



Two men, 64 & 74, on rugged hike

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Devil's Slide Trail
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By John Dew

At about one o'clock in the afternoon the pagers came to life informing us of a search in the Palm Springs area.

Three brothers were visiting each other and two of them had decided to ride the Palm Springs Aerial Tramway to the high country, stay a day or two and return. There were two circumstances which made this excursion unusual. One - They were going to return by hiking down Andreas Canyon, one of the most rugged canyons on the mountain, and ... Two - These two brothers were 74 and 64 years old.

Either of these items could prove a problem, but to put the two of them together looked like a sure bet.

One more item was thrown in to compound the problem. It was raining and very cold on top of the mountain.

The team members arrived at the Banning Sheriff's Station soon after the call. Assignments were made and those making up the various teams went out into the rain to get their gear together. Soon they were ready and started to their search area.

One team was sent to the top of the Tram to make their way to the top of Andreas Canyon via the regular trail. Another team was to start up Andreas from the bottom, while still another was to search from the bottom into Tahquitz Canyon.

After they were deployed word came to us that a light signal had been seen on the side of the mountain the evening before by someone in Palm Springs and the Palm Springs Mounted Police had been working on that since the spotting.

Wondering why we had not been alerted earlier, possibly when the signal was seen, was uppermost in our minds and when the Sheriff's Office was asked about it they informed us that RMRU had been called just as soon as they had heard. They had heard nothing of the signal sighting the night before.

As base was being moved to Palm Springs, after our search teams were well on the way to their destination, a helicopter was seen flying toward Palm Springs by those running base.

The helicopter went to a location at the base of the mountain, made three or four trips up into the hills and out and was not seen again that afternoon.

RMRU was informed soon after that that one of the brothers had hiked out into Palm Springs and given the general location of his brother to the helicopter pilot. He was then flown out.

It was a happy ending to what could have been a tragic episode simply because the professionals were not called in time.

RMRU is a volunteer search and rescue team that covers Riverside County and assists other teams with search and rescue efforts in other counties. 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.