

Mission Reviews:

July 2014 - March 2015



Instruction-

- What If everything goes wrong...
How will you be found?
- The 10 Essential Systems.
Updated must have gear on every outing

RMRU Training

- Annual Helicopter Certification



First Quarter 2015

ABOUT RIVERSIDE MOUNTAIN RESCUE UNIT

FOUNDED 1961

MEMBER MOUNTAIN RESCUE ASSOCIATION 1963

GOVERNING BODY: RIVERSIDE COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT

MEMBERS: ORIGINAL: 6 | CURRENT MEMBERS: 32

ANNUAL BUDGET: ORIGINAL \$200 | CURRENT \$15,000

MISSIONS: TOTAL OVER 2,000 | AVERAGE PER MONTH: 3.33

The Riverside Mountain Rescue Unit is a group of volunteers trained and ready to respond to wilderness emergencies. At any hour of the day, law enforcement agencies, national park and military officials may call upon the Unit to aid an unfortunate victim. The unit is on constant alert, via text messages, to search for and effect the rescue of hikers, skiers, rock climbers and outdoorsmen whenever and wherever tragedy strikes. The unit performs about 95% of its missions in Riverside County. However, it has traveled south into Mexico, north into the High Sierras and into Nevada to accomplish its lifesaving missions.

The unit is currently comprised of 32 volunteers, who literally come from all walks of life. They regularly leave their jobs (or in the middle of the night, their warm beds) to respond to a call for help. They do not receive remuneration for time given to search and rescue. The members make up a small, but spirited, group of mountaineers who spend one weekend each month training to sharpen their rescue skills. Each member must provide all of their own equipment at a cost of more than \$2,500. Besides acting as highly competent rescue workers, members also work closely with schools, clubs, church groups, and Scout troops throughout the area to teach mountain safety. The ounce of prevention may well prevent the untimely pound of cure.

On the Cover...



Looking up the permanent snow / ice field.
Elevation about 12,000 feet



Mt. Ritter 13,150' and Banner Peak 12,942'
with permanent snow / ice field between



Top of the permanent snow / ice field. In the far
distance center Mammoth Mountain Ski Resort

In August 2014, at an elevation of almost 12,000 feet, a mountaineer on the permanent snow / ice field between Banner Peak and Mt. Ritter in the High Sierras west of Mammoth Mountain Ski Resort. Notice the large number of rocks and boulders on the snow. Within 15 minutes of taking this photo, at least 50 rocks in size from a few inches to over 4 feet careened down this slope which originated from the snow chute on the upper right. Fortunately the climber was at the base of this snow / ice field where this photo was taken. The climber was wearing a helmet, used crampons and ice axe on this ice slope.

TIP: When hiking or climbing it is critically important to understand your surroundings and the equipment and skills necessary for safe travel. **Stop Think, Observe, Plan (STOP)** is a great acronym to remember before a trek as well as when on an outing.

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INSTRUCTION

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RIVERSIDE MOUNTAIN RESCUE UNIT

President's Message

Last March marked my 20th anniversary as a volunteer of Riverside Mountain Rescue Unit (RMRU). This time has provided many memorable and rewarding moments helping hikers and climbers in distress as well as the personal close friendships developed with other members of the team.

We are always looking for new team members and hope you will consider joining our team. Prospective members need not have background in backpacking and mountaineering. Monthly trainings are required for all members and these trainings will assist you in learning the skills necessary to participate in our search and rescue activities. As we are part of the Riverside County Sheriff's department, a comprehensive background check is required before you can participate in any rescue or

training activity. Come check us out at one of our meetings held the first Wednesday of each month at the Hemet Sheriff's Department. The contact information is located on the back of this newsletter. I look forward to meeting you!

In 2014, RMRU was called out on missions averaging nearly 1 per week. Considering this strong mission level, as president my primary goal for 2015 is to increase team membership to at least 50 active and trained members capable of responding to missions. To help achieve this goal I have created a Recruitment Committee with RMRU along with one person on the Search and Rescue (SAR) Council, which I have been a member since its creation almost two years ago. The SAR Council is directed by Sheriff's Emergency

Response Team (SERT). The RMRU Recruitment Committee has been tasked with creating a professional presentation for use at Recruitment event. This presentation will be used with other recruitment event items, specifically our vehicle and RMRU EZ-UP. My goal is we will conduct recruitment events at least quarterly.

To add interested candidates to the team quickly, I have also been working closely with RSO to expedite the background process for new team members to join our team.

My second goal is to continue our rigorous and specialized training for our new and current members so we can safely and effectively use our skills during a mission.

Rob May
President RMRU

Mission Reviews

July 2014 - March 2015

The following pages contain a selection of first hand accounts of RMRU missions written by the team members involved.



RMRU volunteers are on call 24/7, to search for and rescue hikers, skiers, rock climbers, and outdoorsmen whenever and wherever needed.

Mt. Baldy Missing Hiker

February 11, 2015

San Gabriel Mountains

Written by Kevin Kearn

RMRU responded to an Office of Emergency Services (OES) request to assist the San Bernardino County Sheriff on Wednesday morning. San Bernardino SAR teams were searching for a 72-year old missing male in the vicinity of the southern side of Mt San Antonio (Elevation 10,068', AKA "Mt Baldy"). He was out hiking with his brother on Tuesday when the two got separated on the way down in late afternoon. His 70 yr-old brother walked out at 6:30am Wednesday morning after rescuers had searched all night for the two.

I was the only RMRU team member able to respond and it was difficult to get through morning LA traffic to the Sheriff's command post established at the Manker Flats Fire Station. The weather was clear and temperatures were in the 60s. Although winds seemed light, they were increasing as Santa Ana winds were expected later in the day. I checked into the command post at 10:00am and was put on standby. At least 8 teams were in the field and I would join up with three personnel from Sierra Madre Moun-

tain Rescue who were still in route.

Shortly after my arrival, an elderly man was spotted in the vicinity of Goode Canyon, where my newly formed team, once assembled, was to search next. Things evolved quickly after some initial difficulty verifying that the elderly man was indeed our subject. While descending, he

"While descending, he apparently missed the turn off the western ridge on the Mt Baldy Trail that follows into the draw toward the green ski hut."

RMRU RESCUER KEVIN KEARN

apparently missed the turn off the western ridge on the Mt Baldy Trail that follows into the draw toward the green ski hut. Instead, he drifted down the north slope of the ridge into the heights above Goode Canyon. Before the slope he was on became too steep for him to safely descend any further, he stopped, exhausted in this spot.

The helicopter on station that spotted him did not have a hoist, so while coordinating for a hoist-equipped aircraft, I was redirected to prepare

to get picked up at an LZ and support the extraction. With winds quickly approaching, a Cal Fire Helicopter with paramedic already on board was tasked to support the mission. Still unsure if winds would allow the hoist, I joined the freshly arrived team from Sierra Madre that was staging to quickly move up the Baldy trail and then descend to the subject in Goode Canyon ahead of teams that were redirected and approaching from below.

Fortunately for everyone, the pilots were able to hoist the subject before the winds made it impossible. We returned from our staging area and the subject was reunited with his family at the command post at 1230 hours. Both of the brothers were exhausted but in good condition.

RMRU Members Involved:
Kevin Kearn



TIP "Check your Six"

As you hike either on a trail or off one, frequently look back on where you came. Look for key local features especially trail junctions. Often these only lead to view points, continuing could lead down a steep gully.

Stuck Hikers above Tin Canyon Trail

January 25, 2015

Corona, Ca

Written by Cameron Dickinson

On a Sunday afternoon I received a call from our Call Captain asking whether or not I can respond quickly to a hoist mission to rescue 4 individuals stuck on a steep hill above Tin Canyon Trail in Corona. I was, and within a couple minutes I was out the door on the road heading over to the Skyline Trailhead.

I arrived with two awaiting Deputy's at the Trailhead. As I was waiting for the Sheriff's helicopter, I was able to obtain information on the 4 stuck hikers. There were 4 male hikers in their late teens that were traversing the hillside above the Tin Canyon Mine, and found themselves on a steep hillside that they were unable to hike out of. At that point one of the hikers was able to call 911 for help.



Not long after, the Sheriff's helicopter had arrived and landed in an adjacent field. I met with pilot and TFO, loaded up my backpack with four rescue suits/helmets, and hopped aboard the aircraft. Our pilot knew exactly where our subjects were located, as they circled the area previously. Our subjects were able to safely position themselves between some thick heavy bushes on the upslope of the hill. Once we were overhead, I was lowered down to our subjects. Two individuals were hoisted out, followed by the other two including myself.

The four subjects were safely extracted out, and in good condition. They came

prepared with food and water, with temps in the low 70's. Special thanks to our Deputy's on the ground as well as well as our Sheriff's Aviation!

RMRU Members Involved:
Cameron Dickinson

Sheriff's Aviation: Chad Marlett (Pilot),
Eric Hannum (TFO)

Rescue Couple & 2 Dogs

January 16, 2015

Tramway Area

Written by Dana Potts

On Friday afternoon at approximately 1:30 P.M. RMRU was called out to the Skyline Trail in South Corona. A local couple had hiked up the canyon from the trailhead in search of a waterfall. Along with them were their two small dogs. Once the couple had arrived near the end of the canyon, they began to hike up what appeared to be a previously used trail. After a short hike up, they found themselves perched upon a small rocky ledge barely big enough for the couple. They then found that climbing back down with the two dogs was too difficult for them and subsequently dialed 9-1-1.

A short time later RMRU member Dana, a Corona resident, responded from his home and within 15 minutes was at base camp. Dana met with the Riverside Sheriff's helicopter that was waiting at the base of the hill. The air crew again demonstrated their expertise by lowering Dana on a 5 foot by 5 foot piece of hillside. The area around him was loose rock and dirt with large bushes and trees.

I then placed our little Kg friends into a Rope Bag for the ride up into the helicopter. They seemed happy enough in the Rope Bag and just stayed there until the helicopter returned to base.

RMRU RESCUER DANA POTTS

Both subjects were instructed how the hoist would work and then hoisted up



one at a time.

I then placed our little Kg friends into a Rope Bag for the ride up into the helicopter. They seemed happy enough in the Rope Bag and just stayed there until the helicopter returned to base.

RMRU Members involved:
Dana Potts.

Missing Woman

January 06, 2015

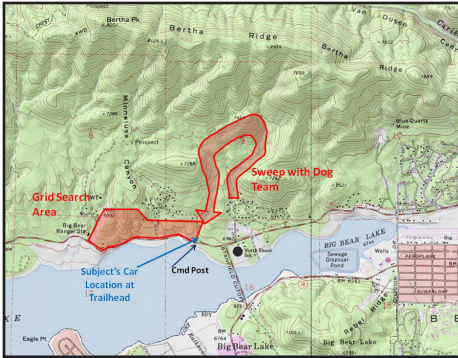
Big Bear Lake

Written by Kevin Kearn

RMRU responded to an Office of Emergency Services (OES) request to assist the San Bernardino County Sheriff on Tuesday January 6. San Bernardino SAR teams were searching for a 35-year old missing female in the vicinity of the Fawnskin Interpretive Trail in the vicinity of the north shore of Big Bear City. The woman, Lisa Ann Cimbalk, of Irvine, had been reported missing by her family on January 29, prior to the snowstorm of January 30. Almost a week later, on Sunday January 4, her snow covered car was located at the trailhead. San Bernardino Sheriff's Deputies and SAR personnel already searched the one-mile trail without any sign of her Sunday and Monday.

