

Plane crash

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East of Desert Hot Springs
1983-006

By John Dew

The early morning hours were serenely passing with most people doing what they are used to be doing!!! SLEEPING!!!! Then it happened. The phone brought me from this semi-conscious condition to reality.

"Hello, John, this is Al Andrews. (Al is our rescue team coordinator.) Indio Sheriff called and wants us to respond to a downed aircraft. Can you go?"

Realizing that the rest of the team was on top of San Jacinto Mountain on training made it even more urgent that all who were not on the mountain make a special effort. I would have gone anyway but this fact made it even more important.

"Sure, Al, Ill go. What time is it?"

"Well, John, it's a quarter to four. The plane has been located. (And the saddest of announcements) There are no survivors.... Where the plane finally stopped is hanging on the edge of a drop off.

They can drive almost all the way to it. They called us to use our lines and expertise to anchor it so it won't fall on over the cliff.'

Nothing in my realm of experience has such a note of finality, nor can remind us more poignantly of the frailty of life than Al's sobering words, "There are no survivors." Each time we get a call of this nature we go hoping and praying that this will be the time we will find someone, but so far in the twenty plus years



Jim Fairchild

CRASH - There is not much that needs to be said about a plane crash other than, why?

of the team it hasn't been our lot.

Upon arriving at the Indio S.O. we were informed that a doctor and his nurse were the subjects in the ill fated plane. The pair had been up on the high desert working, where they went one day each week to their office there and were going back home after work, about a ten or fifteen minute hop.

Upon arriving at the lower tram station to pick up one of the rescue vans we gathered those team members who had slept there intending to take the first tram to the top the next morning and the others AI was able to reach by phone, in all about eight or ten of us, and we retrieved the subjects from the aircraft.

After having something to eat the team members who had planned to go on training on Saturday morning made their way to the tram and the top of the mountain to finish the training exercises with those who were still up there, while the two of us who could not go on training this month made our way back home.

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.