



Man Missing Overnight

February 16, 2008
Mecca Hills, Near Thermal
2008-007

by Patrick McCurdy

RMRU has a technical rope rescue reaccreditation with the Mountain Rescue Association coming up in March and has been doing a number of extra trainings lately to get ready. Saturday, 16 March, was the date for one of these trainings at 9 a.m., but we got a call at 7 a.m. to assist Desert Sheriff's Search and Rescue (DSSAR) with a search for a missing hiker in Painted Canyon in the Mecca Hills east of Coachella. DSSAR had been searching all night for the man and requested help from RMRU and Blythe Search and Rescue in the morning.

Twelve RMRU members responded for the 90-mile drive out to the search area. I drove directly there from my home in Riverside. As I rolled up Painted Canyon Road on the way to the search, I saw a man walking at the point the road turns from straight gravel to curvy sand. I slowed and asked him if he had been out all night, but he said he had not. He asked if I could give him a ride a couple miles up to his car, and I said sure, as that was the direction I was going anyway.

As we got going I asked him if he was just out hiking and he said he had been hiking the day before, but had lost his keys and was just now going back to his car, having spent the night at a friend's house in Thermal. I got suspicious and said that we were searching for a man whose car had been parked up the road all night long. I mentioned that the man we were looking for was diabetic. The very friendly man then looked somewhat shocked and sheepishly said that he was diabetic.

I was pretty thrilled at that point to have found the subject of the search before I ever even made it to the DSSAR command post to check in. Larry was quite friendly and we chatted on the two mile drive to the CP, where both DSSAR and the sheriff's deputy on scene were somewhat surprised when I arrived and said "I found him!"

The team regrouped in Thermal, grabbed a bite to eat, then headed back to our scheduled training which was only delayed three hours!

We got another mission later that evening. See Mission [2008-008](#) for more details.

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.