RMRU team members, Glenn and Matt drove up with the truck and met myself at the Sheriff's command post established in the North Shore Parking Lot at 0700. The weather was clear and temperatures were initially in the low 20s; Big Bear Lake appeared frozen over but a sign read, "Do Not Walk on the Ice." Deputies briefed us along with approximately 30 other searchers

before assigning everyone to search teams. They planned to conduct a grid search of the area and RMRU was assigned to search a sector just west of the trailhead with three members of a San Bernardino Team. There were at least five other teams searching other sectors and several aircraft also supporting the



operation. We started searching by 0900 after loading waypoints for our search boundaries into our GPS units. The terrain was mostly wooded but generally open with good fields of observation below the trees. There was some spotty, shallow snow cover on the ground with a bit more snow in gullies and along the shaded sides of fallen trees. We were careful to probe these snowy areas with poles and our six-man team completed its search by 1300. We had reasonable confidence that we had scoured the terrain thoroughly.

After returning to the command post, Glenn and I both remarked that Ms. Cimbaluk may have ventured onto the ice, given its close proximity just across street from the trailhead parking lot. Our team then linked up with a cadaver search dog and handler, and two more deputies. Our reinforced team moved east by vehicle and then dismounted to search up a gully east of the trail head, over several ridges west, and then down another gully into



the trailhead parking lot. Although the dog stopped several times, there were no definitive signs of our subject.

Deputies ceased search efforts when the sun set at 1700. Although search teams found some clothing and miscellaneous items, nothing belonged to the Ms. Cimbaluk. We initially planned to continue supporting the search Wednesday. Glenn and Matt got a room provided by the San Bernardino County while I went to stay with my brother-in-law, but at 0200 the next morning RMRU was alerted to support a search at the Tram. Glenn and Matt left at 0400 to conduct that mission (See mission 2015-003). I could not go and departed for my work at Ft Irwin ending RMRU's involvement.

Two days later, on Thursday morning January 8, a helicopter discovered a female body in the water by the south shore of the lake where the ice ended and the following day the coroner confirmed the victim was our subject, Ms. Cimbaluk. RMRU offers its deepest condolences to the Cimbaluk family for their tragic loss.

RMRU Members Involved:
Glenn Henderson, Matt Jordon, and Kevin Kearn.

Lost Hikers

January 09, 2015

Tenaja Trailhead

Written by Raymond Weden

It's Friday night and a good majority of the team is getting our gear prepared for our "Winter Shakedown" training scheduled for 0730 on Saturday morning. This training marks the time for us to use our snowshoes, crampons, ice axes, and other winter gear that have been collecting dust for the last 3 seasons. Due to the lack to snow in our local mountains, it has been a couple of years since been able to truly have this training.

Shortly after 2200 a call came in for two lost teenagers near the Tenaja Trail Head in the Cleveland National Forest. The recorded message we call in to get the initial details for the search ended with "... and sorry about the training". Bummer... I still held out some hope that we would

find them quickly and be able to still have this training as schedule. The adrenaline is starting to kick in and it is time to roll. I was the first on scene from RMRU followed almost immediately by Cameron, Glenn, Donny and Carlos. When I arrived, several RSO Deputies and US Forest Service were already at the trail head. We also had the luxury of an RSO Aviation Unit flying overhead searching for our

"They gave us information on what the teenagers were wearing; the type of shoe the male subject was wearing being a very valuable clue."

RMRU RESCUER KEVIN KEARN

lost subjects.

The two teenagers, one male, Matthew, 19 and one female, Alyssa, 17, were going on a short hike in the afternoon and then off to a movie later that evening. We positively ID their car in the parking lot so we knew were at the starting point of their journey. We were informed that they set out at approximately 1430. Both of their parents showed up on scene as we were preparing to insert in to the field. They gave us information on what the teenagers were wearing; the type of shoe the male subject was wearing being a very valuable clue.

Cameron and I became "Team 1" and started off down the Tenaja Trail South as it is the main trail head out of the parking lot and their assumed path of travel. Donny and Carlos became "Team 2" and drove up the Fisherman's Camp Trail Head with the intentions of then picking up the Tenaja Falls Trail at the Fisherman's Camp intersection. Glenn was in the RMRU truck as mobile communication driving up and down Wildomar Road to ensure we stayed in radio range.

At Fisherman's Camp, Team 2 came across some campers who positively ID'd our missing subjects and said they did not go north towards Tenaja Falls (the more popular route) but headed west on the San Mateo Trail. This was con-

firmed by no sign of fresh track heading north so Team 2 pushed west. They also confirmed the time that they saw them



around 1630.

Cameron and I were about ½ mile south of Fisherman's when we heard on the radio that team 2 was going down the San Mateo Trail. We stepped up our pace and radioed over to "Team 2" suggesting we join up as there are several trail intersections off of the San Mateo Trail. Just before merging with them Donny radioed in that he has a fresh track matching the male subject's description given by his father. More confident we were on their heels we pushed on our heads down looking for fresh tracks. At each trail intersection we spent additional time looking for clues to determine their path of travel.

It was pushing 0400 when we hit the intersection of the Bluewater Trail. We spent some significant time here as their tracks disappeared with very thick overgrowth. These trails are pretty far back in the hills and are not used regularly. In part of the briefing we received from the Deputies and the Forest Service we were told Alyssa made a brief cell phone call stating that they have been heading up hill for a very long time. Though searching a few hundred yards down both trails yielded no significant clues, the four of us decided to head up the Bluewater trail.

"Even 'short' hikes like this one was supposed to be can turn in to search and rescue situation if you are not prepared."

RMRU RESCUER RAYMOND WEDEN

The sign post marking the Bluewater trail said something about "hard – 1800ft elevation gain". This could be that hill she was talking about...

Shortly after pressing on up the Bluewater trail, we were told that Orange County Sheriff's Department was assisting in this search with their Airship – Duke1. As they were heading to our location they radioed that they had someone on the ground flashing a light at them. They found a place to land and confirmed that these were our lost teenagers! They were cold and tired, but otherwise unharmed and in good spirits. They were flown over to the trail head where it all started and dropped off. Before heading up the hill, we marked a location that could be a possible Landing Zone (LZ) if a helicopter needed to land. We were about ¾ of a mile from there. Knowing our Matthew and Alyssa were safe, we turned and headed for the (LZ) and awaited our pickup. The additional team of Eric and Kirk that were on their way to assist were told to head back



home. Even "short" hikes like this one was supposed to be can turn in to search and rescue situation if you are not prepared. Here are some key tips that would have helped in this situation:

Know when the sun goes down and set a turnaround time.

Our subjects left at 1430 and arrived at their first major intersection at 1630 - two hours later. The sun sets in this area around 1700. If they hit the camp and immediately turned around they would have to walk an hour and half in the dark.

Bring a Flashlight with Extra Batteries. Leaving as late as they did a flashlight is a must have. Though this is what ultimate-

ly led to their rescue, your cell phone does not count because more often than not it will be out of batteries when you need it most. Even if you leave at first light, it is always smart to have a flashlight as you never know what can happen.

Bring a Map, Compass and GPS.

Ultimately it came down to the simple fact that they were lost. You also need to know how to use these tools. Though a GPS is a great tool, when the batteries die, it is just dead weight so always carry paper maps.

RMRU members present: Carlos Carter, Kirk Cloyd, Cameron Dickinson, Donny Goetz, Glenn Henderson, Eric Holden, and Raymond Weden.

Orange County Sheriff's Aviation: (Pilot – J. Eanes) (TFO - E Baum)



Overdue Tramway Hiker January 07, 2015

**Tramway to San Jacinto Peak
Written by Patrick McCurdy**

I RMRU was called at 2 a.m. on January 7th, for a 6 a.m. report time for a lost hiker out of the Palm Springs Aerial Tramway. Ted, in his earlier 30's, had gone hiking on Mount San Jacinto on the 6th and his parents reported him missing when he did not return home in Irvine where he was visiting from Florida. Arriving at the lower tram station at 5:45 were Glenn and Matt, both of whom came directly from Big Bear where they had been working on a mutual aid search with San Bernardino County, Lew, and myself. RMRU member Donny and five members of Desert Sheriff's Search and Rescue (DSSAR) were just a little behind us.

Glenn and Lew set up the command post at the tram while Matt and I got ready to head out as Team 1. With no real idea where Ted could be, Matt and I headed up the main trail towards Round Valley. Our recent storms had left a substantial amount of snow, but it was a gorgeous morning, about 40 degrees, with no need for crampons or snowshoes.

.... Continued Page 10

TRAINING

SUMMARY OF OUR ANNUAL

HELICOPTER CERTIFICATION

RMRU Teaming with the
Aviation Unit of Riverside County
Sheriff's Department



In Search and Rescue, time is of the essence. The Helicopter Aviation Unit of the Riverside Sheriff's Department plays a critical role in rapidly inserting RMRU search personnel into remote areas or to extract injured hikers or other individuals in distress. Annually every RMRU volunteer interested in helicopter operations must re-qualify in order to assist in helitac SAR missions.

This day long training is held at the Aviation Units base of operations at Hemet – Ryan airport. This consists of several sections beginning in the helicopter hanger learning how to approach the helicopter, open the door, boarding it, seating, and safety belt; then do it all in reverse as you exit.

In the next phase training moves outdoors where you learn to assist



Escorting "Victim" to Helicopter.
TFO Standing to the Right

a simulated victim in boarding the helicopter on the ground with the rotor blades spinning at idle ready to take off. With this noise, verbal communication is all but impossible so following hand instruction by the Sheriff's Technical Flight Officer (TFO) standing outside the helicopter is critically important. In addition, communicating with the victim must be done in like manner with the hand



Entering the Helicopter with
"Victim" entering first.

signals arranged while outside the helicopter's noise. Notice on the left-photo the RMRU team members hand at the base of the "victims" neck. The purpose is to keep their head down as approaching the helicopter.

Expanding on the first two phases of our training, we now learn how to board the helicopter hovering a few



Exiting Helicopter with
RMRU Rescuer exiting first.

feet off the terrain. Once given the signal to approach the helicopter by the TFO, we climb a set of railroad ties simulating uneven terrain, step onto the skids and grab the TFO's forearm as assistance as we board the helicopter. Once safely belted in our seats, we are rewarded with a ride several miles away to a remote peak where we "hover step" off the helicopter and left for the second helicopter to arrive, drop off their RMRU team

... verbal communication is all but impossible so following hand instruction by the Sheriff's TFO is critically important.

