasts. Not too far from Sierra Vista, quick gains in elevation provide attractive launch pads from differing heights. At the bottom end of their flying adventure, there are level landing spots for them. Noel Yarborough, devoted to hang gliding every weekend since January, took off from one of these sites. He joined another pilot in a separate hang glider mid-air over a large meadow. “The men were performing maneuvers and were circling past each other when their wingtips touched, causing both pilots to lose control.”

The second pilot was able to somehow recover his control and land safely, but 49-year-old Noel Yarborough plummeted 150 feet to earth as both of their support crews and other witnesses looked on. The local real estate agent was pronounced dead of massive internal injuries upon arrival at the Sierra Vista Community Hospital. (Citizen 7/28/1997; Star 7/29/1997)

## Two Boys Lost on Mount Lemmon

**Jul 27, 1997**

Bobby Wainwright, 10, and his 11-year-old cousin, C. B. Stotts, were on a family picnic at Rose Canyon Lake when they wandered away at about 2:30 p.m. A third boy was separated from the others, but found his way back to the area and told the mother of one of the boys. They were reported missing around 5:00 p.m. “More than 20 people from the sheriff’s search and rescue, Southern Arizona Rescue Association, Southwest Rescue Dogs, the Sheriff’s Mounted Posse and a Department of Public Safety helicopter,” all quickly responded. Shortly before midnight, SARA volunteers and the DPS helicopter crew found the boys “tired and cold.” The helicopter picked up the lads and reunited them with relatives. (Star 7/29/1997)

## Eight Drown in Storm Drain

**Aug 6, 1997**

Just over an inch of rain fell in two hours the Wednesday night that at least twenty people were caught in a culvert under Douglas. Using the thunderstorm as concealment, the illegal immigrants were crossing from Mexico through a four-foot-high drain when hit by a flash flood. This volume of water was quickly magnified by additional floods sweeping down into the city from nearby mountains. Tragically, also on that day, large, heavy steel grates securing the drainage system separating Douglas from adjacent Agua Prieta in Mexico, were being installed. These grills made

of pipe became clogged when brush and debris lodged up against them, resulting in the tunnels almost completely filling. Many of these twenty people probably never knew what hit them.

It was 14 hours before it was learned anyone was trapped or had died. The head of the US Port of Entry in Douglas came in to see what rain damage had been done and to monitor a front-end loader clearing mud from a main walkway. “ ‘On the fourth scoop I saw something. I thought it was a bundle of dope... I pulled on it and saw it was a human being... If it wasn’t for this grate, we would never have found the bodies. They’d have gone on into Mexico and been buried by the debris.’ ” Within 24 hours, six victims were found, “...investigators had probed the mud in the ditch for several blocks without locating any more bodies.”

As it turned out, however, there were more bodies. Word filtered in to the Police Department over the next few days that there might be at least two more people buried by the flood somewhere beneath Douglas. “Once the water was removed, investigators searched the pipe, block by block. . . .” A cadaver-sniffing dog from Oro Valley near Tucson, was brought in and walked the area, but could not find anything. Finally, on August 17, two more men were spotted floating in the drainage ditch after, ironically, more rain had swept away silt and mud deposited in the earlier flood. Ages for those who died ranged from 18 to 34.

Identifying the eight victims was complicated and time consuming, taking upwards of several weeks. Several did not have identification or it was swept away. Two women eventually told investigating officials that miraculously, “they and three men and a small child climbed up into a manhole shaft and survived.” (Star 8/7/1997, 8/9/1997, 8/27/1997; Citizen 8/8/1997, 8/9/1997, 8/10/1997)

## Plane Lost Exactly 13 Years

### Aug 31, 1997

“ ‘It appeared as though they had no idea they were headed for the mountain and just flew straight into it,’ said Pima County Sheriff’s Detective Jess Hartman, who was among the first investigators arriving at the site by helicopter. . . ‘I don’t think they had even a second to recognize what was happening. I think it was instantaneous. . . .’ ” Deputies and Park Rangers were dropped off by the Department of Public Safety helicopter about one-hundred yards away.

On August 29, 1984, Charles Eric Jenkins, along with three passengers, left an airport near their homes in San Diego at 9:00 p.m., heading for Houston. The 42-year-old Jenkins was a former Navy and Western Airlines pilot, with more than 10,000 hours of flight time. However, he only had two hours in this rented, six-place Piper Saratoga Turbo, a high-performance aircraft with retractable landing gear. For a pilot with his experience, it was a little strange he did not file a flight plan, although this might also be explained by over-confidence in his ability. Not arriving, an intense, week-long search was initiated by the Civil Air Patrol which combed the likely route from California, through Arizona and New Mexico, and into Texas.

For three weeks it was believed the foursome had been on their way to Texas for business. But then, “Suspicious about the plane emerged when one of the men’s landlords entered his. . . apartment and found cocaine, marijuana and cash stuffed in cereal boxes and a suitcase. The next day employees of a towing company found more bags of cocaine and marijuana and a box containing \$58,000 in \$100 and \$50 bills in the trunk of his 1976 Jaguar. . . .”

A year later, “The *San Diego Union-Tribune* reported that Jenkins may have been an unwitting victim of a cocaine-running operation. Quoting unnamed federal authorities, the newspaper said

the rented six-passenger Piper Saratoga Turbo also may have carried a cargo of \$1.5 million cash for a cocaine purchase in Orlando, Florida.” This missing plane story then faded from the news.

While building his home in the shadow of the Rincon Mountains in 1993 and 1994, outdoor enthusiast and mountaineering expert Dave Baker began noticing the sun glinting off what he thought was water running across a rock. A friend eventually brought over a high-powered telescope and the two could clearly see a plane’s tail. He knew there were wrecks in the Rincons but curiosity won out and on August 31, 1997, the two bushwhacked their way to this one, taking 15 hours in and out. “The crash site is an isolated steep and rugged area about 8,000 feet in elevation. . . the wreckage is heavily overgrown with vegetation. . . .” They found a bag of illegible cash and disintegrating human remains; all nearly totally destroyed by time, weather, and wildlife.

“Five search and rescue officers and three deputies rappelled out of a helicopter onto the steep, rocky terrain of the 8,484-foot peak to gather the crumbling remains and cash, all which fit into a few gallon-sized containers.” The wreckage covered a two-hundred-square-foot radius. It was known four men took off but officials were unsure if there had been a stop enroute and passengers got on or off, so at first, there was reluctance to name occupants of the wreckage. “There is no complete skeleton for any one person. There is just a bunch of different bones. . . .”

It does not seem investigators were ever able to draw any firm conclusions as to what these men were up to and who was doing what. (Star 9/3/1997, 9/5/1997, 9/10/1997; Citizen 9/5/1997)

## **Jogger Missing For 29 Hours**

**Sep 28, 1997**

Jackie Bradley intended on taking a two-hour Sunday jog on the Romero Pools Trail in Catalina State Park. Normally she ran on a treadmill or in her neighborhood and this was her first time in the park. She “wasn’t sure how or when she got off the trail.” But the 38-year-old definitely did, somehow climbing nearly 4,000 feet in elevation and then going over rugged Romero Pass and dropping down into the upper reaches of the West Fork of Sabino Canyon. After being two hours late in meeting her husband in the park, he called for help.

The Search and Rescue Council got “involved right away.” That day at least 17 volunteers, many on horseback, were out on the probable trails she might be on. “Mounted posse crews worked through the night” and then on the next day, 14 were there, as was the Department of Public Safety helicopter crew. “She took off her white T-shirt, waving it, and screaming in vain. ‘Please find me!’ she said.” But they did not see her.

The search strategy was to contain her by having rescuers set up on specific trails in the area. This worked and just before noon on Monday, she walked into a rescuer on horseback, near Hutch’s Pool. Although sunburned, dehydrated and very tired, it still needed work by them to coax her onto a horse. “Though jovial and smiling, Bradley said she was scared and vowed never again to run alone in that area.” When found, she was somehow about 12 miles from where she should have been. (Star 9/30/1997; Citizen 9/30/1997)

## **Long Fall in Gates Pass**

**Nov 12, 1997**

A mile from West Gates Pass Road, 22-year-old Robert May lost his footing and fell fifty feet while hiking in the rain. The weather also slowed Northwest Fire District’s technical rescue team’s

ascent of the mountain that May and his three companions were on. “ ‘The rain made the footing more slick, and crews had to focus on safety more than they would have if it wasn’t raining,’ ” a spokesperson said. In addition to the 11 responders from both the Southern Arizona Rescue Association and the Northwest Fire District that afternoon, there were also members of Flowing Wells and Tucson Estates Fire Departments. (Star 11/13/1997)

### **Santa’s Helpers Crash**

**Dec 20, 1997**

Two aero-squadron volunteers for the Pima County Sheriff’s Department were delivering food baskets and Christmas gifts for ten families to the Graham County Sheriff in Safford. The items had been collected on a holiday food drive sponsored by the Arizona Law Enforcement Association. Retired Tucson Police Lieutenant Frank Zunno, 75, was piloting the four-person Mooney when they crashed at 9:30 a.m. into Mount Graham, west of Safford. Due to declining visibility, Zunno was trying to follow a road and finally, he needed to turn around when fog began closing in. A wing clipped the mountainside and the plane quickly went down, it “basically burned up except for the left wing.” Fortunately for them, hikers saw the crash and notified 911.

“Graham County Search and Rescue, the town of Pima’s emergency medical technician squad and horse units from Fort Grant Prison conducted the rescue efforts. . . The horse units, following Zunno’s shouts for help, found the two men about 3:00 p.m. Emergency medical technicians followed in, stabilized the men and carried them on stretchers about 300 yards to emergency vehicles.” Flown to Tucson Medical Center, Zunno was reported in guarded condition and his passenger was admitted to the Burn Unit in critical condition. (Star 12/21/1997; Citizen 12/22/1997)

### **Dog Rescued from Abandoned Mine**

**Jan 14, 1998**

Rescuers guessed the large male Chow Chow had been in the abandoned thirty-foot-deep mine shaft for up to a week. He was hungry, thirsty, and too weak to stand. Two hikers near Ina Road in Avra Valley peered down into the shadowy hole out of curiosity and were surprised to see the animal below. Responding to the 911 call were ten firefighters and rescue workers from Northwest Fire District. When they saw the dog, they knew they had to do something, so two firemen were lowered by ropes into the hole. “The animal, weak from dehydration, lay listless as firefighters strapped it to a board and lifted it from the hole.” According to the Battalion Chief, the dog was skin and bones and just didn’t have the energy to do anything. “ ‘Not only were we able to save the dog, but it was a training experience for rescue techs, giving them real-situation rescue experience’ . . . .” (Citizen 1/15/1998)

### **Dies in Why**

**Jan 15, 1998**

Why, Arizona, is named because of the “Y” intersection, now no longer at that spot on Highway 86. It is an unincorporated settlement of about 110 people, some ten miles east of Ajo and thirty miles north of the Mexican border at Lukeville. Ronald G. Young, 64, just purchased a mine near there and was considering developing it into a tourist attraction. He and two friends were out looking it over when he “walked into the tunnel he had never been through and fell 60 feet down a shaft

to his death.” His companions, soon realizing he was missing, followed his tracks into the tunnel and discovered the darkened shaft and guessed at what had happened. “Pima County Sheriff’s Department rescuers [including SARA volunteers] found Young’s body on a ledge above a 600-foot drop and recovered it. . . .” Reportedly, “none of the men [in Young’s party] were wearing hard hats or carried lights or other safety equipment.” (Star 1/17/1998)

## Trapped By Snow

**Feb 12, 1998**

Intending to spend two nights out, Kay and William Skubus were hiking from Catalina State Park to Sabino Canyon, by way of Romero Pass and Cathedral Peak, about a twenty-mile trip. Soon after midnight of their second night out, 1.44 inches of rain began falling at the airport and 14 inches of snow started on Mt. Lemmon. In their mid-30s, the couple woke up that next morning, realizing they were now stranded by overflowing streams and wet, deep snow. They luckily managed a signal on their cell phone, able to tell their children’s babysitter they would not be home that night but would be the next day. “It was so cold. . . they crawled back into their sleeping bags about 4:00 p.m. to stay warm.” But of course, they could not resume their hike as promised. When the pair did not arrive home that third evening, the babysitter notified the Sheriff’s Department and a rescue began. “The Sheriff’s Mounted Posse combed the mountains for the couple. . . .” All ended well. “[Kay] Skubas said she now believes local hiking manuals that say hikers ‘overestimate their ability and underestimate the ruggedness of the Catalina Mountains.’ ” (Star 2/16/1998, 2/17/1998)

## Died Saving Friend’s Dog

**Feb 15, 1998**

Just after 4:00 p.m., a black Labrador Retriever belonging to a friend of Anton Bakker, jumped into the higher-than-normal Tanque Verde Creek. Bakker and his four friends were just above the eighty-foot waterfall, the highest in the area. Witnesses believed Bakker, only two days shy of turning 22, may have gone in to save the dog. They thought he momentarily had the Lab in his arms. At 6-foot, 3 inches tall and 190 pounds, he was described as fit and athletic. But they watched helplessly as they saw him carried over the next two smaller falls. The gorge is lined by water-worn granite, with no place to grab.

Pima County Sheriff’s Department and its search and rescue volunteers responded. By nightfall, the dog was found dead, but the young man had not yet been located. Given both the height of the drop and the turbulence of the water, very little hope was held out he could have survived, but searchers still worked into the night.

Before daylight the next morning, about ten of his friends showed up with flashlights to look for him, while about 15 members of Southern Arizona Rescue Association, aided by the Southwest Rescue Dogs, Inc., began checking the pools and along the stream. Divers could not enter the water because of the strong current and depth, twenty feet deep in places. On the fourth day, February 19, family and friends discovered the 21-year-old’s body some two miles downstream. “ ‘The family had a feeling when they woke up and saw the sun that they would find him today,’ said a family friend. . . .” Searchers had checked the area daily, said Richard Kunz of the Southern Arizona Rescue Association.

“After Bakker’s body was discovered, his parents. . . and his sister, Kimberly, hiked several hundred yards from the road to Tanque Verde Creek. . . There, Kimberly ‘laid down with the body and



cried for almost an hour’... Apparently, the churning water in a 15-foot-deep pool at the base of the falls released Bakker’s body from its icy grip and pushed him downstream.”

On May 15, a local animal rescue group held a fund-raiser with proceeds going to its Foundation for Animals In Risk, to honor Anton Bakker, who died trying to rescue a dog. (Star 2/16/1998, 2/17/1998, 5/9/1998; Citizen 2/20/1998)

## Drowning in Picacho Reservoir

**Mar 6, 1998**

Friday morning, Kelly Robinson, 35, went fishing at Picacho Reservoir and failed to return to his home in Casa Grande by evening. Pinal County Sheriff’s Department took the lead on the search, assisted by a Department of Public Safety helicopter and the Pima County Sheriff’s Department Search and Rescue. Deputies first found his truck near the spillway about 9:30 p.m. that night and then the next afternoon, his family located his boat and fishing tackle. For several days, divers searched the lake but with no success.

Nine days later, March 15, Vi Brown had “Patches,” her 5-year-old Queensland Heeler, out on the lake, helping to search for Robinson. She was part of the Southwest Rescue Dogs, a small volunteer organization formed in 1993, “to help search and rescue teams find missing persons and drowning victims, and aid in other search efforts.” Patches was one of the five dogs in the group and was trained in finding cadavers. “In water searches, ‘We try to narrow down the area for divers so they aren’t having to search the whole lake,’ she said.” At this point, there had been at least fifty people looking for Robinson.

“ ‘They say a dog can smell one drop of scent in a 55-gallon drum of water. When the body [Robinson] started floating [Sunday], all three dogs began whining,’ Brown said. ‘It was overwhelming to them and we could barely smell it.’ ” At the time, Vi Brown was a thirty-year member of the Southern Arizona Rescue Association. Pima County SAR Deputy, Tom Price, said that the Southwest Rescue Dogs, “which has about 10 members—has assisted in about 50 to 100 calls in the last three years. Most of the calls involved missing children, Alzheimer’s walkaways and cadaver searches.” (Star 3/10/1998, 3/18/1998)

## Narrow Escape at Chivo Falls

**Apr 9, 1998**

Harold “Hal” Loy narrowly dodged death after being swept over two, twenty-foot waterfalls at Chivo Falls. The 21-year-old was hiking with others when he slipped on the wet granite and fell into the water right before noon. “He came precariously close to falling over the main 80-foot waterfall...” Rescuers scrambled down to Loy, securing him into a Stokes wire basket and then hoisted him up. After further stabilizing his back and leg injuries, he was carried to an open spot where he was picked up by a Department of Public Safety helicopter and flown to Tucson Medical Center. The DPS crew was not done, after dropping Loy off, they then responded to Catalina State Park for a 36-year-old woman who suffered a leg injury near Romero Pools. (Star 4/10/1998)

## Two Incidents at Tanque Verde Falls

**Apr 19, 1998**

A 21-year-old woman narrowly missed being killed while swimming at the top of one of the Tanque Verde Falls. Laurie Alford was in stable condition at Tucson Medical Center, suffering from head, neck, hip and knee injuries after surviving a seventy-foot drop at Tanque Verde Falls. While climbing rocks near the lip of the waterfall in her bare feet, she slipped on the slick, polished granite. Just before 6:00 p.m., volunteers from the Southern Arizona Rescue Association were able to get her to Tucson Medical Center by helicopter.

These same rescue workers were then called back to the falls for a 24-year-old woman who was threatening to jump. Upon arriving at the scene, they found the woman was being held down by people in the area. According to Sheriff's Deputies, the woman, whose name was not released, seemed to be hallucinating. In both instances, drugs or alcohol were involved. (Citizen 4/20/1998; Star 4/20/1998)

## Missing Cowboy

**Jul 16, 1998**

Manuel Lopez was a lifelong cowboy on the Tohono O'odham Reservation. The 53-year-old grew up in Queens Well, half-way between Kitt Peak and the Silverbell Mine, and still lived there. He was last seen that Thursday at 1 p.m., when he and three others split up to gather cattle and drive them to a desert watering spot. When not rendezvousing back with them, he was reported missing at 8 p.m. He did not plan on being gone very long so it was believed he had no water with him. This is despite it having been 100 degrees Thursday, the day he went missing although some monsoon rains had fallen in the area.

That first night authorities began a search using all-terrain vehicles, horses and an Arizona Department of Public Safety helicopter. The second day, 64 people from law enforcement agencies, members of the Southern Arizona Rescue Association, the Tohono O'odham Fire Department, and the settlement of Queens Well, formed a "skirmish line" to look at a 25-mile area about 12 miles south of the Silverbell Mine. Because of the heat, the group covered part of the section in the early morning and the other part after 5 p.m. Lopez's horse had not returned to the corral, which some searchers took as a good sign. Their effort lasted through Sunday, a third full day. There were never any clues discovered in the search nor a follow up story; it is unknown if Manuel Lopez was ever found, alive or dead. (Star 7/19/1998)

## Drowning in Parker Canyon Lake

**Jul 17, 1998**

In the late afternoon, Patrick Michael Harmon of Huachuca City, disappeared a dozen feet offshore in Parker Canyon Lake. US Forest Service officials and Pima County Deputies searched the surface and the shoreline for the 42-year-old that night but had to wait until the next morning for divers to arrive. Nine members of the Southern Arizona Rescue Association, including volunteers from the Pima County Search and Recovery Divers, responded for the drowning. It took them two hours to find Harmon's body, about 9:30 a.m. (Star 7/19/1998)

## Woman Jumps From Cliff

**Oct 17, 1998**

Witnesses saw 52-year-old Margaret L. Earl arguing with her boyfriend at a Mount Lemmon Highway pullout near the Seven Cataracts overlook. “Earl, who had been sitting on a guardrail, walked about 10 feet to the edge of the cliff and jumped,” according to a responding Deputy. She suffered critical head and upper torso injuries in the 5 p.m. tumble down the three-hundred feet of cliff and sloping embankment. About 25 people, including 17 volunteers from the Southern Arizona Rescue Association, as well as responding Deputies, Rural Metro Fire Department, and several climbers rappelling in the area, were involved. “Nine people used ropes and pulleys to hoist her back up the cliff... and the rescue was completed about 8:15 p.m.” (Star 10/18/1998; Citizen 10/19/1998)

## Elks SAR Volunteer for 1999

**1999**

“Vi Brown has been a member of the Southern Arizona Rescue Association for over 35 years. She had responded to hundreds of calls over the years lending her valued expertise in all manner of operations... During the last six years, Vi has been very involved in the newest group in the local Search and Rescue Community—South West [sic] Rescue Dogs. The dogs are trained for tracking and trailing... Vi Brown’s dedication and service to our community deserves the recognition for the 1999 Elks Search and Rescue Volunteer Award.” (Elks’ brochure)

## Lost on Bicycles

**Feb 4, 1999**

In Tucson for the Gem and Mineral Show, Tate and Shannon Tewksbury, both 26, rented mountain bikes, planning on riding to Chivo Falls, about three miles east of Tanque Verde Falls. The couple from Georgia had been warned by staff at the bike shop to be careful because “ ‘you can get lost quite easily on that trail.’ ” Not returning by 6:00 p.m. as promised, others in their party became worried and notified the Sheriff’s Department. “A few hours into the search, a Department of Public Safety helicopter spotted them with a night vision device on a remote trail above Tanque Verde Falls...” Due to the rocky terrain, the chopper could not land and two Southern Arizona Rescue Association volunteers were dropped off nearby to hike to them. They took warm clothes and food because the couple were ill-equipped for the cold night. The SARA volunteers hiked out with them. (Star 2/7/1999)

## Overdose Near Hutch’s Pool

**Feb 18, 1999**

Deputies and a dozen or so volunteers from the Southern Arizona Rescue Association searched all night for 36-year-old Greg W. Huckins. The University of Arizona graduate student in evolutionary biology, had left a note telling family members he was off to hike in Sabino Canyon. According to his wife, “ ‘He had mentioned he was just going to get some exercise. It would not have been a long, extended hike.’ ” Joining in the effort the next day were more members of SARA, as well as dogs, horses and a helicopter. Lasting almost a full day, the search for Huckins would be one of the longest searches that year.

He was found a mile north of Hutch's Pool in Sabino Canyon, by a passing hiker—who then proceeded to hike another 13 miles up to Summerhaven before reporting his find. A post-mortem blood test indicated Huckins may have overdosed on two prescription drugs, including a level of Prozac four times higher than his correct dosage. It could not be determined whether this overdose was accidental or intentional. (Star 2/20/1999, 2/30/1999; Citizen 2/20/1999)

## Lost on Their Third Date

**May 29, 1999**

"Johnson's third and last date with Bob Kohlman, a Sierra Vista resident she met through the dating service, stretched into a six-day [sic: five-day] ordeal..." Vickey Johnson, 53, a registered nurse at Tucson Medical Center and Kohlman, 52, were on a Saturday picnic after having earlier met on a dating site. They'd previously gone out twice, to a comedy club and the movies. Johnson had left a note for her 19-year-old son saying she would be back from this date by 10:00 p.m. When she was not home the next morning, he filed a missing person's report with the Tucson Police Department.

According to Johnson, the couple "started down an interminable trail... 'down and down and down.' The trail markers weren't much help... but she assumed they could go back the way they came." Late in the afternoon, however, and totally out of the blue, Kohlman just quit, saying his foot hurt too much and "he'd just have to wait for search and rescue." She was able to get him to go back up a little farther but as it got dark, she knew they would be spending the night. They did get a fire going. " 'I didn't bring any water, but Robert had two liters in his backpack. So, he sits down like a slug and gulps the whole bottle. I found that very ungentlemanly and terribly stupid.' " While not sleeping much that night, she was eager and determined to get out the next morning, so she climbed a nearby rise to look around.

Seeing nothing helpful from the top, she started back down but stumbled and rolled thirty to forty feet. " 'Then I really got mixed up.' " Now, not sure where Kohlman was, she started wandering down dry draws and rocky ravines looking for water. The only semblance of water she could find was a putrid, saucer-sized, smelly puddle. Over the next two days she tried to chew a cactus and also put pebbles in her mouth, hoping to stimulate saliva. Neither proved effective. Becoming very dehydrated in the June heat, Johnson began having delusions.

Kohlman's pickup was found four days after Johnson's son reported her missing. It was at a popular trailhead at the Palisades Ranger Station on Mount Lemmon. Her purse was in the truck and so it was assumed they were together—the Sheriff's Department and the Southern Arizona Rescue Association soon began searching. "The Butterfly Trail is well-maintained and 'covered in pine needles, and people can easily lose their way,' Mount Lemmon fire fighter Steve Schwartz said."

In short order, in addition to Sheriff's Deputies and SARA searching, there were now also volunteers with Southwest Rescue Dogs and a helicopter with the Department of Public Safety. While following tracks believed to be the missing pair, searchers recognized the footprints soon went in different directions, so the mission became even more complicated. They were now looking for two parties rather than just one.

Finally, five days after the two went on their picnic and becoming lost, they were each found. The DPS helicopter crew first spotted Vickey Johnson at 5:45 p.m., one and a half miles north of the Davis Spring Trail. Landing and picking her up, she told them what Kohlman was wearing and by 7:00 p.m., they collected him, five miles away from her. Seriously dehydrated and sunburned, both were treated and released from Tucson Medical Center that night.

After Vickey was taken into the helicopter, the rescuer was telling her, “ ‘You’re a celebrity. Everybody is glad you didn’t end up a homicide...I didn’t know what he was talking about. I thought I was just a lost hiker.’ ” Newspaper reporter Hannah Miller, in concluding her follow up story in *The Arizona Daily Star* of June 5, said, “As Vickey Johnson huddled in a barren canyon... watching vultures circle overhead and extracting cactus needles from her lower lip, she knew she’d never appear in a testimonial ad for the [dating site] Tucson Singles Line.” (Star 6/3/1999, 6/4/1999, 6/5/1999; Citizen 6/3/1999)

## 122 Degrees in Ajo

**Jul 5, 1999**

It was 122 degrees in Ajo the day the two Mexican men walked into a grocery store in town, saying they’d left four gravely sick and injured companions in the desert. Sheriff’s Deputies triggered a multiagency search that night. It was 117 degrees the next day, when US Border Patrol found two of the four by helicopter, both barely alive. It had now cooled down to 106 degrees on day three of the search when the third man’s body was discovered. However, there was still a missing 19-year-old woman to be located and time was critical.

