



Search for man who left suicide note

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San Jacinto High Country
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By Kevin Walker

Indian Summer...the only way to describe fall in Southern California. Fortunately my work load was not too heavy (fortunate for mountain rescue, not work), so when the pager went off I did not have to talk myself into responding to Idyllwild for a search. Nine members from RMRU initially responded to Humber Park. I was first to arrive followed closely behind by Ron Pierson and Eric Townsend. There we met with a deputy and Rick Poschman the son of the missing hiker. It seemed that Robert Poschman, age 70 from San Diego had left a suicide note at his home. The vehicle was located at Humber Park in Idyllwild. With limited information, we started the search.

Giving what we already knew about possible suicides, the first thing to do was look close in, namely areas with views. A helicopter was requested, and the Marines at El Toro were able to respond with a ship (Angel 8). The balance of the day was spent looking within a two mile radius, with one team going on up to the saddle and adjoining areas. With no clues as to Robert's location, at nightfall I made the decision to call for additional help from the California Region of the Mountain Rescue Association.

Thursday morning saw nine members for RMRU, five from China Lake, three from San Dimas, three from Sierra Madre and two from San Diego. Also with us again was Angel 8 and her crew. As missions grow in size, so does the need for additional support in base. Dona Halcrow would be radio operator, Bob Sairs, chief base camp operator, Rob Gardner assist-ant operations leader/air ops, and myself at the helm. Rob and I had spent several hours the night before preparing assignments, and with the aid of the helicopter, teams were soon out in the field. Teams were looking mainly in what we call the Tahquitz Plateau, Skunk Cabbage, Tahquitz Valley, Little Tahquitz, Reeds, Laws, Willow Creek and Caramba. Again the day progressed with no leads. As the noon hour approached, Rob and I continued making plans for more assignments.

Henry Negrete's team had been assigned to look up the Angel's Glide from Saddle Junction to the Strawberry Cienega. They completed their sweep up and back and were ready for another assignment.

Just as Henry and Ron returned to the saddle, a couple drove up to base and stated that they heard someone calling for help near the top of the Devil's Slide trail. I immediately had Dona contact all teams to stand by and had Henry and Ron scream down the trail. As they did so, we had the two China Lake field teams head back to the saddle. It did not take long for Henry and Ron to get down to the Powderbox Spring area, and sure enough made contact with the voice above the trail. It was Rick Poschman and he had located his father in a tent above the main trail on a portion of the old trail from the 193-0's. It seemed that Mr. Poschman had been a member of the California Conservation Corps, and remembered the old trail. Our subject was despondent, but otherwise in good condition. Teams were airlifted back to base, while RMRU and China Lake personnel assisted Mr. Poschman down to Humber Park.

A critique was held during dinner at the Chef in the Forest, and overall it was agreed that the mission went well. Only thing was that we would need to keep the old Devil's Slide in mind on future missions. Our thanks to fellow region teams for their support, to the Marines from El Toro, and special thanks to the Idyllwild Fire Department for the use of their station for base camp.

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.