RMRU - GARY FARRIS



Photos Left, Above & Below
RMRU team members on hoist lift



the safe lift as it is difficult for the TFO seeing them from the bird. Once raised to the helicopter, we use the skids as a ladder and once again the TFO's forearm as final assistance in entry. Once safely seat belted, the hook is disconnected, the next team member is lifted and seated and we are treated to a short flight around the airport. Exiting was the reverse of the entry with the exception that the lower procedure started once standing in front of the TFO on the skid, making eye contact with a head nod OK to lower.

This concluded our training with certification cards distributed at the final debriefing. Major Kudos to all members of the Riverside County Sheriff departments Aviation Unit; their instruction and professionalism were outstanding.

Article by Gary Farris - RMRU



Hoisting Litter with RMRU team
members using rope guided ascent.

members we board as before, and return to base again exiting using the "hover step".

After lunch we return to the hanger for instruction of hoist equipment such as the litter, screamer suit, child sack, and collar. Explanation of these items will come at some later news-letter edition.

The grand finale was being lifted by the hoist while the helicopter hovered about 50 feet above.

But before this step, we practiced raising a dummy in the litter controlling it by a guide rope from the ground then releasing the rope from the ground.

The process of being lifted by the helicopter host begins with the hook being lowered to our location on the ground; not attempting to chase after it. When hooked in to our harness, BIG hand and arm signals are key to



Photos Above & Below
2 of RMRU Actual Helitac Missions



.... Continued from Page 8

Matt, who is a much stronger hiker than I am, had mercy on me and kept the pace reasonable. With not a lick of wind, our voices carried a substantial distance when we called out for Ted, but we got no answer. We checked the toilets at Round Valley, but again no sign of Ted. Note

We checked the toilets at Round Valley....It is not at all uncommon for lost people to sleep in the simple backcountry toilets to shelter from the elements."

RMRU RESCUER
PATRICK McCURDY

that it is not at all uncommon for lost people to sleep in the simple backcountry toilets to shelter from the elements. As Matt and I headed over toward Tamarack to check the toilets there, Team 2, made up of DSSAR personnel, was getting started and were going to check the Sid Davis drainage, a common alternate path between Round Valley and the tram. About the same time Glenn and Lew at the command post were able to establish intermittent voice contact with Ted via cell phone, and slightly more dependable text contact. He said he had slept in a toilet but had now been hiking for about an hour and was on a well-worn snow trail. We all assumed he would head downhill and so figured he was somewhere between Team 1 and Team 2. Glenn and Lew were then able to talk Ted through getting a lat-long coordinate from his cell phone. As the field teams and the command post all started plotting the location, we began to scratch our heads as it plotted higher up than Round Valley, somewhere below Jean Peak. It had never occurred to us he might go up.

Teams 1 & 2 had by this time converged back at Round Valley and we heard the first sound of Star 93 flying in to assist with the search. Team 2 headed up the trail toward Wellman's Divide, while Matt and I remained at Round Valley. Star 93 fairly quickly located Ted very close to the given coordinates. They said he was standing, apparently uninjured, but

not responding to them at all. This had us concerned that he might be severely hypothermic. Star 93 asked for someone to do a hoist and Matt and I were ready! Matt and I were deciding who got to go up in the helicopter when Glenn advised via radio that he wanted me to go, as Ted's medical status was in question and I have more medical training than Matt.

Star 93 landed in the snow-covered meadow at Round Valley and TFO Eric Bashta rigged the airship for a hoist. It was a quick flight up to where Ted was and pilot Andy Rasmussen, blessed with near zero wind, did a great job of placing us very near Ted. I was lowered down by Eric Bashta, quickly determined that Ted was alert, cooperative, and uninjured, and he was hoisted out in a Screamer Suit. Star 93 dropped him in Round Valley where other field teams had converged, came back and hoisted me out, dropping me likewise in Round Valley.

Ted was in great spirits, feeling strong, and said he was absolutely fine with hiking three miles back to the tram. After giving him some energy bars and water, we made quick work of the hike back to the tram and didn't even get a chance to



sit down before we all caught the next tram car down to the valley station. We were back at our cars by noon. Ted had not originally intended to go to the peak, but met some folks with a GPS who assured him they could find it. He got separated from them, then made a wrong turn and got lost. With daylight waning he headed down and spent the night in one of the backcountry toilets, probably at Round Valley or Tamarack.

At dawn the next morning he got up and

started hiking back up to where was more familiar with the trail. With more altitude he found a cell signal and was able to make contact with the command post. About an hour later he was being hoisted out by Star 93.

RMRU members present: Donny Goetz, Matt Jordon, Glenn Henderson, Lew Kingman, and Patrick McCurdy.

DSAR Members present: Mike Calhoun, Mike Fogarty, Chris Miller, Sharon Ollender, and Kevin Wahlstrom.

Sheriff's Aviation: (Pilot – Andy Rasmussen) (TFO - Eric Bashta)



Searching Stuck Cars

December 31, 2014

Ortega Highway

Written by Patrick McCurdy

On December 30th, an unusually heavy early winter storm slammed Southern California with massive winds, freezing temperatures, and snowfall. By 3 a.m. on the 31st, the I-15 freeway in Temecula/Murrieta was closed due to about 4" of snow. At 7:30 a.m. RMRU was called out to assist with rescuing 22 stranded people, including small children, on the Ortega Highway which runs west to east from Lake Elsinore to Orange County over the Santa Ana Mountains.

We arrived at the command post to find a multi-agency operation with CHP running Incident Command, but RMRU under control of Riverside Sheriff's Office. They were dealing with multiple calls from stranded motorists, trying to locate each on maps, and attempted to triage the

"RMRU was called out to assist with rescuing 22 stranded people, including small children, on the Ortega Highway"

RMRU RESCUER
PATRICK McCURDY



calls for the most urgent. Most callers had been stuck on the road all night. Cal-Trans dozers were working the highway from both sides, attempting to clear the road, but were hampered by large numbers of fallen trees and branches. Shortly after arrival our spirits were lifted by the sound of rotors announcing the arrival of



RSO's Star 94 helicopter, which surprised us due to the lingering heavy winds. Numerous agencies were involved and CHP did a fine job of coordinating the effort. After an initial brief, Frank Snider and I were selected to go up in Star 94 to try to locate a family that was out of their vehicle as it was said to be sliding toward a precipitous drop. Small children were reported to be among them. Meanwhile Dana Potts went up in a CHP helicopter to try to locate other stranded motorists,

while the rest of the team stood by for further assignments and coordinated with the incident command staff.

Frank, I, and the Star 94 crew were unable to locate the stranded family at the location given, but flight crew Mike Calhoun and Ryan Burk flew us back and forth over the Ortega Highway for a couple of hours looking for other stranded motorists. While we worked hard to try to locate people needing rescue, we couldn't fail to appreciate the beauty of the mountains that almost never see this amount of snowfall. It was simply gorgeous.

By this time the Cal-Trans dozer crews, working from both the east and west, had cleared all but about 2 miles of roadway. We landed twice so Frank and I could check out stuck vehicles, but both were abandoned. We spoke to people who live near the Candy Store, but they were fine, if without power.

We finally made it back to the command post and stood by with the rest of the team while authorities tried to account for the occupants of all abandoned vehicles. They were taking no chance that someone had walked away from their car and got lost in the mountains. Frank, Dana, and I got the sweet assignments

but every member present was geared up and ready to spend whatever time required in the field to rescue those in need. At about 4 p.m., we were told to stand down as all were accounted for

To the Left, the "X" marks the location of a car buried and abandoned on the Ortega Highway

RMRU RESCUER FRANK SNIDER

This was truly a multi-agency effort. CHP took lead with Riverside Sheriff's Office (including Sheriff's Emergency Response Team, RMRU, Elsinore PD, and Aviation), Orange County Sheriff's Office, Cal Trans, Cal Fire, and CHP Aviation. The American Red Cross stood up a shelter in case it was needed and also provided food and refreshments to personnel at the command



post. While no one ended up needing rescue, a multi-agency task force was in place in case they did.

RMRU Members Involved: Cameron Dickinson, Glenn Henderson, Kevin Kearns, Patrick McCurdy, Dana Potts, Frank Snider, Ray Weden, and Gwenda Yates.

Sheriff's Aviation: (Pilot - Mike Calhoun) (TFO Ryan Burk)



Tramway- Wellman's Divide

December 13, 2014

Mt. San Jacinto

Written by Eric Holden

The team was just wrapping up a great day of Helitac training with the Riverside Sheriff's Office's Aviation unit when we got word that we have lost hikers up on San Jacinto Peak. As some members finished their rotation in the training we pulled out maps and GPS units to trace their cell phone ping coordinates. Unfortunately cell phone pings are not always accurate and the ping either put them in either Glendale, or the Pacific Ocean. It looks like we will be doing a search tonight.



After some debate the team's president requested two volunteers. I quickly raise my hand along with Donny. We both had all of our winter gear ready to go. After putting on our warm jackets and harnesses we hopped on the helicopter with pilot Chad and Technical Flight Officer (TFO) Eric a lot of Eric's on this bird.

A few minute later and we were circling San Jacinto Peak checking all of the normal places that people get funneled into. We could see all of the State Park Rangers searching Round and Tamarack valleys, but no sign of our subjects. On one of the final passes pilot Chad spotted their cell phone light about a mile south east of Wellman's divide. In order to drop someone off at their location we would need to lose some weight so either Donny or I would need to be dropped off at Round Valley. I had the med-pack and stove so Donny got dropped off at Round Valley. It was 20 degrees as we dropped

off Donny. The Aviation team did some great flying and got me to a point I could jump down onto the snow slopes about 300 feet above the subject's location. With the helicopter making their way back to Donny I headed downhill. Snow was 2-3' deep in some of the drifts, which made for some fun travel.

"..... they are in good shape. They had an emergency bivy set-up and had warm clothing, food, water, map and compass, just no light to see with "

RMRU RESCUER ERIC HOLDEN

I reach the subjects, John and Kathy, and they are in good shape. They had an emergency bivy setup and had warm clothing, food, water, map and compass, just no light to see with. They had summited San Jacinto Peak and on the way back down missed the turn off at Wellman's Divide. After introductions all around we start heading back up the slopes to my drop-in point to prepare for aviation's return from fueling and dropping Donny back off at Hemet-Ryan. Chad and Eric held the helicopter perfectly still a few feet above the ground and both Kathy and John climb aboard.

While waiting for their return I get to watch the Geminids meteor shower from the slopes of San Jacinto. SPECTACULAR!!!! During the entire mission I saw about 40 meteors streak across the sky. Aviation returns and as I am handing my pack to Eric we get electrostatic shocked about 7 times. I am an electrical



Upper Tram Station Range Station
on an earlier mission

engineering tech in my day job and the shocks felt just like sticking your finger into an 115V electrical socket. I chuck my bag into the helicopter as Eric can't grab it without getting electrified and grab the skid for one final burst of electricity. Now at the same electrical potential as the helicopter I am able to safely grab Eric's hand as he pulls me inside for a return home. Quite the..... shocking..... experience.

