



5 skiers stranded by bad conditions

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Below the Palisades, San Jacinto Mountains
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By Chris Noon

When all heck breaks loose, why not really be busy! With RMRU members Kevin and Walt Walker, and Steve Vaughn and Chuck Benson from the Hemet Search and Rescue Team a mile ahead trying to locate the two stranded skiers below Chinguapin flat, we the remaining RMRU members were slowly (because of an uncooperative sled) dragging the team toboggan up the steep slope to where the injured pair were dug in. We had been pulling the toboggan for about an hour when Walt radioed down to us that his team had come across three young men making their way down the icy slope. He then informed us that they were part of a group of eight that had been cross-country skiing during the day and that they had attempted to make it down the palisades and had to stop when nightfall overtook them. They did have a fire going though, and no one was injured. The plan then was to continue pulling the toboggan up, and when we reached the altitude of the group several of us would then traverse over to them and help the group back down. Well, we had been pulling the sled for about another hour when Walt radioed down to us that his team was now on water ice, and that it would be too dangerous to attempt pulling the toboggan across the ice. You can imagine how we felt, but there was no choice but to lower the toboggan back to Humber and then drag it up to the saddle and then out the ridge to Chinguapin where it could then be lowered to the stranded skiers. I was held back at base while the rest of the group started for the saddle. The reason being, I would be in the team going back up to where the group of five was held up. As soon as fellow team members Art Bridge and Tom Aldrich arrived at Humber, the three of us started up the slope towards the faint glow of a camp fire. Art was the first one to the group closely followed by Tom and myself. All were in good spirits and very glad to see us. We decided it would be a good idea to wait until morning to attempt a rescue. At first light we decided it would be easier to guide the group down the slope instead of attempting to go back up. Everyone cooperated with us and made the rescue much easier than it could have been. Once back at base we were then ready to help with the main rescue mission.

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.