Vi Brown, President of the Southwest Rescue Dogs, Inc. (SRDI), along with several other members of the Tucson-based search-dog group met in Ajo with a K-9 team from Pinal County. They, along with others, including volunteers from the Southern Arizona Rescue Association, had responded to the call for help in the brutally-hot desert. “ ‘We went down with a cadaver dog and two tracking dogs,’ said Brown. ‘We expected her to be dead, so to see her up and barely moving was fantastic.’ ” She was found alive, over four miles away from where she had been mostly given up for dead. She was sick, severely dehydrated and with very bad blisters. Vi claimed, “ ‘I would say another hour or two and she wouldn’t have made it.’ ” (Star 7/9/1999)

## Hit By Falling Rock

**Jul 11, 1999**

About 10:30 a.m., 18-year-old Jamie Ott was hiking in the Seven Cataracts’ area of Bear Canyon, about nine miles up the Mount Lemmon Highway. The canyon is very steep at this spot, with lots of brush and dangerous loose rocks. She was with a group of at least a dozen when one of them unintentionally dislodged a small boulder which tumbled down the slope. Gaining speed, it smashed into the young woman’s shoulder and knocked her to the ground. In addition to the shoulder, she complained of both neck and head pain.

Responding that hot Sunday noon were several Sheriff’s Deputies, Rural Metro and Mount Lemmon Fire Departments, and at least 29 volunteers from the Southern Arizona Rescue Association. All would be needed to get her out of the treacherous terrain she was in. A technical rescue was called for, requiring specialized equipment such as pulleys, ropes, carabiners, and a wheeled litter, called a Stokes Basket. In this case, it was far easier to go lower rather than back up to the road. The rescuers took Ott down to the old Prison Camp about two miles away, where a helicopter landing spot was prepared. The Arizona Department of Public Safety flew her to Saint Joseph’s Hospital, where she was treated and released. (Citizen 7/12/1999; Star 7/12/1999)

## Submerged Upside-Down Pickup

**Aug 1, 1999**

A construction crew reporting back to work at 7 a.m. found the submerged 1997 Ford F-150. There were about twenty feet of skid marks on the frontage road near West Orange Grove Road off I-10, where they ended by dropping into the Rillito River. “The truck mowed down guardrails along the river and plunged down the 25-foot embankment. It landed upside down in 10 to 12 feet of water collected from the recent monsoon rains.” Only the four wheels showed above the water and the 47-year-old driver, Daniel E. Hawkins from Tucson was still inside, drowned.

Marana Police asked for assistance, so Northwest Fire Department paramedics and eight volunteers from the Southern Arizona Rescue Association along with at least two from Pima County Search and Recovery Divers, including Fran Kunz, responded. She confirmed there was a driver who was dead but it was not known there was still a 40-year-old passenger inside until a tow truck hauled the vehicle out of the water. At the time, it was unclear as to how this accident actually happened other than probably speed was somehow involved.

Within a day, however, investigators from the Arizona Department of Public Safety determined that 16 yellow and black warning signs had been removed from the frontage approach road the week before. The signs had been pulled down since a state contractor was preparing to dig up and relocate a sewer line as part of a bridge-building project. (Star 8/3/1999; Citizen 8/5/1999)

## Anchor Fails, Climber Dies

**Sep 9, 1999**

It was said that James Glenton Boyer, “never met an adventure he did not like.” The 35-year-old University of Arizona second-year law student, with over twenty years of climbing experience, died when the expansion bolt his safety rope was anchored to, pulled out. “ ‘He lived his life for the most real, the most gripping, the most wonderful moments,’ said his sister. . . . ‘He was always a doer.’ ” With a Master’s Degree in Journalism, Boyer was a free-lance writer, having written for such publications as *Arizona Highways*, *Men’s Journal*, *Rock & Ice*, *Tucson Weekly*, *City Magazine*, and the *Discovery Channel*. His journalism professor “ ‘told him that whatever else he did in life, he was put on earth to write.’ ” His sense of adventure also embraced mountaineering, including Mount McKinley in Alaska and peaks in Peru.

Boyer was with a companion on the Reef of Rocks, a west facing cliff north of the Mount Lemmon summit and were preparing to leave. He had gathered his gear together and clipped into a bolt previously placed there by a climber—it failed and pulled out. The Sheriff’s Department spokesman said “a park ranger [sic: forest ranger] flew over the accident site and reported that Boyer apparently fell on his head onto a rock ledge.” Responders, including 12 volunteers from the Southern Arizona Rescue Association, Mount Lemmon Fire Department, and Deputies, arrived and climbed down one-hundred feet to where Boyer had come to rest. It took these rescuers some five hours to airlift Boyer out, due to a thunderstorm in the area.

James Glenton Boyer’s great-grandfather was Godfrey Sykes and his grandfather was Glenton Sykes. Both men were important scientists and renaissance men in early Arizona. (Citizen 9/10/1999, 9/16/1999; Star 9/11/1999)



## Dug A Hole

**Jan 30, 2000**

“Lost Sabino Canyon hiker Gary Hickey dug a hole near a tree and crawled in to keep warm through a long overnight ordeal.” The 43-year-old construction worker believed he was tough and was going to be okay, vowing to never let it happen again, however.

Hickey had parked his truck at the Sabino Canyon Visitor Center and began what he thought would be a short hike. His Game Plan was to be back by the second half of the XXXIV Super Bowl—Tennessee Titans versus the Saint Louis Rams. It was a pleasant day and he wore shorts, a T-shirt and running shoes. However, snow flurries were predicted the next day where he had gone hiking. With no jacket, he carried a sports bottle of water, along with a couple of food bars; they were all gone, as was his water, before it got dark.

Hickey first went up the 4.7-mile Phone Line Trail, high above Sabino Creek and once done with that, moved on to the nearby Esperero Canyon Trail, which goes uphill for more than 15 miles in the front range of the Santa Catalina Mountains. “ ‘I didn’t lose the trail—I ran out of daylight,’ he said.” His worried girlfriend reported him overdue about 10:30 p.m. Sunday night. “Two dozen people, including members of the Sheriff’s Department’s Search and Rescue Squad and the volunteer Southern Arizona Rescue Association, scoured Sabino Canyon throughout the night.” Also included in the search that night was a Department of Public Safety helicopter crew and the Sheriff’s Mounted Posse.

Several search and rescue volunteers spotted Hickey’s shoe tracks along the trail late Monday morning and alerted the helicopter crew from Davis-Monthan AFB. They spotted him near Bridalveil Falls, an aptly named pretty little scenic spot in Esperero Canyon. The searchers also stumbled onto two other lost hikers who had started a campfire to stay warm. They too were escorted to safety. “Hickey was surprised to see reporters and photographers awaiting him at the Sabino Visitor Center. ‘My Rams finally get to the Super Bowl and I didn’t get to see it,’ Hickey said. ‘Who won, anyway?’ ” The Rams did, 23 to 16. (Citizen 1/31/2000; Star 2/1/2000)

## He Landed 400 Feet Below Highway

**Mar 18, 2000**

Richard Kunz, a very senior member of the Southern Arizona Rescue Association said, “I’ve never seen anything like it.” Kunz was referring to the steel guardrail completely ripped from its rock and cement anchors near the Seven Cataracts Pullout on the Mount Lemmon Highway. Manuel Montijo was driving his 1999 Chevrolet van down the road and failed to control his speed on a curve at Mile Post 9. At 5:30 p.m., he “plummeted 400 feet to his death...” The 41-year-old Montijo was not wearing a seat belt and was ejected from the van, landing on the brush and rock-strewn hillside, four-hundred feet below the highway. The vehicle then tumbled to rest nearly two-hundred feet farther down. This might also have been a suicide.

Sheriff’s Search and Rescue Coordinator, Deputy Tom Price, directed the 25 volunteers of SARA, most of whom rappelled down into the rugged canyon. Then using a sophisticated system of rope pulleys, they raised Montijo’s body out in four hours. The heavy-duty metal guardrail was supported every 18 inches by 7-foot posts sunk 5 feet into the ground. “ ‘They are set up to handle reasonable and prudent speeds, not somebody that is extremely exceeding the speed limit,’ Price said.” Alcohol was not a factor in this accident and the van was supposed to be removed by National Guard helicopters. As of 2023, it had been removed. (Star 3/20/2000; Citizen 3/20/2000)

## Body in Santa Rita Mountains

**Apr 21, 2000**

The body of Roy Getner, a 38-year-old Tucsonan, was found two-hundred yards off Box Canyon Road in the northeastern side of the Santa Rita Mountains. The news article could only say, “ ‘it appears he died of unnatural causes.’ ” Overdue and soon alerted by family members, “Search and Rescue workers began searching for him at about 10 p.m.,” that very first night he was missing. Over the next two days, some 25 volunteers from the Southern Arizona Rescue Association responded and looked for the man. There was never a follow up article as to why he was there, how they knew to look there, nor the cause of his death. (Star 4/25/2000)

## Seven Agencies On Search

**Aug 3, 2000**

The five men, two women, and three children had been surviving on cactus for two days. One child was just a year old and everyone was severely dehydrated. The search for them began when a man in the group found his way to a vacant building south of Gila Bend and contacted military personnel on the Barry M. Goldwater Bombing Range. They in turn notified BORSTAR, the Border Patrol Search, Trauma, and Rescue Unit, with agents from Ajo, Casa Grande, and Yuma responding and they began a search both from the air and on the ground. Joining them in this effort were members of the Arizona National Guard, Pima County Sheriff’s Department, the Bureau of Land Management, the National Park Service, the US Fish and Wildlife Service, and the Tohono O’odham Police Department. After several hours of searching, agents found the second of this group of undocumented aliens, and then the remaining eight, huddled together under a bush. Those ten, narrowly escaped death that time. (Star 8/6/2000)

## Searchers Find Second Body

**Nov 12, 2000**

Dana Hall, 21, a telemarketing worker, was last seen leaving a friend’s house on Tucson’s east side on Sunday at 9:30 p.m. His Volkswagen Jetta was found abandoned in an alley two days later. Tucson Police began looking for him before he was even reported missing. When contacted, his mother reported him missing. There was little idea what happened nor where he might be, so there was not much to do at this point.

Near midnight on Monday, November 27, over two weeks after Dana Hall disappeared, University Medical Center nurse, Amanda S. Gerber, dropped off a videotape at a Blockbuster’s on Tucson’s east side. The 23-year-old did not return home that night and was reported missing the next morning by her roommate, also a nurse with Gerber. Several credit cards soon “had unusual transactions” at local stores and her 1987 Chevrolet Blazer was also missing, leading police to fear she may have been killed in a robbery.

Acting on leads Tuesday evening and then using a helicopter the next morning, officials found her body in an isolated piece of desert near Thornydale and Tangerine Roads in northwest Oro Valley. She had been shot multiple times. A crime scene search of the area was conducted and 25 volunteers assisted from both the Southern Arizona Rescue Association and Southwest Rescue Dogs. Viola Brown and her cadaver-trained dog, while looking for evidence involving Amanda Gerber, found

Dana Hall, only seventy feet away from Gerber. Ironically, the police helicopter crew had focused in on Gerber's body, altogether failing to see Hall's.

Tucson Police Department robbery unit worked "every possible lead they could as quickly as they could." That evening, the nurse's green Blazer was spotted, with two teenage men inside. After a short vehicle pursuit and then an even shorter foot chase, detectives arrested John Michael Harper and Frankie Lee Rodriguez, both 18, for the murder of Gerber, as well as kidnapping, armed robbery, aggravated assault, and auto theft. Rodriguez would soon claim their motives had been to just steal the two cars.

On March 22, 2002, Harper was found guilty for killing Gerber, along with nine other criminal counts. He was acquitted of killing Hall. On April 8, 2002, Rodriguez was found guilty of the first-degree murders of both Gerber and Hall, as well as for nine other felony counts. On May 21, 2003, appearing before Superior Court Judge Frank Dawley, both young men were sentenced to "Natural life," meaning no chance of a parole. They were also additionally sentenced to eighty years each for the other nine crimes they were convicted of. (Star 11/30/2000, 12/1/2000, 12/9/2000, 1/25/2003, 3/23/2003; Citizen 11/29/2000, 1/17/2003, 5/22/2003)

PART B:

THE REST OF THE STORY...

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# CHAPTER 13

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## Arizona

Arizona, known as both “The Grand Canyon State,” and “The Copper State,” was the 48<sup>th</sup> state admitted to the Union, February 14, 1912, Valentine’s Day. Its name, Arizona, may come from the Spanish *Arizonac*, although this is still debated. It is the sixth largest state in size and about 400 miles long and 310 miles wide. Its elevation ranges from 12,637 feet on Mt. Humphreys in the San Francisco Peaks near Flagstaff in the north, down to 72 feet on the Colorado River where it enters Mexico in the south. There is a 372-mile border with Mexico which is mostly sparsely settled, full of dry desert, rugged canyons and mountains, all often framed by gorgeous sunsets.

What is now Arizona has been peopled for at least 14,000 years. Its population in the 2020 Census was 7,151,502 people, making it the 14<sup>th</sup> most populous state, mostly centered in and around Phoenix, its capital, and Tucson, in the south. It has a rich Spanish heritage beginning in the 16<sup>th</sup> Century. There are nearly 400,000 Indians on the 22 Federally Recognized Tribes, per the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Department of the Interior. They largely live on 27 reservations, which comprise about one-fourth of the land in Arizona. The Navajo Reservation in the north is the largest in the United States and at 2.8 million acres, the Tohono O’odham is slightly smaller. It is southwest of Tucson with 62 miles of its mostly inhospitable “La Frontera,” bordering Mexico.

Historically, Arizona boasts of the “Five C’s”: Cattle, Copper, Citrus, Cotton, and Climate, each playing significant roles in the state’s past. Climate, however, is today’s most important, with hot summers and mild winters, deeply attractive to increasing numbers of new residents and tourists, alike. The Chamber of Commerce boasts of 350 days per year with sunshine.

The state has 15 counties, with six of them among the twenty largest in the country. However, only 15% of their lands are privately owned, the rest being Indian and military reservations, public trust lands, national park and forest lands. Much of this is open space and in the Public Domain, unrestricted and generally available to the public. This ease of accessibility is a major reason for the search and rescue workload in the state.

Arizona is blessed by rugged mountains and mesas, carved by gorges of all sizes and depths. This is particularly true for the southern part of the state, which was shaped by prehistoric volcanism and geological subsidence and erosion. It is also well known for its desert basins, broad river valleys, and upland grasslands. Most attractive, however, are the region’s “Sky Islands.” Sky islands are prominent peaks and isolated mountain ranges that rise from the low-lying terrain surrounding them, essentially forming islands. There are over fifty of these “islands” in Southern Arizona and

Northern Mexico, all over 4,000 feet high, with almost limitless numbers of valleys, all dissolving into the lowlands below.

The tallest of these island ranges, are: Pinaleno Mountains, with Mount Graham the highest at 10,713 feet; Chiricahua Mountains at 9,763 feet; Huachuca Mountains with 9,465-foot-high Miller Peak; the Santa Rita Mountains at 9,456 feet; and nearest to the million or so people in the Tucson Basin, the Santa Catalina Mountains at 9,157 feet. The Catalinas in particular, are a major hiking, camping, and recreating attraction with its many dozens of miles of trails, a paved road to the top of its highest point, Mount Lemmon, and a couple of intermittent streams. Down through the years, there have been many hundreds of search and rescue missions in these nearby mountains, including most noteworthy, Sabino and Bear Canyons.

There are several significant rivers in Southern Arizona, including the Salt River on the northern side of the region, and then the Gila, San Simon, and San Francisco Rivers. And, flowing intermittently north instead of south, like most rivers in the United States do, are the San Pedro and Santa Cruz Rivers. The broad river valleys include the Gila, Aravaipa, San Pedro, Sulphur Springs, Santa Cruz, Avra, Altar and Baboquivari. However, it is the dry stream beds and washes, also called arroyos, which often provide problems to the area, due to flash floods. Several of these are broad enough to be classified as rivers, although generally, without the water. These include the Santa Cruz and Rillito Rivers and Canada del Oro Wash.

Sky Islands have a biodiversity unlike their surrounding lowlands, which contain three deserts, the Mojave in the west, Sonoran in the south, and Chihuahuan in the east. The most prominent and eco-rich is the much-publicized Sonoran Desert, which is underscored by several national park areas, including Saguaro, Organ Pipe Cactus Forest, Sonoran Desert, and Ironwood Forest National Monument. There are also other protected areas, including the Cabeza Prieta National Wildlife Refuge; at 860,000 acres, it is the third largest refuge in the United States. Additionally, there are grasslands, oak woodlands, pine forests, and everything in between. Several thousand species of plants and animals live in the region. Despite the state's aridity, 27% of it is forest, including the world's largest stand of ponderosa pine trees, which is in the northern part of the state.

The Sonoran Desert is clearly distinct from the other two adjoining deserts because it is lush due to its subtropical warmth and two seasons of rainfall, coming up from Mexico. Its bi-annual precipitation patterns result in more plant species than any other desert in the world. Many of the 2,000 plants there, not only survive but thrive in the hardy conditions. Most have evolved and specially adapted to the climate. The iconic Saguaro Cactus, along with a great many other cacti, agaves, mesquite, ironwood, and palo verde trees, abound there. In the spring time in particular, the desert often comes alive with color from all of its blooming plants, depending on moisture it receives.

Southern Arizona is also rich in animal life, including the only poisonous lizard in the United States, the Gila Monster. Among the region's one-hundred reptiles are 13 species of rattlesnakes and the coral snake, also poisonous although unable to really bite. With about one-hundred rattlesnake bites in Arizona annually, less than five people die. And, these are often young men playing with them.<sup>1</sup> There are twenty amphibians and even thirty native fish species.

Other than birds, the most often seen animals have four legs—over 150 species of mammals. They range from black bears, mountain lions, bobcats, javelinas (pig-like animals), coyotes, foxes, deer, antelope, beaver, porcupines, and jackrabbits, down to a great many kinds of little rodents. The state's 25 species of bats are incredibly valuable as plant pollinators. Bird enthusiasts come

<sup>1</sup> Question: What is the last thing a person says before being bitten by a rattlesnake? Answer: "Here. Hold my beer and watch this."



from all over the world to see Southern Arizona's rich avian life, with its 350 species. That is over half the birds in North America. Lastly, there are the invertebrates, including one-thousand species of bees, many of which are also valuable pollinators, and then there are the nearly forty species of scorpions and thirty of tarantulas.

Southern Arizona relies on two rainy seasons, Summer Monsoons and the winter storms, with an average in Tucson of about 11 inches, although this is becoming increasingly problematic. Commonly, the winter rains are gentle but more often than not, in the summer they come in cloudbursts. That is when there are disastrous flashfloods, frequently proving deadly. This is because people often dare to drive into the normally dry dips and arroyos, ending up being caught by the deceptively swift, flowing waters. Every year without fail, people need rescuing from these dangerous floods and typically, one or more will drown. And, these severe storm incidents may require rescuers to risk their own lives, which is the reason the Governor of Arizona signed "The Stupid Motorist Law," in 1994.

Arizona is one of the fastest growing states in the Union, largely because of its climate, as well as increasingly severe winters up north, retirement, job growth, and escalating expense of living in California, among many things. About two million people live in Southern Arizona and another five million live north of the region that this book covers. A million plus people live in the Tucson Basin with a number of municipalities making up the area, which includes not only Tucson but Marana, Oro Valley, Sahuarita, Green Valley, and South Tucson, as well as the unincorporated areas of Pima, Cochise, and Santa Cruz counties. Additionally, some other of the larger areas included here are Casa Grande, Sierra Vista, Florence, Coolidge, Nogales, Bisbee, Douglas, Safford, Ajo, and Globe.

As the title suggests, "Southern Arizona Search & Rescue and First Responder History: 1901–2000," focuses largely on three Arizona counties: Pima, which is the 16<sup>th</sup> largest in the country, as well as Cochise and Santa Cruz, which is the smallest county in the state. These three counties make up about 14% of the land in the State of Arizona. The book also touches upon several of the neighboring counties, including Pinal, Graham, and Greenlee. The search and rescue workload this book describes is principally due to the large amounts of available public lands and their great attraction to people of all ages and skill levels.

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# CHAPTER 14

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## Collections of Important SAR Events in Southern Arizona 1901–2000

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### Section 14.1

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#### Helicopter Milestones

Helicopter Milestones	
Jan 1945 .....	<b>US Forest Service considers using helicopters.</b> See “Forest Service Considers Helicopters” on page 107.
Sep 26, 1945 .....	<b>First/early helicopter crash in Southern Arizona.</b> See “First (?) Helicopter Crash in Southern Arizona” on page 107.
Jul 8, 1946 .....	<b>First civilian helicopter on Arizona SAR.</b> See “First Helicopter on Arizona Search” on page 112.
Nov 30, 1946 .....	<b>Arizona commercial helicopter service inaugurated.</b> See “Arizona’s First Civilian Helicopter” on page 109.
Aug10, 1948 .....	<b>Helicopter first used on a Southern Arizona SAR.</b> See “Deputy Falls 500 Feet in Sabino Canyon” on page 117.
Nov 1953 .....	<b>Tucson and Pima County consider buying a 3-place helicopter. They did not.</b> See “Helicopter Considered for Local Civil Defense” on page 158.
Nov 12, 1953 .....	<b>Luke AFB helicopter pilot rescues 3-year-old near Ajo.</b> See “Stranded Infant Dies ” on page 144.
Apr 11, 1958 .....	<b>Early DMAFB helicopter use.</b> See “Explorer Scouts and Desert Survival” on page 172.
May 18, 1959 .....	<b>Early use of DMAFB helicopter for a SAR medevac.</b> See “Two Killed Searching for Downed Plane” on page 182.
Oct 11, 1959 .....	<b>Tucson Medical Center establishes first hospital heliport in Arizona.</b> See “Air Medical Evacuation System” on page 257.
Mar 21, 1960 .....	<b>First mention of the Air Force Rescue and Coordination Center (AFRCC) at Hamilton AFB authorizing a local helicopter for a SAR.</b> See “13-Day Search” on page 193.

## Helicopter Milestones (Contd.)

Late-Oct 1961 .....	Det 17, Military Air Transport Service (MATS) at DMAFB activated with 2 H-43B Kaman “Huskie” helicopters. See “Rescue Helicopters Activated” on page 208.
Apr 14, 1963 .....	First (?) helicopter hoist used on local SAR. See “Teenager Hoisted into Helicopter” on page 220.
Jul 9, 1963 .....	Det 17, MATS at DMAFB Deactivated. See “Deactivation of Davis-Monthan Air Rescue Unit” on page 221.
Mid-Oct 1964 .....	Det 17, MATS at DMAFB Reactivated. See “Davis-Monthan Air Rescue Unit Reactivated” on page 229.
Apr 26, 1967 .....	5 soldiers killed in crash of “Huey” near Santa Rita Mountains. See “Helo Crash Kills Five” on page 242.
May 30, 1969 .....	Arizona begins 6-month trial air-evac program for accidents on highways. See “Air Medical Evacuation System” on page 257.
Jun 1, 1969 .....	Tucson’s Saint Joseph Hospital opens heliport. See “Air Medical Evacuation System” on page 257.
Jan 1970 .....	AZ DPS asks State Legislature for helicopter program. See “Air Medical Evacuation System” on page 257.
Sep 1, 1970 .....	Military Assistance for Safety and Traffic (MAST) helicopter program began in Arizona at Luke AFB. See “Military Assistance for Safety and Traffic” on page 269.
Nov 19, 1970 .....	Pima County Sheriff Burr inspects Hughes-500 helicopter for possible purchase for department. See “Helicopter Demonstrated for Sheriff Burr” on page 271.
Mar 13, 1971 .....	60 local SAR members learn about DMAFB helicopters. See “Helicopter Practice” on page 274.
May 4, 1972 .....	Tucson Police Department initiates 6-month trial program with 2, two-seat helicopters. (Citizen 5/3/1972)
May 14, 1972 .....	AZ House Bill 2003 provided funds for 1 helicopter ambulance operated by DPS. See “First DPS Helicopter and Division of Emergency Medical Services” on page 281.
Oct 1, 1972 .....	AZ DPS puts its first helicopter into service, at Mesa’s Falcon Field. See “First DPS Helicopter and Division of Emergency Medical Services” on page 281.
Nov 13, 1972 .....	Tucson City Council voted to accept 2 helicopters for Police Department at \$203,000 per year. (Citizen 11/14/1972)
Dec 1973 .....	Detachment 1 (Det 1), 37th Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadron (ARRS) at DMAFB Activated. See ““Det 1” Helicopters Activated” on page 289.
Feb 18, 1978 .....	DPS stations helicopter at Tucson International Airport fulltime. See “Full-Time DPS Rescue Helicopter” on page 323.
Sep 1, 1978 .....	DPS moves helicopter from airport to Tucson Medical Center. See “Southern Arizona’s First Full-Time DPS Helicopter” on page 323.
Jul 23, 1981 .....	DMAFB Captain Ronald W. Summers and 1st Lieutenant Kim P. Skrinak receive prestigious Air Force Cheney Award for night helicopter rescue near Phoenix on Jan 24, 1980. See “Two From Davis-Monthan Earn Cheney Award” on page 341.

Helicopter Milestones (Contd.)	
Jul 26, 1981 .....	DPS helicopter and pilot narrowly avoid destruction by wall of water. See "Eight Die in Tanque Verde Falls Flash Flood" on page 354.
Mar 27, 1983 .....	Sikorsky "Sea Stallion" helicopter crashes near San Simon, Arizona, killing six marines. See "Six Marines Killed" on page 369.
Oct 2, 1983 .....	Arizona DPS helicopter, Ranger 29, crashes killing both the pilot and the paramedic. See "13 Die, Including DPS Pilot and Paramedic" on page 372.
Mar 12, 1984 .....	15 die in Davis-Monthan AFB "Jolly Green Giant" explosion and crash west of the Tucson Mountains. See "15 Die in Tucson Helicopter Crash" on page 378.
Jul 31, 1984 .....	Det 1, ARRS at DMAFB Deactivated. See " 'Det 1' Helicopters Activated" on page 289.
Oct 20, 1985 .....	Apache Junction Search and Rescue was Arizona's first heli-rappel team. Its inaugural use of this specialty occurred during a rescue in the Superstition Mountains. See "Arizona's First Heli-Rappel Rescue Team" on page 388.
Oct 1993 .....	The 71 <sup>st</sup> Special Operations Squadron with HH-3 helos is deactivated and then reactivated as the 305 <sup>th</sup> Rescue Squadron with HH-60G "Blackhawk" helicopters. See "305 <sup>th</sup> Rescue Squadron at Davis Monthan AFB" on page 445.
Jun 1, 1996 .....	SARA fulfilled the DPS certification requirement for a heli-rappel team See "SARA and Heli-rappel" on page 469.