Turns out that John and Kathy are a new couple and this is one of their first dates! If they can get through this smiling hopefully it's a long and happy relationship.

RMRU Members Involved: Glenn Henderson, Eric Holden, Donny Goetz Matt Jordan, and Rob May.

Sheriff's Aviation: (Pilot - Chad Marlat)
(TFO - Eric Hannum)



Female Lost - Tahquitz Peak

December 06, 2014

Saddle Junction - Idyllwild

Written by Kevin Kearn

The Riverside County Sheriff activated RMRU on Saturday evening, at 1845 to search for a missing female in the vicinity of Tahquitz peak north of Idyllwild. The 45 year old subject had been hiking with a male companion when she went to relieve herself off the trail somewhere between Tahquitz Peak and Saddle Junction at approximately 1330. Although weather conditions were clear with temperatures in the low 50's and little wind, she became disoriented and moved further away from the trail and got lost. Her male companion attempted to locate her for an hour before deciding to leave. He had contact with her via text messages until her phone went dead a very short time afterwards.

The male companion descended to Idyllwild Ranger Station via Saddle Junction and Devil's Slide Trail where he reported her missing at approximately 1630 hours. The Ranger station personnel contacted the Riverside Sheriff and

deputies responded. After interviewing the male companion who claimed to have met her on the internet, examining his cell phone, and confirming the subject's car was still in Humber Park, they alerted RMRU.

Glenn led the operation and was first to arrive at Humber Park with the RMRU truck at 1940 hours. Shortly thereafter, the Riverside Sheriff also mobilized Desert Search and Rescue (DSAR) to also join the search. Cameron, Ray, and I all arrived by 2115 when temperatures had dropped into the low 40s in Idyllwild and low 30s at Saddle Junction. Cameron and Ray were operating on little sleep, having supported the rescue of two subjects at the Tramway the night before. Glenn briefed us on the mission and we distributed equipment which included extra clothing for the subject, radios, callout ropes, an enhanced medical kit, and extra water. Glenn planned to insert our three-man team initially into Skunk Cabbage Meadow, then have us sweep south, west of Hill 8042, along the Pacific Crest Trail to Little Tahquitz Valley, then southwest to the Tahquitz North Ridge trail, and then north to the Saddle Junction.



As our team moved to stage at Keenwild Helipad, elements from DSAR began arriving; initially instructed to launch from the Palm Springs Tram Station and sweep south, Glenn redirected them to clear the Devil's Slide trail from Humber Park to the Saddle. By 2215 hours, the Sheriff's Helicopter (Star-9) had lifted our three-man team individually into the Skunk Cabbage Meadows Landing Zone and we were calling out for the subject while Star-9 conducted visual search with night vision goggles. Nearly 100% illumination from the full moon provided

excellent conditions to observe terrain. Zero winds improved the effectiveness of our shouting out and ability to listen for responses, especially when Star-9 was away from our area.

"Nearly 100% illumination from the full moon provided excellent conditions to observe terrain."

RMRU RESCUER KEVIN KEARN

Soon after, Donny and Kirk arrived to form RMRU's second team. Glenn directed them to search and clear the South Ridge Trail from Idyllwild to Tahquitz Peak. Approximately 500 feet south of the trail intersection on Pacific Crest Trail in Tahquitz Valley, we discovered a freshly drawn arrow in the dirt pointing north (opposite our direction of our travel). We agreed it was fresh and with the absence of any discernible tracks, thought it might be our subject's. After reporting the discovery, our team reversed direction and began sweeping north where arrow pointed, towards the Saddle Junction. At Saddle Junction, we interviewed two campers who reported seeing the male companion earlier in the day and indicated that he had been looking for the subject. At Saddle Junction, our team turned south to clear the North Ridge Trail all the way to the lookout tower on Tahquitz Peak.

While our team cleared the North Ridge, Donny and Kirk continued to approach from the South. DSAR's 5-man team closed on the Saddle after which two members went back down; three remaining DSAR members proceeded to clear from Saddle Junction east to Reed's Camp and then to Law's Camp. Star-9 scoured the Pacific Coast Trail from Saddle Junction to Wellman Divide. At 0215 hours our three-man team completed reconnaissance of the Lookout Tower atop Tahquitz Peak (8,828 feet) with nothing significant to report. We could hear the call outs from Donny and Kirk

approaching the summit from the south. DSAR had finished their reconnaissance as well and Glenn was analyzing options to continue searching or to rest the teams until dawn.

Star-9 made another check of Caramba area, the eastern side of the San Jacinto Wilderness that drops off into hazardous canyons. By luck, Helicopter Crew observed the glint of the reflective material on the subject's shoelaces in the steep section of the Tahquitz Creek east of Caramba Camp in the deep canyon before a steep and impassable (without technical equipment) drop off. They confirmed it was our subject at the bottom by a stream. Aside from a pinkish hat, she wore a black long sleeve top and bottoms which made her difficult to detect below the trees in the darkness.

The narrow canyon with steep sides and trees made it extremely challenging to conduct a safe hoist so the plan was to pick Cameron and me up from Tahquitz peak and insert us into an Landing Zone about a half mile from the subject. We checked to be sure we had the correct equipment with Ray, who stayed at the tower to serve as the radio relay between Star-9 and RMRU Base, since the subject's remote location exceeded line of sight communications. After Cameron and I reached the subject's location, Donny from the second team approaching up the South Ridge, made it to Ray's location at the Lookout Tower. At that time, Glenn put out the order to withdraw all remaining elements in the field back to Idyllwild.

Eric Hannum Technical Flight Officer (TFO), part of the Star-9 flight crew that night, passed the coordinates to Cameron and me after inserting us individually at 0240 hours. They also illuminated the area ahead of us to 'paint' the spot where the subject was. We moved rapidly from the Landing Zone to the stream in the canyon but were slowed down considerably after that. Steep, slippery terrain above the stream with significant debris made it difficult to traverse safely.

.... Continued Page 16

WHAT IF...

EVERYTHING GOES WRONG

HOW WILL YOU BE FOUND?

EVEN THE BEST MOUNTAINEERS
COULD NEED RESCUE



COMMUNICATION - The 11th Essential System

For this scenario you are an avid hiker, backpacker, and mountaineer and as part of your physical conditioning regiment you hike at least once per week. With years of experience you are well aware that even on the simplest most basic hikes there is always the possibility of injury which may require search and rescue assistance.

As you normally do training hikes alone, even the most basic hikes, you take three communication precautions:

1. Leave a map with a reliable close relative or friend and advise them of your planned exit time and when you will call them.
2. Have your cell phone fully charged, turned off and placed your daypack. Charger left in the car.
3. Carry a satellite based personal locator beacon. There are several manufacturers of these devices but for this example the you carry a "SPOT" Gen3.

The SPOT has the ability to send automatic location messages once every 5 minutes. To save battery life, you set to transmit once per hour. The SPOT also has the ability to manually send an "OK" signal, a HELP button to advise your personal contact of an emergency, and finally 911 which will alert emergency services. To get

the most accurate location information the manufacturer recommends carrying the SPOT logo up which means placing it in the top of your daypack in the zippered pocket.

In your daypack are the 10 essential systems and enough gear to comfortably spend the night in case of emergency based on the weather forecast. Today there is a slight chance of scattered showers.

This afternoon's late winter hike is on a trail about 5 miles one way to an elevation of about 7,800 feet. On arrival at your destination, you drop your daypack just off the trail, take out the SPOT Beacon and send a manual OK which states in an email to your Reliable contact "Everything is Fine". You leave the SPOT on top of the pack in order to get the best signal.

Only about 100 feet away is a 30 foot high rock outcropping and you decide to scramble up the rocks and loose boulders to enjoy a great late afternoon view. Climbing down the outlook, you trip over a loose rock and fall the remaining 5 feet, landing face first in the sand. You have just a few scratches on your hands but your left foot fell between the small gap in two large rocks. To make matters worse, the loose rocks you tripped

over fell in on top your foot and lower leg making it impossible to remove without assistance. Less than 100 feet away is your fully equipped daypack and SPOT which just sent an "I am fine" message; might as well be on the moon. You can see the trail, but only by a miracle, will another hiker come by this late in the day. All you have on is your light shirt and at this altitude, the temperature will drop 20 -30 degrees quickly.

Don't try and think your way out of this scenario, you must have outside help.

Will you get it soon enough?

Several hours later, you see the headlights for a couple of RMRU volunteers.

QUESTION: How did they find you?

Consider if you failed to provide your itinerary with a reliable close friend or relative. What value was the SPOT? It was continuing to send an automated location signal for a few hours before hibernating. Not that you were in trouble. Without the reliable contact, the Spot was worthless.

Your reliable relative did not receive a

COMMUNICATION - The 11th Essential System

call from you at the set time of 7 pm. This person called your cell phone and it went straight to Voice Mail. Checking the Spot email link, the automated signal placed you at the same location for 3 hours.

The SPOT did have value in assisting RMRU SAR to find you faster than if you did not have one. Without it, you could have gone missing anywhere along the 5 mile trail. SPOT Gen3, like other Personal Locator Beacons on the market is a valuable tool.

If this scenario is modified slightly and the SPOT was in reach, the 911 button could have immediately alerted emergency services and your position. For this reason keeping the spot physically with you at all times is extremely important.

Here are key pre-cautionary recommendations:

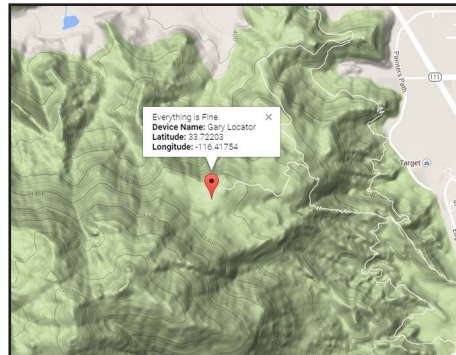
1. Most important, provide a reliable person with details on where you are going, drawing on a map the intended route from the trailhead to the final destination. Also include your vehicle description and license number. Notice how we stress Reliable person.
2. Set a contact time to call that person. If you don't call they should call you. If the phone goes to Voicemail, they should assume you are in trouble and contact emergency services. To make this process easy, provide the emergency service phone number.
3. Always bring the 10 essential systems, discussed on page 22.
4. Take a flashlight, one of the 10 essential systems, even on day trips with a minimum of fresh batteries. Carrying a second flashlight is even better. Strongly consider as well a Safety Lightstick. Once activated they will glow for 12 hours.
5. Try not to dress like a Ninja. Wear bright clothing so you can be easily located.

6. Have a whistle. If in trouble, blow it every 2 minutes; the sound carries much farther than your voice and you won't get as tired.

