



Man Missing Near San Jacinto Summit

April, 7th 2009
Mount San Jacinto
2009-007

By Lee Arnson

The beginning of every mission brings about many questions, the one we could not answer at the time is why we were told to meet at the Palm Springs tram at 5:00 A.M. when it doesn't even open until 6:15. None the less, there we all were staring at a locked gate in the early morning hours wondering how our day was going to proceed.

The only information we had so far was that our subject, "Perry" left on a day hike the previous day with a friend. At the end of the hike, only the friend made it back to his car, at which time he called 911 and then we were called out.

We had phone contact with Perry earlier in the evening and we knew he wasn't injured, just stuck to the point where he could not get out. We also had a rough idea of where he might be.

Finally, 6:15 rolled around and we were able to catch the first tram car from the valley floor to the mountain station. Grace Manues stayed back to act as operations leader and possible observer on Star 9, our sheriff's helicopter.

The rest of us, Nick Nixon, Tom Mahood, Jim Manues, Les Walker and myself decided we would make the hike to Shang-Ri-La and then onto the overlook which would give us a clear view of the Eastern ridgeline leading up to Cornell Peak. This is some of the steepest, roughest country in the San Jacinto's and as we all gathered at the overlook I know we were all thinking the same thing..."Man, I hope he's not down there".

We called the subjects name as a group several times and got no response.

Eventually the "thump, thump, thump" of Star 9 broke the morning silence and we all held our positions as the helicopter started searching the canyons below.

It wasn't long before Star 9 called in and said they spotted the subject in the middle of a very steep looking ice chute at the 8000 foot level. Grace was able to make phone contact with Perry while Star 9 was overhead and it was confirmed this was our guy and there were no injuries.

Star 9 was now asking for one rescuer to high-tail it down to Long Valley to be flown in to do a hoist rescue. I was chosen to do this, so once again I find myself running thru the woods with a 40 pound pack on my back.

Before boarding Star 9, I asked if I could put my crampons on, something not normally done, but since I was to be lowered into the middle of the ice chute , this made sense to the pilot and the T.F.O. I now had to be extra careful not to touch or scratch anything in the million dollar bird.

We flew back to where the subject was and I was lowered down with my ice axe and the "screamer suit' for the subject clipped to my sit harness. As my feet touched down, I was thankful for having my crampons on. The ice was hard on what appeared to be a 45 degree slope.

Perry helped with getting the screamer suit on and then was hoisted on board the hovering helicopter, I was the lifted up and we were flown to the lower parking lot of the Palm Springs Tram.

This mission was a success thanks to all who participated and to the amazing flying abilities of the Sheriff's Aviation Unit.

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.