## Section 14.2

## First Aid and Emergency Medical Service Comes to Southern Arizona

Emergency first aid, the prototype of first response we currently understand and practice—including shock treatment, bandaging, joint immobilization, resuscitation, control of bleeding, transport—took 125 years to arrive in Southern Arizona.

- 1780    The Humane Society of Philadelphia was established: the "recovery of drowned persons and those whose airstream may be suspended from other causes...."
- 1862    The US Army Ambulance Corps was founded.
- 1864    The Red Cross Society was established "for the succor of the sick and wounded in war, or sufferers from its devastations." The name originally applied to a treaty arranged by the Geneva Convention, the members wore the Geneva cross as a badge of neutrality.
- 1871    In Great Britain, the Ambulance Association of the Order of St. John, was formed to assist the first aid to the injured. "First care and assistance of persons suddenly injured or wounded." Training was widespread with a great many policemen instructed by physicians.

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- 1875 The American Red Cross Society was founded by Clara Barton.
- 1881 The Committee of the State Charities Aid for “first Aid to the Injured” was established with US Union Army General George B. McClellan leading it.
- 1882 “First Aid to the Injured” by Peter Shipherd was written. “A small manual that can be slipped into the pocket... how to deal with injured and sick persons before a physician can be summoned.” It was soon edited and followed by the “Hand-book of the First Aid.”
- 1882 US Society for Instruction in First Aid to the Injured was formed under the auspices of the State Charities Aid Association.
- 1899 Railroads began instructing train crews in “first aid to the injured.” They started furnishing portable stretchers and first aid boxes. The Southern Pacific Railroad began doing this in 1905.
- 1903 “First Aid” instruction began on May 19 by the American Red Cross Society.
- 1904 Earliest mention in the Arizona press of first aid taught—to soldiers in Tempe.
- 1906 October 1, a credentialed Instructor in First Aid begins a class for miners in Bisbee.
- 1907 The Draeger Pulmotor was introduced, the first artificial respiration device.
- 1908 The original Red Cross First Aid Manual is issued.
- 1916 Early that year, a “Red Cross aerial ambulance” is designed.
- 1920 Variations of external manual manipulation of the human chest and abdomen give rise to modern Artificial Respiration.
- 1923 With needs and demands increasing, Red Cross First Aid began using “lay” instructors, previously they were physicians and related professionals.
- 1923 On February 23, the UA School of Mines and Engineering, began a semester-long course in First Aid and Mine Rescue, under auspices of the US Bureau of Mines.
- 1923 Coronado National Forest received “its quota of surgical dressings and first aid kits.”
- 1924 Starting May 5, the US Bureau of Mines taught a forty-hour First Aid Course to the Tucson Fire Department, which included the use of the Pulmotor.
- 1927 On November 4, an “air ambulance” is flown into Tucson, probably a first.
- 1930 Red Cross instituted “emergency service to aid highway accident victims.” In 1930, there were 31,000 motor vehicle fatalities in the United States.
- 1934 First Aid began being taught to the local Civilian Conservation Corps, (CCC).
- 1937 Arizona Highway Patrol institutes an “ambulance division.”
- 1943 In November, the US Army begins developing a cadre of “Parachuting Doctors.”
- 1950 Rescue breathing, “the Kiss of Life,” now known as “Mouth-to-Mouth,” introduced.

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- 1951 July 6, Tucson Fire Department accepted its first Rescue Truck, equipped with “simple surgical. . . white coats. . . advanced medical equipment,” including two resuscitators.
- 1957 In November, the American Red Cross released a significantly revised book for Standard and Advanced First Aid. It includes infant mouth-to-mouth resuscitation.
- 1960 Bud Simons becomes the first physician volunteering for a local SAR group, SARA.
- 1960 Resusci Anne training mannequin makes its debut, nationally.
- 1962 CPR formally endorsed by the American Heart Association, teaching “A-B-C.”
- 1969 Air Medical Evacuation System (Air Rescue), implemented for Arizona Highway Patrol.
- 1971 The textbook, “Emergency Care and Transportation of the Sick and Injured,” is published by the Committee on Injuries, American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons.
- 1971 That fall, EMT courses are offered at the local Pima Community College.
- 1972 The popular television series, *Emergency!*, debuts the first of its 124, one-hour episodes, lasting into September 1977.
- 1974 On March 15, the first paramedics in Arizona are licensed.
- 1976 All of Pima County finally becomes covered by the Emergency Number, “911.”
- 1978 February 18, Tucson gets an Arizona DPS Air Rescue, “emergency medical helicopter,” assigned full-time there.
- 1983 October 2, DPS Air Rescue Pilot McNeff and Paramedic Stratman were killed while on a medical emergency.
- 1992 March 4, Air Ambulance Medevac I Pilot Matthews and Flight Nurse Ben-Asher Newton were killed while on a medical emergency.
- 2002 On March 26, Dr. Richard Carmona, Pima County Auxiliary Sheriff’s Deputy and Award-Winning SAR First Responder, is appointed 17<sup>th</sup> Surgeon-General of the United States, by President George W. Bush.

On December 17, 1905, Bisbee’s new YMCA opened to the public for the first time. At the Open House that Sunday afternoon, it was announced there would be “a class for the study of first aid to the injured as found most efficient in Red Cross and general hospital and field experience.” It appears the course was not actually taught until the following October 1, however. By this time, this YMCA had enrolled 600 local boys and men, many of them miners.

The class was taught by YMCA General Secretary Pollard. “Mr. Pollard is a graduate for the society for instruction of first aid to the injured of New York City, and in a recent letter from the society received permission to conduct the class and have the examinations given for a diploma of the society by a local physician. The course will consist of instruction in what is done before a physician arrives in case of injury or accident.” (North-American Intelligencer [Philadelphia] 2/11/1784; New York Times 12/22/1881, 1/22/1882, 3/26/1882, 12/24/1882, 4/8/1895, 2/16/1899,



5/31/1903; Philadelphia Times 1/26/1884; Bisbee Daily Review 5/17/1902, 12/17/1905; Arizona Republican 5/29/1904; Citizen 6/1/1905)

Section 14.3

## Two-Way Radios for Emergencies in Southern Arizona

Communication is the most important aspect of safe, positive outcomes in emergencies; it is often, however, the least recognized and appreciated, including for Search and Rescue: Dispatchers & Responders—Medics & Hospitals—Searchers & Command—Pilots & Crew—Rescuers Above & Rescuers Below. Here is a brief overview of the two-way radio history of Southern Arizona, it is imperfect and incomplete. Some appeared in the newspaper only one time, such as “2-58AX Radio.” And, even though it was near-impossible to trace, the author could not overlook two-way radios: “this piece of the search and rescue puzzle.”

- 1912 Radio Act of 1912 was passed by Congress, eventually regulating all ham radio stations. Two years later, the Amateur Radio Relay League (ARRL), a ham radio member-society was founded. (Wikipedia)
- 1915 In November, Tucson had two “wireless stations,” at the University of Arizona and the Armory, downtown. There was fear of war and an incursion by Japan. In 1917, 14-year-old J. R. Freeman advertised starting a “wireless stations club” in Tucson. At this point, there were three stations there. A similar club recently formed in Phoenix. (Citizen 11/23/1915, 3/10/1917)
- 1917 In August, the first two-way, air-to-ground “wireless” radio message was sent. (Wikipedia)
- 1925 The Auxiliary Amateur Radio System (AARS) was begun by the US Army Signal Corps in November. From it sprang the Military Amateur Radio System (MARS) in November 1948. The acronym was chosen for the Roman God of War. By at least 1950, Davis-Monthan AFB and possibly Fort Huachuca, had MARS units available for emergencies involving Southern Arizona. (Citizen 9/16/1949, 7/14/1951; Star 6/24/1951)
- 1935 Amateur Radio Emergency Services (ARES) established. This is a standby radio service of licensed amateur radio operators available for public service when disaster strikes. (Wikipedia)
- 1938 In April, the US Forest Service mounted two-way radios in fire lookouts in Santa Catalina and Santa Rita Mountains, along with their headquarters in Tucson. The next year, it further expanded around Southern Arizona. See “Forest Service Installs Two-Way Radios,” April 26, 1938, see page 83.
- 1940 Tucson Police Chief “petitioned the federal communications system for a two-way radio station license. . . .” A twenty-watt, portable two-way radio was installed in one of the “scout cars,” using a repeater of the US Forest Service on Catback Mountain in the Tucson Mountains. See “Police and Sheriff’s Departments Get Two-Way Radios,” April 1940, on page 88. (Citizen 4/11/1940; Star 4/27/1940, 7/9/1940, 2/21/1941, 4/4/1941)

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- 1940 Maricopa County Sheriff's Office connected two-way radios in two patrol cars in December. They used the highway patrol transmitter on Tempe Butte, installed in September. They were able to talk with the Pima County Sheriff's Department. (Arizona Republic 12/16/1940)
- 1941 In February, Pima County Sheriff's Department had two-way radios installed in two cars and six were equipped with just receivers. A large repeater was placed on Tucson's "A Mountain," and the radio station was "KQPW." See "Police and Sheriff's Departments Get Two-Way Radios," April 1940, on page 88. (Star 2/21/1941)
- 1941 In June, Civil Aeronautics Board assigned airspace into three zones: below 3,500 feet no two-way radio required; 3,500 to 17,000 feet, civil aircraft, including Civil Air Patrol, must be equipped with two-way radios; above 17,000 feet was strictly for military aircraft with two-way radios. (Citizen 6/25/1941)
- 1941 Bisbee Police Chief requested \$300 in July for "a wire to connect with the two-way radio system to be installed by the sheriff's department... to operate... in the day time and the police at night... budget for 1941 and 1942, includes \$3,500 for the radio system." (Citizen 7/16/1941)
- 1941 In September, Arizona Highway Patrol mounted a police radio repeater atop 7,500-foot Towers Mountain, north of Phoenix. "The new equipment will give the patrol two-way radio coverage over an area of 20,000 square miles... as far distant as Flagstaff and Ajo, and Quartzite and Globe. It replaced the repeater station on Tempe Butte." (Star 8/24/1941)
- 1943 In September, the Tucson Sector of the Arizona Highway Patrol had two-way radios installed in vehicles. (Star 9/10/1943)
- 1943 In May, the Saguaro National Monument fire lookout on top of Mica Mountain in the Rincon Mountains, had a two-way radio installed, now able to talk with the area's Custodian, at headquarters. (Star 5/25/1943)
- 1946 "Walkie-talkie" radios developed for World War II were made available to civilians in significant quantities. (Citizen 11/22/1945)
- 1947 The earliest mention for the Old Pueblo Radio Club the author could find was in the *Arizona Daily Citizen* on March 13. Over the years, it provided assistance and stood ready in emergencies, particularly in association with the American Red Cross. (Citizen 3/13/1947)
- 1948 Nogales and Santa Cruz County had two-way radios equipped in vehicles in September. (Star 9/3/1948)
- 1948 In September, Arizona Highway Patrol's Tucson office initiated 24-hour, two-way radio communications between it and patrol cars. Previously, "all evening calls were broadcast over the sheriff's radio." (Citizen 9/28/1948)
- 1949 Bisbee Police Department installed a two-way radio in its patrol car in November. (Citizen 11/15/1949)
- 1951 Civil Air Patrol's Arizona Wing activated the Communications Flight. "... the wing now has more than 100 licensed mobile and fixed radio stations operating in the state." (Citizen 2/8/1954)

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- 1952 The Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Services (RACES) was developed as a standby Civil Defense radio service governed by the FCC. “RACES is activated by an emergency manager and are the only ham radio amateur operators authorized to transmit during declared emergencies when the president of the United States specifically invokes powers granted under 47 USC.” A RACES plan for Tucson and Pima County was under consideration in 1958 by the Federal Civil Defense Administration. (Wikipedia; Star 6/15/1958)
- 1952 In September, the Arizona Highway Patrol “planned to recruit radio amateurs to aid in a communications system in the event of an emergency. . . nearly 250 volunteer reserves are being trained in police work.” (Citizen 9/26/1952)
- 1954 Catalina Radio Club formed in December with membership limited to employees of Hughes Aircraft Company. In the Fall of 1958, the club established a Catalina Emergency Net. The net is the “ham” term for an organization of radio amateurs on 24-hour alert to serve in any emergency requiring radio communications. In November, it was activated for the first time. See “Ham Radio Assistance on Mt. Baldy Search,” November 16, 1958, on page 176. (Star 6/15/1958, 5/13/1959, 9/14/1959)
- 1958 In November, there was a Radio Emergency Corps in Tucson, as a section of the Amateur Radio Relay League. This may have morphed (?) into the Pima County Emergency Radio Network (PCERN), identified in 1967. (Citizen 11/10/1958, 2/20/1967)
- 1959 In February, “Pima County’s Civilian Defense communications truck, fully equipped with radio sending and receiving apparatus, will be temporarily loaned to Tucson’s radio ‘hams’ for use in search and rescue work. . . the truck has been assigned. . . to both the Old Pueblo and the Catalina Radio clubs as an emergency mobile communications unit. The truck was purchased and is maintained by funds made available by Pima County and the federal government.” (Star 2/12/1959)
- 1962 The Radio Emergency Associated Communications Teams (REACT) began as a CB radio Emergency Channel 9 monitoring organization across the United States. Initially, the primary role of REACT volunteers was to monitor Channel 9 to assist motorists and for traffic accidents. It soon included, however, communications after disasters such as floods and tornadoes. At least in 1969, there were two REACT groups in Tucson. (Citizen 3/17/1969; Wikipedia)
- 1965 RACES was expanded in October to include a network/link between Tucson Medical Center, Saint Mary’s, Saint Joseph’s, and Pima County Hospitals, for emergencies in the Tucson area. It was facilitated by Dr. W. F. McCaughey, a University of Arizona professor and radio officer for the local RACES. Portable two-way radios were given to each hospital and were being kept on 24 hours per-day. In March 1969, there were two RACES groups in Tucson. (Citizen 10/18/1965; Citizen 3/17/1969)

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- 1967 A meeting on April 13 to reorganize the Sheriff's Department Search and Rescue named an 11-person board to govern the newly christened Pima County Sheriff's Search and Rescue. Four of the 11 groups specifically identified were communication units: Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Service (RACES); Amateur Radio Communications; Pima County Emergency Radio Network, Inc. (PCERN), and 2-58AX Radio. See "Sheriff Reorganizes SAR, Changes Name," April 13, 1967, on page 242. (Citizen 4/14/1967)
- 1971 In the Fall, Pima County instituted MEDS, Medical Emergency Dispatching System. This allowed ambulance drivers to communicate with hospitals and doctors and it was integrated into the Pima County Communications Center. See "Arizona's First Paramedics," March 15, 1974, on page 293.
- 1976 In October, all of Pima County, including Tucson, was finally being served by a "911" system. See "'911' Comes to Southern Arizona," January 14, 1974, on page 291.

Section 14.4

## Computers and SAR in Southern Arizona

This history of CASIE (Computer Aided Search Information Exchange) was compiled by David Lovelock in 2022. Most dates were dredged from the memories of various now-elderly participants. As such, all dates should be treated with suspicion!

- 1978 Deputy Charles P. McHugh of the Pima County Sheriff's Department, who had been the Sheriff's SAR Coordinator for about two years, attended the 5-day "Managing The Search Function Instructor Workshop Course" at Grand Canyon National Park. Instructors included Jim Brady (the Course Coordinator), Butch Farabee, Bill Wade, and Tim Setnicka. Among other items discussed was the use of probability theory to help with complex area searches. Concepts of POA, POD, and POS were introduced, based on the work of William G. Syrotuck. McHugh wrote "All of this was an eye-opening experience and I was excited to bring this home to Tucson."
- 1978 Shortly after returning to Tucson McHugh "asked a few of our SAR folks to meet and discuss the course content." Two of those were Dr. John M. Bownds and Dr. David Lovelock, who, in addition to being professors of mathematics at the University of Arizona, were also volunteers with the Southern Arizona Rescue Association (SARA)—Bownds as a ground-pounder and Lovelock as the radio base-station operator. McHugh remembers Bownds and Lovelock "lighting up as we looked at the probability content." McHugh wrote "From my perspective, this meeting was the planting of the seed that led to CASIE's development, POD experiments, and other work that's continued to today."

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- 1978 Quoting from Gary Ferguson “Computers to the Rescue” Popular Computing. December 1984. Pages 53–54: “Bownds refined Syrotuck’s equations to the point that they could be programmed into a hand-held calculator.”
- 1979 McHugh assisted the Pinal County Incident Commander for most of the 6-day search for 10-year-old Randy Parscale in Peppersauce Canyon, Santa Catalina Mountains, Pinal County. See “Little Boy Has Never Been Found,” April 7, 1979 on page 334. After the search was suspended and McHugh had rested, Bownds and Lovelock met with McHugh to see what Bownds’ equations would have suggested. McHugh would explain what they did, step-by-step, and Bownds would then use his hand-held calculator (which had only the ability to add, subtract, multiply, divide, and store numerical results) to predict what should be done. To paraphrase McHugh, the results were consistent. It is one thing to create mathematical equations, it is quite another to find they work in practice.
- 1980 The beginnings of the concept of ROW (without using this term) appear in a Bownds communication to McHugh. “This means that there should always be a non-zero probability assigned to the area ‘outside’ the areas being searched.”
- 1981 Bownds acquired TI 59, a programmable calculator, and creates the program Bayesian Information Processing to run his equations.
- 1981 Bownds submits a report to the Pima County Sheriff’s Department entitled, “Summary of POD and POA Calculations for Colorada Lewis Search.” See “Missing 5-Year-Old,” April 2, 1981 on page 349. This may be the first incident where the Bayesian Information Processing was used. Among other items of interest are two worthy of note. The first was the actual use of the term “Outside” to refer to the area not “assigned to search and rescue units,”—the forerunner of ROW. The second was estimating all, save one, of the PODs for the search resources between 95% and 99%.
- 1981 The document *Desert Searches: Effectiveness of Helicopters* was published by the Pima County Sheriff’s Department after a series of field experiments with the US Air Force Air Rescue Unit (Detachment 1, 37<sup>th</sup> Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadron) based at Davis-Monthan. Various members of SARCI played a major role in this project. These experiments, conducted NW of Marana, AZ, were aimed at determining reliable PODs—one of the numbers needed to use the Bownds’ equations. Copies of this document can be found at <http://www.saraz.org/documents/Desert%20Searches%20Experiment%201981.pdf>.

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- 1982 The results of the Desert Searches experiments sent tsunami-sized shock waves throughout the SAR community. The helicopters' 6-person crews were advised to search for non-responding subjects in the Sonoran Desert terrain. Prior to the start of the first experiment (which occurred on a typical Tucson bright, sunny day) Lovelock asked experienced SAR personnel to estimate the POD of this resource in this environment. No one suggested less than 90% (which was consistent with the numbers assigned by Bownds to PODs during the Colorado Lewis Search). The first experiment gave a POD of about 30%. The immediate reaction was that there was a problem with the experiment. However, subsequent experiments on bright, sunny days were consistent with this result. So, for the first time, SAR personnel had an experimental benchmark for estimating PODs. A second outcome was that on overcast days the POD jumped to nearly 70%, so, when estimating PODs, the sky cover must be accounted for. These experiments revealed that lost persons in dense shade are difficult to spot. Hence, the lower POD on bright sunny days. Since lighting is somewhat uniform on overcast days, lost persons are more easily seen.
- 1982 Bownds introduced the term ROW (Rest of the World) to identify the area outside the search area.
- 1982 Bownds changed the name of his program from Bayesian Information Processing to CASIE (Computer Aided Search Information Exchange).
- 1982 Bownds' TI 59 program used for the first time out of Southern Arizona, during the Abdullah Balsharaf Search at the Grand Canyon National Park. The high value of the ROW was used as a contributing factor to suspend the search.
- 1983 Bownds' equations included in NASAR's latest *Managing The Search Function* manual.
- 1983 Lovelock acquired a Commodore 64 personal computer and created CASIE, a program to run Bownds' equations.
- 1984 Lovelock's Commodore 64 version of CASIE was used for the first time, during the search for Vicky Lynne Hoskinson. See "Abduction of Vicky Lynne Hoskinson," September 17, 1984 on page 381.
- 1985 Lovelock acquired a DOS personal computer and created the DOS version of CASIE.
- 1986 Mike Ebersole added to the CASIE development team.
- ? Lovelock updated CASIE, called CASIE II.
- ? Dan (DOC) O'Connor, author of the O'Connor Consensus Method, added to the CASIE development team.
- ? Lovelock introduced the concept of Influence of Clues, and created CASIE III to include this.
- 1990 NASAR distributed CASIE III on floppy disks. Contract signed on behalf of NASAR by Bill Wade and Gregory McDonald.

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- 1991 The document *Mountain Searches: Effectiveness of Helicopters* was published by NASAR describing a series of field experiments on Green Mountain, Santa Catalina Mountains. Detachment 1, 37<sup>th</sup> Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadron, and SARCI participated in this. Copies of this document can be found at <http://www.saraz.org/documents/Mountain%20Searches%20Experiment%201991.pdf>.
- 1993 Bownds dies. He contracted a fatal form of cocci-meningitis (Valley Fever) while on a search and rescue mission in Southern Arizona. After battling this disease for a number of years he died from its complications at age 51.
- 2003 Rick Toman added to the CASIE development team.
- 2006 Windows XP version of CASIE III, called WinCASIE III, released during an MLPI course at Grand Canyon National Park. It was made available online at no charge. In addition to Area Searches WinCASIE III now covered Route and Location Searches.

## Section 14.5

### Regional Fire Departments

This book hopes to do justice to the many fine organizations comprising Southern Arizona Search and Rescue, including region-wide, fire departments and their EMS. Arguably, these are now the most visible, very often with our getting out of the way of their responding to traffic accidents or home emergencies. They deserve our thanks and gratitude.

The words, “fire department” are mentioned here exactly one-hundred times, and are alluded to even more often, such as in 1909, when a youngster got lost; “...Late Saturday afternoon the fire bell was rung...” See “Four-Year-Old Wanders 18 Miles,” January 30, 1909, on page 37. This work does not dare attempt to trace the rich, colorful history of every fire and law enforcement office and department in Southern Arizona: Pima, Cochise, and Santa Cruz Counties. But make no doubt, they are colorful, just think Wyatt Earp.

Tucson Fire Department claims 1881 as the year it was established, with the Tucson Hook and Ladder Company and a 34-year-old shoe clerk as its Chief. Its formation was due to the city’s growth and more importantly, new architecture snubbing adobe and incorporating wood and the new building of second floors. The population was near 7,000, the Southern Pacific Railroad had just arrived from California the previous March, with Saint Mary’s Hospital then opening a month later. This fire organization died in May of 1882, but was resuscitated less than a week later as the Tucson Volunteer Fire Association. Finally, 11 months later, May 8, 1883, a revised City Charter established the Tucson Fire Department. Now, Tucson could muster additional First Responders, along with the Pima County Sheriff’s Department (1865) and the Tucson Police Department (1874).

Elsewhere around the region in the early 1900’s, many of the larger mines like in Ajo, Bisbee, Clifton, Globe, and Tombstone, all had company-owned fire brigades. However, they were largely oriented to saving property, not lives. But the first time a fire department is specifically mentioned in this document is for a rescue in Douglas, Arizona, in 1916. See “Soldier Jumps into Cesspool,” September 7, 1916, page 49. In addition to Douglas, with its department formed in 1902, more than a dozen other regional departments are identified in this book. Those thirty or more not named here, which also contribute greatly to SAR, should not be overlooked. To name but a few in Pima County there are:

Davis-Monthan Fire Department, 1942  
 Tucson Airport Authority Fire Department, 1943  
 South Tucson Fire Department, 1943  
 Drexel Heights Fire Department, 1954  
 162<sup>nd</sup> Air National Guard Fire Department, 1956  
 Rural Metro Fire Department, 1962  
 Corona de Tucson Fire Department, 1976  
 Northwest Fire Department, 1984  
 Mount Lemmon Fire District, 1984  
 Rincon Valley Fire Department, 1985  
 Tohono O’odham Fire Department, 1994.

All these emergency responders, fire, police, and EMS, work under Mutual Aid Agreements and can and do act beyond their jurisdiction. They also then “invite” others in to help, beginning back during World War II. Davis-Monthan AAB Fire Department would automatically go off the base and into the County to the many wrecks the Army Air Corps was suffering at that time. See “First Fatal Plane Crash at Davis-Monthan Air Base,” April 6, 1942, on page 92.

By no later than the mid- to late-1970’s, Rural Metro and at least Drexel Heights Fire Departments, began responding to rescue calls originating in the more countryside parts of the area. Rural Metro is mentioned 32 times in this book and Drexel Heights, at least 16. Some of the departments identified here, have become very proficient in swift water and cliff rescues. See “Teenager Dies at Tanque Verde Falls,” February 24, 1979, on page 332.

In summing this entry up, fire departments and their EMS, are vital to the health and success of Southern Arizona Search and Rescue. (Principal source for this: “Tucson Fire Department, Est. 1881,” by Al and Bob Ring.)

#### Section 14.6

### Davis-Monthan Ground Rescue “Units”

Davis-Monthan Air Force Base was named in honor of World War I pilots, Lieutenants Samuel H. Davis (1896—1921) and Chief Engineer Oscar Monthan (1885—1924), both Tucson natives. First Lieutenant Samuel Howard Davis (November 20, 1896—December 28, 1921) enlisted in the military in 1917, then discharged at the end of “The war to end all wars.” He returned to the Army Air Service in August 1921 and died on December 28, in a military aircraft accident while a passenger in a Curtiss JN-6. Davis was buried in Evergreen Cemetery in Tucson. Monthan enlisted in the Army as a private in 1917, was commissioned as a ground officer in 1918, and later became a pilot; he was killed in the crash of a Martin NBS-1 bomber in Hawaii on March 27, 1924.