7. If you get lost, stay put. Rescuers will more easily find you the less you move away from your last known location. Moving can greatly complicate search efforts.

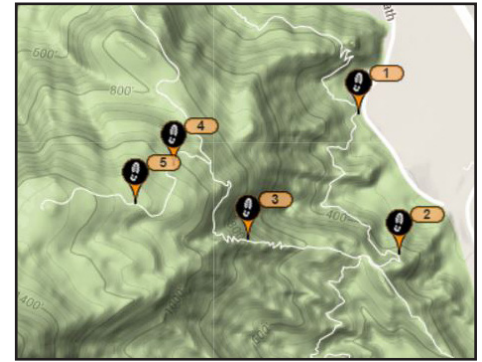
If you have a cell phone, keep it turned off to conserve power and place it in a zip lock plastic bag and store it inside a zipper pocket in your daypack where it is not prone to damage. Turn it on only when you have a signal and off when you don't. Generally, if you get to high ground and turn your phone on, you can communicate with authorities and they have the ability to get permission to obtain a general location of your phone.

Personal Locator Beacons are reasonably priced at about \$150 with a monthly subscription starting at about \$10 per month with premium service features a bit more.



SPOT Manual OK "Everything is Fine"

However learn how to set it up and use it. Sending automatic broadcasts requires you to set-up an email list. Frequently use the device if you are only going for a walk around the block as this will help develop "muscle memory". While the device is fairly simple, if you are in trouble or chances are you are confused and there is a strong possibility that you might forget you have the device and what button to push and for how long in



SPOT Automatic Track Set for 10 minutes

order to transmit a signal. Another possibility is you arrive at the trailhead only to find that the batteries are dead. The SPOT uses Lithium Batteries only.

Taking these steps can save your life. The 10 essential systems will keep you alive for a period of time but at some time these resources will be depleted and your gear compromised by the environment. If trapped or injured, time is of the essence; you must be rescued and found soon. We strongly hope you will include the 11th essential, communication and plan and execute accordingly as outlined above.

RMRU volunteers
Article by Gary Farris
Contributing: Kevin Kearn



Need Training?

Beside acting as a highly competent rescue workers, RMRU members also work closely with school, clubs, church groups, and Scout troops throughout the area to teach mountain safety. Contact us to schedule a training.

The ounce of prevention may well prevent the untimely pound of cure.

continued from page 13

We found our subject in good condition but took a few minutes to check her out; she was cold though not yet hypothermic; however, her feet were soaked. We dried and warmed her feet, changed her socks and later wrapped plastic bags over her socks before putting her feet back in her shoes. We got her into a down

"We found our subject in good condition but took a few minutes to check her out; she was cold though not yet hypothermic; however, her feet were soaked. "

RMRU RESCUER KEVIN KEARN

jacket as well as gloves and she seemed to warm up quickly with some food and water. She was capable of continuing to move and we coordinated with Star-9 to pick us up at a new, closer Landing Zone in one hour. Star-9 flew away at 0315 hours. We proceeded to climb back up the walls of the canyon to our initial crossing point. We were fortunate in that the subject was an avid runner, carrying virtually nothing, and motivated to get out. I went first to find a safe route and clear brush while the subject followed. Cameron went last and ensured the subject was not only safe but felt safe – particularly in steep slippery sections of the canyon. Cameron actually got below her and placed and held her feet in sections while she traversed.

After crossing the stream at the point where we could exit the canyon again, we climbed higher to the coordinates Star-9 had passed for the alternate Landing Zone. Within 5 minutes of our arrival at 0410, Star-9 returned but reported that they could not land in the designated location; they requested that we move to the original insertion Landing Zone across a nearby ridge. They landed and waited the ten minutes for us to come to their location. Star-9 lifted the subject and Cameron out first at 0425 hours and then came back for me. We landed back at Keenwild Helipad where Glenn, Riverside deputies, and Idyllwild Fire Paramedics had gathered. Paramedics

promptly put the subject on a gurney and proceeded to further warm and treat her with IVs in the back of their ambulance. The subject got a picture of herself and the pilots. We turned our equipment in and after a quick debrief with Glenn and the team, ended the mission.

Key Points:

If you get lost, stay put. Rescuers will more easily find you the less you move away from your last known location. The subject's decision to move greatly complicated the search effort. See last mission 2014-047 where the subjects stayed put and the mission was over very quickly.

Always bring extra (warm) clothing – and particularly a shell. The subject was fortunate that there was no wind that night, which had there been, would have ripped the heat off her damp body and likely caused hypothermia and possibly death. This would have happened even faster had there been rain.

Try not to dress like a Ninja. Wear bright clothing so you can be easily located. Bring a whistle and a flashlight even on daytrips. Try to blow a whistle every 2 minutes; it carries much farther than your voice and you won't get as tired. These devices coupled with bright clothing will dramatically increase your chances of being detected and found.

"Try not to dress like a Ninja. Wear bright clothing so you can be easily located. Bring a whistle and a flashlight even on daytrips."

RMRU RESCUER KEVIN KEARN

If you have a cell phone, conserve your power. Turn it on only when you have a signal and off when you don't. Generally, if you get to high ground and turn your phone on, you can communicate with authorities and they have the ability to get permission to obtain a general location of your phone.

Know your hiking partner. Stick together and have a plan if you should become separated.

RMRU Members Involved: Kirk Cloyd, Cameron Dickinson, Donny Goetz, Kevin Kearn, Glenn Henderson, and Ray Weden.

DSAR Members: Mike Calhoun, Chris Miller, Beau Potter, Sharon Ollenburger, Chris Stevens, and Kevin Wahlstrom.

Sheriff's Aviation: (Pilot - Chad Marlat) (TFO - Eric Hannum)



Lost Hikers Tramway

December 05, 2014

Tramway Area – Shangri-La

Written by Pete Carlson

At 7:15 pm we get the call for two lost hikers near the upper Tramway. The Sheriff's Helicopter and flow over and spotted the two, but due to blowing fog on the ridge they had to leave. They did get co-ordinates for us so we knew where to find the two hikers. I arrived at the Lower Tramway at 9 pm and got my gear together for an overnight mission. Even though we know where the people were, you never know what will happen. So into the pack goes the gear: Sleeping bag, short thermo-rest, biv sack, (my jackets, hat, and gloves), extra (jackets, hat, and gloves for subjects if needed), stove, small food bag (Hot coco, soups, and energy bars), 3 litters of water, first aid kit, helmet, harness, small technical bag, 100 foot 9 mm rope, 2 headlamps, map and compass, GPS, Misc. Kit, and Team Radio. OK, now I have a 35-40 lb. pack and I head up to the Tramway to catch the next car up.

Up top are Glenn and Lew running Base, Cameron and Ray have just gone into the field to start looking for the subjects, and the Sheriff Deputy. After Glenn plots the co-ordinates onto the map and I put them into my GPS, I am set to go catch up with the first two searchers. After looking at the map I know right were to go, Shangri-La. It is just past the Ranger Station and the first trail junction. I make a right turn and head up the first drainage just past the trail junction. In 10 minutes I have caught up with Cameron and Ray.

Together with my knowledge of the area we make quick time till we are looking out over the desert and the lights of Palm Springs.

We give a yell and hear a response in the distance up the ridge line toward Harvard Peak and on the desert side of that ridge. First up is a 200 foot cliff in our way. We look to see if going down and traversing under it will work. No, so we go around the mountain side of the ridge and head up as we traverse. It is a lot of third class scrambling and with heavy packs we are sweating hard. After 20 minutes of this we reach the top and I start down the desert side and give a yell. The subjects are still up the ridge and definitely down on the desert side. I try to traverse the desert side and run into class five climbing, so I turned back and yelled to the other two to stay on the mountain side and continue up the ridge farther.

I come back and join them and in 10 minutes we are on top again farther up the ridge. This time the subjects are below us. We are able to find a third class route down to them after a couple of false starts and got to them about 11:00pm. Juan and Ruby are in good shape, dressed warmly, and still have some water left. They just got caught by darkness and had no idea of how to get back to the Tramway. Ruby had suggested that they just hike down to the lights below. Luckily Juan said no way and they stayed put and did not go anywhere.



We took a short break and we Rescuers eat and drink to keep up our energy levels. I did a short look around hike and found we could traverse up into a notch and drop back down into the drainage that goes from Shangri-La up

to the Harvard and Yale Saddle. This was mostly a class two route with just a small bit of class three, so it was great for the subjects.

It was a beautiful night to be hiking with it being only one day from a full moon, it was easy to hike with no headlamp and see just fine. We made it back to the Upper Tramway Station around 12:15. We then put out our sleeping bags and sleep on the floor until 6pm when we could get a ride back down to the Lower Station on the first morning run.

RMRU Members Involved: Pete Carlson, Cameron Dickinson, Glenn Henderson, Lew Kingman, Ray Weden and Gwenda Yates.



Hikers Stranded by Darkness

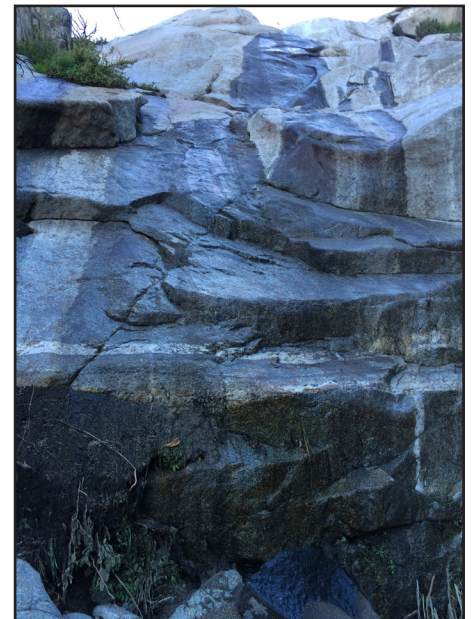
November 23, 2014

Jensen Creek near Snow Creek
Written by Eric Holden

At 8:30 pm I get a call with a heads up on a possible search. Making sure all my gear is ready to go, I get about 90 minutes of sleep before the official call out is made. Two Subjects had called 911 and said they were out of water, with no light source, somewhere on the slopes of Jensen Creek. The helicopter was able to spot them at about the 4,800 foot level but unable to reach them due to flight restrictions. They were able to get a latitude/longitude reading of their location.

The decision was made to head up the same route they went and ascend about 3,500 feet up the canyon. A 60 minute drive later and I was greeted by fellow RMRU members Cameron and Ray at the trailhead. This would be Ray's first mission in the field and turned out to be quite the adventure. We started up the canyon and quickly found that from the rains 3 days ago, the canyon had a good amount of flowing water. This made for...interesting... travel as we occasionally sunk calf high in mud. With Cameron leading the way, the next 4 hours involved boulder hopping, scrambling and even some

short class 5 climbing up waterfalls. I love canyoneering, but most of the time its descending them, in the day, in warm weather.



