



Missing Mountain Biker

June 21, 2015

Hemet – Simpson Park

2015-031

Written by Frank Snider

Being a father of three you know it would be a given there would be a rescue call on Father's Day. This was a very early morning call out at 1:18 am, in fact if it were not for a direct call from Gwenda to my cell phone I would have slept through the mission. The call was for a missing mountain biker at Simpson Park in Hemet. I dragged myself out of bed drank a pot of coffee and headed out making it to the park around 3 am.

I teamed up with Cameron as Team #1, Tony and Ray joined us as Team #2, and Gwenda and Kirk manned the command post. Deputy Garvin with Inga (bloodhound) escorted Team #1 and was able to set us on a trail consistent with bike tire tracks. The teams were able to track the tire markings for what seemed like miles. Right around sunrise a water bottle was found along the trail but later proved to not look like the water bottle in a given picture of the bike that we had available. Sunrise also brought out Sheriff's Aviation airship for helping with searching and more team members who started helping with the ground search. A cell phone ping put the lost mountain biker at 3.2 miles from a known cell phone tower so a perimeter search was set up after initial searches by ground crews and airship were unsuccessful.

Just about the time this was getting organized there was a report from a resident that she thought she saw someone waving a white t-shirt. The airship went to the residence, landed and found that she was seeing a Mylar balloon and not someone waving a shirt. At this point the teams came in for a quick bite to eat, water break, and rest in the shade as temperatures were quickly rising into the 90's. Kirk returned with sandwiches and right as I opened the sandwich package an urgent call from the airship came in stating subject had been spotted from the air.

The subject appeared to be down and in immediate need of medical attention. The airship quickly landed at the command post and Team #1 was loaded and quickly taken to the site. Cameron and I jogged from the LZ to the subject who unfortunately was deceased. Team #2 joined Team #1 and helped in marking off the site and prepping it for the coroner. After a 3 hour wait for the coroner in the direct sun and temperatures quickly

rising above 100 degrees, the mission was called and all teams returned safely to the command post via Judy's nice new air conditioned Jeep. Thanks to Judy because we were spent!

Lessons learned: 1) It is difficult to make an improvised shade shelter with a body bag. 2) The cell phone pings are sometimes accurate. Body was found 3.24 miles from cell phone tower. 3) Subway sandwiches that have sat in the sun for one or two hours still taste wonderful when you are in the field and hungry. 4) Cell service is not good in Simpson Park. 5) It gets hot in Hemet!!

RMRU Members Involved: Kirk Cloyd, Cameron Dickinson, Tony Hughes, Frank Snider, Judy Spowart, Ray Weden, and Gwenda Yates.

Riverside County Sheriff: Todd Garvin with bloodhound Inga and Aviation.

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.