Davis-Monthan Airport was the nation’s first municipally owned airfield, dedicated on November 1, 1925; originally, it was at the site of the Tucson Rodeo Grounds. With the nation’s increase in aviation activities, however, it was moved in 1927 to what is now the Davis-Monthan Air Force Base. In 1940, Davis-Monthan Airport became Tucson Army Air Field, as the nation prepared for World War II. With three units, the US Army Air Corps activated there on April 30, 1941.

In this book, the name Davis-Monthan appears over 260 times. Additionally, just the abbreviation DMAFB, also occurs. There are over 125 separate, incidents here linked to Davis-Monthan, almost all relate directly to Search and Rescue. The first is the November 12, 1941, hunt for a miss-

ing aircraft, with bombers from the Army Air Base launching at night to look for distress signal flares. Then five months later, the death of five of a B-17's seven aviators on April 6, 1942, crashing while giving a Tucson freedom celebration a look at the "New Army." This was reportedly the first instance of a fatal accident in thousands of flying hours among planes based at Davis-Monthan. See "First Fatal Plane Crash at Davis-Monthan Air Base," April 6, 1942, on page 92. But, it would be far from its last.

Between then and 1950, a dozen or more of these incidents recorded here, involved multiple fatalities and attendant search and/or rescue. After mid-1950, Davis-Monthan mainly then gets involved responding to missing civilian planes and lost people, often with its helicopters. But throughout this book, there are many generic references to Davis-Monthan's large, ready pool of man/foot power, which go out as "units." Soldiers may not be given a choice, but still they go. Here are but a few graphic examples of that commitment:

- "... A ground party of 21 men from Davis-Monthan... four days..." 4-6-42
- "... a large party from Davis-Monthan... is expected to reach..." 11-24-44
- "... search and rescue units at Davis-Monthan..." 1-2-45
- "Twenty airmen from Davis-Monthan..." 8-9-45
- "... 40 field officers from Davis-Monthan..." 5-24-47
- "... 15-20 soldiers from Davis-Monthan..." 8-23-47
- "... 73 soldiers from Davis-Monthan plus officers and military police..." 8-9-48
- "... 50 Davis-Monthan air policemen..." 8-1-51
- "Davis-Monthan sent an additional 10 men with camping equipment..." 8-1-51
- "A twenty-man Davis-Monthan AFB Search and Rescue Unit..." 10-11-53
- "Medics with a 200-man rescue party from the base..." 12-3-53
- "Two large teams of DM rescue men struggled..." 4-2-54
- "Davis-Monthan AFB readied 15 airmen to join..." 6-10-54
- "Two separate mountain rescue squads spearheaded... airmen toiled..." 11-7-54
- "Another 40 from Davis-Monthan..." 8-11-60
- "... 23-person party, most of them from Davis-Monthan..." 9-2-61
- "One-hundred airmen from Davis-Monthan..." 7-22-64

In early 1962, the Davis-Monthan Hospital developed a specialized SAR team, dubbed "Code C." When announced, ten pre-selected members of the hospital staff would quit what they were doing, quickly change into fatigues which were always nearby and double-time to a central meeting spot at the rear of the facility. They would be the recently organized, "Crash and Rescue Team," under the command of Captain Lenvol G. Bowers, a Medical Doctor.

In five minutes or less, they were where they were needed, geared up and dressed to respond to a military plane wreck, with all its associated chaos, destruction, and likely death, maybe even multiple. No sooner than the "Code C" was announced, one of the team went to the dining hall, and got several pots of hot coffee. Others were "prepared to pack in a trailer some 2,000 pounds of gear, including 60 meals, 10 gallons of water and 10 gallons of gasoline." The team was ready to stay out for ten days at a time. Their equipment trailer carried enough medical gear for performing minor surgery. And they had recently responded to a medical emergency on Mount Lemmon, where an airman had accidentally shot himself. See "Airman Shot Himself in the Thigh," April 27, 1962, on page 211.

Beginning from the late 1950s, the local SAR workload of Davis-Monthan is dominated by references to its helicopter capability and activity. Which is considerable and world-class. What is missing from this narrative, however, are the countless men and, in more recent times, the women,

who over the years have comprised Davis-Monthan units of just “ground-pounders,” needing our recognition and collective appreciation and gratitude. (Citizen 6/9/1962; Wikipedia)

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# CHAPTER 15

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## Significant Awards and Recognitions for SAR in Southern Arizona

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### Section 15.1

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#### Pre-2000 Awards

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Significant Pre-2000 Awards and Recognitions for Search and Rescue in Southern Arizona				
Date	Recipient	Award	Affiliation	Awarded By
1908	Private William C. Pitts	Promotion to Corporal		United States Army
1912	Edward W. Hargett, Sr.	Carnegie Hero Award		Carnegie Hero Fund Commission
1912	Lance H. Mardiss	Carnegie Hero Award		Carnegie Hero Fund Commission
1924	Joe Johnson	“Medal”		A. R. Myed Jewelry Company of Los Angeles
1929	Michael Marchello	Gold Medal		Joseph A. Holmes Safety Association
1929	E. J. Bellah	Gold Medal		Joseph A. Holmes Safety Association
1929	Zeno Lightfoot Dili	Gold Medal		Joseph A. Holmes Safety Association
1956	Jerome B. Feldt	Soldier’s Medal and Commendation Ribbon	United States Army 93rd Transport Company	United States Army
1956	Walter D. Spriggs	Soldier’s Medal and Commendation Ribbon	United States Army 93 <sup>rd</sup> Transport Company	United States Army

Significant Pre-2000 Awards and Recognitions for Search and Rescue in Southern Arizona (Cont.)				
Date	Recipient	Award	Affiliation	Awarded By
1956	Seven Aviators <sup>1</sup>	Soldier's Medal	United States 93 <sup>rd</sup> Transport Company	United States Army
1956	Fifteen Aviators <sup>1</sup>	Commendation Ribbon	United States 14 <sup>th</sup> Army Aviation Company	United States Army
1961	Pima County Search and Rescue	Certificate of Award	Pima County Sheriff's Department	Pima County Sheriff's Department
1961	Boye Clark	Citation for Bravery	Tucson Police Department	City Council, Tucson, Arizona
1961	Larry Bunting	Citation for Bravery	Tucson Police Department	City Council, Tucson, Arizona
1962	David L. McAdams	Arizona Fireman of the Year	Tucson Fire Department	Arizona State Fireman's Association
1962	David L. McAdams	Citation for Bravery	Tucson Fire Department	Arizona State Fireman's Association
1962	Russell Sprung	Citation for Bravery	Tucson Fire Department	Arizona State Fireman's Association
1963	Carson Gresham	Good Citizenship Award		Tucson Civitan Club
1963	Pima County Search and Rescue Unit	Special Air Force Award	Pima County Sheriff's Department	United States Air Force
1963	Ventura Urquidez	Carnegie Hero Award		Carnegie Hero Fund Commission
1963	Wilbur D. Nelson	Carnegie Hero Award		Carnegie Hero Fund Commission
1964	Wanda K. McKain	Vail Award		American Telephone and Telegraph Company
1968	Eugene L. Parsons	Carnegie Hero Award		Carnegie Hero Fund Commission
1968	Walter M. Hernandez	Carnegie Hero Award		Carnegie Hero Fund Commission
1968	J. Richard Dalmolin	Carnegie Hero Award		Carnegie Hero Fund Commission
1969	Daniel N. Martinez	Special Act Award		United States Bureau of Indian Affairs
1969	Paul S. Dore	Carnegie Hero Award		Carnegie Hero Fund Commission
1969	Ben S. Guerrero	Carnegie Hero Award		Carnegie Hero Fund Commission
1969–1970	Ray Neal	Recognition: MRA President	Southern Arizona Rescue Association	Mountain Rescue Association

<sup>1</sup> Details can be found in *The Arizona Daily Star*, July 31, 1956, pg. 12 and June 30, 1956, Fort Huachuca Aviators Fly into the Grand Canyon.



Significant Pre-2000 Awards and Recognitions for Search and Rescue in Southern Arizona (Cont.)				
Date	Recipient	Award	Affiliation	Awarded By
1970	Volunteer Search and Rescue Association	Kalish Award	Pima County Sheriff's Department	Abram A. and Beatrice F. Kalish
1971	Ted Brandes	"An Award"	Pima County Sheriff's Department	Arizona Emergency Services Association
1976	Private Leslie L. Gaspar	Soldier's Medal	United States Army	United States Army
1976	Certificate of Appreciation	Southern Arizona Search and Rescue Association [sic: Southern Arizona Rescue Association]	Certificate of Appreciation	National Association for Search and Rescue
1976	Thomas P. Harlan	State Award, Arizona	Southern Arizona Rescue Association	National Association for Search and Rescue
1976	Thomas P. Harlan	Fellow	Southern Arizona Rescue Association	National Association for Search and Rescue
1977	Pima County Communications Center	"An Award"	Pima County, Arizona	National Weather Service
1979	Charles "Chuck" McHugh	Law Enforcement Commendation Medal	Pima County Sheriff's Department	National Society of Sons of the American Revolution
1980	Charles "Chuck" McHugh	United States Air Force Military Airlift Command Distinguished Citizens Award	Pima County Sheriff's Department	United States Air Force Military Airlift Command
1980	Captain Ronald W. Summers	United States Air Force Cheney Award	Detachment 1, 37 <sup>th</sup> Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadron	United States Air Force Military Airlift Command
1980	1 <sup>st</sup> Lieutenant Kim P. Skrinak	United States Air Force Cheney Award	Detachment 1, 37 <sup>th</sup> Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadron	United States Air Force Military Airlift Command
1981	Richard G. Stratman	Arizona Department of Public Safety Distinguished Service Award	Arizona Department of Public Safety	Arizona Department of Public Safety
1981	Southern Arizona Rescue Association	State Award, Arizona	Pima County Sheriff's Department	National Association for Search and Rescue
1981	Southern Arizona Rescue Association	American Patriot Award	Pima County Sheriff's Department	United States Air Force Military Airlift Command
1981	Thomas P. Harlan	Jefferson Award	Southern Arizona Rescue Association	American Institute for Public Service
1982	Don Morris	Special Award	Southern Arizona Rescue Association	Southern Arizona Federal Executive Association
1982	William J. "Bill" Grimes	People Protector Award	Southern Arizona Rescue Association	City of Tucson, Arizona

<b>Significant Pre-2000 Awards and Recognitions for Search and Rescue in Southern Arizona (Cont.)</b>				
<b>Date</b>	<b>Recipient</b>	<b>Award</b>	<b>Affiliation</b>	<b>Awarded By</b>
1983	John M. Bownds	State Award, Arizona	Southern Arizona Rescue Association	National Association for Search and Rescue
1983	Robert McCord, Kristine Larsen, Mike McDonald, Charles Faas	Find Ribbons	Civil Air Patrol	Civil Air Patrol
1983	Crew Members, Detachment 1, 37 <sup>th</sup> Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadron	Air Medals	Detachment 1, 37 <sup>th</sup> Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadron	United States Air Force Military Airlift Command
1983	Manuel Lopez	Lions International Plaque for Community Service	Nogales, Arizona Police Department	Lions International
1983	Jesus Gomez	Lions International Plaque for Community Service	Nogales, Arizona Police Department	Lions International
1983	Eddie Rosas, Jr.	Lions International Plaque for Community Service	Nogales, Arizona Police Department	Lions International
1983	Hector Lopez	Lions International Plaque for Community Service	Nogales, Arizona Police Department	Lions International
1984	Thomas P. McNeff	Memorial Recognition	Arizona Department of Public Safety	Office of the Mayor, Tucson, Arizona
1984	Richard G. Stratman	Memorial Recognition	Arizona Department of Public Safety	Office of the Mayor, Tucson, Arizona
1984	Charles “Chuck” McHugh	Air Force Scroll of Appreciation	Pima County Sheriff’s Department	United States Secretary of the Air Force
1986	Charles “Chuck” McHugh	Service Beyond the Call of Duty	Pima County Sheriff’s Department	Southern Arizona Rescue Association
1986	Charles “Chuck” McHugh	Orchid Award	Pima County Sheriff’s Department	Tucson Press Club
1987	Southern Arizona Rescue Association	Book of Golden Deeds	Pima County Sheriff’s Department	Exchange Club of Tucson
1987	Southern Arizona Rescue Association	Certificate of Appreciation	Pima County Sheriff’s Department	Office of the Mayor, Tucson, Arizona
1987	Vernon Skeen	Volunteer of the Year	United States Customs Service	Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks
1987	David A. Lewis	Officer of the Year	United States Border Patrol	Pima County Sheriff’s Mounted Posse
1988	Charles “Chuck” McHugh	Outstanding Achievement Award	Pima County Sheriff’s Department	Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks

Significant Pre-2000 Awards and Recognitions for Search and Rescue in Southern Arizona (Cont.)				
Date	Recipient	Award	Affiliation	Awarded By
1988	Charles “Chuck” McHugh	Achievement Medal	Pima County Sheriff’s Department	Pima County Sheriff’s Department
1991	John M. Bownds	Hal Foss Award	Southern Arizona Rescue Association	National Association for Search and Rescue
1991	David Lovelock	State Award, Arizona	University of Arizona	National Association for Search and Rescue
1991	Search and Rescue Council, Inc.	Achievement Medal	Pima County Sheriff’s Department	Pima County Sheriff’s Department
1991	Pima County Search and Recovery Divers	Sheriff’s Commendation	Pima County Sheriff’s Department	Pima County Sheriff’s Department
1991	Southern Arizona Rescue Association	Outstanding Community Service Certificate	Pima County Sheriff’s Department	Pima County Sheriff’s Department
pre-1992	Agent Thomas Watson	Award for Exceptional Heroism	US Border Patrol	US Attorney General
1992	Pima County Search and Recovery Divers	Certificate for Outstanding Service and Dedication	Pima County Sheriff’s Department	Pima County Sheriff’s Department
1992	Southern Arizona Rescue Association	Golden Rule Group Award	Pima County Sheriff’s Department	J. C. Penney and Company, Inc
1992	Loren Leonberger	Achievement Medal	Arizona Department of Public Safety	Sheriff, Pima County, Arizona
1992	Al Quezada	Achievement Medal	Arizona Department of Public Safety	Sheriff, Pima County, Arizona
1992	Southern Arizona Rescue Association	Letter of Recognition	Pima County Sheriff’s Department	George H. W. Bush, President of the United States
1992	Dr. Richard Carmona	Medal of Valor	Tucson Medical Center	Pima County Sheriff’s Department
1993	Dr. Richard Carmona	SWAT Officer of the Year	Tucson Medical Center	National Tactical Officers Association
1993	Richard Kunz	Arizona Search and Rescue Volunteer of the Year	Southern Arizona Rescue Association	State Office of Emergency Management
1993	Charles “Chuck” McHugh	Sheriff’s Commendation	Pima County Sheriff’s Department	Sheriff, Pima County, Arizona
1994	Mike G. Shook	Air Medal	Detachment 1, 37 <sup>th</sup> Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadron	United States Air Force Military Airlift Command
1994	Robert L. Dunn	Air Medal	Detachment 1, 37 <sup>th</sup> Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadron	United States Air Force Military Airlift Command

Significant Pre-2000 Awards and Recognitions for Search and Rescue in Southern Arizona (Cont.)				
Date	Recipient	Award	Affiliation	Awarded By
1994	Michael L. Flake	Air Medal	Detachment 1, 37 <sup>th</sup> Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadron	United States Air Force Military Airlift Command
1994	Bruce Mabry	Air Medal	Detachment 1, 37 <sup>th</sup> Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadron	United States Air Force Military Airlift Command
1994	Scott Clemans	Citizen Ambassador	Southern Arizona Rescue Association	Hughes Missile Systems Company
1995	Search and Rescue Council, Inc.	Search and Rescue Awareness Week	Pima County Sheriff's Department	Office of the Mayor, Tucson, Arizona
1996	Southern Arizona Rescue Association	Sheriff's Special Recognition	Pima County Sheriff's Department	Sheriff, Pima County, Arizona
1996	Charles "Chuck" McHugh	Excellence in Emergency Management	Arizona Emergency Services	Arizona Emergency Services Association
1997	Southern Arizona Rescue Association	President's Award	Pima County Sheriff's Department	Arizona Medical Association
1999	Vi Brown	Search and Rescue Volunteer of the Year	Southern Arizona Rescue Association	Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks
1999	Southern Arizona Rescue Association	Recognition	Pima County Sheriff's Department	Mountain Rescue Association
1999	Southern Arizona Rescue Association	Recognition for Contribution	Pima County Sheriff's Department	Raytheon Systems Company

## Section 15.2

## Post-2000 Awards

The author needs to explain why the Post-2000 Awards are being documented since the entries and book only goes up through 2000. There is no doubt the many recognitions in this Chapter, both pre- and post- 2000, are probably just the tip of the iceberg, but it is honestly the best we can do. So, the short of it is, we strongly believe these men and women deserve to be fully recognized and honored for their efforts, regardless the year. The author was honestly impressed by their sacrifices and/or in the way the SAR community and their peers saw and respected them.

Significant Post-2000 Awards and Recognitions for Search and Rescue in Southern Arizona				
Date	Recipient	Award	Affiliation	Awarded By
2001	Butch Farabee	Mountain Rescue Association Honorary Lifetime Member		Mountain Rescue Association
2001	Tom Price	Public Safety Achievement Medal	Pima County Sheriff's Department	Pima County Sheriff's Department
2001	Charlie Glover	Sheriff's Citizen's Medal	"Volunteer Fire Fighter"	Pima County Sheriff's Department (no dept ID)
2001	Casey Curtis	Public Safety Achievement Medal	Rural Metro Fire Department	Pima County Sheriff's Department
2002	Cochise County Search and Rescue Posse	Al Schoenstene Group of the Year	Cochise County Sheriff's Office	Arizona Search and Rescue Coordinators Association
2005	Eric Johnson	Medal of Valor	Pima County Sheriff's Department	Pima County Sheriff's Department
2005	Ann Spencer	Public Safety Achievement Award	Pima County Sheriff's Department	Pima County Sheriff's Department
2005	Eric Johnson	American Red Cross Real Heroes Award	Pima County Sheriff's Department	American Red Cross
2006	Brad Judd	Sheriff's Citizen's Medal	Pima County Sheriff's Department	Pima County Sheriff's Department
2006	Cochise County Search and Rescue Posse	Cochise County Search and Rescue Posse Day-Feb 22	Cochise County Sheriff's Office	Office of the Governor of Arizona
2006	Patricia Ellis	2006 Excellence in Emergency Service Award	Carondelet St. Mary's Hospital Emergency Services	Arizona Emergency Services Association
2006	Southern Arizona Rescue Association	Certificate of Appreciation	Pima County Sheriff's Department	US Army Intelligence Center / Fort Huachuca, Arizona
2006	David Lovelock	Search and Rescue Award	University of Arizona	National Park Service
2007	Harry Hicks	Cochise County Sheriff's Office Search and Rescue Award	Cochise County Search and Rescue Posse	Cochise County Sheriff's Office
2007	David Lovelock	Citizens Medal	University of Arizona	Pima County Sheriff's Department
2007-2008	Tom Huntoon	Joe Young Volunteer of the Year	Cochise County Search and Rescue Posse	Arizona Search and Rescue Coordinators Association
2008	David Lovelock	Hal Foss Award	University of Arizona	National Association for Search and Rescue
2008	Southern Arizona Rescue Association	Special Recognition	Pima County Sheriff's Department	Office of the Governor of Arizona

Significant Post-2000 Awards and Recognitions (Cont.) for Search and Rescue in Southern Arizona				
Date	Recipient	Award	Affiliation	Awarded By
2009	Eric Johnson	State Award, Arizona	Pima County Sheriff's Department	National Association for Search and Rescue
2010	Search and Rescue Council, Inc.	Sheriff's Commendation	Pima County Sheriff's Department	Sheriff, Pima County, Arizona
2010–2011	David Lovelock	Joe Young Volunteer of the Year	University of Arizona	Arizona Search and Rescue Coordinators Association
2011	Dave Brown	50 Year Achievement	Southern Arizona Rescue Association	Southern Arizona Rescue Association
2011–2012	Jason Bowman	Joe Young Volunteer of the Year	Southern Arizona Rescue Association	Arizona Search and Rescue Coordinators Association
2012	Eric Johnson	<i>“Extraordinary achievements in developing Inland Search Manual &amp; training curriculum”</i>	Pima County Sheriff's Department	Arizona Emergency Services Association
	David Lovelock		University of Arizona	Arizona Emergency Services Association
	Dave Noland		Cochise County Search and Rescue Posse	Arizona Emergency Services Association
	Ursula Ritchie		Cochise County Search and Rescue Posse	Arizona Emergency Services Association
2012	Frances Walker	Lifetime Achievement	Southern Arizona Rescue Association	Southern Arizona Rescue Association
2012	Tom Harlan	Lifetime Achievement	Southern Arizona Rescue Association	Southern Arizona Rescue Association
2013	John Bownds	In the Line of Duty, Never Forgotten	Southern Arizona Rescue Association	Mountain Rescue Association
2013–2014	Southern Arizona Rescue Association	Al Schoenstene Group of the Year	Search and Rescue Council, Inc.	Arizona Search and Rescue Coordinators Association
2013–2014	Harry Hicks	Joe Young Volunteer of the Year	Cochise County Search and Rescue Posse	Arizona Search and Rescue Coordinators Association
2014	Southern Arizona Rescue Association	Al Schoenstene Unit of the Year	Pima County Sheriff's Department	Arizona Search and Rescue Coordinators Association
2014	John Gorski	Certificate of Appreciation	Southern Arizona Rescue Association	National Search and Rescue School
2014–2015	Sean Fawcett	Joe Young Volunteer of the Year	Southern Arizona Rescue Association	Arizona Search and Rescue Coordinators Association
2015	Southern Arizona Rescue Association	Special Recognition	Pima County Sheriff's Department	Sheriff, Pima County, Arizona



Significant Post-2000 Awards and Recognitions (Cont.) for Search and Rescue in Southern Arizona				
Date	Recipient	Award	Affiliation	Awarded By
2015–2016	Sean Fawcett	Joe Young Volunteer of the Year	Southern Arizona Search and Rescue	Arizona Search and Rescue Coordinators Association
2016–2017	Bart Thompson	Joe Young Volunteer of the Year	Cochise County Search and Rescue Posse	Arizona Search and Rescue Coordinators Association
2017	David Lovelock	John Bownds Award	University of Arizona	Arizona Search and Rescue Coordinators Association
2017	Adrian Gallo	Carnegie Hero Award	Pima County Sheriff's Department	Carnegie Hero Fund Commission
2017	Joe Serrano	Carnegie Hero Award	Pima County Sheriff's Department	Carnegie Hero Fund Commission
2018	Southern Arizona Rescue Association	Certificate of Recognition	Pima County Sheriff's Department	Supervisors, Pima County, Arizona
2018	Southern Arizona Rescue Association	Special Congressional Recognition	Pima County Sheriff's Department	United States Senator Martha McSally
2019–2020	Cochise County Search and Rescue Posse	Al Schoenstene Group of the Year	Cochise County Sheriff's Office	Arizona Search and Rescue Coordinators Association
2020	Paul Anderson	John Bownds Award		Arizona Search and Rescue Coordinators Association

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# CHAPTER 16

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## Tanque Verde Falls Area Deaths

Over the years, Tanque Verde Falls has consistently been touted as one of the most charming and favorite spots in the Tucson area. It is particularly attractive when the stream is running down through its deeper, albeit, more dangerous sections. The falls lie in the canyon of the same name in the lower foothills of the Rincon Mountains, on the far eastern outskirts of Tucson. Beginning at some 3,400-feet in elevation, the picturesque, intermittent stream at the bottom of the equally scenic drainage is in the mesquite and palo verde-covered Sonoran Desert, surrounded by many of the region's signature plant, the iconic Saguaro Cactus.

Before Tanque Verde wash levels off within the city limits of Tucson, the short, several-mile canyon ending upstream, descends off the northwestern flank of the Rincon Mountains. Due to the Southwest's mega-drought of the past decade or two, this stream flow has increasingly become problematic. Today, running water there mostly exists only after the region's periodic storms, although there is always some remaining in the canyon's deeper, rock-lined pools.

In its lower section, the canyon loosely parallels the graded but wash-boarded Redington Pass Road. It follows a late-1800's wagon trail, ending in Redington, a small ranching community of the 1870s, in the bottom of the San Pedro River Valley, to the east. Originally known as Cebadillo Pass (a local flower), the roadway had gradually fallen into disrepair by the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. The existing, thirty some-mile road was resurrected by the county in the fall of 1932, with maintenance assistance by the Civilian Conservation Corps in the following years. In the early 1900's, water in the Tanque Verde watershed was so reliable and plentiful, that in 1913, a mining company named Arizona Power & Water Company, proposed a \$3,000,000 (\$90,000,000 in 2023) dam to be built at Tanque Verde Falls, with a huge reservoir behind it. There was an earlier, similar proposal in nearby Sabino Canyon, which "never also got off the drawing board."

This road provides hikers, picknickers, and partiers, manageable access down to Tanque Verde Falls. This is a double-edged sword, however, in that this ease of entry also contributes to the canyon's misuse and overcrowding, with the attendant dangers of risky and irresponsible behavior, compounded often by alcohol. There are popular trails down into the bottom of the canyon, with one being constructed principally by the Southern Arizona Rescue Association in 1986. It is intended to steer visitors into the safer areas. See "Trail into Tanque Verde Falls," December 6, 1986, on page 400.

For at least the past century, Tanque Verde Falls has been frequented by civic clubs, scouts, university students, church groups, and those studying the area. Before the current Redington

Road was developed, these parties hiked up from downstream. In the mid-1930s with the coming of the current road, visits became easier and its popularity increased manifold. The first search and rescue-related incident the author found was James W. Mitchell committing suicide in 1907. Since the exact spot of Mitchell's death was not specified in the article, it has not been added to the table of Tanque Verde Falls Area Deaths. See "Despondent, Takes Own Life," November 30, 1907 on page 34.