During one of the climbs I was bringing up the rope to belay the Cameron and Ray when I suddenly found myself no longer on the rock face but falling backwards. "How did I fall? I was so secure" I thought as I took the 7 foot drop onto an old tree branch. Checking myself out I didn't have any large holes or broken bones and found that the hold I was standing on actually broke off the rock. Ok, time to try again, this time with less falling. I got to the top and was able to belay Cameron and Ray as they made the climb.

It was about 4:30am and we needed to get a little rest before continuing on. At first light we packed up our gear and ascended till our route became impassable



due to a 60 foot waterfall at about 4,200 feet. We climbed the ridge line to shout down into one of the other canyons but were still unable to make voice contact. If the subjects were at their last known position, we should have been able to get some response. We came up with a plan to head back down to base and possibly try to come in from the Black Mountain Campground up above Jensen Creek.



Thankfully, even in gusty winds, the RSO Aviation Helicopter was able to land near us, pick us up, and give us a short ride back to base. The helicopter then had to return to base for the rest of the day due to high winds.

Cameron and Ray had to leave and the call was made requesting additional help. Soon Gwenda, Patrick and Kirk made it to base. While coming up with a new search plan and getting ready to summon more help from outside agencies, we got a ping from the subject's cell phone at a residence, not on the mountain.

Turns out, the subjects had hiked out during the earlier hours of the morning and got a ride from a buddy back home. They never thought it important to notify the Sheriff and just went home to remodel their kitchen.

Glad the hear they are OK, but please, if you are lost, call 911 for help, and then hike out, let the searchers know...

RMRU RESCUER ERIC HOLDEN

Glad the hear they are OK, but please, if you are lost, call 911 for help, and then hike out, let the searchers know...

RMRU Members involved: Kirk Cloyd, Cameron Dickinson, Eric Holden, Patrick McCurdy, Ray Weden, and Gwenda Yates.



Three Person Hoist November 08, 2014 Cleveland National Forest Skyline Road Written by Dana Potts

Three teens from the Corona area had hiked up to the Main Divide from the Skyline trail area in Corona. After coming down the wrong ridge line on their way back to the road, they became disoriented in the high foliage. As darkness came, they called 9-1-1 to report their situation. 9-1-1 dispatchers from RSO asked Riverside PD to use their helicopter to locate the three teens before the sun set completely.



Once Riverside PD located the three, they stayed on scene until RSO could arrive. As I live in the Corona area RSO picked me up in a field near my home. I was lowered 50' down into the thick brush. All three were in good health, dressed appropriately and had flashlights to assist the air unit in locating them. All three were given a helmet and hoisted up to the RSO airship without incident.

When the three were safely returned to the trail head, RSO was notified of another possibly mission on Mount San Jacinto.

RMRU Members Involved: Dana Potts.



Hoist Stranded Hiker October 26, 2014 Cleveland National Forest Skyline Road

Written by Cameron Dickinson

At 7:15pm, I was notified by our call captain Gwenda that a 19 year old male reported himself lost in the Dripping Springs area of Temecula. The subject was a new resident of Temecula who had recently moved out to the area from New York State. He wanted to explore the trails near his home and he decided to take a solo afternoon hike.

As it became dark in the evening he realized that he was lost and was unable to find his way back to the trailhead. At this point he decided to make a phone call requesting help. He didn't have a map or a GPS, but he was able to report his approximate location to a Riverside Sheriff's Deputy.

I drove to Hemet Ryan Airport and met up with the Aviation Personnel on duty that night and departed via Star 9 the Sheriff's helicopter. It didn't take long to reach the reported location. We circled the location and were quickly able to locate our subject below as he used his cell phone as flashlight.

I was lowered down on the hoist cable and made contact with the subject. I talk to him and told him that I would be putting him a Screamer Suit (A big bag with places for his legs and arms) with an attachment point to clip the hoist cable. He was hoisted up first and then I was hoisted out last.

We flew over to a point on the ground where a Sheriff's Deputy was waiting and dropped him off to safety. We then returned back to Hemet Ryan Airport. The whole mission was over in less than two hours.

RMRU Members Involved: Cameron Dickinson.



Missing 75 Year Old Alzheimer's Woman

October 7 - 9, 2014
Pinezanita Campground -
San Diego
Written by Glenn Henderson

Day 1:

The team was activated for a search on Monday, October 6. We were to assist San Diego County with a search for a missing 75 year old Alzheimer's person. Sally Estabrook went missing on Saturday evening, October 4 from a campground near the town of Julian. The terrain is steep hills and a lot of heavy brush. There are many houses in the area but it is very rural.

We arrived about 7:00 AM on Tuesday. The area was gridded off and teams were assigned to search each grid. No clues of any kind were turned up. We completed multiple assignments and were released at 5:00 PM.



Teams responded from Orange County, San Diego County, San Bernardino County and (RMUR and DSAR) from Riverside County. The searchers included Mounted Posse, Dog teams, helicopters, mountain bikers, off road vehicles, and ground pounders like us.

RMUR Members Present:

Cameron Dickinson, Glenn Henderson, Eric Holden, Matt Jordon, and Rob May.

Desert SAR Members Present:

Donna Beane and Sharon Ollenburger.

Day 2:

We started searching at 8:00 AM. I was assigned to trail with a dog team along

with DSAR members Sharon Ollenburger and Chris Stevens. We completed our assignment and returned to base for another assignment. Assignment two the three of us were sent out about a mile from base and worked our way through open spaces and areas of heavy brush back to base camp. No sign of any kind has been found so far. Sharon and I were pretty beat and Chris had to make a meeting in Palm Desert so we checked out at 1:30 PM.



RMUR member Matt Jordon had spent the night in the campground after searching all yesterday. He was assigned to another team and was still on scene at 7:00 PM. The total number of searchers was down today from yesterday. Laguna Hotshots did respond mid-morning with 28 firefighters that researched the campground and surrounding areas but to no avail. The search continues tomorrow, hopefully the day Sally will be found.

RMUR Members Present: Glenn Henderson and Matt Jordon.

Desert SAR Members Present: Sharon Ollenburger and Chris Stevens.



RMUR Team Search Resumed on October 19. Today went pretty much the

"Sally has been missing for 9 days now the search will probably be scaled back It was especially hard as we hiked for a short time with Sally's son."

RMUR RESCUER -

GLEN ANDERSON

same as the previous three days. Sally has been missing for 9 days now and the search will probably be scaled back starting tomorrow. Today was our fourth day for RMUR and probably the last. We checked in at 8:00 AM and got into the field around 9:00 AM. We were put into pretty high probability areas but again, no clues or sign of any kind.

It was a really quiet drive home as we knew we were leaving Sally out there somewhere. It was especially hard as we hiked for a short time with Sally's son. He



was very composed but you could see the strain was taking a toll on him. We were released at 5:00 PM.

RMUR Members Present:

Cameron Dickinson, Matt Jordon, Patrick McCurdy, and Glenn Henderson



Lost Hiker - San Jacinto Peak September 21, 2014 San Jacinto Wilderness Written by Dana Potts

In the evening around 8:30 pm RMRU was called to the Palm Springs Tram to search for an overdue hiker. RMRU team members Kirk, Dana, and Cameron arrived prior to the shutting down of the tramway. The team was advised by the Riverside County Sheriff's department that a lone male hiker was reported to have made it to the summit of Mount San Jacinto in the afternoon, called home to check in and was on his way back to the tramway. We were told that the hiker had plenty of water but no light.

Two Rangers checked the main trail through Round Valley all the way to the summit while RMRU members Dana and Cameron went to Hidden Lake Divide and took the High Trail to Round Valley with negative contact. The evening was perfect for a night search: warm, no winds, and our voices carried. Come morning other RMRU Members and Desert Search and Rescue members Sharon Ollenburger and Michael Calhoun responded to the top of the tram. Sharon and Michael headed down the dreaded cement pathway and they came across our missing hiker being towed up the ramp by the Rangers.

Upon asking him what happened, he told us that he had twisted his ankle the day before and followed what he thought was the main trail. However as has happened

"He had no flashlight as has happened many times before, with the loss of light, he lost the trail and followed footprints"

RMRU RESCUER DANA POTTS

many times before, with the loss of light, he lost the trail and followed footprints

that lead him away from the main trail. Due to the fact that he didn't have a light, he made the right choice to stay put until sunrise. He said that he felt that he was in the Round Valley area but not sure where. Once the sun was up, he made his way back to the tram.

The subject was reunited with his wife at the lower tram station and sought medical his own medical attention later that day for his minor sprain.

RMRU Members Present:

Steve Bryant, Kirk Cloyd, Cameron Dickinson, Glenn Henderson, Kevin Kearn, and Dana Potts.

Hoist Corona Two Hikers September 27, 2014 Corona Foothills Written by Glenn Henderson

I received a call from Call Captain Gwenda Yates that Star 9, the Sheriff's Helicopter crew, needed one rescue person to assist in a hoist evacuation in the hills above Corona. The call came in at 6:00 PM and I arrived at the Sheriff's Hanger at 6:30 PM. Pilot Tony Bowen and TFO (technical flight officer) Ray Hiers were waiting for me when I got there. We took off and arrived on scene just as the sun went down. Ray hooked me up to the winch and lowered me into the brush where the two guys were stranded. The brush was so thick that I don't know how they even got there. They were uninjured so I strapped each of them into a "screamer suit" and one by one they were lifted into the helicopter. I was the last one in and we flew to Corona Airport where we turned them over to ground transportation to take them back to their car. We then lifted off back to the hanger and I returned home at 8:30 PM.

RMRU Members Present:

Glenn Henderson

Hoist Fuller Ridge July 31, 2014 San Jacinto Wilderness Written by Eric Holden

I get the text and it looks like there may be a mission out of the Tram tonight. I had to make work in the morning and knowing that once you go up the tram you don't get back down till 7am meant that I probably wouldn't be going on this one.... or so I thought. About 10 minutes later I get a phone call, "Ready to do a hoist?" This would be my second hoist in less than 48 hours, so out the door I go heading toward the Hemet Ryan Airport.



I meet up with Chad Marlat and Ray Heirs at the hanger and get the information, two missing hikers out of the tramway and we have GPS coordinates so hopefully this will be a quick run. We gear up and head off in the night towards San Jacinto Mountain. About 10 minutes later we are able to pick up the subjects light. Unfortunately they are not located in a good location, lots of high trees.

Through the expert skills of Ray and Chad they were able to lower me 120 feet through the trees to the waiting ground below. As the helicopter takes off I quickly located the two subjects, Ali (23) and Phuong (25). Both were cold but otherwise in good condition. I got them jackets, water and quickly started to suit them up in screamer suits. Unfortunately the location that I was lowered into would be difficult to hoist us all out. Chad radios that he found a spot a few hundred yards up the mountain that would only be a 50 foot hoist.

We start making our way up but unfortunately we are met with a lot of dense

thigh high brush. After some bushwhacking and a few scratches we make it to the helicopter pick up spot. I signaled that we are good to go and Ray lowers

"... from there they took a "Shortcut".

