

MOUNTIES TRAIN FOR RESCUE

Mountains are all part of the day's work to the Royal Canadian Mounted Police - and a two week course in mountain rescue is all part of the year's work for mounties and national park wardens operating in this kind of country. And it's training the hard way.. Rescuers have to be ready to go to places normal mountaineers wouldn't or shouldn't tackle - and normal earth-bound mortals would rather not even think about. Teamwork is absolutely vital - when you try this kind of thing you have to have an awful lot of faith in the chap up top.

Beside training mounties and wardens in such hair-raising jobs, these courses are used to test new rescue equipment and to work out the best methods of using them. This is a special new cable imported from Austria, which is to be used instead of ropes for all major rescue operations. It will take a 4,000-lb strain, and with it a man can be lowered a thousand feet on a vertical face or 1,500 feet on a forty-five degree slope. If a man has become seriously injured, he is lowered in a basket seat.

For crossing a gap, the cable is pulled out as a static line, and the basket or stretcher attached to it by pulleys.

Mountain climbing is becoming more and more popular every year in Canada, and that means an increasing strain on the rescue teams. So both the training courses and the equipment are high priority. It's the mounty's boast, that he always gets his man - including the one who's stuck on a mountain and wants to be got.