What makes the falls' area—the main attraction—so treacherous, albeit beautiful, are the actual waterfalls themselves. There are a dozen or so of them, depending on how you define a waterfall. They mostly range 15 to thirty feet high, but one is upwards of eighty feet. In over a mile-and-a-half, the canyon drops five-hundred feet in elevation. The granite lips of the falls are deceptively smooth and water-worn, and when wet, are lethally slippery. All of them are in three narrow, water-filled sections: upper, middle, lower. Even when not flooding, several of these pools are nearly impossible to escape from without help, frequently becoming death traps. The accompanying list of 38 fatalities in the Tanque Verde Falls area between 1946 and 2015, will attest to the dangers there. The deaths began with 16-year-old John Carpenter in 1946. See "First Accidental Death at Tanque Verde Falls," August 16, 1946, on page 108.

SARCI is fortunate to have Mykle Raymond as an archivist/historian, maintaining records of their Call-Outs, including into the Tanque Verde Falls area. His data indicates near 140 emergency responses there (1958 to 2000) and, undoubtedly some are not accounted for. It is truly a beautiful but dangerous spot. (Star 11/23/1910, 9/24/1932; Citizen 12/2/1913)

Tanque Verde Falls Area Deaths, 1901–2000				
Date	Victim	Age	Cause of Death	Incident
8/16/1946	John Carpenter	16	slipped over from top	"First Accidental Death at Tanque Verde Falls," on page 108.
10/8/1968	Gary Buck	18	accidentally shot hiking up from falls	"Fatal Gunshot at Tanque Verde Falls," on page 229
2/25/1973	Richard E. Valentine	23	slipped over from top	"Fell at Tanque Verde Falls," on page 285.
3/3/1974	John J. Bullock	21	fell down mountainside	"One Lives, One Dies," on page 292.
8/2/1974	Reed L. Miens	20	drowned in flash flood	"Two Drown in Tanque Verde Falls," on page 295.
8/2/1974	Jesse Mark Teague	17	hit head on rock rescuing Miens	"Two Drown in Tanque Verde Falls," on page 295.
12/19/1976	Kathleen M. Schultze	21	tumbled down 90-foot cliff	"Died Chasing Wine Bota," on page 313.
2/24/1979	Donna Clark	15	fell 40 feet over falls	"Teenager Dies at Tanque Verde Falls," on page 332.
4/17/1979	Scott Stephens	18	over 100 feet of two waterfalls	"Tumbles 100 Feet Over Tanque Verde Falls," on page 335.
4/27/1980	Michael Meaney	21	fell 100 feet over falls	"Death at Tanque Verde Falls," on page 344.

Tanque Verde Falls Area Deaths, 1901–2000 (Contd.)				
Date	Victim	Age	Cause of Death	Incident
7/26/1981	John Evans	22	broke neck diving, died in hospital	“Dies Diving off Cliff,” on page 353.
7/26/1981	Michael Waid	11	flash flood, drowning-trauma	“Eight Die in Tanque Verde Falls Flash Flood,” on page 354.
7/26/1981	Paul Waid	33	flash flood, drowning-trauma	“Eight Die in Tanque Verde Falls Flash Flood,” on page 354.
7/26/1981	Darla Heredia (Roberson)	18	flash flood, drowning-trauma	“Eight Die in Tanque Verde Falls Flash Flood,” on page 354.
7/26/1981	Michele M. Balser	18	flash flood, drowning-trauma	“Eight Die in Tanque Verde Falls Flash Flood,” on page 354.
7/26/1981	Jeff Feiffer	28	flash flood, drowning-trauma	“Eight Die in Tanque Verde Falls Flash Flood,” on page 354.
7/26/1981	John Anthony Parker	19	flash flood, drowning-trauma	“Eight Die in Tanque Verde Falls Flash Flood,” on page 354.
7/26/1981	Kevin Clark	19	flash flood, drowning-trauma	“Eight Die in Tanque Verde Falls Flash Flood,” on page 354.
7/26/1981	Ralph Leroy Chatham	27	flash flood, drowning-trauma	“Eight Die in Tanque Verde Falls Flash Flood,” on page 354.
5/22/1982	Allan Kendrick Paul	19	slipped off cliff into main pool	“Death at Tanque Verde Falls,” on page 363.
3/20/1983	Todd Wright	18	fell jumping over falls	“But It Was Youth That Killed Him,” on page 368.
5/20/1984	Steven M. Schutte	27	hiking, fell 60 feet	“Died in Tanque Verde Falls,” on page 378.
9/9/1984	Travis Lee Holeman	21	fell climbing side of falls	“Landed 30 Feet from the Water,” on page 381.
2/17/1985	April Ledwith	30	hiking, fell, drowned	“Life and Death,” on page 386.
9/1/1986	Dennis R. Cowart	16	fell, trauma-drowning	“Died Rescuing an Ice Chest,” on page 398.
8/17/1987	John W. Neubauer	22	hit head trying to rescue LeRud	“Died Trying to Save a Friend,” on page 404.
8/17/1987	Scott LeRud	21	fell, hit head, drowned	“Died Trying to Save a Friend,” on page 404.
8/2/1988	David M. Nash	21	drowned in undertow	“Located with Prodding Poles,” on page 409.
7/2/1990	Joseph M. Bice	23	fell 80 feet	“Sunbather Goes Over Tanque Verde Falls,” on page 423.
7/15/1990	Brian M. Ormsby	22	diving, trauma-drowning	“Rescuer Nearly Drowns,” on page 423.

Tanque Verde Falls Area Deaths, 1901–2000 (Contd.)				
Date	Victim	Age	Cause of Death	Incident
3/29/1992	Geraldine Guilibon-Clay	27	fell, swept over falls	“Long-Line Lift Out,” on page 434.
6/2/1993	Jamie Young	13	heatstroke on trail into canyon	“Heatstroke Death at Tanque Verde Falls,” on page 442.
9/3/1994	Nancy Holder	44	fell over 80-foot falls	“Woman Dies, Man Injured at Tanque Verde Falls,” on page 455.
2/15/1998	Anton Bakker	22	fell over 80-foot falls	“Died Saving Friend’s Dog,” on page 480.
1/12/2000	Harry Findysz	60	fatal heart attack, hiking up	Pima County Sheriff’s Department File #0001121136.

Tanque Verde Falls Area Deaths, Post 2000			
Date	Victim	Age	Cause of Death
4/6/2004	Russell C. Faulkner IV	31	swept over falls successfully rescuing someone
7/28/2013	Richard M. Baker	30	jumped into pool and pulled out, unresponsive
8/12/2015	Hunter Douglas Miller	21	jumping into pool, “going for swim”

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# CHAPTER 17

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## Southern Arizona SAR Coordinators

Section 17.1

### Southern Arizona SAR Coordinators' Timeline

#### Southern Arizona SAR Coordinators' Timeline<sup>1</sup>

1949–1950 .....	Harry Brannon, Pima County. See "Harry Brannon Mini-Biography" on page 523.
1955–1966 .....	Ken Sturgeon, Pima County. See "Ken Sturgeon Mini-Biography" on page 524.
1964–1972 .....	Ted Brandes, Pima County. See "Ted Brandes. Mini-Biography" on page 524.
1966–1968 .....	Leo Petrucci, Pima County. See "Leo Petrucci Mini-Biography" on page 525.
1972–1976 .....	Joe Woolridge, Pima County. See "Joe Woolridge Mini-Biography" on page 525.
1973–1979 .....	Doug Marcoux, Pima County. See "Doug Marcoux Mini-Biography" on page 526.
1974–1976 .....	Pete Pershing, Pima County. See "Pete Pershing Mini-Biography" on page 527.
1976–1984 .....	Chuck McHugh, Pima County. See "Chuck McHugh Mini-Biography" on page 527.
1977–1985 .....	Larry Seligman, Pima County. See "Larry Seligman Mini-Biography" on page 528.
1977–1990 .....	Larry Dever, Cochise County. See "Larry Dever Mini-Biography" on page 528.
1979–2009 .....	Thomas Price, Pima County. See "Thomas Price Mini-Biography" on page 529.
1983–1990 .....	Jose Padilla, Santa Cruz County. See "Jose Padilla Mini-Biography" on page 530.

<sup>1</sup> These are principally with SAR, not overall time as deputies.



Southern Arizona SAR Coordinators' Timeline (Contd.)	
1983–1995 . . . . .	<b>Pete Alegria, Santa Cruz County.</b> See “Pete Alegria Mini-Biography” on page 531.
1983–2007 . . . . .	<b>Rick Sturgeon, Pima County.</b> See “Rick Sturgeon Mini-Biography” on page 531.
1987–1993 . . . . .	<b>Wally Capas, Cochise County.</b> See “Wally Capas Mini-Biography” on page 532.
1988–2006 . . . . .	<b>Doug Myrvold, Pima County.</b> See “Doug Myrvold Mini-Biography” on page 532.
1991–2001 . . . . .	<b>Joe Luna, Santa Cruz County.</b> See “Joe Luna Mini-Biography” on page 533.
1993–2016 . . . . .	<b>Victor Coss, Santa Cruz County.</b> See “Victor Coss Mini-Biography” on page 533.
1993–2022 . . . . .	<b>David Noland, Cochise County.</b> See “David Noland Mini-Biography” on page 534.
1998–present . . . . .	<b>Luis Martinez, Santa Cruz County.</b> See “Luis Martinez Mini-Biography” on page 535.

## Section 17.2

## Southern Arizona SAR Coordinators' Mini-Biographies

## Harry Brannon: Pima County 1949–1950

Between November 1948 and December 1950, Sheriff's Deputy Harry Brannon served as the SAR Deputy, appointed by Pima County Sheriff Jerome P. Martin, to head a recently created “Rescue Patrol,” formed in 1948. However, Brannon is first mentioned in the Tucson newspapers for a September 21, 1947, death of a 19-year-old man who fell into a well, and drowned. Brannon served as the investigator for that incident, occurring in Pascua Village.

The impetus for a Rescue Patrol may have resulted from the August 9, 1948, death of 33-year-old Sheriff's Investigator, John D. Anderson. He was on a rescue for a boy trapped on a cliff in Sabino Canyon; however, this is speculation by the author. That incident did receive national press, with several, graphic photos in *Life Magazine* and it weighed heavily on the local community. The first SAR-related incident that identifies Brannon is a November 23, 1948, rescue with him leading the “newly formed Recue Patrol” into Upper Sabino Canyon. While he headed that unit, made up totally of volunteer citizens, Deputy Brannon made real efforts to raise funds for much-needed SAR equipment, radios, ropes, and even a vehicle through barbecues, raffles, and various other means. These were not very successful, though.

In mid-December, 1950, Deputy Harry Brannon resigned from the Sheriff's Department, taking a position with a trucking company.

### Ken Sturgeon: Pima County 1955–1966

Born in Ohio, Kenneth L. Sturgeon came to Tucson in 1941. He was a highly-decorated military veteran, having been a combat intelligence specialist in the US Army from 1945 to 1947 and then with the Marine Corps in the Korean War. He was an active member of the American Legion, Disabled American Veterans, Veterans of Foreign Wars, and an acclaimed volunteer with the Tucson Veterans Administration Medical Center. He was with the Tucson Police Department for a short time and then from 1951 to 1966, Sturgeon served with the Pima County Sheriff's Department, rising from deputy to captain. During his earlier years, particularly as a patrol deputy, he was recognized for his aggressive, successful policing.

On August 1, 1954, Ken Sturgeon was promoted to Sergeant in the Traffic Division which in the beginning, was also responsible for overseeing the Department's Auxiliary Deputy program, begun 11 weeks earlier under Sheriff Frank Eyman. These citizen-volunteers soon became a very visible, well-defined unit of the Sheriff's Department. It had a clear-cut command structure, was trained in basic policing and was available for emergencies, its relevance here. Sturgeon's well-respected decade-long connection to Southern Arizona search and rescue may have begun because of his day-to-day involvement with Sheriff Eyman's Auxiliary Deputy program, almost from its beginning.

The earliest mention of Sturgeon in the newspaper in connection to a search and rescue event that the author could locate, was for the January 22, 1955, motor vehicle accident<sup>1</sup> where three teenage boys died and three others were seriously injured after going off the Catalina Highway. However, the first incident the author could find naming Sgt. Sturgeon as the Sheriff's Department's search and rescue supervisor,<sup>2</sup> was for three Boy Scouts overdue on Mount Lemmon, on June 17, 1955. After leaving the Sheriff's Department on December 16, 1966, Kenneth L. Sturgeon remained a member of the Civil Air Patrol and the Pima County Sheriff's Search and Rescue Unit. He was 64 years of age when he died. (Citizen 11/16/1953, 10/26/1988; Star 7/11/1951, 7/31/1954, 1/23/1955, 10/26/1988)

### Ted Brandes: Pima County 1964–1972

After a long illness, Theodore C. "Ted" Brandes, the well-respected veteran head of Pima County Sheriff's Department Search and Rescue, died at age 85. Born in Cincinnati in 1901, he joined the US Navy at 16, by lying about his age. He was in both World War I and II, serving as a frogman, pilot, and navigator on blimps. In 1946, he left the Navy, becoming a policeman on Coronado Island, California, leaving there in 1958 as a Lieutenant.

"Brandes can spin off countless exciting tales. He narrowly escaped death in a dirigible crash outside San Francisco and carried a .45 caliber slug around for 15 years after a quarrel in a Mexican casino as a young man."

Coming to Tucson in 1958, after retiring from Coronado Island, "He worked as a hardware salesman until the store owner gave him hints to leave. 'I was just no good.' " In 1962, he joined the Pima County Sheriff's Department as a Deputy. There he served in patrol, performing routine functions. On December 16, 1966, Sheriff Waldon Burr suspended Captain Ken Sturgeon; Sergeant Leo Petrucci, who had been filling in behind Sturgeon, still kept overseeing the SAR function on an interim basis. In April 1967, Burr formally appointed Petrucci, along with Deputy Ted

<sup>1</sup> See "Car Plunges 1,600 Feet in Bear Canyon," Jan 22, 1955 on page 153.

<sup>2</sup> See "Overdue on Mt. Lemmon Hike," Jun 17, 1955 on page 155.

Brandes, to lead Pima County's search and rescue. See "Sheriff Reorganizes SAR, Changes Name," April 13, 1967, on page 242.

On July 28, 1973, Ted Brandes, at age 72 and a Sergeant, had to mandatorily retire. " 'I had hoped to work until at least 75,' said Brandes, who considers his forced retirement premature. 'They are going by the numbers, not ability.' " At that point, he was in charge of the Department's Property Room and the "Bomb Squad." But he will be most remembered, at least in this book, for his many years of involvement and contributions to regional search and rescue. Sergeant Joe Woolridge followed him into this SAR leadership position. Even after retiring, Brandes had his hand in SAR, often utilizing his communications' skill, mainly with one of his real interests, REACT, the Radio Emergency Associated Citizens Team.

"At 83, Brandes is [was] the president of REACT, a group of volunteers that is an arm of law enforcement agencies. Among other things, they report crimes and help citizens who are in all kinds of troublesome situations. They help take care of us. Brandes said he spent 36 hours on the radio during the flooding earlier this month [October, 1983]. He can't remember how many people he talked to and how many he helped. It was tough, he said." (Star 7/27/1973, 10/24/1983; Citizen 3/1/1987)

### Leo Petrucci: Pima County 1966–1968

Leo C. Petrucci was born in 1921, maybe in Pennsylvania and served with the US Army, late in World War II. He was then in Law Enforcement on the East Coast, beginning in 1946 until 1955, coming to Arizona soon after. On May 10, 1957, Sheriff Waldon V. Burr announced that Petrucci and two other men, had been hired by Pima County as new Deputies. Being then promoted to Sergeant in September 1961, he supervised the night shift of seven deputies, while he made \$440 per month. There were numerous references to Deputy Petrucci in a police capacity but the first time in connection with SAR, is on August 12, 1958. He and another deputy rescued two young men from the swollen waters of the normally dry Pantano Wash. They had been caught by a flash flood and their vehicle was swept downstream for more than a mile.

With Ken Sturgeon leaving the Sheriff's Department in December 1966, Sergeant Petrucci began serving as interim head of the SAR units. Then on April 10, 1967, Sheriff Burr appointed Petrucci, along with Deputy Ted Brandes, to officially coordinate SAR for his Department. That is the last time Leo Petrucci's name appeared in the newspapers until the notice of his death appeared, having passed away on January 29, 1988. (Star 1/27/1963; Citizen 5/10/1957, 2/3/1988)

### Joe Woolridge: Pima County 1972–1976

Joe Woolridge was born in 1938 in Baltimore, Maryland, growing up there. In 1956, at 17 he joined the US Air Force (he lied about his age) and served for three years as a Communications' Technician. In early November 1958, his last year in the military, he was stationed at Davis-Monthan AFB. Two weeks later, he found himself in the Santa Rita Mountains. "Our unit set up communications between law enforcement, military and rescue units looking for three Boy Scouts on Mount Baldy, lost during a bad snowstorm."

That was his introduction to search and rescue in Southern Arizona. He would go on to make a great many contributions to SAR, but not before kicking around as a civilian for several years looking for his "niche in life." He would soon find it with the Pima County Sheriff's Department

in 1966, as a Reserve Deputy. He worked with Sergeant Ted Brandes on several SAR operations, including when a jet plane crashed into the Food Giant on South Alvernon Way, December 18, 1967, where four people were killed.

Joe went full-time on the PCSD in 1968, under Sheriff Waldon V. Burr. After two years in patrol and two more as a detective, he was promoted to Sergeant in 1972. "I was assigned to be Commander for the Voluntary Resource Division, which consisted of Uniformed Reserves, Aero Squadron, Mounted Posse, and Search and Rescue." He was particularly involved with SAR during those four years. He smilingly remembers his first incident. On December 18, 1974, a 21-year-old was rappelling a 300-foot cliff with a 180-foot rope at Rappel Rock and became stuck. Civil Defense and SARA both responded as part of the Sheriff's Rescue Squad. "I almost had to break up a fist fight as to who would perform the rescue."

In 1976, he requested being transferred back to Detectives at which time he recommended Deputy Chuck McHugh be his replacement. Chuck had long been his "right-hand man." After nearly 27 years with the Pima County Sheriff's Department, he retired in 1994. (Joe Woolridge interview 1/10/2023)

### **Doug Marcoux: Pima County 1973–1979**

Doug Marcoux was born and raised in Tucson, graduating from Rincon High School in 1971. In his youth he spent many weekends hiking the mountains around Tucson, and elsewhere in Arizona, with his father and the Southern Arizona Hiking Club. In his high school shop class Doug met a teacher's aide that was a member of the Southern Arizona Rescue Association (SARA), and who helped him join SARA.

Doug was 15 when he joined SARA in 1968. At that time, SAR callouts were initiated via a telephone call-tree. Not having a driver's license, his immediate responsibility were folks living nearby he could catch a ride with. These included Scott Clemans, Tom Harlan, Phil Beisel, and Dr. Chuck Pullen. When he joined SARA there were around thirty members. They welcomed and mentored him, and taught him his needed SAR skills. He moved to Full-Member Status after a year. Doug was also a Search and Recovery Diver, taught American Red Cross First Aid, and got his EMT and I-EMT credentials.

Doug was very active in SARA through high school and at the University of Arizona. During these years, Sergeant Ted Brandes of PCSD oversaw SAR. "One Saturday morning on a callout, Ted told me the Department was starting an academy class and encouraged me to apply. On Monday I did and three weeks later I was in the first, all-Pima County Sheriff's Department Academy, in December 1973."

Doug began as a Patrol Deputy on the north side and subsequently moved to the east side. He then joined the Traffic Section and became a Traffic Accident Reconstructionist. "One of my most enjoyable duties was driving the Department's dune buggy on weekends, patrolling back areas and dry riverbeds around the county. I was also a member of the SWAT. During this time, I continued responding to SAR callouts on a quasi-volunteer basis."

"Lieutenant Jim Rose asked if I would be a SAR deputy due to my prior experience. I agreed, and became full-time with Chuck McHugh." Doug coordinated many operations using his knowledge of the mountains and deserts around Tucson as well as skills taught by SARA. "I believed the most effective model was to allow the volunteers to manage themselves within the bounds supported by the Department." Deputy Marcoux was one of only a few civilians in the country having approval

to contact Scott Air Force Base (the AF SAR HQ) directly to request helicopter support from Davis-Monthan AFB. He also enjoyed doing orientation flights with the various DPS Ranger crews. Some even involved “picnic lunches, complete with red and white checked tablecloths, in some very beautiful and unique locations.”

Doug continued to work as a SAR Deputy for six years until leaving the Sheriff’s Department in 1979 to work in the private sector as a design and manufacturing engineer. While he remains a member of SARA, he stopped his field activities upon leaving the Department at the order of Sheriff Dupnik. Doug currently is retired and lives on the Olympic Peninsula in Washington State.(Doug Marcoux email 4/28/2023)

### **Pete Pershing: Pima County 1974–1976**

Peter “Pete” Edgar Pershing, was born July 30, 1943, in Maryland’s Bethesda Army Hospital, as his father was in the Army’s 101<sup>st</sup> Airborne. In 1958, his family moved west to Tucson, with him graduating from Amphitheater High School, Class of 1962. While studying Forestry Management at the University of Arizona, and also on the school’s Rodeo Team, it was a natural for him to spend summers on trail crews in the mountains. He was, somehow, able to couple his childhood fascination with cowboys and horses, by leading strings of mules into the Santa Catalina Mountains as a packer for the local Coronado National Forest. He also was a stock wrangler in Saguaro National Monument, taking supplies to the top of Mica Mountain as well as then for a following summer, supply backcountry ranger stations deep into the wilds of Yellowstone National Park. Riding horses on those local trails gave unique perspective for his later serving as a SAR Leader for the Pima County Sheriff’s Department.

Two weeks before he was to be drafted, he joined the US Marines; serving 13 months on a Recon Unit, he served his country by rescuing downed airmen in the jungles of Vietnam. Joining the Tucson Police Department in early 1967, he spent the next nine years working patrol as well as deep undercover in narcotics. In January 1973, he had to use deadly force; ruled, justifiable, he was completely exonerated by two separate Coroners’ Juries. And as a result of the stress, he transferred to the Pima County Sheriff’s Department. In June, 1974, while answering a silent burglar alarm, he again had to use deadly force. And again, he was totally cleared by various investigations, but was still unjustly vilified by some in the press.

Sheriff’s Sergeant Joe Woolridge, asked Pete to work with him in Search and Rescue. He spent a successful two years there, often leading SAR volunteers into where he had passed his early summers. But in 1976, while responding on an incident in the Catalinas, the helicopter he was in ran out of gas and was forced to land, although all were uninjured. He subsequently retired from the Department soon after that. Using his considerable investigative skills, he went to work for the State of Arizona, ferreting out fraud and other misuse related to personal injury and compensation claims. He finally retired in 1995; with nearly thirty years of praiseworthy public and military service, Peter E. Pershing died on December 22, 2016. (Adam Pershing email 4/1/2023)

### **Chuck McHugh: Pima County 1976–1984**

Born in Tillsonburg, Ontario, Canada in 1951, Chuck McHugh began a forty-year career in emergency response in 1974, starting as a Deputy with the Pima County Sheriff’s Department. After two years on patrol, he then served eight years as the County’s Search and Rescue Coordinator, managing SAR missions. He promoted to Sergeant, supervising SAR, as well as SWAT, K-9, and

several other related functions for eight years. He retired as a Lieutenant and the Rincon District Commander, in 1994.

Upon leaving Pima County, Chuck began a twenty-year career with the Arizona Department of Emergency and Military Affairs, starting as the State Search and Rescue Coordinator. He aided the 15 Arizona County Sheriffs with state and federal assets. In 1996, he promoted to Assistant Director, managing the state's roles in emergencies. He also served on the Eastern Arizona Type II Incident Management Team. In 2015, Chuck McHugh retired from the State of Arizona as an Assistant Director. He holds both a Bachelor of Science Degree in Criminal Justice and a Master of Public Administration Degree, with an emphasis in Emergency Management, from the University of Arizona.

My search and rescue days are by far the most memorable of my career. It didn't take long to realize that I was privileged to work in this capacity—for two reasons. First, not many have the opportunity to contribute to life saving missions. Most importantly, I was blessed to work among extraordinary, mission-oriented personnel. (Chuck McHugh emails 6/27/2021, 6/6/2023)

### **Larry Dever: Cochise County 1977–1990<sup>3</sup>**

Larry Dever was born in 1952 in St. David, Arizona, a little ranching community between Tombstone and Benson and lived his entire life in the County. He joined the Sheriff's Office in 1976 and quickly rose through the ranks. And probably, he will be long remembered as the Sheriff of Cochise County, serving 16 years in 4 terms. He was running for a fifth, when he met an untimely death in Northern Arizona on September 18, 2012. He was a hands on leader and never abandoned his roots he had with the ranching and farming communities.

He was a Sergeant in 1977, 1983 a Lieutenant, Major in 1990, and Chief Deputy soon after. He became Sheriff in 1996. In 1982, he was wounded by a shotgun blast in a shootout with a radical church group in Miracle Valley, near Sierra Vista. Shortly after, Larry became the SAR Coordinator and in 1983 the SAR Coordinators from all over the State got together and formed the Arizona Sheriffs' Search and Rescue Coordinators Association. AZSAR would meet yearly to train the current and new SAR Coordinators in search tactics. This training brought Arizona to the forefront of Search Management.

Cochise County is replete with abandoned mine shafts with an unusual number of rescues from them; often, they would be recoveries. And that part of beautiful Arizona is a tourist and nature lover's paradise, again with the ubiquitous SAR needs. But as he rose through the ranks, he always held a leadership role in SAR, taking a greater interest than he might have been expected to. And as Sheriff, he never forgot his responsibility to Search and Rescue.

### **Larry Seligman: Pima County 1977–1985**

Born 1951, Larry Seligman arrived in Tucson in 1969 from the Appalachian coal region of Pennsylvania to attend the University of Arizona. Already an avid hiker and backpacker, he explored the Santa Catalina Mountains and developed a passion for rock climbing and mountaineering. He spent time in Yosemite Valley and cliffs in Colorado. He is credited with several notable first ascents, including one identified in legendary mountaineer Fred Becky's book, "50 Best Climbs in North

<sup>3</sup> Dates approximate



America.” This skill, talent and the patience he developed, would prove invaluable in Search and Rescue in his near future.