With no map, water, or warm clothing this proved to be the big mistake. "

RMRU RESCUER ERIC HOLDEN

the hoist. First up was Ali. Chad radioed down to let us know they needed fuel and would drop off Ali and be back shortly. Over the next 30 minutes I was able to speak with Phoebe about how they got lost. Turns out they left the Palm Springs Tramway at 10am and made the peak at 5pm. From there they took a "Shortcut". With no map, water, or warm clothing this proved to be the big mistake. They ended up about half way down Fuller Ridge at 33°49'02.4"N and 116°42'01.8"W. At this point they knew they were lost and called for a rescue.

We were soon greeted by the sound of rotors and within a few minutes Phuong was on her way up the hoist. A minute later the hook came back down and as I was being raised the helicopter drifted slightly and I was about ready to take a big pendulum swing. Quick acting Ray lowered me back down and after a quick reset back up I went. We returned to Hemet Ryan and I said my goodbyes as they decided how to get the subjects back to the tram station.

RMRU Members involved:

Eric Holden.

RSO Aviation:

Char Marlat (Pilot), Ray Heirs (TFO)



Search Deep Canyon

July 30, 2014

Deep Canyon off HWY 74
below Pinyon Flats

Written by Eric Holden

After a quick hour or two of sleep from the previous night's mission I was out the door heading towards the Cahuilla Tewanet Vista Point. RMRU was called out to assist DSAR (Desert Search and Rescue) who had been searching the area for missing 34 year old, Juan Pedro Valladares. DSAR needed a technical team to rappel into the canyon and see what we could see. This would be another mission with fellow RMRU member Les Walker. If ropes are involved, he is the man you want!



We arrived on scene at 5am to beat the desert heat and at first light began setting up our ropes to descend into the canyon. We brought over 1,000' of ropes but would only use about 400' to set up an anchor system utilizing 3 cams and a large boulder for redundancy. The rock around the area was very loose and definitely added to the degree of difficulty for this rappel. Les was the first over the edge and made the 150ft rappel look easy.

After he got into an area protected from rock fall I went over the edge and was quickly on the ground. We proceeded all the way to the canyon bottom and had no sign of our subject. Once in the main drainage we did find recent foot prints.

We followed them for a few miles leading up canyon until they were lost among the hard packed soil of the Cactus Springs Trail. It was only 9am but temps were in the mid-90s and we made the call back to



base. Luckily the Sheriff's Aviation unit was out assisting us and able to land on a small saddle. A quick flight and car ride later and we were back at the command post.

We let DSAR know our findings and went back to the cliff to retrieve our ropes and gear. The technical part of the mission went well but unfortunately no additional signs of Mr. Valladares were found.

RMRU Members involved:

Eric Holden and Les Walker

Other Teams: Desert Search and Rescue, Riverside County Search Dogs, and Riverside Aviation Unit



Hoist Box Springs

July 29, 2014

Riverside behind UCR

Written by Eric Holden

"Have to get up at 3:30am to drive out to a mission tomorrow" I thought to myself as I headed to bed at 9pm. As soon as I lay down my phone goes off, but not my emergency call out notification, its Gwenda calling me. I figured she must be calling to tell me that tomorrow's mission has been cancelled. As soon as I pick up I hear "Eric, get out to Hemet-Ryan Airport, you have a hoist mission". Being I had packed everything for tomorrow I was out the door in 5 minutes. On the way to the Airport I got a text from Cameron, he was on his way to the airport as well. It looks like we will get to have our first hoist mission together. We arrived at the airport, (RSO) Riverside Sheriff Office

.... Continued Page 24

EQUIPMENT

FOCUS ON ILLUMINATION

10 ESSENTIAL SYSTEMS

Don't Leave the Trailhead without them



When day hiking, backpacking, rock climbing, or mountaineering, limiting weight is typically an initial goal. However, the experience of thousands seeking to enjoy the great outdoors has shown that in the event of a host of problems one set of gear is normally considered a must, the 10 essentials.

The list is credited to the Seattle based outdoor club, the Mountaineers. Their book, "Mountaineering, Freedom of the Hills", first published in 1960 and now in its 8th edition, is one of the best resources on every aspect of the outdoor experience from day hiking to ice climbing.

While the 10 essentials were a must take list of equipment for decades, the list needed updated to reflect the interaction between pieces of equipment.

Now called the 10 essential systems, this list addresses this issue by combining related items together such as map and compass combined into the navigation essential system. The new list also adds equipment when someone might be inadvertently stranded overnight packing a space blanket or bivouac sack.

In this issue we will expand on the Essential System Illumination.

THE CLASSIC ESSENTIALS

1. MAP
2. COMPASS
3. SUNGLASSES & SUNSCREEN
4. EXTRA CLOTHING
5. FLASHLIGHT
6. FIRST-AID SUPPLIES
7. FIRESTARTER
8. MATCHES
9. KNIFE
10. EXTRA FOOD

With the prevalence high quality, high life LED flashlights, there is no need for carrying extra bulbs, a requirement on old flashlights. However, this does not mean your flashlight will not malfunction and in the dark, impossible to repair. Carrying a second light weight flashlight is an excellent addition for several reasons.

For example your primary flashlight batteries might come dislodged. This second light would provide you the ability to identify the problem. The same would apply to changing dead or dying batteries. Once batteries are removed from the battery

compartment you are in the dark. Most battery compartments require orientation, something difficult to do in the dark.

Also consider when you are using your flashlight it is dark and at altitude, cold. Fumbling with batteries in the dark and cold also presents the possibility of dropping a fresh one. If you carry only one set of spares, that one lost battery could mean you can't get the flashlight working again. Even in a moonlight night hiking in a forest, it is extremely difficult if not impossible to follow the trail.

Here are some recommendations:



LED Handheld Flashlight 150 Lumens
Lightweight 3.4 Oz. with lanyard attachment ring

- Consider carrying 2 LED flashlights or headlamps instead one with both using the same battery size.
- Carry an extra set of fresh batteries and wrap them together in a small piece of electrical tape. Keep them in the top of your pack in a zipped pocket.
- Take one or 2 commercial grade 6 inch glow sticks. Once activated, these can last 8 – 12 hours and can provide some illumination and in an emergency situation in optimal conditions be seen up to 1 mile away.



LED Headlamp 130 Lumens
Lightweight 3.4 Oz. with
batteries installed

Flashlights and Headlamps both have advantages and disadvantages. Flashlights normally cast more light or lumens and are easy to turn on and off. The disadvantage is you need to hold it in your hand. Headlamps have one advantage over a flashlight, they are hands free making them extremely popular with mountaineers



LED Headlamp with whopping
320 Lumens. 8.1 Oz. with batteries
Quick Open Battery Compartment

THE 10 ESSENTIAL SYSTEMS

1. Navigation

Waterproof Topographic map or in a waterproof container plus a Magnetic compass. Optional altimeter or GPS receiver.

2. Sun protection

Sunglasses, sunscreen for lips and skin, hat, clothing for sun protection.

3. Insulation

Hat, gloves, jacket, extra clothing for coldest possible weather during current season.

4. Illumination

Headlamp, flashlight, batteries. LED bulb is preferred.

5. First-aid supplies plus insect repellent.

6. Fire

Butane lighter, windproof matches in waterproof container.

7. Repair kit and tools

Knives, multi-tool, scissors, pliers, screwdriver, trowel/shovel, duct tape, cable ties.

8. Nutrition

One day of extra food.

9. Hydration

Extra 2 liters of water for one additional day.

10. Emergency shelter

Waterproofed Bivouac sack, tarp or space blanket plus insulated sleeping pad

who frequently do alpine starts at 3 am and keep their hands free. Also backpackers that use trekking poles favor the headlamp. Being that it is on your head, it can be a problem to find the on / off switch especially while wearing gloves.



Chemlight or Snaplight
Visible for up to 1 mile
8 - 12 Hour Duration

If you elect the LED headlamp consider one with a separate battery compartment. These lights normally have a better battery life and can cast a stronger beam some 320 lumen and higher as shown in the example to the left.

An added valuable feature is a variable or second low level light setting which can preserve battery life. This feature is especially valuable on multi-day outings.

As a final thought, practice the use of your flashlight at night including replacement of the batteries. You should be able to do with your eyes closed including removal of extra batteries from your pack. This simple practice could literally be a lifesaver in adverse conditions.

Article by Gary Farris - RMRU
Photo by Eric Holden - RMRU



.... Continued Page 21

Aviation, at the same time and quickly geared up. After a quick briefing with pilot Mike Calhoun and TFO (Technical Flight Officer) Ray Heirs, we were told 3 females (ages 15, 20 and 22) are stuck on the side of Box Springs Mountain. They had gotten into a location where they could no longer go up or down. We stowed away 3 screamer suits and 3 helmets and were soon air born heading towards Riverside.

As we approached the subjects' location we can see the light of their cell phone being waved. Two of the subjects were



on a flat section of grass and one was clinging to the side of a cliff about 10ft down from the other two. Mike expertly positioned the helicopter and Ray lowered me down about 20 feet from the subjects. Next came our packs and finally Cameron was lowered down. Cameron proceeded to get the screamer suits ready while I climbed down to Selena who was stuck on the cliff. This cliff is basically very loose dirt, big rocks, and long grass. She couldn't climb up any further as the dirt would just give way causing her to slide back down. After getting to her, I kicked some big foot holds in the dirt and with my help we got to the flat grassy section.

They had a few small scrapes and scratches on them but were otherwise in good condition. We got them in the screamer suits and Cameron called the helicopter to come pick them up. Once again the aviation crew positioned the helicopter perfectly and lowered the hook.

A few hoists later and two of the three subjects were flying to a nearby landing zone. We interviewed the third subject

while waiting for the helicopter to return. Turns out that two of the subjects are sisters and other was a friend. They left at 6pm to hike up the mountain and quickly lost the trail. They decided to head for a ridge line and in the process slid/fell multiple times, saw a snake, got stuck, and eventually called 911 for help. After a very emotional interview we heard aviation coming back and once again they plucked the last subject off the side of the mountain with surgical like precision.

The pilot let us know that they were low on fuel and after dropping off the last subject would refuel and come back for us. Cameron and I got to spend some good quality time on the side of the mountain with the city lights providing more than enough illumination.

After all the excitement the scene turned quite tranquil. Shooting stars, coyotes and the rustling of grass were our companions till aviation returned. After a couple of quick hoists and a flight back to Hemet we were back to the airport at 1am.

We had a quick debrief in which we all



agreed that the mission went great and was just like training. We said our goodbyes and I headed home for my 90 minutes of sleep before the next mission. Big thanks to Mike and Ray with RSO Aviation for once again RSO Aviation performed flawlessly.

RMRU Members Present: Cameron Dickinson and Eric Holden.
RSO Aviation:
Pilot Mike Calhoun and TFO Ray Heirs.