In 1974, Seligman was admitted to the Pima County Sheriff’s Academy, which was held then at the National Guard Armory on Valencia Road. By the summer of 1976, “I was serving as a Resident Deputy on Mount Lemmon with my friend and partner, Chuck McHugh.” While there, both Chuck and Larry became two of the first police officers in Arizona to become EMT certified. Two years later, Chuck rotated off the assignment and out of the tall pines to become a full-time SAR Deputy. Larry, by now an Intermediate Emergency Medical Technician (I-EMT), followed Chuck as second SAR Deputy as well as SWAT Medic. During this era, the Search and Rescue workload had expanded considerably. Seligman remained closely connected to SAR as both the Special Operations Sergeant and later, its Lieutenant, until his promotion and transfer in 1985.

Captain Larry Seligman oversaw all uniform patrol and also County Emergency Services; eventually transferring to Criminal Investigations, which would be the longest assignment he ever had with the Sheriff’s Department. In September 1998, Captain Seligman retired from the PCSD to accept the Chief of Police position for the Tohono O’odham Nation, at the time the third largest police department in Pima County. The geographically huge Reservation borders with Mexico, and lies within the boundaries of both Pima and Maricopa Counties. The Tribe also supports a small settlement within Pinal County, as well. Their reservation is the second largest in the United States after the Navajo Reservation. Overlapping and complex jurisdictions required Seligman and his Officers, to be trained and credentialed by the Tribe, the Federal Government, and the State of Arizona.

By late 2003, he had become the Director of Public Safety for the Pascua Yaqui Tribe. However, his law enforcement career ended in 2008, due to serious injuries sustained in a motorcycle crash, east of the Galiuro Mountains.

Larry Seligman said his love for the work of Search and Rescue and deep respect for the many volunteers who conduct the SAR missions on behalf of the Sheriff’s Department, make that portion of his career the highlight of his professional life. He and his wife Barbara are retired and living in Pinal County. He has introduced his grandchildren to outdoor adventures and occasionally does a modest walk in the woods himself. (Larry Seligman emails 4/11/2023, 4/12/2023, 4/13/2023)

## Thomas Price: Pima County 1979–2009

*“Being a part of Southern Arizona EMS and SAR for 48 years has been very rewarding.” T.J.*

Tom Price was born in 1956 and raised in Tucson, graduating from Palo Verde High School. While working on a school term paper he developed a lifelong interest in EMS and felt this might be a calling, little realizing just how far it would take him. Right after graduating in 1974, he became an EMT and began working for the local ambulance services. In 1977, he went further in EMS, becoming certified as a Paramedic. Then, with repeated exposure to law enforcement at noteworthy calls and scenes, he soon pursued a career with the Pima County Sheriff’s Department. And in December 1978, he went to the Deputy Sheriff’s Academy.

While there, “the Special Operations Units had a dramatic impact in cultivating my interests in SWAT and SAR.” Already a paramedic, Tom had something extra to offer to the Special Ops Teams. He was initially brought into SWAT and subsequently became a back-up to Deputies Chuck McHugh and Larry Seligman in SAR; “I was very lucky to get my hands-on training from the very best.”

“My assignment in Special Operations was flexible, allowing me to essentially respond to most SAR missions, learning planning and resource management for search and rescue while in the field on those incidents. Some of the most valuable training was gained by working with the various volunteer SAR groups. These people come from all ‘walks’ of public life, each with a passion for serving. The backbone of the SAR community is the Southern Arizona Rescue Association. At the drop of a hat, and at all hours, SARA would respond to some of the most remote, rugged locations to look for or rescue someone in trouble. Many of these missions involved recovery of persons deceased in inaccessible areas; these teams made this incident, a last act of compassion during the recovery.”

For thirty years, Tom was a SAR Coordinator for Pima County Sheriff’s Department, during which he got SCUBA certified, to better help the divers. In 2009, he retired as a Commissioned Deputy and joined the Tactical Emergency Medical Service (TEMS), as the Coordinator for the Regional SWAT. Two years later, he became a full-time Crew Chief for Sheriff One Rescue Helicopter, serving as a hoist-system operator. Because of its hoist, Sheriff One was utilized primarily for SAR missions in Southern Arizona. And, as you might also guess, along the way in his career, he has earned numerous awards, commendations, and accolades, all tributes attesting to his talent, skill, and dedication.

Finally, after an exemplary 48-year career in Public Service, he retired at the end of 2022; Tom and his wife Terri, “are looking forward to some RV sight-seeing now that I am fully retired.” (Tom Price email 4/2/2023)

### Jose Padilla: Santa Cruz County 1983–1990

Jose S. Padilla, “Joe,” was born in 1954 and raised in Nogales, Arizona; graduating from Nogales High School in 1973. Four years later, Padilla joined the Santa Cruz County Sheriff’s Office. As a Deputy, he was assigned as the SAR Coordinator in 1983.

Joe worked SAR missions in one of Arizona’s most complex and challenging settings. As the state’s smallest county, Santa Cruz County covers an area of 1,238 square miles and has a population of about 50,000. Its southern boundary includes the US/Mexico International Border and adjoins Nogales, Sonora, Mexico, with a population exceeding 500,000.

Santa Cruz County hosts three recreational lakes: Patagonia, Pena Blanca, and Parker. Drowning recoveries are routinely conducted in them. With its headwaters in Sonora, Mexico, the Nogales Wash runs across the border and northward through Nogales and Santa Cruz County. This 95-square-mile watershed experiences deadly flash floods that sweep automobiles and occupants downstream. Many of these involve high-risk flood rescues and long-term body searches. Padilla often called upon Pima and Cochise County Sheriffs for aid on these missions. He is most grateful for the assistance they readily provided.

Padilla was promoted to Sergeant in 1986 and to Lieutenant 4 years later. In 1999, he retired from the Santa Cruz County Sheriff’s Office after 22 years of service. He is very thankful to have served his community.

### **Pete Alegria: Santa Cruz County 1983–1995**

Deputy Pete Alegria was born in Tumacacori, Arizona in September 1949. He started his law enforcement career with the Santa Cruz County Sheriff's Office in 1973. By 1983, he was assigned as a Sheriff's SAR Coordinator working closely with Sergeant Joe Padilla.

For several years, Deputy Alegria coordinated the Annual Search and Rescue Country Western Dance. Local businesses donated prizes for the raffle during the dance. This was a popular fundraising event with all proceeds going to acquire training and equipment for the Santa Cruz County Search and Rescue Volunteers. The event was held at the Rio Rico Resort and residents and visitors from beyond Santa Cruz County attended.

For 30 years, Pete worked as a cowboy for the Double Z Ranch near Pena Blanca Lake. He used his horsemanship and backcountry skills on SAR missions. It was not uncommon for him to saddle up an extra horse and ride into remote areas to locate and bring home lost hikers. Working closely with ranchers Dan and Scott Bell, he is remembered as a real cowboy—a man of few words and very much at home working in the backcountry.

In 1995, Pete retired from the Santa Cruz County Sheriff's Office after 22 years of service. He retired as a Range Deputy. After the Sheriff's Department, he continued to support SAR operations, as well as was being a Firefighter and EMT for the Tubac Fire Department. In February 2022, Pete died of natural causes in Tubac, Arizona. Pete lived his life serving the State of Arizona and the people of Santa Cruz County.

### **Rick Sturgeon: Pima County 1983–2007**

Rick M. Sturgeon was born in 1952 in Tucson and no, Rick is not short for Richard in this case, his mother often did battle with his teachers about it. He is the son of a Pima County Sheriff's Deputy, Ken Sturgeon. So, Rick grew up hearing the “war” stories and meeting the men, that were part of his slightly larger-than-life father. Mainly due to his dad's contacts as a Deputy, once Rick got his driver's license, he spent a couple of summers working on cattle ranches around Sonoita, southeast of Tucson. Within several years, this proved helpful in SAR when becoming a Pima County Sheriff's Deputy.

He graduated from Palo Verde High School in 1970, and facing the impending Mandatory Military Draft posed by Vietnam, he went into the Air Force. When tested, he scored high for “bomb tech,” which was ok until learning he was color blind for certain shades. So, the next four years were spent in a Civil Engineering Unit. Once out, he tried to join the Tucson Police Department, but again, his vision got in the way. He went to Pima College in Law Enforcement, became an EMT, worked store security, and then in 1976, a Pima County Detention Officer, known now as Correction's Officer. Within six months or so, the “stars were in alignment,” and in 1976 with the new “Sheriff in Town,” Rick became a Deputy for Richard Boykin.

He delights in saying he spent almost his entire thirty-year career working out of the Rincon Sub-District, covering Tucson's far east side, which included Mount Lemmon and the Catalinas. Over time, that Station would be designated as the PCSD Search and Rescue Base. And, this is when his high school relationships with the ranchers around Sonoita, bore fruit. Rick would soon learn that many of these families were very prominent citizens.

At that time, this small slice of Pima County was exasperated by paying taxes while feeling short-changed with a perceived lack of services. The Sheriff was ready for them; they were promised a

“Rural Deputy,” (an official position), would be patrolling their part of the country. Rick loved these open spaces and was soon renewing old acquaintances and making new ones. This was a welcome, new opportunity for him but he admits to having little patience for “organizational bureaucracy,” that this prospect posed for him.

In the Fall of 1983, Tropical Storm Octave killed 13 people including a DPS Air Rescue Pilot and Paramedic. That is what finally drew Rick Sturgeon into more-active Search and Rescue. Like all Rural Deputies, he would deal with the occasional, short-term SAR event. But that week-long disaster, was an “all-hands-on-deck” incident for the Pima County Sheriff’s Department, as it was for most of the First Responders in Southern Arizona.

Afterwards and in the months and years to come, he would share SAR duties with Chuck McHugh, Doug Myrvold, Tom Price, Larry Seligman, and Spot Edwards, among several. When McHugh moved on, the Department gravitated to two deputies in SAR, although this staffing number often fluctuated. Rick retired in 2007, and would conclude by saying that, “Some of the best times in my career were in Search and Rescue.” (Rick Sturgeon interview 4/7/2023)

### Wally Capas: Cochise County 1987–1993<sup>4</sup>

Sergeant Waldemar “Wally” Capas joined the Cochise County Sheriff’s Office in the mid-1980s where he was assigned to the Sierra Vista patrol area. Prior to that, he was involved in Search and Rescue in the early 1970s assisting the Southern Arizona Volunteer Emergency Rescuers (SAVE), who aided Cochise County. Wally brought plenty of water rescue training with him as he was in the US Coast Guard, Air Station San Diego. Throughout that career, he was involved in numerous SAR missions off the Southern California Coast.

In 1986, Wally joined the State of Arizona Search and Rescue Coordinators where he was a principal leader with the Cochise County SAR team. In that position, he assisted the training of personnel who were interested in becoming Coordinators themselves, throughout the State. During his time in County and Statewide SAR, he worked with many of the Counties with developing the management principles associated with their workload. “This was an interesting career,” said Wally, “and I worked with a great many excellent and dedicated SAR people.”

### Doug Myrvold: Pima County 1988–2006

Doug Myrvold was born in Minneapolis, Minnesota in 1952. After battling pneumonia for a couple of bad winters, the family was encouraged to seek a drier climate. The move to Tucson occurred in 1961, no more health problems.

While attending the University of Arizona, majoring in Law Enforcement, a large headline in a December 1973 edition of the morning paper piqued his interest. “Sheriff Cox Looking To Hire 50 Deputies.” He applied, was hired, and started the Academy in February of 1974, making \$762 per month. After several years of working the far east side, he accepted a position patrolling on Mount Lemmon and the community of Summerhaven. The assignment provided the opportunity to be the initial officer on scene for lost and injured hikers as well as rescue calls. While observing SAR coordinators and volunteers performing their missions, Doug’s interest in SAR as a career emerged. After an alternate coordinator for a few years, he acquired a full-time position in 1988. He worked as a lead in Pima County SAR until his retirement in 2006.

<sup>4</sup> Dates approximate

He would go on to say, “It was a good career move. It was rewarding work. Unlike patrol deputies arriving on scene in the metropolitan area being met with, ‘Oh no it’s the cop,’ the SAR Coordinator was met with, ‘Alright, it’s the cop!’ Search and rescue calls provided good public relations and positive press for the Sheriff, which is always a good thing.”

During his years of Public Service, Doug learned coordinators provide direction and resources for the volunteers, but the bulk of the work is done by them, and they are good at it. Doug was always amazed that day or night, heat, rain, or snow, the volunteers would show up for free to help people they didn’t know. After working with the volunteer search and recovery dive team in lakes and ponds around Arizona and Mexico, Doug was encouraged to get certified in scuba diving, and be an active participant in diving missions. He did get certified and dove on numerous calls. Doug remains an avid diver in retirement and has visited dive sites all over the world.

After retiring from the Pima County Sheriff’s Department, he began working for the United States Marshal Service in 2007. He finally retired for good in 2016, concluding over 42 years of Public Service. (Doug Myrvold email 3/19/2023)

### **Joe Luna: Santa Cruz County 1991–2001**

In 1963, Joe Luna was born and raised in Nogales, Arizona. At 18 years of age, he joined the United States Navy and served for three years as a Boiler Technician on a Naval Vessel stationed in San Diego. In 1984, after completing his obligated active service duties he worked for a soda beverage company in Flagstaff and one year later for a soda beverage company in Tucson.

He decided to pursue a law enforcement career in 1990 after being encouraged by his father-in-law, a retired Customs Officer in Nogales. This was Joe’s introduction to law enforcement after seeing his late father-in-law in uniform. Joe soon found himself with the Santa Cruz County Sheriff’s Office as an Adult Detention Officer.

The following year, Joe was offered a Deputy Sheriff’s position under the late Sheriff Alfonso Bracamonte. Shortly, he joined the Sheriff’s Office Search and Rescue as an Assistant SAR Coordinator under the leadership of retired Lieutenant Joe Padilla and the late SAR Coordinator, Pete Alegria. Joe worked numerous SAR operations as an assistant to Deputy Alegria to include missing and overdue hikers in the areas containing Pena Blanca, Mount Wrightson, and the Patagonia Mountains.

These missions included assistance from the Southern Arizona Rescue Association. He also worked numerous drownings in Patagonia and Pena Blanca Lakes with assistance from the Pima County Sheriff’s Department, Maricopa County Sheriff’s Office Dive Recovery Teams, and the Oro Valley Cadaver K-9 Unit.

After 5 years in the Patrol Division, 5 years in the School Resource Officer Program, and 6 years assigned to the Narcotics Task Force, he was promoted to Sergeant in 2007. Joe was a Patrol Sergeant for 2 years and in 2009, he was assigned to the Adult Detention Center as Operations Sergeant where he retired in July 2011.

### **Victor Coss: Santa Cruz County 1993–2016**

Victor Coss was born in 1955 and raised in Tucson and Nogales, Arizona. After graduating from Nogales High School in 1974, he pursued a teaching degree at Pima Community College and North-



ern Arizona University (NAU). While at NAU in 1977, he enlisted in the United States Navy. Upon completing Basic Training, he was assigned to the USS New Orleans, an amphibious assault ship. The crew and vessel took part in the Iranian Hostage Crisis.

Victor was hired in 1981 by the Santa Cruz County Sheriff's Office as a Communications Officer/EMT. The Sheriff's Office at the time was tasked to provide ambulance service to some areas of the county. The ambulance crew consisted of deputies, dispatchers, and detention personnel.

He received a call from the Naval Reserve Recruiter offering what the recruiter called "diaper money" and an enlistment bonus. In 1990, Victor was recalled to active military duty in support of Desert Shield/Storm. His Tucson unit was mobilized with the 1<sup>st</sup> Medical Battalion at Camp Pendleton, California. While they spent lots of time training in chemical warfare situations, this campaign overseas did not last long, and he never made it out of Camp Pendleton.

In 1991, Victor obtained his Arizona Peace Officer Certification and began patrolling Santa Cruz County. He routinely used his medical skills in motor vehicle accidents and SAR missions to include undocumented migrants in the remote mountainous areas of the County. The Tubac Fire District sponsored Victor to attend a Paramedic Certification Course. In 2003, however, he was unable to complete this training, as he was recalled to active duty in support of Operation Enduring/Iraqi Freedom. He retired as a Hospital Corpsman 1<sup>st</sup> Class from the Fleet Marine Force; this is an elite unit, known as "Devil Docs."

Deputy Coss was promoted to Sergeant in 2007 and was assigned to supervise the Sheriff's SAR function. He worked with Deputy Joe Pimienta on these missions. Coss attended monthly SAR Coordinators' meetings and pursued further SAR training in Managing Lost Person Incidents and at yearly SAR conferences. Victor found it rewarding to work with SAR volunteers and the entire SAR community.

Other Santa Cruz County Sheriff's assignments included the Criminal Investigation Division Sergeant, Swat Team Medic, and in the Civil Division. In 2016, Sergeant Victor Coss retired from the Sheriff's Department.

### David Noland: Cochise County 1993–2022

In November 1976, while attending Cochise College, David Noland began a lifelong affair with Search and Rescue, although he did not know it at the time. Owning a pickup truck, he was pressed into transporting a Stokes Basket to Portal, Arizona, for a rescue in the Chiricahua Mountains, by a Cochise County Deputy. It did not end there, however, as he and his friends were then pressed into carrying the litter up the canyon to where the injured hiker was; spent the night, and transported him back to the trailhead and a waiting ambulance. This would be the first of a great many incidents he would be involved with in his over forty years in law enforcement and search and rescue.

Born in Tucson in 1957 and then raised elsewhere in Arizona, including Willcox and the Navajo Reservation, he returned to Cochise County where he attended Cochise College. He began his four-decade plus career in SAR and Emergency Response in 1978 when he joined the Cochise County Sheriff's Office. That was soon followed, however, in the next seven years, serving with the Arizona Department of Public Safety and the Willcox Police Department. He returned as a Deputy Sheriff with Cochise County in 1985.

His interest in SAR, however, was sparked after attending the National Association for Search and Rescue (NASAR) Managing the Search Function (MSF) Course in February 1992. The following January he was appointed the Search and Rescue Coordinator for Cochise County, going on to



manage thousands of SAR missions. He was promoted to Sergeant in 2008, retiring in July 1, 2022. He served several terms as President of the Arizona SAR Coordinator’s Association. He also assisted writing and continues instructing the current AZSAR Inland Search Management Course, which is recognized for its excellence throughout the United States, being used by several states and the National Park Service for managing SAR operations. (David Noland, email 11/15/2022)

### **Luis Martinez: Santa Cruz County 1998–present**

Luis Martinez was born in Nogales, Arizona in June of 1962. He was raised in Tumacacori, Arizona and still lives there. He attended Sahuarita High School in Sahuarita, Arizona. Luis started his law enforcement career as a Santa Cruz County Juvenile Detention Officer and later transferred to the Probation Department. In 1998, he became a Deputy Sheriff, joined the Search and Rescue Division, and became a SAR Coordinator.

During Martinez’s SAR career, he worked closely with the neighboring Cochise and Pima County Sheriff’s Departments. He also trained and responded to SAR missions with the Southern Arizona Rescue Association. Arizona State SAR Coordinators James Langston, Jesse Robinson, and Chris Pittman provided outstanding assistance to Santa Cruz County Search and Rescue.

While being the smallest county in the state of Arizona, the Santa Cruz County Sheriff’s Office is recognized for its SAR missions on the complex and challenging US/Mexico International Border. Corporal Luis Martinez continues his active service in the Santa Cruz County Sheriff’s Office and as of this writing, has been in SAR for 25 years.

## Section 17.3

### **Arizona State SAR Coordinator**

#### **Background**

The Arizona State SAR Coordinator position was established in 1971. As noted in Arizona Revised Statutes Title 26 and Arizona Administrative Code Chapter 8, the Arizona Department of Emergency and Military Affairs, Division of Emergency Management is responsible for support and management roles in search and rescue missions. The Arizona Search and Rescue Coordinator provides 24/7 support to Arizona’s 15 county sheriffs. This support includes the mobilization of SAR assets, incident management, training, and the cost recovery of SAR missions.

Also, the State SAR Coordinator manages searches for missing aircraft, emergency locator transmitters (ELT) and personal locator beacons (PLB) within the State. These searches routinely include multiple jurisdictions and adjoining states. Success in these missions is achieved through the cooperative efforts with county sheriffs, the United States Air Force Rescue Coordination Center (AFRCC), the Arizona Wing of the Civil Air Patrol and other state and federal assets.

## Arizona State SAR Coordinators: 1971–2015

Arizona State SAR Coordinators: 1971–2015	
1971–1972 . . . . .	• <b>Troy Rhodes.</b> Dates approximate..
1973–1983 . . . . .	• <b>L.E. “Fitz” Fitzgerald.</b> Dates approximate..
1979–1980 . . . . .	• <b>Skip Carnes.</b> Dates approximate..
1984–1993 . . . . .	• <b>Don Hornecker.</b> Dates approximate..
1994–1996 . . . . .	• <b>Chuck McHugh.</b>
1997–2015 . . . . .	• <b>James Langston .</b>

(This history is courtesy of research by Lou Trammell, Chuck McHugh, and James Langston.)

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# CHAPTER 18

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## Southern Arizona Rescue Association—SARA

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### Section 18.1

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#### SARA Milestones

When David Lovelock and the author began this book, we really intended “just” a well-deserved but long-overdue homage to the Southern Arizona Rescue Association (SARA) and, at least a partial record of its over sixty years of missions and accomplishments. SARA certainly merits this acknowledgment but, did not have it. The First Responders of SARA (and their families) are especially worthy of this recognition, for their many decades of volunteering and unheralded work and selfless sacrifice. They did not seek this credit, but we chose to offer it anyway. Without a doubt, there is a genuine sense of reward and satisfaction they should feel for this notable service. But there is a downside.

Besides leaving their families and jobs and the comfort of their homes at a moment’s notice, possibly for extended periods of time, they often put themselves in harm’s way. They may experience both the ugliness of death and life-changing injury for those they respond to. There are an untold number of Southern Arizona residents and visitors alike, whose lives have been saved and bodies patched up—from toddlers to seniors, and everybody in-between.

As you will learn in the very first entry in the following table, the story of SARA actually began in the early 1950s, with the very frightening threat presented to this country by the “Cold War” with the USSR and the resulting, albeit sad, need for homeland Civil Defense.

This table—SARA Milestones—is a compilation of some highlights of only SARA. And, although maybe not a complete surprise to us, we soon understood the record of SAR in Southern Arizona, pre-SARA, as well as “all around it,” needed to be told, as well. What enthusiastically began as an overly optimistic, one-year project on SARA, evolved into nearly a four-year: “Southern Arizona Search & Rescue and First Responder History: 1901–2000.”

SARA Milestones	
1950–1958 .....	<b>Beginning in 1950, SARA would gradually evolve from Civil Defense, becoming its own identity in 1958.</b> See “SARA Evolves from Civil Defense” on page 543.
1958 .....	<b>The name “Southern Arizona Rescue Association” is first used.</b> See “Ray Neal, ‘Father of SARA’ ” on page 545.
Apr 1958 .....	<b>The names of the 17 founders of SARA.</b> See “Founders of SARA” on page 171.
Apr 27, 1958 .....	<b>SARA’s First SAR.</b> See “Toddler Lost: First SARA Search” on page 172.
Nov 16, 1958 .....	<b>Long believed to be SARA’s first SAR, but it is not!</b> See “Three Boy Scouts Missing on Mount Baldy” on page 176.
Jan 16, 1959 .....	<b>First rescue training classes for SARA recruits given.</b> See “First Training Classes for Recruits to SARA” on page 178.
Jan 20, 1959 .....	<b>SARA hosts public meeting of representatives of organizations interested in SAR. Pima County Search and Rescue is born.</b> See “Pima County Search and Rescue is Born” on page 178.
Mar 1959 .....	<b>SARA is identified as one leg of “SAR Triangle,” along with Davis-Monthan AFB and the PSCD.</b> See “SAR Triangle” on page 181.
Jun 15, 1959 .....	<b>SARA’s first rescue is a result of a mishap while fighting a fire for the Sheriff’s Department.</b> See “SARA’s First Rescue?” on page 184.
Sep 21, 1959 .....	<b>Basic and Advanced American Red Cross First Aid classes began for prospective SARA members.</b> See “First Aid Classes Begin” on page 186.
Feb 29, 1960 .....	<b>SARA Officers file Articles of Incorporation.</b> See “SARA Articles of Incorporation” on page 191.
Mar 7, 1960 .....	<b>Bud Simons, a physician at Tucson Medical Center, responded to a rescue in Sabino Canyon, drafted to go by Ray Neal. As a result, Simons joined SARA as its first member-doctor.</b> See “Teenager Rescued from Sabino Canyon” on page 192.
Mar 19, 1961 .....	<b>The 11 groups comprising Pima County Search and Rescue were identified, which included SARA.</b> See “Units of Pima County SAR” on page 199.
Jun 9, 1961 .....	<b>SARA acquired its first SAR truck, “an old surplus Army Ambulance.”</b> See “SARA Miscellaneous” on page 203.
Sep 10, 1961 .....	<b>SARA separates from Pima County Search and Rescue for about ten months.</b> See “SARA Leaves Pima County SAR” on page 206.
Dec 2, 1961 .....	<b>SARA had a formal fund-raising gala at the Pioneer Hotel.</b> See “Fund-Raising Dinner-Dance for SARA” on page 210.
Jun 1962 .....	<b>SARA admitted into the Mountain Rescue Association (MRA).</b> See “SARA Inducted Into Mountain Rescue Association” on page 213.
Nov 26, 1963 .....	<b>Featuring Sheriff Burr, SARA sponsors a Baby Show Coronation Pageant Fund Raising for a truck.</b> See “Waldon V. Burr and Baby Show Coronation” on page 224.

SARA Milestones (Contd.)	
Nov 26, 1965 .....	<b>SARA hosted the annual MRA Conference in Tucson.</b> See "National Mountain Rescue Association Conference in Tucson" on page 233.
Apr 13, 1967 .....	<b>Sheriff Burr reorganized SAR responders into a newly re-named group.</b> See "Sheriff Reorganizes SAR, Changes Name" on page 242.
Nov 9, 1969 .....	<b>Sniper shoots at volunteer from DMAFB.</b> See "Sniper Shoots at SAR Volunteer" on page 262.
Nov 29, 1969 .....	<b>SARA's Ray Neal elected President of the Mountain Rescue Association.</b> See "Ray Neal Named President of Mountain Rescue Association" on page 263.
Feb 10, 1976 .....	<b>Tucson Mayor, Lew Murphy, seeks solutions to the problems between the four units of the County SAR "machine."</b> See "Mayor Tells Rescue Units to Tackle Working Relationships" on page 308.
Feb 19, 1976 .....	<b>Sheriff Coy Cox dictates controlling the county SAR operation.</b> See "Sheriff Cox to Control Rescue Efforts" on page 309.
May 15, 1976 .....	<b>Tom Harlan of SARA elected President of the new SAR group Sheriff Cox formed.</b> See "SARA's Tom Harlan Elected President" on page 310.
Oct 15, 1976 .....	<b>SARA brought a circus to Tucson as a fund Raiser.</b> See "The Circus Comes to Town" on page 312.
Jan 14, 1977 .....	<b>Pima County SAR Council, Incorporated, was inaugurated.</b> See "SARCI Formed" on page 314.
Dec 6, 1986 .....	<b>SARA volunteers complete a new trail down into Tanque Verde Falls.</b> See "Trail Into Tanque Verde Falls" on page 400.
Jun 1, 1996 .....	<b>Six SARA members inaugurate Heli-Rappel program with Arizona DPS Air Rescue.</b> See "SARA and Heli-Rappel" on page 469.
Apr 1999 .....	<b>SARA moves into a permanent meeting spot for the next ten years.</b> See "SARA Miscellaneous" on page 549.

## Section 18.2

## A Brief History of SARA

There were two main triggers that led to the creation of SARA: a government agency—the Civil Defense, and a man—Ray Neal.

### Tucson-Pima County Civil Defense Search and Rescue Unit

On September 18, 1950, President Harry S. Truman approved a plan, incredibly frightening in its implication: "United States Civil Defense." So began this country's preparedness for nuclear war and possible Armageddon. Some eight weeks later, Tucson businessman and civic leader, Karl Barfield, was named Co-coordinator of local Civil Defense (CD) by both the Mayor of Tucson [Acting Mayor, J. O. Nieman] and the Chairman of the Pima County Board of Supervisors [J. Homer Boyd]. This now became Tucson-Pima County Civil Defense.

By May of 1951, the Federal Government had determined urgent needs for state, regional, and local search and rescue squads, to meet the escalating eventuality of nuclear attack. So that next May, 1952, Tucsonans Jack Parker and Arch Humphrys were identified to begin the local CD rescue squad, which would respond for destroyed communities and crushed buildings. See “SARA Evolves from Civil Defense,” on page 543. On May 17, 1952, Jack Parker began a five-day training in California on urban rescue, the first of its kind in the West. (The author, however, never found Arch Humphrys’ name associated again with Civil Defense, including with rescue squads.)

On January 1, 1953, the Federal Civil Defense Administration (FCDA) released a book, “Rescue Techniques and Operations,” with detailed text and many illustrations and graphics on what could be used for SAR in collapsed buildings. Such skills as rigging stretchers, raising and lowering them from multi-story structures, highlines, anchor systems, mechanical advantages, tunneling, shoring, and so forth. In modern today, those techniques are central to the new genre: Urban Search and Rescue (USAR). Currently, the Federal Emergency Management Administration (FEMA) has expert USAR teams around the country and deployable internationally. But back in 1953, as would be learned over the next decade, these skills and techniques were not just for urban settings, but were equally applicable to rural, mountain, and wilderness SAR.

Between October 28 and November 5, 1954, instructors with the FCDA came to Tucson and conducted a ten-session, forty-hour workshop at the University of Arizona on this new urban, heavy-duty rescue. Of the 17 people to graduate from that first training course on November 5, two were future SARA members: Bob Ambrose and Don Sterner. They in turn, helped instruct a more comprehensive, 13-week CD class the following spring, also with 17 volunteers, ending on June 24, 1955. In that program were four more future members and leaders of SARA: Ed Kress, Ruth Neal, Ray Neal, and Phil Meade. Now, with 34 graduates energized and empowered during those eight months, Southern Arizona had a well-trained team in vertical rescue and related skills: Tucson-Pima County Civil Defense Search and Rescue.

For the next two years, there were regular meetings and associated trainings, mostly involving building SAR, with increasing proficiencies. They were generally coupled with emergency first aid problems, particularly championed after Ray Neal became certified as an American Red Cross First Aid Instructor on November 4, 1955. Additionally, Bob Ambrose was an active architect in Tucson and was tuned in to which of the various buildings in the area were scheduled for demolition or refurbishment, according to Frances Walker. These places often offered challenging scenarios for the recently formed rescue unit for sharpening their expertise. And Kress, Ambrose, Phil Meade, and Ray Neal, in particular, were very prominent in the CD organization, all assuming rotating leadership roles during these several years.

But on rare occasion, luckily it seems, they did get into the field on an actual, real-life SAR, one not involving buildings or the Atom Bomb. Such was the case on November 11, 1955, when 11-year-old Steven Stewart and his 2-year-old Cocker Spaniel wandered away, spending 17 hours in the foothills twenty miles north of the Mexican Border. See “Boy Lost in Baboquivaris,” November 11, 1955, on page 157. This mission was led by Pima County Sheriff’s Captain Ken Sturgeon, who also was now aware of the new group and its training and their subsequent need to coalesce as a team. They certainly were more valuable than the “cowboys and deputies,” that had been involved down near Sasabe. And their presence seemingly had the “fingerprints” of Ray Neal, Bob Ambrose, Ed Kress, and Phil Meade, on it.

About five weeks later, the City of Tucson and Pima County jointly contemplated buying a small, three-place helicopter for use in Civil Defense. The ship would cost about \$35,000, and at least half the expense would be through a Grant-In-Aid with the Federal Civil Defense Administration. It was tempting but at the last moment, the City Fathers decided against it. See “Helicopter Considered



for Local Civil Defense,” December 18, 1955, on page 158 . For the conceivable future this helicopter could/would have been useful numerous times, not only for Civil Defense SAR, but for life-saving, rural-oriented missions outside of Tucson.

Over the next two years, the CD group continued refining their expertise, as well as “Spreading the Good Word” with the general public about their core mission of Civil Defense. They gave programs and demonstrations to PTAs and civic groups, and even taught First Aid to anyone that would have them. In September 1957, Bill Wagoner was identified as “the unit’s chief.” (The author was only able to find his name in the newspapers this once.)

By early 1958, Ed Kress was serving as head of the Civil Defense Rescue Unit, Ray Neal his assistant, with Phil Meade working for them. This group became increasingly “antsy” for real-life problems, such as for the rare call-out by Captain Sturgeon. So, reaching an acceptable compromise within the organization, they created a new, second group, SARA; however, they also remained active in the old one, Civil Defense. Now, some of them “had their feet in both camps.” Loyalties die hard, maybe because of their initial training. Then soon, Ray Neal and Phil Meade, despite earlier friendships and close working relationships over the years, developed personality conflicts; rapidly festering, they became pronounced, putting a strain on the two factions. So, each went at least partially their separate ways; partially, because they still would routinely respond to the same emergencies. Meade with CD and Neal with SARA.

In late-April of 1958, both teams were involved in a joint search effort, along with another two-hundred volunteers and law enforcement officers. Two-year-old Jennifer Ann Baker wandered away from her home on Tucson’s south side. See “Toddler Lost: First SARA Response,” April 27, 1958, on page 172. It was an all-night effort lasting 12 hours, ending successfully when two Sheriff’s Deputies found her safe and sound one mile from her home. Civil Defense probably had about the same number of volunteers involved there, since both units had maybe 16 members at this time. Both CD and SARA were now functioning and definitely participated in the search for Jennifer. The region’s next big search effort was for the three Boy Scouts missing in the Santa Rita Mountains that November.

Cathy Hufault, in her well-researched book, “Death Clouds on Mt Baldy: Tucson’s Lost Tragedy,” reports over 750 people were involved in some way in that heartbreak with the three young men. It is unclear to the author whether the local CD Search and Rescue Unit was there. It was now well established, however, and with such a large turnout by others for the Scouts, the CD group with 16 members was surely involved. And, the Southern Arizona Rescue Association was indeed there, with but only a handful of responders, per Frances Walker.

Ray Neal would be quoted in an article in the June 26, 1959 *Tucson Daily Citizen*: “ ‘We had a rough time working up any public interest [in SARA] until... the three Boy Scouts were lost in the Santa Ritas.’ ” See “Three Boy Scouts Missing on Mount Baldy,” November 16, 1958, on page 176.

All through the 1960’s, Tucson-Pima County Civil Defense Search and Rescue was alive and prospering. In addition to their original mission involving building SAR, they kept slowly expanding into rural and desert SAR. To this end, they periodically conducted CD rescue classes, such as the one beginning October 14, 1960.

“A Civil Defense basic light rescue course will be offered to Tucsonans... Sterling May, an accredited federal instructor, will teach the eight sessions, which covers such subjects as organization of rescue operations and the use of the rescue truck, ropes and knots, casualty handling, reconnaissance of building damage, lifting devices, basic firefighting, use and care of ladders, building exercise, mountain and desert rescues.... The local Civil Defense rescue unit currently

includes about 40 persons, all of whom are also automatically members of the Pima County Sheriff's volunteer rescue unit, according to Carl Stevenson, CD squad leader."

For a rescue on November 3, 1962, "A Civil Defense man, Carl Stevenson," and ten other members of the "Pima County Rescue, Civil Defense and Red Cross units" responded. A 25-year-old University student had climbed up some high rocks on Tucson's southwest side, and froze and could not get off without help. Stevenson went up and talked him down. In addition to Stevenson, who was a general insurance agent and the President of the local Arizona Rangers, and Sterling May, mentioned earlier, two other CD rescue leaders identified that decade were Phil Lieberman and Phil Meade.

Meade became leader of the Tucson-Pima County Civil Defense Search and Rescue for about the next ten years, and was recognized as such in numerous articles involving SAR. Perhaps the earliest was on October 12, 1961. "Capt. Kenneth Sturgeon, of the Pima County Sheriff's Search and Rescue Unit, will discuss search and rescue operations at a meeting of the Old Pueblo Radio Club... appearing with him will be Phillip Meade, head of the Pima County Civil Defense Search and Rescue Unit." See "Lost Teenagers Saved By Pima County Search Unit," May 16, 1966, on page 236. But they still retained their original ties to structural SAR. Like on December 18, 1967, when an Air Force fighter jet, just loaded with 16,000 pounds of fuel, took off from Davis-Monthan heading to Las Vegas, to only seconds later, go into a supermarket near the end of the runway, killing four people. See "Air Force Jet Crashes into Tucson Supermarket," December 18, 1967, on page 248.

At the beginning of 1971, Arizona State House Majority Leader Burton Barr began refining what would end up being Arizona House Bill 10. Signed into law by Governor Jack Williams on April 16, 1971, among its several provisions was establishing the Arizona Division of Emergency Services, absorbing the State's Civil Defense program. See "House Bill 10," January 11, 1971, on page 272. So, for a short while, the previous Tucson-Pima County Civil Defense Search and Rescue, added on "and Emergency Services." Even with this three-word longer title, it did not change what they were doing.

Also included in House Bill 10 was the proviso for Arizona Revised Statute 11-441-C, which established/clarified that Search and Rescue was the complete responsibility of each of Arizona's 14 county sheriffs (La Paz was created later in 1983). See "Family Tragedy Generates New Laws for SAR," August 5, 1970, on page 269. This would eventually prove a problem for William F. Caldwell, Chairman of the Tucson-Pima County Emergency Services Department.

And the CD group increasingly kept expanding into rural SAR. Per an article on September 22, 1971, in *The Arizona Daily Star* *Arizona Daily Star*, "The training will include instruction in mountain climbing, rappelling, hiking, first aid, map reading and search organization. Members of the search and rescue team assist the Pima County Sheriff's office in desert and mountain operations using 4-wheel drive vehicles, horses and air support." Notice, there was no longer mention of SAR in buildings and, this all soon loosely morphed into Emergency Services Search and Rescue.

For the next five or so years, Emergency Services SAR was successfully involved in rural/wilderness missions, although at the end of that period, this attainment began tapering off. In 1976, Sheriff Coy Cox took control and began straightening out the organizational response, including that of Emergency Services. There was major resistance from Chairman Caldwell of Tucson-Pima County Emergency Services, to which the SAR group was part of. This contention became very visible in the newspapers. Cox's new group became titled Pima County Sheriff's Search and Rescue Squad. And, Sheriff Cox had full authority on his side, per House Bill 10, enacted five

years before. But in January 1977, Sheriff Boykin took office and soon thereafter, the Search and Rescue Council, Incorporated, was formed. See “SARCI Formed,” January 14, 1977, on page 314.

In July 1977, Emergency Services SAR, from the earlier Tucson-Pima County Civil Defense Search and Rescue and Emergency Services Unit, dissolved itself, for “lack of interest.” For just a short time, they did try to restart themselves but soon then transferred their equipment to SARA. Four-wheel drive, SARA, and the other two or three units which were still active volunteers in the Sheriff’s SAR, voted to accept these former members into their group, “subject to their standards and dues.” This was noted by the author in “Volunteer Search and Rescue 1822, Combined Newsletter 1977,” which, however, was without any frame of reference in a SARA Scrapbook. The author does not know the origin of this Newsletter nor the parent organization. Additionally, as newsworthy as this dissolution would seem, strangely, it was never reported in either of Tucson’s newspapers of the time.

However, Pima County Emergency Services (but not SAR) still existed and also now represented the city of Tucson; it received about forty percent of its funding from the federal government through the Arizona Division of Emergency Services and the remainder from the city and county. Their mandate was still linked directly to preparedness for nuclear war but more pragmatically, for major events such as catastrophic flooding, hazardous chemical train derailments, and massive plane disasters. They were to keep the public and law enforcement informed and coordinate plans and responses with other agencies. But the Emergency Services Search and Rescue group was never mentioned again associated with any SAR mission after July 1977. (Citizen 9/18/1950, 5/16/1952, 6/25/1955, 10/15/1959, 6/7/1960; Star 11/17/1951, 11/23/1953, 5/16/1954, 9/6/1957, 10/12/1960, 10/12/1961, 11/4/1962, 8/1/1965, 3/19/1971, 4/17/1971, 9/22/1971, 3/25/1984; Frances Walker interview 2/15/2023; Volunteer Search and Rescue 1822, Combined Newsletter 1977; Mykle Raymond email 2/24/2023)

## SARA Evolves from Civil Defense

On July 16, 1945 the world changed with the explosion of the first atomic bomb on what is now White Sands Missile Range in New Mexico. With the prospect of a nuclear war, the United States’ many governments—local, state, national—hoped that in a “worst-case scenario,” casualties could be cut in half with trained experts and millions of volunteers. “ ‘...civil defense could spell the difference between defeat with slavery for our people and victory in a war thrust upon us.’ ”

On September 18, 1950, the National Security Resources Board (NSRB, 1947–1953), unveiled a 152-page plan, “United States Civil Defense.” Approved by President Harry S. Truman, it was a six-part blueprint stressing mutual-aid, training, and preparedness, including down to the individual citizen. It identified 140 “critical target areas—cities and installations an enemy almost certainly would hit first.” These areas were never made public but were revealed to the Governors of each state. Tucson may have been one of these, not solely because of Davis-Monthan AFB, rather also the impact Southern Arizona would receive if strategic targets, such as the military installations in San Diego, were bombed. There was a fear Tucson would be overrun by evacuees fleeing Southern California. Additionally, Truman sent along to Congress, a bill to create a new agency, the Federal Civil Defense Administration (FCDA).

The NSRB said that “in your town. . . it needed a full-time civil defense director. . . advisory council, and specialists in charge of mutual aid, evacuation. . . transportation, communications. . . fire-fighting. . . wardens. . . rescue. . . training. . . and an air raid warning system.” See “Tucson Gets Air Raid Sirens,” February 18, 1957, on page 168. On November 9, 1950, Karl Barfield, Tucson busi-

nessman and civic leader, was named “Co-ordinator [sic] for Civil Defense,” by both the Tucson Mayor and Chairman of the Pima County Supervisors.

By the following May, Jack Parker and Arch Humphrys, headed Tucson’s regional Civil Defense rescue squad, from which SARA would eventually splinter off from. On May 17, 1952, Parker, a representative of the Tucson Trades Council, left to attend the CD western training school at St. Mary’s College in Moraga, California. “The St. Mary’s course is the first of its kind to be offered by the federal government in the west and is designed for the 11 western states. A [mock up] is now being put together at the college, consisting of four units of simulated American residences in which trainees will be taught to move in and out through wreckage to get trapped victims to safety by using only simple common tools.”

Upon Parker’s return from this course, he said, “Squads of local volunteers will be taught how to carry people from broken buildings, and how to work their way through twisted and torn areas such as might result from atomic bomb blasts.” It does not seem, however, any of these classes took place for over two more years. Despite this, though, Tucson and Pima County still were way ahead of much of the country in their preparedness.

November 22, 1953, the FCDA reported, “A minimum of 10,000 rescue squads would be needed to remove victims from ruined buildings if an enemy blasted major U.S. target areas with atomic bombs. . . More than three-fourths of the rescue squads required by this country are still to be recruited and equipped. . . Each squad includes a leader and three eight-man teams.” The FCDA had recently put out a training manual, “Rescue Techniques and Operations,” which among other things, reportedly [the author never saw this document] had detailed illustrations of rigging litters with victims for vertical raising and lowering from multi-story buildings, highlines, anchor and mechanical advantage systems, and so forth.

The FCDA went on in that article to say, “qualified leaders and squad members are being recruited among specialized occupations, including ‘the skills of construction foremen, carpenters, steel workers, riggers, miners, firemen, police and others whose daily work has acquainted them practically with the use and limitations of ropes, ladders, jacks, gears, levers, tackle, shoring, blocking and tunneling.’ ” On February 2, 1953, Louis A. Menager took Karl Barfield’s place, as head of the local Civil Defense. Menager, a former department commander of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, was doing this with no salary. David V. Sprunt was Deputy Civil Defense Director, and that paid \$4,800 per year (about \$53,000 in 2022). The local Civil Defense office was downtown Tucson at 10 Ott Street and George B. Owen was identified as the Arizona Director of Civil Defense.

Between October 28 and November 5, 1954, the local Civil Defense hosted its first forty-hour course on skills needed to rescue people trapped in destroyed buildings. The instructors were from the FCDA. Receiving certificates at the University of Arizona on the evening of November 5, those 17 students were to then “train other rescue workers in future C-D programs.” The following spring, several graduates from this original class, including future founding SARA members Donald F. Sterner and Robert J. “Bob” Ambrose, instructed a more comprehensive, 13-week CD course. It culminated with another 17 graduating on June 24, 1955. Among this second class were future SARA members Edgar L. Kress, Raymond R. Neal, Ruth Neal, and Phillip Meade. Then on November 4, Ray Neal would be further certified as an American Red Cross First Aid Instructor, after a 15-hour course.

Ed Kress oversaw a CD class of eight students, graduating on December 9, 1955. Neal, Ambrose, and Kress instructed a CD class every Friday night for 15 weeks, beginning September 7, 1956. And starting on February 12, 1957, Ray Neal, who now was the “Red Cross first aid mobile unit chairman and also chairman of the CD rescue unit,” taught a Red Cross standard twenty-hour first aid course, “for members of the heavy rescue unit of Civil Defense,” although all were welcome.

This was good since on January 10, 1958, Tucson was identified as the top atom bomb target of the three named in Arizona by the state's Civil Defense Director. In March 1958, Ray was instructing Red Cross First Aid to people on Mount Lemmon; in November, he was still also head of "survey and rescue" for the local Civil Defense.

About mid-1957, two years after the first Civil Defense rescue class graduated in June 1955, Bob Ambrose, Don Sterner, Ray Neal, Ruth Neal, Ed Kress, Peg Kress, Phil Meade, and Anita Meade, began slowly to philosophically separate from the main mission of Civil Defense. By that December, this group had reached an acceptable compromise between only just being used for building searches and, increasingly becoming more useful in the wilder areas of the region. They would be eight of the 17 founding members of the Southern Arizona Rescue Association within the year. But, by April 1958 and before what was to become SARA, these eight principals still also remained heavily active in local Civil Defense and Red Cross programs. See "Founders of SARA," April (?) 1958, on page 171. (Citizen 9/18/1950, 5/16/1952, 10/19/1954, 6/25/1955, 11/4/1955, 12/10/1955; Star 9/19/1950, 11/17/1951, 6/1/1952, 11/23/1953, 5/16/1954, 11/8/1954, 2/7/1957, 2/18/1957, 1/11/1958, 3/27/1958, 11/2/1958; The Evening Sun [Baltimore, MD] 4/6/1951)

## Ray Neal, "Father of SARA"

Raymond "Ray" R. Neal is generally considered the "Father" of the Southern Arizona Rescue Association. Born on January 5, 1922, in Mesa, Arizona, he grew up roaming the surrounding deserts and mountains, often while hunting and fishing. Graduating from Phoenix Union High School in 1939, he spent the next six years in the US Army rising to Staff Sergeant, as one of about five-thousand enlisted pilots teaching others to fly. This is where he first became interested in search and rescue. " 'I flew a lot of flood and disaster relief. . . After tornadoes and heavy destructive rains. . . mostly flying in medical supplies and flying out victims. Searching the rivers for stranded people and calling the patrol boats to pick them up.' "

Following the war, Ray got into construction in Phoenix and " 'since then I've built everything from a one-room shack to a \$2½ million job.' " That included serving as Project Superintendent for Tucson's Catalina High School in 1955–1956, having moved into the area three years before. While overseeing this large undertaking, Neal, along with wife Ruth, attended a 13-week Civil Defense course on building rescues, graduating on June 24, 1955. That November, he was further certified as a Red Cross First Aid Instructor. See "SARA Evolves from Civil Defense," on page 543.

Over the next three years, Neal, a determined, often single-minded man, became increasingly involved in both Civil Defense and Red Cross. He taught, as well as quite frequently spoke intensely about these pet projects, continually refining his hands-on, urban rescue skills with its attendant leadership. He was accompanied by several others who also soon would become involved in rural search and rescue (read SARA). These included Bob and Louise Ambrose, Ed and Peg Kress, and Phil and Anita Meade, as well as fellow first aid instructor and eventual good friend, Frances Walker.

"By late-1956, I believe people, including Ray Neal, were getting tired of just constructing rescue tripods from ladders and practicing searches in old buildings that Bob Ambrose, a prominent architect, knew were going to be torn down," according to Walker. Neal, a long-time outdoorsman, advocated going into the field and helping look for lost people, many of them hunters. On occasion, this was now actually being done by some in Civil Defense when asked by the Sheriff. See "Boy Lost in Baboquivaris," November 11, 1955, on page 157. There were others in CD, however, that disagreed with this role, recognizing the country was now at the very height of its "Cold War" with the Soviet Union.



When approached, a regional Civil Defense supervisor said “No,” they were to stay near home in the event of a national emergency. According to Walker, there was a group meeting in December 1957, probably generated by Neal, where this undertaking was further explored; per Ray Neal, it was “mainly because we couldn’t get accident insurance under Civil Defense.” A compromise was reached: a separate unit would form and go out on lost-person incidents. It would remain distinct of CD but still available with its specialized training in building search and rescue. Most thought this a good idea. At the time, Ed Kress was head of Civil Defense rescue and Ray Neal his assistant, with Phil Meade working under Neal. All were still very active in Civil Defense, but also belonged to this new team: “they now had a foot in each camp.”

Walker, who was then part of both Civil Defense and SARA and taught first aid for the Red Cross with Neal, recalls participating in an overnight search for a child in 1958. More than two-hundred volunteers responded, including the Civil Defense Rescue Unit as well as the newly formed Southern Arizona Rescue Association, which title Neal had just recently coined. (Then, not long afterwards, he also designed the current logo for SARA, as well.) The Search and Rescue Council, Incorporated (SARCI) Database maintained by SARA member Mykle Raymond, also has this search as its very first incident. See “Toddler Lost: First SARA Search,” April 27, 1958, on page 172.

Ray Neal, in a feature article interview written by Pearl Aldrich in the *Tucson Daily Citizen* of June 26, 1959, said, “ ‘We had a rough time working up any public interest until . . . the three Boy Scouts were lost in the Santa Ritas [November 1958]. We were out helping in that search. People [in the community] up to then were pretty apathetic.’ ” See “Three Boy Scouts Missing on Mount Baldy,” November 16, 1958, on page 176.

On this search, according to Walker, SARA was there officially with just a handful of members (only about 17 at this time) and they manned the roadblock in Madera Canyon. However, soon-to-be SARA members, Don Morris, Eber Glendening, and Tom Harlan were there, able to talk their way past the Sheriff’s barricades. They ended up playing key roles in the search for the three young men and over the next couple of decades, would be recognized as central in the success of the Southern Arizona Rescue Association.

Right after that deeply-felt tragedy, it was readily apparent to “City Fathers,” and others concerned, including Ray Neal and those within his sphere: Tucson needed a well-trained cadre focusing solely on rural search and rescue. It had been at least eight years since a group dedicated to that specific mission existed in the area. Not since the Sheriff’s Rescue Patrol faded from the scene in late-December 1950. See “Sheriff’s Auxiliary Deputy Program,” May 10, 1954, on page 147. Without question, those in Civil Defense rescue such as Neal, Ambrose, Kress, and Meade, had a solid foundation in these essential skills.

On January 19, 1959, SARA held a third public meeting on the University of Arizona campus of representatives of organizations interested in local search and rescue work. President of SARA, Don Henderson, termed the meeting an “inventory of manpower and equipment.” Captain Ken Sturgeon, the Sheriff’s liaison officer for SAR, addressed the group. “Individuals forming the private rescue association are trained rescue personnel and have participated in such activities in the local area for the past four years.” This was acknowledging those still part of Civil Defense rescue. At this point, there were less than twenty members of SARA although about forty people attended the campus gathering, with some interested in joining.

The following evening some of this group convened at Captain Sturgeon’s home and Ray Neal was one of five singled out by Sturgeon as leaders. The next night, January 20, Ray Neal, construction superintendent for American Homes Association, was named chairman of the Pima County Sheriff’s Advisory Council on Search and Rescue. Lists of equipment and manpower were being identified, with Sturgeon saying nearly two-dozen organizations were being contacted asking for



their participation and lists of their available equipment. See “Pima County Search and Rescue is Born,” January 20, 1959, on page 178.