Search Dripping Springs

July 14, 2014

Temecula Area

Written by Glenn Henderson

We got a call at 5:20 PM that an ultra-distance runner had gone for a "quick" 20 mile run in the morning and had not returned by late in the day. Gwenda Yates and I rushed down and picked up the team rescue vehicle and headed out to Temecula and the Dripping Springs Campground.

It had been way over 100 degrees so we feared the worst. When we got to Dripping Springs we saw a Sheriff's Deputy talking to a guy in running shorts and had a towel wrapped around his shoulders.

"He had been running and felt that he was becoming a victim of heat exhaustion ... He was very smart to take the action that he did and probably saved his own life"

RMRU RESCUER -
GLENN HENDERSON

The Deputy came over and told us that it was our overdue runner. A great sigh of relief!

He had been running and felt that he was becoming a victim of heat exhaustion so he found a tree to get under and waited most of the day until it cooled off and then walked back to the campground.

This was a runner that runs in 50 and 100 miles races regularly so he was aware of the signs of heat exhaustion. He was very smart to take the action that he did and probably saved his own life.

Gwenda and I headed back to the rescue garage and called other members to also turn around as the mission was over.

RMRU Members Present:
Kirk Cloyd, Glenn Henderson, Mark Houston, and Les Walker.

Tahquitz Rock Recovery

July 12, 2014

Idyllwild, Ca.

Written by Eric Holden

The team had just spent about 6 hours on Long Valley Dome working on high angle technical rescues when our cellphones started alerting us of a fallen climber on Tahquitz (Lily) Rock. We quickly packed up our gear and took the tram back down to our vehicles. On our way to Humber Park we learned that the climber, Bryan Rockwood of San Diego, was killed during the fall and we were now on a recovery mission instead of a rescue.



As we arrived at Humber, the Sheriff's Aviation unit was inspecting the accident scene. Two RMRU members and two coroners were inserted via hoist to lunch rock while the rest of us came up the climber's trail with additional gear.



With the great assistance from two fellow climbers, we were able to get the deceased down from the off the rock face and airlifted out.

We would like to express our thanks to the climbers that assisted with the recovery and our deepest condolences to the friends and family of Bryan.

Analysis of the accident: After speaking with multiple witnesses this is what we believe happened. Bryan and his partner were climbing Sahara Terror, a 5.7 six pitch route on the Northwest Recess of Tahquitz Rock. At some point in the climb Bryan was on lead and the piano size slab he was on came loose causing his death. Miraculously no other climbers were injured from the rock fall. This route is known to have loose rock and has claimed lives before.

RMRU Members Involved:

Lee Arnson, Kirk Cloyd, Mike George, Glenn Henderson, Eric Holden, Lew Kingman, Rob May, Dana Potts, and Les Walker.

Missing Peak Hiker

July 2, 2014

San Jacinto Peak

Written by Eric Holden

At 11pm I get the page that we need a hasty team to book it to the tram to search for a missing hiker. I kiss my wife goodnight and head out the door for the 90 minute drive to the Palm Springs Aerial Tramway. When arriving at the parking lot I see fellow RMRU member Cameron gearing up. We meet the Sheriff's deputy at the lower tram station and get the information on our missing subject. A

46 year old named James Jeselson, from New York, was last seen between Wellman's Divide and Round Valley. He did not know the area, didn't have a map, compass or any other survival gear, but did have a bottle of booze. We had a cell phone ping but it put him 8.5 miles south of the tram, very far from the last known position.

Thanks to the Tramway for staying till 1am to give us a lift to Mountain Station. Once at top we got into contact with the State Park rangers who were already in the field near the Hidden Lake area heading south towards the cell phone ping. They recommended we check out Round and Tamarack Valley, we agreed and off we went. We took the main trail towards Round Valley Campground and gave shout outs every few hundred feet. About an hour later after one of our many shouts we heard the faintest of replies. It was very difficult to discern the direction. We went about a tenth of a mile back down the trail, our best guess, and could no longer make contact. Back to our original location and got a response again. We set off in another best guess, this time cross country, and after a few hundred feet we got stronger response to our shout out. Excellent! We are heading in the right direction.

The next 30 minutes involved cross country travel through Round Valley, Tamarack Valley and then finally up Cornell Peak. We started to smell smoke from what I figured was a campfire he started. We turned off our lights and could see the glow from his campfire in the treetops a couple hundred more feet up Cornell. We

"We hiked up over a small ridge and were met by a startling sight! It was not a campfire but a forest fire!"

RMRU RESCUER ERIC HOLDEN

hiked up over a small ridge and were met by a startling sight! It was not a campfire but a forest fire!



About a 40ft by 20ft section of forest was currently burning with at least one tree on fire. Cameron radioed into base and let the deputy know that we had a sizable fire up here. I spotted the subject across the burn area and crossed through it to get to him. He was shaken up pretty badly and I did a quick medical evaluation on him. He had a bad (2nd Degree) burn on his finger, was dehydrated but otherwise in good condition. He showed no signs of intoxication. I wrapped his finger to protect it on the hike out and he drank a liter of water pretty quick. Cameron and I went up to see what we could do about the fire. After about 30 second of trying to put it out we realized that there was nothing we could do for something this big.

We went a few hundred feet from the fire and spoke with James a little more. Turns out that he had turned around about halfway up to Wellman's Divide and then on his way back down he made a left at the water spigot instead of a right. He followed the trails until they disappeared past Tamarack Valley Campground and then he started heading up to get a better visual on where he was. He had found an old tent that he set up and had hung the rain fly out to be seen by searchers. He pointed it out but we could not spot

"His big mistake happened when he decided to light a signal fire..... While it was burning it collapsed down the rock face and spread to all of the brush and trees below. "

RMRU RESCUER ERIC HOLDEN

it till he said look higher. He had climbed up 25 feet into a tree and hung the rain fly at the top.

His big mistake happened when he decided to light a signal fire. He started the fire on a rock outcropping. While it was burning it collapsed down the rock face and spread to all of the brush and trees below. He quickly used up all his water trying to put out the fire and spent the next few hours trying to contain it.

He eventually heard our shouts. Luckily there was virtually no wind that night and the fire did not spread much. We hiked him back down the main trail and got back to the Long Valley Ranger's Station about 4:00am. The two State Park Rangers had made it back and were waiting for us. We spoke with them and they headed off towards the fire while we returned to the tram station. Air crews would later



perform water drops on the fire after the sun came out.

We stayed up the rest of the night and eventually took the first tram back down the mountain. I highly recommend to James that he let EMTs take a look at his finger. He declined medical treatment and said he would take care of it himself. James went into the back country without any of the proper tools that would have let him find his way back out. He had no light source, map, compass, G.P.S., or warm clothing. Luckily it was a warm night.

He started a fire in some of the driest conditions Southern California has seen and it quickly got out of control. The largest fire in Californian history was started the same way (out of control signal fire). The low winds and the quick work of the

State Park Rangers kept the fire from spreading before aviation could knock it down.

Thanks to the State Park Rangers and the Palm Springs Aerial Tramway!

RMRU Members Involved: Cameron Dickinson and Eric Holden.

RMRU BOARD MEMBERS

2015

Rob May - President

Kirk Cloyd - 1st Vice-President

Gwenda Yates - 2nd Vice-President

Eric Holden - Secretary

Pete Carlson - Treasurer

TRAINING CALENDAR

- **HELITAC:** May 16

- **Tracking:** June 6

- **Technical Rock** July 11

- **High Country Camp:** August 8 - 9

- **Mock Mission:** September 12

- **GPS/Map & Compass:** Oct. 10

- **Technical Rock:** Nov 7 - 8

- **HELITAC Night Ops:** Dec. 5

You Can Help!

There are several ways you can help RMRU

Countless people owe their lives



JOIN OUR SEARCH & RESCUE TEAM



RMRU is always looking for new members!

We are an all-volunteer, non-profit team of rescue volunteers who are always looking for qualified people to join our team of dedicated rescue members. As a member of the Mountain Rescue Association, we are not your average search and rescue team. In addition to what is expected of most SAR teams, we specialize in high-angle rope rescue and extended back country and mountain rescue missions. If you think you have what it takes to be part of an elite mountain rescue team, please join us at one of our monthly meetings normally held the Wednesday of every month. While the regular meeting begins at 7 pm, a training season begins at 6 pm and is a great opportunity to meet one on one with team members. We meet at Sheriff's Office Valley Vista substation at 43950 Acacia Street in Hemet.

Email info@rmru.org ahead of time to make sure there will be someone out front to meet you.

We look forward to meeting you!

BECOME A SUSTAINING MEMBER



Even if you can't join us in the field, your contribution can help make a vital difference in our mission to save lives.

RMRU is a completely volunteer search and rescue team that covers Riverside County and assists other SAR teams in other counties and states. Each member purchases their own equipment and takes time off work, without compensation, to participate in search and rescue missions.

Team equipment is purchased from contributions from the community. We are a non-profit organization and are funded by donations from people like you. Your donations allow us to keep our training and team gear updated and help us to save lives. This includes our rescue trucks and at present we seek to replace our primary truck at an estimate cost of \$100,000.

Donations of any size are appreciated, however if you would like be a sustaining member, please fill out the form below. **We also take PAYPAL donations at info@rmru.org.**

SUSTAINING MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Your Donation is deductible from both your state and Federal taxes

RMRU tax ID number for Not-for-Profit status 95-2497048

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

Membership Types:

- ☐ Benefactor Club \$1,000 +
- ☐ Summit Club \$500
- ☐ Patron Club \$200
- ☐ Century Club \$100
- ☐ Supporting Club \$25

Please send your donation to:

Riverside Mountain Rescue Unit
43950 Acacia Street
Hemet, California 92544

Thank You!

To all that volunteer their time and financial assistance....
Countless people owe their lives



OUR SUSTAINING MEMBERS



BENEFACTOR CLUB \$1,000.00+

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 Green Planet | Lori Lansens & Milan Cheylov
 William Howard Warneke Memorial Foundation

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 Craig & Janice Coopersmith | Janet Reynolds | William Faurot

ACTIVE TEAM MEMBERS



Lee Arnson - Idyllwild | Steve Bryant - Alta Loma | Pete Carlson - Blue Jay
 Carlos Carter - Perris | Kirk Cloyd - La Quinta | Cameron Dickinson - Murrieta
 Joe Erickson - San Bernardino | Gary Farris - Palm Desert
 Michael George - Riverside | Donny Goetz - Los Angeles | Eric Hannum - Menifee
 Glenn Henderson - Hemet | Mike Herman - Idyllwild | Eric Holden - Temecula
 Mark Houston - Moreno Valley | Tony Hughes - Yorba Linda | Ray Hussey - Riverside
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 Patrick McCurdy - Riverside | Dana Potts - Corona | Brad Scott - Moreno Valley
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 Ray Weden - Murrieta | Ty Whittersheim - Hemet | Gwenda Yates - Hemet