Philosophical differences between the “CD Camp” and “SARA Camp,” however, were now becoming more pronounced. And despite both Ray Neal and Phil Meade still teaching and working together in Civil Defense rescue, the personality conflicts between them grew more noticeable, divisive and abrasive. According to Frances Walker, “Someone went to the County Board of Supervisors and said there was a group within CD trying to do away with CD, which of course was not true. As a result, however, Phil was made head of CD rescue and soon afterwards, Ray, Bob Ambrose, and Ed Kress resigned from Civil Defense.’ ”

Ray, according to Frances Walker, “was well-meaning, a good person and a valued leader but was intense and focused, someone you either liked or disliked, not much room in between. He did not care how big or how strong you were, whether male or female, only what you could contribute to the program.” She went on to say,

“Ray quickly got on the typewriter, writing to SAR groups in Canada and Great Britain, looking for information, ideas, and resources to bring to this new team. Those first few years, his typing also got him into hot water. The Board of Supervisors, Civil Defense, and others heard from him quite regularly, often through his brusque Letters-to-the-Editor when he thought someone and/or some group deserved criticism or needed nudging along. For a while, Sheriff Burr wanted him gone. Deputy Ted Brandes was able to intervene on Ray’s behalf.”

For at least half a dozen years after the SARA split from Civil Defense, a vestigial, ‘building-search DNA’ remained within SARA, such as when it responded to the fatal gas explosion in 1963. See “Supreme Cleaners Blows Up,” March 29, 1963, on page 219. In turn, CD was regularly called out on searches, maybe because Phil Meade was currently head of the group’s rescue unit. But also, because the “Cold War” was thawing out and local Civil Defense building rescue was less essential and they increasingly were more in need of purpose.

Frances Walker, in speaking of that period when SARA split from Civil Defense, always highly praised the women who played key roles, perhaps even serving as the glue that kept this new group together and going. In addition to Ruth Neal, Ray’s wife, there were Anita Meade, Peg Kress, Louise Ambrose, Anita Schmutz, and Lorna Glendening, wife of Eber Glendening. Of course, Frances should be remembered as part of that “glue,” as well.

Ray Neal would continue growing in his leadership of rural search and rescue in Southern Arizona. He served two years as President of SARA in 1959 and 1960, along with other SARA positions before and after. He was elected Secretary-Treasurer of the National Mountain Rescue Association in 1965, then becoming President in November 1969. See “Ray Neal Named President of Mountain Rescue Association,” November 29–30, 1969, on page 263. In the early 1970s, Neal became less involved with mountain SAR and the Southern Arizona Rescue Association and after 1973, SARA members rarely saw him at meetings or an incident.

Ray Neal proceeded from construction to real estate and property management. He was named Vice-President of Tucson Realty & Trust Company and then in 1974, opened the Ray Neal Property Management Company. Later in life, he became increasingly occupied with social matters, including Second Amendment and racial issues. He died at age 65 on April 29, 1987 of a stroke. (Citizen 10/2/1956, 6/26/1959, 10/10/1974, 5/5/1987; Star 1/18/1959, 1/19/1959, 1/21/1959; Frances Walker Oral Interview, 4/2/2021)

## SARA Miscellaneous

This section—SARA Miscellaneous—is a “Catch-All,” with disparate subjects, details, and dates; largely trivia, these do not warrant separate entries, nonetheless, they should be documented and certainly not lost or forgotten.

### Meeting Places

Prior to “the official birth of SARA,” Civil Defense Search and Rescue would rotate meetings around Tucson, gathering in vacant buildings identified for mock disasters as well as at the more formal CD Headquarters on Ott Street. But on occasion, they also met at the Tucson Red Cross Chapter Headquarters on 222 S. Cherry Avenue, largely because key CD members were also Red Cross First Aid Instructors and Disaster Responders. And it was in those several places scattered around town, that SARA was first conceptualized and began informally organizing.

When SARA first deployed as a hopeful albeit marginally cohesive unit on the search for 2-year-old Jennifer Ann Baker, half its core members were still also active Civil Defense SAR responders and so they were gathering/meeting where CD would. See “Toddler Lost: First SARA Search,” April 27, 1958, on page 172. Over the next six months, these get-togethers for SARA remained informal and probably embedded ad hoc with the CD trainings and meetings. Then on November 16, Southern Arizona experienced a record snowfall and the loss of the three Boy Scouts in the Santa Rita Mountains. From this tragedy, SARA, with its first 17 or so members, several of whom were budding civic leaders, gained much-needed organizational momentum from both the community at large as well as the “City Fathers.”

There were preparatory meetings for SARA’s inaugural search and rescue training, but on January 15, 1959, it was announced in the city’s two newspapers SARA would begin teaching SAR the following evening. And, they would be in Room 216 (one article says Room 206) in the Liberal Arts Building on the University of Arizona Campus. See “First Training Classes for Recruits to SARA,” January 16, 1959, on page 178. Between then and the end of June, SARA had ten weeks of formal training, much of it focusing on the vertical requirements of rescue. After all, the several instructors were all graduates of the Civil Defense Light and Heavy Duty Rescue, which stressed rope systems from multi-story buildings.

Intermittently over the next few years, the group would meet at individual members homes, probably on a designated day and time and with some built-in flexibility. Ray and Ruth Neal’s home at 4801 E. Helen in Tucson, is often mentioned. And to not overly burden the Neals, occasionally others would volunteer their homes, as well.

As membership slowly expanded with new trainees, SARA outgrew backyards and front rooms, moving to larger, more conventional settings. These included several prominent banks, each “occupation” lasting months or perhaps a few years at a time. These were generally secured by “someone who knew someone,” or where a member did their banking, or both. The rooms were often free if a bank account existed and/or were rented by the evening. SARA also used one or two churches along the way. Mykle Raymond writes, “And we were at St. Marks [Presbyterian Church] from before 1973 until April 1999, over 25 years. That leaves 15 years wandering around town.”

In the mid- to late-1990s, SARA began acquiring a spacious house built by a private contractor in the 1970s for his own use. It would adequately serve the group for over a decade. It had numerous

bedrooms and even a swimming pool and is on the north bank of Tanque Verde Wash, just upstream from where Pantano Wash joins, forming the Rillito River. It now faces The Loop Bike Path at North Craycroft, and in 2023 PCSD Deputies now occupy it. When it was built, there was no bridge spanning the wide wash; it was a paved, low-water crossing. See “Two Drown,” November 1, 1982, page 323. This bridge came about in November 1982 and the drainage was widened to accommodate new footings. Within the year, that modification would be disastrous for landowners downstream, including this home owner.

When a record-breaking storm hit the area in September 1983, one-third of the house’s lot, including the swimming pool, washed away. See “13 Die, Including DPS Pilot and Paramedic,” September 30–October 3, 1983, on page 372 Then, with the lengthy, inevitable legal and attendant land and realty proceedings slowly winding through the bureaucracy, there were certainly years it was not occupied at all. But the County would eventually accept liability and buy the property.

Per Mykle Raymond, the April 1997 *SARnews* (SARCI’s internal newsletter) has, “the SARA General Meeting was at St. Marks, with other meetings (Board) at UA Farms and at Sheriff’s Substation 106 (old bank at Catalina and Tanque Verde). The meeting room was also the SAR Office.” Then the December 1997 *SARnews*, has an article about “fundraising and building acquisition for a new SARA House. The work appears to have resulted in our lease of the Craycroft House.” In the April 1998 issue, it notes, “we are meeting (larger than normal) at Tucson Medical Center’s Marshall Auditorium. This is the official kick-off of the SARA fundraiser. All members are encouraged to wear the yellow and orange shirts since we hope to have news media coverage.”

The Craycroft house had several training and meeting rooms, and associated storage and garages. It was ideal for SARA and the building’s remodeling was largely done by its members. The April 1999 *SARnews*, notes, “The Annual Meeting of the Southern Arizona Rescue Association will be held Friday, April 02 at 20:00. The Annual Meeting is being held at a new location, the SARA House on Craycroft Road. This is the first meeting to be held at the property that Pima County is in the process of making available to SARA.”

It served them very well for over ten years, until 2010 when the SARA House in Sabino Canyon was built. It now sits where the Tucson Rod and Gun Club once had its firing ranges. These had to be shut down in 1997 due to noise and safety.

## SARA Rescue Vehicles

When the Pima County Rescue Patrol formed in November of 1948, they began literally begging the community’s “movers and shakers,” for a vehicle that would be dedicated solely to SAR. They never got it. Frank Eyman became Sheriff of Pima County in 1951, and one of his top priorities would quickly become securing a vehicle strictly for SAR. The Tucson Fire Department already had one, although it was outfitted more for urban responses. It took Eyman teaming up with the County Civil Defense Office in 1953 to get what he wanted. That November, Pima County got a rescue truck, though it was to be shared with Civil Defense. See “Pima County’s First Rescue Truck,” November 23, 1953, on page 144.

On June 9, 1961, SARA acquired its first vehicle. It was an “old surplus Army ambulance.” See “Surplus Ambulance Bought for SAR,” June 9, 1961, on page 203. Along with it, came a small cargo trailer for hauling equipment. Parts and labor were donated by 21 different organizations. Two years later, in July of 1963, Bob Burns Motors at 2018 N. Stone, donated a truck to SARA. Burns was a member of SARA. It was a very well-used Bread Delivery Truck and it would eventually

be wrecked on a dirt road while returning from a mission. Some kids on bicycles darted out in front of the driver who swerved, rolling it, sustaining irreparable damage.

That was succeeded by the somewhat infamous, “Yellow Peril,” a van painted a bright yellow; it had very bad tires, according to Frances Walker, who was President of SARA at the time. “We should not have been driving it with those tires. Coming back from a mission in Organ Pipe, a tire blew out and the spare was no good. The proverbial ‘hat was passed’ for a new tire, and several contributed with Dr. William Scott, giving the most. Baum and Adamson Tire Company was approached about donating one. They wouldn’t donate but could sell one at their cost.” A photo shows its license plate was CK-6715.

The next was a surplus van acquired by SARA member Clair Deitering who, according to Frances Walker, worked for the Post Office. He often visited military surplus auctions and according to Ms. Walker, generally proved very successful in outbidding others and/or “scrounging good deals, including this van.” It was stored at the Adair Funeral Home on North Dodge, because an employee there, was also a member of SARA. This lasted for several years.

The following information are details and recollections of Mykle Raymond, the historian for SARA and SARCI. These vehicles were owned by Pima County, serviced by Department maintenance. “When mileage got above 100K, typically 120K, the County replaced the vehicle. SARA purchased the newly-retired vehicle and used it as a spare ‘SARA-2’ for another ten years. When the next vehicle retired and was purchased by SARA, the previous SARA-2 was sold.”

- 1978–1982, Dodge pickup, 2-WD, high mileage (returned to Sheriff). “This vehicle had code equipment. . . Then the Sheriff got smart and pulled the code equipment off.”
- 1982–1983, Chevy Suburban, 2-WD, high mileage (returned to Sheriff).
- 1983–1993, Chevy Suburban, 4-WD, new (became SARA-2, then sold ten years later). “We made a platform in the rear, with two shelves that slid out behind. Marine plywood, with hardwood runners and space under the shelves for backboards. Bob Birkett (SARA member who flew U-2 Spy Planes), made the shelves. It was generally a spare and used for training.”
- 1993–2003, Chevy Suburban, 4-WD, new, (became SARA-2, then sold ten years later).
- 2003–2013, Ford Excursion, 4-WD, new (transferred to SARA, then sold immediately).
- 2014–Chevy Silverado, 4-WD Crew Cab, new.

## SARA Member Levels and Training

(None of the following information should be considered an official process or guidelines for SARA and SARCI membership–Author)

SARA is very much oriented towards field activities and strives for Members: “Green, Yellow, and Orange Shirts.” The color orange epitomizes SAR best, associated with high visibility and safety and is almost universal, with yellow being second. Orange is what the national Mountain Rescue Association adopted as a field uniform shirt, probably back when it first formed in 1959. So, it is logical “Orange Shirts” would be the label given to Full Members or Rescuers, the group’s highest level.

The process for becoming a full-fledged SARA member, or Rescuer Level: Prospective members attend an orientation session during the summer; interested, they receive an application. If then returned, applications are vetted by PCSD (basic background checks). Clearing that hurdle, they will have their application screened by the SARA Board and accepted as “Applicants.” They are invited to an “Applicant Hike,” and as tentative Members, principally for insurance and liability

purposes. This hike serves as a group interview, possibly even weeding a few out or applicants may even decide this is not for them.

As Members, they may assist with non-mission related assignments. If interested in the field, they are accepted into “SALT,” (SARA Awareness Level Training). That begins with the required Arizona Basic SAR Training, including a few NIMS (National Incident Management System) ICS classes on-line, resulting in qualifying for missions as “Green Shirts,” and help with non-technical field stuff.

Those wishing to advance in their skills and go on operational assignments then attend SARA-specific training, such as technical rope and introductory medical knowledge and additional relevant field work. Completing that, they may graduate, becoming “Candidates.” They can now wear Yellow Shirts and participate with field teams. More training, checkoffs and missions with the SARA Board moving the Candidate to Rescuer. They are issued their first Orange Shirt.

All Arizona SAR groups are required to complete the 16-hour Arizona Basic SAR Class. Much of this is part of the SARA Basic Training, so the two are combined into a 24-hour class at the beginning of SALT. Arizona Basic is a one-time requirement. But the State SAR Coordinators are implementing task books for field skills. “ ‘Once an Orange Shirt, always an Orange Shirt, regardless of current field qualifications, or not,’ writes Mykle Raymond.” My thanks to Mykle for clarifying much of this membership information for the author.

## Recovery Divers’ Boats

The first of the two boats the Recovery Divers built was in the mid-1970s and was a platform boat, with Marine-Grade Plywood as the floor. The wooden decking rested on several used airplane wing tanks. These developed leaks and around 1981 or so, the decking on this boat was removed and installed on the second craft, mounted on pontoon floats purchased from the Bass Company. It was constructed by Richard Kunz assisted by several other divers.

But, when they and their equipment sat on the surface, the platform was almost underwater. So, they picked up a third pontoon, proving superior. When the mission is not worth hauling that large pontoon boat around, they usually use a small Boston Whaler, the ‘Molly Brown,’ that Joe Barr owns. Because of what it is made of, it is nearly unsinkable, hence the nod to “The Unsinkable Molly Brown,” a civic, social activist who survived the sinking of the Titanic in 1912.

## Silly/Strange Trivia

Ray Neal designed the first SARA Logo, which is still used today. According to Frances Walker, in 1959 or 1960, some white, team anoraks were dyed yellow for greater visibility, with the logo stenciled on them. On a few early ones, a mistake was spotted on some patches manufactured in China: “SARA Saves Livers,” instead of Lives.

Veteran SARA member, George Simons’ sister had some white T-shirts stenciled for the team. On the front was the Mountain Rescue Association (MRA) logo and on the back was a design with a mountain and a truck with a Stokes Stretcher on top. Also, on the back were these words: “SARA Will Take You Places You Have Never Been.” Often a witticism barb would then be added, “and never want to go again.” (Frances Walker, various interviews in 2021; David Brown, various interviews in 2022; Mykle Raymond, various emails in 2023)

## Section 18.4

## SARA Presidents

1958: Don Henderson	1981: George Simons	2004: Rich Kunz
1959: Ray Neal	1982: Scott Clemans	2005: Jennifer Jennings
1960: Ray Neal	1983: Scott Clemans	2006: Rich Kunz
1961: Steve Mott	1984: George Simons	2007: Brian Duffy
1962: Edgar Kress	1985: Rich Kunz	2008: Brian Duffy
1963: Edgar Kress	1986: Bob Birkett	2009: Rich Kunz
1964: Edgar Kress	1987: Scott Clemans	2010: Rich Kunz
1965: Steve Mott	1988: Dan Hibbert	2011: Rich Kunz
1966: Steve Mott	1989: Norm Hosterman	2012: Scott Clemans
1967: Frances Walker <sup>1</sup>	1990: Scott Clemans	2013: Brian Duffy
1968: Frances Walker	1991: Dave Brown	2014: Brian Duffy
1969: Frances Walker	1992: Tom Mireles	2015: Eric Davis
1970: Frances Walker	1993: Scott Clemans	2016: Eric Davis
1971: Frances Walker	1994: Andy Lamb	2017: Bill Kelleman
1972: Frances Walker	1995: Bill Kelleman	2018: Anjani Polit
1973: Tom Harlan	1996: Dale Mann	2019: Sean Fawcett
1974: Tom Harlan	1997: Rich Kunz	2020: Sean Fawcett
1975: Frances Walker	1998: Rich Kunz	2021: Sean Fawcett
1976: Frances Walker	1999: Andy Lamb	2022: Nic Jones
1977: Frances Walker	2000: John Gorski	2023: Jason Schlueter
1978: Frances Walker	2001: Jim Gilbreath	2024: Jason Schlueter
1979: Don Morris	2002: Jim Gilbreath	2024: John Di Miceli
1980: George Simons	2003: Michael Comeau	2025: John Di Miceli

<sup>1</sup> The Frances Walker interview by Aengus Anderson in 2018–2019, is part of Archive Tucson, an oral history project of the Special Collections Department of the Library at the University of Arizona. It is in three parts and can be found at <https://www.archivetucson.com/people/2020/3/17/walker-frances>.



## SARA/SARCI Workload: 1958–2022

Unfortunately, there is no single source of data reflecting the SAR workload of those agencies in this book: cities, counties, state, federal including military, and volunteer groups. We wish to give you a sense of the “world” of Southern Arizona Search and Rescue. To that end, Mykle Raymond comes to our “rescue,” (pun intended) with SARCI and SARA records, beginning in 1958. A five-decade SARA veteran, Mykle serves as the archivist/historian, maintaining an extensive Excel Database. But remember, what is included here, is only the “tip of the iceberg.”

In the following table, there are four columns. For each year, there are the number of Activities. Then beginning in 1978, the second column offers the sum total of responders, and the third, the totality of their hours. The early years are only the beginning and should be understood that way. However, what is a dramatic visual of the “tip of the iceberg,” is the graph that accompanies these figures. There is missing data but this is the best available. Lastly, many thanks to Mykle Raymond for coming to our “rescue.”

SARA/SARCI Workload: 1958–2022			
Year	Activities	People	Hours
1958	3		
1959	18		
1960	15		
1961	17		
1962	12		
1963	16		
1964	19		
1965	33		
1966	16		
1967	27		
1968	39		
1969	39		
1970	24		
1971	50		
1972	29		
1973	49		
1974	57		
1975	52		
1976	70		

SARA/SARCI Workload: 1958–2022 (Contd.)			
Year	Activities	People	Hours
1977	74	332	
1978	95	1359	1331
1979	78	1360	1531
1980	80	1428	3537
1981	95	1383	5842
1982	59	986	4087
1983	65	1213	4767
1984	62	1161	4729
1985	57	746	3570
1985	57	746	3570
1986	92	1344	5220
1987	60	1039	3821
1988	65	1020	4199
1989	66	1020	6337
1990	71	982	4085
1991	70	962	3376
1992	90	1236	4507
1993	82	1108	4009
1994	106	1673	7245
1995	104	1224	4691
1996	92	1047	4022
1997	62	674	2401
1998	101	1194	4962
1999	105	1228	5022
2000	92	1232	4569
2001	84	1027	4411
2002	100	1200	4673
2003	56	749	2800
2004	85	926	4347
2005	91	984	3580
2006	99	940	3450
2007	117	1228	4415
2008	104	1105	3799
2009	133	1340	4491
2010	139	1533	6294
2011	100	1063	4404
2012	110	1212	4659
2013	97	938	3452

SARA/SARCI Workload: 1958–2022 (Contd.)			
Year	Activities	People	Hours
2014	100	914	3068
2015	118	1193	4158
2016	144	1596	6847
2017	123	1281	4356
2018	105	1318	4793
2019	108	1164	5411
2020	83	957	3605
2021	76	766	3179
2022	78	894	3951

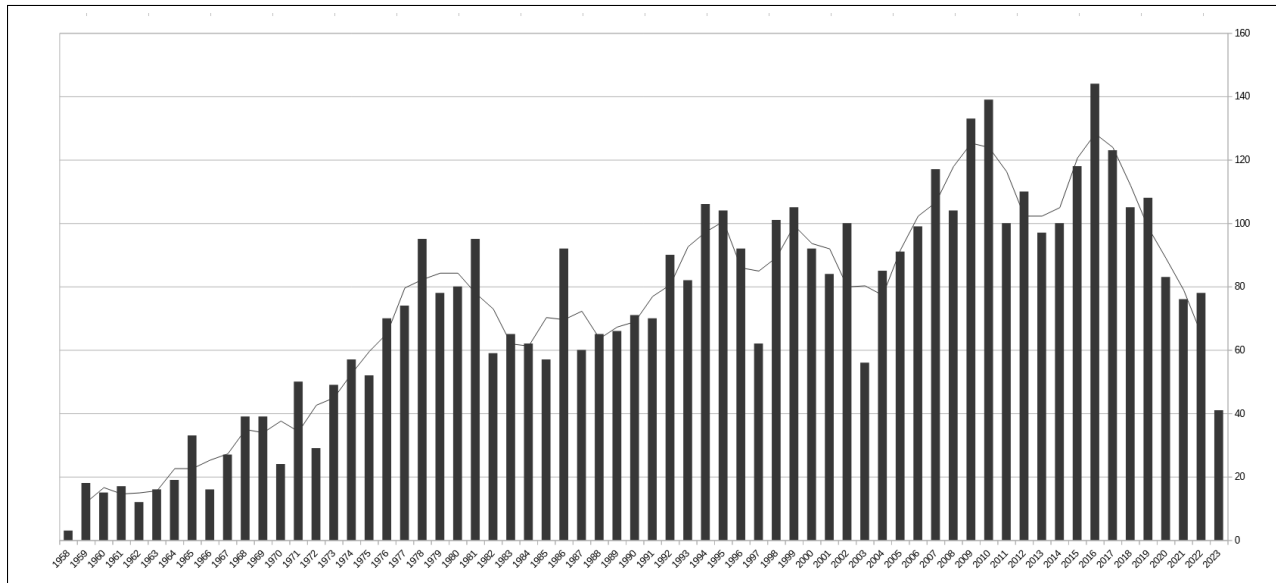


Figure 18.1: Number of Activities (vertical axis) vs Year (horizontal axis)

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# CHAPTER 19

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## SAR Acronyms

<b>AAB</b>	Army Air Base
<b>AFB</b>	Air Force Base
<b>AFRCC</b>	Air Force Rescue Coordination Center
<b>AHP</b>	Arizona Highway Patrol
<b>AMC</b>	Arizona Mountaineering Club
<b>ARRS</b>	Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadron. ARRS can also stand for “Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Service.” However, that usage does not occur in this book. The Service is the “Mother Ship” that Squadrons are part of.
<b>ASARCA</b>	Arizona Search and Rescue Coordinators Association
<b>ASU</b>	Arizona State University
<b>ASUA</b>	Associated Students of the University of Arizona
<b>AT&amp;T</b>	American Telephone and Telegraph Company
<b>BLM</b>	Bureau of Land Management
<b>BORSTAR</b>	Border Patrol Search, Trauma, and Rescue
<b>BSA</b>	Boy Scouts of America
<b>CAA</b>	Civil Aeronautics Administration
<b>CAB</b>	Civil Aeronautics Board
<b>CAMRA</b>	Central Arizona Mountain Rescue Association
<b>CAP</b>	Civil Air Patrol is a volunteer organization of aviation-minded members.
<b>CASIE</b>	Computer Aided Search Information Exchange. The name of the DOS program. It has been replaced by Win CASIE III. See Chapter 14.4 on page 502.
<b>CBS</b>	Columbia Broadcasting System
<b>CCC</b>	Civilian Conservation Corps
<b>CD</b>	Civil Defense
<b>CDO</b>	Cañada del Oro

<b>DEMA</b>	Arizona Department of Emergency and Military Affairs, Division of Emergency Management
<b>Det</b>	Detachment
<b>DM</b>	Davis-Monthan Air Force Base
<b>DMAFB</b>	Davis-Monthan Air Force Base
<b>DOS</b>	Department of State
<b>DPS</b>	Department of Public Safety
<b>ELT</b>	Emergency Locator Transmitter
<b>EMS</b>	Emergency Medical Services
<b>EMT</b>	Emergency Medical Technician
<b>FAA</b>	Federal Aviation Administration
<b>FCDA</b>	Federal Civil Defense Administration
<b>FEMA</b>	Federal Emergency Management Administration
<b>I-EMT</b>	Intermediate Emergency Medical Technician
<b>IBM</b>	International Business Machines
<b>ICS</b>	Incident Command System
<b>LZ</b>	Landing Zone
<b>MAST</b>	Military Assistance for Safety and Traffic
<b>MATS</b>	Military Air Transport Service
<b>MLPI</b>	Managing the Lost Person Incident
<b>MRA</b>	Mountain Rescue Association
<b>MSF</b>	Managing the Search Function
<b>NASAR</b>	National Association for Search and Rescue
<b>NIMS</b>	National Incident Management System
<b>NSRB</b>	National Security Resources Board
<b>PCERN</b>	Pima County Emergency Radio Network
<b>PCSD</b>	Pima County Sheriff's Department
<b>PCSR</b>	Pima County Search and Rescue
<b>PJs</b>	Air Force Pararescue
<b>PTA</b>	Parent-Teacher Association
<b>RACES</b>	Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Service
<b>REACT</b>	Radio Emergency Associated Communication Teams
<b>ROW</b>	Rest of the World
<b>SAHC</b>	Southern Arizona Hiking Club
<b>SALT</b>	SARA Awareness Level Training
<b>SARA</b>	Southern Arizona Rescue Association
<b>SARCI</b>	Search and Rescue Council, Incorporated
<b>SRDI</b>	Southwest Rescue Dogs, Incorporated
<b>SSA</b>	Southwestern Speleological Association
<b>STC</b>	BORSTAR Selection and Training Course

<b>SWAT</b>	Special Weapons And Tactics
<b>TMC</b>	Tucson Medical Center
<b>U of A</b>	University of Arizona
<b>UA</b>	University of Arizona
<b>UMC</b>	University Medical Center
<b>USAR</b>	Urban Search and Rescue



PART C:  
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